

**Site Allocations Development Plan Document  
Common Questions & Answers  
November 2011**

**1. General Questions**

***What is the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (SADPD)?***

It is a planning policy document that identifies the locations for different forms of development that are needed to achieve the vision and spatial objectives in the Bracknell Forest Core Strategy. One of its main functions is to allocate sites to meet the Borough's housing needs, and ensure that appropriate infrastructure is identified alongside new development.

***Why is the Council preparing the SADPD now?***

Production of the SADPD supports the Council's policy of having a **plan-led** approach to development rather than reacting to developers' proposals. We are currently vulnerable to inappropriate planning applications because we do not have an identified five year land supply against the locally agreed housing target set in the Council's adopted Core Strategy.

***Doesn't the proposed abolition of the South East Plan mean you don't need to plan for more homes?***

No. The Government has made it clear that we should continue to identify a supply of land for housing. The Government has confirmed that increased house building, including affordable housing, was a key priority. This is further reinforced by the Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Use of the Council's locally derived housing target based on the Borough's adopted Core Strategy, rather than the previous figure based on the South East Plan, (which the Government has announced its intention to abolish), supports the Government's objectives of decentralisation, localism and planning positively for housing delivery to meet local needs. In practice, this means we are planning for 2000 houses less than what the previous Government had inserted into the South East Plan.

***Why do we need more housing?***

To:

- Accommodate the need for new households in the Borough;
- Deal with a local population which is ageing (most older people prefer to stay in their own homes);
- Respond to a continuing decrease in the average size of households due to high levels of divorce, separation and people generally living longer;
- Provide homes that are affordable to a wide range of people;
- Support the regeneration of Bracknell town centre;

- Provide a balance of housing mix and workforce to support a strong local economy;
- Help deliver improvements to health and wellbeing through improved housing quality and choice.

The 'Planning for Growth' Statement (March 2011) sets out the Government's commitment for Local Planning Authorities to continue to prepare up to date plans, and make every effort to identify and meet the housing, business and other development needs of their areas. The Government's Draft National Planning Policy Framework also sets out that local plans should plan positively for development and infrastructure in an area.

### ***Where did the 10,780 new homes figure come from?***

This is a number that was agreed by the Council at the time the regional plan was being prepared, and is the basis for the figure in our adopted Core Strategy. The figure in the final regional plan was 2,000 higher in accordance with the recommendations of the Planning Inspectorate's Panel Report that examined the draft regional plan. The number in the draft submission SADPD is slightly lower than the figure in the Core Strategy (policy CS15) because it does not include any carry over from the previous plan period.

The use of this figure is supported by Government guidance following the planned revocation of the regional strategies in that it states that these locally derived numbers may be appropriate and that the development framework for the Borough now comprises adopted Development Plan Documents and National policies. For us, this means the Core Strategy provides the default housing target. The figure also fits well with the most up to date Government household projections which forecast an increase of 11,000 households for Bracknell Forest during the plan period (2006-2026).

### ***Will the developments have any benefits for existing communities?***

The following are required as part of the new development, but will benefit the wider community:

- Over 150 hectares of new public open space (including mitigation land to avoid adverse impacts on the Special Protection Area to the south of the Borough);
- Highway improvements to important routes through the Borough and support improved bus services;
- Improvements to the pedestrian and cycle networks;
- Five new primary schools, and a site and funding towards a new secondary school;
- A wide range of new and enhanced community facilities (e.g. multi-functional community hubs);
- A mix of housing types that will meet local needs, including affordable housing;
- Support for the local economy and regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre.

### ***What are you doing about consultation?***

We have held two major consultations along the way to developing the SADPD: starting with a general engagement on what might be included in the document and a wide range of potential sites might be used to meet needs to 2026 and the latest being a preferred approach to the SADPD. These comprised:

- Issues and Options (Participation Document ) – February to April 2010 and
- Preferred Option – November 2010 to January 2011

We will:

- Set up an online consultation with a direct link from the front page of the Council website (direct web link <http://consult.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/portal/planning.siteallocations/draftsubmssion>).
- Place an article in Town and Country delivered to all households in the Borough;
- Make copies of the documents available in public libraries and Council offices;
- Issue a press release to local newspapers at the start of the consultation and place a half page advertisement in local newspapers;
- Send e-mails or letters to all groups and individuals (over 1,300) on our database who responded previously to alert them to the next steps of engagement;
- Produce an explanatory leaflet;
- Place a statutory advertisement in a local newspaper.

The next round of engagement is where the Council has determined it is happy to proceed with a document to be examined by Government Inspectors, and representations are sought from the public on the “soundness” of this document (how to be involved in next steps is dealt with under **Next Steps** below).

### ***Have we listened to the previous consultations?***

Over the period of developing the SADPD, almost 10,000 individual comments have been received. Each of these has been analysed by officers to ensure that we are taking account of all feedback received. These comments have been considered and either accepted or not accepted with reasons why. We have taken heed of these comments for example by reducing the amount of development in a particular area for sound reasons, or by eliminating sites based on evidence or professional experience. All of this has then been presented to Members for their consideration so that all comments have been properly taken account of. Results of the analysis are available to the public as part of the background information supporting the SADPD.

### ***What are the Next Steps?***

The Draft Submission version of the SADPD, in the version the Council feels is sound and fit for submission to the Government for independent examination. It will be recommended for approval for publication and submission by the Council In November 2011. Publication will trigger a further period of engagement with the public followed by submission to the Secretary of State and examination by an independent Inspector.

### ***What is a legally compliant and ‘sound’ plan?***

To be legally compliant the Draft Submission Document must be prepared in accordance with a Local Development Scheme and with the Statement of Community Involvement. It should have been subject to sustainability appraisal and have had regard to national policy.

#### ***A ‘sound’ plan is one that is:***

- Justified;
- Effective, and
- Consistent with national policy.

<p>A justified plan is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Founded on a robust and credible evidence base;</li><li>• The most appropriate approach when considered against the reasonable alternatives.</li></ul>	<p>An effective plan is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deliverable;</li><li>• Can take account of changing circumstances (flexibility);</li><li>• Able to be monitored.</li></ul>
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Representations should explain in what way(s):

- The Council has not followed correct procedures (i.e. the document is not legally compliant; and /or
- The Draft Submission Document is not ‘sound’ and what change(s) would need to be made to make it ‘sound’.

Further information on soundness will be included in the accompanying guidance leaflet.

As referred to above, in previous consultations, the Council has asked the public to provide their opinion and comment on the content of the documents prepared. Whilst public comment is still sought at the Draft Submission stage, there are specific tests which the public must consider when making comments as this is what the Independent Inspector will be judging the SADPD against. This will not stop individuals or groups from making whatever comments they wish, but feedback outside of these tests will be given very little if any consideration by the Inspector.

Prior to the next engagement process, the Council will make available a short guide to assist the public in making accurate and useful representations at the publication stage. This will be available from our website or by contacting the Council.

### ***How did you decide where development should go?***

In the early stages of the SADPD, we identified all potential sites that were available for development. These are then tested to determine which ones were most suitable for development, which are the most sustainable, and which are deliverable during the plan period. We also assessed which best met the Council’s vision and objectives. We identified the constraints to developing potential sites and whether

the constraints could be overcome. We also assessed potential sites against a set of sustainability criteria through a process known as Sustainability Appraisal.

The factors considered when selecting sites for allocation include, but are not limited to:

- Capacity to link to existing settlements and create sustainable communities;
- Availability of the land for development;
- Feedback from previous consultations;
- Landscape sensitivity;
- Accessibility to services and facilities;
- Local and strategic transport issues;
- Heritage value (listed buildings / conservation areas / archaeology / historic parks and gardens);
- Ecology;
- Flood risk.

We also use the approach set out in the adopted Core Strategy Policy CS2 which states that the Council will allocate land for development in the following sequence:

1. Bracknell Town Centre;
2. Previously developed land and buildings in defined settlements;
3. Other land within defined settlements where this does not conflict with other policies;
4. Extensions to defined settlements with good public transport links to the rest of the urban area or with firm proposals to provide such links.

### ***What is the SHLAA?***

The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is essentially a long list of possible development sites that have been identified by the Council or put forward by their owners. The Council is required to include all sites put forward regardless of their suitability for development in the SHLAA. Therefore, if a site appears in the SHLAA it doesn't necessarily mean that the Council would support its development, or that it is ever likely to be developed in the future. Within the SHLAA an initial assessment is made of the suitability of sites based on certain criteria such as whether they are within or adjacent to a defined settlement or in the green belt.

Suitable sites, which are of sufficient size and satisfy other planning criteria, may be allocated for development and some of the SHLAA sites do appear in the SADPD Preferred Option to help meet the Borough's housing target. This is a continuous review of sites and does not stop with the publication of the SADPD. It is used to continually monitor sites that are available for housing development and assess their potential to play a role in meeting our projected need.

### ***Why don't you just re-use empty office buildings for housing?***

The Council has investigated the potential for under-used employment sites to be used for housing and has identified some in the SADPD for housing development such as the Crowthorne Business Park and parts of the Eastern Industrial Area in Bracknell. However, there are a number of reasons why some current employment sites have not been identified including:

- Sites that are important parts of existing employment areas;
- Sites that are poorly located for residential use;
- Sites that are within areas liable to flood;

- Sites whose owners are not interested in using them for housing i.e. they cannot count towards our housing targets as they are considered undeliverable.

It is important that some employment land is retained in order to maintain the balance between the numbers of people in the Borough in work and the employment opportunities available for the future.

### ***What is happening about the regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre?***

Regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre remains a key objective for the Council and work is continuing in order to bring it forward despite the difficult economic climate.

The original concept of a single major phase of development is unlikely to happen under current market conditions so the Council is working with development partners to bring the regeneration forward on a phased basis. The first phase is almost complete in the form of the new Waitrose foodstore at the north end of the Town Centre. We are also anticipating a further early phase will be the regeneration of the Skimped Hill site with a new Healthspace.

The Compulsory Purchase Order process is being implemented whereby key land areas not owned by our development partner, Bracknell Regeneration Partnership (BRP), are being purchased to allow implementation of the town centre plans. This has included for example the purchase of the Market Square properties to enable these to be removed to allow better access and public realm leading to the new major retail area in the north of the centre.

While we are proposing to take the Peel Centre out of the designated town centre area, we still see it as a very important element of the town's retail offer and will continue to support it as an edge of centre shopping location. The complete renovation of the Peel Centre, including two new retail outlets, is almost complete.

Our housing figures include 1,000 new homes to be built in the town centre, and this is still the Council's aim. The Council is working closely with BRP and the owners of Winchester House (former home to 3M) to bring a residential schemes forward in the southern and northern ends of the town centre.

### ***Why are we still looking at garden land when the government has changed the rules on 'garden grabbing'?***

The changes to PPS3 regarding "garden grabbing" for new infill development does not prevent development on garden land. It has stopped private residential gardens in built up areas being classified as "previously developed" or "brownfield" land. This makes such garden land a lower priority for development than brownfield land, but does not prevent it. Where such land can be developed in a way that will not cause unacceptable harm to the character of existing residential areas or conflict with other planning policies, this may be preferable to allocating alternative greenfield sites which may be in a less sustainable location. As noted above, this moves this land from second to third on this Council's ranking of sites which we will look at for allocation, in line with Core Strategy Policy CS2.

***What difference does the Government dropping the national minimum housing density of 30 homes per hectare make?***

In our view, this change provides little change for Bracknell Forest. The revised guidance still requires us to use land efficiently and it is not in our interest to waste developable land thereby increasing our need for more land to meet growth targets. It also makes it clear that the density of existing development should not dictate the density of new housing by stifling change or requiring it to replicate existing styles or built forms.

Adopting lower densities could result in reduced ability to support public transport services, higher levels of car usage to access facilities and the need to allocate a greater area of land to accommodate a given number of homes. The Government is still emphasising the need for sustainable development that minimises the need to travel, especially by car, and the need to use available land efficiently. Furthermore, we want to minimise our need for greater amounts of countryside areas being brought into development.

For Bracknell Forest, our Core Strategy Policy CS1 also seeks the efficient use of land and buildings and locating development so as to reduce the need to travel, which would support higher densities. However, this is balanced by the need to protect and enhance the character and quality of local landscapes (Policy CS1) and respect local patterns of development (Policy CS7).

***What about health services?***

The majority of GP practices in Bracknell Forest Borough have little or no spare capacity to improve their premises on their current sites. The Bracknell Health Space is planned to be the major new development in primary care provision in Bracknell, centrally located so as to be easily accessible for the majority of the Bracknell Forest population. The Health Space will focus on providing (local), high quality, cost-effective extended primary care and specialist services – i.e. the health care people need most often and which does not need the facilities of a major hospital. In addition to specific primary care facilities (GP practices), it will provide services either not cost effective or easily replicated or provided in primary care / GP practices.

Heatherwood and Wexham Park NHS Foundation Trust are planning a major programme of service redesign. This will include a consolidation of services currently provided on the Heatherwood Hospital site at Ascot, potentially rationalising the range of services provided there.

Royal Berkshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has developed specialist cancer and renal services at Brant's Bridge, close to Bracknell Town Centre. This is now open providing cancer and renal services locally to Bracknell residents, avoiding the need for travel to the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading.

***Why isn't promised infrastructure delivered – like the surgery and school at Jennetts Park?***

The delivery of infrastructure relating to large development schemes like Jennetts Park is implemented in phases so that certain levels of development trigger certain items of infrastructure as they are needed. Due to the downturn in the economy

there was a delay in reaching the trigger point for the new school, but this has now been delivered and opened in September 2011. With regard to a doctor's surgery, since the planning consents were granted for Jennetts Park, the Primary Care Trust (PCT) have changed their model of health care delivery and are now promoting a more centralised model with GPs and other medical services being provided at a new health centre planned for Bracknell Town Centre. While the Council can require the developer to provide a building that could accommodate health facilities, we do not have powers to require the PCT or General Practitioners to occupy them.

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan that supports the Site Allocations proposals has been prepared with the best information available from infrastructure and service providers and will continue to be reviewed and updated after the SADPD is published so that we have the best picture of infrastructure need and delivery possible.

***Our roads are congested now so how can they take more traffic from the new planned growth?***

The Council has modelled the cumulative effect of development impacts on the local highway network, both with and without the proposed developments and accompanying highway improvements. The Council and Wokingham Borough Council are working closely with the Highways Agency regarding impact upon the Strategic Road Network. The model demonstrates that the proposed improvements will not lead to a deterioration over the baseline situation that takes account of background traffic growth and the additional traffic that the new development will generate, and that from proposed development in Wokingham.

For most periods of the day and week, the highway network remains uncongested. It is during the morning and afternoon peak times when we experience some levels of congestion. However, these are relatively limited in most areas when compared to other areas in the region. Also, because of our strategic location between the M4 and M3 and west of London, the projected background growth to the network is overwhelmingly from growth taking place elsewhere. Our best ability to cope with this increased impact is to use the infrastructure delivered from our own projected growth needs. In this way, the new growth, whilst delivering against its own impact, can provide a wider community benefit.

***Will planned transport infrastructure eliminate congestion on our roads?***

No. As stated above, most of the impact we see is caused by our strategic location and growth happening elsewhere. We so use our own borough money to improve the network as much as possible and will also use the infrastructure delivered as part of our planned new growth to minimise this impact as much as possible. We also believe that applying a "plan-led" approach gives us the best opportunity to maximise the benefit of new infrastructure rather than react to problems arising from "unplanned" development.

***Can the water supply and sewerage systems cope?***

*Water Supply*

New development areas are likely to require new or upgraded distribution mains and potentially increased pumping capacity. Precise requirements would be identified through further investigations alongside detailed planning work. These measures are



to ensure the physical pipe network can cope with demand from the new homes, without deterioration in service to existing customers. Developers will be expected to work closely with the relevant water company, and pay any relevant contribution for necessary improvements to the water company.

### *Wastewater and Sewerage*

Thames Water's largest Sewage Treatment Works (STWs) in the Bracknell Forest area are Bracknell STW and Ascot STW. To accommodate the proposed new homes these STWs will require upgrades in the future. Provided there is enough time, funding and suitable phasing, upgrades should not prove too problematic (3 - 5 years for STW upgrades). It is important to also consider the sewerage network demands for developments and this would need to be determined on a site by site basis using detailed modelling possibly funded by developers, once specific plans for sites become available. In response to the Preferred Option Consultation, Thames Water had no objection in principle to the allocation of sites for development, and developers will be required to demonstrate there is adequate waste water capacity, on and off site to serve the development.

### ***What about developments in adjoining boroughs – especially the growth planned for Wokingham?***

Adjacent Councils (District/Borough and Parish Councils) are statutory consultees, and so would have an opportunity to comment on all stages of the document, including the Sustainability Appraisal.

The SADPD proposals have been developed in the knowledge of the proposed developments in Wokingham Borough and this Council has modelled the cumulative effect of development impacts on the local highway network both with and without the proposed developments and the accompanying highway improvement. The Council has exchanged data with Wokingham Borough Council to feed into the Council's respective transport models. Joint working has also taken place on various items of infrastructure, including education facilities. A dialogue with officers will be maintained as preparation on the SADPD continues.

The Council and Wokingham Borough Council are also working closely with the Highways Agency regarding the impact on the Strategic Road Network. The model demonstrates that the proposed improvements will not lead to a deterioration over the baseline situation that takes account of background traffic growth and the additional traffic that the new development will generate and that from proposed development in Wokingham.

Representatives from the planning policy section of each Unitary Authority in Berkshire meet on a monthly basis to exchange information on progress on their Local Development Frameworks and issues arising in the preparation of documents. All have been made aware of the progression of the SADPD and studies undertaken to support the document.

The Council has worked in partnership with 10 other local authorities and other interested parties (including Natural England) in respect to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). Partnership work has included strategies, guidance and the production and implementation of the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) project. This on-going work involves Officer, Member and legal input which is formalised through the Joint Strategic Partnership (JSP). This

partnership has proved very successful in co-ordinating, discussing and progressing SPA related issues.

## **2. Site Specific Questions**

### **2.1 Land at Broadmoor, Crowthorne**

#### ***Won't development harm the Special Protection Area (SPA)?***

Any proposal will be required to include an amount of alternative recreational land to divert dog-walkers and others from the SPA and mitigate the impact of the new development on it. Given the proximity of the site to the SPA, significantly more of this mitigation land will be required than the normal standard. There will be no residential development in the 400m buffer zone around the SPA.

#### ***What about local transport impacts?***

In order to ensure that the combined new developments cause no significant adverse impact on the local transport network, improvements are proposed to fifteen functions on key routes within the Borough, and a new access road is proposed. These will be accompanied by improvements, to pedestrian and cycle routes and public transport. Further details are in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Transport modelling has been carried out to ensure that the proposed measures will effectively alleviate the additional impacts caused by the proposed development.

#### ***What's happening with the Hospital?***

The West London Mental Health NHS Trust is planning to carry out a major redevelopment of the hospital, including construction of effectively a new hospital on part of the Broadmoor site. A new use will be sought for the existing listed hospital building that will retain its historic interest. Further information about the Trust's plans is on this web link:

<http://www.wlmht.nhs.uk/services/b/broadmoor/redevelopment.html>

At the time of writing (November 2011) there is a current planning application for the new hospital building and access road.

#### ***Where will the extra children go to school?***

There is a current application for the new hospital building and the access road.

The education department have advised that the development is not of sufficient scale to require the provision of a new primary school. Financial contributions will therefore be secured towards the provision of additional primary school places off-site. Financial contributions will also be secured towards the provision of additional secondary school places at Edgbarrow School.

### ***What about heritage issues?***

It is acknowledged that there will be harm to the significance of the registered park and garden. It will be for Bracknell Forest to form a view as to whether the public benefit secured by provision of the hospital is sufficient to justify the proposed development despite the harm caused to interests of acknowledged importance, and additional justification and evidence has been sought from the owners of the site. Redevelopment will need to be sympathetic to the site's heritage assets and there will be a requirement for a Conservation Management Plan as part of the policy.

Redevelopment would provide a new hospital that is fit for purpose and would retain a significant local employer offering a wide range of job opportunities within the Borough. It would also help to secure the future of a Listed Building and the regeneration of a historic park of Crowthorne. Further consideration of this issue will be set out in the Draft Submission Background Paper. The proposed policy wording makes it clear that the number of homes within the walled garden area may need to be reduced in order to satisfactorily demonstrate that harm to the integrity of the site's heritage assets is minimised.

## **2.2 Land at Transport Research Laboratory, Crowthorne**

### ***What about the planning appeal that was dismissed?***

The appeal was based on the determination of a planning application against the existing planning policy framework at the time. The SADPD will form a new part of the planning policy framework. This means that a different set of considerations will apply. In particular, it means that development of the site is not being considered in isolation, but in relation to the relative merits of developing this site compared to alternative locations.

The Council has always accepted that the right form of development would be acceptable. The current proposal is very different to the development that was considered at the appeal which had a lot more employment development but fewer homes. The appeal decision made it clear that the site is suitable for development, but not in the form that was considered at the inquiry.

### ***Won't development harm the Special Protection Area?***

Any proposal will be required to include an amount of alternative recreational land to divert dog-walkers and others from the SPA and mitigate the impact of the new development on it. Given the proximity of the site to the SPA, significantly more of this mitigation land will be required than the normal standard. There will be no residential development within the 400m buffer zone of the SPA.

### ***What about local transport impacts?***

In order to ensure that the combined new developments cause no significant adverse impact on the local transport network, improvements are proposed to fifteen functions on key routes within the Borough. These will be accompanied by improvements, to

pedestrian and cycle routes and public transport. Further details are in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Transport modelling has been carried out to ensure that the proposed measures will effectively alleviate the additional impacts caused by the proposed development.

***Where will the extra children go to school?***

A new Primary School will be provided on the site and financial contributions will be secured towards the provision of additional secondary school places at Easthampstead School.

***What about the gap between Crowthorne and Bracknell?***

This was an important issue at the planning inquiry. The decision letter made it clear that the development proposed at that time would be unacceptably harmful to the gap, but did not rule out the possibility of extending development beyond the existing built-up area of the site.

The housing numbers require us to allocate greenfield sites as we do not have enough potential brownfield sites, including Bracknell Town Centre and urban areas throughout the borough, to meet demand. In accordance with our development location policy (Core Strategy Policy CS2), the next priority will be extensions to existing settlements and inevitably in some cases, these will form part of a buffer between that settlement and another.

The proposed concept plan includes the provision of a strong tree screen along the boundary with Nine Mile Ride and the northern part of Old Wokingham Road. It also avoids development in the north east corner of the site at the closest point to the built-up area of Bracknell.

***What about the proposed Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Crowthorne?***

Following detailed assessment of air quality, DEFRA has required the Council to declare two air quality management areas (AQMAs) within its area for nitrogen dioxide, one of which is at Bracknell Road/Crowthorne High Street, Crowthorne, and the other Downshire Way/Bagshot Road, Bracknell. AQMAs are areas where air pollution is above national air quality standards. The Council has expanded its monitoring programme for further assessment of the air quality within the two AQMAs. It is also developing an Air Quality Action Plan.

An AQMA designation should not prohibit future development, however each application for development will be considered for its potential impact on air quality on a case-by-case basis. All applications for development inside AQMAs should be supported by sufficient information to allow full consideration of their likely impact on local air quality.

***What does the relocation of the Council Depot to the TRL site involve?***

The plan would be to relocate the existing depot use i.e. refuse collection, street cleansing, landscape. This may also relocate the highway maintenance function including the salt barn - subject to cost.

Refuse and recycling trucks would be parked overnight. They would leave about 7 am and return by 4pm. No refuse is kept over night at this site. The street cleansing service and landscape team would leave about 8pm.

The refuse contract uses circa 12 vehicles, the majority being refuse trucks. The rest of the activity whether street cleansing, landscape or refuse is reliant on the smaller sized pick-up type of vehicle. Generally about 20 of these will be based here in total but not always on site. If highways maintenance is included - the majority of the vehicles are small. The gritters are not much bigger than a pick up; during the winter they could be called on at night - 20 - 30 times based on the past.

There would be deliveries so there would be a parking area for the trucks and staff cars, an administration office and some covered parking/workshop/storage areas. If the highways maintenance function comes in there could be a salt barn and a materials storage area, subject to the viability of moving this from the Downmill Road site in Bracknell. Specific details will depend on requirements at the time.

## **2.3 Amen Corner North, Binfield**

### ***What about local transport impacts?***

In order to ensure that the combined new developments cause no significant adverse impact on the local transport network, improvements are proposed to fifteen functions on key routes within the Borough. These will be accompanied by improvements, to pedestrian and cycle routes and public transport. Further details are in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Transport modelling has been carried out to ensure that the proposed measures will effectively alleviate the additional impacts caused by the proposed development.

### ***Where will the extra children go to school?***

The education authority has advised that primary school children from this site would go to one or both of the two new Primary schools proposed for Amen Corner south and the Blue Mountain site. The catchment areas for the new schools, and any changes to the catchments for the existing schools in the area have yet to be finalised and will be subject to consultation. Secondary provision would be at a new secondary school proposed at the Blue Mountain site.

### ***What about the gap between Binfield and Wokingham / Bracknell?***

The housing numbers require us to allocate greenfield sites as we do not have enough potential brownfield sites, including Bracknell Town Centre and urban areas throughout the borough, to meet demand. In accordance with our development location policy (Core Strategy Policy CS2), the next priority will be extensions to existing settlements and inevitably in some cases, these will form part of a buffer between that settlement and another.

The proposal places the development at the southern end of the site where it will link to the built up area at Amen Corner. This will leave an undeveloped gap to the north and to the west to ensure that a significant gap is retained. Parts of the gap will be allocated as public open space and mitigation land to avoid adverse impacts on the Special Protection Area to the south of the Borough. This means that significant areas of the gap will be retained as open space and its amenity value will be enhanced through making it available for public informal recreation.

#### ***Won't wildlife and nature interests be harmed?***

A Phase 1 Habitat Survey has been carried out of the entire broad area identified at the Options stage and previously consulted on. This did not identify any over-riding nature conservation interests that would prevent the site being developed. It does identify parts of the site that should be kept free of development. These include two Local Wildlife Sites that mainly comprise ancient woodland. The Phase 1 survey also indicates that further studies should be carried out to ensure that proper account is taken of nature conservation as the design of any development is worked up in more detail, including accurate plotting of recent badger activity.

## **2.4 Land at Blue Mountain, Binfield**

#### ***What about local transport impacts?***

In order to ensure that the combined new developments cause no significant adverse impact on the local transport network, improvements are proposed to fifteen functions on key routes within the Borough. These will be accompanied by improvements, to pedestrian and cycle routes and public transport. Further details are in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Transport modelling has been carried out to ensure that the proposed measures will effectively alleviate the additional impacts caused by the proposed development.

#### ***Where will the extra children go to school?***

The preferred option includes a range of educational provision on this site to include a new primary school, a new secondary school and a new Special Educational Needs facility.

#### ***What about the gap between Binfield and Bracknell?***

The housing numbers require us to allocate greenfield sites as we do not have enough potential brownfield sites, including Bracknell Town Centre and urban areas throughout the borough, to meet demand. In accordance with our development location policy (Core Strategy Policy CS2), the next priority will be extensions to existing settlements and inevitably in some cases, these will form part of a buffer between that settlement and another.

While the Council does have planning policies to protect defined gaps, these are not defined on the current Proposals Map and the Site Allocations DPD provides new

policies and forms a new part of the planning policy framework. This means that the potential development of this site is not being considered in isolation against existing policy, but in relation to the relative merits of developing it compared to alternative locations.

In order to preserve the separate identity of Binfield the development has been focussed on the southern part of the site where it will link to the existing built up area. The northern part of the site will be allocated as public open space (to include mitigation land to avoid adverse impacts on the Special Protection Area to the south of the Borough). This will ensure that an undeveloped gap remains between Binfield and Bracknell. It will also ensure that the undeveloped area is accessible to the public for informal recreation use.

### ***Won't wildlife and nature interests be harmed?***

A Phase 1 Habitat Survey has been carried out of the entire broad area identified at the Options stage and previously consulted on. This did not identify any over-riding nature conservation interests that would prevent the proposed site being developed.

The golf course is largely amenity grassland that is regularly mown and offers restricted shelter or foraging for wildlife. The Phase 1 survey also indicates that further studies should be carried out to ensure that proper account is taken of nature conservation interests, particularly in relation to the ponds and other water bodies on and around the site.

### ***What about the loss of the Golf Course?***

The development will result in the loss of the golf course as a recreational resource. This will to some extent be balanced by the provision of a new football facility, including a new location for Bracknell Town Football Club. It will also provide significant areas of open space for informal recreation which will be publicly accessible to all, which the existing golf course is not.

### ***Why Does the Council Not Allocate Downshire Golf Course Instead of Blue Mountain?***

The Downshire Golf Course was included in our considerations among a large number of Council-owned sites but was rejected as the site is covered by a restrictive covenant and was not likely to be available for development during the plan period. The Blue Mountain site is available for development and is being actively promoted for development by its owners.

Where suitable, sustainably located, Council-owned land is available for development we do actively pursue this option. An example of this is the proposal to relocate the Council depot from a site within Bracknell to the Transport Research Laboratory site at Crowthorne which is included in our preferred option. This has enabled us to allocate the existing depot site for housing on an urban brownfield site that would otherwise have required the allocation of additional greenfield land.

### ***Doesn't the Council have an interest in the land?***

The Council has a leasehold interest in the land at Blue Mountain. This has not affected the planning assessment of the site's sustainability. The site is also covered by a Section 52 legal agreement dating from 1990 in which the owner of the land covenants with the Borough Council as follows: "Not to use the golf course land for anything other than a golf course or other sporting or other recreational facilities or as open space and not to construct any buildings on the golf course land other than as reasonably required in connection with any of the uses mentioned in this paragraph". The Section 52 agreement can be varied or released by agreement between the landowner and the Council. Whether or not it is necessary or appropriate to vary or discharge the agreement is a matter which the Council may consider in due course.

## **2.5 Warfield**

### ***What's happening at Warfield?***

Land at Warfield (previously known as 'Land North of Whitegrove and Quelm Park') is identified in the Core Strategy for a comprehensive mixed use development including about 2,200 new homes. This remains an important part of the Council's planned housing provision. The Council is working to prepare a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to guide the future development of the site and any future planning applications.

The Council consulted on a draft SPD from November 2010 to January 2011. This contained a draft Concept Plan and a set of development principles showing how the development should be planned. Further targeted consultation is being undertaken during November 2011 on a document containing a revised Concept Plan and examples, photographs and illustrations of how some key parts of the development could look. Feedback from both consultations will be considered in preparing a final version of the Warfield SPD to be adopted in early 2012.

The SPD will aim to ensure that the development respects the area's semi rural nature. Part of this will be making a large part of Cabbage Hill into a publically accessible country park and that existing public open spaces are enhanced. The scheme will also provide allotments, green corridors and an east to west greenway across the site linking major open space within the site and beyond. The proposals include new homes, a neighbourhood centre, two new primary schools, transport improvements and other infrastructure.

More information is available on this web link: [www.brackenll-forest.gov.uk/warfield](http://www.brackenll-forest.gov.uk/warfield)