

Statement of Common Ground

between

Wokingham Borough Council

and

Crest Nicholson

(Barkham Square -
Arborfield Green

Strategic Development Location: Site SS11)

in relation to the
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040

15 August 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and Crest Nicholson, collectively referred to as “the Parties”. The statement sets out the matters that are agreed regarding Policy SS11: Arborfield Green Strategic Development Location of the Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023 – 2040: Proposed Submission Plan.
- 1.2 Crest Nicholson is an established housebuilder with over 60 years experience and hold the right to develop the land known as Barkham Square (see Appendix A).

2. Description of the Arborfield Green Strategic Development Location

- 2.1 The former Arborfield Garrison was originally identified in the Core Strategy local plan (2010) as a location for sustainable, well-designed mixed use development for around 3,500 homes in the period to 2006 to 2026. Planning permission has since been granted, with a number of development parcels completed or under construction, including the delivery of key infrastructure.
- 2.2 Policy SS11 incorporates both the development permitted under the Core Strategy local plan which had not been completed from the base date of the Proposed Submission Plan, plus the delivery of additional 910 dwellings to be achieved through three sources of supply:
 - 300 dwellings by optimising development density at land currently occupied by Arborfield Studios;
 - 600 dwellings on land to the northeast of Arborfield Studios (excluding any care provision), known as Barkham Square; and
 - 10 dwellings at Westwood Yard, Sheerlands Road.

3. Local Plan Context

- 3.1 WBC commenced a review of its adopted Development Plan (comprising the Core Strategy 2010 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014) through the publication of an Issues and Options Consultation Document in August 2016. Further to this, between November 2018 and February 2019, WBC published a consultation document entitled ‘Homes for the Future’ which consulted on a range of spatial options.
- 3.2 In February 2020, WBC published a Draft Local Plan for consultation. The Draft Local Plan proposed the continuation of the Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location allocation from the original Core Strategy local plan.
- 3.3 In November 2021, WBC published a Revised Growth Strategy for consultation. This again proposed a continuation of the Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location, however small adjustments were proposed to incorporate the additional land known as Westward Cottage, Sheerlands Road to achieve an additional 10 dwellings.
- 3.4 The Proposed Submission Plan continues to identify the site, now called the Arborfield Green Strategic Development Location. The proposed allocation of Policy SS11 further

evolves the vision of the original Core Strategy local plan incorporating additional housing to be achieved through actions outlined at paragraph 2.2 above.

4. Relevant Site Promoter Representations

- 4.1 The development of the land known as Barkham Square has been promoted by Crest Nicholson at the Regulation 18 and 19 stages of plan making as outline above.
- 4.2 With regard to Policy SS11, Crest Nicholson submitted representations in response to the Proposed Submission Plan. Regarding the land at Barkham Square, the representations confirm:
- Support for the identification of the land for development.
 - The land is available for development.
 - There is capacity for at least 600 dwellings.
 - That Crest Nicholson will work positively with WBC to bring forward planning applications to ensure the timely delivery of development and supporting infrastructure.
 - That housing delivery at least equal to that set out in WBC's housing trajectory will be achieved.
- 4.3 In the context of support, Crest Nicholson sought minor modifications and clarifications to Policy SS11, as set out in Appendix C. Modifications included increasing the site capacity from 600 to 660 dwellings and the need for specific details on access to be considered through the planning application process.

5. Areas of Agreement

- 5.1 The Parties agree the following:
- a) That that the evidence supporting the Arborfield Green Strategic Development Location is robust and proportionate to the plan-making stage of planning.
 - b) That Barkham Square is deliverable (i.e. able to produce completions within 5 years) and developable thereafter.
 - c) That the development, place shaping and delivery principles set out in Proposed Submission Plan Policy SS11, as supplemented by the development guidelines set out in Appendix A of the Plan, provide an appropriate basis for framing development at Barkham Square to be further considered and evolved through the planning application process.
 - d) That housing delivery at least equal to that set out in WBC's housing trajectory will be achieved.

6. Areas of Disagreement, Clarification or Further Work

- 6.1 The table in Appendix C provides a summary of Crest Nicholson's representations to the Proposed Submission Plan that seek modifications to Policy SS11.
- 6.2 The Parties agree the remaining areas of disagreement in relation to the Proposed Submission Plan are not substantive. Crest Nicholson have promoted minor modifications capable of addressing the matters raised in their detailed representations. This includes increasing the capacity of Barkham Square from 600 to 660 dwellings and the need for specific details on access to be considered through the planning application process.

7. Anticipated Start and Build Out Rates

- 7.1 As set out above, Crest Nicholson is an established housebuilder. Crest Nicholson is also experienced in the delivery of housing in Wokingham Borough and specifically in the Arborfield Green area.
- 7.2 Crest Nicholson have started work necessary to prepare a planning application for development of the land known as Barkham Square and are engaged in pre-application discussion with WBC. Community engagement was undertaken between November 2024 and January 2025.
- 7.3 The housing trajectory in the Proposed Submission Plan for Barkham Square projects that housing completions will occur as set out below.

Year	Delivery
2031/32	50
2032/33	60
2033/34	70
2034/35	70
2035/36	70
2036/37	70
2037/38	70
2038/39	70
2039/40	70
Total delivery in plan period	600

- 7.4 Crest Nicholson's programme for the submission and consideration of planning applications and subsequent delivery of dwellings is set out below. These milestones are agreed between the parties and are reflected in WBC's response to the Inspectors' Initial Question submitted in June 2025.

Submission of Outline application	Grant of Outline permission	Submission of Reserved Matters application	Grant of Reserved Matters application	First completion
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By November 2025	By September 2026	By December 2026	By September 2027	2028
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- 7.5 Submission of an outline planning application (all matters reserved save for access) will take place by November 2025. The determination of the application is expected by September 2026.
- 7.6 Taking into account Reserved Matters submissions in December 2026 and pre-commencement conditions over the same period, first completions are anticipated in Spring 2028. The intention of Crest Nicholson is to complete 70 dwellings per year on average from 1 or 2 sales outlets.
- 7.7 Appendix B includes further detail of the programme for the submission and determination of planning applications and the delivery of dwellings.
- 7.8 Notwithstanding WBC's housing trajectory, Crest Nicholson are working towards delivery at an accelerated rate and delivering a higher quantum of dwellings.

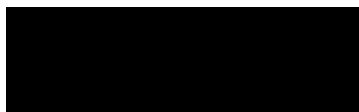
8. Governance Arrangements Including Future Review

- 8.1 The Parties agree to:
- Continue to cooperate and work collaboratively regarding Barkham Square;
 - Review and update this Statement of Common Ground in the light of any material change in circumstance; and
 - Maintain positive principles of cooperation.

9. Signatories

- 9.1 We confirm that the information in this Statement of Common Ground reflects the joint working and engagement undertaken to date. The Parties will continue to work together to ensure the delivery of the Arborfield Green Strategic Development Location.

Signed for Wokingham Borough Council



Name: Nick Irvine

Position: Service Director – Planning, Economy and Culture

Date: 19/08/2025

Signed for Crest Nicholson



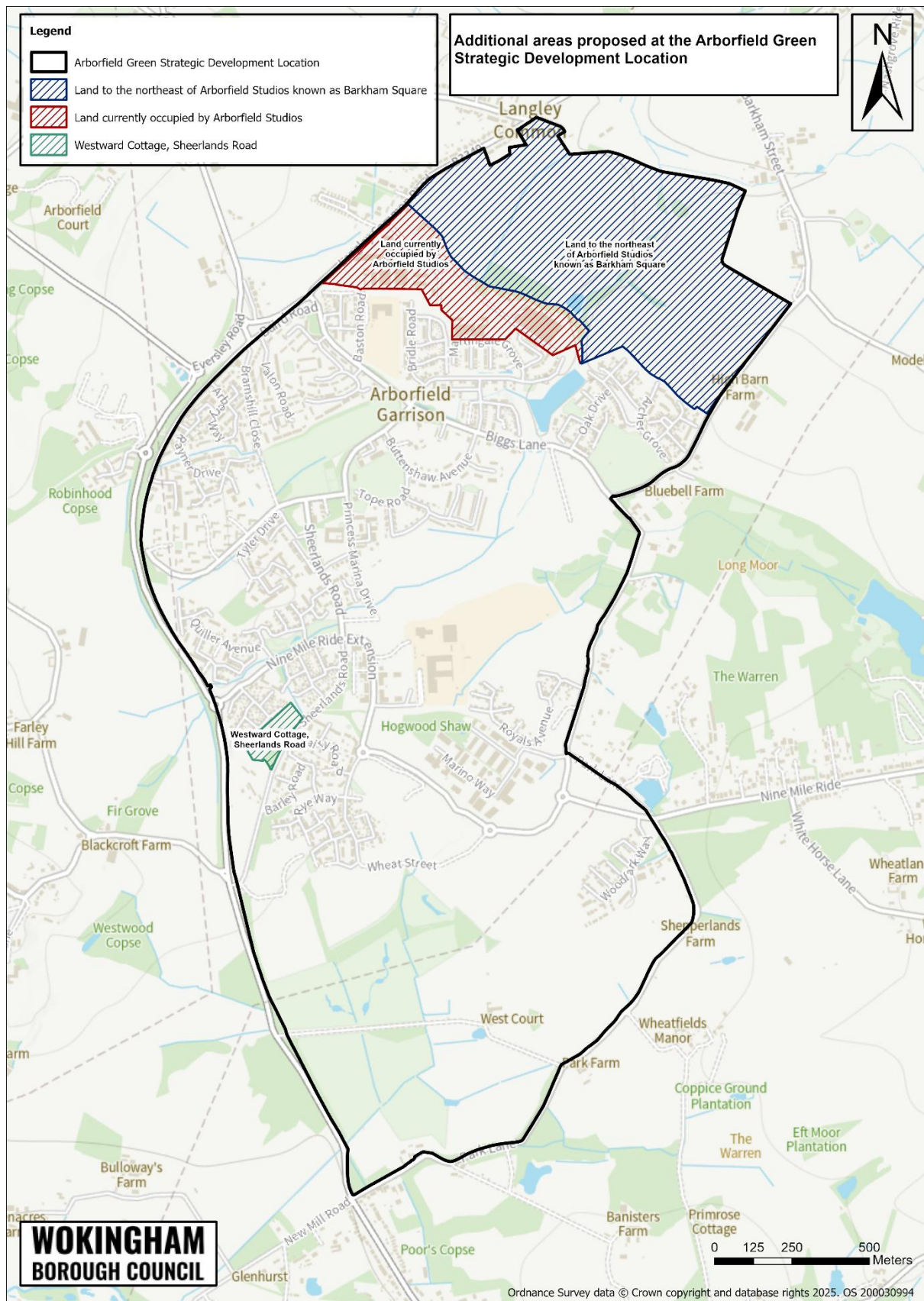
Name: Matthew Parsons

Position: Strategic Land and Planning Director

Date: 15th August 2025

Appendix A

Map: Arborfield Green Strategic Development Location



Appendix B

Planning application programme and delivery trajectory: Land known as Barkham Square

Initialisation

PPA = Planning Performance Agreement.

PA = Pre Application.

HPA = Hybrid Planning Application.

OPA = Outline Planning Application.

RM = Reserved Matters Application.

PC = Pre-Commencement Conditions.

PP = Planning Permission.

Q1 = April-June.

Q2 = July-September.

Q3 = October-December.

Q4= January-March.

Landowner information	2025/26				2026/27				2027/28				2028/29				2029/30				2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37	2037/38	2038/39	2039/40
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4										
Application progress	PA advice		OPA Submitted			OPA granted	RM submitted			RM granted			First completions																	
Projected completions	0				0				0				40				70				70	70	70	70	70	70	70	60	-	-
Cumulative completions	0				0				0				40				110				180	250	320	390	460	530	600	660	-	-
Action	2025/26				2026/27				2027/28				2028/29				2029/30				2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37	2037/38	2038/39	2039/40
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4														
LPU housing trajectory Barkham Square	0				0				0				0				0				0	50	60	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
LPU cumulative completions Barkham Square	0				0				0				0				0				0	50	110	180	250	320	390	460	530	600

Appendix C
Crest Nicholson representation requesting modifications to Policy SS11

Aspect	Issue	Comment/Update
Site capacity	Welcome flexibility afforded by reference to 'around', but considers reference should be made to 660 dwellings (Policy SS11 refers to 600 dwellings), with consequential increase in the overall capacity of the allocation. Amended wording proposed.	Amendment sought not included within the WBC Schedule of proposed modifications.
Completions	Clarification required as to the delivered quantum of development.	An amendment has not been included within the WBC Schedule of proposed modifications. Housing monitoring will enable this to be considered in due course.
Transport measures	Considers amendments be made to set out a test to ensure that the works the policy seeks are justified and that matters such as access be tested through a Planning Application. Amended wording proposed.	Amendment sought not included within the WBC Schedule of proposed modifications.
Uses	Supports requirements but considers further information should be provided within the policy or text on the location of employment floorspace, the primary school and the district centre and local centres.	Amendment sought not included within the WBC Schedule of proposed modifications.