



Bracknell Forest Local Plan  
(Pre-Submission/Regulation 19 Publication)

Jealott's Hill Background Paper

Version for Executive/Council  
March 2021

This background paper supports the Bracknell Forest Local Plan, and provides background information relating to the proposed allocation of land at Jealott's Hill, Warfield, as set out in Policy LP7.

This document is not on deposit for consultation and is background evidence.

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Website: <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/planning-policy/development-plan/draft-bracknell-forest-local-plan/background>

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## **1. Introduction**

1.1 This Paper sets out the Council's approach to the proposed allocation within the Bracknell Forest Local Plan (BFLP) of land at Jealott's Hill, Warfield (as contained in Policy LP7). The site is proposed for the comprehensive development of an exemplar low carbon mixed-use community based on Garden Village Principles, with associated housing, employment, and social and physical infrastructure.

1.2 The Paper sets out:

- the exceptional circumstances which justify removal of land from the Green Belt and allocation of the site,
- the rationale for the new Green Belt/settlement boundary,
- compensatory measures,
- other benefits of the proposal, and
- the proposed policy approach.

1.3 The Paper has been written to aid the Planning Inspector's examination of the BFLP, and the issues raised in relation to Jealott's Hill. It is intended to demonstrate how the Council has taken a comprehensive, robust and sound approach to the proposed allocation of the site.

1.4 This Paper forms part of a suite of documents, produced to support the examination of the Local Plan.

1.5 There are several key documents<sup>1</sup> relating to Jealott's Hill which are cross referenced where relevant within this Paper, and/or should be read alongside this Paper. Only where specifically related to the land at Jealott's Hill are they referred to in this Paper:

- Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (document ref: LP/Ev/10o)
- Economic Background Paper (document ref: LP/Ev/3g)
- Sustainability Appraisal (document ref: LP/Ev/1e)
- Housing Background Paper (document ref: LP/Ev/2i)
- Consultation Statement (document ref: LP/Ev/10r)
- Duty to Co-operate Statement (document ref: LP/Ev/10q)

1.6 The Paper is structured as follows:

- Section 2: Context (Bracknell Forest Green Belt, and national policy)
- Section 3: Overview of existing site and proposal
- Section 4: Exceptional circumstances (economic case, justification for other uses, and consideration of alternatives)
- Section 5: Sustainable pattern of development
- Section 6: Compensatory improvements
- Section 7: Other matters taken into consideration with the allocation of the site
- Section 8: Rationale for location of new Green Belt/settlement boundary

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<sup>1</sup> Local Plan evidence base: <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/planning-policy/development-plan/draft-bracknell-forest-local-plan/evidence-base>

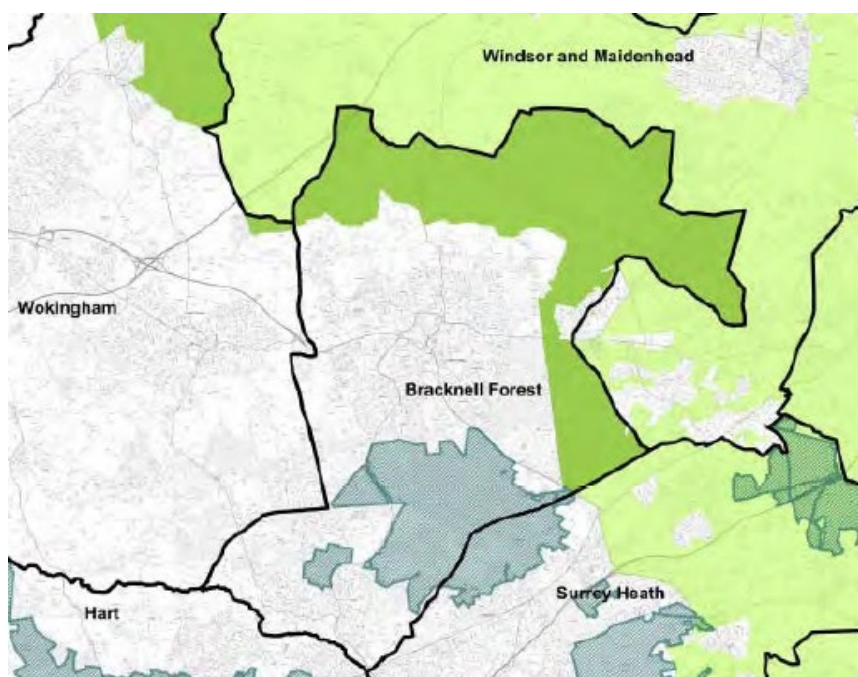
- Section 9: Garden Village Principles
- Section 10: Other benefits of the proposal
- Section 11: Approach to proposed Policy
- Section 12: How previous consultation responses have been addressed
- Section 13: Duty to co-operate
- Section 14: Statement of Common Ground
- Section 15: Conclusions

## 2. Context

### 2.1 Bracknell Forest Green Belt

- 2.1.1 In Bracknell Forest, the Green Belt forms the outer extent of the Metropolitan Green Belt around London (as established under the London Home Counties (Green Belt) Act 1938 and the 1944 Greater London Plan). This was designed to contain the outward sprawl of London. The boundaries of the Green Belt in Bracknell Forest were proposed for inclusion by Berkshire County Council in 1958-59 but this was not confirmed by the Secretary of State until September 1974. The detailed boundaries were confirmed in the Green Belt Local Plan for Berkshire (1985). The Green Belt within Bracknell Forest has not changed since its adoption.
- 2.1.2 Currently the Borough comprises approximately 35% (c.3,800 hectares)<sup>2</sup> of Green Belt. This is primarily situated to the north of the Borough with a narrow section to the East of the Borough separating Bracknell town from north Ascot.
- 2.1.3 Neighbouring authorities are also constrained by the Green Belt, particularly Windsor and Maidenhead. The Metropolitan Green Belt does not extend further west than Wokingham, see **Figure 1**, below.

**Figure 1 Extent of Green Belt within Bracknell Forest**



(Source: Extract from Figure 1 of Bracknell Forest and Wokingham Borough Council Green Belt review. Amec, 2016)

<sup>2</sup> Local Authority Green Belt Statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-green-belt-statistics-for-england-2019-to-2020>

## 2.2 National planning policy

### A. National policy relating to Green Belt

- 2.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019)<sup>3</sup> defines national planning policy and is supported by guidance contained in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).
- 2.2.2 The NPPF (paragraphs 133 and 134) states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The Green Belt serves five purposes:
- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
  - b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
  - c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
  - d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
  - e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 2.2.3 Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation of the local plan. Strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to the Green Belt boundaries, having regard to their intended permanence, so they endure beyond the plan period (NPPF, para. 136). In considering amendments to the Green Belt boundary for housing, the NPPF (para. 137) is clear that all other reasonable options should be examined for meeting identified needs.
- 2.2.4 The NPPF also states (para. 138) that the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should also be taken into account. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which is previously developed, and/or is well served by public transport. Plans should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements environmental quality and accessibility for remaining Green Belt.
- 2.2.5 In terms of compensatory measures, the PPG<sup>4</sup>, sets out that this should be informed by supporting evidence of landscape, biodiversity or recreational needs and opportunities including those set out in local strategies. These could for instance include:
- new or enhanced green infrastructure;
  - woodland planting;
  - landscape and visual enhancements (beyond those needed to mitigate the immediate impacts of the proposal); improvements to biodiversity;
  - habitat connectivity and natural capital;
  - new or enhanced walking and cycle routes; and,

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<sup>3</sup>NPPF:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/810197/NPPF\\_Feb\\_2019\\_revised.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>PPG: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/green-belt>. Reference ID: 64-002-20190722

- improved access to new, enhanced or existing recreational and playing field provision.
- 2.2.6 In relation to defining Green Belt boundaries, the NPPF (para. 139) sets out the parameters that Plans should follow. These include: not including land which is unnecessary to be kept permanently open, being able to demonstrate that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period, and defining boundaries clearly using physical features that are readily recognisable, and likely to be permanent.
- 2.2.7 On 30 January 2021, the Government published for consultation draft revisions to the NPPF<sup>5</sup>. The paragraphs referred to above would not be significantly affected by the proposed changes. One area of proposed changes relevant to Jealott's Hill concerns amendments to para. 72 (would be para. 73) in relation to large scale extensions (amendment added in italics): introduction of supported by 'the necessary infrastructure and facilities (*including a genuine choice of transport modes*)'.

## **B. National policy relating to Traveller Sites**

- 2.2.8 The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS)<sup>6</sup> has an overarching aim to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community (para. 3).
- 2.2.9 The PPTS states that Local Plans should identify a supply of specific, developable sites, or broad locations for growth. They should also relate the number of pitches to the circumstances of the specific size and location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density and protect local amenity and the environment (para. 10). It is also clear that traveller sites should be sustainable economically, socially and environmentally (para. 11).
- 2.2.10 The PPTS also states that if an exceptional, limited alteration to the Green Belt is required (i.e. to accommodate a site inset within the Green Belt) to meet a specific, identified need for a traveller site, it should be done through the plan-making process. It is also clear that if land is removed from the Green Belt in this way, it should be specifically allocated in the development plan as a traveller site only (para. 17).

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<sup>5</sup> Revisions to NPPF consultation: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-and-national-model-design-code-consultation-proposals>

<sup>6</sup> PPTS: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/457420/Final\\_planning\\_and\\_travellers\\_policy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/457420/Final_planning_and_travellers_policy.pdf)

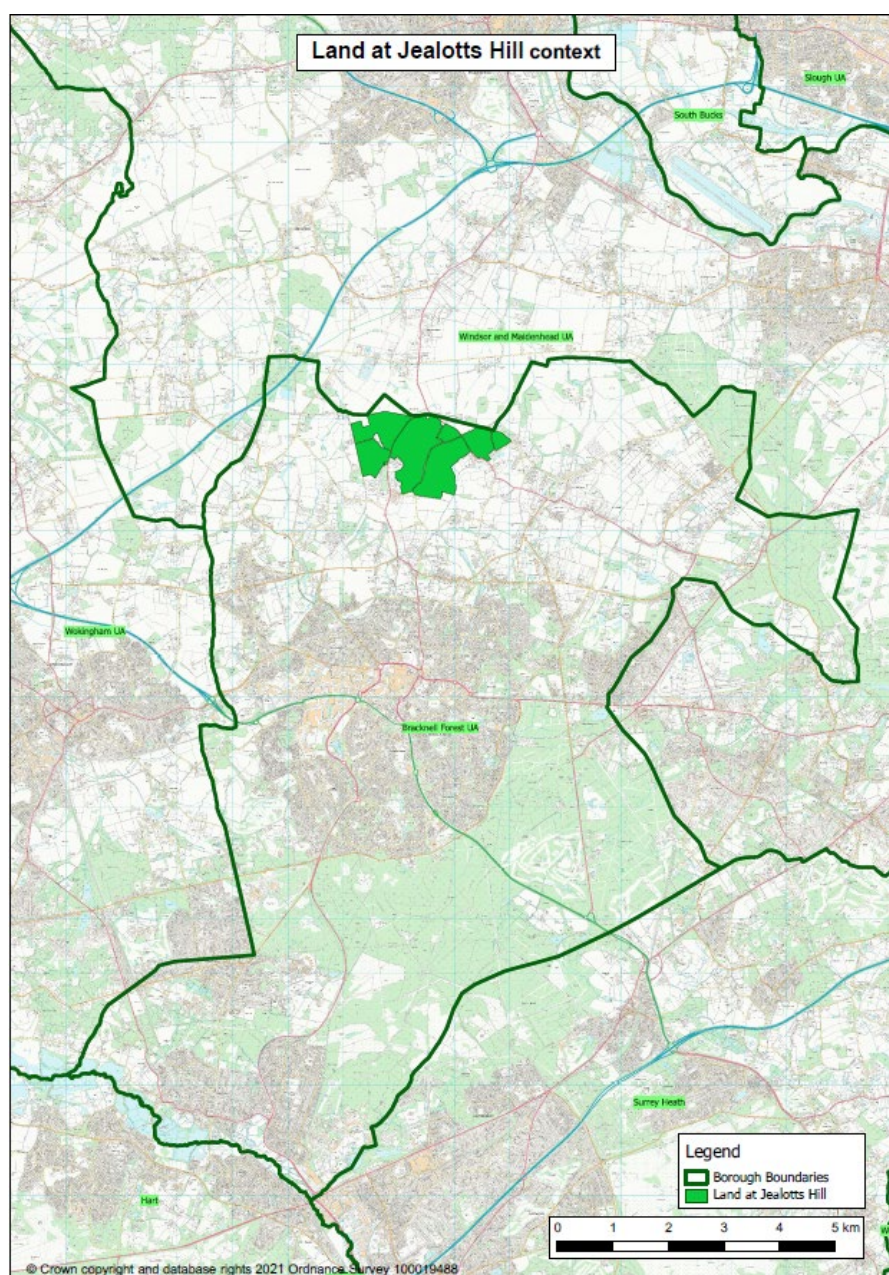


### 3. Land at Jealott's Hill

#### 3.1 Overview of existing site

- 3.1.1 Jealott's Hill International Research Centre, is a long-established use within the Green Belt, operated by Syngenta (a multi-national agricultural technology company), employing around 850 people at the site. The site covers approximately 240 hectares. The existing built envelope/previously developed land covers some 18 hectares, with existing buildings, providing around 60,600 m<sup>2</sup> floorspace. Beyond the built envelope, there is extensive agricultural land (mixed arable/pastoral). The site is in single ownership. **Figure 2** shows the location of Jealott's Hill within the Borough.

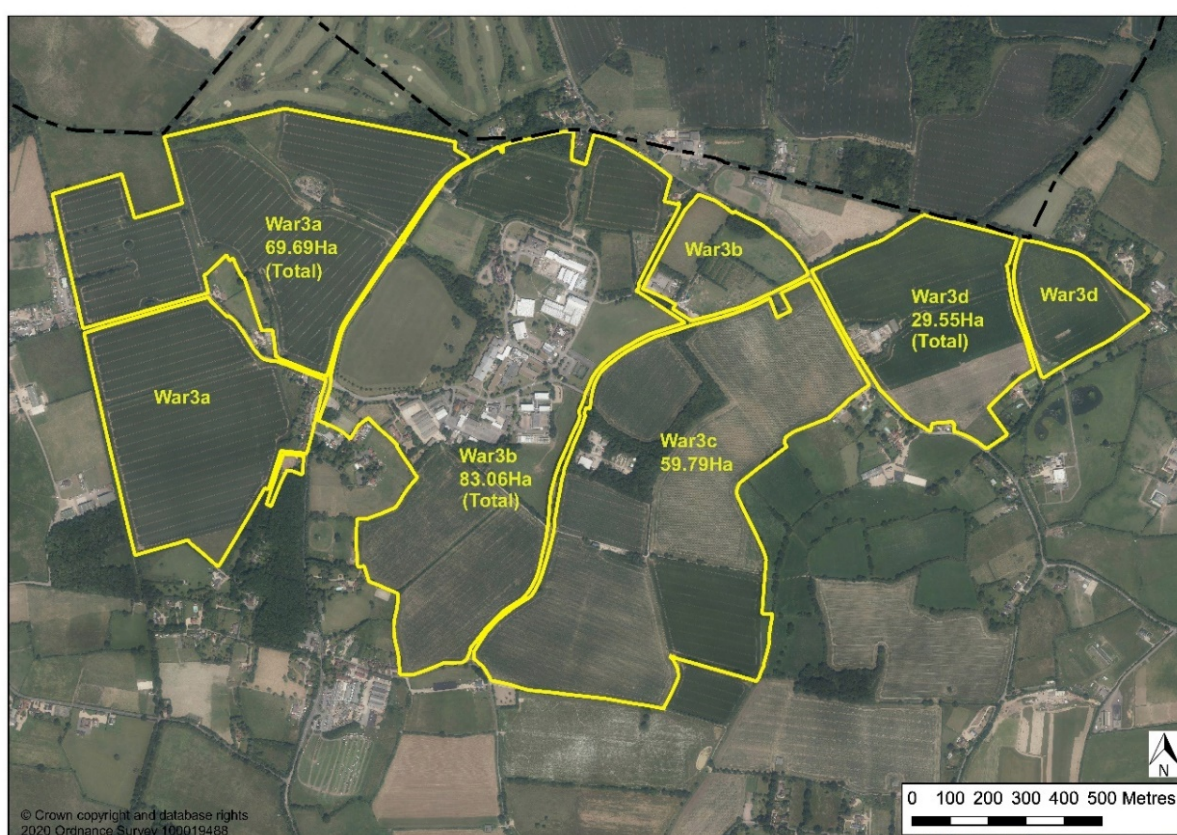
**Figure 2 – Location of Jealott's Hill within the Borough**



## 3.2 Proposal

3.2.1 The site was initially promoted for development through the 'call for sites' exercise in 2016, as part the Local Plan process, and relates to site 'WAR3' within the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)<sup>7</sup>. Syngenta has since selected Taylor Wimpey and CEG to jointly act as Development Partners. **Figure 3** shows the extent of the land which has been promoted for development.

**Figure 3 - Extent of land promoted at land at Jealott's Hill**



(Source: SHELAA. BFC, 2020)

(Note: the site has been considered as a whole site (WAR3). However, for certain assessment purposes, the site was subdivided into areas as indicated above)

3.2.2 The proposed allocation at land at Jealott's Hill, included in Policy LP 7 relates to the comprehensive development of an exemplar low carbon mixed-use community, based on Garden Village Principles with associated housing, employment, and related infrastructure. The proposed development includes a Science and Innovation Park of 132,800 m<sup>2</sup> gross employment floorspace. 72,200m<sup>2</sup> will be net additional floor space, and 14,300m<sup>2</sup> will be replacement floorspace for the existing anchor occupier, who will also retain 46,300m<sup>2</sup> floorspace which is to be refurbished. It is anticipated that the replacement floorspace (14,300m<sup>2</sup>) and a minimum of 38,750m<sup>2</sup> of the new Science and Innovation Park will be provided within the plan period. It also includes 2,000 new

<sup>7</sup> SHELAA (BFC, 2020): <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/strategic-housing-economic-land-availability-assessment-shelaa-part-2-results.pdf>



dwellings (of which 1,350 will be delivered within the plan period), and includes provision of affordable homes, specialist housing for older people (with an emphasis on extra care accommodation), and serviced plots for self or custom builders), and eight permanent gypsy and traveller pitches.

## **4. Exceptional Circumstances**

### **4.1 Overview**

- 4.1.1 This section sets out the exceptional circumstances which exist to justify changing the existing Green Belt boundary and allocating the site, with regard to paragraphs 135-137 of the NPPF.
- 4.1.2 Jealott's Hill is a long-established centre of global importance for research in agricultural technology. Work is carried out at the site that helps improve food production around the world including the resistance of crops to the effects of climate change and technical solutions that allow a reduction in the use of chemicals to control weeds and pests.
- 4.1.3 The site at Jealott's Hill has already had significant investment in equipment and has a highly skilled workforce. These are not things that can be readily relocated.
- 4.1.4 The way in which leading edge research is carried out is changing. There is an increasing need to collaborate with other specialisms to tackle the problems now being faced in agriculture. For example, the precision application of a herbicide directly to a weed rather than the crop, requires a new combination of robotics, software and algorithm development, in addition to the traditional understanding of plant and chemical science. This approach to collaborative working requires a fundamental change to the facilities at Jealott's Hill to create an open innovation model.
- 4.1.5 To carry on the high-level research at the site will require major long-term investment and the ability to expand the research and innovation floorspace to create attractive accommodation for synergistic companies.
- 4.1.6 Without the certainty of being able to create such an environment, Syngenta will not be willing to make further long-term investment in the site and its long-term decline will be triggered. The work that would have taken place at Jealott's Hill would, over time, be relocated elsewhere and in all probability abroad. This would be a significant loss to the country and to the regional economy and is a genuinely exceptional circumstance.
- 4.1.7 In order to make the necessary investment at the site a financially viable proposition for Syngenta, there will need to be a cross-subsidy of some £68 million. This has been demonstrated through independently verified viability information provided by the site's promoters. In order to generate sufficient value from the site to provide this cross-subsidy, it is proposed to release land from the Green Belt for the construction of 2,000 new homes, an Agri-tech Science and Innovation Park and supporting uses for a sustainable community.
- 4.1.8 It is the importance of the work carried out and the level of investment already made at the site, along with the need to make significant investments in order to allow this work to continue and adapt to modern research methods, that form the basis of the exceptional circumstances justifying the release of Green Belt. The decision to remove land from the Green Belt has not been taken lightly. The Council has had to weigh all the proposal's impacts against the likely loss, over time, of this key

employer and has concluded that there are genuinely exceptional circumstances that justify making this change.

- 4.1.9 Significant work has been carried out to ensure that the minimum amount of land is removed from the Green Belt to achieve the necessary values. Having accepted the exceptional case for removing land from the Green Belt, the Council has sought to make the most of the opportunity this necessity presents to plan for a sustainable mixed-use community to be developed as a Garden Village and to secure significant community facilities along with major enhancements to over 50% of the site that is to remain within the Green Belt.
- 4.1.10 Further information on the economic case, and the exceptional circumstances case for the proposed Gypsy and Traveller pitches is set out in the following paragraphs.

## 4.2 Economic justification

- 4.2.1 Jealott's Hill International Research Centre is a key asset in terms of the UK Science and Technology base. It is one of the country's longest-established sites for agricultural science research (research has been undertaken here for approximately 90 years) and is one of the three largest dedicated research and development sites in Syngenta's international network. It is their only one in the UK and has some of the largest research and development glasshouse complexes in Europe. The Jealott's Hill site has capabilities spanning the end-to-end research and development lifecycle, from discovery to commercialisation at scale.
- 4.2.2 Syngenta is one of the world's leading Agri-tech businesses developing technologies to support farmers worldwide grow nutritious, high yielding, affordable and environmentally sustainable crops. These technologies include advanced seeds (i.e. developing cost effective seeds and improving seeds through breeding plants to enhance certain characteristics) and crop protection products to help farmers counter threats throughout the process from seed planting to harvest (such as threats from weeds, insects, diseases, droughts/ floods, heat and cold). Together these factors are critical to prevent food shortages and protect crops grown worldwide, helping to deliver ever improved agronomic and environmental performance of crops whilst also meeting growing demand for food from an increasing global population. Its work is helping to improve crop yields so that, for example, more crops can be grown on the same amount of land.
- 4.2.3 Syngenta's business depends on sustainable natural resources, healthy ecosystems and thriving rural communities. Syngenta cooperates with industry partners, Governments and non-government organisations (NGOs), which among other things, help to support the achievement of some of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>8</sup>. Syngenta has the scale, depth and breadth of expertise and reputation in the core scientific skills that can assist in addressing global challenges facing the agricultural sector.
- 4.2.4 The facility is part of a significant global and national operation, employing approximately 850 people locally<sup>9</sup>, the great majority of whom are research scientists. Syngenta aims to maintain and enhance its position as one of the world's leading companies in the provision of technologies to address fundamental global pressures, such as climate change, use of natural resources, and food production.
- 4.2.5 The market that Syngenta serves is rapidly evolving. There is an urgent need for innovative solutions to achieve sustainable agriculture and food security, and a need to reduce environmental impacts of the Agri-tech industry. Traditional suppliers to the market are having to adapt and change their offer. Businesses whose products and services require scientific knowledge and activity in their development are increasingly pursuing their research and development through an 'Open Innovation' model. This means no longer seeking to invent everything in-house or engaging only selectively with partners, but instead developing science and technology with and through others. The increasing integration and overlap between different spheres of

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

<sup>9</sup> [Business in Berkshire 2019](#)

expertise means that in the future companies will no longer be able to 'do innovation' on their own. They are likely to be overtaken by those engaged in research and development involving 'deep and wide' collaboration.

- 4.2.6 Open innovation requires businesses large and small to increasingly look to be part of an ecosystem rich in knowledge and relevant technology in order to pursue product and service development using science and technology. For large corporates it means that if their own campuses are to fulfil the needs of tomorrow, they need to create opportunities for collaborative work through co-location of relevant, ancillary research and development activity of a suitable quality. Syngenta already collaborates in a broad range of technologies, but there are many areas where further collaboration is needed with other sectors.
- 4.2.7 Due to these changing practices and advances in research and development, the Jealott's Hill site needs to operate differently. Syngenta already invests approximately £200M annually on research and development at Jealott's Hill. The sector is growing and in order to be a part of, and realise this growth in the UK, significant investment is now required in the facility at Jealott's Hill to enable it to maintain its competitive advantage in its sector, and its position nationally and globally. Continuing to operate the site as it is currently ('business as usual') is not a viable option in the longer term. Without investment and development at the site, it will cease to be competitive and Syngenta's research and development component will begin a spiral of decline. This will result in Jealott's Hill losing new projects to international competition (both internally and externally) due to a lack of open innovation and facilities suitable for cutting edge science. Gradual losses of such projects over time would lead to the loss of world leading staff and the site's status as a Top Tier research and development centre within Syngenta, making attracting further investment within the group more difficult, and in turn resulting in fewer projects being won by the Jealott's Hill site, and further decline. Indeed, the Jealott's Hill site recently lost out on a significant Syngenta research project which was awarded to an overseas facility in Switzerland. A key reason influencing the decision was the lack of suitable facilities or expansion space to accommodate this project at Jealott's Hill (or any other UK site). This is a multi-million pound partnership that the UK Agri-tech sector missed out on. It is accepted that to remain competitive, a shift to open innovation is necessary for a company like Syngenta, or further projects will go to other sites, probably overseas and further investment in the UK Agri-tech sector will be lost.
- 4.2.8 The employment proposals for the site take the form of 14,300m<sup>2</sup> replacement floorspace and 46,300m<sup>2</sup> of retained facilities (some will be refurbished) for Syngenta (a total of 60,600m<sup>2</sup>), along with the building of a new speculative Agri-tech Science and Innovation Park (72,200m<sup>2</sup>). The type of space provided will include incubator space, accelerator space and conventional space. This will provide modern flexible employment floorspace for both collaboration and wider business space with Syngenta as its anchor tenant. New occupiers are likely to be a range of start-ups, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and large corporations, which are considered likely to have a research and development focus relevant to the end-to-end industry value chain. It may also include complementary sector specialisms as diverse as digital technology, engineering and waste management for example. The target market for future occupiers has a wider sector focus and is therefore more diverse than the existing use of the site.

- 4.2.9 The total Jealott's Hill Science and Innovation Park campus proposed (including Syngenta's requirements) will equate to some 132,800 m<sup>2</sup> gross employment floorspace. This is consistent with the general scale of Agri-tech and Life Sciences clusters in the UK. It is important that sufficient space is available to attract businesses of a variety of sizes and with the flexibility to allow for their future expansion on site. This critical mass will be necessary to make the site attractive and realise its growth potential as a cluster. As the largest Agri-tech employer in the UK for crop sciences, the scheme at Jealott's Hill will instantly have critical mass of business presence when compared to other campuses in the Agri-tech sector. It is expected that many partners will not only collaborate with Syngenta but also collaborate with others independently of Syngenta to create their own research and development programmes and initiatives. The open innovation campus at Jealott's Hill will seek to facilitate and expedite this knowledge exchange.
- 4.2.10 The Science and Innovation Park with Syngenta as its anchor, and as part of a broad cluster of partners and wider organisations, will be highly significant and valuable in the UK context. There are currently no other known initiatives of this scale in the UK being driven by a commercial entity such as Syngenta. The proposed Science and Innovation Park will help to maintain and further enhance Syngenta's role in helping to solve increasingly complex global problems by enabling evolution towards open innovation and collaboration. Syngenta's research and development pipeline together with the ability to remain at the forefront of research and development into plant sciences is dependent on making the Jealott's Hill Science and Innovation Park a success and creating the wider ecosystem envisaged. Syngenta estimates that investment in research and development, including upgrading facilities at Jealott's Hill, will exceed £1 billion over a 10-year period. It will safeguard the existing 850 jobs at the site and generate approximately 2,000 jobs. This will help improve levels of self-containment in the Borough, which adds to the vibrancy of communities. It also reduces pressure on the transport infrastructure at peak times in the wider area, due to commuting.
- 4.2.11 The proposal accords with the Government's recognition<sup>10</sup> of the substantial opportunities offered by the Agri-tech sector and will also support growth in the wider and local economy, especially in the northern part of the Borough where there are fewer concentrations of employment.
- 4.2.12 The proposals are supported by the Thames Valley Local Economic Partnership (LEP), which states that the plans align with the emerging Berkshire Local Industrial Strategy (BLIS). The overarching priority of the BLIS is enhancing productivity within Berkshire's enterprises. It seeks to strengthen the role of anchor institutions such as Syngenta to support the commercialisation of knowledge, build productive links between SMEs and major players across Berkshire. It aims to act as a catalyst for encouraging even greater investment in research and development, whilst avoiding 'hollowing out' of higher value or higher knowledge content functions in Berkshire (i.e. some companies operating administrative functions in Berkshire and undertaking their research and development elsewhere).

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<sup>10</sup> Though its industrial strategy (and The Grand Challenges): <https://www.gov.uk/business-and-industry/industrial-strategy> and other press releases <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/business-secretary-calls-for-new-tech-revolution-in-agriculture>





### **4.3 Justification for other uses forming part of the proposed allocation**

#### **A. Housing as enabling development**

- 4.3.1 Whilst Syngenta will be investing in the refurbishment and replacement of some of its own buildings to keep them as world leading research and development facilities, Syngenta has demonstrated that the Science and Innovation Park element of the proposal is not viable as a stand-alone commercial development. Funding both the upgrading of its own buildings and the Science and Innovation Park would not be viable because it would divert funding away from investment into actual research and development. A viability gap of circa £68M has been identified in the early stages of the proposal; revenues are expected to cover costs in the subsequent phases. This is by virtue of the hard and soft infrastructure elements related to the first phases of development of the Science and Innovation Park.
- 4.3.2 The delivery of the Science and Innovation Park requires a funding model that provides a cross-subsidy from enabling development. In this case, it is the sale of land for housing. Policy LP7 'Land at Jealott's Hill' ties the development of the Science and Innovation Park to the number of homes that can be built. This will be achieved by a legal agreement. Independent economic and development viability consultants have been engaged by the Council to assess the delivery model and the assumptions made around it. This is an ongoing process.
- 4.3.3 Whilst the housing development is required to secure financial viability, it will also enable the creation of a sustainable Garden Village settlement with local facilities and country parks amongst other things. It will provide an attractive working and living environment, which is considered valuable in being able to recruit and retain top talent, which in turn will deliver the innovation, jobs, exports for the UK and support growth in the local and wider economy. It will help aid recovery from the impacts of Covid-19 and open opportunities for inward investment in the UK following Brexit.

## **B. Gypsies and Travellers**

- 4.3.4 The location of the new, specific gypsy and traveller site for eight permanent pitches opposite the new Jealott's Hill settlement constitutes sustainable development in accordance with paragraph 13 of the PPTS. The site is socially sustainable because it will facilitate community cohesion and help reduce inequalities faced by the traveller community, including access to health and schooling. It is economically sustainable because there will be a variety of employment opportunities at Jealott's Hill as a result of the wider development of the area. It is environmentally sustainable because the site itself makes use of under-utilised land, whilst the new settlement will have sustainable transport options and other facilities that will be accessible on foot for occupants of the gypsy and traveller site.
- 4.3.5 The Council established that no reasonable alternatives exist for meeting identified pitch needs within the plan period, other than considering promoted sites located in the Green Belt. The wider development of the land at Jealott's Hill under Garden Village Principles, means that the location is more suitable and sustainable than alternative sites.
- 4.3.6 The PPTS in paragraph 17 states that insets to the Green Belt can be made through the local plan process to accommodate a specific, identified need for a traveller site, and that land should be specifically allocated in the development plan as a traveller site only. The Council has an identified cultural need for eight pitches, which has been derived from the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. Planning for the 'cultural' need for pitches accords with the overall need for the travelling community, taking into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equalities Act 2010 and the Housing and Planning Act 2016 section 124.
- 4.3.7 The inclusion of pitches at Jealott's Hill will enable the Council to fully address its cultural pitch needs for the plan period. It may also assist in meeting longer-term needs depending on the final outcome of dealing with a retrospective application for four additional pitches that is subject to a legal agreement.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Application 19/00491/FUL has a resolution to approve

## 4.4 Consideration of alternatives

### A. Employment

- 4.4.1 As part of the economic justification it has been established that 'business as usual' is not a viable option for the site; investment in an open innovation campus is needed in order for Syngenta to remain competitive and attract new research and development projects. Neither adopted local policy<sup>12</sup> or national policy would enable the expansion of the site to meet the changing needs of Agri-tech research and development while it remains in the Green Belt.
- 4.4.2 Syngenta has considered alternative locations in the UK for relocation of their facilities. This includes science parks around the UK, and three leading Agri-tech clusters at Norwich Research Park, York Biotech Campus and Rothamsted Enterprises. Of these, Norwich Research Park was considered a potential alternative given that it is an existing Agri-tech cluster with sufficient pipeline availability. However, it does not offer access to the particular talent in digital technology that is required or international links. The companies clustered at the site primarily focused on early-stage discovery research rather than the commercialisation of discoveries at scale.
- 4.4.3 More local options in the Functional Economic Market Area were considered by Syngenta; the main alternative option was the Thames Valley Science Park. Although it was noted that this did not have a strong science focus in Agri-tech, it did have complementary science areas. Current opportunities on site were considered too small to meet Syngenta's requirements but some pipeline development presents a potential opportunity.
- 4.4.4 None are considered as suitable as extending existing research and development facilities at Jealott's Hill. Moving and re-providing the Jealott's Hill facilities would not be viable (in either financial or operational terms). It would also be counter to the objective of enabling Syngenta to maintain its status and identity as a key player in the Agri tech industry, hindering necessary collaboration with sectors specifically attuned to its area of research and development, including local educational establishments.
- 4.4.5 Removal of the Green Belt policy designation while remaining on the existing (expanded) site is considered the best option for several reasons including:
- enabling long-term research and development projects to continue uninterrupted,
  - business continuity (it is preferable to refurbish existing specialist facilities over time than start from scratch elsewhere),
  - reputation is anchored around this location,
  - the specialist wet labs (approximately 18,700m<sup>2</sup>), glasshouses (approximately 11,800m<sup>2</sup>), specialist growth rooms (approximately 1,000m<sup>2</sup>), licenced insect facilities (approximately 500m<sup>2</sup>) plus chemical storage are costly to re-provide (build costs for the glasshouses alone are estimated in the region of £30M).

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<sup>12</sup> 'Saved' Policy GB5 (Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan (2002))

4.4.6 The existing location also provides access to highly skilled talent which enables growth and innovation.

## **B. Gypsies and Travellers**

4.4.7 In order to meet the identified cultural pitch need for eight permanent pitches in the Borough, the Council has:

- reviewed existing traveller sites for their suitability for expansion, including contacting landowners of suitable sites.
- carried out a call for sites in 2016, including for gypsy and traveller pitches. Sites were also invited at all Regulation 18 consultations and site promoters have been able to submit sites outside of the formal consultations.
- contacted the Council's own Property Services department to review landholdings for potential, suitable sites.
- reviewed Council owned sites promoted for conventional housing through the SHELAA.

4.4.8 The Council established that there was no potential to allocate existing sites for expansion, no suitable Council owned land, and no sites with temporary permission to consider. Therefore, the Council's only option to meet the longer-term cultural need was to consider the sites promoted that lie in the Green Belt.

4.4.9 However, NPPF paragraph 137 is clear that before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development. This should include having discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development. Accordingly, the neighbouring Local Authorities of Wokingham Borough Council, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM), Hart District Council, Surrey Heath and Surrey County Council were formally asked under the Duty to Cooperate if they were able to help meet the Council's pitch needs. All responded saying that they had challenges meeting their own needs and were unable to help.

4.4.10 The SHELAA contained two sites promoted to the Council for pitches in the Green Belt (WINK3 and WAR21) and a Council owned site (WINK28) (although the latter was not promoted for pitches). These were all assessed through the site selection methodology for conventional housing but classified as omission sites following comparative assessment. With regard to their potential for pitches, a key constraint to development is their location in the Green Belt, and by virtue of their rural location, relative sustainability.

4.4.11 Given the Council had to consider Green Belt to meet identified needs, it was decided to also assess the option of meeting this need at Jealott's Hill, Warfield. This was already proposed for comprehensive mixed-use development based on Garden Village principles with associated housing, employment and social and physical infrastructure.

4.4.12 Accordingly, a comparative exercise was undertaken of these four Green Belt sites<sup>13</sup>. For the Jealott's Hill site, the comparison is based on an area of disused barns and

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<sup>13</sup> WAR21, WINK2, WINK28, WAR3d (area of disused barns and hardstanding)

hardstanding off the Ascot Road in the WAR3d parcel which has the necessary access for large vehicles and would make use of underutilised land.

- 4.4.13 Each of the four sites makes at least a contribution to the Green Belt; two sites make a significant contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt. Two of the sites would require a SFRA Level 2 assessment to be undertaken, most have some level of ecological constraint, and some have heritage considerations. Two sites have access to health, schools and shops within 2km linear distance, however only the parcel at Jealott's Hill would be able to access these facilities by foot.
- 4.4.14 The area of disused barns and hardstanding in the parcel at Jealott's Hill (WAR3d) is subject to less than 10% surface water flooding so does not require a Level 2 SFRA based on current information. This area also has negligible ecological effect owing to the existing hardstanding on the site. The site is sustainably located within walking distance of the new proposed primary school, shops and health facilities. The wider development at Jealott's Hill will create employment opportunities. When this site is assessed against the same criteria as other Green Belt sites, it performs comparatively better because in accordance with PPTS para.13, the site is sustainable economically (job opportunities), socially (closer to health, education and other local facilities which will help reduce inequalities faced by the traveller community) and environmentally, because the site would make use of under-utilised land that currently comprises hardstanding and disused agricultural barns. Following this comparative assessment, including in the Sustainability Appraisal, it has therefore been demonstrated that there are no exceptional circumstances to justify the release of sites WAR21, WINK3 and WINK28, since the full pitch needs can be met on land at Jealott's Hill.
- 4.4.15 The land, which is currently occupied by disused agricultural barns and hardstanding, is considered to be the most suitable and sustainable option for the location of eight permanent gypsy and traveller pitches. Due to its location outside the built envelope of the Green Belt release associated with the main Jealott's Hill strategic allocation, it requires a separate inset specifically for use as a Gypsy and Traveller site. Due to the characteristics of the local environment and in order to control pressure for other uses, the site will remain in the countryside.

## **4.5 Conclusion on exceptional circumstances**

- 4.5.1 The proposal for releasing Green Belt land at Jealott's Hill is based on the need, in the local and national interest, to retain and develop Jealott's Hill as a global centre of excellence for Agri-tech. In order to achieve this, significant investment is needed in the site which would be commercially unviable without additional investment funding of circa £68m which would be provided by the development of housing as enabling development. It is this need and the solution for meeting it that provide the exceptional circumstances justifying the release of land for housing, employment and community uses at Jealott's Hill from the Green Belt. These do not reflect the scenario envisaged within the NPPF because the case is not that Green Belt land is needed in order to meet identified housing and employment needs due to a lack of non-Green Belt land. Rather, it is the specific locational needs of Syngenta, linked to the investment already made in this site, and the lack of realistic alternatives (other than the winding down of the site) that provide the exceptional circumstances.
- 4.5.2 The exceptional circumstances case for the release of Green Belt land for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation is more in line with the situations envisaged in the NPPF and planning guidance. It is based on the lack of available sites within the settlement boundary, a comparison of available Green Belt sites, and the inability of adjoining authorities to meet Bracknell Forest's needs.

### **A. Employment and housing**

- 4.5.3 It has been demonstrated that in order to maintain and secure the future of Syngenta's research and development capabilities in the UK, significant investment is needed at the Jealott's Hill site to move to 'open innovation' and collaborative ways of working. A critical mass of 132,800 m<sup>2</sup> gross employment floorspace is identified for the Science and Innovation Park campus, anchored by Syngenta, to ensure the commercial attractiveness of the location. This includes 72,200m<sup>2</sup> of additional new floorspace. There are no suitable alternatives in the wider region or nationally for Syngenta to relocate; investment in the existing site is the best option. However, there is a funding gap in providing the new Science and Innovation Park in the early stages of the proposal. This requires a funding model that provides a cross-subsidy from enabling development from the sale of land for housing.
- 4.5.4 The enabling housing development is required for financial viability reasons in order to make the proposal viable. However, it creates an opportunity to achieve a new sustainable settlement established on Garden Village Principles, including local community facilities, country parks, stewardship and among other things. This will create an exceptionally attractive environment for the Agri-tech campus. Furthermore, additional local employment opportunities will be created through the provision of an on-site local centre and primary school as part of the development proposals.
- 4.5.5 National planning policy and practice guidance confirms that planning policies should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. The PPG is clear that specific requirements of specialist sectors, including clustering of certain industries, can play an important role in supporting collaboration, innovation,



productivity and sustainability, as well as associated economic prospects of the areas in which they locate. It goes on to clarify that these needs are often more qualitative in nature and will have to be informed by engagement with businesses and occupiers within relevant sectors.<sup>14</sup> Facilitating the retention of this economic asset at Jealott's Hill has local, regional and national benefits. The loss of Syngenta would result in a loss of employment and economic output in the Borough and wider Thames Valley. If investment in the expansion and development of the site does not go ahead, it is likely that activities undertaken at the site would increasingly go overseas, resulting in a loss of inward investment in the UK and reduced ability to achieve national growth ambitions set out in the Industrial Strategy.

- 4.5.6 In accordance with NPPF paragraph 137 a) and b), the BFLP strategy makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and under-utilised land in urban areas, and has policies and allocations that result in the most efficient use of land in urban locations. There is no alternative land within the Borough's urban area that could accommodate the Jealott's Hill proposal, and no other suitable alternatives elsewhere in the FEMA or nationally. The proposal at Jealott's Hill itself makes use of existing areas of previously developed land, as far as is possible. As set out in paragraph 4.5.1 above, the case is not that Green Belt land is needed in order to meet identified housing and employment needs due to a lack of non-Green Belt land as envisaged in NPPF paragraph 137 c). Accordingly, neighbouring authorities have not been approached about accommodating some of the identified need for development (although Duty to Co-operate discussions have been undertaken on other matters – see Chapter 13 of this Background Paper).
- 4.5.7 Few sites were submitted to the Council for consideration for possible employment development. As a result, it is not possible to allocate sufficient employment land to fully meet theoretical identified needs. The creation of an Agri-tech campus at Jealott's Hill will help the Borough meet some of its employment needs and provide job opportunities in the north of the Borough.<sup>15</sup> In addition to the Science and Innovation Park, development of the site will generate a range of other job opportunities during and post-construction.
- 4.5.8 Additionally, it should be noted that the Jealott's Hill site has been in employment use in this location since before the Green Belt boundaries were established. It has therefore become subject to more restrictive planning policies than were in place when it was originally built. Syngenta claim that Green Belt policy has obstructed any growth aspirations, in spite of it being notated as a major developed site in the Green Belt, in the past.
- 4.5.9 The site will be delivering both employment and housing development over more than one plan period, and therefore the new Green Belt boundaries in this location will be permanent in the longer term and endure beyond the plan period in accordance with NPPF paragraph 136.
- 4.5.10 The Jealott's Hill proposal is unique in that the proposed Green Belt release is to enable an employment-led development which has an Agri-tech company as its anchor. The open innovation Science and Innovation campus at Jealott's Hill will be

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<sup>14</sup> Reference ID: 2a-032-20190722

<sup>15</sup> See Economic Background Paper LP/Ev/3g

unique in the Syngenta portfolio; the site will become integral to the company's global crop protection strategy. It is the specific locational needs of Syngenta, linked to the investment already made in this site, and the lack of realistic alternatives (other than the winding down of the site) that provide the exceptional circumstances. The absence of comparable examples in terms of release of Green Belt for such a proposal in the UK highlights the truly exceptional nature of the proposed new employment campus, as part of a new sustainable settlement based on Garden Village Principles at Jealott's Hill.

## **B. Gypsy and Traveller site**

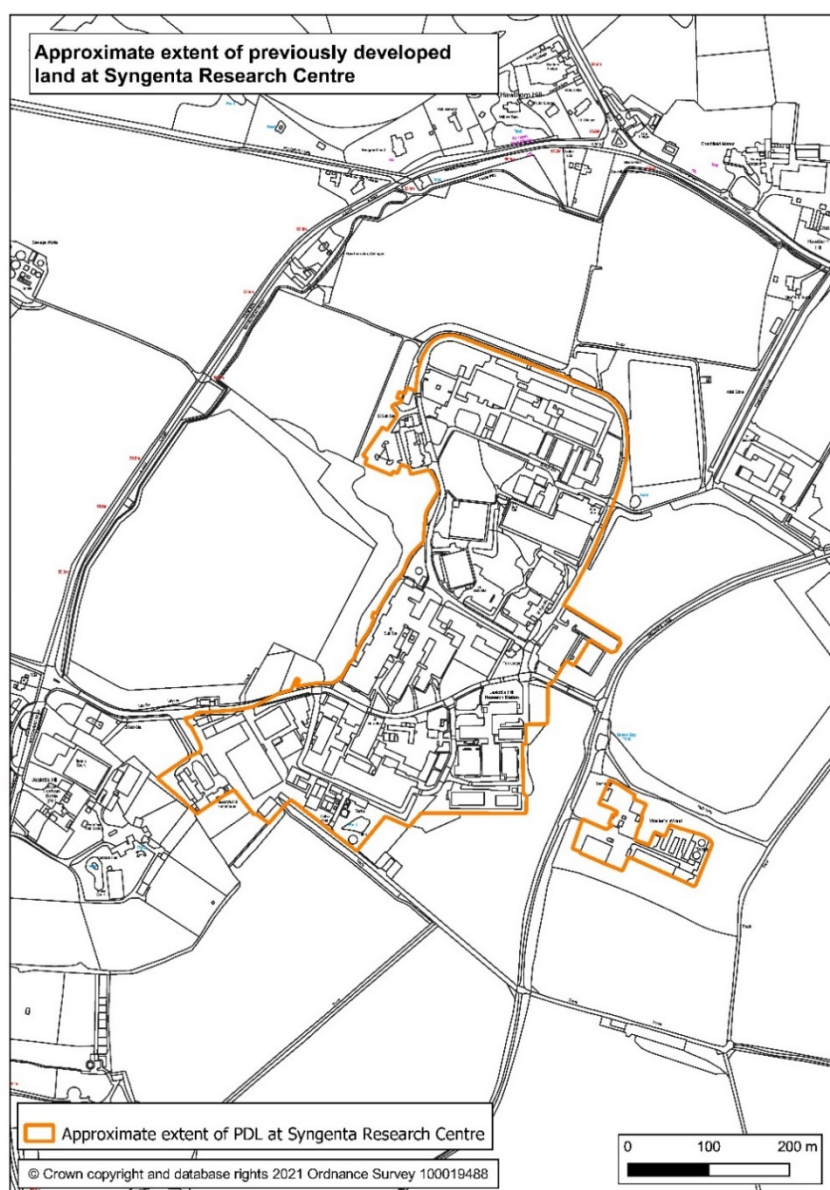
- 4.5.11 The Council has demonstrated it has fully examined all other realistic options for meeting its identified need for permanent pitches and has concluded that the 0.4ha of land to the north of the Ascot Road on an area of disused agricultural barns is the most suitable and sustainable option. Paragraph 137 of the NPPF requires the strategy to consider some additional points, which have been addressed below:
- Whilst the site is not technically brownfield owing to its agricultural use, it comprises disused agricultural buildings and hardstanding. Allocation of the site would make use of underutilised land.
  - Locating gypsy and traveller pitches in town and other urban locations proposed for allocation is not considered a suitable option, because it would not make the most effective use of land in these locations (NPPF Chapter 11).
  - Neighbouring local authorities were formally asked through the Duty to Cooperate if they were able to meet some of Bracknell Forest's pitch need but were not in a position to do so, most citing they are having challenges meeting their own identified needs.
- 4.5.12 In accordance with NPPF paragraph 138, compensatory improvements to the Green Belt will be secured through the wider Jealott's Hill strategic development. The location of the gypsy and traveller site opposite this new settlement constitutes sustainable development, which will enable community cohesion, whilst also providing access to employment opportunities. The new settlement will have sustainable transport options and other facilities that will be accessible on foot for the residents of the gypsy and traveller site, including health care and schooling, helping to reduce inequalities.
- 4.5.13 In accordance with NPPF paragraph 139(e) and (f) the land proposed to be inset is bounded by mature trees on the eastern side, dwellings with some mature trees to the west and the Ascot Road to the south. A new defensible boundary will need to be created to the north and this is set out as a policy requirement in Policy LP7 'Land at Jealott's Hill'.
- 4.5.14 PPTS paragraph 17 states that insets to the Green Belt can be done through the local plan process to accommodate a specific, identified need for a traveller site, and that land should be specifically allocated in the development plan as a traveller site only.
- 4.5.15 Therefore in accordance with NPPF paragraphs 137-139 and PPTS paragraph 17, it can be concluded that there are exceptional circumstances for the release of 0.4ha of Green Belt land to accommodate an inset for a specific identified need for eight permanent gypsy and traveller pitches in the plan period (allowing approximately 500m<sup>2</sup> per pitch).
- 4.5.16 The proposed approach is considered a proactive and pragmatic response to meeting Bracknell Forest's pitch needs, given the limited options available to the Council to meet identified pitch needs. National policy is clear that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered through the local plan process and should endure beyond the plan period. Efficient use should be made of land. The extent of the proposed amendment to the Green Belt boundary in this location should endure beyond the plan period.

## 5. Sustainable pattern of development

5.1 National policy (NPPF para. 138) states when drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land, consideration should be given to land which has been previously developed, and/or is well served by public transport.

5.2 Of the 240ha comprising the overall allocation, there are approximately 18ha of previously developed land (PDL), which relate to the existing Syngenta operations (16.9ha area west of Weller's Lane, and 0.96ha east of Weller's Lane). The approximate extent of the PDL, is illustrated on **Figure 4** below.

**Figure 4 – Approximate extent of PDL at Jealott's Hill**



- 5.3 As indicated on the illustrative concept plan (see **Figure 8**) the employment proposals would cover some of the footprint of existing PDL, but also extend west and north beyond the existing PDL towards Maidenhead Road. The location of the local centre would also be accommodated within the existing PDL footprint. The housing (with the exception of the PDL land east of Weller's Lane) and the primary school would be beyond the existing PDL envelope. However, as set out in **Section 4**, exceptional circumstances exist to justify release of Green Belt land.
- 5.4 Whilst the existing site is not well served by the existing public transport network, the critical mass of the overall proposal (both employment and housing uses) will enable improvements to existing bus services to be achieved, as part of a wider sustainable transport strategy. Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) will be a free/low cost taxi-style/minibus service for residents of the site and include ancillary storage facilities on-site. Formal pedestrian and cycle routes will also be incorporated within the development. This will provide a genuine choice of transport modes for future occupiers of the site (and would also accord with the revised changes to para. 72 to the NPPF, which were published in January 2021).
- 5.5 The site will also deliver a main sustainable transport hub and satellite hubs which will provide information, technology, bus stops, Electric Vehicle Charging, cycle storage, parcel picks drop off and pick up etc. This will assist with self-containment of journeys within the site. There will also need to be financial contributions towards travel planning measures and initiatives to truly maximises sustainable transport choices. A network of footpaths and cycleways are to be provided within the built development and the surrounding greenspace. These will link with existing routes. A pedestrian and cycle route is also required along the A3095 Maidenhead Road to link the site with Warfield and Bracknell. A quieter shared surface route along Wellers Lane, Westhatch Lane (partly to be closed off the traffic) and Osborne Lane is to be provided. Such measures will encourage sustainable modes of travel from and to the development. As part of the Sustainability Framework for the site, details of the above measures and timings will need to be set out in a Transport Strategy which must be submitted for approval.
- 5.6 The scale of the scheme will also facilitate provision of a local centre (providing day to day services and facilities such as a food store, retail, café, and health), a primary school, nursery, and community building for future residents. It will also provide local facilities and services for workforce within the employment areas (which often require access to facilities such as shops and food and drink). This will minimise private car trips from the site and achieve a sustainable development within the site itself. (See **Sections 7 and 11**).
- 5.7 In considering sustainable patterns of development, it is also relevant to consider national policy in relation to the supply of a large number of new homes (para. 72). This refers to large numbers of new homes often best being achieved through planning for larger scale developments, provided they are well located, designed, and supported by necessary infrastructure. (The following also provides cross reference to other sections of this Paper where relevant matters are addressed):
- a) *consider the opportunities presented by existing or planned investment in infrastructure, the area's economic potential and the scope for net environmental gains;*  
Proposed approach: the site will benefit from significant economic investment and

opportunities arising from the provision of the Science and Innovation Park (see **Section 4**). The proposal will include provision of country parks, green infrastructure strategic landscape enhancements, and biodiversity improvements, which will result in a biodiversity net gain of at least 20% across the whole site (see **Section 6**).

- b) *ensure that their size and location will support a sustainable community, with sufficient access to services and employment opportunities within the development itself (without expecting an unrealistic level of self-containment), or in larger towns to which there is good access;*

Proposed approach: As set out in **Section 4**, the site will include employment opportunities. The scale of the proposal, including employment and residential will provide the critical mass to require a local centre and primary school on the site (see **Table 2 - local centre and infrastructure**), which will underpin the development of a sustainable community, due to proximity of services and facilities to meet day to day needs. In addition to the Science and Innovation Park, the local centre and school will provide local employment opportunities.

- c) *set clear expectations for the quality of the development and how this can be maintained (such as by following Garden City principles), and ensure that a variety of homes to meet the needs of different groups in the community will be provided;*

Proposed approach: the scale of the site represents a significant opportunity for a high quality exemplar development, which would follow Garden Village Principles, and be underpinned by a masterplanning process (see **Sections 9 and Table 2 - garden village principles and design**). A mix of housing, including provision of affordable, older people and gypsy and traveller provision will also be incorporated into the scheme (see **Table 2 - housing**).

- d) *make a realistic assessment of likely rates of delivery, given the lead-in times for large scale sites, and identify opportunities for supporting rapid implementation (such as through joint ventures or locally-led development corporations); and*

Proposed approach: the proposed local plan includes a housing trajectory. The rationale for site delivery rates and lead-in times are set out in **Table 2 - Housing**.

- e) *consider whether it is appropriate to establish Green Belt around or adjoining new developments of significant size.*

Proposed approach: the justification for the revised Green Belt/new settlement boundary is set out in **Section 8**.

## 6. Compensatory Improvements

- 6.1 As set out in **Section 4**, exceptional circumstances exist to justify removal of land from the Green Belt. Consequently, in accordance with national policy (NPPF para. 138), the impact of removing land from the green should be offset through compensatory improvements to environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land. **Figure 5** shows the extent of land to be released from the Green Belt (the majority of which would form a new defined settlement), and land which would remain as Green Belt (around 124 ha, just over 50% of the allocated site).
- 6.2 The PPG<sup>16</sup> sets out that such improvements could include: new or enhanced green infrastructure; woodland planting; landscape and visual enhancements (beyond those needed to mitigate the immediate impacts of the proposal); improvements to biodiversity, habitat connectivity; new or enhanced walking and cycle routes; and improved access to new, enhanced or existing recreational and playing field provision.
- 6.3 Existing land at Jealott's Hill has limited biodiversity value given it is largely in agricultural use. It is private land, with limited public access (with the exception of some existing public footpaths and bridleways).
- 6.4 The compensatory improvements at Jealott's Hill would largely relate to the provision of two new country parks, located in the eastern and western parts of the allocation, of around 79 and 45 hectares respectively (124 ha total).
- 6.5 The eastern country park would include a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) extending to around 10ha. Whilst this would be provided within the country park area, the SANG is not a specific compensatory measure, as it is required to mitigate the impact of the residential development upon the Thames Basins Heath Special Protection Area – see **Table 1 – habitat mitigation**). Therefore, excluding the SANG, the country parks would amount to 114ha of open space of public value (OSPV).
- 6.6 Based on an OSPV standard of 4.3ha per 100,000 population (and 2.31 persons per household), the OSPV requirements for the full 2,000 dwellings being allocated would be 19.87ha, minimum. Therefore, the overall open space provision to be provided as part of the Jealott's Hill development would be significantly over and above the OSPV policy requirements for the site. In addition to the two country parks, the proposal would also include open space provision within the built development/defined settlement area (including but not limited to: community landshare, town park, sports ground and pavilion, strategic green ways, allotments, and play areas, together with retained and supplemented landscaping/tree planting).
- 6.7 The proposed country parks would fall within the Green Belt designation, and comprise open space of public value, new and enhanced forest/woodland, general parkland (including features such as: meadow, trees, sustainable drainage, natural play, and other planting/habitat), together with sports pitches and ancillary facilities. They would also include enhancement of adjacent rights of ways and bridleways. A new bridleway is also proposed in the eastern country park, to connect the existing

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<sup>16</sup> PPG Green Belt guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/green-belt>

bridleway network in the north east (path BW4) and south west of the site (paths FP3/BR22).

- 6.8 Linking the two country parks would be two strategic greenways, which would intersect at the local centre in the heart of the development, together with leisure routes, wildlife and habitat corridors and formal pedestrian/cycles ways.
- 6.9 This would result in a significant amount of publicly accessible Green Belt within the overall site allocation, through opening up the land for informal and formal recreational purposes.
- 6.10 Requirements for the site also include strategic landscape planting. This would help create a defensible Green Belt boundary and provide rural and ecological enhancement. New tree belts, and woodland and treed avenues are also proposed. These features would enhance the environmental quality of the site, and provide valued habitat features, acting as wildlife corridors and improved habitat connectivity. This will increase the environmental quality of the site (which is largely agricultural land). There are also requirements to retain and enhance trees and hedgerows within the site. Across the site, this will result in a biodiversity net gain of at least 20% (double the standard policy requirement of 10% net gain). Requirements for the site (through a Sustainability Framework), include a Landscape Strategy, Ecological Strategy (to include a Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy), and a Green Infrastructure Strategy to ensure these elements of the proposal are satisfactorily incorporated.
- 6.11 The illustrative concept plan (**Figure 8**) shows the proposed location of some of the key features referred to above, and **Table 2** (proposed policy approach) sets out the rationale for some of these matters in further detail.



## 7. Other matters taken into consideration with the allocation of the site

- 7.1 A range of evidence has been used to inform the Local Plan site selection process<sup>17</sup>, for example landscape, heritage, ecological, flooding and transport assessments, as well as the Sustainability Appraisal process. The evidence base has been used to assess suitability of sites. For sites deemed suitable for allocation, the extent of the developable area within a site has been derived having regard to the evidence base, for example taking account of trees.
- 7.2 The Housing Background Paper contains a proforma of the sites submitted through the SHELAA process, and provides a suitability assessment in terms of potential allocation, against the evidence base. The main Local Plan wide evidence base is available to view on the Council's website<sup>18</sup>. Appendix D of the Housing Background Paper<sup>19</sup> contains the proforma for land at Jealott's Hill.
- 7.3 In addition to the main evidence base which supports the production of the Local Plan, further studies were commissioned specifically related to Jealott's Hill, e.g. supplementary landscape and transport work (which are not set out in the Housing Background Paper).
- 7.4 **Table 1** (below) provides an overview of the key evidence and conclusions relating to land at Jealott's Hill (including additional site specific evidence).

**Table 1 – Summary of Key Jealott's Hill Evidence Base**

Key Evidence	Conclusions
Economy	Justification for employment uses on this site are set out in <b>Section 4</b> of this Paper.
Housing	<p>Justification for housing (as part of enabling development as cross-subsidy for employment proposals) and gypsy and traveller accommodation on the site is set out in <b>Section 4</b> of this Paper.</p> <p>Rationale for the approach to overall housing need within the Borough, provision of affordable housing, housing mix, meeting the needs of older people, meeting the needs of gypsy and travellers, and self/custom build is set out in the Housing Background Paper.</p> <p>Primary evidence documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bracknell Forest Housing Needs Assessment. Icen, July 2020 (LP/Ev/2g)</li><li>• Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. Arc4, October 2017. (CLP/EV/2b)</li><li>• Housing Background Paper. BFC, 2021. (LP/Ev/2i).</li></ul>

<sup>17</sup> Site Selection Methodology (BFC, 2017): <http://consult.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/file/4653109>

<sup>18</sup> Local Plan evidence base: <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/planning-policy/development-plan/draft-bracknell-forest-local-plan/evidence-base>

<sup>19</sup> Housing Background Paper (BFC, 2021). Document ref: LP/Ev/2i

Key Evidence	Conclusions
Green Belt	<p>Overall conclusion of the Green Belt study is that land which relates to Jealotts Hill (Green Belt Parcel B4b (equating to area WAR3a), B5 (equating to area WAR3b), B6a (equating to WAR3c), and B7a (equating to WAR3d) makes a contribution to the Green Belt purposes, the most significant contribution being to 'assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment'.</p> <p>Primary evidence document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bracknell Forest and Wokingham Borough Joint Green Belt Review. Amec, June 2016 (CLP/Ev/5c).</li> </ul>
Landscape Assessments	<p>The site is predominantly located within area C1 of the Landscape Character Assessment. A landscape sensitivity appraisal was undertaken of the site in 2018, and concluded that the overall sensitivity of the site was medium-high. The 2019 appraisal then undertook an assessment of the site against the 4 sub-parcels identified in <b>Figure 3</b> (above), and concluded that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WAR3a is medium-high sensitivity, due to largely undeveloped areas resulting in a tranquil rural character.</li> <li>• WAR3b is low-medium sensitivity, due to the presence of the existing research centre.</li> <li>• WAR3c is medium sensitivity due to the undeveloped nature results in a tranquil rural character, with some parts being open and visually exposed. Sensitivity increases to medium-high in the northern part of the site due to being a local high point, resulting in visual prominence from surrounding countryside (despite aural intrusion from the A330).</li> <li>• WAR3d is medium sensitivity due to being largely enclosed. Sensitivity increases to medium-high in the northern part, due to being a local high point, resulting in visual prominence from the surrounding countryside.</li> </ul> <p>The study concludes with guidance that should be taken into account if the site is to be considered for development such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focus development in areas of lower sensitivity, and on/around existing developed areas,</li> <li>• focus developed in areas enclosed by landform and vegetation, avoiding elevated areas</li> <li>• retain and manage trees and hedgerows across the site,</li> <li>• strengthen existing vegetation with new planting</li> <li>• conserve leafy character of rural lanes bordering the site</li> <li>• protect and enhance public rights of way</li> <li>• light pollution should be minimised to maintain the rural character and dark skies</li> </ul> <p>Further site-specific work has also been undertaken. At the Pre-Submission stage, Cooper Landscape Planning on behalf of the site promoters undertook a Strategic Landscape and Visual Appraisal, which was reviewed by the Council's Landscape Consultant (LUC). As part of</p>

Key Evidence	Conclusions
	<p>this work, the site was subdivided into parcels and each assigned a landscape sensitivity, based on landscape value and susceptibility which subsequently influenced the proposed development phasing (see Landscape Plans 9 and 10). An Indicative Landscape Masterplan (Plan 11) was included, together with an assessment of visual effects. LUC's review of the Draft Strategic Landscape and Visual Appraisal concludes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recommendations for development potential are appropriate and draw from the landscape sensitivity analysis (Landscape Plan 9 in the original report).</li> <li>• The landscape phasing plan (Landscape Plan 10 in the original report) responds to recommendations for the order in which the parcels might be developed.</li> <li>• The indicative landscape masterplan (Landscape Plan 11 in the original report) addresses the key landscape and visual sensitivities of the site.</li> <li>• It is inevitable that there will be changes to the landscape character of the site, but new proposed planting belts will create a long term defensible edge which will protect the character of the wider landscape and the valleys that lie east and west of the site.</li> <li>• The proposed planting mitigation will ensure that the development can be accommodated into the landscape.</li> <li>• There are a number of other visual receptors that could be affected by development on this site and which will need to be considered in the detailed design stages of the project.</li> <li>• The effects set out in the appraisal are based on the Indicative Landscape Masterplan and the specified maximum heights (e.g. 9m for residential buildings, 15m for commercial buildings). If a different plan or building heights are taken forward the effects of that plan will need to be re-tested.</li> </ul> <p>Primary evidence documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape Character Assessment, LUC, September 2015 (CLP/Ev/5a)</li> <li>• Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal of Potential Housing and Employment Sites in Bracknell Forest. LUC, February 2018 (CLP/Ev/5e)</li> <li>• Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal of Potential Housing and Employment Sites in Bracknell Forest, Addendum report. LUC, August 2019. (LP/EV/5g)</li> <li>• Draft Strategic Landscape and Visual Appraisal, November 2020 (undertaken by Cooper Landscape Planning on behalf of promoters of the site).</li> <li>• Review of Draft Strategic Landscape and Visual Appraisal. LUC, 2020.</li> </ul>
Heritage Assessments	A heritage assessment of the site was undertaken in 2018 which concluded that the overall effects to significance of heritage assets was

Key Evidence	Conclusions
	<p>medium. The 2019 appraisal then undertook an assessment of the site against the 4 sub-parcels identified in <b>Figure 3</b> (above), and concluded that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WAR3a: effects to significance of heritage assets is low. None of the listed buildings in the vicinity of the parcel appear to have any kind of meaningful relationship with the parcel. Development would merge historic settlements. However, some separation and continued sense of separate identity could be maintained via the masterplanning process. Impact to non-designated assess – Hawthorne Cottage, and loss of agricultural land which is historically, functionally, and visually related to Cruchfield Manor. Screening recommended. Removal of hedgerows could have an impact, so should be retained.</li> <li>• WAR3b: effects to significance of heritage assets is medium. There is the potential for harm to the setting of Jealott's Farm either through the altering of their relationship with each other or by their further enclosure within built development and loss of agricultural setting. In either case, the harm would likely be less than substantial. Development would merge historic settlements. However, some separation and continued sense of separate identity could be maintained via the masterplanning process. Removal of hedgerows could have an impact, so should be retained.</li> <li>• WAR3c: effects to significance of heritage assets is medium. Impact on rural setting of Nuptown House, tree belt could be strengthened to mitigate impact (which would be less than substantial). Potential to affect view in/from Warfield Conservation Area and Church of St Michaels and All Angeles (less than substantial harm). Removal of hedgerows could have an impact, so should be retained.</li> <li>• WAR3d: effects to significance of heritage assets is medium. Impact to rural setting of Nuptown House, tree belt could be strengthened to mitigate impact (which would be less than substantial). Removal of hedgerows could have an impact, so should be retained.</li> </ul> <p>In addition to the above, the study concludes with guidance that should be taken into account if the site is to be considered for development such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archaeological desk-based assessment and heritage statements</li> <li>• Archaeological evaluation</li> <li>• Setting of designated and non-designated assessment to be preserved.</li> </ul> <p>Primary evidence documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic Environment Assessment of SHELAA Sites Addendum 2 (LUC, July 2018, updated July 2019) (LP/Ev/7b).</li> <li>• Historic Environment Assessment of SHELAA Sites Addendum 2 (LUC, October 2019) (LP/Ev/7d).</li> </ul>

Key Evidence	Conclusions
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)	<p>Due to the surface water flooding risk, the Level 1 SFRA concluded that a Level 2 SFRA was required for the site. This identifies small unnamed watercourses on the site which flows south and along the eastern boundary of the site joining to the Cut, which may be at risk of flooding, plus roadside drainage ditches. No flood incidents have been recorded on the site itself (although may have occurred on the fields, but not have been recorded). There are several surface water flow paths which affect the site – two originating from the centre of the site and following west towards the site. These are high risk and cover the 1 in 30 year event. A large portion of the site is determined to have no 1 in 100 year flood year event. The report includes recommendations for the site, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A site specific flood risk assessment required.</li> <li>• Detailed hydraulic model developed for the unnamed watercourse.</li> </ul> <p>Primary evidence documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bracknell Forest Council Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) JBA Consulting, April 2018 (LP/Ev/9d).</li> <li>• Subsequent update in August 2018 relating to specific/additional sites (LP/Ev/9e).</li> <li>• Bracknell Forest Council Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) JBA Consulting, September 2019 (LP/Ev/9f).</li> </ul>
Transport and Accessibility	<p>Consultants acting for the Promotion Team in respect of Jealott's Hill have been working closely with the Council's Highway Team to identify the impacts associated with the development on the Highway Network. This has involved using the Council's Multi Modal Transport Model to predict the impact of the development within the plan period (2037) and at the time of scheme build out (2044).</p> <p>Junction improvement schemes have been designed to accommodate additional capacity and access to the site. In addition new junctions would provide an access to the Science and Innovation Park and provide access from Maidenhead Road to the south and onto Ascot Road, to the north and south east, of the site.</p> <p>The delivery of bus services to the site will form part of a wider sustainable transport strategy delivered by a much more focused residential travel plan which will focus on such measures as demand responsive bus services and smarter travel.</p> <p>Linking the site for pedestrian and cyclists has been a key part of discussions with the promotional team and improvements will be included to the surrounding rural road network to encourage walking and cycling as an alternative to the private car.</p> <p>Primary evidence documents:</p>

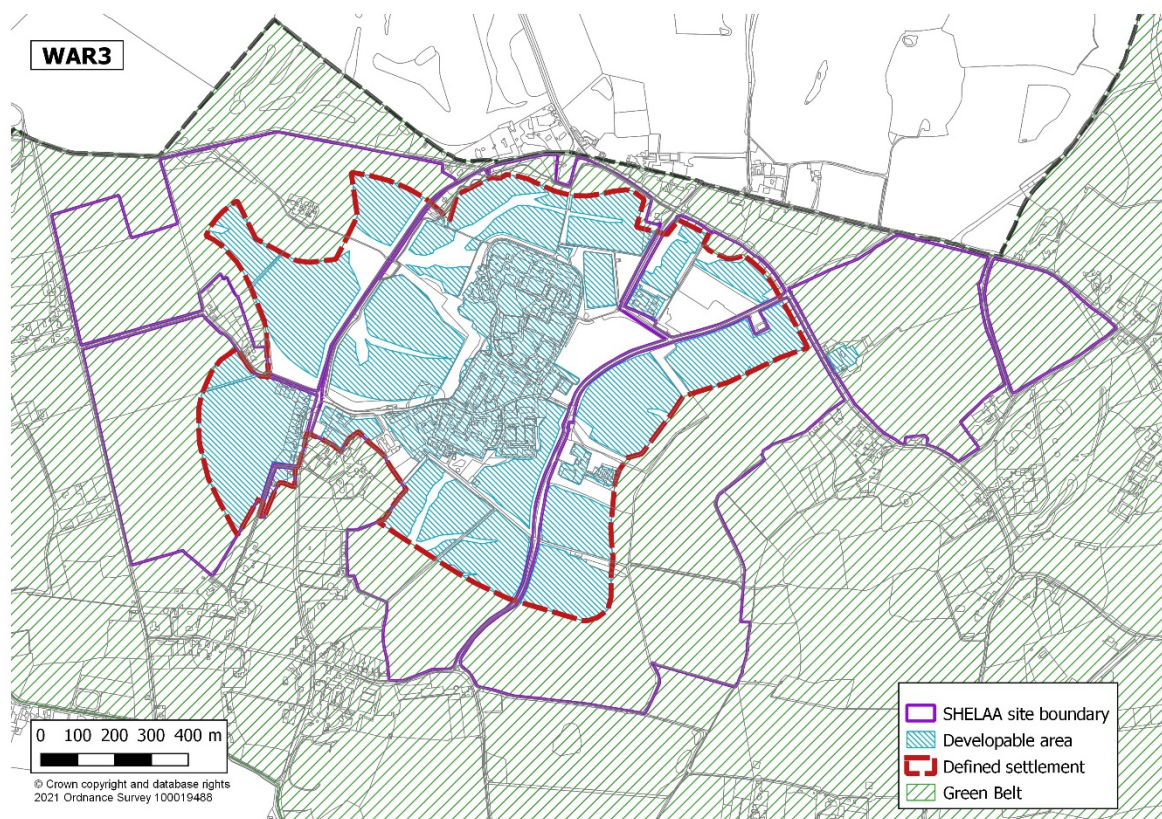
Key Evidence	Conclusions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach to Transport modelling. BFC, January 2018 (CLP/Ev/4d)</li> <li>• Draft Transport Accessibility Assessment of Potential Sites. BFC, October 2019 (LP/Ev/4f)</li> <li>• Journey Times Assessment (LP/Ev/4j)</li> </ul> <p>Other supporting documents will be available to view on the Council's evidence page, including the Transport Impact Report (BFC, 2021).</p>
Ecological Assessments	<p>The site consists mainly of cultivated fields bordered by field margins, hedgerows and trees. Overall the site has a low ecological value (broadly related to the fields), with areas of medium value around field boundaries such as hedgerows (which are examples of UK Priority habitats), woodland parcels, and existing orchard.</p> <p>The report includes recommendations for the site, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage grassland to increase structural and species biodiversity.</li> <li>• Infill hedgerows with native woody species to increase connectivity and increase ecological value.</li> <li>• Opportunity to increase tree planting within the orchard.</li> </ul> <p>Primary evidence document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) Sites, Bracknell Forest, Berkshire, Phase 1 Ecological Survey. John Wenman Ecological Consultancy, 2018 (CLP/Ev/8b)</li> </ul>
Green Infrastructure	<p>The Borough wide assessment identified existing assessment, deficits and opportunities within the green infrastructure network. Land at Jealott's Hill as identified has potential for provision of 20ha of accessible green space.</p> <p>Primary evidence document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bracknell Forest Green Infrastructure Review (TVERC, September 2017) (CLP/Ev/9a)</li> </ul>
Habitat Mitigation	<p>The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) was undertaken by Bracknell Forest Council (BFC), as the local planning authority and competent body, in respect of the Pre-Submission Bracknell Forest Local Plan (BFLP) (March 2021). The objective of this assessment is to identify any aspects of the BFLP that have the potential to cause a likely significant effect on habitats sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) sites), either in isolation or in combination with other plans and projects, and to identify an appropriate avoidance and mitigation strategy where such effects are identified.</p> <p>The following key conclusions were made in the Appropriate Assessment in the HRA and in the BFLP Air Quality Report (the air quality report is in the process of being finalised, so not available at this stage):</p>

Key Evidence	Conclusions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Given the mitigation measures put in place there will be no adverse effects of the BFLP, in combination with other plans and projects, on the integrity of the TBH SPA as a result of urbanisation, recreation effects or loss of functionally linked land.</li> <li>- Conclusion of air quality effects, in combination with other plans and projects to be confirmed.</li> </ul> <p>Primary evidence documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Habitats Regulations Assessment Pre-Submission Bracknell Forest Local Plan (March 2021) (LP/Ev/8e)</li> </ul> <p>Other supporting documents will be available to view on the Council's evidence page, including the Air Quality Assessment of the Pre-Submission Plan.</p>
Sustainability Appraisal	<p>The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) forms one key evidence base documents which informs the site selection process, and draws upon the Council's Local Plan evidence base (though it should be noticed it is not the sole determiner in whether a site should be allocated). The aim of the SA is to make a plan more sustainable, and more responsive to its environmental, social and economic effects.</p> <p>For this site, the SA concludes that the site is poorly located with few services or facilities available locally. The site is subject to constraints. However, due to its scale, there is potential to avoid, mitigate or locally compensate several of the constraints within the development, if they are integrated into the overall master planning process. The most significant issues are the need to create a sustainable community to increase local facilities, thus reducing the need to travel; provision of sustainable transport; the residual landscape impact; and the encroachment into the countryside.</p> <p>Primary evidence documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-Submission Sustainability Appraisal. BFC, 2021. (LP/Ev/1e)</li> </ul>



- 7.5 Based on the justification in terms of exceptional circumstances, and taking account of the evidence base, **Figure 5** shows the extent of developable area relating to the proposed allocation. **Section 8** of this Paper sets out the full rationale for the location of the new Green Belt/settlement boundary within the proposed allocation.

**Figure 5 – Extent of developable area and new Green Belt/settlement boundary**



- 7.6 The total amount of existing land which would be released from the Green Belt (including the proposed gypsy and traveller site) would amount to 115.65ha. This equates to a loss of 3% of the overall existing Green Belt<sup>20</sup> within Bracknell Forest, meaning there would still be around 3,726ha of Green Belt land remaining.
- 7.7 In terms of proportion of the site, around 124ha (just over 50%) of the proposed site to be allocated would remain within the existing Green Belt designation.

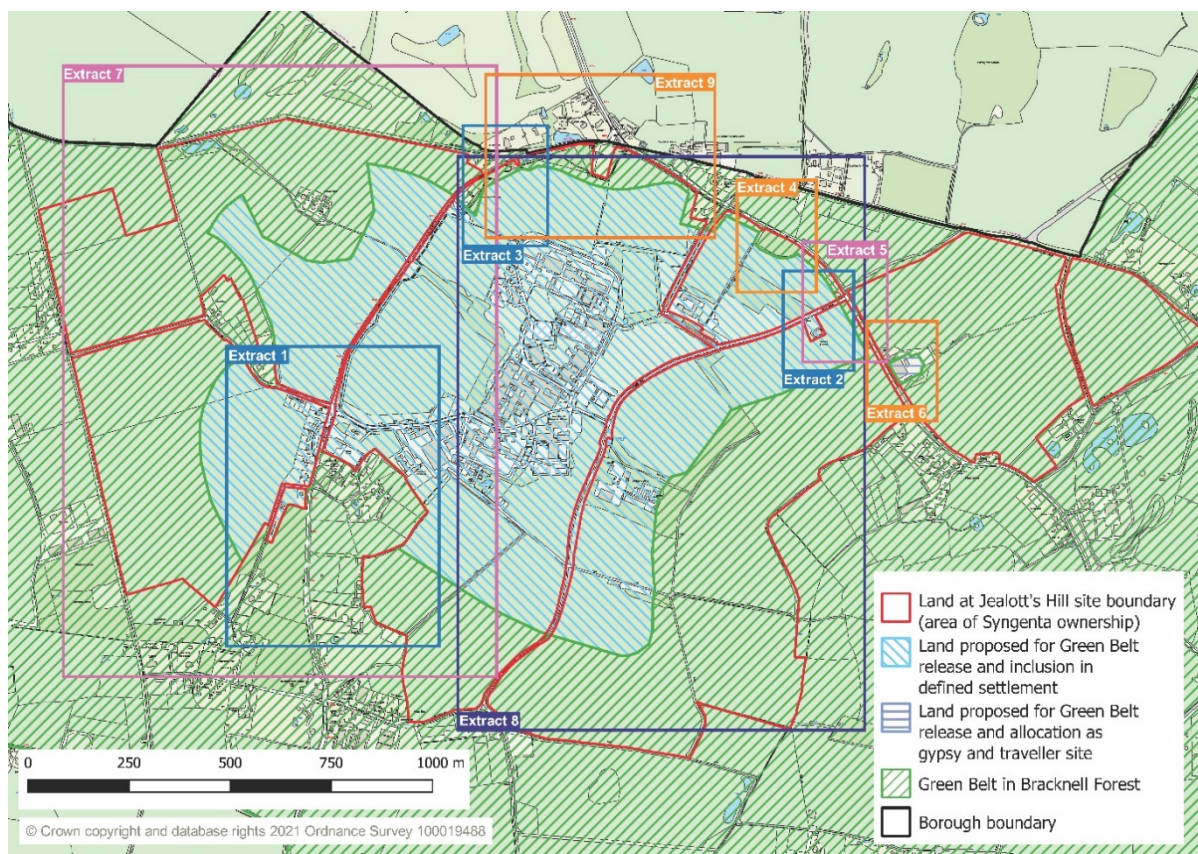
<sup>20</sup> Existing Green Belt land take within Bracknell Forest is 3,841.68ha  
([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/916237/Live\\_Tables\\_-\\_Green\\_Belt\\_Statistics\\_2013-14\\_to\\_2019-20.csv/preview](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/916237/Live_Tables_-_Green_Belt_Statistics_2013-14_to_2019-20.csv/preview))



## 8. Rationale for location of new Green Belt/settlement boundary

- 8.1. This section sets out the rationale behind the approach taken when drawing the redefined Green Belt boundaries at Jealott's Hill and how the approach set out in NPPF paragraph 139 was taken into account. To aid clarity, extract maps are used to indicate the approach taken; the extent of each of the extract maps in relation to the wider site is provided in **Figure 6** below:

**Figure 6 - Extents of extract maps in relation to the wider site**

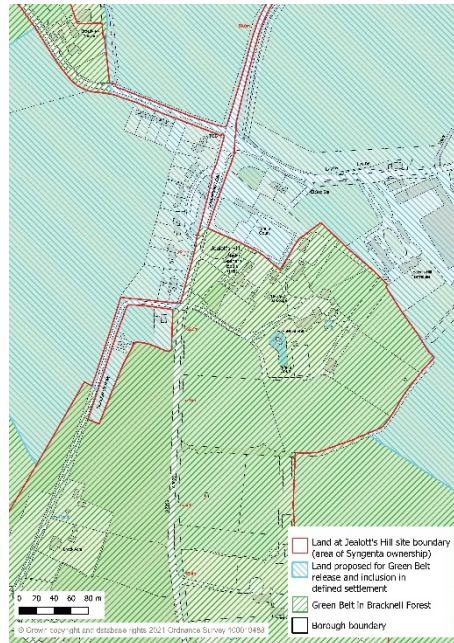


## **A. Redefined Green Belt boundaries**

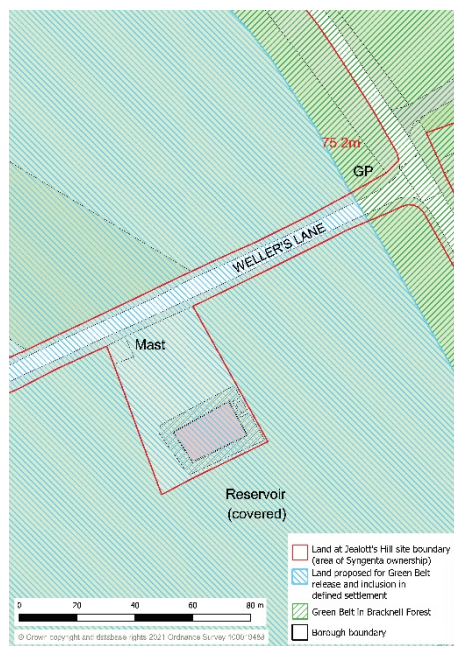
- 8.2. The NPPF states that Green Belt boundaries should be consistent with the development plan's strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development (para. 139a). The Plan's strategy is for the identified needs at Jealott's Hill (set out in **Section 4**) to be met through the creation of a new mixed-use garden community of a scale that provides a sufficient critical mass to be sustainable. **Section 5** demonstrates how the incorporation of a large enough quantum of housing, employment and community uses will ensure the new settlement is of a sufficient scale to be sustainable. This identified quantum of development guided the development of the illustrative concept plan (**Figure 8**), which demonstrates a sustainable and achievable layout for the new settlement. The concept plan subsequently informed the developable areas, settlement boundary and Green Belt boundary (**Figure 5**). The approach taken to drawing the redefined Green Belt boundaries is therefore consistent with the development plan's strategy for meeting the relevant identified needs, and demonstrates that the revised Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period (as required by NPPF para. 139e).
- 8.3. The NPPF also states that land should not be included in the Green Belt if it is unnecessary to keep it permanently open (NPPF para. 139b), and that Green Belt boundaries should be clearly defined using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent (NPPF para. 139f). Wherever possible, such features have been used to redefine the Green Belt boundaries. However, there are parts of the site where there are no suitable features that meet the criteria provided by NPPF para. 139f but it is necessary for land to be kept permanently open and/or land would serve a useful Green Belt function. Taking the above issues into account, alongside the nature of the identified needs and that the revised Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period due to the nature of these needs, it is appropriate for the new boundary to be largely defined to align with the extent of allocated built development. Given this, the following approach was taken when drawing the redefined Green Belt boundaries at Jealott's Hill:

- a. Given the nature of the identified need, no land located beyond the outer boundaries of land promoted at Jealott's Hill (as shown in **Figure 3**) is to be removed from the Green Belt (see **Extract 1** below). However, there are some occasions where exclusion of areas of land outside of Syngenta's ownership would lead to an overly complex boundary, as some roads and verges pass through and a covered reservoir is inset into the area of Syngenta's ownership. These areas are therefore also removed from the Green Belt in order to form a sensible boundary (see **Extract 2** below).

**Extract 1**



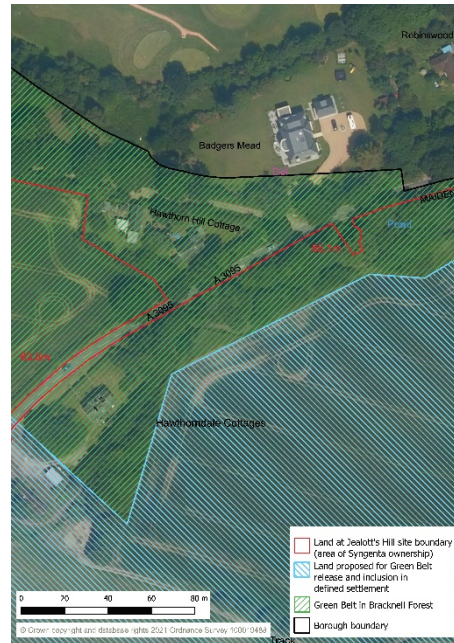
**Extract 2**





- b. There are some treed areas along the boundaries of land in Syngenta's ownership that should be retained, due to their ecological and landscape value, and as they provide an important, natural buffer between the allocated built development and the surrounding countryside. Where these features are well-defined and adjoin the extent of allocated built development, they have been used to define the Green Belt (see **Extracts 3 and 4** below). To ensure the permanence of the redefined Green Belt boundaries, Policy LP 7 requires the appropriate reinforcement of existing boundary features where they exist.

### Extract 3



### Extract 4



- c. In order to ensure a satisfactory natural buffer is provided between the allocated built development and the surrounding countryside where one doesn't already exist, further planting is required along some boundary features in northern parts of the site. To achieve this consistently, a 20m buffer is provided between the edge of the features and the allocated built development (see **Extract 5** below). The exception is a smaller buffer of 10m provided between the edge of Ascot Road and the allocated gypsy and traveller site, due to the lower profile of this type of development (see **Extract 6** below). As these buffers have been used to draw the redefined Green Belt boundaries, Policy LP 7 requires the provision of a new, permanent defensible edge to the Green Belt alongside appropriate new boundary features to ensure permanence.

**Extract 5**



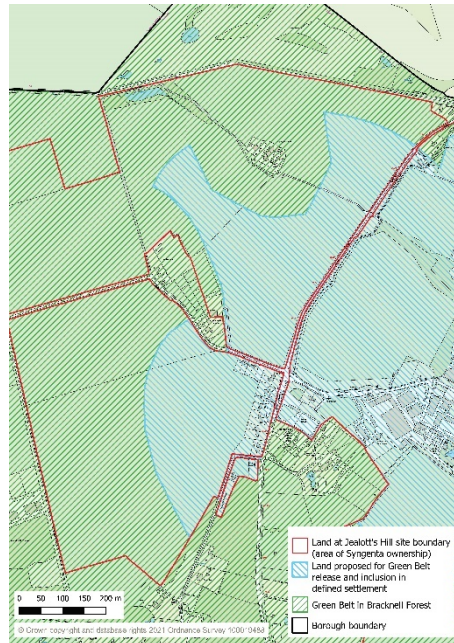
**Extract 6**





- d. There are parts of the site where there are no suitable boundary features in proximity to the edge of the allocated built development, but the surrounding land serves a useful Green Belt function and needs to be kept permanently open. In these areas, the Green Belt boundary has been defined along the profile of the allocated built development (see **Extracts 7 and 8** below). Policy LP 7 therefore requires the provision of a new, permanent defensible edge to the Green Belt alongside appropriate new boundary features in these locations to ensure permanence.

**Extract 7**

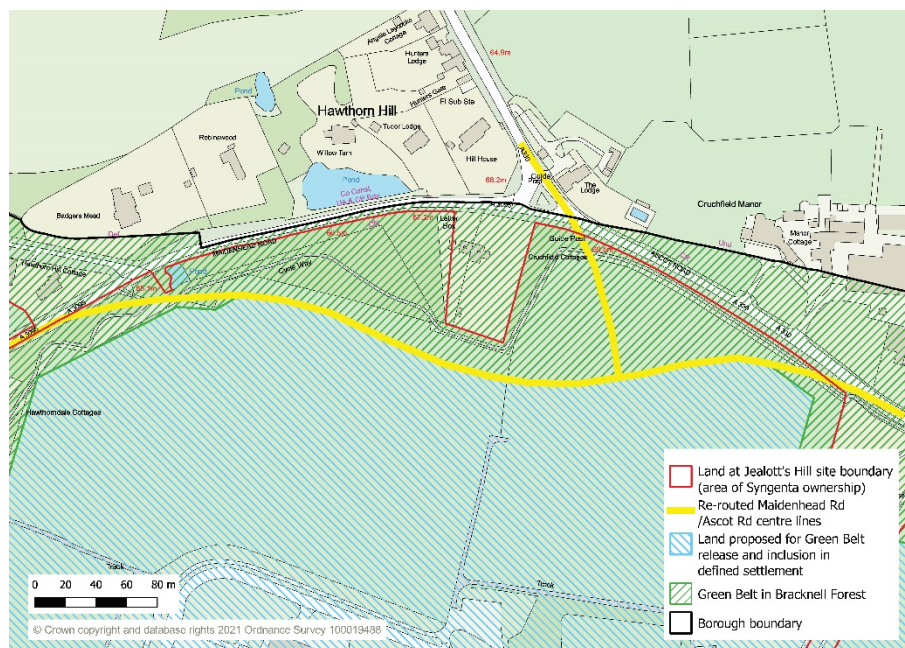


**Extract 8**



- e. The sections of Maidenhead Road and Ascot Road that are to be re-routed will form physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent. Given the buffer between these sections and the countryside to the north of the site, the centre lines of these sections have been used to draw the redefined Green Belt boundaries (see **Extract 9** below). This approach is consistent with the Green Belt boundaries in other parts of the Borough.

**Extract 9**



- f. The Green Belt release to enable provision of a gypsy and traveller site was drawn according to the requirement to allow for 8 permanent traveller pitches, whilst utilising existing physical boundaries that are likely to be permanent as far as possible. The adjoining properties (Nuptown Cottages) and their access remain in the Green Belt (see **Extract 6** above).
- 8.4. As it is not necessary to identify areas of safeguarded land between the new defined settlement and the Green Belt to meet longer-term development needs, paragraphs 139c and d of the NPPF are not applicable.

## **B. New settlement boundaries and developable areas**

- 8.5. As shown in **Figure 5** all land that is proposed for removal from the Green Belt is to be defined as a settlement (except land allocated for a gypsy and traveller site). Land removed from the Green Belt in order to provide a gypsy and traveller site is to be defined as countryside in order to control the risk of it coming forward for other uses.
- 8.6. The indicative developable areas shown in **Figure 5** are based on the findings of the concept planning process, the Plan's evidence base and further work that has been commissioned specifically for Jealott's Hill (see **Section 7** for details). As a review of **Figure 5** will make evident, not all land released from the Green Belt is included in the developable areas. This is because the need for Green Belt boundaries to be sensible and based on clear physical, readily recognisable features that are likely to be permanent means they cannot take all constraints into account. Therefore, not all land removed from the Green Belt should be developed. To address this, Policy LP7 sets out clear expectations of what should be included in the land to be removed from the Green Belt and information on how key on site constraints should be addressed. In addition to this, the other policies in the Plan provide further clarity on what will be expected from proposals.



## 9. Garden Village Principles

9.1 The NPPF (para. 72) sets out that supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, including (para. 72c) setting clear expectations for the quality of development, and how this can be maintained, such as following Garden City Principles.

9.2 The proposal represents an outstanding opportunity for an exemplar development achieving high standards of design, and to maximise opportunities arising from co-location of housing and employment uses on the site. Therefore, in line with national policy, given the scale of the development, it is appropriate to follow the philosophy of Garden Village Principles (such as the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) Garden City principles, and the Government's Garden Community Qualities).

9.3 TCPA Garden City Principles<sup>21</sup> relate to the following:

- Land value capture for the benefit of the community.
- Strong vision, leadership and community engagement.
- Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets.
- Mixed-tenure homes and housing types that are genuinely affordable.
- A wide range of local jobs in the Garden City within easy commuting distance of homes.
- Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with gardens, combining the best of town and country to create healthy communities, and including opportunities to grow food.
- Development that enhances the natural environment, providing a comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains, and that uses zero-carbon and energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience.
- Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhoods.
- Integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport.

9.4 The TCPA guide<sup>22</sup> also includes a section planning and creating new garden villages in terms of understanding and reflecting on the principles of historic model and garden villages:

- Holistically planned with a strategic framework (masterplan) which is comprehensive to guide, but be flexible
- Be underpinned by strong evidence base, incorporating the requirements of the strategic environmental assessment
- Planning for healthy living integral to creation of new places, active communities, planning for walking and cycling, bringing together the best of urban and natural environments, including planning for vibrant social life.
- Highway quality design and materials
- Provision of affordable close to employment
- Provision of day to day needs within walking distance of homes
- Land ownership and long term stewardship

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<sup>21</sup> TCPA Garden City Principles: <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/garden-city-principles>

<sup>22</sup> TCPA understanding garden villages, an introductory guide (2018):  
<https://www.tcpa.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=3507c991-fde2-4218-8920-641416f521b5>

9.5 The Government's Garden Community characteristics<sup>23</sup> are defined as:

- a purpose built new settlement, or large extension to an existing town
- a community with a clear identity and attractive environment
- it provides a mix of homes, including affordable and self-build
- planned by local authorities or private sector in consultation with the local community

9.6 As well as building new homes, the communities develop:

- job opportunities
- attractive green space and public realm areas
- transport infrastructure, including roads, buses and cycle routes
- community infrastructure, schools, community and health centres
- a plan for long-term stewardship of community assets

9.7 From this, a set of principles have been formulated for the site:

- Meaningful community involvement in creating a vision and creating a design that achieves the vision.
- Ensuring the community has ownership and stewardship of key community assets and appropriate elements of public realm.
- Be designed with a distinctive local identity as a new garden community, with an attractive and functioning centre and public realm.
- Exemplary standards of design will be expected. The expectation is that a truly vibrant community will be created providing a variety of employment opportunities and great facilities for recreational and community uses.
- Be designed for good health to provide the choices and chances for all to live a healthy life.
- Have adequate infrastructure to meet the day to day needs of the community and is flexibly and robustly designed to allow adaptation to meet changing needs.
- Homes (including affordable homes) must be of demonstrably high quality and contribute to the distinctiveness of the village. The mix of housing types, sizes and tenures should provide for all stages of life.
- The movement network should provide forward looking and accessible transport options that support economic prosperity and wellbeing for residents. It should encourage walking, and cycling, and the use of public transport. The village should be easy to navigate and provide easy sustainable access to jobs, facilities and services.
- Green spaces will be a key part of the new village. There will be generous, accessible, green and blue infrastructure that promotes health, wellbeing, and quality of life, and delivers environmental gains including biodiversity net gain.
- Legacy and stewardship arrangements should be in place for the care of community assets, infrastructure and public realm, for the benefit of the whole community.
- The new village should have resilience built in. It must be designed and managed to allow for changing demographics and the impacts of climate change. This will

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<sup>23</sup> Government Garden Community characteristics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/garden-communities>

include flood risk and water availability, durable landscaping and buildings designed for generations to come.

9.8 Stewardship is one unique and central aspect of garden villages, which sets them apart from other developments. This relates to how community assets will be maintained and managed in the long-term, so they remain for the benefit of the whole community. The developer would need to submit a supporting statement setting out a programme for achieving appropriate stewardship of green spaces, public realm areas, community and other relevant facilities.

9.9 It should be noted that many of the Garden Village Principles interrelate, for example design and green infrastructure, and correlate with other specific criteria for the site. Therefore, compliance with the principles will be required to be demonstrated through the submission of a 'Garden Village Compliance Statement', which would need to be agreed by the Council, as part of the master planning process. This would set out how Garden Village Principles have informed and been incorporated into the development of site.

## **10. Other benefits of the proposal**

- 10.1 Whilst the justification for the allocation of the site is based on economic exceptional circumstances (as set out in **Section 4** above), allocation of the site would bring about a range of benefits. Key social, environmental, and economic factors are set out below.
- 10.2 An overarching benefit from the proposed allocation would be the requirement for the scheme to following Garden Village Principles. This will create an exemplar development achieving high standards of design and maximise opportunities resulting from the proximity of employment and residential uses. It will also provide the opportunity for community endorsement, through stewardship of community assets.

### **10.1 Social**

- 10.1.1 Whilst the allocation of the housing on the site is part of an exceptional circumstances case (as part of enabling development for the funding gap of the Science and Innovation Park), a key benefit of the allocation is the provision of housing. The 1,350 homes in the plan period would meet a significant part of the Borough's outstanding need within the plan period to 2037. (Of the 3,726 units proposed to be delivered in the plan period, 1,350 units at Jealott's Hill would represent c. 36% of the proposed Local Plan housing allocations).
- 10.1.2 The allocation would also include a significant benefit in the provision for eight permanent gypsy and traveller pitches, which would meet the cultural needs of the Borough during the plan period to 2037 (which as set out in **Section 4** of this Paper cannot be accommodated elsewhere within the Borough, nor be met by neighbouring authorities).
- 10.1.3 The proposed Local Plan strategy focuses a significant number of new homes in and around Bracknell Town Centre (1,624 units in the plan period<sup>24</sup>, which equates to c. 44% of units proposed to be allocated and delivered in the plan period, as referred to above). Given the sustainable location of these sites, and need to make efficient use of land, higher density schemes are envisaged which means it is likely that smaller units as part of flatted schemes will be delivered on these sites. Therefore, it is important to seek larger family homes (including affordable) to help meet the wider needs of the Borough as a whole (which is the approach of proposed Policy LP24 in relation to housing mix). Allocation of housing on this site would result in a crucial benefit in helping to address the balance of much needed family homes in terms achieving a suitable range and mix of house types across the Borough as a whole during the plan period. Notwithstanding this, there is an expectation that the Jealott's Hill allocation will still provide a mix of homes within the site, to comply with Policy.
- 10.1.4 As a consequence of providing new homes, there will be a requirement to provide much needed affordable housing (affordable homes for rent and low cost home ownership products) and specialist housing to meet the needs of older people (with an emphasis on extra care accommodation). Self build plots will also be available. This will help to ensure that the needs of all are achieved through implementation of

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<sup>24</sup> Town related sites: Coopers Hill (69 units), Peel Centre (600 units), Town Square (213 units), former Bus Depot (141 units), Jubilee Gardens (100 units), Southern Gateway (267 units) and Bus Station (234 units)

the Local Plan, and creating a sustainable, inclusive and mixed community (in accordance with Policy LP9).

- 10.1.5 The proposed development would also result in a sustainable community through provision of employment opportunities, local centre (with shops, health centre, veterinary clinic), and a primary school. A community building will also be provided. The development will also provide 2 areas for formal sports including an all year round floodlit artificial grass pitch and multi-use games area. New allotments will be provided and the existing Community Landshare and orchard will be retained (or re-provided) on the site.

## 10.2 **Environmental**

- 10.2.1 A unique benefit of the proposal will be the provision of two country parks. Whilst these are being provided as a compensatory measures (see **Section 6**), together with other measures, they will result in at least 20% biodiversity net gain (which is above the 10% policy requirement contained in proposed Policy LP47 – Biodiversity). Given the scale of the proposal, and the need to following Garden Village Principles, this level of biodiversity net gain is both necessary and achievable for the site. This will also provide a significant increase in wildlife and ecology across the site, through provision of a substantially enhanced green infrastructure network. A Sustainability Framework and supporting strategy relating to the site will form an environmental baseline in the development of the site.
- 10.2.2 A key benefit of the proposal will be the creation of a sustainable community. The scale of the scheme will facilitate provision of a local centre (providing day to day services and facilities such as food store, retail, café, and health), a primary school, and built community facility within the site, which will minimise private car trips from the site, and achieve a sustainable development within the site itself. It will also provide local facilities for employees within the Science and Innovation Park. The workforce within employment areas often require access to a range of facilities and ancillary services (such shops, and food and drink establishments). Proximity of services within the vicinity of the Science and Innovation Park and access to open space for recreation in work breaks will reduce travel demand, improving the sustainability of the site.
- 10.2.3 The proposal will include improvements to bus services and provision of a cycle and footpath networks within the site. It will also deliver a sustainable transport hub. This will improve the sustainability of the site in terms of containment of journeys within the site, and alternatives to private car use (see **Section 5**).
- 10.2.4 The proposed allocation includes measures to provide a low carbon mixed-use development, through requiring:
- net zero regulated emissions for dwellings;
  - new non-residential buildings to meet BREEAM ‘excellent’ standard;
  - reduced embodied carbon in construction; and
  - carbon off-setting.
- 10.2.5 Policy LP49 Sustainable Construction requires:
- major new build residential development to be net zero carbon for regulated emissions (which can be partly met through carbon off setting), unless this is not viable;
  - and non-residential development of 500m<sup>2</sup> or more, to meet BREEAM ‘excellent’, unless this is not viable then ‘very good’ should be achieved.
- 10.2.6 Therefore the requirement for the proposal to reduce embodied carbon in construction is in addition to the requirements of LP49. Also, the viability caveats for the net zero carbon and BREEAM requirements, or BREEAM threshold do not apply. This is considered appropriate due to its scale and meeting the TCPA Garden City

Principles<sup>25</sup> objective of using zero carbon technology. It also reflects the Climate Change Act (2008, as updated) which sets a target for the UK to cut greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.

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<sup>25</sup> TCPA Garden City Principles: <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/garden-city-principles>

### **10.3 Economic**

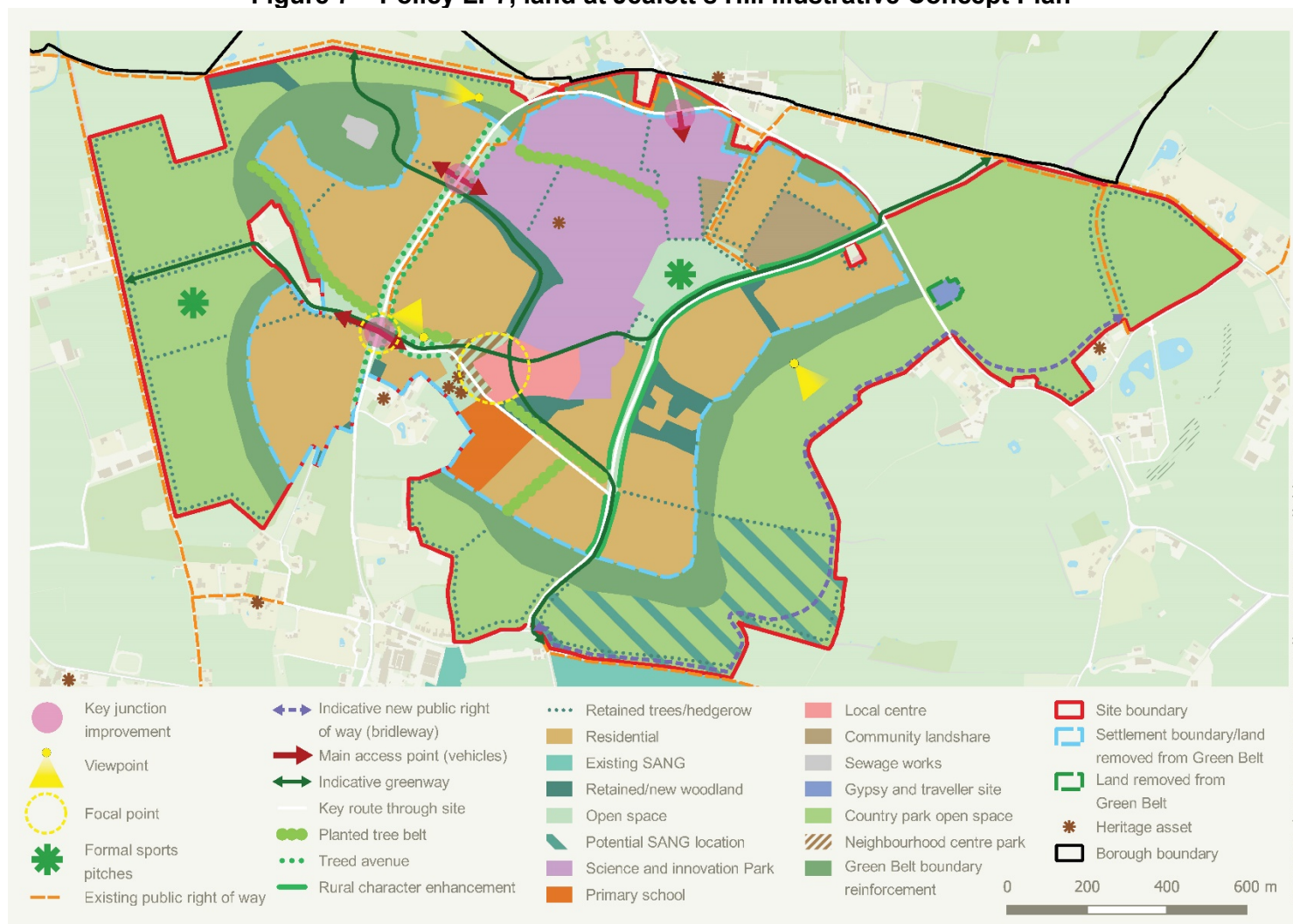
- 10.3.1 A key benefit of the allocation will be the provision of new employment opportunities within the Borough and assist with meeting the Borough's employment floorspace needs.
- 10.3.2 A significant benefit of the scheme will be the retention of an existing long-standing employer within the Borough (which currently employs c. 850 people locally). This means the retention of existing jobs within the Borough rather than them being lost to other parts of the country or overseas. (Although it is acknowledged as set out in the **Section 4**, that in terms of alternatives, there are no suitable locations which would facilitate the operation of the 'open innovation' business model).
- 10.3.3 Aside from the employment opportunities created through the Science and Innovation Park, there will also be new local employment opportunities created through the local centre, primary school and the vast open space offer.
- 10.3.4 The new mixed-use community with both housing and employment will also assist with longer-term employment self-containment levels within the Borough, with potentially less out commuting from within the Borough, so creating and retaining a skilled workforce. Links with education and research establishments will be further developed and assist the training of those wishing to pursue careers in a range of professions.
- 10.3.5 It is estimated that a development of this scale will 20 years or so to build out. During that time, a range of job opportunities will arise in the construction industry. These will also lead to associated spending within the Borough (for example retail and leisure associated with hotel accommodation, shopping etc).



## **11. Approach to Proposed Policy**

- 11.1 The following section includes the illustrative concept plan (**Figure 8**) for Policy LP7, with **Table 2** setting out the justification in approach to the key policy criteria.
- 11.2 As the Development Plan needs to be read as a whole, there will be a need for future applicants to also have regard to other Local Plan policies in relation to the criteria and supporting text set out within the policy. For ease of cross referencing, proposed Local Plan policies on associated topic areas are also cross referred to below (in addition to being referenced in the supporting text to Policy LP7).

Figure 7 – Policy LP7, land at Jealott's Hill Illustrative Concept Plan



**Table 2 – Justification for approach to policy LP7, land at Jealott's Hill**

Key Policy Criteria	Justification
Employment	<p>Following the demonstration of exceptional circumstances (as set out in <b>Section 4</b>), the policy includes provision for a 132,800 m<sup>2</sup> (gross of employment floorspace) Science and Innovation Park. Within this, 72,200m<sup>2</sup> would be net additional employment floorspace, and 14,300m<sup>2</sup> replacement floorspace for the existing anchor occupier who will also retain 46,300 m<sup>2</sup> of existing floorspace.</p> <p>Given how the housing element of the proposal is linked with employment provision on the site, there is a need for a phasing strategy and legal agreements linked to relevant planning applications to deliver 38,750m<sup>2</sup> of employment floor space together with 1,350 homes in the plan period.</p> <p>An education outreach programme to build on existing links with education institutions would also be required, which would need to be provided as part of the first planning application submission.</p> <p>Employment uses would also be generated through provision of the local centre and primary school (see below).</p>
Housing	<p>As set in <b>Section 4</b> of this Paper, 2,000 homes is related to enabling development to provide cross subsidy for the Science and Innovation Park. This would result in 1,350 homes within the plan period.</p> <p>Given that the housing element of the proposal is linked to employment provision on the site, there is a need for a phasing strategy and legal agreements linked to relevant planning applications to deliver 38,750m<sup>2</sup> of employment floor space together with 1,350 homes within the plan period.</p> <p>A build out rate of 150dpa has been used, and is considered appropriate in the absence of detailed information on construction and phasing. This assumes a minimum of two housebuilders/or two sales outlets on a site of this size. Development partners have already been engaged by Syngenta.</p> <p>Given that the site is currently in the Green Belt, the Local Plan needs to be adopted (anticipated 2022/23) before any scheme could be acceptable in policy terms. The site is in single ownership, however, is complex given its scale and the need for infrastructure and other on/off-site mitigation, some of which will be required prior to construction of residential (such as access points and provision of SANG). Therefore, allowing for a pre-application process (which could run concurrent with Local Plan), it is feasible that an outline</p>

Key Policy Criteria	Justification
	<p>application could be submitted by mid 2022/23 (after the Local Plan is adopted), and be approved by end of 2023/24 (allowing 18 months). This would allow for first reserved matters and condition approval (which would be likely to be submitted on a phased basis) during 2024/25. If development commences by 2025/26, and allowing for a 2 year lead-in for site assembly, access works etc, first completions could occur in 2027/28 (50 units), then 100 units following year, followed by 150dpa thereafter. This would result in 1,350 units in the plan period to 2036/37 (overall anticipated completion of the 2,000 units would be 2041/42). (See Local Plan Housing Trajectory contained in Appendix A of the Housing Background Paper).</p> <p>In line with proposed Policy LP9 on affordable housing (see Housing Background Paper for approach taken to provision of affordable housing), 35% of the new homes are required to be affordable. Of the 2,000 homes, this equates to 700 homes, of which 473 would be expected within the plan period.</p> <p>As set out in <b>Section 4</b> of this Paper, the allocation would also include provision for eight permanent gypsy and traveller pitches, on a site of approximately 0.4ha in order to provide pitch sizes of approximately 500m<sup>2</sup> each. (The policy also includes specific requirements related to the gypsy and traveller site, such as new permanent defensible edge to the Green Belt on the northern boundary of the site, appropriate storage, parking and vehicle turning areas, in line with proposed Policy LP25).</p> <p>There would also be a requirement for up to 5% provision of serviced plots for sale to self and custom builders, plus a proportion of specialist housing for older people (with an emphasis on extra care accommodation), in line with proposed Policy LP23. It is also expected that a mix of housing types would be provided in line with proposed Policy LP24 (see Housing Background Paper for approach to self-build, specialised housing for older people, and housing mix).</p> <p>(Key linked Local Plan Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable Housing: LP9</li> <li>• Accessible and adaptable dwellings: LP22</li> <li>• Housing for older people: LP23</li> <li>• Housing Mix: LP24</li> <li>• Gypsy and Traveller sites: LP25)</li> </ul>
Green Belt	<p>As set out in <b>Section 4</b> of this Paper, exceptional circumstances exist to justify the allocation of the site. <b>Sections 6 and 8</b> of this Paper, set out the approach that has been taken to new settlement/Green Belt boundary, and compensatory measures.</p>

Key Policy Criteria	Justification
	<p>In summary, the minimum amount of land necessary to accommodate the development has been released from the Green Belt. It is expected that a strategic landscape buffer will be provided around the periphery of the development to help create a new defensible Green Belt boundary.</p> <p>Two country parks will also be provided (which will remain part of the Green Belt, of at least 124ha). This will provide significantly over and above the open space requirements for the site, to offset removing land from the Green Belt. These will be publicly accessible, so increase the accessibility of this Green Belt land.</p> <p>Provision of the country parks, strategic landscape buffer, and other planting, and incorporation of a Green Infrastructure Network, will also significantly improve the ecological value of the site, and will achieve at least a 20% biodiversity net gain.</p>
Garden Village Principles	<p>As set out in <b>Section 9</b> of this Paper, development of the site represents as outstanding opportunity for an exemplar development and to realise the opportunity for proximity of a variety of uses within the site, to respond to TCPA and the Government's garden village principles. This is in line with the approach set out in para. 72 of the NPPF in relation to setting clear expectations for development. In summary:</p> <p>Development of the site will be underpinned by a masterplanning and design code process (see below) to ensure a comprehensive holistic approach is taken to the development of the site. This will enable a clear vision to be achieved, reflecting local engagement and aspirations of the whole community, to create a new community with clear identity and attractive environment.</p> <p>The site is also expected to provide exceptional green infrastructure, and will also be based on the highest standards of sustainability, achieving low carbon, to ensure the long term durability of the site, for generations to come (see below).</p> <p>Provision of new country parks (see above) provides opportunity for a healthy and vibrant community together with open space provision within the built part of the site itself, and formal pitch provision. Greenways and leisure routes, together with formal pedestrian and cycleways are proposed through the site to integrate the built development with the wider countryside and to the planned open space areas.</p> <p>Provision of a local centre plus inclusion of a primary school and community facility (see below) will provide necessary services and facilities to meet the day to day needs of the community.</p>

Key Policy Criteria	Justification
	<p>There will also be provision of affordable homes, and mix of housing types, together with wide range of potential local employment opportunities (see above).</p> <p>Stewardship arrangements to ensure that the any community assets, infrastructure and public realm remain for the benefit the whole community. There is a policy requirement for a supporting statement setting out long-term governance manage and stewardship arrangement prior to the submission of an outline application.</p> <p>There is also a requirement for the submission of a 'Garden Village Compliance Statement', to demonstrate how the principles have been incorporated into the site. This would need to be agreed by the Council, as part of the master planning process.</p>
Local Centre	<p>As set out in <b>Section 7</b> of this paper, a local centre is justified due to the scale of development proposed on the site, particularly given the lack of existing facilities and services nearby, and the need to achieve a sustainable scheme on the site itself. The proposed location of the centre is such that it would provide the greatest benefit within the site in terms of proximity to both residential and employment uses.</p> <p>In line with delivery of a mixed-use sustainable development, based on Garden Village Principles, the allocation includes a local centre, to meet the day to day needs of the community (to be provided in tandem with other development). It is expected that 1,528m<sup>2</sup> retail related floor space would be provided, with at least 836m<sup>2</sup> within the plan period, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supermarket of at least 760m<sup>2</sup> (net internal area)</li> <li>• Other retail units of around 480m<sup>2</sup> (net internal area)</li> <li>• Food and drink provision of around 288m<sup>2</sup> (net internal area)</li> </ul> <p>Other non-retail facilities would also be provided such as health centre and veterinary clinic. A community building and children's nursery may also be provided in the local centre if they cannot be satisfactorily incorporated elsewhere as part of the development proposal.</p> <p>An appropriate location is shown on the illustrative concept plan. On the approach to the local centre, it is envisaged that a tree lined avenue to the west linking to Maidenhead Road would be incorporated, to assist with legibility.</p> <p>The location of the centre would also form a key focal point at the heart of the development. The location would intersect with two strategic greenways (which would incorporate leisure routes and</p>

Key Policy Criteria	Justification
	<p>formal pedestrian/cycle routes through the development, and link from the development to both country parks).</p> <p>The location of the local centre would also be adjacent to the primary school, which will assist with the vitality and viability of the centre, due to linked journeys and increased footfall. The indicative location would also allow for use of the centre by existing employees, and future employees of the Science and Innovation Park.</p> <p>There is a need for the provision of the centre to be co-ordinated with the delivery of housing and employment. Therefore, a phasing strategy and legal agreements linked to relevant planning applications to deliver 836m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace within the plan period are required.</p>
Sustainability Framework	<p>It is expected that a Sustainability Framework will support the development, which will set out how various factors will be integrated and inform future masterplanning process and planning applications, which will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy Strategy (to ensure exemplar low carbon development is achieved)</li> <li>• Transport Strategy (to ensure sustainable transport choices are delivered)</li> <li>• Ecology Strategy (to ensure priority habitats are protected and enhanced, and new habitats provided, site management plan for the life of the development and a Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy)</li> <li>• Drainage Strategy (to include technical investigation of all sources of flooding, and incorporation of sustainable drainage systems)</li> <li>• Green Infrastructure Strategy (to ensure a well-connected and multi-functional green infrastructure will be delivered)</li> <li>• Lighting Strategy (to include consideration of dark skies and measures to mitigate impact on biodiversity)</li> <li>• Landscape Strategy (to identify constraints and opportunities, and inform a detailed landscape and visual assessment)</li> </ul> <p>It will be expected that these will be submitted to and agreed by the Council, and will be an important material consideration in the determination of subsequent applications and masterplanning process. Further details on specific topics areas are set out below.</p>

Key Policy Criteria	Justification
Carbon reduction	<p>The proposed allocation relates to a low-carbon development, includes measures to provide a low carbon mixed-use development, through requiring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• net zero regulated emissions for dwellings;</li> <li>• new non-residential buildings to meet BREEAM 'excellent' standard;</li> <li>• reduced embodied carbon in construction; and</li> <li>• carbon off-setting.</li> </ul> <p>(Key linked Local Plan Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable construction: LP49</li> <li>• Renewable and low carbon energy: LP50)</li> </ul>
Green Infrastructure	<p>A holistic approach is required in relation to provision of green infrastructure, consistent with the aims of Garden Village Principles.</p> <p>The site provides significant opportunity to provide a valuable network of green infrastructure assets through provision of compensatory measures in the form of two country parks, and strategic greenways that link them, together with linking open space within the developable area, and green grids within the development parcels. The greenways will act as wildlife corridors in addition to leisure routes and formal pedestrian/cycleways.</p> <p>A formal central park and formal sports pitches, community landshare, and new allotments will also be included, as shown on the illustrative concept plan.</p> <p>It is expected that a Green Infrastructure Strategy (through the Sustainability Framework) will be undertaken and agreed with the Council, which will also need to have regard to flood risk management/sustainable drainage systems, and wider masterplanning process.</p> <p>(Key linked Local Plan Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green Infrastructure: LP16)</li> </ul>
Flooding	<p>The policy takes account of the flooding evidence summarised in <b>Section 7</b>. Some parts of the sites are at risk of flooding. Whilst some of these areas extend into the developable area, the overall allocation takes account of this, and there is a requirement to provide sustainable drainage systems, to mitigate the impact of the development. This should be incorporated into a site wide masterplan, so that this matter is considered at the outset of the design process, and holistically alongside other matters such as provision of Green Infrastructure. There is also a requirement for the proposed to meet the requirements identified in the Level 2 SFRA.</p>



Key Policy Criteria	Justification
	<p>(Key linked Local Plan Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flooding: LP18</li> <li>• Sustainable Drainage Systems: LP51)</li> </ul>
Biodiversity	<p>The policy takes account of the ecological assessments undertaken for the site (as summarised in <b>Section 7</b>). It includes policy criteria to provide a network of green corridors, retain important existing trees, and tree belts (including hedgerows), and supplement with new planting, provision of an ecological network, including protection and enhancement of priority habitats, and retention of the existing orchard (as shown on the illustrative concept plan – identified as ‘community landshare’, although there is an option for this to be reprovided elsewhere within the site).</p> <p>The illustrative concept plan also identifies areas of retained/new woodland, planted tree belts and avenues, and rural character enhancements.</p> <p>A detailed ecological impact assessment would be required, together with a site management plan for the lifetime of the development is also required to set out the programme of works needed to achieve restoration and enhancements to the site, and consideration of a conservation covenant to secure the long-term future of the habitats (this will be undertaken through the Sustainability Framework for the site).</p> <p>Given the scale of the site and creation of the country parks, this provides a significant opportunity to improve the quality and quantity of habitats, in order to achieve a biodiversity net gain of at least 20%. It is expected that a Biodiversity Net Strategy will be submitted for approval as part of the planning application process.</p> <p>(Key linked Local Plan Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodiversity: LP46)</li> </ul>
Transport	<p>Measures will be required to ensure the residential element of the development reduces reliance on car-based trips, encourages more environmentally friendly forms of travel and delivers sustainable transport in accordance with Local Transport Plan objectives. As an alternative to a traditional, fully-funded Travel Plan secured via planning obligations - complete with actions, triggers, targets, on-going monitoring and enforcement - the developer will be offered a voluntary alternative to promoting sustainable travel. The voluntary model will require an agreed sum per dwelling to be paid by the developer to the Council, who will take over responsibility for engaging with residents and delivering a range of active and sustainable initiatives.</p>

Key Policy Criteria	Justification
	<p>The remaining use classes covering business and education will require standard Travel Plans (or alternatives agreed with the Council) as detailed in the Council's policy and guidance.</p> <p>(Key linked Local Plan Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport Principles: LP14</li> <li>• Transport Infrastructure Provision: LP55)</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Infrastructure and other facilities	<p>To provide for a sustainable community, the policy includes requirements for a community building (which may form part of the local centre). The proposed allocation also includes provision for one 2 form entry primary school (capable of expansion to 3 form entry) on at least 3ha of land, with associated playing fields.</p> <p>On-site community recycling facilities are also required.</p> <p>The scheme will be required to ensure appropriate provision for services and utilities are provided (e.g. water supply, sewerage, electricity and broad band).</p> <p>On- and off-site infrastructure provision for the development will be expected to be in accordance with the Infrastructure Development Plan and may be in-kind provision and/or developer contributions.</p> <p>(Further details are set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan schedule for the site).</p> <p>(Key linked Local Plan Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure: LP13)</li> </ul>
Design and masterplan	<p>The Planning Practice Guidance set out that strategic policies can set out design requirements for strategic site allocations and explain how future masterplanning and design work is expected to be taken forward for these sites.</p> <p>Therefore, in line with national guidance, and Garden Village Principles (outlined above), it is necessary that development of the site is underpinned by a masterplanning and design code process to ensure a comprehensive holistic approach is taken.</p> <p>This will be prepared in collaboration with the local planning authority and the local community, and will need to be agreed by the local planning authority before the submission of any planning application(s) for the development of the site, and will be a material consideration in future consideration of planning applications. As it will guide the design of the development over a long period, it will need to include a review mechanism so that changes can be made over time in agreement with the local planning authority.</p>

Key Policy Criteria	Justification
	<p>The requirements for the masterplan for the site have been informed by the Local Plan evidence base, and it is expected that the masterplan should develop/draw upon the illustrative concept plan to address the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the vision for the site, to reflect local engagement and aspirations for the whole community including businesses.</li> <li>• Include rigorous analysis of the context of the site including opportunities, constraints and local aspirations.</li> <li>• Be clearly based on that analysis including landscape, heritage, drainage, ecology and other evidence.</li> <li>• Implement the landscape and visual design principles, heritage statement, biodiversity net gain, drainage strategy and sustainability principles.</li> <li>• Provide an arrangement of uses that will deliver the vision, create a vibrant centre and ensure appropriate relationships between different uses.</li> <li>• Contain detailed design guidance and design codes for different parts of the site that will create beauty, legibility and distinctiveness in the buildings and public spaces.</li> <li>• Include information on appropriate densities and building heights for different parts of the site.</li> <li>• Provide for a phased development that will ensure that employment is delivered in tandem with new housing and that strategic landscaping measures are phased at an early stage so that they will provide visual screening of new development within the wider landscape.</li> </ul> <p>(Key linked Local Plan Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design Principles: LP15</li> <li>• Design: LP42)</li> </ul>
Landscape	<p>The policy and illustrative concept masterplan have been informed by the landscape evidence base (as summarised in <b>Section 7</b>). Extent of proposed developable areas has focused on parts of the site with lower sensitivity, includes substantial development around the existing PDL core within the site. A requirement includes a phasing plan to be agreed to ensure less sensitive (in landscape terms) parts of the site are development in advance of more sensitive areas, so that woodland and boundary planting can become more established as the site is developed.</p> <p>In line with the recommendations of the landscape work, there are also requirements to maintain the character of rural lanes, retain, manage and enhance existing trees and woodland.</p> <p>A detailed landscape and visual impact assessment will need to be undertaken and agreed with the council, which will include details of</p>

Key Policy Criteria	Justification
	<p>how skyline views can be avoided). This includes reference to maximum heights tested in the evidence.</p> <p>Mitigation in terms of planting, and creation of a long terms defensible edge of the Green Belt is also included. The concept masterplan identifies area for Green Belt boundary reinforcement, rural character enhancement (along existing lanes) and locations for new tree belts.</p> <p>A requirement for a lighting strategy is also included in relation to consideration of dark skies.</p> <p>(Key linked Local Plan Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape Character: LP37</li> <li>• Protection and enhancement of trees and hedgerows: LP48)</li> </ul>
Mitigation for Habitat Sites	<p>A Habitats Regulations Assessment will need to be undertaken at the planning application stage and agreed with the Council and Natural England. Measures to avoid and mitigate the impact of development on habitat sites will include the provision in perpetuity of an on-site bespoke Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to be located in the eastern country park (which is within the Green Belt) and a financial contribution towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring measures.</p> <p>(Key linked Development Management Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area: LP17</li> <li>• Designated nature conservation and geological sites: LP47)</li> </ul>
Heritage	<p>There are 8 designated heritage assets within the site or on its periphery. A Heritage Statement will be required to support the development proposals (responding to the Council's Heritage evidence) to demonstrate a clear understanding of the significance of their settings and how their significance would be affected, as well as providing clear mitigation for any harm caused.</p> <p>There may also be potential for archaeological remains on the site, therefore a desk based assessment and where necessary field evaluation is required.</p> <p>(Key linked Local Plan Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection and enhancement of the historic environment: LP45)</li> </ul>
Other matters	<p>Given the location of the site in relation to existing main road network and sewage works, noise and odour impact assessment will be required.</p>

Key Policy Criteria	Justification
	<p>Given the location of the site, a lighting strategy would be required to include consideration of dark skies.</p> <p>Given the scale of the proposal, an Environmental Impact Assessment will also be required to be undertaken.</p> <p>(Key linked Local Plan Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pollution and hazards: LP52)</li> </ul>
Response to SA/SEA recommendations	The recommendations of the SA/SEA in relation to this site have been incorporated into the policy, supporting text and illustrative concept plan, and are reflected in relevant sections above.

## **12. How previous consultation responses have been addressed**

12.1 The BFLP has been through five consultations including the Draft BLFP Revised Growth Strategy (2019) Regulation 18 consultation which introduced the proposal to allocate Land at Jealott's Hill, Warfield for a mixed-use settlement. The main issues raised through this consultation are summarised in the BFLP Interim Consultation Statement<sup>26</sup> and are as below:

- Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) objects to the proposals as will significantly impact RBWM (highway and transport networks), unsure whether over provision of housing could meet unmet needs and adverse impact on biodiversity, landscape and climate change.
- Opposition to the proposed allocation from Parish Councils and residents, on grounds which included the following:
  - Green Belt release and lack of evidence to justify exceptional circumstances.
  - Morality of Green Belt release for investors benefit.
  - Alternatives have not been considered sufficiently.
  - The site is not required as above housing need and no need for housing for employees.
  - Loss of jobs would not be significant, jobs not needed, new employees would commute.
  - Proposal could be funded from other sources, no evidence of need.
  - No guarantee Syngenta will stay.
  - Unsustainable location.
  - Concerns regarding pressure on infrastructure (including roads) and services.
  - Merging of settlements.
  - Adverse impact on biodiversity due to loss of habitats and impact on nearby designated sites.
  - Loss of rural and open character and adverse impact on historic environment.
  - Loss/change of footpaths and bridleways.
  - Increase in pollution and adverse impact on air quality.
  - Adverse impact on climate change/sustainability.
  - Overdevelopment of the north of the borough/overdevelopment of the site.
  - Conflict with Warfield Neighbourhood Plan.
  - Conflict with other draft policies in the Local Plan.
- Developers/site promoters object on grounds, which included the following:
  - No justification for removing site from the Green Belt as it contributes to the Green Belt purposes and there are no exceptional circumstances.
  - Other reasonable options/sites are available.
  - Not required as housing needs met.
  - Employment needs can be met without need to release Green Belt.
  - No evidence that housing is needed to deliver improvements.
  - No evidence site in current form is unviable.

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<sup>26</sup> Pre-Submission Consultation Statement. BFC, 2021. (LP/Ev/10r)

- Lack of existing infrastructure/significant improvements needed and no evidence can be delivered in time.
- Not a sustainable location.
- Conflicts with NPPF.
- Contrary to other draft policies in the Local Plan including the spatial strategy.

12.2 The site is considered appropriate for allocation and information on why is set out in the Housing Background Paper<sup>27</sup> which summarises the detailed topic-based evidence studies. Further evidence on ‘exceptional circumstances’ is set out in this Background Paper and further evidence has been made available on the economic and financial case concerned with the development. The infrastructure requirements associated with the development of the site are detailed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan<sup>28</sup> and the Duty to Cooperate discussions are summarised in the Duty to Co-operate Statement<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> Housing Background Paper. BFC, 2021. (LP/Ev/2i)

<sup>28</sup> Infrastructure Delivery Plan. BFC, 2021. (LP/Ev/4l)

<sup>29</sup> Pre-Submission Duty to Co-operate Statement. BFC, 2021. (LP/Ev/10q)

### **13. Duty to Co-operate**

13.1 The key duty to co-operate bodies relevant to this site that the Council has engaged with are:

- Highways England: in relation to impact to the strategic road network.
- Natural England: in relation to impact upon habitat sites (including implications of air quality).
- Neighbouring authorities:
  - Within Berkshire (Reading, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM), Slough, West Berkshire and Wokingham Borough).
  - Surrey (Surrey County Council, Surrey Heath, Runnymede).
  - Hampshire (Hampshire County Council, Hart and Rushmoor).
  - South Bucks.
  - Hertfordshire.
- Latterly, duty to co-operate engagement with neighbouring authorities has focused specifically on Wokingham Borough Council and RBWM, the two most potentially affected authorities. Discussions have predominately related to cross boundary impacts such as provision of housing (including meeting the needs for gypsy and travellers), employment, landscape, infrastructure including education and impact on the highway network.

13.2 In addition to the statutory consultation on the Plan at the Regulation 18 Stage, specific duty to co-operate engagement has involved focused meetings, correspondence relating to sharing of evidence base and data which supports the allocation and requesting feedback on evidence/approach.

13.3 This is set out in further detail in the Duty to Co-operate Statement<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> Pre-Submission Duty to Co-operate Statement. BFC, 2021. (LP/Ev/10q)



#### **14. Statement of Common Ground**

- 14.1 It is intended that a Statement of Common Ground will be progressed between the Council and promoters of the site. Once finalised this will be provided as a supporting document in relation to the Examination of the Plan.

## 15. Conclusions

- 15.1 As outlined in **Section 4** of this document, exceptional circumstances exist to justify release of land from the Green Belt and allocation of land for:
- 132,800m<sup>2</sup> employment floor space for a Science and Innovation Park, anchored by Syngenta (of which 38,750m<sup>2</sup> (net) will be within the plan period).
  - 2,000 dwellings (1,350 in the plan period) to provide c. £68m of cross funding for the Science and Innovation Park.
  - 0.4ha gypsy and traveller site to accommodate eight permanent pitches.
- 15.2 As set out in **Section 5**, the proposal would result in a sustainable pattern of development and will make the best use of existing PDL land within the site. A variety of sustainable transport measures will be incorporated (including a cycle/footpath network), and the scale of the scheme will facilitate a local centre, which will assist with self-containment of journeys within the site.
- 15.3 As a result of the allocation and release of land from the Green Belt, as set out in **Section 6**, a variety of compensatory measures are proposed, which will largely relate to the provision of two country parks. These will be publicly accessible. These together with significant proposed enhancement to Green Infrastructure will also result in a biodiversity net gain of at least 20% across the whole site.
- 15.4 A range of evidence base has been taken into consideration in relation to the proposed allocation (see **Section 7**).
- 15.5 As set out in **Section 8**, the new settlement/Green Belt boundary has been drawn to largely align with the extent of allocated built development. However, in some parts of the site, boundaries have been drawn to reflect existing physical features where this would result in a new defensible boundary, and to reflect ownership of land at Jealott's Hill.
- 15.6 Given the scale of the proposal, as set out in **Section 9**, the allocation would follow Garden Village Principles. It would also be expected to be an exemplar low carbon development.
- 15.7 As set out in **Section 10**, allocation of the site would bring about a range of social, environmental, and economic benefits including contributing to meeting the housing development needs of the Borough over the plan period.
- 15.8 **Section 11** provides justification to the approach to the policy criteria. For this site, this will include a Sustainability Framework to set out how various measures (such as energy, ecology, drainage, landscape and Green Infrastructure) will be integrated and inform a masterplanning process to ensure a comprehensive approach is taken. Significant landscaping will be provided to ensure a new robust defensible boundary. Phasing strategies and planning agreements will also be required to ensure that certain aspects of the proposal are delivered within the plan period.
- 15.9 The Council has sought to undertake meaningful engagement with residents of the Borough and relevant groups and organisations through the Regulation 18 consultation stages of the Plan, and through the duty co-operate process with

neighbouring authorities, Natural England and Highways England (as set out in **Sections 12 and 13**).