

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report

August 2022

Quality information

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Non-Technical Summary (NTS)

Introduction

AECOM is commissioned to lead on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan (FNP).

SEA is a required process for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative effects and maximising positive effects.¹

The FNP is being prepared under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 and in the context of the adopted and emerging local development framework of Wokingham Borough Council. Once 'made' the FNP will have material weight when deciding on planning applications, as part of the local development framework covering the defined neighbourhood area (see **Figure 1.1** in the main report).

The SEA Environmental Report, including this NTS, is published alongside the 'submission' version of the FNP, under Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended).

Structure of the Environmental Report/ this NTS

SEA reporting essentially involves answering the following questions in turn:

- 1) What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?
 - including in relation to 'reasonable alternatives'.
- 2) What are the SEA findings at this stage?
 - i.e., in relation to the draft plan.
- 3) What happens next?

Each of these questions is answered in turn within a discrete 'part' of the Environmental Report and summarised within this NTS. However, firstly there is a need to set the scene further by answering the questions 'What is the Plan seeking to achieve?' and 'What's the scope of the SEA?'

What is the plan seeking to achieve?

The following vision has been established for the FNP:

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

They will live in vibrant and thriving neighbourhoods with a good range of housing, shops, schools, and community services within easy reach. They, and the many visitors who come from outside the parish, will continue to be able to enjoy excellent leisure and recreational activities offered by our local countryside, right of way

¹ Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended) requires that each neighbourhood plan is submitted to the Local Authority alongside either: A) an environmental report; or, B) a statement of reasons why SEA is not required, prepared following a 'screening' process. The FNP was subject to screening in 2022 with Wokingham Borough Council, on the basis of which it was determined that there *is* a requirement for SEA (i.e. the plan was 'screened-in').

network, parks, and nature reserves. We will have ensured that new development makes a positive contribution to the local character and identity of our distinct neighbourhoods and conserve and enhance our countryside assets and the essential semi-rural quality of life in the parish.

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

What is the scope of the SEA?

The scope of the SEA is reflected in a list of themes and objectives which, taken together, indicate the parameters of the SEA and provide a methodological framework for the appraisal process. The detailed policy context and baseline information that has informed the development of the SEA framework is provided within the SEA Scoping Report which is submitted alongside the FNP and SEA Environmental Report.

SEA framework

SEA topic	SEA objective
Biodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.
Climate change and flood risk	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the neighbourhood area and increase resilience to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding.
Community wellbeing	Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, reducing deprivation, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities.
Historic environment	Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.
Land, soil, and water resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land, and protect and enhance water quality, using water resources in a sustainable manner.
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape and townscape.
Transportation and movement	Promote sustainable transport use and active travel opportunities and reduce the need to travel.

Plan-making/ SEA up to this point

An important element of the required SEA process involves appraising 'reasonable alternatives' in time to inform development of the draft proposals, and then publishing information on reasonable alternatives for consultation alongside the draft proposals.

As such, Part 1 of the Environmental Report explains how work was undertaken to development and assess a reasonable range of alternative approaches for the FNP.

Specifically, Part 1 of the report:

1. Explains the process of establishing the reasonable alternatives.
2. Presents the outcomes of appraising the reasonable alternatives; and
3. Explains reasons for developing a preferred option, considering the appraisal.

Establishing alternatives

In line with the objectives of the plan, three sites are considered to feed into the potential reasonable alternatives for the FNP: Land rear of 6-8 The Village (5FI014), Broughton Farm, Heath Ride (5FI016), and Land south of Reading Rd (5FI023).

It is prudent to recognise the option to not allocate any additional land, alongside a 'maximised' growth scenario which would allocate all three sites. It should be noted that in the interests of conciseness and clarity, only a 'no additional allocations' and a 'maximum growth' scenario will be explored in this SEA in addition to the individual site options. Whilst it is the case that there are other combinations of sites available for the FNP to consider, i.e., the delivery of any two of Option 2, Option 3, or Option 4, the impact of any possible permutations can be informed by the appraisal of the outlined scenarios.

Therefore, three sites, accompanied by a 'no additional allocations' and a 'maximum growth' scenario, are taken forward as the alternatives for assessment in this SEA:

- **Option 1:** No additional allocations in the FNP
- **Option 2:** Land rear of 6-8 The Village (5FI014) for the development of two dwellings
- **Option 3:** Broughton Farm, Heath Ride (5FI016) for the development of two dwellings
- **Option 4:** Land south of Reading Rd (5FI023) for the development of ten dwellings
- **Option 5:** Maximum growth (Options 2, 3, and 4) delivering a combined total of 14 dwellings.

Appraising alternatives

The following summary is reached in the appraisal of the alternatives:

SEA theme		Option 1: No additional allocations	Option 2: Land rear of 6-8 The Village	Option 3: Broughton Farm, Heath Ride	Option 4: Land south of Reading Rd	Option 5: Maximum growth
Biodiversity	Significant effect?	No	No	No	Yes – negative	Yes - negative
	Rank	2	1	3	4	5
Climate change and flood risk	Significant effect?	No	No	No	Yes – negative	Yes – negative
	Rank	1	2	3	4	5
Community wellbeing	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
	Rank	4	2	2	3	1
Historic environment	Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	No	Uncertain	Uncertain
	Rank	1	2	1	2	2
Land, soil, and water resources	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
	Rank	1	3	2	2	4
Landscape	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	2	2	2
Transportation and movement	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	2	3	4

Overall, Options 2, 3, 4, and 5 are considered likely to lead to minor positive effects in relation to community wellbeing, due to the provision of additional dwellings to the area.

Potential negative effects have been identified in relation to development at the Land south of Reading Road, this is flagged 'pre-mitigation' and reflects the sites proximity to internationally designated biodiversity sites, and an area of fluvial flood risk.

Uncertain effects have also been identified under Options 2, 4, (and subsequently) 5, which reflects a need to consider on-site mitigation to reduce the potential for negative effects arising in relation to the historic environment.

Option 1 is largely a baseline (do nothing) scenario, where no impacts are considered likely and conversely, the potential for development gain/ benefits (positive effects) is also removed.

Developing the preferred approach

“The Parish Council’s reasons for developing their preferred approach are set out in the main FNDP document and the associated Topic Paper ‘Proposed Sites for

Additional Development'. The team producing the FNDP have reviewed the SEA Environmental Report and understand this to align with the view of the FNDP that location 5F1023 'Land South of the Reading Road' is less suitable as a potential development site.

Therefore, the Parish Council notes that it is the view of the SEA that the two locations below are the best options amongst the promoted sites to meet the requirements of the FNDP:

5F1014 Land r/o 6-8 The Village
5F1016 Broughton Farm, Heath Ride.”

Appraisal findings at this stage

Part 2 of the Environmental Report presents an appraisal of the full 'submission' version FNP. Appraisal findings are presented as a series of narratives under the themes identified by the SEA framework. The following overall conclusions are reached:

The FNP proposes low growth at sites close to the Parish's pre-existing settlements. The promoted small-scale sites are considered likely to integrate with minimal impacts in relation to the SEA themes. No significant effects are considered likely in implementation of the FNP, though some minor effects are considered likely.

Minor negative effects are considered likely in relation to the land, soil, and water SEA theme due to the small-scale loss of greenfield land in part at the allocation sites, though it is noted that the spatial strategy performs well by prioritising lower quality land for development.

Minor positive effects are considered likely in relation to the biodiversity, community wellbeing, and transportation SEA themes. This largely reflects the FNP policy provisions which seek to protect community assets (including ecological networks), enhance active travel opportunities, and improve resident safety.

Given the low-impact spatial strategy and policy mitigation provided by the plan, broadly neutral effects (no significant deviation from the baseline) are concluded in relation to the climate change and flood risk, historic environment, and landscape SEA themes.

One recommendation is identified through the appraisal of the Plan. This is not a recommendation required to reduce the significance of any negative effects, but rather a recommendation to improve the potential for significant positive effects arising. It is recognised that the FNP provides a significant opportunity to identify the features, characteristics, and key views of/ in the designated conservation area, that contribute to its significance, and which should be conserved through future development. This opportunity is highlighted in the absence of a Conservation Area Appraisal for the Finchampstead Church Conservation Area.

Next steps

Plan finalisation

Following consultation, Independent Examination of the FNP will be arranged. At examination, the FNP will be considered in terms of whether it meets the 'basic conditions' for neighbourhood plans and is in general conformity with the Local Plan.

If the examination leads to a favourable outcome, the FNP will then be subject to a referendum, organised by Wokingham Borough Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the FNP, then it will be 'made'. Once 'made', the FNP will become part of the local development framework for Wokingham Borough, covering the defined Neighbourhood Area.

Monitoring

The SEA regulations require 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring' to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of the Neighbourhood Plan to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.

It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the FNP will be undertaken by Wokingham Borough Council as part of the process of preparing its Authority Monitoring Report (AMR). No significant negative effects are considered likely in the implementation of the FNP that would warrant more stringent monitoring over and above that already undertaken by Wokingham Borough Council.

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM is commissioned to lead on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan (FNP).
- 1.2 The FNP is being prepared under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 and in the context of the adopted and emerging local development framework of Wokingham Borough Council. Once 'made' the FNP will have material weight when deciding on planning applications, as part of the Wokingham local development framework.
- 1.3 SEA is a required process which considers and communicates the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative effects and maximising positive effects.²

SEA explained

- 1.4 It is a requirement that the SEA process is undertaken in-line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 1.5 In-line with the Regulations, a report (known as the Environmental Report) must be published for consultation alongside the draft plan that "*identifies, describes and evaluates*" the likely significant effects of implementing "*the plan, and reasonable alternatives*".³ The report must then be considered, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.
- 1.6 More specifically, the Report must answer the following three questions:
 4. What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?
 - including in relation to 'reasonable alternatives'.
 5. What are the SEA findings at this stage?
 - i.e., in relation to the draft plan.
 6. What happens next?

This Environmental Report

- 1.7 This report is the Environmental Report for the FNP. It is published alongside the 'submission' version of the Plan, under Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended).
- 1.8 This report answers questions 1, 2 and 3 in turn, to provide the required information.⁴ Each question is answered within a discrete 'part' of the report.
- 1.9 However, before answering Q1, two further introductory sections are presented to further set the scene.

² Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended) requires that each neighbourhood plan is submitted to the Local Authority alongside either: A) an environmental report; or, B) a statement of reasons why SEA is not required, prepared following a 'screening' process. The FNP was subject to screening in 2022 by Wokingham Borough Council, on the basis of which it was determined that there *is* a requirement for SEA (i.e. the plan was 'screened-in').

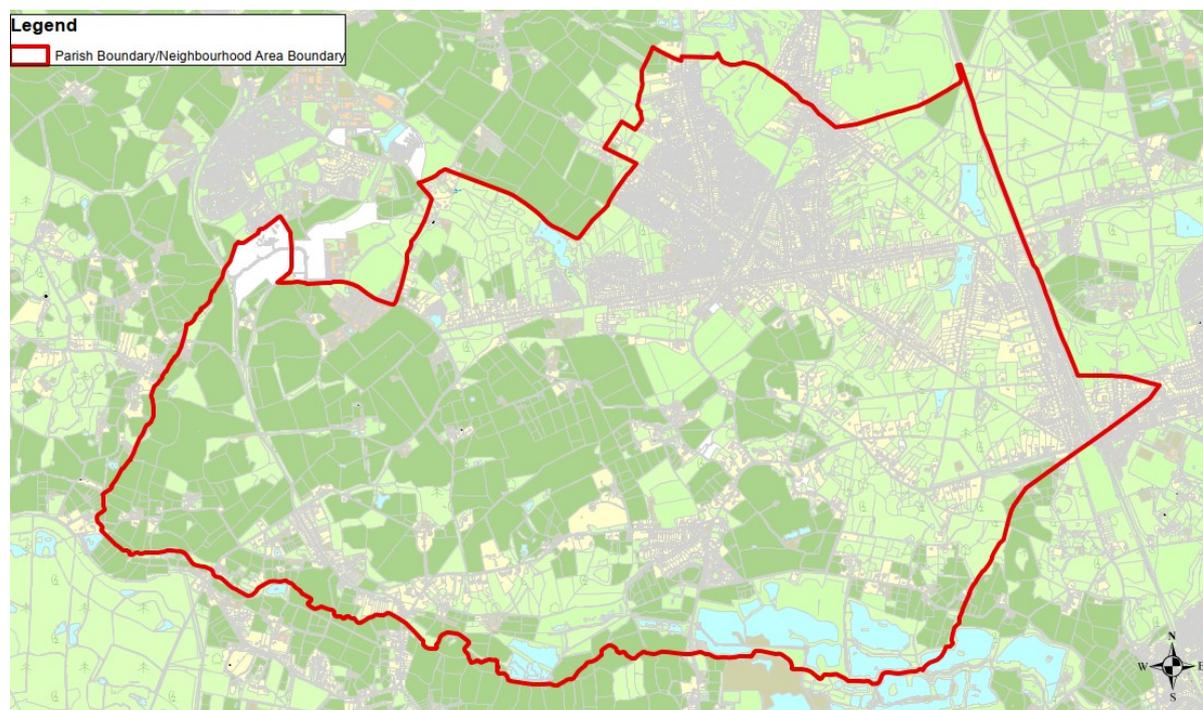
³ Regulation 12(2) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

⁴ See **Appendix A** for further explanation of the report structure including its regulatory basis.

2. What is the plan seeking to achieve?

2.1 This section considers the context provided by the Wokingham local development framework before setting out the established FNP vision and objectives. **Figure 2.1** presents the designated Neighbourhood Area.

Figure 2.1: Finchampstead Neighbourhood Area



2.2 The main settlement within the Parish is Finchampstead village, which itself is split in two halves by the 'Devil's Highway', a Roman Road that runs the central breadth of the Parish. Development patterns to date have not been consistent across the village, with the northern area being developed to a greater degree when compared to the southern area. Therefore, within this report, distinctions may be made between the different parts of the village. Where this is needed, the terms 'northern Finchampstead village' and 'southern Finchampstead village' will be used, referring to the areas of the village north or south of the 'Devil's Highway'.

Strategic planning context

2.3 The Neighbourhood Area falls within the boundary of Wokingham Borough. Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC) Local Plan is divided up into a collection of individual documents, including:

- The Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2010) (CSDP)⁵ – this outlines the overarching strategic development plan and policies for the district in the period to 2026.

⁵ Wokingham Borough Council (2010): 'Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

- The Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014) (MDD)⁶ – this document provides further detail to policies outlined in the CSDP, including specific site allocations and details of four Strategic Development Locations.
 - Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (in consultations) (JMWP)⁷ – the latest round of consultations for the JMWP closed in April 2022. The aim of the document, once adopted, will guide minerals and waste decision-making in Wokingham Borough Council, Bracknell Forest Council, Reading Borough Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
- 2.4 An emerging Local Plan Update⁸ is expected to be adopted by the end of 2023 and relevant for the period up to 2038. The Local Plan Update proposes the allocation of 191 dwellings and 9 Gypsy and Traveller pitches in the neighbourhood area, at the following sites:
- Jovike, Lower Wokingham Road – 15 homes
 - 31-33 Barkham Ride – 66 homes
 - Greenacres Farm, Nine Mile Ride – 100 homes
 - Westward Cottage, Sheerlands Road – 10 dwellings (delivered through the Arborfield Strategic Development Location)
 - Tintagel Farm, Sandhurst Road – 5 Gypsy and Traveller pitches
 - Land to the rear of 166 Nine Mile Ride – 4 Gypsy and Traveller pitches
- 2.5 The Local Plan Update: Revised Growth Strategy consultation (2021) proposed an urban extension for 270 homes in Barkham Parish, to the northwest of Finchampstead at Rooks Nest Farm and 24 Barkham Ride, which is adjacent to the main urban area and the neighbourhood area boundary.
- 2.6 Ongoing discussions with WBC have confirmed that the remaining housing expectation of Finchampstead Parish is 53 dwellings over the plan period, which is expected to be delivered through continued small site permissions and windfall. The 53 homes over the plan period are expected with or without the FNP (as a continued windfall rate of 3 dwellings per annum with a 10% flexibility bracket applied). Any additional allocations made through the FNP will therefore complement the forecasted supply, as identified sites falling outside of windfall allowances.
- 2.7 With regards to the adopted plan, CSDP Core Policy 9 (Scale and location of development proposals) identifies Finchampstead as a 'limited development location' - the third level of the settlement hierarchy. Finchampstead North is defined as a 'modest development location' - the second level of priority in the settlement hierarchy. Development within Finchampstead Parish, therefore, will likely be focussed in the Finchampstead North Ward area.
- 2.8 CSDP Core Policy 18 (Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location) allocates a Strategic Development Location (SDL) at Arborfield Garrison. Plans include the delivery of around 3,500 dwellings, retail facilities, and

⁶ Wokingham Borough Council (2014): 'Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

⁷ Wokingham Borough Council (no date): 'Joint Central and Eastern Berkshire Minerals and Waste Plan', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

⁸ Wokingham Borough Council (no date): 'Local Plan Update', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

social/physical infrastructure. The Local Plan Update anticipates a further 10 dwellings within the Neighbourhood Area in the period up to 2038 connected with the Arborfield SDL, at Westward Cottage, Sheerlands Road.

- 2.9 MDD Policy SAL02 (Allocated housing development sites) provides an indicative figure of 115 dwellings to be delivered across all 'modest development locations' (including Finchampstead North) between 2006-2026. Land in 'limited development locations' has not been set an indicative housing delivery target. MDD Policy SAL03 (Allocated reserve housing sites) specifies one allocated reserve site in Finchampstead Parish, in Finchampstead North Ward for around 40 dwellings. The intention was that those sites allocated through Policy SAL03 would not be developed on or before 1 April 2026, unless specified circumstances applied. In July 2017, owing to the Council's 5-year land supply position at the time, all the reserve allocations in the MDD were released through a decision of the council's executive.
- 2.10 Furthermore, CSDP Core Policy 15 (Employment Development) specifies one 'employment area' in Finchampstead Parish, at Hogwood Farm. These areas are targeted for development for business, industry, or warehouse purposes. MDD Policy SAL07 adds further detail, specifying that the area has been allocated 30,800 sqm for B Class uses.
- 2.11 The adopted planning framework is expected to be superseded by the Local Plan Update in due course.

FNP vision and objectives

- 2.12 The following vision has been established in the development of the FNP:

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

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

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

3. What is the scope of the SEA?

- 3.1 The aim here is to introduce the reader to the scope of the SEA, i.e., the sustainability topics and objectives that should be a focus of the appraisal of the plan and reasonable alternatives.
- 3.2 The FNP SEA Scoping Report (June 2022), submitted alongside the FNP and SEA Environmental Report, presents further information by setting out the policy context and baseline information. This detail has informed the development of key sustainability issues and the proposed framework of themes and objectives (the SEA framework). The SEA framework provides a methodological framework for the appraisal process and is provided in **Table 3.1** below.

Table 3-1: SEA framework

SEA topic	SEA objective
Biodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.
Climate change and flood risk	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the neighbourhood area and increase resilience to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding.
Community wellbeing	Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, reducing deprivation, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities.
Historic environment	Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.
Land, soil, and water resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land, and protect and enhance water quality, using water resources in a sustainable manner.
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape and townscape.
Transportation and movement	Promote sustainable transport use and active travel opportunities and reduce the need to travel.

Consultation

- 3.3 The SEA Regulations require that “*when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies*”. In England, the consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England.⁹ As such the SEA Scoping Report (June 2022) was sent to these authorities for consultation over the period Friday 24th June to Friday 29th July 2022.
- 3.4 Responses were received from Natural England and Historic England, both of whom were satisfied with the proposed scope with no specific comments to make. No response was received from the Environment Agency.

⁹ These consultation bodies were selected “*by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programmes*” (SEA Directive, Article 6(3)).

Part 1: What has plan-making/ SEA involved to this point?

4. Introduction (to Part 1)

Overview

- 4.1 Whilst work on the FNP has been underway for some time, the aim here is not to provide a comprehensive explanation of work to date, but rather to explain work undertaken to develop and appraise reasonable alternatives.
- 4.2 More specifically, this part of the report presents information on reasonable alternative approaches to addressing a key issue that is of central importance to the plan, namely the allocation of land for housing, or growth scenarios.

Why focus on growth scenarios?

- 4.3 The decision was taken to develop and assess reasonable alternatives in relation to the matter of allocating land for housing, given the following considerations:
 - FNP objectives, particularly the core objective to understand housing needs and potentially deliver additional land allocations;
 - Housing growth is known to be a matter of key interest amongst residents and other stakeholders; and
 - The delivery of new homes is most likely to have a significant effect compared to the other proposals within the Plan. National Planning Practice Guidance is clear that SEA should focus on matters likely to give rise to significant effects.

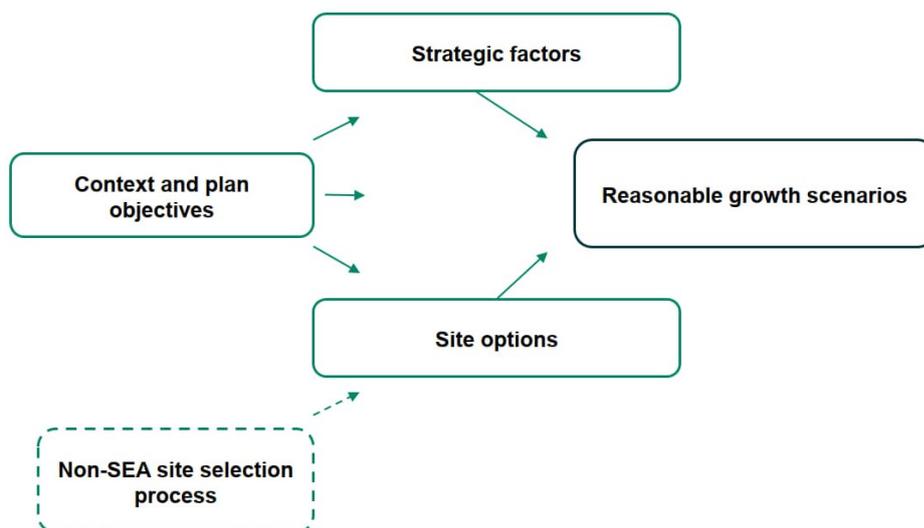
Structure of this part of the report

- 4.4 This part of the report is structured as follows:
 - **Chapter 5** – explains the process of defining growth scenarios.
 - **Chapter 6** – presents the outcomes of appraising growth scenarios; and
 - **Chapter 7** – explains reasons for selecting the preferred approach, considering the appraisal.

5. Defining growth scenarios

5.1 The aim of this chapter is to explain the process that led to the definition of growth scenarios for appraisal and thereby present “*an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with*”.¹⁰ The process is summarised in **Figure 5.1**.

Figure 5.1: Defining growth scenarios



5.2 Specifically, there is a need to explore the strategic factors that have a bearing on the establishment of options (in relation to the level and distribution of growth) and the work that has been undertaken to date to examine site options (i.e., sites potentially in contention for allocation in the FNP). These factors are then drawn together to arrive at growth scenarios.

Strategic factors

5.3 As identified in Chapter 2, there is no requirement for the FNP to identify further land for housing development, with a proportionate level of needs being met through the proposed housing supply of the emerging Local Plan Update (LPU).

5.4 The LPU proposes the allocation of 191 homes and 9 Gypsy and Traveller pitches in the Neighbourhood Area. An urban extension for 270 homes is also proposed in Barkham Parish, to the northwest of Finchampstead at Rooks Nest Farm and 24 Barkham Ride, which is adjacent to the main urban area and the NA boundary. **Figure 5.2** provides the context for these sites which are expected to deliver most future growth in and around the parish in the period up to 2038.

5.5 A small sites supply/ windfall rate of 3 dwellings per year is further anticipated as part of the housing supply and a 10% flexibility bracket is applied to this, equating to a further 53 dwellings in the period up to 2038. This supply is anticipated with, or without the FNP.

¹⁰ Schedule 2(8) of the SEA Regulations.

- 5.6 With regards to the LPU, two formal 'Call for Sites' consultations were held by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC). All promoted sites were then considered in detail through a Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), undertaken by WBC to identify suitable sites for allocations across the borough.
- 5.7 Many sites were submitted to WBC and the HELAA work has assisted in identifying the proposed allocation sites in the LPU. Of note for the FNP, was that the HELAA dismissed small sites below a 0.25ha/ 10 dwelling size threshold (except for Gypsy and Traveller pitch considerations) and the FNP provides an avenue to explore these small sites and complement/ add value to the LPU process in this respect.
- 5.8 District and local-level strategic considerations should further include core FNP objectives to identify and protect 'Local Gaps', 'Important areas of separation', 'Green Wedges', and 'Local Green Spaces'. **Figure 5.2** presents the key FNP diagram depicting these proposed designations.

Site options

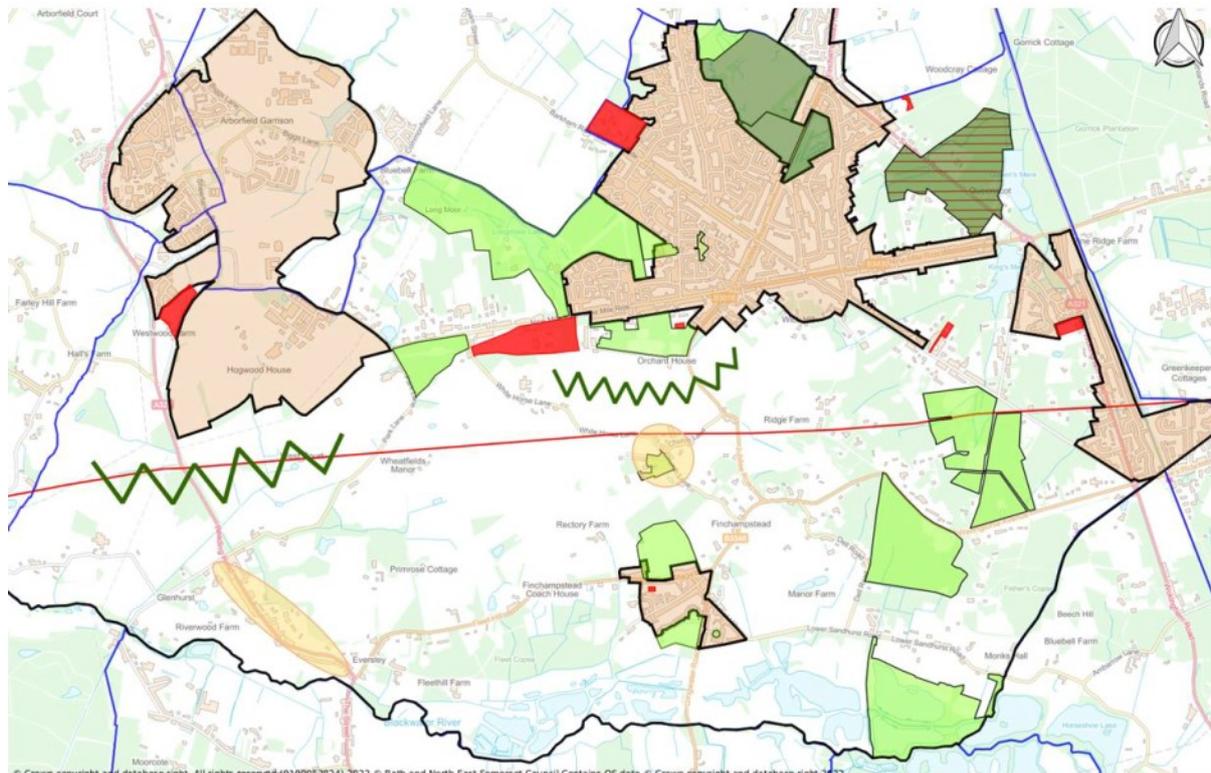
- 5.9 Considering the above, focus is paid to small sites emerging through the LPU process which were discounted through the HELAA, of which six have been identified¹¹:
- Land adjacent to 294 Nine Mile Ride (5FI026).
 - Land to the rear of 115-137 Nashgrove Lane (5FI027).
 - Heartwood Lodge, Sandhurst Road (5FI002).
 - Land rear of 6-8 The Village (5FI014).
 - Broughton Farm, Heath Ride (5FI016); and
 - Land south of Reading Rd (5FI023).
- 5.10 Of note, sites 5FI026 and 5FI027 are both found not suitable for progression as an allocation. Site 5FI026 is notably landlocked, and site 5FI027 was discounted due to traffic and amenity issues. Four of the six sites are therefore considered further in establishing growth scenarios, each are discussed in turn below:
- Heartwood Lodge, Sandhurst Road (5FI002): This is a component site of a much larger area assessed through the HELAA, however, the site falls wholly within the proposed Local Key Gap conflicting with key FNP objectives. On this basis, the site is not progressed as a reasonable alternative.
 - Land rear of 6-8 The Village (5FI014): This site was dismissed through Stage 1 of the HELAA due to the small site size. The site is a suitable small site to consider as a reasonable alternative to deliver a total of 2 dwellings.
 - Broughton Farm, Heath Ride (5FI016): Whilst the site size is over 0.25ha (0.4ha), it is only deemed suitable to deliver two new homes. The site is a

¹¹ Sites 5FI026 and 5FI027 have been assessed through the HELAA with site sizes exceeding 0.25ha, however, the indicative dwelling capacities are less than 10 homes

suitable small site to consider as a reasonable alternative to deliver a total of 2 dwellings.

- Land south of Reading Rd (5F1023): This is a component site of a much larger area assessed through the HELAA. The site is a suitable small site to consider as a reasonable alternative to deliver a total of ten dwellings.

Figure 5.2: LPU strategic designations and housing allocations and land protection designations proposed through the FNP



	Important areas of separation		Area of potential Housing
	Green Wedge		Informal built areas
	Local Key Gap		Existing settlement boundaries
	Local Green Space designation		Parish Boundary
	Site of Roman Road (Devils Highway)		County Boundary

Establishing growth scenarios

- 5.11 Considering the points above, and in line with the objectives of the plan, three sites are considered to feed into the potential growth scenarios for the FNP: Land rear of 6-8 The Village (5FI014), Broughton Farm, Heath Ride (5FI016), and Land south of Reading Rd (5FI023).
- 5.12 It is prudent to recognise the option to not allocate any additional land, alongside a 'maximised' growth scenario which would allocate all three sites. It should be noted that in the interests of conciseness and clarity, only a 'no additional allocations' and a 'maximum growth' scenario will be explored in this SEA in addition to the individual site options. Whilst it is the case that there are other combinations of sites available for the FNP to consider, i.e., the delivery of any two of Option 2, Option 3, or Option 4, the impact of any possible permutations can be informed by the appraisal of the outlined scenarios.
- 5.13 Therefore, three sites, accompanied by a 'no additional allocations' and a 'maximum growth' scenario, will be taken forward as the alternatives for assessment in this SEA:
- **Option 1:** No additional allocations in the FNP
 - **Option 2:** Land rear of 6-8 The Village (5F1014) for the development of two dwellings
 - **Option 3:** Broughton Farm, Heath Ride (5F1016) for the development of two dwellings
 - **Option 4:** Land south of Reading Rd (5F1023) for the development of ten dwellings
 - **Option 5:** Maximum growth (Options 2, 3, and 4) delivering a combined total of 14 dwellings.

6. Appraising growth scenarios

6.1 This chapter provides the appraisal findings for the five alternative options established in the previous chapter. To reiterate, the options are:

- **Option 1:** No additional allocations in the FNP
- **Option 2:** Land rear of 6-8 The Village (5F1014) for the development of two dwellings
- **Option 3:** Broughton Farm, Heath Ride (5F1016) for the development of two dwellings
- **Option 4:** Land south of Reading Rd (5F1023) for the development of ten dwellings
- **Option 5:** Maximum growth (Options 2, 3, and 4) delivering a combined total of 14 dwellings.

Methodology

6.2 For each of the options, the assessment examines likely significant effects on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability themes and objectives identified through scoping (see **Table 3.1**) as a methodological framework. Where appropriate neutral effects, or uncertainty will also be noted.

6.3 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, where there is a need to rely on assumptions to reach a conclusion on a 'significant effect' this is made explicit in the appraisal text.

6.4 Where it is not possible to predict likely significant effects based on reasonable assumptions, efforts are made to comment on the relative merits of the alternatives in more general terms and to indicate a rank of preference. This is helpful, as it enables a distinction to be made between the alternatives even where it is not possible to distinguish between them in terms of 'significant effects.' Numbers are used to highlight the option or options that are preferred from an SEA perspective with Option 1 performing the best.

6.5 Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted considering the criteria presented within Regulations.¹² So, for example, account is taken of the duration, frequency, and reversibility of effects.

¹² Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Biodiversity

	Option 1: No additional allocations	Option 2: Land rear of 6-8 The Village	Option 3: Broughton Farm, Heath Ride	Option 4: Land south of Reading Rd	Option 5: Maximum growth
Significant effect?	No	No	No	Yes – negative	Yes - negative
Rank	2	1	3	4	5

- 6.6 There are no internationally designated sites overlapping any of the proposed sites, however Option 4 (Land south of Reading Rd) is within 1 km of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) which is located to the west outside of the neighbourhood area. Additionally, Option 4 is within 1 km of the Bramshill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). As such, only Option 4 overlaps with a SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for the type of residential development expected to be brought forward – ten or more houses outside of existing settlements and urban areas. Consequently, consultation with Natural England may be likely. Therefore, development at the site allocated under Option 4 has the potential to have a significant impact on internationally and nationally designated sites for biodiversity and geodiversity.
- 6.7 In terms of habitat type, Option 2 (Land rear of 6-8 The Village) is a mix of acid, calcareous and neutral grassland and built-up areas and gardens. The same mix is present at Option 4. Option 3 (Broughton Farm, Heath Ride) is a mix of acid, calcareous and neutral grassland and broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland. Additionally, Option 3 has the potential to overlap with deciduous woodland under the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats. Furthermore, Option 3 and Option 4 are situated adjacent to areas of deciduous woodland. As such, development under these two options have the potential to cause ecological impacts to the local habitat, and onsite mitigation, particularly during the construction stage, should be considered to minimise the effects of the disturbance (including noise and light pollution).
- 6.8 All site options are considered to have the ability to avoid or compensate any biodiversity loss and contribute to overall biodiversity net gain.
- 6.9 Considering the above, Option 2 is ranked most favourably due to avoiding any potential impacts on internationally and nationally designated landscapes whilst still allowing for development and does not overlap with SSSI IRZs. Option 1 (No growth) is ranked second most favourably due to avoiding any potential impacts on internationally and nationally designated landscapes, but it does not provide the opportunity to provide net gains in biodiversity. Option 3 is ranked the third most favourable; although development here could impact on the BAP Priority Habitat, it is far enough removed from internationally and nationally designated landscapes and does not overlap with SSSI IRZs for the type of development expected to be brought forward. Option 4 is ranked the second least favourable due to development being within proximity to internationally and nationally designated landscapes, as well as in proximity to BAP Priority Habitat. Option 5 is ranked least favourably due to have a greater potential to impact on biodiversity designations in the neighbourhood plan area. It is deemed appropriate to flag the potential for significant negative effects (in the

absence of appropriate mitigation) at the Land south of Reading Road (Options 4 and 5) in relation to internationally designated biodiversity.

Climate change and flood risk

	Option 1: No additional allocations	Option 2: Land rear of 6-8 The Village	Option 3: Broughton Farm, Heath Ride	Option 4: Land south of Reading Rd	Option 5: Maximum growth
Significant effect?	No	No	No	Yes – negative	Yes – negative
Rank	1	2	3	4	5

- 6.10 Given the small scale of development being proposed under all options (no more than 10 dwellings at each proposed site), no significant effects are considered likely in relation to climate change mitigation. Option 1 (No growth) will not deviate from the baseline conditions, and options 2, 3, 4 and 5 are considered to have equal potential to deliver small scale renewables and efficiency measures through good design, supported by policy guidance.
- 6.11 Reducing private transport trips could have a significant effect on reducing per capita emissions. Locating allocations in the right place in the neighbourhood area could help encourage residents to take lower carbon journeys through public and active transport. On this topic, the site allocation under Option 2 (Land rear of 6-8 The Village) is located within a settlement boundary, and the proposed site under Option 3 (Broughton Farm, Heath Ride) is located within proximity to an established settlement. As such, these two options are both located close to public transport access points, and Public Rights of Way (PRoW) routes, and therefore, lend themselves to being well positioned to support public transport and active travel opportunities (therefore reducing greenhouse gas emissions linked to transportation). Although located in a developed area, Option 4 (Land south of Reading Rd) is situated further away from the neighbourhood area's facilities, public transport access points, and PRoW routes.
- 6.12 In terms of flood risk, the main areas at risk of fluvial flooding are located along the Blackwater River on the southern border. Whilst Options 2 and 3 include sites that aren't within an area of fluvial flood risk, Options 4 and 5 include the site to the south-west. This site lies near an area of Flood Zone 2 and 3. Mindful of future flood risk, Options 4 and 5 are considered slightly more at risk in terms of fluvial flood risk. In terms of surface flood risk, Option 3 is in proximity to a section of Heath Ride that is at varying risk of surface water flooding, as is Option 2. Option 4 is at low risk of surface flooding within the site boundaries.
- 6.13 The incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in areas with an increased risk of surface water flooding, and the addition of flood defences in areas with an increased risk of fluvial flooding, will play an essential role in mitigating the risk of flooding at these sites.
- 6.14 Considering this information, Option 1 is ranked most favourably – this is due to no deviation from the baseline and not allocating sites that may be at risk of

flooding. Option 2 is ranked the second most favourably, due to being located within an established settlement (and therefore having easier access to facilities and amenities and sustainable and active transportation) and is removed from areas at risk of fluvial and surface water flooding. Option 3 is ranked the third most favourably, due to being in close proximity to an established settlement but being located near to an area at varying risk of surface water flooding. Option 4 is ranked the second least favourably due to the inclusion of a site removed from existing settlement boundaries that is at greater risk of flooding. Finally, Option 5 is ranked the least favourably due to the cumulative impacts associated with the site options, traffic generation, and climate mitigation. A potential for significant negative effects (in the absence of appropriate mitigation) is flagged at this stage for the Land south of Reading Road (Options 4 and 5).

Community wellbeing

	Option 1: No additional allocations	Option 2: Land rear of 6-8 The Village	Option 3: Broughton Farm, Heath Ride	Option 4: Land south of Reading Rd	Option 5: Maximum growth
Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
Rank	4	2	2	3	1

- 6.15 Options 2, 3, 4, and 5 will provide additional dwellings to Finchampstead's housing stock, and therefore, can be considered to provide benefits to the community. The positive impact of housing developments can also be boosted by provision of dwellings in affordable tenures on each site. The largest site (Options 4 and 5) can be considered to provide a greater positive impact, simply by the nature of the development's size.
- 6.16 A large proportion of Finchampstead Parish's community facilities are located by Finchampstead North settlement (including convenience stores, health services, and a primary school). Option 3 (Broughton Farm, Heath Ride) is best placed to make use of these facilities, as it is located close to the Finchampstead North settlement boundary.
- 6.17 Another, smaller, concentration of facilities can be found in Finchampstead village (such as pubs, a sports club, and a primary school). Option 2 (Land rear or 6-8 The Village) is located at the heart of Finchampstead village, and therefore can be considered another suitable location to benefit from the local amenities.
- 6.18 Option 4 (Land south of Reading Rd), is not located close to a settlement or many other facilities, and therefore, can be considered a less suitable site with regards to this SEA theme.
- 6.19 Overall, Options 2, 3, 4, and 5 are considered likely to lead to minor positive effects through the delivery of new homes to meet local needs. Reflecting on these options, Option 5 is ranked the most favourably due to providing a greater number of homes. Options 2 and 3 are ranked joint second most favourably due to being in areas that have easy accessibility to services and

facilities. Option 4 is ranked less favourably – although development here would improve community wellbeing, it is further removed from existing community facilities, services, and amenities. Option 1 (No growth) is ranked the least favourably.

Historic environment

	Option 1: No additional allocations	Option 2: Land rear of 6-8 The Village	Option 3: Broughton Farm, Heath Ride	Option 4: Land south of Reading Rd	Option 5: Maximum growth
Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	No	Uncertain	Uncertain
Rank	1	2	1	2	2

- 6.20 None of the sites under Options 2, 3, 4 and 5 have listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks or gardens, or registered battlefields within the site boundaries. Neither are any of the proposed sites within proximity to a conservation area. However, the site under Option 2 (Land rear of 6-8 The Village) is located within 200 metres of several listed buildings; development at this site has the potential to impact on the setting of these assets, but this may be screened out due to the existing built environment.
- 6.21 Additionally, the site under Option 4 (Land south of Reading Rd) is wholly within archaeological site 51, designated under policy TB25¹³. This area is considered to have high archaeological potential. Within areas of high archaeological potential there is good reason to expect significant finds during any disturbance of the ground and as such development is required to undertake prior assessments of the possible archaeological significance of the site and the implications of the development proposal. A desk-based assessment should accompany any submitted application.
- 6.22 Considering this information, Options 1 (No growth) and 3 (Broughton Farm, Heath Ride) are ranked most favourably, due to avoiding development in areas that could impact the historic environment. The remaining three options are ranked least favourably, as they include sites that have the potential to negatively impact the historic environment through development. The overall effects under Options 2, 4, and 5 are uncertain at this stage, reflecting the need for further site level investigation and mitigation proposals.

¹³ Wokingham Council (2012) 'Heritage Map 411 – Confirm Areas of High Archaeological Potential defined in policy TB25' can be downloaded [here](#).

Land, soil, and water resources

	Option 1: No additional allocations	Option 2: Land rear of 6-8 The Village	Option 3: Broughton Farm, Heath Ride	Option 4: Land south of Reading Rd	Option 5: Maximum growth
Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
Rank	1	2	2	2	2

- 6.23 All three sites under Options 2, 3, 4, and 5 are within the Safeguard Zone (Surface Water) SWSGZ4016; additionally, the site allocation under Option 3 (Broughton Farm, Heath Ride) is within the Surface Water S460 – Emm Brook NVZ.
- 6.24 All site options avoid impacts to local mineral and waste areas and therefore, their impact on these areas can be considered equal and low.
- 6.25 The Finchampstead neighbourhood area is underlain by a variety of soil quality types, ranging from 'Poor' to 'Good to Moderate' according to the local Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Assessment. Developments should seek to avoid areas of higher quality soil, where practicable.
- 6.26 Options 3 (Broughton Farm, Heath Ride) and 4 (Land south of Reading Rd) lie on 'poor' and 'other land primarily in non-agricultural use', respectively, as designated by the local ALC assessment. This land is also recorded in the Predictive Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land Assessment, as land with a 'low likelihood of BMV land ($\leq 20\%$ area BMV)' and 'non-agricultural use', respectively. Consequently, these two options avoid the higher quality agricultural land in the Parish. The same conclusions do not apply to Option 2 at this stage, for which national datasets indicate the potential for moderate quality agricultural land, with a moderate likelihood of BMV land. However, this is somewhat negated by suggestions that the site is contaminated. Remediation of contaminated land at the site would ultimately be considered beneficial for soil quality.
- 6.27 Considering this information, Option 1 (No growth) is ranked most favourably, due to no deviation from the baseline. The remaining options are ranked broadly on par with no significant effects anticipated.

Landscape

	Option 1: No additional allocations	Option 2: Land rear of 6-8 The Village	Option 3: Broughton Farm, Heath Ride	Option 4: Land south of Reading Rd	Option 5: Maximum growth
Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
Rank	1	2	3	4	5

- 6.28 The Finchampstead neighbourhood area is not within or in proximity to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), nor is there a National Park. As such, the neighbourhood area is not constrained by policies protecting these designations.
- 6.29 The total area of Finchampstead Parish is located on an escarpment area in the Thames Basin Heaths National Character Area (NCA). The most recent local landscape character assessment indicates the neighbourhood area falls within four landscape character areas: J2 (Arborfield and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay), M1 (Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands), M2 (Finchampstead Ridges Forested and Settled Sands), and N2 (Finchampstead Pastoral Sandy Lowland).
- 6.30 Options 2, 3, 4 and 5 have the potential to negatively impact the character of Finchampstead's NCA and landscape character areas due to development occurring, however, the small scale of the sites, located close to other developments, provides good potential to integrate development with minimal impacts.
- 6.31 The neighbourhood area has multiple Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) dispersed within its boundaries. Options 3 (Broughton Farm, Heath Ride) and 4 (Land south of Reading Rd) are located adjacent to TPOs, with a greater amount being situated close to the site allocated under Option 3. Whilst it is unlikely these would need to be cleared for development, care will be required during the construction phase to avoid impacts to these trees.
- 6.32 In relation to visual impact, Options 2 (Land rear of 6-8 The Village) and 3 are likely to be low, as they are contained within or nearby a settlement and are screened from the wider landscape due to the trees and surrounding buildings. Option 4 is set on a larger and more open site away from built-up areas, and therefore may have a larger impact with regards to the area's landscape.
- 6.33 Considering this information, whilst all three site options pose no significant threat to Finchampstead's landscape features, they do all pose minor impacts to varying degrees. Option 1 is ranked most favourably as there is no impact to the landscape. Of the individual site options the order of preference is Option 2, then Option 3, then Option 4. The least preferable option is Option 5, due to the maximisation of development.

Transportation and movement

	Option 1: No additional allocations	Option 2: Land rear of 6-8 The Village	Option 3: Broughton Farm, Heath Ride	Option 4: Land south of Reading Rd	Option 5: Maximum growth
Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
Rank	1	2	2	3	4

6.34 Options 2, 3, 4, and 5 involve small-scale developments that will ultimately lead to a minor increase in vehicle use in the neighbourhood area. However, this is not considered likely to lead to significant effects in relation to the local road network or highway capacity.

6.35 Options 2 (Land rear of 6-8 The Village) and 3 (Broughton Farm, Heath Ride) are situated notably closer to local settlements, and therefore can be considered better located to access local facilities, services, and amenities in comparison to Option 4 (Land south of Reading Rd), which, although located amongst other residential units, is much further away from the neighbourhood area's settlements and facilities and does not benefit from any wider facilities being in close proximity.

6.36 The neighbourhood area has an extensive PRow network that extends across its area; however, certain parts of the neighbourhood area are better served by the PRow network than others. In relation to the alternatives considered in this SEA, the same conclusions from the previous paragraph are applicable here too, with Options 2 and 3 being located close to a greater number of routes on Finchampstead's PRow network when compared to Option 4.

6.37 Considering this information, Option 1 is considered the most favourable, as it does not deviate from the baseline and will not lead to increased levels of vehicles on the road network. Options 2 and 3 are ranked second most favourably due to being in proximity to existing settlements, facilities, services, and facilities – limiting the need to rely on private vehicles to move around the neighbourhood area. Option 4 is ranked the second least favourably overall given its more limited potential to promote active travel locally. Option 5 (Maximum growth) is ranked the least favourably due to bringing forward the greatest number of additional cars on the road. No significant effects are considered likely under any of the options.

Summary findings

SEA theme		Option 1: No additional allocations	Option 2: Land rear of 6-8 The Village	Option 3: Broughton Farm, Heath Ride	Option 4: Land south of Reading Rd	Option 5: Maximum growth
Biodiversity	Significant effect?	No	No	No	Yes – negative	Yes – negative
	Rank	2	1	3	4	5
Climate change and flood risk	Significant effect?	No	No	No	Yes – negative	Yes – negative
	Rank	1	2	3	4	5
Community wellbeing	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
	Rank	4	2	2	3	1
Historic environment	Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	No	Uncertain	Uncertain
	Rank	1	2	1	2	2
Land, soil, and water resources	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
	Rank	1	3	2	2	4
Landscape	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	2	2	2
Transportation and movement	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	2	3	4

6.38 Overall, Options 2, 3, 4, and 5 are considered likely to lead to minor positive effects in relation to community wellbeing, due to the provision of additional dwellings to the area.

6.39 Potential negative effects have been identified in relation to development at the Land south of Reading Road, this is flagged 'pre-mitigation' and reflects the sites proximity to internationally designated biodiversity sites, and an area of fluvial flood risk.

6.40 Uncertain effects have also been identified under Options 2, 4, (and subsequently) 5, which reflects a need to consider on-site mitigation to reduce the potential for negative effects arising in relation to the historic environment.

6.41 Option 1 is largely a baseline (do nothing) scenario, where no impacts are considered likely and conversely, the potential for development gain/ benefits (positive effects) is also removed.

7. Developing the preferred approach

- 7.1 The Parish Council's reasons for developing the preferred approach considering the appraisal are identified below:

“The Parish Council’s reasons for developing their preferred approach are set out in the main FNDP document and the associated Topic Paper ‘Proposed Sites for Additional Development’. The team producing the FNDP have reviewed the SEA Environmental Report and understand this to align with the view of the FNDP that location 5F1023 ‘Land South of the Reading Road’ is less suitable as a potential development site.

Therefore, the Parish Council notes that it is the view of the SEA that the two locations below are the best options amongst the promoted sites to meet the requirements of the FNDP:

<i>5F1014</i>	<i>Land r/o 6-8 The Village</i>
<i>5F1016</i>	<i>Broughton Farm, Heath Ride.”</i>

Part 2: What are the SEA findings at this stage?

8. Introduction (to Part 2)

8.1 The aim of this chapter is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the current 'Submission' version of the FNP. This chapter presents:

- An appraisal of the current version of the FNP under the seven SEA theme headings; and
- The overall conclusions at this current stage and recommendations for finalising the submission version of the plan.

FNP policies

8.2 The FNP puts forward 25 policies to guide development in the Neighbourhood Area, accompanied by site allocation information in Chapter 5.4 'Site Allocations'. **Table 8.1** identifies the policy list.

Table 8-1: FNP policies

Policy reference	Policy name
AHD1	Development outside of Development Limits
AHD2	Development within Development Limits
AHD3	Independent living, care and accommodation for vulnerable people.
AHD4	Green space and landscaping
AHD5	Affordable housing
AHD6	Provisions for Gypsy and Traveller communities
AHD7	Caravan and mobile home sites
D1	Building heights
D2	Preserving the rural culture of the parish
D3	Infill, Small Plot Development and Development of Private Residential Gardens
ES1	Environmental standards for residential development
GS1	Key Local Gaps between settlements
IRS1	Protection and enhancement of local green spaces
IRS2	Protection of Outstanding views
IRS3	Protection and enhancement of the historic character of the area
IRS4	Implement strategy to preserve the identity of Finchampstead parish through green spaces
IRS5	Ecological green space biodiversity
IRS6	Trees
GA1	Improve environment and health from traffic pollution
GA2	Reduction in car usage with safe personal mobility options
TC1	Supporting business
TC2	Supporting business

Policy reference	Policy name
TC3	Retail development – California Crossroads
TC4	Retail development – Finchwood Park
TC5	Protection of retail facilities

Methodology

- 8.3 The assessment identifies and evaluates ‘likely significant effects’ on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability objectives identified through scoping (see **Table 3.1**) as a methodological framework.
- 8.4 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the strategic nature of the policies under consideration and understanding of the baseline (now and in the future under a ‘no plan’ scenario) that is inevitably limited. Given uncertainties there is a need to make assumptions, e.g., in relation to plan implementation and aspects of the baseline that might be impacted. Assumptions are made cautiously and explained within the text (with the aim of striking a balance between comprehensiveness and conciseness). In many instances, given reasonable assumptions, it is not possible to predict ‘significant effects’, but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) of the draft plan in more general terms.
- 8.5 Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking account of the criteria presented within Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of effects as far as possible. Cumulative effects are also considered, i.e., the potential for the Neighbourhood Plan to impact an aspect of the baseline when implemented alongside other plans, programmes, and projects. These effect ‘characteristics’ are described within the assessment as appropriate.

9. Appraisal of the submission FNP

9.1 Consideration is given to the FNP contents, aims, and objectives, before appraisal findings are presented for each of the seven SEA themes established through scoping (see Chapter 3). Finally, cumulative effects are explored. Chapter 10 then goes on to present overall conclusions and any recommendations.

Plan contents, aims, and objectives

9.2 Finchampstead is a semi-rural parish in Wokingham Borough, approximately two miles (3 km) south-west to the market town of Wokingham. There are four settlements in Finchampstead Parish - Finchampstead North (to the north), Finchampstead (to the south), and small sections of Arborfield Garrison (to the west) and Pinewood (Crowthorne) (to the east).¹⁴

9.3 The FNP seeks to represent the community's aspirations for development within Finchampstead Parish over the period to 2038. It recognises that growth in Finchampstead is largely being driven through allocations in the emerging Local Plan Update, which plans for in the region of 250 homes including an element of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. However, in addition to the allocations outlined in the emerging Local Plan Update, the FNP and the related Housing Topic Paper proposes two additional sites for housing developments:

- Land rear of 6-8 The Village for two dwellings (5F1014); and
- Broughton Farm, Heath Ride for two dwellings (5F1016).

9.4 The Parish's housing strategy is informed by Policy AHD2 and D3, which suggest that developments should occur within the Parish's defined Development Locations and their design should be in keeping with the character of the surrounding settlement. However, under exceptional circumstances, developments may be permitted outside of the defined development boundaries, as defined by Policy ADH1.

9.5 The housing strategy is further supported by emerging policy in the Local Plan Update. Wokingham's Settlement Hierarchy (Draft Policy SS2 of the Local Plan Update) seeks proportionate growth amongst its settlement and requires that development occurs within defined Development Limits and is appropriate for each area.

9.6 Wider housing policies (Policies AHD3, AHD5, D1, ES1) seek to influence the range of housing types, tenures, and sizes being delivered at allocation sites, as well as development design.

9.7 As mentioned earlier, Finchampstead is semi-rural area, and home to a variety of locally and nationally important habitats. The FNP includes a set of policies (including Policy AHD4, D2, IRS1, IRS2, IRS4, IRS5, and IRS6) designed to protect and enhance the area's natural beauty through proposed development sites.

¹⁴ See 'Local Plan Update' interactive map with 'settlement boundaries' turned on, available [here](#).

- 9.8 The Parish is set within the Thames Basin Heaths National Character Area and had distinctive views towards the Blackwater River. The threat of development on the neighbourhood area's distinctive landscape is of high concern to the residents of Finchampstead Parish. Consequently, the FNP places a strong emphasis on the preservation of its landscape features through parish-wide landscape policies (such as D1, D2, and GS1) and through the specific preservation of four designated Outstanding Views (as outlined in Policy IRS2).
- 9.9 Finchampstead Parish has an extensive Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network, spanning across the Parish. The FNP recognises its importance in the future travel behaviours around the Parish, and through Policy GA1 and GA2, seeks for developments to protect and enhance the PRoW network wherever possible.
- 9.10 There are a range of heritage assets and archaeological deposits in Finchampstead Parish, mostly found in the southern half of the neighbourhood area. The Parish is also home to Finchampstead Church Conservation Area, located in the geographical centre of the Parish. Through Policy IRS3, the FNP requires all developments to protect and enhance historic assets.
- 9.11 Many of the plan policies overlap with the desire for the FNP to improve its settlements for the benefit of its local residents. The development of community infrastructure, such as Local Green Spaces, and an extensive PROW network will be key to preserving and improving local community assets. In addition, the FNP includes a range of policies designed to encourage local business growth, and development of the Parish's retail facilities.

Biodiversity

- 9.12 Finchampstead is home to a diverse range of habitats, supporting a variety of flora and fauna which are all extremely vulnerable to new development. To maintain and improve the condition of biodiversity in the future, it will be important to not only protect and enhance priority habitats but maintain the connections between them.
- 9.13 Growth in the neighbourhood area is immediately constrained by the proximity to the internationally designated site, Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) - protected for its series of shallow acid ponds and associated mire, which support a rich assemblage of fauna and flora. Although this site is located outside of the Finchampstead NA boundary, the SPA's defined Zone of Influence (Zoi) of 5km extends across the whole of the Finchampstead neighbourhood area. A Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) has been undertaken as part of plan-making, which concludes no likely significant effects. Notably, the HRA identifies that *"The Neighbourhood Plan sets out detailed policy regarding the need for net new dwellings to provide SANG and SAMM contributions. In addition, Wokingham Borough Council have confirmed that the two allocations made by the Neighbourhood Plan (totalling four dwellings) can be accommodated within the strategic SANG capacity in the borough. It is therefore considered that an adequate policy framework will be in place to ensure no adverse effects on the integrity of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA either alone or in combination with other plans or projects."*

- 9.14 Within the neighbourhood area boundary, there is also the nationally designated site Longmore Bog Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) – one of the few examples of a base-poor valley mire in Berkshire. The sites do not intersect the SSSI, and the scale of development being proposed is not considered likely to give rise to significant impacts.
- 9.15 Policy IRS4 outlines several ways that proposed developments can reduce their impact on local biodiversity through built-in mitigation within development proposals, including the preservation of green spaces and corridors within the Parish and the encouragement of tree and hedgerow planting.
- 9.16 Policy IRS5 provides additional ecological protections sought through the FNP, highlighting the need for new developments in the Parish to work with and enhance the natural environment. A Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) Survey was carried out in 2019, identifying specific biodiversity areas of importance within the Parish. Policy IRS5 also states that developments should contribute towards the protection and improvement of these specific TVERC biodiversity areas, where possible. Furthermore, Policy IRS5 identifies an expectation for no loss of biodiversity, instead expecting a net gain of ‘at least 10%’ over the baseline values for all development proposals (in line with the Environment Act 2021).
- 9.17 Like Policy IRS4, Policy IRS5 also considers the Parish’s wildlife corridors and highlights the need for development to reduce its impact on the area’s nocturnal species through a considered lighting strategy.
- 9.18 Finally, following national guidance, Policy IRS5 outlines that any proposals that threaten designated species such as bat and badgers, will be subject to an ecological survey or assessment.
- 9.19 Finchampstead is an extremely ‘green’ parish, and according to the FNP it has an estimated tree cover around 39% of the land area, supposedly the highest figure for any parish in Wokingham. Whilst there are many TPOs in the Parish, the FNP recognises that a strong commitment to protecting the wider tree canopy will be needed to preserve the area’s environmental baseline. Policy IRS7 serves this function, providing a set of measures to protect the Parish’s trees, through the retention of ‘mature or important trees, groups of trees or woodland on site’ in development proposals. Any proposals that require the removal of trees will undergo a review, through tree surveys and impact assessment. If trees are needed to be removed, these should be sufficiently offset through planting of similar trees.
- 9.20 Overall, the spatial strategy of the plan is considered likely to avoid negative effects arising, and the additional policy provisions of the plan are considered likely to deliver long-term **minor positive effects**.

Climate change and flood risk

- 9.21 New development in Finchampstead could have the potential to increase flood risk through factors such as changing surface and ground water flows, overloading existing inputs to the drainage and wastewater networks or increasing the number of residents exposed to areas of existing flood risk. It is further recognised that climate change has the potential to increase the

occurrence of extreme weather events. This has the potential to put residents, property, and development at increased risk of flood exposure.

- 9.22 Generally, Finchampstead neighbourhood area is not affected by fluvial flooding, with most of the area deemed to be within Flood Risk Zone 1 (0.1% chance of flooding each year). There are two exceptions to this: firstly, an area the area that spans along the neighbourhood area's southern border by the Blackwater River; and secondly, an area on the north-eastern border by King's Mere and Queen's Mere lakes. Both areas are recorded as Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3. The two housing allocations proposed in the FNP avoid these high-risk areas. Notably though, the area around Queen's Mere is sought to be protected as a Local Key (landscape) Gap, which should preserve its function as part of the floodplain.
- 9.23 Areas of high and medium surface water flood risk have been identified across the neighbourhood area and both housing allocations proposed in the FNP are located close to areas at risk. The construction of additional dwellings and associated impermeable land may increase the chance of surface water flooding locally, however, due to the size of the allocations, this impact is expected to be relatively minor. The impact of these allocations would be mitigated by an appropriate drainage strategy and use of permeable materials, where practicable, in line with national planning policy provisions (and the provisions of the Local Plan).
- 9.24 Development in Finchampstead should also play its part in reducing adverse effects on the environment and in particular global warming. In this regard Policy ES1 sets out provisions to guide development of the allocated sites and contribute towards sustainable construction. Major developments are expected to provide carbon neutral homes, and minor developments (such as the two housing allocations) will be expected be low-carbon emitters. It is also expected that infrastructure for low-carbon technologies, such as electric vehicle charging points, is built into the design of the new dwellings. The requirement for electric charging points also links to wider low-carbon travel policies such as GA2, which aims to encourage forms of active travel within the Parish.
- 9.25 The FNP also outlines its commitment to combatting climate change and reducing the local area's carbon footprint by aligning itself with the wider Wokingham Borough Council Climate Change action plan.
- 9.26 Overall, by recognising growth will occur with or without the FNP, the increase in the built footprint of the neighbourhood area and absolute emissions are not considered a consequence of the FNP. On this basis, and alongside the avoidance of significant effects in relation to flood risk, no significant deviations from the baseline are anticipated, and broadly **neutral effects** are considered most likely.

Community wellbeing

- 9.27 The FNP supports the growth strategy of the Local Plan Update and complements housing supply with an additional two small-scale allocation sites. Wider housing policies (Policies AHD3, AHD5, D1, ES1) seek to influence the range of housing types, tenures, and sizes being delivered at allocation sites (being tailored to be meet local needs), as well as development design.

- 9.28 During a public consultation to support the FNP in 2019, it was identified that residents of Finchampstead Parish value their green spaces, and consequently, there is a strong emphasis within the FNP to protect these. With the support of a topic paper on Local Green Spaces, the FNP identifies 13 sites of Local Green Spaces as important community assets. Policy IRS1 seeks to prevent development that would harm the extent or character of Local Green Space within the parish.
- 9.29 Additional community benefits arise from Policy GA2, which seeks to improve access around the Parish, by protecting, maintaining, and enhancing the local Public Right of Way network. This includes prohibiting development that would damage the current PROW network unless an alternative of equivalent value is arranged. Policy GA2 also supports further developing the current PROW network by adding additional links to improve connectivity between settlements in the area.
- 9.30 Furthermore, Policies TC1 and TC2 both support the growth of local businesses in the Parish – something which is essential in Finchampstead, a semi-rural parish with limited employment opportunities. These policies seek to enable appropriate development of conditions for local business to thrive, fostering opportunities for local employment. In addition, Policy TC1 also supports the upgrading of local infrastructure that facilitates home working (such as fast broadband connectivity).
- 9.31 Finally, while there are limited retail opportunities within the Parish at present, Policy TC3 and TC4 propose two new retail developments at California Crossroads and Finchwood Park. Policy TC5 also seeks to preserve the current retail facilities within the Parish.
- 9.32 Considering the benefits of the policy framework outlined above, **minor positive effects** are considered a likely outcome in relation to this theme.

Historic environment

- 9.33 There are many important buildings in Finchampstead Parish with one listed as Grade I, one listed as Grade II* and 24 listed as Grade II. The Parish is also home to two scheduled monuments. None of the designated assets within the Finchampstead neighbourhood area are known to be 'at risk' (from neglect or decay).¹⁵
- 9.34 Finchampstead Parish also has one conservation area – Finchampstead Church Conservation Area, designated in 1993. The special interest that justifies the designation of this conservation area includes St James Church, the mound on which the Church sits (thought to be medieval or Roman), and the 'Devils Highway' (a Roman Road).¹⁶ There is currently no conservation area appraisal / management plan in place for this asset and no plans in the FNP to do this. In the absence of an appraisal, the FNP provides a significant opportunity to identify the features, characteristics, and key views of/ in this area that contribute to its significance, and which should be conserved through future development. This opportunity was positively reinforced by Historic

¹⁵ Historic England (2022) Risk Register Available at: [Search the Heritage at Risk Register | Historic England](#)

¹⁶ Finchampstead Parish Council (no date) 'Conservation Area' can be accessed [here](#).

England in the consultation response to the Finchampstead SEA Scoping Report.

- 9.35 The Parish's historic environment policy, IRS3, requires all proposed developments to protect and enhance nearby historic assets. This includes the listed buildings and scheduled monuments, as well as 11 areas of historical interest specified within the FNP.
- 9.36 Due to the small-scale nature and location of the additional housing allocations proposed in the FNP, it is expected that impacts will be avoided, and broadly **neutral effects** would be achieved. However, there is significant potential to enhance positive effects (as recommended) by extending policy guidance in relation to the designated conservation area (in the absence of a Conservation Area Appraisal).

Land, soil, and water resources

- 9.37 Large areas in the central and western sections of Finchampstead Parish are underlain by 'good to moderate' agricultural land according to the Agricultural Land Classification. It is important that development avoids the loss of higher quality agricultural land, where possible. The two proposed housing sites in the FNP lie on either 'poor' or 'other land primarily in non-agricultural use', thus avoiding loss of higher quality BMV agricultural land. Of note, the FNP seeks to protect several Local Green Spaces, as well as Local Key Gaps, a Green Wedge, and areas of separation, which will indirectly support the retention of soil quality in these areas.
- 9.38 Developments could have an impact on soil and water through runoff – potentially affecting polybrominated diphenyl ether (PBDE) release around watercourses. However, Policy IRS5 offers consideration to the impacts of developments on the Parish's local water resources, stating that developments will only be approved if '*...all water courses and ditches are protected from any contamination or interruption to natural flow*'.
- 9.39 Considering the above, no significant effects are anticipated in relation to this SEA theme, only **residual minor negative** effects due to the small-scale loss of greenfield land in part, at housing allocation sites. However, it is noted that the spatial strategy performs well by prioritising lower quality land for development.

Landscape

- 9.40 Finchampstead is a semi-rural Parish, located on an escarpment area within the Thames Basin Heaths National Character Area. This provides the area with several outstanding views, which the FNP seeks to preserve. Development within the Parish is limited outside of its settlements, contributing to the Parish's rural character, which is another element of the Parish's landscape that the FNP wants to preserve. In summary, the quality and character of the local landscape, the topography, and valued long-distance views are key constraints for growth and new development in Finchampstead.
- 9.41 Policy GS1 identifies two important areas of separation, a Green Wedge and a Local Key Gap in Finchampstead, all serving to preserve the existing physical and visual separation of the Parish's settlements. These features will help to

ensure that further erosion of the gap between these two settlements is avoided, and wider landscape features and values are largely retained.

- 9.42 The FNP places high importance on ensuring that future development is harmonious with the character of the local natural and historic landscape. Policies D1 and D2 support this by limiting developments to two stories high in most areas of the Parish, and by ensuring that the design of buildings includes relevant landscape features in keeping with the character of local buildings.
- 9.43 The FNP and Local Green Spaces topic paper identifies four Outstanding Views, which have been identified for protection in Policy IRS2, which favours that developments are adapted to the site contours rather than cut and fill, to avoid significant impacts on the local landscape character. Positive effects are anticipated by means of the new policy provisions seeking to retain such features in future development.
- 9.44 Overall, the spatial strategy avoids significant impacts arising, and the policy framework provides good mitigation to reduce the impacts of development and retain key landscape features which contribute to landscape character. Due to their small size and suitable location, the proposed housing allocations are considered likely to integrate with minimal impacts. Broadly **neutral effects** are therefore concluded as most likely.

Transportation and movement

- 9.45 The FNP identifies that traffic is an issue across the Parish and has been noted as a point of concern for locals during the Plan's consultations. Though the highway network in Finchampstead provides good connections with surrounding areas, the FNP seeks to distribute growth to accessible locations to support localised journeys where possible. Both housing allocation sites connect well with their respective local settlements, providing good opportunities to promote active travel when accessing local facilities.
- 9.46 The FNP acknowledges the role that active travel plays as a provider of benefits both to individuals' health and as a solution to congestion issues in the Parish. Several points from Policy GA1 outline the need to support a safe network of active travel routes through the Parish, between settlements and local facilities/ amenities through the provision of safer walking and cycling routes.
- 9.47 Policy GA2 expands on points in Policy GA1, highlighting the importance of developing the pre-existing public right of way network into a series of 'personal arterial routes', achieved by upgrading the material condition of route surfaces to permit safer active travel options. Policy GA2 also proposes to expand the current active travel network through additional Greenways and upgrading the existing Right of Way network.
- 9.48 In the supplementary commentary to Policy GA2, the FNP identifies the need to develop better links between Finchampstead and its eight neighbouring parishes. Due to the limited public transport offering in Finchampstead neighbourhood area, both of the allocated sites in the FNP could benefit from an improved local public transport network offering more regular services within the parish, and out to the wider area (including connecting services to nearby

Crowthorne Train Station). Improvements such as these may lead to more people using active forms of travel, thus reducing need to use cars.

- 9.49 Overall, with growth anticipated in the neighbourhood area with or without the FNP, increases in vehicle use on local roads are an inevitable evolution of the baseline. Despite this, the settlement is relatively well connected to support future residents with opportunities for active travel and to use more sustainable modes of transport. Supported by the policies of the FNP, which seek to address any localised impacts of growth and enhance safety, parking, and active travel opportunities, **minor long-term positive effects** are anticipated.

Cumulative effects

- 9.50 Alongside the provisions of the Wokingham Local Plan update and NPPF, the FNP seeks to support housing delivery in line with forecasted needs over the Plan period whilst avoiding significant impacts in relation to the range of SEA theme explored above. Positive cumulative effects are therefore anticipated.

10. Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusions

- 10.1 The FNP proposes low growth at sites close to the Parish's pre-existing settlements. The promoted small-scale sites are considered likely to integrate with minimal impacts in relation to the SEA themes. No significant effects are considered likely in implementation of the FNP, though some minor effects are considered likely.
- 10.2 Minor negative effects are considered likely in relation to the land, soil, and water SEA theme due to the small-scale loss of greenfield land in part at the allocation sites, though it is noted that the spatial strategy performs well by prioritising lower quality land for development.
- 10.3 Minor positive effects are considered likely in relation to the biodiversity, community wellbeing, and transportation SEA themes. This largely reflects the FNP policy provisions which seek to protect community assets (including ecological networks), enhance active travel opportunities, and improve resident safety.
- 10.4 Given the low-impact spatial strategy and policy mitigation provided by the plan, broadly neutral effects (no significant deviation from the baseline) are concluded in relation to the climate change and flood risk, historic environment, and landscape SEA themes.

Recommendations

- 10.5 One recommendation is identified through the appraisal of the Plan. This is not a recommendation required to reduce the significance of any negative effects, but rather a recommendation to improve the potential for significant positive effects arising. It is recognised that the FNP provides a significant opportunity to identify the features, characteristics, and key views of/ in the designated conservation area, that contribute to its significance, and which should be conserved through future development. This opportunity is highlighted in the absence of a Conservation Area Appraisal for the Finchampstead Church Conservation Area.

Part 3: What are the next steps?

11. Next steps and monitoring

11.1 This part of the report explains the next steps that will be taken as part of plan-making and SEA.

Plan finalisation

11.2 Following consultation, the FNP will be subjected to Independent Examination. At Independent Examination, the FNP will be considered in terms of whether it meets the 'basic conditions' for neighbourhood plans and is in general conformity with the Local Plan.

11.3 If the examination leads to a favourable outcome, the FNP will then be subject to a referendum, organised by Wokingham Borough Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the FNP, then it will be 'made'. Once 'made', the FNP will become part of the local development framework for Wokingham Borough, covering the defined Neighbourhood Area.

Monitoring

11.4 The SEA regulations require 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring' to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of the FNP to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.

11.5 It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the Neighbourhood Plan will be undertaken by Wokingham Borough Council as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). No significant negative effects are considered likely in the implementation of the FNP that would warrant more stringent monitoring over and above that already undertaken by Wokingham Borough Council.

Appendices

Appendix A Regulatory requirements

As discussed in **Chapter 1**, Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans Regulations 2004 (the Regulations) explains the information that must be contained in the Environmental Report; however, interpretation of Schedule 2 is not straightforward. **Table AA.1** overleaf links the structure of this report to an interpretation of Schedule 2 requirements, whilst **Table AA.2** explains this interpretation. **Table AA.3** identifies how and where within the Environmental Report the regulatory requirements have/ will be met.

Table AA.1: Questions answered by this Environmental Report, in-line with an interpretation of regulatory requirements

		Questions answered	As per regulations... the Environmental Report must include...
Introduction	What's the plan seeking to achieve?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes
	What's the SEA scope?	What's the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
		What's the sustainability 'baseline'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
		What are the key issues and objectives that should be a focus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e., provide a 'framework' for) assessment
Part 1	What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (and thus an explanation of the 'reasonableness' of the approach) The likely significant effects associated with alternatives Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives assessment / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan
Part 2	What are the SEA findings at this current stage?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan
Part 3	What happens next?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A description of the monitoring measures envisaged

Table AA.2: Questions answered by this Environmental Report, in-line with regulatory requirements

<u>Schedule 2</u>	<u>Interpretation of Schedule 2</u>	
<i>The report must include...</i>	<i>The report must include...</i>	
(a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	i.e. answer - <i>What's the plan seeking to achieve?</i>
(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan	Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'context'?</i>
(c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;		
(d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;	The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'baseline'?</i>
(e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan'	
(f) the likely significant effects on the environment including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;	The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	
(g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan;	Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance	i.e. answer - <i>What are the key issues & objectives?</i>
(h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information	Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of appraisal	
(i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring.	An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (i.e. an explanation of the 'reasonableness of the approach)	i.e. answer - <i>What has Plan-making / SA involved up to this point?</i> [Part 1 of the Report]
	The likely significant effects associated with alternatives, including on issues such as... ... and an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of the alternatives considered / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan.	
	The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan	i.e. answer - <i>What are the assessment findings at this current stage?</i> [Part 2 of the Report]
	The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan	
	A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring	i.e. answer - <i>What happens next?</i> [Part 3 of the Report]

Table AA.3: ‘Checklist’ of how (throughout the SA process) and where (within this report) regulatory requirements have been, are and will be met.

Regulatory requirement	Discussion of how requirement is met
Schedule 2 of the regulations lists the information to be provided within the SA Report	
1. An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Chapter 2 (‘What is the plan seeking to achieve’) presents this information.
2. The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	These matters have been considered in detail through scoping work, which has involved dedicated consultation on a Scoping Report. The ‘SEA framework’ – the outcome of scoping – is presented within Chapter 3 (‘What is the scope of the SEA?’).
3. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	
4. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.;	
5. The environmental protection, objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	The SEA framework is presented within Chapter 3 (‘What is the scope of the SEA’). Also, the SEA Scoping Report presents key messages from the context review. With regards to explaining “ <i>how...considerations have been taken into account</i> ”, Chapter 7 explains the Steering Group’s ‘reasons for supporting the preferred approach’, i.e., explains how/ why the preferred approach is justified considering the alternatives appraisal.
6. The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects);	Chapter 6 presents alternatives appraisal findings (in relation to housing growth, which is a ‘stand-out’ plan policy area). Chapters 9 presents an appraisal of the plan. With regards to assessment methodology, Chapter 8 explains the role of the SEA framework/scope, and the need to consider the potential for various effect characteristics/ dimensions, e.g., timescale.
7. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	The assessment highlights certain tensions between competing objectives, which might potentially be actioned by the Examiner, when finalising the plan. Also, specific recommendations are made in Chapter 10.
8. An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Chapters 4 and 5 deal with ‘Reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with’, in that there is an explanation of the reasons for focusing on issues and options. Also, Chapter 7 explains the Parish Council’s ‘reasons for selecting the preferred option’ (considering the alternatives appraisal).

Regulatory requirement	Discussion of how requirement is met
9. Description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Art. 10;	Chapter 11 presents measures envisaged concerning monitoring.
10. A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	The NTS is provided at the beginning of this Environmental Report.
The SA Report must be published alongside the Draft Plan, in accordance with the following regulations	
authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the Draft Plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1, 6.2)	At the current time, this Environmental Report is published alongside the 'submission' version of the FNP, with a view to informing Regulation 16 consultation.
The SA must be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.	
The environmental report prepared pursuant to Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of any transboundary consultations entered into pursuant to Article 7 shall be taken into account during the preparation of the plan or programme and before its adoption or submission to the legislative procedure.	Appraisal findings presented within this Environmental Report, and consultation responses received, have been fed back to the Steering Group and have informed plan finalisation.

