

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Wokingham Local Plan Update (LPU)

SA Report

September 2024



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

AECOM Delivering a
better world



Quality information:

Prepared by	Checked by	Verified by	Approved by
LM, MF	Mark Fessey Associate Director	Ian McCluskey Associate Director	Nick Chisholm Batten Technical Director

Prepared for:

Wokingham Borough Council

Prepared by:

AECOM Limited
Aldgate Tower
2 Leman Street
London E1 8FA
United Kingdom
aecom.com

© 2024 AECOM Limited. All Rights Reserved.

This document has been prepared by AECOM Limited ("AECOM") in accordance with its contract with Wokingham Borough Council (the "Client") and in accordance with generally accepted consultancy principles and the established budget. Any information provided by third parties and referred to herein has not been checked or verified by AECOM, unless otherwise expressly stated in the document. AECOM shall have no liability to any third party that makes use of or relies upon this document.

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
2	The plan scope	2
3	The SA scope	5
Part 1: What has plan-making / SA involved up to this stage?		1
4	Introduction to Part 1	2
5	Defining growth scenarios	3
6	Growth scenarios appraisal	38
7	The preferred approach.....	55
Part 2: What are the appraisal findings at this stage?		56
8	Introduction to Part 2	57
9	Appraisal of the Draft Plan.....	60
Part 3: What are the next steps?		82
10	Plan finalisation	83
11	Monitoring.....	83
Appendix I: Regulatory requirements		84
Appendix II: The SA Scope		87
Appendix III: Sites GIS analysis		93
Appendix IV: SDL options appraisal		113
Appendix V: Variable sites additional information.....		144

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 AECOM is commissioned to undertake Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in support of the emerging Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU), which is being prepared by Wokingham Borough Council.
- 1.1.2 Once adopted, the plan will set the strategy for growth and change for the Borough up to 2040, allocate sites to deliver the strategy and establish policies against which planning applications will be determined.
- 1.1.3 SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to minimising adverse effects and maximising the positives. SA is required for local plans.¹

1.2 SA explained

- 1.2.1 It is a requirement that SA is undertaken in-line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 1.2.2 In-line with the Regulations, a report (known as the **SA Report**) must be published for consultation alongside the draft plan that presents an appraisal of “the plan and reasonable alternatives”. The report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.
- 1.2.3 More specifically, the SA Report must answer the following **three questions**:²
 - What has Plan-making / SA involved **up to this point**?
 - including appraisal of ‘reasonable alternatives’
 - What are the SA findings **at this stage**?
 - i.e. in relation to the draft plan
 - What are **next steps**?

1.3 This SA Report

- 1.3.1 The final draft (‘proposed submission’) version of the LPU is currently published under Regulation 19 of the Local Planning Regulations, such that representations can be made ahead of submission to the Government and an Examination in Public (EiP) overseen by one or more Planning Inspectors.
- 1.3.2 As such, this is the formally required SA Report. It is published alongside the Proposed Submission LPU to inform representations and subsequent plan finalisation as part of the EiP (see ‘next steps’).

Structure of this report

- 1.3.3 This report is structured in **three parts** in order to answer the questions above in turn.
- 1.3.4 Before answering the first question there is a need for two further introductory sections:
 - Section 2 – introduces the plan scope.
 - Section 3 – introduces the SA scope.
- 1.3.5 It should be noted that this report is structured identically to the Interim SA Reports from 2020 and 2021.

¹ Since provision was made through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 it has been understood that local planning authorities must carry out a process of Sustainability Appraisal alongside plan-making. The centrality of SA to Local Plan-making is emphasised in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023). The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012 require that an SA Report is published for consultation alongside the ‘Proposed Submission’ plan document.

² See **Appendix I** for further explanation of the regulatory basis for presenting certain information within the SA Report.

2 The plan scope

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The aim here is to introduce the Wokingham LPU more fully, including by setting out the established vision and the objectives that are in place to guide plan preparation. This can be considered the 'plan scope'.

2.2 The plan area

- 2.2.1 Wokingham Borough is a complex area geographically, with: the western part of the Borough comprising the eastern part of the Reading urban area; the eastern half abutting the Bracknell urban area; the northeast extent falling within the London Metropolitan Green Belt; a dense network of major road and rail infrastructure corridors; significant river corridors; varying geology and soils; and wide-ranging environmental constraints in terms of biodiversity, heritage, air quality and other matters. Another key point to note is four existing Strategic Development Locations (SDLs), following the Core Strategy (2010), which are currently coming forward, delivering in the region of 10,000 homes along with major new infrastructure (see <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/major-developments/overview-major-developments>).

- 2.2.2 Figures 2.1 and 2.2 introduce the plan area.

2.3 The plan period

- 2.3.1 The plan period is 17 years from 2023 to 2040. See further discussion in Sections 5.2 and 5.5.

2.4 Policy context

- 2.4.1 The plan is being prepared under the 2023 NPPF. Whilst a new draft version of the NPPF was published for consultation on 30th July 2024, and its direction of travel is acknowledged (also read in the context of a broader understanding of the Government's direction of travel in respect of planning reform), the Draft NPPF sets out 'transitional arrangements' for advanced local plans such as the Wokingham LPU.

- 2.4.2 Central to both the existing and draft versions of the NPPF is a requirement for authorities to take a positive approach to development, with an up-to-date local plan that meets objectively assessed needs (or 'local housing needs, LHN') in the case of housing, as far as is consistent with sustainable development.

- 2.4.3 LHN is understood on the basis of the Government's standard method set out in Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), and the Borough's current (July 2024) LHN figure is 748 dwellings per annum (dpa). However, it is acknowledged that alongside the new Draft NPPF the Government is proposing a new standard method, which would see the Borough's LHN figure rise by 75% to 1,308 dpa. The proposals may also result in an increase in other areas, for example Reading Borough's LHN rises by 17% and that of other neighbouring boroughs rises significantly or even dramatically. Notably, West Berkshire's LHN rises by 114% and Hart District's by 147%.

- 2.4.4 It is also important to recognise that the new Draft NPPF proposes to amend national policy in respect of 'decision-taking' (i.e. determining planning applications), which will likely have a significant bearing on Wokingham Borough from the point at which the new NPPF is adopted (late 2024). In particular, the likelihood (on the basis of the current draft version of the NPPF) is that there will be a requirement to demonstrate a five year housing land supply (5YHLS) against the new standard method LHN figure, which will not be possible, with the implication that policies in the adopted Local Plan (the Core Strategy, 2010) that deal with the supply of land are deemed 'out-of-date' and the presumption in favour of sustainable development (or 'tilted balance' in favour of development; NPPF para 11) will apply to decision-taking. The presumption / tilted balance applies currently (see a recent appeal decision in Swallowfield [here](#); in particular para 36) and the situation will likely worsen under the new NPPF. The only way to achieve a 5YHLS is to adopt a new Local Plan, hence there is a need to progress plan-making with upmost urgency.

- 2.4.5 It is important to emphasise that the Draft NPPF and the new proposed standard method are subject to change in light of the current consultation (at the time of writing, in August 2024).

Figure 2.1: Wokingham Borough in the sub-regional context

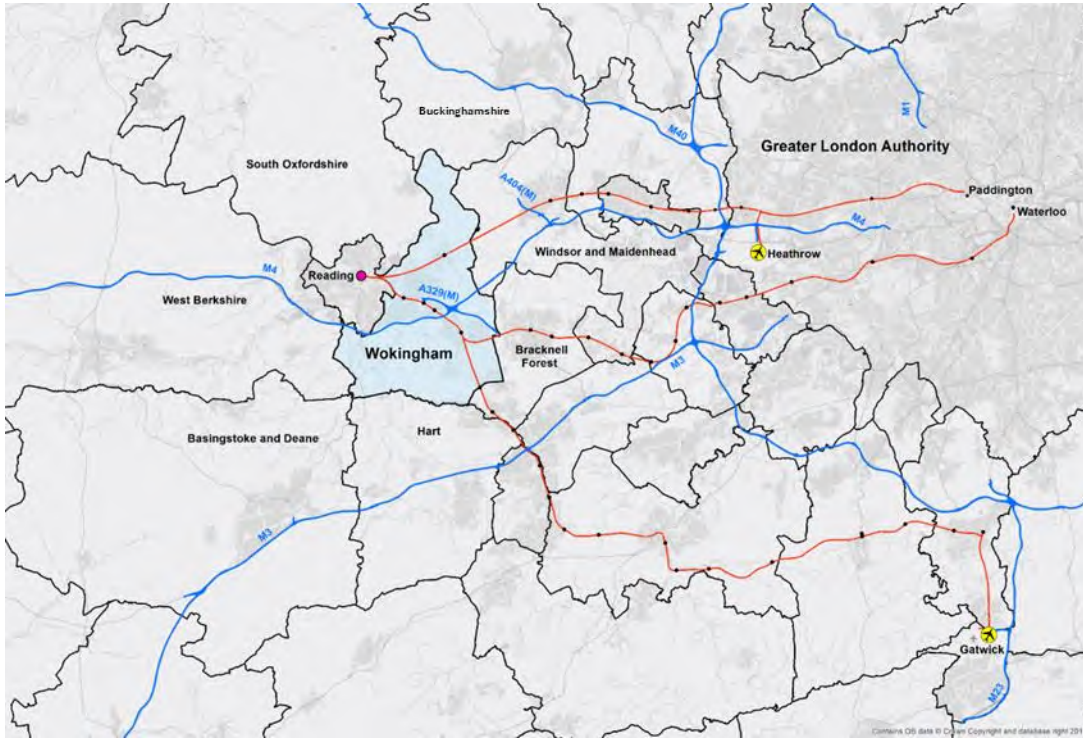


Figure 2.2: Parishes within Wokingham Borough



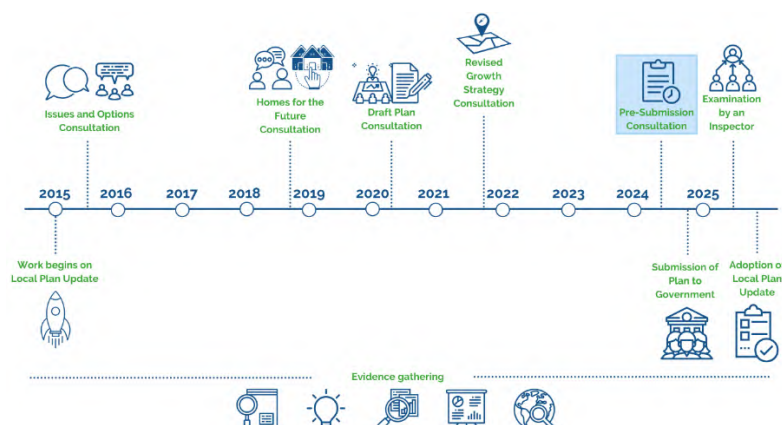
2.5 Plan vision and objectives

- 2.5.1 A vision has been established for Wokingham Borough with the aim of guiding the preparation of the LPU. It was first presented in the 2020 Draft Plan and remains broadly unchanged at the current time. The vision is not repeated here for brevity but, in summary, is structured under three key themes: a borough that focuses on the needs of our **communities**; a borough that will be **sustainable** for generations to come; and a borough where people choose to live, learn and work because both the **places** we build and the places we protect are valued and enriching.
- 2.5.2 The 2020 Draft Plan also presented a list of objectives to guide LPU preparation, which also remain broadly unchanged at the current time. The objectives are:
- Make the fullest contribution possible to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, **climate change** and the transition to a low-carbon economy.
 - Reduce the need to **travel** and widen travel choice, by providing local opportunities to **access** learning and employment, services and facilities, through ensuring that options for walking, cycling and public transport are attractive, accessible for all, convenient and safe, and by enabling digital connectivity.
 - Improve **strategic transport connectivity** by walking, cycling, public transport and road, both between places within and outside of the borough.
 - Maintain and strengthen the **sense of place** by securing quality designed development through protecting and enhancing the distinctive historic environment, landscape character, townscape character and biodiversity value, assisting vibrancy, and by keeping settlements separate.
 - Champion thriving **town and local centres** to provide the focus of their communities both in social and economic activity, ensuring they can adapt to the challenges they face.
 - Enable conditions to allow **the economy** to creatively grow by being adaptable to structural and technological change, ensuring the economic benefits are felt by all.
 - Improve **health and wellbeing** by enabling independence, encouraging healthy lifestyles, facilitating social interaction and creating inclusive and safe communities.
 - Contribute our fair share towards meeting the need for more **housing**, ensuring that a range of suitable housing options are available across both towns and villages which cater for and adapt to a variety of needs including affordable housing and the growing ageing and vulnerable groups in the population.
 - Promote quality and innovation in the **design** of buildings and public spaces, ensuring they are attractive, accessible, welcoming and meet needs of all groups in the community.
 - Facilitate timely provision of new and improved **infrastructure** by working with providers to achieve focused investment and by securing appropriate benefits from new development.

2.6 Plan preparation

- 2.6.1 Plan-making has been underway since 2015 and there have been four formal consultations (under Regulation 18) prior to this current 'publication' stage under Regulation 19. Evidence gathering and appraisal (SA) has been an ongoing process, informing plan decision-making throughout.

Figure 2.3: The plan-making timetable



3 The SA scope

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The SA scope refers to the breadth of sustainability issues and objectives that are taken into account as part of the assessment of “the plan and reasonable alternatives”. It does not refer to the scope of the plan (discussed above) or the scope of reasonable alternatives (discussed below, in Part 1).
- 3.1.2 The aim here is to introduce the reader to the *broad scope* of the SA. **Appendix II** presents further information; however, it is not possible to define the scope of the SA comprehensively. Rather, there is a need for the SA scope to be flexible and adaptable, responding to the nature of emerging plan and reasonable alternatives, as well as to the latest evidence-base and wider understanding of key issues.

3.2 Consultation on the scope

- 3.2.1 The SEA Regulations require that: “*When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the Environmental Report [i.e. the SA scope], the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies*”. In England, the consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England. As such, these authorities were consulted on the SA scope in 2015.
- 3.2.2 The outcome of the scoping process was an SA ‘framework’ comprising 22 objectives, with this framework then used to structure appraisal findings presented within the Interim SA Reports published alongside LPU consultation documents in 2016 (‘Issues and Options’) and 2018 (‘Homes for the Future’).
- 3.2.3 Subsequently, in 2019, the decision was taken to rationalise the framework by grouping the 22 objectives under 13 topic headings. Also, modest adjustments were made to three objectives, namely those dealing with the historic environment, landscape and transport.
- 3.2.4 The adjusted SA framework was then used for the purposes of appraisal work in 2019/2020 and 2021, as set out in the Interim SA Reports published in 2020 and 2021 (as discussed further below). Limited comments were received on the SA scope through the consultations, and so the SA framework is unchanged at the current time.
- 3.2.5 The framework is considered robust in light of the most recent national and local context. Also, and in summary, it has been published for consultation at five points along the plan-making / SA process (the Scoping Report plus five Interim SA Reports).
- 3.2.6 Importantly, the framework is suitably high level such that there is flexibility to focus-in on key issues / opportunities in light of the latest evidence as part of appraisal work.

3.3 The SA framework

- 3.3.1 Table 3.1 presents the sustainability topics and objectives that form the ‘backbone’ to the SA scope.

Table 3.1: The SA framework

Topic	Objective(s)
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve accessibility to services, amenities and facilities in particular by safe walking and cycling routes. Raise educational attainment, skills and training opportunities.
Air and wider environmental quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise impacts arising from pollution and improve and prevent where possible.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conserve and enhance biodiversity, including wildlife and river corridors and networks and to maximise opportunities for building in beneficial features for biodiversity including limiting the impact of climate change.

Topic	Objective(s)
Climate change adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting impact to public well-being, the economy and the environment by ensuring no inappropriate development in any areas at risk of flooding and use sustainable drainage solutions and other solutions in line with advice from the Environment Agency where necessary.
Climate change mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase energy efficiency and the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources [N.B. transport emissions considered below].
Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce poverty and social exclusion. • Improve the health and wellbeing of the population. • Ensure a safe and secure environment. • Create and sustain vibrant and locally distinctive communities.
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure high and stable levels of employment. • Encourage 'smart' economic growth'. • Maintain a buoyant and competitive economy with a range of jobs without adversely affecting the quality of life.
Historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance the historic environment, ensuring new development makes a positive contribution, or leads to no material harm, taking into account the setting of assets and links with the wider landscape.
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make provision for local housing needs by ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent sustainably constructed and affordable home.
Land, soils and natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve efficiency in land use through the re-use of previously developed land, existing buildings, including the re-use of resources and remediation of previously developed land. • Maintain and where appropriate improve soil quality, and to ensure land affected by contamination is remediated to a condition suitable for use. • Sustainably use resources and address waste by reducing and minimising waste as a priority and then managing in line with the waste hierarchy.
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance valued landscapes and the integrity of established character areas, ensuring new development makes a positive contribution, or leads to no material harm, also recalling links with the historic environment.
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce road congestion on the local and strategic road network (SRN), and minimise air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from transport, by improving carefully locating new development, minimising the need to travel and supporting 'sustainable transport' modes including safe walking and cycling routes and public transport.
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain, and, where appropriate improve water quality (including groundwater and surface water) and to achieve sustainable water resource management of both surface and groundwater flows.

Part 1: What has plan-making / SA involved up to this stage?

4 Introduction to Part 1

4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 Plan-making has been underway since 2015, with **four consultations** having been held prior to this current consultation, and four Interim SA Reports having been published, specifically:
- 2016 Issues and options
 - 2018 Homes for the future
 - 2020 Draft LPU
 - 2021 Revised Growth Strategy
- 4.1.2 However, the aim here, within Part 1, is not to relay the entire backstory of the plan-making /SA process, or to provide a comprehensive audit trail of decision-making over time. Rather, the aim is to report work undertaken to **explore reasonable alternatives in 2024**. Specifically, the aim is to:
- Explain the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with – see **Section 5**
 - Present an appraisal of the reasonable alternatives – see **Section 6**
 - Explain the Council’s reasons for selecting the preferred option – see **Section 7**

4.2 Reasonable alternatives in relation to what?

- 4.2.1 The legal requirement is to examine reasonable alternatives (RAs) taking account of the plan’s “objectives and geographical scope” and, as such, it was determined appropriate to focus on the spatial strategy, i.e. providing for a supply of land, including by allocating sites (NPPF paragraph 68), to meet objectively assessed development needs whilst also delivering on wider plan objectives. A key outcome of ‘spatial strategy-making’ is a key diagram, and it is clear that the tasks of deciding a spatial strategy / key diagram is a primary objective of the Local Plan, such that it warrants being a focus of work to explore RAs.³

- 4.2.2 The decision was made to refer to the spatial strategy / key diagram alternatives as “growth scenarios”.

What about site options?

- 4.2.3 Whilst individual site options generate a high degree of interest, they are not RAs in the context of most local plans, because they are not mutually exclusive, i.e. the aim of plan-making is not to select just one site for allocation. Rather, the objective is to allocate a package of sites, hence RAs should be in the form of alternative packages of sites. Nonetheless, consideration is naturally given to the merits of site options as part of the process of defining reasonable growth scenarios – see Sections 5.3 and 5.4.

Is the focus on housing sites?

- 4.2.4 Providing for housing needs is typically a focus of attention, but local plans are also tasked with meeting wider development needs, including needs for employment land and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. The discussion below is somewhat ‘housing-led’, but issues and options relating to wider development needs are also considered throughout, and a summary is presented in Section 5.5.

What about other aspects of the plan?

- 4.2.5 As well as establishing a spatial strategy, allocating sites etc, the local plan must also establish policy on thematic borough-wide issues, as well as site-specific policies to guide decision-making at the planning application stage. Broadly speaking, these can be described as development management (DM) policies.
- 4.2.6 However, it is a challenge to establish DM policy alternatives that are truly reasonable, and, in this case, no reasonable DM policy alternatives can be identified. See further discussion in Section 8.

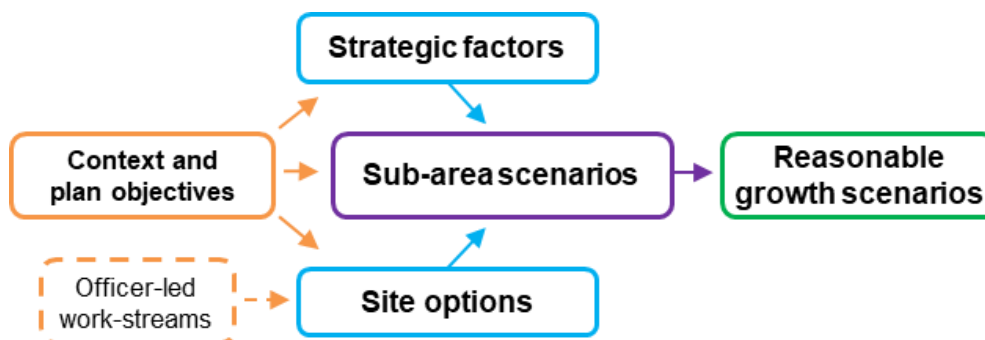
³ Another consideration is a need to define ‘do something’ alternatives that are meaningfully different, in that they will vary in terms of ‘significant effects’, where significance is defined in the context of the plan. SA must focus only on significant effects, and it is also important to be clear that ‘do nothing’ is not a reasonable alternative to ‘do something’ because ‘do nothing’ is the baseline (and effects are identified *in relation to the baseline*). Finally, in respect of defining RAs, it is important to reiterate that they must be mutually exclusive, in line with the dictionary definition [here](#) and the requirement to focus on “the plan and [RAs]”.

5 Defining growth scenarios

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The aim here is to discuss the process that led to the definition of reasonable growth scenarios. To reiterate, reasonable growth scenarios equate to the formal **reasonable alternatives**.

Figure 5.1: Defining reasonable growth scenarios



Structure of this section

- 5.1.2 This section explains a process to define reasonable growth scenarios as follows:
- **Section 5.2** – explores **strategic factors** (issues / opportunities / options) that are a ‘top down’ input.
 - **Section 5.3** – considers individual **site options** that are ‘bottom up’ input (‘building blocks’).
 - **Section 5.4** – explores growth options and scenarios for **sub-areas**.
 - **Section 5.5** – combines sub-area scenarios to form borough-wide **reasonable growth scenarios**.

A note on limitations

- 5.1.3 It is important to emphasise that this section does not aim to present an appraisal of reasonable alternatives. Rather, the aim is to describe the *process* that led to the definition of reasonable alternatives for appraisal. This amounts to a relatively early step in the plan-making process which, in turn, has a bearing on the extent of evidence-gathering and analysis that is proportionate, also recalling the legal requirement, which is to present an “**outline of the reasons for selecting alternatives...**” [emphasis added].

5.2 Strategic factors

Introduction

- 5.2.1 The aim of this section of the report is to explore strategic issues, opportunities and options with a bearing on the definition of reasonable growth scenarios. Specifically, this section of the report explores:

- Quantum – *how many* new homes are needed (regardless of capacity to provide them)?
- Spatial strategy – broadly *where* is more / less suited to growth and what *types* of growth are supported?

Quantum

- 5.2.2 This section sets out the established Local Housing Need (LHN) figure for the Borough, before exploring arguments for the Local Plan providing for a quantum of growth either above or below LHN.

Background

- 5.2.3 A central tenet of the plan-making process is the need to **A**) establish housing needs; and then **B**) develop a policy response to those needs. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) explains (emphasis added):

“Assessing housing need is the first step in the process of deciding how many homes [to plan for]...”

- 5.2.4 With regards to (A), the NPPF (2023) is clear that **LHN** should be calculated on the basis of an “assessment conducted using the standard method” other than in “exceptional circumstances”.
- 5.2.5 With regards to (B), many local authorities will respond to assessed LHN by providing for LHN in full or, in other words, setting the housing **requirement at LHN** and identifying a **supply** through policies sufficient to deliver this housing requirement on an annual basis over the plan period (which will typically necessitate a supply ‘buffer’ to mitigate against the risk of unforeseen delivery issues). However, under certain circumstances it can be appropriate to set a housing requirement that *departs* from LHN.

Wokingham’s Local Housing Need (LHN)

- 5.2.6 A three-step standard method for calculating LHN was first published by the Government in 2017, and then a fourth step was added in 2020 (the ‘cities uplift’), but this does not apply to Wokingham.⁴
- 5.2.7 There have also been some notable changes to guidance in respect of the data that should be utilised as an input to the standard method, since the method was first introduced. Specifically, following a consultation in late 2018, the PPG was updated to require that the household growth projections used as an input to the method must be the 2014-based projections, rather than more recent household projections (with reasons set out clearly at [paragraph 5](#) of the PPG on housing needs assessment).
- 5.2.8 The standard method derived LHN for the Borough is currently **748 dwellings per annum** (dpa), or 12,763 homes in total over the plan period (once slightly higher LHN for the first year of the plan period is factored in). This is an ‘uncapped’ figure, meaning that step 3 of the standard method (“Capping the level of any increase”) has no bearing. With regard to **Step 2** (adjustment for affordability), this involves accounting for the latest (2023) **ratio** of median workplace earning (i.e. the median earnings of those who work in the Borough) to median house price, which stands at 11.79. This latest ratio is a notable drop from 2022, when it stood at 12.73, but remains comfortably above the average for the South East, and it is also important to note that the ratio was below 10% as recently as 2015.
- 5.2.9 Finally, and to reiterate the discussion in Section 2, it is acknowledged that the Government is currently (August 2024) consulting on a new standard methodology that if implemented would see LHN rise by 75% to 1,308 dpa. This figure is acknowledged but is not taken to represent LHN for current purposes.

Is it reasonable to explore setting the housing requirement at a figure below LHN?

- 5.2.10 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states: “... *strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless: i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; 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.*” [emphasis added]
- 5.2.11 Wokingham Borough is overall not heavily constrained by NPPF “policies... that protect areas or assets of particular importance...” There are parts of the Borough that are constrained in this regard, but equally extensive less constrained parts of the Borough. On this basis, the possibility of setting the housing requirement at a figure below LHN can be ruled out as ‘unreasonable’. Also, there is a need to consider constraints to growth affecting Wokingham not only in an absolute sense, but also relative to neighbouring areas that would come under pressure to provide for any unmet need generated (see Figure 5.2, below).
- 5.2.12 Furthermore, there are many positive arguments in favour of providing for LHN. As part of this, it is important to recognise that meeting housing need is important not only in and of itself, but also due to highly significant secondary benefits, for example in terms of supporting communities, health and wellbeing, strategic infrastructure delivery and the local economy.
- 5.2.13 This position – that growth scenarios that would necessitate setting the housing requirement at a figure below LHN are unreasonable – was taken at the Revised Growth Strategy / IIA Report stage in 2021 (also, broadly, at the Draft Plan / IIA Report stage in 2020), and few if any significant concerns were raised.

Is it reasonable to explore setting the housing requirement at a figure above LHN?

- 5.2.14 There are five key points for discussion.

⁴ See [gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments).

Affordable housing need

- 5.2.15 This is quite high locally, and the PPG states: “An increase in the total housing figures included in the plan may need to be considered where it could help deliver the required number of affordable homes.” Key evidence then comes from the Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA, 2023), which explains: “... the study identifies a need for 33% affordable housing in Wokingham Borough [as a percentage of LHN]. However, this figure includes many provisos... Should [need for ‘affordable home ownership’ tenure homes] be provided for... then the **total affordable housing would constitute 66%...**”
- 5.2.16 Affordable housing is primarily delivered by market led housing schemes and at a rate of up to ~40% (before giving detailed consideration to tenure split), hence the LHNA conclusion (66%) does serve as a reason to remain open minded to the possibility of a housing requirement set ‘above LHN’ in order to more fully provide for affordable housing needs. However, the link between affordable need and overall need is complex, including as many of those in need of affordable housing are already in housing (and therefore do not generate a net additional need for a home). Also, under high growth scenarios driven by affordable housing need it could feasibly be that demand for market housing becomes a limiting factor on delivery.

Unmet housing need from elsewhere

- 5.2.17 The NPPF states: “Strategic policy-making authorities should establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need (**and any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas**) can be met over the plan period. The requirement may be higher than the identified housing need if, for example, it includes provision for neighbouring areas, or reflects growth ambitions linked to economic development or infrastructure investment.” [emphasis added]
- 5.2.18 The Interim SA Report (2021) presented a detailed review of unmet need risk, but that exercise need not be repeated here, as the overriding consideration is that none of the Borough’s neighbours have formally requested that the Local Plan make provision for unmet need. That said, it is recognised that in the Wokingham context there is always a need to remain alive to potential ‘unmet need risk’.
- 5.2.19 In particular, whilst Reading Borough recently confirmed no unmet need, the context is as follows:
- The Local Plan was adopted in 2019 and the housing requirement is set at ~750 dpa. An initial consultation on the scope of a Local Plan Update was then held in 2023.
 - As things stand currently (July 2024), the Update will be prepared on the basis of a standard method housing need figure of 878 dpa, but the 2023 consultation document [suggested](#) that there are exceptional circumstances to use an alternative methodology that generates a lower need figure.
 - In turn (as things stand) there is little if any risk of unmet need. Even if Reading’s LHN were taken to be 878 dpa, this is on the basis of a 35% ‘urban uplift’ and the Government’s Planning Practice Guidance includes wording that strongly implies that where the uplift cannot be provided for by the urban area in question (i.e. Reading) then it should *not* pass to neighbouring local authorities.
 - Moving forward though, the new draft standard method figure for Reading published on 30th July 2024 is 1,023 dpa and the new methodology does not include an urban uplift, hence it can be envisaged that there is a risk of Reading generating unmet need.
 - There is no basis for quantifying this risk ahead of further work being undertaken by Reading to explore supply options. However, that does not mean that the risk should be ignored, including noting the emphasis in the Draft NPPF (2024) on “effective collaboration”, including following new wording: “Plans come forward at different times, and there may be a degree of uncertainty about the future direction of relevant development plans or plans of infrastructure providers. In such circumstances strategic policy-making authorities and Inspectors will need to come to an informed decision on the basis of available information, rather than waiting for a full set of evidence from other authorities.”
- 5.2.20 Aside from Reading, there is considered to be limited risk of unmet need. All of Wokingham’s neighbouring authorities see very significant increases to their standard method LHN figures under the current draft proposals (July 2024), but there is little reason to suggest that these higher LHN figures cannot be provided for, nor that Wokingham would be well placed to provide for any unmet need that might arise.
- 5.2.21 Considerations include:
- Authorities to the east are constrained by the London Green Belt. However, on the other hand, the new Draft NPPF includes an emphasis on reviewing Green Belt in order to meet LHN in full.

- Large parts of West Berkshire are constrained by AWE exclusion zones and the West Sussex Downs National Landscape. However, on the other hand, a Local Plan is currently being examined that does not generate unmet need, and the examination appears to be progressing well (see update [here](#)).
- Authorities to the east and southeast are heavily constrained by the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. However, on the other hand: Bracknell Forest recently adopted a Local Plan; Surrey Heath will likely progress a Local Plan under transitional arrangements that does not generate unmet need; and Hart District includes significant areas of land subject to limited constraint. This leaves Rushmoor Borough, where a Local Plan Review is forthcoming that will likely struggle to provide for need in full (the current draft standard method sees a 129% increase to LHN), but Rushmoor does not relate well to Wokingham.

Economic development or infrastructure investment

- 5.2.22 There is no case for an uplift in the Wokingham context in light of Section 3 of the Wokingham LHNA (2023), which deals with “alignment of future jobs growth with resident workforce”. By way of context, the study explains: “... when considering the factors that could justify an uplift to the LHN, one of the most important is ensuring that the number of new homes takes account of changes that are anticipated in the local economy as well as population trends. This section therefore looks at whether a housing number that is higher than the LHN may need to be considered, and what alternative figure may be justified...”
- 5.2.23 Equally, no evidence of any need for an uplift comes from the Wokingham Employment Land Needs Study (ELNS, 2023). Indeed, the Study serves to suggest that local employment opportunities may struggle to keep pace with population growth resulting from a housing requirement set in line with standard method LHN, stating: “The Standard Method approach for the working age group (16-64) generates an increase of just over 10,000 persons between 2022-40, which compares with just 4,000 in the economic forecast.”

Recent rates of housing delivery

- 5.2.24 Recent rates of delivery have been high, averaging 1,167 dpa over the period 2020/21-2022/23. However, delivery over these years has been unusually high, particularly due to Strategic Development Locations (SDLs) from the Core Strategy (2010) delivering at pace.

Conclusion on housing quanta options

- 5.2.25 The *high level* discussion above serves to suggest that, in addition to a focus on growth scenarios that would enable the housing requirement to be set at **LHN** (748 dpa), there is also a need to remain open to the possibility of setting the housing requirement at a figure **above LHN**.
- 5.2.26 However, the high level case for setting the housing requirement above LHN is not strong (including, and most notably, because no neighbouring authority has requested that Wokingham make provision for unmet housing need; also, the LHNA 2023 does not give a clear steer regarding an uplift for affordable housing).
- 5.2.27 In turn, there is a high level case for ruling-out scenarios that aim to support a housing requirement well-beyond LHN (e.g. >20%). On the other hand, the context of the Government’s current consultation on reforms to the NPPF and a new standard method for calculating housing need is acknowledged. Also, it is acknowledged that there is a case for extending the plan period, e.g. by one year, which would generate a need for additional homes; but this is not a straightforward consideration, as discussed in Section 5.5.
- 5.2.28 The question of precise quanta figures to reflect across the growth scenarios is returned to within **Section 5.5**, subsequent to consideration of broad distribution, site options and sub-area scenarios.

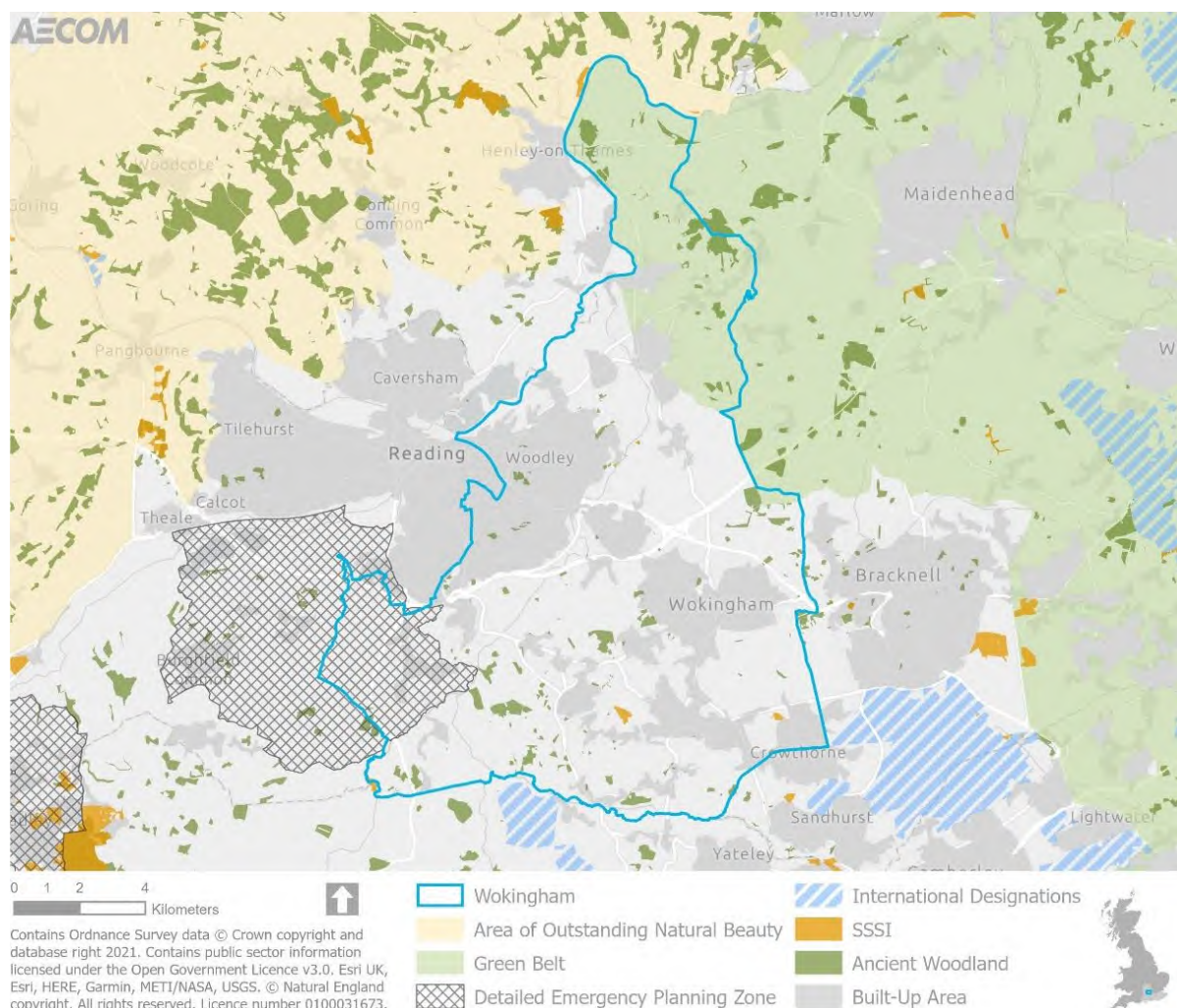
Box 5.1: A note on employment land need

Wokingham Borough is in the heart of the Thames Valley, recognised as the UK’s most productive sub-region. The Employment Land Need Study (ELNS, 2023) finds that there is no need for additional **office space** over the plan period, but that a need for additional space for **industrial uses**, specifically a need for 18 ha. The 18 ha is a combination of: A) a continuation of the past (five year) trend for industrial floorspace change (12 ha); and B) space to accommodate jobs generated as a result of Shinfield Studies (6 ha).

Also, an aspirational figure of 53 ha is identified by the ELNS, arrived at by projecting forward the trend of 259 jobs being created p.a. 2009-19 (and making an allowance to correct for the existing very low rate of availability).

Finally, the ELNS explains that quantifying need for strategic logistics / distribution is outside the study scope, but that: “Provision for logistics / distribution uses would be included within the aspirational 53 ha figure.”

Figure 5.2: Key strategic barriers to exporting unmet need to other authorities in the sub-region



Broad spatial strategy

Introduction

5.2.29 This is the second of two sections examining ‘strategic factors’ of relevance to the task of defining reasonable growth scenarios. The aim is to explore broad spatial strategy issues / options as well as the question of broad growth typologies that are supported, e.g. strategic versus non-strategic.

A note on approach

5.2.30 A lengthy discussion was presented within the equivalent section of the ISA Report (2021). This was presented chronologically (beginning with the adopted Core Strategy and then work on a Strategic Spatial Framework in 2016), included a focus on key lessons learned from preceding consultation stages and ended by concluding on key broad spatial strategy factors with a bearing on growth scenarios. Also, the growth scenarios ultimately arrived at in Section 5.5 of the ISA Report, and then appraised in Section 6, varied significantly in terms of broad spatial strategy. Equally, work at the Draft Plan / Interim SA Report stage in 2020 involved in-depth exploration of broad spatial strategy issues and options.

5.2.31 However, at this stage in the process there is considered to be less call for a detailed discussion here of broad spatial strategy issues and options. The preferred broad spatial strategy from the Revised Growth Strategy consultation stage (2021) remains the preferred approach at the current time and is considered to be strongly justified in light of the work that has been undertaken over the course of the plan-making process. It is also fair to say that the broad spatial strategy was not a major focus of consultation responses received in 2021; for example, whilst a range of concerns were raised regarding the proposed location for a large-scale strategic urban extension (Hall Farm / Loddon Valley, which is now referred to simply as ‘Loddon Valley’), there were few if any calls to revisit the long held view that the Local Plan should include a focus of growth at strategic scale sites.

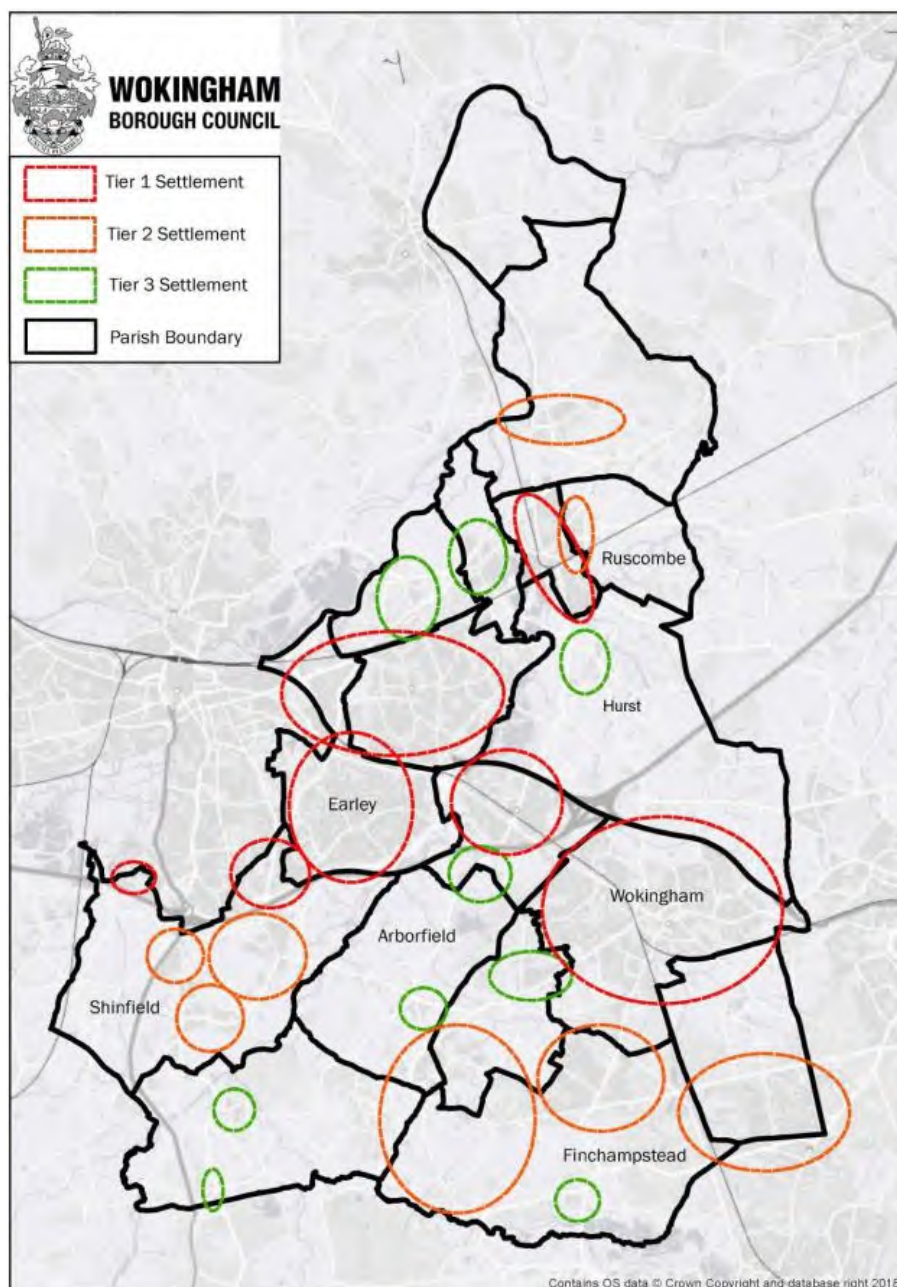
5.2.32 This being the case, the discussion below is much briefer than its equivalent in 2021. Specifically, it simply aims to elaborate on the “Principles guiding the spatial strategy” that are set out in the current Local Plan document. Other broad spatial strategy matters are picked up in Section 5.4, Section 6 and Section 9.

Principles guiding the spatial strategy

5.2.33 The current Local Plan Update explains: “*The spatial strategy directs the most growth to locations that are already sustainable or that can be made sustainable.*” There is little doubt that this represents an appropriate spatial strategy in the context of the Wokingham Local Plan. There can sometimes be arguments for departing from the settlement hierarchy, whether in the form of a new settlement or strategic growth at a settlement that serves to boost its position within the settlement hierarchy, but there are limited arguments for departing from the settlement hierarchy in this way through the current Local Plan.

5.2.34 There are no new settlement options to speak of (but see discussion in Section 5.4 regarding the previous proposal for major growth at Grazeley, which arguably would have been in the form of a new settlement), and there are few realistic options for strategic expansion of lower tier settlements, i.e. expansion of a scale to deliver new infrastructure that changes the local offer, e.g. a new primary school. Detailed issues and options are discussed further in Section 5.4, but the simple message is that directing growth in line with the settlement hierarchy is a key principle when considering site and settlement options.

Figure 5.3: The settlement hierarchy



5.2.35 The final task is to comment briefly on the bullet point list of 'spatial strategy elements' presented within the current Local Plan document (N.B. the list is explained as justified including as it is "consistent with early work... alongside responses to public consultations"):

- Protecting the **identity of places**, and the role of the countryside and Green Belt in achieving this.

Landscape and settlement character varies very significantly across the Borough, reflecting inherent (e.g. geological) and historic factors alongside the influence of modern development and infrastructure. Within Section 5.4 each of the sub-area specific discussions is an opportunity to factor-in settlement identity and character, amongst other 'strategic factors', but it is fair to say here that attention does focus on land surrounding Wokingham itself, in terms of maintaining sensitive settlement gaps.

- Optimising the re-use of **previously developed land** within settlements to... [protect greenfield land].

There is a clear need to maximise supply from brownfield (or previously developed land, PDL). However, there is also a need to ensure that sites are developable (NPPF paragraph 69), in that there is reasonable confidence that they will come forward in the plan period, accounting for complex challenges such as multiple land-ownership and existing uses. Also, it will often transpire that brownfield sites can only viably come forward if compromises are made on affordable housing or other policy objectives. In this light, issues with brownfield sites often relate more to achievability and deliverability than suitability, i.e. relate to technical matters that do not lend themselves to being explored through SA work.

In turn, SA work to date has involved limited focus on brownfield supply options. However, there can be suitability issues that warrant consideration through SA. For example: brownfield sites outside of urban areas can be associated with suitability challenges around place-making, access and 'sustainable transport'; office to residential developments can tend to be associated with poor space, design and open space standards and broadly place-making challenges; and there is a significant tendency for brownfield sites to be subject to flood risk (with this often being the very reason why they have historically been associated with industry, commerce or low intensity uses such as car parks).

- **Focusing growth** on sustainable locations, which would benefit from existing or the creation of new services, facilities and employment... with potential to reduce the need to travel and vehicle emissions.

Throughout the plan-making / SA process to date there has been a strong focus on aligning with infrastructure, 'accessibility' and transport objectives, building upon what is widely believed to be a successful strategy of directing growth to Strategic Development Locations (SDLs) through the Core Strategy.⁵ This means both directing growth to locations with good access to infrastructure with capacity and/or with the potential to deliver strategic infrastructure upgrades alongside housing and/or with the potential to deliver strategic transport improvements. In turn, this means focusing growth at higher order settlements (or, at least, in line with the settlement hierarchy, recognising clear arguments for proportionate growth at lower order settlements) and/or at strategic growth locations. It can also mean focusing growth along strategic transport corridors, which is an important consideration locally.⁶

The equivalent discussion within Section 5.2 of the Interim SA Report (2021) presented considerable information on the 'backstory' to the decision to 'focus growth', including with reference to past appraisal work and consultation responses received in 2019 and 2020. With regards to consultation responses received in 2021, the broad conclusion is that there were few significant concerns raised regarding focusing growth, and overall a good degree of support from key stakeholder and partner organisations.

- Preference for **large scale developments**, where infrastructure can be planned, funded and delivered...

Elaborating on the discussion above, some key consultation from 2020, as reported in the Interim SA Report (2021), include those from Bracknell Forest ("*BFC supports larger scale comprehensive development which can be served by public transport links such as rail.*") and Hart District ("*The logic of large-scale garden communities is understood...*"). Also, the Department for Education highlighted a concern with dispersal through the consultation in 2020, and the following was a notable comment made by Reading Borough through the previous consultation in 2019: "*... a mix of types of site will be needed... [but RBC] generally supports a continuation of WBC's existing strategy... of concentration on major development locations, as this is an effective way to ensure [effective infrastructure delivery].*"

⁵ The equivalent discussion within the Interim SA Report (2021) noted that a comprehensive list of strategic infrastructure delivered alongside SDL housing growth was provided at the 12th November 2021 Extraordinary Executive.

⁶ The equivalent discussion within the Interim SA Report (2021) concluded the following in respect of transport corridors: "*There is a need to support the ambitions of Reading Borough to deliver a network of public and active transport corridors linking residential areas and key employment locations. There is also a need to take account of issues and opportunities raised by Oxfordshire authorities... Hampshire authorities... and Bracknell Forest. Equally, there are 'within borough' issues and opportunities, e.g. concerns with the two main road corridors south of Wokingham...*"

However, it is recognised that responses received in 2019 and 2020 were in the context of a potential focus of growth at Grazeley, along the A33 corridor, whilst the Revised Growth Strategy (RGS, 2021) proposed an alternative focus of growth at Loddon Valley south of the M4 (also, the Interim SA Report 2021 presented detailed appraisal work in respect of two other large-scale strategic growth options, namely Ashridge and East of Twyford/Ruscombe, but consultation responses received from key stakeholder and partner organisations overwhelmingly focused on just the emerging proposed approach). The merits of the Loddon Valley ('Garden Village') SDL option are explored in detail below.

On a final specific point, it should be noted that SDLs are effective at delivering Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), e.g. to the north of Wokingham (www.tbhpartnership.org.uk/greenspace).

- Recognition that a proportionate level of housing growth will be required **across settlements** in order to meet housing needs and maintain a suitable supply of sites.

There was a considerable increased emphasis on distributing growth across settlements at the RGS stage (2021) relative to the Draft Plan stage (2020) following 'loss' of Grazeley, and Section 5.2 of the 2021 ISA Report explained: "... *there is also a need to support a mix of site types, and a degree of dispersal... in order to ensure a robust housing supply trajectory... and ensure that local housing needs are met. There is also a need to avoid an undue imbalance of growth between the north and south of the Borough, as far as possible given... Green Belt.*" This conclusion broadly holds true at the current time, and matters are discussed further below, including within Section 5.5, where conclusions are drawn on reasonable growth scenarios mindful of the need to: A) ensure a housing requirement that is not unduly 'stepped' (i.e. does not unduly delay providing for housing need until later in the plan period); and B) ensure a supply that is 'robust' in that the housing requirement can be delivered on a rolling basis.

- The positive adaptation of **employment locations** to future requirements.

As discussed, there is a considerable need for new industrial floorspace, with a minimum need figure and a considerably higher "aspirational" figure that accounts for needs arising across the sub-region that do not necessarily need to be provided for in Wokingham Borough. After having accounted for completions since the start of the plan period and permitted supply, there is the potential to comfortably exceed the minimum need figure by allocating land for a c.25ha expansion at Thames Valley Science Park (TVSP), primarily by supporting schemes proposed by the Natural History Museum (there are two live applications; see [here](#)) and Kew Gardens (discussed [here](#)). There is a clear case for expanding TVSP to its natural full extent (given the M4 to the north and the River Loddon floodplain to the south), as has been explored through SA work since 2021; for example, Section 5.2 of the ISA Report (2021) discussed expansion of TVSP as a "key strategic opportunity" (also a stand-alone discussion of issues/options was presented in Section 5.3). However, ancient woodlands are a sensitivity, and another issue is a need to retain flexibility to potentially accommodate a [relocated](#) Royal Berkshire Hospital. A question-mark has been around the extent to which TVSP expansion is linked to delivering an adjacent SDL (Loddon Valley), but latest understanding is that there is no major dependency, albeit an adjacent garden community could help to ensure that TVSP thrives (also adjacent Shinfield Studios).

Beyond expansion of TVSP there are very few realistic opportunities for industrial land allocations in order to close the significant gap to the aspirational need figure set out in the ELNS (2023). This matter is discussed further below, but one point to note here is that a major new industrial-led employment area is being promoted by landowners in the Grazeley area (west of the A33; essentially the location previously proposed for a new SDL) but constrained by the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) around AWE Burghfield. There is, however, potential to close the gap by supporting: A) intensification of existing employment land; and B) small scale windfall developments. In turn, there is a need to ensure that the LPU includes policy that is supportive of both (A) and (B).

- The evolution of **town / other centres** to changing markets whilst remaining at the heart of communities.

This is a fairly non-contentious aspect of the preferred broad spatial strategy, in that there are few if any significant arguments for following an alternative approach, e.g. major change or transformation.

5.2.36 Two final matters that were a focus of the detailed discussion of broad spatial strategy issues / options presented in the Interim SA Report (2021) and also warranting being highlighted here are:

- The Borough's 2030 net zero target – this is highly challenging, hence net zero must be a focus of spatial strategy / site selection, with a focus on both emissions from transport and the built environment.
- A Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy ([LNRS](#)) – the Local Plan represents a major opportunity to support the emerging strategy, both by avoiding sensitive areas and supporting targeted investment.

5.3 Site options

Introduction

- 5.3.1 The aim of this section is to introduce the site options that are available and feasibly in contention for allocation, and the proportionate work that has been undertaken to appraise sites in isolation. This is a 'bottom-up' input to the process of defining reasonable alternatives (growth scenarios; see Figure 5.1).
- 5.3.2 The specific aim is to frame and inform the discussion of site and sub-area options in Section 5.4.
- 5.3.3 This section covers: 1) Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA); 2) site options GIS analysis; and 3) work to explore strategic site options.

Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)

- 5.3.4 The HELAA has been led by officers and broadly involved the following steps:
- Collate a long list of ~380 sites and undertake an initial sift
 - Consider the remaining ~150 sites in terms of availability, achievability and suitability
 - Reach conclusions on whether each site is 'deliverable', meaning it could come forward within five years, or 'developable' meaning it could come forward within the plan period.⁷
- 5.3.5 The deliverable and developable sites that pass through the HELAA 'availability, achievability and suitability' tests represent a key shortlist of sites for further consideration in Section 5.4. However, there is also a need to remain open minded to sites deemed unsuitable through the HELAA, as there are potentially suitability factors outside those considered through the HELAA. In particular, a limitation of the HELAA is that it considers sites in isolation, whilst Section 5.4 is a chance to consider sites in combination.
- 5.3.6 Finally, it is important to note that sites that progress through the HELAA are also split into two further categories, specifically sites that are: A) suitable; and B) potentially suitable. The total combined capacity of sites that fall into category (A) is not high, such that there is little question that the sites identified as 'suitable' through the HELAA do warrant being taken forward for allocation in the Local Plan. As such, attention focuses on the 'potentially suitable' sites (as well as select 'unsuitable' sites).
- 5.3.7 The combined capacity of HELAA suitable and potentially suitable sites, is comfortably in excess of the number of homes that need to be provided for through allocations in the Local Plan under any reasonably foreseeable scenario (in the context of LHN understood to be 748 dpa, as discussed in Section 5.2). Nonetheless, proportionate consideration is given to 'unsuitable' HELAA sites in Section 5.4.
- 5.3.8 Figure 5.4 shows all site options categorised according to HELAA status.

GIS analysis

- 5.3.9 As a means of providing supplementary evidence on site options, **Appendix III** presents the findings of an AECOM-led quantitative GIS-based exercise, involving examining the spatial relationship between site options and a range of constraint/push (e.g. biodiversity designations) and opportunity/pull (e.g. schools) features for which data is available in digitally mapped form for the Borough as a whole. The analysis has major limitations, and it is important to note that the analysis does not enable overall conclusions to be reached on the merits of each site (unlike HELAA). However, it is nonetheless a useful input.
- 5.3.10 This work has been undertaken three times, in 2020, 2021 and 2024.

Work to explore strategic site options

- 5.3.11 Strategic site options are larger sites that will deliver more than just housing, in that they can deliver a mix of land uses, a mix of housing types and tenures and/or new or upgraded infrastructure. What they will or could deliver is a detailed matter for consideration, such that they warrant consideration over-and-above non-strategic options. Also, and as discussed in Section 5.2, it is broadly the case that there is support for a focus on strategic sites through the Local Plan, hence detailed work to explore options is warranted.

⁷ There are just four deliverable and ten developable sites, with the remaining 42 sites / site clusters supported by the HELAA being classed as potentially developable. The distinction is that 'deliverable' sites are able to come forward within five years, whilst 'developable' sites are able to come forward later in the plan period. The other key point to note is that whilst the great majority of deliverable/developable sites have been proposed for homes, a number have been proposed for other uses.

5.3.12 Section 5.3 of the Interim SA Report (2021) presented a detailed discussion of strategic site options, with reference to stand-alone appraisal work presented within appendices. The report drew a distinction between two scales of strategic site, and that distinction remains appropriate at the current time.

5.3.13 The following bullet points present a summary of latest views:

- **Large strategic sites** – work to explore strategic site options dates back to 2018, but since ~2020 attention has focused on: A) Loddon Valley (previously ‘Hall Farm / Loddon Valley’); B) Ashridge; and C) East of Twyford / Ruscombe. Site (A) was the preferred site proposed for allocation in 2021, but the other two sites were also given detailed consideration within the Interim SA Report and, in turn, were also a focus of the consultation (although in practice consultation responses focused on Loddon Valley).

N.B. the three large strategic site options are henceforth referred to as Strategic Development Location (SDL) options in order to ensure consistency with the terminology from the Core Strategy (2010).

All three SDL options are further considered below. However, at this stage it can be noted that East of Twyford / Ruscombe is now seen as relatively poorly performing, including as: it is located within the Green Belt; proposals to deliver a train station are now highly questionable on viability grounds; and the promoters have undertaken relatively limited work to explore issues / opportunities.

- **Smaller strategic sites** – Section 5.3 of the Interim SA Report presented an initial list of 9 sites, before focusing attention on a shortlist of four. This shortlist was then the subject of detailed appraisal before a decision was reached to rule one site out as sequentially least preferable, resulting in a refined shortlist of three smaller strategic sites. These three sites were further considered within Sections 5.4 and 5.5 of the Interim SA Report, before a decision was reached to differentiate between:

– South Wokingham SDL extension – was identified as a strongly performing site in 2021, to the extent that its allocation could reasonably be held constant across the RA growth scenarios.

– Barkham Square and Blagrove Lane – were explored as variables across the RA growth scenarios.

At the current time, views are broadly unchanged, in that attention does continue to focus on the three sites listed above, and it remains the case that South Wokingham SDL extension is considered to be a strongly performing site (and it should also be noted that a [planning application](#) was recently submitted).

With regards to the remaining six sites, a number are known to be unavailable (or are not being actively promoted, which at this late stage in the process serves as a reason to suggest that they may not be developable), but all are given proportionate consideration in Section 5.4 and its associated appendix.

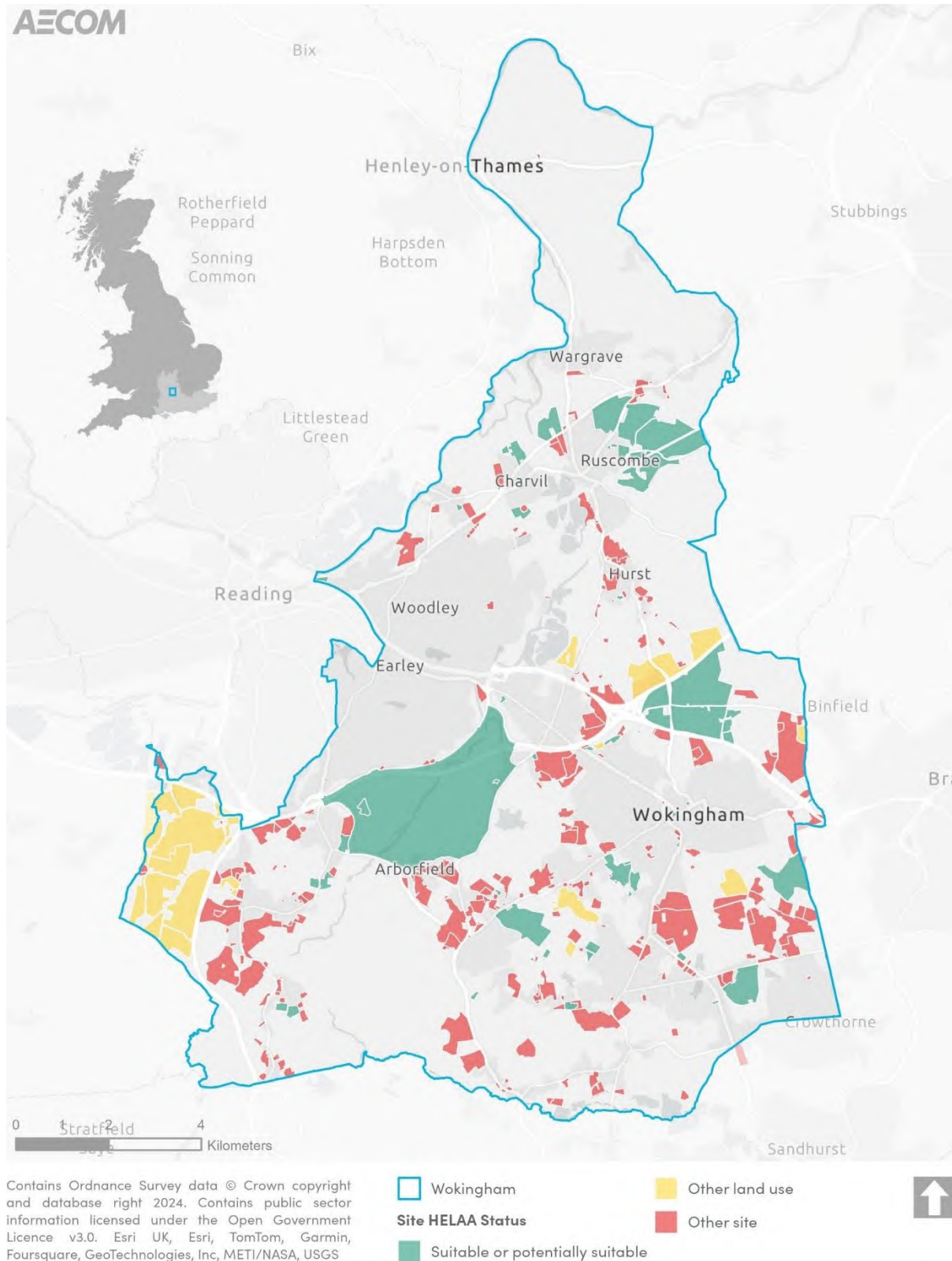
5.3.14 Figure 5.5 shows the new SDL options and other strategic site options that were a focus of work in 2021. As discussed, this list is broadly unchanged at the current time.⁸ **Appendix IV** presents a stand-alone appraisal of the four largest strategic site options currently in contention.



Numerous site options workstreams have fed into work to define RA growth scenarios

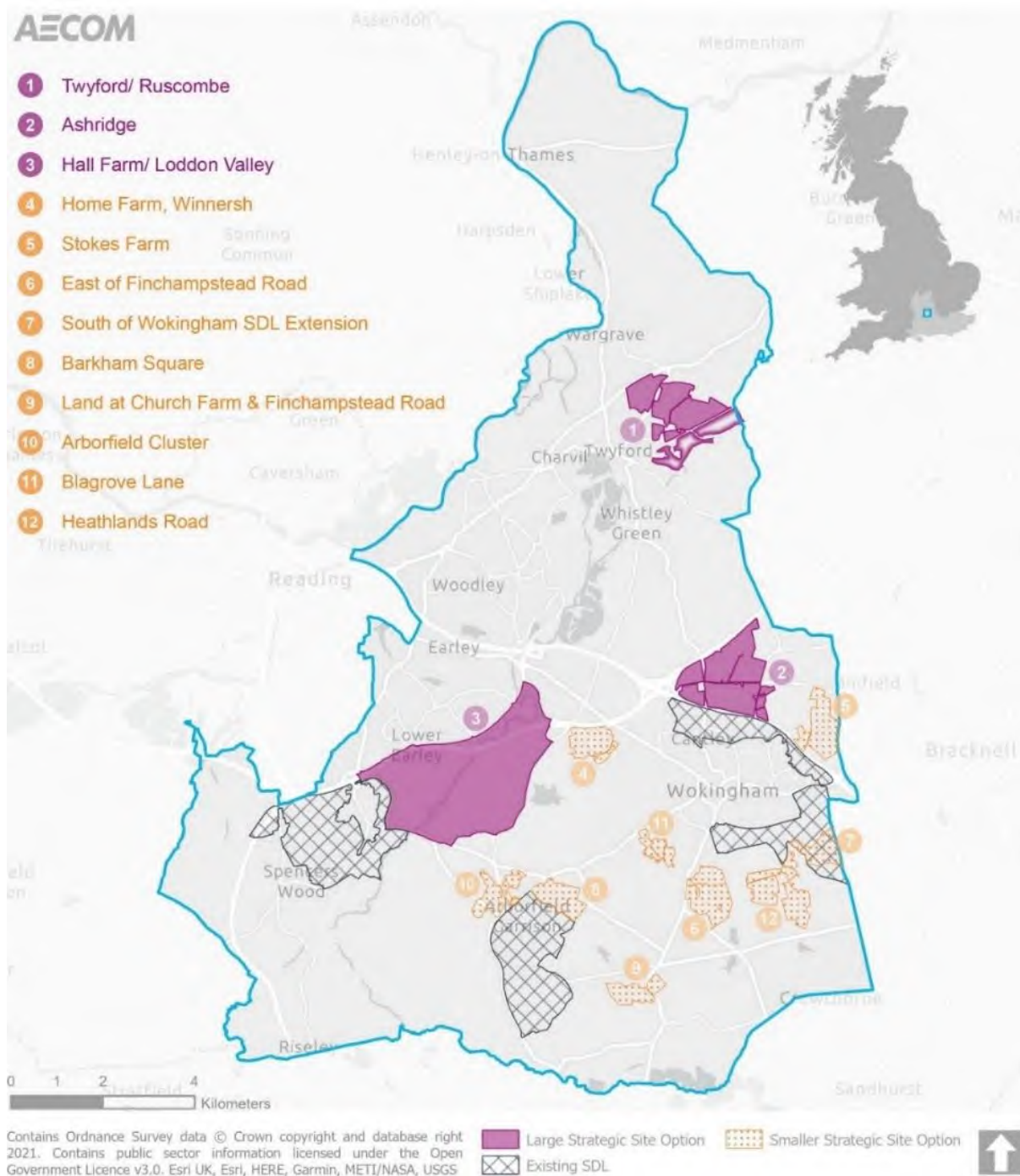
⁸ As discussed in Section 5.4, one other site option of note that arguably might be categorised as a ‘smaller strategic site option’ is Riverways Farm to the north of Twyford (230 homes). There is also a site option located to the west of Barkham with a capacity perhaps in excess of 300 homes, but it performs relatively poorly, including as Barkham is a lower order settlement.

Figure 5.4: HELAA sites



N.B. this figure aims only to give a general picture. Some of the sites shown as 'suitable or potentially suitable' have availability or achievability issues such that they are not deliverable/developable. Also, the list of sites flagged as available for an 'other land uses' (i.e. non-housing) is not comprehensive. For example, at Ashridge development would not extend north of the M4, and at East of Twyford/Ruscombe not south of the railway.

Figure 5.5: Strategic site options and the existing SDLs



N.B. this figure is taken from the Interim SA Report (2021). Points to note are:

- Large strategic site options – can now be referred to SDL options, as discussed. Another point to note is that various different growth quanta / configurations have been considered for all three sites, but there is broadly now a view that all three would be suited to comprehensive growth, i.e. there need not be further detailed consideration of options involving reduced site boundaries (at Ashridge the consideration is more the possibility of an extended scheme to ensure comprehensive growth in this area north of Wokingham / the A329(M)).
- Smaller strategic site options – the twelve shown here represent a long list that was considered in 2021, prior to a shortlist emerging, as discussed above.
- The four existing SDLs – stem from the Core Strategy (2010). Two are now virtually complete - namely South of the M4 (Shinfield) and North Wokingham - and the other two are well-progressed (the most delayed element is the southern part of South Wokingham SDL, but the majority of legal S106 agreements were recently signed).

5.4 Sub-area scenarios

Introduction

- 5.4.1 Discussion has so far focused on A) ‘top down’ consideration of strategic factors (growth quantum and broad spatial strategy); and B) ‘bottom-up’ consideration of site options. The next step is to consider each of the Borough’s sub-areas in turn, exploring how sites might be allocated in combination.

What sub-areas?

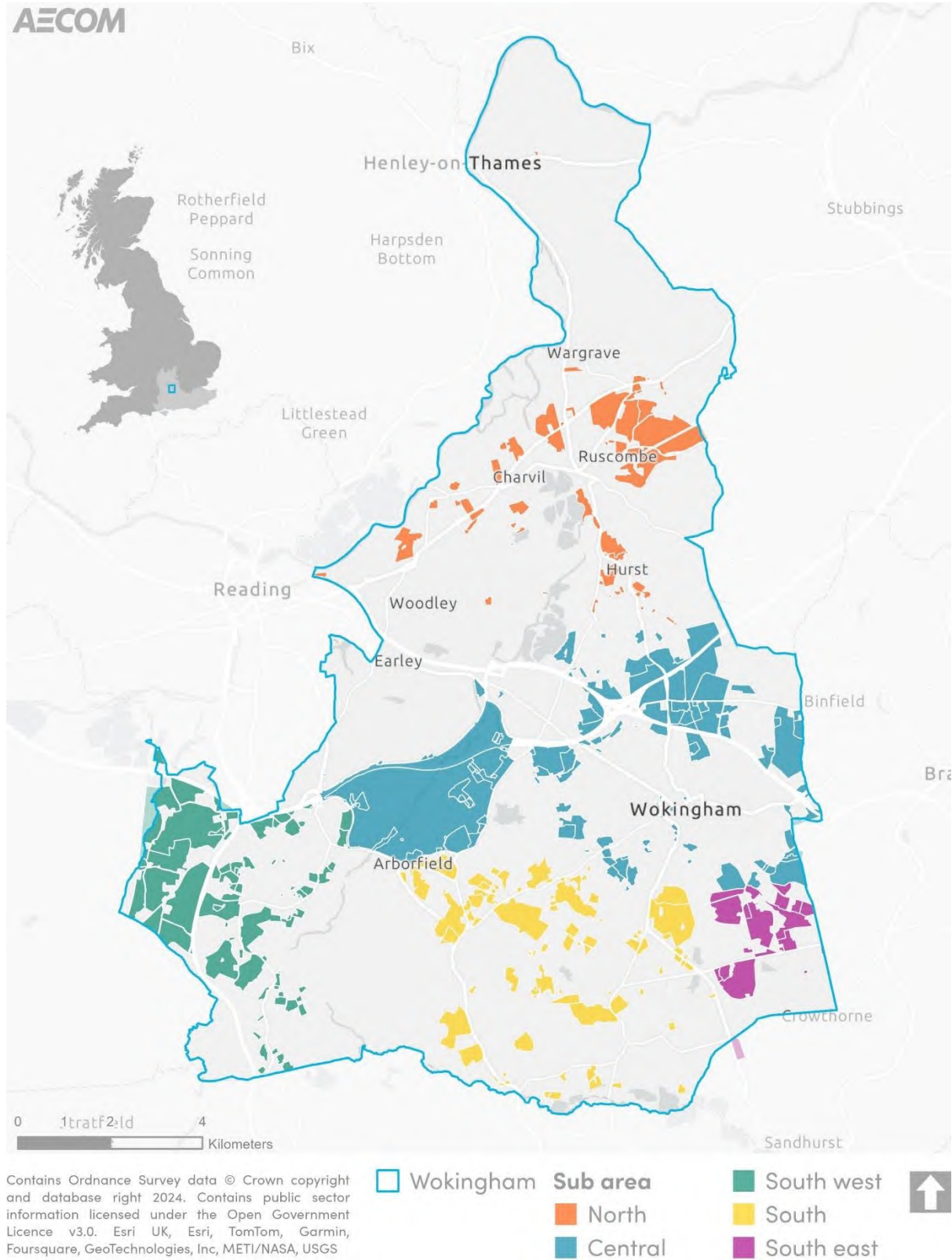
- 5.4.2 Defining sub-areas is challenging in the Wokingham context. The Homes for the Future consultation document (2018) divided the Borough into five sub-areas, but the location of sites options suggests the need for an alternative approach. For example, the five sub-areas from 2018 take the A329(M) as the dividing line between the ‘Wokingham’ and ‘North’ sub-areas, but Ashridge is a strategic site option to the north of the A329(A) that is being promoted as an urban extension to Wokingham.
- 5.4.3 Accounting for both the baseline geography of the Borough and the distribution of site options, the decision was taken in 2019 to define 14 sub-areas, as reported in Section 5.4 of the Interim SA Report (2020). These 14 sub-areas were then broadly reapplied as the basis for the equivalent analysis in Section 5.4 of the subsequent Interim SA Report published at the Revised Growth Strategy consultation stage (2021).
- 5.4.4 At the current time it is considered appropriate to reduce the number of sub-areas to five – see Figure 5.6.

Methodology

- 5.4.5 The aim is to draw together the ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’ inputs discussed above before concluding on ‘sub-area scenarios’ to take forward to Section 5.5, where the aim is to combine sub-area scenarios to form borough-wide RA growth scenarios for formal appraisal and consultation.
- 5.4.6 The aim here is not to present a formal appraisal and, accordingly, the discussions are systematic only up to a point, with extensive application of discretion and planning judgment. The aim is not to discuss all site options to the same level of detail, but rather to focus attention on those *judged to be more marginal*, i.e. where the question of whether or how to take the option forward is more finely balanced. This aligns with the legal requirement to explain reasonable alternatives in “outline” terms.
- 5.4.7 For each of the sub-areas in turn, the first task is to introduce the key strategic issues and opportunities, and the level of recent and committed growth. The primary task is then to place non-committed sites in a broad sequential order of preference, including accounting for issues and opportunities associated with sites delivering in combination, before then concluding on sub-area scenarios.
- 5.4.8 A key methodological consideration is that site options low down the order of preference can naturally be discussed relatively briefly where it is the case that better performing sites would together deliver a reasonable high growth scenario.⁹ Other methodological points include:
- The HELAA categorisation is a key starting point, with a focus on sites that are potentially suitable (PS).
 - The settlement hierarchy is another key input to the process (see Section 5.2).
 - The ‘planning history’ of sites is also a key input. In particular, account is taken of any planning permission that has been granted, including instances where there is a resolution to grant planning permission. Also, small sites benefitting from an existing allocation following the Wokingham MDD (2014). Finally, account is taken of sites that have been consulted on as emerging proposed allocations at least once (i.e. in 2021 and, in some cases, also in 2020) and generated limited concern.
 - For some poorly performing sites – i.e. sites where the decision to not progress the site to the RA growth scenarios is relatively clear cut at this stage in the process – the aim is to present brief analysis in the knowledge that more detailed analysis was presented in the 2021 Interim SA (ISA) Report.
- 5.4.9 A final section at the ends concludes on sub-area scenarios and gives initial consideration to how they might be combined to form RA growth scenarios, before this matter is taken forward in Section 5.5.

⁹ A ‘reasonable high growth scenario’ is broadly defined accounting for strategic factors including: A) the number of homes needed from Local Plan allocations borough-wide; and B) a need to distribute growth broadly in line with the settlement hierarchy. In respect of (A), it is important to reiterate (as per discussion in Section 2, Section 5.2 and Section 5.3) that LHN is taken as 748 dpa but that the higher figure currently the subject of national consultation is also acknowledged.

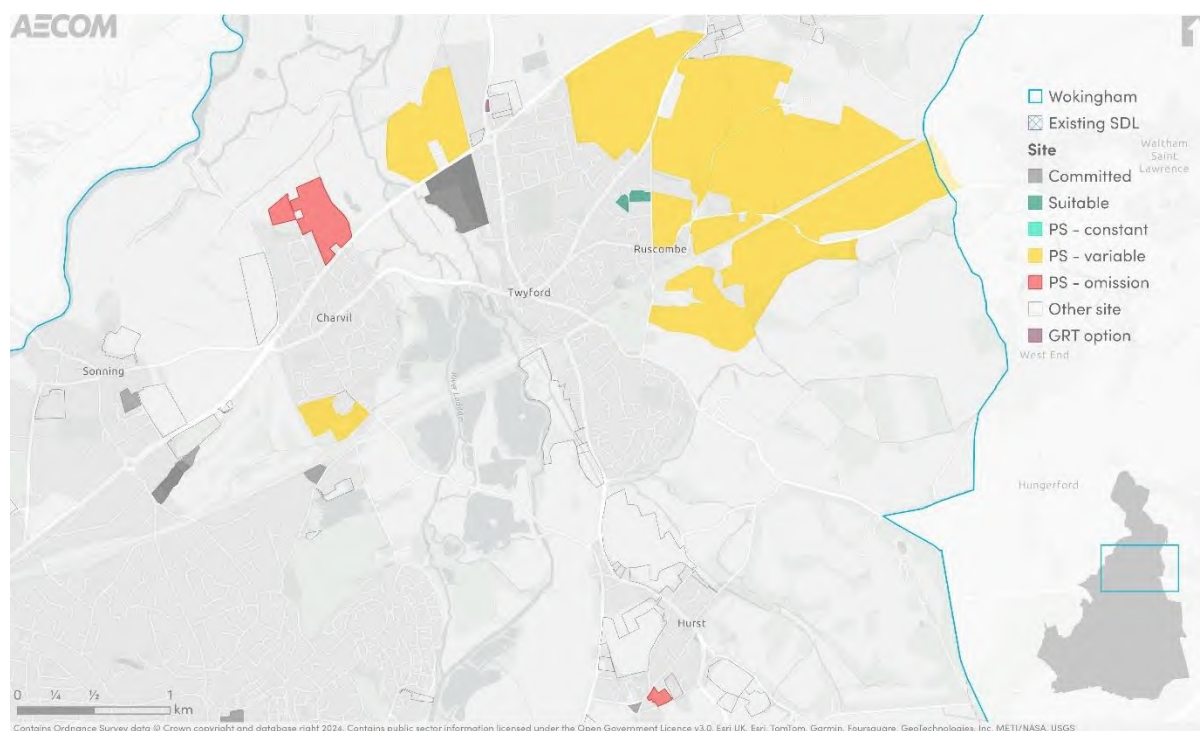
Figure 5.6: Site options placed into five sub-areas



N.B. this figure shows all promoted sites, regardless of HELAA findings or promoted land use.

North sub-area

Figure 5.7: Site options categorised by status in the north sub-area



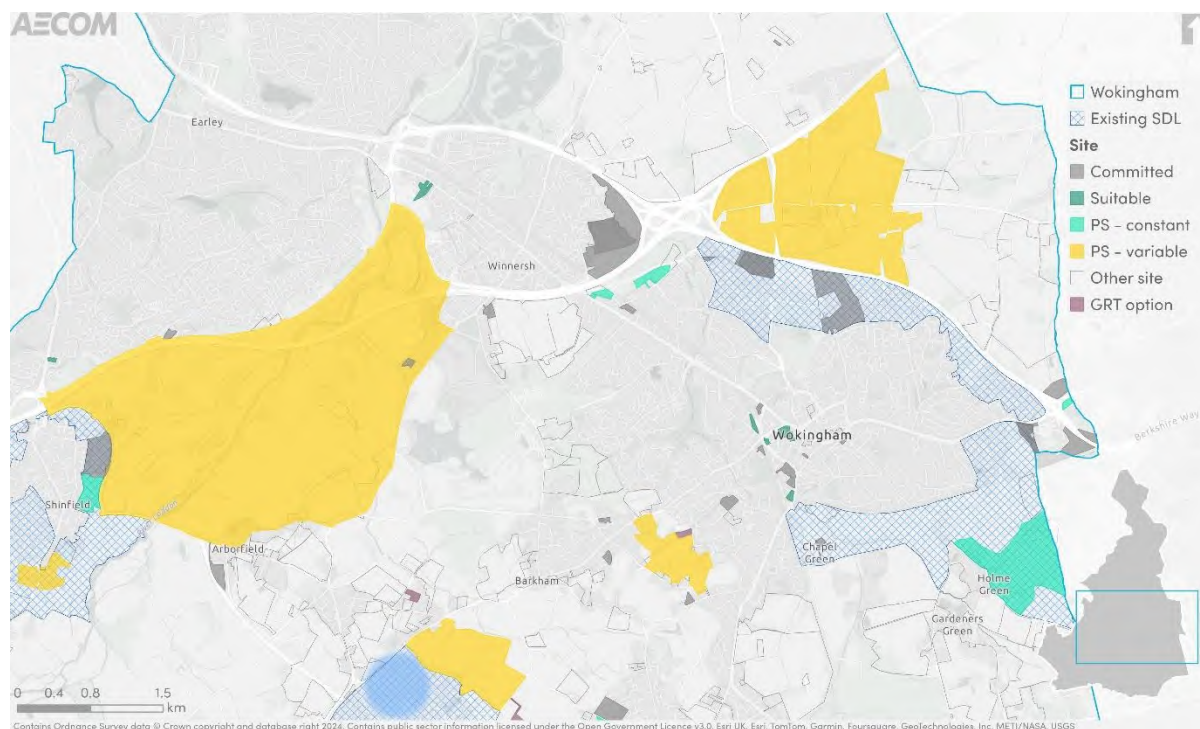
- 5.4.10 Firstly, there is a large site with planning permission at Twyford (Bridge Farm; 200 homes) and two adjacent sites with planning permission to the south of Sonning (Sonning Golf Course; 63 homes in total). The other site shown as committed at Sonning is an existing allocation that is understood to be supported by the Parish Council, and which can safely be rolled forward into the Local Plan Update. Finally, a small site at the eastern edge of Woodley is committed, but this relates to the instillation of a pumping station.
- 5.4.11 Secondly, there are two HELAA suitable sites at Ruscombe that together deliver 32 homes.
- 5.4.12 With regards to HELAA potentially suitable sites, the first port of call is **West of Park Lane, Charvil** (61 homes), which would extend a small recent site. It was a proposed allocation in both 2020 and 2021 and there is a current planning application for 75 homes (ref [232704](#)). There is a case for holding its allocation constant, but it is progressed as a variable on balance, given Charvil's position in the settlement hierarchy.
- 5.4.13 The other two key potentially suitable HELAA sites for consideration are then: **Riverways Farm, Twyford** (230 homes); and **East of Twyford / Ruscombe** (1,500 homes in the plan period). Neither site has previously been proposed for allocation, but both have been examined very closely including through SA.
- 5.4.14 With regards to Riverways Farm, there are issues and challenges, including as established on the basis of a recent refused planning application (ref [223455](#)), but on balance it warrants being considered as a variable across the RA growth scenarios, given a lack of alternative options for the expansion of Twyford.
- 5.4.15 With regards to East of Twyford / Ruscombe, as discussed in Section 5.3 it is the least preferable of the three SDL options, but a scenario can be envisaged whereby it is allocated in combination with another one of the new SDL options (specifically Loddon Valley, as discussed in Section 5.5). N.B. there is a clear commitment to contain development to the north of the railway, with land to the south public open space.
- 5.4.16 These three highlighted sites should be explored further as variables across the growth scenarios.
- 5.4.17 Of the **sites not progressed** to the RA growth scenarios, the two that stand-out are those identified as potentially suitable within the HELAA, namely:
- Land east of Park View Drive North, **Charvil** (78 homes) – was previously an allocation and does benefit from a location on the A4 in close proximity to Twyford. However, flood risk is now understood to be a significant constraint, plus there is a degree of historic environment constraint and concerns have been raised regarding over-allocation at Charvil, which is a 'limited growth' settlement in the hierarchy.

- Land on the north side of Orchard Road, **Hurst** (23 homes) – a planning application at this site was recently refused (ref [230074](#)) and is currently the subject of an appeal. The site is well-located within the village (adjacent to the primary school) and well-contained within the landscape, but there are sensitivities (it has been used in the past for the village show) and Hurst is a 'limited growth' location within the settlement hierarchy. It is recognised that non-allocation will mean low growth at Hurst over the plan period, but the village is well connected to both Twyford and Wokingham. On balance it is considered appropriate to allow consideration of the site via the current appeal process to take its course.
- 5.4.18 Another option of note is allocation of East of Twyford / Ruscombe in part. This option has been given close consideration in the past (as discussed in Section 5.3) but is ruled out at this current stage.
- 5.4.19 With regards to **other sites**, attention focuses on Hurst, and perhaps most notably a small site to the north that was previously proposed for allocation but is now ruled-out through the HELAA for reasons that need not be questioned here, noting a pending application for 9 homes (ref [240583](#)). There are also two strategic growth options at Hurst, which were both discussed in detail in Section 5.4 of the ISA Report (2021), but there is limited case for strategic growth at Hurst, and neither site has particular merit in site-specific terms. The site to the west was explored in considerable detail through the appraisal of RA growth scenarios in 2021 (proposed for 250, but 150 homes assumed), and does benefit from being relatively well-contained, but an application for 200 homes was recently refused at appeal (ref [220458](#)). A new application for 99 homes was submitted in August 2024 (ref [242067](#)), and this does warrant consideration, but this new proposal for the site has come late in the day for the purposes of preparing the LPU.
- 5.4.20 Other sites were discussed in Section 5.4 of the ISA Report (2021), and key points to note are as follows:
- Twyford – the larger site to the southwest is subject to flood risk, with Green Belt a constraint elsewhere;
 - Sonning and Charvil – there is limited case for higher growth, and there would be a need to give strategic consideration to any growth in the gap between the settlements, accounting for landscape and historic environment sensitivities (there is a very notable cluster of scheduled monuments). A growth-related opportunity could feasibly be in respect of enhancing the network of PROWs in this area.¹⁰
- N.B. Charvil was previously proposed for higher growth, and detailed consideration was given to issues and options within both of the Interim SA Report (2020 and 2021).
- Wargrave – has a good local offer and has seen limited growth on account of the Green Belt constraint. However traffic through the historic village centre is an issue. There is one site within easy walking distance of the village centre and station, plus there is good cycle connectivity into Twyford; however, the site comprises recently planted woodland and is adjacent to the village centre conservation area.
- 5.4.21 Finally, there is one small **Gypsy and Traveller site option** in this area, which is potentially suitable in the HELAA, but is located in the Green Belt, and is a very small site. Also, it should be noted that one of the Borough's two Council managed Gypsy and Traveller sites is located to the east of Ruscombe.
- 5.4.22 Finally, with regards to **employment**, there is a need to note TV Business Park to the west of Sonning (eastern edge of Reading). There are no expansion options, but there are opportunities for intensification, and it is understood that this is an area under consideration for Royal Berkshire Hospital relocation and, on this note, it should also be noted that consideration of a new Thames crossing remains [ongoing](#).
- 5.4.23 In **conclusion**, in addition to commitments and HELAA suitable sites, three HELAA potentially suitable sites are progressed to the RA growth scenarios, and all as a variable (i.e. none are progressed as a constant). Beyond these three sites a next port of call is potentially Hurst, but there is a clear case for limiting growth at the village given the settlement hierarchy and limited wider strategic case for growth.
- 5.4.24 Any combination of the three variable sites is *potentially* 'reasonable'. The highest growth scenario (i.e. all three variable sites) is arguably unreasonable, given Twyford crossroads and also recalling committed growth, however, on the other hand, Twyford is major development location and there is a strategic case for some weighting of growth towards the north of the Borough relative to the strategy of recent years. Equally, it would not be fair to conclude that East of T/R could not come forward in the absence of Riverways Farm simply because it is located in the Green Belt (because it would deliver an SDL).
- 5.4.25 As such, **eight sub-area scenarios** are progressed to Section 5.5.

¹⁰ Also, to the west of Sonning (not shown in the figure above), a larger site is associated with Sonning Hill, adjacent to of Thames Valley Business Park. However, this area is sensitive in terms of landscape, settlement separation, biodiversity and potentially archaeology, and the site is poorly related to Sonning (Shepherds Hill Local Centre is nearby but involves crossing the A4).

Central sub-area

Figure 5.8: Site options categorised by status in the central sub-area



5.4.26 The first point to note is that there are two existing SDLs within this sub-area:

- North Wokingham SDL – is near complete, including a distributor road, neighbourhood centre and a series of [SANGs](#). Delivery in the plan period is 352 homes, and all homes have planning permission.
- South Wokingham SDL – the part of the SDL to the north of the railway line, namely Montague Park, has been largely completed, including the planned primary school, and a site at the northeast extent of the SDL (to the east of Montague Park) now has permission for 54 homes (St Annes Drive). To the south of the railway line a strategic scheme – to include a major new road, a primary school neighbourhood centre and parks and open spaces – is now set to come forward, following recent signing of S106 agreements. There is also a southern SDL extension option, as discussed further below.

5.4.27 Secondly, there are a number of sites with planning permission outside of the SDLs, with four proposed for allocation on account of being located outside of an urban area and not having commenced. Of these, comfortably the largest is at the eastern edge of Winnersh (111 homes, or 234 if access can be resolved). Also of note is a site for 45 homes located adjacent to the north of the A329(M)/A329 junction, at the western edge of Bracknell (Popeswood), which recently received a resolution to grant permission (ref [232026](#)) despite being recorded as unsuitable in the HELAA (although it was a proposed allocation in 2021). The remaining two sites are then located: A) at the southern extent of Wokingham (south of Blagrove Lane, discussed below) for 35 homes; and B) at Sindlesham (south of Winnersh) for 28 homes.

5.4.28 Another site shown as committed is Land at Wheatsheaf Close, Sindlesham (24 homes), which is an existing allocation. Access is an issue, but there is likely a solution, and the ISA Report (2024) suggested the possibility of a reduced scheme, noting an adjacent historic lane (bridleway) and nearby listed building.

5.4.29 Finally, before moving on to non-committed allocation options, it should be noted that 200 homes is assumed from windfall development within Wokingham town centre (over-and-above the borough-wide windfall assumption). This is unchanged from the RGS stage (2021).

5.4.30 Moving on to non-committed sites, the first point to note is five HELAA suitable sites that together deliver 279 homes, all of which comprise PDL. Winnersh Plant Hire (60 homes) is notably in close proximity to Winnersh station but subject to flood risk such that capacity is now reduced (various capacity options have been explored). One other site of note is Station Industrial Estate, which is adjacent to Wokingham station, and where capacity was reduced from 92 homes to 40 homes at the RGS stage (2021).

5.4.31 Moving on to HELAA potentially suitable sites, the following three sites are considered to perform strongly, such that they can reasonably be progressed to the RA growth scenarios as a constant:

- **Land on the north west side of Old Forest Road** (50 homes) – located at the western extent of Wokingham (Emmbrook) and contained by a new link road, which includes cycle paths on both sides, it has been proposed for allocation since the Draft Plan stage (2020). However, there is a degree of biodiversity constraint, given hedgerows onsite (shown on historic mapping) and in the context of recent impacts to woodland in this area. The area has a degree of biodiversity sensitivity, with a series of TPOs and a nearby small patch of ancient woodland, but there are no nearby Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).
- **Land to the rear of Bulldog Garage, Reading Road** (34 homes) – is located close to the aforementioned site, and the land was used as part of the link road construction project. Part of the site (land to the rear of the garage) was proposed for allocation at the RGS stage but had access issues. The BP garage is now also included, which resolves the access issue and brings the site capacity to 34 homes. The site is well-contained and links to the A329 (bus and cycle route) and the aforementioned new link road (cycle route), but noise pollution from the adjacent roads and railway is a constraint.
- **Land south of London Road** (12 homes) – is a new proposed allocation, located to the east of Wokingham / at the western extent of Bracknell (Popeswood), to the east of the A329(M)/A329 junction (it is located to the south of the B3408, and south of the aforementioned committed site for 45 homes). The site is unconstrained other than by the adjacent major road, there is a primary school nearby and also nearby to the south is a large site with a resolution to grant permission for 302 homes (ref [180711](#)).

5.4.32 Also, another HELAA potentially suitable site that can reasonably be progressed to the RA growth scenarios as a constant is **South East Wokingham SDL extension** (980 homes in the plan period), which is located within the South Wokingham SDL boundary shown in the figure above. This land was identified as a “potential green open space location” within the South Wokingham SDL SPD (2011; N.B. this was also the case for the committed St Annes Drive site discussed above) but was then proposed for allocation in 2021. As discussed in Section 5.3, it was given close consideration through the SA process in 2021 before a decision was reached to hold its allocation constant across the RA growth scenarios at that time. Further detailed work was then undertaken to examine the site in 2022/23 and, at the current time, it remains the case that it can reasonably be progressed as a constant. Figure 5.9 shows the proposal in 2021 (also showing completed and permitted parts of the wider SDL, other than St Annes Drive) and the latest proposal is to expand the built footprint within the southwest part of the site, such that built form expands beyond the Emm Brook. Also the proposal is to expand the site red line boundary to the south in order to deliver additional greenspace, plus there is a separate application for a SANG to the south of the site (ref [233185](#)), which is relevant to the question of built footprint. There is a current planning application for the main part of the site (ref [241933](#)), and the proposed scheme can also be seen [here](#).

5.4.33 A detailed appraisal of this site alongside three other strategic site options is presented in Appendix IV.

Figure 5.9: South Wokingham SDL extension – concept plan from the RGS stage (2021)



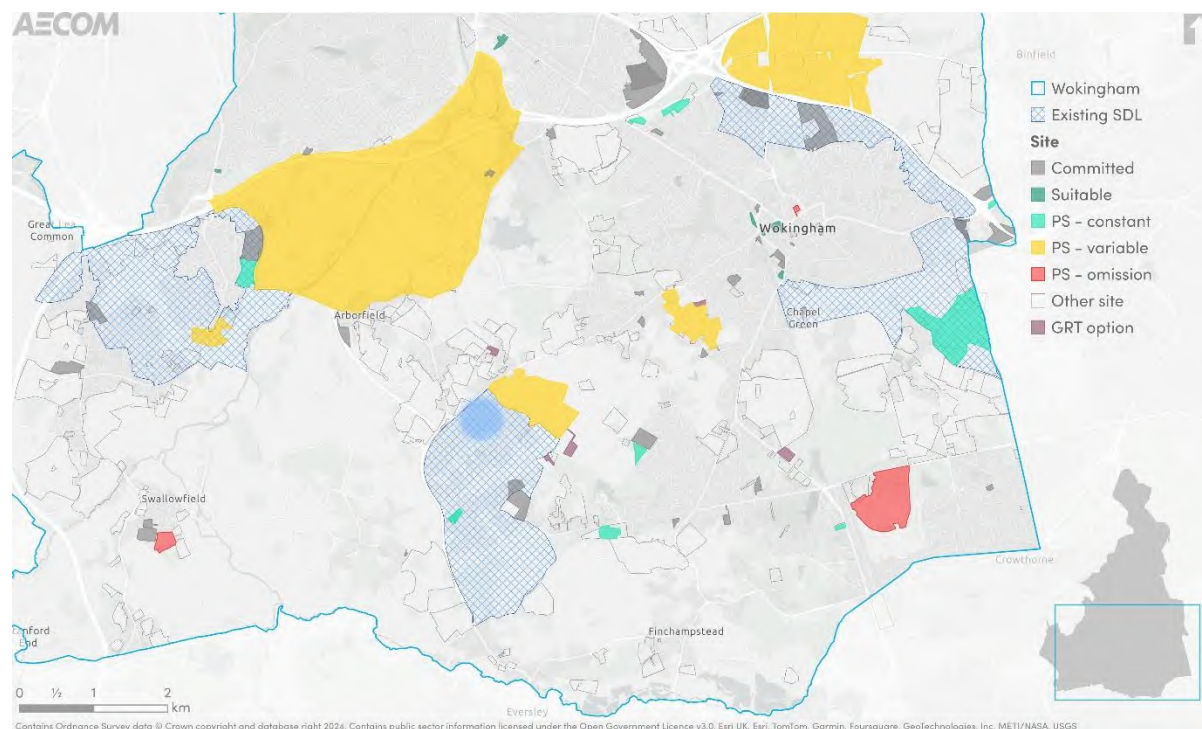
- 5.4.34 The remaining three HELAA potentially suitable sites are then progressed as a variable, namely:
- **Loddon Valley SDL** (2,700 homes in the plan period, with 4,000 in total; N.B. previously referred to as Hall Farm / Loddon Valley; also now referred to as Loddon Valley Garden Village, LVGV) – a new SDL here was the central proposed allocation in 2021, but its allocation was explored as a variable across the RA growth scenarios. Since 2021 much further work has been completed, such that confidence in its merits as an SDL has increased significantly. Also, any decision to change tack at this stage by not allocating this site for a new SDL would generate a need for another consultation under Regulation 18 resulting in a major delay to the plan-making process with knock-on implications. However, on balance, it remains appropriate to explore it further as a variable across the RA growth scenarios at this stage.
 - **Ashridge SDL** (2,200 homes in the plan period, 3,500 in total) – has never been a proposed allocation but has been examined closely through work to explore RA growth scenarios. A considerable amount of work has been undertaken to explore issues and opportunities, and whilst there are major challenges including around road and ‘sustainable transport’ connectivity, it is being actively promoted and, in this light, does warrant ongoing consideration through work to appraise RA growth scenarios at this stage.
 - **Blagrove Lane** (387 homes) – has never been a proposed allocation but has been examined closely through work to explore RA growth scenarios. There is a current pending planning application, through which it has been established that there are some significant concerns regarding biodiversity impacts. However, it is located in relative proximity to Wokingham town centre and would deliver some infrastructure benefits / planning gain. On balance it warrants being taken forward as a variable.
- 5.4.35 With regards to the Loddon Valley and Ashridge SDL options, a detailed comparative appraisal is presented in Appendix IV. Another option of note is allocation of Loddon Valley in part, which is something that has been given close consideration in the past, and is discussed in Appendix IV, but is now ruled out.
- 5.4.36 With regards to **other sites**, attention potentially focuses on the large site directly to the west of Wokingham (south of the M4 and A329), which comprises the landscape gap between Wokingham and Sindlesham. This site has not featured in the RA growth scenarios at any stage in the plan-making / SA process but has been given close consideration as part of the process of defining RA growth scenarios (i.e. within Section 5 of both the 2020 and 2021 ISA Reports). There would be a clear case for not allocating this site in combination with the nearby Loddon Valley (primarily in terms of impacts to Sindlesham, but also noting that the green infrastructure value of this land, including public rights of way, could take on added importance under a scenario whereby a new nearby SDL comes forward). Also, there is also a need to note an adjacent committed site on the edge of Winnersh for 28 homes (discussed above). The ISA Report (2021) did, however, note a proposal to deliver significant new greenspace.
- 5.4.37 Another HELAA unsuitable site of note is located to the southwest of Wokingham, namely Land west of Limmerhill Road (adjacent to the north of Blagrove Lane, discussed above), where a planning application for 60 homes was refused on 30th August 2024 (ref [232621](#)). It would deliver accessible greenspace on around half of the site, as well as flood water attenuation ponds (noting significant downstream surface water flood risk). However, a key issue here is that this is a sensitive landscape gap between Wokingham and Barkham. Also, the site has a current open space designation, albeit there is no public access to the site (historic satellite imagery from 2014 shows that the site was used for dog walking etc at that time). A final consideration is the hedgerow through the site (shown on historic mapping) given nearby woodlands.
- 5.4.38 Two other sites are also of note but are considered to perform relatively poorly. Firstly, to the north of Wokingham is a large site known as Stokes Farm, which relates poorly to both Wokingham and Binfield / Bracknell (including noting an adjacent SANG) and must also be considered in the context of Ashridge to the west. Secondly, to the west of Barkham is a site being promoted for ~300 homes, but the ISA Report (2021) explained: *“Barkham is not well linked in transport terms (distant from a rail station; between A-road corridors)... and there is a need to give long term consideration to the value of the Barkham–Bearwood ridge of raised land (also the valley of the Barkham Brook to the south) as a strategic separation between... growth locations to the north (Wokingham) and south (Arborfield and land south of the M4).”*
- 5.4.39 Finally, there is one **Gypsy and Traveller site option**, located adjacent to Blagrove Lane, which is potentially suitable in the HELAA and considered suitable for allocation, as discussed in Section 5.5.
- 5.4.40 In **conclusion**, in addition to commitments and HELAA suitable sites: three HELAA potentially suitable sites are progressed as a constant; and three more as a variable. The next port of call might be the two ‘other’ sites noted above, and both could deliver an element of planning gain (accessible greenspace), but both are associated with site-specific issues, and there is no clear strategic case for higher growth.

5.4.41 Any combination of the three variable sites is *potentially* 'reasonable'. The highest growth scenario (i.e. all three variable sites) is arguably unreasonable, including given pressure on the road network (in the absence of modelling work having been undertaken to explore any such scenario), however, on the other hand, this is the part of the Borough with the strongest transport and accessibility credentials.

5.4.42 As such, **eight sub-area scenarios** are progressed to Section 5.5.

South sub-areas (x3)

Figure 5.10: Site options categorised by status in the central sub-area



Introduction

5.4.43 There are three sub-areas here:

- Southwest – Shinfield; Spencers Wood; Three Mile Cross; Swallowfield; land west of the A33.
- South – Arborfield Green SDL; Nine Mile Ride / Finchampstead North, Arborfield Cross; Finchampstead.
- Southeast – Land to the east of the railway line including land north; west of Crowthorne.

Southwest

5.4.44 The figure above shows four committed sites; however, only one of these is proposed for allocation at the current time, with the other three either completed or under construction. Specifically, the site at Swallowfield recently gained permission at appeal for 81 homes (ref [230422](#)). Also, it is important to note that a number of other sites are under construction or have recently completed but are not shown on the map as they were not submitted for the purposes of the HELAA. Also, going back a number of years there has been significant growth in this area following allocation of the South of the M4 (Shinfield) SDL.

5.4.45 Beyond committed sites, the first port of call is one HELAA suitable site for 10 homes, which is located to the north of the M4 (Shinfield Rd) and has been an allocation for 10 homes since the Draft Plan stage.

5.4.46 With regards to HELAA potentially suitable sites, the first site to note is **Land north of Arborfield Road, Shinfield** (191 homes). Whilst Shinfield is only a modest growth location in the settlement hierarchy, this site was a proposed allocation in 2021 (and held constant across the RA growth scenarios at that time), has good transport / accessibility credentials and would serve to 'infill' land between the settlement edge and the Eastern Relief Road. In this light, it can be progressed to the RA growth scenarios as a constant. In combination with the adjacent Loddon Valley SDL option it could help to enable / ensure a high quality bus service along the A327 between Arborfield and Reading via Shinfield.

- 5.4.47 The next port of call is then **Hyde End Road, Shinfield** (175 homes), which was an omission site in 2020 (but explored as a variable across the RA growth scenarios) and a proposed allocation in 2021 (when it was held constant across the RA growth scenarios). There have been limited concerns flagged through appraisal and consultation, but it is fair to say that this is a more sensitive / challenging site than north of Arborfield Road (discussed above). There is also the context of total growth quantum at Shinfield (looking back over the past decade), plus the Loddon Valley SDL option is nearby. In this light, it is considered appropriate to progress this site as a variable. N.B. another consideration is that this site is owned by the University of Reading, who are also the owner of an adjacent SANG (Langley Mead) and the intention is to deliver a major [extension](#) that *could* link it to a new country park within a Loddon Valley SDL.
- 5.4.48 The final HELAA potentially suitable site is then Land east of Trowes Lane, Swallowfield (85) homes. This site is identified as potentially suitable through the HELAA but can be ruled out / not progressed to the RA growth scenarios once account is taken of the strategic context. Specifically, an adjacent site recently gained permission at appeal for 81 homes, and allocation of both sites would amount to over-allocation in the Swallowfield context, e.g. noting the lack of a village primary school.
- 5.4.49 With regards to **other sites**, none are of note as being in contention for housing given the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) around AWE Burghfield, which is a major constraint affecting all land in this sub-area to the west of Shinfield. This includes all land to the west of the A33 – which is not shown on Figure 5.10 – including the land previously proposed for a major new SDL (Grazeley).
- 5.4.50 Finally, with regards to the DEPZ, there does remain a question-mark as to whether **employment uses** could be suitable, and this is an option that warrants ongoing consideration in light of high levels of sub-regional need for new employment land, particularly land for industrial and logistics / warehousing uses. However, current understanding is that there would be objection from AWE and the Office for Nuclear Regulation to new employment uses in the DEPZ. In particular, there would be an objection to the very extensive employment land development (also solar farms) currently being promoted in the Grazeley area.
- 5.4.51 In **conclusion**, in addition to commitments and one HELAA suitable site: one HELAA potentially suitable sites is progressed as a constant; and one is progressed as a variable. As such, there are **two scenarios**, namely: A) constants only; and B) constants plus Hyde End Road. It is difficult to envisage any other reasonable growth scenarios in terms of housing, but employment land is discussed further in Section 5.5.

South

- 5.4.52 As an initial point, it is important to note that two key nearby sites have already been discussed above, namely: the Loddon Valley SDL option; and B) Blagrove Lane smaller strategic site option.
- 5.4.53 Beginning with committed sites, five are shown in Figure 5.10. However, only one of these is proposed for allocation at the current time, namely 31-33 Barkham Ride (80 homes),¹¹ which is located at the northwest extent of the Finchampstead North settlement area. It is not far to the east of Arborfield Green, but located to the west of the site is Rooks Nest Country Park (SANG) such that it is well contained.
- 5.4.54 Taking the remaining four committed sites from west to east, these do not require an allocation as they are either: under construction (former Reading FC training ground, at the eastern extent of the Arborfield Green SDL area); permitted for Gypsy and Traveller pitches; within a settlement area (32 homes); or permitted for just five homes. Also, it is important to note that a number of other sites are under construction or have recently completed but are not shown on the map as they were not submitted for the purposes of the HELAA. Also, going back a number of years there has been significant growth in this area following designation of Arborfield Garrison SDL (now known as Arborfield Green SDL).
- 5.4.55 There are then no HELAA suitable sites in this area. However, there is strong support for 300 homes via **Arborfield Green SDL intensification**, specifically intensification within the Arborfield Studios area at the northern extent of the SDL. The film studios only have temporary permission, and the outline planning permission granted in 2015 provides for housing-led redevelopment. The current proposal, therefore, is simply to boost density within an existing permitted scheme. The new district centre to the south will be beyond easy walking distance but very well-connected by high quality new foot and cycleways. Also, a new primary school is adjacent and bus connectivity to Reading should be relatively good.
- 5.4.56 With regards to HELAA potentially suitable sites, the first port of call is two small sites:

¹¹ There is a resolution to grant permission for 33 BR (ref 223528) and a application pending for 31 BR (ref 230791).

- **Hillside, Lower Wokingham Road** (15 homes) – was a proposed allocation in both 2020 and 2021 and an application is pending (ref. [240803](#)). It includes an element of PDL and is progressed as a constant.
- **Westwood Yard, Sheerlands Road** (10 homes) – is within the SDL and includes PDL, such that it is progressed as a constant. It is noted that the site capacity could potentially be higher, but 10 homes is considered appropriate noting priority habitat and nearby listed buildings. A modest scheme can could support green infrastructure objectives, noting the extent of the Hogwood Farm scheme to the east (the SDL's southern extent) which is permitted and under construction.

5.4.57 The next port of call is then **Greenacres Farm, Nine Mile Ride** (100 homes). This site is located between Finchampstead North and Arborfield Green, and the transport / accessibility credentials of the site are not strong. However, this site mostly comprises PDL, such that it can reasonably be progressed as a constant. The ISA Report (2021) discussed the possibility of a higher density scheme, but 100 homes is appropriate given the location, including in terms of transport and accessibility. A key consideration is the possibility of securing land to the west (in the same land ownership) as green space.

5.4.58 The next port of call is then **24 Barkham Ride** (30 homes), which is located opposite (to the south of) 31-33 Barkham Ride. Whilst it is again the case that accessibility / transport credentials are not strong, there is an element of PDL, and the site could round off the settlement edge (given 31-33 Barkham Ride; but also note discussion below regarding Rooks Nest Farm). There is also a degree of biodiversity constraint, and an important bridleway runs adjacent to the site (connecting country parks / SSSIs).

N.B. at the RGS stage (2021) this site was promoted along with Council owned land to the west (Rooks Nest Farm) for a total of 270 homes as part of a concerted effort to identify sites with strong deliverability credentials following the loss of Grazeley SDL. However, this generated concerns through the consultation, including by Finchampstead PC (see a [topic paper](#) submitted alongside the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan, prior to its adoption in 2023) and Rooks Nest Farm is no longer available for housing, but is proposed for two new SEND schools and a community woodland. It is not clear how far these uses will use the entire site, hence there is a need for ongoing work to ensure a comprehensive approach to growth in this sensitive location (landscape gap to Arborfield Green).¹²

5.4.59 The next port of call is then **Barkham Square** (600 homes), which would form a northern extension to the Arborfield Green SDL. This site has never been a proposed allocation but has been examined closely through work to explore RA growth scenarios, and various growth quantum options have been explored. Considerable work has been undertaken to explore issues / opportunities, and the emerging view is that there is infrastructure capacity to accommodate growth and that the site could relate effectively to and complement the existing SDL (noting that this is where intensification is proposed). Also, a 600 home scheme would deliver/enable five Gypsy and Traveller pitches and also custom / self-build housing. There is a case for progressing this site as a constant, given the strategic context and because it is considered sequentially preferable to the two other smaller strategic site options discussed above as progressed as a variable, namely Riverways Farm and Blagrove Lane; however, on balance it is progressed as a variable.

5.4.60 With regards to **other sites**, the first point to note is limited strategic argument for growth beyond that which could be delivered by the sites discussed above, in the context of levels of accessibility / transport connectivity in this part of the Borough. Notable options are then as follows:

- Arborfield Cross area – proportionate consideration has been given to growth options over the course of the plan-making / SA process, including within Appendix IV of the ISA Report (2021). However, there is a clear strategic case for instead focusing growth to the north (Shinfield / Reading) and/or to the south (Arborfield Green SDL). There are also sites available at Arborfield, but this is a lower order settlement and there is the context of the Loddon Valley SDL option adjacent to the east.
- East of Finchampstead Road – is a large cluster of sites at the northeast edge of this southern sub-area, comprising land between Finchampstead Road and the railway to Crowthorne, and mostly in use as a golf course. It has been given proportionate consideration as a smaller strategic site option but has always been ruled out relatively early in the process of defining RA growth scenarios. There has been relatively in the way of active promotion through the LPU, but a 216 home scheme on the northern part of the site was dismissed at appeal several years ago. This is clearly a landscape gap between Wokingham and Finchampstead North, but equally there is already continuous development along Finchampstead Road. Comprehensive planning for housing and strategic greenspace / SANG in this sector of land warrants being an ongoing consideration, i.e. to ensure that piecemeal growth is avoided.

¹² The SEND school proposals are discussed [here](#) and [here](#) and the woodland is discussed [here](#).

- South of Nine Mile Ride – two adjacent sites (either side of Finchampstead Road) were given proportionate consideration in the ISA Report (2021) as a small strategic site option (referred to as Land at Church Farm & Finchampstead Road), but ultimately ruled out relatively early in the process. The conclusion from 2021 still broadly holds true: *“Two separate schemes are being promoted, and it is not clear that a linked strategic scheme is feasible or would deliver any particular benefits. Land here relates well to Finchampstead Cross Roads local centre, and Crowthorne station is within cycling distance, but higher order settlements are more distant. There are also significant landscape and historic environment constraints, noting rising land (with public rights of way) to Finchampstead Church Conservation Area and scheduled monuments, plus there is a need to consider current built form / settlement pattern...”*

However, the option of a modest scheme to the east of the road might warrant ongoing consideration, given good accessibility credentials and in the context of reduced growth directed to this area relative to the RGS stage. The site also comprises low-lying land in the context of otherwise rising land south of Nine Mile Ride, but there is nonetheless sensitivity in terms of impacts to settlement form and landscape.

- Finchampstead village – is a limited growth settlement at the southern extent of the Borough (as per Swallowfield, discussed above). There is a primary school (unlike Swallowfield) but there is no conservation area (unlike Swallowfield; also, note that there is a conservation area north of the village). In this context, Section 5.4 of the ISA Report explored growth options, but the conclusion reached was that no options need be progressed to the RA growth scenarios. This conclusion was partially reached on an assumption that the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan would be well-placed to allocate one or more sites, but as it transpired the adopted Plan does not allocate land for development. As such, ongoing consideration should be given to the possibility of modest growth. There are options to the west and south of the village (and the latter is the subject of a current application for 40 homes; ref [241567](#)). The Parish Council remains in a good position to select a site, if there is a strategic case for growth.

- 5.4.61 Finally, there are three **Gypsy and Traveller site options** that are potentially suitable in the HELAA, and which are considered suitable for allocation, as well as one that is identified as potentially suitable in the HELAA, but which is not proposed for allocation. This latter site located in-between settlements in a prominent location when viewed from the A321 as it passes through the plantation woodland / former heathland that defines the southeast extent of the Borough. There is extensive adjacent priority habitat.
- 5.4.62 In **conclusion**, in addition to one committed site and Arborfield Green SDL intensification: four HELAA potentially suitable sites are progressed as a constant and one is progressed as a variable. As such, there are **two scenarios**, namely: A) constants only; and B) constants plus Barkham Square.
- 5.4.63 Scenario (B) would represent a high growth strategy, and this is in the context of high growth over recent years (Arborfield Green SDL), plus South Wokingham SDL extension and Blagrove Lane are other nearby growth options under consideration. Also, there is a need to recall the context of this part of the Borough being associated with relatively high car dependency. However, there are small omission sites in this area that could be given further consideration were there a case for boosting supply from small sites.
- 5.4.64 Another strategic consideration is around long-term comprehensive planning for growth alongside associated SANG in order to maintain settlement gaps and settlement / landscape character.

Southeast

- 5.4.65 The first point to note here is that South East Wokingham SDL extension smaller strategic site option has already been discussed above and progressed as a constant. The site clearly relates strongly to this southeast sub-area, including given the need to maintain a landscape gap to Nine Mile Ride / Crowthorne.
- 5.4.66 There is just one committed site for six homes, which does not require an allocation.
- 5.4.67 There is then just one further site for discussion, which is Ravenswood Village, located to the northwest of Crowthorne (but separated from Crowthorne by a golf course). This was not proposed for allocation at the RGS stage (2021) with the ISA Report explaining: *“... partially PDL... well screened by woodland and Crowthorne station is nearby, as is a primary school; however, flood risk is a constraint, as is the adjacent Heathlake SSSI.”* The latest situation is that it is HELAA potentially suitable in the HELAA but is not proposed for allocation as there is insufficient confidence that the site is developable within the plan period.
- 5.4.68 With regards to other sites, there are a number of submitted sites in the Gardeners Green area, but there is little in the way of active promotion, and there is generally limited strategic case for growth here.
- 5.4.69 In **conclusion**, there is just **one scenario** involving nil growth from Local Plan Update allocations.

Conclusion on sub-area scenarios

- 5.4.70 This section has considered five sub-areas in turn, exploring supply options and growth scenarios.
- 5.4.71 At each sub-area the first port of call is supply from **committed sites** (i.e. permitted sites plus two small existing allocations), plus account is taken of recent completions (primarily those within the plan period)..
- 5.4.72 The next port of call is then supply from **HELAA suitable sites**; however, supply from these sites is limited.
- 5.4.73 A key focus is then **HELAA potentially suitable sites**, with a distinction between:
- Those that perform strongly (in light of both site specific and strategic factors) to the extent that allocation can reasonably be held constant across the RA growth scenarios, i.e. they are progressed as a **constant allocation**. Also, whilst not a HELAA site, there is strong support for Arborfield Green SDL intensification (300 homes) to the extent that this supply can reasonably be progressed as a constant.
 - Those that are more marginal such that they warrant being explored further as a **variable allocation** across the RA growth scenarios. There are eight such sites, of which six are located within either the north or central sub-area. Focusing on these six sites (two sets of three), all combinations are potentially reasonable (i.e. it is difficult to conclude that any sites should or should not deliver in combination), such that there are eight potential growth scenarios for the north and central sub-areas – see Table 5.1.
 - A small number that are **ruled-out** (or, in other words are progressed as a constant omission site).
- 5.4.74 Finally, with regards to **other sites**, these are given targeted but proportionate consideration, and ultimately none are progressed. However, a number of these sites are ‘noted’ as warranting ongoing consideration (in light of strategic and site-specific factors).

Table 5.1: Summary sub-area scenarios

Sub-area	Variable sites	Scenarios
North	3	8
Central	3	8
Southwest	1	2
South	1	2
Southeast	0	1

- 5.4.75 The task of combining these sub-area scenarios to form a single set of borough-wide RA growth scenarios is clearly challenging, hence Section 5 considers an alternative way of categorising options, specifically according to the settlement hierarchy.

5.5 Reasonable growth scenarios

- 5.5.1 The aim of this section is to draw upon the process described above (see Figure 5.1 for a summary) in order to define reasonable alternative growth scenarios for appraisal and consultation.
- 5.5.2 In theory, the task should be to combine the sub-area scenarios defined in Section 5.4. However, in practice this is not possible because numerous scenarios are identified for two of the sub-areas. As such, as a final step ahead of defining growth scenarios there is a need to categorise the supply options discussed in Section 5.4 according to the settlement hierarchy – see Tabel 5.2.
- 5.5.3 Specifically, the aim of Table 5.2 is to categorise non-committed site options involving housing led development (i.e. not including sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches) according to the settlement hierarchy. In particular, there is a focus on potentially suitable HELAA sites (as opposed to HELAA suitable sites).
- 5.5.4 In summary, the focus of the table is on presenting the ‘progressed’ HELAA potentially suitable sites under the settlement hierarchy, plus there is a single row recording supply from the eight HELAA suitable sites, plus the table records other sources of supply categorised under two headings:
- 5.5.5 Also, the table also presents:

- Permissions – total 6,244 homes, which breaks down as: **A)** 2,137 homes from Arborfield SDL; **B)** 1,775 homes from South Wokingham SDL; **C)** 352 homes from North Wokingham SDL; **D)** 259 homes from South of the M4 SDL; and **E)** 1,721 homes from sites outside an SDL (of which sites for 630 homes require an allocation, on account of not yet being under construction and not being located within a settlement or an SDL). N.B. these figures include both sites with planning permission and those with a resolution to grant planning permission (subject to legal / S106 agreements).
- Other supply – totals 2,472 homes, which breaks down as: **A)** 1,880 homes from small site permissions and a windfall allowance; **B)** 300 homes from Arborfield Green SDL Intensification; **C)** an additional 200 home windfall allowance for Wokingham town centre; **D)** 49 homes from two existing allocations;¹³ and **E)** 43 non-permitted Gypsy and Traveller pitches.¹⁴

Table 5.2: Summary of housing supply options categorised by the settlement hierarchy

Supply component			Number of homes	
			Option 1	Option 2
Permissions (including resolutions to grant)			6,244	
Other supply (windfall, Arborfield intensification, existing allocations, pitches)			2,472	
Non-committed housing-led allocations	HELAA suitable sites (x8) ¹⁵		321	
	New SDL	Loddon Valley	0	2,700
		Ashridge	0	2,200
		East of Twyford / Ruscombe	0	1,500
	Major development settlement	South Wokingham SDL extension	980	
		Old Forest Road, Winnersh	50	
		Bulldog Garage, Winnersh	34	
		South of London Road, Wokingham	12	
		Blagrove Lane, Wokingham	0	387
		Riverways Farm, Twyford	0	230
	Modest development settlement	North of Arborfield Road, Shinfield	191	
		Greenacres, Nine Mile Ride	100	
		24 Barkham Ride, Nine Mile Ride	30	
		Hillside, Finchampstead	15	
		Westwood Yard, Arborfield Green	10	
		Barkham Square, Arborfield Green	0	600
		Hyde End Road, Shinfield	0	175
Limited dev. set.	West of Park Lane, Charvil	0	61	
Total homes			10,459	18,312

¹³ Land off Wheatsheaf Close, Sindlesham (Central; 24 homes); Land at Sonning Farm, Sonning (North; 25 homes)

¹⁴ Woodside, Blagrove Ln, Wokingham (Central; 4 pitches); Honeysuckle, Commonfield Ln, Finchampstead (South; 4 pitches); Woodlands Fm, Wood Ln, Barkham (South; 15 pitches); High Barn Fm, Commonfield Ln, Barkham (South; 20 pitches).

¹⁵ Rustlings, The Spring and Land to rear of Cushendall, Shinfield Road, Shinfield (Southwest; 10 homes); Land to the rear of 9-17 Northbury Lane, Ruscombe (North; 12 homes); Land at the corner of Wellington Road and Station Road, Wokingham (Central; 20 homes); Land between 39-53 New Road, Ruscombe (North; 20 homes); Station Industrial Estate, Oxford Road, Wokingham (Central; 40 homes); Bridge Retail Park, Finchampstead Road, Wokingham (Central; 59 homes); Winnersh Plant Hire, Reading Road, Winnersh (Central; 60 homes); WBC offices, Shute End, Wokingham (Central; 100 homes).

- 5.5.6 From Table 5.2 it can be seen that a feasible lowest growth scenario would involve for 10,459 homes supply whilst a feasible highest growth scenario would involve 18,312 homes supply. The former scenario is clearly unreasonable, in light of the discussion presented in Section 5.2, as is the latter, although it is recognised that this level of supply would still be insufficient to enable the housing requirement to be set at 1,308 dpa, which is consultation draft standard method LHN figure at the time of writing (August 2024).¹⁶
- 5.5.7 With regards to growth scenarios that would deliver a total quantum of homes in between these two bookends, a reasonable starting point is a scenario involving support for:
- Loddon Valley SDL – as this was proposed for allocation in 2021 and there remains a strong argument to suggest that it is sequentially preferable of the three new SDL options.
 - Barkham Square – which has been discussed as the sequentially preferable of the three smaller variable strategic site options listed in Table 5.2 (the others being Blagrove Lane and Riverways Farm).
 - Hyde End Road, Shinfield – there are limited concerns with this site, and there is a need for a good mix of sites to ensure a robust supply trajectory in the early years of the plan period.
 - West of Park Lane, Charvil – as above, although it is recognised that Charvil is a lower order settlement.
- 5.5.8 These four variable supply options in combination with the constant supply options listed in Table 5.2 would deliver 13,946 homes in total, which would enable the housing requirement to be set at LHN with a total supply buffer of 10%. This is **Growth Scenario 1**.
- 5.5.9 Maintaining a focus on scenarios involving allocation of Loddon Valley, other reasonable scenarios are:
- **Growth Scenario 2** – replace Barkham Square with Blagrove Lane and Riverways Farm, leading to 13,963 homes, which would enable the housing requirement to be set at LHN with a 10% supply buffer.
 - **Growth Scenario 3** – allocate all three smaller strategic sites (Barkham Square, Blagrove Lane, Riverways Farm) and remove the two non-strategic sites (Hyde End Road, West of Park Lane) leading to 14,327 homes, enabling the housing requirement to be set at LHN with a 13% supply buffer.
 - **Growth Scenario 4** – Scenario 3 plus the two non-strategic sites leading to 14,502 homes, which could potentially allow the housing requirement to be set modestly above LHN. Alternatively, the housing requirement could be set at LHN with a larger supply buffer of 14%.
- 5.5.10 Moving on to growth scenarios involving allocation of Ashridge as the only new SDL, there is only one reasonable such scenario, namely a scenario whereby Ashridge is allocated in combination with all of the other variable sites. This would involve 14,002 homes supply, enabling the housing requirement to be set at LHN with an 10% supply buffer. This is **Growth Scenario 5**.
- 5.5.11 Other feasible 'Ashridge focused' scenarios can be envisaged involving removal of Riverways Farm (as the smallest of the three strategic sites) or the two non-strategic sites (it is pragmatic to consider these sites in combination). However, supply would drop to a point where the supply buffer is 9%, which is arguably too low, plus there is a pragmatic need to minimise the number of growth scenarios.¹⁷
- 5.5.12 There is no reasonable scenario involving allocation of East of Twyford / Ruscombe as the sole new SDL, given its smaller scale, plus a view that it is sequentially the least preferable of the three new SDL options.
- 5.5.13 As such, the final scenarios for consideration are those that would see allocation of two new SDLs:
- **Growth Scenario 6** –
 - Loddon Valley and East of Twyford / Ruscombe
 - Non-strategic sites (to support a healthy supply trajectory) but none of the three smaller strategic sites.
 - 14,785 homes supply, such that the housing requirement could be set above LHN. Alternatively, the housing requirement could be set at LHN with a 16% supply buffer.
 - **Growth Scenario 7** –

¹⁶ To reiterate the plan has been prepared on the understanding that LHN is 748 dpa and were it to transpire that LHN is in fact a much higher figure then there would be a need to revisit work to explore supply options / growth scenarios. As part of this, there could be a need for further work to consider whether the three new SDL options listed in Table 5.1 could deliver in combination, as on the basis of current understanding there is no confidence that they could (such that allocation of all three would risk setting the Local Plan up to fail, in that the Borough commits to a housing requirement that it cannot deliver).

¹⁷ 12 scenarios were explore in 2021, and the ISA Report explained that this was too many to enable effective consultation.

- Loddon Valley and Ashridge
 - Non-strategic sites (to support a healthy supply trajectory) but none of the three smaller strategic sites.
 - 15,485 homes supply, such that the housing requirement could be set well above LHN, e.g. 830 dpa with a 10% supply buffer. Alternatively, the housing requirement could be set at LHN with a large supply buffer of 22% (which is not necessarily an unreasonable proposition).
- 5.5.14 With regards to higher growth scenarios involving two new SDLs plus one or more of the variable smaller strategic sites, these scenarios are ruled out on balance as they would arguably lead to over-supply, in the context of a 748 dpa LHN figure and recalling no requests to provide for unmet housing need.
- 5.5.15 With regards to a scenario involving allocation of Ashridge and East of Twyford / Ruscombe, this is ruled out on balance on account of the two sites being too close to one another (this was also the view taken when defining reasonable growth scenarios in 2021 and no objections were made to this approach).
- 5.5.16 The **seven reasonable growth scenarios** are presented below.
- 1) Constants plus Loddon Valley **SDL**, Barkham Sq and small sites
 - 2) Constants plus Loddon Valley **SDL**, Blagrove Lane, Riverways Farm and small sites
 - 3) Constants plus Loddon Valley **SDL**, Barkham Sq, Blagrove Lane and Riverways Farm
 - 4) Constants plus Loddon Valley **SDL**, Barkham Sq, Blagrove Lane, Riverways Farm and small sites
 - 5) Constants plus Ashridge **SDL**, Barkham Sq, Blagrove Lane, Riverways Farm and small sites
 - 6) Constants plus Loddon Valley **SDL**, East of Twyford/Ruscombe **SDL** and small sites
 - 7) Constants plus Loddon Valley **SDL**, Ashridge **SDL** and small sites
- 5.5.17 These seven scenarios are set out in the table below and across the subsequent maps. These are considered to be the reasonable alternatives at the current time in light of the plan objectives and evidence-based in light of the process over time described across the sections above. These alternatives can be meaningfully differentiated in terms of significant effects and are suited to supporting engagement.
- 5.5.18 Final considerations are in respect of:
- **Employment land** – as discussed in Section 5.2, the key proposal is to allocate land for approaching 25ha of industrial land at TVSP. Also, the proposal is to allocate land for a small extension to Hogwood Industrial Estate at Arborfield Green. This would be the case under all scenarios.
- In addition, there is a need to account for: A) completions and commitments; and B) proposed redevelopment of industrial sites for housing. Accounting for all of these things together (i.e. proposed allocations + A – B) the net total supply of industrial land in the plan period is about 25 ha, so comfortably in excess of the minimum requirement set out in the ELNS (18 ha), but a long way short of the aspirational target (53 ha). Additional supply is anticipated from intensification of existing industrial areas and also small windfall sites (given supportive policy), but total supply will likely nonetheless still fall short of 53 ha. However, this is not necessarily a concern, as the 53 ha figure is arrived at by the ELNS with a sub-regional perspective, i.e. the supply need not necessarily be within Wokingham Borough. Section 5.4 explains that a major employment scheme is being promoted in the Grazeley area, which in theory would be of larger-than-local significance, but the proposal is judged unreasonable. Moving forward, there will be the potential to work with neighbouring authorities in respect of employment land provision to meet the needs of the sub-region, the M4 corridor and the Thames Valley, potentially in the context of the [Draft NPPE](#) (July 2024), which includes a major new emphasis on new employment land to meet larger-than-local needs. Other options within the Borough may be identified in time; for example, there is the context of the Royal Berkshire Hospital relocation and a possible new Thames crossing.
- **Gypsies and Travellers** – under all scenarios the proposal is to allocate four stand-alone sites, of which two are extensions to existing sites. These sites are all strongly supported, as discussed further in Section 9, and will deliver 43 pitches in total. Also, under all scenarios South Wokingham SDL extension would deliver 6 pitches, and under scenarios with Barkham Square a further 5 pitches will be delivered at Arborfield Green SDL. There are also 4 pitches from completions/commitments, which brings total supply to 58 pitches against a need figure of 86. Under all scenarios there will also be pitches delivered at a new SDL, and the assumption is that one pitch would be delivered per 200 homes (on the basis of total site capacity, i.e. not plan period). For Loddon Valley SDL this would mean 20 pitches, bringing total supply to 78 pitches, with good potential for the shortfall to be made up by windfall applications.

- **Plan period** – under all scenarios the plan period is assumed to run to 2040. It is recognised that under the two highest growth scenarios support for two new SDLs would create flexibility to extend the plan period (e.g. by one year to 2041, noting NPPF paragraph 22 which encourages plans to run for 15 years from the point of plan adoption), but extending the plan period is a complicated matter, given that other evidence and wider plan-making work has been undertaken on the basis of a plan period to 2040.
- **Stepped housing requirement** – it is not clear that this would be necessary under any of the scenarios, but there could be an issue with providing for need (748 dpa) in the earlier years of the plan period under Scenario 3, and under Scenarios 6 and 7 there could potentially be an issue in the early-middle years.

Table 5.3: The RA growth scenarios (with constants greyed-out)

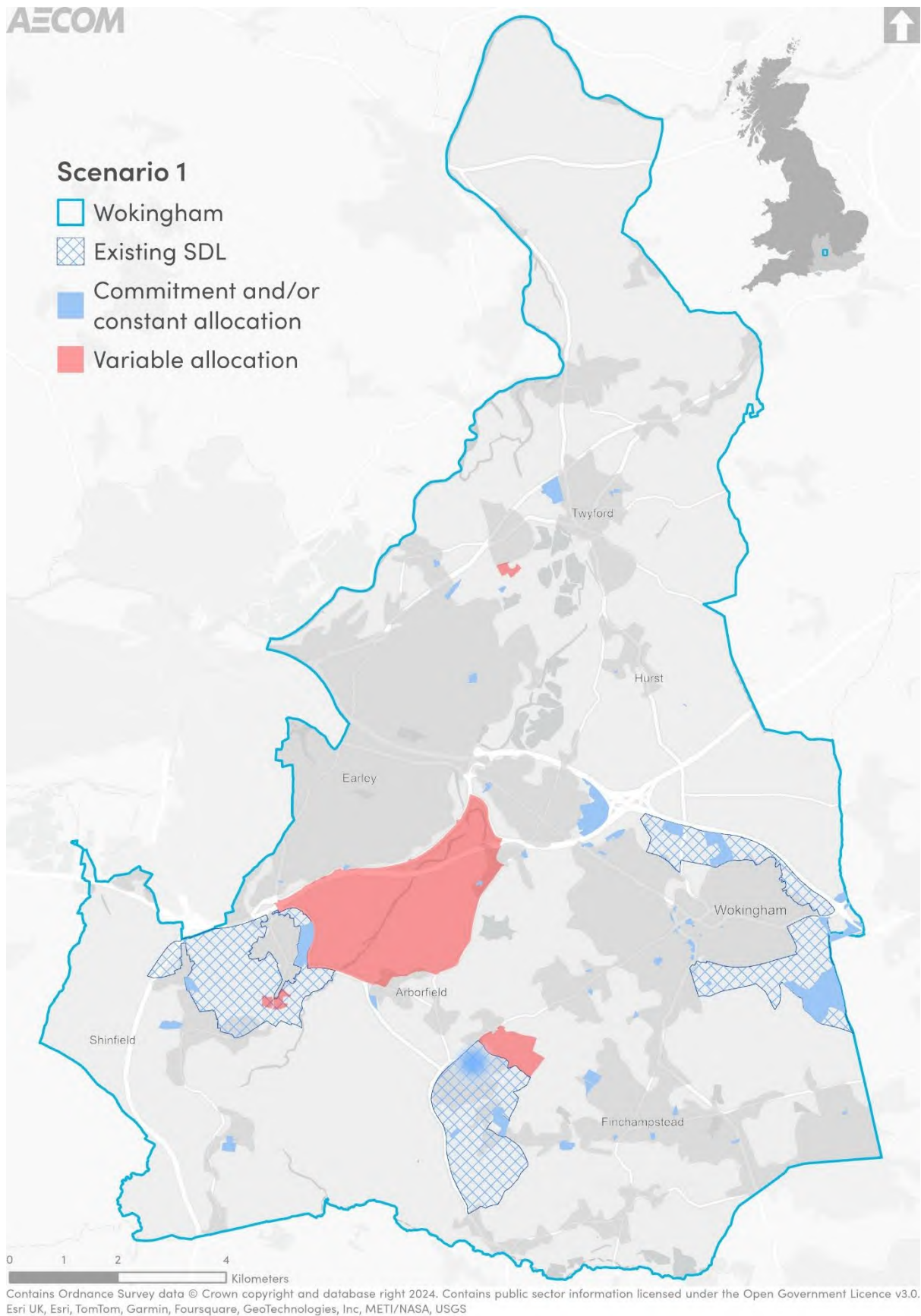
Supply component		Reasonable growth scenarios							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Permissions ¹⁸		6,244	6,244	6,244	6,244	6,244	6,244	6,244	
Other supply ¹⁹		2,472	2,472	2,472	2,472	2,472	2,472	2,472	
Non-committed housing-led allocations	HELAA suitable sites (x8)	321	321	321	321	321	321	321	
	New SDL	Loddon Valley	2,700	2,700	2,700	2,700	-	2,700	2,700
		Ashridge	-	-	-	-	2,200	-	2,200
		East of Twyford / Ruscombe	-	-	-	-	-	1,500	-
	Major dev. settlement	South Wokingham extension	980	980	980	980	980	980	980
		Old Forest Road	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
		Bulldog Garage	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
		South of London Road	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
		Blagrove Lane	-	387	387	387	387	-	-
		Riverways Farm	-	230	230	230	230	-	-
	Modest dev. settlement	North of Arborfield Road	191	191	191	191	191	191	191
		Greenacres	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
		24 Barkham Ride	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
		Hillside	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
		Westwood Yard	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
		Barkham Square	600	-	600	600	600	-	-
		Hyde End Road	175	175	-	175	175	175	175
West of Park Lane, Charvil ²⁰		61	61	-	61	61	61	61	
Total homes 2023-2040		13,995	14,012	14,376	14,551	14,051	14,834	15,534	
% above LHN (748 dpa)		10%	10%	13%	14%	10%	17%	22%	

¹⁸ Sites with 'permission' includes those where there is a resolution to grant subject to S106.

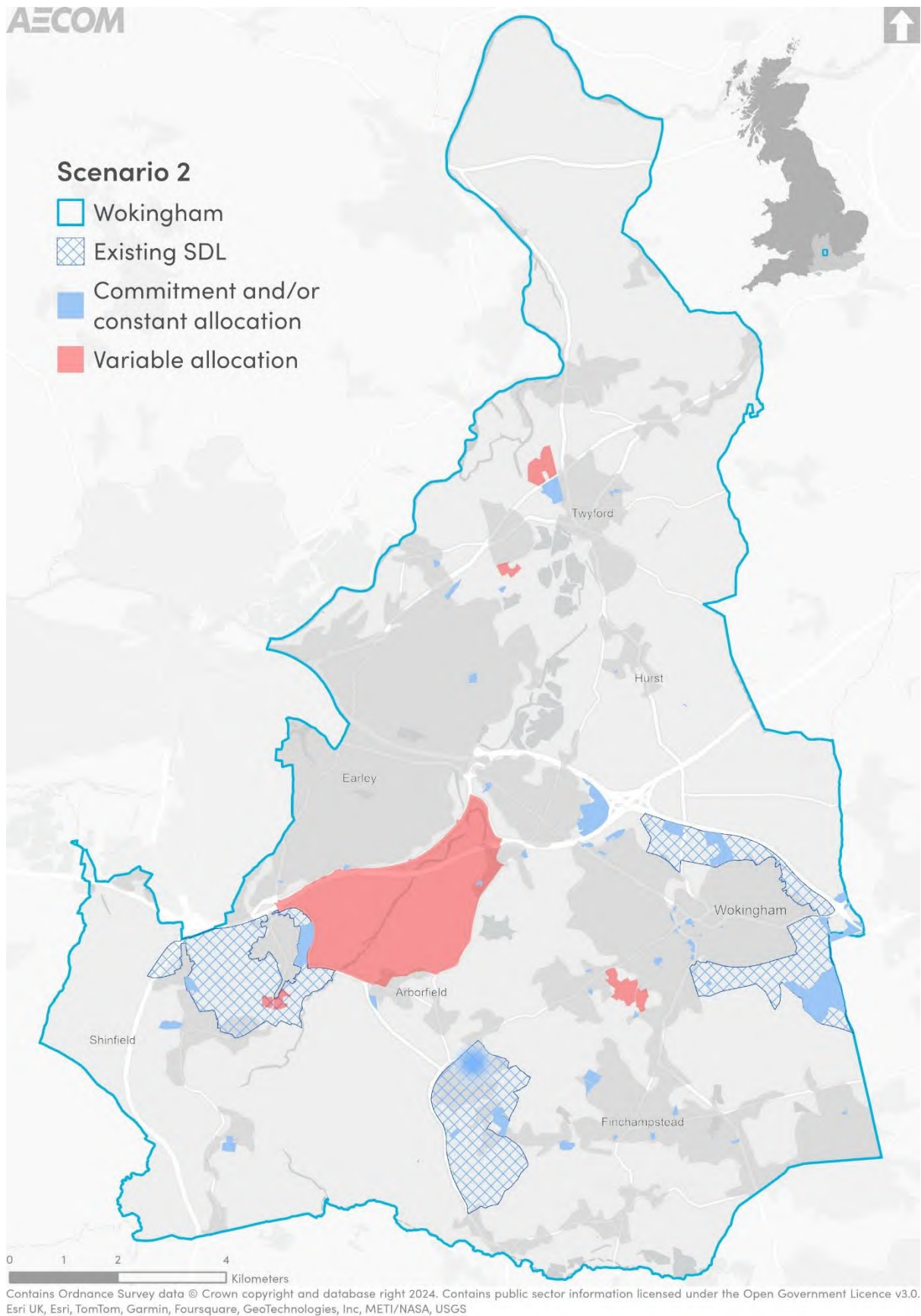
¹⁹ 'Other supply' is mainly windfall, plus Arborfield Green intensification, 2x existing allocations and Gypsy & Traveller pitches

²⁰ Charvil is a limited growth settlement

Reasonable growth scenario 1: Loddon Valley SDL, Barkham Sq, small sites

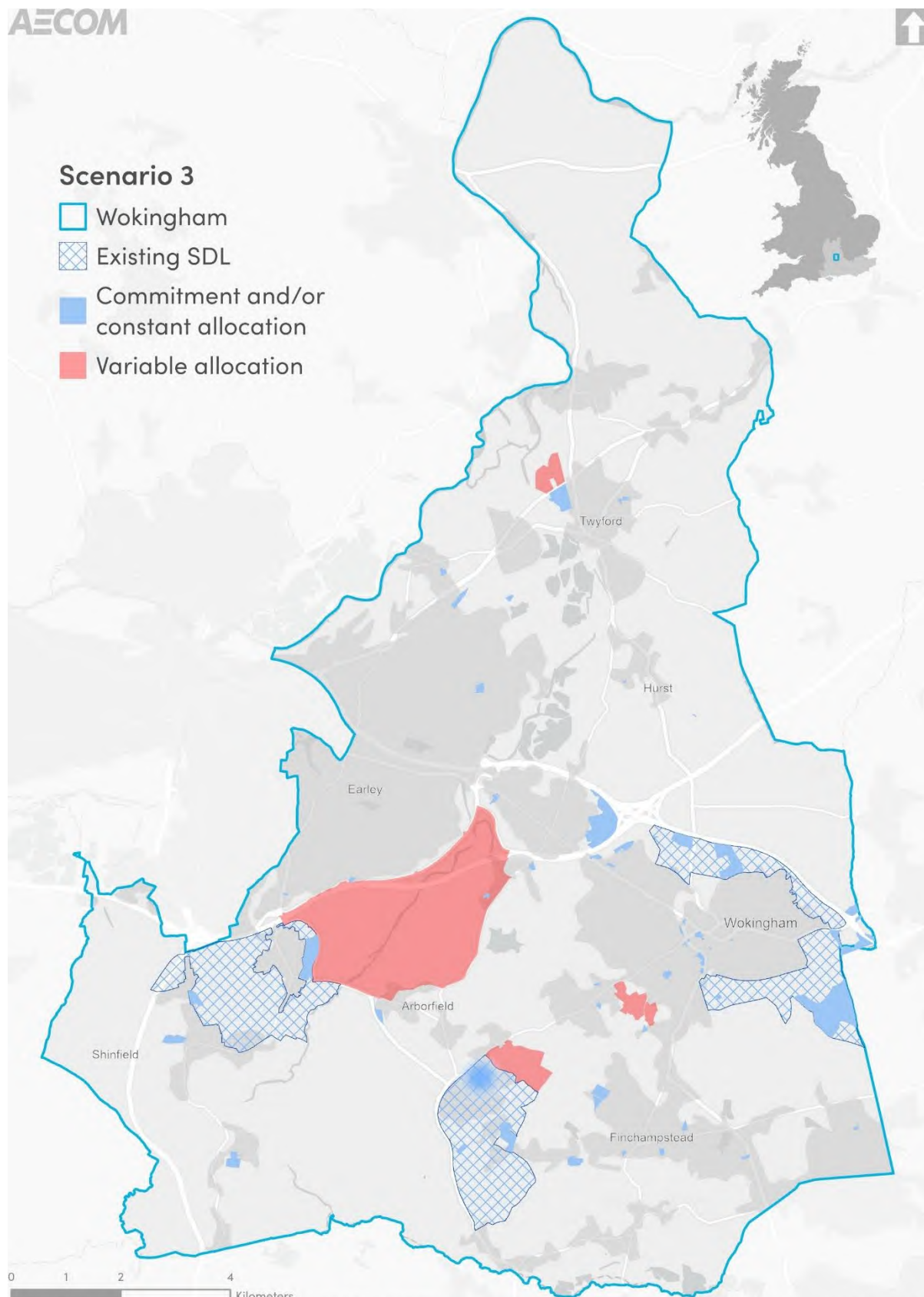


Reasonable growth scenario 2: Loddon Valley SDL, Blagrove Ln, Riverways Fm, small sites



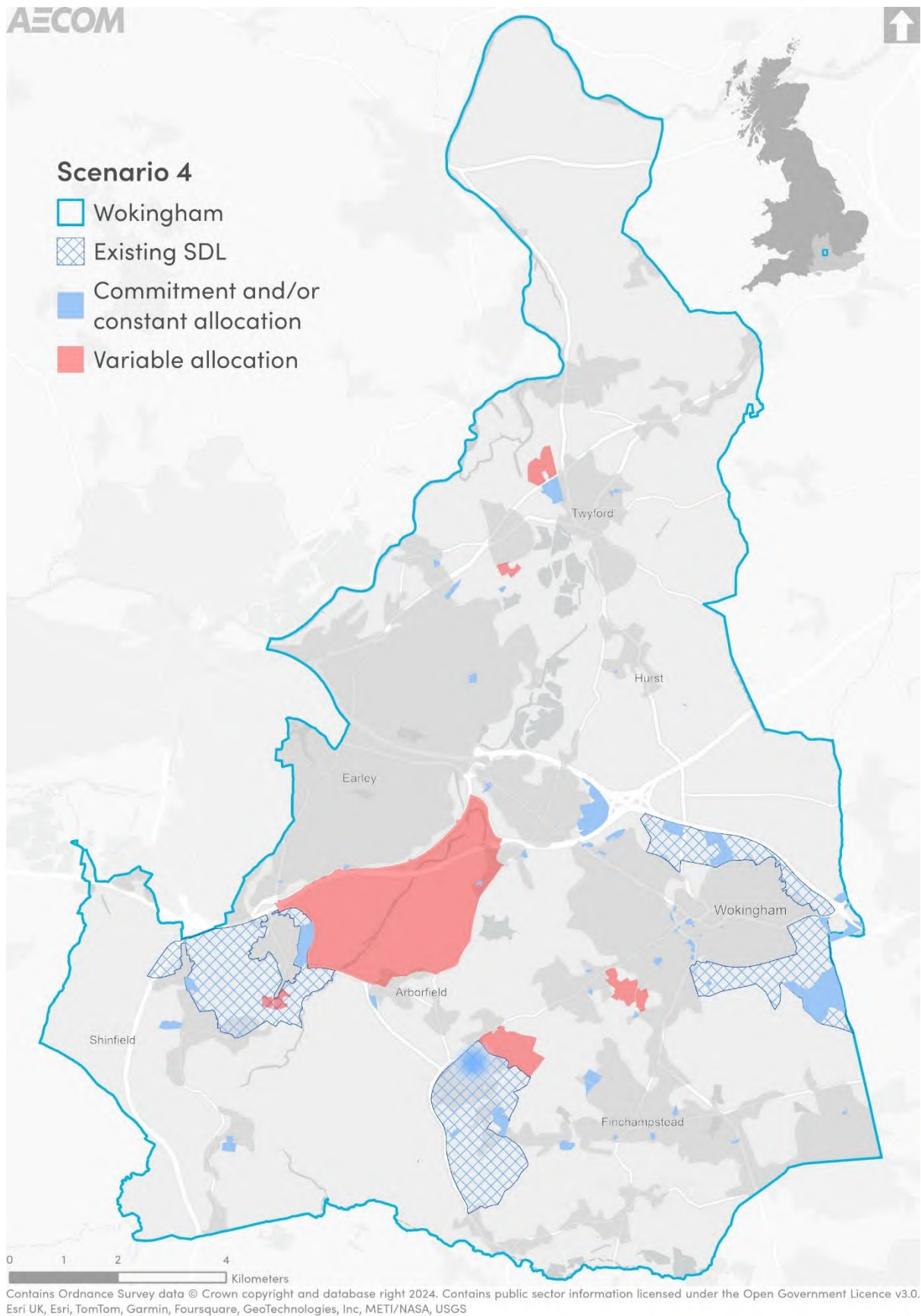
Reasonable growth scenario 3: Loddon Valley SDL, Barkham Sq, Blagrove Ln, Riverways Fm

AECOM

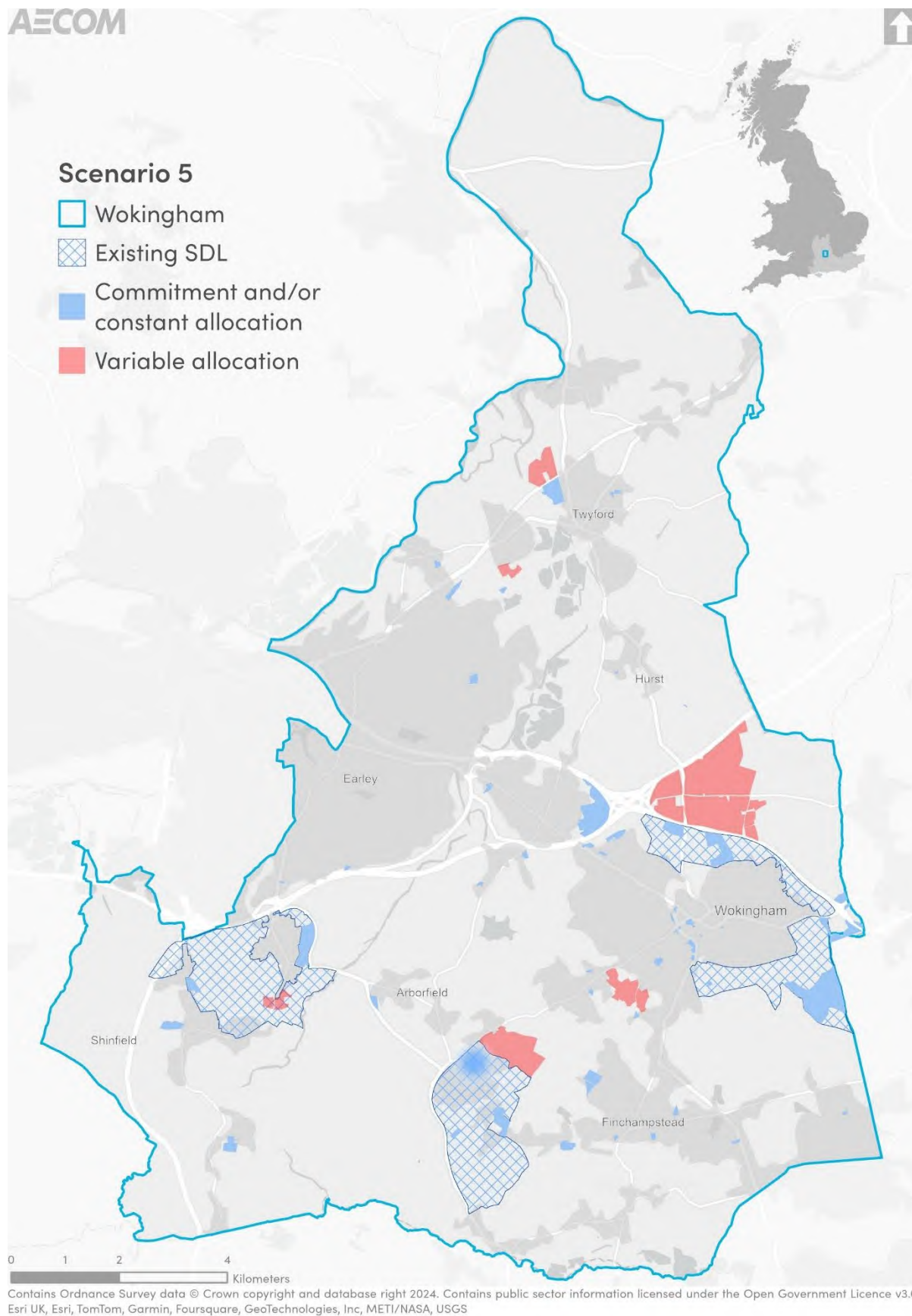


Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2024. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. Esri UK, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, Foursquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS

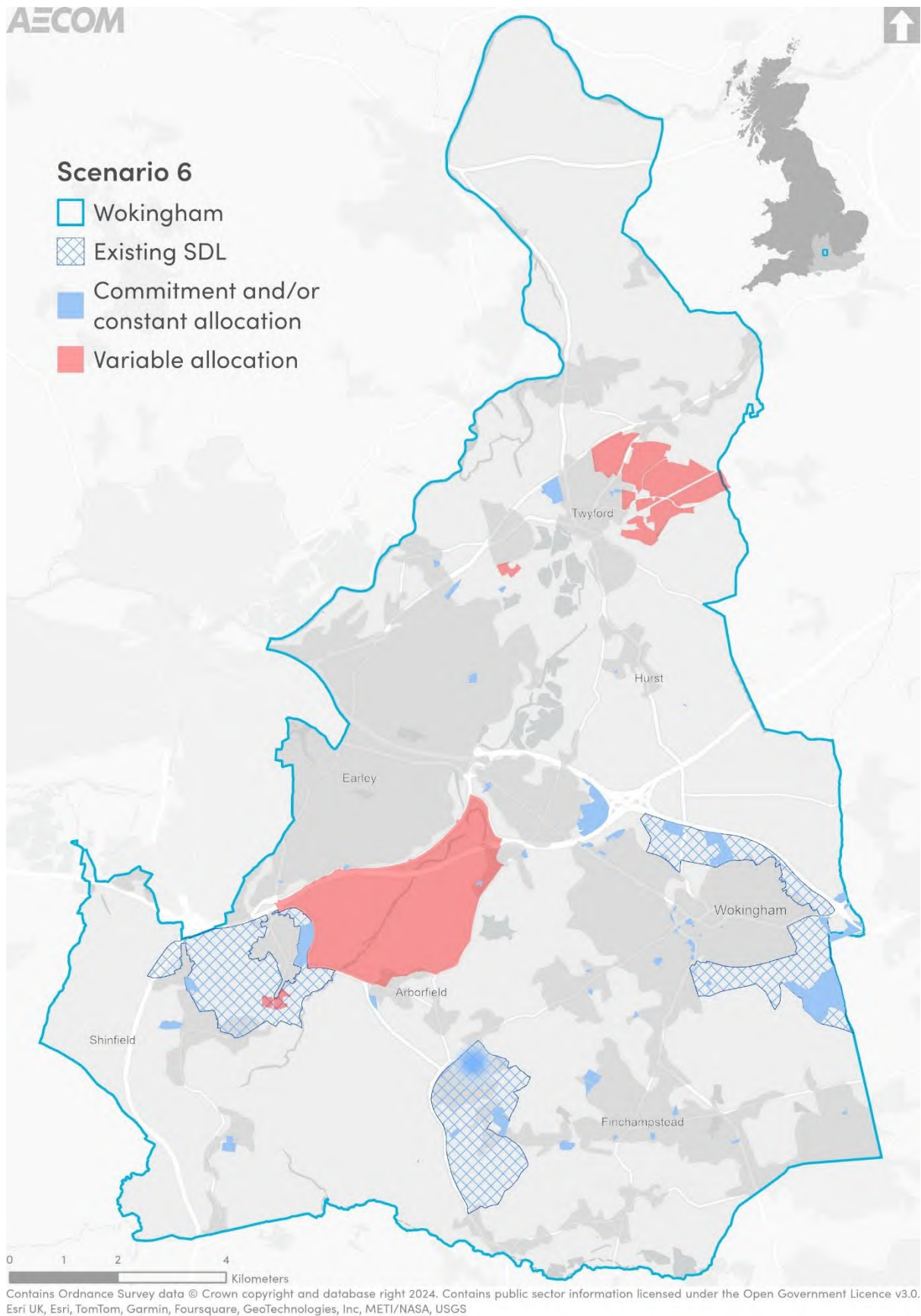
Reasonable growth scenario 4: Loddon Valley SDL, Barkham Sq, Blagrove Ln, Riverways Fm, small sites



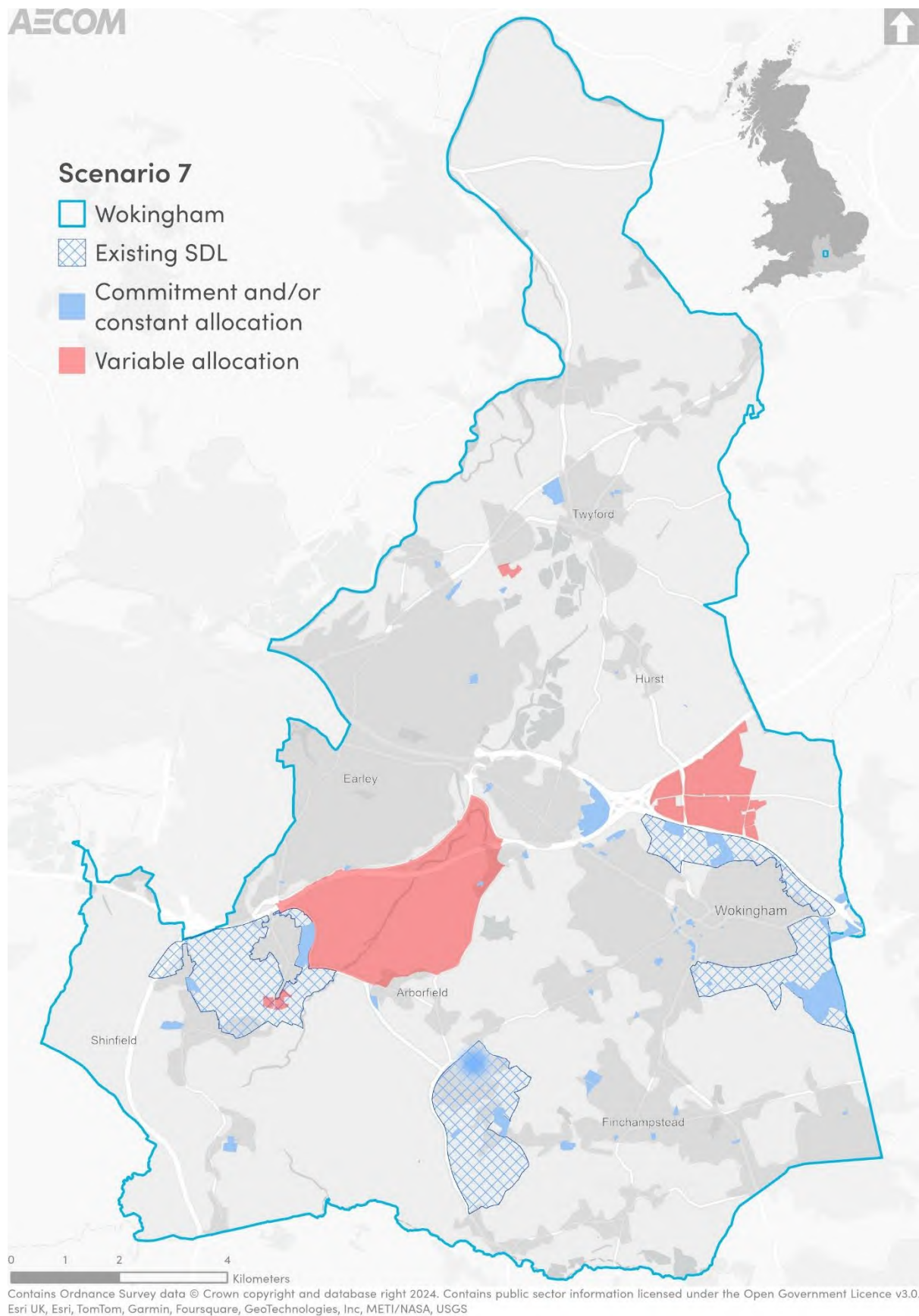
Reasonable growth scenario 5: Ashridge SDL, Barkham Sq, Blagrove Lane, Riverways Farm, small sites



Reasonable growth scenario 6: Loddon Valley SDL, East of Twyford/Ruscombe SDL, small sites



Reasonable growth scenario 7: Loddon Valley SDL, Ashridge SDL, small sites



6 Growth scenarios appraisal

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 This section presents an appraisal of the 7 growth scenarios defined above.

Appraisal methodology

6.1.2 The appraisal is presented under 13 headings – one for each of the topics that together comprise the SA framework – before a final section presents conclusions. Under each heading, the aim is to: **1)** rank the scenarios in order of performance (with a star indicating best performing); and then **2)** categorise the performance in terms of ‘significant effects’ using red / amber / light green / green.²¹ Finally, it is important to be clear that there is a need to make significant assumptions, e.g. around scheme masterplanning, infrastructure delivery etc. The appraisal aims to strike a balance between exploring and explaining assumptions on the one hand whilst, on the other hand, ensuring conciseness and accessibility.

Summarising the growth scenarios

6.1.3 The growth scenarios are summarised in the appraisal tables according to:

- New SDL(s) – either one or two of: Loddon Valley (LV), Ashridge, East Twyford/Ruscombe (T/R)
- Smaller strategic site(s) – either one, two or “all three” of: Barkham Sq, Blagrove Ln, Riverways Fm
- Small sites – either both variable small sites are allocated, or neither is allocated (Scenario 3)

6.1.4 Finally, note that **Appendix IV** presents detailed further information on the SDL options, whilst **Appendix V** presents brief supplementary information regarding the other variable sites (including concept plans).

6.2 Accessibility (to community infrastructure)

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6	Scenario 7
LV Barkham Small sites	LV B'grove, R'ways Small sites	LV All three	LV All three Small sites	Ashridge All three Small sites	LV, East T/R - Small sites	LV, Ashridge - Small sites
★ 1	★ 1	★ 1	★ 1	2	★ 1	★ 1

6.2.1 The order of preference reflects a view that:

- SDLs – Loddon Valley is preferable, as discussed in Appendix IV, as there is a locational opportunity to deliver a secondary school and a major new country park. However, the other two options would deliver community infrastructure alongside homes and are reasonably linked to a higher order settlement.
- Smaller strategic sites – Barkham Square is comfortably the largest site but would deliver limited additional benefits in terms of community infrastructure, plus it is associated with a modest development settlement, as opposed to a major development settlement, and the Arborfield Green District centre would be beyond easy walking distance. However, on the other hand, it would link very effectively to the district centre via high quality walking/cycling routes, a primarily school/neighbourhood centre is very close-by and there should be good bus connectivity to Wokingham and Reading via the A327.

In this light, it is difficult to differentiate between the three smaller strategic sites. Blagrove Lane would deliver a well-located SANG and is in relative proximity to Wokingham town centre, whilst Riverways Farm would deliver a potential rugby club site, is close to a secondary school and is ~1.6km from the centre of Twyford. At Riverways Farm an issue is having to cross the A4, but the significance of this issue is unclear. It is noted that there is an adjacent committed site for 200 homes (Bridge Farm), that is located on the opposite (Twyford) side of the A4, and so the ideal situation might involve planning for these two sites in collaboration in order to improve walking and cycling infrastructure.

²¹ Red indicates a significant negative effect; amber a negative effect of limited or uncertain significance; light green a positive effect of limited or uncertain significance; and green a significant positive effect. No colour indicates a neutral effect.

- Small sites – neither site would deliver significant new community infrastructure, but both are considered suitably well located, including as the Charvil site is very close to the village primary school.

6.2.2 In conclusion, the key differentiating factor is the importance of capitalising on the opportunity that presents itself at Loddon Valley to deliver new homes alongside strategic community infrastructure, and on balance it is not possible to confidently differentiate the scenarios to reflect the merits of the variable smaller strategic sites or package of small sites. Another factor is that under Scenarios 5 – 7 the reality is that there would be a need for a major delay to plan-making and, in turn, a risk of ‘planning by appeal’ with suboptimal infrastructure outcomes. However, on balance this does not factor into the order of preference.

6.2.3 With regards to significant effects, the best performing scenarios are considered to perform very well in absolute terms, in that new homes would be delivered in such a way that there is a strong focus on delivering new/upgraded community infrastructure alongside. To be clear, this conclusion is reached accounting for proposed allocations held constant across the scenarios (appraised in Section 9).

6.3 Air and wider environmental quality

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6	Scenario 7
LV Barkham Small sites	LV B'grove, R'ways Small sites	LV All three	LV All three Small sites	Ashridge All three Small sites	LV, East T/R - Small sites	LV, Ashridge - Small sites
2	4	3	4	5	1	3


6.3.1 The order of preference reflects a view that:

- SDLs – East of Twyford/Ruscombe has been flagged as the preferable SDL option from an air quality perspective over a number of years, because development would deliver a new relief road to ease traffic congestion and associated air pollution at Twyford crossroads, where there is a designated AQMA. This remains a key benefit of the scheme; however, the process of revoking the AQMA has now begun, plus there is the national context of air pollution reducing as an issue over time. With regards to Loddon Valley and Ashridge, it is difficult to separate these two SDL options in transport and air quality terms, as discussed in Appendix IV, but on balance there is a preference for Loddon Valley. Both sites are constrained by adjacent motorways, but at Ashridge motorways are located on two of its three sides.
- Smaller strategic sites – Riverways Farm would lead to increased traffic through the Twyford AQMA, as would one of the two variable small sites (West of Park Lane, Charvil). It is recognised that the promoters of both sites have undertaken air quality work for current planning applications and that these do not raise concerns (when looking at the sites in isolation; for example, the conclusion for Riverways Farm is that “impacts... on NO2, PM10 and PM2.5 concentrations at all... receptor locations are considered to be ‘negligible’”); however, it is appropriate to take a precautionary approach here. Also, Riverways Farm is constrained by an adjacent main road, an adjacent railway and an adjacent sewage treatment works.
- In combination effects – it is difficult to suggest that the highest growth scenarios would risk problematic levels of traffic congestion with implications for air quality; however, these scenarios would represent a major change of tack resulting in a need for much further work, recognising the amount of work that has been undertaken on matters relating to transport over recent years. A benefit of the highest growth scenarios would be flexibility to provide for any unmet housing need from Reading, where there is a very extensive AQMA covering the town centre; however, it cannot be assumed that Wokingham would be an appropriate location to provide for any unmet need from Reading in transport terms; also, and in any case, the current situation is that Reading its own housing needs (as discussed in Section 5.2).

6.3.2 In conclusion, the key differentiating factor is pressure on Twyford AQMA, notwithstanding it is in the process of being revoked, and another factor is the constraint at Ashridge posed by adjacent motorways.

6.3.3 With regards to significant effects, it is considered appropriate to flag a ‘moderate or uncertain’ negative effect under the worst performing scenario, albeit this is uncertain. With regards to the ‘moderate or uncertain’ positive effect predicted for the best performing scenario involving East of T/R, this conclusion aligns with that reached through past appraisals, but there is again some uncertainty, including given the timing of when the road would be delivered, and recognising that air quality is improving over time.

6.4 Biodiversity

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6	Scenario 7
LV Barkham Small sites	LV B'grove, R'ways Small sites	LV All three	LV All three Small sites	Ashridge All three Small sites	LV, East T/R - Small sites	LV, Ashridge - Small sites
2	4	3	4	6	1 	5

6.4.1 The order of preference reflects a view that:

- **SDLs** – there are important distinctions to be drawn between the three options, as discussed in Appendix IV. What appears clear is that Ashridge is subject to the highest constraint on account of being closely associated with a heavily wooded landscape. It is then more difficult to reach a conclusion on Loddon Valley, as whilst the river valley is clearly sensitive in biodiversity terms, there is good potential to avoid impacts through masterplanning and there is a major opportunity to deliver well-targeted strategic enhancements, with positive implications for biodiversity at a broad landscape scale. Finally, East of Twyford / Ruscombe is associated with low constraint and a degree of opportunity (but it is not clear that this is fully factoring into the masterplanning work led by the promoters to date).


- **Smaller strategic sites** – Blagrove Lane is constrained by locally designated (LWS) woodland at the northern extent of the site. Whilst housing growth would be directed away from the woodland, a new road would have a direct impact. Barkham Square is also subject to a degree of constraint, in the form of a stream corridor associated with bankside woodland (including a small area of ancient woodland and Longmoor Bog SSSI is located c.500m upstream), whilst Riverways is relatively unconstrained.

N.B. another key consideration is that Barkham Sq and Blagrove Ln must deliver bespoke Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) in order to mitigate recreational pressure on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA; however, at both sites there appears to be good potential to deliver high quality SANG.

- **Small sites** – Hyde End Road (Shinfield) is closely associated with a small cluster of ancient woodlands; however, this constraint is feeding-in as a key factor as part of ongoing work on site capacity, layout etc. Also, Langley Mead SANG is adjacent and the landowner (UoR) is proposing a major new [extension](#). With regards to Land West of Park Lane, Charvil, the site falls within a Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) and would extend an existing permitted site as far as a small ancient woodland, which is designated as a LWS. However, it is not clear that there are significant concerns assuming a sensitive scheme that buffers the woodland, and it is noted that a proposed allocation to the north from the RGS stage is now removed from the plan, reducing pressure on the Loddon Corridor / BOA.
- **In combination effects** – it is difficult to suggest any significant biodiversity concerns associated with the SDLs or smaller strategic sites delivering in combination, or generally with a high growth strategy borough-wide. A key consideration is SANG capacity, recognising that both Loddon Valley and Ashridge are within the TBHSPA recreational catchment zone, and given the importance of avoiding impacts ahead of relying upon mitigation as far as possible. However, Ashridge is mainly located within the 5-7km outer catchment (with northwest extent outside 7km) and both sites are capable of delivering high quality onsite SANG. There is also a good resource of strategic SANG in the Borough, as the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), with significant new capacity proposed at Rooks Nest Farm SANG.

6.4.2 With regards to significant effects, a key point to note is that whilst the equivalent appraisal in 2021 concluded a 'moderate or uncertain' negative effect for all scenarios involving Loddon Valley, there is now greater confidence in the biodiversity merits of the site / proposed scheme. Finally, it is important to be clear that conclusions are reached accounting for: A) the baseline situation including growth from existing committed sites; B) the proposed allocations that are held constant across the growth scenarios, of which a number are subject to constraint; and C) the statutory requirement to achieve a 10% biodiversity net gain as part of every planning application alongside a degree of uncertainty around the efficacy of this requirement in all cases (such that maximising biodiversity net gain opportunities must be a focus of local plan spatial strategy / site selection).

6.5 Climate change adaptation

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6	Scenario 7
LV Barkham Small sites	LV B'grove, R'ways Small sites	LV All three	LV All three Small sites	Ashridge All three Small sites	LV, East T/R - Small sites	LV, Ashridge - Small sites
3	3	3	3	1 	2	2

6.5.1 By way of introduction:

The key consideration here is the need to avoid development, and new homes in particular, encroaching on fluvial flood risk zones, noting the possibility of expanded flood risk zones and more frequent flooding under climate change scenarios. A secondary consideration is surface water flood risk, noting that it is often possible to deal effectively with surface water flood risk through masterplanning and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). Another consideration is development impacting on water flows and, in turn, downhill or downstream flood risk; however, it is difficult to pinpoint issues ahead of detailed work, and it is typically the case that SuDS can ensure no net worsening of run-off rates, and often a betterment.

There are also wider climate change adaptation (and resilience) considerations that are of relevance to local plan-making beyond flood risk, including overheating risk, plus climate change adaptation is a reason for planning with a strong focus on biodiversity, community resilience and protecting high quality agricultural land. However, it is difficult to comment on the merits of the growth scenarios over-and-above points made more appropriately under other topic headings. One point to note is support for larger-scale strategic sites, where there will typically be a focus on resilience/adaptation as part of masterplanning and design work at the planning application stage. As part of this, strategic sites will certainly tend to support effective planning for green and blue infrastructure, which is an important climate change resilience / adaptation consideration, including given links to biodiversity, flood risk and overheating risk.

6.5.2 Having made these introductory points, the order of preference reflects a view that:

- SDLs – Loddon Valley is constrained given very close association with the River Loddon floodplain, as well as that of the Barkham Brook. However, flood risk has been a key factor influencing masterplanning with a clear focus on avoiding flood zones, including accounting for climate change scenarios. Also, there is also a clear focus on integrating high quality Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) as part of a green and blue infrastructure strategy, which is a key consideration given extensive areas at flood risk downstream of the site, and there may be potential to deliver strategic flood water attenuation leading to a downstream flood risk betterment (see Appendix IV). With regards to the other two SDL options, there are significant surface water flood constraints, and it is not clear that these have fully fed-into masterplanning work undertaken to date, but both sites are unconstrained in terms of fluvial flood risk.
- Smaller strategic site options – a narrow fluvial flood risk channel cuts through Barkham Square, but there is a clear commitment to integrating this as part of a green / blue infrastructure. Having said this, there could be merit to ongoing consideration of masterplanning options aimed at enhancing the stream corridor from a flood risk and biodiversity perspective, recognising its strategic position within the Borough, e.g. linking Longmoor Bog SSSI to the south with the Loddon and Bear Wood in the north. The other two smaller strategic site options are notably unconstrained in fluvial and surface water terms.
- Small sites – Hyde End Road is associated with a surface water flood channel, and this is a constraint to site access, but there is understood to be good potential to address this issue via careful consideration of site capacity, layout and SuDS. The Charvil site is unconstrained, and it can be noted that flood risk is a constraint to growth to the north of the village, whilst the landscape gap to Sonning is a constraint to the west, such that there is a case for completing the expansion of the village to the south.
- In combination effects – Loddon Valley and Barkham Sq share a river (brook) corridor, but it is difficult to suggest any significant concerns in terms of surface water runoff leading to downstream flood risk.

6.5.3 With regards to significant effects, it is considered appropriate to predict neutral effects, given consultation on detailed site-specific proposals in 2021 and subsequent Level 2 SFRA. However, as discussed, the Environment Agency will wish to comment further on changes to sites and the latest available evidence.

6.6 Climate change mitigation

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6	Scenario 7
LV Barkham Small sites	LV B'grove, R'ways Small sites	LV All three	LV All three Small sites	Ashridge All three Small sites	LV, East T/R - Small sites	LV, Ashridge - Small sites
3	3	3	3	2	2	★ 1

6.6.1 By way of introduction:

The primary consideration here is per capita built environment emissions, given the potential to cover matters relating to transport emissions under other topic headings.

The ambition must be to deliver net zero carbon developments – see Box 6.1.

Strategic growth locations can give rise to an opportunity over-and-above smaller developments, given economies of scale and also the possibility of delivering a mix of uses onsite, which can feasibly support one or more heat networks. Strategic growth locations can also give rise to an opportunity to deliver ‘smart energy systems’ that link heat networks / heat pumps, solar PV, power consumers and battery storage. Also, it is simply the case that large sites will generate a high degree of attention and scrutiny, and housebuilders will often be keen to demonstrate good practice or even exemplar development.

However, the relationship between scale and decarbonisation opportunity is not clear-cut, e.g. because strategic sites often have to deliver costly infrastructure upgrades. Also, heat networks are technically challenging to deliver, and practice is not well advanced nationally, with a clear opportunity currently only seen to exist where there is very high density development and/or a good mix of uses (to allow heat to be shared across the course of the day) and/or a source of waste or ambient heat that can be drawn upon.

A further consideration, in respect of built environment decarbonisation, is a case for directing growth to locations that benefit from strong viability, with a view to ensuring funding for decarbonisation measures and potentially delivering net zero development (recognising competing funding priorities).

Box 6.1: Defining net zero development

‘Net zero development’ is carefully defined, and there are perhaps three key points to make.

Firstly, any approach to net zero development must align with the energy hierarchy, which means a primary focus on efficiency (‘fabric first’) followed by onsite renewable heat/power generation, with offsetting of residual needs that cannot be met onsite (over the course of a year) only as a last resort. Achieving Passivhaus standard is an accepted approach to ensuring a suitably ‘fabric first’ approach to development, and the Buildings Research Establishment (BRE) also have established methods.

Secondly, there are two broad approaches to calculating net zero and evaluating proposals, namely A) the methodology applied under the Building Regulations; and B) an energy-based approach. The two approaches are compared and contrasted in a recent report [here](#) and another even more recent report [here](#).²²

Thirdly, it is important to be clear that the focus of discussion above is in respect of ‘operational’ energy/carbon, i.e. the energy used / carbon emitted as a result of the development’s occupation / use. Additionally, there is a crucial need to consider the ‘whole life cycle’ of a development, to include to the emissions associated with construction, maintenance, retrofitting and demolition (often referred to simply ‘embodied’ carbon or emissions).

²² Under the Building Regulations methodology the question for any given planning application is the extent to which the development can improve on a Target Emissions Rate (TER), measured in percentage terms up to a possible 100% improvement. The energy based methodology involves scrutiny in absolute terms, measured in terms of kWh / m2/yr. It has wide-spread support amongst specialists, including because it is very easily understood by non-specialists and because actual ‘as built’ performance can be monitored simply using a smart meter. A high proportion of recent and emerging local plans nationally present an energy based policy. However, on 13th December 2023 a Written Ministerial Statement was released which appears to prohibit its use.

6.6.2 Having made these introductory points, the order of preference reflects a view that:

- SDLs – in theory all are of a sufficient scale to generate a good degree of confidence regarding the potential to achieve net zero development to an exacting standard. However, there is considerable variability in terms of the amount of work undertaken by the site promoters, and generally the level of commitment shown to decarbonisation. In particular, the Ashridge site promoters have shown a high level of ambition, which is strongly supported. However, there is uncertainty regarding the deliverability of what is proposed given cost and, in turn, development viability implications in the context of: innovative but unproven approaches; limited engagement with housebuilders to date; and wider cost uncertainties most notably in terms of transport infrastructure. Also, there is a concern that proposals do not align suitably well with the energy hierarchy, in that there is not a primary focus on efficiency ('fabric first').

With regards Loddon Valley and East of Twyford and Ruscombe, it is Loddon Valley that is preferable from a built environment net zero carbon perspective. Firstly it is a much larger site, leading to economies of scale and positive implications for development viability (but there are major transport infrastructure costs involved, and East of Twyford/Ruscombe likely benefits from strong development viability assuming no new train station, plus it benefits from being in the control of a housebuilder). Secondly, there is a good level of commitment from the three landowners, which includes the University of Reading (an organisation with net zero commitments), whilst this has not been the case to date with regards to the landowner at East of Twyford/Ruscombe (although it is recognised that Berkeley Homes, as an organisation, does show a good level of commitment to being at the forefront of evolving practice).

- Smaller strategic sites – a review of the vision documents etc for all three sites shows no clear ambition in respect of delivering net zero carbon development. Barkham Square is comfortably the largest site, with positive implications for development viability, and this also appears to be a straightforward site to bring forward (i.e. without any apparent abnormal costs), but development viability is not quite as strong in this part of the Borough as elsewhere (including noting the extent of recent, ongoing and committed housing delivery). There have been numerous options considered for development quantum / extent over the years (including the question of whether development should extend east of Barkham Brook), and the current proposed capacity is towards the lower end of options considered, with implications for development viability and, in turn, potential to achieve net zero development to an exacting standard. At Blagrove Lane there is a need to note that the site will need to deliver a costly new access road, whilst Riverways Farm is a notably smaller site (and, whilst Twyford benefits from good development viability, this site would be notably separated from Twyford by the A4).
- Small sites – although not having the benefit of economies of scale, small sites associated with limited need to deliver new infrastructure, and otherwise an absence of abnormal development costs, can still be associated with good potential to deliver net zero carbon development to an exacting standard. Hyde End Road is the larger site (more accurately described as medium-sized), but development viability is likely stronger at Charvil (but the current planning application does not propose net zero development). Another consideration at Hyde End Road is that the landowner is University of Reading, as discussed.

6.6.3 With regards to significant effects, whilst all scenarios would undoubtedly see an improvement on the baseline (a situation whereby growth continues to come forward but in a less well-planned way, and without development management policy in place such that the Building Regs apply by default), there is a need to reach conclusions mindful of established objectives and targets, including the local 2030 net zero target, which amounts to a high bar to reach before predicting positive effects of any significance.

6.6.4 It is recognised that the Borough is committed to stringent DM policy aimed at built environment decarbonisation. However, it is not possible to be certain that net zero development will prove to be viable in all cases, hence there is a need to take steps through spatial strategy and site selection.

6.6.5 In this light, it is considered appropriate to flag a 'moderate or uncertain' negative effect for those scenarios involving support for just one of the SDL options, in that this could fail to represent a suitably proactive approach to meeting decarbonisation targets. It is recognised that SDLs are associated with major infrastructure costs, but all other things being equal it should nonetheless be the case that a focus of growth at SDLs represents a proactive approach to built environment decarbonisation. There is also a case for predicting a 'moderate or uncertain' negative effect for the three better performing scenarios; however, on balance a neutral effect is predicted having accounted for: A) the detailed work that has been taken by the Ashridge site promoters in respect of built environment decarbonisation; and B) the potential for a Wokingham Local Plan that supports high growth including two major new SDLs to generate significant attention nationally and potentially funding in support of achieving net zero objectives.

6.7 Communities

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6	Scenario 7
LV Barkham Small sites	LV B'grove, R'ways Small sites	LV All three	LV All three Small sites	Ashridge All three Small sites	LV, East T/R - Small sites	LV, Ashridge - Small sites
2	3	2	2	3	★1	★1

6.7.1 By way of introduction:

The aim under this heading is to discuss factors other than in respect of 'Accessibility'. There are a wide range of considerations that are a focus of discussion in Section 9, whilst the discussion here is focused.

6.7.2 Having made these introductory points, the order of preference reflects a view that:

- **SDLs** – all three sites are associated with a good place-making opportunity (with potential to align with garden community principles) and all site promoters having taken the opportunity to refine their proposals over time in response to issues raised. There are potentially concerns with Ashridge over-and-above the other two competing sites, particularly given the severance effect of the A329(M), but this is uncertain. East of T/R would be delivered solely by Berkeley Homes, who have a good reputation for place-making, and new strategic greenspace would benefit Twyford (albeit there is already a good strategic greenspace offer). Finally, Loddon Valley has the potential to deliver a major new river valley country park that will benefit both the new community and existing nearby communities (although, on the other hand, the Shinfield community will experience the negative effects of growth from a new SDL, just as the South of the M4 SDL completes). There is little reason to suggest a country park could be delivered in the absence of a new SDL, recognising the context of UoR delivering nearby Langley Mead SANG alongside an SDL (and a major extension is underway, which will link to the Loddon Valley site).

Providing for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs is the other key matter for consideration here. There is confidence in the ability to deliver 20 pitches at Loddon Valley, but there is uncertainty in respect of what if anything could be delivered at the other two SDL options. Also, it seems likely that at East of Twyford/Ruscombe would envelop an existing large (council managed) Gypsy and Traveller site.

- **Smaller strategic sites** – without wishing to repeat discussion above, there is a case for suggesting that Barkham Square and Blagrove Lane represent a place-making opportunity over-and-above Riverways Farm. Both of the two better performing sites would deliver new strategic open space to the benefit of the existing community as well as the new community; however, neither is ideally located in terms of integrating well with an existing community. Specifically, Blagrove Lane would be somewhat 'out on a limb' noting a large industrial area to the north, and the simple fact is that Barkham Square represents a departure from the long-established vision for bringing forward the Arborfield Green SDL, and the benefits it will deliver to the SDL appear to be fairly limited. With regards to Gypsy and Traveller needs, there is the potential to deliver five pitches at Barkham Square (or it will enable pitches to be delivered elsewhere in the SDL), whilst there is not likely to be any potential at the other two sites.
- **Small sites** – both give rise to limited issues/opportunities. Hyde End Land benefits from adjacent to [Langley Mead SANG](#), and the Charvil site has good access to [Charvil Country Park](#) (although this likely subject to regular flooding in the winter months, whilst SANGs must be accessible year-round).
- **In combination effects** – delivering two SDLs could well enable additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches to be delivered, which could feasibly mean that the Borough is able to provide for above the identified need figure, such that there is some flexibility to provide for unmet. This could represent a proactive approach, recognising that it is very common for needs to go unmet (see a recent RTPi blog [here](#)). However, benefits are uncertain, as Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs can be very localised.

6.7.3 With regards to significant effects, all of the scenarios are considered to perform well from a place-making perspective and appropriately reflect issues raised by existing communities, recognising that the plan has been iterated over time in response to community concerns (e.g. Barkham Square is a new site since the RGS stage, which is thought likely to generate little in the way of community concern). However, under Scenarios 2 and 5 there could potentially be insufficient supply of Gypsy and Traveller pitches.

6.8 Economy and employment

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6	Scenario 7
LV Barkham Small sites	LV B'grove, R'ways Small sites	LV All three	LV All three Small sites	Ashridge All three Small sites	LV, East T/R - Small sites	LV, Ashridge - Small sites
1	1	1	1	2	1	1

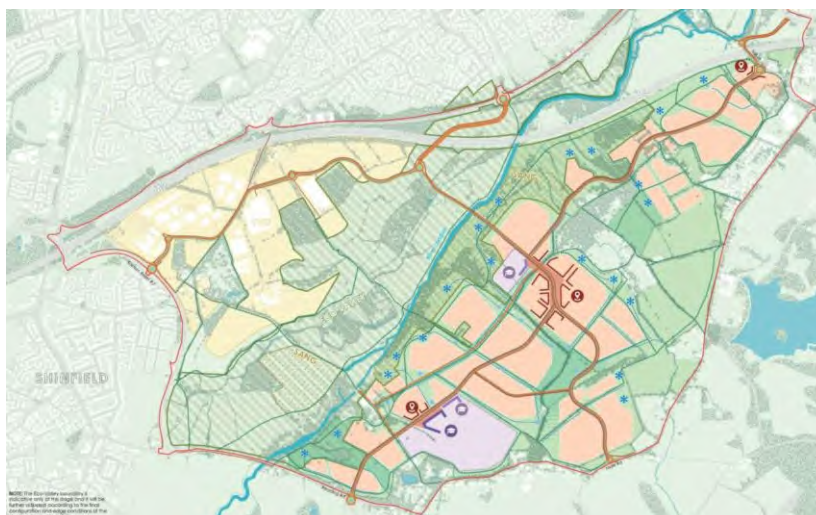
6.8.1 The order of preference reflects a view that:

- SDLs – whilst the equivalent appraisal in 2021 flagged a strong preference for Loddon Valley, on the basis of being able to support realisation of the vision for Thames Valley Science Park (TVSP), the interdependencies are now less clear. TVSP would benefit from a new M4 road bridge as well as from having homes and a country park on its doorstep, but the significance of these benefits is uncertain. Whilst the bridge would enable flexibility in respect of the types of employment land that can come forward, it seems likely that TVSP would develop to its full extent regardless. With regards to Ashridge and East of T/R, both have the potential to deliver or support only very modest employment land.
- Smaller strategic sites – none of the sites would deliver new employment land, but all do have the benefit of being well-located in terms of accessing existing major employment areas.
- In combination effects – there is a case for high growth given that the Borough is in the heart of the Thames Valley, which is recognised the UK’s most productive sub-region. However, on the other hand, the ELNS (2023) finds that local employment opportunities may struggle to keep pace with population growth and land availability is a constraint on employment growth locally, as discussed in Section 5. There is a need to ensure a balance between housing and employment growth, including with a view to avoiding problematic commuting patterns, with implications for traffic and, in turn, economic activity.

6.8.2 In conclusion, with regards to the order of preference, there is support for Loddon Valley, such that Scenario 5 is flagged as performing less well, but this is potentially somewhat marginal. It is recognised that Ashridge is quite well located in terms of accessing key employment area (Reading, Wokingham and Bracknell) although on the other hand there are outstanding question-marks regarding transport connectivity. Also, on balance the appraisal does not differentiate according to total growth quantum.


6.8.3 With regards to significant effects, it is considered appropriate to depart significantly from the equivalent appraisal conclusion from the ISA Report (2021). Specifically, the conclusion now is ‘moderate or uncertain positive effects’ under all scenarios, because the minimum employment need figure set out in the ELNS (2023) would be provided for (and exceeded). However, it is not possible to predict significant positive effects given that the supply would fall well short of the upper-end ELNS target figure.

Figure 6.1: Loddon Valley concept plan highlighting new road links to TVSP²³



²³ This concept plan was prepared by the site promoters in 2024 but is not the latest agreed concept plan (see Figure 8.2).

6.9 Historic environment

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6	Scenario 7
LV Barkham Small sites	LV B'grove, R'ways Small sites	LV All three	LV All three Small sites	Ashridge All three Small sites	LV, East T/R - Small sites	LV, Ashridge - Small sites
3	2	3	3	3	4	 1

6.9.1 The order of preference reflects a view that:

- **SDLs** – equivalent appraisal work in 2020 and 2021 flagged a significant concern with East of Twyford / Ruscombe on account of impacts to the Ruscombe Conservation Area. However, site promoters responded with a new concept masterplan that sees a significant greenspace buffer to the conservation area (albeit the effect is to separate the proposed new community from Twyford, somewhat). The other two options are associated with certain constraints (discussed in Appendix IV), as is inevitable when dealing with SDL / strategic site options on this scale, but overall it is considered that focusing growth at either site would represent a good way of minimising the historic environment impacts of the LPU. In summary, whilst East of Twyford/Ruscombe is the most constrained site, concerns are now somewhat (or largely) allayed, whilst it is not possible to place the other two SDL options in an order of preference.
- **Smaller strategic sites** – Riverways Farm is quite notably unconstrained in historic environment terms, whilst the other two sites give rise to concerns regarding encroachment on clusters of listed buildings that are associated with an important position within the landscape. At Barkham Square, there would be encroachment towards two small clusters of Grade II listed buildings associated with historic Barkham, and this is the sensitive landscape gap between an expanding Wokingham to the north and an expanding Arborfield Green area to the south, associated with the Barkham Brook valley. At Blagrove Lane, there is a cluster of Grade II listed buildings at the northern edge (Blagrove Farm) that arguably currently serves to logically define the southern edge of Wokingham, plus a small cluster at the southern extent that arguably contributes to the aforementioned sensitive gap to Arborfield Green, including noting that Doles Lane (a bridleway). However, [historic mapping](#) shows that this area was associated with little settlement, and the potential to support both southern expansion of Wokingham and northern expansion of Arborfield Green whilst avoiding impacts on the sensitive Barkham Brook valley can be envisaged.
- **Small sites** – West of Park Lane (Charvil) is notably unconstrained, with historic mapping showing that this was historically a very rural area, and whilst archaeology is a key sensitivity in this area (with easily worked alluvial soils having supported the early settlement), this has been explored through the current planning application, and is understood to not be a constraint to bringing the site forward (given the potential for archaeological investigations and conservation). With regards to Hyde End Road (Shinfield), there are no listed buildings in the vicinity, but [historic mapping](#) shows the site to be strongly associated with a notable cluster of farms and ancient woodlands. However, there is now limited sense of historic character from the B3349, and there are few public rights of way through this area.
- **In combination effects** – issues with Barkham Square in combination with Blagrove Lane have already been discussed, but there is also a need to note that Loddon Valley would also impact on the Barkham Brook corridor, also mindful of Bearwood College, which is a large Grade II* listed Registered Park and Garden. However, this is more a landscape consideration than a historic environment consideration.

6.9.2 In conclusion, it is very difficult to place the scenarios in an order of preference, but on balance there is support for high growth via Loddon Valley and Ashridge, and it is fair to flag support for Riverways Farm.

6.9.3 With regards to significant effects, it remains appropriate to flag a ‘moderate or negative’ effect for Scenario 6 involving East of Twyford/Ruscombe, but this is potentially fairly marginal (the views of Historic England would be welcomed). Under the other scenarios a neutral effect can be predicted (as per the conclusion reached across most scenarios appraised in 2021), including recognising that the baseline situation is one whereby development continues to happen but in a less well planned way without a Local Plan Update.

6.10 Homes

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6	Scenario 7
LV Barkham Small sites	LV B'grove, R'ways Small sites	LV All three	LV All three Small sites	Ashridge All three Small sites	LV, East T/R - Small sites	LV, Ashridge - Small sites
5	5	4	2	3	2	1

6.10.1 The order of preference reflects a view that:

- **SDLs** – there is little potential to differentiate between the three sites, recognising that it would not be appropriate to differentiate purely on the basis of size, given the potential to allocate the smallest site (East of Twyford/Ruscombe) in combination with smaller sites elsewhere (and given that there is broad support for a good mix of sites, in terms of size/type and location, from a housing perspective). Ashridge is associated with delivery risk (and East of Twyford/Ruscombe is associated with low delivery risk), and on balance it is appropriate to differentiate between the sites accounting for this; however, it is recognised that delivery risk can be mitigated as part of an overall strategy that involves a good mix of sites and a total supply that exceeds what is required ('the housing requirement'), i.e. a 'supply buffer'.
- **Small strategic sites** – all should be suited to delivering a good mix of housing, to include the full quota of affordable housing. As larger sites the current proposal at both Barkham Square and Blagrove Lane is to additionally deliver specialist older persons accommodation, and Barkham Square would deliver or facilitate both Gypsy and Traveller pitches (discussed above) and custom/self-build housing. However, an argument in favour of Riverways Farm is potential locally arising housing needs in the Twyford area. Finally, all three are able to deliver early in the plan period, noting current applications for Blagrove Lane and Riverways Farm, and given that Barkham Square appears an uncomplicated site to bring forward.
- **Small sites** – neither gives rise to any concerns around housing mix or affordable housing.
- **In combination effects** – this is the key consideration here. There is clear support for Scenario 7 as a high growth scenario that would generate flexibility to set the housing requirement at a figure modestly above standard method LHN (as currently understood) after having factored in the need for a healthy supply buffer. In turn, there would be flexibility to provide more fully for affordable housing needs (and/or feasibly provide flexibility to support Reading). However, under Scenario 7 there would be heavy reliance on two major new SDLs, both of which are associated with delivery risks (in particular Ashridge). In turn, there could be a need for a stepped housing requirement (or otherwise there would be a risk of failing to deliver on the housing requirement in practice, leading to the presumption in favour of sustainable development, albeit this is not a major concern from a pure housing perspective, i.e. the negative effects of 'the presumption' are felt in respect of wider sustainability objectives).

In this light, from a housing perspective there is also strong support for Scenario 4, which would involve: A) a total supply comfortably in excess of LHN over the plan period as a whole; and B) a good mix of sites (in terms of location and size/type). This would enable the requirement to be confidently set at LHN across the plan period (i.e. non-stepped) plus there could be flexibility to modestly exceed LHN.

6.10.2 With regards to significant effects, even the lowest growth scenario would enable provision for standard method housing need (LHN) over the plan period as a whole (and without the need for a stepped requirement), such that it is fair to predict significant positive effects. This is in the context of no formal request from a neighbouring authority to provide for unmet need and notwithstanding the extent of affordable housing needs locally (see discussion in Section 5.3).

Wokingham Borough Council Affordable Housing Strategy 2024-2028

“Right Homes, Right Places”

Housing plays a huge role in the health, environmental, social and economic well-being of everyone who lives in the Borough. It is more than just bricks and mortar; everyone is affected by housing. Housing underpins local growth and economic stability as well as contributing to healthy, thriving communities.



An extract from the Affordable Housing Strategy (2024)

6.11 Land, soils and other resources

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6	Scenario 7
LV Barkham Small sites	LV B'grove, R'ways Small sites	LV All three	LV All three Small sites	Ashridge All three Small sites	LV, East T/R - Small sites	LV, Ashridge - Small sites
2	2	2	2	★ 1	3	2

6.11.1 The order of preference reflects a view that:

- SDLs – appraisal work over the years has consistently flagged agricultural land quality as a significant constraint to growth at East of Twyford / Ruscombe, in light of the low resolution/accuracy nationally available ('provisional') dataset, which indicates the presence of grades 1 and 2 land, i.e. land that is best and most versatile (BMV, where BMV land is that which is grade 1, 2 or 3a). It is also fair to flag agricultural land quality as likely higher at Loddon Valley relative to Ashridge, although there is uncertainty as whilst much of the Ashridge site has been surveyed in detail none of the Loddon Valley site has been surveyed. Aside from loss of productive / BMV agricultural land, another consideration is sterilisation of minerals resources, with clear potential for significant sand and gravel resources at Loddon Valley given its river valley location. However, it is difficult to suggest that this is a constraint, as there would be good potential for prior extraction of sand and gravel ahead of development.
- Smaller strategic sites – the nationally available dataset suggests that Barkham Square is the least constrained site, and indeed suggests that this is notably poorer quality (grade 4) agricultural land. However, in light of work undertaken in support of the planning application at Riverways Farm, there is a need to conclude that this site is also quite unconstrained in terms of agricultural land quality. Specifically, whilst the national dataset suggests that this land is of grade 1 quality (and the land is used for fruit growing, which is indicative of high quality soils), work in support of the planning application concludes that the land is of grade 3b quality (albeit it is noted that the findings of the study have not been uploaded to the national dataset, despite dating from 2018). Finally, with regards to Blagrove Lane, a small part of the site has been surveyed, finding there to be a mix of grades 2 and grade 3a.
- Small sites – both sites have been surveyed and the findings have been uploaded to the national dataset (namely the 'post 1988' criteria dataset, available at magic.gov.uk). This shows the site at Charvil to comprise grade 3a (BMV) quality land whilst the site at Shinfield is mostly grade 3b (non-BMV). Another consideration is that the Charvil site comprises a small, isolated field with implications for productivity.
- In combination effects – it is difficult to make an 'agricultural land' case for considering higher growth in Wokingham Borough in order to relieve the pressure for growth elsewhere. Firstly this is because the Borough likely would only consider accepting unmet need from Reading. Secondly, this is because whilst some Green Belt authorities to the east are associated with significant grade 2 (i.e. higher quality) agricultural land (RBWM and South Oxfordshire) others are associated with significant grade 4 (i.e. lower quality) agricultural land, namely those associated with the Thames Basin Heaths landscape area.

6.11.2 With regards to significant effects, it is appropriate to flag a concern with East of Twyford/Ruscombe, although on the plus side the assumption is no need to allocate Blagrove Lane (BMV), Riverways Farm (questionable BMV) or Barkham Square (likely not BMV, but nonetheless productive farmland).



An image from the Riverways Farm agricultural land study (2018)

6.12 Landscape

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6	Scenario 7
LV Barkham Small sites	LV B'grove, R'ways Small sites	LV All three	LV All three Small sites	Ashridge All three Small sites	LV, East T/R - Small sites	LV, Ashridge - Small sites
=	=	=	=	=	=	=

6.12.1 The order of preference reflects a view that:

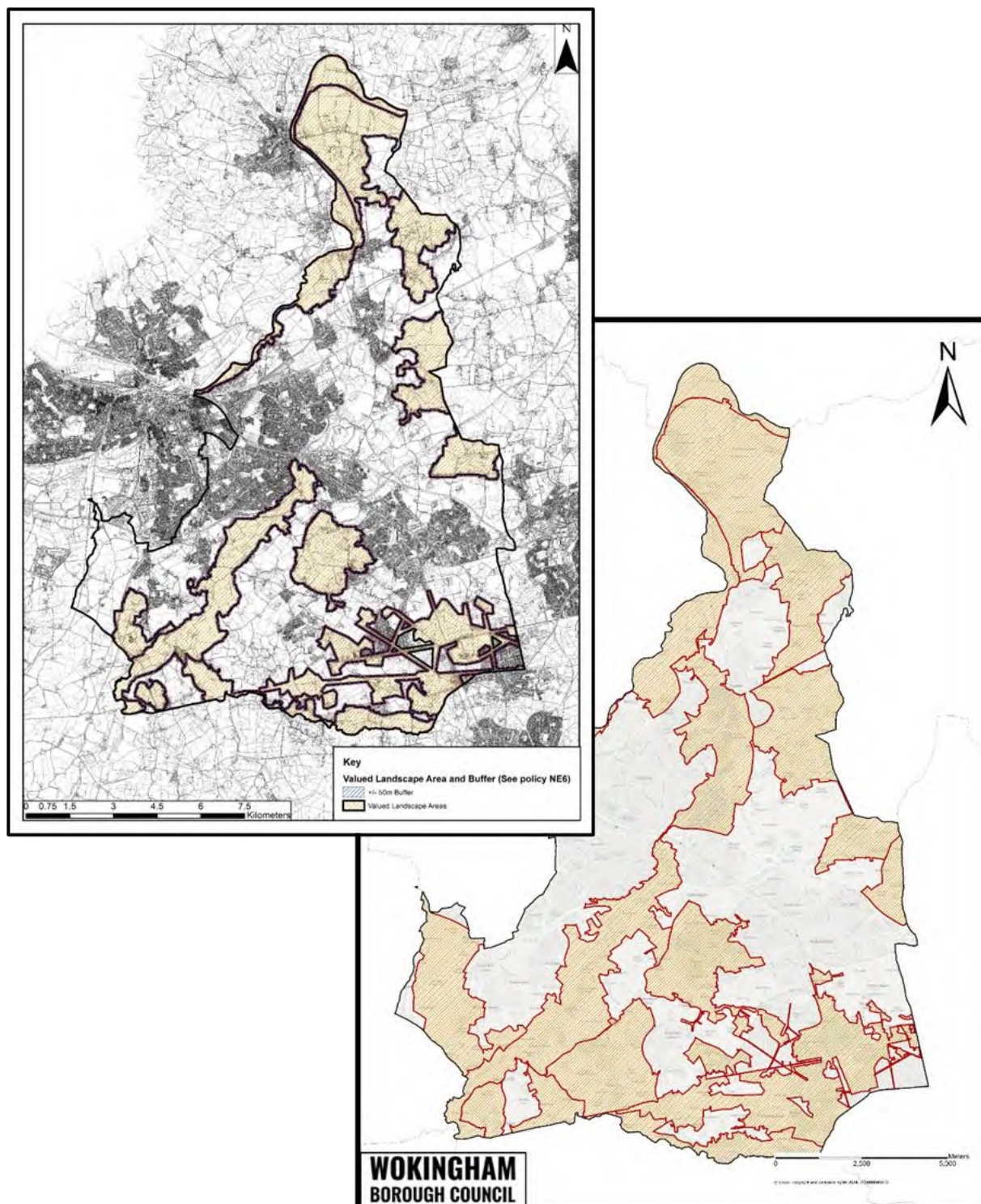
- **SDLs** – none would impact nationally designated landscapes, but all three are nonetheless considered to be subject to significant landscape constraint. For East of Twyford/Ruscombe this is readily apparent as this is quite an expansive chalk influenced landscape; also, there is a need to consider Green Belt designation, but there is confidence in the ability to deliver a fairly well-contained scheme, such that there is limited risk of future 'sprawl' to the east (with Waltham St Larence a sensitive historic village). With regards to Ashridge, woodlands provide enclosure, but this is raised land and, in turn, there are sensitive views from the Wokingham urban area (also one or two sensitive views to/over the urban area). Also, whilst the landscape is not very accessible by public right of way, it can be appreciated as a wooded landscape (with historic associations) from the roads and accessibility might be improved. Finally, with regards to Loddon Valley, the river valley does generate a degree of inherent constraint, and parts of it are accessible / likely appreciated; however, the river valley provides containment (in contrast, there is a significant concern regarding Ashridge 'sprawling' to the east over time), and the river valley landscape is changing due to the expansion of TVSP. Also, the proposal is to deliver a major new country park that would be transformative in terms of ensuring that the Loddon Valley is appreciated / valued and, indeed, would be one of the largest country parks delivered in the south of England in decades (and would link to an expanded Langley Mead SANG to the west, as discussed above).

Further context comes from work to define locally designated ('valued') landscapes – see Figure 6.2. The latest amendments serve to suggest a greater degree of constraint affecting East of T/R and Ashridge relative to the RGS Stage (2021), but there is a need to recognise that the proposed designations assume development of Loddon Valley. With regards to Loddon Valley, it can be seen that the proposal is to designate not only the Loddon River corridor but also the Barkham Brook corridor and, in this regard, there is a need to consider the matter of containing development within the valley of the former, i.e. avoiding breaking into the valley of the latter, as discussed further in Appendix IV.

- **Small strategic sites** – Riverways Farm is quite notably unconstrained in landscape terms, as this is a flat site with little or no visibility in the wider landscape, and the site would be entirely contained by flood zones to the north and the railway to the east (albeit there is an inherent concern with the built footprint of Twyford 'breaking' to the north of the A4, including as it could set a degree of precedent). Relevant issues and opportunities associated with Barkham Square and Blagrove Lane have already been discussed above, and the primary concern is in respect of both sites in combination (albeit, and as discussed, there is confidence in the ability to 'defend' the intervening Barkham Brook valley/corridor in the long term, including noting Council-owned land that is under consideration as a potential SANG). The latest proposal at Barkham Square is to concentrate growth (at a relatively high density) in the western part of the site where the land is slightly raised above the Barkham Brook corridor to the east and north, such that there is a need to ensure a comprehensive scheme with a long term perspective.
- **Small sites** – the site at Charvil appears to be notably unconstrained in landscape terms. With regards to the site at Shinfield there are some relevant sensitivities that have already been discussed, but overall the site appears to be subject to limited landscape constraint. Woodlands and Langley Mead SANG together provide strong containment to the south, but this does leave the question of maintaining a gap to Spencers Wood to the west (see the South of the M4 SDL progress map [here](#)).
- **In combination effects** – as has already been discussed, the southern part of the Borough is broadly sensitive in terms of maintaining settlement gaps and landscape character, plus there is a clear need for comprehensive long term planning for the central transport corridor (also the A4 corridor). In this context, the in combination effects of growth over time are a key consideration. However, there are limited concerns regarding in combination effects for the three SDL options currently under consideration. As discussed, the main concern is in respect of Barkham Square in combination with Blagrove Lane, also noting that Loddon Valley is in proximity to the west, with functional links in terms of landscape character.

- 6.12.2 In conclusion, it is not possible to differentiate between the growth scenarios with confidence. There is a case for supporting scenarios that would avoid Barkham Square and Blagrove Lane in combination, but this is uncertain, given good potential to ensure no future development creep towards the Barkham Brook.
- 6.12.3 With regards to significant effects, the Borough is considered sensitive in landscape terms, with a clear need for comprehensive planning with a very long term perspective (noting Green Belt authorities to the east), hence it is fair to predict 'moderate or uncertain' negative effects across all of the scenarios.

Figure 6.2: Proposed designated landscapes from the Draft Plan / RGS stages (left) and now (right)



6.13 Transport

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6	Scenario 7
LV Barkham Small sites	LV B'grove, R'ways Small sites	LV All three	LV All three Small sites	Ashridge All three Small sites	LV, East T/R - Small sites	LV, Ashridge - Small sites
★1	★1	★1	★1	2	★1	3

6.13.1 The order of preference reflects a view that:

- **SDLs** – there is a clear case for concluding East of Twyford/Ruscombe as the preferable option, given its location on a strategic transport corridor, and particularly its location in proximity to an Elizabeth Line station; however, a high proportion of journeys to a higher order settlement and employment locations would still be made by car, including given limited bus connectivity / opportunity. Loddon Valley is the next best performing of the three options, where there would be a good level of self-containment / trip internalisation and detailed work has been undertaken to overcome the inherent challenge of being located between main transport corridors, as well as the severance effect of the river corridor and the M4, in terms of accessing Reading and Winnersh station (also Bearwood College in terms of accessing Wokingham via a direct route). Finally, there are significant concerns with Ashridge from a transport perspective, because whilst there would be good potential to cycle into Wokingham town centre (via two enhanced and one new crossing of the A329(M), there are major challenges in respect of junction access onto the A329(M) and, in turn, concerns around east-west journeys by roads with insufficient capacity.
- **Smaller strategic sites** – Blagrove Lane is potentially the preferable site in transport terms in that there would be potential to easily cycle to Wokingham town centre, but the location of the site likely does not lend itself to good bus connectivity, and the need for a long access road is an inherent challenge (as discussed). The other two sites are then difficult to separate, with considerations being: A) Riverways Farm is a much smaller site benefiting from a location on the A4 and proximity to a train station (~2km), but an inherent issue is the need for pedestrians to cross the A4 and A321 (but new and upgraded crossings are proposed); and B) Barkham Square would be beyond easy walking distance of the new district centre to the south, but there would be very good (highest quality) pedestrian and cycle connectivity and a neighbourhood centre is nearby, plus potential for good bus connectivity seems likely.
- **Small sites** – Charvil is a limited development location in the settlement hierarchy, but the site in question is adjacent to a primary school, a secondary school is nearby in Woodley (but limited walking/cycling connectivity) and Charvil is generally well-linked via the A4. The Shinfield site is within easy walking distance of a new district centre and there are reasonable road links (a B-road), albeit there is not direct access onto the A329 and there appears not to currently be any bus services along Hyde End Road.
- **In combination effects** – this is clearly a key consideration from a transport perspective, both in terms of traffic congestion (with wide ranging knock-on implications, including for active travel and bus services) and realising opportunities to deliver new / upgraded infrastructure and bus services. Loddon Valley and Ashridge would clearly give rise to an in-combination effect on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) that National Highways would need to comment on, likely with a need for further work to explore options for strategic solutions. Also Barkham Square and Blagrove Lane would clearly impact on the B3349 in combination, but equally there could be a degree of opportunity in terms of cycle and/or bus connectivity, plus there is a need to consider the proximity of Loddon Valley including its proposed new link road.

6.13.2 In conclusion, the key differentiating factor is a transport concern with Ashridge and an even greater concern with Ashridge in combination with Loddon Valley, notwithstanding more minor concerns with Barkham Square and Blagrove Lane in combination and also a minor concern with growth at Charvil.

6.13.3 With regards to significant effects, whilst the equivalent appraisal in 2021 concluded ‘significant’ concerns with Ashridge and ‘Ashridge plus Loddon Valley’ scenarios, the Ashridge promoters have subsequently undertaken a considerable amount of work to explore transport issues, solutions and opportunities (but there remain key uncertainties, most notably in terms of A329(M) connectivity; see Appendix IV). With regards to the better performing scenarios involving just one SDL at Loddon Valley, whilst the appraisal in 2021 concluded ‘negative or uncertain’ negative effects, it is now appropriate to conclude neutral effects in light of the consultation and subsequent engagement and detailed technical work.

6.14 Water

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6	Scenario 7
LV Barkham Small sites	LV B'grove, R'ways Small sites	LV All three	LV All three Small sites	Ashridge All three Small sites	LV, East T/R - Small sites	LV, Ashridge - Small sites
4	3	5	6	★1	3	2

6.14.1 The order of preference reflects a view that:

- SDIs – focusing on capacity at Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTWs) and their associated water courses (in terms of chemical, biological and ecological capacity), the table below is a key output of the Water Cycle Study (2024). In particular, it highlights an issue with capacity at Arborfield WwTW and a lesser issue at Wargrave WwTW, and this is on the assumption that Loddon Valley (which would likely drain to Arborfield WwTW) is the only allocated SDI (the table assumes the RGS allocations from 2021).

Capacity at WwTWs can typically be increased, and water companies are expected to deliver upgrades to facilitate planned growth. However, upgrades are costly and there can be unforeseen issues. As such, there is a need to direct growth to locations with existing capacity (or known upgrade potential) as far as possible, in order to minimise the risk of delays to housing delivery and capacity breaches.

- Smaller strategic sites – the figures presented in the table below do not account for allocation of any of the three sites currently under consideration (to reiterate, the figures assume the RGS allocations). Barkham Square would drain to Arborfield WwTW, which does give rise to a concern, whilst the other two would likely drain to Wargrave WwTW (albeit there is a degree of uncertainty with Blagrove Lane).
- Small sites – the Shinfield site would add notably to the concern in respect of Arborfield WwTW and the Charvil site, although a much smaller site, would add to pressure on Wargrave WwTW.
- In combination effects – as discussed, a key issue is in combination effects on Arborfield WwTW resulting from growth at three of the variable growth locations (Loddon Valley, Barkham Square, and Hyde End Road, Shinfield), and in combination impacts on Wargrave WwTW are also a consideration (East of Twyford Ruscombe, Blagrove Lane, Charvil). There is also the broader context of existing water quality within the Borough’s network of water courses, which is a separate matter examined through the WCS (2024). Overall, analysis in the WCS does appear to indicate that poor water quality is an issue locally relative to neighbouring areas, and Table 7.2 in the study flags a particular concern with water quality impacts resulting from increased pressure on Arborfield WwTW.

6.14.2 With regards to significant effects, whilst few concerns were raised through the consultation in 2021,²⁴ and a Stage 2 WCS was subsequently completed that raises few concerns, the WCS has not been able to account for the latest proposed allocations and does not explore the implications of growth scenarios. It appears clear that there is an issue at Arborfield WwTW, but the significance of this issue is unclear, including noting that Thames Water have recently [proposed](#) an upgrade by 2030 (at a cost of £48m; see TMS24 Enhancement case: Sewage Treatment Growth), whilst there are no plans to upgrade Wargrave. Taking a precautionary approach, it is appropriate to flag a potential significant negative effect for the scenario involving allocation of Loddon Valley, Barkham Square and Hyde End Lane, which would all drain to Arborfield WwTW, plus this is also the case for five of the allocations held constant across the scenarios.

Figure 6.3: WwTW capacity assessment from the WCS (2024)

WwTW	JBA Assessment	Estimated spare hydraulic capacity (number of dwellings)*
Arborfield	Amber	-15,814
Ashridge (Wokingham)	Green	4,644
Bracknell	Green	66,821
Easthampstead Park	Amber	-263
Reading	Green	394,429
Wargrave	Amber	-1,213

²⁴ The Environment Agency commented that a water quality assessment should determine the impact of development on the Arborfield Sewage Treatment Works and watercourses; and Thames Water commented that the scale of development is likely to require upgrades to the wastewater network, such that there will be a need for early engagement.

6.15 Appraisal summary

6.15.1 The table below present a summary of the appraisal of reasonable growth scenarios presented above. To reiterate, within each row, the aim is to **1)** rank the scenarios in order of performance (with a star indicating best performing and “=” used where it is not possible to differentiate with confidence); and then **2)** categorise performance in terms of ‘significant effects’ using **red / amber / light green / green**.²⁵

N.B. the topics that together comprise the SA framework should not be assumed to have equal importance, or ‘weight’. As such, the intention is not to add scores to arrive at a total score for each growth scenario.

Table 6.1: The reasonable growth scenarios – summary appraisal findings

Topic	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6	Scenario 7
	LV Barkham Small sites	LV B'grove R'ways Small sites	LV All three	LV All three Small sites	Ashridge All three Small sites	LV, East T/R - Small sites	LV, Ashridge - Small sites
Topic	Significant effects (shading) and order of preference (numbers)						
Accessibility	★	★	★	★	2	★	★
Air & wider env quality	2	4	3	4	5	★	3
Biodiversity	2	4	3	4	6	★	5
Climate adaptation	3	3	3	3	★	2	2
Climate mitigation	3	3	3	3	2	2	★
Communities	2	3	2	2	3	★	★
Economy & employment	★	★	★	★	2	★	★
Historic environment	3	2	3	3	3	4	★
Homes	5	5	4	2	3	2	★
Land, soils, resources	2	2	2	2	★	3	2
Landscape	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
Transport	★	★	★	★	2	★	3
Water	4	3	5	6	★	3	2

²⁵ Red indicates a significant negative effect; amber a negative effect of limited or uncertain significance; light green a positive effect of limited or uncertain significance; and green a significant positive effect. No colour indicates a neutral effect.

- 6.15.2 The summary appraisal matrix above shows a very **mixed picture**, serving to suggest that the choice between the RA growth scenarios is finely balanced. This is a strong indication of their 'reasonableness', in that all or most could arguably deliver on key objectives and their performance varies 'at the margins'.
- 6.15.3 A good starting point is **Scenarios 6 and 7**, i.e. those scenarios involving two SDLs. In short, these scenarios perform notably well in terms of some objectives, but notably poorly in terms of others. Two SDLs could represent a highly proactive approach to planning for housing needs (including from a larger-than-local perspective), infrastructure, the economy and climate change mitigation. However:
- There are concerns with both Ashridge and East of T/R, and there are additional concerns in respect of delivering Ashridge in combination with Loddon Valley, particularly from a transport perspective.
 - Concerns increase once account is taken of delivery uncertainties/risks associated with Ashridge (particularly from a transport perspective and given limited engagement with housebuilders). This is in contrast to East of Twyford/Ruscombe, which is in the control of a single housebuilder (albeit the level of work undertaken is less than would ideally be the case, e.g. there has been confusion regarding a new train station), and Loddon Valley, which has been the focus of consultation and much technical work led by the site promoters in close collaboration with the Council and other partner organisations.
 - Also, there is a need to recall that East of T/R is located in the Green Belt (albeit at the edge) such that allocation would require 'exceptional circumstances' and, in turn, work to demonstrate that Green Belt release cannot be avoided (given strategic, settlement and site-specific factors taken in the round).
 - Finally, in reality the reasonableness of these two scenarios is questionable from a housing perspective because there would be a need for a heavily stepped housing requirement. In practice, there could be a need to allocate additional smaller sites, and potentially one of the small strategic site options.
- 6.15.4 Moving to the left, **Scenario 5** is a logical next port of call, as the only scenario that substitutes Loddon Valley for an alternative SDL, namely Ashridge. It is very difficult to draw upon the appraisal matrix to put forward a case for Ashridge being preferable to Loddon Valley (also see Appendix IV). This is particularly the case once account is taken of two factors: firstly, under 'climate change adaptation', whilst it is appropriate to flag Loddon Valley as associated with flood risk, in practice development will avoid flood zones and there is potential to achieve a flood risk betterment (albeit there is also a need to account for new road infrastructure within / crossing the flood zone); secondly, under 'climate change mitigation', whilst the Ashridge promoters completed a detailed study to explore built environment decarbonisation, in practice deliverability is uncertain plus the proposals are not strongly tied to the inherent characteristics of the site. Also the approach proposed does not strongly align with the energy hierarchy ('fabric first').
- 6.15.5 With regards to Scenarios 1 to 4, which would all involve allocation of one SDL in the form of Loddon Valley Garden Village, a good starting point is **Scenario 4**, which arguably performs relatively poorly. Specifically, whilst it is flagged as representing a very proactive approach to providing for housing needs, there is a significant concern in respect of wastewater treatment capacity (albeit this is highly uncertain, in light of the available evidence, and given typically good potential to deliver upgrades to WwTWs). Also, there are some concerns with Riverways Farm (including from an air quality perspective) and Blagrove Lane (including from a biodiversity perspective). Furthermore, whilst not reflected in the order of preference assigned to the scenarios, there is an element of concern around Barkham Sq and Blagrove Ln delivering in combination from a landscape and transport perspective. Contrasting Scenario 4 to Scenarios 1 and 3, it can be seen that Scenario 4 is preferable only in terms of 'housing' objectives.
- 6.15.6 Finally, focusing on **Scenarios 1 to 3**, the decision is clearly finely balanced, but points to note are in respect of the following: Air quality – there is a constraint at Twyford, but the predicted negative effect reflects a precautionary approach; Biodiversity – Blagrove Lane and (to a lesser extent) Hyde End Road (a small site) are subject to a degree of constraint; Communities – Barkham Square is very notably able to deliver or facilitate Gypsy and Traveller pitches, plus there are limited concerns regarding direct impacts to nearby communities; Historic environment – Barkham Square is flagged as the more constrained of the three small strategic sites, and as this is a new allocation Historic England will wish to comment formally, but concerns are unlikely to be significant; and Water – there is a concern that sites in combination could risk capacity breaches at Wargrave and (in particular) Arborfield WwTWs. Also, and as discussed, whilst the appraisal concludes that these scenarios perform broadly on a par under the landscape and transport headings, there is a degree of concern with delivering Barkham Square and Blagrove Lane in combination. Having said that, there could also be a transport opportunity, and perhaps even a 'landscape' opportunity if the opportunity is taken to comprehensively plan for the long term future of the sensitive sector of land between Wokingham and Shinfield / the A327 / Arborfield / Finchampstead North / Nine Mile Ride.

7 The preferred approach

7.1.1 The Council’s preferred approach is to take forward **Scenario 1**, for the following reasons:

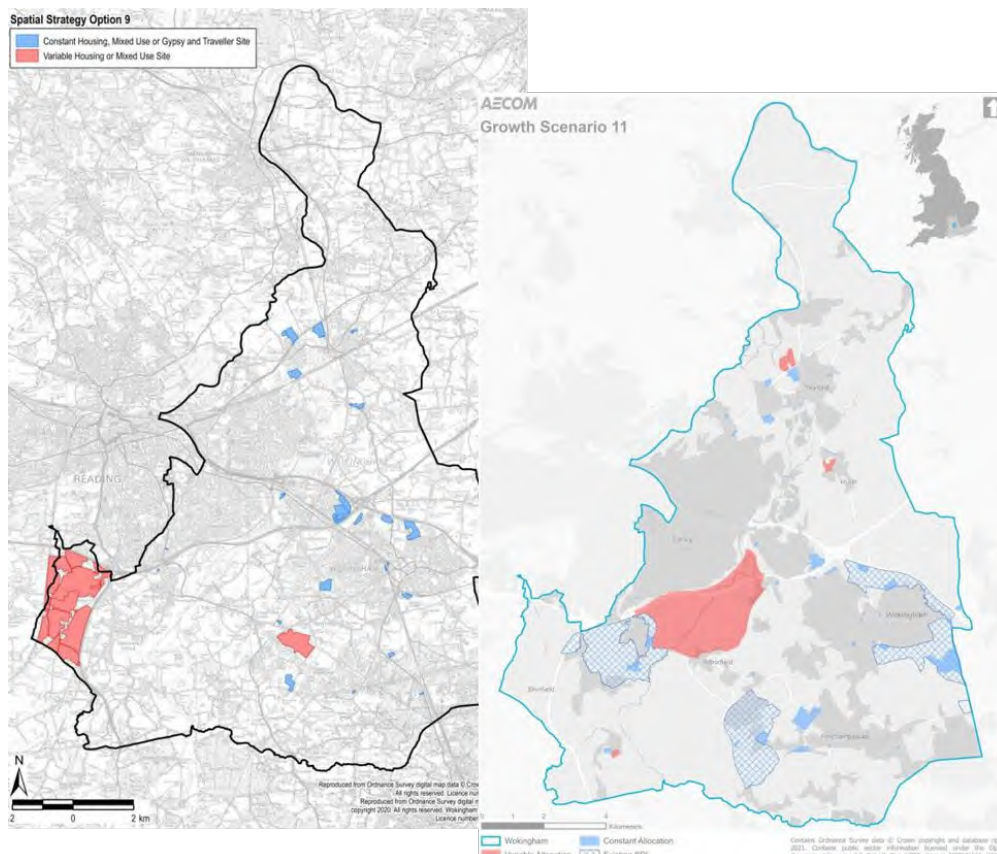
“We broadly agree with AECOM’s appraisal findings. Loddon Valley is preferable to Ashridge, whilst the scenarios with two SDLs are associated with drawbacks and uncertainties. Loddon Valley is associated with a range of benefits relative to the other two options, including in terms of delivering a county park, biodiversity improvements, flood betterment, sustainable bus services, and employment in proximity.

The Council has remained alive to the possibility of a high growth strategy throughout plan preparation but a preferable approach – in light of appraisal, consultation and ongoing engagement – is to provide for ‘standard method’ LHN in full which, at the current time (notwithstanding the Government’s draft proposals, at the time of writing), means a housing requirement set at 748 dpa.

By way of context, the highest growth scenario appraised at the current time might enable the housing requirement to be set at c.830 dpa, but scenarios appraised previously in 2020 and 2021 would have enabled the housing requirement to be set at an even higher figure (circa 860 and 930 dpa respectively). The figure below shows the highest growth scenarios previously appraised in 2019/20 and in 2021.

Focusing on Scenarios 1 to 4, the Council agrees with AECOM’s conclusion that the decision is finely balanced. The two variable small sites are ultimately quite strongly supported, including because they help with ensuring a good mix of sites within the overall supply profile/trajectory. Of the three smaller strategic sites appraised Barkham Square is preferred for a number of reasons, including its location on the edge of an existing SDL, and its ability to support additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches. Blagrove Lane and Riverways Farm are both associated with issues/challenges, and there are in-combination effects to consider. In addition, from a strategic perspective there is no numerical requirement to allocate either of these sites, because allocating the ‘constant’ site plus Loddon Valley plus Barkham Square plus the two variable small sites leads to a total supply over the plan period 10% above the requirement (LHN).”

Figure 7.1: The highest growth scenarios previously appraised in 2020 (left) and 2021 (right). N.B. neither represents the current preferred approach, but the fact that these scenarios have been appraised and published for consultation as part of the plan-making process (along with numerous other scenarios) supports the case for the preferred approach being ‘justified’ and specifically “an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence” (NPPF para 35)



Part 2: What are the appraisal findings at this stage?

8 Introduction to Part 2

- 8.1.1 The aim of this part of the report is to present an appraisal of the Proposed Submission Local Plan Update (LPU) as a whole which, in practice, involves elaborating on the appraisal of **Growth Scenario 1** presented above, with added consideration given to:
- Site allocations that are a ‘constant’ across the growth scenarios (see Tables 5.2 and 5.3, above); and
 - Development management policies.
- 8.1.2 Figure 8.1 presents the key diagram and Figure 8.2 then presents the concept plan for Loddon Valley Garden Village, which is the largest proposed allocation. Table 8.2 concisely lists proposed allocations.

Appraisal methodology

- 8.1.3 Appraisal findings are presented across 13 sections below, with each section dealing with a specific sustainability topic. For each sustainability topic the aim is to discuss the merits of the Proposed Submission LPU, as a whole, before reaching an overall conclusion on significant effects.
- 8.1.4 Specifically, the regulatory requirement is to “identify, describe and evaluate” the significant effects of “the plan” taking into account the available evidence and also mindful of wide-ranging effect characteristics, e.g. effects can be short or long term, direct or indirect, and where:
- An effect is a predicted change to the baseline situation, which is not simply a snap shot of the current situation, but also a projection of the current situation in the absence of the LPU. As part of this, there is a need to recognise that housing growth locally would continue in the absence of the Local Plan. Also, neighbouring local authorities would have to consider providing for Wokingham’s unmet need.
 - The significance of any given effect is judged taking into account not only the magnitude of the predicted change to the baseline situation but also established objectives and targets (e.g. the Borough has a 2030 net zero target date, such that there is a need to achieve a rapid decarbonisation trajectory).
- 8.1.5 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the strategic nature of the LPU. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by knowledge gaps in respect of the baseline (both now and in the future). In light of this, there is a need to make considerable assumptions regarding how the LPU will be implemented and the effect on particular ‘receptors’.
- 8.1.6 The appraisal aims to be systematic and to explain assumptions. However, there is also a need for conciseness and accessibility, for example noting that a Government Committee in 2022 [emphasised](#) a need to: “*streamline the current bureaucracy and overcomplication associated with... assessments.*” Also, in 2023 SA was described within a Government [consultation](#) as “... a nightmare... unintelligible...”
- 8.1.7 In practice, there is a particular focus on the proposals set out within the ‘Spatial Strategy’ section of the Draft Plan, including the Key Diagram (see Figure 8.1, below) and as supported by Appendices B and C (which present site specific policy) and Appendix D (which presents the housing supply trajectory).
- 8.1.8 This approach is also taken mindful that the Government’s Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) is clear that SA should focus on significant effects, which translates as a need to focus primarily on the merits of the proposed approach to land supply (allocations and broad locations; see NPPF paragraph 68) to meet objectively assessed needs and wider plan objectives. There is inherently relatively limited potential to predict significant effects for borough-wide thematic policy, mindful that significance is defined in the context of the plan as a whole. Equally, it is the proposed approach to land supply / spatial strategy that generates overwhelmingly greatest interest amongst local residents and wider stakeholders.

Level of detail

- 8.1.9 **Loddon Valley Garden Village** is comfortably the largest of the proposed allocations within the LPU but has already been a focus of appraisal within Section 6. As such, the aim here is to present summary information. Similarly, **Barkham Square** is the third largest proposed allocation and has already been a focus of appraisal in Section 6, hence this section presents summary information. In contrast, this is the first place within the main report where **South of Wokingham SDL extension** (the second largest allocation) is a focus of the appraisal, and so the opportunity is taken to present detailed information. It is the same for all of the other proposed allocations – see Table 8.1.

Committed sites

8.1.10 The appraisal focuses on non-committed sites (i.e. sites without any sort of planning permission or resolution to grant planning permission and sites without an existing allocation, although only two small sites fall into the latter category). This is appropriate given a need to focus the appraisal only on significant effects, recognising that committed sites can and should be taken into account when envisaging the future baseline, and significant effects are defined as effects on the baseline. However, committed sites are taken into account as appropriate through the appraisal, and it should also be noted that all are discussed in Section 5.4 (which considers growth options/scenarios for five sub-areas in turn).

Figure 8.1: The LPU Key Diagram

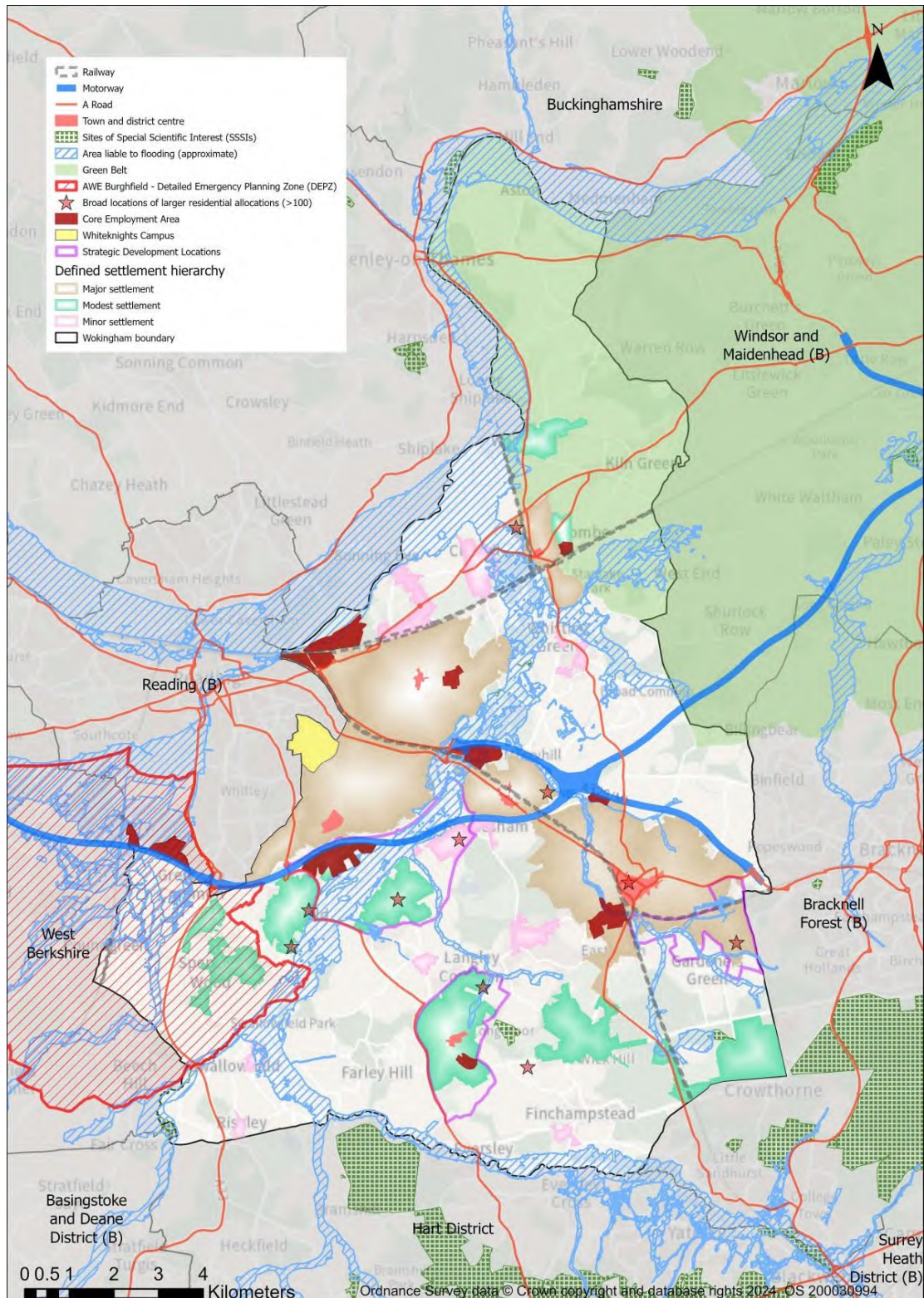


Figure 8.2: The latest Loddon Valley Garden Village concept plan

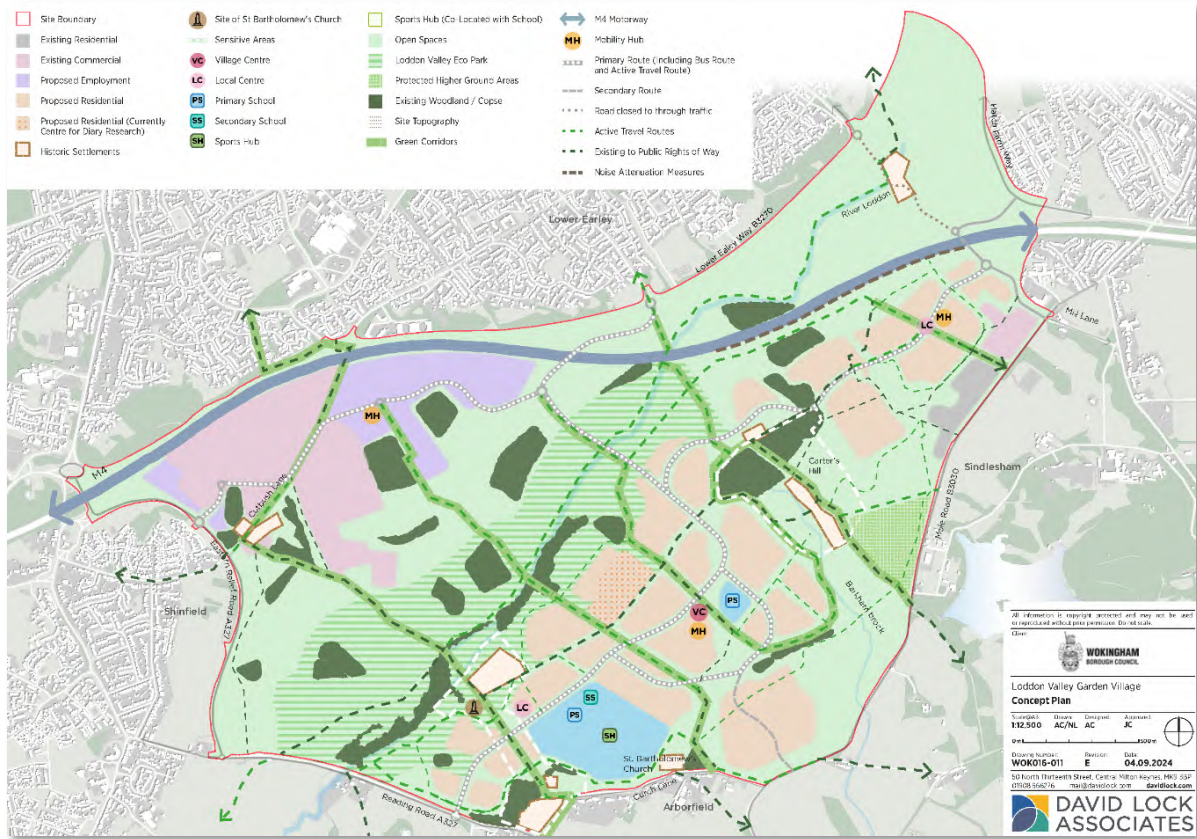


Table 8.1: Proposed supply (with a focus on setting out the key proposed allocations)

Supply component		# homes	
Permissions (including resolutions to grant)		6,244	
Other supply (windfall, Arborfield intensification, 2x existing allocations, 43 pitches at 4x sites)		2,472	
Non-committed housing-led allocations	HELAA suitable sites (x8) ¹⁵	321	
	New SDL	Loddon Valley Garden Village	2,700
	Major development settlement	South Wokingham SDL extension	980
	Modest development settlement	Barkham Square, Arborfield Green	600
	Modest development settlement	North of Arborfield Road, Shinfield	191
	Modest development settlement	Hyde End Road, Shinfield	175
	Modest development settlement	Greenacres, Nine Mile Ride	100
	Limited development settlement	West of Park Lane, Charvil	61
	Major development settlement	Old Forest Road, Winnersh	50
	Major development settlement	Bulldog Garage, Winnersh	34
	Modest development settlement	24 Barkham Ride, Nine Mile Ride	30
	Modest development settlement	Hillside, Finchampstead	15
	Major development settlement	South of London Road, Wokingham	12
	Modest development settlement	Westwood Yard, Arborfield Green	10
Total homes		13,995	

9 Appraisal of the Draft Plan

9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 Set out below is an appraisal of the Local Plan as a whole. The appraisal takes the form of 13 narrative discussions – one for each of the topic headings that together comprise the SA framework.

N.B. efforts are made to minimise repetition of text presented, hence the appraisal narratives presented below should be read alongside the appraisal of Scenario 3 in Section 6.

9.2 Accessibility (to community infrastructure)

9.2.1 Taking the **proposed allocations** in turn:

- Loddon Valley Garden Village (2,700 homes) – performs well given a locational opportunity to deliver a secondary school and a major new country park and given links to employment and higher order centres.
- South Wokingham SDL extension (980 homes) – in several ways the potential to integrate (fairly) well with the committed South of Wokingham SDL amounts to a locational benefit, including noting school capacity. However, on the other hand, there is limited reason to suggest that the scheme would significantly ‘compliment’ the offer within the SDL. Key aspects of the proposed offer are: *“a neighbourhood centre, enabling a local store to be provided and space for a variety of commercial uses... making best use of existing or planned primary school place provision in the SDL, with the flexibility to provide an on-site primary school... [and] contributions to the Gray’s Farm Sports Hub...”* The site is also reasonably well-connected to Wokingham town centre, but the more peripheral eastern and southern components of the site are less well-connected (but the site as a whole is well-connected to Crowthorne, plus the Pinewood Centre is nearby and Bracknell town centre is accessible by minor roads). A key outstanding issue is the question of delivering a primary school, noting the current planning application, plus the proposal is for the LPU to require only a 1fe school, which can give rise to viability challenges (the ideal might be to ensure space to expand).
- Barkham Square (600 homes) – would deliver limited new community infrastructure and Arborfield Green District centre is beyond easy walking distance. However, it would link very effectively to the district centre via high quality walking/cycling routes, a primarily school/neighbourhood centre is very close-by and there should be good bus connectivity to Wokingham and Reading via the A327.
- Other proposed allocations:
 - North of Arborfield Road, Shinfield (191 homes) – is well located in proximity to the new district centre and on the A327 (20 minute frequency bus services), plus Thames Valley Science Park is within walking distance and Loddon Valley Garden Village would be near adjacent to the east.
 - Hyde End Road, Shinfield (175 homes) and West of Park Lane, Charvil (61 homes) – have already been a focus of appraisal in Section 6. Neither site would deliver significant new community infrastructure, but both are considered suitably well located, including as the Charvil site is very close to the village primary school (albeit, to be clear, Charvil is a limited growth settlement).

At Charvil it should be noted that the proposed approach to growth is notably reduced relative to the RGS stage (2021). This is supported from an accessibility perspective, with Section 9 of the Interim SA Report (2021) having quoted the Interim SA Report (2020) having explained: *“... Charvil is a tier three settlement... with a primary school and two secondary schools in good proximity; however, there are limited facilities in that part of the village to the north of the A4 (where there is only a community hall and recreation ground). The northern site would benefit from good access to a convenience store / post office immediately to the south of the A4, via a pedestrian crossing with central island, but would be over 800m from the primary school at the southern extent of the village (which is adjacent to the southern proposed allocation). Charvil also benefits from excellent access to the string of country parks associated with the River Loddon; however, access from the northern proposed allocation involves crossing the A4 at a location without a pedestrian crossing. It is recommended that further consideration be given to facilitating improved access to community and green infrastructure...”*

- Finchampstead North – the uncommitted two proposed allocations (130 homes in total) are located at the western extent of the settlement area (the larger along Nine Mile Ride, the latter Barkham Ride). In turn, neither has good accessibility credentials, and a degree of car dependency can be envisaged. However, the local centre within Finchampstead North is to the east and Arborfield Green district centre is to the west, and it should also be noted that the scale of growth is reduced relative to the RGS stage. Both sites also have excellent access to county parks / SANG, and largest of the two sites (Greenacres, 100 homes) has the potential to deliver a significant new area of accessible greenspace.
- Winnersh / west of Wokingham – the two proposed allocations (84 homes in total) located here are considered to perform suitably well in accessibility terms, including given good access to high quality cycle infrastructure along the new distributor road and 20 minute frequency bus services along the A329. Winnersh district centre is to the west and Emmbrook local centre is to the east.
- Other non-urban allocations – are smaller and do not give rise to any significant concerns. Hillside, Lower Wokingham Road is not near a local centre but within walking distance of Crowthorne Station.
- Gypsy and traveller allocations – all four are considered to perform suitably well in accessibility terms, with three in relatively close proximity to Arborfield Green and the other in an accessible location on the edge of Wokingham. The main omission site (see Section 5.4) is in a more inaccessible location.
- Urban allocations – inherently perform well or reasonably well from an accessibility perspective. Winnersh Plant Hire (60 homes) is a key site as it is subject to flood risk but is located in a highly accessible, given nearby Winnersh Triangle Station. Its capacity was increased from 20 homes to 85 homes at the RGS stage, but the latest proposal is to support 60 homes. Another site of note is Station Industrial Estate, Wokingham, where the proposal at the RGS stage was to decrease the capacity from 92 homes to 40 homes, and this remains the proposed capacity at the current time. Wokingham station is adjacent, but the area has a low density character and there are overlooking constraints.
- Arborfield Green Intensification (300 homes) – is supported from an accessibility perspective, given a new primary school / neighbourhood centre in this area, and a new district centre accessible to the south. Also, there could be an opportunity to support high quality bus services.
- Committed sites – need not be a focus of appraisal, as discussed, but Land west of Trowes Lane at Swallowfield (81 homes) is a key site of note, given no primary school at Swallowfield. Other sites that were a focus of the equivalent appraisal in both 2020 and 2021 but need no longer be a focus as they are now permitted are: A) Land at Bridge Farm; and B) Winnersh Farms.

9.2.2 With regards to **in-combination effects**, a key opportunity for local plans is not only to facilitate strategic sites able to deliver new community infrastructure but also ensure that sites deliver new community infrastructure in combination. Attention potentially focuses on Arborfield Green SDL, where there could be opportunities associated with delivering Barkham Square alongside intensification of the adjacent northern extent of the permitted SDL. Also, attention focuses on enhancing bus services along the A327 corridor, which is currently a 'quality bus corridor' as opposed to a 'fast track public transport corridor'.

9.2.3 Finally, with regards to **DM policies**, it is difficult to suggest that any give rise to a significant tension with accessibility objectives, and policies broadly supportive of accessibility objectives include:

- Policy HC2 (Community infrastructure) – there is limited local specificity, but the policy importantly sets out support for new community facilities and sets out to protect existing facilities
- Policy HC4 (Open space, sports, recreation and play facilities) – requires defined standards, explaining: *"[Schemes]... will be required to provide or contribute to the provision of open space, sport and recreation and play facilities and must demonstrate how they meet the standards in the table below."*

9.2.4 In **conclusion**, the proposed spatial strategy performs very well, primarily due to a focus on directing growth broadly in line with the settlement hierarchy and towards strategic sites able to deliver new community infrastructure, most notably new education facilities including a new secondary school at Loddon Valley Garden Village that will be well-located / in line with borough-wide schools strategy. Of the other two strategic allocations, Barkham Square will not deliver a primary school and there is some uncertainty at South Wokingham SDL extension (but it will deliver a neighbourhood centre), but both are well located in terms of accessing community infrastructure (with capacity) within adjacent SDLs. A robust DM policy framework is proposed and there is confidence that the net effect will be to ensure that community infrastructure is delivered in line with the policy intent, accounting for development viability considerations. Overall a **significant positive effect** on the baseline is predicted, accounting for established objectives, which is in line with the conclusion reached for growth scenario 1 in Section 6.

9.3 Air and wider environmental quality

9.3.1 Taking the **proposed allocations** in turn:

- Loddon Valley Garden Village – is constrained by the adjacent motorway, but there is good potential to avoid and mitigate noise and air pollution impacts. There are also question-marks regarding car dependency in the context of an extensive AQMA within central Reading, as discussed further below.
- South Wokingham SDL extension – there are no significant concerns, although there will be additional car trips through the Wokingham town centre AQMA, with the southern and eastern extents of the site are associated with less potential to reach key destinations by walking, cycling and public transport.
- Barkham Square – again, the potential for additional car trips through the Wokingham town centre AQMA can be envisaged. See discussion above, under ‘accessibility’.
- Other proposed allocations:
 - A4 corridor – the proposal is to allocate a site at Charvil for 61 homes, plus two small sites at Ruscombe, and this is in the context of a committed site at Twyford for 200 homes and modest committed growth at Sonning (one of the sites being an existing allocation not yet with permission). In turn, there will likely be increased traffic through the problematic Twyford crossroads, in the absence of transformative measures to minimise the need to travel or support modal shift. However, the AQMA here is in the process of being revoked, as has been discussed.
 - Bulldog Garage, Winnersh (34 homes) – is in close proximity to the M4.
 - South of London Road, Wokingham (12 homes) – is adjacent to the A329(M), hence noise pollution is likely to be an issue. Also, it should be noted that another adjacent to the north (North of London Road) recently gain a resolution to grant permission for 45 homes and is similarly constrained. Furthermore, another permitted site adjacent to the A329(M) is Land east of Toutley Depot.

9.3.2 With regards to **in-combination effects**, there is clearly a need to consider the in combination effects of proposed allocations on traffic through an AQMA. It is difficult to reach conclusions here given the available evidence, but ultimately the potential for increased traffic through a number of AQMAs can be envisaged (Reading, Wokingham, Twyford, Crowthorne). However, whether this translates into significant air quality concerns is another matter, recognising that air quality in many AQMAs is improving over time. A focus of attention is potentially traffic through the Wokingham AQMA.

9.3.3 Finally, with regards to **DM policies**, it is difficult to suggest that any give rise to a significant tension with air quality objectives, and policies broadly supportive of accessibility objectives include: Policy HC6 (Air pollution and air quality), which requires that applicants submit an air quality assessment; and Policy HC8 (Noise pollution), which sets out that: *“Development proposals must demonstrate how noise impacts have been addressed, to protect sensitive receptors, including existing and proposed dwellings.”*

9.3.4 In **conclusion**, the proposed spatial strategy does not generate any significant concerns from an air quality perspective, including recalling that the baseline situation is one whereby growth continues to come forward but in a relatively unplanned way. LVGV is not ideally located in transport terms, and there is an extensive AQMA affecting the centre of Reading, but there will be good potential to minimise the need to travel and achieve high levels of transport modal shift. Another issue at LVGV is noise and air pollution from the adjacent M4, but steps can be taken to avoid and mitigate this (at a cost). The modest growth strategy for the north of the Borough is also supported given a problematic AQMA affecting Twyford, although equally the opportunity to deliver a bypass road is not set to be realised. Finally, with regards to the Wokingham AQMA, both South Wokingham SDL extension and Barkham Square will likely result in additional car trips through the AQMA, but there is no reason to suggest a significant concern. Overall a **neutral effect** on the baseline is predicted, in line with the conclusion reached for growth scenario 1.

9.4 Biodiversity

9.4.1 Taking the **proposed allocations** in turn:

- Loddon Valley Garden Village – whilst the river valley is clearly sensitive in biodiversity terms, there is good potential to avoid impacts through masterplanning and there is a major opportunity to deliver well-targeted strategic enhancements, with positive implications for biodiversity at a broad landscape scale.

- South Wokingham SDL extension – is associated with very limited onsite priority habitat, but there are notable concentrations of priority habitat adjacent and nearby, potentially serving to suggest a particular opportunity for onsite habitat creation to support a biodiversity net gain at a functional landscape scale. The stream corridor within/adjacent to the site is a key feature, but is not associated with any priority habitat, and the proposed concept master proposes enhancements, which could prove well-targeted. The proposal is also to deliver a new area of SANG, including woodland creation, that would be well-located from a biodiversity perspective, given extensive areas of woodland associated with raised ground to the south and east. As of 2022 the proposal was 20% BNG.
- Barkham Square – can deliver bespoke SANG but there is a degree of constraint in the form of a stream corridor associated with bankside woodland (including a small area of ancient woodland and Longmoor Bog SSSI is located c.500m upstream). From a biodiversity perspective there is a need to ensure the southeast part of the site is delivered as greenspace in perpetuity, as this is the part of the site in proximity to the SSSI, plus there is a need to consider in-combination effects of growth on the SSSI, given committed sites (including nearby Reading FC Training Ground), proposed allocations (notably Greenacres, 100 homes) and the proposed Arborfield SDL intensification (300 homes).
- Other proposed allocations:
 - Land north of Arborfield Road, Shinfield (191 homes) – is within the South of the M4 SDL. Adjacent wetland priority habitat is a consideration, but there is an intervening road, namely the A327.
 - Hyde End Road, Shinfield (175 homes) – has been discussed in Section 6 as closely associated with a small cluster of ancient woodlands. However, this constraint is feeding-in as a key factor as part of ongoing work on site capacity, layout etc (theoretical capacity is 300+ homes). Also, Langley Mead SANG is adjacent and the landowner (UoR) is currently bringing forward a major new extension.
 - Land West of Park Lane, Charvil (61 homes) – falls within a Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) and would extend an existing permitted site as far as a small ancient woodland, which is designated as a LWS. However, it is noted that a proposed allocation to the north from the RGS stage is now removed from the plan, reducing pressure on the Loddon Corridor / BOA.

It is also noted that the site capacity has been reduced from 75 homes at the RGS stage (2021), when the appraisal stated: *“It is recommended that the scale of the scheme be examined in order to ensure no adverse impact to the woodland, and ideally deliver an enhancement to the functioning of the woodland and the wider BOA.”*
 - Bridge Retail Park, Wokingham (59 homes) – comprises previously developed land, and there is no priority habitat onsite or adjacent, but is very closely associated with the Emm Brook corridor, and something of a ‘green/blue wedge’ at the point where the two railway corridors meet.
 - Old Forest Road, Winnersh (50 homes) – access will presumably necessitate some loss of mature hedgerow (shown on the 1888-1913 OS map). Cumulative impacts here are a consideration, noting concentrations of woodland to the north and south, and the impacts to hedgerows and the millennium arboretum following construction of the distributor road.
 - 24 Barkham Ride (30 homes) – is perhaps the key site to consider, noting that it is near-adjacent to 31-33 Barkham Ride, which is committed for 80 homes). This is a sensitive part of the borough given SSSIs (and country parks) located to the north (in close proximity) and to the south. However, it is also important to note that the proposed approach to growth is significantly reduced relative to the RGS stage (2021), when the proposal was to allocate Rooks Nest Farm along with this site.
 - Westwood Yard, Sheerlands Road (10 homes; within the Arborfield Garrison SDL) – includes area TPOs, including one area shown as woodland priority habitat by the nationally available dataset. A modest scheme could support green infrastructure objectives, noting the extent of the Hogwood Farm scheme to the east (the SDL’s southern extent) which is permitted and under construction.

9.4.2 With regards to **in-combination effects**, there are a number of key areas of sensitivity within the Borough where the potential for in-combination effects can be envisaged, particularly in terms of recreational pressure, but also accounting for other potential impact pathways. Longmoor Bog SSSI is perhaps the key consideration (as discussed above), and it is noted that the SSSI is in ‘unfavourable recovering’ condition. Another consideration is the Barkham Brook, which links Loddon Valley Garden Village and Barkham Square, but it is difficult to suggest any significant concerns from a biodiversity perspective.

- 9.4.3 Finally, with regards to **DM policies**, it is difficult to suggest that any give rise to a significant tension with biodiversity objectives, but the key point to note is Policy NE2 (Biodiversity net gain), which requires only the statutory minimum 10% BNG (although Loddon Valley Garden Village is expected to deliver 20%). This approach is informed by the LPU Viability Assessment in the context of competing priority objectives with cost implications, including affordable housing and net zero development, but it is important to note that a number of recently adopted local plans set a requirement for 20%, for example the [Guildford Local Plan Part 2](#). Having said this, there is increasingly scrutiny of the potential drawbacks for development viability and delivery more generally, recognising the potential for administrative burden, particularly if there is a lack of readily available local biodiversity credits (also accounting for habitat types) that can be purchased by developers where it is the case that the requisite BNG cannot be achieved onsite. In turn, there is increasingly an emphasis on undertaking detailed evidence work as part of plan-making in order to justify 20% BNG, which takes time and resources. For example, evidence studies have recently been published alongside the Regulation 19 local plans for [Uttlesford](#) and [Surrey Heath](#). Ultimately, whilst 20% BNG is supported from a biodiversity perspective, and there could also be wider benefits in terms of recreational opportunity and other 'ecosystem services', there can be risks and drawbacks for development viability and delivery, particularly in the absence of detailed evidence base work. There could be potential to revisit this matter guided by the [Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#).
- 9.4.4 In **conclusion**, the proposed spatial strategy does not generate any significant concerns, with the three main proposed allocations subject to limited constraint and all able to deliver new strategic greenspace (SANG) that should prove well-targeted from a biodiversity perspective. LVGV is inherently sensitive on account of the Loddon valley / corridor, but sensitivities are more associated with land to the north of the river, where the expansion of TVSP is likely to come forward regardless of a garden village to the south, and the opportunity to deliver a major new country park is of larger-than-local (e.g. regional) significance. Certain of the other proposed allocations are also subject to a degree of biodiversity constraint, including in the vicinity of Longmoor Bog SSSI, but concerns are overall of limited significance, and a degree of tension with biodiversity objectives is largely unavoidable in the context of local plan-making. With regards to DM policy, the key point to note is that the proposal is not to require BNG over-and-above the nationally required 10%, but otherwise a suitably proactive approach is taken through site-specific policy, and at the current time plan-making is being undertaken without the benefit of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS; one is currently in preparation for Berkshire). Overall a **neutral effect** on the baseline is predicted.

9.5 Climate change adaptation

- 9.5.1 Taking the **proposed allocations** in turn:
- Loddon Valley Garden Village – is constrained given very close association with the River Loddon floodplain, as well as that of the Barkham Brook. However, flood risk has been a key factor influencing masterplanning with a clear focus on avoiding flood zones, including accounting for climate change scenarios. Also, there is also a clear focus on integrating high quality Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) as part of a green and blue infrastructure strategy, which is a key consideration given extensive areas at flood risk downstream of the site, and there may be potential to deliver strategic flood water attenuation leading to a downstream flood risk betterment.
 - South Wokingham SDL extension – is quite closely associated with a tributary of the Emm Brook, but there appears to be ample opportunity to accommodate flood zones and SuDS as part of a green and blue infrastructure strategy, and there could be an opportunity for some flood risk betterment. With regards to surface water flood risk, the northeast of the site is associated with a notable channel, which follows Old Wokingham Road, before cutting through the site (following a field boundary) to meet the Emm Brook tributary. This is reflected in the masterplan; however, there might be the potential to deliver a more generous green buffer along Old Wokingham Road in order to both ensure good planning for flood risk / resilience and also address the concerns raised by Bracknell Forest Council, through consultation in 2022, regarding a “hard urban edge”.
 - Barkham Square – a narrow fluvial flood risk channel cuts through the site, but there is a clear commitment to integrating this as part of a green / blue infrastructure. Having said this, there could be merit to ongoing consideration of masterplanning options aimed at enhancing the stream corridor from a flood risk and biodiversity perspective, recognising its strategic position within the Borough, e.g. linking Longmoor Bog SSSI to the south with the Loddon and Bearwood in the north.

- Other proposed allocations:
 - North of Arborfield Road, Shinfield (191 homes) – around 10% of the site intersects the fluvial flood risk zone, but this is on the edge of the site such that there is clear potential to leave the land in question undeveloped (and greenspace would be well located given adjacent priority habitat).
 - Hyde End Road, Shinfield (175 homes) – is associated with a significant surface water flood channel, and this is a constraint to site access, but there is understood to be good potential to address this issue via careful consideration of site capacity, layout and SuDS.
 - Winnersh Plant Hire (60 homes) – comprises PDL and benefits from very good accessibility credentials, but capacity of the site has been the focus of detailed consideration on account of significant onsite flood risk. Capacity has ranged between 20 and 80 homes.
 - Bridge Retail Park, Wokingham (59 homes) – intersects flood zone 2 by c.32%, but there is understood to be good potential to avoid and mitigate flood risk. There is a need to recognise that flood risk likely fed into a decision to support retail here, but equally intensification of retail parks subject to a degree of flood risk is quite common practice nationally.

9.5.2 With regards to **in-combination effects**, Loddon Valley and Barkham Square share a river corridor, but it is difficult to suggest any concerns in terms of surface water runoff leading to downstream flood risk.

9.5.3 Finally, with regards to **DM policies**, it is difficult to suggest that any give rise to a significant tension with flood risk or wider climate change adaptation objectives, and a key supportive policy is FD1 (Development and flood risk from all sources). There is limited local specificity (in the context of potential forthcoming National Development Management Policies), but there is also a section on flood risk within the Policy SS13 (Loddon Garden Village), which requires, amongst other things: “... *takes opportunity as appropriate to improve the management of flood risk and reduce the risk of flooding to areas beyond [LVGV].*”

9.5.4 In **conclusion**, the proposed spatial strategy does not generate any significant concerns, once account is taken of the potential to avoid flood zones through masterplanning and design-in Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). LVGV is inherently sensitive, including noting downstream flood risk and the need for infrastructure within / across the flood zone, but detailed work has concluded the potential to avoid any worsening of flood risk, and ongoing consideration can be given to strategic flood water attenuation as part of work to design and deliver a new country park along the river corridor. The two other largest allocations – Barkham Square and South Wokingham SDL extension – are also bisected by fluvial flood zones, and at both there is a need for ongoing scrutiny of the steps taken through masterplanning to buffer and potentially enhance the flood zones. Finally, certain of the PDL allocations are located in a flood risk zone, but this is not unusual in the national context, and the key thing is that flood risk factors into decision-making in respect of site capacity (including accounting for non-residential uses on the ground floor) and development management policy. Overall a **neutral effect** on the baseline is predicted, but it is recognised that the Environment Agency will wish to comment in detail through the current consultation.

9.6 Climate change mitigation

9.6.1 Taking the **proposed allocations** in turn:

- Loddon Valley Garden Village – is of a sufficient scale to generate a good degree of confidence regarding the potential to achieve net zero development to an exacting standard. However, there is a need for further work to confirm what can be achieved, accounting for competing costs / development viability.
- South Wokingham SDL extension – whilst it has not been possible to review materials submitted as part of the current planning application (August 2024). Prior materials submitted did not set out a clear commitment to net zero development, but there was clarity on the need to balance net zero development and affordable housing aspirations, as discussed in Appendix IV.
- Barkham Square – there is again no clear commitment to delivering net zero development, but the site is thought to have good development viability credentials (albeit development viability is not quite as strong in this area as in some other areas), and so an early / clear commitment is encouraged. Having said this, the current proposed capacity is at the lower end of options that have been considered.

- Other proposed allocations – although not having the benefit of economies of scale, small sites associated with limited need to deliver new infrastructure, and otherwise an absence of abnormal development costs, can still be associated with good potential to deliver net zero carbon development to an exacting standard. Hyde End Road is an example of a larger site, but development is not quite as strong in this area as in some other areas. Another consideration at Hyde End Road is that the landowner is University of Reading, which could lead to a degree of additional ‘net zero’ opportunity.
- 9.6.2 Finally, with regards to **DM policies**, the key point to note is a requirement for net zero development to an exacting standard, as described in Section 6. This is very strongly supported, although it is important to recognise implications for development viability. It is not anticipated that this will result in a need to compromise on affordable housing, but the proposal is to compromise on biodiversity net gain.
- 9.6.3 The two key policies are CE2 and CE3, which deal with non-residential and residential development respectively, and the two policies are notably different in respect of the reliance that is placed on established quality marks (notably BREEAM for non-residential development) versus achievement of quantified standards regardless of the method employed (i.e. use of a quality mark or not). Further consideration might be given to ensuring that the policies are suitably non-technical, such that they are suited to engaging a wide audience (i.e. not just specialists involved with planning applications) and recognising that detail might be alternatively presented in an appendix of supplementary guidance (which also has the benefit of allowing for ease of updates, recognising that this is a fast moving policy area).
- 9.6.4 The summary requirements set out in Policy SS13 (Loddon Valley Garden Village) are commended as being easily understandable,²⁶ although it is recognised that within Policies CE2 and CE3 there is a need to set out additional detail. One other suggestion is the possibility of removing discussion of water efficiency requirements, to ensure a clear focus on built environment decarbonisation.
- 9.6.5 Finally, policies CE4 and CE5 are also strongly supported from a perspective of wishing to minimise built environment emissions other than those associated with the building’s day-to-day occupation. However, consideration should be given to whether there is a risk of overlap between the information provided within the assessments submitted under the two policies. Again, this is with a view to ensuring a clear and easily understood policy environment, to the benefit of planning applicants and the interested public wishing to scrutinise applications and hold applicants and decision-makers to account.
- 9.6.6 In **conclusion**, the spatial strategy has some merit in terms of built environment decarbonisation (the focus of discussion here), particularly given the focus of growth at LVGV and two other strategic sites, but equally it is difficult to conclude that built environment decarbonisation has been a key focus of spatial strategy / site selection and masterplanning work undertaken to date. This being the case and given the urgency of decarbonisation given the committed net zero target date / trajectory, Section 6 predicts a ‘moderate or uncertain’ negative effect for growth scenario 1 (the preferred scenario). However, within this section added consideration is given to proposed DM policy and, in this regard, proposals are very strongly supported. Specifically, the DM policy approach involves requiring net zero development to an exacting standard (in line with the energy hierarchy and with an energy-based approach to calculating performance) and is considered to be at the forefront of national best practice (with numerous emerging local plans taking this approach, particularly in parts of the country with strong development viability). On this basis it is considered appropriate to predict a **‘moderate or uncertain’ positive effect** on the baseline, accounting for established objectives/targets. However, this conclusion is reached on balance, because it is crucially important to take all steps to realise built environment decarbonisation opportunities through spatial strategy and site selection, rather than relying overly on DM policy with cost implications such that there is a risk of having to make compromises at the planning application stage.

²⁶ The Loddon Valley Garden Village policy requires: “Implement the energy hierarchy at all scales and demonstrate a fabric first approach; Ensure 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; Provide measures to reduce the whole-life impacts by creating adaptable, durable buildings and employing construction methods and materials which minimise embodied emissions.”

9.7 Communities and health

9.7.1 Taking the **proposed allocations** in turn:

- Loddon Valley Garden Village – is associated with a very good place-making opportunity, with clear potential to align with garden community principles, and the site promoter(s) have taken the opportunity to refine proposals over time in response to issues raised. There is the potential to deliver a major new river valley country park that will benefit both the new community and existing communities (although the Shinfield community may also experience some negative effects of growth from a new nearby SDL, just as the South of the M4 SDL completes). There is little reason to suggest a country park could be delivered in the absence of a new SDL, recognising the context of UoR delivering nearby Langley Mead SANG alongside an SDL (and a major extension is underway, which will link to the Loddon Valley site).
- South Wokingham SDL extension – much work has been undertaken to explore masterplanning options, and the site benefits from close association with the Emm Brook, which will be enhanced as a green/blue corridor through the site, plus the site benefits from close links with the committed SDL. The site was identified “potential green open space” in the South Wokingham SDL SPD (2011), but the proposal to extend the SDL to incorporate Gray’s Farm as a potential sports hub has emerged since the SPD.
- Barkham Square – represents a departure from the long-established vision for bringing forward the Arborfield Green SDL, in a similar fashion to South Wokingham SDL extension. It would deliver new strategic open space to the benefit of the existing community, but otherwise the benefits it will deliver to the SDL appear to be fairly limited, and the site is not ideally located in terms of effective integration.
- Other proposed allocations – a key consideration is Shinfield. The two proposed allocations benefit from good accessibility to a district centre and also an expanding Langley Mead SANG. However, there is a need to consider that the local community has already had to deal with construction over a number of years, and Loddon Valley GV is nearby.

9.7.2 With regards to **in-combination effects**, a key consideration here is providing for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs. As discussed in Section 5.5, the identified supply amounts to 78 pitches, in the context of a need for 86 pitches (N.B. there is also a need to factor-in when the need arises, within the plan period), plus there is the likelihood of windfall planning applications, given supportive development management policy. This amounts to a proactive approach in the national / regional context, with it being the case that Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs often go unmet (see a recent RTPi blog [here](#)); for example, this is the case with a number of neighbouring local authorities. A large proportion of the proposed supply is set to come forward within SDLs, and hence is associated with an element of delivery risk, plus there is a need to recognise that pitches can tend to be phased late as part of SDL delivery. With regards to the four proposed stand-alone allocations, all are suitably unconstrained and appear to strike a good balance between accessibility and ensuring a degree of self-containment. It is also understood that the allocations account for the specific nature of needs arising, which are typically very localised / site specific. The HELAA identifies two omission sites that could potentially be allocated in order to boost supply, but one of these is a very small site located in the Green Belt. Focusing on the remaining site, this is quite large, and is located in a sensitive and not very accessible location. It is discussed in Section 5.4, within the section that deals with the ‘south’ sub-area.

9.7.3 Finally, with regards to **DM policies**, it is difficult to suggest that any give rise to a significant tension with communities objectives, and numerous policies have positive implications. Key policies include:

- HC1 (Promoting healthy communities), which requires that: “Residential development proposals of 10 dwellings or more, or non-residential development proposals of 1,000 m² or greater gross internal area must include a Health Impact Assessment (HIA).” Also, with regards to new health facilities, the policy requires: “Support the provision of new or improved health facilities, in consultation with the borough’s Health and Wellbeing Board, Integration Partnership, the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) Integrated Care Board and NHS England.”
- Policy SS7 (Development in the vicinity of Atomic Weapons Establishments, AWE) – includes reference to the latest (2023) Office for Nuclear Regulation land use planning consultation zones.
- Policy H10 (Traveller sites) – sets out a range of site assessment criteria which take on considerable importance given the need to support windfall sites / extensions in order to provide for need, including in the short term ahead of pitch delivery within Loddon Valley Garden Village.

- Policy SS13 (Loddon Valley Garden Village) – amongst other things has a strong focus on stewardship, which is a key benefit of strategic growth locations. It requires that applicants align 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.*”

9.7.4 In **conclusion**, key issues relate to: A) providing for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs; and B) place-making and avoiding impacts to communities / addressing community concerns. There is a strong degree of support for the spatial strategy in both respects, e.g. in respect of Gypsies and Travellers it is important to be clear that the approach taken to providing for accommodation needs is proactive to a level that goes beyond what is typical across the South East (although supply from allocations still falls short of the identified need figure). Section 6 predicts a ‘moderate or uncertain’ positive effect for growth scenario 1 (the preferred scenario) but having taken account of the proposed DM policy framework it is considered appropriate to upgrade this conclusion to a **significant positive effect**. A robust DM policy framework is proposed – both site/area-specific and borough-wide – and it is clear that the needs of communities are prioritised to a good extent in the context of limited funds / development viability parameters.

9.8 Economy and employment

9.8.1 Taking the **proposed allocations** in turn:

- Loddon Valley Garden Village – TVSP would benefit from a new road bridge over the M4 as well as from having homes and a country park on its doorstep, but the significance of these benefits is uncertain. Whilst the bridge would enable flexibility in respect of the types of employment land that can come forward, it seems likely that TVSP would develop to its full extent regardless.
- South Wokingham SDL extension – there is thought to be an opportunity to support the regeneration of the Priors Farm commercial land to offer additional space for local businesses, but this is of limited significance. There is also a good proximity to the Molly Millars industrial estate in Wokingham.
- Barkham Square – is well-located in terms of accessing existing major employment areas.

9.8.2 With regards to **in-combination effects**, the key consideration is the extent to which employment land needs will be provided for, as understood from the Employment Land Needs Study (ELNS, 2023). The key proposal is to allocate land for approaching 25ha of industrial land at TVSP. Also, the proposal is to allocate land for a small extension to Hogwood Industrial Estate at Arborfield Green. In addition, there is a need to account for: A) completions and commitments; and B) proposed redevelopment of industrial sites for housing. Accounting for all of these things together (i.e. proposed allocations + A – B) the net total supply of industrial land in the plan period is about 25 ha, so comfortably in excess of the minimum requirement set out in the ELNS (18 ha), but a long way short of the aspirational target (53 ha). Additional supply is anticipated from intensification of existing industrial areas and also small windfall sites (given supportive policy), but total supply will likely nonetheless still fall short of 53 ha. However, this is not necessarily a concern, as the 53 ha figure is arrived at by the ELNS with a sub-regional perspective, i.e. the supply need not necessarily be within Wokingham Borough. Section 5.4 explains that a major employment scheme is being promoted in the Grazeley area, which in theory would be of larger-than-local significance, but the proposal is judged unreasonable. Moving forward, there will be the potential to work with neighbouring authorities in respect of employment land provision to meet the needs of the sub-region, the M4 corridor and the Thames Valley, potentially in the context of the [Draft NPPF](#) (July 2024), which includes a major new emphasis on new employment land to meet larger-than-local needs. Other site options within the Borough may be identified in time; for example, there is the context of the RBH relocation and a possible new Thames crossing.

9.8.3 Finally, with regards to **DM policies**, Policy SS8 (Meeting employment needs) is of key importance, as there is a need to support the intensification of existing sites given the need figure(s) established by the ELNS (2023). The key policy criterion is: “*Core Employment Areas will be retained and protected, and development proposals that facilitate their ongoing regeneration and evolution in accordance with economic needs and Policy ER1 will be supported.*” Policy ER1 then goes on to state that:

“Expansion and intensification of employment uses within Core Employment Areas will be supported where: a) It is appropriate to the character of the local area; and b) It does not have an unacceptable impact on nearby residential uses, other employment uses and other uses, including impacts caused by traffic movements, noise, emissions, odour, hours of operation and lighting.”

9.8.4 In **conclusion**, the spatial strategy performs well in that the minimum employment need figure set out in the ELNS (2023) is provided for in full (and exceeded). However, the conclusion is a **'moderate or uncertain' positive effect**, rather than a significant positive effect, being mindful of the higher figure identified in the ELNS, albeit this is a strategic and aspirational figure. A robust DM policy framework is also proposed, and this is of considerable importance, as there is a need to ensure a proactive approach to supporting windfall sites and windfall applications for the intensification of existing employment sites in order to boost supply.

9.9 Historic environment

9.9.1 Taking the **proposed allocations** in turn:

- Loddon Valley Garden Village – is associated with a range of historic environment constraints, as discussed in Appendix IV, but this is inevitable when dealing with an SDL option on this scale. Overall it is considered that focusing growth here represents a good way of minimising the impacts of the LPU.
- South Wokingham SDL extension – there are two areas of sensitivity: at the northwest extent of the site (Pearce's Farm, Holme Green); and at the northeast extent (Locks Farm):
 - Pearce's Farm (Holme Green) – is associated with a small cluster of Grade II listed buildings, and the proposed primary access point for the site (linking the site to the permitted SDL) passes through this area. However, the assets are primarily associated with Easthampstead Road, where the proposal is for the road to be downgraded / improved as a walking and cycling route. This could well lead to improved appreciation of the assets, as there are currently only glimpsed views from Easthampstead Road, along which cars likely travel quite fast.
 - Locks Farm – is likely associated with lesser concern. There is a Grade II* listed farmhouse and a Grade II listed barn; however, the proposed development adjacent to the south would not necessarily impact significantly on the setting of the assets, given their association with Waterloo Road to the north. There is also a need to consider the historic lane – now a bridleway – linking Locks Farm to Holme Green.
- Barkham Square – there would be encroachment towards two small clusters of Grade II listed buildings associated with historic Barkham, and this is the sensitive landscape gap between an expanding Wokingham to the north and an expanding Arborfield Green area to the south, associated with the Barkham Brook valley, which has a notable degree of historic character.
- Other proposed allocations:
 - Hyde End Road, Shinfield (175 homes) – there are no listed buildings in the vicinity, but historic mapping shows the site to be strongly associated with a notable cluster of farms and ancient woodlands. However, there is now limited sense of historic character from the B3349, and there are few public rights of way through this area.
 - West of Park Lane, Charvil (61 homes) – is notably unconstrained, with historic mapping showing that this was historically a very rural area, and whilst archaeology is a key sensitivity in this area (with easily worked alluvial soils having supported the early settlement), this has been explored through the current planning application, and is understood to not be a constraint to bringing the site forward (given the potential for archaeological investigations and conservation).
 - Westwood Yard, Sheerlands Road (10 homes) – was originally not proposed for allocation at the Draft Plan stage noting a Grade II listed building, but the site boundary has since been amended.
- Wheatsheaf Close (24 homes) – is committed in that it is an existing allocation in the MDD Local Plan and included in the Draft Plan (2020). The Interim SA Report (2021) suggested that *"the possibility of a lower capacity... noting the adjacent historic lane (bridleway) and nearby listed building."*
- Nine Mile Ride / Barkham Ride – there remains a focus of growth in this southern part of the Borough, although this is reduced relative to the RGS stage, and there are no proposed allocations at Finchampstead Village. This area is overall associated with quite limited historic environment constraint, as this was a rural location at the edge of the extensive Barkham Common prior to the 20th century.

9.9.2 Finally, with regards to **DM policies**, it is difficult to suggest that any give rise to a significant tension with historic environment objectives, whilst the key policy supportive of objectives is Policy DH5 (the historic environment). This policy reflects limited local specificity, but it is noted that the historic environment does feature under several criteria within Policy SS13 (Loddon Valley Garden Village).

9.9.3 In **conclusion**, whilst there are inevitably some tensions with historic environment objectives, the spatial strategy is overall judged to perform strongly, and the historic environment is a focus of area/site-specific policy (plus there is borough-wide DM policy in line with national expectations). Focusing growth at Loddon Valley Garden Village is ultimately supported from a historic environment perspective, and whilst Barkham Square is subject to a notable degree of constraint, concerns are likely of limited significance, including accounting for the proposed layout / approach to masterplanning (but Historic England will wish to comment further, recognising that this is a new proposed allocation since the RGS stage, 2021). Overall, a **neutral effect** is predicted, accounting for established objectives and recognising that the baseline situation is one whereby growth continues to come forward without an up-to-date local plan.

9.10 Homes

9.10.1 Taking the **proposed allocations** in turn:

- Loddon Valley Garden Village – clearly there is excellent potential to deliver a good mix of housing sizes, types and tenures, as well as specialist housing, self/custom build housing and Gypsy and Traveller pitches. There is an element of delivery risk, but this is much reduced on account of the level of technical work that has been completed, delivery risk can be mitigated as part of an overall strategy that involves a good mix of sites and a total supply that exceeds what is required ('the housing requirement'), i.e. a 'supply buffer'. There has been an early commitment to deliver 40% affordable housing, in the context of recent expectations at SDLs (where there are inevitably major infrastructure costs) to be 35%.
- South Wokingham SDL extension – is also suited to delivering a good mix of housing, to include the full quota of affordable housing. However, the current planning application proposes 35% affordable housing whilst the LPU Viability Study suggests there should be potential to deliver 40%.
- Barkham Square – it has recently been established through the LPU Viability Study that the site can deliver 40% affordable housing, but this is a matter for ongoing scrutiny in light of other competing costs (e.g. net zero development) and also noting the amount of housing growth elsewhere in the local area. This appears an uncomplicated site to bring forward, i.e. without any obvious abnormal costs.
- Other proposed allocations – a key consideration is whether there is a good distribution of growth, recognising that there will be locally arising housing needs (albeit not quantifiable). In this regard, attention focuses on the Twyford area, where there has been relatively low growth over recent years / decades, and the growth strategy is slightly reduced relative to the RGS stage (when the proposal was to support higher growth at Charvil, as discussed in detail in the Interim SA Report, 2021). However, it is difficult to identify options for higher growth in this area, as discussed in Sections 5, 6 and 7.

9.10.2 Finally, with regards to **DM policies**, the key consideration is a proposal to require 40% affordable housing across all allocations other than previously developed sites within a main settlement. With regards to tenure split, the supporting text to Policy H3 (Affordable housing) explains:

"In accordance with the Planning Practice Guidance, a minimum of 25% of new homes on an eligible site would be delivered as First Homes. Of the remaining 75%, as a guide the council will seek a 70:30 split between social rent and shared ownership. The affordable housing tenure split will typically be 70% provided as social rent, 25% as First Homes, and 5% as shared ownership... This split may be applied flexibly in exceptional circumstances where there are site specific issues, including viability."

9.10.3 A further consideration is that Policies SS2 to SS7 provide a very clear starting point for the consideration of windfall planning applications, albeit other policies in the plan will also need to be factored-in. Overall, the proposed DM policy framework is supportive of the windfall assumption (see Section 5.5).

9.10.4 In **conclusion**, the key consideration is a proposal to provide for housing needs in full over the plan period at a steady rate, i.e. the proposal is to set the housing requirement at Local Housing Need (LHN) for each year within the plan period. This is currently 748 dwellings per annum (although the Government is consulting on a significantly higher figure at the time of writing, and neighbouring authorities also see higher figures under the proposals). Furthermore, when looking across the plan period as a whole the total supply exceeds the housing requirement (housing need) by c.10%, with a 'supply buffer' of this nature important as a contingency for delivery issues. Aside from the question of total growth quantum, there is also considered to be a good mix of sites, in terms of location and size/type, which is important in terms of ensuring a robust supply profile/trajectory and also providing for locally arising housing needs.

9.10.5 However, there could be the potential to focus growth at existing settlements to a greater extent (as opposed to focusing growth at a garden village and two extensions to existing SDLs) and there is an acknowledged 'housing' case for an alternative approach involving a greater weighting of growth towards the north of the Borough. Finally, with regards to DM policy, affordable housing is prioritised to a good extent (accounting for both total percentage requirement and required tenure mix), in the context of development viability parameters and competing objectives such as net zero. Overall it is considered appropriate to predict a **significant positive effect** in the context of current understanding of LHN.

9.11 Land, soils and other resources

9.11.1 Taking the **proposed allocations** in turn:

- Loddon Valley Garden Village – likely includes significant BMV agricultural land, although there is uncertainty as none of the site has been surveyed. Another consideration is sterilisation of minerals resources, with clear potential for significant sand and gravel resources at Loddon Valley given its river valley location. However, it is difficult to suggest that this is a constraint, as there would be good potential for prior extraction of sand and gravel ahead of development.
- South Wokingham SDL extension – is shown by the nationally available (low resolution) dataset to comprise grade 3 quality land. The site has not been surveyed, but nearby land has and been found to comprise mainly grade 3b quality land (non-BMV), as well as some grade 3a (BMV)
- Barkham Square – comprises notably poorer quality (grade 4) agricultural land.
- Other proposed allocations –
 - Good quality agricultural land in the north of the Borough – West of Park Lane, Charvil (61 homes) has been surveyed and found to comprise grade 3a (BMV) quality land. However, this is a small, isolated field not well suited to productive agricultural use.
 - Poorer quality land in the south of the Borough – aside from Barkham Square, the proposal is to reduce the scale of growth directed to the Finchampstead North / Nine Mile Ride / Barkham Ride area relative to the RGS stage (2021). Whilst this strategy can be questioned, from an agricultural land perspective, it is also noted that the allocation removed subsequent to the RGS stage (Rooks Nest Farm) is at the western extent of this area where the national dataset suggests grade 3 quality land.
 - Average quality land – Land North of Arborfield Road, Shinfield (191 homes) has been surveyed and found to comprise grade 3a quality land (BMV) whilst Hyde End Road, Shinfield (175 homes) has been surveyed and found to comprise mostly grade 3b (non-BMV).

9.11.2 Finally, with regards to **DM policies**, whilst loss of agricultural land is not something that can realistically be avoided or mitigated at the development management stage (beyond support for allotments and orchards), there is a clear requirement in respect of minerals extraction at Loddon Valley Garden Village (Policy SS13): *“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.”*

9.11.3 In **conclusion**, the spatial strategy will result in extensive loss of productive agricultural land and a proportion of this will comprise land that is 'best and most versatile' (BMV), but it is difficult to quantify the effect with any certainty, and there is limited guidance nationally on what extent of loss is 'significant'. Also, there is a need to consider that loss would continue under a baseline scenario, and that the Borough does not stand-out as particularly constrained in the sub-regional context. Aside from the loss of productive / BMV agricultural land, another consideration is sterilisation of mineral resources, but there are no significant concerns in this regard. Overall a **neutral effect** is predicted.

9.12 Landscape

9.12.1 Taking the **proposed allocations** in turn:

- Loddon Valley Garden Village – the river valley does generate a degree of inherent constraint, and parts of it are accessible / likely appreciated. However, the river valley provides containment and the landscape is changing due to the expansion of TVSP. Also, the proposal is to deliver a major new country park that would be transformative in terms of ensuring that the Loddon Valley is appreciated / valued and, indeed, would be one of the largest country parks delivered in the south of England in decades (and would link to an expanded Langley Mead SANG to the west, as discussed above).

Further context comes from work to define locally designated ('valued') landscapes, with the proposal to designate not only the Loddon River corridor but also the Barkham Brook corridor and, in this regard, there is a need to consider the matter of containing development within the valley of the former, i.e. avoiding breaking into the valley of the latter, as discussed further in Appendix IV.

- South Wokingham SDL extension – key considerations are around avoiding the risk of long term development creep and accounting for the concerns raised by Bracknell Forest Council (BFC) through the RGS consultation (2021), as discussed in Appendix IV. It is noted that there is a pending planning application for a SANG to the south of the site, which serves to highlight the need for comprehensive planning in respect of the intervening parcel of land / defining a new long term extent to the Wokingham urban area, mindful of settlement separation to Bracknell and Nine Mile Ride / Crowthorne.
- Barkham Square – generates limited concern, but there is also a need to factor-in the possibility of future southern expansion of Wokingham, ensuring that the sensitive Barkham Brook valley is protected (valuable in and of itself and from a perspective of avoiding settlement sprawl and coalescence risk). The latest proposal is to concentrate growth (at a relatively high density) in the western part of the site where the land is slightly raised above the Barkham Brook corridor to the east and north, such that there is a need to ensure a comprehensive scheme with a long term perspective.
- Other proposed allocations – none of the non-committed proposed allocations stand out as generating significant landscape concern, with all well contained by strong landscape features. For example, North of Arborfield Road, Shinfield (191 homes) will infill the gap between the settlement edge and the A327, whilst Hyde End Road, Shinfield (175 homes) is well-contained to the south by woodlands and Langley Mead SANG, although this does leave the question of maintaining a gap to Spencer's Wood to the west. In the Finchampstead North area the amended strategy (relative to the RGS stage, 2021) is supported from a perspective of maintaining settlement separation to Arborfield Green, but there remains a need for ongoing consideration of the future of Rooks Nest Farm, as discussed in Section 5.4.

One other notable adjustment to the strategy is in respect of reduced growth at Charvil. The Interim SA Report (2021) discussed Land East of Park View Drive North (78 homes), which was proposed for allocation but has now been removed from the plan, in detailed, explaining: "... *land surrounding Charvil, to the north of the A4, is associated with a distinctive wide river valley landscape where the River Loddon braids before reaching the River Thames, and there is a nearby (although not adjacent) circular footpath that that is likely to be well used by walkers and anglers (this area is popular for fishing). The LCA states: "In some parts such as around Charvil, access to the floodplain is limited, creating a locally strong sense of remoteness. Views of parklands and manor houses associated with the adjoining valley sides also create an impression of settlement and are important features of the landscape."* The LCA concludes that the 'Loddon Valley with Open Water' character area has only 'moderate' value and sensitivity; however, it is noted that this conclusion is reached on the basis that the area has been affected by extraction activities, which is thought not to apply to the Charvil area."

9.12.2 With regards to **in-combination effects**, Barkham Square is located in an important area from a perspective of in combination landscape impacts, recognising that Loddon Valley Garden Village is to the west along the Barkham Brook corridor, and expanding Barkham Ride is located to the east and Wokingham is located to the north, where there is a current pending planning application for a southern expansion (as discussed in Sections 5, 6 and 7) albeit this is not supported by the LPU.

9.12.3 Finally, with regards to **DM policies**, whilst numerous policies might give rise to an element of tension with landscape objectives (e.g. Policy H4: Rural exception sites), there is little reason to suggest any significant concern. A key policy supportive of landscape objectives is then Policy NE6 (Valued landscapes), which designates a series of landscapes (see Figure 6.2, above) and sets out:

“Development proposals within or otherwise affecting valued landscapes must carefully consider and take account of the important landscape attributes and characteristics. Development will normally only be supported where these are protected. Where development is deemed appropriate, it should appropriately respond to the landscape through location, layout and high quality design.”

- 9.12.4 With regards to Policy NE5 (Landscape and design), this includes limited local specificity, but there is a focus on Green Routes, with the supporting text explaining:

“Many routes into and through the borough’s settlements are lined with trees and other vegetation that together make a significant contribution to the environmental character of the borough. These Green Routes include, amongst others: Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead Road, Easthampstead Road, Barkham Road, Eversley Road, London Road and Wargrave Road.”

- 9.12.5 Finally, there is an extensive focus on landscape within Policy SS13 (Loddon Valley Garden Village), for example policy criteria require:

- *“A coordinated and comprehensive landscape led approach to development of the whole Loddon Valley Garden Village to avoid piecemeal and ad-hoc development proposals;*
- *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...*
- *Protect and enhance the identified attributes of the River Loddon Valued Landscape and Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape...*
- *Protect and retain the permanent physical and visual sense of separation of Arborfield and the defined settlements of Arborfield Cross and Shinfield...*
- *Incorporate measures to protect the separate identity of Carter’s Hill...*”

- 9.12.6 In **conclusion**, there is a need to predict a **‘moderate or uncertain’ negative effect**, even after having accounted for the proposal to support a series of local landscape designations and DM policy that includes clear requirements for green infrastructure aimed at ensuring developments are well-contained within the landscape. Whilst there is a strong case for LVGV in landscape terms (particularly given the proposal to deliver a new country park of regional significance, and notwithstanding inherent sensitivities associated with the Loddon Valley) there are concerns regarding landscape character in the southern half of the Borough with a long term perspective. However, it is important to be clear that there are no easy options in the Wokingham Borough context, in terms of avoiding or minimising landscape impacts, as discussed in Section 6. Whilst there are no nationally designated landscapes, the effect of decades of urban expansion just beyond the edge of the London metropolitan Green Belt means that there are inherent risks to settlement separation and landscape / settlement character.

9.13 Transport

- 9.13.1 Taking the **proposed allocations** in turn:

- Loddon Valley Garden Village – there would be a good level of self-containment / trip internalisation and detailed work has been undertaken to overcome the inherent challenge of being located between main transport corridors, as well as the severance effect of the river corridor and the M4, in terms of accessing Reading and Winnersh station (also Bearwood College in terms of accessing Wokingham). Supporting fast and frequent bus connectivity is a key challenge and opportunity associated with the site – see Figures 9.1 and 9.2 (but noting this is an initial view from the land promoters, which is will be further evolved through engagement with WBC and Reading Borough Council).
- South Wokingham SDL extension – limited transport-related concerns were raised through consultation in 2021. However, it is important to recognise that new homes would mostly be beyond an easy walking distance of the committed local centre / primary school within the SDL as well as bus stops along the new South Wokingham Distributor Road (there are no bus services currently serving the site). In this regard, there is an important distinction between the northwest part of the site, which is well-connected to the committed SDL / Wokingham, and the southern and eastern parcels, which would look to Old Wokingham Road for connectivity (and which are also discussed above as subject to a degree of constraint in wider terms). With regards to the matter of downgrading or closing the Easthampstead Road to road traffic, this is strongly supported, but it is not entirely clear whether, or to what extent, this is dependent on the SDL extension.

- Barkham Square – would be well-beyond easy walking distance of the new district centre to the south, but there would be very good (highest quality) pedestrian and cycle connectivity and a neighbourhood centre is nearby, plus potential for good bus connectivity seems likely.
- Other proposed allocations:
 - North of Arborfield Road, Shinfield (191 homes) – is considered well located in transport terms, given proximity to a district centre and a location on the A327, which is a key bus corridor (as discussed).
 - Hyde End Road, Shinfield (175 homes) – is within easy walking distance of a new district centre and there are reasonable road links (a B-road), albeit there is not direct access onto the A327 and there appears not to currently be any bus services along Hyde End Road.
 - Finchampstead North – the two proposed un-committed allocations (130 homes in total) are located at the western extent of the settlement area (the larger along Nine Mile Ride, the latter along Barkham Ride). In turn, neither has good accessibility credentials, and a degree of car dependency can be envisaged. However, there is also a committed allocation in this area along Barkham Ride (31-33 Barkham Ride; 80 homes), which could potentially contribute to funding for transport upgrades.
 - West of Park Lane, Charvil (61 homes) – Charvil is a limited development location in the settlement hierarchy, but the site in question is adjacent to a primary school, a secondary school is nearby in Woodley (but limited walking/cycling connectivity) and Charvil is generally well-linked via the A4.

9.13.2 With regards to **in-combination effects**, this is clearly a key consideration from a transport perspective, both in terms of traffic congestion (with wide ranging knock-on implications, including for active travel and bus services) and realising opportunities to deliver new / upgraded infrastructure and bus services. Loddon Valley and Ashridge would clearly give rise to an in-combination effect on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) that National Highways would need to comment on, likely with a need for further work to explore options for strategic solutions.

9.13.3 Finally, with regards to **DM policies**, whilst numerous policies might give rise to an element of tension with transport objectives (e.g. Policy H4: Rural exception sites), there is little reason to suggest any significant concern. A key policy supportive of objectives is then Policy SS17 (Transport improvements), which sets out a range of priority interventions, some of which are somewhat generic, but others of which are specific to the Borough. There are also numerous policies within the ‘Connections’ section of the plan document that are supportive of transport objectives, although these mostly reflect limited local specificity, and it will be important to ensure that priority interventions are identified and delivered by the proposed allocations.

9.13.4 In **conclusion**, the spatial strategy directs growth strongly in line with the settlement hierarchy and to strategic sites suited to achieving a degree of trip internalisation and investment in transport infrastructure/services. None of the strategic sites are ideally located from a transport perspective – with LVGV located between strategic transport corridors, South Wokingham SDL extension some way distant from Wokingham town centre and Barkham Square an extension to a modest development settlement (Arborfield Green) – but it is not clear that there is a preferable strategy (see Sections 5, 6 and 7). Much detailed work has been undertaken to explore transport issues and opportunities, e.g. with a view to a targeted approach to bus services and cycle infrastructure, and a robust DM policy framework is proposed, but overall it is appropriate to predict a **neutral effect** on the baseline. This is an improvement on the equivalent conclusion reached at the RGS stage (2021).

Local Transport Plan 4



Figure 9.1: LVGV – existing bus services (including four with 20 minute frequency – blue, orange, green and yellow)

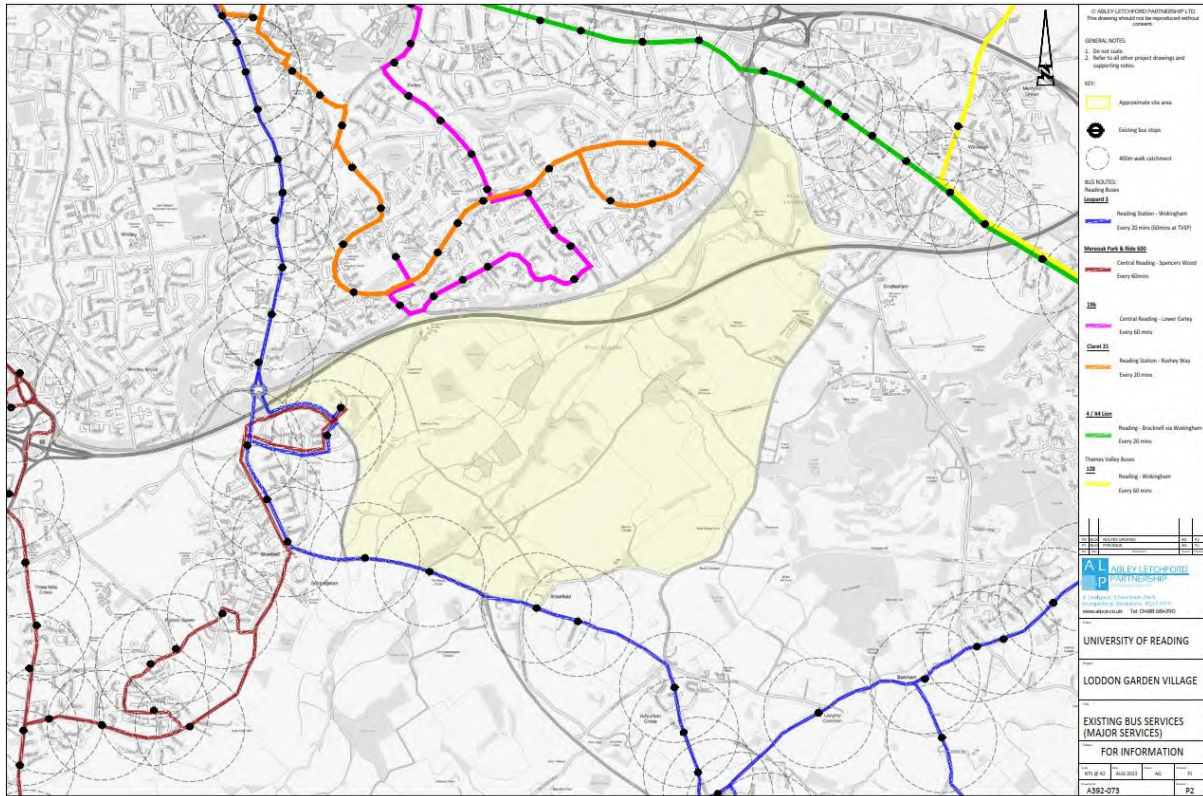
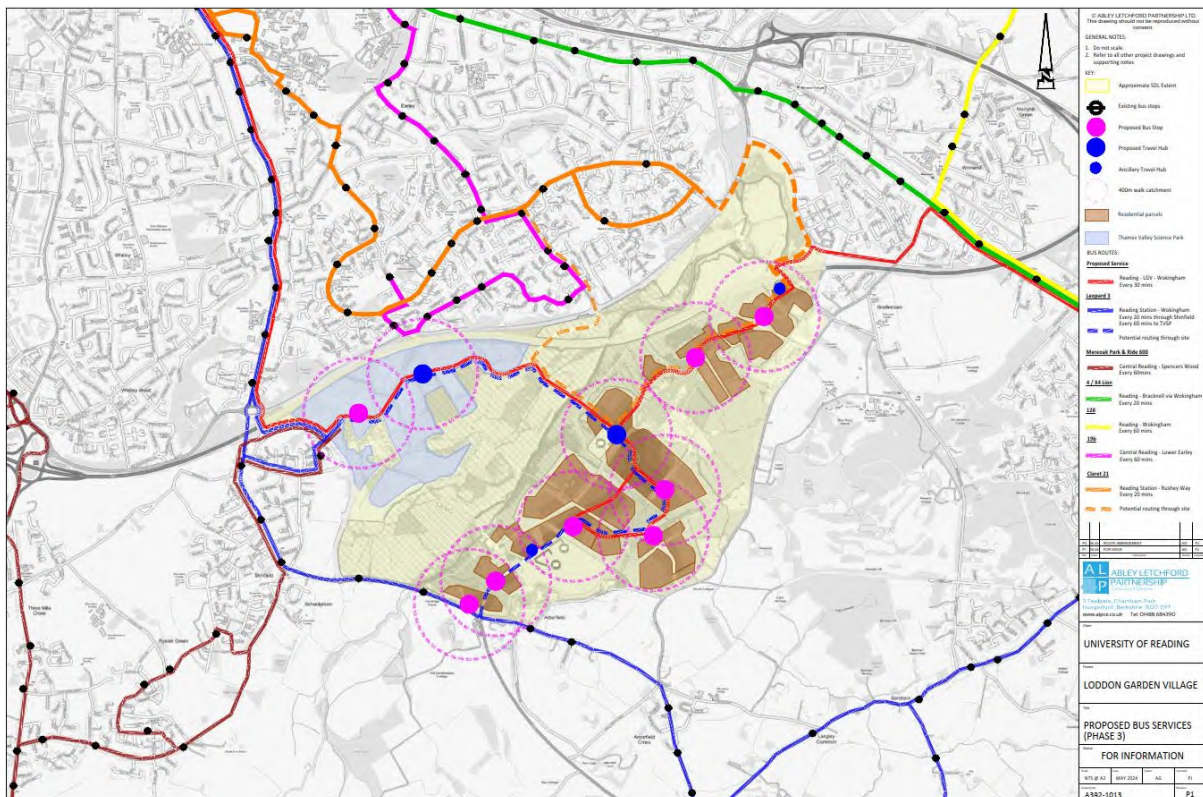


Figure 9.2: LVGV – Proposed bus services (N.B. site-promoter proposals subject to further work)²⁷

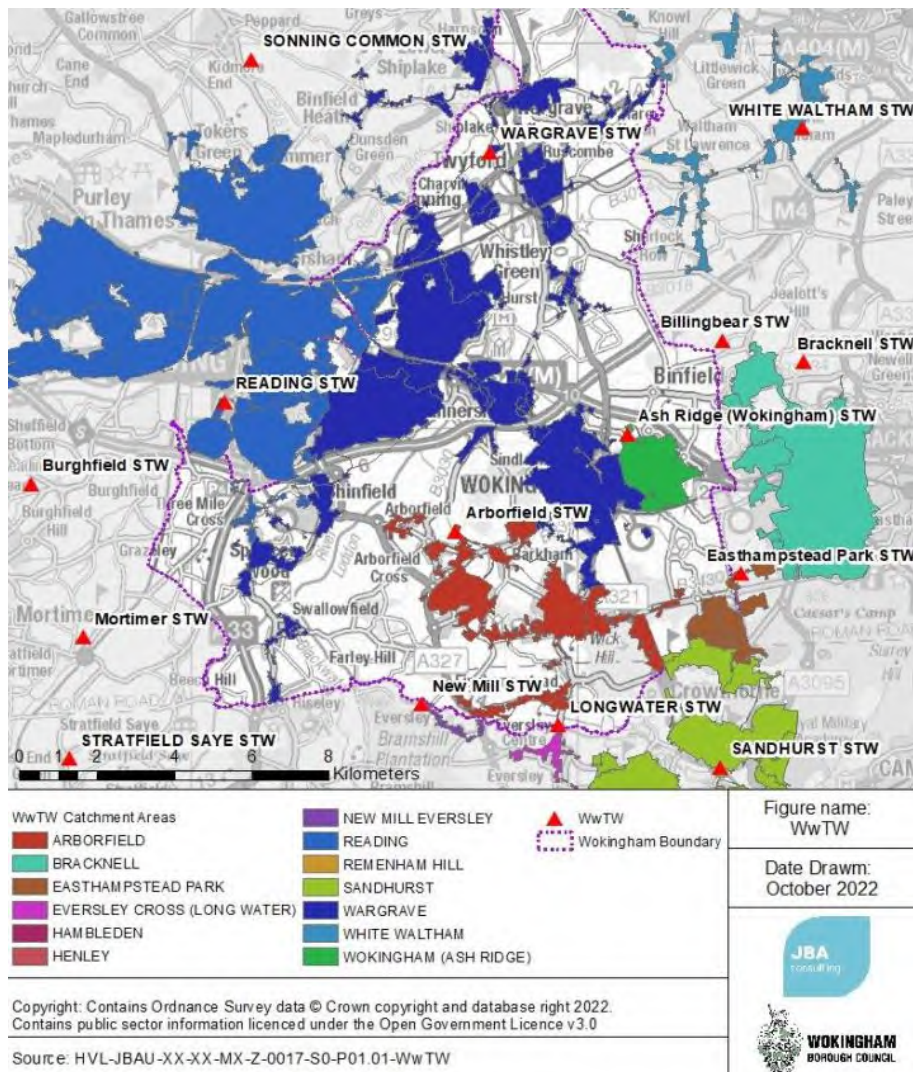


²⁷ It can be seen that the proposal is to: A) extend the blue route through the site; B) extend the orange route through the site; and C) deliver a new red route through the site that links between the A329 and A327 corridors.

9.14 Water

- 9.14.1 As discussed in Section 6 and Appendix IV, a key issue is in combination effects on Arborfield WwTW, including resulting from growth at Loddon Valley, Barkham Square and Shinfield; however, on the other hand, this issue is likely surmountable noting that Thames Water have recently [proposed](#) an upgrade. Also, there is a need to consider in-combination impacts on Wargrave WwTW, which serves a large proportion of the Borough. Furthermore, there is also the broader context of existing water quality within the Borough’s network of water courses, which is a separate matter examined through the WCS (2024).
- 9.14.2 With regards to DM policies, the proposal is to require 105 litres/person/day, which is standard practice, although some local plans in particularly water stressed areas requiring more stringent standards (with cost / viability implications). With regards to WwTWs, Policy C8 (Utilities) sets out a standard requirement: *“Development proposals must demonstrate that there is sufficiency capacity for electricity, water supply and waste water collection and treatment infrastructure on and off site to service the development, and that agreement has been or will be sought from the appropriate utility / service providers.”*
- 9.14.3 In **conclusion**, whilst few concerns were raised through the consultation in 2021, and a Stage 2 WCS was subsequently completed that raises few concerns, the WCS has not been able to account for the latest proposed allocations and does not explore the implications of growth scenarios. It appears clear that there is an issue at Arborfield WwTW, but the significance of this issue is unclear, given the potential to secure capacity upgrades. If nothing else, it serves to shine a light on the importance of integrating water environment objectives into ongoing work around masterplanning and design at LVGV. Taking a precautionary approach, it is appropriate to flag a **‘moderate or uncertain negative effect**. It will be for the Environment Agency and Thames Water to comment further through the current publicity period.

Figure 9.3: Wastewater Treatment Works catchments



9.15 Conclusions

- 9.15.1 The whole plan appraisal presented above seeks to build upon the appraisal of Scenario 1 presented in Section 6. The appraisal conclusions reached for the LPU as a whole broadly align with those reached for Scenario 1, although in two cases it is considered appropriate to 'upgrade' the appraisal conclusion after having taken account of proposed development management policies (which for the most part do not factor-in to the appraisal in Section 6, to ensure an unbiased appraisal of the growth scenarios). Specifically, this is the case for climate change mitigation and communities/health.
- 9.15.2 The outcome is that the appraisal predicts a **positive effect** under five topics, and in three cases it is possible to conclude that the positive effect will be 'significant'. Specifically, a significant positive effect is predicted under the accessibility (to community infrastructure), communities/health and homes headings. A less significant positive effect ('moderate or uncertain') is then predicted for climate change mitigation and the economy (although there is an argument for predicting significant positive effects),
- 9.15.3 The appraisal then predicts a **negative effect** under two headings – landscape and water – but in neither case is the effect predicted to be significant. Under the remaining topic headings the appraisal predicts a **neutral effect**, but that is not to say that the appraisal does not flag a range of specific issues and tensions with sustainability objectives.
- 9.15.4 Taking each of the sustainability topics in turn:
- **Accessibility** – the proposed spatial strategy performs very well, primarily due to a focus on directing growth broadly in line with the settlement hierarchy and towards strategic sites able to deliver new community infrastructure, most notably new education facilities including a new secondary school at Loddon Valley Garden Village that will be well-located / in line with borough-wide schools strategy. Of the other two strategic allocations, Barkham Square will not deliver a primary school and there is some uncertainty at South Wokingham SDL extension (but it will deliver a neighbourhood centre), but both are well located in terms of accessing community infrastructure (with capacity) within adjacent SDLs. A robust DM policy framework is proposed and there is confidence that the net effect will be to ensure that community infrastructure is delivered in line with the policy intent, accounting for development viability considerations. Overall a **significant positive effect** on the baseline is predicted, accounting for established objectives, which is in line with the conclusion reached for growth scenario 1 in Section 6.
 - **Air and wider environmental quality** – the proposed spatial strategy does not generate any significant concerns from an air quality perspective, including recalling that the baseline situation is one whereby growth continues to come forward but in a relatively unplanned way. LVGV is not ideally located in transport terms, and there is an extensive AQMA affecting the centre of Reading, but there will be good potential to minimise the need to travel and achieve high levels of transport modal shift. Another issue at LVGV is noise and air pollution from the adjacent M4, but steps can be taken to avoid and mitigate this (at a financial cost). The modest growth strategy for the north of the Borough is also supported given a problematic AQMA affecting Twyford, although equally the opportunity to deliver a bypass road is not set to be realised. Finally, with regards to the Wokingham AQMA, both South Wokingham SDL extension and Barkham Square will likely result in additional car trips through the AQMA, but there is no reason to suggest a significant concern. Overall a **neutral effect** on the baseline is predicted, in line with the conclusion reached for growth scenario 1.
 - **Biodiversity** – the proposed spatial strategy does not generate any significant concerns, with the three main proposed allocations subject to limited constraint and all able to deliver new strategic greenspace (SANG) that should prove well-targeted from a biodiversity perspective. LVGV is inherently sensitive on account of the Loddon valley / corridor, but sensitivities are more associated with land to the north of the river, where the expansion of TVSP is likely to come forward regardless of a garden village to the south, and the opportunity to deliver a major new country park is of larger-than-local (e.g. regional) significance. Certain of the other proposed allocations are also subject to a degree of biodiversity constraint, including in the vicinity of Longmoor Bog SSSI, but concerns are overall of limited significance, and a degree of tension with biodiversity objectives is largely unavoidable in the context of local plan-making. With regards to DM policy, the key point to note is that the proposal is not to require BNG over-and-above the nationally required 10%, but otherwise a suitably proactive approach is taken through site-specific policy, and at the current time plan-making is being undertaken without the benefit of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS; which is currently in preparation for Berkshire). Overall a **neutral effect** is predicted.

- **Climate change adaptation** – the proposed spatial strategy does not generate any significant concerns, once account is taken of the potential to avoid flood zones through masterplanning and design-in Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). LVGV is inherently sensitive, including noting downstream flood risk and the need for infrastructure within / across the flood zone, but detailed work has concluded the potential to avoid any worsening of flood risk, and ongoing consideration can be given to strategic flood water attenuation as part of work to design and deliver a new country park along the river corridor. The two other largest allocations – Barkham Square and South Wokingham SDL extension – are also bisected by fluvial flood zones, and at both there is a need for ongoing scrutiny of the steps taken through masterplanning to buffer and potentially enhance the flood zones. Finally, certain of the PDL allocations are located in a flood risk zone, but this is not unusual in the national context, and the key thing is that flood risk factors into decision-making in respect of site capacity (including accounting for non-residential uses on the ground floor) and development management policy. Overall a **neutral effect** is predicted, but it is recognised that the Environment Agency will wish to comment through the consultation.
- **Climate change mitigation** – the spatial strategy has some merit in terms of built environment decarbonisation (the focus of discussion here), particularly given the focus of growth at LVGV and two other strategic sites, but equally it is difficult to conclude that built environment decarbonisation has been a key focus of spatial strategy / site selection and masterplanning work undertaken to date. This being the case and given the urgency of decarbonisation given the committed net zero target date / trajectory, Section 6 predicts a ‘moderate or uncertain’ negative effect for growth scenario 1 (the preferred scenario). However, within this section added consideration is given to proposed DM policy and, in this regard, proposals are very strongly supported. Specifically, the DM policy approach involves requiring net zero development to an exacting standard (in line with the energy hierarchy and with an energy-based approach to calculating performance) and is considered to be at the forefront of national best practice (with numerous emerging local plans taking this approach, particularly in parts of the country with strong development viability). On this basis it is considered appropriate to predict a **‘moderate or uncertain’ positive effect** on the baseline, accounting for established objectives/targets. However, this conclusion is reached on balance, because it is crucially important to take all steps to realise built environment decarbonisation opportunities through spatial strategy and site selection, rather than relying overly on DM policy with cost implications such that there is a risk of having to make compromises at the planning application stage.
- **Communities** – key issues relate to: A) providing for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs; and B) place-making and avoiding impacts to communities / addressing community concerns. There is a strong degree of support for the spatial strategy in both respects, e.g. in respect of Gypsies and Travellers it is important to be clear that the approach taken to providing for accommodation needs is proactive to a level that goes beyond what is typical across the South East (although supply from allocations still falls short of the identified need figure). Section 6 predicts a ‘moderate or uncertain’ positive effect for growth scenario 1 (the preferred scenario) but having taken account of the proposed DM policy framework it is considered appropriate to upgrade this conclusion to a **significant positive effect**. A robust DM policy framework is proposed – both site/area-specific and borough-wide – and it is clear that the needs of communities are prioritised to a good extent in the context of limited funds / development viability parameters.
- **Economy** – the spatial strategy performs well in that the minimum employment need figure set out in the ELNS (2023) is provided for in full (and exceeded). However, the conclusion is a **‘moderate or uncertain’ positive effect**, rather than a significant positive effect, because the supply would fall well short of the upper-end ELNS target figure (albeit this is a strategic and aspirational figure). A robust DM policy framework is also proposed, and this is of considerable importance, as there is a need to ensure a proactive approach to supporting windfall sites and windfall applications for the intensification of existing employment sites in order to boost supply.
- **Historic environment** – whilst there are inevitably some tensions with historic environment objectives, the spatial strategy is overall judged to perform strongly, and the historic environment is a focus of area/site-specific policy (plus there is borough-wide DM policy in line with national expectations). Focusing growth at Loddon Valley Garden Village is ultimately supported from a historic environment perspective, and whilst Barkham Square is subject to a notable degree of constraint, concerns are likely of limited significance, including accounting for the proposed layout / approach to masterplanning (but Historic England will wish to comment further, recognising that this is a new proposed allocation since the RGS stage, 2021). Overall, a **neutral effect** is predicted, accounting for established objectives and recognising that the baseline situation is one whereby growth continues to come forward without an up-to-date local plan.

- **Homes** – the key consideration is a proposal to provide for housing needs in full over the plan period at a steady rate, i.e. the proposal is to set the housing requirement at Local Housing Need (LHN) for each year within the plan period. This is currently 748 dwellings per annum (although the Government is consulting on a significantly higher figure at the time of writing, and neighbouring authorities also see higher figures under the proposals). Furthermore, when looking across the plan period as a whole the total supply exceeds the housing requirement (housing need) by c.10%, with a ‘supply buffer’ of this nature important as a contingency for delivery issues. Aside from the question of total growth quantum, there is also considered to be a good mix of sites, in terms of location and size/type, which is important in terms of ensuring a robust supply profile/trajectory and also providing for locally arising housing needs. However, there could be the potential to focus growth at existing settlements to a greater extent (as opposed to focusing growth at a garden village and two extensions to existing SDLs) and there is an acknowledged ‘housing’ case for an alternative approach involving a greater weighting of growth towards the north of the Borough. Finally, with regards to DM policy, affordable housing is prioritised to a good extent (accounting for both total percentage requirement and required tenure mix), in the context of development viability parameters and competing objectives such as net zero. Overall it is considered appropriate to predict a **significant positive effect** in the context of current understanding of LHN.
- **Land, soils and natural resources** – the spatial strategy will result in extensive loss of productive agricultural land and a proportion of this will comprise land that is ‘best and most versatile’ (BMV), but it is difficult to quantify the effect with any certainty, and there is limited guidance nationally on what extent of loss is ‘significant’. Also, there is a need to consider that loss would continue under a baseline scenario, and that the Borough does not stand-out as particularly constrained in the sub-regional context. Aside from the loss of productive / BMV agricultural land, another consideration is sterilisation of mineral resources, but there are no significant concerns. Overall a **neutral effect** is predicted.
- **Landscape** – there is a need to predict a **‘moderate or uncertain’ negative effect**, even after having accounted for the proposal to support a series of local landscape designations and DM policy that includes clear requirements for green infrastructure aimed at ensuring developments are well-contained within the landscape. Whilst there is a strong case for LVGV in landscape terms (particularly given the proposal to deliver a new country park of regional significance, and notwithstanding inherent sensitivities associated with the Loddon Valley) there are concerns regarding landscape character in the southern half of the Borough with a long term perspective. However, it is important to be clear that there are no easy options in the Wokingham Borough context, in terms of avoiding or minimising landscape impacts, as discussed in Section 6. Whilst there are no nationally designated landscapes, the effect of decades of urban expansion just beyond the edge of the London metropolitan Green Belt means that there are inherent risks to settlement separation and landscape / settlement character.
- **Transport** – the spatial strategy directs growth strongly in line with the settlement hierarchy and to strategic sites suited to achieving a degree of trip internalisation and investment in transport infrastructure/services. None of the strategic sites are ideally located from a transport perspective – with LVGV located between strategic transport corridors, South Wokingham SDL extension some way distant from Wokingham town centre and Barkham Square an extension to a modest development settlement (Arborfield Green) – but it is not clear that there is a preferable strategy (see Sections 5, 6 and 7). Much detailed work has been undertaken to explore transport issues and opportunities, e.g. with a view to a targeted approach to bus services and cycle infrastructure, and a robust DM policy framework is proposed, but overall it is appropriate to predict a **neutral effect** on the baseline. This is an improvement on the equivalent conclusion reached at the RGS stage (2021).
- **Water** – whilst few concerns were raised through the consultation in 2021, and a Stage 2 WCS was subsequently completed that raises few concerns, the WCS has not been able to account for the latest proposed allocations and does not explore the implications of growth scenarios. It appears clear that there is an issue at Arborfield WwTW, but the significance of this issue is unclear, given the potential to secure capacity upgrades. If nothing else, it serves to shine a light on the importance of integrating water environment objectives into ongoing work around masterplanning and design at LVGV. Taking a precautionary approach, it is appropriate to flag a **‘moderate or uncertain negative effect**. It will be for the Environment Agency and Thames Water to comment further through the current publicity period.

9.15.5 There will be the potential to make improvements to the plan through the forthcoming examination in public (EiP). Improvements to the plan might seek to further bolster positive effects identified through this appraisal, and there will certainly be the potential to further explore tensions with sustainability objectives. As part of this, it may be possible to adjust the balance that has been struck in respect of DM policy requirements in the context of development viability, e.g. feasibly compromising on one or more objectives in order to boost the requirement for biodiversity net gain to 20%.

- 9.15.6 A small number of recommendations are made; however, it is inherently difficult to confidently make recommendations because actioning them will have implications that are difficult to foresee and account for here. For example, whilst it would be easy to recommend further policy stringency in respect of biodiversity net gain, this would have cost/viability implications such that there could be a need to accept trade-offs in respect of wider objectives (e.g. affordable housing, net zero or accessibility standards). Equally, whilst it would be easy to recommend further site-specific policy, there is always a risk of being overly prescriptive, such that there is reduced flexibility at the DM stage, potentially impacting delivery.
- 9.15.7 Finally, it should be noted that the current version of the Local Plan was prepared taking account of the appraisal presented within Section 9 of the Interim SA Report (2021). There is no requirement for SA to be iterative in this way, but it helps to demonstrate a robust and sound plan-making process.

Cumulative effects

- 9.15.8 The SEA Regulations, which underpin the SA process, indicate that stand-alone consideration should be given to 'cumulative effects', i.e. effects of the Local Plan in combination with other plans, programmes and projects that can be reasonably foreseen. In practice, this is an opportunity to discuss potential long term and 'larger than local' effects. The following bullet points cover some key considerations:

- **Reading** – as discussed (including in Section 5.2), whilst current understanding is that there is no unmet need arising from Reading, there may be the potential for this situation to change in the future, and under this scenario there would be a need for a sub-regional strategic approach to growth with close consideration given to transport connectivity and other wide-ranging factors.

There is also a need for close collaboration with Reading Borough in wider respects, including in terms of strategic planning for transport and wider infrastructure capacity, including making the most of strategic transport corridors as public and active travel routes, e.g. aiming for fast and frequent bus services and high quality segregating cycle lanes. There is a clear need for more work in this regard, e.g. noting the following figure from the Reading Local Plan Partial Update Scope and Content consultation document (2023) and the new emphasis on effective collaboration in the Draft NPPF (2024).

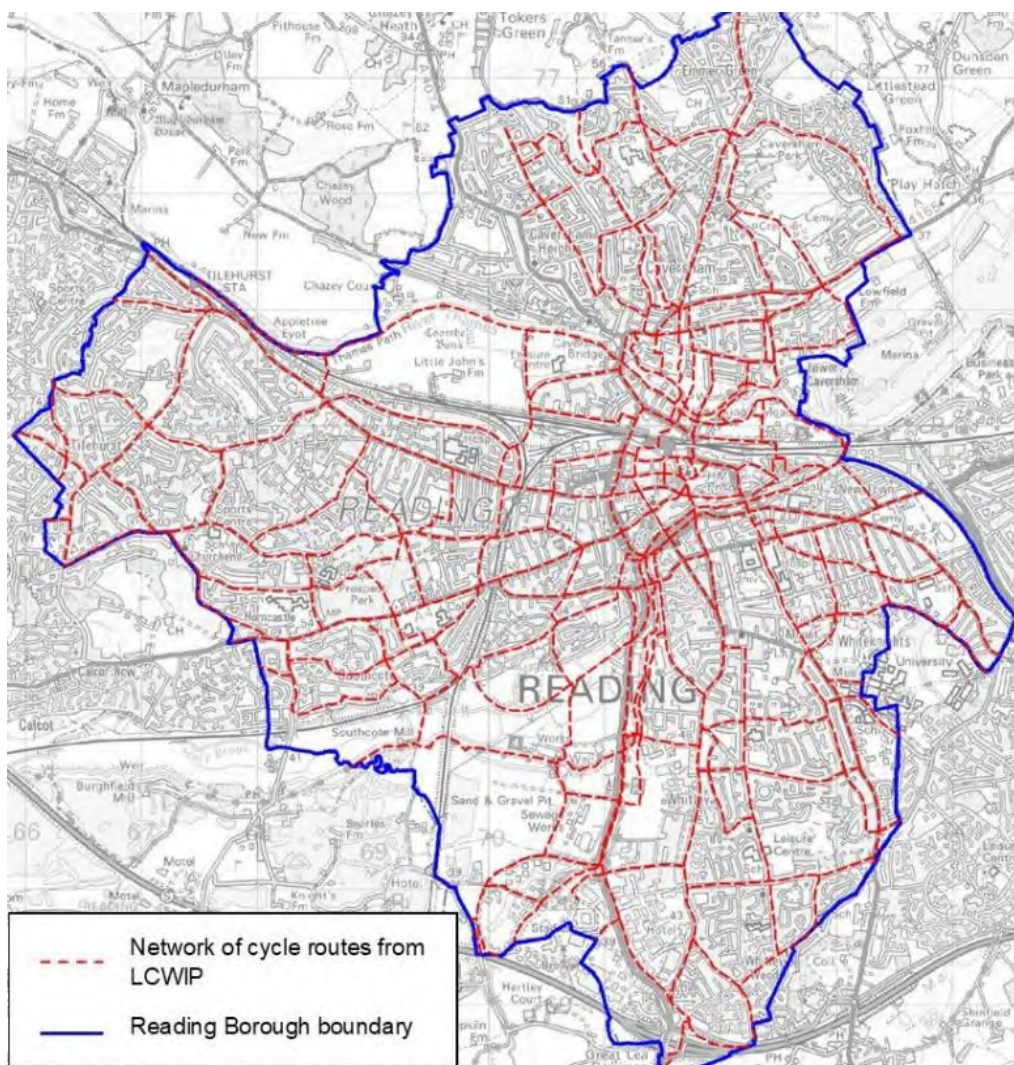
Recent delivery of P&R facilities across Reading/Wokingham is a good example of joint working.

- **Bracknell** – Wokingham Borough must also effectively collaborate with Bracknell Forest, including in respect of sensitive landscape gaps, transport corridors and SANG / local nature recovery.
- **Other local authorities** – as things currently stand there is less need for close collaboration with Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, South Oxfordshire, West Berkshire and Hart. However, moving forward there could be a need for closer collaboration, including in the context of potentially increased standard method housing need figures. Also, the new Draft NPPF proposes new policy in respect of Green Belt and includes a major new focus on collaboration between neighbouring authorities. Also, the Government has set out the aspiration of moving towards a new regime of formal sub-regional strategic planning. The sub-region clearly has a range of issues to deal with, including development needs associated with London / the London suburbs, Slough, Reading and the Blackwater Valley, all in the context of the TBHSPA, AWE Burghfield and wider constraints. Amongst other things, the possibility of a new road crossing of the River Thames could require ongoing consideration, including with a view to minimising pressure on the historic crossings at Sonning, Henley, Marlow, Cookham and Maidenhead.



Close collaboration on transport is a key issue across the sub-region

- **Employment land** – as has been discussed, providing for warehousing and logistics needs is a key sub-regional consideration along the M4 corridor and within the wider Thames Valley, such that there is a need for effective collaboration with neighbouring authorities. Providing for film studio needs is similarly a key sub-regional consideration. Also, at this point there is a need to reiterate that potential flexibility to accommodate a relocated Royal Berkshire Hospital is an ongoing factor, with both TVSP and Thames Valley Park identified as the Trust’s preferred options if relocation goes ahead.
- **Thames Basin Heath SPA** – the matter of in-combination impacts to the SPA is a focus of a stand-alone Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), noting that eleven authorities manage the SPA in partnership. Despite many years of effective collaboration to deliver SANG, following work under the South East Plan (2009; also see (see tbpartnership.org.uk) there remains room for improvement e.g. a single online portal showing existing SANGs as well as information on SANGs with capacity and SANG options.
- **Landscape scale net gain** – there is a need to focus efforts on achieving conservation and ‘net gain’ objectives, in respect of biodiversity and wider ecosystem services, at functional landscape scales, including those discussed within the Wokingham LCA (also catchment scales). A Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) will be forthcoming, under the Environment Act, but steps must be taken in the interim.
- **Land and water** – self-sufficiency of food production is increasingly a key national consideration, as is effective planning for water resources at the scale of river catchments and groundwater aquifers. In agricultural land terms Wokingham is not particularly constrained in the regional context, but there are some concerns around water quality including relating to capacity at wastewater treatment works.



Collaboration with Reading on transport is a key larger-than-local issue

Part 3: What are the next steps?

10 Plan finalisation

- 10.1.1 Once the period for representations on the Local Plan / SA Report has finished the intention is to submit the plan for examination in public alongside a summary of the main issues raised through the Regulation 19 publication period. The Council will also submit the SA Report.
- 10.1.2 At examination one or more Government-appointed Inspector(s) will consider representations before identifying modifications necessary for soundness. Modifications will then be prepared (alongside SA if necessary) and subjected to consultation (alongside an SA Report Addendum if necessary).
- 10.1.3 Once found to be 'sound' the Local Plan will be adopted. At the time of adoption a 'Statement' must be published that sets out (amongst other things) "the measures decided concerning monitoring".

11 Monitoring

- 11.1.1 Within the SA Report the requirement is to present "measures envisaged concerning monitoring".
- 11.1.2 The following are suggestions / ideas for monitoring, although it is recognised that, in practice, there is a need to balance ambition with time and resource implications:
- Biodiversity – there will be a need to establish a regime for ensuring that decision making in respect of biodiversity net gain as part of planning applications is undertaken under a strategic spatial framework – informed by the forthcoming Local Nature Recovery Strategy – and then monitor effectiveness.
 - Communities – there could be merit to targeted monitoring of growth/change at Loddon Valley Garden Village. For example, incidences of residents commuting to work by active or public transport.
 - Community infrastructure – the Borough is already at the forefront of good practice nationally in respect of clearly reporting information on progress at strategic development sites, including in respect of community infrastructure ([/www.wokingham.gov.uk/major-developments](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/major-developments)). There is a need to build upon this and also integrate into ongoing local plan monitoring and evaluation.
 - Climate change mitigation – monitoring should focus on clarity. This can be a confusing policy area, but it is very important that the interested public can understand / engage and scrutinise applications.
 - Climate change adaptation – a focus on avoiding surface water flood zones could be considered but would likely prove challenging. Regardless, there is a need for clarity on the different forms of flood risk.
 - Economy and employment – the nature of need/demand for office floorspace and industrial/logistics floorspace changes very quickly. Regular monitoring of delivery would assist with future assessments.
 - Historic environment – it can be difficult to know what monitoring indicators are most appropriate to apply. What is quite typical is to monitor the number of assets on the Heritage at Risk register, but this will not give a good picture of the local plans impacts or contextual changes to the historic environment.
 - Homes – this topic is already a focus of the monitoring, but additional indicators could be explored, for example with figures broken down further by settlement and by housing type and tenure. Also, there is an increasing focus on tenure split for affordable housing, which might feed into monitoring. A focus on Gypsy and Traveller accommodation could also serve to inform future needs assessments.
 - Transport – there is a clear need for targeted detailed monitoring. As well as road traffic and air quality, there is a need for improved data on bus patronage and use of cycle routes. Also, understanding of strategic transport infrastructure issues and opportunities changes significantly over time (e.g. informed by Transport for the South East and the transport policy work led by Wokingham's neighbouring county and unitary authorities), hence there is a need to consider local plan implications on an ongoing basis.
 - Water – there is a need for monitoring of the situation regarding wastewater treatment capacity and potentially also wider water quality. Also, there is a need to monitor water efficiency standards achieved.

Appendix I: Regulatory requirements

As discussed in Section 1, Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans Regulations 2004 explains the information that must be contained in the SA Report. However, interpretation of Schedule 2 is not straightforward. Table A links the structure of this report to an interpretation of Schedule 2, whilst Table B explains this interpretation. Table C then presents a discussion of more precisely how the information in this report reflects the requirements.

Table A: Questions answered by this SA Report, in-line with an interpretation of regulatory requirements

		Questions answered	As per regulations... the SA Report must include...
Introduction	What's the plan seeking to achieve?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes
	What's the SA scope?	What's the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
		What's the sustainability 'baseline'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
		What are the key issues and objectives that should be a focus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e. provide a 'framework' for) assessment
Part 1	What has plan-making / SA involved up to this point?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (and thus an explanation of the 'reasonableness' of the approach) The likely significant effects associated with alternatives Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives assessment / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan 	
Part 2	What are the SA findings at this current stage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan 	
Part 3	What happens next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A description of the monitoring measures envisaged 	

Table B: Interpreting Schedule 2 and linking the interpretation to the report structure

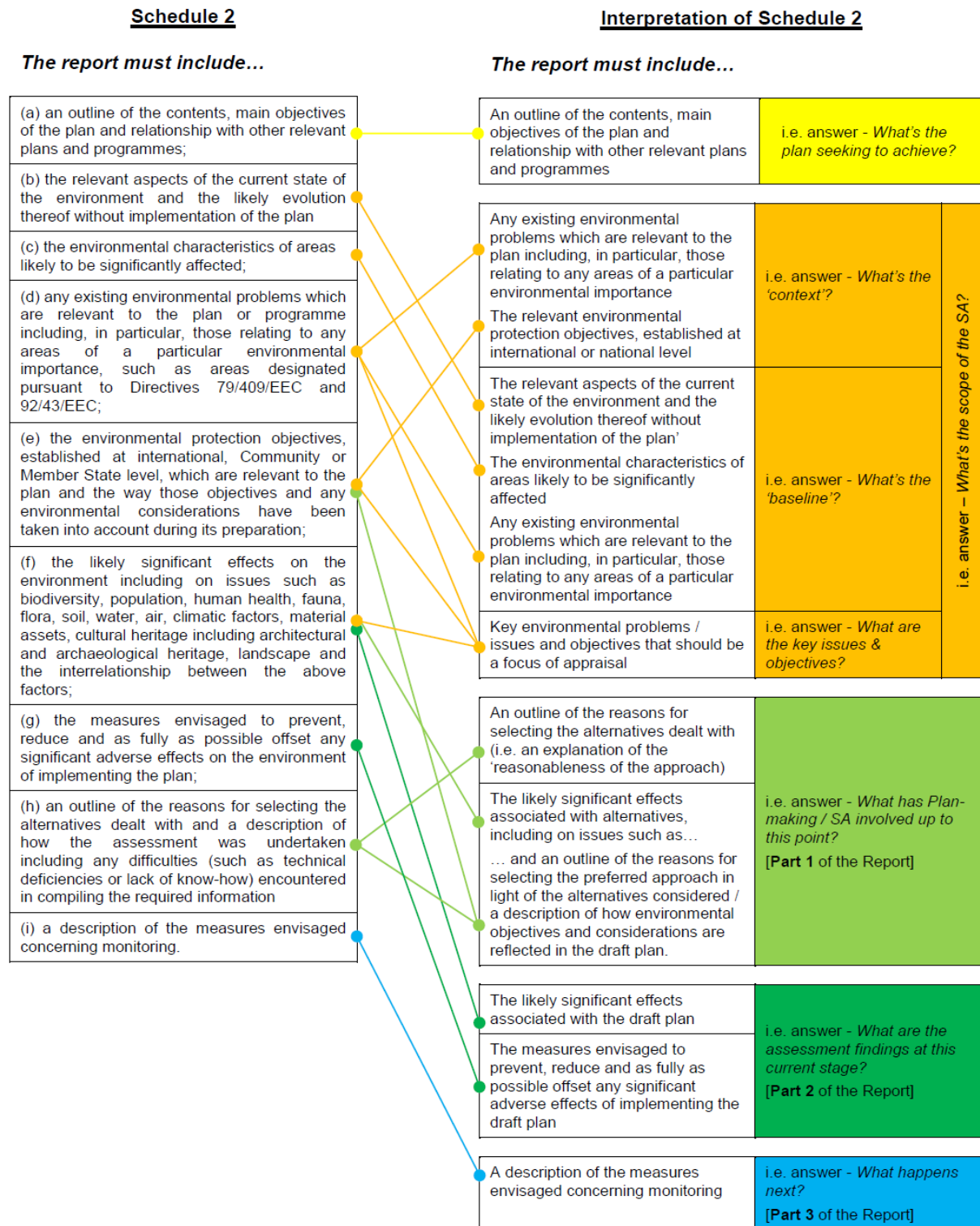


Table C: 'Checklist' of how and where (within this report) regulatory requirements are reflected.

Regulatory requirement	Information presented in this report
Schedule 2 of the regulations lists the information to be provided within the SA Report	
a) An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Section 2 ('What's the plan seeking to achieve') presents this information.
b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	These matters were considered in detail at the scoping stage, which included consultation on a Scoping Report. The outcome of scoping was an 'SA framework', which is presented within Section 3 in an adjusted form.
c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	
d) ... environmental problems which are relevant... areas of a particular environmental importance...;	
e) The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	The Scoping Report presented a detailed context review and explained how key messages from this (and baseline review) fed into the 'SA framework', which is presented within Section 3. Also, information on the SA scope is presented as part of appraisal work in Sections 6 and 7. With regards to explaining "how... considerations have been taken into account", Section 7 explains reasons for supporting the preferred option, i.e. how/why the preferred option is justified in-light of alternatives appraisal.
f) The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.	Section 6 presents alternatives appraisal findings in respect of reasonable growth scenarios, whilst Section 9 presents an appraisal of the Local Plan as a whole. All appraisal work naturally involved giving consideration to the SA scope and the potential for various effect characteristics/dimensions.
g) The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan...	Section 9 presents recommendations.
h) An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Sections 4 and 5 deal with 'reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with', with an explanation of reasons for focusing on growth scenarios / certain growth scenarios. Sections 7 explains 'reasons for supporting the preferred approach', i.e. explains how/why the preferred approach is justified in-light of the alternatives (growth scenarios) appraisal. Methodology is discussed at various places, ahead of presenting appraisal findings.
i) ... measures envisaged concerning monitoring;	Section 11 presents this information.
j) a non-technical summary... under the above headings	The NTS is a separate document.
The SA Report must be published alongside the draft plan, in-line with the following regulations	
Authorities... and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1, 6.2)	This SA Report is published alongside the Proposed Submission Local Plan in order to inform representations and plan finalisation.
The SA Report must be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.	
The environmental report prepared pursuant to Article 5 [and] the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6... shall be taken into account during the preparation of the plan... and before its adoption or submission to the legislative procedure.	This SA Report will be taken into account when finalising the plan (see Section 10). Also, it should be noted that Interim SA Reports were published alongside draft versions of the plan in 2020 and 2021, with both ISA Reports presenting the information required of the SA Report.

Appendix II: The SA Scope

Introduction

The aim of this appendix is to supplement Section 3, which presents the SA framework. Specifically, for each of the topic headings that are at the core of the framework, the aim is to present a brief discussion of key issues. Each discussion does not aim to be comprehensive but aims to give a flavour of the key issues of relevance to the appraisal, given the broad scope of the plan and reasonable alternatives. Discussion is slimmed down relative to that presented within the Interim SA Report, given the stage in the plan-making process and a need to avoid discussion of non-issues (recalling that SA must focus only on the significant effects of the local plan).

Accessibility

Access to **community infrastructure** is invariably a key issue for local plan-making. There is a need to avoid undue strain on existing infrastructure, including by delivering new and upgraded infrastructure alongside housing growth, and ideally deliver 'planning gain' to the benefit of the local community (e.g. settlement) as a whole. Spatial strategy and site selection / consideration of growth scenarios is a key means of addressing issues and realising opportunities, plus there is an important role for policy (district-wide and site-specific) and masterplanning.

Community infrastructure is a **broad term**, and there is cross-over with considerations that factor-in under other topic headings; for example, green / blue infrastructure and infrastructure relating to health and active travel. There are various approaches that might be taken to categorising infrastructure, but there is arguably a key distinction between **strategic** (e.g. a secondary school, leisure centre or health campus) and **local** (e.g. a primary school, or a new community hub for a village). **Schools** capacity is quite often a key issue for local plans, and the Wokingham Local Plan is no exception. However, planning for schools capacity is challenging due to the nature of school place projections, due to parental choice (such that parents will often choose to send children to a school further afield) and because of the free schools system. One issue nationally, at the current time, is recent low birth rates leading to issues with maintaining school rolls at some primary schools, but it is not clear that this is an issue locally.

Air and wider environmental quality

A priority issue is addressing poor air quality in known hotspots. This primarily means air quality management areas (**AQMAs**), of which there are a number locally (see map of AQMAs [here](#)). However, there is also a need to remain alive to data serving to identify air quality hotspots other than AQMAs. Spatial strategy / site selection is a key opportunity to minimise and potentially reduce **traffic** (the key source of air pollution), plus there is an important role for policy (district-wide and site-specific) and masterplanning.

Air pollution from traffic has decreased rapidly over recent years and is set to decrease much further due to the national switch-over to **electric vehicles** (EVs). However, the trend to EVs has begun to slow recently, such that the timetable remains uncertain. Also, air pollution will remain an issue even following the switchover, as EVs are heavier vehicles that lead to high levels of particulate pollution from brake, tyre and road wear.

Finally, it is important to also consider 'wider environmental quality' issues, particularly **noise pollution**. This is largely an issue that is dealt with effectively through 'the market' (because house buyers will typically be aware of sources of noise), but this is not entirely the case. As such, there is a need to scrutinise proposals to direct new housing to locations that might historically have been seen as less appropriate for housing due to noise pollution.

Biodiversity

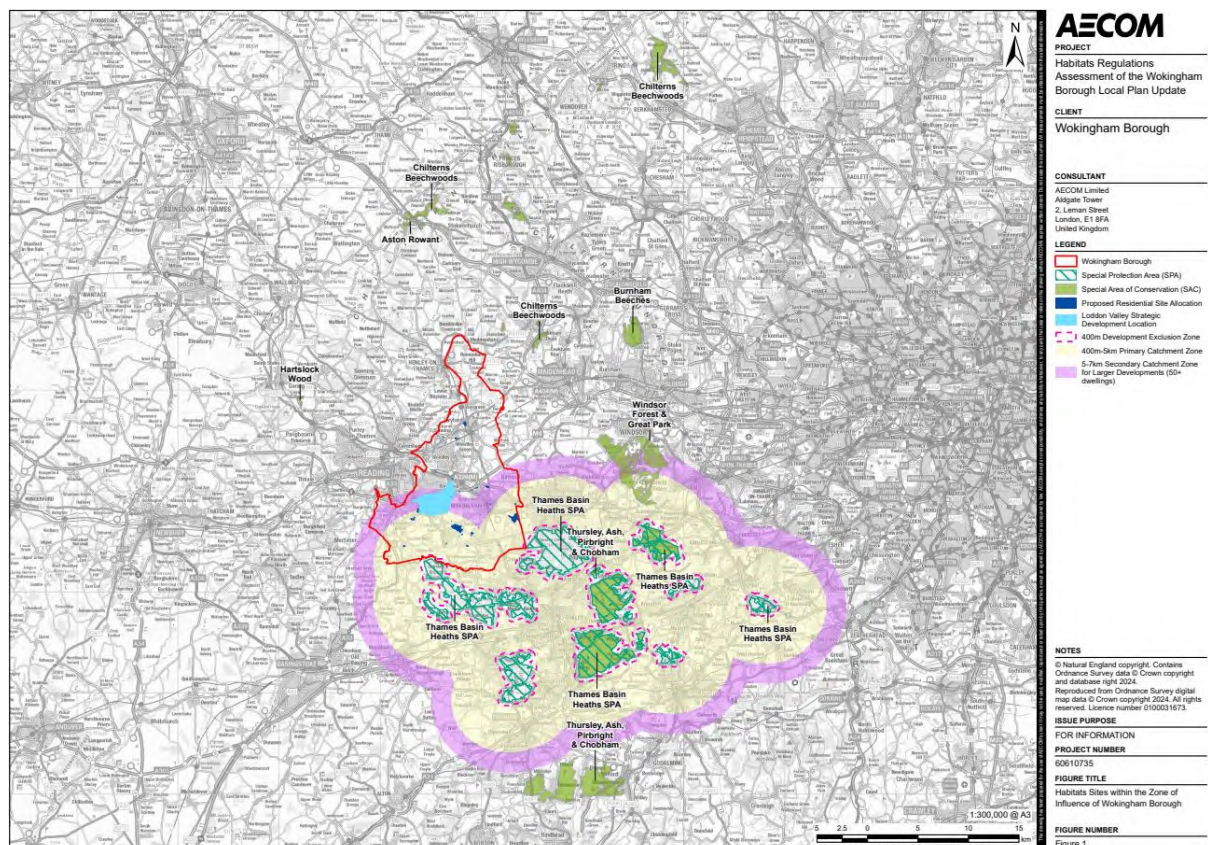
A clear starting point is the hierarchy of **designated sites** locally, each of which will be associated with known sensitivities/issues, or issues that can be safely inferred given knowledge of the habitats present. Specific key issues are explored in detail in the appraisal sections of this report; however, it is important to note here that an effective approach to planning for biodiversity involves considering issues/opportunities at **landscape scales**, where a landscape is defined as a collection of key sites / areas of valued habitat *and the intervening landscape*.

As part of this, there is a need to support ecological networks / functional connectivity between habitat patches, including with a view to enabling species populations to respond to pressures including climate change. River and stream corridors are a key 'landscape scale' at which to plan for biodiversity (alongside associated ecosystem services, such as flood risk management, recreational uses and heritage value), but others can also be identified, often linking closely to landscape character areas. It is anticipated that the forthcoming **Local Nature Recovery Strategy** (LNRS; a requirement under the Environment Act) will assist with identifying landscape-scale priorities.

Finally, there is a need consider the other key requirement under the Environment Act, which is a requirement for development to deliver a mandatory 10% **biodiversity net gain**, as measured using the Defra Biodiversity Metric. Biodiversity Net Gain is primarily a matter for the planning application stage, as opposed to the local plan-making stage. However, there is a clear need for a strategic approach, both in terms of: A) directing growth to locations with greatest 'net gain' opportunity (or, at least, sites not likely to pose an issue in terms of achieving sufficient net gain); and B) identifying sites (or even a network of sites) that can be a focus of habitat creation or enhancement in order to create biodiversity 'credits', which can then be purchased by developers in order to achieve sufficient biodiversity net gain (where it is the case that biodiversity net gain cannot be achieved onsite). Another matter for the local plan is the question of whether policy might require biodiversity net gain over-and-above the 10% legal requirement, whether that be for all sites district wide, certain types of site or perhaps even specific sites.

Finally, in the Wokingham context a crucially important issue is planning for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) in order to mitigate recreational pressure on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.

Figure A: The Thames Basin Heaths SPA



Climate change adaptation

A key issue for local plans is invariably **flood risk**. This is a key 'adaptation' consideration, including given the impacts of flooding, and mindful of the uncertainties around climate change projections. Mapped data showing the location of nationally identified fluvial and surface water flood zones is available [here](#).

Aside from flood risk there are wide ranging climate change adaptation considerations that warrant being a focus of local plan-making, including the key task of spatial strategy and site selection / consideration of growth scenarios. Indeed, climate change adaptation is a **cross-cutting** issue that must factor-in as part of the appraisal under all topics, but most notably biodiversity (including supporting ecological connectivity / networks), communities/health (including over-heating risk) and water (droughts and heatwaves place stress on the water environment).

Climate change mitigation

Wokingham Borough Council has committed to an ambitious target of achieving **net zero** carbon emissions district-wide by 2030. This is on par with the most ambitious targets nationally, with only a small number of urban authorities having committed to an earlier target date. In light of this target, the key wording within the NPPF undoubtedly applies strongly, namely: *"The planning system should... help to... shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions..."* [emphasis added].

Also, there is a need to consider that, whilst the local net zero target is important, what is arguably more important is **per person ('per capita') emissions**. What this means in practice is that it is difficult – and arguably inappropriate – to argue for lower housing growth in the Borough to assist with meeting the local 2030 net zero target. This reflects the fact that not meeting housing needs locally would lead to A) continued inability for new households to form / concealed households / overcrowding, which is something that is difficult to argue in favour of (albeit there might be some positive effects for greenhouse gas emissions); and/or B) unmet housing need locally that is met elsewhere (with no net effect in terms of the number of new homes nationally).

When considering climate change mitigation / decarbonisation through local plans it is important to ensure suitably structured / systematic consideration of the **various sources of greenhouse gas emissions**. A conceptual framework is called for, under which there is a top-level distinction between emissions from A) the built environment (particularly new build development, which is overwhelmingly the focus); and B) transport (see discussion below).

With regards to (A), one category of emissions are those that are 'regulated' by the **Building Regulations**, which are in the process of being tightened to a Future Homes Standard. In turn, a key question is around the potential for local plan policy to require emissions standards that go beyond the minimum requirement. As part of this, there is the potential to require 'net zero' development, although this is a term that must be carefully defined (there has recently been good progress made nationally, including through recently adopted local plans for Cornwall and Bath / North East Somerset). A key issue is invariably the extent to which there is flexibility for offsetting (or, in other words, the extent to which net zero must be achieved onsite), and also the extent to which there is flexibility to achieve an emissions standard that falls short of net zero for viability reasons.

Communities and health

This topic heading offers an opportunity to consider **wide-ranging issues** over-and-above the key issue of accessibility to community infrastructure. Access to open space, sports facilities, green and blue infrastructure, active travel infrastructure and high quality / accessible countryside can appropriately be a focus of discussion under this topic heading, although there are clear cross-overs with other topic headings. Other matters that could potentially be a focus of appraisal (dependent on the nature of plan proposals/options) include:

- supporting the vitality and viability of existing centres and rural communities;
- health and safety considerations (including road safety);
- integrating communities and supporting wide-ranging equalities objectives;
- delivering high quality place-making; and
- minimising the negative effects of development, e.g. relating to construction and traffic congestion.

Economy

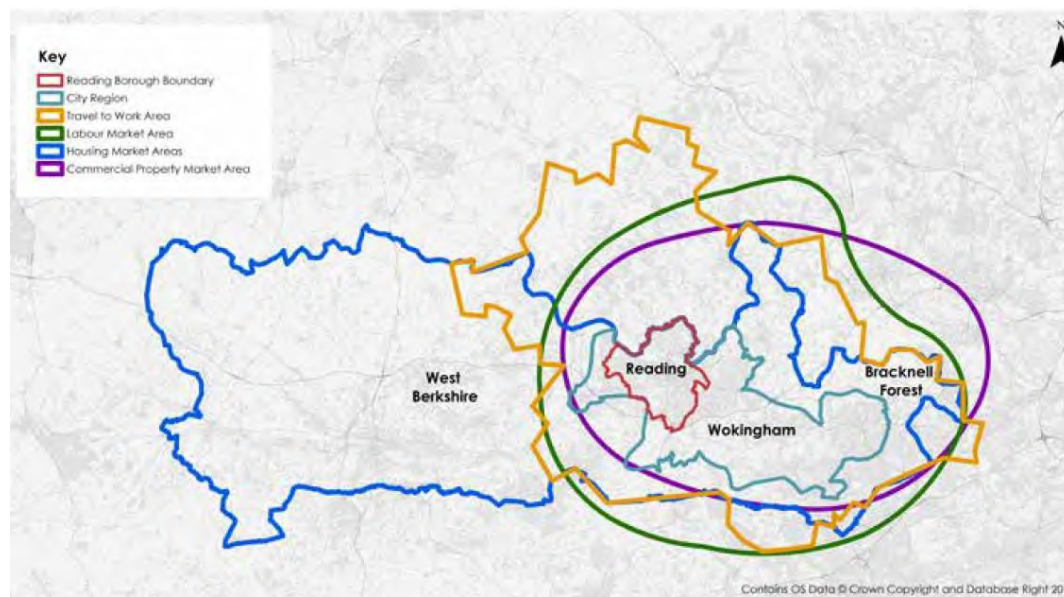
As with housing, a key priority issue is invariably **providing for need** as far as is consistent with sustainable development. However, understanding need/demand for new employment land can be quite complex, including as there is a need to take into account a range of specific types of need (e.g. industrial versus office space), account for loss of employment land to housing (including under permitted development) and 'churn' within existing employment land (i.e. existing employment land being repurposed and potentially intensified).

Furthermore, there is a need to consider long term strategy for employment growth, the effect of employment clusters / agglomerations, the extent to which demand for employment space is 'footloose' (e.g. where it might be provided for anywhere within a broad area to the same effect) and the importance of balancing housing and employment growth, with a view to minimising longer distance commuting by road.

When planning for employment land there is a need to consider larger-than-local **Functional Economic Market Areas** and this is a complicated matter in the Wokingham context.

Beyond ensuring sufficient employment land, another key consideration is supporting the viability of centres as hubs of economic activity, most notably Wokingham town centre but also the other higher order centres.

Figure B: Select sub-regional geographies (Source: Draft Reading Local Transport Strategy 2036)



Historic environment

As per the discussion above under biodiversity, the starting point is the range of **designated assets** of varying significance. However, beyond this, there is a need to consider how assets relate to one another and the surrounding landscape, including via considering the **'setting'** of designated assets. There is often a need to consider why assets are located where they are, and what is revealed by patterns of assets across an area. Having taken these steps, it can be possible to take a positive indeed proactive approach to conservation of the historic environment that is supportive of local character, sense of place (including 'time depth') and place-making.

Methodological approaches to appraising reasonable alternative growth scenarios, and the draft plan as a whole, in terms of the historic environment, are quite well established. The appraisal sections of this report present a suitably systematic appraisal and, and this builds upon work in Section 5 as part of the process to define reasonable alternatives (but there is a need to ensure that this stage of work is proportionate, including work to explore site options in isolation, as set out in Sections 5.3 and 5.4).

Housing

Headline considerations are in respect of setting the **housing requirement** and also policy on **affordable housing** (i.e. the question of the extent to which affordable housing is prioritised alongside other policy 'asks' of developers, in the context of development viability considerations, i.e. limitations on available developer contributions / funding).

Beyond this, there is a need to consider the specific nature of the proposed **supply**, including in terms of whether the effect will be to support a good mix of housing, in terms of type, size, tenure and location, and also in terms of delivery risk (there is invariably a need to identify a total supply that exceeds the requirement, given the inevitability of unforeseen delivery issues at the planning application stage and/or post planning permission being granted).

Specialist housing is another key consideration, as is providing for **Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs**. Further considerations include space standards and also the adaptability of housing, e.g. for those with disabilities.

Landscape

Whilst there are no nationally designated landscapes in the Borough, there are well understood **landscape character areas**, each associated with distinct characteristics, to be protected and potentially enhanced.

It is difficult to confidently differentiate between character areas – or landscape parcels of any scale – in terms of value or **sensitivity**; however, various factors can be taken into account to give an indication. These include: links to settlement, including settlement form, particularly historic settlement form; topography and 'enclosing' vegetation, given that longer distance views will tend to be valued; links to valued historic environment and biodiversity assets; and accessibility, including views from key locations, roads and public rights of way.

There is also a need to consider landscape with a long-term perspective, given clear arguments for planning comprehensively as opposed to opening the door to future development creep, or **'sprawl'** (although there can also be arguments for enabling settlements and communities to expand organically over time).

A key issue locally is the work that has been taken over a number of years to identify Locally Valued Landscapes.

Soils / resources

A clear priority is avoiding the loss of productive **agricultural land**, particularly that which is defined as 'best and most versatile', which is defined as that which is of grade 1, grade 2 or grade 3a quality. However, data availability is a barrier, as the nationally available dataset is very low resolution (and does not differentiate between grades 3a and 3b) whilst the available dataset showing agricultural land quality with a high degree of accuracy (following fieldwork) is very patchy. In this light, site promoters are encouraged to submit evidence on land quality.

Aside from agricultural land quality, it can be difficult to reach strong conclusions on the effects of local plans on 'resources' more widely. However, one immediate consideration is the need to support the objectives of **minerals and waste** planning, including avoiding the undue sterilisation of known minerals resources.

Another consideration is avoiding issues with **contaminated land**, and ideally directing growth in such a way that supports the remediation of contaminated land. This includes accounting for historic landfills (typically following past quarrying), but this is not a major issue for the LPU.

Also, a subject that is increasingly recognised nationally and internationally as being of key importance is minimising 'non-operational' built environment greenhouse gas emissions, in particular the **embodied emissions** in construction materials. The implication is a need to seek to reuse buildings (at least their steel and concrete 'super structure') ahead of demolition and rebuild is increasingly seen as a climate change mitigation priority. Equally, there is a new focus on designing and constructing buildings with a view to future repurposing, i.e. seeking to avoid or delay the need for future demolition. This approach is in line with 'circular economy' principles.

Transport

This is a **key issue** locally from a range of perspectives, including climate change mitigation, traffic congestion, health and wellbeing, the historic environment and the economy. There is a need to direct growth to the most accessible and best-connected locations, particularly those that are well-connected in terms of public and active transport. Also, there is a need to support specific strategic transport objectives, including as established at sub-regional scales, and including in terms of directing growth so as to deliver or facilitate delivery of new strategic transport infrastructure (e.g. new cycle routes or road/junction upgrades in support of bus connectivity).

Strategic growth within the Borough over recent years has had a strong focus on delivering transport upgrades, with most notably the following recently delivered and forthcoming improvements to the transport network: The Arborfield Cross Relief Road; Winnersh Relief Road Phase 2; South Wokingham Distributor Road; North Wokingham Distributor Road. These new road links have been delivered with a strong focus on supporting bus services and walking/cycling; however, it is recognised that there is increasingly a national focus on avoiding delivery of new roads by taking a 'vision-led' approach to spatial strategy and site selection. A key issue locally is supporting fast and frequent bus services, in particular to Reading, which has one of the best networks nationally.

Figure C: Case-study from the National Bus Strategy: Bus Back Better (2021)



Figure D: Case-study from the Draft Reading Transport Strategy 2036 (2020)

Project Name: South Reading Fast Track Public Transport
Cost: £18.3 Million (to date)
Status: In progress
Partners: Reading Buses, Wokingham Borough Council, Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Green Park, Reading International Business Park

Reading's South Fast Track Public Transport (FPT) corridor scheme has delivered a series of bus priorities measures on the A33 between Reading Town Centre and the Mereok Park and Ride facility to the south of the M4 junction 11. The scheme is designed to reduce forecast congestion

and improve public transport journey times and reliability on this key corridor into Reading, helping to accommodate the increasing travel demands associated with growth by attracting more travel to be made by public transport instead of private car. We have a phased approach to implementation of South FPT, delivering sections of the scheme as external funding is secured.

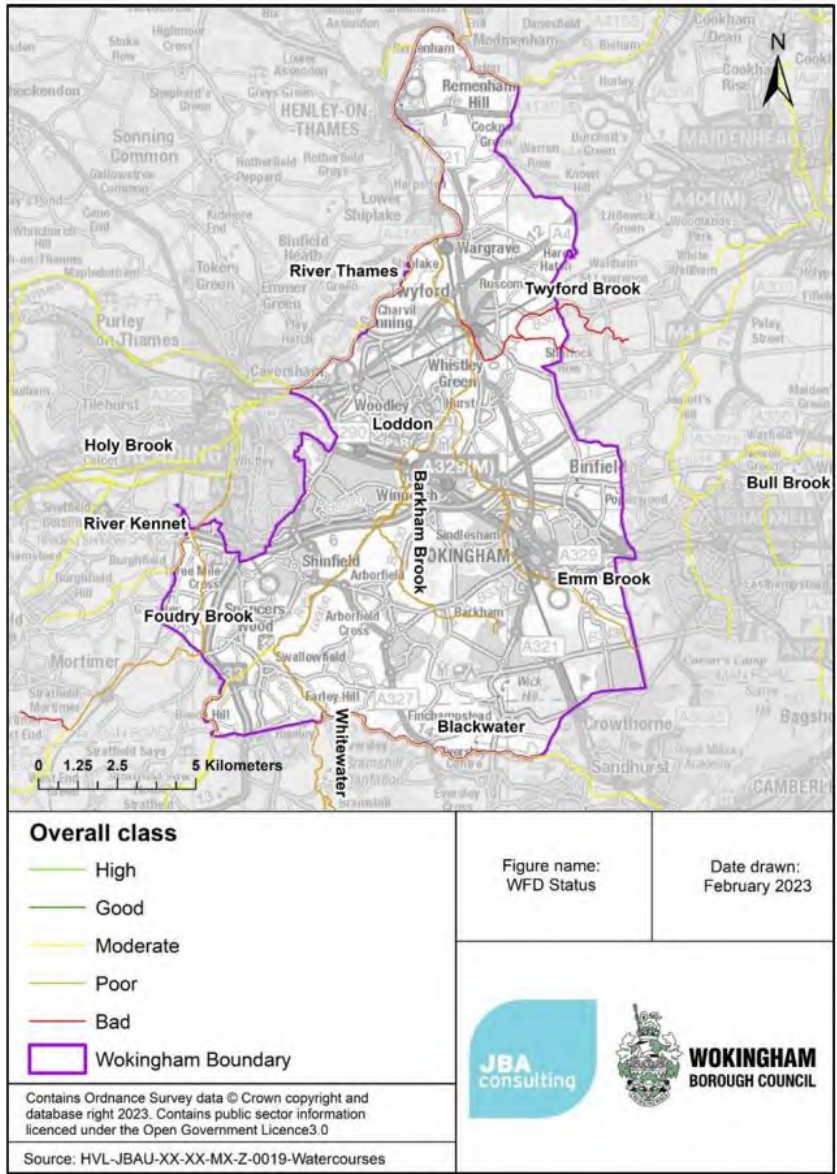
Journey times for South FPT services have reduced by up to 24% from 2015 when Mereok was opened and these services are now the most reliable in the Reading area. As a result of this improvement, average passenger numbers on these services have increased by 62% from 2015 to 2019.



Water

Both **water availability** (i.e. low levels/flows affecting water availability and habitats) and **water quality** (within water bodies failing Water Framework Directive objectives and at valued biodiversity sites susceptible to nutrient enrichment) have been high on the agenda nationally over recent years. However, it is the latter issue that is understood to be the key issue locally and, in particular, there is a need to avoid water pollution from wastewater treatment works, both in terms of treated and untreated water. As well as the quality of rivers, there is also a need to consider groundwater, but it is not clear that this is a key issue locally, given the scope of the emerging plan and reasonable alternatives (although attention potentially focuses on the chalk aquifer in the Twyford area).

Figure E: A key figure from the Stage 2 Water Cycle Study (2024)



Appendix III: Sites GIS analysis

Introduction

As discussed in Section 5.3, as a relatively minor step in the process of arriving at reasonable growth scenarios (see Figure 5.1) all site options were subjected to GIS analysis.

The aim of this section is to present a summary of the analysis, as a means of differentiating between site options and informing the process of exploring site options by sub area, as reported in Section 5.4.

It is important to be clear that this is a minor step in the overall process, site options are not reasonable alternatives and the aim of the analysis is not to identify significant effects.

What is GIS analysis

GIS analysis involves quantifying the spatial relationship between site options and various constraint/push (e.g. flood zones, SSSIs) and opportunity/pull (e.g. GP surgeries) features for which geospatial data is available.

The analysis comprises a large spreadsheet of data, with a row for each site option and around 50 columns, where each column either: reports the performance in terms of a particular 'metric' (e.g. distance to a school); presents supplementary information related to the metric (e.g. the name of the nearest school); or presents other information on the attributes of the site options (e.g. the proposed use, or what parish the site is located within).

It is important to be clear that this is not sophisticated analysis, in that:

- it will rarely serve to highlight an issue or an opportunity associated with any given site option that would not otherwise be readily apparent; and
- many of the issues and opportunities that the analysis does highlight are only 'theoretical', in that they can be discounted, or assigned limited weight in decision-making, upon closer inspection, including after taking into account what the development would involve in practice. For example, where a site is distant from accessible greenspace this can sometimes be addressed by delivery of new accessible greenspace onsite.

As such, GIS analysis of site options should not be overly relied upon, at the expense of a focus on qualitative analysis informed by wide ranging evidence, including the views of stakeholders, and professional judgement.

The analysis should certainly not be used as a primary means for arriving at overall conclusions on site options. Any attempt to utilise the analysis in this way would necessitate a process of Multi Criteria Analysis (MCA) whereby a degree of importance is assigned to each of the performance metrics, and this process is fraught with challenges.

Methodology

The **first step** was to gather GIS data.

- Site options – the Council provided 'red line boundaries' for all HELAA sites. One of the issues / limitations is that large landholdings sometimes get submitted, within which might be contained realistic site options. Also, an issue is that overlapping sites get submitted over time, and it is not necessarily the case that the intention of the landowner is that the most recent submission should supersede the previous submissions.
- Constraint / push and opportunity / pull features – much data is available nationally ('open source') and a range of other data is held by the Council. However, there are a range of potential issues to be mindful of, including data becoming out of date, only being available for certain parts of the Borough or not being available for neighbouring local authority areas. Gathering data on primary and secondary schools is particularly challenging, as schools can be placed into many different categories.

There is much potential to add value through an involved data gathering process, but equally there is a need to ensure proportionality, recalling the limited role of GIS analysis within the overall process.

The **second step** was then to run the analysis, i.e. query the spatial relationship between each site option and each push / pull feature (e.g. distance to a listed building, intersect with a flood zone). There are two points to note:

- Distance was measured "as the crow flies" (it can also be possible to calculate distance by road, footpath etc).
- Distance was calculated from the nearest point of each site option.

Having generated the spreadsheet of data, the **final step** was then to interrogate, utilise and report the data.

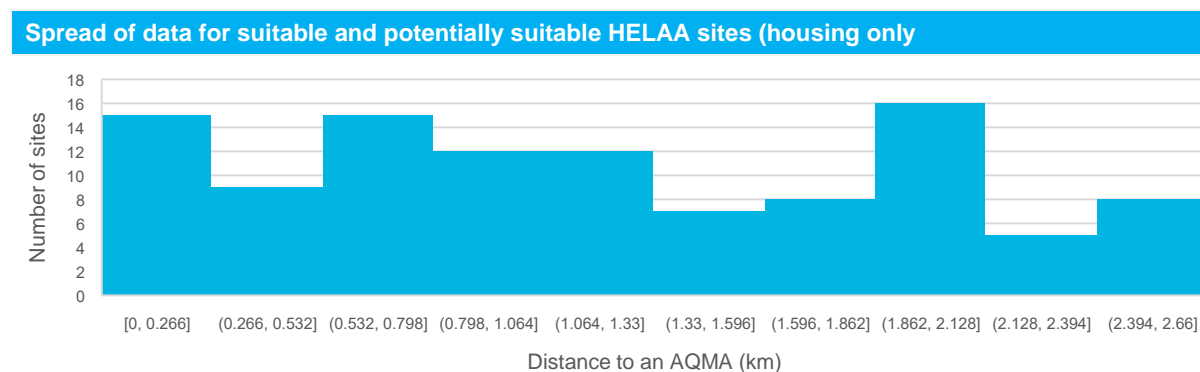
Within the spreadsheet there is much potential to run ‘queries’ by sorting and filtering columns. For example, it is possible to query the average performance of sub-sets of sites, for example:

- Sites at settlement A versus settlement V versus settlement C etc
- Commitments versus proposed allocations versus omission sites etc
- Sites that feature in growth scenario 1 versus growth scenario 2 versus growth scenario 3 etc

The Interim SA Reports published in 2020 and 2021 presented a considerable amount of analysis of this nature, but limited such analysis is reported at this current stage. There is much potential to take analysis of this nature forward through the use of interactive online platforms and ‘dashboards’.

Figure A: Examples of analysis presented in the ISA Report (2021)

	Average % intersect with agricultural land by grade		
	Grade 1	Grade 1 or 2	Grade 1, 2 or 3
Suitable	0.1	3.3	30.5
Potentially suitable	4.7	11.7	71.9
Unsuitable or unknown	3.7	12.6	56.6
Excluded	0	2.9	68.4



The focus here is simply reporting the performance of site options in terms of each of the metrics. However, it is not possible to report performance in detail (e.g. reporting that a site is 756m from a Grade I listed building or intersects a flood zone by 3%) given available space / the limitations of PDF reporting. As such, the aim is to place sites into performance categories, and report which category each site falls into under each of the metrics.

This means reporting performance on a red → amber → green (RAG) scale; however, additionally the opportunity is taken to replace amber with a ‘light red to light green’ colour scale. This means that the distinction between red/amber and amber/green is less stark and, in turn means that it is possible to be more conservative when judging which sites should be assigned red or green. In short, it allows for additional differentiation between site options.

The table below reports the rules used when assigning red and green. It is important to be clear that the red/green rules applied reflect the spread of data primarily, i.e. with a view to most effectively differentiating between the merits of the site options. However, some account is also taken of absolute rules, e.g. it is an established rule of thumb that 400m is considered to be an easy walking distance.

It is recognised that when differentiating according to the spread of data / relative performance the number of site options subject to the analysis takes on considerable importance. In this instance the approach taken was simply to run all of the sites that feature in the HELAA through the analysis; however, an alternative approach would be to firstly identify a shortlist (e.g. removing duplicate sites and very poorly performing sites) and then run the analysis.

Table A: Red-amber-green rules

Metric	Dark red	Light red → light green	Dark green
Air quality management area (AQMA) distance (m)	<=1000	Other sites	>=5000
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) distance (m)	<=1000	Other sites	>=3000

Metric	Dark red	Light red → light green	Dark green
Local wildlife site (LWS) distance (m)	<=50	Other sites	>=500
Ancient woodland distance (m)	<=10	Other sites	>=500
Priority habitat inventory overlap (%)	>=20	Other sites	<=0.1
Tree preservation order (TPO) overlap (%)	>=20	Other sites	<=0.1
National forest inventory overlap (%)	>=50	Other sites	<=10
Flood zone 2 overlap (%)	>=20	Other sites	<=0.1
Surface water flood risk 1:100yr overlap (%)	>=20	Other sites	<=5
Scheduled monument distance (m)	<=20	Other sites	>=500
Conservation area distance (m)	<=250	Other sites	>=1500
Registered park and garden (RPG) Grade II* distance (m)	<=1000	Other sites	>=3000
Registered park and garden (RPG) Grade II distance (m)	<=1000	Other sites	>=3000
Listed building Grade I distance (m)	<=500	Other sites	>=1500
Listed building Grade II* distance (m)	<=500	Other sites	>=1500
Listed building Grade II distance (m)	<=50	Other sites	>=500
Agricultural land classification (Agricultural land) overlap (Grades 1 and 2) (%)	<=20	Amber for sites with between 5 and 20% overlap.	>=5
Landfill site distance (m)	<=50	Amber for sites between 50 and 200m of landfill site.	>=200
School (secondary) distance (m)	>=2500	Other sites	<=1000
School (primary) distance (m)	>=1500	Other sites	<=500
School (early years) distance (m)	>=1500	Other sites	<=500
GP surgery distance (m)	>=2000	Other sites	<=1000
Local town centre distance (m)	>=5000	Other sites	<=1500
District centre distance (m)	>=7500	Other sites	<=2500
Local centre distance (m)	>=4000	Other sites	<=1000
Local nature reserve distance (m)	>=4000	Other sites	<=1000
Economy area distance (m)	>=2500	Other sites	<=1000

Summary analysis

Performance is reported below by sub area and within each sub area sites are reported in the following order:

- First, committed sites are shown in **grey**.
- Second, HELAA suitable and potentially suitable sites held constant across the RA growth scenarios are shown in **green**.
- Third, HELAA potentially suitable sites that are a variable across the RA growth scenarios are shown in **amber**.
- Fourth, HELAA potentially suitable sites that are not included in the RA growth scenarios are shown in **red**.
- Fifth, Gypsy and Traveller (or Gypsy, Roma and Travellers, GRT) options are shown in **purple**.
- Finally, all other HELAA sites are reported.

North sub area

Ref	Address	Area	AQMA	SSSI	LWS	Ancient woodland	Priority habitat	TPO	Woodland	Flood zone	Surface water	Scheduled mon.	Conservation area	RPG II*	RPG II	Listed building I	Listed building II*	Listed building II	Agri land	Landfill	Secondary school	Primary school	Early years	GP surgery	Town centre	District centre	Local centre	LNR	Employment
5TW005,09, 10	Land at Bridge Farm	12	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5TW010	Land at Bridge Farm	12	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5TW005	Land at Bridge Farm	7	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5TW009	Land west of Twyford	5	Red	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5SO008	Sonning Golf Club	3	Amber	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WO002	Western Site, Headley Road East	3	Amber	Red	Green	Amber	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Amber	Green	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5SO013	Sonning Golf Club	2	Amber	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5SO008	Sonning Golf Club	1	Amber	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5SO001	Land at Sonning Farm	1	Amber	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Red	Red	Green	Red	Red	Amber	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WO005	Land at Waingels College	1	Amber	Amber	Amber	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5SO005	Land at Sonning Golf Club, Duffield Road	1	Amber	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU029	Triangle outside Hurst House	0	Amber	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Amber	Green	Amber	Green	Amber
5HU018	Land on north-west side of Nelsons Lane	0	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Amber	Amber	Red	Amber	Green	Amber	Green	Amber

Ref	Address	Area	AQMA	SSSI	LWS	Ancient woodland	Priority habitat	TPO	Woodland	Flood zone	Surface water	Scheduled mon.	Conservation area	RPG II*	RPG II	Listed building I	Listed building II*	Listed building II	Agri land	Landfill	Secondary school	Primary school	Early years	GP surgery	Town centre	District centre	Local centre	LNR	Employment
5RU008	Land b/w 39-53 New Road, Ruscombe	1	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5RU007	Rear of 9-17 Northbury Lane, Ruscombe	1	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5RU006	Land at Ruscombe	89	Red	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5RU004	Land at Southbury Lane	44	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5RU001	Land to the west of London Road	42	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5RU005	Land to the east of London Road	38	Red	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5TW007	Land north of the A4	24	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5RU002	Land north of Castle End Road	13	Red	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5CV002	Land west of Park Lane	7	Red	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5RU003	Land east of Church Lane	7	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5CV001	Land east and west of Park View Drive North	13	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU006	Land on the north side of Orchard Road	1	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5TW013	Opposite 136 - 144 Wargrave Road, Twyford	0	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5SO011	Land at Holme Farm	25	Red	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5TW011	North of A4 and west of A321	24	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU003	Whistley Meadow St Nicholas, Whistley Green	18	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU043	Land to the west of Hurst Road	12	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU016	Land on the east side of Lodge Road	11	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5SO004	Land west of Milestone Avenue	9	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5CV002	Land west of Park Lane	9	Red	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5SO002	Land east of Garde Road	6	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU004	Land at Broadcommon Road	5	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5SO010	Old Redingensians Sports Ground	4	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU030	Land north-west of Hogmoor Lane	4	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WA012	Land south of Braybrooke Road	4	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WA008	Hare Hatch Garden Centre, Floral Mile	4	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green
5SO003	Land north of Thames Street	4	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

Ref	Address	Area	AQMA	SSSI	LWS	Ancient woodland	Priority habitat	TPO	Woodland	Flood zone	Surface water	Scheduled mon.	Conservation area	RPG II*	RPG II	Listed building I	Listed building II*	Listed building II	Agri land	Landfill	Secondary school	Primary school	Early years	GP surgery	Town centre	District centre	Local centre	LNR	Employment	
5WA002	Hare Hatch Sheeplands	4	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5SO009	Thatched Cottage, Sonning Lane	3	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WA004	Land to the south of Bath Road	3	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5TW006	Land west of Hurst Road	3	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU031	Land south-west Broadwater Lane	2	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WA007	Primrose Nursery, London Road	2	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WA005	West of Wargrave Rd and north of the A4	2	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WA010	Sheeplands Farm, New Bath Road	2	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5EA002	Gasholders 5&6	2	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WA003	Primrose Nursery, London Road	2	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU032	Land south-west of Broadcommon Road	2	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
5HU028	West Lodge land north and south, Lodge Road	2	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU025	Hedgerley Stables	2	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5CV005	Land to the rear of Oaktree Cottage	1	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5SO001	Land at Sonning Farm	1	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WA006	Land at the eastern end of 'The Old House'	1	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU027	Walden Acres, Wokingham Road	1	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU052	Land at the rear of Vine cottage	1	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5RU008	Land between 39-53 New Road	1	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU008	Land off Lodge Road	1	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5RE001	Land west of Remenham Hill	1	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WO004	Land at Sandford Mill Pumping Station	1	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5TW012	Loddon Nursery	1	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WA009	Land adj Bear Cottage, Milley Lane, Hare Hatch	1	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU055	Wind in the Willows, Islandstone Lane, Hurst	1	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5RU007	Land to the rear of 9-17 Northbury Lane	1	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU019	South of Units 1-12 Beech Court, Wokingham Rd	1	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

Ref	Address	Area	AQMA	SSSI	LWS	Ancient woodland	Priority habitat	TPO	Woodland	Flood zone	Surface water	Scheduled mon.	Conservation area	RPG II*	RPG II	Listed building I	Listed building II*	Listed building II	Agri land	Landfill	Secondary school	Primary school	Early years	GP surgery	Town centre	District centre	Local centre	LNR	Employment
5TW008	134 Wargrave Road	0	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU007	Land at St Swithins Cottage, Hinton Road	0	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WA011	Land at Tag Lane	0	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Yellow
5HU002	Land adj to Whistley Green Cottage	0	Orange	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Orange	Red	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow
5CV004	3 Norris Green	0	Yellow	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU026	Hedgerley Stables	0	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5SO007	Land adj to Model Farm Cottages Bath Road	0	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow

Central sub area

Ref	Address	Area	AQMA	SSSI	LWS	Ancient woodland	Priority habitat	TPO	Woodland	Flood zone	Surface water	Scheduled mon.	Conservation area	RPG II*	RPG II	Listed building I	Listed building II*	Listed building II	Agri land	Landfill	Secondary school	Primary school	Early years	GP surgery	Town centre	District centre	Local centre	LNR	Employment
5WI004	Land off Poplar Lane and Watmore Lane	33	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK002	Ashridge Farm, Warren House Road	18	Red	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WI006	Land off Maidensfield	11	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK026	Land adjoining Berkshire Way	9	Orange	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red
5WK051	Land east of Toutley Depot	7	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK051	Land east of Toutley Depot	7	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK043	Land at St Anne's Drive	3	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Red	Orange	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red
5HU051	Land north of London Road and east of A329(M)	3	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red
5WK043	Land at St Annes Drive	3	Orange	Orange	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red
5WK030	Millars Business Park, Molly Millars Lane	2	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK019	Carnival Pool Phase 2, Wellington Road	1	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Orange	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WI014	69 King Street Lane, Winnersh, RG41 5BA	1	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Orange	Green

Ref	Address	Area	AQMA	SSSI	LWS	Ancient woodland	Priority habitat	TPO	Woodland	Flood zone	Surface water	Scheduled mon.	Conservation area	RPG II*	RPG II	Listed building I	Listed building II*	Listed building II	Agri land	Landfill	Secondary school	Primary school	Early years	GP surgery	Town centre	District centre	Local centre	LNR	Employment
5WK036	Land at the rear of Chapel Green House	1	Red	Green	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5EA001	Lower Earley Way, Cutbush Industrial Park	1	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK025	Old Forest Road	1	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WI011	Wheatsheaf Close	1	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange
5WK023	Rosery Cottage and 171 Evendons Lane	1	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green
5WK035	West Forest Gate, Finchampstead Road	1	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5BA024	Land to north of the Shires	1	Yellow	Green	Orange	Yellow	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green
5WK012	54 - 58 Reading Road	0	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK053	Lee Springs, Latimer Road	0	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK013	Land at Toutley Road	0	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK008	Ritz Plaza House, Easthampstead Road	0	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK015	Exa House, Elms Road	0	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WI008	Winnersh Plant Hire	2	Red	Yellow	Orange	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK054	WBC council offices, Shute End, Wokingham	2	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK029	Station Industrial Estate, Oxford Road	1	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK045	Land at Bridge Retail Park	1	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK046	Land at Wellington Road, Wokingham	0	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WW017 etc	South Wokingham SDL extension	54	Orange	Orange	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
5WI009, 019	Land north west of Old Forest Road	4	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WI012, 021	Rear of Bulldog Garage and the BP filling station	1	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK011	Land south of London Road (Western Field)	1	Yellow	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red
5AR011Group	Loddon Valley Garden Village	735	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Red	Red	Red	Orange	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU014	Warren Farm, Forest Road	49	Red	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU022	The Bill Hill Estate, Twyford Road	45	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU015	Ashridgewood Farm, Warren House Road	38	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU017	Ashridgewood, Forest Road	35	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK028	Land at Blagrove Lane	30	Orange	Green	Red	Red	Orange	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU013	Land on the north-west side of Harp Farm	22	Red	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

Ref	Address	Area	AQMA	SSSI	LWS	Ancient woodland	Priority habitat	TPO	Woodland	Flood zone	Surface water	Scheduled mon.	Conservation area	RPG II*	RPG II	Listed building I	Listed building II*	Listed building II	Agri land	Landfill	Secondary school	Primary school	Early years	GP surgery	Town centre	District centre	Local centre	LNR	Employment
5HU011	Pikes Farm, Forest Road	17	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU020	Land on the east side of Twyford Road	10	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU021	Land on the south side of Forest Road	8	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU023	Ashridge Manor Forest Farm	7	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU009	Oak View Farm, Forest Road	7	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU047	Land to east of Warren House Road	5	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU012	Ashridgewood Place, Forest Road	4	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU041	The Lodge, Ashridge Manor, Forest Road	1	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK048	Suffolk Lodge, Rectory Road	1	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK042	Woodside Caravan Park, Blagrove Lane	1	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5AR015	Land at Arborfield	471	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU053	Bill Hill	98	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU033	Land at Stokes Farm, Binfield Road	80	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WI007	Home Farm, Bearwood Road	59	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WW030	South Wokingham Masterplanning Area	33	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WI015	Hatch Farm	33	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WW006	Grays Farm, Heathlands Road	26	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5AR032	Land at Newlands Farm	25	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU037	Dinton Pastures, Sandford Lane, Davis Street	18	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU034	Land west of Dunt Lane/ south of Green Lane	18	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK034	Land to the east and west of Blagrove Lane	18	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK022	Close to junction of Bearwood Rd / Highlands Av	15	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WI022	Land north of Sadlers Lane, Winnersh	12	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5BA018	Land at Highland Avenue	11	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5AR014	Land west of Mole Road	11	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU056	Land east of Maidenhead Road	8	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU024	North of London Road and east of the A329M	7	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WW015	Land adjoining Bigwood House, Waterloo Road	7	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

Ref	Address	Area	AQMA	SSSI	LWS	Ancient woodland	Priority habitat	TPO	Woodland	Flood zone	Surface water	Scheduled mon.	Conservation area	RPG II*	RPG II	Listed building I	Listed building II*	Listed building II	Agri land	Landfill	Secondary school	Primary school	Early years	GP surgery	Town centre	District centre	Local centre	LNR	Employment
5WW016	Adjacent to Bigwood House, Waterloo Road	7																											
5WK044	Land at Limmerhill Road	7																											
5WW023	Holme Park Game Hatcheries	6																											
5WK032	Land to north of Doles lane	6																											
5WW026	South of Waterloo Rd / west of Old W'ham Rd	6																											
5SH049	Shinfield Grange	6																											
5WI005	Winnersh Garden Centre, Reading Road	5																											
5BA027	Land to the rear of 178 Bearwood Road	5																											
5WI020	Land at Home Farm, Sindlesham	5																											
5HU010	North of the A329(M), Ashridge Farm	5																											
5WK009	Wokingham STW, Bell Foundry Lane	5																											
5HU035	Heriots, Wokingham Road	4																											
5WI009	Land on the north-west Side of Old Forest Road	4																											
5WK006	Land south of Gipsy Lane	4																											
5WK039	Land fronting Barkham Road	3																											
5AR011	Land off Betty Grove Lane	3																											
5HU039	White Cottage, Forest Road	3																											
5WI013	Millennium Arboretum, off Old Forest Road	3																											
5HU045	Manor Farm, Binfield Road	3																											
5HU054	Poppies Farm, Pound Lane, Hurst, RG10 0RS	2																											
5WI012	Rear of Bulldog Garage, Reading Road	2																											
5EA003	Land at Meldreth Way	2																											
5HU001	Little Hill Road	2																											
5HU005	Land at The Phoenix, Nelson's Lane	2																											
5AR029	Land at Park Farm	2																											
5WI019	Land north-west of Forest Road	2																											
5AR025	Land at Carters Hill, north side of Barretts Lane	2																											
5WI018	Willow Pond Farm	2																											

Ref	Address	Area	AQMA	SSSI	LWS	Ancient woodland	Priority habitat	TPO	Woodland	Flood zone	Surface water	Scheduled mon.	Conservation area	RPG II*	RPG II	Listed building I	Listed building II*	Listed building II	Agri land	Landfill	Secondary school	Primary school	Early years	GP surgery	Town centre	District centre	Local centre	LNR	Employment
5WI008	Winnersh Plant Hire	2	Red	Yellow	Orange	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK054	WBC council offices, Shute End, Wokingham	2	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5AR030	Vine Farm	2	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange
5WI001	Land at Hatch Farm	1	Red	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Yellow	Green
5WI002	Land at Hatch Farm	1	Red	Green	Orange	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Yellow	Green
5WI014	69 King Street Lane	1	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Orange	Green
5WK055	Rubra I, etc, Mulberry BP, Fishponds Lane	1	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU048	Land at Hatch Gate Farm	1	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green
5WW017	East of Pearces Farm, Easthampstead Road	1	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	Yellow	Orange	Green
5HU049	Stokes Cottage	1	Red	Green	Orange	Orange	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Orange	Green
5WI017	Holmewood House	1	Red	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Green
5WK042	Woodside Caravan Park, Blagrove Lane	1	Red	Green	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU044	Land between Davis Way and Little Hill Road	1	Red	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green
5WK011	Land south of London Road (Western Field)	1	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Green
5WI011	Wheatsheaf Close	1	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Orange	Red	Green	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Green
5HU050	Land adjacent to Old Crown Cottage	1	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK029	Station Industrial Estate, Oxford Road	1	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK045	Land at Bridge Retail Park	1	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU046	Douglas House, Douglas Way	1	Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green
5WK017	Telephone Exchange, Elms Road	0	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU040	Galtimore, Dunt Lane	0	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK053	Lee Spring site, Latimer Road	0	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK050	Site of Former M&S Building, Wokingham	0	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK018	54 - 72 Peach Street	0	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK046	Land at Wellington Road, Wokingham	0	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5SH012	Land at Cutbush Lane	0	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Red	Green	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green
5WI021	BP Triangle, Reading Road	0	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5HU042	Land at Junction of Davis Street and Dunt Lane	0	Orange	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green

Ref	Address	Area	AQMA	SSSI	LWS	Ancient woodland	Priority habitat	TPO	Woodland	Flood zone	Surface water	Scheduled mon.	Conservation area	RPG II*	RPG II	Listed building I	Listed building II*	Listed building II	Agri land	Landfill	Secondary school	Primary school	Early years	GP surgery	Town centre	District centre	Local centre	LNR	Employment
5WI016	9 Winnersh Gate	0	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5AR016	Land adjoining Hunters Point, Hughes Green	0	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange	Orange	Red
5WI003	498 Reading Road	0	Red	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5WK033	Land adjacent to 229 Barkham Road	0	Orange	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

Southwest sub area

Ref	Address	Area	AQMA	SSSI	LWS	Ancient woodland	Priority habitat	TPO	Woodland	Flood zone	Surface water	Scheduled mon.	Conservation area	RPG II*	RPG II	Listed building I	Listed building II*	Listed building II	Agri land	Landfill	Secondary school	Primary school	Early years	GP surgery	Town centre	District centre	Local centre	LNR	Employment
5SH025	Land south of Cutbush Lane	17	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green
5SH015	Land at Stanbury House, Basingstoke Road	6	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Orange
5SH019	Parklands, Basingstoke Road	5	Red	Yellow	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Green
5SW019	Land west of Trowes Lane	4	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Red	Green	Red
5SW007	South of The Street and west of Trowes Lane	1	Green	Red	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Red	Green	Red
5SH031	Rustlings', 'The Spring', rear of 'Cushendall'	0	Red	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Red	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Green
5SH025	Land north of Arborfield Road	7	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green
5SH023,27	Land east and west of Hyde End Road	11	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green
5SW005	Land east of Trowes Lane	6	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Orange	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Red	Orange	Red	Green	Red
5SH029	Land at Grazeley	227	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Red	Orange	Green
5SH040	Land at Grazeley	213	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Red	Yellow	Green
5SW015	Loddon Court Farm, Beech Hill Road	41	Yellow	Red	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Red	Green	Red
5SH013	Body's Farm, Basingstoke Road	39	Orange	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red
5SH017	Land at Highlands	36	Orange	Red	Red	Green	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Red	Red	Yellow	Orange	
5SH035	Land at Highlands, Basingstoke Road	33	Orange	Red	Red	Green	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Red	Red	Yellow	Orange	

Ref	Address	Area	AQMA	SSSI	LWS	Ancient woodland	Priority habitat	TPO	Woodland	Flood zone	Surface water	Scheduled mon.	Conservation area	RPG II*	RPG II	Listed building I	Listed building II*	Listed building II	Agri land	Landfill	Secondary school	Primary school	Early years	GP surgery	Town centre	District centre	Local centre	LNR	Employment
5SW004	Land off Basingstoke Road	28	Green	Red	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Red	Orange	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Red	Green	Red
5SH016	Land at Three Mile Cross, Church Lane	14	Red	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green
5SH061	Land at Stanbury Park	9	Red	Yellow	Orange	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Yellow
5SH062	Land at Shinfield Glebe, Church Lane, Shinfield	9	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green
5SH024	Land north-west side Church Lane	7	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green
5SH023	Land east of Hyde End Road	7	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Red	Yellow	Green
5SW009	Land adjacent to Applegarth Basingstoke Road	5	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red
5SH002	Land west of Basingstoke Road	4	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Orange	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green
5SH042	Land at Basingstoke Road, Spencers Wood	4	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Orange	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green
5SH021	Land at Kirtons Farm Road	4	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Red	Green	Red	Red	Orange	Green
5SH014	Land off Sussex Lane	4	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Orange	Red	Green	Red	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red
5SW019	Land west of Trowes Lane	4	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Red
5SH057	Land west of Hyde End Road	4	Orange	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Orange	Green
5SH010	Land at Grazeley Road	4	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green
5SH033	Land at Grazeley Road	4	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green
5SH027	Land west of Hyde End Road	4	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Red	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow
5SH054	Land to the rear of 55 Woodcock Court	4	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Orange	Green	Red	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green
5SW010	Land south of Part Lane	4	Green	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Orange	Red	Green	Red	Red	Green	Red
5SW006	Land off Basingstoke Road	4	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Red	Orange	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Red
5SH006	Land off Winston Close	4	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Orange	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red
5SW016	Land adjacent Oakleigh Farm, Part Lane	3	Green	Red	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Red	Green	Red
5SH041	Great Lea Farm, Three Mile Cross	3	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Red	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green
5SH001	Adjacent to North Lodge, Basingstoke Road	3	Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Red	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Orange
5SW020	Land north of Part Lane, Riseley	3	Green	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red
5SW023	Land at Wyvols Court Farm	3	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Red	Green	Red
5SH044	Dobbies Garden Centres Limited	3	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Orange	Green
5SH026	Land south of Millworth Lane	3	Red	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green
5SH047	Pound Green Fields	2	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Red	Red	Orange

Ref	Address	Area	AQMA	SSSI	LWS	Ancient woodland	Priority habitat	TPO	Woodland	Flood zone	Surface water	Scheduled mon.	Conservation area	RPG II*	RPG II	Listed building I	Listed building II*	Listed building II	Agri land	Landfill	Secondary school	Primary school	Early years	GP surgery	Town centre	District centre	Local centre	LNR	Employment
5SH051	Land at Church Lane	2	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5SH063	Land adjacent to Mere oak Park & Ride	2	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5SW011	Land at Bull Lane	2	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
5SW012	Land at Part Lane	2	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red
5SH018	Lane End Villas	2	Red	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5SW001	NE side of Part Lane & SW side of Church Road	2	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
5SW003	Land adjoining The Lodge, Taylors Lane	2	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
5SW013	Land adjoining Lambs Farm Business Park	2	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
5SH022	Land at The Manor, Church Lane	2	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5SW002	Land at Basingstoke Road	1	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
5SW025	Land at Robin Lodge Nursery	1	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
5SH005	Derydene, Basingstoke Road	1	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
5SH048	Pound Green Yard	1	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
5SH043	Land to the north of Brookers Hill	1	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5SW026	Land at Sheepbridge Court Farm	1	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
5SW021	Land at Swallowfield	1	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
5SW017	Uplands and adjacent land, Basingstoke Road	1	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
5SH009	Land adjacent to east side of Oakbank School	1	Red	Green	Red	Green	Red	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
5SH058	Land at Lambs Lane	1	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
5SH003	The Paddock, Croft Lane	1	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
5SH007	Land off Sussex Lane	1	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
5SH032	Land to the rear of Diana Close	1	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
5SH059	Land north of Hyde End Lane	1	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
5SH053	Oakwood, Croft Road, Spencers Wood	1	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
5SH045	18 Sevenoaks Drive, Spencers Wood	0	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
5SH056	Land at Great Lea Dairy Farm	0	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5SH011	Lane End House, Shinfield Road	0	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5SH031	Rustlings', 'The Spring', rear of 'Cushendall'	0	Red	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

Ref	Address	Area	AQMA	SSSI	LWS	Ancient woodland	Priority habitat	TPO	Woodland	Flood zone	Surface water	Scheduled mon.	Conservation area	RPG II*	RPG II	Listed building I	Listed building II*	Listed building II	Agri land	Landfill	Secondary school	Primary school	Early years	GP surgery	Town centre	District centre	Local centre	LNR	Employment
5SH046	Land at Stanbury Park, Spencers Wood	0	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Red	Red	Green	Red	Orange	Orange
5SH008	B/w Orchard House, Sunways etc, Croft Road	0	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Yellow	Orange
5SH030	Rose Cottage, Croft Road	0	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Orange
5SW022	Land at Swallowfield Street	0	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Red	Orange	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Red
5SH060	Smallmead Cottages, Kirtons Farm	0	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Orange	Red	Green	Red	Orange	Green	
5SW008	Arkley, Lambs Lane	0	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Red

South sub area

Ref	Address	Area	AQMA	SSSI	LWS	Ancient woodland	Priority habitat	TPO	Woodland	Flood zone	Surface water	Scheduled mon.	Conservation area	RPG II*	RPG II	Listed building I	Listed building II*	Listed building II	Agri land	Landfill	Secondary school	Primary school	Early years	GP surgery	Town centre	District centre	Local centre	LNR	Employment
5BA012	Reading Football Club Training Ground	10	Green	Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Orange	Green	Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	
5FI003	31 and 33 Barkham Ride	5	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
5AR024	Land to the south of Bridge Farm Business Park	3	Yellow	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Yellow	
5FI018	Land to the rear of 6 Johnson Drive	1	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Orange	
5FI045	Land at the rear of 238 - 240 Nine Mile Ride	1	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange
5BA006	Land to the rear of 326-334 Barkham Ride	1	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	
5FI015	Land to the rear of 166 Nine Mile Ride	1	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
5SW027	Fairlands, Church Road, Farley Hill, RG7 1TU	0	Green	Red	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Red	Red	Orange	Red	Orange	Orange	Green
5FI050	Land at Longwater Lane	0	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Orange	Red	Red	Yellow	Orange	
5FI004	Greenacres Farm, Nine Mile Ride	4	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	
5BA032	24 Barkham Ride	2	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow
5FI028	Westwood Yard, Sheerlands Road	2	Green	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Orange	Green	Green
5FI028	Westwood Yard, Sheerlands Road	2	Green	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Orange	Green	Green

Ref	Address	Area	AQMA	SSSI	LWS	Ancient woodland	Priority habitat	TPO	Woodland	Flood zone	Surface water	Scheduled mon.	Conservation area	RPG II*	RPG II	Listed building I	Listed building II*	Listed building II	Agri land	Landfill	Secondary school	Primary school	Early years	GP surgery	Town centre	District centre	Local centre	LNR	Employment
5FI024	Hillside, Lower Wokingham Road	1																											
5BA010	Barkham Square	58																											
5FI005	Silverstock Manor	2																											
5BA036	High Barn Farm, Commonfield Lane	2																											
5BA013	Woodlands Farm, Wood Lane	1																											
5FI032	Honeysuckle Lodge, Commonfield Lane	1																											
5WK038	Land at Woodcraze Manor	65																											
5BA010	Barkham Square	58																											
5FI054	Land at Blackcroft Farm, Farley Hill	37																											
5FI049	Land at Church Farm, Finchampstead	35																											
5AR012	Ducks Nest Farm and Chamberlain's Farm	35																											
5BA035	Mortimer Lodge Farm and Brook Farm	34																											
5WK037	Land east of Finchampstead Road	24																											
5BA031	Land at Barkham Manor Farm	21																											
5FI039	Land at Bulloways Farm Land, Eversley	18																											
5AR031	Land at Crosslanes Farm	17																											
5FI025	Land north of Nine Mile Ride	16																											
5AR020	Lockey Farm, Sindlesham Road	14																											
5FI048	Park Farm	13																											
5FI013	West of Finchampstead, Longwater Lane	11																											
5FI038	Land at Finchampstead Rd Wokingham	11																											
5AR008	Land to the south of School Road	9																											
5AR007	Land to the north of School Road	9																											
5FI004	Greenacres Farm, Nine Mile Ride	9																											
5AR018	Targetts Farm, Eversley Road	8																											
5AR028	Land at Highfield Park	8																											
5BA016	Willow Farm, School Road	6																											
5BA009	Model Farm, Barkham Ride	6																											

Ref	Address	Area	AQMA	SSSI	LWS	Ancient woodland	Priority habitat	TPO	Woodland	Flood zone	Surface water	Scheduled mon.	Conservation area	RPG II*	RPG II	Listed building I	Listed building II*	Listed building II	Agri land	Landfill	Secondary school	Primary school	Early years	GP surgery	Town centre	District centre	Local centre	LNR	Employment	
5BA033	Land at Rooks Nest Farm	6																												
5AR001	Land to the north of Reading Road	6																												
5FI003	31 and 33 Barkham Ride	5																												
5FI041	Land west of Finchampstead Road	5																												
5FI009	Land at Sandhurst Road	5																												
5FI010	Land to the east of Finchampstead Road	5																												
5BA004	The Bungalow, Edneys Hill	5																												
5FI017	Paddock Farm, Nine Mile Ride	5																												
5WK040	Ten Acres Farm	4																												
5FI052	Land at Fleet Hill Farm Site B	4																												
5AR002	Cloud Stables, Church Lane	3																												
5BA014	Oakwood view, b/w 30 & 32 Langley Comm Rd	3																												
5AR010	Land south of School Road	3																												
5AR009	Land north of School Road	3																												
5FI012	Land opposite Hall Farm, Lower Sandhurst Rd	3																												
5AR034	Land at Wood Lane, Arborfield	2																												
5FI029	The Ridges	2																												
5FI047	Land at Longwater Road	2																												
5BA032	24 Barkham Ride	2																												
5BA030	Land off Langley Common Road	2																												
5FI019	Rear of 267 and 273 Finchampstead Road	2																												
5BA036	High Barn Farm, Commonfield Lane	2																												
5BA008	Land off Barkham Street	2																												
5FI001	Tintagel Farm, Sandhurst Road	2																												
5FI040	Land at Great Oaks, Fleet Hill	2																												
5FI031	Land at Sandhurst Road	2																												
5FI051	Land at Fleet Hill Farm Site A	2																												
5AR006	Land on the south side of Reading Road	1																												

Ref	Address	Area	AQMA	SSSI	LWS	Ancient woodland	Priority habitat	TPO	Woodland	Flood zone	Surface water	Scheduled mon.	Conservation area	RPG II*	RPG II	Listed building I	Listed building II*	Listed building II	Agri land	Landfill	Secondary school	Primary school	Early years	GP surgery	Town centre	District centre	Local centre	LNR	Employment	
5AR013	Land to the rear of The Copse, Eversley Road	1																												
5AR005	Ridgefield Farm, Reading Road	1																												
5BA002	Land at Barkham Manor	1																												
5BA019	Wrens Nest Stables, Barkham Road	1																												
5BA026	Land north of Barkham Road	1																												
5BA013	Woodlands Farm, Wood Lane	1																												
5FI024	Hillside (formerly Jovike), Lower Wokingham Rd	1																												
5BA028	Langley Pond Farm Paddocks	1																												
5FI002	Heartwood Lodge	1																												
5FI021	Land to the rear of 76 and 80a Reading Road	1																												
5AR027	Land at Sherbourne	1																												
5FI042	Land on north side of Reading Road	1																												
5AR003	Land at Church Lane	1																												
5BA017	Adjacent to Coppid Hill House, Barkham Road	1																												
5BA025	29 Bearwood Road	1																												
5FI030	Bluebell Farm, Commonfield Lane	1																												
5FI022	Land at Horns Farm, Reading Road	1																												
5FI027	Rear of 115 - 137 Nash Grove Lane	1																												
5FI053	59 Nine Mile Ride	1																												
5BA034	Hillsborough, 16 Barkham Ride	1																												
5FI007	Land to the rear of 5 Clayside	1																												
5BA015	Oakwood view, b/w 30 & 32 Langley Comm Rd	1																												
5AR004	Land at Reading Road	1																												
5FI023	Land to the south of Reading Road	1																												
5FI020	Land at Warren Lane	1																												
5AR026	Land at Baird Road	0																												
5FI026	Land adjacent to 294 Nine Mile Ride	0																												
5BA003	Land at Suncot, School Road	0																												

Ref	Address	Area	AQMA	SSSI	LWS	Ancient woodland	Priority habitat	TPO	Woodland	Flood zone	Surface water	Scheduled mon.	Conservation area	RPG II*	RPG II	Listed building I	Listed building II*	Listed building II	Agri land	Landfill	Secondary school	Primary school	Early years	GP surgery	Town centre	District centre	Local centre	LNR	Employment	
5BA029	Land at Suncot	0																												
5BA011	Land to the rear of 370 - 384 Barkham Road	0																												
5FI016	Broughton Farm, Heath Ride	0																												
5AR023	Redwood	0																												
5FI032	Honey Suckle Lodge, Commonfield Lane	0																												
5WK021	Land at the Bowers	0																												
5AR021	Langley Pond Farm Livery Stables	0																												
5FI014	Land to the rear of 6-8 The Village	0																												

Southeast sub area

Ref	Address	Area	AQMA	SSSI	LWS	Ancient woodland	Priority habitat	TPO	Woodland	Flood zone	Surface water	Scheduled mon.	Conservation area	RPG II*	RPG II	Listed building I	Listed building II*	Listed building II	Agri land	Landfill	Secondary school	Primary school	Early years	GP surgery	Town centre	District centre	Local centre	LNR	Employment	
5WW022	Land south of Oaklands Lane, Crowthorne	1																												
5WW009	Ravenswood Village	48																												
5WW018	Heathlands Farm	40																												
5WW004	Birchin Inhms Farm, Heathlands Road	32																												
5WW025	Land at Newlands Farm	26																												
5WW020	Land west of Holme Grange Farm	12																												
5WW002	Pinewood, Nine Mile Ride	11																												
5FI046	East of Wokingham Rd, south of Duke's Ride	9																												
5WW024	Southfork, Easthampstead Road	9																												
5WW028	Land at Brookfield Farm	7																												
5WW003	Pine Ridge Park, Nine Mile Ride	7																												

Ref	Address	Area	AQMA	SSSI	LWS	Ancient woodland	Priority habitat	TPO	Woodland	Flood zone	Surface water	Scheduled mon.	Conservation area	RPG II*	RPG II	Listed building I	Listed building II*	Listed building II	Agri land	Landfill	Secondary school	Primary school	Early years	GP surgery	Town centre	District centre	Local centre	LNR	Employment	
5WW031	Hambridge Farm, Easthampstead Road	6	Yellow	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Orange	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Orange
5WW019	Holme Grange Farm	6	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange	Green	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
5WW029	Land at Sutton Court Farm	5	Yellow	Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Orange	Red	Yellow	Orange	Green	Green	Red	
5WW014	Land at Heathlands, Nine Mile Ride	4	Orange	Red	Orange	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Orange	Green	Green	Red	
5WW011	Heathlands Garden Centre, Heathlands	4	Yellow	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	
5WW013	Pinecopse, Nine Mile Ride	3	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Orange	Green	Green	Red	
5WW010	Land adjacent to Sulby Court, Heathlands Road	2	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Orange	Green	Green	Red	
5WW021	Land adjacent to St Sebastians Memorial Hall	1	Orange	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Red	
5WW001	B/w Pinewood Villas and St Michael's Cottages	1	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Red	
5WW032	Land at New Acres, Nine Mile Ride	0	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Orange	Green	Green	Red	
5WW012	Heathlands, Land east of Heathlands Road	0	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Orange	Green	Green	Red	
5WW005	Old Sawmill Lane	0	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Red	Green	Green	Red	

Appendix IV: SDL options

Introduction

This appendix presents a comparative appraisal of three Strategic Development Locations (SDLs) plus one smaller strategic site option, namely South Wokingham SDL extension. It feeds into Section 5.3 of the main report, which deals with work undertaken to explore site options in isolation as part of a process (over time) that ultimately led to the definition of reasonable alternative growth scenarios for formal appraisal and consultation (see Section 5.5 and Section 6). It is important to be clear that **the aim here is not to present an appraisal of reasonable alternatives.**

When was this work undertaken?

This work was undertaken in late 2022 and early 2023, in order to inform deliberations at that time, and then subjected to a 'light touch' update in 2024 (rather than simply presenting analysis from late 2022 / early 2023).

Selecting sites for appraisal

As discussed in Section 5.2, for a number of years there has been a focus on three SDL options, plus there has been dedicated work to explore the merits of smaller strategic site options. In late 2022 (when the work reported in this appendix was commenced) understanding was that there would likely only be a need to allocate one smaller strategic site option, and that the clear front-runner was South of Wokingham SDL extension. As such, the decision was taken to additionally appraise this site alongside the three SDL options (which were naturally the primary focus of attention). As discussed in Section 5 of this report, at the current time there are also three other 'smaller strategic site options' reasonably in contention for allocation; however, these are much smaller sites, and so it is considered reasonable and appropriate for these sites not to feature within the current appraisal.²⁸

Introducing the four options (and variations)

The following bullet points introduce the four site options, and also briefly discuss variations that have been considered over the years, in terms of scale / quantum (and, in turn, infrastructure etc).

- **Loddon Valley** SDL (previously 'Hall Farm / Loddon') – was consulted-upon as the sole preferred strategic site option in 2021 and, in turn, generated a high degree of interest through the consultation. The site spans the Loddon river corridor, but the firm proposal is to deliver: a large country park along the river corridor; housing and associated social infrastructure to the south (~4,500 homes); and employment to the north (extending the existing / committed major employment area). The land is in the control of three parties, with the great majority owned by the University of Reading. The housebuilder Bellway and the land promoter / housebuilder Gleeson Land are the other two principal parties. A new community would likely look towards Reading as the higher order centre but would also link to Shinfield (west) Sindlesham / Winnersh (northeast) and Wokingham (east).

Informal consideration has been given to the possibility of a reduced scheme involving housing growth weighted more towards the western part of the site, including within the Strategic Sites Report (2021).²⁹ However, at the current time there is a clear focus on delivering a comprehensive scheme that responds to the river valley context and delivers strategic community, green/blue and transport infrastructure.

- **Ashridge** – is located directly to the north of Wokingham town, separated by the A329(M). The northern extent is the M4 motorway, with the western extent being Junction 10. The promotion is to deliver around 3,000 homes, plus a range of other uses (including very modest employment land). Key concerns in the past have included fragmented land ownership leading to a delivery risk (the site is being promoted by a grouping of land promoters) and the achievability of a suitable new road junction onto the A329(M). The scheme is located such that a community would likely look towards Wokingham town as well Binfield and Bracknell to the east and Twyford to the north. The site is associated with a raised wooded landscape, in contrast to Loddon Valley.

The scheme has gone through a number of iterations, including with different approaches taken to land at the northern extent of the site that is adjacent to the M4 and less well-connected. This land was originally proposed as sports pitches, and then proposed for housing and now there is the option to use part of this land for a data centre and leave part undeveloped. Another consideration is the eastern extent of the site, where previous work has flagged a weak boundary and, in turn, a risk of development creep / sprawl over time. Finally, it is important to note that there are three very distinct options 'on the table' in respect of A329(M) connectivity.

²⁸ For context, the Interim SA Report (2021) did present a comparative appraisal of four smaller strategic site options, specifically, all of the sites currently in contention bar Riverways Farm (which, in practice, is borderline non-strategic).

²⁹ Under a scenario involving a reduced scale of growth at Loddon Valley (weighted more to the west) it could also be that land at the eastern extent of the site (Sindlesham) remains in contention for allocation as a non-strategic site.

- **East of Twyford / Ruscombe** (East of T/R) – is located to the east of Twyford within Ruscombe Parish, which is a notably chalk influenced landscape (distinct from the two other sites). The site is in the control of Berkeley Homes (a housebuilder) and the promotion is for 2,500 homes. The promotion includes the possibility of a new train station alongside a new business hub; however, achievability is uncertain, and it is understood that there is no commitment to delivery from Network Rail. Even if a new station was achievable in physical terms, it is understood that the cost would exceed the capability of the promotion so requiring additional external funding. A key consideration for this site is that the land falls within the Metropolitan Green Belt, such that allocation would necessitate demonstration of ‘exceptional circumstances’ (NPPF paragraph 140).

Whilst there has been past work by the Council to explore varying scales and configurations of growth, there is now a firm proposal from the site promoter, which involves: A) no built form to the south of the railway (other than a possible carpark for Twyford Station); and B) a comprehensive scale of growth to the north of the railway, including being mindful of the need to create a defensible new Green Belt boundary.

- **South of Wokingham SDL extension** – the site would deliver a neighbourhood centre, but there would be reliance on schools delivered as part of the permitted South Wokingham SDL to the north. The assumption in 2021 was an 835-home scheme contained to the north of a narrow flood zone (a tributary of the Emm Brook). However, the latest proposal from the site promoter is to extend the scheme to the south of the flood zone (adjacent to Easthampstead Road), leading to a 980 home scheme (as per a current planning application).

The site promoters have also previously suggested an additional ~150 homes to the south of the flood zone, adjacent to Old Wokingham Road. However, this is not supported because: A) the additional homes would ‘look’ towards the Old Wokingham Road rather than the South of Wokingham SDL and its planned distributor road; and B) Bracknell Forest Council would likely raise further concerns regarding settlement separation.

Appraisal methodology

The appraisal is presented below under 13 sustainability topic headings, as introduced in Section 3 of the ISA Report (2021), which presents “The SA Scope”. Under each topic heading, the aim is to present a comparative discussion of the competing strategic site options, and ultimately to: 1) **rank** the site options in order of performance (with a star indicating best performing; “=” indicating broadly equal performance; and “?” indicating an inability to reach a conclusion); and then 2) **categorise** performance in terms of ‘significant effects’ using **red** / **amber** / **green**.³⁰

Further methodological points are as follows:

- **Ranking / order of preference** – the variable scale of growth across the site creates an inherent challenge. Notably, South of Wokingham SDL extension would need to be allocated in combination with one or more other sites with a capacity of over 3,000 homes in order to deliver an equivalent number of homes to Loddon Valley.
- **Significant effects** – significance is context dependent. The approach taken is to judge significance in the context of an assumption that the task at hand is to select one site for allocation in order to deliver perhaps 1,000 to 4,500 homes. However, significance is reduced in the context of the Local Plan Update as a whole.
- **In-combination effects** – as discussed, the appraisal is underpinned by a primary assumption that the four competing site options are mutually exclusive. However, in practice it could prove necessary to allocate two or more. Potential in-combination effects are discussed where necessary, e.g. in respect of shared road corridors.
- **Timing of development** – discussions have been ongoing with all of the site promoters to understand the likely timing / phasing / trajectory of housing delivery, which is a factor of many things, including the number of housebuilders operating and sales outlets. This is an important consideration, as the local plan is tasked with providing for housing needs within the plan period (a period of at least 15 years from plan adoption) and delivery early in the plan period is of particular importance. For all three SDL options it is likely that they would deliver beyond the plan period, hence an important question is how many homes could be delivered *in the plan period*.
- **Evidence** – a key consideration is the extent to which it is appropriate to take account of materials submitted by site promoters, in respect of proposals for bringing forward sites (e.g. mix of uses, areas of greenspace) and directing limited funds to measures aimed at mitigation (e.g. infrastructure upgrades) and ‘planning gain’ (e.g. affordable housing). There is certainly a need to take site specific proposals into consideration; however, there is a need to apply caution because: site specific proposals are subject to change; work undertaken by site promoters can naturally involve a degree of bias; and there is a need to avoid unduly biasing in favour of sites for which more work has been undertaken. In this particular case, the promoters of all four sites have been given ample opportunity to submit evidence, including as part of a detailed period of engagement in Nov 2022.

³⁰ **Red** indicates a significant negative effect; **amber** a negative effect of limited or uncertain significance; **light green** a positive effect of limited or uncertain significance; and **green** a significant positive effect. No colour indicates a neutral effect.

Accessibility (to community infrastructure)

Loddon Valley	Ashridge	East of T/R	S. Wokingham SDL ext.
	2	2	3

The equivalent appraisal completed in 2021 concluded a preference for Loddon Valley, and there are still reasons to suggest that Loddon Valley performs relatively well, particularly given the potential scale of growth and certain inherent locational considerations (i.e. less-so on the basis of scheme proposals).

A key point to note is that the other two competing SDL options, as promoted, are considerably smaller (particularly East of T/R, which could be around half the size, and would also deliver slower), which would have a bearing on the potential to deliver new strategic community alongside housing. However, on the other hand, Ashridge and East of T/R are located more closely to an existing settlement (although in the case of Ashridge there is a need to account for the potential severance effect of the A309(M)).

Also, as a larger site with potential to deliver at a good, consistent rate over a number of years (and with a good degree of confidence regarding delivery), allocation of Loddon Valley could lead to reduced pressure for allocation of smaller / small sites elsewhere that are likely to have comparatively lower levels of accessibility and less potential to deliver new or upgraded community infrastructure alongside housing.

Focusing specifically on **Loddon Valley**, a central proposal is to deliver three local centres, of which the one located in the centre of the site is comfortably the largest. Importantly, Loddon Valley would also deliver a secondary school (i.e. provide land for and facilitate), which might not only 'consume the smoke' of the new community, but also benefit existing nearby communities, where a proportion of students travel some distance to be educated, and there is something of an imbalance between primary and secondary places. However, it is recognised that benefits are dependent on good pedestrian and cycle links to neighbouring areas (and, in turn, the secondary school opportunity could serve as an argument for a greater focus of growth towards the western extent of the site).

N.B. there is also the context of Loddon Valley potentially facilitating the relocation of the Royal Berkshire Hospital, but there can be no certainty at the current time, and it would necessitate a new M4 junction.

Finally, with regards to Loddon Valley, there is a need to consider the merits of a new community linking very closely to a large new country park as well as a major employment hub. These benefits would also likely extend to a significant number of existing residents in Lower Earley.

With regards to **Ashridge**, it can be suggested that a key factor in its favour is that the new community would be in reasonable proximity to Wokingham town centre. However, on the other hand, the severance effect of the A329(M) would need to be overcome for this journey to be attractive. There is less potential to deliver new community infrastructure onsite than is the case for Loddon Valley, but there should still be the potential to deliver a range of services / facilities supportive of self-sufficiency / trip internalisation. This would be particularly important under a scenario whereby the scheme does not deliver a new road junction onto the A329(M), as discussed below.

Focusing on links to Wokingham town, a 'green spine' running north-south through the centre features strongly in the promoter's concept masterplan, and at its southern extent would be a new walking/cycling bridge over the A329(M). This would link to the near-complete North of Wokingham SDL and then on to the town centre (potentially via an attractive route, given the extent of existing and committed green infrastructure). There would also be two road bridges which, it is proposed, would be enhanced to support walking / cycling, and it is noted that the western road bridge (the A321), would link to existing local centres in North Wokingham. However, the simple fact remains that the A329(M) is a barrier to movement, plus northern parts of the site are distant from Wokingham town centre.

Aside from the green spine, another key factor central to the promoter's concept masterplan is a proposal to deliver six communities of 500 homes, each with an Energy, Mobility and Community (EMC) hub within 5 minutes' walk of all homes. Additionally, there would be a central district centre and two local centres (three EMC hubs integrate with a district or local centre, whilst three are stand-alone, of which one is associated with a school). The offer of the district centre might be considerably lower than the equivalent centre at Loddon Valley (which would also serve the employment area north of the river corridor), but the main district centre at Ashridge would have the benefit of integrating with the adjacent existing Ashridge Manor Garden Centre (where there is also a farm shop and a café), and one of the two local centres would integrate with an adjacent existing small rural business hub (Ashridgewood).

N.B. the viability of retail spread across such a large number of centres within the site can be questioned.

With regards to school provision, the proposal is to dedicate a considerable amount of land to schools; however, the strategic case lacks evidence. With regards to a new secondary school capacity, the concern is that it would be too close to existing schools (Forest, Emmbrook & Holt). Overall, it seems clear that there is less to be gained by new secondary school capacity here than is the case for Loddon Valley. With regards to the proposed SEND school, added capacity for the Borough might be welcomed, but plans for boosting capacity are in train (see [here](#)).

Another consideration, in respect of Ashridge, is that the north-eastern-most 500 home community (proposed to be the sixth and final community delivered) would be less well-connected, and potentially much less well-connected than would be the case for any of the communities at Loddon Valley (e.g. the western-most community at Loddon Valley might have relatively little in the way of new services and facilities 'on the doorstep', but would be well-linked to Shinfield, and also Reading via the A327). However, and as discussed, the possibility of using the northern extent of the site to deliver one or more data centres is now under consideration (as of 2024).

Finally, at Ashridge, there is a degree of uncertainty regarding what would actually be achievable in practice, with a concern that aspects of the concept masterplan could be 'watered-down', given that the site promoters are yet to engage housebuilders, and noting uncertainty around scheme extent/masterplanning and transport infrastructure.

In contrast, there is good confidence regarding deliverability of **East of T/R**, because the site promoters – Berkeley Homes – would also act as house builders. There is benefit to Berkeley Homes being a known entity and, furthermore, they are able to demonstrate a strong track-record in respect of place-making.

With regards to the locational merits of East of T/R, the first point to note is that the majority of new homes would be quite well-connected (1.5 - 2km) to the centre of Twyford, which is a Tier 1 settlement alongside Wokingham town (the 2018 Settlement Hierarchy Study found the services offer to be only marginally below Wokingham town, although the employment offer is much lower). Also, a locational benefit of the site is its good links to central Reading by train. However, on the other hand, the proposal is to deliver the two fields most closely related to Twyford as greenspace (due to heritage constraints), and there is nothing of note, in terms of community infrastructure, located between the centre of Twyford and the site.

With regards to scheme proposals, the proposed new areas of strategic greenspace (east of Ruscombe and also south of the railway line), would be well-placed to benefit the existing community (the ambition might be for Twyford to ultimately benefit from accessible strategic green infrastructure around perhaps 2/3rd of the settlement edge). However, the proposal for a single modest sized 'community hub' is in notable contrast to the other SDL options (discussed above). East of T/R is obviously a smaller scheme, but the fact remains that the two larger options are associated with a greater opportunity in respect of delivering new community infrastructure alongside housing.

The final site and scheme-specific consideration at East of T/R relates to access to a secondary school (with capacity). There is one secondary school at Twyford – the Piggott School – which is located to the north of Twyford, in a location that is not very easily accessed from East of T/R (the most direct route from the eastern-most part of the site might involve crossing three A-road corridors plus the proposed new relief road). The scheme website states: *"We would work with [the Council] to deliver a new 3-form entry primary school and a pre-school nursery, together with land for the future expansion of The Piggott School, or a new secondary school, if one is required."* However, the strategic case for a new school can be questioned noting planned expansion of the Piggott School.

The final strategic site option for consideration is **South of Wokingham SDL extension**. In several ways the potential to integrate (fairly) well with the committed South of Wokingham SDL amounts to a locational benefit, including noting school capacity. However, on the other hand, there is limited reason to suggest that the scheme would significantly 'compliment' the offer within the SDL. Key aspects of the proposed offer are: *"a neighbourhood centre, enabling a local store to be provided and space for a variety of commercial uses... making best use of existing or planned primary school place provision in the SDL, with the flexibility to provide an on-site primary school... [and] contributions to the Gray's Farm Sports Hub...."* A key outstanding issue is the question of delivering a primary school, noting the current planning application.

The site is also reasonably well-connected to Wokingham town centre, with the distance being similar to that for Ashridge (~2.5km). The more peripheral eastern and southern components of the site are less well-connected to the committed SDL and Wokingham town centre, but the site as a whole is well-connected to Crowthorne, plus the Pinewood Centre is nearby and Bracknell town centre is accessible by minor roads. Accessibility to Bracknell town centre might be higher than is the case for Ashridge, but this might be dependent on upgrades, which would be a matter for further discussion with Bracknell Forst Borough Council, including given constraints to road upgrades.

In **conclusion**, all three SDL options are associated with pros and cons, having considered both inherent locational characteristics and scheme proposals, also mindful that scheme proposals are subject to change and/or delivery risk. All three would deliver significant new community infrastructure alongside new homes, thereby helping to ensure the new communities have good access to community infrastructure and avoiding putting problematic strain on existing infrastructure. There may also be some opportunity to benefits existing communities ('planning gain').

On balance, it is possible to highlight Loddon Valley as performing best, given its scale and locational opportunities (country park, employment and secondary school). It is then challenging to differentiate between the other two SDL options with any confidence. Ashridge has the potential to link quite well to Wokingham and Wokingham town centre, and there are certain aspects of the concept masterplan that have merit (a good network of centres and EMC hubs, schools linked by the green spine, a large central area for sports pitches, some existing facilities onsite); however, there are many uncertainties. East of T/R is a smaller scheme proposing to deliver less in the way of community infrastructure. With regards to South of Wokingham SDL extension, the site has some locational and scheme-specific merit, but the potential for the new community (particularly in the more peripheral parts of the site) to be delivered in-line with [20-minute neighbourhood](#) principles is less clear than for the three larger sites.

Looking beyond the current comparative appraisal and, specifically, looking ahead to the task of defining reasonable growth scenarios for the LPU as a whole, it is fair to say that a decision to support two or more of these sites could amount to taking a very proactive approach to planning for accessibility to community infrastructure, in a similar vein to designation of four SDLs through the Core Strategy (2010). However, this is clearly subject to the scale of housing need, plus there is a need to recognise that smaller housing schemes can also contribute towards or deliver new or upgraded community infrastructure. Also, smaller sites can – in certain circumstances – be important from a perspective of seeking to maintain the viability of existing centres and community infrastructure (e.g. maintaining primary school capacity can be an issue, given a decade of lower birth rates nationally).

Air and wider environmental quality

Loddon Valley	Ashridge	East of T/R	S. Wokingham SDL ext.
2	3	1	2

A key consideration is the need to avoid worsening of air quality – and ideally achieve improvements – within the three key air pollution hotspots locally, namely Reading (where an AQMA covers the town centre and beyond), Wokingham town (where an AQMA follows the main roads through the town centre) and Twyford village (where an AQMA is associated with the central crossroads but is in the process of being [revoked](#)). There is also a need to account for the M4 AQMA, and also recognise noise pollution associated with the M4, A329(M) and train lines.

Beginning with **Loddon Valley**, an immediate consideration is air and noise pollution from busy roads affecting the amenity of nearby properties. These issues are likely to be particularly material for the eastern part of the site; however, the illustrative masterplan shows employment adjacent to the M4, and there is the potential to deliver a significant new landscaped earth bund to screen the motorway coupled with an open space buffer. Noise pollution may still affect the amenity of some homes and gardens, but it would be possible to provide mitigation (in the form of acoustic glazing/fences) or use design approaches, like self-screening and/or orientating homes to shield noise.

Aside from the M4 constraint, there is also a risk of car dependency, given: limited potential for connectivity by rail; the proposed focus of growth in the central part of the site, distant from strategic road corridors; and barriers to movement in the form of the river corridor and the M4. In turn, this translates into a degree of concern regarding increased traffic through air pollution hotspots. However, this is a matter for discussion below under ‘transport’.

With regards to **Ashridge**, it is immediately apparent that the site is constrained by motorways on two of its three sides, although the site promoter’s Noise Assessment concludes: *“The predicted levels across the majority of the proposed development site are unlikely to represent a significant constraint on the site for the residential and educational use, providing a suitable site layout is retained and appropriate mitigation measures are included as part of the detailed design. Therefore, from an acoustic perspective the site is considered to be appropriate...”*

The reference to the “majority” of the site raises some questions, and it is also noted that the assessment considered the 2021 version of the masterplan, with the 2022 version including some additional housing close to the M4 / A329(M) junction. It is also important to note the costs (and visual impacts) of noise mitigation measures along such an extensive part of the site boundary, in the context of a site with wider uncertainties around costs.

Aside from the M4 / A329(M) constraint, there is also a need to note the A321 corridor passing through the centre of the site. Otherwise, it is again the case that a key consideration is traffic generation, which is a matter for discussion below, under the ‘transport’ heading. One key point to note here though relates to the risk of some (likely modest levels) of additional traffic through the Twyford AQMA.

One final consideration for discussion here relates to the question of a potential new junction onto the A329(M), specifically a junction from Warren House Road. There are three options:

- Full junction – with both east and west facing slips. This would be preferable in terms of avoiding traffic congestion, and allowing ease of access to Reading, including for residents of Wokingham, but this would be costly, impact an existing SANG and west facing slips would require downgrading of the A329(M) to an A-road.
- Half junction – with east facing slips only. This would risk car journeys to Reading via more minor roads, including Sandford Lane across the River Loddon, as the route via the A329(M) would necessitate travelling east ~2km to the Coppid Beech roundabout, before doubling back and heading west towards Reading. Also, the southeast slip road would be in close proximity to existing homes and associated greenspace.
- No junction – this would require a ‘vision-led’ approach to achieving very high rates of trip internalisation and offsite trips by active and public transport. This would clearly involve cost savings that could be put to good use, and it is noted that the site promoters have done an extensive amount of engagement to explore the feasibility of this option (11 meetings with WBC under a PPA as of April 2024), but there remain uncertainties. One final point to note is discussion below regarding the site being progressed as net zero carbon exemplar in terms of built environment emissions, which could align with aiming to be a ‘vision-led’ transport exemplar.

With regards to **East of T/R**, the key issue is well understood, namely the nearby AQMA at Twyford village crossroads. This is a significant issue currently, plus there is a need to consider the trend over time. On the one hand, the introduction of Elizabeth Line services supports commuting; however, on the other hand, working from home is affecting rates of commuting, plus air pollution is decreasing as an issue due to the national switch-over to less polluting vehicles, including electric vehicles (but air pollution will remain an issue in the long term, including particulates pollution from road, tire and break wear, and including recognising the weight of EVs).

Different scales and configurations of growth have been considered in the past. However, the current assumption is comprehensive to deliver an optimum road solution in the form of an eastern relief road to address the AQMA issue. This new road link would enable some traffic (specifically traffic approaching Twyford from the east, along the A4, and heading towards Wokingham to the south) to bypass the village centre cross-roads AQMA.

The promoter has proposed the delivery of new station car parking, likely by enabling a new multi-storey car park, which could potentially assist with easing the flow of traffic. However, latest understanding is that use of the station car park by commuters has dropped, such that it is not at full capacity (although improved parking could still be welcomed). Other considerations relate to noise and air pollution from the (electrified) railway and the A3032.

Finally, with regards to **South of Wokingham SDL extension**, the site is associated with few major issues. However, there is a need to question whether the more peripheral parts of the site could be associated with car dependency and, in turn, traffic through the Wokingham town centre AQMA and/or along minor road corridors towards Bracknell. There is also an AQMA in the centre of Crowthorne.

In **conclusion**, as per the conclusion reached in 2021, it is fair to highlight that East of T/R is associated with a strategic opportunity to address an existing air quality issue. However, the AQMA is in the process of being revoked, and there is also a need to recognise that the scheme would also clearly generate car trips through the AQMA. Ashridge is the least preferable site, given some clear issues and constraints, but there are also issues at Loddon Valley, where there is a noise constraint plus inherent transport challenges (discussed below).

The wider context is the national switch-over to EVs, which is set to result in significant improvements to air quality nationally. However, particulates pollution will remain an important issue for spatial planning, as will noise pollution.

Biodiversity

Loddon Valley	Ashridge	East of T/R	S. Wokingham SDL ext.
2	3	★1	★1

Differentiating between strategic site options in respect of biodiversity objectives is inherently challenging due to a need to account for not only onsite, nearby or otherwise functionally linked areas of sensitivity, which might act as a **constraint** to development, but also the **opportunity** to deliver targeted/strategic enhancements. There is increasingly a focus on recognising the value of development-related biodiversity enhancements, as practice improves in light of the new national requirement for all development to achieve a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain. However, there is also a need to follow the mitigation hierarchy, where issues are avoided in the first instance as far as possible, given uncertainties in respect of mitigation and enhancement measures. A paper was published in Nature in August 2024 highlighting the need for a precautionary approach, including in respect of the ‘additionality’ of biodiversity enhancements proposed as part of biodiversity net gain calculations.

Beginning with the SDL option that is subject to the least constraint – **East of T/R** – the site is located in close proximity to two Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs), but does not intersect either, and there are limited functional linkages between the site and wooded landscapes to the northeast and south. Ruscombe and Vale Woods Local Wildlife Site (LWS; 2.8 ha in total) is in the western part of the site, but the promoter proposes retaining the woodland and delivering adjacent land to the west as strategic greenspace (a buffer to Ruscombe village).

Also, and importantly, the proposal is to deliver new woodland planting and other strategic greenspace at the eastern extent of the site, including with a view to creating a new defensible Green Belt boundary. This woodland planting could prove well targeted, as the effect would be to enhance a significant cluster of ancient woodlands. The possibility of taking a more proactive approach to woodland creation could feasibly be explored, although it is recognised that the benefits of woodland planting would need to be weighed against the cost of losing high quality agricultural land. There might also be a focus on increasing accessibility to woodlands (e.g. Scarlett’s Wood).

A final consideration is in respect of the landscape to the south of the railway line, where the proposal is to deliver a new area of strategic parkland. There is considered likely to be a good opportunity for habitat creation and enhancement given: a relatively high density of woodland and mature hedgerows; the Twyford Brook; connectivity to Stanlake Park; and existing public rights of way.

In contrast, the other two SDL options are subject to more biodiversity constraints:

Beginning with **Ashridge**, this is a part of the Borough is associated with a high density of woodland and, indeed, the north-eastern part of the site comprised a large woodland until late in the 20th Century. There is also a need to consider the remnant parkland habitats associated with the Bill Hill Estate, at the western extent of the site. The promoter proposes avoiding and buffering ancient woodland, but there could still be a risk of indirect impacts, for example recreational impacts and loss of functionally linked hedgerows, copses and trees. The site does not contain any LWSs but significantly intersects the Berkshire BOA.

The Ecology Report (2022) prepared by the site promoter explains: *“Notable corridors include; along the southern, western, northern and eastern boundaries; running north/ south through the central area of the site; and in association with the stream in the north west of the site.”* However, there is a case to be made for the “central corridor” being of overriding significance. Specifically:

- South – Ashridge Manor is associated with a small ancient woodland patch, as well as a wider extensively ‘treed’ landscape, with all current features shown on the pre-1914 OS map.
- Centre – this is the location of former Ashridge Wood, which is now associated with a linear ancient woodland comprising the periphery of the former woodland, as well as 10 - 15 field trees. The latest proposal is to increase the buffer to the remnant woodland, but there remain concerns with intensification of uses in this area (the latest proposal is for sports pitches, with housing previously proposed). The Ecology Report (2022) recognises that land here is a Biodiversity Opportunity Area but does not consider ways of capitalising on the opportunity.
- Northeast – there is extensive semi-improved grassland, and, immediately beyond the site boundary, is a large ancient woodland complex, comprising Beech Wood and Pond Wood, both of which are LWSs. The proposal is to buffer the woodlands, but there could be potential for habitat creation or to leave this land undeveloped, given its relatively poor accessibility credentials. In this regard, the new data centre option (2024) is noted.

In summary, there is a concern regarding further fragmentation of notably wooded landscape, and impacts to woodlands more generally, albeit mitigation is proposed, most notably in the form of the green spine that is a core component of the concept masterplan. However, there is a need to maintain perspective, specifically mindful that none of the habitats onsite are formally designated, and adjacent / nearby woodlands are only locally designated. The proposal is to deliver the statutory minimum 10% biodiversity net gain onsite, which presumably reflects the nature of the constraints that exist; hence the question might be asked as to whether 15% or 20% could be achieved, albeit there would be viability implications.

Moving on to **Loddon Valley**, key constraints are associated with: the River Loddon corridor running through the centre of the site; the Barkham Brook corridor running through the south of the site (where the proposal is to deliver homes); and some small woodland patches outside of the river corridors, particularly to the north (where the proposal is to deliver employment land, and much of this is already committed) and the east (the Carter’s Hill area). In contrast, the central-southern part of the site, which is proposed to be the primary focus of housing growth, is subject to notably limited biodiversity constraint. The southwest part of the site is also associated with fairly limited constraint, but there is a remnant former parkland landscape (Arborfield Hall and Arborfield Grange). The existing constraints require careful consideration. Further points are as follows:

- The River Loddon corridor is the primary consideration, and this was reflected in the consultation response received from Natural England in 2022, who emphasised the need to buffer the River Loddon SSSI, which is located 3.5km upstream. There are no nationally designated SSSIs within the site, and only one small SSSI

downstream (i.e. prior to the confluence with the Thames at Charvil), but there is extensive floodplain grazing marsh priority habitat within the site. Overall, the site is of crucial importance to the functioning of the river corridor as a whole, which is undoubtedly of larger-than-local significance for biodiversity (and wide-ranging associated ecosystem services). The whole area is strongly associated with a Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

- The University of Reading has demonstrated a strong commitment to conserving and enhancing the biodiversity value of the river corridor, via delivery of a large new country park, and early work has been completed that suggests the potential to achieve *at least* 20% biodiversity net gain. It seems likely that there would be a generous buffer zone between development and the river corridor, and it is fair to assume high quality Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) that avoid hydrological impact pathways. However, at this early stage it is important to make only cautious assumptions regarding the proposal to deliver significant enhancements to the river corridor, for two reasons. Firstly, and most importantly, there is a need to consider the implications of one or more road bridges across the river corridor and M4. The most recent proposal (2024) is to potentially minimise concerns via a single shorter bridge section joining the B3270 at Meldreth Way (in the vicinity of the Loddon / Barkham Brook confluence), but in 2022 the proposal was for a longer bridge section cutting diagonally across the river corridor to join the B3270 at Rushey Way / Mill Lane. Secondly, there is a need to consider the 'future baseline' scenario and, in turn, the 'additionality' of the enhancements being proposed as part of Loddon Valley. Whilst it is recognised that realising the country park opportunity would necessitate large-scale housing growth, the strategic importance of this stretch of river corridor is such that it could feasibly be the subject of some enhancement in the absence of housing growth, including noting that University of Reading commitments.
- With regards to woodland patches, these are of varying value/sensitivity, with at least one of the patches known to have been planted in the 20th century, but several comprise ancient woodland, and there are two that comprise LWSs *and* which would fall outside of the proposed country park. The key issue is potentially employment development to the north of the river corridor enveloping St. Johns Copse ancient woodland / LWS on three sides; however, it is recognised that further employment development in close proximity to this woodland (over and above that which already exists and is committed, to the west) is fairly likely under any scenario, i.e. in the absence of a new garden village. Concept masterplans suggest enhancing bat populations in this area, but it is not clear how realistic this is.
- The other key area of sensitivity is then in the Carter's Hill area, to the south of the river corridor, where there is a core area of sensitivity associated with an ancient woodland LWS, but also a wider landscape associated with further woodland, a high density of mature field boundaries (with associated historic lanes / bridleways), the Barkham Brook and a small area of common land. There is a need to consider the links between this landscape and the nearby historic parkland of Bearwood College.
- With regards to the remnant parkland landscapes to the north of Arborfield, it is difficult to conclude significant biodiversity constraint, but efforts would clearly be made to sympathetically reflect the historic environment constraint, and biodiversity would naturally be a consideration as part of this.
- Finally, with regards to the central part of the site, which is proposed as the primary focus of housing growth, whilst this has overall limited biodiversity sensitivity, there is a strong mature tree belt along the historic lane (now a bridleway) that links Arborfield Church to Carters Hill, via the central part of the site. This is reason to consider possibly utilising this feature as an eastern boundary to the built form. However, on the other hand, it is recognised that the current concept masterplan integrates this feature as part of a generous green corridor.


Finally, **South of Wokingham SDL extension** is associated with very limited onsite priority habitat, but there are notable concentrations of priority habitat adjacent and nearby, potentially serving to suggest a particular opportunity for onsite habitat creation to support a biodiversity net gain at a functional landscape scale. The stream corridor within/adjacent to the site is a key feature, but is not associated with any priority habitat, and the proposed concept master proposes enhancements, which could prove well-targeted. The proposal is also to deliver a new area of SANG, including woodland creation, that would be well-located from a biodiversity perspective, given extensive areas of woodland associated with raised ground to the south and east. As of 2022 the proposal was 20% BNG.

In **conclusion**, East of T/R and South of Wokingham extension both perform well, in that there is limited constraint and a degree of opportunity (well-targeted woodland creation and enhancement of the Twyford Brook corridor in the case of East of T/R; enhancement of the stream corridor, as well as SANG to helpfully bound the southern extent of Wokingham town, in the case of South Wokingham extension). The East of T/R site promoters have, to date, stated only a commitment to "at least 10% biodiversity net gain", but it is thought less work has been completed than is the case for the other three sites (two of which propose at least 20%).

At Loddon Valley the situation is then much more nuanced, but overall there is tentative support, from a biodiversity perspective. This is a sensitive river valley landscape, such that development would undoubtedly lead to certain impacts of some significance. However, there is also a clear opportunity to deliver major enhancements, recalling the current intensively farmed nature of the landscape. Ultimately, there is confidence in the ability to deliver a significant net gain, but there are also acknowledged risks and uncertainties at this stage in the planning process.

Finally, with regards to Ashridge, the site promoters must be given credit for being open regarding the constraints onsite that mean that the intention is to deliver only the statutory minimum 10% biodiversity net gain (there is also a need to consider whether this would be onsite, as opposed to including an allowance for offsite enhancements). This is a raised wooded landscape associated with considerable sensitivity, but this must be kept in perspective, in that none of the onsite habitats are designated, and adjacent woodlands are only locally designated. It is noted that sensitivities largely surround the edge of the site, such that further avoidance/mitigation steps could be taken.

Climate change adaptation

Loddon Valley	Ashridge	East of T/R	S. Wokingham SDL ext.
3	2	2	1 

There is fairly limited potential to meaningfully differentiate between the four options in respect of climate change adaptation / resilience. Flood risk is a key consideration, but at all four sites it seems likely that it will be possible to suitably address both fluvial and surface water flood risk (mindful that the distinction between the two forms can be blurry; also mindful of expanded flood zones due to climate change) through masterplanning and SuDS.

Loddon Valley is clearly constrained in part by the extensive flood zone of the River Loddon, as well as the narrower Barkham Brook corridor. The site is also subject to flood risk from the Bearwood Reservoir located beyond the site to the east (embankment failure, albeit highly unlikely, would lead to flooding along the Barkham Brook Corridor). However, the proposal, as promoted, has been carefully designed to ensure buildings are not at risk of flooding by avoiding building in these areas. In addition there may well be the opportunity to design and deliver strategic flood water attenuation, to the benefit of extensive areas at flood risk downstream.

The Environment Agency (EA) commented in detail as part of the consultation in 2021, raising a number of questions but not any fundamental concerns. Key questions related to how climate change scenarios had factored-in as part of flood risk modelling, and the EA also questioned whether built form might ideally be set back further from the identified flood risk zones. However, it seems likely that issues/questions raised would not materially impact the promoter’s concept masterplan. The EA’s response was also supportive of the potential to deliver an improvement to downstream flood risk:

“We are constantly reviewing opportunities to deliver flood alleviation schemes in the Thames Area and therefore we may request that areas in the floodplain or on the edges of floodplains are safeguarded from development where there are opportunities to deliver... schemes.”

One final point to note is that, whilst information was available, the EA did not comment specifically on the proposal for a significant new road corridor across the flood zone which, which has been discussed above. It is recognised that there is already considerable built form and major infrastructure associated with the river corridor downstream, including the entire eastern section of the Lower Earley Way and Winnersh Triangle; however, development in these areas happened in the late 20th Century, since which time understanding has advanced regarding climate change risks.

With regards to **East of T/R** and **Ashridge**, there is limited flood risk. However, points to note are:

- East of T/R – there is a significant surface water flood risk channel associated with the A3032, and it is noted that there are numerous homes intersecting the flood zone downstream. A drainage ditch can be seen running alongside the road along its entire length through the site. However, despite this, there is no evidence to demonstrate that this constraint has been considered as part of the concept masterplan, e.g. via a green spine incorporating SuDS. Indeed, a ‘community’ hub is proposed in this area. This is not likely to be a significant issue but is indicative of the challenge created by the high-level concept masterplan submitted.
- Ashridge – submitted technical studies raise no concerns, for example finding that *“Ashridge has no flood risk constraints”* and also stating that *“surface water flood risk is considered low across the majority of the site and in higher risk areas it can be managed onsite through incorporation of [SuDS].”* However, there is one significant area of surface water flood risk at the southeast extent of the site, close to the proposed new A329(M) junction, which is not explicitly discussed in the submitted evidence. This could have implications for the masterplan.

With regards to **South of Wokingham SDL extension**, as per the discussion above under ‘biodiversity’, the site is quite closely associated with a tributary of the Emm Brook, but there appears to be ample opportunity to accommodate flood zones and SuDS as part of a green and blue infrastructure strategy, and there could be an opportunity for some ‘betterment’ in terms of downstream flood risk. There have been some notable amendments to the concept masterplan since 2022, when the EA commented:

“We would however like to raise that the master plan does show residential parcels very close to the watercourse and possible flood extents. We would like to see these parcels moved further away from the watercourse and flood extents as a precautionary approach.”

With regards to surface water flood risk, the northeast of the site is associated with a notable channel, which follows Old Wokingham Road, before cutting through the site (following a field boundary) to meet the Emm Brook tributary. This is reflected in the masterplan; however, there might be the potential to deliver a more generous green buffer along Old Wokingham Road in order to both ensure good planning for flood risk / resilience and also address the concerns raised by Bracknell Forest Council, through consultation in 2022, regarding a “hard urban edge”.

In **conclusion**, whilst it seems likely that Loddon Valley could avoid sensitive built form encroaching upon flood zones (including accounting for climate change scenarios), and there could well be an opportunity to deliver strategic flood water attenuation, there is a question-mark regarding the impact of road infrastructure. With regards to East of T/R and Ashridge, in both cases there is a need for further/ongoing work on masterplanning and SuDS.

N.B. beyond flood risk there are a wide range of other climate change adaptation / resilience considerations. However, these are of less significance to the current appraisal and can be integrated as part of discussion under other headings as appropriate. By way of context, it is important to note that climate change adaptation (and mitigation) is locally addressed through the Council’s Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP). The Council is in a position to lead local response to climate emergency since it has the information about local climate hazards (primarily water stress and overheating) and opportunities for responsive and proactive action.

Climate change mitigation

Loddon Valley	Ashridge	East of T/R	S. Wokingham SDL ext.
2	1 	4	3

The focus here is **built environment emissions**, recognising that transport emissions can be appropriately discussed under other topic headings. As discussed in Section 6 of this report, the aim must be to achieve net zero development to an exacting standard, which means with net zero achieved in line with the energy hierarchy (onsite as far as possible and ‘fabric first’) and with net zero calculated using an ‘energy based’ approach.

A further key consideration is ‘whole lifecycle’ net zero accounting for non-operational emissions, which primarily means the embodied emissions associated with construction (but there is also a need to consider the whole lifecycle of buildings including refurbishment and demolition). Other considerations might include: the need for extensive groundworks; access to circular economy networks for material reuse etc.; local materials availability (e.g. from minerals extraction); bespoke means of reducing material transport emissions (e.g. transport by rail or water); and embodied carbon / lifecycle emissions associated energy infrastructure (e.g. heavy reliance on solar PV and batteries that require replacement over time). One other opportunity can relate to supporting modern methods of construction (MMC), including modular buildings (which can also perform well in terms of operational emissions); however, no particular opportunities have been highlighted to date (e.g. a new MMC facility).

In this light, it is clearly inherently challenging to differentiate between the four site options with confidence. All four site promoters will have to meet minimum building regulations including the Future Homes Standard and could likely comply with the emerging local plan requirement for net zero and, in turn, might claim that operational built environment emissions is something of a ‘non-issue’, for the purposes of this appraisal. However, given the critical importance of the issue there is a need to ensure that built environment decarbonisation feeds-in at this stage in the plan-making process as far as possible.

The following sub-headings consider each of the four competing strategic site options in turn. The order reflects the degree of built environment decarbonisation ambition that has been shown to date, from lowest to highest.

East of T/R

Beyond the concept masterplan for the site, which is very high level and refers only to “low carbon homes”, Berkeley Homes have submitted only a short statement explaining their corporate commitment to decarbonisation and setting out a commitment to deliver new homes that are “zero carbon ready” (which means they will be net zero once the national grid fully decarbonises), in line with the Future Homes Standard. This is surprising given the Council’s public ambition for net zero carbon developments, as reflected in the previous two local plan consultation documents. It is thought *unlikely* to translate as a suggestion that the scheme could *not* achieve policy compliance, in respect of net zero, and Berkeley Homes’ corporate commitment was emphasised by the Chief Executive Officer during the November 2022 in-person workshop (who also confirmed that Berkeley Homes had not yet delivered a net zero development at that point in time). Also, the scheme is thought likely to perform well in viability terms, particularly on the assumption that the scheme would not deliver a new train station. However, at the current time, the lack of any work to demonstrate inherent site-specific opportunities, or how decarbonisation fits with their masterplanning concept, leads to considerable uncertainty and risk. In particular, the risk might be that the planning application seeks to rely on offsetting at the expense of minimising emissions onsite.

Finally, two recent Berkeley Homes planning applications from the local area are of note:

- Land Adjacent to Blagrove Lane Wokingham (July 2022; [ref. 222306](#)) – the submitted sustainability statement provides an overview, with slightly more detail presented in an energy statement. The headline is a proposal to achieve an emissions standard that goes 11% beyond the requirement of 2021 Building Regulations, in line with ambition of adopted local policy. With regards to the higher ambition set out in emerging local policy, the applicants state only that: *“This document currently carries no weight in decision making, but seeks for developments to be carbon neutral. Other than adding carbon offsetting, the draft policy requires no additional onsite measures to be provided.”* This statement is arguably not in the spirit of a positive approach to decarbonisation. Also, another point to note is that the sustainability statement does not discuss the key matter of gas boilers versus heat pumps, but the supporting energy statement explains: *“The currently preferred heating strategy is the use of condensing gas boilers to all homes. Recognising the timescales of the development and technological changes, alternative systems (such as heat pumps may... be used).”* Finally, both statements make much of accordance with Berkeley Group’s ‘Our Vision’ document, which includes *“verified science-based targets that are 1.5°C aligned.”* However, this can be questioned, given primary reliance on local plan policy from more than a decade ago.
- Manor Lane, Maidenhead (June 2022; local ref. [22/01717/FULL](#)) – an energy and sustainability statement dated June 2022 committed to a 29% improvement over the requirements of the 2013 Building Regulations (it is not clear what this means in respect of an improvement of the 2021 Regulations) with remaining emissions to be offset, so as to achieve net zero (N.B. not energy based). However, a January 2023 update sets out that the scheme will achieve onsite net zero via: *“An array of Be Lean measures to reduce energy demands. This includes fabric strategies which can comply with the enhanced Fabric Energy Efficiency requirements of Part L 2021... The use of individual air-source heat pumps and a large installation of PV panels...”*

These two examples serve to highlight good potential to achieve net zero, indeed onsite net zero, but also serve to highlight the inherent challenge in respect of differentiating competing strategic site options.

South of Wokingham SDL extension

Whilst it has not been possible to review the current planning application given its very recent submission (August 2024), ‘net zero’ was not a focus of materials previously submitted in 2022/23. For example, there was no discussion presented within the ‘masterplan booklet’ submitted in January 2023. However, the site promoters have submitted a statement on “Maximising Affordable Housing whilst Achieving Net Zero”:

“Lightwood and Nicholas King Homes... recognise the strong aspirations... to achieve net zero developments. We are clear that the 2025 Building Regulations (the ‘Future Homes Standard’) are a minimum and that Councils can seek to adopt higher standards in their Development Plans. Lightwood and Nicholas King are being advised by a specialist consultant to develop a comprehensive strategy...”

Affordable provision on greenfield sites should not be a negotiation and delivery of affordable housing is fundamental to the proposals. [We] are fully committed to delivering the authority’s required provision...”

This is a helpful statement, and the promoters are right to highlight the fact that net zero and affordable housing objectives must be considered in tandem, because both involve costs. As hinted at by the statement above, the potential for future ‘negotiation’ on net zero and affordable housing objectives cannot be ruled out.

As per East of T/R, the fact that there has been no discussion of inherent site-specific opportunities, or ways in which decarbonisation fits with the masterplanning concept, leads to a degree of risk, likely in the form of a risk that there would be a need for high reliance on offsetting.

Loddon Valley

Promotional materials are clear about a commitment to deliver ‘net zero homes’, which is important. It is also recognised that the University of Reading is strongly committed to climate change mitigation, and close links to university research and teaching departments may amount to a site-specific opportunity. Also, submitted materials have suggested that opportunities will be sought to deliver a heat network within the proposed district centre.

However, there is little detail regarding compliance with the energy hierarchy (fabric first and ideally onsite net zero, i.e. with offsetting as a last resort).³¹ Also, beyond a brief mention of a potential heat network (and the proposal for a relatively large local centre, which could be suited to a heat network),³² there is no evidence of built environment decarbonisation having been a significant consideration with a bearing on masterplanning.

Finally, the following statement from the 2022 Vision is of note:

“In relation to energy and the desire to be a low carbon development, the most essential ingredient for any major new community is to achieve low energy buildings and a low energy layout. In relation to low energy buildings, the development will comprise energy efficient buildings throughout, well insulated and energy efficient, encouraging energy monitoring systems so that future users are acutely aware and able to control energy use... A significant part of the site is south facing, hence its overall orientation is ideal for maximising passive solar gain... A high number of the buildings will have at least one south facing main elevation, facilitating passive solar gain.”

This statement is not as clear in its commitments as might ideally be the case. With regards to orientation, this is not considered to be a very significant factor in the Loddon Valley context.

Ashridge

The site promoters have undertaken detailed work to explore decarbonisation options and demonstrate that decarbonisation is central to their masterplan concept. Work has been ongoing for some time and culminated in publication of a detailed study by Siemens in December 2022.

The level of work completed is to be commended. However, there are two headline concerns.

Firstly, the concern is that the proposed major focus on renewable energy generation (both power and heat) and storage, as discussed below, could be at the expense of a sufficient focus on energy efficiency / a fabric first approach to built environment decarbonisation (in line with the energy hierarchy).

Secondly, the opportunities highlighted by the report (essentially in respect of renewable energy) are scheme-specific rather than site-specific, and the risk is that the scheme could change, e.g. due to:

- competing funding priorities (e.g. in respect of transport infrastructure, noise mitigation);
- the possibility of the scheme capacity being reduced (e.g. to substitute increased greenspace or woodland planting for new homes in the north of the site);
- challenges securing investment (there is a need for £35m capital investment, with the proposal to do so via setting up an Energy Services Company, ESCO); and
- the fact that site promoters are yet to engage house builders (who could raise concerns with masterplan and design proposals unaligned with their typical model).

Ultimately, there is a need for caution, but the overriding consideration is that: A) early masterplanning for built environment decarbonisation is strongly supported (contrast to discussion above regarding leaving key decisions to the outline planning application or even reserved matters stage); and B) this has been undertaken for Ashridge in a way that at this time far exceeds work completed for the other competing strategic sites.

The following bullet points summarise key aspects of the Siemens Ashridge study:

- The proposal is for “*a climate positive development that **will not require carbon offsetting***” [emphasis added]. What this means is that, over the course of any given year, whilst there will be times when the development imports electricity/power from the national grid, it will export more than it imports.

³¹ Bellway Homes, who are the promoters of the Hatch Farm part of the site (at the northern extent, close to Sindlesham) have highlighted a commitment to taking a fabric first approach to net zero. Specifically, they have partnered with the University of Salford to develop a bespoke approach to housing design and construction that they call ‘The Future Home’. The design includes a number of features that appear to represent cutting-edge good practice, and it is recognised that this part of the site would likely deliver first / early. However, no data has been submitted to enable a comparison to standards under Building Regulations or Passivhaus. As such, little weight can be attributed to the submitted proposals, also mindful that proposals are subject to change.

³² Heat networks are attractive in theory because they generate heat from electricity at much higher rates of efficiency than standalone heat pumps. However, they are technically challenging and costly to deliver, such that there can only be confidence regarding deliverability where development is at quite a high density and involves a good mix of uses (plus there is a need to consider heat sources; however, for most heat networks the primary option will be ambient heat from the ground).

- Furthermore, the proposal is for a climate positive development that **minimises the need to import from the grid**, via a major focus on storing heat and power.³³ Specifically, the proposal is to maximise the potential for power generated from onsite solar PV to feed the development directly (and therefore minimise the need to draw power from the grid) by utilising large scale battery storage, with batteries located at each of the six Energy, Mobility and Community (EMC) hubs.
- The proposal is also for a heat network at the district centre, combined with thermal storage. With regards to thermal storage, as with battery storage, the idea is to store heat during times of surplus and release it when needed. In doing so, the amount of electricity needed to generate heat is minimised.
- The study explores **three scenarios**, each involving an increasing degree of decarbonisation ambition (along with increased costs) and named: A) Base case; B) Grid balanced; and C) Grid Lite. As is clear from the names of the scenarios, the primary differentiator is in respect of the extent to which there would be a need to draw power from the national grid. This is considered to be clear and helpful.
- The proposal is to support **Scenario B**, but Siemens believes Scenario C to be achievable. This raises the question of whether additional funding might be sought in order to deliver Scenario C (it would involve more than twice the capital expenditure). However, it is noted that Scenario C would require additional land for battery storage, thermal storage and solar PV.

It is clear that a central component of the proposals is the series of EMC hubs to deliver a battery (and thermal) storage solution. The report presents a good appraisal of alternative options before arriving at a conclusion that this is an optimum solution. However, it is not clear that this approach has been taken elsewhere, and views on the role of large-scale battery (and thermal) storage are subject to change over the coming years, as this is a fast-moving area of research, with practice arguably still in its infancy.

The figure below is taken from the Siemens report. Points to note are as follows:

- **Headline** – reference to “grid connection for export only” appears to be a typo. Elsewhere Siemens explain: “To meet zero-carbon targets, i.e., where no energy is imported from the grid, long-term energy storage technologies would need to be used, which can store energy from the summer to the winter months. Currently, no viable technology [exists].”
- **Efficiency** – the proposal is notably for new homes to be designed and constructed to the Future Homes Standard, even under Scenario C. This presumably reflects a view that achieving higher standards (e.g. Passivhaus) is challenging (N.B. the report does not mention modern methods of construction).
- **Solar generation and storage (battery and thermal)** – elsewhere the report explains that the area required under Scenario C would be nearly five times that required under Scenario B.

		Base Case	Grid Balanced	Grid Lite
		A	B	C
		All demand met by utility grid connection	Lowest cost deployment of local generation and storage with utility grid connection for import and export	Highest deployment of local generation and storage with utility grid connection for export only
EV Charging	Residential Spaces Active (%)	1 per property = 3000 (100% of properties)	1 per property = 3000 (100% of properties)	1 per property = 3000 (100% of properties)
	Commercial Spaces Active (%)	3 for every 10 spaces = 55 (30% of 175 total spaces)	3 for every 10 spaces = 55 (30% of 175 total spaces)	3 for every 10 spaces = 55 (30% of 175 total spaces)
Buildings	Efficiency Standard	Future Homes Standard - EPC-A (31% lower than current new builds)	Future Homes Standard - EPC-A (31% lower than current new builds)	Future Homes Standard - EPC-A (31% lower than current new builds)
Generation	Solar (phased)	None	High	Very High
Storage	Batteries	No	Medium	High
	Thermal	No	Medium	High
Grid Connection	Import	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Export	No	Yes	Yes
Residential Heating	Source (Delivery)	ASHP (Individual)	ASHP (Individual)	ASHP (Individual)
Commercial Heating	Source (Delivery)	ASHP (Individual)	GSHP (District Heat Network)	GSHP (District Heat Network)

Other points to note are as follows:

- The report discusses potential routes for investment to fund capital expenditure and models for ownership and ongoing management of the infrastructure. This is a key issue for battery storage.

³³ The importance of minimising strain on the national grid reflects uncertainty around how the grid will cope with the task of accommodating both intermittent renewables and increased demand peaks due to the electrification of transport and heating.

- Linked to the above, the potential to secure investment will be linked to risks around securing revenue from sales of electricity and heat.
- The report refers to a theoretical possibility of 2,400 boreholes to feed a heat network, at a cost of circa ~£20,000 per borehole, such that total cost would be £58,000,000.
- There is a helpful table of technologies scoped out, with the range of available serving to highlight the inherent challenge in respect of decision-making (in the absence of clear guidance / national direction).
- For example, and notably, it is not possible to be sure that hydrogen will not be viewed as a primary means for 'storage and management' in five years' time, instead of batteries. The recent Mission Zero report (2023) notably recommended: *"By the end of 2023, develop and implement an ambitious and pragmatic '10 year' delivery roadmap for the scaling up of hydrogen production. Government should deliver hydrogen business models as soon as legislation allows and confirm the long-term funding envelope available for hydrogen revenue support, to incentivise timely investment."*

The Siemens Report sums up by stating: *"A pragmatic energy decarbonisation plan differentiates the scheme from other developments, which will help to secure planning approval and attract the necessary delivery partners."* This is an important consideration. Whilst there can be no certainty that the proposals would be deliverable, nor that they are 'future proof', there is an opportunity here to capitalise on good work completed to date and build momentum behind a scheme that could prove to be a true national exemplar, mindful of the following quote from Mission Zero (2023): *"The litigious nature of the planning system means local authorities are often unwilling to take risks, and so the system effectively puts a ceiling on local ambition."* However, on the other hand, to be categorised as an 'exemplar' there is a need to commit to a highly fabric efficient standard of construction (e.g. Passivhaus) and then implement low-carbon infrastructure only as necessary to cover residual demand.

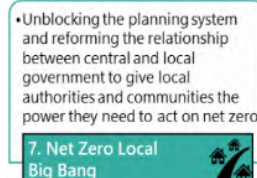
Finally, by way of context, AECOM is not immediately aware of any larger strategic site nationally where the potential to deliver onsite net zero (i.e. no offsetting) has been confirmed (let alone an ambitious approach to onsite net zero, namely minimising grid strain). Briefly, two comparator schemes are:

- Hawkwel Village, in Cherwell District – was formerly known as North West Bicester Ecotown, and there is a current planning application for 3,400 homes ([ref. 21/04275/OUT](#)). The proposal here is to achieve net zero via offsetting. Specifically, [the proposal](#) is to offset by delivering an adjacent solar farm.
- South West Maidenhead – an [SPD](#) for this strategic urban extension was adopted in 2022. The SPD is ambitious, stating: *"The net zero outcome should be achieved on site where feasible, but where it is not feasible, to contribute towards a carbon offset fund. The Council's strong preference and expectation, particularly on greenfield sites such as those in South West Maidenhead, is that net [zero] carbon is achieved on site. Furthermore, to be genuinely sustainable, developers are encouraged to consider the 'whole life carbon' impact of their development, taking account of the energy used in the construction, maintenance and demolition phases of a building, as well as the operational phase."* However, the current planning application is less ambitious.

N.B. an **update** for Ashridge of April 2024 is that the possibility of delivering a data centre at the northern extent of the site has been submitted as an option. Proposed benefits include: *"Waste heat would heat all residential, commercial and educational elements of the scheme..."* This is potentially a significant locational opportunity; however, this is a complicated matter given data centres are clearly associated with major power demands.

Conclusion

In conclusion, whilst it is inherently challenging to differentiate between the competing strategic site options in respect of built environment decarbonisation, it is judged appropriate to give weight to the fact that the promoters of Ashridge have undertaken the most detailed work, which has concluded that the site could deliver on site net zero in respect of regulated operational emissions. However, there are outstanding concerns around: insufficient focus on high fabric standards / energy efficiency and, in turn, the energy hierarchy; the extent to which proposals are future proof; and the fact that proposals are scheme-specific, rather than site-specific, such that they are subject to change (and might feasibly be adopted by the other competing strategic site options). Despite the uncertainties, there could be an opportunity to 'grasp the nettle', attract investment and build momentum behind what could potentially be a national exemplar, in line with the proposal to deliver a 'Net Zero Local Big Bang', as set out within the Mission Zero report (2023).



Communities

Loddon Valley	Ashridge	East of T/R	S. Wokingham SDL ext.
=	=	=	=

Numerous communities-related matters are discussed under other headings, most notably under the ‘accessibility’ heading above. A key matter for consideration here is ‘place-making’ and the potential concerns of existing communities nearby to growth locations.

The equivalent appraisal completed in 2021 concluded:

- Loddon Valley – was favoured given excellent potential to deliver a high quality new development, in line with garden community principles, and also mindful of the strategic green infrastructure opportunity. However, the appraisal flagged risks of impacts to nearby communities, including at Shinfield, which has been a focus of housing growth for some years, following the Core Strategy (2010). Also, the northern neighbourhood within the site would be somewhat separate from the central neighbourhood (district centre) and southern neighbourhood (secondary school) on account of the intervening Barkham Brook corridor and Carters Hill.
- Ashridge – was also broadly supported, including due to its proposal for “6 unique neighbourhoods with distinct place-identity”, and given relatively limited risk of impacts to existing communities. However, an issue that has perhaps crystallised since 2021 is around the severance effect of the A329(M). There remains much uncertainty regarding the potential to sufficiently address the issue such that the new community links well to Wokingham.
- East of T/R – an issue is proximity of Ruscombe village, and the appraisal also noted that a Gypsy and Traveller site is located within the site (along the A3032). The former issue is now addressed, at least in part, through masterplanning (a significant landscape buffer), but the latter issue is not something that has been addressed within the materials received from the site promoter to date. It is not uncommon for strategic sites to accommodate one or more Gypsy and Traveller sites; however, it might typically be anticipated that Gypsy and Traveller sites are located at the edge of the development, rather than centrally.
- South Wokingham SDL extension – the appraisal noted that the site was identified “potential green open space” in the South Wokingham SDL SPD (2011). However, on the other hand, the proposal to extend the SDL to incorporate Gray’s Farm as a sports hub has emerged since the SPD.

Focusing specifically on place-making, in light of work completed by the site promoters since 2021 it is now considered that all four sites have the potential to deliver high quality developments, e.g. reflecting garden community principles. There is an argument to suggest that this could particularly be the case for East of T/R, given that the site would be delivered solely by Berkeley Homes, who have a good reputation for place-making. In contrast, as has been discussed, Ashridge promoters are yet to engage housebuilders.

In **conclusion**, it is difficult to confidently differentiate between the competing strategic site options. There are potentially concerns with Ashridge over-and-above the other three competing sites, but this is uncertain, such that the four sites are judged to perform broadly on a par. All four sites are associated with a reasonable or good place-making opportunity, with all site promoters having taken the opportunity to refine their proposals over time in response to issues raised and the emerging evidence.

Economy

Loddon Valley	Ashridge	East of T/R	S. Wokingham SDL ext.
★ 1	2	2	2

The equivalent appraisal completed in 2021 strongly favoured **Loddon Valley**, explaining: “... there is the potential... to support the aspirations to deliver a major new employment and enterprise hub south of the M4 / east of Shinfield, including and closely associated with Thames Valley Science Park (TVSP). However, it is important to recognise that much of the employment land is already committed, so attention must focus on that which would be ‘unlocked’ or otherwise facilitated by strategic housing growth.”

Reading and Wokingham Chamber of Commerce were also supportive through consultation:

“Whilst we [are] not best placed to comment on specific sites, we do wish to make the following comment. The Plan proposes additional dwellings and associated infrastructure. We encourage and support WBC proposals to take into full consideration the current and future economic growth within the Borough boundary (notably developments at TVSP and Green Park) but also crucially beyond (e.g. Bracknell and Reading) to help ensure housing sites are located to provide the choice (i.e., in the range of housing types provided) and ready access in accordance with your vision and objectives.”

The situation is largely unchanged. However, it is noted that the Natural History Museum announced plans for a major new facility in 2022, which potentially serves to highlight the possibility that the area as a whole could reach its full economic / employment potential without a garden village nearby to the south. Also, it is noted that a “Thames Valley Science Park Expansion: Review of Employment Land Needs” study (2022), as submitted by the site promoter, does not discuss the benefits of delivering new housing alongside new employment land.

However, the simple fact remains that a large garden village linked to TVSP via a new country park would make for an attractive proposition for businesses, e.g. in terms of supporting a ‘live work play’ community. Also, a new road bridge over the M4 would enable flexibility in terms of the types of employment land that can locate here.

The next site for consideration is **East of T/R**, where the current concept masterplan shows a “business hub” adjacent to a new Twyford Gardens Station. This would amount to an attractive proposition, given links to Reading to the west and locations including Maidenhead, Slough and London (also feasibly direct links to Heathrow in the future, under a scenario whereby the Western Rail Link to Heathrow comes to fruition). However, as discussed, it is highly questionable whether a new station is deliverable. The possibility of delivering some significant new employment land (as opposed to just small-scale floorspace as part of a local centre) might still be explored given limited employment land at Twyford, and given good links to Thames Valley Park, Reading and Maidenhead.



With regards to **Ashridge**, there is no proposal to deliver significant new employment land, and it is noted that road connectivity is potentially a barrier in this respect. The site is in good proximity to major employment hubs to the east (Bracknell) and west (Winnersh Triangle and Reading),³⁴ but there would be limited potential to cycle to work. There is also a small business park onsite, which might be expanded.

N.B. an update as of April 2024 is that the possibility of delivering a datacentre at the northern extent of the site has been submitted as an option. Proposed benefits include: *“Makes valuable use of least attractive land... Screens the M4 from rest of the site... Waste heat would heat all residential, commercial and educational elements of the scheme... Lower car traffic so lower mitigation required... Design can be anything – sorghum roof, timber clad etc... Strategic asset with proximity to research led university...”*

Finally, with regards to **South of Wokingham SDL extension**, the proposal is for *“regeneration of the Priors Farm commercial land to offer additional space for local businesses.”* However, this is a modest intervention, and there is little reason to suggest significant additionality. There is also a good proximity to the Molly Millars industrial estate in Wokingham, as well as to Bracknell town centre (see discussion above under ‘accessibility’).

In **conclusion**, as per 2021, it is appropriate to highlight Loddon Valley as performing comfortably most strongly. A garden community linked to a major science park represents a clear opportunity, in terms of fully realising aspirations for the science park, although much of the science park is now committed, and it might see further expansion under a baseline scenario, i.e. without a linked garden community. The other sites are also supported in terms of bringing forward new homes in locations from which strategic employment hubs can be accessed, but there is less opportunity for access / commuting by active modes.

Historic environment

Loddon Valley	Ashridge	East of T/R	S. Wokingham SDL ext.
		2	2

The equivalent appraisal in 2021 highlighted a significant concern in respect of East of T/R. However, concerns have now been allayed, to a degree, with the promoter’s concept masterplanning showing a significant landscape buffer between the new community and the Ruscombe Conservation Area. Nonetheless, there is still a clear historic environment constraint. The 2021 appraisal explained:

³⁴ Bracknell town centre is around 4km away, Wokingham town centre 2.3km (the Molly Millar Employment area is further) and Winnersh Triangle is 3.4km (approximate measurements from the centre of the site).

“... there would be a significant impact to the setting of Ruscombe Conservation Area, where there is a grade 1 listed church and six other listed buildings. Furthermore, there is a need to consider the value of historic links between Ruscombe and assets / clusters of assets in the surrounding countryside... Also, Stanlake Park is potentially a constraint to the south... Also, whilst there are no scheduled monuments within the site boundary, it may be fair to conclude that this part of the Borough may be associated with a high likelihood of archaeology, with the Landscape Character Assessment (2004) stating that: “A low density of late Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement evidence suggests that there may have been early clearance of the woodland and cultivation of the chalk soils, with an expansion of prehistoric settlement from the river valley...” However, on the other hand, it is recognised that the amenity, quality and character of the Twyford Conservation Area is currently undermined by the traffic which dominates the village centre. Expansion would deliver a new relief road, to the benefit of Twyford Conservation Area.”

With regards to Loddon Valley and Ashridge, both are associated with one main cluster of assets; however, in both cases, the cluster is shown to be integrated as part of strategic green infrastructure. In both cases appraisal findings from 2021 still stand.

Focusing on **Loddon Valley**, the primary concentration of assets is considered likely to be at Hall Farm, where there is a Grade 2 listed farmhouse and an adjacent ruined church (a scheduled monument; also a listed tomb) that is on the national [Heritage at Risk](#) Register (suggesting a potential development-related opportunity). There are also some non-designated historic buildings in this area with clear historic character. This is a historic river crossing (shown on the pre-WW1 OS map), and there remains a public footbridge over the river, hence the assets may be quite well appreciated. However, there will be good potential to conserve and enhance the assets as part of a green/blue infrastructure strategy. Other considerations are:

- The readily apparent remnant parkland landscape adjacent to Hall Farm, associated with Arborfield Hall (demolished 1955), its lodge houses (still present), Arborfield Grange (not listed) and a grade 2 listed rectory. The proposal is to develop this land for residential (albeit at a modest density, compared to land within the central part of the site), which leads to a tension with historic environment objectives; however, significance is unclear, given few nationally listed buildings, and the potential for mitigation.
- Historic England did not comment in detail in 2022, explaining: “We will comment further when a full draft of the plan is available.” The only substantive comment was as follows: “Loddon Valley SDL includes a schedule monument... It is also adjacent to the grade II* Bearwood College registered park and garden. This allocation should include a requirement to assess and design out any harm to the significance of any affected heritage assets, including through impacts on setting. The masterplan should also be supported by an appropriate historic environment evidence base.”
- With regards to archaeology, Berkshire Archaeology commented as follows:

“We are delighted to see that the historic environment and its contribution to a sense of place remain at the heart of the local plan; both below-ground and extant above-ground archaeology form an important part of the historic environment in the borough, and its conservation for future generations is a vital consideration in planning policy. Archaeological mitigation in the ongoing [SDLs] has been very successful so far and resulted in a number of significant new discoveries, with archaeological assets being either protected in situ or investigated and recorded in detail, and their results being made available publicly through the Historic Environment Record for Wokingham and via other means.

We note the addition of the new proposed SDL at Hall Farm/Loddon Valley; this is an area known from both previous works and finds recorded on the Historic Environment Record to have archaeological potential for all periods, and we look forward to working with planning colleagues and applicants to ensure the best possible outcomes for surviving archaeological assets. As usual, the key to this will be early discussion and detailed assessment, to identify any areas where significant archaeology should be preserved in situ, and to assist potential developers in master planning and costing exercises, where... impacts need to be mitigated.”

- The Carters Hill area, where there is one grade II listed building, but likely a general sense of historic character, with built form having changed little from that shown on the pre-WW1 OS map.
- The B3030 Mole Road, along which there are several grade II listed buildings, and beyond which is the raised wooded landscape of Bearwood College Registered Park and Garden (Grade 2*).
- The potential for some increased traffic arising through the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area beyond the site to the south, albeit likely modest given the Observer Way (A327) as an alternative route.
- Locally designated assets within the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan (2020).

As for **Ashridge**, there is a cluster of five listed buildings associated with Bill Hill Park, plus there is a remnant parkland landscape in this area; however, the promoter’s masterplan shows land here utilised for accessible greenspace. Indeed, the masterplan has been amended, since the RGS consultation (2021), to remove any housing development in this area, suggesting potential to improve access to and understanding / appreciation of this historic landscape.³⁵ It is noted that the parkland was severed by the M4 in the 20th Century, potentially serving to highlight an opportunity to take a landscape-scale approach to enhancing access to historic countryside.

Ashridge Manor is another building potentially of note, in that it shown (as Ashridgewood) on the pre-1914 OS map, along with a lodge house and a series of woodland copses. The lodge house has recently been redeveloped, but the wooded landscape remains intact. The proposal is to integrate this area as part of the proposed ‘green spine’, although there would also be some housing growth adjacent.

Finally, with regards to **South of Wokingham SDL extension**, there are two areas of sensitivity: at the northwest extent of the site (Pearce’s Farm, Holme Green); and at the northeast extent (Locks Farm):

- Pearce’s Farm (Holme Green) – is associated with a small cluster of Grade II listed buildings, and the proposed primary access point for the site (linking the site to the permitted SDL) passes through this area. However, the assets are primarily associated with Easthampstead Road, where the proposal is for the road to be downgraded / improved as a walking and cycling route. This could well lead to improved appreciation of the assets, as there are currently only glimpsed views from Easthampstead Road, along which cars likely travel quite fast.
- Locks Farm – is likely associated with lesser concern. There is a Grade II* listed farmhouse and a grade II listed barn; however, the proposed development adjacent to the south would not necessarily impact significantly on the setting of the assets, given their association with Waterloo Road to the north. There is also a need to consider the historic lane – now a bridleway – linking Locks Farm to Holme Green.

In **conclusion**, historic environment constraint is more of an issue at East of T/R and South of Wokingham SDL extension than is the case for Loddon Valley or Ashridge. However, at this stage – in light of work completed by the site promoters – it is not clear that there is a risk of ‘significant’ effects at either site, mindful that Historic England did not raise concerns regarding Loddon Valley through the consultation in 2021 and did not comment on the other three sites. All of the sites are associated with certain historic environment-related opportunities.

Housing

Loddon Valley	Ashridge	East of T/R	S. Wokingham SDL ext.
=	=	=	=

The equivalent appraisal in 2021 focused particularly on the matter of **delivery risk** at Ashridge. Specifically, the concern was delivery might be significantly delayed given multiple land owners and the risk of unforeseen costs (and/or reduced revenues, i.e. fewer homes), and mindful that the site promoters are yet to engage house builders (also noting an ambitious approach to EMC hubs / energy infrastructure, as discussed). The effect of delays in delivery could be the absence of a sufficient housing land supply borough-wide and the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development (or ‘tilted balance’) leading to housing delivery that is not planned (and so essentially less-planned). However, progress has been made by the site promoters in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding between the landowners to jointly promote the site.

Another factor that influenced the appraisal in 2021 was the matter of a perceived **spatial imbalance** in respect of housing delivery over recent years. The East of T/R site promoters suggest that between 2010/11 and 2019/20, 97% of the Borough’s new homes were built in the southern parishes. Figures for alternative time periods tell a different story; however, the simple point that the Twyford area has seen relatively low recent growth is accepted (this is largely due to the way constraints impact Wokingham Borough, especially the Metropolitan Green Belt which covers the majority of the northern parishes). There is no clear evidence to demonstrate particularly high housing needs at Twyford, but the following from the Twyford Local Housing Need Assessment (LHNA, 2022), prepared in support of the emerging Twyford Neighbourhood Plan, is noted: *“Focusing on affordability thresholds, no affordable or market tenure options are likely to be considered to be affordable for those single-earning lower quartile households... when accounting for potential lower quartile earners from households with two earners, affordable or social rented tenures may be affordable, but ownership options are considered unaffordable.”* Twyford is also well linked to areas of high housing growth, namely Reading and Maidenhead.

³⁵ It is noted that the parkland was severed by the M4 in the 20th Century, so one feasible opportunity could relate to a new walking / cycling route linking to the historic landscape to the north of the M4 / south of Hurst, where there is currently quite low accessibility to the countryside via public rights of way.

A next key matter to consider is **affordable housing**. It is noted that Loddon Valley and Ashridge propose 40% of all new homes are affordable housing, whilst East of T/R and South of Wokingham SDL extension propose 35%, which would reflect adopted local policy but not align with the Council's well-established ambition to deliver higher levels of affordable housing. It is noted that East of T/R and South of Wokingham SDL extension are the two smallest strategic site options, but it is difficult to infer a direct correlation.

There would be the potential to hold further discussions with all site promoters regarding rates (and tenure mix) of affordable housing delivery; for example, the East of T/R promoters explain: *"If the Council wishes to seek a higher proportion of affordable homes... we would need to assess the implications of this, having regard to the effects on the overall viability and the site's potential to deliver the infrastructure..."* This is helpful, although it is not immediately clear what particular viability challenges effect of T/R, particularly given an assumption that the developers would not be expected to assist with funding a new train station.

Another factor is **delivery timescales**, given that delivery of greater homes within the plan period would reduce the pressure for non-strategic allocations. Ashridge potentially gives rise to a risk of a delay to delivery starting, given that the site promoters are yet to engage housebuilders, whilst East of T/R has the benefit of being promoted by a housebuilder, but would deliver at a slower rate, given that the site would be delivered solely by Berkeley Homes.³⁶ South Wokingham SDL Extension is also in the control of a house-builder, as is part of Loddon Valley.

Finally, with regards to delivery rates and risks, there is a need to consider **housing markets** locally, and the risk of market saturation leading to a decision on the part of any housebuilder to delay delivery. In this respect, it is reasonable to highlight that East of T/R is comparatively further from other committed and potential strategic growth locations, and also to highlight the proximity of Ashridge and Loddon Valley as feasibly creating a challenge to delivering both sites simultaneously (also Ashridge and East of T/R). With regards to South of Wokingham SDL extension, the site would clearly need to be phased carefully alongside the adjacent permitted SDL (which has faced challenges in respect of agreeing S106 contributions over a number of years, but issues are now resolved).

In **conclusion**, at this stage (and in contrast to the equivalent appraisal completed in 2021) it is not possible to differentiate between the four site options with any confidence. It would not be appropriate to favour Loddon Valley simply on account of being a larger site, as the smaller sites could be delivered in-combination (with each other and/or with other allocations) to the same effect, in terms of the number of homes delivered. However the proposal to deliver 40% affordable housing at Loddon Valley is noted, and no particular concerns are flagged regarding delivery risk. The Ashridge 'delivery risk' concern that was a key factor influencing the appraisal in 2021 still stands, but is reduced, and the proposal is to deliver 40% affordable housing. With regards to East of T/R, from a 'housing' perspective: the association of the site with Twyford is a consideration; and the control of Berkeley Homes generates confidence; however, the proposal promotes 35% affordable housing which could be improved.

With regards to **significant effects**, on balance it is considered appropriate to highlight that a local plan strategy involving a focus of growth at one or more strategic site options would lead to an opportunity to realise 'housing' related objectives, over-and-above a strategy focused / more focused on smaller allocations. This is for two broad reasons. Firstly, strategic sites can lead to an opportunity to deliver a good mix of housing onsite, in terms of type, size and tenure; also specialist housing/accommodation. Secondly, support for one or more strategic sites would ease the task of identifying sufficient supply to enable the local plan housing requirement to be set at local housing need (LHN) or even potentially above. However, in respect of the latter point, it is also important to note that there cannot be over-reliance on strategic site options, which are inherently associated with delivery risk.

N.B. one other consideration is **Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs**, mindful of a 2022 [legal precedent](#) that potentially serves to indicate a need to provide for full 'cultural' needs, as opposed to only the needs of those who meet the 'planning' definition, as set out in the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS, 2015). The proposed approach within the Revised Growth Strategy consultation document (unchanged from the previous Draft Plan stage) was to allocate three small sites. However, it is generally the case that allocating land for Gypsy and Traveller pitches can tend to prove challenging, hence it is quite common practice to look to strategic site options to deliver supply. For example: Bracknell Forest sought to deliver eight pitches as part of the Jealott's Hill strategic allocation, prior to the Inspectors deleting the allocation in January 2023 (which potentially serves to indicate a supply challenge in the area, also noting that the Reading Local Plan generated an unmet need for pitches). Elsewhere nationally, the current proposed submission [Chichester](#) Local Plan proposes supply from all new strategic allocations above 200 homes. None of the strategic site options currently under consideration have explicitly shown how one or more Gypsy and Traveller sites might be integrated, but all would likely have good potential to deliver pitches if necessary (and there are a good practice principles that would need to feed in).

³⁶ East of T/R would deliver at around 170 dwellings per annum (dpa), whilst the Ashridge site promoters suggest a rate of around 200 dpa, and Loddon Valley would likely be able to deliver at a faster rate, given clear potential for at least two sales outlets operational at any one time. It is also anticipated that the eastern part of Loddon Valley could deliver early.

Land, soil and natural resources

Loddon Valley	Ashridge	East of T/R	S. Wokingham SDL ext.
★ 1	★ 1	2	★ 1

A foremost consideration here is avoiding the loss of **agricultural land** classed as ‘best and most versatile’ (BMV), which the NPPF defines as that which is grade 1 (highest quality), grade 2 or grade 3a.

The nationally available agricultural land quality dataset shows variation in agricultural land quality across the borough; however, this dataset has low accuracy (it does not differentiate between grades 3a and 3b) and low spatial resolution, such that it must be used with caution.

Another dataset is available showing agricultural land quality with a much higher degree of resolution and accuracy, on the basis that it reflects the findings of field surveys, namely the “Post 1988” dataset; however, this dataset is very patchy, and covers only a small part of the borough. The Interim SA Report published alongside the Revised Growth Strategy consultation pointed out that detailed survey work had not been completed for most of the strategic site options. No further work has been made available.

The table below summarises the agricultural land quality across the four sites as indicated by both the low resolution and, where available, higher resolution datasets.

Site	Low resolution/accuracy dataset	“Post 1988” dataset
Loddon Valley	Grade 3 (bar river corridor grade 4)	No (but nearby grade 3a and 3b)
Ashridge	Grade 3 (majority) and grade 4	Circa 50% - mainly grade 3b
East of T/R	Mostly grades 1 and 2 (some grade 3)	No
S. of Wokingham SDL ext.	Grade 3	No (but nearby grade 3b and some 3a)

The table shows that a key consideration is the extent to which the **East of T/R** proposal impacts BMV agricultural land. As well as the loss of agricultural land for housing, there is also a need to consider loss of agricultural land for open greenspace / parkland (it is noted that Berkeley Homes do emphasise the potential to integrated food growing as part of open space, but it is not clear that this is to an extent over-and-above what would be expected in any case given established standards including for allotments).

As for the other three sites, there is an argument that Ashridge has the lowest impact BMV agricultural land with more detailed data being available – but on balance the sites are judged to perform on a par.

A further consideration is the need to avoid sterilisation of **minerals** resources, in light of the Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (2023). The [policies map](#) shows that all three of the larger strategic site options intersect a minerals safeguarding area (i.e. only South of Wokingham SDL extension does not). However, it is difficult to conclude that this is a significant constraint, as safeguarding is not absolute (also, there could be opportunity for prior extraction, including in order to reduce the need to import materials). Mineral Products Association guidance (2019) explains:

“Allocation of sites for non-minerals development within MSAs... should be avoided where possible... However, safeguarding is not absolute. Where other considerations indicate that a proposed site allocation within an MSA is appropriate... [employ] mitigation measures to reduce the... amount of resource sterilised.”

In **conclusion**, it is appropriate to highlight East of T/R as notably more constrained in terms of BMV agricultural land, with there being a strong likelihood of some grade 1 quality land, i.e. land that is of the best quality nationally.

Landscape

Loddon Valley	Ashridge	East of T/R	S. Wokingham SDL ext.
=	=	=	=

The sites are considered in order of scale.

Loddon Valley

Primary issues relate to land to the south of the river corridor, i.e. land under consideration for a garden village, as opposed to land to the north of the river under consideration for employment land. It is recognised that employment land would involve tall and bulky buildings; however, land here is heavily influenced by the M4, there are few public rights of way; there is potential to utilise woodland for screening, to some extent. Also, it is important to recall that much of the employment land is already committed, as has been discussed.

Focusing on land to the south of the river corridor, the Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment (LCA, 2004 and 2019 update) shows the land to be associated with two landscape character areas - Arborfield River Terrace and Arborfield/Barkham Settled Farmland - both of which have 'moderate' quality and sensitivity (as is the case for the character areas associated with all three of the other site options).

There is a relatively high density of public footpaths in this area, and there is a clear sensitivity at the western edge of the site, in the form of remnant historic parkland associated with Hall Farm and the former Arborfield Hall, with the LCA describing *"the presence of mature oaks, which provide a strong silhouette against the open sky."* There are also views from here of Arborfield Church on slightly raised ground.

There are also valued views from the former lane / bridleway that passes through the site, linking Arborfield Church to Carter's Hill and on to Sindlesham. This is a high point in the landscape, with land descending (very gradually) west towards the River Loddon and east (also gradually) towards the Barkham Brook, beyond which the land rises (more steeply) towards the wooded parkland landscape of Bear Wood.

In this light, there is a 'landscape' argument for containing the garden village to the west of the bridleway, potentially with a view to containing the garden village within the valley of the River Loddon, i.e. not breaking into the valley of the Barkham Brook. Under **this scenario** it might be possible to enhance the Barkham Brook corridor as a natural break between developed transport corridors. However, it is recognised that this southern development parcel is important, including as it is able to deliver early in the plan period and deliver a strategic road link.

Finally, there is a need to consider evidence from the proposed Valued Landscapes Topic Paper (2020), which proposed much of the site (specifically the river corridor and land to the north) as appropriate for local designation as a Valued Landscape (VLs). This is a notable consideration; however, there is a need to balance impacts to river valley-related views with the fact that the proposal is to deliver a country park that would greatly improve access to the river valley. For example, and notably, the proposal is to deliver a key link part of the proposed [Loddon Long Distance Path](#). As discussed above, it is appropriate to raise the possibility of improved accessibility to the river valley in the future in the absence of a garden village; however, it is recognised that the country-park / significant river corridor enhancement opportunity would likely only be realised under a garden village scenario.

N.B. with respect to the river valley landscape, there is also a need to consider the impact of one or more new road bridges (albeit also recalling that there is currently limited accessibility to the river corridor and also urbanising influences, notably the M4 but also pylons). The question of bridge location/extent has already been discussed, but here there is a need to additionally mention the question of how to treat historic Mill Lane (discussed below).

Ashridge

This is the Ashridge Farmed Clay Lowlands landscape character area, which is a landscape of 'moderate' quality and sensitivity, with a 'strong sense of place'. This is a raised wooded landscape, very distinct from Loddon Valley (also east of T/R), and a notable management objective is to

"ensure that the landscape is actively managed to retain the rural character", recognising that a key issue for the area is "... loss of wooded ridges which are characteristic of the [district]".

Woodlands provide enclosure, but this is raised land and, in turn, there are sensitive views from the Wokingham urban area (also one or two sensitive views to/over the urban area). Also, whilst the landscape is not very accessible by public right of way, it can be appreciated as a wooded landscape (with historic associations) from the roads and accessibility might be improved. With regards to views from Wokingham town there is also a need to consider the impacts of new earth bunds introduced to mitigate noise pollution.

A specific constraint within the site is the proposed Billingbear VL, which covers the northeast part of the site as well as the wooded landscape to the east of the site. A key issue here is the historic association with the poet Alexander Pope (discussed within the site promoter's Landscape Study). Concerns regarding impacts to the valued landscape are potentially reduced somewhat by the new proposal to deliver sports pitches adjacent to the remnant part of Ashridge Wood (an adjustment since 2021); however, a significant concern remains. N.B. also at the time of writing the promoters have proposed the option of a data centre at the northern extent of the site along with land to the east within the valued landscape left undeveloped. This could have landscape merit.

A final important consideration is the fact that the south-eastern boundary of the site is not well-defined, such that there might be a risk of long-term development creep to the east. This is something that might warrant further consideration, mindful of two key factors providing containment within the landscape, namely: 1) the proposed Billingbear VL (north of the B3034); and 2) rising land and woodlands to the east, associated with the Popeswood-Binfield-Billingbear ridge. Whilst there are arguments for allowing organic settlement expansion over time, there is also a case for comprehensive long-term planning (e.g. NPPF paragraph 22 suggests a 30-year vision where *“larger scale developments such as... significant extensions to... towns form part of the strategy for the area”*).

Linked to the point above, there is also a need to recognise that proposed development parcels to the east of Warren House Road would impact upon quite an open / expansive agricultural landscape, which can be appreciated from Warren House Road, albeit there are no public rights of way in this area. As such that development here risks being prominent and incongruous within the landscape.

East of T/R

Land here is associated with the Wargrave-Twyford Arable Chalk Lowlands, which again has ‘moderate’ quality and sensitivity. This area is distinct from the clayland character areas discussed above, with LCA describing: *“Farmland with strong sense of openness and homogeneity due to the lack of field divisions or vertical elements across the landscape... maintains separation between and setting of settlements.”*

In turn, there are quite extensive views from roads; and also from the bridleway through the site that links Wargrave to the north with Ruscombe and locations beyond, including Waltham St. Lawrence to the east (where it links to the Knowl Hill Bridleway Circuit). This bridleway is an important constraint.

It is also important to consider the position of East of T/R within the Metropolitan Green Belt (albeit at the edge). The Growth Scenarios Report (2018) proposed a new defensible Green Belt boundary in the form of a boundary road, with a large area of publicly accessible open space / green space beyond; however, the site promoters stated through their 2018 Homes for the Future consultation response that: *“Whilst this would establish a set boundary to the development, it is considered that this would not necessarily result in the most appropriate solution to promote high quality place making. Alternative options to this approach include for example an attractive built edge with high quality landscaping beyond, including new planting where appropriate to form a defensible Green Belt boundary.”* The latest proposal is to deliver a new defensible Green Belt boundary by enhancing the cluster of woodlands to the south of Hare Hatch and also by new strategic greenspace adjacent to the railway line.

This could represent an appropriate means of creating a new defensible Green Belt boundary. However, what would give rise to a concern would be delivery of a train station along the stretch of railway between Waltham Lane and Milley Lane. This is because there might be a risk of the large arable field adjacent to the south coming under pressure for development in the future, which would lead to highly problematic encroachment on the attractive historic village of Waltham St. Lawrence (it is also noted that the field is highly visible from the railway line). The field in question is in the control of the site promoters, but it is somewhat unclear – on the basis of the submitted materials to date – whether the proposal is to deliver this land as accessible greenspace in perpetuity. It is not entirely clear that loss of agricultural land here for the purposes of delivering greenspace would be appropriate, given the potential to alternatively focus greenspace solely on the Twyford Stream corridor to the southwest.

South Wokingham SDL extension

Land here is associated with the Holme Green Pastoral Sandy Lowland character area, which is again of moderate quality and sensitivity. Key considerations are around avoiding the risk of long term development creep and accounting for the concerns raised by Bracknell Forest Council (BFC) through the RGS consultation (2021). In particular, BFC are concerned about maintaining a settlement gap, notwithstanding that land to adjacent to the east of the site is a ‘strategic gap’ in the Bracknell Forest Local Plan. The 2022 consultation response explains:

“This is not a satisfactory way of addressing this matter of maintaining the separation of settlements, through reliance on a proposed designation by BFC. This area is extremely important in providing a physical and visual gap between two substantial settlements, and therefore should be appropriately addressed within the [LPU]. The proposed development would significantly urbanise the character of this presently rural stretch of Old Wokingham Road and as such significantly reduce the landscape and gap value of the area of the proposed strategic gap within BFC. It would fundamentally change the experience of travelling through a rural gap between settlements...”

The concerns of BFC are acknowledged, and are in line with the LCA, which identifies a need to *“protect the individual identity of settlements by conserving the rural character of the landscape between adjacent towns and village centres and avoiding amalgamation of these settlements.”* However the promotion, whilst reducing the scale of separation, would not lead to the physical or visual coalescence of settlements. Also, there is potential for mitigation, with sensitive use of land along the eastern edge of the site (also mindful that land here is not as well connected in transport terms).

The above also applies to the consideration of the expanded scheme proposal submitted by the site promoters in late 2022 / January 2023, which would see development stretching further to the south, along the Old Wokingham Road, along with a new roundabout delivered at the current junction of Easthampstead Road and the Old Wokingham Road. This might also give rise to concerns regarding securing a long-term landscape gap to Nine Mile Ride. However, on the other hand, the landscape gap would be bolstered by new SANG provision and, in any case, is quite strong, comprising the extensive horticultural area at Gardeners Green, extensive surface water flood risk and extensive woodland.

Finally, by way of an update (2024), it is noted that there is a pending planning application for a SANG to the south of the site. This does serve to highlight the need for comprehensive planning in respect of the intervening parcel of land, i.e. land between the proposed development site and the proposed SANG.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is not possible to differentiate between the sites with any confidence, and an ‘amber’ score is assigned across the board to highlight the need for further work (i.e. adjusted schemes aimed at reducing landscape concerns). However, it is recognised that any such adjustments involving reduced schemes would have knock-on implications for scheme concept and viability. Also, landscape impacts must be kept in perspective, e.g. recognising that Wokingham Borough is not constrained by nationally designated landscapes (in contrast to neighbouring authorities, and not counting Green Belt, which is not strictly speaking a landscape designation). There is an argument for concluding a preference for Loddon Valley and South of Wokingham SDL extension given the potential to ‘work with the landscape’ in the sense of utilising river valley topography to contain growth. Also, both schemes have good potential to support a well-integrated strategic green/blue infrastructure network. However, in both cases there are outstanding landscape issues that warrant further detailed consideration.

Transport

Loddon Valley	Ashridge	East of T/R	S. Wokingham SDL ext.
2	3	★1	4

As an initial point, it is important to recall that there is merit to favouring large mixed-use schemes that can support a good level of self-containment, i.e. a situation whereby residents’ need to travel beyond the local area is minimised, and where there is commensurately high rates of walking and cycling (also micro-mobility). Such schemes can also support good access to high quality transport infrastructure (with capacity), in particular public transport infrastructure, such that longer trips (in particular commuting trips at peak times) can be made in such a way that per capita greenhouse gas emissions and traffic congestion (with associated pollution and impacts to economic productivity) are both minimised.

Having made these initial points, the sites are discussed in size-order.

Loddon Valley

Beginning with key consultation responses from 2021/22 consultation:

- Reading Borough Council

“... we have not been provided with information to clearly demonstrate that a development on this scale can and will be highly accessible by public transport, walking and cycling to services, facilities and the rest of the transport network, including links into central Reading.”

“... accessibility to central Reading and the rest of the urban area is currently extremely poor.”

“Public transport accessibility other than bus routes through Shinfield and Arborfield at the western end of the location is minimal. The location is in reasonable proximity to Winnersh and Winnersh Triangle stations, but these stations have stopping services on the Reading to Waterloo line only at approximate half-hourly frequency, and a public transport journey from the site to these stations followed by a rail journey would be a somewhat tortuous way of reaching central Reading.”

“As a result of the low level of current transport accessibility, any significant development in this location would therefore be dependent on a complete step-change in accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling in particular, which would have to be provided to a large extent upfront.”

“The illustrative map... does appear to show some potential measures, but does not significantly flesh out the proposals... In our view, a more strategic direction of how links to central Reading and the wider urban area would work is necessary.”

“In particular, RBC would wish to see a planned, dedicated public transport link from the SDL across the M4 to Reading. This would require either a new public transport crossing (or dedicated public transport space on a new crossing) or use of an existing crossing such as the Cutbush Lane crossing which is currently for pedestrians and cycles only. This would potentially also require upgrades to public transport routes north of the M4 in the Earley/Lower Earley area, with bus priority measures around the Elm Lane/Pepper Lane/University of Reading area towards central Reading.”

- Reading Busses

“[There is a need to] create developments that sit along a logical line of route, a corridor, or ‘string of pearls’ between key destinations. One significant strength of the previously identified site at Grazeley was that it would naturally bolt on to the bus rapid transit corridor along the A33..”

“[Loddon Valley] interfaces at Shinfield and Sindlesham where the core corridors are reliant on much more heavily congested roads with limited scope for bus rapid transit facilities (A327 Shinfield Road and A329 Wokingham Road). We do therefore see [Loddon Valley] as less sustainable location.”

“To foster high levels of public transport use it will be necessary to ensure that significant priority for public transport users is built into the geography of the development to minimise the extent to which car use is considered necessary. Whilst we note the small number of dedicated bus links noted at the centre of the development, the model of Southcote/Ford’s Farm/Beansheaf in West Berkshire should be considered to create small enclaves of development that are linked by a central direct bus route. The route should aim to cover both the residential and employment areas, especially the film park.”

Matters raised above largely relate to the location of the site between strategic radial corridors. The A327 corridor to the west is key, but the A329 corridor to the east is also important. Winnersh station is also located here, from which there is a short train journey to Reading and Wokingham town centres. There would be potential to cycle to the station from the eastern part of Loddon Valley, and reasonable potential from the centre (~3km). In this regard it is also important to note that the primary focus of growth would be within the central part of the site, and that the secondary school would be located towards the southern extent closer the A327.

However, it is possible to identify a potential strategic opportunity in respect of bus connectivity, with a detailed study recently having been completed, which includes giving consideration to development phasing. Figures presented below show that frequent bus services (every 20 minutes) are located along the two radial road corridors either side of the site, but these can be linked into the site, and there is also the potential to boost bus connectivity through Lower Earley. Figures presenting bus route considerations are presented in Section 9 of this report.

Further evidence was provided by a Traffic Study submitted by the site promoters in 2022, which concluded limited concerns (important for bus and cycle connectivity). It proposed two road bridges across the M4 and closing Mill Lane to through traffic (given a narrow bridge, plus the lane has a rural character). Furthermore, it suggested that primary southern access would be via the A327 west of Arborfield, rather than from the B3030 east of Arborfield, which could suggest flexibility to revisit the southernmost development parcel.

However, subsequently plans have been iterated, and the latest proposal is to deliver a shorter new M4 road bridge to join the B3270 at the Meldreth Way junction, directly to the north of the site. Also, the proposal is for two primary access points from the south, located either side of Arborfield. This is clearly a matter for ongoing consideration, balancing transport connectivity issues/opportunities with river corridor (etc) sensitivities and costs implications.

Overall, it is recognised that strategic opportunities relate to: a new road link through the site, from the B3270 (Lower Earley Way) to the A327, which could deliver strategic benefits to the road network, and potentially support improved bus connectivity for Lower Earley;³⁷ and good potential for trip internalisation and cycle connectivity to some key destinations (also, as discussed, development could assist with secondary school objectives with positive transport implications). However, there remains uncertainty regarding the potential to achieve the levels of public and active travel connectivity sought by Reading Borough Council.

³⁷ The “Transport Strategy for the South East (2020), prepared by Transport for the South East, identifies the following priority: *“Improve orbital links between the M3 and M4, ideally in a way that avoids... traffic through urban areas such as Bracknell.”*

Ashridge

Next there is a need to consider **Ashridge**, with two immediate key considerations (which have already been discussed above). Firstly, whilst the site benefits from proximity to existing centres, there is a need to consider the severance effect of the A329(M), which is a barrier to integration into Wokingham town, and both the A329(M) and M4 are barriers to cycle connectivity. Secondly, there is the challenge of delivering a new junction onto the A329(M), as discussed above under 'air quality'. The simple fact that there remain three options generates a concern, and whilst there are clear theoretical benefits to the 'no junction' option, as it could align with the vision-led / decide and provide approach to transport planning that is now a focus of national policy (e.g. see new paragraph 112 in the Draft NPPF, 2024), the risk of highly problematic traffic must be given due consideration.

With regards to bus connectivity, the site promoters initially proposed a park and ride, but the latest proposal is a new route between Twyford and Wokingham via the A321 (the current service follows an indirect route via Winnersh) and a new route to Bracknell. However, the viability of the latter route might be questioned, and there would be a need to change busses in the north of Wokingham in order to reach Reading (see figure below). Overall, it is not clear that development would align well with a long-term vision for bus connectivity in this part of the Borough, also looking beyond the Borough. Reading busses notably commented in 2022: *"We cannot see how [Ashridge] could be served sustainably, with no local bus services nearby, and the reliance on the A329(M) that would require a new service that is unlikely to be sustainable based purely on this development alone."*

With regards to cycle connectivity, there appears to be a good opportunity to link to Wokingham; however, the A321 to Twyford is not currently an attractive route for cyclists, nor is it a priority route in the Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan (LCWIP, 2023). The proposal is also to secure high quality cycle connectivity to Bracknell, and this could be a reason for exploring a site that extends further to the east, but rising land is an issue.

East of T/R

The option of growth here has a degree of merit in transport terms, albeit the assumption is that the scheme would not involve a new train station. The site is fairly well connected to Twyford, which is a Tier 1 settlement with an Elizabeth Line station; and also quite well-connected to A-road corridors. There is also the potential to deliver an important new eastern relief road and a new train station car park (as discussed above, under 'air quality').

From a traffic perspective, there are not known to be any particular concerns regarding road corridors that link to Wokingham, Bracknell and Winnersh, and it might be the case that there is a strategic opportunity for A4 enhancement (e.g. noting that there is currently no bus service). However, the A321 to Wokingham is not associated with a cycle route, nor is it discussed as a priority corridor for upgrades in the LCWIP (2023). There is also a need to consider traffic through Twyford crossroads, albeit a relief road could deliver a net improvement.

There might also feasibly be the opportunity for growth at Twyford to support the enhancement of Twyford Station as a transport hub (public and active transport connectivity is currently limited). With regards to the Elizabeth Line, the Chamber of Commerce notably suggested in 2022 *"... schemes like... Elizabeth Line... are the very substance of your place-shaping principles, clear commitments to net zero carbon development and vision for sustainability."*

South of Wokingham SDL extension

Limited transport-related concerns were raised through consultation in 2022. However, it is important to recognise that new homes would mostly be beyond an easy walking distance of the committed local centre / primary school within the SDL as well as bus stops along the new South Wokingham Distributor Road (there are no bus services currently serving the site).³⁸

In this regard, there is an important distinction between the northwest part of the site, which is well-connected to the committed SDL / Wokingham, and the southern and eastern parcels, which would look to Old Wokingham Road for connectivity (and which are also discussed above as subject to a degree of constraint in wider terms). With regards to the matter of downgrading or closing the Easthampstead Road to road traffic, this is strongly supported, but it is not entirely clear whether, or to what extent, this is dependent on the SDL extension.

Conclusion

In conclusion, East of T/R has good rail accessibility and is close to an existing centre. Also, it would deliver new road infrastructure that will support the redistribution of traffic away from an AQMA (with air quality benefits, but also a major carbon cost). However, accessibility to Wokingham and Bracknell is likely to rely on private car travel unless it is possible to develop viable bus services and/or active travel infrastructure.

³⁸ There could feasibly be the potential to divert the 194 commercial service, which currently links Crowthorne to Bracknell, but the viability of diverting this would need to be discussed with Thames Valley Buses.

It is very difficult to differentiate between the other three sites; however, on balance, Loddon Valley is judged to be second-best performing. There is an inherent challenge associated with a focus of growth between strategic road corridors, however: it is a large site with the potential to achieve a good degree of trip internalisation; there will be good potential for active travel to some key destinations; and there is likely a greater opportunity to support modal shift to bus travel than is the case at the other sites. It is also important to note that transport modelling work to date serves to highlight limited concerns in respect of traffic congestion (subject to factors including the location of M4 crossing points), although, on the other hand, equivalent work has not been completed for the other sites.

The remaining two sites are judged to perform broadly on a par. Neutral effects are predicted on balance; however, there is a need for further work around bus connectivity at Ashridge and both bus and active travel connectivity at South of Wokingham SDL extension.

Finally, there is a clear need to consider potential in-combination impacts, given shared road corridors. In particular, allocation of Ashridge and East of T/R in combination would give rise to a need to carefully consider in-combination issues and opportunities, particularly in terms of the A321 corridor.

Figure A: Bus stops locally (from the Wokingham [LBSIP](#), 2023)

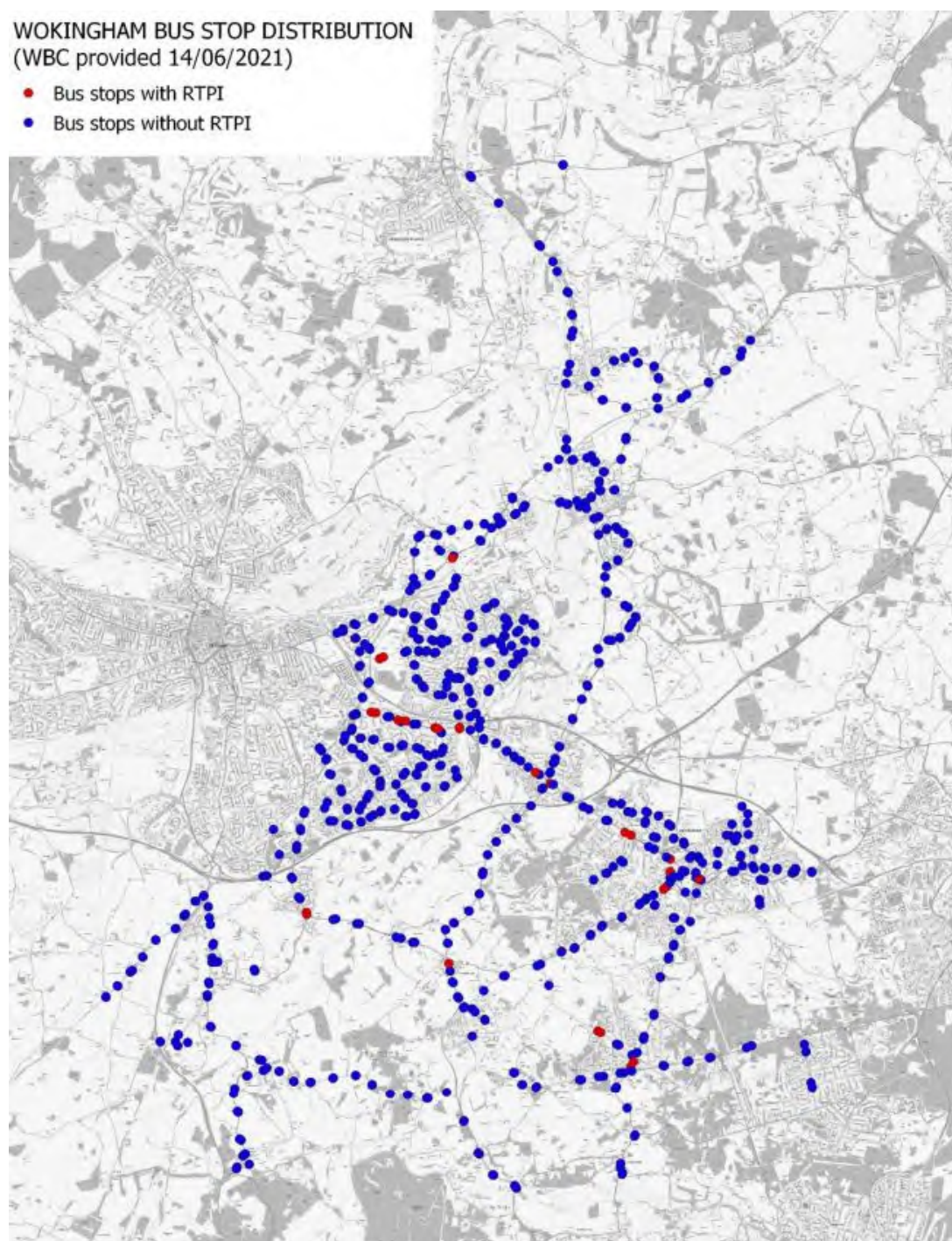


Figure B: Bus frequency locally in 2019 (from the Wokingham [LBSIP](#), 2023)

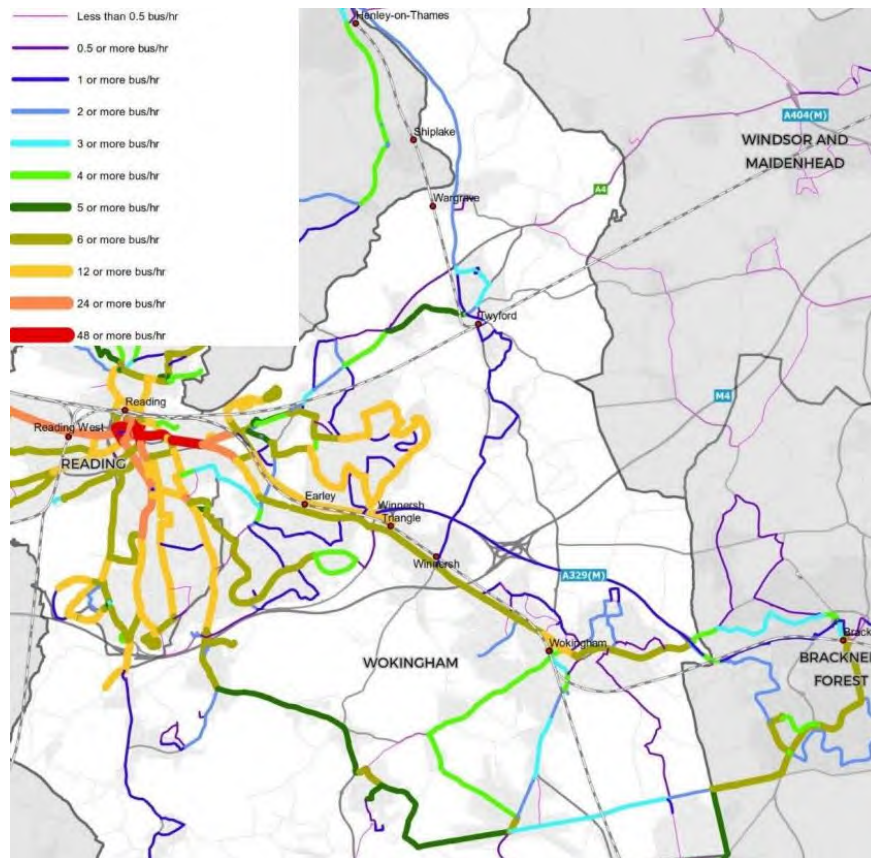
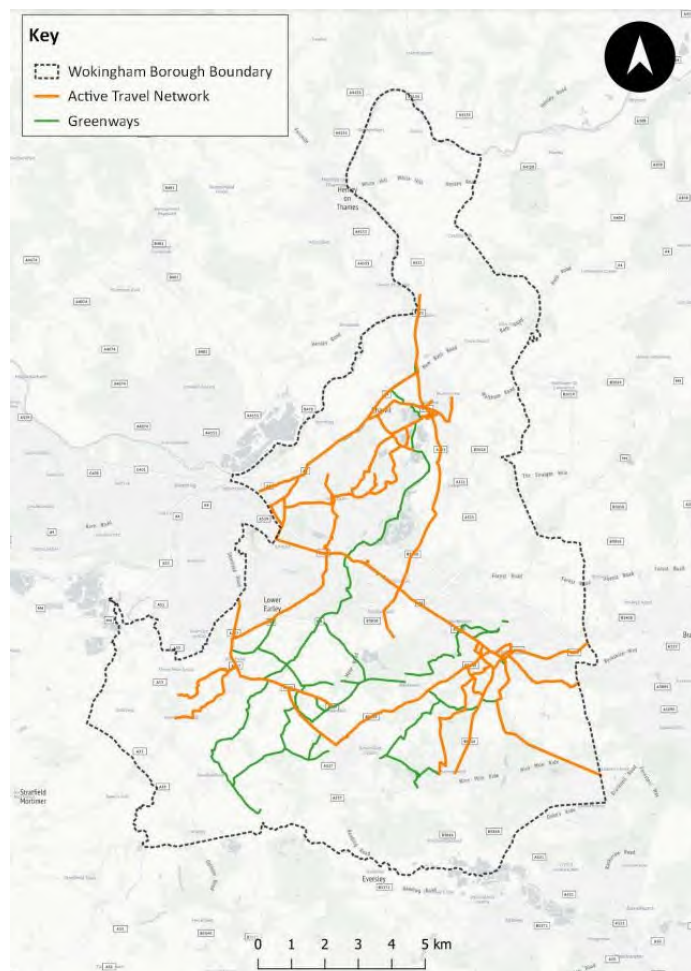


Figure C: A key output map from the Wokingham [LCWIP](#) (2023)



Water

Loddon Valley	Ashridge	East of T/R	S. Wokingham SDL ext.
=	=	=	=

A key consideration is often capacity at **wastewater treatment works**, both in terms of hydraulic capacity and the environmental capacity of the water courses that receive treated wastewater.

Capacity can typically be increased, and the Planning Practice Guidance places an emphasis on water companies to deliver upgrades to facilitate planned growth. However, upgrades come with a significant cost and a risk of unforeseen delays. As such, there is a need to direct growth to locations with existing capacity (or known potential to upgrade capacity) as far as possible, in order to minimise the risk of delays to housing delivery and capacity breaches. The Phase 2 Water Cycle Study (2023) provides the following overview:

“Headroom at Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) can be eroded by growth in population or per-capita consumption, requiring investment in additional treatment capacity or improvements in treatment processes. Thames Water operate all the WwTWs serving growth across Wokingham Borough.

There are six WwTWs that may serve growth during the plan period in Wokingham Borough. Three of these are expected to exceed their flow permit during the Local Plan period and will require an increase in their permit and / or upgrades to treatment processes in order to serve growth. No significant constraints to providing upgrades have been identified by TW. In addition to hydraulic capacity, it is important to consider water quality considerations.

Whilst the frequency of operation of overflows [at WwTWs, i.e. release of untreated wastewater to rivers] in the study area is below the threshold for investigation, it is important that development does not increase this frequency. The local plan can contribute to this by encouraging the use of SuDS to divert storm water away from the sewer network, reducing the volume that reaches the WwTW.”

The table below presents further detail, specifically highlighting the three WwTWs “expected to exceed their flow permit during the Local Plan period...” Specifically, an ‘amber’ rating indicates: *“Infrastructure and/or treatment work upgrades are required to serve proposed growth, but no significant constraints to the provision of this infrastructure have been identified.”*

It is important to be clear that the assessment is based on allocation of Loddon Valley and South Wokingham SDL Extension (because these sites were preferred options at the previous Regulation 18 consultation stage) but does not assume allocation of Ashridge or East of Twyford/Ruscombe.

From the table it is clear that there is an issue at Arborfield WwTW, which would likely serve Loddon Valley, and also at Wargrave, which would likely serve East of T/R (although it is located on the opposite side of Twyford). In contrast, there is headroom capacity at Ashridge WwTW, which would likely serve Ashridge.

However, it is important to reiterate that the WCS assigns only an amber score to Arborfield and Wargrave WwTWs, as opposed to a ‘red’ score (“Infrastructure and/or treatment upgrades will be required to serve proposed growth. Major constraints have been identified”). By way of further background, the WCS explains:

“For WwTW that need upgrading, typically around 5 years is required for permit changes to be agreed, funding obtained for the next AMP and major works upgrades to be completed.

Also, Thames Water have recently [proposed](#) an upgrade to Arborfield WwTW by 2030 (at a cost of £48m; see TMS24 Enhancement case: Sewage Treatment Growth), whilst there are no plans to upgrade Wargrave.

Table A: Capacity assessment of WwTWs from the Phase 2 Water Cycle Study (2023)

WwTW	JBA Assessment	Estimated spare hydraulic capacity (number of dwellings)
Arborfield	Amber	-15,814
Ashridge (Wokingham)	Green	4,644
Bracknell	Green	66,821
Easthampstead Park	Amber	-263
Reading	Green	394,429
Wargrave	Amber	-1,213

The above discussion is a summary of information presented in Section 7 of the Phase 2 WCS (2023), which deals with wastewater treatment. Additionally, there is a need to consider Section 10, which deals with water quality. That section concludes:

“The modelling indicates that growth during the Local Plan period could result in a significant deterioration (10% or over or deterioration in class) in water quality at two WwTWs (Arborfield and Easthampstead Park). In the case of Easthampstead Park, deterioration in phosphate is predicted to be 3% and as this is already within bad class, this is considered to be significant. This can be prevented by a tightening of the environmental permit and / or upgrades to treatment processes.

Whilst it is notable that this conclusion identifies a concern with Arborfield WwTW over-and-above Wargrave WwTW (despite both being assigned an ‘amber’ rating in Section 7), it is important to reiterate that the WCS analysis assumes allocation of Loddon Valley but not East of Twyford/Ruscombe.

Finally, with regards to Loddon Valley and the Arborfield WwTW works, whilst the Phase 2 WCS represents the most up-to-date evidence, there is also a need to note the following from the EA’s 2022 consultation response:

“Thames Water have commented that further additions to Arborfield STW should be carefully assessed as it believed the catchment is approaching its capacity. We are therefore not confident that the development can connect to the existing waste water infrastructure within this area... and we require more evidence to determine the permit, and capacity restraints at the [WwTW].”

Further considerations are:

- Ashridge – a proposal has been to rely on an onsite Living Machine, which would utilise biological processes to manage wastewater (the proposal in 2021 was to deliver four Living Machines), but it is not clear if this is the latest proposal. Also, it is not clear that this is a proven technology in the UK context, and so there would be a need to liaise with the Environment Agency and Thames Water, who might well suggest that it is more appropriate to rely on proven methods, e.g. where there is confidence regarding mechanisms for ownership and ongoing management / maintenance. The existing Ashridge (Wokingham) treatment works is nearby.
- South of Wokingham SDL extension – the nearest treatment works is a small treatment works at Easthampstead Park, in Bracknell Forest, which is somewhat capacity constrained. However, it is not clear that the site would drain to this WwTW or, alternatively, to Ashridge (Wokingham). The EA did not comment through consultation in 2022.
- Twyford Brook – is in proximity to East of T/R and is assigned ‘poor’ status under the Water Framework Directive. However, it is difficult to conclude that this is a significant issue; indeed, there could be an opportunity for a betterment relative to the current situation, if this involves intensive farming.
- Groundwater - the EA explained in 2022: *“A large proportion of Wokingham district is overlain by London Clay (Unproductive Strata) with significant areas of secondary aquifer being either Bagshot Beds or Lambeth Group. This means that generally groundwater is not particularly sensitive. The only area of principal aquifer is the Chalk that lies from Twyford northwards... As the proposed developments are residential they should not provide much of a groundwater pollution risk.”*

Drainage – The EA explained in 2022: *“Probably one of the main issues for redevelopment will be the high clay content of the soils and bedrock which means that infiltration drainage will be difficult across most of the proposed sites if not impossible in most cases. We would not wish to see any developments that propose deep borehole soakaway drainage through the confining clays... Consequently all the sites that sit on clay will require areas of the site for water attenuation features, therefore careful site planning and layout is essential to provide these attenuation features... The [Loddon Valley] area is a good example of this overlying thick London Clay with the underlying Arborfield Source protection zone, we would not wish to see deep structures penetrate the clay and compromise the underlying groundwater in the Chalk aquifer.”*

Loddon Valley is clearly closely associated with the River Loddon. However, it is difficult to conclude that this is a significant concern, from a water quality perspective. Much of the land here is currently used for dairy farming (the UoR Centre for Dairy Research), such that it could be that development alongside high-quality SuDS) and a country park leads to a ‘net gain’ in terms of water quality.

In **conclusion**, water quality is high on the agenda nationally, in particular the matter of avoiding capacity breaches at wastewater treatment works (WwTWs), hence it is appropriate to flag a risk of negative effects ahead of further detailed work and further engagement with Thames Water and the EA.

Conclusions

The table below presents a summary of the appraisal presented above. To reiterate the methodological approach taken, within each of the topic-specific rows of the table the aim is to: **rank** the site options in order of performance (with a star indicating best performing; “=” indicating broadly equal performance); and then **categorise** performance in terms of ‘significant effects’ using **red** / **amber** / **light green** / **green**.³⁹

N.B. it is important to reiterate that this appraisal was first completed in early 2023. If there are any inconsistencies with the analysis presented in the main body of this report, then the latter analysis take precedence.

Table B: Summary appraisal of strategic site options

Topic	Loddon Valley	Ashridge	East of Twyford and Ruscombe	S. Wokingham SDL extension
Accessibility	★1	2	2	3
Air quality	2	3	★1	2
Biodiversity	2	3	★1	★1
CC adaptation	3	2	2	★1
CC mitigation	2	★1	4	3
Communities	=	=	=	=
Economy	★1	2	2	3
Historic environment	★1	★1	2	2
Housing	=	=	=	=
Land, soil and natural resources	★1	★1	2	★1
Landscape	=	=	=	=
Transport	2	3	★1	3
Water	=	=	=	=

Concluding discussion

The appraisal serves to highlight a mixed picture, with all options associated with **pros and cons**. It is not possible to place the options in an overall order of preference purely on the basis of this appraisal, recognising that the sustainability topics are not assumed to have equal weight. It is for the Council to reach overall conclusions on balance, after having assigned weight / a degree of importance to each of the sustainability topics and having taken into account other relevant factors.

³⁹ **Red** indicates a significant negative effect; **amber** a negative effect of limited or uncertain significance; **light green** a positive effect of limited or uncertain significance; and **green** a significant positive effect. **No colour** indicates a neutral effect.

One immediate point to note is that Loddon Valley is associated with the highest number of predicted positives, relatively few predicted negatives, as well as a good number 'gold stars' (indicating a rank of 1 for any given topic) and only one instance of ranking least well (climate change adaptation, albeit no major concerns are raised). This is an indication that the site performs well overall; however, to reiterate, only the Council can reach this conclusion.

Taking each of the sites in size order:

- **Loddon Valley** – stands out as performing well in respect of accessibility to community infrastructure, which could well be seen as a particularly important topic, e.g. given the recent experience of delivering SDLs in the Borough. The scale of the site gives rise to a particular opportunity in this respect, and there are also inherent locational opportunities in respect of delivering a secondary school and a large new country park (including to the benefit of the existing community). A garden community would also support the achievement of economic growth / employment objectives, although significance should not be overstated.

However, this is a sensitive river corridor / river valley landscape and there are inherent transport challenges, given the proposed focus of growth between strategic transport corridors. Detailed concept and masterplanning work has been completed, and there are strong commitments in respect of key matters including affordable housing (40%) and biodiversity net gain (at least 20%), but there remains a need to question the in-principle approach of delivering strategic growth in this location, and there is a need for ongoing detailed work, including in respect of the approach to crossing the river corridor and the M4. There is also a need to consider variation within the site, in terms of sensitivities/constraints and accessibility, including the Barkham Brook valley/corridor.

- **Ashridge** – an immediate point to note is that the site is flagged as potentially representing a major decarbonisation (net zero) opportunity following the promoter's concept masterplan, and the new data centre option may add to this. Specifically, focusing on built environment greenhouse gas emissions (as opposed to transport emissions), evidence has been provided to demonstrate the potential to deliver net zero development to an exacting standard (in particular 'onsite', i.e. without having to resort to carbon offsetting). Further work might be undertaken in order to better communicate the nature of the opportunity and attract backers.

However, the proposals are scheme-specific, rather than site-specific, such that they might feasibly be adopted by the other competing strategic site options. Also, it is recognised that the proposals are associated with a high degree of uncertainty in respect of: A) the extent to which they are 'future-proof'; and B) deliverability, with no evidence that house builders are able to develop this type of scheme. Furthermore, the proposed focus on renewable heat and power generation (and storage) over efficiency can be questioned ('the energy hierarchy').

Aside from net zero, there is some merit to the central location of the site within the Borough, and relative proximity to a town centre. However, there are a range of concerns around transport connectivity, including in terms of severance created by the A329(M), a suitable new junction onto the A329(M) and bus connectivity.

It is noted that quite detailed work has been undertaken to iteratively develop a detailed masterplan that addresses onsite issues / opportunities. However, the fact remains that there is a range of onsite constraints (notably biodiversity, landscape, noise). Another consideration is a delivery risk over-and-above the other sites.

- **East of Twyford and Ruscombe** – the site is relatively unconstrained in a number of respects. There are also limited transport issues alongside a degree of transport opportunity given the nearby Elizabeth Line Station and a proposed relief road for Twyford (albeit the merits of road building can be questioned from a decarbonisation perspective). Also, the north of the Borough has seen relatively low growth over recent years/decades; and the fact that the site is in the control of Berkeley Homes, who would also act as the sole housebuilder, is a 'plus'.

However, the site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt, such that allocation would require 'exceptional circumstances'. Also, Twyford is associated with high quality agricultural land and a chalk influenced landscape. There is also a significant historic environment constraint given the adjacent Ruscombe Conservation Area, although the proposal is to mitigate impacts via a strategic greenspace buffer (which affects connectivity to Twyford). Finally, work completed to date by the site promoter is relatively high level, with uncertainty regarding a new train station clearly having been a barrier to developing proposals, given major cost / viability implications.

- **South of Wokingham SDL extension** – is a smaller site that gives rise to relatively limited concerns, albeit there is also relatively limited growth-related opportunity. There is the potential to work with the landscape and enhance the Emm Brook valley/corridor, although there is also a need to think carefully about defining a new long term extent to the Wokingham urban area, mindful of settlement separation to Bracknell to the east and Nine Mile Ride. The key issues here are: relatively limited potential to deliver new community infrastructure alongside housing growth; limited potential for bus and active travel connectivity, particularly for those parts of the site less well-connected to the permitted SDL to the north; and concerns raised by Bracknell Forest regarding development forming a 'hard boundary' along the Old Wokingham Road (the borough boundary).

Appendix V: Variable sites information

The aim of this appendix is to present figures to illustrate proposals/options and issues/opportunities across the eight sites that are considered most 'marginal' in that they feature as variables across the reasonable alternative growth scenarios. Also information is presented for another key site, namely South Wokingham SDL extension.

Loddon Valley

The latest proposed concept masterplan is presented as Figure 8.2 in the main body of this report, whilst Figures 9.1 and 9.2 in the main report deal with bus connectivity. Figure A below shows how a new country park would link to Langley Mead SANG. Figure B then shows latest road connectivity proposals (and phasing), whilst Figure C shows the proposals as they stood in late 2022 (noting significantly adjusted proposals for crossing the M4).

Figure A: Loddon Valley country park / habitat creation opportunity

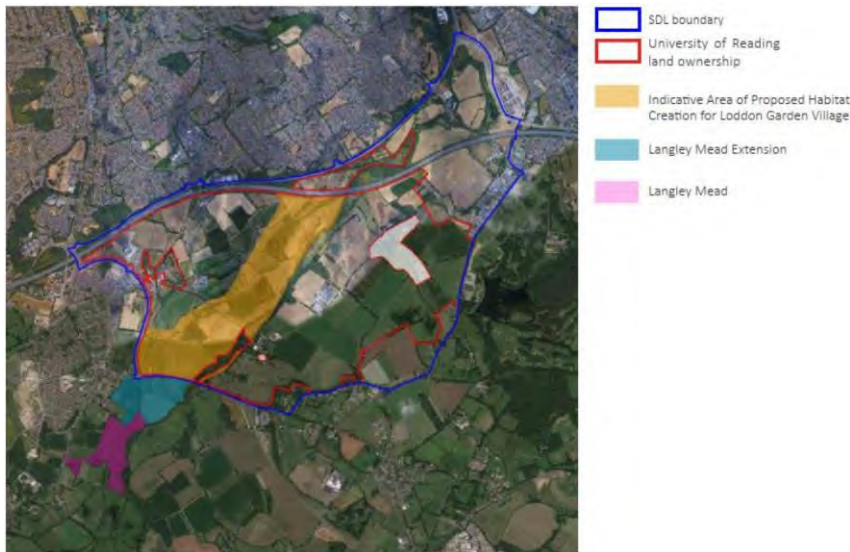


Figure B: Latest road connectivity proposals

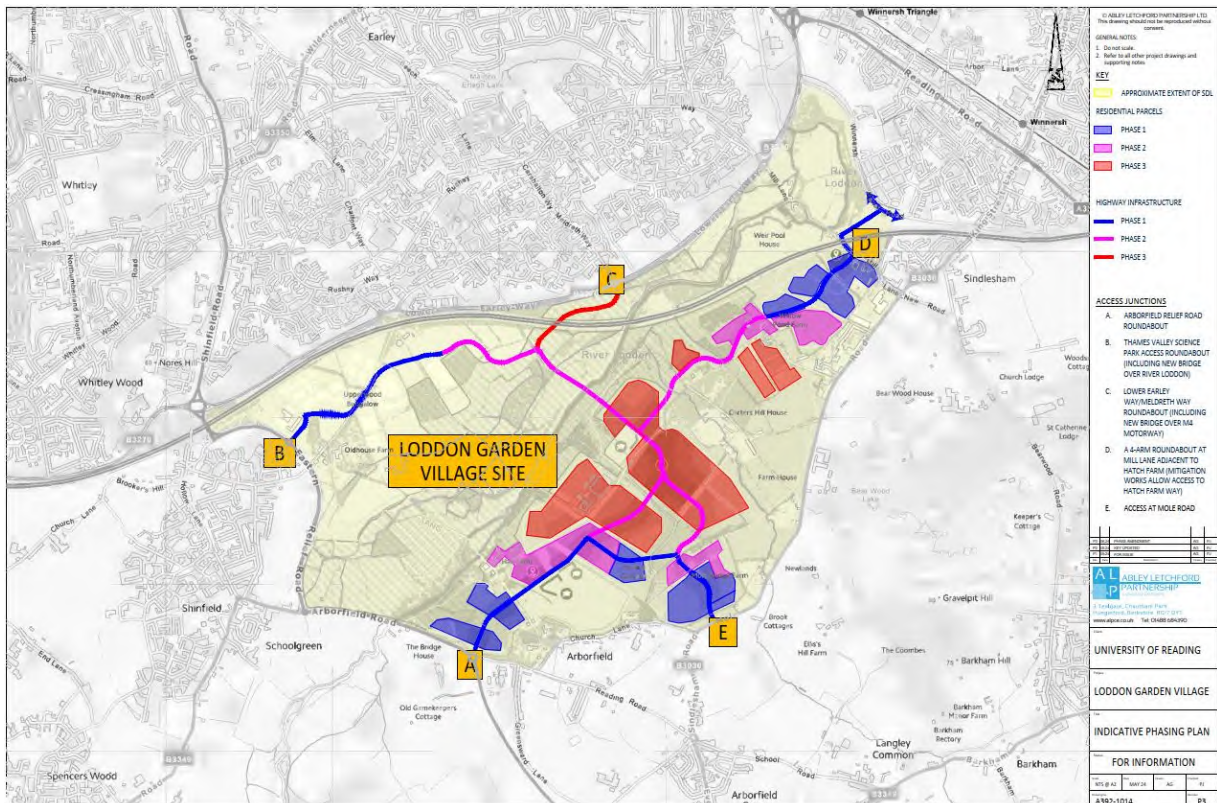
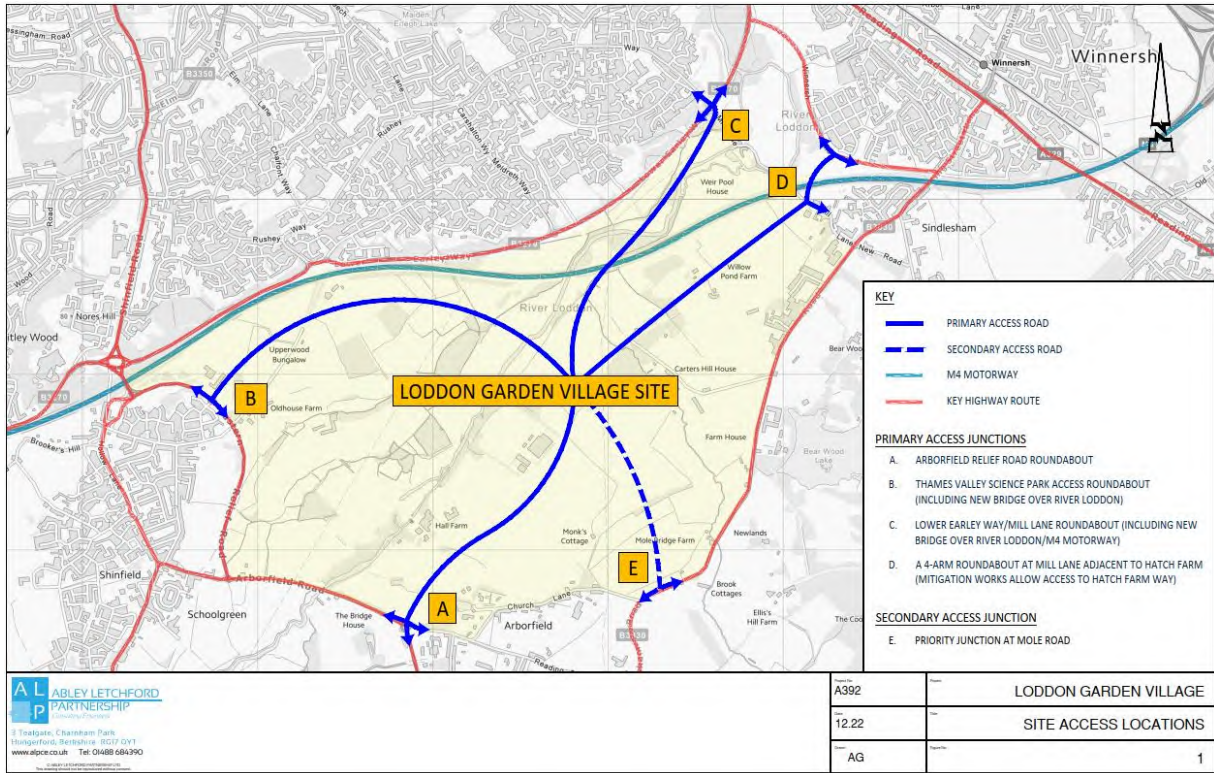


Figure C: Road connectivity proposals from late 2022



Ashridge

The concept master plan is shown as Figure D the new datacentre option at the northern extent of the site as Figure E. Figure F shows proposals for bus and cycle connectivity and Figure G the full junction option.

Figure D: Ashridge concept plan



Figure E: Data centre option



Figure F: Bus and cycle connectivity

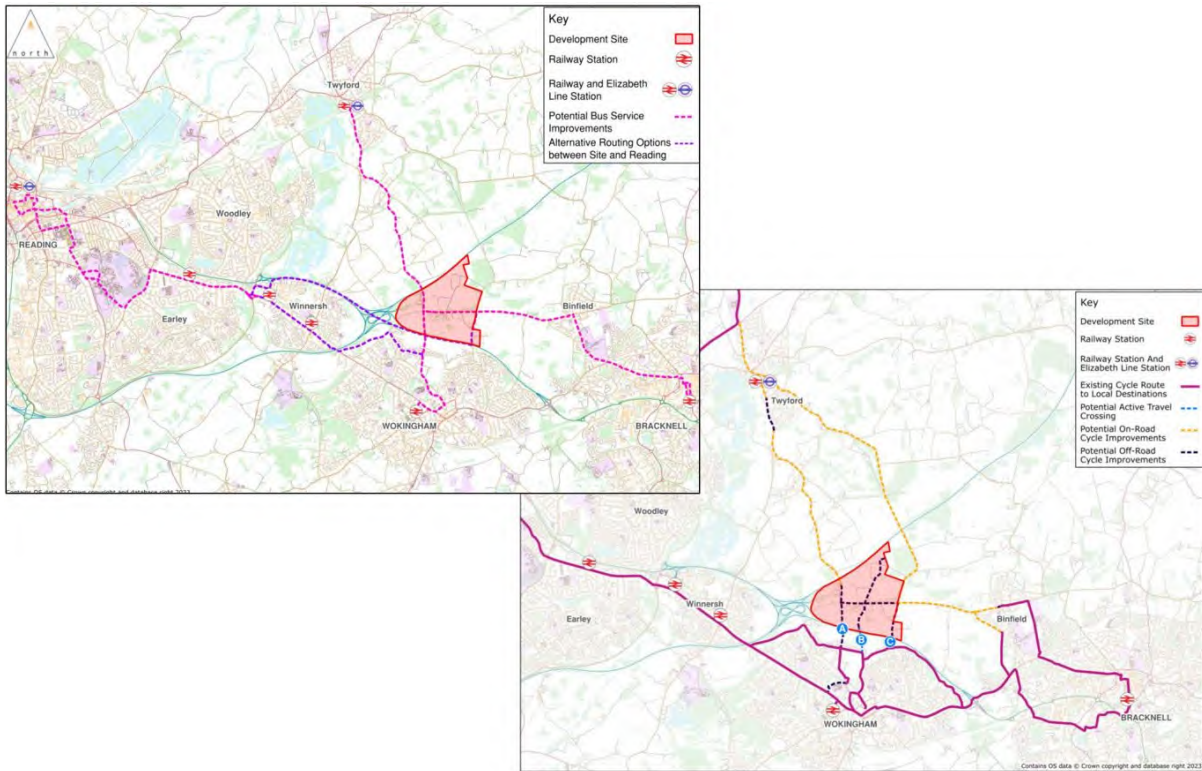
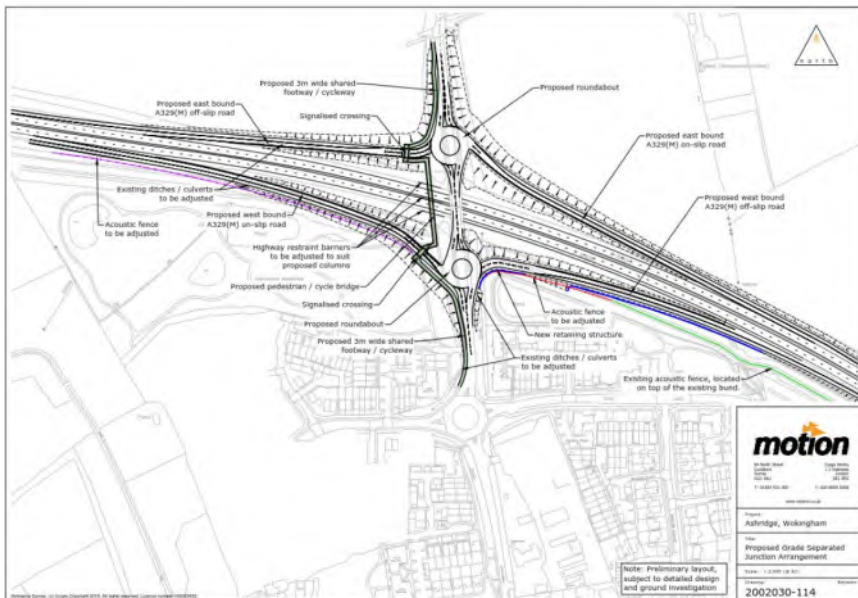


Figure G: Potential means of delivering a full junction onto the 329(M)



East of Twyford / Ruscombe

Figure H: East of Twyford / Ruscombe concept plan



Figure I: Artistic interpretation (showing proposed new train station)



Figure J: Proposed relief road



South Wokingham SDL extension

A high level concept plan is shown as Figure K whilst Figure L presents an artistic visualisation. Also, it should be noted that the previous concept plan from 2021 is shown as Figure 5.9, plus there is a need to note a current planning application for a new SANG a short distance to the south of the site.

Figure K: High level concept plan



Figure L: Artistic visualisation



Barkham Square, Arborfield Green

Figure M: Current concept plan

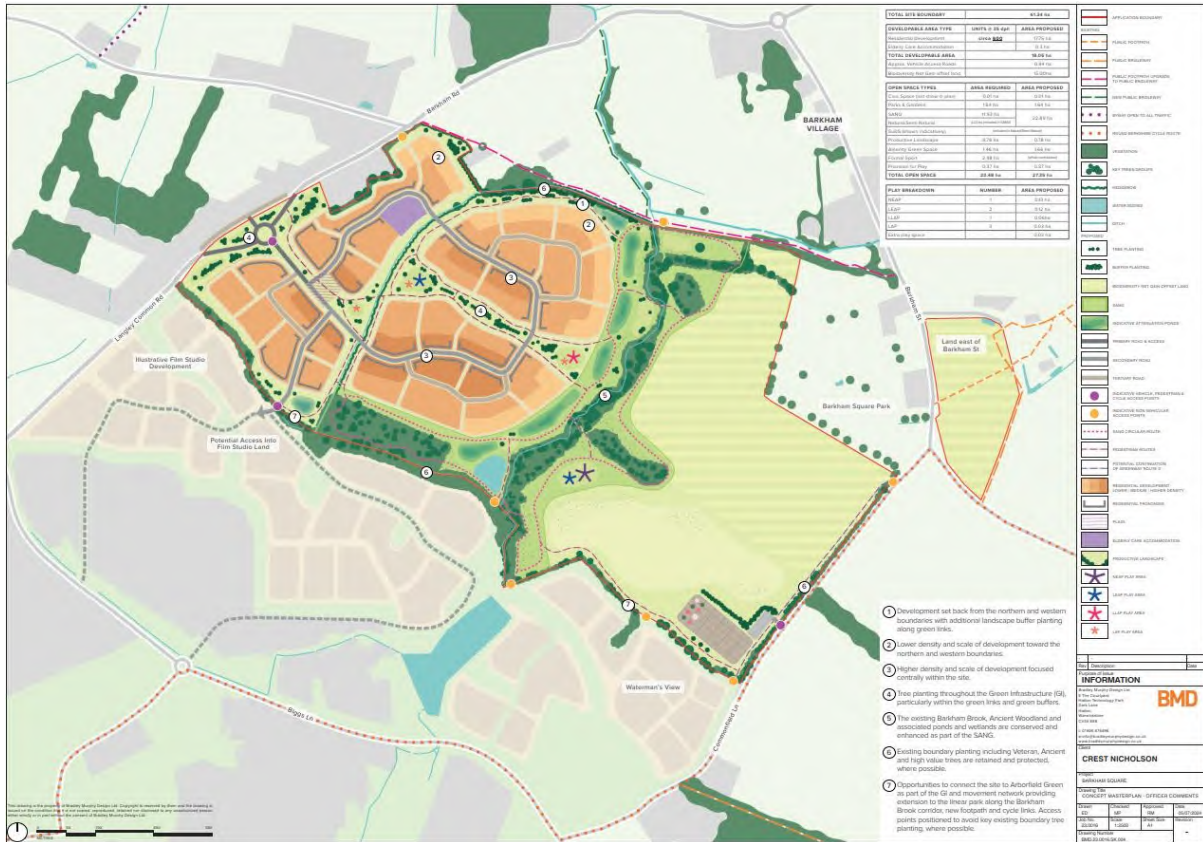
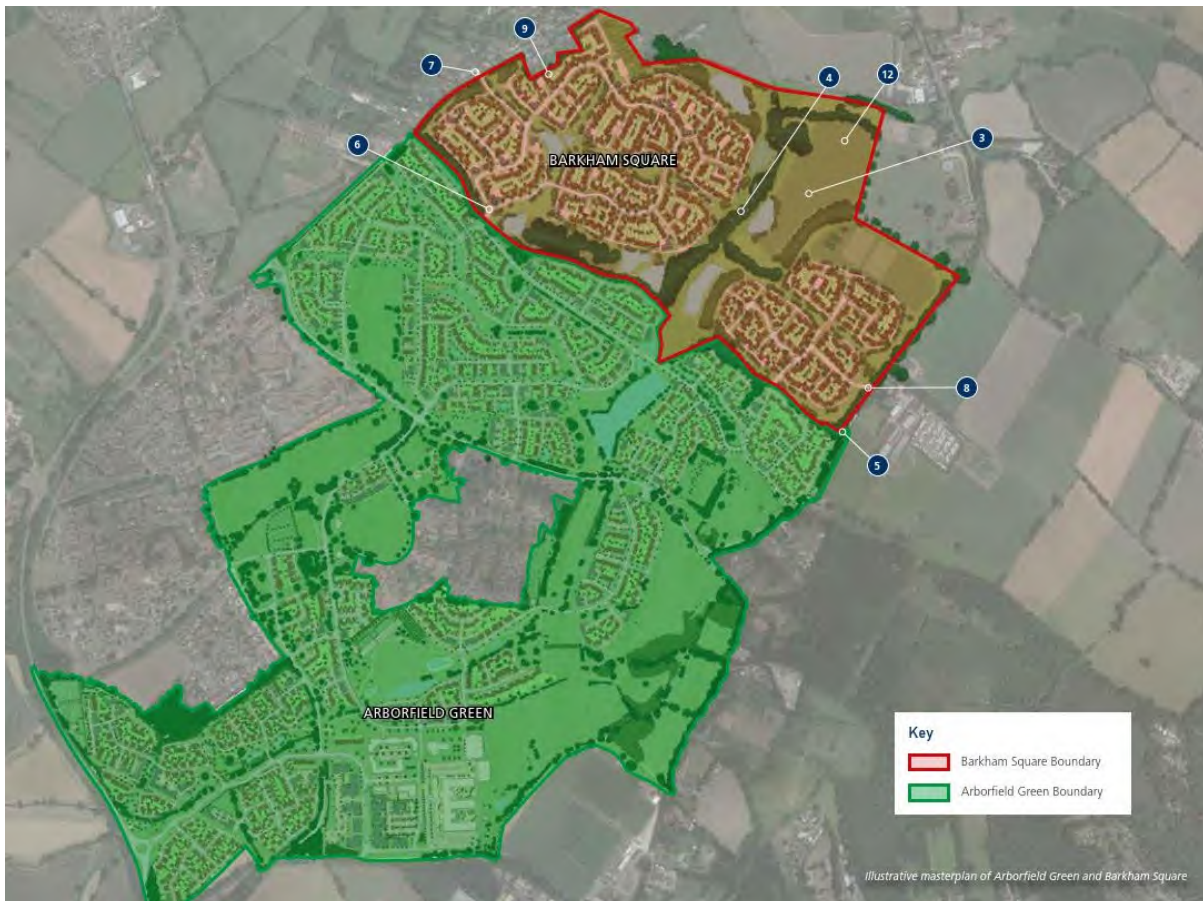


Figure N: Previous concept plan



Blagrove Lane, Wokingham

Figure O: Concept plan



Figure P: Figure highlighting the extent of SANG but also the new road through woodland

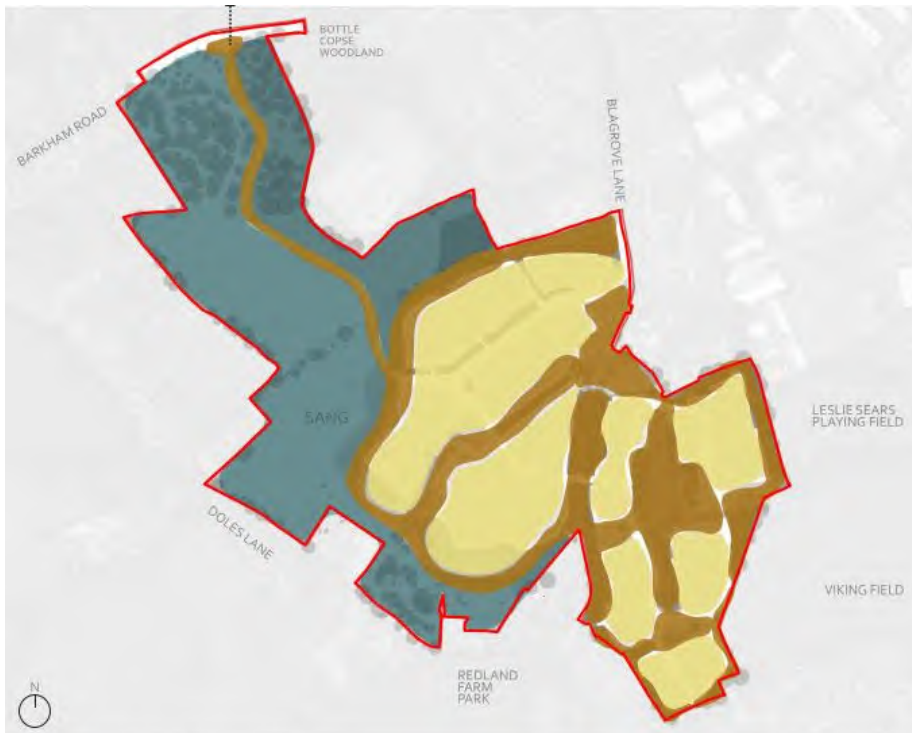


Fig 35. Illustrative lighting strategy

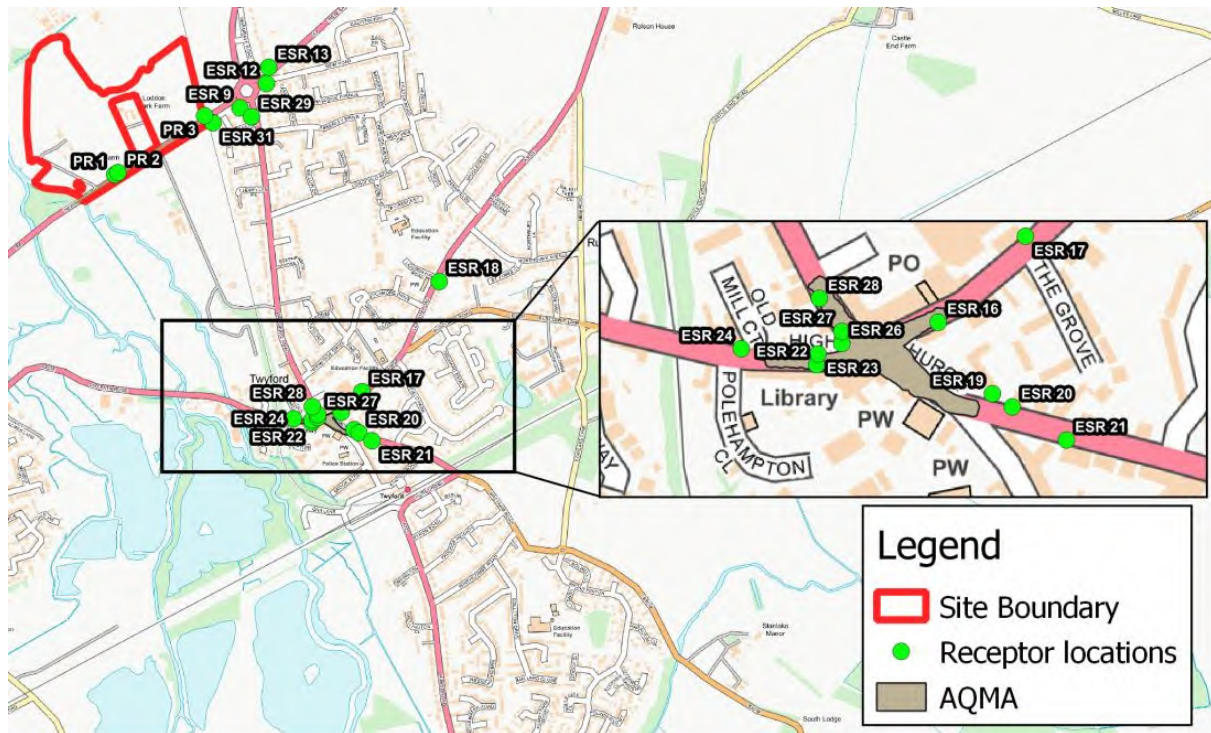
- Zone 1 - No lighting in this zone
- Zone 2 - Limited lighting zone - lighting provided to ensure lowest level required for highways and public safety.
- Zone 3 - Development areas; lighting will include the following -
 - Streets for adoption - Lit by LED Columns (Street column lighting as shown on the right)
 - Private Roads, pedestrian and cycle paths within this area - Lit by Pedestrian Column Lighting (as shown on the right)

Riverways Farm, Twyford

Figure Q: Concept plan



Figure R: Extract from the site promoter's Air Quality Assessment



Hyde End Road, Shinfield

Figure S: Concept plan from 2021 (at which time the proposal was for 220 homes)



West of Park Lane, Charvil

Figure T: Concept plan



Figure U: The site in context

