

West Berkshire District Council Examination Hearing Statement

Reading Borough Council Local Plan Partial Update

Stage 2 Hearings

Matter 9 – Other Uses

Issue 1: Are the policies for other uses justified, effective and consistent with national policy?

9.2 Is policy OU2 justified, supported by robust evidence and consistent with national policy? Is the Council's approach to the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone and other consultation zones for Atomic Weapons Establishment Burghfield consistent with that of its neighbours, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council?

1.1 Further to West Berkshire District Council's (WBDC) representation to the Regulation 19 consultation, ongoing discussions have taken place with Reading Borough Council (RBC) and an additional Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared. This additional SoCG is dated December 2025. The purpose of the SoCG Dec 2025 is to address the comments raised by WBDC at the Regulation 19 stage. It sets out proposed changes that both WBDC and RBC agree should be made to policy OU2, as well as outlining matters relating to AWE Burghfield that remain outstanding.

1.2 WBDC welcomes the outcomes and position reached within the SoCG Dec 2025, and therefore it is only the outstanding matters, that can be found in Section 3 of the SoCG, that will be considered below; each taken in turn.

- a. WBDC maintains the position set out in its Regulation 19 representation that policy OU2 should explicitly state that should ONR, as regulator of the nuclear licensed sites, advise against proposed development within the DEPZ, planning permission is likely to be refused. It is considered this modification would align with policy SP4 in the West Berkshire District Local Plan Review,

adopted in June 2025, and ensure consistency and ultimately effectiveness of the policy.

- b. The Regulation 19 representation submitted by WBDC sought a change to policy OU2 to include the Office of Nuclear Regulation's (ONR) land use planning consultation zones within the policy. Through ongoing discussions and work on the SoCG Dec 2025, agreement was reached to include reference to the ONR consultation zones surrounding the AWE sites within policy OU2 via a proposed main modification.

Whilst a specific request for the consultation zones to be shown on the Policies Map was not explicitly made within the WBDC Regulation 19 representation, the Council believes such a change should happen as a consequence of the proposed main modification.

The Policies Map is not defined in legislation as a development plan document, and hence a main modification cannot be recommended to it directly. However, the role of the Policies Map is to geographically illustrate the application of the policies in the Plan and as such, WBDC considers it necessary, given the proposed main modification to the policy, that the ONR consultation zones are geographically represented on the Policies Map, in the same way the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) is proposed to be.

It is appreciated that the DEPZ and wider ONR consultation zones are not determined or controlled via the Local Plan, and therefore the reference note currently present on the Policies Map relating to the DEPZ being a contextual designation remains relevant to all such zones.

- c. The third outstanding matter within the SoCG relates to the request within the WBDC Regulation 19 representation to split the policy (OU2) into two separate policies to improve clarity. However, whilst it is considered this would be advantageous, it is not considered a soundness matter.

- d. The final outstanding matter relates to the allocated sites falling within the DEPZ under policies SR1 and SR4. This matter will be addressed under Matter 10 Site-specific policies: South Reading.