

Appeal Decision

Inquiry held on 18 – 21 and 26 March 2025

Site visit made on 21 March 2025

by **Andrew McGlone BSc MCD MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29th May 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/24/3354667

Land adjacent to Blagrove Lane, Wokingham RG41 4AX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Berkeley Strategic Land Limited against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
- The application Ref is 222306.
- The development proposed is an outline application, with all matters reserved except for access, for the proposed erection of up to 350 dwellings (Use Class C3) and care home (Use Class C2), with new accesses onto Barkham Road and Blagrove Lane, landscaping and onsite SANG, following demolition of outbuildings and agricultural buildings.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and outline planning permission is granted with all matters reserved except for access, for the proposed erection of up to 350 dwellings (Use Class C3) and care home (Use Class C2), with new accesses onto Barkham Road and Blagrove Lane, landscaping and onsite SANG, following demolition of outbuildings and agricultural buildings at land adjacent to Blagrove Lane, Wokingham RG41 4AX in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 222306, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. The application subject of this appeal was submitted in outline form, with all matters reserved for future consideration, except for access details. However, the access details submitted only relate to the initial section of the proposed accesses from Barkham Road, the northern emergency access off Blagrove Lane, the proposed northern access off Blagrove Lane and the proposed southern access off Blagrove Lane. The access details provided do not include land away from those access points, save for the approximate identification of the primary street, secondary street and tertiary street locations and pedestrian and cycle routes. Therefore, further access details would need to form part of any reserved matters application(s), so my consideration of access matters is limited to those submitted.
3. Alongside the various access plans and the site location plan, I have considered the three demolition plans; a proposed land use and access parameter plan; a building heights plan; a green infrastructure (“GI”) parameter plan; a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (“SANG”) general arrangement plan; and a SANG management strategy. There are several illustrative plans before me also¹ which are potential ways that the site could be developed. I have considered the appeal based on the plans for which the appellant has sought approval, which do not include the illustrative plans.
4. Shortly after the Inquiry closed, the appellant submitted a signed and dated s106

¹ Statement of Common Ground, Paragraph 3.3

agreement (“s106 agreement”). The main parties agree that the s106 agreement secures the provision of affordable housing, highway infrastructure, measures to develop local employability skills, public open space (“POS”) and allotment infrastructure, and SANG provision. Hence, they consider that the s106 agreement addresses the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth reasons for refusing planning permission. I will come to the s106 agreement later in my decision.

5. For clarity I used the following terms to express my opinion of the weight that different matters carry: very substantial, substantial, significant, moderate, limited, and neutral. They will be expressed either in the context of a harm or benefit.

Main Issues

6. The main issues are: (a) whether the proposal would accord with the spatial strategy in the development plan; (b) whether the proposed development would cause the coalescence of Wokingham and Barkham; (c) the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, including on the surrounding landscape and Bottle Copse Local Wildlife Site (“LWS”); (d) the effect of the proposed development on the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (“SPA”); and (e) whether the proposed development would make adequate provision for affordable housing, the care home, on and off-site highway works, sustainable travel infrastructure, public open space and allotment facilities, local employment skills, and the NHS.

Reasons

The appeal site

7. The appeal site is on the southwestern edge of Wokingham, the principal settlement in the borough with a range of facilities and services available, and to the southeast of Barkham. It comprises a series of agricultural fields, lined by hedgerows, trees (some are protected) and ditches, and includes several small-scale outbuildings and agricultural buildings to the south of the site. Barkham Road to the north of the site connects Wokingham and Barkham. Doles Lane (a Byway Open to All Traffic) extends from Barkham, along the site’s western edge before connecting with Blagrove Lane, which extends alongside and through the eastern part of the appeal site up to Barkham Road. To the west of Blagrove Lane are Leslie Sears Playing Field and Viking Field.
8. In the northern part of the site, to the south of Backham Road, is Bottle Copse, a woodland and a LWS. This is covered by a blanket Tree Preservation Order (“TPO”). Ancient woodland is adjacent to the northeast of the appeal site. The site is located within the 5-7km buffer zone for the SPA.

Spatial strategy

9. Policy CP17 of the Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (“CS”) says that provision will be made for the development of at least 13,230 dwellings and associated development and infrastructure in the Borough in the period 2006-2026, for which substantial investment in infrastructure will be required. The policy goes on to explain where the minimum numeric total will be delivered across the borough. This is to deliver the requirements of the abolished South East Plan (“SEP”). The appeal proposal is not located in one of the listed locations.
10. Policy CC02 of the Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (“MDD”) sets the development limits for each settlement in the borough. Although the appeal site lies at the edge of Wokingham, it is outside of the development limit, and it is not one of the Strategic Development Locations identified in the

development plan. As such, the site lies within the countryside and does not accord with MDD Policy CC02. The site's natural green space does, however, fall within the MDD's definition of GI, which has a number of objectives.

11. CS Policy CP11 restricts development in the countryside to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment. None of the stated exceptions apply in CS Policy CP11 to the proposal, but the policy provides some flexibility due to the phrase 'will not normally be permitted'. To my mind this allows a decision-maker to come to judgement about a proposal where it broadly meets the exceptions but not wholly yet still achieves the policy's purpose. That is not the situation here because the proposal's scale would not, for reasons that I will explain, maintain the quality of the environment, and there would be resultant conflict with CS Policy CP1 1) and MDD Policy TB21. I see no reason to take a more flexible approach given the proposal would result in the loss of existing GI on the site, even though some would be protected and enhanced and new GI added.
12. CS Policy CP9 says that the scale of development proposals in Wokingham borough must reflect the existing or proposed levels of facilities and services at or in the location, together with their accessibility. This policy, however, relates to sites within development limits. Hence, the appeal scheme conflicts with this policy, a view also expressed in two other recent appeal decisions².
13. But, even if the appellant is correct that this policy is not directly relevant to the proposal given the site's location outside of the settlement boundaries, I would be in the same place; that the development proposed would conflict with the Council's spatial strategy owing to the scheme's location and thus conflict with MDD Policy CC02 and CS Policy CP11. CS Policy CP17 is based on a minimum quantum of homes, and the listed locations broadly equate to that quantity. While there would be no conflict insofar as an overprovision of the number of homes stated, the proposal would conflict with this policy as an extension of the scheme's conflict with the other spatial strategy policies which give spatial application to CS Policy CP17's housing requirement. The loss of GI caused by the proposal would result in conflict with MDD Policy CC03 2a) and 3.
14. Despite the identified policy conflict, the CS was adopted based on the requirements of the SEP prior to the first publication of the Framework in 2012, which introduced a shift in approach to boost significantly the supply of housing. Hence, the CS's approach to the delivery of housing did not follow the Framework's method, and it has not been reviewed since it was adopted. Thus, the CS's assessment of development needs does not reflect the current and previous versions of the Framework, which have housing requirement figures of 1,336 dwellings per annum ("dpa") and 748 dpa respectively.
15. Consequently, the housing requirement has now considerably increased compared to CS Policy CP17, and it is inconsistent with the Framework's aim of significantly boosting the supply of housing and meeting an area's identified housing need. By extension MDD Policy CC02 and CS Policies CP9 and CP11 are also inconsistent with the Framework as they limit where development can go based on delivering the housing requirement in CS Policy CP17. Hence, this affects where the housing required to meet a higher level could potentially go.
16. The purposes of CS Policies CP9 and CP11 are to identify appropriate and sustainable areas for development that are well located for facilities and services,

² CD10.2 and CD10.5

to protect the identity of settlements, and maintain the quality of the environment. These purposes are consistent with the aims of the Framework. However, despite recent Housing Delivery Test performances, the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The latest agreed position is a supply of 1.7 years, which has decision-making consequences that I shall come to later, in that the most important policies for determining this application are deemed to be out of date.

17. I note the borough's housing requirement rose due to last December's Framework publication, but even prior to that appeal decisions³ show a progressively declining supply of deliverable sites (ranging from 4.84 years to 3.2 years pre-December 2024 Framework) against either a four or five year minimum as dictated by the Framework at the time of each decision. I put this down to the development plan coming towards the end of its plan period and delivering on what was a lower housing requirement, albeit one that was not a ceiling. Furthermore, planning permissions have been granted for housing schemes outside of the borough's settlement limits. Hence, the current supply position is not solely down to the national policy change, which has only seen the supply position decline further.
18. I note that the Council has submitted the Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040: Proposed Submission Plan ("emerging plan") for Examination in Public ("EiP"). The Council anticipates the hearing sessions will be complete by the end of 2025 and the emerging plan to be adopted around May 2026, and at this point, the borough's housing land supply position will be above the minimum five years. However, the EiP is at an early stage, and hearing sessions are yet to take place, and there is no indication of the Examining Inspectors view on the emerging plan.
19. While the appeal site may not be a proposed allocation, I need to consider this appeal on its own merits. It is a matter for the Examining Inspectors to determine whether the emerging plan is sound or not. Nevertheless, it is not certain that the Council's expectations on timescales will occur, and at best the emerging plan will not be adopted until this time next year. Thus, the current housing land supply position will not change overnight, and it may be that the emerging plan will look to allocate more housing sites in the countryside, and that may well be necessary.
20. For the time being, I consider CS Policies CP9, CP11, CP17 and MDD Policy CC02 frustrate the delivery of housing at the level that is required. They are therefore inconsistent with the Framework's objective to meet an area's identified need. However, that does not mean that those out-of-date policies (not only deemed out of date) carry no or little weight. In my opinion, given the purposes of the policies, they carry moderate weight, and moderate material harm would arise from the proposal's conflict with the spatial strategy.
21. I give full weight to the significant material harm that would occur with MDD Policy CC03 2a) and 3 due to the Framework's aim to maintain and enhance GI.

Coalescence

22. The appeal site's rural character abuts the settlement boundary of Barkham to the northwest. It then extends behind the linear development along Doles Lane that lies outside of the settlement boundary of Barkham, around the dwellings at the junction of Doles Lane and Blagrove Lane, and to the rear of dwellings on Evendon Lane which form part of the southwestern edge of Wokingham, before it extends next to the western edge of Wokingham and returns to Barkham Road.

³ CD10.1, CD10.2, CD10.3, CD10.4 and CD10.6

23. The appeal site plays a functional role in separating the settlements of Wokingham and Barkham. This is reflected in the aim found in the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment⁴ ("LCA") to integrate new development into its landscape setting and retain the open and rural character of the landscape between settlements. Moreover, the potential effect of extensive development on the east of Wokingham is identified in the aspirations and spatial issues for the borough detailed in the CS⁵. Meanwhile CS Policy CP11 seeks to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment.
24. Both settlements have a defined settlement boundary. The western edge of Wokingham's reflects the extent of existing built form but does not include Leslie Sears Playing Field or Viking Field to the east of Blagrove Lane. Barkham's extends westwards roughly from the sign on Barkham Road, which clearly indicates the start and end of this part of Barkham. The settlement boundary does not include the linear development along Doles Lane which extends southwards away from Barkham Road. Although the settlement boundary is more tightly drawn, there is no understanding that you have left Barkham until the end of the row of dwellings on the eastern side of Doles Lane. From here, there are views across to dwellings on Blagrove Lane on Wokingham's existing western edge. However, there is no visual understanding of Barkham from Blagrove Lane, Evendons Lane, or Barkham Road within Wokingham.
25. While the gap between Wokingham and Barkham is not specifically identified in the development plan, CS Policy CP11 aims to prevent the coalescence of settlements in the borough. The appeal site provides a physical and visual buffer between the two settlements, helping maintain their separate identity, even at their closest point along Barkham Road, where there is not an understanding that upon leaving one settlement, you are almost about to enter another. The Bottle Copse LWS allied with the curve and gradient of Barkham Road informs that character.
26. The proposed quantum of development would not occupy the entire site as despite the outline nature of the scheme, the land use and access parameter plan, GI parameter plan and the SANG general arrangement plan would all be fixed if the appeal is allowed. This would likely mean that built form would occupy land either side of Blagrove Lane, with that abutting Wokingham's settlement boundary and extending towards Doles Lane. Leslie Sears Playing Field and Viking Field would then lie between the existing edge of Wokingham and the development's proposed eastern edge. However, the development would be read and understood as forming the new physical and visual western edge of Wokingham. Moreover, part of the borough's existing GI network would be lost due to the proposed built form.
27. There are currently views across to dwellings on the existing western edge of Wokingham on Blagrove Lane from Doles Lane. That would change, with a new western edge of Wokingham brought closer to Doles Lane. The location and extent of the SANG (secured in perpetuity) and the proposed new wet woodland would mean that no built form would occupy the northern and western parts of the site. Hence, the proposed new built edge of Wokingham would not directly adjoin Barkham's settlement boundary or people's understanding of Barkham on the ground if that includes the linear development on Doles Lane. However, Wokingham's new edge would be readily understood from Doles Lane (and the rear of numerous houses along it) to be considerably closer to Barkham, and the development would also spill northwards towards the residential development and

⁴ CD6.2, Character Area J2, Landscape Strategy

⁵ CD5.1, Paragraph 2.84

POS on the western side of Blagrove Lane. The illustrative landscape buffers along the western edge of the development would assist but not screen the scale, massing and quantity of housing proposed even if they were strengthened and the alternative ecological habitats were still delivered in this area.

28. The proposal would also change the site's relationship with Barkham, as the SANG would enable public access and alter the land's current function, character and appearance, despite it being of a semi-natural state. The SANG would not be an urban park, and it is within the Council's gift to ensure that would not be the case due to the proposed planning conditions and the s106 agreement. The SANG would act as a buffer between the two settlements; nevertheless, circular paths would provide a greater understanding of the proximity of the two settlements at different points along the western side of the site.
29. Introducing a new access on Barkham Road between the two settlements would result in Bottle Copse LWS being severed by an access road that would have regular vehicular movements along it and to/from it onto Barkham Road. The access road would see several trees removed and alterations made to the Barkham Road corridor to provide visibility splays, a turning lane, pedestrian crossing points, and a pedestrian footway that would extend into the appeal site. These typical road features would not look out of place on Barkham Road, but they would signify a new road junction and introduce a new corridor of movement, which would be regularly and routinely used, and a perception that the road leads to somewhere between the two settlements. That would alter people's current experience of departing/arriving at Barkham and Wokingham even though none of the proposed residential development would be visible from Barkham Road.
30. The new edge of Wokingham may be numerically further away from Barkham than is currently the case along Barkham Road if the site were developed as envisaged and the access road effect were set aside, but the two settlements would still be far closer together when judged from Doles Lane and from within the appeal site.
31. I conclude, on this issue, that the proposal would result in a visual and perceived coalescence of Barkham and Wokingham even though the proposed built form would not cause physical coalescence. This would be due to the quantum, scale and location of the development, the changed land use and public access. The SANG would not prevent the proposal causing significant harm. Hence, conflict would arise with CS Policies CP1, CP3 a) and f) and CP11 and MDD Policy CC03 2a), d) and 3. Jointly these policies, among other things, seek development to maintain the separate identity of settlements and maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment, to be of an appropriate scale, layout and character to the area and contribute to a sense of place in buildings and spaces and the way that they integrate with their surroundings, including the use of landscaping.
32. The Council refers to MDD Policy TB21 on this issue, but that policy is more relevant to the next main issue rather than the coalescence points.

Character and appearance

The baseline

33. The appeal site does not lie within a valued landscape, but it does have value as it lies within the J2 area⁶ which comprises 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 J2 area

⁶ Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay Landscape Character Area

extends across part of Wokingham, Barkham, Arborfield Cross, Arborfield Green, land between them, and part of Sindlesham. The LCA identifies its key characteristics, which include a wooded context, arable farming, small-scale wet woodland and wetland habitats often designated as LWS, and a network of busy local roads across the area which tend to be rural in character, with ditches, hedges and hedgerow trees sometimes opening directly onto the arable fields, and a dense settled character influenced by modern development.

34. The appeal site and the surrounding area reflect the LCA's key characteristics. The LCA assesses the J2 area as being in a moderate condition, and the landscape strategy for the area is "to conserve and enhance the remaining rural character of the landscape"....and "to integrate new development into its landscape setting and retain the open and rural character of the landscape between settlements".⁷
35. The main parties have both carried out a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment ("LVIA"). Despite the appellant recognising that the appeal site reflects the LCA's key characteristics, their LVIA has not included the site within its study area. The Council's LVIA includes more receptors, but in my experience the landscape's qualities are understood to different extents from various points around the appeal site. Some points provide clear views and understanding of it, others reduce that, and others provide limited views and understanding. The combination of existing development, mature vegetation and woodland (even in winter months), the alignment of roads and footpaths, and ground levels all affect people's appreciation of the landscape character of the site and its surroundings. This also means that there is not a wider understanding of the landscape that the appeal site lies within beyond a short distance away.
36. Even so, the appellant says that the landscape has medium to high value and a moderate to high sensitivity. The Council says that a moderate sensitivity better reflects the landscape, but there are parts with a higher sensitivity. I prefer the appellant's assessment due to the site's location outside of any settlement boundary, its settlement-separating function and its landscape elements.

The proposed SANG – a semi-natural space?

37. Before I address the scheme's potential effects, the proposed SANG is, in part, mitigation, but any excess SANG could be made available to mitigate other nearby development. But, despite its primary role, it would be a semi-natural space. This can be controlled by planning condition and the s106 agreement so that it would not have a semi-urban feel.
38. Looking beyond that point of principle, electricity pylons and overhead power lines are common features in rural areas despite their function and appearance. So too are roads. Planting could help soften the road's presence once it leaves Bottle Copse. The paths would likely loop around the SANG and enable users to view the development and its surroundings from different vantage points, but they need to facilitate access for all and fulfil the purpose of a SANG, which is to divert pressure away from the SPA. They do, however, provide opportunity for onward journeys and details could be secured of how they would be laid out and how landscaping would be structured within the SANG to create a semi-natural feel.
39. Furthermore, the play area to the south of the site could reflect the character and appearance of a semi-natural space in terms of the layout of equipment, surfacing,

⁷ Landscape SoCG, Paragraphs 2.3.5 – 2.3.8

and the materials used. This could look and feel very different from any urban children's play area while serving the purpose of the SANG. Lastly, the part of the SANG which would likely be close to the developable area to the north of the play area is a small section of the overall SANG and the detailed design of the development could come forward to respond to the larger areas of the SANG.

The proposal's effect

Landscape

40. The proposal would fundamentally change what is a largely undeveloped greenfield site and introduce a residential land use. Development on such sites is not precluded by the Framework, but the proposal would result in a permanent change with immediate effects due to the introduction of built form, despite the retention of existing landscaping and landscape features. New planting would be added, but this would not be established and would take some time before its full potential is realised. The proposal's greatest effect would be during its construction and the initial years post-completion from the various points around the site.
41. Looking further into the future, the topography of the site would largely be retained, and new recreational connections would be formed through the site, including in Bottle Copse LWS, and to neighbouring routes. But the proposed access road through Bottle Copse LWS would fracture the woodland and cause a permanent loss of it with new urban form and movement created instead. New wet woodland planting to the south of Bottle Copse would, over time, mature and extend the existing woodland, and, in part, mitigate for the lost woodland. The woodland would be part of the SANG which would be managed, but the development would still have an adverse effect here.
42. Ecological measures would be taken to provide connectivity and suitable habitat. Nevertheless, the effect would be particularly harmful during the construction phase and in the initial years due to the stark change and urban form created. Other ecological habitats that would be created would be mitigation and would not be akin to the site's existing undeveloped rural character.
43. There would be some variation in effect along the Blagrove Lane corridor, but there would be a considerable influx of development on either side of the road along a stretch of the lane where there is currently no or very little development. There would be a loss of the fields. This, together with the new accesses, would, despite the change to a section of the lane to non-motorised traffic, bring additional movement over and above that which currently uses the lane. Trees and hedgerows would be retained and enhanced, but their context would alter, as would the rural character that adjoins them. From Blagrove Lane, the wooded context to the north, proposed wet woodland and hedgerow retention would not be understood at all or widely understood due to the extent, layout and likely scale and massing of the proposed development.
44. Green landscaped corridors would break up the development's massing, but the proposal would be at considerable odds with the open rural landscape character, particularly to the west of the lane, thereby harming the existing sense of place and altering the landscape's key characteristics. Over time, landscaping will mature and soften the development but not change its adverse effect and conflict with the landscape's character, particularly at the northern end of the lane.
45. Viking Field and Leslie Sears Playing Field are both accessible, well-used recreation spaces. From various points on Viking Field there is an understanding of the landscape character to the west. That would be considerably damaged and

diminished. There would also be a diminished sense of place from Leslie Sears Playing Field due to the proximity of new development, given that the local community knows that the land abuts countryside. However, owing to the landscaped western boundary, which could be bolstered and mature over time, I consider that the harm caused, especially in future years, would be more limited from Leslie Sears Playing Field.

46. From the end of the dwellings lining Doles Lane, there is a clear understanding of the appeal site's wooded context, hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and its rural character owing to the open fields that extend right up to the current edge of Wokingham. Although the SANG would be delivered up front, this and any landscape buffer along the eastern edge of the development would take time to develop. As the planting matures, it would help reflect the landscape's key characteristics. In time, there would be a small adverse effect.
47. For these reasons, while not entirely, I prefer the Council's analysis of the proposal's effect on landscape character for the appeal site and its close surroundings, but I agree with the appellant's assessment about the proposal's effect further away from the site. The proposal's harmful effects in landscape terms are not limited to areas where the character and appearance of the proposed SANG would be the sole difference between the parties' views, in my opinion.

Visual

48. Visually, the proposal's effect would be felt at various points around the site. At its highest, this would be during the construction phase and in the initial years post completion. Those effects would be visually harmful, albeit time limited. Over time people would adjust the development's presence, its layout, scale and massing. They would also see that development in amongst existing and new, yet maturing, landscaping. But visual harm would still arise, in my view, even in the long term.
49. Logically harm is more likely to arise on a greenfield site such as this compared to one that is previously developed. However, while views from Viking Field are not, and would not be, of the whole site, they would be considerably degraded and diminished through the introduction of blocks of dwellings close to Viking Field. Landscaping would assist, but the existing boundary is not densely vegetated, and the likely space available along the site's south-eastern boundary would not allow for a deep landscape buffer. The proposal would also consequentially change Viking Field into an urban park.
50. People's visual experience changes as they travel along Blagrove Lane, whether that be north/south or south/north. This is because of existing vegetation, the topography of the road, and adjoining land uses. That would fundamentally alter with the closure of a section of the lane to motorised traffic and the addition of blocks of built form on either side of the lane. Although a landscaped corridor would be retained and enhanced, this would not avoid a harmful long-term visual effect from being experienced, whether that be at the southern end of the site or the northern end, where people would no longer experience the open rural character of undeveloped fields with a wooded context in the distance. There would also be a changed role for hedgerows on the site, which are currently a feature of the landscape, and a loss of wooded horizons.
51. Along Barkham Road, people would become familiar with the proposed access road and footpaths within the woodland, but the access road would, in particular, cause an adverse long-term visual effect due to the segregation and loss of the woodland and movement through it. Planting alongside the access road would

help mitigate, but not prevent, the visual effect of an urban road and its associated movement, noise and light transcending through an established woodland. The formation of other ecological habitats in the woodland would be mitigation and would not be akin to the site's existing undeveloped rural character.

52. The proposed dwellings would not be far from Doles Lane, and they would be clearly visible along the stretch of Doles Lane between the linear row of dwellings and Hutts Farmhouse. Any buffer along the development's eastern edge would take time to develop and would require careful thought to ensure that it forms a strong landscaped edge to the development and the SANG so that the latter's semi-natural character is achieved. However, this view would be in the context of the existing pylons, and while there would be a visual shift from a quiet rural lane to one that is near a large housing development, I consider the harm caused would be limited, albeit the proposal would damage the landscape's characteristics.
53. I had regard to both parties' LVIA's but find myself somewhere between the two LVIA's in terms of visual effect for Doles Lane. That said, I consider that the Council's assessment better reflects the proposal's likely visual effect, though I have formed my own view.

Conclusion on the main issue

54. The proposal would have a localised effect from multiple points around the site and reflect how the development would be experienced. The proposal would generate landscape and visual effects in the construction period, short and long term, and cause a permanent change to the landscape. The proposal would not accord with the landscape strategy and key characteristics for the J2 area in the LCA. In doing so, the proposal would cause a quantitative loss of woodland and a loss of the wooded horizons as well as several ditches and native hedgerows.
55. The introduction of a new large-scale residential development would not necessarily improve the existing edge of Wokingham, given that it is bound by roads or vegetated boundaries. Instead, it would realise one of the key issues facing the LCA and not accord with its landscape strategy. There is, however, a higher bar set by CS Policy CP1, CP3 and MDD Policies CC03 and TB21 compared to the Framework in that they place an 'absolute' on no harm arising. Taken literally, this means a single tree cannot be lost regardless of the overall scheme, but the broad thrust of these policies is consistent with the Framework's aim to minimise impacts and provide net gains for biodiversity.
56. That said, I conclude that the proposal would not accord with CS Policies CP1 1), CP3 a), c) and f), and CP11 and MDD Policies CC03 2a) and d) and 3 and TB21, and the material harm arising from that conflict would be moderate. These policies attract full weight due to their consistency with the Framework, save for CS Policy CP11 for the reasons explained. Jointly they seek, among other things, to address the requirements of the LCA and to retain or enhance the condition, character, high quality and features of the landscape. The proposal would not accord with Framework paragraphs 135 c) and 187 a) as well as the Borough Design Supplementary Planning Document ("SPD").
57. I do, however, consider there would be no conflict with CS Policy CP3 b) given that this is an outline scheme with all matters reserved except for certain access details, and there are no accessibility and safety issues with the scheme.

Thames Basin Health Special Protection Area

58. The appeal site is around 5.1km from the SPA, which is protected site under the

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (“the Regulations”). Regulation 63(1) requires a Competent Authority (“CA”) to make an Appropriate Assessment (“AA”) of the implications of any plan or project potentially affecting a site with regard to the site’s conservation objectives. Regulation 63(5) says that the CA may, in light of the conclusions of the AA, agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site.

59. The Council completed an AA as part of the planning application, and I have had regard to the parties’ agreed AA SoCG submitted as part of the appeal. I have also had regard to Natural England’s (“NE”) response after the Inquiry closed in which they confirm that they agree with the content of the AA SoCG.
60. The appeal scheme is not directly connected with or necessary for the nature conservation of the SPA, and the main parties and NE consider that any net increase in residential development of greater than 50 dwellings within 5-7km of the SPA is likely, alone or in combination, to result in likely significant effects on the SPA due to additional recreational disturbance of the features of interest without mitigation. I agree that there is a strong potential of additional recreational activity arising from the proposed development and thus disturbance, which would be likely to have a significant effect on the SPA’s integrity, given the scale and type of proposed development and its proximity to the SPA.
61. The AA SoCG outlines that mitigation in line with The Thames Basin Heaths Delivery Framework (“TBHDF”) must be provided through a combination of SANG and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Measures (“SAMM”) on the SPA itself. A SANG is proposed as part of the appeal scheme. For residential developments of the scale and location proposed, the need for SANGs and SAMM is assessed on an individual basis and in consultation with NE, but SANG provision is generally provided at a rate of 2ha per 1,000 population.
62. NE have assessed the proposed SANG. Having regard to their comments, a narrow area of an earlier version of the proposed SANG has been removed from the total SANG area proposed to reflect the constraints of that section of the SANG. The section of path will count towards the overall length of the SANG’s circular walk and be managed as SANG but it will not count in quantum terms as SANG. On balance, having regard to the 2021 SANG Guidelines, taking this into account and the proposed connections to wider routes and GI, together with the current lack of public access to the appeal site, I agree with NE’s assessment that this is an exceptional case for a single path arrangement.
63. The overall quantity of SANG proposed here is also considerably greater than what is required. Excess SANG can be made available to mitigate the effects of other nearby development. The s106 agreement will secure the SANG in perpetuity for both eventualities and mean that the Council would take over the long-term management of the SANG once it is transferred from the appellant. I also agree with NE that the remainder of the SANG would be functional and would provide mitigation for the development’s impact on SPA. A planning condition could be imposed to secure a SANG Management Strategy. Added to this, the SANG would be delivered before any dwelling on the site is occupied so that the mitigation is in place before any home is first occupied.
64. I consider that the required mitigation can, and would be, secured through the s106 agreement and planning conditions and that the proposal would accord with the SANG Guidelines. I concur with NE, who do not object to the proposed

development on this basis. This leads me to conclude that there are mitigation measures capable of reducing the adverse effect identified. The proposal would therefore accord with CS Policies CP7 and CP8, MDD Policy TB23, saved SEP Policy NRM6, Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, Regulation 63(5) the Regulations, and TBHDF, which collectively seek development alone or in combination not to have a significant effect on the SPA, and if so, provide adequate mitigation to avoid and mitigate any potential adverse effect.

Planning obligation

65. The completed s106 agreement would secure various obligations, including a quantum and tenure mix of affordable housing compliant with CS CP5 if the Council elects not to take up the care home aspect of the proposal (Option 1). However, should the Council decide to take up the care home, a sub-policy compliant affordable housing offer of 35% would be secured (Option 2). Option 2 would conflict with CS Policy CP5, as it would be below the 40% minimum sought, and no viability case has been made by the appellant to justify lowering that requirement. As such, in this eventuality, the proposal would not help meet this accommodation need of the borough, albeit it would help meet another in accordance with CS Policy CP2. Under either scenario, the affordable housing obligations include the provision of First Homes.
66. The SANG (roughly 9.9 hectares) and contribution for its maintenance, a SAMM and Biodiversity Net Gain ("BNG") are all necessary to mitigate the appeal scheme's effects on the natural environment. The excess SANG (8 hectares) could mitigate the effects of other nearby development on the SPA. The BNG provision accords with CS Policy CP7, MDD Policy TB23 and paragraphs 187 and 193 of the Framework in that there would not be a net loss.
67. The employment skills contribution or plan is necessary to support the training and use of local labour. The POS, including the allotment provision, is necessary to provide a policy-compliant and minimum range of POS typologies and its future maintenance. This will include equipped play provision for children. Sports pitch provision in the Wokingham town area and its future maintenance near to the appeal site would also be secured by the s106 agreement.
68. A My Journey contribution or a travel plan and upgrades to bus stops on Barkham Road are necessary so that future occupiers are encouraged to use sustainable transport modes. The Council also seeks a contribution of up to £319,000 to either deliver the Arborfield Bus Strategy or the diversion of bus route 3 through the site to increase the attractiveness to travel by bus. The appellant contends that the contribution should be funded by the Council through CIL receipts from the development given the Council's Infrastructure Funding Statement⁸ identifies local bus services as one of the areas that would be funded from CIL receipts. However, this relates to the inflation of local bus services, which indicates to me money being spent on covering the rising cost of operating those services, not providing new or extended services due to new development. Further, the Council has confirmed that it has allocated how CIL monies will be spent in forthcoming years. CS Policy CP6 says planning permission will be granted for schemes that improve the existing infrastructure network, including public transport. Hence, I consider a contribution for bus service 3 is necessary and the s106 agreement is the appropriate mechanism to secure that to encourage people to use it.

⁸ CD6.9, Section 7.1

69. The s106 agreement secures a contribution of £6,500 towards the costs of a Traffic Regulation Order for the closure of Blagrove Lane south of Roberts Grove to vehicular traffic. This is necessary so that the development does not have a detrimental impact on highway safety. For the same reason, the s106 agreement ensures that the estate roads within the development are either constructed to adaptable standards and managed or offered for adoption to the Council.
70. Added to the above, the s106 agreement makes provision for an NHS contribution of up to £302,400, which has been calculated based on the number of dwellings, the projected average population per dwelling and a monetary sum. The NHS Integrated Care Board (“ICB”) explained that the nearest medical centre at Woosehill is over capacity. As such, it requires extra clinical space to cater for any new patients arising from the proposed development. To provide the necessary infrastructure in the form of extra clinical space, existing non-clinical space would be undertaken, or the centre would be expanded. The s106 agreement includes a provision for the commissioning of a pre-project study to determine which option is pursued. The ICB have confirmed capital funding for infrastructure development is not received in their annual budgets. I have had regard to the approaches adopted by the Inspectors in the Haddenham and Bath Road appeals and both parties’ views, and I consider that the obligation would satisfy the necessary tests.
71. The s106 agreement also includes a monitoring fee clause to the value of £512 per clause and a travel plan monitoring fee if the My Journey option is not taken up. Given the number of clauses within the s106 agreement, I consider that these contributions are necessary to enable the ongoing monitoring of the trigger points and administration of the obligations by officers.
72. The Council has explained how each of the contributions has been calculated, the relevant policy justification and how the monies would be spent. Hence, I consider that they meet the statutory tests set out in Framework paragraph 58 and in Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations. They are material considerations in this appeal, and the proposal would accord with CS Policies CP1, CP2, CP3, CP4, CP5, CP6, CP7, CP8, CP10 and CP21; MDD Policies TB5, TB8, TB12 and TB23; as well as saved SEP Policy NRM6, the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (“AHSPD”), and Framework paragraphs 110, 187 and 193.

Other Matters

Designated heritage assets

73. There are two groups of Grade II listed buildings in the area surrounding the appeal site. Group 1 is to the northeast of the site, whereas group 2 is to the southwest. Group 1 comprises Blagrove Farmhouse and three barns, 8, 20 and 22 metres to the northeast, north and northwest, respectively, of Blagrove Farmhouse. Group 2 comprises Hutts Farmhouse, a castle shelter to the east of the farmhouse and a barn to the southwest of the farmhouse.
74. The four buildings within Group 1 surround a central courtyard as they were when they were first mapped. The buildings were collectively known as Blagrove Farm. The farmhouse holds architectural interest as an example of an early 17th century timber-framed house with a tiled roof, brick chimneys and painted brick infill panels. Its construction reflects its rural location. The three remaining buildings are largely screened from public view by planting and boundary treatment, but they are timber-framed and date from the 17th and 18th centuries. Over time their original roofs have been replaced by tile roofs, and some of their large cart doors have

been infilled as part of their residential development. Where they have been retained, they reflect the previous agricultural use of the farm. The four buildings have group value owing to their prior interlinked relationship connected to the land use and their architectural interest. However, their setting has been altered with the addition of residential development on Roberts Grove and the cessation of their functional link to the nearby farmland.

75. Group 2 is located at the junction of Doles Lane and Blagrove Lane. The two barns lie either side of the central residential building. They all hold architectural and historic interest. The farmhouse dates from the 16th century and has later 17th and 20th century extensions. Each of the buildings are timber-framed with brick infill panels and mainly retain their original features. The buildings are typical of rural southern England and are all now in residential use, but historically they were part of a small farmstead and had a collective functional use. As such, they hold group value due to their relationship with one another.
76. The proposal would alter the setting of the listed buildings in Groups 1 and 2 by introducing considerable built form instead of each asset's countryside context and land use. There would also be greater noise and disturbance in a relatively quiet area, and the proposal would erode visual connections between the respective heritage assets and the surrounding landscape and each group's legibility as a farmstead. The proposed planting, SANG and POS would assist with providing a green setting for the development and thus, the heritage assets. Furthermore, the use of a section of Blagrove Lane solely by pedestrians and cyclists would lessen traffic movement near to Group 1. However, the planting and reduced traffic movement do not alter my assessment that the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the setting of the heritage assets in Groups 1 and 2. I place the degree of harm within that spectrum at the low end.
77. I agree with the main party's assessment that the proposal would not affect the significance and historic interest of Bearwood College and the non-designated heritage assets of Folly Thatch Cottages, 221, 243 and 245 Barkham Road and Ye Olde Leathern Bottle public house. Thus, their special interest would be preserved.
78. Given the identified harm to the listed buildings in Groups 1 and 2, the proposal would conflict with section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) as the harm relates to the setting of those assets. Furthermore, conflict with MDD Policy TB24 would arise given that the proposal would not conserve or enhance the assets.

Highways

79. The development's scale would inevitably increase vehicular movements in the area, but that does not necessarily make the proposal unacceptable in highway terms. The proposed Barkham Road access has been designed to accord with national design standards and would have visibility splays in accordance with surveyed vehicle speeds rather than the road's speed limit. Those surveys were carried out across a range of days and over a 24-hour period each day. I note speeding traffic is a local concern, and despite the implications of that, it is an existing situation; and there are measures outside the scope of this appeal to ensure drivers adhere to speed limits.
80. Vertical visibility splays also show that drivers would have acceptable visibility of road users despite local topography. Furthermore, pedestrian visibility splays show that each pedestrian crossing point would be suitable, and pedestrians could cross the road in two movements, unlike the single current movement. Central islands

would prevent vehicles travelling in either direction along Barkham Road from overtaking near to the proposed access junction. A Road Safety audit has been carried out for the junction, and both identified issues are resolved either through the approved plans condition (securing visibility splays) or as part of a s278 agreement with the Council. Further, a planning condition could secure suitable lighting along the new access whilst addressing highway safety and ecology.

81. Two access points would be formed on Blagrove Lane, with the section in between limited to pedestrian and cycle use. Therefore, traffic entering and leaving the development could either travel north or southwards on Blagrove Lane and join Barkham Road or Evendons Lane. Vehicles travelling from the north or south of the appeal site would need to travel through the appeal site to continue travelling north or southwards. Detailed landscape proposals would be assessed at reserved matters stage and enable suitable visibility splays to be achieved and maintained.
82. The closure of a section of Blagrove Lane would result in a change in vehicle movements, but given its sunken nature, width, limited forward visibility splay and alignment, it currently creates difficulty for two vehicles to pass and potential conflict with vulnerable road users due to the lack of a footway in addition to its other constraints. Therefore, limiting its use to pedestrians and cyclists, whilst not inconveniencing motorists too much by taking a slightly longer and more suitable route, would be acceptable in my view. Taking these matters into account, I consider the proposed accesses and junctions with Barkham Road and Blagrove Lane would be safe and capable of accommodating traffic arising from the proposed development and the locality, including use by buses.
83. The proposed northern access onto Blagrove Lane would result in a localised loss of on-street parking, but driveways in this section of the road can accommodate several vehicles, so no harm would result.
84. Changes to mitigate the development's effects are proposed at the Evendons Lane/Finchampstead Road junction opposite Evendons Primary School. Residents are concerned about the additional traffic and proposed alterations to the junction on the safety of children in particular. I observed this junction and the roads leading up to it several times myself. The appellant's assessment recognises that this junction would be over capacity in 2036 without development. The proposal would aggravate that situation without any changes. The improvements proposed would result in a 'nil detriment' position, i.e. the situation would remain the same with the development in place. Although the junction is busy, especially in peak times (including school drop-off) and the school pick-up period, I consider the proposed changes to this junction would be safe and capable of accommodating traffic arising from the proposed development.
85. Multiple concerns raised relate to the proposal's impact on the existing highway network in terms of travel time, queues and increased usage. The appellant's modelling includes committed development, and I have no reason to disagree with the main party's assessment that the proposal would not cause an unacceptable impact on highway safety or a severe residual cumulative impact on the road network, taking into account trip rates, traffic surveys, manual redistribution and proposed mitigation. This includes Doles Lane, which would likely see a limited increase in traffic flows. Hence, horses could safely continue to use the lane for guided rides. I have reached this view based on current evidence, which is many years after the Inspector's view in 1974 concerning the capacity of Barkham Road.

86. In the round, despite the concerns raised, I have no reason to disagree with the appellant's assessment or that of the Highway Authority.

Sustainable location and local infrastructure

87. Given the site's location, the greatest range of facilities and services that future occupants would use on a day-to-day basis are at the upper end or beyond the distance that most people are prepared to walk or cycle to. But, with the diversion of the number 3 bus route, together with the provision of cycle parking for each dwelling and electric vehicle charge points (delivered through Building Regulations), future occupiers would be encouraged to travel by means other than the private car. The site is reasonably well placed for onward connections to central London, Reading and Gatwick Airport, among other places. Despite the scheme's spatial strategy conflict, the site is broadly in a sustainable location.
88. Concerns are raised about local infrastructure, including local schools not having enough places to accommodate future occupiers of the proposed development. However, there is no substantive evidence to support these views, and the Council has not sought any obligations for additional infrastructure, such as additional school places, to mitigate the proposal's effects on these facilities.

Ecology

89. Bottle Copse LWS is designated as it supports Habitats of Principal Importance under s41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended) ("NERC Act"): 'wet woodland' and 'lowland mixed deciduous woodland'. The LWS extends to the east of the site, and that off-site area forms part of NE's Ancient Woodland Inventory. The LWS supports various species, including protected species. Across the wider site, ecological surveys, which have been reviewed and found still to be sound, have identified numerous protected species and habitats present, among others, including some in decline. These include birds on the RSPB's Birds of Conservation Concern Red and Amber lists.
90. Despite residents' concerns, no Great Crested Newts or evidence of their presence has been noted. So, while they may be present in the surrounding area, I have no substantive evidence to consider that they are present on the site.
91. Although the proposal's detailed designs would be for any reserved matters application, based on the information I have, I consider the proposal has been designed to avoid and minimise its effects on biodiversity. That does not, however, mean that there would be no effects at all. The proposed access from Barkham Road would result in the permanent loss of existing trees and habitat in Bottle Copse LWS. There would also be temporary losses in the LWS. This access has, however, been designed to minimise tree losses, and if losses are to occur, then they are lower-quality trees. The proposed access would also make use of the existing cleared area beneath the overhead powerlines. No veteran trees would also be lost, and they will be retained, protected, and managed, thereby safeguarding them as a valuable habitat. The proposal would not also cause the loss or deterioration of the ancient woodland adjacent to the appeal site. As such, there would be no conflict with Framework paragraph 193 c).
92. The proposal would not cause an effect on the hydrology of the woodland, either on or off the site. Furthermore, watercourses would also remain in good condition and would be subject to enhancement measures. The proposal would, however, result in the loss of a proportion of existing native hedgerow across the site.

93. Various planning conditions would protect existing biodiversity features during construction and minimise the impact of constructing the proposed development.
94. New s41 priority habitats would be formed, including wet woodland, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, hedgerow and traditional orchard. Much of the new woodland habitat would adjoin Bottle Copse LWS and thus extend the woodland over time, especially with over four times the number of trees lost to the new access being planted. It would take time for each new tree's canopy to grow, but given the number of trees to be planted and the ability to secure native species that can develop large canopies, there would likely be an increase in tree canopy cover across the site, especially with the SANG being managed in perpetuity. Moreover, new ecological habitat would be formed, including bat and bird boxes, including a range of types suitable for different bird species; habitat provision, including for protected species; while existing habitat would be enhanced and managed in perpetuity through the s106 agreement as they lie within the proposed SANG, which would have a multi-functional purpose, albeit in a semi-natural state. These measures would mitigate the scheme's effects.
95. The SANG would be used by people and wildlife, and due to the latter, there would be recreational disturbance. That said, features could be included in the SANG's detailed design to maintain connectivity across the habitat for species without needing to cross the road and to limit access to the woodland and thus prevent damage to existing habitat and minimise disturbance to species and their wider habitat. The design could also minimise effects on wildlife through its lighting, layout and landscaping, and its management.
96. Deer and foxes are present in the area, but the SANG would provide an extensive area of ecological habitat, including areas that would not be accessible to people, and potential pathways can be formed through the detailed landscape designs of the SANG to maintain suitable habitat, aid connectivity and minimise disturbance to them. The SANG would afford connections to habitat to the north and east.
97. Drawing these matters together, I agree with the main parties that the proposal includes suitable ecological mitigation and enhancement measures and that there would be an acceptable impact on Bottle Copse LWS.

Flooding

98. The appeal site lies within flood zone 1, which means that the land is at the lowest risk of flooding. I note the views of the Council's Drainage Officer and Thames Water, who both raise no objection to the proposal subject to the imposition of planning conditions securing drainage details for foul and surface water. I agree and consider the proposal would be acceptable in flood risk and drainage terms.

Air and Noise

99. Developing the site would bring increased noise, light pollution and traffic but not to the extent that it would detrimentally affect existing residents' living conditions. Also, sustainable transport measures would be secured to encourage people not to use the private car. That said, I agree with the Council's assessment of the proposal's effect on air quality and noise and concur with the need for planning conditions to minimise the proposal's effect on the local environment, even if the effects are time-limited, so that they are appropriately managed and minimised.

Other

100. The appeal site comprises Grade 2/3a agricultural land, but owing to the site's fragmentation and the necessary drainage improvements to facilitate productive agriculture allied with the relatively modest proportion that the site makes up of the borough's best and most versatile agricultural land ("BMV"), the proposal would not result in a significant loss of BMV and thus the benefits of it for food production.
101. I note concerns about the difficulty of finding places to keep horses, but there is no substantive evidence to suggest that there are no options available. I also note resident's points about the appeal site contributing to their wellbeing and helping address heat effects; nevertheless, the proposal would create a large publicly accessible SANG that would be formed around retained and enhanced biodiversity that could cater for both issues.
102. The Planning Practice Guidance confirms that the courts have taken the view that planning is concerned with land use in the public interest so that the protection of private interests, such as the impact of a proposal on the value of a neighbouring property or loss of private rights to light could not be material considerations.
103. The local community has submitted numerous detailed representations during the application's consideration and during this appeal. A significant number of people also attended the Inquiry in person or online. Hence, people have had adequate opportunity to express their views about the scheme throughout. I have, in reaching my decision, carefully taken them into account, and I have determined the appeal on its planning merits. It is not my role to consider other sites or development proposals; that is either for the Council initially, the EiP or a separate appeal.
104. Various appeal decisions in Wokingham have been referred to. When appropriate, I have considered the points insofar as they are relevant to the main issues, though note some of the appeal decisions relate to a much smaller quantity of development and are from some years ago. For the more recent decisions, they are for a different quantity of development and located elsewhere in the borough in different landscape character areas. They also predate the publication of the current Framework and were determined based on a different housing land supply position. The most recent appeal decision is again for a different quantity of development in a different part of the borough with its own considerations. For these reasons, these decisions are materially different from the scheme before me, which I considered on its own planning merits.

Planning Balance

The development plan

105. I have found moderate harm in respect of the proposal's conflict with CS Policies CP9, CP11 and MDD Policy CC02 because of the proposed development's location. I have also found moderate harm due to the proposal's conflict with CS Policies CP1 1), CP3 a), c) and f), and CP11 and MDD Policies CC03 2a) and d) and 3 and TB21 and the SPD on character and appearance matters. There would also be significant harm from the proposal's conflict with CS Policies CP1, CP3 a) and f) and CP11 and MDD Policy CC03 2a), d) and 3 due to the coalescence of Wokingham and Barkham. I have identified significant harm due to the scheme's conflict with MDD Policy CC03 2a) and 3 given the Framework's emphasis on maintaining, conserving and enhancing GI.
106. The proposal would accord with CS Policies CS7 and CP8, MDD Policy TB23, saved SEP Policy NRM6 in respect of the SPA. Further, through the s106 agreement, the proposal would accord with CS Policies CP1, CP2, CP3, CP4, CP5 (subject to 40% affordable housing), CP6, CP7, CP8, CP10 and CP21, MDD

Policies TB5, TB8, TB12 and TB23 and saved SEP Policy NRM6, the AHSPD. If a 35% affordable housing offer is secured with the care home option taken up, there would be conflict with CS Policy CP5. Some of the obligations would provide the local community with affordable homes and recreation, leisure, employment/skills, and wellbeing benefits that weigh in favour of the appeal scheme. The affordable housing benefit would reduce with the care home option. The other contributions would mitigate the development's effect, so they carry neutral weight.

107. Given the identified harm to the listed buildings in Groups 1 and 2, the proposal would conflict with section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) as the harm relates to the setting of those assets. Furthermore, conflict with MDD Policy TB24 would arise given that the proposal would not conserve or enhance the assets.
108. Considering these issues in the round, the proposal would be contrary to the development plan when taken as a whole. I shall now consider whether there are material considerations that would indicate that my decision should be made otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.

Benefits of the appeal scheme

109. The current housing land supply position stands at 1.7 years (2,321 dwellings) over a five-year period which is set against the housing requirement of 7,014 dwellings (including a 5% buffer as required by the Framework) over this same period. This is substantially below the Framework's minimum requirement, so while the Council has a solid track record of delivering homes and has done so against the current development plan, that figure is lower than the current housing requirement to increase the delivery of housing to meet people's needs. There is also not an upper limit to new housing being built, despite historic housing delivery, and the requirement for local planning authorities to deliver housing is a forward-looking objective. I am mindful of past delivery, but this matter only carries limited weight.
110. Therefore, against this backdrop and considering the emerging plan's progress, the proposed quantum and mix of market homes would contribute to, and help boost, the Council's supply of market homes in an accessible location. The proposal would contribute to around a quarter of a year's supply. However, there would only be a partial delivery of new homes in the next five years based on the timescales for the submission of reserved matters applications and the commencement of development. So, while the proposal may help, it would not bring about an immediate change to the Council's supply and deliver enough affordable and suitable houses for people now, though it would in the future. I attach substantial weight to the proposed market housing provision due to the extent of the shortfall and the quantum and mix of housing being proposed.
111. Option 2 (35% affordable housing and a 68-bed care home) would not be policy compliant in respect of affordable housing, and there is no viability evidence, but that does not necessarily mean that the appeal should be dismissed; it is simply a matter to weigh in the balance. Option 1 would be policy compliant in terms of affordable housing, though under either option, the proposal would see numerous affordable homes delivered and a mix of tenures against a backdrop of a local shortage of such homes, including family-sized units.
112. Not providing enough affordable homes affects people. Being able to access good housing has a bearing on everyday life. There are also socio-economic effects such as financial security and stability, physical and mental health, decreased social mobility, and children's education and development. Under either scenario, the proposal would make a strong and vital contribution to the Council's forward supply,

though this would be greater for Option 1 insofar as affordable homes are concerned. That said, when I factor the care home in under Option 2 alongside the affordable homes I consider, given the importance of affordable homes and housing for older people, that both scenarios carry substantial positive weight even if the potential cluster flats are not secured.

113. The appellant may be correct that the proposal could potentially free up 136 homes from existing housing stock if the care home comes to pass, but this is not certain, and there is no indication that those homes would all be in the Council's administrative area. This social benefit carries limited positive weight.
114. Although the development may be accessible by a choice of means of transport and future occupiers would be able to access a range of facilities and services, these are local and national policy expectations, so no extra benefit arises.
115. Downgrading of a section of Blagrove Lane and delivering part of the Council's Greenways Programme would help encourage future occupants to use these sustainable modes of travel and help mitigate the proposal's impact on the local transport network. Those improvements would also benefit the existing nearby population and encourage them to use public transport. However, these benefits are tempered by the busy nature of roads leading to/from Wokingham that would be used for onward connections which residents have explained discourages them from using. As this would not change, I give limited positive weight to this benefit.
116. There would not, however, be a benefit in road safety terms because of the proposed new access and associated road infrastructure, as there is no existing access to improve and no highway safety issue for the proposal to address. I also do not consider any off-site drainage improvements to be a benefit, as they are mitigation for the proposal's effect. This matter carries neutral weight.
117. The proposal would, however, lead to economic benefits in the form of direct, indirect, and induced jobs from the construction of the development and once it is fully operational. Future occupants would also spend locally. This would include spending from residents of the care home if that is built. There could also be a saving to the NHS if the care home is provided. These contributions would be both short-and long-term. I give the economic benefits moderate positive weight.
118. Despite the appellant's claims, there would not be an improvement to the character of Blagrove Lane, as I have identified a harmful effect for the reasons explained. The SANG is principally mitigation, and that assists with ensuring the two settlements will not physically merge. The SANG would, however, be of a greater quantum than is required to mitigate the scheme's effects. That could be used to mitigate the effect of other development within a 2km catchment area. If it is used as such, then that SANG would be mitigation, but any excess SANG not used would be a benefit, as that SANG would provide a greater provision than any development is required to provide. It is difficult to quantify how much excess SANG will be used, but given the catchment area, the site's location and the extent of development nearby, not all of it is likely to be used. Hence, I cautiously attach limited to moderate positive weight to this benefit.
119. The proposed SANG would involve significant woodland planting and include net wet woodland, orchard, hedgerow and habitat creation. The proposal could result in a 12% increase in woodland across the site. The proposal is also predicted to achieve BNG increases of 0.14% for broad habitats, 39.42% for linear habitats, and 89.41% for watercourse habitats. They do not double count habitats across two different types and factor in the proposed new habitat. A planning condition would ensure that each phase would deliver no less BNG than the headline results set out

above. The s106 agreement secures a BNG Monitoring Scheme which would ensure the delivery of the predicted net gains for each habitat type.

120. There is also no statutory requirement for BNG as the planning application was submitted before 12 February 2024. CS Policy CP7 and MDD Policy TB23 seek to ensure no overall net loss of biodiversity. The Framework in paragraph 193 d) seeks proposals to secure measurable net gains for biodiversity. The 10% statutory requirement is a relevant consideration, but it is a matter of planning judgement whether the stated gains are benefits and how much weight they carry.
121. The three figures provide very different levels of BNG, though each would provide a gain. The broad habitats would be at the extreme end of a gain, and while there would not be a net loss of this habitat, it would not be a measurable gain, as this indicates to me something more than a neutral or minimal amount. In the context of reversing a national decline in biodiversity, this habitat provision carries neutral weight. However, the linear and watercourse habitats would be measurable BNGs, with the latter far greater. Both would be considerably above the statutory requirement and like the broad habitats delivered on site. They would assist locally and carry moderate to significant positive weight in my view.
122. Although there could be an aspect of double counting for biodiversity benefits as they also fulfil mitigatory functions for landscape and ecological effects, that does not mean that the biodiversity benefits do not occur. Framework paragraph 182 is clear that there can be multifunctional benefits arising from sustainable drainage systems and biodiversity, which would be the case here. Given that the whole of the SANG would be publicly accessible, that is an amenity benefit for use by existing occupants. The POS could also be used by the existing population for play and recreation, though how much they are used by existing residents will depend on their proximity to them and their willingness to cover more ground. Accordingly, I attach limited positive weight to this benefit.
123. I attach limited positive weight to the 10% reduction in carbon emissions arising from the operation of the proposed development. It would be incorrect to give weight to the targeted 21% reduction that the appellant claims, as this is not secured by a planning condition or the s106 agreement.
124. Save for the affordable housing, care home and excess SANG, the remaining obligations secured through the s106 agreement mitigate the development's impact; as such, they are not benefits and carry neutral weight.

Heritage balance

125. The harm to the significance of the listed buildings in Groups 1 and 2 would be less than substantial, with the harm at a low end within that spectrum. I give great weight and importance to their conservation, as they are an irreplaceable resource. However, having regard to the public benefits set out above, I consider that they would outweigh the harm that would be caused to them.

Conclusion on Planning Balance

126. The planning system should be genuinely plan-led. The development plan directs development to suitable locations to enable growth as per the adopted spatial strategy to provide housing and address other economic, social, and environmental priorities. The Council has delivered against that plan, but the appeal is to be judged on its own merits. The proposal would result in benefits and harms, and weighing the two is not a mathematical exercise, but the harms mean that the proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole.

127. That said, the proposal would deliver either a policy-compliant level of affordable housing or a slightly sub-policy-compliant provision with a care home that is also needed. The affordable housing mix would provide a mix of tenures. The proposal would also not result in isolated homes in the countryside, as it would abut and extend the settlement of Wokingham. Its location, whilst not perfect, would provide future occupants with a choice of transport modes, and measures can be secured to encourage people to prioritise the use of sustainable transport modes. Further, safe and suitable access can be achieved for all, and the design of the accesses reflect current national guidance, and the development's significant impacts on highway safety, capacity and congestion can be mitigated where they arise.
128. As I have explained, the proposal would provide different types and sizes of housing, and it would mitigate its effects on infrastructure and services, while it could be a well-designed, attractive, and healthy place that would be safe, accessible, functional, and include effective landscaping. The area's character would not be maintained, but the proposal seeks to strike a balance between retaining that character and making an efficient use of land. This, together with the likely design of the scheme, leads me to consider that it does not conflict with Framework paragraph 139.
129. Therefore, the adverse impact of granting permission would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the collective benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. The proposal would accord with MDD Policy CC01, despite its wording reflecting a previous version of the Framework. Hence, the material considerations indicate in this case that planning permission should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Conditions

130. I have imposed a condition (1) in respect of the timing and composition of future reserved matters applications and to control when development must have begun on site in the interests of certainty. An approved plans condition (2) is necessary in the interests of certainty; to inform future reserved matters applications and to ensure the SANG is delivered and suitable mitigation is in place prior to the homes being occupied, and to ensure its future management. In the interests of certainty, a condition (3) is necessary to control the number of dwellings permitted.
131. To prevent the increased risk of flooding and to protect water quality, I have imposed a condition (4) to secure a detailed drainage scheme. A condition is necessary (5) to secure precise details of car, motorcycle, and cycle parking, their delivery and retention in the interests of highway safety and sustainable travel. To ensure the detailed landscaping design provides the habitats to deliver a BNG, I have imposed a condition (6) to secure landscape details with each reserved matters application. I have imposed a condition (7) so that a design code for the site is secured with the first reserved matters application to help inform the development and assimilate it into the area. For the same reason and to maintain the favourable conservation status of protected species, a condition (8) is necessary to secure a detailed landscape strategy with the first reserved matters application. It is also necessary to secure details with each reserved matters application of how the development will be safe, inclusive, and accessible for all (9).
132. To meet the changing needs of future occupiers I have imposed a condition (10) so that at least 10% of market and affordable homes in each phase are designed and constructed to Lifetime Home standards or such equivalent. So that each dwelling achieves a 10% reduction in the predicted carbon emissions, I have imposed a

- condition (11) to secure on-site renewables. I have also imposed a condition (12) to secure details of how non-native species will be managed.
133. A condition (13) to secure a phasing strategy is necessary to comprehensively deliver the scheme in a timely manner to protect the environment. To prevent increased flood risk from surface water run-off, I have imposed a condition (14) to secure an exceedance flow routing plan. So that any archaeological remains within the site are suitably investigated and recorded to aid our understanding of the significance of any buried remains, I have imposed a condition (15) so that archaeological works are carried out before development commences. To protect nearby residents living conditions from noise and disturbance during construction, conditions (16 and 17) are necessary to secure a construction environmental management plan and a revised noise impact assessment.
134. In the interests of highway safety, conditions are necessary (18 and 19) to secure full construction details of the accesses including visibility splays, and full details of all off-site highway works. To protect future occupiers, living conditions from external noise, I have imposed an amalgamated condition (20) to secure design details and their subsequent implementation. A condition (21) is necessary to investigate and protect future occupiers of the site and structures from the risks associated with the migration of toxic and flammable gases. A landscape and ecological management plan condition (22) is necessary to secure the ongoing management of the POS, to deliver BNG and the provisions of section 41 of the NERC Act. In the interests of protected species, a condition (23) is necessary to secure a strategy for ecological permeability and enhancement, including up-to-date surveys due to the passage of time. Conditions (24 and 25) are necessary to secure existing and future levels and to protect trees, shrubs and hedges growing on the site or adjacent to it to integrate the development into its surroundings.
135. I have imposed a condition (26) to secure details of earthworks for each phase to protect the living conditions of those living nearby and the landscape character of the area. To ensure the care home part of the development contributes to sustainable development, I have imposed a condition (27) so that it achieves a minimum BREEAM rating of excellent. To protect water quality and to prevent increased risk of flooding, I have imposed conditions (28 and 29) so that effective water quality treatment measures are implemented alongside a SuDS management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development. To prevent an adverse impact upon wildlife and highway safety, I have imposed a condition (30) to secure a lighting design strategy that is sensitive and avoids disturbance. A condition (31) for a parking management strategy is necessary so that there is an effective use of parking spaces in the interests of highway safety.
136. A condition (32) is necessary to ensure adequate ducting is provided to allow the dwellings to be served by ultrafast broadband or similar technology. I have also imposed a condition (33) so that fittings are installed in each dwelling to limit water consumption to make effective use of natural resources. So that adequate parking space is available on the site, it is necessary to restrict the use of garage and carport accommodation within the development (34). A condition (35) is necessary to secure protection for trees while the development is being constructed.

Conclusion

137. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan, but the material considerations in this case indicate that a decision should be made other

than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Andrew McGlone

INSPECTOR

APPEARANCES

FOR THE APPELLANT:

Christopher Boyle KC of Counsel

he called:

Richard Waddell BA (Hons), PG Dip. LA, CMLI	Associate Director, BMD Limited
Daniel Lampard BA (Hons), DipTP, Dip (PD&D), MRPI	Senior Director, Lichfields
Sarah Moorhouse* BA (Hons), DipTP, MRTPI	Planning Director, Lichfields
James Clark*	Solicitor, Foot Anstey

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

Rebecca Sage of Counsel

she called:

Stuart Ryder BA (Hons), CMLI	Director, Ryder Landscape Consultants Ltd
Laura Ashton BA (Hons), MSc, MRPTI	Director, LAUK Planning Ltd
Andrew Chugg*	Team Manager, Development Management
Jenna Williams*	Developer Contributions
Geraldine Medramo*	Housing
Duncan Fisher*	Ecologist
Gordon Adam*	Highways
Nicky Phillips*	Economic Prosperity and Place
Alan Lewis*	Highways Development Management
Boniface Ngu*	Drainage
Chris Beasty*	Senior Locum Planning Lawyer
Jeffrey Ng*	Senior Primary Care Estates Manager, NHS ICB
Andy Glencross*	Head of Environmental Services

INTERESTED PARTIES:

Adrian Mather	Paul Tolan
Denise Tolan	Susan Hughes

INQUIRY DOCUMENTS

ID1	Photograph from within the appeal site
ID2	Proposed masterplan imposed on aerial image
ID3	Appellant opening submissions
ID4	Council opening submissions
ID5	Adrian Mater submissions
ID6	Denise Tolan submissions
ID7	Paul Tolan submissions
ID8	Natalie Wilson submissions
ID9	Laura Ashton, Proof of Evidence, Appendix 2 Update
ID10	Council Executive Meeting Agenda Item 63 and Decision Record Sheet
ID11	BNG Technical Note
ID12	Council closing submissions and accompanying authorities
ID13	Appellant closing submissions
ID14	Natural England response to the Planning Inspectorate, 30 April 2025

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

1. Approval of details of access (other than shown on plan reference 'Blagrove Lane – Northern Site Access 4200322-SK087 Rev P1', and 'Blagrove Lane – Southern Site Access 4200322-SK015 Rev P1', and 'Blagrove Lane Northern Emergency Access 4200322-SK070 Rev P1'), layout, scale, appearance, and landscaping (hereinafter called the 'reserved matters') of the site in accordance with the aims of the approved Design Code (condition 7) shall be obtained from the Local Planning Authority ("LPA") in writing before any development, other than the SANG, is commenced and carried out as approved.

Plans and particulars of the reserved matters referred to above, shall be submitted in writing to the LPA before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission and all reserved matters applications shall be made within a period of 5 years from the date of this permission, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission.

2. This permission is in respect of the approved plans numbered 'Application Boundary Plan PP01 Rev A', 'Demolition Plan – Sheet 1 BSL-T-001-1', 'Demolition Plan – Sheet 2 BSL-T-002-2' and 'Demolition Plan – Sheet 3 BSL-T-001-3', 'Barkham Road Junction With Right Turn Lane – Visibility Splays 4200322-SK008 Rev P1', 'Blagrove Lane – Northern Site Access 4200322-SK087 Rev P1', 'Blagrove Lane – Southern Site Access 4200322-SK015 Rev P1', and 'Blagrove Lane Northern Emergency Access 4200322-SK070 Rev P1' The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
 - a. The Reserved Matters Submission(s) shall be substantially in accordance with the 'Land Use and Access Parameter Plan PP02 Rev G and 'Building Heights Plan PP06 REV C' and 'Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan PP03 Rev K',
 - b. Prior to or concurrent with submission of first reserved matters details of the proposed SANG which are substantially in accordance with the 'SANG General Arrangement Plan BMD.22.0018.DR.001 Rev H and a SANG Management Strategy which is substantially in accordance with the HDA SANG Management Strategy (July 2022), shall be first submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA.
 - c. No dwelling shall be occupied until the Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) has been provided in accordance with the details approved pursuant to this approved plan and written confirmation has been received from the LPA that the SANG has been delivered to an acceptable standard and the SANG is available for public use. The SANG shall be managed in accordance with the approved SANG Management Strategy.
3. The number of dwellings constructed shall not exceed 350 dwellings in total.

Prior to or with reserved matters application

4. Reserved Matters application(s) for each defined phase shall be accompanied by a detailed drainage scheme which shall demonstrate how it complies with the overarching drainage strategy principles contained in the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy Report (Price & Myers, Revision 07 dated October 2023). The submitted detailed drainage scheme shall include
 - a) evidence of the level of the seasonally high groundwater table;
 - b) modelling of the scheme, which shall include modelling of any contributing catchments where run-off from off-site sources is drained together with the site run-off (to take full account of additional drainage flows);
 - c) drainage calculations to demonstrate technical feasibility of the detailed

drainage scheme;

- d) assessment of SuDS components as listed in the CIRIA SuDS Manual (and justification for exclusion of any if necessary);
- e) details of the layout, position and size of attenuation basins (which shall provide attenuation for storm events up the 1 in 100 years + 40% climate change allowance); and
- f) principles for locally based treatments such as rain gardens, filter strips and swales. Detailed design of SuDS features shall demonstrate how they will be integrated into the wider landscape, with attenuation basins having a natural shape and shallow profile (not requiring lifesaving equipment and fence barriers), allowing them to fulfil amenity, ecological and drainage functions including maintenance of the quality, quantity and constancy of the hydrology of the existing LWS.

The development within each phase shall not be commenced until the detailed drainage scheme has been approved in writing by the LPA. No building within each phase of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until the surface water drainage scheme has been implemented for that phase in accordance with the approved details.

- 5. The reserved matters application for the development shall include details of car, motorcycle, and cycle parking in accordance with the Council's policies and shall be approved in writing by the LPA. No dwelling shall be occupied until the vehicular accesses, driveways, parking, and turning areas (including any unallocated space) and secure, covered cycle storage/parking facilities have been provided in accordance with the approved details. The vehicle parking shall not be used for any purpose other than parking, and the turning areas shall remain available for turning at all times. The cycle storage/parking shall be permanently retained in the approved form and used for no other purpose.
- 6. i) Each reserved matters application shall be accompanied by detailed landscaping proposals, the details of which shall include, as appropriate:
 - a) scheme drawings;
 - b) proposed levels and contours;
 - c) detailed design of SuDS features in accordance with the SuDS Strategy, demonstrating how they will be integrated into the wider landscape, with attenuation basins having a natural shape and shallow profile (not requiring lifesaving equipment and fence barriers), allowing them to fulfil amenity, ecological and drainage functions;
 - d) soft landscaping details including planting plans, schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate;
 - e) a Landscape Specification document covering soft landscaping (including site preparation, cultivation, plant handling and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment) and hard landscaping including all construction works such as paths, bridges and retaining walls;
 - f) details of the street tree planting pits in combination with the roadside swales/raingardens demonstrating that the trees have sufficient rooting volume to enable their successful retention long term health;
 - g) hard landscaping materials including samples;
 - h) minor artefacts and structures (e.g. play equipment, street furniture, refuse or other storage units, signs, external services) including specifications for the product and its installation;
 - i) specification for tree rooting systems and use of structural soils under paving or

where rooting volumes are limited;

- j) all boundary treatments, and other means of enclosure or controlling access such as gates, bollards and vehicle restraint systems, which shall include consideration of ecological permeability;
- k) measures required for ecological mitigation and biodiversity net gain which shall, through the submission and approval of a detailed biodiversity impact assessment calculator, demonstrate how each phase delivers an overarching biodiversity net gain not less than the headline results identified in the metric dated 12 February 2024; and
- l) detailed watercourse (including ditch) enhancements that will be undertaken on all existing watercourse features identified within the Technical Note to Accompany Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculations (Hankinson Duckett Associates, ref: 2090.74, 13 February 2024).

ii) Details of quality control measures, including supervision of landscape contract(s) by a suitably qualified landscape specialist and annual landscape audits for the five-year period from completion of the landscaping for the Landscape Phase or until adoption (whichever is longer). The annual Landscape Audit shall be submitted to the LPA for information prior to the next planting season and replacement planting undertaken in accordance with the landscape audit and iii) below.

iii) Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of species, size and number as originally approved and permanently retained.

7. Prior to, or concurrent with, the submission of first Reserved Matters pursuant to condition 1 above, a Design Code for the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The Design Code shall include:
 - a. amplification of the principles for development in each of the character areas and street typologies demonstrating a comprehensive approach that will deliver a cohesive and high-quality development with distinct character areas within it;
 - b. an interconnected movement network delivering a hierarchy of streets and paths to prioritise movement by pedestrians and cyclists including connectivity to Wokingham town centre and Viking Field and Redlands Farm Park;
 - c. principles for how parking to the council's standards will be delivered within each character area including integration of unallocated parking in the public realm;
 - d. measures to ensure that the proposals provide appropriate mitigation embedded in the design and planting of the access road through the TPO woodland.
8. Prior to or concurrent with the submission of a first reserved matters application of the development an overarching landscape strategy document for the whole site shall be submitted and approved in writing by the LPA. The landscape strategy shall be based on the submitted Development Framework Plan, Green Infrastructure Plan and Open Space Typology Plan, and provide more detailed information on the types of structural planting proposed throughout the site and how this relates to the existing landscape features to be retained. It should also define structural landscape elements within the development parcels including SuDS, green infrastructure, and street tree planting. In areas outside the development parcels the strategy will need to show the location of footpaths and possible linkages to rights of way off site as well as SUDs proposals and all formal recreational locations. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved strategy unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA.
9. The reserved matters application for each phase of the development hereby permitted shall include details of how the development has taken into account principles of

Secure by Design for that phase. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

10. The reserved matters for each phase of the development hereby permitted shall provide details to demonstrate that at least 10% of the affordable and market dwellings in that phase will be designed and constructed to Lifetime Homes standards (or such equivalent scheme or standard that is in operation at the time that reserved matters are submitted for that phase, currently Building Regulations Part M4 (Cat 2)). Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
11. Prior to or concurrent with the reserved matters for each phase (other than that of the approved SANG) a scheme for achieving a 10% reduction in the predicted carbon emissions arising from the operation of the development through the use of decentralised renewable and/or low carbon sources (as defined in the glossary of Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change (December 2007) or any subsequent version) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The minimum 10% reduction shall be achieved against Building Regulations Part L (2021). Alternatively, the development shall comply with the Future Homes Standard or equivalent if it is in force at the time of the submission of any reserved matters application for each phase of development. No dwelling hereby permitted shall be occupied until the approved measures for that dwelling have been fully implemented.
12. All Reserved Matters applications for any phase of the development shall include a detailed non-native invasive species management plan for that phase of the development. The agreed detailed non-native invasive species management plans shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Pre-commencement

13. Prior to the commencement of development, a Phasing Strategy for the phasing of the development hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The Phasing Strategy will define:
 - i) the development to be delivered within each phase of the development;
 - ii) indicative timescales;
 - iii) details of the coordination of housing and infrastructure delivery including site accesses and offsite highway works,
 - iv) details of full SANG delivery
 - v) details of the care home serviced land parcel delivery

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Phasing Strategy.

14. Prior to commencement of any phase of the development hereby permitted, a plan for flows above the 1 in 100+40% climate change event (hereinafter referred to as an Exceedance Flow Routing plan) for that phase shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The Exceedance Flow Routing plan:
 - i) shall identify exceedance flow routes through the development based on proposed topography with flows being directed to highways and areas of public open space;
 - ii) will demonstrate how flow routes avoid passing through gardens and other areas in private ownership;
 - iii) shall be accompanied by an exceedance map with arrows showing the direction of surface water in an event above 1 in 100+40% climate change or blockage;Each phase of the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details before the first occupation of the development within that phase.

15. Prior to the commencement of development hereby permitted, a phased scheme of archaeological works (which may comprise more than one phase of works) in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted to and approved by the LPA shall be carried out. The development shall only take place in accordance with the approved scheme.
16. No work relating to the development hereby permitted, including any demolition, works of ground clearance or preparation prior to commencement of construction operations shall commence until a Construction Environmental Management Plan ("CEMP") has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. Construction of the development shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved CEMP. The CEMP shall include the following matters:
- i) a construction travel protocol or Green Travel Plan for the construction phase including details of parking and turning for vehicles of site personnel, operatives and visitors;
 - ii) details of site operatives, visitors and construction vehicles loading, off-loading, parking and turning within the site during the construction period;
 - iii) storage of plant and materials;
 - iv) programme of works, including traffic management measures;
 - v) piling techniques;
 - vi) provision of boundary hoarding;
 - vii) details of a site security strategy;
 - viii) protection of the aquatic environment in terms of water quantity and quality;
 - ix) details of proposed means of dust suppression and noise mitigation, including the control of noise from delivery vehicles, times when deliveries are accepted and when materials can be removed from the site;
 - x) details of measures to prevent mud from vehicles leaving the site during construction;
 - xi) details of any site construction office, compound and ancillary facility buildings;
 - xii) external lighting on site during construction;
 - xiii) measures to ensure no on-site fires during construction;
 - xiv) monitoring and review mechanisms;
 - xv) implementation of the CEMP through an environmental management system;
 - xvi) details of the haul routes to be used to access the development;
 - xvii) details of temporary surface water management measures to be provided during the construction phase;
 - xviii) details of the excavation of materials and the sub-surface construction methodology;
 - xix) relevant ecological mitigation measures for protected species and species of principal importance including details of responsible persons and lines of communication to be based on updated surveys for protected and notable species, where appropriate;
 - xx) appointment of a Construction Liaison Officer.
 - xxi) hours of construction operations to be within 08:00 and 18:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank or Public Holidays.
 - xxii) a Communications Plan specifying methods for communicating with local residents, including the creation of a liaison group to meet in accordance with an agreed schedule.
17. A revised noise impact assessment, considering the construction phase noise generation, having regard to the approved access, shall be submitted for approval by the LPA before development commences. The assessment shall clearly detail

construction phase mitigation measures to be implemented, to ensure noise from construction is managed at the site and minimised at sensitive existing residential receptors. The approved scheme shall be implemented for the duration of the construction phase.

18. Prior to commencement of the development, other than the approved SANG, full construction details of the proposed vehicular accesses on to Barkham Road and Blagrove Lane in accordance with drawings listed in condition 2 above shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The accesses shall be formed and the visibility splays shall be cleared of any obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height prior to the first occupation of the development. The accesses shall be retained in accordance with the approved details and used for no other purpose and the land within the visibility splays shall be maintained clear of any visual obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height at all times.
19. Prior to the commencement of each phase of the development other than the approved SANG, details of all off-site highway works in accordance with the submitted Transport Assessment Addendum dated 2 November 2023 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. These off-site works shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved phasing strategy prior to first occupation of the development hereby permitted.
20. The dwellings and care home hereby approved shall be designed in terms of layout, glazing and ventilation and/or insulated so as to provide attenuation against externally generated noise in accordance with a mitigation scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA before the commencement of development within any phase. The scheme shall ensure that all noise implications are mitigated so that internal ambient noise levels for dwellings shall not exceed 35 dB LAeq (16 hour) 07:00-23:00 during the daytime and 30 dB LAeq (8 hour) 23:00- 07:00 during the night assuming full road traffic flows at the outset. The design and/or insulation measures identified in the scheme shall ensure that ambient internal noise levels and the noise levels within usable external spaces (e.g. gardens) for the dwellings meet the BS8233 sound insulation and noise reduction for buildings design range 'good' for living accommodation. For gardens, the steady noise level should not exceed 50dB LAeq,T. For each individual phase (as set out in the approved phasing strategy), identified as requiring design or insulation measures incorporated into its build; to achieve the acceptable internal noise environment, a verification report shall be submitted for approval prior to occupation of the dwelling. The dwellings shall be implemented in accordance with the approved mitigation measures prior to occupation and retained thereafter.
21. No development shall take place until a Landfill Gas Investigation and Risk Assessment has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. Where a risk from landfill gas is identified, appropriate works to mitigate the effects of landfill gas shall be incorporated in detailed plans to be approved by the LPA. Where mitigation measures are required, these shall be implemented in accordance with the approved Landfill Gas Investigation and Risk Assessment, and a verification report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved. The approved landfill gas mitigation measures shall thereafter be retained for the lifetime of the development.
22. A landscape and ecological management plan ("LEMP") shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA prior to the commencement of development in each defined phase of development. The LEMP shall include the following:
 - description and evaluation of features to be managed.
 - ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management.

- aims and objectives of management, which shall include the objectives to provide and secure the long-term management of adequate hedgerow compensation; and to set out the ongoing management requirements to deliver the habitat types and conditions set out in the approved detailed BNG assessment for that phase.
- prescriptive management options for achieving aims and objectives.
- preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period).
- details of the body or organization responsible for implementation of the plan. Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.
- woodland management plan (including ancient semi natural woodland, individual ancient and veteran tree, the various types of woodland habitat found within and adjacent to the application site and any protected and other trees) for the TPO woodland adjacent to Barkham Road.

The LEMP shall also include details of the legal and funding mechanism(s) by which the long-term implementation of the LEMP will be secured by the developer with the management body(ies) responsible for its delivery. The LEMP shall also set out (where the results from monitoring show that conservation aims and objectives of the LEMP are not being met) how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development delivers the fully functioning biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme. The approved LEMP or any amendment to that shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

23. Prior to commencement of development a strategy for ecological permeability (especially with regard to reptiles and hedgehogs) and enhancements to the site for birds (in line with table 1 of the submitted Ecology Summary Note, Hankinson Duckett Associates, ref: 2090.74 Rev A, 13 February 2024), bats (in line with paragraph 5.2.19 of the submitted Bat Survey Report, Hankinson Duckett Associates, ref: 2094.74 Rev A, October 2023), amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates and schedule for implementation of the strategy shall be provided to the LPA for its approval. This strategy shall be prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist and appropriate to the local ecological context and shall be based on up-to-date surveys for protected and notable species, where appropriate. Once approved the strategy shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.
24. No development within any phase shall take place until a measured survey of the site and a plan prepared to scale of not less than 1:500 showing details of existing ground levels for the application site and proposed finished ground and floor levels (in relation to a fixed datum point) and finished roof levels for that phase shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.
25. i) No development or other operation shall commence within each phase until a scheme which provides for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent to that phase in accordance with BS5837: 2012 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA (the Approved Scheme); the tree protection measures approved shall be implemented in complete accordance with the Approved Scheme for the duration of the development (including, unless otherwise provided by the Approved Scheme) demolition, all site preparation work, tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery.
 ii) No development (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) shall commence until the LPA has

been provided (by way of a written notice) with a period of no less than 7 working days to inspect the implementation of the measures identified in the Approved Scheme onsite.

iii) No excavations for services, storage of materials or machinery, parking of vehicles, deposit or excavation of soil or rubble, lighting of fires or disposal of liquids shall take place within an area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the Approved Scheme.

iv) The fencing or other works which are part of the Approved Scheme shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works including external works have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from the site, unless the prior approval of the LPA has first been sought and obtained.

26. Prior to the commencement of the development within each phase, details of earthworks for that phase shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. These details shall include the proposed grading and mounding of land areas including the levels and contours to be formed, showing the relationship of proposed mounding to existing vegetation and surrounding landform. The Earthworks shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Slab level

27. Prior to works proceeding beyond the slab level for the care home hereby permitted, a Design Stage Certificate or alternative equivalent evidence prepared by a suitably qualified BREEAM assessor for each building comprised in the development, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. This shall demonstrate that that the building(s) will achieve a minimum BREEAM (or equivalent) rating of 'Excellent'. Within three months of first occupation of the care home development, a Post-Construction Certificate in respect of that building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The Post-Development Certificate shall be prepared by an accredited assessor and shall demonstrate compliance with BREEAM rating of 'Excellent' as a minimum.

Before first occupation

28. Before each phase of the development is brought into use measures for effective water quality treatment (using the methodology set out in the SuDS Strategy and Section 26.7 of the CIRIA SuDS Manual (C753) or any guidance that supersedes it) shall be provided in accordance with details for that phase that have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA.
29. No dwelling within each defined phase shall be occupied until a SuDS management and maintenance plan for the development's lifetime ("Maintenance Plan") has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The Maintenance Plan shall include:
- a. the arrangements for adoption by a public authority or a statutory undertaker and arrangements to secure the operation of the scheme throughout its lifetime;
 - b. full details of the access that is required to reach surface water management component for maintenance purposes; and
 - c. a plan for safe and sustainable removal and disposal of waste periodically arising from drainage system, detailing the materials to be used and standard of work required, including method statement.

The approved SUDS Maintenance Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

30. Prior to first occupation within a defined phase, a lighting design strategy for biodiversity for areas to be lit shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The strategy shall:

- a. identify those areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for protected species and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their breeding sites and resting places or along important routes used to access key areas of their territory, for example, for foraging; and
- b. show how and where external lighting will be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places.
- c. provide a schedule for implementation of the strategy.

The external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications, locations and schedule set out in the strategy, and these shall be retained thereafter in accordance with the strategy. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the LPA.

31. Prior to the first occupation of the development, a Parking Management Strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The strategy shall include the distribution and management of allocated and unallocated spaces, including any restrictions on their use, and visitor parking provision. The approved Parking Management Strategy shall be implemented upon first occupation of the development and maintained thereafter.
32. No dwelling shall be occupied until adequate ducting, that shall enable the connection of ultrafast broadband or similar technologies, has first been provided to serve that dwelling.
33. No dwelling hereby approved shall be occupied until fittings have been installed that are designed to achieve a water consumption target of 105 litres/person/day or less in accordance with details that have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA.

Other

34. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), the garage and car port accommodation shall be kept available for the parking of vehicles ancillary to the residential use of the dwellings hereby approved and not used for any business nor as habitable space.
35. No retained tree shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree be topped or lopped other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, without the written approval of the LPA. If within a period of five years from the date of the planting of any tree that tree, or any tree planted in replacement for it, is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place.

END OF SCHEDULE