

Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update
2023-2040

**Response to
Matter 3:
The Proposed Strategic
Development Locations ('SDLs')**

**Wokingham Borough Council's
Statement**

03 November 2025



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

1. This statement sets out Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC's) response to examination Matter 3: The Proposed Strategic Development Locations (SDLs). The questions are shown in bold within a border. WBC's responses are shown below each question.

Issue 1: Loddon Valley Garden Village SDL

1) Is the site suitable for allocation as an SDL and have the constraints to development been adequately assessed and considered? In particular:

- a. Has the impact of the development on the highway network been adequately assessed? Are the internalisation assumptions in the TA and Interim TA reliable having regard to when facilities such as schools and local centres would be delivered? Would there be unacceptable impacts on highway safety or severe residual cumulative impacts on the highway network as a result of the development?**
- b. Could adequate public transport connections be provided to the site?**
- c. Is it clear that sufficient sewerage capacity would be available to facilitate the proposed development?**
- d. Has flood risk at this site been appropriately considered?**
- e. Have all other constraints to development been adequately assessed and considered?**

2. The Loddon Valley Garden Village (LVGV) proposal is suitable for allocation as an SDL and constraints and opportunities have been considered and assessed through robust processes.
3. The proposal has evolved through significant engagement and cooperation between WBC, the promoters/landowners and relevant stakeholders throughout stages of plan-making. The proposed allocation has also been supported by masterplanning exercises that have informed deliverability.
4. WBC is confident there are no significant constraints that cannot be overcome and the site can be delivered viably. There are opportunities across the site to enhance existing features to enable quality placemaking, aligned to the garden village concept and principles.
5. A valid hybrid planning application was submitted by the University of Reading in October 2025 for up to 2,800 homes and associated infrastructure on their portion of the LVGV allocation. Other key landowners are actively engaged in pre-application discussions and planning applications for their respective portions are being prepared.

Matter 3: Wokingham Borough Council's Statement

The applications are being coordinated and together seek permission for the delivery of 3,930 dwellings proposed in Policy SS13.

6. Constraints and opportunities of the site have been assessed throughout plan making. In 2021, the Wokingham Strategic Sites Report was undertaken by DLA ([PD3a](#)) and supported the Revised Growth Strategy consultation ([EC4](#)). It considered key constraints at that time, including transport and access, ecology, utilities, landscape and heritage.
7. The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) considers the broad suitability of promoted land for development at each stage of the plan. The suitability of LVGV has been thoroughly and robustly assessed through the HELAA ([HO7a](#) and [HO7b](#)). This considered a wide range of constraints and opportunities, drawing on information from a range of sources including evidence base studies, masterplanning, designations, surveys and previous planning history.
8. LVGV has also been subject to assessment in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) ([CD3a](#)), and earlier SA work. The SDL is treated as a variable but is noted to perform better than other strategic site options (Sections 5.4 Sub-area scenarios and 5.5 Reasonable growth scenarios).
9. Representations submitted through consultation have also been taken into account ([CD4f](#)) and modifications proposed where appropriate ([CD22](#)).
10. Further detail on the highlighted matters is set out below.

1)a.i Has the impact of the development on the highway network been adequately assessed?

11. As set out in Matter 2, the LVGV SDL has been assessed through a robust modelling process. National Highways in their Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) ([WBC2](#)) agree that the evidence supporting the plan, including both the Transport Assessment Report (TA) ([TR1a-j](#)) and the Transport Assessment Report 2032 Interim Year Assessment (Interim TA) ([TR1m-o](#)), is robust and proportionate to the plan-making stage.
12. The SDL has been assessed in detail in paragraphs 2.4.29 and 2.7.8 of the TA for the end of the plan period in 2040, and in paragraphs 2.4.4 and 2.7.7 of the Interim TA for the interim date of 2032.
13. As set out in Matter 2, the TA assesses (Table 5) the entirety of the development (i.e. 3,930 homes) with the required infrastructure being completed by 2040, noting that, as set out in the housing trajectory ([WBC 27](#)), the development is anticipated to be completed over a longer period extending beyond 2040. The assessment in the TA is robust, not least because it assesses a greater level of development than anticipated to occur within the plan period. This approach also ensures a robust assessment of the

mitigation requirements and supports the proposed timelines defined within the IDP in the tables for the SDL (Pages 28-33).

1)a.ii Are the internalisation assumptions in the TA and Interim TA reliable having regard to when facilities such as schools and local centres would be delivered?

14. The internalisation assumptions for the LVGV SDL for 2040 are set out in the TA at paragraphs 2.4.6 to 2.4.8 and Table 8. These are utilised to adjust the vehicle trips for each of the land uses and define those vehicle-based trips that would remain within the SDL and not access the highways network beyond.
15. The TA includes the delivery of all land uses including the schools and local centres by 2040. This is consistent with the IDP 2025 ([WBC 28](#)), which includes delivery of the schools, as below, as well as the district centres between 2029 to 2038.
 - 2 x 3FE Primary Schools from 2029
 - Secondary School and Sixth Form between 2031-2034
16. The need for the education facilities will be managed to respond to the need arising from the housing as it is delivered. WBC has managed the opening of recent new primary schools to match when local need arises, starting with the youngest year. The first-year cohort would move through the school being replaced by a new intake. On this basis it would take 5 to 7 years to occupy the schools fully, which is within the plan period.
17. Paragraph 2.4.8 of the TA explains that postcode data from PLASC (Local Pupil Level Area School Census Data) provided by WBC indicates that 57% of primary school pupils live within 1km and for secondary schools 72% of pupils live within 2km. The TA also identifies WBC's "My Journey" policy to promote locating such facilities within easy access of residents promoting use by all sustainable modes as set out in paragraphs 2.4.20 and 2.4.21 (Table 9). As set out in Table 1 of the TA, the development is expected to include targeted sustainable transport measures to promote increased internalisation of trips to such land uses and use of sustainable travel modes.
18. The distances defined by the postcode data would fall predominantly within the LVGV SDL area. The schools would be fully occupied and have settled local catchments by 2040. The TA therefore uses 50%, as defined in Table 8, as an internalisation factor for education which is robustly based on the WBC postcode data and should be viewed as conservative.
19. The TA assesses the full delivery of the LVGV SDL within the plan period including the retail uses. The scale of LVGV at 3,930 dwellings, means residents will be attracted to use the new, easily accessible facilities within the SDL in preference to making a dedicated trip to locations beyond the site. The assumption that 50% of the retail-based trips (Table 8) will remain within the SDL is robust and should be viewed as conservative.

1)a.iii Would there be unacceptable impacts on highway safety or severe residual cumulative impacts on the highway network as a result of the development?

20. The TA in paragraph 7.2.2 sets out that the modelling shows that the mitigation package provided as part of the LVGV SDL will improve the situation when compared to the reference case, with forecasts showing that queueing and delay will be reduced.
21. This is supported by the response to Matter 2, which sets out the robustness of the modelling and assessment process, including that the assumptions used to generate the model are fully in accordance with guidance at the time of preparation which has not been altered to date. The applied assumptions are conservative and produce a greater impact than is likely to occur in the plan period.
22. The TA concludes that, whilst not all the network will be returned to the level of the reference case, the proposed quantum and location of development can be accommodated with the package of mitigation set out in the TA as reflected in the IDP. WBC will work with the promoters/landowners through the planning application stage to shape and phase the development in accordance with the requirement in national policy to ensure that any significant impacts from the development can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.
23. The Interim TA was prepared to assess a proportionate and phased level of development for the SDL. This showed that with the initial package of measures set in para 6.4.3, substantial development can be accommodated within this period and that further measures are not required until later in the delivery phase.
24. In summary, robust transport evidence concludes that there would be no unacceptable impacts on the highway in terms of safety, nor would any residual cumulative impacts be severe as a result of the LVGV SDL following the implementation of the proposed mitigation packages considered for 2032 and 2040.

1)b. Could adequate public transport connections be provided to the site?

25. Policy SS13 requires the provision of high-quality public transport services, in particular parts 3d), 3h) and 12, which is further supported by Policy C1: Active and sustainable transport and accessibility. The expectation, as per standard practice, is that the developer will progress a "Movement Framework" which demonstrates how development will maximise the opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport. The developer will be expected to deliver comprehensive connections for walking and cycling, particularly to access facilities and public transport services, ensuring that future occupiers are offered an attractive choice of sustainable and active travel.
26. Policy C1 also sets out the requirements for Active and Sustainable Transport and Accessibility, which in paragraph 7.10 outlines WBC's requirements for providing a good public transport service (replicated below) and which the LVGV SDL will be expected to provide as a minimum within the "Movement Framework":

- At least a thirty-minute service frequency during the period 7:00 to 19:00 Monday to Saturday.
 - At least an hourly service frequency, but ideally a thirty-minute frequency, between 7:00 and 22:00 on Sundays and outside the above hours.
27. The TA in Section 2.4.10 explains the opportunity for sustainable transport measures that the LVGV SDL would be able to provide, including a package of public transport measures allowing connections to both internal and external destinations such as railways stations and the major towns of Wokingham and Reading. The TA, in Section 2.4.13, also indicates that this network of services is provided at the earliest opportunity.
28. Section 2.4.10 of the TA recognises that there will need to be a requirement for subsidy and competitive fair pricing to enhance the attractiveness of the service until it is commercially viable. This approach supports the phased build out of the development and the internal connections between the four initial access points at an early stage to provide a site wide network with access to the wider area in the early phases of the proposal. This would allow current public transport services the opportunity to re-route through the site and new direct routes to be provided.
29. To support this approach, the TA in section 2.4.18 sets out that the IDP would include an allowance for £6-7million for provision of the local and wider services and infrastructure. The IDP 2025 ([WBC 28](#)) includes a package of physical and monetary provisions to provide the public transport support, as summarised below:
- Bus Priority Improvements along wider network including bus strategy.
 - Bus Subsidy, required for early phases of development to maintain services until sufficient revenue is generated.
 - Bus Stop Infrastructure.
 - New Bus Services.
30. The Interim TA covers the early phases of the development, which promote individual plot access points without internal links. Of the four initial access points proposed, one is existing and three are new to support predominantly residential elements of the development. Within the early phases, the delivery of bus services will help establish travel behaviour and promote use by public transport. The Interim TA shows the importance of the internal links, and that the interim development will need to consider individual dedicated services, or the opportunity to re-direct current services into the site, until the internal links are completed and the site wide strategy can be fully implemented.
31. Within the “Movement Framework” the developer will be expected to provide sufficient details of the service, and the bus strategy should build on best practice with bus stops spaced at 400-600m to minimise walking distances to between 200-300m. Housing mix can also have a material impact on the attractiveness of public transport, with apartments and 1-2 bed dwellings, which generally have lower parking provisions,

located closer to the main public transport corridors. The provision of bus priority through physical measures which allow “bus only” access – such as bus lanes; priority at junctions; or retaining bus cages in the carriageway (rather than laybys) to maintain bus headway – would all form part of the bus strategy. Public transport provision would be integrated with the walking and cycling network and not limited to improvements within the development area.

32. The TA in para 2.4.10(1) sets out how the bus strategy could consider a Rapid Transport System (RTS) to provide a higher frequency service which would provide additional connectivity through the site alongside new connections to the public highway. As set out in para 2.4.25 of the TA, the modelling assessment did not include an adjustment for public transport or RTS. Information set out in Attachment 3 of the TA ([TR1e](#)) suggests that an RTS could have supported a 5-10% reduction in highway trips to/from the site or above.
33. As set out above, the TA sets out how the LVGV SDL will deliver adequate public transport connections across the site and beyond.

1)c. Is it clear that sufficient sewerage capacity would be available to facilitate the proposed development?

34. There is clear evidence that sufficient sewerage capacity would be available to facilitate the proposed development.
35. Waste water treatment capacity is assessed in the Water Cycle Study Phase 1 (2019) ([IN1a-b](#)), and Phase 2 (2024) ([IN2a-c](#)). Arborfield Sewage Treatment Works (STW) is the closest STW to the proposed development.
36. WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#), paragraphs 208-212) sets out how Thames Water have confirmed improvements to the Arborfield STW, secured as part of their business plan for the period 2025-30, which will increase capacity.
37. In the SoCG with Thames Water (February 2025) ([CD8m](#)) the parties agree that:

“There are no known significant water supply, waste water, or sewage treatment capacity issue that would be likely to prevent, or delay the delivery of the site allocations proposed in the plan.”

38. This position has not changed since the SoCG was agreed.
39. The Environment Agency (EA) made representations regarding Arborfield STW in their response to the Proposed Submission Plan; these are summarised in Appendix A of the SoCG between the parties (March 2025) ([WBC 4](#)). WBC's response in Appendix A reflects engagement with Thames Water, and states that the planned capacity increase is sufficient to serve all the proposed allocations in the area.

1)d. Has flood risk at this site been appropriately considered?

40. Flood risk at this site, and across the borough as a whole, has been appropriately considered through the production of a robust evidence base at all relevant stages of plan preparation.
41. The local plan process has been supported by Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) throughout, most recently the Level 1 SFRA 2023 ([EN2a](#)) and Level 2 SFRA 2023 ([EN3a](#)). NPPF 2023 paragraph 166 states:

“Strategic policies should be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment, and should manage flood risk from all sources. They should consider cumulative impacts in, or affecting, local areas susceptible to flooding, and take account of advice from the Environment Agency and other relevant flood risk management authorities, such as lead local flood authorities and internal drainage boards.”

42. The SFRA shows all sources of flood risk, now and in the future, and also considers the cumulative impact of developments. The SFRA has been prepared based on engagement with the Environment Agency (EA) and in collaboration with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) (which is WBC).
43. This approach fully accords with the NPPF 2023 and associated guidance. This is confirmed via the agreed SoCG with the EA ([WBC 4](#)), wherein the statutory body with the remit for flood risk concludes that the evidence supporting the plan, including the SFRA, is robust and proportionate.
44. With particular regard to LVGV, the Level 2 SFRA 2023 provides a detailed site summary table (see Appendix A to the Level 2 SFRA ([EN3b](#)) – site 5AR011 and combined sites), as well as detailed interactive mapping (see Appendix D Site 5AR011 combined ([EN3f](#))). As above, these site specific SFRA documents have been considered by the EA and it is common ground (as per paragraph 5.7 of [WBC 4](#)) that:

“...there are no flood risk barriers that would prevent the delivery of the proposed new community on land between Shinfield, Sindlesham and Arborfield Cross (known as Loddon Valley Garden Village), including the delivery of road infrastructure through the flood plain linking the site internally and with Lower Earley Way to the north.”

45. In addition to specific flooding evidence, the plan process has also been supported by masterplanning exercises that have informed the deliverability of LVGV. The Wokingham Strategic Sites Report was undertaken by DLA ([PD3a](#)) and supported the Revised Growth Strategy consultation ([EC4](#)) in 2021. The Strategic Sites Report considered all constraints, in particular flood constraints as informed by detailed Level 2 SFRA ([EN1a](#)) work, at that time undertaken by consultants Stantec in parallel with the masterplanning exercise. Flood risk was a key consideration which informed DLA's proposed framework masterplan in the Strategic Sites Report ([PD3a](#), Section 4.2); this identified potential provision for 4,500 dwellings at the site while delivering:

“Development areas that avoid sensitive locations, including areas of flood risk, existing woodland, locally identified areas of historic importance, and existing settlements.”

46. The quantum of development now proposed in the plan, at 3,930 dwellings, is less than the quantum tested through WBC commissioned masterplanning, thereby providing greater assurance that development can be located within Flood Zone 1 and outside areas at greatest risk of surface water flooding.
47. The evidence demonstrates that flood risk at the site has been considered in a comprehensive manner, appropriate to the stage of plan making and clearly shows that the scale of development proposed can be accommodated at the site without locating new buildings within areas at risk of flooding from all sources. It is on this basis that Policy SS13 part 3.i) sets the requirement for new buildings to be located outside of areas of flood risk.
48. It is acknowledged that internal bridge infrastructure will be required to pass through areas at risk of flooding, including floodplain. This principle has been accepted by the relevant statutory consultee ([WBC 4](#), Appendix A), with a proposed modification to development guidelines agreed with the EA to ensure that detailed design does not exacerbate flood risk and that opportunities to alleviate flood risk are maximised ([CD22](#), page 103).

1)e. Have all other constraints to development been adequately assessed and considered?

49. All other constraints to development have been adequately assessed and considered. As set out in the opening response to the question, extensive site assessment work has been undertaken.
50. Following comprehensive assessment, there are no significant constraints that cannot be overcome. Those constraints which require mitigation are reflected in the masterplanning and concept plan for the site.
51. Policy SS13 and the Development Guidelines (Proposed Submission Plan Appendix C) ([CD1b](#)) address the key constraints and opportunities in the delivery of the site. Both the policy and the development guidelines have evolved through engagement and consultation, including with statutory consultees. Collaborative working will therefore continue on specific matters as required, including as part of the ongoing planning application process.
52. Constraints identified in the question regarding highways, public transport, sewerage capacity and flood risk are set out in detail above. Other constraints have been adequately assessed and considered and briefly discussed below, particularly given the opportunities they present.

53. The LVGV SDL includes heritage assets which have been assessed and considered as part of the proposal, specifically the remains of St Bartholomew's Church. The ruins are a Scheduled Monument and are included on the Heritage at Risk Register. As a result, its conservation and enhancement have been assessed and considered, including in the Historic Environment topic paper ([HE1a](#), p.49 and [HE1b](#), p.90-94). WBC and Historic England have agreed to work jointly, including with the landowners and other parties, to maximise opportunities to improve the condition and setting of St Bartholomew's Church, as set out in the SoCG ([CD8j](#)).
54. The landscape character of the site, identified in the Landscape Character Assessment (2019) ([LA2a-i](#)), has helped to inform the site assessment, and subsequent masterplanning. In particular, the River Loddon forms a key feature through the site. The site also benefits from areas of woodland, including ancient woodland and local wildlife sites, alongside other trees, hedges and hedgerows, as recognised in the Wokingham Strategic Sites Report ([PD3a](#), Section 4.1, pages 30 and 32). An effective landscape strategy that incorporates key characteristics and features, including the River Loddon, will support the place making principles that are key to the delivery of a garden village. For example, the concept plan ([CD1a](#), Figure 8, page 85) identifies at a high level the opportunities for active travel routes and green corridors to and through the site, supporting connections to local services, facilities and communities.

2) Is the site capable of delivering the necessary infrastructure whilst remaining viable? In particular:

- a. Is there sufficient certainty that the infrastructure required to support the development could be delivered viably and at the point which it is needed?**
- b. Does the Loddon Valley Garden Village – Financial Viability Assessment [WBC29] demonstrate that the site would be viable and capable of delivering all of the required infrastructure? Does this consider all of the likely infrastructural costs?**
- c. Paragraph 47 of the Council's response to our Initial Questions states that the site promoters agree on how the infrastructure costs would be apportioned. Is this agreement set out in any public document?**

55. The site is capable of delivering the necessary infrastructure whilst remaining viable.

2)a. Is there sufficient certainty that the infrastructure required to support the development could be delivered viably and at the point which it is needed?

56. When considering the degree of certainty that the infrastructure required to support the development could be delivered, the PPG advises:

“Where plans are looking to plan for longer term growth through new settlements, or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, it is recognised that there may not be certainty and/or the funding secured for necessary strategic infrastructure at the time the plan is produced. In these circumstances strategic policy-making authorities will be expected to demonstrate that there is a reasonable prospect that the proposals can be developed within the timescales envisaged.”

Paragraph: 059 Reference ID: 61-059-20190315 Revision date: 15 03 2019

57. The IDP 2025 ([WBC 28](#)) sets out the anticipated timing and cost of infrastructure projects to mitigate the impact of the development proposed across the borough, including at the LVGV SDL. The IDP has evolved with consideration of evidence coming forward through the planning application process.
58. The IDP 2025 does not capture all the requirements of development, for example affordable housing. As set out at paragraph 1.3 it should be treated as a 'live document' which provides a snapshot at a particular point in time and will need to be updated as development proposals and other circumstances change. Given the scale of the development proposed, with delivery over multiple years, this is to be expected.
59. The IDP and WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#)) sets out the 'essential' infrastructure projects that are necessary to mitigate the impact of development at the

LVGV SDL, for example schools, and highways works, alongside other 'desirable' and 'policy high priority' projects. The IDP identifies the indicative costs and timing of delivery for all the infrastructure projects. These projects can be delivered alongside the development linked to triggers controlling the level of occupation. The IDP 2025 does not list any items of infrastructure as 'critical' i.e. there are no 'blocker' or 'show-stopper' infrastructure items that must be in place upfront to enable growth.

60. The site assessment set out in the HELAA ([HO7a](#), [HO7b](#)), and the Strategic Sites Report undertaken by DLA ([PD3a](#)) show there are no significant constraints that would prevent or delay the delivery of infrastructure required to support development. In addition, there are no objections to the delivery of the site from statutory consultees, as demonstrated by the various Statements of Common Ground.
61. As shown by the delivery of the existing SDLs, WBC has significant recent experience of delivering and facilitating the delivery of large-scale developments. The four existing SDLs have already delivered over 7,400 dwellings¹ alongside new schools, retail and community uses, and major highways infrastructure including a bridge over the M4. This shows how WBC has worked effectively with multiple landowners, developers/promoters, and relevant stakeholders to deliver large scale sustainable new communities.
62. The Loddon Valley Garden Village – Financial Viability Assessment (2025) ([WBC 29](#)) shows how the site can be delivered viably (including the delivery of circa £424 million of supporting infrastructure), as set out further in the response to Question 2b.
63. The vast majority of the site is controlled by three landowners/promoters, who have experience of bringing forward large scale sites. On-site infrastructure delivery is therefore within their control. Off-site infrastructure is predominantly highways schemes which have been designed to a concept stage and are generally proposed to be within current highway authority ownership which similarly supports the timely delivery of infrastructure.
64. The scale of the site allows infrastructure, particularly on-site highways projects to be delivered separately and in phases before being connected into the wider site. This helps to speed up infrastructure delivery and can help to reduce costs.
65. The landowners/promoters have not identified any viability issues with delivering the development and the infrastructure planned. Appendix 1 of the University of Reading's representation ([0305](#)) includes a letter signed by the three principal landowners/promoters – the University of Reading, Hatch Farm Land Limited, and Gleeson Land Limited – setting out their commitment to collaborative working to deliver the site.
66. The Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) ([WBC 23](#)) with all the site landowners agrees that the site is deliverable, with no concerns regarding the timing, delivery or viability of

¹ See Table 3 of WBC Response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#)).

the infrastructure required to support the development. The parties will continue to work positively and proactively on various matters, including the IDP.

2)b. Does the Loddon Valley Garden Village – Financial Viability Assessment [WBC29] demonstrate that the site would be viable and capable of delivering all of the required infrastructure? Does this consider all of the likely infrastructural costs?

67. The Loddon Valley Garden Village – Financial Viability Assessment (2025) ([WBC 29](#)) assesses the viability of delivering the site, including the delivery of all the likely required infrastructure costs, and shows that the site can be delivered viably.

68. The Assessment found that based on present day values and costs, the site would generate a surplus of £31.2 million². A sensitivity analysis was also undertaken with a higher Benchmark Land Value that generates a deficit of £15.82 million. However, the application of this higher Benchmark Land Value would be inappropriate given the scale and nature of the site, including the scale of infrastructure costs the site will incur. The conclusion notes that the site is:

“very well placed to be brought forward with a policy compliant level of and tenure mix of affordable housing.”

69. The Assessment includes all the likely infrastructure costs, which are summarised in Appendix 2. The infrastructure requirements provided by the landowners/promoters have been amended by WBC in specific projects, as set out in Table 4.12.1, to reflect more recent discussions, avoid double counting, and more accurately reflect the anticipated infrastructure costs.

70. The Assessment recognises that the landowners/promoters and WBC have discussed the infrastructure requirements, that there is a large degree of consensus (WBC's adjustments amount to only 4% of the total) and that the requirements will continue to evolve as the development proposals progress through the application and delivery processes. Given the scale of the development proposed, with delivery over several decades, this is to be expected.

71. The Assessment takes a conservative approach to viability, when considering the timing of housing and infrastructure delivery. Paragraph 4.14 of the Assessment states:

“The promoters have also advised on the anticipated timing of delivery of individual items of infrastructure based on their accelerated rate of delivery. This results in many items being frontloaded in the cashflow compared to the Council's housing trajectory. The promoters' estimated timings are incorporated within the summary at Appendix 3. The consequence of using the promoters' estimated timings is higher interest costs than would otherwise have been the

² This is a surplus residual value, after allowing for all costs, including infrastructure, finance, land costs and developer's profit.

case if delivery of some items is deferred. By utilising a combination of higher borrowing costs to deliver infrastructure early, coupled with slower rates of sale, our appraisal of viability is therefore conservative. The alignment of infrastructure and delivery rates would improve viability.”

72. As a result, if the landowners/promoters' more optimistic housing delivery rates were utilised, the viability of the site would improve due to higher sales and lower borrowing costs.

73. The SoCG ([WBC 23](#)) with the landowners/promoters confirms the agreement that the site is deliverable, with no concerns regarding the timing, delivery or viability of the infrastructure required to support the development. The parties will continue to work positively and proactively on various matters, including the IDP.

2)c. Paragraph 47 of the Council's response to our Initial Questions states that the site promoters agree on how the infrastructure costs would be apportioned. Is this agreement set out in any public document?

74. The apportionment of infrastructure costs has not been set out in a public document. The landowners/promoters have been working collaboratively to bring the site forward. WBC understands they are in broad agreement with how infrastructure costs will be apportioned between the parties. However, ultimately this is a commercial matter.

75. Appendix 1 of the University of Reading's representation to the Proposed Submission Plan ([0305](#)) includes a letter signed by the three principal landowners/promoters - the University of Reading, Hatch Farm Land Limited, and Gleeson Land Limited, setting out their commitment to collaborative working to deliver the site.

76. For commercial confidentiality reasons, the landowners/promoters have not submitted information regarding apportionment to WBC. However, WBC understands the split is predominantly based on the number of homes each promoter is delivering, alongside the infrastructure each party is delivering.

3) Are the delivery assumptions regarding this site robust? In particular:

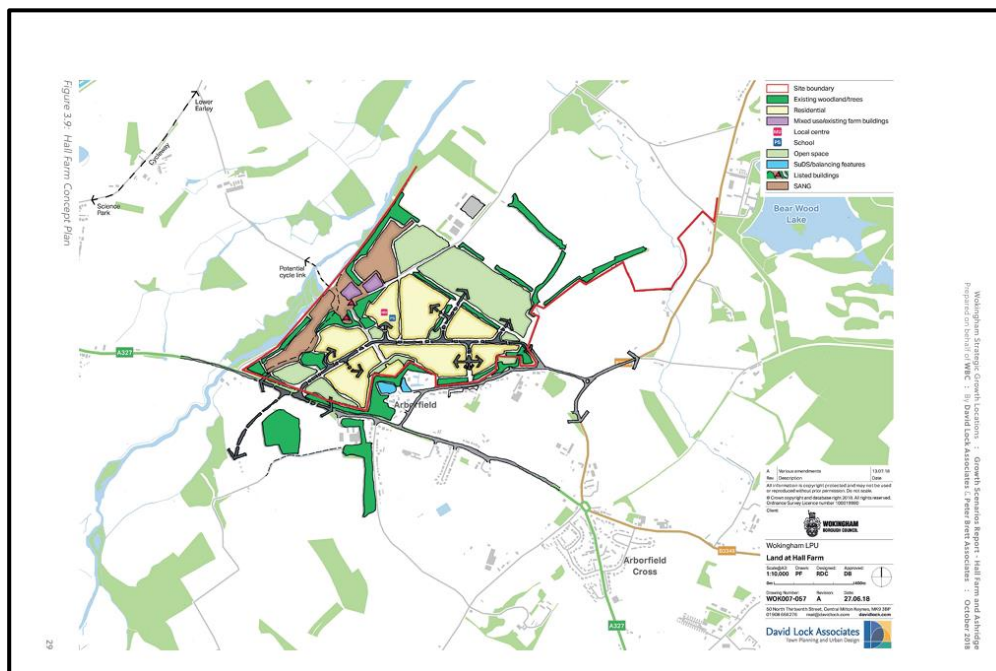
- a. How has the assumed number of dwellings been determined?**
- b. What effect would any delays in the delivery of key pieces of infrastructure, including new road bridges and schools, have on the phasing and delivery of housing at the site? How many dwellings could be completed prior to the delivery of these pieces of infrastructure?**
- c. Part 4 of Policy SS13 requires that a single agreed vision and masterplan for the whole site is agreed and consulted upon. The policy also requires that other strategies are prepared. Is the preparation of these documents reflected in the assumed delivery timescales?**
- d. Part 14 of Policy SS13 and the most recent SA refer to potential on-site mineral resources, and it is suggested that the site intersects with a 'Minerals Safeguarding Area'. Would extraction of minerals be required prior to any development taking place? If so, what impact would this have on housing delivery timescales?**
- e. Is there clear evidence that completions would begin within 5 years and that the development can otherwise be considered deliverable as defined by Annex 2 of the Framework?**
- f. Would the site deliver the number of units per annum that are envisaged?**

77. The deliverability of the LVGV SDL has been informed by a number of technical studies and reports produced or commissioned by WBC during plan preparation, in particular:

- The Strategic Growth Locations: Growth Scenarios Report (October 2018) ([PD2a](#), [PD2b](#), [PD2c](#), [PD2d](#))
- Wokingham Strategic Sites Report (November 2021) ([PD3a](#), [PD3b](#), [PD3c](#), [PD3d](#))
- Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) (2024) ([HO7a](#), [HO7b](#))
- Transport Assessment Report (2024) and Interim Year Report ([TR1a-o](#))
- WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#))
- Loddon Valley Garden Village Financial Viability Assessment (August 2025) ([WBC 29](#))
- Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement (March 2025) ([WBC 25](#))
- Housing trajectory (August 2025) ([WBC 27](#))
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan (August 2025) ([WBC 28](#))

3)a. How has the assumed number of dwellings been determined?

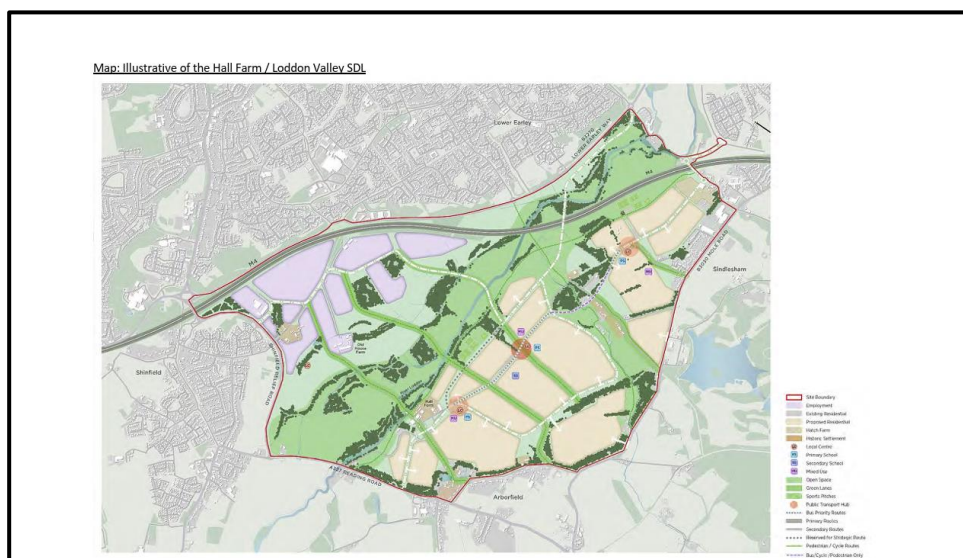
78. The number of dwellings proposed at the LVGV SDL is informed by a detailed understanding of the site's constraints and opportunities, informed by technical evidence and significant engagement and cooperation between WBC, the landowners/promoters and relevant stakeholders.
79. In 2018, WBC commissioned consultants David Lock Associates (DLA) to assess strategic scale opportunities to inform earlier stages of plan-making. The Strategic Growth Locations: Growth Scenarios Report (October 2018) ([PD2a](#), [PD2b](#), [PD2c](#), [PD2d](#)) examined a strategic site option at Hall Farm to deliver around 1,000 homes. A concept plan was included in Figure 3.9 of the Growth Scenarios Report (reproduced below), showing development focussed in the area north of Church Lane, with on-site infrastructure including a local centre, primary school and SANG along the River Loddon.



80. However, the proposal was not included in the Draft Local Plan (2020) ([EC3](#)) consultation, with the opportunity for a new garden town at Grazeley being preferred.
81. After the Draft Local Plan consultation, alternative strategic sites were considered following changes to the emergency planning legislation and arrangements around AWE Burghfield which meant that the Grazeley proposal was no longer achievable. At this time a larger area of land at Hall Farm was promoted as a strategic scale opportunity, extending further north towards the M4 and east towards Sindlesham. Further land was also promoted in the area of the South Wokingham SDL. To understand the constraints and opportunities of new and extended areas, DLA prepared the Wokingham Strategic Sites Report (November 2021) ([PD3a](#), [PD3b](#), [PD3c](#), [PD3d](#)), which considered strategic

scale development opportunities at Hall Farm / Loddon Valley, and at South Wokingham.

82. Figure 18 of the Strategic Sites Report (November 2021) ([PD3a](#)) set out a framework masterplan for the delivery of approximately 4,500 dwellings at Hall Farm / Loddon Valley. The framework masterplan included land at Hall Farm, land in the north east of the site at Hatch Farm, and towards the south of the site off Mole Road (part of which is now controlled by Gleeson Land Limited).
83. The land at Hall Farm / Loddon Valley was proposed as an allocation for a new garden village for 4,500 homes in the Revised Growth Strategy consultation ([EC4](#)). A minimum of 2,200 homes were expected to be completed in the period to 2037/38. An illustrative plan is set out in Figure 8 of the Revised Growth Strategy consultation document (reproduced below). The plan shows development on land to the south-east of the River Loddon, the expansion of the Thames Valley Science Park, a new country park along the River Loddon valley, and significant new services and facilities.



84. Following the Revised Growth Strategy consultation, the vision for the site changed with further engagement with the landowners/promoters and further understanding of the site's opportunities and constraints. This resulted in refinements to the design and a reduction in the overall capacity of the site, by removing and reducing a small number of development parcels, particularly in the area west of B3030 Mole Road. The Proposed Submission Plan ([CD1a](#)) continued to propose the site for a new garden community at a reduced scale of 3,930 dwellings, with a minimum of 2,700 dwellings expected to be completed within the plan period to 2040. Figure 8 of the Proposed Submission Plan shows an updated LVGV concept plan (reproduced below).



85. The landowners/promoters agree that the site can accommodate at least 3,930 dwellings across the allocation, as confirmed in the SoCG ([WBC 23](#)).
 86. A valid hybrid planning application was submitted by the University of Reading in October 2025 for up to 2,800 homes and associated infrastructure on their portion of the LVGV allocation. Other key landowners are actively engaged in pre-application discussions and planning applications for their respective portions are being prepared. The applications are being coordinated and together seek permission for the delivery of 3,930 dwellings proposed in Policy SS13.
- 3)b. What effect would any delays in the delivery of key pieces of infrastructure, including new road bridges and schools, have on the phasing and delivery of housing at the site? How many dwellings could be completed prior to the delivery of these pieces of infrastructure?**
87. WBC is confident that key pieces of infrastructure will be delivered at the appropriate time to effectively mitigate the impact of development and enable the delivery of housing as set out in the housing trajectory.
 88. The IDP 2025 ([WBC 28](#)) sets out information on infrastructure delivery, including timing and costs. The infrastructure package and delivery of housing have been assessed in the Loddon Valley Garden Village Financial Viability Assessment ([WBC 29](#)), which shows the site can be delivered viably. There is no evidence that suggests key infrastructure could be delayed.

Schools

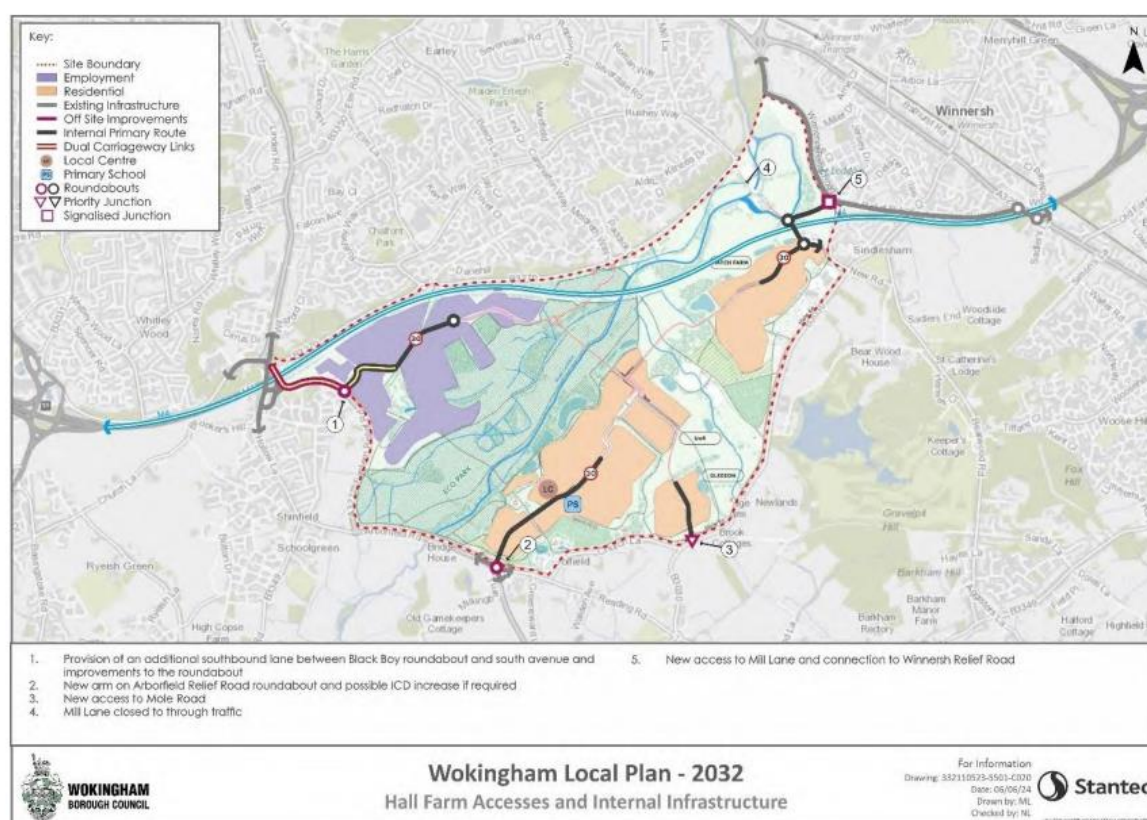
89. The demand for 1FE primary schools is often assessed as arising from around 800-1,000 dwellings. The first primary school within LVGV is expected to start construction in 2029 with completion in 2031. The housing trajectory ([WBC 27](#)) shows 525 dwellings would be completed by the end of 2030/31. The delivery timeframe of the first primary school and tested in the LVGV Financial Viability Assessment ([WBC 29](#)) ensures delivery can be achieved when need arises.
90. Whilst WBC is confident the completion of housing and the delivery of the first primary school are aligned, the Wokingham Borough School Places Strategy (2024/25 – 2029/30) (Appendix A) shows potential future surpluses in primary school places, with a declining birth rate a key factor. As a result, even if there were a delay in delivering a primary school, there is anticipated to be sufficient capacity at schools elsewhere in the borough where pupils could be accommodated in the shorter term until the school within LVGV were delivered.
91. The secondary school within LVGV is expected to start construction in 2031 with completion in 2034. The housing trajectory ([WBC 27](#)) shows 1,275 dwellings would be completed by the end of 2033/34. The delivery timeframe of the secondary school and tested in the LVGV Financial Viability Assessment ([WBC 29](#)) ensures delivery can be achieved when need arises.
92. Similarly to primary school provision, WBC is confident that the completion of housing and the delivery of the secondary school are aligned. With the falling primary school population, even if there were a delay, sufficient capacity can be anticipated at schools elsewhere in the borough where pupils could be accommodated in the shorter term until the school within LVGV were delivered.
93. WBC has experience of monitoring and managing the need for and delivery of school places through strategic development, including analysis of birth rates, school capacity and international migration. Where necessary, completed school buildings have been held empty when local need was insufficient, opening them once local need increased.
94. The hybrid planning application submitted by the University of Reading in October 2025 includes the delivery of the two primary schools and a secondary school, reflecting Policy SS13, the concept plan in the plan ([CD1a](#), Figure 8) and the IDP 2025.

Highways

95. The Transport Assessment Report 2032 Interim Year Assessment (the Interim TA) ([TR1m](#)) helps to identify the potential mitigation required in the initial phase of the LVGV development. Table 2 of the assessment sets out a summary of the land uses compiled to understand trip generation, internalisation and trip distribution in 2032 (reproduced below).

Land use	Local Plan Update quantum
Residential dwellings	800 houses
Local Centres	Food store – 500m ² Mixed retail/café – 500m ²
Primary School	1 x 1 FE
R&D (m ²)	40,000m ²

96. Figure 1 of the Interim TA shows the access and internal infrastructure delivered in 2032 to support the development identified in the table (reproduced below).



97. The five highways projects identified in Figure 1 are all included in the IDP, with delivery timescales on or before 2032, and are deliverable within the timescales indicated.
98. The question specifically refers to road bridges, which are identified in the IDP and WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#)): a bridge over the River Loddon to connect to the Thames Valley Science Park, and a bridge over the M4 motorway to connect to Lower Earley. The evidence shows at least 800 dwellings can be delivered before highways infrastructure such as the bridges over the M4 and River Loddon are required.
99. The location of the infrastructure projects, on a greenfield site, with good existing access to the highways network and no significant on-site constraints reduces the

likelihood of delays to delivery. In addition, projects like the bridges can be delivered independently of other infrastructure projects, again facilitating delivery and reducing the likelihood of delays.

3)c. Part 4 of Policy SS13 requires that a single agreed vision and masterplan for the whole site is agreed and consulted upon. The policy also requires that other strategies are prepared. Is the preparation of these documents reflected in the assumed delivery timescales?

100. The preparation of a single agreed vision and masterplan and other strategies for LVGV are reflected in the assumed delivery timescales.
101. The LVGV proposal has evolved through significant engagement and cooperation between WBC, the landowners/promoters, and relevant stakeholders. Collaboration has allowed the evolution of an illustrative masterplan and various technical evidence to support the plan process, as well as enabling the landowners/promoters to prepare more detailed and site-specific strategies and studies to support individual planning applications, which are capable of meeting the requirements set out in the policy.
102. Collaborative working has already enabled the development of an illustrative masterplan, building on the principles and concept plans established in the Wokingham Strategic Sites Report (November 2021) ([PD3a](#), [PD3b](#), [PD3c](#), [PD3d](#)) produced by David Lock Associates (DLA).
103. WBC and the landowners/promoters are working jointly with consultants at DLA to prepare a Strategic Design Code and Masterplan, which incorporates a vision and masterplan, which will meet the requirements of Policy SS13. Work is ongoing to test and finalise the vision and illustrative masterplan as part of the Strategic Design Code and Masterplan document. It is anticipated to be finalised in spring 2026, following further public engagement and consultation. The emerging masterplan continues to align with the concept plan set out in Figure 8 of the Proposed Submission Plan.
104. Engagement between WBC and the landowners has led to the vision and masterplan being considered as part of the Strategic Design Code process. A minor modification is therefore proposed to the wording of Policy SS13. This has been agreed with the principal landowners and is set out below:

Strategic Design Code and Masterplanning

5. To ensure that development comes forward in a strategic, coordinated and comprehensive manner, delivery should be led by a single agreed vision and masterplan for the whole garden village that demonstrates how the principles established in this policy and supporting guidance in Appendix C have been considered to ensure high quality development. **This will be secured through a strategic design code that** ~~The masterplan~~ must be produced in partnership between the council, developers, landowners and key stakeholders, and involve

consultation with the local community. Development proposals on individual land parcels must accord with the principles and requirements set out in the agreed vision and **concept** masterplan **contained within the strategic design code**. The **strategic design code** masterplan must provide:

- a) A coordinated and comprehensive landscape led approach to development of the whole Loddon Valley Garden Village to avoid piecemeal and ad-hoc development proposals;
- b) A strategy for the quantum and distribution of land uses, access points, design and layout principles (~~including a strategic design code~~) which draws on a detailed understanding of the area's characteristics, opportunities and constraints;
- c) A strategy for the timely delivery of facilities and infrastructure necessary to support each phase of delivery and the garden village as a whole;
- d) A strategy for creating a distinctive and sustainable community, embracing the best of town and country and that delivers climate resilience; and
- e) A strategy for integrating and implementing arts and cultural activities including public art.

105. This approach has enabled the landowners/promoters to progress and prepare individual but complementary planning applications to ensure the development will come forward in a strategic, coordinated and comprehensive manner, as required by Part 5 of Policy SS13.

106. Alongside masterplanning work, a coordinated approach to infrastructure delivery has been achieved through the preparation of a single Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) across all three of the principal landowners. The SoCG with various landowners ([WBC 23](#)) confirms that the parties will continue working positively and collaboratively to refine the IDP and other strategies such as the Masterplan and Strategic Design Code.

107. Other documents and strategies, including on drainage and flood alleviation, ecology, sustainable transport and movement, and energy and sustainability have been prepared by the landowners/promoters and will be considered through the planning application process.

3)d. Part 14 of Policy SS13 and the most recent SA refer to potential on-site mineral resources, and it is suggested that the site intersects with a 'Minerals Safeguarding Area'. Would extraction of minerals be required prior to any development taking place? If so, what impact would this have on housing delivery timescales?

108. Parts of the LVGV SDL are located within a Minerals Safeguarding Area (MSA) for sand and gravel identified in the Joint Central and Eastern Berkshire Minerals and Waste Plan, and associated policies map (2023) ([WBC 32d](#)). Part 3 of Policy M2: Safeguarding sand and gravel resources, sets out the approach to minerals safeguarding, prior extraction of minerals, and proposals for non-minerals development in the MSA.

109. As set out in Policy SS13, a Minerals Resource Assessment (MRA) should be submitted by the applicant(s) to understand the potential for mineral extraction. This assessment will review where, and how far, mineral extraction is viable and deliverable.
110. Prior extraction often requires limited engineering works to win the aggregate, often due to the shallow depth of winnable sand and gravel. This means aggregate is winnable as part of the groundworks already being undertaken for the development and would therefore not cause a delay in delivery.
111. The site is of such a scale that it is unlikely that prior extraction will be viable across the whole site given variation in mineral depth, quality and location. Minerals may also not be extracted where there are other important considerations, for example protected trees, hedgerows and biodiversity considerations. Any prior extraction would therefore be undertaken in phases, including in areas where development is not planned until the later stages of the site's delivery. This would prevent any adverse impacts on housing delivery.
112. An MRA has been submitted by the University of Reading as part of their planning application. The MRA states that full prior extraction across the site would not be feasible, but that targeted prior extraction could be viable. The MRA also states that incidental extraction should be adopted and encouraged in line with the phasing of construction development. WBC will review the MRA and engage with the University of Reading as part of the planning application process.
113. In summary, the prior extraction of minerals may be required on parts of the site, depending on whether it is viable and deliverable, but given the large scale and phasing of delivery, and the University's MRA, it is not expected to impact on housing delivery timescales.

3)e. Is there clear evidence that completions would begin within 5 years and that the development can otherwise be considered deliverable as defined by Annex 2 of the Framework?

114. There is clear evidence that completions on the LVGV SDL will begin within five years and that the site can be considered deliverable on adoption of the plan, having regard to the definition of what is deliverable in Annex 2 of the NPPF 2023.
115. The PPG Housing supply and delivery, further sets out examples of evidence to demonstrate deliverability, which may include:
- *current planning status – for example, on larger scale sites with outline or hybrid permission how much progress has been made towards approving reserved matters, or whether these link to a planning performance agreement that sets out the timescale for approval of reserved matters applications and discharge of conditions;*

- *firm progress being made towards the submission of an application – for example, a written agreement between the local planning authority and the site developer(s) which confirms the developers' delivery intentions and anticipated start and build-out rates;*
- *firm progress with site assessment work; or*
- *clear relevant information about site viability, ownership constraints or infrastructure provision, such as successful participation in bids for large-scale infrastructure funding or other similar projects.*³

116. The following points provide clear evidence that demonstrates that the deliverability of LVGV at the time of adoption would have at least a realistic prospect of completions within the five year period. This includes evidence that would meet several of the (non-exhaustive) examples provided in the PPG:

- A hybrid planning application was submitted in October 2025 on land owned by the University of Reading (the principal landowner) at Hall Farm for up to 2,800 dwellings and associated infrastructure. This provides sufficient time for officers to consider and refine the application as the local plan is examined.
- The remaining landowners are actively engaged in pre-application discussions and are preparing applications for submission during the examination process. The application for the land promoted by Hatch Farm Land Ltd is expected to include detailed matters supporting a first phase of development without the need for subsequent reserved matters applications.
- A Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) was agreed by WBC and the principal landowners (University of Reading, Gleeson Land Ltd, Hatch Farm Land Ltd) in February 2025.
- The submission of applications demonstrates land is available and deliverable and provides a clear commitment to delivery.
- The SoCG sets out that WBC and the landowners anticipate first completions on site within five years. This is also reflected in the latest housing trajectory (August 2025) ([WBC 27](#)).
- Firm progress with the necessary surveys, consultation and engagement to help shape the proposals and agree solutions to any identified issues.
- Technical evidence and studies, which demonstrate that the site is viable and deliverable. This includes the Loddon Valley Garden Village Financial Viability Assessment (August 2025) ([WBC 29](#)) that shows the site can be delivered viably, and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) ([WBC 28](#)).
- WBC's track record of delivering large scale developments, as demonstrated by the delivery of the adopted SDLs.

117. In summary there is clear evidence that there is at least a realistic prospect of completions at the LVGV SDL within five years, and the site should therefore be considered deliverable on adoption of the plan.

³ Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 68-007-20190722.

3)f. Would the site deliver the number of units per annum that are envisaged?

118. The LVGV SDL will deliver housing across most of the local plan period, particularly in the 2030s.
119. The housing trajectory (August 2025) ([WBC 27](#)) sets out anticipated delivery from the site across the plan period based on the information available at the time. This shows first completion of 25 dwellings in 2027/28, with delivery increasing in the years afterwards and maximum delivery of 250 dwellings per annum between 2031/32 – 2037/38. In total 2,700 dwellings are anticipated to be delivered in the plan period to 2040. The projected housing delivery rates take into account the specific context of the site, including on-site constraints, infrastructure delivery and the timing of planning applications. In preparing the housing trajectory, WBC has taken a relatively conservative approach to housing delivery, informed by local data and analysis.
120. The SoCG with the landowners ([WBC 23](#)) anticipates first completions of 25 dwellings in 2027/28, but suggests an accelerated delivery rate is being planned for, peaking at over 400 dwellings per annum in 2032/33, with over 3,500 dwellings anticipated to be delivered in the plan period to 2040. This shows WBC's approach to housing delivery is conservative.
121. WBC understands that there is a recent change to the anticipated timing of the planning application on the Hatch Farm Land Ltd section of the site, and that submission is now likely to be spring 2026, rather than October-December 2025 as set out in the SoCG. However, the change in expected submission date is unlikely to materially impact on the overall delivery of the site given the progress that has been made and continues to be made with the wider landowner/promoter group and the time available for consultation and consideration of detail once submitted.
122. The timing of planning applications for the other two principal landowners/promoters remains unchanged from the SoCG. The University of Reading submitted a hybrid application in October 2025, and Gleeson Land Ltd are preparing a planning application for submission in November/December 2025.
123. The delivery rates for the LVGV SDL have been informed by WBC's substantial experience in delivering the existing SDLs. The Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement (March 2025) ([WBC 25](#)) and WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#)) included information on delivery rates for the SDLs. The data shows the SDLs have achieved substantial completions in the local market, with multiple years where completions have consistently exceeded 250 dwellings per annum. The delivery of 250 dwellings per annum is therefore clearly achievable at the LVGV SDL.
124. The scale of the site also means different housing products, types and tenures can be delivered by different developers, which supports absorption rates. For example, a district centre and local centres incorporating public transport nodes/routes will support higher density housing, while lower densities will be subject to site-specific sensitivities, such as landscape, character and heritage. The design code will also help

to establish varied character areas that appeal to different segments of the housing market. The delivery of 40% affordable housing would deliver 150 open market sale dwellings per annum alongside 100 custom and self-build serviced plots, 20 Gypsy and Traveller pitches, as well as other forms of specialist accommodation. Together this approach widens housing diversity, which is a key driver of build out rates.

125. In the early stages of delivery four separate highways access points will be provided from the existing highways network, followed by a further access at later stages. This supports the delivery of multiple phases and parcels simultaneously.
126. In addition, the Loddon Valley Garden Village Financial Viability Assessment ([WBC 29](#), paragraph 6.1) shows the site can be delivered viably, and responses to other questions have shown that there are no significant obstacles to the delivery of the site in the timescales set out in the housing trajectory.

Issue 2: South Wokingham SDL

4) Is the site suitable for allocation as an SDL and have the constraints to development been adequately assessed and considered? In particular:

- a. Has the impact of the development on the highway network been adequately assessed? Are the internalisation assumptions in the TA and Interim TA reliable having regard to when facilities such as schools and local centres would be delivered? Would there be unacceptable impacts on highway safety or severe residual cumulative impacts on the highway network as a result of the development?**
- b. Has flood risk at this site been appropriately considered?**
- c. Have all other constraints to development been adequately assessed and considered?**

127. The South Wokingham SDL is suitable for allocation, and constraints and opportunities have been considered and assessed through robust processes.
128. The South Wokingham SDL was originally allocated in the Core Strategy local plan 2010 ([OD4](#)). As set out in WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#)) under Response 13 and 14, part of the SDL has been completed, with the remaining parts benefitting from a hybrid planning permission, with several parcels recently granted reserved matters consent. The South Wokingham Distributor Road (SWDR) is under construction and due to be completed in 2027.
129. The plan proposes additional development which is mostly contained within the extent of the existing adopted South Wokingham SDL. The area beyond the adopted extent where new housing is proposed is an area containing existing buildings. The area proposed for additional development is referred to as the SDL extension.
130. The proposal for the SDL extension has evolved through significant engagement and cooperation between WBC, the promoters/landowners, and relevant stakeholders. The SDL extension has also been supported by masterplanning exercises that have informed deliverability.
131. WBC is confident there are no significant constraints that cannot be overcome and the site can be delivered viably.
132. Valid planning applications have been submitted for the SDL extension by the landowners/promoters for up to 1,150 dwellings and associated infrastructure. The applications are being coordinated and together seek permission for slightly more than the proposed allocation in Policy SS12.

133. The following focuses on the SDL extension as this does not yet have planning permission.
134. Constraints and opportunities of the SDL extension have been assessed in extensive detail through a robust site assessment process, based on technical evidence and studies. The Wokingham Strategic Sites Report was undertaken by DLA ([PD3a](#)) and supported the Revised Growth Strategy consultation ([EC4](#)) in 2021. It considered key constraints at that time, including transport and access, ecology, utilities, landscape and heritage.
135. The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) considers the broad suitability of promoted land for development at each stage of the plan process. The suitability of the SDL extension has been thoroughly and robustly assessed through the HELAA ([HO7a](#), [HO7b](#)). This considered a wide range of constraints and opportunities, drawing on information from a range of sources including evidence base studies, masterplanning, designations, surveys and previous planning history.
136. The SDL extension has also been subject to assessment in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) ([CD3a](#)), and earlier SA work, where the site is treated as constant across all growth scenarios, as discussed in response to Matter 1, Question 5.
137. Representations submitted through consultation have also been taken into account ([CD4f](#)) and modifications proposed where appropriate ([CD22](#)).
138. Further detail on the highlighted matters is set out below.

4)a.i Has the impact of the development on the highway network been adequately assessed?

139. As set out in Matter 2, the South Wokingham SDL, including extension, has been assessed through a robust modelling process. National Highways in their SoCG ([WBC 2](#)) agree that the evidence supporting the plan including both the Transport Assessment Report (TA) ([TR1a-j](#)) and the Transport Assessment Report 2032 Interim Year Assessment (Interim TA) ([TR1m-o](#)), is robust and proportionate to the plan-making stage.
140. The SDL extension has been assessed in detail in both the TA to 2040, incorporating the package of measures set out in section 2.5.11, and in the Interim TA to 2032 section 2.5.
141. As set out in Matter 2, the TA assesses (Table 10) the entirety of the SDL extension (i.e. 1,150 homes) with the required infrastructure being completed by 2040, noting that, as set out in the housing trajectory ([WBC 27](#)), the development is anticipated to be completed over a longer period extending beyond 2040. The assessment in the TA is robust, not least because it assesses a greater level of development than anticipated to be delivered within the plan period. This approach also ensures a robust assessment of the mitigation requirements and supports the proposed timelines defined within the IDP in the tables for the SDL (Pages 34-36).

4)a.ii Are the internalisation assumptions in the TA and Interim TA reliable having regard to when facilities such as schools and local centres would be delivered?

142. The response to Question 1b(i) sets out information on internalisation. With respect to the South Wokingham SDL Extension, the same internalisation factors are used as set out in the TA at 2.4.6 to 2.4.8 and Table 8. These are utilised to adjust the vehicle trips for each of the land uses and define those vehicle-based trips that would remain within the SDL and would not access the network beyond. As set out in Table 1 of the TA, the development is expected to include targeted sustainable transport measures.
143. The TA assesses the delivery of all land uses including 2 x 1FE primary schools and the local centres in 2040. The TA in paragraph 2.5.3, confirms that *land assumptions at the time of modelling assumed 2 x 1 FE primary schools, however this has since been revised to a single 1 FE primary school, this change does not result in a material change to the modelling output*. The Interim TA assesses 1x 1FE primary school is provided. This is consistent with the IDP 2025 ([WBC 28](#)).
144. The need for education facilities will be managed to respond to need arising from the housing as it is delivered. The Interim TA assumes that 1x 1FE primary school is provided.
145. The South Wokingham SDL extension is part of the wider South Wokingham SDL and is able to utilise primary school facilities within the permitted element which would still comprise trips within the wider SDL. The use of 50% internalisation for education as defined in Table 8, and explained in paragraph 2.5.5 of the TA, is robust and may be viewed as conservative.
146. The TA assesses the full delivery of the SDL within the plan period including the retail uses. The wider South Wokingham SDL provides additional retail-based opportunities which could be used by residents helping to maintain trip internalisation. Retail and other facilities within the SDL will be attractive to residents, being nearby and easily accessible. The assumption that 50% of the retail-based trips (Table 8) will remain within the SDL is robust and conservative.

4)a.iii Would there be unacceptable impacts on highway safety or severe residual cumulative impacts on the highway network as a result of the development?

147. The TA in 7.2.3 sets out that the modelling has shown that, with the provision of the mitigation package, the SDL will improve the situation when compared to the reference case with forecasts showing that queueing and delay will be reduced.
148. This is supported by Matter 2, which explains the robustness of the modelling and assessment process, including that the assumptions used to generate the model are fully in accordance with current guidance and guidance at the time of preparation. The

applied assumptions are conservative and produce a greater impact than is likely to occur in the plan period.

149. The Interim TA was prepared to assess a proportionate and phased level of development for the SDL. This showed that with the initial package of measures set in paragraph 6.4.3, a proportion of the development can be accommodated within this period and further measures are not required until later in the delivery phase.
150. Within the reference case, the Waterloo Road/Old Wokingham Road and Peacock Lane junction is changed to a roundabout as per agreement between WBC and Bracknell Forest Council (BFC). As set out in Matter 2 following the publication of the TA, options for a new walking/cycling route on Waterloo Road and additional traffic calming are being considered by the authorities, which may alter the capacity assumptions for the junction. Matter 2 sets out that this is likely to reassign additional vehicle movements to the new link road through the development and may change the flow pattern through the junction. However, as stated in Matter 2, this is not considered a material change at this scale as amended schemes can be considered and discussed by the councils through planning application consultations.
151. Within the area of South Wokingham, as set out in Matter 2, the A329 Corridor between Coppid Beech and Vigar Way junction witnesses capacity issues in the reference case. Matter 2 sets out that this corridor will be the subject of wider consideration by the authorities. Both WBC and BFC have included possible improvements within their IDPs which will seek to secure funding through regional sources, CIL and Section 106 contributions to address this.
152. In summary, robust transport evidence concludes that there would be no unacceptable impacts on the highway in terms of safety nor would any residual cumulative impacts be severe as a result of the SDL following the implementation of the proposed mitigation packages considered for 2032 and 2040.

4)b. Has flood risk at this site been appropriately considered?

153. Flood risk at this site, and across the borough as a whole, has been appropriately considered through the production of a robust evidence base at all relevant stages of plan preparation. Please refer to WBC's response to Matter 3, Issue 1, Question 1d for background on the general flood evidence supporting the plan, which is not repeated here.
154. With particular regard to the SDL extension, the Level 2 SFRA 2023 provides a detailed site summary table for the site (see Appendix A to the Level 2 SFRA ([EN3b](#)) – site 5WW030 and combined sites) as well as detailed interactive mapping (see Appendix D Site 5WW030 ([EN3af](#))). The majority of the site lies within Flood Zone 1, with fluvial and surface water flood risk affecting mainly a modest area around the Emm Brook and its tributary. While surface water flood risk extends further across the site in the 0.1% AEP event, the majority of the site is unaffected.

155. It is noted that the area proposed for allocation extends further southwards than promoted site 5WW030 (see page 31 of [WBC 18G](#)) which formed the basis of the SFRA assessment at that time. The proposals subsequently evolved to include built development in the area relating to site 5WW031 (see page 32 of [WBC 18G](#)), extending built development south of the Emm Brook. While this area was not assessed specifically within the site boundary in the SFRA, it is shown on the Level 2 SFRA mapping. Other than adjacent to the Emm Brook, the additional land to the south is mostly not shown to be at flood risk, based on the data used in the SFRA (and through more recent EA Flood Map updates, as confirmed with the EA ([WBC7a](#) & [7b](#))). The Proposed Submission Plan Sequential and Exception test ([EN4](#)) incorporates site 5WW031 in the summary of flood risk.
156. The site specific SFRA documents, as well as the Sequential and Exception Test, have been considered by the Environment Agency (EA) and it is common ground ([WBC 4](#)) that the proposed allocations in the plan are developable in principle and that the evidence base is robust and proportionate. The SFRA and Sequential and Exception Test have been prepared in collaboration with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) (which is WBC).
157. In addition to specific flooding evidence, the plan process has also been supported by masterplanning exercises that have informed the allocation and deliverability of the SDL extension. The Wokingham Strategic Sites Report was undertaken by DLA ([PD3a](#)) and supported the Revised Growth Strategy consultation ([EC4](#)) in 2021. The sites report considered all constraints, in particular flood constraints as informed by detailed Level 2 SFRA ([EN1a](#)) work, at that time undertaken by consultants Stantec in parallel with the masterplanning exercise. Flood risk was a key consideration which informed DLA's proposed framework masterplan which was predicated on a landscape led approach with green and blue infrastructure an integral part of the development, with built form steered away from areas of flood risk. It is noted that WBC's commissioned masterplanning exercise ([PD3a](#)) concluded that the quantum of development proposed in the Revised Growth Strategy was achievable.
158. The evidence demonstrates that flood risk at the site has been considered in a comprehensive manner, appropriate to the stage of plan making and clearly shows that the scale of development proposed can be accommodated at the site without locating new buildings within areas at risk of flooding from all sources. It is on this basis that Policy SS12 part 4.e) sets the requirement for new buildings to be located outside of areas of flood risk.
159. The concept plan within the submitted plan (Figure 7) details how the proposed quantum can be achieved with development located away from the area around the Emm Brook which is subject to flood risk. This position is mirrored in the updated concept plan contained within the Schedule of proposed modifications ([CD22](#) and [WBC 39](#)), with changes limited to primary road/junction alignment and to landscaping provision.

160. It is acknowledged that a secondary route is proposed through floodplain to link the proposed parcels north and south of the Emm Brook. This principle has been accepted by the relevant statutory consultee, with a proposed modification to development guidelines agreed with the EA to ensure detailed design does not unacceptably impact on ecology and blue and green infrastructure ([WBC 4](#)).

4)c. Have all other constraints to development been adequately assessed and considered?

161. All other constraints to development have been adequately assessed and considered. As set out in the opening response to the question, comprehensive site assessment work has been undertaken.
162. Following extensive assessment, there are no significant constraints that cannot be overcome. Those constraints which require mitigation are reflected in the masterplanning and concept plan for the site.
163. Policy SS12 and the Development Guidelines (Proposed Submission Plan Appendix B) ([CD1b](#)) address the key constraints and opportunities in the delivery of the site. Both the policy and the development guidelines have evolved through engagement and consultation, including with statutory consultees. Collaborative working will therefore continue on specific matters as required, including as part of the ongoing planning application process.
164. Constraints identified in the question regarding highways and flood risk are set out in detail above. Other constraints have been adequately assessed and considered and are briefly discussed below, particularly given the opportunities they present.
165. The SDL extension includes a small number of heritage assets which have been assessed and considered as part of the proposal, including at Pearce's Farm and Lock's Farm, and other heritage assets in proximity to the site. The conservation and enhancement of heritage assets have been assessed and considered, including in the Historic Environment topic paper ([HE1a](#), p.47-49 and [HE1b](#), p.87-89). The concept plan for the site within the submitted plan ([CD1a](#), Figure 7) identifies these areas as 'historic settlements' which will help to inform the future delivery of the site including sensitive layout and design. These historic settlements continue to be identified in the proposed modified concept plan ([CD22](#) and [WBC 39](#)). WBC and Historic England agree the heritage evidence supporting the plan is adequate and proportionate and that the strategic implications of proposals (including the SDL extension) have been considered and addressed, with no in principle objection to any of the sites proposed for allocation. This is set out in the SoCG ([CD8j](#)). The Statement also recognises the modifications WBC have proposed to the heritage section of Policy SS12 in the Schedule of proposed modifications ([CD22](#)), in response to Historic England's representations.
166. The landscape character of the site is identified in the Landscape Character Assessment (2019) ([LA2a-i](#)), and has helped inform the site assessment in the HELAA ([HO7a](#), [HO7b](#)), the Wokingham Strategic Sites Report (2021) ([PD3a](#)) and the concept

plan ([CD1a](#), Figure 7). Features of the landscape such as the Emm Brook, provide an opportunity to provide SANG and open space with active travel routes and green corridors running through the site, connecting it with other parts of the South Wokingham SDL and beyond. The trees and hedgerows along Old Wokingham Road are expected to be reinforced with additional planting to reduce visual impact when viewed from the east, including from within Bracknell Forest. This is set out in Policy SS12 and the development guidelines, and at a high level in the concept plan (Figure 7) and the proposed modifications to the concept plan ([CD22](#) and [WBC 39](#)).

5) Is there sufficient certainty that the infrastructure required to support the development could be delivered viably and at the point which it is needed?

167. The site is capable of delivering the necessary infrastructure whilst remaining viable.
168. The response to Matter 3, Issue 1, Question 2a sets out the relevant parts of the PPG, which states that strategic policy-making authorities will be expected to demonstrate there is a reasonable prospect that proposals can be developed within the timescales envisaged.
169. The adopted South Wokingham SDL which has planning permission, and the SDL extension proposed in the plan, are considered to comprise a significant extension to an existing town. WBC is confident that there is at least a 'reasonable prospect' that the proposals can be developed within the timescales envisaged, which is the relevant test in the PPG.
170. The IDP 2025 ([WBC 28](#)) sets out the anticipated timing and cost of infrastructure projects to mitigate the impact of the development proposed across the borough, including at the South Wokingham SDL, including the SDL extension.
171. The IDP and WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#)) sets out the 'essential' infrastructure projects that are necessary to mitigate the impact of development of the South Wokingham SDL including the SDL extension, and identifies the indicative costs and timing of delivery for all the infrastructure projects. These projects can be delivered alongside the development linked to triggers controlling the level of occupation. The IDP 2025 lists the South Wokingham Distributor Road (SWDR) as the only 'critical' infrastructure item. The SWDR is already under construction with completion anticipated in 2027. There are no other infrastructure items which are 'blockers' or 'show-stoppers' that must be in place upfront to enable growth.

Existing South Wokingham SDL

172. It is important to note that the South Wokingham SDL is largely an existing allocation in the Core Strategy local plan ([OD4](#)), with 637 dwellings completed and a further 1,820 dwellings with planning permission at 31 March 2025.

173. Completed dwellings north of the railway line at Montague Park have been supported by a range of infrastructure including a new primary school, as set out at paragraph 65 of WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#)). Further infrastructure benefits from planning permission on land south of the railway line and will be delivered as part of the committed development at the SDL, as set out in the South Wokingham section of the IDP 2025 ([WBC 28](#)). This includes a second new two form entry primary school, open space, SANG, financial contributions towards Grays Farm sports hub, and various highways and transport projects. An S106 agreement sets out the agreed delivery timescales for infrastructure, which is reflected in the IDP.
174. As above, the SWDR, which is required to unlock development south of the railway line, is under construction. As set out in response to question 14 of the initial questions([WBC 6](#)), this will support the delivery of further phases of development.
175. Progress of this and the other existing SDLs, shows that WBC has significant experience of delivering and facilitating the delivery of large scale developments. This shows how WBC has worked effectively with multiple landowners, developers/promoters, and relevant stakeholders, including statutory organisations like Network Rail, to deliver large scale sustainable new communities, and provides confidence that future infrastructure needs will be delivered viably and at the point of time required alongside development.
176. In summary, there are no known constraints that would delay the delivery of the infrastructure required to support the existing South Wokingham SDL.

South Wokingham SDL extension

177. The site assessment set out in the HELAA ([HO7a](#), [HO7b](#)), and the Wokingham Strategic Sites Report undertaken by DLA ([PD3a](#)) show there are no significant constraints that would prevent or delay the delivery of infrastructure required to support development. The site is immediately adjacent to the area with planning permission with the key road under construction. Additionally, there are no objections to the developability of the site from statutory consultees, demonstrated by the various agreed Statements of Common Ground.
178. The SDL extension will deliver additional infrastructure that will complement the infrastructure secured and being delivered as part of the existing SDL. This includes delivery of a new one form entry primary school, SANG, open space, financial contributions towards Grays Farm sports hub, and various highways and transport projects as referenced in ([CD1b](#)), South Wokingham SDL Development Guidelines, Appendix B, p.18, para. B3.11 a) to o).
179. WBC's Response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#)) (paragraphs 105-111) sets out how the Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy Viability Study ([VI1a](#)) assessed different site typologies, including strategic sites of 500 and 2,000 dwellings, and showed they could be delivered viably. This shows that the SDL extension can be delivered viably.

180. The development of the site is controlled by two landowners/promoters. The SoCG ([WBC 24](#)) with the landowners/promoters confirms that the site is deliverable.
181. The scale of the proposed SDL extension does not give rise to abnormal infrastructure in terms of type or cost. The site is capable of being delivered in a manner consistent with the original SDL vision, linking into the approved site and committed infrastructure. WBC is therefore confident that there is at least a 'reasonable prospect' that the proposals can be developed within the timescales envisaged.

6) Are the delivery assumptions regarding this site robust? In particular:

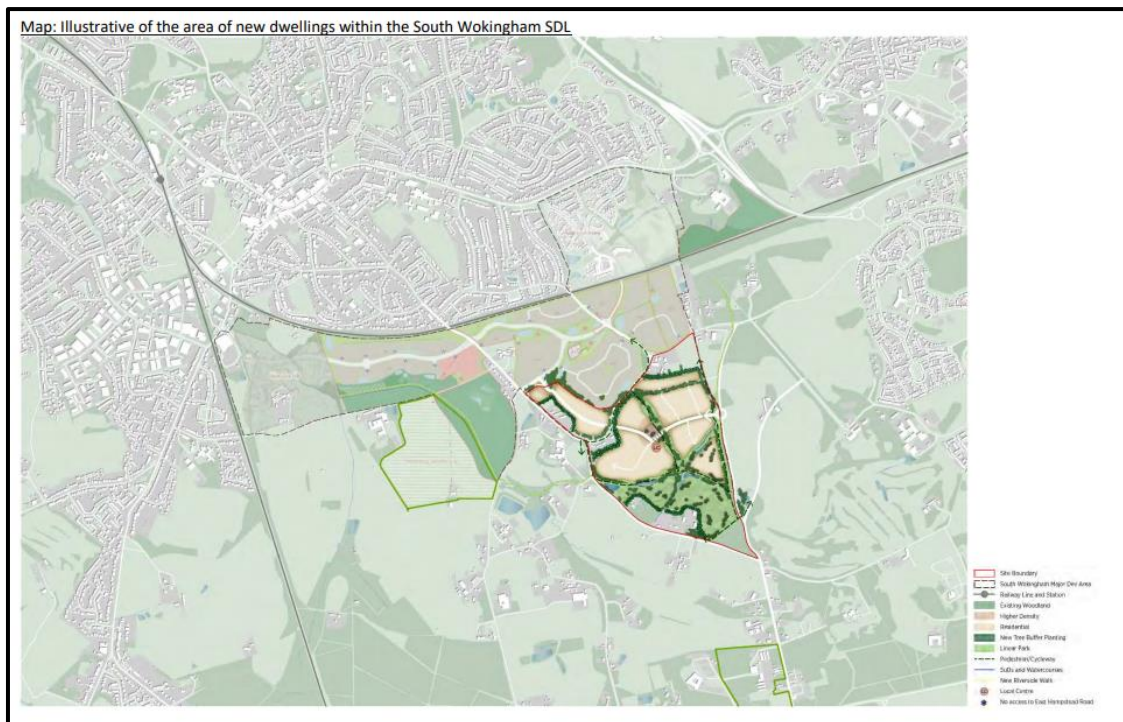
- a. How has the assumed number of dwellings been determined?**
- b. Is there clear evidence that completions would begin within 5 years and that the development can otherwise be considered deliverable as defined by Annex 2 of the Framework?**
- c. Would the site deliver the number of units per annum that are envisaged?**

182. The deliverability of the South Wokingham SDL, including the SDL extension, has been informed by a number of technical studies and reports produced or commissioned by WBC during plan preparation, in particular:
- Planning applications and progress towards delivery
 - Wokingham Strategic Sites Report (November 2021) ([PD3a](#), [PD3b](#), [PD3c](#), [PD3d](#))
 - Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) (2024) ([HO7a](#), [HO7b](#))
 - Transport Assessment Report and Interim Year Report ([TR1a-o](#))
 - Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy Viability Study Main Report ([VI1a](#))
 - WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#))
 - Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement (March 2025) ([WBC 25](#))
 - Housing trajectory (August 2025) ([WBC 27](#))
 - Infrastructure Delivery Plan (August 2025) ([WBC 28](#))

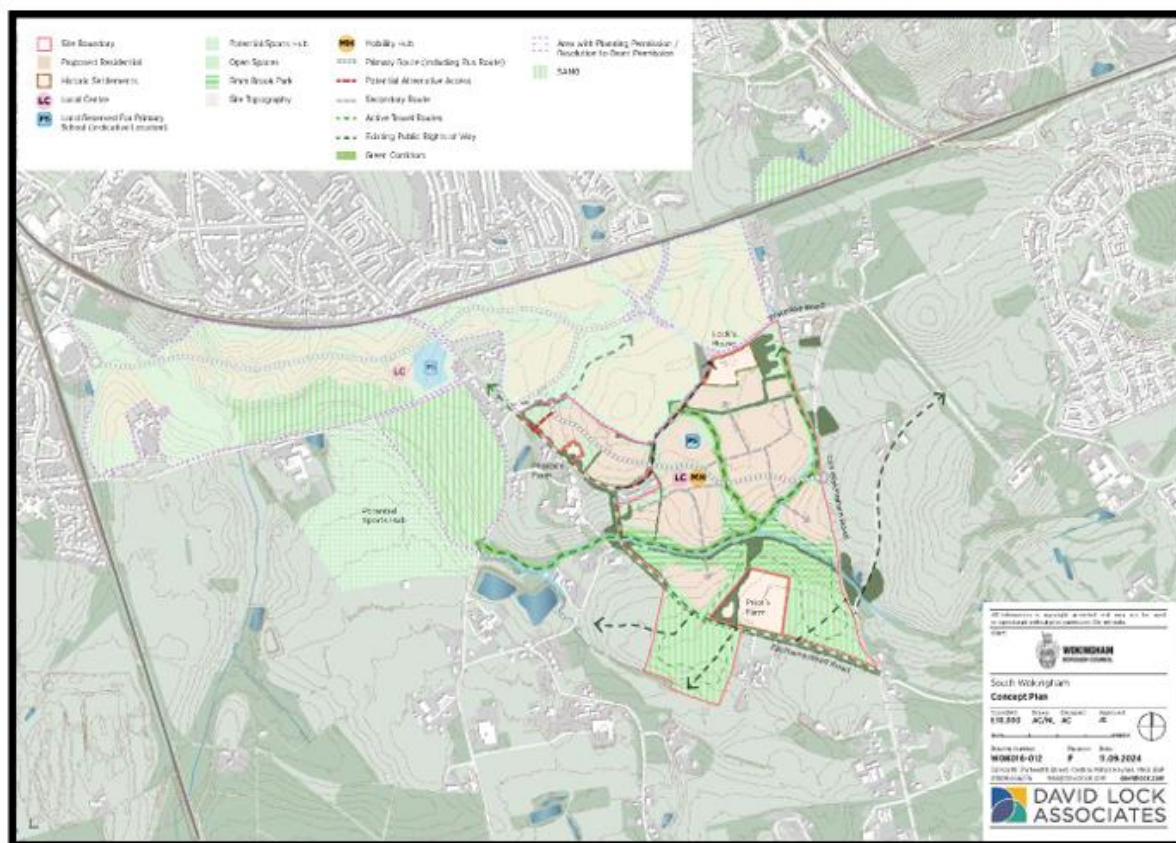
6)a. How has the assumed number of dwellings been determined?

183. Land at South Wokingham was originally identified in Policy CP21 of the Core Strategy local plan ([OD4](#)) as a location for sustainable, well-designed mixed-use development for around 2,500 dwellings.
184. The number of dwellings proposed in the plan is informed by a detailed understanding of committed development, the site's constraints and opportunities, technical evidence and significant engagement and cooperation between WBC, the landowners/promoters and relevant stakeholders.

185. An assessment of strategic scale opportunities was undertaken to inform earlier stages of plan-making, as explained in WBC's response to Question 3a above.
186. The Draft Local Plan (2020) ([EC3](#)) consultation retained the Core Strategy allocation and proposed an additional area of land south of Gipsy Lane for 17 dwellings.
187. After the Draft Local Plan consultation, alternative strategic sites were considered following changes to the emergency planning legislation and arrangements around AWE Burghfield which meant a proposal for a new garden town at Grazeley was no longer achievable. At this time, an additional area became available for development within the South Wokingham SDL largely within the original extent of the allocation on land south of Waterloo Road, which was promoted as a substantial opportunity through the local plan process.
188. To understand the constraints and opportunities of the extended area, David Lock Associates (DLA) prepared the Wokingham Strategic Sites Report (November 2021) ([PD3a](#), [PD3b](#), [PD3c](#), [PD3d](#)), which considered strategic scale development opportunities at South Wokingham and Hall Farm / Loddon Valley. Figure 31 of the Strategic Sites Report (November 2021) ([PD3a](#)) set out a framework masterplan for the delivery of approximately 835 dwellings at the South Wokingham SDL.
189. The land south of Waterloo Road was proposed as an allocation for 835 dwellings in the Revised Growth Strategy consultation ([EC4](#)). In addition, development opportunities were also identified on land to the west of St Anne's Drive and south of London Road for 54 dwellings; and at Gray's Farm for outdoor and indoor sports and community use. Land south of Gipsy Lane was retained as an allocation. Together, the additional areas formed an extension to the South Wokingham SDL.
190. An illustrative plan for the SDL extension was set out in Appendix F of the Revised Growth Strategy consultation document ([EC4](#)) and reproduced below. The plan shows development on land south of Waterloo Road with a small local centre and central square at the heart of the development. A central spine road connects the proposed development to the SWDR and Old Wokingham Road alongside green infrastructure north-south through the centre of the proposal, providing connection and integration to the current SDL.



191. Following the Revised Growth Strategy consultation, the design of the proposal evolved through engagement with the landowners/promoters, which indicated that a higher capacity could be achieved through an uplift to housing densities (around 35-40 dwellings per hectare). In addition, further land became available for development to the south of Easthampstead Road, largely within the original extent of the SDL. The SDL extension was therefore capable of accommodating a higher capacity of around 1,100 dwellings.
192. Planning permission had been granted for the land west of St Anne's Drive and was therefore removed as an allocation. Land south of Gipsy Lane was also removed as an allocation following further flood risk assessment.
193. The Proposed Submission Plan ([CD1a](#)) retained the Core Strategy allocation, with the vision for the area incorporating the land south of Waterloo Road. The site capacity is increased to 1,100 dwellings, with a minimum of 980 dwellings expected to be completed within the plan period to 2040. Figure 7 of the Proposed Submission Plan shows an updated concept plan (reproduced below).



194. The Schedule of proposed modifications ([CD22](#) and [WBC 39](#)) proposes further minor changes to the concept plan, to provide additional clarity regarding the highways layout and landscaping proposals, and respond to representations from BFC.

195. The landowners/promoters confirm the site can accommodate at least 1,100 dwellings across the proposed extension, as agreed through the signed SoCG ([WBC 24](#)).

196. Several planning applications have been submitted that form the area comprising the South Wokingham SDL extension, as set out in WBC's Response 14 of the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#), pages 24-29).

197. Together, the applications seek the delivery of at least the 1,100 dwellings proposed in Policy SS12.

6)b. Is there clear evidence that completions would begin within 5 years and that the development can otherwise be considered deliverable as defined by Annex 2 of the Framework?

198. There is clear evidence that completions will begin within five years and that the site can be considered deliverable on adoption of the plan, having regard to the definition of what is deliverable in Annex 2 of the NPPF 2023.

199. Examples of evidence provided in the PPG which may be used to demonstrate deliverability are referred to in the response to Question 3e above. This is not a closed list allowing other information to be utilised.
200. For context, the allocated SDL is divided into several areas. The area north of the railway line (Montague Park) is complete. The remaining areas south of the railway line: Land at phase 2a; Land at phase 2b (South of Waterloo Crescent) and Land at phase 3 (south-east of Finchampstead Road) benefit from outline/hybrid planning permissions, which are shown in the plan accompanying WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 15B](#)).
201. The section of the allocation south of the railway line has been reliant on the delivery of the planned South Wokingham Distributor Road (SWDR). As explained in WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#), paragraph 59), a contract has been agreed to deliver the road, with the works having commenced in spring 2025 and completion anticipated by early 2027. The construction of the road has enabled developers to exercise their options. For instance, Reserved Matters applications for Parcels R10 and R11 of Phase 2b, totalling 558 dwellings, were approved in June and September 2025.
202. The following points set out further compelling evidence that demonstrate that the delivery of the South Wokingham SDL at the time of adoption would have a realistic prospect of completions within the five year period. This includes evidence that would meet several of the examples provided in the PPG:
- The recent progress regarding planning applications/permissions for the phases of housing delivery at the existing SDL, and work to deliver substantial infrastructure, including the South Wokingham Distributor Road.
 - The landowners/promoters have submitted planning applications that together form the area comprising the SDL extension and are awaiting determination. The three planning applications seek the delivery of at least the 1,100 dwellings proposed in Policy SS12.
 - The site is available and all the parties to SoCG ([WBC 24](#)) anticipate first completions on site within five years. WBC anticipate first completions in 2029/30, which is reflected in the housing trajectory ([WBC 27](#)). The landowners/promoters have indicated their intention to progress the delivery of the site faster than the housing trajectory, as set out in the SoCG. One of the parties is a housebuilder, which will further support the timely delivery of new homes.
 - Firm progress with the necessary surveys, consultation and engagement to help shape the proposals and agree solutions to any identified issues.
 - Technical evidence and studies that demonstrate that the site is viable and deliverable, including whole plan viability ([VI1a](#)).
 - WBC's track record of delivering large scale developments, as demonstrated by the delivery of the adopted SDLs.

203. In summary, there is clear evidence that there is at least a realistic prospect of completions at the South Wokingham SDL within the five years, and that the site should therefore be considered deliverable on adoption of the plan.

6)c. Would the site deliver the number of units per annum that are envisaged?

204. The housing trajectory ([WBC 27](#)) sets out the anticipated delivery from the site across the plan. WBC is confident the South Wokingham SDL will deliver the number of units per annum as envisaged in the trajectory, with WBC having taken a relatively conservative approach to housing delivery, informed by local data and analysis.
205. The parcel north of the railway line (known as Montague Park) is complete. The parcels south of the railway line benefit from outline/hybrid planning permission. Reserved Matters applications for initial phases were granted permission by WBC in June 2025. The recent progress regarding planning applications/permission for the phases of housing delivery, and work to deliver the South Wokingham Distributor Road (under construction) are clear evidence homes and infrastructure will be delivered. The housing trajectory shows delivery from parcels R10 and R11 that benefit from Reserved Matters approval in the period up to 2028/29, with new homes now being marketed for sale by the developers.
206. The construction of the SWDR will also enable other phases of development to come forward, including from different developers with different housing products. Delivery rates for other parcels from 2029/30 onwards are anticipated to be a maximum of around 120 dwellings per annum. Given the likely number of outlets, infrastructure delivery and evidence from other SDLs in the borough this scale and rate of delivery is realistic.
207. Regarding the proposed SDL extension on land south of Waterloo Road, the housing trajectory ([WBC 27](#)) shows first completions in 2029/30, with delivery increasing in the years afterwards, with maximum delivery of 100 dwellings per annum between 2031/32 and 2039/40. In total, 980 dwellings are anticipated to be delivered in the plan period to 2040. WBC's projected housing delivery rates take the context of the site into account, including on-site constraints, infrastructure delivery and the timing of planning applications.
208. The SoCG ([WBC 24](#)) shows the landowners/promoters anticipate completions two years earlier than envisaged in the housing trajectory, with delivery at an accelerated rate and capable of achieving a higher quantum of dwellings. The landowner/promoter's projection would see the whole allocation delivered within the plan period to 2040.
209. The delivery rates for the SDL have been informed by WBC's substantial experience in delivering the existing SDLs. The Five-Year Housing Land Supply Statement (March 2025) ([WBC 25](#)) explains the monitoring of build out rates from sites across the borough, noting that developers are capable of delivery at consistent rates in the local housing market.

210. WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#)) included information on delivery rates for the SDLs. Substantial completions have been achieved in the local market, with multiple years where completions have consistently exceeded 250 dwellings per annum. The delivery of 100 dwellings per annum is therefore achievable.
211. The scale of the site means different housing products, types and tenures can be delivered, which supports absorption rates. The delivery of 40% affordable housing would provide a mix of housing types and tenures and widens housing diversity, which is a key driver of build out rates.
212. In addition, the whole plan viability study ([VI1a](#)) recognises that the SDL extension constitutes predominantly greenfield land with limited on-site constraints and is immediately adjacent to an area with planning permission, where it can be delivered viably. WBC's responses to other questions have shown that there are no significant obstacles to the delivery of the site in the timescales set out in the housing trajectory.

Issue 3: Arborfield Green SDL

7) Is the site suitable for allocation as an SDL and have the constraints to development been adequately assessed and considered? In particular:

- a. Has the impact of the development on the highway network been adequately assessed? Would there be unacceptable impacts on highway safety or severe residual cumulative impacts on the highway network as a result of the development?**
- b. Is a secondary access capable of being taken through the adjoining development to the southwest, as indicated in Figure 6 of the Plan? Is a secondary access necessary for this site to be delivered?**
- c. Is it clear that sufficient sewerage capacity would be available to facilitate the proposed development?**
- d. Have all other constraints to development been adequately assessed and considered?**

213. The Arborfield Green SDL is suitable for allocation as an SDL, and constraints and opportunities have been considered and assessed through robust processes.
214. The Arborfield Green SDL was originally allocated in the Core Strategy local plan ([OD4](#)). As set out in WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#)), part of the SDL has been completed, with the remaining parts benefitting from outline planning permission of which over two thirds have been granted reserved matters approval.
215. The responses below focus primarily on the extension of the SDL to incorporate additional areas of land, namely Barkham Square, the redevelopment of Arborfield Studios, and Westwood Yard, Sheerlands Road.
216. The proposed extension of the SDL has evolved through significant engagement and cooperation between WBC, the landowner/promoter, and relevant stakeholders throughout stages of plan-making. The proposed allocation has also been supported by masterplanning exercises that have informed deliverability.
217. WBC is confident there are no significant constraints that cannot be overcome and the site can be delivered viably.
218. Constraints and opportunities have been considered and assessed in extensive detail through a robust site assessment process, based on technical evidence and studies. The Wokingham Strategic Growth Locations: Growth Scenarios Report undertaken by

DLA (June 2018) ([PD1a](#)) considered all constraints at that time, including transport and access, ecology, air quality, landscape and heritage.

219. The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) considered the broad suitability of land for development at three stages of the LPU – Draft Plan (2020), Revised Growth Strategy (2021) and Proposed Submission Plan (2024). The suitability of the Arborfield Green sites was assessed through the HELAA ([HO7a](#) and [HO7b](#)) based on wide ranging constraints and used information from a range of sources including evidence base studies, masterplanning, designations, surveys and previous planning history.
220. Arborfield Green has also been subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) ([CD3a](#)). The intensification of the studios is treated as a constant across all growth scenarios. Barkham Square is treated as a variable but is noted as being sequentially preferable to the two other smaller strategic site options (Sections 5.4 Sub-area scenarios and 5.5 Reasonable growth scenarios).
221. Representations submitted through consultation have also been taken into account ([CD4f](#)) and modifications proposed where appropriate ([CD22](#)).
222. Further detail on the highlighted matters is set out below.

7)a.i Has the impact of the development on the highway network been adequately assessed?

223. As set out in Matter 2, the Arborfield Green SDL has been assessed through a robust modelling process. National Highways in their SoCG ([WBC 2](#)) agree that the evidence supporting the plan, including both the Transport Assessment Report (TA) ([TR1a-j](#)) and the Transport Assessment Report 2032 Interim Year Assessment (Interim TA) ([TR1m-o](#)), is robust and proportionate to the plan-making stage.
224. The TA (in Table 11) assessed the additional sites within the SDL as part of the smaller sites assessment across the wider network, with the committed SDL and mitigation measures included within the reference case. The additional sites have been assessed appropriately with the infrastructure package required to support the consented site which is being built out. The TA assessed the delivery of the entire development in accordance with the housing trajectory ([WBC 27](#)). The assessment in the TA is robust, not least because it assesses a greater level of development than anticipated to occur within the plan period.

7)a.ii Would there be unacceptable impacts on highway safety or severe residual cumulative impacts on the highway network as a result of the development?

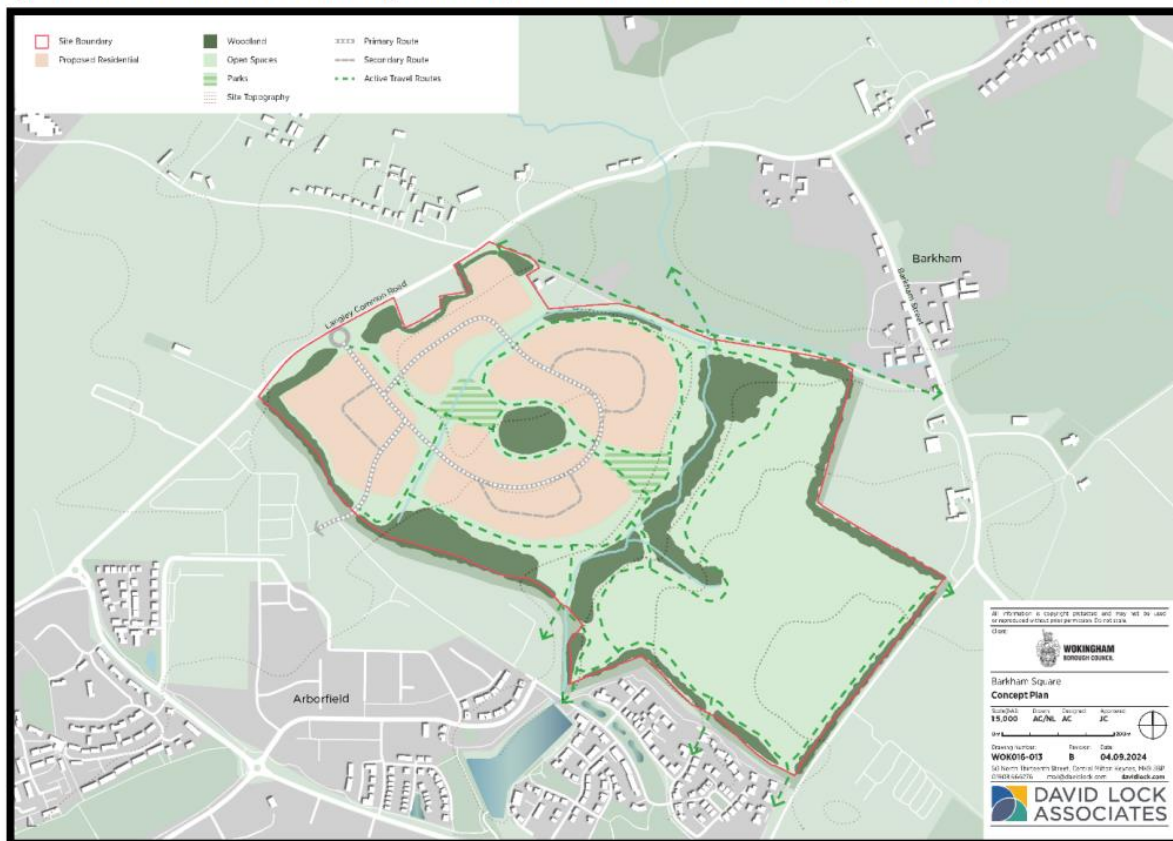
225. The TA at Section 5 'Local Highway Network Analysis' and the conclusions in 7.2, shows there are no unacceptable impacts within the area around the SDL within the strategic model.

226. The TA and Interim TA set out the package of measures to mitigate the impact of the planned growth, including the Arborfield Green SDL for the forecast years. The IDP sets out indicative delivery dates for the mitigation schemes for the build out of the development. Through the planning process the measures and phasing may be altered as more detailed assessments are carried out.
227. This allows WBC to work with the promoters/landowners through the planning application stage to shape and phase the development in accordance with national policy to ensure that any significant impacts from the development can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.
228. The TA explains in para 5.2.46 that WBC will consider where and how it is possible to embrace a 'monitor and manage' style approach to defer the need for additional road capacity and exploit opportunities to deliver sustainable transport alternatives, subject to development build out and the realisation of forecasted impacts to address the current congestions issues along the Barkham Road corridor, which may not be able to be fully mitigated by highway improvements.
229. Various measures will be considered, which could include junction improvements, additional traffic calming, bus priority and promotion of enhanced active travel schemes across a wider area through increased emphasis on providing modal choice, facilitated by the Local Transport Plan ([TR5a](#)), individual planning applications and developer/CIL funding.
230. In summary, robust transport evidence concludes that there would be no unacceptable impacts on the highway in terms of safety nor would any residual cumulative impacts be severe as a result of the SDL following the implementation of the proposed mitigation packages considered for 2032 and 2040.

7)b.i Is a secondary access capable of being taken through the adjoining development to the southwest, as indicated in Figure 6 of the Plan?

231. A secondary access is capable of being taken through the adjoining development to the southwest, as indicated in Figure 6 of the Proposed Submission Plan ([CD1a](#)), shown below.

Figure 6: Arborfield Green Strategic Development Location: Barkham Square concept plan.



232. There are no technical constraints that cannot be avoided or mitigated that would prevent such a link. Whilst in different land ownerships, Crest Nicholson holds the rights to develop/secure development on both parcels as set out in the SoCG ([WBC 22](#)).

7)b.ii Is a secondary access necessary for this site to be delivered?

233. The secondary access is necessary for this site to be delivered.
234. The Schedule of proposed modifications ([CD22](#)) proposes modifications to Policy SS11, including the following additional wording to Part 9 (Transport) (additional text bold and underlined):

“Development proposals should devise and implement a sustainable transport and movement strategy that has been informed by a detailed Transport Assessment and provides....:

h) New vehicular connection from land north of Arborfield Studios, known as Barkham Square, through to the Arborfield Green SDL

235. The approved access and movement parameters for Arborfield Green have, to date, ensured the formation of a clear street hierarchy that allow for convenient navigation across the SDL to facilities, including the new centre. The aim of the above modification is to clarify that a secondary highways access is required and ensure the homes delivered at Barkham Square integrate effectively with the wider Arborfield Green SDL,

particularly given the services and facilities available at the SDL, including schools, retail, community uses and sports pitches.

236. Direct highways access to the existing SDL is an important part of the comprehensive and sustainable delivery of the proposed SDL. The secondary access would encourage internalised trips and provide the opportunity for sustainable public transport, such as bus routes, to be provided both through and beyond the SDL.

7)c. Is it clear that sufficient sewerage capacity would be available to facilitate the proposed development?

237. There is clear evidence that sufficient sewerage capacity would be available to facilitate the proposed development. WBC's response to Matter 3, Issue 3, Question 1 c outlines the engagement with Thames Water and the position regarding sewerage capacity at Arborfield STW.
238. The Arborfield STW is also anticipated to serve the development proposed at Arborfield Green SDL, where upgrades to capacity are set out in Thames Water's investment programme, as confirmed in the SoCG ([CD8m](#), Appendix A).

7)d. Have all other constraints to development been adequately assessed and considered?

239. All other constraints to development have been adequately assessed and considered. As set out in the opening response to the question, extensive site assessment work has been undertaken.
240. Following comprehensive assessment, there are no significant constraints that cannot be overcome. Those constraints which require mitigation are reflected in the masterplanning and concept plan for the site.
241. Policy SS11 and the Development Guidelines (Proposed Submission Plan Appendix A) ([CD1b](#)) address the key constraints and opportunities in the delivery of the site. Both the policy and the development guidelines have evolved through engagement and consultation, including with statutory bodies. Collaborative working will therefore continue on specific matters, as required, including as part of the ongoing planning application process.
242. Constraints identified in the question regarding highways and sewerage capacity are set out in detail above. Other constraints have been adequately assessed and considered and briefly discussed below, particularly given the opportunities they present.
243. There are no designated or non-designated heritage assets located within the additional areas of land proposed as extensions to the SDL, but several Listed Buildings are located in proximity of the Barkham Square and Westwood Yard site boundaries. The conservation and enhancement of heritage assets has been assessed and considered, including in the Historic Environment Topic Paper ([HE1a](#), p.47, [HE1b](#), p.7-8 [HE1c](#), p.6-

10). WBC and Historic England have agreed that the heritage evidence supporting the plan is adequate and proportionate and that the strategic implications of proposals (including Arborfield Green SDL) have been considered and addressed, with no in principle objection to any of the sites proposed for allocation. This is set out in the SoCG ([CD8j](#)).

244. Flood risk at the SDL, and across the borough, has been assessed through the production of a robust evidence base at all relevant stages of plan preparation. WBC's response to Matter 3, Issue 1, Question 1d provides background on the general flood evidence supporting the plan, which is not repeated here.
245. With particular regard to the areas of land proposed to be included within an extended SDL, the Level 2 SFRA 2023 provides a detailed site summary table for the Barkham Square site (Appendix A to the Level 2 SFRA ([EN3b](#)) (site 5BA010) as well as detailed interactive mapping – see Appendix D Site 5BA010 ([EN3g](#)). The majority of the site lies within Flood Zone 1, with fluvial and surface water flood risk affecting mainly a modest area around the Barkham Brook and its tributary. While surface water flood risk extends further across the site in the 0.1% AEP event, the majority of the site is unaffected. The Arborfield Studios site, while not specifically assessed in the SFRA given it is an extant allocation, is included in the mapping and likewise the vast majority of the site lies within Flood Zone 1. Modest areas of surface water flood risk are capable of being managed on site, noting it is Previously Developed Land (PDL). Westwood Yard is specifically assessed in the Level 2 SFRA 2023 Appendix C ([EN3d](#)). It is not subject to fluvial flood risk and a modest part of the site is subject to surface water flood risk in the 0.1% AEP event only, which is not significant. The site specific SFRA documents have been considered by the EA and it is common ground ([WBC 4](#)) that the proposed allocations in the plan are developable in principle and that the evidence base is robust and proportionate. The SFRA has been prepared in collaboration with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) (which is WBC). In summary, flood risk has been assessed and considered and is not a constraint to delivering the quantum of development proposed in the plan.
246. The landscape character of Barkham Square, identified in the Landscape Character Assessment (2019) ([LA2a-i](#)) and Landscape Character Assessment (2004) ([LA1a](#), [LA1b](#)), inform the site assessment in the HELAA ([HO7a](#), [HO7b](#)), the Growth Scenarios Report (2018) ([PD1a](#)) and the concept plan ([CD1a](#), Figure 6). In particular, the Barkham Brook which runs north-south through the middle of the site forms a feature recognised in the Growth Scenarios Report (June 2018) ([PD1a](#), paragraph 5.3). The site also benefits from areas of ancient woodland which follow the path of the watercourse.
247. An effective landscape strategy is established for the existing SDL, as explained in WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#), paragraphs 130 and 131). Proposals at Barkham Square and Arborfield Studios will incorporate key characteristics and features of the site, including the Barkham Brook, to complement the place making principles established for the Arborfield Green SDL. For example, the concept plan for Barkham Square ([CD1a](#), Figure 6, page 74) identifies, at a high-level, opportunities for

active travel through the site, supporting connections to local services, facilities and communities.

8) Is there sufficient certainty that the infrastructure required to support the development could be delivered viably and at the point which it is needed?

248. The site is capable of delivering the necessary infrastructure whilst remaining viable.
249. The response to Matter 3, Issue 1, Question 2a sets out the relevant parts of the PPG, which states that strategic policy-making authorities will be expected to demonstrate there is a reasonable prospect that proposals can be developed within the timescales envisaged.
250. The committed Arborfield Green SDL, and the extension proposed in the emerging plan, are together considered to comprise a new settlement. WBC is confident that there is at least a 'reasonable prospect' that the proposals can be developed within the timescales envisaged, which is the relevant test in the PPG.
251. The IDP 2025 ([WBC 28](#)) sets out the anticipated timing and cost of infrastructure projects to mitigate the impact of the development proposed across the borough, including at the Arborfield Green SDL, and the proposed extension and intensification. The IDP has evolved with consideration of evidence coming forward through the planning application process.
252. The IDP and WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#)) set out the 'essential' infrastructure projects that are necessary to mitigate the impact of development of the Arborfield Green SDL, and identifies the indicative costs and timing of delivery for all the infrastructure projects. These projects can be delivered alongside the development linked to triggers controlling the level of occupation.
253. The IDP 2024 ([IN7](#)) and WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#), Table 14) identified three items of infrastructure as 'critical'. Following a review of the projects they are no longer considered to be 'critical' because they do not have to be delivered in advance of development, and do not form 'showstopper' projects as defined in IDP Table 1. Each project has been reassessed as 'essential' because they are necessary to mitigate the impacts arising from the development and can be delivered alongside development. This is reflected in the updated IDP 2025 ([WBC 28](#)). There are therefore no infrastructure items which are 'blockers' or 'show-stoppers' that must be in place upfront to enable growth.

Existing Arborfield Green SDL

254. It is important to note that the Arborfield Green SDL (formerly referred to as Arborfield Garrison SDL) is largely an existing allocation in the Core Strategy local plan ([OD4](#)), with

2,048 completed and a further 889 dwellings with planning permission or resolution to grant at 31 March 2025.

255. Completed dwellings have been supported by a range of infrastructure, which includes highways improvements including the Nine Mile Ride extension and Arborfield Cross Relief Road; new Farley Hill Primary School; Bohunt Secondary School; a food store; open space and SANG.
256. In addition to infrastructure delivered already, a sixth form extension to Bohunt Secondary School is currently under construction, progressing to completion by September 2026, while the district centre is also under construction.
257. Progress of this and the other existing SDLs shows that WBC has significant recent experience of delivering, and facilitating the delivery of, large scale developments. This shows how WBC has worked effectively with multiple landowners, developers/promoters, and relevant stakeholders to deliver large scale sustainable new communities and provides confidence that future infrastructure needs will be delivered viably and at the point of time required alongside development.
258. In summary, there are no known constraints that would delay the delivery of the infrastructure required to support the existing Arborfield Green SDL.

Additional development opportunities (Barkham Square, Arborfield Studios intensification and Westwood Yard)

259. The site assessment set out in the HELAA ([HO7a](#), [HO7b](#)), and the Wokingham Strategic Growth Locations: Growth Scenarios Report undertaken by DLA (June 2018) ([PD1a](#)) for Barkham Square in particular, show there are no significant constraints that would prevent or delay the delivery of infrastructure required to support development. The additional development opportunities are either within the existing SDL or immediately adjacent to the area with planning permission. Additionally, there are no objections to the developability of the sites from statutory consultees, demonstrated by the various agreed Statements of Common Ground.
260. The SDL extension does not in itself give rise to the need for significant additional new infrastructure. The Barkham Square site will nevertheless provide on-site SANG and the additional development will provide mobility hubs as well as financial contributions to support highways and transport projects and other improvements.
261. WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#), paragraphs 151-54) sets out how the Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy Viability Study ([VI1a](#)) assessed different site typologies, including strategic sites of 500 and 2,000 dwellings, and showed they could be delivered viably. This shows that the SDL extension can be delivered viably.
262. The development of the Arborfield Studios and Barkham Square are both controlled by Crest Nicholson. Two Statements of Common Ground ([WBC 21](#) and [WBC 22](#)) have been agreed with the promoter of Arborfield Studios intensification and Barkham

Square respectively. The SoCGs confirm that the sites are deliverable, with no concerns regarding the timing, delivery or viability of the infrastructure required to support the development. The parties further agree to continue to work positively and proactively on various matters through the planning application process.

263. The scale of the proposed extension and intensification does not give rise to abnormal infrastructure in terms of type or cost. The additional development opportunities are capable of being delivered in a manner consistent with the original SDL vision, linking into the approved site and committed infrastructure. WBC is therefore confident that there is at least a 'reasonable prospect' that the proposals can be developed within the timescales envisaged.

9) Are the delivery assumptions regarding this site robust? In particular:

- a. How has the assumed number of dwellings been determined?**
- b. Part 6 of Policy SS11 requires that a site masterplan and other strategies are prepared. Is the preparation of these documents reflected in the assumed delivery timescales?**
- c. Would the site deliver the number of units per annum that are envisaged?**

264. The deliverability of the Arborfield Green SDL, including the additional development proposed, has been informed by a number of technical studies and reports produced or commissioned by WBC during plan preparation, in particular:

- The Strategic Growth Locations: Growth Scenarios Report (June 2018) ([PD1a](#), [PD1c](#), [PD1e](#), [PD1g](#), [PD1h](#))
- Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy Viability Study Main Report (August 2024) ([VI1a](#))
- Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) (2024) ([HO7a](#), [HO7b](#))
- Transport Assessment Report (2024) and Interim Year Report ([TR1a-o](#))
- WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#))
- Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement (March 2025) ([WBC 25](#))
- Housing trajectory (August 2025) ([WBC 27](#))
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan (August 2025) ([WBC 28](#))

9)a. How has the assumed number of dwellings been determined?

265. Land at Arborfield Green was originally identified in Policy CP18 of the Core Strategy local plan ([OD4](#)) as a location for sustainable, well-designed, mixed-use development for around 3,500 dwellings.

266. The number of dwellings proposed in the plan is informed by a detailed understanding of committed development, the site's constraints and opportunities, and technical evidence and significant engagement and cooperation between WBC, the landowners/promoters and relevant stakeholders.
267. An assessment of strategic scale opportunities was undertaken to inform earlier stages of plan-making, as explained in WBC's response to Question 3a above. The Strategic Growth Locations: Growth Scenarios Report (June 2018) ([PD1a](#)) examined strategic site options at Barkham Square for 500, 750 and 1,000 dwellings.
268. The Draft Local Plan (2020) ([EC3](#)) consultation retained the Core Strategy allocation but did not include any further strategic development opportunities, with a proposal for a new garden town at Grazeley being preferred. After the Draft Local Plan consultation, alternative strategic sites were considered following changes to the emergency planning legislation and arrangements around AWE Burghfield, which meant a proposal for a new garden town at Grazeley was no longer achievable. The land at Barkham Square was promoted as a development opportunity but did not feature as a preferred strategic option.
269. The allocated SDL continued to form a component of the Plan's spatial strategy in the Revised Growth Strategy consultation ([EC4](#)). A small adjustment was made to incorporate the land at Westwood Cottage, Sheerlands Road for around 10 dwellings.
270. Following the Revised Growth Strategy consultation, the design of proposals at Barkham Square evolved through engagement between the landowner and WBC and a further understanding of constraints and opportunities. This indicated that development on the western part of the site and could accommodate around 600 dwellings.
271. The Proposed Submission Plan ([CD1a](#)) retains the Core Strategy allocation, with the vision for the area at an increased scale to incorporate Barkham Square for 600 dwellings. Figure 6 of the Proposed Submission Plan shows an updated concept plan, reproduced below:



272. A further opportunity has also become available for development on the land temporarily occupied by Arborfield Studios, which is capable of accommodating around 300 additional dwellings by optimising development densities.
273. The land at Westwood Yard, Sheerlands Road remains a proposed allocation for around 10 dwellings. An outline planning application for 20 dwellings⁴ is pending determination.
274. The promoter confirms at least 600 dwellings can be accommodated on land at Barkham Square; and around 300 dwellings on the land at Arborfield Studios, as agreed through signed Statements of Common Ground ([WBC 21](#) and [WBC 22](#)). In August 2025, a pre-application request for a full planning application for up to approximately 360 dwellings was received by WBC on the land occupied by Arborfield Studios. Together the applications are expected to seek at least the number of dwellings proposed in Policy SS11.
275. Crest Nicholson's anticipated programme for the delivery of sites are set out in Appendix B of the respective Statement of Common Ground ([WBC 21](#) and [WBC 22](#)).

⁴ The same application for 22 dwellings referred to in WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#)), but the layout has been revised to provide 20 dwellings.

276. WBC is confident that there is at least a realistic prospect of completions at the SDL within five years and that the delivery assumptions for the site as outlined in the housing trajectory ([WBC 27](#)) are robust and clearly justified.

9)b. Part 6 of Policy SS11 requires that a site masterplan and other strategies are prepared. Is the preparation of these documents reflected in the assumed delivery timescales?

277. The preparation of a site masterplan and other strategies for the SDL are reflected in the assumed delivery timescales.

278. The allocated SDL is divided into two sections, Land at Arborfield Garrison (Arborfield Green) and Hogwood Farm (Finchwood Park). Both sections benefit from outline planning permissions and subsequent reserved matters permissions. A vision and concept are therefore established for the whole SDL.

279. Multiple strategies have been submitted and approved at the appropriate stage of development. Further detail is provided in paragraphs 130 and 131 of WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#)).

280. The additional allocations proposed in the local plan have evolved through engagement between WBC and the landowners/promoters throughout stages of plan-making, and are informed by a robust site assessment process, based on technical evidence and studies. This included investigating opportunities to integrate the additional development with the planned and permitted development within the existing SDL. There are no significant constraints on site that cannot be overcome.

281. Policy SS11 seeks various strategies and documents, including illustrative masterplans, phasing strategies, design code, infrastructure delivery, drainage and flood alleviation, ecology and sustainable transport and movement strategy (informed by a Transport Assessment).

282. The promoters have worked in collaboration with WBC to progress illustrative masterplans for the land at Arborfield Studios and Barkham Square. Proposals build on the established vision, the principles and concept plans in the Growth Scenarios Report (June 2018) ([PD1a](#)) and approved strategies and masterplans, which are referred to in WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#), paragraph 130 and 131). The site assessment work will enable the landowners to prepare individual but complementary masterplans based on the established vision, and more detailed, site-specific strategies/studies to support the preparation of forthcoming planning applications. This will ensure the development comes forward in a strategic, coordinated and comprehensive manner, as required by Part 5 of Policy SS11 and would also help to meet other requirements in the policy.

283. The SoCGs with the promoter ([WBC 21](#) and [WBC 22](#)) recognises the engagement undertaken between the parties. This has informed pre-application discussions and

work that is actively being undertaken by the landowner/promoter to prepare planning applications.

284. In August 2025, WBC received a pre-application request relating to an outline planning application for up to approximately 360 dwellings on the land at Arborfield Studios. A Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) was agreed in August 2025 as part of the pre-application and the developer has since confirmed their intention is to submit a full application for the Film Studios site.
285. An outline planning application is anticipated to be submitted in late 2025 for the land at Barkham Square; and a full application in spring 2026 for Arborfield Studios.
286. Between November 2024 and January 2025, community engagement was undertaken by the promoters for the proposal at Barkham Square to help inform the preparation of a planning application. The promoters will need to submit a number of strategies and masterplans as part of their respective planning applications to meet the requirements of Policy SS11, which has been fully considered in the assumed delivery timescales.

9)c. Would the site deliver the number of units per annum that are envisaged?

287. The housing trajectory ([WBC 27](#)) sets out the anticipated delivery from the site across the plan period. WBC is confident the Arborfield Green SDL will deliver the number of units per annum set out in the trajectory, with WBC having taken a conservative approach to housing delivery, informed by local data and analysis.
288. A substantial amount of the development at the existing SDL is completed, with several remaining sections under construction, with reserved matters permission, or with a reserved matters application pending consideration by WBC. Outstanding areas benefit from outline planning permission, with reserved matters applications to be submitted.
289. Regarding the proposed additional areas of land, the housing trajectory ([WBC 27](#)) sets out first completion of 50 dwellings are anticipated on the land at Barkham Square in 2031/32, with maximum delivery of 70 dwellings per annum. The promoters anticipate earlier delivery, with first completion of 40 dwellings in 2028/29. At Arborfield Studios, the housing trajectory sets out first completion of 30 dwellings in 2028/29, with maximum delivery of 50 dwellings per annum. The landowner's projected housing delivery for Arborfield Studios sets out first completion of 30 dwellings in 2028/29, followed by delivery of 50 dwellings per annum. For both sites the landowners and WBC anticipate completion of the sites within the local plan period to 2040. The respective SoCGs recognise that both sites can achieve at least the quantum of development identified in Policy SS11.
290. The Barkham Square promoters have identified that additional development providing 660 dwellings could be accommodated on site.

291. For both sites, the housing delivery rate reflects the specific context of the site, including on-site constraints, infrastructure delivery and the timing of planning applications.
292. The site at Westwood Yard is capable of delivering at least the 10 additional dwellings identified in the policy, with a higher quantum of development being considered as part of the current planning application.
293. The delivery rates for the Arborfield Green SDL have been informed by WBC's substantial experience in delivering the existing SDLs. The Five-Year Housing Land Supply Statement (March 2025) ([WBC 25](#)) and WBC's response to the Initial Questions ([WBC 6](#)) include information on delivery rates for the SDLs. The data shows the SDLs have achieved substantial completions in the local market, with multiple years where completions have consistently exceeded 250 dwellings per annum.
294. The SDL will deliver 40% affordable housing and different housing products, types and tenures, alongside 25 custom and self-build serviced plots, 5 Gypsy and Traveller pitches, as well as other forms of specialist accommodation. Together, this approach widens housing diversity, which is a key driver of build out rates. The design code will also help to establish varied characters across the site to appeal to different segments of the housing market.
295. The whole plan viability study ([VI1a](#)) shows that most of the additional development is in a greenfield location with limited on-site constraints, where development can be delivered viably. WBC's responses to other questions have shown that there are no significant obstacles to the delivery of the site in the timescales set out in the housing trajectory.

Matter 3: The Proposed Strategic Development Locations ('SDLs')

Appendix



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Appendix A

Wokingham Borough School Places Strategy

2024/25 to 2029/30
(To be refreshed annually)

Next review date: April 2025

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Introduction

The Wokingham Borough School Place Strategy 2024/25 to 2029/30 (the strategy) assesses the sufficiency of education provision over this period and, where deficiencies are identified, proposes remedial measures and options. The strategy considers the needs of children and young people in the key education phases of Early Years (pre-statutory school age); mainstream statutory school age (age 4 to 16); and post-16 in the Borough. This breadth reflects the Council's core statutory duties for education. The Strategy also considers longer term needs, tied to developing Borough development plans for the period to 2037/38.

There are 10 secondary schools within the Borough. All are (or will shortly be) Academies or Free Schools. In addition, there are 55 primary schools, currently consisting of 26 Academies, 3 Free Schools, 4 Voluntary Aided Schools, 4 Voluntary Controlled Schools and 18 Community Schools.

The strategy sets out how and why the child population of the Borough is changing. It considers how factors behind current population trends may themselves change and what these changes could imply for school place planning. It sets this need in the context of inter-Borough movement of children and young people from other local authorities into borough schools and vice versa. The analysis is underpinned by the most recent 2023 roll projections, which extend to 2027/28 for the primary phase and 2030/31 for the secondary phase, backed by a range of relevant contextual housing, planning and demographic data. The longer period of the secondary projection reflects the greater reliability of projections for older children, as the forecast is entirely based on living children, rather than forecast births.

Key constraints and policy imperatives that the strategy and any plan for action must take account of are set out. In doing this, the strategy establishes how the different parties including the local authority, the Department for Education (DfE), Academy Trusts and other bodies interact to ensure that all children have a school place.

The strategy sets out the key challenges for the Early Years, primary (aged 5 to 11), secondary (11 to 16) and post-16 mainstream phases. It sets out options for meeting needs and makes recommendations concerning future action. In some cases, further work will be required before an action plan can be agreed.

The Strategy will be refreshed annually to reflect the regular update of pupil forecasts and consequent alterations to the approach to addressing sufficiency. It is also the aim to incorporate sections in relation to SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) sufficiency in future iterations of this document.

Local Authority Legal Duty for School Sufficiency

Early education and childcare sufficiency

Provision of early education and childcare is vital for the local economy and for developing stronger communities. One aim of childcare is to ensure parents are supported to be economically active, either in work, or in study or training for work. Early education focuses on the specific learning needs of very young children, and the benefits can extend far beyond the early years - children build confidence, develop their fine and gross motor skills, and expand their communication and social skills through play and exploration, preparing them for lifelong learning. Funded early education for 2-year-old children aims to reduce levels of inequality and narrow the pre-school educational gap for disadvantaged children.

Local Authorities are required to secure sufficient early years and childcare provision (Childcare Act 2016; Childcare Act 2006; Children and Families Act 2014; The Local Authority (Duty to Secure Early Years Provision Free of Charge) Regulations 2014; The Local Authority (Duty to Secure Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Amendment) Regulations 2016; The Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) Regulations 2016). In practice this translates as follows:

- Sufficient childcare means securing the right type and volume of provision, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (up to 18 for a disabled child).
- Sufficient early years provision means families being able to access their free entitlement for qualifying 2, 3 and 4-year-old children:

The free entitlement is:

- from April 2024, all working parents of 2-year-olds can access 15 hours per week.
- from September 2024, all working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3-years-old can access 15 hours per week.
- from September 2025, all working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3-years-old can access 30 hours free childcare per week.

Alongside the free entitlement, some parents will wish to purchase additional childcare hours from their provider where, for example, they require more childcare to be able to undertake their choice of work.

School places duties

Local authorities with statutory education duties are required to:

- Ensure sufficient school places (Education Act 1996 Section 14).
- Increase opportunities for parental choice (Section 2 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which inserts sub-section 3A into S14 of the Education Act 1996).
- Comply with any preference expressed by parents provided compliance with the preference would not prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources (School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Section 86).
- Ensure fair access to educational opportunity (Section 1 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserts sub-section 1(b) into S13 of the Education Act 1996).

Turning to land use planning, paragraph 95 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that it is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities, and that local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. This includes local planning authorities giving substantial weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools when preparing plans and making decisions on planning applications.

Post-16 duties

Local authorities hold responsibilities for the sufficiency of post-16 education and training and promoting continuing education to young people.

These are:

- To secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people in their area who are over compulsory school age but under 19 or aged 19 to 25 and for whom an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan is maintained (Education Act 1996 S15ZA). To fulfil

this, local authorities need to have a strategic overview of the provision available in their area and to identify and resolve gaps in provision.

- To make available to all young people aged 13-19 and to those between 20 and 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training under Section 68 of the ESA 2008.

However, the Council's legal duty in relation to young people's post-16 participation and its statutory powers to enable it to fulfil this duty are not precisely aligned. It has no formal role in the planning of Further Education provision; it can propose sixth form provision, but decision-making lies with the DfE Regional Director. Therefore, to fulfil this legal duty, the Council is required to work in partnership with education, skills training providers, and local businesses.

A changing population

As at the latest census in 2021, there were 177,502 people living in Wokingham Borough. That is 15% more people than in the previous census 10 years prior in 2011, when the population was 145,380.

Looking further back, the population of Wokingham Borough has been increasing by approximately 12% every 10 years, based on population changes between 1981 and 2021.

The number of resident children is determined by the number of births to Borough residents, modified by net internal and international migration.

Births: The trend in both annual births and underlying fertility rates is downwards in the Borough and in neighbouring Local Authorities. Birth numbers peaked in 2012 with just under 2,000 births. By 2022 birth numbers had dropped to less than 1,700 (but with considerable annual variation, most recently in 2021 when over 1,800 children were born). The children now entering secondary schools were born when the birth numbers peaked. Annual births have been at least 100 less in subsequent years than the 2012 peak.

Migration: Wokingham Borough is characterised by strong rates of child migration into the Borough. Until 2021 the consistent picture from ONS data was that migration was strong for early years (>100 annually per year group), slightly less strong for primary (average c.60 per year per year group), and very low for secondary year groups (6 per year group). This has been facilitated by high rates of housebuilding and churn (families moving into older homes). While there is no ONS post-2021 data yet, it is clear from admissions and roll data that post-2021 there has been a significant increase in international migration of children into the Borough. Much of this is due to increased numbers of British Nationals (Overseas), from Hong Kong. Numbers of additional primary age children per year have more than doubled and secondary rolls have also increased, but from much lower annual base numbers.

Currently the high migrant numbers from 2021 onwards are at least balancing the impact of falling birth numbers on rolls.

Should international migrant numbers drop to pre-2021 levels, pupil intake will begin to fall. Housebuilding has also been a significant factor in migration to the Borough. While it is expected that housing growth will remain strong given national planning policy requirements, the housing market is volatile and subject to economic conditions. While there are a number of large schemes in development, if annual new home completions fall, there will likely be a corresponding fall in the number of children requiring school places.

Constraints

The council makes decisions within the constraints of the statutory framework that governs the provision of education, the priorities of the various parties within that framework and available resources.

Local Authorities have some powers and responsibilities for existing maintained schools (community, and voluntary (church) schools). However, education is increasingly provided by schools within Academy Trusts, rather than by local authority-maintained schools. All Wokingham Borough's secondary schools are (or will shortly be) Academies or Free Schools. The Borough's primary schools are also increasingly converting to academy status. Academies are responsible to their managing Trusts, and to the DfE Regional School Director (RSD), who approves all changes to Academies / Free Schools.

Therefore, while the school place sufficiency duty is solely held by the council, it must focus on partnership working with other parties to ensure there are sufficient places.

Wokingham Borough Council has wider responsibilities, though, and education planning takes place within this broader framework of objectives. In particular, the council has committed to making the fullest possible contribution to reducing the carbon footprint to meet carbon neutrality by 2030, which leads to an emphasis on local provision and energy efficient development.

The council's resources are limited, with pressures on both capital and revenue budgets. There is a strong imperative, therefore, to look to measures that reduce revenue costs (such as school transport costs) with a minimal capital cost. Revenue costs associated with new or enlarged schools come from the DSG Growth Fund, which is agreed annually with the Wokingham Schools Forum (a statutory body).

Early Years sufficiency

The 2022 childcare sufficiency report noted that both childcare provision and demand had remained constant over the period May 2020 to May 2022. The one area where place supply had changed materially was child minding, where the number of registered child minders had declined from 244 (December 2019) to 198 in 2022 (an 18% reduction). This is in line with national trends. Key aspects of Early Years sufficiency are the provision of free entitlement places and the provision of services to vulnerable learners (children entitled to free 2-year-old provision and children with SEND).

The profile of setting offering free entitlement places from May 2020 to May 2022 is as follows:

Pre School Play Groups	27
Day Nurseries	29
Independent Schools	5
Childminders	24
Specialist Provision	1
Maintained Primary School	10
Academy	7
Special	1

Note that provision (measured by number of providers) has remained largely static over this period. One area of positive change though, is the increase in the proportion of childminders offering free entitlement places (up from 40% in December 2019 to 71% in October 2022).

The numbers of children taking up Free Entitlement places has remained relatively constant over the May 2020 to May 2022 period. It should be noted that Early Years numbers follow an annual cycle, so it is important to compare May, October and January figures separately.

Three year olds peaked in May 2021 with a high of 1527 children, and lowest numbers were recorded in October 2020 with 1484 children.

Four year olds peaked in May 2020 with a high of 1058 children, and lowest numbers were recorded in October 2021 with 183 children.

The data above relates to the number of 3- and 4-years-olds using Free Entitlement places in private settings and at childminders over this period.

The data below show the same data, but for users of school settings.

Three year olds peaked in October 2021 with a high of 580 children, and lowest numbers were recorded in May 2020 with 371 children.

Four year olds peaked in May 2020 with a high of 362 children, and lowest numbers were recorded in October 2021 with 1 child.

One service area that has seen increased usage is provision for children with SEND and vulnerable 2-year-olds. Both numbers of children requiring SEND support and those with EHCPs increased over the May 2020 to May 2022 period, as shown in the data below.

The number of children requiring SEND support increased from 111 in May 2020 to 165 in May 2022.

The number of children holding Education Health and Care Plans increased from 20 in May 2020 to 40 in May 2022.

The number of vulnerable 2-year-olds benefitting from Free Entitlement places has also increased, from 97 in May 2020 to 124 in May 2022.

On the basis of the above, the report concluded that there are broadly enough places across the Borough for families to access the funded hours for which their child is eligible. This includes enough spaces for the new entitlement for working families of 2-year-olds which comes into effect in April 2024. Subsequent to this review, the DfE carried out a national local authority readiness assessment (published February 2024) in preparation for the expanded Early Years entitlements. In relation to Wokingham, the overall assessment states that the Borough would need an additional 26 places (a 1% increase) by September 2025. Given the recent level of activity to create additional Early Years capacity by Wokingham schools and other parties (with a number of projects currently in the pipeline), this is not considered to be a significant risk, but will require annual monitoring.

It is important to note that early years' sufficiency can change quickly, for example if a key provider closes or receives a poor Ofsted judgement. Therefore, local authority will continue to identify areas which may be vulnerable and where additional provision may be needed due to growth in demand, for example from new housing development.

Primary Phase sufficiency

As noted above, the key factors of Wokingham School Place Planning are:

- Declining birth rates over the past decade
- High migration rates in the recent past
- Balanced inter-Borough movement

Therefore, the primary roll projections point to low Reception admission numbers (generally declining in line with birth numbers), leading to significant surpluses in Key Stage 1 (290 to 360 per year). However, high net migration rates have led to rolls steadily rising year by year from initial admission, leading to deficits in Key Stage 2 (Year 6 in particular). There are variations though, between areas, with some areas having projected surplus capacity in all phases, some having Key Stage 2 deficits, and one having a projected deficit in both Key Stages.

Movement between the Borough and other local authorities sees a small net gain of Wokingham Borough rolls of 165 pupils and no future changes are currently forecast in respect of this pattern. The below table sets out these patterns in more detail.

LA	Wokingham Borough residents' destinations	Wokingham Borough school roll from out of Borough
Reading	380	512
Bracknell Forest	204	284
Hampshire	73	32
Windsor and Maidenhead	46	44
West Berkshire	38	28
Oxfordshire	11	13
Others	20	24
Total	772	937

Net gain to Wokingham Borough rolls	165
Total Roll Number	15,385
% of total	1.1%

Note that migration rates are likely to be susceptible to short term change (because they are directly related to government policy, variable home building rates and volatile preferences). Should migration rates decrease, much of the Key Stage 2 pressure set out below would be alleviated.

Borough-wide primary projections are that there will be sustained shortfalls in Year 6 (all years to 2027/28) of between 15 (in 2024/25) and 102 (in 2026/27) places. Three other year groups will see deficits, with a maximum of 38 places in 2025/26.

The Borough's seven primary school planning areas can be grouped as follows, according to the challenges they face.

Areas with a surplus in Key Stage 1 and a deficit in Key Stage 2: Earley, Wokingham Town East (of the town centre) and Woodley.

In Earley the peak deficit was 66 places in Year 6 in 2026/27. Surplus capacity across both Key Stages was projected to increase from 10 places to 264 places by 2027/28.

In Wokingham Town East the peak deficit was 69 places in Year 6 in 2027/28. Surplus capacity across both Key Stages was projected to peak at 90 places in 2025/26, declining to 47 places by 2027/28

In Woodley, the peak deficit was 44 places in Year 6 in 2026/27. Surplus capacity across both Key Stages was projected to increase from 65 places to 342 places by 2027/28.

Areas with a small current projected surplus for both Key Stages: the North (of the A329M), South East (Finchampstead and Wokingham Without), and Wokingham Town West (which includes Winnersh). In all these areas there were no more than 4 year groups with deficits, and none were greater than 5. Conversely, very significant surplus capacity was projected by the end of the period (2027/28), with 109 places in the North, 325 in the South East and 219 in Wokingham Town East.

An area with a projected deficit across all Key stages: the South West (Shinfield, Arborfield, Barkham, Swallowfield and part of Finchampstead within the Arborfield Garrison SDL area). It is worth noting that this area includes both the Shinfield and Arborfield SDL areas, and therefore has very high numbers of homes completed over the past decade, with further homes to follow. The Shinfield area is seeing the highest rate of growth and is the area with immediate capacity issues.

The maximum deficit in any one year group is 58 (Year 2 2027/28). The overall deficit is projected to increase to 152 places in 2027/28.

The South West area is effectively divided by the Loddon Valley, with Shinfield South Ward to the north-west, and Arborfield, Barkham, Swallowfield and parts of Finchampstead to the south-east. In Shinfield, major developments being sited around the Shinfield Village, Spencers Wood and Three Mile Cross communities (South of the M4 SDL). In the south-east the schools are in the Arborfield Green and Arborfield Cross communities. The Arborfield SDL is sited where the Arborfield, Barkham, Finchampstead South and Swallowfield wards meet. The Arborfield SDL is the major population centre in this area, with c.1,800 further homes planned for the period 2023 to 2030.

Currently, within the South West area, the Shinfield area is experiencing the highest rates of growth and school place pressures. The Shinfield SDL is now largely built out, although a further c.630 homes are planned for the period 2023 to 2030, completing the development of 3,000 new homes.

Disaggregating the projections and capacities of the Shinfield schools from other South West schools makes this clear. In essence, rolls are rising and there is a current local deficit of 30 Reception places (with children placed in other Borough schools), and a projected deficit against whole school capacity by 2025/26. Note that the surplus capacity seen below reflects the fact that the Alder Grove CoE Primary School is filling one year group at a time through Reception class admissions, with this surplus capacity expected to be filled for 2025/26 admission.

[Actions proposed for place planning](#)

In response to the above-described analysis of each admission area's trend of school place needs, the following actions are proposed for next five year's primary school place planning:

Areas where more Key Stage 2 places would be helpful: Earley, Wokingham Town East and Woodley.

The Council has been working with the Keys Trust to develop an option to add a bulge Year 6 class at St. Cecilia's C of E Primary School, should applications / in year admissions merit this. Such an option would only be deployed if required in order to meet the Borough's sufficiency obligations.

Areas where it might be possible to reduce Planned Admission Numbers (PANs), without significant risks to Key Stage 2 capacity: North, South East and Wokingham Town West.

Note that when PANs are decreased this increases the likelihood that additional Key Stage 2 capacity will need to be agreed and funded as children age through the primary phase. While it is clearly preferable for schools to maintain a 1 to 30 teacher to children ratio in Key Stage 1 and a 1 to 32 ratio

in Key Stage 2, the implication of making PAN reductions to maintain these ratios is that the Council may have to fund an increased number of places in older Key Stage 2 year groups, if the current rate of mid-phase growth is maintained. Without reduced PANs additional children could be absorbed into classes with significant numbers of unfilled places. It is therefore important that the Growth Fund is funded and resourced appropriately to meet this challenge.

If the rate of migration into the Borough slows to pre-2021 levels, the Council would need to look to make significant reductions in the number of primary phase places. This would likely require area school re-organisation, rather than reductions in PANs at a number of schools.

In recent years, the Council made a number of applications to the Schools Adjudicator to reduce primary school PANs, with mixed results. In future, it is intended to make adjustments to primary PANs through the annual admissions determination process.

Area where there is a case for additional Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 capacity: South West (Shinfield focus)

Shinfield rolls are rising and there is a likely local need for at least an additional 30 places per year, evidenced in the 2023 admissions round (but less clearly in the 2024 admissions round). As population growth in this area is housing led, it is anticipated that growth could be maintained, even if the rate of international migration into the Borough is maintained at lower, pre-2021 levels. Recent roll projections have shown demand increasing above the current level, as developments complete. At some point though, demand may drop back towards (or even below) current levels, as development slows and completed homes age and their resident children move into secondary phase education. Future Shinfield development is planned, but at a slower rate than seen in the recent past. Further analysis is required, using the latest, housing delivery sensitive 2024 roll projection model, and taking account of 2025 projections, January 2025 rolls and 2025 applications, to evaluate whether or not the tipping point has been reached, to give confidence that new capacity will be sustainable in future.

Shinfield options:

In view of the likely need for additional capacity, a range of options for action have been considered, including “do nothing”; expansion of an existing school; and the creation of a new school. “Do nothing” is not recommended for the long term, if current growth is sustained, because alternative provision is not within statutory walking distance, which could lead to an unsustainable increase in home to school transport spend by the Council. The expansion of an existing school would provide a sustainable, flexible option and good value for money. The Council must also explore the alternative option, building new school premises on a separate site. A site is available, in Spencers Wood but this is within AWE Burghfield’s Detailed Emergency Planning Zone and consequently may be subject to additional planning restrictions. Currently, the Council holds c.£4m in S106 contributions that are linked to this site, and it may be better value for money to build school premises here, to avoid losing this money. New school premises could be run as a new school or as a satellite of an existing school.

All identified options (except “do nothing”) require additional funding over currently allocated resources. Until it is clear that resources are available, it is not possible to include any new provision as component of this strategy.

It is proposed that, subject to further review, the Council takes steps to create 210 places. Options to add further capacity may be available in future. The Council will test options in this respect over the

course of the coming year, with a view to anticipated delivery of additional building capacity for September 2027 (taking advantage of exiting temporary surplus capacity in the interim, if necessary).

Secondary Phase Sufficiency

Background

The council's secondary schools are divided into two areas for place planning purposes.

- **North area schools:** Maiden Erlegh, Bulmershe, Waingels and the Piggott schools.
- **South area schools:** Oakbank, Forest, Emmbrook, Holt, St Crispins and Bohunt Wokingham Schools.

All these schools are, or will shortly be, Academies or Free Schools. Holt School is the sole single sex (girls) school in the area. The Forest School is converting from a boys to a co-educational school from September 2024.

The North area has seen markedly lower rates of housebuilding in the last decade than the south and, because of the limited building opportunities in the north (much of the area is either built up or designated green belt) this is likely to be true in future too. This is expected to have implications for the future balance of the Wokingham child population between these areas.

As noted above the key factors of school place need are:

- High numbers of children currently feeding through from the primary sector, reflecting high and growing birth numbers until 2012.
- High migration rates
- Inter-Borough movement

Year 7 numbers required for next three years are projected to remain high, well above current permanent Year 7 place capacity, reflecting the impact of both high continuing rates of migration of primary school age into the Borough and high numbers coming through from the primary sector, reflecting high and rising birth rates until 2012. Should the migration rates fall, the number of children who have arrived to date is expected to maintain Year 7 numbers above those established in 2021 and earlier projections. However, demand across the projection period will reduce and Year 7 numbers can be expected to fall too, in this event.

There are also challenges due to the increase in the number of mid-secondary-phase applicants. These are particularly acute for girls, as in most year groups there are places for boys at the Forest School. This school is converting to co-educational status through annual changes to the admissions to Year 7 arrangements. As a consequence, the challenges the council faces placing girls in older year groups are likely to persist throughout the five-year period it takes the school to become fully co-educational.

Movement between the Borough and adjoining local authorities is not balanced, with more Wokingham Borough children securing out of Borough places than vice versa. The number of children crossing the Borough boundary is much higher than is the case for the primary sector, and the net movement is a much more significant issue, with a net balance of 382 or 4% more of Wokingham Borough's resident secondary state school attendees on roll at an out of Borough school than there are out of Borough children on roll at a Wokingham school. While there is no obvious

reason to expect this to change in the immediate future, this is a potential place planning vulnerability.

A new secondary school, River Academy Reading (part of the Maiden Erlegh Trust family of schools) opened in September 2024. This school is planned to provide capacity for north Reading, but the actual impact will not be seen until 2024 admissions are fully analysed. It is possible that the new school may have an indirect impact and make more Year 7 places available at Wokingham Borough residents' preferred Reading Schools.

The most significant movements are Wokingham Borough children to Grammar schools in Reading and Slough and Wokingham Without (Crowthorne) children to Edgbarrow School in Bracknell Forest. Conversely significant numbers of Reading children attend Wokingham Borough schools, with the highest numbers being at schools in Earley and Woodley.

Local Authority	Wokingham residents' destinations	Wokingham school roll from out of Borough
Reading	781	1010
Bracknell Forest	575	118
Hampshire	63	54
Windsor and Maidenhead	15	33
West Berkshire	27	19
Oxfordshire	15	12
Buckinghamshire	17	5
Slough	139	0
Others	16	15
Total	1648	1266

Net loss from Wokingham Borough schools	-382
Total Roll Number	10,752
% of total	-4%

The projection of secondary place needs (made in 2023):

	7	8	9	10	11
2023/24	-164	-143	-59	37	50
2024/25	-177	-212	-202	-73	25
2025/26	-162	-222	-274	-227	-87
2026/27	-182	-215	-284	-315	-240
2027/28	-256	-221	-277	-325	-329
2028/29	-268	-331	-283	-318	-338
2029/30	-204	-374	-394	-324	-331
2030/31	-140	-250	-437	-438	-337

These figures take account of current school capacity (and therefore do not include planned additional places at a number of Wokingham schools).

There are also two local issues, one related to recent development and another long standing, which are significant enough to require specific focus of place planning for next five years:

Firstly, Shinfield is served by one secondary school, Oakbank, which admits c.120 pupils a year. Local primary schools admit 210 pupils (with further growth to follow). Alternative schools are not within walking distance, so the provision is unbalanced. There are no immediate local solutions, but one may become available in conjunction with the proposed Loddon Valley Garden Village (Hall Farm), which was a preferred allocation in consultative stages of the emerging local plan. Conversely, the schools that many Shinfield residents do rely on are in Winnersh and Wokingham Town. The option of a new school in Hall Farm could negatively impact on the current schools that supply the places for children in Shinfield. However, further residential development on the southern edge of Wokingham Town is expected and the number of children living in the communities around that area requiring secondary places will also increase. As a consequence, it is possible that rebalancing could be achieved, in time, without any detriment or need to make changes to existing Winnersh / Wokingham Town provision.

Secondly, much of Wokingham Without (part of Crowthorne) is served by Edgbarrow School in Bracknell Forest. Rising numbers of children in Crowthorne have meant that some local Wokingham Borough children have not been admitted to that school. While the school has advised that they would offer additional places, this would be dependent on financial support. Bracknell Forest Council have no grounds to give such support and the DfE have advised this local authority that it should not do so. However, if Bracknell Year 7 numbers do begin to decline, it is likely that the place availability issue for Wokingham resident families will become less acute in time.

Options for action

Year 7 place shortfall: The council has a number of options, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The “do nothing” option and reliance on provision in other boroughs could be eliminated quickly, because neither was likely to meet statutory need. A new school would be expensive and vulnerable should rolls begin to decline, as they are projected to do. Accordingly, the council has focused on expansion at existing schools. The expansion programme has focused on larger expansion schemes, on three school sites near areas of continuing residential growth (at St Crispins, the Emmbrook and the Bohunt schools), and a fourth (Piggott School) in the north of the Borough. Other schools have provided useful capacity too, but at a lower scale.

Current programmes of school place expansion

Plans were agreed in 2022 for expansion projects at a number of secondary schools, based on forecasts that year 7 rolls would peak in 2022-24 and decline towards a level that could be accommodated in the permanent Year 7 capacity, over much of the following decade.

More recent projections, taking account of the impact of increased international migration from 2021 onwards, point to a need for the enhanced capacity to be maintained for a longer period. Moreover, the proposals that had been developed before 2023 were found to be unaffordable within the council’s financial constraints and needed to be modified. New and modified plans have been developed. While some of these are still subject to final legal agreement with schools, they have been verified through value for money checks and considered to be deliverable within resource constraints.

In 2023, a significant effort has been made across the council departments led by the Education and SEND Service to pursue expansion programmes of existing schools while having a focus on outcomes

and value for money, as well as a revised place forecasting model to inform any need to modify the programmes.

The new approach with cross-cutting council-wide efforts and stronger partnership with schools have led to successfully securing sufficient secondary school places for next three years until 2027.

However, our forecast indicates that Wokingham will still need extra secondary school places for the remaining planning period from 2027-28 until at least 2030-31. The need for extra places in additional to what has already been secured is minimal and manageable.

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30*	2030/31*
Year 7 shortfall	-177	-162	-182	-256	-268	-204	-140
St Crispins	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
Emmbrook	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Piggott	46	45	45	45	45	45	45
Bohunt	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Oakbank	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Waingels	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Holt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Forest	90	60	60	60	60	60	60
Maiden Erlegh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bulmershe	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Total Extra Places	274	243	243	243	243	243	243
<i>Balance</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>-13</i>	<i>-25</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>103</i>

* Current school place expansion programmes cover next five years' planning period up to 2029/30. The continued delivery of the increased numbers for the future years beyond 2029 (highlighted in yellow below) will need to be confirmed with the relevant schools by November 2024, the time for an annual review of this strategy. Sufficiency for 2029-2031 will also be achieved once this has been confirmed.

As the Forest School will convert to co-educational status from September 2024 there is no requirement to make adjustments for unusable places for boys, as was the case in 2022 and 2023.

International migration will in time reduces back to pre-2021 levels. Should that occur in the near future in the near future, the number of places required will also reduce significantly, at least eliminating the 2027 to 2030 projected deficit against existing plans.

Proposal for action

The projected shortfalls of the later years of this planning period will be reviewed in the light of the 2024/25 updated projections, taking account future changes to the immigration rate and inter-borough movement. Any necessary actions will be developed in partnership with schools in the

Autumn 2024 to Spring 2025 period, in good time for the budget making process for the 2027 Financial Year. If additional temporary capacity is required, this is likely to be delivered in the form of bulge classes, so as to ensure that places are not oversupplied, in view of the falling rolls issue currently filtering through the age range.

Post-16

Local sufficiency for post-16 participation requires cross departmental collaboration between Skills, Growth and Economic Development and Education Services in Wokingham Borough and in neighbouring local authorities.

Most post-16 provision for the Borough is through sixth forms in eight of the Borough's secondary schools. These are academically selective; largely offering A Levels and other Level 3 courses. A minority of students go onto sixth forms, sixth form colleges and other provision outside the Borough for A-level study. Most Level 2 and vocational courses are offered out of Borough, with majority of them in Reading and Bracknell Forest at Further Education colleges. The Council has agreed to work with the Bohunt Education Trust to open a new sixth form at the Bohunt Wokingham School (currently planned for September 2025). Schools have considerable discretion around the size and nature of their sixth form offer.

Several Wokingham Borough school Sixth Forms have surplus capacity. In May 2025, three schools had sixth form rolls below the DfE's minimum size expectation for a new sixth form of 200 students. However, Sixth Form rolls are forecast to rise over the projection period of 2023/24 to 2030/31, as the rising numbers of students being admitted to secondary schools age into the post 16 sector. Moreover, some of the preferred out of Borough provision (Sixth Form Colleges in particular) may be unable to admit Wokingham Borough students, because of rising demand for their post-16 places from nearby communities. There is therefore a concern that the demand for sixth form places may in the foreseeable future exceed local sixth form capacity. Other providers, the FE Colleges in particular, are known to have more flexibility, and would reasonably be expected to respond positively to increased demand from Wokingham Borough students for Level 3 (A/T Level) courses. Although the council has a duty to ensure there are sufficient sixth form places, the DfE do not provide capital funding to enable local authorities to create this capacity.

The sixth form roll projection is the standard Wokingham Borough roll forecast. It is based on the average of the last three years Year 12 rolls at a school with a sixth form, as a proportion of the preceding year's Year 11 roll (e.g. Year 12 2023 ÷ Year 11 2022). Sixth form capacities are estimated through a number of methods, following DfE guidance.

The current sufficiency analysis (gap between projected need and current provision) points to there being a significant sixth form place deficit over the projection period, even taking account of the new sixth form for the Bohunt School scheme that is in active development. However, there is an example of a school operating successfully with an apparent deficit. In this case, its actual and projected rolls include significant numbers of young people from outside the Borough. Wokingham schools are not compelled to offer significant number of places to students from outside the Borough. Taking account of these facts, part of the deficit could be discounted, so that any operational deficits will occur much later in the projection period, if they occur at all. On this basis any deficit will be more limited and probably be manageable within existing Borough resources.

Year	Total places	Standard Roll Projection ¹	Surplus / Deficit	Restricted to ex WBC Year 11 ²	Surplus / Deficit	Alternative place calculation ³	Surplus / Deficit
2024	2,286	2,141	145	2,151	135	2,542	391
2025	2,286	2,319	- 33	2,318	- 32	2,602	284
2026	2,436	2,547	- 111	2,536	- 100	2,752	216
2027	2,586	2,814	- 228	2,775	- 189	2,902	127
2028	2,586	3,013	- 427	2,918	- 332	2,902	- 16
2029	2,586	3,141	- 555	3,009	- 423	2,902	- 107
2030	2,586	3,174	- 588	3,033	- 447	2,902	- 131
2031	2,586	3,176	- 590	3,035	- 449	2,902	- 133

Proposed actions

Given:

- that schools have discretion over the size of their sixth forms;
- the significant level of surplus sixth form capacity at a number of Wokingham Borough schools;
- the small size of some Wokingham Borough sixth forms;
- the uncertainty over future needs; and
- the planned 2025 opening of a new sixth form at the Bohunt School,

it is proposed that the Council continues to monitor current place needs and developments in sixth form provision in neighbouring local authorities. Apart from the review of post-16 place sufficiency, the Council will need to review, with local and strategic partners, the fit of the current post-16 offer with local educational demand and skills needs. It is important that post-16 education provides young people with the skills that will enable them to thrive, in line with the expectations raised in the “Skills for Jobs” White Paper from 2021. To this end, the Council will look to develop proposals for broadening the local post-16 offer, alongside any increase in capacity.

Future community needs

The council is required to plan for long term development needs, including the need for additional housing. Whilst work continues, consultative stages of the local plan have proposed two new major housing allocations. If confirmed, planning permission would need to be gained and so first housing completions likely be five years away with full realisation over a period extending into the 2040s. The major proposals will give rise to significant demand for school places. Education proposals are to a

¹ The standard roll projection uses the historic relationship between Year 11 and Year 12 rolls (and between Year 12 and Year 13) to derive projected future Year 12 and 13 rolls. This would mean that out of Borough admissions to WBC sixth forms would rise in line with WBC origin sixth form rolls.

² This projection is on the basis that out of Borough entry to WBC sixth forms will not rise in line with WBC origin rolls, where schools have discretion over external admissions to sixth forms. For the purposes of this exercise this is modelled by freezing one school’s sixth form at 500 on roll.

³ WBC core concern is whether all young people 16+ have suitable provision available to them. Some schools have apparent current shortfall in sixth form provision but are able to deliver high quality post-16 education despite this. This may simply reflect the inadequacy of the tools and information available for sixth form capacity evaluation. This measure removes sixth capacity shortfalls at schools that are known to have current calculated deficit, but which operate successfully. Inclusion of these deficits risks masking genuine capacity deficits that may result in young people being unable to secure desired sixth form places.

large extent, prudent planning for possible future need, rather than firm commitments to actions that may be a decade or more in the future.

Loddon Garden Village

The most important potential major development (c.3,750 homes) is the Loddon Garden Village proposal focused on land around the University of Reading's ownership at Hall Farm. It is proposed that this development should have two primary school sites and one secondary school site. The two primary schools could be sustained by the need arising from development alone. Secondary schools need to take a minimum intake (at least 180 children per year) to be viable, and this would not be generated by this development. The school would therefore need to serve a wider area, i.e. Shinfield and possibly parts of Lower Earley too (fringe areas normally outside Maiden Erlegh School's recruitment radius). This points to the need to plan any new provision in partnership with the Anthem Trust, who are responsible for the Oakbank School. It will be several years before works start on site, and the area requires extensive work before the school could be built. As agricultural land it has no utilities, roads, or other infrastructure to enable development. However, strategic local planning is being initiated to maximise the opportunity and sustainability of this future development for school improvement.

South Wokingham SDL Extension

This proposal would add up to a further c.1,150 homes to the existing South Wokingham Strategic Development Location (SDL). Although the first part of the SDL, Montague Park, is now complete, the land south of the Wokingham to Bracknell rail line is yet to be delivered. The area south of the railway scheme has a planned primary school within it, to be brought forward if necessary. The new scheme is expected to have a further primary school site reserved. This gives the council assurance that it will be able to meet needs locally, if a further school is required. Although, as with the Loddon Garden Village proposal, there is much site work to be completed before the school could be built, the plans are more developed and so delivery of new homes is expected to commence at an earlier date.

Risks

Risk	RAG rating	Mitigation	Post mitigation RAG rating
Current projections are unreliable, because they are underpinned by high rates of international migration, which may return to or towards pre-2021 levels at any time	RED	By moving to annual all-phase plans, proposals can be developed, and commitments made on an annual basis (“just in time”) rather than some years in advance.	Amber
The Council’s financial position could deteriorate further, and the capital programme commitments may be undeliverable.	Amber	The purpose of the “Gold” review process was to ensure that schemes were reduced to their minimum costs so as to be deliverable within the council’s resources. The new School Place Planning Working Group galvanises the joint efforts of planning, education, property services of the Council to find the VfM solutions.	Green
Further changes to the Borough’s population, such as an increased rate of migration into the area, could make the current proposals too limited in scope to meet needs.	Amber	Changes such as this are outside the council’s control. However, the national view is that the level of net migration seen last year is exceptional and will reduce in future years.	Amber
School priorities (broadly, standards) may be out of alignment with the council’s need to work within budget constraints.	Red	The Gold process, of negotiation by senior officers, led by members of the council’s most senior leadership team is believed to have arrived at a set of proposals that provide additional capacity and meet essential school requirements. The assessment is left as “amber” because the underpinning formal agreements are still in preparation.	Amber
Further increases in construction costs, labour shortages and diversion of manufacturing capacity to help meet other identified national needs (such as providing temporary accommodation for RAAC affected schools) makes the construction programme undeliverable.	Red	As far as is practicable the growth programme emphasises use of existing premises to achieve growth aims. Minimising the need for investment provides better VFM and minimises risks to programme delivery from this source.	Amber333

Appendix 1: Shinfield area primary phase delivery plan

There are five primary phase schools in Shinfield Parish: Shinfield Infant and Nursery and Shinfield St Mary's Junior Schools, Lambs Lane Primary School, Alder Grove CoE Primary School and Grazeley Parochial VA COE Primary School. Shinfield Infant and Nursery Schools, Shinfield St Mary's CoE Junior School and Grazeley Parochial Schools were all expanded in the early 2010s, and none are thought to have significant future expansion capacity. Lambs Lane provided additional "bulge classes" at that time and is not thought to have further significant expansion potential. The site is small and car parking provided on leased land. Grazeley Parochial also has a limited site and is not within walking distance (by a safe route) of the new Shinfield communities.

There are two viable options for creating additional capacity in Shinfield:

- a) Expansion of the Alder Grove CoE Primary School
- b) A new school site in Spencers Wood.

There is an additional strip of land available through the S106 agreement for the Shinfield West development to enable the expansion of the Alder Grove CoE Primary School.

There is a primary school site in Spencers Wood available through the S106 agreement for the Spencers Wood and Three Mile Cross housing development. Although the costs per place would be higher than at Alder Grove, the site has the potential to offer more places than would be possible through the Alder Grove expansion scheme.

In addition, the Council holds c£4m of S106 funding ringfenced to the Spencers Wood site. This would require a deed of variation to enable the funds to be used on the Alder Grove project. Although discussions are ongoing, to date, agreement has not been given to this.

However, the Spencers Wood site is within the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone of the AWE Burghfield site and, as such, there is a risk of objection or restrictive planning conditions being applied to any development.

The Council is developing proposals for both sites whilst negotiations with the developers are ongoing, on the basis that forfeiture of the S106 funding would make expansion on either site difficult to achieve in view of the current financial context.

Initial indicative timetable

Task	Date
Planning application for a development brief for the Spencers Wood site	Spring / Summer 2024
Decision on Preferred Option	Spring 2025
Additional children admitted to an existing school	September 2025
Construction contract let	Spring / Summer 2025
Initial site occupation	September 2026

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