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Local Decisions.  
Local Future.

# **Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan**

## **Report on the Second Public Consultation**

### **held October-November 2021**

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## Introduction

During the Consultation on the Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan, held in January-February 2021, Wokingham Borough Council announced that the planned Garden Village at Grazeley would no longer go ahead, and that the houses originally planned to be part of that development now needed to be re-distributed around the Borough, including in Finchampstead Parish.

WBC indicated that Finchampstead would need to accommodate an extra 250 to 500 households over the period to 2036.

As a result of this the Finchampstead Future team were required to look at where additional housing could be located in the Parish. The Finchampstead Future Team analysed all the sites put forward for development (known as promoted sites) in Finchampstead, and produced an update to the Plan, known as the "Topic Paper on Additional Housing".

As this Paper amended the Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan previously circulated, a further Consultation was carried out October - November 2021 to ask for comments. An abridged version of the Additional Housing Topic Paper was distributed to every home in the Parish to facilitate this.

Local residents, stakeholders and other interested parties were invited to comment on the proposals in one of three ways: Via an online survey using the SurveyMonkey platform, via email or by letter. The Consultation received 203 responses via the online survey and a further 53 submissions by email.

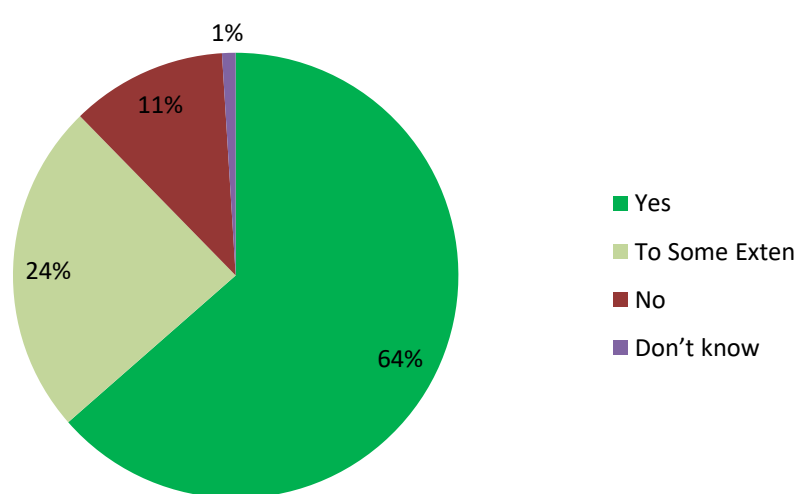
This Report gives the results of that Consultation and provides analysis of the level of support and nature of the comments received.

Allan Gibson  
Chair, Finchampstead Future

February 2022

# Level of Support and Comments on Additional Housing Topic Paper

## 1. Question1: Suitability of Potential Sites

Q1	<p>The FNDP uses five priorities to assess the suitability of potential sites for housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support development within ‘strategic development locations’ identified by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC)</li> <li>• Support development where it avoids coalescence of identified ‘existing settlements’ [Policies GS1 and GS2]</li> <li>• Support development which preserves specified ‘local green spaces’ of importance to local residents [Policy IRS1]</li> <li>• Support development which preserves ‘outstanding views’ and locations of ‘historical significance’ [Policies IRS2 and IRS3]</li> <li>• Support development within ‘development limits’ set by WBC or support development outside these limits for permanent rural workers’ dwellings [Policies ADH2 and ADH1]</li> </ul> <p>Do you support this approach?</p>										
Consultation Response	<p>Total: 203          Yes: 129          To Some Extent: 49          No: 23          Don’t Know: 2</p>										
Percentage Chart	 <p>A pie chart illustrating the distribution of responses to the question 'Do you support this approach?'. The chart is divided into four segments: a large green segment for 'Yes' at 64%, a light green segment for 'To Some Extent' at 24%, a dark red segment for 'No' at 11%, and a very small purple segment for 'Don't know' at 1%. A legend to the right of the chart identifies the colors with their respective response categories.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>64%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>To Some Extent</td> <td>24%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>11%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't know</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Yes	64%	To Some Extent	24%	No	11%	Don't know	1%
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Comments	<p>Comments from 8% of surveys felt the plan allowed for too much new housing or wanted no new development, while 6% commented on the need to protect Green space.          5% commented on the need for better/ more infrastructure.</p>										

## 2. Question 2: Selection of Potential Sites

<p>Q2</p>	<p>The FNDP Team assessed fifty ‘promoted sites’ (sites for housing put forward to WBC by landowners and developers). They have identified five which, assessed against the FNDP’s policies, are acceptable for development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5F1003 - 31/33 Barkham Ride - 70 Units</li> <li>• 5F1004 - Green Acres Farm, Nine Mile Ride - 100 Units</li> <li>• 5F1014 - Land r/o 6-8 The Village - 2 Units</li> <li>• 5F1016 - Broughton Farm, Heath Ride - 2 Units</li> <li>• 5F1028 - Westwood Cottage, Sheerlands Road - 10 Units</li> </ul> <p>Do you support this approach?</p>										
<p>Consultation Response</p>	<p>Total: 203          Yes: 93          To Some Extent: 45          No: 64          Don’t Know: 1</p>										
<p>Percentage Chart</p>	<p>A pie chart illustrating the distribution of responses to the question 'Do you support this approach?'. The chart is divided into four segments: a large green segment representing 'Yes' at 46%, a light green segment for 'To Some Extent' at 22%, a dark red segment for 'No' at 32%, and a very thin purple segment for 'Don't know' at 0%. A legend to the right of the chart identifies the colors: green for 'Yes', light green for 'To Some Extent', dark red for 'No', and purple for 'Don't know'.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>46%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>To Some Extent</td> <td>22%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>32%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't know</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Yes	46%	To Some Extent	22%	No	32%	Don't know	0%
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<p>Comments</p>	<p>Comments from 16% of surveys mentioned traffic issues and 11% commented on the need for better infrastructure, or noted its current limited ability to cope. 9% objected to 5F1003 Barkham Ride site and 8% commented that the plan allowed for too much new housing or wanted no new development 6% objected to 5F10004 Greenacres Farm and 4% objected to 5F1014 The village location</p>										

## Comments received from Developers

Amongst the 53 emails submitted in response to the Consultation, were a large number from Developers questioning why the updated Neighbourhood Development Plan did not include their site for potential development.

As part of the review process, the Finchampstead Future team assessed all those sites submitted to Wokingham Borough Council under their “Call for Sites” request for sites proposed for potential development.

This assessment included:

- Supporting housing development in locations where it avoids the coalescence of existing settlements
- To protect Key Gaps between settlements.
- Supporting development in locations where it protects and preserves Local Green Spaces, valued by local residents.
- Supporting development within Development Limits and avoid development outside of these limits (i.e. in the countryside). While it is recognised that there is comparatively little space within the existing Development Limits for additional houses, the FNDP wishes to avoid ad-hoc developments in the countryside.
- How the proposed development would impact on the local infrastructure, roads, traffic and services.

Those sites which were selected for potential development were the ones which most closely met these criteria, while those which were not selected did not satisfy the policies set out in the FNDP.

## Comments on Greenacres Farm development

A number of comments were received pointing out that only part of Greenacres is considered as Brownfield, as the western end is Greenfield.

The FNDP supports the view that suitable SANG provision should be made on the western half of the site in any future development.

The FNDP also highlights the existence of a Key Gap immediately to the south of this location and requires that any development proposal should take account of this, and secure the southern boundary of the site against any possible expansion.

## Comments on Rooks Nest Farm development

During the last week of our six-week Consultation period Wokingham Borough Council published their Local Plan Update and commenced their own borough-wide consultation on their plan. This included the surprise announcement that Rooks Nest Farm on Barkham Ride, in Barkham Parish but on the Finchampstead Parish boundary, was being proposed by WBC as a location for a further 270 dwellings. The Rooks Nest Farm site is situated directly opposite 31-33 Barkham Ride, put forward in our Topic Paper. A small number of comments were received relating to this at the end of our process, but it is clear (based on subsequent events such as the raising of a petition with over 1100 signatures, letters to the local newspaper and the responses to WBC from Finchampstead residents) more would have been received if this proposed development had been publicised at or before the start of our consultation.

Considered together, these two locations on Barkham Ride would create the largest non-SDL (Strategic Development Location) development in the borough and will result in the community of Finchampstead having to accommodate nearly 500 additional dwellings, rather than the previously indicated 200. Concerns, which we now know exist, about the aggregated effect of this on local infrastructure have not been captured within our consultation.

Reflecting the strength of local concerns, The FNDP Team and Finchampstead Parish Council will raise the strongest objections to the proposed new development at Rooks Nest Farm whilst continuing to be open to an extension of the current development on the 31-33 Barkham Ride site to provide additional homes. This is on the basis of our judgment that 70 additional homes at this location is sustainable but not 340.

The FNDP Team, with the support of the Parish Council, believe that it is in everyone's interest to work with WBC to create a joint plan to enable the delivery of around 200 additional dwellings during the period of the plan. It remains our belief that FNDP is the best way to actively influence where development occurs in the parish, and to address head-on concerns about integration with existing communities, traffic, infrastructure capacity and retention of the character of our semi-rural parish.