

EXAMINATION OF

THE WOKINGHAM BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN UPDATE 2023-2040

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By email via the Programme Officer

Dear Mr Bellinger,

MATTERS, ISSUES AND QUESTIONS FOR PART 2 HEARING SESSIONS

1. This letter sets out the Matters, Issues and Questions ('MIQs') for the part 2 hearing sessions in respect of the examination of the Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040 ('the Plan'). The MIQs are not intended to cover all facets of the matters identified, but to assist in our consideration of key aspects of the Plan. As such, as we continue our review of the examination documents, we may ask further questions before or during the hearing sessions.
2. Prior to the hearing sessions, written statements from the Council and representors are invited on the MIQs. Where reference is made to evidence produced by the Council, this should be clearly cross-referenced by providing the examination reference and document title, page and paragraph number.
3. It is noted that the Council has submitted a Schedule of Proposed Modifications to the Plan [CD22] and changes to the Policies Map [CD23]. Modifications are

also proposed in Statements of Common Ground ('SoCGs'). For clarity, we are examining the Plan as consulted on at publication¹ stage [CD1]. While we will have regard to the proposed modifications to the Plan, these may only be included if we consider they are necessary for legal compliance or soundness reasons and recommend them as main modifications.

4. The MIQs refer to the 'MM' reference numbers specified for the proposed modifications in the Schedule of Proposed Modifications.
5. The Plan is being examined under the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') published on 19 December 2023. Any references below to the Framework relate to this version.
6. Should further changes to the Plan be proposed as a result of the MIQs, then these should be added to the Schedule of Proposed Modifications. This should be kept up-to-date, and the latest version published prior to the hearing sessions.
7. Further information about the examination, hearing sessions and the format for written statements is provided in the accompanying Guidance Note, and the Planning Inspectorate's Procedure Guide for Local Plan Examinations, which should be read alongside the MIQs.
8. Part 1 hearings took place in November 2025 and covered matters relating to legal compliance and the Duty to Co-operate, strategic transport, the proposed Strategic Development Locations ('SDLs'), and the housing requirement and supply. It is not our intention to revisit these matters. Instead, the Part 2 hearings will cover other matters not addressed during the Part 1 hearings.
9. The main focus of the examination is on the Plan's policies and their supporting text. Therefore, we will consider points made in relation to other aspects of the Plan (e.g. the Vision and Objectives) as part of our consideration of the soundness of the relevant policies and their supporting text.

¹ Regulation 19 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

Matter 1: Spatial Strategy

Issue 1 - Policy SS1: Sustainable development principles

- 1) Is proposed modification MM5 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy SS1?
- 2) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 2 - Policy SS2: Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy

- 3) Are the spatial strategy and overall distribution of development justified by the evidence base and is this consistent with national planning policy?
- 4) Is the settlement hierarchy appropriate and consistent with the evidence base?
Are all of the settlements listed in the correct level within the hierarchy?
- 5) Is the Council's Settlement Boundaries Review [OD2] robust and based on a consistent methodology?
- 6) Are proposed modifications MM6-MM8 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy SS2?
- 7) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 3 - Policy SS3: Development within or adjacent to major and modest settlements

- 8) Is it justified and consistent with national planning policy to require 'exceptional circumstances' to be demonstrated to permit development outside of settlement boundaries?
- 9) Is it justified to require the Plan to be at least 5 years old before the exceptions at part 2 of the policy apply?
- 10) Are the requirements set out in part 2(b) of the policy justified and consistent with national planning policy?
- 11) Is proposed modification MM9 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy SS3?
- 12) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 4 - Policy SS4: Development within and adjacent to minor settlements

- 13) Is it justified to only permit proposals for up to 9 dwellings within minor settlements?

- 14) Is part 3 of the policy justified and consistent with national planning policy?
- 15) Is proposed modification MM10 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy SS4?
- 16) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 5 - Policy SS5: Development in the countryside

- 17) Should Policy SS5 cross-refer to the exceptions allowed for under Policies SS3 and SS4? Is the Plan internally consistent in this regard?
- 18) Are proposed modifications MM11-MM15 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy SS5?
- 19) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 6 - Policy SS6: Development in the Green Belt

- 20) Is proposed modification MM16 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy SS6?
- 21) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 7 - Policy SS7: Development in the vicinity of Atomic Weapons Establishment ('AWE')

N.B. The approach taken by the Council to the AWE in the selection of potential site allocations will be covered under Matter 4.

- 22) Is the proposed policy approach towards the development in the vicinity of AWE justified and consistent with the evidence base?
- 23) How would the policy be applied where growth within the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone is supported by other policies in the Plan, e.g. Core Employment Areas?
- 24) Are proposed modifications MM17-MM21 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy SS7?
- 25) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 8 - Policy SS9: Whiteknights Campus

- 26) Are proposed modifications MM22-MM23 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy SS9?

- 27) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 9 - Policy SS16: Safeguarded routes

- 28) Is proposed modification MM42 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy SS16?
- 29) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 10 - Policy SS17: Transport improvements

- 30) Is the policy positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Matter 2: Employment Land and Gypsy and Traveller Needs and Requirements

N.B. The proposed housing requirement was addressed during the Part 1 hearings. The Part 2 hearings will therefore focus on matters that have not previously been addressed.

N.B. The approach to assessing site allocations will be covered under Matter 4.

Issue 1 - Policy SS8: Meeting employment needs

- 1) Is the Plan's approach to employment provision supported by a robust evidence base?
- 2) Should the policy set out an employment requirement? If so, what figure(s) should this requirement specify?
- 3) Does the Plan's employment strategy satisfactorily address identified needs and is this affected by the findings of the Employment Land Position Update on 31 March 2025 [WBC26]?
- 4) Is the Plan's approach to the intensification of Core Employment Areas justified? What land supply is available within existing Core Employment Areas and town, district and local centres, and what contribution could such locations make towards satisfying employment needs?
- 5) Does the Plan provide support for a prosperous rural economy and accord with the sequential approach for main town centre uses, as specified at paragraphs 88, 89 and 91 of the Framework?
- 6) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 2 - Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpersons (including Policies H9 and H10)

- 7) Is the evidence base supporting the identified need for residential pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots robust, taking into account factors such as household growth, hidden need (those in bricks and mortar housing), unauthorised sites and encampments and any engagement with the Gypsy and Traveller community?
- 8) Have the potential sources of additional supply identified in the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment [HO4] been thoroughly investigated? This includes regularisation of unauthorised sites, expansion/intensification of existing sites, and addressing the occupation of authorised pitches by non-Gypsy and Traveller households.

- 9) If negotiated stopping arrangements are to be used for transit provision, how would this work, and which land would be used? What procedures are in place to ensure any such approach is effective?
- 10) Have the site allocations been selected using a robust, objective, and consistent process?
- 11) Will there be at least a 5 year supply of deliverable Gypsy and Traveller pitches on adoption of the Plan?
- 12) Is proposed modification MM64 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy H9?
- 13) Is Policy H9 otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?
- 14) Is proposed modification MM65 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy H10?
- 15) Is Policy H10 otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Matter 3: Policies Relating to the SDLs

N.B. The suitability, viability, and deliverability of the SDLs were addressed during the Part 1 hearings. The Part 2 hearings will instead focus on the detailed policy wording and requirements.

Issue 1 - Requirements that apply to each of the SDLs

- 1) Is it justified to require the provision of custom build housing on each of the SDLs, and is this likely to be effective?
- 2) Is it justified to require the provision of Gypsy and Traveller pitches on each of the 3 SDLs, and is this likely to be effective?

Issue 2 - Policy SS11: Arborfield Green SDL

- 3) Do Policy SS11 and the development guidelines at Appendix A of the Plan provide a suitable framework for the delivery of the SDL? Is the policy wording clear, and are the proposed requirements justified and likely to be effective?
- 4) Are proposed modifications MM25-MM31 and MM104-MM107 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy SS11 and the development guidelines at Appendix A?

Issue 3 - Policy SS12: South Wokingham SDL

- 5) Do Policy SS12 and the development guidelines at Appendix B of the Plan provide a suitable framework for the delivery of the SDL? Is the policy wording clear, and are the proposed requirements justified and likely to be effective?
- 6) Is it clear that a new 1 form primary school will be required on land south of Waterloo Road, as specified by part 3(b)(ii) of the policy?
- 7) Are proposed modifications MM32-MM37 and MM108-MM112 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy SS12 and the development guidelines at Appendix B?

Issue 4 - Policy SS13: Loddon Valley Garden Village SDL

- 8) Do Policy SS13 and the development guidelines at Appendix C of the Plan provide a suitable framework for the delivery of the SDL? Is the policy wording clear, and are the proposed requirements justified and likely to be effective?
- 9) Are the proposed settlement boundaries for the SDL justified?
- 10) Are proposed modifications MM38-MM39 and MM113-MM118 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy SS13 and the development guidelines at Appendix C?

Matter 4: Site Allocations

Issue 1 - The assessment of potential site allocations for employment and housing

- 1) Is the sequential and exception testing that has been undertaken for the Plan robust and consistent with national planning policy?
- 2) Have the site allocations been appraised and selected, in comparison with possible alternatives, using a robust and objective process? In particular:
 - a. Is the approach to potential sites within the vicinity of the AWE justified and consistent with national planning policy?
 - b. Is the approach to potential sites in the Green Belt justified and consistent with national planning policy?
 - c. Is the assessment that has been undertaken robust in all other respects?

Issue 2 - Other residential site allocations (Policy SS14)

- 3) Since the submission of the Plan, has the Council resolved to approve or grant planning permission for any more of the sites allocated by the policy, and does this indicate that the amount of housing anticipated for any of the allocations should be updated in the Plan?
- 4) Are the site allocations justified and supported by appropriate evidence? For each allocation:
 - a. Have the environmental and other constraints to development been properly assessed and, where necessary, can appropriate mitigation be achieved?
 - b. Has the availability, viability and deliverability of the site been appropriately assessed?
 - c. Is the approximate site capacity justified? What assumptions and evidence is this based on?
 - d. Is the site likely to be developed within the timescales envisaged in the latest housing trajectory [WBC27]?
 - e. Are the site specific development guidelines specified in Appendix E of the Plan justified and effective?
- 5) In responding to question 4), please can the following be addressed specifically:
 - a. **SS14.3:** The land promoter's Regulation 19 representation states that there is no intention to deliver Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople pitches at this site. In that context, is the site available and the allocation justified?
 - b. **SS14.22:** Is the allocation consistent with Policy C6, which requires existing refuelling stations to be retained except where operationally

unviable, particularly as the site owner's Regulation 19 representation indicates that the refuelling station 'serves an important role and is viable'?

- c. **SS14.23:** is a modification required to delete this allocation following a change in the site's availability for housing, as set out in the Council's response to the Inspectors' Initial Questions [WBC6]?
- 6) Are proposed modifications MM40, and MM119-MM125 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy SS14, associated site allocation mapping in Appendix D of the Plan and the site specific development guidelines in Appendix E?
- 7) Is a modification needed to clarify that development of SS14.1 should connect to a public sewer unless this is demonstrably unfeasible, as specified in the SoCG between the Council and the Environment Agency?
- 8) Are the policy and Appendices D and E otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Matter 5: Housing Land Supply

N.B. A number of housing land supply matters were discussed in the Part 1 hearings. The Part 2 hearings will therefore focus on matters that have not previously been addressed.

- 1) Are proposed modifications MM3, MM4 and MM24 to tables 2 and 6 of the Plan needed to clarify anticipated housing delivery from small sites with planning permission and windfall sites and update the base housing land supply?
- 2) Will there be at least a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land on adoption of the Plan?
- 3) Does the Plan identify land to accommodate at least 10% of the housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare, as set out in paragraph 70(a) of the Framework?

Matter 6: Infrastructure

N.B. Infrastructure considerations relating to the SDLs, and strategic highway matters, were addressed in the Part 1 hearings. The Part 2 hearings will therefore focus on matters that have not previously been addressed.

Issue 1 - Policy SS15: Securing infrastructure

- 1) Has the cumulative impact of all development anticipated during the plan period on infrastructure, such as water supply and wastewater and facilities for education and health, been taken into account in the Plan? Is this demonstrated in the evidence base, and what mitigation will be put in place to ensure that any adverse impacts are satisfactorily addressed?
- 2) Is the role of Community Infrastructure Levy charges in securing the delivery of different forms of infrastructure sufficiently clear in the Plan?
- 3) Is part 3 of the policy clear in respect of each of its requirements for proposals and how decision-making will be approached in circumstances where development is considered 'unsustainable' in the terms of the policy?
- 4) Is proposed modification MM41 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy SS15?
- 5) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Matter 7: Flooding and Drainage Policies

Issue 1 - Policy FD1: Development and flood risk (from all sources)

- 1) Is the policy consistent with national planning policy, particularly in respect of the application of the exception test and the circumstances in which site specific flood risk assessments are required?
- 2) Are proposed modifications MM67-MM70 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy FD1?
- 3) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 2 - Policy FD2: Sustainable drainage

- 4) Is it clear when the requirements of the policy would apply, are the requirements justified and proportionate for all sizes of development proposal, and is the approach consistent with paragraph 175 of the Framework?
- 5) Are proposed modifications MM71-MM76 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy FD2?
- 6) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 3 - Policy FD3: River corridors and watercourses

- 7) Is proposed modification MM77 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy FD3?
- 8) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Matter 8: Climate Change and Energy Policies

Issue 1 - Policy CE1: Design principles for efficient buildings

- 1) Policy CE1 states that '*development proposals should adequately demonstrate the following design principles have been considered*'. Is it clear from this wording whether meeting criteria (a)-(e) is required, or simply encouraged?
- 2) If criteria (c)-(e) are intended as requirements, is it clear what development proposals would need to demonstrate in order to comply with this policy? Would any such requirements accord with national planning policy, including the Written Ministerial Statement entitled 'Planning - Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update' made on 13 December 2023?
- 3) If criteria (c)-(e) are intended as requirements, have the viability implications of these been adequately assessed?
- 4) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 2 - Policy CE2: Environmental standards for non-residential development

- 5) Are the requirements set out in the policy consistent with national planning policy, including the Written Ministerial Statement entitled 'Planning - Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update' made on 13 December 2023?
- 6) Are the requirements set out in the policy justified and likely to be effective? Are they supported by the evidence base?
- 7) How would the implementation of these requirements be monitored, verified, and enforced?
- 8) Have the viability implications of the requirements been adequately assessed?
- 9) Is it justified to apply Clause 3 of the policy (relating to viability) to previously developed land only?
- 10) Is proposed modification MM43 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy CE2?
- 11) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 3 - Policy CE3: Environmental standards for residential development

- 12) Are the requirements set out in the policy consistent with national planning policy, including the Written Ministerial Statement entitled 'Planning - Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update' made on 13 December 2023?

- 13) Are the requirements set out in the policy justified and likely to be effective? Are they supported by the evidence base?
- 14) How would the implementation of these requirements be monitored, verified, and enforced?
- 15) Have the viability implications of the requirements been adequately assessed?
- 16) Is it justified to apply Clause 3 of the policy (relating to viability) to previously developed land only?
- 17) Is the proposed adoption of the optional technical standards for water efficiency justified, and supported by the evidence base?
- 18) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 4 - Policy CE4: Supporting a circular economy

- 19) Is it clear how the requirements of the policy would be monitored, verified, and enforced?
- 20) Have the viability implications of these requirements been adequately assessed?
- 21) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 5 - Policy CE5: Embodied carbon

- 22) Is the requirement at part 2 of the policy for certain developments to submit a whole-life carbon assessment, and demonstrate actions to reduce life-cycle carbon emissions, justified, consistent with national planning policy, and is it likely to be effective? Is it clear how this requirement would be met?
- 23) Are the requirements in the policy relating to demolition justified and consistent with national planning policy?
- 24) Have the viability implications of these requirements been adequately assessed?
- 25) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 6 - Policy CE6: Reducing energy consumption in existing buildings

- 26) Is the requirement at part 3 of the policy CE6 relating to changes of use and extensions, proportionate, justified, and consistent with national planning policy? Is it clear how a development proposal would meet this requirement?

- 27) Are proposed modifications MM44 and MM1 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy CE6 and Chapter 2 of the Plan?
- 28) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 7 - Policy CE7: Low carbon and renewable energy generation

- 29) Are proposed modifications MM45-MM46 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy CE7?
- 30) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 8 - Policy CE8: Protecting renewable energy infrastructure

- 31) Is the policy positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Matter 9: Housing Policies

Issue 1 - Policy H1: Housing mix, density and standards

- 1) Is it clear how a development proposal would meet the requirement at part 2 of the policy relating to housing mix?
- 2) Is part 4 of the policy that requires all new residential development to meet Requirement M4(2) justified?
- 3) Is part 5 of the policy that requires at least 5% of new housing in schemes of 20 or more dwellings to meet Requirement M4(3) justified?
- 4) Is part 6 of the policy that requires at least 25% of proposals for specialist accommodation for older people to meet Requirement M4(3) justified?
- 5) Is part 8 of the policy that requires all new residential development to meet the up to date nationally described space standard for internal space justified?
- 6) Have the viability implications of the policy requirements been adequately assessed?
- 7) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 2 - Policy H2: Presumption against residential losses

- 8) Is Policy H2 positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 3 - Policy H3: Affordable housing

- 9) Are the proposed affordable housing thresholds of 5 units/bedspaces, or a site area of 0.16 ha, justified and consistent with national planning policy?
- 10) Are the proposed affordable housing requirements, set out in the table within the policy, justified and supported by the evidence base?
- 11) Part 4 of the policy does not refer to financial contributions in lieu of on-site provision. Is this justified and consistent with national planning policy?
- 12) Is part 5 of the policy relating to First Homes justified, consistent with national planning policy, and likely to be effective?
- 13) The policy seeks affordable housing contributions from proposals for older persons housing and Gypsy and Traveller pitches. Is this approach justified and supported by the evidence base?
- 14) Have the viability implications of the policy requirements been adequately assessed?

- 15) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 4 - Policy H4: Exception sites

- 16) Are the proposed thresholds of up to 9 dwellings, and up to 20% market housing, justified?
- 17) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 5 - Policy H5: Rural workers' dwellings

- 18) Are the thresholds set out in part 1(f) (10 years) and part 2 (3 years) of the policy justified and consistent with national planning policy?
- 19) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 6 - Policy H6: Self-build and custom housebuilding

- 20) Is the proposed approach to self-build and custom housebuilding justified and supported by the evidence base?
- 21) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 7 - Policy H7: Specialist accommodation

- 22) Is the proposed approach to specialist accommodation justified and supported by the evidence base?
- 23) Are proposed modifications MM60-MM61 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy H7?
- 24) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 8 - Policy H8: Conversion and sub-division of buildings

- 25) Is part 1(f) of the policy, relating to an overconcentration of flats or HMOs, justified? Is it clear how compliance with this part of the policy would be assessed or measured?
- 26) Are proposed modifications MM62-MM63 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy H8?
- 27) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 9 - Policy H11: Houseboat moorings

- 28) Is proposed modification MM66 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy H11?
- 29) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 10 - Policy H12: Residential development of existing private gardens

- 30) Is the policy positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 11 - Policy H13: Retention of mobile home parks

- 31) Is the policy positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Matter 10: Design, Heritage and the Built Environment Policies

Issue 1 - Policy DH1: Place making and quality design

- 1) Are proposed modifications MM83-MM86 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy DH1?
- 2) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 2 - Policy DH2: Safeguarding amenity

- 3) Is the policy positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 3 - Policy DH3: Shopfronts

- 4) Is the policy positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 4 - Policy DH4: Advertisements and signage

- 5) Is the policy positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 5 - Policy DH5: The historic environment

- 6) Are proposed modifications MM87-MM90 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy DH5?
- 7) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 6 - Policy DH6: Archaeology

- 8) Is proposed modification MM91 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy DH6?
- 9) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 7 - Policy DH7: Equestrian Development

- 10) Is Policy DH7 positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Matter 11: Healthy and Safe Communities Policies

Issue 1 - Policy HC1: Promoting healthy communities

- 1) Is there a requirement for certain development proposals to be supported by health impact assessments?
- 2) Is proposed modification MM93 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy HC1?
- 3) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 2 - Policy HC2: Community infrastructure

- 4) How is paragraph 13.13 of the Plan intended to interact with, and is it consistent with, part 4 of the policy?
- 5) Would part 4(d) of the policy lead to the unnecessary loss of community facilities and thereby conflict with paragraph 97(c) of the Framework?
- 6) Does the policy suitably provide for the reorganisation of the National Health Service estate?
- 7) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 3 - Policy HC3: Local Green Space

- 8) Are the designation and spatial extent of the Local Green Spaces specified at Appendix K of the Plan consistent with paragraphs 105 to 107 of the Framework and justified by an appropriate methodology and evidence?
- 9) Are proposed modifications MM94 and MM126 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy HC3 and Appendix K?
- 10) Are the policy and Appendix K otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 4 - Policy HC4: Open space, sports, recreation and play facilities

- 11) Is the policy, including the open space, sports, recreation and play facility standards (specified in hectares per 1000 homes) in its table, based on robust and up-to-date assessments of need over the plan period?
- 12) Is it clear how the standards should be used to determine when open space sports, recreation and play facilities should be provided directly on a development site and when financial contributions would be appropriate?

- 13) Is it clear how financial contributions towards open space, sports, recreation and play facilities will be calculated for development proposals?
- 14) Is proposed modification MM2 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Chapter 2 of the Plan.
- 15) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 5 - Policy HC5: Environmental protection

- 16) Is proposed modification MM95 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy HC5?
- 17) Is the policy positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 6 - Policy HC6: Air pollution and air quality

- 18) Is the policy positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 7 - Policy HC7: Light pollution

- 19) Is proposed modification MM92 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy HC7?
- 20) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 8 - Policy HC8: Noise pollution

- 21) Is it clear from the policy when noise and disturbance should be considered for a development proposal?
- 22) Are proposed modifications MM96-MM98 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy HC8 and associated Table 11?
- 23) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 9 - Policy HC9: Contaminated land and water

- 24) Is the policy positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 10 - Policy HC10: Odour, fumes and dust

- 25) Is proposed modification MM99 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy HC10?

26) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?



Matter 12: Natural Environment Policies

Issue 1 - Policy NE1: Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 1) Is proposed modification MM78 required to amend the paragraph numbers in Chapter 11 of the Plan to correspond with the chapter number?
- 2) Does the Plan appropriately identify, map and safeguard the different aspects of the natural environment specified at paragraph 185(a) of the Framework, and is the identification of 'Vine Cottage, Hurst' as a Local Wildlife Site justified?
- 3) Are proposed modifications MM79-MM80 and MM127 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy NE1 and provide a corresponding update to the Glossary to the Plan?
- 4) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 2 - Policy NE2: Biodiversity net gain

- 5) Is the policy compatible with, and justified in the context of, the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain?
- 6) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 3 - Policy NE3: Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

- 7) Do parts 6(a)(iii) and (iv) of the policy align with Natural England guidance in respect of the minimum size of Suitable Alternate Natural Greenspace?
- 8) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 4 - Policy NE4: Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows

- 9) Do parts 1 to 6 of the policy provide appropriate flexibility for the removal of trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows that may not be worthy of, or suitable for, retention as part of a development proposal?
- 10) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 5 - Policy NE5: Landscape and design

- 11) Are the policy requirements proportionate and justified for all types and scales of development proposal?
- 12) Is the policy approach, that the character and distinctiveness of landscapes is protected and enhanced, justified in all circumstances?

- 13) Does part 5 of the policy provide appropriate flexibility for the removal of trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows that may not be worthy of, or suitable for, retention as part of a development proposal?
- 14) Are proposed modifications MM81-MM82 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy NE5?
- 15) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 6 - Policy NE6: Valued landscapes

- 16) Are the designation and spatial extent of Valued Landscapes specified in the policy and shown on the Policies Map, both as a whole and taking each individual landscape in turn, justified by an appropriate methodology and evidence?
- 17) Is the policy compatible with the Plan's spatial strategy, its approach to addressing housing and employment needs and associated policies?
- 18) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 7 - Policy NE7: Sites of Urban Landscape Value

- 19) In what ways do Sites of Urban Landscape Value differ from the proposed Valued Landscape and Local Green Space designations in the Plan?
- 20) Are the designation and spatial extent of the Sites of Urban Landscape Value specified in the supporting text to the policy and shown on the Policies Map, both as a whole and taking each individual site in turn, justified by an appropriate methodology and evidence?
- 21) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Matter 13: Economy, Employment and Retail Policies

Issue 1 - Policy ER1: Core Employment Areas

- 1) For proposals involving non-employment uses within Core Employment Areas, is a minimum 18 month marketing period for the use of a site for employment purposes, as specified by paragraph 8.10 of the Plan, justified?
- 2) Is proposed modification MM55 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy ER1?
- 3) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 2 - Policy ER2: Employment uses outside Core Employment Areas

- 4) Is it justified for the policy to include separate requirements for development proposals based on whether the gross internal area would be above or below 1000 square metres?
- 5) Is it sufficiently clear how the policy would be applied to employment development supported by other policies outside Core Employment Areas, such as at the SDLs and in town centres?
- 6) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 3 - Policy ER3: Supporting the rural economy

- 7) Is proposed modification MM56 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy ER3?
- 8) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 4 - Policy ER4: Employment and skills plans

- 9) Is the policy positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 5 - Policy ER5: The hierarchy of centres

- 10) Should the policy specify a retail requirement and, if so, should this be informed by the figures included at paragraph 8.25 of the Plan?
- 11) Is proposed modification MM57 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy ER5?
- 12) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 6 - Policy ER6: Town, district and local centres and shopping parades

- 13) Is the policy positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 7 - Policy ER7: Strengthening the role of centres

- 14) Is it justified for the policy to only require development proposals involving 500 square metres or more of 'town centre uses' to follow a sequential approach, and is this consistent with national planning policy?
- 15) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 8 - Policy ER8: Wokingham town centre

- 16) Is proposed modification MM59 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy ER8?
- 17) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 9 - Policy ER9: Woodley town centre and Lower Earley district centre

- 18) Is the policy positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Matter 14: Connections Policies

Issue 1 - Policy C1: Active and sustainable transport and accessibility

- 1) Are the requirements in part 4 of the policy proportionate and sufficiently flexible to account for varying types and scales of development, in both urban and rural locations?
- 2) Are proposed modifications MM47-MM48 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy C1?
- 3) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 2 - Policy C2: Mitigation of transport impacts and highways safety and design

- 4) Is part 1(a) of the policy clear and consistent with paragraph 115 of the Framework?
- 5) Is part 1(d) of the policy clear in respect of when development proposals should be supported by a travel plan or contributions towards the Council's 'My Journey' initiative?
- 6) Is proposed modification MM49 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy C2?
- 7) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 3 - Policy C3: Active travel

- 8) Is the policy positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 4 - Policy C4: Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way

- 9) Is proposed modification MM50 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy C4?
- 10) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 5 - Policy C5: Parking and electric vehicle charging

- 11) Does part 1 of the policy intend to require that any specific parking standards are satisfied by development proposals?
- 12) Is the policy's approach to electric vehicle charging consistent and compatible with the requirements of Part S of the Building Regulations?

- 13) Are proposed modifications MM51-MM52 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy C5?
- 14) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 6 - Policy C6: Technology and innovation in transport

- 15) Is the policy positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 7 - Policy C7: Digital infrastructure and communications technology

- 16) Are proposed modifications MM53-MM54 necessary to ensure the clarity and soundness of Policy C7?
- 17) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Issue 8 - Policy C8: Utilities

- 18) Are parts 1 and 2 of the policy justified in requiring an applicant to demonstrate sufficient utility capacity exists to serve a development and align its occupation with the provision of any necessary utility upgrades?
- 19) Is the policy otherwise positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

Matter 15: Viability and Monitoring

Issue 1 – Viability

- 1) Is the Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy Viability Study [VI1] robust, has it been carried out in accordance with national planning policy, and does it take full account of, accurately reflect and influence the requirements of the Plan?
- 2) Do the findings of that viability study remain valid following the production of the Loddon Valley Garden Village – Financial Viability Assessment [WBC29] and the update to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan in August 2025 [WBC28]?
- 3) Are the requirements of the policies in the Plan set at a level such that the cumulative cost of all relevant policies would not undermine deliverability of the Plan's objectives?

Issue 2 – Monitoring

- 4) Are the proposed indicators and targets specified in Appendix M of the Plan relevant, measurable and clearly time related so that they can be monitored during the plan period?
- 5) Are any modifications needed to the proposed indicators and targets as a consequence of modifications to the Plan?
- 6) Are any other indicators necessary for monitoring purposes to ensure the soundness of the Plan?

THE END