



BARKHAM SQUARE

MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT

PROJECT TEAM



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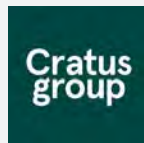


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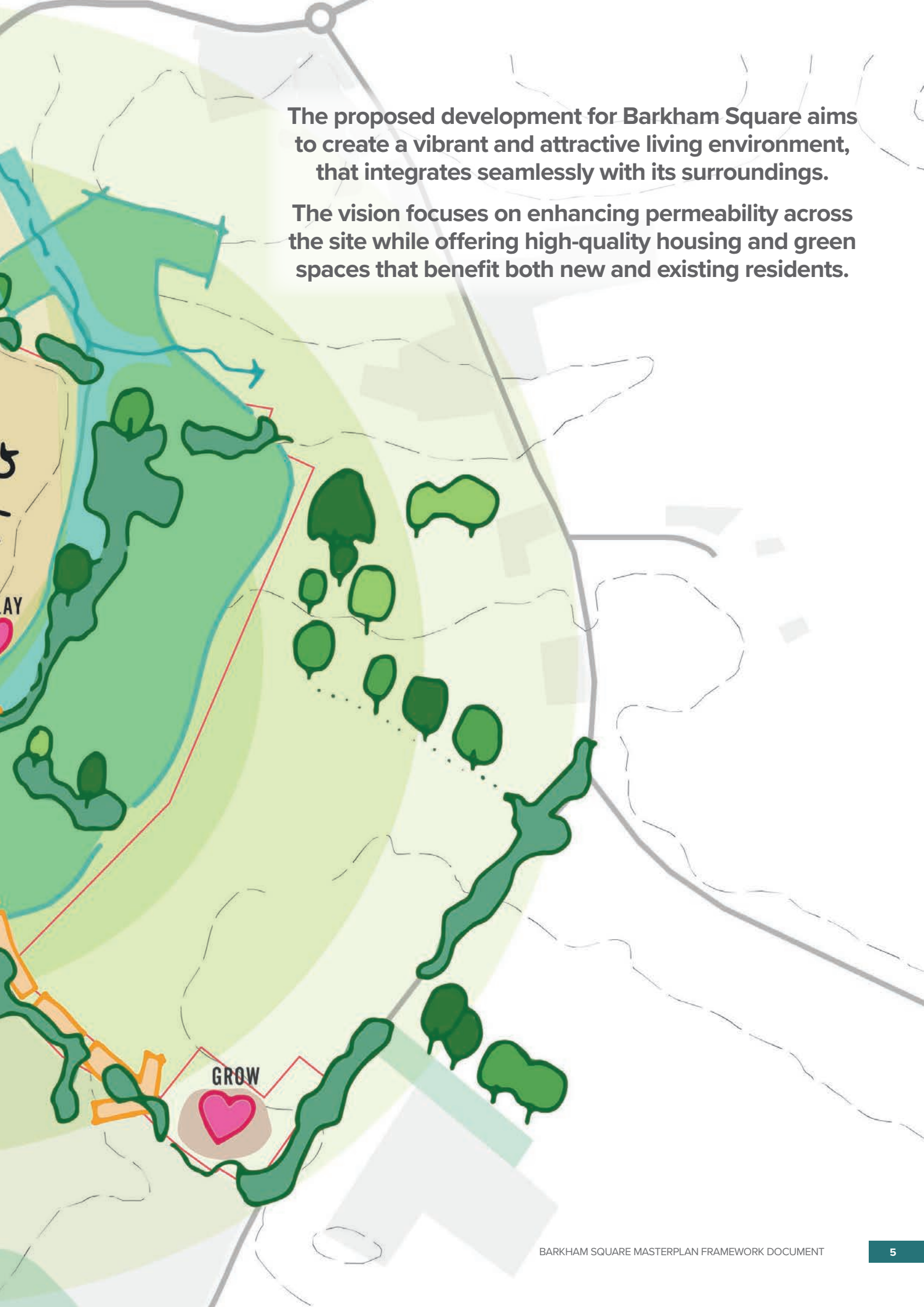
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VISION





The proposed development for Barkham Square aims to create a vibrant and attractive living environment, that integrates seamlessly with its surroundings.

The vision focuses on enhancing permeability across the site while offering high-quality housing and green spaces that benefit both new and existing residents.



1

Introduction & Context

- 1.1 Purpose of the Document**
- 1.2 What Are We Applying For?**
- 1.3 The Application Site**
- 1.4 Planning Policy Context**
- 1.5 Design Guidance**



1. INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

This Masterplan Framework Document has been prepared by Bradley Murphy Design (BMD) on behalf of Crest Nicholson Operations Limited, Chiltern Division (Crest), to set out the design process and establish the design parameters underpinning the Outline Planning Application (OPA) for a new residential neighbourhood at Barkham Square, Arborfield (hereafter referred to as 'the Site', as illustrated on **Figure 1**).

This Masterplan Framework Document (MFD) also fulfils the purpose of a Design and Access Statement.

This MFD outlines the vision for the Proposed Development Site, along with its design principles and concepts that have been developed as part of the iterative design process. The document provides a framework to explain why the Proposed Development is a suitable response to the Site and its context, how the scheme has been resolved through an understanding of setting, scale, access and movement and has been informed by the outcomes from consultation and stakeholder events. This MFD demonstrates how the Site and its surrounding context have influenced the design.

This document forms part of the information submitted as part of the OPA, for the Proposed Development. The purpose of the MFD is to provide stakeholders with the relevant information they require to understand and to explain issues relating to design and access proposals for the Site, the steps taken to appraise the Site and its context, evaluate relevant policies and explain how any potential issues with providing development on and access into the Site have been addressed.

1.2 WHAT ARE WE APPLYING FOR?

Submission of Outline application (with all matters reserved except for access) for residential dwellings (Class C3) plus elderly care dwellings (Class C2 / C3), associated open space, allotments, green and blue infrastructure including the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and other associated works.

1.3 THE APPLICATION SITE

The Site is located adjacent to the northern boundary of Arborfield Green and circa 1km south west of Barkham Village. Wokingham lies circa 2km to the north east and Reading is a circa twenty minute drive to the north. The Site extends to circa 45ha and currently comprises agricultural land. There is sporadic mature tree coverage, (including veteran trees and parcels of Ancient Woodland), hedgerows, ditches, ponds and Barkham Brook which flows south to north through the Site.



Figure 1. Aerial Plan



1.4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

This section sets out the key planning documents relevant in shaping the information contained in this MFD, forming the framework within which the design of the scheme has been developed. For more information please refer the **Chapter 3** of the **Planning Statement**.

Wokingham Development Plan

- Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010)
- Managing Development Delivery (2014)
- Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan (2020)
- Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (January 2023)

Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010)

The Core Strategy is the main planning document which guides development choices and decisions in Wokingham Borough Council. The Core strategy sets out the vision for how the borough will develop in the period to 2026 and how the council aims to protect and enhance the good quality of life enjoyed in the borough.

- Policy CP1 - Sustainable development
- Policy CP2 - Inclusive communities
- Policy CP3 - General Principles for development
- Policy CP4 - Infrastructure Requirements
- Policy CP5 - Housing mix, density and affordability
- Policy CP6 - Managing Travel Demand
- Policy CP7 - Biodiversity
- Policy CP8 - Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
- Policy CP10 - Improvements to the Strategic Transport Network
- Policy CP11 - Proposals Outside Development Limits
- Policy CP17 - Housing delivery
- Policy CP18 - Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location

Emerging Development Plan

- Wokingham Local Plan Update: Proposed Submission Plan

Wokingham Local Plan Update: Proposed Submission Plan

The Wokingham Local Plan Update: Proposed Submission Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination in Public on 28th February 2025. The Hearings are yet to commence at the time of writing.

Upon adoption, the Local Plan Update will set out the planning policies proposed to manage development across the Borough through to 2040 – including the strategic scale residential allocations. The Local Plan Update will replace the existing adopted Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery Local Plans in full.

- Policy SS11 - 'Arborfield Green SDL' – which is allocated for a 'sustainable, well-designed, mixed-use development' incorporating Barkham Square as an extension to the SDL along with a re-commitment (via intensification) to the Studios Site.

Consideration of the application's compliance with draft Policy SS11 is detailed within **Section 6** of the **Planning Statement**.

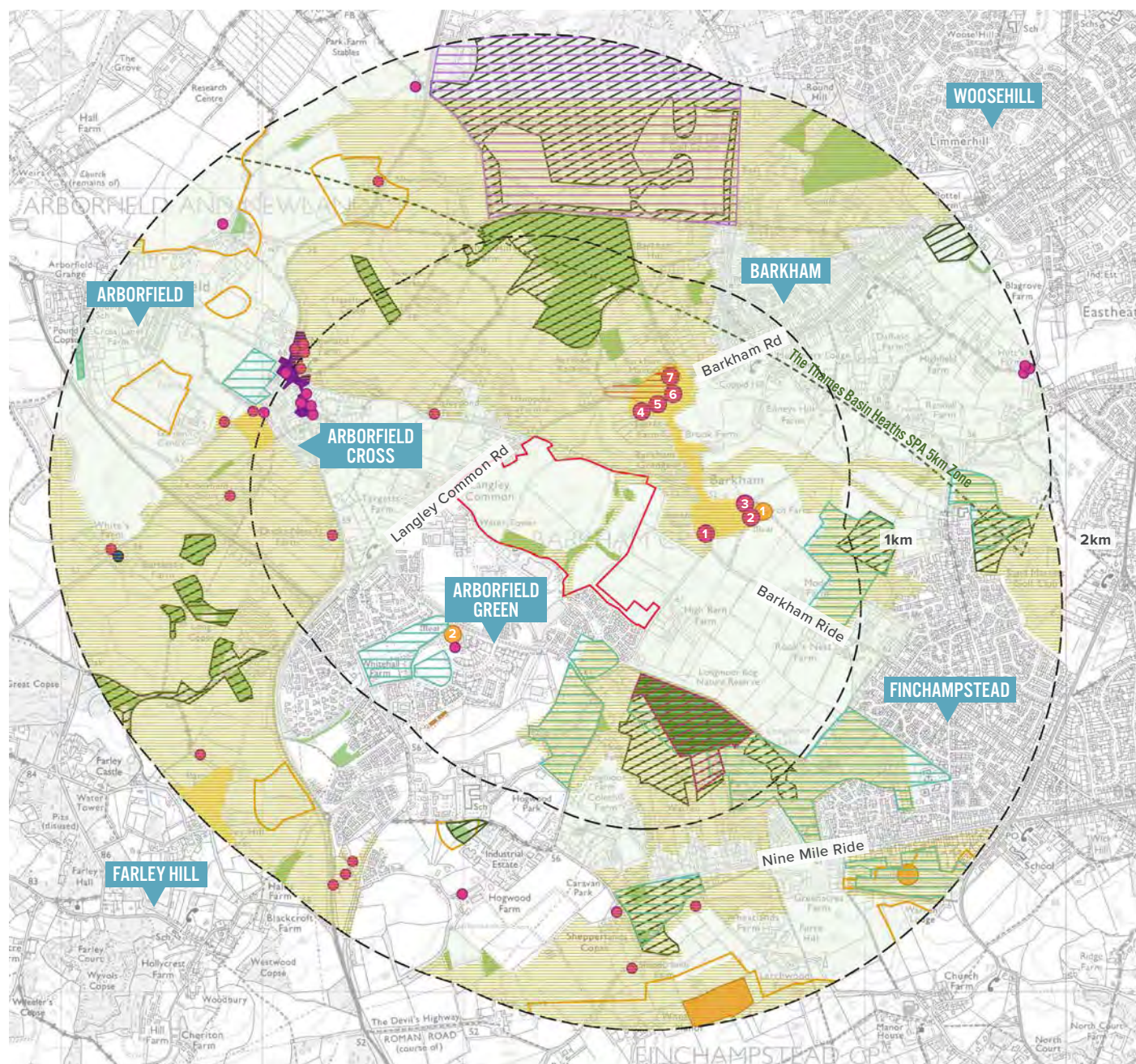
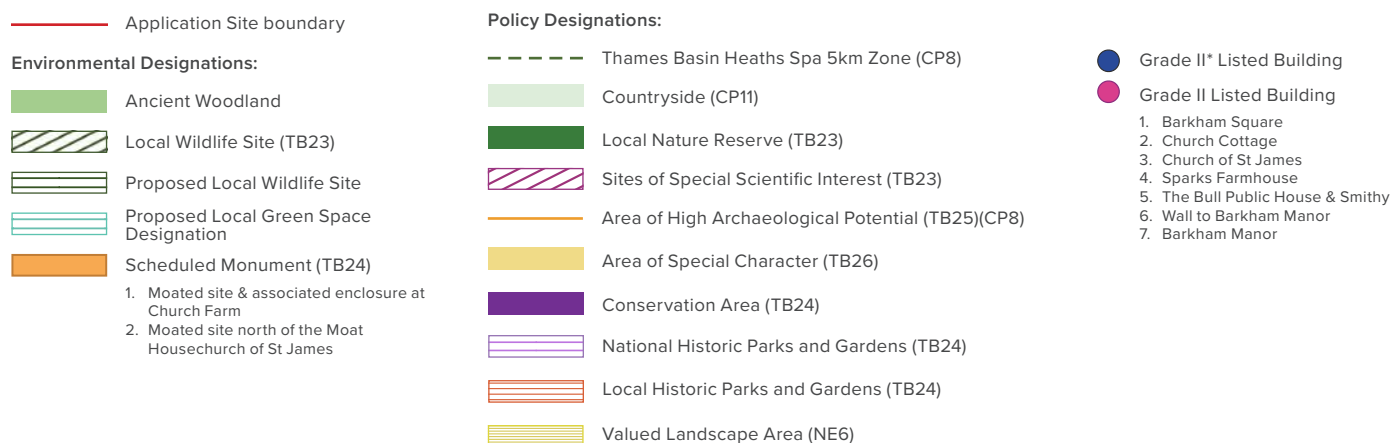


Figure 2. Planning Policy Context Plan





1.5 DESIGN GUIDANCE

In addition to national and local policy, the Proposed Development has been designed with reference to a number of design guidance documents. These have helped inform and shape the design process for the Proposed Development.

National Design Guide

The National Design Guide (NDG) sets out the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics. The ten characteristics are based upon **Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places** of the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**. They are as follows:

1. Context
2. Identity
3. Built form
4. Movement
5. Nature
6. Public spaces
7. Uses
8. Homes and buildings
9. Resources
10. Lifespan



Well-designed places have individual characteristics that work together to create their physical distinctiveness. The ten characteristics highlighted in the National Design Guide help to nurture and sustain a sense of community and work to positively address environmental issues affecting climate. They all contribute towards the cross-cutting themes for good design set out in the NPPF.

A WELL DESIGNED PLACE	How the principles of the National Design Guide (NDG) have been embedded within this MFD
Context	• Refer to Chapters 2 & 3 for an understanding of the wider surrounding context and the Site - with the proposals shaped by an understanding of the local context
Identity	• Refer to Section 2.5 & 2.6 for an overview of local settlement character and identity - Chapter 7 explains how the proposals respond to character and identity
Built Form	• Refer to Section 4.4 to understand the coherent pattern of development
Movement	• Refer to Section 3.5 to understand the existing access & movement context and Chapter 8 for design approach to access, parking and services
Nature	• Refer to Section 4.4 to understand the landscape-led approach to masterplanning and Chapter 5 which explain the Open Space, Landscape, Biodiversity and SuDS Strategies for the proposals
Public Spaces	• Refer to Chapter 5 for Landscape and Open Space and Play Strategies
Uses	• Refer to Section 6.1 - Land Use which refers to uses and affordable mix
Homes & Buildings	• The application is in Outline with all matters reserved bar access
Resources	• Crest's approach to sustainability is set out in Chapter 9 - Sustainability
Lifespan	• Crest's approach to long term stewardship, adapting to changing needs and a sense of ownership is set out in Chapter 9 - Sustainability

Local Design Guidance

The following local design guidance has been used to guide the Proposed Development:

- Affordable Housing SPD (July 2013)
- Design SPD (May 2012)
- Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD (October 2011)
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (adopted May 2010)
- Renewable Energy Requirement of South East Plan Policy NRM11 (May 2010)
- Thames Basin Heaths SPA Mitigation Mini Area Plan (2009)
- Highways Design Guide (November 2006)
- Landscape Character (April 2004)
- Barkham Village Design Statement (August 2009)
- Living Streets: A Highways Guide for Developers in Wokingham (2019)
- Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy (November 2013)
- Play Space Design Guide (December 2019)
- Valued Landscapes Assessment, Wokingham Borough Council (September 2024)

There are a number of common themes for place making policy in the local design guides that we have used to inform our masterplanning work, these include:

Landscape	• Protection and enhancement of landscape and biodiversity • Have regard for existing woodland, trees and hedgerows
Quality	• Providing a high quality design that respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area
Character	• Understanding the Site and its context and reflecting distinctiveness in our built form and open space proposals • Have regard to neighbouring development
Resource	• Working with existing topography, ditch, brook and pond network to integrate a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) • Conserve energy and water, maintain biodiversity and reduce waste and pollution • Sustainable, low carbon development
People	• To encourage vibrant and mixed communities where people feel safe • To incorporate a mix of house types and tenure
Movement	• To create places for people that are safe and easy to move through and are accessible to all • Connectivity of Public Rights of Way • Access to local facilities



2

Surrounding Context

- 2.1** **Location**
- 2.2** **Historical Context**
- 2.3** **Landscape Character**
- 2.4** **Wider Visual Context**
- 2.5** **Local Settlement Character**
- 2.6** **Local Features & Materials**
- 2.7** **Local Amenities & Facilities**
- 2.8** **Sustainable Connectivity**
- 2.9** **Green Infrastructure Context**
- 2.10** **Green Infrastructure Influences**



2. SURROUNDING CONTEXT

2.1 LOCATION

The Site lies adjacent to the northern boundary of Arborfield Green and circa 1km south west of Barkham Village, with nearby settlements of Arborfield Cross to the north west and Finchampstead to the south east. Wokingham lies circa 2km north east and Reading is 13km to the north. The Site is located within the county of Berkshire to the west of Greater London.

Wokingham Railway Station is located 4km to the north east of the Site and provides onward connections to London.

The wider landscape of Chilterns National Landscape lies to the north and North Wessex Downs National Landscape to the west of the Site.

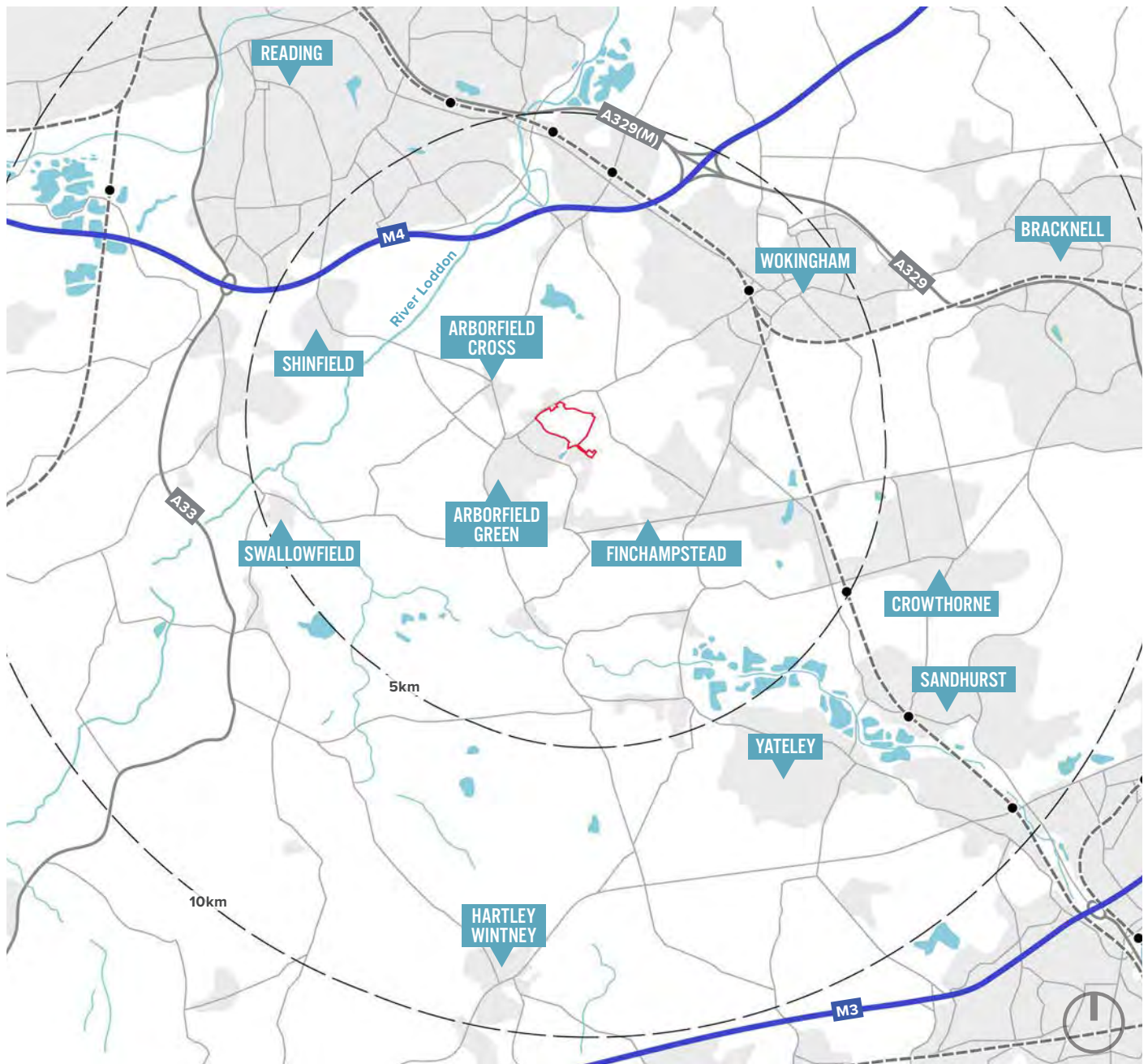
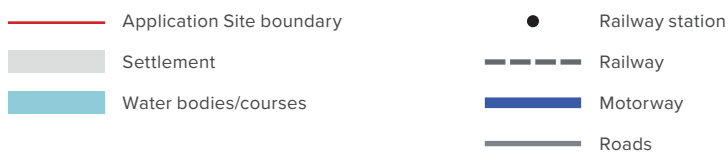


Figure 3. Location Plan





2.2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Mapping the timeline of the surrounding urban context shows the evolution of nearby settlements, with Aborfield Cross, Barkham, Finchampstead and Arborfield Green most relevant to the Site.

Taken from **‘Barkham Village Design Statement (2007)’**, Barkham’s earliest recorded name, in a Saxon charter of AD 952, of Beorchamme (birch tree meadow) suggests that it began as a clearing in the woods.

Up to the present era, Barkham remained predominantly an agricultural parish with a settlement pattern of dispersed farms. Barkham’s small population and relative isolation is reflected in its single alehouse, The Bull (whose landlord was often also the village blacksmith), which was converted into a restaurant in 1982.

Since medieval times there has been a church on the site of St James Church, which was rebuilt by the Victorians in keeping with an early medieval style. Adjacent to the church was a moated medieval manor house on the site of the present Church Cottages. There are only two mansion houses, Barkham Manor (rebuilt in the late 18th century) and Barkham Square (built in the 1740s).

The Site once featured Kidgem Copse, which, over time, has been largely cleared with remnants remaining which now form Ancient Woodland along Barkham Brook and the Site’s southern boundary.



1 Barkham Square (Grade II)



2 Church of St James (Grade II)



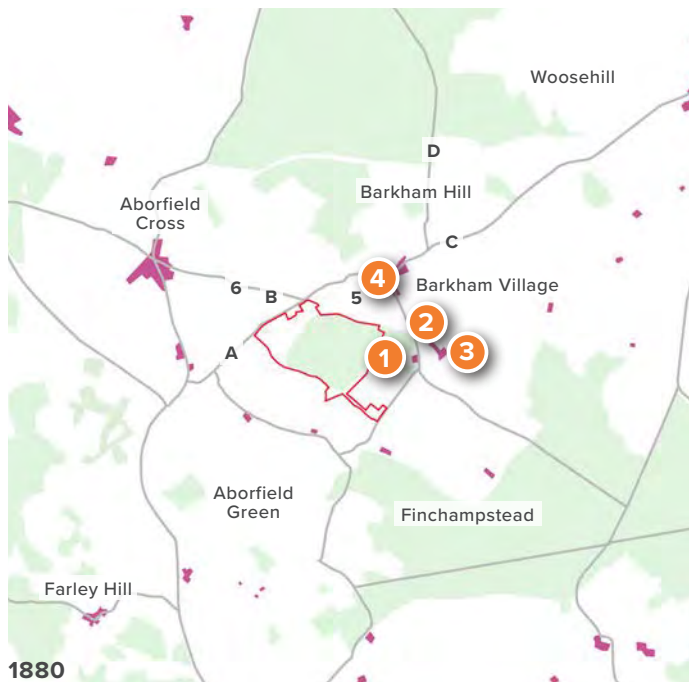
3 Church Cottages (Grade II)



4 The Bull (Grade II)

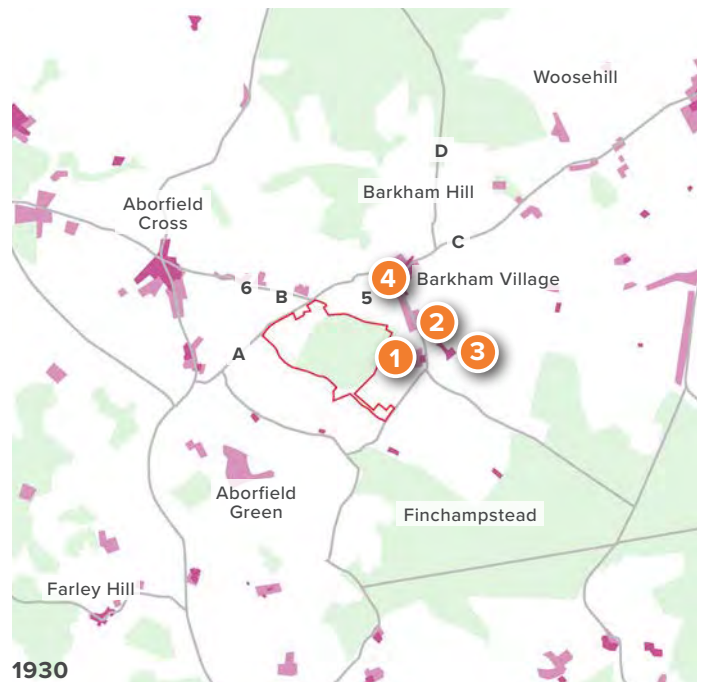
“It is important to understand the history of how the place has evolved. The local sense of place and identity are shaped by local history, culture and heritage, and how these have influenced the built environment and wider landscape.”

National Design Guide (2021)



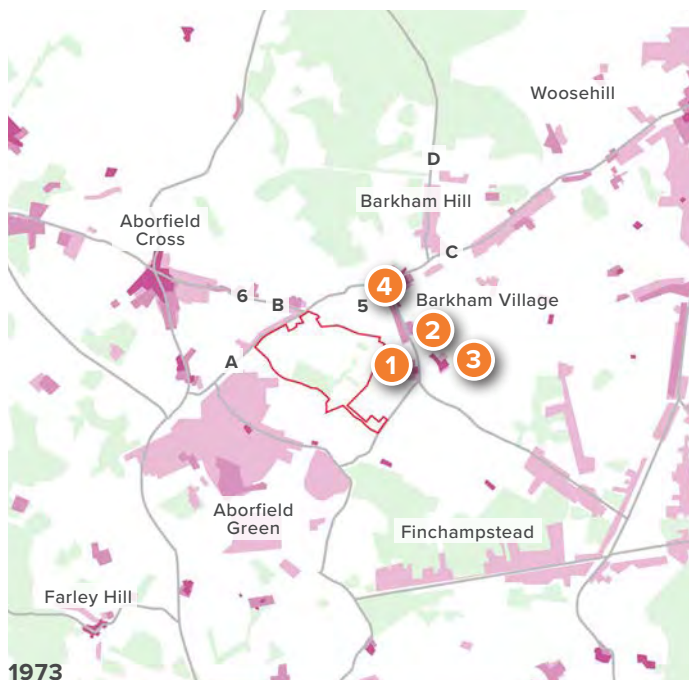
1880

Without the development of a village centre, Barkham evolved as a thinly populated agricultural community characterised by a landscape of scattered farmsteads. Population in 1921 was 211.



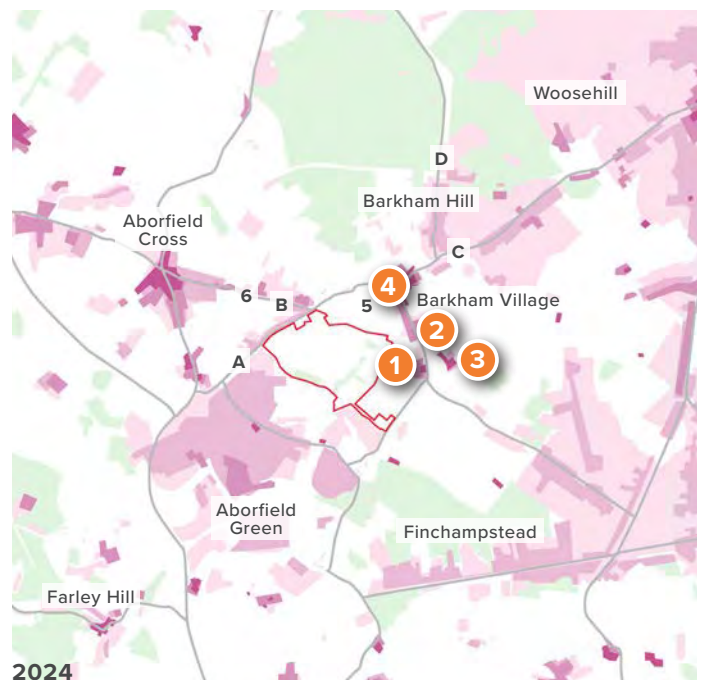
1930

During the next fifty years there was a steady growth in population to 1,858 according to the 1971 census. Housing had grown mainly as ribbon development, particularly along Barkham Road, Bearwood Road, Langley Common Road and School Road.



1973

Continued piecemeal development along Langley Common Road, School Road and Barkham Road has resulted in a variety of housing styles. New development within Barkham Hill, Finchampstead and Arborfield Green have created their own distinct landscape and architectural style.



2024

The census from 2021 shows a population of 4,334. Wokingham Borough Council allocated Arborfield Green as a Strategic Development Location and granted regeneration for a new sustainable village.

- Application Site boundary
- Evolution of settlement
- Woodland

- 1 Barkham Square Grade II listed building
- 2 Church of St James Grade II listed building
- 3 Church Cottages Grade II listed building
- 4 The Bull Grade II listed building
- 5 Sparks Farmhouse Grade II listed building
- 6 Langleypond Farmhouse Grade II listed building

- A Langley Common Road
- B School Road
- C Barkham Road
- D Bearwood Road



2.3 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The parish of Barkham is primarily situated on open farmland that rises gently towards Barkham Hill in the north of the parish. Barkham Brook runs through the area, while the northern ridge is predominantly covered by the extensive woodland known as The Coombes.

National Landscape Character

At a national level the Site is located within **National Character Area (NCA) 129: Thames Basin Heaths**. The NCA stretches westwards from Weybridge in Surrey to the countryside around Newbury in Berkshire. In the west, the settlement pattern is a mix of dispersed hamlets, farmsteads and houses interspersed with villages, many of medieval origin, comprising parkland, Ancient Woodland, and small to medium-sized fields of semi-natural grassland, ancient hedgerows and veteran trees.

District Landscape Character

The landscape classification within the **‘Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2019)’** is represented by fourteen Landscape Character Types (LCT), which are further sub-divided into component local Landscape Character Areas (LCA).

The Site is wholly located within **LCT J: Settled and Farmed Clay** characterised by a shelving and undulating landform underlain by London Clay, with large tracts of post-war settlement, connected by both major and minor roads cutting across the landscape. Areas of large arable fields remain, as well as tributaries draining towards the River Loddon.

The Site is wholly located within **LCA J2: Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay** which is described as “a gently undulating landscape, principally in agricultural use. Large arable fields bound by hedgerows dominate, with smaller fields of sheep pasture and horse paddocks close to settlements”.

The character assessment concludes that **LCA J2: Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay** landscape has a “modest capacity to accommodate change without detriment to character within an overall objective to enhance existing character. The key characteristics to be retained/respected in any change are the historic field system, habitats, moats, rural lanes and wooded valleys. Enhancements should include attempting better integration of the garrison in its landscape setting, and more general improvements to woodland, farmland and habitat management.”

Key recommendations and a summary of the management guidelines for **LCA J2: Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay**, most relevant to guide future development of the Site include:

- *Conserve the scenic quality and naturalistic character of the Barkham Brook,*
- *Conserve woodlands, including Ancient Woodland, BAP priority habitats and remnant standard trees,*
- *Increase the extent of native deciduous woodland, using locally occurring native species, in order to provide screening of roads and development and linking woodland habitats,*
- *Conserve the open and rural qualities of the farmed landscape, which provides a physical and visual separation or gap between settlements. Protect the individual identity of towns and villages and retain their sense of physical and visual separation,*
- *Conserve and manage hedgerows with standard trees as important wildlife habitats and landscape features, as well as the links they provide across the landscape and between areas of woodland,*
- *Conserve and enhance the integration of urban edges through wooded boundaries and large-species trees to provide visual screening and create a positive interface between the built up and rural areas,*
- *Maintain and enhance the character of rural lanes, resisting unsympathetic highway improvements, infrastructure and signage - particularly in the most rural areas.*

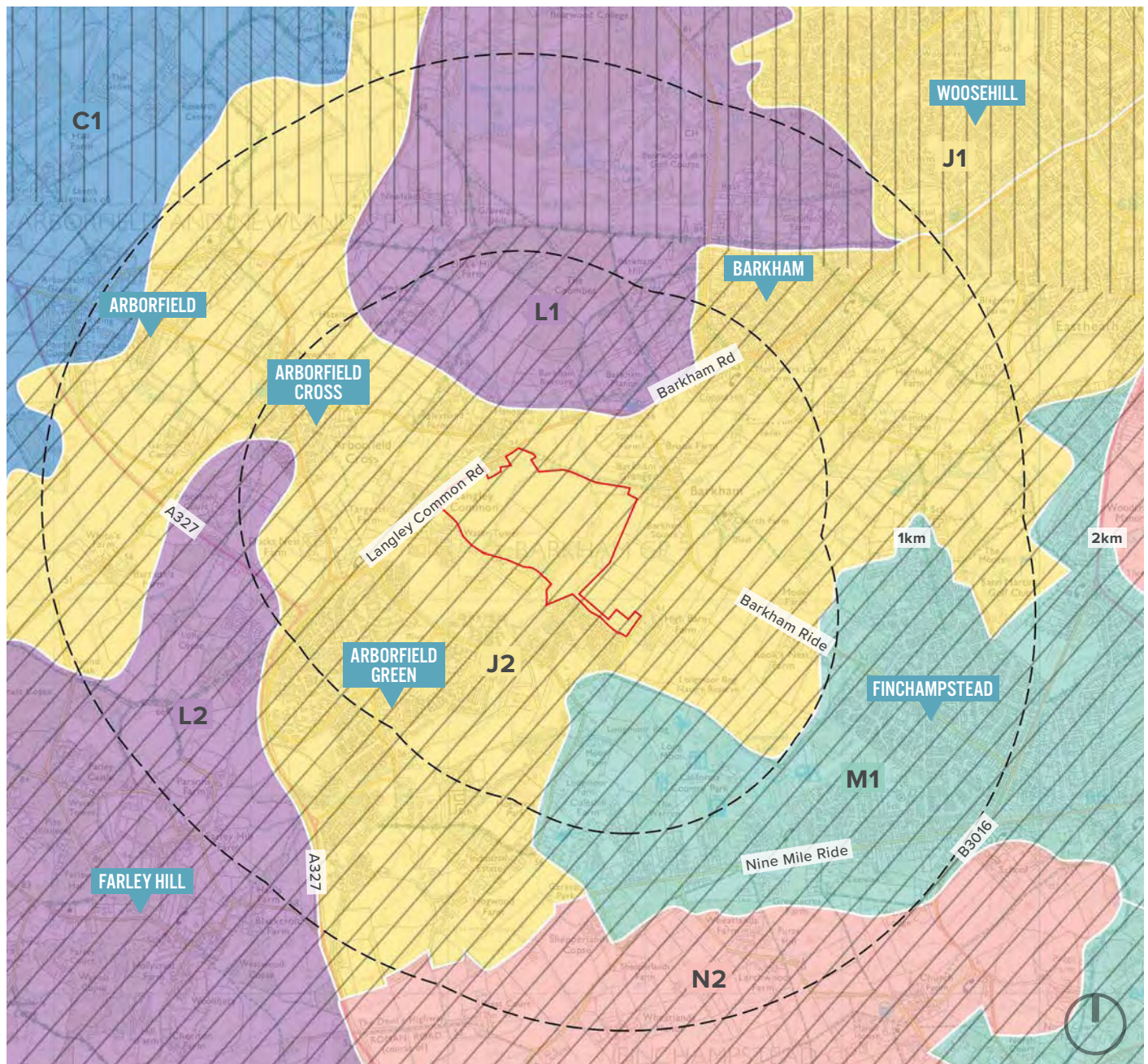
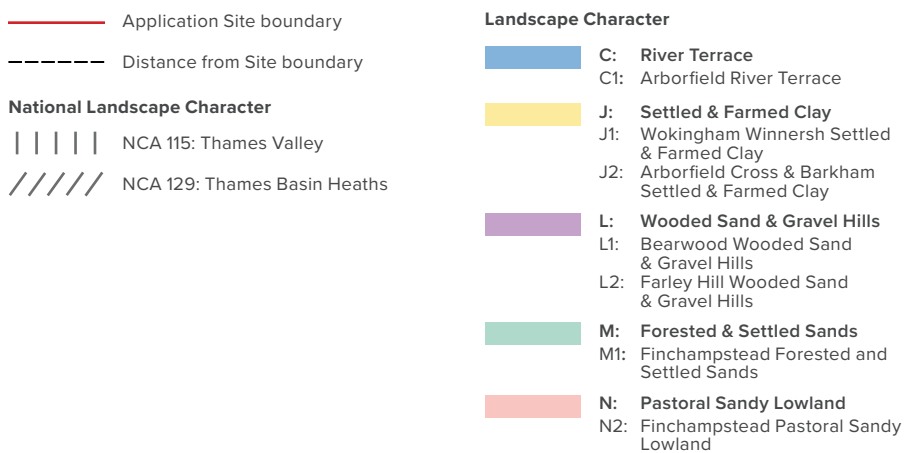


Figure 4. Landscape Character Plan





2.4 WIDER VISUAL CONTEXT

The **‘Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment’** by Bradley Murphy Design states that the majority of views towards the Site are enclosed, beyond anything more than near views, particularly from the north and south - with the exception of middle to long distance views experienced from Edneys Hill in the north east and Arborfield Court in the west, due to the elevated, open, less vegetated nature of the pastoral landscapes in these locations.

The mature wooded nature of the area (provided by characteristic mature hedgerow and in-field trees, combined with woodland belts and Ancient Woodland) and the wooded horizons of the surrounding hills (Barkham Hill and The Coombes), creates a sense of enclosure and limits intervisibility with the Site.

Capacity for Development

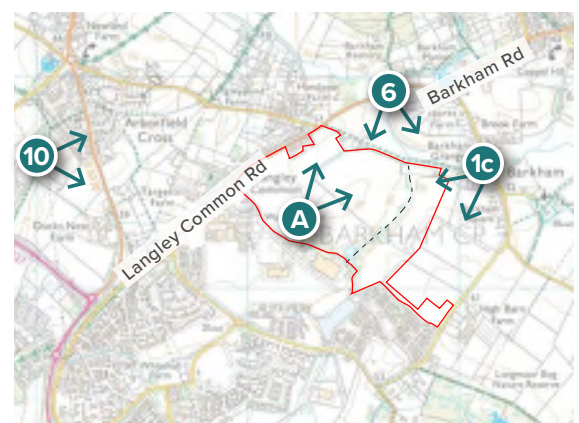
It is considered that the main area of the Site, off Langley Common Road and to the west of Barkham Brook, has the capacity to accommodate future residential development - set within a strong landscape framework - and can be accommodated with very limited impacts to the landscape and views from the surrounding context.

It is considered that targeted Green Infrastructure enhancements may be required to strengthen landscape and visual assimilation – with the opportunity for part of this parcel to be used in the provision of the required SANG, public open space, community growing and recreational facilities.

Reducing Adverse Landscape & Visual Effects

- Development within the main area of the Site should be set back from the northern and western boundaries, to allow for additional landscape buffer planting to strengthen these visually sensitive edges. Retaining, supplementing and strengthening the existing hedgerow and tree planting along these boundaries would reinforce visual enclosure and unity.
- Development within the main area of the Site should transition to a lower density and scale towards the northern and western boundaries, focusing higher density and scale in the centre.
- Strengthen existing buffer planting on Site interface/boundary with properties backing onto the site from Langley Common Rd.

- Tree planting should be proposed in key locations throughout the Site (particularly within the green links, Green Infrastructure destinations and green buffers) to help mitigate views of any proposed built form from the immediate surrounding landscape, elevated long-distance viewpoints from Edneys Hill in the north east and Arborfield Court in the west. Over time, a strong network of new tree canopies across the Site would enhance the existing wooded character of Barkham Brook valley, recreating Kidgem Copse and forming a wooded backdrop to proposed development parcels and assimilating any development into the surrounding valley landscape - reducing the extent to which built form will break the wooded skyline.
- Development proposals must seek to retain, protect and appropriately buffer identified veteran, ancient and high value trees (as recommended by the arboricultural consultant).
- The wooded nature of the Site's field boundaries and existing Ancient Woodland, vegetation along Barkham Brook and mature trees within the Site currently assist in visually assimilating the Site into the landscape. The retention of as much of the high value trees and woodland on the Site as possible (especially TPO and notable trees) would be highly advisable, as they will assist in visual assimilation, reduce visual effects and are very important in terms of biodiversity and landscape character.



Viewpoint locations



Figure 5. Viewpoint A



Figure 6. Viewpoint 1c - Barkham footpath 7

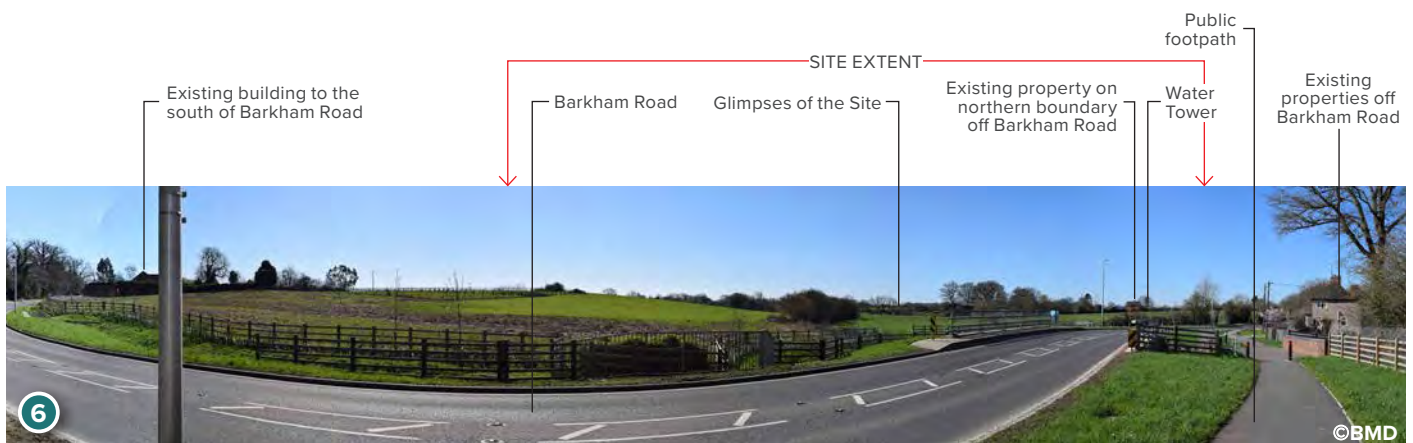


Figure 7. Viewpoint 6 - Barkham Road

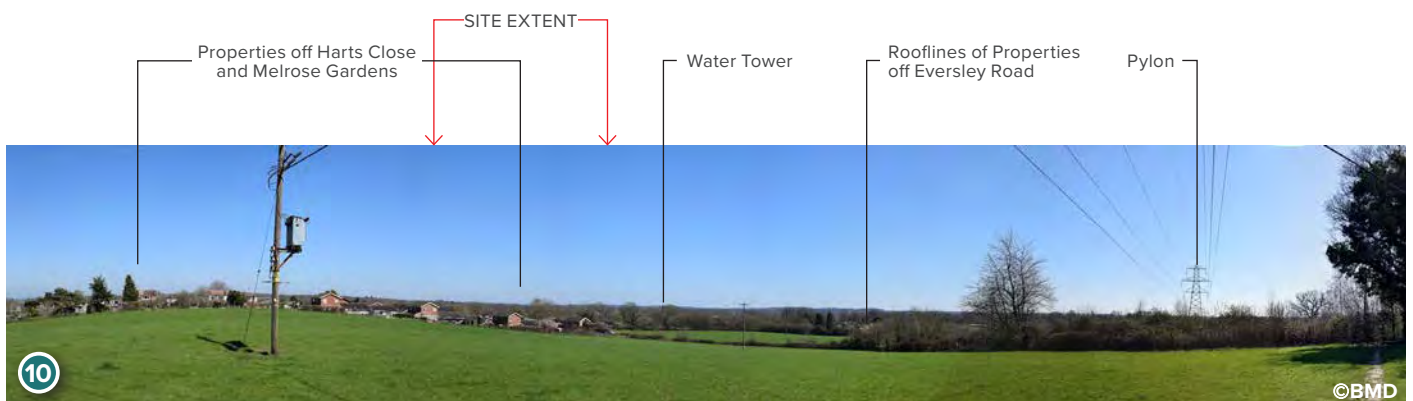


Figure 8. Viewpoint 10 - Arborfield footpath



2.5 LOCAL SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

There is a wide variety of environments in Wokingham, both in the settlements and the countryside, reflected in the **'Wokingham Borough Council Borough Design Guide SPD (2012)'**.

Some areas have a strong, locally distinctive character that is unique to a specific place. Variation in settlement character noted within a 2km radius of the Site include:

Informal suburban, Loose (rural) village, Formal suburban and **Ex-woodland**.

Informal suburban

This settlement character applies to areas within the district that have been built in the last 30 years by volume house builders. They have a homogeneous feel to them and have mainly been designed around culs-de-sac. At Arborfield Green this character can be seen through block structure and varied house typologies that create a diversified street scene. Detached, semi-detached and terraced properties in generally 2-3 storeys mostly feature through the settlement, with some pockets of apartments at an average density of 30-45dph.

Loose (rural) village

A great variety of architectural styles can be seen at Barkham Village. This is a consequence of buildings having been built at different times over the last 500 years and also the variety of materials and finishes used. Rural character can be seen through scattered settlement pattern at a low density with buildings set back from roads and well screened by trees/hedgerows.

Formal suburban

'The Woodlands' at Barkham Hill was built in the late 1980's. In some areas the developers made a genuine effort to introduce a variety of designs. In Hornbeam Close, for example, every house is actually unique in appearance. The **'Barkham Village Design Statement'** highlights, *"Houses in 'The Woodlands' show how developers can achieve a landscaped environment in a modern estate. Also notable is the way the low ridgelines disguise the scale of these sizeable homes."*

Ex-woodland

Historically, areas such as Finchampstead were former forests and woodland that have become populated by detached and semi-detached housing, with significant tree cover being retained. Development is generally well set back, without an apparent building line from the street, helped by landscape dominated street scenes, within front/side boundaries and rear gardens. Buildings generally vary and most are individually designed.



Amber Drive, Arborfield Green -
Informal suburban



Barkham Street, Barkham Village -
Loose (rural) village



The Woodlands, Barkham Hill -
Formal suburban



Manor Park Drive, Finchampstead -
Ex-woodland

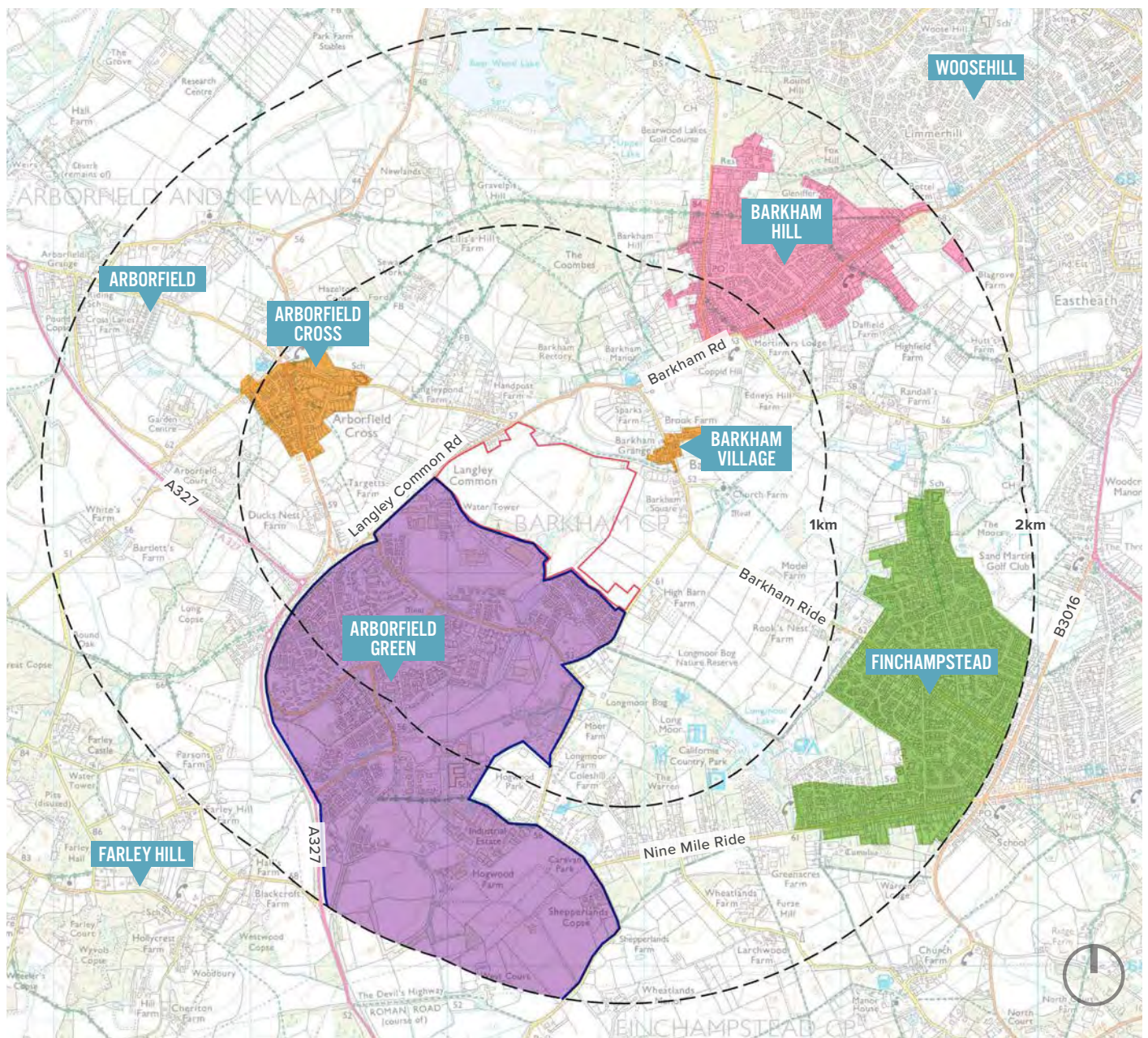


Figure 9. Local Settlement Character Analysis Plan



2.6 LOCAL FEATURES & MATERIALS

The study area for local architectural features and materials has been concentrated to the settlement character areas adjacent to the Site, Arborfield Green and neighbouring properties along Langley Common Road, Barkham Road and Barkham Street, capturing Barkham Village. These areas have a great variety of architectural styles which is a consequence of buildings having been built at different times over the last 500 years and also the variety of materials and finishes used over time.

Building, Roof Types & Architectural Style

Housings are generally detached or semi detached in Barkham Village with some converted barns and traditional cottages, this has allowed to maintain a connection to the rural past.

The roof forms vary however mostly follow a traditional vernacular style with pitched roofs and low roof lines. Houses are dormer style with various types of gables or hip roof. Chimneys are also a common feature adding to traditional character. These traditional building techniques and the local farming history both are influences of a vernacular style of architecture.

Arborfield Green consists of mostly semi-detached properties with some detached and terraced, in general 2-3 storeys mostly feature through the settlement, with some pockets of apartments.

Rooflines across the area mixed and varied depending on the period of the dwelling with no real pattern or cohesion.

Materials & Detailing

The local palette in the Barkham Village area includes red orange brick, painted render, timber cladding being used occasionally in other developments and barn conversions, and roofs are mostly clay tile or slate with pitched forms. Feature materials include render and cladding and brickwork patterns and timber beams feature of historic properties such as Sparks Farm and Church Cottages.

At Arborfield Green, brick is the dominant feature across the area, particularly multicoloured red bricks. There is mostly an emphasis on simple building features across the existing and emerging developments regardless of the modern or traditional architectural tones.

Boundaries & Landscape Integration

Barkham Village boundaries mostly consist of native hedgerows, post-and-rail fencing and low brick walls, with planting preserving the semi-rural character and provide visual screening.

Arborfield Green boundaries include a range of hard and soft boundary treatments across the area. A mix of grassed front lawns, planting, walls and fencing are evident.

Settlement Pattern & Grain

The rural character of Barkham Village consists of scattered settlements, with low density housing where the buildings are set back from roads and have screening such as green verges, hedgerows and informal boundaries. This has many environmental benefits where exposure to noise, vibration and pollution along a busy road is reduced and facilities off-road parking along with additional space for vegetation and landscaping.

Arborfield Green has a higher housing density with less variety in design. It is a notable area for its own distinctive architectural style.



Church Cottages, Barkham Village



Sparks Farm, Barkham Village



Brook House, Barkham Village



Barkham Street, Barkham Village



Lime Grove, Arborfield Green



Sherman Avenue, Arborfield Green



Archer Grove, Arborfield Green



Ambler Drive, Arborfield Green



Archer Grove, Arborfield Green



2.7 LOCAL AMENITIES & FACILITIES

The Proposed Development Site is sustainably located within an accessible walking distance of 15 minutes from the Arborfield Green community hub.

Community

A village hall, place of worship and public house (within Barkham Village) can be accessed within a 20 minute walk from the Site. Arborfield Green is the closest settlement centre, consisting of a place of worship, community centre with associated classes and public house.

Health

There is a leisure centre currently located within Arborfield Green, accessible by a 20 minute walk from the Site. Other medical facilities such as a pharmacy, doctors surgery and dentist surgery are situated in Finchampstead, at a comfortable cycle distance.

Education

The nearest primary school is Farley Hill, located in Arborfield Green, within a 5 minute walk from the Site. The Bohunt School is a secondary school and sixth form, also located within Arborfield Green and a 22 minute walk from the Site.

Retail

There is a convenience store located within a 10 minute walk from the Site, with two others available within a 20 minute walk. The nearest supermarket is Sainsbury's in Arborfield Green, approximately 7 minutes drive from the Site.

Recreation

In addition to facilities that will be provided through the Proposed Development, there are a wide range of recreational areas accessible within a 24 minute walk or 15 minute cycle from the Proposed Development Site. These include playing fields at Arborfield Green with a sports pavilion (within a 10 minute walk), Hazebrouck Meadows SANG at Arborfield Green (within a 12 minute walk), two country parks including Rook's Nest Wood, off Barkham Ride, and California Country Park, accessible from Commonfield Lane.

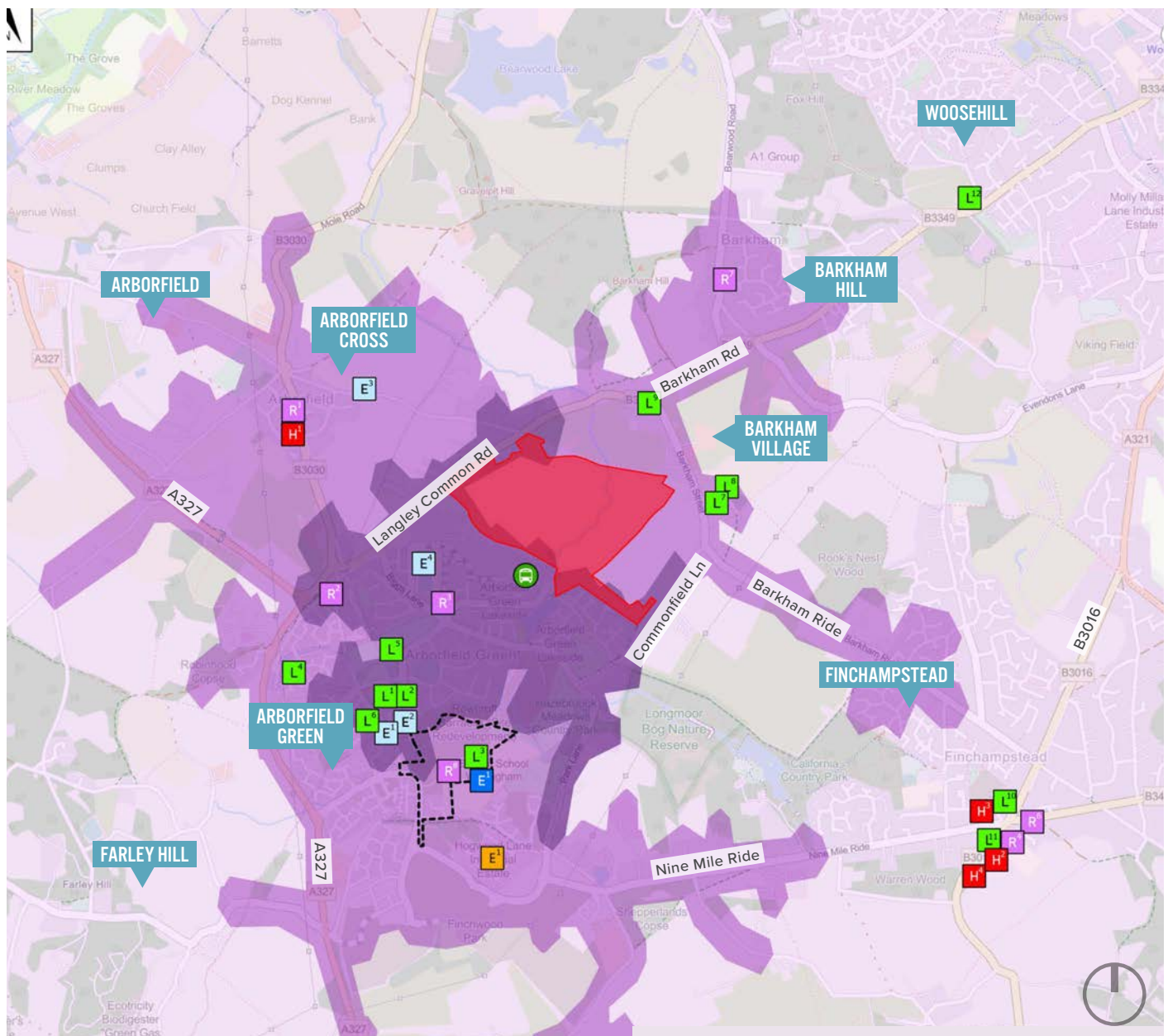
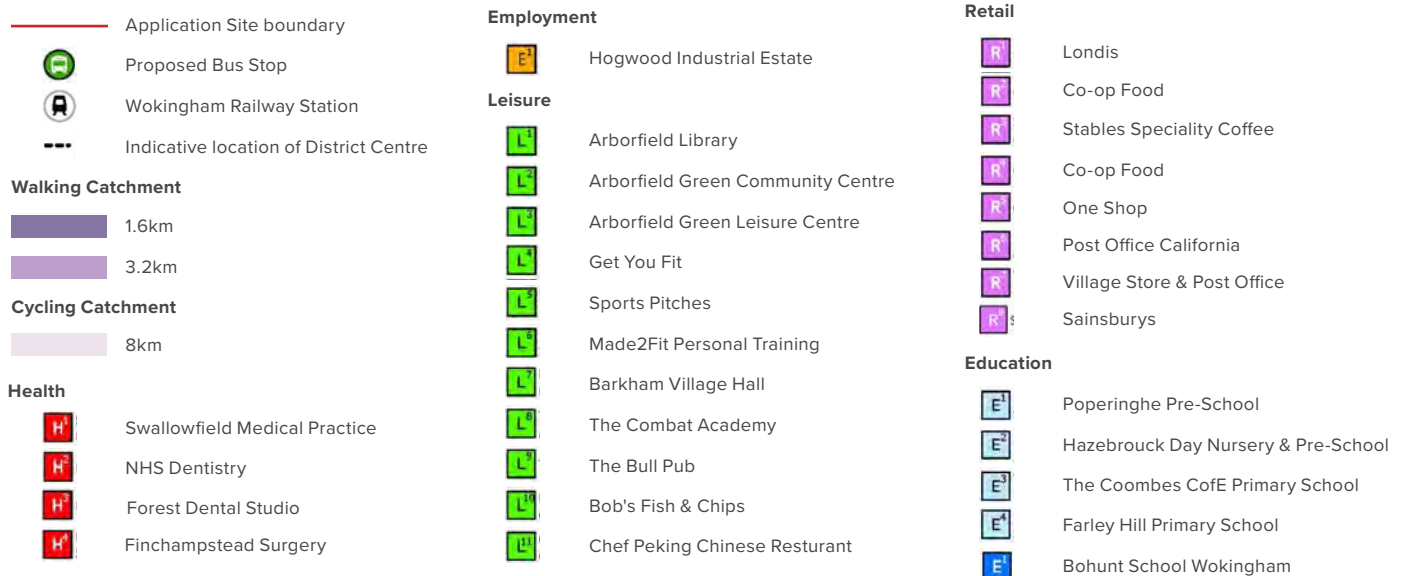


Figure 10. Local Amenities & Facilities Plan





2.8 SUSTAINABLE CONNECTIVITY

The Proposed Development Site is located immediately east of Langley Common Road, connecting to a network of local 30mph speed limited residential roads servicing Barkham & Arborfield Green. The proposed vehicular access will be from Langley Common Road. For more information on our proposed sustainable connections refer to **Section 8.1**

Public Rights of Way (PROWs) & Pedestrian/Cycle Routes

There is a network of PROW routes to the north, west and east of the Site. BARK7 is a footpath which runs along the northern boundary of the Site, connecting Langley Common Road to Barkham Street. The **‘Wokingham Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2020)’** also features some proposed routes nearby including one from roughly the middle of BARK7 routing north to link to Barkham Road and one along Barkham Street. The plan also includes proposals to change the BARK7 footpath to a bridleway, allowing equestrian and cycle use.

These routes offer walking and cycling connections to the wider area, including Wokingham to the north east, Finchampstead to the south and towards Shinfield to the north west. These destinations are all within reasonable cycling distance and offer access to a variety of additional facilities and services.

Bus Routes

Currently, the Leopard 3 service to Wokingham runs every 20 minutes and routes through Arborfield Green with stops on Biggs Lane. It then routes south along Princess Marina Drive before joining the Nine Mile Ride Extension (NMRE) and connecting with Nine Mile Ride to continue its journey east via Finchampstead before reaching Wokingham. Return journeys follow the same route in reverse. A new service to Bracknell will undertake the same route as above through Arborfield Green.

As part of the Arborfield Green development, new bus stops will be located 0.5km from the southern boundary of the Site, ensuring future residents of Barkham Square will be able to benefit from a new and improved bus service.

Train Services

The nearest train station is Wokingham, circa 4km north east of the Site. The station can be accessed by cycling or the Leopard 3 bus service which will offer two buses per hour once fully operational. The rail services available from Wokingham provide direct connections to Reading (10 minutes) and an onwards connection to London Paddington via the Victoria Line (30 minutes).

In Summary, the Site benefits from good connections to the public transport network, as well as pedestrian and cycling networks. This will offer both current and future residents a choice of sustainable modes of travel to reach both local destinations and destinations further afield for commuting journeys.

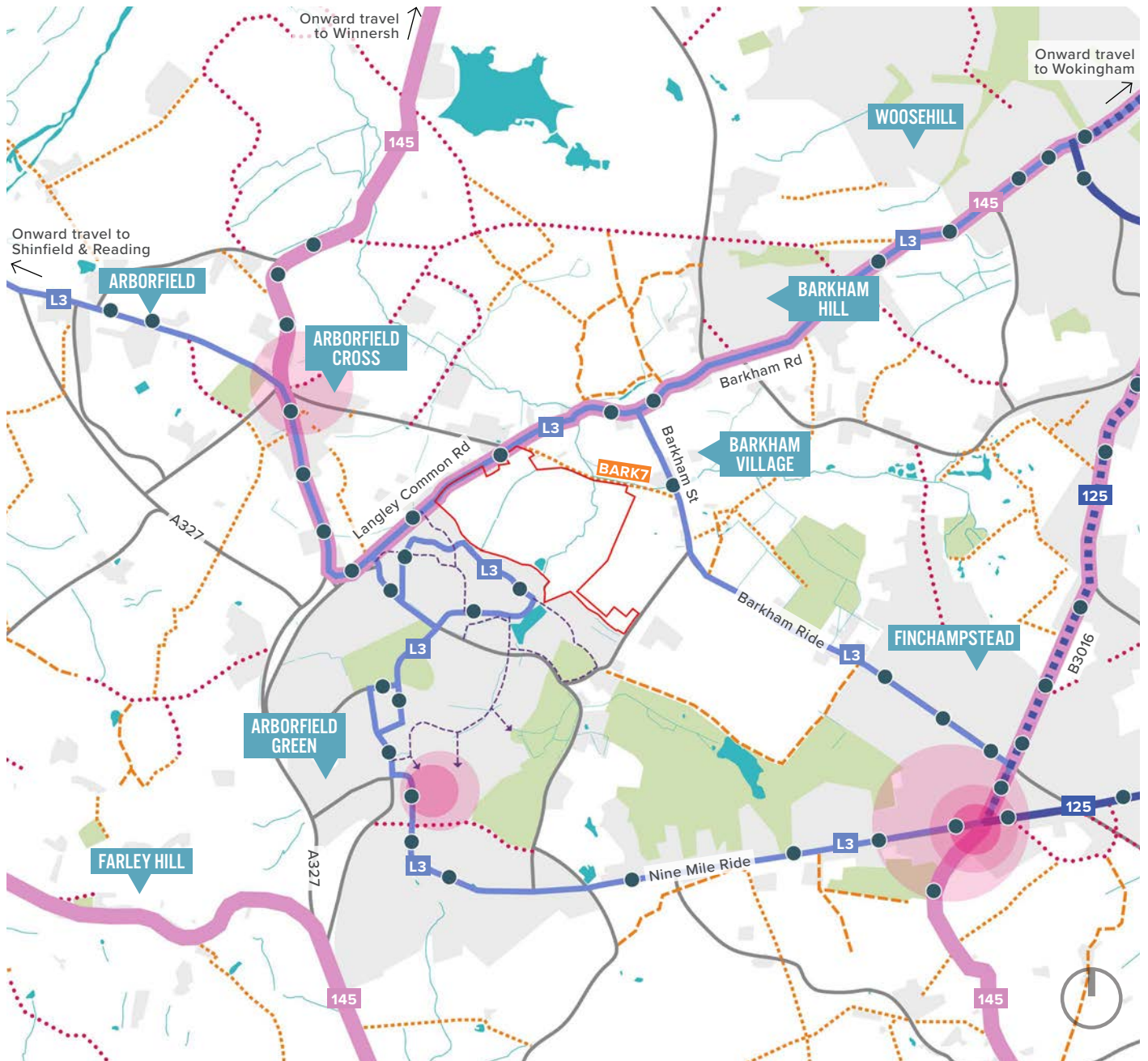
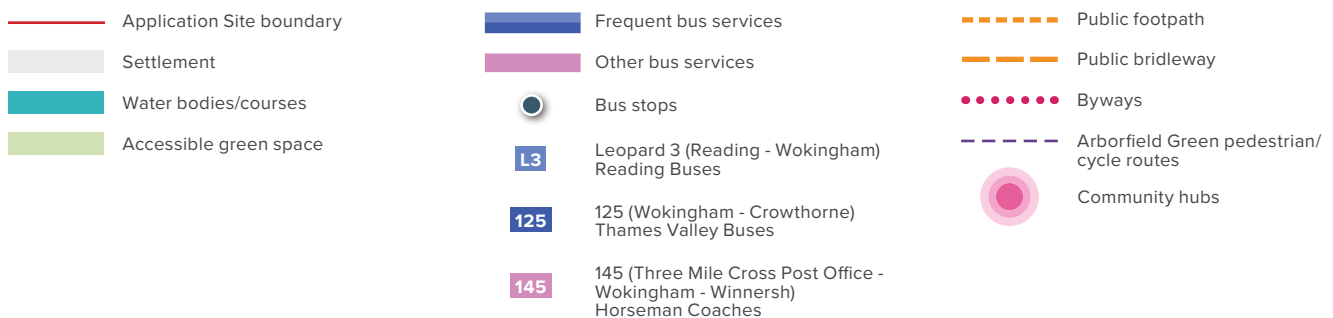


Figure 11. Sustainable Connectivity Plan





2.9 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE CONTEXT

The landscape surrounding the Site is wooded in character, with historical settlements of Arborfield and Barkham located in (what was once) a part of the Windsor Great Park forest. Remnants of this historic landscape can be found within the Site and its surrounding context through historic farmland, Ancient Woodland and hedgerows.

Barkham Brook begins at Longmoor Lake within Calforina Country Park, flows south to north through the proposed development Site and passes under Barkham Road where it eventually joins the River Loddon.

Several traditional orchard sites are designated adjacent to the proposed development Site. Traditional orchards are a UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat, are hotspots for biodiversity and thus are managed in a low intensity way.

Other local designated sites include The Coombes Ancient Woodland and Local Wildlife Site (LWS), Rook's Nest Wood Country Park and LWS, Longmoor Bog Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and California Country Park LWS. All of these sites provide many ecological and recreational benefits to the neighbourhood.

The NPPF defines Green Infrastructure as “a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local communities and prosperity.”

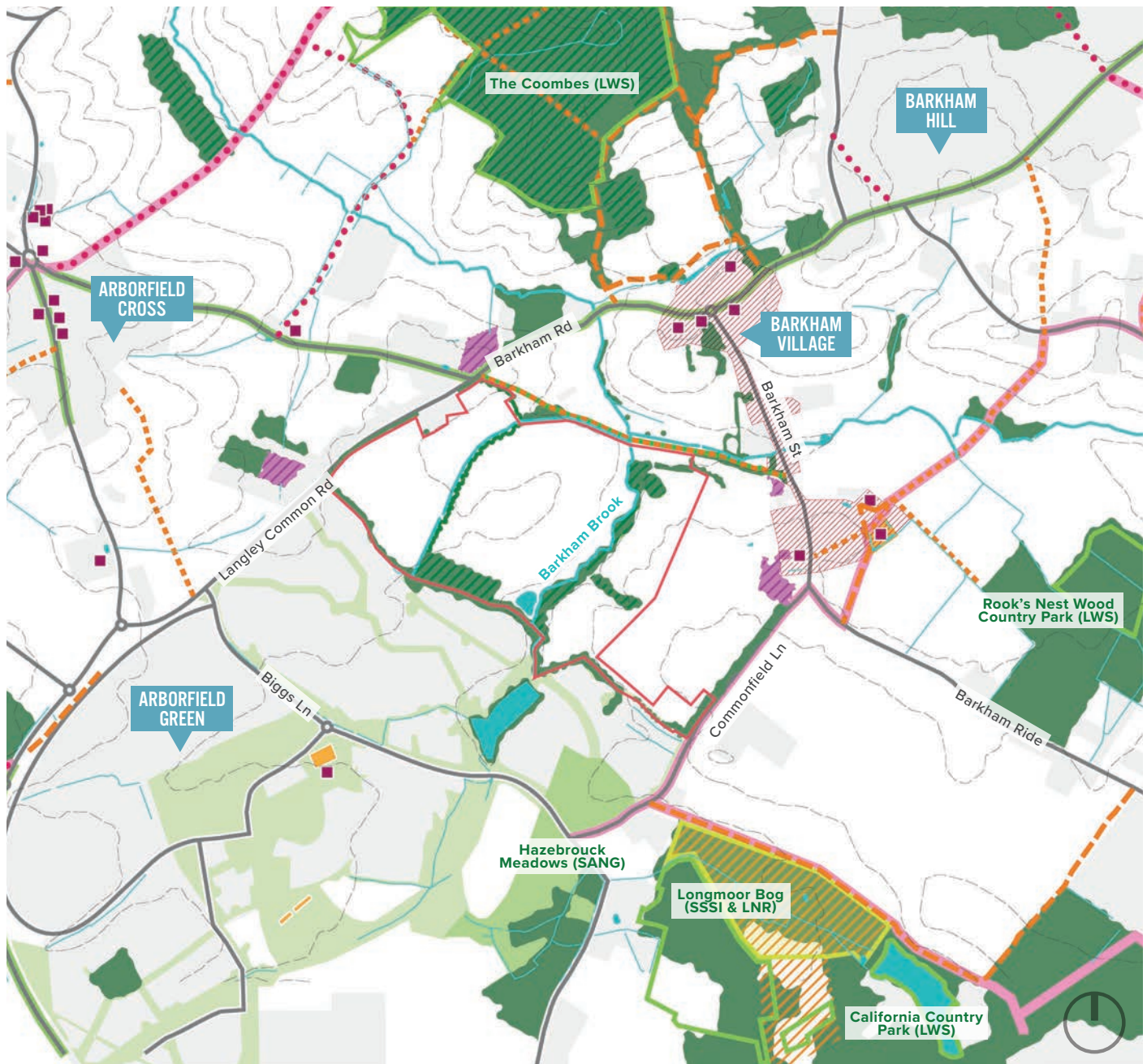
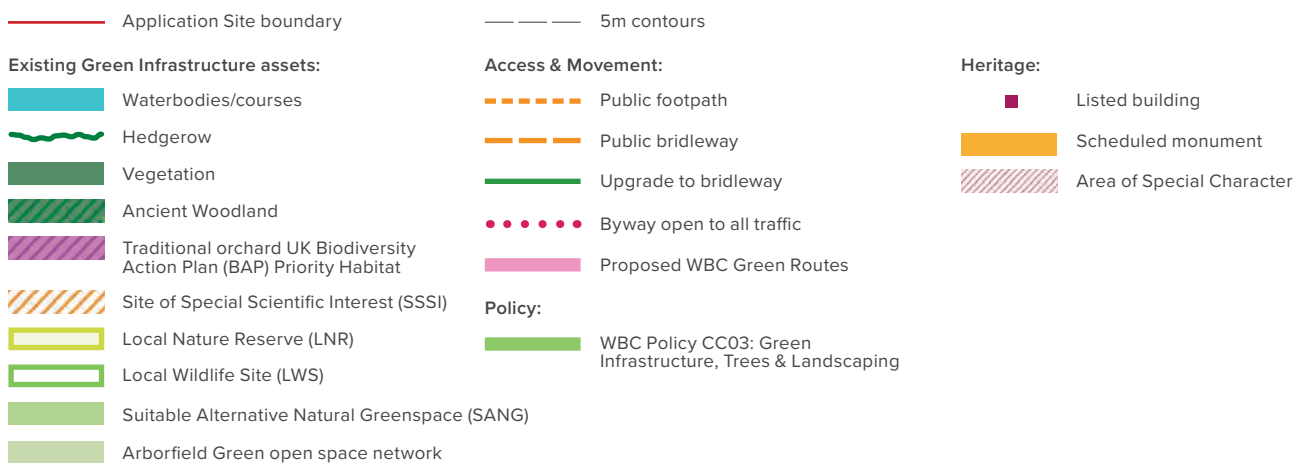


Figure 12. Green Infrastructure Context Plan



Source:
Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document January 2010 (WDPD)



2.10 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE INFLUENCES

The Green infrastructure influences of the surrounding context can provide a strong basis for the future Green Infrastructure framework of the Proposed Development.

THE COOMBES WOODED HILLS

- Strengthen and enhance the wooded character of the landscape and its biodiversity,
- Buffer and protect Coombes Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and Ancient Woodland, providing suitable alternative greenspace on Site to reduce recreational pressures,
- Manage the integration of new woodland and tree planting, so that the leafy appearance of Barkham is conserved and enhanced, using locally native broadleaf species.

BARKHAM BROOK

- Conserve, enhance and manage the Barkham Brook corridor and associated wetland and woodland habitats which provide important ecological networks,
- Conserve the scenic quality and naturalistic character of the Barkham Brook.

ARBORFIELD LINEAR PARK

- Promote the integration of the adjoining public open space and green grid network at Arborfield Green,
- Seek the opportunity to extend the linear park, north through the Site, featuring a series of nodal points/activity along its length.

FINCHAMPSTEAD FOREST

- Conserve and enhance the wooded character of the landscape, including Ancient Woodland, BAP priority habitat, hedgerows and trees,
- Increase the extent of native deciduous woodland, particularly on elevated plateaus and ridgelines to create wooded skylines,
- Enhance informal recreational enjoyment of the landscape - but balance with the conservation of valuable landscapes.

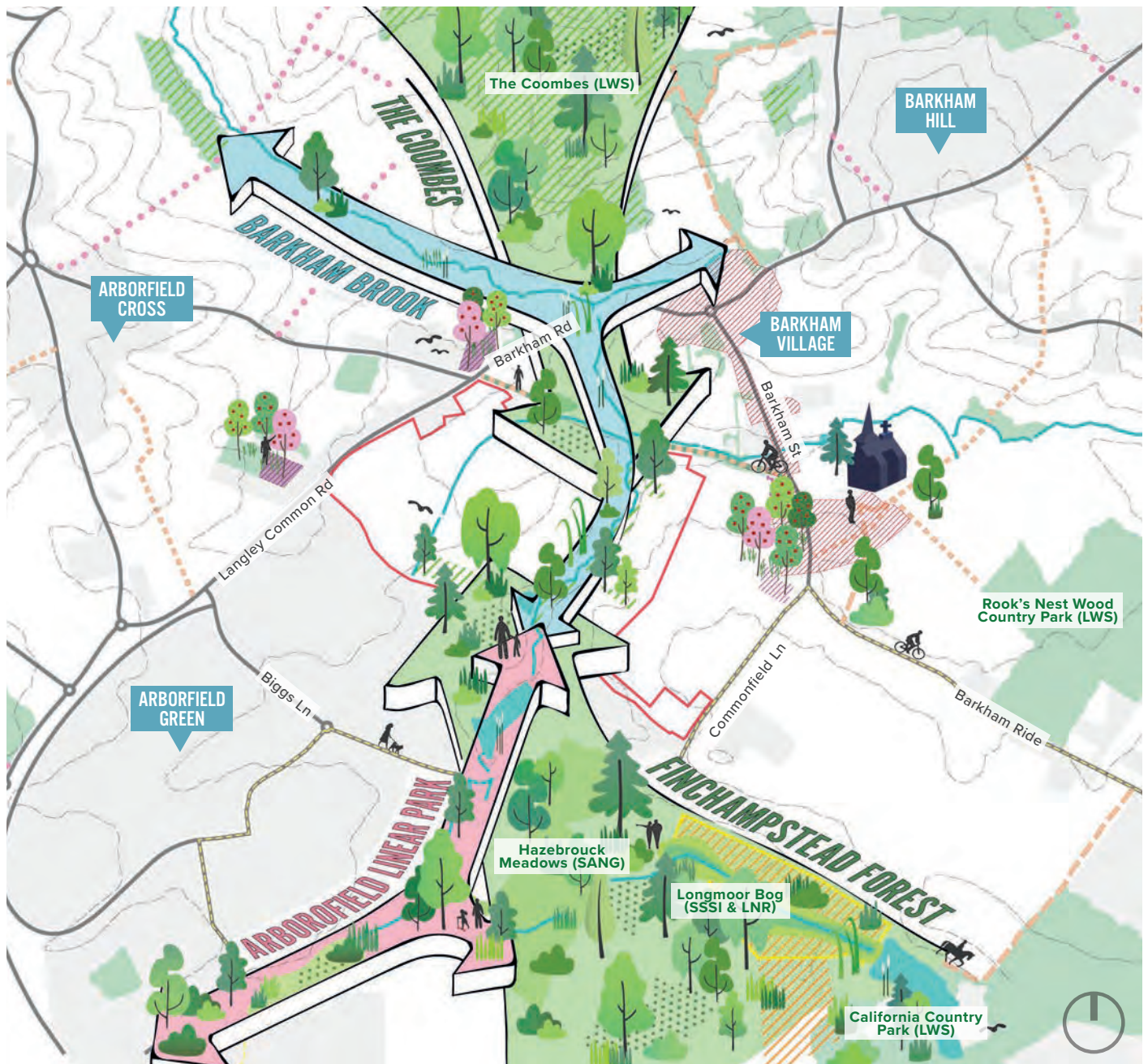


Figure 13. Green Infrastructure Influences Plan



3

The Site

- 3.1 Site Photos & Description**
- 3.2 Ecology & Arboriculture**
- 3.3 Topography & Water**
- 3.4 Heritage & Archaeology**
- 3.5 Access & Movement**
- 3.6 Local Visual Context**
- 3.7 Site Constraints**
- 3.8 Site Opportunities**



3. THE SITE

3.1 SITE PHOTOS & DESCRIPTION



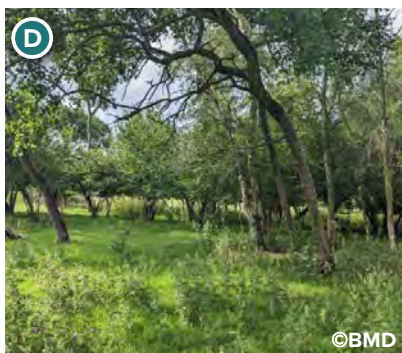
View from Arborfield Green



View from Arborfield Green



Mature oak in enclosed field



Ancient Woodland



Willow creates strong feature along woodland edge



Ancient Woodland



Looking north over pond



Hedgerow with trees



Grassland along northern site boundary



Figure 14. Site Photo Location Plan

— Application Site boundary



3.2 ECOLOGY & ARBORICULTURE

- The majority of the Site comprises species-poor grasslands of very limited ecological value.
- The Ancient Woodland along Barkham Brook is degraded with ground flora restricted to patchy coarse grasses due to intensive sheep grazing and associated parching. Although the hazel coppice is, individually, of high quality, the canopy cover is sparse and comprises a range of willows with no native oak or beech etc. present.
- **Conserve and enhance valuable landscape attributes, to inform the Site's framework:**
 - The Site features Ancient Woodland (an irreplaceable habitat) as well as hedgerow, deciduous woodland and ponds, all of which are priority habitats.
 - There are no ancient or veteran trees on the Site but notable and mature specimens will be retained and protected.
 - Policy IRS3 of the Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan states that development proposals should conserve and where possible enhance locally valued natural assets.
- **Character Area J2: Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay** identifies the following as valuable landscape attributes to be conserved and enhanced, which feature on Site:
 - Barkham Brook and associated wetland.
 - The field pattern including the mature hedgerow trees, in-field trees, wetland and woodland habitats, rural lanes and historic features.
 - Views across the landscape to surrounding areas.
- **The masterplan will integrate new development into its landscape setting and retain and enhance the features of ecological value such as, Barkham Brook, the hedgerow network and the existing Ancient Woodland.**



Ancient Woodland Barkham Brook



Willow creates strong feature along woodland edge



Grassland along northern site boundary

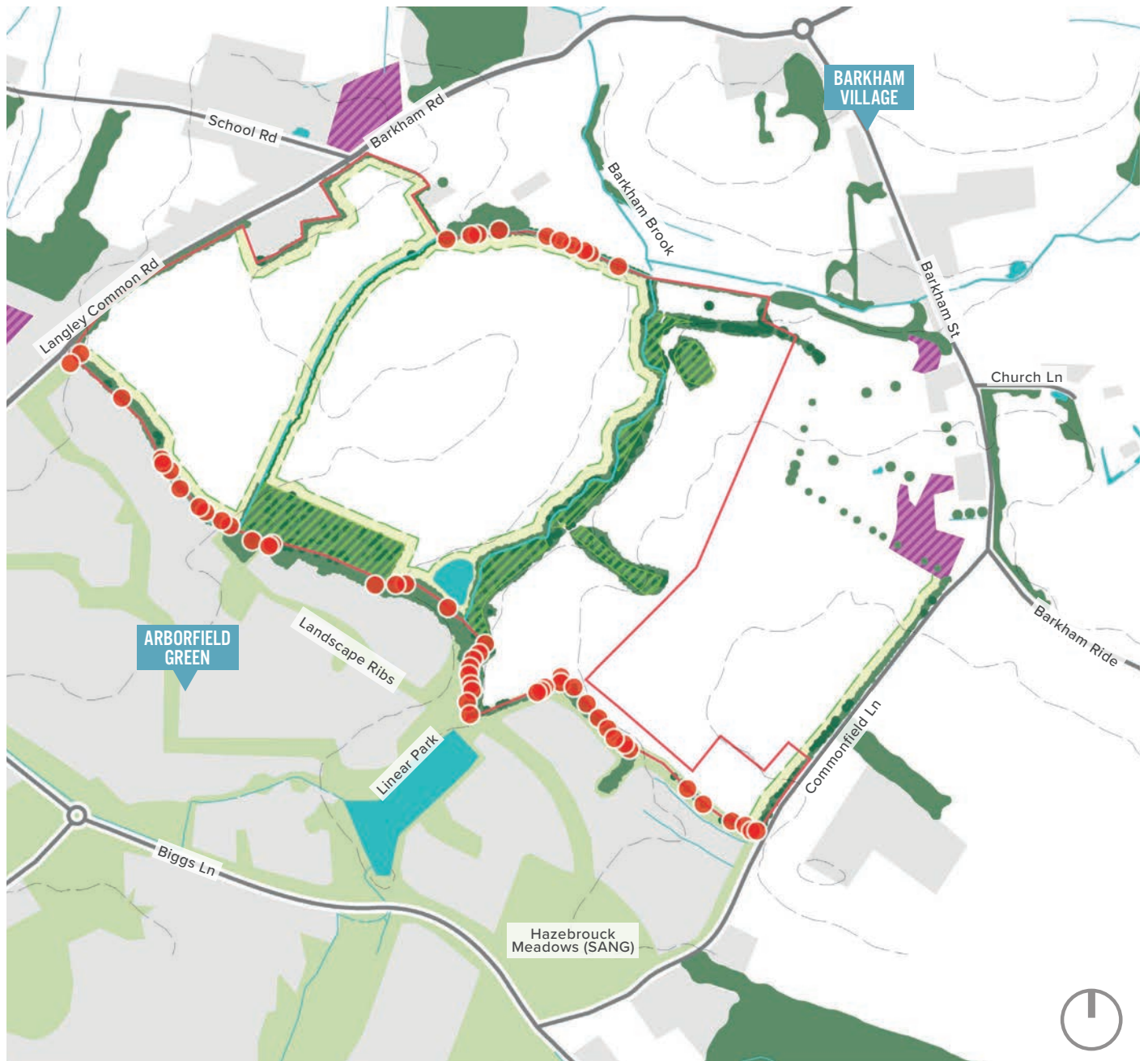
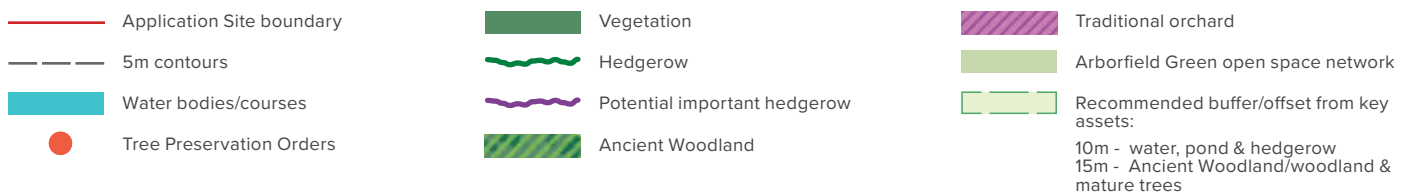


Figure 15. Ecology & Arboriculture Plan



Source:

¹ Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2036

² Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2019)



3.3 TOPOGRAPHY & WATER

- Barkham lies in the River Loddon valley. The River Loddon is a tributary of the River Thames. Low gravel hills in the north descend to level clay land in the south drained by the Barkham Brook.
- The Site sits at between +50-60m AOD and features a gently undulating landscape.
- Within the Site, a shallow wooded valley follows the course of the Barkham Brook.
- The Site features Barkham Brook, ditches and open water bodies.
- **Future development proposals for the Site will respond to localised variations in topography, alongside the visual context analysed in Section 3.6 and as part of the 'Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (LVIA), and will ensure development will not increase flood risk offsite.**



Looking south west towards Area A1 plateau



Looking north in Area A2 over pond



Looking south in Area B towards localised ridgeline



Figure 16. Topography & Water Plan

- Application Site boundary
- 5m contours
- Direction of slope
- Localised ridgeline
- Localised plateau
- Flood zone 2
- Flood zone 3
- Water bodies/courses



3.4 HERITAGE & ARCHAEOLOGY

An 'Archaeological Desk Based Assessment and Geophysical Survey' has been carried out by RPS, to assess the Site's archaeological potential. It is anticipated that archaeological features typical of the landscape and of local significance will be present. A high potential is identified for evidence of prehistoric burnt mounds of low significance, a moderate potential is identified for the remains of Bronze Age occupation/ activity of low/medium significance and a moderate potential is identified for Iron Age and Roman field ditches and enclosures of low significance. A potential is also identified for Medieval and Post-Medieval field boundaries of low/negligible significance.

- **No archaeological issues that would preclude the suitability of the Site for residential development have been identified.**
- 1892 - 1908 OS mapping highlights the Site once featured '**Kidgem Copse**' - which, over time, has been largely cleared with remnants remaining which now form the Ancient Woodland along Barkham Brook & the Site's southern boundary.
- Barkham Street '**Area of Special Character**' stretches from the original medieval centre of Barkham, marked by the church, a moated manor building that is still occupied and the village pond. It then extends along Barkham Street passing Barkham Square, The Bull pub and Sparkes Farm (all of which are listed) towards Barkham Manor.
- Barkham Square Listed Building (Grade II) and associated parkland setting are located adjacent to the Site in the north east.
- **Local Plan Policy TB26:** *"Planning permission will only be granted for proposals to or affecting Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character where they demonstrate that they retain and enhance the traditional, historical, local and special character of the building or area and its setting."*
- **The masterplan will aim to integrate new development sensitively into its setting, avoiding disturbance on the nearby listed buildings and 'Area of Special Character' associated with Barkham Village.**



Barkham Square (Grade II)



Sparks Farmhouse (Grade II)



Church of St James (Grade II)

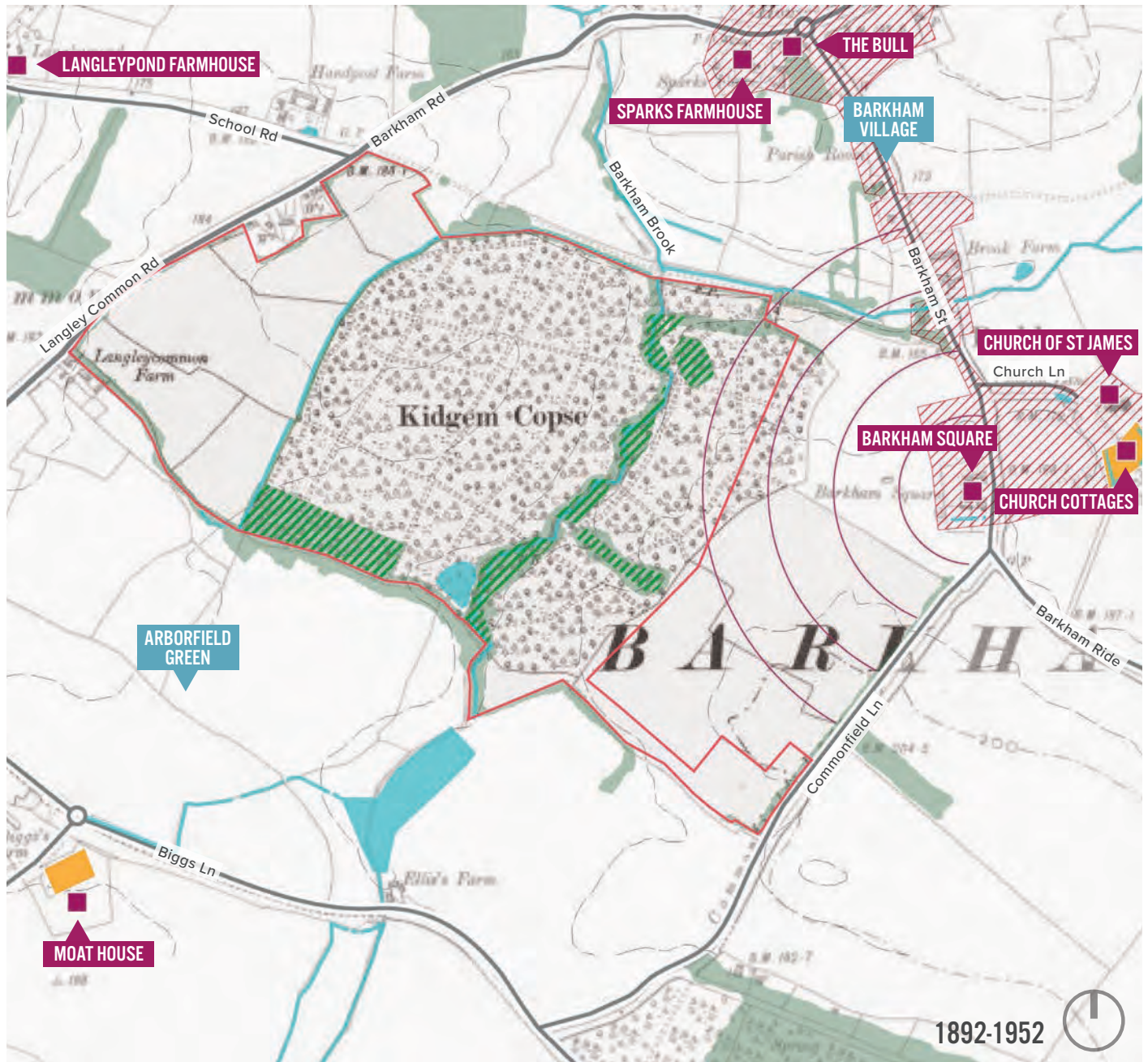
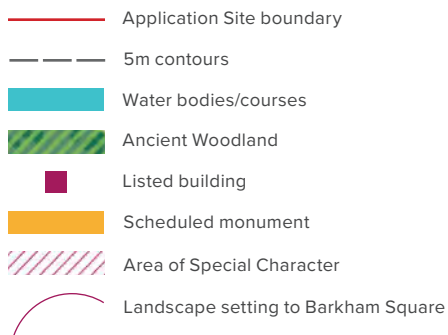


Figure 17. Heritage & Archaeology Plan





3.5 ACCESS & MOVEMENT

- Barkham's country lanes are well used for leisure purposes - including Commonfield Lane, School Road and Church Lane.
- The footpath adjacent to northern Site boundary is currently proposed to be upgraded to a public bridleway - which would provide off road access to horse riders and cyclists.
- Commonfield Lane and Barkham Ride are both part of **'The Round Berkshire Cycle Route'** - a road based cycling route that broadly traces the perimeter of the county for around 140 miles.
- There is a well used extensive PRow network in and around the Site - used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders - providing onward connections to key Green Infrastructure destinations.
- The existing vehicular accesses to the Site are designed to serve the existing agricultural use, and are not adequate to serve the proposed development.
- Detail on the proposed access strategy is set out within **Section 8**. The main vehicular access point will be from Langley Common Road with a secondary access proposed from Commonfield Lane to provide access to the allotments and SANG car park.
- The access strategy has been designed to connect with the existing network surrounding the Site, including Commonfield Lane and Langley Common Road, and in addition a connection up to the boundary adjacent to Arborfield Green.



Looking south along Commonfield Lane



Pedestrian route along Barkham Road



Looking east along BARK FP 7 from Barkham Road

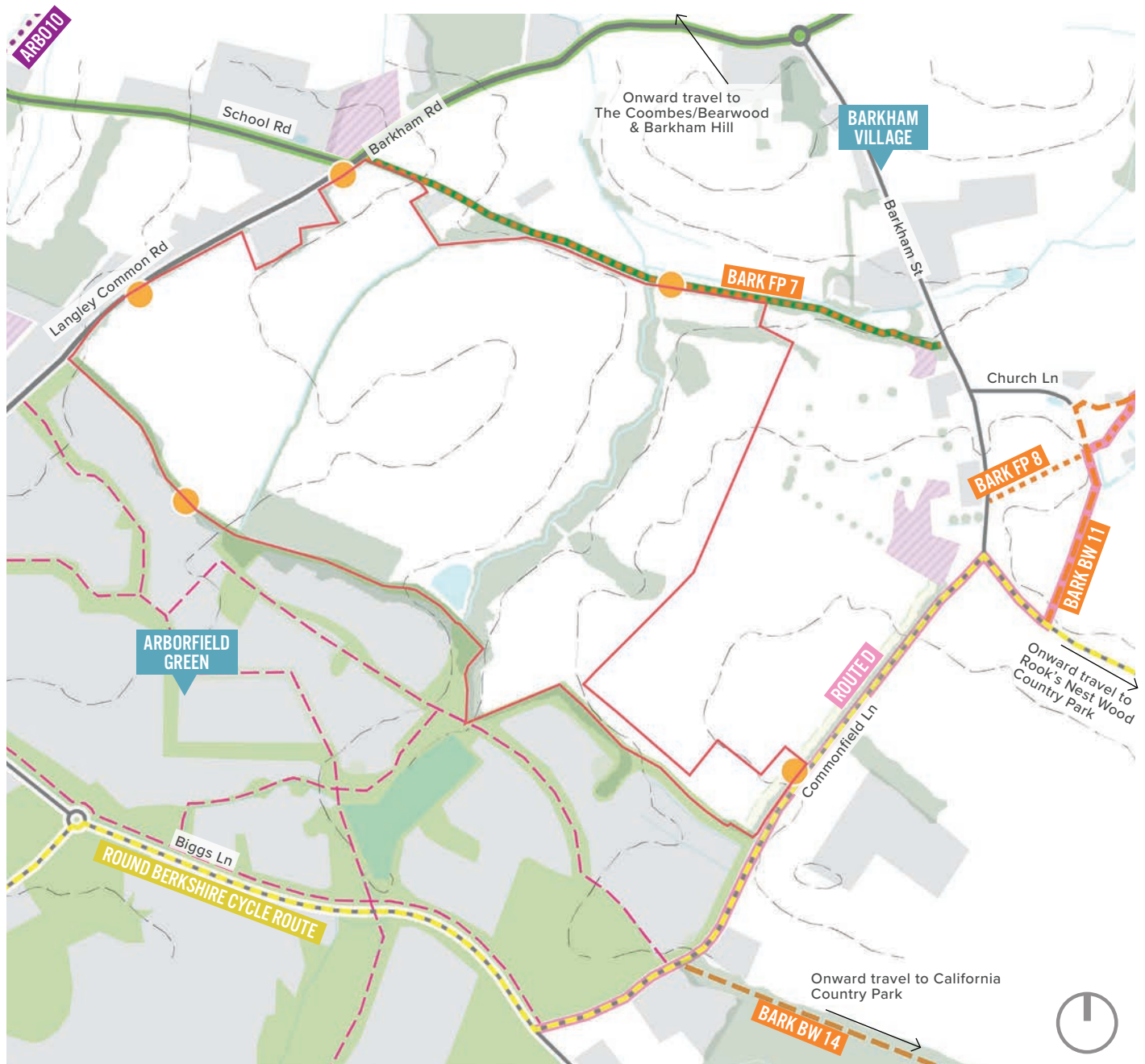


Figure 18. Access & Movement Plan

- Application Site boundary
- 5m contours
- - - Public footpath
- - - Public bridleway
- • • Byway open to all traffic
- - - Round Berkshire cycle route
- - - Arborfield Green ped & cycle routes
- Proposal to upgrade footpath to bridleway
- Proposed WBC Green Routes
- WBC Policy CC03: Green Infrastructure, Trees & Landscaping
- Potential connection up to the boundary



3.6 LOCAL VISUAL CONTEXT

A 'Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)'

has been carried out by Bradley Murphy Design to identify the significance of any visual impacts as a result of the Proposed Development. The current visibility of the Site is summarised below.

- **The Site is visually well contained by existing tree, woodland and hedgerow boundaries, with limited intervisibility with the wider landscape.**
- There are direct to filtered views of Area A1 from residential receptors, whose properties directly back onto the Site on Langley Common Road.
- There are direct views of Area A1 from residential receptors whose property is adjacent to the northern boundary.
- There are glimpsed/filtered, near to middle distance views, towards the northern part of Area A2, from a handful of residential receptors located within Barkham's Area of Special Interest (northern part).
- There are direct to filtered views of Area B from residential receptors, whose properties front or side onto the Site on Archer Grove, Fox Close and Sherman Avenue within Arborfield Green.
- Boundary with Barkham Square (Grade II) and grounds is visually open with Area B.
- A small part of the Site falls within the published **Wokingham Borough Council – Valued Landscape Assessment (September 2024)**, informing the emerging **Policy NE6 Valued Landscapes**.



Existing property on northern boundary off Barkham Rd



Filtered views of existing properties from Barkham Rd, Barkham St and The Bull



Visually sensitive edge to Barkham Square

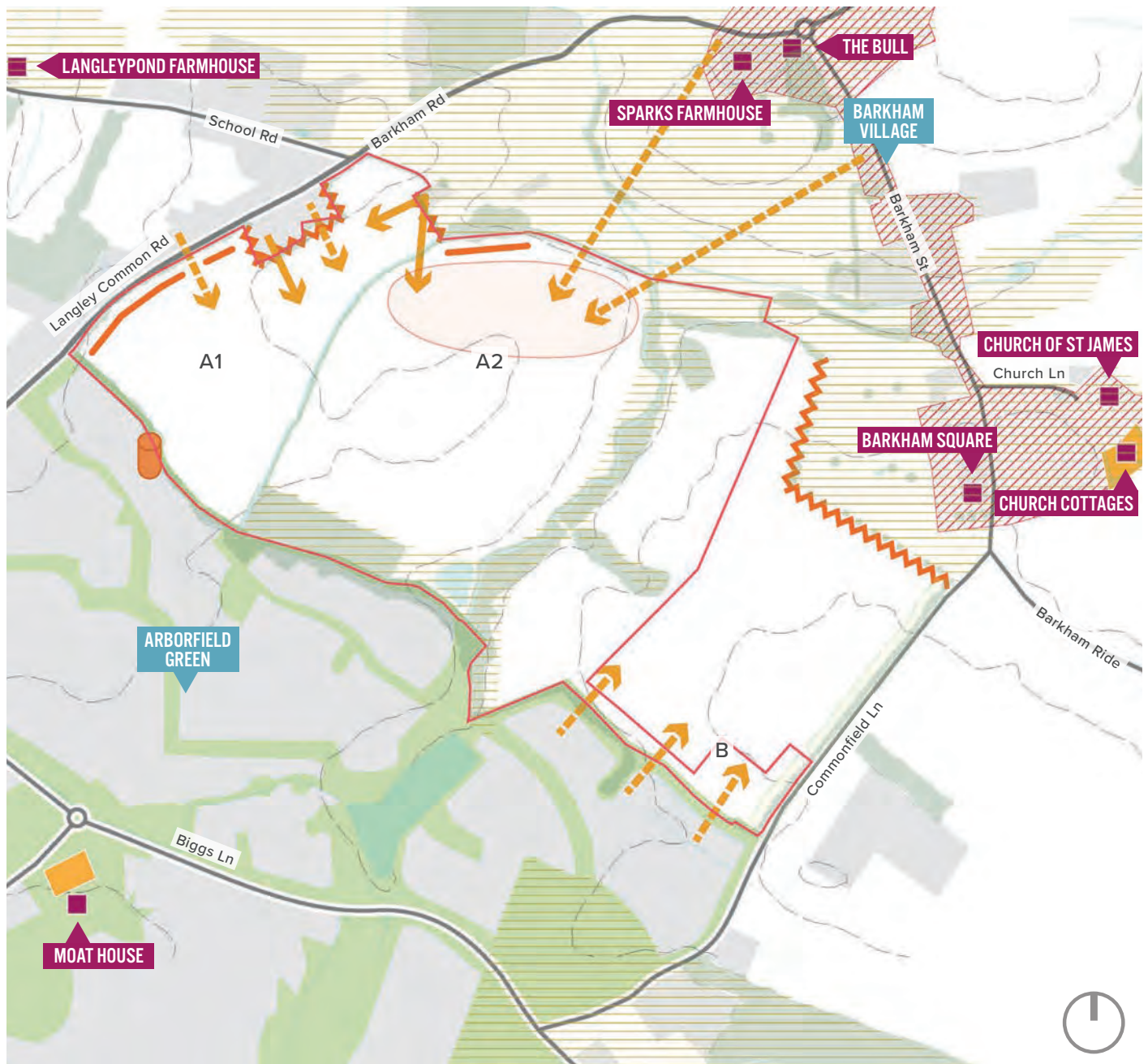
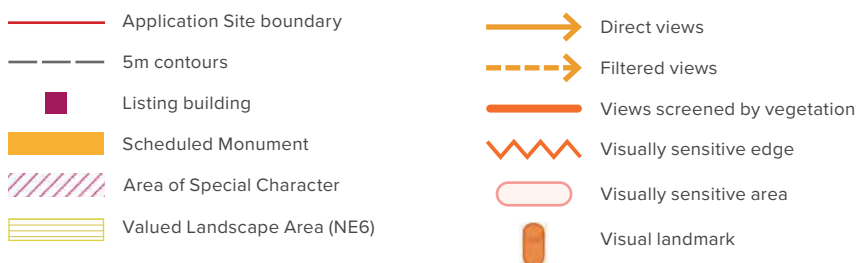


Figure 19. Visual Context Plan





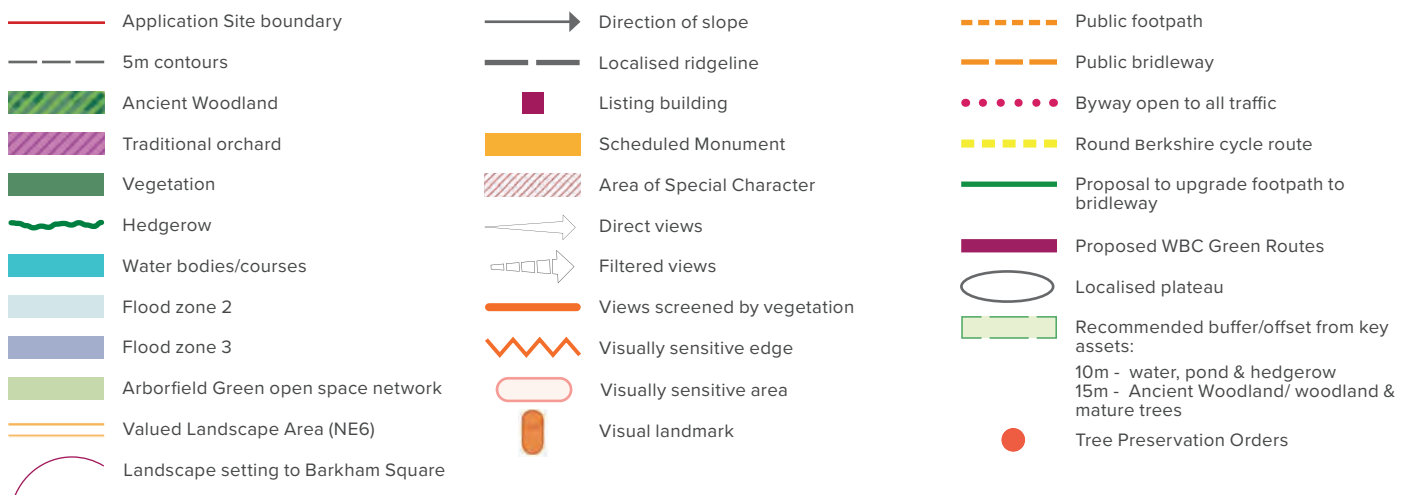
3.7 SITE CONSTRAINTS

This section summarises the known key environmental and technical constraints that have influenced and shaped the proposals for the Site.

- The Site is located within a landscape historically part of **'The Forest of Windsor'**, once featuring birch woodland set within meadow grassland as part of Kidgem Copse.
- Strategically the Site forms a Green Infrastructure stepping stone north/south between woodlands, linked by Barkham Brook linear corridor.
- The Site features valuable landscape attributes including - Ancient Woodland, Barkham Brook, hedgerow field boundaries, which should be conserved and enhanced, to inform the Site's framework.
- There is a strong recreational network surrounding the Site, used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Development Proposals should seek to improve the movement network through the Site and beyond.
- Seek to extend the Arborfield Green linear park. Create public access through the Site, along the Barkham Brook corridor, connecting to PRoW Bark FP7 along the Site's northern boundary.
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting associated with Barkham Square Listed Building (Grade II) and parkland in the north east of the Site.
- Ensure Development Proposals sit within a strong landscape framework, ensuring development is well contained physically and visually, with clear defensible boundaries, to mitigate against impact on Barkham Street **'Area of Special Character'** and immediate adjacent residential receptors.
- The Site is located within 5km of the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (SPA), therefore in accordance with Local Plan Policy CP8 it will require the provision of SANG.
- Ensure proposals align with emerging local plan **Policy NE6 Valued Landscape**, which states *"development proposals affecting valued landscapes will only be supported where they protect and, where appropriate, integrate with and/or enhance the special features, characteristics and qualities of the landscape, unless the benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the harm"*.



Figure 20. Site Constraints Plan





3.8 SITE OPPORTUNITIES

The following Opportunities have been identified for the Proposed Development at Barkham Square.

- Creation of wooded Green Infrastructure corridors to enhance and strengthen the wooded character and assimilate built form and create wooded skylines.
- Conserve the Barkham Brook corridor through enhanced woodland habitats, new wetland features through provision of SuDS and new connections for people and wildlife.
- Conserve parkland setting associated with Barkham Square listed building.
- Provide a new Green Infrastructure connection for the benefit of wildlife and recreational enjoyment.
- Respond to sensitive edges with strengthened buffer planting where appropriate.
- Opportunity to provide a connection to the Site boundary to connect with key local facilities and bus stops within Arborfield Green to the south and, to the village of Barkham to the north, via an enhanced PRow network.
- Opportunity to connect future and existing residents to recreational open space, by extending the Arborfield Linear park into the Site - encouraging healthier lifestyles for the whole community.
- Opportunity to protect and enhance areas of Valued Landscape by respecting Ancient Woodland buffers, removing intensive grazing and establishing a more diverse woodland.

Character Areas

The shaping of the opportunities plan creates a strong landscape framework for proposed Gi corridors and developable area. These character areas have been identified as below.

LANGLEY GREEN

A green gateway into the Site, set back from Langley Common Road, with proposed woodland and hedgerow planting to screen and soften the development edge. Green spaces within development provide opportunities for community gathering.

KIDGEM COPSE

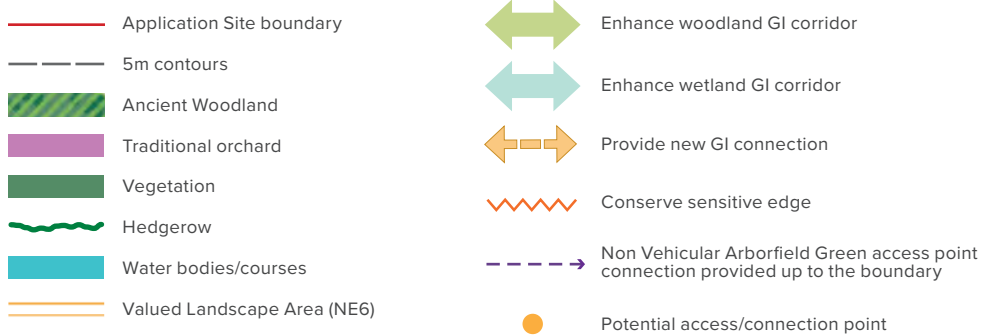
Wooded in character, conserving and enhancing the existing boundary vegetation and drawing the wooded influence into the Site, through new tree, woodland and hedgerow planting.

BARKHAM PARK

Extension of Arborfield Linear Park enhances the wetland and wooded valley character of this Green Infrastructure corridor - optimising its value for wildlife, recreation and providing a high value frontage for Proposed Development.



Figure 21. Site Opportunities Plan





4

Design Process

- 4.1 Stakeholder & Community Engagement**
- 4.2 Design Evolution**
- 4.3 Pre-App Process**
- 4.4 Masterplan Design Principles**
- 4.5 Concept Masterplan**
- 4.6 Development Density**
- 4.7 Illustrative Masterplan**



4. DESIGN PROCESS

4.1 STAKEHOLDER & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Engagement Process

The Applicant has endeavoured to conduct a consultation process which ensured the local community were properly informed of the plans for the site and had the opportunity to comment on the plans. The community consultation carried out comprised the following:

- A public consultation invitation leaflet sent to 3,188 properties surrounding the site on 26th November 2024;
- A public consultation website - barkhamsquareconsultation.co.uk - which has been live since 26th November 2024;
- An in-person public consultation event held between 2pm-8pm (2pm-3pm Councillors preview session) on 4th December 2024 at Arborfield Green Community Centre, Princess Marina Drive, RG2 9NN;
- Letters to Barkham & Arborfield ward members at Wokingham Borough Council, the Leader of Wokingham Borough Council, Arborfield & Newland and Barkham Parish Councils;
- A direct phone line for public consultation enquiries; and
- A direct contact email address for public consultation enquiries

In total, 11 feedback forms were completed on the day of the public consultation, with a further five responses completed via the project website.

Public Consultation Feedback

A sample of the feedback received via both the physical and online feedback forms is provided below:

- *"I support the building of new houses, but this absolutely shouldn't be allowed until the village centre has been fully finished. We were promised this two years ago. This is another example of Crest putting profit before promises. I'm outraged."*
- *"The area of Arborfield Green is quickly becoming overpopulated and the only acceptable way to use this land would be to significantly reduce the amount of homes and dedicate the majority of the land to being a country park or green space."*
- *"Lovely. I like the environmental issues, nature, walkways etc. But... Traffic would be an issue and car parking for residents and visitors. Thank you, very interesting indeed. Good luck."*

- *"No major objection. Would like to see all supporting infrastructure and amenities completed first i.e. village centre with retail commercial space, pub etc and new commercial space, pub etc) and new community centre and all snags related to recent developments."*
- *"Congratulations on such a well thought out plan to create a beautiful environment to many homeowners."*
- *"Not very happy about more housing. At the moment, infrastructure and transport (particularly to Wokingham) not very good."*
- *"I am against any building work in the field that runs next to homes on Archer Grove. The idea of allotments on the other side of a fence that can be climbed poses a security risk to our homes and any park will encourage anti-social behaviour. The local infrastructure is not able to support the number of homes being built. We need doctors, schools, shops, road improvement."*

Response to Feedback

In addition to the public consultation, pre-application consultation has been undertaken with both the LPA and Natural England. This consultation has resulted in the following principal changes to scheme's design;

- Changes to location and design of play areas.
- Changes to pedestrian and cycle routes within the scheme improving connectivity to the existing SDL area.
- Removal of attenuation ponds from the SANG to outside of it.
- Increase in distance between development edge and SANG edge.
- Change in the shape of the SANG.
- Changes to routes of paths within the SANG.
- Increase in woodland planting within the SANG to "re-create" the historic Kidgem Copse.
- Increase in planting to protect and enhance existing Ancient Woodland.

The changes to the SANG design in particular will provide significant ecological benefits and provide an interesting and enjoyable experience for users whether they be new residents of the proposed scheme of existing residents of Arborfield Green and neighbouring villages.

Engagement Summary

A comprehensive process of pre-application community engagement has been undertaken to support the submission of the outline planning application at Land at Barkham Square. Engagement from stakeholders has been sought using an appropriate mixture of methods (both in person and online) and feedback has been fed into the development of the application.

The Applicant has sought to amend its final planning application to reflect the broad variety of consultation feedback received. The Applicant is confident that many of those concerns identified have been appropriately addressed through the development of the planning application or can be properly managed at a later stage in the development process.

The project website remains live and will do so throughout the duration of the planning application so that local residents can continue to contact with the project team if required. The Applicant will continue to engage with the local community until the planning application has been determined, to ensure residents, stakeholders and community groups remain informed as the application progresses.



Photo from public exhibition Dec 2024



Photo from public exhibition Dec 2024

4.2 DESIGN EVOLUTION

The design has evolved with close regard to various key influences, including:

- Feedback following the presentation to Wokingham Borough Council in August 2024 as part of input to the Reg 19 Local Plan Update
- Response to emerging WBC Local Plan, highlighting Barkham Square as an extension to Arborfield Green development,
- Input received during the public consultation
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), SANG and Open Space requirements

Design development throughout the Pre-Application process, meetings included;

- Pre-App 1 - Dec 2024 (WBC)
- Pre-App 2 - Jan 2025 (WBC)
- Site Meeting - Feb 2025 (WBC & Natural England)
- Pre-App 3/SANG Focus Meeting - June 2025 (WBC)

For more information on how the design has evolved through the Pre-App process, please see **Chapter 4.3**.



Photo from public exhibition Dec 2024



Photo from public exhibition Dec 2024



4.3 PRE-APP PROCESS

This chapter demonstrates the evolution of the Concept Masterplan following the public consultation and Pre-Application process.



Concept Masterplan presented at pre-app meeting - Jan 2025

- Application Site boundary represents full site ownership of Barkham Square, including the parcel east of Barkham St
- SANG includes SuDS basins and is adjacent to the proposed residential development
- 4 x play areas proposed, including 1 x play area within the SANG



Current Concept Masterplan

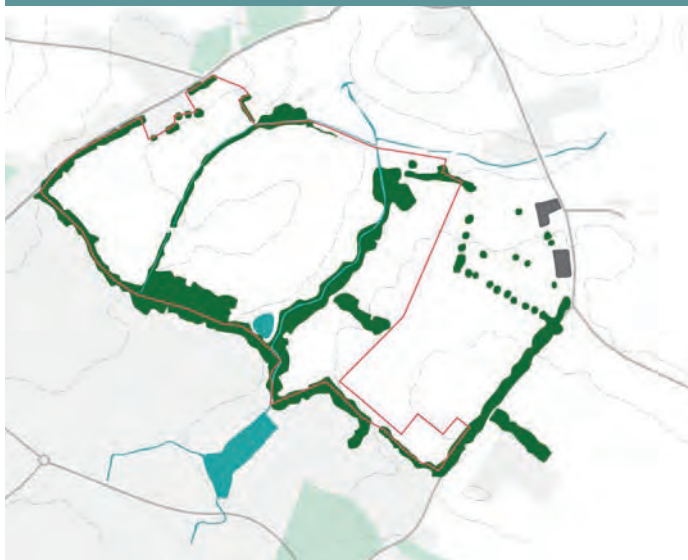
- Revised Application Site boundary following a review of BNG and Open Space calculations - see **Section 5.6** for **Open Space Strategy**
- SANG includes more of the land east of Barkham Brook and excludes the SuDS basins, removing 'pinch points' from the width and creating a more considered boundary edge, with the potential for reinstating Kidgem Copse with proposed woodland planting - see **Section 5.10** for **SANG Strategy**
- Proposed footpaths through the Ancient Woodland and the SANG footpath align with old tracks previously associated with Kidgem Copse - see **Section 5.10** for **SANG Strategy**
- Play areas removed from SANG and reduced to 2 x play areas, one in the west and one in the east of the development area - see **Section 5.7** for **Play Strategy**
- SuDS basin moved more central to development area and linear SuDS features incorporated within the Green Infrastructure corridors - see **Section 5.9** for **Sustainable Drainage Strategy**



4.4 MASTERPLAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

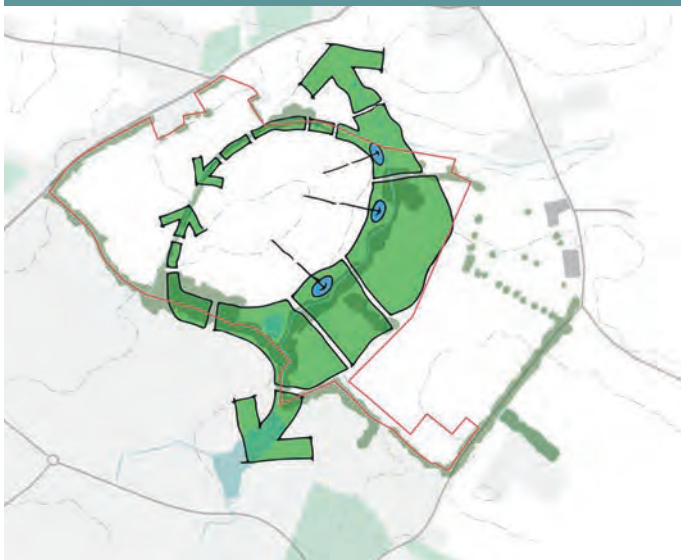
Eight key principles underpin the structure of the Parameter Plans and the Illustrative Masterplan. These masterplan design principles support the proposals and are focused on creating sustainable communities, whilst responding to Site specific considerations.

1 INTEGRATE & CELEBRATE EXISTING NATURAL ASSETS



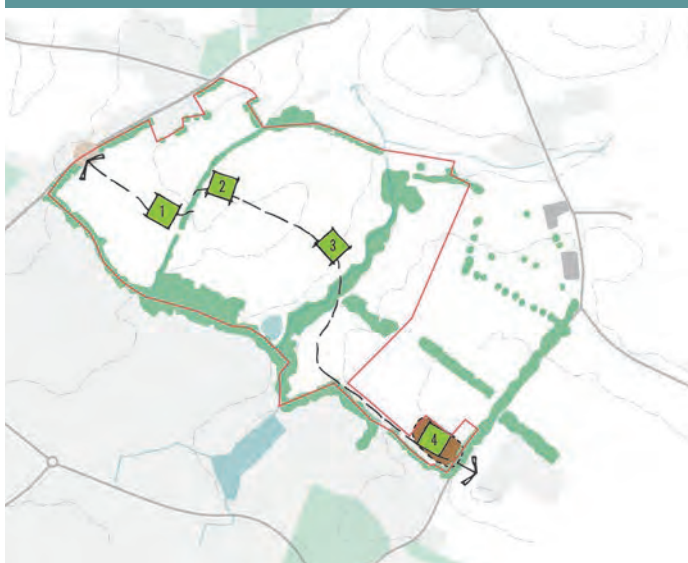
The existing Ancient Woodland blocks, mature trees, hedgerows, brook and pond network will be conserved and enhanced.

2 EXTEND THE LINEAR PARK



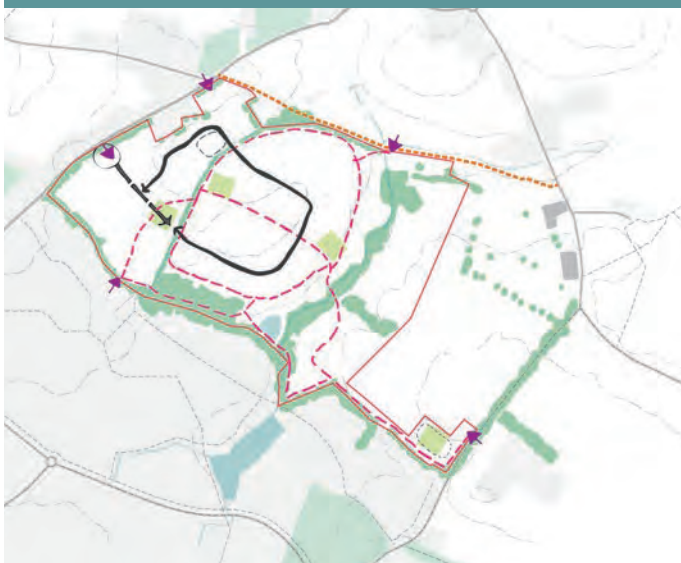
Extend the multifunctional Linear Park along the Barkham Brook corridor and associated wetland and woodland habitats, which provide important ecological networks and greater recreational opportunities.

5 CREATE NEW COMMUNITY SPACES



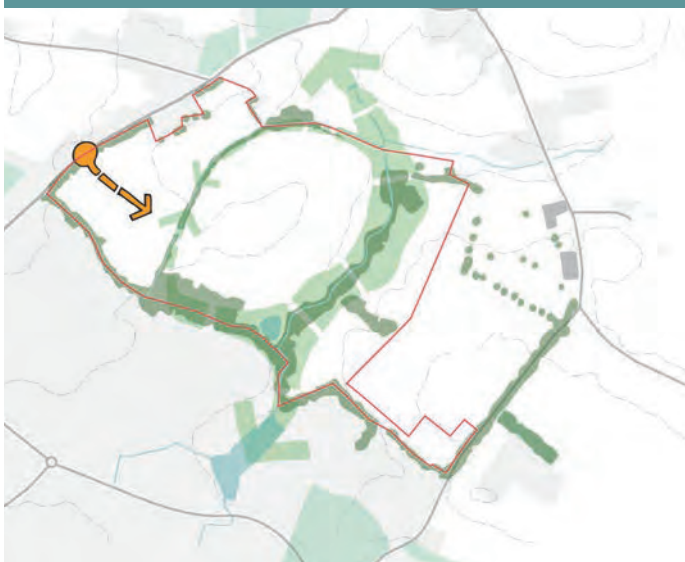
A network of focal points, connected by a new green spine at the heart of the development, will provide safe and accessible hubs with opportunities to learn, play, exercise and grow food.

6 SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT



Create safe active travel streets with new and improved pedestrian and cycle links that connect to the wider movement network.

3 A NEW GATEWAY ENTRANCE



Create a new vehicular gateway entrance into the development from Langley Common Road.

4 ADDITIONAL LANDSCAPE SCREENING



Provide new landscape screening in key locations to help minimise visual impact from adjacent properties and landscape areas, providing an attractive setting for new development.

7 ELDERLY CARE



Integrate elderly care into development and alongside key vehicular and pedestrian connections to provide accessible routes into green corridors and open space.

8 CREATE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER AREAS



Define residential parcels with varied but cohesive character that responds to their location and specific nature of the Site, with landmark buildings to form key vistas aiding legibility throughout the development.



4.5 CONCEPT MASTERPLAN

The concept masterplan demonstrates the design approach for the Proposed Development Site. It responds to the surrounding context and landscape character, and has been informed by the constraints and opportunities for the Site, identified in Chapters 2 & 3.

The concept masterplan aims to create an attractive living environment that benefits both new and existing residents whilst integrating seamlessly with its surroundings, encompassing the vision for Barkham Square.

1 Vehicular Access

Site gateway to Langley Common Road, providing a verdant and safe vehicular access, connecting the Site to the existing settlement. The proposed access will include buffer planting to mitigate views as well as incorporating measures to enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety to provide safe sustainable travel to local facilities.

2 Community Green

Opportunity to provide flexible community spaces to serve both the existing community and new residents of the Proposed Development.

3 Elderly Care

Elderly care accommodation has been integrated into the Proposed Development alongside key vehicular and pedestrian routes, to provide access to open space.

4 Walking & Cycling Links

Proposed pedestrian/cycle links will connect the Site with the wider PRoW network and provide a connection to the Site boundary with the neighbouring Arborfield Green development, promoting sustainable modes of transport.

5 SANG

An extension of Arborfield Green linear park will provide 13.23ha of SANG and feature new and enhanced habitats, walking/cycling routes and natural play spaces.

6 Existing Trees, Woodland & Hedgerows

Retain and safeguard existing mature trees, Ancient Woodland, hedgerows and habitats, and incorporate them into a well-integrated landscape strategy.

7 Buffer Planting

Proposed buffer/screening planting will create an attractive landscape setting and help mitigate views of the Proposed Development.

8 Existing Pond

Existing pond to be retained and enhanced with new habitats and walking routes.

9 Surface Water Management

The surface water runoff will be managed through the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and located outside the fluvial and surface water flood extent.

10 Outdoor Play Spaces

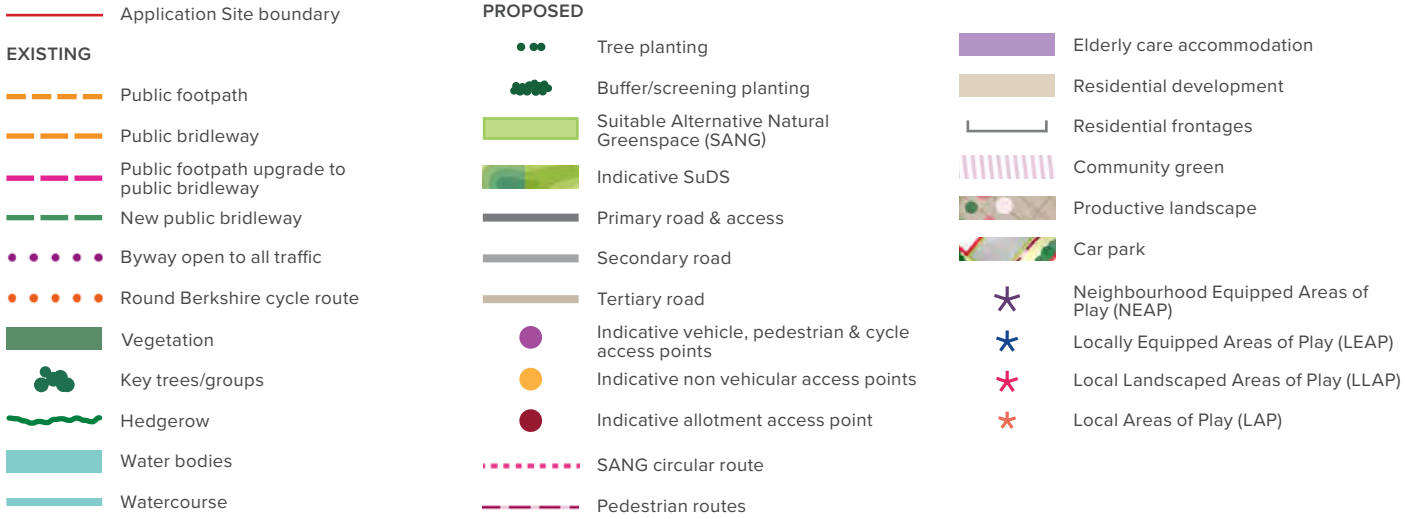
Two new combined play spaces have been introduced into the Proposed Development as a part of a site-wide strategy, supported by opportunities for incidental and doorstep play within walking distance for all new residents.

11 Community Allotments

To support healthy lifestyles through productive landscapes, a new community food growing area will be provided to give new and existing residents the opportunity to engage in food production within reach of their homes.



Figure 22. Concept Masterplan





4.6 DEVELOPMENT DENSITY

The Site is visually well contained by existing vegetation. There are direct and filtered views of the Site from properties adjacent to the boundary and Langley Common Road, and glimpsed/filtered views from Barkham's Area of Special Interest, refer to the '**Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)**', that have helped inform and shape the Proposed Development and its density.

The development density has been broken down into low, medium and high, based on how visually sensitive particular areas of the Site are, the relationship with the existing edges and the topography of the Site.

The central and southern areas within the Proposed Development have the lowest visual sensitivity and are therefore the most appropriate locations for medium density development with high densities focussed along the secondary street.

The northern and eastern edges of the Proposed Development has moderate visual sensitivity from receptors within Barkham's Area of Special Character and with appropriate mitigation can accommodate medium density, reducing to low towards the edge.

Determining the densities for the Proposed Development has also helped inform the proposed building height parameters and character areas for the scheme.

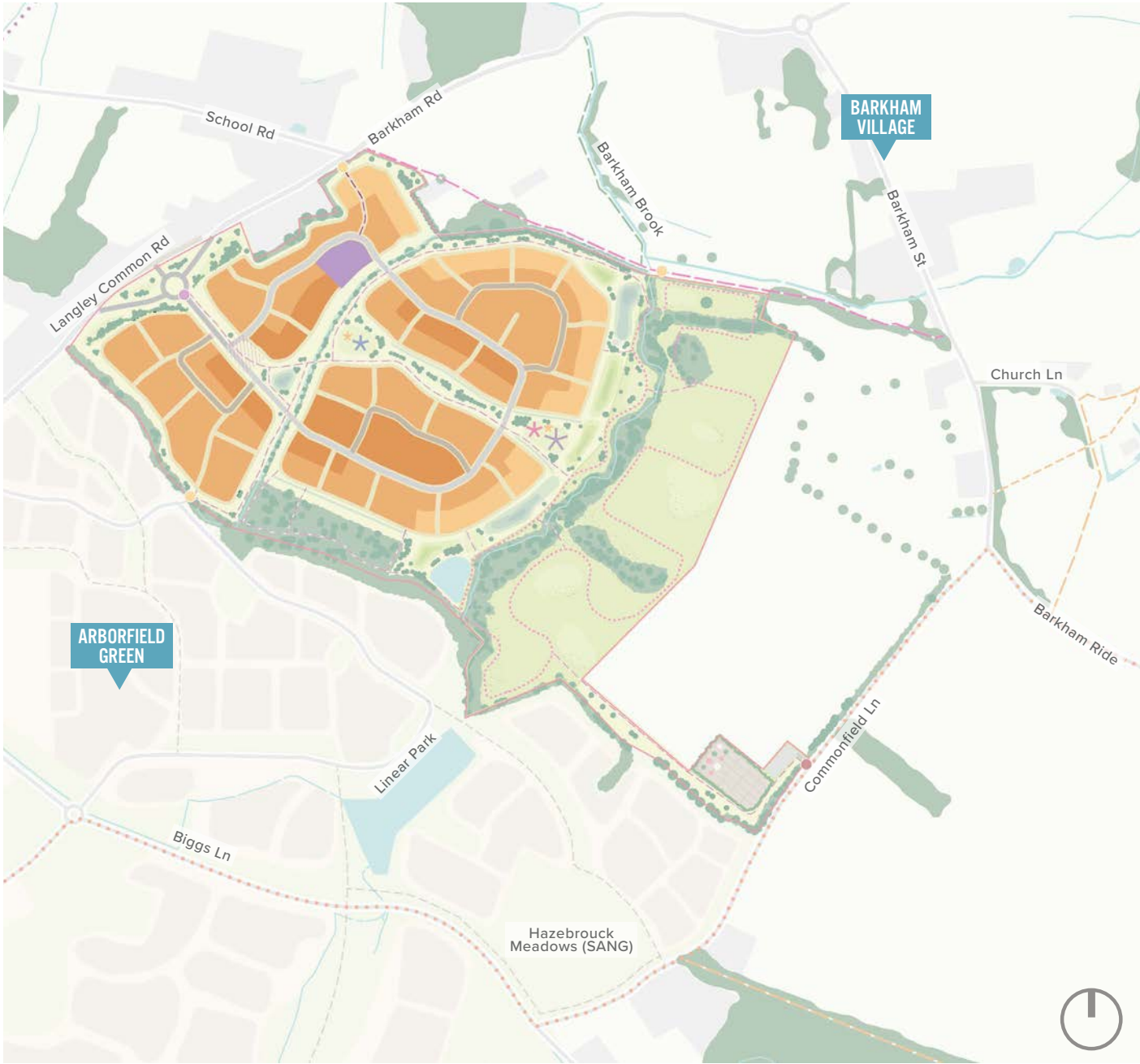


Figure 23. Development Density Plan

- Application Site boundary
- Residential development - High density
- Residential development - Medium density
- Residential development - Low density
- Elderly Care



4.7 ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

The Illustrative Masterplan demonstrates how the proposals come together as a cohesive design. The evolving strategies informing the Illustrative Masterplan include: landscape and visual assessment; housing mix; sustainable access and movement; landscape, open space and play, SANG; placemaking; biodiversity and sustainable drainage.

- 1 Main vehicle access point
- 2 Community green
- 3 Pedestrian/cycle connectivity up to the site boundary
- 4 Main street with street trees and planted verges
- 5 Elderly care accommodation
- 6 Proposed SANG with proposed woodland and meadow planting
- 7 Proposed allotment & SANG car park
- 8 Retention of existing vegetation
- 9 Retention of existing pond
- 10 Proposed attenuation basins
- 11 Proposed allotments
- 12 Proposed landscaped play area
- 13 Proposed buffer/screening planting
- 14 Proposed native hedge & buffer planting to allotment
- 15 Green corridors



Figure 24. Green Infrastructure Sections Location





4.7 ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN



Figure 25. Aerial view of Barkham Square, Artist Impression





5

Landscape Strategy

5.1	Landscape Masterplan
5.2	Green Infrastructure Strategy
5.3	Green Infrastructure Illustrative Sections
5.4	Landscape Character Areas
5.5	Indicative Planting Palettes
5.6	Open Space Strategy
5.7	Play Strategy
5.8	Biodiversity Strategy
5.9	Sustainable Drainage Strategy
5.10	SANG Strategy



5. DESIGN PROPOSALS

5.1 LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN

The Illustrative Masterplan supports the landscape led design process undertaken for the Proposed Development.

The Proposed Development respects and safeguards, where possible, the existing Site features through provision of appropriate development offsets and buffers. Retention of existing features, as well as the creation of a new linear park extension from Arborfield Green, and a new east-west connection from Langley Common Road to Commonfield Lane, has resulted in the creation of a strong landscape framework in which the development would be set.

These multifunctional green corridors include all open space requirements (refer to **Section 5.6**), allow for provision of SuDS (refer to **Section 5.9**) and provides play opportunities for all ages (refer to **Section 5.7**).

Proposed buffer and screening planting, guided by the '**Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)**', has been integrated within the proposed Green Infrastructure to help mitigate views of the Proposed Development.

Proposed pedestrian/cycle links will connect the Site with the wider PRoW network and provide a point of connection to the boundary with the Arborfield Green development, promoting sustainable modes of transport.

Refer to **Section 5.3** for **Green Infrastructure sections**.



Figure 26. Landscape Masterplan





5.2 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

The proposed Green Infrastructure Strategy has been built following an in depth analysis of the Site's constraints and opportunities, ensuring a landscape-led framework for the Proposed Development.

The Green Infrastructure Strategy respects and safeguards existing Site features, enhances key existing habitats, and provides new connections throughout the Proposed Development.

These Green Infrastructure Corridors are multifunctional, strengthening and providing buffer planting to assimilate built form, provide opportunities for recreation and play, incorporate SuDS features and provide pedestrian/cycle links to connect the Site with the wider PRow network and provide a pedestrian/cycle link to the Site boundary, to provide access between Arborfield Green, promoting sustainable modes of transport and providing valuable connections for residents and wildlife.

The key Green Infrastructure Corridors consist of:

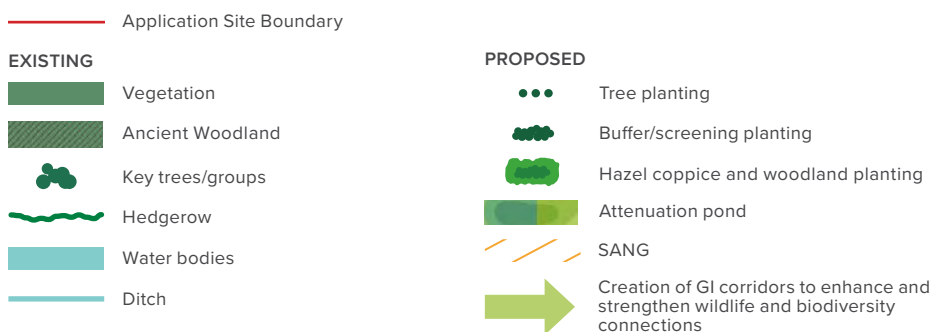
1 North-south Green Infrastructure Corridor connects the existing Barkham Brook to the Linear Park at Arborfield Green. This corridor conserves the Barkham Brook corridor through provision of enhanced woodland habitats and new wetland features through provision of SuDS. Areas of Valued Landscape in this key corridor will be protected and enhanced by respecting Ancient Woodland buffers, removing intensive grazing and establishing a more diverse woodland. Pedestrian/cycle links will provide access between Arborfield Green to the wider PRow network.

2 Arborfield Green Buffer connects Langley Common Road to Commonfield Lane, along the southern boundary. This corridor responds to sensitive edges, ensuring strengthened buffer planting is provided where development is proposed. Areas of Ancient Woodland and Valued Landscape will also be protected and enhanced in this corridor, through establishing a more diverse woodland and re-introducing historic tracks. Along this boundary with Arborfield Green there is the opportunity to significantly enhance the accessibility of the wider area by creating meaningful, legible pedestrian and cyclist routes across the Site.

3 East-west Green Infrastructure Corridor, a new corridor proposed through the middle of the development, connecting the SANG to Langley Common Road. This Green Infrastructure Corridor has a strong community focus with two play areas, recreational/amenity areas and a community green, providing a variety of spaces for all ages and users. Proposed buffer and screening planting has been integrated within this corridor to help mitigate views and proposed pedestrian/cycle links will provide sustainable connections.



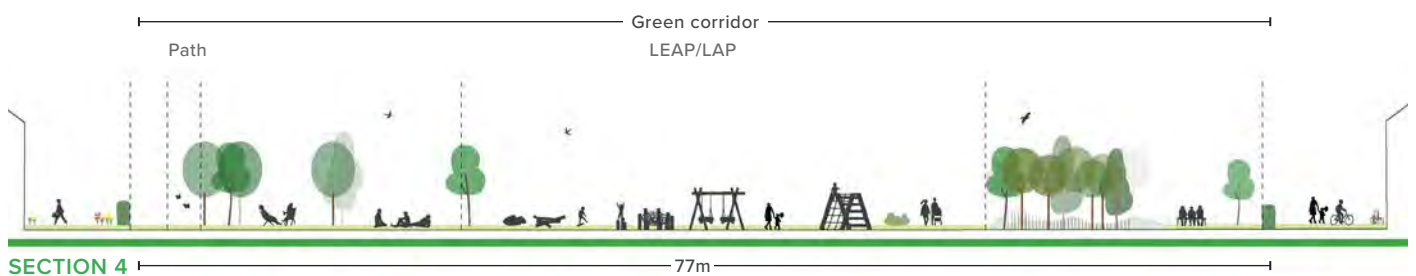
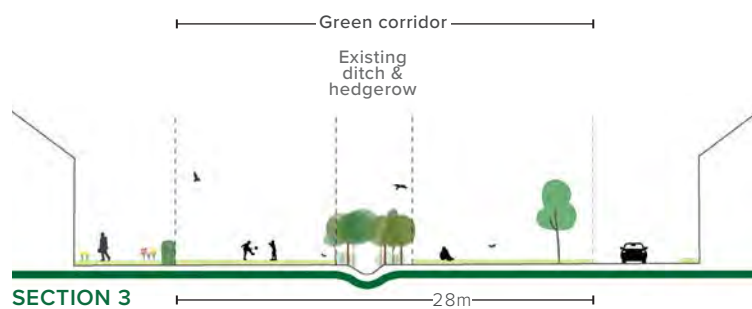
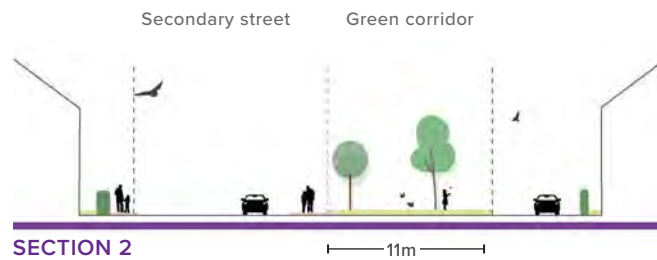
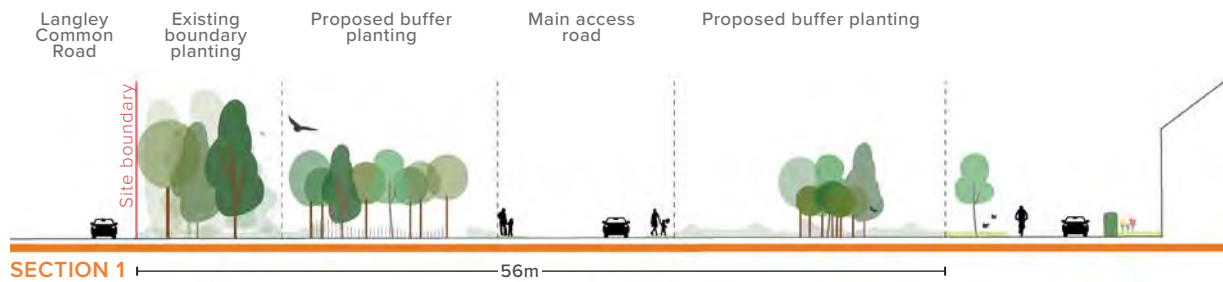
Figure 27. Green Infrastructure Strategy Plan

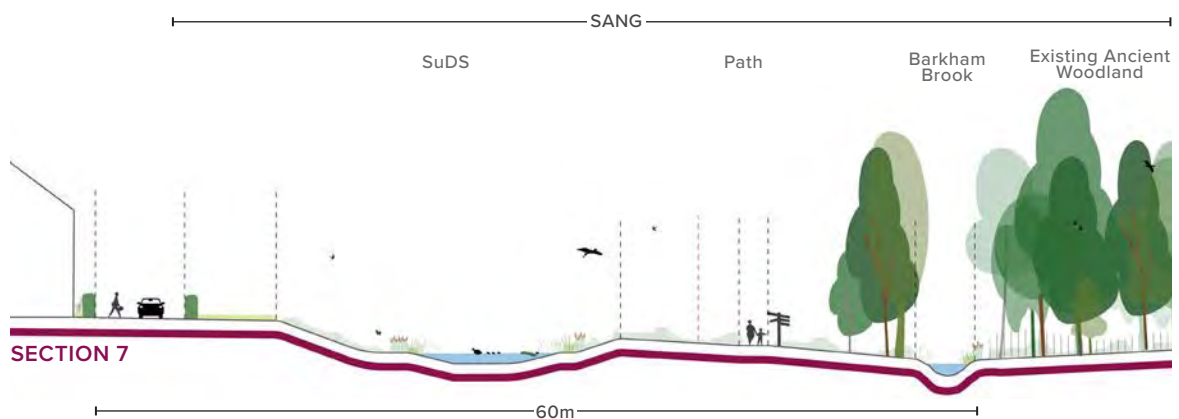
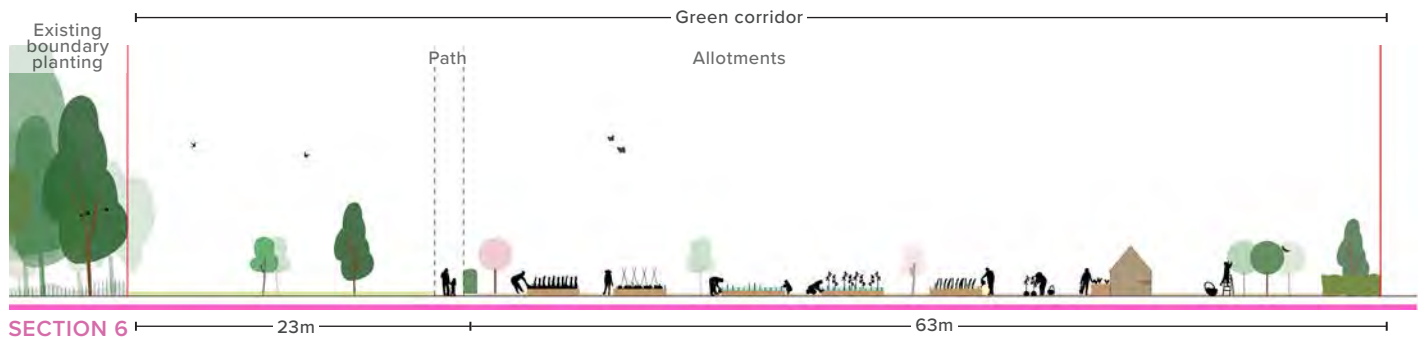
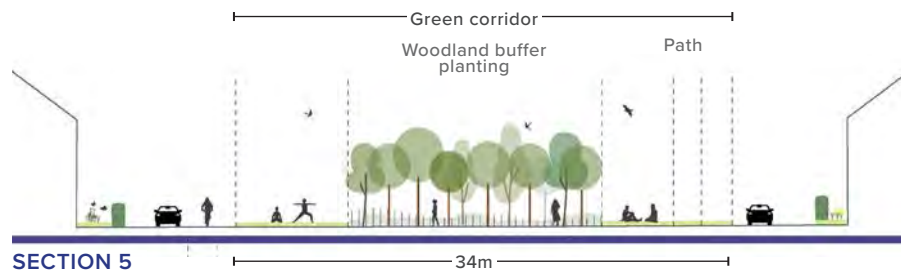




5.3 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ILLUSTRATIVE SECTIONS

The sections provide insight into the design intention of some of the key green spaces, providing more details on scale, character and how the Green Infrastructure provides a strong positive setting for the Proposed Development.







5.4 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Proposed landscape character areas have been shaped from the Landscape Masterplan, each with their own unique character that responds to their location, proposed 'use' within the Green Infrastructure Strategy, surrounding landscape and their relationship to the local context.

- 1 Green Links**
Retained existing features and enhanced buffer planting where appropriate, provides attractive pedestrian and wildlife connections.
- 2 Langley Gateway**
Attractive gateway setting, creating a sense of arrival, set back from existing road, allowing a generous landscape buffer to neighbouring properties and appropriate buffer planting. Tree lined street with community green leads vehicular, pedestrian and cyclist movement into the Proposed Development.
- 3 Arborfield Rise**
Retain and enhance existing Ancient Woodland by respecting offsets, establishing new diverse woodland planting, recreating historic tracks through woodland.
- 4 Parkland View**
A key space for the community, providing two play areas at either end connected by recreational space and buffer woodland planting, creating a key destination linear park along the key Green Infrastructure corridor.
- 5 The Brook**
The landscape character area incorporating Barkham Brook and landscape buffer to the west, containing proposed SuDS features, enhanced woodland planting, parkland trees and pedestrian connections, creating an attractive outlook for development and comprising a key part of the north-south Green Infrastructure corridor.
- 6 Barkham Copse**
A large area of proposed hazel coppice planting, creating a new habitat as part of the SANG proposals that reflects the historic Kidgem Copse, and footpath/cycle connections that mimic historic tracks through the woodland, creating an attractive route for the SANG footpath.
- 7 Barkham Meadow**
Areas of grassland and wildflower meadows, with areas of scrub and parkland trees, creating new valuable habitats as part of the north-south Green Infrastructure corridor, and attractive setting for the SANG footpath.
- 8 Commonfield Allotments**
Allotment provision with pedestrian and cycle access from Barkham Square and Arborfield Green, and vehicular access from Commonfield Lane and provision for parking within the proposed SANG car park. This space will provide traditional allotment plots with orchard planting, foraging hedgerows and informal seating area, providing space for new community events and socialising.

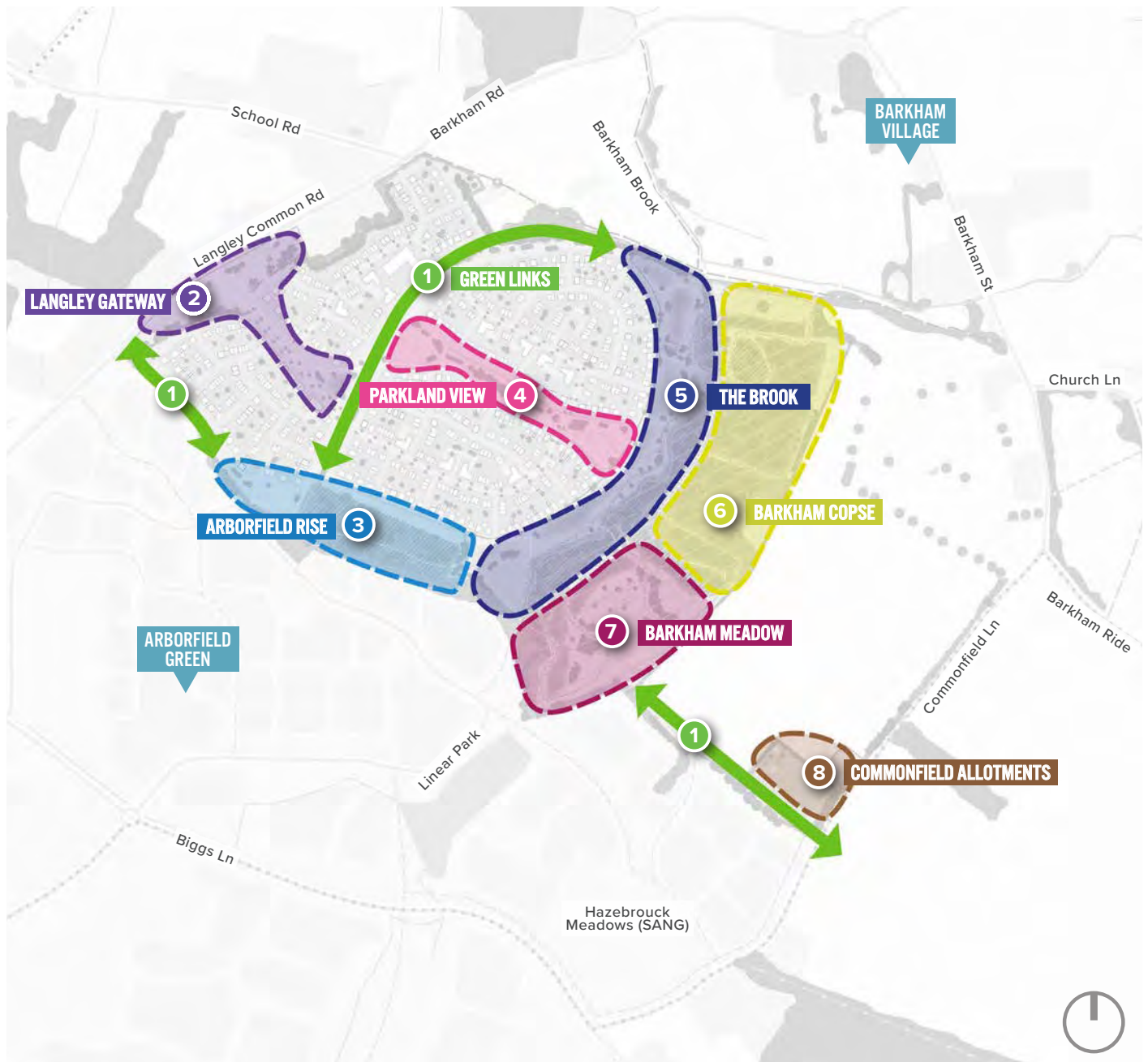


Figure 28. Landscape Character Area Plan





5.5 INDICATIVE PLANTING PALETTES

The following planting palettes set out a nonexhaustive list of typical species and sizes that are considered appropriate to guide the development of detailed planting proposals, to be defined further as part of Reserved Matters Applications. Proposed tree species to be primarily native and of regional provenance - although opportunities for non-native species may be explored to enhance diversity, ensure resilience to climate change and biosecurity against host specific pests and diseases, whilst providing variation in form, colour and texture.

Where possible, opportunities should be taken to retain dead and removed trees onsite, to provide important habitats.

Existing Vegetation

Existing hedgerow, tree, woodland and Ancient Woodland planting form important habitat and species connections and are being retained and enhanced as part of the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Existing boundary vegetation to the north and south will be retained and enhanced through additional planting that corresponds to existing habitats and appropriate species.

Proposed Buffer/Screening Planting

Typical Mitigation Woodland and Scrub Species

10% of the planting stock provided as feathered trees, with a further 5% provided as standard trees and the remainder as transplant stock at 60-90cm height.

Typical woodland species may include, but are not limited to:

- Acer campestre (field maple)
- Carpinus betulus (hornbeam)
- Prunus avium (wild cherry)
- Quercus robur (English oak)
- Sorbus torminalis (wild service tree)
- Betula pubescens (downy birch)
- Rhamnus cathartica (buckthorn)
- Cornus sanguinea (common dogwood)
- Corylus avellana (hazel)
- Crataegus monogyna (common hawthorn)

Proposed Parkland Trees

Tree planting within key Green Infrastructure corridors to create continuous canopy, connecting existing vegetation, aiding biodiversity movement corridors. Size and form dependent on location within corridors. 2m clear stem and high canopy to accommodate visibility splays.

Size typically a semi-mature tree (minimum 20cm Girth), to be determined as part of Reserved Matters Applications.

Species may include, but are not limited to:

- Ulmus 'New Horizon' (resistant elm)
- Quercus ssp. (oak)
- Prunus avium (bird cherry)
- Carpinus betulus (hornbeam)
- Castanea sativa (sweet chestnut)
- Tilia ssp. (lime)
- Betula pendula (silver birch)

Proposed Landmark/Feature Trees

Landmark trees will be located at key Green Infrastructure destinations, such as within the play areas, community spaces or at the end of Green Infrastructure corridors, to provide visually prominent landmarks. These trees will aid in natural wayfinding, create terminus features to vistas and aid in place making principles.

Size, typically a combination of Extra Heavy Standards to Semi-mature trees, to be defined further as part of Reserved Matters Applications.

Typical landmark tree species may include, but are not limited to:

- Quercus robur (oak)
- Populus nigra (black poplar)
- Castanea sativa (sweet chestnut)

Proposed Trees within SuDS

Water tolerant trees will be used within SuDS basins, raingardens, wetland and waterside areas throughout the Proposed Development.

Typical water tolerant trees may include, but are not limited to:

- Alnus glutinosa (alder)
- Salix alba (white willow)
- Salix fragilis (crack willow)
- Salix caprea (goat willow)
- Populus tremula (aspen)
- Viburnum opulus (guelder rose)

Proposed Street Trees

Formal street trees varying in size and form dependent on location within primary, secondary or tertiary streets. 2m clear stem and high canopy to accommodate visibility splays.

Size typically a semi-mature tree (minimum 20cm girth), to be determined as part of Reserved Matters Applications.

Typical street trees species may include, but are not limited to:

- Amelanchier 'Ballerina' (snowy mespilus tree)
- Acer rubrum (red maple)
- Alnus x spaethii (spaeth alder)
- Alnus glutinosa 'Lacinata' (cut-leaved common alder)
- Betula albosinensis 'Fascination' (chinese red birch)
- Corylus colurna (turkish hazel)
- Gleditsia triacanthos 'Ruby Lace' (honey locust)
- Prunus 'Hillieri Spire' (cherry spire)
- Prunus avium (wild cherry)
- Sorbus aria 'Majestica' (whitebeam)

Proposed On Plot Trees

Planting within front gardens make a valuable contribution to the street scene and help to promote a sense of identity and uniformity within landscape character areas. New tree planting within on plot landscapes must take into consideration **NHBC Chapter 4.2 Building Near Trees**.

Size typically between Heavy Standard and Extra Heavy Standard for trees, to be defined further as part of Reserved Matters Applications.

Typical on plot species may include, but are not limited to:

- Amelanchier lamarckii (serviceberry)
- Betula utilis var. jacquemontii (white-barked himalayan birch)
- Acer campestre 'William Caldwell' (field maple)
- Carpinus betulus 'Frans Fontaine' (hornbeam)
- Magnolia kobus (northern japanese magnolia)
- Sorbus aucuparia 'Jospeh Rock' (mountain ash)
- Malus 'John Downie' (crab apple)

Proposed Hedgerows

Hedgerow planting will be woven throughout the Proposed Development, along boundaries and within Green Infrastructure corridors, to aid in wildlife connectivity and create a sense of enclosure, where desired.

Hedgerows will be mixture of formal and informal, depending on location and desired function.

Informal Native Hedgerows

Typical size transplant stock at 60-90cm with a density of 5 per linear metre, to be defined further as part of Reserved Matters Applications.

Native species to include, but not limited to:

- Crataegus monogyna (hawthorn)
- Corylus avellana (hazel)
- Prunus spinosa (blackthorn)
- Rosa canina (dog rose)
- Acer campestre (field maple)
- Malus sylvestris (crab apple)
- Cornus sanguinea (dogwood)

Formal Hedgerows

In residential areas, hedgerows may be more formal and include a proportion of non-natives.

These are usually planted using a single species and species selection needs to be carefully considered to suit the context and intended mature size of the hedge – using small leaved species for small and medium sized hedges and large leaved species only used for large hedges.

Typical size transplant stock at 60-90cm with a density of 5 per linear metre. Instant hedgerow can be specified for immediate impact. To be defined further as part of Reserved Matters Applications.

Species include but not limited to:

- Viburnum tinus 'Eve Price' (laurustinus)
- Elaeagnus spp. (silverberry)
- Escallonia 'Iveyi' (white escallonia)
- Ilex crenata (japanese holly)



5.5 INDICATIVE PLANTING PALETTES

Proposed Hazel Coppice

As part of the enhancement of Ancient Woodland and Valued Landscape within the SANG, proposed woodland planting would include a process of rotational hazel coppice, to infill gaps between areas of Ancient Woodland and strengthen the Green Infrastructure corridor.

Typical coppice woodland, would see *Corylus avellana* (hazel) stools planted 2m-2.5m apart in rows to ensure enough space for regrowth and a healthy canopy.

This hazel coppice planting will form part of the proposed native woodland planting, (see below).

Proposed Native Woodland Planting

Where woodland planting is proposed as part of the SANG, a species mix should be chosen that is suited to the surrounding context, maximises biodiversity and is resilient against climate change. Woodland planting stock should be grown in the UK from native seed sourced from the **Forestry Commission Provenance Zone 405**, which the Site lies within.

For large areas of woodland or ecologically sensitive areas, woodland will be planted in areas of existing or newly established grass (enhanced with wildflower where required), with an area of 500mm radius maintained free of competing vegetation until the canopy of the woodland planting closes.

Planting mixes should be specified to suit the species percentage of climax, nurse, woodland edge and shrub species set out below. The woodland will be set out with species planted in drifts of 5-9 plants using a matrix with a grid planting at 1m, 1.5m or 2m centres to maximise the sustainability of the woodland areas, enhance woodland structure, ensure swift establishment and assist in long term management into maturity.

Typical native woodland trees may include, but are not limited to:

- *Quercus robur* (common oak) - climax
- *Betula pendula* (silver birch) - nurse
- *Sorbus aucuparia* (rowan) - edge
- *Prunus avium* (wild cherry) - edge
- *Corylus avellana* (hazel) - shrub
- *Cornus sanguinea* (dogwood) - shrub
- *Crataegus monogyna* (hawthorn) - shrub
- *Rosa arvensis* (field rose) - shrub

Proposed Native Shrub Planting

Where native shrub planting is required - to supplement woodland planting, enhance informal parkland areas or to maximise biodiversity value - this should be planted using a species mix that is suited to the surrounding context, maximises biodiversity value and ensures resilience against climate change.

The specification would include species that possess horticulturally interesting characteristics such as flowers, fruit or autumnal colour. Planting stock should be grown in the UK from native seed sourced from the **Forestry Commission Provenance Zone 405** within which the site lies. Where used in conjunction with woodland planting, mixes should be specified to suit the wider woodland scheme and set out in a grid of 1m or 1.5m centres with each species in informal drifts of 9-15 plants.

Typical native woodland trees may include, but are not limited to:

- *Cornus sanguinea* (dogwood)
- *Corylus avellana* (hazel)
- *Ilex aquifolium* (holly)
- *Ribes odoratum* (flowering currant)
- *Rosa arvensis* (field rose)
- *Rosa canina* (dog rose)
- *Prunus spinosa* (blackthorn)
- *Viburnum opulus* (guelder rose)

Orchards/Fruiting Trees

These trees will provide a range of fruit and nuts, which can be harvested by the community whilst also providing food for wildlife. These areas will contain fruit trees, nut trees and fruit bushes. They will be set within grassland areas, which can be managed for wildlife. Where possible species should specify trees that are typical to the area.

Typical girth of 8-10cm to be defined further as part of Reserved Matters Applications. Typical Orchard Tree Species:

- *Malus* ssp., (apple) including natives and cultivars
- *Pyrus* ssp., (pear) including natives and cultivars
- *Cydonia oblonga* (quince) including natives and cultivars
- *Prunus* ssp (cherry, sloe, plum and damson) including natives and cultivars
- *Juglans regia* (walnut)
- *Castanea sativa* (sweet chestnut)

Proposed Grassland

There are many opportunities across the Proposed Development for a mosaic of species rich grassland including wetland, woodland shade tolerant, wildflower, flowering lawns and amenity. These grasslands play a significant role in creating attractive biodiverse environments to live, rest and play.

Species Rich Meadow Grassland

Species will provide valuable new habitats for a variety of pollinators and where there is higher footfall and informal play opportunities amenity grass and flowering lawns will be proposed with species more suited for these environments.

Wetland Grassland

Species will be used within basin and slopes of the ponds, swales and wet landscaped areas. These species are suited to seasonally wet soils. Soils within SuDS features may flood for short periods in winter, but are usually dry in summer.

Woodland Shade Tolerant Grassland

Species will be used within or adjacent to existing woodland and hedgerows with species more suited to shady areas. Proposing this shade tolerant grassland mix in areas of Ancient Woodland will reverse the effects of grazing and enhance the biodiversity throughout the proposed Green Infrastructure corridor.

These species rich, wetland and woodland shade tolerant grasslands shall be established on 150mm depth of low nutrient soils with no fertiliser used in the ground preparation or implementation process. Preparation shall include stone picking, removal of weeds and using repeated cultivation or a herbicide. Then harrow or rake to produce a medium tilth, and roll, or tread, to produce a firm surface. These areas of grassland can provide enhanced biodiversity value and a naturalistic setting to the landscape. However, they can take time to establish. To provide instant effect to prominent areas, a wildflower turf shall be specified. In other areas a wildflower earth or wildflower seed mix may be more appropriate.

Amenity Grassland

These areas of grassland are used for a variety of purposes including front gardens, formal and informal play/amenity areas and maintenance verges. The biodiversity value of these grassland areas is minimal but they shall be specified with a turf product or seed mix that is robust and suited to their context, intended use and location – ensuring resilience throughout all seasons.

Ornamental/Amenity Planting

Soft landscaping plays an important aesthetic role in helping to define and reinforce the character of a development. The palette of ornamental and amenity planting mixes must respond both to the local distinctiveness of the surrounding context, along with the architectural character of the house types and layout of the development.

Planting shall be robust in areas susceptible to public activity, whilst providing year-round interest to ensure a change in scenery from season to season, through carefully setting out the design to integrate layered ornamental planting within a structure of hardier amenity species. Care should be taken to avoid placing spikey or thorny species adjacent to areas passed by pedestrians, with softer species along these edges.

Opportunities shall also be taken to maximise the contribution ornamental planting provides to biodiversity, using species with wildlife value wherever possible.

Typical ornamental/amenity species may include, but are not limited to:

- Berberis thunbergii sp (barberry)
- Cotoneaster × suecicus 'Coral Beauty' (cotoneaster coral beauty)
- Erica carnea sp (heather)
- Escallonia laevis (escallonia)
- Lonicera nitida sp (shrub honeysuckle)
- Euonymus fortunei sp (spindle)
- Juniperus Squamata 'Blue Carpet' (juniper)
- Mahonia aquifolium 'Apollo' (oregon grape)
- Pachysandra terminalis 'Green Carpet' (japanese spurge)
- Pieris japonica 'Little Heath' (lily of the valley)
- Vinca minor (periwinkle)



5.6 OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

The proposed development is compliant of Open Space requirements, as set out in '**Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) Open Space, Sport & Recreation Facilities Strategy - Nov 2013**' and offers over 50% as Open Space. Refer to the tables below and **Figure 29** for a breakdown of the proposed Open Space typologies. Formal Sports will be delivered through an offsite contribution, as agreed with WBC.

OPEN SPACE TYPOLOGY	AREA REQUIRED
Civic Space ●	0.02 ha
Natural/Semi Natural	4.70 ha
SANG	13.23 ha
Amenity Green Space	1.62 ha
Parks & Gardens	1.82 ha
Provision for Play	0.41 ha
Productive Landscape	0.65 ha
TOTAL OPEN SPACE	22.45 ha

PLAY BREAKDOWN	NUMBER
Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play (NEAP)	1
Local Equipped Areas of Play (LEAP)	1
Local Landscaped Areas of Play (LLAP)	1
Local Areas of Play (LAP)	2
Extra Play Space	-



Example of allotments



Example of enhanced grassland planting within the SANG



Example of play within Parks & Gardens



Examples of play spaces



Figure 29. Open Space Strategy Plan





5.7 PLAY STRATEGY

The Proposed Development provides the quantum of play required as per the '**Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update: Proposed Submission Plan 2023-2040**' and the '**Wokingham Borough Council Open Space, Sport & Recreation Facilities Strategy - Nov 2013**'.

The overall strategy for the Site ensures that play will cater for all ages, offer opportunities for interaction and socialisation and provide a range of experiences. It also supports the idea of doorstep and informal play. This is achieved through the provision of two formal play spaces, located within key areas of Green Infrastructure and evenly distributed to ensure the appropriate walking distances within the Proposed Development.

Formal Play

1 The combined **LEAP/LAP** within the development provides co-located play for a range of ages and will be zoned for different uses without segregation. This play space is proposed central to the development within the green corridor to ensure natural surveillance.

2 The combined **NEAP/LLAP/LAP** is also located within the green corridor and overlooked by housing for natural surveillance. It will consist of play equipment that is natural in style, due to its proximity to the SANG, with a focus on natural features for exploratory play. The NEAP will also cater for wide age range, and be composed of natural materials to compliment the natural setting for the existing landscape. Its location is adjacent to pedestrian and cycle routes, which will ensure natural surveillance and easy access for new and existing residents.

Informal Play

Informal play will be provided through landscape design elements such as: changes to levels, boulders, logs and other engaging natural features to create incidental play opportunities, as well as within pocket parks in development areas. This will focus on play for children under 5 years old, with space to be overseen by parents, guardians, carers within close proximity to housing areas. These informal play areas will focus on natural play features and elements to explore through the senses: interesting textures, shapes, solidity, weight, pattern and colour.

Informal play elements will be provided adjacent to formal equipped play areas, in pocket parks/doorstep locations within the development areas and along key movement routes providing play on the way, and ensuring all ages of play are catered for across the Proposed Development.



Example of a NEAP



Example of a LEAP



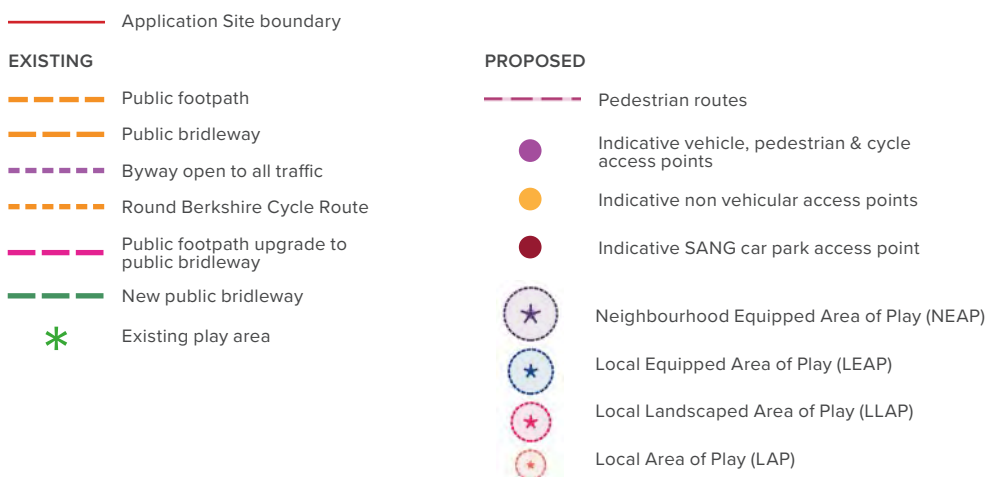
Example of a LAP



Example of a LAP



Figure 30. Play Strategy Plan





5.8 BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

The Biodiversity Strategy for the development draws on principles set out in the Green Infrastructure Strategy. Biodiversity value will derive from enhancement of the existing ecological resources and creation of new north/south and east/west ecological connectivity (see **Figure 31**). This includes:

- retained and enhanced boundary planting,
- proposed buffer/screening planting with careful species selection to enhance biodiversity,
- improving the setting of Barkham Brook and associated wetland corridor, woodland and Ancient Woodland, incorporating into the SANG,
- SANG designed to be biodiverse, focusing on the enhancement of existing species-poor grassland into a more diverse sward and diversity of habitats,
- SuDS features designed to enhance biodiversity and contribute to habitat creation.

The strategy has been developed to ensure that the delivery of the project would result in a **Biodiversity Net Gain of at least 10%**, in line with local and national planning policy.



Species rich meadow planting



Wetland planting



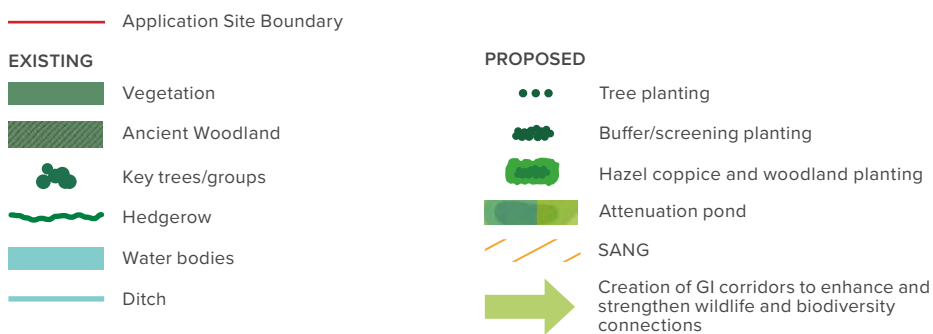
Bird box on tree



Wildlife friendly planting



Figure 31. Green Infrastructure Strategy Plan





5.9 SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE STRATEGY

Overall Strategy

Existing and future surface water runoff rates will be assessed and managed through a formal drainage network and attenuation storage. The proposed Drainage Strategy will minimise the surface water flood risk. It will be designed to ensure no flooding across the Site for up to and including the 100-year return period, with an allowance for climate change. This will be achieved through the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The hierarchy will be utilised in the decision-making process, to ensure that the proposed development will not increase flood risk offsite.

The Site's existing hydrology will be replicated as far as is practicable by the use of source control and infiltration SuDS techniques following intrusive geo-environmental investigations during the detailed design stage.

The proposed Drainage Strategy will consider utilising strategic swales and lined attenuation basins to provide surface water attenuation, before discharging flows to the watercourse at a controlled rate.

In addition to the above, it is anticipated that the use of tanked permeable paving, within parking courts and shared surfaces, will also provide some attenuation for surface water runoff as well as water quality benefits.

At the outline planning stage, the strategic SuDS features are illustrated indicatively on **Figure 32**. The detailed design and implementation of these features will be refined and developed at the Reserved Matters Application (RMA) stage.

The attenuation basins allow for greater flexibility during the detailed design phase, enabling the incorporation of a varied range of slope gradients, without exceeding 1 in 3. This approach supports the creation of a more naturalised character and allows for successful vegetation establishment and safe public and maintenance access.

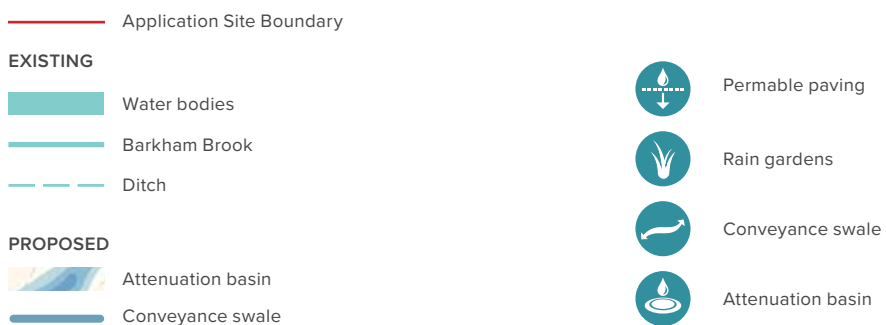
These basins will also contribute to forming the informal western boundary of the SANG, despite sitting outside the area required. Their design will enhance the naturalised character of the new SANG and act as a natural buffer between the development and the SANG.

All SuDS features will be designed in accordance with CIRIA's SuDS Manual (C753).

All drainage features will be located outside the fluvial and surface water flood extent.



Figure 32. SuDS Strategy Plan





5.9 SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE STRATEGY

Sustainable Drainage Features

Permeable Paving

Permeable paving intercepts and controls the rainwater where it falls.

Permeable paving can be used in driveways, parking areas and some roads. They allow water to soak through the surface into the gravel sub-base below.

Rain Gardens

Shallow landscaped depressions that can be used to enhance the capacity of the surface water piped drainage network by capturing and storing rainfall, allowing it to soak into the ground, or release it slowly back into the piped network.

They are flexible in design and are excellent examples of how SuDS components can be integrated into a streetscape without negatively impacting on the primary function of our streets and spaces.

Conveyance Swale

Shallow, open, vegetated naturalistic channels to store and/or convey run off and provide a diverse range of plants that are suited to the specific conditions of a SuDS swale (tolerant of varying water/moisture levels etc.) and where possible can integrate appropriate street tree planting.

Wet Attenuation Basin

Permanently wet, planted depressions with capacity to hold and convey excess stormwater during heavy rainfall, that have a high treatment, amenity and biodiversity value.

Basins to have varying depths and slope gradients for over-wintering areas as refuges for wildlife during severe winters.

Semi-Wet Attenuation Basin

Partial permanent water with the remaining area to detain and temporarily hold excess stormwater during heavy rainfall, controlling the rate at which it is released into downstream systems or the environment.

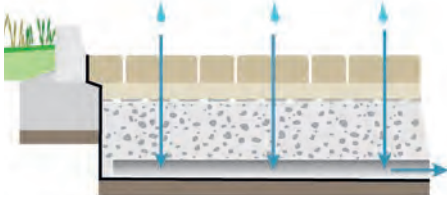
Semi-wet basins are multi-functional landscape features that offer many opportunities for the landscape design and provide biodiversity and amenity value.

Dry Attenuation Basin

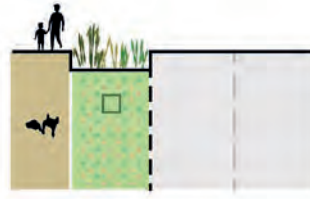
Planted depression with capacity to temporarily hold or detain excess stormwater during heavy rainfall, controlling the rate at which it is released into downstream systems or the environment.

Multi-functional landscape feature that combines sustainable drainage, biodiversity, informal sports, recreation, natural play and amenity value,

PERMABLE PAVING

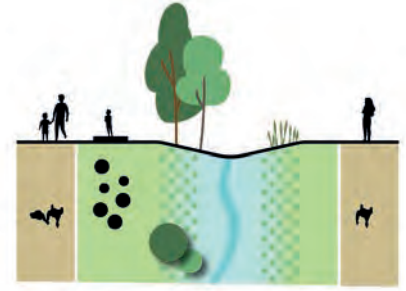


RAIN GARDENS



Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire

CONVEYANCE SWALE



Great Kneighton, Cambridgeshire

WET ATTENUATION BASIN



Abbey Barn, High Wycombe

SEMI-WET ATTENUATION BASIN



Warfield, Bracknell

DRY ATTENUATION BASIN



Warfield, Bracknell



5.10 SANG STRATEGY

Overall SANG Strategy

The Site is located within 5km of the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (SPA). Therefore in accordance with **Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update: Proposed Submission Plan 2023-2040', Policy NE3** it will require 13.23ha of SANG. This will ensure that any potential impacts on the SPA are fully avoided. The SANG will be delivered to **Natural England, 'Guidelines for Creation of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) - August 2021'**.

The SANG will provide a 2.3km circular walk and appropriately sized car park. The Proposed Development provides pedestrian/cycle links to connect the SANG with the wider PRoW network. The SANG will form an extension of Arborfield Green linear park, enhancing the wetland and wooded valley character of Barkham Brook, optimising its value for wildlife and unlocking a new Green Infrastructure corridor for both new and existing residents.

The SANG will also play a key role in ensuring Biodiversity Net Gain is met within the Proposed Development, through the creation of new habitats, such as wetlands and species rich grasslands and woodlands, as well as enhancing the existing Barkham Brook and Ancient Woodland habitats.

The inclusion of Ancient Woodland within the SANG provides the opportunity to control access and for it to be managed in a sympathetic manner, encouraging the establishment of a more diverse woodland, both with respect to structure and species present. Proposals also include a large area of hazel coppice and native woodland planting, seeking to reinstate the historic Kidgem Copse, with the proposed SANG circular walk following historic tracks through the proposed woodland. Areas of grassland and wildflower meadows are also proposed within the SANG, with additional areas of scrub and parkland trees, creating new valuable habitats and an attractive varied setting, attracting users to the SANG.

The boundary of the SANG will consist of a combination of existing and new planting and fencing. A native hedgerow with fencing will define the boundary to the east. There is no formal boundary proposed between the SANG and the adjacent open space to the west, allowing for a softer interface with the SuDS features and surrounding landscape, creating a more unified and naturalised edge. Hedgerow planting and fencing along the development edge will form a boundary to the natural/semi-natural open space, SuDS, and SANG providing enclosure and helping to soften the visual impact of housing and roads. The SANG proposals will be supported by a **General Arrangement BMD.23.0016.DR.P010, Planting Plan BMD.23.0016.DR.P301** and a **Management and Funding Plan**.



Enhance Ancient Woodland along Barkham Brook



Deangarden Ancient Woodland at Abbey Barn, High Wycombe



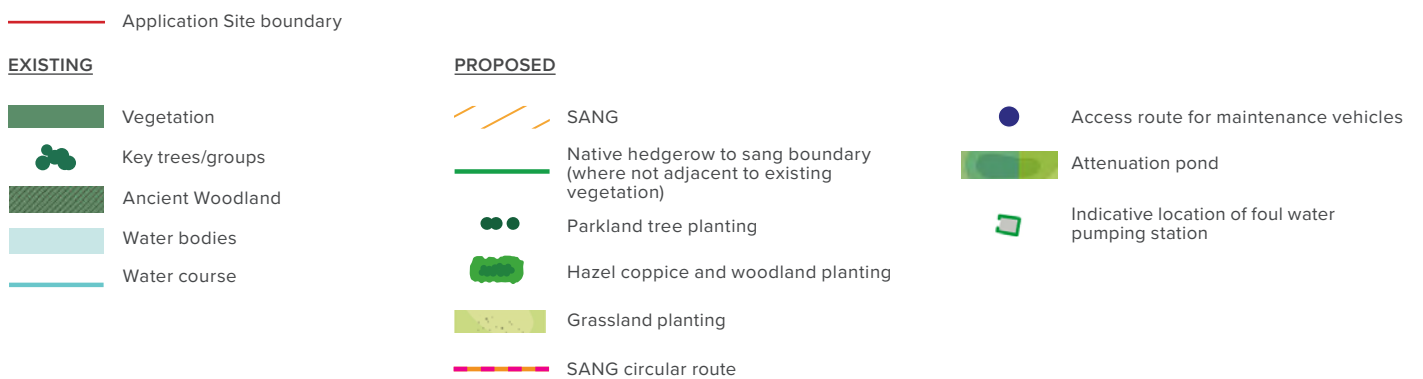
Species rich grassland



Hazel coppice



Figure 33. Landscape Masterplan





5.10 SANG STRATEGY

The features listed below have been considered as part of the overall SANG Strategy and have helped shape the SANG into a cohesive design.

- 1 SANG car park access from Commonfield Lane
- 2 Maintenance access to SANG from car park
- 3 SANG circular route
- 4 SANG circular route follows historic tracks associated with historic Kidgem Copse
- 5 Connections along development edges, allowing for ease of access for new residents into the SANG
- 6 Pedestrian connections from the wider Green Infrastructure network of Barkham Square
- 7 Connection from existing PRoW network, allowing for wider sustainable journeys to the SANG
- 8 Sensitive pedestrian crossings over Barkham Brook
- 9 Potential location of boardwalk
- 10 Native hedgerow to define boundary between proposed development edge, open space & SANG
- 11 Native hedgerow and fence to define boundary between retained pasture fields and SANG
- 12 Pumping station with hedgerow and tree planting to buffer and screen views from development and the SANG
- 13 Natural buffer between the SANG boundary provided by a variation of wet and dry SuDS ponds and open green space
- 14 Woodland planting to infill gaps between remnant blocks of Ancient Woodland, increasing the size and therefore ecological resilience of the woodland
- 15 Proposed hazel coppice and native woodland/shrub planting, strengthening the wildlife corridor and reinstating part of historic Kidgem Copse
- 16 Strips of native tree planting to screen and manage views in and out of the SANG, enhancing the user experience of being within a natural and quiet green space
- 17 Grassland and wildflower meadows with additional areas of scrub and parkland trees, creating new valuable habitats and an attractive varied setting, attracting users to the SANG



Figure 34. SANG Strategy Plan





5.10 SANG STRATEGY

SANG Sections

The following illustrative sections provide more details on the scale of the SANG and demonstrate how these spaces will relate to its surrounding context.

