University of Reading

Loddon Garden Village Planning Statement

In support of an Planning Applications for a sustainable new community at Loddon Garden Village

Date of report: September 2025

PREPARED FOR

University of Reading

savills

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Document History

Issue	Date	Issued by	Comment
1.0	06/10/2025	PB	First Issue to WBC

1. Introduction

1.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Savills on behalf of the University of Reading (hereafter "the University"), the Applicant for an Outline planning application for a sustainable new Garden Community known as the Loddon Garden Village ("LGV"), along with a parallel full application for the provision of Sustainable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG). This comprises a landscape-led mixed use development on land designated as a Strategic Development Location (SDL) in the emerging Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update [1] via Policy SS13[2].

1.1.2 The University, acting as Trustee for the National Institute for Research in Dairying (NIRD), is the principal landowner within the planning application site boundary and is working in close co-operation with Hatch Farm Land Limited (HFLL), Gleeson Land ('Gleeson'), the Seal family, Brazil family and Foxcroft family that control other parts of the allocation site. Planning applications on behalf of the other Landowners will also be submitted during the latter part of 2025 and in doing so will ensure that the LGV (excluding the Thames Valley Science Park) and its associated supporting infrastructure is delivered in a comprehensive manner in accordance with the requirements of Local Plan Update Policy SS13.

1.1.3 The University has worked closely with the Wokingham Borough Council and their advisors, stakeholders and the community in relation to the application proposals through the pre-application process, and have continued to do so through the Strategic Design Code (SDC) process led by the Council. The Strategic Design Code will be subject to preparation through late 2025 and is expected to be capable of being adopted by Wokingham Borough Council as a material consideration for the determination of planning applications.

1.1.4 The University's planning application will deliver a new Garden Community comprising new housing, a EcoValley, a range of services, facilities and employment opportunities in a highly sustainable location that will not only address the housing and employment needs of the Borough in the next Local Plan period (to 2040), but also contribute significantly towards meeting needs in the period beyond that. A full description of the Site and the proposed development is provided in Sections 2 and 3 of this Planning Statement.

1.1.5 The new EcoValley will create new habitats and deliver Biodiversity Net Gain of well over 20%; substantially in excess of statutory requirements. It will provide SANG and new recreational routes, making large parts of the Loddon Valley publicly accessible for the first time.

1.1.6 The Site lies to the south of and will be linked, via roads and active travel routes, to the University's Thames Valley Science Park (TVSP), which has a proven track record for creating new jobs, with approximately 1,900 people currently employed in that location. Policy SS13 allows for the further expansion of the TVSP, and whilst that expansion is not included as part of this planning application, these proposals have been evolved having very close regard to how TVSP will grow and develop in the future, and the mutual beneficial relationship between employment and housing growth. The Site is also within a short distance of other major concentrations of employment in the locality, including the Reading International Business Park and Green Park.

1.1.7 The purpose of this Planning Statement is to:

- set out the planning context for the Site and the proposed development;
- describe the proposed development, the Site and surrounding area;

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[2] https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2024-10/Local%20Plan%20Update%20-%20Regulation%2019%20Plan.pdf

- assess the conformity of the proposal with relevant development plan policy and material considerations;
- review the technical surveys underpinning the proposal;
- assess the benefits of the proposed development;
- consider the approach to planning conditions and planning obligations; and
- consider the planning balance.

1.1.8 Its conclusion is that this application is fully consistent with emerging LPU policy, which should be afforded substantial weight, and that there is an array of positive social, economic and environmental benefits that would accrue as a result of this application. Relevant development plan policies are 'out of date', and the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' therefore applies in Wokingham Borough, pursuant to NPPF paragraph 11d. Hence, it is wholly appropriate for this planning application to be approved at the earliest opportunity.

1.1.9 This Planning Statement refers to, and should be read in conjunction, with an array of supporting documents submitted with this application. In particular, reference should be made to those items referred to in the list below. However, reference should also be made to a fully detailed schedule of all application documents and drawings, which is included within the covering letter.

Table 1.1: Core application documents relating to this Planning Statement

Document / Drawing	Author
Site Location Plan	Savills
Design and Access Statement	Savills
Parameter Plans	Savills
Landscape Design Proposals	Savills
Environmental Statement, including an assessment of the below topics: Ch 7 - Air Quality and odour Ch 8 - Archaeology Ch 9 - Built Heritage Ch 10 - Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases Ch 11 - Ecology Ch 12 - Human Health Ch 13 - Hydrology (Flood Risk and Drainage) Ch 14 - Landscape and Visual Impact Ch 15 - Noise and Vibration Ch 16 - Socio-Economics Ch 17 - Transport and Access Ch 18 - Summary of Mitigation, Residual and Interactive Effects The Environmental Statement also comprises a substantial suite of technical appendices, and a Non-Technical Summary	Savills plus multiple authors
Transport Assessment (ES Appendix)	Abley Letchford
Flood Risk Assessment (ES Appendix)	Abley Letchford
Proposed Highway Plans	Abley Letchford
Proposed Drainage Plans	Abley Letchford

Affordable Housing Statement	Pioneer
Arboricultural Impact Assessment	FLAC
Statement of Community Engagement	Meeting Place

1.1.10 This planning application has been produced in light of extensive engagement with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), statutory bodies and other stakeholders since 2021, throughout the preparation of the LPU which allocates the Site for development. As described in this document, this has been a comprehensive and positive process resulting in a scheme that fulfils all of WBC's objectives.

1.1.11 This Planning Statement is structured as follows:

- **Section 2:** introduces the University of Reading and its track record for delivering development;
- **Section 3:** provides the Site context;
- **Section 4:** describes the Proposed Development;
- **Section 5:** provides a summary of the Environmental Impact Assessment process and a summary of the Environmental Statement;
- **Section 6:** provides a summary of pre-application discussions, stakeholder engagement and public consultation;
- **Section 7:** reviews relevant Development Plan policies and material considerations;
- **Section 8:** establishes the principle of development;
- **Section 9:** addresses the Technical Assessments that support the planning application;
- **Section 10:** provides the Housing Statement;
- **Section 11:** considers the Planning Conditions and Planning Obligations;
- **Section 12:** sets out the benefits associated with the planning application and the Planning Balance; and
- **Section 13:** concludes the Planning Statement and case for granting permission.

1.1.12 This Planning Statement comprises the following appendices:

- **Appendix 1:** Copy of LPU Policy SS13; and
- **Appendix 2:** Extract from the LPU Policies Map.

2. About the University of Reading

2.1 Purposes and Values

2.1.1 The University's long-term goal is to be a force for good in the region and across the world through education and research. Founded in 1860 and receiving Royal Charter in 1926, it is ranked 26th in the UK and is world ranked and recognised internationally for its research and expertise in the field of Climate Change. It has a tradition of academic excellence and entrepreneurship, and these characteristics are demonstrated through its ownership and management of the TVSP.

2.1.2 The University has been at the heart of the community for more than a century and its Strategy highlights the core values that underpin its mission, these being:

- Community;
- Excellence;
- Sustainability; and
- Engagement.

2.1.3 These same values have shaped the University's proposals for the Loddon Garden Village.

2.2 Previous Successful Delivery

2.2.1 The University has a strong track record in delivering on its commitments through the planning process, which can be seen through many successful developments within Wokingham Borough and more widely. Key examples of this include the following in the immediate vicinity of the LGV.

2.2.2 South of M4 Strategic Development Location (SDL)

2.2.3 This was a previous Development Plan allocation by WBC. Here, the University's partnership with WBC and developers has secured around 1,350 homes, a new bridge over the M4, the Shinfield Eastern Relief Road, and an array of new open spaces including Suitable Alternative Green Space (SANG). This SDL was influenced by similar considerations to the LGV in terms of delivering complex infrastructure and achieving high-quality development in a sensitive environment. Through positive partnership working, the SDL has delivered within the timescales required in the previous Local Plan.

2.2.4 Thames Valley Science Park (TVSP)

2.2.5 This is a highly successful campus-style environment that is host to around 80 companies in a diverse range of sectors, attracted by the dynamic modern environment, flexible accommodation and connections to world-class institutions including the British Museum. TVSP is continuing to grow and evolve, with recent key projects including:

- The Natural History Museum: Science and Digitalisation Centre (approved May 2024) c. 25,000m2;
- Gateway 4 to the Thames Valley Science and Innovation Park (approved August 2024), c. 5,000m2;
- Shinfield Studios: a world-leading facility, completed in 2024, which offers nearly 1 million square feet of studio space with an array of stages and associated supporting facilities which are now used by major international film and television producers; and
- Royal Botanical Gardens (Kew) herbarium, c. 16,000m2, ongoing project.

2.2.6 The above examples demonstrate the University's commitment to excellence and delivery, through partnership working with WBC and the local community. Through the same principles, the LGV will be equally successful.

3. Site Context

3.1 Site Location

3.1.1 The Site is located north of Arborfield and Arborfield Cross and west of Sindlesham, Barkham and Wokingham. The settlement of Shinfield borders the Site to the west. The TVSP lies to the northwest and beyond that is the M4 Motorway and the residential area of Earley. Further to the east of the Site is the Bearwood Lakes Golf Club, beyond which are the residential areas of Sindlesham and Woosehill.

3.1.2 Further to the south is Arborfield Garrison SDL of 3,500 homes allocated in the Core Strategy (2010), comprising the redevelopment of the former Garrison site. This is well advanced with building having commenced in 2016 and has now delivered over 1,600 homes[3]. To the west of the Site is the South of the M4 SDL, again allocated by the Core Strategy and comprising of some 2,500 homes and is also now substantially complete.

3.2 Site Description

3.2.1 The Site is approximately 397 hectares in size and its character is influenced by the proximity of the M4 Motorway and recent developments at TVSP, Arborfield Garrison and the South of the M4 SDL.

3.2.2 The majority of the Site is comprised of farmland and associated buildings, along with semi-natural and amenity grassland, copses and woodland. The University of Reading's Centre for Dairy Research ('CEDAR') is located at its centre. The River Loddon flows from southwest to northeast across the length of the site, and the Barkham Brook flows through the eastern part of the site from southeast to northwest.

3.2.3 The Site's main topographical influence is the River Loddon valley. This includes a relatively low-lying, level area adjacent to the northern side of the River. To the south of the River Loddon, land gently rises up to a plateau. Arborfield and land around Mole Road are then slightly more elevated. Further localised variations within the Site are created by features such as the Barkham Brook tributary. Further to the south-east, the land continues to rise towards Gravelpit Hill and Barkham Hill, which provide a good degree of visual enclosure from the wider area beyond.

3.3 Accessibility

3.3.1 The M4 motorway runs to the south of Reading and along the northern portion of the Site, with Junction 11 accessed via the Eastern Relief Road and B3270 Lower Earley Way. Other key highway links nearby include the Shinfield Eastern Relief Road to the west (to be delivered by the University in partnership with Homes England), Arborfield Relief Road to the south and Winnersh Relief Road to the east. The Site will be accessed from the south via the existing roundabout on the A327 Reading Road (forming part of the Site's southern boundary). Beyond the M4 and northern boundary of the Site is the established residential area of Earley, connected to the site via an existing pedestrian and cycle bridge over the M4 and Cutbush Lane East.

3.3.2 The nearest rail station is at Winnersh, approximately 3km to the northeast, which provides regular and frequent services operating between Reading and London Waterloo. Reading station, which forms an important hub on the national rail network, is 7km to the north while Green Park station (opened 2023) is approximately 6km to the west.

[3] Wokingham Borough Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement at 31 March 2025

3.3.3 The Site is located in an area with good existing bus services, including from Shinfield to the west, Sindlesham to the east, Arborfield and Arborfield Cross to the south and Earley to the north. The South of M4 SDL bus service already routes into the Thames Valley Science Park, providing a frequent service to and from key destinations within Reading such as the rail station, town centre, the Royal Berkshire Hospital and the University of Reading's main campus at Whiteknights.

3.3.4 The area around the Site has a good level of pedestrian and cycle connectivity, due in part to the significant investment in new infrastructure that has been implemented over recent years in conjunction with the TVSP expansion and the development of the south of the M4 SDLs. Cycleways link TVSP to the SDLs.

3.4 Green and Blue Infrastructure

3.4.1 Primarily the site comprises a number of arable fields (31% of the Site) and modified grassland fields (37%) subdivided by native hedgerows with trees. Other vegetation types include woodland (10%), other neutral grassland/Lowland meadow (12%), scrub (2%), and wetland (2% of the Site).

3.4.2 There are around 25 hectares of woodland cumulatively across the site alongside over 4,400 metres of hedgerow and 4,500 trees, the vast majority of which are good-quality specimens with expected lifespans of over 20 years. There are five areas of Ancient Woodland present on the site alongside 10 Veteran trees.

3.4.3 The River Loddon flows through the site with various tributaries, joining it from both the west and east within the site. At the upstream (south western) boundary of the site, the Loddon flows under an open span bridge at Reading Road. There is an existing bridge crossing to Hall Farm and the river flows under the M4 via box culverts within the main channel and along the eastern floodplain.

3.4.4 The Barkham Brook joins the Loddon just downstream (north) of the M4 and it splits into multiple channels in some locations with wide meandering reaches east of Lower Earley Way. The Arborfield Cut flows into the Loddon just downstream of Reading Road.

3.4.5 The Environment Agency's online Flood Map for Planning confirms the majority of the Site is located in Flood Zone 1 (low risk) although there are substantial areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3 immediately adjacent to the River Loddon and Barkham Brook.

3.4.6 The flood modelling undertaken to inform the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) in 2021 is most representative of current site conditions The SFRA shows that the floodplain is less extensive on both the western and eastern sides of the Loddon with more dry 'island' areas on the western floodplain.

3.4.7 The floodplain does not extend beyond the Eastern Relief Road to the west. The SFRA also shows a less extensive floodplain along the Barkham Brook than previously was thought to be the case.

3.4.8 There are areas of indicative surface water flooding shown in low-lying parts of the western bank of the Loddon such as the woodland to the south-east of Oldhouse Farm and the area opposite CEDAR. The EA's surface water flood mapping shows an overland flow route of Barkham Brook in an area north of Mole Road that also potentially leads to surface water flooding.

3.4.9 The SFRA also shows the potential for groundwater flooding along the Loddon corridor but concluded the risk was low.

3.5 Ecology

3.5.1 Designations

3.5.2 The site has been the subject of extensive field ecological surveys during the preparation of this application, which have provided a detailed understanding of its habitats and ecology. The illustrative masterplan has been developed in order that the habitats and ecological interest of the Site are preserved and that opportunities for biodiversity enhancement are created.

3.5.3 The closest statutory designated sites of national importance are four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs):

- **Lodge Wood and Sandford Mill SSSI**. This is a wet woodland located approximately 4km northeast, and is designated for large populations of the rare Loddon Lily.
- **Longmoor Bog SSSI**. This is located approximately 3km southeast, its main features being a well-developed Carr woodland of Alder and an area of wet heathland;
- **Bramshill SSSI**, located approximately 5.1km south. This is designated for a series of shallow acid ponds and associated mire, which support a rich assemblage of dragonfly and damselfly, and rotationally felled conifer plantation, which provides habitat for internationally important populations of nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler.
- **Stanford End Mill and River Loddon SSSI**, located approximately 4.4km southwest. This is designated for a series of traditionally-managed seasonally waterlogged hay meadows, and a 4km stretch of the River Loddon, a tributary of the River Thames. The Site is of interest particularly for nationally important populations of two rare plants: the Fritillary Meleagris, a native bulb of unimproved damp meadows, and the Loddon pondweed, Potamogeton nodosus, a very rare aquatic species.

3.5.4 The site includes a number of designated areas, including five Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs), Ancient Woodland and the Loddon Valley South Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) runs across the western and northern parts of the Site.

3.5.5 The southern section of the Site is located approximately 4.4km north of the designated Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). The Thames Basin Heaths is designated because it supports populations of Dartford warbler, Nightjar and Woodlark.

3.5.6 There are two further LWSs immediately adjacent to the Site and a further 22 within a 2km radius of it.

3.5.7 Habitats and Species

3.5.8 Ecological survey work has identified the presence of Priority Habitats and Species, alongside other protected and notable species, including European Protected Species.

3.5.9 The Site largely comprises of agricultural land, with a mix of arable and cattle grazed pasture fields. Whilst these areas may offer limited foraging resources for some protected species, they are of little to no botanical value.

3.5.10 The more ecologically valuable habitats are largely found adjacent to the River Loddon, which bisects the Site, and within its floodplains. Within these areas are more diverse grasslands, wetlands, woodlands and scrub including Section 41 Habitats of Principle Importance such as Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pasture and Wet Woodland.

3.5.11 Pockets of woodland are scattered throughout the Site, including the Ancient Woodlands. Furthermore, a number of Veteran Trees have been identified across the Site.

3.5.12 Desktop studies have identified fourteen species of bat within a 5km radius of the Site, a large number and wide variety of bird species, including farmland and riparian species, and a single record of Hazel Dormouse. All four common species of reptile are present on the Site with Otter approximately 230m downstream on the Loddon, with anecdotal evidence that they use the stretch of river running through the Site

3.5.13 The woodlands, grasslands and hedgerows provide suitable habitats which may allow Great Crested Newt to move through the local landscape. Habitat Assessments undertaken in 2022 and 2023 found Great Crested Newt in ponds within the proximity of the Site.

3.6 Landscape Character

3.6.1 The Site occupies a broad valley floor and valley-sides, focussed on the River Loddon and its tributaries, including Barkham Brook. Along the River Loddon and flood-plain to the north-west the landform sits at approximately 40m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD).

3.6.2 On the eastern side of the Site, the land rises gently up to 55m AOD with St. Bartholomew's Church at Arborfield sitting on a localised hill at Arborfield. Beyond the Site, the landform continues to rise up more steeply towards Arborfield Cross and to the west beyond Bearwood College towards Wokingham.

3.6.3 To the north-west, the TVSP also lies on a slightly more elevated river terrace, with the landform continuing to rise towards Earley and Reading beyond.

3.6.4 There are no national designations relating to landscape or visual amenity covering the Site. Part of the Site is covered by the draft 'River Loddon Valued Landscape' designation, as described in the Wokingham Borough Council Valued Landscapes Assessment and included in the emerging Local Plan Update.

3.6.5 National Character Areas

3.6.6 The Site is covered by two National Landscape Character Areas. The majority lies within NCA115 Thames Valley, however a small area at the southern part of the Site is within NCA 129 Thames Basin Heaths.

3.6.7 NCA115 Thames Valley is a mainly low-lying, wedge-shaped area, widening from Reading, which includes Slough, Windsor, the Colne Valley and the southwest London fringes. The River Thames is described as provides a unifying feature through a very diverse landscape of urban and suburban settlements, infrastructure networks, fragmented agricultural land, historic parks, commons, woodland, reservoirs and extensive minerals workings. The area is typified by much development, both in the past and planned for the next 20 years, and with 'virtually no undisturbed land'

3.6.8 NCA129 stretches westwards from Weybridge in Surrey to the countryside around Newbury in Berkshire. It is described as a densely settled area with gardens amounting to a significant area of greenspace. The area has a relatively high percentage of woodland, reflecting its low-grade agricultural land. These are often planted on former heathland. In general, the Site is not typical of these characteristics, however valley floors with ditches, watercourses, mills, and relict water meadows are key characteristics reflected in this southern part of the Site.

3.6.9 In general, the character of the Site is not strongly typical of the either NCA115 nor NCA129, and given that Wokingham Borough Council has its own Landscape Character Assessment, this is used in the assessment below.

3.6.10 Local Character Areas

3.6.11 Given the size of the Site, its landscape falls within four areas of the Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment, dated 2019:

- A2 Loddon River Valley;
- C1 Arborfield River Terrace;
- J2 Arborfield and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay; and
- J3 Spencers Wood Settled and Farmed Clay.

3.6.12 The key characteristics of the Loddon River Valley are broad, flat alluvial floodplain by the river, pasture and arable farmland, wetland character, riverside features such as humpback bridges and a tranquil and rural character with little public access to the floodplain.

3.6.13 The Arborfield River Terrace is characterised by gently undulating landform, floodplain, water features, intensive arable farmland, small woodland areas, historic parkland, farmstead, large modern agricultural buildings, tree-lined land and long-distance views across the floodplain.

3.6.14 The key characteristics of the Arborfield and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay area are a gently undulating landscape, water bodies, woodland, arable farming, wetland, a dense residential character influenced by modern strategic development, a network of local roads and public rights of way.

3.6.15 The Spencers Wood Settled and Farmed Clay area is a clay ridge above the Loddon Valley to the east with lowlands to the west, small woodland block, meadow habitats, large arable fields, remnant parkland, large scale residential development and traditional farmsteads.

3.6.16 Whilst including areas of farmland and woodland, the rural character of the landscape and the character areas described above have already been partially eroded by development that has recently taken place at the TVSP, as well as the proximity of the adjacent M4 motorway and new housing along the Eastern Relief Road at Shinfield.

3.6.17 Savills Character Assessment

3.6.18 To undertake the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment as part of the Environmental Statement, Savills has undertaken a more detailed appraisal to expand on the Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment. This utilises recognisable site features rather than contours as boundaries for the character areas and also subdivides the Character Areas where there are clear geographically specific changes to their character which wouldn't have been practical to differentiate within the WBC Assessment.

3.6.19 The Character Areas are summarised in the below table:

Table 3.1: Summary of Landscape Character Areas

Landscape Character Area	Key Characteristics
CA1 - Loddon River Valley: M4 Corridor	- Flat floodplain, irregular pasture fields - Visually contained by woodland of CA2 - Field pattern affected by M4 construction - River Loddon screened by vegetation - Views of Lower Earley in northern part
CA2 - River Valley: Loddon West	- Floodplain, the River Loddon, pasture and arable fields - Two small areas of ancient woodland

	- Wet woodland - Glimpsed views of TVSP - River views screened by mature vegetation
CA3 - Arborfield River Terrace: Arborfield Hall Parkland	- Remnant parkland character associated with Arborfield Hall - Avenue connecting with Arborfield - Parkland now used for arable food production - Mature trees on bank of River Loddon and Reading Road provide visual enclosure - Views of St Bartholomew's Church
CA4 Arborfield River Terrace: Loddon East	- Mixed arable and pasture agricultural fields part of University Research Centre - Land slopes up towards Arborfield (south) and down to River Loddon (north) - Remote feel due to visual containment from mature trees along River Loddon and strong hedgerow buffers - Public footpaths connect Carters Hill with Hall Farm and Arborfield - Views of St Bartholomew's Church
CA5 Arborfield and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay: Mole Road	- Arable farmland occupying rolling landscape west of Mole Road - Barkham Brook runs down a narrow valley to the south of Carter's Hill - To the southeast, the land rises to The Coombs, providing visual enclosure from the wider area - To northeast, Bearwood College Registered Park and Garden provides further visual screening - Glimpsed views of the Bearwood Park football training ground here contribute to a more semi-rural setting - Small areas of woodland - Views into eastern parts are limited by Mole Road - A number of public rights of way cross this area

3.6.20 Landscape Features

3.6.21 The Site has a few isolated buildings and clusters of buildings across it. These reflect its agricultural uses and comprise:

- Twentieth century house and two bungalows within the original Arborfield Hall area;
- Two pairs of semi-detached twentieth century cottages at the southern end of the Arborfield Hall avenue;
- Cluster of buildings at Hall Farm, including the listed Hall Place Farmhouse listed building and associated farmyard buildings, the International Cocoa Quarantine Unit, two cottages and a number of twentieth century barns; and

- Cluster of twentieth century buildings at the CEDAR, including offices and barns and a pair of semi-detached cottages.

3.7 Historic Context

3.7.1 Archaeology

3.7.2 The Scheduled Monument of St Bartholomew's Church is the only statutorily designated archaeological asset within the Site. The remains of this church are also Grade II Listed.

3.7.3 There is some background potential for archaeological deposits dating to the Prehistoric period, mostly associated with undated finds from fieldwalking survey to the south, east and north-east of Hall Farm, and cropmarks identified through aerial photography surveys to the south of Hall Farm, also identified as Area of High Archaeological Potential.

3.7.4 Evidence from a study area around the Site suggests that the area was cleared of natural woodland and the landscape was extensively farmed and settled from the late Prehistoric period. However, there is no evidence to suggest that Iron Age or Roman settlement occurs within the Site. Topographic differences between the Site and known settlement sites elsewhere in the wider area suggest that the Site may always have been in agricultural use rather than a focus of settlement.

3.7.5 Built Heritage

3.7.6 Given the size of the Site, there is a range of Listed buildings and heritage assets (designated and non) both within it and in the immediate surroundings, including:

Table 2.2: Listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets within the Site boundary

Listed Building	Grade	Location
Hall Place Farmhouse	II	Within the Site
Simonds Family Tomb	II	Within the Site
St Bartholomew's Old Church	II (and Scheduled Monument)	Within the Site
Bridge House	II	Outside the Site – immediately south
Old Rectory	II	Outside the Site – immediately south
St Bartholomew's Church	II	Outside the Site – immediately south
Mole Bridge Farmhouse	II	Outside the Site – 100 metres SE
The Glen	II	Outside the Site – immediately SE
Carters Hill	II	Outside the Site – immediately east
West Lodge	II	Outside the Site – immediately east
Park Lodge	II	Outside the Site – immediately east
Oak Cottage	II	Outside the Site – 100 metres NE
Cutbush	II	Outside the Site – 530 metres NW
Listed Barn	II	Outside the Site – 530 metres NW
Old House	II	Outside the Site – 140 metres west

Listed Barn	II	Outside the Site – 140 metres west
Listed Mill	II	Outside the Site – 345 metres west
Berkshire Masonic Centre	II	Outside the Site – 670 metres NE
Bearwood Park	II*	Outside the Site – immediately east
Arborfield Conservation Area	-	Outside the Site – 520 metres south
Sindlesham Conservation Area	-	Outside the Site – 555 metres east
Shinfield Grange	Non-designated asset	Outside the Site – 245 metres west
Reading Room	Non-designated asset	Outside the Site – immediately east
Mole Lodge Gasworks	Non-designated asset	Outside the Site – immediately east

3.7.7 The impacts of this development on the significance of these assets is considered in full in Chapter 9 of the Environmental Statement accompanying the application.

3.8 Planning Application History

3.8.1 A review of WBC's online records has been completed to research the planning history of the Site.

3.8.2 The Site is predominantly in agricultural use, with there being a relatively small number of farm buildings, houses, cottages and other buildings located within the redline boundary. Other than applications for householder development, there have been no other planning applications for new residential development of any scale.

3.8.3 Within the Site are the University's Cocoa Quarantine Unit and CEDAR, for which there is an extensive planning history. However, these applications generally relate to smaller-scale or minor forms of development such as prior approvals for agricultural uses, external works or for ancillary buildings / cabins.

3.8.4 To the north of the site is the TVSP incorporating Shinfield Studios and facilities for the British and Natural history Museums. The University owns and manages the Langley Mead SANG and SANG extension to the southwest of the site. Immediately to the south of the site there has been a recent outline planning application for 111 new homes and immediately to the southwest of the site there has been a full planning application for 191 new homes. Planning applications associated with the wider locality are summarised in the table below.

Table 3.3: Planning History

Application Reference	Site / location	Description	Outcome
163609	Thames Valley Science Park Land North Of Cutbush Lane	Outline planning application for Phase 2 of the Thames Valley Science Park comprising up to 57,110sqm research and development and innovation floor space (with occupancy restricted by a Gateway policy) inclusive of up to 5,711 sqm of amenity and supporting uses and an energy centre (all matters reserved except access to the site).	Approved July 2017

181631	Land South of Reading Road and Arborfield Road, East of Chestnut Crescent, West of the River Loddon	Full planning application for the change of use of 21.7ha of land from agricultural use to informal recreation (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace SANG) and associated infrastructure including pedestrian and vehicle access, a car park, footpath network and landscaping.	Appeal allowed January 2020
182059	Land off Cutbush Lane	Hybrid planning application in respect to: 1) Full planning application for a 15,628sqm research and storage facility (Sui Generis Use for the British Museum); 80 parking spaces; landscaping and surface water drainage. 2) Outline planning application for up to 15,000sqm research and storage facility (Sui Generis Use for the British Museum) all maters reserved. 3) Demolition of two existing residential dwellings.	Approved February 2019
211841	Land North and South of Cutbush Lane Shinfield	Full planning permission for the Science Park Creative Media Hub comprising the erection of film stages and associated workshops and office space and ancillary uses including equipment stores, cafe. Formation of associated access, decked and surface parking, and landscaping at the Thames Valley Science Park (TVSP).	Approved December 2021
222906	Land south of Oldhouse Farm	Full planning application for the proposed erection of a temporary Film Studio Backlot (for a period of 5 years)	Approved February 2024
232833	Land South Of Cutbush Lane East	Full application for the proposed Construction of a Collections, Digitisation & Research Centre with associated infrastructure and external works including car parking, SUDS basin and landscaping.	Approved September 2024
232995	Land South Of Cutbush Lane East	Full planning permission for the construction of an extension to the Thames Valley Science Park spine road to provide access to a proposed new building for the Natural History Museum, landscaping, surface water attenuation and other associated works.	Approved September 2024
243099	Land North of Reading Road Arborfield	Outline application for the proposed erection of up to 111 no. dwellings with associated works, parking, landscaping, publicly accessible open space and access from Reading Road. (All matters reserved except for means of access.)	Refused May 2024
242484	Land to the north of Arborfield Road west of Shinfield Eastern Relief Road	Full application for the erection of 191 dwellings, open space, landscaping, supporting infrastructure and associated works.	Registered October 2024, currently under consideration

3.8.5 Overall, there are no forms of major residential development in the vicinity of the Loddon Garden Village site that would affect the implementation of the proposed scheme. The Environmental Statement submitted alongside this Planning application provides a separate cumulative assessment of effects of the proposal at Loddon Garden Village on the wider locality.

4. The Proposed Development

4.1 Description of the Proposed Development

4.1.1 The formal description of development applied for is shown below.

Application for the phased development of a new community at Loddon Garden Village, comprising, in outline:

- *up to 2,800 residential units to include up to 100 custom and self-build plots;*
- *2 primary schools (up to 3 forms of entry) to include early years provision and 1 secondary school (up to 12 forms of entry);*
- *one District Centre, to incorporate up to 11,000m2 of Class E (Commercial, Business and Service, to include a food store of around 2,500m2), and Class F (Local Community and Learning);*
- *one Local Centre; to incorporate up to 2,400m2 of Class E;*
- *a Sports Hub to include sports pitches and pavilion space;*
- *up to 4,250m2 of further Class E, Class F and Sui Generis development to include commercial, health care and public house;*
- *comprehensive green infrastructure including a EcoValley, landscaping and public open space, and ecological enhancement measures;*
- *20 gypsy and traveller pitches;*
- *comprehensive drainage and flood alleviation measures to include Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and engineering measures within Loddon Valley for the River Loddon;*
- *internal road network including spine road with pedestrian and cycle connections and associated supporting infrastructure;*
- *new and modified public rights of way;*
- *associated utilities, infrastructure, and engineering works, including the undergrounding of overhead lines;*
- *Ground reprofiling to accommodate infrastructure, flood alleviation and development parcels;*
- *Up to 0.5ha of land adjoining St Bartholomew's church for use as cemetery;*
- *Electricity substation (up to 1.5ha).*

All matters reserved other than access, incorporating:

- *a new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to Lower Earley Way via a new 4th arm to the Meldreth Way roundabout;*
- *a new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular bridge over the M4;*
- *a new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular bridge over the River Loddon;*
- *a new vehicular access to the A327 Reading Road, via a new arm to the Observer Way roundabout;*
- *a new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to Thames Valley Science Park;*
- *an initial phase of internal roads with associated drainage, landscape and engineering works and ground reprofiling, between the A327 and the south eastern boundary of the site.*

Application includes full permission for the change of use of 40.4 hectares of agricultural land to Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), 18.35 hectares of SANG link, and provision of Biodiversity Net Gain measures, the demolition and clearance of 20,809 m2 of buildings and structures at the Centre for Dairy Research (CEDAR) and at Hall Farm, the demolition of 3 existing dwellings on Carter's Hill Lane, and the retention of specified buildings at Hall Farm.

4.1.2 Through the diverse and integrated range of proposals set out, LGV will incorporate the best principles of sustainable and climate-resilient development, underpinned by the University's world leading research in Climate Change and long-term management and care for the environment. It will be a distinctive and sustainable community, for all generations, providing choice for its residents in terms living, working, socialising as well as for education and leisure.

4.1.3 This application will deliver the majority of the overall LPU SS13 allocation, including around 70% of the housing, the EcoValley, SANG, and higher-order facilities such as the secondary school, sports hub, and bridges over the River Loddon and M4. In so doing it fulfils the vision for the Site contained in Policy SS13 of the emerging LPU.

4.1.4 The application is accompanied by the following Parameter Plans:

Table 4.1: Parameter Plans

Plan	Drawing No:
Demolition Plan	DP01
Land Use Plan	PP01
Land Use Plan – Community Hub Detailed Plan	PP01A
Landscape	PP02
Movement	PP03
Density	PP04
Building Heights	PP05
Building Heights – Community Hub Detailed Plan	PP05A

4.1.5 These parameter plans identify elements of the proposals which are fixed at this point, and will form the framework which the proposed development can be delivered and against which future Reserved Matters applications will be assessed.

4.2 Land Uses

4.2.1 The application site measures 397 hectares overall, within which the major components, as shown on the parameter plans, include:

- Residential development: circa 54.3ha;
- Mixed-use centres (including Class E and F): circa 5.2ha;
- Self-build: circa 2.6ha;
- Education (primary and secondary schools and sports hub): circa 19.3ha;
- Gypsy and traveller pitches: 2.5ha;
- Electrical substation: 1.3ha;
- Retained agricultural land: 30.7ha;
- SANG and SANG link: 58.57ha; and
- Other public open space: 15.5ha.

4.2.2 Taken together with uses such as the cemetery and allotments, the green and blue infrastructure is some 26% of the gross site area.

4.3 Layout

4.3.1 The layout has taken a landscape-led approach framed around green and blue infrastructure that links into the wider ecological network and SANG. The application includes a wide range of multi-functional open spaces that provide opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, local food growing and natural play. The layout will link into the existing footpath network to create better connectivity that encourages active travel.

4.3.2 LGV will comprise of a series of walkable neighbourhoods, each with a range of accessible services and facilities, linked by a network of connected green travel routes and high-quality open spaces.

4.3.3 The movement framework of primary, secondary and tertiary streets creates a well-connected place, offering multi modal routes, pedestrian and cyclist routes and linkages to wider existing networks. Segregated and integrated cycle and pedestrian pathways are provided throughout.

4.3.4 A spine road runs through the development with two distinct centres and activity hubs located along this route. The schools, and a sports hub are also located along the primary street infrastructure and integrated into the centres. Secondary routes, will link the new LGV communities to surrounding neighbourhoods and local employment areas, including Thames Valley Science Park.

4.4 Approach to Density and Building Heights

4.4.1 The average development density across LGV is approximately 47 dwellings per hectare (dph). The lowest density range of 30-39 dph will be located in the residential areas closest to the EcoValley in the north and the north-western border.

4.4.2 The highest average residential densities of 60+ dph will be focused in and around the mixed use District and Local Centres, also fronting the central primary street. Across the rest of the residential areas, medium residential densities within the ranges of 40-49 dph and 50-59 dph will be applied.

4.4.3 The maximum height will be 18m from ground level in the District Centre with predominantly four storey buildings, with five storey buildings at strategic corners and along strategic frontages. In the Local Centre the maximum height will again be 18m from ground level, with predominantly three storeys.

4.4.4 Taller residential buildings of up to 12m or a maximum of 3.5 storeys will be located within the central neighbourhoods around the centres and along the primary street infrastructure. The residential areas on the edges closest to more sensitive landscape and EcoValley will be predominantly 2.5 storey.

4.5 Green and Blue Infrastructure

4.5.1 Regional and local SuDS features would work in conjunction with a range of solutions, such as roadside swales, tree pits, granular strips, porous surfacing, and traditional pipe and gully networks. These will provide interest and variety within the development, delivering a more biodiverse environment. The attenuation basins will be planted with indigenous species that can withstand both dry and very wet conditions and will be sympathetic to the adjacent landscape treatment.

4.5.2 A wide range of open space types are provided in line with the Council's Open Space standards. All, open spaces provided the either meet and in most instances exceed these requirements. Outdoor sports facilities will form part of the new schools will the community having access to the all-weather pitches provided.

4.5.3 The proposed 'Eco-Valley' covers an area of over 195 Ha and relates to much of the land associated with the River Loddon corridor, extending to the M4 and the edge of Lower Earley. This will be retained and managed by the University of Reading as part of its wider land holding in the area.

4.6 Access and Movement

4.6.1 The LGV will also be supported by comprehensive new transport infrastructure, including public transport priority routes, a new link over the M4 to Lower Earley Way, new vehicular and pedestrian links over the River Loddon, a new link to Hatch Farm Way, the partial closure of Mill Lane and a new link to Mole Road. Advantage will be taken of existing transport infrastructure and public transport networks, such as the well-established bus routes to Reading and Wokingham, Green Park, Winnersh and Reading Stations.

4.6.2 The proposed development will be phased, with the first areas to come forward being towards the south-western corner of the site close to Observer Way, with development then steadily progressing in a north-easterly direction into the site. The University are liaising closely with the other principal landowners within the LGV and WBC, in terms of programming the build-out of the site as a whole, factoring in their parallel (but separate) planning applications. Further detail on the phasing of the site is provided in the Environmental Statement, which considers the cumulative effects of the three landowners' proposals.

4.7 Construction Environmental Management Plan

4.7.1 Central to the delivery of the LGV is the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) that accompanies this application and that has been prepared to address WBC's standard requirements for inclusion in a CEMP, including a Travel Plan, piling techniques, programme of works, dust and mud suppression measures, site lighting, environmental management system, haul routes and Community Liaison provision.

4.7.2 The CEMP confirms that the initial stages of the construction will include formation of the new permanent access routes into the development and the primary internal roads, alongside enabling works that include arboricultural works, demolition, ground remodelling and excavation for foundations.

4.7.3 A future construction phase will include the delivery of the bridge structure over the M4 motorway. At this stage, it is anticipated that the bridge will be constructed using a modular approach, with sections either prefabricated off-site or constructed adjacent to the intended bridge location.

4.7.4 The CEMP outlines the location of construction compounds, construction routings, boundary hoardings and construction working hours. It also outlines the measures to be taken across the site to reduce noise, suppress dust, prevent mud spread and manage surface water. The Ecology chapter of the Environmental Statement outlines the ecological and species specific protection measures to be adopted alongside the CEMP during construction.

4.7.5 Other mitigation measures contained in the CEMP are referred to in Chapter 9, the technical assessment section of this Planning Statement.

5. Environmental Impact Assessment

5.1 EIA Screening

5.1.1 The Proposed Development falls within Schedule 2 Section 10(b) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, as an "Urban development project" in which "the development includes more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development", "the development includes more than 150 dwellings", and "the overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares".

5.1.2 Owing to the nature and scale of the Proposed Development, the Applicants considered that it is likely to give rise to significant environmental effects and did not seek a *Screening* Opinion from the Council (i.e., to determine whether an EIA would be required), proceeding instead to request a *Scoping* Opinion (i.e., to determine how an EIA should be undertaken).

5.2 Scoping Request

5.2.1 A scoping request was submitted to the Council on 19 December 2024 (Council Ref: 24328) jointly by the University of Reading, HFLL, and Gleeson Land Limited. This was based on the following summary of development:

> *"The delivery of around 3,930 dwellings together with associated infrastructure (to include internal roads / internal and external access points. landscaping, site wide flood alleviation and surface water drainage and other required infrastructure). New link road over the M4 motorway to Lower Earley Way; new junctions and potential highway upgrades to existing routes. Phased expansion of the Thames Valley Science and Innovation Park (around 100,000m2). New neighbourhood and district centres (retail, leisure, sports, cultural, health and service facilities); and associated education facilities to include primary and secondary school provision. Provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, landscaping to include a EcoValley."*

5.2.2 As framed above, the Scoping Opinion relates to the entirety of the LPU SS13 allocation area, including the full quantum of 3,930 dwellings and TVSP expansion; i.e. a greater amount of development than directly included in this planning application by the University. However, the Scoping process has nonetheless provided an appropriate framework for preparing this application.

5.2.3 The Scoping Report submitted to WBC[4] proposed the following scope of the Environmental Statement (ES):

Table 5.1: Proposed Scope of Environmental Statement in Scoping Report submitted to WBC

Topic	EIA Scoping Report Chapter	Scoped In / Out
Agricultural land and Soils	5	In
Air Quality and Odour	7	In
Archaeology	8	In

[4] See Appendix 5.1 to the Environmental Statement which accompanies this application

Built Heritage	9	In
Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases	10	In
Ecology	11	In
Ground Conditions and Contamination	12	Out
Human Health	13	In
Landscape and Visual Impact	15	In
Noise and Vibration	16	In
Socio-Economics	17	In
Solid Waste Management	5	Out
Transport and Access	18	In
Water Resources (including Flood Risk and Drainage)	14	In

5.2.4 The Scoping report provided a detailed explanation of what each chapter within the ES would cover to ensure that each topic is comprehensive. This included the Legislative Context, Guidance and Previous Assessment work.

5.2.5 The Proposed Assessment Methodology included the proposed baseline data collection, the geographical scope, the temporal scope and proposed criteria for appraising the magnitude of impact for each topic. Each chapter also sought to establish a Baseline Environment from existing data sources.

5.2.6 Finally, each chapter sought to highlight the potential environmental impacts and effects of the proposed scheme, first during construction and then the operational/occupation phase.

5.3 Scoping Opinion

5.3.1 The Council issued its Scoping Opinion on 28 February 2025, based on the agreed summary of development, provided as Appendix 5.2 of the ES submitted in support of this application. The ES only assesses the extent of the land within the Applicant's ownership. A separate ES will need to be undertaken for other parcels with each considering the cumulative impact of the entire allocation along with existing extant development in the area as well the particular impacts of this proposal.

5.3.2 The Council broadly agreed with the Scoping Request as to which topics should be scoped into the ES accompanying this application, as summarised above. The Council agreed to scope out Ground Conditions and Contamination on the basis that this can be covered by the usual technical reports expected for an application of this scale. Similarly, Solid Waste Management was scoped out of the ES.

5.3.3 The Council's comments on each topic scoped into the ES are considered below. Again, these responses are relevant to the entire allocation which was scoped so not all feedback is relevant to this application.

- **Air Quality**: The chapter on air quality should be undertaken in accordance with the principles set out by the Institute of Air Quality Management.
- **Archaeology:** It is likely that more than one phase of archaeological works will be needed.
- **Agricultural Land Quality**: Further information to supplement the base maps will need to be provided in the ES.
- **Built Heritage:** The ES needs to scope in heritage assets such as the boat house to the rear of Aberleigh as it was previously associated with Arborfield House, the long single-storey farm building and that of the walled garden both of which lie south west of Hall Farmhouse in Arborfield. Other potentially historic buildings that are at least over a century are found within other parts of the Site in locations such as Julkes and Parkcorner Lanes, as well as Betty Grove and Gipsy Lanes and Mill Lane. These should also be included in the assessment.
  The ES should also thoroughly assess potential impacts on the Site of St Bartholomews Church as it is a Scheduled Monument within the Site. This should include an assessment of impacts on significance, as contributed to by the monument's setting.
  The ES should demonstrate a field study area of sufficient size to capture all heritage assets likely to be affected. This should take into account associated activities, such as construction and additional traffic, that may alter how an asset is perceived.
- **Climate Change**: The impacts of the development should be considered in terms of how they contribute to the expenditure of the Borough-level carbon budget. The distribution of emissions and the intersections with climate adaptation requirements need to be examined in more detail. It should be demonstrated how climate mitigation measures have influenced the illustrative masterplan. It will be important to understand where responsibility for compliance will sit, and how progress towards benchmarks and targets will be measured.
- **Ecology:** The White-clawed Crayfish should not be scoped out as other surveys have returned positive results of this species of regional importance. Full supporting evidence is needed to justify scoping out Hazel Dormouse as the EcoValley could offer potential for species recovery. Similarly there are opportunities for species recovery for Water Voles and reptiles.

  [redacted]

  The biodiversity net gain baseline will need to follow the Statutory User Guide for biodiversity net gain rules in relation to accounting for floodplain wetland mosaic, which is indicated in Natural England inventories as being present on site and so will need to be factored into the baseline. More information is required to explain the bat surveys completed to date and the measures taken to remove survey bias.
- **Biodiversity:** The emerging Local Plan requires 20% BNG to be achieved on this site and this includes a 20% increase in watercourse units. Proposals should include robust enhancements to rivers and there are opportunities to improve connectivity within the floodplain. The bottom section of the Barkham Brook should undergo a robust habitat assessment to identify the numerous opportunities for habitat improvement.
- **Water Resources**: The scope should be widened to include the Bearwood Reservoir. The drainage strategy for this proposed development should focus on sustainable, integrated solutions that address both flood risk and water quality. The drainage network should be designed to handle surface water and foul water runoff without exacerbating flood risks in surrounding areas. Careful consideration of flood alleviation, SuDS implementation, sewer capacity, and water quality control will be essential. The specific site requirements for the Hall Farm site contained in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment should be incorporated the

proposals. The definition of the functional floodplain (Flood Zone 3b) is not covered in the scoping document. Further information regarding the potential impacts during the construction phase is required.

- **Landscape and Visual Impact**: The Valued Landscape Topic Paper (January 2020), has now been superseded by the Valued Landscapes Assessment (September 2024) and will need to be referred to in the ES. A number of viewpoints are indicated 5 within the Scoping Report, however it is not clear if all these will be included in the ES and prior agreement will be needed to additional viewpoints.
- **Noise and Vibration:** The ES should include a full noise assessment both for construction and post occupation of the proposed development. This should identify measures to mitigate existing and new residents from noise sources. Vibration should also be understood for construction and post occupation and identify sensitive receptors existing residents and new occupants. The ES should identify and mitigate the impacts of this and have regard to heritage assets.
- **Transport and Access:** Amendments are requested in terms of the geographical scope of the ES. National Highways has not seen any evidence to demonstrate that the proposed new link over the M4 is feasible or deliverable.

5.3.4 The feedback received in relation to each topic is addressed in the relevant chapter of the ES. Since receiving the comments, there has been ongoing liaison with WBC Highways officers concerning the scope for transport modelling and a Statement of Common Ground has been entered into with National Highways, which at paragraph 5.2e) states *"There is no object to the principle of a new bridge over the M4, subject to formal assessment and design."*

5.4 Summary of Environmental Statement

5.4.1 In light of the Scoping process, the Environmental Statement submitted with this application comprises the following chapters:

- Chapter 1 - Introduction
- Chapter 2 - Site and Local Context
- Chapter 3 - Proposed Development
- Chapter 4 - consultation / alternatives
- Chapter 5 - approach to assessment
- Chapter 6 - Planning policy
- Chapter 7 - Air Quality and odour
- Chapter 8 - Archaeology
- Chapter 9 - Built Heritage
- Chapter 10 - Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases
- Chapter 11 - Ecology
- Chapter 12 - Human Health
- Chapter 13 - Hydrology (Flood risk and drainage)
- Chapter 14 - Landscape and Visual Impact
- Chapter 15 - Noise and Vibration
- Chapter 16 - Socio-economics
- Chapter 17 - Transport and access
- Chapter 18 - Summary of mitigation, residual and interactive effects

5.4.2 Whilst this Planning Statement provides overall commentary on the application as a whole, particularly in relation to planning policy considerations, for full consideration of the environmental impacts of this proposal, reference should be made to the ES, along with the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) and supporting appendices and figures.

6. Pre-Application Engagement

6.1 Introduction and Summary

6.1.1 Loddon Garden Village is the largest single development proposal in the Local Plan Update and supports a quantum of housing and employment growth that is regionally significant. The University therefore recognises the importance of front-loaded engagement with an array of stakeholders. As noted in paragraphs 40-43 of the NPPF, pre-application engagement provides for better co-ordination and understanding and helps in identifying and resolving issues and concerns at an early stage.

6.1.2 [redacted]

6.1.3

6.1.4

6.2 Core Phase of Public Engagement, 2025

6.2.1 The most substantial element of public-facing engagement at the pre-application stage has been a phase of consultation undertaken in Spring 2025, comprising a variety of different methods and channels. Full details of this process are set out in the *Statement of Community Engagement (SCE)*,

prepared by Meeting Place, which accompanies this application. In summary, the major elements of this process have been:

- **11 March**: Formal launch of consultation, including publication of press release, and distribution of newsletter
- **17 March**: Webinar for invited Key Stakeholders;
- **27 March**: Shinfield public engagement event, Shinfield School Green Centre;
- **28 March**: Earley public engagement event, Meadow Suite, University of Reading, White Knights Campus;
- **29 March**: Arborfield public engagement event, Arborfield Village Hall;
- **3 April**: Arborfield and Barkham area stakeholder meeting, Arborfield Village Hall;
- **3 April**: Earley area stakeholder meeting, Radstock Lane Community Centre;
- **23 April**: Winnersh area stakeholder meeting, Crone Plaza, Winnersh Triangle;
- **16 Ju**ly: Winnersh and Earley area stakeholder meeting
- **17 July**: Shinfield, Arborfield and Barkham area stakeholder meeting; and
- **25 September**: Winnersh and Earley public engagement event

6.2.2 Further stakeholder meetings are scheduled for October 2025, following the submission of this application.

6.2.3 Feedback was received in multiple ways, including:

- feedback form (paper and online);
- an interactive map;
- emails to comments@meeting-place.uk;
- Freephone calls to 0800 148 8911;
- letters to Freepost, MEETING PLACE CONSULTATION; and
- through the stakeholder engagement meetings and public events.

6.2.4 Over the six-week consultation period the University received written feedback from over 400 people, via 376 feedback forms, 14 comments on interactive map, ten emails and two letters. Around 350 people attended the meetings and events, with:

- over 274 at the three public consultations;
- a total of 45 attending the four area stakeholder group meetings; and
- 34 attending the webinar for Stakeholders.

6.2.5 Around 350 attended a variety of meetings and events, with over 274 at the three public consultations, a total of 45 attending the four area stakeholder group meetings and 34 logging in to the webinar for local representatives.

6.2.6 At the public engagement events there was praise for the quality of consultation, especially the range of specialist consultants present to answer questions at events. There was a level of distrust around the principles of development, which may be accounted for by the distrust in the planning process in general.

6.2.7 The theme that generated the most feedback and concern from residents and stakeholders was transport, because of the impact on everyday lives. Existing traffic congestion across the local area was mentioned frequently, the common concern being whether this would worsen with further development, despite proposed road upgrades. Concern over ongoing disruption during construction was also a common concern.

6.2.8 Flooding, drainage and sewage concerns were raised many times, as well as for healthcare provision. There was a strong desire for stewardship by the University of Reading being maintained,

having oversight of the scheme. People were keen to see a mix of housing, with truly affordable housing and provision for key workers.

6.2.9 Part 2 of the SCE provides responses to the key issues raised during the consultation and engagement process, taking account of the detailed work undertaken by the University through the preparation of this planning application. The key themes responded to include:

- Housing;
- Community facilities;
- Employment and education;
- Sustainability and Space
- Transport; and
- Vision and values.

6.2.10 The University is grateful to all those who participated in the consultation process, particularly local residents giving up their time to provide their input, which has been very helpful in shaping the proposals ultimately applied for in this application.

6.3 Design Evolution and Design and Access Statement

6.3.1 The first set of land use and masterplan proposals for Loddon Garden Village were set out by WBC in November 2021 as part of its Regulation 18 consultation on the Local Plan Update. These were subsequently updated and were included as Figure 8 in the Council's Proposed Submission (Regulation 19) Plan, consulted on during Autumn 2024. The Figure 8 proposals, produced by David Locke Associates on behalf of WBC, are shown in the accompanying Design and Access Statement (DAS).

6.3.2 From that starting point, the University and their consultant team, collaborating with HFLL and Gleeson Land, have developed and refined the LGV proposals based on three years of technical studies and design development. This has culminated in the plans set out in the DAS, Illustrative Masterplan and supporting Parameter Plans that accompany this application.

6.3.3 The DAS has been prepared in accordance with National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), and in particular paragraphs 023-033[5]. The DAS also follows the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure, England) (Amendment Order 2015). It sets out and explains how the proposals have been designed through a methodical process taking the following steps:

- **Assessment:** In Chapters 1-3 of the DAS, the context of the Site and its immediate surroundings are taken into consideration, such as physical features as well as planning policies and best design practice.
- **Involvement:** In Chapter 4, the DAS explains how the masterplan has evolved over time, taking account of consultation and involvement with professionals and other stakeholders, and how this has informed the design process.
- **Placemaking Guidelines:** Chapter 5 of the DAS establishes the design and spatial guidelines for the proposals.
- **Design:** Chapters 6-12 of the DAS then explain the proposals in relation to the following factors:
    - Sustainability principles;
    - Masterplan;
    - Green and Blue Infrastructure;
    - Access and movement;
    - Character areas;

[5] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-an-application#Design-and-Access-Statement

- The spine road; and
- Implementation.

6.3.4 As set out in the DAS , the University's Illustrative Masterplan and Parameter Plans are consistent with the indicative LPU Regulation 19 Concept Plan for the LGV. The Illustrative Masterplan has, however, evolved into more detail, as would be expected at the planning application stage. This design evolution has been informed by various elements:

(i) detailed technical work and evidence base studies, running in parallel with the Environmental Impact Assessment;
(ii) pre-application discussions with WBC;
(iii) engagement with statutory bodies; and
(iv) public consultation.

6.3.5 In December 2024, at an early stage of the planning application process, initial advice and recommendations were sought from the Design South East (DSE) Design Review Panel; a process which WBC was also closely involved with. The Panel consisted of a range of built environment experts, offering expertise across a range of disciplines, combining to provide independent comprehensive feedback on the emerging proposal. The Panel sessions were collaborative, with WBC and the Applicant's team playing an active role in discussions. The Applicant has welcomed the detailed feedback provided which has positively informed the submitted proposal.

6.4 Pre-Application Discussions

6.4.1 A Planning Performance Agreement has been in place with WBC since 2022, through which a series of site visits, workshops and pre-application meetings have been held with a range of planning and technical officers. These meetings have provided a range of feedback that has been discussed and informed the submitted application.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

7. Development Plan Policy and Material Considerations

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 directs Local Planning Authorities to determine planning applications in accordance with the policies of the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 38(3) of the Act provides that the Development Plan includes the "*development plan documents (taken as a whole) which have been adopted or approved in relation to that area*".

7.1.2 Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, states:

"In dealing with an application for planning permission or permission in principle the authority shall have regard to:

(a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application,

(aza) a post-examination draft neighbourhood development plan, so far as material to the application,

(aa) any considerations relating to the use of the Welsh language, so far as material to the application;

(b) any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and

(c) any other material considerations."

7.1.3 The adopted statutory Development Plan for this site comprises the following:

- Adopted Core Strategy, January 2010;
- Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan, February 2014;
- The South East Plan 2009 – Saved Policy NRM6 only; and
- Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals & Waste Plan 2019.

7.1.4 Relevant policies within these Development Plan Documents (DPDs) are reviewed in turn below.

7.2 Wokingham Borough Core Strategy DPD

7.2.1 The Wokingham Borough Core Strategy DPD (adopted January 2010) set out a vision for how the Borough would develop in the period to 2026. The approach of the Core Strategy included delivering housing in locations that meet the needs of the community and supporting new mixed use development locations based primarily on larger scale (Strategic Development Locations (SDLs)) consisting of accessible, high quality, well designed development.

7.2.2 The four SDLs allocated in the Core Strategy were as follows:

- Arborfield Garrison (3,500 dwellings);
- South of the M4 (2,500 dwellings);
- North Wokingham (1,500 dwellings); and
- South Wokingham (2,500 dwellings).

7.2.3 WBC's Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement 2024[6] confirms that the following number of dwellings have been delivered at the SDLs to date:

Table 7.1: Monitoring of completions on previous 2010 Core Strategy SDLs

Development Area	Dwellings Permitted	Dwellings Completed (at 31 March 2024)	Remaining
Arborfield Garrison	3,642	1,699	1,955
South of the M4	2,893	2,826	67
North Wokingham	2,048	1,984	64
South Wokingham	2,458	636	1,821

7.2.4 The following policies from the 2010 Core Strategy are considered to be of most relevance to the Proposed Development.

- CP1: Sustainable development;
- CP2: Inclusive communities;
- CP3: General Principles for development;
- CP4: Infrastructure requirements;
- CP5: Housing mix, density and affordability;
- CP6: Managing Travel Demand;
- CP7: Biodiversity;
- CP8: Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area;
- CP9: Scale and location of development proposals;
- CP10: Improvements to the Strategic Transport Network;
- CP11: Proposals outside Development Limits (including countryside); and
- CP17: Housing delivery.

7.2.5 Whilst technically the above policies are extant, all have been found by the Inspector to be 'out of date' pursuant to NPPF paragraph 11d in recent appeal decisions; as has been established in successive planning Appeals[7].

7.3 Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Document (MDD)

7.3.1 The Wokingham Borough MDD (adopted February 2014) took forward and developed the objectives laid down in the Core Strategy. This includes providing additional detailed policies to use when considering development proposals. The following policies from this document are considered to be of most relevance to the Proposed Development.

- CC01: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development;
- CC02: Development Limits;
- CC03: Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping;
- CC04: Sustainable Design and Construction;
- CC05: Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks;
- CC06: Noise;
- CC07: Parking;

[6] https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2025-01/Five%20Year%20Housing%20Land%20Supply%20Statement%202024_0.pdf
[7] Including appeal decision APP/X0360/W/24/3354667 (Berkeley Strategic, Blagrove Lane, May 2025)

- CC08: Safeguarding alignments of the Strategic Transport Network & Road Infrastructure;
- CC09: Development and Flood Risk (from all sources);
- CC10: Sustainable Drainage;
- TB05: Housing Mix;
- TB07: Internal Space Standards;
- TB08: Open Space, sport and recreational facilities standards for residential development;
- TB09: Residential accommodation for vulnerable groups;
- TB10: Traveller Sites;
- TB12: Employment Skills Plan;
- TB20: Service Arrangements and Deliveries for Employment and Retail Use;
- TB21: Landscape Character;
- TB23: Biodiversity and Development;
- TB24: Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas); and
- TB25: Archaeology.

7.3.2 Again, as with the Core Strategy, whilst technically extant, the above policies have been confirmed to be 'out-of-date' on Appeal, pursuant to the NPPF Paragraph 11(d) by multiple Inspectors.

7.4 South East Plan

7.4.1 In May 2010 the Government announced its intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies, including the South East Plan. In February 2013, the South East Plan was formally abolished except for Policy NRM6 which relates to new residential development close to the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area. This policy remains in place as part of the Development Plan and has therefore been proactively addressed in this application.

7.5 Minerals and Waste Plan

7.5.1 A Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP) for Wokingham Borough Council, Bracknell Forest Council, Reading Borough Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead has been produced. The Plan was adopted by Wokingham Borough Council on 19 January 2023. Parts of the application site falls within a Mineral Safeguarding Area and an Area of Search for Sand and Gravel.

7.6 Neighbourhood Plans

7.6.1 Shinfield

7.6.2 Part of the application site is located within Shinfield Parish, comprising land to the north of the River Loddon which forms the Parish boundary. A Neighbourhood Plan for Shinfield Parish, which covers the period from 2016 to 2026, was formally 'made' in February 2017.

7.6.3 Figure 7.1 below shows the extent of the Neighbourhood Plan area as well as existing settlements and infrastructure. Future residential development is shown in pink, which is now largely built out. Thames Valley Science Park is shown in blue.

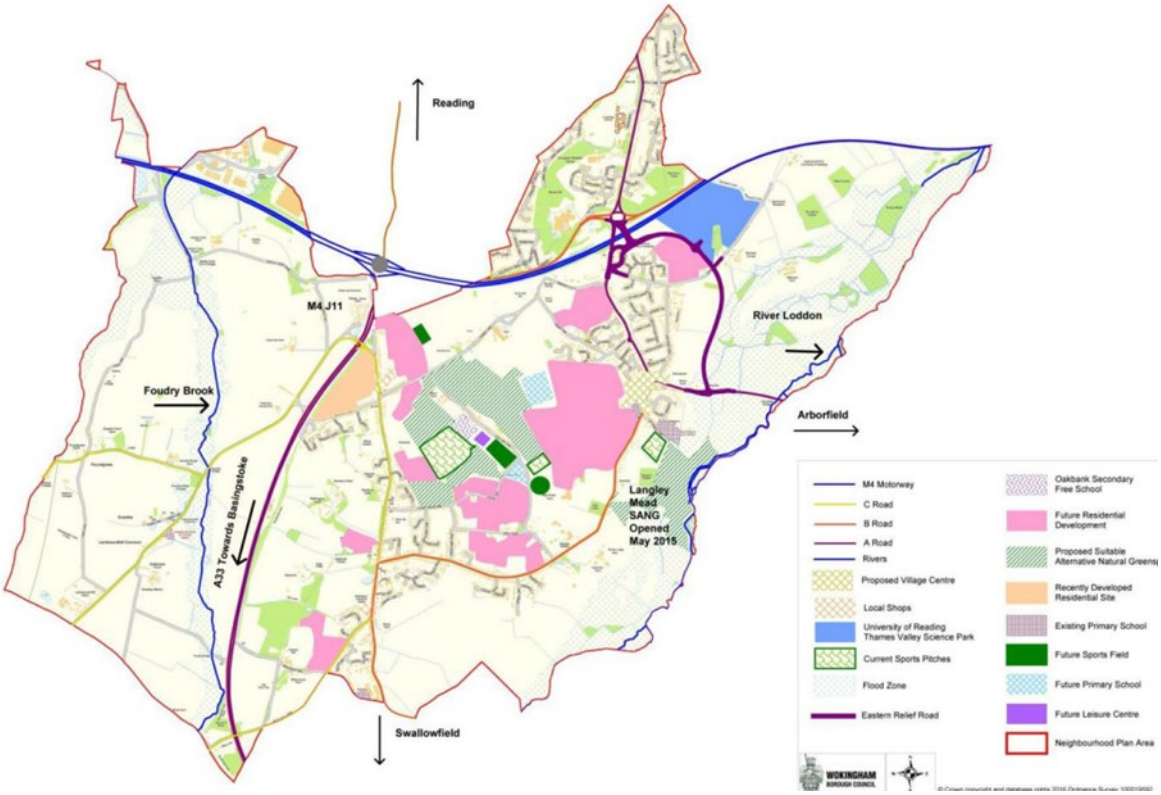


Figure 7.1: Shinfield Neighbourhood Plan Context Map. Source: Shinfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan

7.6.4 NPPF paragraph 31 confirms that policies in a Neighbourhood Plan take precedence over *existing non-strategic* policies in a Local Plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict. However, they would be superseded by *strategic or non-strategic* policies emerging *subsequently*. As such, the Shinfield Neighbourhood Plan will not have any bearing on the determination of this application once the LPU is adopted and the application has been prepared on this basis.

7.6.5 In addition, the Neighbourhood Plan only covers the period up to March 2026, which is the period of growth outlined in the South of M4 SDL Supplementary Planning Document (May 2011). It is not anticipated that this planning application will be determined until after that point.

7.6.6 Notwithstanding the above, there are elements of the LGV that would be consistent with the general aims of this Neighbourhood Plan, including in relation to:

- **Policy 2: General Design Principles,** which supports an appropriate mix of size, built form and garden size, including style, design and character within new residential development. The policy includes a set of criteria that should be considered and achieved in relation to design;
- **Policy 3: Sustainable Development**, which supports the highest stands of sustainability;
- **Policy 4: Accessibility and Highways Safety**, which requires development proposals to demonstrate appropriate levels of accessibility and highway safety;
- **Policy 5: Parking** sets parameters for car and bicycle parking;
- **Policy 6: Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland** seeks to protect hedgerows, habitats, ancient woodlands, Local Wildlife Sites, ponds that are appropriate for retention;
- **Policy 7: Biodiversity** supports the enhancement of biodiversity;
- **Policy 8: Flooding** promotes the creation of SuDS in new developments;

- **Policy 10: Community and Sports Facilities** states that development should contribute towards formal and informal sport and leisure activities within the Parish;
- **Policy 11: Commercial Development** states that for proposals for or that incorporate employment uses may be supported where they do not conflict with other policies;
- **Policy 12: Broadband Provision** encourages the continuous improvement of broadband and internet connections.

7.6.7 Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan

7.6.8 The Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2036 was made in April 2020. Figure 7.2 below shows the extent of the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan Area which covers the majority of the application Site area; i.e. of the land south of the River Loddon which forms the parish boundary.

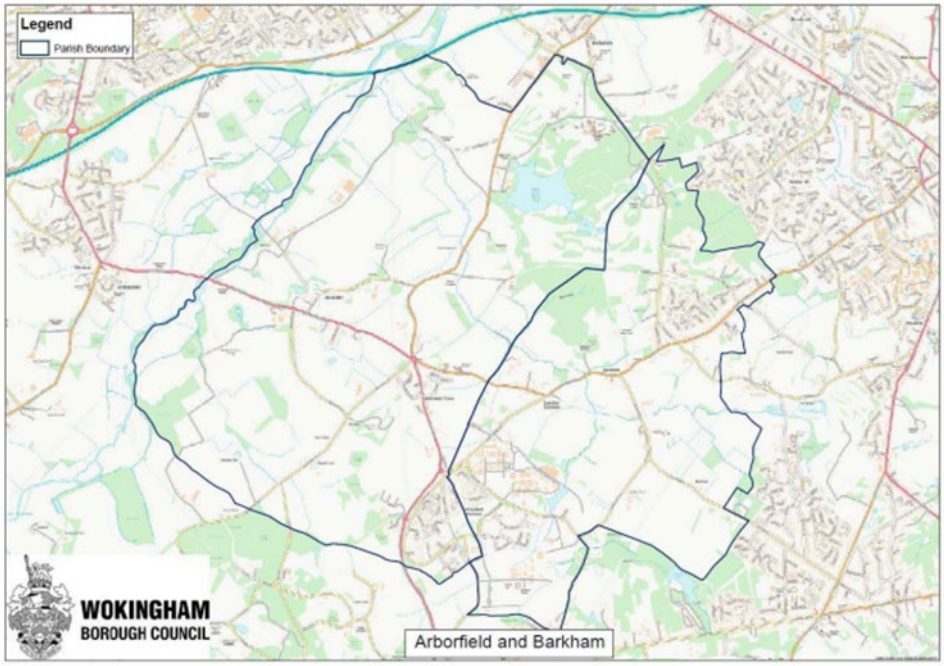


Figure 7.2: Map of Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan Area. Source: Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan.

7.6.9 For similar reasons as outlined above in relation to Shinfield, we do consider the policies in the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan to be of only indirect relevance to this planning application. By definition, it addresses non-strategic matters whereas the Local Plan Update addresses strategic matters; particularly the quantum and distribution of housing across Wokingham Borough as a whole, which itself responds to national planning objectives.

7.6.10 That said, the application proposals have had regard to a number of policies in the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan, including:

- **Policies IRS1 & 2:** retaining the separateness and setting of settlements;
- **Policy IRS3:** protecting and enhancing the natural environment;
- **Policies IRS4 & 5:** protecting and enhancing the historic environment;
- **Policy TC2:** planning for new community facilities;
- **Policy AD2:** providing a balanced mix of housing;

- **Policy AD3:** building to high design standards;
- **Policy AD4:** addressing flood risk;
- **Policies GA1, 2 & 3):** addressing transport matters through a suitable approach to traffic and roads, developing the local network of green routes for non-motorised users, and through public transport improvements.

7.7 Other Material Considerations

7.7.1 There are a number of documents that are material considerations in the context of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that may be referred to by the decision-taker for this planning application.

7.7.2 Material considerations include emerging Development Plan policy (notably the Local Plan Update), national policy, which is primarily expressed through the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance, as well as additional guidance produced by the Council and other relevant authorities / bodies in the form of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

7.8 Emerging Local Plan Update ('LPU')

7.8.1 For around 9 years, Wokingham Borough Council been working to replace the extant Development Plan with what it refers to as the *Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update* ('LPU'). This process has undergone the following key steps:

- **August - September 2016:** Issues and Options consultation *(Reg 18)*;
- **November 2018 - February 2019:** Homes for the Future consultation *(Reg 18)*;
- **February - April 2020:** Draft Plan 2020 consultation *(Reg 18)*;
- **November 2021 - January 2022:** Revised Growth Strategy consultation *(Reg 18);*
- **September - November 2024:** Proposed Submission Plan consultation *(Reg 19);*
- **February 2025:** Submission to the Secretary of State for examination by an independent Planning Inspector.

7.8.2 A key factor to note is that in the Homes for the Future consultation in 2018/2019, and subsequently in the 2020 consultation, it was proposed to allocate a new Garden Village at Grazeley, located on the western edge of Wokingham Borough and partially in West Berkshire. This would have comprised a minimum of 15,000 new homes. However, a significant change in circumstances occurred in March 2020 when the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) for the Atomic Weapons Establishment, Burghfield was significantly extended, and as a result covered the proposed Grazeley allocation in its entirety.

7.8.3 Hence the Revised Growth Strategy Consultation in 2021-2022 introduced the Hall Farm / Loddon Valley Strategic Development Location via Policy SS3, as an alternative to Grazeley. This was originally proposed to comprise a minimum of 4,500 new homes (of which 2,200 to be completed by then end of 2037/38), the phased expansion of the TVSP comprising 85,000sqm for film and television use and a further 100,000sqm for research and development. The University responded to the consultation in support of Policy SS3. In a similar way, the University has engaged positively at the Regulation 19 consultation in 2024.

7.8.4 The LPU was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 28 February 2025. In March 2025, two Inspectors, T Hatfield BA(Hons) MPLAN MRTPI and M Philpott BA(Hons) MA MRTPI, were appointed to undertake an independent examination into the soundness and legal compliance of the Wokingham Local Plan Update.

7.8.5 The Inspectors submitted initial Questions to the Council on 17 April 2025 (ID1) which covered some of the following matters in relation to Loddon Valley Garden Village:

- Phasing assumptions applied;
- Consistency of costs for infrastructural requirements;
- The inclusion of infrastructural costs in the Viability Study;
- Contributions to Borough wide infrastructure;
- Basis for costings in an Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
- Contribution of each scheme within Loddon Valley Garden Village to infrastructure identified within an Infrastructure Delivery Plan; and
- Type of application to be submitted in 2025.

7.8.6 There were additional questions on the South Wokingham SDL and Arborfield Green SDL as well as questions on the following:

- Ability to demonstrate a 5 year supply from the date the Plan is adopted;
- Windfall allowances;
- Base date for Housing Trajectory;
- Duty to Cooperate;
- Plan Period;
- Review of new flood zone data;
- Improvements to Arborfield Sewage Treatment Works;
- Sewer flooding; and
- Transport modelling.

7.8.7 The Council submitted a response to the initial questions on 28 May 2025 (ID1), which dealt positively and proactively to the matters arising, with substantial input having been provided by the University and other landowners over the timing and delivery of LGV as a whole.

7.8.8 On 5 October 2025, a Regulation 24 Notice of Hearing Sessions was published which confirms a programme of hearing sessions has been scheduled for November 2025.

7.8.9 Paragraph 49 of the NPPF (December 2024) states that Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to three factors:

> *'a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);*
>
> *b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and*
>
> *c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).*

7.8.10 As regards (a), the LPU has been submitted for Examination, which represents an advanced stage of preparation, albeit that the Examination is (at the time of writing) still at a fairly early stage. Regarding (b), whilst there are objections to the LPU, these can be resolved through the Examination process and therefore do not accept that the weight of the LPU is appreciably reduced. Regarding (c) the policies in the LPU are broadly consistent with the NPPF in all material respects and hence their weight is not diminished.

7.8.11 Given the above, we believe that **substantial weight** can be given to the LPU as a material consideration and that this is expected to increase further through the course of the determination of this planning application and as the Examination progresses, with the LPU ultimately becoming part of the statutory Development Plan.

7.8.12 The following policies from the LPU are considered to be of most relevance to the determination of this application.

Delivering the Spatial Strategy:

- SS1: Sustainable development principles
- SS2: Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy
- SS10: Meeting our housing needs
- SS13: Loddon Valley Garden Village
- SS14: Sites allocated for residential, including residential as part of mixed-use development
- SS17: Transport improvements

Climate Change and Energy:

- CE1: Design principles for efficient buildings
- CE2: Environmental standards for non-residential development
- CE3: Environmental standards for residential development
- CE4: Supporting a circular economy
- CE5: Embodied carbon
- CE7: Low carbon and renewable energy generation

Connections:

- C1: Active and sustainable transport and accessibility
- C2: Mitigation of transport impacts and highways safety and design
- C3: Active travel
- C4: Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way
- C5: Parking and electric vehicle charging
- C6: Technology and innovation in transport
- C7: Digital infra
- structure and communications technology
- C8: Utilities

Economy, Employment and Retail:

- ER4: Employment and skills plans

Housing:

- H1: Housing mix, density and standards
- H3: Affordable housing
- H6: Self-build and custom housebuilding
- H7: Specialist accommodation
- H9: Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople provision
- H10: Traveller sites

Flooding and Drainage:

- FD1: Development and flood risk (from all sources)
- FD2: Sustainable drainage
- FD3: River corridors and watercourses

Natural Environment:

- NE1: Biodiversity and geodiversity
- NE2: Biodiversity net gain
- NE3: Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
- NE4: Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows
- NE5: Landscape and design
- NE6: Valued landscapes

Design, Heritage and the Built Environment:

- DH1: Place making and quality design
- DH2: Safeguarding amenity
- DH5: The historic environment
- DH6: Archaeology

Healthy and Safe Communities:

- HC1: Promoting healthy communities
- HC2: Community infrastructure
- HC4: Open space, sports, recreation and play facilities:
- HC5: Environmental protection
- HC6: Air pollution and air quality
- HC7: Light pollution
- HC8: Noise pollution
- HC9: Contaminated land and water
- HC10: Odour, fumes, and dust

7.8.13 Of particular relevance is Policy SS13, which identifies the application site as being within a Strategic Development Location. The Loddon Valley Garden Village SDL is proposed to be allocated for a *'beautifully and imaginatively designed community including housing, employment, social and physical infrastructure.'* The policy sets out development, place shaping, and delivery principles which are discussed in Sections 8, 9 and 13 below.

7.9 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

7.9.1 An update to the NPPF was published in December 2024 with a further minor amendment being made in February 2025. The policy requirements of the NPPF are material to the consideration of applications for planning permission. The chapters and paragraphs of most relevance to this application are outlined below.

7.9.2 Paragraph 2 in the introduction states:

> *"Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements."*

7.9.3 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out the overarching objectives of the planning system in achieving sustainable development:

> *"a)* ***an economic objective*** *– to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*

*b) **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*

*c) **an environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."*

7.9.4 Paragraph 10 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development at the heart of the NPPF, which at paragraph 11, is defined for decision making as:

"c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date , granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this 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."

7.9.5 Footnote 8 sets out that the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date for applications involving the provision of housing, where: the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (with the appropriate buffer as set out in paragraph 78); or where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing was substantially below (less than 75% of) the housing requirement over the previous three years.

7.9.6 In relation to paragraph 11(d)(i), footnote 7 confirms that the policies referred to are those in the NPPF relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 194) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

7.9.7 Paragraph 61 underlines the importance of land coming forward where needed to support to Government's overarching objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes.

7.9.8 Paragraph 66 states that for major developments, planning policies and decisions should expect that the mix of affordable housing required meets identified local needs, across Social Rent, other affordable housing for rent and affordable home ownership tenures.

7.9.9 Paragraph 77 sets out that the supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities (including a genuine choice of transport modes).

7.9.10 Other relevant paragraphs of the NPPF are discussed as part of Section 9 (Technical Assessment) below.

7.10 Planning Practice Guidance

7.10.1 On 6 March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government issued its Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) web-based resource, which is updated regularly. The PPG provides

detailed guidance on the implementation of the NPPF and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Parts have been updated to reflect the new NPPF and the application responds to the new advice and guidance.

7.11 National Design Guide and National Model Design Code

7.11.1 The National Design Guide (NDG), published October 2019 by the (then) Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, is planning practice guidance for 'beautiful, enduring and successful places'.

7.11.2 The NDG addresses the question of how we recognise well designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics.

7.11.3 The focus of the NDG is on good design in the planning system, so it is primarily for local authority planning officers, councillors, planning applicants and their design teams as well as people in local communities and their representatives.

7.11.4 The National Model Design Code (NMDC) provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design.

7.11.5 The Design and Access Statement which forms part of the planning application documentation confirms that the ten characteristics from the NDG have been used to check that all aspects of the proposals have been considered, and that the proposals represent the best design possible in this location.

7.12 Natural England Guidelines for the Creation of SANG

7.12.1 Natural England (NE) has published guidance on the creation of SANG. The guidelines cover various aspects of SANG creation, including size, layout, design, location, accessibility and management.

7.13 Evidence base supporting the Local Plan Update

7.13.1 The Wokingham Borough Council Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) specifically considers the suitability, availability and achievability of land for development.

7.13.2 To assist the process the Council commissioned masterplanning studies to inform the opportunities, constraints and infrastructure ask and high-level viability of areas identified as having potential for strategic development including Hall Farm / Loddon Valley. The Site was identified as a potentially developable site with a capacity of 3,930 dwellings.

7.13.3 The Topic Paper: Housing: Site Allocations (September 2024) provides background to explain the Site allocations within the LPU: Proposed Submission Plan (September 2024). In relation to the LGV it states the reasons for site selection as follows:

> *"Loddon Valley Garden Village has been identified as strategic opportunity to deliver a new community which aligns to garden city principles.*
>
> *The Site provides an opportunity to provide key infrastructure including a district centre and local*
>
> *centres, primary schools and a secondary school, and a new EcoValley. The location is in proximity to major employment hubs and located on key transport corridors, providing an opportunity for enhanced public transport and active travel. In designing the EcoValley, there is an opportunity to deliver flood risk attenuation to currently affected areas downstream of the Site.*
>
> *Whilst constraints do exist across the Site, work undertaken to date indicates that these can be addressed and appropriately mitigated.*

The opportunity is in line with the spatial strategy.

The opportunity has been explored through the sustainability appraisal.

The Site is treated as a variable but is noted to perform better than other strategic site options."

7.14 Five Year Housing Land Supply

7.14.1 The NPPF requires local authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than 5 years old.

7.14.2 WBC published a Five-Year Housing Land Supply Statement in August 2025, which sets out the housing completions at 31 March 2025 and the supply of deliverable sites for the subsequent five year period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2030.

7.14.3 The Statement confirmed that at 31 March 2025, WBC could demonstrate only a 2.5 year housing land supply against the local housing need of 1,316 with the total number of dwellings deemed deliverable in the 5-year period being 3,453. As such, as outlined elsewhere in this document, extant Local Plan policies can be considered 'out of date' and the 'presumption in favour' applies, consistent with paragraph 11d of the NPPF.

7.15 Supplementary Planning Documents

7.15.1 Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD

7.15.2 The Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD was adopted in October 2011 following the adoption of the Core Strategy, with the aim of delivering a viable infrastructure solutions to support the new developments. The SPD sets out the infrastructure requirements and obligations for the four SDLs allocated in the Core Strategy. It is anticipated that a similar SPD will be adopted for the allocations in the emerging Local Plan.

7.15.3 Sustainable Design and Construction SPD and Companion Document

7.15.4 The Sustainable Design and Construction SPD was adopted in May 2010 and promotes the use of sustainable techniques (including renewable energy technologies) and materials in the construction of buildings and structures. The SPD provides guidance to help improve the sustainability performance of buildings and spaces through their design and subsequent use. In particular, it forms part of the suite of documents guiding the four SDLs in the Core Strategy.

7.15.5 Borough Design Guide

7.15.6 The Borough Design Guide SPD was adopted in June 2012 to encourage developers to bring forward well designed developments which complement and build upon the character of that immediate area. The key objectives of the design guide are:

"To promote good design through the development process;
To create attractive, harmonious and well used places;
To ensure that all developments improve the character and quality of the area;
To encourage vibrant communities where people feel safe;
To create places that provide ease of movement and are accessible to all;
To respect and be sympathetic to the character of the area in which the development is situated;
To minimise overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of amenity or over-dominance;
To take full account of the mass and height of development in relation to adjacent development and surrounding spaces; and

To ensure that new development meets the needs of its users."

7.15.7 Play Space Design Guide Technical Note

7.15.8 The Play Space Design Guide (December 2019) sets out the Council's ethos, principles and benchmarks for play facilities. The document is supplementary to the requirements of the WBC Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy and the Borough Design Guide. It aims to ensure adequate play facilities for all age groups are delivered via the planning process.

7.15.9 Affordable Housing SPD

7.15.10 The Affordable Housing SPD was adopted in July 2013 and supports the Core Strategy Policies CP5, CP15 and CP16. It provides further guidance of the Council's approach to securing affordable housing through the planning process.

7.16 Other Supplementary Guidance Documents

7.16.1 Climate Change Interim Policy Position Statement

7.16.2 The Interim Planning Policy Position Statement was published as an explanatory document in December 2022 and sets out WBC's position on the issue of climate change when assessing planning applications. The statement makes clear that WBC will expect, as a minimum, that development proposals contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation by applying adopted policies to their best effect. It is also an expectation that development proposals play their part and go beyond current requirements to be more aligned with emerging local and national policy. Where development proposals demonstrably go above and beyond adopted policy requirements, this will be weighed positively in the balance when assessing a development proposal.

7.16.3 First Homes Interim Policy Statement

7.16.4 The First Homes Interim Policy Statement was published in January 2022 following the Written Ministerial Statement on First homes on 24 May 2021. The statement sets out that, as referenced in the PPG, a minimum of 25% of all affordable housing units secured through developer contributions should be First Homes. Once a minimum of 25% of First Homes has been accounted for, social rent and the remaining affordable housing tenures should be delivered in the same percentage / proportions as set out in Core Strategy Policy CP5.

7.16.5 It is noted that, to provide more flexibility, the NPPF (December 2024) removed the reference to a 25% requirement for first homes.

7.16.6 Parking Standards Calculation Document

7.16.7 The Parking calculation spreadsheet is a tool based on the parking demand technical report to identify an appropriate parking allocation for developments based on accessibility and the character of the area, whether spaces are allocated to a specific dwelling or unallocated and the number of bedrooms and habitable rooms of each dwelling.

7.16.8 Highways Development Design Guidance

7.16.9 Living Streets: A Highways Guide for Developers in Wokingham was published in 2019 and outlines the key principles to follow when producing new highway layouts for all types of development. The document sets out that layouts should be compliant with the philosophy of Manual for Streets (DfT, 2007c) and Manual for Streets 2 (CIHT, 2010).

7.16.10 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy

7.16.11 The Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy was adopted in November 2013. It provides guidance on the approach it envisages to the application of the open space, sport and recreational facilities standards for residential development in Policy TB08 of the Managing Development Delivery Development Plan Document. Although this policy remains technically in force, so far as Loddon Garden Village is concerned, broadly speaking, the principles and themes of this strategy have been superseded by and incorporated into Policy SS13 of the LPU.

7.17 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

7.17.1 WBC approved its CIL Charging Schedule on 19 February 2015 and it came into effect on 6 April 2015. The Charging Schedule sets out specific CIL rates for the previously-allocated SDLs and for the 'rest of the Borough' (the CIL rate for the 'rest of the Borough' is £365 per square metre); which will encompass Loddon Garden Village until such time as the LPU progresses and the Charging Schedule is amended. It is anticipated that the Charging Schedule will be updated alongside the LPU to cover the new site allocations including SS13 Loddon Garden Village. Mitigation for the LGV is expected to be dealt with by planning obligations and planning conditions.

8. Principle of Development

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 This section of the Planning Statement addresses why the principle of the LGV is acceptable in the context of the adopted and emerging Local Plan and WBC's lack of five-year housing land supply. The Site is not allocated in extant Local Plan policies and should therefore, until the LPU is formally adopted, be considered open countryside. However, WBC are not able to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply and therefore relevant policies in the Local Plan are 'out of date' in respect of the provisions of Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF. This means that paragraph 11d of the Framework is engaged, i.e. planning permission should be granted unless:

i. *"the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
ii. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this 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."*

8.1.2 Neither of the above exceptions apply in this instance, and this Planning Statement demonstrates and concludes that the benefits of the proposed development significantly and demonstrably outweigh the harms, taking into account the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainability. Over and above paragraph 11d, this application receives significant support under NPPF Paragraph 49 on account of its emerging allocation status. This policy status should be attributed substantial weight, and this section demonstrates that the application conforms with all relevant aspects of the Local Plan Update and Policy SS13. Under paragraph 49 of the Framework, local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

8.1.3 In relation to (a), the LPU is at Examination and therefore the plan is at an advanced stage, formal Examination hearing sessions are scheduled for November. In relation to (b), whilst there are objections to the Plan including Policy SS13, there are no unresolved objections from statutory consultees that are fundamental to the site being included in the plan. It is the case that Local Plan Inspectors have raised Initial Questions (ID1) in relation to the Local Plan and Policy SS13. However, these primarily focus on the Inspectors' need to examine in detail the overarching delivery of the site, including the timing, funding and mechanisms for the delivery of key infrastructure. Given the significance of LGV within the Local Plan, these are matters that should naturally be explored by Inspectors and do not raise 'in principle' concerns over the allocation. In relation to (c), there is a high degree of consistency between the LPU and the Framework in terms of the aspirations for LGV expressed in Policy SS13. Whilst the housing need figure in the LPU is below the Standard Method Figure, the Plan adheres to the transitional arrangements set out within the Framework.

8.1.4 Upon adoption of the LPU, WBC will be able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. At this point, the LGV will accord with an up-to-date development plan and thus should be approved without delay in line with paragraph 11c of the Framework.

8.2 Policy SS13: Loddon Valley Garden Village

8.2.1 Policy SS13 allocates the application Site, thus confirming WBC's clear intention to bring the site forward. On adoption, the LPU through SS13 will formally establish the principle of development as a part of the statutory Development Plan. An assessment of the Site against the development, place shaping and delivery principles provided by Policy SS13 and is set out in Table 8.1 below. The Assessment also addresses the Development Guidelines for the LVGV provided in Appendix C of the LPU, as far as they relate to the LGV.

Table 8.1: Assessment of proposed development against Policy SS13 principles

Policy SS13 Principle		Assessment of application against principle
Development Principles		
a)	Around 3,930 dwellings, of which at least 2,700 dwellings will be delivered by 31st March 2040, including: i. 40% affordable homes, in accordance with Policy H3; ii. 100 custom and self-build serviced plots; iii. 20 Gypsy and Traveller pitches; and iv. Specialist accommodation, including accommodation for older persons.	This application directly fulfils these principles. Regarding the quantum of homes, it will contribute substantially towards the overall target of 3,930 for the whole allocation, with the balance being provided via applications made by the other landowners within the SDL boundary. This application will provide for 40% affordable homes in accordance with and subject to the detailed criteria of policy H3. It will also itself deliver in full the requirement for 20 Gypsy and Traveller pitches and make a proportionate contribution towards self and custom-build housing. Regarding specialist accommodation, although a detailed mix has not been formalised at this Outline stage, the parameter plans and Illustrative Masterplan will permit the inclusion of a variety of accommodation in order to fulfil this objective.
b)	Around 100,000 m2 of research and development floorspace or equivalent trip generating activity within use class E(g), B2, B8 and other complementary uses, through an extension to the Thames Valley Science and Innovation Park	This application does not include the Thames Valley Science Park (TVSP). Instead, extensions to it will be the subject of separate planning applications, as has been the case with Shinfield Studios, The British Museum and the Natural History Museum, as summarised in the 'Planning History' section (Section 3) above. This application for LGV will however directly complement the TVSP and the economic objectives of the SS13 and the plan as a whole, by providing substantial much-needed housing of a variety of types and sizes in a location that is

		accessible to current and emerging clusters of employment.
c)	Schools, including: i. Two 3-form entry primary schools (including appropriate onsite early years provision); and ii. An 8-form entry secondary school, with additional land reserved to enable expansion to 12-form entry with sixth form. Each school should include space for the integrated teaching of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.	All of these requirements have been directly included within the description of development and are provided for within the submitted plans.
d)	A District Centre providing a range of services and facilities in a location central to the planned housing, to include retail, leisure, employment, cultural, and health uses.	The requirement for District and Local Centres has been directly incorporated into the formal description of development and proposed plans. The District Centre comprises a central component of the design strategy for the site as a whole, as set out in the Design and Access Statement. The Local Centre provides further complementary uses. A second Local Centre will be provided via a separate application led by Hatch Farm Land Limited on land outside of the University's control.
e)	Two Local Centres providing day to day retail and other local community uses.	
f)	A multi-functional EcoValley which is accessible to settlements beyond the garden village; and	The EcoValley is an integral and essential component of this application and has been configured in such a way as to be accessible to new residents of the development as well as surrounding communities. This will be achieved through the development of a network of footpath and cycleways to integrate with existing Rights of Way.
g)	A solution to avoid or mitigate the impact of development upon the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area through the provision of sufficient Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) (subject to monitoring of the quality and quantity standards).	This requirement has been directly addressed through the provision of two areas of on-site SANG (with a total site area of 58.75ha.), which accords with the requirements and guidance of Natural England in both quantitative and qualitative terms. The approach to the location and design of the SANG areas has been the subject of discussions with Natural England and WBC.

Place Shaping Principles		
3.	The siting, layout, and form of development, including landscaping should:	
a)	Draw on and enhance the Site's context, changes in topography and its considerable natural assets such as the River Loddon and Barkham Brook, irreplaceable habitats, and hedgerows, trees, woodland and other features;	As explained in the DAS and landscape strategy, and demonstrated in the submitted drawings including the drainage strategy, this application has been configured in direct accordance with this objective with the preservation and enhancement of green and blue infrastructure on the site having been integral to masterplanning process.
b)	Protect and retain the permanent physical and visual sense of separation of Arborfield and the defined settlements of Arborfield Cross and Shinfield;	Consistent with the LPU Concept Plan by David Locke Associates (LPU Figure 8), this application retains separation from surrounding settlements through both physical separation, the reinforcement of green infrastructure, and careful consideration of use types as well as building densities and heights.
c)	Be designed around a series of walkable neighbourhoods, each providing a range of accessible services and facilities. Where important local facilities are necessarily located beyond the neighbourhood, these should be linked by accessible and attractive routes which support and encourage active travel. The promotion of community facilities for shared use, such as outdoor and indoor sports and leisure provision will be strongly encouraged;	As explained in the DAS, the arrangement of new homes, facilities and transport connections has emerged from a detailed analysis of accessibility, to ensure that future residents will have 'walkable' access to schools, shops, bus connections, leisure opportunities, and other facilities via an extensive network of active travel routes. Evidence of this is particularly clear in the following drawings: - The Transport Assessment - LA139 - Illustrative Play Strategy, which shows the accessibility to play areas based on walking distances;
d)	Establish a comprehensive and integrated network of high-quality and attractive active travel routes, greenways and bus services within the garden village and to destinations in the wider area;	This objective has been directly incorporated within the development as set out in the accompanying Active Travel and Public Transport strategies, which have been incorporated into the parameter plans and Illustrative Masterplan and connect to the wider area.
e)	Incorporate measures to protect the separate identity of Carter's Hill;	This has been ensured by adhering to WBC's concept plan, under which new built development does not occur directly adjacent to Carter's Hill, but rather there is a substantial landscape buffer around it, with Carter's Hill entirely omitted from the red line of the application.
f)	Incorporate measures to conservation and enhancement of heritage assets, including listed buildings, through appropriate design and the provision of sufficient space;	This has been addressed in relation to all heritage assets through the sensitive arrangement of new development, particularly through the inclusion of substantial green space and landscaping around Hall Farm and ruins of the St Bartholomew's Church. Views have also been maintained between the Church ruins and St Bartholomew's Church to the south. A detailed analysis of this is set out in Chapter

		9 of the Environmental Statement which assesses heritage impacts.
g)	Locate district and local centres where they are accessible to the planned housing, and are of an appropriate scale to meet the day-to-day needs with a range of retail (including food store of around 2,500m2), leisure, cultural, community, health and service facilities;	This has been responded to directly through the careful location and arrangement of the District and Local Centres within the illustrative masterplan. This has maximised their accessibility on foot, by cycle and by bus, and thus their future patronage and sustainability into the long term. Allowance has been made in the District Centre for a 2,500 sqm foodstore, the exact size and format of the supermarket will be established in light of a retail needs assessment.
h)	Locate higher development densities around the district and local centres, transport nodes, and along public transport routes subject to site specific sensitivities such as landscape, character and heritage;	This has been addressed directly through the proposed approach to density, shown in the relevant Parameter Plans, in which the highest densities are located around the District/ Local centres and the principle transport routes. These areas have themselves been located in less constrained and visually less sensitive parts of the site, where there is greater potential to accommodate taller forms of development. Conversely, in more sensitive areas such as adjoining the River Loddon, tree belts and other designations, densities and building heights are lower in order to provide a sensitive transition.
i)	Locate new buildings, except those for water compatible uses, outside areas of flood risk, with development planned for sequentially, by placing the most vulnerable development in the lowest areas of flood risk; and	This requirement has been integrated into the proposals from the outset, with all new development located wholly outside of the flood risk area.
j)	Draw on the recreational and ecological opportunities of the River Loddon and Barkham Brook to create a multi-functional EcoValley which provides coherent ecological networks, recreational opportunities and active travel connectivity.	This has been accommodated directly through the specific inclusion of the EcoValley through the proposed description of development.
Delivery Principles		
4.	The delivery of the garden village must be supported by a comprehensive package of infrastructure to support a self-sustaining, thriving and healthy community including the following [sic].	All key elements of infrastructure needed to support LGV have been included in the parameter plans which support this applications, and have been costed within an Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
Masterplanning		
5.	To ensure that development comes forward in a strategic, coordinated and comprehensive manner, delivery should be led by a single agreed vision and masterplan for the whole garden village that demonstrates how the principles established	The parameter plans and Illustrative Masterplan included in this application conform directly to the David Locke Associates Concept Plan (LPU Figure 8) included and consulted on within the LPU, initially in 2021-2022 and subsequently in 2024.

	in this policy and supporting guidance in Appendix C have been considered to ensure high quality development. The masterplan must be produced in partnership between the Council, developers, landowners and key stakeholders, and involve consultation with the local community. Development proposals on individual land parcels must accord with the principles and requirements set out in the agreed vision and masterplan.	The University has worked closely with the WBC, stakeholders and community in relation to the outline proposals through the pre-application process, and have continued to do so through the Strategic Design Code (SDC) process led by WBC. This has included through the joint commissioning / tendering of an independent design practice to produce the SDC for Loddon Garden Village. This will be subject to preparation through late 2025 and is expected to be capable of being adopted by WBC as a material consideration for the determination of future planning applications.
a)	A coordinated and comprehensive landscape led approach to development of the whole Loddon Valley Garden Village to avoid piecemeal and ad-hoc development proposals.	The design approach to Loddon Garden Village has been landscape-led and integrated, to ensure a positive, sustainable and creative response to the site constraints. This is made particularly clear in the Landscape Parameter Plan (PP02)
b)	A strategy for the quantum and distribution of land uses, access points, design and layout principles (including a strategic design code) which draws on a detailed understanding of the area's characteristics, opportunities and constraints.	This application sets out a clear approach to land use, design and access through the parameter plans submitted. Key design considerations for each character area are set out in Chapter 10 of the DAS. These will be further refined through future Reserved Matters applications, having regard to the emerging SDC being led by WBC.
c)	A strategy for the timely delivery of facilities and infrastructure necessary to support each phase of delivery and the garden village as a whole.	The Infrastructure Delivery Plan for the LVGV provides an account of the facilities, services and infrastructure needed to support the development. This has been framed around a deliverable trajectory of build-out for the development. Information as to the phasing of the development is also provided within the Design and Access Statement.
d)	A strategy for creating a distinctive and sustainable community, embracing the best of town and country and that delivers climate resilience.	Loddon Garden Village has been conceived to achieve all of these aims, through the integration of the development with the EcoValley, SANG, ecological enhancement (including 25% Biodiversity Net Gain) and retained agricultural land all incorporated into the proposals. It will consist of a number of discrete character areas, informed by site opportunities and constraints and consistent with the SDC being developed by WBC in partnership with the University and the other LGV Landowners, and will be built to high standards of sustainable design, as set out in the Sustainability Assessment.
e)	A strategy for integrating and implementing arts and cultural activities including public art.	Arts and cultural activities will be promoted and supported in Loddon Garden Village through the

		provision for substantial amounts of Use Class F as well as Use Class E floorspace in the District Centre, which will facilitate a variety of cultural activities. In addition, the extensive public realm, including along the Spine Road as well as in open space areas, will provide multiple opportunities for public art. The outline application does not itself put forward a specific Public Art Strategy, however it is expected that one will be required by planning condition, to ensure compliance at the Reserved Matters stage, in close consultation with WBC, the community and other stakeholders. This is expected to be a requirement of a site-wide planning condition, linked to the Section 106 agreement. Preparation of the Public Art Strategy will also be linked to the Strategic Design Code.
Landscape and green and blue infrastructure		
6.	Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive strategic landscape and green and blue infrastructure strategy that:	
a)	Provides a new EcoValley incorporating the River Loddon and Barkham Brook that contributes to, and enhances, coherent ecological networks and habitats, which are integrated into the wider green and blue infrastructure beyond the garden village;	A new EcoValley, centred on the River Loddon, is provided for in this application. This measures around 180 hectares ;in size, as part of a wider network of green infrastructure that comprises over 2/3rds of the overall application area. As shown in the Landscape Parameter Plan (PP02), this will connect with other green spaces and habitats on and around the site, creating a comprehensive network of green and blue infrastructure.
b)	Protects and enhances the identified attributes of the River Loddon Valued Landscape and Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape;	The landscape-led design approach to Loddon Garden Village has been closely influenced by the attributes of the Valued Landscape areas within and close to the site. As set out in the Environmental Statement, there has been comprehensive analysis of the potential landscape impacts of the proposal, with this process having influenced the design ultimately applied for in order to ensure an appropriate response.
c)	Provide a network of connected, accessible and high-quality open spaces that includes tree lined streets, opportunities for local food growing and natural play, that integrate with the wider green and blue infrastructure network;	As set out in the accompanying Landscape Design Strategy Document, this application makes provision for all open space typologies, totalling to a much greater amount than would be required under conventional WBC standards. The proposed approach to the Spine Road and other key streets in the site will also facilitate extensive tree planting, which will contribute to high-quality placemaking and quality of life.

d)	Retains, and incorporates appropriate buffers for, ancient woodland, ancient or veteran trees, watercourses, hedgerows, and other trees into the connected green and blue infrastructure of the Site;	Substantial, appropriate buffers have been retained and incorporated into this application, as shown in the submitted parameter plans. Particularly high priority has been given to the retention and protection of woodland and ancient/veteran trees. The approach to different constraint types is explained in more detail within Section 3 (Assessment) of the accompanying DAS. Further information can also be found within the accompanying Arboricultural Impact Assessment.
e)	Provides a network of safe, attractive, landscaped and accessible public rights of way across the Site, and where appropriate demonstrates how they connect into the existing rights of way network;	The application site is crossed by several different existing rights of way. These have been incorporated into the Illustrative Masterplan, and a network of additional rights of way are also introduced, as shown in the Movement Parameter Plan (PP03).
f)	Contributes to establishing the Loddon long distance footpath for active travel; and	A new footpath along the river Loddon is included through the site, contributing towards the completion of the Loddon Long Distance Footpath, as shown in the Movement Parameter Plan.
g)	Establishes clear and robust arrangements for future maintenance.	The future maintenance and management of public open space, green and blue infrastructure will be the subject of a Management Plan that will be formally secured by Section 106 agreement and by planning condition. This will itself be the subject of consultation and engagement with the Council and relevant stakeholders.
Drainage and flood alleviation		
7.	Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive drainage and flood alleviation strategy that:	A comprehensive drainage and flood alleviation strategy has been developed for the site, as set out within the accompanying Flood Risk Assessment Drainage Strategy documents by Abley Letchford.
a)	Provides high quality sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) that are integrated into the wider landscape and green and blue infrastructure strategy, including mitigation at source and makes a positive contribution to attractive open spaces, and improvement to biodiversity and water quality;	As set out in the DAS, care has been taken to ensure that SuDS features are located and designed in such a way as to complement the area both visually and in terms of ecology as well as fulfilling their required drainage function. These are shown in the drainage proposals accompanying this application produced by Abley Letchford (A293-OPA-0501-0509), and the landscape design drawings by Savills including the Attenuation Basin Planting Plans (LA316-LA319)
b)	Considers and takes opportunity as appropriate to improve the management of flood risk and reduce the risk of flooding to areas beyond the garden village; and	The proposals in this application are framed around this precise objective and will contribute positively to the management of flood risk both within and beyond the site. This is detailed further in the accompanying Flood Risk Assessment, ES and supporting drawings.
c)	Establishes clear and robust arrangements for future maintenance.	The maintenance and management of drainage and SuDS features will be the subject of comprehensive planning conditions and S106 obligations consistent

		with this policy and accord with the site-wide Infrastructure Development Plan.
Biodiversity		
8	Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive ecological strategy that:	
a)	Achieves a measurable biodiversity net gain of at least 20% as calculated using the latest statutory metric;	As set out in the accompanying Metric produced by EPR, a Biodiversity Net Gain of over 25% will be achieved on the site for habitat units. Net gain for hedgerow and river units is 20%.
b)	Shows how priority habitats and ecological features will be protected and enhanced, having particular regard to any Biodiversity Action Plan and Local Nature Recovery Strategy priorities;	A detailed assessment of this has been provided in the ES (Chapter 11), in light of detailed site surveys, taking into account the predicted impacts of the development and proposed mitigation.
c)	Provide a suitable buffer between the built development and ecological areas, including (but not limited to) Local Wildlife Sites, areas of irreplaceable habitat and areas of priority habitat; and	Substantial, appropriate buffers to all relevant ecological designated areas have been incorporated into the parameter plans and will provide a formal template as to where built development can and cannot take place.
d)	Provide measures to avoid and mitigate the impact of development on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. This will include the provision of sufficient and accessible Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace on-site (as set out in Policy NE3).	The requisite quantity of SANG has been provided in this application. This will be formally defined on approved Parameter Plans, and secured through the Section 106 agreement.
Housing		
9.	Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive housing strategy that:	
a)	Provides a mix of housing types, sizes (including those suitable for extended family living), and tenures that reflect the identified housing needs and demands as set out in the Council's most up to date evidence of housing need;	This application has been conceived on the basis of adhering to Policy H1 of the LPU, and other relevant policies. However as set out in Section 10 of this statement, and in the accompanying Affordable Housing Statement by Pioneer, the mix is for further consideration and discussion with WBC through the course of this application.
b)	Applies designs which support spaces suitable for home working; and	Given the size of Loddon Garden Village there will be ample opportunity to deliver a variety of housing types and to ensure that an appropriate proportion of these will include spaces for home working. Although the Outline application does not itself submit specific house types or layouts for consideration, subsequent Reserved Matters application will address such matters, consistent with appropriately-worded planning conditions and with the SDC.
c)	Shows how the mix of housing types, sizes and tenures will be coordinated through each phase of delivery.	Recognising that Loddon Garden Village will be delivered over a long period across numerous parcels and stages, it is proposed to formalise (by condition) a Housing Implementation Strategy, to be submitted to and approved by WBC. Each

		subsequent Reserved Matters application will be required to demonstrate how it adheres to this strategy, to ensure each phase of residential development provides an appropriate mix. This Site-Wide Housing Implementation Strategy will be updated as the development progresses with each update being first submitted to and approved in writing by WBC.
Employment and Jobs		
	Development proposals should contribute towards a wide range and mix of employment, skills and training opportunities in different sectors of the economy, including small-scale business space and small/medium sized flexible units, within district and local centres as appropriate.	This application will contribute directly through the inclusion of substantial business space within the District and Local Centres. These will offer flexible accommodation at the small and medium scale, to complement larger-scale commercial development at TVSP being brought forward under other applications. As set out in the ES (Chapter 16: Socio-economics), the development will lead to significant economic benefit and job growth both directly and indirectly, in the short, medium and long term.
Sustainable design and construction		
11.	Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive energy and sustainability strategy that:	
a)	Applies passive design principles to ensure that form, orientation, building typologies, development densities and green and blue infrastructure are appropriately used to reduce energy demand and deliver climate resilient neighbourhoods;	As set out in the accompanying Sustainability Statement (Savills), a comprehensive approach is proposed which will address energy, whole life carbon, resources, human-centric design, landscape and ecology, and sustainable transport. These share the common objective of reducing energy demand and providing climate resilience. These principles will be secured via planning condition, and developed into further detail through the Reserved Matters stage, informed by the SDC.
b)	Implements the energy hierarchy at all scales and demonstrates a fabric first approach;	The project aspires to achieve net zero emissions through a 'fabric first' approach in addition to implementing energy-efficient systems. The preliminary energy strategy for the site, as set our within the Climate Change Statement by Savills, includes the recommendation to optimise fabric performance with high levels of insulation, airtight construction and minimised 'thermal bridges'.
c)	Ensures that the total operational energy demand at completion of the Loddon Valley Garden Village is met from renewable or low-carbon sources on site, prioritising opportunities for heat networks, community energy initiatives or other solutions	A fully electric energy approach will be taken with efficient air source heat pumps for heating and hot water. The energy strategy proposes the installation of photovoltaic (PV) panels on suitable roof spaces to convert sunlight into electricity. The scheme will also explore a range of innovative technologies and

	which take advantage of the scale of the development;	strategies that optimise energy use and maximise the benefits of renewable energy generation. Annual carbon emissions for the proposed development have been estimated using the adopted energy strategy and current industry benchmarks. The Climate Change Statement sets out that by 2042, total emissions are projected to be reduced by 93% compared to a baseline compliant with today's Building Regulations. The energy strategy for the site will be developed in more detail at the reserved matters stage.
d)	Provides measures to reduce the whole-life impacts by creating adaptable, durable buildings and employing construction methods and materials which minimise embodied emissions; and	The scheme will assess and minimise whole life carbon, comprising regulated, unregulated and embodied carbon emissions. Resource efficiency and circular economy principles will be prioritised.
e)	Provide measures to reduce water consumption.	As set out in Section 6 of the Sustainability Strategy by Savills, the proposed development aims to achieve a target of under 105 litres per person per day. Strategies include low-flow fixtures and flow restrictors that reduce water flow whole maintaining pressure. Additionally, rainwater collection systems could be installed in each house, allowing the use of collected rainwater for gardening and internal use for the WC.
Transport		
12.	Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive sustainable transport strategy that has been informed by a detailed Transport Assessment and:	
a)	Provides layouts, street designs and associated measures that are safe, suitable and convenient for all users, that prioritise active travel, and facilitates high quality public transport services both within and to key destinations beyond the garden village. This will include:	As set out in the DAS, these principles have been incorporated into this application through means such as: an effective street hierarchy; pedestrian, bus and cycle connectivity; and the integration of green infrastructure and public realm strategy.
i)	The phased delivery of active travel and public transport measures;	New high-quality bus services are proposed, operating between the site and key destinations such as Reading, Wokingham and Winnersh. This strategy has been formulated on the basis of providing new services in a phased manner, with increased frequency over time. Rather than relying on the re-routing of any existing services, new services are provided. This ensures there will be an increase in bus accessibility in the area and avoids detracting from the level of service along existing routes.
ii)	An on-site dedicated network of segregated facilities for pedestrians and cyclists that integrate	There is already an expansive network of pedestrian and cycle links routing within and around the site which provides an excellent basis from which to build

	with active travel networks, including the Public Rights of Way network; and	from to help ensure that travel by foot and cycle is maximised. Various opportunities are therefore included to reflect the differing character areas, the anticipated level of usage and also the nature of the trips that are being catered for. For example, segregated cycleways will be provided to a high specification along the primary streets, and these will be supplemented by an extensive network of shared use footways / cycleways to run alongside the main highway corridors as well as through areas of green space. Off-road routes follow corridors which respond positively to the WBC's planned Greenway networks in the area, including the proposals for the Long Distance Path along the Loddon. A network of other, less formal, paths will also be provided along the peripheries of the development which will complement and enhance the public rights of ways in these areas.
iii)	The provision of new and improved off-site connections for pedestrians and cyclists, providing safe, suitable and convenient access to the surrounding communities, facilities, services and employment opportunities including the Thames Valley Science and Innovation Park, Mereoak Park and Ride, Green Park, Green Park Station, Shinfield, Lower Earley, Winnersh and Winnersh Triangle Station.	Facilities such as these are typically located within reasonable walk and cycle distances from the site and hence represent a significant opportunity for active travel. Accordingly, this application incorporates measures to facilitate pedestrian and cycle trips onto the adjacent networks. These works include the enhancement of routes beyond the site such as improvements to the existing shared use footway / cycleway facilities along the Shinfield Eastern Relief Road and Lower Earley Way. Works will also introduce new footway / cycleway links along corridors where no provision is currently present; such as along Arborfield Road towards Shinfield and also the new connections being provided between Hatch Farm Way and Mill Lane. A more detailed account of this is provided in the Transport Assessment which accompanies this application.
b)	Demonstrates that the design of the access arrangements and the associated highway improvements take into account all the planned development; and	Detailed drawings of the proposed access arrangements are submitted with this application, which have been configured following extensive pre-application engagement and technical refinement. The Transport Assessment and the ES provide a detailed analysis of impacts based on up-to-date highway modelling that has been produced in conjunction with WBC.
c)	Ensures that development will not have a severe adverse impact on the local and strategic highway networks, nor an unacceptable impact upon highway safety following the inclusion of suitable measures to mitigate the impact.	
Utilities		
13.	Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive utility and digital infrastructure and communications strategy. This will include:	

a)	The phased delivery of water, foul water, sewerage and electricity upgrades; and	Loddon Garden Village will bring forward a programme of utility infrastructure upgrades to support the emerging development. Further details of this are set out in the accompanying Utilities Assessment by Abley Letchford which accompany this application.
b)	The phased delivery of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) connectivity, including access to full-fibre gigabit-capable broadband; and 4G and 5G mobile technologies.	
Minerals and waste		
14.	The potential for on-site minerals resources which may be winnable through prior extraction should be informed by minerals resource assessments. Where viable, development proposals should respond and implement a strategy for prior extraction.	This application is accompanied by a Minerals assessment (by RPS) which considers the potential for on-site prior extraction. The conclusion of this assessment is that it is not viable or appropriate to undertake such extraction. As such it is proposed that there will not be specific planning conditions attached to the Outline application requiring further detail in this area.
Stewardship		
15.	Development proposals should proceed in accordance with an agreed strategy for the long-term governance and stewardship arrangements for community assets, including EcoValley, open spaces, public realm areas and community and other relevant facilities.	Appropriate ongoing stewardship of the LVGV will be critical in maintaining the quality of environment and place expected of a garden village. The strategy will be produced collaboratively by the University, other landowners and WBC and secured by planning condition, following consultation with the local stakeholders and community, and having regard to the emerging LPU and SDC. Key elements of the strategy are likely to be focussed on EcoVAlley (under the ownership of the University), Public Highways, community facilities, public open space and play areas. It will have regard to such matters as: • The roles and responsibilities of any governance body or board; • Long-term management and maintenance of common areas; • Community initiatives and resident participation; • The use of any maintenance charges; • Ensuring consistency with the overall vision for the site and Design Code. The delivery of this Strategy will be secured through the Section 106 agreement. Once established the strategy will be monitored annually and adapted to take account of the phased delivery of the LVGV.

9. Technical Assessment

9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 This section of the statement assesses key technical considerations related to the LGV, through a summary of the technical documents that accompany the planning application that identify the impacts of the development and how these will be addressed (the full documents should be referred to for their detailed analysis and conclusions). Each section introduces the relevant adopted and emerging policy position within the Development Plan before assessing the proposed development against this relevant planning policy context and other material considerations, as already identified in Section 7 above.

9.2 Design

9.2.1 Chapter 12 of the NPPF provides guidance on achieving well-designed places. Paragraph 135 requires that developments:

> *"a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
>
> *b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
>
> *c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
>
> *d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
>
> *e) optimise the potential of the Site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
>
> *f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience."*

9.2.2 Various policies from the adopted Development Plan that have the aim of achieving high quality design are discussed under other headings of this chapter, such as Climate Change and Sustainability and Health and Wellbeing.

9.2.3 The emerging Local Plan Update includes a specific policy on place making and quality design: Policy DH1. This requires all new development to be of high-quality design to endure over the lifetime of the development and create a strong sense of place. The policy sets out design principles that should achieved as part of delivering high quality design.

9.2.4 A detailed account of the design principles is set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement. This sets out an overarching approach to LGV framed on the following vision and objectives:

> **Loddon Garden Village - Vision**
>
> *Loddon Garden Village will be Wokingham's exemplar sustainable Garden Community. It will promote wellbeing by integrating contemporary living, heritage, active travel and community*

facilities, with landscape and green-blue infrastructure at the heart of this place. It will create opportunities for work, innovation, education and play on the doorstep, to attract investment and provide a thriving local economy for residents and wider communities.

Objective 1: Grow the local economy and develop community

- Provide appropriate spaces to attract a range of businesses for the local community.
- Connect well into wider employment beyond TVSP and capture growth from science park industries and institutions.
- Deliver schools, health facilities and recreational green spaces across LGV ensuring easy access for new and existing communities.

Objective 2: Conserve and enhance heritage, landscape and ecology

- Incorporate and celebrate local heritage to build a stronger sense of place and identity.
- Develop a landscape led approach with nature-based solutions, also focusing on easy access to a new EcoValley, providing resilient spaces and places for the local community.
- Preserve established habitats to enhance biodiversity and maintain healthy landscapes, supporting grow-your-own spaces to foster healthy lifestyles.

Objective 3: Design and develop with sustainable development solutions

- Incorporate and celebrate local heritage to build a stronger sense of place and identity.
- Develop a landscape led approach with nature-based solutions, also focusing on easy access to a new EcoValley, providing resilient spaces and places for the local community.
- Preserve established habitats to enhance biodiversity and maintain healthy landscapes, supporting grow-your-own spaces to foster healthy lifestyles.

9.2.5 These principles are subsequently applied on a site-wide basis as expressed through the Parameter Plans and Illustrative Masterplan. They are also illustrated on a more specific basis relevant to individual 'character areas' within the site, which include:

- District Centre
- Local Centre
- Community Hub
- Spine Road
- Residential neighbourhoods

9.2.6 Work to further establish how these principles will be delivered will continue through the determination period for the applications and via the Strategic Design Code process (working closely with WBC, the NHS / CCB and others), and through the Reserved Matters process which will adhere to all the agreed principles.

9.3 Climate Change and Sustainability

9.3.1 Paragraph 164 of the NPPF sets out that new development should be planned for in ways that:

"avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through incorporating green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems; and

help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings in plans should reflect the Government's policy for national technical standards."

9.3.2 Within the adopted Core Strategy, Policy CP1 (Sustainable development) expects development to contribute towards the goal of reaching zero-carbon developments, include appropriate on-site renewable energy features, and minimise energy and waste consumption by measures including the use of appropriate layout and orientation, building form, design and construction, and design to take account of microclimate so as to minimise carbon dioxide emissions through giving careful consideration to how all aspects of development form.

9.3.3 Within the MDD, Policy CC04 (Sustainable Design and Construction) requires developments to seek to deliver high quality sustainably designed and constructed development. Policy CC05 (Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks) encourages local opportunities to contribute towards decentralised energy supply from renewable and low-carbon technologies. It further states that planning permission will only be granted for proposals that deliver a minimum 10% reduction in carbon emissions through renewable energy or low carbon technology.

9.3.4 Chapter 6 of the emerging Local Plan Update relates to Climate Change and Energy. Policy CE1 (Design principles for efficient buildings) requires development proposals to adequately demonstrate the following design principles have been considered:

- Orientation of buildings;
- Form of buildings;
- Fabric of buildings;
- Heat Supply; and
- Renewable energy generation.

9.3.5 Policy CE2 (Environmental standards for non-residential development) relates to non-residential development proposals and Policy CE3 (Environmental standards for residential development) relates to residential development proposals. Both policies sets out a number of requirements that must be met and set out in an Energy and Sustainability Statement.

9.3.6 Policy CE4 (Supporting a circular economy) supports development proposals which demonstrate compatibility with, or furthering of, a strong circular economy in the local area. A circular economy strategy is submitted as part of this application in line with this policy.

9.3.7 Policy CE5 (Embodied carbon) requires development proposals to take opportunities to reduce the development's embodied carbon content, through the careful choice, use and sourcing of materials. How the development has sought to do this is covered in the accompanying Sustainability Statement. A whole-life carbon assessment is also submitted with the application in accordance with Policy CE5.

9.3.8 Policy CE5 also covers the demolition of buildings. It sets out that there is a presumption in favour of repairing, refurbishing, re-using and re-purposing existing buildings over their demolition. This planning application includes significant demolitions, however these are justified in order to enable the comprehensive development of the site, in particular the demolition of CEDAR and other large farm-related buildings and structures. Elsewhere however, existing buildings (including those with heritage value) are converted and/or incorporated into the masterplan in order to support high-quality place making and fulfil sustainable development objectives.

9.3.9 A Sustainability Statement and Climate Change Statement accompany this application which demonstrate how the proposed development has accorded with these.

9.3.10 Climate Change

9.3.11 Due to the outline nature of the application, the proposed energy strategy is indicative and will be confirmed during reserved matters application. A preliminary energy strategy has been developed which aims to minimise carbon dioxide emissions and enhance sustainability. It follows the principles of the energy hierarchy which involves reducing energy use through passive and energy-efficient design, delivering clean energy and utilising renewable energy sources. Key recommendations of the energy strategy which will be developed at the reserved matters stage include:

- Optimised fabric performance with high levels of insultation, airtight construction and minimised thermal bridges;
- A fully electric energy approach with efficient air/ground source hear pumps for heating and hot water; and
- Installation of photovoltaic (PV) panels on suitable roof spaces to convert sunlight into electricity, matching the operational demand to achieve carbon neutrality.

9.3.12 The overheating strategy will be further developed at the reserved matters stage with the aim of providing healthy living environments. Key points of this strategy will include the use of an adaptive approach for thermal comfort in naturally ventilated buildings.

9.3.13 The Climate Change Statement includes an estimate of the annual carbon emissions for the proposed development. This has been estimated using the adopted energy strategy and current industry benchmarks. The proposal includes sufficient PV panels to offset operational demand, as required by the emerging LPU, and is estimated to be able to reduce operational carbon emissions by 100% compared to baseline compliance. In addition, efforts to specify lower carbon intensive materials within an efficient design is estimated to reduce embodied carbon emissions by 50% completed to the baseline case. When considering whole life carbon emissions, the scheme has potential to reduce emissions by 72% against the baseline case.

9.3.14 To ensure thermal comfort, an overheating strategy has been embedded into the design, combining passive measures such as orientation, shading, and natural ventilation with efficient active systems. These measures will be refined through detailed modelling at future Reserved Matters stages.

9.3.15 Sustainability

9.3.16 A comprehensive sustainability framework has been developed for LGV to guide the design process and ensure the delivery of a future-ready, environmentally responsible community. The framework is built on a set of measurable and ambitious sustainability targets to ensure each phase not only meets but exceeds the standards needed to deliver benefits to local communities. The following concepts form part of the sustainability framework, as set out in the Sustainability Statement, and are discussed in more detail in relevant sections of Section 9 of this Planning Statement.

- **Energy** – As set out above, the project aspires to achieve net zero emissions through a 'fabric first' approach in addition to implementing energy efficient systems. The scheme will utilise fossil fuel free heating and hot water solutions and renewable energy generation technologies will generate clean energy on-site, offsetting the site's energy consumption.
- **Whole Life Carbon** – The scheme will assess and minimise whole life carbon, comprising regulated, unregulated and embodied carbon emissions. Resource efficiency and circular economy principles will be prioritised.
- **Resources** – Waste management and water conservation strategies will be implemented. The design will also focus on protecting green spaces, preventing soil erosion and promoting sustainable transportation to reduce environmental impact.
- **Human-centric Design** – A human-centric approach is being taken to prioritise residents' wellbeing. Accessibility and safety will be promoted. Sustainable food production will be encouraged along with green infrastructure to improve air quality. The proposals will include

a range of housing options supporting diverse socio-economic backgrounds and multigenerational living.

- **Landscape and Ecology** – Sustainable drainage and flood risk has been accounted for, including an allowance for climate related changed to rainfall patterns. The biodiversity strategy for the site will secure a biodiversity net gain, enhance ecosystems by creating diverse habitats and use drought-resistant plants. Native species will be prioritised to support local wildlife.
- **Sustainable Transport** – The proposals aim to enhance active travel by ensuring amenities are within walking or cycling distance. The scheme will promote electric vehicle (EV) ownership through strategically located charging stations and integrated charging infrastructure. Public transport hubs and a cycling network will decrease reliance on private cars.

9.3.17 Through the implementation of the above sustainability framework and proposed energy strategy, the proposed development will ensure compliance with the relevant parts of Core Strategy Policy CP01; MDD Policy CC04 and CC05; emerging LPU Policies CE1, CE2, CE3, CE4 and CE5; as well as relevant parts of the NPPF.

9.4 Transport and Access

9.4.1 Chapter 9 of the NPPF relates to Promoting Sustainable Transport. Paragraph 115 requires that:

> *"a) sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the Site, the type of development and its location;*
>
> *b) safe and suitable access to the Site can be achieved for all users;*
>
> *c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and*
>
> *d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach."*

9.4.2 Within the adopted Development Plan, Policy CP6 (Managing Travel Demand) of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure development proposals provide for sustainable forms of transport to allow choice, improve the existing infrastructure network, enhance facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, mitigate any adverse effects upon the local and strategic transport network that arise from the development proposed, enhance road safety and do not cause highway problems or lead to traffic related environmental problems.

9.4.3 Policy CC07 (Parking) of the MDD requires proposed parking provision to meet the standards set out in Appendix 2 of the MDD. The standards provided differ depending on whether the location is urban, town and fringe or village.

9.4.4 Within the emerging Local Plan Update, Policy C1 (Active and sustainable transport and accessibility) requires development proposals to support the delivery of active and sustainable transport. The policy sets out the following requirements:

- prioritise travel by active means (including walking, cycling and wheeling), public transport, and incorporate inclusive infrastructure which provides connections to and within the development;
- development proposals should support the increased uptake of electric and zero emissions vehicles;

- ensure development is located where people of all ages and level of physical ability are able, or will be able, to access a wide range of essential social, community, and cultural facilities;
- optimise accessibility and connectivity both within the proposed development and in the surrounding area, which includes having regard to schemes identified in cycling and walking strategies;
- make active travel (including walking, cycling and wheeling) the mode of choice for shorter journeys, both within and outside the Site, including safe and attractive links to new and existing facilities, services, bus stops, train stations and existing non-motorised routes;
- ensure buildings and spaces are inclusively designed to be legible and permeable for all, and provide for the delivery of, and improvement to, walking and cycling routes that serve the Site, the wider area and adjoining development parcels;
- reduce reliance on single occupancy car trips and prioritise and increase the use of sustainable transport modes;
- maximise opportunities to provide improved and viable public and community transport and other mobility services and routes, including through active engagement with providers as appropriate;
- maximise integration of, and interchange between, sustainable transport modes;
- embrace opportunities to minimise congestion and delay, as part of an effective strategy to manage harmful emissions and improve air quality;
- facilitate transport innovations and solutions which reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

9.4.5 As set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement, parameter plans and Transport Statement, each of the above principles has been incorporated into the proposals for Loddon Garden Village, maximising the potential for active and sustainable transport modes.

9.4.6 LPU Policy C2 (Mitigation of transport impacts and highways safety and design) requires development proposals to fully assess the transport impacts of the development and provide for appropriate mitigation to minimise the adverse effects.

9.4.7 With regards to highway safety and design, Policy C2 requires development proposals to implement a proportionate package of measures that:

> *"a) Ensure safe and suitable access to the Site for all users;*
>
> *b) Contribute towards a high quality public realm designed in accordance with Living Streets (or any successor document), user access hierarchy and demonstrate how the relevant principles of Healthy Streets have been incorporated;*
>
> *c) Prioritise pedestrian, cycling and sustainable transport in accordance with Policy C1;*
>
> *d) Design roads to optimise traffic flows to avoid adverse environmental impacts; and*
>
> *e) Provide effective, convenient and safe delivery, collection, servicing and refuse, and recycling collection arrangements."*

9.4.8 LPU Policy C3 (Active travel) requires development proposals to promote sustainable transport by prioritising active travel including walking, wheeling and cycling. Policy C4 of the LPU (Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way) includes a section on development proposals in the vicinity of the River Loddon and sets out that they should contribute towards the achievement of a multi-use riverside footpath, cycleway and bridleway.

9.4.9 Chapter 17 of the Environmental Statement considers the transport and highways impact of the development. The study area for the assessment was determined at the Scoping stage in consultation with WBC. It encompasses the road corridors within the immediate vicinity of the development including Arborfield Road, Shinfield Eastern Relief Road, Lower Early Way, Mill Lane

and Mole Road. It also includes road links along the wider highway network to ensure that areas which might experience significant changes in traffic flows are appraised.

9.4.10 WBC has developed its own traffic model in order to establish future year traffic flows for scenarios with and without the development and this model has been used to underpin the assessment, allowing for a comprehensive approach that incorporates background traffic growth, committed development and other planned growth in the area. It allows for “with” and “without” development scenarios to be calculated at 2032 and 2040.

9.4.11 The modelling methodology and scope of the transport appraisal encompasses the road links and junctions depicted at Figure 17.1 of the Environmental Statement. There are 26 in total. , The appraisal also includes the proposed access junctions for the Garden Village, which, in addition to this application, also includes development at adjacent parcels which comprise the remaining components of the Strategic Development Location. There are seven new junctions proposed and assessed by the model.

9.4.12 The Environmental Statement establishes a baseline that includes public transport routes, walking and cycling routes and facilities within the proximity of the site. Accident data allows for an appraisal of the effects on road safety.

9.4.13 The effects considered by the Environmental Statement include, Severance of communities, vehicle delay, pedestrian and cyclist delay, safety and large loads. The approach to assessing the magnitude of the effects is outlined using IMEA guidelines.

9.4.14 A number of mitigation measures are inherent to the design on the proposal and these are accounted for within the assessment. This includes the new river crossing of the Loddon and bridge over the M4 motorway corridor, which will not only act to facilitate the broad dispersal of development traffic but also offer the opportunity for some background traffic to re-route through the development and thereby provide some relief to adjacent areas such as within and around Sindlesham and Shinfield

9.4.15 The Assessment considers the impacts of both the construction and operational (post completion) stages. When assessing the potential for adverse effects, account is taken of the magnitude of change in the context of the sensitivity of each location.

9.4.16 During the construction period, the nature of HGV trips associated with the construction activities is such that it has the potential to create a minor adverse effect in terms of pedestrian amenity along the surrounding network. The analysis has also identified a potential for minor adverse effects to driver delay during the construction of the access junctions, albeit these are temporary in nature, anticipated to last 6-9 months. The implementation of the CEMP will help to mitigate these adverse effects which are temporary in nature.

9.4.17 During the operational phase, some minor and moderate adverse effects are predicted, in the form of journey delays for motorised and non-motorised modes of transport. There are many instances where traffic flows along highway links would not increase significantly when compared to the baseline scenario. Indeed, in the cases where the magnitude of change in less than 10%, the environmental effects would not be perceptible.

9.4.18 There are some instances where traffic flows would decrease slightly due to the traffic adopting different routings in response to the different traffic flows and highway network configuration that will be in place by 2040

9.4.19 Similarly, the creation of the new highway connections through the Proposed Development which links the Arborfield Road and Lower Early Way corridors via the new M4 overbridge also acts to relieve some of the traffic flows which currently route along the western section of Lower Early Way.

9.4.20 The Assessment also considers severance, which is the perceived division that can occur within a community when it becomes separated by major transport infrastructure, which will potentially occur in six assessed locations.

9.4.21 Of the highway links assessed, five are predicted to experience a change in flow of 30 – 60%, which equates to a minor magnitude of effect under the definitions of the Environmental Statement. The Assessment identifies these links and the severity of the effects and explains the significance of those effects is not significant and would not preclude the proposed development.

9.4.22 In summary, the transport and traffic effects during the operational phase of does have potential for some minor adverse and moderate adverse effects in terms of driver delay, non-motorised user delay and non-motorised user amenity along some areas of the surrounding network. There is also the potential for some minor adverse effects in terms of severance and fear and intimidation.

9.4.23 A package of off-site highway works is proposed as scheme specific mitigation to ensure that the vehicular traffic arising from the proposed development can be accommodated satisfactorily in the "With Development" scenarios.

9.4.24 The proposals include measures aimed at encouraging journeys by active travel and public transport modes as well as improvement schemes to better cater for pedestrian and cycle journeys to and from destinations beyond the application site. Appendix 17.2 provides an Outline Travel Plan which sets out measures which can be adopted or adapted by future Travel Plans specific to the detailed phases of development come forward.

9.4.25 When all of the proposed mitigation measures are taken into consideration, the residual adverse effects are reduced to minor significance, with some beneficial effects, particularly resulting from the proposals to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity along the surrounding networks.

9.4.26 Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios

9.4.27 Given the transport and highway effects range from minor adverse effects to moderate beneficial effects, there is clearly no justification for resisting this proposal on highway safety grounds

9.5 Ecology and Biodiversity

9.5.1 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF sets out that planning decisions should minimise impacts on and provide net gains in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs.

9.5.2 The Site includes Local Wildlife Sites, Ancient Woodland, Priority habitats and spaces and other protected and notable species. Within the adopted Development Plan, Policy CP7 (Biodiversity) sets out that development:

> *"A) Which may harm county designated sites (Local Wildlife Sites in Berkshire), whether directly or indirectly, or*
>
> *B) Which may harm habitats or, species of principle importance in England for nature conservation, veteran trees or features of the landscape that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna (including wildlife and river corridors), whether directly or indirectly, or*
>
> *C) That compromises the implementation of the national, regional, county and local biodiversity action plans*

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, that no alternative site that would result in less or no harm is available which will meet the need, and:

i) Mitigation measures can be put in place to prevent damaging impacts;

or

ii) Appropriate compensation measures to offset the scale and kind of losses are provided."

9.5.3 Policy TB23 (Biodiversity and Development) of the MDD sets out that development proposals must demonstrate how that:

"a) Provide opportunities, including through design, layout and landscaping to incorporate new biodiversity features or enhance existing

b) Provide appropriate buffer zones between development proposals and designated sites as well as habitats and species of principle importance for nature conservation

c) Ensure that all existing and new developments are ecologically permeable through the protection of existing and the provision of new continuous wildlife corridors, which shall be integrated and linked to the wider green infrastructure network."

9.5.4 Chapter 11 of the LPU relates to the Natural Environment. Policy NE1 (Biodiversity and geodiversity) sets out that development proposals should protect and enhance biodiversity and/or geodiversity features of conservation value and implement appropriate conservation management. The degree of protection will be proportionate to the status of the Site or species in terms of its international, national and/or local importance.

9.5.5 The policy requires development proposals to demonstrate through a suitable level of ecological survey information and assessment how they conserve and enhance biodiversity and/or geodiversity including their long-term management.

9.5.6 An extensive programme of field surveys across the Site have been carried out between 2022 and 2025 and are included within the planning application submission. Surveys include:

- Habitat Survey;
- Botany Surveys;
- Hazel Dormouse Surveys;
- [redacted]
- Breeding Bird Survey;
- Bat Surveys;
- Great Crested Newt eDNA;
- Invertebrate Surveys;
- River Corridor Survey;
- Winter Bird Surveys;
- White-clawed Crayfish eDNA and Habitat Assessment;
- Veteran Tree Surveys; and
- Freshwater Fish Survey.

9.5.7 Section 3 of this Planning Statement confirmed Internationally Designated Statutory Sites and Nationally Designated Statutory Sites that are located within 5km of the Site. It also confirmed Non-Statutory Designed Sites within and surrounding the Site, including five Local Wildlife Sites within the Site Boundary.

9.5.8 The accompanying Ecology Surveys and ES Chapter on Ecology confirms that there are a wide variety of habitat types at the Site including cereal crops, agricultural grasslands, semi-improved

neutral grasslands, scrub, rush pasture, reedbeds, swamps, wet and dry woodland, ditches, hedgerows, tree lines, veteran trees, urban land, standing water, streams and the River Loddon.

9.5.9 A range of mitigation measures have been designed into the Proposed Development, alongside measures which are commonly implemented as part of the delivery of a new development, to avoid significant negative effects on Important Ecological Features (IEF). These measures are set out in detail within the accompanying ES and include:

- The CEMP will prescribe measures to prevent and mitigate dust, noise, lighting and other forms of pollution.
- Buffer Zones: All retained habitats identified as IEFs will be appropriately buffered. This will include the implementation of buffers during the construction phase to prevent damage, whilst the Proposed Development has been designed to incorporate semi-natural buffers during the operational phase.
- Tree Root Protection Zones: Retained trees and hedgerows will be appropriately avoided at construction.
- Drainage Strategy: Adverse effects on hydrology and water quality will be avoided and mitigated during the operational phase of development by the implementation of a detailed Drainage Strategy for each development parcel.
- Lighting Strategy: The impacts of artificial lighting will be controlled through measures to be implemented as part of the CEMP at construction phase. At operational phase, a lighting strategy will be secured for each development parcel which will take account of ecological considerations.
- Access Management: The Proposed Development includes the delivery of 40.27ha of SANG to avoid adverse impacts on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. The footpath network across the County Park has been, and will be, designed to direct footfall through away from sensitive ecological features, including LSW's and overwintering wildfowl.
- Provision of Greenspaces: The design of the Proposed Development has incorporated extensive areas of open greenspace, including the EcoValley, natural greenspace, amenity greenspace and parks and gardens.

9.5.10 The ES confirms that through the above key mitigation measures at the construction phase, residual negative effects are limited to disturbance to wintering birds resulting in a temporary negative effect at the local level.

9.5.11 Through the proposals for extensive habitat creation and restoration within the EcoValley, significant positive effects will be achieved for the majority of Important Ecological Features at the site. The proposals therefore accord with Policies CP7 and TB23 of the adopted development plan and Policy NE1 of the emerging LPU.

9.5.12 Table 9.2 outlines further requirements of Policy NE1 of the emerging LPU and how the Proposed Development accords with these.

Table 9.2: Assessment of development proposals against Emerging Local Plan Update Policy NE1 Requirements 9

	Emerging Local Plan Update Policy NE1 Requirements	Details of the proposed development
3a	Avoids fragmentation of existing habitats and provides coherent ecological connectivity and permeability that is integrated and linked to the wider green and blue infrastructure network, through the restoration, enhancement and connection of: linear features such as wildlife corridors; stepping stones;	Green corridors are included within the Proposed Development to aid in species movement through the Site and increase permeability in the local landscape. This will enable species to more easily shift their distributions over time to adapt to local

	and any nature recovery networks (including links to habitats outside the borough).	climates. Proposals for habitat creation include extensive habitat creation and/or restoration along the River Loddon floodplains that will seek to improve the quality of habitats available.
3b	Incorporates beneficial biodiversity and/or geodiversity conservation features and enhances existing features through design, layout and landscaping.	The Proposed Development incorporates extensive measures to benefit biodiversity including enhancing existing features and incorporating measures to increase resilience to anticipated climate change.
3c	Provides or retains appropriate buffer zones between development proposals and designated sites, protected species, priority species or priority habitats or main rivers, which are informed by detailed site-based assessment.	As set out above, the Proposed Development includes appropriate buffer zones.
3d	Seeks to eradicate or control any invasive non-native species present on site.	Management Plans for the Site will include the removal of invasive species where present.
3e	Is compatible with any national, regional, county, and local biodiversity action plans, Local Nature Recovery Strategy and/or other strategic conservation management plans for species or habitats.	Relevant biodiversity plans and strategies have informed the design of the Proposed Development and the preparation of the ES Chapter on Ecology. Further information is included within the ES.
4	Development proposals likely to result in a significant effect on internationally designated sites either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the adverse effects on the integrity of the designated site can be fully avoided, mitigated and/or compensated.	The Proposed Development includes the delivery of over 40 hectares of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to avoid adverse impacts on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA in line with legislation, local planning policy and Natural England Guidelines (2021).
5	Development proposals that are likely to have an adverse effect on the notified features of a nationally designated site will only be supported in exceptional circumstances, and provided it has been clearly demonstrated that: a) A suitable alternative site with a lesser impact than that proposed is not available; b) The on-site biodiversity or geodiversity benefits of the proposal including, where applicable, the overall site or wider habitats network, clearly outweigh the impacts on the notified features of the Site; and c) All appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures have been proposed and secured.	Due to the distance to the Site, no impacts are predicted on SSSI's during the construction phase. At the operation phase, with the inherent design mitigation proposed, no significant negative effects are anticipated as a result of an increase in recreational pressure of SSSI's within Zones of Influence.
6	Development proposals that are likely to result in the loss or deterioration of an irreplaceable habitat, (such as ancient woodland, ancient or veteran trees) will only be supported in exceptional circumstances, where:	The loss of veteran trees will be mitigated through a two-step strategy, involving tree replacement and dead wood management as set out within the ES.

	a) A suitable alternative with a lesser impact than that proposed is not available; b) It has been adequately demonstrated that the irreplaceable habitat cannot be retained within the proposed development scheme; c) The need and benefits of the proposed development in that location and form clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration; and d) Adequate compensation measures are provided on site wherever possible, and offsite where this is not feasible. The scale and quality of the compensation measures required will be commensurate to the loss or deterioration of the irreplaceable habitat and will be considered on a site-by-site basis, including their long-term management and maintenance.	
7	Development proposals which are likely to have an adverse effect on a site of local importance (including priority species or priority habitats, and sites that meet the criteria for designation as a Local Wildlife Site or Local Geological Site) will only be supported where they accord with the following sequential approach: a) No alternative with a lesser impact is available; b) The need and benefits of the proposed development in that location and form clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration; c) All proportionate mitigation measures to minimise adverse effects are included within the development proposal; and d) As a last resort, secure appropriate compensation measures on-site wherever possible, and off-site where this is not feasible, including their long-term management and maintenance.	The implementation of mitigation measures is likely to result in a significant positive effect on sites of local importance.

9.5.13 Biodiversity Net Gain

9.5.14 NPPF Paragraph 193 states that opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

9.5.15 The PPG includes guidance on BNG, which is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021). Under the statutory framework for BNG, subject to some exceptions, every grant of planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met ("the biodiversity gain condition"). This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat. This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits.

9.5.16 Policy NE2 (Biodiversity net gain) of the LPU requires all development proposals to demonstrate a biodiversity net gain calculated via the most up-to-date national biodiversity accounting metric and

provide details of the long-term maintenance and management of the net gain. This should be delivered on site in the first instance, or through biodiversity off-setting where appropriate. Policy SS13 (Loddon Valley Garden Village) requires the development proposals for the Site to achieve a measurable biodiversity net gain of at least 20%.

9.5.17 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric has been completed and shows that the Proposed Development is predicted to result in a net gain of 206.76 habitat units (25.4%), 28.29 hedgerow units (20.15%) and 12.52 river units (20.59%).

9.5.18 As outlined in the ES, this figure includes a discount of units that would have otherwise been created in order to deliver a basic functional SANG, in line with the requirements of Natural England's SANG Guidance. It also discounts features that are required as mitigation/compensation for significant ecological effects.

9.5.19 The output generated by the statutory metric relates to habitats only, and does not account for the gains proposed for specific species groups, such as the provision of hibernation features for herptiles, or the inclusion of wildlife boxes as outlined in the Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement Strategy.

9.5.20 The metric also does not reflect the enhanced landscape-level connectivity that the SANG and EcoValley will provide for species such as invertebrates, reptiles and mammals. The creation of EcoValley would create a substantial green link through the landscape, linking up to existing biodiverse greenspaces such as Langley Mead SANG and The Ridge SANG.

9.5.21 SANG

9.5.22 Parts of the Site are located within 5km of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Policy CP8 (Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area) of the adopted Core Strategy states that development which alone or in combination is likely to have a significant effects on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures to avoid and mitigate any potential adverse effects are delivered.

9.5.23 Policy NE3 (Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area) of the LPU sets out that development proposals that are likely to have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the SPA must demonstrate that adequate measures will be put in place to avoid or mitigate any such effects. Such measures must be agreed with the Council and Natural England.

9.5.24 Within the 400m - 5km zone, the policy requires development proposals for a net increase in dwellings to secure the SANG and SAMM standards set out within the policy. A minimum of 8 hectares of SANG land (after discounting to account for current access and capacity) should be provided per 1,000 new occupants. Development proposals for a net increase of more than 50 dwellings are expected to provide their own bespoke SANG.

9.5.25 Within the 5-7km zone, the policy states development proposals for a net increase of more than 50 dwellings may be required to provide mitigation measures based on a combination of SAMM and the provision of SANG to a lower standard than within the 400m - 5km zone. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with Natural England and, where appropriate, a Habitats Regulations Assessment may be required to ascertain whether the proposal could have an adverse effect on the SPA.

9.5.26 Part of the Site is located within the 5km mitigation zone and part of the Site is located within the 7km mitigation zone. Circa 700 homes are proposed within the 5km zone and circa 2,100 homes are proposed within the 7km zone.

9.5.27 SANG land is proposed to avoid adverse impacts on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. 40.27ha of SANG is proposed as part of the development across two areas which are to be connected by

approximately 18ha of SANG Link. This provision meets the requirements and guidance of Natural England in both quantitative and qualitative terms. The approach to the location and design of the SANG areas has been the subject of discussions with Natural England and WBC.

9.5.28 The SANG land will be secured in perpetuity via a S106 agreement. This will protect these areas as accessible greenspace for members of the public and ensure their continued management. These areas will seek to provide attractive alternative recreational spaces for new and existing residents in the local area, thereby drawing visitors away from potentially sensitive sites, including the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, accessible SSSI's and LWS's.

9.5.29 The provision of SANG will ensure compliance with the above policies including Policy NE3 and Policy SS13 of the emerging LPU as well as Natural England Guidelines.

9.6 Agricultural Assessment

9.6.1 Paragraph 187b of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodlands. Best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land is defined in the NPPF glossary as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

9.6.2 Within the Core Strategy, Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development) sets out that development proposals should avoid areas of best and most versatile land.

9.6.3 Within the emerging LPU, Policy SS1 (Sustainable Development Principles) states that development proposals will be expected avoid the unplanned loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, except in exceptional circumstances.

9.6.4 An Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey has been undertaken across the Site by Reading Agricultural Consultants (RAC). The findings have been included in the Agricultural Land Classification and Soil Resources Report (June 2025), which accompanies this application. The survey identifies approximately 44% of the site (a total of 176.2 ha) as the Best and Most Versatile (BVA) agricultural land, comprising Grade 2 and Subgrade 3a land. The remaining areas are classified as Subgrade 3b, Grade 4, or non-agricultural land. These findings provide a robust baseline for understanding agricultural land quality across the site. Further assessment of development impact and soil resource management will be undertaken at the reserved matters stage.

9.6.5 Whilst it is acknowledged that the development would entail the loss of some BMV agricultural land, this forms part of the wider planned strategy for Wokingham Borough, with the site having been selected following a robust assessment of alternatives through the Local Plan process, all of which would entail some BMV losses in a similar way. The application therefore is compliant with relevant provisions of local and national planning policy.

9.7 Arboricultural Assessment

9.7.1 Paragraph 136 of the NPPF sets out that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. It requires planning policies and decisions to ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. The right trees should be planted in the right places, and solutions should be found so that they are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.

9.7.2 Paragraph 193 of the NPPF states that development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

9.7.3 Within the Core Strategy, Policy CP7 (Biodiversity) states that development which may harm veteran trees or features of the landscape that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna, will only be permitted if it has been clearly demonstrated that the need for the proposal outweighs the need to safeguard the nature conservation importance, that no alternative site that would result in less or no harm is available which will meet the need, and mitigation measures can be put in place to prevent damaging impacts or appropriate compensation measures to offset the scale and kind of losses are provided.

9.7.4 Policy CC03 (Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping) of the MDD sets out that development proposals should demonstrate how they have considered and achieved a number of criteria, including:

- Provide new or protect and enhance the Borough's Green Infrastructure networks, including the need to mitigate potential impacts of new development;
- Protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features; and
- Incorporate high quality, ideally, native planting and landscaping as an integral part of the scheme.

9.7.5 The policy goes on to say that development proposals which would result in the loss, fragmentation or isolation of areas of green infrastructure will not be acceptable.

9.7.6 Within the emerging Local Plan update, Policy NE4 (Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows) sets out that development proposals should:

- Incorporate existing trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows and ensure they are well integrated within the public realm, in a suitably landscaped setting;
- Ensure the existing pattern of fields, hedges and hedgerows, woodland, trees, watercourses, water bodies, underlying topography and other landscape features are retained and that the design of the scheme is integrated into the landscape;
- Provide sufficient space to enable existing trees to thrive by maintaining adequate root protection areas and space for the trunk and branches to grow;
- Ensure buildings are carefully sited to limit excessive shading to residential properties;
- Provide appropriate buffer zones around woodlands, including semi-natural ancient woodlands, planted ancient woodland sites, orchards, hedgerows and individual trees;
- Provide enhanced and additional tree and hedgerow planting wherever possible, but particularly where there are opportunities to restore or develop habitat and landscape links between woodlands and hedgerows and between these features and other landscape or habitat features such as river corridors;
- Maximise opportunities for planting urban trees, shrubs and hedges within streets and greenspace to create rich urban landscapes; and
- Demonstrate sufficient rooting volume of soil, irrigation and drainage for trees to thrive in the long term.

9.7.7 The draft policy also states that development proposals that are likely to affect trees, irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland, ancient or veteran trees), hedges or hedgerows either on-site or nearby, should:

- Assess the health of all trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows affected, describing and assessing their value and the potential impact of the development as part of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment submitted with a planning application;
- Provide an appropriate Arboricultural Method Statement, including a Tree Constraints Plan and Tree and Woodland Protection Plan; and
- Ensure all tree and hedge/hedgerow protection measures are in place prior to works commencing on site, commensurate with any pre-commencement planning conditions.

9.7.8 Part 5 of the draft policy states that the loss, threat or damage to any tree, woodland, hedge or hedgerow of visual amenity, heritage or nature conservation value, will not be permitted unless the development proposal has been designed to avoid, reduce or minimise impact, or mitigation measures are incorporated as part of a development proposal, that provide equivalent character, visual amenity, heritage value, as well as habitat connectivity.

9.7.9 The Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) accompanying the application includes a baseline survey of all the existing trees on the site. In line with the British Standard 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction, this Assessment has considered the over 4,600 trees and groups of trees on the site and how many of these trees will be retained and lost as a percentage of the tree stock on the site. This is summarised below:

Table 10.1: Summary of arboricultural impacts

Grade and lifespan	Trees Before	Trees After	Trees Lost	Percentage of Grade Lost	Percentage of Grade Retained
U- unviable < 10 years	70	63	7	10%	90%
C- Low quality – 10 years +	1863	1642	221	12%	88%
B – Moderate quality – 20 years plus	2426	1680	74+	31%	69%
A -High Quality – 20 years plus	253	237	16	6%	94%

9.7.10 The AIA also details the amount of woodland and hedgerow that will be lost to achieve this development. The relative losses of woodland are minor, just 3.1% of the total on site, whilst nearly 80% of the hedgerows are retained. In the context of a large residential-led development, such losses are unavoidable but the comprehensive planting proposals accompanying this application more than compensate these losses and provide an overall betterment in line with Policy CC03 and emerging Policy NE4.

9.7.11 The AIA confirms both woodlands and individual veteran trees meeting the NPPF's definitions of Irreplaceable Habitat are present on the site and these will all be retained as part of the proposals in line with the above policies. The plans accompanying the AIA show buffers around the ancient woodland and veteran trees in line with Natural England advice. Within these buffers lies existing roads and vehicular accesses that are to be repurposed as Active Travel Routes. These access

routes pass within the root protection areas and the buffers so their repurposing represents a deintensification of use. This is consistent with the local policies discussed above.

9.7.12 Two mature oaks and a Wellingtonia that would otherwise be lost will be repurposed as standing dead wood habitat (monoxyle). Habitat creation of this kind can provide dead wood resource for over 50 years, mitigating to some extent the habitat loss.

9.7.13 The AIA includes standard tree protection measures shown in a Tree Protection Plan and an Arboricultural Method Statement, Tree Protection Phasing Schedule and an Arboricultural Supervision Schedule.

9.7.14 The AIA also includes Heads of Terms of an Outline Arboricultural Management Plan that sets out a summary of the proposed approach to the long term management of the extensive remaining tree stock on the site.

9.7.15 Overall there are no conflicts between this proposal and national and local policy

9.7.16 Landscape and Visual Impact

9.7.17 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF seeks to ensure the protection and enhancement of Valued Landscapes.

9.7.18 Policy TB21 (Landscape Character) of the MDD 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. The policy seeks to ensure proposals retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.

9.7.19 Policy NE5 (Landscape and drainage) of the LPU supports development proposals where they adopt a landscape led approach which protects and enhances the character and distinctiveness of landscapes. The policy requires:

> *"Proposals to be informed by, and respond to, the distinctive characters set out in the Landscape Character Assessment and other relevant assessments;*
>
> *Proposals to be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment;*
>
> *Landscape schemes to be set within an overall masterplan for the proposed development, which:*
>
> *Include a structural tree, hedge and shrub planting schedule;*
>
> *Incorporate landscape spaces, public realm and green and blue infrastructure to achieve a sense of place, improve health and wellbeing and mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change;*
>
> *Incorporate effective built form and landscape transitions for rural-urban transition*
>
> *areas; and*
>
> *Set out a long-term landscape establishment and management plan, which prescribes and protects planting and its sustainability."*

9.7.20 Policy NE6 (Valued Landscapes) sets out that development proposals location within a Valued Landscape, including the River Loddon Valued Landscape, should have particular regard to the list of attributes set out within the policy. The policy only supports development proposals affecting Valued Landscapes where they protect, and where appropriate, integrate with and/or enhance the special features, characteristics and qualities of the landscape, unless the benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the harm.

9.7.21 Policy SS13 requires a coordinated and comprehensive landscape led approach to the development of Loddon Garden Village. The accompanying ES provides a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) that assesses the impact of the development both during construction and post completion.

9.7.22 The LVIA uses the Character Areas described in Chapter 2 as a baseline for the assessment and establishes their Value, Susceptibility to Change and Overall Sensitivity. The LVIA also establishes a baseline for landscape features for land uses, the river valley, trees, hedgerows and access.

9.7.23 In terms of the visual amenity of the current site, it is well concealed from the wider area, with undulating hills to the north (Earley and Whitley areas of Reading) and south (towards Arborfield Cross and The Coombes, Barkham) and existing mature tree planting around field boundaries and within woodlands.

9.7.24 The value of the views are generally either 'low' or 'medium'. The low value views include highways in the foreground, often with urban infrastructure such as pylons and housing, such as the views from Cutbush Lane bridge, the M4 and Lower Earley Way. Elsewhere within parts of the site, views are judged to be of 'medium' value. These views are generally within the draft Valued Landscape designated area.

Mitigation

9.7.25 Given this baseline, a comprehensive range of mitigation measures have been incorporated into the design of the proposal, including:

- No diversion or extinguishment of any Public Rights of Way;
- All existing hedgerows retained except for sight lines of new road junctions;
- All existing trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders and all ancient woodland retained;
- Tree Root Protection Zones and Veteran Trees would include a root protection zone;
- All woodland retained except a small amount of woodland to accommodate the spine road to the north of Carter's Hill;
- All veteran trees retained other than those that need to be removed for safety purposes;
- Retention of the majority of mature trees, with buildings focussed in the areas of existing arable farmland which have no trees;
- The existing historic avenue connecting Arborfield with Hall Farm retained within a green corridor;
- Hall Place Farmhouse retained;
- Land to the north-west of the River Loddon to be retained as the EcoValley, including a SANG area; and
- Land adjacent to the south-eastern bank of the River Loddon to be retained within a linear open space linking the two areas of SANG (the SANG Link) and a further SANG area within the northern part of the Site.

9.7.26 Construction Period

9.7.27 The assessment shows that during construction the only significant effects on designated landscapes would be a 'direct moderate adverse' effect on a small part of the draft River Loddon Valued Landscape at the southern end of the Site where housing is proposed within this draft designated area.

9.7.28 With regards to effects on landscape character, the only significant effects of construction would be on the parts of the site that would have the new roads, bridges and buildings within them.

9.7.29 The LVIA considers the visual impacts from 27 different viewpoints within and around the site. All visual impacts during the construction period are judged to be short-term. The main adverse effects would be on receptor groups immediately within and surrounding the Site. Beyond this, natural

screening is provided by the hillside terrain to the north and south and strong existing vegetation and around and within the Site. Given the short-term nature of the effects, the overall significance of the changes are reduced.

9.7.30 Operation Period (inc. 15 years mitigation)

9.7.31 There would be localised significant effects on the draft River Loddon Valued Landscape, however this is not an adopted designation at the time of writing. The introduction of the new vehicular bridge over the M4 motorway and its connection with Lower Earley Way to the north, together with a further roundabout and vehicular bridge across the River Loddon just south of the M4 would introduce large new areas of infrastructure into the landscape.

9.7.32 To the north of the River Loddon, the proposed EcoValley area within the draft River Loddon Valued Landscape would experience 'high beneficial' changes. Strategic areas of new tree planting would help filter views of the new bridges and road to the north.

9.7.33 The ES considers the impacts across the other Character Area summarised in Section 3.6. Where harm is identified, the proposed effects of the mitigation are highlighted.

9.7.34 In terms of visual impacts, the assessment considers effects, both with and without strategic planting, where this might soften/screen views. The main adverse effects would be on views experienced immediately within and surrounding the site. Beyond this, natural screening is provided by the hillside terrain to the north and south and strong existing vegetation and around and within the site.

9.7.35 Summary

9.7.36 The effects on landscape character vary across the site, with significant beneficial effects across the proposed EcoValley area to the north of the site as well as some significant adverse effects on the character of the farmland to the south of the river. These changes are inevitable, given the change from arable farmland to a new village, as part of growth that is planned consistent with national and local planning policy.

9.7.37 There will be some significant benefits to landscape features across the proposal, with significant new areas of scrub, new tree planting and the restoration and creation of species rich meadows and woodland.

9.7.38 The proposal will not be visible from a wide area, and instead is well contained by its location and presence of numerous areas of small woodland and mature hedgerow trees in the immediate area. Nonetheless, significant changes to views would only be experienced by users of Public Rights of Way immediately adjacent to the site.

9.7.39 The identified landscape harm from built development, the associated benefits offered the Green Infrastructure proposals and the visual harm experienced by users of public rights of way are relevant considerations, but ones which are considered acceptable, subject to mitigation, given the policy context seeking development of Loddon Garden Village, and other benefits that will accrue from the development.

9.8 Historic Environment

9.8.1 In accordance with Paragraph 207 of the NPPF and the adopted and emerging Development Plan, this planning application is accompanied by a Heritage Assessment which describes the significance of the heritage assets affected by the proposals, including the contribution made by their setting.

9.8.2 Paragraph 212 of the NPPF sets out that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's

conservation. Paragraph 213 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.

9.8.3 Paragraph 215 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

9.8.4 Within the adopted Development Plan, Policy TB24 (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas) seeks to ensure the conservation and enhancement of designated heritage assets and their settings.

9.8.5 Policy DH5 (The historic environment) of the LPU also seeks to ensure development proposals conserve and, wherever possible, seek to enhance, the archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest of all heritage assets, including the contribution made by their setting. Where a development proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, clear and convincing justification will need to be provided to demonstrate the public benefits of the proposal that could not otherwise be achieved. The level of public benefit must outweigh any harm to a designated heritage asset.

9.8.6 As set out in the accompanying Environmental Statement (Chapter 9), it is considered that the proposed development has the potential to have a moderate adverse effect on the significance of one listed building (Hall Place Farmhouse). However, the sensitive change of use, refurbishment and historic building recording can reduce this to minor. The residual effects on the remaining built heritage receptors are considered to be no more than minor.

9.8.7 More specifically, the Heritage Statement, appended to the Environmental Statement, considers that the proposals will have no impact on the significance of Cutbush Farm and Barn, Shinfield Grange and Oldhouse Farm and Barn.

9.8.8 Hall Place Farmhouse is assessed together with the former Parish Church. Both buildings enjoy a rural context with visual ties to the remaining Arborfield Hall parkland. The development of the surrounding agricultural land will alter the setting of these assets in a way that causes the less than substantial degree of harm highlighted above. The harm should be weighed against the heritage enhancements such as additional footpaths to link to the former St Bartholomew's Church and the new parkland to help preserve the overall rural setting.

9.8.9 The Heritage Statement considers that the significance of Old Rectory and the Church of St Bartholomew will also experience less than substantial harm as their setting as rural dwellings will be somewhat eroded by the proposed development.

9.8.10 Molebridge Farmhouse and the Glen, Bearwood College Registered Park and Garden and Mole Road Lodge will experience no impact on their significance from this development. The Reading Room Cottage will experience a negligible degree of harm from the erosion of its setting.

9.8.11 There will be no impact on the significance of Carter's Hill House and Oak Cottage, Sindlesham Mill, Berkshire Masonic Centre and Sindlesham Conservation Area.

9.8.12 Development of the southern part of the site will have an urbanising effect on the setting of the Arborfield Conservation Area, although there is a belt of rural landscape between the site and the conservation area. The proposed planting along the southern edge will help screen the site and preserve the rural character. Nonetheless, less than substantial harm will occur.

9.8.13 Bringing forward development proposed on the Site has the capacity to give rise to up to a less than substantial degree of harm to the significance of identified designated built heritage assets. This harm, in line with Paragraph 215, must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. As discussed in Chapter 12, these benefits are wide ranging, covering economic, social, and

environmental matters, and very substantial. The Applicant is confident that these benefits far outweigh the limited harm to heritage assets identified.

9.9 Archaeology

9.9.1 In accordance with paragraph 207 of the NPPF and emerging Policy DH6 (Archaeology), this planning application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement which includes a chapter on Archaeology.

9.9.2 The Site includes a Scheduled Ancient Monument and therefore the paragraphs of the NPPF and policies set out above in relation to designated heritage assets apply. In addition, paragraph 216 sets out that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

9.9.3 Policy TB25 (Archaeology) of the MDD sets out that in areas of high archaeological potential, which includes parts of the application site, applicants will need to provide a detailed assessment of the impact on archaeological remains. Where development is likely to affect an area of high archaeological potential or an area which is likely to contain archaeological remains, the presumption is that appropriate measures shall be taken to protect remains by preservation in situ. Where this is not practical, applicants shall provide for excavation, recording and archiving of the remains. Where development is likely to affect an area of high archaeological potential or an area which is likely to contain archaeological remains, the presumption is that appropriate measures shall be taken to protect remains by preservation in situ. Where this is not practical, applicants shall provide for excavation, recording and archiving of the remains.

9.9.4 Policy DH6 (Archaeology) requires the archaeological assessment accompanying the planning application to explore and explain any likely impact of development upon archaeological remains. The policy sets out that development proposal should take appropriate measures to protect any archaeological remains by preservation in situ. Where an assessment of archaeological potential demonstrates this is not justified or proportionate, applicants will be responsible for the excavation, recording and archiving of remains.

9.9.5 As set out in the accompanying ES (Chapter 8) it has been concluded that the effects on archaeological receptors and on one Scheduled Monument will not be significant in terms of EIA Regulations.

9.9.6 The Scheduled Monument of St Bartholomew's Church is the only statutorily designated archaeological asset within the study site. Elsewhere within the study site, the proposals would have the potential to further truncate or completely remove any archaeological deposits within areas of ground-intrusive development, should they survive. There is no evidence to suggest that any of the archaeological features on the study site are of such significance to preclude development.

9.9.7 As set out within the Archaeological Desk Based Assessment within the ES Appendices, the proposed development would not result in total or substantial destruction of the Scheduled Monument, nor result in a change to its setting that would result in the complete loss of its cultural significance or the ability to appreciate it. The development would result in a change to the wider setting of the Scheduled Monument, but it's primary significance will remain. Any harm to the monument from the proposed development is considered to result in a low level of less than substantial harm.

9.9.8 The Scheduled Monument is included in Historic England's Heritage At Risk Register due to its current ruinous condition, and the potential for further collapse and ultimate loss of the remains.

Options for the stabilisation of the remains and clearance of vegetation are being explored by the Applicant and Historic England. If practicable, this would be a substantial heritage benefit.

9.9.9 In respect of any other archaeological remains, the works will almost completely offset their physical loss by realising their archaeological potential through excavation and analysis. However, it is acknowledged that there is likely to remain some loss of data that might be recovered by future archaeological methods.

9.9.10 As with the harm to designated built heritage assets, the Applicant is confident that the low level of less than substantial harm to the Scheduled Monument and other heritage assets would be outweighed by the substantial benefits of the proposed development, as set out within Chapter 12.

9.10 Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Water Resources and Flood Risk Assessment

9.10.1 Paragraph 181 of the NPPF sets out that when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, in light of a site-specific flood-risk assessment it can be demonstrated that:

> *"a) within the Site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location;*
>
> *b) the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient such that, in the event of a flood, it could be quickly brought back into use without significant refurbishment;*
>
> *c) it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate;*
>
> *d) any residual risk can be safely managed; and*
>
> *e) safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan."*

9.10.2 Paragraph 182 requires the Site to incorporate sustainable drainage systems to control flow rates and reduce volumes of runoff, which also provide multifunctional benefits, through facilitating improvements in water quality and biodiversity, as well as benefits for amenity.

9.10.3 Within the adopted Development Plan, Policy CC09 (Development and Flood Risk (from all sources)) of the MDD requires all sources of flood risk to be taken into account at all stages to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding. The policy requires development to be guided to areas of lowest flood risk by applying the sequential approach.

9.10.4 Policy CC10 (Sustainable Drainage) of the MDD requires all development proposals to ensure surface water arising from the proposed development takes into account climate change in a sustainable manner. It requires all development proposal to:

> *"a) Reproduce greenfield runoff characteristics and return run-off rates and volumes back to the original greenfield levels, for greenfield sites and for brownfield sites both run-off rates and volumes be reduced to as near greenfield as practicably possible.*
>
> *b) Incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), where practicable, which must be of an appropriate design to meet the long term needs of the development and which achieve wider social and environmental benefits*
>
> *c) Provide clear details of proposed SuDS including the adoption arrangements and how they will be maintained to the satisfaction of the Council [as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)]*

d) Not cause adverse impacts to the public sewerage network serving the development where discharging surface water to a public sewer."

9.10.5 Chapter 10 of the LPU relates to Flooding and Drainage. Policy FD1 (Development and flood risk (from all sources)) states that development proposals must take into account at all stages of development, all sources of flood risk, including historic flooding, current and future impacts of climate change, and cumulative impacts. The policy sets out that development must be guided to areas of lowest flood risk, in the first instance, by applying the sequential approach, taking into account the effects of climate change and flooding from all sources. Development proposals in areas of flood risk will only be supported in exceptional circumstances where the criteria under section 5 of the policy can be met.

9.10.6 Flood Risk

9.10.7 A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy accompanies this planning application as required by the above policies.

9.10.8 The majority of the site is in Flood Zone 1 and has low risk of flooding from all sources. Areas of potential fluvial and pluvial flooding are primarily located to the west of the River Loddon with some areas around the Barkham Brook and its tributaries.

9.10.9 As part of proposing the site for allocation, WBC has confirmed the site is suitable for development with an appropriate approach to development masterplanning and a robust mitigation strategy around flood risk and drainage. This was informed by WBC completing the Sequential Test for proposed allocated sites as part of the LPU, including for the LGV site. The development passed the sequential test for allocation. It was concluded that given the scale of the site and that a significant area of land is located within Flood Zone 1, this area is capable of accommodating the proposed quantum of development. The Proposed Submission LPU requires development to both reduce and minimise flood risk on site; in particular by sequentially locating development within the site. There are also opportunities to manage flood risk at the site.

9.10.10 Chapter 13 of the Environmental Statement covers Flood Risk and Drainage, Hydrogeology, Water Framework Directive and Water Resources

9.10.11 Areas of the site that are at risk of fluvial and pluvial flooding are to remain free of built development and will form part of the wider EcoValley area, which is a water compatible land use.

9.10.12 The residential, commercial and educational land uses will be located in Flood Zone 1 and areas of low pluvial flood risk. This approach of placing the most vulnerable development in the lowest areas of flood risk accords with draft Policy SS13 of the LPU.

9.10.13 The proposed new vehicular crossing of the River Loddon has been developed to ensure that there is no impact on flood storage or flood conveyance. However, the road and associated embankments do, by necessity, pass through the floodplain on both the western and eastern sides of the River Loddon. The road to the north of the M4 from the M4 crossing to the connection at Lower Early Way also passes through an area of floodplain, as does the proposed new pedestrian/cycle crossing of the River Loddon. Both of these will be designed to ensure no detrimental impact on conveyance and floodplain storage.

9.10.14 To allow access within the development, there are a number of crossings of the Barkham Brook and its tributaries. These have been kept to a minimum and located to minimise their impact on the floodplain. In most cases, crossings are at points where the design flood (1 in 100 year flood with higher central climate change allowance) is retained within the main river channel or where the floodplain is limited to the river corridor. Similarly, a new crossing of the Arborfield Cut has been located where there would be minimal intrusion into areas of potential flooding.

9.10.15 The general approach to masterplanning has been to retain the key watercourses in their current location and protect the watercourses and floodplains through maintaining green corridors. This also allows for opportunities to enhance the river corridors where appropriate and to maximise the social and biodiversity potential for these features. This reflects the aspirations of national policy and adopted and emerging local policy.

9.10.16 A floodplain storage compensation strategy has been developed to address the potential impacts of the development proposal set out above. Further details are set out within the FRA which confirms the proposed development includes suitable floodplain compensatory elements and will have no detrimental impact on flooding elsewhere.

9.10.17 Drainage Strategy

9.10.18 The accompanying Drainage Strategy demonstrates that the development will maintain pre-development surface water runoff rates, ensuing no increased flood risk either on or off-site.

9.10.19 The drainage strategy for the site will use SuDS for managing surface water in a sustainable and resilient manner, bringing environmental, social and economic benefits for sustainable water management. The following SuDS features are considered to be the most suitable for the site:

- Attenuation Basins;
- Permeable paving;
- Swales;
- Filter Drains;
- Bioretention Systems;
- Sub surface storage in the form of attenuation crates or tanks; and
- Use of existing natural ditches and watercourses.

9.10.20 It is proposed to provide a network of roadside swales, bioretention features such as pits and filter strips, and traditional pipes to collect the surface water runoff from impermeable areas such as roads, roofs and driveways.

9.10.21 This system will work in combination with source control drainage techniques within development parcels, with attenuation basins and sub-storage features providing attenuation storage, and high water quality benefits.

9.10.22 Attenuation features have been sized for the proposed development with discharges to local water courses restricted to greenfield runoff rates, in line with Policy CC10. Attenuation volumes have been calculated for all events up to and including the 1 in 100 year event including an allowance for a 40% increase in rainfall intensities as a result of climate change and urban creep.

9.10.23 Flood risk posed by uncontrolled surface water runoff from the site will be managed by the proposed drainage strategy. Any increase in surface water run-off can be managed using SuDS source control techniques as well as attenuation features to provide storage in extreme storm events.

9.10.24 Conveyance systems, such as swales and filter drains, will be designed to cater for the 1 in 30 year storm event, in accordance with industry standard, with all attenuation features designed to allow for the 1 in 100 year storm event plus 40% climate change allowance. The design of conveyance systems will form part of the proposed blue-green corridors.

9.10.25 Basins will form an integral part of the landscape and will be designed to reflect the landscape typologies within which they are located. For example, within amenity green space, the basins will be designed to provide access for amenity use and will be predominantly dry until rainfall events. Within the natural green space typology, the basins will be designed to look more natural, with permanent water bodies and shallow sides to provide wildlife habitat. The approach taken will ensure

the drainage strategy for the site has multifunctional benefits, including managing flood risk, providing biodiversity and amenity benefits, and protecting and enhancing water quality.

9.10.26 In relation to foul water, discussions are ongoing with Thames Water regarding the extent of additional off-site sewers or improvements to existing sewers that will be required to provide sufficient capacity to service the development. The drainage system will be designed to the appropriate standards.

9.10.27 Hydrogeology

9.10.28 A hydrogeological risk assessment has been undertaken to assess the risks of the proposed development to groundwaters and groundwater receptors, such as surface watercourses, springs, private water supplies and groundwater dependant ecosystems. Geology at the site is dominated by the London Clay Formation which does not form an aquifer and superficial deposits, mainly gravel which form minor aquifers. Major receptors of groundwater effects identified in the assessment included the River Loddon, Barkham Brook and wetlands within the floodplain of the River Loddon.

9.10.29 Potential impacts from the construction phase of the development include the mobilisation of pollutants from spills, such as fuels and lubricants through groundwater to receptors. This impact could be mitigated through the production of a pollution prevention plan. No residual construction phase impacts are anticipated after the mitigation measures are implemented.

9.10.30 A Water Framework Directive (WFD) assessment was undertaken for the scheme according to guidance set out by the Environment Agency. Potential WFD impacts from the construction phase are related to works within the channel such as the construction of drainage outfalls, bridges and culverts. This could disrupt habitats and natural river processes. These can be mitigated by reinstating any bed and bank habitat lost during construction and the inclusion of native substrates (sediment) and emergent plants. Where culverts are installed, it was recommended that the gradient of the channel is preserved wherever possible.

9.10.31 Potential WFD impacts from the operational phase of the scheme are increased shading of watercourses by structures such as bridges and culverts, loss of river habitat from works within the channel and changes to downstream hydro-morphology. This can be mitigated by structures at outfalls and embedding culverts with a natural substrate (sediment) beds.

9.10.32 Any impacts during the construction work on water resources will be very limited and are deemed to be overall negligible. Operational effects will primarily be related to the provision of new infrastructure to provide foul water drainage through provision of a pumped system and a potable water supply, but will be managed by works by Thames Water to address the capacity shortfall in the existing network off site.

9.10.33 Overall, the FRA, Drainage Strategy and Chapter 13 of the ES have demonstrated how the development proposals accord with Section 14 of the NPPF, Policies CC09 and CC10 of the MDD and Policies FD1 and SS13, in relation to flood risk and drainage, of the emerging LPU.

9.11 Air Quality

9.11.1 Paragraph 187e of the NPPF sets out that new and existing development should be prevented from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of air pollution, alongside other forms of pollution. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air quality.

9.11.2 Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development) of the Core Strategy states that development proposals should minimise the emission of pollutants into the wider environment. In addition, development should avoid areas where pollution may impact upon the amenity of future occupiers.

9.11.3 Policy HC6 (Air Pollution and Air Quality) of the emerging Local Plan Update sets out that development proposals should maintain, and where possible improve air quality. Development proposals should consider the prevailing air quality and potential impacts upon air quality arising from airborne particulates, dust and odour associated with the construction and operation of a proposal (including vehicular traffic).

9.11.4 Chapter 7 of the Environmental Statement accompanying this application relates to the assessment of air quality, evaluating aspects that arise from both the construction phase and the operational phase of development. The baseline air quality conditions have been determined through a comprehensive review of Defra air quality estimates, relevant documentation published by WBC including the MDD, Sustainable Design and Construction SPD, Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD as well as relevant Annual Status Reports (ASRs) and Air Quality Action Plans.

9.11.5 For the construction phase of the Proposed Development the key pollutant is dust, for the operational phase, the main pollutants from road traffic, with potential for local air quality impacts, are nitrogen oxides.

9.11.6 For the Assessment, the following scenarios were modelled, including the traffic data used throughout the Environmental Statement. Allowances were made where the data predicted slow moving traffic at junctions.

9.11.7 Without Development – without the Proposed Development in the first year that the Proposed Development is expected to be fully operational, 2040;

9.11.8 With University of Reading development only, in the first year that the Proposed Development is expected to be fully operational, 2040; and

9.11.9 With the full Loddon Garden Village development, in the first year that the Proposed Development is expected to be fully operational, 2040.

9.11.10 A range of existing and proposed residential receptors were identified as the nearest sensitive properties where pollution concentrations were predicted to be greatest during the operational phase.

9.11.11 Passive diffusion tubes were used to monitor the current nitrous oxide concentrations at four locations around the site to establish a baseline. These were found to be broadly representative of residential areas within large conurbation.

9.11.12 Mitigation measures considered inherent within the design of the proposal for the air quality assessment include a Dust Management Plan (DMP) and the CEMP and locating sensitive uses (residential and schools) away from where pollution concentrations are predicted to be higher.

9.11.13 The proposed development is not expected to give rise to any residual significant effects related to dust emissions and air quality during the construction phase. Provided that effective dust suppression and mitigation measures are consistently applied across all relevant construction areas, the likelihood of cumulative dust-related impacts is considered to be low. Consequently, it is anticipated that no significant adverse cumulative effects will occur as a result of the proposed development and its associated construction works.

9.11.14 Typical mitigation measures offered on site during construction include the erection of solid screens around dusty activities, regular removal of dusty materials, avoid site runoff of water or mud, and covering of material stock piles.

9.11.15 During construction operations, the use of diesel or petrol power generators will be avoided, cutting, grinding or sawing equipment will be used in conjunction with water sprays and local ventilation systems, chute, conveyors and skips will be covered and a wheel washing system will be implemented site wide.

9.11.16 The Air Quality Assessment summarises the nitrous oxide concentration levels with and without the development at all of the identified sensitive receptors during the operational phase of the development. At all locations the difference against Air Quality objectives is negligible, including when other committed development in the area is factored into the assessment.

9.11.17 Consequently, it is anticipated that no significant adverse cumulative effects will occur as a result of the proposed development and its associated construction works.

9.12 Land Contamination and Ground Conditions

9.12.1 Paragraph 196 of the NPPF requires that planning policies and decisions ensure that a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination. This includes risks arising from natural hazards or former activities such as mining, and any proposals for mitigation including land remediation (as well as potential impacts on the natural environment arising from that remediation).

9.12.2 Adopted Development Plan Policy CP1 (Sustainable development) includes the requirement to minimise the emission of pollutants into the wider environment.

9.12.3 Within the emerging LPU, Policy HC9 (Contaminated land and water) sets out that development proposals on or near sites which are known, or suspected to be potentially contaminated, or proposals for sensitive land uses, will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the sensitive receptors set out in the policy would not be exposed to levels of potential contamination that would give rise to unacceptable risks or harm to health, or other adverse impacts.

9.12.4 The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ground Investigation Report that builds on previous work including a Desktop Study and a Preliminary Risk Assessment. This previous work identified potential contamination within and surrounding the site, including historical landfill and gas consultation zones.

9.12.5 The historical land uses are primarily agricultural land with the later addition of the Hall Farm research complex and the Cocoa Centre.

9.12.6 The Report is supported by intrusive ground investigation works that included excavating boreholes, collecting soil samples, gas monitoring and groundwater sampling.

9.12.7 The soil samples for limited presence of chemical contaminants including heavy metals that did not exceed the levels that would be incompatible with the intended residential use. The groundwater samples identified slightly elevated concentrations of compounds including arsenic, nickel and zinc. These are commonly associated with agricultural practices.

9.12.8 The redevelopment of the site will likely remove the source of these contaminants over time and no specific remediation is proposed.

9.12.9 The gas monitoring identified some elevated concentrations of carbon dioxide and the Report recommends further monitoring. This can be covered by standard conditions attached to any permission to ensure compliance with adopted and emerging policies.

9.13 Noise and Vibration

9.13.1 Policy 187(e) of the NPPF sets out that planning decisions should prevent new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of noise pollution.

9.13.2 Policy CC06 (Noise) of the adopted MDD requires proposals to demonstrate how they have addressed noise impacts to protect noise sensitive receptors from noise impacts.

9.13.3 Within the LPU, Policy HC8 (Noise pollution) also requires proposals to demonstrate how noise impacts have been addressed. Where there is no adverse impact, noise pollution will not be a material consideration. Where there is an adverse impact, then the policy sets out the approaches that must be taken.

9.13.4 The potential for the scheme to produce significant effects in relation to noise has been considered in context to the requirements in the EIA Regulations. It has been concluded that, with the implementation of suitable design alongside mitigation and avoidance measures and best practice construction methods, significant environmental effects are unlikely to arise.

9.13.5 Chapter 15 (Noise and Vibration) of the Environmental Statement accompanies this application and further evaluates the impacts of noise. This should also be read in conjunction with the Acoustic Modelling Report and Noise Assessment, included within the Environmental Statement.

9.13.6 The Environmental Statement considers the potential impacts during the construction and operational (post completion) periods. Clearly the operation of heavy machinery and the movements of large construction vehicles has the potential to create noise and vibration disturbances in the construction phase. Post-completion, the only significant source of noise is likely to be traffic, alongside noise emissions from mechanical plant serving Class E and F buildings.

9.13.7 A baseline noise survey was undertaken at seven locations around the Site over a seven-day period from 25th February 2025 – 6th March 2025. A seventh location was surveyed from 6th March until 18th March 2025. The survey identified 62 Noise Sensitive Receptors (NSR) which are primarily existing residential streets surrounding the application site. The results of the survey and subsequent assessment work have been assessed in accordance with standards and guidance and are accompanied with this application. All NSRS are considered to have Medium sensitivity to noise and vibration.

9.13.8 During the construction period, the CEMP, discussed in previous sections of this Statement, will include a number of measures to control noise and vibration emissions as far as practical. These include noise and vibration monitors, fitting silencers to vehicles and equipment, flexible hours of working, reducing drop heights of materials, regular maintenance of equipment and community liaison.

9.13.9 The Environmental Statement confirms that the anticipated significance of noise and vibration effects during construction activity would be Negligible to Minor adverse. Overall, the effects are considered to be not significant. The impacts of construction traffic is assessed as Negligible, given the predicted flow of construction traffic.

9.13.10 The Environmental Statement considers the potential traffic noise given the traffic flow modelling discussed in previous sections. For all locations assessed, including the NSRs, the noise disturbance is assessed as no higher than Negligible with no significant effects.

9.13.11 The potential noise from plant and commercial buildings is also considered, albeit, at Outline stage, the exact end use of these employment areas is unknown, However, Class E facilities of this nature are typically located close to residential areas and, through appropriate design of the facilities, it would be readily achievable for these areas to operate without causing a significant adverse impact at proposed or existing NSRs.

9.13.12 Given the findings of the Environmental Statement, this proposal clearly complies with the requirements of adopted and emerging planning policy.

9.14 Socio-Economic Benefits

9.14.1 Sustainable development is achieved by meeting economic, social and environmental objectives. In relation to the economic objective, paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out that this is achieved by ensuring

that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.

9.14.2 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF also defines the social objective as being to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.

9.14.3 This reflects the Vision of both the adopted and emerging Development Plan.

9.14.4 In particular, Policy ER4 (Employment and skills plans) of the LPU requires proposals to be accompanied by an Employment and Skills Plan to show how the proposal provides opportunities for training, apprenticeships or other vocational initiatives to develop local employability skills required by developers, contractors or end users of the proposal.

9.14.5 Policy HC1 (Promoting healthy communities) of the emerging Local Plan Update promotes vibrant, healthy and safe communities. Policy HC2 (Community infrastructure) supports the provision of new community facilities.

9.14.6 The proposed development will deliver socio-economic benefits at both the construction and operational phase.

9.14.7 At the construction phase, Chapter 16 of the ES estimates the provision of 340 on site FTE construction jobs per year on average being generated over a 15-year construction period. Once leakage, displacement, and multiplier effects are taken into account, the number of net additional on and off-site FTE jobs per annum for residents of the Study Area equates to 195. This is considered to have a temporary beneficial effect.

9.14.8 Once operational, it is anticipated that the proposed development would create around 1,160 on- and off-site jobs for residents which will have a permanent beneficial effect.

9.14.9 The proposed development will provide 2,800 dwellings, including 1,120 affordable dwellings which will help to improve affordability levels in Wokingham. This is considered to be highly beneficial.

9.14.10 Other benefits of the development, include the provision of 2 x 3FE primary schools and 1 x 8 FE secondary school. These schools will not only meet the needs arising from the proposed development but will also expand existing capacity locally for future developments nearby.

9.14.11 The provision of allotments at the site will help to ease the identified allotment shortfall in the area. The LGV will also provide extensive open space which will benefit both existing and future residents. The provision of community space through the Community Hub and County Park Pavilion will also serve and benefit existing and future residents.

9.15 Health and Wellbeing

9.15.1 The NPPF sets out that sustainable development has three overarching objectives. This includes the social objective to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities. Chapter 8 of the NPPF relates to promoting healthy and safe communities. Paragraph 96 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

> *"a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;*

b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and

c) enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling."

9.15.2 Part of the Vision of the Adopted Core Strategy is to maintain social wellbeing, health and the quality of life although there are no specific policies on health and wellbeing.

9.15.3 The LPU includes Chapter 13 on Healthy and Safe Communities. Policy HC1 (Promoting Healthy Communities) sets out that vibrant, healthy and safe communities will be promoted through a high-quality environment with local services to support health, social and cultural wellbeing and help contribute to reducing deprivation and inequalities in the Borough. The policy requires development proposals to consider impacts on the health and wellbeing of new and existing residents, by including measures that contribute to healthier communities and reduce inequalities. This includes the creation of high quality, active, safe and accessible places.

9.15.4 Policy HC1 also sets out that development proposals will be supported where they contribute to health and wellbeing priorities in the Borough and support the provision of new or improved health facilities.

9.15.5 Where community facilities are proposed, Policy HC2 (Community Infrastructure) of the LPU requires that they are:

"a) Of a suitable nature and scale to meet identified needs, be compatible with the character of the area and be sufficiently flexible to meet changing needs over time;

b) Designed to accommodate a range of community uses, where appropriate. The colocation of facilities, including access for appropriate organisations and the local community will be strongly encouraged;

c) Accessible by the community and promote social inclusion".

9.15.6 One of WBC's aims in the emerging LPU is not only to improve health in overall terms, but to reduce health inequality (paragraph 2.26 of the LPU). A leading source of guidance on this topic is the 'Marmot principles', deriving from an independent review by Professor Sir Michael Marmot on behalf of a previous Secretary of State for Health. The final report, 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives' (2010) concluded that reducing health inequalities would require action on six policy objectives:

- Giving every child the best start in life;
- Enabling all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives;
- Creating fair employment and good work for all;
- Ensuring healthy standard of living for all;
- Creating and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities; and
- Strengthening the role and impact of ill-health prevention.

9.15.7 These principles are being taken forward by WBC not only through the Local Plan Update, but more generally through its Health and Wellbeing Board in order to become a 'Marmot Borough' across all corporate activities. Each of the six Marmot considerations has been considered in the preparation of this application. The proposed strategy for the site contributes directly through the provision of extensive community and social infrastructure, including health facilities (subject to discussions with NHS and CCB), schools, sport, and public open space, sustainable access to high-quality

employment and provision for active travel. The LGV will positively address the Marmot principles, with discussions with WBC establishing how this will be achieved.

9.15.8 Chapter 12 of the Environmental Statement provides a Health Impact Assessment that presents the assessment of the likely significant effects (both positive and negative) of the proposals during construction and operation with respect to the health of the existing and future community.

9.15.9 Wokingham has a comparatively older population to the national average, with a higher proportion of males and females aged 40 to 54 years old and a lower proportion of males and females aged 20 to 34 years old. The employment rate in Wokingham has consistently remained above the national average.

9.15.10 Male and female life expectancy in Wokingham has been consistently higher than the regional and national averages for the years analysed, and has shown a general increase over the years. Mortality rates for all causes, cancer, circulatory disease and respiratory disease are all lower in the unitary authority compared to the regional and national averages.

9.15.11 Potential effects during the construction phase on human health could occur from changes in air quality, exposure to noise and changes in transport nature and flow rates. During the operational phase, potential effects could occur from changes in air quality from traffic, noise, and socio economic factors affecting income and employment.

9.15.12 Inherent mitigation measures included in the proposed construction phase include a Dust Management Plan (DMP) as identified in the CEMP. The CEMP also addresses hours of working, noise, vibration, dust, light spill, wheel washing and control of runoff.

9.15.13 With these mitigation measures in place, the health effects during the construction period are expected to be negligible.

9.15.14 During the Operational phase, as discussed in the Air Quality and Noise chapters of the Environmental Statement, it is anticipated that negligible changes in the environment would result in negligible magnitude of impact on human health and wellbeing. Based on a low receptor sensitivity, the resultant human health and wellbeing effect would be negligible and not significant.

9.15.15 The severance discussed in the Transport section would have potentially adverse effects on human health. An Active Travel Strategy would mitigate some of the harm of the experienced at three locations experiencing Severance, leaving two further locations where a minor adverse effect is unavoidable. This is concluded to have, a low magnitude impact on human health and wellbeing. Given the low sensitivity of the particular locations, Observer Way Relief Road and Meldreth Way corridor, this would result in a minor adverse effect, which is not significant.

9.15.16 It is considered that there will be minor beneficial effects on human health from the suite of improvements offered to pedestrians and cyclists, the Mill Lane link north of the M4 motorway would provide a moderate beneficial effect. The improvements to bus routes would provide a moderate beneficial effect. There would be a negligible impact on human health from road safety during the operational phase.

9.15.17 Overall, for both low and high sensitivity receptors, based on changes to transport nature and flow rate, a minor adverse effect on human health and wellbeing would be predicted with regard to severance, pedestrian delay, and fear and intimidation, which would not be significant.

9.15.18 No significant adverse health effects associated with the range in health determinants assessed (air quality, noise exposure, transport nature/flow rate and socio-economic factors) are anticipated to be directly attributable to the proposed development. Furthermore, no cumulative effects are anticipated due to the appropriate mitigation measures proposed.

9.16 Minerals

9.16.1 The NPPF recognises that minerals are essential to support sustainable economic growth and our quality of life and recognises that a sufficient supply of materials is necessary. The NPPF also recognises that minerals are a finite natural resource, and is important to make best use of them and to secure their long-term conservation through safeguarding.

9.16.2 The JMWP identifies that the Site falls within a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA) for 'Sharp Sand and Gravel'. Based on published BGS 1:50,000 scale sheet map 268 'Reading', the sharp sand and gravel mineral resources are attributed to the underlying superficial River Terrace Deposits (RTDs). The extent of the MSAs within the site are also identified within the JMWP as 'Areas of Search for Sand and Gravel.

9.16.3 Policy M2 of the JMWP states:

> *"Non-minerals development in the Minerals Safeguarding Area may be permitted if it can be demonstrated through the preparation of a Mineral Resources Assessment, that the option of prior extraction has been fully considered as part of an application, and:*
>
> *Prior extraction, where practical and environmentally feasible, is maximised, taking into account site constraints and phasing of development; or*
>
> *It can be demonstrated that the mineral resources will not be permanently sterilised; or*
>
> *It would be inappropriate to extract mineral resources in that location, with regard to other policies in the wider Local Plans."*

9.16.4 The application is accompanied by a Mineral Resource Assessment (MRA) that identifies the RTD as a slightly sandy to sandy silty gravel or a slightly gravelly to gravelly silty sand with occasional upper clay-rich horizons, that were identified at exploratory locations to the south of the River Loddon. It is therefore considered that the RTD is relatively variable in composition across the site. The thickness of RTD across the Site is relatively variable and there does not appear to be any obvious patterns

9.16.5 The RTD is considered to be a potentially viable mineral resource both north and south of the River Loddon. Given that a proportion of the mineral resource will therefore be lost or left in situ following excavation, it is reasonable to consider that the viable mineral resource present on the Site is represented by those areas where at least 1 m of sand and gravel mineral resource is present.

9.16.6 The MRA concludes that there is a large volume of sand and gravel mineral resource at the site. However, good practice indicates that buffer zones should be applied in safeguarding areas and used to fully assess the extent of the viable resource. These buffer zones are affected by land uses such as schools, residential and community centres and designated sites such as SSSIs, main rivers, woodland and the highway network.

9.16.7 The MRA applies a range of reasonable buffers around the safeguard area on this site and the impact renders the north of the River Loddon area as unviable for mineral extraction. Furthermore, the likely hydrogeological continuity between the RTD and River Loddon means that the contamination status of any backfill materials will require careful consideration to avoid impact to the watercourses. This may further impact the commercial and practical viability of any mineral operation.

9.16.8 It is therefore considered that full prior extraction of the entire RTD deposit is not feasible, although excavation of safeguarded resources within the upper horizons of RTD above the water table could, theoretically, be considered.

9.17 Waste Management

9.17.1 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF relates to sustainable development having three overarching objectives, that need to be pursued mutually in supportive ways. This includes the environmental objective, which relates to waste. Paragraph 8c) states that to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment waste and pollution should be minimised. This should also be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy for Waste (October 2014), which refers to the Government's ambition to work towards a more sustainable and efficient approach to resource use and management by identifying opportunities for improvements through driving waste management up the waste hierarchy.

9.17.2 Policy CC04 (Sustainable Design and Construction) within the MDD requires development to seek to deliver high quality sustainably designed and constructed developments. This includes requiring all development to incorporate suitable waste management facilities, including on-site recycling. Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development) of the WBC Core Strategy calls for development proposals to "incorporate facilities for recycling of waste".

9.17.3 The Environment Act 2021 provides a legislative framework for environmental protection in the UK, focusing on enhancing air and water quality, biodiversity, and reducing waste. It reinforces waste management policy through measures such as Extended Producer Responsibility, Deposit Return Schemes, mandatory food waste collection, greater consistency in recycling, and stricter enforcement against waste-related crimes. The initiatives are designed to minimise environmental impact, encourage sustainable use of resources, and improve the efficiency and transparency of waste management systems.

9.17.4 A Waste Management Report prepared by RPS (September 2025) accompanies this application, which considers the type and volume of wastes that will be generated through the construction of the proposed development. The report considers the site clearance, construction and operational phases and the estimated volumes of waste.

9.17.5 The Waste Report includes the likely operational wastes associated with the completed development and sets out; what type of waste will be developed, the potential quantity of waste produced and, how the waste will be managed (in regards to reducing, reusing and recycling), with reference to local waste facilities.

9.18 Utilities

9.18.1 In the LGV Policy (SS13) of the WBC Local Plan Update, clause 13 states:

> *"Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive utility and digital infrastructure and communications strategy. This will include the:*
>
> *Phased delivery of water, foul water, sewerage and electricity upgrades; and*
>
> *The phased delivery of Fiber to the Premises (FTTP) connectivity, including access to full fibre3 gigabit-capable broadband, and 4G and 5G mobile technologies."*

9.18.2 A Utilities Assessment, prepared by ALP, accompanies this application and should be read in conjunction with the Planning Statement. This identifies constraints and opportunities, associated with utility supply, and reinforcement and diversions, that might be required to facilitate the proposal. The findings within the report provide assurance that the Site can be served by utilities within the siting and context, without detriment to existing users, the surrounding area, or the local environment. Further to this, the report confirms the development's feasibility based upon available network capacity.

9.18.3 Each utility has been reviewed to evaluate the feasibility of connecting the proposed development, and available connection points have been identified in the surrounding area. Initial assessments have not revealed any significant issues or engineering challenges in providing new potable water, electricity, or telecommunications services to the site. The Utilities Assessment considers that adequate capacity exists, or can be provided, to support the proposed development.

9.18.4 Following the granting of planning approval, detailed plans and service loadings would be submitted to relevant utility companies, allowing for detailed proposals to be obtained for the provision of new supplies.

9.19 Conclusion

9.19.1 The assessment above and in the corresponding ES and technical documents that accompany this application demonstrate that the proposals for the LGV are acceptable in technical terms. Where impacts associated with the development of the LGV have been identified, measures have been identified to mitigate these. Additional controls and planning obligations (secured by planning conditions) will enable Wokingham Borough Council, as local planning authority, to ensure the development comes forward in a controlled and co-ordinated manner.

10. Housing Statement

10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 This is an Outline planning application with all matters except for access Reserved for future consideration. The Proposed Development will be undertaken through multiple phases over a period of more than 20 years.

10.1.2 Over such a period of time, planning policy and guidance and evidence which underpins policy will evolve. This will be at the national level and also locally. It is important therefore that the Outline planning permission and any planning permission pursuant to it will establish a planning framework for the delivery of the LGV that is sufficiently flexible to accommodate and respond to such changes during the lifetime of the development.

10.2 Overall Housing Requirements

10.2.1 The NPPF emphasises that local planning authorities should plan to boost significantly the supply of housing. It requires an evidence-based approach to identifying and meeting the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with policies in the NPPF.

10.2.2 This application is submitted in response to the spatial strategy contained within the emerging LPU. Table 1 of the draft LPU confirms that the housing need for the Plan period is 12,763 dwellings, an annual requirement of 751 dwellings per year. Without the new allocations in the Plan, the Council would face a shortfall of 4,439 dwellings.

10.2.3 The Plan confirms that, "*given the nature of the borough and the level of future need, it is necessary to allocate greenfield land for development*." The majority of the shortfall will be addressed through the allocation of three new SDLs, of which the LGV is one.

10.2.4 Para 4.31 of the Plan states, "*Loddon Valley Garden Village has capacity for around 3,930 new homes of which 2,700 would be built within the plan period*." Annex F of the LPU contains a proposed delivery trajectory that confirms that the strategy expects this site to start delivering from 2028/29 and for that delivery to ramp up through the remainder of the Plan period to around 250 units as year. The Applicant will work with WBC in respect of a delivery trajectory from the proposed development.

10.3 Affordable Housing

10.3.1 The NPPF confirms that the provision of housing and affordable housing is a vitally important material consideration in the determination of planning applications as assisting with meeting present and future housing and affordable housing needs (whilst having regard to the other objectives of national guidance) is necessary to fulfil the social objective of sustainable development.

10.3.2 The approach to affordable housing in the Core Strategy is provided by Policy CP5, which seeks 40% affordable provision on sites outside of the defined development locations. The LPU, at Policy H3 outlines the approach to the provision of affordable housing, stating:

> *"All residential development proposals for at least 5 units of accommodation (gross) or 5 bedspaces (gross), or covering a site area of at least 0.16 ha, will provide affordable housing or affordable bedspaces, where viable."*

10.3.3 Under Policy H3, the proportion of affordable housing expected is location dependent, varying from between 30% and 40%. The specific LGV requirement is 40%. Part 2 of Policy H3 states that, "*The expectation is that all development proposals for housing will be able to meet the above policy requirement. In exceptional circumstances applicants may submit an independently produced, open book viability assessment to justify any relaxation of the requirement. Any relaxation will require compelling reasons*." Affordable housing is expected to be provided on site unless exceptional circumstances indicate provision elsewhere.

10.3.4 The Council's most recent Local Housing Need Assessment 2023 ("LHNA") published in November 2023 indicates an overall affordable housing need to rent and buy of 6,689 households over the 19 year period between 2021 to 2040 (352 households per annum).

10.3.5 The Affordable Housing Topic Paper (September 2024) forms a crucial part of the evidence base underpinning the LPU and it makes it clear that the LGV will be a crucial component of the planned supply of affordable housing. The document states at paragraph 6.4 that, "…within the plan period, Loddon Valley Garden Village is anticipated to deliver 1,080 affordable homes, and 1,572 affordable homes in total."

10.3.6 This application will deliver a total of 40% of the proposed new dwellings as affordable housing in accordance with adopted and emerging Local Plan policy and having regard to the emphasis within National Planning Policy and Guidance on meeting the affordable housing need of all eligible households

10.3.7 Rented and Shared Ownership affordable dwellings will be managed by Registered Provider(s); i.e., organisations that have been accredited for such purposes by Homes England. At this early stage specific Registered Providers have not been identified, however this will progress in a phased manner as Reserved Matters applications come forward, consistent with a site-wide Section 106 agreement for the Outline application.

10.4 Housing Mix and Tenure

10.4.1 The NPPF (paragraph 63) states that planning policies should reflect the size, type and tenure of homes needed by different groups in the community. The Core Strategy does not prescribe a target housing mix but seeks a range of dwelling types and sizes on larger developments to reflect changing needs and demographics in the Borough. The MDD includes Policy TB05 'Housing Mix' that seeks a mix of housing which reflects a balance between the underlying character of the area and both the current and projected needs of households. It also sets out that affordable housing should be provided in an 'appropriate mix' to be established on a site by site basis and reflecting the Housing Strategy and Affordable Housing SPD (2010).

10.4.2 The more recent Wokingham Borough Council Affordable Housing Strategy 2024-2028 (published in April 2024) does not include any affordable housing mix preferences.

10.4.3 Emerging Policies H1 and H3 of the LPU do not specify an affordable housing mix but expect a proposal to reflect and respond to the identified housing needs and demands as set out in the council's most up to date evidence of housing need. The supporting text to Policy H1 replicates the indicative housing mix from the LHNA as currently the most up to date evidence, which proposes the following:

Table 10.1: LHNA Indicative Housing Mix

Number of Bedrooms	Affordable Housing	Total Market Housing
1-bed	17%	5%
2-bed	38%	13%

3-bed	33%	47%
4+ bed	12%	36%

10.4.4 Although the application is made in part in Outline, with layout and scale as Reserved Matters, the Applicants propose that the indicative market housing mix will meet that proposed by the LHNA. As each phase of the development comes forward, the individual developer(s) will need to propose a mix that reflects the latest evidence. Given the length of time it will take for the entire development to come forward, it is likely that the LHNA underpinning the LPU will become outdated and later phases will propose differing mixes to the above.

10.4.5 The Affordable Housing Statement accompanying this application uses the latest Housing Waiting List data published by Government, the Arborfield and Barkham Housing Needs Analysis 2019 and Wokingham Help to Buy data to offer a potential affordable housing mix for this proposal, as follows:

Table 10.2: Potential Affordable Housing Mix for the Proposed Development as set out in accompanying Affordable Housing Statement by Pioneer Property Services Ltd

Number of Bedrooms	Rent	Home Ownership
1-bed	15%	0%
2-bed	44%	70%
3-bed	35%	30%
4+ bed	6%	0%
TOTAL	100%	100%

10.4.6 The above potential mix is for further consideration and discussion with the Council including in respect of the split of houses and flats, but It is proposed that the application site will provide a mix sizes and types of affordable homes with the final mix proportions being the subject of negotiation with the Council in accordance with adopted policy.

10.5 Specialist Accommodation

10.5.1 MDD Policy TB09 confirms that the Council will support in principle the provision of accommodation for people over the course of their lifetime, including homes for the elderly in need of care homes, extra care and enhanced shelter schemes. LPU Policy H7 retains this policy stating,

> *"The council will work positively and collaboratively with statutory and voluntary agencies and the private sector to support households who require additional support or form of specialist accommodation to meet their needs. The council's preference is to encourage self-reliance and independent living but recognises that providing the right type of accommodation can enable these households to live successfully."*

10.5.2 More specifically, Criterion iv of part a) of LPU Policy SS13 specifically requires the provision of specialist accommodation, including that for the elderly. The LHNA has identified a Borough wide need for 925 places over the period 2021-2040, to be provided through a mix of sheltered and extra care housing and domiciliary care to accommodate people with specific requirements, such as the older population

10.5.3 Although a detailed mix for specialist housing has not been formalised at this Outline stage, there is sufficient flexibility within the proposals for specialist accommodation to come forward as individual phases of the overall development come forward through detailed application.

10.6 Accessible Housing

10.6.1 There is no currently adopted policy in either the Core Strategy or MDD that provides a requirement for accessible housing. Criterion 4 of LPU Policy H1 however requires residential development proposals to be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations, unless it is built in line with M4(3). Accordingly Criterion 5 of Policy H1 requires Development proposals for 20 or more new-build dwellings to deliver at least 5% of the new housing as wheelchair accessible and adaptable in line with M4(3) of the Building Regulations .

10.6.2 The Applicant is comfortable that all the Affordable Housing will comply with these Accessibility requirements and this can be secured by condition or within the Section 106 agreement as required. Compliance with the Accessibility requirements for market housing will then be for the subsequent Reserved Matters applications to demonstrate for each phase of the development.

10.7 Gypsy and Romany Travellers

10.7.1 The NPPF together with Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) requires local authorities to assess the size, type and tenure of housing needed by different groups and for this to be reflected in planning policies. This includes the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson communities. LPU Policy H10 offers in principle support to the provision of new plots for Gypsy and Traveller sites subject criteria on location, scale, access, design, landscape impact and amenity.

10.7.2 The LPU is underpinned by the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2023) which identified a need for 86 Gypsy and Traveller pitches. Since this Assessment was published, 4 pitches have been permitted, reducing the need for the 2023-2040 plan period to 82 pitches. Para 9.95 of the draft LPU confirms the approach, stating:

> "[The Plan] allocates 4 sites specifically for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. Together these 4 sites have the capacity to deliver approximately 43 pitches. Strategic scale developments are also expected to make a proportionate contribution to meeting the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community. Taken together, expected permissions, specific allocations and delivery as part of strategic scale developments would contribute 78 pitches towards meeting the identified need."

10.7.3 Para 9.96 confirms strategic development should make provision at a rate of 1 pitch per 200 dwellings. Consequently, criterion iii of part a) of Policy SS13 requires the provision of 20 Gypsy and Traveller pitches across the whole of the LGV site allocation. This application makes provision in the east of the site for the full SS13 requirement for 20 pitches. The pitches will be an integral part of the development with access taken from within the proposed road network that forms part of the proposal. The precise details of the provision will be addressed via subsequent Reserved Matters applications.

10.8 Space Standards

10.8.1 Policy TB07 of the MDD provides internal space standards that pre-date the introduction of the Nationally Described Space Standards ("NDSS"). The NPPG states that: *"Where a local planning authority (or qualifying body) wishes to require an internal space standard, they should only do so by reference in their Local Plan to the nationally described space standard."* Some of the internal space standards in Policy TB07 fall below NDSS and some are higher. As such, the Council does not currently have an updated adopted NDSS position.

10.8.2 Consequently, criterion 8 of LPU Policy H1 requires all residential proposals to comply with the NDSS. The Affordable Housing will comply with the NDSS and this can be secured by condition or within the Section 106 agreement as required. Compliance with the NDSS for market housing will be for the subsequent Reserved Matters applications to demonstrate for each phase of the development.

10.9 Custom Build Housing

10.9.1 Paragraph 63 of the NPPF supports the provision of custom built housing, stating, "… *the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include…people wishing to commission or build their own homes.*" Neither the Core Strategy nor the MDD contain specific policies regarding custom build.

10.9.2 However, Policy H6 of the LPU confirms proposals that are consistent with the self and custom build register will be supported in principle. The delivery will be provided as serviced plots, subject to a design, completed within 3 years of purchase and marketed for at least a year before being offered first too Registered Providers and then the open market. The supporting text to Policy [H6] confirms, "*Loddon Valley Garden Village and the South Wokingham Strategic Development Location are expected to deliver custom and self-build plots as part of the overall housing mix*."

10.9.3 Consequently, criterion ii) of part a) of LPU Policy SS13 requires the provision of 100 custom and self-build serviced plots across the whole of the LGV allocation. This application indicatively makes provision in the east of the site for an area measuring approximately 2.6ha which would provide custom and self-build plots. The precise details of the provision will be addressed via subsequent Reserved Matters applications.

11. Planning conditions and obligations

11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 Loddon Garden Village is the largest development in the emerging Local Plan Update, and one of the largest developments ever brought forward within Wokingham Borough. As such it is recognised that the development must be supported by the delivery of comprehensive, appropriate and well-timed infrastructure, both new and enhanced; and that development must be carefully managed through the careful use of planning conditions.

11.2 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

11.2.1 The Wokingham Borough Council Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule was adopted on 19 February 2015 and came into effect on 6 April 2015. The Charging Schedule sets out site specific CIL rates for the Core Strategy SDL's (ranging from £300-£365/m2 index linked) and for the 'Rest of Borough' (£365/m2).

11.2.2 At the time of writing, the application site is located within the 'Rest of Borough' area for CIL purposes. However, following discussions with the Council, it is anticipated that the Charging Schedule will be updated alongside the LPU, in order to give the LGV a nil (or nominal) rate. Infrastructure is therefore expected to be dealt with solely by via S106 Planning Agreement.

11.3 Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and Section 106 Heads of Terms

11.3.1 A wide range of infrastructure is necessary to support Loddon Garden Village, including complex engineering works, community and educational facilities, transport measures, public open space, SANG, and ecological enhancement. Hence, engagement has taken place with WBC through the pre-application stage, culminating in an IDP published by WBC in August 2025 and provided to the LPU Examination Inspectors on 2 September 2025 (reference: WBC28).

11.3.2 The IDP will be developed further as this application progresses, and subject to wider consultation, before being formalised upon determination through the Section 106 agreement.

11.3.3 It is anticipated that the S106 Agreement is likely to address the following key matters:

Table 11.1: Overview of anticipated planning obligations (preliminary Heads of Terms)

Topic/ theme	Anticipated S.106 requirement
Housing	
Affordable housing – quantum	To ensure provision of 40% affordable housing on the site in accordance with policy.
Affordable housing – tenure and unit type	To determine an appropriate tenure mix, including in terms of Affordable Rent, Social Rent, and Affordable Home Ownership units.
Affordable housing – distribution	To address how and when affordable housing will be delivered across the application site as a whole, to ensure an appropriate mix and balance across different parcels coming forward at different times.
Affordable housing – delivery, management and detailed matters	We would expect the Section 106 agreement to encompass further matters such as the transfer to registered providers, estate management, 'staircasing', and viability.
Education	
Provision of land for schools	Provision of land for 2 x 3 Form entry Primary Schools and 12 Form Entry Secondary School
Financial contributions	Financial contributions to Primary, Secondary and SEND provision
Governance	Providing for the creation of a steering group between the Applicant, Local Planning Authority and Local Education Authority to oversee delivery of the education facilities.
Delivery programme	Mechanism to devise and agree a delivery programme in conjunction with the Local Education Authority, to include a timetable for design, procurement, construction and opening of schools
SANG mitigation and ecology	
SANG – design and definition	Formal definition of the SANG land in terms of its area, composition, uses, design, and management.
SANG – implementation and management	Mechanisms to secure the appropriate phased implementation of the SANG having regard to the occupancy of the overall development, and subsequently its ongoing management and maintenance, to include the financing thereof.
Biodiversity Net Gain	Obligations to ensure that the 20%+ Biodiversity Net Gain calculated as a result of the submitted Metric are delivered,

	managed and maintained in accordance with the relevant legislation.
Financial contributions	Financial contributions towards Strategic Access Management & Monitoring (SAMM).
Public open space	
Definitions	Mechanism to formally require delivery of the various forms of public open space formally applied for in the development, with a means by which each typology is defined / approved.
Delivery and timing	Obligation to devise a programme to provide a suitable quantum of open space typologies, in suitable locations, as the development of site progresses. The focus of this being, to ensure that a sufficient and appropriate amount of public open space is available to residents at each phase.
Management and maintenance	Financial contributions towards management and maintenance, alongside a schedule of who is responsible for these works, their frequency and duration
Sports hub	
Overarching	Establishment of protocols around how the Sports Hub will be carried forward into the Reserved Matters process (including the timing thereof, and roles/ responsibilities) and its future management and maintenance
Future use	Obligation to devise a 'Community Use Agreement' in conjunction with WBC and in liaison with community and sports stakeholders. This agreement will establish how pitches and other facilities will be used by the wider public as well as by the schools within Loddon Garden Village.
Highways, transport and engineering	
Financial contributions to off-site highway improvement works	Formal definition of relevant works emerging from the Transport Assessment, relating to a defined cost and mechanism for payment thereof.
Bridges (M4, Loddon, and Barkham Brook)	Obligations relevant to the detailed design, commissioning, and implementation of bridges.
Adoption of public footpaths and roads	Protocols relating to formal adoption by the Highway Authority, having regard to the overall masterplan, strategic design code, and build /phasing programme.

Rights of way	Definition of the location and status of each public right of way affected by, or created as a result of, the development, and measures to ensure effective delivery of a rights of way strategy consistent with the overall programme of development
Sustainable transport measures	Definitions of, and mechanisms for the delivery of, all relevant measures including: • Public Transport infrastructure (e.g. bus stops) • Transport hubs • My Journey Contribution • Provision of new / improved footpaths and cycleways • Residential and Commercial Travel Plans • Travel Plan Coordinator • Contributions towards bus services
Flood mitigation	Works associated with the River Loddon to prevent flooding.
Drainage	Detailed design, provision and management of SuDS systems and associated infrastructure through the development.
Utilities	Obligations associated with ensuring capacity for required infrastructure, such as water, waste, electricity, mobile network, and broadband.
Waste	Obligations associated with the minimisation, collection, and disposal of waste within the development.
Public and community facilities	
District Centre	Obligations which relate to the formal definition of each element within the proposed development and how they will be brought forward, implemented and managed in a timely way consistent with the overall Vision for the LGV. Consideration required of which organisations (in addition to WBC) would be involved in the evolution of each obligation, such as the NHS / CCB design guidance in relation to health provision.
Local Centre	
Community centres	
Health facilities, inc. GP	
Community Manager	
Employment Skills and Construction	
General	Employment, training and apprenticeship opportunities
	Measures to identify opportunities to source goods and services from local suppliers
Management of Public Areas and Buildings	
General	Financial contributions towards management and maintenance

Heritage conservation	Measures in relation to retained / enhanced heritage assets, emerging from the Environmental Impact Assessment
Public Art	Protocols for the delivery of appropriate public art through the development, having regard to the SDC.
Monitoring and viability	
General matters	Mechanisms and fees for S106 monitoring
	Mechanisms for and timing of post-permission viability review

11.3.4 Triggers for infrastructure will need to be defined across each party and these may overlap into the respective planning conditions / S106 requirements.

11.3.5 Discussions with the Council will continue during the application determination period in order that the Heads of Terms are agreed and a draft S106 Agreement has been prepared by the time that the application is reported to the Council's Planning Committee.

11.4 Planning Conditions

11.4.1 The planning application is submitted in part in Outline, with all matters apart from Access reserved for later consideration, and is accompanied by a full planning application for SANG. It is anticipated therefore that a range of planning conditions will need to be agreed in response to consultee recommendations and in relation to the following key matters:

Table 11.2: Anticipated planning conditions

Topic/ theme	Anticipated planning condition requirement
Overall process and documentation	
Timescales	To submit the first application for Reserved Matters within 3 years of permission
Timescales	To commence development under any Reserved Matters application within 2 years of the date of approval of those matters
Approval of Parameter Plans	To carry out development in accordance with a series of formally fixed 'parameter' plans, including: • PP01 LGV Parameter Plans - Land Use • PP01 LGV Parameter Plans - Land Use (Community Hub Detailed Plan) • PP02 - LGV Parameter Plans - Landscape • PP03 - LGV Parameter Plans - Movement • PP04 - LGV Parameter Plans - Density • PP05 - LGV Parameter Plans - Building Heights • PP05A - LGV Parameter Plans - Building Heights (Community Hub Detailed Plan)

	• PP06 LGV Parameter Plans - Combined Parameter Plan
Approval of highway plans	To carry out development substantially in accordance with the suite of highway drawings included with this application, which include: • General arrangement drawings (A392-OPA-0101 to 0109); • Bridge drawings for the M4 and River Loddon Crossings (A392-OPA-0120 to 0121); • Longitudinal sections (A392-OPA-0131 to 0135) • Tracking drawings (A392-OPA-0140 to 0149) • Highways Materials plans (A392-OPA-0701 to 0708) • Highway standard details (A392-OPA-0720)
Approval of drainage plans	To carry out development substantially in accordance with the suite of drainage plans submitted with the application, which include: • Drainage and levels layouts (A392-OPA-0501 to 0509) • Storm Water Catchment Plans (A392-OPA-0520 to 0523) • Typical drainage details (A392-OPA-0530 to 0531) • Basin sections (A392-OPA-0540 to 0541) • Preliminary surface water drainage strategy (A392-024) • Materials plans (A392-OPA-0701 to 0708) • Highway Standard Details (A392-OPA-0720)
Site-wide strategies for design and built form	
Strategic Design Code	Requirement for Reserved Matters application to accord with the Strategic Design Code, which is expected to have been completed by the point the outline application is determined.
Site-wide housing strategy	Requirement for the submission of a site wide housing strategy to demonstrate how residential development will provide the delivery of, quantum of and phasing of market, affordable, custom-build and other types through the lifetime of the development. To consider internal space standards having regard to the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS).

Crime Prevention	Submission and agreement of a site-wide Crime Prevention Strategy to clarify a common approach to 'designing out crime' through the detailed design process.
Public Art	Requirement for the submission and agreement of a site-wide public art strategy as part of, or at least prior to the approval of the first Reserved Matters application.
Landscape, Environment and Ecology	
Tree and hedgerow protection	Adherence to the proposals in relation to tree retention and protection, as set out in the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment.
Landscape, Ecology and Green Infrastructure	Provision of landscape and public open space substantially in accordance with the details submitted, including planting plans for the Spine Road, SANG, Attenuation Basins, and elsewhere.
Landscape and Ecological Management Plan	Requirement to adhere to principles of the submitted Landscape Management Plan and Landscape Design Strategy document, and how these will be supplemented with more detail for approval by WBC prior to commencement .
Woodland Management Plan	Requirement to submit for approval a strategy for the continued protection of relevant woodlands prior to commencement.
Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace	To deliver the SANG in accordance with the submitted plans, and in a timely manner, having regard to the need to phase mitigation around the occupation of dwellings.
Ecology	Requirement to adhere to, monitor and manage the provision of ecological measures as set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain assessment.
Lighting	Requirement for the submission of detailed lighting strategies in association with Reserved Matters stage, consistent with the Strategic Design Code.
Heritage	
Archaeology	Adherence to the principles and mitigation set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment, setting out (as applicable) any further approvals required in relation to further fieldwork or protocols to follow during the construction process.
Built heritage	Controls as appropriate, relating to the conservation of the setting of heritage assets around the site, as more detailed proposals progress through Reserved Matters and ultimately into the construction process.
Ground conditions and the water environment	
Ground and Building Levels	Requirements to provide parcel-specific details on ground and building levels through the Reserved Matters process.

Flooding, surface water drainage and Sustainable urban Drainage Systems	Measures to ensure the comprehensive implementation and management of drainage measures such as SuDS across the development, consistent with the Flood Risk Assessment and parameter plans.
Contamination and pollution	Measures through the construction process to prevent the pollution of watercourses and groundwater.
Construction, waste and servicing	
Construction Environmental Management Plan	Requirement for a phase-specific CEMP to be submitted to and approved in writing by WBC prior to commencement. To include factor such as soil movement, traffic management, lighting, loading, storage, working methods, pollution prevention (dust), and protection of trees/hedgerows and other sensitive features.
Demolition Method Statement	Requirement for this to be submitted to and approved by WBC prior to commencement of development in relevant parcels, such as that which CEDAR is located within.
Waste Strategy	Submission of site-wide Waste Strategy to ensure the minimisation and sustainable handling of waste arising through the development process across the site.
Transport and access	
Pedestrian and Cycle Strategy	Requirement for the submission and approval of a pedestrian and cycle strategy for LGV as a whole, based on the Outline parameters and which will be progressively delivered in parallel with the completion of individual parcels of the site. The objective of the strategy will be to ensure new pedestrian and cycle infrastructure is proactively and comprehensively delivered.
Public Transport Strategy	Requirement for the submission and approval of a public transport strategy for LGV in conjunction with WBC and operators, which will ensure the timely delivery of new infrastructure and services, particularly bus connections, through the development.
Site Access Arrangements	Any relevant controls over the physical implementation of approved accesses to the site by vehicles, cycles and pedestrians.
Travel plan	Formal agreement of a Travel Plan in order to promote travel choice and accessibility to and from and within the development for all users of the site, including residents, visitors and employees, which will minimise the need to travel, facilitate active travel, provide safe and convenient active travel routes, and encourage healthy lifestyles.
Parking strategy	Requirement for the submission and approval of a parking strategy, to ensure a comprehensive and effective overall approach to the site.
Sustainability and energy	

Electric Vehicle charging	To require the submission and approval of an overall site-wide Electric Vehicle (EV) charging strategy, to be supplemented with more information and detail at the Reserved Matters stage
Low and Zero Carbon Technologies	Requirements to adhere to low-carbon principles through the Reserved Matters stage, consistent with Local Plan policy and the sustainability statement included with this application.
Other Conditions	
Grampian conditions	As necessary to deliver off site infrastructure

11.4.2 Discussions with the Council in relation to the nature and scope of planning conditions such as those provisionally identified above will be progressed in order that a draft decision notice can be completed by the time that the application is reported to the Planning Committee.

12. Planning Balance and Benefits of the Development

12.1 Development Plan and Material Considerations

12.1.1 As Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 confirms, planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

12.1.2 The LGV does not feature in the extant Development Plan, comprising the Core Strategy and the MDD; and the LPU, which allocates the Site, has not yet been adopted. Hence until the adoption of the LPU, approval would entail a technical departure from the Development Plan. However, material considerations overwhelmingly indicate that this application should be granted, which can be summarised under three broad headings:

i. Due to relevant Development Plan policies being 'out of date', the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' applies pursuant to NPPF 11d.

ii. There is an array of positive social, economic and environmental benefits that would accrue as a result of this application that are overwhelmingly in the public interest.

iii. This application is fully consistent with emerging LPU Policy SS13, which itself should be afforded substantial weight.

12.2 The Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

12.2.1 As noted above in Sections 7 and 8 above, WBC are unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing supply, and hence relevant policies in the Local Plan are 'out of date'. This means that based on the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' set out in paragraph 11d of the NPPF, permission should be granted, 'unless':

> *"(i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
>
> *(ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this 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."*

12.2.2 Neither of the above exceptions apply. This application lies largely outside of 'footnote 7' designations, and insofar as there is a relationship with habitats, heritage assets, and flood risk areas within the development, the application will produce overall positive benefits. In line with paragraph 110 of the NPPF, the proposals have been developed to ensure the development will be sustainable, by limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. The proposed development makes effective use land, will provide a well-designed new development and will provide affordable homes. The benefits of the proposed development, as set out below, clearly outweigh the adverse impacts of doing so, and the application would direct development to a location that will be made sustainable. Hence there is no reason, let alone a strong one, to refuse the development. The Garden Village approach in this application, allied with the comprehensive infrastructure proposals, conform directly with the Framework's objective of directing development

to sustainable locations. As such, whilst this application is being brought forward in line with Policy SS13 of the LPU, it can be considered favourably in its own terms, having regard to the NPPF alone.

12.3 Positive Benefits of the Development

12.3.1 As evidenced throughout this application, and as summarised in this Planning Statement, the Design and Access Statement, and the Environmental Statement, the benefits of this application (social, economic and environmental) are considered to outweigh any harms. These are summarised in the table below.

Table 12.1: Summary of benefits and weight

Benefit	Planning weight
Social benefits of Loddon Garden Village	
Construction of up to 2,800 homes in a highly sustainable location, selected by WBC for inclusion in the emerging Local Plan. This, in a context where the council are able to show a housing supply of only 1.7 years, and where the Development Plan is 'out of date'.	**Very Substantial**
Provision of 40% affordable homes, in line with emerging LPU policy, with a mix suitable to the context of the Site and housing needs in the area.	**Very Substantial**
Provision of a new EcoValley that will serve both the development, adjoining communities, and the wider Borough of Wokingham, with the inclusion of SANG that will facilitate other developments required in the plan period.	**Very Substantial**
Provision of significant quantum of community facilities which will serve not only Loddon Garden Village but the surrounding area.	**Significant**
Provision of a substantial sports hub which will provide a strategic opportunity for greater activity both for residents of the site and wider communities.	**Significant**
Provision of land for a 12-form entry Secondary School.	**Significant**
Provision of land for two 3-form entry Primary Schools with early years.	**Significant**
20 Gypsy and Traveller pitches, consistent with Policy SS13.	**Moderate**
Economic benefits of Loddon Garden Village	
Contributing to the success of the Thames Valley Science Park (TVSP) through providing substantial amounts of residential accommodation – both affordable and market – in close proximity, thus supporting the existing and future workforce.	**Very Substantial**
Provision of up to of new commercial, business and service development within the District Centre, Local Centre, and Community Hub, providing a significant number of new job opportunities.	**Significant**

Economic benefits to the area relating to the construction process and additional spending in the local area by new residents after the Proposed Development is completed. Key components of this include: - An anticipated construction cost of approximately £1.05bn; - The generation of around 5,120 construction job-years on site; equating to an average of 340 on-site and 195 for residents in the study area;	**Significant**
Environmental benefits of Loddon Garden Village	
Delivery of a total of 25% Biodiversity Net Gain (habitat units) across the development as a whole. As well as significantly exceeding the statutory 10%, this benefit is enhanced by the large scale of the development, such that the 20% gain represents a [highly significant positive intervention] in the ecology of the area.	**Very Substantial**
Provision of homes on a low-carbon basis, with comprehensive sustainable energy measures.	**Significant**
Provision of a network of new pedestrian and cycle paths to facilitate sustainable transport and recreation.	**Moderate**

12.4 Consistency With, and Weight of LPU Policy

12.4.1 Given the above, there is strong justification for the LGV irrespective of its position outside of the adopted Development Plan. However, what sets this application apart is its consistency with the emerging LPU and particularly LPU Policy SS13, to which significant weight should be afforded in decision-making.

12.4.2 Following a 5-year programme of exhaustive site selection and analysis work led by WBC in connection with the LPU, the LGV has emerged as the optimal location within the Borough for delivery of a sustainable new settlement to meet social, economic and environmental objectives over the next 20 years and beyond.

12.4.3 Hence this application has the full backing of an emerging Development Plan allocation (Policy SS13) which is at an advanced stage and provides a direct basis for all elements that it contains to be assessed against. The LPU was submitted for Examination in February 2025 and as such, the LGV has been deemed by the planning authority – wholly independently of the applicant – as a sustainable location for development. Although the LPU has not yet been adopted, and may be the subject of some modification and refinement through the Examination process, both the urgent need for housing and the inherent suitability of this Site remain.

12.4.4 Other than through planning applications such as this one coming forward at an early stage in the Plan Period, there is no realistic means of delivering the key objectives of the LPU, particularly the quantum of housing required. It is particularly vital that larger, more complex schemes such as the LGV come forward through the planning application process promptly, in order to facilitate timely delivery of housing and ensure that the array of other social, economic and environmental benefits can be achieved without undue delay.

12.4.5 Consistent with NPPF paragraph 49, substantial weight can be afforded to emerging LPU policy SS13 on the basis of its advanced stage of preparation, the limited range of unresolved objections, and the consistency of the plan with the Framework in providing for sustainable housing, and other benefits.

12.4.6 This application is therefore not premature; indeed it is wholly appropriate for WBC to determine this application favourably.

13. Conclusions

13.1.1 The University's ambition is for Loddon Garden Village to be a fully integrated and sustainable new community. Given the extent of this application, delivering on the majority of the LPU Policy SS13 site allocation, which is pivotal to the achievement of the LPU spatial strategy, the University will have a crucial role to play in meeting the development needs of Wokingham as a whole in the period to 2040 and beyond.

13.1.2 As described throughout this Planning Statement, supported by the Design and Access Statement, Environmental Statement and other reports, the LGV is a highly appropriate and deliverable proposal.

13.1.3 The approval of this application, which relates to land identified as a draft allocation within the emerging LPU, represents a timely and strategically sound response to both local and national planning imperatives. Its inclusion in the LPU reflects its suitability, and its potential to support the long-term spatial strategy of WBC.

13.1.4 This application is fully aligned with the NPPF, particularly its emphasis on plan-led, sustainable development that meets the needs of current and future generations. It will significantly boost the supply of homes, create well-designed and beautiful places, support sustainable modes of transport, enhance biodiversity, and ensure climate resilience. It will contribute positively to the five-year housing land supply based on a robust delivery trajectory supported by evidence of infrastructure viability and market demand.

13.1.5 Loddon Garden Village directly tackles the housing crisis and contributes to the government's commitment to deliver 1.5 million homes in the current parliament, with 40% affordable housing.

13.1.6 In accordance with S.38(6) of the Planning and Compulsorily Purchase Act, there are therefore clear grounds for Wokingham Borough Council to support Loddon Garden Village proposal and we therefore respectfully request that this planning application is approved at the earliest opportunity.

Appendix 1 – Copy of LPU Policy SS13

5.107 Further guidance to Policy SS12 is set out in Appendix B. This is supplementary to the original South Wokingham SDL Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD sets out principles to ensure high quality development with a distinctive character and will remain in its current form. Further guidance may be prepared in due course to ensure the additional development continues to reflect the key principles and concept.

5.108 A defined settlement area has been defined on the Policies Map which reflect areas where building is anticipated based on the concept plan. The council recognises that these areas are indicative and that masterplanning will establish where building will occur in more detail. The Policies Map will be updated in the future once there is greater certainty.

Policy SS13: Loddon Valley Garden Village

1. The area identified as Loddon Valley Garden Village Strategic Development Location, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for a beautifully and imaginatively designed community including housing, employment, social and physical infrastructure.

2. The garden village will be delivered in accordance with the development, place shaping, and delivery principles set out below.

<u>Development principles</u>

Phased delivery of:

a) Around 3,930 dwellings, of which at least 2,700 dwellings will be delivered by 31st March 2040, including:
   i. 40% affordable homes, in accordance with Policy H3;
   ii. 100 custom and self build serviced plots;
   iii. 20 Gypsy and Traveller pitches; and
   iv. Specialist accommodation, including accommodation for older persons.

b) Around 100,000 m^2 of research and development floorspace or equivalent trip generating activity within use class E(g), B2, B8 and other complementary uses, through an extension to the Thames Valley Science and Innovation Park.

c) Schools, including:
   i. Two 3-form entry primary schools (including appropriate onsite early years provision); and
   ii. An 8-form entry secondary school, with additional land reserved to enable expansion to 12-form entry with sixth form.

   Each school should include space for the integrated teaching of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

d) A district centre providing a range of services and facilities in a location central to the planned housing, to include retail, leisure, employment, cultural, and health uses;

e) Two local centres providing day to day retail and other local community uses;

f) A multi-functional country park which is accessible to settlements beyond the garden village; and

g) A solution to avoid or mitigate the impact of development upon the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area through the provision of sufficient Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) (subject to monitoring of the quality and quantity standards).

Place shaping principles

3. The siting, layout, and form of development, including landscaping should:

    a) Draw on and enhance the site's context, changes in topography and its considerable natural assets such as the River Loddon and Barkham Brook, irreplaceable habitats, and hedgerows, trees, woodland and other features;
    b) Protect and retain the permanent physical and visual sense of separation of Arborfield and the defined settlements of Arborfield Cross and Shinfield;
    c) Be designed around a series of walkable neighbourhoods, each providing a range of accessible services and facilities. Where important local facilities are necessarily located beyond the neighbourhood, these should be linked by accessible and attractive routes which support and encourage active travel. The promotion of community facilities for shared use, such as outdoor and indoor sports and leisure provision will be strongly encouraged;
    d) Establish a comprehensive and integrated network of high-quality and attractive active travel routes, greenways and bus services within the garden village and to destinations in the wider area;
    e) Incorporate measures to protect the separate identity of Carter's Hill;
    f) Incorporate measures to conservation and enhancement of heritage assets, including listed buildings, through appropriate design and the provision of sufficient space;
    g) Locate district and local centres where they are accessible to the planned housing, and are of an appropriate scale to meet the day-to-day needs with a range of retail (including food store of around 2,500m^2), leisure, cultural, community, health and service facilities;
    h) Locate higher development densities around the district and local centres, transport nodes, and along public transport routes subject to site specific sensitivities such as landscape, character and heritage;
    i) Locate new buildings, except those for water compatible uses, outside areas of flood risk, with development planned for sequentially, by placing the most vulnerable development in the lowest areas of flood risk; and
    j) Draw on the recreational and ecological opportunities of the River Loddon and Barkham Brook to create a multi-functional country park which provides coherent ecological networks, recreational opportunities and active travel connectivity.

Delivery principles

4. The delivery of the garden village must be supported by a comprehensive package of infrastructure to support a self-sustaining, thriving and healthy community including the following.

Masterplanning

5. To ensure that development comes forward in a strategic, coordinated and comprehensive manner, delivery should be led by a single agreed vision and masterplan for the whole garden village that demonstrates how the principles established in this policy and supporting guidance in Appendix C have been considered to ensure high quality development. The masterplan must be produced in partnership between the council, developers, landowners and key stakeholders, and involve consultation with the local community. Development proposals on individual land parcels must accord with the principles and requirements set out in the agreed vision and masterplan. The masterplan must provide:

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

Landscape and green and blue infrastructure

6. Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive strategic landscape and green and blue infrastructure strategy that:

    a) Provides a new country park incorporating the River Loddon and Barkham Brook that contributes to, and enhances, coherent ecological networks and habitats, which are integrated into the wider green and blue infrastructure beyond the garden village;
    b) Protects and enhances the identified attributes of the River Loddon Valued Landscape and Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape;
    c) Provide a network of connected, accessible and high-quality open spaces that includes tree lined streets, opportunities for local food growing and natural play, that integrate with the wider green and blue infrastructure network;
    d) Retains, and incorporates appropriate buffers for, ancient woodland, ancient or veteran trees, watercourses, hedgerows, and other trees into the connected green and blue infrastructure of the site;

e) Provides a network of safe, attractive, landscaped and accessible public rights of way across the site, and where appropriate demonstrates how they connect into the existing rights of way network;
f) Contributes to establishing the Loddon long distance footpath for active travel; and
g) Establishes clear and robust arrangements for future maintenance.

Drainage and flood alleviation

7. Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive drainage and flood alleviation strategy that:

a) Provides high quality sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) that are integrated into the wider landscape and green and blue infrastructure strategy, including mitigation at source and makes a positive contribution to attractive open spaces, and improvement to biodiversity and water quality;
b) Considers and takes opportunity as appropriate to improve the management of flood risk and reduce the risk of flooding to areas beyond the garden village; and
c) Establishes clear and robust arrangements for future maintenance.

Biodiversity

8. Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive ecological strategy that:

a) Achieves a measurable biodiversity net gain of at least 20% as calculated using the latest statutory metric;
b) Shows how priority habitats and ecological features will be protected and enhanced, having particular regard to any Biodiversity Action Plan and Local Nature Recovery Strategy priorities;
c) Provide a suitable buffer between the built development and ecological areas, including (but not limited to) Local Wildlife Sites, areas of irreplaceable habitat and areas of priority habitat; and
d) Provide measures to avoid and mitigate the impact of development on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. This will include the provision of sufficient and accessible Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace on-site (as set out in Policy NE3).

Housing

9. Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive housing strategy that:

a) Provides a mix of housing types, sizes (including those suitable for extended family living), and tenures that reflect the identified housing needs and demands as set out in the council's most up to date evidence of housing need;
b) Applies designs which support spaces suitable for home working; and

c) Shows how the mix of housing types, sizes and tenures will be coordinated through each phase of delivery.

Employment and Jobs

10. Development proposals should contribute towards a wide range and mix of employment, skills and training opportunities in different sectors of the economy, including small-scale business space and small/medium sized flexible units, within district and local centres as appropriate.

Sustainable design and construction

11. Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive energy and sustainability strategy that:

    a) Applies passive design principles to ensure that form, orientation, building typologies, development densities and green and blue infrastructure are appropriately used to reduce energy demand and deliver climate resilient neighbourhoods;
    b) Implements the energy hierarchy at all scales and demonstrates a fabric first approach;
    c) Ensures that the total operational energy demand at completion of the Loddon Valley Garden Village is met from renewable or low-carbon sources on site, prioritising opportunities for heat networks, community energy initiatives or other solutions which take advantage of the scale of the development;
    d) Provides measures to reduce the whole-life impacts by creating adaptable, durable buildings and employing construction methods and materials which minimise embodied emissions; and
    e) Provide measures to reduce water consumption.

Transport

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

    a) Provides layouts, street designs and associated measures that are safe, suitable and convenient for all users, that prioritise active travel, and facilitates high quality public transport services both within and to key destinations beyond the garden village. This will include:

        i. The phased delivery of active travel and public transport measures;
        ii. An on-site dedicated network of segregated facilities for pedestrians and cyclists that integrate with active travel networks, including the Public Rights of Way network; and
        iii. The provision of new and improved off-site connections for pedestrians and cyclists, providing safe, suitable and convenient access to the surrounding communities, facilities, services and employment opportunities including the Thames Valley Science and Innovation Park,

Mereoak Park and Ride, Green Park, Green Park Station, Shinfield, Lower Earley, Winnersh and Winnersh Triangle Station.

b) Demonstrates that the design of the access arrangements and the associated highway improvements take into account all the planned development; and
c) Ensures that development will not have a severe adverse impact on the local and strategic highway networks, nor an unacceptable impact upon highway safety, following the inclusion of suitable measures to mitigate the impact.

Utilities

13. Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive utility and digital infrastructure and communications strategy. This will include the:

    a) The phased delivery of water, foul water, sewerage and electricity upgrades; and
    b) The phased delivery of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) connectivity, including access to full-fibre gigabit-capable broadband; and 4G and 5G mobile technologies.

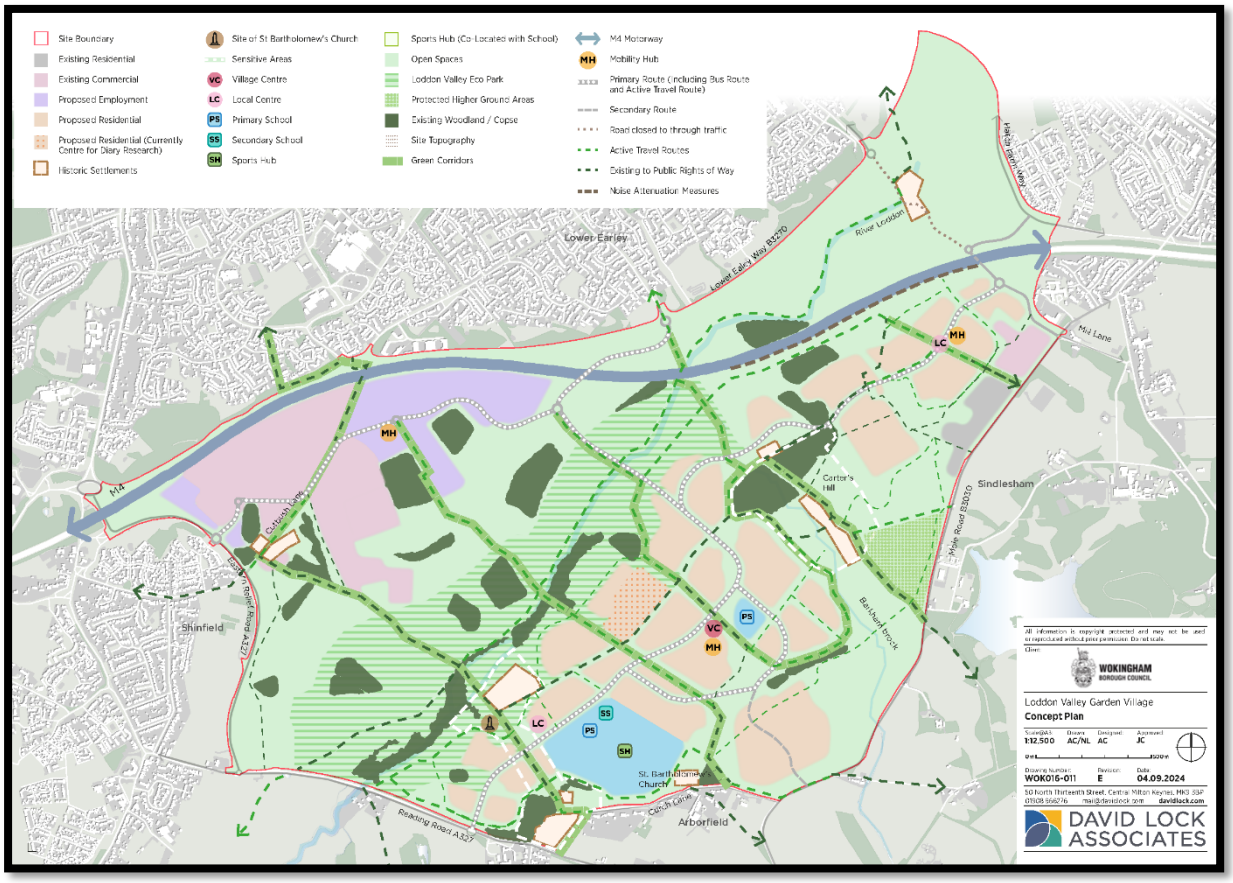
Minerals and waste

14. The potential for on-site minerals resources which may be winnable through prior extraction should be informed by minerals resource assessments. Where viable, development proposals should respond and implement a strategy for prior extraction.

Stewardship

15. Development proposals should proceed in accordance with an agreed strategy for the long-term governance and stewardship arrangements for community assets, including country park, open spaces, public realm areas and community and other relevant facilities.

Figure 8: Loddon Valley Garden Village concept plan.



5.109 Loddon Valley Garden Village will be a holistically planned, beautifully designed, and sustainable new community. The site, which will align to the principles and qualities for Garden Communities[8], will make provision for around 3,930 new homes alongside employment and a range of services and facilities. Of the total number of homes, a minimum of 2,700 are expected to be completed within the period to 2040.

5.110 Loddon Valley Garden Village should be a place where people will want to live, where they feel healthy and happy, and which provides opportunities for communities to prosper and flourish. The new settlement will comprise 40% affordable homes, include local services and facilities to minimise the need for unnecessary travel, and where travel is required, support opportunities to do this by active means such as walking, wheeling and cycling. The country park will provide recreational opportunities for the new community as well as those nearby, and significant biodiversity improvements.

5.111 An integral element of the new garden village is the provision of homes in proximity to jobs with the location incorporating the existing Thames Valley Science and Innovation Park, a location which includes a mix of science and technology, film studios, educational and health uses. In providing new homes in proximity to key job locations, it is not assumed that all residents would work in the immediate area but the approach provides a clear opportunity to reduce travel compared to other approaches. It is accepted that wider travel will always be necessary and must be planned for.

[8] Town and Country Planning Association (2017) Garden Villages Guidance; Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (2018) Prospectus on 'Garden Communities'

5.112 The scale and complexity of the garden village requires that development comes forward in a coordinated manner and led by a single agreed vision. The new community will be supported by a comprehensive package of infrastructure to incentivise sustainable behaviours and travel choices. This will include a framework to maximise opportunities for active travel within the new community and between the surrounding places (including a new connection over the M4 to Earley), primary schools and a secondary school, and district and local centres.

5.113 An integral element of the garden village is the creation of a country park along the River Loddon Valley, an area currently without public access. This will facilitate wider public access along the river corridor and to open space in the wider area. The river corridor provides a significant opportunity for comprehensive habitat management, restoration and enhancement, improving biodiversity.

5.114 Further guidance to Policy SS13 is set out in Appendix C. Further guidance may be prepared in due course to ensure the additional development continues to reflect the key principles and concept. Defined settlement areas have been defined on the Policies Map which reflect areas where building is anticipated based on the concept plan. The council recognises that these areas are indicative and that masterplanning will establish where building will occur in more detail. The Policies Map will be updated in the future once there is greater certainty.

Policy SS14: Sites allocated for residential, including residential as part of mixed-use development

1. The sites listed below and shown on the Policies Map, are allocated for residential development (including residential as part of mixed-use development).

2. Development proposals should consider the site specific development guidelines, as set out in Appendix E.

   In considering the site specific development guidelines flexibility may be applied to allow for material changes in circumstance as a result of the passage of time or to enable alternative solutions that will deliver the same, or preferably, a better planning outcome.

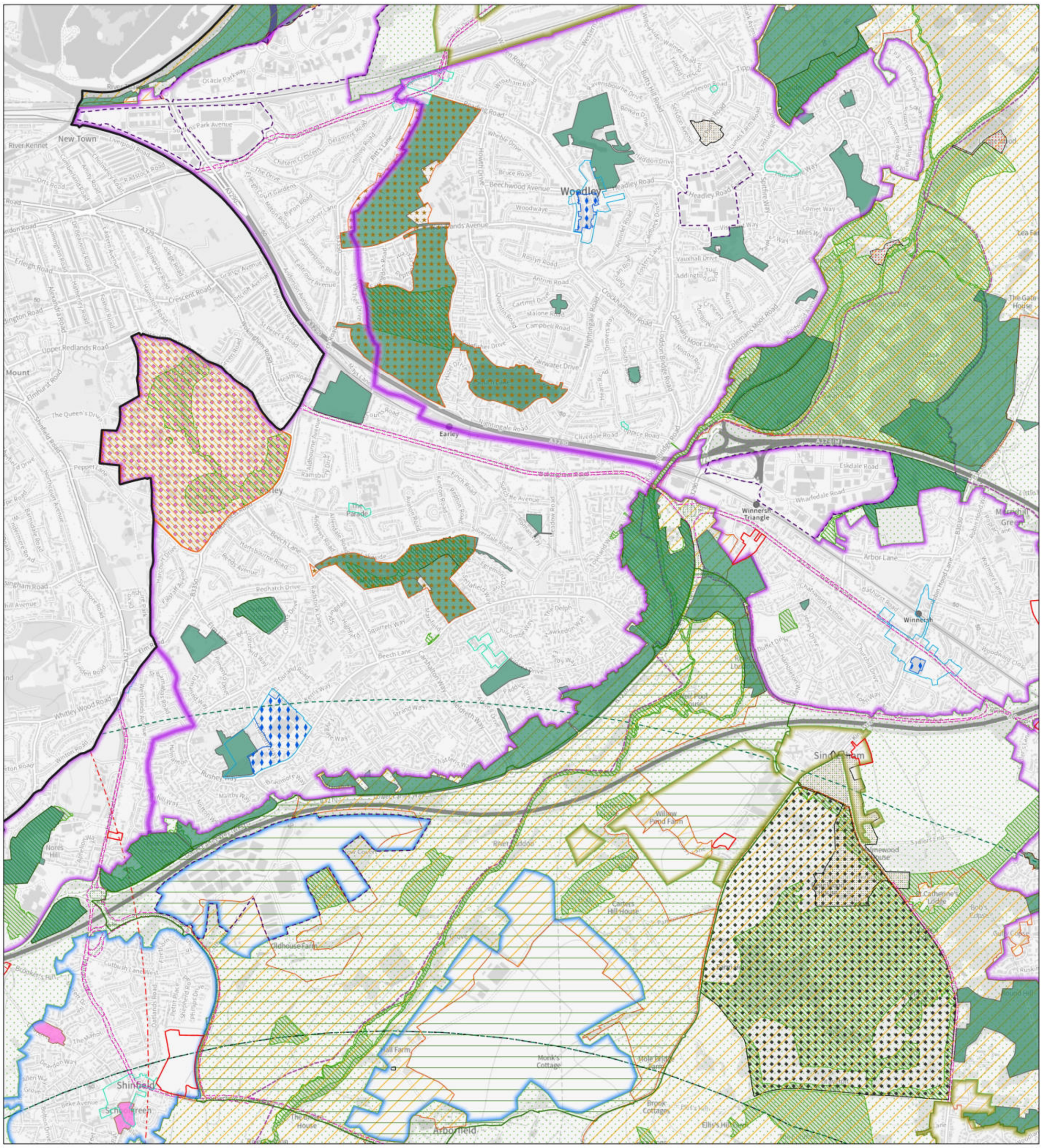
3. Development proposals are expected to come forward through a design led approach, involving the local community. For the larger sites, and where outlined in the development guidelines, it will be necessary for a masterplan and a strategic design code to be prepared.

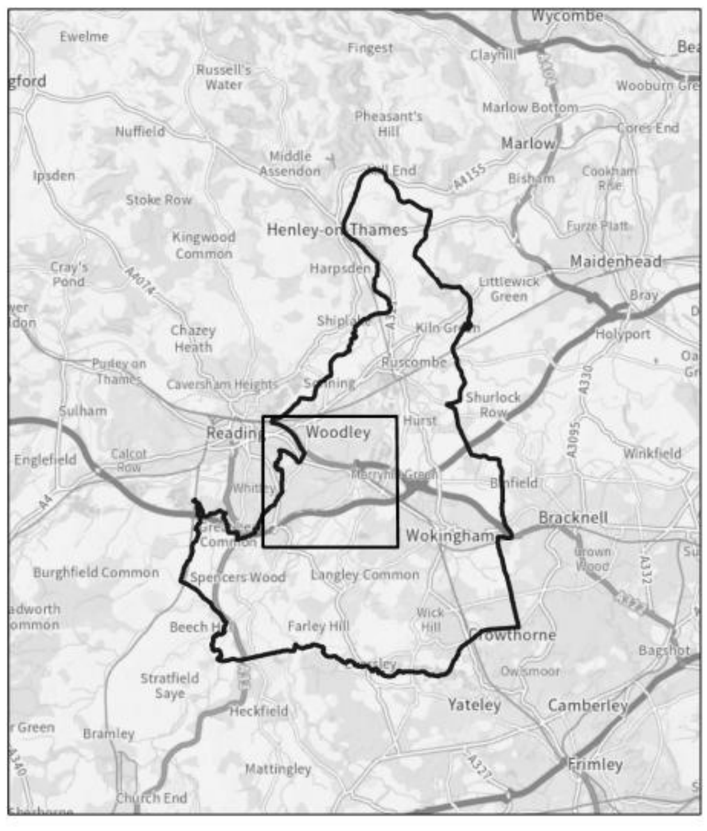
Ref	Site name	Approx No. wellings	Permission / resolution to grant[9]
SS14.1	High Barn Farm, Commonfield Lane, Barkham*	20	-
SS14.2	Honeysuckle Lodge, Commonfield Lane, Barkham*	4	-
SS14.3	Woodlands Farm, Wood Lane, Barkham*	15	-
SS14.4	Land west of Park Lane, Charvil	61	-
SS14.5	24 Barkham Ride, Finchampstead	30	-
SS14.6	31-33 Barkham Ride, Finchampstead	80	Yes
SS14.7	Greenacres Farm, Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead	100	-

[9] At September 2024.

Appendix 2 – Extract from the LPU Policies Map

Map C1 Local Plan Update Proposed Submission Plan Policies Map





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Appendix 3 – Abbreviations

Abbreviation List – Loddon Garden Village Planning Statement

Site Specific Abbreviations

- CEDAR – Centre for Dairy Research
- LGV – Loddon Garden Village
- TVSP – Thames Valley Science Park
- SS13 – Site allocation policy in the LPU for LGV

General Planning & Policy Abbreviations

- CIL – Community Infrastructure Levy
- DAS – Design and Access Statement
- DPD – Development Plan Document
- HELAA – Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment
- IDP – Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- LHNA - Local Housing Need Assessment
- LPU – Local Plan Update
- MDD – Managing Development Delivery Document
- NDG – National Design Guide
- NDSS - Nationally Described Space Standards
- NMDC – National Model Design Code
- NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework
- PPG – Planning Practice Guidance
- Reg 18 / Reg 19 – Regulation 18/19 (Local Plan consultation stages)
- S106 – Section 106 Agreement
- SDC – Strategic Design Code
- SDL – Strategic Development Location
- SPD – Supplementary Planning Document
- SPG – Supplementary Planning Guidance

Environmental & Technical Abbreviations

- AIA – Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- ALC – Agricultural Land Classification
- BMV / BVA – Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land
- BNG – Biodiversity Net Gain
- BOA – Biodiversity Opportunity Area
- CEMP – Construction Environmental Management Plan
- DEPZ – Detailed Emergency Planning Zone
- eDNA – Environmental DNA
- EIA – Environmental Impact Assessment
- ES – Environmental Statement
- EV – Electric Vehicle
- FE – Form Entry
- FTTP – Fibre to the Premises
- GP – General Practitioner
- HGV – Heavy Goods Vehicle
- IMEA – Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment

- LVIA – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- LWS – Local Wildlife Site
- MRA – Mineral Resource Assessment
- MSA – Mineral Safeguarding Area
- RTD – River Terrace Deposits
- SAMM - Strategic Access Management & Monitoring
- SANG – Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace
- SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- SCE – Statement of Community Engagement
- SFRA – Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- SPA – Special Protection Area
- SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest
- SuDS – Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
- WFD - Water Framework Directive

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