

## West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022-2039 (LPR) Examination

### West Berkshire Council

#### Council response to IN33: Five year housing land supply from 1 April 2026

**IN33.** The Council’s response to AP77 and modified housing trajectory indicates that a total of 3,195 dwellings are expected to be built between 1 April 2026 and 31 March 2031 on sites allocated in the Plan and on windfalls<sup>1</sup>. This compares to a five year requirement (including 5% buffer) for that period of 2,704 dwellings meaning that there would be a surplus of 491 dwellings or a deliverable supply of 5.9 years.

A number of representors’ written statements in response to SQ7.22 raise issues related to some of the sites that the Council assume will contribute to the five year supply from 1 April 2026, in particular Pro Vision’s statements on behalf of T A Fisher.

The Council is requested to consider the issues raised by T A Fisher relating to the sites contributing to the five year supply and prepare a brief note summarising its response to each.

**Council response:**

Since the publication of the Council’s latest trajectory ([EXAM 54](#)), new information has become available regarding the deliverability of several sites. As a result of this new information, the Council now estimates the five year supply from 2026 to be 6.3 years as Table 1 below illustrates:

**Table 1: Five year land supply calculation (1 April 2026 to 31 March 2031)**

A. Requirement including a 5% buffer	2,704 (515 * 5 * 1.05)
B. Total deliverable housing land supply	3,402
<b>C. Total deliverable housing supply in years (B / A * 5)</b>	<b>6.3 years</b>

The sites which have been reassessed as making a different contribution to the five year supply from 1 April 2026 are set out in Table 2 below:

**Table 2: Proposed changes to the five year land supply (1 April 2026 to 31 March 2031)**

Site	Contribution to Five Year Land Supply in EXAM54	Contribution to amended Five Year Housing Land Supply	Adjustment
<i>Local Plan allocations (retained and proposed)</i>			
SP16: Sandleford Park East	450	600	+150
SP16: Sandleford Park West	150	270	+120
SP17: North East Thatcham	60	20	-40
RSA1 Land North of Newbury College	15	31	+16
RSA15 Land at Newbury Road, Lambourn	8	5	-3
<i>Existing planning commitments on unallocated sites</i>			
Land to the rear of 1-15 The Broadway, Newbury	36	0	-36
<b>Total</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>926</b>	<b>+207</b>

Taking the individual sites in order to raised within the Written Statement by Pro Vision on behalf of TA Fisher & Sons Ltd [FMS7/18](#) and [FMS7/19](#):

**Local Plan allocations (retained and proposed)**

**SP17 – North East Thatcham**

Pro Vision states that 60 units should be removed.

Things have moved on since the SoCG was signed earlier in the examination. The Council's latest trajectory ([EXAM 54](#)) anticipates that this site would be delivered from 2030/31, with a build out rate of approximately 170 dwellings per annum from 2031/32, and a total of 1,760 dwellings to be delivered within the plan period. The Written Statement submitted by Lichfields on behalf of North East Thatcham Partnership (see [FWS4/4](#)) supports the Council's view on the deliverability of the site, in particular the anticipated lead in time to the delivery of the first homes on site in 2030/31. The North East Thatcham Partnership anticipates a build out rate of approximately 190 dwellings per annum across five outlets from 2033/34, with a total of 1,835 dwellings to be delivered within the plan period.

In light of the above, the Council considers that 20 dwellings will be delivered within 2030/31. This represents a decrease of 40 dwellings in the five-year period post adoption when compared to what is set out within the Council's latest housing trajectory ([EXAM 54](#)).

**RSA17 Land at Chieveley Glebe**  
**RSA19 Land west of Spring Meadows, Great Shefford**  
**RSA22 Land adjacent to Station Road, Hermitage**

Pro Vision states an issue with achieving Nutrient Neutrality on these sites.

The Nutrient Neutrality Zone (NNZ) was discussed at the hearing session that was held on 4 June 2024. Since this date, further progress has been made on mitigation measures within the District with the publication of the River Lambourn Phosphate Mitigation Solutions Report and the River Lambourn Phosphate Budget Calculator.

It was outlined during the hearing sessions that land adjoining RSA17 and RSA19 can be utilised to deliver mitigation as this is in the same ownership, and for RSA22 the Council's Ecology Team has commented that the Phosphate Budget Calculator indicates that no mitigation will be required post 2030. RSA17 and RSA22 are both within the catchment of the Chieveley Waste Water Treatment Works (WwTW), whereby there will be a 50% reduction in phosphate levels following the 2025 upgrades. Following further upgrades by January 2030, there will be a 75% reduction in phosphate levels. RSA19 is within the catchment of the East Shefford WwTW, whereby there will be a 90% reduction in phosphate levels following the 2025 upgrades.

The Council refers to its position set out in the latest trajectory in ([EXAM 54](#)).

**RSA14 – Land adjoining Lynch Lane, Lambourn**

Pro Vision states that no application has been submitted for this site.

The Council's latest trajectory ([EXAM 54](#)) makes clear that there is no permission on this site and anticipates delivery of 20 dwellings per annum from 2028/29. The site is owned by a developer and pre-application discussions are currently taking place with the Council. The site is within the catchment of the East Shefford WwTW, whereby there will be a 90% reduction in phosphate levels following the 2025 upgrades. In addition, the developer has confirmed the availability of land adjacent which is in the same ownership to be used to deliver mitigation measures. The developer has confirmed that an application is forthcoming following pre-application.

**RSA15 Land at Newbury Road, Lambourn**

Pro Vision states that the extant permission on the site for 8 dwellings expired 10 September 2024 and an alternative application for 5 dwellings is pending determination. It is also stated that this site requires a nutrient solution.

The Nutrient Neutrality Zone (NNZ) was discussed at the hearing session that was held on 4 June 2024. Since this date, further progress has been made on mitigation measures within the District with the publication of the River Lambourn Phosphate Mitigation Solutions Report and the River Lambourn Phosphate Budget Calculator. At the earlier hearing sessions, it was confirmed that there are mitigation options available on the wider estate. As above, the site is also within the East Shefford

WwTW, whereby there will be a 90% reduction in phosphate levels following the 2025 upgrades.

In light of the current situation regarding the extant permission and the current application pending determination the Council considers that the latest trajectory (EXAM 54) should be revised down to 5 units (a reduction of 3 units in five-year period post adoption).

### **RSA20 – Land off Charlotte Close, Hermitage**

Pro Vision states that the extant permission on the site is due to expire 8 October 2024 and there is a condition discharge application pending a nitrate solution. It would therefore appear unlikely at this stage that development could lawfully commence before permission expires.

The Nutrient Neutrality Zone (NNZ) was discussed at the hearing session that was held on 4 June 2024. Since this date, further progress has been made on mitigation measures within the District with the publication of the River Lambourn Phosphate Mitigation Solutions Report and the River Lambourn Phosphate Budget Calculator.

The site is within the catchment of the Chieveley WwTW, whereby there will be a 50% reduction in phosphate levels following the 2025 upgrades. Following further upgrades by January 2030, there will be a 75% reduction in phosphate levels.

The Council consider there remains a realistic prospect that the site will deliver 16 dwellings within the five-year period post adoption as set out in the latest trajectory (EXAM 54).

### **RSA21 – Land to the southeast of the Old Farmhouse, Hermitage**

Pro Vision states that this site is owned by its client TA Fisher and has outline permission for 21 dwellings. A Reserved Matters application is on hold due to the site's location in the River Lambourn catchment and pre-commencements conditions are waiting to be discharged until a nitrate solution is found.

The Nutrient Neutrality Zone (NNZ) was discussed at the hearing session that was held on 4 June 2024. Since this date, further progress has been made on mitigation measures within the District with the publication of the River Lambourn Phosphate Mitigation Solutions Report and the River Lambourn Phosphate Budget Calculator.

The site is within the catchment of the Chieveley WwTW, whereby there will be a 50% reduction in phosphate levels following the 2025 upgrades. Following further upgrades by January 2030, there will be a 75% reduction in phosphate levels. The Council's Ecology Team has advised that the mitigation requirement post 2030 is likely to be able to be offset through an on-site SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) scheme.

TA Fisher have previously suggested in a site deliverability proforma that it could deliver the site by 2026/27.

The Council considers there remains a realistic prospect that the site will deliver 21 dwellings within the five-year period post adoption as set out in the latest trajectory (EXAM 54).

### **Lambourn NDP**

Pro Vision states that no Regulation 14 draft has been published for consultation and there is no indication of when this is to be expected. In any event, the lack of a nitrate solution means it is unrealistic to expect 25 dwellings to be delivered by 2030/31.

Work on the NDP is progressing, and consultation on the pre-submission (Regulation 14) version of the Plan commenced on 6 September 2024. The draft Plan includes three residential site allocations that amount to 40 dwellings – two of these allocations are located within the settlement boundary.

Further progress has been made on mitigation measures within the District with the publication of the River Lambourn Phosphate Mitigation Solutions Report and the River Lambourn Phosphate Budget Calculator.

The Council remains of the view that there is a realistic prospect that 25 dwellings will be delivered within the five-year period post adoption.

### **Hungerford NDP**

- **HUNG12 – Land at Smitham Bridge Road**

Pro Vision states that flood risk issues could affect site capacity or deliverability, and that concerns from the Highway's Team place the suitability of this proposed allocation in doubt.

The flood risk on site HUNG12 is minimal and constrained to the eastern site boundary.

The site was promoted for consideration within the Council's Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) whereby it was assessed as 'potentially developable in part'.

A developer (Donnington New Homes) has an option on the site, and they have recently confirmed that they are waiting for the Neighbourhood Plan to be finalised, however they consider the site to be fully developable by the end of 2026 and plan to achieve this.

- **HUNG13 – Land north of Cottrell Close**

Pro Vision states that the site was not included in the HELAA and that the Town Council were awaiting a response from West Berkshire Council Highways and Drainage Teams. Given the stage of Plan preparation and the fact that neither sites are allocated yet it is unrealistic that either this site, or HUNG12, could be delivered by 2030/31.

The site was promoted directly to Hungerford Town Council as part of the 'call for sites' for its neighbourhood plan. The Town Council undertook its own 'HELAA assessment' (i.e. used the same assessment criteria) of sites promoted directly to it so that all sites being considered were assessed in a consistent manner.

Work on the NDP is progressing, and the Council considers that 55 dwellings could realistically be delivered within the five-year period post adoption as set out in the latest trajectory ([EXAM 54](#)).

### **SP16 Sandford Park**

Pro Vision states that both East and West sites are complex with regard to access, drainage and delivery of infrastructure and reserved matters applications are needed before development can commence. Given their stages, it considers 300 units should be removed from the supply for Sandford Park East and 100 units from the supply for Sandford Park West.

- **Sandford Park East**

The Council considers there remains a realistic prospect that the site will start to deliver in within the five-year period post adoption.

The developer has confirmed it intends to submit the first reserved matters application before March 2025 and start on-site by the end of 2025. It anticipates a build-out rate across two outlets of 120 units per annum from Spring 2026. This indicates that 600 dwellings will be delivered by the end of 2030/31, which represents an increase of 150 units in the five year period post adoption compared to the Council's latest trajectory ([EXAM 54](#)).

No firm detail has been provided to explain a reduced housing figure as promoted by the developer, other than a phasing plan.

- **Sandford Park West**

The Council considers there remains a realistic prospect that the site will start to deliver in within the five-year period post adoption.

The developer has indicated a start on site is intended in late 2025 and into early 2026. The delivery of 30 units is expected during 2026/27, with 60 units in the following years until completion in 2032/33. A total of 270 units will be delivered from

2026/27 to 2030/31. This represents an increase of 120 units in the five year period post adoption compared to the Council's latest trajectory ([EXAM 54](#)).

No firm detail has been provided to explain a reduced housing figure as promoted by the developer, other than a phasing plan.

### **RSA 1 Land north of Newbury College**

Pro Vision states that permission for the site has lapsed and that an outline application is pending determination.

The Council can confirm the case officer is looking to recommend approval for 31 units. The developer has also confirmed that the site can be delivered in 2027/28. The Council therefore considers there remains a realistic prospect that the site will deliver within the five-year period post adoption, and it is realistic to include 31 dwellings within the housing trajectory. This represents an increase of 16 dwellings when compared to what is set out within the Council's latest housing trajectory ([EXAM 54](#)).

### **Existing Planning Commitments**

#### **Land off Faraday Road and Kelvin Road**

Pro Vision states that 160 units should be removed from the supply because the site is not considered deliverable as there are existing uses on site with existing leases.

The site has the benefit of full planning permission which is extant. It is currently owned by West Berkshire Council (who have the freehold) and Renaissance and Faraday Investment who hold the leasehold. The extant planning permission includes a hotel and office component however the marketing agent for the site advises there is no demand in the current market and development of this type is currently not viable. The agent also advises that the site is to be sold off in multiple lots and it is anticipated that the buyers will seek then alternative planning permissions. The agent also advises there is good interest from potential residential lots being marketed.

#### **1 – 15 The Broadway (Bayer site)**

Pro Vision states that the site was to be put to public auction in July 2024 but was withdrawn before it took place. There is therefore no certainty that the site will be deliverable.

In light of this recent evidence the Council accepts that the site is not deliverable within the five-year period post adoption. This results in a decrease of 36 dwellings within the five-year supply post adoption.

However, the site has the benefit of full planning permission which is extant. Although this is unlikely to be viable in the current market, the site is a brownfield site and located within the settlement boundary whereby there is a presumption in favour of development. The Council therefore considers that there remains a reasonable prospect that development on the site will be delivered within the plan period.

### **Bayer House, Strawberry Hill**

Pro Vision states that this site is in the hands of administrators and being marketed for sale. Notwithstanding this, the prior approval for 191 residential units has lapsed under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (GDPO) and therefore the 141 units not completed should be removed from the 2024/25 supply.

The Council's latest trajectory (EXAM54) shows the site as delivering in advance of the five-year period post adoption, with 50 units in 2023/24 and 141 units in 2024/25.

At the current time the site is partly complete, and partly under construction. Phase 1 of the development is complete (50 units). Recent information indicates that the developer has gone into administration, and the administrator has advised that they are progressing with discussions with interested parties and expect to complete a sale within the coming months. The site is located within the settlement boundary where there is a presumption in favour of development.

The Council acknowledges that the prior approval has not been completed within a period of 3 years starting with the prior approval date. However, the extant permission for change of use from office to residential has been implemented, it is therefore reasonable to anticipate that the remainder of the conversion can be delivered very quickly within the five-year period post adoption.

### **Windfall allowance**

Pro Vision states that there should be a reduction in the anticipated windfall delivery between 2026 – 2031 by 205 units.

The Council's position on the windfall allowance is set out within its response to AP77 (see [EXAM53.1](#)), which reinforces the position set out at paragraph 6.20 of the LPR.

In addition to this, whilst small site windfall completions were lower over the 2019 to 2022 period, it needs to be seen in context. This three-year period was significantly influenced by the Covid pandemic. This issue was recognised by the government when it adjusted the Housing Delivery Test results "*to reflect the disruption caused to housing delivery by the pandemic*". Specifically, it reduced the target for 2019/20 by 8.3% and for 2020/21 by 33.3%.

The Council does not consider that the windfall allowance should be reduced.