

PRIORS FARM, SOUTH WOKINGHAM

Green Infrastructure Document

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Lightwood Strategic & Nicholas King Homes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) has been commissioned by Lightwood Strategic to provide a Landscape Strategy and Green Infrastructure Document in relation to Priors Farm, South Wokingham.

This document supports the emerging masterplan for the site and sets out further detail relating to the design approach. The key components of the Green Infrastructure strategy are as follows:

- 1 This Strategy is based on a robust assessment and evaluation of the existing site landscape character and a detailed understanding of the site's unique sense of place;
- 2 The Strategy considers the local surroundings and provides links to the existing landscape context;
- 3 Views to and from the surrounding landscape context are integrated into the site layout and the visual relationship between the development and the wider landscape forms a key component of the Landscape Strategy;
- 4 The Strategy aims to create a soft transition between the settlement edge and wider landscape context, creating a new positive settlement edge; and
- 5 High quality Green Infrastructure (GI) is embedded throughout the scheme, both enhancing existing vegetation and creation of new.

FOR EDP USE:

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SECTION 1

Introduction and Purpose

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) has been commissioned by Lightwood Strategic to provide a Green Infrastructure Strategy Document to support the planning application for development at Priors Farm, South Wokingham.

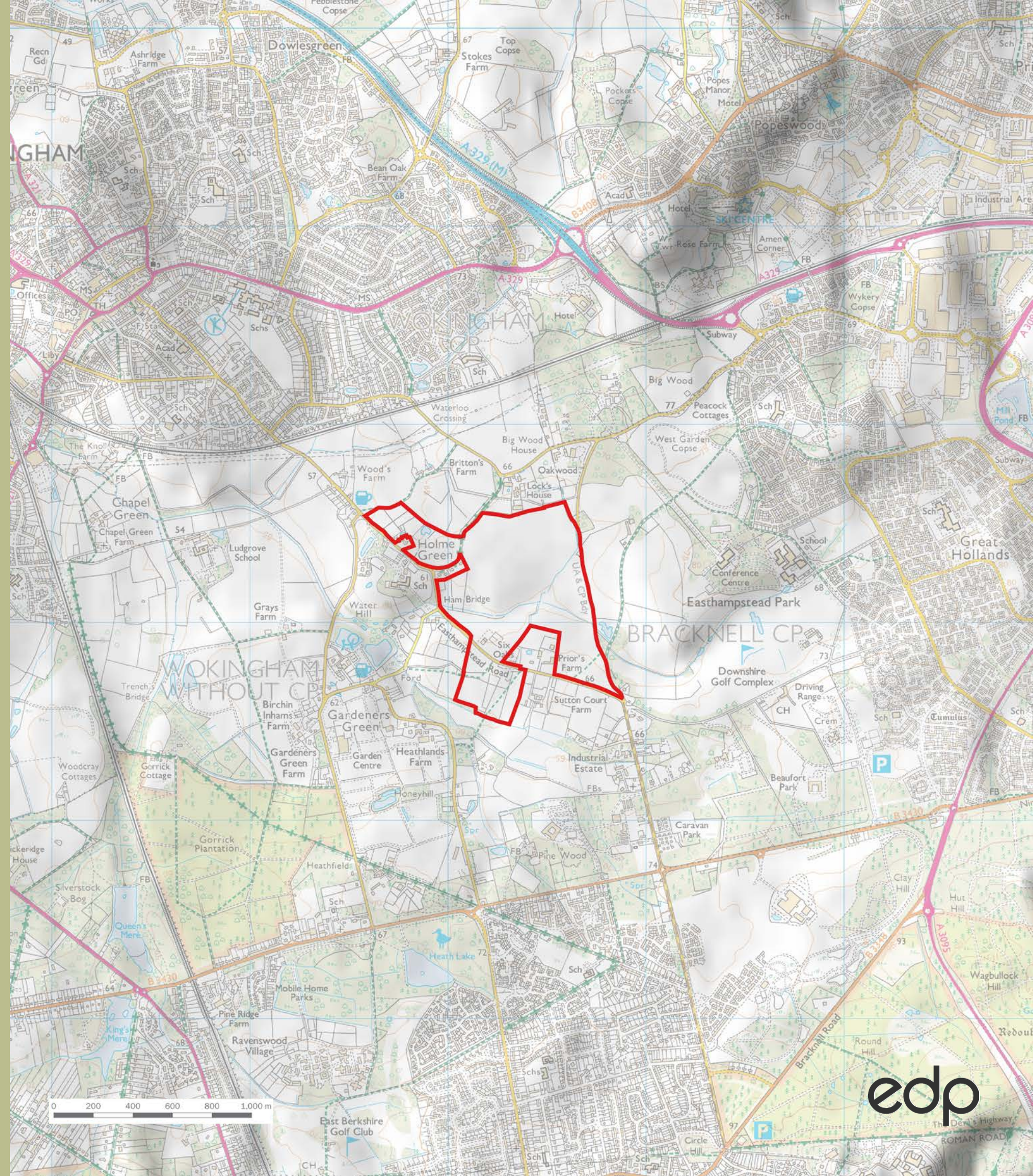
The site is located centrally between Wokingham, Bracknell and Crowthorne and comprises greenfield land set within a mosaic of agricultural field parcels. The site is divided up into multiple field parcels of varying shapes and sizes and is dissected by Easthampstead Road, which runs in a north-west south-east orientation through the site.

Due to the nature of the site, the main area is typical of arable farmland; generally open with landscape features predominately located along field boundaries. The site boundaries are generally well vegetated with pockets of woodland, mature hedgerow and hedgerow trees. The site also includes some existing development in the form of farmsteads, residential properties and agricultural buildings.

The development proposal would deliver a sustainable, landscape-led design which provides high-quality GI and accessible open space with links to the wider countryside.

The Green Infrastructure strategy draws on the local landscape character, ecological context and visual amenity of the site, providing a scheme which respects the sensitivity of the site and is well integrated into the surrounding landscape.

Site Location Plan 1:20,000 @ A3





1.2 PURPOSE

The document presents the initial design concepts and sets out the scope of a more detailed GI Strategy which will be developed as the design process evolves.

1.3 SETTING OUT THE APPROACH

This document provides detail on the approach to the GI Strategy, showing where the existing GI can be preserved, enhanced, connected and expanded to create a biodiverse and multi-functional landscape setting for the development:

Section 2 commences with a detailed site assessment, landscape character evaluation and review of policy and best practice guidance. It also explains the Landscape and Visual Baseline Assessment work undertaken as well as summarising how this informs the landscape design process;

Section 3 presents details of the project concepts and how this will inform the design and development of a masterplan using the landscape and habitat structure of the site as a starting point.

1.4 WHAT IS GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE?

GI is a key component in delivering sustainable development. It provides an opportunity to achieve biodiversity net gain (BNG) and enhances the landscape quality of a development area. It can be defined as the following:

According to the European Commission:

“Green infrastructure is a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services”.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) glossary defines GI as:

“A network of multi-functional green spaces and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and well-being benefits to nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity”.

GI can comprise a wide range of features, such as parks, gardens, green spaces, green roofs, green walls, street trees, verges along roads, meadows, wetlands, rivers, canals and lakes, because of the inclusion of lakes and waterways it is sometimes called ‘green and blue infrastructure’.

SECTION 2

Site Assessment

2.1 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

NATIONAL PLANNING AND POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF) 2023

The NPPF sets out strategic planning policies for England. It emphasises a presumption in favour of sustainable development and identifies key requirements to ensure an appropriate design response.

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH CORE STRATEGY (2010)

The adopted local plan is a collection of planning documents, including the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy, which includes over-arching general development policies, to which the development proposals should reflect. Policies that are specific to the site in landscape and visual terms are briefly summarised below.

Policy CP3: Landscape development that demonstrates the appropriate use of landscaping to contribute to the creation of sense of place.

Policy CP7: The appropriate conservation and retention of landscape features and biodiversity that are considered locally important.

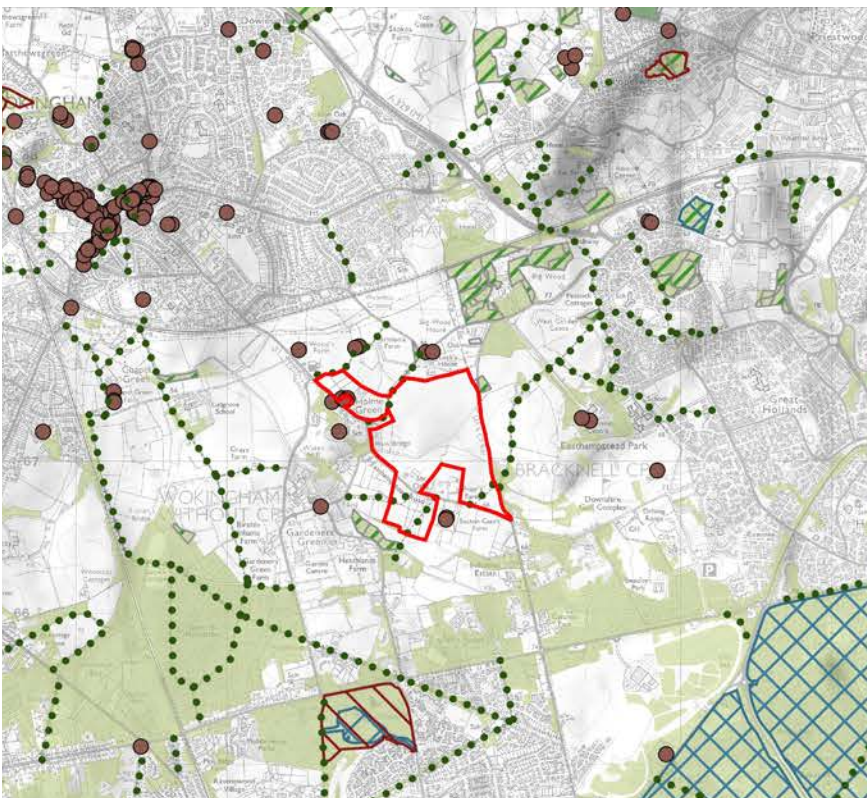
2.2 SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The GI Strategy will be underpinned by best practice design principles and will adhere to the following supplementary planning documentation:

- Wokingham Borough Council Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD
- South Wokingham Strategic Development Location SPD
- Play Space Design Guide Technical Note
- Fields in Trust Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play (England)

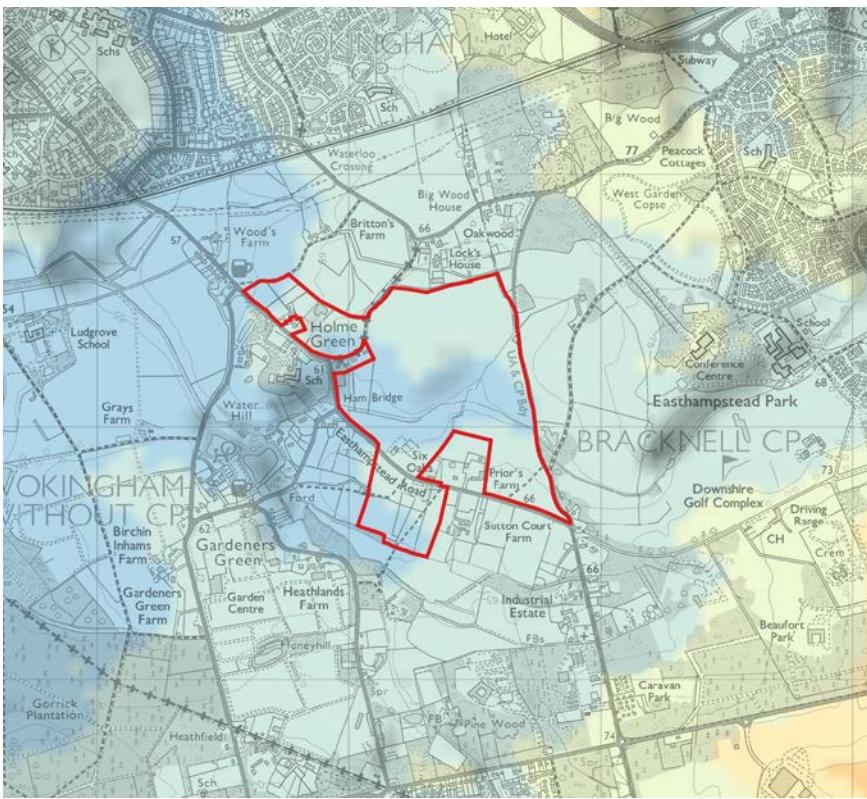
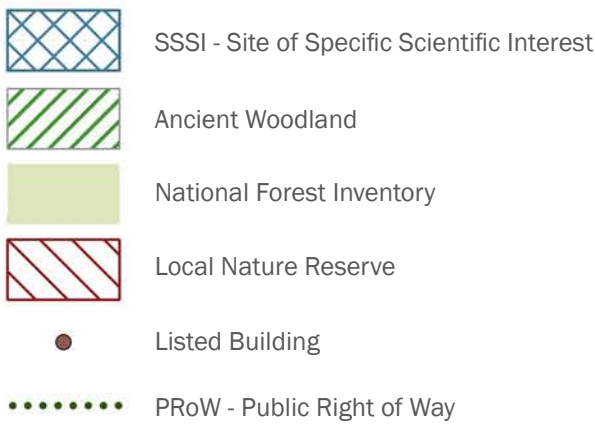


2.3 BASELINE MAPPING



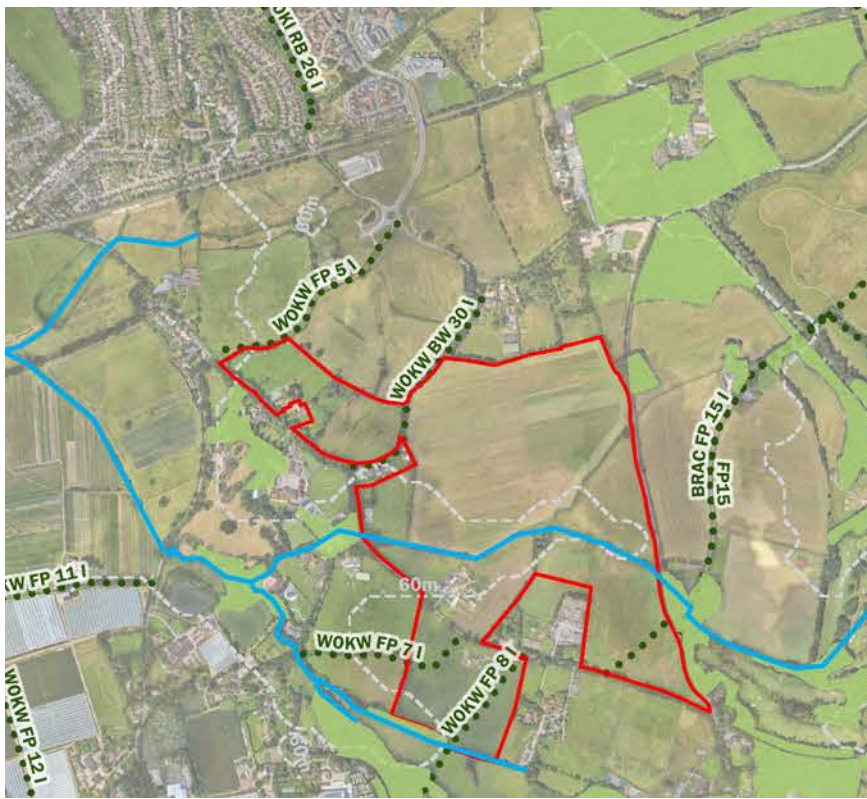
DESIGNATIONS

The site is not located within and does not contain a designated landscape. Nor is it subject to any historic or emerging local plan designation relevant to matters of landscape value.



TOPOGRAPHY

The site is generally flat with a gentle fall inwards towards the water course, which runs east to west through the centre of the site. Across the entire site, there is a c.15m difference in levels from approximately 65m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) to the north and south and 50m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) along the water course.



LANDSCAPE FABRIC

The site contains a Public Right of Way (PRoW) within the north-western section. The byway (Ref: WOKW BW 30 I) runs along Holme Grange Lane connecting Easthampstead Road and Waterloo Road.

PRoW WOKW FP 6/I is a footpath located to the south-east extending across the site from Easthampstead Road to the eastern boundary at Old Wokingham Road. A further two PRoWs (WOKW FP 7/I and WOKW FP 8/I) also cross the site from Easthampstead Road but in a south-westerly direction.

The site is dominated by medium sized open pastoral farming with enclosing trees and hedgerows in declining condition, and settlement edge equestrian and hobby farm use. An existing watercourse bisects the site, along which can be found scrubby vegetation.

