



Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework

Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document

January 2010

4 Core Strategy Policies

- 4.1 This Core Strategy includes a number of high level policies in order to achieve the objectives and vision set out in the earlier sections. It also includes a number of policies relating to specific strategic proposals e.g. SDL in policies CP18-21. Proposals would therefore need to comply with relevant policies, together with other parts of the Development Plan. The policies are arranged into broad themes applying to the whole borough before more specific issues are considered.

Delivering a sustainable borough

CP1 – Sustainable development

Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that:

- 1) Maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment;
- 2) Minimise the emission of pollutants into the wider environment;
- 3) Limit any adverse effects on water quality (including ground water);
- 4) Ensure the provision of adequate drainage;
- 5) Minimise the consumption and use of resources and provide for recycling;
- 6) Incorporate facilities for recycling of water and waste to help reduce per capita water consumption;
- 7) Avoid areas of best and most versatile agricultural land;
- 8) Avoid areas where pollution (including noise) may impact upon the amenity of future occupiers;
- 9) Avoid increasing (and where possible reduce) risks of or from all forms of flooding (including from groundwater);
- 10) Provide attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes;
- 11) Demonstrate how they support opportunities for reducing the need to travel, particularly by private car in line with CP6; and
- 12) Contribute towards the goal of reaching zero-carbon developments⁴¹ as soon as possible by:
 - a) Including appropriate on-site renewable energy features; and
 - b) Minimising energy and water consumption by measures including the use of appropriate layout and orientation, building form, design and construction, and design to take account of microclimate so as to minimise carbon dioxide emissions through giving careful consideration to how all aspects of development form.

- 4.2 Development within the borough should enhance the overall sustainability of the area through minimising impact on the environment, including access to facilities as detailed under CP9. As is recognised in both the Community Strategy and the Spatial Objectives, the community values the high quality of the environment within the borough. It is therefore important that any proposals for development do not harm this or adversely affect the quality of life of residents, workers and visitors. The Council's Landscape Character Assessment highlights the areas of the borough with landscapes which

⁴¹ The Department for Trade and Industry definition of a zero carbon development is one that achieves zero net carbon emissions from energy use on site, on an annual basis.

should be protected or enhanced by development. The Council's Borough Design Guide SPD (July 2007) provides guidance on how schemes can reflect the quality of the borough's character. Village Design Statements provide similar guidance for smaller areas.

- 4.3 Proposals that enhance the quality of the environment of the borough could include those that improve the openness of the areas outside of development limits defined under Policy CP9. Landowners and developers have the primary responsibility for protecting their land against the risk of flooding. They are also responsible for managing the drainage of their land such that they do not adversely affect adjoining properties. It is essential that future development is planned carefully, in accordance with PP25 (and the accompanying Good Practice Guide), the Flood Direction 2007 and the Wokingham Borough Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, steering it away from areas that are most at risk from flooding and ensuring that it does not exacerbate existing flooding problems. A planning solution to flood risk management should be sought wherever possible. At the planning application stage, the developer/ applicant is responsible for preparing a detailed site based Flood Risk Assessment or Drainage Impact Assessment depending upon the location and scale of development. It is essential that the developer/ applicant consider the possible change in flood risk over the lifetime of the development because of climate change. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems can be used to minimise the risk and impact of flooding. Developers will be expected to provide and fund effective SUDS maintenance regimes. New development should be designed to be resilient to flooding as appropriate.
- 4.4 The completed Wokingham Borough SFRA highlights where the impacts of flooding (including from groundwater) and surface water runoff (both on and off site) will need to be addressed. The SFRA is a strategic document which identifies zones of risk to help in the allocation of land for development, for Development Management decision making purposes, to develop emergency plans and highlight possible requirements that may be needed in a more detailed FRA. Proposals need to include measures to reduce water consumption so that the impacts of water abstraction upon Natura 2000 sites as explained in the Appropriate Assessment are avoided. The minimisation of impacts on air quality will also help address the impacts of development on Natura 2000 sites as highlighted in the Appropriate Assessment.
- 4.5 Further guidance on flooding, drainage and water supply for development proposals will be included in the future Sustainable Development SPD.
- 4.6 Proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and effectively and take account of the effects of climate change. Delivering on sustainable energy can bring significant social, environmental and economic benefits to Wokingham Borough.
- 4.7 As a result of the rapidly changing situation the Council is taking a flexible approach to the provision of on-site renewables and other sustainable forms of development dealt with in CP1.

- 4.8 The Council will expect developers to use the Buildings Regulations, the Code for Sustainable Homes and other national guidance (at the time of application) to demonstrate that in order to achieve reductions in carbon emissions, a percentage of energy used in developments be provided by on site renewable energy installations. The Council will seek over and above the minimum national and regional targets (SEP Policy NRM11) through the Managing Development Delivery DPD.
- 4.9 Development for the generation of energy from renewable resources will be permitted unless there are unacceptable locational or other impacts that could not be outweighed by wider environmental, social and economic or other benefits. Overall, the Council wants to achieve zero-carbon development as soon as possible. The Government target for new homes is to do so by 2016. The regional target for reducing carbon dioxide emissions is detailed in SEP Policy CC2.
- 4.10 It is recognised that small-scale projects make a valuable contribution to the overall outputs of renewable energy and therefore help meet renewable energy targets both locally and nationally. Only where a developer can satisfy the Council why the higher target cannot be achieved will a lower target be provided.
- 4.11 The Council will need to make provision for implementing the renewable energy generation targets and strategy set out in the SEP (Policies NRM11-NRM16).
- 4.12 The speed of progress towards these aims will be kept under review in future local development documents, having regard to Government and regional policy, developments in technology and science, and the impact of viability of development. Technology is changing and new guidance is coming forward from various sources, Government policy is still emerging.
- 4.13 The policy will be delivered through:
- a) Preparation of the Managing Development Delivery DPD and a SPD on Sustainable Development;
 - b) Development control and building control;
 - c) Private and public sector development – particularly through implementation of emerging good practice;
 - d) Close working with other agencies and utilities including the Environment Agency and water utilities, particularly in relation to pollution control, flooding and water conservation, efficiency and recycling measures.
- 4.14 The community, Government and regional policy (PPG24 & SEP Policy NRM10 respectively) recognise the need for proposals to avoid areas of noise. Within the borough, noise issues arise in a variety of locations including alongside the major roads (M4 & A329(M)/A3290) and the railway lines within the Strategic Transport Network (see paragraph 4.56). Proposals should have regard to the advice in PPG24 concerning the suitability of different locations (based on noise exposure levels) for a variety of activities and the Air Quality Management Areas of the borough. The LAA includes targets for dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviours and crime. Initiatives such as 'Secured by Design' can make a contribution to this.

CP2 - Inclusive communities

To ensure that new development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities (including the provision of community facilities) to meet long term needs, planning permission will be granted for proposals that address the requirements of:

- a) An ageing population, particularly in terms of housing, health and wellbeing;
- b) Children, young people and families, including the co-ordination of services to meet their needs;
- c) People with special needs, including those with a physical, sensory or learning disability or problems accessing services; and
- d) The specific identified needs of minority groups in the borough, including Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and black and minority ethnic groups. Proposals for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople (including allocations in other Development Plan Documents) will demonstrate that:
 - i) The site is located either within or close to the development limits of a settlement in policy CP9 in order to maximise the possibilities for social inclusion and sustainable patterns of living; and
 - ii) The proposed site is not disproportionate to the scale of the existing settlement whether singly or cumulatively with any existing sites in the area.

- 4.15 In order to achieve sustainable development, it is important that the needs of all sections of the population are met through development. All proposals should take into account relevant equality and diversity legislation. Additionally, proposals for any specific part of the community should take account of other relevant legislation. For example provision for Gypsies and Travellers should accord with the approach outlined in the LDF and take account of the Housing Act and Circular 1/2006 which requires sites to be identified to meet needs. Allocations (if required) will be examined following the early revision of the SEP. The meeting of the South East England Regional Assembly on 4 March 2009 agreed recommendations to the Secretary of State regarding permanent pitch requirements to 2016. For Wokingham Borough, it was recommended that the requirement is:
- a) 21 pitches for gypsies and travellers; and
 - b) 2 pitches for travelling showpeople.
- Once the Secretary of State has confirmed the requirement (through a revision of the SEP), the Council will allocate sites (if necessary) through the Managing Development Delivery DPD.
- 4.16 The Council recognises that household size and associated needs varies across social and ethnic groups. The Council recognises that addressing the needs of young people includes those in the care of the authority due to their vulnerability. Some of the issues in planning for changes in the demography of the borough are outlined in section 3.
- 4.17 Community facilities include development for health (including preventative social care and community support services), education, play and leisure or culture together with libraries, village/community halls and religious buildings. It also includes burial sites.

- 4.18 Sustainably meeting the needs of young people includes ensuring that children of primary school age have access to a school within walking or cycling distance of their home (3-4km) along a safe route. Furthermore, young people aged 13-19 need to have sufficient access to positive activities and safe places to go.

CP3 - General Principles for development

Planning permission will be granted for proposals that:

- a) Are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life;
- b) Provide a functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable scheme;
- c) Have no detrimental impact upon important ecological, heritage, landscape (including river valleys) or geological features or water courses.
- d) Maintain or enhance the ability of the site to support fauna and flora including protected species;
- e) Use the full potential of the site and contribute to the support for suitable complementary facilities and uses;
- f) Contribute to a sense of place in the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings (especially existing dwellings) including the use of appropriate landscaping;
- g) Provide for a framework of open space in secure community use achieving at least 4.65 ha/1,000 population provision together with recreational/sporting facilities in addition to private amenity space;
- h) Contribute towards the provision of an appropriate sustainable network of community facilities;
- i) Do not lead to a net loss of dwellings and other residential accommodation or land; and
- j) Do not lead to a loss of community or recreational facilities/land or infrastructure unless suitable alternative provision is available.

Development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they have responded to the above criteria through the submission of Design and Access Statements, clear and informative plans, elevations and streetscenes and where required Masterplans, Development Briefs, Concept Statements and Design Codes.

- 4.19 The Wokingham Borough Design Guide SPD (July 2007) seeks to ensure development is of a high standard of design that can integrate with the character of the area is also important to achieving sustainable development in the borough. The provision of public and private amenity space contributes to the character of the borough. All development can impact on the overall character of the area. Consequently, it is vital that the Council minimises any adverse impacts. Each town and village, together with the areas between them has their own unique character which is illustrated in Village Design Statements. Proposals for development must acknowledge this to ensure that the distinctiveness of different parts of the borough is maintained in line with PPS1 (paragraph 13 iv). The authority through the designation of Conservation Areas will recognise the distinctive character of parts of the

borough. Proposals should also take account of the results of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment and the vegetation in the area. Areas that are important to the Borough's landscape include Areas of Special Landscape Importance and Sites of Urban Landscape Value. These areas will be reviewed through the Managing Development Delivery DPD. Development proposals in line with PPS9 should demonstrate how they can address the needs of existing wildlife in the area, including the protection and enhancement of wildlife corridors. The Council will produce SPD complimenting the Borough Design Guide to help implement this policy.

- 4.20 In line with the SCI, the Council will encourage the submission of development briefs or masterplan with major proposals (Tier 1, see paragraphs 3.45 to 3.47 of SCI).
- 4.21 The SEP (Policy C7) highlight the regional significance of the River Thames Corridor. The valley of the River Thames is identified as an important feature within the Landscape Character Assessment. Other river valleys including the Loddon and Blackwater are also in the highest Landscape Character category. As a consequence of policies on flooding, parts of river valleys cannot be developed. They also contribute towards the separation of settlements. In addition, they provide valuable areas for recreation and have potential as wildlife corridors.
- 4.22 The Open Space Audit indicates that the borough provides the sites for open recreational activities to both the boroughs of Bracknell Forest and Reading, whereas these authorities provide the sites and buildings for indoor recreation. It is important that proposals recognise and enhance the value of open spaces to contribute to the needs of Boroughs' of Bracknell Forest, Reading and Wokingham. The Council's Open Space standards are detailed in the Wokingham District Open Space Audit which was undertaken in accordance with the advice in PPS17. The Open Space Standards are summarised in Appendix 4 and cover quality, quantity and accessibility. This policy will also aid the delivery of green infrastructure within the borough as encouraged in the SEP (Policy CC8) and PPS12 (paragraph 2.4). The delivery of green infrastructure (including Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) under policy CP8) also contributes towards the delivery of healthy communities, including safe access to facilities and opportunities for exercise/recreation⁴². Open space is to be delivered in perpetuity. Where open space meets the standards for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), it can also count towards this provision as detailed in paragraph 4.49.
- 4.23 In order to maintain a variety of mix of uses throughout the borough, proposals that entail a net loss of community or recreational facilities will not be allowed. This is due to the risk that a loss of variety of activities in the borough could have on the overall sustainability of the area. This is especially an issue where the loss of a use results in longer journeys by less sustainable means to access alternative facilities. The Council will be improving community facilities in the borough, and these will be targeted within the neighbourhoods illustrated in map 2.3.

⁴² This reflects the advice of the Department of Health and National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE), available at <http://www.nice.org.uk/newsevents/infocus/Newguideforlocalauthorities.jsp>.

CP4 - Infrastructure Requirements

Planning permission will not be granted unless appropriate arrangements for the improvement or provision of infrastructure, services, community and other facilities required for the development taking account of the cumulative impact of schemes are agreed.

Arrangements for provision or improvement to the required standard will be secured by planning obligations or condition if appropriate.

- 4.24 The Council and the community is concerned that all necessary improvements to infrastructure are identified when development is allowed. This community view has been clearly expressed during the earlier stages in producing the Core Strategy. Any improvements to infrastructure, services and community facilities will be assessed in accordance with Circular 05/2005 to ensure that they are:
- a) Relevant to planning,
 - b) Necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms,
 - c) Directly related to the proposed development,
 - d) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development, and
 - e) Reasonable in all other respects.
- 4.25 Where improvements are required by the development, the planning obligations or condition will ensure that they are provided at the appropriate time to ensure the proper planning of the area. Development proposals will not be allowed where the necessary infrastructure required by the scheme is either not available or will not be delivered in line with the phased approach identified for the development concerned, including those in a master plan or development brief. Since the adequacy of infrastructure can be a material consideration in determining planning applications, the Council may impose conditions to ensure that development does not proceed in advance of appropriate and necessary infrastructure improvements. Any master plan or development brief will be consistent with DPD/SPD produced by the authority.
- 4.26 The Council recognises that depending upon the type of infrastructure improvements necessary from a proposal, there can be significant time lags for their delivery. Applicants will need to consider both the current and future availability of infrastructure to accommodate the development they propose, having regard to developments already approved that are subject to a planning application or are proposed in the LDF.
- 4.27 Infrastructure includes roads and other transport requirements such as public rights of way enhancements together with the needs of utility suppliers for water, drainage, sewerage, electricity, gas or telecommunications. Improvement to services can include public transport. Community facilities are listed in paragraph 4.17. Other facilities can include those for retail, leisure, recreation such as open space or to mitigate impacts on protected species. Contributions may also be sought for affordable housing and business/community space together with training opportunities and measures to ensure safety of the community. Further guidance on contributions towards infrastructure improvements will be outlined in the Planning Obligations SPD.

As part of the preparation of the Planning Obligations SPD, the Council is preparing a Long Term Transport Strategy (LTTS) to inform the calculation of any tariff. Planning Obligations are likely to be superseded by a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). It is anticipated the documents setting CIL will be subject of public examination. This will include background information such as the LTTS. The LTTS will also assist in the consultation on the Infrastructure Delivery SPD. This will be produced so that it can be adopted in tandem with the Core Strategy.

- 4.28 Proposals will need to demonstrate that there is either sufficient infrastructure capacity or that this can be readily provided as part of any scheme. Consequently, consideration of on and off site improvements will be required in any scheme and the applicant may be required to submit evidence of this. Any assessment of the ability to deliver necessary improvements to infrastructure will need to demonstrate that both the enhancements and the proposal are viable and deliverable. To deliver the necessary improvements required, the Council will consider the use of its Compulsory Purchase powers, when appropriate.
- 4.29 As paragraphs 2.26 to 2.30 indicate, the Council's strategy for children and young people looks to enhance facilities for all. Where these improvements are related to the SDL in policies CP18-21, these are detailed in the relevant section. However, due to development in the borough, there may be a requirement to increase capacity at other sites. The authority will negotiate contributions in line with this policy to deliver this additional capacity.

CP5 - Housing mix, density and affordability			
<p>Planning permission will be granted for residential development providing a mix and balance of densities, dwelling types, tenures and sizes. Affordable housing must reflect the sizes and types that meet the proven needs of people who are not able to compete in the general housing market.</p> <p>All residential proposals of at least 5 dwellings (net) or covering a net site area of at least 0.16 ha will provide up to 50% of the net additional units proposed as affordable dwellings, where viable. The Council will negotiate the tenure, size and type of affordable units on a site by site basis having regard to housing needs, site specifics and other factors.</p> <p>Subject to viability, the minimum percentages of affordable housing sought on site by land type and location are:</p>			
Land types	Location (CP9)	Size trigger	%
Previously developed land	Within Development Limits	5 to 14 dwellings (net) or between 0.16ha and 0.49ha (net)	20
Previously developed land	Within Major Development Location	15 dwellings or more (net) or 0.5ha (net) and larger	30
Previously developed land	Within Modest or Limited Development Location	15 dwellings or more (net) or 0.5ha (net) and larger	40

Greenfield	Within Major Development Location	5 dwellings (net) or more or 0.16 ha (net) and larger	35
Greenfield	Within Modest or Limited Development Location	5 dwellings (net) or more or 0.16 ha (net) and larger	40
Any	Outside development location	5 dwellings (net) or more or 0.16 ha (net) and larger	40
Any	Strategic Development Location (policies CP18-21)	5 dwellings (net) or more or 0.16 ha (net) or larger	35
Subsequent Development Plan Documents may vary the proportions for affordable housing of allocated sites having regard to the specific viability of the site.			

- 4.30 The provision of a variety of types and sizes of accommodation is desirable across the borough, so that the housing needs of as many households as possible can be met. This helps to ensure that the Plan is sustainable in meeting the housing needs of the community in line with PPS3 (paragraph 29). Depending upon the character and needs of the area, it may not be necessary to include a mix of dwellings in every residential scheme, especially smaller ones. The importance of ensuring adequate provision of affordable housing is recognised in the Audit Report.
- 4.31 To ensure schemes comply with Policy CP2 regarding socially inclusive communities, affordable housing units should be in accordance with the social landlords requirements which may mean distribution around the proposal and not concentrated in one area, unless there are particular management issues. Due to the exceptional need for affordable housing in the Borough and to achieve its supply until the SDL in policies CP18-21 deliver, the Council has reduced the thresholds at which affordable housing is sought down to five dwellings (net). These thresholds will be reviewed to establish if they are still necessary once the SDL have started contributing towards the provision of affordable housing.
- 4.32 The Council recognises that the threshold in this policy is consistent with that in the adopted in the WDLP for settlements with 3,000 or fewer residents. Since its adoption in March 2004, the Council has successfully delivered affordable housing on a number of sites of at least 5 dwellings without affecting the financial viability of the proposal⁴³. The Council is unaware of financial factors within settlements of more than 3,000 residents that prevent the delivery of affordable housing on similar sized sites elsewhere in the Borough. This reflects the findings of the Affordable Housing Viability Study, which indicates viable development can be achieved with up to 50% of the units supplied as affordable dwellings. A lowering of the threshold to five means that affordable housing would be provided on smaller sites allocated in subsequent DPD, especially in limited development locations (CP9).

⁴³ Application Nos. F/2004/0977 (96-98 Grazeley Rd, Three Mile Cross), O/2003/0646 (Land adjacent to Lord Harris Court, Mayfields, Sindlesham) & F/2006/7037 (4 St. Catherine's Close, Sindlesham).

Having regard to the Viability Study, the Council has tiered the requirements for affordable housing based upon site location and characteristics. The provision of affordable housing is based upon a 70:30 split between social rent and shared ownership as detailed in the Affordable Housing Viability Study. The Council will use this split as the starting point for negotiations on affordable housing but apply flexibility where there are viability and other site specific issues.

- 4.33 Applicants for planning permission who wish to suggest a provision below that in policy CP5 based on a viability case must submit with their planning application an open book appraisal of the development finances which demonstrates that the proposal is clearly not viable without a lesser affordable housing provision and/or Social Housing Grant.
- 4.34 This reduction in threshold to five dwellings recognises the exceptional need for affordable housing within the borough as highlighted in the Berkshire HMA. This indicates that between 64% and 88% of the Borough's annual housing completions would need to be affordable dwellings⁴⁴. The Council recognises that the application of either a 5⁴⁵ or 15⁴⁶ dwelling thresholds for requiring affordable housing associated with the percentages in the HMA could affect the delivery of housing. An off-site contribution towards the provision of affordable housing may be acceptable where it is impractical to include on-site, particularly due to the small number of units proposed. The practicalities of this are examined in the Viability Study. Whilst PPS3 indicates that proportions of affordable housing could vary around the area, the Council currently operates a borough-wide waiting list. It is therefore not able to separate the need out to individual settlements. To ensure adequate affordable housing is provided in smaller communities, notwithstanding the lower threshold, the Council considers it necessary to allow for rural exceptions. Further guidance on where affordable housing may be permitted as an exception to usual planning policy is set out in policy CP9.
- 4.35 In recognition of the changing needs and demographics within the Borough, larger developments (including SDL) should provide a range of different sizes and types of housing, which address these needs across all tenures. This will include the provision of "Lifetime Homes" and other accommodation for the elderly and the vulnerable. This will assist the Council in meeting the needs of an ageing population in the Borough highlighted in the Council's Housing Strategy for Older People. Further information on housing mix will be provided in the Managing Development Delivery DPD.

CP6 - Managing Travel Demand

Planning permission will be granted for schemes that:

- a) Provide for sustainable forms of transport to allow choice;

⁴⁴ See figure 7.37 of the Berkshire HMA. The figures are a minimum of 400 units and a maximum of 550 units per annum in comparison to the SEP requirement.

⁴⁵ Reflecting the approach applied in settlements of 3,000 or fewer population within the Wokingham District local Plan.

⁴⁶ PPS3, paragraph 29 indicates that the national indicative minimum threshold for requiring affordable units is 15 dwellings.

- b) Are located where there are or will be at the time of development choices in the mode of transport available and which minimise the distance people need to travel;
- c) Improve the existing infrastructure network, including road, rail and public transport, enhance facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, including provision for those with reduced mobility, and other users;
- d) Provide appropriate vehicular parking, having regard to car ownership;
- e) Mitigate any adverse effects upon the local and strategic transport network that arise from the development proposed;
- f) Enhance road safety; and
- g) Do not cause highway problems or lead to traffic related environmental problems.

4.36 Paragraph 2.16 recognises that the borough has one of the highest car ownership rates of any English local authority. To reduce the likelihood that these vehicles will be used and to encourage modal shift, it is important to ensure all proposals achieve sustainable development and that they are assessed for their impacts in generating travel demand. This assessment will need to take account of the cumulative impact of proposals in the area. To help achieve sustainable development, proposals likely to generate significant demands for travel movements should be located in areas with best access to existing good services. This means that people can have the widest range of choice in selecting transport modes and help reduce the use of the private car. The availability of good existing public transport services has been considered in drafting the strategy for the Borough. The Council assumes that this provision will be maintained⁴⁷ and enhanced by development in the period to 2026. Enhancements will include the measures detailed in policy CP10 together with new/improved feeder bus services to railway stations within and adjoining the borough. During the plan period, opportunities for the improvement of existing railway stations and the possibility of new railway stations will be examined. One way to reduce congestion will be to provide better bus services for school children. The approach of this policy is consistent with the LAA and the LTP. Measures to improve accessibility to the transport network will also have regard to the requirements of policy CP7 concerning avoiding significant affects upon Natura 2000 sites.

4.37 In line with the WDLP definition, good public transport services meet the following requirements:

- a) At least a thirty minute service frequency during peak times (7:00 to 9:00 and 16:00 to 19:00 Monday to Saturday); and
- b) At least an hourly service frequency during off-peak hours (9:00 to 16:00 and 19:00 to 22:00 Monday to Saturday and between 7:00 and 22:00 on Sundays).

4.38 The appropriate vehicular parking is set out in the Council's standards. This is currently in WDLP Appendix 8, but a SPD will replace it. Parking provision will have regard to the potential level of vehicle ownership/use and the availability of high quality alternative means of transport.

⁴⁷ Such as the operation of the Park & Ride at Loddon Bridge roundabout on A329.

- 4.39 Enhancement of public transport provision could include increased frequencies and improved integration between bus and rail routes together with the provision of new stops or routes. The Council will look towards proposals contributing towards solutions which enhance the sustainability of the site together with the location generally. This is because improving access to sustainable transport modes to the existing population should create capacity within the network to cope with new development. This policy is consistent with the LAA (NI 175 and 198).

CP7 - Biodiversity

Sites designated as of importance for nature conservation at an international or national level will be conserved and enhanced and inappropriate development will be resisted. The degree of protection given will be appropriate to the status of the site in terms of its international or national importance.

Development:

- A) Which may harm county designated sites (Local Wildlife Sites in Berkshire), whether directly or indirectly, or
 - B) Which may harm habitats or, species of principle importance in England for nature conservation, veteran trees or features of the landscape that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna (including wildlife and river corridors), whether directly or indirectly, or
 - C) That compromises the implementation of the national, regional, county and local biodiversity action plans
- will be only permitted if it has been clearly demonstrated that the need for the proposal outweighs the need to safeguard the nature conservation importance, that no alternative site that would result in less or no harm is available which will meet the need, and:
- i) Mitigation measures can be put in place to prevent damaging impacts; or
 - ii) Appropriate compensation measures to offset the scale and kind of losses are provided.

- 4.40 SEP Policy NRM5 (criterion iii) recognises that the need to protect European sites from likely significant effects could mean that housing targets in Policy H1 are not achievable. The Habitats Regulations Assessment (see paragraph 2.67) indicates that the development currently envisaged through the Core Strategy can be delivered without likely significant harm upon any European sites (either on their own or in-combination with other plans or projects). However, the Council will assess each plan or project in line with NRM5 to confirm that they can be delivered without likely significant harm (either on their own or in-combination with other plans or projects).
- 4.41 The need for a development that affects a Site of Special Scientific Interest will be deemed to outweigh the need to safeguard the nature conservation interest where the development has clear social or economic benefits of national importance. The need for a development that affects Local Wildlife Sites, habitats or, species of principal importance in England for nature conservation, ancient woodland, veteran trees or features of the landscape that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna will be deemed to

outweigh the need to safeguard the nature conservation interest where the development has clear social or economic benefits of regional or national importance.

- 4.42 The conservation of sites designated as important to nature conservation, habitats or species of principal importance in England for nature conservation and features of the landscape that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna are essential for the maintenance of the area's biodiversity and the quality of life of the borough's residents. All developments should take account of the biodiversity, and where possible developments should contribute to the enhancement of the borough's biodiversity. The Wokingham District Biodiversity Action Plan⁴⁸ highlights targets where proposals can contribute towards their achievement and the Council has identified a number of Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (in line with SEP Policy NRM5) that are priorities for the maintenance, restoration and creation of priority habitats. Biodiversity Opportunity Areas have the highest concentration of existing ecological sites e.g. Local Wildlife Sites. Consequently, in these areas, measures to support and enhance biodiversity are most likely to deliver benefits. Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre surveyed the borough for potential Biodiversity Opportunity Areas during the 2007/08 financial year. Information on biodiversity within the Borough can be obtained from the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC)⁴⁹. Further details on the level of protection appropriate to international, national and local sites are detailed in PPS9 (including the accompanying Good Practice Guide), ODPM Circular 06/2005 and SEP Policies NRM5 and NRM7. Where a proposal is likely to have a significant effect upon a Natura 2000 site, the authority will expect the applicant to supply it with sufficient information to demonstrate how these impacts will be avoided.
- 4.43 The Managing Development Delivery DPD will provide further details on the application of this policy. The Berkshire Nature Conservation Forum advises on the boundaries of Local Wildlife Sites (formerly Wildlife Heritage Sites), including deletions, additions and amendments. Consequently, they may change from the current ones defined in WDLP Policy WNC5 (as amended by the Council decision on 27 July 2006). Details of international, national, regional and county biodiversity sites are available on the Council's website.

CP8 - Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

Development which alone or in combination is likely to have a significant effects on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures to avoid and mitigate any potential adverse effects are delivered.

- 4.44 Within 400m (linear) of the TBH SPA, the authority and Natural England do not consider it is generally possible to avoid impact from development. Therefore, no proposal for residential development will be allowed due to the risks of fires, fly-tipping, cat predation and other impacts. This view has been

⁴⁸ Available at

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/environment/countryside/biodiversity/biodiversity-action-plan>

⁴⁹ See www.tverc.org

accepted by the Assessor⁵⁰ who considered the validity of Natural England's evidence on the matter as part of the examination into the SEP. This approach is also consistent with the Appropriate Assessment and SEP Policy NRM6.

- 4.45 Having regard to the findings of Natural England's visitor surveys⁵¹, SEP Policy NRM6 and the Delivery Framework⁵², the authority (in the Appropriate Assessment) concludes that residential proposals involving increases of one or more net additional dwelling within 5km (linear) of the SPA will need to be assessed for whether there is likely to be significant impacts. This distance covers 70% of all visitors. Furthermore, within the area from which 80% of visitors come (equates to 7km linear), the Appropriate Assessment recognises that proposals of 50 dwellings or more dwellings will need to be assessed for whether they are likely to generate significant impacts. The Appropriate Assessment indicates that as all of the SDL (policies CP18-21) propose at least 50 dwellings within 7km of the TBH SPA, they are likely to have a significant affect upon the site. Where residential schemes include avoidance and mitigation measures, the likely significant effects upon the TBH SPA will have been addressed.
- 4.46 Whilst each SDL will include their own measures to avoid the significant impacts upon the TBH SPA, the Council recognises that other schemes for residential development will come forward before 2026 on sites where a likely significant impact without avoidance measures would occur. The Council is working with the National Trust to deliver an impact avoidance site at Simons Wood, Wellingtonia Avenue, Crowthorne. This site will function as part of a suite of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANG) within the borough, alongside those of the SDL. The Simons Wood SANG will be complimented by other sites identified in the Managing Development Delivery DPD to avoid the impacts of development on the TBH SPA.
- 4.47 The Council recognises that Gorrick Plantation, Nine Mile Ride, Crowthorne contains populations of Woodlarks and Nightjars. The density of nightjars in every year from 1999 to at least 2004 has been higher than any part of the SPA. In the review of Natura 2000 sites expected between 2008 and 2010, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee may conclude that Gorrick Plantation should be included within a Special Protection Area. Whilst its potential inclusion may affect the ability to deliver residential schemes on sites to be identified in the Managing Development Delivery DPD, it will however not affect the SDL around Wokingham as the impact avoidance measures to address the issues associated with the TBH SPA, will also apply in the event that Gorrick Plantation is designated. Pending the Joint Nature Conservation Committee's review of Natura 2000 sites, the Council in line with the requirements of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 will consider the impacts of development on the Habitats Directive Annex 1 birds (Nightjar and Woodlark) at Gorrick Plantation under policy CP7 and SEP Policy NRM5.

⁵⁰ See paragraphs 4.7.19 and 10A(ii)(b) of the Assessor's Report on the Thames Basin Heaths Delivery Plan, published 19 Feb 2007. The Assessor's Report is available at <http://www.eipsoutheast.co.uk/downloads/documents/20070220094714.doc>.

⁵¹ Liley, D, Jackson, D. & Underhill-Day, J. (2005). Visitor Access Patterns on the Thames Basin Heaths. English Nature Research Report. English Nature, Peterborough.

⁵² Available at http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/documents/sustainability/thames_basin_heaths/delivery_framework_march2009.pdf

- 4.48 In line with the findings of the Appropriate Assessment, it is recognised that non-residential development could also have a significant effect upon the SPA. This could either be from linked trips including a recreational use of the SPA⁵³ or from workers employed close to the SPA using the area during breaks (especially lunch time). Consequently, proposals for non-residential development will also need assessing for whether they are likely to have a significant effect upon the SPA. Where non-residential schemes include avoidance and mitigation measures, the likely significant effects upon the TBH SPA will have been addressed.
- 4.49 The Appropriate Assessment indicates that to ensure that development avoids its likely significant impact upon the SPA, the following principles will apply:
- i) Dwellinghouses and other residential development (including staff accommodation in use class C2) will need to provide avoidance and mitigation measures where:
 - a. The proposal involves the provision of one or more net additional residential unit and is within 5km (linear) of the SPA. Contributions to on site SPA access management measures and monitoring in line with the Delivery Framework will be required together with provision of SANG at a minimum of 8ha/1,000 population (calculated at a rate of 2.4 persons per household). This monitoring includes the effectiveness of the SANG;
 - b. The proposal provides 50 or more residential units within 7km (linear). In this case, the proposal will be individually assessed for whether a significant effect upon the SPA is likely either on its own or in combination with other plans or projects around the site. Where avoidance and mitigation measures are required to address likely significant effects, this is likely to involve SANG together with funding towards monitoring the effectiveness of the solution agreed;
 - c. There is a 400m exclusion zone from the SPA for any net additional dwellings due to the inability to avoid likely significant effects upon the SPA.
 - ii) SANG to be provided and maintained in perpetuity in line with the quality and quantity standards advocated by Natural England. The size and location of SANG contributes towards the delivery of healthy communities in line with advice from the Department of Health and NICE. In order to ensure access to avoidance sites in perpetuity, the Council's preference is for the authority to own any SANG. Where SANG also meets the definition of open space (see Appendix 4), it can also count towards this provision i.e. at least 1 ha/1,000 of the SANG could also contribute towards the Natural Greenspace requirement and vice versa; and
 - iii) Non-residential development will be individually assessed for their likely significant effects. Where avoidance and mitigation measures are required, monitoring of their effectiveness will be necessary.

⁵³ See paragraph 4.5.8 of the Assessor's Report.

Managing growth

CP9 – Scale and location of development proposals

The scale of development proposals in Wokingham borough must reflect the existing or proposed levels of facilities and services at or in the location, together with their accessibility. Development proposals (in addition to the Strategic Development Locations in policies CP18-21) within development limits will be acceptable in:

- 1) The major development locations of Earley, Green Park, Shinfield (North of M4), Twyford, Winnersh, Wokingham and Woodley;
- 2) The modest development locations of Arborfield Garrison, Pinewood (Crowthorne), Finchampstead North, Ruscombe, Shinfield, Spencers Wood, Three Mile Cross and Wargrave.
- 3) The limited development locations of Arborfield Cross, Barkham Hill, Charvil, Finchampstead, Hurst, Riseley, Sindlesham, Sonning and Swallowfield.
- 4) The boundary of the Science Park proposed under policy CP16 as defined in the Managing Development Delivery DPD.

Affordable housing on rural exception sites will be permitted adjoining the Development Limits of Modest or Limited Development Locations, if a need is demonstrated for residents, workers or other people with family connections within the Parish Council's area.

- 4.50 The Council has had regard to the advice in SEP Policies SP2, SP3, CC6, RE3, H1, H2, T1, C4, C5, BE1, BE4, BE5, TC2, WCBV1, WCBV2 & WCBV3 and the information on facilities and services detailed in appendix 3 (as to be enhanced by proposals in the Core Strategy). The SDL in policies CP18-21 have been selected on the basis of compliance with this policy. Proposals will need to demonstrate how they can achieve sustainable development, especially if they precede significant improvements in services and facilities (including good public transport) envisaged in this Plan. The accessibility of sites will be assessed having regard to whether good public transport services are available (or can be made available) as defined in paragraph 4.37. The Council will have regard to the cumulative impact of all proposals during the Plan period with regard to these limits. This is to ensure balanced communities and sustainable development is achieved which reflects the social fabric of the borough.
- 4.51 For consistency, appendix 5 indicates how settlements in adjoining authorities (along the main public transport routes from the borough) would have been classified under policy CP9 (see also SEP Policy T8).
- 4.52 The Assessment of Hierarchy of Settlements applies the Spatial and Sustainability Objectives of the Sustainability Appraisal to each settlement. Having regard to its findings, the Core Strategy divides each of the borough's settlements into one of the three categories identified in policy CP9.
- A) Major development locations are those with the greatest range of facilities and services which also allow residents the greatest choice in modes to access them. It is within the development limits of these settlements

where major development (including urban extensions within these limits) would be acceptable;

- B) Modest development locations are those with access to some facilities and services either within them or through good public transport services to major development locations or centres in neighbouring areas e.g. Bracknell, Crowthorne and Reading. It is within the development limits of these settlements where modest development would be acceptable. The limits on the acceptable scale of development are based upon former BSP policy DP1 together with the dwelling completion information summarised in appendix 3;
- C) Limited development locations are those containing a basic range of services and facilities and are physically and socially cohesive. Within the development limits of these settlements, limited development would be acceptable. This includes affordable housing to meet identified local needs. The limits on the acceptable scale of development are based upon the dwelling completion information summarised in appendix 3.

- 4.53 Associated with each SDL, the Council will be producing individual Development Brief (including masterplan) SPD together with an overarching Infrastructure Delivery SPD. The Infrastructure Delivery SPD will detail the phasing of all the associated improvements to infrastructure, facilities and services within each SDL. For the SDL proposed through policies CP18 and CP19, these improvements would enhance the overall sustainability of Arborfield Garrison, Shinfield, Spencers Wood and Three Mile Cross. Consequently, once the following improvements envisaged through policies CP18 and CP19 (respectively) have been achieved or are programmed (as part of the proposal) in a legal agreement associated with a planning permission, major development proposals in line with CP9 would also be acceptable in Arborfield Garrison, Shinfield, Spencers Wood and Three Mile Cross.
- a. Arborfield Garrison – the secondary school and district centre (in line with CP13);
 - b. Shinfield, Spencers Wood and Three Mile Cross – appropriate additional retail facilities

- 4.54 Until the adoption of the Managing Development Delivery DPD, the Council will treat the settlement boundaries defined in the WDLP⁵⁴ as the relevant Development Limit, subject to the areas defined for development in the SDL concept plans. The CS Map Changes also indicates the amendments to the Proposals Map arising from the re-classification of settlements through this policy (from Category A/B to major/modest/ limited). The definition of Development Limits recognises the consistent approach in planning to identify appropriate and sustainable areas for development.

CP10 - Improvements to the Strategic Transport Network

Improvements to the Strategic Transport Network will be provided to ameliorate major environmental or safety problems and to support new development in partnership with other authorities. The improvements to the strategic transport network are:

⁵⁴ WDLP Policy WOS2, available at www.wokingham.gov.uk/localplan. As Arborfield Garrison has no settlement boundary, the Development Limit will reflect the SDL.

Improvement to Strategic transport network	Extent Improvement is part of Core Strategy			Funding		
	Sub-Regional ⁵⁵	Integral to Core Strategy	Adjacent authority strategy	National/ regional funding	Apply for through LTP	S106 and WBC funds
1 – Measures to improve cross Thames travel which may include a bridge ⁵⁶			✓	✓	✓	
2 – Reading Road to Wellington road link, Wokingham		✓		✓		✓
3 – Improvements to the railway bridges on the A321 Finchampstead Road, Wokingham		✓				✓
4 – Re-building Wokingham station as a public transport interchange, including provision of access by foot, cycle and public transport	✓	✓		✓		✓
5 – Provide a Park & Ride near the Coppid Beech roundabout on the A329 in Wokingham		✓				✓
6 - Improvements to M4 Junction 11 and A33 Mere oak roundabout, Three Mile Cross	✓	✓	✓	✓		
7 – Provide a Park & Ride in the vicinity of M4, Junction 11	✓	✓	✓			✓
8 – Winnersh relief road		✓				✓
9 – Twyford Eastern relief road						✓
10 – High quality express bus services or mass rapid transit along the A4 and A329 corridors		✓	✓			✓
11 – High quality express bus services or mass rapid		✓	✓			✓

⁵⁵ See SEP paragraphs 8.46-8.47, 8.52 (including tables 2 & 3), paragraphs 21.21 & 21.22

⁵⁶ Measures to be developed to provide alternatives for north-south movement across the river with Reading Borough, South Oxfordshire District and Oxfordshire County

Improvement to Strategic transport network	Extent Improvement is part of Core Strategy			Funding		
	Sub-Regional ⁵⁵	Integral to Core Strategy	Adjacent authority strategy	National/ regional funding	Apply for through LTP	S106 and WBC funds
transit between Reading and Woodley town centres						
12 – High quality express bus services between Green Park and Twyford stations via the Park & Rides in the vicinity of M4, J11 and Loddon Bridge and Winnersh Triangle railway station		✓				✓
13 – Reading station improvements	✓		✓	✓		
14 – Great Western mainline improvements	✓		✓			
15 – Western access by rail to Heathrow airport including Airtrack	✓					
16 – Crossrail	✓			✓ ⁵⁷		
17 – Improvements listed in policies CP18-21		✓				✓
18 – Measures to maintain the operation of the network during times of flooding		✓		✓		✓
19 – Improvements to the quality and frequency of public transport services along any part of the network		✓				✓
20 – Improvements to increase the use of bicycles, including cycle paths		✓				✓
21 – Enhancements to footpath and cycle networks to improve access to services and		✓				✓

⁵⁷ Funding only in place for route east from Maidenhead, however the route from Maidenhead to Reading was safeguarded with effect from 29 April 2009 – see <http://www.crossrail.co.uk/construction/safeguarding/maidenhead-to-reading>.

Improvement to Strategic transport network	Extent Improvement is part of Core Strategy			Funding		
	Sub-Regional ⁵⁵	Integral to Core Strategy	Adjacent authority strategy	National/ regional funding	Apply for through LTP	S106 and WBC funds
facilities.						
22 - Improvements to M4 Junction 10.				✓		✓

4.55 Infrastructure improvements associated with the SDL are detailed in CP18-21. Depending upon the improvements, proposals outside of the SDL may need to contribute as part of the cumulative resolution of the issue. It is imperative that these are provided otherwise the scheme would not achieve a sustainable quality of life. Indicative alignments for the improvements to the Strategic Transport Network will be shown in the Managing Development Delivery DPD. Improvements associated with the SDL are included in the concept plans. Other proposals for improvements to the Strategic Transport Network may arise including those to ensure that the Community Resilience functions of the authority are maintained e.g. access along the Strategic Transport Network at times of flooding for the emergency services.

4.56 The strategic transport network through the borough comprises all the motorways, A and B class roads together with the railway lines from Reading to Guildford & Gatwick Airport, Basingstoke, London Paddington and London Waterloo together with the line from Twyford to Henley-on-Thames. This Strategic Transport Network is consistent with that defined in the LTP.

CP11 - Proposals outside Development Limits (including countryside)

In order to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment, proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted except where:

- 1) It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough, or in the case of other countryside based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside; and
- 2) It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and
- 3) It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement; or
- 4) In the case of residential extensions, does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building;
- 5) In the case of replacement dwellings the proposal must:
 - i) Bring about environmental improvements; or
 - ii) Not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.

- 6) Essential community facilities cannot be accommodated within development limits or through the re-use/replacement of an existing building;
- 7) Affordable housing on rural exception sites in line with CP9.

- 4.57 Restricting development outside of development limits also helps protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the borough's environment which is recognised in the Audit Report. Preventing the proliferation of development in areas away from existing development limits is important, as they are not generally well located for the facilities and services. Proposals for development, which would be an increase over what currently exists (outside development limits) are likely to lead to increased use of the private car as they are poorly served by other transport modes contrary to Policy CP6. Proposals may be able to address deficiencies in accessibility to services through contributions in line with Policy CP4.
- 4.58 Proposals for agricultural workers dwellings will need to demonstrate that they comply with this policy and PPS7. Community facilities are listed in paragraph 4.17. The Council recognises the role of leisure and recreational activities (that do not require significant buildings) to maintain the character of the countryside. Cemeteries can also perform this role. Proposals within the Green Belt must also comply with PPG2 and Policy CP12.

CP12 - Green Belt

Planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate development within the Metropolitan Green Belt as defined in PPG2.

The Metropolitan Green Belt in the borough as illustrated on the key diagram comprises the land north and east of Twyford but excluding Wargrave. It also includes the land in the parish of St. Nicholas Hurst east of The Straight Mile and north of Carter's Hill.

- 4.59 In line with the guidance in PPG2, one of the key features of Green Belts is their permanence. SEP Policy SP5 indicates that Green Belts in the region will be supported. PPG2, paragraph 2.6 indicates that changes to Green Belt boundaries should only be made in exceptional circumstances. The Council does not consider that exceptional circumstances exist to warrant changes to the Green Belt during the Plan period as all the development needs for the Borough can be accommodated sustainably elsewhere. This is consistent with the findings of the SHLAA and SEP paragraph 21.6 which does not indicate that a review of the Green Belt is required at any locations within Wokingham Borough.
- 4.60 Within the borough's Green Belt any proposal that harms the open character of the area or entails inappropriate development will not be acceptable. Forms of appropriate development are listed in PPG2 (paragraphs 3.4 to 3.10).
- 4.61 The precise boundary of the Green Belt will be defined in the Managing Development Delivery DPD. Pending the production of this DPD, the extent of the Green Belt will reflect that designated by WDLP Policy WGB1. There is currently one major developed site within the Green Belt at the Star Brick &

Tile Works, Knowl Hill (WDLP Policy WGB6). The Managing Development Delivery DPD will consider whether this or any other major developed site is necessary within the borough.

CP13 – Town centres and shopping

Wokingham and Woodley town centres, Lower Earley district centre, Shinfield Road centre, Twyford village centre and Winnersh centre are suitable in principle to accommodate town centre uses. The roles of all existing and new retail centres will be protected and maintained, in addition to local shopping centres and parades that meet the day to day needs of the local community. Losses of retail from primary retail frontages will not be permitted in order to maintain vitality and viability.

New retail centres that will not impact upon existing retail centres may be designated through the Local Development Framework. The hierarchy of centres within the borough is:

- a) Wokingham town centre is designated as a major town centre;
- b) Arborfield Garrison district centre (proposed through policy CP18), Lower Earley district centre, Shinfield Road district centre, Twyford village centre, Winnersh village centre and Woodley town centre are designated as small town/district centres
- c) Local centres – as defined in subsequent Development Plan Documents

4.62 The existing retail centres in Wokingham borough are Lower Earley district centre, Twyford village centre together with Wokingham and Woodley town centres. The various centres of the borough took 15% of all retail expenditure in 2005⁵⁸, which the authority aims to increase to improve the vitality and viability of centres within the borough. Centres outside the borough (including details of their share of borough retail expenditure) include Bracknell (7.5%), Maidenhead (1.4%) and Reading (62.1%). Town centre uses are defined as retailing, entertainment, arts and culture, indoor recreation, leisure, health, community and office uses. Community uses are defined in paragraph 4.17.

4.63 Table 4.2 provides information (derived from the Retail Study) on the current and potential needs during the plan period of retail floorspace within the four main centres of the borough. Having regard to this, the Council expects that the roles of each centre during the Plan period will be as follows:

- a) Earley – to serve the convenience needs of its catchment together with some limited comparison goods. It will also become a stronger focus for the community, providing for an enhanced civic function.
- b) Twyford – to serve the convenience needs of its catchment together with some limited comparison goods. The Retail Study indicates a number of improvements to the quality of the centre which will be considered through the Managing Development Delivery DPD.
- c) Wokingham – to serve the convenience needs of its catchment and to reduce leakage of comparison expenditure to other centres. Policy CP15 sets out the broad approach to achieving this in line with the findings of the Retail Study. As table 4.1 indicates, Wokingham town is the largest retail centre in the borough.

⁵⁸ Information derived from CACI Balance of Trade Report for Wokingham District

- d) Woodley – to serve the convenience needs of its catchment together with some limited comparison goods. The Retail Study indicates a number of improvements that could be made to the usage of the main pedestrian precinct. These will be considered through the Managing Development Delivery DPD.

Table 4.1 – Summary of current floorspace and potential future capacity for centres in Wokingham Borough (convenience & comparison)

Centre	Floorspace (2007) (m ²) ⁵⁹		Potential additional floorspace (m ²)					
			2011		2021		2026	
	Conv	Comp	Conv	Comp	Conv	Comp	Conv	Comp
Wokingham	3,305	12,902	500	1,050	900	3,900	1,800	12,350
Earley	5,101	3,184	2,450	350	3,000	800	4,200	1,950
Twyford	1,938	1,948	250	200	350	450	600	1,050
Woodley	2,709	5,413	900	650	1,100	1,450	1,450	3,350
Rest of borough			3,102	0	3,972	1,299	6,075	4,549

- 4.64 Table 4.1 supports a hierarchy of centres within the borough with Wokingham town at the top, then Earley & Woodley and finally Twyford. The Council's Retail Study (August 2007) indicates that there is potential for additional floorspace to maintain the roles of the centres and support this hierarchy. The Study recognises that the longer term estimates for floorspace needs are less accurate than those for the short term due to the extent that other factors e.g. growth of internet shopping may generate impacts. Additional sites to support the findings of the Retail Study for improving the vitality and viability of the centres will be identified in the Managing Development Delivery DPD. Further guidance to support the vitality of the centres will be provided in Development Guide SPD.
- 4.65 In order to achieve the development strategy, new centres will be developed between 2006 and 2026 to achieve a more sustainable pattern of development. New or enhanced centres will arise as part of the Arborfield Garrison, south of the M4, North Wokingham and South Wokingham SDL (policies CP18-21). The improvement and provision of retail centres is consistent with the findings of the Audit Report which emphasised the importance of improving access to facilities and services to enhance residents' quality of life. The Shinfield Road local centre in Shinfield (North of M4) will be upgraded to a district centre in conjunction with the proposals in Reading's Core Strategy (Policy CS26). It is likely that the existing local centre at Winnersh will be upgraded to district centre status. The Retail Study (paragraph 5.2) recognises that it may be appropriate for some of the 2,000m² likely convenience needs for Earley to be provided within the SDL proposed under policy CP19.
- 4.66 The extent of town, district, village and local centres will be defined in the Managing Development Delivery DPD. This DPD will also provide definitions for the retailing areas together with any primary and secondary shopping frontages within the centres following a review of those within the WDLP (Policies WSH1, WSH5, WSH6, WSH7 and WSH9).

⁵⁹ Convenience shopping includes food, drink, tobacco, confectionary and newspapers. Comparison is other products including clothing, electrical goods and hardware.

- 4.67 To maintain the range of activities available in defined centres so that they are at the heart of sustainable communities, proposals leading to the loss of town centre uses will not be allowed unless it is substantiated that there is no deficiency in the catchment. Furthermore, proposals for the loss of convenience stores outside defined centres but within development limits will need to demonstrate that appropriate alternative provision is available or there is no demand for the unit. Further guidance on this will be set out in the Managing Development Delivery DPD.

CP14 - Growth and Renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre

Wokingham, as a major town centre in Berkshire is considered suitable for growth. Proposals should retain and enhance the historic market town character of Wokingham and maintain its position in the Berkshire retail hierarchy by:

- 1) Strengthening shopping in the retail core to reduce leakage of expenditure;
- 2) Conserving and enhancing historic quality and interest;
- 3) Improving existing public space;
- 4) Ensuring development cumulatively provides and maintains:
 - a) A wide range of services, learning opportunities, community facilities and tourist facilities that complement existing provision;
 - b) Housing;
 - c) Office accommodation;
 - d) Public open space providing for a range of activities;
 - e) Leisure and entertainment;
 - f) Improved pedestrian links between the station and the shopping streets;
 - g) Improved pedestrian and cycle links between the centre and other parts of the town;
 - h) Appropriate car parking to facilitate a viable and sustainable town centre;
 - i) Enhanced environmental and design quality.
- 5) The use of compulsory purchase powers to facilitate site assembly and the delivery of renewal and regeneration schemes.

- 4.68 Further information on how the proposals in Wokingham town centre will contribute towards this policy will be set out in both the Managing Development Delivery DPD and the Wokingham Town Centre Development Guide SPD. The former BSP (Policy S1) recognised that Wokingham town centre was a major centre.

- 4.69 The rejuvenation of Wokingham town centre is consistent with the views of the community (LPS3) and the Audit Report's conclusions. Improving the centre means that it can better meet the needs of residents and prevent decline associated with loss of expenditure following expansion in nearby larger centres. The Retail Study indicates proposals within the town centre should contribute towards lengthening the time visitors stay (including into the evenings), as this will contribute towards the vitality and viability of the centre. The Retail Study (see table 4.1 earlier) indicates that there is scope for additional comparison floorspace in the centre to help reduce the current leakage. The main funding for the regeneration is from the Council's own land

interests in the town centre, S106 and regional funding that comes with the LTP and private funding from developers. The indicative timetable for completion of the competitive dialogue process is Spring 2010.

CP15 - Employment Development

Development for business, industry or warehousing will be permitted, including the expansion or intensification of existing employment uses provided it is within one of the following Core Employment Areas:

- 1) Green Park Business Park, Reading;
- 2) Headley Road East, Woodley;
- 3) Hogwood Industrial Estate, Park Lane, Finchampstead;
- 4) Molly Millars Industrial Estate, Wokingham;
- 5) Ruscombe Business Park, Ruscombe;
- 6) Sutton's Industrial Estate, Earley;
- 7) Thames Valley Business Park, Earley;
- 8) Toutley Industrial Estate, Wokingham; or
- 9) Winnersh Triangle Business Park, Winnersh.

Elsewhere within development limits the redevelopment, refurbishment or minor extension of buildings in employment use will be acceptable in principle.

Some scope for limited additional employment development may be identified in:

- i) The Managing Development Delivery DPD;
- ii) Within the Strategic Development Locations as detailed within the proposed SDL Masterplan SPDs (Policies CP18-21); or
- iii) The retail centres defined in policy CP13 for office proposals.

Any proposed changes of use from B1, B2 & B8 should not lead to an overall net loss of floorspace in B Use within the borough. Provision will be made for a range of sizes, types, quality and locations of premises and sites in order to meet incubator/start up, move on, expansion and investment accommodation needs and having regard to the needs of specific sectors of the business community.

All proposals for employment development (including offices in line with Policies CP13 and CP14) will include mitigation commensurate with the impact of the development on the demand for housing, labour, skills, traffic and highways.

- 4.70 A good supply of a range of sizes, types and location of available sites and buildings is a pre-requisite to a thriving economy. This will be monitored through the AMR. The Employment Land Study indicates the current level of floorspace for industry and warehousing would need to rise by 51,000sq m to meet forecast employment growth in the Borough over the Plan period. This represents approximately a 10% increase in stock and can be met through the intensification of use brought about through the redevelopment of existing employment areas and new allocations in the Managing Development Delivery DPD. The increase in floorspace of 40% approved as part of the