

Planning Statement

Land to the north of the A4, Theale

January 2024

Turley

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Appendix 1: Application Material

Appendix 2: Relevant Planning History Decisions

Appendix 3: EIA Screening Opinion

Appendix 4: Copy of Relevant Local Development Plan Policies

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Client

CP Logistics UK Reading Propco Limited / Panattoni

Our reference

FIRS3002

January 2024

1. Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted on behalf of CP Logistics UK Reading Propco Limited / Panattoni (the “Applicant”) to West Berkshire Council (“WBC”) in support of an application for full planning permission at ‘land to the north of the A4, Theale’ (the “Site”) for commercial development.

1.2 The site comprises circa. 5.4 ha of land which is currently a vacant field between the M4/Bath Road and the existing settlement boundary of Theale.

1.3 The proposal is described as follows:

“Full planning application for the construction of 2 employment units for flexible uses within Class E (light industrial), B2 and/or B8 of the Use Classes Order (including ancillary office provision) with associated enabling works, access from Hoad Way, parking and landscaping”

1.4 This Planning Statement is intended to address all the relevant planning policy considerations associated with the proposed development, and should be read in conjunction with the other documents and drawings submitted in support of the application as set out at **Appendix 1**.

Panattoni

1.5 Panattoni is Europe’s largest industrial and logistics developer with a track record of delivering over 320 million sq ft of commercial floorspace globally. Their projects are characterised by innovation, flexibility, speed and convenience to provide customers with real cost, service and performance advantages.

1.6 Panattoni has extensive experience of delivering high quality commercial facilities including warehouses, distribution centres and logistics parks throughout the UK, as well as across Europe.

Context

1.7 This Statement is intended to assist WBC in its determination of the application having regard to the requirements of the Development Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework (the “Framework”) and relevant Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). It evaluates the proposed development against local and national planning policies and other material considerations and carries out an overall planning balance.

1.8 A previous application (Ref No: 21/02029/COMIND) was submitted on the site for a similar proposal although was subsequently withdrawn following discussions with Officer’s prior to determination. It is noteworthy that since the withdrawal of this planning application, the Applicant has made the following significant amendments to the proposals for the site:

- The number of units has been reduced from three to two. The overall built footprint of the sites has been reduced from 172,976 sq ft to 103,815 sq ft.

- The built form has been pulled back from the eastern edge of the Site maintaining more of the Site as open landscape and pulling built form further away from the boundary of the AONB.
- The offsets between proposed built form and the northern and western boundaries have been increased.
- The maximum height of built form has been reduced from 18m down to 13m across the Site in order to increase the containment of built form from the wider landscape and from within the conservation area.
- The elevational treatment has been reviewed and measures incorporated to break down the overall massing of built form in views.
- Additional tree and hedgerow planting is provided within the layout to reinforce the landscape structure.
- A footpath is proposed across the Site to provide access between Hoad Way and the High Street, connecting with the Ikea retail park to the northeast and the wider public right of way network within the AONB.

1.9 The site was previously identified as a proposed employment allocation within the Regulation 18 version of the emerging Local Plan. The Applicant maintains that the site is a deliverable site and should not have been removed from the emerging Local Plan. This application clearly demonstrates the site is acceptable and technically deliverable.

1.10 Furthermore, there is an acute and identified employment need within West Berkshire which is acknowledged by all parties and is set out within the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan (currently submitted for examination). This is further acknowledged in the Inspector's Preliminary Questions dated October 2023 which asks the Council to quantify the employment floorspace provided for in the Plan and expected shortfall against the identified need. The Council confirmed in their response dated October 2023 that the shortfall is 32,709sqm.

1.11 The supporting Employment Land Review provides clear evidence on this need. In addition, the proposals will offer significant job opportunity and investment into West Berkshire.

1.12 This position is now amplified by the Inspectors Matters, Issues and Questions, where it is clear that:

- The Council will have a greater shortfall, owing to the increase in the plan period (2039 to 2041) which will increase the minimum requirement for industrial floorspace; and (Question 2.4); and
- Q11.6 queries whether "*Are all sites that are available and suitable for industrial and/or storage and distribution development allocated in the Plan?*". It is plain, owing to the submission of this proposal and the fact the site was previously allocated in the Regulation 18 version of the Local Plan, that the Council have not exhausted all deliverable options.

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- 1.13 The employment need and shortfall set out within the emerging Local Plan and its evidence base is a material consideration of substantial weight and weighs clearly in favour of the proposed development.
- 1.14 The site is located to the south of Theale and directly to the west of Junction 12 of the M4 providing strong strategic transport links and is one of the most accessible locations within the Borough for employment development.
- 1.15 Overall, there is a clear and compelling case to support the proposals based on the need for employment space within West Berkshire, the associated benefits and the sites highly suitable location.

Structure of Planning Statement

- 1.16 This remainder of the Statement is structured as follows:
- **Section 2: Site Context, History and Description** - Review of the site circumstances and surroundings including reference to any site specific designations and its planning history;
 - **Section 3: Pre Application Engagement** - A summary of the pre-application discussions with West Berkshire District Council prior to submission of the planning application;
 - **Section 4: The Proposed Development** - A summary of the proposed development including land uses, building heights, open space and accessibility;
 - **Section 5: Planning Policy Context** - A review of relevant planning policies contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Development Plan to the consideration of the proposals;
 - **Section 6: Planning Assessment** - An assessment of the schemes compliance with Planning Policy and associated policy justification for the principle of development;
 - **Section 7: Public Benefits Statement** – A review of the public benefits associated with the proposed development;
 - **Section 8: Planning Obligations** - A summary of relevant Planning Obligations and the draft Section 106 ‘Heads of Terms’; and
 - **Section 9: Planning Balance** – sets out the planning balance through a consideration of the benefits vs the harms
 - **Section 11: Conclusions** - Summary and conclusions.

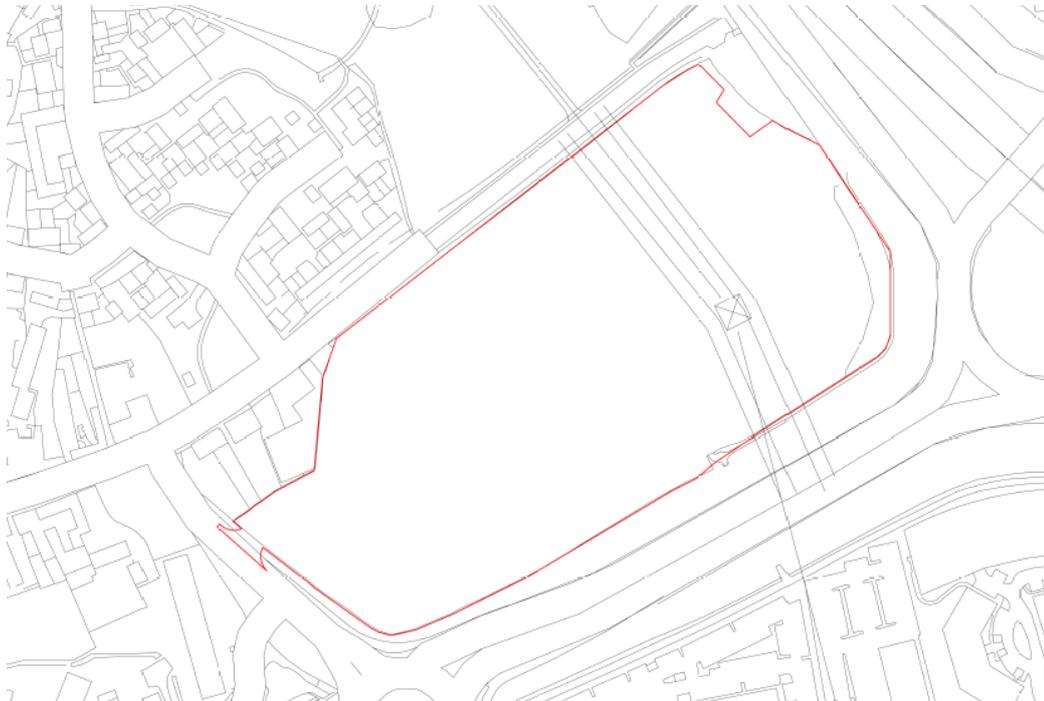
2. Site History, Context and Description

2.1 This section considers the history, context and description of the site.

Site Location and Surrounding Context

2.2 The application site is located to the south of Theale and directly to the west of Junction 12 of the M4 providing strong strategic transport links. The southern boundary of the site aligns with Bath Road providing access between Newbury and Reading. See extract of Site Location Plan below at Figure 2.1:

Figure 2.1: Site Location Plan



2.3 Within the immediate context of the site, Arlington Business Park and Theale Business Park lies to the south of the Bath Road, east and west of Waterside Drive. Arlington consists of mainly office buildings within a landscaped setting, whilst Theale Business Park comprises predominantly warehouse development with limited landscaping and increase focus on loading bays and parking associated with the distribution uses.

2.4 To the west of the site is James Butcher Drive where there are existing residential apartments accessed from Hoad Way. There is a tree belt along this boundary with well-established trees. Further west lies the centre of Theale with a range of residential, retail and commercial properties. To the north of the site there is a residential estate abutting an undeveloped field further east.

2.5 With regard to accessibility, the closest bus stops to the site are located on the High Street in Theale within 150m of the site. There are two main bus services that provide access between Reading Town Centre, Calcot, Thatcham and Newbury and run half

hourly every day. The closest railway station is approximately 900m to the south-west of the site and offers services between Newbury, Reading and London Paddington.

- 2.6 This site is strategically located for employment led development and well positioned with the existing highways network.

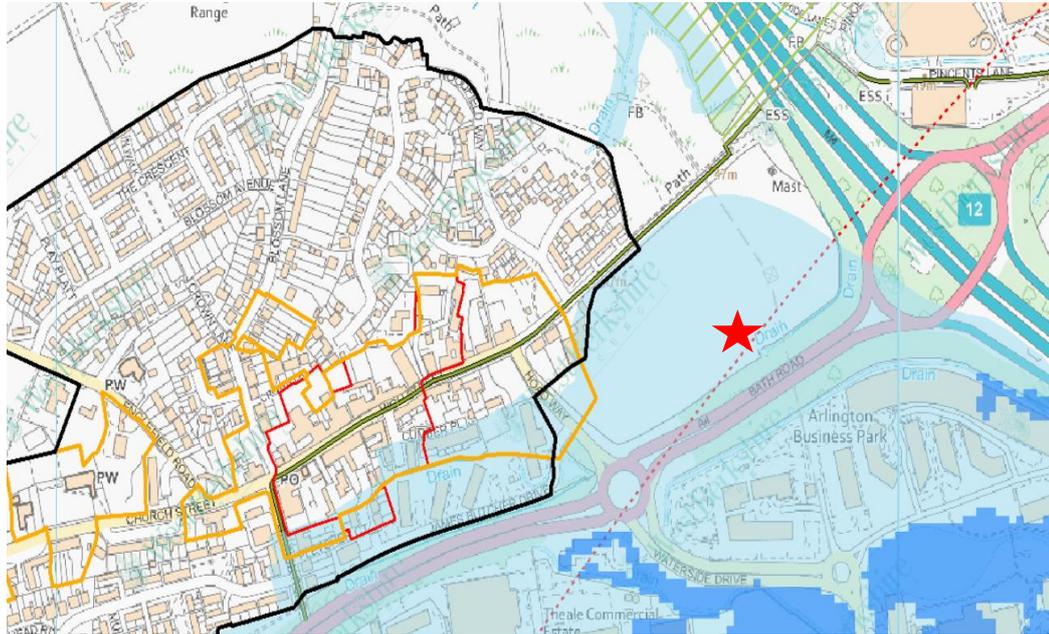
Site Description

- 2.7 The Site itself comprises an existing grass field extending to circa 5.4ha. The site is broadly rectangular in shape with no built form or public access. Power cables cross over the site and there is a pylon within the site itself. The northern boundary of the site benefits from an established hedgerow.
- 2.8 The site abuts the High Street to the north with a number of residential properties abutting the north-west corner of the site. Vehicular access along the High Street to the north of the site is limited by barriers, but cycle/ pedestrian access remains. This route leads to a footbridge across the M4 to Pincents Lane, Calcot.
- 2.9 The M4 is located along the north-eastern boundary with a small inset on the northern corner which is outside the site boundary and is associated with the existing Telecommunication Mast. The south-eastern corner abuts the spur road from Junction 12 of the M4 to the Bath Road that runs along the southern boundary of the site. These boundaries of the site are screened by existing landscaping including established trees.
- 2.10 The western boundary aligns with Hoad Way connecting the A4 to Theale High Street. Adjacent uses comprise predominately road infrastructure (east, south and west) with a number of residential properties abutting the north-western boundary.

Development Plan Designations

- 2.11 For the purposes of the adopted Development Plan, the site lies partially within the Theale High Street Conservation Area and the majority of the site falls within Flood Zone 1 and 2. The site also falls within the AWE Outer Zone. The site is outside the existing settlement boundary of Theale which currently extends to the rear of the properties abutting the northern boundary and along the western edge of Hoad Way.
- 2.12 The Lower Pang Valley and Sulham Stream Biodiversity Area is located to the north of the site, on the other side of High Street. The AONB boundary is positioned to the north-east of the site and extends across the M4 to the east.
- 2.13 An extract of the adopted proposals map is provided at Figure 2.2 overleaf.

Figure 2.2: Extract of adopted Proposals Map



Key

- Settlement Boundary
- Conservation Area
- AONB
- Biodiversity Opportunity Area
- Flood Zone 2
- Town Centre Boundary
- Cycle Routes
- AWE Buffer Zone
- ★ Application Site

3. Planning History

Site Planning History – planning application

- 3.1 Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the “EIA Regulations”) identifies projects where an EIA is required. The EIA Regulations implement the requirements of the European Community’s Directive on Environmental Assessment (85/337/EEC), as amended by the Council Directive No. 97/11/EC and 2011/92/EU. Further guidance is provided in the National Planning Practice Guidance.
- 3.2 The proposal does not constitute Schedule 1 development of the Regulations, where EIA is required in every case. It is considered to comprise an ‘Infrastructure Project’ under Schedule 2, specifically, either an ‘Industrial estate development project’ or an ‘Urban Development Project’ under paragraph 10(b). Therefore, the Development falls under Schedule 2 Development within the meaning of the Regulations and therefore the need for EIA must be considered.
- 3.3 The Applicant submitted an EIA Screening Opinion (Reference: 20/00461/SCREEN) alongside an application for a commercial development in 2019 under reference 20/00476/OUTMAJ. The application sought planning permission for the following development:
- “Outline Application for up to 20,000 sqm of commercial floorspace comprising B1(c), B2 and B8 floorspace along with associated access. Matters to be considered: Access”*
- 3.4 The EIA Screening Opinion was issued and is included at **Appendix 3**, concluding EIA is not required. This remains relevant to the proposed development.
- 3.5 Application 20/00476/OUTMAJ was withdrawn by the Applicant in summer 2020 and since that time the original proposals have been re-visited and a subsequent planning application submitted (ref. 21/02029/COMIND, submitted July 2021) for:
- “Full planning application for the construction of 3 employment units for flexible uses within Class E (light industrial), B2 and/or B8 of the Use Classes Order (including ancillary office provision) with associated enabling works, access, parking and landscaping”*
- 3.6 This application was also withdrawn ahead of determination.

Pre-application

- 3.7 Following the withdrawal of planning application 21/02029/COMIND, a pre-application enquiry was submitted to WBC (ref. 22/03049/PREOPD). A response from WBC was received on 9th March 2023 and a meeting held on 23/03/2023.
- 3.8 The Applicant raised concerns at the time regarding the pre-application response namely that it:

- Did not provide any material consideration to the current employment land shortfall, as identified in the emerging Local Plan Review; and
- Prejudged the development impacts, without any technical work to the contrary.

3.9 As part of the pre-application process, Turley Planning and Visual Impact met on site with the Council’s Landscape Officer to agree the key views for the planning application and to agree the scope of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to support the planning application.

Summary

3.10 The revised proposals, subject to this application, seek to address the comments received from Planning and Technical Officers during the course of previous applications.

3.11 A summary of the comments received and the Applicants response is set out below.

Consultation response from 21/02029/COMIND	Applicant response
Archaeology	
Re-submitted archaeological desk-based assessment carried out in 2019, geophysical survey carried out in 2020. Expecting any application to provide up to date analysis of impact on paleoenvironmental potential of the site.	A WSI for a geoarchaeological borehole study accompanies this submission, which has been approved by the Council’s Archaeologist. It has been agreed that the archaeological investigation can be secured via planning condition to any consent granted.
Conservation	
Proposals will result in harm to the setting of the Conservation Area. Proposed mitigation is insufficient.	As set out in the accompanying Heritage Statement, the proposal will result in less than substantial harm to the setting of the Conservation Area. In accordance with the NPPF and PPG, this harm can be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. As set out in later sections of this Planning Statement, the public benefits of the proposal outweigh the less than substantial harm to the setting of the Conservation Area.
Highways	
Proposals need to provide pedestrian/cycle access onto the High Street.	Two pedestrian accesses are proposed. One of which is from the High Street, which provides access to the shops and facilities within Theale.

Proposed footway would increase conflicts between vehicles and pedestrian.	As set out in the supporting Transport Statement, the two proposed footways will not increase conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians.
Sufficient swept paths need to be provided.	Swept paths are provided within the submitted Transport Statement.
TEMPRO growth factors need to be amended and flow diagrams and modelling updated.	To determine the forecast traffic growth on the network, base traffic forecasts have been uplifted using TEMPRO growth factors. Flow diagrams for 2023 Base Flows, 2033 with TEMPro and 2033 plus the proposed development in Passenger Car Units (PCUs) can be seen in Appendix E of the submitted Transport Assessment.
Model for A4/Hoad Way should be re-run with correct geometry on Hoad Way.	A VISSIM model is being run for the wider area which includes the M4 Junction 12 and nearby A4 junctions. The output of the modelling will follow in a separate Technical Note.
Highways Agency (now National Highways)	
No objection subject to condition.	No response required.
Transport Policy	
Pedestrian/cycle access should be provided to the High Street. Needs to be overlooked for natural surveillance.	Two pedestrian accesses are proposed. One of which is from the High Street.
Site is in accessible location.	We fundamentally agree that the site is in an accessible location, highly suited to employment development.
EVCP should be provided.	A total of 8 electric vehicle charging points will be provided at both units, two of which will be located within the disabled parking provision.
Requests further detail in the Framework Travel Plan.	A Framework Travel Plan accompanies the submission.
Environment Agency	
No consultation to make.	No response required.
Drainage	

Concerns that drainage information doesn't address site falls into a different catchment to that which is discharges into.

The updated SDS details the drainage hierarchy and explains why the proposals are to connect into the sewer and as such address the issues of cross-catchment discharge. The EA will be consulted as part of the planning process for the revised application.

Greenfield run-off rates are higher than the actual discharge rate proposed.

2. The proposed discharge rate, which has been provisionally agreed with Thames Water, is limited below the existing 1 in 1 year discharge rate and is therefore provide a significant betterment.

Detail comment on flow controls that can be easily monitored.

The proposed pump station will be a duty / standby arrangement where if one pump fails the standby will immediately be able to drain the site. In this situation telemetry will initiate a warning direct to the site maintenance team who will have all the specifications required (as part of the H&S File and the O&M Manual) to make sure they are fully versed in the requirements of the pump station and fully trained to be able to undertake the work in a timely manner. 24-hour monitoring systems are common for pumps and do not necessarily require the site to be manned permanently. The exact O&M strategy will be agreed ahead of the appointment of the management company. Regarding additional storage, in the unlikely event of both pumps failing the site levels are design such that flooding will be directed away from the building, which can be seen in the flood exceedance plan in the SDS.

Insufficient pollution control.

The updated SDS includes a SuDS optioneering document which highlights all the proposed SuDS feature that are included within the scheme. Filter drains are proposed for the carparks alongside the interceptors to provide multi-stage water treatment. The alterations made to the drainage strategy from the previous design has maximised the possible SuDS features and thus will address the LLFA's concerns. In terms of the maintenance of these SuDS features we have included a draft copy of a more detailed maintenance strategy within

	the SDS, which should provide the LLFA with comfort on the frequency of maintenance.
Response needed on green walls	Redesign of the site to isolate offices from the main warehouse is not viable in terms of cost, site space allowance or operational needs for tenants being able to coordinate their business. Therefore, green walls are not proposed.
Modelling calculations are difficult to follow.	The revised calculations in the SDS now include the pipeline and MH schedules. The FEH and FSR hydraulic modelling results are also located in the SDS.
No exceedance plan included.	The currently modelling shows that the design does not currently anticipate any flooding. However, a drawing showing the potential flood exceedance routes has been provided.
Supporting detail for drainage assets needed.	Drainage details drawings are submitted with the application.
More information on pumping station needed.	The detail provided on the submitted drawings is the usual level of detail provided at planning. A specialist is usually engaged during tender to provide the further details needed for construction.
Drainage assets need buoyancy checks/mitigation measures.	Buoyancy calculations will be carried out at the detailed design stage to ensure that any drainage features are adequately designed for the high ground water. The drainage drawings have been caveated as such.
More detail required on operation and maintenance.	Section 5 in the SDS covers the maintenance of the below ground drainage. In due course we will produce a document to be included within the O&M documentation, but this is usually a detailed design item.
Thames Water	
Request conditions to confirm network capacity.	No response necessary other than to review conditions proposed during the course of the determination of this planning application.
Ecology	

Kennet catchment and water quality – We require the inclusion of water retention areas that that will retain a small amount of water at least 8 months of the year.	A detailed drainage strategy has been prepared in support of the planning application in line with the SuDs hierarchy.
Require The submission of an isolux lighting plan to make sure there is no increase in light levels inside the retained wooded and areas of ecological interest on the site.	The applicant will accept a planning condition requiring the detail of lighting to be submitted prior to installation.
Net gain needs to be demonstrated.	A net gain assessment is included in the application submission which details measures to achieve a biodiversity net gain.
Would prefer to see integrated bird and bat boxes.	A condition relating to ecological enhancements can secure such details as integrated bird and bat boxes.
Joint Emergency Planning	
No adverse comments.	No response required. The proposal will result in no different conclusion from the Joint Emergency Planning team.
Office for Nuclear Regulation	
No comments.	No response required. The proposal will result in no different conclusion from the ONR team.
Environmental Health	
Noise concerns – will be a perceptible increase in noise at several nearby residential properties. Scheme should be redesigned.	The scheme has been redesigned with these comments in mind, as yards associated with the units are orientated away from the nearest residential receptors and assessed accordingly. A description of the existing noise environment in and around the site is provided. Noise surveys have been undertaken and the results used to verify predictions of the short-term and long-term effects of noise.
Landscape	
The proposals will degrade an important open site at the entrance to Theale. They will reduce the separation between Theale and	The proposals have been revised since these comments have been received, resulting in a lower quantum of development on site. A clear sense of separation between these settlement areas would be maintained by the

Calcot. Significant adverse effect on the CA.	vegetated M4 motorway corridor. Proposed planting to the east of the Site would reinforce the visual separation by infilling existing gaps in roadside vegetation. As above, the submitted Heritage Statement confirms the proposal will result in less than substantial harm to the setting of the Conservation Area.
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Trees	
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Objection – level of loss of trees within a Conservation Area. Majority of retained trees are in third party land.	The majority of trees on site are to be retained. Retained trees will be protected in accordance with good practice to ensure their longevity, as set out in the accompanying Preliminary Arboricultural Assessment. There are no Category A trees on the site.
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The proposals result in the loss of one tree group as well as the partial removal of three groups of trees and one hedgerow.

Planning Policy	
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Site is located in Flood Zone 2 therefore requires a sequential test and FRA. Council Highways and Transport Policy teams should advise on impact on the road network and sustainable transport modes. Should consider compatibility with surrounding uses, Conservation and Design comments.	A Sequential Assessment has been submitted in support of the planning application.
	We agree that the evidence base for the Local Plan Review identifies an unmet need for employment land. We consider this is a material consideration which should be given substantial weight in the planning balance.

Evidence base for LPR does highlight need for employment need within the plan period to 2036. LPR is at Reg 18 stage, little weight can be given to its content. Decision maker should determine the application against the adopted development plan.

Minerals and Waste	
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No comments.	No response required. The proposal will result in no different conclusion from the Minerals and Waste team.
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Theale Parish Council	
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Object: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • traffic impact, increase in pollution 	The Transport Assessment has assessed the level of traffic increase as a result of the development, and confirms through traffic
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development would spoil the character of the area. • concerns of flood risk • loss of wildlife. • question the need for this type of development. 	<p>and hazard to pedestrians.</p> <p>assessments that the adjacent junction will operate within its capacity when taking into account forecast traffic generation. Therefore, there are no concerns of traffic impact.</p> <p>Two dedicated pedestrian points are provided onto the site and specific pedestrian areas within the plot boundaries therefore there are no concerns to pedestrian safety.</p>
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Sulhamstead Parish Council	
No objection	No response required.

Tilehurst Parish Council	
Object – concerns of additional traffic.	The Transport Assessment has assessed the level of traffic increase as a result of the development, and confirms through traffic generation and junction capacity assessments that the adjacent junction will operate within its capacity when taking into account forecast traffic generation. Therefore, there are no concerns of traffic impact.

Surrounding Planning Applications

- 3.12 To the north-east of the site between the site boundary and the M4 there have been a number of applications in connection with the existing Telecommunications Mast (Ref: 00/01118/TELE42, 14/00738/FUL, and 2/00762/TELE28).
- 3.13 To the north-west of the site, there are a number of properties that have benefitted from planning permissions for residential development:
- 70 High Street, Theale: Ref 06/02814/FULD – Residential development of 9 No. flats (Layout Plan included at Appendix 2);
 - 74-76 High Street, Theale: Ref 18/00454/FULD – Demolition of existing workshops and erection of 6 no flats, consisting of town blocks –front and back, with 6 parking spaces and associated landscaping. The two developments i.e. development at the front with two self contained flats (2x 2 bedrooms) and development at the rear with four self contained flats (4x2 bedrooms) (Layout Plan included at Appendix 2); and
 - Stuart House, High Street, Theale: Ref 18/02791/FULD – Redevelopment of site to 9 apartments (Layout Plan included at Appendix 2).

3.14 To the south of the site within the existing Business Park, there have been several planning permissions:

- 1210 Arlington Business Park: Ref. 22/01806/COMIND – extension of building, realignment of access, alterations to the adjacent soft landscaping, realignment of vehicular access, re-provided visitor and accessible car parking, improved bicycle parking, replacement plant equipment and installation of solar photovoltaic panels at the roof level. Approved 4th November 2022.

4. The Proposed Development

Description of Development

4.1 The formal description of development is:

“Full planning application for the construction of 2 employment units for flexible uses within Class E (light industrial), B2 and/or B8 of the Use Classes Order (including ancillary office provision) with associated enabling works, access from Hoad Way, parking and landscaping”

Layout, scale and appearance

4.2 The proposed quantum of development, the size of individual units and the servicing areas have been designed specifically to accord with prevailing market conditions and occupier requirements, as well as taking into account comments on the previously withdrawn applications.

4.3 The proposals comprise of two units of 49,045 sq ft and 54,769 sq ft GIA, all for a flexible Class E (light industrial), B2 and B8 Use. The range of units and the flexible use proposed ensures that there are opportunities for a range of occupiers to locate to the site.

4.4 The units are located to the west and centrally within the site. The north eastern section of the site is proposed as open space and landscaping. Table 3.1 below outlines the key characteristics of each unit:

Table 3.1: Key Characteristics

Unit	Key Characteristics
Unit 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GIA – 49,045.27sq ft (including 4,475.16 sq ft of ancillary mezzanine office space)• GEA – 50,329.9sq ft• 3 Level Access Doors• 4 Dock Access Doors• 60 car parking spaces• 10 trailer spaces• 20 cycle spaces
Unit 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GIA – 54,769.9 sq ft (including 4,475.16 sq ft of ancillary mezzanine office space)• GEA – 56,124.8 sq ft

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Dock Doors and 2 Level Access Dock Doors • 60 car parking spaces • 10 trailer spaces • 20 cycle spaces
Site as a whole	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GIA – 103,815.17 sq ft (including 8,000 sq ft of ancillary office space) • GEA – 106,454.73 sq ft • 7 Dock Doors and 5 level access dock doors • 120 car parking spaces • 20 trailer spaces • 40 cycle spaces

4.5 The site is laid out in order to allow the 25m HGV turning circles.

4.6 The Design and Access Statement in support of this application provides a detailed summary of the design rationale for the proposed development, including the proposed appearance and materials.

Access and Parking

4.7 The application proposes a single vehicular access and egress point from Hoad Way, comprising a priority junction.

4.8 Two pedestrian accesses are proposed. One of which is from the High Street, which provides access to the shops and facilities within Theale.

4.9 Parking to each unit is provided as set out in Table 3.1 above.

Landscaping

4.10 The landscape strategy for the site looks to create a strong landscape buffer that softens the interface between the site and the adjacent village of Theale. These buffers will be utilised for the creation of a mosaic of habitats while also reinforcing the existing boundary vegetation. Internally, the landscape design will seek to create an attractive formal business park feel through the use of hedgerow, larger stature trees, close mown grass verges and ornamental planting with breakout space created for the benefit of employees and visitors to the site.

4.11 Development has been sensitively set back from High Street to respect the visual amenity of the residential properties. A landscape buffer with a native tree and shrub

mix will run along the High Street boundary to strengthen the existing tree line, this will increase its increase visual screening and soften the potential visual impact of the built form.

- 4.12 The existing perimeter vegetation is defined by well established semi-mature trees which contribute to the containment of the Site. These will largely be retained, with the exception where losses will be necessary to facilitate the proposed vehicular entrance. Root protection areas of existing trees have been respected.
- 4.13 Additional supplementary tree and shrub planting is proposed to perimeter vegetation to strengthen the boundaries. This is specifically required where the site borders Bath Road. Landscaping to the access road will be formal in appearance to establish a threshold into the development and will utilise avenue tree planting, clipped native hedgerows, close mown grass areas, ornamental planting and low groundcover planting.
- 4.14 Landscaping to the wider site will be more naturalised in appearance and will utilise a native tree and shrub mix, species-rich grassland mixes and seasonal bulb planting as well as individual native tree planting. Overall, the planting will optimise opportunities for landscape enhancement to soften the built form and service yards whilst assimilating the proposals within the existing landscape context.

Environmental Impact Assessment

- 4.15 This planning application proposes a smaller quantum of development than that considered under the previous Screening Opinion. As a result, it remains that the proposed development does not constitute EIA development.

5. Planning Policy Framework

Introduction

5.1 This Section outlines the key planning policy considerations relevant to the proposed development at a national and local level.

5.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides as follows:

“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”

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

“In dealing with an application for planning permission or permission in principle the authority shall have regard to the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application,...and any other material considerations.”

5.4 The sources of policy of relevance to this application are therefore:

- The adopted Development Plan; and
- Other material considerations, including the emerging Local Plan.

The Adopted Development Plan

5.5 The adopted Development Plan for WBC comprises:

- Saved policies of the West Berkshire Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved policies);
- Core Strategy (July 2012); and
- Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (May 2017).

Saved Local Plan policies (Local Plan 1991-2006)

5.6 The relevant Saved Local Plan policies are as follows¹:

- Policy OVS5 (Environmental Nuisance and Pollution)
- Policy OVS6 (Noise Pollution)
- Policy TRANS1 (Meeting the Transport Needs of the Development)
- Appendix 5 – Parking Provision for New Development

¹ A copy of these policies is available at **Appendix 3**

Core Strategy (2006-2026)

5.7 The Core Strategy is the principal Development Plan document in the Borough and covers a plan period from 2006 to 2026 and was adopted in December 2012.

5.8 The Core Strategy sets out a number of policies which are of relevance to the determination of this application. The policy references are set out below, and full extracts of the relevant planning policies are provided at **Appendix 4**.

- Area Delivery Plan Policy 1 – Spatial Strategy
- Area Delivery Plan Policy 4 – Eastern Area
- Area Delivery Plan Policy 5 – North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Area Delivery Plan Policy 6 – The East Kennet Valley
- Policy CS5 – Infrastructure Requirements and Delivery
- Policy CS8 – Nuclear Installations – AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield
- Policy CS9 – Location and Type of Business Development
- Policy CS11 – Hierarchy of Centres
- Policy CS13 – Transport
- Policy CS14 – Design Principles
- Policy CS15 - Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency
- Policy CS16- Flooding
- Policy CS17 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy CS18 – Green Infrastructure
- Policy CS19 – Historic Environment and Landscape Character

Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2023) (the NPPF)

5.9 The NPPF was published in December 2023 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The following key paragraphs are considered to be of relevance to the determination of this application:

- Paragraphs 7 – 11 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development)
- Paragraphs 38, 39, 47 – 49 (Decision-making)
- Chapter 6 (Building a strong and competitive economy)

- Paragraphs 108, 115 and 117 (Promoting Sustainable Transport)
- Paragraph 123 and 128 (Making effective use of land)
- Paragraphs 131 and 135 (Achieving Well-Designed Place)
- Chapter 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change)
- Paragraphs 180, 181, 182, 186 and 191 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment)
- Chapter 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the historic environment)

The Emerging Local Plan (Review to 2037)

- 5.10 West Berkshire Council is preparing a new Local Plan, the ‘West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2037’.
- 5.11 The Local Development Scheme (January 2023) provides the following anticipated timescales for the adoption of the new Local Plan:
- Submission to Secretary of State – March 2023
 - Examination – July 2023 (subject to Planning Inspectorate)
 - Adoption – September 2024
- 5.12 It is noted that the above timescales for Examination are currently behind that of the LDS. The Local Plan Review was submitted for Independent Examination in March 2023 and is currently awaiting examination dates. The Council have provided responses to the Inspector’s Preliminary Questions, with the latest version dated October 2023 and uploaded to the Examination page on 8th November 2023. The Inspector published their Matters, Issues and Questions on 30th November 2023. Written Statements are requested in February and March 2024.
- 5.13 In December 2023 an Extraordinary Council meeting was called with a proposition to withdraw the Local Plan Review in favour of a new approach which focuses on new developments within existing town and village boundaries. Before the meeting took place the Minister of State for Housing, Planning and Building Safety, Lee Rowley MP, wrote to the Council instructing that the examination continues as planned.
- 5.14 The Local Plan Review is therefore proceeding as per the Inspector’s Matters, Issues and Questions published in November 2023.
- 5.15 Paragraph 48 of the Framework states that ‘local authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:
- the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation , the greater the weight that may be given);

- The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given);
- The degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

5.16 The emerging Local Plan policies referenced below will be attributed some weight during the determination period of this application given the advanced stage of the Plan preparation.

Emerging Local Plan Policies

5.17 The emerging Local Plan includes a number of draft policies that are relevant to the acceptability of these proposals. We have identified the relevant policies below and included a copy of these policies within **Appendix 4** for reference: These policies are as follows:

- Policy SP1 – Spatial Strategy
- Policy SP2 – North Wessex Downs AONB
- Policy SP3 – Settlement Hierarchy
- Policy SP4 - AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield
- Policy SP5 – Responding to Climate Change
- Policy SP6 – Flood Risk
- Policy SP7 – Design Quality
- Policy SP8 – Landscape Character
- Policy SP9 – Historic Environment
- Policy SP10 – Green Infrastructure
- Policy SP11 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy SP20 – Strategic approach to employment land
- Policy SP21 – Sites allocated for employment land
- Policy SP23 – Transport
- Policy SP24 – Infrastructure requirements and delivery
- Policy DM3 – Health and Wellbeing
- Policy DM4 – Building sustainable homes and businesses
- Policy DM5 – Environmental nuisance and pollution control

- Policy DM6 – Water Quality
- Policy DM7 – Water Resources & Waste Water
- Policy DM8 – Air Quality
- Policy DM9 – Conservation Areas
- Policy DM14 – Assets of Archaeological Importance
- Policy DM15 – Trees, woodland and hedgerows
- Policy DM32 – Designated Employment Areas
- Policy DM41 – Digital Infrastructure

5.18 Further detail on the employment need evidence base provided as part of the emerging Local Plan is set out in the following Section of this Statement.

6. Planning Assessment

Approach

- 6.1 The legislative basis for decision making is Section 70(2) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 which requires a local planning authority in determining a planning application to have regard to the development plan insofar as it is relevant and other considerations that are material, and Section 38(6) of the Act.
- 6.2 Other material considerations can be very wide and have a significant influence upon decision-making. However, such considerations are not all of the same weight which is an important distinction given the planning balance that has to be drawn. This Statement deals with the matter of planning balance and weight.
- 6.3 The Framework makes it clear that development plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and that they should be consistent with its policies and kept up to date. Wherever a development plan has no relevant policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, permission should be granted unless, the application of policies in the Framework provides a clear reason for refusal, or any adverse impact of approving the application should significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the Framework as a whole.
- 6.4 On this basis, and having regard to Section 38(6) of the Act, the key issues to be considered in determining the planning application are:
 - A. whether the proposals accord with the development plan when read as a whole, and;
 - B. if not, whether there are any material considerations which indicate that the application should be determined otherwise than in accordance with the plan
 - C. whether the proposals would amount to sustainable development as defined in the Framework
- 6.5 These matters are considered in the following chapters of this Statement and draw upon the technical information and evidence base contained in the key documents supporting the planning application.
- 6.6 This application is put before the Council at a time when there is a significant need to provide for new employment space within West Berkshire as evidenced within the Council's evidence base and recognised within the Regulation 19 version of the Council's new Local Plan.

A) Whether the proposals accord with the development plan when read as a whole

The Principle of Development

6.7 The proposed development site is greenfield and outside of the defined settlement boundary.

6.8 Despite the site's out of settlement location, Policy CS9 (Location and Type of Business Development), Point (a), highlights that in the absence of new employment allocations being identified through the adopted Development Plan, opportunities for employment development exist where the following policy requirements are satisfied:

1. *Compatibility with uses in the areas surrounding the proposals and potential impacts on those uses; and*
2. *Capacity and impact on the road network and access by sustainable modes of transport.*

6.9 The intention had been for a future Site Allocations DPD to consider not only residential allocations but also employment allocations to meet WBC needs over the plan period to 2026. However, to date, only the Housing Sites Allocations DPD has been adopted which does not identify any additional employment sites within the District. As a result a shortfall in plan-led employment land has arisen.

6.10 The supporting text to Policy CS9 identifies that the '*policy seeks to support and build upon West Berkshire's vibrant and successful economy through continued business development in sustainable locations*'. The supporting text further clarifies that '*the location of any B2 and B8 uses should be in areas with good access to major freight route networks, and not conflict with surrounding uses*'. This proposal will achieve this objective.

6.11 The Framework discusses that '*planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors*'² and in this context we discuss the application of the two requirements of Policy CS9 in turn.

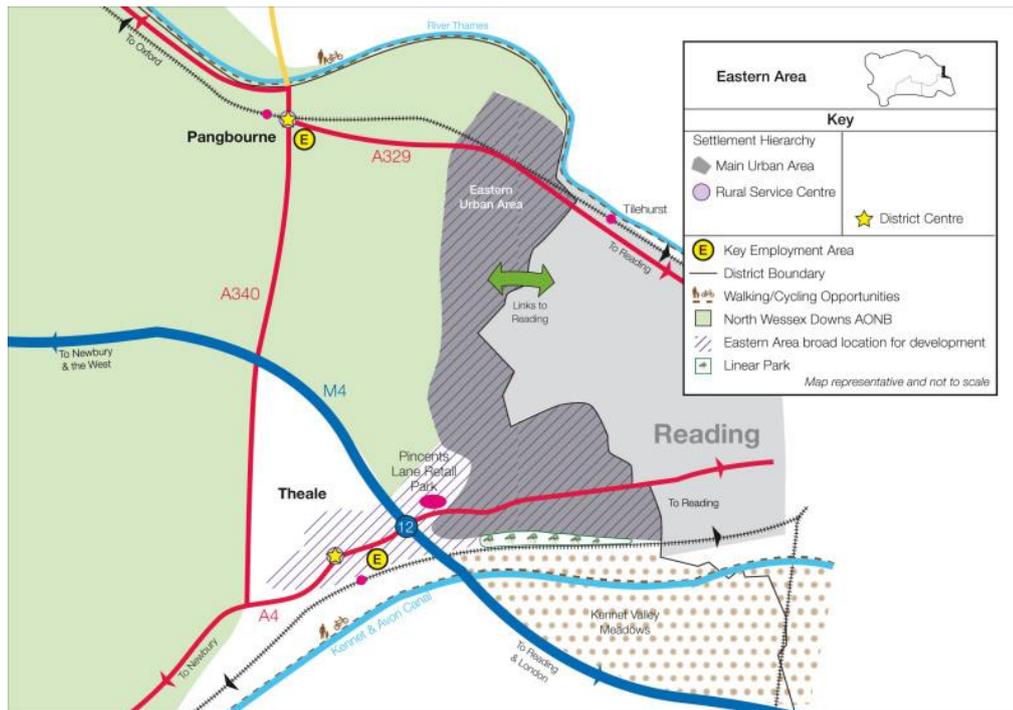
1) Compatibility with uses in the areas surrounding the proposals and potential impacts on those uses

6.1 The adopted Core Strategy identifies Theale as within the Eastern Area and as a Rural Service Centre providing a '*wide range of shops and business*'³ to the local community.

6.2 Paragraph 4.10 of the Core Strategy identifies that the Eastern Area of the District is subject to significant constraints to development although '*a broad location has been defined within this spatial area, encompassing the urban area, Theale and intervening land*'⁴ as shown below:

² Paragraph 86 of the Framework

³ Paragraph 4.35 of the Core Strategy



Source: Core Strategy: Figure 3 – Eastern Area

- 6.3 The Site falls within the area identified as a broad location for development to the west of Junction 12 of the M4. Area Delivery Plan Policy 4 identifies that the intention was for the Site and Allocations Delivery DPD to allocate sites recognising the broad location identified on the Key Diagram above. In the absence of the Site Allocation DPD progressing any employment sites, the site falls outside of any defined settlement boundary as noted above.
- 6.4 The character of the site is considerably influenced by infrastructure arising from the surrounding road network of the M4 and Junction 12, alongside the A4 Bath Road and Theale High Street. It sits adjacent to the strategic road network for West Berkshire and the wider Thames Valley. The M4 terminates the eastern edge of the site, and if permitted, would deliver a robust and permanent edge to the settlement of Theale.
- 6.5 The Site is seen within the context of Arlington Business Park and Theale Industrial Estate directly to the south. This not only demonstrates the attractiveness of the area for such uses, but reinforces the commercial character of this area, building on the LIS and West Berkshire’s acknowledgement that sites around the M4 provide significant opportunities for employment growth to meet the needs of the Thames Valley.
- 6.6 It is appreciated that the Site abuts residential development in the north-western corner of the site and is in close proximity to properties along High Street to the north. Consideration has been given in the evolution of the design to ensure that an appropriate offset is proposed from the Site boundary to address noise and amenity considerations but also to ensure that an appropriate landscape buffer is accommodated to provide an appropriate setting to the proposed development.

6.7 The application material clearly assesses the impact on the proposals on the surrounding uses. As demonstrated, there are no significant effects which highlights the proposals are incompatible with the surrounding area. The proposals comply with point (1) of the Policy CS9 identified above.

(2) Capacity and impact on the road network and access by sustainable modes of transport.

6.8 The supporting Design and Access Statement sets out the proximity of the site to both Theale High Street that provides a range of local shops and facilities alongside within 500m of bus stops and Theale Train Station. The public transport accessibility from the Site is high with access available to the larger settlements of Reading and Theale, and further afield towards London Paddington and Bedwyn.

6.9 It should not be overlooked that the Site benefits from the proximity to residential communities at Theale and Calcot (via the footbridge across the M4) with the proposal providing local job opportunities within walking distance of their homes. In addition, the opportunities for sustainable travel via train or bus are equally optimised through the location of the proposal.

6.10 This planning application is supported by a Transport Statement prepared by David Tucker Associates which considers the capacity and impact on the road network. There have been a number of pre-application discussions with National Highways and West Berkshire Highways to understand the existing capacity of the strategic road network and ensure that appropriate and safe access into the site from Hoad Way can be achieved. The Transport Assessment has concluded that there is theoretical capacity at the junctions. A VISSIM model is being run for the wider area which includes the M4 Junction 12 and nearby A4 junctions.

6.11 The development traffic can be accommodated on the local network and the proposals are in accordance with local and national planning policy.

6.12 The proposals therefore comply with point (2) of Policy CS9.

Summary of Principle of Development

6.13 The proposals comply with the requirements of Policy CS9 and are therefore acceptable in principle. Notwithstanding this, it remains our view that further material considerations also exist which enhance support for the grant of planning permission considered further in this statement

Air Quality

6.14 Paragraph 180 of the Framework and Saved Local Plan Policy OVSC5 requires that new development does not give rise to unacceptable pollution of the environment.

6.15 This application is supported by an Air Quality Assessment prepared by Tetra Tech.

6.16 The report finds that during the:

- **Construction Phase** - site specific mitigation measures detailed within the assessment will be implemented. With these mitigation measures in place, the effects from the construction phase are not predicted to be significant.

- **Operational Phase** - Detailed dispersion modelling of traffic pollutants has been undertaken for the proposed development. An operational year assessment for 2026 traffic emissions has been undertaken to assess the effects of the Proposed Development. The impacts during the operational phase take into account exhaust emissions from additional road traffic generated due to the proposed development.

The long-term (annual) assessment of the effects associated with the proposed development with respect to Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) is determined to be 'negligible'. With respect to PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} exposure, the effect is determined to be 'negligible' at all identified existing sensitive receptor locations. The effect at ecological receptors is not predicted to be significant.

Based on the assessment undertaken and data, methodology and assumptions used within this assessment it is concluded that the site is suitable for the proposed development.

- 6.17 The proposed development fully accords with Paragraph 180 of the Framework and Saved Local Plan Policy OVSC5.

Archaeology

- 6.18 A Desk-based Archaeology Report has been prepared by TVAS which sets out that a scheme of evaluation will need to be submitted to the Council although this could be secured through an appropriately worded planning condition. A WSI for a geoarchaeological borehole study has been prepared in August 2023. This has been agreed with the Council's Archaeological advisor. The archaeological evaluation can be secured via planning condition.

AWE

- 6.19 The application site falls within the land use planning zone identified within Core Strategy Policy CS8 (Nuclear Installations – AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield).
- 6.20 A consultation response on the previous application 21/02029/COMIND from the Emergency Planning Officer confirmed that there were no adverse comments based on the previous scheme which comprised a higher quantum of development. It is not anticipated that this view will change as a result of these revised proposals for the same use class albeit with a smaller unit size.

Design

- 6.21 Core Strategy Policy CS14 (Design Principles) requires that new development demonstrates high quality and sustainable design relating to both appearance and function. There is a requirement for the design and layout to be informed by the wider context not just the immediate area.
- 6.22 To assist in demonstrating compliance, the scheme has been assessed against the policy requirements within the supporting Design and Access Statement.
- 6.23 The Design and Access Statement outlines that given the content of the site, a key objective is to ensure new buildings and associated landscaping are designed

sympathetically and with an appropriate scale. A creative approach is intended for the redevelopment of this site.

- 6.24 The intention is that the primary 'street' elevation that will address Hoad Way is broken up with tone, mass, colour and texture – providing a contemporary feel and contributing to an active street scene, with offices addressing Hoad Way. Existing soft landscaping and trees around the perimeter of the site will be retained wherever possible and reinforced with new landscaping where practical. This will maintain the existing street scene as well as soften the visual impact of the proposed buildings.
- 6.25 The consultation responses received during the previously withdrawn application provided considerations where key design elements could be improved. These comprise:
- Existing vegetation to be retained to increase screening of the development and continue wildlife movement.
 - New buildings designed with an appropriate scale and density.
 - Pedestrian connection between the site and High Street.
- 6.26 The proposals are considered to accord with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy CS14 (Design Principles).

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 6.27 The Framework, at paragraph 185, discusses the need to minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity. Core Strategy Policy CS17 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) seeks to ensure assets are conserved and enhanced through the proposed development.
- 6.28 The application is supported by a suite of ecological information, including a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, bat surveys, badger surveys and reptiles surveys prepared by Middlemarch. This has been supplemented by a Walkover Survey to ensure the findings remain relevant and a Biodiversity Metric Assessment.
- 6.29 The bat survey found only a small amount of bat activity on site, and no bat roosts present in the trees on site. Therefore, the proposed works are not expected to impact roosting bats and the proposed works can proceed as scheduled.
- 6.30 Badger surveys were undertaken in 2019 and further surveys undertaken in October 2023. The 2019 survey found no signs of badger or badger setts within the site and the immediate surrounding landscape. The October 2023 badger survey identified three potential badger setts, none of which appeared to be in current use. The sett monitoring visits found no evidence of badger activity.
- 6.31 Due to the lack of evidence of badger activity, it is unlikely that the proposed works will impact badgers at this site. Appropriate safeguards are proposed to be secured through a Construction Ecological Management Plan, to be secured via planning condition. In addition, if no work has commenced within 12-18 months of the date of the survey, it is recommended that updated badger surveys are undertaken.

6.32 Reptile surveys were undertaken in 2019 and further surveys undertaken in October 2023. No reptiles were found therefore these pose no constraint to the proposed works.

6.33 The Walkover Survey recommended the following additional items to be conditioned on any permission granted to be undertaken prior to commencement of any works:

- An up-to-date Bat Roost Assessment should be undertaken with emergence and dawn re-entry surveys potentially required
- A up-to-date Badger Survey is recommended (as above, this has been undertaken);
- A up-to-date Reptile Survey is recommended (as above, this has been undertaken);
- Biodiversity Net Gain Plan: Opportunities to create or enhance, habitats should be sought at an early stage of the design process, alongside avoiding, mitigating or compensating for those already present, to ensure that the requisite net gain can be achieved. Where this is not possible on site, offsite compensation solution may be required to meet the net gain objective.

A robust landscaping strategy is submitted with the application.

- Construction Ecological Management Plan: to be secured via planning condition.
- Landscape and Ecology Management Plan: to be secured via planning condition.

6.34 The proposals will deliver a gain of 1.21 BU in hedgerows. Although opportunities to deliver biodiversity benefits regarding habitats have been maximised on site, the proposals result in a loss of 21.96 BU of habitats. In accordance with Policy CS17, compensation via a commuted sum will be required to mitigate the loss in habitats. The Applicant will enter in to discussions with the authority during determination to agree the extent of this contribution.

6.35 The proposed development is considered in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS17 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity)

Electricity Pylons

6.36 The Applicant has engaged with National Grid prior to the submission of the earlier planning application 21/02029/COMIND application to clarify any development restrictions associated with building in proximity to the pylon and overhead cables. National Grid confirmed that at a maximum swing is to be sited a minimum of 5.3m from the conductor. Combined with the span of the conductor itself, this established a stand-off of circa 17m which has been incorporated within the layout supporting this application.

Energy and Sustainability

6.37 Regarding energy efficiency, an Energy Statement has been prepared by Couchperrywilkes to address Core Strategy policy CS15 (Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency).

- 6.38 The Statement sets out that sets out the approach to incorporating low energy design principles within the scheme and the plant efficiency and control measures that are proposed.
- 6.39 The proposed development proposed to include the following measures to reduce the development CO2 emissions by a further 27% compared to that required by Building Regulations:
- Unit 1 – 1,390m² (c. 296kWp) roof-mounted Solar Photovoltaic Panel installation; and Air Source Heat Pump installation as part of the base build.
 - Unit 2 – 1,310m² (c. 278kWp) roof-mounted Solar Photovoltaic Panel installation (c. 20.0% CO2 reduction); and Air Source Heat Pump installation as part of the base build.
- 6.40 To quantify the positive impact of the proposed sustainability measures, a BREEAM Design and Procurement pre-assessment has been undertaken by a qualified BREEAM Accredited Professional (AP) against the New Construction criteria. The example unit used in the assessment achieves a score in excess of 70% which translates into an overall BREEAM rating of 'Excellent'.
- 6.41 The proposed development accords with Core Strategy policy CS15 (Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency).

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 6.42 In addition, CS15 requires that a Flood Risk Assessment is prepared alongside a drainage strategy to demonstrate that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the flow of fluvial flood water, surface water or obstruct the run-off of water. Equally the policy requires that appropriate measures are incorporated to manage flooding with long term maintenance proposed.
- 6.43 A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been prepared by BWB in line with policy CS15 discusses whilst the site is identified as within Flood Zone 2, further modelling indicates that the site is within Flood Zone 1. The FRA includes proposed mitigation to address flood sources as follows:
- Fluvial Flooding – It is recommended that the finished floor levels are raised to 45.91m, 300mm above the 1 in 100-year + 35% climate change event;
 - Groundwater, Sewer and Pluvial Flooding – the elevation of the finished floor levels will mitigate against flood risk, with pluvial and overland flows away from the built development towards the nearest drainage point;
- 6.44 Further In line with the sequential approach identified within Core Strategy Policy CS15 (Flooding) and paragraph 167 of the Framework, a Flood Risk Sequential Assessment has been prepared and supports this application.
- 6.45 With regard to drainage, a Sustainable Drainage Statement has been prepared by BWB to support the application. A surface and foul water layout is included within Appendix

11 of the Statement. The maintenance of the SuDS features is likely to be retained by a management company.

Ground Conditions and Contamination

6.46 The Framework at paragraph 189 requires that to contribute and to enhance the natural environment there is a need to remediate any contaminated land and address any land instability associated with a proposal. This application is supported by a Phase 1 and 2 Geo-environmental assessment prepared by BWB. The Assessment discusses that ground investigations have been completed including boreholes, puts and two preliminary rounds of ground gas monitoring.

6.47 The investigations confirmed that there was no visual or olfactory evidence of contamination with no identified contaminants above the health screening levels at the site. Ground gas protecting measures are not indicated to be required at the site.

Heritage

6.48 The Framework, at paragraph 198, discusses that applicants are required to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. Whilst referenced within Area Delivery Plan Policy 4 (Eastern Area), a Conservation Area Appraisal has yet to be prepared for Theale High Street.

6.49 However, Core Strategy Policy CS19 (Historic Environment and Landscape Character) requires that new development considers the impact of development on conservation areas and existing heritage assets and their setting.

6.50 This application is supported by a Heritage Statement prepared by Turley to support the application. The following key changes from a built heritage perspective have been made from the previously withdrawn application:

- The number of units has been reduced from three to two.
- The built form has been pulled back from the eastern edge of the Site maintaining more of the Site as open landscape.
- The offsets between proposed built form and the northern and western boundaries have been increased.
- The maximum height of built form has been reduced from 18m down to 13m across the Site to increase the visual containment of built form from the wider landscape and from within the conservation area.
- The treatment of the proposed elevations has been reviewed and measures incorporated to break down the overall perception of massing of built form in identified views.
- Additional tree and hedgerow planting is provided within the layout to reinforce the landscape structure.

6.51 The impact assessment contained at Section 4 of the Heritage Statement confirms that the Proposed Development will cause less than substantial harm to the heritage

significance of the Theale High Street / Blossom Lane Conservation Area, as a result of development in part of its setting. The direct impacts of the proposed development, the formation of a vehicular access into the Site and associated landscaping, will preserve the character or appearance of the conservation area, satisfying the requirements of the relevant duty of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990/29.

- 6.52 In accordance with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and paragraphs of 199, 200, 202 and 206 of the Framework, this less than substantial harm must be accorded considerable weight and importance when considered against the public benefits delivered by the Proposed Development, as part of the overall planning balance. As a result the public benefits of the proposals are considered separately under Section 7 of this Statement, and the planning balance undertaken in Section 9.

Landscape and Visual Impact

- 6.53 The Core Strategy Policy CS19 (Historic Environment and Landscape Character) requires that new development proposals assess local landscape character and demonstrates the sensitivity of an areas to change and seek to ensure that the new development is appropriate to its context. This is particularly relevant given the location of the North Wessex Downs AONB to the north-east of the site that predominately extends eastwards across the M4.
- 6.54 The application is supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment prepared by Turley.
- 6.55 The baseline appraisal identified that the Site is located within LCA: RO1 Kennet Lower River with Open Water in the West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment. The area is described as comprising the broad open valley of the River Kennet with land use dominated by gravel pit lakes, industry, and transport infrastructure. As such, it is a modern landscape, much changed by transport corridors and gravel extraction. The identified valued features and qualities of LCA: RO1 that are of relevance to the Site include the historic village of Theale. Key guidance identified includes the requirement to conserve and enhance hedgerows, woodland strips and remaining areas of pasture. These features are described as valued semi-natural habitats which also provide visual and audial screening of transport corridors. The guidance also states that new development should not detract from the integrity of heritage features and opportunities to further screen the M4 should be sought. It also states that the distinction and sense of separation between the settlements of Theale and Calcot should be maintained and the role of the landscape as a setting to the character of those individual settlements should be respected. No value or sensitivity for the LCA is provided in the study. Based on the methodology used for this LVA it was assessed as being of Medium Value, with a Medium-Low Susceptibility to change and an overall Medium-Low Sensitivity to employment development.
- 6.56 In September 2021, Landscape Capacity Assessments were carried out for potential housing and employment sites which included an assessment of the Site under Reference: THE8 (Land off Hoad Way). This assessment concluded that the Site was not suitable for employment development due to the potential for development to compromise the setting of Theale and its separate identity from Calcot. Turley Landscape

and VIA reviewed the capacity assessment within an advice note submitted as part of representations which is set out in **Appendix 5**. This concluded that the WBC assessment of both the Visual and Landscape Sensitivity of the Site have been overstated and that the Landscape Capacity of the Site has been undervalued.

- 6.57 Further analysis of the landscape character of the Site and its landscape features has been carried out in this LVA. This concluded that the Site is of Medium-Ordinary Landscape Value which is lower than the wider LCA: RO1 due to the limited landscape features of value within the Site itself and due to areas that contribute to the scenic and recreational value of the LCA being located away from the Site. As no existing development is present in the Site, which forms part of an open landscape to the settlement edge of Theale it has Medium susceptibility to change which is higher than the wider LCA. The context of the Site in terms of the surrounding road infrastructure and built form reduced the susceptibility. The overall sensitivity of the Site is Medium.
- 6.58 Visually, there are limited publicly accessible locations from which the Site can be seen; this is due to the predominantly flat topography, the relatively high level of tree cover including mature tree belts associated with the M4 and the presence of existing built form in the surrounding area. Visibility of the Site is primarily from roads and public footpaths as they pass immediately adjacent to the Site. The views across the Site have some value encompassing an area of open landscape, but contain limited distinctive features and are generally unremarkable. Electricity pylons, the surrounding road network and filtered views of commercial development are detracting elements in views.
- 6.59 The Proposed Development would introduce two 13m high logistics buildings into the centre of the Site. The design of the scheme has been informed by this LVA and the consultation responses received from West Berkshire Council for a previously withdrawn application under Ref: 21/02029/COMIND, including that from the appointed landscape consultant.
- 6.60 The report sets out how the proposals have responded to landscape and design comments raised in the previously withdrawn application:
- The number of units has been reduced from three to two.
 - The built form has been pulled back from the eastern edge of the Site maintaining more of the Site as open landscape and pulling built form further away from the boundary of the AONB.
 - The offsets between proposed built form and the northern and western boundaries have been increased.
 - The maximum height of built form has been reduced from 18m down to 13m across the Site in order to increase the containment of built form from the wider landscape and from within the conservation area.
 - The elevation treatment has been reviewed and measures incorporated to break down the overall massing of built form in views.
 - Additional tree and hedgerow planting is provided within the layout to reinforce the landscape structure.

- A footpath is proposed across the Site to provide access between Hoad Way and the High Street, connecting with the Ikea retail park to the northeast and the wider public right of way network within the AONB.
- 6.61 The Site would become more urban in character and would extend the settlement area of Theale towards the M4. This would introduce logistics development into the setting of the town which would have an adverse effect. The Proposed Development would be experienced in the context of other similar scale employment areas to the south of Bath Road and adjacent road infrastructure. The width of open landscape between Theale and Calcot would reduce. However, a clear sense of separation between these settlement areas would be maintained by the vegetated M4 motorway corridor. Proposed planting within areas of maintained open landscape to the east of the Site would reinforce the visual separation by infilling existing gaps in roadside vegetation. The historic character of the High Street to the centre of Theale would be maintained due to the glimpsed views of new built form not detracting from the intimate, enclosed character of the conservation area. Built form would become visible along parts of the historic coaching route and approach to the town. This would not be prominent due to the height of the built form, materiality and the proposed and retained vegetation along this route. There would be adverse effects on an area of landscape that falls within the setting of the AONB. However, due to the containment of the Proposed Development from the AONB and the separation of the Site from the wider AONB by the M4 motorway corridor, the Proposed Development would not harm the special qualities and scenic beauty of the AONB.
- 6.62 At year 1, the implementation of the Proposed Development would change the character and appearance of some close proximity views. This includes some open views from Hoad Way, the M4/Bath Road junction and from localised parts of the High Street to the eastern edge of the Theale High Street / Blossom Lane Conservation Area. From the North Wessex Downs AONB, the Proposed Development would be screened by the retained mature vegetation around the Site perimeter and the built form and changes in topography surrounding the Site. Where visible, the Proposed Development would introduce large scale built form that contrasts with the residential context to parts of the Site. However, the Proposed Development would be experienced in the context of the busy motorway and nearby employment uses. The open qualities of the Site itself would reduce. The built form would typically sit below distant tree lines and would not detract from any high quality views. By year 15, the proposed planting would have established and would provide increased containment to the proposed built form within the Site.
- 6.63 In summary, the Proposed Development would introduce employment development into an area of landscape on the edge of Theale, changing the character of the landscape within the Site and some local views. However, effects on the wider landscape and more distant views would be very limited.
- 6.64 The LVIA demonstrates that the proposed development is in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS19.

Minerals

- 6.65 A Sand and Gravel Recovery Report has been prepared by BWB to support this application. Paragraph 17 of the Framework requires that best use needs to be made of minerals that can be worked to secure their long-term conservation.
- 6.66 The Sand and Gravel Recovery Report has been prepared alongside the Phase 1 and Phase 2 Geo-environmental Survey above. The Report concludes that based on the ground investigations undertaken, that whilst deposits of sand and gravel existing, the deposit is likely to be economically and environmentally unviable due to:
- Limited suitable/ easily accessible resource thickness;
 - High groundwater levels and saturation of the gravel deposit;
 - Dewatering and stability issues, including associated costs; and
 - Vehicular movements and resultant environmental impact.
- 6.67 On the above basis, it is considered that the deposit would be of little commercial interest in line with the Replacement Minerals Local Plan (RMLP) Saved Policy 2.

Noise

- 6.68 With regard to noise, Saved Local Plan Policy OVSC5 and 6 and paragraph 180 of the Framework require that new development does not give rise to unacceptable pollution to the environment including noise.
- 6.69 A Noise Assessment prepared by Tetra Tech supports this planning application. The report addresses the comments received on the withdrawn application, and as a result the scheme has been redesigned with these comments in mind, as yards associated with the units are orientated away from the nearest residential receptors and assessed accordingly.
- 6.70 The conclusion of the noise intrusion assessment and noise level change assessment in the Noise Report require that mitigation in the form of a 2m high acoustic barrier is needed at the western boundary of the service yard for Unit 1 with approximate length of 50m, to address the noise impact from HGV unloading noise during the night-time.
- 6.71 The extracted figure below from the Noise Report indicates the proposed acoustic fence location:

Figure 6.1: Indicative Barrier Location



- 6.72 With the inclusion of additional mitigation, internal noise levels from all sources of potential noise associated with the proposed development (including HGV movements, loading/unloading events, car parking and refrigeration plant) have been assessed at the closest sensitive receptors with windows open, where a reduction from a partially open window of 15 dB has been used and with windows closed where a reduction of 30 dB has been used.
- 6.73 When the differences between the 'existing' and 'proposed' ambient noise climate scenarios are compared, the contribution from the proposed development fall within the Lowest Observed Effect Level during the both the daytime and night-time periods (< +3 dB change). The development will have a low impact in relation to noise.
- 6.74 In accordance with paragraphs 191(b), 193 and 194 of the Framework, considering the existing use of the site and wider development site, it is not considered that any existing businesses wanting to develop would be restricted by the proposals.
- 6.75 The proposals therefore fully accord with Saved Local Plan Policy OVSC5 and 6.

Transport and Parking

- 6.76 The Framework requires that transport issues associated with new development is considered at an early stage. This relates to considering the potential impacts on the

transport network with a focus on significant development being in location that are or can be made sustainable⁵.

- 6.77 As part this submission, a Transport Assessment has been submitted alongside a Framework Travel Plan to support the justification for the proposals. This follows the reports submitted for the earlier application 21/02029/COMIND, on which Highways England (formerly the Highways Agency at the point of consultation) the Local Highways Authority were consulted on. Highways England had no objection to the scheme. The Local Highways Authority had comments, which as per Section 3 of this Statement, have been picked up in this application.
- 6.78 The Transport Assessment finds that the percentage increase on any single movement will be a maximum of 2% during peak periods. This level of traffic is well within daily variation of background flow.
- 6.79 The content of the material has been assessed against Core Strategy Policy CS13 (Transport) which sets out a series of requirements for new development where a transport impact will be generated. To demonstrate compliance:

Requirement of Policy CS13	Application Proposals
Reduce the need to travel (Saved Local Plan policy TRANS 1. which requires that the needs of new development should be addressed through different modes of transport including walking and cycling.)	The site is located within 150m of existing bus stops that provide half hourly services between Reading and Newbury. In addition, Theale Station is within 900m of the site with services between Newbury and London Paddington.
Improve and promote opportunities for healthy and safe travel	A Framework Travel Plan has been prepared and supports the submission.
Improve travel choice and facilitate sustainable travel particularly within, between and to main urban areas and rural services centres	The Framework Travel Plan sets out the Framework Travel Plan Initiatives for walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing will seek to raise awareness of the environmental and health problems connected with transport. This can be found at paragraph 6.7 of the Framework Travel Plan.
Demonstrate good access to key services and facilities	The site is within walking distance of Theale High Street that provides a range of local services. The site is also within walking distance of residential development either to the east at Calcot or within Theale itself.

⁵ Paragraph 102 of the Framework

Minimise the impact of all forms of travel on the environment and help tackle climate change	The proposal incorporates cycle parking in excess of the required standards with parking provision below maximum standards to encourage use of sustainable forms of transport. The Travel Plan further seeks to facilitate a greater modal shift to non-car modes with a target of reducing single occupancy car trips by 10% over five years. In addition, lift sharing will be encouraged.
Mitigate the impact on the local transport network and the strategic road network	The Transport Statement discusses the traffic generation associated with delivering B1c, B2, B8 floorspace. In addition, assessments have been undertaken of the principle junctions around the site including the M4.
Prepare Transport Assessments/ Statements and Travel Plans to support planning proposals in accordance with national guidance.	A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan support this submission.

- 6.80 The proposal fully accords with the requirements of Policy CS13.
- 6.81 The level of parking for a development should be based on the availability of alternative methods of transport and in line with the Council's maximum parking standards.
- 6.82 The Transport Statement considers that appropriate parking can be accommodated on-site for both car and cycle parking.
- 6.83 With regard to vehicle access into the site, a new access into the site is proposed from Hoad Way in the form of a priority junction 115m north of the A4 Bath Road roundabout. Access details are been provided under DTA Drawings 20168-01c which demonstrates that a visibility splay of 2.4m by 50m to the south and 2.4m x 48m to the north. Section 4 of the Assessment discusses how the proposed access is acceptable.
- 6.84 It further demonstrates that the proposed development will not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe as required under paragraph 113 of the Framework.

Summary

- 6.85 The proposed development has been assessed against the provisions of the Development Plan. The principle of the development is acceptable when considered against Policy CS9.
- 6.86 The effect upon the environment, local amenity and the living conditions and quality of life of adjacent residents will be acceptable, in design, construction and technical terms.

Where there are some residual impacts, these are limited to landscape and heritage, both of which are manageable.

B) Other Materials Considerations

Emerging West Berkshire Local Plan – Draft Policy EMP6

6.87 The Regulation 18 version of draft Local Plan at Policy SP21 (Sites allocated for economic development) allocated the application site under reference EMP6 “*Land north of Arlington Business Park, Theale East Business Centre*” for “*the delivery of new employment floorspace, as a new Designated Employment Area: Theale East Business Centre*” for up to 20,000sqm of floorspace.

6.88 In the Regulation 19 version of the Plan the omitted the site as a draft employment allocation due to landscape impact.

6.89 The Local Plan Review has since been submitted for examination and we would note that the submission version set out at paragraphs 7.8 and 7.9 that:

“7.8 The provision of industrial space has been consistently strong over recent years, and both trend-based projections and economic forecasts indicate growth in industrial space. The ELR 2022 therefore recommends a minimum industrial requirement of 91,109sqm or 23 ha of land to 2039 to meet identified needs.

7.9 Policy SP21 sets out a number of site allocations for industrial land, each of which has a site specific policy (Policy ESA 1-6) setting out development parameters. Whilst these allocations go some way towards meeting the identified need there remains a shortfall. As with the office requirement the Council has positively sought opportunities to meet the industrial requirement however, the District is heavily constrained and this has resulted in a lack of suitable available sites. Given the identified shortfall in supply the Council will commit to seek to address this matter again at the first five year review of the Local Plan.”

6.90 In summary the Council has accepted that the allocations proposed in its emerging LPR will not meet the need for employment land in full, with an unmet need for 22,328sqm of industrial space alone. The Inspector’s Preliminary Questions dated September 2023 acknowledges the shortfall of employment floorspace due to a lack of suitable available sites. PQ41 queries to the Council how much net additional industrial and warehouse floorspace will be provided across allocated sites, designated employment sites and other existing employment sites, and what the expected shortfall is. The Council confirmed in their response dated October 2023 that the shortfall is 32,709sqm.

6.91 This position is now amplified by the Inspectors Matters, Issues and Questions, where it is clear that:

- The Council will have a greater shortfall, owing to the increase in the plan period (2039 to 2041) which will increase the minimum requirement for industrial floorspace; and (Question 2.4); and
- Q11.6 queries whether “Are all sites that are available and suitable for industrial and/or storage and distribution development allocated in the Plan?”.

It is plain, owing to the submission of this proposal and the fact the site was previously allocated in the Regulation 18 version of the Local Plan, that the Council have not exhausted all deliverable options.

6.92 This is a material consideration of substantial weight, which weighs in support of the proposals.

West Berkshire's Employment Land Requirements

6.93 An Employment Land Review has been prepared in support of the planning application. The key findings of which are:

- There is a stated ambition and precedent for economic growth in this area, expressed both by the Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership. Berkshire is viewed by the LEP as a 'powerhouse' that has benefited from its locational advantages and driven growth in the national economy as a result. Critically, however, the LEP has long identified that the county is facing a continued shortage of employment land and its competitive advantage is consequently diminishing. The LEP clearly expects partners such as West Berkshire Council to take responsibility for accelerating and sustaining economic growth to deliver wide-ranging benefits, and the Council does ostensibly remain 'open for business' with a continued prioritisation of economic development to withstand unforeseen challenges, compete with other areas and generate benefits for residents. It has recognised in this context that the shortage of employment land has been a challenge that needs to be addressed to attract businesses to West Berkshire;
- National planning policy requires the Council to proactively encourage sustainable economic growth, addressing potential barriers to investment with flexibility to respond to unanticipated changes in economic circumstances. It expects local authorities to regularly review the extent to which their supply of employment land is meeting businesses' needs, and both review and update planning policies where necessary every five years;
- The Council is revising its approach to employment land provision, informed by up-to-date evidence, but has explicitly acknowledged that the allocations proposed in its emerging Local Plan Review will not meet needs in full. This need was found to have grown in the Council's latest update to its evidence base, primarily due to a shrinking pipeline. While it has expressed an intention to revisit the situation through a future review of the Local Plan, the Council appears to remain open to the prospect of resolving the shortfall – of some 22,300sqm – sooner through commercial development on unallocated sites in suitable locations, where these accord with other policies;
- The shift in the Council's approach appears to be necessary, when recognising that existing policies – set out in the Core Strategy – have led to there being an extremely limited supply of employment space in West Berkshire. CoStar data indicates that the availability of industrial and logistics space in West Berkshire has markedly fallen over the last decade to a level far below that needed to provide a healthy or optimal level of churn, and this has been the case for a number of years. Available units offer only around 1,350sqm of space on

average, whereas the two units proposed would more than triple this on average to fill a clear gap in the market; and

- The shortage of available commercial floorspace appears likely to have a disproportionate impact on the logistics sector. There is a notable shortage of the large premises typically required by logistics operators throughout West Berkshire, and the increasingly dated policy adopted by the Council – pending the progress of the emerging Local Plan Review – fails to account for the specific needs of a sector that has rapidly changed in response to industry demands and consumer trends, including a long-term growth in online retail that was amplified during the pandemic.

6.94 Overall, the employment need in West Berkshire is a material consideration of substantial weight in the determination of this planning application.

Economic Benefits

6.95 The application is supported by Economic Benefits Statement, which seeks to quantify the potential economic benefits to the local authority area of west Berkshire and wider South east region estimated to be generated from the delivery of the proposed development.

6.96 In summary the development is expected to generate the following:

- Construction Phase
 - £9.8 million investment in the construction phase
 - 45 gross full-time equivalent jobs (comprising 30 net direct job and 15 net indirect / induced jobs)
 - £6.5 million productivity boost
- Operational Phase
 - 150 jobs supporting on site (comprising 100 net direct jobs and 50 net indirect / induced jobs)
 - £11.8 million productivity boost
 - £500,000 per annum of business rates

6.97 The proposed development will clearly deliver significant economic benefits of a substantial nature.

C. Whether the proposals would amount to sustainable development as defined in the Framework

6.98 This section provides an outline of how the proposed development constitutes sustainable development as defined by the Framework and the weight that should be attached to it.

- 6.99 The Framework identifies at paragraph 7 the purpose of planning and of the Framework as one of achieving sustainable development. Sustainable development is aligned with growth and it indicates that such development should go ahead without delay.
- 6.100 Taken as a whole, the Framework constitutes the Government’s view of what sustainable development means in practice for the planning system. The Framework re-states the statutory test in section 38(6) of the Act.
- 6.101 The sustainability credentials of the proposals are a material consideration. The assessment of the proposals as sustainable development in accordance with the Framework as a whole is therefore relevant, significant and of considerable weight given the priority attached to it.
- 6.102 The Framework provides guiding principles for the assessment of sustainable development including economic, social and environmental discussions.
- 6.103 These three objectives are elaborated in paragraph 8, which notes:
- **economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure
 - **social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number of range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being
 - **environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 6.104 These objectives should not be taken in isolation and decisions need to take local circumstances into account so they respond to different opportunities for sustainable development in different areas. There is not a fixed UK standard and therefore each proposed development has to be individually assessed in its own context. A summary is set out below against each objective.

Table 7.5: Sustainability Objectives Summary

Sustainable Development Dimension	Comment
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal responds to this positively as the application site has been identified as suitable for industrial uses within the Employment Land review (2020) and would

generate employment in the local area. It would meet the requirement of ensuring “*sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity.*”

- The proposed development will provide a range of employment opportunities through the delivery of 106,454.73 sq ft of flexible Class E (light industrial), B2 and/or B8.
- The proposed development provides employment opportunities to local residents and will support local businesses and services within Theale.
- The proposals will provide for the creation of direct and indirect jobs and expenditure associated with construction, as set out above and in the supporting Economic Benefits Assessment.
- In the longer term, the level of disposable income in the local area will also be increased with some commensurate growth in the demand for goods and services.
- As a consequence of the proposed development, WBC will receive additional business rates towards local infrastructure.

Social

- The provision of a scheme that can respond to surrounding uses and is well-related to the existing settlement.
- Development in a sustainable location close to a range of key local services including a primary school, food store and post office.
- Development with easy access to a range of sustainable and active modes of travel.
- The provision of a well-designed scheme responding to the character of the area.

Environmental

- The provision of employment opportunities within walking and cycling distance of key facilities/services and public transport links
 - A commitment to mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change as demonstrated through the application material.
 - Development designed to minimise the impact of the development on the site habitats and wildlife including retention of the sites existing hedgerows and trees (where possible), as well as a range of mitigation measures to improve the sites biodiversity.
 - Measures to manage waste during both construction and occupation to reduce waste and maximise recycling (to be ultimately conditioned on any planning consent).
 - The proposals deliver a BREEAM Excellent scheme
-

-
- Energy efficiency measures included in order to reduce the development's CO2 emissions by a further 27%:
-

6.105 Taking the three objectives together the sustainable development status of the proposals is demonstrated. This carries substantial weight in the determination of the planning application.

7. Public Benefits Statement

Introduction

- 7.1 This Section is intended to identify the key public benefits (economic, social and environmental) for the application proposals and should be read alongside the rest of this Statement and the Design and Access Statement.
- 7.2 The Applicant is committed to delivering a high quality development that contributes towards the delivery of employment opportunities in the District. This Statement draws together all of the benefits arising from the proposals and provides a consolidated statement setting them out for ease and clarity.
- 7.3 It has been prepared to assist the Local Planning Authority in determining the application, in particular given the Heritage Statement's conclusions that the proposals would lead to 'less than substantial harm' (at the lower end of less than substantial).
- 7.4 Consideration has been given to paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) which states that:

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

- 7.5 It is considered that the site provides substantial public benefits that will outweigh the minimal harm, and that the application should accordingly be approved. The PPG considers 'what is meant by public benefits' and sets out that:

'public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress as described in the NPPF. Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits.'

- 7.6 In view of the requirement set out within the PPG, the schemes public benefits can be summarised as follows:

Economic Benefits

- 7.7 The Council's own evidence identifies a significant shortfall in industrial floorspace within West Berkshire and the wider Thames Valley. Driving the demand across all sectors within the Thames Valley is the high level of connectivity of this area to the strategic road network, Heathrow and London and has been evidenced by the number of domestic and international business that have located to the region.
- 7.8 The site has the potential to be a high economic value to the area building upon the established commercial uses to the south of the A4 and taking advantage of the strategic

location along the M4 providing easy accessibility to the wider Thames Valley and further afield. It is critical that the proposals are high quality and aimed at meeting the identified unmet needs from the industry. This will position the site as the premier new site in the Thames Valley given the limited opportunities available and allow West Berkshire to be at the forefront of driving economic growth for the region. It will provide premium floorspace that will attract global and national companies and those sub-sectors which are reflective of the fast-evolving nature of retail and industrial sectors.

7.9 The proximity to Theale and Calcot on foot, with locations such as Reading and Newbury accessible by train or bus provides a local and accessible workforce providing both employment opportunities for the local economy.

7.10 In summary the development is expected to generate the following economic benefits:

- Construction Phase
 - £9.8 million investment in the construction phase
 - 45 gross full-time equivalent jobs (comprising 30 net direct job and 15 net indirect / induced jobs)
 - £6.5 million productivity boost
- Operational Phase
 - 150 jobs supporting on site (comprising 100 net direct jobs and 50 net indirect / induced jobs)
 - £11.8 million productivity boost
 - £500,000 per annum of business rates

7.11 The infrastructure and facilities to accelerate employment growth can be accommodated at the site through its sustainable location, proximity to an existing workforce and easy connectivity to the strategic road network.

Social Benefits

7.12 The proposed development will deliver additional local jobs to those with Theale and the West Berkshire in close proximity to where people live.

7.13 The parameter plans allow for enhanced overlooking from the site to High Street to the north to activate surveillance on the public footpath running eastwards across the M4.

7.14 The Design and Access Statement demonstrates that a well-designed development could be delivered through creating well-designed workspaces for employees and production to enhance efficiency and productivity.

Environmental Benefits

7.15 Whilst this is an outline planning application, there are opportunities to deliver environmental benefits including:

- A 27% reduction in carbon emissions;
- A net gain in biodiversity across the site according with the requirements of the Framework through the provision of commuted sums;
- The retention of the majority of existing trees along the site boundaries with opportunities for additional landscaping to be delivered at reserved matters stage; and
- Provision of cycle stands to encourage sustainable travel to site.

Summary

7.16 The Proposed Development will deliver substantial public benefits to West Berkshire as summarised above. Many of these benefits are locationally specific and can only be delivered on the Site, which occupies a unique position in proximity to the strategic road network.

8. Draft Heads of Terms

- 8.1 The requirements of Core Strategy Policy CS5 (Infrastructure and Delivery) states that the Council will work to identify requirements for infrastructure provision and services for new development.
- 8.2 These contributions will be agreed through the determination of the application with Officers.

9. Planning Balance

Approach

- 9.1 The application is to be determined in compliance with the development plan (as a whole) unless material considerations indicate otherwise. As set out in section 6.
- 9.2 It follows that there is a hierarchy / cascade of decisions necessary which address the question below:
- Where the proposed accord with the development plan when read as a whole;
 - What are the other considerations that needs to be weighed in the balance; and
 - What is the planning balance conclusion of development plan compliance and other material considerations.

Non-compliance/ harms

Landscape and Visual Impact

- 9.3 It is acknowledged that the Proposed Development would introduce employment development into an area of landscape on the edge of Theale, changing the character of the landscape within the Site and some local views. Whilst effects on the wider landscape and more distant views would be very limited.
- 9.4 It is inevitable that there will be a degree of landscape change as a result of the proposals on a greenfield parcel of land. The harm is not out of the ordinary.

Heritage

- 9.5 The impact assessment contained at Section 4 of the Heritage Statement confirms that the Proposed Development will cause less than substantial harm to the heritage significance of the Theale High Street / Blossom Lane Conservation Area.
- 9.6 In accordance with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and paragraphs of 199, 200, 202 and 206 of the Framework, this less than substantial harm must be accorded considerable weight and importance when considered against the public benefits delivered by the Proposed Development, as part of the overall planning balance.
- 9.7 A detailed public benefits case has already been set out under Section 7 of this Statement.

Other material considerations – positive impacts and benefits

- 9.8 Section 7 identifies the benefits of the scheme, which are summarised below:

The Need for Employment Space

- 9.9 The Council has explicitly acknowledged that the allocations proposed in its emerging Local Plan Review will not meet needs in full. There is therefore an unmet need of employment space within the Borough.
- 9.10 This need was found to have grown in the Council's latest update to its evidence base, primarily due to a shrinking pipeline. It will have also been worsened by the Councils intention to increase the plan period within the emerging Local Plan.
- 9.11 Further evidence is set out within the supporting Employment Land Review.
- 9.12 The unmet employment need is a material consideration of substantial weight in the decision making process.

Other Benefits

- 9.13 The proposals offer the following benefits:
- Local investment during both the construction and operation phase as set out in the supporting Economic Benefits Assessment.
 - The site has the potential to be a high economic value to the area building upon the established commercial uses to the south of the A4 and taking advantage of the strategic location along the M4 providing easy accessibility to the wider Thames Valley and further afield. It will provide premium floorspace that will attract global and national companies and those sub-sectors which are reflective of the fast-evolving nature of retail and industrial sectors.
 - The prime location of the site and accessibility by public transport means it is a genuine opportunity to provide employment to a local workforce and contribute to the local economy.
 - The lack of suitable alternatives within West Berkshire
- 9.14 These benefits are also of substantial weight in the decision making process.

Conclusion on Planning Balance

- 9.15 The Applicant submits that the substantial benefits and other material considerations clearly outweigh the harm to landscape and visual impact and heritage assets from the proposed development to justify a grant of planning permission.

10. Summary and Conclusions

10.1 Planning Permission is sought in respect of the proposal:

“Full planning application for the construction of 2 employment units for flexible uses within Class E (light industrial), B2 and/or B8 of the Use Classes Order (including ancillary office provision) with associated enabling works, access, parking and landscaping.”

10.2 This Planning Statement has demonstrated that the proposed development satisfies policy CP9 of the Core Strategy addressing the significant unmet employment need both within the West Berkshire and the wider Thames Valley.

10.3 As demonstrated within this Planning Statement and the Design and Access Statement which is also submitted in support of the application, the proposed development will provide a sustainable development comprising an employment space which sensitively responds to the surrounding context of the Site.

10.4 The Applicant has entered into pre-application discussions with the local planning authority in addition to discussions during determination of the earlier withdrawn applications, which have helped to shape the final proposals presented in this application.

10.5 The range of studies that have been undertaken to support this planning application are all summarised in this Statement and the accompanying reports. These demonstrate that a high quality development will be achieved at the Site, and that there are no environmental, technical or other reasons why planning permission should not be granted in this case.

10.6 It has been demonstrated that this proposal and the Site is suitable for development. Furthermore, the submission of this application demonstrates that the site is available. There are no reasons why the development could not be delivered or substantial progress made with its delivery within five years from the grant of permission and the site is therefore achievable. This proposal makes a significant contribution towards the employment supply position in the Borough and this should be afforded substantial weight in the determination of this application.

10.7 A recommendation for approval is therefore justified.

Appendix 1: Application Material

- Planning Application Forms and Certificates of Ownership, prepared by Turley
- Community Infrastructure Levy Form 1: CIL Additional Information

Application Drawings (for approval)

- Site Location Plan – Dwg No: 131000 Rev. P2
- Site Plan - Dwg No: 131001 Rev. P6
- Warehouse Layout Unit 1 and Unit 2 – Dwg. No. 131100 Rev. P6
- Unit 1 Office Layout – Dwg No: 131101 Rev. P6
- Unit 2 Office Layout - Dwg No: 131102 Rev. P6
- Roof Plan – Dwg No: 131103 Rev. P4
- Sections – Dwg. No. 131200 Rev. P2
- Elevations – Dwg. No. 131300 Rev. P8
- GIA Plans – Dwg. No. 920100 Rev. P4
- GEA Plans - Dwg. No. 920101 Rev. P2
- Illustrative Landscape Masterplan – Dwg. No. 01 Rev. B
- Soft Landscaping Plan – Dwg. No. 02 Rev. C
- Plant Schedule – Dwg. No. 03 Rev. A
- Hard Landscaping Plan – Dwg. No. 04 Rev. B
- Proposed Drainage – Dwg. No. THR-BWB-GEN-XX-DR-D-500 S8 Rev. P02
- Proposed Drainage Exceedance – Dwg. No. THR-BWB-GEN-XX-DR-D-501 S8 Rev. P01
- Proposed Earthworks - Dwg. No. THR-BWB-GEN-XX-DR-C-0631 S8 Rev. P04
- Proposed Levels - Dwg. No. THR-BWB-GEN-XX-DR-C-0603 S8 Rev. P04
- Drainage Details - Dwg. No. THR-BWB-GEN-XX-DR-C-0560 S8 Rev. P03
- Drainage Details Sheet 2 - Dwg. No. THR-BWB-GEN-XX-DR-C-0561 S8 Rev. P04

Application Documentation

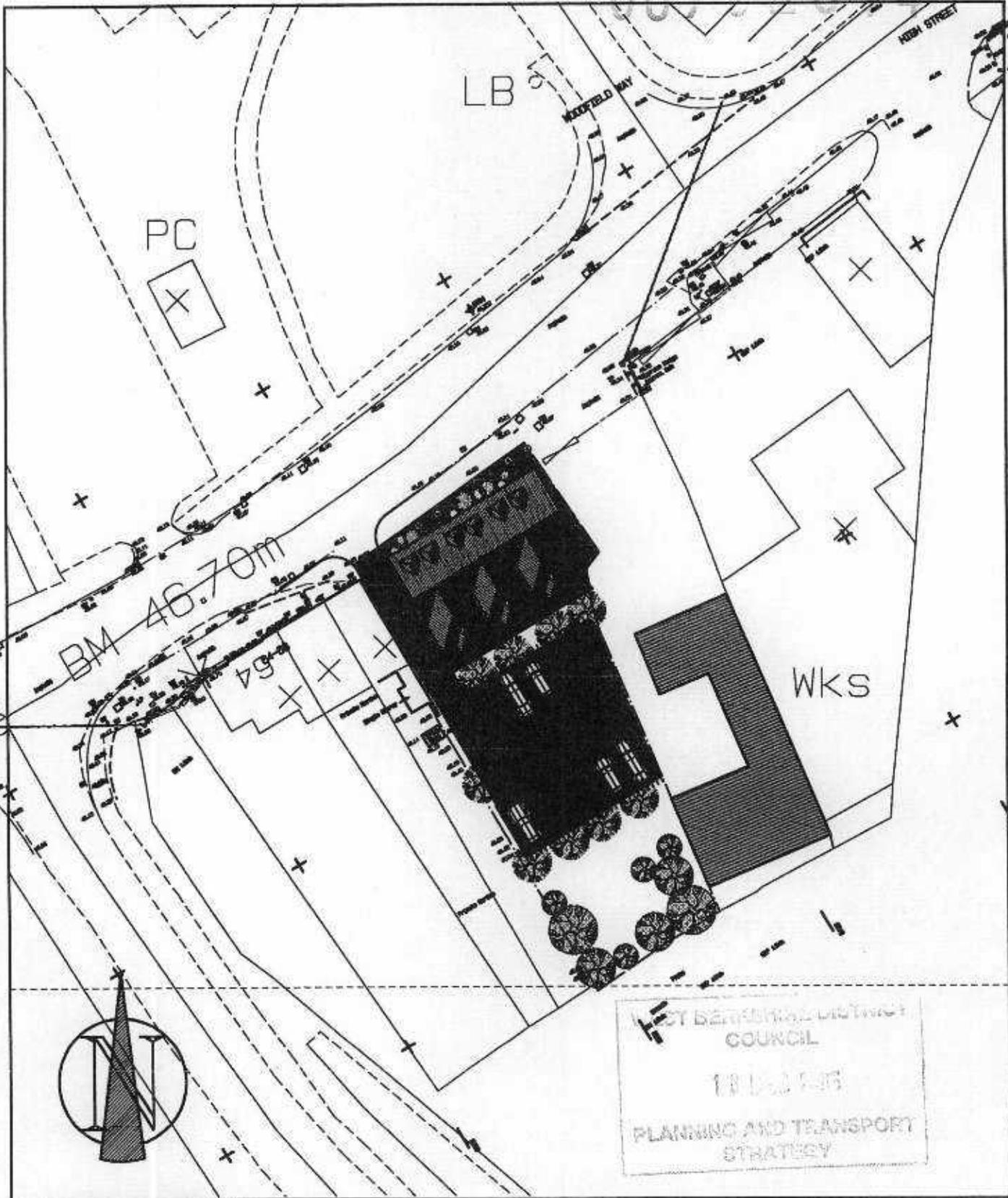
- Planning Statement, prepared by Turley
- Design and Access Statement prepared by SGP;
- Flood Risk Sequential Assessment, prepared by Turley
- Transport Statement and Framework Travel Plan prepared by David Tucker Associates;
- Employment Land Assessment, prepared by Turley;
- Economic Benefits Summary Statement, prepared by Turley;
- Air Quality Assessment, prepared by Tetra Tech;
- Noise Assessment, prepared by Tetra Tech;
- Landscape and Visual Assessment, prepared by Turley;
- Heritage Statement prepared by Turley;
- Sustainability Statement prepared by CPW;
- Supporting Ecological Information
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment prepared by Middlemarch Environmental (2019);
 - Dusk Emergence and Dawn Re-entry Bat surveys, Badger Survey, Reptile Survey prepared by Middlemarch Environmental;
 - Walkover Survey prepared by Middlemarch Environmental (to confirm the result of previous ecological work or make recommendations) (2021);
 - Ecological Walkover Survey (2023); and
 - Biodiversity Metric Assessment; prepared by Middlemarch Environmental (2023)
- Preliminary Arboricultural Assessment and Arboricultural Impact Assessment, prepared by Middlemarch Environmental;
- Flood Risk Assessment, prepared by BWB Consulting;
- Sustainable Drainage Statement, prepared by BWB Consulting
- Sand and Gravel Recovery Report prepared by BWB;
- Phase 1 and 2 Geo-environmental Assessment prepared by BWB Consulting;

- Archaeology Desk-based Assessment, prepared by TVAS; and
- Written Scheme of Investigation, prepared by University of Winchester Geoaerhaeology.

Appendix 2: Relevant Planning History Decisions

Application Ref 06/02814/FULD

06/02/04




 WEST BERKSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
 18 DEC 2005
 PLANNING AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY



CUTLER ARCHITECTS

REGISTERED ARCHITECTS
 43 ST. MARY'S STREET WALLINGFORD
 OXFORDSHIRE OX11 1EL
 mail@cutlerarch.com www.cutlerarch.com
 FAX: 01491 836104

01491 838130

SITE BLOCK PLAN
 Proposed

1:500

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
 70-72 HIGH STREET, THEALE, BERKSHIRE.

592 | B/11 |

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

Cutler Architects - Mr R Cutler
43 St Mary's Street
Wallingford
Oxfordshire
OX10 0EU

Applicant:
Horstonbridge Thames Valley
Limited - Mr D Griffith

PART I - DETAILS OF APPLICATION

Date of Application

13th December 2006

Application No.

06/02814/FULD

THE PROPOSAL AND LOCATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT:

Residential development of 9 No. flats.

70 High Street, Theale, Reading, Berkshire

PART II - DECISION

In pursuance of its powers under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, West Berkshire District Council GRANTS planning permission for the development referred to in Part I in accordance with the submitted application form and plans, subject to the following condition(s):-

- 1 The development shall be started within three years from the date of this permission and implemented strictly in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to review the desirability of the development against Policy DP5 of the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016 and Policy OVS2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 - 2006 should it not be started within a reasonable time.

- 2 The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with amended drawing title numbers 592/L/11, 592/B/11, 16 Rev C, 15 Rev C, 13 Rev B, 12 Rev D, 14 Rev A received on the 18th December 2006 and amended drawing 11 Rev E received on 29th January 2007 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the submitted details assessed against Policies DP1, DP4, DP5 and EN4 of the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001 - 2016 and OVS2, ENV33 and HSG1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 - 2006.

- 3 Prior to the commencement of development, samples of the materials to be used in the proposed development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This condition shall apply irrespective of any indications as to the details that may have been submitted with the application, and shall where necessary include the submission of samples of glass, plastic and mortar materials. Thereafter the materials used in the development shall be in accordance with the approved samples.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy DP5 of the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001 - 2016 and Policy OVS2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 - 2006.

- 4 Prior to the commencement of development a scheme of landscaping for the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be landscaped in accordance with the approved scheme which shall ensure:-
- (a) the retention of selected existing trees and shrubs on the site;
 - (b) the protection of the selected existing trees and shrubs on the site during the development of the site;
 - (c) the carrying out of any earth moving operations concurrently with the carrying out of the building and other works;
 - (d) completion of the scheme during the planting season next following the completion of the building(s), or such other date as may be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority;
 - (e) the maintenance of the landscaped areas for a period of five years or until established, whichever may be the longer. Any trees or shrubs removed, or which in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, are dying, being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within five years of planting, shall be replaced by trees or shrubs of a similar size and species to those originally required to be planted.

Reason: To ensure the implementation of a satisfactory scheme of landscaping which will in due course improve the quality of the development and soften its impact on the area in accordance with policies DP5 and EN1 of the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001 - 2016 and policies OVS2 and OVS3 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 - 2006.

- 5 Prior to the commencement of development details of the external lighting to be used in the areas around the proposed building(s) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter no building shall be occupied until the external lighting has been installed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: The Local Planning Authority wish to be satisfied that these details are satisfactory, having regard to the setting of the development in accordance with Policy OVS2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006.

- 6 Prior to the commencement of development a scheme for the means of treatment of

the hard surfaced areas of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No building(s) shall be occupied before the hard surfaced areas have been constructed in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity, in accordance with Policy OVS.2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 - 2006 and Policy DP5 of the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001 - 2016.

- 7 Prior to the commencement of building or other operations on site, a scheme of fencing and other means of enclosure to be erected on the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and no building(s) shall be occupied before the fencing and other means of enclosure have been erected to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: The fencing and other means of enclosure are essential elements in the detailed design of this development and the application is not accompanied by sufficient details to enable the Local Planning Authority to give proper consideration to these matters in accordance with policy DP5 of the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001 - 2016 and policy OVS2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 - 2006.

- 8 No development of the site shall be brought into use until visibility splays of 90m metres by 2m metres have been provided at the access. The visibility splays shall, thereafter, be kept free of all obstructions to visibility above a height of 0.6 metres above carriageway level.

Reason: In the interest of road safety in accordance with Policies DP5 and T4 of the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016 and Policy OVS 2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006.

- 9 Prior to the development being brought into use the vehicle parking spaces shall be surfaced, marked out and properly provided in accordance with the approved drawing(s). The spaces shall, thereafter, be kept available for parking (of private motor cars and/or light goods vehicles) at all times. Vehicles shall only be parked within those marked spaces.

Reason: To regularise the use of the available parking area and to reduce the likelihood of roadside parking, which would be a danger to road users in accordance with Policies DP5 and T4 of the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016 and Policies TRANS 1 and OVS 2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006.

- 10 Prior to the commencement of development, details to show a temporary parking area and turning space to be provided and maintained concurrently with the development of the site, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such approved parking area and turning space shall at the commencement of development be provided and thereafter retained in accordance with the approved details until the development has been completed and shall during that time be used for parking by all employees, contractors and operatives or other visitors during all periods that they are working at or visiting the site.

Reason: In accordance with Policy OVS 2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 to ensure the development is provided with adequate parking facilities during the construction period, in order to minimise the incidence of off site parking in the locality which could cause danger to other road users or long term inconvenience to

local residents.

- 11 Prior to the commencement of development, details of the cycle parking and storage space to be provided within the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the cycle parking and storage space shall be provided prior to the development being brought into use in accordance with the approved details and retained for this purpose at all times..

Reason: To ensure that there is adequate and safe cycle storage space within the site in accordance with Policies DP5 and T4 of the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016 and Policy TRANS 4 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006.

- 12 Prior to the commencement of development details of floor levels in relation to existing and proposed ground levels shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved levels.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory relationship between the proposed building and the adjacent land in accordance with Policy OVS2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006.

The decision to grant Planning Permission has been taken having regard to the policies and proposals in the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (WBDLP), the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016 (BSP), the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006, the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 (incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001) and to all other relevant material considerations, including Government guidance, supplementary planning guidance notes; and in particular guidance notes and policies:

PPS1 PPG3 PPG15 SPDP1 SPDP4 SPDP5 SPEN4 OVS1 OVS2 OVS3 ENV33 HSG1

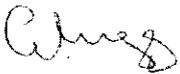
The reasoning above is only intended as a summary. If you require further information on this decision please contact the Council via the Customer Call Centre on 01635 519111.

INFORMATIVE:

1. The applicant's attention is drawn to the fact that above conditions must be complied with in full before any work commences on site, failure to do so may result in enforcement action being instigated.
2. The above Permission may contain pre-conditions, which require specific matters to be approved by the Local Planning Authority before a specified stage in the development occurs. For example, "*Prior to commencement of development written details of the means of enclosure will be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority*". This means that a lawful commencement of the approved development cannot be made until the particular requirements of the pre-condition(s) have been met.
3. The Highways (Planning) Manager, West Berkshire District Council, Highways and Engineering, Council Offices, Faraday Road, Newbury RG14 2AF, telephone 01635 519169, should be contacted to agree the access construction details and to grant a licence before any work is carried out within the highway. A formal application should be made, allowing at least four (4) weeks notice, to obtain details of underground services on the applicants behalf.

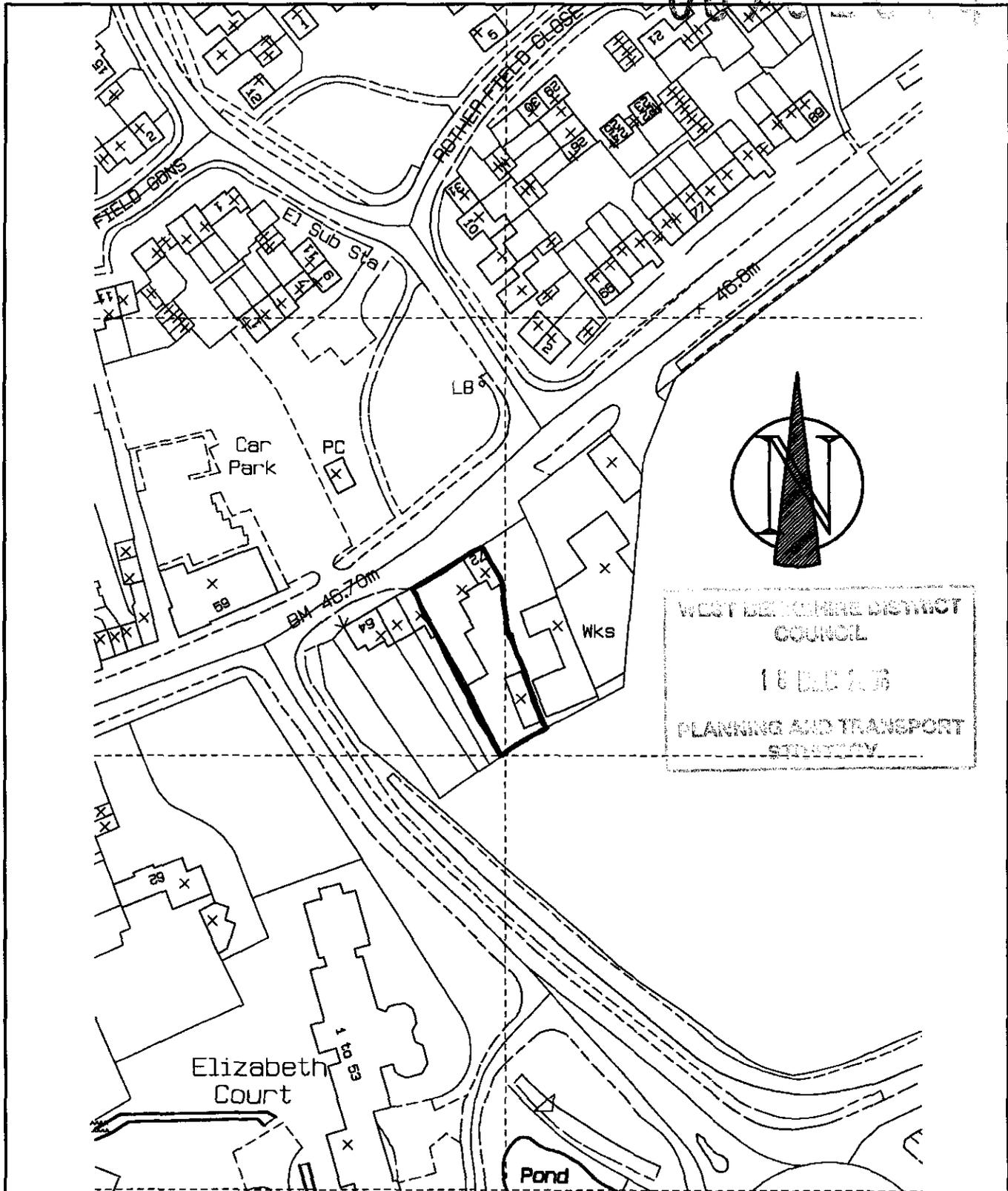
- 4 The attention of the applicant is drawn to the Berkshire Act, 1986, Part II, Clause 9, which enables the Highway Authority to recover the costs of repairing damage to the footway, cycleway or grass verge, arising during building operations.
- 5 The attention of the applicant is drawn to the Highways Act 1980, which enables the Highway Authority to recover expenses due to extraordinary traffic.
- 6 Any temporary signing required as part of this development is to be agreed in writing with the Highway Authority, West Berkshire Council, Highways and Engineering, Council Offices, Faraday Road, Newbury, RG14 2AF.
- 7 This Decision Notice must be read in conjunction with the terms of a Legal Agreement of the 13th February 2007. You are advised to ensure that you have all the necessary documents before development starts on site.

Decision Date :- 13th February 2007



Gary Lugg
Head of Planning

06/02/04



WEST BERKSHIRE DISTRICT
 COUNCIL
 18 DEC 2006
 PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
 STRATEGY

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**CUTLER
 ARCHITECTS**
 Chartered Architects
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 OXFORDSHIRE OX10 0EU
 mail@cutlerarch.com www.cutlerarch.com
 FAX: 01491 836504

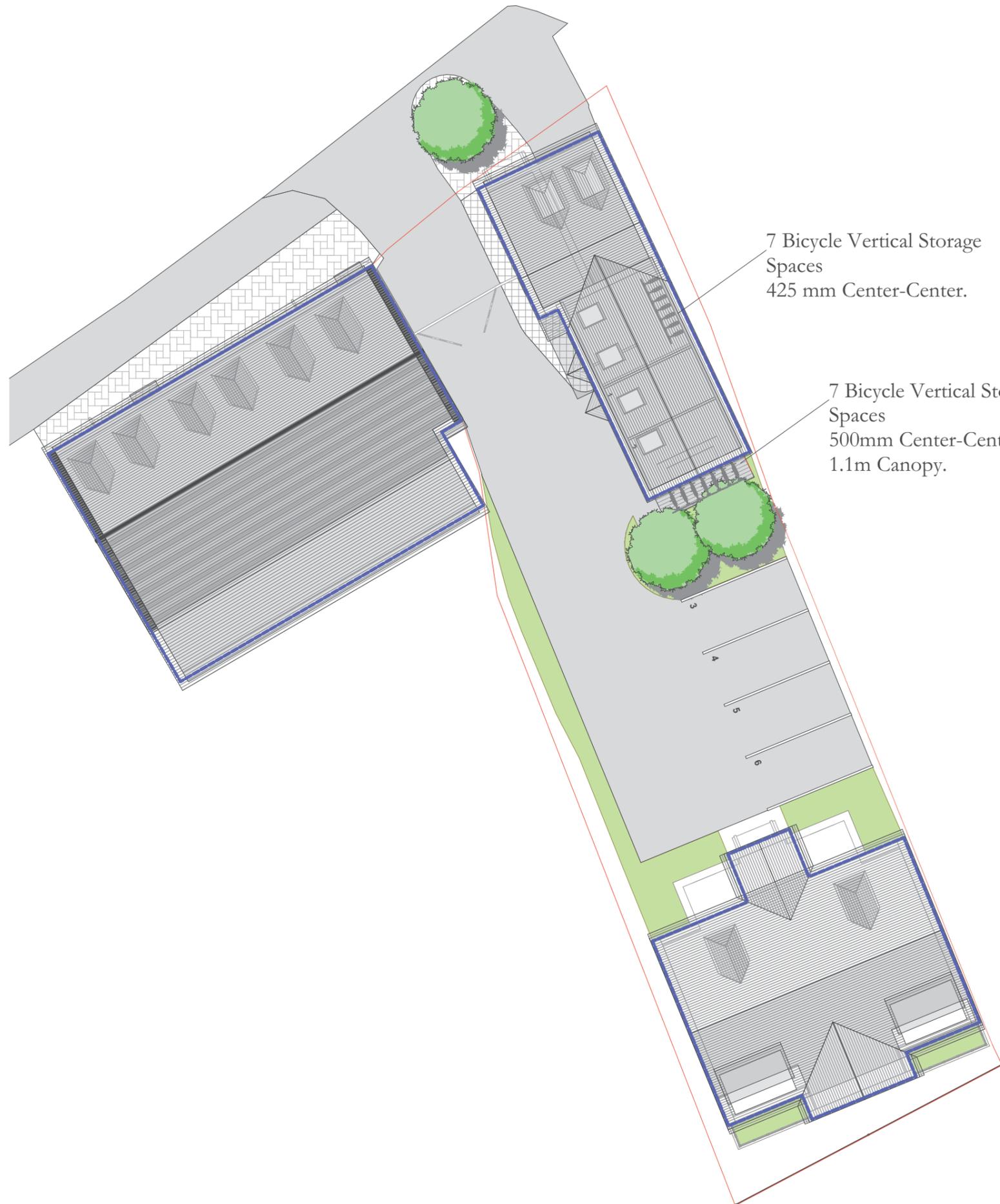
SITE LOCATION PLAN
 Existing

1:1250

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
 70-72 HIGH STREET, THEALE, BERKSHIRE.

592	L01
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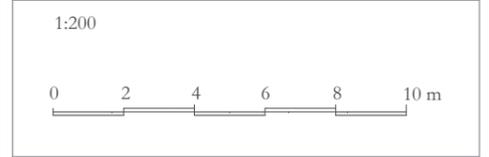
Application Ref 18/00454/FULD



© This drawing remains the property of The Keen Partnership and shall not be copied without prior written consent.

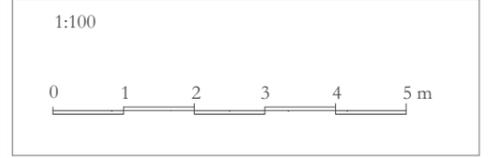
All dimensions to be checked on site and any discrepancies to be reported before work commences.

Notes:



Amendment to 14 Bicycle spaces.
Josta Wall Rack Mount installed as per manufacturer's specification.

Rev A - 28.09.16 - Cycle Spaces increased to 14. KB



THE
KEEN
PARTNERSHIP

The Courtyard
Edinburgh Road
Reading
RG30 2UA

Tel: 0118 9510855

Fax: 0118 951866

Email: info@keenpartnership.co.uk

Client:

Mr Martin Clark

Job Title:

Kremer, 74-76 High Street,
Theale, Berkshire RG7 5AR

Drawing Title:

Proposed Block Plan

Status:

Planning

Date Drawn:

28/09/2016

Drawn By:

SFR

Scale:

1:200@A3

Job No:

8629

Drg No:

PL-03

Rev:

A

Chris Dent Architect
Chris Dent
5 North Avenue
Exeter
EX1 2DU

Applicant:
Martin Clark

PART I - DETAILS OF APPLICATION

Date of Application

21st February 2018

Application No.

18/00454/FULD

THE PROPOSAL AND LOCATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT:

Demolition of existing workshops and erection of 6 no flats, consisting of two blocks -front and back, with 6 parking spaces and associated landscaping. The two developments, i.e. development at the front with two self contained flats (2x2 bedrooms), and development at the rear with four self-contained flats (4x2 bedrooms).

74 - 76 High Street, Theale, Reading, Berkshire RG7 5AR

PART II - DECISION

In pursuance of its powers under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, West Berkshire District Council GRANTS planning permission for the development referred to in Part I in accordance with the submitted application form and plans, subject to the following condition(s):-

1. The development hereby approved shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. The development of the six apartments hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with drawing numbers PL01 A, PL03 A, PL04, PL05, PL06 A and PL07 registered 15 March 2018.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. No development of the approved dwellings shall commence until a schedule of all external materials to be used in the approved development has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the dwellings shall be constructed in accordance with the approved schedule.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in the Theale High Street conservation area, in accordance with the NPPF and Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Core Strategy (2006-2026) 2012.

4. No approved dwelling shall be occupied until a parking plan has been submitted and approved under a formal discharge of conditions application. The approved dwellings shall not be occupied until the parking spaces have been surfaced and marked out in accordance with the approved plan. The parking spaces shall be retained for the parking of private motor cars thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the site is provided with sufficient parking in accordance with the NPPF, Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Core Strategy (2006-2026) 2012 and Policy P1 of the West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document 2017.

5. No dwelling shall be occupied until details of cycle parking to be provided on the site have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. No dwelling shall be occupied until the cycle parking has been provided in accordance with the approved details. The cycle store shall thereafter be kept free and retained on the site for the purposes of parking of bicycles.

Reason: In order to secure sufficient cycle parking to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport in accordance with the NPPF and Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Core Strategy (2006-2026) 2012.

6. No development shall take place until a scheme of surface water drainage has been submitted and approved under a formal discharge of conditions application made for this purpose. The scheme shall incorporate sustainable drainage principles to deal with surface water run-off from the roof of the dwellings hereby permitted and within the application site. The dwelling hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until the scheme of surface water drainage has been implemented in accordance with the approved details. The approved method of surface water drainage shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that surface water will be managed in a sustainable manner. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2018), Policy CS16 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design - Part 4 Sustainable Design Techniques (June 2006).

7. No dwelling shall be occupied until the refuse and recycling facilities have been provided in accordance with the approved drawings and these facilities shall be retained for the purpose of providing refuse and recycling storage.

Reason: To ensure that there is adequate and safe refuse/recycling facilities within the site. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2018), Policies CS13 and CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), and Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006).

8. Unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority, development other than that required to be carried out as part of an approved scheme of remediation must not commence until conditions 1 to 4 have been complied with. If unexpected contamination is found after development has begun, development must be halted on that part of the site affected by the unexpected contamination to the extent specified by the Local Planning Authority in writing until condition 4 has been complied with in relation to that contamination.

A. Site Characterisation:

An investigation and risk assessment, in addition to any assessment provided with the planning application, must be completed in accordance with a scheme to assess the nature and extent of any contamination on the site, whether or not it originates on the site. The contents of the scheme are subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken by competent persons and a written report of the findings must be produced. The written report is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The report of the findings must include:

(i) a survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination;

(ii) an assessment of the potential risks to:

- Human health,
- Property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and service lines and pipes,
- Adjoining land,
- Groundwaters and surface waters,
- Ecological systems,
- Archeological sites and ancient monuments;

(iii) an appraisal of remedial options, and proposal of the preferred option(s).

This must be conducted in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11'.

B. Submission of Remediation Scheme:

A detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historical environment must be prepared, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme must include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, timetable of works and site management procedures. The scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.

C. Implementation of Approved Remediation Scheme:

The approved remediation scheme must be carried out in accordance with its terms prior to the commencement of development other than that required to carry out remediation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority must be given two weeks written notification of commencement of the remediation scheme works.

Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

D. Reporting of Unexpected Contamination:

In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of part A of this condition, and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared in accordance with the requirements of part B of this condition, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with part C of this condition.

If required:

E. Long Term Monitoring and Maintenance

A monitoring and maintenance scheme to include monitoring the long-term effectiveness of the proposed remediation over a period to be agreed with LPA, and the provision of reports on the same must be prepared, both of which are subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of the measures identified in that scheme and when the remediation objectives have been achieved, reports that demonstrate the effectiveness of the monitoring and maintenance carried out must be produced, and submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

This must be conducted in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11'.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to

ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors, in accordance with the NPPF and Policy OVS5 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan (1991-2006) Saved Policies 2007.

9. No demolition of the existing buildings on the site or development of the approved apartments shall take place until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted and approved under a formal discharge of conditions application. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Construction Method Statement. The Construction Method Statement shall provide for:

- (a) The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors
- (b) Delivery, loading and unloading of plant and materials
- (c) Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development
- (d) Wheel washing facilities
- (e) Measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction
- (f) A scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works

Reason: The site is located adjacent to land in an existing agricultural use that generates traffic flow into Purley Village and past the access to existing residential properties, and where construction activities might have a detrimental impact on existing traffic flow and the existing agricultural use if not appropriately controlled. The proposed works might also result in high levels of dust and mud arising from the development which would impact detrimentally on highway safety without appropriate measures for their control in place. This condition is imposed in order to safeguard the amenity of land uses and occupiers surrounding the site and in the interests of highway safety, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2018), Policies CS5, CS13 and CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Policy TRANS 1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

10. Prior to the commencement of development, details of a scheme of works, for protecting the occupiers of the development from externally generated noise including traffic, shall be submitted and approved under a formal discharge of conditions application. No dwelling shall be occupied until the scheme of works is completed.

Reason: In order to protect the amenities of proposed residents/occupiers of the development in accordance with the NPPF, Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Core Strategy (2006-2026) 2012 and Policies OVS5 and OVS6 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan (1991-2006) Saved Policies 2007.

11. The hours of work for all contractors, site operatives and other persons employed on the site for the duration of the site development shall be limited to:

7.30 am to 6.00 p.m. on Mondays to Fridays 8.30 am to 1.00 p.m. on Saturdays and NO work shall be carried out on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of neighbouring occupiers in accordance with the NPPF and Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Core Strategy (2006-2026) 2012.

The decision to grant Planning Permission has been taken having regard to the policies and proposals in the National Planning Policy Framework, South East Plan 2006-2026, West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (WBDLP) Saved Policies 2007, the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire, adopted 1998, the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 (incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001) and to all other relevant material considerations, including Government guidance, Supplementary Planning Document; and in particular guidance notes and policies:

OVS5, OVS6, TRANS1, ADPP1, ADPP4, CS1, CS4, CS6, CS9, CS13, CS14, CS16, CS19, C1, P1

The reasoning above is only intended as a summary. If you require further information on this decision please contact the Council via the Customer Call Centre on 01635 519111.

INFORMATIVE:

1. The applicant's attention is drawn to the fact that above conditions must be complied with in full before any work commences on site, failure to do so may result in enforcement action being instigated.
2. The above Permission may contain pre-conditions, which require specific matters to be approved by the Local Planning Authority before a specified stage in the development occurs. For example, "*Prior to commencement of development written details of the means of enclosure will be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority*". This means that a lawful commencement of the approved development cannot be made until the particular requirements of the pre-condition(s) have been met. A fee is required for an application to discharge conditions.
3. For further information regarding the discharge of the conditions or any other matters relating to the decision, please contact the **Customer Call Centre** on: 01635 519111
4. The development hereby approved results in a requirement to make payments to the Council as part of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) procedure. A Liability Notice setting out further details, and including the amount of CIL payable will be sent out separately from this Decision Notice. You are advised to read the Liability Notice and ensure that a Commencement Notice is submitted to the authority prior to the commencement of the development. Failure to submit the Commencement Notice will result in the loss of any exemptions claimed, and the loss of any right to pay by instalments, and additional costs to you in the form of surcharges. For further details see the website at www.westberks.gov.uk/cil
5. This decision has been made in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development having regard to Development Plan policies and available guidance to secure high quality appropriate development which improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.
6. The attention of the applicant is drawn to the Berkshire Act, 1986, Part II, Clause 9, which enables the Highway Authority to recover the costs of repairing damage to the footway, cycleway or grass verge, arising during building operations.
7. This Decision Notice must be read in conjunction with the terms of a Legal Agreement of the 6th August 2018. You are advised to ensure that you have all the necessary documents before development starts on site.

Decision Date :- 6th August 2018



Gary Lugg
Head of Development and Planning

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

Notification to be sent to an applicant when a local planning authority refuse planning permission or grant it subject to conditions

Appeals to the Secretary of State

- If you are aggrieved by the decision of your local planning authority to refuse permission for the proposed development or to grant it subject to conditions, then you can appeal to the Secretary of State under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- If you want to appeal against the local planning authority's decision then you must do so within 6 months of the date of this notice.
- Appeals must be made using a form which you can get from the Planning Inspectorate at Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6PN or online using the Planning Portal at www.planningportal.co.uk.
- The Secretary of State can allow a longer period for giving notice of an appeal, but he will not normally be prepared to use this power unless there are special circumstances which excuse the delay in giving notice of appeal.
- The Secretary of State need not consider an appeal if it seems to him that the local planning authority could not have granted planning permission for the proposed development or could not have granted it without the conditions they imposed, having regard to the statutory requirements, to the provisions of any development order and to any directions given under a development order.
- In practice, the Secretary of State does not refuse to consider appeals solely because the local planning authority based their decision on a direction given by him.

Purchase Notices

- If either the local planning authority or the Secretary of State refuses permission to develop land or grants it subject to conditions, the owner may claim that he can neither put the land to a reasonably beneficial use in its existing state nor render the land capable of a reasonably beneficial use by the carrying out of any development which has been or would be permitted.
- In these circumstances, the owner may serve a purchase notice on the Council in whose area the land is situated. This notice will require the Council to purchase his interest in the land in accordance with the provisions of Part VI of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Application Ref 18/02791/FULD

Davis Planning
Neil Davis
19 Woodlands Avenue
WOKINGHAM
RG41 3HL

Applicant:
H Foster 1875 Ltd

PART I - DETAILS OF APPLICATION

Date of Application

18th October 2018

Application No.

18/02791/FULD

THE PROPOSAL AND LOCATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT:

Redevelopment of site to provide 9 apartments.

Stuart House, High Street, Theale, Reading Berkshire RG7 5AR

PART II - DECISION

In pursuance of its powers under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, West Berkshire District Council GRANTS planning permission for the development referred to in Part I in accordance with the submitted application form and plans, subject to the following condition(s):-

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following documents:

Documents received 18 October 2018

- a) Application form
- b) Environmental Report
- c) Design and access statement
- d) Proposed elevations
- e) proposed front and side elevations
- f) proposed rear and side elevations
- g) proposed ground floor plan
- h) proposed first floor plan

- i) proposed second floor plan
- j) proposed roof plan

Document received 14 November 2018

- a) amended block plan with bin store

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning

- 4. No development shall take place until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The statement shall provide for:
 - a. The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors
 - b. Loading and unloading of plant and materials
 - c. Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development
 - d. The erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing
 - e. Wheel washing facilities
 - f. Measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction
 - g. A scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works
 - h. A site set-up plan during the works

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of adjoining land uses and occupiers and in the interests of highway safety. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018), Policies CS5 and CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Policy TRANS 1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

- 5. The hours of work on site for all persons employed in the development of the dwellings hereby approved shall be limited to:
7.30 am to 6.00 p.m. on Mondays to Fridays 8.30 am to 1.00 p.m. on Saturdays and NO work shall be carried out on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of neighbouring occupiers in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2018) and Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Core Strategy (2006-2026) 2012.

- 6. The existing vehicular access at the site shall be stopped up and abandoned immediately after the new access hereby approved has been brought into use. The footway shall, at the same time as the stopping-up and abandonment, be reinstated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of road safety and highway maintenance. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018) and Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).

- 7. The dwellings shall not be occupied until the vehicle parking and turning space have been surfaced, marked out and provided in accordance with the approved plans. The parking and turning space shall thereafter be kept available for parking (of private motor cars and light goods vehicles) at all times.

Reason: To ensure the development is provided with adequate parking facilities, in order to reduce the likelihood of roadside parking that would adversely affect road safety and the flow of traffic. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018), Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Policy TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

7. The dwellings shall not be occupied until the vehicle parking and turning space have been surfaced, marked out and provided in accordance with the approved plans. The parking and turning space shall thereafter be kept available for parking (of private motor cars and light goods vehicles) at all times.

Reason: To ensure the development is provided with adequate parking facilities, in order to reduce the likelihood of roadside parking that would adversely affect road safety and the flow of traffic. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018), Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Policy TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

8. The dwellings shall not be occupied until the cycle parking secure store has been provided in accordance with the approved drawings and this area shall thereafter be kept available for the secure parking of cycles at all times.

Reason: To ensure the development reduces reliance on private motor vehicles and assists with the parking, storage and security of cycles. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018), Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Policy TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

9. The development shall not be brought into use until the refuse and recycling facilities have been provided in accordance with the approved drawings and these facilities shall be retained for this purpose thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that there is adequate and safe refuse and recycling facilities within the site. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2018), Policies CS13 and CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), and Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006).

10. No above ground development shall take place until a scheme of surface water drainage has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall incorporate sustainable drainage principles to deal with surface water run-off from the roof of the dwellings hereby permitted and within the application site. The dwellings hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until the scheme of surface water drainage has been implemented in accordance with the approved details. The approved method of surface water drainage shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that surface water will be managed in a sustainable manner. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2018), Policy CS16 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design - Part 4 Sustainable Design Techniques (June 2006)

The decision to grant Planning Permission has been taken having regard to the policies and proposals in the National Planning Policy Framework, South East Plan 2006-2026, West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (WBDLP) Saved Policies 2007, the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire, adopted 1998, the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 (incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001) and to all other relevant material considerations, including Government guidance, Supplementary Planning Document; and in particular guidance notes and policies:

The reasoning above is only intended as a summary. If you require further information on this decision please contact the Council via the Customer Call Centre on 01635 519111.

INFORMATIVE:

- 1 The applicant's attention is drawn to the fact that above conditions must be complied with in full before any work commences on site, failure to do so may result in enforcement action being instigated.
- 2 The above Permission may contain pre-conditions, which require specific matters to be approved by the Local Planning Authority before a specified stage in the development occurs. For example, "*Prior to commencement of development written details of the means of enclosure will be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority*". This means that a lawful commencement of the approved development cannot be made until the particular requirements of the pre-condition(s) have been met. A fee is required for an application to discharge conditions.
- 3 This decision has been made in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development having regard to Development Plan policies and available guidance to secure high quality appropriate development. In this application whilst there has been a need to balance conflicting considerations, the local planning authority has secured and accepted what is considered to be a development which improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.
- 4 The development hereby approved results in a requirement to make payments to the Council as part of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) procedure. A Liability Notice setting out further details, and including the amount of CIL payable will be sent out separately from this Decision Notice. You are advised to read the Liability Notice and ensure that a Commencement Notice is submitted to the authority prior to the commencement of the development. Failure to submit the Commencement Notice will result in the loss of any exemptions claimed, and the loss of any right to pay by instalments, and additional costs to you in the form of surcharges. For further details see the website at www.westberks.gov.uk/cil

Decision Date :- 8th February 2019



Gary Lugg
Head of Development and Planning

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

Notification to be sent to an applicant when a local planning authority refuse planning permission or grant it subject to conditions

Appeals to the Secretary of State

- If you are aggrieved by the decision of your local planning authority to refuse permission for the proposed development or to grant it subject to conditions, then you can appeal to the Secretary of State under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- If you want to appeal against the local planning authority's decision then you must do so within 6 months of the date of this notice.
- Appeals must be made using a form which you can get from the Planning Inspectorate at Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6PN or online using the Planning Portal at www.planningportal.co.uk.
- The Secretary of State can allow a longer period for giving notice of an appeal, but he will not normally be prepared to use this power unless there are special circumstances which excuse the delay in giving notice of appeal.
- The Secretary of State need not consider an appeal if it seems to him that the local planning authority could not have granted planning permission for the proposed development or could not have granted it without the conditions they imposed, having regard to the statutory requirements, to the provisions of any development order and to any directions given under a development order.
- In practice, the Secretary of State does not refuse to consider appeals solely because the local planning authority based their decision on a direction given by him.

Purchase Notices

- If either the local planning authority or the Secretary of State refuses permission to develop land or grants it subject to conditions, the owner may claim that he can neither put the land to a reasonably beneficial use in its existing state nor render the land capable of a reasonably beneficial use by the carrying out of any development which has been or would be permitted.
- In these circumstances, the owner may serve a purchase notice on the Council in whose area the land is situated. This notice will require the Council to purchase his interest in the land in accordance with the provisions of Part VI of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.



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Revisions
 Client **H Foster & Co.**

Project **Proposed Development
 High Street
 Theale
 Berkshire
 RG7 5AR**

Status **Planning**

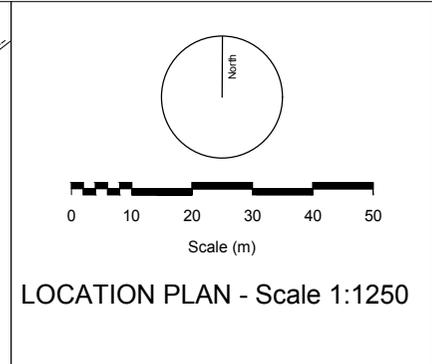
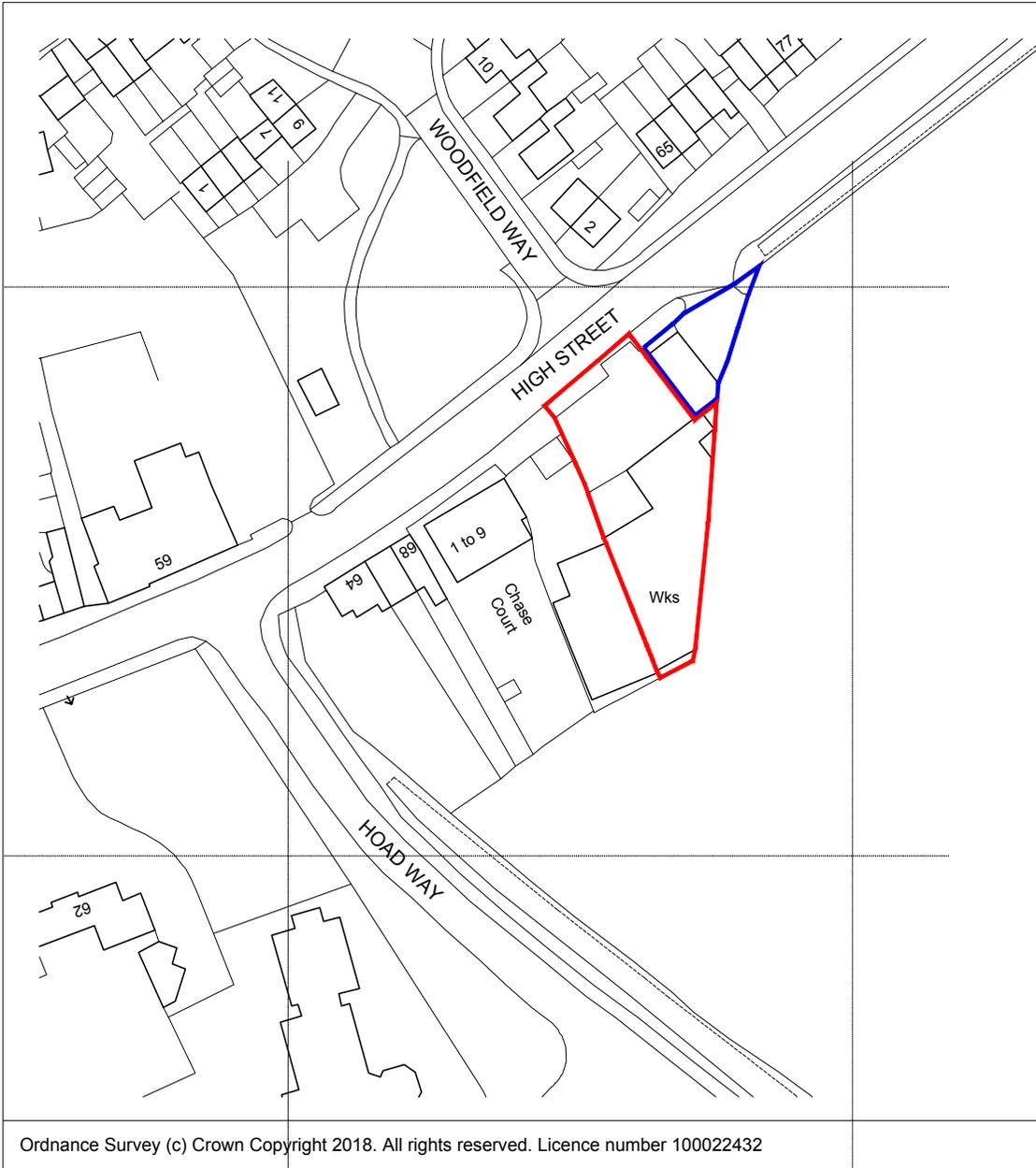
Date **2018.08.14**

Scale **1:200** Size **A3**

Title **Proposed Street Elevation**

Number **18.17-106** Revision **-**

Spires Architects
 9 Monks Way | Reading | RG30 3DP
 Tel 07495 529905



LOCATION PLAN - Scale 1:1250

Revisions
Client

Client
H Foster & Co.

Project
Proposed Development
High Street
Theale
Berkshire
RG7 5AR

Status
Planning

Date
2018.08.14

Scale
1:1250

Size
A4

Title
Location Plan

Number
18.17-100

Revision
-

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Spires Architects

9 Monks Way | Reading | RG30 3DP
Tel 07495 529905

Appendix 3: EIA Screening Opinion

11th March 2020

Turley
Hannah Knowles
20 Tudor Road
Reading
RG1 1NH

Development & Planning
Council Offices
Market Street, Newbury
Berkshire, RG14 5LD

Our Ref: 20/00461/screen
Please ask for: Emma Nutchey
Contact Centre: 01635 519111
Email: planapps@westberks.gov.uk

Dear Ms Knowles

Screening opinion under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

Reference:	20/00461/SCREEN
Site:	Land Bounded by Hoad Way and M4 and High Street, Theale
Proposal:	Outline planning permission for up to 20,000 sqm of commercial floorspace comprising B1(c), B2 and B8 floorspace along with associated access (all other matters reserved)

Thank you for your e-mail dated 19th February. In accordance with Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, the Council is required to adopt a screening opinion as to whether the proposal constitutes 'EIA development', and therefore whether Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required as part of the decision-making process. Information on EIA is available from the Planning Practice Guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessment>

The proposed development falls within schedule 2, Column 1, 'infrastructure project' under paragraph number 10 (a), 'industrial estate development project' or under 10 (b) 'urban development project'. It is not located in but is adjacent to a sensitive area, namely the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It does exceed the relevant threshold in column 2 with respect to 10 (a) namely the site is greater than 0.5 hectares in area. It also exceeds the site areas set out under 10 (b). The proposal is therefore "Schedule number 2 development" within the meaning of the Regulations.

However, taking into account the selection criteria in Schedule 3, it is not considered that the proposal is likely to have significant effects on the environment. Accordingly, the

proposal is **NOT considered "EIA development"** within the meaning of the Regulations. An Environmental Statement is not required. Please see the written statement in Annex A to this letter, which gives the reasons for this screening opinion.

The judgements on the significance of the effects on the environment are made solely in relation to the EIA Regulations, and any conclusions that 'significant environmental effects' are unlikely in terms of the Regulations does not necessarily denote that such impacts would be regarded as acceptable when considering a planning application. Neither the screening opinion, nor any statement within this letter, should be construed as precluding the Council from concluding that the development would have environmental impacts, albeit not significant in terms of the Regulations.

According to the Planning Practice Guidance, there may, exceptionally, be cases where a screening opinion has been issued but it becomes evident that it needs to be changed, for example, because new evidence comes to light. This screening opinion is issued based on the evidence currently available, having taken reasonable steps to obtain relevant information. Given the overriding purpose of EIA, the Council is bound to review its position in light of any new evidence, for example, through consultation during any forthcoming application.

A copy of this screening opinion will be placed on the Planning Register. If you wish to discuss this screening opinion, please contact Emma Nutchey at these offices.

Yours sincerely


RR **Gary Rayner**
Development Control Manager

Enc. Annex: Screening Opinion Written Statement

ANNEX – SCREENING OPINION WRITTEN STATEMENT

Case Details:	
Reference:	20/00461/SCREEN
Stage/Type:	Pre-application screening
Relevant history:	None
Has the applicant supplied an ES for the current or previous (if reserved matters or conditions) application?	N/A

Schedule 1	
Is the proposed development Schedule 1 development as described in Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations?	No
If YES, under which description of development i.e. Nos. 1-24?	N/A

Schedule 2	
Is the proposed development Schedule 2 development as described in Column 1 of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations?	Yes
If YES, under which description of development in Column 1 i.e. Nos. 1- 13?	10(a) – Industrial estate development projects or 10 (b) Urban development project
Is the development within, partly within, or near a 'sensitive area' as defined by Regulation 2 of the EIA Regulations?	Yes
If YES, which area?	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
Are the applicable thresholds/criteria in Column 2 exceeded/met?	Yes
If yes, which applicable threshold/criteria?	10 (a) – site area 10 (b) – (i) and (iii)
Is it necessary to issue a screening opinion?	Yes

Decision	
Is an ES required?	No
Reason	<p>When screening Schedule 2 projects, the local planning authority must take account of the selection criteria in Schedule 3 of the Regulations. Not all of the criteria will be relevant in every case. According to the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), only a very small proportion of Schedule 2 development will require an assessment.</p> <p>This proposal seeks permission for up to 20,000 sqm of commercial floorspace for B1c (light industrial), B2 (general industrial) and B8 (storage & distribution) use in Theale. The site is currently greenfield and is positioned on the edge of the village. It is bound by the M4 to the east, A4 to the south, Hoad Way to the west and High Street to the North.</p> <p>Characteristics of the development:</p>

	<p>The criteria set out in schedule 3 of the regulations, paragraph 1 criteria a-g have been considered in detail within the accompanying statement and where there are potential noise or waste impacts these will be controlled and mitigated. The proposal by virtue of its end use is not considered to pose a serious risk to human health or the environment.</p> <p>The main impacts arising from the development relate to highways and transport, ecology and drainage and the visual impact of the development on the setting of Theale and the conservation area and longer views from the AONB. Given the greenfield nature of the site it is highly sensitive to change. It is understood that the relevant reports necessary to assess these impacts alongside any mitigation measures will accompany any future application.</p> <p>The impacts are considered to be localised in terms of the EIA regulations and it is recognised that some are short term, limited to the construction phase only. Overall the impacts are not considered to be significant in terms of the EIA regulations.</p>
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**Appendix 4: Copy of Relevant Local
Development Plan Policies**

APPENDIX 5:

Parking Provision

The schedule below sets out standards for broad classes of development, as required by PPG13. The list is not exhaustive and should be used to give an indication only of the level of maximum provision. In more accessible locations, such as town centres, more stringent standards will be applied. The Council will publish supplementary planning guidance which provides additional information and advice on interpretation.

Standards relate to gross floor area unless otherwise stated and are for off-road parking.

LAND USE	MAXIMUM PROVISION
Dwellings	An average of 1.5 spaces/dwelling across the District (or any higher figure that the government may recommend in the future.)
Business	
B1	1 per 25m ² up to 2500m ² 1 per 30m ² above 2500m ²
General And Special Industrial	
B2 – B7	1 per 25m ² up to 235m ² 1 per 50m ² over 235m ²
Storage And Distribution	
B8	1 per 25m ² up to 235m ² 1 per 200m ² over 235m ²
Retail And Financial And Professional Services (except food retail)	
A1/A2	1 per 30m ² up to 1000m ² * 1 per 20m ² over 1000m ² *Newbury Town Centre Commercial Area 1 per 20m ²
Food Retail	
A1	1 per 30m ² up to 1000m ² 1 per 14m ² over 1000m ²
Places Of Entertainment And Sports Facilities	
D2 (except cinemas, conference facilities and stadia)	1 per 5m ² up to 1000m ² 1 per 22m ² over 1000m ²
Cinemas And Conference Facilities	
D2	1 per 3 seats up to 1000m ² 1 per 5 seats over 1000m ²
Stadia	
D2	1 per 15 seats over 1500 seats

Further And Higher Education

1 per 1 member of teaching staff
+ 1 per 2 non-teaching staff
+ 1 per 3 students up to 2500m²

1 per 2 staff
+ 1 per 15 students over 2500m²

1.12 ENVIRONMENTAL NUISANCE AND POLLUTION CONTROL (OVS. 5)

1.12.1 One of the key objectives of Structure Plan Policy OS1 in seeking sustainable development is to minimise pollution. This approach is embodied in the Structure Plan chapter on limiting the impact of development. Structure Plan policy LD1 and paragraph 4.5(iv) refers to minimising the harm to human health and to the environment from noise, vibration, effluent, fumes and other pollution including gas rising from land fill sites. The Council needs to be satisfied that proposals for development will not have significant adverse environmental impacts. Structure Plan policy LD3 states: development proposals will only be permitted where they do not give rise to an unacceptable impact on the environment, including serious harm to the character or appearance of an area, or the amenities of neighbouring land uses.

1.12.2 Structure Plan policy EN2 seeks protection from environmental nuisance. Development should not give rise to unacceptable levels of noise, smell, dust, fumes, light or noxious emissions affecting areas beyond the site boundary, or to unacceptable levels of air or water pollution. In addition, uses sensitive to disturbance such as new houses, schools or hospitals should not be located in areas already subject to unacceptable levels of environmental nuisance. In areas affected by high noise levels, developments should be designed to minimise the nuisance which may be caused to future occupiers.

1.12.3 The Structure Plan indicates that unacceptable levels of environmental nuisance will be defined through the local plan process and by building upon studies such as the former County Council's State of the Environment Report.

1.12.4 PPG23 Planning and Pollution Control issued in July 1994, provides advice on the relationship between planning and pollution control legislation. In this respect the planning system is defined as having two distinct roles:

- (i) to determine the location of development which may give rise to pollution, and
- (ii) controlling development in close proximity to pollution sources. The control of pollution itself is not a function of the planning system. This is the responsibility of the various pollution control agencies under the 1990 Environmental Pollution Act.

1.12.5 PPG24 Planning and Noise issued in September 1994 gives guidance on the use of planning powers to minimise the adverse impact of noise. Noise can have a significant effect on the environment and quality of life enjoyed by individuals and communities. The planning system should ensure that, wherever practicable, noise sensitive developments are separated from major sources of noise. Housing, hospitals and schools should generally be regarded as noise sensitive development but others may be included depending on local circumstances and priorities. Special consideration is required where noisy development is proposed in or near Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or which would affect the quiet enjoyment of AONBs.

1.12.6 The Berkshire First State of the Environment Report of January 1995 contains base line county wide information on various aspects of pollution including noise. The former Newbury District's State of the Environment Report of 1994 deals with a similar range of issues at a District level including water quality, the environmental effects of transport and air pollution levels.

1.12.7 The potential risk of pollution or the possibility that nuisance might be caused as a result of development will be important concerns to the Council when assessing the environmental suitability of proposals. In particular, the Council will seek to ensure that appropriate measures are taken in developments to minimise environmental impacts.

1.12.8 In terms of the Local Plan it is considered appropriate to introduce local plan policies that deal with the Council's concerns regarding:

- unacceptable levels of environmental nuisance
- noise sensitive developments
- hazardous substances.

1.12.9 A policy to define unacceptable levels of environmental nuisance can only be considered in general terms. It is impossible to define unacceptable levels of nuisance in all circumstances, given different types of development, locations and land use and their relative sensitivity.

POLICY OVS.5 The Council will only permit development proposals where they do not give rise to an unacceptable pollution of the environment. In order to minimise the adverse impact on the environment or loss of amenity proposals should have regard to:

- (a) the need to ensure the adequate storage and disposal of waste materials; and
- (b) the installation of equipment to minimise the harmful effects of emissions; and
- (c) the hours, days or seasons of operations; and
- (d) locating potential nuisance or pollution activities onto the least sensitive parts of the site or where the impacts can be best contained by physical or other appropriate measures.

1.12.10 The Council will consult closely with the various pollution control agencies and environmental health services when considering proposals for potentially polluting developments, and other development near to a source of pollution.

NOISE POLLUTION (OVS. 6)

1.12.11 Noise can be a major 'nuisance'. Certain types of development are particularly sensitive to noise, for example housing, schools and hospitals. The background levels of noise in residential areas and the countryside are often low. The introduction of noisy activities into such areas can therefore be especially disruptive. The Council will pay particular attention to any likely increase in 'ambient' noise levels when considering planning applications. PPG24 gives advice on how the planning system can be used to reduce the impact of noise on people. It also introduces the concept of 'noise exposure categories' to assist in the appraisal of noise sensitive developments near to existing noise sources.

Policy OVS.6 The Council will require appropriate measures to be taken in the location, design, layout and operation of development proposals in order to minimise any adverse impact as a result of noise generated. Special consideration is required where noisy development is proposed in or near Sites of Special Scientific Interest or which would harm the quiet enjoyment of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Proposals for noise sensitive developments should have regard to the following:

- (a) existing sources of noise e.g. from roads, railways and other forms of transport, industrial and commercial developments, sporting, recreation and leisure facilities; and
- (b) the need for appropriate sound insulation measures; and
- (c) the noise exposure levels outlined in Annex 1 of PPG24. In the context of this policy noise sensitive uses are housing, schools and hospitals.

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES (OVS.7 and OVS.8)

1.12.12 Local planning authorities have been able to exercise a degree of control over the presence of hazardous substances through the development control system, where such substances have been directly associated with a proposed development. There are situations, however, in which hazardous substances may be introduced into a site, or used differently within it, without there being any associated development requiring planning permission. Circular 11/92(4) fills the gap by enabling specific control to be exercised over the presence of hazardous substances whether or not associated development is involved. The Health and Safety Executive will need to be consulted on every application for 'hazardous substances consent'.

1.12.13 Annex B (paragraph B7) of Circular 11/92 states that local planning authorities should formulate, as appropriate, policies and proposals for the development and use of land at or near to hazardous installations and for the siting of future hazardous developments.

Policy OVS.7 The Council will not permit development which on advice from the Health and Safety Executive would cause unacceptable risk or harm to personal safety due to the presence of hazardous substances on the site or other land in the vicinity.

Policy OVS.8 Hazardous Substances Consent will not be granted where on advice from the Health and Safety Executive the risk arising to persons in the vicinity from the presence of a hazardous substances would be unacceptable.

1.12.14 The Council has accepted as valid a number of applications for deemed consent under the Hazardous Substance Regulations, these are listed in Appendix 11.

6.5 MEETING THE TRANSPORT NEEDS OF NEW DEVELOPMENT (TRANS. 1)

6.5.1 Policy TRANS.1 sets out a parking supply and management approach that promotes sustainable transport choices and is consistent with PPG13 and the strategies in the Local Transport Plan. A broad framework of parking standards based on those contained within national and regional guidance will be applied as set out in Appendix 5. In addition, a more detailed set of standards which expand on the basic framework contained within Appendix 5 will be published by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance. These standards will be reviewed from time to time in the context of emerging national policy and the Council's Local Transport Plan. The standards are expressed as maximum standards in accordance with national guidance and will be applied with flexibility, to take account of the ability of the site to be accessed by alternative transport modes. A reduction in the standard will be required in some circumstances, for example, where the site is readily accessible by alternative means of travel to the private motor vehicle and/or has a good existing public transport service. The standards reflect the range of accessibility and rural nature of much of West Berkshire. The Council will seek to locate local facilities in local and rural service centres. In some cases, where public transport improvements are being introduced but are not yet in place, the Council may negotiate a phased reduction in parking provision for new development through the adoption of an appropriate travel plan.

POLICY TRANS.1 The transportation needs of new development should be met through the provision of a range of facilities associated with different transport modes including public transport, walking, cycling and parking provision. The level of parking provision will depend on the availability of alternative modes, having regard to the maximum standards adopted by West Berkshire Council. Standards below the maximum level may be applied in more accessible locations.

6.5.2 The move to maximum standards has removed the ability to take contributions in lieu of reduced on-site parking provision. However, contributions from developers will continue to be sought to ensure that any infrastructure relevant to the development is provided. All applications for development with significant transport implications will be required to be submitted with a full transport assessment which must illustrate accessibility to the site by all modes and the likely modal split of journeys to and from the site, together with details of proposed measures to improve access by public transport, walking and cycling. Where appropriate, the Council will expect applications to be accompanied by a travel plan which should detail the proposed strategy to manage parking demand on the site and provide appropriate provision for alternative modes of travel. Such plans may include phased proposals for reduced parking provision, for example, where improvements to public transport are proposed, or through other strategies that encourage the use of alternative modes of travel.

The Spatial Strategy 4

as open space, biodiversity, geodiversity and other semi-natural features will be protected and enhanced, including networks of green wildlife corridors and spaces. Green infrastructure has an important role in our adaptation to climate change and contributing to carbon neutral development.

Delivering the Spatial Strategy

4.7 To implement the Spatial Strategy, a delivery strategy is set out which divides the District into four main geographical areas and sets out a vision and an Area Delivery Plan Policy for each. These reflect the distinct characteristics of the different parts of West Berkshire, using the District's settlement hierarchy as the focus for development within these areas:

- Newbury and Thatcham, with separate delivery plan policies for Newbury and Thatcham.
- The Eastern Area, which includes the Eastern Urban Area (Tilehurst, Calcot and Purley on Thames) and the Rural Service Centre of Theale.
- The North Wessex Downs AONB which includes the Rural Service Centres of Hungerford, Lambourn and Pangbourne.
- The East Kennet Valley, including the Rural Service Centres of Burghfield Common and Mortimer.

4.8 A vision for each area sets the scene for how it is expected to change and evolve over the Core Strategy period. This vision is followed by a set of bullet points which show how the vision will be implemented and how the level of growth for each area will be delivered, with detailed proposals coming forward through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD and through the development management process.

Spatial Strategy

Area Delivery Plan Policy 1

Spatial Strategy

Development in West Berkshire will follow the existing settlement pattern and comply with the spatial strategy set out in the Area Delivery Plan policies of this document based on the four spatial areas. Provision will be made for the delivery of at least 10,500 net additional dwellings and associated infrastructure over the period 2006 to 2026.

Most development will be within or adjacent to the settlements included in the settlement hierarchy set out below, and related to the transport accessibility of the settlements (especially by public transport, cycling and walking) their level of services and the availability of suitable sites for development. The majority of development will take place on previously developed land.

West Berkshire's main urban areas will be the focus for most development. The most intensively used developments, intensive employment generating uses, such as B1(a) offices, and intensive trip generating uses, such as major mixed use, retail or leisure uses, will be located in those town centre areas where the extent and capacity of supporting infrastructure, services and facilities is the greatest. High densities of development may be appropriate in these locations. Such development will have to be comprehensively planned in order to deliver maximum social, environmental and economic benefits to the wider community.

The scale and density of development will be related to the site's current or proposed accessibility, character and surroundings. Significant intensification of residential, employment generating and other intensive uses will be avoided within areas which lack sufficient supporting infrastructure, facilities or services or where opportunities to access them by public transport, cycling and walking are limited.

4 The Spatial Strategy

District Settlement Hierarchy

Urban Areas	Wide range of services and the focus for the majority of development	Newbury, Thatcham, Eastern Urban Area (Tilehurst, Calcot and Purley on Thames)
Rural Service Centres	Range of services and reasonable public transport provision - opportunities to strengthen role in meeting requirements of surrounding communities	Burghfield Common, Hungerford, Lambourn, Mortimer, Pangbourne, Theale
Service Villages	More limited range of services and some limited development potential	Aldermaston, Bradfield Southend, Chieveley, Cold Ash, Compton, Great Shefford, Hermitage, Kintbury, Woolhampton

Below the settlement hierarchy there are two additional types of area where there will be more limited development, including affordable housing for local needs:

- smaller villages with settlement boundaries - suitable only for limited infill development subject to the character and form of the settlement,
- open countryside - only appropriate limited development in the countryside will be allowed, focused on addressing identified needs and maintaining a strong rural economy.

4.9 The Core Strategy Vision aims to build upon the existing settlement pattern and direct most development to those urban areas which have the infrastructure and facilities to support sustainable growth. The main focus for housing growth will therefore be Newbury, Thatcham and the east of the District. Within the Newbury and Thatcham urban areas, two strategic urban extensions are proposed: the first to be developed will be the site at Newbury Racecourse to the east of Newbury which gained planning consent in April 2010, for up to 1,500 dwellings, partly on land within the existing settlement boundary, and the second will be a greenfield site at Sandleford, to the south of Newbury where up to 2,000 homes could be developed, with delivery commencing in the second half of the plan period and extending beyond 2026. The allocation of this strategic site introduces some flexibility into the housing delivery with the opportunity to amend the phasing to respond to changing circumstances. Additional non-strategic scale sites in Newbury and Thatcham will be allocated in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD based on the evidence base in the SHLAA.

4.10 In the Eastern Area there are significant constraints to development, including floodplain and the adjoining AONB. A broad location has been defined within this spatial area, encompassing the urban area, Theale and intervening land. Sites will be allocated within this broad location, informed by the SHLAA and any more up to date evidence about the suitability and deliverability of sites.

4.11 In the rural areas of the North Wessex Downs AONB and the East Kennet Valley, the distribution of housing reflects the District wide settlement hierarchy, which takes account of the function and sustainability of settlements and is set out in Policy ADPP1. The proposed housing distribution reflects recent completions and existing residential commitments as well as the constraints and opportunities for development in the rural settlements. Within the AONB, housing is focused on meeting identified local needs in accordance with Government policy. The result of this is that although 74% of West Berkshire lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB, and 29% of the District's population live in the AONB; only 19% of the housing has been allocated to this area. Within the AONB, the conservation

4 The Spatial Strategy

Area Delivery Plan Policy 4

Eastern Area

Housing

- The Eastern Area of West Berkshire will accommodate approximately 1400 new homes during the plan period, in order to support the growth of the Reading area and to sustain services in the rural service centre of Theale. Further development will take place through the implementation of existing commitments, infill development, and sites allocated through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD. A broad location has been identified on the Key and Area Diagrams which covers the Eastern Urban Area, Theale and the intervening land within which to find sites for the housing required. A number of sites which have future potential for development have been identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).⁽³⁵⁾

Transport

- Cycle and pedestrian accessibility between Theale and Calcot will be enhanced by the construction of a new bridge over the M4 in partnership with the Highways Agency.
- Better cycle provision between Pangbourne and Tilehurst, through Purley on Thames; as well as safe and attractive cycle links between Pangbourne and Theale will be delivered in accordance with the Transport Vision⁽³⁶⁾.
- Facilities at Theale railway station will be improved in partnership with First Great Western; including additional parking where possible, and greater accessibility to facilitate interchange between modes.
- Existing and new businesses, particularly around junction 12 of the M4 at Pincents Lane Retail Park and Arlington Business Park will engage with the Council in travel planning.
- Highways infrastructure will be upgraded to reduce congestion along the A4 corridor, including improvements to the Langley Hill / A4 junction and potentially dualling the A4 from Langley Hill to the M4. Upgrades are identified and prioritised in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan with details of any critical infrastructure set out in Appendix D.

Retail Centres

- The retail park at Pincents Lane will be retained and enhanced as an important retail centre for the residents of Calcot, Tilehurst and Theale.
- The retail and service offer in the district centre of Theale will be protected and enhanced. The district centre boundary and its primary shopping frontage will be reviewed in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.
- Local centres will be identified through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.

Employment

- Theale town centre will accommodate small scale office development, whilst Arlington Business Park, Station Road and adjacent estates which comprise of a mix of high quality office and distribution floorspace, will continue to provide sustainable employment opportunities for local residents.
- The role, function and boundaries of the Protected Employment Areas of Arlington Business Park, Station Road and adjacent estates will be reviewed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.

35 [Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment](#) available to view at www.westberks.gov.uk

36 The Transport Vision is part of the [Local Transport Plan](#) available to view at www.westberks.gov.uk/ltp

Community Infrastructure and Services

- Educational facilities will be improved through the refurbishment of Denefield and Brookfields Schools, and expansion of Theale Primary School. The need for any other educational facilities will be assessed using a formulaic approach.

Environment

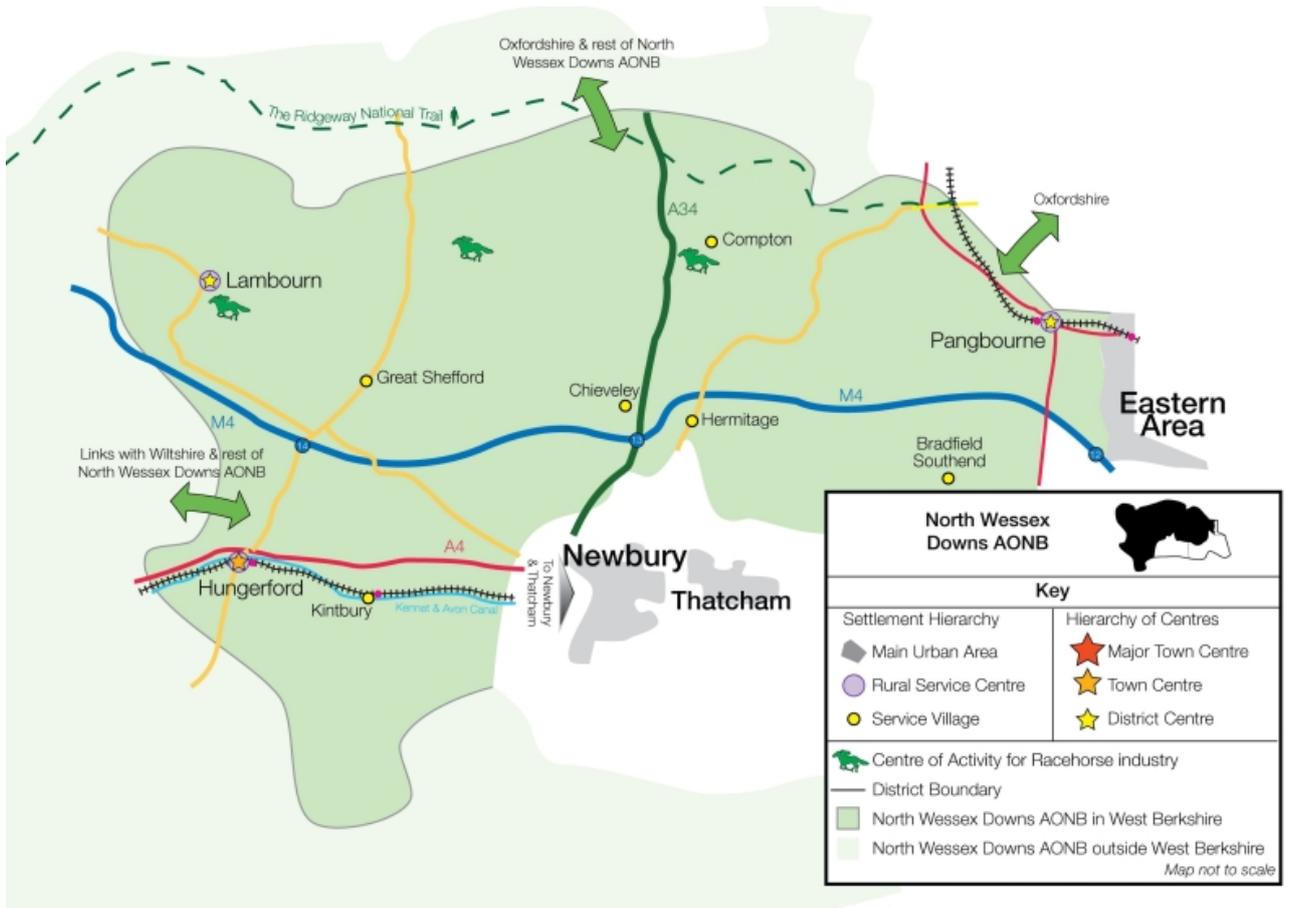
- As part of a Biodiversity Opportunity Area, a strategic approach will be taken towards the Kennet Valley Meadows to ensure that the habitat continues to be able to support a diverse range of species and that the area's recreational function is maximised. Cross boundary work with Reading Borough Council on the management of this area will continue.
- Access to opportunities for leisure and tourism on the Thames National Path, the Kennet and Avon Canal and in the North Wessex Downs AONB will be improved through signposting and communication methods. They will be an important resource for both local residents and for visitors to the area.
- Conservation Area Appraisal will be undertaken for Theale Conservation Area in accordance with the Council's programme.

Delivery and Monitoring

The strategy for the Eastern Area will be delivered through the range of core policies identified in Section 5 'Core Policies'.

Monitoring will be through a range of indicators which are outlined in Section 6 'Monitoring Framework'.

Figure 4 North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Area Delivery Plan Policy 5

North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Housing

- The North Wessex Downs AONB will have appropriate and sustainable growth that conserves and enhances its special landscape qualities. During the Core Strategy period provision will be made for the delivery of up to 2,000 dwellings, of which over half have already been built or have planning permission. Provision of this scale of housing is subject to the overarching objective for the AONB set out at the beginning of this policy. If preparation of the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD indicates that there are insufficient developable sites to provide the balance of the 2,000 dwellings whilst adhering to the landscape priority of the policy, any shortfall will be provided on sites allocated outside the AONB.
- There will be further opportunities for infill development and for development on previously developed land. New housing allocations will be focused on the rural service centres and service villages within the North Wessex Downs, with the emphasis on meeting identified local needs. The development will be allocated through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD or a subsequent planning document, and will depend on the role and function that the settlement performs, supported by suitable development opportunities, identified through the SHLAA. The conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape will be the paramount consideration in assessing these sites.
- The SHLAA has assessed the future development opportunities in the AONB. Landscape sensitivity work has been a critical part of the assessment, given the 'great weight' to be

4 The Spatial Strategy

given to the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and countryside within the AONB. The outcome of this work has shown a 'basket' of potentially developable sites from which to select at the Site Allocations stage.

- Within the North Wessex Downs AONB there are three rural service centres; Hungerford and Lambourn in the west of the District and Pangbourne in the east. In the western part of the AONB, development will be focused in Hungerford as the more sustainable rural service centre. Hungerford is considerably larger than Lambourn and performs a more significant function for a large catchment area. Hungerford town centre is defined as one of only two town centres in the District, reflecting the range of goods and services which it provides for the surrounding area. More information is set out below which describes Hungerford's role, and these factors will be used to inform decisions about the level of growth to be allocated to the town. The capacity for growth on the edge of Hungerford has been assessed.
- Lambourn, whilst performing the role of a rural service centre, does so at a more local level, due to its size and location, and this will influence the future level of growth. In terms of services and facilities, there is a particular emphasis in Lambourn on the needs of the equestrian industry. More limited growth will take place in Lambourn due to the town's comparatively smaller district centre and relative remoteness.
- Pangbourne, in the east, is a thriving community similar in size to Lambourn. It plays an important role as a service centre for the eastern areas of the AONB and provides a district centre shopping function with a range of services and facilities. Whilst there are some opportunities for growth at Pangbourne, those outside the current settlement boundary are partly constrained by environmental considerations in terms of the floodplain and the sensitivity of the landscape. This will restrict the amount of development to take place at Pangbourne.
- There are six service villages within the AONB in West Berkshire. The service villages will continue to provide a range of services to their communities and surrounding areas. A limited level of development will be accommodated to meet local needs, including employment, housing, amenity and community facilities, to maintain the areas as vibrant and balanced communities with their own sense of identity.
- The level of development to be allocated to each will depend on the role and function which they are to perform for the surrounding area and the availability of suitable sites identified through the SHLAA. Compton and Hermitage have opportunity sites adjacent to the existing village settlement boundary at Compton Institute for Animal Health and Denison Barracks. These could potentially provide a greater level of growth than that normally expected in a service village, which will have implications for the distribution of development. However, as well as infrastructure and sustainability issues associated with these sites, there is not yet any clarity about any timescales for developing them or the appropriate scale of development. Therefore the extent of any contribution from these sites cannot be clarified at this stage.
- In terms of the 'basket of sites' identified by the SHLAA, no further development opportunities have been identified at this time in Bradfield Southend, so development opportunities here may be more limited. Great Shefford shows limited future development opportunities through the SHLAA, whilst Kintbury and Chieveley demonstrate a wider range of opportunities to be assessed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.
- Smaller villages within the AONB will continue to support the needs of their residents and surrounding communities for facilities and services.
- The AONB will be managed by working in partnership with the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Council of Partners and by implementing the statutory North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan. ⁽³⁷⁾

Environment

- Recognising the area as a national landscape designation, development will conserve and enhance the local distinctiveness, sense of place and setting of the AONB whilst preserving the strong sense of remoteness, tranquillity and dark night skies, particularly on the open downland. Development will respond positively to the local context, and respect identified landscape features and components of natural beauty.
- Development will respect and respond to the historic environment of the AONB. In Hungerford the historic features, character and identity of the burgage plots extending either side of the High Street, and its highly distinctive medieval market town character will be respected.
- Conservation Area Appraisals will be undertaken for the Hungerford, Lambourn and Pangbourne Conservation Areas in accordance with the Council's programme.
- Traditional and local rural skills, such as the skills of hedge laying, woodland management and thatching will be supported so that they help to deliver a wide range of public benefits which include the conservation and enhancement of the area's special qualities and features and sustaining the vibrancy of the rural economy.
- In the Hungerford area, Portdown Common, Freeman's Marsh, the River Kennet and the Kennet and Avon Canal will be protected and enhanced as important areas of recreation and nature conservation. Improvements to access to these areas and the surrounding countryside will be implemented when opportunities arise.

Economy

- The equestrian and racehorse industry will continue to be supported as a nationally and locally important part of the economy, including Lambourn's role as a nationally important centre for the racehorse industry, in accordance with Policy CS12 'Equestrian/Racehorse Industry'.
- With an accessible economic base with good access to the road and rail network Hungerford will continue as a self-sufficient rural service centre providing a focus for local employment and local businesses.
- New small scale office developments in Hungerford, Lambourn and Pangbourne will be directed towards the town centre. Changes of use/redevelopment of existing offices will be guided by policy CS9.
- The Protected Employment Areas within the AONB will continue to play a vital role in supporting the local economy, especially those in edge of centre locations. The role, function and boundaries of these Protected Employment Areas will be reviewed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.
- Small, local businesses will be supported, encouraged and protected within the AONB providing local job opportunities and maintaining the rural economy.
- Positive management of the AONB will take place through partnership working to ensure its continuation as a location for leisure and green tourism. The AONB will continue to play an important role in attracting visitors and investment. The landscape and recreational role of the waterways, which make a positive contribution to the character and cultural heritage of the AONB, will be strengthened as part of this.
- Hungerford will have an enhanced role as a tourist destination within the AONB (within and beyond the District boundary), promoting its diverse retail offer, regular market and acting as a base to explore the surrounding countryside.
- Economic development will be supported through the North Wessex Downs LEADER programme, and any similar subsequent schemes, which offers grants for farmers, foresters, rural businesses and community organisations within the AONB to enable them to strengthen their support for the local economy. The funding is available for a wide range of activities

4 The Spatial Strategy

such as farm diversification, adding value to timber, tourism activities and projects that will benefit local communities.

- Opportunities for appropriate small scale renewable energy schemes, which use local resources will be encouraged if they can be accommodated within the landscapes of the North Wessex Downs.

Accessibility

- Opportunities will be sought to improve the accessibility to and within the AONB, bringing improved public transport links and the retention of services and facilities as well as stronger signage to enhance the identity of the North Wessex Downs.
- Opportunities will be taken to manage congestion and improve accessibility linkages within Hungerford, in particular the north/south links within the community and encouraging the use of public transport. Opportunities will be sought to provide improved and safe pedestrian and cycling access within the town and to the surrounding countryside.
- Demand for improved accessibility to and from Lambourn will be managed through enhanced public transport to Newbury, Hungerford and across the District boundary to Swindon.
- Facilities at Pangbourne railway station will be improved in partnership with First Great Western; including additional parking where possible, and greater accessibility to facilitate interchange between modes.

Community Infrastructure and Services

- The retail offer in Hungerford town centre will be encouraged and supported whilst preserving its unique character and local, independent businesses. The town centre commercial boundary and primary shopping frontage will be reviewed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.
- Fibre broadband will be installed in Hungerford enabling super-fast broadband speeds for businesses, schools and homes in the area. This will contribute towards reducing the need to travel as residents will have better access to online services and will have benefits for education and the economy.
- Lambourn is defined as a district centre in Policy CS11 'Hierarchy of Centres'. The historic market district centre will continue to provide a range of shops and services meeting the needs of local people and visitors. Opportunities will be sought to strengthen its role in serving surrounding communities.
- The retail and service offer in the district centre of Pangbourne will be protected and enhanced. The district centre boundary and its primary shopping frontages will be reviewed in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.

Delivery and Monitoring

The strategy for the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be implemented through the range of core policies identified in Section 5 'Core Policies'.

Infrastructure requirements are set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Monitoring will be through a range of indicators which are outlined in Section 6 'Monitoring Framework'.

5 Core Policies

Infrastructure

Policy CS 5

Infrastructure Requirements and Delivery

The Council will work with infrastructure providers and stakeholders to identify requirements for infrastructure provision and services for new development and will seek to co-ordinate infrastructure delivery, whilst protecting local amenities and environmental quality. The key infrastructure schemes required to facilitate development and secure the delivery of the Core Strategy include, but are not limited to, those schemes set out within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. A schedule of the infrastructure which has been assessed as critical to the delivery of the Core Strategy is included within the Core Strategy as Appendix D.



Explanation of the Policy

5.24 New development within West Berkshire needs to be supported by adequate infrastructure of all kinds including physical, social, and green infrastructure. The infrastructure requirements of new development need to be established to ensure improvements occur alongside new development. Development should not be permitted unless essential infrastructure can be completed in pace with new development.

5.25 The Council has worked in partnership with other infrastructure providers, including both internal Council departments and external agencies, throughout the development of the Core Strategy to identify the infrastructure required to facilitate the development set out in the Core Strategy, including where, when, by whom, and by what means this is to be delivered to ensure that the spatial strategy is robust in terms of delivery.

Delivery and Monitoring

The Council will maintain an Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifying the key infrastructure projects required to support the delivery of the Core Strategy. The infrastructure schedule will be maintained on the Council's website as a 'live' schedule that will be updated as further infrastructure requirements or projects are identified, and as the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD is taken forward. The Council will continue to give consideration to the level of risk that some of the required infrastructure will not be forthcoming and ways that this might be mitigated or addressed. The implementation schedule identifies contingency planning where this may be required. However, in the preparation of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, the Council has consulted with and had regard to, the investment and operational plans of relevant infrastructure and public

5 Core Policies

AWE Aldermaston and AWE Burghfield

Policy CS 8

Nuclear Installations - AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield

In the interests of public safety, residential⁽⁵⁹⁾ development in the inner land use planning consultation zones⁽⁶⁰⁾ of AWE Aldermaston and AWE Burghfield is likely to be refused planning permission by the Council when the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) has advised against that development. All other development proposals in the consultation zones will be considered in consultation with the ONR⁽⁶¹⁾, having regard to the scale of development proposed, its location, population distribution of the area and the impact on public safety, to include how the development would impact on “Blue Light Services” and the emergency off site plan in the event of an emergency as well as other planning criteria. Consultation arrangements for planning applications will be undertaken with the ONR using the table below.

Development within the Land Use Planning Consultation Zones: Office for Nuclear Regulation

AWE Aldermaston			AWE Burghfield		
Zone	Distance	Development Type	Zone	Distance	Development Type
Inner	0 - 3 km	All residential or non residential - Where one or more additional person may live, work, shop (all applications save listed buildings, conservation area consent, house extensions, shop fronts, prior notifications and telecommunications).	Inner	0 - 1.5 km	All residential or non residential - Where one or more additional person may live, work, shop (all applications save listed buildings, conservation area consent, house extensions, shop fronts, prior notifications and telecommunications).
Middle	3 - 5 km	Residential accommodation or non residential accommodation exceeding 50 people. - 20 or more dwellings; - 1,000 sq.m. B1 - 2,400 sq.m. B8	Middle	1.5 - 3 km	Residential accommodation or non residential accommodation exceeding 50 people. - 20 or more dwellings; - 1,000 sq.m. B1 - 2,400 sq.m. B8

59 Residential for the purpose of this policy includes any development resulting in a permanent resident night time population, e.g. residential institutions. This policy does not preclude normal residential extensions

60 Consultation Zones as defined by the ONR and shown on the West Berkshire Proposals Map

61 Consultation arrangements with the ONR

Development within the Land Use Planning Consultation Zones: Office for Nuclear Regulation					
AWE Aldermaston			AWE Burghfield		
Zone	Distance	Development Type	Zone	Distance	Development Type
Outer	5 - 8 km	Residential accommodation or non residential accommodation exceeding 500 people. - 200 or more dwellings; - 11,000 sq.m. B1 - 24,000 sq.m. B8	Outer	3 - 5 km	Residential accommodation or non residential accommodation exceeding 500 people. - 200 or more dwellings; - 11,000 sq.m. B1 - 24,000 sq.m. B8

Explanation of the Policy

5.39 There are two licensed nuclear installations located in West Berkshire, the Atomic Weapons Establishment in Aldermaston (AWE (A)) and in Burghfield (AWE (B)).

5.40 The United Kingdom's Fifth National Report on Compliance with the Convention on Nuclear Safety Obligations (Department of Energy and Climate Change, Sept 2010) states in its forward that "The safety of the other UK nuclear facilities that fall outside the scope of this Convention are also regulated to the same standards, so as to ensure that they are operated in a manner that maintains a high level of safety". Paragraph 17.30 refers to development control policy in the vicinity of nuclear installations.

5.41 Circular 04/00 'Planning Controls for Hazardous Substances', (Sections A17 and A18) ⁽⁶²⁾ provides general advice about the need for consultation about proposed developments in the vicinity of licensed nuclear installations. This is a requirement of longstanding Government policy regarding local demographics which would limit the radiological consequences to the public in the unlikely event of an accident involving the spread of radioactive materials beyond the nuclear site boundary. This policy is a measure of prudence over and above the stringent regulatory requirements imposed on nuclear operators to prevent such accidents. The ONR administers the Government's policy on the control of development and provides advice to the Local Planning Authority, who take this into account in considering whether or not to approve planning applications. Applicants considering new development within the land use planning consultation zones provided by the ONR and as shown on the proposals map, are strongly encouraged to enter into early discussions with the Council.

5.42 The land use planning consultation zones for the installations cross over into the following neighbouring councils: Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, Reading Borough Council, and Wokingham Borough Council. Given the potential cumulative effects of any population increase surrounding the installations, it will be necessary to monitor committed and future development proposals in partnership with neighbouring Councils and the ONR. The Councils will monitor housing completions and commitments as part of the Annual Monitoring Report and send this information directly to the ONR for them to make informed judgements when assessing future development proposals.

Employment and the Economy

Policy CS 9

Location and Type of Business Development

The Council seeks to facilitate and promote the growth and forecasted change of business development in the plan period in order to:

- manage the growth of B1 floorspace to meet future requirements;
- manage the reduction of land for B2 uses, whilst maintaining a sufficient portfolio of sites suitable for such uses; and
- retain a portfolio of sites for B8 uses in suitable locations.

This will be achieved through the following:

(a) The appropriate location of business development:

Proposals for industry, distribution and storage uses will be directed to the District's defined Protected Employment Areas⁽⁶³⁾, and existing suitably located employment sites and premises. Any proposals for such uses outside these areas/locations will be assessed by the Council against the following:

- compatibility with uses in the area surrounding the proposals and potential impacts on those uses; and
- capacity and impact on the road network and access by sustainable modes of transport.

New office development will be directed towards West Berkshire's town and district centres as outlined in policy CS11. The scale of development will be appropriate to the size and character of the centre.

If no suitable sites are available within an existing centre, then the following sequential approach will be taken for accommodating additional offices in the review of Protected Employment Areas and any allocations in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD. This sequential approach should also be used in support of any planning application for office development outside defined centres:

- Edge of centre: suitably located brownfield site or Protected Employment Area within an edge of centre location, and Newbury Business Park.
- Out of centre: brownfield site or Protected Employment Area within an out of centre location, with good accessibility by alternative modes of transport.
- Other existing employment sites and premises not in an edge of centre or out of centre location.

Proposals for non town centre uses which seek the loss of office floorspace within defined town and district centres will need to demonstrate that the proposal maintains the vitality of the existing centre and would not substantially prejudice the overall supply of office floorspace over the Core Strategy period in that centre.

63 Protected Employment Areas are outlined within Appendix G. These designations will continue to be in use until reviewed under the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD

5 Core Policies

In making allocations for residential development in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD the need for any complementary element of business development or other economic use to achieve an appropriate sustainable development, commensurate with the scale of any proposed allocation will be considered.

(b) Protecting Employment Areas:

Protected Employment Areas are parcels of land throughout the District designated for B uses⁽⁶⁴⁾. The continued designation, role and boundaries of existing Protected Employment Areas will be reviewed in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD (or other subsequent Development Plan Document) to achieve a balanced portfolio of fit for purpose sites to meet future requirements. In the interim, subject to the application of the sequential test for any proposed town centre uses, proposals for employment generating uses, other than B class uses, within Protected Employment Areas will be favourably considered where these would be complementary to the existing business use in that location, and consistent with the integrity and function of the location for employment purposes. Proposals for such non B class employment generating uses which are likely to substantially prejudice the strategy set out at the start of this policy, will not be permitted.

Business development will be supported on existing employment sites, particularly on those sites seen as strategically important for the District's economy – New Greenham Park, Vodafone HQ, and the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE). The Site Allocations and Delivery DPD will assess the role and function of these three sites to determine whether they should be designated as Protected Employment Areas or an alternative bespoke designation consistent with their importance to the local economy.

(c) Managing the scale, type and intensification of business development:

A range of types and sizes of employment sites and premises will be encouraged throughout the District to meet the needs of the local economy. Proposals for business development should be in keeping with the surrounding environment, not conflict with existing uses, and promote sustainable transport.

More efficient use of existing sites and premises should be made in order to attract inward investment, respond to modern business requirements, and meet the demand for employment land over the plan period. The Council will promote the intensification, redevelopment, and upgrade of existing, vacant and/or derelict employment sites and premises for business development.

Explanation of the Policy

5.45 The overall aim of this policy is to set the framework to facilitate and promote the growth and forecasted change of business development across the District over the plan period.

5.46 Evidence⁽⁶⁵⁾ indicates that West Berkshire has a sufficient supply of employment land to meet demand to 2026, and thus no need to plan for a net increase in employment land stock. Whilst a sufficient supply exists, it is not necessarily in the correct use class. The Employment Land Assessment (ELA) concludes that over the plan period there is a shortfall of B1 floorspace by approximately 121,000sqm, a surplus of B2 space by approximately 65,000sqm due to declining demand, and a potential shortfall in the longer term of B8 floorspace of approximately 24,000sqm. Policy CS9 therefore sets out the framework to ensure this imbalance in employment land supply is addressed over the plan period, through the effective utilisation of existing employment sites and premises. The Council

64 B uses refer to those uses identified within The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) – (B1; B2; B8)

65 [Employment Land Assessment](#), DTZ 2007 available at www.westberks.gov.uk

The Council will regularly monitor and review the delivery of economic development across the District through planning commitments and completions. The AMR will assess various indicators including the total amount of additional employment floorspace, total amount of employment land available, and total amount of employment land lost to alternative uses.

Town Centres

Policy CS 11

Hierarchy of Centres

The vitality and viability of the District's town, district and local centres will be protected and enhanced. The existing network of town, district, local, and village centres will form the focal point for uses, services, and facilities serving the surrounding population. The scale, character and role of the centres defines their position within the hierarchy and network of centres within the District as follows:

- Major town centre Newbury
- Town centres Thatcham and Hungerford
- District Centres Pangbourne, Lambourn and Theale
- Local and Village Centres To be confirmed through Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.

As no capacity for any additional retail convenience and comparison floorspace on top of that which is already committed has been identified through the 2010 Retail Study⁽⁶⁷⁾, any retail development during the Core Strategy period will be mainly focused on the implementation of current schemes such as the Parkway development in Newbury, plus regeneration and other qualitative improvements and schemes. Any scheme will be of an appropriate scale and character to reflect and respond to the role and function of the centre, and should promote the individuality of the centre, responding to any distinct features.

The significant new investment committed and planned for the District's main centres should not be jeopardised or harmed by additional out of centre retailing.

Some small amounts of new retail floorspace may be provided in the form of new local centres at the two strategic developments of Sandleford Park and the Racecourse in Newbury, to respond to local needs in these areas.

The detailed boundaries of the centres identified in the retail hierarchy and their primary and secondary shopping frontages will be defined in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD as will the local shopping centres and parades that meet the day to day needs of local communities.

The main town centre uses identified by the NPPF will be directed to the town and district centres defined in this policy.

Transport

Policy CS 13

Transport

Development that generates a transport impact will be required to:*

- Reduce the need to travel.
- Improve and promote opportunities for healthy and safe travel.
- Improve travel choice and facilitate sustainable travel particularly within, between and to main urban areas and rural service centres.
- Demonstrate good access to key services and facilities.
- Minimise the impact of all forms of travel on the environment and help tackle climate change.
- Mitigate the impact on the local transport network and the strategic road network.
- Take into account the West Berkshire Freight Route Network (FRN).
- Prepare Transport Assessments/Statements and Travel Plans to support planning proposals in accordance with national guidance⁽⁷⁰⁾.

*Development proposals may not need to fulfil each bullet point. The supporting text below clarifies the types and scale of development which will be required to meet the specific parts of this policy.

Explanation of the Policy

5.82 West Berkshire Council is a unitary authority, and as such is both the Local Planning Authority and the Local Highway Authority for the District. The Council is responsible for producing both the Local Plan and the Local Transport Plan (LTP) which specifically addresses transport issues; and there are strong links between these two forward planning documents. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies the key infrastructure projects required to support the delivery of the Core Strategy, and infrastructure that is critical to the delivery of the Core Strategy is set out in Appendix D. The LTP is supported by an Implementation Plan which sets out how schemes and initiatives will deliver the LTP, and this will be updated annually.

5.83 The provision of a sustainable transport network to serve the communities of West Berkshire is essential for improving accessibility, enhancing economic vitality, protecting the environment, and promoting quality of life. The policy therefore seeks to encourage sustainable travel in order to achieve these goals, and to minimise the impact on the strategic and local road network.

5.84 Reducing the need to travel reflects the Council's desire to plan for people to live in places where there are local facilities and services, whether these are fixed or mobile (development that is in accordance with the settlement hierarchy in ADPP1 will help to achieve this). Reducing the need to travel also reflects the changing nature of technology and how this facilitates working from home and access to services through the



70 [Guidance on Transport Assessment](#) (Department for Transport and Communities and Local Government, May 2007) available to view at www.dft.gov.uk

5.91 Transport Assessments / Statements and Travel Plans are vital to support planning proposals so that the impact of the proposed development can be assessed and mitigated. All development which meets the thresholds set out in national guidance will be required to prepare the appropriate Transport Assessments / Statements and Travel Plans.

5.92 Standards for parking provision will be related to levels of accessibility. The basis for this will be established through the Local Transport Plan, and subsequently a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will be prepared.

Delivery and Monitoring

Implementation will be through the development management process with production of Transport Assessments, Statements and Travel Plans, and through implementation of the Local Transport Plan.

The following indicators will be monitored in the AMR:-

- Accessibility of new residential development.
- Sustainable travel to schools.

Design Principles

Policy CS 14

Design Principles

New development must demonstrate high quality and sustainable design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area, and makes a positive contribution to the quality of life in West Berkshire. Good design relates not only to the appearance of a development, but the way in which it functions. Considerations of design and layout must be informed by the wider context, having regard not just to the immediate area, but to the wider locality. Development shall contribute positively to local distinctiveness and sense of place.

Development proposals will be expected to:

- Create safe environments, addressing crime prevention and community safety.
- Make good provision for access by all transport modes.
- Ensure environments are accessible to all and give priority to pedestrian and cycle access providing linkages and integration with surrounding uses and open spaces.
- Make efficient use of land whilst respecting the density, character, landscape and biodiversity of the surrounding area.
- Consider opportunities for a mix of uses, buildings and landscaping.
- Consider opportunities for public art.
- Conserve and enhance the historic and cultural assets of West Berkshire.
- Provide, conserve and enhance biodiversity and create linkages between green spaces and wildlife corridors.
- Make a clear distinction between public and private spaces and enhance the public realm.
- Consider opportunities for including Home Zones⁽⁷¹⁾ where practicable.

5 Core Policies

All development proposals will be expected to seek to minimise carbon dioxide emissions through sustainable design and construction, energy efficiency, and the incorporation of renewable energy technology as appropriate and in accordance with Policy CS15: Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency.

Explanation of Policy

5.93 The quality and local distinctiveness of the built environment in West Berkshire is an important asset for the area. The importance of new development complementing and relating to its surroundings, while being safe and accessible for all, is established in the Core Strategy Vision and Objectives. The SPD 'Quality Design – West Berkshire' contains local guidance on design, including a Residential Character Framework, and a series of Area Design Focus Statements which give detailed guidance for particular key areas. Conservation Area Appraisals, the Landscape Character Assessment, and Town and Village Design Statements also provide a more detailed local context for the consideration of development and should be taken into account as material considerations.

5.94 The objectives of the Core Strategy also seek to mitigate the impact of climate change, and the environmental performance of new buildings is particularly important in this context. Policy CS15 'Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency' requires that development proposals consider energy efficiency and sustainable design from the outset. While many of these principles can be incorporated within existing building materials and forms, it is acknowledged that non-traditional materials and designs may be necessary in order to achieve low carbon or carbon-neutral developments, and meet targets for reducing carbon emissions.

5.95 Design and Access Statements are required to be submitted with most planning applications, and these should demonstrate how a proposal addresses the design considerations set out in this policy, in the SPD 'Quality Design – West Berkshire', and other relevant documents such as Town and Village Design Statements. The criteria in 'Building for Life' published by CABE⁽⁷²⁾ will be incorporated wherever possible. Developments should incorporate 'Secured by Design' principles to reduce opportunities for crime and the fear of crime.

Delivery and Monitoring

Implementation will be through the development management process.

Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency

Policy CS 15

Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency

Residential Development

New residential development will meet the following minimum standards of construction:

- Minor development - Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3
- Major development⁽⁷³⁾ - Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4
- From 2013: All development - Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4
- From 2016: All development - Code for Sustainable Homes Level 6

Non-Residential Development

New non-residential development will meet the following minimum standards of construction:

- Minor development - BREEAM Very Good
- Major development - BREEAM Excellent
- From 2013: All development - BREEAM Excellent

Renewable energy

Major development shall achieve the following minimum reductions in total CO₂ emissions (regulated and unregulated energy use) from renewable energy or low/zero carbon energy generation on site or in the locality of the development as long as a direct physical connection is used, unless it can be demonstrated that such provision is not technically or economically viable.

The percentage reductions in CO₂ emissions should be based on the estimated CO₂ emissions of the development after the installation of energy efficiency measures related to either the Code for Sustainable Homes, BREEAM or equivalent method has been applied.

Residential Development:

- A 10% reduction in CO₂ emissions;
- from 2014: A 20% reduction in CO₂ emissions;
- from 2016: Zero Carbon⁽⁷⁴⁾.

Non-Residential Development:

- A 10% reduction in CO₂ emissions;
- from 2014: A 20% reduction in CO₂ emissions;
- from 2019: Zero Carbon⁽⁷⁵⁾.

73 For dwellings: where 10 or more are to be constructed, or if the site is more than 0.5 hectares. For all other uses: where the floorspace will be 1000sq metres or greater. Floorspace is defined as the sum of the floor area within the building measured to the external wall faces at each level.

74 Requirements for zero carbon in line with stated Government aspirations, which may be subject to change.

75 Requirements for zero carbon in line with stated Government aspirations, which may be subject to change.

Flooding

Policy CS 16

Flooding

The sequential approach in accordance with the NPPF will be strictly applied across the District. Development within areas of flood risk from any source of flooding, including Critical Drainage Areas and areas with a history of groundwater or surface water flooding, will only be accepted if it is demonstrated that it is appropriate at that location, and that there are no suitable and available alternative sites at a lower flood risk.

When development has to be located in flood risk areas, it should be safe and not increase flood risk elsewhere, reducing the risk where possible and taking into account climate change.

Proposed development will require a Flood Risk Assessment for:

- Sites of 1 ha or more in Flood Zone 1.
- Sites in Flood Zone 2 or 3.
- Critical Drainage Areas.
- Areas with historic records of groundwater and/or surface water flooding.
- Areas near ponds or the Kennet and Avon Canal, that may overtop.
- Sites where access would be affected during a flood.
- Areas behind flood defences.
- Sites with known flooding from sewers.

Development will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that:

- Through the sequential test and exception test (where required), it is demonstrated that the benefits of the development to the community outweigh the risk of flooding.
- It would not have an impact on the capacity of an area to store floodwater.
- It would not have a detrimental impact on the flow of fluvial flood water, surface water or obstruct the run-off of water due to high levels of groundwater.
- Appropriate measures required to manage any flood risk can be implemented.
- Provision is made for the long term maintenance and management of any flood protection and or mitigation measures.
- Safe access and exit from the site can be provided for routine and emergency access under both frequent and extreme flood conditions⁽⁸⁰⁾.

On all development sites, surface water will be managed in a sustainable manner through the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Methods (SuDS)⁽⁸¹⁾ in accordance with best practice and the proposed national standards and to provide attenuation to greenfield run-off rates and volumes, for all new development and re-development and provide other benefits where possible such as water quality, biodiversity and amenity.

80 Advice on safe access and exit can be found in the [Strategic Flood Risk Assessment](#) available at www.westberks.gov.uk

81 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) is a term used to describe the various approaches that can be used to manage surface water drainage in a way that mimics the natural environment.

5.108 It is recommended that all sites within Flood Zone 1 should carry out an assessment of localised flood risks, including surface water (flash) flooding. Development in the upstream vicinity of critical drainage areas could also raise flood risk issues. The cumulative impact of minor development, including development permitted without the need for a planning application, could also affect local flood storage capacity or flood flows. The Environment Agency's Standing Advice should be referred to prior to designing a development.

5.109 The Council will consult the Environment Agency where it has indicated that it wishes to be involved in the planning process. The Environment Agency's Flood Risk Standing Advice provides information to local planning authorities on which applications it wishes to be consulted on in relation to flood risk.

Delivery and Monitoring

The policy will be delivered through the development management process.

The indicator used for monitoring purposes will be the number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding and water quality grounds.

Biodiversity

Policy CS 17

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Biodiversity and geodiversity assets across West Berkshire will be conserved and enhanced.

Habitats designated or proposed for designation as important for biodiversity or geodiversity at an international or national level or which support protected, rare or endangered species, will be protected and enhanced. The degree of protection given will be appropriate to the status of the site or species in terms of its international or national importance.

Development which may harm, either directly or indirectly,

- locally designated sites (Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites), or
- habitats or species of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity, or
- the integrity or continuity of landscape features of major importance for wild flora and fauna

will only be permitted if there are no reasonable alternatives and there are clear demonstrable social or economic benefits of regional or national importance that outweigh the need to safeguard the site or species and that adequate compensation and mitigation measures are provided when damage to biodiversity/geodiversity interests are unavoidable.

In order to conserve and enhance the environmental capacity of the District, all new development should maximise opportunities to achieve net gains in biodiversity and geodiversity in accordance with the Berkshire Biodiversity Action Plan and the Berkshire Local Geodiversity Action Plan. Opportunities will be taken to create links between natural habitats and, in particular, strategic opportunities for biodiversity improvement will be actively pursued within the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas identified on the Proposals Map in accordance with the Berkshire Biodiversity Action Plan.

Green Infrastructure

Policy CS 18

Green Infrastructure

The District's green infrastructure will be protected and enhanced. The Council will work with partners, including Parish Councils and the community to address the District's green infrastructure needs and deficiencies as set out in the forthcoming Green Infrastructure SPD.

New developments will make provision for high quality and multifunctional open spaces of an appropriate size and will also provide links to the existing green infrastructure network. Specific standards for provision within new developments will be identified in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD and through the masterplanning for strategic sites.

Developments resulting in the loss of green infrastructure or harm to its use or enjoyment by the public will not be permitted. Where exceptionally it is agreed that an area of green infrastructure can be lost a new one of equal or greater size and standard will be required to be provided in an accessible location close by.

5.123 Green infrastructure (GI) is the network of multi-functional green space, both new and existing, both rural and urban, which supports the natural and ecological processes, and is integral to the health and quality of life of sustainable communities. West Berkshire is generally well provided for in terms of green infrastructure, and it will be important to protect and increase this provision in the future, to meet the future needs associated with new development. The overall strategy for green infrastructure in the District is for:



- the protection and enhancement of existing green infrastructure; and
- the creation of new green infrastructure and links to better connect green infrastructure.

Further information about the delivery of green infrastructure is set out within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan⁽⁹²⁾.

5.124 For the purposes of this Core Strategy, green infrastructure is defined as:

- Parks and public gardens, including parks, country parks and formal gardens.
- Natural and semi-natural green spaces – including woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, common land, grasslands, wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and derelict open land and rock areas.
- Green corridors – including river and canal banks, cycleways and rights of way.
- Outdoor sports facilities (with natural or artificial surfaces, either publicly or privately owned) – including tennis courts, bowling greens, sports pitches, golf courses, athletics tracks, school and other institutional playing fields, and other outdoor sports areas.

in terms of quality, but that quality standards were also above national standards. A Green Infrastructure SPD will set out the Councils comprehensive approach to protecting and improving the network of GI in West Berkshire as well as a framework for the creation of new GI.

Delivery and Monitoring

This policy will be implemented through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD, the forthcoming Green Infrastructure SPD, the Rights of Way Action Plan, the Biodiversity Action Plan, the determination and monitoring of planning applications and appeals, and the use of planning obligations in planning agreements or planning conditions.

Provision of open space and recreational facilities will be monitored in the AMR.

Historic Environment and Landscape Character

Policy CS 19

Historic Environment and Landscape Character

In order to ensure that the diversity and local distinctiveness of the landscape character of the District is conserved and enhanced, the natural, cultural, and functional components of its character will be considered as a whole. In adopting this holistic approach, particular regard will be given to:

- a) The sensitivity of the area to change.
- b) Ensuring that new development is appropriate in terms of location, scale and design in the context of the existing settlement form, pattern and character.
- c) The conservation and, where appropriate, enhancement of heritage assets and their settings (including those designations identified in Box 1).
- d) Accessibility to and participation in the historic environment by the local community.

Proposals for development should be informed by and respond to:

- a) The distinctive character areas and key characteristics identified in relevant landscape character assessments including Historic Landscape Characterisation for West Berkshire and Historic Environment Character Zoning for West Berkshire.
- b) Features identified in various settlement character studies including Quality Design - West Berkshire Supplementary Planning Document, the Newbury Historic Character Study, Conservation Area Appraisals and community planning documents which have been adopted by the Council such as Parish Plans and Town and Village Design Statements.
- c) The nature of and the potential for heritage assets identified through the Historic Environment Record for West Berkshire and the extent of their significance.

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The Spatial Strategy

Policy SP1

Spatial Strategy

The overarching spatial strategy for West Berkshire will deliver the spatial vision and strategic objectives for the District over the plan period and inform the preparation of neighbourhood plans (NDPs). The strategy:

- a. Directs development to areas of lower environmental value;
- b. Optimises the use of previously developed land; and
- c. Optimises the density of development to make the best use of land whilst conserving and enhancing the distinctive character and identity of the built, historic and natural environment.

The development approach will be based on three spatial areas:

- Newbury and Thatcham
- Eastern Area
- North Wessex Downs AONB

The focus of development in each spatial area will be required to follow the District-wide settlement hierarchy set out in Policy SP3 which takes account of the function and sustainability of settlements and promotes sustainable communities.

Development and redevelopment within the settlement boundaries of those settlements identified in Appendix 2 and outlined on the Policies Map will be supported. Outside of settlement boundaries, land will be treated as open countryside where development will be more restricted, as set out in Policy DCM1 and DM35.

In each spatial area, opportunities should be taken to make the best use of previously developed land with higher densities of development in locations such as town centres, where the extent and capacity of supporting infrastructure, services and facilities is the greatest.

Density on individual sites will vary according to their location and context, size of developable area and site specific issues such as shape and access:

- Within Newbury, Thatcham, Tilehurst, Purley on Thames, and Calcot, developments are expected to secure a net density of at least 35 dwellings per hectare with densities of at least 70 dwellings per hectare in town centres and for flatted developments along main transport routes and close to transport nodes.
- Within other defined settlements developments are expected to secure a net density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare with higher densities achievable in the centres of Hungerford, Pangbourne and Theale.
- Developments on the edge of defined settlements are generally expected to secure a net density of 30 dwellings. However, lower density developments will be appropriate in certain areas of the District that are particularly sensitive to the impact of intensification and redevelopment. This may be because of the prevailing character of the area, the sensitive nature of the surrounding countryside or built form, and/or the relative remoteness from public transport.

The strategy will deliver a range of site sizes for residential development. There are already significant existing commitments throughout the District. Additional development will come forward on both large strategic sites and smaller non-strategic sites allocated in the LPR and in some neighbourhood plans, together with infill development, including that on windfall sites within settlement boundaries. Allocations will be related to the role and function of settlements and the development opportunities identified through the HELAA.

Town centres will be expected to continue to play a vital role for communities and will need to adapt to meet the changing needs of communities. Main town centre uses will be located in accordance with Policy SP22. Within town centres, schemes will be of an appropriate scale and character to respond to the role and function of the centre and to support sustainable communities.

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Employment development to meet the existing and future economic demands of businesses will be directed to sites allocated for employment land, to sites within settlement boundaries, to Designated Employment Areas (DEA) and to existing suitably located employment sites, to help promote sustainable patterns of development, prioritise the use of previously developed land and support the retention of these areas for employment uses. In accordance with Policy SP20 and Policy SP22, proposals for office development will be directed to town and district centres and DEAs.

Proposals to strengthen and diversify the rural economy will be encouraged, particularly where they are located in or adjacent to Rural Service Centres and Service Villages identified in the settlement hierarchy. Existing small and medium sized enterprises within the countryside will be supported in order to provide local job opportunities and maintain the vitality of smaller rural settlements and their communities.

Demand for travel will be managed, and accessibility to sustainable transport opportunities increased through improving choice in transport modes. Existing community infrastructure will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced. Infrastructure requirements will be set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

The District's historic environment and environmental assets will continue to be protected and enhanced and used positively in development to establish a distinctive sense of place that nurtures human health and wellbeing.

Newbury and Thatcham

Newbury will retain its traditional market town heritage and continue to fulfil its key role as the administrative centre and major town centre for the District. Opportunities will continue to be taken to regenerate and enhance the townscape of the town centre and its periphery.

Newbury will be a focus for housing development. An urban extension on greenfield land to the south of Newbury, at Sandeford Park will provide a new residential neighbourhood with supporting facilities and green infrastructure in accordance with Policy SP16. Smaller scale developments will include redevelopment of previously developed land.

Thatcham will be a focus for regeneration, for new housing and for improved provision of services and facilities. A new urban extension to the north east of the town will provide a new residential neighbourhood with supporting facilities and green infrastructure in accordance with Policy SP17. Opportunities will be taken to maintain and enhance the identity of Thatcham separate to that of Newbury and its surrounding rural settlements in accordance with Policy DM2.

Newbury and Thatcham will remain the focus for business development, with Newbury the main focus for office development. DEAs in this spatial area will play a vital role in meeting the existing and future economic needs of the District.

The villages in the surrounding area will retain their existing role and separate identity, with settlement boundaries and Policies SP8, DM1 and DM2 ensuring that physical separation is maintained.

Eastern Area

The individual identities of the separate settlements within this area will be maintained and the high quality landscape and environmental assets in this part of West Berkshire will be conserved and enhanced.

Theale will be a focus for additional housing through existing commitments and new allocations.

The area will continue to be important for business development with the retention of DEAs.

North Wessex Downs AONB

The North Wessex Downs AONB will have appropriate and sustainable growth that conserves and enhances its special landscape qualities as set out in Policy SP2.

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North Wessex Downs AONB

Policy SP2

North Wessex Downs AONB

The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) will have appropriate and sustainable growth that conserves and enhances its special landscape qualities. Development will be required to respond positively to the local context, conserving and enhancing local distinctiveness, sense of place and setting of the AONB. The strong sense of remoteness, tranquillity and dark night skies, particularly on the open downland, should be preserved. The conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape will be the primary consideration in the assessment of all development proposals.

Development in the North Wessex Downs will be required to support its local communities and rural economy in a manner commensurate with the statutory status of the AONB as a nationally valued landscape. Planning permission will be refused for major development in the AONB except in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated to be in the public interest.

In determining what constitutes major development, the Council will consider whether the development, by reason of its scale, character or nature, has the potential to have a significant adverse impact on the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. This will include the consideration of the individual characteristics of a proposal and its context and the impact of cumulative development.

If an application is deemed to be major development then further consideration will take account of:

- a. The need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- b. The cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the AONB, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- c. Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

If it is considered that exceptional circumstances exist and development would be in the public interest, all opportunities to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the AONB will be sought.

Supporting text

4.24 The primary purpose of AONB designation, 'to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area', is set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The North Wessex Downs AONB covers 74% of West Berkshire and its natural beauty is a function of the relationship between people and place over time. It encompasses everything that makes the area distinctive: the area's geology and landform; its climate, soils and rivers; its wildlife and ecology; its rich history of human settlement and land use over millennia; its archaeology and buildings and cultural associations; and the people who have occupied the area in the past and those who currently live and work there. It is inevitable and appropriate that this unique landscape will continue to change and develop but it is important that this is done in a way that conserves and enhances its special qualities. Under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the Council has a duty to have regard to the primary purpose of designation and so this policy makes clear that the North Wessex Downs will have appropriate sustainable growth throughout the plan period to support its local communities and rural economy in a manner commensurate with its statutory status.

4.25 The [North Wessex Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment \(2002\)](#) draws out the special qualities of the landscape and identifies the main issues that will need to be addressed to conserve its special character and outstanding qualities. It is complemented by the [West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment \(2019\)](#) which identifies in more detail the sensitivities and qualities of the features that are particularly valued for their contribution to landscape character (i.e. if any one attribute ceased to exist, it would change the character to the detriment of the landscape).

4.26 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) requires local authorities to produce management plans for AONB within their areas. The review, production and publication of the [Management Plan for the North Wessex Downs](#), (currently covering the period 2019-2024) together with the coordination of its delivery, has been delegated

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Settlement Hierarchy

Policy SP3

Settlement Hierarchy

Development in West Berkshire will be required to comply with the spatial strategy set out in Policy SP1. The focus of development will follow the District-wide settlement hierarchy which takes account of the function and sustainability of settlements across the District and promotes sustainable communities. The scale of development proposals will be expected to be relative to the existing or proposed level of facilities and services in the settlement, together with their accessibility.

Urban Areas: Newbury, Thatcham, Eastern Urban Area (Tilehurst, Calcot, Purley on Thames)

The urban areas will be the prime focus for housing and economic development, offering development potential through:

- a. Regeneration and change in the existing built up area including the redevelopment of suitable previously developed sites for both housing and employment purposes;
- b. Strategic and non-strategic sites allocated for housing and economic development through other policies in the LPR or neighbourhood plans;
- c. The retention of the individual identity of adjacent settlements; and
- d. The necessary supporting infrastructure.

Rural Service Centres: Burghfield Common, Hungerford, Lambourn, Mortimer, Pangbourne, Theale

These larger rural settlements offer development potential appropriate to the character and function of the settlement through:

- e. Infill or changes of use within the settlement boundary;
- f. Non-strategic sites allocated for housing and economic development through other policies in the LPR or neighbourhood plans; and
- g. Rural exceptions affordable housing schemes

Service Villages: Bradfield Southend, Chieveley, Cold Ash, Compton, Great Shefford, Hermitage, Kintbury, Woolhampton

These smaller rural settlements may offer some limited and small-scale development potential, appropriate to the character and function of the village, in order to meet local needs through:

- h. Infill or changes of use within the settlement boundary;
- i. Non-strategic sites allocated for housing and economic development through other policies in the LPR or neighbourhood plans; and
- j. Rural exceptions affordable housing schemes.

Development in smaller settlements with settlement boundaries, and which are not included in the settlement hierarchy, will be delivered in accordance with Policy SP1. Development outside of these settlements, in other rural hamlets and in isolated groups of development will be restricted to that which is appropriate in a rural area as set out in Policy DM1.

Supporting Text

4.29 The policy has been informed by a re-assessment of the existing settlement hierarchy used for the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006 – 2026) Development Plan Document. The revised and updated [settlement hierarchy](#) ensures that new development planned throughout the Plan period continues to be directed to the more sustainable settlements, is appropriate for the settlement in question and is adequately supported by infrastructure and services.

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AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield

Policy SP4

Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Aldermaston and Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Burghfield

In the interests of public safety, and to ensure that any proposed developments do not pose an external hazard to the AWE sites, any new development of a type more particularly described in the table below ⁽¹⁰⁾ located in the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ)⁽¹¹⁾ of AWE Aldermaston and AWE Burghfield is likely to be refused planning permission by the Council, especially when the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and/or Ministry of Defence (MoD) have advised against that development and/or object.

The ONR will be consulted on applications for new development in the DEPZ, Outer Consultation Zone (OCZ) ⁽¹²⁾ and any other consultation zone as detailed on [ONR-website](#) which meets the consultation criteria described in the table below (as may be amended by the ONR from time to time).

For development proposals in the DEPZ and OCZ for each of AWE's sites, consideration will be given as to how the proposed development would impact on the AWE Off-Site Emergency Plan and supporting documents.

Development within the Land Use Planning Consultation Zones: Office for Nuclear Regulation

AWE Aldermaston (AWE A)		AWE Burghfield (AWE B)
Zone	Development Type	
DEPZ	Any new development, re-use or re-classification of an existing development that could lead to an increase in residential or non-residential populations thus impacting on the off-site emergency plan.	
	Any new development, re-use or re-classification of an existing development that could pose an external hazard to the site.	
OCZ	Any new residential development of 200 dwellings or greater.	
	Any re-use or re-classification of an existing development that will lead to a material increase in the size of an existing development (greater than 500 persons).	
	Any new non-residential development that could introduce vulnerable groups to the OCZ.	
	Any new development, re-use or re-classification of an existing development that could pose an external hazard to the site.	
12km zone	A circular zone of 12km radius around all nuclear sites, for certain types of significant development due to the potential for such developments to pose an external hazard to sites.	

ONR's website provides non-exhaustive examples of the types of developments that could pose an external hazard to a nuclear licensed site and the examples of the type of developments ONR would expect to be consulted on.

The maps set out in Appendix 3 provide the mapping information, as at March 2020 in relation to the DEPZs, OCZs (5km) and the 12km consultation zones for each AWE site as per the ONR consultation criteria.⁽¹³⁾

Supporting Text

4.36 There are two nuclear licensed sites located in West Berkshire, the Atomic Weapons Establishment in Aldermaston (AWE A) and in Burghfield (AWE B). These are operated by AWE plc on behalf of the Ministry of Defence and regulated by the Office of Nuclear Regulation (ONR) (as well as other regulators).

10 This table reflects the ONR's consultation criteria as at 2022 – please note that these may change over time and the Policy SP4 reflects the Council's intention to follow the latest ONR guidance from time to time

11 Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) as defined by REPIR and as detailed on the Council's [website](#)

12 Outer Consultation Zone (OCZ) and 12km zones defined on ONR website along with relevant distances and centre points

13 It should be noted that the ONR 12km land use planning area should not be confused with the REPIR Outer Planning Zones (OPZ) for the AWE sites. OPZs are for emergency planning use only. In 2022 they were AWE Aldermaston 15km and AWE Burghfield 12km.

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5 Our environment and surroundings

Responding to climate change

Policy SP5

Responding to Climate Change

The principles of climate change mitigation and adaptation will be required to be embedded into new development, improving the resilience of land, buildings and existing and future communities to the opportunities and impacts arising from climate change. All development should contribute to West Berkshire becoming and staying carbon neutral by 2030. Depending on the nature and scale of proposals, development will be expected to satisfy the following criteria:

- a. To withstand predictable effects from climate change for its expected lifetime;
- b. To take advantage of the latest low and zero carbon technologies and innovations, including digital;
- c. To achieve net zero operational carbon development by applying the energy hierarchy, achieving the highest viable levels of energy efficiency, generating and supplying renewable, low and zero carbon energy, and as a last resort carbon offsetting in accordance with Policy DM4;
- d. To achieve the highest viable levels of energy efficiency;
- e. To generate and supply renewable, low and zero carbon energy for its own use and/or local distribution networks in accordance with Policy DM4;
- f. To provide for sustainable forms of vehicular and personal transport to and from the site and reduce car use in accordance with Policies SP23, DM44 and DM45;
- g. To enable recycling and waste reduction both during construction and occupation;
- h. To manage and conserve adequate water resources and avoid harming water quality and improve it where possible in accordance with Policies DM7 and DM6;
- i. To demonstrate that flood risk from all sources can be avoided or managed in accordance with Policy SP6;
- j. To use sustainable urban drainage systems in accordance with Policy SP6;
- k. To provide for green/blue infrastructure and open spaces within the layout for shading and cooling, to detain surface water run-off and absorb carbon dioxide emissions in accordance with Policy SP10;
- l. To improve wildlife habitat and species conservation and connectivity to allow for movement in response to climate change in accordance with Policy SP11; and
- m. To maintain the integrity of the historic environment and to respect the character and improve the environmental performance of heritage assets without compromising their significance, by adopting principles of reversibility and minimum intervention in accordance with Policy SP9.

Proposals should be accompanied by a Sustainability Statement which demonstrates how these principles have been embedded into the development. The level of information provided should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed.

Supporting text

5.1 Our climate is changing faster than it would otherwise due to our increased burning of fossil fuels for electricity, heating and powering transport as well as our consumption of products such as meat and milk from livestock that produce methane. The gases emitted such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous monoxide have added to our atmosphere and the greenhouse 'blanket' accelerating global temperatures and affecting the climate in ways that could change how we live and our long term behaviours. The effects of climate change include shifts in our seasons, hotter drier summers, warmer wetter winters, rising sea levels and more extreme weather events such as droughts, flash floods, and strong winds.

5.2 National policy is leading the response to climate change but there are measures that can be taken through the Local Plan to incorporate climate impacts into local decision making that radically reduce our contributions to greenhouse gas emissions and adapt development to enable communities and infrastructure to be more resilient to the consequences of climate change. Both reducing the impacts of, and being less vulnerable to, climate change is an essential part of delivering the environmental element of sustainable development.

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Flood risk

Policy SP6

Flood Risk

Flood zones are defined in Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and the Council's Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) ⁽¹⁸⁾. Within Flood Zones 2 and 3 (and also on sites of 1 hectare or more in size, and in other circumstances as set out in the NPPF, the sequential approach will be strictly applied across the District. Development within areas of flood risk from any source of flooding, including areas with a history of fluvial, groundwater or surface water flooding will only be supported if it is demonstrated that it is located and designed to ensure that flood risk from all sources of flooding is acceptable in planning terms, and there are no suitable and available sites at a lower flood risk.

A sequential test is needed for all development in all areas of flooding unless:

- a. The site is allocated for development and subject to the test at the plan-making stage (provided the proposed development is consistent with the use for which the site was allocated and provided there have been no significant changes to the known level of flood risk to the site, either now or in the future which would have affected the outcome of the test);
- b. The site is an area at low risk from all sources of flooding, unless the SFRA, or other information, indicates there may be a risk of flooding in the future; and
- c. The application is for a development type that is exempt from the test, as specified in the NPPF.

However applications for the above exceptions should still demonstrate all the requirements for site specific flood risk assessments.

The sequential approach should be followed for all development so that the most vulnerable development is located at the lowest risk flood areas within a site, taking account of all sources of flood risk. Development proposals should also include an assessment of the impact of climate change using appropriate climate change allowances over the lifetime of the development so that future flood risk is taken into account.

Only water compatible uses and essential infrastructure development will be supported in the area defined as functional floodplain (Flood Zone 3b). The exception test will still apply.

In applying the Sequential Test, where development has to be located in flood risk areas, it should be demonstrated that:

- d. It will be safe and not increase flood risk elsewhere;
- e. It will reduce the risk where possible and take into account climate change;
- f. Safe access and egress from the development will be provided during the 100-year plus climate change event, from any source of flooding;
- g. A sequential approach to development layout will be undertaken with the highest vulnerability development located in areas at lowest risk within the site; and
- h. Flood mitigation measures will be as set out in the Level 1 SFRA, or any future SFRA.

Evidence provided within the Level 1 SFRA should be used to apply the sequential test as well as provide evidence to show that other reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development have been adequately considered.

Where an Exception Test is required, in accordance with national policy and guidance, this should demonstrate how flood risk would be managed on site, including that the sustainability benefits of the site outweigh the flood risk and that the development will be safe for its lifetime, taking into account the vulnerability of its users and that it will not increase flood risk elsewhere.

Development will only be permitted in areas at risk of flooding if either of itself or cumulatively it can be demonstrated:

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- i. Through the sequential and exception test (where required), that the benefits of the development to the community outweigh the risk of flooding;
- j. It would not have a detrimental impact or impede on the flow of fluvial flood water, surface water or obstruct the run-off of water due to high levels of groundwater;
- k. It would not increase the number of people, property or infrastructure at risk of flooding;
- l. It would not reduce the capacity of the floodplain to store water and includes or contributes to compensation, flood mitigation and/or protection measures, where necessary, to manage flood risk associated with or caused by the development;
- m. It would not cause new or exacerbate existing flooding problems, either on the proposal site or elsewhere and would increase the flood storage capacity of the floodplain where possible;
- n. Provision is made for the long term maintenance and management of any flood protection and or mitigation measures for the lifetime of the development;
- o. Safe access and exit from the site can be provided for routine and emergency access under both frequent and extreme flood conditions; and
- p. Natural flood management measures can be implemented.

Mitigation measures should be considered as a last resort to address flood risk issues where the sequential and exception tests have demonstrated that development is necessary for wider sustainability benefits.

Proposed development will require a site specific flood risk assessment (FRA) if it meets any of the following criteria:

- q. All developments greater than 1ha in size located in Flood Zone 1.
- r. All developments located within Flood Zone 2 or 3, or 1 in 100-year flood extent plus climate change. This includes standing advice for minor developments such as non-residential extensions, alterations which do not increase the size of the building or householder developments. It also includes changes of use of an existing development.
- s. All developments where proposed development or a change of use in development type could be subject to other sources of flooding. This applies to those less than 1ha in Flood Zone 1.
- t. All developments located in an area which has been highlighted as having critical drainage problems by the lead local flood authority or the Environment Agency.

Development proposals will be required to incorporate appropriate comprehensive flood risk management measures as agreed with the Environment Agency or the Council as Lead Local Flood Authority. FRAs should be proportionate to the proposal and follow the latest government guidance on development and flood risk, complying with the approach recommended in national planning policy and guidance as well as the West Berkshire SFRA in appraising, managing and reducing the consequences of flooding both to and from a development site. Information on FRAs is also set out within the Level 1 SFRA.

All new development close to rivers and culverts should take advantage of the opportunity presented to improve and enhance the river environment, water quality, and contribute to biodiversity targets. To enable this, an undeveloped 10 metre buffer zone alongside main rivers and, where practicable and appropriate, ordinary watercourses should be provided. This buffer zone should be on both sides of the watercourse and be measured from the top of the river bank at the point at which the bank meets the level of the surrounding land.

On all development sites, in order to restrict or reduce runoff, surface water will be managed in a sustainable manner through the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Methods (SuDS) in accordance with the SuDS Supplementary Planning Document, best practice, and the Non-statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage⁽¹⁹⁾.

Restriction to greenfield run-off rates and volumes, for all new development on undeveloped sites should be provided, unless it can be demonstrated that this is not achievable, for all rainfall events up to and including the 1 in 100 year, including an allowance for climate change. For pre-developed sites a restriction to greenfield run-off rates and volumes, should be provided, unless it can be demonstrated that this is not achievable. For

19 DEFRA Non-statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-drainage-systems-non-statutory-technical-standards>

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pre-developed sites, a maximum discharge rate equivalent to 50% of the existing 1 in 100 year runoff rate would be accepted. SuDS should also provide other benefits where possible such as water quality, biodiversity and amenity.

Supporting Text

5.9 The risk of flooding within West Berkshire is widespread, arising not only from rivers, but also from surface water and groundwater, and sewer flooding. This policy aims to achieve a planning solution to flood risk management wherever possible, steering vulnerable development away from areas affected by flooding.

5.10 Under the NPPF, development is classed as 'essential infrastructure', 'less vulnerable', 'more vulnerable', 'highly vulnerable' or 'water compatible'. Table 2 of the Planning Practice Guidance ⁽²⁰⁾ provides further detail of the type of development considered appropriate for each Flood Zone, where development is not permitted, and where development is allowed only when an exception test is passed.

5.11 The Council has undertaken a [SFRA](#) of the District which has been agreed with the Environment Agency. This study supports this policy and has been used to evaluate allocation sites. It has considered all sources of flooding including fluvial, surface water, groundwater, sewers and reservoirs, both now and in the future, taking climate change into account.

5.12 Information on flood risk is being updated continuously and flood risk identified in the SFRA may change. The most up-to-date flood risk information should always be used to inform planning applications, including future SFRA's and the Flood Zones identified by the Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning. ⁽²¹⁾

5.13 Definitions for the following terms used in this policy can be found in the NPPF, Planning Practice Guidance, and the West Berkshire SFRA.

Sequential test, exception test, and sequential approach

5.14 The aim of the sequential test is to direct new development to areas at the lowest risk of flooding from all sources, both now and in the future, to ensure that areas with little or no risk of flooding are developed in preference to areas at higher risk. Development should not be permitted if there are reasonably available sites in areas with a lower risk of flooding. The sequential test is required in accordance with national policy.

5.15 In line with Planning Practice Guidance, the area of search for the sequential test should be defined by local circumstances relating to the catchment area for the type of development proposed. For some developments this may be clear, for example, the catchment area for a school. In other cases it may be identified from other policies contained within the LPR, for example Policies SP1, SP3, SP20, and DM1. Alternatively it may be identified through evidence produced for the LPR, for example the 2016 Berkshire Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) Study identified the Western Berkshire FEMA which comprises of West Berkshire District.

5.16 If it is not possible for development to be located in areas at lower risk of flooding, the exception test may need to be applied. The need for the exception test will depend on the vulnerability of the proposed development and the Flood Zone as set out in Planning Practice Guidance 'flood risk vulnerability classification' and 'flood risk vulnerability and flood zone compatibility table'.

5.17 The sequential approach to the layout of a development site can reduce the risk of flooding from all sources and not increase flood risk overall, both off and on site. This approach also ensures that the most vulnerable development is located within the areas of lowest risk of flooding.

5.18 The Council's SFRA provides the necessary information for the sequential and exception tests to be applied. Early discussions with the Environment Agency and the Council are encouraged, at the pre-application stage, for sites within flood risk areas, to address flooding issues.

20 Table 2 Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification, Planning Practice Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change#Table-2-Flood-Risk-Vulnerability-Classification>

21 Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

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Design quality

Policy SP7

Design Quality

New development will be required to strengthen a sense of place through high quality locally distinctive design and place shaping. This will enable healthy place making, creating places that are better for people, taking opportunities available for conserving and enhancing the character, appearance and quality of an area and the way it functions.

Development proposals will be expected to show how they have responded positively to both national and local design guidance. At a national level this includes the characteristics of a well-designed place as set out in the National Design Guide (2021), or as superseded, and at a local level, this includes neighbourhood plans and relevant community planning documents that identify the local character and distinctiveness of an area which is valued by local communities.

Supporting Text

5.28 A sense of place is about ensuring that development responds in a holistic way. The Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission ⁽²⁵⁾ notes that new development should be designed to fit into the life and texture of the place where it occurs and should also aim to be an improvement of that place. It promotes beautiful buildings in beautiful places, where they are also beautifully placed.

5.29 In that context, the purpose of this policy is to ensure that all new development across West Berkshire is of the highest possible design quality, in line with both national and local design guidance.

5.30 For new development to comply with the [National Design Guide](#) ⁽²⁶⁾ and be of the highest possible design quality, proposals for new development should demonstrate a positive response to the following characteristics of a well-designed place:

- a. Context – Proposals for new development should enhance the surroundings by beginning with an understanding of an area’s existing character and context and its design should evolve from West Berkshire’s high quality and diverse landscape character and rich built and cultural heritage.
- b. Identity – New development should be attractive and distinctive, complementing and enhancing existing areas, using architectural distinctiveness (through both the quality and choice of construction materials and techniques) and high quality design, to reinforce local identity and to create a sense of place; one that is successful and enjoyed. Architectural design should be appropriate and sympathetic to the setting, in terms of height, massing, scale, proportions, roof form, materials, night and day visibility, elevation, vernacular detailing (where relevant), hard and soft landscaping, curtilage and boundary treatment.
- c. Built form – All forms of development should be designed appropriately in terms of nature, location and scale. When assessing an application consideration will be given to the impact of the scheme taking into account existing approved and proposed development in the same locality and considering the cumulative impact of development over time.
- d. Movement - Proposals will be designed to enhance the way an area functions in practical terms through a mix of land uses, by ensuring the development is well connected, accessible, safe and easy for people to find their way through and around.
- e. Nature – Development will be designed to strengthen green infrastructure in accordance with policy SP10 and should include arrangements for its long term maintenance and management. Design proposals will create habitats and select species that are locally characteristic, taking opportunities to design wildlife habitats into the fabric of buildings and enhance wildlife connectivity in accordance with Policy SP11.
- f. Public spaces - A sense of place can be created through a full understanding of how new development contributes to the character of an area and adapting design techniques to create places that feel safe, and secure; places that feel inclusive and people enjoy using; places that promote physical activity, enhance social connections and strengthened mental health; and places that people can identify with and can take pride in or responsibility for their upkeep. Development will be comprehensive at a human scale using gateways, focal points and

25 Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission

26 National Design Guide

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Landscape character

Policy SP8

Landscape Character

Landscape led development which conserves and enhances the diversity and local distinctiveness of the landscape character of the District will be supported.

The natural, cultural, and perceptual components of the character of the landscape will be considered as a whole. Particular regard will be given to:

- a. Its valued features and qualities;
- b. The sensitivity and capacity of the area to change; and
- c. Ensuring that new development is appropriate in terms of location, scale and design in the context of the existing settlement form, pattern and character.

Development should be demonstrably informed by and respond positively to the evaluation of the distinctive landscape character areas set out in the [West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment](#) (2019) and other relevant landscape character assessments. These assessments provide an understanding of the valued characteristics, features and qualities of identified local landscape character areas across West Berkshire.

Proposals for development should be accompanied by an appropriate landscape assessment carried out in accordance with the current guidance from the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment. The level of information provided should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed but should be sufficient to allow an informed assessment of the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed development. The assessment should demonstrably inform the detailed design of the development, including its layout, form, scale and appearance in accordance with Policy SP7.

Supporting Text

5.36 One of the key issues facing West Berkshire is the conservation and enhancement of the distinctive local character of both the natural, and built and historic environment. It helps local people in West Berkshire achieve sustainable development. The high quality diverse landscape character with its rich cultural and natural heritage contributes to the enjoyment and overall quality of life of everyone in the District. Having an understanding of this distinctive character and using this as a positive tool in accommodating necessary change will ensure that the inherent qualities and valued features of West Berkshire's landscape will continue to be appreciated.

5.37 Conserving and enhancing the distinctive landscape character of the District is given considerable weight in line with national policy which sets out that valued landscapes should be protected in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan.

5.38 74% of the District lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB, extending from Wiltshire in the west and Oxfordshire in the north, over the Berkshire Downs. At West Berkshire's eastern boundary, the River Thames, the North Wessex Downs AONB adjoins the Chilterns AONB above Purley-on-Thames and then curves back around the north of Newbury before returning south to cover part of the Hampshire Downs. The AONB is characterised by the quality of its chalk landscape which ranges from remote open downland, dramatic skyline escarpments, contrasting wooded downland, and the small scale intimate settled river valleys of the Lambourn and Pang. As a nationally valued and designated landscape, the North Wessex Downs AONB will be conserved and enhanced in accordance with its national status and this is set out in Policy SP2.

5.39 A landscape does not have to have a designation to be valued locally. Outside the AONB, the River Kennet and the inter-connected Kennet & Avon Canal, from Newbury to Reading, lies within a distinctive broad corridor of an open lowland landscape characterised by a variety of wetland habitats including wet meadow, reed bed, and flooded gravel workings. Further to the south and east there are small areas of remnant heath with the Ministry of Defence owning large tracts of land at Aldermaston and Burghfield.

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Historic environment

Policy SP9

Historic Environment

Positive action will be taken to ensure that opportunities for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment are maximised. The historic character, sense of place, environmental quality and local distinctiveness of West Berkshire will also be sustained and enhanced through new development. Development proposals will be required to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance those aspects of the historic environment which are recognised as being of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest, or of landscape or townscape significance. These heritage assets include:

- a. Listed Buildings;
- b. Scheduled Monuments and archaeological sites of national importance;
- c. Registered Parks and Gardens;
- d. Registered Battlefields;
- e. Conservation Areas;
- f. Buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas and landscapes that have been added to the [West Berkshire Local List of Heritage Assets](#); and
- g. Other places, spaces, structures and features which may not be formally designated but are recognised as significant elements of West Berkshire's heritage and are positively identified on the [West Berkshire Historic Environment Record](#), or through the development management or other planning processes.

Development that has an impact upon a heritage asset, whether designated or non-designated, will be expected to maximise opportunities to preserve, enhance, or better reveal the asset's significance and/or setting, and make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness through high standards of design in accordance with Policy SP7.

All proposals affecting a heritage asset, including its setting, should be accompanied by a 'Statement of Heritage Significance', in accordance with the current guidance from Historic England. For known assets of archaeological interest, or on land where there is archaeological potential, an archaeological desk-based assessment will be required as a minimum. The level of information provided should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed but should be sufficient to allow an informed assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage asset.

Weight will be given to the conservation of the District's heritage assets in a manner according to their importance. Any harm to the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset must be justified. Proposals will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal: whether it has been demonstrated that all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain the existing use, find new uses, or mitigate the extent of the harm to the significance of the asset; and whether the works proposed are the minimum required to secure the long term use of the asset.

Development which would lead to substantial harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset or its setting will not be permitted, unless –

- h. This harm is demonstrated necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that cannot otherwise be achieved and which outweigh that harm; or
- i. The nature of the asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- j. No viable use of the asset can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;
- k. Conservation by grant funding or some other form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- l. The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Development which would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset or its setting will not be permitted, unless this harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

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Where development would affect the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, a balanced judgement will be made which has regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Development proposals for enabling development which would otherwise conflict with other policies in the Local Plan but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset will be permitted where:

- i. the proposals will not materially harm the heritage value of the asset or its setting;
- ii. it can be demonstrated that alternative solutions have failed;
- iii. the proposed development is the minimum necessary to protect the significance of the heritage asset;
- iv. it meets the tests and criteria set out in Historic England guidance GPA4: Enabling Development and Heritage Assets;
- v. it is subject to a legal agreement to secure the restoration of the asset prior to completion of the enabling development; and
- vi. it enables public appreciation of the saved heritage asset.

Where material change to a heritage asset has been agreed, recording and interpretation should be undertaken to document and understand the asset's archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance. The scope of the recording should be proportionate to the asset's significance and the impact of the development on the asset. The information and understanding gained should be made available for public benefit, as a minimum through the deposition of evidence with the West Berkshire Historic Environment Record. Archaeological archives resulting from investigations in West Berkshire should be deposited in West Berkshire Museum or an appropriate digital depository, with provision made for ongoing conservation, storage, access and interpretation.

Proposals for development will be informed by and respond to:

- m. The nature and potential of heritage assets identified through the West Berkshire Historic Environment Record and the extent of their significance;
- n. Relevant historic landscape character assessments;
- o. Other features identified in various settlement character studies including the Newbury Historic Character Study and Conservation Area Appraisals; and
- p. The West Berkshire Historic Environment Action Plan (HEAP).

Supporting Text

5.44 People have left their mark on our landscape for over ten thousand years, modifying natural features, utilising local materials, cultivating the soil and creating monuments, buildings and settlements. This multi-layered interaction of humans and their environment tells our story and gives us a perspective on our own times. West Berkshire's historic environment is therefore a positive and irreplaceable resource, valuable not only in social, educational and economic terms, but as a frame and reference point for the creation of distinctive places for existing and future generations to enjoy. It shapes the District's sense of identity and is intrinsically linked to the quality of life of its residents, the success of its existing businesses and the wider cultural profile that West Berkshire projects to potential investors and visitors. The Local Plan therefore sets out to implement a positive strategy for the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the historic environment across the District as a fundamental approach to sustainable development.

5.45 The policy gives great weight to conserving the significance of heritage assets and their settings in a manner according to their importance. Heritage assets include any valued component of the historic environment, be it a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape, identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the Council, 'non-designated' heritage assets.

5.46 There are a wide variety of heritage assets across West Berkshire, ranging in age from the early prehistoric to the modern day and in scale from landscape parks to milestones.

5.47 Designated heritage assets in 2020 include:

- 53 Conservation Areas
- Approximately 1900 Listed Buildings
- Approximately 90 Scheduled Monuments

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Green Infrastructure**Policy SP10****Green Infrastructure**

The Council will strengthen both local and strategic green infrastructure (GI) assets across the District. This will be achieved by protecting and enhancing existing GI assets and linkages and adding to the local network for the benefit of both the natural environment and the health and wellbeing of the community. This policy will be considered in conjunction with other policies in the LPR affecting the status and provision of GI in the District.

Depending on their location, nature and scale, development proposals should:

- a. Protect and/or enhance existing GI and the functions this performs,
- b. Create additional GI which is integrated into the overall development design from the outset; and
- c. Take opportunities to achieve multi-functionality by bringing GI functions together.

Proposals for GI will be supported where they:

- d. Help to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change and boost resilience through sustainable drainage measures which minimise urban heating, flood risk and maximising GI habitats to sequester carbon and provide environmental cooling and insulation functions;
- e. Generate high quality GI which creates an attractive and distinctive setting to new development, enhancing any existing asset that may be present. This should be planned and designed from the outset as a network of multifunctional green and blue spaces and other natural features which identify and respond to the site's local context. Proposals for GI will be expected to be designed in accordance with the most up to date recognised GI standards;
- f. Can provide pleasant and safe 'green routes' to commute or travel on foot, cycle and horseback which help to link parts of urban areas and to the surrounding countryside along blue (water) and green corridors;
- g. Enhance the natural environment and natural processes to improve biodiversity and increase natural capital whilst seeking opportunities to use green infrastructure to extend wildlife corridors and provide habitat connectivity, particularly in urban areas and where it contributes to nature recovery networks;
- h. Use the GI network to help improve health and wellbeing and promote local social interaction and community networks;
- i. Increase its attractiveness as a recreation opportunity and support accessibility to public open spaces which are adaptable and capable of accommodating multiple uses of varying ability;
- j. Restore and open up historic routeways such as hollow ways and drovers roads, avenues and access to historic parks;
- k. Does not involve the culverting of watercourses, except where essential to allow highways and / or other infrastructure to cross;
- l. Protect, enhance and support the creation of integrated constructed wetlands, 'wet woodland' habitats, ponds, lakes, reed beds, raingardens, and floodplain meadows;
- m. Make appropriate provision to protect, enhance, improve and maintain accessible networks of blue corridors, including the restoration of chalk streams and their catchments, de-culverting, back water creation, de-silting, naturalising the channel through in-channel habitat enhancements and removal of structures where appropriate;
- n. Maintain and enhance natural drainage features; and
- o. Provide 'buffer strips' of vegetation along the banks of water courses.

Development proposals will be required to take account of existing access networks within and around the site. Opportunities should be sought to protect and enhance the Public Rights of Way network within and adjacent to development proposals in line with the NPPF, having particular regard to ensuring the needs of all users have been provided throughout the year. The addition of new connections and status upgrades to the existing rights of way network will be supported.

Proposals involving the loss of green or blue spaces and other natural features will not be supported unless there is no longer a need for the existing infrastructure or an alternative is provided to meet the local needs that is both accessible and of equal or greater quality and benefit to the community.

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Proposals for major development will be required to consider the long-term management and maintenance of GI infrastructure and should clearly demonstrate how these considerations have informed site proposals. Details of maintenance requirements and arrangements will be required to be set out, including who is responsible for these requirements. Appropriate funding arrangements for delivery of the long-term maintenance requirements should be clearly demonstrated to the Council before construction starts, including measures to secure biodiversity net gain through all phases and stages of the development.

The amount, type and design of GI will be informed by the appropriate national and local standards, guidance and best practice current at the time of the application.

Supporting text

5.61 The NPPF defines green infrastructure as ‘a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity’. It is integral to successful place-making through the range of multi-faceted benefits well-designed and integrated green infrastructure can bring to an area. In West Berkshire the Green Infrastructure network will be The network is planned, designed and managed to:

- promote healthier living and positive well-being;
- lessen the impacts of climate change;
- improve air quality and water quality;
- support economic growth and investment via greener settings;
- boost tourism and support tourism related jobs;
- encourage walking, cycling, horse riding and other recreational and sensory experiences;
- store carbon; and
- improve biodiversity and ecological resilience.

5.62 Examples of GI assets include:

- Natural and semi-natural rural and urban green and blue spaces – including woodland and scrub, hedgerows, individual trees and groups of trees grassland (e.g. downland and meadow), heath, wetlands, open and running water, brownfield sites and bare rock habitats (e.g. quarries);
- Parks and gardens – urban and country parks, formal gardens, and institutional grounds (e.g. schools and hospitals);
- Amenity green space – informal recreation spaces, play areas, outdoor sports facilities, housing greenspaces, community gardens, roof gardens, village greens, commons, living roofs and walls, trees and hedgerows, civic spaces, and highway trees and verges;
- Allotments, orchards, and farmland;
- Cemeteries and churchyards;
- Green/blue corridors - rivers and canals (including their banks and towpaths), road verges and rail embankments, cycling routes and public rights of way;
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites and Nature Reserves;
- Local Green Spaces;
- Accessible archaeological and historic sites;
- Functional green space such as sustainable drainage schemes (SuDS) and flood storage areas;
- Green and brown roofs and green walls on buildings; and
- Lakes and reservoirs.

5.63 The government’s 25 Year Environment Plan (2018) highlights that ‘The provision of more and better quality green infrastructure, including urban trees, will make towns and cities attractive places to live and work, and bring about key long term improvements in people’s health’. The document makes a commitment to the production of a GI Framework, ⁽³¹⁾ currently being produced by Natural England, which will help to target the creation and/or improvement of GI across the District. The Framework complements Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Nature Recovery Strategies which both form part of the Environment Act (2021). To ensure high quality multi-functional GI is delivered in West Berkshire as set out in the policy, development proposals will be expected to be designed having regard to the Natural

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Biodiversity and geodiversity**Policy SP11****Biodiversity and geodiversity**

Development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they conserve and enhance biodiversity and/or geodiversity including their long-term future management and deliver a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain.

Development will be permitted where it:

- a. Protects biodiversity and/or geodiversity value and implements appropriate conservation management. The degree of protection will be proportionate to the status of the site or species in terms of its international, national and/or local importance;
- b. Avoids fragmentation and maximises opportunities for restoration, enhancements and connection of linear features which enables strong connectivity of biodiversity as part of an integrated habitat network (including links to habitats outside the district);
- c. Incorporates beneficial biodiversity and/or geodiversity conservation features and enhances existing features, including those that will help wildlife to adapt to climate change where appropriate;
- d. Provides or retains appropriate buffer zones between development proposals and designated sites, habitats for protected or priority species or main rivers, which are informed by detailed site-based assessment;
- e. Provides coherent ecological connectivity and permeability that is integrated and linked to the wider green infrastructure and any nature recovery network identified as relevant to the location;
- f. Seeks to eradicate or control any invasive non-native species present on site; and
- g. Is compatible with any Biodiversity Action Plan, Local Nature Recovery Strategy and /or other strategic conservation management plans for species or habitats that have been formally adopted by the Council.

In addition to the above, where specific identified sites are to be affected the following will be taken into account:

Internationally Designated Sites

Development likely to result in a significant effect on an internationally designated site will be subject to assessment under the Habitats Regulations and will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there are no alternatives following/through appropriate derogation tests for the proposal and that any adverse effects on the integrity of the site can be fully avoided, mitigated and/or compensated and proposals are in the public interest.

Nationally Designated Sites

Development which is likely to have any adverse impact on the notified features of a nationally designated site will not normally be permitted. In exceptional circumstances, a proposal may be found acceptable where it can be demonstrated that:

- j. A suitable alternative site with a lesser impact than that proposed is not available;
- k. The on-site benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the impacts on the notified features of the site and where applicable, the overall site or habitat network;
- l. All appropriate mitigation measures have been proposed and secured through the development management process; and
- m. Does not prevent future attainment of nationally protected sites from meeting Favourable Condition, or to provide enhancements to enable the nationally designated sites to meet Favourable Condition as per their Conservation Objectives.

Irreplaceable Habitats

Proposals which are likely to result in the loss or deterioration of an irreplaceable habitat (such as ancient woodland, ancient or veteran trees, ancient hedgerows, traditional unimproved meadows/ancient grasslands and lowland fens) will only be permitted for wholly exceptional reasons where:

- o. The need and benefits of the development in that location clearly and unambiguously outweigh the loss;

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- p. It has been adequately demonstrated that the irreplaceable habitat cannot be retained with the proposed scheme; and
- q. Appropriate compensation measures are provided on site wherever possible and off site where this not is feasible. The scale and quality of the compensation measures required will be commensurate to the loss or deterioration of the irreplaceable habitat and will be considered on a site by site basis, including long term management and maintenance.

Sites of Local Importance

Development proposals affecting sites of local importance should always seek to contribute to their favourable management in the long term.

Where a proposal is likely to result in harm to sites of local importance (including habitats or species of principal importance for biodiversity, and sites that meet the criteria for designation as a Local Wildlife Site or designation as a Local Geological Site), developers will be required to accord with the following sequential approach:

- r. Firstly, seek an alternative site in the District with a lesser impact than that proposed;
- s. Secondly, if the first is not possible, demonstrate mitigation measures can be taken on site; and
- t. Thirdly, and as a last resort, seek appropriate compensation measures, on site wherever possible and off site where this is not feasible including long term management and maintenance.

Biodiversity Net Gain

All proposals should demonstrate a minimum biodiversity net gain of 10% via a Biodiversity Net Gain Plan using the most up to date biodiversity accounting metric developed by Natural England and provide details of the long-term maintenance and management of the net gain. This should be delivered on site in the first instance, or through biodiversity off setting where appropriate.

Major developments in particular must include measures to deliver biodiversity gains through opportunities to:

- u. Restore and enhance existing features on site;
- v. Create additional habitats and ecological networks on site which help support the District's wider ecological network; and
- w. The linking of existing habitats within West Berkshire to create links between ecological networks and where possible, with adjoining features.

Supporting text

5.67 West Berkshire supports a rich and diverse range of biodiversity and geodiversity assets which reflect both the underlying geology and soils and traditional management practices that have been carried out over many years. The aim of this policy is to provide a framework for conserving and enhancing this richness and diversity both for its own sake, but also the positive contribution that it makes to the overall quality of life and sense of place for residents and visitors to West Berkshire in both urban and rural areas. Policy SP11 sets out how new development in West Berkshire will be expected to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment at a landscape scale as well as sites of biodiversity importance at different levels. Where appropriate, new development should promote conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and should secure opportunities for a net gain for biodiversity.

5.68 The 2019 'State of Nature Report' indicates that biodiversity across the UK is continuing to decline and as such change is required in relation to how we manage land. The Report highlights that urbanisation can fragment landscapes by creating barriers between habitats, thus isolating some populations but also recognises the wide variety of green spaces which exist within urban environments including domestic gardens, parks, allotments, cemeteries, ponds, and road verges which can all add to biodiversity value. Habitat connectivity is a key challenge for biodiversity and linked to the challenge of the climate crisis it is important that habitats do not become isolated with metapopulations and local populations of faunal and flora species finding themselves less able to respond to natural fluctuations where they can face heightened risk of decline and extinction.

5.69 Linear features, or stepping stones, which form part of the connected habitat includes networks of hedgerows and ditches; habitats along all water courses; roadside verges; and (cumulatively) private gardens (including links to habitats outside the District) are essential for the migration, dispersal, and genetic exchange of wild species. Examples of linear features within West Berkshire include waterways such as the River Kennet, River Lambourn and the Kennet and Avon Canal and they play an important role in providing strong connecting links across the biodiversity network.

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7 Fostering economic growth and supporting local communities

Strategic approach to employment land

Policy SP20

Strategic approach to employment land

Through the LPR the Council will seek to facilitate the growth and forecasted change of business development over the plan period by promoting the supply of office and industrial space across the District to meet the identified shortfall.

Appropriate proposals for business development (offices, industrial, and storage and distribution) will be supported where they are located:

- a. On sites allocated for business development as set out Policy SP21 and in accordance with the individual site specific policy; or
- b. On a suitable site within a settlement boundary; or
- c. Within a Designated Employment Area (DEA) in accordance with Policy DM32 and as defined on the Policies Map; or
- d. On previously developed land within existing suitably located employment sites; or
- e. Within the countryside provided the proposal is in accordance with other relevant policies within the Plan, in particular Policy DM35.

Proposals for new office development that are not within a town or district centre as set out in Policy SP22 or within a DEA will be required to satisfy the sequential test.

Development proposals that would result in the loss of business development outside of a DEA, will be required to justify the loss of floorspace and/or land. As a minimum, this will require marketing evidence and demonstrating that the proposal will:

- f. Not substantially prejudice the overall supply of employment land over the plan period; and
- g. Not conflict with or undermine the function of existing neighbouring uses; and
- h. If offices within a town or district centre, maintain the vitality of that centre;
- i. If in the countryside, the proposal would also need to demonstrate that it does not have a significant negative impact on the vitality and viability of the local economy of the surrounding rural area in accordance with Policy DM35.

The redevelopment and regeneration of existing employment sites for business uses will be supported.

A range of types and sizes of employment sites and premises will be encouraged throughout the District to meet the needs of the local economy. Proposals for business development should be of a high quality design and in keeping with the surrounding environment.

Where feasible and appropriate, the Council will encourage an Employment and Skills Plan as part of major business development proposals.

Supporting text

7.1 The purpose of this policy is to set the framework to facilitate and promote the growth and forecasted change of business development across the District over the plan period to 2039. For the purposes of this Plan business uses/development are office, industrial, storage and distribution, and the term employment land/site refers to the land on which these uses are located. It is recognised that the term economic development is broader and encompasses other employment generating uses including main town centre uses, as well as community and public uses.

7.2 The Council Strategy 2019 – 2023 sets out six priorities of which one is to support businesses to start, develop and thrive in West Berkshire, stemming from the Council's Strategy theme 'Open for Business'. This theme is followed through within the Council's [Economic Development Strategy](#) which seeks to boost inclusivity, productivity and sustainability in a way that benefits all of our residents and businesses.

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Sites allocated for employment land

Policy SP21

Sites Allocated for Employment Land

The following sites will be allocated to facilitate the growth and forecasted change of industrial land over the plan period to 2039:

Table 4

Policy Ref	Site Name	Approximate Floorspace (sqm)	Use
ESA1	Land east of Colthrop Industrial Estate, Thatcham	20,400	B2/B8
ESA2	Land west of Ramsbury Road, Membury Industrial Estate, Lambourn Woodlands	10,381	B2/B8
ESA3	Land to the south of Trinity Grain, Membury Industrial Estate, Lambourn Woodlands	5,200	Egiii/B2
ESA4	Beenham Landfill, Pips Way, Beenham	14,000	B2/B8
ESA5	Northway Porsche, Grange Lane, Beenham	6,400	Egiii/B2
ESA6	Land adjacent to Padworth IWMF, Padworth Lane, Padworth	12,400	B2/B8

Each of the above allocations are subject to a site allocation policy (Policy ESA1 - Policy ESA6), providing criteria by which planning applications will be assessed against. Each policy is accompanied by an indicative map.

New Designated Employment Areas

The following locations are currently well established employment areas within West Berkshire. Their importance to the local economy is recognised by identifying them as Designated Employment Areas (DEA).

Site Name
Greenham Business Park, Greenham, Thatcham
The Vodafone Campus, Newbury
Langley Business Court, Worlds End, Beedon

Supporting Text

7.22 The purpose of this policy is to set the framework to facilitate and promote the growth and forecasted change of business development across the District over the plan period. The policy allocates sites for industrial land to assist in meeting the identified need set out in the [West Berkshire Employment Land Review](#) (ELR, 2022) and designates three currently well established employment areas as Designated Employment Areas (DEA).

7.23 The Council will seek to ensure that sufficient sites are provided in the right locations to foster sustainable economic growth. The allocated sites are focused around or near to areas of existing employment activity, and mainly adjacent to defined Designated Employment Areas. Those sites allocated on land adjacent to a DEA, will, through this LPR, now form part of that DEA.

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Transport

Policy SP23

Transport

Development that generates a transport impact will be required to:

- Minimise the impact of all forms of travel on the environment, in accordance with West Berkshire's declared Climate Emergency and Environment Strategy;
- Improve and promote opportunities for active travel;
- Improve travel choice and facilitate sustainable travel particularly within, between and to main urban areas and rural service centres;
- Demonstrate good access to key services and facilities;
- Mitigate any adverse impact on local transport networks and the strategic road network; and
- Have regard to the West Berkshire Freight Route Network and availability of lorry parking where development will need the support of these facilities.

Non-residential developments will be required to prepare Transport Assessments or Transport Statements as appropriate in support of the proposed development. The judgement regarding the need for such documents lies with the Council and will be guided by indicative thresholds for various uses.

For residential development, a full Transport Assessment will be required where 60 or more dwellings are proposed. Where 30 or more dwellings are proposed, a Transport Statement will be required. Where appropriate, any development below 60 dwellings may be requested to produce a full Transport Assessment. Development proposals should follow the advice set out in the Council's 'Highway Design Guidance for Residential Developments.'

Travel Plans and the implementation of associated measures will be required for all developments which generate a significant amount of transport movement and in accordance with Policy DM45 relating to travel planning measures.

Supporting Text

7.42 The provision of a sustainable transport network to serve the communities of West Berkshire is essential for improving accessibility, enhancing economic vitality, protecting the environment, and promoting quality of life. The policy therefore seeks to encourage sustainable travel in order to achieve these goals, and to minimise the impact on local transport networks and the strategic road network.

7.43 Central to this policy is the recognition of the part that transport needs to play in adapting to help achieve the local Climate Emergency target of carbon neutrality by 2030. The development of new ideas and technologies in relation to reducing the environmental harm caused by our travel activities is moving at pace. It is essential that new development in the District adopts the latest standards and practices in reducing carbon in order that transport and travel is leading the way in West Berkshire in tackling climate change and minimising harm to our environment.

7.44 Improving and promoting opportunities for active travel should be considered for all development and be carried out in a way that recognises safety as a key consideration. Particular focus should be given to the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians, and other vulnerable road users. These active travel modes benefit people's health and are promoted through the [Local Transport Plan](#) and supporting [Active Travel Strategy](#), and the [Environment Strategy](#).

7.45 Improving travel choice is a key way of working towards a modal shift away from single occupancy car use in favour of more sustainable travel (walking, cycling, bus and rail travel, car sharing, car clubs). Improving sustainable travel choice within and between the main urban areas and rural service centres of West Berkshire and key destinations in neighbouring authorities will help to facilitate regular journeys for example to work and education. All development will be required to show how it improves travel choice and reduces the use of single occupancy cars.

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Infrastructure requirements and delivery

Policy SP24

Infrastructure Requirements and Delivery

New development will be supported where it contributes to the delivery of infrastructure to support the overall spatial strategy of West Berkshire. This includes making contributions to the delivery of all relevant infrastructure projects included in the IDP in the form of financial contributions or on site provision. Infrastructure, facilities and services both on and off site, that are necessary to make the development acceptable, will be supported if provided at the appropriate stage.

The Council will collaborate with other strategic policy making authorities to ensure that administrative boundaries do not restrict the delivery of the most appropriate infrastructure response.

To ensure that communities and business are able to function and grow in a sustainable and effective manner, within the context of the Council's declared local climate emergency, the Council will work with infrastructure providers and stakeholders, agencies and organisations and funding providers, to identify requirements for and enable the delivery of infrastructure and services for new development and infrastructure development in its own right.

The Council will seek to protect, co-ordinate and, where appropriate, improve services and facilities that provide a key function in the operation of existing communities and protecting environmental quality. The loss of existing infrastructure will only be supported if a suitable alternative can be provided or it can be demonstrated that the infrastructure is no longer required to meet the needs of the community.

The key strategic and local infrastructure schemes required to facilitate new development and secure the delivery of development within this plan will be linked to the phasing of new development. Phasing and specific infrastructure requirements are set out within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

Supporting Text

7.52 To ensure that new development within West Berkshire is sustainable, it needs to be supported by adequate and appropriate infrastructure in a timely manner. Infrastructure includes, but is not limited to, physical, social and green (including blue) infrastructure. Certainty regarding the infrastructure requirements of new development is needed, and therefore infrastructure will be completed in advance of new development where appropriate. This is to make certain that the needs of the occupiers of new development can be met without placing undue burdens on existing infrastructure facilities and services.

7.53 Existing infrastructure facilities and services in West Berkshire will play an important role in helping to meet demand where spare capacity has been identified or where co-location of facilities can be achieved for multiple uses. As such, the Council will be seeking to protect and make best use of its existing infrastructure assets.

7.54 In preparing the LPR, the Council is working in partnership with infrastructure providers, both internal Council departments and external organisations, to identify the infrastructure required to support and facilitate the new development proposed in the plan. Details of this are contained in the Council's emerging Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

7.55 The [Infrastructure Delivery Plan](#) (IDP) sets out a range of infrastructure projects to be delivered over the lifetime of the plan and includes details of the timing and type of infrastructure, costs associated with delivery and funding arrangements or gaps and who will lead on delivery. Infrastructure schemes identified in the early phase of the Local Plan will have greater certainty of being delivered and although longer term schemes may be more fluid at this stage, the IDP is a living document which will be updated on a regular basis to ensure it remains up to date with the timing of projects and their costs and funding.

7.56 The Council will always seek to ensure that development makes a fair contribution to infrastructure, with developers taking the lead in this provision. Therefore, and where appropriate, the Council will encourage developers to provide the necessary infrastructure and facilities themselves as part of new development, rather than by making financial contributions, provided that these include funded proposals for long term management and maintenance.

10 Development Management Policies: Our environment and surroundings

Policy DM3

Health and Wellbeing

Development proposals will be required to promote, support and enhance positive mental and physical health and wellbeing and thus contribute to reducing health inequalities. Where any potential adverse impacts are identified, they will need to be addressed and mitigated in an appropriate manner.

Proposals for major development, or other development likely to have a potentially significant health impact in relation to either its use and/or location, should be accompanied by a fit for purpose Health Impact Assessment (HIA) in accordance with the current guidance⁽³⁹⁾ from Public Health England. The level of information required should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed. Development proposals should demonstrate how the conclusions of the HIA have been taken into account in the design of the scheme.

Development that would have an unacceptable impact on the health or wellbeing of existing or new communities will not be permitted.

Supporting Text

10.1 It is essential that the decisions we make consider the health of our residents and contribute to reducing health inequality. The [West Berkshire Vision 2036](#) highlights that mental health problems represent the largest single cause of disability in the district, affecting people of all ages. It also notes the significant health inequalities across West Berkshire, with a life expectancy gap of up to ten years in different areas. The district's mix of rural and urban settlements means that access to services can be varied.

10.2 The Council's [Leisure Strategy 2021-2031](#) notes that West Berkshire's existing leisure offering is very good, with a number of parks and open spaces, commons, woodland, public rights of way and leisure centres available for physical activity. There is also a range of water based opportunity through rivers such as the Thames, Enborne, Lambourn, Pang and Kennet, the Kennet & Avon Canal and lakes which are also enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. It quotes the percentage of physically active adults at 63.3%, just below the national average of 66.3%.

10.3 A wide range of indoor and outdoor sports are played across the District. These opportunities and their associated health benefits, are reflected in West Berkshire's life expectancy, with those for both men and women being above regional and national averages. The District's cultural heritage is also integral to people's health and wellbeing. It increases academic attainment, provides a sense of place and identity and has a significant, positive impact on the local economy.

10.4 Tackling health and wellbeing requires a multi-agency approach. The Berkshire West Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2030, developed by the Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham Health and Wellbeing Boards together with the Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership is underpinned by a place based approach with its number one priority to reduce health inequalities.

10.5 The Council recognises that the Local Plan has a crucial role to play in ensuring that opportunities exist for people to be able to make healthier lifestyle choices and address health inequalities. Health and environment are inextricably linked and the creation of attractive, safe and accessible places to live improves the quality of life and wellbeing of both individuals and communities as a whole.

10.6 Policy SP7 sets out that development should be designed to encourage healthier lifestyles through the promotion of physical activity, the enhancement of social connections and the strengthening of mental health.

10.7 This DM policy ensures that specific consideration is given to the potential overall impact of development on health, with individual proposals encouraged to maximise their overall contribution towards a healthier environment and healthier communities. Health Impact Assessments (HIA) will be an important tool for assessing any effect on

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Policy DM4

Building Sustainable Homes and Businesses

New development of one or more new dwellings (C3 or C4 use class) and/or 100sqm or more of new non-residential floorspace, including hotels (C1 use class), residential institutions (C2 use class) or Secure Residential Institutions (C2A use class) should achieve net zero operational carbon emissions (regulated and unregulated energy) by implementing the energy hierarchy.

Proposals should demonstrate application of the energy hierarchy through submission of an Energy Statement or a detailed energy section within the Sustainability Statement in accordance with Policy SP5 and which identifies how the following minimum standards of construction are achieved to the greatest extent feasible and viable.

1. Residential Development - minimum construction standard

A. New development of one or more new dwellings (C3 or C4 use class) will meet the following minimum standards of construction:

- Achieve the carbon Target Emission Rate set by the Future Homes Standard once this is confirmed by central government; in the meantime, achieve 63% reduction in carbon emissions is achieved by on-site measures, as compared to the baseline emission rate set by Building Regulations Part L 2021 (SAP 10.2). These regulated carbon emission targets are to be achieved before the addition of on-site renewable electricity generation (which should subsequently be considered in section 3 of this policy); and
- Equal to or less than 15kWh/m²/year space heat demand target, evidenced by the Building Regulations Part L SAP Fabric Energy Efficiency metric.

B. New residential refurbishment developments of 10+ units will meet BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment Excellent as a minimum.

2. New Non-Residential Development, hotels, residential institutions, secure residential institutions - minimum construction standard

New development of 100sqm or more of new non-residential floorspace, hotels (C1 use class), residential institutions (C2 use class) or secure residential institutions (C2A use class) will meet the following minimum standards of construction:

- Appropriate to the building type, calculate a typical building baseline using a nationally recognised standard and demonstrate a percentage reduction in energy (regulated and unregulated) carbon emissions. These operational carbon emission targets are to be achieved before the addition of on-site renewable electricity generation (which should subsequently be considered in section 3 of this policy); and
- BREEAM Excellent (BREEAM 2018 or future equivalent).

3. Renewable Energy

A. Subsequent to the achievement of the minimum construction standards under parts 1 and 2, new development of one or more new dwellings (C3 or C4 use class) and/or 100sqm or more of new non-residential floorspace, hotels (C1 use class), residential institutions (C2 use class) or Secure Residential Institutions (C2A use class) should include onsite renewable, zero and low carbon energy technologies to achieve net zero carbon operational energy (regulated and unregulated) on site.

B. The Council will support proposals for renewable energy provided that the technology is:

- i. Suitable for the location;
- ii. Not on the most versatile agricultural land (grades 1, 2 and 3a);
- iii. Is accompanied by a landscape / visual impact assessment; and
- iv. Would not cause harm to residential amenity by virtue of noise, vibration, overshadowing, flicker or other harmful emissions.

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4. Carbon Offsetting

Where a development proposal of one or more new dwellings (C3 or C4 use class) and/or 100sqm or more of new non-residential floorspace, including hotels (C1 use class), residential institutions (C2 use class) and or secure residential institutions (C2A use class) cannot demonstrate that it is net zero carbon in relation operational energy (regulated and unregulated), it will be required to address any residual carbon emissions by:

- a cash in lieu contribution

Supporting Text

10.12 Carbon reduction has been a key issue for West Berkshire since the Core Strategy, introducing policies aimed at delivering carbon neutral development by 2016, was approved following examination in 2012. However, despite the 26.4% reduction in CO₂ emissions in the District since 2005^(xx), the authority still has emissions well above the Berkshire, South East and England levels.

Table 5 : Full Set and Sub Set* Per Capita Carbon Dioxide emissions (tonnes) at local authority level in 2017, listed by difference

Area	Full Set data	Sub Set data	Difference
West Berkshire	8.2	5.8	2.4
Windsor & Maidenhead	5.7	4.5	1.2
Wokingham	4.7	3.6	1.1
Slough	5.0	4.1	0.9
Reading	3.4	3.3	0.1
Bracknell	3.7	3.7	0
South East	4.8	4.2	0.6
England	5.1	4.3	0.8

**The Full Set data contains all measured emission sources for each LA area whilst the Sub Set removes those that the LA has no influence over.*

10.13 The Council unanimously declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 with the stated aim to be carbon neutral by 2030 as the consequences of global temperature rising above 1.5°C are so severe that preventing this from happening must be of the utmost urgency.

10.14 Sustainable construction and renewable energy generation can help in achieving emissions reduction. Cost implications of installing CO₂ emissions reduction measures from the start of a development are less than if they were retro-fitted. In addition, the benefits derived by the end user in relation to reduced heating and fuel bills will be enhanced.

10.15 The District is one of the highest electricity users in the south east, and is in the upper quartile of local authorities for CO₂ emissions within the country. Fuel poverty levels in West Berkshire are also high, compared to other authorities. This is clear evidence and justification that West Berkshire needs to do more to meet national targets in relation to CO₂ emissions reduction.

10.16 The NPPF requires action on climate change and the protection and enhancement of the natural environment. Paragraph 152 requires the Council to support the transition to a low carbon future and shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience to the effects of climate change. At the same time development of poor design, which fails to capitalise on opportunities for improving character, quality and take account of design standards should be refused. Furthermore, the quality of development approved should not diminish between permission and completion as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme.

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Policy DM5**Environmental Nuisance and Pollution Control**

Development will be supported where it does not lead to adverse effects on pollution of the environment. In ensuring a site is suitable for development proposals should satisfy the following criteria:

- a. There would be no harm to the amenity of occupants of neighbouring land and buildings, and future occupants of the development, through an unacceptable increase in pollution, including from light, noise, dust, vibration and/or odour. Where necessary suitable mitigation measures will be put in place;
- b. It would be compatible with surrounding uses; and not give rise to unreasonable restrictions placed on existing businesses and community facilities;
- c. There would be no adverse impact on the environment by pollution of air, soil, or water, through the storage and disposal of waste and hazardous materials or through emissions;
- d. Where there is a likelihood that contamination is present or is known to be present, as a minimum a desk based assessment detailing the likelihood and extent of land contamination be undertaken, followed by, where necessary, an intrusive investigation; and the identification and undertaking of appropriate remediation measures in accordance with minimum national standards. Further monitoring may be required depending on the nature of the contamination and remediation;
- e. It would not cause noise or vibrations of a level which would disturb areas that are valued for their tranquillity in terms of recreation or amenity. Development proposals that generate significant levels of noise must be accompanied by an assessment to mitigate such effects, having regard to the nature of surrounding uses;
- f. All reasonable steps are taken through design, siting and technological solutions to ensure the abatement of obtrusive light to avoid sky glow, glare and light spillage, intrusion and any adverse impact to wildlife and neighbouring residents. A Lighting Appraisal in accordance with the current guidance from the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) (or similar body), national guidance and British Standards will be required for proposed developments which include outdoor lighting;
- g. Appropriate containment solutions for oils, fuels and chemicals are provided; and
- h. There would be no harm to existing areas with biodiversity and/or geological value, in accordance with Policy SP11.

Development which includes potential nuisance or pollution activities should be located on the least sensitive part of the site.

Appropriate site investigations/assessments will guide development and the results and recommendations will be presented with planning applications (for example, noise assessments) depending on the type of development, location, and likely source of pollution.

Supporting Text

10.38 The NPPF seeks to conserve and enhance the natural, built and historic environment and in doing so protects new and existing development from contributing to and/or being put at risk from unacceptable levels of pollution.

10.39 This policy is intended to aid in promoting good quality of life for all land users, by managing the effects of development and requiring developers to undertake appropriate assessments to understand the sources of pollution on and around the site, and their impacts on the site and surrounding uses. Such assessments can aid in guiding development to the least sensitive part of the site, and/or identifying suitable mitigation measures to alleviate the effects of pollution.

10.40 There are existing regimes in place, though pollution control authorities (Environmental Health), and the planning system is not intended to replicate or control pollution in the same way as such regimes.

10.41 Development must be compatible with neighbouring uses, particularly those in town/village centre locations and those venues which operate in the evening or night. Suitable mitigation must therefore be provided, in the form of good design (e.g. for proposed residential, the consideration of placement of bedrooms), and noise and odour reduction measures, depending on the proposed uses and surrounding existing uses (e.g. sound insulation in proposed residential units; odour minimisation for proposed food outlets near to residential properties). It is important that new development would not place unreasonable restrictions on existing businesses and community facilities.

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Policy DM6

Water quality

The water quality of West Berkshire District's waterbodies will be protected and enhanced. Any development (including infrastructure) that would have a direct or indirect impact on any water body will take account of the impact of their development on water quality. All development should demonstrate it satisfies the following criteria:

- a. That it causes no deterioration in the quality of waterbodies, surface and groundwater, nor that it will prevent future attainment of 'favourable condition' for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) rivers, waterbodies or wetlands (as required by Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), or 'good status' for other waterbodies under the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 and Groundwater (Water Framework Directive) (England) Direction 2016 or subsequent amendment;
- b. That it contributes positively to the water environment and its ecology and delivers enhancements where waterbodies are not achieving 'favourable condition' for SSSI's or, good ecological or chemical status for non-SSSI waterbodies;
- c. If located within the hydrological catchments of the River Lambourn SSSI/SAC or River Test, development proposals will be required to demonstrate nutrient neutrality;
- d. Where proposals are not connecting to the sewer network and are within 500 metres of a SSSI an assessment of the risk to water quality will be required;
- e. That it contributes to the protection and enhancement of classified waterbodies identified by the Thames River Basin Management Plan objectives, covering the Thames and Chilterns South Catchment and Kennet Catchment;
- f. Proposals for built development will be required to be at least ten metres away from the top of the bank of the nearest watercourse or main river providing or retaining a natural or semi-natural habitat buffer; and
- g. How the proposal will support improving the status and overall health of the River Kennet and River Lambourn.

Where development is likely to have an adverse impact on water quality, a detailed water quality assessment will be required. The need for and the type of assessment will depend on the type or location of new development. Appropriate measures may be required to be undertaken by the developer to ensure that a proposed development does not contaminate surface or groundwater resources.

Supporting Text

Water Framework Directive

10.51 The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017(WFD) recognises that development near water bodies can affect their quality for human consumption and health and for their ecological value. It establishes a legal framework along with national implementation for the protection, improvement and sustainable use of the water environment. This includes lakes, streams, rivers, groundwater and dependent ecosystems.

10.52 The primary policy document for the delivering the WFD is the Environment Agency's River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for the Thames District that includes the Kennet and tributaries catchment and Thames and Chilterns South catchment in West Berkshire. Proposals will be expected to include sufficient information to demonstrate how they have taken into account the Thames River Basin Management Plan. Development can have a major impact on the water environment, and so needs to be controlled accordingly, delivering enhancements wherever possible. Development that would be likely to lead to deterioration in the overall status of a water body, or would prevent future attainment of good status, can only be permitted in exceptional circumstances as set out in regulations. This is a requirement of the WFD to prevent a deterioration in class of individual containments. The 'Weser Ruling' by the European Court of Justice in 2015 specified that individual projects should not be permitted where they may cause a deterioration of the status of a water body. If a water body is already at the lowest status 'bad', any impairment of a quality element was considered to be a deterioration. It is noted in the [Water Cycle Study](#) (Phase 2) (2021) that current emerging practice is that a 3% limit of deterioration is applied.

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Policy DM7**Water Resources and Waste Water**

Development will be required to minimise water use and aim to be water-neutral as far as practicable by incorporating appropriate water efficiency and water recycling measures. A collaborative approach is encouraged between the Council, statutory agencies, water companies and site promoters/developers to promote innovation in water efficiency and re-use within and outside of dwellings and commercial buildings, including demand reduction to improve longer term water resilience. Liaison with other local authorities is expected where relevant.

Development will be required to be designed to be water efficient and reduce water consumption. Refurbishments and other non-domestic development will be expected to meet BREEAM water-efficiency credits. All new residential developments (including replacement dwellings) will meet the Building Regulation optional higher water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day, as set out in Building Regulations part G2. Planning conditions will be applied to new residential development to ensure that the water efficiency standards are met.

New or replacement non-residential development of 1000sqm gross floor area or more will meet BREEAM 'excellent' standards for water consumption (with at least a 40% improvement in water consumption against the baseline performance of the building), unless demonstrated not to be practicable.

Both of the above apply unless it can be demonstrated that it would not be feasible on technical or viability grounds. Where subsequent national standards exceed those set out above, the new national standards will be applied.

Development proposals should satisfactorily demonstrate the following criteria:

- a. There is adequate water supply and waste water treatment infrastructure capacity resources are available, or can be provided, to support the development proposed at the time of occupation, and will be safeguarded from the potential impacts of development;
- b. Efficient use of water is made through recycling measures such as rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling;
- c. Foul water treatment and disposal of adequate design and capacity already exists or can be provided in time to serve the development ensuring that the environment and amenity of local residents are not adversely affected;
- d. Foul water flows produced by the development will be drained separately from surface water run off to a suitable point of connection to a public foul sewer or, for non mains drainage proposals, where there would be no detrimental impact on the environment;
- e. Suitable land and access is safeguarded for the maintenance and treatment of water resources and wastewater, flood defences and drainage infrastructure; and
- f. It will not adversely impact the water quality, ecological value or drainage function of water bodies in the District, including any adverse impacts on Source Protection Zones (SPZ).

Development which would overload available facilities and create or exacerbate problems of flooding or pollution will not be permitted. Where upgrades to water supply and waste water are required consideration should be given to phasing the development so that the necessary infrastructure is in place.

The West Berkshire Phase 2 Water Cycle Study (2021) identifies that land adjacent to the Hungerford Waste Water Treatment Works (as shown on the plan below), will need to be safeguarded to enable upgrades to the Waste Water Treatment Works to serve future growth.

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Policy DM8**Air Quality**

Development will be required to maintain, and where possible, improve air quality and reduce exposure to areas of poor air quality. Development will be supported where it does not lead to adverse effects on health or the environment either from the development itself or cumulatively.

Taking account of the end-use and nature of the area and application, the proposal should demonstrate that the development satisfies the following criteria:

- a. It has no adverse effect on air quality in an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA);
- b. It will not lead to the declaration of a new AQMA;
- c. It will not interfere with the implementation of current Air Quality Action Plans (AQAP);
- d. It is not in proximity to a source of air pollution which could present a significant risk to human health;
- e. It does not expose occupiers who are particularly sensitive to air pollution, such as those in schools, health care establishments or housing for older people;
- f. It is not in proximity to a source of air pollution which could present a likely significant effect/ risk on/to the qualifying features of a site designated for its wildlife habitat and species importance;
- g. It will minimise the impact on air quality, both during the construction process and lifetime of the completed development; and
- h. It provides opportunities to improve air quality, reduce airborne emissions, and where necessary mitigates impacts, including measures such as the provision and enhancement of green infrastructure, active travel, and other traffic and travel management.

An Air Quality Assessment (AQA) carried out in accordance with the relevant national standards and guidance will be required by the Council where development proposals meet one of the following criteria:

- i. The development has the potential to impact on air quality within an AQMA, either on its own or having regard to cumulative planned developments;
- ii. The development has the potential to impact on air quality where there are concerns that an air quality objective might be exceeded, either on its own or having regard to cumulative planned developments;
- iii. The development involves more than 100 parking spaces outside an AQMA, or 50 parking spaces within or close to an AQMA;
- iv. The development has the potential to increase heavy goods vehicle movements on a busy (greater than 10,000 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) movements) or congested road near to sensitive receptors;
- v. Development involving larger scale energy/heating plant with the potential to impact on sensitive receptors e.g. solid fuel plant and short term operating reserve sites; or
- vi. Development introducing a new sensitive receptor within an AQMA or in close proximity to an AQMA.

A Habitats Regulations Assessment, will be required by the Council to establish whether a development could present a likely significant effect/ risk on/to the qualifying features of a site designated for its international importance for biodiversity.

Supporting Text

10.73 Air quality is the largest environmental health risk in the UK. It shortens lives and contributes to chronic illness. Health can be affected both by short-term, high-pollution episodes and by long-term exposure to lower levels of pollution (*Source: Clean Air Strategy 2019*). Air pollution has direct and indirect impacts on the natural environment, contributing to climate change and affecting habitats and species, through plant take up and nitrogen and acid deposits on the ground and water sources.

10.74 The air quality in West Berkshire is predominantly good although the major source of air quality pollutants in the area is from road transport and there are specific areas where air pollution exceeds the levels set by European and UK regulations. For this reason, the Council has declared two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs), which relate to elevated levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). These are located at Newbury and Thatcham. The adjoining urban areas of Reading town centre is also designated an AQMA. Development proposals located within these areas will

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Policy DM9**Conservation Areas**

Proposals for development in a Conservation Area, or for development that affects its setting or important views into, out of, across or through the area, will be required to assess and clearly demonstrate how the special character, appearance and significance of the Conservation Area will be preserved or enhanced. Proposals will be determined in accordance with Policy SP9 and will be sensitively designed to satisfy the following criteria:

- a. To respect the overall settlement pattern and its setting as part of the wider landscape;
- b. To reflect the form and layout of the area including views and vistas into and out of it and the shape and character of spaces contributing to the character of the historic environment, including historic street patterns and their setting;
- c. To ensure the scale, height, form, massing, and alignment respects the historic and architectural character, including roofscapes of the area, the relationship between buildings and the spaces between them;
- d. To ensure the nature and quality of materials are appropriate to the locality and complement those of the surrounding area;
- e. To respect locally distinctive design details that contribute to the area's character such as traditional frontage patterns, vertical or horizontal emphasis, pattern of fenestration, window and door detailing, shopfronts, advertisements, historical or traditional street furniture, traditional surfaces, and boundary treatments;
- f. To ensure buildings and streets of townscape character, trees, open spaces, walls, fences or any other features are retained where they contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area;
- g. To ensure it does not generate levels of traffic, parking or other environmental problems which would result in substantial harm to the character, appearance or significance of the area; and
- h. That the use is appropriate to and compatible with the character, appearance and historic function of the area.

Proposals for or involving demolition of existing buildings, walls or other structures which make a positive contribution to the special character or appearance or historic interest of the Conservation Area will not be permitted unless there is clear and convincing evidence that:

- i. The condition of the building (provided that this is not a result of deliberate neglect) and the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its significance and to the value derived from its continued use, is such that repair is not practical; or
- ii. The replacement would make an equal or greater contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Where development is acceptable, a record of the current site, building or structure and its context will be required, prior to or during development or demolition, in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation.

Plans for redevelopment or re-use of an area where demolition is proposed must be agreed and a contract for redevelopment signed before the demolition is carried out.

Supporting Text

10.78 The purpose of this policy is to set out more detailed criteria for development proposals affecting Conservation Areas.

10.79 A Conservation Area is 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act, 1990). Preservation in this context means not harming the interest in the Conservation Area, as opposed to keeping it utterly unchanged.

10.80 The special character and appearance of a Conservation Area can be derived from many different aspects including its physical features, spaces, landscape, views, the uses of an area, and the relationship between these elements. Other aspects of character may be more intangible perceptions of a place, such as historical or cultural associations with a place or building. Others may be relatively ephemeral or transitory, such as the smells and sounds associated with specific activities, which may occur only at certain times of the day or year.

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Policy DM14

Assets of Archaeological Importance

Proposals for development affecting heritage assets of archaeological interest and their settings will be determined in accordance with Policy SP9 and will be expected to clearly demonstrate:

- a. Why the proposed development and related works are desirable or necessary; and
- b. How the significance of the assets will be preserved

Development may not be permitted if applicants fail to provide adequate or accurate detailed information to show the impact on the nature, extent and significance of the assets. For known assets of archaeological interest, or on land where there is archaeological potential, an appropriate archaeological desk-based assessment will be required which should allow informed decisions to be made about options for mitigating or offsetting that impact.

Where appropriate, pre-determination field evaluation may be necessary as a further stage. This is a limited programme of fieldwork to determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, artefacts or ecofacts and their research potential, and to define their character, extent, quality and preservation to enable assessment of significance.

Archaeological evaluation may include:

- i. Non-destructive methods such as geophysical survey, earthwork survey, building survey;
- ii. Intrusive methods of varying destructive potential such as augering, test pits, trial trenches and fieldwalking; and
- iii. In the case of buildings, physical intervention such as the removal of modern materials to reveal older fabric.

Proposals will be permitted where the proposal accords with other relevant policies and includes:

- Provision to preserve the archaeological remains in situ, by sensitive layout and design. This is the preferred outcome for archaeological assets of the highest significance (Scheduled Monuments and those non-designated assets of equivalent significance); and/or
- Provision for the investigation and recording of any archaeological remains that cannot or are not required to be preserved, including at least the deposition of evidence with the West Berkshire Historic Environment Record and any archaeological archive with the appropriate depository, in accordance with a detailed Written Scheme of Investigation approved before the start of development.

Supporting Text

10.117 The purpose of this policy is to set out more detailed criteria for development proposals affecting Assets of Archaeological Interest.

10.118 There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset, whether it is a building, monument, site, place, area of landscape, if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

10.119 The survival into the present day of any given archaeological material depends on many factors. Below ground conditions are not always conducive to site formation, and natural processes or later human activity can erode or destroy archaeological evidence whether buried or upstanding. Heritage assets of archaeological interest can therefore be fragile and fragmentary. They form a finite resource which is irreplaceable.

10.120 The potential knowledge which may be unlocked by investigation of archaeological assets may be harmed even by minor disturbance, because the context in which evidence is found is crucial to furthering understanding. It is therefore generally desirable for archaeological assets to be preserved in situ.

10.121 Archaeological sites, monuments and buildings vary in type, scale and character as well as state of preservation, and they may be of national, regional or local significance and designated or non-designated. Only a very small percentage of archaeological sites are designated in any way, and many await discovery.

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Policy DM15

Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

Development which conserves and enhances trees, woodland and hedgerows will be supported.

Development proposals should be accompanied by an appropriate Arboricultural Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and/or an Arboricultural Method Statement. Proposals will be expected to clearly demonstrate that wherever possible existing trees, woodland and hedgerows have been incorporated into the design and layout of a scheme from the outset. Where this cannot be achieved the onus is on the applicant to justify the loss of trees and/or other features as part of the proposals.

The loss or deterioration of protected trees, groups of trees, woodland or important hedgerows will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and in accordance with the relevant legislation, policy and good practice recommendations. Where protected trees are subject to felling, a replacement of an appropriate number, species and size in an appropriate location will be required.

Ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees and ancient hedgerows are irreplaceable habitats. Development resulting in their loss or deterioration will be considered in accordance with Policy SP11. The scale and quality of the compensation measures required will be commensurate to the loss or deterioration of the irreplaceable habitat.

Development proposals which could potentially result in the loss of ancient wood pasture; or trees, woodlands and hedgerows located within historic parks and gardens will be considered in accordance with policy DM13, for those within Registered Parks and Gardens, or Policy DM12 for those forming part of non-designated heritage assets.

Where loss or damage of non-protected trees, woodland or hedgerows is unavoidable, appropriate replacement or compensation planting including appropriate measures to secure their long term maintenance will be required.

Development proposals will provide appropriate protection for retained trees, woodland and hedgerows in advance of any work on site to prevent damage to root systems and to take account of future sustainable growth.

Where appropriate, suitable opportunities should be identified and incorporated for the restoration and planting of new trees, woodland and hedgerows. New planting should:

- a. Be suitable for the site conditions;
- b. Use appropriate tree pit sizes and soil volumes;
- c. Use native species wherever appropriate;
- d. Be informed by and contribute to local character; and
- e. Enhance or create new habitat linkages.

To ensure the sustainable growth of restored or newly planted trees, development will be required to include appropriate measures to secure their long term maintenance.

Supporting text

10.125 The purpose of this Policy is to ensure the management, including conservation and enhancement, of existing trees, woodland and hedgerows, and to ensure that opportunities for restoration and new planting are realised where appropriate. Development proposals will be considered in accordance with the latest guidance in British Standard BS5837 'Trees in relation to demolition, design and development'.

10.126 This policy does not prevent the appropriate management of trees, woodlands and hedgerow or removal of trees and hedges that are not in character with their locality particularly if they are a non-native species of flora. For new planting the use of UK and Ireland sourced and grown tree stock is encouraged.

10.127 West Berkshire's trees, woodland and hedgerows are valued visual and ecological assets in our towns, villages and countryside, adding local character and distinctiveness to the landscape, streets, parks, gardens, public rights of way and other open spaces. They have an inherent biodiversity value and can help integrate new development into the landscape, its character, and environment. They are important components of the historic environment as

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12 Development Management Policies: Fostering economic growth and supporting local communities

Policy DM32

Designated Employment Areas

Designated Employment Areas (DEA), as defined on the Policies Map and listed in Appendix 4, are specific locations designated for business uses (office, industry, storage and distribution). These areas are safeguarded for such uses and for the role they play in meeting the future economic needs of the District.

The redevelopment and regeneration of land within DEAs to provide additional business development that meets the needs of the District will be supported.

Proposals for appropriate alternative employment generating uses which support and compliment the primary function of DEAs will be considered favourably, subject to the application of the sequential test if required.

New office proposals located within a DEA will not be required to satisfy the sequential test.

Development which either individually or cumulatively would undermine the integrity or function of the DEA will not be permitted.

Supporting Text

12.1 Designated Employment Areas (DEA) are specific locations across the District designated for business uses/development providing a range of sites and locations to promote sustainable economic growth. These areas host a diverse range of businesses from large multi-national companies to small and medium sized enterprises (SME), all of which contribute to a strong and resilient local economy. Such areas contribute significantly to the supply of employment land across the District and provide further opportunities for regeneration and intensification of use. The aim of this policy is therefore to protect and strengthen the function and integrity of these areas.

12.2 For the purposes of this Plan business uses/development are office, industrial, storage and warehousing and distribution, and the term employment land refers to the land on which these uses are located.

12.3 The Local Plan designates a number of areas for business development, previously known as Protected Employment Areas (PEA), and through this Local Plan Review (LPR) these have been renamed DEA. The Council has reviewed the designated areas, taking the [Employment Land Review](#) (ELR) as the starting point in considering how each area performs including any key issues or opportunities, and any changes in circumstances, in particular where there has been a loss of office space to residential through permitted development rights, or new development adjacent to existing areas. This work also takes in account allocations set out within this Plan and the designation of new DEA as identified in Policy SP21.

12.4 The Council's evidence ([ELR 2020 and 2022](#)) highlights high occupancy rates for industrial uses and high to moderate occupancy for office space and given the balance between supply and demand, the ELR recommends safeguarding all DEAs for business uses/development. It is important to safeguard the District's DEAs for the role they play in providing a supply of employment land to meet the existing and future needs of businesses. Maintaining a supply of employment land is essential to ensure the economic competitiveness of the District and to deliver sustainable economic growth.

12.5 However, the Council does recognise the need to allow for some diversity of uses within DEA to create the right conditions for businesses to invest, expand and adapt and so the policy does allow for appropriate alternative employment generating uses to locate within DEAs where, subject to the sequential test if required, they are complementary to the existing business use in that location, support the primary function of the DEA, and individually and/or cumulatively would not undermine the integrity and function of the DEA.

12.6 For the purposes of this policy appropriate alternative employment generating uses are those not classed as business uses within this Plan, but are uses that serve the businesses and employees in these locations and which support the function and operation of DEAs without compromising their integrity. Where such proposals would result in the loss of employment land and/or floorspace the applicant will be required to provide justification for the loss,

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Policy DM41**Digital Infrastructure**

The roll out and continued improvement of digital infrastructure serving all parts of the district will be supported. This includes full-fibre gigabit-capable broadband, 4G and 5G technologies.

Applicants will be required to actively demonstrate that they have considered gigabit-capable broadband and mobile connectivity within their proposals for new residential, employment, and retail developments.

Fibre to the Premises:

- a. All residential developments and all new employment generating development will enable Fibre-to-the-Premises (FTTP) at first occupation;
- b. All new dwellings, including those provided via building conversions, must be designed and constructed in a way that enables them to meet or exceed the government's building regulations relating to the provision of high speed FTTP infrastructure in the home or any subsequent national equivalent standard should the building regulations and/or national policy be reviewed in the future;
- c. Where it can be demonstrated that FTTP is not practical, the fastest viable connection should be delivered as well as ducting to allow future delivery of FTTP.

Telecommunications Infrastructure:

- d. All residential developments and all new employment generating development should consider the mobile telecommunications requirements of the development proposal. This is to ensure that there is sufficient coverage.

Adverse impacts on the successful functioning of existing digital infrastructure shall be avoided. Where this is not possible, appropriate mitigation shall be provided.

Supporting text

Digital infrastructure comprises of physical telecommunications components such as fixed broadband and mobile connectivity. High quality digital infrastructure is key to ensuring economic growth and social inclusion, and this is recognised in the NPPF.

12.88 The NPPF expects planning policies and decisions to support the expansion of digital infrastructure. Policies should set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time; and should prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments, as these connections will, in almost all cases, provide the optimum solution.

12.89 In March 2020, the government stated its intention to amend Building Regulations to require all new build developments to have the physical infrastructure to support gigabit connections. At the time of writing building regulations remain unchanged. However the LPR policy has had regard to this.

12.90 The six Berkshire authorities ⁽⁴⁹⁾, including West Berkshire District Council, are implementing a Digital Strategy and have set-out a "Connected Berkshire Vision and Strategy" to ensure that over 95% of households and business have access to full fibre coverage (providing Gigabit capable connectivity) and to eliminate all 4G poor coverage areas by 2025. A suite of guidance is being produced by the six authorities to support the Digital Strategy which will act as good practice for developers to help them determine the best solution for their proposals.

12.91 With this in mind, the Council will expect all new residential and employment generating premises commercial premises to be served by high speed reliable gigabit-capable broadband, wherever possible in the form of fibre to the premises (FTTP), or any new or alternative technologies that may come forward during the lifetime of the Local Plan. Where it is not currently viable to deliver FTTP broadband, the fastest viable alternative connection should be provided, together with adequate ducting to allow FTTP connections to be made easily at a later date, without the additional costs of retrofitting.

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