



Wokingham Borough Council

Local Transport Plan 2025: Connecting People and Places

Appendix C - Scoping Report, SEA Policy Review
and Baseline Information



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Relevant Plans, Policies and Programmes

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1. Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) are currently preparing their Fourth Local Transport Plan (LTP4) that will primarily focus on the period from 2024. This will replace the existing Wokingham Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3)¹, which was adopted in 2011.
- 1.1.2. Wokingham Borough is located in Berkshire in the south of England, covering 179km². The Borough has higher car ownership than the national average. The transport network includes the M4, three A-roads and six railway stations which serve a total of five railway routes connecting Wokingham to other parts of the South East.
- 1.1.3. The road network in Wokingham Borough experiences high volumes of vehicular traffic. Car travel is the primary means of transport for many local journeys in the Borough. As of 2016, Wokingham Borough had limited electricity charging infrastructure (with 6 publicly accessible charging points), however in 2022 WBC received a grant for new charging infrastructure at 19 locations within the Borough, 12 of which will be located within residential areas².
- 1.1.4. The rail routes within the Borough provide services to Reading, London Waterloo, and Gatwick Airport, as well as stations throughout the Borough. The railways reach capacity during peak times, causing issues with congestion and unreliable journey times.
- 1.1.5. The Borough is rural in nature and the public transport network is dispersed, disconnected and unreliable limiting accessibility to areas and services. Bus services are particularly limited in the evenings and at weekends.
- 1.1.6. In the WBC area, in 2020, 18% of the total highway network was made up of Public Rights of Way (PRoW)³. The routes are well used throughout the Borough. Issues with the routes include limited information, accessibility for wheelchairs and pushchairs, seasonal restrictions, maintenance, and personal safety concerns.

¹ Wokingham Borough Council, Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 [online] Available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/council-and-meetings/open-data/plans-policies-and-strategies/?assetdet91f252ff-550d-4cfa-a838-92ef2cb5f83c=210332&categoryesct91f252ff-550d-4cfa-a838-92ef2cb5f83c=7749>

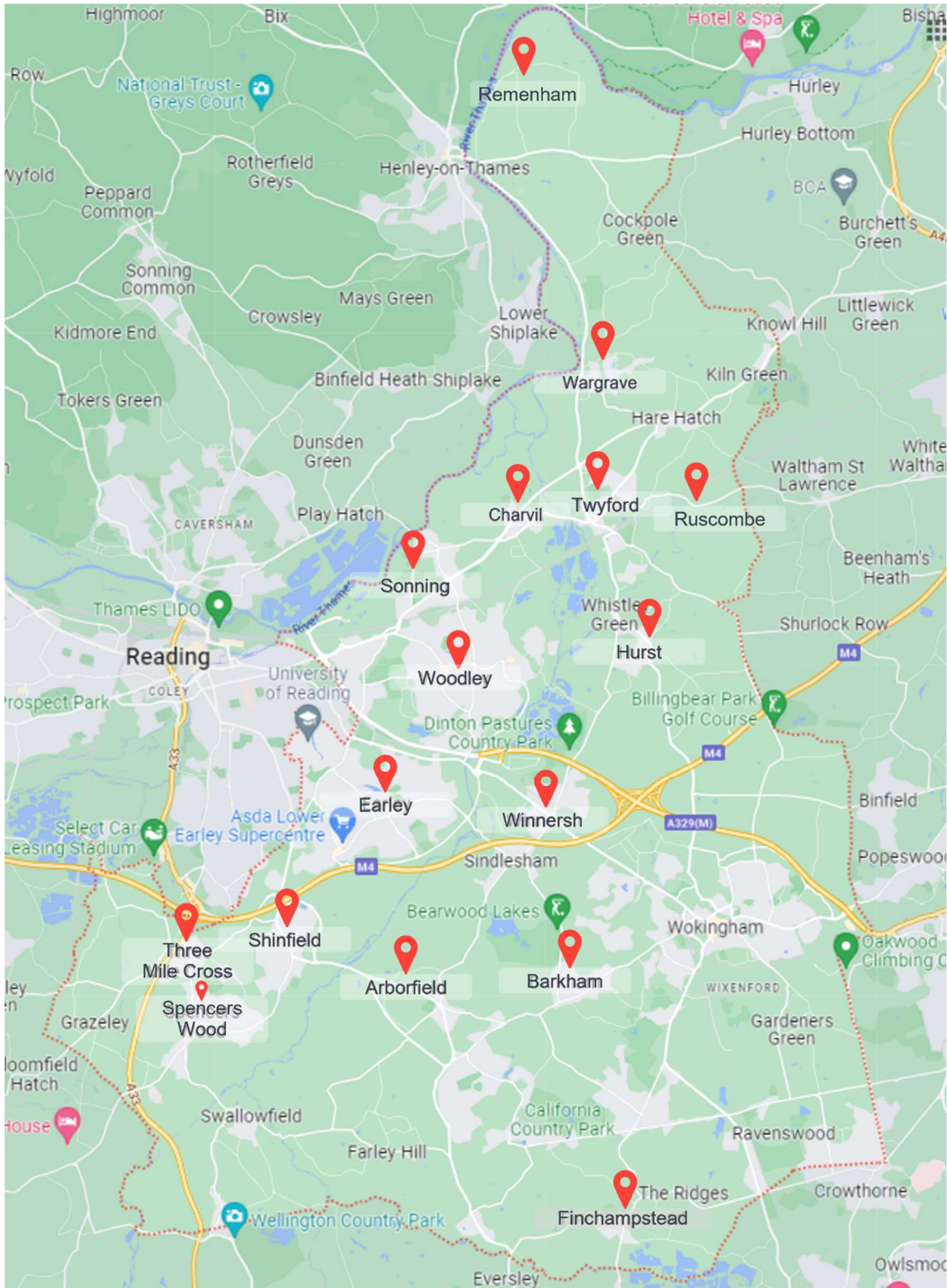
² Wokingham Borough Council (2022) Locations Confirmed for new Electric Vehicle Chargers. Available at: <https://news.wokingham.gov.uk/news/locations-confirmed-new-electric-vehicle-chargers/>

³ Wokingham Borough Council (2020). 'Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2020 – 2030'. Available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/countryside-parks-and-conservation/footpaths-and-bridleways/public-rights-of-way-improvement-plan/>

⁴ Wokingham Borough Council (2020). 'Strategic Roads and Highways Map.' Available at: <https://wokingham.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=b0a1cb1052f74527b89ed96d9e2145f6>

- 1.1.7. The LTP4 will apply to transport systems, assets and resources within WBC’s administrative boundary, incorporating the towns and parishes of Arborfield, Barkham, Charvil, Earley, Finchampstead, Hurst, Sonning, Remenham, Ruscombe, Shinfield, Twyford, Wargrave, Three Mile Cross, Winnersh, Spencers Wood, and Woodley, shown in **Figure 1-1**.

Figure 1-1 - Towns and parishes of WBC



1.2 Local Transport Plans

- 1.2.1. The Government's 1998 White Paper on transport, 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone'⁵, introduced the concept of Local Transport Plans (LTPs) to steer the development of national transport policies at the local level. The Transport Act 2000⁶ (now amended by the Local Transport Act 2008⁷) then made it a statutory requirement for local transport authorities outside of London to produce LTPs having regard to Government guidance and policies on the environment.
- 1.2.2. The more recent Local Transport Act 2008⁷ gave local authorities the freedom to decide for themselves how many years future LTPs should cover, including the option to set different time spans for the Strategy and implementation plan elements of the LTP.
- 1.2.3. The Local Transport Act 2008⁷ makes particular reference to climate change mitigation and adaptation, but states that authorities should consider how their strategies and implementation plans relate to all relevant environmental issues, including air quality, noise, landscape and biodiversity.
- 1.2.4. The Department for Transport (DfT) are currently updating LTP guidance. This guidance will set out how local areas will deliver quantifiable carbon reductions in transport, considering the different requirements of different areas. New guidance is due to be published in 2023 along with additional standalone quantifiable carbon reductions (QCR) guidance. When used as a part of the LTP development process, the QCR guidance will help local authorities make long term, evidence-based plans for local transport by considering the carbon impacts at a strategic planning stage⁸.

1.3 Purpose of this Report

- 1.3.1. WBC has commissioned WSP to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) that incorporates the requirement of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the LTP4. The SA will ensure that sustainability aspects are incorporated into the LTP4 and that the LTP4 aligns with the upcoming LTP guidance, including QCR guidance.
- 1.3.2. This Scoping Report sets out the first stage of the SA process, known as Scoping. The purpose of this stage is to set out proposals for conducting the SA, through:

⁵ Department for Transport, A new deal for transport: better for everyone - White Paper, 1998 [online] available at: <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.dft.gov.uk/about/strategy/whitepapers/previous/anewdealfortransportbetterfo5695>

⁶ Transport Act 2000 [online] available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/38/introduction>

⁷ Local Transport Act 2008 [online] available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/26/contents>

⁸ Department for Transport, Transport decarbonisation: local authority toolkit [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/transport-decarbonisation-local-authority-toolkit>

- Introducing the Local Transport Plan and this Scoping Report (**Section 1**);
- Identifying likely options for delivery of the Local Transport Plan (**Section 2**);
- Presenting the methodology and framework for undertaking the SA (**Section 3**);
- Reviewing relevant legislation, plans, and programmes baseline (**Section 4**);
- Identifying key issues and opportunities for the LTP4, reflecting for example the increased pressure of development on the natural environment or the beneficial health effects of active travel (**Section 5**);
- Identifying Sustainability Objectives to feed into an overall framework for appraisal of options (**Section 6**); and
- Setting out next steps (**Section 7**).

1.3.3. The Scoping Report also provides baseline information on the environmental, social and economic characteristics of the area, including the likely evolution of the baseline position which would occur without the LTP4.

2 Transport Plan

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1. The current WBC LTP3 and associated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) were approved in 2011.
- 2.1.2. WBC's LTP3 is applicable between 2011-2026 and requires a refresh to ensure that the overarching Strategy and policy statements remain consistent with the emerging Local Plan and to reflect a changed policy, funding and transport scheme delivery environment since 2011.
- 2.1.3. The updated LTP4 will require a SA to assess any significant effects and identify mitigation and monitoring for effects. The SEA completed for the LTP3 will be used as a basis for the LTP4 SEA update, where possible.
- 2.1.4. The emerging LTP4 will provide the key mechanism for expressing how transport interventions will help WBC will achieve its vision and Strategic Objectives.
- 2.1.5. The LTP4 will provide a strategy for the development of implementation plans; the first will be a short term action plan (expected 3 years), with further revisions of specific policies within the implementation plans during the life of the LTP4.
- 2.1.6. The LTP4 will comprise two elements, the Long Term 'Strategy' and the 'Implementation Plan'.

2.2 The Strategy

- 2.2.1. The LTP4 will take a place-based approach to addressing local problems and opportunities. Four different Places types have been identified:
 - Wokingham Town;
 - Woodley / Earley / Shinfield;
 - Rural North; and
 - Rural South Areas.
- 2.2.1. *The LTP4 will describe how these individual places function and consider appropriate themes for these distinct areas.*
- 2.2.2. Draft vision themes for the LTP4 have been formulated. These include:
 - Connect people and places;
 - Reduce emissions from transport;
 - Enable sustainable and inclusive economic growth; and
 - Create liveable, healthy and safe places.
- 2.2.3. As part of the development of the LTP4, a number of objectives and outcomes are being developed from evidence, principles consultation and national/regional targets.

2.3 The Implementation Plan

- 2.3.1. The Implementation Plan will set out how the Strategy will be implemented, identifying what interventions are required and options available which could achieve the WBC's objectives. It will set out issues and proposals for each of the identified place types within Wokingham Borough.

3 Approach to the Sustainability Appraisal

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1. The SEA/Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process is carried out during the preparation of local plans and spatial development strategies. Its role is to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which emerging plans will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives.
- 3.1.2. SEA is used to describe the application of environmental assessment to plans and programmes in accordance with the “Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations” (SI 2004/1633, known as the SEA Regulations)⁹.
- 3.1.3. An SEA is mandatory for plans and programmes which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste or water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations¹⁰.
- 3.1.4. SEA only considers the environmental effects of a plan, whilst SA considers a plan’s wider economic and social effects in addition to its potential environmental impacts. It is obligatory that SAs meet all of the requirements of the SEA Regulations.

3.2 Sustainability Appraisal

- 3.2.1. SA is an iterative process of gathering data and evidence, assessment of environmental, economic, and social effects, developing mitigation and monitoring measures, and making recommendations to refine plans or programmes in view of the predicted environmental, economic, and social effects.
- 3.2.2. The approach adopted for the SA of the LTP4 follows that set out in the Practical Guide to SEA¹¹ and the Planning Practice Guidance to SEA and SA¹². It involves the development of an assessment framework comprising a series of sustainability objectives, assessment criteria and indicators. This framework is developed from an understanding of environmental

⁹ SI 2004 No. 1633, The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 [online] available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/1633/pdfs/ukxi_20041633_en.pdf

¹⁰ The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 [online] Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/571/introduction/made>

¹¹ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005) A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. [online] Available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf

¹² Department for Communities and Local Government (2015) Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal. [online] Available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal/>

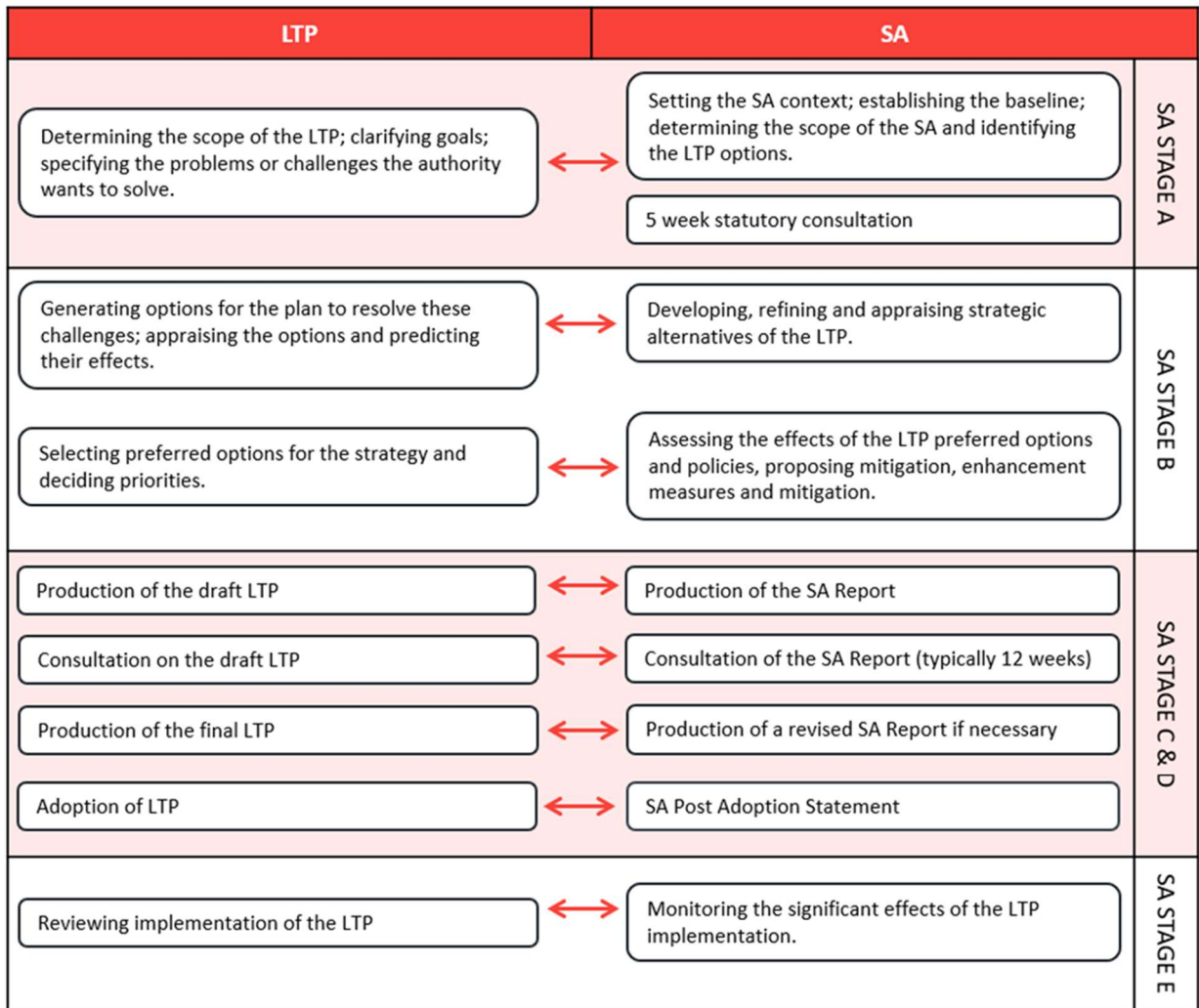
problems and opportunities. These are identified through a review of existing baseline information and a review of other plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives relevant to the plan area (i.e. Wokingham Borough) and subject matter (transport).

3.2.3. The key stages of the SEA process are:

- **Stage A:** Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on scope (this stage);
- **Stage B:** Developing and refining strategic alternatives and assessing their effects;
- **Stage C:** Preparing the SA Report;
- **Stage D:** Consulting on the draft plan or programme and the Environmental Report; and
- **Stage E:** Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the plan or programme on the environment.

3.2.4. The stages of the SA process and their interactions with the LTP process are shown in **Figure 3-1**.

Figure 3-1 - SA and LTP Stages



3.3 Relationship With Other Processes

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

- 3.3.1. Under the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) ('The Habitats Regulations')¹³ a duty is placed upon 'Competent Authorities' to consider the potential for effects upon sites of European importance identified by the Regulations, prior to granting consent for projects or plans. Following the UK's exit from the EU, The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 were amended by The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019¹⁴. As advised by national governments in the UK, the Habitats Regulations remain in force, including the general provisions for the protection of European sites and the procedural requirements to undertake HRA to assess the implications of plans or projects for European sites. The changes made were only those necessary to ensure that they remain operable now that the UK has left the EU.
- 3.3.2. Regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations defines the procedure for the assessment of the implications of plans or projects on European Sites. Under this Regulation, if a proposed development is unconnected with site management and is likely to significantly affect the designated site, the competent authority must undertake an 'Appropriate Assessment'. According to the Habitats Regulations the competent authority may agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site or the European offshore marine site (as the case may be).
- 3.3.3. Guidance on the Habitats Directive (European Commission, 2000)¹⁵ sets out the stepped approach which should be followed to enable Competent Authorities to discharge their duties under the Habitats Directive and provides further clarity on the interpretation of Articles 6 (3) and 6 (4). The process used is usually summarised in four distinct stages of assessment. As set out in Regulation 3 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, where Natura 2000 sites are referenced in previously issued guidance this should be interpreted as relating to the national site network but does not otherwise affect guidance as it applied before EU exit day.
- 3.3.4. The stages of a HRA are:

¹³ UK Government (2017) The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/1012/contents/made>

¹⁴ UK Government (2019) The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2019/9780111176573>

¹⁵ European Commission (2000) Habitats Directive. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index_en.htm

- Stage 1: Screening: the process which identifies whether effects upon a Natura 2000 site of a plan or project are possible, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects and considers whether these effects are likely to be significant.
- Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment: the detailed consideration of the effect on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site of the plan or project, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, with respect to the site's conservation objectives and its structure and function.
- Stage 3: Assessment of alternative solutions: the process which examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the plan or project that avoid adverse effects on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site.
- Stage 4: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse effects remain: an assessment of whether the development is necessary for Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Importance (IROPI) and, if so, of the compensatory measures needed to maintain the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network.

3.3.5. The first stage of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (screening) as well as subsequent stages where required, will be undertaken as the LTP4 develops. Pre-screening will be conducted by WSP to establish the scope, which will need to be agreed with Natural England. Information from the HRA relating to European sites and potential impacts on them can be used within the SA.

Equalities Impact Assessment

3.3.6. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) will be undertaken as part of preparing the LTP4. Under the Equalities Act 2010, public bodies have a duty to assess the impact of their policies on different population groups to ensure that discrimination does not take place and, where possible, to promote equality of opportunity.

3.3.7. The EqIA process focuses on assessing and recording the likely equalities effects as a result of a policy, project or plan. It seeks to ensure that the policy, project or plan does not discriminate or disadvantage people and enables consideration of how equality can be improved or promoted. The equality duty came into force in April 2011 and covers the following nine Personal Protected Characteristics:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race;
- Religion or belief; and
- Sexual orientation.

Health Impact Assessment

- 3.3.8. HIA is a process to identify the likely health effects of plans, policies or developments and to implement measures to avoid negative impacts and promote opportunities to maximise the benefits. There is no formally adopted methodology for HIA although there is a body of practice and guidance at a policy level. Assessment of health can be undertaken as a discrete process within an HIA and can also be embedded within environmental assessments.
- 3.3.9. HIA is not a statutory requirement of the Local Transport Plan preparation process. However, Planning Practice Guidance states that ‘Local planning authorities should ensure that health and wellbeing and health infrastructure are considered in local and neighbourhood plans and in planning decision making’.
- 3.3.10. HIAs can be done at any stage in the development process but are best done at the earliest stage possible.

3.4 Transport for the South East

- 3.4.1. Transport for the South East (TfSE) is a sub-national transport body for the South East of England. It brings together 16 local transport authorities, of which WBC is one, and a range of wider stakeholders. TfSE is dedicated to creating an integrated and sustainable transport system that makes the South East more productive and competitive, improves the quality of life for all residents giving access to opportunity whilst protecting and enhancing the unique natural and built environment. TfSE’s vision is for the South East to be a leading global region for:
- net-zero carbon;
 - sustainable economic growth where integrated transport, digital and energy networks have delivered a step change in connectivity; and
 - environmental quality.
- 3.4.2. TfSE’s Transport Strategy for the South East¹⁶ provides a strategy for a more connected, productive and sustainable transport network in the south east. The Covid-19 pandemic saw significant behavioural changes, with more individuals working from home, increased use of online retail, and individuals seeking greater access to open space. To understand and consider the impact of the pandemic TfSE released a Covid-19 recovery scenarios report documenting rising inequality, technological and behavioural change, the importance of

¹⁶ Transport Strategy for the South East June 2020.
<https://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/app/uploads/2020/09/TfSE-transport-strategy.pdf>

polycentricity and a new relationship with London¹⁷. The report's purpose was to help consider and adapt to the changes brought about as a result of the pandemic.

- 3.4.3. In 2023 TfSE released a Strategic Investment Plan¹⁸ which sets out a vision for the region with priorities to decarbonise the transport system, level up left behind communities, and facilitate sustainable economic growth in the south east. It includes nearly 300 multi-modal transport interventions to be implemented between now and 2050.
- 3.4.4. Alongside other sub national transport bodies such as England Economic Heartland and Transport East, TfSE has also been working with local transport authorities across the three regions to provide support to deliver on commitments in the Government's Bus Back Better strategy. This has included looking at fares and ticketing, and integration of rural hubs as well as alternative fuels. TfSE is also developing an electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure strategy linking with the DfT National EV Infrastructure Strategy.

¹⁷ Covid-19 recovery scenarios: Opportunities for a more prosperous and sustainable South East. January 2021 <https://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/app/uploads/2021/03/Covid-recovery-scenarios-key-insights.pdf> [accessed March 2023]

¹⁸ A Strategic Investment Plan for the South East March 2023. <https://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/app/uploads/2023/03/SIP-1.pdf>

4 Policy Context

- 4.1.1. To establish a clear scope for the SA, it is necessary to review and develop an understanding of the environmental, social and economic objectives contained within international, national and regional legislation, policies and plans that are of relevance to the LTP4.
- 4.1.2. The SEA Regulations require information on:
- *“An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme, and of its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.”* (Schedule 2, Paragraph 1); and
 - *“The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.”* (Schedule 2, Paragraph 5).
- 4.1.3. The review process ensures that the SA complies with existing international, national, regional and local governance. The DfT’s emerging guidance for LTPs, due to be released in 2023, will be considered as part of the review. The process entails identifying and reviewing those environmental protection objectives that are directly relevant to both the LTP4 and the SA.
- 4.1.4. The Scoping task of identifying related legislation, policies and plans cannot yield an exhaustive or definitive list. Therefore, the review has been focussed to ensure that only policies that are current and of direct relevance to the LTP4 and sustainability are included.
- 4.1.5. A detailed outline of the policy documents, objectives and targets reviewed is set out in **Table B-1 in Appendix B. Table 4-1** outlines the key messages from the policy review. The review provides the context for the SA and helps to inform a SA Framework of objectives which will guide the subsequent appraisal process.
- 4.1.6. Due to the overlapping content of policies and plans, some of the SA topics in **Table 4-1** have been combined. Therefore, the SA topics in Chapter 5 of this Scoping Report are not exactly the same as those listed in **Table 4-1**.

Table 4-1 - Key Messages from Policy Review

SA Topic	Key Messages from Review
Natural Resources and Waste	There is a need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Facilitate the sustainable use of minerals, considering any mitigation measures proposed; ■ Maintain and enhance geodiversity through the management of sites, areas and wider landscapes; and ■ Encourage a circular economy.
Soils	There is a need to:

SA Topic	Key Messages from Review
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minimise impacts on soil quality, considering any mitigation measures proposed; ▪ Protect the Best and Most Versatile Land; and ▪ Consider land stability in respect of new development; and encourage a circular economy.
Biodiversity and Natural Capital	<p>There is a need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify opportunities for green infrastructure provision, recognising the multiple functions that green infrastructure provides to the area and linking into regional and national green infrastructure networks; ▪ Protect and enhance biodiversity, including designated sites, priority species, habitats and ecological networks; ▪ Minimise the impact on biodiversity and ensure net gain wherever possible; ▪ Maintain and enhance ecosystems and their services; and ▪ Improve the long-term sustainability of ecological and physical processes that underpin the functioning of ecosystems.
Air Quality	<p>There is a need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that air quality is maintained or enhanced and that emissions of air pollutants are kept to a minimum.
Climate Change	<p>There is a need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take all practical steps to mitigate climate change, while adapting to reduce its impact. ▪ Avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. ▪ Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases that may cause climate change; and ▪ Increase energy efficiency and move towards a low carbon economy.
Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development must be undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements for noise. ▪ There is a need to promote good health and a good quality of life through the effective management of noise within the context of Government policy on sustainable development.
Landscape and Townscape	<p>There is a need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New developments should not have adverse impacts on the quality of the natural and built environment; ▪ Protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of natural landscapes in ways that allow them to continue to evolve; and ▪ Provide greater access to greenspace, to help reconnect people to nature.
Historic Environment	<p>There is a need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conserve and enhance the significance of nationally and locally designated cultural and historical assets as well as those which are undesignated; ▪ Enhance the beauty of the natural scenery and improve its environmental value while being sensitive to considerations of its heritage; ▪ Encourage engagement with the historic environment; and

SA Topic	Key Messages from Review
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that transport development within, adjacent, or in close proximity to, historic areas or historic buildings, respects their character and context, and does not detract from the quality of the built environment.
Water Environment	<p>There is a need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect and enhance surface and groundwater quality and ensure that water quality is improved or maintained where possible; ▪ Avoid development in areas prone to flooding; ▪ Water resources in the county are under increasing pressure from a rapidly growing population, climate change and environmental needs; ▪ Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest flood risk; and ▪ Any 'essential infrastructure' proposed to be located in Flood Zone 3a or 3b should be designed and constructed to remain operational and safe for users in times of flood.
Population and Equalities	<p>There is a need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce inequalities in care (both physical and mental) across and within communities; ▪ Ensure fair and equal access to services and support irrespective of race, religion, sex, age, income, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership or pregnancy/maternity; ▪ Plan for an aging population with complex needs, which will require inputs from all parts of the health and social care system; ▪ Ensure that there are appropriate facilities for people with disabilities and the elderly; ▪ Transport is a key factor shaping experiences of poverty. The ability of households in poverty to find paid work often depends on access to affordable, regular and reliable transport; and ▪ The delivery of new developments should not be of detriment to the interests of existing communities.
Human Health	<p>There is a need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote healthy standards of living; ▪ Prioritise walking, cycling and use of public transport; and enhance accessibility to key community facilities, services and employment; ▪ Good placemaking is linked to a wider set of positive social, economic and environmental outcomes. ▪ Twenty-minute neighbourhoods can provide effective way to create healthy and active communities whilst improving equality, inclusion and help tackle climate change; ▪ Regular physical activity provides a range of physical and mental health and social benefit; ▪ The Covid-19 pandemic will have significant consequences for people's health outcomes in the short and longer term. There is a need to level-up in the wake of the pandemic to create a level playing field for both life and job opportunities; ▪ Transport plays a key role in improving access to health services particularly for vulnerable groups.
Economy	<p>There is a need to:</p>

SA Topic	Key Messages from Review
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote a low carbon economy; ▪ Support the sustainable growth and expansion of businesses particularly within the science, research and innovation sectors; ▪ Ensure that housing growth requirements are accommodated in the most sustainable way, whilst also delivering a mix of high-quality housing of varying size and tenure to meet local needs; ▪ Deliver increased economic growth and decreased emissions; ▪ The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning policies should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge, and data-driven, high technology industries in suitably accessible locations; ▪ Working with businesses and infrastructure owners is necessary to develop proposals that meet the needs of the freight and logistics sector; and ▪ Continued investment in the transport infrastructure is an essential part of post-pandemic economic recovery.
<p>Crime and Disorder</p>	<p>There is a need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to improve safety by investing in the road network, both to prevent incidents from occurring and to reduce the severity of those that do; ▪ Reduce crime and the fear of crime, as well as encourage reporting; and ▪ Safety is an important consideration for road users owing to the significant impact of serious and fatal accidents.
<p>Transport and Accessibility</p>	<p>There is a need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve sustainable transport modes (public and active); ▪ Ensure transport access to all social groups, including those with disabilities and the elderly; ▪ Rural populations and ▪ Provide access to employment, leisure, retail and education facilities.

5 Baseline, Sustainability Issues and Opportunities

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1. This section sets out the sustainability policy context; baseline and any future trends regardless of the implementation of the LTP4. It identifies key issues for sustainability in relation to the LTP4. This information can then be used to develop an appraisal framework in Section 4.
- 5.1.2. The applicable sustainable policy context for each sub-section is included in **Appendix B**.

5.2 Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services

- 5.2.1. Natural capital is a term used to describe those elements of the natural environment that provide benefits for humans (also known as ecosystem services), including food, water, recreation and clean air and water. Some ecosystem services fall across a number of sustainability topics, for example, recreational and aesthetic value services could be considered under the Health and Biodiversity, Landscape and Townscape, and Water Environment topics, amongst others. Biodiversity (the variety of life on Earth) is a fundamental component of natural capital, and underpins the provision of ecosystem services, for example pollination, recreational, and water, soil, disease and pest regulation services.
- 5.2.2. A natural capital approach is therefore useful for understanding the inter-dependencies between nature, people, the economy and society, and ensuring that natural capital is considered as an integrated system. It provides a framework for incorporating the value of nature into decision-making and revealing the cost of its degradation. Degradation of natural capital (including biodiversity loss) has an adverse effect on the benefits that humanity receives from the natural environment such as flood risk reduction, food, water provision and energy production. As such, this represents an overarching topic to frame the rest of the SA.

Summary of Baseline and Future Trends

Current Baseline

- 5.2.3. The UK National Ecosystem Assessment (UK NEA) (2014) revealed that the loss, fragmentation and deterioration of natural habitat in the UK since the 1940s has caused a decline in the provision of many ecosystem services, and that this declining trend is continuing. Though not the key cause, transport networks have nevertheless contributed to this decline; however, they also have the potential to improve ecosystem service delivery.
- 5.2.4. In 2011, the Government stated, through Commitment 32 of the Natural Environment White Paper, that it would “work with its transport agencies and key delivery partners to contribute to the creation of coherent and resilient ecological networks”. In response to this, Natural England published a report in 2014 investigating how land within or adjacent to transport

corridors (the ‘soft estate’) can be used or enhanced for green infrastructure that delivers biodiversity gain, ecological connectivity and ecosystem services¹⁹.

- 5.2.5. A £3 million pilot project followed in 2015-2017, drawing together Natural England, National Highways, Network Rail, and Nature Improvement Area (NIA) partnerships in northern England²⁰. The aim of the pilot was to ensure that transport corridors not only accommodate more wildlife (especially pollinators), but to benefit transport users and the wider public by making infrastructure more resilient to the growing impacts of climate change, such as increased flooding and winter storms.
- 5.2.6. Its findings and recommendations have helped influence the recent Varley review into Network Rail lineside vegetation management, the establishment of the Linear Infrastructure Network (LINet), and Natural England’s work on developing an ongoing impact within National Highways and with the Office of Road and Rail (ORR), and a similar approach is desired for transport corridors across the country.
- 5.2.7. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has produced national level natural capital accounts. These show that carbon sequestration by woodlands in England was valued at £2 billion in 2020. Additionally, air pollution removal in 2020 was valued at approximately £2.4 billion.
- 5.2.8. The value of recreation and tourism (based on the number of hours people spend outside in the natural environment) has also been estimated for the UK. In 2019, this was valued at £12.4 billion, with associated health benefits valued at £5.5 billion. This is an increase on previous years due to increased expenditure in urban, woodland and coastal habitats.

Future Trends

- 5.2.9. The declining trend in the provision of many ecosystem services reported in the UK NEA is expected to continue – in part due to the continuing deterioration, loss and fragmentation of habitats, as reported in the national ‘State of Nature’ report 2019²¹.
- 5.2.10. Further development to address the needs of the SE’s growing population – in combination with a changing climate – has the potential to further fragment and deteriorate the region’s ecosystems, impacting on natural capital and its ability to provide ecosystem services.

¹⁹ Davies, H., Frandsen, M. & Hockridge, B (2014). ‘NEWP32 Transport green corridors: literature review, options appraisal and opportunity mapping’. Natural England Commissioned Reports, Number 168. Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5752930789490688>

²⁰ Natural England, Defra and Highways England (2014). ‘Greener Transport Network to provide highways for Wildlife’. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/greener-transport-network-to-provide-highways-for-wildlife>

²¹ Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (2019). ‘The State of Nature Reporting’. Available at: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/state-of-nature-report/>

- 5.2.11. An increase in the number of private vehicles on the roads and associated increases in noise pollution, air pollution, and contamination surface water run-off, could restrict the ability of existing roadside habitats (including trees) to reduce these impacts.
- 5.2.12. However, there is also an increasing trend amongst governments and businesses to be “Future Ready”, which includes addressing issues surrounding biodiversity, resource use, and climate change.

Issues and Opportunities

- 5.2.13. The following issues and opportunities have been identified in **Table 5-1**.

Table 5-1 - Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services Issues and Opportunities

Sustainability Issues	Sustainability Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ New transport routes will need to be carefully planned so that they do not cause adverse effects on ecosystems with high (potential) ecosystem service provision. Given that ecosystem services are the benefits that nature provides to people, areas of high (potential) provision are often the green and blue spaces close to centres of population, as well as connecting habitats that link these with more remote designated habitats and landscapes. ■ As transport corridors are typically linear, ensuring the connectivity of ecosystems is both an issue and an opportunity for the Transport Strategy. There is scope to focus on redevelopment of existing assets rather than build new, to focus development away from areas of high biodiversity and ecosystem service provision, and to enhance the quality of the transport ‘soft estate’ alongside existing and new transport corridors to improve habitat connectivity. ■ Human health and quality of life can be improved by taking a natural capital approach to the Transport Strategy. For example, improving the quality of habitats (including tree planting, sowing wildflower mix rather than amenity grassland to improve biodiversity) alongside walking and cycling routes can help encourage more active lifestyles with benefits for people’s physical and mental health and wellbeing. Views of vegetation from other modes of transport (e.g. along roads and railways) can also enhance mental wellbeing, for example by reducing stress levels. ■ Enhancing the quality of transport ‘soft estate’ can also help improve the resilience of the transport network to future climate change, for example by reducing flood risk and providing shading and cooling benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Enhancing the quality of transport ‘soft estate’ can also help improve the resilience of the transport network to future climate change, for example by reducing flood risk and providing shading and cooling benefits. ■ Human health and quality of life can be improved by taking a natural capital approach to the Transport Plan. ■ Views of vegetation from other modes of transport (e.g. along roads and railways) can also enhance mental wellbeing, for example by reducing stress levels. ■ There is scope to encourage the redevelopment of existing assets as well as build new, to focus development away from areas of high biodiversity and ecosystem service provision, and to enhance the quality of the transport ‘soft estate’ alongside existing and new transport corridors or to improve habitat connectivity.

5.3 Materials and Waste

Summary of Baseline and Future Trends

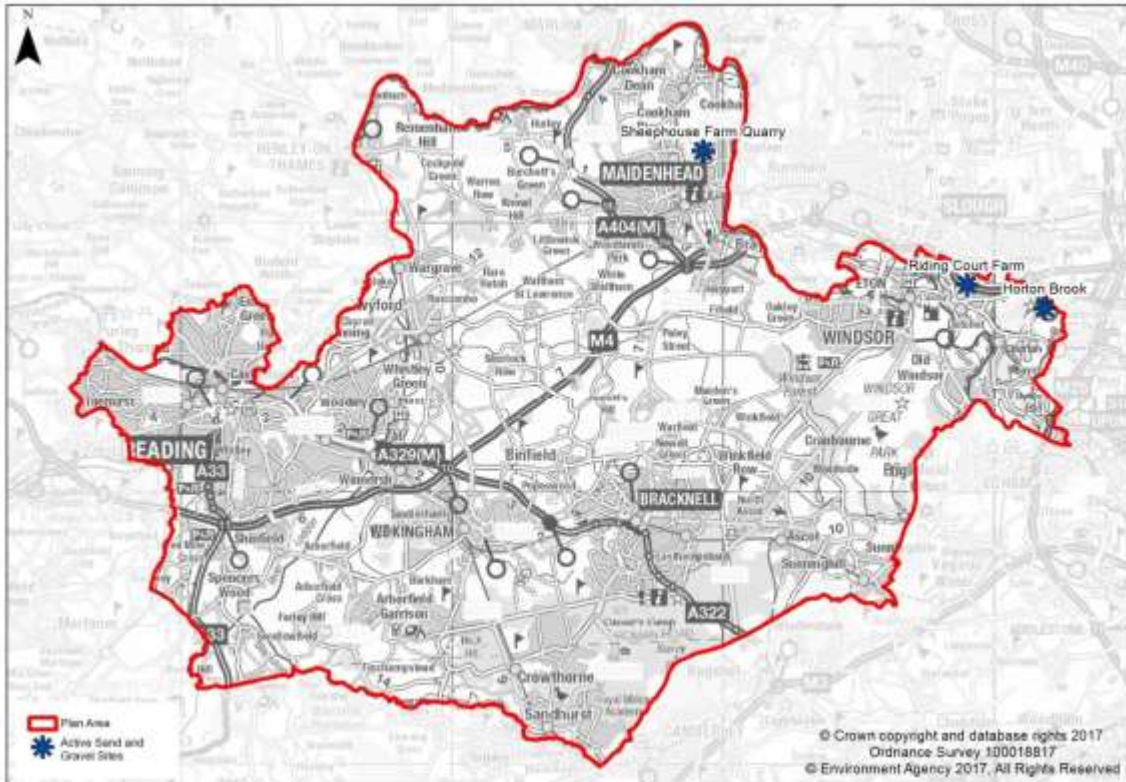
Current Baseline

Materials and Minerals

- 5.3.1. Construction and operation of new or improved transport infrastructure can lead to the use of materials and generation of waste. The transport of waste and materials can also lead to indirect effects from traffic such as congestion, air pollution and noise.
- 5.3.2. The distribution of mineral reserves across the UK is not even. Wokingham Borough is underlain by the following bedrock geology²²:
- Chalk Formations (in the north);
 - Lambeth Group – Clay and Sand (in the north);
 - London Clay Formation (in the middle and south); and
 - Bagshot Formation – Sand (in the south).
- 5.3.3. The superficial geology within Wokingham Borough consists of the following²²:
- Alluvium;
 - Clay with Flint;
 - River Terrace Deposit; and
 - Sand and Gravel.
- 5.3.4. There are three active quarries located within Central Eastern Berkshire, shown in **Appendix A**.

²² Central and Eastern Berkshire (2018). 'Local Aggregate Assessment'. Available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/planning-policy-information/minerals-and-waste/>

Figure 5-1 - Location of active quarries in Central Eastern Berkshire, 2017²⁴



Waste

5.3.5. The following waste management facilities are located within Wokingham Borough²³ (See **Figure 5-2**):

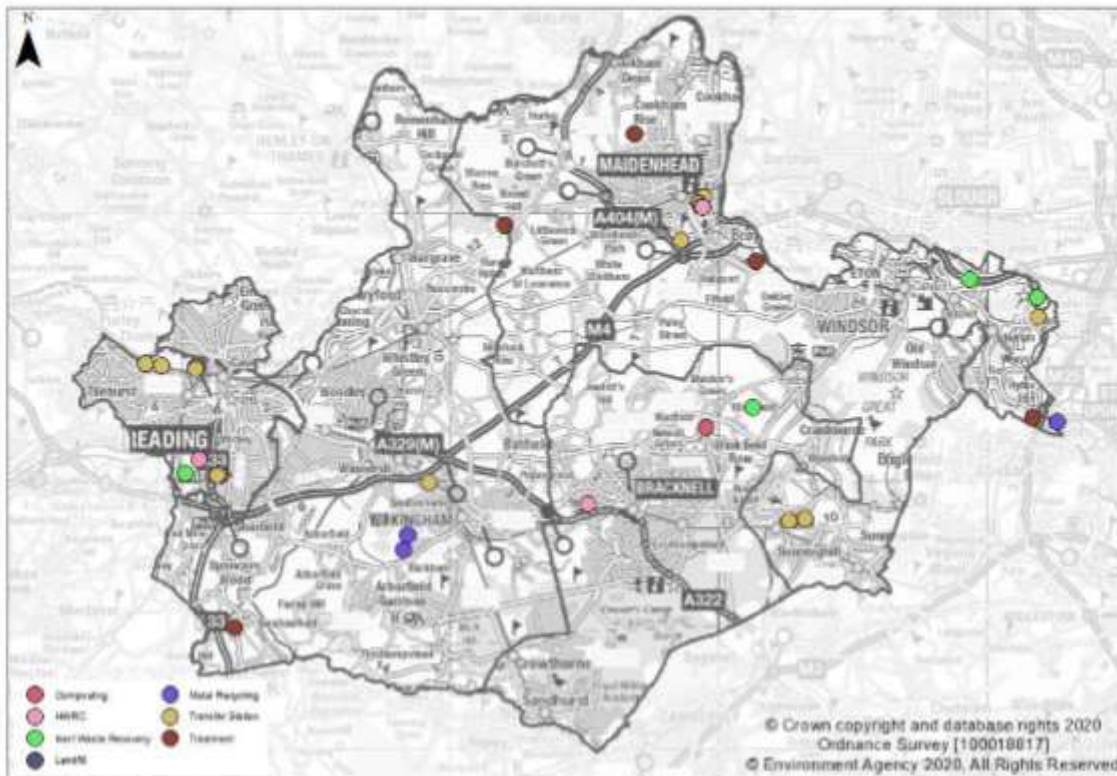
- One end of life vehicles;
- One waste transfer station;
- Two metal recovery facilities; and
- Two water waste treatment works.

5.3.6. Inert waste has the highest arisings from the waste streams in CEB with non-hazardous waste having the second highest arisings in CEB.

5.3.7. There are nine Preferred Waste Areas within Wokingham Borough outlined within the Joint Minerals and Waste Plan²³. These areas present opportunities for the development of sites for waste management.

²³ Central and Eastern Berkshire (2023) Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (Adopted January 2023). Available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/planning-policy-information/minerals-and-waste/>

Figure 5-2 - Location of waste management facilities in Central and Eastern Berkshire²⁴



Future Trends

- 5.3.8. Predicted infrastructure projects within CEB are anticipated to place significant demands on aggregate supply within CEB. As such, CEB needs to maintain a sufficient aggregate landbank and encourage recycled and secondary aggregate sites to supply future demand.
- 5.3.9. Regarding provisions of sand and gravel, there is anticipated to be a total additional requirement of 7,639,000 tonnes required up to 2036. As CEB is reliant on imports, sources for this supply will need to be met elsewhere, however due to sand and gravel constraints in Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey future supply may need to be considered from alternative sources.

²⁴ Central and Eastern Berkshire (2020 Proposed Submission). 'Waste: Background Study'. Available at: <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/environment/Regulation19-ProposedSubmissionConsultation-JCEBWasteBackgroundStudy-ProposedSubmission.pdf>

5.3.10. With a growing population and increased development (see **Section 5.12**) the potential for generating waste is increasing. There is a need to apply resource efficiency and waste management to limit the amounts of waste generated.

Issues and Opportunities

5.3.11. The following issues and opportunities have been identified in **Table 5-2** below.

Table 5-2 – Materials and Waste Issues and Opportunities

Sustainability Issues	Sustainability Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New transport infrastructure can lead to use of minerals and other materials, in addition to generating waste. The transport of waste and materials can lead to indirect effects from traffic such as congestion, air pollution and noise. ▪ There is a reliance upon the road network to transport materials, and it is unlikely that this will change; and ▪ Increasing population of the County is likely to generate more waste which requires transportation. Construction of new transport infrastructure also has the potential to generate waste. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resource efficiency is important in the reduction of waste and conservation of resources. ▪ The LTP4 could promote opportunities to support a circular economy. ▪ Materials, including minerals, will be required in any new transport infrastructure schemes. The application of resource efficiency including use of recycled materials is important for reducing waste. There is also significant capacity for increasing the levels of recycled and secondary aggregate production used for transport infrastructure.

5.4 Soils

Summary of Baseline and Future Trends

Current Baseline

5.4.1. The UK has over 700 different soil types arising from a diverse array of geological deposits. There are six soil groups within Wokingham Borough, which can be loosely related to the geology. These are as follows²⁵:

- Argillic Brown Earths;
- Podzols/Brown Sands;
- Gley-Podzols;
- Argillic Gley Soils; and
- Stagnogley Soils.

²⁵ LUC (2019). 'Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment'. Available at: https://www.google.com/url?client=internal-element-cse&cx=008624316100129476043:osi-gdj83q0&q=https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/resources/assets/attachment/full/0/508875.pdf&sa=U&ved=2ahUKEwiYmovzh6DtAhVDQkEAHYXNCDUQFjAAegQIABAC&usq=AOVaw26wPfdSZTQf2_BCVbJKlij

5.4.2. Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) is a system used in England and Wales to grade the quality of land for agricultural use. It is graded by the extent by which physical or chemical characteristics impose long-term limitations and is graded as follows:

- Grade 1 – Excellent;
- Grade 2 – Very Good
- Grade 3a – Good
- Grade 3b – Moderate
- Grade 4 – Poor
- Grade 5 – Very Poor

5.4.3. Grades 1, 2 and 3a are considered within the ‘best and most versatile’ land. Grade 3 (a and b) agricultural land is the predominant agricultural grade throughout WBC, with Grade 2 and Grade 1 predominantly found in the northern area of WBC. Grade 4 agricultural land is threaded throughout WBC (**Appendix A**).

5.4.4. Approximately 25% of the land area in Wokingham Borough is built up, the remainder is predominantly agriculture and woodland but also present to varying degrees are other types of land use associated with the urban fringe²⁵.

Future Trends

5.4.5. Economic growth and rising population within the county will undoubtedly place additional pressures upon agricultural land; it is likely that land for development will become more of a premium and intensify competition for land amongst developers. Development on greenfield sites prevents their use for agriculture. New transport developments need to consider optimised use of brownfield sites, or agricultural land which is of lower grade (Grades 3b to 5) and minimise severance wherever possible, particularly when unlocking land for future development.

Issues and Opportunities

5.4.6. The following issues and opportunities have been identified in **Table 5-3**.

Table 5-3 – Soils Issues and Opportunities

Sustainability Issues	Sustainability Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Soil is an important natural resource for agriculture, food production, biodiversity and archaeological and geological purposes. Acknowledgement should be given to the detrimental impacts arising from soil compaction, erosion and cumulative pollution. ■ It is important that any future development of the transport network in WBC does not have adverse impacts or lead to the degradation of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) (grades 1 to 3) agricultural land. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There’s an opportunity to avoid development on some of the Borough’s best and most versatile land and support the repurposing of existing infrastructure.

Sustainability Issues	Sustainability Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improvements to transport infrastructure will likely require land take; and ▪ Land should be used in the most efficient manner. 	

5.5 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

Summary of Baseline and Future Trends

Current Baseline

- 5.5.1. WBC contains the following international, national, regional and local nature reserve designations, as follows^{26 27} (see **Appendix A** for more details):
- Special Protection Area (SPA): 1 (Thames Basin Heath);
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): 5;
 - National Nature Reserve (NNRs): 5;
 - Local Nature Reserves (LNR): 11²⁶;
 - Local Geological Sites (LGS) (formerly known as Regionally Important Geological / Geomorphological Sites (RIGS)): 5;
 - Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) (formerly known as Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs)): 111;
 - Biodiversity Opportunity Areas: 7; and
 - Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG): 10.
- 5.5.2. Within Wokingham Borough, 2,031ha of land consist of UK Habitats of Principal Importance (as of 2022)²⁶ .
- 5.5.3. There are 125 priority species and 18 farmland birds listed within Wokingham Borough²⁸.
- 5.5.4. Wokingham Borough contains a range of woodland types, including 1780ha of Plantations on Ancient Woodland (PAWS) located throughout the Borough. A total of 14% of the

²⁶ Thames Valley Environmental Record Centre (2016). 'Biodiversity Annual Monitoring Report'. Available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/planning-policy-information/planning-policy-supporting-information/>

²⁷ Wokingham Borough Council (2020). 'Proposals Map'. Available at: <http://www.planvu.co.uk/wbc/>

²⁸ Wokingham Borough Council (2022) Biodiversity Annual Monitoring Report. Available at: <https://wokingham.berkshireobservatory.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Wokingham-Borough-Council-AMR-2021-2022.pdf>

Borough is covered in woodland and as such Wokingham Borough is of county importance for its woodland resource.

- 5.5.5. According to the South East England Biodiversity Forum²⁹, the south east (which includes Wokingham Borough) is a key area for a range of priority habitat. For example, the south east holds over 40% of England's Ancient Woodland, making this important habitat for the area. The south east also holds more than 30% of England's broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland; and more than 40% of its lowland heath habitats. The low chalk and hard limestone hills of southern England show excellent examples of lowland calcareous grassland – famous for its floristic (and therefore invertebrate) richness. The south east region holds over 10% of England's lowland calcareous grassland resource.

Future Trends

- 5.5.6. Projected population growth (see **Section 5.12**) and industrial development are anticipated to place increasing pressure on sensitive wildlife sites within WBC³⁰.
- 5.5.7. Studies such as '*State of Nature UK*'³⁰ report have shown that biodiversity has been declining across the UK despite the prevalence of conservation efforts; with 41% of UK species in decline and 15% of Red List criteria species threatened with extinction or already extinct³⁰. In some cases, this may be a result of the traditional approach to protecting designated areas on an individual basis, whereas perhaps a regional or county level approach may be more effective. The most important habitats (those for which the UK has a European level responsibility) also remain in relatively poor condition (71% unfavourable for the UK versus an EU average 30%). A rising population and associated need for development may cause further loss, fragmentation and degradation of habitats, causing a further decline in biodiversity.
- 5.5.8. Avoiding overall decline in biodiversity will be increasingly important as the population grows and development gives rise to habitat loss, severance and other impacts. Development on greenbelt land in particular is likely to encourage less sustainable travel methods (i.e. use of the private car), given these areas are likely to have limited existing transport infrastructure available. This may have knock-on effects on habitats sensitive to air quality and disturbance.
- 5.5.9. Biodiversity is also threatened by climate change, with changing temperatures and extreme weather events resulting in the loss, degradation and movement of species and habitats. Increased frequency and severity of summer drought will be a particular threat to

²⁹ South East Biodiversity Forum (2012). 'A Summary of Climate Change Risks for South East England'. Available at: <https://www.arun.gov.uk/download.cfm?doc=docm93ijim4n1708.pdf&ver=1350>

³⁰ RSPB (2019). 'State of Nature' Available at: <https://nbn.org.uk/stateofnature2019/reports/>

woodlands, with sensitive tree species on shallow freely draining soils in southern and eastern England being most at risk³¹ .

Issues and Opportunities

5.5.10. The following issues and opportunities have been identified in **Table 5-4**.

Table 5-4 – Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna Issues and Opportunities

Sustainability Issues	Sustainability Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Due consideration should be given to protecting and conserving WBC’s biodiversity, particularly in light of the disturbance and habitat degradation that may arise from the construction of transport infrastructure and projected population increase; ■ There are a number of statutory local, national and international sites designated for nature conservation within the country which may be affected by development, including transport infrastructure; ■ Habitats, particularly those designated as HPI and Ancient Woodland are at risk of being lost, damage or fragmented by development, including transport infrastructure; ■ Species, including Species of Principal Importance and protected species, may also be affected by construction and operation of new infrastructure, both directly and indirectly; and ■ Biodiversity may be lost as the end result of development of new infrastructure resulting from the LTP4. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LTP4 presents opportunities to be strategic in the enhancement of biodiversity at the landscape scale. ■ The LTP4 presents opportunities to achieve biodiversity net gain (BNG) through the development of its policies and schemes. ■ There is scope to encourage the redevelopment of existing assets as well as build new, to focus development away from areas of high biodiversity and ecosystem service provision, and to enhance the quality of the transport ‘soft estate’ alongside existing and new transport corridors to improve habitat connectivity. ■ Enhancing biodiversity can also help improve the resilience of the transport network to future climate change, for example by reducing flood risk and providing shading and cooling benefits. ■ Human health and quality of life can be improved by improving biodiversity. ■ Views of vegetation during travel (e.g. along roads and railways) can also enhance mental wellbeing, for example by reducing stress levels. ■ The LTP4 presents opportunities to be strategic in the landscape scale across the corridors (and, once the interventions are defined, also in relation to any necessary offsets beyond the boundary of specific developments). Existing biodiversity Opportunity Areas (Natural England) can be combined with priorities for wider ecosystem services benefits to deliver landscape wide environment gain for biodiversity and people.

³¹ The Woodland Trust (2011). ‘The State of the UK’s Forests, Woods and Trees’. Available at: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/publications/2011/11/state-of-uk-forests/>

5.6 Air Quality

Summary of Baseline and Future Trends

Current Baseline

- 5.6.1. The major source of air quality pollution in WBC is road transport, specifically the M4. The pollutant identified as being a main concern is nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).
- 5.6.2. Three AQMA's are located within WBC as presented in **Table 5-5**^{32 33}. All AQMA's are declared for exceedances of NO₂ with all cases associated with traffic. Details of the current AQMA's are presented in **Appendix A**.

Table 5-5 – Air Quality Monitoring Areas

Name	Location
Wokingham AQMA (and M4 AQMA)	An area encompassing properties along the M4 Motorway and along part of the A329 where it passes under the M4.
Twyford Crossroads	An area extending along roads from High Street, Wargrave Road, London Road and Church Street.
Wokingham Town Centre	An area incorporating areas of Wokingham including Reading Road, Station Road, Shute End, Broad Street, Denmark Street, Peach Street, London Road and Seaford Road.

- 5.6.3. The NO₂ levels in Wokingham Borough have shown a decreasing trend since 2016³³.
- 5.6.4. Within WBC, the average PM_{2.5} level is 10.13 with a maximum level of 11.98³³. 0.81% of PM_{2.5} is produced by road and transport, the remaining 99.19% is produced by other factors (such as rail, industry, domestic etc.). No PM_{2.5} or PM₁₀ monitoring is undertaken outside of the AQMA's in WBC³³.
- 5.6.5. The number of vehicles in WBC has been increasing, albeit usage of each individual vehicle falling.

³² Defra (2022). 'Local Authority Details Wokingham Borough Council'. Available at: https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/local-authorities?la_id=318

³³ Wokingham Borough Council (2022). '2022 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)'. Available at: https://www.woking.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/environmental-services/pollution/Woking%20Air%20Quality%20Report_2022_Final.pdf

Future Trends

- 5.6.6. Predicted increase in the use of cleaner vehicles has potential to improve air quality in the future, and improving the health, wellbeing and quality of life of residents of Wokingham Borough (see **Sections 3.11** and **3.12**).

Issues and Opportunities

- 5.6.7. The following issues and opportunities have been identified in **Table 5-4**.

Table 5-6 – Air Quality Issues and Opportunities

Sustainability Issues	Sustainability Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Within WBC, AQMA's are predominantly associated with transport sources and emissions. Potential adverse impacts affecting human health and the wider surrounding environment arising from transport sources will need to be given appropriate consideration. ■ Where AQMAs are declared, due consideration of transport associated measures should be given to address their declaration; ■ Addressing local problems associated with PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, NO_x and NO₂ emissions to reduce air pollution; and ■ Although changes in technology mean that vehicles are producing fewer emissions, the number of vehicles on roads is expected to increase. This has the potential to affect air quality and as a consequence, human health, natural capital, and ecological sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensuring that air quality continues to improve across WBC. ■ There is the potential that improved transport links will facilitate traffic flows, reduce idling times and thus improving air quality locally. However, an improved highway network could also result in increased usage, thus increasing emissions. ■ The UK Government's plan to end the sale of all new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030 and support for work and home-based electric charging facilities, will promote use of hybrid and electric vehicles, with positive effects for air quality. ■ The UK Government's commitment to end diesel haulage on the rail network by 2040 and introduce at least 4,000 more zero emission buses. ■ Uptake of technological advances such as autonomous vehicles. These have the potential to further reduce emissions through reduction in the stop start nature of traffic, opening up the possibility of vehicle platooning³⁴. ■ Air quality issues across Wokingham Borough can be addressed by promoting a modal shift towards less polluting methods of transport (low carbon transport initiatives) and inclusive of active transport (e.g. cycling, walking etc.) into the LTP4 thereby leading to a higher standard of air quality. ■

³⁴ Platooning is a newly developed technology referring to referring to linking up the driving of vehicles, by maintaining a distance between vehicles to increase road capacities and decrease distances between vehicles.

5.7 Climate change

Summary of Baseline and Future Trends

Current Baseline

- 5.7.1. WBC declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and committed to reducing the Borough carbon footprint to net carbon zero by 2030³⁵. The Borough, including sectors beyond the Council's scope (e.g. the M4), currently produces 557ktCO_{2e} of carbon emissions per annum³⁵. Without the inclusion of sectors beyond the Council's control, the Borough produces 388.6 ktCO_{2e} per annum.
- 5.7.2. Sectors beyond the Council's sphere of influence include emissions from major transport links (predominantly the M4) and diesel rail transport which are managed by National Highways and national rail companies, respectively. These sectors contribute 168.4 ktCO_{2e} to the total emissions produced in the Borough.
- 5.7.3. In addition to the sectors that are beyond the Council's remit, the two highest emitting areas in WBC are transport and the use of gas in the domestic sector.
- 5.7.4. During the most recent decade (2009-2018) the UK has been on average 0.3°C warmer than the 1981-2010 average and 0.9°C warmer than 1961-1990. All of the top ten warmest years have occurred since 2002. In the past few decades there has been an increase in annual average rainfall over the UK, for which the most recent decade (2009–2018) has been on average 5% wetter than 1961–1990 and 1% wetter than 1981-2010³⁶.

Future Trends

- 5.7.5. WBC has committed to reducing the Borough's carbon footprint to net zero carbon by 2030. However, projected population increase (**Section 5.12**) and development within the Borough is anticipated to increase carbon dioxide emissions.
- 5.7.6. Carbon off-setting/Sequestration is anticipated to increase throughout the Borough to help negate carbon emissions.

³⁵ Wokingham Borough Council (2022). 'Climate emergency Action Plan'. Available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/council-and-meetings/open-data/climate-emergency/#:~:text=Progress%20report%202022,net%20carbon%20zero%20by%202030>.

³⁶ Met Office, UK Climate Projections: Headline Findings, 2022, [online] Available at: https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/binaries/content/assets/metofficegovuk/pdf/research/ukcp/ukcp18_headline_findings_v4_aug22.pdf

- 5.7.7. All areas of the UK are predicted to be warmer, more so in summer than in winter, by the end of the 21st century³⁷. The UKCP 18³⁸ predicts an increase in hotter, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters by 2070. Should the currently high greenhouse gas emissions remain unchanged or increase, hot summers are even more likely.
- 5.7.8. The current baseline review identifies that areas of WBC are at risk of flooding from a variety of sources. Future climate change is anticipated to exacerbate this risk through increases in the occurrence of extreme weather events and annual precipitation in the Borough.

Issues and Opportunities

- 5.7.9. The following issues and opportunities have been identified in **Table 5-7**.

Table 5-7 – Climate Change Issues and Opportunities

Sustainability Issues	Sustainability Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ WBC has committed to reducing the Borough’s carbon footprint to net zero carbon by 2030. Transport infrastructure is one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions and must be considered accordingly before progressing future schemes; ■ Climate change is anticipated to exacerbate flood issues across WBC putting livelihoods, dwellings, businesses and lives at risk; and ■ The RAIN project³⁹ has been investigating the impact of severe meteorological occurrence on critical infrastructure across Europe. Conclusions highlighted that rail and road infrastructure were more vulnerable than power or telecommunications infrastructure since structural damage is not required for the system to fail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is a need to plan for and implement/ facilitate climate change adaptation, in respect of rising temperatures, water scarcity and extreme weather events, particularly heavy rainfall/ flooding. ■ There is a need to support the continued increase in infrastructure to support the demand in electric cars. ■ Supporting climate change mitigation via promoting alternative methods of sustainable transport, and thereby limiting the contribution of transport to greenhouse gas emissions; ■ Increasing the resilience of the local transport network to the effects of climate change; ■ Supporting low emission fuels, infrastructure and associated technologies; ■ Supporting green infrastructure enhancements; and ■ The continuation of the reduction in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, where appropriate, alongside limiting emissions of other greenhouse gases.

³⁷ Met Office (2019). ‘UK Climate Projections: Headline Findings’. Available at:

<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/binaries/content/assets/metofficegovuk/pdf/research/ukcp/ukcp-headline-findings-v2.pdf>

³⁸ UKCP18 (2018). ‘UKCP18 Climate Change Over Land’. Available at:

<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/binaries/content/assets/metofficegovuk/pdf/research/ukcp/ukcp18-infographic-headline-findings-land.pdf>

³⁹ RAIN Project (2017). ‘Risk Analysis of Infrastructure Networks in Response to Extreme Weather’. Available at:

<http://rain-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/D2.2-Past-Cases-final.compressed.pdf>

5.8 Noise

Summary of Baseline and Future Trends

Current Baseline

- 5.8.1. There are 52 Noise Important Areas (NIA's) located within Wokingham Borough. These are primarily located along the M4, A3290, A329, A329M, A4 and the railway line in the north of the Borough.
- 5.8.2. Wokingham Borough is included in the Reading/Wokingham agglomeration⁴⁰ which also includes Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire⁴¹. Significantly more people are exposed to road noise than railway noise, with the M4 and the A329(M) being the major sources of noise in the Borough⁴². **Table 5-8** and **Table 5-9** present the estimated number of people exposed to various noise levels from roads and railways respectively.

Table 5-8 – The estimated number of people exposed to various noise levels due to roads within the Reading/Wokingham agglomeration⁴¹

Noise Level (Lden) (dB)	Number of People
≥55	127,000
≥60	53,000
≥65	27,000
≥70	10,000
≥75	<500

Table 5-9 – The estimated number of people exposed to various noise levels due to railways within the Reading/Wokingham agglomeration⁴¹

Noise Level (Lden) (dB)	Number of People
≥55	14,000

⁴⁰ “An agglomeration is an area with a population of more than 100,000 people; for major roads with more than 3,00,000 vehicle passages per year, and for major railways with more than 30,000 train movements per year,”

⁴¹ Defra (2019). ‘Noise Action Plan: Agglomerations (Urban Areas)’. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/813776/noise-action-plan-2019-agglomerations-appendix.pdf

⁴² Wokingham Borough Council (2018). ‘Creating the right environments for health’. Available at: <https://wokingham.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s25901/Wokingham%20Borough%20Council%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

≥60	7,000
≥65	3,000
≥70	1,000
≥75	<500

5.8.3. For 3.9% of Wokingham Borough residents, transport noise is above the 65dB daytime limit, rising to 11.3% for the night time limit 55dB limit⁴¹.

Future Trends

5.8.4. Given the projections for an increasing population in the Borough, and the popular use of cars as the main mode of transport, it is likely that noise levels will increase along major roads. In addition, the increased population is likely to place pressure on public transport methods such as rail and buses. Increased number of services of those public transport would lead to similar increases in noise levels along road and rail networks.

5.8.5. An increase in development is also likely to cause an increase in construction noise in areas within the Borough, although this will be temporary in nature.

Issues and Opportunities

5.8.6. The following issues and opportunities have been identified in **Table 5-10**.

Table 5-10 – Noise Issues and Opportunities

Sustainability Issues	Sustainability Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transport noise may adversely impact sleep, health and wellbeing as well as disturb wildlife and there is potential for an increase in noise levels in the NIAs in Wokingham Borough; and ▪ The natural environment, particularly tranquil areas, may experience an increase in transport-related noise pollution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There exists an opportunity to reforecast the understanding of transport noise profiles and exposure. This could account for the benefits from low-noise electrified road vehicles and reactions to climate change. A plan could be developed from this that accounts for the future and realises benefits for Wokingham Borough.

5.9 Landscape and Townscape

Summary of Baseline and Future Trends

Current Baseline

Landscape Designations

5.9.1. Landscape character is defined as:

‘a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse’.

- 5.9.2. WBC is located within three National Character Areas (NCA), these are the following⁴³:
- 110 – The Chilterns NCA: *‘The countryside is a patchwork of mixed agriculture with woodland, set within hedged boundaries. The extensively wooded and farmed Chilterns landscape is underlain by chalk bedrock that rises up from the London Basin to form a north-west facing escarpment offering long views over the adjacent vales. From the vales, the River Thames breaches the escarpment in the south at the Goring Gap and flows on past riverside towns such as Henley. Small streams flow on chalk down some of the dip slope valleys or from the scarp foot, passing through numerous settlements’;*
 - 115 – Thames Valley: *‘The Thames Valley is mainly low-lying, wedge-shaped area, widening from Reading... The River Thames provides a unifying feature through a very diverse landscape of urban and suburban settlements, infrastructure networks, fragmented agricultural land, historic parks, commons, woodland, reservoirs and extensive mineral workings. Hydrogeological features dominate the Thames Valley’;* and
 - 129 – Thames Basin Heaths: *‘The Thames Basin Heaths NCA stretches westwards from Weybridge in Surrey to the countryside around Newbury in Berkshire... Woodland accounts for a quarter of this NCA, reflecting the predominance of low-grade agricultural land... Semi-natural habitat is extensive on the plateaux, and includes mosaics of wet and dry heathland, woodland and acid grassland.*
- 5.9.3. The WBC Landscape Character Assessment identifies 29 landscape characters located throughout WBC⁴⁴.
- 5.9.4. There are no Areas of Outstanding National Beauty within Wokingham Borough, although the Chiltern AONB is located along the northern border. There are no National Parks within the Borough²⁵.

Green Infrastructure

- 5.9.5. Wokingham Borough has numerous greenspaces available throughout the Borough. The importance of the PRow and Green Infrastructure (GI) network is in enabling residents and visitors to access the countryside with its rich natural and cultural heritage.
- 5.9.6. WBC is in the process of increasing the greenways within the Borough. Greenways are routes which are free of traffic and provide multi-user routes to connect Strategic Development Locations to existing settlements. One Greenway has been delivered by WBC linking Finchampstead Baptist Centre with Arborfield Garrison.
- 5.9.7. There are multiple PRow and green routes located throughout the Borough (**Appendix A**).

⁴³ Natural England (2020). ‘National Character Area Profiles’. Available: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles>

⁴⁴ Defra (2020). ‘MagicMap’. Available at: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx>

Future Trends

- 5.9.8. Projected population increase and development within the Borough may affect the quality of the landscape character in WBC. It is critical that due consideration is given to areas of landscape importance to prevent adverse impacts arising.
- 5.9.9. Landscape character quality may be affected both positively and adversely by new transport infrastructure and residential developments, and the development of greenfield and unoccupied sites resulting from population pressure. Adverse impacts are more likely to occur in areas with no previous transport infrastructure, in particular woodland areas, in terms of both visual amenity and overall quality (e.g. presence of new hard engineering, landscape fragmentation, signage and other infrastructure elements of height, street lighting affecting night skies, urbanisation and widening of rural roads etc.). However, future transport infrastructure may improve accessibility to valued landscape and townscape areas; other non-road infrastructure (e.g. footpath and cycling route networks) may facilitate access with little adverse impact, while linking up with goals identified in **Sections 5.6, 5.7, and 5.13**.

Issues and Opportunities

- 5.9.10. The following issues and opportunities have been identified in **Table 5-11**.

Table 5-11 – Landscape and Townscape Issues and Opportunities

Sustainability Issues	Sustainability Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The character and quality of Wokingham Borough’s landscapes and townscapes can be eroded by the construction and operation of transport infrastructure, which may impact upon the distinctive historic character of settlements; ■ Green Infrastructure (GI) describes the multifunctional network of green and blue spaces, landscapes, and natural elements within and between our cities, towns and villages. By connecting the centres of settlement into the surrounding landscape, GI can facilitate prosperous, active, healthy and happy communities. This network may be severed or reduced due to new transport infrastructure; and ■ Transport infrastructure has the potential to erode and adversely affect local character and distinctiveness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The design of transport infrastructure requires a landscape-led approach to design, to ensure the best placement and integration of the proposed development into the existing landscape, especially in sensitive locations. Landscape-led designs can help contribute to the climate change agenda, health and wellbeing, and tackling pollution in all its forms (such as air, light and noise). ■ There is potential for transport to improve access to the countryside, to promote sustainable tourism and to provide greater awareness for the UK’s AONBs and other designated areas. ■ Increasing access to the countryside, whilst increasing pressure on those resources, can bring new audiences to tourist attractions and enable better appreciation of landscapes and townscapes through creating new views and vistas, providing information and enhancing access. ■ The incorporation of ‘Future Ready’ Landscape principles into landscape-led designs would help ensure transport infrastructure is designed for longevity in the 21st century, for both its people and its natural environment.

5.10 Historic Environment

Summary of Baseline and Future Trends

Current Baseline

- 5.10.1. There are 16 conservation areas located throughout Wokingham Borough⁴⁵. There are a number of listed buildings located within Wokingham⁴⁶. The highest concentration of listed buildings are located in Wokingham, Wargrave and St Nicholas, and Hurst.
- 5.10.2. There are four registered parks and gardens within Wokingham Borough⁴⁵.
- 5.10.3. There are 45 Buildings of Traditional Local Character located within Wokingham Borough⁴⁷. There are 18 Scheduled Monuments within the Borough⁴⁴.
- 5.10.4. No World Heritage Sites or Registered Battlefields are present within the Borough.
- 5.10.5. Historic England's Heritage at Risk (HAR) programme helps to understand the overall state of England's historic sites. It identifies those sites that are most at risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development. In Wokingham Borough there are six heritage assets on the HAR register⁴⁸.

Future Trends

- 5.10.6. The historic environment is increasingly under threat from development pressures. In addition to loss of green infrastructure and heritage assets, new infrastructure to provide for a growing population affects visual amenity and heritage setting.
- 5.10.7. Protection of the historic environment is firmly embedded in national and local planning policy, and this has been the case since 1990. This policy has developed independently of the European Union and is unlikely to change during the time period covered by the LTP4.
- 5.10.8. However, whilst direct (physical) impacts on designated historical sites are strongly restricted, adverse effects on the setting of designated heritage assets do still occur, for example relating to visual intrusion, or aspects such as traffic, lighting and noise. This can be a sensitive planning issue.
- 5.10.9. One trend over the last few years which may well continue is the reduction in funding for Historic England and county and local authorities, with increased pressure on the case

⁴⁵ Wokingham Borough Council (2020). 'Listed buildings, heritage and conservation areas' Available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/how-to-apply-for-planning-permission/listed-buildings-heritage-and-conservation-areas/>

⁴⁶ British Listed Buildings (2020). 'Listed Buildings in Wokingham'. Available at: <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/wokingham#.X84Tk9j7SM8>

⁴⁷ Wokingham Borough Council (2016). 'List of Buildings of Traditional Local Character'. Available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=443924>

⁴⁸ Historic England, Heritage At Risk Register. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/>

workload of Archaeological Officers, Conservation Officers and Historic England advisors. This can have an impact on the response times for the provision of planning advice.

Issues and Opportunities

5.10.10. The following issues and opportunities have been identified in **Table 5-12**.

Table 5-12 – Historic Environment Issues and Opportunities

Sustainability Issues	Sustainability Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Conserving the character of the Borough is key, particularly in light of government policy and the extent of development and pressure for continued development in the area. Transport infrastructure has the potential to erode and adversely affect local character and distinctiveness. ■ Adverse impacts upon the setting of components of the historic environment; ■ The impact of vehicular damage to historic structures, buildings and the fabric of the public realm in town and village centres; ■ The impacts of vehicular pollution on historic buildings; and ■ The impacts of ancillary features, inclusive of marked parking bays, yellow lines etc. on the historic environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The LTP4 presents opportunities for enhancing the understanding and appreciation of the significance of above ground heritage assets. This might be achieved for example, by reducing traffic volume, visibility and noise in the vicinity of a designated heritage asset and reducing existing detrimental effects on setting. ■ Asset enhancement has the potential to lead to an increase in tourism and associated revenue, and education opportunities associated with Wokingham’s cultural heritage. ■ Protecting and enhancing the cultural and heritage identity of Wokingham Borough. ■ Improvement to the access and accessibility of heritage assets.

5.11 Water and flood risk

Summary of Baseline and Future Trends

Current Baseline

5.11.1. Wokingham Borough is located within the Thames river basin district (RBD). The Thames RBD covers 16,200km⁴⁹ and contains 17 management catchments⁴⁹. The management catchments within the Borough are the Loddon and Trib, and the Thames and Chilterns South catchments⁵⁰. There are a total of 545 water bodies within the Thames RBD of which 342 are natural, 72 are artificial and 131 are heavily modified.

⁴⁹ Defra (2015). ‘Part 1: Thames river basin district River basin management plan’. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/718342/Thames_RBD_Part_1_river_basin_management_plan.pdf

⁵⁰ Environment Agency (2020). ‘Thames River Basin District’. Available at: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/RiverBasinDistrict/6>

5.11.2. Significant water management issues affecting the Thames RBD are presented in **Table 5-13**.

Table 5-13 – Significant Water Management in the Thames River Basin District⁴⁹

Water Management Issue	Percentage (%) of Water Bodies Affected
Physical modifications (e.g. flood defences)	44%
Pollution from waste water	45%
Pollution from towns, cities and transport	17%
Changes to the natural flow and level of water	12%
Negative effects of invasive non-native species	3%
Pollution from rural areas	27%

5.11.3. The main rivers within Wokingham Borough are the following:

- River Thames;
- River Loddon;
- Twyford Brook;
- Emm Brook;
- Barkham Brook; and
- River Blackwater.

5.11.4. Wokingham Borough is underlain by a principal aquifer and Chalk bedrock. There have been several instances of historical flooding which are suspected to have been caused, either in full or in part, by groundwater. Much of the Borough is susceptible to groundwater flooding, with paths and rivers being the most susceptible⁵¹.

5.11.5. The north of the Borough around north Aston, Remenham Hill and Cockpole Green and south-east of Ruscombe are the most permeable areas in the Borough, which corresponds with the areas of overlying chalk geology. The least permeable areas in the Borough are in

⁵¹ Halcrow Group Limited (2011). 'Wokingham Borough Council Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment'. Available at: <https://www.google.com/url?client=internal-element-cse&cx=008624316100129476043:osi-gdj83q0&q=https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx%3FallId%3D196557&sa=U&ved=2ahUKEwjWzbnOz53uAhUHUBUIHQNWb3MQFjAlegQIARAC&usq=AOvVaw3jiYjsJ950I3nZgjyccywr>

the south-west to the centre-east of the Borough which correspond with areas of Clay geology⁵².

Loddon and Trib Catchment

- 5.11.6. There are 22 water bodies located within the Loddon and Trib management catchment⁵³. **Table 5-14** presents the ecological classification of the water bodies. All of the water bodies chemical status are classified as 'fail'.

Table 5-14 – Ecological classification of water bodies in the Loddon and Trib management catchment⁵³

Ecological Status	Number of Water Bodies
Bad	1
Poor	9
Moderate	12
Good	0

- 5.11.7. The top three reasons for not achieving good status and reasons for deterioration within the management area are the following:
- Water Industry;
 - Urban and Transport; and
 - Other.

Thames and Chilterns South Catchment

- 5.11.8. There are 33 water bodies within the Thames and Chilterns South catchment⁵⁴. **Table 5-15** presents the ecological classification of the water bodies. All the water bodies chemical status are classified as 'fail'.

Table 5-15 - Ecological classification of water bodies in the Thames and Chilterns South management catchment⁵⁴

⁵² WSP (2020). 'Strategic Flood Risk Assessment'. Available at: <https://www.google.com/url?client=internal-element-cse&cx=008624316100129476043:osi-gdj83g0&q=https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/resources/assets/attachment/full/0/508886.pdf&sa=U&ved=2ahUKEwjxIM7z7bTtAhXRzqQKHSVYA4EQFjAAegQIABAC&usq=AOVvaw1Ye75R0d3hym9UFpmqnDiv>

⁵³ Environment Agency (2020). 'Loddon Trib – Summary'. Available at: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/ManagementCatchment/3048/Summary>

⁵⁴ Environment Agency (2022) 'Thames and Chilterns South Management Catchment'. Available at: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/ManagementCatchment/3098>

Ecological Status	Number of Water Bodies
Bad	0
Poor	10
Moderate	23
Good	0

5.11.9. The top three reasons for not achieving good status and reasons for deterioration within the management area are the following:

- Agriculture and rural land management;
- Water industry; and
- Urban and transport.

Flooding

5.11.10. There have been multiple instances of flooding within Wokingham Borough. Significant historic flooding has occurred in recent years; 1993, 2000, 2003, 2007, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2020⁵². The majority of flooding within the Borough is in relation to surface water flooding associated with the River Loddon and the River Thames. Areas within the Borough located immediately adjacent to these rivers areas are located within Flood Zone 3^{55 56}.

5.11.11. There is a small percentage of properties within the Borough at high to medium risk of flooding, as most properties are within Flood Zone 1. Few vulnerable sites are located within areas of high flood risk; most are located within Flood Zone 2⁵².

5.11.12. Data on groundwater flood risk are limited, although there are historical floods that are believed to have been caused, either in full or in part, by groundwater flooding. The WBC Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) Report⁵² indicated that parts of the Borough are at risk of groundwater flooding due to the presence of underlying primary or secondary aquifers. The highly permeable Chalk in the north of the Borough and the Sand and Gravel superficial deposits scattered across the Borough have the highest risk of groundwater flooding.

⁵⁵ Wokingham Borough Council (2015). 'Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.' Available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=357325>

⁵⁶ Gov.uk (2020). 'Likelihood of flooding in this area'. Available at: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/confirm-location?easting=481266&northing=168562&placeOrPostcode=wokingham>

Future Trends

- 5.11.13. Increasing population and development within the Borough is anticipated to place strain on water resources and may lead to a decrease in water quality. Increased development and population will also increase the number and likelihood of properties being at risk of flooding.
- 5.11.14. Due to climate change, the peak river flow within the Thames RBD is anticipated to increase 10-25% within the next 25 years⁵⁷. Extreme rainfall intensity is also predicted to increase by 20-40% in the next 100 years⁵².
- 5.11.15. It is postulated that peak river flows may increase by as much as 20% by 2080, increasing the risk and frequency of river flooding. Alongside this, the south-east region is sinking, which would result in increased flood risk throughout a large portion of the region.
- 5.11.16. The RAIN project⁵⁸ has been investigating the impact of severe weather occurrences (refer also to **Section 5.7**) on critical infrastructure across Europe. It concludes that rail and road infrastructure is much more vulnerable than power or telecommunications infrastructure because there does not need to be structural damage for the system to fail⁵⁹. The official estimate of the cost of river floods in England between May and July 2007 was £3.2bn. Impacts included damage and destruction by floodwater, disruption of traffic and cessation of rail services.
- 5.11.17. In terms of water quality, the requirements of the Water Framework Directive should lead to continued improvements to water quality in watercourses. However, water quality is also likely to continue to be affected by pollution incidents in the area, the presence of non-native species and physical modifications to water bodies.

Issues and Opportunities

- 5.11.18. The following issues and opportunities have been identified in **Table 5-16**.

Table 5-16 – Water and Flood Risk Issues and Opportunities

Sustainability Issues	Sustainability Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change is likely to increase the occurrence of flooding from all sources and hence raise the flood risk in Wokingham Borough, including to transport infrastructure; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrading existing infrastructure also provides the opportunity to improve pollution control on older drainage systems.

⁵⁷ Gov.uk (2020). 'Flood risk assessments: climate change allowances'. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessments-climate-change-allowances>

⁵⁸ RAIN (2017) RAIN project [online] Available at <http://rain-project.eu/>

⁵⁹ RAIN (2017) RAIN project [online] Available at <http://rain-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/D2.2-Past-Cases-final.compressed.pdf>

Sustainability Issues	Sustainability Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pollution of the water environment can occur from run-off from roads and pavements after rainfall; and ▪ Increase in flood risk can occur through the loss of permeable surfaces due to new road construction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New transport infrastructure could result in improved drainage, reducing surface water flooding.

5.12 Population

Summary of Baseline and Future Trends

Current Baseline

- 5.12.1. Wokingham Borough contains 17 parishes and covers an area of 179km²⁶⁰⁶¹. The population of the Borough in 2021 was 178,169⁶², increasing from 154,380 in 2011. In 2021, WBC’s population profile showed 20% of people aged 0-14 years, 63% of people aged 15 – 64 years, and 17% of people aged 65+ years. This is in line with both the South East and England averages⁶³.
- 5.12.2. Wokingham Borough has seen a 28.2% increase in residents aged 65+, 11% increase in people aged 15-64, and 18% in people aged 0-15 years⁶⁴. These increases, particularly with regard to population aged 65+, are in line with trends across England.
- 5.12.3. The National Travel Survey (2019) found that 75% of English residents aged over 17 hold a driving licence and that 76% of households have at least one car⁶⁵. Within Wokingham Borough, 53.2% of households have two or more cars⁶⁶.

⁶⁰ Wokingham Borough Council (2021). ‘Borough Statistics’. Available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/community-and-safety/life-in-the-community/borough-statistics/>

⁶¹ Public Health England (2022). ‘Local Authority Health Profiles’. Available at: <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/data#page/12/gid/1938132696/pat/6/par/E12000008/ati/102/are/E06000041/cid/4>

⁶² Public Health England (2022). ‘Wokingham’. Available at: <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/static-reports/health-profiles/2019/E06000041.html?area-name=Wokingham>

⁶³ Wokingham Borough Council (2021) Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Available at: https://wokingham.berkshireobservatory.co.uk/population/#/view-report/63aeddf1d7fc44b8b4dffcd868e84eac/___iaFirstFeature/G3

⁶⁴ Office for National Statistics (2022) Census 2021. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/E06000041/>

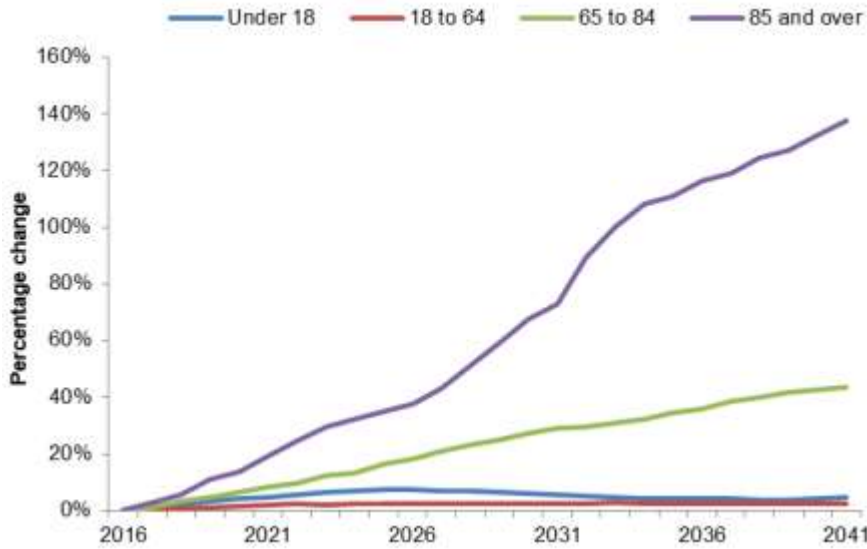
⁶⁵ Department for Transport (2020). ‘National Travel Survey: England 2019’. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/906276/national-travel-survey-2019.pdf

⁶⁶ Wokingham Borough Council (2010). ‘Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document’. Available at: <https://www.google.com/url?client=internal-element-cse&cx=008624316100129476043:osi->

Future Trends

5.12.4. It is projected that the population of WBC will increase by 1% a year and reach 180,900 by 2037⁶⁴. The population is also ageing, with the total population aged over 65 to increase from 18% in 2018 to 20% by 2027. **Figure 5-3** presents the predicted change in resident population age groups within Wokingham Borough.

Figure 5-3 - Percentage change in resident population within Wokingham Borough from 2016 to 2041 by age group⁶⁴



5.12.5. Within Central and East Berkshire, the objectively assessed need (OAN) is 2,902 houses per year from 2013-2036 with Wokingham Borough having an OAN of 856 houses per year.

Issues and Opportunities

5.12.6. The following issues and opportunities have been identified in **Table 5-17** – Population Issues and Opportunities.

Table 5-17 – Population Issues and Opportunities

Sustainability Issues	Sustainability Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An ageing population for WBC is likely to place increased strain and demand on access to services, particularly healthcare, and public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are opportunities to improve access to rural areas through transport services, digital services and bring services to people.

[gdj83g0&q=https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx%3FallId%3D365578&sa=U&ved=2ahUKEwiTg-7r3aztAhVSOBoKHd7gBeAQFjAAegQIBBAC&usq=AOvVaw2g88lrJQboeK7wsQPtgWYt](https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx%3FallId%3D365578&sa=U&ved=2ahUKEwiTg-7r3aztAhVSOBoKHd7gBeAQFjAAegQIBBAC&usq=AOvVaw2g88lrJQboeK7wsQPtgWYt)

Sustainability Issues	Sustainability Opportunities
<p>transport. Proposed sites for strategic development will need to be accounted for when choosing potential locations for new transport infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The population in Wokingham Borough is increasing there will be additional movement associated with this growth; and ■ The ageing population structure is likely to increase demand for access to services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There will be a need for adequate support and greater access to services and facilities for the elderly population, families with young children and single parent families. ■ There were 3.5 million disabled people in work in 2017, with the Government aiming to increase this to 4.5 million by 2027. By helping more disabled people into work, this will enable people to reach their potential and to achieve economic independence. ■ Transport networks should promote a range of sustainable transport modes to limit the effects of congestion, economic vitality, and residents' quality of life.

5.13 Health and wellbeing

Summary of Baseline and Future Trends

Current Baseline

Health

5.13.1. Health in WBC is generally greater compared to the national average. WBC is the second least deprived local authority in England, with none of the neighbourhoods in the Borough ranking in the 20% of the most deprived areas in England⁶³. However, 6.8% of children aged under 15 live in poverty. Deprivation is recognised as one of the most influential factors on a population's health, wellbeing and life expectancy.

Access to Healthcare

5.13.2. Wokingham Borough has one community hospital, 13 GP Practices and 24 pharmacies. A total of 164,433 people are registered to the GPs in the Borough and the practices are well spread throughout the Borough, however they are more accessible to those with cars than via public transport, as this is quite limited⁶⁷.

5.13.3. Wokingham Hospital is located within Wokingham Borough, however this does not have an accident and emergency (A&E) department, nor does it offer a full range of hospital services. The closest major hospital with an A&E department is the Royal Berkshire Hospital, located in Reading.

⁶⁷ Wokingham Borough Council (2020). 'Active Travel Plan, Supporting Local Transport Plan 2011-2036'. Available at: <https://www.google.com/url?client=internal-element-cse&cx=008624316100129476043:osi-gdj83g0&q=http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/resources/assets/attachment/full/0/432860.pdf&sa=U&ved=2ahUKEwjwttup5aZtAhVSx4UKHfY9Aw0QFjABegQICRAB&usq=AOvVaw0IN3fb8kijy4GH14rxjZbTV> Accessed: 01/12/2020.

5.13.4. Large employment centres and hospitals are the most difficult services to get to in a set amount of time in England⁶⁸. Within England, the average journey time to a hospital with different modes of transport is shown in **Table 5-18**.

Table 5-18 – Average Mode of Transport Travel Time to Hospital⁶⁸

Mode of Transport	Average Journey Time to Hospital
Car	20
Cycle	34
Public Transport / Walking	39

Mental Health

5.13.5. Within WBC, 9.1% of adults over 18 were reported as having depression and/or anxiety⁶³. This rate is significantly lower than the national average (13.7%).

5.13.6. In Wokingham Borough, 823.9 out of 100,000 children between 15 and 19 are admitted to hospital annually for self-harm. This rate has been increasing in recent years and is significantly worse than the national average (648.6 admissions per 100,000 children per year)⁶¹.

Mortality

5.13.7. In 2020 Wokingham Borough’s most common cause of death was cancer, with 26.22 deaths per 100,000 people, followed by cardiovascular disease with 19.24 deaths per 100,000 people and liver disease with 8.08 deaths per 100,000 people⁶³. The Borough’s mortality rate from causes considered preventable is significantly lower than both the South East and England’s averages.

5.13.8. Behavioural risk factors, such as a poor diet and smoking, are accountable for 40% of total deaths in England. These deaths are considered preventable and could be avoided through public health awareness and interventions. Smoking prevalence in Wokingham Borough in 2021 was lower than both the South East and England averages (11.9% and 13.0% respectively), at 6.7%.

5.13.9. Although Wokingham Borough’s mortality rates are below the national average, there are differences within the Borough specifically with regards to more deprived areas which have a higher mortality rate⁶¹.

⁶⁸ Department for Transport (2019). ‘Journey Time Statistics England: 2017’. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/853574/journey-time-statistics-2017.pdf

Obesity

- 5.13.10. The rate of obesity within WBC in 2021 is slightly lower than the England average for adults (aged 18+), with 60.2% of adults classified as overweight or obese in Wokingham Borough, 62.4% in the South East and 63.5% in England⁶³
- 5.13.11. In children (0-16 years), 21.2% are considered overweight or obese within Wokingham Borough. This is marginally lower than the South East average of 21.9% and slightly lower than the England average of 23%⁶³.
- 5.13.12. Within WBC, only 43.9% of children and young people achieved at least 60 minutes of moderate-vigorous intensity activity per week, this is slightly lower than both the South East and England averages of 45.5% and 44.6% respectively⁶³.
- 5.13.13. In adults, only 68% achieve 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per month in Wokingham Borough in 2021⁶³.

Life Expectancy

- 5.13.14. WBC has one of the highest life expectancies in England for both men and women, as indicated in **Table 5-19**.

Table 5-19 – Life Expectancy in Wokingham Borough and Nationally⁶³

	Wokingham Borough (Years)	South East Average (Years)	England Average (Years)
Life Expectancy (Male)	83.3	80.1	78.7
Life Expectancy (Female)	87.8	83.7	82.6

- 5.13.15. However, there are inequalities in life expectancy within the Borough. Those in the most deprived areas have a lower life expectancy than those in the least deprived areas, with men having 4.5 years less and women having 5.5 years less life expectancy in deprived areas.

Access to Green Space

- 5.13.16. Access to green space is known to increase people’s likelihood of being able to be physically active⁶³. **Table 5-20** presents the hectares of land looked after by the WBC Countryside Services.

Table 5-20 – Green space coverage in Wokingham Borough⁶³

Land Use	Coverage (hectares)
Country Parks	217ha

Nature Reserves	105ha
Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)	59ha
Total	381ha

5.13.17. In 2017, WBC opened the first greenway in the Borough which links Finchampstead (The FBC Centre) to the development at Aborfield Green (the former Aborfield Garrison). The aim of the greenway is to make walking and cycling more accessible to the local community⁴⁴.

Future Trends

5.13.18. The population of WBC is projected to increase in the future. The number of people aged 65 and over is also anticipated to increase to 60% of WBC's population by 2020⁶³. In this context, accessibility to existing and new health and community facilities is likely to become increasingly important.

5.13.19. Wokingham Borough exhibits higher levels of life expectancy and general health compared to the national average, and therefore demographically it is in a favourable position. However, as noted above there is anticipated to be an increasing ageing population. As such, accessibility to transport networks may develop into an important issue since older generations may not have access to appropriate forms of private transport. Similarly, there are other inequalities in access to healthcare, employment and other services for other vulnerable groups.

5.13.20. Obesity is seen as an increasing issue by health professionals, and one that will contribute to significant health impacts on individuals, including increasing the risk of a range of diseases, including heart disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer. Transport planning will play a key role in encouraging active travel choices (e.g. walking and cycling) by Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) as well as accessibility to sports and recreation facilities. Continued traffic growth without adequate provision for NMU facilities is unsustainable. One element of this NMU provision will be the pedestrianisation of urban centres and removal of parking in urban centres, creating 'car free environments' promoting a safer and cleaner environment for exploitation of active transport.

5.13.21. Covid-19 has significantly impacted the movement of people, reducing the requirement for commutes, limiting access to services, and increasing avoidance of public transport. The impact of Covid-19 on transport movement is yet to be determined but alterations to people's approach to transport, specifically private transport, and the subsequent health impacts (such as increased walking commutes or more time spent sat down) should be considered.

Issues and Opportunities

5.13.22. The following issues and opportunities have been identified in **Table 5-21**.

Table 5-21 – Health and Wellbeing Issues and Opportunities

Sustainability Issues	Sustainability Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The population of Wokingham Borough is an ageing population, transport and future mobility will need to reflect their needs; ▪ There may be inequalities in access to healthcare, jobs and other services associated with transport provision; and ▪ Active travel can play a role in reducing obesity and increasing health and wellbeing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The transport plan could present opportunities to enhance walking and cycling routes and encourage the use of non-motorised forms of transport. ▪ There will be opportunities to provide inclusive services to meet the needs of older residents. ▪ There will be opportunities to improve public transport users' confidence in returning to public transport post-Covid.

5.14 Economy and employment

Summary of Baseline and Future Trends

Current Baseline

Gross Value Added

- 5.14.1. Gross Value Added (GVA) is a contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) made by an individual producer, industry or sector based on the value output minus the value of intermediate consumption.
- 5.14.2. The total GVA in Wokingham Borough is £7,612 million for the total Borough GVA being⁶⁹. The three industries with the highest GVA in WBC are the following:
- Information and Communications (£2,817m);
 - Real Estate (£929m); and
 - Wholesale and Retail Trade (£656m).
- 5.14.3. The ONS GVA data from 2019 (balanced per head of population and income) gives values for Berkshire (which Wokingham Borough is within) £48,337 million⁷⁰. This makes Berkshire the second highest GVA area within Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire with Milton Keynes having the highest GVA in the area.

⁶⁹ Berkshire Observatory (2022). 'Wokingham'. Available at: <https://wokingham.berkshireobservatory.co.uk/economy-and-employment/>

⁷⁰ ONS 2019. 'Regional gross value added (balanced) per head and income components'. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossvalueaddedgva/datasets/nominalregionalgrossvalueaddedbalancedperheadandincomecomponents>

5.14.4. Wokingham Borough is within the Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) which aims to increase net GVA over £700m by 2021 which translated to an average growth rate of 3% per annum⁷¹.

Employment and Skills

5.14.5. Wokingham Borough’s employment rate is higher than the national average rate and is consistent with other least deprived local authority areas. In 2022, 81.4% of people aged 16-64 in Wokingham Borough were in employment, higher than both the South East (78.1%) and England (75.8%) averages.

5.14.6. Similarly, in 2022, 82.8% of WBC’s population aged 16-64 were economically active⁶⁹. This is also higher than the South East and England averages of 80.5% and 78.8% respectively. Of those who are economically inactive, the two main factors for this are being a student (40.3%) or being retired (21.4%)⁷².

5.14.7. In Wokingham Borough, 2.0% of young people are not in employment, education or training which is the fourth lowest average in the South East and is low in comparison to the England average⁷³.

5.14.8. In 2021, 66% of employed people in Wokingham Borough are employed in roles that are one of the three highest groups in the Standard Occupation Classification (SOC2010), which is higher than the national average (see **Table 5-22**)⁷⁴.

Table 5-22 – Percentage of people in employment by occupation (2017/18)⁷⁴

Occupation Group	Wokingham Borough	England
1. Managers, Directors and Senior	12.7%	10.8%
2. Professional Occupation	34.3%	23.9%

⁷¹ Thames Valley Berkshire (2021). ‘The Fundamentals’. Available at: <http://www.thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/the-fundamentals>

⁷² Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (2016). ‘Central Berkshire FEMA Economic Development Needs Assessment’. Available at: <https://www.google.com/url?client=internal-element-cse&cx=008624316100129476043:osi-gdj83g0&q=https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx%3FallId%3D442713&sa=U&ved=2ahUKEwiBuuTX6qrtAhUs8-AKHVVAAigQFjAAegQIBhAB&usq=AOvVaw3f-O6gKtGRMjydBgY1gfpu>

⁷³ Wokingham Borough Council (2022). ‘Economic Sustainability Facts and Figures Update’

⁷⁴ Berkshire Observatory (2022). ‘Economy and Employment Map’. Available at: <https://wokingham.berkshireobservatory.co.uk/economy-and-employment/map/>

3. Associate Professional and Technical	19%	15.3%
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5.14.9. The areas with the highest economically active population (>5,036 – 5,897) are the following⁷⁴:

- Hawkedon (5,897);
- and Hillside (5,349).
- Loddon (5,258); and
- Winnersh (5,257).

5.14.10. In 2021, 37% of the Borough’s population travel to work by private vehicle⁷⁴ with 28% of commuting journeys from being to/from Reading⁷⁵⁷⁶.

5.14.11. Within Central Berkshire, employment space is relatively evenly split between office and industrial uses⁷². The stock of employment space in Wokingham Borough is more mixed in nature and accommodates a two-tier office market. This office market comprises a number of large-scale, high-quality business parks which operate within the ‘greater Reading office market’ and the town of Wokingham Borough which is a smaller and more localised office location.

5.14.12. Wokingham Borough’s population are highly skilled compared to the English average, with 56.8% of the population having NVQ Level 4 qualification or above and only 3.8% of the population has no qualifications⁶³.

Access to Town Centres

5.14.13. Wokingham town benefits from the close proximity of the M4, as well as having strategic rail connections. However, as 53.2% of households have two or more cars there are issues in the town centre of congestion. Average parking capacity within the town centre averages 75.6% of demand, and there is consistently high demand for on-street parking⁷².

5.14.14. The railway station is the primary means of access to the town centre, however the station has poor integration with other forms of public transport⁷². Public transport use within WBC is 5% lower than the national average.

5.14.15. The town centre is accessible for pedestrian users and benefits from a hierarchy of routes located throughout the centre. However, there is limited clearly indefinable cycle routes across the Borough and provision within the town centre, including storage, is poor⁷².

⁷⁵ Wokingham Borough Council (2020). ‘Local Transport Plan 4 Vision’. Available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/parking-and-transport/transport-and-travel-passes/have-your-say-about-our-local-transport-plan/>

⁷⁶ Please note, this data was gathered before Covid-19. The long-term impact of Covid-19 on commuting patterns is yet to be determined.

Access to Educational Facilities

5.14.16. Within Wokingham Borough there are 60 schools that are attended by 23,000 pupils. Of these schools, 50 are infant and primary, 8 are secondary and 2 are special schools⁶⁰.

5.14.17. During peak hours in Wokingham Borough, 10% of vehicular traffic is from the school run with one third of children travelling to school in a car in 2010⁶⁵. A total of 48% of school pupils in the Borough walked to school, with a further 6% cycling to school. There is a notable difference in the percentage of children walking to school among primary and secondary school children with more primary children (54%) walking more than secondary school children (43%). However, both of these figures are higher than the national average of pupils walking to school.

Future Trends

5.14.18. Given uncertainties arising from leaving EU/Single Market, Covid-19 and unknown aspects such as migrant labour-force, tariffs and taxes on export/inputs it is presently unknown as to how the economic market of Wokingham Borough will change.

5.14.19. The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly altered the way people work, travel and undertake leisure activities in the short term. The long-term implications of this remain to be seen and may include greater emphasis and proportion of the work force working from home (although certain sectors will not be affected by this), hesitation to use public transport and increased active transport adoption. The decline in retail shopping and increased use of online sales will also likely see a decreased footfall in urban centres.

Issues and Opportunities

5.14.20. The following issues and opportunities have been identified in **Table 5-23**.

Table 5-23 – Economy and Employment Issues and Opportunities

Sustainability Issues	Sustainability Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Economic issues linked to transport include barriers to growth, enabling greater access to well-paid and satisfying employment within a flexible labour market characterised by diversity in activity and transferable and complementary knowledge solutions. Supporting sustainable economic development which mitigates or combats the effects of climate change is a key issue. ■ Good access to customers is important, transport infrastructure is noted as an area of improvement to enable this; and ■ Sustaining and supporting economic growth across the country in light of the withdrawal from the EU and economic issues brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The impact of factors such as Brexit, Covid-19, new vehicle and energy technologies, disruptive digital technologies, changing working patterns and preferences and extreme climactic events will play a part in determining the types of transport investment which will most benefit the economy. ■ Improved connectivity between business clusters and housing markets (both planned and existing) in the county will improve access to the skills pool as well supporting improvements in productivity.

6 Sustainability Appraisal Framework

6.1 Introduction

This section sets out the Sustainability Appraisal Framework which will be used in the assessment process.

6.2 Appraisal Framework

- 6.2.1. While not specifically required by the SEA Regulations, sustainability objectives are a recognised way of considering the environmental effects of a plan or programme and comparing the effects of alternatives. The objectives have been developed using the sustainability issues identified in Section 3. The objectives will be used to assess emerging policies and implementation plans from the LTP4 and identify likely sustainability effects.

Table 6-1 – Sustainability issues identified and sustainability issues

Topic	Sustainability Issues Identified	Sustainability Objective
Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ New transport routes will need to be carefully planned so that they do not cause adverse effects on ecosystems with high (potential) ecosystem services provision. Given that ecosystem services are the benefits that nature provides to people, areas of high (potential) provision are often the green and blue spaces close to centres of population, as well as connecting habitats that link these with more remote designated habitats and landscapes; ■ As transport corridors are typically linear, ensuring the connectivity of ecosystems is both an issue and an opportunity for the Transport Strategy. There is scope to focus on redevelopment of existing assets rather than build new, to focus development away from areas of high biodiversity and ecosystem service provision, and to enhance the quality of the transport 'soft estate' alongside existing and new transport corridors in order to improve habitat connectivity; ■ Human health and quality of life can be improved by taking a natural capital approach to the Transport Strategy. For example, improving the quality of habitats (including tree planting/wildflower planting) alongside walking and cycling routes can help encourage more active lifestyles with benefits for people's physical and mental health and wellbeing. Views of vegetation from other modes of transport (e.g. along roads and railways) can also enhance mental wellbeing, for example by reducing stress levels; and ■ Enhancing the quality of transport 'soft estate' can also help improve the resilience of the transport network to future climate change, for example by reducing flood risk and providing shading and cooling benefits. 	<p>SA1: To maintain and enhance the provision of ecosystem services from the Borough's natural capital and contribute to environmental net gain.</p>

Topic	Sustainability Issues Identified	Sustainability Objective
Materials and Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ New transport infrastructure can lead to use of minerals and other materials, in addition to generating waste. The transport of waste and materials can lead to indirect effects from traffic such as congestion, air pollution and noise; ■ There is a reliance upon the road network to transport materials, and it is unlikely that this will change; and ■ Increasing population of the County is likely to generate more waste which requires transportation. Construction of new transport infrastructure also has the potential to generate waste. 	<p>SA2: To conserve natural resources, increase resource efficiency and reduce generation and disposal of waste.</p>
Soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Soil is an important natural resource for agriculture, food production, biodiversity and archaeological and geological purposes. Acknowledgement should be given to the detrimental impacts arising from soil compaction, erosion and cumulative pollution; ■ It is important that any future development of the transport network in WBC does not have adverse impacts or lead to the degradation of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) (grades 1 to 3) agricultural land; ■ Improvements to transport infrastructure will likely require land take; and ■ Land should be used in the most efficient manner. 	<p>SA3: To protect soils and minimise the loss of Best and Most Versatile Land.</p>
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Due consideration should be given to protecting and conserving WBC's biodiversity, particularly in light of the disturbance and habitat degradation that may arise from the construction of transport infrastructure and projected population increase; ■ There are a number of statutory local, national and international sites designated for nature conservation within the county which may be affected by development, including transport infrastructure; ■ Habitats, particularly those designated as HPI and Ancient Woodland are at risk of being lost, damaged or fragmented by development, including transport infrastructure; ■ Species, including Species of Principal Importance and protected species, may also be affected by construction and operation of new infrastructure, both directly and indirectly; ■ The LTP4 presents opportunities to be strategic in the enhancement of biodiversity at the landscape scale across the corridors (and, once the interventions are defined, also in relation to any necessary offsets beyond the boundary of specific developments). Existing Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (Natural England) can be combined with priorities for wider ecosystem service benefits to deliver landscape wide environment gain for biodiversity and people; and ■ Biodiversity may be lost as the end result of development of new infrastructure resulting from the LTP4. 	<p>SA4: To protect and enhance the Borough's biodiversity, fauna and flora, including designated sites for nature conservation notable and protected species.</p> <p>SA5: Enhance the connectivity between habitats through the creation of green corridors and preservation / enhancement of the Green Infrastructure Network.</p>
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Within WBC, AQMA's are predominantly associated with transport sources and emissions. Potential adverse impacts 	<p>SA6: To reduce traffic related air pollution in</p>

Topic	Sustainability Issues Identified	Sustainability Objective
	<p>affecting human health and the wider surrounding environment arising from transport sources will need to be given appropriate consideration;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Where AQMAs are declared, due consideration of transport associated measures should be given to address their declaration; ■ Addressing local problems associated with PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, NO_x and NO₂ emissions to reduce air pollution; ■ There are three AQMA's located within WBC and are all declared for exceedances of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) with all cases associated with traffic; and ■ Although changes in technology mean that vehicles are producing less emissions, the number of vehicles on Borough roads is expected to increase, which has the potential to affect air quality and as a consequence, human health, natural capital and ecological sites. 	<p>AQMAs where possible, and enhance air quality elsewhere in Wokingham Borough.</p>
<p>Climate Change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ WBC has committed to reducing the Borough's carbon footprint to net zero carbon by 2030. Transport infrastructure is one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions and must be considered accordingly before progressing future schemes; ■ Climate change is anticipated to exacerbate flood issues across WBC putting livelihoods, dwellings, businesses and lives at risk; and ■ Road and rail infrastructure are vulnerable to power and telecommunication issues as a result of an increase in severe meteorological occurrence. This may impact services as well as, in a worst case scenario, risk human health. 	<p>SA7: To reduce emissions of greenhouse gases in line with WBC's net zero commitment by 2030</p> <p>SA8: Ensure that the local transport network builds resilience to climate change.</p>
<p>Noise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Excessive noise from transport can adversely affect general health, sleep and be seen as a nuisance; ■ Transport noise may adversely impact sleep, health and wellbeing as well as disturb wildlife and there is potential for an increase in noise levels in the NIAs in Wokingham Borough; and ■ The natural environment, particularly tranquil areas, may experience an increase in transport-related noise pollution. 	<p>SA9: To reduce noise from transport related sources in particular, Noise Important Areas and to protect tranquil areas.</p>
<p>Landscape and Townscape</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The character and quality of Wokingham Borough's landscapes and townscapes can be eroded by the construction and operation of transport infrastructure, which may impact upon the distinctive historic character of settlements; ■ Green Infrastructure (GI) describes the multifunctional network of green and blue spaces, and natural elements within and between cities, towns and villages. By connecting the centres of settlements into the surrounding landscape, GI can facilitate prosperous, active, healthy and happy communities. This network may be severed or reduced due to new transport infrastructure; and 	<p>SA10: To protect and where possible, enhance the quality, character and diversity of the existing landscape.</p>

Topic	Sustainability Issues Identified	Sustainability Objective
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Transport infrastructure has the potential to erode and adversely affect local character and distinctiveness. 	
Historic Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Conserving the character of the Borough is key, particularly in light of government policy and the extent of development and pressure for continued development in the area. Transport infrastructure has the potential to erode and adversely affect local character and distinctiveness. ■ Adverse impacts upon the setting of components of the historic environment; ■ The impact of vehicular damage to historic structures, buildings and the fabric of the public realm in town and village centres; ■ The impacts of vehicular pollution on historic buildings; and ■ The impacts of ancillary features, inclusive of marked parking bays, yellow lines etc. on the historic environment. 	<p>SA11: To protect and enhance the Borough’s historic environment, including heritage resources, historic buildings, historic landscapes and archaeological features.</p>
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Climate change is likely to increase the occurrence of flooding from all sources and hence raise the flood risk in Wokingham Borough including to transport infrastructure; ■ Pollution of the water environment can occur from run-off from roads and pavements after rainfall; and ■ Increase in flood risk can occur through the loss of permeable surfaces due to new road construction. 	<p>SA12: To protect and where possible, enhance water quality of the county’s rivers, groundwater and coast.</p> <p>SA13: To reduce vulnerability to flooding of transport infrastructure and ensure that the risk of surface water flooding is not increased.</p>
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ An ageing population for WBC is likely to place increased strain and demand on access to services, particularly healthcare, and public transport. Proposed sites for strategic development will need to be accounted for when choosing potential locations for new transport infrastructure;The population of WBC is increasing and there will be additional movement associated with this growth; and ■ The ageing rural population is becoming increasingly isolated, increasing the demand for access to services. 	<p>SA14: To increase the capacity and efficiency of the transportation network to support demographic changes, including increasing travel and sustainable modes of transport.</p>
Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The population of Wokingham Borough is an ageing population, transport and future mobility will need to reflect their needs; ■ There may be inequalities in access to healthcare, jobs and other services associated with transport provision; and ■ Active travel can play a role in reducing obesity and increasing health and wellbeing. 	<p>SA15: To improve the health and well-being of the population through access to transport, active travel and reductions in pollution.</p>

Topic	Sustainability Issues Identified	Sustainability Objective
Economy and Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economic issues linked to transport include barriers to growth, enabling greater access to well-paid and satisfying employment within a flexible labour market characterised by diversity in activity and transferable and complementary knowledge solutions. Supporting sustainable economic development which mitigates or combats the effects of climate change is a key issue. ▪ Good access to customers is important, transport infrastructure is noted as an area of improvement to enable this; and ▪ Sustaining and supporting economic growth across the country in light of the withdrawal from the EU and economic issues brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, conflict in Ukraine and other regions, and inflation pressures. 	<p>SA16: To sustain economic growth, enable well paid employment and competitiveness across Wokingham Borough through provision of reliable and accessible transport networks.</p>

7 Next Steps

- 7.1.1. WBC will undertake a statutory consultation to seek the views of the statutory bodies (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency) on the scope of the SA. WBC will also seek internal views, particularly from the Heritage and Environment team. Consultation at this stage helps to ensure that the SA provides a robust assessment of the LTP4.
- 7.1.2. In particular views on the following questions are welcome:
- Do you agree with the policy context and baseline information presented?
 - Are there any additional sustainability issues which should be identified?
 - Do you agree with sustainability objectives in **Table 6.1**?
- 7.1.3. Following receipt of comments, they will be reviewed and changes to the appraisal framework made as necessary. The appraisal framework will then be used to assess the Local Transport Plan (refer to Stage B of **Figure 3.1**) during the next stages of its preparation.

Appendix A

Figures

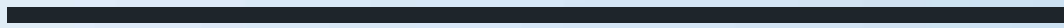


Figure A-1 - Declared AQMAs, NIAs and Active Waste Mineral Sites

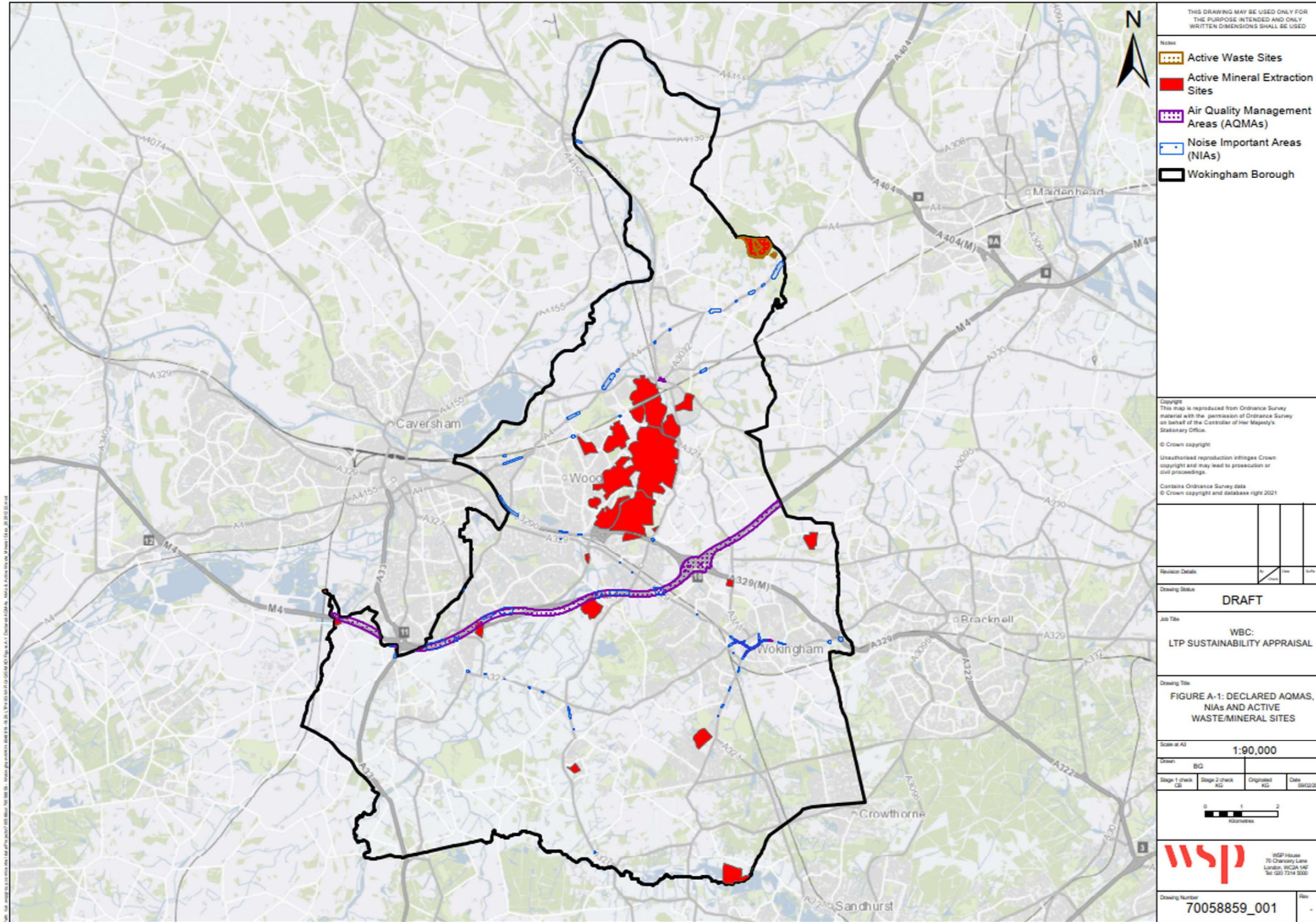


Figure A-2 - Agricultural Land Classification

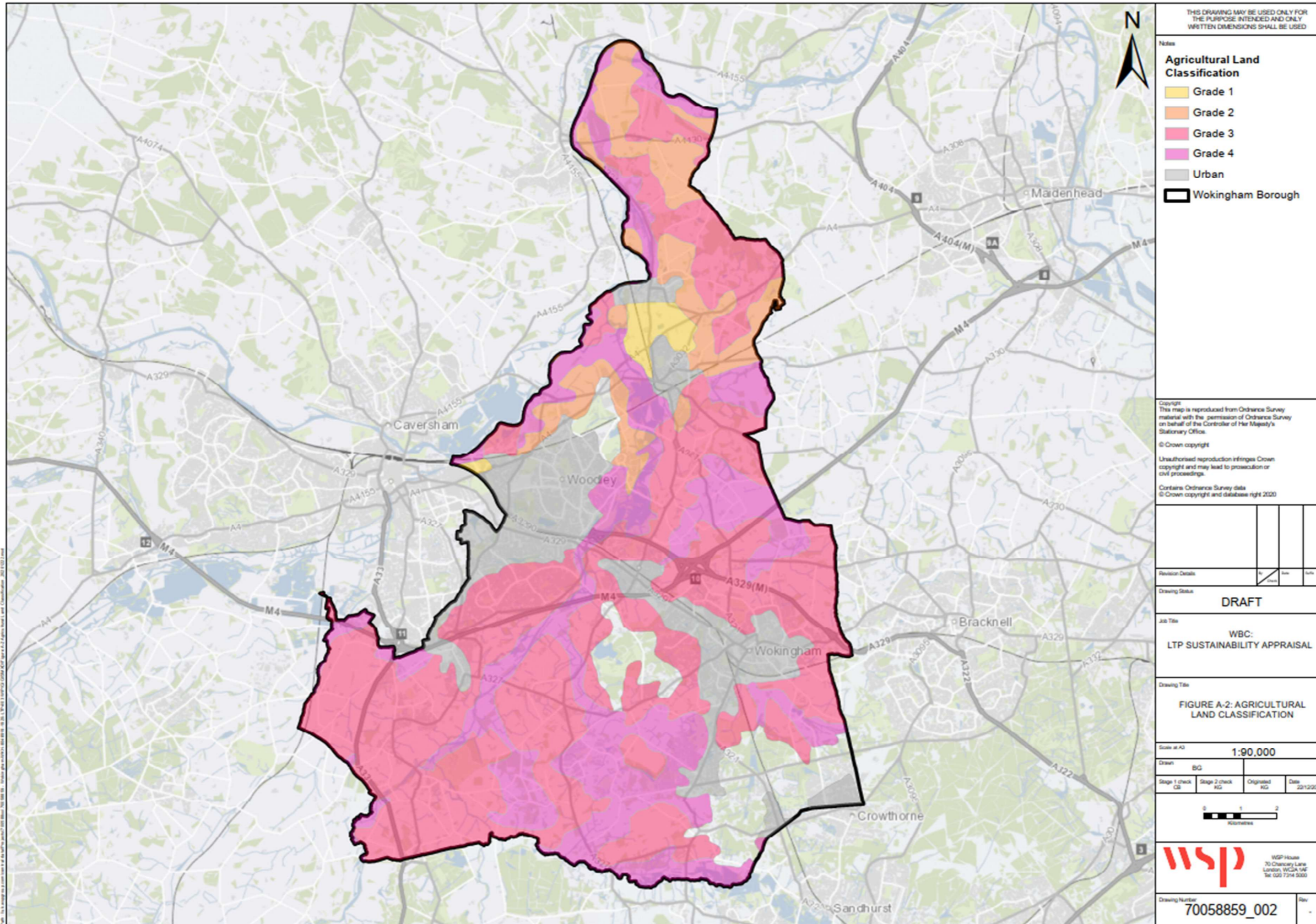


Figure A-3 - Ecological Designations

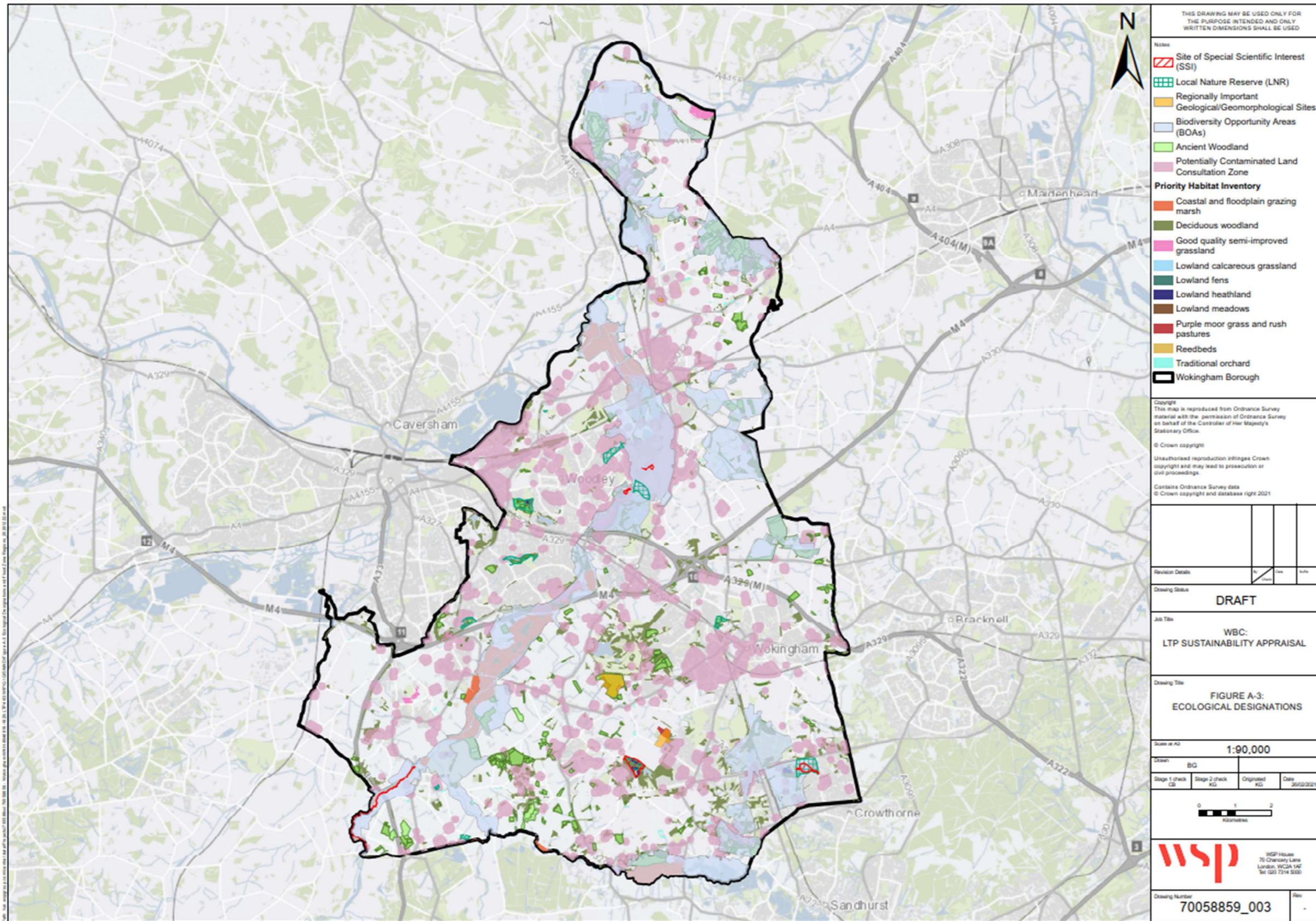


Figure A-4 - Designated Heritage Assets

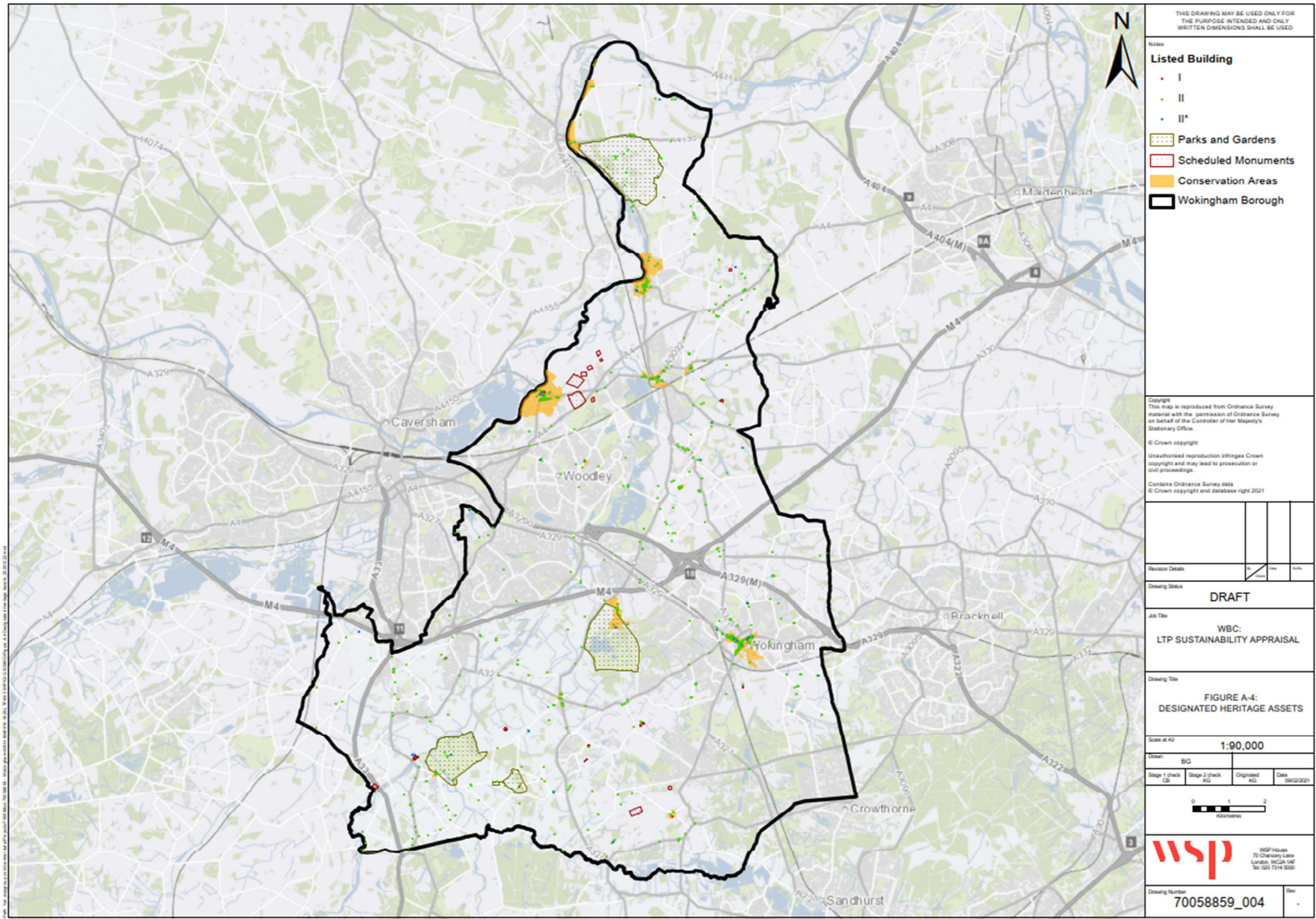


Figure A-5 - Flood Zones

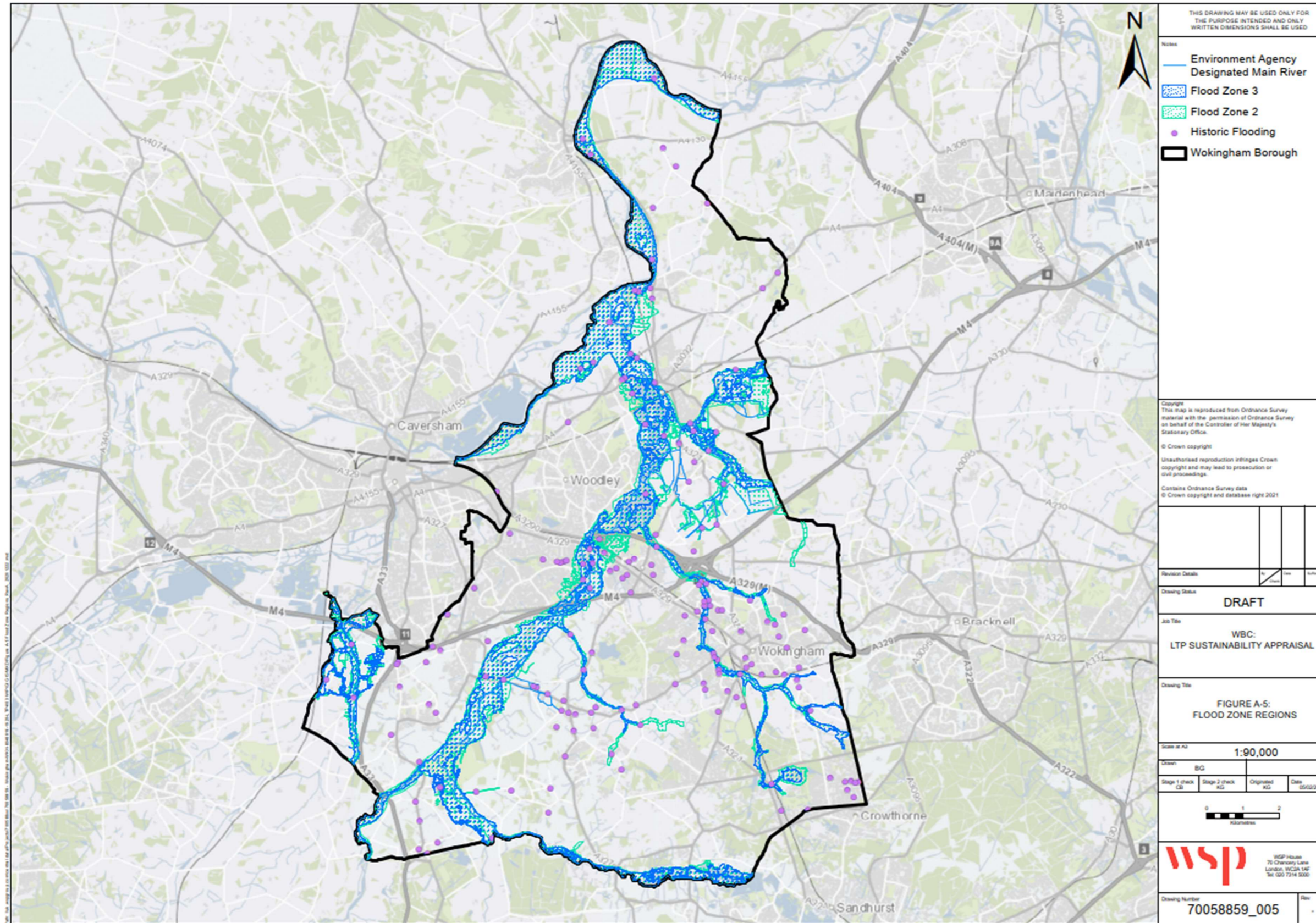
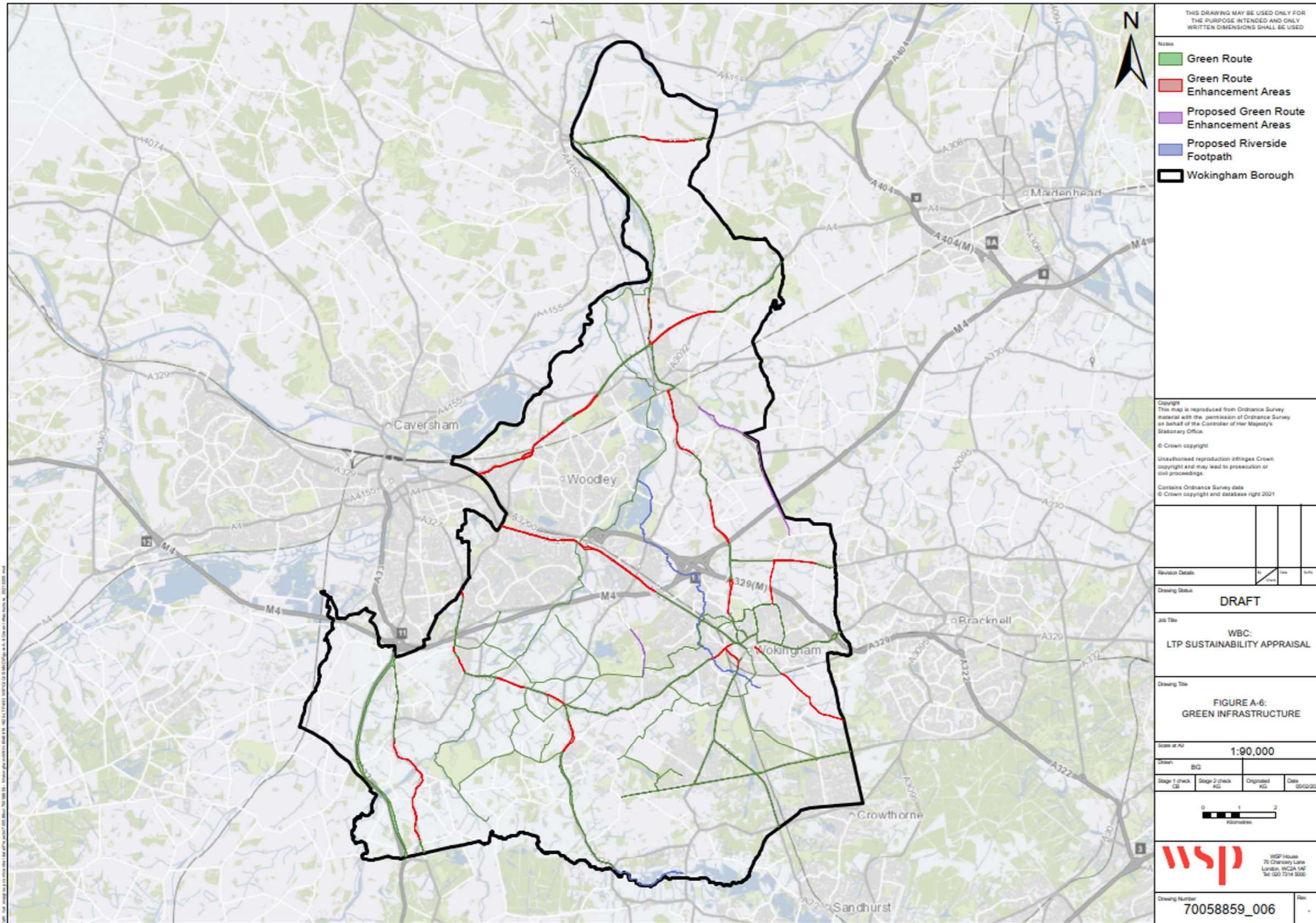
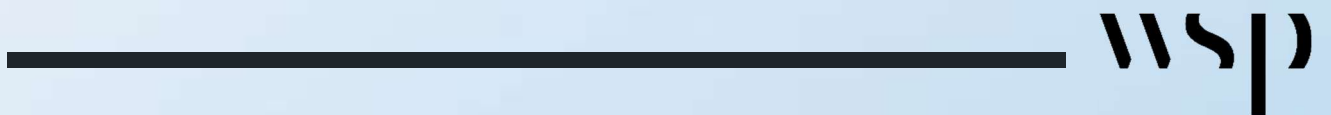


Figure A-6 - Green Infrastructure



Appendix B

Relevant Plans, Policies and Programmes



This appendix presents the findings of the review of legislation, policies and plans including relevant international, national and regional documents undertaken as a part of the evidence gathering exercise for the Wokingham LTP4 Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

Tables B-1 – B-14 provide details of the relevant legislation, policies, plans and programmes (PPP) broken down by topic. Some SA topics have been combined as the content related to them overlap or are very similar and therefore the SA topics in **Chapter 5** are not entirely the same as those listed in **Table B-1 – Table B-14**.

Table B-1 – Relevant Plans, Policies, Strategies and Programmes – Natural Resources and Waste

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
National	
<p>The Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 (as amended)</p>	<p>Requires that an establishment that imports, produces, collects, transports, recovers or disposes of waste must take reasonable steps to apply the waste hierarchy when waste is transferred or disposed. A departure from the priority order is only permitted when this is justified by life-cycle thinking on the overall effect of generation or management of waste.</p> <div data-bbox="566 901 1489 1348" data-label="Diagram"> <p>The diagram illustrates the waste hierarchy as an inverted pyramid divided into five horizontal sections. From top to bottom, the sections are: PREVENTION (yellow box), PREPARING FOR RE-USE (light blue), RECYCLING (light blue), RECOVERY (light blue), and DISPOSAL (light blue). A red horizontal line is drawn across the pyramid, separating the top two sections (Prevention and Preparing for Re-use) from the bottom three (Recycling, Recovery, and Disposal). To the left of the pyramid, there are two green boxes: 'PRODUCT (NON-WASTE)' at the top level and 'WASTE' at the level of the red line.</p> </div> <p>Source: Directive 2008/98/EC</p>

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
	<p>The main principles of the waste hierarchy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Waste should be prevented or reduced at source as far as possible; ■ Where waste cannot be prevented, waste materials or products should be re-used directly or refurbished and then re-used; ■ Waste materials should be recycled or reprocessed into a form that allows them to be reclaimed as a secondary raw material; ■ Where useful secondary raw materials cannot be reclaimed, the energy content of the waste should be recovered and used as a substitute for non-renewable energy resources; and ■ Only if waste cannot be prevented, reclaimed, or recovered, should it be disposed of into the environment. If this occurs, then it should be disposed of in a controlled manner.
The Waste Management Plan for England (2013)	Provides an analysis on waste management in England, collating policies to meet the requirements of Article 28 of the Waste Framework Directive.
The Environment Act (2021)	<p>The Environment Act, which became law in 2021, acts as the UK’s new framework of environmental protection. The Environment Act allows the UK to enshrine better environmental protection into law. It provides the Government with powers to set new binding targets, including for air quality, water, biodiversity, and waste reduction.</p> <p>Objectives for targets under consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ increase resource productivity ■ reduce the volume of ‘residual’ waste we generate
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2021	<p>Paragraph 174 states: “... <i>contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils...; ■ Preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability...; and ■ Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate”. <p>Paragraph 17 also seeks to facilitate the sustainable use of minerals.</p> <p>Paragraph 210 encourages so far as practicable, planning policies should “<i>take account of the contribution that substitute or secondary and recycled materials and minerals waste would make to the</i></p>

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
	<i>supply of materials, before considering extraction of primary materials, whilst aiming to source minerals supplies indigenously</i> .
National Policy Statement for National Networks (2014)	<p>Paragraph 5.117 requires land stability to be considered in respect of new development. Specifically, proposals should be appropriate for the location, including preventing unacceptable risks from land instability.</p> <p>Paragraph 5.168 states <i>“Applicants should also identify any effects, and seek to minimise impacts, on soil quality, considering any mitigation measures proposed. Where possible, developments should be on previously developed (brownfield) sites provided that it is not of high environmental value. For developments on previously developed land, applicants should ensure that they have considered the risk posed by land contamination and how it is proposed to address this”</i>.</p> <p>Paragraph 5.19 states <i>“Evidence of appropriate mitigation measures (incorporating engineering plans on configuration and layout and use of materials) in both design and construction should be presented”</i>.</p>
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (2018)	Goal 5 ‘Clean and plentiful water’ involves using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently. The plan states: <i>“Improve our approach to soil management: by 2030 we want all of England’s soils to be managed sustainably, and we will use natural capital thinking to develop appropriate soil metrics and management approaches”</i> .
Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England (Dec 2018)	Sets out how the UK Government aims to preserve material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy in England.
Local	
Wokingham District Local Plan Update (undergoing development)	The Draft Wokingham District Local Plan is likely to contain policies related to materials and waste within Wokingham.
Central and Eastern Berkshire, Joint Minerals and Waste Plan	Sets out the vision for Central and Eastern Berkshire’s waste and minerals: <i>“... aim to ensure the maintenance of a steady and adequate supply of minerals, whilst maximising the contribution that</i>



Document	Key Messages/ Issues
	<p>minerals development can bring to local communities, the economy and the natural and historic environment.”</p> <p>“Waste will be managed in a sustainable way, in accordance with the waste hierarchy. The Authorities will work in collaboration with others to ensure the best environmental solutions to waste management are delivered.”</p> <p>“... ensure that the full extent of social, economic and environmental benefits of minerals and waste development are captured, contributing to Central and Eastern Berkshire’s economic activity and enhancing the quality of life and living standards within the area. These benefits will be achieved, whilst minimising impacts on the natural and historic environment and positively contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation.”</p>



Table B-2 – Relevant Plans, Policies, strategies and Programmes – Soils

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
National	
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2021	<p>Paragraph 174 states: “... <i>contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils...; ■ Preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability...; and ■ Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate”.
National Policy Statement for National Networks (2014)	<p>Paragraph 5.117 requires land stability to be considered in respect of new development. Specifically, proposals should be appropriate for the location, including preventing unacceptable risks from land instability.</p> <p>Paragraph 5.168 states “<i>Applicants should also identify any effects, and seek to minimise impacts, on soil quality, considering any mitigation measures proposed. Where possible, developments should be on previously developed (brownfield) sites provided that it is not of high environmental value. For developments on previously developed land, applicants should ensure that they have considered the risk posed by land contamination and how it is proposed to address this</i>”.</p>
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (2018)	<p>Goal 5 ‘Clean and plentiful water’ involves using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently. The plan states: “<i>Improve our approach to soil management: by 2030 we want all of England’s soils to be managed sustainably, and we will use natural capital thinking to develop appropriate soil metrics and management approaches</i>”.</p>
The Natural Environment White Paper (2012)	<p>This commits the UK government to ensuring that soils are managed in a sustainable manner by 2030. The paper highlights two major commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ‘Undertaking a significant research programme to explore: how soil degradation can affect the soil’s ability to support vital ecosystem services such as flood mitigation, carbon storage and nutrient cycling; and how to best manage our lowland peatlands in a way which supports efforts to tackle climate change; and

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce peat use to zero by 2030.’
The Path to Sustainable Farming: An Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024 (2020)	The Sustainable Farming Incentive will support sustainable approaches to farm husbandry to deliver for the environment, such as actions to improve soil health, quality, and management.
Local	
Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (2019)	The LCA aims to provide an objective description of the landscape and a strategy for managing it. The LCA provides an evidence base to support policies within the Local Plan Update or more widely guide decision making around development and the management of future change.
Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010)	The Core Strategy for Wokingham also includes the priority to protect the most important areas for landscape from development and maintain the borough’s landscape as far as possible.



Table B-3 – Relevant Plans, Policies, strategies and Programmes – Biodiversity and Natural Capital

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
<i>International</i>	
Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979)	<p>The convention has three main aims which are stated in Article 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats; ■ To promote cooperation between states; and ■ To give particular attention to endangered and vulnerable species including endangered and vulnerable migratory species.
Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna & Flora (the ‘Habitats Directive’) (1992)	<p>The identification of a European network of Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) to be designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). A SA would need to report on any potential effects on SACs and all development plans should aim to avoid adverse effects on them.</p>
EU (2011) EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 – towards implementation	<p>Aimed at halting the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU by 2020, the strategy provided a framework for action over the last decade and covers the following key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Conserving and restoring nature; ■ Maintaining and enhancing ecosystems and their services; ■ Ensuring the sustainability of agriculture, forestry and fisheries; ■ Combating invasive alien species; and ■ Addressing the global biodiversity crisis.
EU (2013) 7th Environment Action Programme (EAP) to 2020	<p>The 7th EAP guided EU environmental policy up to 2020 and set ambitions for 2050. The Programme set the following as a priority objective: “to protect, conserve and enhance the Union’s natural capital.”</p> <p>The 7th EAP reflects the EU’s commitment to the preservation of biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides for both its intrinsic value and its contribution to economic well-being.</p> <p>The Programme highlights that integrating the value of ecosystem services into accounting and reporting across the Union and its member states by 2020 will result in the better management of natural capital.</p>

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
<p>The Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD's) Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020</p>	<p>This plan provides an overarching framework on biodiversity, for all biodiversity-related conventions, the entire United Nations system and all other partners engaged in biodiversity management and policy development.</p> <p>The plan consists of five strategic goals, which address 20 Aichi targets::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strategic Goal A: Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across Government and society. ■ Strategic Goal B: Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use. ■ Strategic Goal C: Improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity. ■ Strategic Goal D: Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services. ■ Strategic Goal E: Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building.
<p>Ramsar Convention on the Conservation on Wetlands of International Importance (1971)</p>	<p>The Ramsar Convention covers all aspects of wetland conservation. It has three main pillars of activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The designation of wetlands of international importance as Ramsar sites; ■ The promotion of the wise use of all wetlands in the territory of each country; and ■ International co-operation with other countries to further the wise use of wetlands and their resources. <p>While the initial emphasis was on selecting sites of importance to waterbirds, now non-bird features are increasingly considered, both in the selection of new sites and when reviewing existing sites.</p>
<p>National</p>	
<p>The Environment Act (2021)</p>	<p>The Environment Act, which became law in 2021, acts as the UK's new framework of environmental protection. The Environment Act allows the UK to enshrine better environmental protection into law. It provides the Government with powers to set new binding targets, including for air quality, water, biodiversity, and waste reduction.</p> <p>The Biodiversity Gain objective requires the biodiversity value attributable to a development to exceed pre-development biodiversity value by at least 10%.</p>

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
<p>25 Year Environment Plan, HM Government (2018)</p>	<p>The 25 Year Environment Plan outlines the UK Government’s ambition to leave our environment in a better state than we found it and the steps proposed to take to achieve that ambition. The Plan includes ten key targets, of which two focus on biodiversity.</p> <p><u>Thriving plants and wildlife:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Restoring 75% of our one million hectares of terrestrial and freshwater protected sites to favourable condition, securing their wildlife value for the long term; ■ Creating or restoring 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat outside the protected site network, focusing on priority habitats as part of a wider set of land management changes providing extensive benefits; ■ Taking action to recover threatened, iconic or economically important species of animals, plants and fungi and where possible to prevent human-induced extinction or loss of known threatened species in England and the Overseas Territories; and ■ Increasing woodland in England in line with our aspiration of 12% cover by 2060: this would involve planting 180,000 hectares by end of 2042. <p><u>Enhancing biosecurity:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Managing and reducing the impact of existing plant and animal diseases; lowering the risk of new ones and tackling invasive non-native species; ■ Reaching the detailed goals to be set out in the Tree Health Resilience Plan of 2018; ■ Ensuring strong biosecurity protection at our borders, drawing on the opportunities leaving the EU provides; and ■ Working with industry to reduce the impact of endemic disease.
<p>Environmental Improvement Plan 2023</p>	<p>The plan outlines the UK Government’s pargets for improving the environment, including for biodiversity. The plan aims to restore biodiversity and enhance biosecurity within the UK. The plan aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Halt the decline in species abundance by 2030, and then increase abundance by at least 10% to exceed 2022 levels by 2042. ■ Restore or create more than 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat by 2042, alongside our international commitment to protect 30% of our land and ocean by 2030. ■ New interim target to restore or create 140,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitats outside protected sites by 2028, compared to 2022 levels. ■ Improve the Red List Index for England for species extinction by 2042 compared to 2022 levels. ■ New interim targets for all sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) to have an up-to-date condition assessment; and for 50% of SSSIs to have actions on track to achieve favourable condition by 31 January 2028.

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase tree canopy and woodland cover from 14.5% to 16.5% of total land area in England by 2050, with a new interim target to increase this by 0.26% (equivalent to 34,000 hectares) by 31 January 2028, in line with the trajectory required to achieve the long-term target. ■ For 70% of designated features in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to be in favourable condition by 2042 with the remainder in recovering condition, with a new interim target of 48% of designated features to be in favourable condition by 31 January 2028, in line with the trajectory required to achieve the long-term target.
<p>Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services (2011)</p>	<p>The mission for this strategy is: to halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people.</p> <p>This will be delivered through four areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ a more integrated large-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea ; ■ putting people at the heart of biodiversity policy; ■ reducing environmental pressures; and ■ improving our knowledge.
<p>Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended 1981)</p>	<p>The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 consolidates and amends existing national legislation to implement the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds (Birds Directive) in Great Britain (NB Council Directive 79/409/EEC has now been replaced by Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (codified version).</p> <p>The Act provides for the notification and confirmation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and the protection of wildlife.</p>
<p>Working with the grain of nature: A Biodiversity Strategy for England 2002</p>	<p>The Biodiversity Strategy for England sets a fundamental shift by ensuring that biodiversity considerations become embedded in all the main sectors of economic activity, public and private. The Strategy capitalises on the opportunities presented by the report of the Policy Commission on Food and Farming and the transition away from the Common Agricultural Policy.</p> <p>The Strategy sets out a programme for five years for the other main policy sectors, to make the changes necessary to conserve,</p>

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
	<p>enhance and work with the grain of nature and ecosystems rather than against them. It takes account of climate change as one of the most important factors affecting biodiversity and influencing policies.</p>
<p>The Path to Sustainable Farming: An Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024 (2020)</p>	<p>By 2028, the goals are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ a renewed agricultural sector, producing healthy food for consumption at home and abroad, where farms can be profitable and economically sustainable without subsidy; and ■ farming and the countryside contributing significantly to environmental goals including addressing climate change <p>The second goal will be backed up with support for tree planting, peatland restoration and nature recovery.</p>
<p>The Natural Environment White Paper (2011)</p>	<p>The White Paper sets out a clear 25 year framework for protecting and enhancing the things that nature gives us for free.</p> <p>Four core themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Protecting and improving our natural environment ■ Growing a green economy ■ Reconnecting people and nature ■ International and EU leadership <p>The White Paper has led to the development of Natural Environment Indicators against which to assess progress towards the goals of the Paper.</p>
<p>Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network: Chaired by Professor Sir John Lawton CBE FRS (2010)</p>	<p>Species and habitats should be restored and enhanced in comparison with 2000 levels.</p> <p>Improve the long-term sustainability of ecological and physical processes that underpin the functioning of ecosystems, thereby enhancing the capacity of ecosystem services.</p> <p>Provide accessible natural environments rich in wildlife for people to enjoy and experience.</p> <p>This has also influenced other documents, such as the 25-year Environment Plan.</p>
<p>The Natural Choice: Securing the value of nature; HM Government (2011)</p>	<p>Protect and enhance biodiversity through Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs), biodiversity offsetting, Local Nature Partnerships and phasing out peat use by 2030.</p>

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
	Place natural capital at the centre of economic decision making to avoid the unintended environmental consequences that arise from undervaluing natural assets.
National Networks National Policy Statement (NN NPS) (2014)	<p>NN NPS states that development should avoid significant harm to biodiversity and geological conservation interests, including through mitigation and consideration of reasonable alternatives. The applicant may also wish to make use of biodiversity offsetting in devising compensation to counteract impacts on biodiversity which cannot be avoided or mitigated. Where significant harm cannot be avoided or mitigated, as a last resort, appropriate compensation measures should be sought.</p> <p>Paragraphs 3.2 to 3.5 of the NN NPS state that not only should national road and rail networks be designed to minimise social and environmental impacts, but that they should also seek to improve quality of life. In part this may be achieved by “reconnecting habitats and ecosystems [...] improving water quality and reducing flood risk, [...] and addressing areas of poor air quality.”</p> <p>Paragraph 5.162 recognises the potential for developments to provide positive environmental and economic benefits through the provision of green infrastructure. Paragraph 5.175 of the NN NPS highlights that green infrastructure identified in development plans should be protected and, where possible, enhanced.</p>
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2021	<p>Paragraphs 174 and 179 to 182 of the NPPF require development to protect and safeguard biodiversity, and advise that development should aim to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity adequately through mitigation or, as a last resort, using compensation. Proposals which aim to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported.</p> <p>Recognise the wider benefits of ecosystem services; minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the UK Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.</p> <p>Paragraph 174 of the NPPF requires that planning decisions should be taken to enhance the natural environment by recognising the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services. Further, Paragraph 175 requires plans to take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing green infrastructure networks and improving natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale.</p>

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
<p>The State of Natural Capital: Restoring our Natural Assets; Natural Capital Committee (2014)</p>	<p>Key points from the report are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Some assets are currently not being used sustainably and the benefits that we derive from them are at risk; ■ There are major economic benefits to be gained from natural capital and that their value should be incorporated into decision making; and ■ A long-term restoration plan is necessary to maintain and improve natural capital for future generations.
<p>The State of Natural Capital; Natural Capital Committee (2020)</p>	<p>In the updated State of Natural Capital report, the Natural Capital Committee sets out that Despite some improvements, only limited progress has been made towards the 25 Year Environment Plan’s goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Its advice to Government that biodiversity net gain should be expanded to environmental net gain. ■ Its advice that an England wide baseline of natural capital assets should be established to measure progress towards environmental goals. <p>Natural capital should be seen as infrastructure in its own right, in recognition of its contribution to economic wellbeing.</p>
<p>Local</p>	
<p>Wokingham Biodiversity Action Plan (2012-2024)</p>	<p>This Wokingham Borough Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) aims to build on the achievements of the previous Biodiversity Action Plan for the Borough (2003-2012).</p> <p>The overall aims of the Wokingham Borough BAP are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Raise awareness of the issues impacting on local biodiversity ■ Outline targets and actions which will enhance biodiversity in the Borough ■ Encourage and support community engagement; enabling local action to deliver targets ■ Encourage management practices sympathetic to wildlife; promoting “good practice” and providing guidance ■ Ensure policies are in place for the protection, management and enhancement of the local wildlife resource
<p>Biodiversity Strategy The Loddon Catchment (2003)</p>	<p>The Loddon catchment is located in the South East England Biodiversity Region, straddling the borders of Hampshire, Surrey and Berkshire.</p> <p>Objectives of the Loddon Strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensuring that key areas for biodiversity are adequately protected

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Creating stronger linkages between and around habitats to reduce fragmentation ■ Influencing land use and planning to achieve sustainable development ■ Providing conservation advice to landowners to enhance/restore habitats ■ Working with communities on public land to enhance and restore habitats ■ Conducting surveys on species and habitats where there is a lack of information to ensure that management decisions are based on the best available knowledge ■ Monitoring species and habitats to ensure that management is maintaining them in favourable condition ■ Raising awareness of the ecological value of the Loddon catchment with key sectors of the community ■ Buying or leasing land to maintain and restore habitats where appropriate



Table B-4 – Relevant Plans, Policies, strategies and Programmes – Air Quality

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
<i>International</i>	
Ambient Air Quality Directive (2008)	The Ambient Air Quality Directive provides the current framework for the control of ambient concentrations of air pollution in the EU. The control of emissions from mobile sources, improving fuel quality and promoting and integrating environmental protection requirements into the transport and energy sector are part of these aims.
<i>National</i>	
The Environment Act (2021)	<p>The Environment Act, which became law in 2021, acts as the UK’s new framework of environmental protection. The Environment Act allows the UK to enshrine better environmental protection into law. It provides the Government with powers to set new binding targets, including for air quality, water, biodiversity, and waste reduction.</p> <p>Objectives for targets under consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ reducing the annual mean level of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) in ambient air (as required by the Environment Bill) ■ in the long-term, reducing population exposure to PM2.5
25 Year Environment Plan, HM Government (2018)	With regards to the transport sector, the 25 Year Environment Plan identifies four ‘early’ priorities through the ‘Future of Mobility Grand Challenge’. These include encouraging new modes of transport; addressing the challenges of moving from hydrocarbon to zero emission vehicles; and Preparing for a future of new mobility services, increased autonomy, journey-sharing and a blurring of the distinctions between private and public transport.
The Clean Growth Strategy, 2017	<p>This Strategy sets out a comprehensive set of policies and proposals that aim to accelerate the pace of “clean growth”, i.e. deliver increased economic growth and decreased emissions.</p> <p>Key Policies and Proposals in the Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop world leading Green Finance capabilities;

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop a package of measures to support businesses to improve their energy productivity, by at least 20 per cent by 2030; ■ Improving the energy efficiency of our homes; ■ Rolling out low carbon heating; ■ Accelerating the shift to low carbon transport; ■ Delivering clean, smart, flexible power emissions; and ■ Enhancing the benefits and value of our natural resources.
National Policy Statement for National Networks (2014)- Paragraph 5.12	Accords air quality considerations substantial weight where, after taking into account mitigation, a scheme would lead to a significant air quality impact in relation to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and/ or where they lead to deterioration in air quality in a zone/ agglomeration.
Air Quality Strategy: Framework for Local Authority Delivery (2023)	<p>This policy outlines the strategic framework for local authorities and other partners. It sets out their powers, responsibilities, and further actions the government expects them to take.</p> <p>The priorities of the strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Planning reforms helping to deliver on air quality; ■ Building capacity in local councils through training, guidance and knowledge sharing; ■ Reducing emissions from industrial sources through improved enforcement of environmental permits; ■ Reducing pollution from domestic burning through smoke control areas and cleaner fuels; ■ Raising awareness within local communities of air quality impacts and how to reduce them; and ■ Boosting active travel and public transport to improve air quality.
Local	
Wokingham Borough Council Air Quality Action Plan (2017-2026)	This report outlines the actions that Wokingham Borough Council will deliver between 2017-2026 to reduce concentrations of air pollutants and exposure to air pollution; thereby positively impacting on the health and quality of life of residents and visitors to the Wokingham Borough's administrative area.



Table B-5 – Relevant Plans, Policies, strategies and Programmes – Climate Change

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
<i>International</i>	
Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992) Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol (2012)	Developed countries commit themselves to reducing their collective emissions of six key greenhouse gases by at least 5%. Each country’s emissions target must be achieved by the period 2008-2012. Doha Amendment saw parties commit to reduce GHG emissions by at least 18 percent below 1990 levels in the eight-year period from 2013 to 2020.
The Paris Agreement, 2015	Aims to limit the global warming change to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. However, countries aim to limit the increase to 1.5°C to reduce the impacts of global warming. The UK has committed to a binding target of a reduction of at least 40% in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to 1990.
<i>National</i>	
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2021	Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states that “New development should be planned for in ways that: a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; and b) can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the UK Government’s policy for national technical standards.”
The Climate Change Act, 2008	Improve carbon management and help the transition towards a low carbon economy in the UK. Demonstrate strong UK leadership internationally, showing the commitment to taking shared responsibility for reducing global emissions in the context of developing negotiations on a post-2012 global agreement at Copenhagen in 2009.

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
	Greenhouse gas emission reductions through action in the UK and abroad of at least 80% by 2050, and reductions in CO2 emissions of at least 26% by 2020, against a 1990 baseline.
Department for Transport, National Policy Statement for National Networks, 2014	<p>Paragraph 4.38 of the NN NPS states that “New development should be planned to avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the provision of green infrastructure.”</p> <p>The NN NPS also requires carbon impacts to be considered as part of the appraisal of scheme options, and an assessment of any likely significant climate factors in accordance with the requirements in the EIA Directive. It goes on to state that “it is very unlikely that the impact of a road project will, in isolation, affect the ability of UK Government to meet its carbon reduction plan targets.”</p>
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment, 2018	<p>The 25 Year Environment Plan outlines the UK Government’s ambition to leave our environment in a better state than we found it and the steps proposed to take to achieve that ambition.</p> <p>Mitigating and adapting to climate change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continuing to cut greenhouse gas emissions including from land use, land use change, the agriculture and waste sectors and the use of fluorinated gases. The UK Climate Change Act 2008 commits us to reducing total greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80 per cent by 2050 when compared to 1990 levels; ■ Making sure that all policies, programmes and investment decisions take into account the possible extent of climate change this century; and ■ Implementing a sustainable and effective second National Adaptation Programme.
UK Committee on Climate Change, Interim UK Carbon Budgets	<p>The UK has committed to an 80% reduction in its greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. In order to help meet this target, the UK Committee on Climate Change (CCC) has devised a series of interim UK “carbon budgets” as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1st carbon budget (2008 to 2012): 23% reduction; ■ 2nd carbon budget (2013 to 2017): 29% reduction; ■ 3rd carbon budget (2018 to 2022): 35% reduction by 2020; ■ 4th carbon budget (2023 to 2027): 50% reduction by 2025; ■ 5th carbon budget (2028 to 2032): 57% reduction by 2030.

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
25 Year Environment Plan, HM Government (2018)	Goal 7 of the 25 Year Environment Plan, 'Mitigating and adapting to climate change', is to "take all possible action to mitigate climate change, while adapting to reduce its impact" by "continuing to cut greenhouse gas emissions including from land use, land use change..." and "making sure that all policies, programmes and investment decisions consider the possible extent of climate change this century".
How Local Authorities can Reduce Emissions and Manage Climate Risk (2012)	<p>Planning functions are described as being a <i>'key lever in reducing emissions and adapting localities to a changing climate'</i>, with it considered particularly important that local authorities use these to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reduce transport emissions by concentrating new developments in existing cities and large towns and/or ensuring they are well served by public transport; ■ Avoid increasing the area's risk to climate change impacts by locating new development in areas of lowest flood risk; and ■ Plan for infrastructure such as low-carbon district heating networks, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems.
The Natural Environment White Paper (2014)	The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) sets out the importance of a healthy, functioning natural environment to sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal well-being. The NEWP recognises that green infrastructure is <i>'one of the most effective tools available'</i> to manage <i>'environmental risks such as flooding and heat waves'</i> .
Local	
Wokingham Borough Council Climate Emergency Action Plan (2022)	In July 2019, Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) members unanimously declared a climate emergency. The declaration set out the commitment to play as full a role as possible, leading by example as well as by exhortation, in achieving a carbon neutral borough by 2030.



Table B-6 – Relevant Plans, Policies, strategies and Programmes – Noise

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
National	
The Environmental Noise Directive (ENDS) (2002)	This requires noise action plans to be drawn up. Member states are required to produce noise maps for major roads, railways, airports and urban areas.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)	<p>The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life as a result of new development; ■ Mitigate and reduce to a minimum other adverse impacts on health and quality of life arising from noise from new development, including through the use of conditions; and ■ Identify and protect areas of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason.
The Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE) (2010)	<p>The NPSE is the overarching statement of noise policy for England and applies to all forms of noise other than occupational noise, setting out the long term vision of Government noise policy which is to:</p> <p><i>“Promote good health and a good quality of life through the effective management of noise within the context of Government policy on sustainable development.”</i></p>
Planning Practice Guidance: Noise (2019)	This outlines that local authorities should take account of the acoustic environment in plan making and decision-making.
Local	
Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy (2010)	The Core Strategy states that there is a need for proposals to provide mechanisms for noise mitigations, particularly next to the A329.

Table B-7 – Relevant Plans, Policies, strategies and Programmes – Landscape and Townscape

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
<i>International</i>	
<p>European Landscape Convention 2000 (became binding March 2007)</p>	<p>The Council of Europe Landscape Convention promotes the protection, management and planning of the landscapes and organises international co-operation on landscape issues.</p> <p>Specific measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ raising awareness of the value of landscapes among all sectors of society and of society's role in shaping them; ■ promoting landscape training and education among landscape specialists, other related professions and in school and university courses; ■ the identification and assessment of landscapes, ■ analysis of landscape change, with the active participation of stakeholders; ■ setting objectives for landscape quality, with the involvement of the public; and ■ the implementation of landscape policies through the establishment of plans and practical programmes.
<i>National</i>	
<p>Environment Act (2021)</p>	<p>Part 6 of the act aims to ensure biodiversity net gain and ensure nature recovery strategies for England, preserving local landscapes.</p>
<p>Accessible Natural Green Space Standards in Towns and Cities: A review and Toolkit for their Implementation (2003) and Nature Nearby: Accessible Green Space Guidance (2010)</p>	<p>English Nature (now Natural England) recommends that provision should be made of at least 2ha of accessible natural greenspace per 1000 population according to a system of tiers into which sites of different sizes fit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No person should live more than 300m from their nearest area of natural greenspace; ■ There should be at least one accessible 20ha site within 2km from home; ■ There should be one accessible 100ha site within 5km; and ■ There should be one accessible 500ha site within 10km.

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play (2015)	Fields in Trust guidance, first published in the 1930s, is based on a broad recommendation that 6 acres (2.4 hectares) of accessible green space per 1,000 head of population enables residents of all ages to participate in sport and play; 75% of local authorities adopt this or an equivalent standard (2014 Fields in Trust / David Lock Associates Survey).
Local Green Infrastructure: helping communities make the most of their landscape: Landscape Institute for Green Infrastructure Partnership (2011).	Communities should identify green infrastructure requirements in their local area through addition to or creative enhancement of the existing network. Look to enhance local landscape character, heritage and biodiversity and ensure long term management is included in an overall strategy.
Green Infrastructure: An integrated approach to landscape use. Landscape Institute Position Statement (2013)	The Landscape Institute’s most recent position statement, ‘Green Infrastructure LI Position Statement 2013’ sets out why GI is crucial to our sustainable future. The publication showcases a range of successful GI projects and shows how collaboration is key to delivering multifunctional landscapes. It also illustrates why landscape professionals should take the lead on the integration of GI.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2021	<p>Paragraph 174 of the NPPF requires developments to protect and enhance valued landscapes and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.</p> <p>Paragraph 176 of the NPPF states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.</p> <p>Paragraph 177 of the NPPF states that when considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.</p>

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
National Policy Statement for National Networks (2014)	Paragraph 5.149 states that when judging the impact of a project on landscape, the decision is dependent on the nature of the existing landscape likely to be affected and the nature of the effect likely to occur. The project should aim to avoid or minimise harm to the landscape, providing reasonable mitigation where possible and appropriate.
25 Year Environment Plan (2018)	Goal 6: Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment, is to “safeguard and enhance the beauty of our natural scenery and improving its environmental value while being sensitive to considerations of its heritage.”
Local	
Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2019)	The Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) forms the most up to date evidence base for planners, developers and land managers to take account of the character and valuable attributes of Wokingham’s landscape when considering new development or land uses – and to pursue opportunities to enhance and strengthen landscape character whenever possible.



Table B-8 – Relevant Plans, Policies, strategies and Programmes – Historic Environment

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
<i>International</i>	
The Valetta Convention, 1992	<p>This convention outlines protection measures for archaeological heritage assets, including the development and maintenance of an inventory of sites. The aim of this convention is to protect sites for future study, outlines the requirements to report ‘chance finds’, as well as controlling excavations.</p> <p>The input of expert archaeologists into the making of planning policies and decisions is also required under this convention.</p>
Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, Granada (1985)	<p>The main purpose of the Convention is to reinforce and promote policies for the conservation and enhancement of Europe’s heritage. It affirms the needs for European solidarity with regard to heritage conservation and is designed to foster practical co-operation among the Parties.</p> <p>The convention considers comprising the following permanent properties, which are stated in Article 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Monuments: all buildings and structures of conspicuous historical, archaeological, artistic, scientific, social or technical interest, including their fixtures and fittings; ■ Groups of buildings: homogenous groups of urban or rural buildings conspicuous for their historical, archaeological, artistic, scientific, social or technical interest, which are sufficiently coherent to form topographically definable units; and ■ Sites: the combined works of man and nature, being areas which are partially built upon and sufficiently distinctive and homogenous to be topographically definable and are of conspicuous historical, archaeological, artistic, scientific, social or technical interest.
<i>National</i>	
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2021	<p>Paragraph 190 of the NPPF states that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; ■ the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring; ■ the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and ■ opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.
The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England (2010)	The statement sets out its vision for the historic environment. It calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in an intelligent manner in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life. Also of note is the reference to promoting the role of the historic environment within the government's response to climate change and the wider sustainable development agenda.
Heritage at Risk Register (2015)	This lists every heritage asset currently considered to be at risk in the UK according to local planning authority. Heritage assets are split into a number of categories namely; buildings, places of worship, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields, protected wreck sites and conservation areas.
National Policy Statement for National Networks (2014)	Paragraph 5.132 states that any harmful impact on the significance of a designated heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefit of development, recognising that the greater the harm to the significance of the heritage asset, the greater the justification that will be needed for any loss.
25 Year Environment Plan (2018)	Goal 6: Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment, is to "safeguard and enhance the beauty of our natural scenery and improving its environmental value while being sensitive to considerations of its heritage."
Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990	This is an Act relating to special controls in respect of buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest.

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979	An Act to consolidate and amend the law relating to ancient monuments. It makes provision for the investigation, preservation and recording of areas of archaeological or historical interest.
Historic England Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008)	The primary aim of this guidance is to support the quality of decision making, with the ultimate objective of creating a management regime for all aspects of the historic environment that is clear and transparent in its purpose, and sustainable in its application.
Local	
Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010)	As part of the approach to the Core Strategy, WBC state that the most important areas for heritage should be protected from development. The Strategy also states that development should maintain the heritage of Wokingham as far as possible.



Table B-9 – Relevant Plans, Policies, strategies and Programmes – Water Environment

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
<i>International</i>	
<p>Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (“The Water Framework Directive”)</p>	<p>The main aims of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ prevent deterioration and enhance status of aquatic ecosystems, including groundwater ■ promote sustainable water use ■ reduce pollution ■ contribute to the mitigation of floods and droughts <p>The WFD requires the creation of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs).</p> <p>Statutory objectives are set for Scottish waters through River Basin Management Planning. These objectives are based on ecological assessments and economic judgments. The plans cover all types of water body, e.g. rivers, lochs, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwater.</p>
<p>Directive 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on the assessment and management of flood risks</p>	<p>Requires Member States to assess if all water courses and coast lines are at risk from flooding, to map the flood extent and assets and humans at risk in these areas and to take adequate and coordinated measures to reduce this flood risk.</p>
<p>Directive 2006/118/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration</p>	<p>This Directive establishes a regime which sets groundwater quality standards and introduces measures to prevent or limit inputs of pollutants into groundwater. The directive establishes quality criteria that takes account local characteristics and allows for further improvements to be made based on monitoring data and new scientific knowledge.</p>
<i>National</i>	
<p>The Water Framework Regulations (2003)</p>	<p>National water policies are primarily driven by the aims of the EC Water Framework Directive (WFD) as translated into national law by the Water Framework Regulations (2003). Key objectives include</p>

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
	<p>improving the quality of rivers and other water bodies to ‘good ecological status’ by 2015; considering flood risk at all stages of the plan and development process to reduce future damage to property and loss of life; and incorporating water efficiency measures into new developments.</p> <p>The Directive drives a catchment-based approach to water management. In England there are 83 water catchments and it is Defra’s intention to establish a ‘framework for integrated catchment management’ across England. The Environment presented second river basin management plans to ministers in 2015. These plans aimed to deliver the objectives of the WFD, namely;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Enhance the status and prevent the further deterioration of aquatic ecosystems and associated wetlands which depend on aquatic ecosystems; ■ Promote the sustainable use of water; ■ Reduce the pollution of water, especially by ‘priority’ and ‘priority hazardous’ substances; and ■ Ensure the progressive reduction of groundwater pollution.
<p>Blueprint to Safeguard Europe’s Water Resources (2012)</p>	<p>This highlights the need for Member States to reduce pressure on water resources, for instance by using green infrastructure such as wetlands, floodplains and buffer strips along watercourses. This would also reduce the EU’s vulnerability to floods and droughts.</p>
<p>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2021</p>	<p>Paragraph 159: “... inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere”.</p> <p>Paragraph 174 (e) Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans.</p>
<p>Water for Life (The Water White Paper) (2011)</p>	<p>This sets out the government’s vision for a more resilient water sector, where water is valued as the precious resource it is. It states the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources.</p>

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
	<p>The avoidance of pollution is also a consideration in the White Paper, which led to a government consultation on a national strategy on urban diffuse pollution in 2012. The consultation report notes that pollutions affecting failing waterbodies can be broken down into a number of categories including point source pollution and diffuse pollution. Transport infrastructure can contribute to diffuse pollution to waterbodies (e.g. untreated stormwater runoff from roads).</p>
<p>The Environment Act (2021)</p>	<p>The Environment Act, which became law in 2021, acts as the UK’s new framework of environmental protection. The Environment Act allows the UK to enshrine better environmental protection into law. It provides the Government with powers to set new binding targets, including for air quality, water, biodiversity, and waste reduction.</p> <p>Objectives for targets under consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ reduce pollution from agriculture, in particular phosphorus and nitrate; ■ reduce pollution from wastewater, in particular phosphorus and nitrate; ■ reduce water demand; ■ improve the quality of habitat on land, including freshwater and coastal sites, expressed through the condition of our protected sites (SSSIs); and ■ improve the overall status of species populations on land and in freshwaters.
<p>National Policy Statement for National Networks (2014)</p>	<p>Paragraph 5.105 “... if there is no reasonably available site in Flood Zones 1 or 2, then national networks infrastructure projects can be located in Flood Zone 3, subject to the Exception Test. Both elements of the test will have to be passed for development to be consented...”</p> <p>Paragraph 5.109 “Any project that is classified as ‘essential infrastructure’ and proposed to be located in Flood Zone 3a or 3b should be designed and constructed to remain operational and safe for users in times of flood; and any project in Zone 3b should result in no net loss of floodplain storage and not impede water flows”.</p> <p>Paragraph 5.224 “Activities that discharge to the water environment are subject to pollution control”</p> <p>Paragraph 5.225 “... impacts on the water environment should be given more weight where a project would have adverse effects on the achievement of the environmental objectives established under the Water Framework Directive”.</p>

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (2018)	Goal 2 'Clean and plentiful water' "Improve at least three quarters of our waters to be close to their natural state as soon as is practicable by: [...] Reaching or exceeding objectives for rivers, lakes, coastal and ground waters that are specially protected, whether for biodiversity or drinking water".
Local	
Wokingham Borough Council Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2015)	<p>The Strategy focuses on local flood risk sources and explains the ways in which WBC will ensure flood risk is managed in an integrated and effective way.</p> <p>The objectives of the Strategy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continue to improve knowledge and understanding of current and future local sources of flood risk within Wokingham. ■ Continue to work collaboratively and develop effective partnerships with other Flood Risk Management Authorities and local communities to deliver a sustainable, cost effective approach to flood risk management that reduces flood risk and provides wider environmental and social economic benefits where possible. ■ Ensure that land use planning and application decisions take full account of flood risk, avoiding development in inappropriate locations, preventing an increase in flood risk and minimising existing flood risk wherever possible. ■ Maintain and, where necessary, improve local flood risk management infrastructure and work with riparian landowners to ensure privately owned flood defence assets, features and Ordinary watercourses, are well maintained to reduce risk. ■ Ensure that emergency plans and responses to flood incidents are effective and that communities are prepared and resilient to local flood risk. ■ Identify national, regional and local funding mechanisms to deliver flood risk management solutions and schemes.

Table B-10 – Relevant Plans, Policies, strategies and Programmes – Population and Equalities

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
<i>National</i>	
Ready for Ageing? (2013)	<p>The Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change report 'Ready for Ageing?' warns that society is underprepared for the ageing population. The report says that:</p> <p><i>'Longer lives can be a great benefit, but there has been a collective to address the implications and without urgent action this great boon could turn into a series of miserable crises'.</i></p> <p>Key projections about ageing include 51% more people aged 65 and over and 101% more people aged 85 and over in England in 2030 compared to 2010; and a 90% increase in people with moderate or severe need for social care for the same time period. Organisations involved in urban planning will need to adjust to an older population and will have an important role to play in preventing the social isolation of older citizens.</p>
Local Growth White Paper (2010)	<p>The paper notes that government interventions should support investment that will have a long term impact on growth, working with markets rather than seeking to create artificial and unsustainable growth. In some cases this means focusing investments at areas with long term growth challenges, so that these areas can undergo transition to an economy that responds to a local demand. Places that are currently successful may also wish to prioritise activity to maximise further growth by removing barriers, such as infrastructure constraints.</p>
The Equality Act, 2010	<p>The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Age; ■ Being or becoming a transsexual person; ■ Being married or in a civil partnership; ■ Being pregnant or having a child; ■ Disability; ■ Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; ■ Religion, belief or lack of religion/belief; ■ Sex; and

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sexual orientation.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2021	When delivering new schemes, applicants must avoid and mitigate environmental and social impacts in line with the principles set out in the NPPF and the UK Government’s planning guidance. Applicants should provide evidence that they have considered reasonable opportunities to deliver environmental and social benefits as part of schemes.
Department for Transport, Transport for Everyone: an action plan to promote equality, 2012	<p>The Action Plan sets what the UK Government is doing to ensure people from all communities in society have the option to use public transport.</p> <p>The main aim of the report is to <i>‘deliver better access to jobs and key services through an accessible and socially inclusive transport system, by removing the barriers to travel and ensuring that social impacts are addressed in policy development and service delivery’</i>.</p>
Strong and Prosperous Communities: The Local Government White Paper, 2006	Deliver better public services through involving and consulting users more fully, providing better information about local standards and managing services at neighbourhood level.
Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project (2008). Final Project report. The Government Office for Science	As the number of older adults increases substantially in the UK over the next six decades, the existing urban and rural infrastructure will need to be adapted so that the needs of these people are met. For example, issues of access, transport, amenity and security will substantially affect the wellbeing of older people.
Addressing Transport Barriers to work in Low Income Neighbourhoods, Sheffield Hallam University, 2017	<p>Transport is a key factor shaping experiences of poverty. The ability of households in poverty to find paid work often depends on access to affordable, regular and reliable transport.</p> <p>Residents of low-income neighbourhoods generally have a significant reliance on bus services. This can create issues regarding variable frequency, timing, reliability and range of places served.</p> <p>There is considerable evidence that transport issues affect different groups to varying extents and in particular ways, especially in terms of gender.</p>

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
	<p>A distinguishing feature of low-income neighbourhoods is the relatively low incidence of motor vehicle ownership. This means that residents have a much higher reliance on public transport than those living in middle and high-income areas. Difficulties in meeting the costs of transport from current incomes have given rise to the concept of 'transport poverty'.</p>
<p>Build Back Fairer: The Covid-19 Marmot Review, 2020</p>	<p>The Marmot Review identified that the levels of social, environmental and economic inequality in society are damaging health and well-being. This report identifies that as the UK emerges from the pandemic it would be a mistake to attempt to re-establish the status quo that existed before the pandemic.</p> <p>The reductions in car traffic during the pandemic resulted in cleaner air and reduction in emission of greenhouse gases. Walking and cycling as modes of transport became both necessary and desirable. As the pandemic is brought under control and public transport again becomes safe, a future for our cities based on reduction in vehicle traffic and made safe for walking and cycling in addition to public transport is a future we can both imagine and realise.</p> <p>Building Back Fairer requires a sizeable reduction in private car use and greater active travel and use of public transport. Efforts to support this are required urgently and would help to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and lead to a more sustainable environment.</p>
<p>TfL, Healthy Streets for London, 2017</p>	<p>Although the initial strategy is based in London, the approach is becoming more widely adopted nationally. The Healthy Streets Approach puts people and their health at the centre of decisions about how we design, manage and use public spaces. It aims to make our streets healthy, safe and welcoming for everyone.</p> <p>The Approach is based on 10 Indicators of a Healthy Street which focus on the experience of people using streets. These are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pedestrians from all walks of life; ■ Easy to cross; ■ People chose to walk, cycle and use public transport; ■ Clean air; ■ People feel safe; ■ Not too noisy; ■ Places to stop and rest; ■ Shade and shelter;

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ People feel relaxed; and ■ Things to see and do.
Local	
Wokingham Borough Joint Strategic Needs Assessment	<p>The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) assess the current and future health, care and wellbeing and needs of the population in Wokingham Borough. It highlights the key needs of the Borough and assesses how to meet these needs with partners.</p> <p>The evidence, analysis of needs and agreed priorities is used to help us and our partners (like the local NHS) determine what actions to take to meet health and social care needs. As well as helping address the wider factors that impact on health and wellbeing.</p>
Wokingham Borough Council Older People's Strategy (2018)	<p>The Strategy is aimed primarily at people aged 50 and over, and clearly refers to the needs of older people.</p> <p>The Strategy is described as “Young at Heart” and is a ten year strategy to signal a direction of travel for Wokingham Borough Council, its residents and partner agencies, so to anticipate and influence the changes of the next 10 years, and put some of the groundwork in place.</p>

Table B-11 – Relevant Plans, Policies, strategies and Programmes – Human Health

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
<i>National</i>	
Health and Social Care Act (2012)	The increasing role that local level authorities are expected to play in producing health outcomes is well demonstrated by recent government legislation. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 transferred responsibility for public health from the NHS to local government, giving local authorities a duty to improve the health of the people who live in their areas. This requires a more holistic approach to health across all local government functions.
Ending Childhood Obesity Plan (2016)	This links transport planning to opportunities for physical activity and access to healthy food. The plan recommends increased recreational space and safe walking and cycling paths for active transport, to help make physical activity functions of daily life. These spaces will, of course, benefit the entire economy.
Transport for Health: The Global Burden of Disease from Motorised Road Transport (2014)	This explores the relationship and burden that road transport places upon global health development. It attempts to quantify global health losses arising from injury and air pollution associated with road transport. It reiterates the need for safe and clean transport methods in order to achieve global health goals, and the importance of multi-disciplinary collaboration – transport, health and urban sectors – in achieving sustainable development.
Walking and cycling: local measures to promote walking and cycling as forms of travel or recreation (2012)	<p>The NHS National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) published guidance on Local measures to promote walking and cycling. The evidence presented in this report suggests that ‘effective support’ from local councils plays a key role in increasing rates of walking and cycling. The report emphasises that increasing the numbers of people who walk and cycle, and how often, can reduce the health costs associated with air pollution and inactivity. Relevant recommendations made in the report include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure local, high-level strategic policies and plans support and encourage both walking and cycling; ■ Develop coordinated, cross-sector programmes to promote walking and cycling for recreation as well as for transport, based on a long-term vision of what can be achieved, taking account of the needs of the whole population; and ■ Address infrastructure issues that may prevent people from wanting to walk.

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
<p>Wellbeing and Resilience Strategy Framework (2017)</p>	<p>The strategy is still in development, but it outlines five ways to wellbeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Give e.g. ability to access volunteering opportunities; ■ Keep learning e.g. access to school, university, workplace; ■ Be active e.g. active transport, access to physical activity; ■ Connect e.g. access to social activities; and ■ Take notice e.g. access to green space. <p>Projects could be delivered in a way that both provides more of the opportunities above and uses the transport network as a means of delivering those opportunities in its own right e.g. use the network itself as a learning opportunity.</p>
<p>Mental Health and Transport Summit (2016)</p>	<p>In 2016, the Department for Transport sponsored a Mental Health and Transport Summit: 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health condition at some time in their lives and 1 in 10 people live with a long term mental health condition. The summit highlighted some of the barriers that people face when using the transport network and the vital role that being able to travel plays in maintaining some control over their condition. The summit also raised the issue of both direct and indirect discrimination. Direct discrimination is easier to identify and deal with, but indirect discrimination is less visible. For example, a policy that means people can only book train tickets online may have a disproportionate impact on people with a mental health problem who experience paranoia.</p>
<p>Fair Society, Healthy Lives: The Marmot Review: Strategic review of health inequalities in England post, 2012</p>	<p>Reducing health inequalities is a matter of fairness and social justice. In England, the many people who are currently dying prematurely each year as a result of health inequalities would otherwise have enjoyed, in total, between 1.3 and 2.5 million extra years of life.</p> <p>Ensure a healthy standard of living for all; Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities; and strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.</p>
<p>Build Back Fairer: The Covid-19 Marmot Review, 2020</p>	<p>The Marmot Review identified that the levels of social, environmental and economic inequality in society are damaging health and well-being. This report identifies that as the UK emerges from the pandemic it would be a mistake to attempt to re-establish the status quo that existed before the pandemic.</p> <p>The reductions in car traffic during the pandemic resulted in cleaner air and reduction in emission of greenhouse gases. Walking and cycling as modes of transport became both necessary and desirable. As the pandemic is brought under control and public transport again becomes safe, a future for our cities</p>

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
	<p>based on reduction in vehicle traffic and made safe for walking and cycling in addition to public transport is a future we can both imagine and realise.</p> <p>Building Back Fairer requires a sizeable reduction in private car use and greater active travel and use of public transport. Efforts to support this are required urgently and would help to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and lead to a more sustainable environment.</p>
<p>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2021</p>	<p>Paragraph 92 of the NPPF states:</p> <p><i>'Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:</i></p> <p><i>a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;</i></p> <p><i>b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of attractive, well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and</i></p> <p><i>c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.'</i></p>
<p>Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation (CIHT), Better planning, better transport, better places, 2019</p>	<p>Poorly located and designed new development seriously hinders healthy lifestyles. Physical inactivity directly contributes to one in six deaths in the UK, drives rising levels of obesity, and is the fourth largest cause of disease and disability. It costs society an estimated £7.4 billion a year and places the national healthcare system under increasing financial strain.</p> <p>By enabling compact, higher density, and mixed-use patterns of development. This encourages more people to incorporate physical activity into their daily journeys, improving productivity and dramatically reducing ill health.</p>

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
<p>Transport, health, and wellbeing: An evidence review for the Department for Transport, 2019</p>	<p>There are three main mechanisms that link transport and health and wellbeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Transport and access: Transport plays a key role in improving access to health services, particularly for vulnerable groups like older people. ■ Mode of transport: Mode of transport affects physical and mental health, via mechanisms including physical activity and commuting time. ■ Wider effects of transport and infrastructure: Transport can facilitate social interactions and promote social inclusion.
<p>Public Health England, Health Matters, Physical Activity: Prevention and management of long-term conditions</p>	<p>Regular physical activity provides a range of physical and mental health and social benefits, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reducing the risk of many long-term conditions ■ Helping manage existing conditions ■ Ensuring good musculoskeletal health ■ Developing and maintaining physical and mental function and independence ■ Supporting social inclusion ■ Helping maintain a healthy weight ■ Reducing inequalities for people with long-term conditions <p>The CMOs' Physical Activity Guidelines state that for good physical and mental health, adults should aim to be physically active every day. Any activity is better than none, and more is better still.</p> <p>Regular physical activity can help to prevent and manage a range of chronic conditions and diseases, many of which are on the rise and affecting people at an earlier age.</p>
<p>Local</p>	
<p>Wokingham Borough Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy (2013)</p>	<p>The purpose of the Strategy is to consider how Wokingham Borough's network of open spaces and sports facilities is planned, managed, protected, designed, and maintained; and to set out a series of objectives to ensure that these open spaces and sports facilities are of a consistent high standard and continue to meet the needs of Wokingham Borough's current and future communities.</p>
<p>Berkshire West Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2021-2030)</p>	<p>The strategy sets out how professionals across health and social care will work together to improve the health of the population.</p> <p>The new strategy is based around five health and wellbeing priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reduce the differences in health between different groups of people



Document	Key Messages/ Issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Support individuals at high risk of bad health outcomes to live healthy lives■ Help families and children in early years■ Promote good mental health and wellbeing for all children and young people■ Promote good mental health and wellbeing for all adults



Table B-12 – Relevant Plans, Policies, strategies and Programmes – Economy

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
<i>International</i>	
Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (2010)	The European Union published its strategy for achieving growth up until 2020. This strategy focuses on smart growth, through the development of knowledge and innovation; sustainable growth, based on a greener, more resource efficient and more competitive economy; and inclusive growth, aimed at strengthening employment, and social and territorial cohesion.
<i>National</i>	
National Planning Policy Framework, 2021	<p>To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for. Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies, including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Those who require affordable housing; ■ Families with children; ■ Older people; ■ Students; ■ People with disabilities; ■ Service families; ■ Travellers; ■ People who rent their homes; and ■ People wishing to commission or build their own homes. <p>Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.</p>

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
Growth and Infrastructure Act (2013)	<p>The Act allows the modification or discharge of the affordable housing elements of section 106 agreements in order to make developments more viable.</p> <p>Contains measures to extend permitted development rights to allow single-storey extensions of up to eight metres.</p> <p>Reduces the volume of extra paperwork required with a planning application; removing over-lapping development consent regimes that require multiple extra permissions from different government agencies.</p>
The Enterprise Act (2016)	<p>The Enterprise Act includes measures to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Establish a Small Business Commissioner to help small firms resolve issues. ■ Extend the Primary Authority scheme to make it easier for businesses to access tailored and assured advice from local authorities, giving them greater confidence to invest and grow. ■ Protect and strengthen apprenticeships by introducing targets for apprenticeships in public sector bodies in England, and establish an Institute for Apprenticeships – an independent, employer-led body that will make sure apprenticeships meet the needs of business.
UK Industrial Growth Strategy, 2017	<p>The Industrial Strategy sets out a long term plan to boost the productivity and earning power of people throughout the UK. It sets out how the UK Government is working towards building a Britain fit for the future – how they will help businesses create better, higher-paying jobs in every part of the UK with investment in the skills, industries and infrastructure of the future.</p> <p>The strategy includes five foundations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ideas: the world’s most innovative economy ■ People: good jobs and greater earning power for all ■ Infrastructure: a major upgrade to the UK’s infrastructure ■ Business environment: the best place to start and grow a business ■ Places: prosperous communities across the UK <p>The UK Government will use this strategy to work with industry, academia and civil society over the coming years to build on the UK’s strengths, make more of untapped potential and create a more productive economy that works for everyone across the UK.</p>

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
<p>The Clean Growth Strategy, 2017</p>	<p>This Strategy sets out a comprehensive set of policies and proposals that aim to accelerate the pace of “clean growth”, i.e. deliver increased economic growth and decreased emissions. The Strategy has two guiding objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To meet our domestic commitments at the lowest possible net cost to UK taxpayers, consumers and businesses; and, 2. To maximise the social and economic benefits for the UK from this transition. In order to meet these objectives, the UK will need to nurture low carbon technologies, processes and systems that are as cheap as possible.
<p>Local</p>	
<p>Wokingham Borough Economic Development Strategy (2016-2021)</p>	<p>The key objectives set out in the strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create a place where businesses thrive by offering good quality housing and infrastructure ■ Facilitate business growth through business support and inward investment ■ Ensure that people have the skills that businesses need and are able to support themselves into employment ■ Encourage innovation and technology to build a competitive business environment
<p>Thames Valley Berkshire: Delivering national grown locally, Strategic Economic Plan (2015/16-2020/21)</p>	<p>The vision for the Plan is: <i>“By 2021, the vibrancy of our business community will be internationally envied. The ambition and creativity of our established businesses will be energised through strong, knowledge-rich, networks. Our Workforce will be the lifeblood of our economy; young people will be inspired and older workers valued. Our infrastructure will match the scale of our ambition and potential. And people will choose Thames Valley Berkshire as the place to live and work.”</i></p>
<p>Wokingham Borough Arts and Culture Strategy (2021-2030)</p>	<p>This Strategy states the ambition for Wokingham Borough to be a great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business.</p> <p>The vision for the Strategy is: <i>“By 2030 Wokingham Borough will be recognised regionally and nationally as a dynamic cultural hub, a Borough of surprises that delight across all our towns and villages, a Borough where everyone can access or get involved in creating high quality cultural experiences and where creativity is nurtured across all age-groups.”</i></p>



Table B-13 – Relevant Plans, Policies, strategies and Programmes – Crime and Disorder

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
National	
<p>The Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation Strategy) Regulations (2007)</p>	<p>The regulations require all local authorities to have a county strategy group who public a community safety agreement; for Wokingham Borough Council this is the Community Safety Partnership.</p> <p>The Wokingham Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is made up of the following partner agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Wokingham Borough Council ■ Thames Valley Police ■ Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service ■ Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner ■ Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group ■ Berkshire Healthcare Trust ■ Wokingham Youth Offending Services ■ National Probation Service
<p>Resource Guide for Local Authorities: Transport Solutions for Older People (2012)</p>	<p>The guide identifies a number of barriers that older people face in using transport systems. It notes that local transport plans offer <i>“the opportunity to tackle these barriers in a clear and systematic way. Any improvements will benefit not just older people but improve access for many other members of the community”</i>.</p> <p>The resource guide covers a wide range of transport issues facing older people including affordability (given many people are likely to be on fixed incomes) and accessibility in terms of providing transport options to destinations older people need to access. The guide also notes that nationally the number of older people in rural areas has increased at a faster rate than in urban areas, particularly those aged over 85. It goes on to note that <i>“a lack of frequent, accessible public transport is a particular concern for people living in rural areas. It may, therefore, be necessary to consider alternative transport solutions and innovative means of service delivery to help maintain access to key health, shopping and leisure facilities”</i>.</p>

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2021	<p>Paragraph 185 of the NPPF states that any significant impacts from developments on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, should be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.</p> <p>Paragraph 92 (b) of the policy states that policies should help to develop places that <i>‘are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of attractive, well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas’</i>.</p> <p>Places and developments should also create safe spaces where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.</p>
National Networks National Policy Statement (NN NPS) (2014)	<p>Paragraphs 3.10 – 3.12 of the NN NPS advise that “scheme promoters are expected to take opportunities to improve road safety, including introducing the most modern and effective safety measures where proportionate”, and that it is the UK Government’s policy to ensure that risks of rail passenger and workforce accidents are reduced so far as reasonably practicable.</p>
Highways England Delivery Plan 2015-2020, 2015	<p>Whilst the number of people Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) on UK roads has generally been declining since 2005, over the last few years the number of fatalities has remained fairly consistent with a small increase in KSIs in 2013.</p> <p>Highways England recognise that they must continue to improve safety by investing in the road network, both to prevent incidents from occurring and to reduce the severity of those that do.</p> <p>By end of 2020, they aim to have reached a target of no more than 1,393 KSIs across the network in a year. This will be achieved by a year on year reduction in those harmed across the network.</p>
Department for Transport, Road Investment Strategy: for the 2015/16 – 2019/20 Road Period, 2015	<p>Safety is an important consideration for road users owing to the significant impact of serious and fatal accidents. A considerable economic cost is also associated with collisions on all roads, estimated at £15 billion annually to the UK economy.</p> <p>While driverless technology still has to mature, it clearly has the potential to transform the UK’s transport networks – improving safety, reducing congestion, and lowering emissions.</p>

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
	<p>Safety and the environment suffering as congested traffic is more polluting and there is an increased risk of accidents.</p> <p>The Strategic Road Network and local networks should work together to provide flexibility and door-to-door connectivity for all users. Schemes such as the A453 upgrade highlighted below do just this, and we have also set aside funding in the ring-fenced Cycling, Safety, and Integration Fund to further support connectivity with local networks.</p>
Local	
Wokingham Borough Older People's Strategy (2012)	The Strategy aims to reduce the fear of crime amongst older people, making them feel safer in their homes and in the Borough. This includes reducing anti-social behaviour amongst young people.
Great Western Franchise Consultation Strategy (2017)	This Strategy aims to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour on its trains, enabling passengers to feel safer while travelling.
Wokingham Borough Community Safety Strategy (2021-2024) (Draft)	<p>The proposed draft priorities and strategic themes for the Strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Listening to the needs and concerns of local residents and taking action; ■ Intervening early and preventing issues escalating; and ■ Working together to protect vulnerable residents.



Table B-14 – Relevant Plans, Policies, strategies and Programmes – Transport and Accessibility

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
National	
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2021	<p>Paragraph 104 - Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals so that potential impacts and opportunities are addressed.</p> <p>Paragraph 105 - Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.</p> <p>Paragraph 106 – Planning policies should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ support an appropriate mix of uses across an area to minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities; ■ be prepared with the active involvement of local highways authorities; ■ identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice and realise opportunities for large scale development; ■ provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks; and ■ recognise the importance of maintaining a national network of general aviation airfields, and their need to adapt and change over time <p>Paragraph 112 - address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport.</p> <p>Paragraph 112 - Create places that are safe, secure and attractive.</p> <p>Paragraph 112 – Developments should be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.</p>
Transport Investment Strategy, 2017	<p>This Strategy sets out how the government will build on recent transport progress and how they intend to respond realistically and pragmatically to today’s challenges.</p> <p>They aim to create a more reliable, less congested, and better connected transport network that works for the users who rely on it. Through investment they aim to achieve:</p>

Document	Key Messages/ Issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A network that is reliable, well-managed, and safe; ■ Journeys that are smooth, fast, and comfortable; and ■ The right connections in the right places
Local	
<p>Wokingham Borough Active Travel Plan (2011-2026)</p>	<p>The vision for the Active Travel plan is: <i>“To work with partners to promote walking and cycling as a health-enhancing physical activity for all of our residents and as a viable alternative to travelling short distances in cars”</i></p> <p>There are four objectives within the plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We will work in partnership with businesses to encourage walking and cycling to centres of employment ■ We will actively encourage walking and cycling to schools, colleges and other education facilities ■ Improve and encourage active travel access to town and local centres, public open spaces and public transport interchanges ■ Work with partners and key stakeholders to promote the benefits of active travel to reinforce public health messages
<p>Wokingham Borough Home to School Travel Assistance Policy (2022-2023)</p>	<p>The goals of the strategy are to, where possible, encourage and support children and young people, including those with special educational needs and/or disability, to travel independently. This approach helps to deliver the Community Vision and Strategic Priorities.</p>
<p>Wokingham Borough Council Post-16 Transport Policy Statement (2022-2023)</p>	<p>This policy is based on the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Independence and wellbeing - Our commitment is to support and prepare every young person for adulthood, including those young people with Special Educational needs or disability through the development and promotion of individual independence, facilitating opportunities for social inclusion as well as supporting the physical well-being for all young people. Travel assistance, and the form this takes, is a key contributor to achieving these goals. ■ Sustainability - The council will favour environmentally sustainable forms of travel, including walking, cycling and the use of public transport. The council will also promote those options which make the most effective use of public resources. In order to support a young person’s needs and assisting them to develop greater independence for adulthood, a range of travel options will be explored when deciding what form of travel assistance will be offered. All pupils should be encouraged to follow a healthy lifestyle including walking a reasonable distance to college/sixth form, where possible.



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