

2014

*Local Planning Authority's
Monitoring Report for
1/4/13 – 31/3/14
March 2015*



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Executive Summary

This is the Local Planning Authority's Monitoring Report, which covers the period from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. The aim is to demonstrate progress against the programme outlined in the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and examine the effectiveness of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy. Policies are measured against various indicators but there is no requirement to use national core output indicators previously prescribed by Central Government. The report looks at changes in performance and any progress with actions proposed in earlier Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs). Due to changes introduced through the Localism Act 2011, the monitoring requirements prescribed for local planning authorities have altered.

Progress this year includes:

Adoption of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan on 21 February 2014

Initial consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal for the emerging Gypsy and Traveller Plan for the Borough undertaken summer 2013

Designation of Remenham Parish as a Neighbourhood Area in July 2013

Consultation on the CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule April to May 2013 followed by consultation on the Draft Charging Schedule January to March 2014

First phase of the town centre regeneration underway at Peach Place Corner

Publication of WBC Open Space, Sports and Recreation Strategy followed by consultation from June to July 2013

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1 BACKGROUND

The *Monitoring Report* is produced to demonstrate how well an authority is complying with the progress outlined in its Local Development Scheme (LDS) for producing planning policy documents.

The *Monitoring Report* also explains how well the policies in these planning policy documents are being implemented and whether any changes are needed. The *Monitoring Report* covers the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. The policies that have been monitored for this year are from the *Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CSDPD)*, adopted 29 January 2010, and the *Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD)*, adopted 21 February 2014. The *Core Strategy* is the key planning policy document for the Borough, which will be used to guide development. It sets out the long-term vision and overarching policies for the Borough. The *MDD* provides a greater level of detail about the delivery of the *Core Strategy*.

2 INTRODUCTION TO THE BOROUGH AND ISSUES FACING THE AREA

The area covered by Wokingham Borough lies within the former administrative county of Berkshire in the area known as the Thames Valley. In many ways Wokingham borough is a federation of 3 towns and 14 parishes. The area is diverse; to the north the area is part of the Metropolitan Green Belt; Wokingham, the administrative centre, is an old market town which retains its character but only houses one-fifth of the borough's population; two-fifths of the borough's population live in the towns of Woodley and Earley which adjoin the borough of Reading; the remainder of the population live in smaller settlements which are separated by areas of countryside that include extensive flood plains. The *Landscape Character Assessment* confirms the borough's diversity. It shows it contains three separate national landscape areas. The borough includes a range of employment including modern business parks at Winnersh Triangle Business Park and Thames Valley Business Park.

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The 2011 census found that the borough had a population of 154,380. This is a rise of approximately 2.8% per since 2001. The current mid-year estimate (mid 2013) is 157,866. The 2011 census figures show a smaller increase than expected given that the mid-year estimate for 2010 was 163,200.

According to NOMIS, the official labour market statistics service, unemployment had remained consistently low at less than 1% for several years but it rose sharply from 0.8% in August 2008 to a peak of 2% in August 2009. Numbers have fallen since then and were down to 0.5% by November 2014 (NOMIS January 2015, ONS). This is lower than any of the other Berkshire local authority areas.

A *UK Vitality Index* produced by Lambert Smith Hampton (December, 2013) found Wokingham to be joint top in the index of “most economically productive” towns and cities. It was also joint top in the “most entrepreneurial” index which assesses which towns and cities provide the best environment for new business. In the most recent issue (December 2014) Wokingham has retained top ranking in these two indices and moved up to joint top ranking in the “most affluent” ranking. The “most affluent index is a combination of average house prices, average weekly pay and socio-economic demographic data. Similarly, the recently published economic report *Centre for Cities* (2015) found that Wokingham together with Reading and Bracknell Forest local authority areas (defined as Greater Reading in the report) was the top ranked area in the UK for economic production per worker (GVA). The area was also ranked fifth for start-up businesses and second for highest wages. In a report published by Grant Thornton in autumn 2014, Wokingham scored highly on the Dynamism Index. The Dynamism Index “focuses on the quality of growth, to identify areas with a vibrant and dynamic economy, from which to elicit common characteristics which may be the key ingredients for driving value and growth in local economies in the future.” Outside of London, Wokingham was the sixth highest scoring Local Authority (*Grant Thornton Report - Where growth happens*, 2014).

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Whilst house prices in Wokingham are above the national average they have not increased as much as the average price for the South East region. The trend can be seen in the graph in Appendix 4.

Census data for 2011 has shown that 16.4% of the Borough's population are from Black and Minority Ethnic communities (including "white Irish" and "white other" categories). This is an increase from 10.19% in the 2001 census and in line with the estimate of 16% in the Mid 2009 experimental statistics (ONS). The census data also showed that compared to the national average (England and Wales) Wokingham Borough has fewer people aged 20 to 30 and fewer males aged 30 to 35. Wokingham has a higher than average proportion of people in the age group 35 to 55.

The Council's *Core Strategy* requires the delivery of 13,230 dwellings between 2006 and 2026; The Council has been very proactive in assisting with the delivery on the ground of development, in particular the delivery of the four Strategic Development Locations. The Council has made a clear commitment to growth and to ensure that the new development is carefully planned, well designed and includes the appropriate infrastructure to deliver good quality places for people to live.

3 PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Council produces a timetable setting out when different planning policy documents will be produced and what issues these will cover. This is called the Local Development Scheme (LDS). It is a three year timetable for the Council's planning policies and strategies.

The LDS contains dates of when consultation will take place and also when a public examination will take place for certain planning policy documents. This can be seen at

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planningcontrol/planning/planningpolicies/ldf/ldftimetable/>

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The *MDD* underwent an Examination in Public from 14 to 24 May 2013. The Council published the Inspectors Interim Conclusions on 26 June 2013. This was followed by a consultation on the Proposed Main Modifications from 31 July until 25 September 2013. The Inspector's final report was published on 27 January 2014 and the *MDD* was adopted on 21 February 2014. Further information about the *MDD* can be found via

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/policy/ldf/managingdevelopmentdelivery/>

The authority consulted upon the *Scoping Report for the Sustainability Appraisal* (incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment) for the Borough's *Gypsy and Traveller Plan* in June and July 2013. Although the authority envisaged consulting upon the Draft Options for its *Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan Draft* in August to September 2013, due to the need to prioritise the resources of the authority in taking the *MDD* through examination and adoption, the consultation took place in August 2014.

Reports and further information can be found at

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/policy/ldf/gypsy-and-traveller-local-plan/>

The LDS also indicated that in March 2013, the authority would commence initial work on a Minerals and Waste Local Plan for the Borough to replace the saved policies of the Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plans. In contributing towards the updating of the Local Aggregate Assessments for Berkshire (alongside the other Berkshire Unitary Authorities) and reviewing the information on waste movements provided by the Environment Agency's Waste Data Interrogator, the authority is reviewing information to inform the evidence base of the plan as envisaged in the LDS. Further, the LDS notes that the authority could work collaboratively with other authorities on a joint plan and the potential for undertaking a joint plan is being considered.



4 POLICIES AND MONITORING

The Council's planning policy documents cover a wide range of topics, such as how much housing has already been provided and how much housing needs to be provided in the future. Other policies are for employment development and the health of our local town centres, for example, the number of vacant retail units is monitored regularly. There are also planning policies that seek to protect and enhance the Borough's countryside, open spaces and biodiversity and to ensure that development is sustainable.

Monitoring information is collected and made available as soon as possible. The following sections of the *Monitoring Report* set out how these policies are being implemented and signpost where the relevant information can be found.

New Homes Residents Survey

A survey of new homes was carried out to gather and assess resident opinion of new developments completed in the monitoring year. The survey included questions on amount and use of space in the home which was particularly relevant as the *MDD* contains policies focused on the quality of new homes. Questions were based on policies in the *Borough Design Guide*, *Core Strategy* and *MDD, Sustainable Design and Construction SPD* and *Community Strategy*. It is intended that the survey will be repeated every year to show whether our policies are being implemented and whether or not they are working satisfactorily. The information will be helpful for formulating our policies and in working with developers. The questionnaire was distributed in January 2015 to 733 new homes and 168 were completed and returned. Results and analysis are included in the Housing Section of this *Monitoring Report*.

5 HOUSING

Core Strategy policies aim to ensure residential development provides a mix and balance of densities, dwelling types, tenures and sizes. This includes



affordable housing that must meet the proven needs of people unable to compete in the general housing market.

Core Strategy Policies

CP2 Inclusive communities
CP5 Housing mix, density and affordability
CP17 Housing Delivery
CP18 Arborfield Garrison SDL
CP19 South of the M4 SDL
CP20 North Wokingham SDL
CP21 South Wokingham SDL

MDD Policies

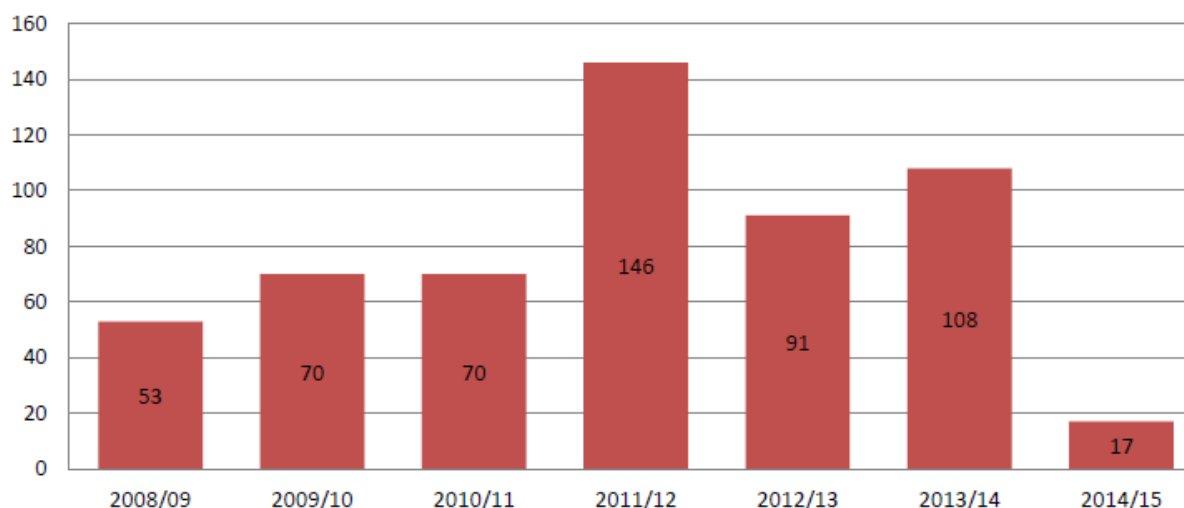
TB05 Housing mix
TB09 Residential accommodation for vulnerable groups
TB10 Traveller sites
SAL01 Allocated housing development sites (Sites identified through Wokingham District Local Plan)
SAL02 Allocated housing development sites
SAL03 Allocated reserve housing sites

Affordable Housing Supply

The chart below shows how many affordable homes were completed since 2008. These are completed through partnership with Registered Providers (i.e. housing associations). Most new supply is secured through Section 106 negotiations with developers, and is therefore dependent on sites getting planning consent, and developers then building them out. Figures for 2012/13 dropped markedly from the previous year but that is largely due to 2011/12 having an exceptional number of affordable dwellings completed at extra care developments such as Alexandra Place and Beeches Manor.



Affordable Housing Completions 2009/10 - 2014/15



Source: Wokingham BC Housing Facts and Figures, July-Sept 2014

Housing Delivery

Information about housing supply, completion rates and SDL allocation can be found in the *Wokingham Borough Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) April 2014*. The SHLAA was carried out to assess the amount of land available for residential development and to consider sites with potential for new housing. This includes information updated to reflect housing monitoring at 31 March 2014. For full details see

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/policy/housing/shlaa/>

Plan period and housing targets

Following adoption of the *Core Strategy* on 29th January 2010, policy CP17 sets the borough's housing requirements from April 2006 to March 2026. The phased requirements are set out below.

Time Period	Housing Target for period (Housing target per annum)
1/4/06-31/3/11	3,000 dwellings (600 per annum)
1/4/11-31/3/16	3,500 dwellings (700 per annum)
1/4/16-31/3/21	3,615 dwellings (723 per annum)
1/4/21-31/3/26	3,115 dwellings (623 per annum)

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<i>Total</i>	
1/4/06-31/3/26	13,230 dwellings (661.5 per annum)

Net additional dwellings and managed delivery target

Net additional dwellings

Details of completions since April 2001 are set out below

1/4/01-31/3/02	237
1/4/02-31/3/03	418
1/4/03-31/3/04	492
1/4/04-31/3/05	376
1/4/05-31/3/06	655
1/4/06-31/3/07	1,018
1/4/07-31/3/08	488
1/4/08-31/3/09	368
1/4/09-31/3/10	226
1/4/10-31/3/11	220
1/4/11-31/3/12	273
1/4/12-31/3/13	401
1/4/13-31/3/14	490

Site allocation

The housing delivery requirements identified above have been addressed by the allocation of sites in the *MDD*. Policy SAL01 Allocated Housing Development Sites (Sites identified through former Wokingham District Local Plan) would provide around 999 dwellings). They would contribute towards the overall housing requirement and the maintenance of a rolling 5 year supply of housing land. The sites allocated for residential development are:

- Land at Hatch Farm Dairies, Winnersh (431 dwellings)
- Land at Sandford Farm, Woodley (468 dwellings)
- Land at junction of Hatch Ride and Old Wokingham Rd, Crowthorne (100 dwellings)

Policy SAL02 Allocated Housing Development Sites would provide around 840 dwellings across the Borough. These include 725 at major development locations and 115 at modest development locations.



Policy SAL03 Allocated Reserve Housing Sites would provide around 135 dwellings. These sites are allocated for development after 1 April 2026 unless one of the following applies:

- The Council accepts that the overall dwelling requirement for 13,230 net dwellings between 1 April 2006 and 31 March 2026 is unlikely to be achieved
- The Council accepts there is a deficit in the rolling 5 year supply of housing land
- An approved Neighbourhood Plan confirms that residential development of an allocated reserve site can occur before 1 April 2026

Housing trajectory

The Council has also produced a housing trajectory associated with the *Core Strategy* (updated to April 2014 and taking account of the allocation of sites within the Adopted *MDD*). **The housing trajectory in Appendix 1 shows past and estimated future housing completions on an annual basis.**

The information in appendix 1 demonstrates that sufficient land has been identified to meet both the overall housing requirements of *Core Strategy* policy CP17 and to maintain a rolling 5 year supply of housing from April 2014 to at least April 2021. This has been achieved by taking account of the allocation of sites in the *MDD*). The *Summary SHLAA* (March 2014) indicates that taking account of the identification of sites for these dwellings, the Council's assessment of rolling 5 year supplies of housing land at both April 2014 and 2015 indicated supplies of 5 years and 5.4 years respectively (taking account of the 20% buffer to address persistent under delivery of housing).

Within the area where residents may visit the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area there is a need to provide land as an alternative visitor destination (mitigation land) in association with any residential development. The provision of such land has been agreed. Whilst the supply of housing from the affected area has been constrained, this constraint was removed from May 2010 as planning applications could be permitted.



SDLs for Arborfield Garrison, South of the M4 and, North Wokingham and South Wokingham

Within the *Core Strategy*, a significant proportion of the borough's housing (around 10,000 dwellings out of the 13,230 required in the borough) will be delivered from the four Strategic Development Locations (SDL) allocated in policies CP18-21.

Development of all the allocated Strategic Development Locations in the Borough will be guided by individual Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) for each SDL and an over-arching *Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD*.

The diagram in Appendix 2 illustrates the role of each SDL for housing delivery within the borough, and the comparison between them and other sources.

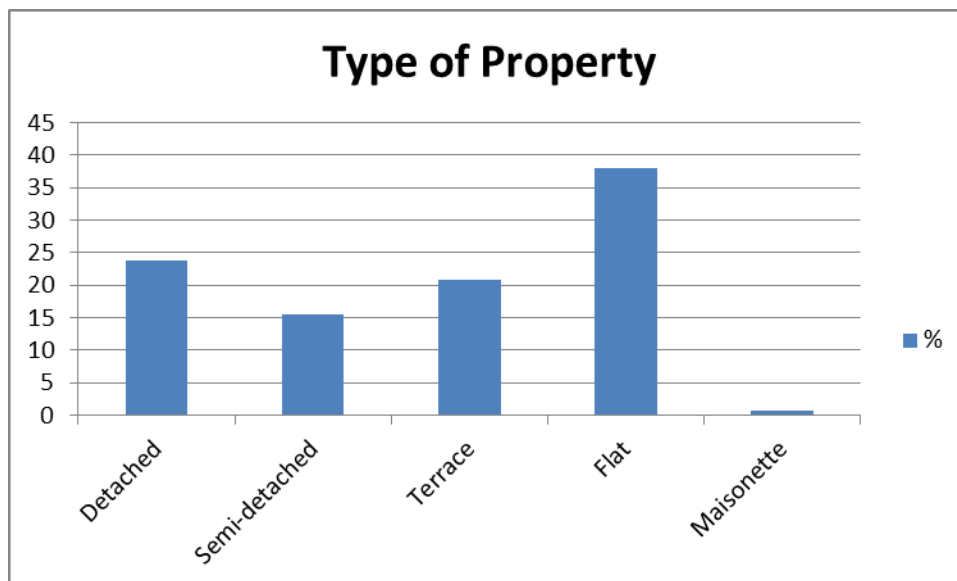
Further information is available at

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/development/locations/>

Results of the New Homes Resident's Survey – Homes

General

Most respondents lived in flats (38.1%) followed by detached houses (23.8%), terraced houses (20.8%), semi-detached houses (15.5%) and maisonettes (0.6%). 67.9% of new homes were owner occupied. The remainder were rented through a housing association (12.5%); privately rented (11.3%) or shared ownership (7.1%).



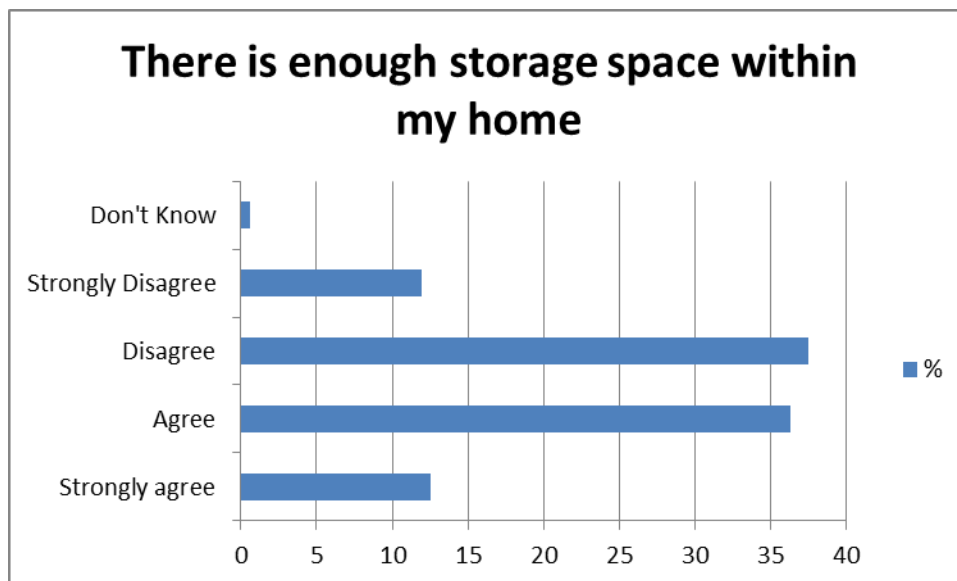
These percentages reflect *Core Strategy* policy (CP5) to have residential development providing a mix and balance of densities, dwelling types, tenures and sizes.

Just over 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that overall, they were satisfied with their new home.

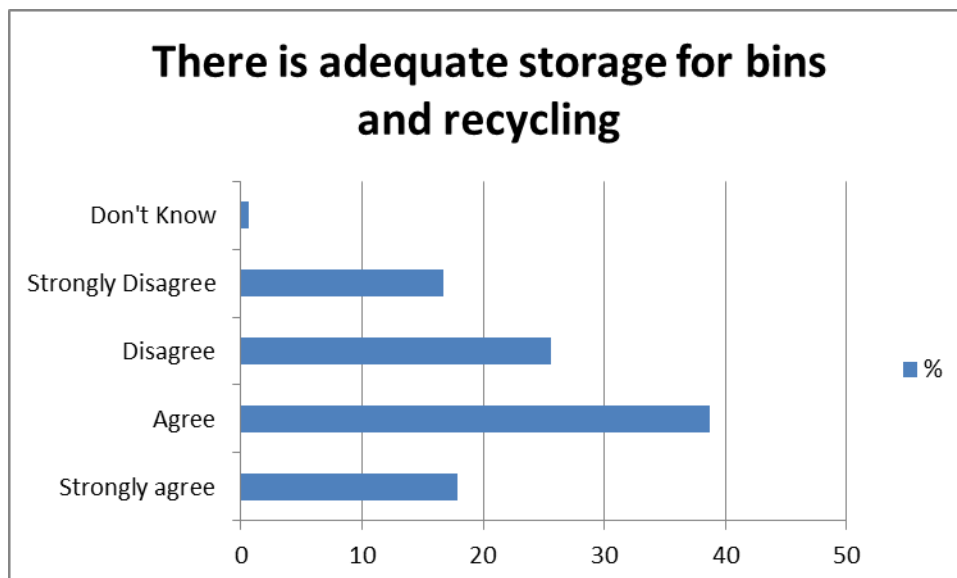
Space and Storage

Most respondents agreed (49.4%) or strongly agreed (36.9%) that they had enough space to move around and undertake normal living activities in their new home. Fewer agreed that they would be able to move furniture around to try different layouts.

There was less satisfaction with the amount of storage space with slightly more respondents disagreeing that they had enough in their home.



There was a separate question about adequate storage for bins and recycling. In this case there was slightly more satisfaction expressed as a percentage although several residents gave comments about problems with rubbish collection and the recycling facilities available.



Borough Design Guide (Principle R17) intends Development proposals to provide high quality, functional, accessible, secure and adaptable buildings. Results suggest that it is working quite well in terms of general living space but not so well for provision of storage space.



The majority of respondents were satisfied that rooms in their home were sufficiently lit by natural light (87.5%) and that their home was well insulated and retained heat well (85.7%). Most were satisfied with the sound proofing (75.5%) although 14.3% disagreed and 8.9% expressed strong disagreement that their home was well sound proofed. There were several negative comments about poor quality of homes including problems with insulation.

40.5% of respondents agreed that their private outdoor space was the right size for their needs whilst 16.1% disagreed. The remainder were neutral/don't know (26.8%). The *Borough Design Guide* (R16) says new housing must provide easy access to some form of amenity space. It also gives guidance on size of garden and separation distances to maintain privacy.

The Neighbourhood

The majority of respondents (88.1%) felt that the buildings and streets around their new home were attractive. A similar percentage (90.5%) agreed that the new homes fitted in well with their surroundings. This is one of the aims of the *Core Strategy* to ensure proposals will have “built upon the attractiveness and features of the area thereby ensuring the sense of place is retained”. Over 97% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe in their neighbourhood during the day. Almost as many (92.3%) felt safe during the night.

The *Core Strategy* and *Borough Design Guide* include policies to encourage accessibility and sustainable patterns of living with “connected networks with a choice of routes” to encourage pedestrian and cycle use but also to apply to vehicular movement where possible. Most residents agreed it was easy to find their way around their neighbourhood by foot, bicycle and car. Fewer found it easy by public transport. Suggestions for improvements to increase use of sustainable travel included short cuts for walking, more cycle lanes but most of all for improvements to bus services.



“More regular and frequent bus routes through Three Mile Cross needed. Present - one per hour which is always late and stops very early in the evening”

“Bus service is poor and non reliable. There is no bus after 6 which doesn't suit any professional or commuter. Need proper and reliable public transport to avoid congested A33”

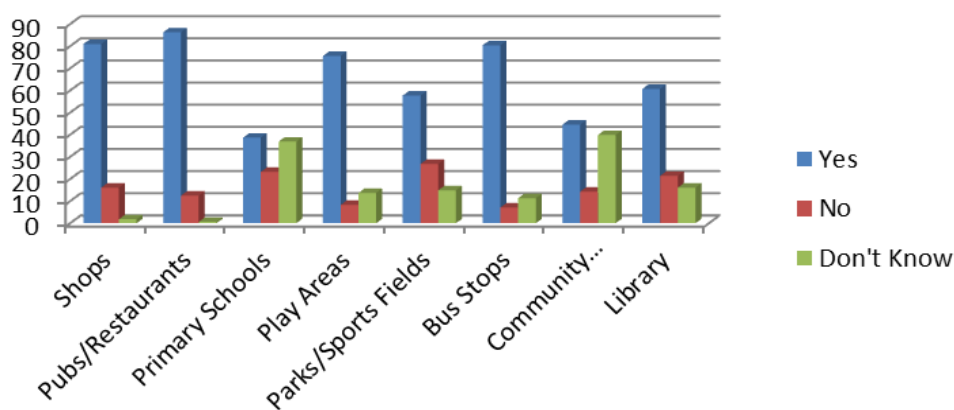
“Bus service is unreliable and infrequent. Would be good to have a better bus service than runs more often”

“More buses and more regularly”

“Yes - need a better (more frequent) bus service!”

Facilities such as shops, pubs/restaurants, play areas and parks were mostly thought to be within reasonable walking distance but less than half of respondents thought this for primary schools and community centres/halls.

The following facilities are a reasonable walking distance from my home

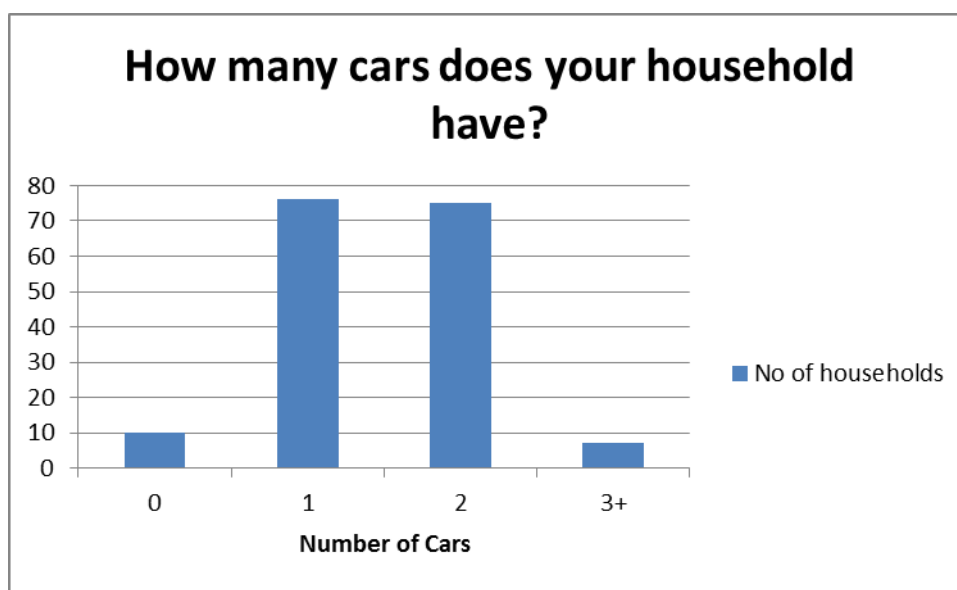


Parking

As with last year's survey the lack of parking space was by far the biggest concern for residents. The survey included specific questions on parking but over a quarter (26.1%) of respondents also returned to this subject in the general comments section to describe their dissatisfaction with the lack of parking and/or related problems.



Car ownership is particularly high in Wokingham Borough. In the 2011 Census Wokingham had the second highest level of car ownership behind Hart District Council. This was reflected in the New Homes Resident Survey where only 6% of households had no car. The number of two car households (44.8%) was only marginally lower than the number with one car (45.2).



73.2% of respondents felt that there was not enough parking for visitors whilst 70.8% thought that parked cars dominated the streets in their neighbourhood.



“Cars parked on kerbs now a real problem. Often in the morning I'm unable to drive out of side drive onto the crescent in one turn, often having to reverse/go forward/reverse to get round. Emergency services, especially a fire engine would not get through.”

“Way too many cars for amount of parking spaces. Cars all over the pavements. Difficult to manoeuvre as both a pedestrian and a driver”

“Only one allocated parking space is available for each residence. But most families have at least two vehicles. The road is therefore full of vehicles. Parking with wheels on the pavement is the norm. Commercial vans of some residents are parked overnight and at weekends... Families with prams cannot easily use the pavement as they are blocked with cars/vans. There are no visitor parking spaces at all!”

“Friends/relatives don't like to visit as no where to park”

“No visitor parking, double yellows on a lot of Ashville Way making it near impossible for visitors to park any where near the property”

It should be noted that all of the large sites included in this survey had their planning permission granted before the Council's current parking standards were published (Oct 2011). As the survey is repeated annually we will eventually see new developments built out which were approved under current revised parking standards. We can then assess whether or not the revised standards have led to improvements.

Development within the vicinity of the AWE facility at Burghfield

Policy TB04 of the *MDD* outlines how the authority will consult the Office for Nuclear Regulation on proposals which could result in a change in the number of people living, working or visiting the area around the site. The monitoring section of the *MDD* indicates that the authority will provide West Berkshire Council with relevant information on development approved or completed around the site, taking account of the baseline situation considered as part of the work they undertook on their *Core Strategy* (see paragraph 3.15 of the *MDD*).



The table below details dwelling completions annually since April 2010 together with a summary of the level of planning permissions/allocations within each of the consultation zones (although not all of the proposals summarised exceeded the thresholds in the policy).

Period	Net dwellings in AWE Burghfield consultation zones		
	DEPZ (0 - 1.5km)	Middle (1.5 - 3km)	Outer (3-5 km)
Completed 1/4/10 - 31/3/11	0	0	8
Completed 1/4/11 - 31/3/12	0	0	5
Completed 1/4/12 - 31/3/13	3	36	4
Completed 1/4/13 - 31/3/14	-1	186	4
Outstanding at 1/4/14	1	117	2,841
Total	3	339	2,862

Neighbourhood Planning

The Localism Act of 2011 introduced Neighbourhood Planning. This is intended to involve communities in the production of a Neighbourhood Plan. Remenham Parish was designated as a neighbourhood area in July 2013. Arborfield and Barkham applied for designation as a neighbourhood area in March 2014. Shinfield Parish continued to work on their neighbourhood plan. Further information about neighbourhood planning can be found at <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planningcontrol/planning/planningpolicies/ldf/neighbourhood/neighbourhoodplansgeneralinformation/>

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Community infrastructure Levy is a new charge for development which may be imposed by local authorities. The charge will be for certain types and size of development and will contribute to the local infrastructure needed as a result of the new development. Consultation on the *CIL Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule* ran from 4 April to 16 May 2013. This was followed by a Statement of Consultation. Consultation on the Draft Charging Schedule ran from 29 January to March 2014. Details of the timetable for introducing CIL can be seen at <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/developers/cil/>



EMPLOYMENT

Objectives include: Allow limited new business, industrial, distribution and storage development to meet local needs, retain the range of employment and provide job opportunities for the local population in locations that have regard to environmental issues and limiting the need to travel.

Core Strategy Policies

CP9 Scale and location of development proposals
CP13 Town Centres and Shopping
CP14 Growth and Renaissance of Wokingham town centre
CP15 Employment Development
CP16 Science Park

MDD Policies

TB11 Core Employment Areas and Defined Bad Neighbour Uses
TB13 Science and Innovation Park
TB14 Whiteknights Campus
TB15 Major Town and Small Town/District Centre development
TB16 Development for Town Centre Uses
TB17 Local Centres and Neighbourhood and Village Shops
TB18 Garden Centres and other small rural units outside Development Limits
SAL07 Sites within Development Limits allocated for employment/commercial development

The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as use classes. The table below shows B1 Business uses; B2 general industrial and B8 Storage or Distribution. B1 Business uses are broken down further into B1 (a) Offices; B1 (b) Research and development, studios, laboratories, high technology and B1(c) Light industry. See Glossary for full details.

The table below shows the amount of employment floorspace developed in Wokingham Borough in the last six years. It shows the amount for the various business use classes, annual total change and cumulative total change.



Completed B Uses in the Borough by year

Year (1 st April to 31 st March)	Use Class			Annual total change of all B use classes combined (m ²)	Cumulative total change of all B use classes combined (m ²)
	B1 (m ²)	B2 (m ²)	B8 (m ²)		
2006 - 2007	10,123	-5,263	-11,042	-6,182	-6,182
2007 - 2008	4,173	-10,208	4,970	-1,065	-7,247
2008 - 2009	-1,032	131	1,740	839	-6,408
2009 - 2010	26,763	-455	-104	26,204	19,796
2010 - 2011	-1,422	475	-3,235	-4,182	15,614
2011 - 2012	-7,383	-7,034	970	-13,447	2,167
2012 - 2013	-594	2,618	17,231	19,255	21,422
2013- 2014	-22,061	1,915	2,373	-17,773	3,649
Total	8,567	-17,821	12,903		

Source: WBC Employment Land Monitoring Report 2013-2014

Please note the WBC Employment Land Monitoring Report 2013-2014 supersedes the 2012-2013 report and includes revised data for earlier years. For full details please see

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/policy/planningforemployment/>

In the monitoring year 2013-14 the largest developments completed were:

- Unit 310, Wharfdale Road, Winnersh, RG41 5TZ - 1591m² of B1, B2 and B8 floor space
- Unit 1, Base 329, Headley Road East, Woodley, RG5 4AZ - 622m² of B8 floor space
- NTS House, Headley Road East, Woodley, RG5 4SZ - 890m² of B2 floor space
- 123a Reading Road, RG41 1HD - 2770m² of B8 floor space

The change in the total B class use since 2013 was mainly due to the loss of 21,390m² at the former Linpac Metal Packaging Site, Headley Road East,



Woodley as this site has been cleared and is in the process of being re-developed.

Town centres and shopping

Wokingham Borough Council has defined certain areas within local town centres as primary shopping areas. These are defined areas where retail development is concentrated. For monitoring purposes, the Council considers that land within the following uses is regarded as retail development:

- A1 Shops
- A2 Financial and professional services
- A3 Restaurants and cafes
- A4 Drinking establishments
- A5 Hot food takeaways

Retail Vacancies

The chart in appendix 3 shows the trend in retail vacancies in local town centres since 1999 (except for Winnersh which only has data since 2011). As with last year there are no vacancies for Winnersh. Woodley has dropped to zero vacancies. Earley has risen from 0 to 2.56. Twyford has also risen slightly to 3.7. The number of vacant retail outlets in Wokingham has remained at 9.6. The comparatively high rate in Wokingham may be related to the current town centre regeneration.

Further information about retail can be found at

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/policy/retailandtowns/>

Wokingham Town Centre

The first phase of the town centre regeneration began at Peach Place Corner (the corner of Market Street and Rose St with the replacement of building facades and refurbishment of the flats above the retail units. Further information can be found at

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/development/regenerating-wokingham-town-centre/>



7 COUNTRYSIDE AND OPEN SPACES

Core Strategy Policies

CP3 General principles for development

CP12 Green belt

CP13 Gaps

MDD Policies

TB01-3 Development within and adjoining the Green Belt

TB08 Open space, sport and recreational facilities standards for residential development

SAL04 New Public Open Space

SAL06 Allocated Country Parks

One of the principles set out in CP3 of the *Core Strategy* is to ensure planning proposals can provide a framework of open space together with recreational/sporting facilities and private amenity space.

Country Parks and Open Spaces

The Borough has four Sites of Special Scientific Interest, but no Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas (SPAs). There are also 117 Local Wildlife Sites and three Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS). Although, there are no SPAs in the Borough, around 30% of the Borough lies within the 5km protection area for the Thames Basin Heath.

The Council's Countryside Service manages 3 country parks totalling 233 hectares (ha), 11 Nature reserves totalling 110ha (although we are about to increase this figure with a 3.19ha extension to Keephatch and a new site at Shinfield Park of 8.2ha).

Hurst Golf Course and the water-based Multi Activity Centre are set within Dinton Pastures Country Park.

The service also manages one SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) of 18.5ha in Barkham.



The borough also contains 238 hectares of parks and open spaces which include:

- Local parks
- 35 outdoor sports pitches
- Tennis courts
- 4 pavilions
- 18.1 hectares of highway grass verges
- Sponsorship sites (e.g. roundabouts)
- Leisure centre grounds
- Over 95 play areas.

Open space

The *Managing Development Delivery Development Plan Document (MDD DPD)* includes standards for open space and recreation facilities which new residential development proposals must adhere to. This includes parks and public gardens; natural and semi natural open space; play areas for children; burial grounds and cemeteries; indoor and outdoor sports facilities and activity halls. New development can bring opportunities to provide new areas of open space or enhance existing ones by onsite measures or contributions to offsite areas. The *Wokingham Borough Council Open Space, Sports and Recreation Strategy* was published in November 2013. This followed a formal public consultation period of six weeks from 12 June to 24 July 2013. The strategy can be found at

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/policy/countryside-and-open-space/>

Building in the Countryside

The Council seeks to control development in the countryside. Annual housing monitoring shows that the number of dwellings completed in the countryside has been consistently low over the last decade. Full details of completions and percentages can be seen in the *Planning Commitments for Housing March 2014*. Please see tables 2.12, 2.13 and 2.14 at the weblink:

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/policy/housing/housingmonitoring/>



8 BIODIVERSITY

Core Strategy Policies

CP7 Biodiversity

CP8 Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area

MDD Policies

TB23 Biodiversity and Development

SAL05 Delivery of avoidance measures for Thames

Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

CP7 seeks to conserve and enhance sites that are important for nature conservation and to resist inappropriate development. Development may require mitigation measures to prevent harmful impacts or appropriate compensation measures. CP8 specifies that all proposals must have regard to the cumulative impact of schemes around the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area.

Delivery of avoidance measures to address impacts of residential development upon the Thames Basin Heaths SPA

In line with the approach of Core Strategy policy CP8, in order to address the impacts of residential development upon the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (the SPA), the authority needs to ensure that proposals deliver appropriate avoidance measures. These measures typically include delivery of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG) together with a contributions towards pan-SPA wide Strategic Access Management & Monitoring (SAMM).

The information below details how developments within the borough have or will address their impacts upon the SPA through the delivery of these two measures.

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Information on committed SANG use in Wokingham Borough at 31/3/14

SANG identified			SANG allocated			
Name of SANG site	Total discounted SANG area (ha)	Total SANG capacity (dw) (based on dwellings within 5km)	Dwellings allocated to SANG to date* ¹ (dw) (inc dwellings 5-7km)	Amount of SANG allocated (ha)	Remaining unallocated SANG area (ha)	Remaining unallocated capacity (dw) (Based on dwellings within 5km)
Extension to Keephatch Woods, Binfield Road, Wokingham	3.19	166	150	3.19	0	0
Rooks Nest Woods, Barkham Ride, Barkham	18.3	963	834	5.25	13.05	679
Kentwood Farm SANG, Warren House Rd, Wokingham	2.7	140	510	2.7	0	0
Buckhurst Meadows SANG, London Road, Wokingham	12.48	650	650	12.48	0	0
Loddon SANG, Hyde End Road, Shinfield	18.31	953	1,097	18.31	0	0
Ridge SANG, Hyde End Lane/ Church Lane, Three Mile Cross	11.71	609	701	11.71	0	0
Stanbury House SANG, Basingstoke Rd, Spencers Wood	12.53	652	0	0	12.53	652
Total	79.22	4,133	3,942	53.64	25.58	1,331

The information in the above table indicates that having regard to the SANG's approved and the residential proposals assigned to them, there are only 2 sites with remaining capacity to avoid impacts of additional dwellings upon the SPA. Of the two sites, Rooks Nest Woods is operated by the Council and can contribute towards the avoidance solution of relevant proposals. The permission for the Stanbury House SANG requires the whole of the first phase (around half the site) to be delivered before it can contribute as part of

¹ Taking account of planning permissions or allocations in the borough's development plan



the avoidance solution for residential developments. Since no proposals to fund delivery of the first phase of Stanbury House SANG have been agreed by the authority, this site cannot currently be relied upon as contributing towards the avoidance solution of residential schemes. Therefore, only the remaining avoidance capacity at Rooks Nest Woods could be available for further residential proposals.

Information on SAMM contributions received or anticipated at 31/3/14

SAMM payments	Net additional dwellings	Amount received/ expected
Received 1/4/10 – 31/3/11	4	£3,058.11
Received 1/4/11 - 31/3/12	15	£19,561.89
Received 1/4/12 – 31/3/13	421	£224,459.36
Received 1/4/13 – 31/3/14	47	£33,083.45
Payment pending assuming development commences after 1/4/14	3,112	£1,569,368.57
Total	3,599	£1,849,531.38

The above table summarises SAMM contributions which the authority has received to date (and forwarded to Hampshire County Council who co-ordinate this on behalf of the Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board). Once development commences on those schemes which also requires a contribution towards SAMM, the income received by the authority will also be forwarded to Hampshire County Council. The above table indicates that Wokingham BC by 31 March 2014 had collected £280,162.81 in SAMM which is around 18% of the £1.5million which had been collected by all the 11 authorities around the SPA.

Biodiversity data from TVERC (Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre is received every three years. No update has been received this year. The following data is repeated from last year.



Changes in areas of biodiversity importance (SPA, SAC, SSSI, LWS, LGS, LNR)

The only change in area was for the Local Wildlife Sites where the deselection of Southlake Park saw a reduction from 1293 hectares in 2012 to 1246 in 2013.

Area of sites designated for the intrinsic environmental value

Designated site	Area in hectares (2012)	Area in hectares (2013)	As % of Wokingham	Berkshire Area in hectares (2013)	As % of Berkshire
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	27	27	<1%	4848	4%
Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)	0	0	0	1817	1%
Special Protection Areas (SPAs)	0	0	0	1455	1%
Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)	1293	1246	7%	9394	8%
Local Geological Sites (LGS)	35	35	<1%	221	<1%
Local Nature Reserves	93	93	<1%	487	<1%

Source: TVERC Biodiversity Annual Monitoring Report 2012/13 Wokingham

National Indicator 197 (The Single Data List 160) proportion of local sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented.

This indicator calculates the number of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and Local Geological Sites (LGS) that can be said to be in or have been in positive conservation management in the five year period to 31st March.

In Berkshire, a site was considered to be in positive management if at least 50% of the site was being managed in a way that protected or enhanced the biological or geological interest of that site.



In Wokingham there was a decrease from 42% to 41% in the proportion of sites in positive conservation management due to a decrease in the total number of Local Wildlife Sites.

There are four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within or partly within Wokingham Borough but their condition was not monitored in 2012.

Changes in number of UKBAP Priority Species

The number of *UK Biodiversity Action Plan* species in Wokingham has increased by three species since last year. This includes records of hazel dormouse, western barbastelle and red-tipped cudweed.

9 TRANSPORT

Core Strategy Policies

CP3 General Principles of Development

CP6 Managing Travel Demand

CP10 Improvements to the Strategic Transport Network

MDD Policies

CC07 Parking

CC08 Safeguarding alignments of the Strategic Transport Network & Road Infrastructure

CC08 Transport site allocations

Car parking standards

Car parking standards can be found in the *MDD DPD* and the *Parking Standards Study Report* (2011).

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/policy/parking-standards/>

Further guidance on parking provision is available in the *Borough Design Guide SPD* (2012). Planning proposals must demonstrate how the standards are met and that the appropriate level of off street parking is retained.

Transport plans and policies can be seen at

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/transport/travel/policies/>



10 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Core Strategy Policies

CP1 Sustainable Development

CP9 Scale and location of development proposals

CP4 Infrastructure requirements

CP11 Proposals outside development limits

MDD Policies

CC04 Sustainable Design and Construction

CC09 Development and Flood Risk

CC10 Sustainable Drainage

TB06 Development of Private Residential Gardens

Duty to co-operate

The Localism Act 2011 inserted a “Duty to co-operate” clause into the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This is a duty to co-operate in relation to planning of sustainable development. Local authorities and other relevant bodies are required to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries in a continuous and constructive process of engagement. This includes the homes and jobs needed in the area together with the provision of infrastructure for transport, water supply and wastewater and flood risk and health, community and cultural facilities.

To satisfy this requirement for ongoing collaboration, Wokingham Borough County Council is engaged in a range of sub-regional groups on matters such as delivering strategic transport improvements within Berkshire; work with the Local Enterprise Partnership and around the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Although joint Berkshire plans are no longer produced for minerals and waste the Council continues to collaborate with other local authorities for these areas. The Council is actively engaged in the sub-regional working group SEWPAG (South East Waste Planning Advisory Group) which includes 16 member authorities. SEWPAG has adopted a ‘manifesto’ which includes the following statement to define the purpose of the group:

“To help waste planning authorities in the area to fulfil the Duty to Cooperate on strategic issues enshrined in the Localism Bill, and specifically to give



effect to the Government's stated intention to place the responsibilities of the former Regional Technical Advisory Bodies with local authority groupings".

The Council is a member of SEEAWP (South East England Aggregates Working Party), a technical group with the role of advising government, Mineral Planning Authorities and industry on aggregates."

The Council attends regular Berkshire Minerals and Waste Officer working group meetings and the Berkshire authorities are currently undertaking a Berkshire Annual Aggregates Survey.

The authority also collaborates with other neighbouring authorities on other cross boundary issues on matters such as education, flood risk/water supply and considering implications of proposals around the AWE (Atomic Weapons Establishment) sites.

Minerals and waste

The six unitary authorities in Berkshire were preparing a *Joint Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CSDPD)*. However this plan was withdrawn in 2010. The work on a *Joint Minerals and Waste CSDPD* was suspended in March 2011. Each unitary authority in Berkshire is now responsible for minerals and waste planning in its own area. The future approach for minerals and waste planning is under review. The Council's revised Local Development Scheme (13 May 2013 to 12 May 2016) includes an indicative timetable for a new Minerals and Waste Local Plan, although this noted that the authority could work collaboratively with other authorities on a joint plan. The potential for undertaking a joint plan is still be considered.

Flood risk and water quality

Policy CP1 of the *Core Strategy* aims to enhance sustainability through minimising impact on the environment. This includes limiting any adverse effects on water quality, ensuring adequate drainage, avoiding any increased risk in flooding (and where possible reducing it). From the information supplied below it can be seen that this policy is achieving its goals.



Planning applications approved following objections from the Environment Agency

The Environment Agency produces a list of planning applications that it has made initial objections to. Twelve applications received objections on flood risk grounds in the year 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. One of these was refused planning consent and two were withdrawn.

1. F/2013/0347 Land south of Croft Road, Spencers Wood, 276 dwellings. Objections for surface water. These were resolved by conditions for the sustainable drainage scheme to prevent the risk of flooding from surface water runoff.
2. F2013/1736 660 Wokingham Road, Earley. Demolition and reconstruction of vehicle showroom. Objection due to unsatisfactory FRA (Flood Risk Assessment)/FCA (Flood Consequences Assessment). Objections were removed following submission of further information for FRA and Contaminated Land Assessment subject to conditions.
3. F/2013/1803 Willow Marina, Willow Lane, Wargrave. Excavation and installation of new fixed jetties for additional moorings. Request for FRA/FCA. No objection to proposal but request for Flood Defence Consent application to be submitted prior to commencement.
4. F/2013/2345 Little Lake (Lot 3) Whistley Mill Lane, Whistley Green, Reading. Application for removal of earth to create fish stock pond. Objections raised mainly due to lack of information. Following submission of FRA and Ecological Survey subject to conditions.
5. O/2013/0101 Land north of Cutbush Lane, Shinfield. 126 dwellings. Request for further information following FRA. Objections removed subject to condition.
6. O/2013/0346 Church Lane, Hyde Lane and Hyde End Road, Three Mile Cross. Hybrid application with part in outline in respect of up to 900 dwellings up to a three form entry primary school and public open space access and



landscape. Objections relating to surface water. Objections removed subject to conditions for mitigation measures.

7 and 8. RM/2013/0240/2 Buckhurst Farm, London Road, Wokingham. 650 dwellings and associated infrastructure. Objections relating to surface water. Addressed by conditions for each reserved matters application to include surface water drainage schemes.

9. RM/2013/2411 University of Reading, Woodlands Avenue, Earley. 34 dwellings. Objections for unsatisfactory FRA/FCA. The planning consent included conditions that the development was carried out in accordance with the approved level of Flood Risk Assessment.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

The Council completed a review of the *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment* in February 2012. The *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment* assesses the risks of all forms of flooding in a local authority area. Please see this link for further information: <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/policy/flood/sfra/>

Brownfield Development

Policy CP9 states that the scale of development proposals in the Borough must reflect existing or proposed levels of facilities and services at or in the location together with their accessibility. National planning guidance contained in Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) had a target for 60% of new housing to be provided on previously developed land (brownfield) but this has since been superseded by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which does not have a target. In June 2010 a new PPS3 was released with an amended definition of previously developed land which now excludes private residential gardens and this definition has been carried forward into the NPPF. Therefore all housing applications granted since 9 June 2010 that were developed on residential gardens are classed as Greenfield land. Annual *Monitoring Report* figures for building on previously developed land have been consistently high. Housing data for the monitoring year shows that a high proportion (56%) of housing development is still on brownfield land despite the change in PPS3/NPPF. This is a drop from 65% in the previous

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monitoring year. See *Planning Commitments for Housing March 2014* for further data and analysis.

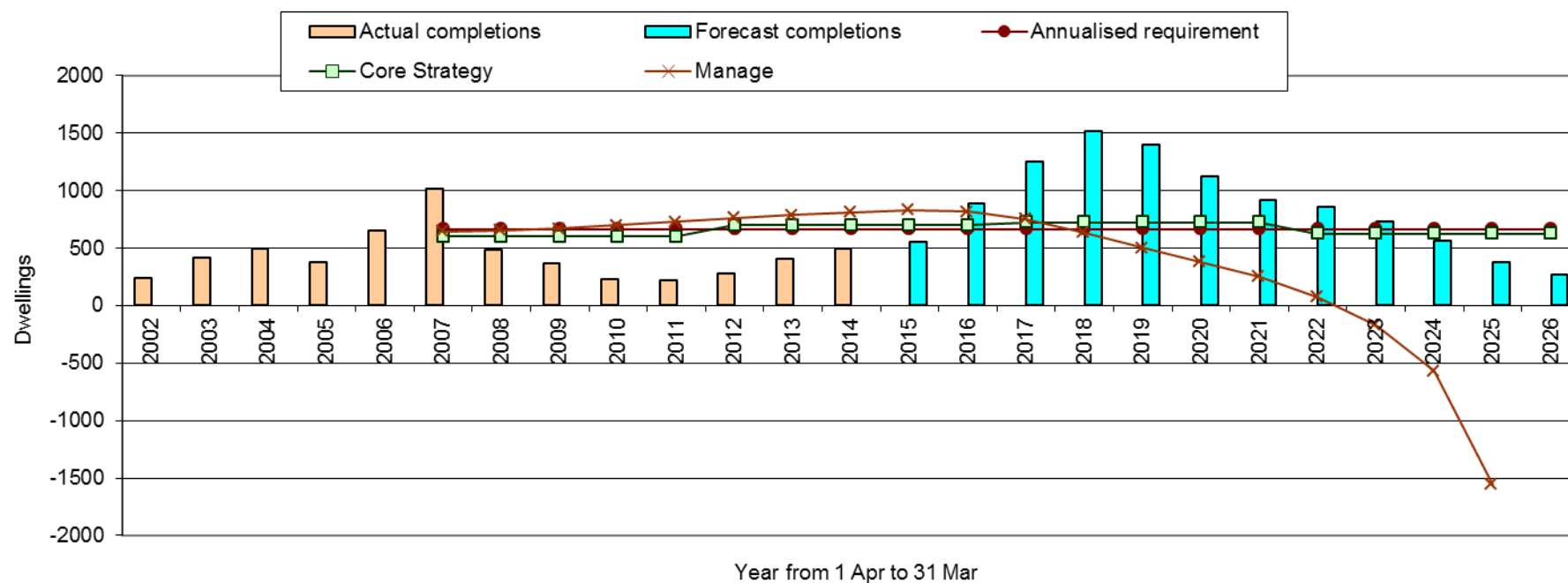
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Appendix 1. Housing Trajectory of Core Strategy updated to take account of the Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan



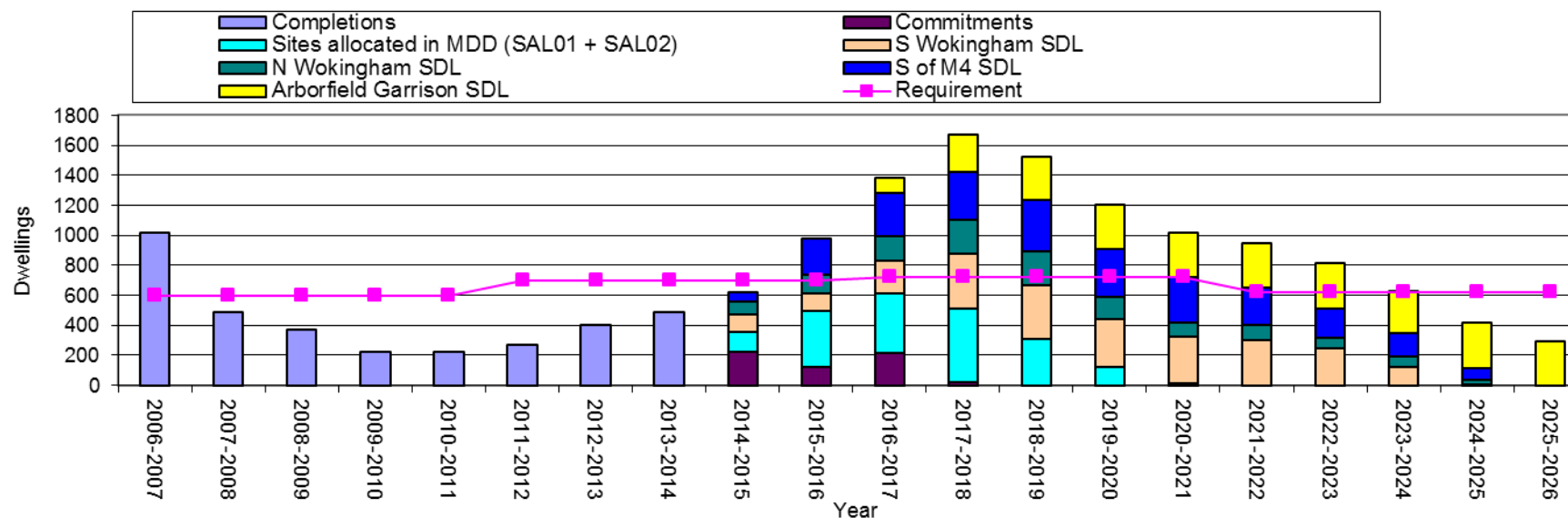
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Appendix 2. Housing Trajectory for SDLS and other sources of housing supply



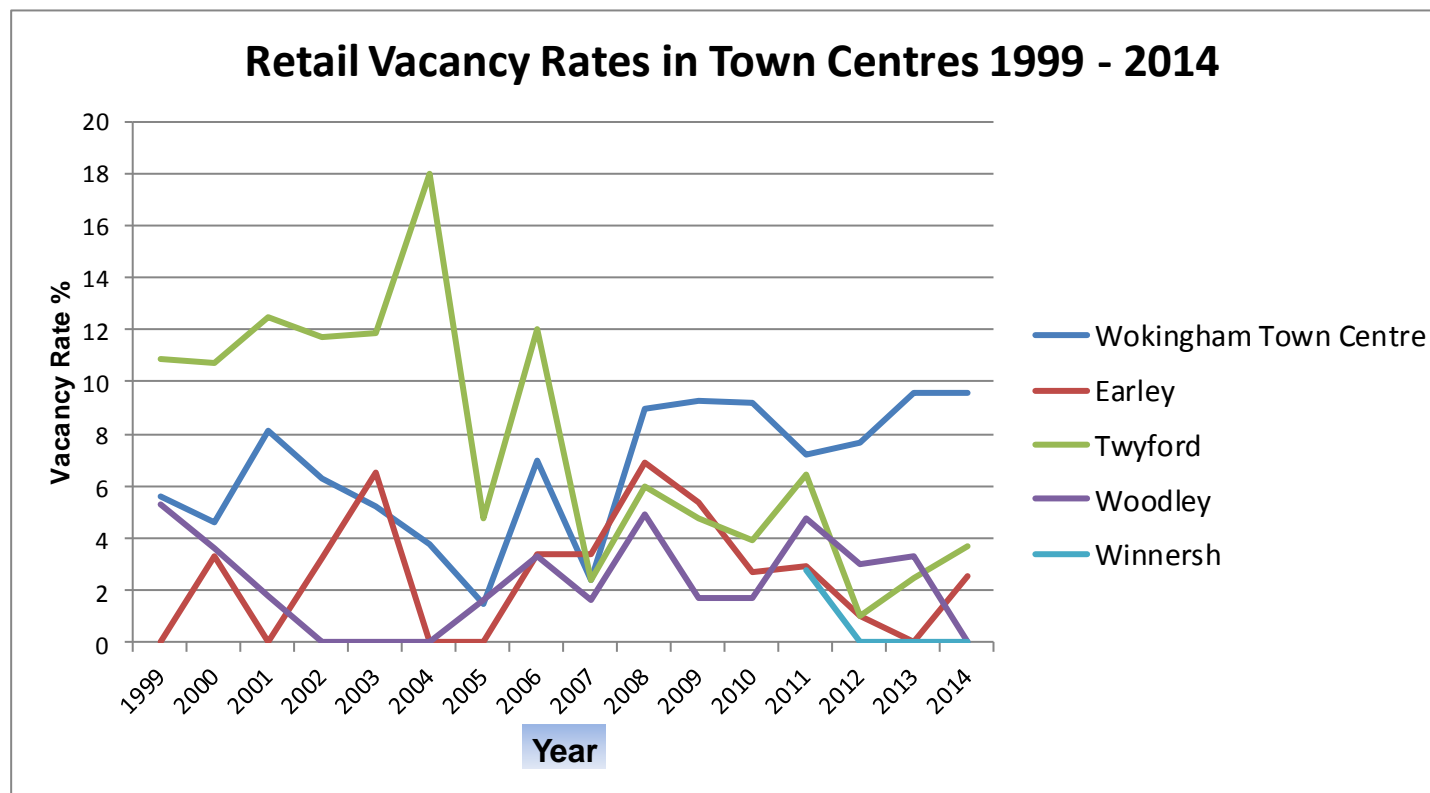
2014

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Appendix 3



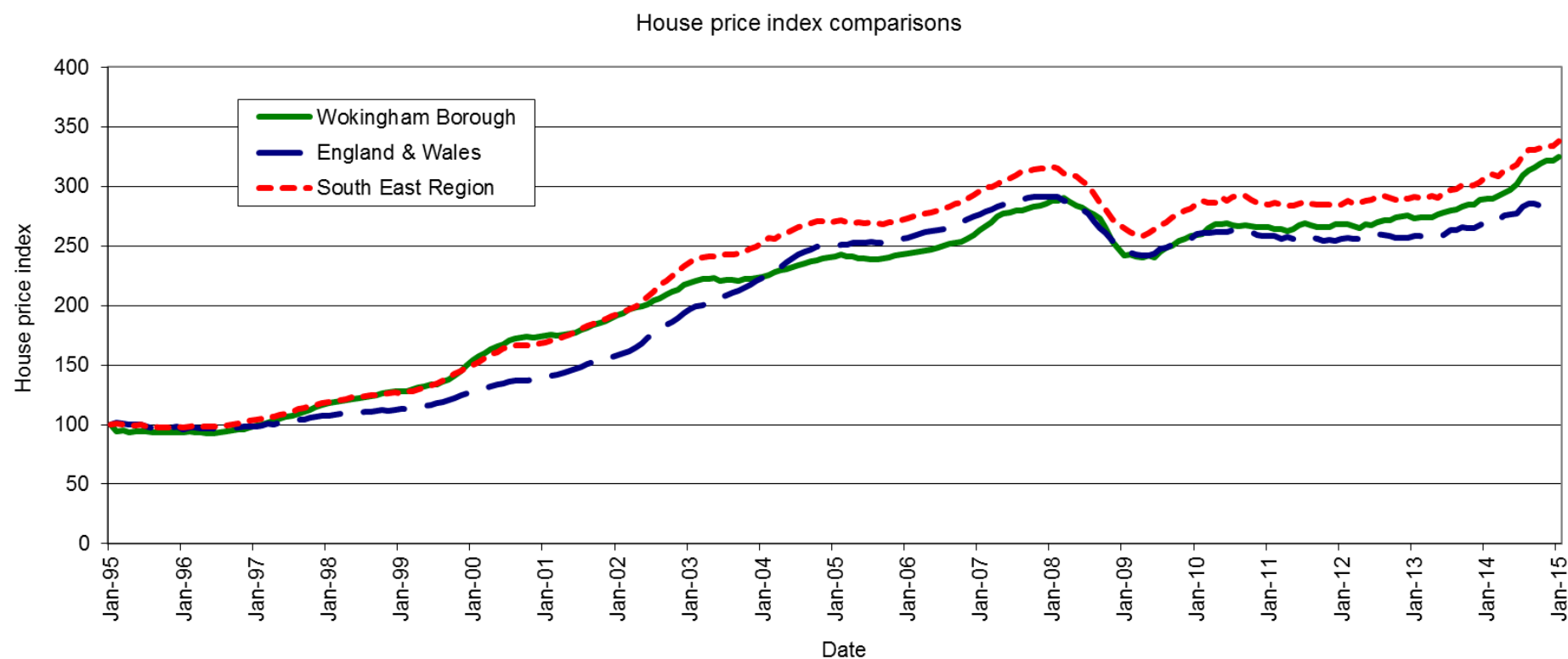
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Appendix 4. House Price Data from the Land Registry



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GLOSSARY

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)

See “Monitoring Report”.

Biodiversity

Or biological diversity is a term given to the variety of life on Earth, and the natural patterns it forms.

Community Strategy

A strategy prepared by a local authority to improve the local quality of life and aspirations, under the Local Government Act 2000.

Core Strategy

A Development Plan Document (DPD) (as well as now being known as a Local Plan) setting out the spatial vision and strategic objectives of the planning framework for an area, having regard to the Community Strategy. The Wokingham Borough Core Strategy was adopted on 29th January 2010. (See also DPDs).

Development Plan

A document setting out the local planning authority's policies and proposals for the development and use of land and buildings in the authority's area. The Development Plan for Wokingham Borough currently comprises the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy, the Managing Development Delivery DPD, Neighbourhood Development Plans and saved policies of Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plans

The Managing Development Delivery Development Plan Document (Local Plan) is one of the Development Plan documents prepared by Wokingham Borough Council that make up the Development Plan for the Borough. The other Development Plan document produced by the Council is the Core Strategy, adopted on 29th January 2010, which sets out the strategic planning policy to guide development in the Borough to 2026.

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Under the Localism Act 2011, there is the ability for Parish and Town Councils to produce Neighbourhood Development Plans, which would also form part of the Development Plan.

Development Plan Documents (DPD)

DPD are prepared by local planning authorities and outline the key development goals of the Development Plan.

The first DPD prepared by Wokingham Borough Council was the Core Strategy. The Managing Development Delivery document is also a DPD. There will also be an adopted proposals map which illustrates the spatial extent of policies that must be prepared and maintained to accompany all DPDS.

All DPDs must be subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement, consultation and independent examination, and adopted after receipt of the inspector's binding report. Once adopted, development control decisions must be made in accordance with them unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Together, the Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery Plan Document are also known as the Local Plan.

Inclusive Communities

Communities that promote integration and aim to tackle the exclusion of marginalised groups. This is primarily achieved through suitable housing provision, the co-ordination of appropriate services and addressing the requirements of the population.

Local Development Documents (LDD)

These include DPDs (part of the statutory development plan) and Supplementary Planning Documents or SPDs (which do not form part of the statutory development plan). LDDs collectively deliver the spatial planning strategy for the local planning authority's area.

Local Geological Sites (LGS)

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Local Geological Sites (LGS) are sites within the county that are considered worthy of protection for their Earth Science or landscape importance, but are not already protected as SSSIs. Previously called Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS).

Local Nature Reserves (LNR)

Non statutory habitats of local significance designated by local authorities where protection and public understanding of nature conservation is encouraged.

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)

Local Wildlife Sites are non statutory sites of significant value for the conservation of wildlife. These sites represent local character and distinctiveness and have an important role to play in meeting local and national targets for biodiversity conservation.

Monitoring Report

A report prepared at least annually by the Local Authority which assesses progress with and the effectiveness of planning policy. Previously referred to as the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Policy Framework, which has replaced Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and Planning Policy Guidance Notes, with the exception of PPS10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

Sites classified under the European Community Directive on Habitats to protect internationally important habitats.

Special Protection Areas (SPA)

Sites classified under the European Community Directive on Wild Birds to protect internationally important bird species.



Strategic Development Location (SDL)

These are the key sites identified through Core Strategy policies CP18-21 to take a significant proportion of the Borough's development.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

A SHLAA assists in the identification of sufficient deliverable sites for residential development and the assessment of whether a rolling five year supply of housing land is available. It should be undertaken as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan. Undertaking a SHLAA is a key requirement of National Planning Policy Framework.

Sui generis

Certain uses do not fall within any use class and are considered 'sui generis'. Such uses include: theatres, houses in multiple occupation, hostels providing no significant element of care, scrap yards. Petrol filling stations and shops selling and/or displaying motor vehicles. Retail warehouse clubs, nightclubs, launderettes, taxi businesses, amusement centres and casinos. E.g. theatres, night clubs. Also see 'use class'.

Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANG)

Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces or 'SANGS' are new or existing open spaces designed to attract visitors away from the Special Protection Area by providing an enjoyable natural environment or recreation.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the Development Plan.

Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBH SPA)

A collection of sites on the borders of Berkshire, Hampshire, and Surrey covering an area of 8,274 hectares. It was classified under the European Community Directive on Wild Birds to protect the internationally important bird species on 9 March 2005



for the populations of three Annex 1 bird species – Nightjar, Woodlark and Dartford Warbler.

Use Class

The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes' and include:

- A1 shops
- A2 financial and professional services
- A3 restaurants and cafes
- A4 drinking establishments
- A5 takeaways
- B1a business: offices, not within A2
- B1b business: research and development, high technology etc.
- B1c business: light industry
- B2 general industrial
- B8 storage or distribution
- C1 hotels
- C2 residential institutions
- C2A secure residential institutions
- C3 dwelling houses
- C4 houses in multiple occupation.
- D1 non residential institutions
- D2 assembly and leisure

Also see 'sui generis'

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