

To all members of Shinfield Parish Council

Notice is hereby given and you are summoned to attend a meeting of the Full Council on THURSDAY 16th February 2023 at the School Green Centre, commencing 19.30



Bruce Winton
Parish Clerk
10th February 2023

Members: Cllrs N Boyer, I Clarke, P Emmment, A Grimes, P Jahromi, L James, M Jones, D Lias, N Masseron, I Montgomery, D Peer and R Tatla

Agenda

1. Public Questions

- 1.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** questions from the public

2. Apologies and declarations of members' interests

- 2.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** members' apologies for absence
- 2.2 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** declarations of members' interests
- 2.3 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** changes to members' declarations of pecuniary interest

3. Reports

- 3.1 To **RECEIVE** reports from the Borough Councillors**
- 3.2 To raise any questions to WBC via the Borough Councillors
- 3.3 To **NOTE** the draft minutes of the Recreation and Amenities Committee 2nd February 2023* and update from the Chairman of the Committee
- 3.4 To **NOTE** the draft minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee 9th February 2023** and update from the Chairman of the Committee
- 3.5 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** verbal reports from Working Parties
- 3.6 To **RECEIVE** a verbal report from the Chairman
- 3.7 To **RECEIVE** reports from outside bodies

4. Borough Council Boundary Review

- 4.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** the proposed revised ward boundaries for Wokingham Borough Council*

5. Planning Appeal Decision for land west of Kingfisher Grove

- 5.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** the council's response to the appeal decision for the planning application for land west of Kingfisher Grove*

6. Minutes of Meeting on 26th January 2023

- 6.1 To **APPROVE** the minutes of the Full Council meeting on 26th January 2023* as a correct record of the meeting
- 6.2 To **RECEIVE** information on matters arising

7. Land Swaps

- 7.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** a verbal report from the Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee on Land Swaps

8. School Green Centre

- 8.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** a verbal report from Cllr Grimes on the School Green Centre

9. Coronation of King Charles III

- 9.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** proposals for marking the coronation of King Charles III*

10. Correspondence

- 10.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** correspondence on the number of students travelling to school by bus*
- 10.2 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** a complaint received from a member of the public regarding a grant application*
- 10.3 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** an invitation from the Chief Operating Officer of Wokingham Borough Council to an event entitled "Community Futures with Town & Parish Council"*

11. Invoices for Payment

- 11.1 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** Lloyds Bank payment of invoices within the Clerk's financial delegation *
- 11.2 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** to approve Barclaycard payment of invoices within the Clerk's financial delegation*
- 11.3 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** payments due to be made that are outside the Clerk's financial delegation *

10. Dates of Next Meetings

- 10.1 To **NOTE** that the next Full Council Meeting is on Thursday 16th March 2023 at 7.30 p.m.

** indicates one or more attachments in support of the item*

*** indicates papers to follow*

Minutes of a meeting of
Recreation & Amenities Committee
Held on Thursday 2nd February 2023
At School Green Centre commencing at 19.30

Present: Cllrs N Boyer, I Clarke (Ch), P Emmment, P Jahromi, L James, N Masseron,
D Peer, R Tatla

Attending: B Winton (Clerk), S Herring (Deputy Clerk), P Gudge (Facilities Manager)

23/RA/14

Public Questions

14.1 There were no public questions

23/RA/15

Apologies and declarations of Members' Interest

15.1 There were no apologies for absence

15.2 There were no declarations of members' interests

15.3 There were no changes to members' declarations of pecuniary interest

23/RA/16

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

16.1 The minutes of the committee meeting of 5th January 2023 were approved
as a correct record and signed as such by Cllr I Clarke

Proposed: Cllr P Jahromi
Seconded: Cllr P Emmment
Approved: Unanimously

16.2 The following matters arising were covered:

- 23/RA/1 Report graffiti to WBC
Report graffiti as Criminal damage
Report graffiti to the ASB team at Wokingham Borough Council (WBC)

These had all been carried out.

- 22/RA/94.1 Arrange a meeting with the Chairman of R&A, the developer and the Facilities Manager

The Facilities manager is awaiting a response from Ray Barry at WBC

- 22/RA/48.2 Chase for formal permission from the University of Reading (UoR) for preparatory works at Millworth Lane

This has been requested from UoR but not yet provided.

- 22/RA/57.1 Chase the UoR regarding the Manor Court Pavilion
Keep on the agenda for the next meeting.

This is on the agenda.

- 22/RA/61.3 Clerk to write to the Chairman of Governors of Whiteknights School regarding providing space for SPC to provide a facility for Shinfield North

The Clerk sent a letter to the Chairman of the Governors last week and is awaiting a response.

ACTION – Clerk to follow up when a response is received

- 22/RA/91.1 Add Bookings Report to the agenda for the February 2023 meeting of R&A

This is on the agenda.

- 22/RA/98.2 Cllr Clarke to follow up on obtaining a quote for toilets for the Shinfield Tennis Club – to be put on the next agenda of R&A

This was on the agenda

- 22/RA/105.2 Investigate options for new community notice boards – to be put on the next agenda of R&A

This is on the agenda.

- 22/RA/105.3 Investigate options for displaying history of parish and names of previous Chairs at SGC - to be put on the next agenda of R&A

This is on the agenda.

- 23/RA/4.1 Division of the R&A Committee to be put on the next agenda.

Due to the length of the agenda for this month it was agreed with the Chairman to defer further discussion to next month.

ACTION – Clerk to add to the next agenda

- 23/RA/5.1 MUGA
To obtain quote for a connecting path
To continue to monitor the MUGA for official handover.

A quote had been requested by the Facilities Manager and would be shared with the Committee when received. The handover is still being managed.

ACTION – Clerk to add to the next agenda

- 23/RA/6.1(a) Sports Consultation
(i) Invite organisations to the consultation.
(ii) To include the provision of physical training facilities in the consultation exercise

This was carried out for the consultation.

- 23/RA/6.1(b) To report the outcome of a meeting with a sports company to the Sports Strategy Group

That discussion took place but there has been no further movement as the focus has been on the consultation. Further discussions will be reported back to this committee.

- 23/RA/6.1(c) Suggest to the Sports Strategy Group that an external member be added to the constitution of the group

Various suggestions were made but no final decision made.

- 23/RA/6.1(d) To investigate the feasibility and cost of picnic tables with accessibility for wheelchair users for Deardon Field

Facilities Manager was in the process of obtaining a quote.

ACTION – Facilities Manager to obtain a quote

- 23/RA/6.2 Report on the Community Services to be added to the next agenda.

This is on the agenda

- 23/RA/6.3 To monitor the operation of the Pavilion Youth Club and the Flat at Shinfield Rise

This was on the agenda

- 23/RA/7.1 Clerk to inform the Shinfield Volunteers of the outcome of the grant application.

This had been carried out

- 23/RA/7.2 Clerk to inform the Link Visiting Scheme of the outcome of the grant application.

This had been carried out

- 23/RA/8.1 To add 'Padel Tennis' at Millworth Lane to the Sports Consultation

This had been carried out

- 23/RA/8.2 Physical training company, Heads of Terms, to be added to the next agenda.

This is on the agenda

23/RA/8.3 To set up a Sports Working party in 2023

This item is to be carried forward to the next meeting following the analysis of the results from the Sports Consultation held on 28th January 2023.

ACTION – Clerk to add to the next agenda

23/RA/9.2 Car Park

- (i) Request information from the Land Registry regarding the ownership of the public car park on School Green

The Clerk had the land registry document confirming the transfer to Wokingham Borough Council in 1988. The transfer contained a covenant “not to use the Property other than as a public car park”

- (ii) To obtain facts of the transfer from WBC using the Freedom of Information legislation if necessary

The Clerk had arranged to visit the Berkshire Records Office on 3rd February to inspect parish council minutes from the period of the transfer to see if any further information was available from that source. SPC would like to take back ownership of the car park

ACTION – Clerk to provide an update at the next meeting

23/RA/9.5 Initial costings to be obtained for the proposals for the School Green, North and South end

The Clerk and Facilities Manager had met with a landscaping company to request an initial quote which will help set an order of magnitude for the scoped works. This had not been received to date.

ACTION – Clerk to add to the next agenda

23/RA/9.6 Soft lights on the trees on the Green to be added to the agenda in September / October 2023

This will be on the agenda for September

23/RA/10.1 Warm Room Update to be added to the next agenda.

This is on the agenda

23/RA/11.1 Develop the event plan of Help for Ukraine event and promote the event.

This is going ahead as planned tomorrow evening

23/RA/12.1 Booking terms and conditions to be added to the next agenda.

This is on the agenda

23/RA/12.2 SWP Playgroup contract to be added to the next agenda.

This is on the agenda

23/RA/17

Works Update

17.1 The Facilities Manager gave the following update on the new MUGA and the outdoor gym equipment.

The Facilities Manager had met with the company who had installed the equipment and reported that £3,000 would be held back until the final work had been completed. Outstanding work included damage to the gate, topsoil and turf to be laid. SPC would be working on getting the path in first.

ACTION – Facilities Manager to report progress to the next meeting

22/RA/18

Community Services

18.1 **Verbal report from the Sports Strategy Group**

This was discussed under item 23/RA/20

18.2 **Verbal report on the Community Services**

No report was available at this time

18.3 Verbal report on Pavilion Youth Club and the Flat at Shinfield Rise

Cllr R Tatla reported that she had met with Shabina and had the following feedback:

- The Pantomime visit had been successful
- Youth Group at Spencers Wood Pavilion (SWP) had one evening cancelled due to the lights not working at SWP
- The viability of the group being bussed to SWP was being reviewed as it was time consuming for Mark Tomkinson (WBC) in collecting and returning the mini bus to Wokingham. Numbers had fallen so they may return to the Flat in North Shinfield
- It was recognized that this cohort were very different from the group run by Mark Sandringham who wasn't familiar with working with a group where 'special needs' youths were in attendance where more time was required for preparation. The Clerk agreed to follow this up
- Anti-Social Behaviour was still a problem at SWP on a Wednesday mainly from youths not taking part in the youth club but being in the vicinity

ACTION – Clerk to follow up with Mark Sandringham

23/RA/19

Grant Applications

19.1 Application from CAB Wokingham

The grant application of £2,500 was considered and the request was declined

Proposed: Cllr P Emment

Seconded: Cllr D Peer

Approved: Unanimously

ACTION – Clerk to inform the CAB

19.2 **Application from Spencers Wood Football Club**

The grant application of £5,000 was considered and the request was declined

Proposed: Cllr
Seconded: Cllr
Approved: Unanimously

ACTION – Clerk to inform the Spencers Wood Football Club

19.3 **Summary of Grant requests**

The summary of the grant requests was **NOTED**.

23/RA/20

Millworth Lane

20.1 Cllr I Clarke reported that he had a meeting on 3rd February 2023 and would report back to the next meeting

ACTION – Clerk to add to the next agenda

20.2 The Clerk advised that there had been no progression on the discussion on 'Heads of Terms' for a potential fitness training facility as the focus had been on the sports consultation. That consultation would suggest support for the concept and so the Clerk proposed to continue to resume the discussions.

ACTION – Clerk to continue discussions on 'Heads of Terms' with the fitness training company

20.3 The original business model was based on the sports originally put forward for Millworth Lane. This would need to be adapted as the actual sports provision was refined.

ACTION – Clerk to update business model to reflect the latest proposals for Millworth Lane

- 20.4 There was an initial discussion regarding the results of the questionnaires completed at the Sports Consultation

The Clerk reported that:

Over 200 people attended

There were 46 responses on the day and, to date, a further 40 responses via the website. The larger the sample size the more likely it was to reflect the views of the general population although this was still just a sample

There were a good range of responses, with representation from both ends of the age range covered, with almost a 2:1 female to male representation

It was noted that that nobody stated that they would use public transport to get to Millworth Lane, even though this was one of the planning assumptions about High Copse

Of sports eight sports identified in the questionnaire, netball seemed to be the least preferred, but a lot of people verbally seemed to favour one combined netball/basketball court. Of the "write ins" a few thought that cricket should stay, as should football, and table tennis seemed to interest a few respondents. A running track was another popular request and should probably be included (by adapting the access footpath that would be required in any case)

Generally, people were prepared to 'pay as you play', but there was a reluctance to have any kind of membership. The pavilion should be included in the proposals, even if only as an opportunity to provide access to toilets

In terms of general comments there was some support for a 3G pitch in the location but the concerns of local residents regarding parking and access would need to be addressed. This would mean providing a larger car park than originally envisaged to avoid cars needing to park in the lane itself and improving access to Hyde End Road.

ACTION – Clerk to produce revised plans for the site and present this at the next meeting

23/RA/21**Allotment Management Protocol**

- 21.1 The Facilities Manager had produced a document setting out the 'Allotment Management Protocol' that clearly laid out the expected requirements for allotment holders and the management progression where necessary. It was important that allotment holders were aware of the expectations on them, the rules and how they would be enforced (if required).

Proposed: Cllr N Boyer
Seconded: Cllr P Emmet
Approved: Unanimously

23/RA/22**Cricket Equipment for Manor Ground**

- 22.1 (i) It was **AGREED** that the official name would be 'The Manor Ground'

Proposed: Cllr R Tatla
Seconded: Cllr P Jahromi
Approved: Unanimously

- (ii) The Facilities Manager reported that the Manor Ground would be owned by SPC. The UoR would not be supplying any equipment. A list of essential equipment that would be required was circulated with the agenda. Revenue would be obtained through chargeable rent and match fees. The equipment would belong to SPC who would be responsible for the maintenance and replacement, in time, and would need to be covered by an occupational licence. It was recognised that there were eight cricket clubs in Shinfield and the costs for maintenance would be factored into the contact price. The ground would also be used for football. It was agreed to allocate CIL money for the capital costs.

Proposed: Cllr L James
Seconded: Cllr N Boyer
Approved: Unanimously

ACTION – Facilities Manager to arrange procurement of the required equipment

ACTION – Clerk and Facilities Manager to pursue the licence with the cricket club

23/RA/23

Additional CCTV cameras for School Green Centre

- 23.1 The Facilities Manager had circulated a proposal for two additional CCTV cameras at the School Green Centre in areas where there was currently no coverage. One would be fitted in the café area and the other in the external Courtyard area. The cost to supply, install and connect would be £1669 excluding VAT.

Proposed: Cllr P Emment
Seconded: Cllr P Jahromi
Approved: Unanimously

ACTION – Facilities Manager to organise the installation of the CCTV cameras

23/RA/24

Bookings Report

- 24 .1 The Clerk reported a further slight improvement in the forecast outturn for School Green Centre compared to the last report. He had now included utilisation figures.

At the school Green Centre the 10 largest room hirers accounted for 45% of total bookings which at Spencers Wood Pavilion the top ten hirers accounted for over 75% of bookings. The Clerk felt that these ratios were appropriate given that SWP was managed remotely and benefitted from having more regular hirers while SGC had staff on site to manage any issues that may arise.

ACTION – Clerk to report on year-end figures when available

23/RA/25

Booking Terms & Conditions

- 25 .1 The Clerk advised that this was nearly complete but has not yet been finished due to staff illness and other items requiring more attention. It is hoped to complete the review soon.

ACTION – Clerk to add to the next agenda

23/RA/26

Other Items

26 .1 School Green Working Party

An initial quote for the scoped works has not yet been received

ACTION – Clerk to add to the next agenda

26.2 Warm Room

The Clerk reported that in hindsight we had been overly generous in terms of making the warm room available for such an extended period over five days of the week. Other locations ended to go for a limited period of time on specific days of the week which created more of a reason to attend and more likelihood of creating a critical mass for attendees. The Clerk recommended that the warm room continue and would bear this information in mind if it was decided to offer the provision next winter

26.3 Ukraine Event

The Clerk reported that this event would proceed. Attendees would receive soup and a roll and bacon butties (or vegetarian option) in the morning. A Ukrainian singer would provide entertainment along with a live band. It was felt that a charity event along similar lines could take place annually.

ACTION – Clerk to report at next meeting

26.4 Community Noticeboards

The Facilities Manager reported that a quote for digital notice boards had been received for £6,000 each which was considered too expensive. It was felt that a map showing where the existing notice boards were would be useful to help identify any new areas that needed to be covered. It was felt that dividing the notice boards into areas for Parish Council business and Community event would be more attractive.

ACTION –

- (i) Facilities Manager to investigate the legal requirements for notice boards**
- (ii) The Clerk and the Facilities Manager to arrange for the 'Map' boards to be reprinted as there had been many changes to the area since the last print**

26.5 Displaying History of Parish and Chairs of Parish Council

The Facilities Manager was still investigating options. Cllr D Peer was interested in being involved.

ACTION – Facilities Manager to investigate and report back to the next committee meeting

26.6 Contract with the Pre-School

The Clerk reported that he had been continuing to review and improve the terms and conditions of the licence. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday 10th February

ACTION – Clerk to add to the next agenda

23/RA/27

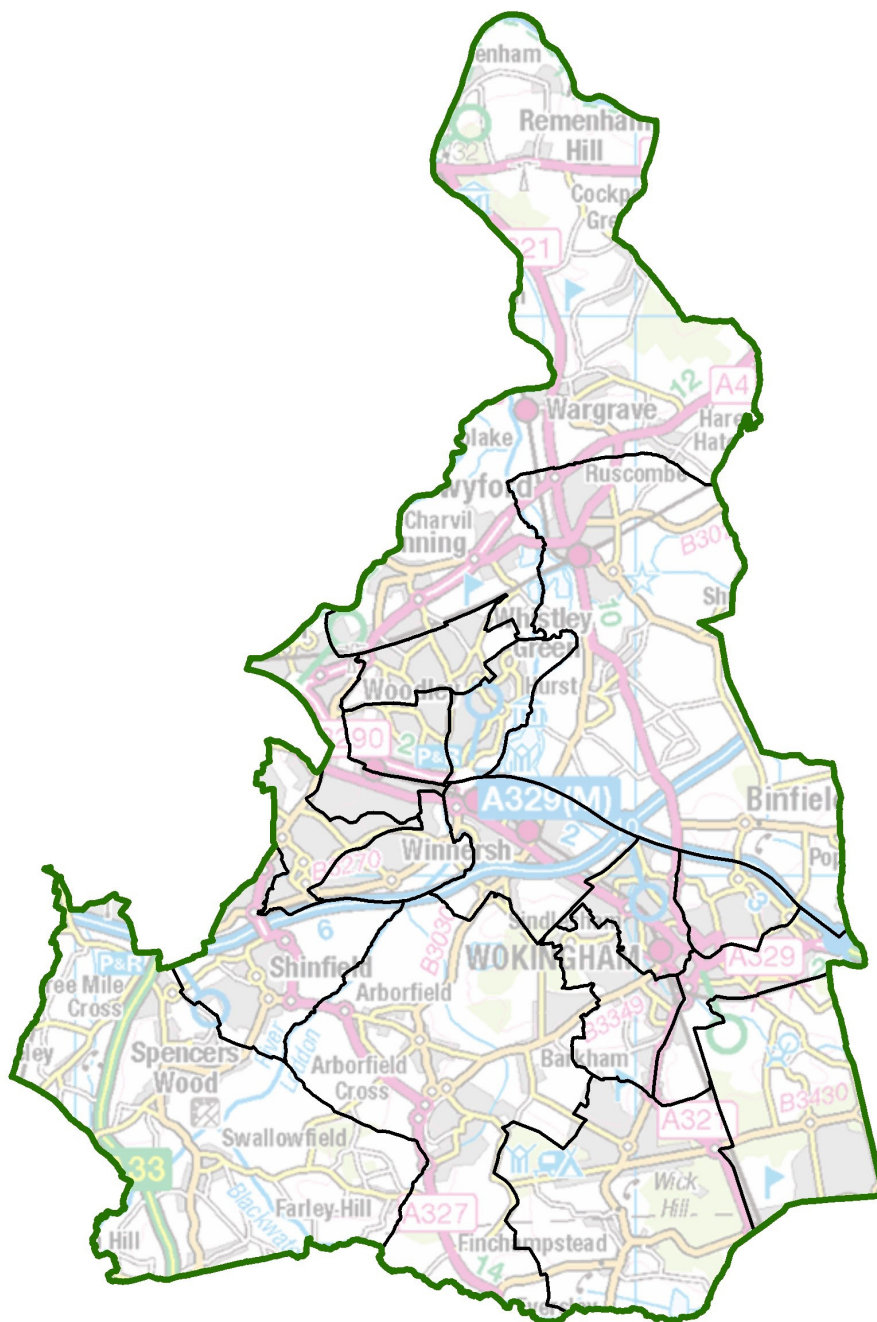
Future Meetings

27.1 The next meeting would be Thursday, 2nd March 2023

The meeting ended at 21:23

List of Actions

DRAFT



New electoral arrangements for Wokingham Borough Council Draft Recommendations

January 2023

Translations and other formats:

To get this report in another language or in a large-print or Braille version, please contact the Local Government Boundary Commission for England at:

Tel: 0330 500 1525

Email: reviews@lgbce.org.uk

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A note on our mapping:

The maps shown in this report are for illustrative purposes only. Whilst best efforts have been made by our staff to ensure that the maps included in this report are representative of the boundaries described by the text, there may be slight variations between these maps and the large PDF map that accompanies this report, or the digital mapping supplied on our consultation portal. This is due to the way in which the final mapped products are produced. The reader should therefore refer to either the large PDF supplied with this report or the digital mapping for the true likeness of the boundaries intended. The boundaries as shown on either the large PDF map or the digital mapping should always appear identical.

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Introduction

Who we are and what we do

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament.¹ We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

2 The members of the Commission are:

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Professor Colin Mellors OBE
(Chair) | • Amanda Nobbs OBE |
| • Andrew Scallan CBE
(Deputy Chair) | • Steve Robinson |
| • Susan Johnson OBE | • Jolyon Jackson CBE
(Chief Executive) |

What is an electoral review?

3 An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority. A local authority's electoral arrangements decide:

- How many councillors are needed.
- How many wards or electoral divisions there should be, where their boundaries are and what they should be called.
- How many councillors should represent each ward or division.

4 When carrying out an electoral review the Commission has three main considerations:

- Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents.
- Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity.
- Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.

5 Our task is to strike the best balance between these three considerations when making our recommendations.

¹ Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

6 More detail regarding the powers that we have, as well as the further guidance and information about electoral reviews and review process in general, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why Wokingham?

7 We are conducting a review of Wokingham Borough Council ('the Council') as some councillors currently represent many more or fewer electors than others. We describe this as 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where the number of electors per councillor is as even as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

8 This electoral review is being carried out to ensure that:

- The wards in Wokingham are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- The number of electors represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the borough.

Our proposals for Wokingham

9 Wokingham should be represented by 54 councillors, the same number as there are now.

10 Wokingham should have 18 wards, seven fewer than there are now.

11 The boundaries of 22 wards should change; three will stay the same.

How will the recommendations affect you?

12 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward, and, in some cases, which parish council ward you vote in. Your ward name may also change.

13 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the borough or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. The recommendations will not have an effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums and we are not able to consider any representations which are based on these issues.

Have your say

14 We will consult on the draft recommendations for a 10-week period, from 31 January 2023 to 10 April 2023. We encourage everyone to use this opportunity to comment on these proposed wards as the more public views we hear, the more informed our decisions will be in making our final recommendations.

15 We ask everyone wishing to contribute ideas for the new wards to first read this report and look at the accompanying map before responding to us.

16 You have until 10 April 2023 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 31 for how to send us your response.

Review timetable

17 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Wokingham. We then held a period of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the borough. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft recommendations.

18 The review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
23 August 2022	Number of councillors decided
30 August 2022	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
7 November 2022	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
31 January 2023	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
10 April 2023	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
4 July 2023	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and draft recommendations

19 Legislation² states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors³ there are now, but also on how many there are likely to be in the five years after the publication of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for our wards.

20 In reality, we are unlikely to be able to create wards with exactly the same number of electors in each; we have to be flexible. However, we try to keep the number of electors represented by each councillor as close to the average for the council as possible.

21 We work out the average number of electors per councillor for each individual local authority by dividing the electorate by the number of councillors, as shown on the table below.

	2021	2028
Electorate of Wokingham	130,690	132,562
Number of councillors	54	54
Average number of electors per councillor	2,420	2,455

22 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having 'good electoral equality'. All of our proposed wards for Wokingham are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

Submissions received

23 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

24 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2028, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2023. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 1% by 2028.

25 Wokingham Without Parish Council expressed concern that the forecasts did not consider developments that are expected to occur after 2028. A number of residents also expressed concerns that the forecasts in various parts of the borough

² Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

³ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

do not take into account all the expected development. One resident expressed concern that the electorate in EFW polling district is forecast to decline by 253 between 2021 and 2028. We note the concerns about developments beyond 2028, but under the legislation we must only have regard for developments forecast to be completed and occupied five years from the end of the review. Therefore, we cannot consider developments beyond this.

26 We note the concerns about EFW polling district and queried this with the Council who believe an issue had arisen around the volatile levels of voter registrations in the area of Reading University Campus that falls within the borough. The Council therefore revisited its projections and concluded that the fall in electorate resulted from the changing levels of registration in the university area and that these had been carried through into its forecasting methodology. It did not consider this an accurate reflection, so revised its forecasts for this area.

27 Having considered the evidence received, we considered the information provided by the Council and are satisfied that the projected figures, subject to the amendment to EFW polling district, are the best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our draft recommendations.

Number of councillors

28 Wokingham Borough Council currently has 54 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and have concluded that keeping this number the same will ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

29 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 54 councillors. As the Council elects by thirds (meaning it has elections in three out of every four years) there is a presumption in legislation⁴ that it have a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. We will only move away from this pattern of wards should we receive compelling evidence during consultation that an alternative pattern of wards will better reflect our statutory criteria.

30 In response to the warding patterns consultation we received a number of submissions making general comments about the number of councillors. However, there was no significant new evidence. Therefore, we have based our draft recommendations on a 54-councillor council.

Ward boundaries consultation

31 We received 146 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included two borough-wide proposals. The Council put forward

⁴ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 2(3)(d) and paragraph 2(5)(c).

proposals for a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. In a few areas it put forward 'minority proposals' for a mixed pattern of wards. A resident also put forward proposals for a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. A number of their boundaries mirrored the Council's proposals and other wards were broadly similar, except where polling districts were split. However, the resident did not provide specifics on how to divide these areas. On the basis of the similarities with the Council's proposals, and the fact their proposals split the same polling districts, we have read their proposals together with the Council's, albeit noting that the resident did propose alternative ward names. These are discussed in the sections below.

32 A number of respondents put forward proposals that would require changes to the external boundary of the borough, including transferring or including areas of neighbouring districts like Bracknell Forest and Reading. However, we are unable to do this as part of this review. It can only be addressed by a Principal Area Boundary Review, which is a separate process.

33 There were some objections to proposals for a uniform pattern of three-member wards, with some respondents proposing alternative multi-member proposals. However, as stated in paragraph 29, we need compelling evidence to persuade us to move away from a uniform pattern. We did not consider these respondents put forward sufficient evidence to persuade us to move away, particularly in light of well-argued three-member proposals.

34 One resident objected to the division of Twyford parish for parish council elections. However, where a borough ward divides a parish, we are obliged under the legislation to divide the parish into parish wards.

35 Councillor Cowan argued against the current electoral cycle, stating his preference for all-out elections. However, changes to the electoral cycle fall within the Council's powers, so we cannot recommend such changes as part of this review.

36 We received a number of general comments or requests for no change to the existing wards. We also received comments about links to parliamentary boundaries. However, these are considered by a different body under a different review process.

37 Our draft recommendations also take into account local evidence that we received, which provided further evidence of community links and locally recognised boundaries. In some areas we considered that the proposals did not provide for the best balance between our statutory criteria and so we identified alternative boundaries.

Draft recommendations

38 Our draft recommendations are for 18 three-councillor wards. We consider that our draft recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

39 The tables and maps on pages 9–25 detail our draft recommendations for each area of Wokingham. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁵ criteria of:

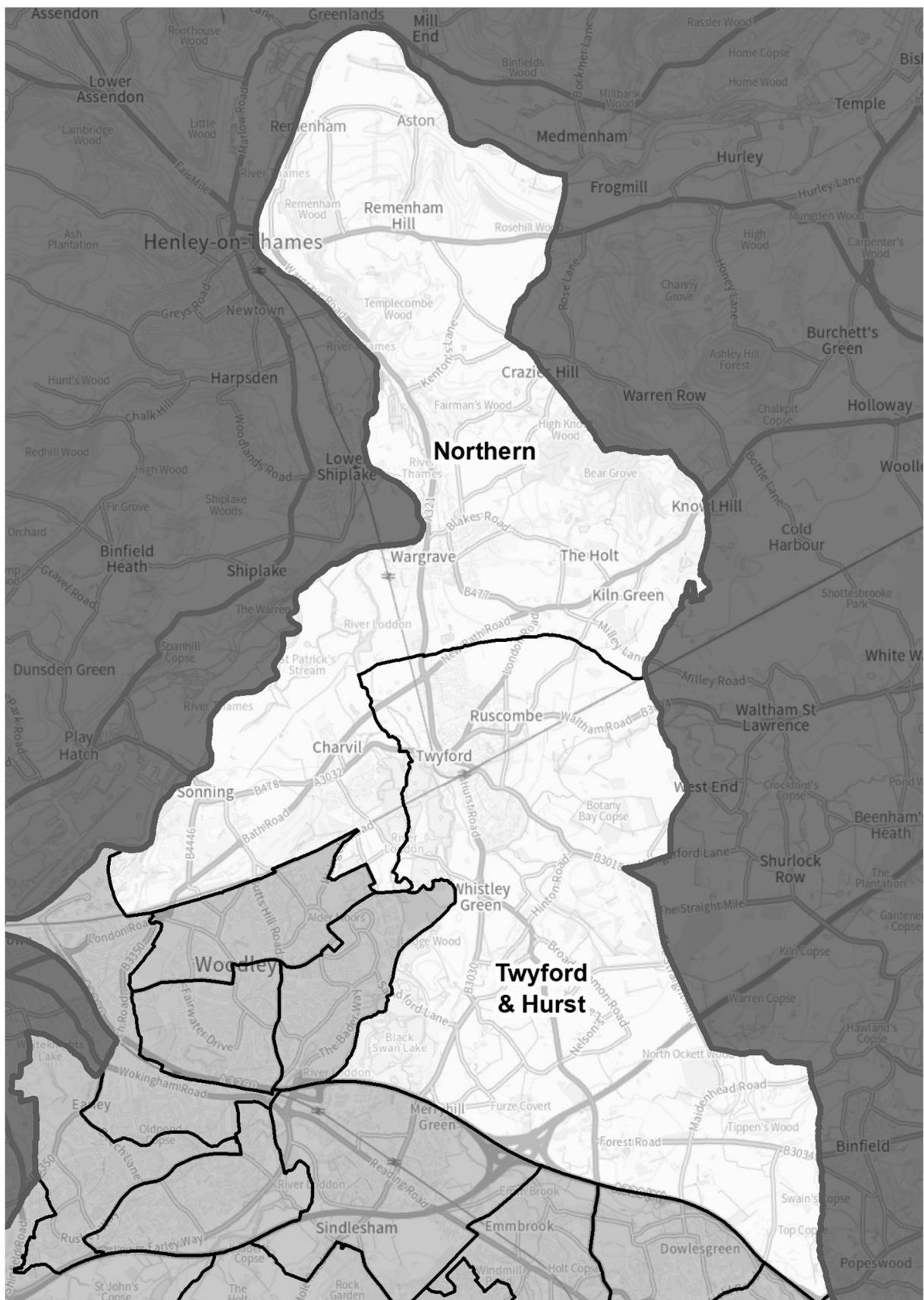
- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

40 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 37 and on the large map accompanying this report.

41 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations, particularly on the location of the ward boundaries, and the names of our proposed wards.

⁵ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

North



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Northern	3	-3%
Twyford & Hurst	3	7%

Northern

42 The Council proposed a three-member Northern ward comprising Charvil, Remenham, Sonning and Wargrave parishes. It acknowledged that these are different communities, but that they are rural and located on the bank of the River Thames, so share some issues. The Council rejected any names with 'Thames' or 'Riverside', arguing that this would cause confusion with wards in neighbouring authorities. A resident proposed an identical ward which they named 'Thames Quartet'.

43 Councillor Firmager expressed concern about merging rural communities, arguing that they have complex issues and would lose their identity. He objected to removing single-councillor wards, requesting no change to the existing wards. Councillor Halsall also objected to a move away from a mixed warding pattern, but argued that if three-member wards were to be adopted they should respect parish boundaries. He put forward comments on the name of a ward comprising Charvil, Remenham, Sonning and Wargrave parishes, suggesting 'Remenham, Wargrave, Charvil & Sonning' or 'the Northern Parishes'. Charvil Parish Council accepted the need to be in a ward with other parishes, but stated that it should not be in a ward with Twyford or Woodley, favouring links to Sonning, Wargrave or Hurst.

44 A resident stated that they live in Sonning, but use facilities in Twyford and Charvil, so it would make sense to be linked to them. There was support for a single-councillor Sonning ward, but objections to the inclusion of parts of Woodley in the ward. There was also support for the existing two-councillor Remenham, Wargrave & Ruscombe ward.

45 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received, noting the arguments for retaining the existing wards or wards based on single or two councillors. However, as stated in paragraph 29, there is a presumption in legislation that the Council have a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards, unless there is compelling evidence to move away. We do not consider there to be compelling evidence and note the Council has provided evidence for a three-councillor ward with good electoral equality which joins parishes with some shared interests. This ward also reflects some of the community links that other respondents mentioned.

46 We are therefore adopting the Council's three-councillor Northern ward. This would have 3% fewer electors than the borough average by 2028. We note that there was some suggestion of a different ward name, but no agreement on what this

should be, with the exception of wards with 'Northern' in the title. We do not consider that having wards that include 'Thames' or 'Riverside' in neighbouring authorities should preclude it here. However, we are proposing using 'Northern' as the ward name. We would welcome further local views on the most appropriate name.

Twyford & Hurst

47 The Council proposed a three-councillor Twyford & Hurst ward comprising Ruscombe, St Nicholas Hurst and Twyford parishes. It stated that Twyford is a hub for rural communities and this proposal removed the inclusion of part of Twyford in a ward with St Nicholas Hurst. It argued that Ruscombe, while separate, has no services and looks to Twyford. The Council also put forward proposals that received minority support for a two-councillor Twyford ward and single-councillor ward comprising St Nicholas Hurst and Ruscombe parishes, noting that these rural parishes share issues. A resident put forward an identical three-councillor ward, which he called Twyford.

48 Councillor Smith, Councillor Halsall and St Nicholas Hurst Parish Council objected to the creation of a three-councillor Twyford & Hurst ward, supporting a two-councillor ward comprising St Nicholas Hurst and Ruscombe parishes. They noted that, as rural parishes, they are different to a small town like Twyford and joining them would 'dilute' the relationship between councillor and community.

49 A number of residents cited links between Twyford and Ruscombe parishes arguing they should be in a ward together, while rejecting any proposal to place them in ward with Remenham and Wargrave parishes. Another resident argued that Twyford should be a two-councillor ward, while Ruscombe and Wargrave should be a single-councillor ward.

50 A number of residents argued that the south area of Twyford should be in ward with Twyford, not St Nicholas Hurst parish. A resident argued that Hurst should remain a single-councillor ward.

51 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received, noting the arguments for retaining a separation between Twyford and Ruscombe and St Nicholas Hurst parishes. However, we also note that there is evidence of links between these parishes and Twyford. In addition, as stated in paragraph 29, there is a presumption in legislation that the Council have a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards, unless there is compelling evidence to move away. We do not consider there to be compelling evidence and note the Council has provided evidence for a three-member ward with good electoral equality that joins existing wards with some shared interests. This proposed ward also reflects the community links that some respondents mentioned.

52 We are therefore adopting the Council's three-councillor Twyford & Hurst ward. This would have 7% more electors than the borough average by 2028. We note the suggestion of calling the ward 'Twyford', but consider that the Council's proposal that contains the name of another constituent part provides a good reflection of the area covered.

Earley and Woodley



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
East Woodley	3	-9%
North Earley	3	9%
North Woodley	3	-9%
South East Earley	3	5%
South West Earley	3	-1%
South Woodley	3	-2%

East Woodley, North Woodley and South Woodley

53 The Council put forward proposals for three three-councillor East Woodley, North Woodley and South Woodley wards for this area, entirely contained within Woodley parish. Under the revised electorate forecasts discussed in paragraph 24–27, its North Woodley ward would have 11% fewer electors than the borough average by 2028, rather than 10% fewer as under the initial forecasts. The Council stated that it could not reach a consensus on whether the Whitegates area should remain in an Earley ward or be in a Woodley ward. However, the majority view was that it is part of Earley parish and should therefore be in an Earley ward, with the minority stating that the physical links to Earley are weak and that it looks to Woodley. The Council stated that these wards used major roads as boundaries and kept the airfield development in a single ward. It also put forward alternative proposals for three-councillor East Woodley, North Woodley and South Woodley wards, which were based on a ‘minority’ that sought to minimise change to the existing wards.

54 Councillor Baker supported the creation of three-councillor wards within Woodley parish. However, he expressed support for the Council’s minority view, along with different ward names, his Coronation ward mirroring the Council’s minority view North Woodley, Loddon mirroring East Woodley and South Lake identical to West Woodley. He stated that his Loddon ward matches the existing ward, except for a small area in the north-east, which is transferred to Coronation ward. He added that this means Loddon Bridge Road does not have a boundary running along it. The councillor’s South Lake ward comprises the existing ward with the addition of the west Bulmershe area and avoids the current boundary along Woodlands Road. Finally, his Coronation ward reflects elements of the existing Coronation ward, but with the addition of east Bulmershe area and part of Loddon, discussed above. A resident put forward similar proposals to the Council’s ‘minority’ pattern, but proposed calling the wards Woodley Loddon, Woodley North and Woodley South.

55 A resident objected to the current inclusion of the Whitegates area of Earley parish in a Woodley ward. Another resident accepted that Whitegates is in a different parish, but that given the ‘population, it is a good mix’ and they should be in a Woodley ward. They rejected putting Whitegates in a ward with Sonning or putting in the existing Maiden Erlegh ward as they are separated by the A3290.

56 A resident expressed concern about the inclusion of the Mannock Way area in the existing Coronation ward, arguing they would be better served in Loddon ward – or East Woodley under the Council’s proposals. Finally, a resident stated that School Drive should be in South Lake ward, not Loddon, reflecting its access.

57 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note the comments about the Whitegates area, but this area cannot be included in Woodley without moving away from the uniform pattern of three-member wards. In addition,

there are objections to including this area in a Woodley ward. Therefore, we are placing Whitegates in an Earley ward, as discussed below.

58 We note that the Council's proposals secure good electoral equality with the exception of the -11% for North Woodley. They also address issues of access around School Drive and Mannock Way under the existing wards that were raised by residents.

59 We have also considered 'minority view' proposals, as supported by Councillor Baker. However, we have a number of concerns, particularly the boundary between Coronation and Loddon wards, which as flagged by a resident results in the Mannock Way area having no direct access into its ward. Hurricane Way is divided under the proposal. We do not consider these suggestions provide for effective and convenient local government, and these concerns are not offset by avoiding ward boundaries along Loddon Bridge Road and Woodlands Avenue. Indeed, we believe these roads make clear boundaries. In addition, Councillor Baker stated that his proposal places the east and west areas of Bulmershe communities in separate wards, while the Council's proposal keeps these together with the town centre at the centre. We consider the Council's proposal to use the town centre as a focus provides a stronger warding pattern than proposals that divide it.

60 Therefore, we consider that the Council's proposals provide the best basis for the draft recommendations in this area. We do, however, propose a small amendment to secure better electoral equality in North Woodley ward by transferring Hartigan Place to North Woodley. This road has access directly into the ward and would improve electoral equality in North Woodley to 9% fewer electors than the borough average by 2028.

61 We note that there was not agreement on the names for these wards, with a resident putting 'Woodley' at the front, while the Council used it at the end. The resident also retained the Loddon name for the Council's Woodley East ward. We have no particular view on the use of Woodley as a name at the front or end, but note that with two of the wards using compass points in their name, it would be unusual to have one with a geographical name, i.e. Loddon. We are therefore using the Council's names as part of our draft recommendations, but would welcome local views on the most appropriate names for these wards.

62 Our East Woodley, North Woodley and South Woodley wards would have 9% fewer, 9% fewer and 2% fewer electors than the borough average by 2028, respectively.

North Earley, South East Earley and South West Earley

63 The Council proposed three-councillor North Earley, South East Earley and South West Earley wards for this area. As discussed above in the East Woodley, North Woodley and South Woodley section, the Council stated that it could not reach a consensus on whether the Whitegates area should remain in an Earley ward or be in a Woodley ward. However, the majority view was that it is part of Earley parish and should therefore be in an Earley ward, with the minority stating that the physical links to Earley are weak and that it looks to Woodley. The Council also noted that by respecting the Earley parish boundary it was possible to secure a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards.

64 The Council also stated that it could not reach a consensus on whether the Shinfield North area should be in an Earley ward, with a minority considering the M4 a barrier to the rest of Shinfield. A resident put forward similar proposals to the Council, but proposed calling the wards Earley North, Earley South East and Earley South West.

65 Earley & Shinfield Liberal Democrats expressed broad support for the Council's proposals for this area, but proposed a number of small amendments between North Earley ward and South East Earley and West Earley wards to provide a stronger boundary along Gipsy Lane, Mill Lane and Wokingham Road.

66 Parish Councillor Chopping expressed support for the existing wards. A resident proposed transferring an area to the south of Lower Earley Way to Winnersh. However, this area only contains a few electors and would not make a viable parish ward within Earley parish. In addition, there is no other evidence of support for such a change. Therefore, we are not adopting this proposal.

67 One resident provided good evidence for including part of Shinfield North in an Earley ward. He argued that Shinfield North is separated from the rest of Shinfield by the M4 and that the Shinfield Rise estate has footpath links into the Whitegates area of Earley. He also pointed out that Ryhill Way has no direct access into Shinfield North ward or indeed Shinfield parish and only access into Earley. As a result, the resident argued that the area to the east of Shinfield Road should be included in Earley. A number of respondents proposed transferring the Ryhill Way area to Earley, citing a lack of direct access to Shinfield and use of services in Earley.

68 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. As discussed in the Woodley section (above), we note that there is not total agreement on where the Whitegates area sits best, but putting it in a Woodley ward means moving away from the three-member pattern of wards. Therefore, we are placing Whitegates in an Earley ward, as suggested by the Council. Doing this means moving away from the existing Earley wards, as they need to be adjusted to accommodate the Whitegates area, as well as improve electoral equality of the existing wards.

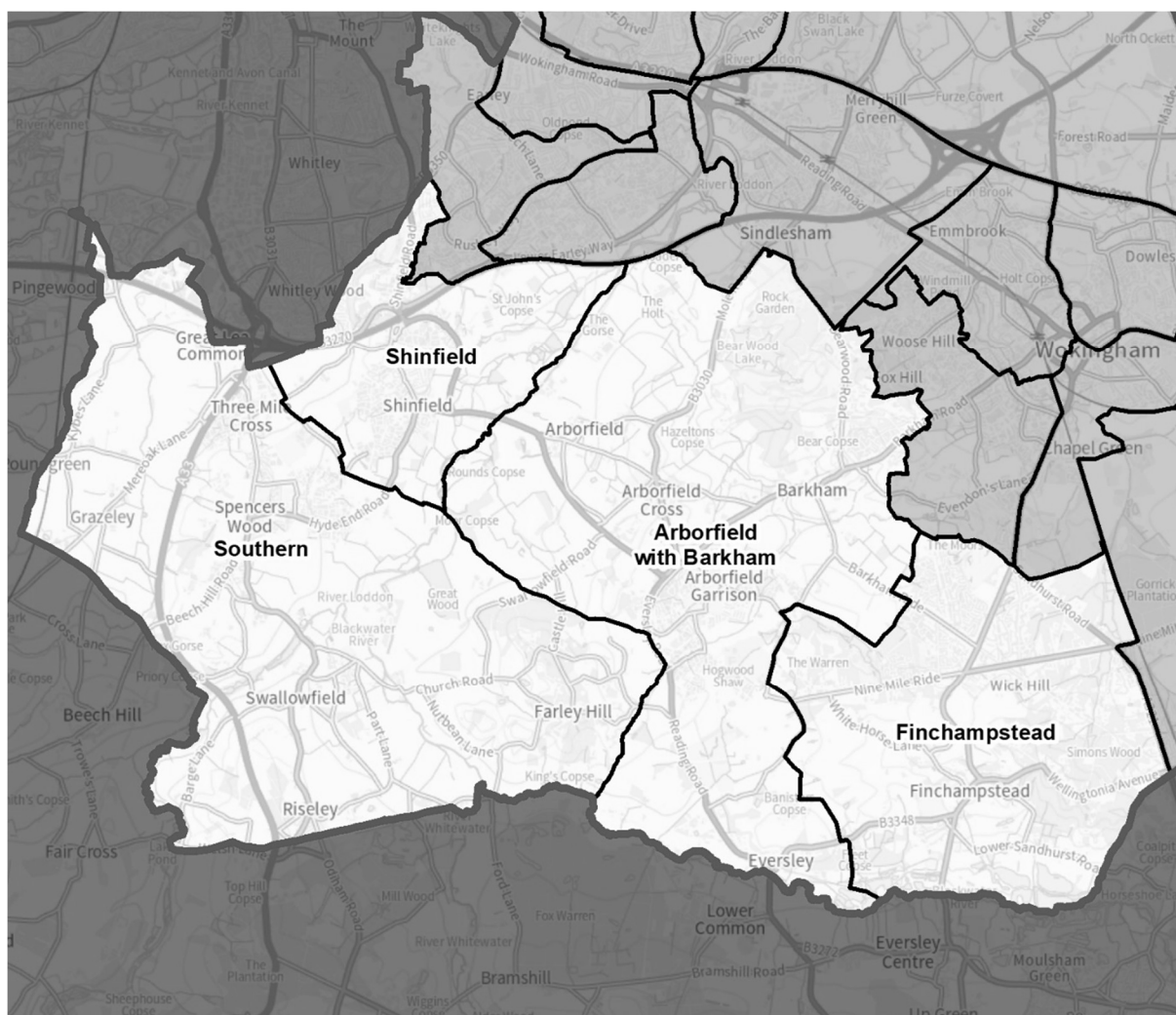
69 We consider that the Council's proposals provide a good basis for the draft recommendations. We note the concerns about the Shinfield North area. Given the number of electors, moving this area would mean departing from the three-member ward pattern. Even just including the area to the east of Shinfield Road in an Earley ward, as suggested by a resident, would worsen electoral equality in Shinfield ward to over -10%, which we do not consider acceptable. In addition, we note that the Shinfield Rise area does have direct access into Shinfield, via Shinfield Road, even if it is closer in proximity to parts of Earley. However, we note that the Ryhill Way has no direct access into Shinfield (except for a single footpath) and that its links are directly into Earley. Transferring this area would require the creation of a parish ward of Earley parish and worsen electoral equality in Shinfield ward (discussed below) to 8% fewer electors than the district average by 2023. It would, however, improve in the Council's West Earley ward to 1% fewer, rather than 3% fewer. We consider that this amendment should be adopted because of the improved reflection of community identity.

70 We have considered the proposal from the Earley & Shinfield Liberal Democrats for an amendment to North Earley ward. This provides a good boundary, reflecting the access of the electors on these roads, albeit while moving away from the centre of road boundaries. However, we consider this a good boundary. While this arrangement worsens electoral equality in North Earley ward from 7% to 9% more electors than the borough average by 2028, it improves it in South East Earley ward from 8% more to 5% more. Therefore, on balance, we are persuaded to adopt these amendments.

71 We note that there was not agreement on the names for these wards, with a resident putting 'Earley' as a prefix, while the Council used it as suffix. The resident proposed a 'South West' ward, rather than 'South'. We have no particular view on the use of Earley as a suffix or prefix, but consider the use of South West sensible given that the two wards south of the A3290 contain south areas of Earley parish. We are therefore adopting the 'South West' element of the resident's ward name, but would welcome local views.

72 Our draft recommendations are for three-councillor North Earley, South East Earley and South West Earley wards which would have 9% more, 5% more and 1% fewer electors than the borough average by 2028, respectively.

South



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Arborfield with Barkham	3	8%
Finchampstead	3	8%
Shinfield	3	-9%
Southern	3	3%

Arborfield with Barkham, Finchampstead, Shinfield and Southern

73 The Council proposed three-councillor Arborfield with Barkham, Finchampstead, Shinfield and Southern wards for this area. Its Shinfield ward would comprise the north area of Shinfield parish and is centred on Shinfield itself, with the eastern boundary being the break around Three Mile Cross and Ryeish Green. As discussed in the Earley section (above), it stated that it could not reach a consensus on whether the Shinfield North area should be with Shinfield or Earley.

74 The Council's Southern ward would comprise the southern half of Shinfield parish, along with Swallowfield parish and an area of Finchampstead parish. The

majority view was that Three Mile Cross, Ryeish Green and Spencers Wood villages in the south of Shinfield parish could be joined with the villages in Swallowfield parish and Eversley in Finchampstead parish. The Council stated that while the villages have their own identities, they share common characters. It also put forward a minority proposal that would see the creation of a two-councillor Three Mile Cross & Spencers Wood ward, comprising these areas of Shinfield parish, while also creating a single-councillor Grazeley & Swallowfield ward, comprising the Grazeley area of Shinfield parish, along with Swallowfield parish and the Eversley area of Finchampstead parish.

75 The Council's Arborfield with Barkham ward would comprise Arborfield and Barkham parishes, along with part of Finchampstead parish and a very small area of Swallowfield parish. It argued that this ward would see the whole of the Arborfield Garrison development included in a single ward, while acknowledging that this requires the inclusion of areas within different parishes. The Council's Finchampstead ward would comprise those areas of Finchampstead parish not transferred to Arborfield with Barkham and Southern ward or the area currently in Wokingham Without ward.

76 A resident put forward broadly similar proposals to the Council, but proposed naming the wards Barkham, Finchampstead, Shinfield East and Shinfield West & Swallowfield.

77 As discussed in the Earley section (above), a resident provided good evidence for including part of the north of Shinfield parish in an Earley ward.

78 A number of respondents argued that the existing Shinfield South ward should be split into two wards or increased to four councillors. A number of others objected to proposals to include Swallowfield with part of Shinfield, arguing that Swallowfield is very rural, while the Shinfield area is becoming more developed and suburban. A number of others put forward comments about the existing Shinfield and Swallowfield wards, particularly around the inclusion of parts the Spencers Wood area of Shinfield parish in the existing Swallowfield ward.

79 Swallowfield Parish Council expressed support for being in a three-councillor ward, but stated that it is very different from Shinfield and more similar to South Finchampstead and Arborfield village.

80 A resident proposed an amendment to the Council's boundary between its proposed Shinfield and Southern wards, arguing that it omitted part of the Ryeish Green area from the communities it links to in Spencers Wood and Three Mile Cross. The resident also objected to the Council's minority proposal, arguing that it separates Grazeley from its neighbouring villages, placing it in a ward with Swallowfield to which it has limited links.

81 Barkham Parish Council expressed support for its inclusion in a three-councillor ward, as well as keeping Arborfield Green in the same wards as the community centre. Arborfield Garrison Residents' Action Group argued for placing the whole of the Arborfield Garrison development in a single ward, rather than being divided between four wards, as at present. A number of residents also argued that the ward boundaries should reflect the Arborfield Garrison development, while others argued that the existing Barkham ward contains too many electors and should be redrawn or have more councillors. A resident proposed the creation of a Barkham that does not include the Arborfield Garrison development, arguing that as it stands there are too many electors.

82 As discussed in the electorate forecasts section, a number of people questioned whether the forecasts fully reflected the level of development in the Arborfield Garrison development. We note these comments, but can only have regard for growth until 2028, five years from the end of this review. We are satisfied that the Council has provided the most accurate forecasts available at the present time. A resident argued that the Council's three-councillor Arborfield & Barkham ward should be three single-councillor wards, but did not put forward specific proposals.

83 Finchampstead Parish Council suggested combining the existing Finchampstead North and Finchampstead South wards, but acknowledged that this may be too large, requiring four councillors. It also proposed creating a ward based on the Arborfield Garrison development and combining the rest of Barkham parish with Finchampstead North. Finally, the Parish Council observed that part of Wokingham Without ward is a parish ward of Finchampstead parish.

84 A resident called for the retention of the existing Finchampstead North and Finchampstead South wards, objecting to putting any part of Finchampstead in a ward with Barkham. Another resident suggested amending the boundary between these existing wards, while another suggested creating a smaller south ward focused on Finchampstead village.

85 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received, noting the Council's proposals for a pattern of three-councillor wards across this area. As discussed in the Earley section (above), we propose transferring the small area of Ryhill Way out of the Shinfield ward, to West Earley ward, as this reflects its sole road access. We consider that the remainder of its Shinfield ward, focused around Shinfield itself, provides a good three-councillor solution. However, we also note the comments from a resident that the ward omits part of Ryeish Green. On balance, we are persuaded to move this small number of electors out of the Shinfield ward.

86 We note the concerns about the creation of a three-councillor Southern ward, particularly around the inclusion of a range of different rural communities. We have

examined the Council's minority proposal for a two-councillor and single-councillor ward. However, we do not consider that the suggested Grazeley & Swallowfield ward provides a coherent warding pattern as the two-councillor Three Mile Cross & Spencers Wood ward sits in the middle, effectively dividing it. When taken into consideration with the fact this moves away from the three-councillor pattern, we are not persuaded to adopt this proposal.

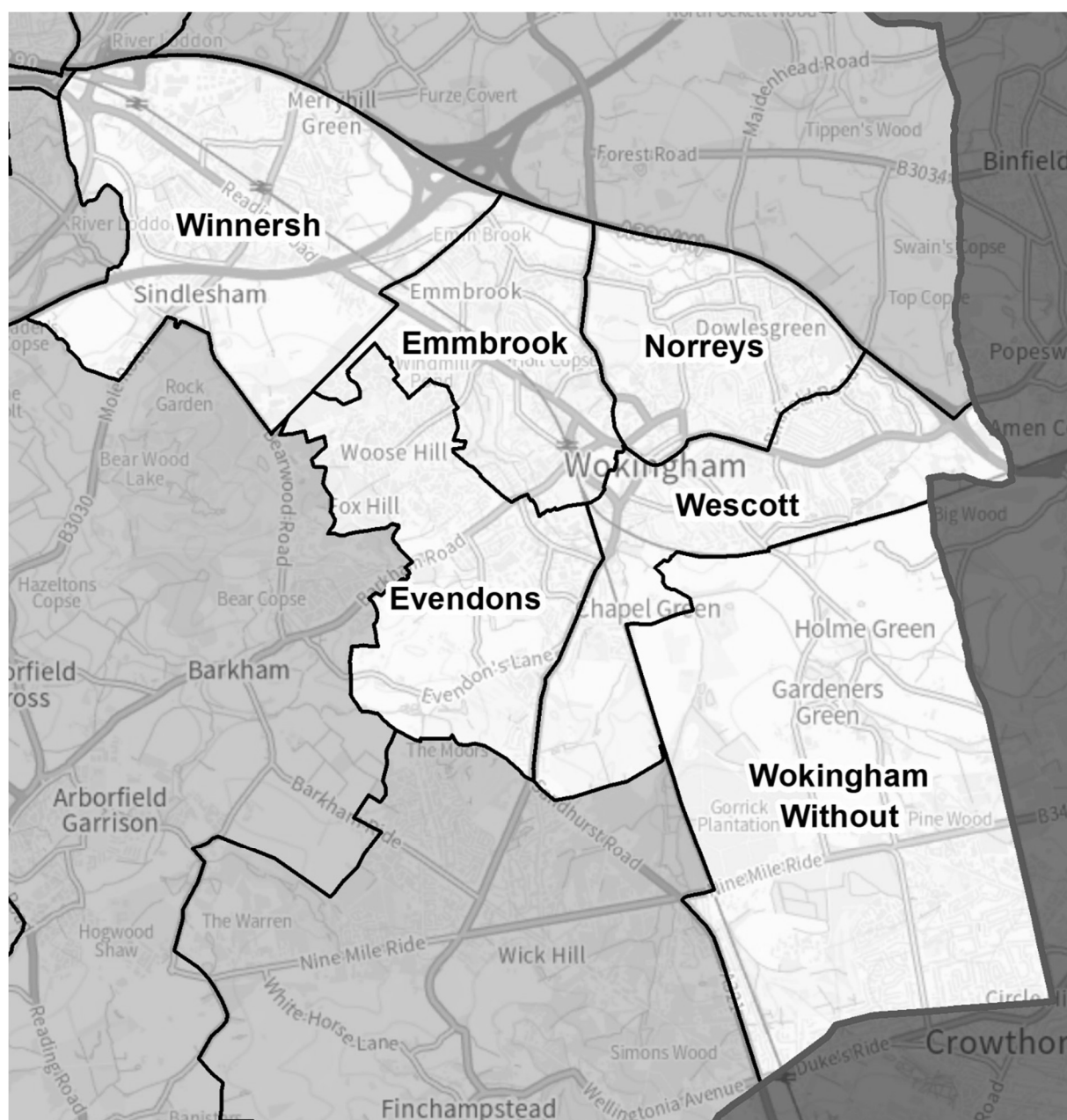
87 We note that the villages in the Council's Southern ward have good links between them, although we have concerns that the ward stretches too far east, taking in part of Finchampstead parish. We consider that the Eversley area has better links into the proposed Arborfield with Barkham ward. We are therefore adopting the Council's three-councillor Southern ward, subject to not including the Eversley area or the small area of Ryeish Green.

88 We note that there was support for including the whole of the Arborfield Garrison development in a single ward, which the Council achieves with its Arborfield with Barkham ward. We do not consider that any other respondents put forward a stronger warding pattern. As discussed in the paragraph above, we consider that the Eversley area of Finchampstead parish has better links into Arborfield with Barkham and we are therefore reflecting that in our proposals, noting that if we were to retain the area in the Finchampstead ward it would create a ward with 13% more electors than the borough average in 2028. This is a level of electoral inequality we are not persuaded to adopt.

89 Finally, we have considered the comments around Finchampstead, noting that there is not consensus on how the area should be divided, but note that the Council has provided a good three-councillor proposal. As discussed above, we support the inclusion of the Arborfield Garrison development area of Finchampstead parish in the Arborfield with Barkham ward and propose going further to also include the Eversley area. We note the Parish Council's concern that part of the parish is included in Wokingham Without ward. However, if this area is retained in the Council's three-councillor Finchampstead ward it would have 19% more electors than the borough average by 2028, while Wokingham Without would have 19% fewer. This is a level of electoral inequality we are not persuaded to adopt. We are therefore incorporating the Council's proposed ward without amendment.

90 Our draft recommendations are for three-councillor Arborfield with Barkham, Finchampstead, Shinfield and Southern wards with 8% more, 8% more, 9% fewer and 3% more electors than the borough average by 2028.

Wokingham, Wokingham Without and Winnersh



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Emmbrook	3	1%
Evendons	3	-1%
Norreys	3	-8%
Wescott	3	3%
Winnersh	3	5%
Wokingham Without	3	-9%

Emmbrook, Evendons, Norreys and Wescott

91 The Council proposed four three-councillor wards for the Wokingham parish area. It stated that there was agreement that the existing Emmbrook and Evendons wards remain an accurate reflection of their communities and should be unchanged. The Council proposed changes between Norreys and Westcott wards to secure electoral equality and reflect communities. A resident supported the inclusion of the area to the east of Binfield Road in Wescott ward. Another supported no change to Emmbrook ward. A resident put forward broadly similar proposals to the Council.

92 A resident proposed renaming Norreys as Cantley, but did not offer any supporting evidence as to why. Another resident stated that the area around Glebelands Road is cut off from the rest of Norreys ward by Wiltshire Road, and suggested that the area is a different ward. Another resident suggested dividing the existing Norreys ward along Binfield Road. However, they did not provide compelling supporting evidence. In addition, as with the proposal above, it would not fit with a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards.

93 A resident suggested that Keep Hatch should be in its own ward. However, this area does not contain sufficient electors for a single-councillor ward, nor does it fit in with a three-councillor pattern. Therefore, we have not considered it further. Another resident put forward general comments about the boundaries needing changing, as well as changing ward names, but did not provide any specific evidence. We received a suggestion of a ward covering the town centre, taking in the edges of the areas around it. However, there was no specific evidence, and this would make it difficult to secure three-councillor wards.

94 A resident stated that Jasmine Close should be in Evendons ward, rather than Emmbrook, citing the use of facilities there. However, we note that the road's only access to Evendons is via Emmbrook ward, and ensuring internal access for the ward would require transferring a large area to the west of Reading Road. Another resident suggested that the area to the west of Reading Road should be in Evendons. However, moving this area would worsen electoral equality in Emmbrook and Evendons to 15% fewer and 16% more electors than the borough average by 2028, respectively. We do not propose adopting wards with this poor level of electoral equality.

95 A resident proposed moving a small area of Evendons ward to Finchampstead. However, there was not sufficient evidence for this change and would require the creation of an unviable parish ward.

96 We received a number of general comments about the need for changes to the existing boundaries or proposing small changes, as well as a range of comments proposing specific changes. However, none of these provided strong evidence to support the changes.

97 We are therefore basing the draft recommendations on the Council's proposals, subject to a small amendment to the boundary between Emmbrook and Wescott wards. We are tying the boundary to Earle Crescent to ensure that the Elms Road area has road access into Wescott ward. This does not affect any electors.

98 Our three-councillor Emmbrook, Evendons, Norreys and Wescott wards would have 1% more, 1% fewer, 8% fewer and 3% more electors than the borough average by 2028, respectively.

Winnersh

99 The Council proposed the retention of the existing Winnersh ward noting that there was support for this. A resident stated that Old Forest Road should be in Emmbrook ward, not Winnersh ward. We received no other significant comments on this area.

100 We note that the Council's proposals secure good electoral equality, while comprising the whole parish. The resident's suggestion would require the creation of an unviable parish ward and would be better addressed as part of a Community Governance Review, which is a separate process run by the Council. We are therefore retaining the three-councillor Winnersh ward without amendment. This would have 5% more electors than the borough average by 2028.

Wokingham Without

101 The Council proposed the retention of the existing Wokingham Without ward. As discussed in the Arborfield with Barkham, Finchampstead, Shinfield and Southern section (above), Finchampstead Parish Council and a number of residents objected to the inclusion of part of Finchampstead in Wokingham Without ward. A resident put forward broadly similar proposals to the Council.

102 A resident put forward good evidence for retaining the existing Wokingham Without ward, including the inclusion of part of Finchampstead parish. A number of other residents also supported the retention of the existing ward. Another resident suggested that the western boundary should follow the railway line, while addressing the loss of electors by amending the northern boundary. A resident proposed moving the boundary between Wokingham Without and the existing Wescott ward. Finally, a resident suggested that Wokingham Without could be renamed Pinewood.

103 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received, noting some support for the retention of the existing ward. As discussed in the Arborfield with Barkham, Finchampstead, Shinfield and Southern section, we note the concern of Finchampstead Parish Council about the inclusion of part of the parish in Wokingham Without. However, if this area is retained in the Council's three-councillor Finchampstead ward it would have 19% more electors than the borough

average by 2028, while Wokingham Without would have 19% fewer. This is a level of electoral inequality we are not persuaded to adopt. This proposal also precludes the suggestion of tying the boundary to the railway line as this effectively reflects the removal of the parish ward.

104 We note the suggestion from a resident for amending the boundary between Wokingham Without and the existing Wescott wards, but this would require the creation of a parish ward, as well as worsen electoral equality. In light of this and no other support, we are not adopting this amendment. Finally, we note the suggestion to rename the ward as Pinewood. However, there was no other evidence to support this and the ward name reflects the name of the parish.

105 We are therefore retaining the existing Wokingham Without ward without change. This would have 9% fewer electors than the borough average by 2028.

Conclusions

106 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality in Wokingham, referencing the 2021 and 2028 electorate figures against the proposed number of councillors and wards. A full list of wards, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found at Appendix A to the back of this report. An outline map of the wards is provided at Appendix B.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2021	2028
Number of councillors	54	54
Number of electoral wards	18	18
Average number of electors per councillor	2,420	2,455
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	5	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Draft recommendations

Wokingham Borough Council should be made up of 54 councillors serving 18 three-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for Wokingham Borough Council. You can also view our draft recommendations for Wokingham Borough Council on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Parish electoral arrangements

107 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

108 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, Wokingham Borough Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

109 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Earley, Finchampstead, Shinfield, Swallowfield, Wokingham and Woodley parishes.

110 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Earley parish.

Draft recommendations

Earley Town Council should comprise 25 councillors, as at present, representing nine wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Cutbush	4
Egremont	1
Hawkedon	4
Hillside	4
Maiden Erlegh	2
Radstock	4
Redhatch	1
St Nicolas	2
Whitegates	3

111 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Finchampstead parish.

Draft recommendations

Finchampstead Parish Council should comprise 17 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Finchampstead North	7
Finchampstead South	6
Finchampstead West	3
Lower Wokingham	1

112 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Shinfield parish.

Draft recommendations

Shinfield Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing six wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Grazeley	2
Shinfield North	2
Shinfield North East	1
Shinfield Village	5
Spencers Wood & Three Mile Cross	4
Spencers Wood South	1

113 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Swallowfield parish.

Draft recommendations

Swallowfield Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
East	1
West	8

114 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Wokingham parish.

Draft recommendations

Wokingham Town Council should comprise 25 councillors, as at present, representing nine wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Emmbrook North	3
Emmbrook South	3
Evendons East	3
Evendons West	4
Norreys Central	2
Norreys East	2
Norreys West	4
Wescott East	2
Wescott West	2

115 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Woodley parish.

Draft recommendations

Woodley Town Council should comprise 25 councillors, as at present, representing 10 wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Bulmershe East	2
Bulmershe West	2
Coronation Central	1
Coronation East	3
Loddon Airfield	5
Loddon South	3
Loddon West	2
South Lake North	2
South Lake South	3
Warren	2

Have your say

116 The Commission has an open mind about its draft recommendations. Every representation we receive will be considered, regardless of who it is from or whether it relates to the whole borough or just a part of it.

117 If you agree with our recommendations, please let us know. If you don't think our recommendations are right for area, we want to hear alternative proposals for a different pattern of wards.

118 Our website has a special consultation area where you can explore the maps. You can find it at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

119 Submissions can also be made by emailing reviews@lgbce.org.uk or by writing to:

Review Officer (Wokingham)
LGBCE
PO Box 133
Blyth
NE24 9FE

120 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for Wokingham Borough Council which delivers:

- Electoral equality: each local councillor represents a similar number of electors.
- Community identity: reflects the identity and interests of local communities.
- Effective and convenient local government: helping your council discharge its responsibilities effectively.

121 A good pattern of wards should:

- Provide good electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of electors.
- Reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links.
- Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries.
- Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government.

122 Electoral equality:

- Does your proposal mean that councillors would represent roughly the same number of electors as elsewhere in Wokingham?

123 Community identity:

- Community groups: is there a parish council, residents' association or other group that represents the area?
- Interests: what issues bind the community together or separate it from other parts of your area?
- Identifiable boundaries: are there natural or constructed features which make strong boundaries for your proposals?

124 Effective local government:

- Are any of the proposed wards too large or small to be represented effectively?
- Are the proposed names of the wards appropriate?
- Are there good links across your proposed wards? Is there any form of public transport?

125 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all representations will be placed on deposit at our offices and on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

126 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers. This includes your name, postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, no matter who they are from.

127 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with the draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

128 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. The draft

Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the all-out elections for Wokingham Borough Council in 2024.

Equalities

129 The Commission has looked at how it carries out reviews under the guidelines set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It has made best endeavours to ensure that people with protected characteristics can participate in the review process and is sufficiently satisfied that no adverse equality impacts will arise as a result of the outcome of the review.

Appendices

Appendix A

Draft recommendations for Wokingham Borough Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2028)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Arborfield with Barkham	3	6,384	2,128	-12%	7,935	2,645	8%
2	East Woodley	3	6,729	2,243	-7%	6,717	2,239	-9%
3	Emmbrook	3	7,388	2,463	2%	7,455	2,485	1%
4	Evendons	3	7,162	2,387	-1%	7,315	2,438	-1%
5	Finchampstead	3	8,152	2,717	12%	7,971	2,657	8%
6	Norreys	3	6,543	2,181	-10%	6,747	2,249	-8%
7	North Earley	3	8,256	2,752	14%	8,063	2,688	9%
8	North Woodley	3	7,199	2,400	-1%	6,711	2,237	-9%
9	Northern	3	7,170	2,390	-1%	7,122	2,374	-3%
10	Shinfield	3	6,049	2,016	-17%	6,731	2,244	-9%
11	Southern	3	7,381	2,460	2%	7,550	2,517	3%

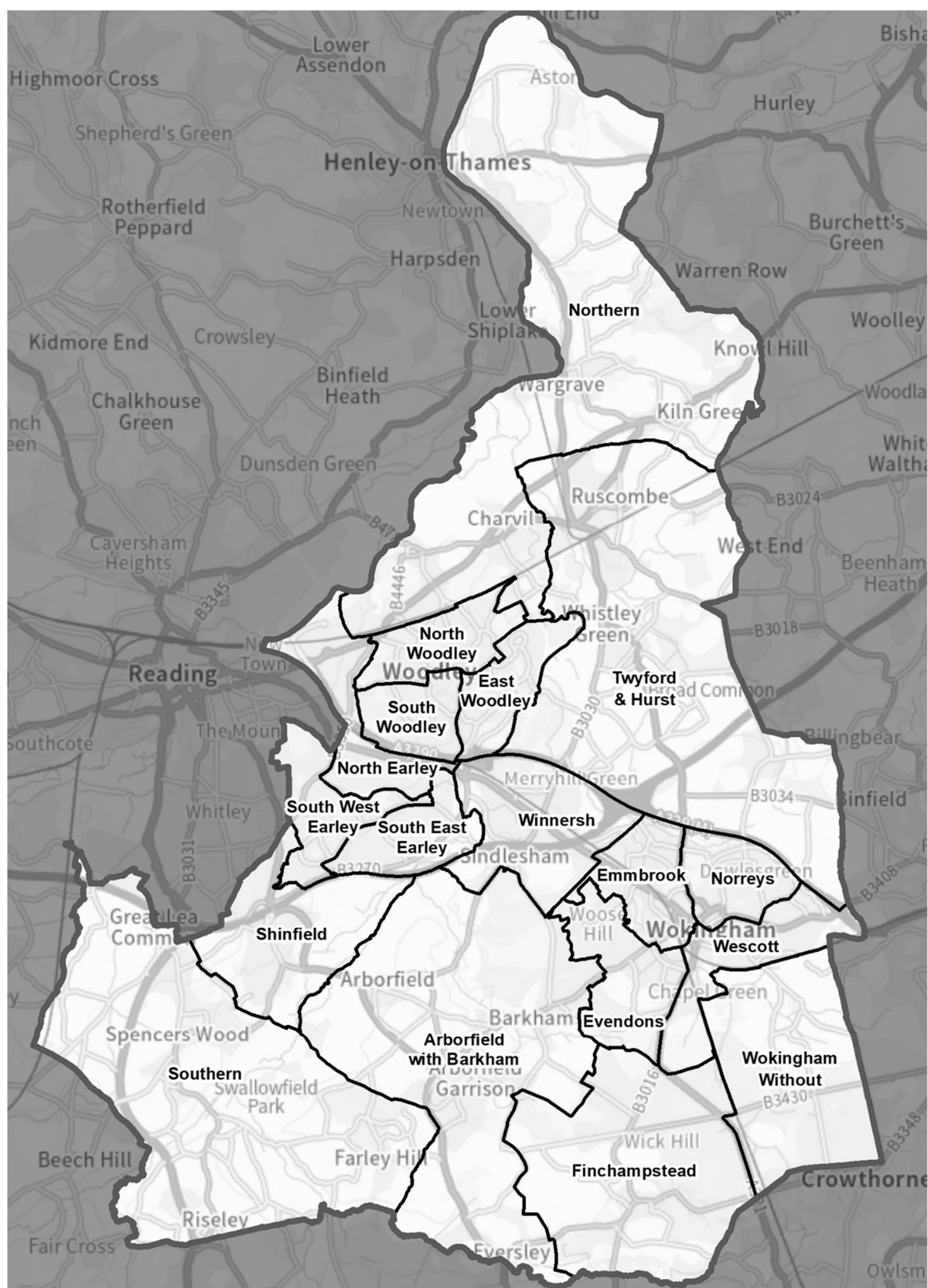
	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2028)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
12	South East Earley	3	7,865	2,622	8%	7,768	2,589	5%
13	South West Earley	3	7,481	2,494	3%	7,297	2,432	-1%
14	South Woodley	3	7,485	2,495	3%	7,182	2,394	-2%
15	Twyford & Hurst	3	7,794	2,598	7%	7,902	2,634	7%
16	Wescott	3	7,383	2,461	2%	7,619	2,540	3%
17	Winnersh	3	7,867	2,622	8%	7,756	2,585	5%
18	Wokingham Without	3	6,400	2,133	-12%	6,721	2,240	-9%
Totals		54	130,690	–	–	132,562	–	–
Averages		–	–	2,420	–	–	2,455	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Wokingham Borough Council

Note: The ‘variance from average’ column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix B

Outline map



A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the large map accompanying this report, or on our website: www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/berkshire/wokingham

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:
www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/berkshire/workingham

Local Authority

- Wokingham Borough Council

Political Groups

- Earley & Shinfield Liberal Democrats

Councillors

- Councillor V. Milam (Wokingham Borough Council)
- Councillor K. Baker (Wokingham Borough Council)
- Councillor M. Firmager (Wokingham Borough Council)
- Councillor J. Halsall (Wokingham Borough Council)
- Councillor G. Cowan (Wokingham Borough Council)
- Councillor W. Smith (Wokingham Borough Council)
- Parish Councillor D. Chopping (Earley Town Council)

Local Organisations

- Arborfield Garrison Residents' Action Group

Parish and Town Councils

- Barkham Parish Council
- Charvil Parish Council
- Finchampstead Parish Council
- Wokingham Without Parish Council
- St Nicholas Hurst Parish Council
- Swallowfield Parish Council

Local Residents

- 130 local residents

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral inequality	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. We only take account of electors registered specifically for local elections during our reviews.
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents

Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) was set up by Parliament, independent of Government and political parties. It is directly accountable to Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. It is responsible for conducting boundary, electoral and structural reviews of local government.

Local Government Boundary Commission for
England
1st Floor, Windsor House
50 Victoria Street, London
SW1H 0TL

Telephone: 0330 500 1525

Email: reviews@lgbce.org.uk

Online: www.lgbce.org.uk
www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Twitter: @LGBCE

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND
ELECTORAL REVIEW OF WOKINGHAM

Draft recommendations for ward boundaries in the borough of Wokingham January 2023
Sheet 1 of 1

Boundary alignment and names shown on the mapping background may not be up to date. They may differ from the latest boundary information applied as part of this review.

This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Keeper of Public Records © Crown copyright and database right. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and database right. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England GD10004928 2023.

KEY

BOROUGH COUNCIL BOUNDARY

PARISH BOUNDARY

PROPOSED PARISH WARD BOUNDARY

PROPOSED WARD BOUNDARY COINCIDENT WITH PARISH BOUNDARY

PROPOSED WARD BOUNDARY COINCIDENT WITH PROPOSED PARISH WARD BOUNDARY

NORTHERN

REMHENHAM CP

PARISH NAME

KEY TO PARISH WARDS

EARLEY CP

- A CUTBUSH
- B EGREMONT
- C HAWKEDON
- D HILLSIDE
- E MAIDEN ERLEGH
- F RADSTOCK
- G REDHATCH
- H ST NICOLAS
- I WHITEGATES

FINCHAMPSTEAD CP

- J FINCHAMPSTEAD NORTH
- K FINCHAMPSTEAD SOUTH
- L FINCHAMPSTEAD WEST
- M LOWER WOKINGHAM

SHINFIELD CP

- N GRAZELEY
- O SHINFIELD NORTH
- P SHINFIELD NORTH EAST
- Q SHINFIELD VILLAGE
- R SPENCERS WOOD & THREE MILE CROSS
- S SPENCERS WOOD SOUTH

SWALLOWFIELD CP

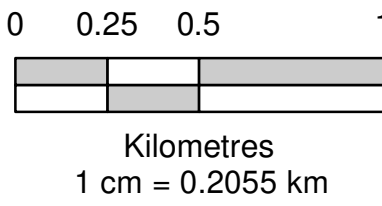
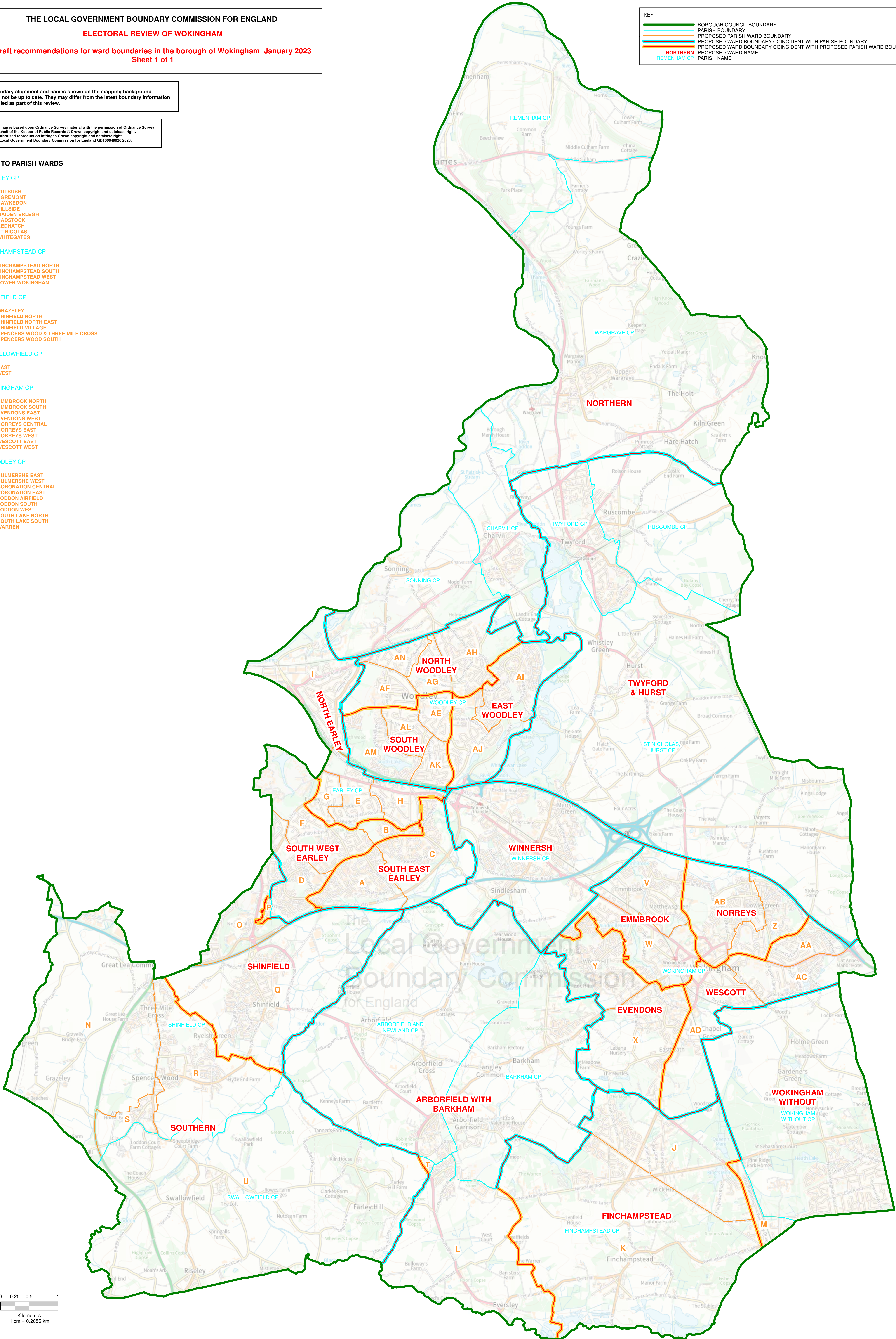
- T EAST
- U WEST

WOKINGHAM CP

- V EMMBROOK NORTH
- W EMMBROOK SOUTH
- X EVENDONS EAST
- Y EVENDONS WEST
- Z NORREYS CENTRAL
- AA NORREYS EAST
- AB NORREYS WEST
- AC WESCOTT EAST
- AD WESCOTT WEST

WOODLEY CP

- AE BULMERSHE EAST
- AF BULMERSHE WEST
- AG CORONATION CENTRAL
- AH CORONATION EAST
- AI LODDON AIRFIELD
- AJ LODDON SOUTH
- AK LODDON WEST
- AM SOUTH LAKE NORTH
- AN SOUTH LAKE SOUTH
- AO WARREN



Have your say

We are now consulting local people on a new pattern of wards for Wokingham Borough Council. We have an open mind about our final recommendations, and we will consider every piece of evidence we receive from local groups and people, regardless of whom it is from or whether it relates to the whole council area or just a part of it.

If you agree with our recommendations, please let us know. If you don't think our recommendations are right for Wokingham we want to hear alternative proposals for a different pattern of wards.

We aim to propose a pattern of wards for Wokingham Borough Council which delivers:

- **Electoral equality:** each councillor represents a similar number of electors.
- **Community identity:** reflects the identity and interests of local communities.
- **Effective and convenient local government:** helping your council discharge its responsibilities effectively.

A good pattern of wards should:

- Provide good electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of electors.
- Reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links.
- Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries.
- Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government.

Electoral equality

- Does your proposal mean that councillors would represent roughly the same number of electors as elsewhere in the council area?

Community identity

- **Transport links:** are there good links across your proposed ward? Is there any form of public transport?
- **Community groups:** is there a parish council, residents association or another group that represents the area?
- **Facilities:** does your pattern of wards reflect where local people go for shops, medical services, leisure facilities etc?

Write to:
Review Officer (Wokingham)
LGBCE
PO Box 133
Blyth
NE24 9FE

- **Interests:** what issues bind the community together or separate it from other parts of your area?
- **Identifiable boundaries:** are there natural or constructed features which make strong boundaries for your proposals?

Effective local government

- Are any of the proposed wards too large or small to be represented effectively?
- Are the proposed names of the wards appropriate?

Useful tips

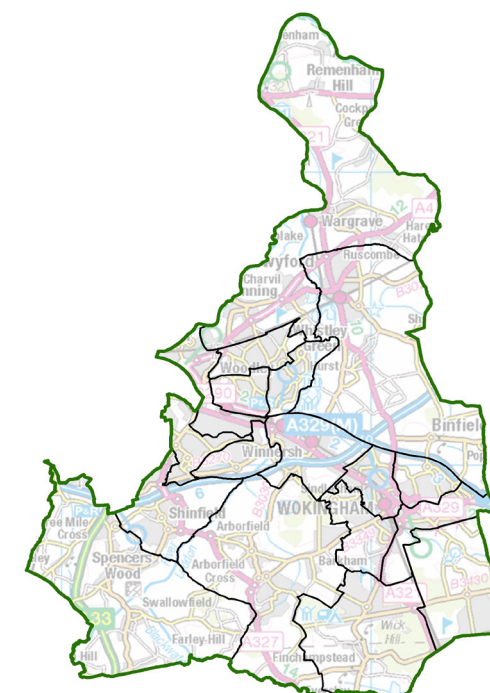
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- We publish all submissions we receive on our website. Go to: www.lgbce.org.uk

Our consultation area:
consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Email:
reviews@lgbce.org.uk
Twitter:
[@LGBCE](https://twitter.com/LGBCE)

Wokingham Borough Council

Draft Recommendations on the new electoral arrangements



Who we are

- The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament.
- We are not part of government or any political party.
- We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons.
- Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

Electoral review

An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority, including:

- The total number of councillors representing the council's electors ('council size').
- The names, number and boundaries of wards or electoral divisions.
- The number of councillors for each ward or division.

Why Wokingham?

- Wokingham Borough Council currently has high levels of electoral inequality: some councillors represent many more - or many fewer - electors than others.
- We are seeking to improve levels of electoral equality for local electors.

Our proposals

- We propose that the council should have **54 councillors** in future, representing 18 three-councillor wards across the council area.

You have until 10 April 2023 to have your say on the recommendations

Summary of our recommendations

Our draft recommendations propose that Wokingham Borough Council should have 54 councillors, the same as under the existing arrangements.

Those councillors should represent 18 three-councillor wards across the council area.

Before drawing up the draft recommendations, the Commission carried out a public consultation inviting proposals for a new pattern of wards for Wokingham.

We have considered all of the submissions we received during that phase of consultation. The boundaries of 22 wards should change; three will stay the same (Evendons, Winnersh and Wokingham Without).

An outline of the proposals is shown in the map to the right. A detailed report on the recommendations and interactive mapping is available on our website at: www.lgbce.org.uk.

We welcome comments on our draft recommendations, whether you support the proposals or wish to put forward alternative arrangements.

Have your say at consultation.lgbce.org.uk:

- view the map of our recommendations down to street level.
- zoom into the areas that interest you most.
- find more guidance on how to have your say.
- read the full report of our recommendations.
- send us your views directly.

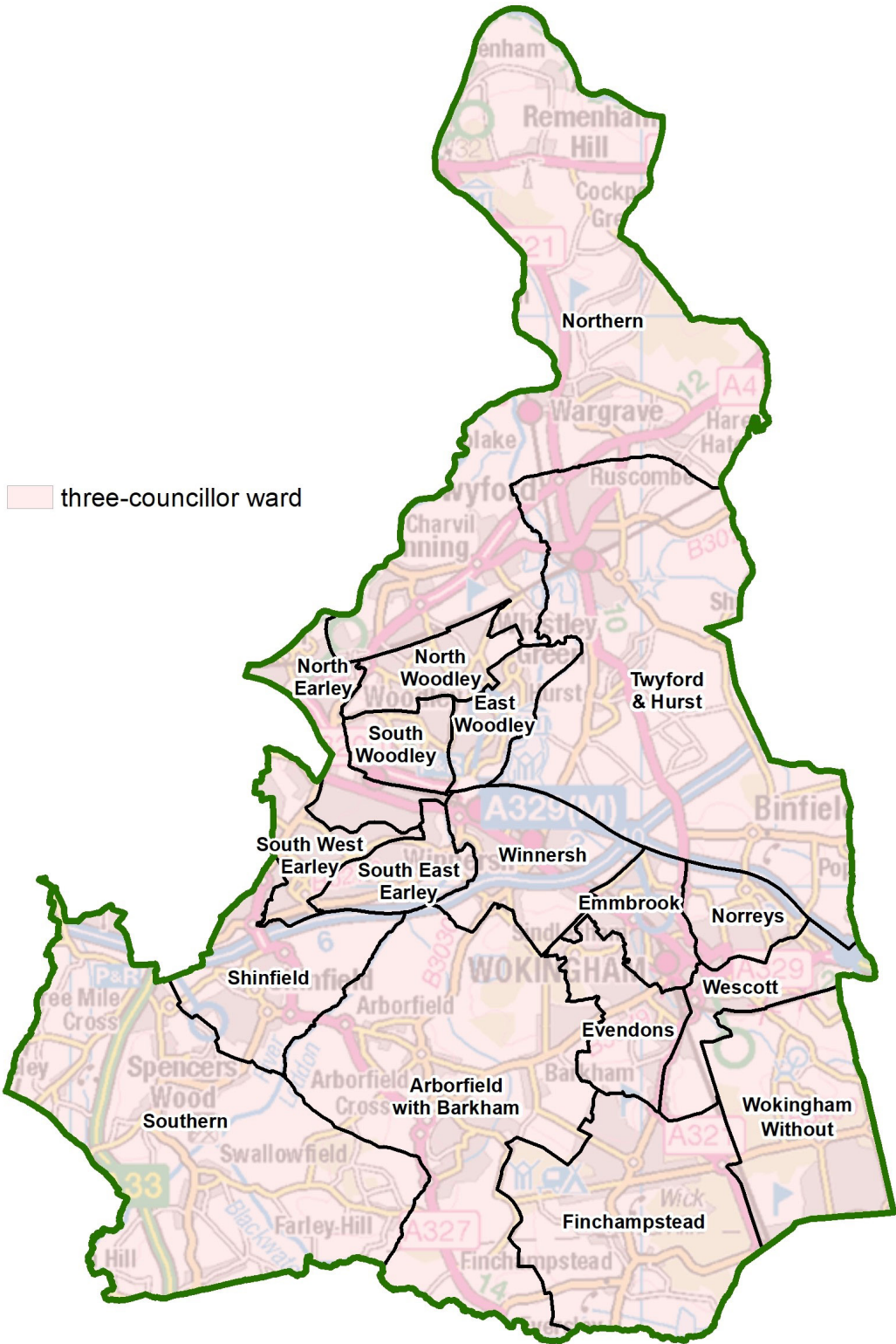
Stage of Review	Description
30 August 2022 - 7 November 2022	Public consultation on warding arrangements
31 January 2023 - 10 April 2023	Public consultation on draft recommendations
4 July 2023	Publication of final recommendations
May 2024	Subject to parliamentary approval - implementation of new arrangements at local elections

Overview of draft recommendations for Wokingham Borough Council

View this map online: consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Follow the review on Twitter: [@LGBCE](https://twitter.com/LGBCE)

If you are viewing this page online, click on the map to go straight to our interactive consultation area.





Appeal Decision

Inquiry held on 15-18, 22 and 24 November 2022

Site visit made on 17 November 2022

by G Rollings BA(Hons) MAUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31st January 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/22/3304042

Land west of Kingfisher Grove, Three Mile Cross, Reading, Berkshire, RG7 1LZ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for outline planning permission
 - The appeal is made by JPP Land Ltd against Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application, Ref: 201002, is dated 23 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is an outline planning application for the proposed erection of 49 affordable dwellings, with new publicly accessible open space and access (access to be considered).
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for outline planning application for the proposed erection of 49 affordable dwellings with new publicly accessible open space and access, at land west of Kingfisher Grove, Reading, RG7 1LZ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 201002, dated 23 April 2020, subject to the schedule of conditions in Annex A of this decision.

Preliminary Matters

Change of development description

2. Prior to the Council's decision, the appellant requested a change to the description of development, altering the number of proposed affordable homes. The original description of development was: "Outline application for the proposed erection of 49 dwellings, including 22 units of affordable housing, with new publicly accessible open space and access from Grazeley Road." Prior to the Inquiry, the appellant consulted interested parties on the intended description, with three submissions received, which I have taken into account together with all other correspondence. The Council agreed to the change.
3. Having considered this issue at the Case Management Conference held on 6 October 2022, I advised in the note of the proceedings that the change to the description of development does not raise any new issues, that it would not prejudice any party, and that sufficient consultation on the change has been undertaken. As such, it is reflected in the description of development in this decision.

Other matters and appeal background

4. The appeal is submitted in outline form will all matters except access reserved for more detailed consideration at a later time. Parameter plans were submitted which are incorporated in the conditions at Annex A.
5. The development plan for the area includes the Council's *Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document* (2010)¹ (the Core Strategy) and the *Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan* (2014)² (MDD), together with the *Shinfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan* (2017)³ (the Neighbourhood Plan). The Council's Local Plan review is at an early stage and is subject to further consultation and revision. I therefore accord it only minimal weight in my decision.
6. In its statement of case, the Council stated that had it decided the application, it would have been refused for several reasons. Several of these inform the main issues set out below. Others are addressed by the completed and signed Planning Agreement (s106 Agreement)⁴, which was submitted during the Inquiry. A highways-based reason for refusal was latterly the subject of discussions between the appellant and the Council, during which the parties achieved common ground, and was not subject to examination at the Inquiry.

Main Issues

7. The main issues are:
 - Whether the proposed development can be safely accommodated with regard to the proximity of the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) site at Burghfield;
 - The effect of the proposal on the landscape character and appearance of the area; and
 - Whether the proposed development would provide appropriate accessibility for future occupiers.

Reasons

AWE Burghfield site

8. The appeal site is around 2.8 kilometres to the east/northeast of the AWE Burghfield site, which is subject to the *Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2019* (REPPIR)⁵. An urgent protective area (UPA) with a radius of around 3.16km has been established around the AWE site, and the appeal site is within this. The UPA is wholly within a detailed emergency planning zone (DEPZ), The *AWE Off-site Emergency Plan* (2022)⁶ (the REPPIR plan) has been established for the DEPZ by West Berkshire District Council (WBDC). Should an incident occur, Wokingham Borough Council would have a role in managing and executing any emergency response.

¹ CD 5.1.

² CD 5.3.

³ CD 5.5.

⁴ ID 07.

⁵ CD 11.20.

⁶ CD 11.5.

9. MDD Policy TB04 states that development will only be permitted when the applicant demonstrates that the increase in the number of people living, working, shopping and/or visiting the proposal can be safely accommodated having regard to the needs of “blue light” services and the emergency off-site plan for the AWE site. It was agreed at the Inquiry that blue light services includes emergency services, such as ambulances, that would be required for the operation of the REPPIR plan in the event of an AWE site incident. *National Planning Policy Framework* (2021) (the Framework) paragraph 95 suggests, amongst other considerations, that operational sites for defence and security purposes should not be affected adversely by the impact of other development.
10. The AWE Burghfield site has a role in maintaining national security that includes manufacture and disposal services. Despite the small risk of any accident occurring, emergency planning must be in place. One of the risks is a serious event in which radioactive material could be released into the atmosphere and which would most likely take the form of a plume that would be carried along the atmosphere according to wind direction, eventually dispersing. The type of activity taking place at AWE Burghfield means that any release of material would not be sustained, and thus any event would likely happen over hours or a small number of days.
11. Were an incident to occur, the most likely composition of a plume would be plutonium particulates. The type of activity carried out at the AWE Burghfield site together with the distance of the appeal site from the former means that although there are additional risks of different material release or various possible types of exposure, the greatest risk would be from inhalation. For example, larger particulates would be likely to drop from the atmosphere after being carried and settle on the ground before the plume were to pass over a 2.8km radius from the site.
12. The Council and the appellant agree that such a risk, or the risk of an incident occurring, is very small. The appellant carried out an exercise that considered potential risk factors of previously calculated event frequencies and the AWE Burghfield on-site fault sequences that could trigger an event, concluding that such an event could occur on a 1 in 10,000-year basis. The consideration of additional factors such as meteorological and wind conditions and adherence to the REPPIR plan reduces the risk of a person on the appeal site being harmed by such an incident to a single event in many more thousands or millions of years.
13. The REPPIR plan recommends sheltering within buildings during an event as the primary method of protection to human health. The barrier of a building (with closed doors and windows) would afford the greatest and most immediate and accessible type of protection in the event of the type described above. The REPPIR plan also sets out measures for potential evacuation either during or after the event, but it is unlikely that this would be required for the appeal site should the shelter-in-place recommendation be followed. The same low risk factors mean that the requirement to shelter would be over a short period of no more than two days.
14. The consideration of risk was relevant to the Secretary of State’s agreement to allow 115 dwellings at Boundary Hall⁷ close to the AWE Aldermaston site, which performs similar work to that of AWE Burghfield and is also covered by the

⁷ CD 6.8.

REPPIR plan. The minimum distance between Boundary Hall and AWE Aldermaston was agreed to be 740 metres. He concluded in that case that the “extremely remote possibility” of an incident did not outweigh the other factors that led to him allowing the application.

15. The Council’s duties under the REPPIR plan include the protection of the public and the organisation of emergency services. Its concerns are predominantly based on the ability of the plan to be carried out should the appeal development occur. Although only 49 properties and around 117 people, this would add to the number already within the DEPZ and UPA. The surroundings of the AWE site are predominantly rural, but other parts of the area have also been developed, and these include Burghfield Common, a larger residential settlement than Three Mile Cross, and Green Park, a mixed-use business area. These are to the west/southwest and north/northeast, respectively, of the AWE site. Although low in risk, I acknowledge that an incident would have a high impact as set out in the Crest Nicholson judgement⁸.
16. The unidirectional nature of wind means that if a plume was to occur then it would disperse in a singular direction. This would be dependent on specific weather conditions and wind speeds, which are factors that inform the low risk of a plume passing over the appeal site. The REPPIR plan sectorises the DEPZ radially from the AWE site. The plan seeks to prioritise assistance within the sectors over which the plume would pass. Although I heard at the Inquiry that blue light and other relevant services would be working at capacity should an event occur, these are planned to address all areas within the DEPZ. The settlements elsewhere within the area that are larger than those in the appeal site sector (or a sector area comprising the sector and its neighbouring sectors) are in different directions. Given that the plan has the capacity to cover an incident in those sector areas, and that service resources would be predominantly focused on only one sector area, I consider that the addition of the proposed dwellings on the appeal site would not compromise the delivery of the plan.
17. Other implications for the safety of appeal site residents were presented to the Inquiry, including responses from WBDC and other agencies. In particular, the safety of home care workers entering the DEPZ during an incident was in issue, and it was mentioned that the potential for affordable housing to accommodate those with home care meant that this could occur. The Council would not send staff into the DEPZ in an emergency without being confident that staff would not be at risk.
18. Based on the appellant’s modelling, were an incident to occur, a person at the appeal site who was not sheltering might be exposed to a radiation dose of 1.5 milliSieverts (mSv). Advice from the Health and Safety Executive categorises the risk impact of such a dose to “minor”⁹. By comparison, WBDC’s public advice¹⁰ provides example levels of 0.02 mSv from a single chest X-ray, 1 mSv as the average annual dose in the UK from naturally occurring radon in homes and 2 mSv as the average total annual dose in the UK from natural radiation sources, 8 mSv as the average annual dose from all sources of radiation in Cornwall, and 500 mSv as the threshold for nausea and reduction in white blood cells. 20 mSv is listed as the annual legal worker dose limit.

⁸ CD 7.4.

⁹ CD 11.12 (appendix 2).

¹⁰ CD 11.21.

19. The effective dose received by anyone within the zone within the conditions set out previously would therefore be low, and lessened if REPPIR advice is followed. Although fear of contamination may prevent workers from entering the DEPZ, this could be disproportionate to the actual risk. Even in the event of plume particles settling on the ground in the appeal site, the risk from a dose following an incident would be lower than those occurring from the alternative sources set out above.
20. Should the REPPIR shelter-in-place advice be followed by those in the DEPZ, road traffic levels are unlikely to be greater than normal and the ability of services to access the zone would not be adversely affected. The possibility of self-evacuation by those within the zone was also raised as a potential safety issue, but this is addressed within the REPPIR plan and discouraged through the dissemination of public information. Other safety barriers such as being elsewhere on the appeal site away from shelter, travelling into the DEPZ, or not having access to a telephone landline (in the event of a safety announcement) are partly covered within the REPPIR plan. Alternatively, they are situations in which sufficient time would be available between the incident occurring and the plume passing over the site for people to become aware of the situation and gain access to shelter or other safety.
21. I have been made aware of other appeal decisions in which siting within the DEPZ have been factors in their dismissal¹¹. In each of these cases the evidence was considered by way of written representations. The Inspector in the Diana Close appeal adopted a precautionary approach in the absence of detailed evidence. In comparison, the evidence presented to me in this appeal has been examined and tested. Given its bespoke circumstances, I do not consider that it would result in the creation of a precedent for allowing other development in the DEPZ that in any case must be assessed on its own merit.
22. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not present a barrier to the ability of blue light services to safely carry out their duties, and nor would it affect the Council's ability to execute and manage its obligations under the REPPIR plan. Furthermore, people living in or using the appeal site could be safely accommodated. Together, these considerations form the thrust of MDD Policy TB04 and, as such, I find no conflict with this policy. Additionally, the development would not adversely affect the continued operation of the AWE site, and there would be no conflict with the NPPF.

Landscape character and appearance

23. The site is to the west of the existing built-up area of Three Mile Cross, and to the east of the A33. Its sole road access is at its northernmost point, from the junction of Grazeley Road and Kingfisher Grove. The land slopes downward generally from a ridge close to the eastern boundary, and apart from a shed and some vehicles close to the entrance, is vacant, having been used for agriculture. It currently has a grassland appearance dotted with trees, particularly along ditches close to the western edge and on the southern portion of the site.
24. At least the southern part of the site is historically associated with a former stately home and this also adjoins an area of open grassland (known as a suitable alternative natural greenspace, or SANG, area). A footpath (known as

¹¹ CD 6.7, CD 6.20, CD 6.21.

a byway open to all traffic, or BOAT) runs along the length of the site's eastern boundary. Beyond this is the A33. I visited the site in late Autumn, when deciduous trees were not in leaf, and there was intervisibility between the site and the SANG and BOAT areas, although views were limited to glimpses. In both cases there were areas with no or very limited intervisibility due to vegetation, which would be exacerbated in the months when deciduous trees are in leaf. More distant views are gained beyond the A33 to the west, in which the uppermost part of the site is visible.

25. Of relevance to the consideration of landscape character are Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP11, which together seek sustainable development that maintains or enhances the high quality of the environment, has no detrimental impact on landscape features, and seeks to maintain development limits, amongst other considerations. MDD policies CC01, CC02, CC03 and TB21 are also relevant. These add the requirement to respect adopted development limits, green infrastructure and landscape character, amongst other considerations, with Neighbourhood Plan Policies 1 and 2 reflecting the boroughwide policies.
26. The Council has also referred to its *Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment*¹² (2019) (the LCA), which characterises the borough into landscape zones sharing particular characteristics. The 'J3' categorisation into which the site falls identifies its undulating landscape of large fields, with changes to its character through settlement and urbanising influence of its proximity to Reading. Other relevant characteristics include remnant parkland and an intact hedgerow network. Issues for the area include pressure to develop the ridgelines and the encroachment of residential development changing the landscape character and increasing demand for associated infrastructure.
27. Although outside of the Council's defined development limit, the development would adjoin existing residential development within the limit. The proposed 49 homes would be concentrated in a group form running roughly parallel with the BOAT, with the remainder of the site as managed grassland to be used as open space.
28. The topography of the site as well as its surrounding vegetation limits unhindered views into the site. The site itself is in private ownership with restricted public access, and public views are therefore limited to the BOAT and the area around the Kingfisher Grove access, together with the SANG and areas beyond the A33 in which distant views are possible. Private views are possible from within the site itself and other surrounding land, such as the dwellings on Kingfisher Grove. New development would be visible to varying degrees in most of these views, but although direct views would be largely filtered by vegetation, viewers would be in no doubt that there were buildings on the site. This would be particularly noticeable in dynamic views in the context of a journey along the BOAT, in which (despite the existing heavy understorey of vegetation) they would appear closer and more distinct than existing development, and would periodically appear through vegetation gaps. I also that the verified views in the appellant's *Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*¹³ (LIVIA) demonstrate that visibility of the proposal would be reduced over time as screening vegetation matures.

¹² CD 12.1A/B.

¹³ CD 1.6.

29. Viewers on MereOak Lane would notice buildings on the lower portion of the existing visible green swath of the site. This viewpoint is identified within the LIVIA as a low-value receptor and views from here are generally experienced in the context of a journey. Although building heights would be limited by the parameter plan and the line of the ridge would not be broken, there would still be visible signs of development. This is a form of urbanising development discouraged by the LCA.
30. Overall, despite the largely screened nature of the site, there would be a shift in some views from a rural to a partly suburban character. This would result in minor harm the landscape character of the area.
31. However, there are measures within the proposal that seek to mitigate this harm. The area to be developed immediately adjoins existing development and enables retention of the green space in more than half of the site, allowing for open zones around its other edges in which structural planting would filter outside views. The development would also enable the green space around the proposed built-up zone to be maintained as a recreational parkland and biodiverse resource, together with the formal management of three identified veteran trees, of which at least one is at risk of failure without intervention.
32. Concern was expressed from various parties that the development would close the existing strategic gap between Three Mile Cross and Spencers Wood. I do not consider that this would be the case. The development would enable the retention of a substantial amount of green space between the settlements, including land both on the appeal site and the existing land outside. I saw that there was a significantly narrower gap between the settlements on Basingstoke Road where the provision of a relatively narrow strip of green space between built-up areas was sufficient separation to ensure retention of both settlements' identities. The lack of direct access between the site and Spencers Wood, together with there being no intervisibility of the proposed buildings to or from Spencers Wood, as well as the existing topography and the existing and proposed vegetation, would not exacerbate any physical or perceived coalescence of the settlements.
33. Despite the minor level of harm, there would nonetheless be harm to the landscape character of the area. This would conflict Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP11, MDD policies CC01, CC02, CC03 and TB21 and Neighbourhood Plan Policies 1 and 2, for the reasons set out above.

Accessibility

34. The Council's putative reason for refusal on this issue expresses a concern that as a development outside settlement limits, with perceived poor accessibility to local facilities and services, a lack of good public transport links and poor quality of the walking and cycling environment, it would not encourage a shift towards sustainable modes of transport. These themes are reflected in Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP2, CP3, CP6 and CP11, MDD Policies CC01 and CC02 and Policy 4 of the Shinfield Neighbourhood Plan.
35. Both the Council's and appellant's evidence referred to an 800-metre distance being an indicator of whether a neighbourhood is 'walkable', this being a comfortable ten-minute walking time for most people to be able to access a

range of services¹⁴. This is not an upper limit and I heard that there may be factors that influence people to consider a longer walking distance to acceptable, such as the physical quality of the walking route. The supporting text to Core Strategy Policy CP6 states that the borough has one of the highest car ownership rates of any English local authority, and thus, in accordance with this policy, local conditions should offer choices through the provision of sustainable forms of transport.

36. The closest facilities and services to the site are concentrated on Basingstoke Road in Three Mile Cross. These include convenience stores, leisure facilities, schools and a post office counter within a range of 800m to two kilometres (a 25-minute walk)¹⁵. Other facilities including a wider range of employment are further afield. The *Manual for Streets* (MfS) recognises that walking trips under 2km offer the greatest potential to replace short car trips and whilst the walking time to all these facilities would be longer than the comfortable 10-minute walking time, I acknowledge the possibility that people could be encouraged to walk greater distances if the range of services was appropriately enticing, as set out in a previous appeal decision¹⁶.
37. The main walking route between the site and the concentration of facilities and services on Basingstoke Road is along Grazeley Road. I saw that although the route is legible along its full length, in many places the footpath is narrower than the MfS suggested accessible width of two metres and also is not overlooked for a short length close to Kingfisher Grove. As indicators of route quality, the absence of an appropriate width and passive surveillance from dwellings along sections of the route result in a substandard walking experience. The alternative available walking route using Tabby Drive is longer and as such, Grazeley Road is more likely to be used. Additionally, the Tabby Drive route uses part of Grazeley Road and does not wholly avoid substandard sections. Although improvements to junctions along Grazeley Road are planned, these would not alleviate the substandard sections.
38. Beyond the aforementioned closest services, walking routes to other destinations such as local schools are variable, including areas with no passive surveillance or lighting. Such conditions would discourage users from walking longer distances.
39. Cycling options would be improved with the proposed paving of the section of BOAT north of Grazeley Road. This would offer a route to the employment centres beyond Three Mile Cross. Although there is a good range of facilities and services within a 20-minute cycling distance from the site, are other few dedicated cycling facilities or lanes within the vicinity of Three Mile Cross, thereby affecting the attractiveness of cycling as a realistic travel mode choice.
40. A bus service operates to Reading along Basingstoke Road on a good frequency, with services into the evening. However, the absence of a Sunday service would reduce the attractiveness of the proposed housing for those who would rely on public transport, as would the absence of convenient links to alternative destinations, such as the borough centre at Wokingham. Access to the bus stops would be along the Grazeley Road route which, given my

¹⁴ As set out in *Manual for Streets* section 4.4 (CD 12.3) and the *National Design Guide* (CD 12.21).

¹⁵ Distances are calculated from the approximate centre of the proposed residential component of the appeal site and are as set out in the parties' proofs of evidence.

¹⁶ CD 6.15.

considerations set out above, would affect the attractiveness of public transport as a transport mode choice.

41. In conclusion on this main issue, despite some positive components, accessibility to and from the site when considered as a whole, would be poor. As such, future occupiers of the proposed development would not benefit from appropriate accessibility and there would be conflict with Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP2, CP3, CP6 and CP11, MDD Policies CC01 and CC02 and Policy 4 of the Shinfield Neighbourhood Plan, for the reasons set out above.

Other Matters

Housing supply

42. It is agreed between the appellant and the Council that the latter is not able to demonstrate that it has a deliverable five-year housing land supply. There is disagreement on the scale of the shortfall, with the appellant and Council claiming a supply of 4.66 and 4.83 years, respectively. I heard evidence at the Inquiry as to the varying methods resulting in the different outcomes but consider the difference to be so small as to be of minimal relevance. In any case, the housing land supply shortfall is minor. Although other factors raised in the evidence include local affordability and the previous supply/delivery of homes against the housing need, I have no need to refer to these in detail.
43. The calculation variances result in annual housing need figures, with a 5% buffer applied, of about 806 (Council's figure) or 835 (appellant's figure) dwellings. The development would provide approximately 6% of the Council's annual supply of homes, which I consider to be a sizeable proportion. Although the Housing Delivery Test indicates that the Council has delivered more homes than its targets in recent years, there is nonetheless a shortfall in the future five-year supply.

Affordable housing

44. The development would wholly comprise affordable dwellings, with the tenure split agreed by the Council. The relevant Strategic Housing Market Assessment¹⁷ (SHMA) estimates the borough's per annum affordable housing need as 441 dwellings with the Council's more recent Local Housing Needs Assessment¹⁸ (LHNA) stating a requirement for 407 affordable dwellings per annum.
45. The recent delivery of affordable housing, of around 1,700 homes over the past five years, has been stronger in some years but delivery in most has fallen short of the per annum requirement. The Council considers that the likely delivery of dwellings over the next five years (estimated to be at least 1,249 homes) would meet the housing requirement for those on the local Housing Needs Register with the most acute need and that this would include meeting around 87% of the local need within Shinfield. The fact that the site's proximity to employment sources could result in a high local need but this is tempered by the Council's assertion that the types of jobs to be created would not be those that would appeal to those residing in affordable housing. Nonetheless there are links between the site and the wider employment catchment area incorporating Reading.

¹⁷ CD 10.2.

¹⁸ CD 10.3.

46. No targeted local affordable housing needs surveys have been undertaken in Shinfield, although local housing register demand is strong. I am reticent to the rely on this source as an indication of local affordable housing need, given the potential for 'double counting' in demand for Shinfield and neighbouring borough areas. Nonetheless the SHMA and LHNA indicate strong demand for affordable housing within the borough, and despite the expected forthcoming local delivery of dwellings, unmet demand will remain in Shinfield and the wider borough area.

Rural exception site

47. Core Strategy Policy CP9 refers to the provision of affordable housing on rural exception sites. These are sites outside development limits, and the policy enables the provision of affordable housing adjoining the limits in specific instances, where a need is demonstrated for residents, workers or other people with family connections within the Parish Council's area. A rural exception site is defined in the Framework as a small site used for affordable housing in a site that would not normally be used for housing, which seeks to address the needs of the local community.
48. The Framework does not define what constitutes a small site. At 5.82 hectares with a development area of 1.63ha providing 49 dwellings, there is disagreement between the appellant and the Council that this is a small site. Without a definition, this becomes a matter of planning judgement. In comparison with the Council's Local Housing need for 2020/21 of 789 homes, 49 homes represents about 6% of the Council's annual need, which as I noted above would represent sizeable proportion to the borough's housing supply and therefore not small in this sense. Elsewhere in the Core Strategy (at appendix 3) small sites are defined as those less than 1ha with up to 9 dwellings. Although this is not a direct comparison to the absence of a definition with regard to rural exception sites, the Council's intention in describing small sites in regard to housing delivery is clear. Taking all these matters into consideration, I do not consider the appeal site to be a rural exception site.

Biodiversity

49. Core Strategy Policy CP8 requires development which alone or in combination is likely to have a significant effect on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (the SPA) to demonstrate that adequate measures to avoid and mitigate any potential impacts are delivered. Thresholds for mitigation requirements are set out in the accompanying text. As a development of fewer than 50 dwellings and one between five and seven kilometres of the SPA, mitigation is not required.
50. Implementation of the appeal scheme would result in biodiversity net gain of 114% for habitats, 11% for hedgerows and 35% for ditches. Further benefits would be gained from additional planting and habitat management over the longer term. Phase 1 and Phase 2 surveys have been undertaken to protected species, with evidence of dormice in the hedgerow boundaries. The site was also found to be of value to foraging and commuting bats, with trees on the site of potential value to roosting. Paragraph 180 of the Framework encourages avoidance of significant harm to biodiversity. Together with the implementation of the features that would result in biodiversity net gain and the creation of new invertebrate habitats, as well as the suitable management of the site, I am satisfied that the development would avoid significant harm.

Highways

51. Whilst the Council initially presented a putative reason for refusal relating to access to the site and its potential effects on highway safety, discussions between the appellant and Council prior to the Inquiry resolved matters of difference. A theme within the objections from interested parties was the potential effects of traffic congestion on the local road network resulting from the additional vehicle trips generated by the development. The junction of Grazeley Road and Basingstoke Road was identified as a particularly congested spot. Forthcoming improvements to the junction have already been resourced and from the evidence provided it appears that this junction will provide for increased traffic levels resulting from the various developments in and around Three Mile Cross.

S106 Agreement

52. The heads of terms of the s106 Agreement were agreed between the main parties prior to the Inquiry. Given that an obligation may constitute a reason for granting planning permission only if it meets the tests set out in Regulation 122 of the *Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010* and paragraph 57 of the Framework, it falls to me to reach a finding on its acceptability.
53. Provision for affordable housing comprising 70% social rented and 30% shared ownership tenures is incorporated, with a nomination agreement for prospective residents. This is an appropriate method for ensuring fair placement according to local need. The proposal complies with Core Strategy Policy CP5 in that it contributes to mixed and balanced developments within the borough, and I am satisfied that it would meet a need for such accommodation.
54. The development/employment skills contribution would take the form of either a plan or a monetary contribution. I recognise that the Council's preference is for a plan but acknowledge that the agreement offers suitable choice in the event of a housing provider managing the scheme in the future. Based on benchmarked values, the contribution or plan would target the Council's identified shortfall of skills training in the area local to the application site and is therefore necessary.
55. The proposed transport-related contributions of a 'My Journey' travel plan payment and a contribution for upgrading the surface of Woodcock Lane would promote sustainable travel choices and improve local access. I am satisfied that these are required to make the development acceptable.
56. Open space on the site would be made available for use by residents, and although the agreement contains various closure clauses I am content that these would only be used as necessary and for reasonable purposes. Management of the space is necessary, particularly in relation to the veteran trees and to comply with Core Strategy Policy CP2 and MDD Policy TB08 with regard to meeting the needs of residents and providing appropriate spaces for recreation.
57. Monitoring fees are specified within the agreement and I am satisfied that due to the nature of the development, particularly with regard to the level of affordable housing and open space proposed, their inclusion makes the development acceptable in planning terms.

58. The various sums within the obligation are necessary and justified and I am satisfied that the Council could rely on the document to secure the contributions. Moreover, I am content that the obligations meet the requirements of the statutory and acceptability tests.

Planning balance

Policy and Framework considerations

59. Framework paragraph 11 states that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11d suggests that where the policies which are the most important for determining an application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole. There is no five-year housing land supply in Wokingham and therefore paragraph 11d is applicable to this appeal, and the policies that are the most important for determining this appeal are deemed to be out of date. I have no discretion within this purpose to consider whether specific policies are out of date. However, I must consider the weight to be given to policies including whether they are out of date in the context of the issues in this appeal.
60. Previous appeal decisions that have been brought to my attention¹⁹ have noted that in specific cases, although some of the Council's policies were considered to be out of date, the overall 'basket' of policies considered most important for determining the appeal was not out of date. In these cases, the Council was able to demonstrate that it had a suitable housing land supply at that time. This is not the case in this instance, where both the Council and the appellant agree that the 'tilted balance' is engaged. A further example²⁰ found the basket to be out of date in that specific instance, when the Council could not demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.
61. Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP2 and CP3 set the overall approach to sustainable and inclusive development in the borough and are broadly consistent with the Framework. Similarly, Policy CP6 which promotes sustainable travel choices and does not conflict with the Framework, These policies do conflict with the appeal proposal in terms of landscape and accessibility. My weighting on these issues is set out in the next section.
62. Policy CP5 sets the requirements for affordable housing provision by development scale and location but is not consistent with the Framework in that it seeks affordable housing on developments from five or more dwellings in urban areas, whereas paragraph 64 of the Framework states that provision should be sought only on such development of ten or more dwellings. However, there is no conflict with the appeal proposal and I have afforded only minimal weight to this consideration.
63. Core Strategy Policy CP7 requires conservation of biodiversity, veteran trees or features of the landscape that are important for flora and fauna, and MDD Policy TB21 requires proposals to address the requirements of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment, amongst other considerations. There are no conflicts with the Framework or the appeal scheme and thus no weight is allocated.

¹⁹ Including CDs 6.7 and 6.15.

²⁰ CD 6.1.

64. Core Strategy Policy CP17 provides housing figures based on the South East Plan which is no longer in force. Accordingly, Core Strategy policies CP9 and CP11, MDD Policy CC02, and Neighbourhood Plan Policy 1, which apply development limits throughout the borough, are out of date because these are based on out-of-date housing numbers, to which I give significant weight. A further out-of-date policy is MDD Policy TB04 which deals with development around the AWE Burghfield Site, due to the use of superseded measurements for the DEPZ radius, but as the general principles still apply only minimal weight is apportioned to this conflict.
65. MDD Policy CC01 which sets a presumption in favour of sustainable development is broadly comparable with the similar Framework presumption and does not conflict. Likewise, MDD Policies CC03 sets the Council's approach to developing and managing green areas and assets and does not conflict with the Framework, and MDD Policy TB08 which sets out the Council's approach to recreational facility provision is also generally in line with the Framework, despite the superseded reference to a previous version. The former policies conflict with the appeal scheme in the areas of landscape and accessibility, with weighting set out below.
66. Summarising the above, the Framework's tilted balance is applied as the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. The issues in which there are conflicts between out of date policies are AWE Burghfield, with the conflict attracting minimal weight, affordable housing provision in which the conflict attracts minimal weight, and conflict with the policies for the supply of housing more generally attracting significant weight.

Applying the balance

67. With regard to the main issues, the proposal demonstrates poor accessibility and this weighs heavily against the proposal, attracting significant weight. Landscape harm would be minor, but still conflicts with policy, and therefore this attracts moderate weight. I have found that there would be no harm with regard to the proximity of the AWE Burghfield site, which is a neutral factor in the balance.
68. Housing and affordable housing provision aside, other benefits of the scheme would include provision of new open space, net biodiversity gain, ongoing management of at-risk veteran trees, and local transport improvements. These would benefit those outside the site, and I give these considerations moderate weight. Other section 106 provisions are needed to make the development acceptable only and attract minimal weight, although there would be a wider benefit in regard to the improvement of Woodcock Lane and employment skills provisions, which attracts moderate weight.
69. The provision of new homes comprising 6% of the borough's annual supply attracts moderate weight. The provision of affordable housing that would assist the Council in meeting its shortfall in provision is significant, as is the presumption in favour of sustainable development triggered by the application of Framework paragraph 11.
70. The development plan policies that are the most important for the supply of housing are out of date, but those with which I have found conflict in this decision are not out of date and are generally consistent with the Framework.

The development would result in landscape harm and have poor accessibility. I find that the proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole.

71. However, the weighting of the above factors is in favour of the scheme proceeding. I find that the adverse impacts of granting permission would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. The development proposal benefits from the Framework's presumption in favour of sustainable development.
72. Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Notwithstanding the conflict with the development plan, I have found that the development would deliver significant and demonstrative benefits. These are material considerations that lead me to the decision that planning permission should be granted, and the appeal should succeed.

Conditions

73. I have assessed the list of conditions proposed by the parties against the tests set out in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)²¹. These were discussed at the Inquiry and subsequently refined, and are included at Annex A. I have made minor changes for clarity. In accordance with section 100ZA(5) of the Act, the Appellant has agreed to those conditions which would be pre-commencement conditions.
74. Conditions 1 through 5 are applied for the absence of doubt, with conditions 3 and 5 also applied to ensure that the development proceeds in accordance with the outline plans. Conditions 6, 7, 8 and 18 are applied in the interests of satisfactory access and highway safety. Conditions 9, 10 and 17 are to preserve the living conditions of surrounding occupiers and minimise the effects of construction. Condition 11 is to ensure sustainable drainage is incorporated within the development, and 12 is applied to investigate and if necessary preserve the archaeological heritage of the appeal site. Conditions 13 and 14 are included to ensure the protection, conservation and management of landscape features. Conditions 15 and 16 are to preserve and improve the biodiversity of the appeal site, and conditions 19 and 20 are included to ensure the landscape character and appearance of the site is preserved.

Conclusion

75. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

G Rollings

INSPECTOR

²¹ PPG reference ID: 21a-003-20190723; revision date: 23 07 2019.

ANNEX A: SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1) Approval of the details of the siting, design and external appearance of the buildings, and the landscaping of the site (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the local planning authority in writing before any development is commenced.
- 2) Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the local planning authority not later than 3 years from the date of this permission.
- 3) The number of dwellings hereby permitted shall not exceed 49.
- 4) The development hereby permitted shall take place not later than 2 years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved.
- 5) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan in A2 (D2871_430 Rev A); Parameter Plan (D2871_423_Rev B); Site Access Arrangement (ITB15490-GA-002 Rev E).
- 6) No building shall be occupied until the accesses (pedestrian and vehicle) have been constructed in accordance with details to plan no. ITB15490-GA-002 Rev E.
- 7) Prior to the commencement of development, full details of the construction of the access, including levels, widths, construction materials, depths of construction, surface water drainage, boundary treatment, landscaping and lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Each dwelling shall not be occupied until the vehicle access to serve that dwelling has been constructed in accordance with the approved details to road base level and the final wearing course will be provided within 3 months of occupation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.
- 8) No occupation of the development shall take place until:
 - (a) the approval by the local planning authority of a scheme that provides for the visibility splays shown on plan no. ITB15490-GA-002 Rev E (to include also the removal of any obstruction above a height of 0.6 metres) and the maintenance of the same over the lifetime of the development; and,
 - (b) the full implementation of the aforementioned approved scheme.
- 9) 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:
 - (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.
- 10) 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 and 18:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank or National Holidays.
- 11) Prior to the commencement of development details for disposing of surface water by means of a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No dwelling hereby permitted shall be occupied until the aforementioned approved details (in so far as they apply to that dwelling) have been implemented.
- 12) No development shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title have secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the planning authority. The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme approved pursuant to this condition.
- 13) No development shall take place until an Arboricultural Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, this shall include details of existing trees and hedges to be retained in the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment, in line with BS5837:2012, and shall include details of;
- (a) any proposed topping or lopping of any retained tree, or of any tree on land adjacent to the sub-phase;
 - (b) any proposed alterations to ground levels within the Root Protection Area or Crown Spread (whichever is the greater) of any retained tree, including trees on land adjacent to the site;
 - (c) the specification and position of fencing and of any other measures to be taken for the protection of any retained tree from damage before or during the course of development.
 - (d) the erection of fencing for the protection of any retained tree shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans and particulars before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought on to the site for the purposes of the development, and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed in any area fenced in accordance with this condition and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made without the written consent of the local planning authority.
 - (e) Prior to occupation of the first dwelling, a Veteran Tree Management Plan shall be agreed in writing with the local planning authority. This Plan shall include:

- Specialist Survey Method assessment of the trees;
- Individual tree management programme geared towards maximising longevity;
- Provision and maintenance of knee-rail style fencing beyond crown driplines, enclosing access-deterrent planting; and
- Regular review by a competent person of veteran trees' condition, with follow-up management works being implemented as recommended.

The first three elements of the Plan shall be implemented also prior to first occupancy.

- 14) No trees, shrubs or hedges within the site which are shown as being retained on the plans approved under condition 13 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.
- 15) Prior to the commencement of development, details of how the development will achieve a biodiversity net gain of 10 % 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.
- 16) Prior to the commencement of the development a Landscape Environmental Management Plan (LEMP), in accordance with the Update Biodiversity Report by Aspect Ecology dated October 2022, 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.
- 17) The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until the noise mitigation measures as set out in the Noise assessment report, project number 13390 dated 08/04/2020 submitted with the application, are implemented. The noise mitigation measures shall be retained and maintained thereafter.
- 18) The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until the pedestrian crossing improvements shown in principle on Drawing ITB15490-GA-017 have been completed to the written satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.
- 19) No dwelling shall be more than 2 storeys in height, and no dwelling shall be higher than 61.5mAOD.
- 20) Prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved, details of any gate, fence or other means of enclosure within or around the public open space as shown on the Parameter Plan (D2871_423_Rev B), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

End of schedule.

ANNEX 2: CORE DOCUMENTS REFERENCED IN THIS DECISION

CD 1.6	Appellant's <i>Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment</i> , April 2020.
CD 5.1	<i>Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document</i> (2010).
CD 5.3	<i>Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan</i> (2014).
CD 5.5	Made <i>Shinfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan</i> (2017).
CD 6.1	Appeal decision, ref: APP/X0360/W/19/3275086, 18 February 2022.
CD 6.7	Appeal decision, ref: APP/X0360/W/19/3240232, 1 February 2021.
CD 6.8	SoS decision, ref: APP/H1705/V/10/2124548, 16 June 2011.
CD 6.15	Appeal decision, ref: APP/X0360/W/19/3235572, 25 August 2020.
CD 6.20	Appeal decision, ref: APP/X0360/W/21/3271917, 3 September 2021.
CD 6.21	Appeal decision, ref: APP/X0360/W/21/3269974, 31 August 2021.
CD 7.4	High Court judgment, <i>Crest Nicholson v West Berkshire Council</i> [2021] EWHC 289 (Admin).
CD 10.2	<i>Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment</i> (February 2016).
CD 10.3	<i>Wokingham Borough Local Housing Needs Assessment 2019</i> (January 2020).
CD 11.5	<i>AWE Off-site Emergency Plan</i> , Joint Emergency Planning Unit, August 2022.
CD 11.12	<i>The Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2019</i> , HSE/ONR.
CD 11.20	<i>The Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2019</i> , SI 2019 No. 703.
CD 11.21	<i>REPPIR – What you should do if there is a radiation emergency at the AWE Aldermaston or Burghfield sites</i> , West Berkshire Council, 2020.
CD 12.1A/B	<i>Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment</i> , LUC 2019.
CD 12.3	<i>Manual for Streets</i> , DoT/DCLG, 2007.
CD 12.21	<i>National Design Guide</i> , MHCLG, 2021.

ANNEX 3: DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED AT THE INQUIRY

ID 01	Appellant's opening submissions.
ID 02	Council's opening submissions.
ID 03	Shinfield Parish Council written statement.
ID 04	Site visit route map.
ID 05	Wokingham Draft Local Plan.
ID 06	Wokingham Employment Skills Plan Guidance for Developers.
ID 07	Section 106 Agreement Certified Copy.
ID 08	Agreed (final) schedule of conditions.
ID 09	<i>Hopkins Homes Ltd, Richborough Estates Partnership LLP v Cheshire East BC</i> , SSCLG [2017] UKSC 37.
ID 10	<i>Hallam Land Management Ltd c v Eastleigh BC</i> , SSCLG [2017] EWHC 2865 (Admin).
ID 11	<i>Old Hunstanton Parish Council v Hastoe Housing Association Ltd</i> , Kings Lynn & West Norfolk BC, SSCLG [2015] EWHC 1958 (Admin).
ID 12	Council's closing submissions.
ID 13	Appellant's closing submissions.

ANNEX 4: APPEARANCES

FOR THE APPELLANT

Andrew Tabachnik
of King's Counsel
and Katherine Barnes
of Counsel

Instructed by the appellant

They called

Michael C Thorne
BSc PhD FInstP FSRP CRadP
Tim Wall *BA MSc MCIHT CMILT*
Andrew Smith
BSc(Hons) MSc CMLI
Julian Forbes-Laird
BA(Hons) Dip.GR.Stud MICFor
MRICS MEWI Dip.Arb.(RFS)
Douglas Bond *BA(Hons) MRTPI*

Mike Thorne and Associates Ltd

Partner, i-Transport LLP
Joint Managing Director, fabrik

Senior Director, Forbes-Laird
Arboricultural Consultancy Ltd

Partner, Woolf Bond Planning LLP

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY (WBC)

Matt Lewin
of Counsel

Instructed by Lyndsay Jennings
of WBC

He called

Harry Williamson
BSc(Hons) Cert(CBCI)
Gordon Adam
BA DipEcon MA CGIHT MILT
Chris Hannington
BSc MPhil CMLI MRTPI
Catherine Brimble
BA(Hons) DipLA CMLI
Ian Church
BA(Hons) MTRP MRTPI
Mark Croucher *BA(Hons) MSc*

Emergency Planning Manager, WBC

Principal Development Control Engineer,
WBC
Team Manager, WBC

Senior Landscape Officer, WBC

Team Manager (Senior Specialist), WBC

Principal Planning Officer Team Leader,
WBC

INTERESTED PERSONS

Darrell Lias

Vice Chair (operations),
Shinfield Parish Council



Minutes of a meeting of
Full Council
Held on Thursday 26th January 2023
At School Green Centre commencing at 19.30

Present: N Boyer, I Clarke, P Emmet, A Grimes (Chair), L James,
D Lias, N Masseron, I Montgomery & D Peer
Wokingham Borough Councillors Batth, Frewin & Rance

Attending: B Winton (Clerk), S Herring (Deputy Clerk)

23/1

Former Councillor Eddie Brown

- 1.1 The Chairman formally recorded the appreciation of Eddie's commitment to Shinfield Parish Council (SPC) and all agreed that he would be missed by the Committee.

His funeral will take place at Caversham Crematorium on 17th February 2023 at 13:45. The Committee would support the Ramblers' request to name one of the recently installed 'kissing gates' in his memory.

23/2

Public Questions

- 2.1 There were no public questions

23/3

Apologies and declarations of Members' Interest

- 3.1 Apologies had been received from Cllr P Jahromi and Cllr R Tatla
Apologies had been received from Borough Cllr Munro

The Chairman expressed a desire to see as many Borough Councillors as possible at these meetings as they were beneficial to all parties. The Committee expressed concerns that they had not seen one of the BCllrs for sometime. BCllr Frewin agreed to take this forward. It was also stressed to the Committee that members should be mindful of any comments they may make at any public meeting so as not to put the work of the parish and borough council in a bad light.

- 3.2 There were no declarations of members' interests

- 3.3 There were no changes to members' declarations of pecuniary interest



23/4

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

4.1

It was agreed that the wording on Item 22/PC/103.3 should be amended to remove the names of the specific councillors. Members approved the minutes as correct in all other respects. The Clerk would correct 22/PC/103.3 and ask the Chairman to sign the amended copy.

Proposed: Cllr D Lias
Seconded: Cllr I Clarke
Approved: Unanimously

ACTION – Clerk to amend the draft minutes and resubmit to the Chairman for signature

4.2

The following matters arising were discussed

22/113.2 103.4

BCllr Batth to give an update on the Pedestrian crossing at Crosfields School

BCllr Batth advised that Paul Fishwick, the Exec Member was not in favour of the crossing but had agreed to look at the scoping work undertaken by officers. Parents were unhappy with that decision and may present a petition; they say that the students would walk to school if there was a crossing.

104.3(i)

Clerk to pursue a meeting with the Forest School Youth Councils

The Clerk visited the Holt School on 12th January and met with seven girls from Shinfield parish. They were especially keen to have a 3G pitch where they could practice and train throughout the year. They also suggested a swimming pool, boxing facilities and a place to meet with friends. The Clerk was due to attend the Emmbrook School on 1st February and was awaiting a date from Oakbank School. He would continue to try and arrange a similar visit to engage with The Forest School.

ACTION – Clerk to continue to carry out visits and collate information from schools attended by pupils from Shinfield.

104.3(ii)

(a) Clerk to follow up and arrange a meeting with BCLr Bray and the Police Commissioner to discuss how to reduce anti-social behaviour (ASB). It was agreed to keep this issue and the provision of education as separate items initially.

ACTION – Clerk to follow up and arrange a meeting with BCLr Bray as the next step

(b) Clerk to follow up with Rebecca Brooks a request for data on the number of children bussed to schools and related costs

ACTION - Clerk to pursue obtaining data on the number of secondary school pupils bussed out of the Parish with Rebecca Brooks

(c) Clerk to follow up and arrange a meeting with BCLr Bray to discuss the future plans for Secondary Education in the Parish

To date BCLr Bray had been unable to provide the figures on student numbers requested and the Clerk agreed to pursue this with the assistance of the BCLrs. Concern was expressed about the lack of secondary education provision in the Parish as there was already no space available at Bohunt School. It was suggested that a working party be set up to investigate further, however, the relevant data needed to be obtained first to establish the current situation. The 2021 Census information by Parish should be available in early 2023.

ACTION –

- Clerk and BCLr Frewin to arrange a meeting with BCLr Bray, Children's Services
- Clerk to pursue obtaining data relating to the number of secondary school aged children in the parish

104.5 Clerk to arrange a meeting with WBC Highways Department

This meeting had taken place on 18th January and the outcome was on the agenda at item 5.5



- 107.1 Clerk to ask Democratic Services for background data on how many households were in the Parish

This information was not yet available.

ACTION –

- Clerk to pursue with WBC
- Clerk to circulate to Cllrs the statistics in the Parish that Cllr N Boyer had produced

- 114.2 Clerk to add proposal for WBC to charge for School Green Car Park to the next agenda for Planning and Highways

This had been done and was on this agenda at item 6.3

- 114.4 Clerk to confirm responsibility for Nullis barn with Wokingham Borough Council

The following had been received from Chris Howard, Delivery Manager- Development Delivery, Development & Regeneration

“The application was for the demolition of the outbuildings that form part of the complex but not for the main farmhouse itself which we are looking to retain. We had a site meeting out there last week and we are hoping to move towards a programme of repairs for the building which Taylor Wimpey should be undertaking in the coming months. We have not determined the application to demolish the stable block subject to planning application 210136 as this might factor into the re-use of the farmhouse. Taylor Wimpey are however only obliged to repair the farmhouse and bring this back into a usable state but they do not have to secure an end use for this although ultimately they will want to secure a purchase for this historic asset.”

- 114.5 Clerk to arrange a meeting with WBC Highways Department regarding Traffic Working Party

This had been done

- 114.7 Clerk to investigate action plans for incidents within DEPZ with WBC

The Clerk had arranged Harry Williamson, Emergency Planning Manager for WBC and his colleague Zoran Matic to attend the start of the next Planning & Highways meeting on 9th February to give a short outline on the emergency planning arrangements for an incident and if there is time a more general update on emergency planning within the Borough. All members were welcome to attend this presentation if they wish.

- 115.1 Clerk to continue to follow up land swaps with WBC



This was on the agenda at 8.1

117.1 Clerk to provide a list of annual subscriptions

The following list was approved at the Annual Meeting on Monday 16th May (10.1 in those minutes)

Berkshire Association of Local Councils £2,230 VAT EX (Split

BALC £1,323 and NALC £907)

Berkshire Youth £30 VAT EX

Information Commissioners Office Regn £60 VAT EX Locality £600 VAT EX

National Allotment Society £60 EX

TOTAL of £2,980

At the Annual Meeting, Community Buildings Advice Service £70 VAT EX was queried and not renewed. The Annual Meeting approved the other subscriptions

23/5 Reports

5.1 Reports from Borough Councillors

- (a) Cllr Batth did not wish to add anything to his written report. Cllr James advised that the parish was actively seeking to provide more for the north of the parish such as the Christmas tree in Frensham Green. SPC was actively looking for a building for youth in the North Shinfield area and the Clerk was continuing to try and make contact with Whiteknights School on this issue.
- (b) BCLlr Frewin reported :-
- he was currently helping to resolve the issue of waste at HMOs that was expected to be resolved next week.
 - Croft Road – the land had not been officially handed over so was still the responsibility of the developers who was failing to keep land clean, provide bins etc
 - First Responders were finding it difficult to locate houses in new developments. Developers must put in street names and numbers earlier in the build process so emergency services can find houses. This is an issue as to how Councils and Developers manage the situation.
 - There is an update on the bus situation coming soon, but no details available to date. They were pushing hard for services in Shinfield, Risley, Grazeley and Spencers Wood.
 - Wokingham Borough Council's constitution was under review to bring it up to date particularly with managing decision making.
- (c) BCLlr Rance had nothing to add to her written report
- (d) Members **NOTED** the written reports from Borough Councillors

5.2 Questions for Borough Councillors

Discussions ahead of the Sports Consultation had indicated that Shinfield Rangers and Shinfield Football Club have approximately 2,500 members and have been paying large sums annually for access to 3G pitches. WBC had put on hold the 3G pitch in Lower Earley and there was support for Shinfield having such a pitch in the parish.

ACTION – Clerk and the Chairman of Recreation and Amenities Committee to pursue the provision of a 3G pitch in the Parish with WBC

5.3 Minutes of Recreation & Amenities Committee 5th January 2023

Cllr Clarke gave the following update:

The Manor cricket pitch and pavilion would be the responsibility of SPC. Running costs would be matched by the pitch fees to cover costs and future growth. The location of the pavilion means it has potential as a site for business meetings. The cricket club would be responsible for the maintenance of the 'square'.

Members **NOTED** the minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting on 5th January 2023.

5.4 Minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee 12th January 2023

Cllr Peer gave the following update:

- The sports and traffic consultations on 28th January would be very important to plan the way forward.
- It was thought that one 3G pitch at a suitable location within the parish, would be a better option than multiple pitches north of Fullbrook Avenue.
- The work on the football pitches near Oakbank School would resume once the weather improved.
- 22/RA/9.5 – Engineers were working on Footpath 20, Deer Leap Park to Basingstoke Road and it seems likely that WBC will pay for this.
- The Committee will pursue where the CIL money has been spent.
- It is likely that Waitrose would be taking over the supermarket element of Dobbies.



Members **NOTED** the minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee meeting on 12th January 2023.

5.5 **Working Parties**

School Green Working Party:

The Clerk had arranged an initial quote for the main elements of the proposals from a landscaping company currently used to at least put a ball park figure together for the proposals under consideration. It is hoped that the quote will be available for the R&A meeting next week.

Traffic Working Party:

Cllr James reported that he had put the proposals to Abdul Karim, WBC but had not received a positive response. Mr Karim felt that the proposal for the traffic lights at the junction of Church Lane with Basingstoke Road would solve the traffic problems. A meeting with WBC would be scheduled after the consultation on 28th January 2023. Proposals were for approximately 12 chicanes and two zebra crossings in the parish. The bus gate on Beke Avenue would also be included in the consultation presentation.

ACTION – Clerk to arrange a meeting with WBC

5.6 **Chairman's Report**

Cllr Grimes advised that Spencers Wood Village Hall was operating well.

5.7 **Reports from Outside Bodies**

SPC has the responsibility of appointing three of the five trustees of Shinfield United Charities. Cllr Montgomery and Mr David Purton are two of those and Cllr Jahromi is the third. Cllr Jahromi's term of office ends in February and he is happy to serve for another four years.

Proposed: Cllr I Montgomery
Seconded: Cllr N Masseron
Approved: Unanimously

ACTION – Clerk to inform Shinfield United Charities that SPC supported the reappointment of Cllr Jahromi as a trustee



23/6

Correspondence

6.1 Thames Valley Police proposals regarding Local Policing Areas

It was agreed that there was a need for more local policing and the figures for growth in the area should be taken into consideration. The clear preference was for the retention of the Bracknell and Wokingham Local Policing Area

ACTION – Clerk to respond to the survey accordingly

6.2 Reading Borough Councils proposals on Houses in Multiple Occupation

The Clerk reported the proposals of Reading Borough Council in relation to Houses of Multiple Occupation's (HMO's) in their area, for example, Section 4.3 would require planning permission to change a small HMO to a large HMO or to intensify the use of a large HMO by increasing occupants without any physical extension or alteration. BCllrs reported that this was work in progress for WBC.

ACTION – BCllr Batth will take forwards to WBC

6.3 Email from Paul Fishwick to BCllr Frewin regarding car parking charges for School Green Car Park

BCllr Frewin had received confirmation from Paul Fishwick that there was no intention to introduce charging for the School Green Car Park.

20:48 – BCllrs left the meeting

23/7

Budgets for 2023/24

7.1 Proposed Budget

The proposed budget was agreed.

Proposed: Cllr P Emment
Seconded: Cllr I Montgomery
Approved: Unanimously

7.2 Proposed Precept

The proposed precept was agreed for a total of £599, 570.

Proposed: Cllr P Emmment
Seconded: Cllr D Lias
Approved: Unanimously

ACTION – Clerk to submit the relevant information to Wokingham Borough Council

23/8

Land Swaps

- 8.1 WBC have confirmed that they have not identified any viable use for Ryeish Green Pavilion. The Clerk was arranging a meeting with the Head of Estates for WBC to try and get this moving. One option is that the current package is unpicked so each piece of land can be resolved separately.

ACTION – Clerk to arrange a meeting with the Head of Estates at WBC

23/9

School Green Centre

- 9.1 The Clerk reported that there were still issues with heating and hot water in extended cold periods and the Facilities Manager was working to resolve this problem. As an interim measure portable oil radiators had been obtained and investigations were underway regarding the air source heat pump.

23/10

Invoices for Payment

- 10.1 Payment of the Lloyds Bank invoices were **NOTED**

Proposed: Cllr D Lias
Seconded: Cllr N Bowyer
Approved: Unanimously

- 10.2 Payment of the Barclaycard invoices were **NOTED**

Proposed: Cllr N Boyer
Seconded: Cllr I Montgomery
Approved: Unanimously

Minutes approved on:
Approved By:



Clerk: Bruce Winton
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23/11

Dates of Next Meeting

- 11.1 The next meeting of the Full Council will be on Thursday, 16th February 2023.
- 11.2 The Clerk gave his apologies for the next Full Council meeting

The meeting ended at 21:53

DRAFT



List of Actions

23/4	Clerk to amend the draft minutes and resubmit to the Chairman for signature	Clerk
22/113.2	104.3(i) Clerk to continue to carry out visits and collate information from schools attended by pupils from Shinfield regarding desired sports facilities	Clerk
	104.3(ii) (a) Clerk to follow up and arrange a meeting with BCllr Bray regarding ASB	Clerk
	104.3(ii) (b) Clerk to pursue obtaining data on the number of secondary school pupils bussed out of the Parish with Rebecca Brooks	Clerk
	104.3(ii) (c)	Clerk
	- Clerk and BCllr Frewin to arrange a meeting with BCllr Bray, Children's Services - Clerk to pursue obtaining data relating to the number of secondary school aged children in the parish	Clerk
		Clerk
107.1	- Clerk to ask Democratic Services for background data on how many households were in the Parish - Clerk to circulate to Cllrs the statistics in the Parish that Cllr N Boyer had produced	Clerk
23/5.2	Clerk and the Chairman of the Recreation and Amenities Committee to pursue the provision of a 3G pitch in the Parish with WBC	Clerk & Chairman of R&A
23/5.5	Clerk to arrange a meeting with WBC regarding the proposals from the Traffic Working Party	Clerk
23/5.7	Clerk to inform Shinfield United Charities that SPC supported the reappointment of Cllr Jahromi as a trustee	Clerk
23/6.1	Clerk to respond to the Thames Valley Police survey accordingly	Clerk
23/6.2	BCllr Batth will take forwards to WBC the proposals of Reading Borough Council	Clerk
23/7.2	Clerk to submit the information relating to the proposed precept to Wokingham Borough Council	Clerk
23/8.1	Clerk to arrange a meeting with the Head of Estates at WBC to discuss land swaps	Clerk

Proposals for Celebrating the coronation of King Charles III

The coronation of King Charles III will take place on Saturday 6th May 2023 with an additional Bank Holiday being held on Monday 8th May.

Tea Parties

St Michaels Church and Spencers Wood Village Hall collectively organized a tea party for HM Queen Elizabeth's platinum jubilee which took place at Spencers Wood Recreation Ground with support provided by Shinfield Parish Council.

The same groups have indicated they intend to run a similar event this year for the coronation.

One of the official event streams for the coronation is called the Big Lunch which hopes to see similar celebrations across the country.

It is proposed to establish if similar events could be held throughout the parish to promote community spirit and to involve remoter parts of the parish more. The intention would be to identify individuals or groups who may already be considering running such an event and providing them with practical and financial support.

In addition to Spencers Wood the following locations are suggested as possibilities:

School Green (using School Green Centre as a logistics base)
Grazeley
Frensham Green

Photo Mosaic

It is also proposed to attempt to create a photo mosaic image of King Charles using photographs provided by residents of the parish.

These images could be of

- Friends
- Family
- Pets
- Their locale
- Their favourite places in the parish

By using these images not only would the mosaic commemorate the coronation it would become a time capsule of Shinfield in 2023.

The idea would be to have the mosaic printed in a large format so that it could be taken to the local schools etc. and displayed over the coronation weekend at the School Green Centre so people could come and view it (and hopefully try to spot themselves in the final image).

The way these programmes work is that there could not be a guarantee that a submitted image would appear in the final document and any submissions would need to be vetted to make sure they did not include any inappropriate images.

The greater the number of images submitted the better the overall effect in the final image. This final image would also be available via our website and allow people the opportunity to scrutinize the finished document

In addition to the time taken to collate and vet the images there would be a cost of obtaining the final print but otherwise this could be managed from within existing resources.

Please note that the attached image is a quick first cut to provide an idea of the type of effect possible



Student Bus Numbers

Members requested additional information on the number of students travelling to school by bus.

The following was provided by BCIr Prue Bray

Shinfield Area HTST Analysis – January 2023

Below is the total Home to School Transport (HTST) spend on Primary, Secondary, SEND In borough (IB) and SEND Out of Borough (OOB) on children living in the Shinfield area. This does not include Secondary School Bus Services which is provided in Tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 1: Total Spend on Shinfield Students HTST

Education Sector	Annual Cost	No. Students
Primary main	£238,395.91	54
Secondary Main	£43,492.66	27
SEN IB	£320,568.78	45
SENOOB	£397,300.13	22
Total Spend	£999,757.49	148

Table 2: Whole Borough Spend on Secondary School Bus Services

Bus Service	Annual Cost for Bus Route	Total number of Students travelling IB	Total no. of Eligible Students	Cost per Eligible Student	Total no. of Farepayers	Farepayer Income	Overall spend with Farepayers income
E1	£41,800.00	54	22	£1,900.00	32	£25,120.00	£16,680.00
E2	£41,800.00	59	33	£1,266.67	26	£20,410.00	£21,390.00
F2	£75,050.00	36	22	£3,411.36	14	£10,990.00	£64,060.00
H3	£57,000.00	57	18	£3,166.67	39	£30,615.00	£26,385.00

Table 3: Shinfield Area Spend on Secondary School Bus Services

Bus Service	No. of Eligible Students in Shinfield	Cost of Transport for Eligible Students	No. Of Farepayers in Shinfield	Farepayers Income	Overall spend with Farepayers income
E1	22	£41,800.00	27	£21,195.00	£20,605.00
E2	19	£24,066.67	24	£18,840.00	£5,226.67
F2	18	£61,404.55	14	£10,990.00	£50,414.55
H3	17	£53,833.33	37	£29,045.00	£24,788.33

* The figures above show that even if we removed all the Shinfield students, we would still need to run the school buses.

Mainstream Primary

In total the LA transports **76** primary aged children to local schools, from Shinfield, 22 of which are primary SEND students going to special schools, predominantly Addington, and 54 mainstream primary aged children.

Table 4: Breakdown of Mainstream Primary School Aged Children receiving Travel Assistance in Shinfield

Primary School	Number of Children Transported
Civitas Academy	1
Bearwood	4
The Coombes	24
Emmbrook Infants School	1
Floreat Montague Park	1
Gorse Ride Junior School	4
Grazeley	2
Lambs Lane Primary School	1
Loddon Primary School	2
Radstock Primary School	9
Shinfield Infant School	1
St Sebastian's	1
Wheatfield	1
Whiteknights Primary School	2
Total Mainstream	54

There are 24 Primary aged students travelling from Shinfield to The coombes, which is the biggest spend. This is not surprising however, since The Coombes is the school which we tend to use as a divert school, when all other schools are full. The LA is also transporting 9 students to Radstock from Shinfield, again this due to the nearest school for these children being full, and Radstock in these cases is the nearest school with places available.

Out of the 54 students we transport, in the Mainstream Primary Sector, 38 of those are because these children are unable to secure a place at their local school, and the LA has had to offer the next nearest school with places available.

SEND Primary

There are 5 primary aged SEND students travelling out of Borough, 17 all go to local provision within Wokingham, and 12 of that 17 travel to Addington Special School.

Table 5: Breakdown of Primary School Aged SEND Children receiving Travel Assistance in Shinfield

SEND Provision	Number of students transported
Addington	12
Just Around The Corner/Radstock Primary	1
Orchid Therapeutic Farm	1
Sensory Smart Child	1
The Alternative Provision School	1
Just Around The Corner/Radstock Primary	1
Total SEND Primary (In Borough)	17

Mainstream Secondary

In total 28 secondary school aged students from the Shinfield area are being transported to the schools detailed in table 6 below. The majority are being transported to Bulmershe, St Crispins and Bohunt. Of that 28, 11 students are being transported because they are attending their catchment school, but it is over 3 miles from their home address, which makes them eligible for travel assistance. 8 are being transported because their nearest school is full, and they have been offered a place at the next nearest school (Bohunt, forest, St Crispins) with places available, and that will be over 3 miles from their home address, making them eligible for travel assistance.

Table 6: Breakdown of Mainstream Secondary School Aged Children receiving Travel Assistance in Shinfield

Secondary School	Number of students transported
Bulmershe	7
St Crispins	6
Bohunt	7
Maiden Erlegh	2
Forest	2
Oakbank	1
Emmbrook	2
The Holt	1
Total	28

SEND Secondary

21 Secondary school aged SEND students are transported from Shinfield to In Borough Special school provision, the majority travelling to Addington and High Close Senior Special School. There are 17 students from Shinfield that are transported to specialist provision out of the Borough.

Table 7: Breakdown of Mainstream Secondary School Aged SEND Children receiving Travel Assistance in Shinfield

SEND Secondary Provision	Number of students transported In Borough
Addington	11
High Close Senior Special School	5
Maiden Erlegh School	2
Acorn Community Centre	1
Chiltern Way Academy	1
Foundry College	1
Total SEND Secondary (In Borough)	21

Additional Information was provided by Rebecca Brooks via 2 emails

1st email

“There are two type of transport provision to secondary schools which the Council is involved in providing, one is the one the local bus network and the other is via closed door school buses which are arranged for students who are eligible for home to school transport.

With the local bus network it’s difficult to tell where students are boarding and which schools they are attending without doing an on-bus survey and picking up the uniforms. I would suggest that with the exception of the 244, the other public bus services should already cater for after schools clubs as they are at least hourly by their nature.

With regards to home to school transport routes, these are provided for eligible students who the Council has a statutory duty to provide transport for at the start and end of the normal school day. If there are large enough numbers of eligible students travelling from certain areas (which at the moment there are from Shinfield to Emmbrook, Holt and Forest) then we would look to commission a school bus / coach. If there are any spare seats available then we would make these available at a cost to parents / students who do not have a travel eligibility. If you are considering funding an afternoon journey I would suggest we have a short Teams meeting to see if the current services could be double run / added to, as this would probably provide the most beneficial solution to students. If you commission a separate service, it is unlikely students with a transport eligibility will be able to use the service, unless it is provided free of charge to students.

In terms of numbers, some analysis of postcodes provided by our education team has already been requested by Councillors for home to school transport route. I believe this data will be passed across in due course.”

2nd email

“If a student is eligible for travel assistance then they will general receive a free bus pass on a school bus route from the Council. In some cases, where a bus pass isn’t available then the travel assistance might be a bus pass on a public route or a shared seat on a taxi. In some cases where we don’t have suitable transport routes we offer parents mileage.

Unfortunately, assessing if someone is eligible or not is not simple, each application is assessed against policy. The Council’s policy is available here:

<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-information-and-services/school-and-college-transport/>

Historically, a fair number of students from the Shinfield area were eligible for travel assistance, however in the last couple of years places have been available at Oakbank School, John Madejski Academy and Reading Girls School. Generally speaking a student will only be eligible for travel assistance if when they submitted an application for their school place, there were no nearer schools available to their home address with a space available to offer and the school they are attending is over 3 miles safe walking distance.”

Complaint from a Member of the Public

A complaint has been received from a member of the public regarding the following items:

1. The decision by the Recreation & Amenities committee not to make a grant award to St Mary's Church

The complaint is that the decision contravened the Equalities Act 2010 by deciding not to make the award as the church is a religious organisation.

2. That the papers for grant applications contained business data and personal data

The Clerk as a matter of urgency had any such information removed from the website. In future grant applications will request any such sensitive information is provided on a separate form to prevent this happening in future.

Invitation

Community Futures with Town and Parish Councils

Wokingham Borough Council is working across the public, private and voluntary and community sectors to jointly create a bold and ambitious shared vision for the future of our borough.

We view town and parish councils as vital partners in this. We know there are many urgent priorities facing our communities that many of you will already be involved in addressing now and in the coming months. But alongside addressing these immediate needs we are sure we are all equally committed to building a better long-term future for all those who live and work in the borough.

To hear your perspectives and inform future working we are inviting all Town and Parish Councils **to send two councillors and their clerk** to an event as we embark on a process of shaping a shared long-term vision for our communities.

We do not view this as a Borough Council initiative but as a collaborative endeavour and very much hope you will be able to join us at the start of this exciting journey.

The session will be held:

- 6 March 2023
- 4-6pm
- Wokingham Town Hall, Market Place, Wokingham, RG40 1AS

Working with our partner, [New Local](#), a national organisation that brings experience from across the country, the workshop will be highly participative giving all who attend a chance to share their views and aspirations for the future of the borough. The outcomes of the session will inform the development of new ways of working and lay the foundations for a more collaborative engagement approach.

If you have any questions in advance, please email us at InsightStrategyandInclusion@wokingham.gov.uk. We look forward to seeing you there!

Item 11.1 Lloyds Bank payment of invoices within the Clerk's financial delegation - 19th January to 10th February 2023

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Payment</u>	<u>Description</u>
24/01/2023	Multiple	725.00	Refunds Deposits
25/01/2023	Employees	17,342.08	Net Pay January
27/01/2023	Barclaycard Commercial	548.93	December Balance
30/01/2023	SSE Southern Electric	4,308.36	Electricity School Green Centre (South) - Billed Qtrly
31/01/2023	Nest Pension Contributions	1,615.84	Pension ContributionsEr's & Ee's January
31/01/2023	HMRC	5,407.33	PAYE & NI Er's & Ee's Contributions
31/01/2023	Land Registry	3.00	Search Fee - Establishing Land Ownership
31/01/2023	Lloyds Bank plc	20.34	Bank Charges (£13.34) & Fees (£7) December
06/02/2023	Royal Electric	510.00	Convert Lighting Post - Spencers Wood Pavilion
06/02/2023	Royal Electric	732.00	Rewire SWP - Community Room
06/02/2023	Gavin Fullbrook (Window Clean	760.00	Cleaning Contract Windows (£730.00 SGC & £30 SWP)
06/02/2023	Air It Limited	635.62	Phones (SGC £493, SWP £143)
06/02/2023	Office Depot International (UK	40.63	Note Pads - Office & FOH
06/02/2023	Cartridgesave.co.uk	144.68	Cartridges Small Printer SWP
06/02/2023	Alexandra	798.26	Polo Shirts & Fleeces for Staff
06/02/2023	Harcon Fall Protection & Safety System	714.00	Inspection Lifeline Safety System - SGC
06/02/2023	Thames Valley Signs (Berkshire)	126.00	Roller Sign Ukraine Event (£114) & Allotment Sign (£12)
06/02/2023	Dyno Rod	198.00	Call Out Drains SGC
06/02/2023	Select Environmental Services	435.13	Commercial Waste Collection
06/02/2023	SPY Alarms	348.00	Access Control Works SWP
06/02/2023	Josh Chamberlain Arborist	440.00	Clearance Hyde End Footpath
06/02/2023	The Head Partnership	200.00	Deposit - New Lease Manor Cricket Grd
06/02/2023	Rialtas Business Solutions Ltd	526.32	Training for Staff - Bookings System
06/02/2023	Haslams Chartered Surveyors	420.00	Valuations Ownership SPC Land
06/02/2023	SSE Southern Electric	233.21	School Green External - Qtr 3
	Total Payments	<u>37,232.73</u>	

Item 11.2 Barclaycard payment of invoices within the Clerk's financial delegation - January 2023

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Payment</u>	<u>Description</u>
03/01/2023	Keep Britain Tidy	126.00	Litter Hoops for Litter Picker Bags
05/01/2023	BES Ltd	25.10	Storage Bins SGC
06/01/2023	Adobe	51.98	Creative Software for Office
12/01/2023	Buzz Supplies	28.36	Descaler Dishwasher SWP
21/01/2023	CRW (UK) Ltd	32.00	10 x Tonne Ton Builders Bags for Green Waste
24/01/2023	Marcos Enterprise	31.72	Velcro Tape for Displays
26/01/2023	Post Office	4.70	Postage Allotments Letters
27/01/2023	B & B Wristbands	10.70	Wristbands for Community Events
	Total	<u>310.56</u>	

Item 11.3

There are no payments due to be made that are outside the Clerk's financial delegation.