

# **Statement of Common Ground**

between

## **Wokingham Borough Council**

and

## **Reading Borough Council**

in relation to the

Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040

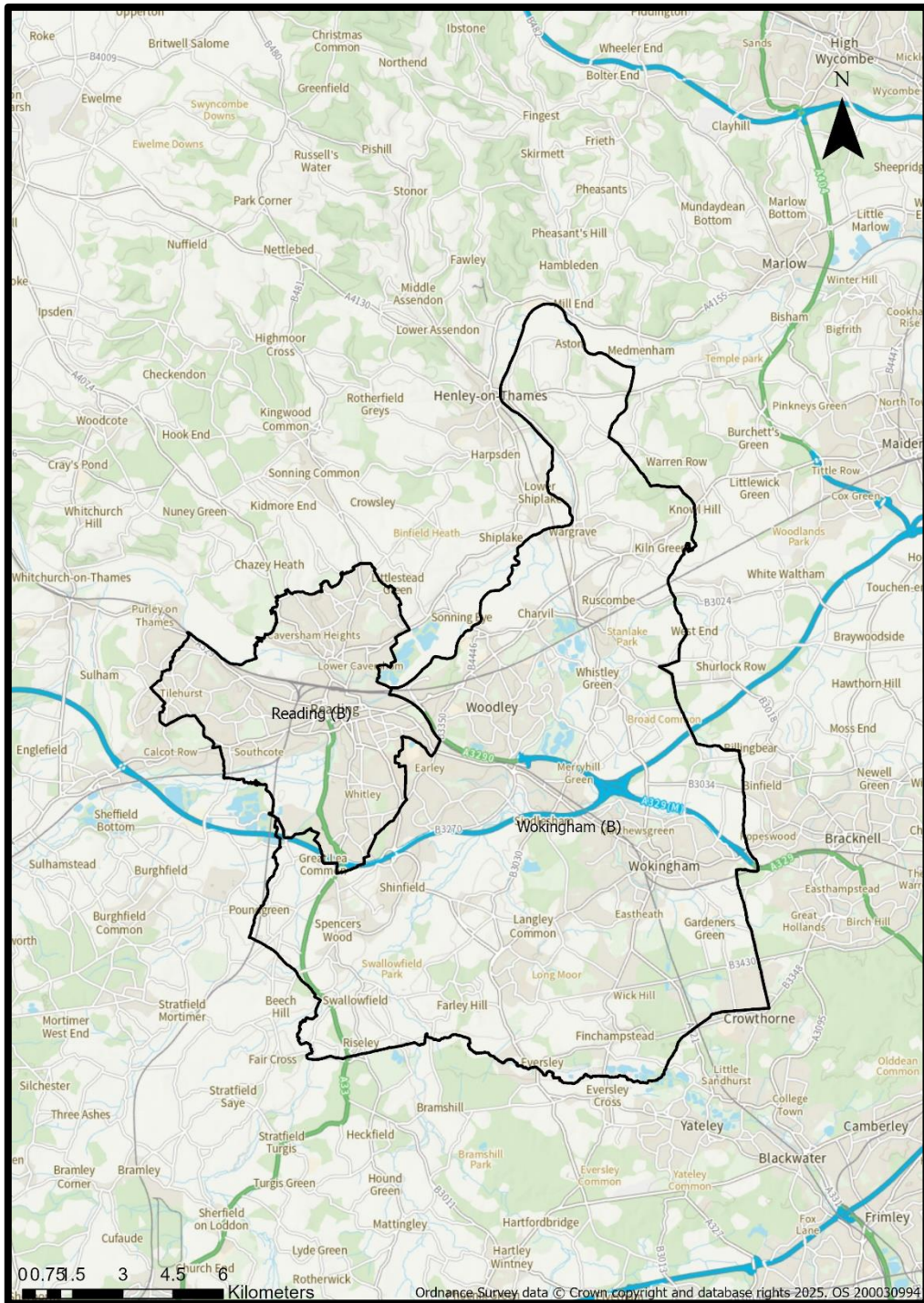
March 2025

# 1. Introduction

1.1 This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and Reading Borough Council (RBC), collectively referred to as “the parties”. It sets out matters that are agreed between the parties in relation to the preparation of the Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023 – 2040: Proposed Submission Plan.

# 2. Strategic Geography

**Figure 1: Map of the local authorities.**



- 2.1 Wokingham Borough is located approximately 50km west of London, in the heart of the Thames Valley and within the Royal County of Berkshire. The borough covers an area of 17,892 hectares and is characterised by a variety of settlements with the largest being Earley, Winnersh and Woodley, which are in proximity to Reading Borough, and Wokingham.
- 2.2 RBC is located to the west of Wokingham Borough, also within the county of Berkshire. RBC is focused on Reading town, incorporate the main urban area. Peripheral suburban areas extend into the neighbouring local authorities of WBC and West Berkshire District Council.
- 2.3 The parties are neighbouring local authorities sharing a boundary from near the Mouth of the River Kennet round in a broadly south-westerly direction to the Green Park business area.
- 2.4 The parties are linked by various roads, notably the M4, A33, and Reading Road / Wokingham Road (A329). The Reading to London Waterloo, Great Western Railway mainline into London Paddington, and the Reading to Gatwick airport railway lines also connect the boroughs.

### **3. Local Plan Positions**

#### ***Wokingham Borough Council***

- 3.1 WBC commenced evidence gathering to inform the Local Plan Update in 2016. The plan-making process has been informed by opinions expressed through various consultations, including Issues and Options Consultation (2016), Homes for the Future Consultation (2018), Draft Plan Consultation (2020) and Revised Growth Strategy Consultation (2021). A wide range of technical reports have also been completed, including reports relating to sustainability, landscape character, transport, flood risk, air quality, housing, economic and retail needs, and land supply.
- 3.2 WBC invited representations on the Local Plan Update Proposed Submission Plan between 30th September and 13th November 2024.
- 3.3 The plan will be submitted for examination under the transitional arrangements set out in the 2024 version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), meaning it will be examined against the requirements of the December 2023 NPPF.

#### ***Reading Borough Council***

- 3.4 RBC's Local Plan was adopted in 2019. RBC began the process of reviewing the Local Plan and concluded in March 2023 that 45 of the 90 policies require updating. Accordingly, a partial update is underway with the Pre-Submission Draft of the Partial Update to the Local Plan (Regulation 19) undergoing consultation from 6<sup>th</sup> November to 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024.
- 3.5 Similarly to WBC, RBC expect to submit the Partial Update to the Local Plan for examination under the transitional arrangements set out in the 2024 version of the NPPF.

### ***Minerals and Waste Local Plan***

- 3.6 WBC and RBC worked jointly in the preparation of the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan with Bracknell Forest Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. The plan was adopted in January 2023. There is no published timetable for its review.

## **4. Key Strategic Matters**

### ***Engagement on strategic cross boundary matters***

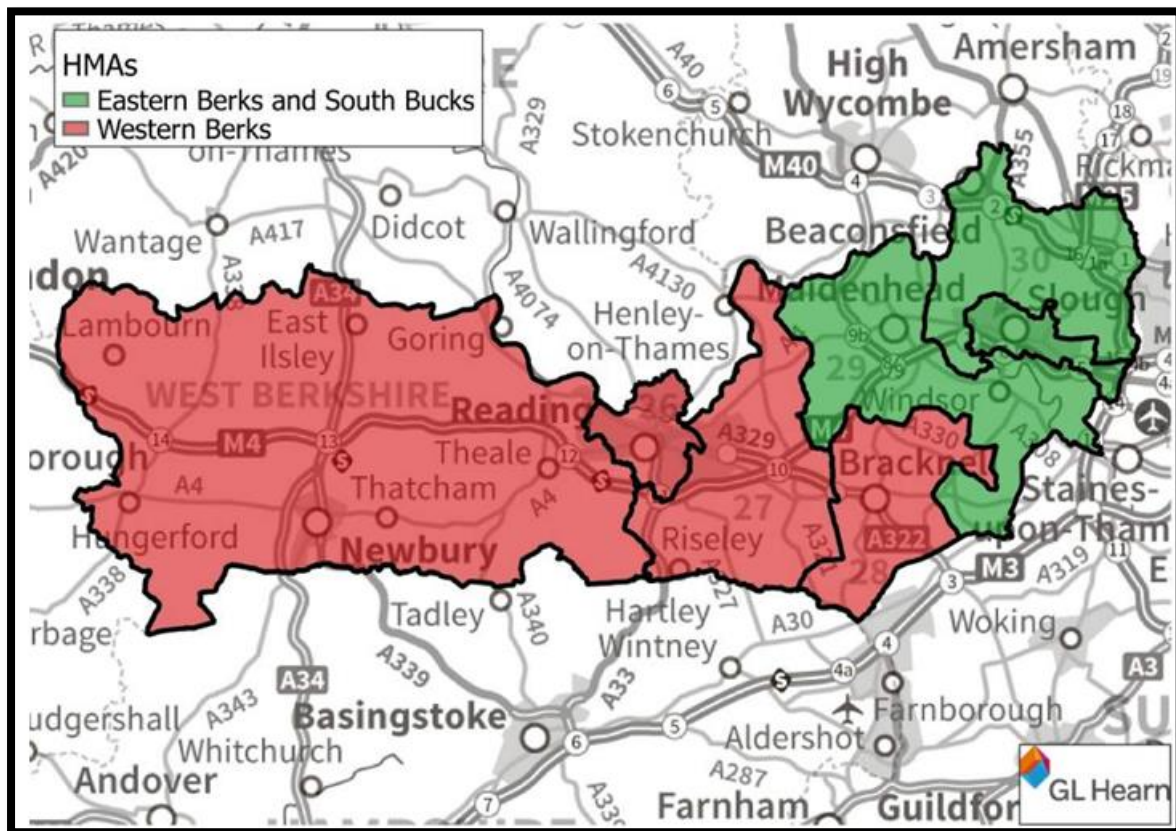
- 4.1 The parties have engaged to discuss relevant strategic cross boundary matters throughout the preparation of their respective plans. This has included engagement on the various evidence base documents which underpin emerging policies.
- 4.2 The duty to cooperate activities between the parties are recorded in the Wokingham Borough Council Duty to Cooperate Interim Statement of Compliance (September 2024).
- 4.3 The relevant strategic cross boundary matters between the parties are as follows:
- a) Housing need and supply (including the provision of sites for Gypsies and Travellers).
  - b) Employment need and supply.
  - c) Retail need and supply.
  - d) AWE consultation zones.
  - e) Green Belt and landscape character.
  - f) Historic environment.
  - g) Infrastructure, including transport, health, education, utilities.
  - h) Recreational pressure on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.
  - i) Habitats and biodiversity.
  - j) Flood risk and climate change.
- 4.4 RBC responded to the Proposed Submission Plan (Regulation 19) publication. The representation did not raise any issues regarding legal compliance or failure to discharge the duty to cooperate. The focus of comments was on individual policies. Please see Appendix A for further information.

### ***a) Housing need and supply (including the provision of sites for Gypsies and Travellers)***

- 4.5 The Berkshire (Including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) identified Wokingham Borough and Reading Borough being part of a Western Berkshire Housing Market Area (HMA) centred on Reading and comprising the local authorities of Reading Borough Council, Bracknell Forest Council, West Berkshire District Council and Wokingham Borough Council. Whilst HMAs are no longer specifically referenced in the NPPF, the accompanying Planning Practice Guidance: plan-making references them in the context of cooperation. The parties agree that for Wokingham Borough and Reading

Borough, the Western Berkshire HMA is the core area for cooperation on the planning of housing.

**Figure 2: Housing Market Areas.**



Wokingham Borough Council

- 4.6 The Proposed Submission Plan will be submitted for examination under the transitional arrangements set out in the 2024 version of the NPPF, meaning it will be examined against the requirements of the 2023 version of the NPPF, including the associated calculation of local housing need.
- 4.7 The local housing need figure as defined by the standard method set out in national guidance associated with the 2023 NPPF for Wokingham Borough is 748 dwellings per year at 1 April 2024 and 795 dwellings at 1 April 2023. Housing need over the plan period 2023-2040 equates to 12,763 dwellings as set out in Policy SS10. There is no unmet need arising from other local authorities within the Western Berkshire Housing Market Area.
- 4.8 The Proposed Submission Plan enables a land supply capable of providing as a minimum 13,955 dwellings within the plan period, meeting local housing need plus a reasonable allowance for potential non-delivery.
- 4.9 The spatial strategy set out in Policy SS2 proposes to meet a large proportion of the housing requirement through the evolution of the existing planned developments at the Arborfield Green and South Wokingham Strategic Development Locations, and the delivery of a new



sustainable garden village on land between Shinfield, Sindlesham and Arborfield, called Loddon Valley Garden Village. A number of allocations for a lesser scale of development are also proposed across Wokingham Borough.

- 4.10 The need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches is proposed to be primarily met through a combination of specific site allocations and delivery as part of strategic scale development. The modest remaining need is expected to be met through windfall developments, for which a positive framework is set by Policies H9 and H10.
- 4.11 In summary on housing need, the parties agree that housing need, including the provision of Gypsy and Traveller pitches can be delivered in full over the plan period within Wokingham Borough.
- 4.12 The parties agree to continue necessary engagement regarding infrastructure provision, including that concerning highway impacts.

#### Reading Borough Council

- 4.13 The Reading Local Plan (2019) identified a modest shortfall of 230 dwellings over the plan period 2013 – 2036. However, the most up to date delivery position is that no unmet need exists against the requirement, with a projected over-delivery of around 1,900 dwellings expected. This was confirmed by RBC in a letter dated 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024.
- 4.14 The emerging Local Plan Partial Review evidence identifies a housing need of 735 dwellings per annum, with the plan identifying a supply equating to 825 dwellings per annum.
- 4.15 RBC does not consider that there is a need to make any additional allowance for unmet housing need from Reading Borough in other local plans, including the Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update.
- 4.16 Regarding Gypsy and Traveller provision, there is an unmet need in RBC's adopted Local Plan (2019) equating to 10-17 permanent pitches. The emerging local plan continues to utilise the same evidence base, and no sites have arisen since adoption of the local plan that would meet this need. RBC continues to explore options with surrounding local authorities for this need to be accommodated outside of Reading Borough.
- 4.17 Given the scale of WBC's own Gypsy and Traveller needs, and the reliance on windfall development to meet the remainder of its own need, WBC consider that there is no capacity within Wokingham Borough at this time to accommodate unmet need from other local authorities. The parties agree to maintain open dialogue on this matter.

#### Loddon Valley Garden Village

- 4.18 Policy SS13: 'Loddon Valley Garden Village' (LVGV) proposes to allocate land south of the M4 between Shinfield, Sindlesham and Arborfield for a sustainable new garden village comprising around 3,930 dwellings (of which at least 2,700 dwellings will be delivered by 31st March 2040), alongside employment land at the Thames Valley Science Park. The

proposal will be supported by significant infrastructure improvements including a secondary school, two primary schools, local and district centres and new highways, public transport and active travel routes, and significant open space including a new country park. The site is proposed to be delivered to align with the principles and qualities of Garden Communities.

- 4.19 A high-level concept plan showing how the land might be developed was included within the Revised Growth Strategy Consultation (2021). This included an illustrative layout of housing, employment, open spaces, and key highway concepts. The high-level concept plan was updated and included as Figure 8 of the Proposed Submission Plan Consultation.
- 4.20 An Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Opinion application relating to the proposals was submitted by the promoters in December 2024 and is currently being considered by WBC.
- 4.21 The evolution of the Loddon Valley Garden Village proposal has been subject to significant co-operation between WBC and RBC throughout the process. RBC raises no objection to the principle of the level of development proposed in the Loddon Valley Garden Village. RBC also considers the principle proposed in Policy SS13 that the development will need to provide a comprehensive sustainable transport strategy to be essential to the successful delivery of the proposal.
- 4.22 Appendix A sets out the matters RBC raised about the potential cross boundary implications of the Proposed Submission Plan, and in particular the Loddon Valley Garden Village proposals.
- 4.23 Subsequent to the Proposed Submission Plan Consultation, the land promoters have further developed emerging public transport and active travel strategies which have been shared with RBC. The parties agree that the information provided is robust and proportional to the stage of plan-making, that the allocation is developable in principle, and that Policy SS13 is sound. The parties recognise and agree that further engagement is required and will continue to liaise on further refinements as part of the pre-application and planning application processes.

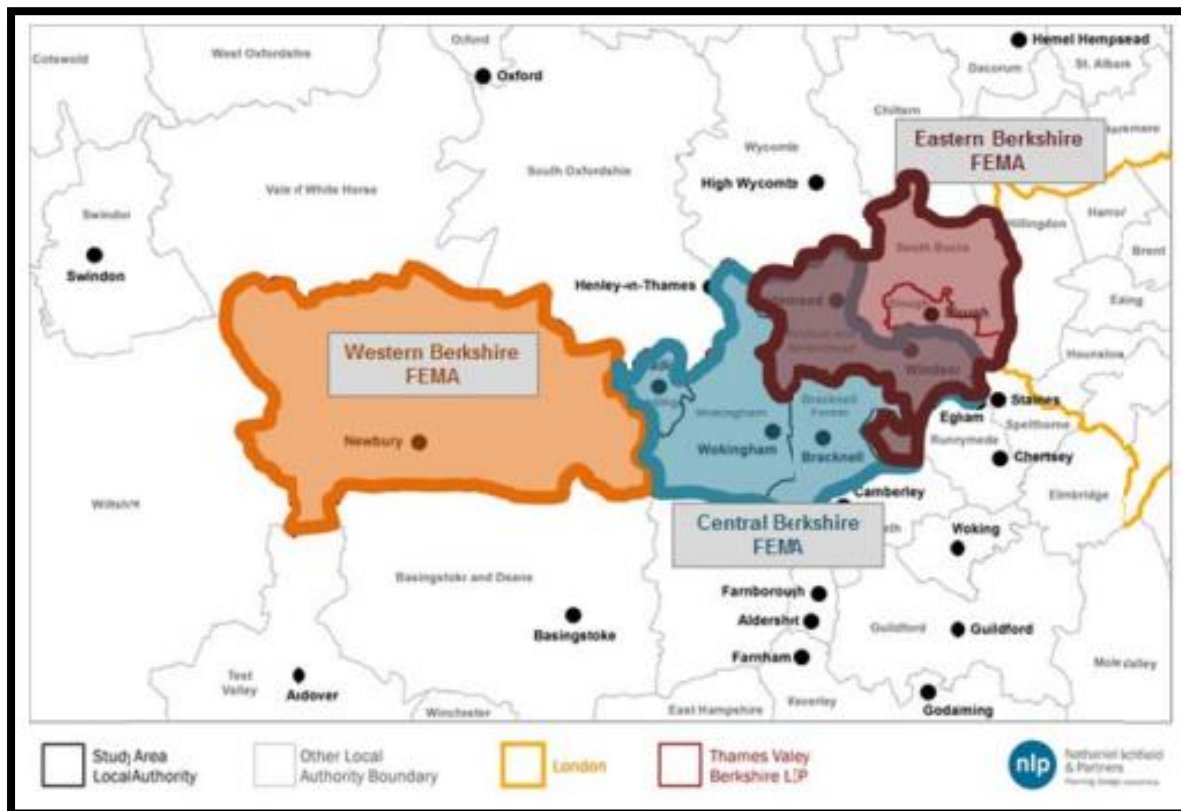
#### Other allocations

- 4.24 The Proposed Submission Plan includes a number of other allocations for housing, of a lesser scale. The parties agree that these allocations are unlikely to have a material impact on cross boundary issues between Wokingham Borough and Reading Borough.

#### ***b) Employment need and supply***

- 4.25 The Berkshire Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) study identified Wokingham Borough and Reading Borough being part of a Central Berkshire FEMA, centred on Reading and comprising the authorities of Bracknell Forest Council, Reading Borough Council, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, and Wokingham Borough Council. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is also part of the Eastern Berkshire FEMA, alongside Slough Borough Council. The parties agree this strategic geography.

**Figure 3: Functional Economic Market Areas.**



4.26 The need for employment land within Wokingham Borough has been identified through an Employment Land Needs Assessment (2024). Employment needs over the plan period is set out in Table 3 of the Proposed Submission Plan and reproduced below.

**Table 1: Employment needs 2022-2040.**

	Industrial	Office
Identified need 2022-2040	73,756 m <sup>2</sup> (18 Ha)	30,761 m <sup>2</sup> (GIA)
Completions 2022-2023	41,284 m <sup>2</sup>	4,979 m <sup>2</sup>
Commitments at 31 March 2023	7,731 m <sup>2</sup>	41,313 m <sup>2</sup>
Net need (2023-2040)	24,741 m <sup>2</sup>	15,531 m <sup>2</sup> over supply

4.27 Future office needs are anticipated to be met, because there is an oversupply of over 15,000 m<sup>2</sup> floorspace when compared to identified needs.

4.28 Future industrial need can be met through a combination of completions, commitments and the expansion of Core Employment Areas as set out in Policy SS8.

4.29 Employment needs can be delivered in full within Wokingham Borough over the plan period.

**c) Retail need and supply**

4.30 The need for retail land has been identified through a Retail and Commercial Leisure Study (2023). Retail needs over the plan period is set out in paragraph 4.24 of the Proposed



Submission Plan. In summary there is no capacity to support additional comparison goods, but a need for between 14,700 m<sup>2</sup> and 17,200 m<sup>2</sup> of convenience goods by 2040.

- 4.31 Convenience floorspace is currently being delivered as part of the near complete South of the M4 Strategic Development Location and the Arborfield Green Strategic Development Location. The Proposed Submission Plan expects further convenience goods floorspace to come forward as part of the South Wokingham Strategic Development Location (Policy SS12) and the Loddon Valley Garden Village (Policy SS13). Windfall sites would also be supported within town centres.
- 4.32 Retail needs can be delivered over the plan period, and WBC is not seeking to accommodate any unmet need in neighbouring local authorities.
- 4.33 No material impact will arise to defined centres within Reading Borough as a result of the anticipated delivery within Wokingham Borough.

***d) AWE consultation zones***

- 4.34 AWE plc operates AWE Burghfield, which is situated within West Berkshire District Council. It is operated on behalf of the Ministry of Defence and is a nuclear licensed site. West Berkshire District Council is the lead local authority for emergency planning for AWE Burghfield and is the owner of the AWE Off-Site Emergency Plan.
- 4.35 A Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) is defined around AWE Burghfield which extends into both Wokingham Borough and Reading Borough.
- 4.36 The spatial strategy set out in Policy SS2 proposes to meet development needs outside of the AWE DEPZ, and this zone is not a location where additional development is planned. Any development in the vicinity of AWE Burghfield will be determined with regard to public safety, emergency response and national security and defence requirements.
- 4.37 RBC supports the approach not to allocate land for development within the AWE DEPZ. RBC also supports the commitment within Policy SS7 which places public safety at the forefront of decisions, and the principle of refusing development proposals considered to have unacceptable risk to the AWE Off-Site Emergency Plan.

***e) Green Belt and landscape character***

- 4.38 The Proposed Submission Plan has been informed by a Green Belt Review (2016) (undertaken jointly with Bracknell Forest Borough) and a Landscape Character Assessment (2004, 2019). RBC contains no Green Belt.
- 4.39 The spatial strategy set out in Policy SS2 proposes to meet development needs on land outside the designated Green Belt. The parties do not expect the growth identified in the Proposed Submission Plan to significantly impact the landscape character of Reading Borough.

#### ***f) Historic environment***

- 4.40 The Proposed Submission Plan has been informed by a Historic Environment Topic Paper (2024) which provides background evidence and justification for WBC's approach to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.
- 4.41 The parties do not expect the growth identified in the Proposed Submission Plan to impact the significance of heritage assets within Reading Borough.

#### ***g) Infrastructure, including transport, health, education, utilities***

- 4.42 WBC has prepared an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2024) (IDP) to identify infrastructure needs arising from planned growth. This important document reflects all aspects of infrastructure need.
- 4.43 Transport modelling and assessment has been undertaken throughout the plan-making process to identify and address issues on the local and strategic transport network. Modelling outputs and forecast flow differences at the boundary have been shared with RBC. The strategy set out in the Proposed Submission Plan has been informed by the Transport Assessment Report (2024). The parties do not expect the growth identified in the Proposed Submission Plan will result in residual cumulative effects that would be severe, subject to the concerns identified in relation to Loddon Valley Garden Village in Appendix A being addressed. Information on emerging public transport and active travel linked to the Loddon Valley Garden Village proposal has also been shared with RBC. Highway mitigations are proposed which will help to mitigate impacts and encourage active travel, including mitigations within Reading Borough.
- 4.44 WBC has engaged with utility companies in the preparation of the Proposed Submission Plan and associated IDP. Phase 1 and Phase 2 Water Cycle Studies (2019, 2024) have been prepared to consider the impact on potable and waste water infrastructure.
- 4.45 The parties do not expect the growth identified in the Proposed Submission Plan to generate additional needs for community infrastructure such as school places and healthcare facilities within Reading borough.
- 4.46 There is currently a degree of uncertainty surrounding the possible future of the Royal Berkshire Hospital, with emerging proposals for possible relocation. The current site is situated within Reading Borough, with two alternative sites located within Wokingham Borough. For the avoidance of doubt, there is no firm proposal from the hospital trust, nor does the Proposed Submission Plan or the associated Infrastructure Delivery Plan identify a site for potential relocation. The parties have jointly been engaging with the hospital trust on potential options and are committed to continuing collaborative dialogue as necessary.

#### ***h) Recreational pressure on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area***

- 4.47 The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) is designated because the heathland habitat supports the important species of ground nesting birds: Dartford warbler, nightjar

and woodlark. Natural England has advised that residential development around the SPA boundary is likely to have a significant effect (alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the integrity of the SPA through associated recreation activity of the heaths and air pollution.

- 4.48 Natural England advise that all residential developments within 5km and larger residential developments proposing 50 dwellings or more within 7km may impact on the integrity of the SPA. The zone of influence therefore extends into the southern half of Wokingham Borough but not into Reading Borough.
- 4.49 The available evidence indicates that beyond the immediate area around the SPA, effective mitigation can be achieved by a combination of providing additional suitable areas for recreation (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace or SANG) together with access management of the heaths themselves (Strategic Access Management and Monitoring or SAMM).
- 4.50 The Proposed Submission Plan has been informed by the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy, which sets out an agreed method of avoiding and mitigating impacts on the SPA.
- 4.51 No land is allocated for development within 400m of the SPA, where the avoidance of mitigation of impacts is considered unachievable.
- 4.52 Beyond 400m, larger development proposals of 50 or more dwellings are expected to provide their own SANG as part of the development. All Strategic Development Locations and the Loddon Valley Garden Village are required to provide SANG as a key aspect of their masterplan. Smaller development proposals of 49 dwellings or less are expected to mitigate their impact via securing capacity in off-site SANG. WBC is supporting planned and anticipated developments from small sites by providing additional strategic SANG capacity.
- 4.53 The full need for SANG can be delivered within Wokingham Borough over the plan period, and WBC is not seeking mitigation in neighbouring local authorities.

***i) Habitats and biodiversity***

- 4.54 The spatial strategy set out in Policy SS2 proposes to meet development needs away from the administrative boundary between the parties. The parties do not expect the growth identified in the Proposed Submission Plan to impact habitats of importance within Reading Borough.

***j) Flood risk and climate change***

- 4.55 The Proposed Submission Plan has been informed by Level 1 and Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024).

4.56 The parties do not expect the growth identified in the Proposed Submission Plan to have implications for land elsewhere in the river catchment.

## **5. Areas of Agreement**

5.1 The parties have engaged effectively and on an on-going basis during the plan making process and WBC has fully fulfilled its duty to cooperate with RBC.

5.2 The parties agree the following statements of common ground:

- a) The parties agree that the Proposed Submission Plan makes provision to fully meet development needs.
- b) The parties agree there is no unmet need for housing arising from Reading Borough.
- c) The parties agree that there is an unmet need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation arising from Reading Borough and that an open dialogue on this will continue.
- d) The parties agree that the evidence supporting the Proposed Submission Plan is robust and proportionate to the plan-making stage of planning.
- e) The parties agree that the overall strategy promoted by the Proposed Submission Plan is sound.
- f) The parties agree that the proposed development allocations, including the Loddon Valley Garden Village, are developable in principle, and that remaining detailed design, public and active transport strategies, and highway mitigation, will be considered through the planning application process.
- g) The parties will continue engagement relating to plan-making as appropriate and necessary.
- h) The parties will continue to engage through the planning application process on development proposals in vicinity of the administrative boundary, or further afield where there is potential for cross boundary impacts.

## **6. Areas of Further Work / Disagreement**

6.1 As set out above, the parties agree that the proposed allocation Loddon Valley Garden Village is developable in principle, with evidence being robust and proportional to the plan-making process.

6.2 Further engagement is however required to ensure an appropriate transport package can mitigate potential adverse effects, including public transport and active travel provision. It is agreed that these detailed matters will continue to be investigated and considered through

further engagement including the planning application process and that the parties will continue to work proactively to ensure quality place making and connections are achieved.

6.3 Further engagement on Reading's unmet needs for Gypsy and Traveller provision will continue.

## **7. Governance Arrangements Including Future Review**

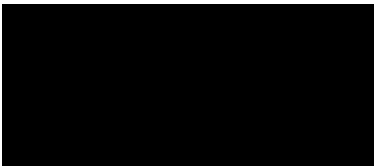
7.1 The parties agree to:

- Continue to cooperate and work collaboratively regarding the location and timing of infrastructure delivery, including relating to the Loddon Valley Garden Village;
- Continue to cooperate and work collaboratively to agree the location and timing of highways infrastructure to mitigate the cumulative impact of development;
- Keep a dialogue open on Gypsy and Traveller accommodation provision;
- Keep a dialogue open on matters arising which are likely to have significant impacts and implications for the delivery of local plan policies;
- Review and update this Statement of Common Ground in the light of any material change in circumstance; and
- Maintain positive principles of cooperation.

## **8. Signatories**

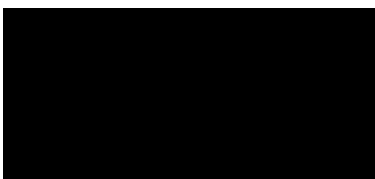
8.1 We confirm that the information in this Statement of Common Ground reflects the joint working and engagement undertaken to date to address identified strategic matters. The parties will continue to work together to address cross boundary issues.

### ***Signed for Wokingham Borough Council***



Name: Trevor Saunders  
Position: Assistant Director, Planning  
Date: 17/03/2025

### ***Signed for Reading Borough Council***



Name: Matthew Golledge  
Position: Acting Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection  
Date: 12 March 2025

## **Appendix A**

### **Summary of RBC representations on the Proposed Submission Plan**



Summary of RBC comments	WBC response	Agreement or need for further discussion
<b>General comments</b>		
RBC works closely with WBC on a range of strategic planning matters and looks forward to continuing this process throughout the Local Plan Update process. We welcome the progress that has been made on the Local Plan Update. RBC provided comments on the Revised Growth Strategy in January 2022.	Support noted.	No further discussion required.
The only site within the Proposed Submission Plan on which RBC wishes to comment is the proposed Garden Village at Loddon Valley. The other additional sites proposed for development are of much smaller scale, mostly located some distance from the boundary with Reading, and are likely to have very limited implications for Reading Borough.	Comment noted. Representation and response on Loddon Valley Garden Village is addressed below.	No further discussion required.
<b>SS13: Loddon Valley Garden Village</b>		
RBC does not object in principle to this level of development to the Loddon Garden Village proposal but cannot support the proposal as it stands.	Noted that there is no in principle objection to the Loddon Valley Garden Village allocation.	

Summary of RBC comments	WBC response	Agreement or need for further discussion
<p>RBC’s main concerns is transport, where insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate the proposal will be highly accessible by public transport, walking and cycling to services, facilities and the rest of the transport network.</p> <p>Policy SS13 refers to a “comprehensive sustainable transport strategy that has been informed by a detailed Transport Assessment”. This is accepted in principle, but details on what this would entail are light. The illustrative map (Figure 8, pp. 85) does appear to show some potential measures but is insufficiently detailed. A more detailed illustration showing links to central Reading and the wider urban area is necessary.</p>	<p>Expressed concerns are linked to the level of information available on public transport and active transport links to ensure the sustainability of the proposal.</p> <p>Initial engagement with RBC on emerging public transport and active transport strategies took place in July 2024. This included a meeting involving the site promoters and both RBC and WBC. Comments from both local authorities were provided to help evolve the initial proposals.</p> <p>Subsequent to this initial engagement and the publication of the Proposed Submission Plan, the site promoters have reviewed and updated proposals for public transport and active travel, submitting new documents as part of their representation. These documents were shared with RBC in January 2025. It is noted that the evolved proposals for public transport and active travel have been shaped by the comments from RBC.</p> <p>WBC is satisfied that available information on public transport and active travel is proportional to the stage of plan-making. It is agreed however that engagement will continue to evolve proposals further so they are ready to support the future planning application process. As quoted, Policy SS13</p>	<p>Ongoing engagement required as the proposed development continues to evolve and be refined based on the ongoing transport assessment work for the forthcoming planning applications.</p>

Summary of RBC comments	WBC response	Agreement or need for further discussion
<p>Active travel proposed routes within and adjacent to the site appear to provide good connectivity for cycling and walking journeys.</p> <p>An active travel link should be considered instead of the proposed all-traffic motorway bridge connection to Lower Early Way.</p>	<p>requires the submission of a comprehensive sustainable transport strategy as part of the planning application process.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Comment noted. The Loddon Valley Garden Village concept plan includes multiple access points to the surrounding highway network including the creation of a new link over the M4 to Lower Earley Way. The mitigations have been informed and tested through the Transport Assessment. WBC is satisfied that the new link over the M4 forms an appropriate part of the strategy to manage vehicle traffic impacts and provide connectivity for active travel and public transport.</p> <p>As set out above, WBC is satisfied that available information on active travel is proportional to the stage of plan-making. It is agreed however that engagement will continue to evolve proposals further so they are ready to support the future planning application process.</p>	<p>Ongoing engagement required as the proposed development continues to evolve and be refined based on the ongoing transport assessment work for the forthcoming planning applications.</p>

Summary of RBC comments	WBC response	Agreement or need for further discussion
<p>Proposed routes to areas beyond the immediate vicinity appear to have gaps at Shinfield Road between B3270 and The Maidens area. There is likely to be major difficulty in providing upgraded facilities for active travel on this section due to its restricted width. Alternative options to connect existing routes through Lower Earley between Cutbush Lane bridge and University of Reading need to be developed, including an upgraded crossing on the B3270 as there is currently no safe crossing from Cutbush Lane. Finally, active travel signage is very poor across Lower Early and would need to be significantly improved.</p> <p>Welcome the consideration of development phasing with regard to public transport. An effective strategy will address the problems created by a long build out period and a short funding package for initial bus services. Bus services frequency and journey time must be sufficient to encourage model shift.</p>	<p>Comment noted. Suggestions can be considered as through continuing engagement.</p> <p>Comment noted and agreed.</p>	<p>Ongoing engagement required as the proposed development continues to evolve and be refined based on the ongoing transport assessment work for the forthcoming planning applications.</p>
<p>RBC transport officers have compiled views on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Proposed phase 1 bus services from Wokingham via Winnersh to development on Mill Lane and Mole Road;</li> <li>b. Phase 2 buses through the development, running south to north between Central</li> </ul>	<p>Comment noted.</p>	<p>Ongoing engagement required as the proposed development continues to evolve and be refined based on the ongoing transport assessment work for the forthcoming planning applications.</p>

Summary of RBC comments	WBC response	Agreement or need for further discussion
<p>Reading, Loddon Valley, Winnersh, Wokingham Station and Wokingham Town Centre;</p> <p>c. A fast route from Winnersh Triangle P&amp;R to and from Central Reading with an extension to Loddon Valley via Showcase roundabout with priority bus measures on the B3270 and Hatch Farm Way; and</p> <p>d. An alternative provision via BRT routes on the A33 and A3290 to form a circular route.</p> <p>Concern expressed the proposals do not prioritise public transport use. Comment that this could be achieved through establishing bus priority lanes to the exits at A327 and A329 and bus priority access lanes to Winnersh Triangle Station and to the A33 and funding additional buses.</p> <p>Note that the funding proposed for improved bus services is twice what has been previously provided.</p>	<p>Comment noted. Information from the site promoters shows a 30 minute bus frequency from the first phase of delivery, which will provide a good level of service for first occupiers to encourage modal shift. Additional routes will be set out as other phases are delivered.</p> <p>As set out above, WBC is satisfied that available information on public transport is proportional to the stage of plan-making. It is agreed however that engagement will continue to evolve proposals further so they are ready to support the planning application process.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p>	<p>Ongoing engagement required as the proposed development continues to evolve and be refined based on the ongoing transport assessment work for the forthcoming planning applications.</p>

Summary of RBC comments	WBC response	Agreement or need for further discussion
<p>RBC wish to continue co-operating with WBC in investigating proposals for this garden village location and undertaking more detailed work on transport proposals, in particular.</p>	<p>Comment noted and agreed</p>	<p>Ongoing engagement required as the proposed development continues to evolve and be refined based on the ongoing transport assessment work for the forthcoming planning applications.</p>
<b>Other matters</b>		
<p>RBC notes the uncertainty surrounding the possible relocation of the Royal Berkshire Hospital. We are committed to seeing the Hospital remain in Reading and re-developed on-site and this is reflected in our emerging local plan.</p> <p>We look forward to continued discussions under the Duty to Co-operate to consider the possible implications of the relocation of the hospital within Wokingham Borough.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>For completeness, the hospital trust has been considering potential options which have included redeveloping the existing hospital site and the relocation to two alternative sites, both within Wokingham Borough. The hospital trust has not identified a preferred solution and has not presented a technical evidence base that would be required to demonstrate the achievability of any option.</p> <p>The Proposed Submission Plan does not identify a location for a hospital.</p> <p>WBC agree ongoing cooperation is required with RBC and the hospital trust, building on previous joint meetings.</p>	<p>Future engagement, outside the scope of this local plan process, is required between RBC, WBC and the hospital trust on health case provision and implications.</p>



Summary of RBC comments	WBC response	Agreement or need for further discussion
<b>Gypsy and Traveller</b>		
<p>RBC has previously commented on its own unmet needs for gypsy and traveller provision, and therefore welcomes the inclusion of provision within Wokingham Borough. RBC would further welcome discussion over whether there is scope for this provision to include meeting unmet needs from Reading. As previously stated, RBC would be open to discussion of how any proposal that also incorporated needs from Reading could be resourced.</p>	<p>Comment noted. WBC is not currently in a position to assist with meeting unmet need from elsewhere, given the limited opportunity to address its own needs which are being planned for.</p>	<p>For RBC to advance future engagement with surrounding authorities.</p>
<b>SS10: Meeting our housing needs</b>		
<p>RBC welcomes “Policy SS10: Meeting our housing needs” in which WBC proposes to provide for a minimum of 12,763 dwellings for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2040 using the standard method in national Planning Practice Guidance.</p> <p>Under the existing RBC local plan, we do not anticipate any resulting unmet housing need. RBC does not consider that there is a need to make any additional allowance for unmet need from Reading in the Wokingham Local Plan Update.</p>	<p>Support noted.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p>	<p>No further discussion required.</p>