



Local People
Local Decisions
Local Future



Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2038 Made Version September 2023

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1 Foreword

1.1 Why we've produced this plan

1.1.1 The challenges facing our community

Wokingham Borough, due to its attractive scenery and facilities, semi-rural location and proximity to London has for the last forty years been a target for development, both planned and from speculative developers. Within Wokingham Borough the population of Finchampstead Parish has trebled in size since the seventies and even from this high baseline, current plans will see housing increase by a further 30%¹ between 2018 and 2026. The overwhelming desire of the residents is to manage this development in a manner that allows these new communities to integrate with the existing ones, to mitigate the inevitable growth and environmental impact of traffic, whilst maintaining the semi-rural nature and distinct community footprint.

1.1.2 The planning system

Neighbourhood Development Plans ensure that local communities are closely involved in the decisions which affect them. The **Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan** (hereafter referred to as the **FNDP**) has been developed to establish a guiding vision for the parish and to help deliver the local community's aspirations and needs for the plan period 2022 – 2036. The plan is a statutory document that will be incorporated into the Borough development plan and will be used by **Wokingham Borough Council** (hereafter referred to as **WBC**) alongside other policies and guidance to determine planning applications.

1.1.3 Giving our community a voice

Our plan has been produced by local residents with the support of the Parish Council, fully incorporating the views of the residents of Finchampstead. The group, known as 'Finchampstead Future' has consulted and listened to the community and local organisations on a wide range of issues that will influence the well-being, sustainability and long-term preservation of our semi-rural community. Every effort has been made to ensure that the views and policies contained in this document reflect those of the majority of Finchampstead residents.

1.1.4 The organisation behind the plan

The plan came about as a result of a strategic review of the future role of Finchampstead Parish Council by all members of the council in November 2017. One outcome of this review was to set up a fact-finding team which reported back to Finchampstead Parish Council in 2018. The Parish Council decided at a meeting in September 2018 to proceed with a call for volunteers from the local community to draw up the plan, under the guidance of a steering group consisting of five parish councillors (with one as chair of the steering group) and two volunteer members. One of these volunteer members was the chair of the whole project team, who led a project management group consisting of the 'lead' volunteers on various workstreams.

A total of 34 volunteers have worked on the plan under the banner of 'Finchampstead Future' at various intervals, with others volunteering to deliver leaflets and questionnaires. The group has been supported by several Borough councillors and from time to time has called upon the assistance of a professional planning advisor and upon the services of Wokingham Borough Council planning team.

¹ In 2018, there were c5,000 residences in the parish; by 2026, this will have increased by c1,500 at Finchwood Park

1.2 Key definitions

This plan has been produced by and on behalf of local residents, not professional ‘planners’, who use their own words to describe a sense of place and particularly where they live. However, this plan is a technical planning document, and it is sometimes necessary to use specific terminology that is consistent with existing Wokingham Borough Local Plan documents to ensure clarity and consistency in meaning.

The existing development plan uses the term ‘**Development Location**’ to denote areas that are designated as settlements i.e., those areas which have the services and facilities to accommodate a level of future growth. Land that is outside of the ‘Development Locations’ is designated as ‘**Countryside**’. Different planning policies apply depending upon the designation concerned.

Whilst retaining and supporting these definitions, the FNDP is also aware that informal built areas of housing exist beyond ‘Development Limits’ or exist in completely separate locations. These are ‘Countryside’ locations and the FNDP seeks to ensure that they do not become linked to each other or to other Development Locations.

Two specific locations are of concern in the FNDP.

First, in an area of just over half a mile along the A327 from Eversley Bridge to the junction of New Mill Road and Park Lane, there exists ribbon development of some one hundred dwellings, several industrial sites and a public house. Furthermore, this area is, to all intents and purposes, linked with Eversley, south of the Blackwater bridge. This area has another 120 houses, a school at St Neots, another public house, large hotel and a small artisan shop. The Parish and County boundary creates a smaller unit in Finchampstead that is integral to another Settlement in Hampshire. Nevertheless, beyond the house line along the main roads, open countryside exists.

The FNDP is concerned to avoid any development north of this area which would effectively coalesce the village of Eversley with the SDL at Finchwood Park.

Secondly, the historic heart of the parish is around the church of St James’. On this hilltop location, there are some thirty dwellings, a public house (designated as an asset of community value), a farm and a small commercial estate. It also overlaps with a conservation area. Any development to the north of this area would effectively coalesce it with Finchampstead North Development Location.

Any development to the south could create a coalescence with the Village Settlement and impact upon the Memorial Park LGS.

Residents recognise both of these smaller communities and are keen to ensure that they do not become merged into other built-up areas.

The FNDP has sought to avoid any risk of coalescence between these particular informal built areas and the defined Development Locations in the Parish. In some instances, this risk has been mitigated by the designation of a Key Local Gap.

For the avoidance of doubt, this Plan confirms that these informal built areas exist as part of the area designated as ‘Countryside’ and have the same planning requirements.

1.3 Frequently used terms

Development Locations	Areas identified in the current development plan as areas acceptable for 'major', 'modest' or 'limited' development. These almost wholly coincide with the current main built-up areas of the parish. The only Development Location in the parish designated as 'major' is at Finchwood Park.
Settlements	The existing built-up areas of the parish – any reference in this plan means the same as 'Development Locations'.
Development Limits	The boundaries of 'Development Locations'. In this plan, to mean the same as Settlement Limits.
Countryside	The development plan designation given to all areas which are outside of 'Development Locations'. The extent is defined on the policies map.
Informal built area	A small collection of dwellings in the countryside.
Local Green Spaces	As defined in National Planning Policy Framework Guidance Criteria on Local Green Spaces Para. 100.
Key Local Gaps	A term used by the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan to describe locations within the parish that represent the last remaining visible green space between Development Locations or Informal built areas
Strategic Development Location (SDL)	The location at Arborfield covered by Core Policy 18 of Wokingham Borough Council's Core Strategy.
Finchwood Park	An area of the Arborfield Garrison SDL within Finchampstead Parish which will provide c1,500 new houses.
Green Wedges	Green wedges comprise the open areas around and between parts of settlements, which maintain the distinction between the countryside and built-up areas, prevent the coalescence (merging) of adjacent places and can also provide recreational opportunities

1.4 Key acronyms

WBC	Wokingham Borough Council (the Local Planning authority)
FNDP	Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (this Plan)
LPU	Local Plan Update (the process by which WBC review and update the current Local Plan)

1.5 List of the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan policies

ES1	Environmental Standards for residential development
AHD1	Development within Development Limits
AHD2	Independent living, care and accommodation for vulnerable people.
AHD3	Provisions for Gypsy and Traveller communities
D1	Building heights
D2	Preserving the rural culture of the parish
D3	Infill, Small Plot Development and Development of Private Residential Gardens
GS1	Key Local Gaps and green wedges
IRS1	Protection and enhancement of local green spaces
IRS2	Protection of Outstanding views
IRS3	Conservation and enhancement of the historic character of the area
IRS4	Implement strategy to preserve the identity of Finchampstead parish through green spaces
IRS5	Ecologically important areas and Biodiversity
IRS6	Trees
GA1	Improve environment and health from traffic pollution
GA2	Reduction in car usage with safe personal mobility options
TC1	Supporting business
TC2	Supporting Core Employment Areas
TC3	Retail development – California Crossroads
TC4	Retail development – Finchwood Park
TC5	Protection of retail facilities

2.1 The Parish



Finchampstead has no single centre, instead consisting of four ‘settlements’ (formally designated as ‘Development Locations’) and two other significant but Informal built areas (see [‘Key Definitions’](#)) spread across an area of 18.7 sq. km, approximately 60% of which is designated in the WBC existing Core Strategy Local Plan as Countryside.

The four Development Locations are:

1. An extensive area centred on the California Crossroads where Nine Mile Ride (B3430) crosses the B3016, these being the main east-west and north-south routes across the parish, referred to in the development plan (although not known as such by residents) as 'Finchampstead North'. At the crossroads are to be found shops, post office, two pharmacies, a garage and restaurants along with a primary school, surgery, two dentists and a vet. This, together with the nearby California Country Park and Finchampstead Baptist Centre, makes it the busiest area in the parish.
2. The 'old village' in the south of the parish, around the junction of Jubilee Hill and Longwater Road, with a small primary school, a public house and the Memorial Hall and Park.
3. The 'ribbon' settlement along the A321 running south along the eastern edge of the parish. While most of this area undoubtedly sees itself as part of Finchampstead, the housing situated close to Crowthorne station in the east has more limited links with the rest of the parish and generally sees itself as part of Crowthorne and Bracknell Forest.
4. The significant new settlement emerging at Finchwood Park as part of the Arborfield Strategic Development Location.

Additionally, there are two other informal built areas (see '[Key Definitions](#)') which have a distinct sense of 'place' in the minds of those who live there and who do not wish to see them coalesce with the formal Development Locations, these are:

1. The development along the A327 Reading Road in the extreme south-west of the parish from the Tally Ho Public House and Eversley Bridge up to New Mill Lane.
2. The small area around St James Church and the Queens Oak Public House, linked to the 'old village' by St James' Church Conservation Area and Memorial Park

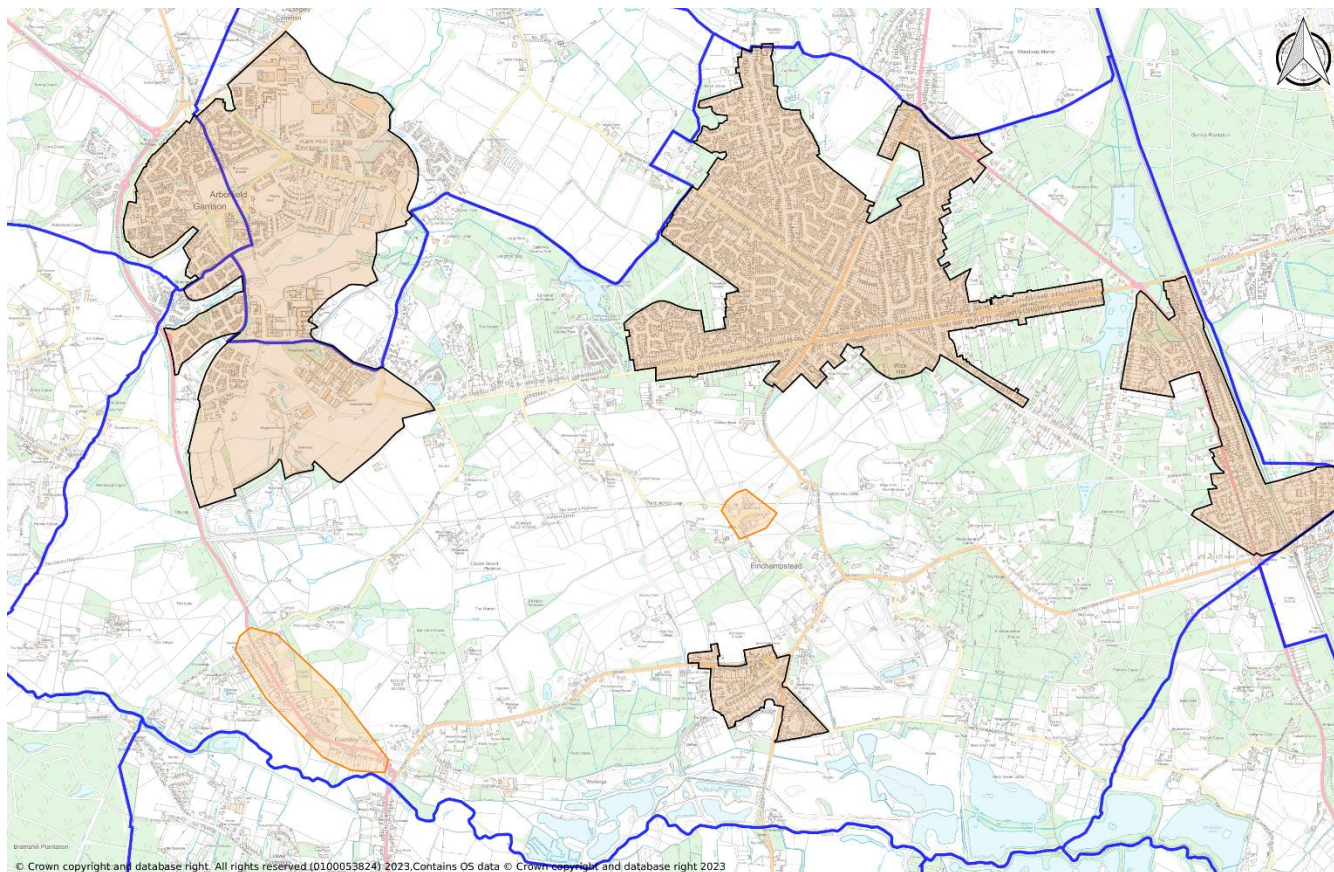


Figure 2 - Parish Development Locations (in brown / black outline) and other Informal built areas (outlined in orange)

2.2 Our rural heritage

Finchampstead has a rich history of continual settlement stretching back to the Iron Age. During the medieval period, this area was part of The Royal Forest of Windsor. This was enclosed in the early half of the 19th century and the last remnants of heaths were replaced by plantations. The remaining open farmland was broken up into small units in the second half of the 20th century. There remain a small number of farms in the parish, some with livestock, agriculture, or specialist fruit-growing capability but others given over to paddock land. These rural open spaces are highly valued by the community although it is likely that many of today's residents are unaware of the agricultural and rural heritage that gave rise to them, nor the challenges which they face today.

For more information, see [Annex C History & Heritage](#) and *Wokingham Landscape Assessment 2019*

2.3 Our local environment



Figure 3 - Aerial view showing semi-rural nature of the parish

The parish is mainly residential, farmland, woodland and nature reserve, giving it a natural or rural character although there is a light industrial estate in Hogwood Lane. On the border with Arborfield is one of WBC Strategic Development Locations, on the previous army garrison site which is currently being developed. Around the north-western, western, and southern edges of the parish, there are still broad areas of farmland and open space offering recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike along the parishes' 34kms (21 miles) of footpaths, bridleways, byways and cycle paths.

Previous sand and gravel extraction along the boundary with the River Blackwater (which forms the boundary of the southern edge of Berkshire and the parish) have resulted in a large nature reserve (Moor Green Lakes). Further nature reserves at Manor Farm and Fleet Hill are currently under development. The National Trust land at the Ridges and Simons Wood creates opportunities to commune with nature and enjoy the tranquillity of woodland and wildlife. California Country Park dates back to the 1930s as an amusement park but is now mostly woodland with a lake, a wetland area Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), camping park, visitor centre and café, all of which make it a very popular local amenity, promoted as such by WBC.

On the northern edge of the parish is an 18-hole golf course, Waverley Playing Field and farmland preserving the last green gap between Finchampstead and Wokingham.

2.4 The coming of suburbia

The whole area was extensively developed after the Second World War. The 1971 census showed a population of fewer than 4,000 in Finchampstead, mostly in a rural setting but with predominantly social housing at Gorse Ride. During the seventies and eighties, as much of East Berkshire became 'commuter belt', large new estates were built around the area of California Crossroads. The current population of some 11,000 (ref: JSNA² estimates 2016 based on 2011 Census data) is the result of this rapid growth. This development came close to absorbing the northern part of the parish into Wokingham town and risked ribbon development towards Bracknell and Camberley. This has been resisted but the area remains a target for speculative developers. However, the next phase of planned change is now underway, with the southern area of Arborfield Strategic Development Location bringing another 1,500 dwellings to the parish of Finchampstead by 2026. As housing has increased, farming has become more challenging as rural infrastructure and support disappears.³

The Strategic Development Locations strategy has facilitated some infrastructure improvements across the borough, including the provision of the Bohunt School just outside the parish in Arborfield, which is attended by residents of Finchampstead parish. However, the only significant investments planned for the infrastructure of Finchampstead will be the extension of Nine Mile Ride and improvements to California Crossroads. Other than this, the local perception is that the growth in population over the last 40 years has not been matched either by public transport provision or by any significant road improvements, resulting in increasing traffic congestion, particularly toward Wokingham town centre.

² JSNA - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

³ As noted in discussions with the owners of Church Farm, Wheatlands Farm and Fleet Farm

3 The Vision and Objectives for the Plan

3.1 The community vision

In the years leading up to 2036 and hopefully beyond, families living in the distinct communities that make up Finchampstead parish will continue to enjoy the benefits of life in a pleasant, well-served semi-rural environment.

They will live in vibrant and thriving neighbourhoods with a good range of housing, shops, schools and community services within easy reach. They, and the many visitors who come from outside the parish, will continue to be able to enjoy excellent leisure and recreational activities offered by our local countryside, rights of way network, parks and nature reserves. We will have ensured that new development makes a positive contribution to the local character and identity of our distinct neighbourhoods and conserve and enhance our countryside assets and the essential semi-rural quality of life in the parish.

Our vision is to embrace the need for change and to meet the expanding needs of a growing population, whilst protecting those important things that have attracted generations of people to choose Finchampstead as a place to live and raise their families.

Approved by the community in a public consultation in November 2019

3.2 Our goals and vision for the FNDP

In almost any survey in recent times, the residents of the wider Wokingham Borough and also locally in Finchampstead have stated that they consider the area already overdeveloped and would prefer that no more development takes place. On the other hand, the Government seeks to address the national shortage of housing and expects each local authority to deliver the targets given. This puts all levels of Local Government in a very difficult position, caught between the wishes of their residents and Government policy.

Our goal for the FNDP is to encourage local residents to work with the Local Planning Authority to ensure that housing targets are delivered in a way that enhances and does not harm our community and environment.

Our objective is to avoid unplanned speculative development with no infrastructure improvements and instead, to deliver development in a structured and planned manner through which the community has made a positive, proactive and meaningful contribution and around which infrastructure can be proactively planned and delivered.

3.3 Qualifying body

This Neighbourhood Development Plan is proposed by Finchampstead Parish Council, which is a qualifying body as defined by the Localism Act 2011.

3.4 Neighbourhood area

The boundary of the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Finchampstead is that of the civil boundary of Finchampstead Parish. This boundary represents the full extent of Finchampstead Parish Council's area of responsibility in terms of both statutory obligations and discretionary powers to provide services to the people of Finchampstead and is therefore considered as meeting the criteria for designation as a Neighbourhood Area. Finchampstead Parish was designated as a Neighbourhood Area on 12th March 2019.

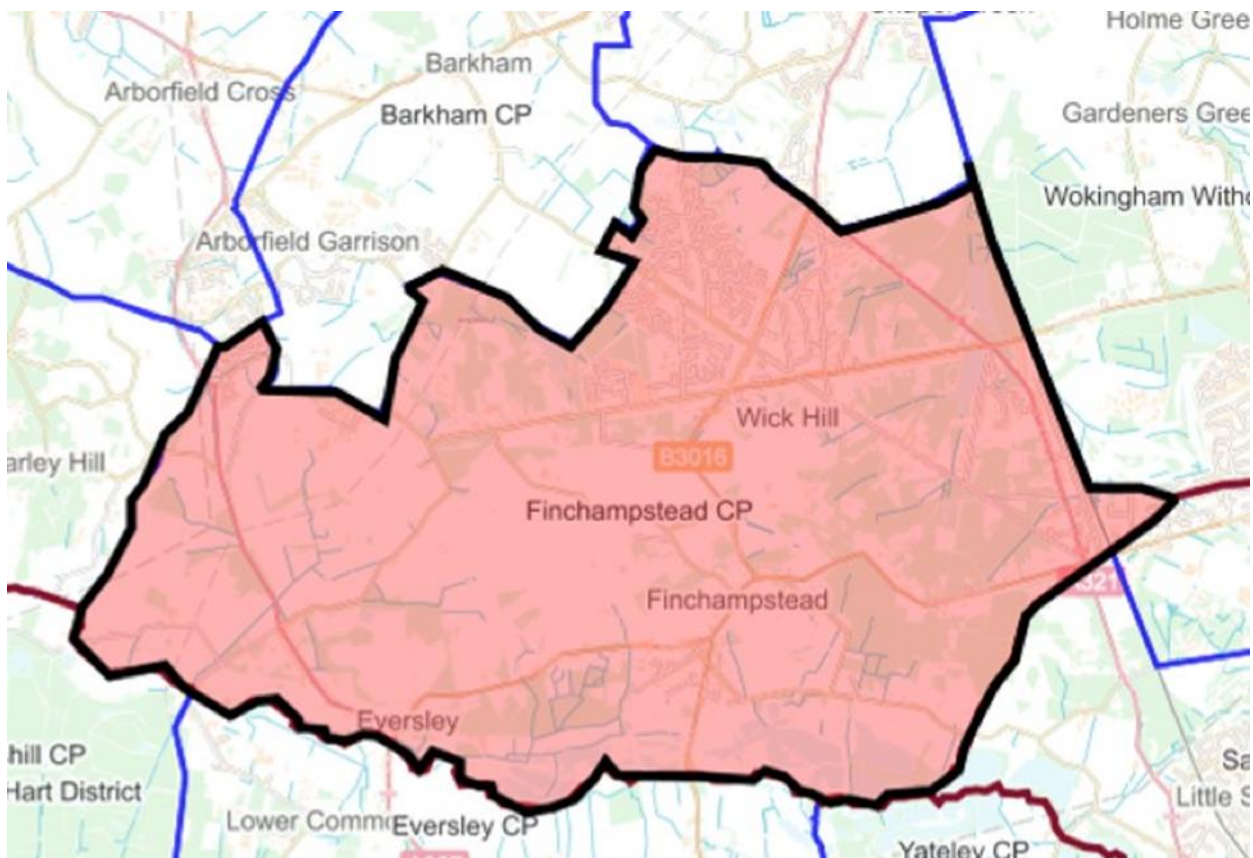


Figure 4 - Boundary of the Neighbourhood Development Plan

3.5 Plan period, monitoring and review

The Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan will run concurrently with the emerging Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU), for which the plan period is currently anticipated to be to 2038. It is, however, a response to the needs and aspirations of the local community as understood today and it is recognised that current challenges and concerns are likely to change over the plan period.

Finchampstead Parish Council, as the Neighbourhood Plan Qualifying Body, will be responsible for maintaining and periodically revisiting the FNDP to ensure relevance and to monitor delivery.

3.6 The Neighbourhood Plan

The 26 policies shown in this document form the main body of the FNDP. In addition to the policies, there are many background papers, shown as Annexes or as separate documents, which have been prepared by the Focus Groups and other organisations. These provide additional background information about the parish and supporting material and evidence relating to the policies.

Included in [Annex U](#) is a Project List containing issues that the Parish Council intend to address. These are items beyond the scope of the FNDP itself, which focuses on spatial planning and land use considerations.

The FNDP, including the Annexes, is to be read as a whole. Development proposals will be required to fulfil the conditions of all applicable policies.

3.7 The development process for the FNDP

Before deciding to embark on a Neighbourhood Development Plan, the parish council sought the advice of other parish councils who had already produced, or were producing, their own plans, both within Wokingham Borough but also in neighbouring local authority areas and others across the south of England. This was mostly in the form of face-to-face meetings but also on a few occasions, by telephone or web-conferencing.

As part of the decision to proceed with a Neighbourhood Development Plan, the parish council set out clear objectives for the plan. While other parishes had produced simple plans driven by a focus on securing greater CIL⁴ payments, Finchampstead decided that CIL was a secondary consideration and that the core requirement for the FNDP was to produce a specific, long-term plan for the parish which supported and facilitated the growth of the Strategic Development Location at Arborfield into Finchwood Park but which also laid out policies that would preserve the semi-rural nature of the parish, both for the benefits of the residents but also for the nearby urban centres as well.

The original strategy of the FNDP was to accommodate all new development in the plan period at Finchwood Park, but the development of the FNDP has taken place against a changing background with the emerging strategic plan – the Local Plan Update. The start of this process coincided with WBC consulting on their LPU. A key element of the LPU was the delivery of a new ‘garden town’, at Grazeley. Since then, a legislative change has caused detailed emergency planning requirements around the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Burghfield to be extended over a wider area that now includes Grazeley, Three Mile Cross and Spencers Wood.

The change resulted in objections to the Grazeley garden town proposal from the Defence Nuclear Organisation (part of the Ministry of Defence) and the Office for Nuclear Regulation. As a consequence, the Grazeley garden town proposal, and therefore the strategy proposed by the Draft Local Plan (February 2020), is no longer achievable. WBC has to find an alternative strategy to accommodate the 3,750 dwellings expected to be delivered at Grazeley within the plan period.

In Q1 2021, the FNDP decided to face the obvious implications of this situation in a proactive way and has therefore engaged with both WBC and local residents to offer up additional sites for development beyond those proposed in the Draft Local Plan (2020). This is done reluctantly, but in the anticipation that to do so now will give more security to the overall Vision of the Plan in the future.

The impact of this change in circumstances meant that further Regulation 14 Consultation was undertaken in Q4 2021 in addition to that already completed in Q1 2021.

Towards the end of this consultation, WBC published its LPU – Revised Growth Strategy consultation which included the proposal of Rooks Nest Farm as a site for 270 dwellings. Technically, this site is in Barkham Parish and therefore outside the Designated Area of the FNDP. However, it directly abuts the Parish of Finchampstead and is separated only by a road from one of the FNDP supported sites, at 31-33 Barkham Ride. The Lead member for Planning at WBC described Rooks Nest Farm as ‘de facto part of Finchampstead’. The draft LPU was published just as the second Regulation 14 consultation was getting underway.

This issue is discussed more fully in the [Topic Paper – Proposed site for Additional Development](#).

The FNDP team and the Parish Council have objected to this proposed site on a number of grounds but also because both believe that it could compromise the objectives and policies of the FNDP.

At the start of the process, the FNDP team had assumed that the draft policies in the draft LPU would be a matter of fact by the time that the FNDP was produced. As this will not now be the case, the team producing the FNDP has decided to incorporate more fully into the FNDP either existing or proposed policies from the Core Strategy and the draft LPU than might otherwise have been the case.

⁴ Community Investment Levy

The team producing the FNDP have worked very closely with the planning department at WBC but also retained the services of professional consultants (Bell-Cornwell LLP) and as the FNDP came together, both were continually consulted, with regular meetings to review progress and a number of informal reviews of the FNDP.

3.8 Working as a community

The FNDP was initiated by Finchampstead Parish Council but developed by a team well balanced between members of the parish council and other members of the local community and known as 'Finchampstead Future'.

The parish council has a full complement of councillors and is one of the most active in the borough. Although some councillors are active members of political parties, all regard themselves as 'Independents' in their role as parish councillors, allowing the council to function as a united body. This has been of great value in the construction of the FNDP, with a ready willingness to ensure that all views have been fully represented. It has also helped foster a positive, non-political engagement with WBC and local borough councillors.

The community group came into being as a result of a 'call for volunteers' by the parish council, including two public meetings. It also included members of a local campaign group who formed to oppose a local speculative development proposal.

The team initially approached over 30 business organisations, clubs, community groups, schools and other organisations both as a potential source of volunteers on the project and also to get their views more generally. Particular efforts were made to engage with younger people and also the Traveller community as groups often under-represented in the local planning process.

Unfortunately, many of these efforts were compromised by Covid-19 public health controls, ongoing from March 2019.

3.9 Evidence base and the views of the local community

A large part of the evidence base for this plan draws from a comprehensive survey of parish residents conducted at the end of 2019, with a written questionnaire delivered to every dwelling in the parish. Over a thousand responses were received, representing approximately 10% of the local population.

Roadshows and engagement opportunities were held at several outdoor locations during the autumn of 2020, again unfortunately limited by the restrictions of the Covid-19 crisis.

Full details of the whole record of public engagement are in the [Consultation Statement](#), published on the FPC website.

4 Sustainability and Sustainable Development

Sustainable development and sustainability have the meaning of “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (See National Planning Policy Framework Para 7).

In national planning terms, achieving sustainable development addresses three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways to secure net gains across each:

- **Economy** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.
- **Social** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being. (See National Planning Policy Framework Para 8)
- **Environmental** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment; making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

We have considered how Finchampstead fits into this broad national picture and with Wokingham Borough and other surrounding authorities. Statistics gathered by the National Trust and engagement work with residents provide firm evidence that the semi-rural nature of the parish is valued by communities from beyond the parish boundary. Work by WBC to develop California Country Park as a borough-wide destination is a case in point. The level of visitors from urban areas such as Wokingham Town and Bracknell indicate that the semi-rural nature of Finchampstead is a vital asset to conserve to support the need of surrounding communities for amenity, green space and leisure facilities. Changes to the planning system suggested during the making of the FNDP indicate that existing tests in judging whether a proposal is sustainable will become more important in development decisions and it is essential that a ‘bigger picture’ viewpoint is taken when considering individual development proposals and proposals from outside of the FNDP area.

The policies within the FNDP have been written with this in mind, protecting and enhancing our natural environment and ensuring that new development meets current standards of sustainable design. The FNDP also focuses on actions to combat and reduce the impact of climate change.

Development will bring more people into the parish, either to work, to live or for recreation. The buildings they use, their transport choices and their impact on the countryside will all have an impact on our climate. Therefore, we believe it to be consistent with local and national commitments to reduce our carbon footprint that planning decisions are made with reference to this issue and that proposals for sustainable development should include suitable measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

The way in which these guiding principles will be applied is set out in the sections below and contained generally as standing principles throughout the FNDP.

4.1 Key issues for environmental sustainability

Facilitating development that does not result in a biodiversity net loss, where possible achieves biodiversity net gain of at least 10% over base value⁵ and which protects the natural environment is a priority of the FNDP. These priorities will be achieved by requiring robust ecology evidence to support development proposals. *The detail of this is set out in the Policy IRS5 - Ecological Green Space and Biodiversity (see Section 8. [Identity and Rural Setting](#)).*

⁵ Emerging Environment Bill 2021

Finchampstead parish has a landscape highly valued for recreation and relative tranquillity, as demonstrated in the results of the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan Resident Questionnaire 2019. The following matters need to be addressed in a sensitive and appropriate way if the current valued use and condition of the parish is to be sustained:

- Pressure for new residential development and supporting infrastructure, both inside and outside the area, impacting on landscape character; for example, the development of a new settlement at the Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location and the extension of the existing Hogwood Industrial Estate has the potential for negative impact on California Country Park
- Continued pressure for expansion, infill and densification within existing settlements leading to loss of open pasture, heathland and woodland habitat and potential amalgamation with adjacent settlements, such as extension of the caravan site on the east shore of Longmoor Lake
- There is also pressure for back land development to the rear of properties of Nine Mile Ride and unauthorised development between Nine Mile Ride and Ravenswood Park, potentially eroding the landscape of the parkland
- Maintaining the sense of remoteness that exists away from the areas of settlement, together with the views along the historic rides
- Preventing the erosion of and impact on tranquillity by the high demands for recreation due to the proximity to large centres of population, particularly by trail and quad biking
- Monitoring and preventing the erosion of rights of way, or the neglect of special archaeological, ecological and other landscape features, which is a continuing concern in this well populated area
- The need to balance the continuing pressure for new roads or improvements to existing roads, to ease congestion in this well-populated and commercially vibrant area, against the impact on the tranquillity of the environment, particularly in relation to the Arborfield Strategic Development Location and the consequent increase in traffic along Nine Mile Ride
- Protection of wildlife habitats, protected species and green corridors to support the range and movement of wildlife

Throughout this Plan our policies seek to address these matters.

4.2 Environmental standards for residential development

The method and process of building construction, and the measured sustainable performance of the building over its lifetime represent significant opportunities to have a positive impact on the wider environment and to mitigating the impacts of climate change. The FNDP will support the efforts of responsible developers who pay significant regard to these issues as part of their development proposals.

It is a minimum standard for approval for all housing developments within the parish that they conform to national and local environmental standards and also meet the higher water efficiency standard in Regulation 36 of the Building Regulations. These standards should be achieved as a minimum unless it can be demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist. Where on-site achievement is not viable or practical, appropriate financial contributions to offsite provision may be considered.

Measures which facilitate a reduction of carbon emissions in existing dwellings will be supported provided they do not give rise to unacceptable impacts on landscape, biodiversity, heritage assets, character of the area, and amenity.

Policy ES1

Environmental standards for residential development

Development proposals for residential development should meet the following environmental standards:

1. The achievement of improvements beyond those defined in Part L of the Building Regulations 2021 for minor residential developments or satisfy any higher standard that is required under new national planning policy or Building Regulations.
2. In addition, major residential development should be designed to achieve carbon neutral homes where this is both practicable and viable.
3. Conversions to residential and extensions to existing dwellings of 500sqm of residential floorspace (gross) or more, should achieve or seek to achieve 'excellent' in domestic refurbishment as defined in the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method <https://www.breeam.com/>.
4. Provision is made for charging for electric vehicles in all domestic dwellings where garages or vehicle parking spaces are provided.

5 Appropriate Housing Development

Readers of this section are reminded of, and referred to, the [‘Key Definitions’](#) set out in Section 1.2 of this plan.

5.1 A background of development

Finchampstead is a semi-rural parish with four areas of settlement designated as Development Locations and two other Informal built areas (see 1.2 ‘Key Definitions [Figure 2](#)’) in designated ‘Countryside’ (see also [‘Section 2.1 Introducing Finchampstead - The Parish’](#)).

Topographically, the area is sub-divided roughly east to west by an escarpment which falls away to the south offering extensive views over the River Blackwater Valley and its nature reserves. Those discrete areas of residential settlement therefore enjoy extensive green and pleasant surroundings, as described in the Landscape Character Assessment, but these are coming under increasing pressure as more development land is sought.

Finchampstead was the focus of significant suburban style housing during the 1970s and 1980s (see [Section 2.4 Introducing Finchampstead - The coming of suburbia](#)). After then, the rate of new house- building dropped dramatically and amounted to only 107 in the period 2011 to 2019. This has been characterised by very small-scale housing schemes built in infill, or back-land or redevelopment of a couple of units where one previously existed.

In the late 2010s, the identification of a Strategic Development Location at the former Arborfield Garrison has led to another significant increase in housebuilding. This is due to the release of a large tract of former Ministry of Defence land for development. It will deliver 1,500 dwellings which will be an increase of around 30% in the parish since 2018. This will have a very considerable impact on the nature of Finchampstead. The new community (Finchwood Park) will require time to consolidate and mature.

5.2 Local housing market

To gain additional understanding of the local housing market, a survey was commissioned involving four of Wokingham’s long-established estate agents, actively doing business in the parish. The responses are set out in [Annex E Estate Agents Survey](#). The findings confirm that Finchampstead is predominantly an area that attracts people wanting to buy family homes set in a semi-rural location. What it generally lacks in amenities (found more extensively in Wokingham and Crowthorne) it compensates for with a pleasant and safe environment in which to raise a family.

Demand for family accommodation accounts for approximately 80% of all the estate agents’ enquiries. The property built in Finchampstead since the 1970s has generally catered for this market. Provision for first-time buyers and retirees in Finchampstead however, is more limited and demand for this type of accommodation (typically, one and two bed dwellings) accounts for only a combined 20%. The absence of proximate high street services and facilities was cited as a major factor in this. Wokingham and Crowthorne are considered to offer a better choice for first time buyers and retirees. It would also be fair to say that limited or no suitable housing has been built in Finchampstead, to accommodate these two groups of buyers. The same is true with regards to the provision of affordable homes and socially rented accommodation.

Finchwood Park and the planned regeneration of Gorse Ride will provide a broad range of new build properties for both first time buyers and families as well as options for affordable and socially rented accommodation.

5.3 The emerging Local Plan Update

Wokingham Borough Council is preparing a Local Plan Update. Once adopted it will replace the existing Core Strategy and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan. It has progressed through the following stages:

- Issues and Options Consultation (August-September 2016). Its focus was early opinion gathering on a range of high-level issues;
- Spatial Options Consultation: Right Homes, Right Places Consultation (November 2018-February 2019). Its focus was to provide opportunity to comment on the suitability of land promoted across the borough for potential development. In addition, some high-level opinions were sought;
- Draft Local Plan Consultation (February-April 2020). The consultation set out a full set of draft policies, including the spatial strategy directing the location of future development and supporting allocations. The consultation included a full suite of policies intended to assess and manage the impact of development; and
- A Revised Growth Strategy was published in November 2021.

In September 2023 the Borough Council was awaiting the outcome of national consultation on proposed changes to national policy. The Borough Council's Executive agreed on 27 July 2023 to publish an updated timetable for the submission and examination of the Plan.

The Parish Council has sought to ensure that the development of the neighbourhood plan proceeded at a similar time as the development of the Local Plan update. However, the neighbourhood plan is now at a far more advanced stage. As part of the preparation of the Plan, the Parish Council considered the way in which it could reflect the proposed housing allocations in the parish in the emerging Local Plan update. It also considered the allocation of two additional housing sites. However, as an outcome of the examination, the Plan takes a neutral position on the identification of new housing opportunities in the parish. It will be a matter for the Local Plan Update to consider as it addresses the wider opportunities and challenges in the Borough.

Nevertheless, this Plan notes and supports the following sites as identified in the Draft Local Plan Update (January 2020):

- 5FI001 Tintagel Farm, Sandhurst Road 5 Units (Gypsy & Traveller);
- 5FI015 Land rear of 166 Nine Mile Ride 4 additional Units (Gypsy & Traveller); and
- 5FI024 Jovike, Lower Wokingham Rd 15 homes.

Similarly, the Plan notes and supports the following additional proposed development allocations as identified in the Revised Growth Strategy (November 2021):

- 5FI003 31/33 Barkham Ride 66 homes (net);
- 5FI004 Green Acres Farm, Nine Mile Ride 100 homes; and
- 5FI028 Westwood Cottage, Sheerlands Road 10 homes.

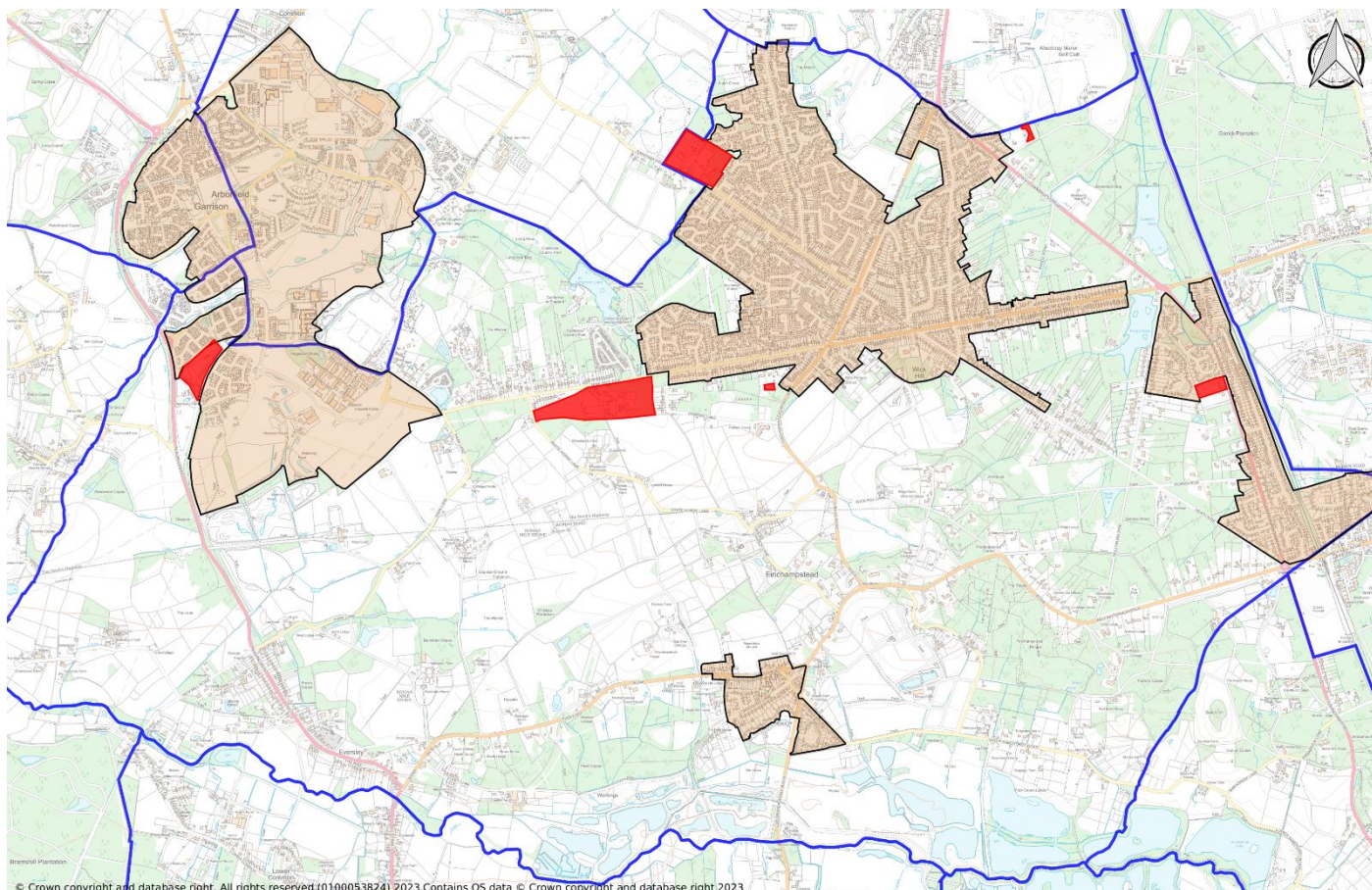


Figure 5 - Proposed locations for development locations in the emerging Local Plan Update.

5.4 The approach taken in the Plan

In this context the Plan sets out a strategy which supports development within the Development Locations where they comply with Policy TB06 of the Managing Development Delivery Plan and with Policy D3 of this Plan.

The Plan also supports the ongoing development within the Finchwood Park area of the Arborfield Strategic Development Location. It also supports proposals which would provide higher residential development densities within Finchwood Park than those envisaged in the Core Strategy and Arborfield Supplementary Planning Document.

5.5 New housing outside Development Limits

New housing outside the amended Development Limits (as currently defined by Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy and cemented by policy CC02 of the MDD or as updated via the emerging LPU) – (see also [‘Key Definitions’](#)) will be supported only against very strict criteria as defined in the WBC Core Strategy Policy CP11, or successor policy, relating to Development in the Countryside. See [Map Annex F Definition/designation of ‘countryside’ in the local plan update](#).

Keeping defined settlements apart by maintaining their visual and physical separation to ensure that future development does not compromise their separate identities was highlighted as an important part of the FNDP vision. Subsequently, it was confirmed as a strategic finding of the FNDP Residents’ Questionnaire (2019).

A small number of specific locations are the last remaining spaces between areas of settlement and it is vital that they are retained and protected as countryside or other green space in order to prevent the coalescence of these settlements.

Therefore, regardless of their landscape or ecological qualities, it is a robust conclusion that these specific locations require specific protection. The issue, the locations concerned, and the policies relating to it are detailed in Section 7 of this plan, [Gaps and Settlements](#).

Any proposal will need to demonstrate support of Policy GS1 – Key Local Gaps between settlements as set out in Section 7 of this plan, [Gaps and Settlements](#).

Any proposal will also need to demonstrate support of the policies relating to Identity and Rural Setting as set out in Section 8 of this plan, [Identity and Rural Setting](#).

5.6 New development within Development Limits

The FNDP strongly supports the delivery of sustainable development within the boundaries of the Arborfield Strategic Development Location, (specifically the development at Finchwood Park) and within the other Development Locations following any proposed amendments to the Development Limits proposed in the Plan (see section 5.4). The FNDP would support a reassessment of their original vision if required. In particular, a move to higher density housing might make the best use of infrastructure investment already associated with these developments.

In addition to the above, although building on residential gardens will not be generally supported, the FNDP will allow an exception for smaller opportunities for replacement, frontage infill and sensitively planned ‘back-land’ development within the Development Locations (*see [section 2.1](#)*) and which does not interfere with Outstanding Views’, areas designated as ‘Key Local Gaps’ or designated as Local Green Spaces. The criteria for such development are set out in Policy D3.

Policy AHD1

Development within Development Limits

Development proposals within the Development Locations will be supported where they comply with MDD TB06 and with Policy D3 of this plan.

Development proposals within the Finchwood Park area of the Arborfield Strategic Development Location will be supported. Proposals which would provide higher residential development densities within Finchwood Park than those envisaged in the Core Strategy and Arborfield SDL Supplementary Planning Document will be supported, where they comply with other design and layout criteria which apply to the site.

Development proposals outside the Development Locations will only be supported where they are in accordance with national and Borough planning policies.

Policy AHD2

Independent Living, Care and accommodation for Vulnerable people

Development proposals for independent living housing accommodation for older residents will be supported where they comply with Policy TB09 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan.

5.7 Gypsy and Traveller provision

A full analysis of Gypsy and Traveller provision was undertaken by WBC in September 2017. This identified that approximately 17% of the total borough provision was located within the parish of Finchampstead. These locations are listed in [Annex H Gypsy and Traveller Sites](#).

In January 2020 the WBC Local Plan Update included proposed allocations for Gypsy and Traveller pitches at two sites within Finchampstead. These two sites were retained in the Revised Growth Strategy consultation in November 2021. The first is an additional four pitches at 'Land to the rear of 166 Nine Mile Ride'. The second is for five pitches at Tintagel Farm, Sandhurst Road. Planning permission has since been granted for the extra pitches to the rear of 166 Nine Mile Ride. If the two additional sites are included in the adopted version of the Local Plan their development will be determined by the relevant policy in that Plan. Policy AHD3 seeks to establish a positive context within which proposals for the expansion of the existing sites can be considered and determined. It requires any such proposals to meet a series of criteria.

Policy AHD3

Provisions for Gypsy and Traveller Communities

Development proposals which would result in the loss of existing Gypsy and Traveller sites and pitches will not be supported unless it is clearly demonstrated that:

- the site is no longer suitable for such use; and that alternative provision on a site that is of equal or better quality is provided; or
- there is no need for such pitches in the Borough

The expansion of existing Gypsy and Traveller sites will be supported, where the following criteria are satisfied:

1. There is a demonstrable need for additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches within the neighbourhood area
2. The proposed occupiers are Gypsies and Travellers.
3. Where appropriate, proposals include appropriate landscaping to mitigate their impact on the surrounding landscape; and
4. The proposals include the provision of or enhancement to the links to community facilities/services or contributions to upgrading roads and pathways in and around the site as appropriate.

6 Design Policies

6.1 Background to design criteria

Given the development history of Finchampstead and the general modernity of this area of Berkshire, there is no single design vernacular which needs to be upheld. However, the specific aspect of various long straight roads which were historical forest 'Rides' is retained not just in road names but in layout, with housing set back from the carriageway and boundaries being of trees and hedges. Specific roads which retain these characteristics are listed in [Annex I Roads with "Rides" Characteristics](#)

The more modern areas of estate development, notably Fernlea, Kiln Ride, Wellesley Drive, Carolina Place, Ashdale Park, Manor Park and Waverley Way were also each set out with their own specific design style, and which retain their overall visual coherency today. A key feature of these estates was their 'open plan' style, avoiding the use of fencing to demarcate front gardens and this should be retained.

Overall, the parish has retained its semi-rural character and residents place great value upon the general appearance of 'greenery' and 'openness' and want these to be protected.

Pressure on this landscape includes:

- Frontage development (such as garages in front of the established building line) and the use of close board fencing along the rides. This is incongruous to the character of the area and leads to tree losses, which themselves harm the character of the area and the Green Rides
- On existing estates, there is pressure for expansion of properties especially above ground floor level, which if not designed sympathetically, can lead to unsightly and intrusive extensions
- On existing estates, there is pressure to convert garages into extra living space, with the potential for causing increased on-street parking and pavement blockage
- Increasing demand for communication masts, pylons and poles leads to visual intrusion of these elements in the elevated landscape and in views to the wooded backdrop from elsewhere

The FNDP will support three storey housing in a limited number of locations within the existing settlements. The concept of three storey housing is generally viewed unfavourably by the local population (*as evidenced by the response to the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan Resident Questionnaire, 2019*). Very few such buildings currently exist within the Parish, and they are not seen as being in character with the rural and semi-rural nature of the parish.

Policy D1 addresses this important matter. The general expectation is that three-storey houses will only be supported within the Strategic Development Location. Nevertheless, there may be circumstances elsewhere in the parish where well-designed three storey houses may be appropriate. The policy applies to proposals for new three-storey houses. Proposals to add an additional storey to an existing house will be considered on their individual merits taking account of the potential impact of the development in the immediate locality.

Policy D1

Building Heights

Building heights should reflect the character and appearance of the parish. The development of 3 storey (and above) housing will generally only be supported within the area of the Strategic Development Location (that part within Finchampstead Parish) and the Gorse Ride regeneration area.

Policy D2

Preserving the rural character of the parish

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should be located and designed to maintain the separation of settlements and to complement the characteristics of the landscape in the immediate locality through:

1. Locating structures where they will be viewed against existing built form and wherever possible, development should deliver enhancements to the landscape character.
2. Retaining the proportion, scale and the space between the main residential buildings on each residential plot with reference to the built vernacular of the neighbourhood area and conservation of traditional boundary treatments.
3. The use of appropriate plant species in a comprehensive landscape scheme with appropriate boundary treatments to integrate with the rural character.
4. The use of street trees.
5. The protection of existing street trees.

6.2 Design requirements for Arborfield Strategic Development Locations

Most new housing development delivered during the FNDP period will be in the Arborfield Strategic Development Locations and the regeneration of the Gorse Ride Community. The draft WBC LPU has a range of detailed Design and Heritage policies specially aimed at their design, including matters such as place making, which the FNDP supports.

6.3 Design requirements for infill housing and plot developments

There will be continuing demand for small infill development sites and for extension and alterations to existing properties. Whilst the FNDP does encourage innovation and modernity in design, this needs to be sympathetic to, and complement, existing styles and as such won't always be appropriate. In particular, the FNDP will seek to protect and enhance both the open and rural nature of the various 'Rides' and also respect and harmonise the specific design styles of the more modern estates.

6.4 Gardens

The size and nature of domestic gardens vary considerably across the Parish, but they all contribute to the greenness of the Parish as well as providing habitats for wildlife and other sustainability benefits. It is the intent of the FNDP that these should be preserved wherever possible.

Policy D3

Infill, Small Plot Development and Development of Private Residential Gardens

Development proposals for new residential development that includes land within the curtilage, or the former curtilage, of private residential gardens should:

1. Make a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:
 - a. The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around the buildings within the surrounding area:
 - b. A layout which integrates with existing landscape features and the surrounding area, with regards to the built-up coverage of each plot, building line(s), rhythm of plot frontages and parking areas, especially in those locations listed in Annex I Roads with “Rides” Characteristics
 - c. Existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage:
 - d. Providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries. This includes features such as the variety of trees, hedges, and hard standing/lawn etc.
 - e. Compatible compatibility with the general building height within the surrounding area:
 - f. The materials and elevational detail are of high quality and where appropriate distinctive and/or complementary; and
 - g. The arrangement of doors, windows and other principle architectural features and their rhythm between buildings.
2. Provide a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking.
3. Incorporate an access which meets appropriate highway standards.
4. Not lead to unacceptable tandem development.
5. Incorporate a design and layout that minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas and avoids the need for additional physical security measures.
6. Provide biodiversity net gain and would not have an adverse impact on the biodiversity through the fragmentation of blocks of gardens, which together, or in Association with adjacent green spaces or deemed to make an important contribution to biodiversity and the wider green infrastructure network.
7. Not prejudice the satisfactory development of the wider area.
8. The development is within a Development Location (see section 2.1).

7 Gaps and Settlements

7.1 Background

Finchampstead is a semi-rural parish and it is the overriding concern of residents that it stays that way. The Parish has no single centre. It includes several distinct settlement areas, each with their own sense of place, identity and community. The strength and character of the neighbourhood area is in its greenness and community rather than the physical aspects of the settlements.

Some settlements are clearly separated while others have been linked by ribbon development. Nevertheless, even where this has occurred, there is still a perception of 'different place' between the settlements. It is the strong wish of the community that green gaps between the individual settlements around the Parish, which give it its semi-rural nature, should be protected and maintained. This was clearly expressed in the public consultation in November 2019.

There is also a wider local concern that without explicit policy protections, gaps between smaller settlements will disappear by 'creepage' and the Parish may eventually be consumed into an urban continuum linking Wokingham Town with Bracknell to the east and Sandhurst and Crowthorne to the south and now Arborfield and Barkham to the west and north.

The Plan uses the terms 'Key Local Gaps' and 'Green Wedges' to describe locations within the Parish that represent the last remaining green space between Development Locations or other informal built areas (see '[Key Definitions](#)'). In most cases, they represent the 'ground level' view when travelling along a road, giving a sense of departing from one settlement, passing through countryside, and then arrival at another settlement. The sense of distinct place and community exists notwithstanding that some settlements may not have full 360-degree separation when viewed from an aerial perspective. The fact that two settlements may be linked via development that occurs elsewhere than along the route being travelled does not detract from the visual value of the 'gap' to local residents.

7.2 Wokingham Borough Council designations

Of key significance is the definition/designation of 'countryside' and 'settlement' in the existing development plan and emerging Local Plan Update ([Annex F Definition/designation of 'countryside' in the local plan update](#))

Most of Finchampstead Parish in terms of area is designated as 'Countryside'. Development Locations (or Settlements) are separately designated. The Strategic Development Location at Arborfield includes the emerging new developments at Finchwood Park, which will eventually comprise part of the new Garden Village at Arborfield Garrison to provide a new settlement partly in the Parish.

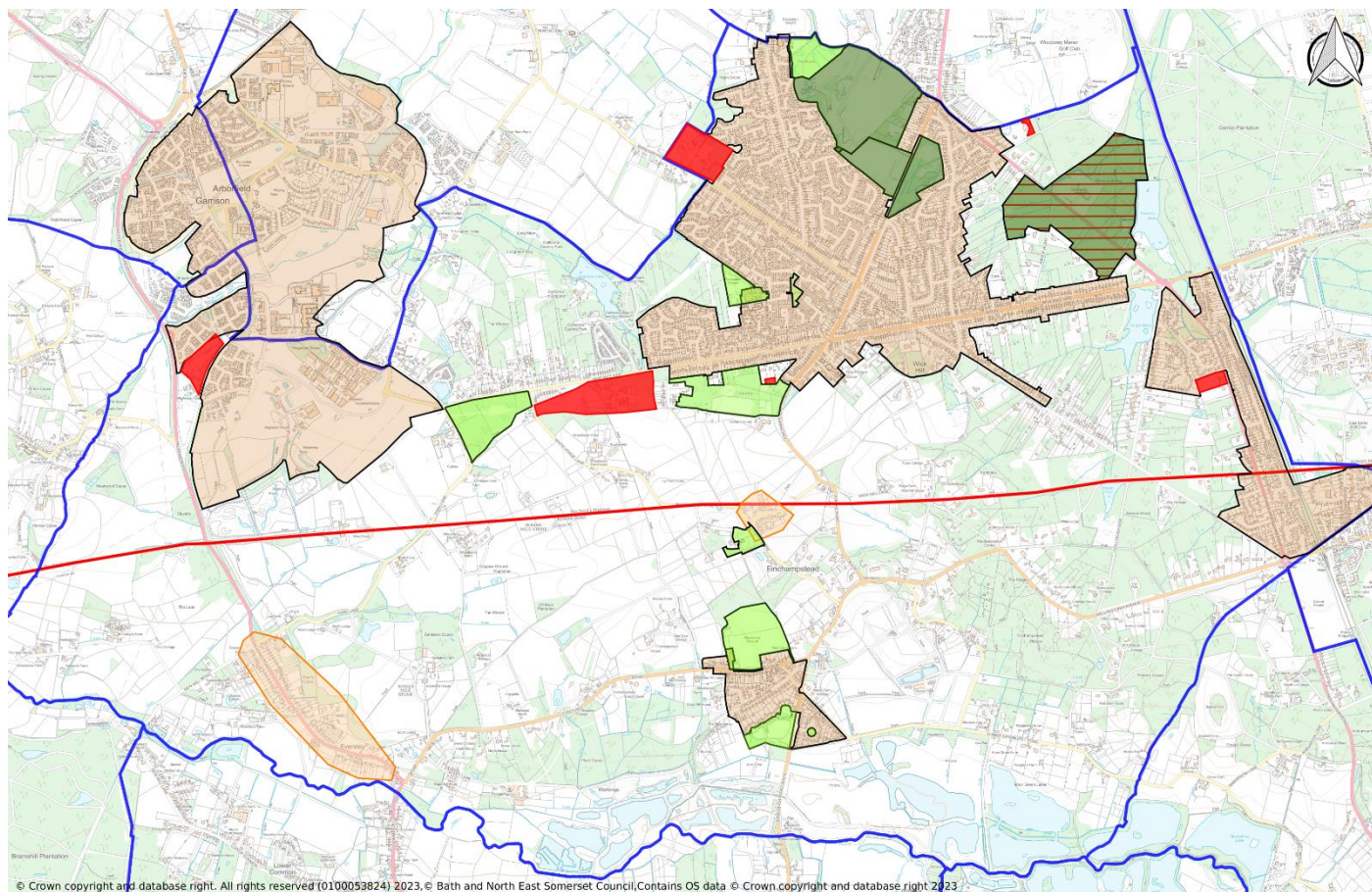
To maintain the separation of settlements, the Plan makes a general presumption of sustainable development being supported within the existing Development Locations as defined by the Borough Council, but development not being permitted outside of those boundaries (in the areas defined as countryside). However, both presumptions will be guided by policies within this plan and in accordance with other policies in the development plan. ([Annex F Definition/designation of 'countryside' in the local plan update](#))

7.3 The local perspective of settlements and the spaces between them


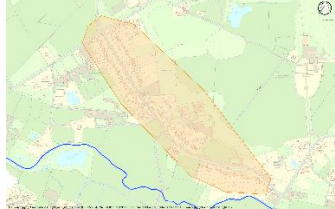
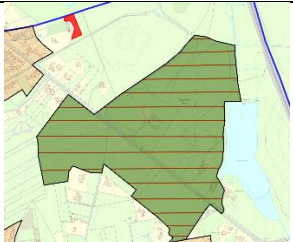
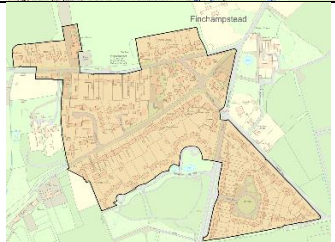
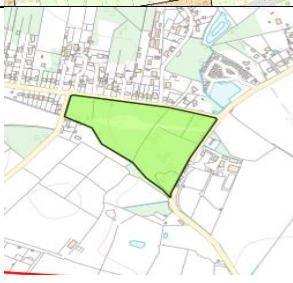
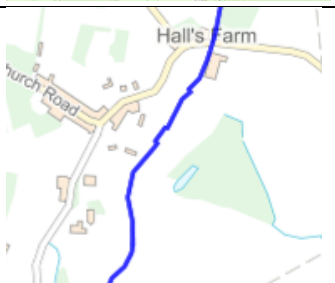
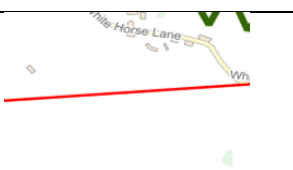
For the purposes of the FNDP, settlements have been identified in line with local perceptions of place and community. Four 'Settlements' are formally defined as Development Locations. The protection of some specific spaces against harmful development is now critical to the preservation of the last actual or perceived green gap between settlements and need to be fully protected.

As part of the preparation of the Plan, the Parish Council considered the way in which it could address proposed Areas of Separation between Finchampstead North and the Finchampstead Church Conservation Area, and between Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location and the residential development fronting Reading Road.

The overall purpose of Policy GS1 is to guide development away from areas around and between parts of settlements, which maintain the distinction between the countryside and built-up areas. The approach will also prevent the coalescence of adjacent places. The policy recognises the important function that these parcels of land have as gaps which preserve the distinct character of the surrounding areas.



KEY TO MAP

Key to Figure 6			
	Green Wedge		Informal built areas
	Key Local Gap		Existing settlement boundaries
	Designated Local Green Space		Parish Boundary
	Site of Roman Road (Devils Highway)		

Policy GS1

Key Local Gaps and Green Wedges

The Plan identifies Key Local Gaps and Green Wedges on Figure 6.

Development proposals should respond positively to the identification of the key local gaps and green wedges. Development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that they would not unacceptably affect the function of the gap or wedge, and/or not unacceptably reduce the physical and visual separation of settlements, or distinct parts of a settlement concerned.

8 Identity and Rural Setting

The topography and history of Finchampstead Parish has created dispersed distinctive settlements, linked through green spaces and corridors. Away from the areas of settlement, the landscape demonstrates a strong sense of enclosure and remoteness, enhanced by gentle hills giving wide ranging views over pastures and continuous swathes of large woodland. It is a landscape highly valued for recreation and relative tranquillity.⁶

The semi-rural nature of this Parish and the sense of closeness to the countryside and open green spaces is repeatedly mentioned by residents as what they most value about living here [*public consultation, November 2019*].

It is not just residents who value this. Finchampstead is part of a set of adjoining Parishes with an extensive and well-used network of footpaths and Bridleways. Recent broad surveys indicate over 50% of visitors are external to Finchampstead, many from other larger towns.

Green spaces have many scientific, historical and cultural features for today and a key objective of the FNDP is to facilitate sustainable development in a way that blends in with, and protects, the more valuable parts of the countryside around us.

To do this objectively, the FNDP has identified and classified those natural environments and areas into specific reasons for protection other than just being 'green'. This section identifies designated Local Green Spaces, important and outstanding views, conservation areas and areas of historic interest, and those more informal green areas which can mitigate the visual and environmental impact of development. It should be noted that any given location may appear in more than one of these classifications.

As well as specific policies on the above points, the FNDP sets out a further policy to protect and enhance the wider natural environment of the Parish as a whole.



Figure 7 - Aerial view showing semi-rural nature of the Parish

⁶ Ref: Wokingham LCA 2019

8.1 Protection of designated Local Green Spaces

A constant and consistent message from the residents of Finchampstead is that they value their green spaces. An initial stated objective of the FNDP was that:

'...we will aim to offer recreational spaces where local people and visitors can enjoy and appreciate the countryside. Specifically, the 'Crown Jewels' of the Parish such as Simons' Wood, The Ridges, Blackwater Valley, California Country Park and others will continue to be protected for future generations to enjoy'. [Public consultation, November 2019].

This objective received overwhelming support with 92% in favour.

Whilst undoubtedly the community would prefer to protect all green spaces in the Parish, the FNDP recognises that specific protection can and should only be applied as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework Guidance Criteria on Local Green Spaces Para. 100, namely where the green space is:

1. In reasonably close proximity to the community which it serves
2. Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife
3. Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land

The sites considered for Local Green Space designation are set out in the accompanying [Topic Paper – Local Green Spaces](#). The following map identifies those areas that are designated as Local Green Space in this Plan with the numbers corresponding with the LGS references in policy IRS1 (note these are not necessarily sequential). More detailed information on the site boundaries can be viewed in the [Topic Paper – Local Green Spaces](#).

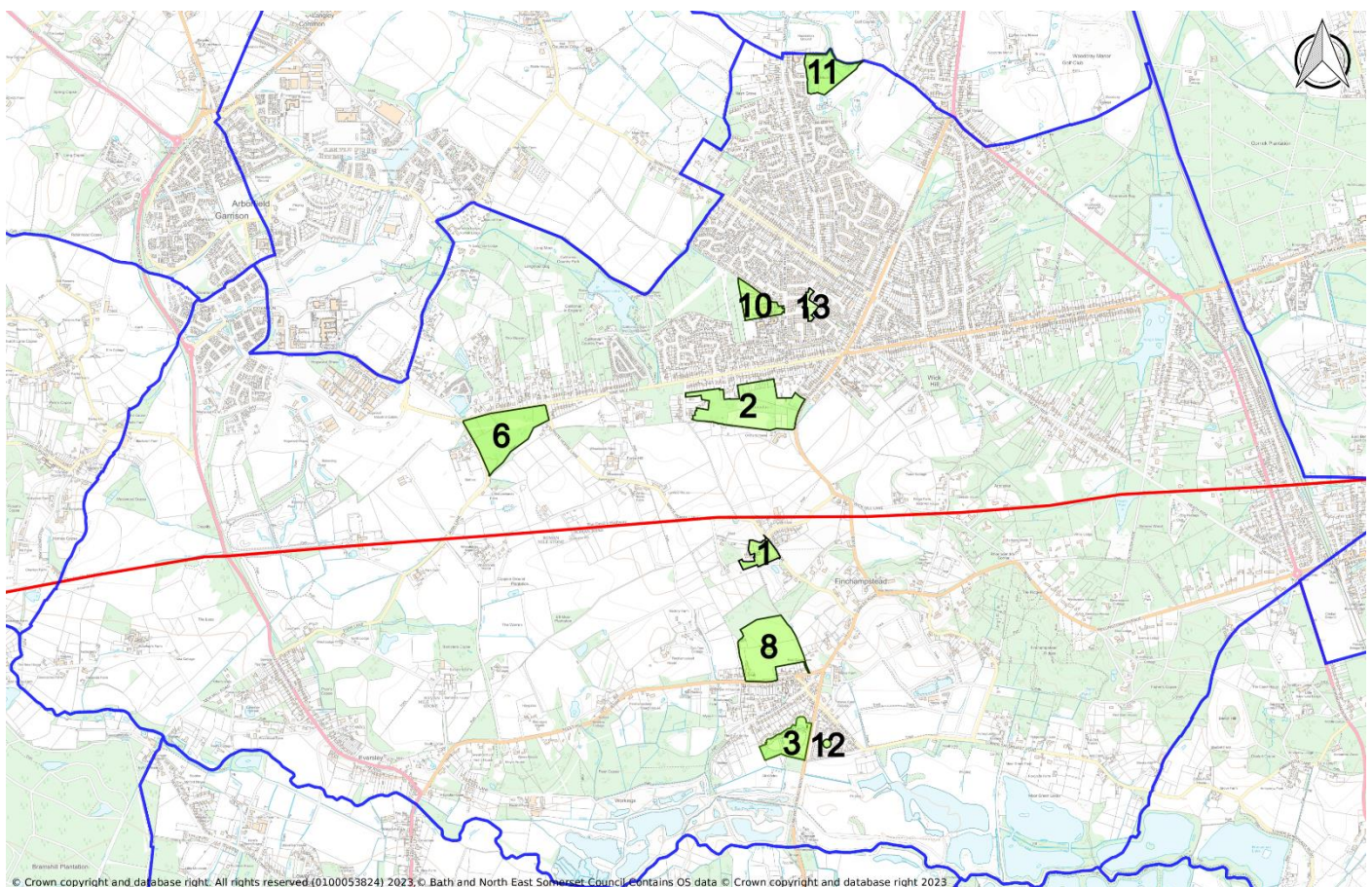


Figure 8 - Local Green space designations in the Neighbourhood Development Plan

Policy IRS1

Protection and enhancement of Local Green Spaces

The Plan designates the following areas as Local Green Spaces:

- LGS1 – St James’ Church including part of the conservation area, Church Lane, Finchampstead
- LGS2 – Warren Wood Country Park, Warren Lane, Finchampstead
- LGS3 – Burnmoor Meadow, Longwater Road, Finchampstead
- LGS6 – Shepperlands Farm, Park Lane, Finchampstead
- LGS8 – Finchampstead Memorial Park and Leas field The Village, Finchampstead
- LGS10 – FBC/Gorse Ride Playing Fields, Gorse Ride North, Finchampstead
- LGS11 – The Moors, Waverley Way, Finchampstead
- LGS12 – Woodmoor play area, Woodmoor, Finchampstead
- LGS13 – Gorse Ride Woods play area, Whittle Close, Finchampstead

Development proposals within designated Local Green Spaces will only be supported in very special circumstances.

Policy IRS1 identifies the local green spaces and sets out a policy to ensure that development is only supported within their identified areas in very special circumstances. Any change that would impact upon the Local Green Spaces must consider the need to retain and respect the value placed upon the spaces by the local community.

8.2 Protection of Outstanding Views

Topographically, the Parish is sub-divided roughly east to west by an escarpment which falls away to the south offering extensive views over the River Blackwater Valley and its Nature Reserves.

Finchampstead is fortunate to be located in an escarpment area with outstanding views from a number of vantage points over Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey. The popularity of these views and viewpoints has been recognised in the provision of benches, car parks and resting places. Specific viewpoints greatly increase the sense of open space and therefore need to be protected in order to maintain the rural setting and to achieve many of the environmental, community, historical and residential objectives.

There are four key viewpoints ([Annex K Outstanding Views](#)) within the Parish:

- A. West from St James over pasture, the Devils Highway, listed buildings and footpaths
- B. South-West from the War Memorial over the Blackwater Valley
- C. South from The Ridges to the Hogs Back, Eversley and Hampshire
- D. East from The Ridges down Wellingtonia Avenue onwards to Crowthorne, Caesars Camp and Ascot

An assessment of views to and from all new development within the distinctive view areas as illustrated in Annex K should accompany planning applications which may affect the integrity of the outstanding views. The re-modelling of the local topography, through cut and fill, could adversely impact on the landscape character. Therefore, new development should be adapted to the site contours through the consideration of both near and distant views of the development from the principal public vantage points showing existing landscaping and that proposed to be established after 10 years (based upon assessment for rate of vegetation growth). Where appropriate details of how those areas to be retained for open space and/or woodland will be managed in the future should be included with planning applications.

Policy IRS2

Protection of Outstanding Views

The design, layout, scale and massing of development proposals should take account of the outstanding views shown in Annex K.

Development proposals which would have an unacceptable impact on the outstanding views will not be supported.

8.3 Protection and enhancement of the historic character of the area

Although Finchampstead has a rich history of continual settlement stretching back from the Iron Age, most of the settlement is largely post-Victorian and includes a high proportion of post-war and modern estate dwellings; generally, the architecture is unremarkable.

This places special emphasis on protecting those elements of genuine historical interest and local character.

8.3.1 Areas of historical interest

1. An ancient barrow northwest of Warren Lodge.
2. The Roman Road between London and Calleva (Silchester), running east-west through the Parish and known locally as the Devil's Highway; identified in Simon's Wood, by the Church and on down to the western Parish boundary. The road's agger (earthen embankment) is still visible at locations in Crowthorne and Finchampstead Parishes, and its line is reflected in the alignments of several lengths of modern road and track. It is integral with the footpath network.
3. St James Church, 12th Century, and The Queens Oak public house, marking the ancient village centre.
4. The avenue of Wellingtonia trees on Wellingtonia Ave (a commemoration to the Duke of Wellington).
(ref: *Landscape Strategy - Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment March 2019*)
5. and 5a - The view westwards from the Church along the Devil's Highway encompasses two Grade II 16th and 17th Century Listed Buildings and a Scheduled Monument of an Aisled Roman Villa, all with substantial green surrounding grounds.
6. The conservation area around St James Church.
7. The Walled Garden on Wick Hill.
8. Poor Ridge Cottage, The Ridges.
9. Water trough and pump, Rectory Hill.
10. Kitchen Garden Wall at North Court.
11. The Well, California Country Park.

The above assets are indicated in Figure 9 below.

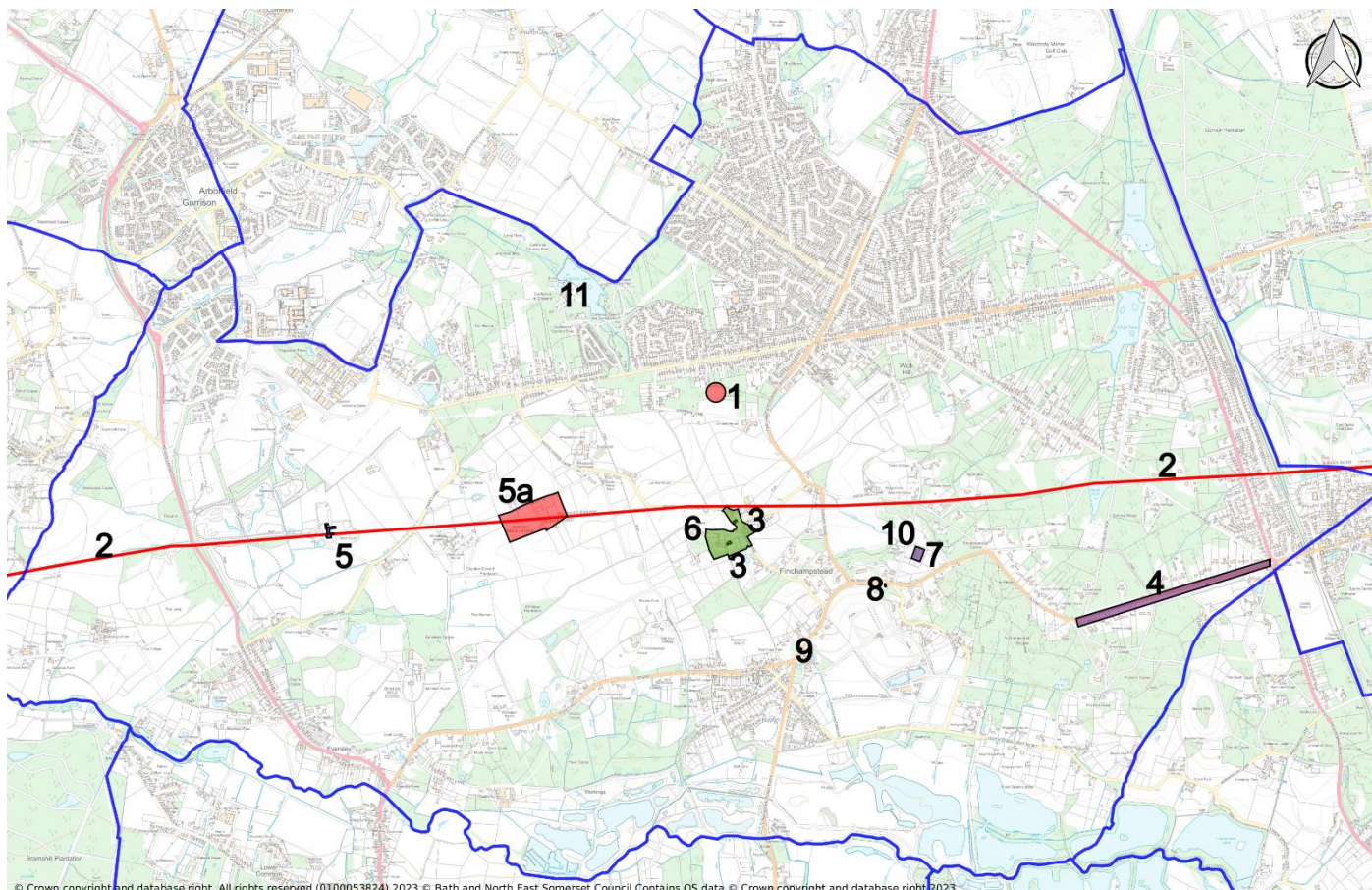
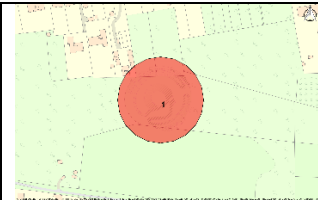

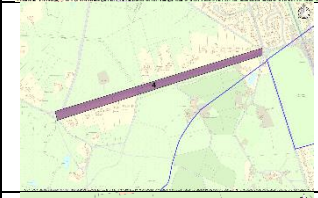
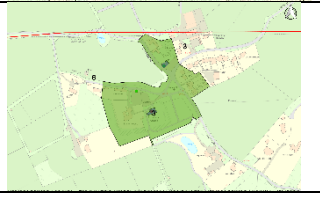



Figure 9 – Areas of historical interest

KEY TO MAP

	Scheduled monument		Archaeological site (Devil's Highways – Roman Road)
	Non-designated heritage asset		Conservation Area
	Listed Building		

8.3.2 Listed buildings

There are 28 Listed Buildings in Finchampstead full list in [Annex C History & Heritage](#).

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. St James Church and local surrounds: | 7 Buildings |
| 2. View from St James Hill towards and including Banisters: | 7 Buildings/monuments |
| 3. Western area from Shepperlands including East Court: | 9 Buildings |
| 4. Elsewhere in Parish: | 5 Buildings |



Figure 10 - View of 12th C St James church and conservation area (July 2020)

Policy IRS3

Conservation and enhancement of the historic character of the area

The historic environment and any designated heritage assets in the Parish and their settings, both above and below ground will be conserved and enhanced for their historic significance, their setting and their importance to local distinctiveness, character, and sense of place.

Proposals for development of sites associated with heritage assets must take account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage assets.

Development proposals should protect or enhance the historic character of the area which includes but is not limited to the sites identified in paragraph 8.3.1 of the Plan.

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset in the neighbourhood area should be taken into account in determining related planning applications. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be taken having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

8.4 Recognise, respect and preserve identity and rural setting of the parish

Beyond the specific definitions of valued green spaces in the sections above, there are other general principles which will help development proposals to recognise, respect and preserve the identity and semi-rural setting of the distinctive settlements and to protect the historic and environmental identity of Finchampstead Parish as a whole.

A Summary of key Parish landscape characteristics which are essential to maintain are set out in [Annex L Summary of Key Parish Landscape Characteristics](#) which are essential to maintain.

These principles are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework and use the WBC Landscape Character Assessment 2019.

Policy IRS4

Implement strategy to preserve the identity of Finchampstead Parish through informal green spaces.

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should:

1. Preserve the semi-rural look and feel of the Parish with its surrounding natural open environment.
2. Preserve the distinctive character and appearance of the Parish countryside with varied landscapes and outstanding views.
3. Preserve the topological features of the landscape that distinguish it as part of the Blackwater Valley and Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas.
4. Protect and where possible, enhance the green spaces of the Parish, both general and specific, through protected special areas, green gaps between settlements, green corridors, diverse flora and community spaces.
5. Specify tree and hedgerow planting to reinforce and reflect local biodiversity in the Parish.
6. Retain informal green gaps along the Parish access roads and other small areas of natural green space, as outlined in Annex S Rights of Way Network with adjoining Parishes.
7. Retention and potential expansion of the green corridors through the extensive rights of way network ([Annex R Rights of Way Network with adjoining Parishes](#)) and enclosure hedgerows to retain and enhance the outstanding views east, south and west within the Parish.

8.5 Protection and enhancement of the natural environment

8.5.1 Habitats, species and SANG

Policy IRS5 comments about the significance of the natural environment in the parish. It seeks to ensure that development proposals do not result in the loss or deterioration of habitats, including woodlands, habitats of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity and local wildlife sites. It encourages opportunities to create links between natural habitat and wider biodiversity improvements.

Opportunities will be sought to restore woodland, habitats of principal importance for the purpose of conserving the landscape balance. Any residential developments must enhance the wildlife- friendly environment, augment and

enrich green corridors in accordance with government policy on net gain in biodiversity (*Lawton Report 2010, 25-year Environment plan, Environment Act 2021, NPPF*).

Protection must be given to heathlands, wetlands, grasslands and hedgerows, valued and appreciated as part of our natural heritage: (Ref TVERC Report 2019 <https://www.finchampstead-pc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/TVERC.19.236-Finchampstead-Parish-Biodiversity-Report.pdf>).

In addition to SANG provision it must be noted that all net new residential dwellings within 5km of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA must also provide an appropriate Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) contribution in line with the Wokingham Borough Council Thames Basin Heaths Avoidance Strategy (and retained policy NRM6 of the South-East Plan and CP8 from Wokingham Borough Council's Core Strategy to 2026). Net new dwellings in the FNDP area will be required to make a financial contribution to the Thames Basin Heaths SAMM strategy.

The potential new residential developments within Finchampstead could cumulatively increase visitor numbers to the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. Additional visitors to the areas would result in further disturbance and potential damage to the heathlands and the local biodiversity.

In order to alleviate additional recreational pressures faced by the Thames Basin Heaths SPA future developments within Finchampstead are required to provide avoidance measures.

The provision of a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to draw new residents away from the European Site is an important measure set out by the Delivery Framework. Individual developments can provide their own SANG but the minimum requirement for SANG are relatively arduous: an area of attractive natural greenspace, not already heavily used for recreation, which can accommodate a 2.4km circular walk, and which meets an overall standard of provision of at least 8ha/1000 population. As a result, it is often the case that only very large developments can provide their own SANG. While that option is open to developers seeking to potentially deliver net additional dwellings, the appropriate assessment supporting the plan makes the precautionary assumption that the development facilitated by the plan may have to rely on one of the strategic SANG provided by Wokingham Borough Council or a third party.

It is therefore necessary to identify whether there is a strategic SANG with residual capacity located close enough to Finchampstead to serve that settlement and parish. According to the Wokingham Annual Monitoring Report, as of March 2021, there is one site in public control with remaining capacity to avoid impacts of additional dwellings upon the SPA. Rooks Nest Woods is located within the neighbouring parish of Barkham and is operated by the council. In February 2021 it had unallocated capacity of 375 dwellings. Other private SANGs also offer available capacity and can be bought into by developers to mitigate SPA impact. In total there are 3 SANGs within or adjacent to Finchampstead Parish. It is likely that potential additional dwellings facilitated by the Finchampstead neighbourhood plan will be covered by this existing SANG space.

However, any development that is reliant on the identified SANG will need to make a financial contribution to the delivery of that SANG and its management in perpetuity as per Wokingham Borough Council Thames Basin Heaths Avoidance Strategy and the tariffs provided on the Wokingham Borough Council website.

Policy IRS5 takes a comprehensive approach to this matter. As appropriate to the proposal concerned, planning applications should ensure that all species protected by law, including bats, badgers and others named at the time are subject to an ecological survey or assessment which accompanies the development proposal. The survey should be undertaken at an appropriate time of year for the relevant species and must include proposals for the measures that will be taken by way of appropriate mitigation to minimise and compensate for any likely impact the development may have on them, taking account of the requirements of any associated licence from Natural England.

Policy IRS5

Ecologically important areas and Biodiversity

Development proposals should conserve and enhance the natural environment and green spaces of the area, specifically biodiversity areas set out in [Figure 23](#) and the TVERC Survey 2019 ([Annex M TVERC Report](#)) wherever practicable.

The Plan area abuts the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA), specifically Bramshill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). All development resulting in a net gain in dwellings or other recognised pathway to likely significant effects, alone or in-combination, on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA must provide sufficient information to allow assessment of the effect and demonstrate how, through secured avoidance and mitigation measures if required, no adverse effect will occur in accordance with saved policy NRM6 of the South-East Plan and policy CP8 from Wokingham BC's Core Strategy to 2026.

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should demonstrate that:

- They will not have an unacceptable impact on local biodiversity or the network of sites designated as of importance for nature conservation, as evidenced through a robust specialist independent survey report, which is supported by the Borough's Ecological Adviser. The assessment should consider impacts on the site and on connections between sites important for biodiversity.
- There are no alternatives with less harmful impacts.
- They provide a net gain of at least 10% over base value using a robust metric. Where a loss of biodiversity on site is demonstrably unavoidable, development will only be acceptable if off site compensation measures are secured to ensure the creation of like-for-like or better distinctiveness habitats so a minimum 10% gain of biodiversity overall is achieved.
- All water courses and ditches are protected from any contamination or interruption to natural flow.
- Compensation through suitable alternatives of any loss of bird nesting habitat is secured.
- They take any opportunities to protect, enhance and extend wildlife corridors between existing open spaces and habitats as a means of mitigating the impacts of development on biodiversity.
- They conserve the environment for nocturnal species, through the avoidance of lighting and mitigating the impact of external lighting likely to increase night-time human presence.
- They contain measures that will help to mitigate the impacts of, and adapt to, climate change with reference and adherence to the Wokingham Borough Council Climate Change action plan.

All development which would result in a net gain in dwellings or other recognised pathway to likely significant effects, alone or in-combination, on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA must provide sufficient information to allow assessment of the effect and demonstrate that no adverse effect will occur through secured avoidance and/or mitigation measures if required.

8.5.2 Trees

The tree cover in Finchampstead is 39% of the land area, has been developed over many decades and is the highest of any parish in the Borough. There is wide diversity in species, many mature trees including the Wellingtonias. The overall tree population is spread across both public and private land. Whilst there are many trees under protection by individual or area TPOs, the wider tree canopy and species require clear policies to manage the sustainability of this valuable resource in biodiversity (See *Topic paper* [Topic Paper – Local Green Spaces](#)).

Residential or commercial development proposals that involve the removal or loss of a tree or group of trees should be accompanied by a tree survey and tree protection plan, impact assessment and a method statement. Where this is needed it must be supplied with a planning application and is part of the validation process.

Proposals should be accompanied by an indicative planting scheme to demonstrate an adequate level of sustainable planting can be achieved.

All proposals under this policy must meet British Standards 5837:2012 (Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations) or any future amendment or replacement of this.

Policy IRS6

Trees

1. Development proposals should seek to retain mature or important trees, groups of trees or woodland on site.
2. Proposals should clearly identify the trees, the constraints and root protection areas, any trees to be removed, and state how the health of the trees on the site and those influencing from neighbouring sites including the highway will be protected during demolition and construction, including that of installing utilities, drainage, and landscaping.
3. Where removal of a tree or group of trees of recognised importance is proposed, a replacement of similar amenity value should be provided on the site.
4. Wherever appropriate, the planting of additional trees should be included in new developments, particularly local species that are in keeping with the character of the area and appropriate to the site/ground conditions. Planting that contributes to the biodiversity of the area and supports green corridors is particularly encouraged.

9 Getting around

9.1 Overview of Finchampstead personal mobility and traffic

Whilst it is understood that the focus of Neighbourhood Development Plans is based on policies concerning land use, it is recognised that how land is used can have a considerable impact on other matters affecting the community. This is particularly true in the relationship between housing development and the growth of traffic.

When asked, residents highlighted deep concerns about traffic congestion in and around the Parish and through the Parish and therefore it is logical that conditions and policies relating to land use must pay regard to this issue, in the way they do to other issues such as climate change sustainable development and impact upon the countryside.

We are in alignment with WBC (Local Plan Update 2020/21) in setting out policies which address highway safety and good design and demonstrates the principles of healthy streets by prioritising pedestrian, cycling and sustainable transport. See *Highways Design Guide for Developers* <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/advice-for-developers/highways-development-advice/> User hierarchy set out at 2.1.2.

The critical matters considered for strategy and policy are:

- Increasing opportunities to improve personal mobility and reducing dependency on use of cars
- Safety in movement within and through the Parish
- Impact on quality of life for residents in the Finchampstead settlements
- Mitigating the impact of new development on the current infrastructure
- Understanding the impact of both of traffic growth and infrastructure network capacity
- Movement modes included: foot, horse riding, bicycle, car, bus, and train (stations outside of the Parish)
- Parking: retail, residential on roads, schools, amenities and leisure pursuits

Frameworks for Policy Guidance are listed in [Annex N - Frameworks for Policy Guidance – Natural Environment](#) and [Annex O - Framework for Policy Guidance – Traffic and Rights of way](#)

The protection of Finchampstead and its environment requires an offset in the expected growth in traffic (internal and external) with a shift to more journeys being made by active modes. The FNDP supports the construction of low-cost alternative movement routes in Greenways, car-sharing and other measures to reduce traffic and help the Parish's roads become more attractive routes for active travel. Safety is paramount for residents which must be met with planned and enforced traffic calming measures on all arterial routes and local networks.

The volume of traffic combined with excess speeds; congestion at the pinch points; delays; and concern over safe movement, plus noise and atmospheric pollution in a perceived green environment causes significant concern to residents. Residents' feedback is clear on seven points:

1. Settlements need to be connected by safe routes. It is felt that it is not safe ('dangerous') to walk or cycle on the arterial roads: Jubilee Hill/Finchampstead Road, Barkham Ride, Reading Road and Nine Mile Ride
2. Non-safe routes accessing schools create a mixed approach of walking and car use due to the traffic congestion. Residents' comments infer that traffic volumes make it quicker to walk.
3. Cycleways need to be off-road and clear of inter-action with the traffic flows
4. Rights of Way are valued as access to Green Spaces and for areas of leisure pursuits and form an intrinsic network across the Parish
5. The Greenway principle is supported and needs to be extended using development of the Rights of Way network with new routes where demanded
6. Traffic calming measures are necessary

7. Air pollution: there is a localised adverse effect to children and other pedestrians at crowded zones and at specific times of the day such as the school day, of standing and slow-moving traffic including parked vehicles with engines running. California Crossroads and The Village are potential risk areas.

9.2 Managing traffic within and passing through the parish

Residents are very concerned about traffic congestion on arterial routes and new development must not make this worse. [Figure 24](#) in Annex Q identifies five main arterials and local networks. Finchampstead has an area of 18.7 sq. kms. but with no single centre. The key transport features are:

- Four distinct settlement areas ('Development Locations' - see 'Key Definitions') and two other Informal built areas (See section 2.1), four of which are each located around one arterial road
- Two arterial A roads: Reading Road and Lower Wokingham/Sandhurst Rd
- Three arterial B roads: Nine Mile Ride, Finch/Longwater Rd and Wellingtonia Ave/Village
- The public transport services that are present are very limited in cover of area and schedules

There are five arterial routes through Finchampstead together with an urban network in the north of the Parish and rural lanes in the south and west of the Parish. The urban and rural local networks are used for normal daily activities of commuting, school runs, shopping and community/social activities. The arterial routes will be used by residents for commuting inside and external to the Parish together with a large volume of through traffic from towns and villages outside the Parish.

Analysis of population and residence growth with consequent traffic flows in Finchampstead shows the numerical relationship of residences to vehicle movements: (*Source Finchampstead Parish Council⁷ traffic volumes and Wokingham Borough Council Electoral Roll Data*)

Year	2010	2019	Change/ Growth %
Residences (as defined by Local Council Tax Base)	5,722	6,031	5.40
Traffic daily volumes on the five arterials plus Barkham Ride	54,186	55,021	1.54

Vehicle growth over the last ten years has been caused by both local traffic and external through traffic with potentially people choosing not to travel or seeking alternative means. Visual evidence and traffic recordings over recent long periods demonstrate high volumes of traffic, resulting substantial queuing at peak times at key junctions: the result demonstrates the flows to be in excess of capacity and original road design. Further local growth will be a disadvantage as there is no effective action available to stop/reduce through traffic.

Impact of developments external to Finchampstead is continuing to put pressure on the five arterial roads. The challenge is to understand capacity more than growth. Major capital infrastructure is outside of the scope of the Neighbourhood Development Plans and therefore comment is restricted to managing growth within a known and inadequate capacity. Congestion is a main concern of residents, (*Ref Neighbourhood Development Plan Public Questionnaire Survey October 2019*) and affects the quality of life through noise, localised pollution and results in a lowering of the desired quality of life.

⁷ Finchampstead Parish Council make extensive use of Speed Indication Display and Speed Detection Radar equipment as part of their 'Speedwatch' programme in partnership with Thames Valley Police. This is the source of much of the data in this section.

Arterial Infrastructure	Potential Impact from Development on infrastructure
Reading Road A327: north/south with a pinch point junction at Eversley Bridge which is the boundary to Hampshire.	The large developments in Finchampstead at Finchwood Park Arborfield together with those at Shinfield and Fleet will impact this road.
Finchampstead Road B3016: north/south through a pinch point California Crossroads affects local traffic and safety.	There are three difficult areas on the narrow Jubilee Hill, War Memorial turn and the junction with Finchampstead Village B3348. Ribbon and infill development will adversely impact on safety and flow. (Traffic movements in excess of 11,000 vehicles a day are currently recorded at this junction alone).
Sandhurst/Lower Wokingham Road A321: north/ south with busy crossing points at Nine Mile Ride and Dukes Ride.	Developments in Camberley, Yateley, Sandhurst and south Wokingham will affect this road through volume, safety and tailbacks.
Nine Mile Ride B3340: east/west joining Arborfield and Bracknell onwards with Pinch points at California Crossroads and long queues into Wokingham Without Parish at Heathlands traffic lights	Ribbon development along this road creates a series of delays and congestion. Future development plans in Bracknell Forest and also at Arborfield will add to this.
Ridges and Village B3348: joining Crowthorne and Eversley with slower progress through junctions and the Village.	Commercial development makes this road busy with heavy duty vehicle gravel extraction and waste transfer traffic between Yateley, Hart and Finchampstead and diverse sites in SE England.

Analysis of traffic volumes highlight four key points for Finchampstead road infrastructure:

1. North south arterial movements approx. 32,000 per day
2. East west arterial movements approx. 23,000 per day (there will be duplication north/south into east/west and reverse)
3. Assumed traffic levels are likely to be between 45,000 and 55,000 distinct vehicle movements per day
4. Road network comprises single carriageway for arterial roads plus small lanes in the larger rural part of the Parish.

There is no information to split residents from non-residents. However, residents do experience the negative aspects of the high levels of traffic.

Housing development will add to the level of traffic on the five main arterial roads. The basis for assessing the cars generated per household in development appear to differ dependent on type of development and location zone (urban to rural).

For Wokingham Borough the figure is about 1.63 – 1.70 cars per household. This would include the urban areas on the north of the Borough. Evidence from residents indicate that Finchampstead would be on the marginal upper side of these numbers.

9.2.1 South Wokingham Development

There is well documented traffic build-up along the Finchampstead Road due to congestion at the Wokingham Town junction near the southern bridges. Finchampstead Parish starts at The Throat (junction where Finchampstead Road meets Sandhurst Road) and encounters significant delays now in the mornings on route into Wokingham.

It is accepted that the arterial routes will be used fully by Finchampstead residents and transit traffic from outside of the Parish. Finchampstead should look to reduce local vehicular traffic through the provision and use of Greenways to retail, schools, service and leisure zones.

9.2.2 Speed of traffic

Speed of car travel is seen as a major factor in assessing the impact of traffic and health and safety on residents of the settlements. Evidence obtained from Finchampstead Parish Council direct observation and recording in Finchampstead⁸ indicates that speeds are unacceptably high and exceed legal limits by 8 – 12% on all arterial roads at all times.

All potential developments need to demonstrate that the overall impact on traffic levels, flow, congestion and pollution are mitigated to a minimum through traffic calming measures and ease of flow at the pinch-points.

9.3 Alternative methods of movement

Residents are concerned about the impact of development on local movement networks and these need to be safeguarded as part of development plans.

Ease of movement is intrinsic to the enjoyment of living in Finchampstead. 24% of residents commented that traffic is a major problem affecting their quality of life (*Ref Neighbourhood Development Plan Public Questionnaire Survey October 2019*). This includes issues such as volume, flows, speeds, 'rat-runs', potholes, noise, all exacerbated by increases in home delivery and roadside parking. Full data is in [Annex P - Traffic Flow Analysis](#)

9.3.1 Local public transport

Local public transport is sparse, does not meet residents' needs and, in many areas, is non-existent. Where it exists, costs are high per/km and services are subject to change, reduction and removal. It has limited options in location and direction of movement. Consequently, the option of car travel offers better security in timing.

Currently, over 80% of residents need to use their car every day (*Ref Neighbourhood Development Plan Public Questionnaire Survey October 2019*). Given the semi-rural nature of the Parish, current mitigation measures to offer alternative forms of transport may not significantly reduce the need to own a car. Therefore, all developments must mitigate for parking safely off road at the expected rate of cars per household.

9.3.2 Trains

There are two options, Crowthorne station and Wokingham station. Crowthorne train service is adjacent to the south-east corner of the Parish running from Guildford to Reading. The train service is relatively good, running from 06:40 in the morning weekdays to 23:50 at night. There is a reduction on Saturdays and a further reduction on Sundays. Many Finchampstead residents in the eastern part of the Parish will use this service for work and social needs. Wokingham station is some 5 kms north into the centre of Wokingham using the arterial Finchampstead Road. This is a congested route at peak travel times. The service is usually two trains each hour to London, two to Guildford and four per hour to Reading.

9.3.3 Bus services

Buses run on a circuit into Wokingham Town centre through routes from Reading. The service starts at 06:23 and ceases 19:49. There are four buses early and then eleven spread across the rest of the day. No buses run on Sunday. The Finchampstead/Bracknell service is infrequent and often subject to change. Overall, for work or social needs, the bus service provides limited support.

Policy GA1

Improve environment and health from traffic pollution

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should:

1. Demonstrate plans to integrate with arterial routes in a way that does not impede traffic flow, make pinch-points worse or create additional pinch- points leading to unacceptable congestion.
2. Respect the rural lane network and their historic character. These include Barkham Ride, Commonfield Road, Park Lane, Whitehorse Lane, Dell Road and Lower Sandhurst Road/Ambarrow Lane.
3. Support safe active travel connections and routes between settlements, schools, green spaces and support services such as doctors and dentists and local retail outlets.
4. Give new routes bridleway status so they can be used by all non-motorised users and remain in perpetuity, (except for where doing so would compromise other non-motorised uses of such a path).
5. Provide adequate off-road parking to avoid access restrictions on the urban and rural roads.
6. Offer protected movement for cycling to and from public transport points.
7. Demonstrate effective planning to mitigate noise and air pollution from traffic.

9.4 Implement local network of green routes for non-motorised traffic.

Truly sustainable development needs to offer as many non-car options as possible, both locally and as connections to areas outside the Parish. *(Research uses variety of sources Government Data, Finchampstead Parish Council data, RAC data, Wokingham Borough Council Local Plan Update, LCA 2019, HRA 2019, Horse Society Report 2019)*

9.4.1 Local networks: vehicle and pedestrian

The settlements are shown on [Annex Q - Parish Rights of Way and Arterial Roads](#) with the inter-connecting networks. The north of the Parish around California Crossroads, Nine Mile Ride and Barkham Ride is urban. The rural lanes in the south and west connect the four settlements, local green spaces and access points to the amenities, countryside and 34kms (21 miles) of Rights of Way networks (Byways, Bridleways, Footpaths) and other Permitted Paths and Greenways. This is set out in the Section on Green Routes.

There is good public usage of the rights of way network and confirmation *(Ref Neighbourhood Development Plan Public Questionnaire Survey October 2019)* that residents wish to retain and enhance the network. The network connects the six settlements and is currently used primarily for leisure and activities such as dog-walking, health walks, horse riding and rambling.

In addition to enhancing leisure usage, there is an excellent opportunity to develop the network into a series of 'personal arterial routes' through upgrading the material condition to permit safer walking, cycling and horse-riding

including improved gateway access and egress. Part of the upgrade should be a planned move into Greenways standard with lighting. The aim would be to connect centres of habitation with schools, health areas, retail and leisure sites as in Local Green Spaces and protected green zones.

WBC LPU seeks to reduce the incidence of 'single occupancy' car travel, which is a challenge for Finchampstead due to lack of currently available and planned alternatives. Increasing local Greenways and improving or upgrading Rights of Way will support this aim.

To date, there is one Greenway (yet to be completed) from the central urban area at the FBC to the new Bohunt School in Arborfield offering safe transit for walkers and cyclists: distance 1.9 Kms. Further Greenways that are in the Draft Plan Consultation: total length 14.6 Kms of which only a small portion will be within Finchampstead.

The residents have expressed concerns (*Ref Neighbourhood Development Plan Public Questionnaire Survey October 2019*) that cycling and walking along the arterial roads and small road networks is dangerous. The southern and western road systems in Finchampstead are narrow, often without pavements or shared surfaces, making cycling an increased risk option. The eastern area has more pavements which cyclists could use safely when free of pedestrians and if they were better maintained and kept clear of vegetation, the urban area is safer for cyclists.



Figure 11- Barkham Ride

Two examples of an arterial road that is hazardous for cyclists and walkers:

Left is Barkham Ride and right is Lower Wokingham Road.

There are problems with road surface damage, side surface collapse, potholes and verge overgrowth. Greenways would provide safe transit for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.



Figure 12 - Lower Wokingham Road

The principles and design requirements of Gear Change and LTN 1/20 should be adopted to support and encourage active travel.

Many residents place a high value on their ability to walk, cycle or ride in the countryside and enjoying the local green spaces. A network of connected paths and rights of way is essential to enable this and this needs to be protected and enhanced in any development plans.⁸

9.4.2 Mobility and leisure activities

Finchampstead has a range of locations for exercise, enjoyment and family activities. Locations mean that access has to be through walking and local car travel. The Rights of Way link into the activity sites with the objective of reducing car travel. Surveys show a high level of visitor numbers to the main locations of Moor Green, California/Longmoor, Simon's Wood and The Ridges: indications and evidence show in excess of 340,000 visits per annum in total.

⁸ See also Government publication on walking and cycling https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf and also design guidance for cycling infrastructure: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120>

Observational evidence indicates a further increase in recent times (*2007 Wokingham Borough Council Footprint Ecology Survey*).

Average Group size was about two people, 98% staying for 1-2 hours per occasion, 50% living within 2 kms, visiting daily and weekly for walking with family and pets.

Developments must allow this access to continue and help support the sites and green access routes.

9.4.3 Horse riders

There are some 630 registered horse owners in Finchampstead engaging in regular horse-riding activity through private ownership, Riding and Pony Clubs. In Finchampstead only about 20% of Rights of Way are designated as a Bridleway and WBC Local Plan proposes to increase this proportion (no level indicated). As shown above the road safety problems are prevalent for horse riders as well: speeding traffic and few safe zones. *Source: British Horse Society Wokingham Nov 2019*

9.4.4 Inter-connectivity with adjoining parishes: walking, horse riding and cycling

Rights of Way networks are an underused but effective way to move between parishes and towns avoiding public highways. Future proposals need to take account of the advantages of developing better links between Finchampstead and the eight parish neighbours with varying lengths of common boundary:

1. Barkham village and Arborfield covering the new housing and infrastructure developments with connections to bus services
2. Evendons and Wokingham Without covering routes into Wokingham Centre for buses and trains.
3. Crowthorne, Sandhurst, Yateley and Eversley with access to bus and train services

The extent of Rights of Way, in both number and distance, incorporated within Finchampstead Parish is reflected in a continuing network external to Finchampstead Parish giving a very high level of local inter-connectivity. The value of this connectivity is set out in [Annex R - Rights of Way Network with adjoining parishes](#).

The numbers of people moving for work, education or leisure should not be viewed as confined by one parish boundary. Finchampstead has long standing established rights of way with adjoining parishes that benefit both Finchampstead and its neighbours. Any loss of this inter-connectivity should be considered as detrimental to the current residential benefits of living in Finchampstead. Every effort should be made to ensure the interconnectivity, maintenance and sustainability of adjoining Rights of Way.

The WBC Local Draft Plan seeks to create opportunity for more walking and cycling movement and the FNDP also supports the WBC Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). Together, these will help to address the need for a reduction in local vehicle movements especially in the morning school-run. In addition, safe routes to Wokingham, Bracknell, Reading and Camberley would be a significant gain. To achieve this will require the construction of more Greenways from the existing Rights of Way networks and new routes where need is clear.

WBC Delivery Plan and Statement of Actions for Rights of Way highlight five key objectives which we endorse and a Strategy Plan for Greenways:

1. Creating new links
2. Encouraging use of the networks
3. Access for all
4. Looking after the networks
5. Planning for the future

Developments need to ensure that there is no loss of existing Rights of Way and should be committed to create or sponsor additional routes.

Policy GA2

Reduction in car usage with safe personal mobility options

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should:

1. Support and encourage Greenway development with residential development and alternative modes of personal movement connecting the settlements in Finchampstead with places of work and onward movement and public transport connections in Wokingham, Earley, Reading, Bracknell and Camberley.
2. Protect, maintain and enhance Footpaths, Bridleways, Byways and Permitted paths within the parish.
3. Create safe Greenway routes by-passing high risk areas such as Jubilee Hill, Barkham Ride and Nine Mile Ride.
4. Create a maintenance schedule to keep verges, pavement and footpath overgrowth cleared.
5. Collaborate and seek support from stakeholders in the development of new Rights of Way: Landowners, Ramblers, Horse Riders, cyclists, National Trust, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust.
6. Work with adjoining Parishes to retain and, where practical, improve the Rights of Way network.
7. Include the principles and design requirements of Gear Change and LTN 1/20.

9.5 Road improvement projects to be considered

There are issues of great concern to residents concerning traffic and getting about which will be noted in the FNDP's action points. The way forward will be through collaboration and support with Local and National Authorities specifically WBC, Finchampstead Parish Council and adjoining Boroughs and Parishes.

In some circumstances, this will involve discussions and initiatives with WBC and potentially Network Rail.

Considerations are:

1. Collaborate with WBC and Highways Authorities to improve traffic high volume pinch-points where traffic and pedestrians interface
2. Collaborate with WBC and Highways Authorities to improve traffic high volume pinch-points where excess delays occur on a daily basis
3. Endorse the recording and subsequent use of information on traffic flows and speed of flows to aid development planning
4. Monitor the index of cars per household in all developments
5. Support speed reduction initiatives on all five arterial routes in Finchampstead. Reduce the excess speed from 8-12% to zero over next five years
6. Create 'pass-points' on the rural network areas where there is no protective surface
7. Look to seek extensions to parking zones and drop-off points at schools and service areas such as Doctor Surgeries and retail points at California Crossroads and Barkham Ride
8. Work with WBC to reduce road damage and facilitate speed of repairs to road damage: potholes, roadside collapse and verge clearance
9. Work with WBC to achieve roadside surface repairs to eliminate potholes and edge erosion

10 Thriving Communities

As mentioned throughout this document, Finchampstead is a semi-rural Parish with a number of settlement areas scattered across a parish which is still mostly countryside. There is very little industry and a very limited amount of retail space. Most employment is either away from the area or is based upon home working. Some residual agriculture remains and there are also other countryside businesses such as livery stables. At the time of writing, some gravel extraction remains along the Blackwater River.

A key aim of residents is to maintain the 'community feel' of the Parish, retaining the key elements that make it a place to live, work, relax and raise families. These include retail facilities, local businesses, the family needs of education and healthcare and a basic social and leisure infrastructure.

Local residents are in favour of encouraging planned economic regeneration, with the preference being for new enterprise to be located on brownfield sites, and on existing business estates. Small local retail was the most favoured closely followed by small business start-ups and artisan crafts.

Office based enterprise, high-tech, light industry and services were also supported. This should be balanced against concerns about increased traffic and loss of rural character (*Ref Neighbourhood Development Plan Public Questionnaire Survey October 2019*).

10.1 Community and recreational facilities

Finchampstead has three community and recreational designated areas covering a total of 30 Hectares: two in the north high-density housing area and one site in the south village centre. The classification is 'flexible' as there is the shared use of California Country Park with Longmoor Bog, access to the ecological areas, a privately-owned golf club and two community halls.

The Parish has high levels of open countryside to visit, explore and exercise, therefore specialised recreational areas tend to focus on community activities for families, education, social meeting and young children. The community hall in the south village area is adjoined to high quality sports pitches for summer and winter activities, the Finchampstead Baptist Centre in the north is a standalone facility. The community use these facilities for general health and well-being: sports, exercise, gardening, social interaction, child-care, library and community support with Parish Council offices. Parents can chat with friends in the cafe while children play in the safe green space environment.

The centres are fully used by parish residents all year. For example, the FBC Centre was developed about twelve years ago and demonstrates the high value placed on this type of indoor and outdoor facility by the local community making 3,500 individual visits each week (logged records).

10.2 Retention of existed valued community facilities

The following are valued community facilities and will be retained in any future development plans:

The Queens Oak Public House	Hospitality	A traditional country pub close to the Parish church of St James', in a peaceful location and at the centre of a network of public Rights of Way and with extensive outdoor areas. This has been listed as 'an Asset of Community Value'
Finchampstead Memorial Park and Memorial Hall and a Sports Pavilion	Recreational	Roughly 2 hectares of football, cricket, netball, tennis activities with a sports pavilion for playing clubs. Children's play areas. Hall is used for social activities, recreational and learning
California Country Park surrounds	Educational	Scout and Guide groups of all ages use a purpose-built scout hut in the grounds for personal development
Sand Martins Golf Course	Recreational	Standard open and membership golf course with clubhouse for social functions
FBC Centre	Recreational	Owned by the Finchampstead Baptist Church, open for public use 6 days per week. Large children's play areas with café. Rooms/halls are used for community activities, learning. 3,500 visits each week. Houses the WBC library and SureStart Children's Centre. Houses the Parish Council Office.
California Ratepayers Hall	Recreational	Hall is used for social activities, recreational and learning
Allotments	Community value and recreational	One set on the south perimeter area of the Parish close to the Blackwater River and Longwater Road.

10.3 Places to do business

Finchampstead Parish includes one core employment area (*as defined by Wokingham Borough Core Strategy - Jan 2010*), being Hogwood Industrial Estate.

Outline consent has also been granted for an extension of Hogwood Industrial Estate (*WBC Consent No. 181194*). This expansion could provide relocation opportunities for any units removed from Greenancre's industrial site.

In addition, there are a number of smaller employment and business sites across the Parish in both rural and semi-rural locations.

Numerous professional/micro businesses and home worker start-ups are known to operate throughout the Parish and in the light of Covid 19 it is anticipated that this type of work will be increasingly popular.

Policy TC1

Supporting Business

1. Development proposals for small employment uses or a mix of uses within Development Locations but outside Core Employment Areas will be supported provided:
 - a. They are appropriate to the character of the area; and
 - b. They do not have an unacceptable impact on nearby residential uses, other employment uses and other uses, including impacts caused by traffic movements, noise, emissions, hours of operation and lighting.
2. Proposals for commercial use within the countryside will be supported where evidence is provided of the genuine need for the proposed business use and where:
 - a. They allow existing buildings to be appropriately converted.
 - b. Existing buildings that are to be replaced or converted are of permanent and substantial construction.
 - c. Such redevelopment of existing buildings is well designed and proportionate in scale, respecting the character of the rural setting.
3. Development proposals which would facilitate home working, including fast broadband connectivity, will be supported.

Policy TC2

Supporting Core Employment Areas

Development proposals which contribute to the safeguarding and retention of employment and enterprise uses in the existing Core Employment Area at Hogwood Industrial Estate and its planned extension will be supported.

10.4 Retail

The retail centre of Finchampstead Parish is a single local centre at California Crossroads incorporating supermarkets, a pharmacy, dentist, restaurants, takeaway food, Post Office and garage.

A new Neighbourhood Centre is proposed as part of the Finchwood Park with outline consent for 500m² of retail space (181194).

There are a number of individual retail businesses located across the Parish (e.g. One Stop, Barkham Ride).

Although major household shopping requirements are met by stores outside of the Parish boundary in Wokingham, Bracknell, Camberley or Reading; the combination of the above retail facilities provide the day-to-day retail needs for the Parish.

Providing a variety of shops, services and facilities, these locations play an essential role in the local community by promoting social interaction and providing places to meet and socialise, whilst reducing the need to travel by car to town or district centres. They form focal points within the Parish, and it is vital that planning decisions support and

enhance the continuing role of these facilities. In particular, substantial improvements to the area around California Crossroads Local Centre will be actively supported and encouraged with the aim of easing pedestrian movements whilst maintaining existing parking.

The second part of Policy TC5 comments about the way in which development proposals that would result in the loss of shops will be determined. The element of the policy on viability will be considered against evidence supplied with individual proposals that genuine sustained efforts to promote, improve and market the facility at a reasonable value have been undertaken.

Policy TC3

Retail Development - California Crossroads

Development proposals at the California Crossroads local centre which would consolidate and strengthen its predominately Use Class E(a) function and allow it to continue to be the focus of the local community will be supported.

Development proposals which would improve the public realm at the California Crossroads local centre will be supported.

Policy TC4

Retail Development - Finchwood Park

Development proposals at Finchwood Park Neighbourhood Centre which would maintain its predominately Class E(a) retail uses and serve the new Finchwood Park community will be supported.

Policy TC5

Protection of Retail Facilities

Development proposals which would consolidate the provision of retail uses and/or which assist with the retention of retail premises will be supported.

Proposals that result in the loss of day-to-day shopping facilities will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated the existing retail use is no longer viable.

Glossary of Terms

Affordable Housing	Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. It does not include low-cost market housing.
Affordable Rented Housing	Rented housing let by registered providers of affordable housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is not subject to the national rent regime but is subject to other rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80 per cent of the local market rent.
Informal built areas	For the purposes of this plan, these are small and informal groups of houses in designated Countryside as distinct from Development Locations
Biodiversity	The variety of life in the world or in a particular habitat or ecosystem.
Brownfield Site	Land that has been previously occupied or used for industrial or manufacturing purposes.
Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method.	A nationally recognised standard for sustainable design and construction.
Community Land Trust	A non-profit organisation that develops and manages affordable housing on behalf of the community.
Conservation Area	An area designated by the Borough Council under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as an area of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
Code for Sustainable Homes	The code sets out levels (1 to 6) specifying the sustainability performance of a house to reduce the environmental impact of homes.
Core Strategy	The Development Plan Document setting out long-term spatial vision and objectives and containing both strategic policies and generic policies which will apply to all development proposals in the district.
Countryside	The development plan designation given to all areas which are outside of Development Locations. The extent is defined on the policies map.
Development Limits	The boundaries of Development Locations. In this plan, to mean the same as Settlement Limits.
Development Locations	Areas identified in the current development plan as areas acceptable for 'major', 'modest' or 'limited' development. These almost wholly coincide with the current main built-up areas of the parish. The only Development Location in the parish designated as 'major' is at Finchwood Park.

Ecohomes	A term which is broadly used to describe any house which puts sustainability or environmental concerns at the forefront of design.
Finchwood Park	An area of the Arborfield Garrison SDL within Finchampstead Parish which will provide c1,500 new houses.
Floodplain/Flood Risk Zones	Flood risk areas identified by the Environment Agency, as high (zone 3), low to medium (zone 2), or little or no risk (zone 1).
Green Belt	Designated land around a town or city to be kept permanently open and where there is a strong presumption against inappropriate development.
Green Wedges	Green wedges comprise the open areas around and between parts of settlements, which maintain the distinction between the countryside and built-up areas, prevent the coalescence (merging) of adjacent places and can also provide recreational opportunities
Infilling	The filling of a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings.
Infrastructure	All the ancillary works and services which are necessary to support human activities, including roads, sewers, schools, hospitals, etc.
Intermediate Affordable Housing	Housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market price or rents. These can include shared equity products (e.g. Home-Buy), other low-cost homes for sale and intermediate rent.
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment	A process by which local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups assess the current and future health, care and wellbeing needs of the local community to inform local decision making.
Key Local Gaps	A term used by the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan to describe locations within the parish that represent the last remaining visible green space between Development Locations or Informal built areas
Lifetime Homes	Guidance incorporating 16 design criteria that can be applied to new homes at minimal cost to add to the comfort and convenience of the home and support the different needs of occupants as they age.
Listed Buildings	Buildings and structures which are listed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport as being of special architectural and historic interest and whose protection and maintenance is the subject of special legislation.
Local Education Authority	The term Local Education Authority is no longer in official use, but it is still sometimes used informally to refer to the department of a local authority that deals with education.
Local Green Spaces	As defined in National Planning Policy Framework Guidance Criteria on Local Green Spaces Para. 100.
(Open) Market Housing	Private housing for rent or for sale, where the price is set in the open market.
Neighbourhood Plan	A plan forming part of the development plan prepared by Town or Parish Councils.
National Planning Policy Framework	A document setting out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Renewable Energy	Energy generated from the sun, wind, oceans, plants, the fall of water, biomass and deep geothermal heat
Revised Growth Strategy	The second version of the Local Plan Update from Wokingham Borough Council, brought forward as a result of the removal of Grazeley Garden Village from the original LPU.
SAMM	Strategic Access Managing and Monitoring
SANG	The acronym of SANG stands for Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space, land set aside to reduce pressure on Special Protection Areas of wildlife habitat. One example is the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area covers over 8,400 hectares of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey.
Settlements	The existing built-up areas of the parish – any reference in this plan means the same as Development Locations.
Social Rented (Affordable) Housing	Rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and registered social landlords, for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime.
Strategic Development Location (SDL)	The location at Arborfield covered by Core Policy 18 of Wokingham Borough Council's Core Strategy.
Strategic Environmental Assessment	Assessments made compulsory by a European Directive (the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive). To be implemented in planning through Sustainability Appraisal of Development Plan Documents.
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	A study to identify sites with potential for housing, assess their housing potential and assess when they are likely to be developed.
Sustainability Appraisal	A process of appraising policies for their social, economic and environmental effects, which must be applied to all Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. See also Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.
Sustainable Drainage Systems	(Previously Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) Management practices and control structures designed to drain surface water in a sustainable manner.

11 Annexes

A. Residents Survey (2016) Summary of Results

i. Executive Summary

The FNDP will be used to guide WBC on how the residents of Finchampstead wish to see the area develop to meet the increasing need for housing, while preserving access to the Countryside and maintaining Green Spaces.

As part of this, a questionnaire was circulated to determine the views of Finchampstead residents on a number of topics including Housing, Green Spaces, Economic Regeneration, and Transport.

Almost a thousand responses were received. The summary points are as follows:

- 1) The central vision that, while housing was needed to meet a growing population it should not encroach on the semi-rural nature of Finchampstead, received overwhelming support.
- 2) The preservation of Green Space and the wish to maintain green Gaps between distinct settlements was seen as paramount, with the most important area identified to be preserved being around Sand Martins, the subject of a recent planning application.
- 3) The single most attractive feature about living in Finchampstead was stated as being the proximity of Green Spaces and the Countryside.
- 4) As to where future housing should be built, the overwhelmingly preference was for this to be on Brownfield sites, while building on Greenfield sites was almost totally rejected.
- 5) When asked to choose the single most important thing that would improve the quality of life in Finchampstead, 'Reducing Traffic' was rated as the highest.
- 6) Because of the semi-rural location, it was not surprising that almost everyone used their car daily. There was little use of public transport, driven in part by people living in semi-rural locations and the infrequent bus services.
- 7) The objective of encouraging planned economic regeneration was well supported, with the preference being for new enterprise to be located on Brownfield sites, and on existing Business Estates.

The full report and results of this survey can be found at: [Survey-2019-Results](#)

B. Area Statistics

i. Context of data

Finchampstead South and North are electoral Wards of WBC. They are also electoral Wards of the Parish Council.

Finchampstead Parish, the area of the NDP, consists of these two wards in their entirety, representing over 90% of the area and population of the Parish. However, the Parish also includes a small area of the borough council electoral Ward of Wokingham Without. This constitutes the Lower Wokingham Ward of the Parish council but as WBC collate data based upon Borough Council electoral Wards, little or no separate data is available for the Lower Wokingham Ward of Finchampstead Parish Council.

The data set is further complicated by the new development of Finchwood Park (in Finchampstead South), expected to consist of some 1,500 dwellings by 2026 but at the time of origin of this plan (end of 2018), less than one hundred had been occupied. Clearly this situation will change rapidly.

Therefore, the data in this section relates to the Finchampstead North & South wards only. Where required elsewhere in this plan, data has been derived from statistics relating to Finchampstead North & South, with careful estimates provided for the remaining 10% represented by Lower Wokingham Ward.

ii. Current Demographics

(Ref: Wokingham Borough Council/ Berkshire Public Health Shared Team JSNA Profile – Jan 2018)

Finchampstead South	Finchampstead North
Pop 5517 (51% females and 49% males)	Pop 5463 (50% females and 50 males)
Average age 42 (median 45)	Average age 40 (median 43)
Average life expectancy m 81.2 f 81.4	Average life expectancy m 84.6 f 85.8
85.6% were born in England	86.5% were born in England
97.6% speak English	97.3% speak English
65.4% Christian faith	64.4% Christian Faith
70.1% are married or cohabit with a member of the opposite sex	73.1% are married or cohabit with a member of the opposite sex
180 widowed people in the ward	192 Widowed people in the Ward
2207 dwellings	2132 dwellings
Pop density 356/sq. km	Pop density 1564/sq. km
68% farmland/natural	100% urban city and town

Figure 13 - 2011 census and ONS estimates 2017

C. History & Heritage

Finchampstead has charted the course of English history in a unique way and has a rich history of continual settlement stretching back from the Iron Age, the Roman occupation of Britain, Saxons, Normans, medieval Britain, the Tudors, the English civil war and through to the modern age. This is evidenced by:

- an ancient Barrow northwest of Warren Lodge
- the Roman road between London and Calleva (Silchester) runs East-West through the Parish and is known locally as the Devil's Highway
- a 12th Century church marking the ancient village centre with its associated hostelry the Queens Oak
- commemorations of the victory at Waterloo in Dukes Ride with its magnificent avenue of Wellingtonia trees

(ref: Landscape Strategy (Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment March 2019))

During the medieval period, this area was part of The Royal Forest of Windsor. This was enclosed in the early half of the 19th century and the last remnants of heaths were replaced by plantations by 1857 and straight rides through this forested landscape (e.g. Nine Mile Ride), were created.

The scenic woodland landscape, close to London, made the heathland a popular setting for country houses surrounded by mostly small ornamental and landscaped parks. Sections of the rides have been suburbanised with kerbs, lighting, signage and roundabouts, but remain characterised by roadside rhododendron 'hedges', and occasional colourful patches of gorse and heather with occasional views into woodland or forestry plantation.

The settlement is largely post-Victorian and includes a high proportion of post-war and modern estate dwellings. Generally, the architecture is unremarkable. The absence of obvious centres of development is notable other than the 12th Century St James' Parish Church and the Elizabethan cottage in Dell Road. The woodland and wetlands provide the focus for recreational use in this area.

The main 'formal' recreation area is California Country Park, first developed in the early 1950s as a holiday camp, which is focused on Longmoor Lake caravan and camping park, visitor centre and café.

St James' Church and Warren Lodge Tumuli (Bronze Age) are points of historical interest sites of relatively small areas, however, are central in the Parish. The old Roman road from London to Silchester (named The Devil's Highway) runs through the Parish and is identified in Simon's Wood, by the Church and on down to the western Parish boundary. The road's agger (earthen embankment) is still visible at locations in Crowthorne and Finchampstead Parishes, and its line is reflected in the alignments of a number of lengths of modern road and track. It is integral with the Footpath network.

There are 28 Listed Buildings in Finchampstead – see Fig 14 below.

Title	Grade
Church of St James'	I
The Queen's Oak	II
Granary in the grounds of land approximately 30 metres to the north of Banisters	II
Stone in the grounds of and approximately 35 metres south-east of Banisters	II
Barn approximately 60 metres north-west of Banisters	II
Old Rectory Cottage	II
Bulloways Farmhouse And Byre	II
East Court and Adjoining Wall	II
Lea Farmhouse	II
West Court	II
Hogwood Farmhouse	II
Granary Approximately 30 Metres South West of Westwood Farmhouse	II
Finchampstead Baptist Church	II
Westwood Farmhouse	II
The Verge	II
THE THATCHED COTTAGE 1313092 Reading Road	II
THE THATCHED COTTAGE 1313097 The Village	II
King's Lodge	II
New Mill	II
Shepperlands Cottage	II
Wall, Approximately 60 Metres North West of The Church of St James	II
Banisters	II*
Westwood Cottage	II
Thatch Cottage	II
Shepperlands Farm	II
Finchampstead War Memorial	II
Roman Buildings E of Wheatlands Manor	
Bell Barrow 160m North-West of Warren Lodge	

Figure 14 - Listed buildings in Finchampstead

D. Housing Needs Assessment

Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2018-36: Housing Needs Assessment Phil Phillips Issue 2 15.05.20

i. Introduction

This Housing Needs Assessment seeks to provide a reliable estimate of housing need during the plan period as part of the evidence base upon which appropriate plans and policies can be based.

Initial attempts were made to extrapolate from the 2011 census results using published birth and death rates to estimate the population of Finchampstead in 2036 as a basis for estimating housing need. However, two features of the Finchampstead population profile made this approach unreliable.

Firstly, as noted in the WBC LPU⁹, *“a large decrease in population occurs in the 15-24 age groups, most likely due to 61% of young adults leaving the borough to study at universities and colleges”*.

Secondly, because most of the housing stock in Finchampstead is 3+ Bedrooms and relatively expensive; most people moving into the area are already established family units. The level of this inward migration depends upon the availability of either new or vacated housing from time to time.

Without reliable data on the age profile of both inward and outward migrants no reliable way was found to model the population growth through to 2036. This finding is consistent with the statement by Locality¹⁰ that *“a single village ... virtually never forms its own housing market and must therefore be assessed in the context of its wider market”*.

We therefore concluded that more robust conclusions could be obtained by using the WBC projections for the housing need in Wokingham¹¹ and calculating the fair proportion of each type of house which Finchampstead should contribute.

ii. Outline

We begin by comparing the population structure and housing stock in Finchampstead and Wokingham to establish that they are sufficiently similar to use the housing needs of the whole of Wokingham to estimate the housing need in Finchampstead.¹²

We then extracted from the Wokingham Housing Needs Analysis¹³ (abbreviated as LHNA) the key findings regarding the overall need, the need for Affordable Homes and the provision required for Older People's Housing.

In conclusion we calculated the proportion of Wokingham's requirement that Finchampstead should fairly contribute and compare this to the housing already planned.

iii. Population¹⁴

In 2011 (which was the date of the last census) the population of Wokingham was 154,380 and of Finchampstead was 11,990. Finchampstead's population was 7.8% of Wokingham's. The age profile of the two areas was broadly similar although Finchampstead has a more pronounced reduction in the 20 – 35 age group.

The average age of the population in Finchampstead is 41.4 and in Wokingham is 39.4.

⁹ Wokingham Borough Council Draft Local Plan Update 2018 – 36 Para 2.15.

¹⁰ Housing Needs Assessment at Neighbourhood Plan Level Pg. 5: Pub: Locality (Undated).

¹¹ Wokingham' in the document refers to Wokingham Borough of which Finchampstead is a part.

¹² “As such, one particularly important consideration is to ...determine the extent to which the neighbourhood diverges from the local authority average.” Locality *ibid* Pg. 5

¹³ Wokingham Borough Local Housing Needs Assessment Pub: Opinion Research Services Jan 2020 (hereafter LHNA).

¹⁴ Source: ONS-2011 Census KS102EW

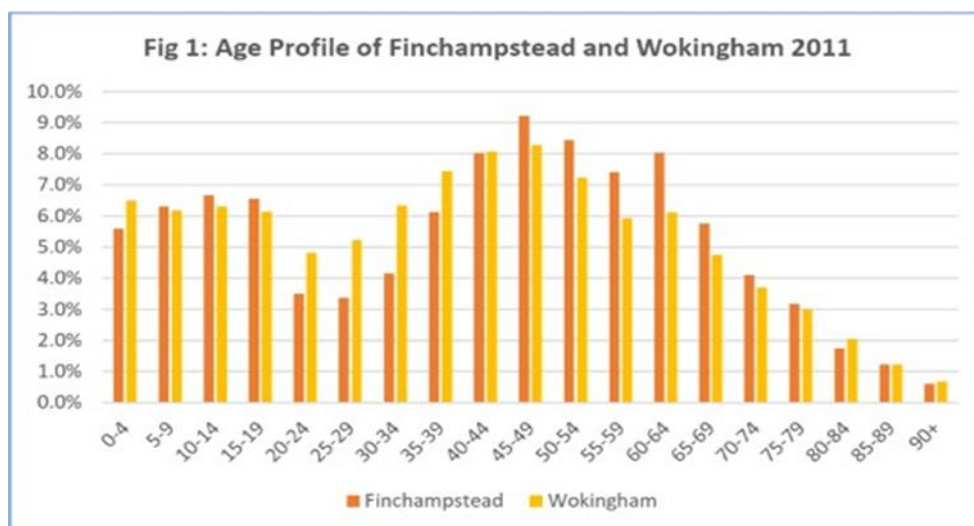


Table 1 - Age profile of Finchampstead and Wokingham - graph

	Finchampstead		Wokingham	
0-4	670	5.6%	10,031	6.5%
5-9	756	6.3%	9,551	6.2%
10-14	800	6.7%	9,740	6.3%
15-19	786	6.6%	9,487	6.1%
20-24	420	3.5%	7,428	4.8%
25-29	403	3.4%	8,071	5.2%
30-34	498	4.2%	9,782	6.3%
35-39	733	6.1%	11,499	7.4%
40-44	962	8.0%	12,460	8.1%
45-49	1,106	9.2%	12,780	8.3%
50-54	1,012	8.4%	11,173	7.2%
55-59	888	7.4%	9,163	5.9%
60-64	963	8.0%	9,426	6.1%
65-69	691	5.7%	7,337	4.8%
70-74	492	4.1%	5,715	3.7%
75-79	381	3.2%	4,637	3.0%
80-84	209	1.7%	3,154	2.0%
85-89	147	1.2%	1,896	1.2%
90+	73	0.6%	1,050	0.7%
Total	11,990		154,380	

Table 2 - Age profile of Finchampstead and Wokingham -data

iv. Housing Stock¹⁵

In 2011 the number of Households¹⁶ in Wokingham was 60,332 and in Finchampstead was 4,582 which is 7.6% of the Wokingham total. The housing stock in Finchampstead was broadly similar to Wokingham's although slightly larger. The average number of bedrooms was 3.6 in Finchampstead and 3.2 in Wokingham.

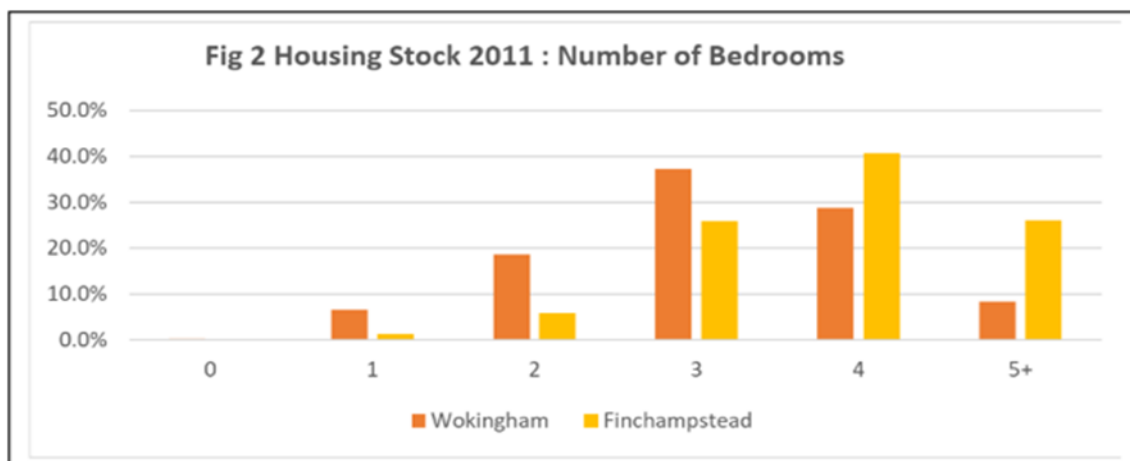


Table 3- Housing Stock – graph

	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
Wokingham	99	3993	11260	22503	17390	5087	3.2
	0.2%	6.6%	18.7%	37.3%	28.8%	8.4%	
Finchampstead	3	217	966	4266	6705	4295	3.6
	0%	1.3%	5.9%	25.9%	40.8%	26.1%	

Table 4- Housing Stock - Data

v. Housing need in Wokingham Borough

We have relied on the LHNA for the following data. The key conclusions regarding housing need in Wokingham are:

1. The minimum Local Housing Need for Wokingham based on standard methodology¹⁷ is 804¹⁸ houses /annum. Over the 18-year period 2018-2036 this would be a total of 14,472 houses.
2. There will be a need for 7255¹⁹ affordable houses in Wokingham during the 18-year period 2018- 2036 which is 50% of the total housing need.
3. The proportion of over 75's is expected to increase significantly during the plan period giving rise to a need for an additional 676 homes²⁰ suitable for Older People during the plan period.

¹⁵ Source: ONS-2011 Census QS411EW

¹⁶ 'Households' excludes Household Spaces that are not usually occupied.

¹⁷ In accordance with the Governments National Planning Practice Guideline

¹⁸ LHNA Fig 1

¹⁹ LHNA Fig 40

²⁰ LHNA Fig 6

vi. Houses already planned

We have identified three significant developments in Finchampstead which are already included in WBC's plan and are scheduled to be built during the plan period:

- a) 1,500 houses in Finchwood Park²¹.
- b) 250 houses in Arborfield Green²² which are within the Finchampstead Boundary.
- c) 80 additional houses arising from the Gorse Ride/Arnett Avenue redevelopment²³.

vii. Conclusions

1. From the above analysis we conclude that although Finchampstead tends to have more families and slightly larger houses than Wokingham; the population profile and housing stock are similar enough to consider Finchampstead a constituent part of Wokingham's housing market. Anecdotal evidence confirms that people move within Wokingham without allegiance to a specific area of the Borough
2. Based on both population and housing stock, Finchampstead accounts for under 8% of the Wokingham total. We therefore conclude that the Housing Need in Finchampstead during the period can fairly be considered to be 8% of Wokingham's
3. The Housing Need in Finchampstead in the period 2018 – 2036 is estimated to be 64²⁴ additional houses each year and a total 1152 during the plan period
4. The need for Affordable Housing in Finchampstead in the period 2018-2036 is estimated to be 580²⁵ which is approximately 50% of the total
5. We estimate that there will be a need for an additional 54²⁶ homes in Finchampstead specifically suitable for Older People in the period 2018 – 2036
6. 1,830²⁷ houses in Finchampstead are scheduled to be built during the plan period including a proportion of Affordable Housing. This exceeds the identified need by nearly 60%

There are further discussions of these conclusions in the main body of this document.

²¹ Figure quoted by L & G in discussion.

²² Estimated by analysis of Plans published by Crest Nicholson

²³ Estimated by counting units shown on drawings presented at Public Consultation

²⁴ i.e., 8% of 804

²⁵ i.e., 8% of 7255 (see Para 3b)

²⁶ i.e., 8% of 676 (see Para 3c)

²⁷ i.e., 1500 + 250 + 80.

E. Estate Agents Survey

Market Research with Wokingham Estate Agents May 2020

As part of the NDP project work, it was decided to obtain the views of local estate agents to tap into their knowledge and experience of the property market in Finchampstead.

i. Methodology

The research methodology was qualitative, via a questionnaire consisting of 12 open-ended questions.

The research took place during April and early May 2020.

Six Wokingham estate agents were selected for inclusion in the survey. They were:

- Michael Hardy
- Prospect
- David Cliff
- Richard Worth
- Romans
- Chancellors

Unfortunately, due to the Covid19 pandemic and 'lockdown', all the estate agents on the target list at that time were closed and so getting through to the right person was very challenging and time consuming. Four Agents were eventually contacted, and they agreed to help with the survey:

- Michael Hardy - Barnaby Styer (Branch Manager)
- Prospects - Daniel White (Branch Manager)
- David Cliff - Luke Strzadala (Branch Manager)
- Richard Worth - Tim Coles (Branch Manager)

After numerous attempts to contact Romans and Chancellors, it was decided that the views expressed by the 4 Estate Agents, would be sufficient.

ii. Estate Agents Telephone Survey - Finchampstead NDP (March 2020) Introduction:

Introduction script

"We are voluntary members of the Finchampstead Parish Neighbourhood Development Planning Group and have been tasked with reviewing housing provision and future demand within the Finchampstead Parish.

To help with our research, we are undertaking meetings with local estate agents to gain expert opinion and insight into why people might want to buy homes and live in Finchampstead.

This meeting should take no more than 30 minutes and we would be happy to share the results when published."

Questionnaire

1. Typically, over say the last 3-6 months, what percentage of all new enquires have been for homes in the Finchampstead area?
2. If you could categorise those property buyers interested in Finchampstead into 4 broad groups: First Time Buyers (FTBs), Small Families, Growing Families and Downsizers (Retirees) – what would be the approximate splits (percentages) of each of these buyer groups?
3. Has this 'buyer profile' been consistent for many years or have you seen any significant changes in this profile?

4. Expanding on Q2 and Q - What type of property is in greatest demand in Finchampstead nowadays? – (prompt) Apartments, 2/3 bed houses, 4/5 bed houses, retirement living properties.
5. In your opinion are there any supply shortages within these broad property groups?
6. Given the choice of either 'second-hand' or 'new-build' homes, are you seeing any preference from potential buyers who are looking to move into the Finchampstead area? Does this vary with buyer type?
7. Has there been any growth in demand for rental properties or affordable homes, such as shared ownership, in Finchampstead?
8. How do property prices in Finchampstead compare with say Wokingham, Barkham and Crowthorne?
9. In your opinion, what are the main reasons that buyers or renters consider Finchampstead as their place to live?
10. When potential buyers or renters turn down properties in Finchampstead, other than for price / specification / suitability – What are the main reasons?
11. In your opinion what could the Parish do to encourage people to move to Finchampstead?

iii. Summary of key responses

1. Based on the responses from **Questions 2 and 3**, the properties in greatest demand are 2/3 bedroom houses and 4/5 bedroom houses i.e., to satisfy the demand for both small and growing families. The demand for family homes in Finchampstead has remained consistent for the last 10 to 20 years or more. In percentage terms, the demand for family homes accounts for approximately 80% of the property mix.
Many families that live in Finchampstead have done so for many years and many have traded up to larger properties within Finchampstead. Children that have grown up in Finchampstead also return and buy houses in the area.
The demand for first-time buyer properties and retirement properties accounts for around 20%. But this fact should not come as a surprise, as there has been few first-time buyer or retirement properties built in Finchampstead in recent times.
2. Based on **Question 4**, the properties in greatest demand are 4 bedroom detached houses on developments built in the last 30 to 35 years e.g., Deerhurst Manor Park and Carolina Place plus, 4/5-bedroom individual / non-estate properties located on Nine Mile Ride, Kiln Ride and Heath Ride.
3. Based on **Question 5**, There is no real shortage of properties across the broad housing mix with perhaps the exception of retirement properties but demand for this type of property is low. The reason is twofold:
 - a. A general level of resistance to downsize into say a communal retirement home but in the case of Finchampstead – there is a lack of appropriate amenity; Finchampstead does not offer a high street that can be walked to.
 - b. The lack of good public transport was also cited.

Wokingham Town Centre and Crowthorne, however, are much better placed and there are good examples of retirement properties e.g., the recently built McCarthy and Stone development on Dukes Ride. All the agents said that they like taking instructions on typical 4-bedroom estate properties and the bigger 4/5 non-estate properties.
4. Based on **Question 6**, a proportion of buyers do ask for new-build properties but the scale of this is such that it is not a major blocker in wanting to buy a property in Finchampstead. In recent years there has been limited numbers of new-build properties on offer in Finchampstead, when compared to other parts of Wokingham (now changing with Finchwood Park). As there is a lack of new-build in Finchampstead, buyers must buy second hand.
Specification (number of bedrooms), garden size and price therefore, become more important. Demand for one off / individual (large 4/5) new-build homes, however, has been strong. Aborfield Green is proving to be very popular as it offers a good range of new-build properties and

especially family homes; with developers offering incentives such as Help to Buy. The new Bohunt School is also a major draw for families.

5. There has always been good demand for rental properties in Finchampstead with most of this being for family properties. Younger renters prefer to be in Wokingham town centre and closer to the station and amenities. Many families renting in Finchampstead go on to buy in Finchampstead. There are not many shared ownership homes in Finchampstead (if any) but there has been growth in this tenure over the last 5 years at the large new-build sites on the outskirts of Wokingham - required by the developers to gain planning consent. E.g., Emmbrook Place, Mulberry Grove and Montague Park.
6. The price points quoted by defined property type e.g., 2/3 bed houses, 4/5 bed houses by all 4 estate agents were broadly similar but when comparing Finchampstead pricing with Wokingham there were some differences of opinion.
Wokingham is more expensive than Finchampstead. Finchampstead, Crowthorne and Barkham are generally on a par with each other. Although 2 Agents stated that Crowthorne commands a premium over Finchampstead and this is due to the provision of greater amenity – a high street and a secondary school. The same is true for Wokingham town centre properties.
7. Based on **Question 10**, the main reasons that buyers or renters want to live in Finchampstead are: the open spaces, green areas, woodland, California Country Park, schools (infant and junior), local shops, good medical centre, low crime rate, community and village feel. It is generally quieter than the town.
8. Based on **Question 11**, the main reason why buyers or renters reject Finchampstead are the of lack of amenities and good quality public transport. There is no high street and the facilities at the California Crossroads are limited and 'dated'. The lack of a good secondary school is also an issue but, the new Bohunt School in Arborfield, is now providing parents with an option. Families with teenage children like to be close to the town and to the secondary schools (walking distance). The same applies for FTB's and retirees who want proximity to transport and amenity.
9. Based on **Question 12**, the main things to improve are public transport, reduction in traffic congestion and upgrade to the amenity and 'look' at California Crossroads. Improve broadband speed.

Finchampstead has so many positive attributes that they outweigh many of the negatives.

'To be honest very little – you cannot please or cater for everyone'

"I am not sure about this one; the schools are great – both public and private and the shops at the crossroads, more than serve a purpose. The Country Park and the FBC are also mentioned positively, by potential buyers. However, for first-time buyers and retirees, the proximity to a high street or a railway station is preferable and so Wokingham town centre or Crowthorne is a stronger option".

The following suggestion was also proffered: *"Build a secondary school, build a supermarket; but then you would spoil the appeal of Finchampstead"*

iv. Conclusion

The housing type in greatest demand in Finchampstead is properties for families. Small and growing family accommodation accounts for approximately 80% - this typically includes 2/3 bedroom and 4/5-bedroom homes built by volume builders or individual properties either built new or redeveloped from older housing stock.

The property built in Finchampstead since the 1970s has generally catered for this market.

Provision for first-time buyers and retirement living homes in Finchampstead, however, is more limited and demand for this type of accommodation accounts for only a combined 20%. The main reasons cited are lack of amenity and proximity to amenity that a high street would offer. Wokingham and Crowthorne are considered to offer a better choice for FTB's and retirees. It would also be fair to say that little or no suitable housing has been built in Finchampstead, to accommodate these two groups of buyers.

The same would be true with regards to the provision of affordable homes and social rented accommodation.

As the volume of new-build homes constructed in Finchampstead has been minimal in recent years, the choice available to buyers has been limited to very small developments or one-off new-builds. Those wanting to buy new, have opted for homes built on the new estates on the outskirts of Wokingham and Crowthorne, where there is a wide choice of accommodation and developer promoted incentives, such as Help to Buy.

Arborfield Green is providing a great range of new-build property options for both first-time buyers and families. Incentives are also helping to drive demand. The new Bohunt School is also cited as another pull for families.

The main reasons why people choose to live in Finchampstead (families in particular) are the green spaces and woodland areas and the community feel of a village. Amenities are generally considered to be adequate although the FBC, the Finchampstead Medical Centre and the local infant and junior schools are considered very good.

Things to improve include the look of the rather dated area at California Crossroads. Other things to improve include road congestion, public transport and faster broadband to support greater home working.

FTB's and retirees are already catered for with property choices on the new developments including Arborfield Green as well as central Wokingham and Crowthorne that have high streets and proximity to railway stations.

F. Definition/Designation of ‘Countryside’ in the Local Plan Update

Areas within the solid black lines around areas of settlement are designated as Development Areas. The area outside of these lines is designated as 'Countryside' by Wokingham Borough Council.

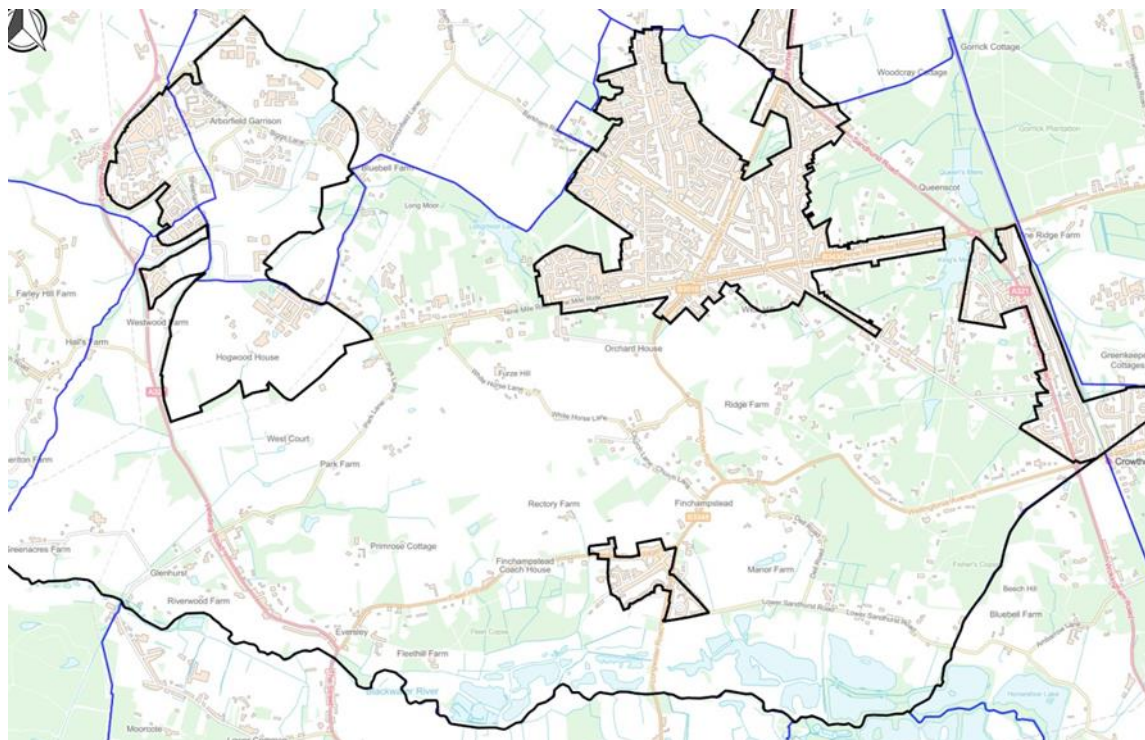


Figure 15 - Development Locations

WBC's Core Strategy 2010 (CP 11) covers Development in the Countryside. It sets out a presumption that development will generally not be permitted except as provided for by this policy. It uses the Key Diagram above in defining what is 'countryside'. The policy is:

i. WBC Policy SS13: Development in the Countryside

The countryside, as defined on the policies map, will continue to be recognised for its intrinsic character and beauty in accordance with national policy.

Development proposals will generally not be permitted except for the types of development set out below:

- a) Rural exception housing in accordance with Policy H6; or
- b) Development in accordance with a made Neighbourhood Plan; or
- c) Gypsies and Travellers or Travelling Showpeople accommodation in accordance with Policy H12; or
- d) Rural workers' accommodation in accordance with Policy H7; or
- e) Small scale development which contributes to a diverse and sustainable rural economy in accordance with Policy ER4; or
- f) Low carbon & renewable energy generation schemes in accordance with Policy DH10; or
- g) Residential extensions which do not lead to inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building; or
- h) Replacement buildings which would bring about environmental improvement and would be of an appropriate scale, form or footprint; or
- i) Development for agriculture and forestry; or
- j) Development for outdoor sports and recreation; or
- k) The provision of essential community facilities which cannot be located within settlement limits; or
- l) The redevelopment of brownfield land provided this respects the rural character of the surroundings and would not lead to a proliferation of development into the countryside; or

- m) Essential utilities including development for transport infrastructure, waste and cemeteries; or
- n) Minerals development in accordance with relevant policies in the Minerals and Waste Plan; or
- o) Waste development in accordance with relevant policies in the Minerals and Waste Plan.
- p) All development proposals within the countryside will be required to:
 - a. Recognise and respect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and
 - b. Not lead to the physical, visual or perceived coalescence of existing settlements; and
 - c. Not lead to isolated development of dwellings; and
 - d. Maximise any opportunities to make the location more sustainable; and
 - e. Have no unacceptable adverse impacts on highway safety; and
 - f. Maximise opportunities to improve public access to the countryside; and
 - g. Achieve net biodiversity gains (through providing new habitats where possible) in accordance with Policy NE1, where appropriate.

Also of importance is what Policy SS1: Spatial Strategy says in relation to separation between settlements.

ii. WBC Policy SS1: Spatial Strategy

The following is an excerpt from the WBC Core Strategy – Spatial Strategy

New growth will be balanced by ensuring that Wokingham Borough's identified development needs can be met with adequate provision of infrastructure, in a manner that enables improvements to quality of life, reduces the need to travel, adapts to and mitigates against the impacts of climate change to achieve a 'carbon neutral' future, and maintains and strengthens the sense of place, including the role and separate identity of settlements.

The following actions will help to achieve this:

The salient point for this reference is subsection n:

- 1.1 n) Limit development on sites that would unacceptably reduce the perceived physical and visual separation of settlements.

The full policy can be found at: [Wokingham Borough Council – Core Strategy](#)

G. Social Housing locations in Finchampstead

Vicarage Close	4
Barkham Ride	6
Woodside	11
Firs Close	38
Dart Close ²⁸	19
Billing Avenue	44
Whittle Close	17
Orbit Close	23
Gorse Ride South	14
Arnett Avenue	43
Longwater Road	2
Woodmoor	8
The Village	3
Roycroft Lane	36
Ditchfield Lane	18

Total = 286 (Finchampstead North = 54 and Finchampstead South = 232)

²⁸ Numbers quoted for Dart Close, Billing Avenue, Orbit Close, Firs Close, Whittle Avenue and Arnett Avenue are subject to ongoing change due to the regeneration of the Gorse Ride Estate

H. Gypsy and Traveller Sites

- 23a Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead RG40 4QD
- The Orchard, 88a Reading Road Finchampstead, RG40 4RA
- Hogwood Meadows Park Lane, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 4PT
- Honeysuckle Lodge Honeysuckle Lodge, Commonfield Lane, Barkham, Wokingham, RG40 4PR Littlemore Plot 1 Park Lane, Finchampstead, RG40 4PT
- Littlemore Plot 2 Park Lane, Finchampstead, RG40 4PT
- Land South Side Lower Sandhurst Road. Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 3TH Meadowside Plot 1 Park Lane, Finchampstead, RG40 4PT
- Meadowside Plot 2, Park Lane, Finchampstead, RG40 4PT Land adjacent to The Finches, Commonfield Lane, RG40 4PR The Promise 166 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, RG40 4JA Summerleigh Park Lane, Finchampstead, RG40 4PY
- Twin Oaks Longwater Lane Finchampstead Wokingham Berkshire RG40 4NX

As a percentage overall:

Twyford has one council site of 20 pitches	16%
Hurst has one council site of 15 pitches plus 2 private with 1 pitch	12%
Arborfield has 2 private sites with 20 pitches between them	16%
Finchampstead has 12 sites with 21 pitches between them	17%
Barkham has 2 sites with 11 pitches between them	9%
Riseley has 1 site with 3 pitches	2%
Wokingham Without has 1 site with 4 pitches	3%
Charvil has 1 site with 4 pitches	3%
Sindlesham has 1 site and 4 pitches	3%
Ruscombe has 1 site and 3 pitches	2%

I. Roads with 'Rides' Characteristics

- Nine Mile Ride
- Heath Ride
- Soldiers Rise
- Lower Wokingham Road
- Sandhurst Road
- Lower Sandhurst Road
- The Village
- Finchampstead Road
- Barkham Ride
- Nashgrove Lane

J. Designated Local Green Spaces

These Green Spaces are integral to the values of the Parish communities and a summary is set out below:

- St James' Church including part of the conservation area, Church Lane, Finchampstead (LGS1)
- Warren Wood Country Park, Warren Lane, Finchampstead (LGS2)
- Burnmoor Meadow, Longwater Road, Finchampstead (LGS3)
- Shepperlands Farm, Park Lane, Finchampstead (LGS6)
- Finchampstead Memorial Park and Leas field The Village, Finchampstead (LGS8)
- FBC/Gorse Ride Playing Fields, Gorse Ride North, Finchampstead (LGS10)
- The Moors, Waverley Way, Finchampstead (LGS11)
- Woodmoor play area, Woodmoor, Finchampstead (LGS12)
- Gorse Ride Woods play area, Whittle Close, Finchampstead (LGS13)

The detailed case for designation for each of these is set out in the accompanying [Topic Paper – Local Green Spaces](#).

K. Outstanding Views

The Parish possesses important linear Outstanding views from the vantage points of the Ridges and St James Church surrounds with limited scope for mitigation without damage to their character: set out on Figure 16 below.

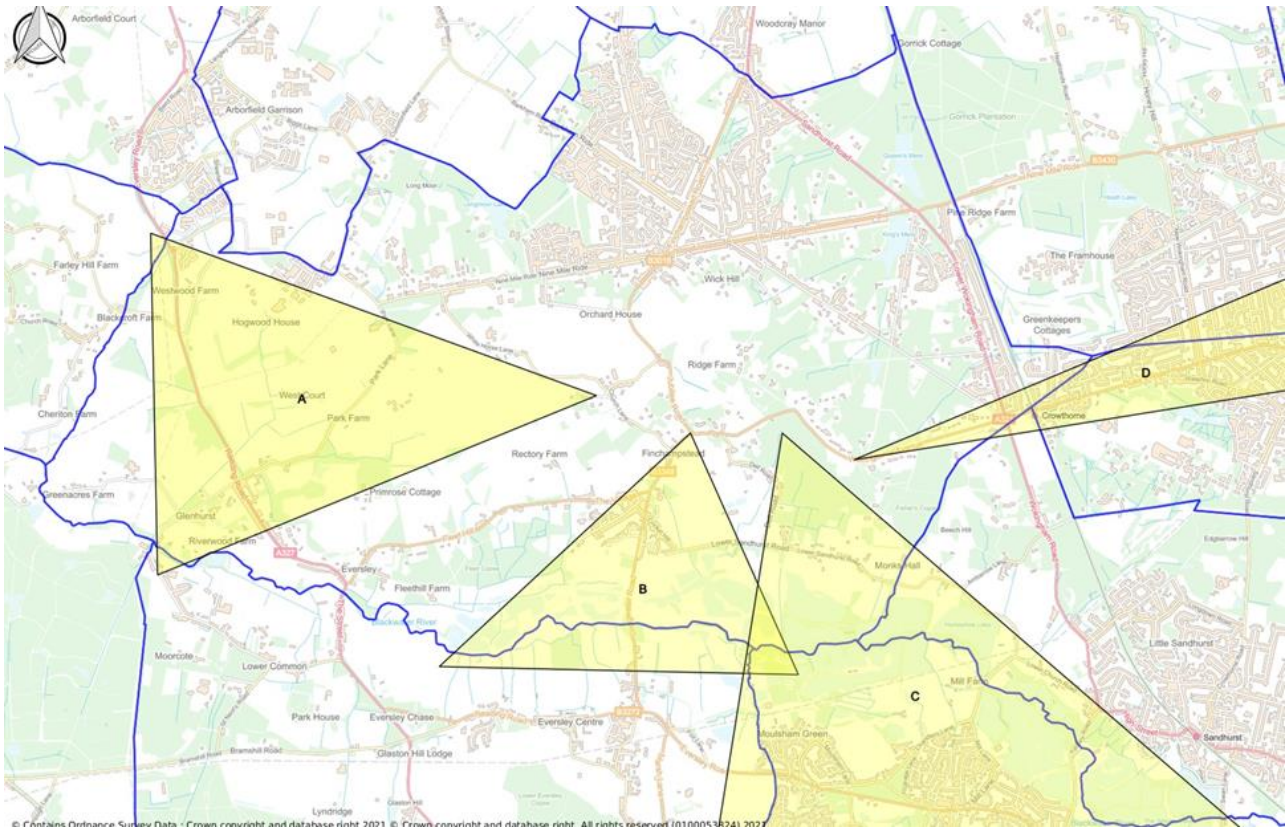


Figure 16 - Location of Outstanding Views

- i. Outlining in yellow shading the outstanding viewpoints in Finchampstead – viewed from their apex at the centre of the map.

Finchampstead is an intimate landscape with a sense of tranquillity and feels remote from settlements with many landscape features of interest ([Topic Paper – Local Green Spaces](#)). It is important that the views are not eroded by development. The western part of the Parish is agricultural where the settlement density is very low with houses and farmsteads dotted about accessed through narrow roads. It retains a peaceful rural character and the outstanding views within the Parish need to be protected.

- ii. Outstanding View A – Looking west from below St James Church over Banisters and the Blackwater Valley towards Farley Hill over pasture, listed buildings and footpaths.



Figure 17 - Outstanding View A

The area is made up from open land of meadows, paddocks, hedgerows, and copses incorporating a stretch of the Devil's Highway and forms the central tranche of the western view from St James Church up to Farley Hill.

Included is the Roman Aisled Villa Scheduled Monument, 16th Century Listed Building at Banisters and 17th Century Listed building at West Court.

Then there is the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust site at Shepperlands, Agates Farm and views across to Fleet Copse and through to The Leas by the Blackwater. There are stretches of flat open farmland adjacent to the Blackwater Valley reserves and walks. It includes the Blackwater Ford at Old Mill. This forms a key gap between the new Arborfield major development and the west and central Finchampstead settlements.

iii. Outstanding view B - South from War Memorial over Blackwater Valley



Figure 18 - Outstanding View B

The outstanding view from the War Memorial looks South over the Manor Farms to the Blackwater Valley and on to distant Blackbushe and Hogs Back upland areas.

The War Memorial sits on a small piece of land with an adjacent seating area located at the eastern edge of the old Village and St James Church Conservation Zone.

The War Memorial is a grade 2 Listed Site and is a stopping point for walkers coming up from Eversley into Finchampstead and onto the network of footpaths. The land down the escarpment is farmed then transfers into planned new conservation areas by the Blackwater Valley.

iv. Outstanding View C- South from The Ridges to Hartley Wintney and the Farnham Hills



Figure 19 – View C2 - Brass map atop the triangulation point



Figure 20 - View C1 - Triangulation point at the highest point on the Ridges



Figure 21 – Outstanding View C - View South from the Ridges

Seats are located at the top of the Ridges escarpment at 4 positions on promontories, they encompass a broad vista across the Blackwater Valley, Moor Green Lakes and Horseshoe lakes to the distant hills at Farnham.

The locations are designated as part of two set walks by National Trust, Ramblers Association and the surrounding Local Authorities which promote the Ridges Ramble, the three sites walk with Ambarrow Hill and Simon's Wood. Also, the footpaths link with Moor Green Lakes, into Ambarrow and on to Crowthorne woods. These walks are published in external books and on-line.

v. Outstanding View D- East from The Ridges down Wellingtonia to Wildmoor and Caesars Camp



Wellingtonia Avenue is a set of protected trees with firm historical value. The Avenue forms part of the Rides structure in the Parish that stems from the Hunting Lodge time of Queen Anne leading from Windsor. The view eastwards into Wildmoor and Caesars Camp links Finchampstead with Crowthorne and Crown Land north of Sandhurst Academy.

Figure 22- Outstanding View D - Wellingtonia Avenue

L. Summary of Key Parish Landscape

(Ref: Landscape Strategy (Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment March 2019))

1. An elevated landscape rising to 90m comprising a shelving plateau, underlain by acidic sands. The infertile sandy soils influence land cover and ecological character. The Ancient village centre comprising St James's Church and the Queens Oak provide views in all directions from near this high point which are important characteristics to retain.
2. Large swathes of interconnected forestry and woodland dominate the area, which has little farmland. These consist of large coniferous plantations as well as mixed woodlands with sandy heaths. Stands of Scots Pine and exotic species are particularly distinctive.
3. A number of large lakes, including Longmoor Lake, King's Mere and Queen's Mere, originally excavated in late 19th century for brick making, now form a focus for recreation.
4. The underlying heathland character typifies areas of woodland clearings such as California Country Park and adjacent to roads.
5. Rich semi-natural habitats associated with the poorly draining acidic soils including acid grassland, dry and wet heathland, wet woodland and large acidic lakes or meres surrounded by wetland, some of which are nationally important SSSIs: e.g. Longmoor Bog and Heath Lake.
6. Long straight roads such as Nine Mile Ride give a strong linear character to the landscape. Characterised by roadside rhododendron 'hedges' and occasional colourful patches of gorse and heather.
7. Strong settlement character, with a low-density pattern of detached houses lining the historic rides, which have provided a framework for settlement. Residential properties of relatively unremarkable post-war and modern suburban character in a variety of styles.
8. Good public accessibility including formal parks such as California Country Park, local nature reserves (including Longmoor Bog and Heath Lake) and areas of open access Forestry Commission land (such as Gorrick Plantation) connected by a network of bridleways and footpaths.
9. Localised area of remoteness within woodlands and smaller areas of pasture, mire and heath, which provide a sense of tranquility.
10. A highly enclosed landscape created by the often-continuous swathes of dense woodland, except for framed views along the rides. The area also contains seven Wildlife Heritage Sites, the majority of which are lakes and open heath surrounded by mixed woodland. These acid woodlands are characterised by birch, pine, oak and sweet chestnut.

The Perpetual Landscape is interconnected rides. Subsequent infill of the intervening areas with settlement gives the perception of an area considerably more settled than is actually the case with an impression of extended linear ribbon development along roads. (Ref: WBC LCA M1.12 and M1.13)

Away from the areas of settlement, the landscape demonstrates a strong sense of enclosure and remoteness, with views afforded by the often-continuous swathes of large woodland, except for vistas along the historic rides, including views from this area up the avenue of giant redwoods on Wellingtonia Avenue.

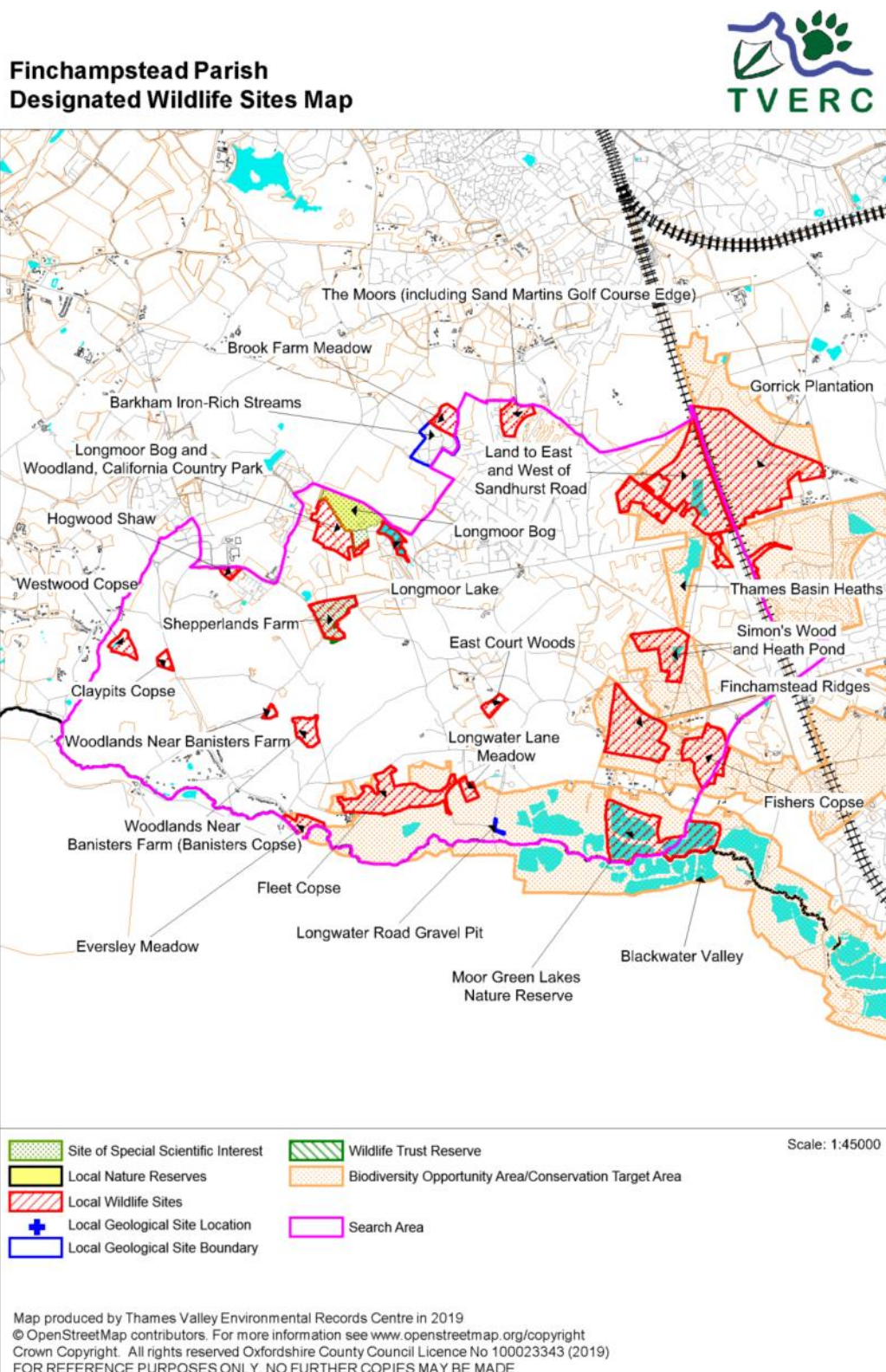
(Reference WBC LCA M2.)

(Reference [Topic Paper – Local Green Spaces](#))

M. TVERC Report and Parish Designated Wildlife

For the full TVERC report, please use the link <https://www.finchampstead-pc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/TVERC.19.236-Finchampstead-Parish-Biodiversity-Report.pdf>

Figure 23- Designated Wildlife Sites



N. Frameworks for Policy Guidance – Natural Environment

i. Overview of Finchampstead Natural Environment and Landscape

Finchampstead Parish comprises some 18.7 sq. kms (1,870 Hectares) with a spectrum of green spaces of ecological value, historical and Outstanding views, community access and use and green corridors all generating an integral part of the Parish footprint in a sustainable and balanced environment. The green spaces are shared in ownership between Local Authority, Charities: National Trust and Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust and private land. All contribute to the continuing quality in maintenance and protection.

The Parish has just on 60% as identifiable green space including open agricultural land with another 21% as large garden areas in low density housing. Finchampstead has recognised ecological sites in The Ridges, Simon's Wood, Wellingtonia Sequoia Redwoods, Shepperlands, Warren Tumuli, Moor Green Lakes and Longmoor Bog, a 39% tree canopy cover (Ref: WDVTA i-tree Report) along with a 41.8 km open access footpath network, all contributing to the pattern of four distinct settlements linked by green spaces.

The topography of Finchampstead offers an undulating landscape with a church hilltop setting and an escarpment in the southern part creating outstanding viewpoints. The views overlook the Blackwater Valley Nature reserves both south and west, to distant Hogs Back and round to Hannington in Hampshire. Finchampstead is an area of natural acid grassland and heathland habitats.

ii. Frameworks for Policy Guidance

I. Protection and Enhancement of Local Green Spaces

The objective of an NDP is to retain the Green Spaces features that make Finchampstead an attractive place to live. These Green Spaces help to retain the feel of a rural village and maintain the importance historic heritage.

Under the National Planning Policy Framework, NDPs have the opportunity to designate Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to the local community. This will afford protection from development other than in very special circumstances. The National Planning Policy Framework (Rev Feb 2019 Para 100) states that Local Green Spaces should only be designated:

- Where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves
- Where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility or richness in its wildlife
- Where a green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land

The areas marked on [Figure 8](#) of the report are noted as of significant importance to the community of Finchampstead and are in need of protection as meeting the criterion of Local Green Space designation as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

II. National Planning Policy Framework

The revised National Planning Policy Framework, published in 2019, states in paragraph 1.72 that, *'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: ...protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality)'* (para 170.a)

...recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland ...' (para 170.b).

III. The European Landscape Convention

The European Landscape Convention (ELC) came into force in the UK in March 2007. It establishes the need to recognise landscape in law; to develop landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and planning of landscapes; and to establish procedures for the participation of the general public and other stakeholders in the creation and implementation of landscape policies.

The ELC definition of 'landscape' recognises that all landscapes matter, be they ordinary, degraded or outstanding: *"Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors"*

IV. WBC Landscape Character Assessment Survey

WBC completed a full Landscape Character Assessment Survey in 2019: part reference to Finchampstead: see Annex 1 for Extract Report. The observations and recommendations were to conserve and restore all remnant heathland habitats by linking the existing sites. Wooded heaths, local ponds increasing tree planting are key to the solution. The Green Spaces are to be protected and developed.

Actions with the National Trust, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust and WBC has made steps to achieve this objective: some examples being the development of California Country Park with the SSI Longmoor Bog, National Trust major works to clear invasive vegetation, improve the ecology and access through the sites, and recovery from extraction sites to a nature reserve environment status.

To date the development of habitation has been in reasonable harmony with the natural environment green spaces albeit there is noticeable growing pressure for displacement. The NDP wishes to preserve the features of the landscape that distinguish it as a successful balanced environment with good biodiversity (measure of the variety organisms present in different ecosystems).

V. Wokingham Biodiversity Action Plan 2014

part reference to Finchampstead: see Annex 2 for Extract Report

The report sets out the aims, a local perspective and incorporates the relevant Legislation:

- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- Local Government Act section 4
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC)

The research, analysis and recommendations cover communities, woodlands, grasslands, wetlands and heathlands: all highly relevant to Finchampstead. This Report embraces the aims of the WBC Biodiversity Report and incorporates the aims into the development of outcomes for the FNDP.

VI. Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre Report 2019:

(See [Annex M - http://www.tverc.org/cms/](http://www.tverc.org/cms/))

The Report is based on a set of observations taken over many years reporting on the incidence of Protected and Notable Species. The biodiversity in Finchampstead is well established across the spectrum of the TVERC Report, many within the NERC-S41 category to preserve the biodiversity of the area.

The observation period demonstrates a longevity in the presence of the species with over 232 distinct species. There are 4 species that are classified as in need of plans to ensure protection and habitat provision: Great Crested Newt, Stag Beetles, Bats (all) and Sand Lizard. [Figure 23](#) indicates areas of Designated Wildlife.

The Report is not exclusive to the presence of other or new species, it is a record of observations over time. Note: Authorities and managers of protected sites such as National Trust and Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust have carried out surveys in a similar format and over long periods of time that complement and add to

the TVERC Report.

The Invasive Species noted are, and have been, the subject of positive action plans to remove from the landscape: good progress to date.

VII. The Lawton Report 2010

The Lawton Report 2010 identified action plans to help alleviate a decline in biodiversity with a reference to:

‘Enhancing connections between, or join up, sites either through physical corridors, or through ‘steeping stones’

‘Reduce the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment including through buffering wildlife sites’

There is a requirement for communities be active and involved to support and promote the local biodiversity.

Protection is needed for heathlands, wetlands, grasslands and hedgerows, to be valued and appreciated as part of our natural heritage

There is a requirement for communities be active and involved to support and promote the local biodiversity.

VIII. Wokingham Borough BAP 2014

From the Wokingham Borough BAP 2014, there is a requirement for communities be active and involved to support and promote the local biodiversity. Local Nature Reserves and urban natural green spaces at least match the Natural England recommendations based on a population of 175,366 by 2029.

O. Framework for Policy Guidance – Traffic and Rights of way

i. National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework is intrinsic to the matter of traffic planning for both strategy and policy through the potential gain or loss of the valued aspects by the residents of Finchampstead.

The revised National Planning Policy Framework, published in 2021, states in paragraph 174 that, '*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment...*'

ii. Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2019

Reference is made to the Wokingham Borough LPU 2019 in strategy and Policies C1, C2 and C3 which are set out in Annex 1 and Core Strategy CP10. Proposals for new developments should show how they meet the listed criteria in mitigating the impact of traffic on the environment and safety.

iii. Research Information Sources

- Department of Transport Vehicle Licencing Statistics 2018: Annual Report- Data Tables RAC Foundation car ownership rates per Local Authority: Census 2011
- Finchampstead Parish Council Road Safety in Finchampstead: data gathering methodology Department of Transport: Road Use Statistics UK 2016
- British Horse Society Wokingham Report November 2019 Finchampstead Residents NDP Survey October 2019

P. Traffic Flow Analysis

Data is drawn from Finchampstead Parish Council records taken at roadside using specialised equipment (SDR and SID). Modelling uses records taken Tuesday to Thursday with peak movement hours morning and evening. There is no separation of private and commercial vehicles.

Important Note: the traffic volumes do vary at different zones for each arterial road as junctions in this report feed in and out of the road. The figures used represent fairly a consistent level for subsequent analysis and comment.

iv. Data Research Summary

Total vehicle movements per day (000)

- 2010/13 - 54.2
- 2015 - 51.9
- 2018/19 - 55.0

- North/South per day - 32.0
- East/West per day - 23.0

Peak times,

- 1 hour in the morning - 3.1
- 1 hour in the evening - 2.9 (indicates flexible/longer hours)

Car per household: 1.63 - 1.70 (*WBC figs, no figs for Finchampstead*)

Speed between 8 – 12% above limit consistently: Reduction on NMR in 2017 had limited effect

Growth in housing 2010 – 2019 Finchampstead: 5.40%

Growth in traffic 2010 – 2019 all roads: 1.54%

v. Sources

- Dept of Transport Vehicle Licencing Statistics 2018 and Road Use Statistics 2016
- Finchampstead Parish Council Road Safety Data gathering SID and SDR
- WBC RoW Improvement Plan 2020 -2030

Arterial Road Figures drawn from direct observation recording equipment Tuesday to Thursday	Traffic vehicle per day 2010 (2013) Av Speed Speed Limit	Traffic vehicle per day 2010 (2013) Av Speed Speed Limit	Traffic vehicle per day 2010 (2013) Av Speed Speed Limit	Morning 08:00- 09:00 Directio n N/S/E/W	Evening 17:00- 18:00 Directio n N/S/E/W	
A327 Reading RoadWest Parish running north/south Feeds Reading/Fleet routes and M4	12,081 45.1 40	11,494 43.9 40	12,485 42.0 40	574 N 727 S	651 N 581 S	
B3016 Finchampstead Road Central Parish running north/south Feeds Wokingham	7,249 44.1 40	7,353 44.0 40	7,329 43.2 40	390 N 403 S	725 N 353 S	Major filters at California crossroad
A321 Sandhurst/Lower Wokingham Road East Parish running north/south Feeds Wokingham and Camberley	11,032 45.6 40	10,796 45.2 40	12,085 44.5 40	673 N 537 S	490 N 751 S	Filters in/out NM Ride
B3340 Nine Mile RideCentral Parish running east/west Feeds Reading/ Bracknell and M3	9,877 41.3 40	9,321 39.2 40	9,333 37.9 30 (Oct 2017)	485 E 357 W	400 E 473 W	Major filters at Sandhurst Road
B3348 Ridges to Village South Parish running east/west Feeds local traffic to Yateley and NW Hants	4,973 (in 2013) 54.5 50	4,909 55.0 50	5,165 55.4 50	383 E 245 W	263 E 225 W	Filters at Longwater Lane
Urban Network Barkham Ride	8,974 35.6 30	8,062 37.8 30	8,624 36.3 30	250 E 576 W	491 E 305 W	Urban traffic and cut through to Lower Earley/M4
Total Vehicle Movements Daily	54,186	51,935	55,021			

Table 5 - Arterial Road Traffic Movements

Q. Parish Rights of Way and Arterial Roads

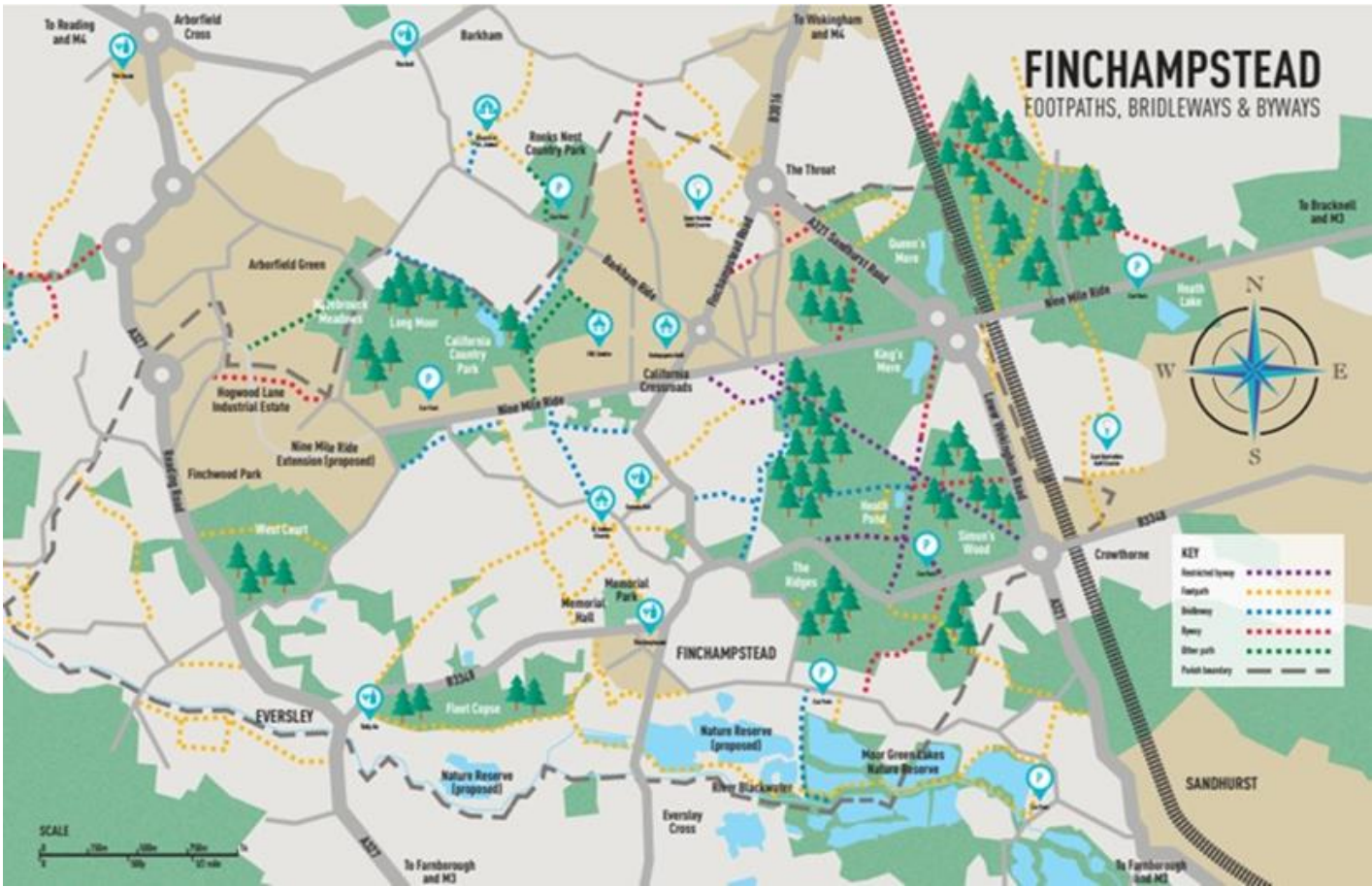


Figure 24 - Parish Rights of Way and Arterial Roads

R. Rights of Way Network with Adjoining Parishes

i. Crowthorne, Sandhurst and Yateley

From Simon's Wood there is direct access to public transport at Crowthorne Railway Station with connections to Reading and Guildford. At this point, there are onward footpaths that lead into Ambarrow Hill and Ambarrow Court through to Sandhurst Town and into Camberley main roads.

There is safe access to St Michaels Junior School for children. For walkers, there is a designed 3 Sites walk for some 8 kms to connect Simon's Wood, The Ridges with Ambarrow, this walk can be extended into Moor Green and Horseshoe Lakes making the three parishes connected in leisure.

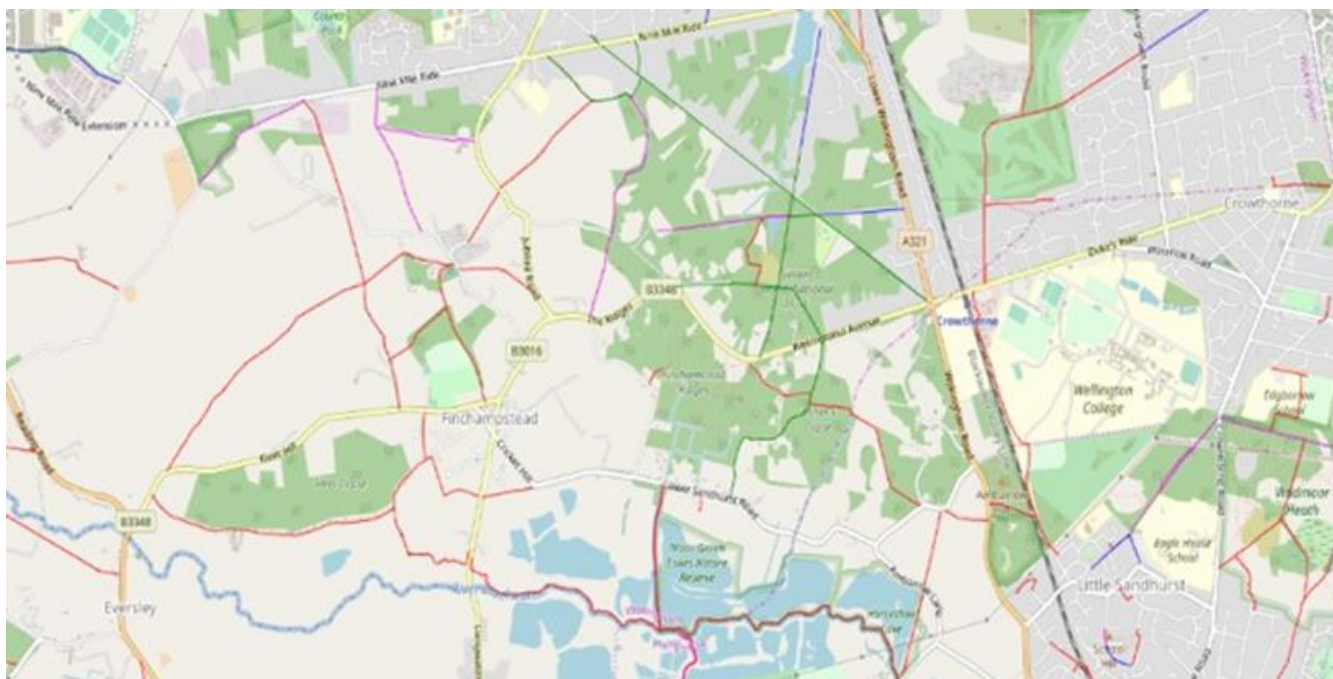


Figure 25 – Rights of Way South-East: Crowthorne and Sandhurst

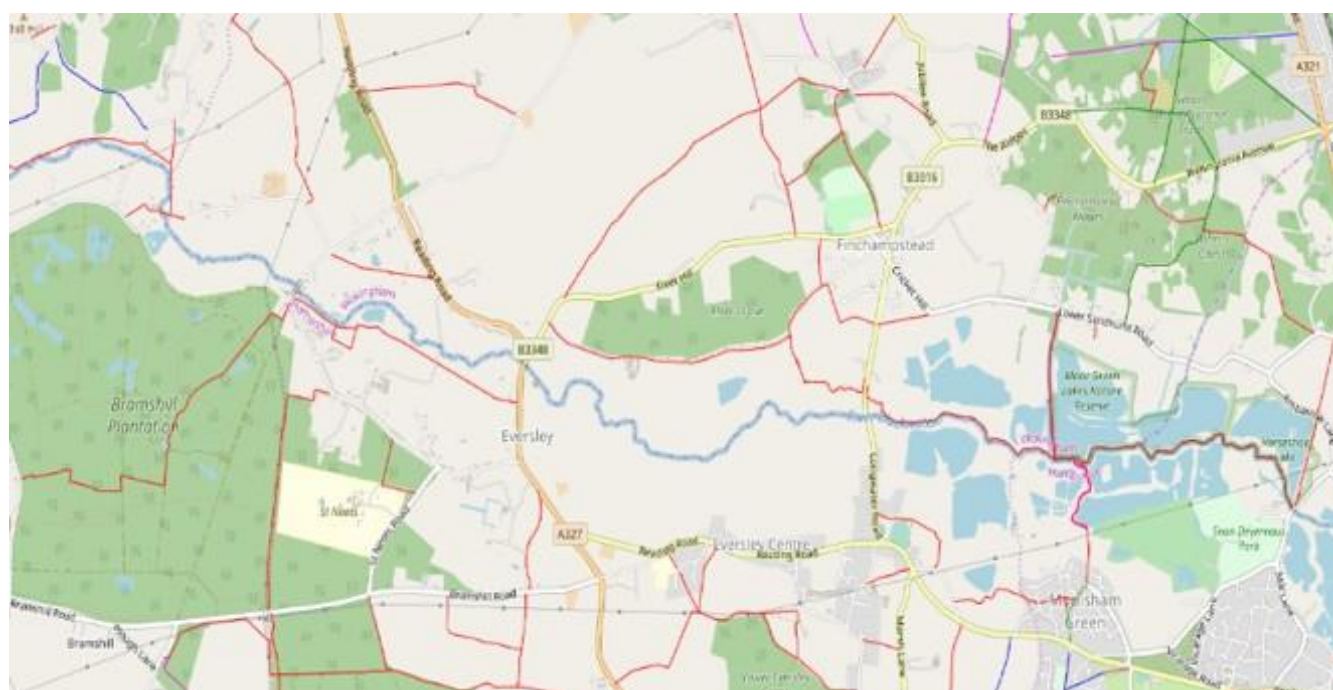


Figure 26 – Rights of Way South: Sandhurst and Yateley with Blackwater Valley

ii. Barkham and Arborfield

Arborfield is undergoing major development in housing and support infrastructure drawing in movement of people to the housing, services and schools. The Rights of Way from Finchampstead are integrated into the overall development planning. There is a safe access Greenway west from Finchampstead through to the new Bohunt Senior School. West of Arborfield has pathways through open farmland up to Farley Hill.

iii. Eversley including Farley Hill

The paths lead from the western end of Finchampstead into the large areas of Bramshill Forest and open farmlands up to Farley Hill. Bramshill Forest is available for horse riding, cycling and walking activities and covers a large area west and south of Finchampstead. The schools are in Eversley, Farley Hill and Arborfield.

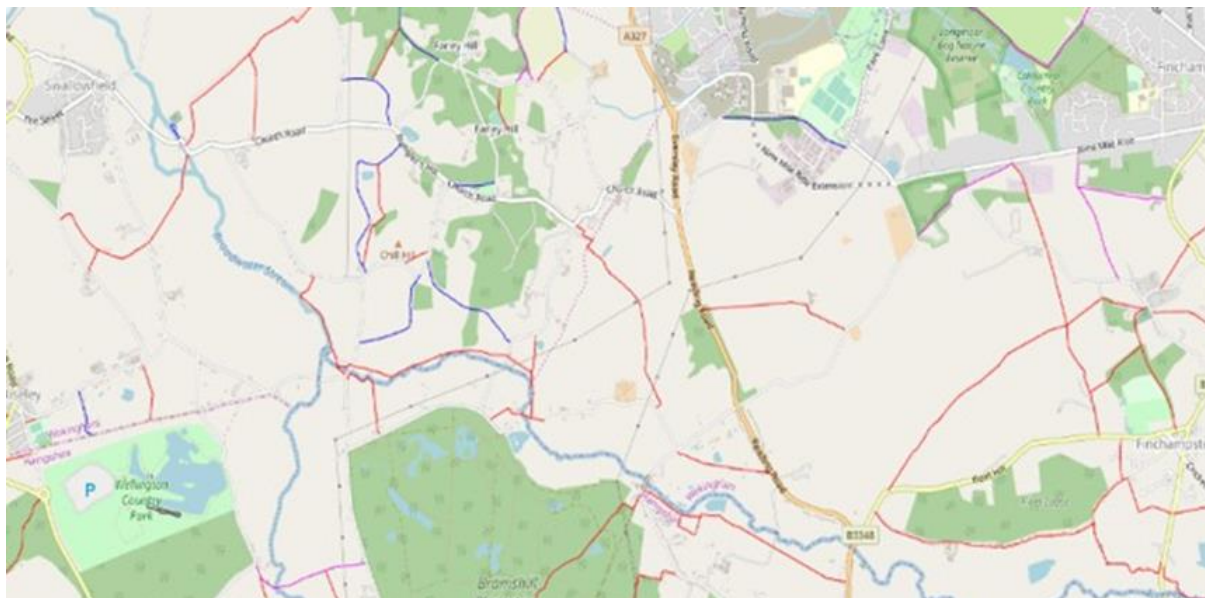


Figure 27 – Rights of Way South-West: Eversley, Barkham and Farley Hill

iv. Barkham, Evendons and Wokingham Without

The main footpath leads from Nine Mile Ride at the eastern end of Finchampstead through Gorrick Forest, giving a direct safe route into Wokingham Town Centre. This path will be integrated with the new Wokingham Southern Distributor Development Plans. From Evendons, there are paths to the western side of Wokingham Town into Barkham Road. For children, there are footpaths giving safe access to St Sebastians and Evendons Junior Schools and Luckley Senior School.



Figure 28 – Rights of Way North: Barkham, Evendons and Wokingham Without

S. References to Wokingham Borough Council

The LPU is still being updated at time of writing (February 2022). Policy references below are to those in place in the update extant at the end of 2020.

i. LPU/H2: Sites Allocated for Development

Residential / mixed use....defined on the policies map....allocated for residential development...

Jovike, Lower Wokingham Road, Finchampstead.

ii. LPU/H5: Affordable Housing

1. Planning permission will be supported for residential development providing a mix and balance of densities, dwelling types, tenures and sizes. Affordable housing must reflect the sizes and types that meet the proven needs of people who are not able to compete in the general housing market.
2. All residential proposals of at least 5 units of accommodation (net) or covering a net site area of at least 0.16 ha will provide up to 50% of the net additional units of accommodation proposed as affordable housing, where viable. The council will negotiate the tenure, size and type of affordable units on a site by site basis having regard to housing needs, site specifics and other factors.
3. Subject to viability, the minimum percentages of affordable housing sought on site by land type and location are: (see page 84 of WBC LPU dated January 2020)
4. The delivery of affordable housing will be provided in accordance with the following order of priority: a) on-site as part of the development. On strategic developments affordable housing should be distributed across the development to create a mixed and balanced community, b) on an alternative site, only if: i. provision would result in a more effective use of available resources, or ii. it would meet an identified housing need, such as providing a better social mix and wider housing choice, or iii. site specific considerations mean it is more feasible to provide an offsite contribution.
5. Planning obligations will be used to ensure that affordable housing will remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled to alternative affordable housing provision.

iii. LPU/H9: Accommodation for Older People and Vulnerable Communities

1. The council will work positively and collaboratively with statutory and voluntary agencies to support the needs of current and future households in the context of vulnerable people and an ageing population, by encouraging self-reliance and independent living and by providing the right type of homes for residential, nursing and dementia care to enable these communities to live successfully in the borough.
2. Specialist accommodation for older people and vulnerable people will be delivered primarily at a strategic scale through the existing Strategic Development Locations (Policies SS4, SS5, SS6 and SS7) and at a new garden town at Grazeley²⁹ (Policy SS3).
3. Elsewhere, development proposals for purpose built or specialist accommodation for vulnerable people and/or older people will be supported, provided the following criteria are met:
 - a. Local commissioning priorities, or a demonstrable local community need has been established
 - b. The accommodation is well located, close to an identified town, district or local centre with access to a good range of services and facilities, including existing public transport routes, or incorporates essential community facilities and services, such as healthcare services or day care for older people,
 - c. Adequate provision for service arrangements, including the provision of ambulance access.
 - d. Incorporate areas of green space, which are particularly important for many groups of vulnerable and older people.

²⁹ The proposal for the development at Grazeley has now been withdrawn but it is understood that the policies will apply in any alternative location

4. Development proposals that would lead to the reduction in the number of residential, nursing or dementia care premises will only be supported provided it can be demonstrated that a replacement facility can be provided elsewhere, or that such a use is not considered to be viable or no longer fit for purpose.
5. All new residential proposals providing a form of specialist accommodation (including extra care housing) for older people should meet the optional technical standards requirements set out in the Building Regulations Approved Document M Part 2, except where it can be demonstrated that they would be unviable. This will be a matter for negotiation, but the council will expect the following requirements to be met:
 - a. as a minimum, 25% of dwellings to be constructed to Category M4(3) standard.
 - b. all dwellings to be constructed to Category M4(2) standard.
6. Development proposals involving other forms of purpose built and/or specialist accommodation with care for older people will be supported, in principle, in accessible and sustainable locations subject to other relevant policies in the FNDP.

iv. LPU/H14: Development of Private Residential Gardens

1. Development proposals for new residential development that includes land within the curtilage, or the former curtilage, of private residential gardens will only be supported where:
 - a. The proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:
 - i. The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around buildings within the surrounding area.
 - ii. A layout which integrates with existing landscape features and the surrounding area, with regard to the built-up coverage of each plot, building line(s), rhythm of plot frontages, parking areas
 - iii. Existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage
 - iv. Providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries. This includes features such as the variety of trees, hedges and hardstanding/lawn etc.
 - v. Compatibility with the general building height within the surrounding area.
 - vi. The materials and elevational detail are of high quality, and where appropriate distinctive and/ or complementary.
 - vii. The arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features and their rhythm between buildings
 - b. The application site provides a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking.
 - c. The proposal includes access, which meets appropriate highway standards.
 - d. The proposal does not lead to unacceptable tandem development.
 - e. The design and layout minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas and avoids the need for additional physical security measures.
 - f. The development provides biodiversity net gain, and would not have an adverse impact on biodiversity through the fragmentation of blocks of gardens, which together, or in association with adjacent green space are deemed to make an important contribution to biodiversity and the wider green infrastructure network.
 - g. The proposal does not prejudice the satisfactory development of the wider area.
2. Planning permission will be refused where a development proposal fails to demonstrate that any of criteria (a) to (g) have been fully met.

v. LPU/DH - Design Heritage and the Built Environment Policies LPU/DH1: Place Making and Quality Design

1. All development will contribute to a strong sense of place through high quality design which should endure over the lifetime of the development. Development is required to:

- a. Be resilient to climate change in accordance with Policy SS9: Adaptation to Climate Change, and minimise energy demand and maximise energy efficiency in accordance with Policy DH7: Energy.
- b. Reinforce or create a positive sense of place and local distinctiveness through design that respects the local natural and historic character of the area, paying particular attention to urban grain, layout, rhythm, density, scale, bulk, massing, proportions, detailing and trees.
- c. Incorporate appropriate innovation in design to improve the quality of an area and the way it functions.
- d. Deliver safe, easy access and movement for pedestrians, cyclists, cars and service vehicles and
- e. maximise the opportunities for and prioritisation of walking, cycling and other sustainable modes of transport.
- f. Have a layout that provides attractive, permeable and legible environments that encourage people to easily move around by walking and cycling.
- g. Ensure that streets and public spaces are attractive, particularly at the pedestrian level, incorporating features of visual interest wherever possible, and are functional, inclusive and able to be managed for the long term.
- h. Create places that foster active healthy lifestyles in accordance with Policy HC1: Healthy and safe communities.
- i. Provide sufficient levels of high quality, usable private and public amenity space which is clearly delineated through the incorporation of high quality soft and hard boundary treatments as appropriate.
- j. Provide acceptable standards of amenity, privacy and daylight for occupiers, and not unacceptably affect the amenity of the locality or surrounding properties in accordance with Policy DH2: Safeguarding Amenity.
- k. Include an appropriate mix of uses to the scale and location of the development.
- l. Make most efficient use of land and make best use of existing buildings while also designing in the adaptability of use into new buildings wherever possible to allow for flexibility in their usage over time.
- m. Not prejudice by way of design and layout the comprehensive development of a wider area.
- n. Retain and protect existing trees, hedgerows and other vegetation worthy of retention.
- o. Integrate appropriate new landscaping and green infrastructure as an integral part of the scheme, which is consistent with achieving net biodiversity gain in accordance with Policy NE1: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation.
- p. Create safe environments that are designed to discourage crime and disorder through appropriate levels of natural surveillance and spaces that promote positive social interaction.
- q. Be accessible to all, including people of all ages and with disabilities and other vulnerable members of the community through carefully designed access features and be capable of adaptation to meet future needs.
- r. Minimise the visual impact of parking arrangements.
- s. Provide adequate on-site space for refuse and recycling storage facilities conveniently located for collection and designed in a manner that is integrated into the scheme to reduce visual impact.
- t. Ensure that service access to commercial uses is arranged so there is no unacceptable impact on highway safety, amenity, and visual impact.
- u. Optimise the density of all developments, with higher densities provided in town centres and other locations well served by public transport, as appropriate.

- v. Maximise opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land.
- 2. All development proposals must demonstrate that they are in general conformity with the design principles set out in supporting guidance and Neighbourhood Plans where applicable.
- 3. Masterplans and Design Codes will be required for larger and more complex developments to agree an overall vision and strategy for a development as a whole, which demonstrates a comprehensive and inclusive approach to design.

vi. LPU/DH2: Safeguarding amenity

1. Development proposals should not cause by themselves, or cumulatively with other existing or proposed development, a detrimental impact on the amenity of existing properties or unacceptable living conditions for new occupiers in terms of:
 - a. Privacy and overlooking.
 - b. Access to daylight and sunlight.
 - c. Visual dominance, outlook and overbearing effects of development.
 - d. Noise and disturbance.
 - e. Artificial lighting.
 - f. Vibration.
 - g. Dust and fumes.
 - h. Odour.
 - i. Potential for crime or perception of unsafe environments.
2. As well as immediate impacts, other aspects to which this policy applies will include matters such as hours of operation of businesses, and effects of traffic movements, particularly of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs). Development proposals that would generate regular movements of HGVs and commercial traffic in residential areas should demonstrate that the impacts on the amenity of the local residents, by reason of noise and disturbance are minimised.
3. Where an otherwise acceptable development could change its character to a use that would have a greater impact on amenity without needing planning permission, conditions will be applied to restrict such changes.

vii. LPU/DH5: The Historic Environment

1. Development proposals should conserve and seek to enhance, wherever possible, the archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest of all heritage assets, including the contribution to this interest made by their setting. This will be achieved through:
 - a. ensuring that development proposals identify and understand the heritage interest(s) that may be affected by the proposed works, at an early stage in the design process.
 - b. supporting works that secure the sensitive use, enjoyment, conservation and/or enhancement of heritage assets and their settings, particularly in relation to designated assets identified as being at risk.
 - c. securing the sensitive design of development which impacts on heritage assets and their settings, retaining or incorporating existing features or details of historic or architectural interest and/or design quality into the scheme.
2. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource. Where development proposals have the potential to affect heritage assets, a heritage assessment should be prepared and submitted alongside the development proposal describing the significance of any heritage assets affected, including the contribution to their setting. Where there is harm, information must be provided.

viii. LPU/DH7: Energy

IX. Energy generation in new development: -

To minimise energy use development proposals will be supported where they:

- a. Implement the Energy Hierarchy within the design of new buildings by prioritising a 'fabric first' approach and passive design and landscaping measures to minimise energy demand for heating, lighting and cooling;
- b. Demonstrate a reduction in on-site energy demand and maximise the use of low carbon energy sources across the scheme to minimise the effects of climate change;
- c. Maximise opportunities to link into and/or expand existing renewable and low carbon energy networks wherever it is feasible and viable to do so;
- d. Embrace innovative sustainable design solutions for energy efficiency and low carbon energy generation and use, over and above the National Housing Standards Building Regulations;
- e. Appropriately integrate solar gain, natural ventilation or ventilation with heat recovery, fabric performance and passive principles into the layout and design.

X. Energy efficiency in existing developments: -

Development proposals which would result in considerable improvements to the energy efficiency, carbon emissions and/or general suitability, condition and longevity of existing buildings will be supported, with significant weight attributed to those benefits.

The sensitive retrofitting of energy efficiency measures and the appropriate use of micro- renewables in historic buildings, including listed buildings and buildings within conservation areas will be encouraged, providing the special characteristics of the heritage assets are protected.

ix. LPU/DH9: Environmental standards for residential development

Development proposals for residential development will be supported provided they meet the following environmental standards.

- a. Meet the higher water efficiency standard in Regulation 36 of the Building Regulations.

Minor developments

- b. Minor residential developments will additionally be expected to achieve at least a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined within Building Regulations Approved Document Part L 2013, or satisfy any higher standard that is required under new national planning policy or Building Regulations.

Major developments

- c. Major residential development will additionally be expected to be designed to achieve carbon neutral homes.

Conversions to residential and extensions to existing dwellings

- d. All conversions to residential and extensions to existing dwellings of 500 sqm of residential floorspace (gross) or more are encouraged to achieve 'excellent' in BREEAM domestic refurbishment.

Measures to reduce energy use of existing dwellings

- e. Measures which facilitate a reduction of carbon emissions in existing dwellings will be supported provided they do not give rise to unacceptable impacts on landscape, biodiversity, heritage assets, character of the area, and amenity

The standards within this policy should be achieved as a minimum unless it can be demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist. Where on-site achievement is not viable or practical, a pro- rata contribution to the carbon offset fund should be provided.

T. Details of Community Engagement

This is detailed in the [Consultation Statement](#)

U. Finchampstead Parish Council Project List

The engagement with the community highlighted a number of potential project areas which although beyond the scope of the NDP, would be of value to the community and will now be considered by Finchampstead Parish Council for further action. These are set out in the list below.

Project	Proposal
Traffic	Work with WBC to monitor traffic speed within the Parish and to consider reduction inspeed limits where appropriate.
Traffic	Work with WBC to consider traffic calming measures where appropriate.
Gorse Ride Community	Improvements / extension to St Mary & St Johns Parish Hall
Gorse Ride Community	Provision of new 'Community House'
Finchampstead Baptist Church Centre	Additional parking
Rooks Nest Country Park	Additional links to site. Potential to form part of route to Barkham.
Allotments	Land acquisition to safeguard site and allow expansion. Or creation of communityorchard.
Cycle routes to Wokingham	From Nashgrove Lane to link to future greenway D and Wokingham centre and / or SWokingham SDL From NMR through Gorricks Plantation linking to existing BW and to South WokinghamSDL
Bridle path 26	Drainage improvements
Footpath 20	Re designation as bridleway / improvements
Footpath 33	Re designation as bridleway / improvements
Improvements to War MemorialJunction.	Changes to improve highway safety
Pedestrian (and cycle) access from TheVillage to the north of the Parish	Path required from War Memorial junction to Spring Gardens
California Crossroads parking	Potential for additional parking adjacent to Co-op
California Crossroads improvement scheme	Overall improvement scheme for area – due summer 2021
Air quality monitoring	Purchase of equipment for ongoing monitoring in various locations

V. Policy Screening extract from the HRA Review – (table 2)³⁰

Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan Policy Screening

Policy Name	Brief Policy Description	Potential Likely Significant Effect?
ES1 - Environmental standards for residential development	<p>This policy details the environmental standards to be applied to new developments including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate Major residential development will be expected to be designed to achieve carbon neutral homes. Conversions to residential and extensions to existing dwellings of 500 sqm of residential floorspace (gross) or more, should achieve 'excellent' in domestic refurbishment. Provision is made for charging for electric vehicles in all domestic dwellings where garages or vehicle parking spaces are provided 	<p>No likely significant effects.</p> <p>The policy is a development management policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.</p>
AHD1 - Development outside Development Limits	<p>Development proposals for permanent rural workers dwellings in the countryside will be supported when it can be demonstrated that a genuine need exists and that they comply with the relevant policies of the Local Plan.</p> <p>The following sites have been promoted as acceptable for development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5FI003 31/33 Barkham Ride 70 Units (net) 5FI004 Green Acres Farm, Nine Mile Ride 100 Units 5FI014 Land rear of 6-8 The Village 2 Units 5FI016 Broughton Farm, Heath Ride 2 Units 5FI028 Westwood Cottage, Sheerlands Road 10 Units 	<p>Potential likely significant effects</p> <p>5 sites have been proposed as acceptable for development. If these sites were allocated there would be a net increase of 184 new dwellings.</p> <p>This is a net increase in dwellings and will need to be discussed further within the body of the report.</p>
AHD2 - Development within Development Limits	<p>This policy allocated the locations of 1,830 new dwellings allocated in the Wokingham borough local plan update.</p> <p>New development proposals must be contained within the Development Locations.</p> <p>Development within the Finchwood Park area of the Arborfield Strategic Development Location will be encouraged.</p>	<p>No likely significant effect.</p> <p>The housing allocated under this policy has already been reviewed under the Wokingham borough local plan update HRA and therefore will have no further impacts.</p>
AHD3 - Green Space and Landscaping	<p>For any major applications as defined by Borough-wide policies, a landscape strategy shall be submitted which will incorporate the following details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing and proposed hard and soft landscaping A Condition Survey of all existing trees and hedgerows 	<p>No likely significant effects.</p> <p>The policy is a development management policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.</p>

³⁰ Note that this table considers the policies as included in the Submission version of the Plan. Some of the policies have subsequently been deleted as a consequence of the Examination.

Policy Name	Brief Policy Description	Potential Likely Significant Effect?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An outline of the measures to be taken to protect existing trees and hedgerows during construction. A Survey of local Public Rights of Way (PROWs) and outline of measures to protect and enhance off road linkages for recreational and active travel purposes available to all non-motorised users. 	
AHD4 - Independent Living, Care and Vulnerable Housing	This policy describes how proposals providing housing for older residents for care homes and vulnerable communities will be supported.	<p>No likely significant effects.</p> <p>The policy is a development management policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.</p>
AHD5 – Affordable housing	This policy states all proposals for new housing must contain a proportion of affordable housing.	<p>No likely significant effects.</p> <p>The policy is a development management policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.</p>
AHD6 - Provisions for Gypsy and Traveller Communities	This policy relates to the supporting of existing lawful Gypsy and Traveller sites in their current use and potential for their expansion.	<p>No likely significant effects.</p> <p>The policy is a development management policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.</p>
AHD7 - Caravan and Mobile Home Sites	This policy relates to maintaining the current (January 2020) number of caravan and mobile home sites.	<p>No likely significant effects.</p> <p>The policy is a development management policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.</p>
D1 – Building Heights	This policy relates to the permitted height of most developments.	<p>No likely significant effects.</p> <p>The policy is a design policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.</p>
D2 - Preserving the rural character of the parish	This policy details the requirement to maintain the separation of settlements and to complement the relevant landscape characteristics by including features such as street trees and retaining the proportion, scale and the space between the main residential buildings on each residential plot.	<p>No likely significant effects.</p> <p>The policy is a design policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.</p>
D3 - Infill, Small Plot Development and Development of Private Residential Gardens	This policy relates to permitted development on small plots and private residential gardens.	<p>No likely significant effects.</p> <p>The policy is a design policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.</p>
GS1 - Strategic Gaps Between Settlements	This policy details 4 areas that should be generally excluded from any development proposals.	<p>No likely significant effects.</p> <p>The policy is a development management policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.</p>
GS2 – Green wedges	This policy details 3 areas identified to be designated as green wedges which should be generally excluded from any development proposals.	<p>No likely significant effects.</p> <p>The policy is a development management policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.</p>
IRS1 - Protection and enhancement of Local Green Spaces	This policy seeks to protect existing local green spaces and states the need to retain and respect the value placed upon the spaces where possible.	<p>No likely significant effects.</p> <p>The policy is a development management policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.</p>

Policy Name	Brief Policy Description	Potential Likely Significant Effect?
IRS2 - Protection of Outstanding Views	This policy relates to the requirement for any new developments to prove they will cause no adverse impact on the landscape setting and the outstanding views.	No likely significant effects. The policy is a development management policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.
IRS3 - Protection and enhancement of the historic character of the area	This policy details protection given to the historic environment and any designated heritage assets in the Parish and their settings.	No likely significant effects. The policy is a development management policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.
IRS4 - Implement strategy to preserve the identity of Finchampstead Parish through informal green spaces	This policy relates to the need to add features to reserve the semi-rural look and feel of the Parish with its surrounding natural open environment in order to be supported.	No likely significant effects. The policy is a development management policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.
IRS5 - Ecologically important areas and Biodiversity	This policy details the need for development proposals to protect and enhance biodiversity area.	No likely significant effects. The policy is a development management policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.
IRS6 - Trees	This policy relates to the retention or removal of trees during development.	No likely significant effects. The policy is a development management policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.
GA1 - Improve environment and health from traffic pollution	This policy details the need for new developments to consider traffic flows and road use as well as showing effective planning to mitigate noise and air pollution from traffic.	No likely significant effects. The policy is a development management policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.
GA2 - Reduction in car usage with safe personal mobility options	This policy details need to develop transport links for non-car transport.	No likely significant effects. The policy is a development management policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.
TC1 - Supporting Business	This policy detail the types of business proposals that will be supported.	No likely significant effects. The policy is a development management policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.
TC2 - Supporting Business	This policy details support for the planned extension of Hogwood industrial estate as defined in the Wokingham Borough Council Local Plan Update.	No likely significant effects. The policy is a development management policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.
TC3 - Retail Development - California Crossroads	This policy details support for developments that will enhance the role and function at the California Crossroads local centre.	No likely significant effects. The policy is a development management policy and does not have any linking impact pathways..
TC4 - Retail Development - Finchwood Park	This policy supports retail use development within the Finchwood park neighbourhood centre.	No likely significant effects. The policy is a development management policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.

Policy Name	Brief Policy Description	Potential Likely Significant Effect?
TC5 - Protection of Retail Facilities	This policy details how proposals that provide for the retention of retail premises will be supported.	<p>No likely significant effects.</p> <p>The policy is a development management policy and does not have any linking impact pathways.</p>

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Whatever the contribution, the people of Finchampstead are very grateful for it.

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1.1 Other Parish Councils

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Barkham Parish Council
Woodcote Parish Council

