

Agenda Item 60.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
230422	12.01.2024	Swallowfield	Swallowfield

Applicant	Boyer Crowthorne House Nine Mile Ride, Wokingham RG40 3GZ
Site Address	Land West of Trowes Lane and North of Charlton Lane, Swallowfield
Proposal	Full planning application for the proposed erection of 81 dwellings (including 40% affordable homes), open space, SuDS, landscaping, biodiversity enhancements, new vehicular access off Trowes Lane, pedestrian & cycle links, and associated infrastructure.
Type	Full
Officer	Mark Croucher
Reason for determination by committee	Major application

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 10 January 2024
REPORT PREPARED BY	Assistant Director – Place and Growth

RECOMMENDATION	<p>That the committee authorise the GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following:</p> <p>A. Completion of a legal agreement relating to the following head of terms:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On site Affordable housing delivery of at least 40% of the number of dwellings delivered. 2. Employment Skills Plan 3. Highway adoption details for on-site roads and management details of open spaces. 4. Off-site highway works 5. MyJourney contribution at £540 per dwelling (prior to occupation) 7. Off-site Sports and Recreation Contributions in accordance with TB08 8. SPA Mitigation via SANG <p>B. Conditions and informatives as set out in Appendix 1 (subject to any additions and updates agreed with the Assistant Director – Place and Growth between the date of the resolution and the issue of the decision).</p> <p>OR</p> <p>C. Refuse full planning permission if the legal agreement is not completed within three months of the date of this resolution unless officers (on behalf of the Assistant Director – Place and Growth) agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement.</p>
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SUMMARY

The application is for full permission for the erection of 81 dwellings including 33 affordable homes. The proposed access will be via Trowes Lane and the road will be reconfigured so that it leads into the application site.

The site is outside of, but adjacent to the settlement limits of Swallowfield, which is classified as a Limited Development Location with a limited range of day-to-day facilities within the village. The outside of settlement location is contrary to policy CP11 and the spatial strategy in the development plan, which steers housing development to within settlement limits.

It is recognised that the proposed development will cause a degree of harm to the immediate landscape, but due regard is had to the fact the site is relatively well contained by landscape features that includes a woodland to the south. The proposal will also result in the loss of Best and Most versatile agricultural Land.

The development makes a meaningful contribution to the boroughs housing land supply and provides 33 on-site affordable homes. There will be ecological benefits to the scheme and at least 10% biodiversity net gain being achieved across the site. The design and layout will result in a satisfactory residential development with incorporated open space and play facilities. These factors weigh substantially in favour of the scheme.

The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites and Subsequently, Core Strategy policies CP9 and CP11, as well as MDD Local Plan Policy CC02 identified above, which are most important for determining applications for new housing, are considered out-of-date in accordance with Paragraph 11 of the NPPF. Paragraph 11 of the Framework states that where the development plan is out of date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, or there are specific policies in the Framework which indicate that development should be restricted. In this regard the tilted balance is engaged, albeit tempered due to past over-delivery.

Overall, in applying the test required by Paragraph 11d of the NPPF and the tempered tilted balance, and when taking all matters into consideration, the adverse impacts of the proposed development would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh those identified benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework when taken as a whole. The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to the conditions and legal agreement set out in this report.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None.

DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

Proposed units	81
Proposed density - dwellings/hectare	14 – 20 dph.
Number of affordable units proposed	33

Previous land use	Agriculture
Existing parking spaces	N/A
Proposed parking spaces	236
CONSTRAINTS	Countryside Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone Archaeological Sites Affordable Housing Thresholds Bat Roost Habitat Suitability Minerals Site Consultation Area Replacement Mineral Local Plan Landscape Character Assessment Area Local Plan Update Submitted Sites Thames Basin Heaths SPA Mitigation Zones Archaeological Sites Consultation Zone

CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
WBC Planning Policy	No objection
WBC Drainage	No objection subject to conditions
WBC Landscape and Trees	Objection
WBC Highways	No objection subject to conditions
Berkshire Archaeology	No objection subject to condition
WBC Environmental Health	No objection subject to conditions
WBC Emergency Planner	Outside DEPZ
WBC Employment Skills Plan	ESP required
WBC Affordable Housing	No objection subject to AH
WBC Ecology	Further information required from Natural England regarding SANG mitigation
Environment Agency	The development does not fall within a category where the EA should be consulted
Thames Water	Sufficient capacity.
Berkshire Fire and Rescue	No observations regarding building separation and fire service access.

REPRESENTATIONS

Town/Parish Council:

Swallowfield Parish Council

Strongly objects to the Croudace Homes planning application (WBC ref 230422) and asks that it be refused on the grounds that:

1. It represents an inappropriate site for development and a fundamental misunderstanding of the village by the applicant.
2. It runs contrary to several key WBC Core Policies and Climate Emergency Plans.
3. It fails to recognise the absence of critical infrastructure.
4. It will result in a huge increase in vehicle movements within the village and linked commuter routes.
5. It will have a massive negative impact on residents of the whole parish.
6. It is strongly opposed by the vast majority of Swallowfield residents as demonstrated by the objections lodged to date. In the following paragraphs, where appropriate, the relevant

numbers from the current application for 81 homes (230422) and an earlier application by Cove Homes for 20 homes (162498) (approved on appeal but not yet constructed) have been conflated. Collectively the two sites represent 101 homes and >200 additional motor vehicles. It is appropriate to consider their combined impact on the local infrastructure.

A full copy of the Parish Council Response is appended to the agenda.

Local Members:

Cllr S Munro

I am placing my strong objections to this application.

Inappropriate Development

1. Swallowfield is classified as a limited development location. Yet this site, together with the Cove Homes development, would represent a 40% increase in properties in Swallowfield and urbanise our rural village, ignoring its countryside location.
2. The proposed 'island pedestrian crossings', increased street lighting and bus shelters would adversely impact not only the Conservation section of The Street but the character of an entire rural village.
3. The housing density of the Croudace proposal far exceeds that of the rest of the village and the guidance, based on 63 houses in the HELAA report.
4. The plan and size of the plots, with a cramped layout and small gardens, do not transition into the countryside location or reflect the existing development within Swallowfield,
5. The estate represents an isolated development with minimal links to Swallowfield Village and local roads serving only as a conduit to the outside world.

Infrastructure & Sustainability

1. Our Swallowfield Medical Practice is already hugely overstretched serving Swallowfield, Riseley, Farley Hill and parts of Spencers Wood. These developments will result in > 300 new patients, compromising medical services for all residents.
2. The catchment schools for Swallowfield are already vastly oversubscribed, and not accessible by foot or by cycle along a safe route. There are no primary or secondary schools (with the exception of an already overloaded Lambs Lane Primary School) within the 3-4 Km specified in WBC's Core Strategy. The issue is that all children from these new estates will have to be transported to and from school by car.
3. The local bus route provides a basic service, inadequate for the majority of journeys to work or school, and has an uncertain future. It does not meet WBC Core Strategy guidelines for 'good public transport' thereby necessitating further car journeys.
4. The new developments would bring minimal employment or economic benefit to the village. In contrast to an SDL, this is over exploitation of a rural area with no sustainable infrastructure.

Traffic & Transport

1. An estimated increase of 400+ vehicle movements per day in Trowes Lane feeding in to connected local routes with associated noise, pollution and safety for other road users, including cyclists and pedestrians
2. Modifications to Trowes Lane near the junction with Foxborough, would give priority to traffic entering or leaving the estate and will inconvenience traffic entering the village from the south

3. Trowes Lane itself is narrow at points and proposed modifications to the pavement and adjacent trees will not resolve the problem.
4. An inadequate public transport (bus) service, with a highly uncertain future, will not alleviate private car journeys to work, schools, shopping, etc. resulting in higher than average road traffic and contrary to WBC's core strategy
5. Higher traffic volumes will lead to increased vehicle congestion and danger to pedestrians. The Street, and especially pavements in the conservation area, are very narrow and can't be widened. The applicant claims that the site has been allocated as part of the Local Plan update. This is simply not the case and is untrue. The Local Plan Update is still work in progress and no feedback has been given to the sites, which were promoted for consideration. I hope that the Committee will not support this Application.

Neighbours: 354 representations received objecting to the development, which are summarised below:

- Increase in traffic.
- Negative impact on highway safety.
- The area is unable to cope with additional traffic.
- Detrimental impact on character and appearance of the village.
- Overdevelopment.
- The application has no merit.
- Urbanisation.
- Loss of countryside.
- Insufficient public transport.
- Unsustainable location.
- GP practice unable to cope with more patients.
- Green spaces should be preserved.
- The realignment of the road should be built to adoptable standards.
- The surrounding infrastructure is unable to cope.
- The roads are too narrow, including countryside single track lanes.
- Insufficient facilities and services within the village.
- Wrong development in the wrong location.
- Inappropriate density of development.
- Roads are not suitable for construction traffic.
- The local roads flood.
- The increase in traffic will impact horse riders and cyclists.
- Impact on wildlife.
- Pavements are not wide enough.
- Increase in flooding.
- Disproportionate increase of homes within the village.
- Public transport in the area is poor.
- The development is out of keeping with Swallowfield and the surrounding area.
- Increase in pollution.
- Swallowfield is a limited development location and quantum proposed exceeds that identified in the Development Plan.
- The density exceeds that outlined in the HELAA report.
- Contrary to the development plan.
- Surface water flooding occurs in the area and on the site.
- There are sites with better infrastructure.
- Increase in noise pollution.

- Increase in air pollution.
- The local medical practice is already oversubscribed.
- Insufficient school places.
- Water infrastructure struggles with existing capacity.
- Existing sewage system is inadequate.
- Negative impact on the local economy.
- Parking along local roads impedes vehicle movements.
- No economic benefits.
- Exacerbate existing congestion.
- Infilling of areas between villages.
- It will set a precedent for future development.
- Impact on the Conservation Area of the village centre.
- The pedestrian infrastructure proposed would impact the character and setting of the village.
- The plots are cramped and too small.
- Insufficient broadband infrastructure.
- Loss of hedgerows.
- Increase in light pollution.
- The local medical practice is overstretched
- Insufficient school places in the area.
- Outside of settlement boundaries.
- Trowes Land and Charlton Lane are not wide enough for cars to pass.
- Impact on the setting of the village.
- Impact on habitats including newts.
- The roads are inadequate to cope with construction traffic.
- No indication of future proofing.
- No details of solar for every home.
- Disproportionate addition to the village.
- Loss of a quiet country lane.
- No nearby schools.
- The existing bus service is poor.
- Increase demand for electricity.

PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework
National Design Guide
National Planning Practice Guidance

Core Strategy (CS)

CP1 – Sustainable Development
 CP2 – Inclusive Communities
 CP3 – General Principles for Development
 CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements
 CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability
 CP6 – Managing Travel Demand
 CP7 – Biodiversity
 CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
 CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals

CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits
CP17 – Housing Delivery

MDD Local Plan (MDD)

CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC02 – Development Limits
CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction
CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks
CC06 – Noise
CC07 – Parking
CC09 – Development and Flood Risk
CC10 – Sustainable Drainage
TB04 – Development in vicinity of Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE), Burghfield
TB05 – Housing Mix
TB07 – Internal Space Standards
TB08 – Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities Standards
TB21 – Landscape Character
TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets
TB25 – Archaeology

Joint minerals and waste plan

M2 - Safeguarding sand and gravel resources

Other

Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document
CIL Guidance + 123 List
Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document
Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document
Swallowfield Village Design Statement

Principle of Development:

1. The starting point for decision making is the development plan. Section 70[2] of the TCPA 1990 & 38[6] of the PCPA 2004 states that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The plan-led approach established in law is reinforced through the NPPF including paragraph 47:

'Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.'

2. Paragraph 15 and 20 of the NPPF state the development plan must include strategic policies to address each local planning authority's priorities and an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development.
3. The Development Plan includes the Core Strategy (adopted in January 2010) and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (adopted in February 2014) (MDD Local Plan). The Core Strategy and MDD Local Plan sets out the vision for the borough and the policies to achieve those objectives. The core spatial strategy established by the Core Strategy was informed by engagement with the community.
4. The NPPF has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the Development Plan. Policy CC01 of the MDD Local Plan states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Plan - Core Strategy and MDD Local Plan

5. A priority of the Development Plan is to steer new housing to the most sustainable locations within settlement boundaries and limit development within the countryside. This is, among other things, in order to promote sustainability, maintain the quality of the environment, protect the separate identity of settlements and provide certainty regarding how the borough will be developed. It is also well-explained in the Borough Design Guide at pages 6 -7.
6. The spatial vision explains that in order to deliver the necessary development within the Borough the Council has identified a number of high-quality Strategic Development Locations (SDLs) where the majority of the minimum 13,230 new houses to be delivered in the Core Strategy local plan period will be located. This approach seeks to locate schemes where they can provide easy access to existing facilities and services or where infrastructure improvements can be delivered. In addition, the spatial vision seeks to concentrate development in those towns and villages that either have a significant range of infrastructure including facilities and services now - or will have them as a result of the development proposed through the CS. Development is stated to be less likely in locations where these facilities and services will not be available.

7. Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy and CC02 of the MDD Local Plan states that proposals will be permitted within development limits where the scale of the application reflects the facilities and services within the settlement. The settlements are split into three categories depending on the sustainability of those locations; Major, Modest and Limited development locations. Policy broadly steers Major developments to sustainable Major settlements with the best services, facilities and infrastructure. The definition of development limits recognises the consistent approach in planning to identify appropriate and sustainable areas for development.
8. Swallowfield is defined in Policy CP9 as a Limited Development Location. Para 2.87 of the MDD Local Plan states *'these settlements have a limited range of facilities, and do not have access to good quality public transport services' [...]* *'due to the limited range of facilities, it is not considered that significant development is appropriate in these locations, although smaller proposals which help support the communities and provide for an identifiable local need may be acceptable.'* Policy CP17 then states that development within such locations should not generally exceed 25 dwellings, within an allowance of 100 dwellings over all sites within limited development locations during the plan period.
9. The proposed development of up to 81 dwellings would be appreciably in excess of the scale of development identified as being suitable within the village. A previous appeal to the north of the site was permitted for 20 dwellings. Therefore, as a result of development plan allocations, a total of 101 units have been permitted in this Limited Development Location, which exceeds the identified general scale of development for individual sites within such small settlements.
10. Whilst it is recognised that the application site adjoins part of the settlement of Swallowfield, the main area for the proposed housing is outside development limits and within the open countryside. Therefore, an assessment against Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy is also required. This refers to development within the countryside and states *'in order to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment, proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted'*, other than the exceptions listed. The proposed development would not fall within any of the exceptions set out in policy CP11 and would conflict with this development plan policy.
11. In summary, the location of this development is not in accordance with the Development Plan, taken as a whole. This is because by seeking to develop this countryside location, outside the Swallowfield defined development limits, for up to a 81-unit housing scheme would be at odds with the spatial vision for the Borough, set out at Section 3 of the Core Strategy, and would conflict with a number of adopted policies such as CS Policies CP9 and CP11, as well as MDD Local Plan Policy CC02.
12. Whilst the conflict with the spatial strategy in the development plan should be noted, this must be considered in the context of the housing land supply shortfall and as such policies CP9, CP11 and CP17 are out of date in accordance with para 11 of the NPPF. This issue is revisited in this section and again in the planning balance.

Neighbourhood Plan

13. There is no Neighbourhood Plan for Swallowfield. The area has however been determined as appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area on February 14th 2023.

Emerging Local Plan Update

14. The Local Plan Update (LPU), the plan which will supersede the Core Strategy and MDD Local Plan, is at the consultative stage of preparation. To date, the Council has consulted on two draft strategies for the LPU: the Draft Plan (2020) and the Revised Growth Strategy (2021).
15. It should be noted that the site is included as an specific allocation with the revised growth strategy consultation under policy H2 for the erection of 70 dwellings. The allocation is informed through the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELLA). The HELAA states that the site would achieve a satisfactory relationship to the existing settlement pattern.
16. Given the LPU is at a consultative stage, the draft strategy and related draft policies have limited weight in determining planning applications at this time. It must also be recognised that the assessment of land in the HELAA is high level with the purpose of informing options within the plan-making process. It is not comparable to a planning application, however, it is nonetheless useful in providing an understanding as to how the site is viewed in context of plan-making and its anticipated role and contribution to meeting the boroughs identified housing needs over the future plan period.

National Planning Policy Framework

17. The NPPF is a material consideration in the decision-making process. The NPPF outlines the Government's planning policy on a national level and highlights sustainable development as the centre of the decision-making process incorporating economic, social and environmental objectives. These three objectives seek to balance growth and local community needs against the protection of the natural, built and historic environment. It does not however change the status of the development plan as the starting point in the decision-making.

Housing land supply

18. To achieve sustainable development, the NPPF (Dec 2023) requires LPAs to identify a five-year supply of specific deliverable sites to meet housing needs. However, against this requirement, the Council is currently only able to demonstrate 3.95 years' worth of deliverable sites, rather than a five-year supply required. Subsequently, Core Strategy Policies CP9 and CP11, as well as MDD Local Plan Policy CC02 identified above, which are most important for determining applications for new housing, are considered out-of-date in accordance with Paragraph 11 of the NPPF.
19. Paragraph 11 states that where policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless:
- the application of policies in the Framework that protect assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development; or

- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

20. Firstly, in considering i), it must be recognised that the proposed site is not located within any protected areas or assets of particular importance (as outlined above and within footnote 7 and paragraph 181 of the NPPF). Officers must therefore consider the application under ii) and determine whether there are any adverse impacts generated by the development that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. This is referred to as the ‘tilted balance’, as harm and benefits are not weighed equally, but tilted against any adverse impacts.

21. In acknowledging the requirements of paragraph 11(d) ii) and the tilted balance being engaged, it is necessary to consider the underlying reasons for the shortfall in deliverable housing sites in order to understand whether there are any circumstances which affect the degree to which the tilted balance is engaged. Firstly, the identified shortfall is acknowledged to not be a result of under-delivery of housing but is in fact due to a significant over delivery in recent years, reducing the bank of land with extant planning permissions.

22. In this context, the weight to be attached to the benefits of additional housing under paragraph 11 of the NPPF should be moderated. This has been reflected in the approach taken in recent appeal decisions.

23. The Inspector for the appeal decision at Land East of Lodge Road, Hurst for 200 houses (Application ref: 220458, Appeal ref APP/X0360/W/22/3309202) and was determined using the most recent housing land supply statement of 3.95 years. The Inspector noted:

‘In view of these points, and even though the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a deliverable 5-year HLS, falling short by some 863 dwellings, I do not consider it reasonable to ignore the bigger picture, which is that there is a very strong likelihood that the Council will achieve a significant oversupply of dwelling completions over the whole CS period. To my mind this does not signify a Council that is failing in terms of housing provision, but rather one which is performing well and managing to boost the supply of housing over that which it planned for.’

[...]

‘Turning to consider the CS’s spatial vision, I see nothing in the evidence placed before me to indicate that the Council’s chosen method of distributing new housing throughout the Borough has prevented it from achieving satisfactory housing delivery to date.’

24. Taking the Inspector’s conclusions from these appeal decisions into consideration, it would indicate that whilst the tilted balance is engaged, this tilt is tempered due to past over delivery for those reasons outline above. It is however relevant that the Lodge Road Inspector gave substantial weight to the provision of open market and affordable housing.

25. Having established the tilted balance is 'tempered', Paragraph 11d(ii) requires the proposal to be considered against the policies of the NPPF taken as a whole.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land:

26. Policy CP1 states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that avoid areas of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land. BMV agricultural land is grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

27. A Land Classification and Soil Resources Assessment has been submitted showing the land to be grade 2 (very good) and grade 3a (good) agricultural land quality. Approximately 2/3 of the site is grade 2 with the remaining 1/3 being grade 3a.

28. The assessment submitted states that the site is situated slightly away from the main farming operation and has only grown very average crops for many years. It is a small, isolated field that is not well suited to modern farming operations and the size of machinery used on the remainder of the farm and cannot be farmed in association with adjacent land. The Estates Manager has stated that the loss of the field to the main farming operation will be completely inconsequential as the site has struggled to contribute in any meaningful way to the overall commercial viability of the farm business.

29. Notwithstanding the above, council aerial records show the land as being consistently used as arable farmland and the land is good and very good quality, as per the information submitted. Whilst reference has been made to field being more isolated from the main holding, it has clearly been practical to farm the land and contributes to the existing farming operation.

30. The proposed development therefore conflicts with policy CP1 of the Core Strategy and Section 15 of the NPPF in that there would be to the loss of BMV land. This should be weighed in the overall planning balance.

Minerals:

31. The site is shown as having sand and gravel deposits and is partially located within a Minerals Safeguarding Area. Policy M2 of the 2023 of the Joint Minerals & Waste Plan states that non-minerals development in the Minerals Safeguarding Area may be permitted if it can be demonstrated through the preparation of a Mineral Resources Assessment, that the option of prior extraction has been fully considered as part of an application, and:

a. Prior extraction, where practical and environmentally feasible, is maximised, taking into account site constraints and phasing of development;
or

b. It can be demonstrated that the mineral resources will not be permanently sterilised; or

c. It would be inappropriate to extract mineral resources in that location, with regard to other policies in the wider Local Plans.

32. The applicant has submitted a letter from Wardrop Minerals Management Limited which raises a several reasons why the site is not appropriate for minerals extraction.

'This thickness of mineral is too low to be of interest to a mineral operator even if present in a much larger site. It is common practice to apply an allowance of 0.15 metres for excavation losses which here would give a recoverable mean thickness of a calculated 1.57 metres. The quarrying industry will generally take 1.5 metres thickness as the minimum that can be practically recovered by excavation machinery. In real terms the industry are more interested in deposits of 3 metres or more on practical and economic grounds.'

[...]

'In my opinion, the site offers only a minimal quantity of mineral and I would argue that the deposit does not meet the threshold for protection against sterilisation set out in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan.'

[...]

'In addition here the relatively thin overburden means that conventional 1 metre foundation excavations will bottom out on or close to the sand and gravel surface. This means that the deposit offers good, draining, footing material for housing and the material performs an effective aggregate function by being left in place.'

33. The information submitted considers that extraction would be unviable from the site and there is no other evidence to warrant a different conclusion being reached.

Design and Impact on character and appearance:

34. This section will address the design impacts and how it relates to the built environment of the existing settlement. The impact on the landscape and countryside is addressed in the next section of the report.
35. In terms of the overall size of the development, this would be the largest single addition to the village. The largest developments in the village occurred towards the end of the 20th century and early 21st century. The Pippins (approved in 2014) to the north of the village delivered 38 dwellings, although this was a redevelopment of a brownfield site. Whilst Foxborough and The Curly's comprise of a series of separate permissions, these developments were built around the same period from 1990 to 1999 and consequently have the feeling of a larger singular development of similar size and scale to the current application. Therefore, whilst the size of the development is somewhat out of scale with the small historic growth of the village throughout most of the 20th century, there is a degree of consistency with larger developments that have occurred in the last 35 years within Swallowfield.
36. The development would in effect extend the southern envelope of the village. The modern development referred to above did themselves extend beyond the furthest points of the village that existed at the time permission was granted. Notwithstanding this, the development will abut residential development along the northern boundary and the development would be partially experienced in the context of the existing village. Whilst The landscape impact of the erecting a new residential development in this location is set out further in the following section, it is

identified that the site is relatively well contained by existing landscape features. The HELAA assessment also supports this conclusion that the development would achieve a satisfactory relationship with the village.

37. The proposed density of the built area is approximately 20 dph (dwellings per hectare) and when taking the small area of woodland to the south into consideration, the density would be approximately 14 dph. The density of the approved development for 20 dwellings immediately to the north is 15dph. Foxborough to the east has a density of 16 dph and the Towels Lane 14 dph. Overall, the density of development is considered compatible with the grain of development in locality. Therefore, whilst the draft allocation in the LPU referred to 70 dwellings, it is considered that the 81 units proposed is acceptable for the context of the site.
38. The new footpath extending into the site would be 2 metres wide but is close to the existing side boundary 1 Foxborough. Whilst this relationship would be tight, there would be some space for landscaping, albeit very limited. The footpath would be adjacent to this side boundary for 20m but overall, there would be significant vegetation and landscaping within the public realm at this point.
39. The development would have properties fronting into Trowels Lane but set well back to maintain the existing trees, hedgerow, scrub and verges along the road. This is an appropriate solution for the context of the area.
40. The site layout comprises of perimeter blocks with the front elevations generally fronting onto public area and private rear gardens backing onto other gardens and dwellings. This is the preferred design solution when setting out new residential development and is supported in this instance.
41. There would be a central green open space and this provides a good focal point to the development. The main play area is located in the southwestern corner of the site and whilst this is somewhat away from the main part of the site, it benefits from necessary surveillance and effectively concentrates the majority of built form towards the village.
42. The style of the properties comprises of features to match design elements within the village and identified in the Swallowfield Village Design Statement. The main materials proposed are brick, with two types suggested within the development - red/orange brick to match some of the buildings on Trowes Lane and The Street, and a red multi brick also found in the village and buildings in the rural area. Secondary materials proposed are white render, which is a common material found throughout Swallowfield and in particular on Trowes Lane to the cottages to the north. Also proposed is tile hanging as found throughout the village. Roof colours will match the proposed brick type - slate colour tiles where the red/orange brick is used, and a clay colour tile where the red multi brick is used. Other elements would also be incorporated that will result in attractive design features such as windows with glazing bars, tile hanging diaper brick patterns, soldier arch detailing above the windows, open eaves and decorative gable treatments with finials.
43. Parking would be located on plot for most of the houses. Whilst there are 2 backland forecourts for the maisonettes and other properties, these are small in scale and not prevalent throughout the remainder of the layout.

44. In summary, the design and layout of the scheme is acceptable and will result in satisfactory public realm to the future residents.

Impact on Landscape:

Policy & Guidance

45. Policy CC02 of the MDD Local Plan reinforces the development limits of each settlement area stating that *'planning permission for proposals on the edge of settlements will only be granted where they can demonstrate that the development, including boundary treatments, is within development limits'*. Policy CC03 states that development should promote the integration of the scheme with any adjoining public space or countryside and proposals that result in the loss, fragmentation or isolation of areas of green infrastructure will not be acceptable.

46. Policy TB21 of the MDD Local Plan states that proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed the requirements of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), including the landscape quality; landscape strategy; landscape sensitivity and key issues and proposals shall retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.

47. The site is located in Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (WBLCA) I2 – 'Riseley Farmed Clay Lowland'. The visual landscape attributes of the area include;

- Rural character of an agricultural landscape
- Lightly settled character
- Roadside verges of wild flowers and with water filled ditches
- Views across open arable landscapes
- Remote character

48. Key issues affecting the character area include; loss of trees, woodland and hedgerows, soil erosion associated with agriculture and field expansion, the lack of recruitment of young trees and introduction of non-native shelterbelts. There is pressure for the expansion of settlements due to the demand for housing resulting in impact on the surrounding countryside as well as the loss of traditional dwellings and dilution of vernacular character and distinctive architectural style.

49. Key issues identified within the LCA include:

- The pressure of expansion within existing settlements such as Swallowfield leads to loss of individual settlement identity and potential amalgamation of settlements.
- Increases in traffic movements as a result of settlement expansion disturbs the tranquillity of the landscape.
- Increased development can result in widening of country lanes, lighting and engineering operations that are irreversible.

50. The Landscape Strategy for I2 'Riseley Open Clay Lowlands' is to conserve and enhance the existing remote rural character of the agricultural landscape. It further states there are opportunities to improve the condition, intactness and presentation

of the farmed landscape without affecting the sense of openness which is central to the character of the landscape.

Assessment

51. The proposed development of the site will harm the character and appearance of the of the countryside by reason of the loss of the open fields and replacing this with a major housing development.
52. The submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment identifies the proposal will result in harm to the landscape. It describes the harmful visual impacts ranging from Negligible to Substantial Adverse. Visual impacts would be from Trowes Lane, residential dwellings to the north and to a lesser extent, views from Charlton Lane. It is stated these harmful impacts would reduce after 15 years. The LVIA concluded these impacts well contained in views from the surrounding area, with the majority of views filtered by existing vegetation, even when in closer proximity to the Site. Middle-distance views are limited to a short stretch of Basingstoke Road, where there is a framed view towards the interior of the site, and some locations to the east.
53. The Council's Tree and Landscape Officer objects to the development. They broadly agree with the conclusion in the LVIA with respect to where the harm would arise.
54. The development would harm the character and appearance of the area and this weighs against the proposal.

Neighbouring Amenity:

55. The nearest residential dwellings are to the north and north-east of the site. Whilst not yet building out, there will also be residential dwellings to the north permitted by the proposal ref: 162498 and 202845.
56. The dwellings along the northern boundary have been designed so that the rear gardens back onto other properties rear gardens. The proposed gardens would be 16.5 metres long at this location and this appreciably in excess of 11 metre depth set out in the Borough Design Guide SPD. A minimum back-to-back distance of 22m with the dwelling to the north will be achieved, as per the recommendations in the Borough Design Guide.
57. A dwelling in the north-east corner of the site has been oriented to that the side elevation will face the existing house to the north (Lynwilg) and this would result in an acceptable relationship. The submitted soft landscape plans show the boundary with this dwelling being reinforced with planting to minimise the exposure of this private rear garden and provide screening.
58. Overall, the proposed dwellings would be located a sufficient distance away from neighbouring properties as not to result in overbearing, loss of light and overlooking impacts.

Amenity of future occupiers:

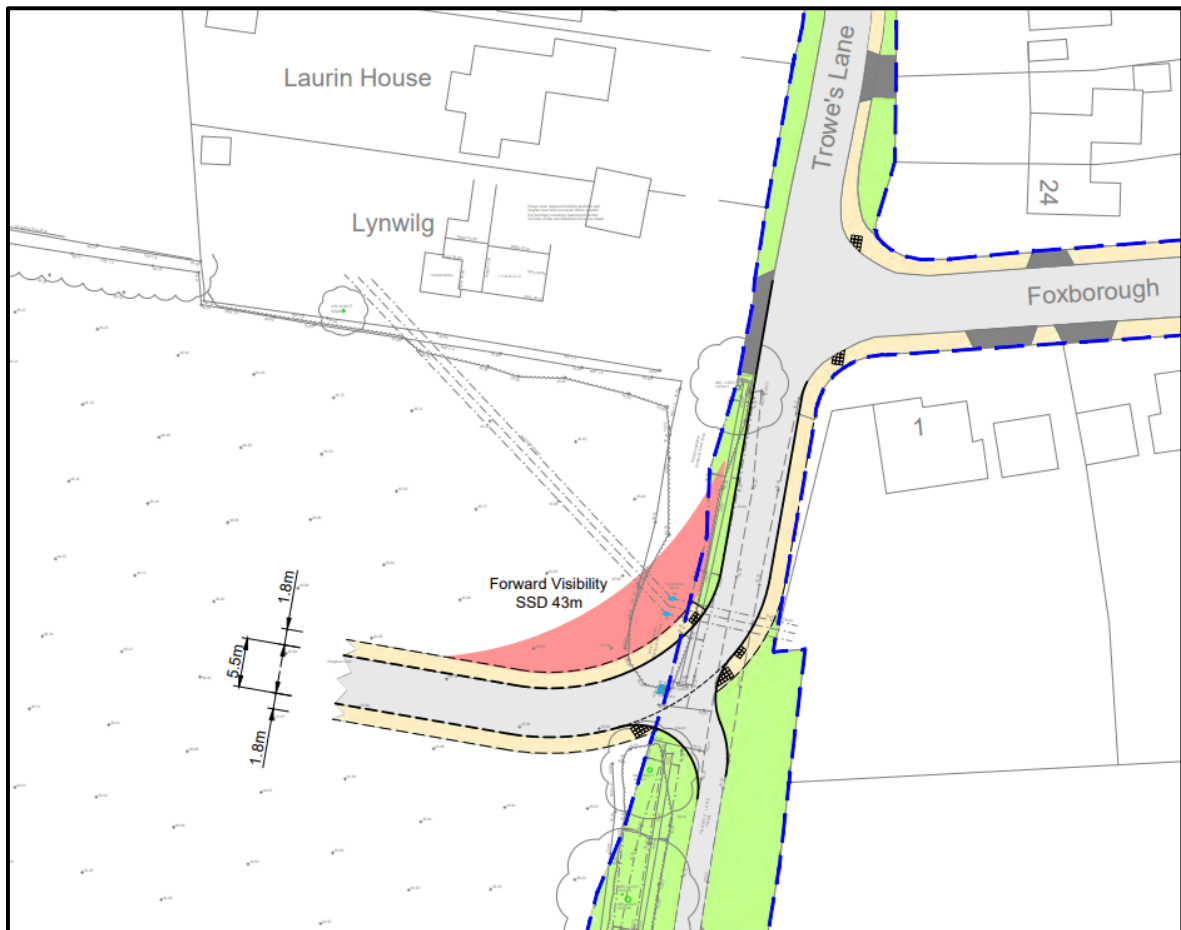
59. Amended plans have been submitted ensuring that all the proposed gardens are a minimum of 11 metres deep and usable, as per the recommendations in the borough design guide. This ensures residents will have private and usable gardens with natural sunlight. All dwellings will have internal floor areas to meet the national space standards.
60. The proposed flats/maisonettes will have some shared outdoor amenity space, albeit limited. This is however commensurate to the size of the units and the type of accommodation intended for these units. The development also includes onsite open spaces and play areas near these units.

Environmental Health:

61. The use of the site for residential development is compatible with the surrounding residential area to the north and other dwellings bordering the site. The main play area is located away from the existing dwellings to the north and would be within the southwest corner. The dwelling Charlton House will be approximately 37m from the nearest piece of play equipment and there is significant intervening vegetation along the western boundary that will be re-enforced through additional planting in the soft landscaping plans. Whilst this relationship is considered to be compatible, Condition 20 is recommended to ensure noise attenuation measures are incorporated into the design and management of the play area and the site overall. The Environmental Health Officer raises no objection to noise impacts.
62. For the Agricultural Land Classification, soil samples were taken from the site and this did not show any contamination that would warrant mitigation measures. The site has been used as arable farmland and therefore this conclusion is consistent with the existing land use. The Environmental Health Team has raised no objection to contamination but has recommended condition 19 should any unexpected land contamination be found during construction.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

63. The vehicle access to the site will be via Trowes Lane. The southern section of the road is single track width and the road will be reconfigured so that a new two lane carriageway will sweep into the application site from the north. There will be a new junction leading to the single track part of the road, as set out on the plan below. The reconfiguration of the road will encourage drivers to travel northwards from the site.



64. The proposed new access and road layout incorporates suitable visibility splays and swept path tracking for larger vehicles. It is proposed that the 30-mph speed limit would be extended into the site and the change to 30mph moved further south. This would need to be delivered through a Traffic Regulation Order at the expense of the applicant. A Road Safety Audit Stage 1 and designer's comments have been incorporated into the design of the access road.
65. The Transport Assessment identifies that Trowes Lane to the south of the site is lightly trafficked with less than 10 cars two-way per hour, and 80 vehicles 2-way per day. The northern section of Trowes Lane has 43 two-way movements during the AM Peak, 31 vehicles two-way during the PM peak and 352 vehicles two-way movements throughout the day.
66. The Council's Highway Engineer has advised that traffic movements along Trowes Lane would be within the capacity of the road, subject to the reconfiguration set out above, and would equate to less than 1 additional vehicle movement per minute during the morning and peak hours. There would be an additional 47 two-way movements into and out of the site during the AM peak hour and 41 two-way movements in the PM peak hour. The development has been run through the Borough Strategic Model showing an acceptable impact on the highway network.
67. It is proposed that there would be 178 allocated spaces, 29 garages, 16 visitor spaces and 13 unallocated spaces. This would result in a parking ratio of 2.2 and 2.5 with garages which exceeds the council's parking standards and in this instance is acceptable to the council's Highway Engineer. All spaces will be of an acceptable

size of 5m x 2.5m and parallel spaces being 6m x 2.5m and all garages will have internal dimensions of 7m x 3m.

68. Plots with garages have internal dimensions of 7m x 3m which is sufficient for cycle storage. Those plots without garages, cycle storage will need to be in rear gardens with direct access. For the proposed maisonettes, cycle parking would be provided in communal cycle storage areas. The communal cycle storage is of the correct dimensions and are in accessible locations which is welcome. The details of this will be secured through planning condition 10.

69. The council's Highway Engineer is satisfied with the development and raises no objection subject to conditions 4 – 10.

Sustainable Location:

Policy

70. Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy states *'the scale of development proposals in the borough must reflect the existing or proposed levels of facilities and services at or in the location, together with their accessibility.'*

71. Policy CP6 states of the Core Strategy states:

'Planning permission will be granted for schemes that:

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

b) Are located where there are or will be at the time of development choices in the mode of transport available and which minimise the distance people need to travel;'

72. The supporting text to Policy CP6 states:

'Paragraph 2.16 recognises that the borough has one of the highest car ownership rates of any English local authority. To reduce the likelihood that these vehicles will be used and to encourage modal shift, it is important to ensure all proposals achieve sustainable development'

'To help achieve sustainable development, proposals likely to generate significant demands for travel movements should be located in areas with best access to existing good services. This means that people can have the widest range of choice in selecting transport modes and help reduce the use of the private car. The availability of good existing public transport services has been considered in drafting the strategy for the Borough.'

Walking

73. The Borough Design Guide SPD states *'if places are to be sustainable then the aim should be to create: Walkable neighbourhoods, with a range of facilities within 10 minutes walking distance of residential areas, which encourage people to travel on foot or by bicycle.'* Walkable neighbourhoods are defined in Manual for Streets (MfS) as those typically characterised by having a range of facilities within 10

minutes walking distance from residential areas. Manual for Streets clarifies that 10 minutes walking distance is roughly 800 metres. The Urban Design Compendium further advises:

'People should be able to walk in 2-3 minutes (250 metres) to the post box or telephone box: the newsagent's should be within 5 minutes (400 metres). There should be local shops, the bus stop, the health centre and perhaps a primary school within a walking distance of (say) 10 minutes (800 metres).'

74. The National Design Guide¹ (Oct 2019) defines walkable as local services being no more than a 10 minute walk (800m radius).

75. The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) document 'providing for journeys on foot' advises that 400 metres is a desirable walking distance outside of city centres; 800 metres is stated as acceptable and 1,200 metres is the preferred maximum. The document clarifies that the suggested walking distances are for pedestrians without mobility impairment. These distances are also cited in the Wokingham Highway guidance Living Streets.

76. Swallowfield is classed as a Limited Development Location, which is summarised in the development plan as those settlements containing '*a basic range of services and facilities and are physically and socially cohesive*' and is at the bottom of the settlement hierarchy. The site would adjoin the existing development limits of the village.

77. There are several facilities that would fall within acceptable walking distances including a shop, public house, medical centre, pre-school, parish hall and several recreational facilities:

- Convince store with post office facilities 520m
- The Crown Public House 550m
- Swallowfield Medical Practice 590m
- Swallowfield Pre-school 750m
- Swallowfield Parish Hall 750m
- Swallowfield Park Sports Pitch(es) 800m
- Swallowfield Park Play Area 800m
- Swallowfield Meadow Nature Reserve 465m

78. The new footpath into the site would be 2m wide. The above facilities would be accessed by walking northwards and there two main routes a pedestrian could take; along Trowes Lane or via Foxborough and Curlys Way. Trowes Lane only has a footpath on one side of the road and this does not meet the minimum width of 2 metres as set out in manual for streets. Foxborough has footpaths on either side of the road approximately but the connecting footpath to Curlys way is narrower. Curlys Way only has footpaths on one side of the road.

79. Further afield, The Street has footpaths on both side of the road which varying in width and having a number of pinch points less than the minimum 2 metre width. There are no footpaths south along Trowes Lane but this is not essential as there are no nearby facilities and service in that direction.

80. The Transport Assessment identifies areas within the village where improved pedestrian infrastructure such as dropped kerbs, tactile paving and can be incorporated. Whilst this is a benefit it does not mitigate the issues raised above regarding existing walking infrastructure.
81. The nearest Primary School called Lambs Lane Primary School, which is outside of the village envelope would be over 2km from the centre of site. The majority of the walk to the school would be along the B3349 which only has narrow footpath (less than 2m) on one-side of the road, is unlit and has large areas without passive surveillance. It is unlikely that this would be a desirable walk for parents with children of primary school age.
82. The nearest secondary schools would either be Bohunt School in Arborfield or Oakbank School in Three Mile Cross. Both would be a considerable journey over 4km predominantly along country roads and lanes. It is not realistic that public or parents would walk to these secondary school.
83. Overall, the village has several walkable facilities and services which would serve day-to-day needs and offers a reasonable level of facilities for the limited size of Swallowfield. Whilst walking infrastructure is not optimal, it is generally in line with what would be expected of a village of this size. There are realistic options for pedestrians when choosing a walking route to the nearby services in the village, whilst travel by private vehicle would continue to be required for school journeys and shopping trips over and above top up shopping as is the case for existing residents.

Buses

84. The supporting text to policy CP6 of the Core Strategy sets out the requirement of a good bus service:
- a) At least a thirty minute service frequency during peak times (7:00 to 9:00 and 16:00 to 19:00 Monday to Saturday); and*
b) At least an hourly service frequency during off-peak hours (9:00 to 16:00 and 19:00 to 22:00 Monday to Saturday and between 7:00 and 22:00 on Sundays).
85. The Bus Service along The Street is the 600 which serves Reading and Shinfield to the north and Risley to the south. It does not meet the criteria set out above and cannot be considered as a 'good service'. There is no 30-minute frequency during peak there are no services on Sundays. There are no direct buses to Wokingham.
86. CIHT guidance 'Buses In Urban Developments recommends a bus stop catchment of 300 metres for less frequent routes. The nearest bus stops would be approximately 500-600m from the centre of the site along The Street. There is a bus shelter for easterly and northern routes but no shelter or seating for southerly/western routes.

Cycling

87. There are no cycle lanes in vicinity. Basingstoke Road is a busy B Road and would not be an attractive route to all cyclists. Cycling infrastructure in the area is limited and the development would unlikely encourage an uptake in modal journeys by bicycle.
88. The CHIT document Planning for Cycling estimates the modal share of cycle trips to equate to around 2% of all journeys. Cycling also has a seasonal bias and is only an opportunity for those that are physically capable. Even if good cycle infrastructure was in the vicinity, it would not compensate for the less than desirable walking opportunities and limited public transport options.

Appeal decision

89. A previously approved appeal decision for 20 dwellings was allowed on land immediately to the north of the site. The inspector stated in the Decision Letter that:

'I acknowledge that, as is likely to be the case in relation to existing residents of Swallowfield, many of the trips associated with future occupants of the appeal site are likely to be completed by car given the rural situation of the site. Nonetheless, Swallowfield is a location where, having regard to the levels of facilities and services at or in the location together with their accessibility, CS Policy CP9 supports the development of sites not exceeding 25 dwellings. The scale of development proposed would be below this level.'

Summary

90. Overall, it must be recognised that the quantum of development is in excess of the identified scale appropriate for the existing village and level of development set out for Limited Development Locations in the Development Plan. However, some day-to-day facilities and service within proximity of the site. While pedestrian infrastructure is not optimal and below standards in some locations in the village, it would offer some realistic options to some residents.
91. The above conclusion is consistent with the HELAA assessment that states '*the site is considered to perform poorly in respect of highways and accessibility issues.*' Notwithstanding this, there were other factors that resulted in the site being part of the draft allocation.
92. The use of the Langley Mead SANG is required to avoid a detrimental impact on the Thames Basin Heath SPA – This is consideration is set out in further detail in the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Residents will likely access this via private car from the site.
93. Overall, the sustainability of the site of the site does weigh against the scheme in the overall planning balance.

Flooding and Drainage:

94. The site is within Flood Zone 1 where the risk of flooding from rivers is low. There are areas at risk from surface water flooding in the south-east corner of the site and the woodland to the south. Trowles Lane and Charlton Lane that border the site are

liable to surface waterflooding. Land drainage ditches are located adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site and Trowes Lane and the southern boundary of the site.

95. A Flood Risk Assessment & SuDS Strategy has been submitted setting out the surface water drainage strategy and this includes a climate change allowance for peak rainfall intensity.
96. Runoff from roof areas and shared/private areas will drain to permeable pavements which will filter and treat runoff falling on its surface. Roof water will connect into the permeable pavement sub-base via rainwater diffuser units. The permeable pavement areas will then discharge either to a piped network and/or outfall directly to one of the three attenuation basins (central, north and/or south) in the site.
97. Adoptable highway runoff will drain to a piped network which will outfall to a northern attenuation basin and roof areas and runoff from the far eastern units/footpath will drain via a piped network to the southern attenuation basin. Flows from the central attenuation basin will be conveyed via a piped network to the northern attenuation basin. The flow from each attenuation will be restricted via flow control devices.
98. In accordance with British Standard requirements, the finished floor level should be a minimum of 43.49m AOD (i.e. 300mm above the modelled 1 in 100 (1.0%) annual probability plus allowance for climate change flood level). The majority of the site is at least 1.6m above this flood level, and therefore finished floor levels are set at a minimum of 150mm above external ground level to mitigate against the residual risk of surface water ingress during an extreme rainfall event.
99. The Council's Drainage Engineer has considered the application and raised no objection to recommended conditions 15 - 17.

Sewerage and water infrastructure

100. Thames Water have confirmed that *'we're pleased to confirm that there will be sufficient sewerage capacity in the adjacent foul water sewer network to serve your development.'* Thames Water sewer records for the area shows that there is no built surface water drainage infrastructure at the site. A 175mm diameter foul sewer is present within the northern part of the site that runs in a north-easterly direction to where it joins a larger 225mm diameter foul sewer beneath Trowes Lane. The relevant water authority / Statutory Undertaker is satisfied that the development can be adequately connected to mains water and sewers.

Impact on Trees:

101. The site is an open field with trees and hedge boundaries around the periphery. Other than small group of trees and vegetation being removed for the proposed access, all other trees will remain on site. numerous additional trees will be planted within the public realm of the site.
102. There is a plantation woodland to the south of the site which is being retained. Whilst public access is being proposed into the area, no formal footpaths or hard

surfacing is proposed that would affect the roots of these trees. Bringing this area into management would have benefited the overall condition of woodland.

Affordable Housing:

103. It is proposed that 40% of the dwellings on site will be affordable housing and this equates to 33 units and complies with the requirements set out in policy CP5 of the Core Strategy. The dwellings will be located along the north and eastern sections of the site and comprise of:
- 1 bedroom maisonettes/flats = 7
 - 2 bedroom maisonettes/flats = 7
 - 2 bedroom houses = 9
 - 3 bed houses = 6
 - 4 bed houses = 4
104. The units will also comprise of a mix between first homes, shared ownership and social rented. The council's Affordable Housing are satisfied with the on-site provision of affordable units. This will be secured via an accompanying legal agreement that transfers to the Council's Local Housing Company (Wokingham Housing Limited) or one of the Council's preferred Registered Provider (RP) partners for a price that will enable the RP or Local Housing Company to deliver the affordable housing without the need for public subsidy.

Employment Skills Plan:

105. Policy TB12 of the MDD Local Plan states that for Proposals for major development should be accompanied by an Employment and Skills (ESP) plan to show how the proposal accords opportunities for training, apprenticeship or other vocational initiatives to develop local employability skills required by developers, contractors or end users of the proposal.
106. ESPs are worked out using the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) benchmarks which are based on the value of construction. The value of the construction for planning application 230422 - Land West of Trowes Lane and North of Charlton Lane, Swallowfield has been calculated as £9,066,576. This is calculated by multiplying the interior floor space of 8845.44m² by £1025, which is the cost of construction per square metre as set out by Building Cost Information Service of RICS.
107. The ESP contribution for this application has therefore been calculated in the table below and will be secured by a section 106 agreement:

230422 - Land West of Trowes Lane and North of Charlton Lane, Swallowfield	
Project value	£9,066,576
Community Skills Support E.g. work experience or CSCS training courses	7

Apprenticeship starts	4
Jobs created	3

Ecology:

Bats

108. The Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) indicates that at least eight species of bat are using the site. This includes two species that are considered vulnerable on the IUCN list for England. The activity on site recorded does appear to be indicative of ad hoc commuting and foraging use by the rarer species of bat with the two more common species of Pipistrelle bat being more locally reliant on habitats on site and in the immediate vicinity.
109. The council's Ecologist raises no objection to the impact on bats stating:

'Considering that the arable field, which is a significant proportion of the site, is likely to be of limited value for foraging I interpret this number of species as indicative of the wider landscape being important for bats.'

[...]

'The proposed layout would result in a small amount of hedgerow loss but I consider the soft landscaping scheme to likely mitigate the fragmentation risk of this loss. The remaining habitat of higher value to bats will be retained.'

110. Condition 21 is recommended to ensure a lighting strategy is delivered and implemented to minimise excessive lighting in more ecological sensitive areas.

Badgers

111. The ecological surveys indicate that the site is currently not used by badgers and that the proposed development does not need to apply any specific avoidance or mitigation measures for this species. The council's Ecologist agrees with this conclusion and has advised that a condition ensuring a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is recommended (condition 5).

Reptiles

112. The council's Ecologist considers that sufficient reptile surveys have been undertaken and this indicates that one species (Grass Snake) has been recorded using the site. They have advised that the risk of killing or injuring Grass Snakes during construction can be adequately mitigated through the application of reasonable avoidance measures through the recommended CEMP condition.

Great Crested Newts

113. Paragraph 4.56 of the EclA states that it is likely that Great Crested Newts will occur within on-site terrestrial habitat. Paragraph 5.37 of the EclA recommends that the project should be covered by a derogation licence from Natural England.

114. The council's Ecologist has advised that sufficient survey effort has been undertaken. These identify a small population of Great Crested Newt as using a pond close to the site boundary. It has also picked up another pond within 250m of the site boundary which has confirmed presence of the species by eDNA (population size unknown). They conclude by stating '*I recommend that the licensing and integration of mitigation measures during construction is an element that is covered within the CEMP condition already proposed*'

Other

115. The council's Ecologist has also advised that sufficient survey work has been undertaken with regard to water voles and Dormice and that the development would not detrimentally impact these species.

Ecological Permeability

116. Paragraph 4.41 of the EclA considers it likely that Hedgehogs are present locally and that there could be use of the site by this Species of Principal Importance. MDD Policy TB23 seeks new development to provide ecological permeability. Hedgehogs are a target species for permeability measures and this would include regular gaps in fences lines and boundaries. Condition 25 is recommended to secure ecological permeability measures are implemented.

Biodiversity Net Gain and species enhancements

117. The development will largely be concentrating to the existing open fields. Whilst there would be some hedgerow loss, this would be to a limited extent for the site access. The woodland to the south and trees and vegetation around the periphery of the site would be maintained. The development includes open space to the west which has sufficient space to locate ecological enhancements. That would result in a Biodiversity Net Gain. The EIA states that the proposed development would be expected to result in an on-site net gain of 25.66% in habitat units.
118. Species specific enhancements have been proposed in the EclA and include bat boxes, bird boxes, log piles, an invertebrate nesting tower, and a hibernaculum.
119. It is proposed that the public green spaces will be managed by a management company. It is possible that the post-development scenario could be managed for a period of 30 years post construction by a management company, and this could deliver a biodiversity net gain. The Planning Statement includes ongoing landscape maintenance and the council's ecologist recommends that this route is pursued in order to secure the biodiversity net gain for a minimum period of 30 years via a Landscape Infrastructure Management Plan (condition 12).

Summary on ecology

120. The council's Ecologist has advised that the development can deliver a biodiversity Net Gain and that important species can be protected and mitigated, subjected to the recommended conditions 5, 23, 24 and 25.

Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area:

121. The application site is within 5km of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. The impact to the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area must be mitigated by the provision of the Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG).
122. Wokingham Borough Council's own strategic SANG could not be used to provide SANG capacity for this project because it is beyond the catchment zone for this SANG. The developer proposes to purchase capacity at a SANG owned by the University of Reading, instead.
123. The development has confirmed that the Langley Mead SANG and subsequent extension can be used as suitable mitigation for the Impact on the SANG. Natural England originally set out in 2017 that the Langle Mead Extension would provide suitable SANG that can act as adequate mitigation for the impact on the SPA. This is proposed to be secured by the Heads of Terms in the section S106 agreement.

Sustainable Design:

124. An Energy & Sustainability Statement has been submitted and this details a combination of 'fabric first' and renewable and low-carbon energy technologies. The fabric first measure measures include energy-efficient building fabric and insulation, high-efficiency double glazed windows throughout, measures for achieving good air-tightness, high-efficiency heating systems, Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery System and Low-energy lighting throughout the building. Renewable and low-carbon energy technologies will include Individual Air Source Heat Pump technology and photovoltaic panels array across the site.
125. Paragraph 164 of the NPPF states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements through installation of heat pumps and solar panels. As such it is recognised the development meets the requirements set out in policy CC04, contributes to the Council climate change goals and fulfils the national sustainability objectives. This affords weight in the overall balance.

Archaeology:

126. There are potential archaeological implications with this proposed development as demonstrated by Berkshire Archaeology's Historic Environment Record. The site has been classified as part of an Area of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP) by Wokingham Borough Council. Aerial Photographic records have identified possible archaeological crop marks within the application area, whilst there are several findspots of Prehistoric, Roman and Medieval in the vicinity of the site. During the evaluation of the site in May 2022, archaeological features including middle/late Iron Age and Romano British pits and pottery were discovered in the northern area of the site, Medieval evidence in the southwest, along with a linear feature which may relate to Post Medieval period running centrally north, were found showing that there is potential for further archaeology on the site.
127. Berkshire Archaeology have considered the application and raise no objection subject to condition 22.

Heritage Assets:

128. The Swallowfield Conservation Area is located at the northeastern end of The Street. The site is over 300m away and significantly detached from this area. There are intervening houses, roads and other physical features that separate the site from this Conservation Area. There are no on the ground views where the development would be perceived within the context of this part of The Street and the development would maintain the character and appearance of this Heritage Asset. In addition, the development does integrate some architectural feature that are characteristic of the Swallowfield.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

129. When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development. Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed for all CIL liable applications.

130. The council's Regulation 123 List outlined CIL contributions towards Health centres/GP surgeries and education. The current Infrastructure Funding Statement shows allocations towards health provisions and education. CIL can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure in accordance with third-party comments regarding the capacity of local services, including education.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010):

131. In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

Planning Balance:

132. The Council cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing supply and therefore the development must be assessed in line with Paragraph 11d(ii) and against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole. The three overarching objectives contained within paragraph 8 of the Framework seek to balance growth and local community needs against protection of the natural, built and historic environment. The benefits and disbenefits are therefore considered against these three broad topic areas below.

133. Whilst the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date by virtue of the absence of a 5-year housing land supply, that does not mean the policies carry no weight. The weight attached to the development plan policies is a matter for the decision maker(s). The conflict with the spatial strategy of the plan still weighs against the application and the Inspector for the Lodge Road Appeal gave the conflict with the spatial vision in the development plan significant weight.

'For reasons set out earlier in this decision, I consider that the appeal proposal would be in clear conflict with this spatial vision and the aforementioned policies, which I have already concluded should carry significant weight in this appeal, notwithstanding the absence of a deliverable 5-Year HLS. This weighs very heavily against the appeal proposal.'

Economic

134. As with all housing development of this scale in this location, the proposal would result in notable economic benefits. This is broadly set to arise from the short-term economic contribution of the construction of up to 81 homes via construction industry jobs. In the longer term, future residents of up to 81 dwellings will contribute to the viability and vitality of businesses in the village and nearby towns. CIL payments and New Homes Bonus would also be an economic benefit of the proposal. Although none of these are unique to this scheme, the size of the development means these benefits are not insignificant and the development is therefore considered to perform a positive economic role.

Social

135. The provision of 81 new dwellings, including 33 affordable homes would positively assist in furthering the social objective of sustainable development. The provision of an adequate range of dwelling sizes and policy compliant on-site affordable housing provision will ensure this site does as much as it can to meet the identified general and affordable housing need over the local plan period. Planning Inspectors have given the benefit of affordable housing varying weight. Broadly speaking, the greater number of homes and affordable units provided within a development tends to attract greater weight from government Inspectors. This particular development is therefore considered to perform a positive social role.

Environmental

136. There would be a degree of harm to the character and appearance of the countryside as the proposal would result in the loss of undeveloped open fields. The scale of the development is not entirely commensurate with the local facilities and services within the village but would be opportunities to utilise sustainable travel options to several facilities and this tempers the weight attached to the limited sustainability of the area for this size of development. There would be a temporary environment impact from the construction phase of the development associated with quarrying, processing and transportation of materials along with the general construction on site and emissions from travelling to and from the site.
137. Ecological benefits will be secured alongside biodiversity net gain across the site and in accordance with updated national policy, the proposed heat pumps and solar panels in addition to the fact the new dwellings would inherently meet an enhanced level of sustainability through compliance with mandatory energy efficiency and sustainability standards.

Conclusion:

138. The most important policies for determining the application are out of date by virtue of the absence of a 5-year housing land supply. Paragraph 11 of the Framework

therefore states that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, or there are specific policies in the Framework which indicate that development should be restricted. In this regard the tilted balance is engaged, all-be-it tempered due to past over-delivery.

139. As outlined above, the proposal would provide several benefits that weigh in favour of the application. The provision of new housing and affordable homes is a weighty material benefit in favour of the scheme. Whilst past over-delivery is relevant, it is also pertinent that the current housing land supply shortfall will likely remain until the new LPU is adopted, enabling new planned developments to come forward. Notwithstanding this, the Lodge Road Inspector was clear regarding past over-delivery and that the spatial vision of the plan was performing well and managing to boost the supply of housing over that which it planned for (Paragraph 32). In addition, the Inspector notes in paragraph 137 that relevant policies accord strongly with the Framework, especially in promoting and securing a sustainable pattern of development.
140. As noted, there are material factors that weigh negatively in the planning balance including the landscaping impact, sustainability of the location, partial loss of BMV land and conflict with the spatial vision of the development plan. However, there are also notable benefits that accord with the governments objective to significantly boosting the supply of homes in and areas where there is a housing land supply shortfall.
141. In considering all matters raised, the adverse impacts of the proposed development would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework when taken as a whole. The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to the conditions and legal agreement set out in this report.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts upon protected groups as a result of the development.

APPENDIX 1 - Conditions / informatives or Reasons for refusal

APPROVAL subject to the following conditions and informatives:

Time Limit

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

Reason: In pursuance of s.91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by s.51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

Approved Details

2. This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings numbered below received by the local planning authority:

Site Location Plan 3145-A-1001
Site Layout 3145-A-1005-PR-H
Site Layout Coloured 3145-C-1005-PL-H
Parking Plan 3145-A-1700-PL- E
Street Scenes 3145-A-1010-D
Street Scenes 3145-A-1011-E
Refuse Strategy Plan 3145-A-1701-PL-D
Boundary Treatments Plan 3145-A-1702-PL-D
Materials Plan 3145-A-1703-PL-D
Tenure Plan 3145-A-1704-PL-D
Fire Strategy Plan 3145-A-1705-PL-D
Garden Sizes Plan 3145-A-1706-PL-D
POS Typologies Plan 3145-A-1707-PL-J
Landscape Masterplan CSA/5643/118 D
LEAP Landscape Proposals CSA/5643/119 B
LAP Play Area Proposals CSA/5643/120 A
Hard Landscape Proposals (Sheet 1) CSA/5643/111 F
Hard Landscape Proposals (Sheet 2) CSA/5643/112 F
Hard Landscape Proposals (Sheet 3) CSA/5643/113 F
Soft Landscape Proposals (Sheet 1) CSA/5643/114 F
Soft Landscape Proposals (Sheet 2) CSA/5643/115 F
Soft Landscape Proposals (Sheet 3) CSA/5643/116 F
Soft Landscape Proposals (Sheet 4) CSA/5643/117 F

Elevations:

3005 Rev B; 3010 Rev C; 3011 Rev A; 3015 Rev B; 3020 Rev B; 3021 Rev B; 3022 Rev B; 3023 Rev C; 3025 Rev C; 3035 Rev B; 3036 Rev B; 3040 Rev B; 3045 Rev B; 3046 Rev B; 3050 Rev B; 3051 Rev B; 3056 Rev B; 3058 Rev A; 3059 Rev C; 3060 Rev B; 3061 Rev B; 3065 Rev C; 3070 Rev B; 3075 Rev B; 3080 Rev B; 3085 Rev C; 3086 Rev B; 3100 Rev B; 3150 Rev A and 3151 Rev A.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

External materials

3. Before above ground construction works of the proposed development hereby permitted is commenced, samples and details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building/s shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the so-approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3

Access

4. Prior to commencement of the development, there shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, details of the proposed vehicular access on to Trowes Lane to include visibility splays of 2.4m by 43m as well as the pedestrian access onto Charlton Lane. The accesses shall be formed as so-approved and the visibility splays shall be cleared of any obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height prior to the occupation of the development. The access shall be retained in accordance with the approved details and used for no other purpose and the land within the visibility splays shall be maintained clear of any visual obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience. Relevant policy:

Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

Highway Construction Details

5. Prior to the commencement of development, full details of the construction of roads and footways, including levels, widths, construction materials, depths of construction, surface water drainage and lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The roads and footways shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details to road base level before the development is occupied and the final wearing course will be provided within 3 months of occupation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that roads and footpaths are constructed to a standard that would be suitable for adoption as publicly maintainable highway, in the interests of providing a functional, accessible and safe development. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

Construction Method Statement and Ecological Management Plan

5. No development shall take place, until a Construction Method Statement, including a CEMP (Construction Ecological Management Plan), has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall provide for but not be limited to the following:
 - (a) construction of suitable works access;
 - (b) the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
 - (c) loading and unloading of plant and materials;
 - (d) storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
 - (e) the erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative

- displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate;
- (f) wheel washing facilities;
- (g) measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction;
- (h) a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works;
- (i) hours of construction;
- (j) hours of delivery; and
- (k) mitigation and avoidance measures for ecology and biodiversity.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety & convenience, neighbour amenities and ecology. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

Parking spaces

6. No part of any building(s) hereby permitted shall be occupied or used until the vehicle parking space for that property has been provided in accordance with the approved plans, including 3145/A/1700/PL Rev E. All communal vehicle parking spaces should be provided prior to the occupation of the 81st dwelling. The vehicle parking space shall be permanently maintained and remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory parking is delivered and maintained.

Parking Management Plan

7. Prior to the first occupation of any dwelling, a Parking Management Strategy for the management of the parking arrangements shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The submitted Parking Management Strategy shall include details of the management of all parking spaces and the monitoring and the delivery of additional electric vehicle charging spaces when required.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory development in the interests of amenity and highway safety in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP6, CP13 and CP21 and MDDLDP policies CC07 and TB20.

Electric Vehicle Charging

8. Prior to the commencement of development, an Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This strategy shall include details relating to onsite electric vehicle charging infrastructure in accordance with Building Control Regulations Approved Document S and details of installation of charging points. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed strategy thereafter.

Reason: In order to ensure that secure electric vehicle charging facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

Garage retention

9. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), the garage accommodation on the site identified on the approved plans shall be kept available for the parking of vehicles ancillary to

the residential use of the site at all times. It shall not be used for any business nor as habitable space.

Reason: To ensure that adequate parking space is available on the site, so as to reduce the likelihood of roadside parking, in the interests of highway safety and convenience. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

Cycle Parking

10. Prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted details of secure and covered bicycle storage/ parking facilities for the occupants of [and visitors to] the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The cycle storage/ parking shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be approved before occupation of the development hereby permitted, and shall be permanently retained in the approved form for the parking of bicycles and used for no other purpose.

Reason: In order to ensure that secure weather-proof bicycle parking facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

Landscaping details

11. Prior to above ground construction works of the development hereby permitted, full details of both hard and soft landscape proposals shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include, as appropriate, proposed finished floor levels or contours, means of enclosure, car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas, hard surfacing materials and minor artefacts and structure (e.g. furniture, play equipment, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting, external services, etc). Soft landscaping details shall include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable.

All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a timetable approved in writing by the local planning authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of species, size and number as originally approved and permanently retained.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21 (and TB06 for garden development)

Landscape management plan

12. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved, a landscape management plan, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities, timescales and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas, other than privately owned, domestic gardens, shall be submitted to and approved in writing

by the local planning authority. The landscape management plan shall be carried out as approved.

Reason: In order to ensure that provision is made to allow satisfactory maintenance of the landscaping hereby approved. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21

Tree Protection

13. a) No development or other operation shall commence on site until a scheme which provides for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority (the Approved Scheme); the tree protection measures approved shall be implemented in complete accordance with the Approved Scheme for the duration of the development (including, unless otherwise provided by the Approved Scheme) demolition, all site preparation work, tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery.

b) No development (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) shall commence until the local planning authority has been provided (by way of a written notice) with a period of no less than 7 working days to inspect the implementation of the measures identified in the Approved Scheme on-site.

c) No excavations for services, storage of materials or machinery, parking of vehicles, deposit or excavation of soil or rubble, lighting of fires or disposal of liquids shall take place within an area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the Approved Scheme.

d) The fencing or other works which are part of the Approved Scheme shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works including external works have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from the site, unless the prior approval of the local planning authority has first been sought and obtained.

Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that the development is being carried out of trees shrubs or hedges growing within or adjacent to the site which are of amenity value to the area, and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place before development and other works commence Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21

Tree Retention

14. No trees, shrubs or hedges within the site which are shown as being retained on the approved plans shall be felled, uprooted wilfully damaged or destroyed, cut back in any way or removed without previous written consent of the local planning authority; any trees, shrubs or hedges removed without consent or dying or being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within 5 years from the completion of the development hereby permitted shall be replaced with trees, shrubs or hedge plants

of similar size and species unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.

To secure the protection throughout the time that development is being carried out, of trees, shrubs and hedges growing within the site which are of amenity value to the area. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21

Drainage maintenance

15. No development shall be put in to use/occupied until a SuDS management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include the arrangements for adoption by any public authority or statutory undertaker and any other arrangements to secure the operation of the scheme throughout its lifetime, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Plan should fully detail the access that is required to reach surface water management component for maintenance purposes. It should also include a plan for safe and sustainable removal and disposal of waste periodically arising from drainage system, detailing the materials to be used and standard of work required including method statement. The approved SUDS maintenance plan shall be implemented in full in accordance with the agreed terms and conditions.

Reason: To ensure the continued operation and maintenance of drainage features serving the site and avoid flooding.

Drainage exceedance flow

16. Development shall not take place until an exceedance flow routing plan for flows above the 1 in 100+40% climate change event has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The proposed scheme shall identify exceedance flow routes through the development based on proposed topography with flows being directed to highways and areas of public open space. Flow routes through gardens and other areas in private ownership will not be permitted. The scheme shall subsequently be completed in accordance with the approved details before the development is first brought into use/occupied.

Reason: To ensure that the site can be adequately drained. It is important that these details are agreed prior to the commencement of development as any works on site could have implications for drainage in the locality.

Drainage overflow

17. The layout of the development site and the drainage system should be designed so that natural low lying areas and overland conveyance pathways are used to manage surface runoff, where appropriate, where they do not pose an unacceptable risk to the new developments or downstream areas/ elsewhere. Where run-off from off-site sources is drained together with the site run-off, the contributing catchment should be modelled as part of drainage system in order to take full account of additional flows.

Reason: To ensure that the site can be adequately drained. It is important that these details are agreed prior to the commencement of development

Hours of operation

18. No work relating to the development hereby approved, including works of demolition or preparation prior to building operations, shall take place other than between the hours of 08:00 hours and 18:00 hours Mondays to Fridays and 08:00 hours to 13:00 hours on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank or National Holidays.

Reason: to protect the occupiers of neighbouring properties from noise and disturbance outside the permitted hours during the construction period.
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.

Unexpected Land Contamination

19. If land contamination (including any UXB) is found at any time during site clearance, groundwork, and construction the discovery shall be reported as soon as possible to the local planning authority. A full contamination risk assessment shall be carried out and if found to be necessary, a 'remediation method statement' shall be submitted to the local planning authority for written approval.

Reason: To ensure that any contamination of the site is identified at the outset to allow remediation to protect existing/proposed occupants of property on the site and/or adjacent land. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment) and Core Strategy policies CP1 & CP3.

Noise

20. Prior to occupation of the development hereby approved, a full noise impact assessment should be carried out by an appropriately qualified consultant, this should be submitted to the local authority for approval. This can inform the design to achieve best practice and will need to address noise impact in terms of.

- Existing noise sources and how they may affect any future development of the site, this is to take into consideration the character of the site and the nearby roads and the impact on the amenity of the new properties and on the amenity of nearby properties, both internal and external spaces.
- Nearby sensitive receptors during the construction phase, to include vehicle movement and plant and machinery being used, as well as construction noise and any mitigation measures.

This report is to identify a clear scheme of recommended works, or such other steps as may be necessary to minimize the effects of noise associated with the proposed development, both on nearby noise sensitive receptors and on future occupants of the development.

Reason: to ensure a satisfactory noise impact on nearby residents.

Lighting

21. Prior to the occupation of the first dwelling, details of external lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before the development is occupied. The details shall include location, height, type and direction of light sources and intensity of illumination for all external lighting strategies including details of lighting for all highways, cycleways, footpaths, public areas and any non-residential buildings. No further external lighting shall be installed without the written approval of the local planning authority

Reason: to ensure a satisfactory and safe public realm, avoid detrimental impacts on existing and future residents and to ensure impacts on bats and protected species are satisfactorily minimised.

Archaeology

22. A) No development shall take place/commence until a programme of archaeological work including a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been submitted to, and approved by, the local planning authority in writing. The WSI shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:

1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording
2. The programme for post investigation assessment
3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording
4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation
5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation
6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the WSI.

B) The Development shall take place in accordance with the WSI approved under condition (A). The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the WSI approved under condition (A) and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.

Reason: The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, particularly for, but not limited to, Iron Age and Medieval remains. The potential impacts of the development can be mitigated through a programme of archaeological work. This is in accordance with national and local plan policy. To ensure that archaeological assets noted on the Berkshire Archaeology HER and recorded during evaluation are mitigated, a targeted Scheme of Works, which is likely to include an excavation of further areas of the site, should be undertaken therefore it is suggested that the applicant's consultant contacts us to finalise the scope of these further works.

Landscape Ecological Management Plan

23. Prior to the commencement of the development a Landscape Environmental Management Plan (LEMP), including long term design objectives, management responsibilities, timescales, and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas, other than privately owned domestic gardens, which delivers and demonstrates a habitat and hedgerow biodiversity net gain shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved LEMP.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21 (and TB06 for garden development).

Biodiversity Net Gain

24. Prior to the commencement of development, details of how the development will achieve a biodiversity net gain of at least 20% (as set out in the submitted Ecological Impact Assessment ref: CSA/5643/05 August 2023) for habitats shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details thereby agreed shall be fully implemented in accordance with an agreed timetable.

Reason: to ensure the development results in a biodiversity net gain and contributes to the objectives of conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Ecological permeability

25. Prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved, detailed drawings of any walls, fences or other means of enclosure within or around the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The design of any wall, fence or other means of enclosure must be ecologically permeable to small mammals and wildlife. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and so-retained thereafter.

Reason: to ensure satisfactory boundary treatment and privacy and ensure the development is ecologically permeable.

Sustainability/renewables

26. Prior to the occupation of any dwelling, details of the solar panels and air source heat pumps recommended by the Energy & Sustainability Statement rev 3 ref: BO.S.RG7 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. No building shall be occupied until the sustainability measures associated with that property are installed in full working order in accordance with the details set out in Energy & Sustainability Statement rev 3 ref: BO.S.RG7. So far as practical, the sustainability measures shall be maintained in full working order unless they are replaced by more efficient and sustainable technology.

Reason: to mitigate and adapt to climate change and ensure the building are energy efficient.

Permitted development rights

27. Notwithstanding the provisions of Classes B and C of Part 1 of the Second Schedule the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no buildings, enlargement or alterations permitted shall be carried out without the express permission in writing of the local planning authority.

Reason: To protect the privacy and amenity of neighbouring dwellings from overlooking from upper floor windows

28. Notwithstanding the provisions of Class A of Part 2 of the Second Schedule of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no walls, fences gates, other means of enclosure or additional hard surfacing shall be erected within the curtilage of any dwellinghouse forward of any wall of that dwellinghouse which fronts onto a road.

Reason: to maintain the character and appearance of the development.

Bin storage details

29. No building shall be occupied until the bin storage area/facilities have been installed and made available in accordance with drawing 3145 A 1701 PL C. The bin storage area and facilities shall be permanently so-retained and used for no purpose other than the temporary storage of refuse and recyclable materials unless a satisfactory alternative bin storage area is provided.

Reason: In the interests of visual and neighbouring amenities and functional development. Relevant policy: Core Strategy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC04.

Informatives

1. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received. This planning application has been the subject of positive and proactive discussions with the Applicant.

2. The applicant is reminded that this approval is granted subject to conditions which must be complied with prior to the development starting on site. Commencement of the development without complying with the pre-commencement requirements may be outside the terms of this permission and liable to enforcement action. The information required should be formally submitted to the Council for consideration with the relevant fee. Once the details have been approved in writing the development should be carried out only in accordance with those details. If this is not clear please contact the case officer to discuss.

3. This permission should be read in conjunction with the legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act, the obligations in which relate to this development.

4. The developer's attention is drawn to the fact that this permission does not authorise the physical construction of the proposed off-site highway works and site access connections to the public highway. A separate legal agreement made with the Council under s.278 of the Highways Act 1980 is required. No work within or affecting the public highway shall commence until the agreement has been completed and the Council, as local highway authority, has approved all construction and installation details together with a programme of works.

5. The development hereby permitted is liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy. The Liability Notice issued by Wokingham Borough Council will state the current chargeable amount. A revised Liability Notice will be issued if this amount changes. Anyone can formally assume liability to pay, but if no one does so then liability will rest with the landowner. There are certain legal requirements that must be complied with. For instance, whoever will pay the levy must submit an Assumption of Liability form and a Commencement Notice to Wokingham Borough Council prior to commencement of development, failure to do this will result in penalty surcharges being added. For more information see the Council's website – Community Infrastructure Levy advice page. Please submit all CIL forms and enquiries to developer.contributions@wokingham.gov.uk.