



**OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT:
LAND OFF BASINGSTOKE ROAD, SPENCERS WOOD**

PLANNING STATEMENT

March 2025



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Outline planning permission is sought with all matters reserved for future determination, save for the means of access via Basingstoke Road for residential led mixed-use development of up to 420 dwellings.

The 39.26 hectare (ha) site (the “Site”) lies to the south and west of Spencers Wood and is bound by residential development to the north, residential/commercial development and Basingstoke Road (B3349) to the south and west, and agricultural land and a solar farm to the east.

It is acknowledged there is a breach of Policies CP9 and CP11 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010) as well as policy CC02 of the Wokingham Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014), in so far as development extends beyond the development limits. However, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies as set out within the NPPF paragraph 11d.

The following benefits in this case are attributed very significant weight; notably:

- the delivery of 252 market homes, 168 affordable homes, and a care home in a sustainable location and for which there is a clear and evidenced need;
- the economic benefits arising from jobs created during the construction phase, and from the direct and indirect jobs created by the provision of 1ha of employment land, local centre, and community facilities;
- the environmental benefits in the form of approximately 18.01ha of public open space and in excess of 10% biodiversity net gain; and,
- the social and health benefits arising from a new primary school (for which great weight should be given), GP surgery, potential 3G sports pitch, changing facility, and local centre with small scale retail and community uses reducing the need to travel for both existing and new residents.

The adverse impacts would be the conflict with the Development Plan, change to the countryside to which we attribute limited harm, loss of agricultural land, and a low degree of harm to the setting of Swallowfield Park to which we attribute limited harm. On balance, these adverse impacts do not demonstrably outweigh the above benefits. It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Marrons on behalf of Richborough (the Applicant). It accompanies a planning application seeking outline planning permission for a residential led mixed-use development at Land off Basingstoke Road, Spencers Wood.
- 1.2. Specifically, this planning application seeks permission for:

“Outline planning permission is sought with all matters reserved for future determination, save for the means of access via Basingstoke Road, for: up to 420 dwellings (Use Class C3), an 80 bed care home (Use Class C2), 1ha of employment land (Use Class E(g), primary school (Use Class F1), local centre (Use Classes E(a), (b), (c), (f)), GP Surgery (Use Class E(e), sports pitch and changing facility, public open space, SANG provision and associated infrastructure”
- 1.3. The purpose of this Statement is to describe the proposed development and to demonstrate how it accords with the adopted Development Plan and relevant material considerations including the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and adopted Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 1.4. This Statement draws upon evidence included in the application submission, including the Environmental Statement (ES).
- 1.5. The Applicant, Richborough, are a specialist land promotion business who work in partnership with landowners, Councils, local stakeholders and the community to bring forward development schemes that deliver new homes and the facilities that meet the needs of the local area. At the forefront of their ethos, the Richborough team strive to create sustainable developments that are of high quality and integrate sympathetically with their surroundings. Their approach is about more than just housing as they focus on the local community and how developments can complement and enhance existing infrastructure. Sustainability is vital to the way Richborough operate, with the vision, expertise and strategic resources to deliver a distinct and thriving new part of the community in Spencers Wood.



This Planning Statement is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** – describes the application site, and its surrounding area;
- **Section 3** – details the proposed development;
- **Section 4** – describes the extensive engagement and consultation undertaken that has informed the planning application;
- **Section 5** – provides an assessment of the proposed development against the Development Plan and relevant material considerations;
- **Section 6** – sets out the draft heads of terms for the planning obligations.



2. SITE DESCRIPTION, CHARACTERISTICS AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The Site is located to the south and west of Spencers Wood and is bound by residential development to the north, residential/commercial development and Basingstoke Road (B3349) to the south and west, and agricultural land and a solar farm to the east. The Site adjoins the existing settlement boundary of Spencers Wood and is within walking distance of its existing services and facilities.
- 2.2 The Site is formed of an irregular shape of agricultural land that extends to circa 39.26ha. It is comprised of a series of fields, established hedgerow boundaries and a gently undulating terrain. There are no particular features of interest within the site boundary.
- 2.3 There are a series of mature trees located throughout the Site, none of which are subject to Tree Protection Orders. Indeed, the Site is not currently designated for its ecological or landscape value and it is well screened by the established hedgerow boundaries.
- 2.4 The Site is situated within the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) 5km Linear Mitigation Zone, and the Stanford End Mill and River Loddon Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone.
- 2.5 The Site is within the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) of Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Burghfield set by West Berkshire Council. However, the Site is located outside of the Urgent Protection Action Zone (UPAZ) determined by the Burghfield site operator (AWE plc).
- 2.6 An Exolum Pipeline, running east to west, is located within and across the northern part of the Site. There are no existing Public Right of Ways (PROW) located within the Site.
- 2.7 The site is a sustainable location for residential development with local shops and services within reasonable walking and cycling distance, including two convenience stores, a bakery, public house, restaurant, veterinary clinic, and a post office. Further local amenities include Lambs Lane Primary School, Oakbank Secondary School, Spencers Wood Library, Spencers Wood Village Hall, Spencers Wood Pavilion and



Recreation Ground, and employment opportunities at Lambs Farm Business Park.

- 2.8 The Site is well served by further employment and leisure opportunities within its immediate vicinity given its proximity to Shinfield, Wokingham and Reading. Indeed, the Site is located within walking distance of five bus stops, located on both Basingstoke Road and Hyde End Road, offering an approximately hourly service to Shinfield and Reading.
- 2.9 Further detail of the Site and its characteristics are described within the submitted Design and Access Statement.

3. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The detailed description of development is as follows:

“Outline planning permission is sought with all matters reserved for future determination, save for the means of access via Basingstoke Road, for: up to 420 dwellings (Use Class C3), an 80 bed care home (Use Class C2), 1ha of employment land (Use Class E(g), primary school (Use Class F1), local centre (Use Classes E(a), (b), (c), (f)), GP Surgery (Use Class E(e), sports pitch and changing facility, public open space, SANG provision and associated infrastructure”

3.2 In summary, the proposed development will contribute up to 420 dwellings towards the Council’s housing supply to meet the newly established local housing need, up to 40% of which will be affordable homes. The development will provide a range of housing types and sizes, with the exact housing mix to be agreed at the reserved matters stage.

3.3 The proposed development will provide 1ha of commercial land which can host several small business units and provide further local employment opportunities adjacent to Lambs Farm Business Park for which there is an evidenced need within the area.

3.4 An 80-bed care home will be included in the proposals to accommodate for a greater range of the local demographic and satisfy a demand for care provision in the Borough.

3.5 The proposed development includes a new Two-Form Entry primary school, allowing for the expansion and relocation of the existing Lambs Lane Primary School, which is currently operating at capacity and unable to expand. The modern school buildings can be designed with the intention of it operating as a dual-purpose facility, where it will have the capability to be used as a Rest Centre in the event of an incident at AWE (Burghfield). It can also include the permanent storage of emergency monitoring/mitigation equipment.

3.6 The proposal includes the provision of a local centre, which can incorporate a GP surgery for Spencers Wood, which is expected to serve as a branch of the existing Swallowfield Medical Practice in the nearby settlement.

3.7 In addition, the local centre for Spencers Wood is proposed to provide potential community spaces and several small retail units, for which there is demonstrated market demand (see Appendix 1).



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- 3.8 New sports facilities are also proposed including a potential 3G football pitch, multi-functional open space, informal 'kick about' space and changing facilities in response to an identified local need from the Parish Council and sports bodies.
- 3.9 A key aspect of the proposed development is the provision of new areas of public green space. This includes the provision of 8.13ha of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) with a 2.3km circular pedestrian route for recreation. This is an asset which does not currently exist within Spencers Wood. This is supplemented by new tree planting, biodiversity enhancements, structural landscaping and a Sustainable Urban Drainage System.
- 3.10 The primary vehicular access will be provided off Basingstoke Road, along with several opportunities for safe pedestrian and cycle routes into and out of the Site to the surrounding residential areas. All access points are designed to ensure the safety of users.
- 3.11 Although a reserved matter, all homes will be constructed to meet Building Regulations, the Future Homes Standard, and the DEPZ mitigation design measures indicated in the submitted On-Site Emergency Plan. Sufficient parking space will be provided for all uses, along with appropriate waste collection, and private amenity space.



4. Pre-Application Advice

- 4.1.1. A formal pre-application request was submitted to WBC on 27th November 2024 and the subsequent written advice was received on the 21st February 2025. The points raised have been addressed within the application and supporting documents.

Stakeholder Engagement

- 4.2.1. As detailed in the accompanying Statement of Community Involvement, a community consultation was undertaken to inform local residents and stakeholders of the proposals, and to invite comment. The approach applied was informed by the 'Principles of Community Involvement' set out in WBC's Statement of Community Involvement, which was adopted by the Council in March 2024.
- 4.2.2. The application has been informed by a Design Review Panel which was undertaken on 29th July 2024. The feedback received on an earlier iteration of the proposed masterplan has been addressed within the Design and Access Statement.
- 4.2.3. Consultation has also been undertaken with the Integrated Care Board and Swallowfield Surgery in respect of the need for a GP surgery within Spencers Wood; the Education Authority in respect of the need for a primary school and secondary school capacity; Sport England and the Sports Officer at the Borough Council in respect of the need for 3G football and grass pitches for cricket and football; the Local Highway Authority in respect of highway modelling and transport; Natural England in respect of the SANG provision and ecological aspects of the scheme; and potential occupiers for the retail units within the Local Centre. All of these discussions and requests made by the various stakeholders have been accommodated and have informed the application.

Shinfield Parish Council

- 4.3.1. Stakeholder engagement included an initial meeting with Shinfield Parish Council, which took place on 26th February 2024. Key issues discussed at the meeting were education, sports, and health provision, with concerns relating to traffic congestion and safety. The Parish Council expressed specific support for the provision of a 3G football pitch and the need for a new community facility to support the existing library. On the 28th May 2024, a letter was sent to the Parish Council outlining progress with the

development proposals, next steps and a desire to continue working collaboratively.

- 4.3.2. A further meeting was held with Shinfield Parish Council on the 6th November 2024, where a comprehensive update on the development proposals was provided and a response given to the Parish Council's initial concerns.

Joint Emergency Planning Unit

- 4.4.1. Engagement with the Joint Emergency Planning Unit (JEPU) was sought during the design of the proposals, to better understand potential implications on the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) of AWE (Burghfield) and discuss an approach to mitigation. A letter requesting discussion was sent to Emergency Planning at West Berkshire Council on the 8th May 2024, who required a pre-application request to be submitted at WBC before they could engage in discussion.
- 4.4.2. As part of the pre-application advice request, specific engagement with the JEPU was sought in the form of written advice and a bespoke meeting to discuss the intricacies of the DEPZ. Whilst written advice was received as part of the pre-application advice on 21st February 2025, it consisted of a standard response to policy requirements. Due to JEPU capacity issues, no meeting could be scheduled prior to this submission, with the earliest meeting set for the 29th of April 2025.
- 4.4.3. Richborough's intention with the pre-application request was to be able to engage with the JEPU directly, as had been indicated to us in early 2024, to better understand their position and offer support, along with a potential solution. Richborough do however remain committed to working alongside the JEPU and look forward to the meeting on the 29th of April 2025.

Wider Community Engagement

- 4.5.1. A community consultation was undertaken to allow local residents to provide comments on the proposal. The consultation period ran from 8th July 2024 to 22nd July 2024 where residents could make comments on the proposal. A public exhibition was held on 8th July 2024 at Spencers Wood Pavilion to give residents the opportunity to ask the project team questions about the development and provide feedback using questionnaires.
- 4.5.2. To raise awareness of the proposals and the public exhibition, an informative leaflet



with high-level details of the proposals, was distributed to 2631 addresses within Spencers Wood and the surrounding area. This directed people to a dedicated project website, which was created to provide residents with an accessible means to view the emerging proposals. The website included a 'Your Views' section, allowing residents the opportunity to respond to the questionnaire online.

- 4.5.3. The majority of the responses provided by the public highlighted concerns as to the impact of the proposed development on the capacity of local services and infrastructure, the loss of wildlife and greenspace, and concern over the DEPZ. Further details and outcomes of the community consultation are detailed in the Statement of Community Involvement.
- 4.5.4. Detail of how stakeholder and community feedback influenced the proposed development, are provided in the accompanying DAS, which sets out how the design of the scheme evolved.

5. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 5.1.1. This section of the Planning Statement assesses the proposals against the relevant planning policy context, namely the statutory development plan for Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and other material planning considerations.
- 5.1.2. Planning law, as contained in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Furthermore, paragraph 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises that the Development Plan is the starting point for decision making.
- 5.1.3. The Development Plan comprises the adopted Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010), the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014) (MDDP), and the Shinfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2017) (SPNP), and the partially revoked South East Plan. In respect of the latter, only policy NRM6 remains part of the Development Plan.
- 5.1.4. There are five Supplementary Planning Documents that are material considerations. These include the Affordable Housing SPD (2013), the Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD (2011), Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2010) and Borough Design Guide (2012). These largely relate to matters of detail that would be considered at reserved matters stage.
- 5.1.5. The Core Strategy is therefore 15 years old with subservient Plans 11 and 8 years old respectively, and therefore the weight to be afforded to Development Plan policies in decision making must have careful regard to their consistency with the NPPF (see paragraph 232 of the NPPF).
- 5.1.6. The policies relevant to the determination of this application are considered below.

5.2 Principle of Development

- 5.2.1. The spatial strategy of the Core Strategy from 2010 is to focus new development within strategic development locations and settlements that either have or are planned to have a significant range of facilities and services. The scale of development should reflect the existing or proposed levels of facilities and services available, with a

hierarchy of settlements ranging from major through modest to limited development locations. Outside settlements only certain types of development are considered appropriate, primarily relating to agriculture, open recreation, burial grounds and the rural economy.

- 5.2.2. Spencers Wood is recognised as a modest development location in Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy with its development limits defined by Policy CC02 of the Managing Development Delivery Document and shown on the Policies Map. Policy CP17 of the Core Strategy allocates 350 dwellings across limited development locations, where sites should generally not exceed 100 dwellings each.
- 5.2.3. The application site lies outside the development limits of Spencers Wood. The proposal does not fall into any of the categories of development included in Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy as being appropriate in the countryside. Even if it had fallen within the development limits of the village, at 420 dwellings it is of a scale of development that exceeds that envisaged for limited development locations.
- 5.2.4. However, the weight to be given to these policies are dependent on the degree to which they are consistent with the NPPF, in particular the Framework's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, supporting economic growth and healthy places.
- 5.2.5. The Council have stated that it has a 1.7 years housing land supply, and on that basis the policies most important to the determination of the application are out-of-date (paragraph 11 of the NPPF). Accordingly, the NPPF says that planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
- 5.2.6. Therefore, although the proposal conflicts with the spatial strategy of the development plan and runs counter to its approach to the location of new residential and employment development, the development plan is out-of-date and this is an important material consideration considered below in the planning balance.

5.3 Housing Mix, Tenure and Density

- 5.3.1. Core Strategy Policy CP2 (Inclusive Communities) states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that address the requirements of an ageing population

in terms of housing, and TB05 of the MDDP seeks to ensure that new development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities with an appropriate housing mix. It is indicated planning permission will be granted for proposals that meet the long-term needs and address the requirements of an ageing population, children, young people, families and those with special needs.

- 5.3.2. The exact housing mix is reserved for future determination; however this proposal can provide a range of house types including catering for an ageing population with the inclusion of an 80 bed care home. The application also proposes 40% affordable housing, which is consistent with Core Strategy Policy CP5 (Housing Mix, Density and Affordability). The proposals are therefore consistent with the policy requirements.

5.4 General Design Principles

- 5.4.1. Core Strategy Policy CP3 (General Principles) sets out general requirements on new developments which should be demonstrated through the submission of a Design and Access Statement and other material, including plans and Design Codes.
- 5.4.2. A Design and Access Statement and Design Code is submitted with this application which addresses each of the principles and demonstrates how they can be met. The design has been informed by a Design Review Panel which suggestions taken on board. Where necessary, the principles are also addressed below within this section of the Planning Statement.

5.5 Infrastructure Requirements

- 5.5.1. Core Strategy Policy CP4 (Infrastructure Requirements) indicates permission will not be granted unless appropriate arrangements for the improvement or provision of infrastructure required for the development are agreed. It is stated that the arrangements for the provision or improvement of infrastructure to the required standard will be secured by planning obligations or condition if appropriate.
- 5.5.2. Draft Heads of Terms for a Section 106 Agreement are contained within this Planning Statement and the Applicant is willing to enter into a Section 106 Agreement with the Council and agree conditions in accordance with paragraphs 56 to 58 of the NPPF. The requirements of Policy CP4 can therefore be met.



5.6 Sustainable Transport

- 5.6.1. Strategic Core Policy CP6 (Managing Travel Demand) is a criterion-based policy and states planning permission will be granted for schemes that, amongst other requirements, provide for sustainable forms of transport to allow choice and are located where there are choices in the mode of transport available.
- 5.6.2. A Transport Assessment has been prepared in consultation with the Local Highway Authority and demonstrates there are choices in terms of modes of transport for future residents and that the distance people need to travel is minimised.
- 5.6.3. In terms of providing choice for trips beyond the settlement, Spencers Wood is well-served by frequent public transport services, with five bus stops situated immediately adjacent to the Site on Basingstoke Road and Hyde End Road. These bus stops are served by the 'MereOak Park & Ride 600' hourly bus service, which provides a return service between Reading, Swallowfield, Riseley, Spencers Wood, Shinfield and MereOak Park & Ride.
- 5.6.4. In terms of minimising the need to travel for residents and workers within the proposed development, there will be a range of new shops and facilities on-site, alongside the existing facilities already within the village. This includes retail, sports, health, community and education facilities, along with opportunities for employment. Alongside the provision of new facilities, the illustrative design of the proposal includes segregated pedestrian and cycle routes with accesses connecting to both Basingstoke Road, the existing PRow off Hyde End Road, and a park via Century Drive to make the site as permeable as possible for pedestrians and cyclists. This will promote active travel aligned with the vision of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 2023.
- 5.6.5. Policy CP6 (Managing Travel Demand) also specifies that planning permission will be granted for schemes that improve the existing infrastructure network and mitigate any adverse effects upon the local highway network. Further, Core Strategy Policy CP15 also requires proposed employment development to include mitigation commensurate with the impact of the development. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states that development should only be refused where the residual cumulative impacts following mitigation are severe taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

- 5.6.6. In terms of the residual highway impact, the submitted Transport Assessment summarises that model forecasts anticipate the proposed development would only exacerbate existing congestion at the Basingstoke Road/ Hyde End Road Junction, as well as the Basingstoke Road/ Beech Hill Road Junction during the 2032 and 2038 AM peak scenarios. Further capacity analysis of these junctions with the Council and National Highways will be undertaken post-submission, as well as discussions surrounding the enhancement of bus service provision. The submitted Transport Assessment is not accompanied by a Travel Plan. The Applicant proposes to contribute to WBC's 'My Journey Wokingham' travel planning initiative which can be secured through an appropriately worded S.106 contribution.
- 5.6.7. In respect of other highway matters, the proposed vehicular accesses have been designed to enhance road safety in accordance with Policy CP6. Parking provision will be considered as part of any future reserved matters application in accordance with Policy CC07 of the MDDP.
- 5.6.8. Further, Policy CP10 (Improvements to the Strategic Transport Network) sets out that improvements to the strategic transport network will be provided to ameliorate major environmental or safety problems. Consideration will be given to the improvements necessary in light of further capacity analysis and discussions with the Council and National Highways.
- 5.6.9. The full requirements of these policies can therefore be met.

5.7 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping

- 5.7.1. Core Strategy Policy CP7 (Biodiversity) specifies development which may harm county designated sites, habitats, species of principle importance in England for nature conservation, veteran trees, and features of the landscape that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna (including wildlife and river corridors) will be only permitted if it has been clearly demonstrated that the need for the proposal outweighs the need to safeguard the nature conservation importance, and mitigation measures can be put in place to prevent damaging impacts.
- 5.7.2. This is supported by MDDP Policy TB23 which requires proposals to enhance existing biodiversity, provide opportunities for new biodiversity, provide buffers between habitats and species of principle importance, and ensure all development is ecologically permeable through the provision of wildlife corridors.

- 5.7.3. The Ecological Impact Assessment submitted with the application establishes that the Site is largely within dominant areas of arable cropland, and the proposed development seeks to deliver extensive areas of open green space and habitat creation, comprised of wildflower meadows, native trees, scrub planting and SuDS features. Native hedgerows within the Site will be largely retained.
- 5.7.4. In terms of potential negative residual effects, there is potential for residual negative impacts to the Stanford End Mill and River Loddon SSSI during the construction phase, which can be addressed in the form of pollution mitigation measures dealt with through hydrological links. Apart from a proposed off-site contribution for the significant negative residual effect due to loss of skylark nesting territories, all other proposed mitigation measures can be captured within a Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP) and secured by an appropriately worded condition.
- 5.7.5. The proposed development has the potential to result in a Biodiversity Net Gain of 10.74% Habitat Units, 30.86% Hedgerow Units and 11.50% Watercourse Units, all of which can be delivered on Site. The potential to maximise net gain within the redline boundary has been explored, at this outline stage, based on the design parameters and targeting realistic and deliverable habitats as part of the developments soft landscaping. The mandatory requirement for 10% BNG has the potential to be achieved. The proposal has therefore considered and is in accordance with Policy TB23.
- 5.7.6. Policy CP8 (Thames Basic Heath Special Protection Area) and NRM6 (Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area) of the South East Plan requires developments to demonstrate that adequate measures are put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects to the Special Protection Area (SPA). The site sits within the 5km zone of influence from the SPA, meaning mitigation measures will need to be delivered prior to occupation and in perpetuity. The application proposes approximately 8.13ha of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to satisfy the policy requirements and this has been discussed and agreed with Natural England.
- 5.7.7. The proposed SANG will follow policy requirements set out in Policy NRM6 through the provision of a minimum of 8 hectares of SANG per 1000 occupants, providing access management measures to ensure it functions effectively and co-operating

with authorities to ensure mitigation measures are correctly implemented. Further detail can be found in the submitted Design and Access Statement.

- 5.7.8. MDDP Policy CC03 (Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping) requires green infrastructure proposals to demonstrate the following criteria: provide new or protect and enhance the green infrastructure networks, mitigate potential impacts of new development, promote accessibility and linkages between green corridors and promote the integration with open space or countryside.
- 5.7.9. The proposed development will provide a range of Green Infrastructure, including a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces. This is proposed to include sustainable drainage solutions with native planting, structural, ornamental and wildflower planting, native mixed-scrub, community orchard planting, public open green space. This is in addition to the proposed SANG provision which will include a 2.3km circular walking route and significant planting and retention of hedgerows and trees. Across this network of Green Infrastructure and open space, there are a host of active travel opportunities, with several proposed walking and cycling routes connecting the site internally and externally to promote access to all residents.
- 5.7.10. Policy CC03 also seeks development to protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features and incorporate high quality planting and landscaping. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment submitted with the application demonstrates the proposal retains existing hedgerows and trees along the site boundary as well as throughout the site where possible. Any trees and hedgerows removed will be in order to facilitate development, these will be replaced through a series of hedgerow restorations and replanting schemes across the site, contributing towards an overall biodiversity net gain. All landscaping details will be the subject of reserved matters applications.
- 5.7.11. The full requirements of these policies can therefore be met.

5.8 Climate Change and Sustainability Pollution

- 5.8.1. Minimising the emission of pollutants into the wider environment and consumption and use of resources is a requirement of Core Strategy Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development). MDDP Policy CC04 (Sustainable Design and Construction) indicates proposals will be supported that seek to deliver high quality sustainably designed and constructed developments that achieve the requirements of the full Code for

Sustainable Homes Level 4 and achieve the necessary mandatory Building Research Establishment Assessment Method (BREEAM) requirements or any future national equivalent. This is expanded upon under MDDP Policy CC05 (Renewable Energy Network) which indicates local opportunities to contribute towards decentralised energy supply from renewable and low-carbon technologies will be encouraged, as well as introducing a requirement for developments to deliver a minimum 10% reduction in carbon emissions.

- 5.8.2. Paragraph 164b of the NPPF states that any local requirements for sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government's policy for national technical standards. An Energy and Sustainable Design Statement submitted with the application demonstrates how the proposed development can address sustainability requirements at the detailed design stage.

5.9 Pollution

- 5.9.1. Avoiding areas where pollution (including noise) which may impact upon the amenity of future occupiers is a requirement of Core Strategy Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development). This is supported by MDDP Policy CC06 (Noise) which requires proposals to demonstrate how they have addressed noise impacts to protect noise sensitive receptors (both existing and proposed) from noise impacts.
- 5.9.2. A Noise Impact Assessment has been submitted with the application which demonstrates noise receptors (existing and proposed) will not be significantly adversely impacted. Given the distance between the potential 3G football pitch and proposed sensitive receptors, noise from the proposed sports pitch is unlikely to result in significant adverse impacts at proposed receptors. Further, the development generated road traffic noise has also been assessed and is predicted to have a negligible, adverse impact at worst on existing noise sensitive receptors in both the short-term and long-term.
- 5.9.3. An Air Quality Assessment was also conducted for the proposed development and has been submitted as part of this application. Based on the assessment results, the impact of the proposed development on local air quality with regards to the current relevant air quality objectives was considered to be not significant. No mitigation is required but measures included in the development that may be considered

beneficial to air quality include ASHPs and EV charging. This is compliant with Policy CP1.

5.10 Flood Risk and Drainage

5.10.1. Core Strategy Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development) seeks to avoid increasing, and where possible reduce, risks of or from all forms of flooding. This is supported by MDDP Policy CC09 (Development and Flood Risk), which indicates development must be guided to areas of lowest flood risk and shall ensure flood risk is not worsened for the application site and elsewhere, and ideally that betterment of existing conditions is achieved.

5.10.2. Further, Policy CC10 (Sustainable Drainage) is a criterion-based policy which requires all development proposals to ensure surface water arising from the proposed development including taking into account climate change is managed in a sustainable manner.

5.10.3. A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy Note has been submitted with this application which demonstrates the whole of the Site is within Flood Zone 1, the lowest level of flood risk. The drainage strategy for the proposed development is to split the site into the 2 catchment areas, northern and southern. For each catchment a suitable drainage system been created, incorporating the necessary attenuation needed to store the flows for all storm events up to and including 100-year + 40% [allowance for climate change], whilst restricting the discharge rates for each parcel to the maximum equivalent greenfield run-off rate for the impermeable area of that parcel.

5.10.4. The proposed drainage strategy incorporates the following Sustainable Urban Drainage System features:

- Each parcel (including all the adoptable highway) shall be discharged via the ponds. The basin shall incorporate, permanent wet area, a dense layer of vegetation and be underlain by a soil with good contaminant attenuation potential.
- Where viable, carriageways could be designed to discharge direct (overland) to an under-drained swale. The swale shall be vegetated and captured runoff shall permeate through the base and subsequently conveyed by a filter drain toward the adoptable sewerage network.

- Carriageway and private drive runoff – not collected by a swale/filter drain configuration; shall be intercepted by trapped gullies and discharged through.
- Roof water will drain via sealed pipes to make sure no contaminants from other sources do not pollute the runoff before flowing into the detention basins or storage tanks.

5.10.5. In terms of foul water drainage, the sewer records have identified that there are existing public foul water sewers crossing through the site. Based on the topography of the site, it is considered that it may be viable to drain the whole development by gravity into the existing public FW sewer at the eastern boundary of the site.

5.10.6. Further detail can be found in both the submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy Note. It is considered that the requirements of Policies CP1, CC09 and CC10 are therefore satisfied.

5.11 Development in the Vicinity of AWE (Burghfield)

5.11.1. MDDP Policy TB04 (Development in Vicinity of Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE), Burghfield) sets out development will only be permitted where it has been demonstrated that the increase in the number of people living, working, shopping and/or visiting the proposal (including at different times of the day) can be safely accommodated, having regard to the needs of “Blue light” services and the emergency off-site plan of AWE Burghfield. NPPF paragraph 102 requires operational sites (for security and defence) not to be affected adversely by the impact of other development proposed in the area.

5.11.2. As required under Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2019 (REPPiR-19), and as the delegated authority, West Berkshire Council have determined the boundary of a Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) and coordinate the AWE Off-Site Emergency Plan (OSEP). At over 3.5 km but less than 5 km from AWE Burghfield, the proposed development site is in the AWE(B) outer consultation zone and the scale of the proposed development puts it within the scope of DMMP Policy TB04.

5.11.3. An Environmental Statement has been submitted with this application which assesses the likely effects on human health arising from the development. It concludes that there is a very low likelihood of a radiation emergency at AWE Burghfield and the radiation doses that could be received are in the range considered

to be “minor” in UK legislation (REPP19-19). Further, the proposed development is beyond the range that the off-site plan suggests evacuation might be required and therefore there should be no additional burden on the authorities in terms of evacuation of people.

5.11.4. In relation to the needs of the “Blue light” services and the OSEP, it is proposed an On-Site Emergency Plan is secured by way of condition or legal agreement that provides community support to residents during a period of sheltering up to 48 hours after an event. This would provide resource and assistance to residents to further reduce any demand on “Blue Light” services. This includes establishing an on-site plan in liaison with other bodies and the GP surgery, care home operator, and school, establishing an emergency control centre and refuge, undertaking monitoring of conditions, providing equipment and supplies to residents in need, and ensuring timely communication of information. Details are provided within the On-Site Plan appended to the Environmental Statement.

5.11.5. It is therefore concluded the “Blue Light” services and OSEP would not be affected adversely by the proposed development.

5.12 Public Open Space

5.12.1. MDDP Policy TB08 (Open Space, sport and recreational facilities standards for residential development) states open space; indoor or outdoor play; sport and recreational facilities should be provided on-site; and residential development should demonstrate how they meet the standards set by the policy.

5.12.2. A Sport and Leisure Strategy has been prepared in consultation with the sports bodies and is submitted with this application. The proposed development includes approximately 18.01ha of public open space, multi-functional open space, a potential 3G football pitch and changing rooms, informal kick about space, LEAP, NEAP, a trim trail, and a community orchard. These features sit within an area of green space comprising 45.8% of the total development area. This new accessible public open space is a clear benefit for Spencers Wood’s existing community as well as for new residents and addresses an identified need. Open space provision is nearly double the requirements of MDDP Policy TB08 where 7.36ha/1000 population is required.

5.12.3. The requirements of Policy TB08 are satisfied.

5.13 Landscape

- 5.13.1. MDDP Policy TB21 (Landscape Character) requires proposals to demonstrate how they have addressed the requirements of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment; including the landscape quality; landscape strategy; landscape sensitivity and key issues; and states proposals shall retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.
- 5.13.2. An Environmental Statement has been submitted with this application which assesses the likely effects on landscape and visual effects arising from the development. This demonstrates that the proposed development would result in limited effects on landscape character and visual amenity, restricted to the site and its immediate environs. Indeed, the proposed development would be seen in the context of the existing settlement edge of Spencers Wood, with existing development to the north, west and south of the site. It would not result in the expansion of Spencers Wood into the base of the Loddon valley, or the convergence of settlements.
- 5.13.3. The residual impacts identified indicate the greatest effects would relate to the site and to a very localised area immediately adjacent to the site. The effect on potential receptor groups in the wider landscape context, including users of the wider PRow network, would be generally very limited. Topography, existing development, and the existing tree cover and hedgerows within the site and the surrounding landscape would limit visibility of the proposed development. Boundary vegetation and the proposed extensive new planting would also help to soften the appearance of new built form where it is visible.
- 5.13.4. Overall, the design of the proposed development, the context provided by the existing settlement edge of Spencers Wood, and the combined screening effects of topography, existing vegetation and built form mean that effects on landscape character and local visual amenity would be very limited in scale. Therefore, on balance, the proposed development is considered acceptable in landscape and visual terms and is in accordance with MDDP Policy TB21.

5.14 Heritage and Archaeology

- 5.14.1. Core Strategy Policy CP3 (General Principles of Development) indicates planning permission will be granted for proposals that have no detrimental impact upon

important ecological, heritage, landscape (including river valleys) or geological features or water courses. This is elaborated on further under MDDP Policy TB24 (Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas) and MDDP Policy TB25 (Archaeology). Paragraph 215 of the NPPF requires that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to a heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

5.14.2. In accordance with Policy TB24, a Built Heritage Statement is submitted as part of this planning application. It has established that the proposed development has the potential to cause a low degree of harm to Swallowfield Park (Registered Park and Garden, Grade II), although in time the visual impact will be softened by the landscaping on the southern boundary. The public benefits test is therefore engaged and this is addressed within the Planning Balance section.

5.14.3. In the eastern section of the site, there is an area of high archaeological potential for evidence of the Medieval period which is anticipated to be related to a Medieval rural building. There is also a moderate to high potential for archaeological evidence of Iron Age-Roman settlement activity and field system. This is concluded based on HER evidence; however no obvious archaeological anomalies of this period were detected during a geophysical survey. Berkshire Archaeology therefore recommended that a programme of archaeological evaluation can be undertaken under condition associated with any outline planning permission.

5.15 Agricultural Land and Minerals

5.15.1. Policy CP1 – Sustainable development states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that avoid areas of best and most versatile agricultural land. The agricultural quality of the land is being assessed and a statement will be submitted during the period of determination to ascertain whether the land is best and most versatile.

5.15.2. The site also lies within a Minerals Safeguarding Area (MSA) where Policy M2 of the Joint Minerals and Waste Plan applies. A Minerals Resource Assessment will be submitted during the period of determination of the application.



5.16 Local Centres

5.16.1. Policy CP13 – Town centre and shopping protects the roles of existing retail centres. Basingstoke Road near the junction of Beech Hill Road is defined as a local centre under Policy TB17 and on the Policies Map. The application site lies adjacent to the defined local centre and within 300m so is edge of centre. There are no retail units available within the local centre, and therefore edge of centre sites are supported by national policy (paragraph 91 of the NPPF). The threshold for retail impact assessment is 2,500m² and therefore is not necessary for this application. There is therefore no harm to the local centre arising from the proposals.

5.17 Other Considerations and Planning Balance

5.17.1. In accordance with the NPPF, a proposal should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. We now turn to set out the benefits the appeal scheme would deliver which are important material considerations.

5.17.2. As noted above, the Council are unable to demonstrate a five-year housing supply as required by paragraph 78 of the NPPF. The proposal would deliver up to 252 market homes, 168 affordable homes in a location which is a sustainable one. The affordable housing provision at 40% would comply with policy CP5 of the Wokingham Core Strategy (2010). In an authority which is unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of homes, these dwellings would boost the supply of housing in this area which would go some way to addressing this shortfall. The affordable homes would deliver a number of social benefits by providing homes for a sector of the population for which there is an acute need and, in an area, where the delivery of affordable housing has fallen persistently short of meeting these identified needs. Furthermore, the provision of an 80 bed care homes would address an acute need for older people's accommodation in the Borough. Overall, there is a clear and pressing need for the delivery of both affordable and market homes in Wokingham.

5.17.3. We therefore attach very significant weight to the delivery of the market housing, care home, and affordable housing in this sustainable location.

5.17.4. The proposal would deliver significant economic benefits. The proposed development will contribute towards economic growth through the creation of jobs during the construction of the development, and an increase in other jobs opportunities from the

indirect and induced effects of the construction activity. This will arise from services and suppliers to the construction process. Part of the income of the construction workers and suppliers will be spent locally in the area and may generate further (induced) employment. Indeed, it is expected that total net (direct and indirect) FTE jobs generated during the 7-year construction period will be 170 FTE jobs (of which 70 FTE jobs are within the Borough). This is further boosted by the total temporary economic output during the construction of £74m, of which £30m will be within the Borough.

- 5.17.5. The proposed development will also provide employment land with new business units expected to create local jobs opportunities, as well as housing for workers who can sustain and contribute towards the economic growth of the area. The proposed non-residential employment generating uses will support around 239 on-site jobs, increasing to 412 FTE jobs across the wider economy, and resulting in an economic contribution of £28m per annum. The future residents of the development will also contribute towards economic growth through increased spending within the local economy and are likely to generate a gross direct economic output of approximately £33m per annum of which £11m is likely to flow into the local economy.
- 5.17.6. Paragraph 85 of the NPPF requires Councils to attach significant weight to be placed on the need to support economic growth, and the economic benefits of the proposed development weigh in favour of the grant of planning permission.
- 5.17.7. The proposal would also deliver environmental benefits in the form of publicly accessible open space, including approximately 18.01ha of public open space, multi-functional open space, informal kick about space, LEAP, NEAP, a trim trail, and a community orchard. Although this space is most likely to be used most by the occupiers of the new dwellings, it will address a locally identified need for open space and therefore we attach significant weight to this benefit. The proposal would also deliver BNG in excess of the 10% mandatory target to which we attach significant weight.
- 5.17.8. The proposal would also deliver social benefits in the form of a new primary school catering for the needs of the occupiers of the new dwellings and allowing for the potential relocation of the existing school to modern facilities capable of being designed to have regard to the potential implications of an event at AWE Burghfield. The proposal would also provide for a new GP surgery catering for the potential

expansion of the existing Swallowfield Surgery to Spencers Wood providing a facility within the settlement and reducing the need to travel for existing and new residents. Further, the provision of a Local Centre providing small scale retail units and community space to meet the day-to-day needs of the existing and new residents within the settlement.

- 5.17.9. There would also be significant health and wellbeing benefits from the potential provision of a 3G football pitch and changing facility which is an identified local need within the area. The community facilities proposed will contribute to meeting the social and health needs of the settlement and we attach them significant weight.
- 5.17.10. A number of potential transport measures may also be delivered which will have benefits not only for the residents of the proposed development but will also benefit existing residents in the area. These may attract weight in the planning balance.
- 5.17.11. Although therefore the proposal would conflict with policies CP9 and CP11 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010) as well as policy CC02 of the Wokingham Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014), these policies present a more restrictive approach to development outside of defined development limits than the Framework. As such, this reduces the weight we attach to this development plan conflict. However, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies as set out within the Framework. This states that where a Council cannot demonstrate an adequate housing supply, as is the case here, then permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.
- 5.17.12. In addition to this conflict with the development plan, the adverse impacts would be the change to the countryside to which we attribute limited harm. There would also be a low degree of harm to the setting of Swallowfield Park to which we attribute limited harm, and some loss of agricultural land to which we attribute limited harm.
- 5.17.13. Taking into account the above conclusions, material considerations indicate that notwithstanding the conflict with the development plan, planning permission should be granted. There would be no adverse impacts which would significantly and



demonstrably outweigh the benefits of granting planning permission. Accordingly, we respectfully request planning permission should be granted.



6. DRAFT HEADS OF TERMS FOR A SECTION 106 AGREEMENT

6.1.1 The Applicants accept that they will enter into an agreement with the Council to provide (unless the matter can be dealt with by condition):

- a) up to 40% of the proposed new dwellings as affordable homes;
- b) any necessary contributions and/or land towards the improvement of sustainable transport, highways, health, education, open space, recreation and/or community facilities;
- c) biodiversity offsetting and SANG design and management; and,
- d) any other reasonable and directly related requirements as may be shown to be necessary based on detailed evidence of need.

6.1.2 This agreement is subject to any obligation being demonstrated to meet the tests as required within Paragraph 58 of the Framework.



APPENDIX 1 – MARKET TESTING SUMMARY

19th December 2024

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Richborough Estates Limited
Waterloo House
20 Waterloo Street
Birmingham
B2 5TB
FAO: Ben Webster

Lambert Smith Hampton
55 Wells Street
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W1T 3PT

By email

Dear Ben,

Body`s Farm, Basingstoke Road, Shinfield, Spencers Wood, RG7 1AF

Further to our instructions dated the 3rd December 2024 to market test the subject site to convenience store retailers we have pleasure in providing a summary of the feedback.

As to be expected with market testing some operators haven`t responded and whilst this could signify the site is not currently of interest it could also reflect the fact the development is at an early pre-planning stage and might be considered further, later in the development process.

The responses received to date are as follows:

Retailer	Response
Asda Express	In principle interest
Sainsburys Local	In principle interest although have preference for Basingstoke Road frontage.
Tesco Express	In principle interest.
One Stop	Already have a store in Spencers Wood so not of interest.
Co Op	In principle interest although have preference for Basingstoke Road frontage.
Morrisons Daily	In principle interest.

At this stage the retailers won`t have carried out a detailed analysis of the site with sales projections etc although the level of interest is encouraging with Asda, Sainsburys, Tesco, Co Op and Morrisons expressing interest and asking to be kept informed on the opportunity.

The typical store requirement for these operators will be circa 4,000 sq ft gross floor area with 12-15 dedicated car parking spaces or potentially a shared shoppers car park with other local centre users.

Some of the retailers have commented that prominence to the Basingstoke Road would make the opportunity more attractive which could be considered in future design iterations.

We trust the brief report is suitable for your current purposes, but should you wish to discuss the above in further detail, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards,
Yours sincerely,



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Planning, Regeneration + Infrastructure
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