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**Wokingham Borough Council**

**Authority Monitoring Report**

**01/04/2020 – 31/03/2021**



**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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## 1 Background

Local planning authorities (LPA) are required to produce Authority Monitoring Reports (AMRs)<sup>1</sup>. AMRs should contain<sup>2</sup>:

- details of documents referred to in the Local Development Scheme (LDS), and the timetable and stage that each document has reached in its preparation - if behind schedule, the reasons for this should be given.
- reasons why any Local Plan policy is not being effectively implemented and the steps that will be taken to address the situation.
- progress on achieving Local Plan annual dwelling numbers.
- details of any Neighbourhood Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Plan made by a LPA.
- information in relation to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- details in relation to any co-operation that has been undertaken within another LPA in relation to the 'duty to co-operate'.

Whilst AMRs were introduced as an annual requirement, the Localism Act allows local authorities to choose when they are produced. Wokingham Borough Council has chosen to produce an overarching AMR which is supplemented by a separate Five-Year Housing Land Supply Statement which specifically assessed the deliverable housing land supply position as of 31 March each year. Separate statements will also be produced regarding co-operation in plan making.

This AMR covers the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. With regards to policy, it considers the performance of the council's adopted planning policies contained in the Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery local plans.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Part 8 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

## 2 Progress Report on Plans

### a) Local Plans

One of the purposes of the AMR is to set out how the council has performed in achieving the milestones for reviewing adopted plans and preparing new plans. These milestones are set out in the LDS.

The LDS was last updated in July 2021<sup>3</sup>. It sets out a programme for preparing a new Local Plan, known as the Local Plan Update, to manage most forms of development, as well as the programme for preparing a plan to specifically manage minerals and waste related development. This plan is being prepared in a partnership of four local authorities and is known as the Central and East Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan<sup>4</sup>.

During the period covered by this monitoring report (1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021) the council has undertaken the following activities:

**Table 1 – Activities undertaken on Local Plan Update and Minerals and Waste Local Plan in 2020-21**

<b>Local Plan Update</b>	<p>Extensive work was undertaken in progressing the evidence base for the plan and resource documents.</p> <p>The Draft Local Plan Consultation (2020) setting out the proposed strategy to manage development and mitigate the impacts was held between 3 February 2020 and 3 April 2021. A report on the initial consultation outcomes is available on the council's website.</p> <p>Further information is provided on the next steps below.</p>
<b>Central and East Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan</b>	<p>Extensive work was undertaken in progressing the evidence base for the plan and resource documents:</p> <p>Regulation 19: Consultation on the Proposed Submission Plan to consider compliance with all legal requirements and the plan's soundness was held between 3<sup>rd</sup> September and 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020).</p> <p>Submission of the joint plan for independent examination to Secretary of State occurred on 25 February 2021.</p> <p>Further information is provided on the next steps below.</p>

<sup>3</sup> [Wokingham Borough Local Development Scheme 2021-2024 \(July 2021\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> The Central and East Berkshire Minerals and Joint Waste Local Plan is being prepared by Reading Borough Council, Wokingham Borough Council, Bracknell Forest Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

The key milestones for the Central and East Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan and the Local Plan Update are set out below.

**Table 2 – Local Development Scheme 2020-23 Timetable**

Stage	Joint Central and East Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan	Wokingham Local Plan Update
Draft Plan Consultation	August – October 2018	February – April 2020
Focused Consultation: Sand and Gravel Provision and Operator Performance	February – March 2020	Not applicable
Revised Draft Plan	Not applicable	Autumn 2021
Consultation on Proposed Submission Plan	September – October 2020	Summer 2022
Submit to Secretary of State	25 <sup>th</sup> February 2021	November – December 2022
Examination	Summer 2021	2023
Inspector's Report Received	Autumn 2021	Summer 2023
Adoption	Winter 2021/22	Winter 2023

### Local Plan Update

Subsequently to agreeing the Draft Local Plan (2020) for consultation, a change in legislation resulted in the extension of emergency planning arrangements around AWE Burghfield, a nuclear licences facility, in the case of an incident. A central plank of the Draft Local Plan (2020) was the creation of a garden town at Grazeley. Whilst the proposed garden town was situated beyond the emergency planning arrangements around AWE Burfield at the time of being proposed for consultation, the subsequent extension to these arrangements placed the proposed garden town within the area. As a result of the changed circumstances, the proposed garden town, and therefore the strategy proposed by the Draft Local Plan (2020), is no longer achievable.

In the autumn 2021, the council published a Revised Growth Strategy Consultation, seeking views on an updated approach to managing development

### Central and East Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan

Following the submission of the joint plan, the examination process has continued. Hearing sessions were held by the Inspector over several days in September and October 2021 and the

examination closed. The authorities are now progressing to consult on Main Modifications (February 2022).

#### b) Neighbourhood Plans

Neighbourhood planning was introduced through the Localism Act 2011 and is a means for local communities to take the lead on shaping how their area is developed. Communities can prepare Neighbourhood Development Plans (often referred to simply as Neighbourhood Plans) which set out specific, non-strategic planning policies to help shape and guide development in their area. Neighbourhood Plans sit alongside Local Plans in being the starting point for considering planning applications.

Communities can also prepare Neighbourhood Development Orders (including community right to build orders). Through these, certain types of development, which is supported by the community, are automatically granted planning permission without the need to go through the usual process.

Several communities have, and are, progressing neighbourhood plans. These are outlined below:

- Shinfield Parish – designated as a neighbourhood area in 2012 with the formal adoption of the neighbourhood plan in February 2017.
- Remenham Parish – designated as a neighbourhood area in July 2013.
- Arborfield and Newland, and Barkham Parishes – designated as a neighbourhood area in July 2014 with the plan formally adopted of the neighbourhood plan in April 2020.
- Ruscombe Parish – designated as a neighbourhood area in January 2018.
- St Nicholas Hurst Parish – designated as a neighbourhood area in April 2018.
- Twyford Parish – designated as a neighbourhood area in August 2018.
- Wokingham Without Parish – designated as a neighbourhood area in August 2018.
- Finchampstead Parish – designated as a neighbourhood area in March 2019.
- Sonning Parish – designated as a neighbourhood area in October 2019.

With neighbourhood plans being a community-led initiative, enquiries should be directed to the relevant parish or town council.

### 3 Housing Delivery

The Core Strategy<sup>5</sup> and MDD<sup>6</sup> local plan 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 identified local needs of people who are unable to compete in the general housing market.

**Table 3 – Core Strategy and MDD Policies for Housing Delivery**

Core Strategy Policies	
Delivering a Sustainable Borough (CP1- CP8)	CP2 Inclusive communities
	CP5 Housing mix, density, and affordability
Managing Growth (CP9- CP17)	CP17 Housing Delivery
Major locations for growth (CP)	CP18 Arborfield Garrison SDL
	CP19 South of the M4 SDL
	CP20 North Wokingham SDL
	CP21 South Wokingham SDL
MDD Policies	
Topic Based (TB)	TB05 Housing mix
	TB09 Residential accommodation for vulnerable groups
	TB10 Traveller sites
Site Allocations (SAL)	SAL01 Allocated housing development sites (Sites identified through the former Wokingham District Local Plan)
	SAL02 Allocated housing development sites
	SAL03 Allocated reserve housing sites

#### Housing Delivery Against Requirements

A total of 1,167 net additional dwellings were completed between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021 with a further 1,940 under construction. This high completion record is primarily the result of delivery across the four Strategic Development Locations (SDLs) reaching its peak as well as several large sites across the borough delivering above the average delivery rates. In terms of overall delivery against the Core Strategy, the following table shows the number of completions and projected completions against the Core Strategy targets. The number of completions exceed that required by the Core Strategy.

<sup>5</sup> [Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Development Plan \(January 2010\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Document \(February 2014\)](#)

**Table 4 - Housing Completions (excluding communal accommodation adjustment) 2006/7 to 2020/21  
compared to the Core Strategy Policy CP17**

Year	Completions (Annual)	Completions (Cumulative)	Core Strategy CP17 (Annual requirement)	Core Strategy CP17 (Cumulative requirement)
2006/7	1,011	1,011	600	600
2007/8	482	1,493	600	1,200
2008/9	369	1,862	600	1,800
2009/10	226	2,088	600	2,400
2010/11	217	2,305	600	3,000
2011/12	267	2,572	700	3,700
2012/13	390	2,962	700	4,400
2013/14	488	3,450	700	5,100
2014/15	454	3,904	700	5,800
2015/16	675	4,579	700	6,500
2016/17	967	5,546	723	7,223
2017/18	1,528	7,074	723	7,946
2018/19	1,284	8,358	723	8,669
2019/20	1,555	9,913	723	9,392
2020/21	1,167	11,080	723	10,115

Since the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2010, the government has introduced a standard method of calculating housing need.

Further information about the housing land supply can be found in the Wokingham Borough Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement at 31 March 2021<sup>7</sup> and in its accompanying Appendix 4<sup>8</sup> which maps the progress on the four SDL sites across Wokingham Borough.

#### Site Allocation

At the time of publication, most housing allocations in adopted local plans have either full or outline planning permission with further reserved matters having been consented. All four SDLs have active planning permissions across a range of the sites, with 9,054 homes with planning permission as of 31 March 2021. A further 1,649 homes in the South Wokingham SDL (south of the railway line) are currently under consideration by the council.

<sup>7</sup> [Wokingham Borough Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement \(31 March 2021\)](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Appendix 4: Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement \(31 March 2021\)](#)



The table below outlines the amount of housing that has been allocated in both the Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery (MDD) against the amount of housing that has been permitted as of 31 March 2021. Please note the figures include capacity from additional land that has come forward for development within the extent of the SDL.

**Table 5 – Number of houses allocated compared to number of permissions**

Policy	Number of dwellings allocated <sup>9</sup>	Number of dwellings permitted	Difference	
Core Strategy Policies				
CP18 Arborfield Garrison SDL	3,500	3,519	+19	
CP19 South of the M4 SDL	2,500	2,938	+438	
CP20 North Wokingham SDL	1,500	2,217 <sup>10</sup>	+717	
CP21 South Wokingham SDL	2,500	2,458 <sup>11</sup>	-42	
MDD Policies				
SAL01 Allocated housing development sites (Sites through the former Wokingham District Local Plan)	999	1018	+19	
SAL02 Allocated housing development sites	Major:	725	729	+4
	Modest:	115	156	+41
	Total:	840	885	+45
SAL03 Allocated reserve housing sites	135	56	-74	

### Affordable Housing Supply

A total of 187 net additional affordable dwellings were completed between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021. These figures include both affordable housing delivered because of planning policy requirement and other forms of delivery.

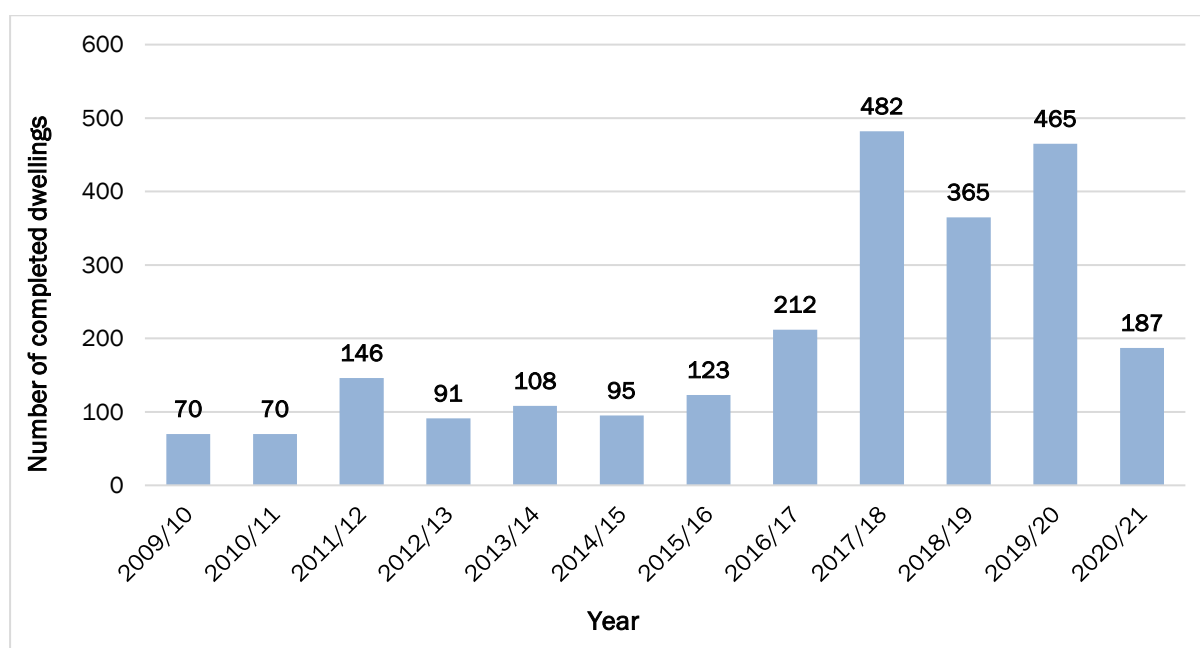
Figure 1 below shows affordable dwelling completions since 2009/10. These are completed through partnership with Registered Providers (i.e., housing associations). Most new supply is secured through Section 106 negotiations with developers. The council also delivers affordable homes directly through its housing companies. The decrease in the number of affordable dwelling completions in 2020/21 is primarily linked to a slowdown of delivery of all types of dwellings across the borough which was likely influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic.

<sup>9</sup> The allocating policies allow for flexibility with the allocated number of dwellings.

<sup>10</sup> Full application for 153 dwellings (201515), outline application for 169 dwellings (211777) and reserved matters application for 19 dwellings (210174) under consideration as of 31/3/21.

<sup>11</sup> Outline applications for 215 dwellings (190914) and 1,434 dwellings (191068) under consideration as of 31/3/21.

**Figure 1 - Affordable Housing Completions 2009/10– 2020/21**



### The New Homes Residents' Survey

The council undertakes an annual survey to ascertain how satisfied new homeowners are with the property they have purchased and their new community. In January 2021, the surveys were sent out to 1,060 households living in new builds in Wokingham Borough. There was a 7.5% response, down from the 21% response rate received from the previous survey in 2020.

The results of the survey published in 2021 show that 84% of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with their new home. This is compared to an 83% satisfaction rate in 2020 and a 86% satisfaction rate in 2019. A large majority of respondents (94%) agreed that they had enough space in all rooms or most rooms in their new homes for everyday living. Many (75%) agreed that they have sufficient storage space which is consistent with last year's results. The survey also shows that new residents feel safe within their new neighbourhood with a combined total of 87.5% agreeing that they feel safe at night, staying consistent with last year's response. Most people (82%) agreed that they have sufficient access to outdoor private or communal space, slightly down from last year (87%).

The results of the survey suggest that satisfaction levels have remained consistently high for residents who have moved into new homes. This is a key indicator in showing that the overall objectives of the local plans, and the policies associated with house building and design, are working as desired.

## 4 Employment

Core Strategy and MDD local plan policies aim to ensure development continues to meet local needs through the development of new business, industrial, distribution and storage facilities. Local needs will also be met by the retention and creation of job opportunities in locations that have regard to environment issues and minimizing the need to travel.

**Table 6 – Core Strategy and MDD Policies for Employment**

<b>Core Strategy Policies</b>	
Managing Growth (CP9- CP17)	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
<b>MDD Policies</b>	
Topic Based (TB)	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
Site Allocations (SAL)	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. Until 1 September 2020 there were four classifications of use classes (A, B, C and D), which were then subdivided. The use classes were reformed in 2020 with the introduction of new classes E (commercial, business and service uses), F.1 (learning and non-residential institutions) and F.2 (local community uses). Use class E is of particular importance to note as it brought together several previously separate classes covering commercial or employment activities. The following table provides a summary of the recent changes.

**Table 7 – Changes to the Use Class Order as of 1 September 2020**

Use	Use Class up to 31 August 2020	Use Class from 1 September 2020
Shop not more than 280sqm mostly selling essential goods, including food and at least 1km from another similar shop	A1	F.2
Shop	A1	E
Financial and professional services (not medical)	A2	E
Café or restaurant	A3	E
Pub or drinking establishment	A4	Sui generis
Take away	A5	Sui generis
Office other than a use within Class A2	B1a	E
Research and development of products or processes	B1b	E
For any industrial process (which can be carried out in any residential area without causing detriment to the amenity of the area)	B1c	E
Industrial	B2	B2
Storage or distribution	B8	B8
Hotels, boarding and guest houses	C1	C1
Residential institutions	C2	C2
Secure residential institutions	C2a	C2a
Dwelling houses	C3	C3
Use of a dwellinghouse by 3-6 residents as a 'house in multiple occupation'	C4	C4
Clinics, health centres, creches, day nurseries, day centre	D1	E
Schools, non-residential education and training centres, museums, public libraries, public halls, exhibition halls, places of worship, law courts	D1	F.1
Cinemas, concert halls, bingo halls and dance halls	D2	Sui generis
Gymnasiums, indoor recreations not involving motorised vehicles or firearms	D2	E
Hall or meeting place for the principal use of the local community	D2	F.2
Indoor or outdoor swimming baths, skating rinks, and outdoor sports or recreations not involving motorised vehicles or firearms	D2	F.2

For the purpose of this document, the use class order prior to 1 September 2020 has been used to continue the useful distinguishment between different types of employment activities. 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.

In April 2016 the Government made Prior Approval Consents (PACs) for the change of use of offices (Class B1 (a, b, c), B2 and B8) to residential (Class C3) a permanent change<sup>12</sup>. C3 uses

<sup>12</sup> see Class O of Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended by a Further Order that came into force on 6th April 2016.

consented prior to the permanent implementation of the amendment lapsed on 30th May 2016 unless the use had begun by this time. For PACs granted after the amendments came into force, the development must be completed within three years of the approval date. PACs are considered against a list of set criteria such as flood risk.

The borough has experienced a large volume of prior approval permissions since the government introduced the scheme. In 2019/20, there were 6 prior approvals approved which has the potential to deliver 144 dwellings and the potential loss of 3,415m<sup>2</sup> office space. In 2020/21, there were 2 prior approvals approved which have the potential to deliver 41 dwellings as well as mixed use floor space and potential loss of 4,208m<sup>2</sup> office space.

Table 8 shows the amount of employment floorspace developed in Wokingham Borough from 2007/08 to present. It shows the amount for the various business use classes, annual total change, and cumulative total change. Table 9 shows the employment use changes which were permitted in 2020-21 and have either not been started or are under construction, indicating where the future pool of floor space will draw from. Table 10 shows a breakdown of large permissions (1,000m<sup>2</sup> +) that were completed in the monitoring year of 2020/21<sup>13</sup>.

**Table 8 – Completed B Uses by Year**

Year (1 <sup>st</sup> April to 31 <sup>st</sup> March)	Use Class			Annual total change of all B use classes combined (m <sup>2</sup> )	Cumulative total change of all B use classes combined (m <sup>2</sup> )
	B1 (m <sup>2</sup> )	B2 (m <sup>2</sup> )	B8 (m <sup>2</sup> )		
2007/08	4,170	-10,210	-10,210	-1,070	-7,270
2008/09	-1,032	131	131	839	-6,431
2009/10	26,760	-460	-460	26,200	19,769
2010/11	-1,851	1,996	1,996	-2,962	16,807
2011/12	-10,829	3,078	3,078	12,021	28,828
2012/13	-132	2,156	2,156	19,218	48,046
2013/14	-22,726	1,442	1,442	-18,289	29,757
2014/15	-1,390	419	419	3,452	33,209
2015/16	8,150	1,008	1,008	11,667	44,876
2016/17	-714	-1,775	-1,775	-2,813	42,063
2017/18	46,396 <sup>14</sup>	-6,683	-7,433	47,146	89,209
2018/19	-4,087	0	1,250	-2,837	86,372
2019/20	-7,854	-2,074	-350	-10,278	76,094
<b>2020/21</b>	<b>-3,527</b>	<b>3,383</b>	<b>3,647</b>	<b>3,503</b>	<b>79,597</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,334</b>	<b>-7,589</b>	<b>-5,101</b>		

<sup>13</sup> A number of small permissions were also completed in the monitoring year which are included in the total figure in Table 8, these have not been included in Table 10.

<sup>14</sup> Includes temporary planning permission for 34,492m<sup>2</sup> of B1 use floorspace (film studio) at Arborfield Garrison.

**Table 9 – Non-implemented B Uses Permitted in 2020-21**

Planning application reference	Site address	Date of Permission	Planning application description	Net Use Class (m <sup>2</sup> )		
				B1	B2	B8
201050	Alexandra House, Alexandra Court, Wokingham, RG40 2LD	08/07/2020	Full planning application for the change of use of night club on the ground floor of Alexandra House to a flexible mixed use comprising A1 (Retail), A2 (Financial and Professional Services), A3 (Cafes and Restaurants), A4 (Drinking Establishments), and/or A5 (Hot Food Takeaways) and B1(a) (Office) plus changes to fenestration at ground floor. Part retrospective.	218.2		
200888	Units R1, R2 and R3, Lambs Farm Business Park, Basingstoke Road, RG7 1PQ	08/07/2020	Full application for the proposed erection of 3 no. buildings (units R1, R2 and R3) for business use (Use Classes B1(a), (b), (c) and B8) with ancillary office space, parking and associated works.	465		
201743	Interserve House Ruscombe Park Ruscombe Reading	15/07/2020	Prior approval submission for proposed conversion of office building (Use Class B1(a)) to 41 no. residential units (Use Class C3).	-2,860		
192420	Unit 1 Molly Millars Lane Wokingham, RG41 2QZ	04/12/2020	Full application for the change of use to mixed use of B8, B1c and B1a. Extension of first floor. Increase in ridge height by 1.75m. Installation of 2no. silos, new external doors and solar panels.	4,379		640
201345	Fishponds Estate, Fishponds Road, Wokingham, RG41 2QJ	18/12/2020	Full application for the proposed erection of a building consisting of 1 no. self-storage facility (Use Class B8) and 2 no. industrial units (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8) with associated hardstanding and soft landscaping, following demolition of existing units 720 and 721 Millars Business Park.	3,794		
202901	Walnut Court Rose Street Wokingham RG40 1XU	18/12/2020	Full planning application for the proposed raising of existing roof to create first floor office space, with two storey side extension to existing building, changes to fenestration and relocation of exiting shed.	63.2		
202764	5 Wellington Industrial Estate Basingstoke Road Spencers Wood RG7 1AW	07/01/2021	Full application for the erection of a single storey extension to the rear of the building.	95		
191788	Newlands Farm New Bath Road Twyford RG10 9RY	15/01/2021	Full planning application for the proposed change of use of buildings and land from agricultural use to general industrial use plus erection of two additional buildings (part retrospective)		3,109	
<b>Total</b>				<b>6,154.4</b>	<b>3,109</b>	<b>640</b>

**Table 10 – Large employment planning permissions (1,000m<sup>2</sup>+) completed in 2020-21**

Planning application reference	Site address	Planning application description	Net Use Class (m <sup>2</sup> )		
			B1	B2	B8
<b>171903</b>	Unit 21 (formerly Units 62-67) Suttons Business Park, Sutton Park Avenue,	Full planning application for the redevelopment of site to provide a new class B2/B8 industrial unit with ancillary office space and associated storage areas, car parking and landscaping.	0	1,448	1,448
<b>171496</b>	Unit 27-28 Suttons Business Park, Sutton Park Avenue,	Full planning application for proposed redevelopment of site to provide a new Class B2/B8 industrial unit with ancillary office space and associated car parking and landscaping.	0	2,046	2,046
<b>201328</b>	Quoin House, Fishponds Road, RG41 2QJ	Full application for the proposed change of use from offices (Use Class B1a) to a flexible mixed use comprising an eye clinic with ancillary administration hub and warehousing (Use Class D1) with erection of associated bin store, and offices (Use Class B1a), plus changes to external plant and fenestration.	-1,348	0	0

### Town Centres and Shopping

Local plan policy has defined certain areas within town centres as primary shopping areas. These are defined areas where retail development is concentrated. The reform to the use classes order has seen changes to the classification of retail use classes. Table 7 highlights the overall changes to the order and the changes to retail are noted below. For consistency, the council has used the use class order prior to 1 September 2020. For monitoring purposes, the council regards that land within the following use classes as retail development:

- A1 Shops (E as of 1 September 2020)
- A2 Financial and professional services (E as of 1 September 2020)
- A3 Restaurants and cafes (E as of 1 September 2020)
- A4 Drinking establishments (sui generis as of 1 September 2020)
- A5 Hot food takeaways (sui generis as of 1 September 2020)

### Wokingham Town Centre

Wokingham town centre is subject to a regeneration process with a number of planning

applications approved across the town<sup>15</sup>. A number of these have been implemented or are in the process of being so.

- Refurbishment of the buildings on the corner of Market Place and Rose Street which has already been completed (F/2012/1678).
- Regeneration of the 'Peach Place' site, which extends from the Market Place along Rose Street and Peach Street (F/2014/2637).
- A mixed-use development including expansion of the existing leisure facilities and a new multi-storey car park at Carnival Pool (O/2015/1056).
- A mixed-use development including reconfiguration of the park at Elms Field, a new cinema, and a hotel (153125).
- Carnival Pool Phase 2, which includes plans for an improved leisure centre and community facilities to include the relocation of Wokingham library (172012).

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<sup>15</sup> [Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration - Wokingham Borough Council](#)



## 5 Countryside, Open Spaces and Biodiversity

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

**Table 11 – Core Strategy and MDD Policies for Countryside, Open Spaces and Biodiversity**

Core Strategy Policies	
Delivering a Sustainable Borough (CP1- CP8)	CP3 General principles for development
	CP7 Biodiversity
	CP8 Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area
Managing Growth (CP9- CP17)	CP12 Green belt
	CP13 Town centres and shopping
MDD Policies	
Topic Based (TB)	TB01-3 Development within and adjoining the Green Belt
	TB08 Open space, sport and recreational facilities standards for residential development
	TB23 Biodiversity and Development
Site Allocations (SAL)	SAL04 New Public Open Space
	SAL05 Delivery of avoidance measures for Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
	SAL06 Allocated Country Parks

### Country Parks and Open Spaces

The council has been able to secure several different nature parks, play areas and sports facilities alongside a number of the new housing developments that are currently being built out across the borough. Thirteen new nature parks have been created in Arborfield Garrison, North and South of Wokingham Town, and in Shinfield. One has also been created in Barkham and another in Crowthorne. Several new facilities and open spaces were opened in 2020/21:

- Grays Farm Sports Hub and Cantley Park tennis courts in Wokingham.
- Improvement works to California Country Park in Finchampstead.
- Enhancements to Cantley Park and the new and inclusive destination play area in Wokingham.

Wokingham Borough has four Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and although there are no Special Protection areas (SPAs) or Special Area of Conservation (SAC) in the borough itself, around 30% of

the borough lies within 5km of the Thames Basin Heath SPA within which the council along with Natural England has found that mitigation is required to address pressure to the heaths from recreation. There are 118 Local Wildlife Sites and 35 Local Geological Sites (LGS).

The council's Countryside Service manages 3 country parks totalling 233 hectares (ha) and 23 Nature reserves totalling 120ha. The council has a water based Multi Activity Centre set within Dinton Pastures Country Park.

The service manages Rooks Nest Farm, a SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) of 18.5ha in Barkham, which forms part of the mitigation arrangements required to address impacts on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA from recreational pressures.

The borough 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
- 100 play areas

### Open Space

The MDD local plan 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<sup>16</sup>.

### Delivery of Avoidance Measures to Address Impacts of Residential Development Upon the Thames Basin Heaths SPA

In line with the approach of Core Strategy local plan policy CP8, to address the impacts of residential development upon the Thames Basin Heaths SPA the authority needs to ensure that

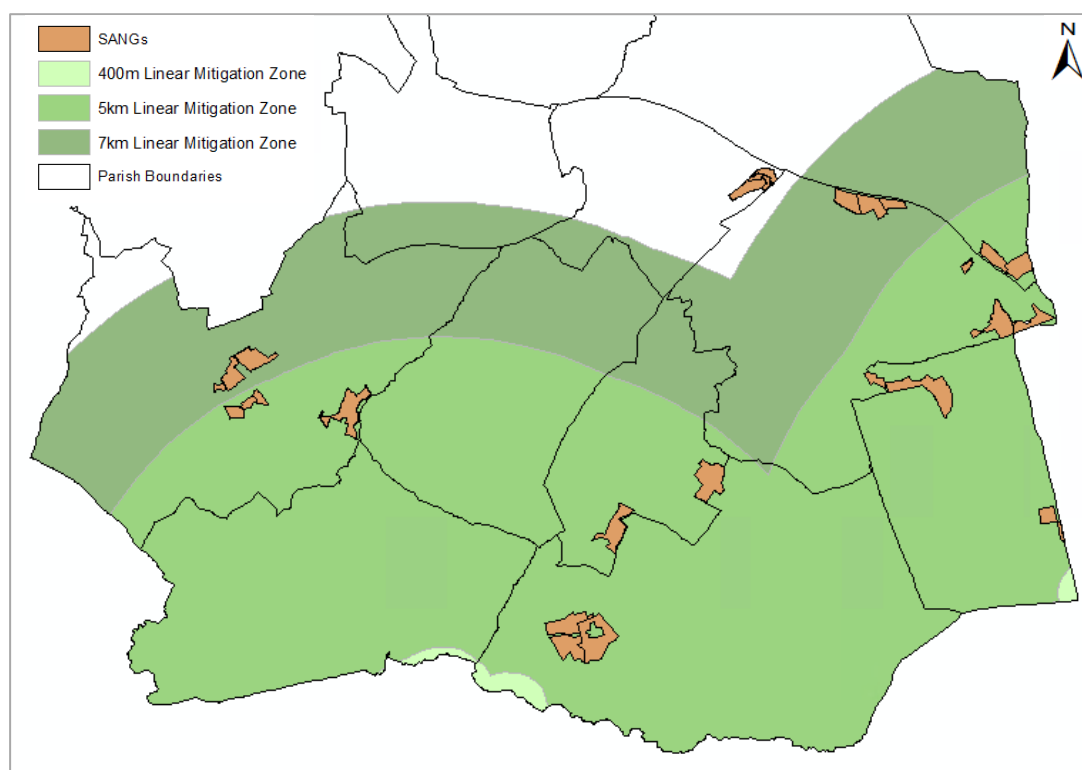
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<sup>16</sup> [Wokingham Borough Council Open Space, Sports and Recreation Strategy \(November 2013\)](#)

proposals deliver appropriate avoidance measures. These measures typically include delivery of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG) together with a contribution towards pan-SPA wide Strategic Access Management & Monitoring (SAMM). Strategic Development Locations are required to make direct provision onsite for SANG. For smaller developments onsite provision may not be achievable. For developments which accord with the development plan, the council has provided a strategic SANG towards which such smaller developments can made an in-leu payment to mitigate their impact. Private and council managed SANGs within the borough include:

Amen Corner	Hazebrouck SANG	Rooks Wood Nest
Ashridge Farm SANG	Holme Park SANG	Parklands SANG
Ashridge Meadows (Bell Farm SANG)	Keephatch Meadows (Stokes Farm SANG)	Plough Lane
Bell Farm	Keephatch Park (SANG Extension)	St Annes SANG
Buckhurst Farm	Kentwood Farm	Stokes Farm
Buckhurst Meadows	Langley Mead SANG	The Ridge SANG
Charles Church (Emm Parkland SANG)	May's Farm SANG	West Court SANG
Clare's Green SANG	Old Forest Road Meadows (Old Forest Road SANG Extension)	
Five Acre SANG	Oakham Woods (Old Wokingham Road SANG)	

**Figure 2: Map of the areas of SANG around the Thames Heath Basin SPA 5km and 7km zones**



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.

**Table 12 - Information on committed SANG use in Wokingham Borough at February 2021**

SANG identified			SANG allocated			
Name of SANG site	Total discounted SANG area (ha)	Minimum SANG capacity (dwellings) (based on dwellings within 5km)	Dwellings allocated to SANG to date (dwellings) (inc. dwellings 5-7km)	Amount of SANG allocated (ha)	Remaining unallocated SANG area (ha)	Minimum remaining unallocated capacity (dw) ( <i>based on dwellings within 5km</i> )
Rooks Nest Woods, Barkham Ride, Barkham	18.5	963	905	11.27	7.22	375

The information in Table 12 indicates that having regard to the SANG's approved and the residential proposals assigned to them. As of March 2021, there is only one site in public control with remaining capacity to avoid impacts of additional dwellings upon the SPA. Rooks Nest Woods is operated by the council and can contribute towards the avoidance solution of relevant proposals. Other private SANGs are also offer available capacity and can be bought into by developers to mitigate SPA impact.

**Table 13 - Information on SAMM contributions received or anticipated at 31 March 2021**

SAMM payments	Amount received/ expected
Received 1/4/10 – 31/3/11	£3,058.11
Received 1/4/11 – 31/3/12	£19,561.89
Received 1/4/12 – 31/3/13	£224,459.36
Received 1/4/13 – 31/3/14	£33,083.45
Received 1/4/14 – 31/3/15	£130,242.04
Received 1/4/15 – 31/3/16	£57,798.82
Received 1/4/16 – 31/3/17	£825,511.71
Received 1/4/17 – 31/3/18	£632,542.45
Received 1/4/18 – 31/3/19	£1,254,848.19
Received 1/4/19 – 31/3/20	£649,310.38
Received 1/4/20 – 31/3/21	£198,002.12
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4,028,418.52</b>

Table 13 summarises the SAMM contributions which the authority has received to date and has forwarded to Hampshire County Council who co-ordinate this on behalf of the Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board.

#### Changes in Areas of Biodiversity Importance (SPA, SAC, SSSI, LWS, LGS, LNR)

Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) published an updated Biodiversity Annual Monitoring Report in 2020 for Wokingham, and a few key findings have been highlighted below.

- There are 118 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) within Wokingham Borough, increasing by 6 sites since 2019.
- The area of these LWS has decreased by 1.57ha since 2019.
- The area of Local Geological Sites (LGS) has not changed.

**Table 14 - Area of sites designated for the intrinsic environmental value**

Designated site	Areas (ha) 2013	Area (ha) 2016	Area (ha) 2019	Area (ha) 2020	Area (ha) 2021	2021 % of Wokingham	2021 Number of sites
Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)	1,246	1,245	1,243.22	1,244.79	1,264	7%	120
Local Geological Sites (LGS)	35	35	35	35	35	<1%	5

*Source: TVERC Biodiversity Annual Monitoring Report 2020 Wokingham*

## 6 Sustainable Development

**Table 15– Core Strategy and MDD Policies for Sustainable Development**

Core Strategy Policies	
Delivering a Sustainable Borough (CP1- CP8)	CP1 Sustainable Development
	CP4 Infrastructure Requirements
Managing Growth (CP9- CP17)	CP9 Scale and location of development proposals
	CP11 Proposals outside development limits
MDD Policies	
Topic Based (TB)	TB06 Development of Private Residential Gardens
Cross Cutting (CC)	CC04 Sustainable Design and Construction
	CC09 Development and Flood Risk
	CC10 Sustainable Drainage

### 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 Council is engaged in a range of sub-regional groups on varying matters which are detailed in the council’s Duty to Co-operate Statements. The latest statements were published in support of the Revised Growth Strategy Consultation<sup>17</sup>.

### Brownfield Development

Core Strategy local plan policy CP9 states that the scale of development proposals in the

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/planning-policy-information/revised-growth-strategy-consultation/?categoryesct91f252ff-550d-4cfa-a838-92ef2cb5f83c=10785>

borough must reflect existing or proposed levels of facilities and services at or in the location together with their accessibility. In the past 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. Since June 2010 the definition of previously developed land has excluded private residential gardens within built up areas, meaning that residential gardens in the countryside may be considered brownfield sites. All housing applications granted since 9 June 2010 that were developed on residential gardens are classed as greenfield land.

At the time of the last update of the brownfield register (August 2020) there are 24 sites on the council's brownfield register<sup>18</sup>. This is lower than the number of sites in the previous monitoring year, 2019/2020, which had 50 sites on the brownfield register. Housing data for the monitoring year shows that 54% of housing development is on previously developed land. This is an increase from 46% in the previous monitoring year (2019/20).

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<sup>18</sup> [Wokingham Borough Council Brownfield Register](#)

## 7 Developer Contributions

Development often brings the need for new and improved infrastructure typically because of additional population and their requirements or as a result, for example, of extra traffic and travel demands. Two mechanisms are available to secure infrastructure improvements: the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 Agreements.

### a) Community Infrastructure Levy

The council adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule on 15 February 2015.

Funds are being used to provide infrastructure to support the development of the area. Parish and Town Councils receive 15% (rising to 25% in areas with adopted neighbourhood plans) of the CIL raised from developments in their areas.

The charges are dependent on the type and size of the new development, with specifics being published on the Wokingham Borough Council website<sup>19</sup> and in the CIL Charging Schedule<sup>20</sup>.

The following table summarises CIL contributions from 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021, this includes CIL receipts received and CIL expenditure.

**Table 16 - Summary of total CIL receipts received and expenditure in 2020/21**

Total CIL summary 2020/21	
Total CIL receipts for 2020/21	£6,644,031
CIL Expenditure – Transferred to Parish/Town Councils	£1,404,567
CIL Expenditure – Administration and Monitoring of CIL	£271,236
Total CIL Expenditure for 2020/21	£29,471,454
Total CIL retained at the end of 31 March 2021	£0
Total CIL receipts carried forward into next financial year (2021/22)	£0

<sup>19</sup> [Wokingham Borough Council CIL Information](#)

<sup>20</sup> [Wokingham Borough Community Infrastructure Levy \(CIL\) Charging Schedule \(February 2015\)](#)



b) Section 106 (S106) Contributions

From April 2015 the scope to collect developer contributions for infrastructure projects through the mechanism of Section 106 Agreements is much more limited. However, they still being used to secure affordable housing and for specific project-based improvements such as Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area.

Over £26 million was received in S106 contributions during 2020/21, representing a decrease from the last financial year which received over £38 million. Over £25 million was either spent or transferred to committed projects during 2020/21.

**Table 17 – Section 106 expenditure in 2020/21 by Service Area**

Service Area	2020/21 Expenditure
Business, Employment and Skills	£25,899
Education	£11,486,145 <sup>1</sup>
Affordable Housing	£3,031,236
Leisure	£1,919,606 <sup>2</sup>
Parks and Open Space	£1,344,425 <sup>3</sup>
Traffic and Transport	£7,793,627 <sup>4</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£25,600,938</b>

<sup>1</sup> Of which £1,417,471.31 was used to repay borrowing

<sup>2</sup> Of which £158,058.04 was used to repay borrowing

<sup>3</sup> Of which £206,372.60 was used to repay borrowing

<sup>4</sup> Of which £3,335,032.33 was used to repay borrowing

Following an update to the CIL Regulations in 2019, the council is now required to publish an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) on an annual basis. The IFS outlines the Council's expenditure and future expenditure of CIL and S106 funds. The document for the monitoring period of 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 was published in November 2021<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> [Wokingham Borough Council Infrastructure Funding Statement \(IFS\) 2020/21](#)

## 8 Glossary

A generalised glossary is available on the Wokingham Borough Council Local Plan Update webpage<sup>22</sup>.

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