



**Extraordinary Meeting of  
West Berkshire  
District Council**

**Monday, 31st January, 2011**

***Summons and Agenda***

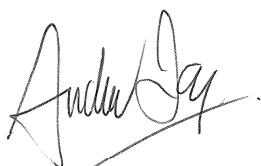
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To: All Members of the Council

*You are requested to attend a meeting of*  
**WEST BERKSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
*to be held in the*  
**COUNCIL OFFICES, MARKET STREET,  
NEWBURY**

on

**Monday, 31st January, 2011**  
at 7.00pm



Andy Day  
Head of Policy and Communication  
West Berkshire District Council

Date of despatch of Agenda: Friday, 21 January 2011

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## **AGENDA**

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1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any).
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
To receive notice of any Declarations of Interest from Members.
3. **CORE STRATEGY: PROPOSED FOCUSED CHANGES (Pages 1 - 132)**
4. **INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL 2011 (Pages 133 - 136)**
5. **COUNCIL MOTION - RENEWABLE ENERGY IN WEST BERKSHIRE (Pages 137-158)**

West Berkshire Council is committed to equality of opportunity. We will treat everyone with respect, regardless of race, disability, gender, age, religion or sexual orientation.

If you require this information in a different format, such as audio tape, or in another language, please ask an English speaker to contact Moira Fraser on telephone (01635) 519045, who will be able to help.



**West Berkshire**  
C O U N C I L

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Core Strategy: Proposed Focused Changes</b>
<b>Report to be considered by:</b>	Council
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	31 January 2011
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	C2215

**Purpose of Report:**

To recommend the schedule of post-examination proposed focused changes to the West Berkshire Core Strategy for approval by Council

**Recommended Action:**

That Council Resolves that:

1. the schedule of post-examination proposed focused changes to the submission Core Strategy are published in accordance with Regulation 30 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Amendment regulations 2008 for a 6 week period of consultation.
2. Delegated authority is given to the Head of Planning and Countryside in consultation with the Portfolio member for Planning and Housing to agree any non-material supporting documentation and any other non-material refinements to the policy wording before consultation.
3. The Council disagrees with the 'Proposed Inspector Change' to Policy CS16 (Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency) and will so inform the Inspector during the consultation period. The Council strongly recommends policy CS16 to remain substantially unchanged.

**Reason for decision to be taken:**

Following the suspension of the Core Strategy examination in November 2010, further work has been carried out at the request of the Inspector. This has resulted in some changes to the wording of the Core Strategy as submitted.

**Key background documentation:**

Submission Core Strategy  
Inspector's Post Hearing Notes 1 and 2

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Plan Priority:

- CPP3 – Reduce West Berkshire’s carbon footprint** – to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in West Berkshire and contribute to waste management, green travel, transportation and energy efficiency

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Theme(s):

- CPT1 - Better Roads and Transport**
- CPT2 - Thriving Town Centres**
- CPT3 - Affordable Housing**
- CPT4 - High Quality Planning**
- CPT5 - Cleaner and Greener**
- CPT6 - Vibrant Villages**
- CPT7 - Safer and Stronger Communities**
- CPT8 - A Healthier Life**
- CPT9 - Successful Schools and Learning**
- CPT12 - Including Everyone**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:

Setting a positive framework for the future planning of West Berkshire

<b>Portfolio Member Details</b>	
<b>Name &amp; Telephone No.:</b>	Councillor Alan Law - Tel (01491) 873614
<b>E-mail Address:</b>	alaw@westberks.gov.uk
<b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>	25/01/2011
<b>Contact Officer Details</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	Liz Alexander
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## Implications

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**Policy:** The West Berkshire Core Strategy sets out the strategic direction for the Council's planning policy, setting out the broad strategy for development in West Berkshire to 2026.

**Financial:**

**Personnel:**

**Legal/Procurement:**

**Property:**

**Risk Management:**

**Equalities Impact Assessment:** An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out in tandem with the development of the Core Strategy..

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Task Groups within preceding six months	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	

# Executive Report

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report asks full Council to approve the proposed focused changes to the submission Core Strategy. These are the outcome of additional work on the Core Strategy which was necessary following the suspension of the Examination in November.
- 1.2 The Core Strategy examination began on 2 November 2010 and ran for 8 days. Under guidance from the Inspector, the Council asked for a suspension to the Examination at the end of the scheduled hearings to enable the Council to consider matters that had arisen from the discussions. The Examination was suspended on 11 November to enable the Council time to undertake the extra work that the Inspector had asked for.
- 1.3 The substantive structure and direction of the Core Strategy in terms of the spatial strategy, including the settlement hierarchy, the 4 spatial areas and the 2 strategic sites at Newbury Racecourse and Sandford Park, have not been questioned by the Inspector and are therefore not the subject of these proposed changes to the Core Strategy.
- 1.4 The Inspector published 2 post hearing notes (available from <http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=20791>) setting out matters highlighted in discussions at the hearings, with further work suggested for the Council to undertake. The main areas are set out in section 2, together with the outcome of the work, and the implications for the Core Strategy in terms of whether any changes were needed, and whether these were focused or minor changes.
- 1.5 Any focused changes require consultation under regulation 30 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008. A schedule of responses will then be prepared and sent to the Inspector. Comments can only be made on proposed focused changes to the Core Strategy – not on the rest of the document.
- 1.6 The Examination will then resume to allow the additional information to be examined. This resumption needs to take place within 6 months of the date of the suspension of the Examination i.e. by 11 May 2011. The Inspector has indicated that in terms of his timescales, the Examination process could resume on 2 May, with further hearing sessions to be held in late June/early July.
- 1.7 Any minor amendments do not require consultation. The consultation schedule of focused changes is supported by a topic paper which is attached as Appendix B. This provides background information to explain the changes made. A sustainability appraisal has been carried out on the focused changes and this is available on request.
- 1.8 Full Council is asked to approve the schedule of proposed focused changes which is attached as Appendix A.

## **2. Main Matters Raised by the Inspector and Outcomes of Work to Date**

### **Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE)**

- 2.1 The Inspector was concerned that the Core Strategy in its submitted form did not sufficiently take into account the Health and Safety Executive's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (HSE NII) position with regard to AWE at Aldermaston and Burghfield. The Inspector requested that the HSE NII provides clear information about the amount of development and additional population which can be accommodated in each zone. He was particularly keen to know whether there is any constraint in development in and around Burghfield Common and Mortimer, and what, if any capacity there is for development in these 2 rural service centres.
- 2.2 A detailed response has now been received from the HSE NII. The response is positive and indicates that the amount of development proposed in the Core Strategy for the spatial area of the East Kennet Valley is acceptable and can be accommodated without any safety issues.
- 2.3 A policy on the AWE issue is included as policy CS9A in Appendix A. This sets out that a special policy approach is required in the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone. This will also need to be shown on the Proposals Map. The policy also includes information on the appropriate monitoring of development, which will take place in partnership with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council; Reading Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council and that the policy will be kept under review.
- 2.4 Policy ADP4 on the East Kennet Valley has been revised to more fully reflect the significance of AWE. This includes the limitations on development in the service village of Aldermaston.

### **Justification of the Overall Housing Provision**

- 2.5 The Inspector asked that the Council demonstrates in more detail if the housing figure of 10,500 set out for West Berkshire within the South East Plan is appropriate for the District in terms of balancing need and demand issues against environmental considerations such as the extent of the AONB in West Berkshire, and the amount of the District that is affected by flooding. Following Counsel's advice the need for this work was discussed by PTG in December 2010 and carrying out the additional work was supported by Members.
- 2.6 The changing policy agenda means that the Inspector is keen to ensure that the plan's evidence base remains up to date and that the Council is demonstrating flexibility which is one of the tests of soundness. The flexibility test set out in PPS12 sets out the need to be flexible enough to deal with changing circumstances over the long term.
- 2.7 The outcomes of this additional work are included within the supporting topic paper attached as Appendix B. This more fully explains the different elements that affect the housing number for the District, in order to give a fuller explanation and justification for the figure. Amendments have been made to the supporting text of CS1 to give more information about these different factors.
- 2.8 Following discussions at Planning Task Group on 21 January 2011, it has been agreed that the figure of 10,500 is justified. It is still a legal requirement that the

Core Strategy is in conformity with the South East Plan. Recent evidence, including the Government's overall ambitions for affordability and increasing the housing supply, does not merit a move away from the housing figure at the current time. It is considered that the Core Strategy demonstrates the flexibility to adapt to any changing policy requirement. The Sandleford Park strategic site could deliver more than 1,000 dwellings before 2026 if necessary, and there is additional contingency shown through the updated Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

2.9 The housing figure of 10,500 will then be defended at the resumed Examination.

### **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)**

2.10 The Inspector expressed concern about the clarity of the SHLAA which required further work to show which sites promoted through the SHLAA process could be developable, dependent on policy choices to be made through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD. This included sites which are outside current settlement boundaries and which do not have policy constraints such as flooding.

2.11 Further work was also required to assess the landscape impact of SHLAA sites within the AONB (both individually and cumulatively), to assess whether the quantum of development proposed for the AONB through the spatial strategy of the Core Strategy was deliverable, taking into account the national importance of the AONB and the landscape sensitivity. This work has concluded and demonstrates that the amount of development proposed in the spatial strategy of the Core Strategy for the AONB is deliverable within the capacity of the landscape. Sites to fulfil the housing requirement will be allocated through the Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document (DPD).

2.12 The outcomes of the work on the SHLAA also justify the spatial strategy for the other spatial areas, and demonstrate a 'basket' of potentially developable sites from which to select through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD. Further references to the outcomes of the SHLAA have been added to the spatial policies of the Core Strategy.

### **AONB issues**

2.13 The Inspector asked for further consideration to be given by the Council as to what meeting 'identified local needs' within the AONB means in practice. This stems from national guidance set out in PPS7. This work has been carried out, taking into account factors such as population projections, local needs surveys and the information from the housing waiting list. The details of this work are included within the supporting topic paper attached as Appendix B.

### **Clarity of the Presentation of Housing Distribution**

2.14 The Inspector asked that the housing figures be presented in a consistent manner, building on the spatial approach set out in the Area Delivery Plan policies. This has led to one set of housing figures set out in the Area Delivery Plan Policies, setting out the scale of development for each of the Spatial Areas, and removing the figures from the different levels of the settlement hierarchy in policy SP1. The presentation has been simplified by transferring some of the policy content from Policy CS2 into CS1 and the deletion of Policy CS2.



- 2.15 The Inspector also felt that it was confusing to have Pangbourne in two overlapping spatial areas. As Pangbourne is factually in the North Wessex Downs AONB, references to it have been moved from the Eastern Area to the spatial policy on the North Wessex Downs AONB, and adjustments have been made to the housing numbers to reflect this move.
- 2.16 The Inspector also wanted an appropriate scale of development to be set out for the Rural Service Centres and Service Villages within the AONB, with the scale of development that might be appropriate for Hungerford contrasted, for example, with the scale of development for Lambourn and for Pangbourne. This has been progressed through adding more detail to the wording of the Area Delivery Plan policies to draw out local distinctiveness and the issues affecting the appropriate housing distribution for each Rural Service Centre and Service Village. This has also included reference to the opportunity sites at the Compton Institute of Animal health and Denison Barracks. There will also be further information provided through the evidence base about the availability of SHLAA sites in each area.

### **Business Development**

- 2.17 In terms of B1 office floorspace in the District, the employment policy of the Core Strategy (CS10) has been amended to set a clearer steer as to sequentially suitable future locations for office development. This accords with PPS4 and states that office development should be accommodated in existing town centres first, followed by edge of centre locations before accessible out of centre locations. The revised policy CS10 forms part of the schedule of focused amendments. Supporting references in the topic paper demonstrate that the forecast shortfall in B1a office floorspace across the Core Strategy period can be accommodated in sequentially preferable locations.

### **Sustainable Design and Construction**

- 2.18 Since the Examination closed, the Inspector has been in contact to ask the Council to take forward a 'Proposed Inspector Change' to policy CS16. This is the deletion of the sections of the policy under the headings *Residential Development* and *Non Residential Development* which set out requirements relating to the Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM. The reason for this is that the Inspector is not currently satisfied that these requirements are justified in relation to national policy in the Supplement to PPS1 (December 2007) particularly paragraphs 30-32. As this is a proposed Inspector change and **has not been supported by the Council**, it will be set out within a separate schedule to the focused amendments being proposed by the Council. This means that during the consultation, the Council can submit comments to the proposed change which will then be considered by the Inspector.
- 2.19 The wording of this proposed Inspector change is set out at the back of appendix A. As a consequence of this potential change, Policies CS3 and CS4 (Newbury Racecourse and Sandford Park) have been amended to include a site specific requirement on the Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM.

### **Other issues**

2.20 A number of other issues are being amended and will form either focused or minor amendments to the Core Strategy.

- The critical cross boundary issues such as the relationship with Reading and the sub-regional economy are being brought out in more detail within the Core Strategy, with amendments to some of the background sections such as the cross boundary issues section and the SWOT analysis. This will be a focused amendment.
- Changes to policy CS3 (Newbury Racecourse) to clarify that any new proposals for the site would be subject to the requirements of policy CS7 (Affordable Housing).
- Changes to policy CS4 (Sandleford) which give further information about how the development is proposed to take place in terms of the proposed accesses and the location of the development to the north and west of the site. The concept plan for the site will be attached as an appendix to the Core Strategy.
- Changes to the wording (but not the principle) of several other policies including CS5 (Housing Type and Mix), CS6 (infrastructure), CS7 (affordable housing), CS9 (Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople), CS17 (Flooding) and policy CS20 (Historic Environment and Landscape Character). Some of these will be minor changes and will therefore not require consultation
- The Inspector also asked the Council provide further information on the equestrian policy (CS13) in terms of the sizes/facilities of training establishments in and abutting Lambourn and an explanation of how the council would assess the suitability of existing establishments. The further information has been provided to the Inspector, and wording for the policy has been drawn up and included within Appendix A.

### **3. Next Steps**

3.1 The schedule attached as Appendix A was considered by Planning Task Group on 21 January 2011 and by Management Board on 27 January 2011.

3.2 A 6-week period of public consultation will then follow between 4 February and 18 March 2011. Following analysis of the responses to the consultation and sending this information off to the Inspector, the Inspector will resume the examination in summer 2011.

### **Appendices**

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Appendix A Schedule of Post Examination Focused Changes to the Core Strategy.

Appendix B Proposed Focused Changes – Supporting Topic Paper.

### **Consultees**

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**Local Stakeholders:** n/a

**Officers Consulted:** Corporate Board.

**Trade Union:** n/a

## Appendix A

### Draft Changes to the Core Strategy

#### Formatting explanation

Minor changes: New minor changes and those on the rolling schedule of minor changes which were not embedded – black text with underline for additions and ~~strikethrough for deletions.~~

New Proposed Focused Changes: Major changes we are consulting on in February - black text with underline for additions and ~~strikethrough for deletions.~~

*Old Proposed Focused Changes: Major changes consulted on last year but not embedded – red italic text with underline for additions and ~~strikethrough for deletions.~~*

Old minor changes: Those that have been embedded by the Inspector - no formatting.

#### Cross Boundary Issues

##### The draft text below replaces the current section on Cross Border Working

West Berkshire does not exist in isolation from its neighbours. The Core Strategy needs to take account of the wider challenges, issues and opportunities affecting neighbouring areas as well as in the wider region. Cross-boundary working has taken place during the preparation of the Core Strategy, both through ongoing liaison with neighbouring authorities and at sub-regional level and through the review of proposals within adjoining Core Strategies and other DPDs. This will continue with the development of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan as a number of infrastructure issues will require joint working.

In looking at cross boundary issues in West Berkshire it is important to understand that various influences that have a bearing on various parts of the District.

Economic influences are particularly significant. The County of Berkshire has a number of defining characteristics underpinned by a significant concentration of high technology industries and high Gross Value Added per capita. However the County of Berkshire is seen to comprise three separate Functional Economic Areas (FEA) of which West Berkshire (excluding the far eastern part of the District) is one. In identifying these three distinct areas it is recognised that the boundaries of each are porous and that there is significant movement between each as well as across the County boundary itself. The West Berkshire FEA is characterised by a mixed economy far more rural in nature than the rest of Berkshire.

The Sustainable Community Strategy for West Berkshire highlights a number of economic objectives, some of which, such as enhanced skills and better transportation, are reflected in similar documents not only across the rest of Berkshire but potentially across the wider sub region. Others such as enhancing employment opportunities within rural communities and regenerating town centres have a more local flavour. The underlying aim of promoting regeneration in some of

the District's more significant centres such as Newbury highlights a move towards creating a more sustainable District with improved employment, leisure and cultural opportunities thereby potentially reducing some of the cross boundary movements.

The economic domination of the Thames Valley within the sub region means that the most significant economic influences lie to the east, notably Reading. Commuting data highlights the fact that 14% of West Berkshire's resident working population work within the Reading Borough - by far the most significant single flow of outward commuting. Partnership working generally reflects West Berkshire's presence within the Thames Valley. The Government's recent (2010) approval of a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for Berkshire highlights the interconnectivity not only within Berkshire but also of some of the surrounding areas notably Southern Buckinghamshire and North Hampshire. The Berkshire Economic Strategy Board has also produced a set of transport investment priorities for Berkshire which again highlight the economic challenges and opportunities that exist across much of the County and more widely across the Thames Valley.

The economic linkages to the north, south and west of the District are less strong, although there is significant economic movement between West Berkshire and North Hampshire. A cross-border working group exists between West Berkshire Council, Hampshire County Council, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council on areas of common concern – including the exploration of sustainable solutions to the growth of traffic on the A339.

Rural issues do create synergies and a range of cross border activity does exist between West Berkshire, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire and Hampshire often associated with the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The FEA for Reading and Central Berkshire does include the eastern parts of West Berkshire notably Calcot, Theale and Pangbourne and it is this part of the District that inevitably has the strongest links with Reading. The Council works in partnership on various transport related joint activities given some of the eastern communities of West Berkshire have a boundary co-terminus with the urban area of Reading. This work is particularly related to the need to deliver sustainable transport solutions to reduce and manage the growth of congestion around the A4 and the M4 and surrounding transport corridors.

Whilst many residents in the most eastern communities of West Berkshire will use facilities and services in Reading, there is a significant movement the other way in terms of school children, with West Berkshire schools educating a significant number of Reading pupils. This most prevalent movement relates to children of secondary school age.

Joint working also takes place with Reading in respect of crime and community safety. Crime rates are much higher in Reading than in West Berkshire but some of the District's more eastern communities are affected in a similar way to Reading by criminal activity thereby necessitating a joint approach.

Additional cross border working takes place with Basingstoke and Deane, Wokingham and Reading relating to the monitoring of housing completions within the consultation zones of AWE in Aldermaston and AWE in Burghfield.

It is important to realise that geography also plays an important role in shaping cross border movements in West Berkshire. Some of the western and northern parts of West Berkshire look towards Swindon and Oxford. Some of the southern

communities gravitate towards Basingstoke highlighting the complex nature of cross border arrangements that inevitably have to exist.

## **SWOT**

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>The strategic location of West Berkshire.</u></li> <li>• <u>The strategic transport links connecting West Berkshire to London and to the West.</u></li> <li>• <u>The District's location in relation to major economic centres including Reading, Oxford, Swindon and Basingstoke, and its relative proximity to London.</u></li> <li>• <u>The strategic road network with the M4 and A34 providing links in all directions north, south, east and west, and a major interchange in the centre of the District at Chieveley.</u></li> <li>• <u>The rail network which provides strategic links to Reading, London and the south west, as well as important local connections.</u></li> <li>• <u>The District's position in the buoyant Thames Valley sub-regional economy which is known for its clustering of world-class knowledge based companies.</u></li> <li>• <u>A strong pool of labour available for businesses to draw upon resulting from being part of the Thames Valley economic sub-region.</u></li> <li>• A diverse and successful local economy, hosting many small and medium sized enterprises, as well as large multi-national companies.</li> <li>• The high quality rural landscape and character with 74% of the District lying within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), providing the first area of substantive rural countryside <del>as you travel west of</del> <u>from London along the M4.</u></li> <li>• Attractive towns and villages, with their own identities.</li> <li>• The high quality of the District's heritage assets, including Newbury Battlefield and Donnington Castle.</li> <li>• The high quality of the District's</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <del>Rural accessibility is an issue, with the lack of a frequent bus service and limited local facilities in some rural areas encourages use of the car.</del></li> <li>• <u>Lack of a frequent bus service and limited local services in some rural areas can result in residents having limited accessibility.</u></li> <li>• <u>Lack of accessibility in rural areas encourages use of the car.</u></li> <li>• Traffic congestion already exists in certain hotspots at peak times and these needs to be carefully managed.</li> <li>• Shortage of affordable housing across the District, leading to a high number of people on the housing waiting list.</li> <li>• A skills shortage in some sectors contributes to a deficiency of labour supply in some industries.</li> <li>• Lack of higher education provision in the District meaning students have to migrate out for higher education opportunities.</li> <li>• Some small pockets of deprivation relative to the rest of the District.</li> <li>• The quality of the gateways into Newbury fail to provide a strong sense of identity for the town.</li> <li>• Widespread risk of flooding within the District, arising not only from rivers but also from surface water and groundwater flooding.</li> <li>• A lack of identity in some recent housing developments.</li> </ul>
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<p>biodiversity assets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinctive quality of the built environment, allowing the District to retain its sense of remoteness in parts of the downlands.</li> <li>• An internationally renowned horse-racing centre in and around Lambourn.</li> <li>• The role of the Kennet and Avon Canal and other waterways, including the River Thames, as a focus for recreation and leisure, for tourism and economic development.</li> <li>• A good quality of life with a high satisfaction rate amongst residents.</li> <li>• Newbury provides a cultural centre for the District.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing the Parkway development in Newbury to improve the retail offer and increase the attractiveness of the town to investors.</li> <li>• Taking forward the schemes within the Newbury Vision through regeneration which reflects and responds to the historic legacy whilst meeting the needs of residents and visitors.</li> <li>• Working in partnership to deliver the growth within the Core Strategy.</li> <li>• <u>Being a member of the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership represents an opportunity for sharing knowledge throughout the sub-region.</u></li> <li>• <u>Attracting inward investment through the co-location of businesses within the Thames Valley economic sub-region due to the District's comparatively cheaper rents and the focus on small and medium sized enterprises.</u></li> <li>• Improving the tourism offer across the District and promoting the largely cultural tourist base and attractions.</li> <li>• Improving the culture, leisure and retail offer within the District.</li> <li>• Regenerating the centre of Thatcham to provide higher quality shopping and facilities for residents and visitors.</li> <li>• Using the development in the District to deliver a high quality of design which responds positively to the local context.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The potential impact to the local economy as a result of the over-reliance on some key businesses.</li> <li>• Ageing population leading to pressure on some services, such as community care and health, plus the implications for the type of housing provision and employment.</li> <li>• <u>West Berkshire and Reading are in the same housing market area but average house prices in Reading are cheaper so could draw young people away from the District.</u></li> <li>• <u>The concentration of towns surrounding West Berkshire with strong economic growth agendas has the ability to attract business investment and labour away from the District.</u></li> <li>• <u>The impact of Growth Points and Diamonds of Investment and Growth in neighbouring authorities.</u></li> <li>• <u>Reading has a large retail and leisure offer and this currently draws spending away from West Berkshire.</u></li> <li>• Viability of parts of the rural areas and their ability to retain services and facilities.</li> <li>• A reliance on a subsidised</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Improving sustainable transport links to Reading through joint working, particularly bus, cycle and pedestrian routes along the A4 corridor and the proposed new station at Green Park.</u></li> <li>• The potential for improving the management of Kennet Valley Meadows to provide an enhanced open space and biodiversity resource.</li> <li>• Recognising the District's biodiversity assets by more active management and by improving linkages and corridors between sites.</li> <li>• Enhancement of existing green infrastructure and ensuring appropriate provision of green infrastructure within new developments.</li> <li>• Utilizing opportunities for delivering renewable energy schemes through the development of strategic sites.</li> <li>• Improving skill levels and educational attainment within the District will have knock on benefits for the local economy.</li> <li>• The potential for the co-location of facilities and services enabling shared sites and an increased provision.</li> <li>• Working in partnership across the boundaries of West Berkshire on issues of common interest making more efficient use of resources and knowledge.</li> <li>• Maintaining and enhancing the viability of rural service centres and service villages by recognising their role as centres for the surrounding areas.</li> </ul>	<p>public transport system is a threat to the accessibility of rural areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High car dependency due to the rural nature of much of West Berkshire and an insufficient public transport service places a threat to the environment and on the level of accessibility to rural areas.</li> <li>• Possibility that housing delivery will not continue at a sufficient rate to meet the needs of the District across the Core Strategy period.</li> <li>• Delivering the levels of growth in the District in a sustainable way taking into account climate change and maintaining a high quality environment.</li> <li>• Managing increases in traffic from existing and new developments.</li> <li>• Inappropriate amount, type or timing of infrastructure delivery to accompany developments in order to ensure the District's growth targets.</li> </ul>
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## Strategic Objectives

The Spatial Vision leads to a set of objectives which have been prepared through consultation, and which reflect the direction given by other plans and strategies in the District. The strategic objectives represent the key delivery outcomes that the Core Strategy should achieve. It is critical to the success of the Core Strategy that these objectives are realised.

### 1. Tackling Climate Change

To exceed regional and national targets for carbon dioxide emissions reduction and deliver the District's growth in a way that helps to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

### 2. Housing Growth

To deliver 10,500 homes across West Berkshire between 2006 – 2026 in accordance with the South East Plan. These homes will be delivered in an

effective and timely manner, will maximise the use of brownfield land and access to facilities and services and will be developed at densities which make the most efficient use of land whilst responding to the existing built environment.

### **3. Housing Needs**

To ~~meet housing needs in a way that~~ secures the provision of affordable and market housing to help meet local needs in both urban and rural areas of the District. To provide homes in a way that promotes sustainable communities, providing a mix of house sizes, types and tenures to meet identified needs, and respond to the changing demographic profile of the District.

### **4. Economy**

To provide for a range of sizes and types of employment land and premises in the right locations to respond to the forecast changes in economic activity, the location of new residential development and the specific needs of the rural economy, including the equestrian and horseracing industries.

### **5. Infrastructure Requirements**

To ensure that infrastructure needs (including community services and facilities) arising from the growth in West Berkshire are provided in a timely and coordinated manner, which keeps pace with development in accordance with the detail set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

### **6. Green Infrastructure**

To ensure that West Berkshire contains a strong network of well-connected and multi-functional green infrastructure which provides an attractive environment to live, work and spend leisure time, providing benefits for health and opportunities for formal and informal recreation.

### **7. Transport**

To put in place a sustainable transport network which supports the growth in West Berkshire, links existing and new development, prioritises walking, cycling and public transport and provides a genuine choice of modes. Traffic management measures will minimise the impact of new development on the existing network.

### **8. Retail**

To achieve growth in retail activity and consequent increase in the vitality and vibrancy of town centres in West Berkshire. To meet the range of shopping needs for residents and visitors largely through the completion of the Parkway development and through the regeneration of Thatcham town centre. To provide for local shopping need in Town, District and Local centres to serve the needs of existing and future residents.

### **9. Heritage**

To ensure that development to 2026 is planned, designed and managed in a way that ensures the protection and enhancement of the local distinctive character and identity of the built, historic and natural environment ~~and habitats~~ in West Berkshire's towns, villages and countryside.

A table showing how the strategic objectives are linked with the Council Plan and the themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy can be found in Appendix A



‘Strategic Objectives’. The table also shows which strategic objectives will be delivered by each policy of the Core Strategy.

## The Spatial Strategy

To implement the Spatial Strategy, a delivery strategy is set out which divides the District into 4 main geographical areas and sets out a vision and an area delivery plan policy for each. These reflect the distinct characteristics of the different parts of West Berkshire, using the District's settlement hierarchy as the focus for development within these areas:

- Newbury and Thatcham, with separate delivery plan policies for Newbury and Thatcham.
- The Eastern Area which includes the Eastern Urban Area (Tilehurst, Calcot and Purley on Thames) and the Rural Service Centres of ~~Pangbourne and~~ Theale.
- The North Wessex Downs AONB which includes the Rural Service Centres of Hungerford, ~~and~~ Lambourn ~~and Pangbourne.~~
- The East Kennet Valley, including the Rural Service Centres of Burghfield and Mortimer.

~~Pangbourne lies within 2 spatial areas, due to its inclusion within the North Wessex Downs AONB, and its functional relationship with the Eastern Area of the District.~~

## Spatial Policy SP1 Spatial Strategy

Development in West Berkshire will follow the existing settlement pattern and comply with the spatial strategy set out in the Area Delivery Plan policies of this document based on the 4 spatial areas. Provision will be made for the delivery of 10,500 net additional dwellings and associated infrastructure over the period 2006 to 2026.

Most development will be within or adjacent to the settlements included in the settlement hierarchy set out below, and related to the transport accessibility of the settlements (especially by public transport, cycling and walking) ~~and~~ their level of services and the availability of suitable sites for development. The majority of development will take place on previously developed land.

West Berkshire's main urban areas will be the focus for most development. The most intensively used developments, intensive employment generating uses, such as B1(a) offices, and intensive trip generating uses, such as major mixed use, retail or leisure uses, will be located in those town centre areas where the extent and capacity of supporting infrastructure, services and facilities is the greatest. High densities of development may be appropriate in these locations. Such development will have to be comprehensively planned in order to deliver maximum social, environmental and economic benefits to the wider community.

The scale and density of development will be related to the site's current or proposed accessibility, character and surroundings. Significant intensification of residential, employment generating and other intensive uses will be avoided within areas which lack sufficient supporting infrastructure, facilities or services or where opportunities to access them by public transport, cycling and walking are limited.

<b>District Settlement Hierarchy</b>		
<b>Urban Areas</b>	<b>Wide range of services and the focus for the majority of development. - <del>delivery of approximately 6,900 new homes between 2006 and 2026</del></b>	<b>Newbury, Thatcham, Eastern Urban Area ( Tilehurst, Calcot and Purley on Thames)</b>
<b>Rural Service Centres</b>	<b>Range of services and reasonable public transport provision - opportunities to strengthen role in meeting requirements of surrounding communities. - <del>delivery of approximately 2,000 new homes between 2006 and 2026.</del></b>	<b>Burghfield Common, Hungerford, Lambourn, Mortimer, Pangbourne, Theale</b>
<b>Service Villages</b>	<b>More limited range of services and some limited development potential. - <del>delivery of approximately 1,100 new homes</del></b>	<b>Aldermaston, Bradfield Southend, Chieveley, Cold Ash, Compton, Great Shefford, Hermitage,</b>

Below the settlement hierarchy there are two additional types of area where there will be more limited development, including affordable housing for local needs:

- smaller villages with settlement boundaries - suitable only for limited infill development subject to the character and form of the settlement
- open countryside - only appropriate limited development in the countryside will be allowed, focused on addressing identified needs and maintaining a strong rural economy.

The Core Strategy Vision aims to build upon the existing settlement pattern and direct most development to those urban areas which have the infrastructure and

facilities to support sustainable growth. The main focus for housing growth will therefore be Newbury, Thatcham and the east of the District. Within the Newbury and Thatcham urban areas, two strategic urban extensions are proposed: the first to be developed would be the site at Newbury Racecourse to the east of Newbury which gained planning consent in April 2010, for up to 1,450 1,500 dwellings, partly on land within the existing settlement boundary, and the second will would be a greenfield site at Sandford, to the south of Newbury where up to 2,000 homes could be developed, with delivery commencing in the second half of the plan period and extending beyond 2026. The allocation of this strategic site introduces some flexibility into the housing delivery with the opportunity to amend the phasing to respond to changing circumstances. Additional non-strategic scale sites in Newbury and Thatcham will be allocated in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD based on the evidence base in the SHLAA.

In the Eastern Area there are significant constraints to development, including floodplain and AONB. A broad location has been identified focused on the urban areas of Tilehurst, Calcot and Purley on Thames and the rural service centre of Theale, with sites to be allocated in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD based on the SHLAA.

In the rural areas of the North Wessex Downs AONB and the East Kennet Valley, the distribution of housing reflects the District wide settlement hierarchy, which takes account of the function and sustainability of settlements and is set out in Policy SP1. The proposed housing distribution reflects recent completions and existing residential commitments as well as the constraints and opportunities for development in the rural settlements. Within the AONB, housing is focused on meeting identified local needs in accordance with government policy. The result of this is that although 74% of West Berkshire lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB, and 29% of the District's population live in the AONB; only 19% of the housing has been allocated to this area. Within the AONB, the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the protected landscape will be the primary consideration in any allocation of sites to be made through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD or any subsequent document. Landscape sensitivity analysis has been carried out to inform this process

Development within the East Kennet Valley will take into account the presence of AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield, which will affect the level of development to be accommodated within the different Detailed Emergency Planning Zones (DEPZ).

The number of dwellings proposed in the different spatial areas forms a basis for the allocation of sites in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD. Within the 4 spatial areas, the focus of development will follow the settlement hierarchy.

The rural service centres provide the role of a focal point for the surrounding villages and rural areas in terms of the provision of services and facilities and will accommodate some additional housing. The level of development in the individual settlements will vary depending on the character and function of the settlement and on assessment of the potential sites available for housing.

Villages identified in the District settlement hierarchy as service villages will accommodate more limited development: these villages would benefit from small-scale development, appropriate to the character and function of the village, in order to meet local needs, including residential infill or minor development adjacent to the settlement, which will be allocated in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.

The characteristics of the individual Rural Service Centres and Service Villages vary, reflective of the diverse nature of West Berkshire. They are not intended to have the same amount of growth as each other; instead, the level of growth will depend on the role and function that they perform for the surrounding spatial area, and will be related to their size, range of facilities and services as well as the availability of suitable development opportunities. This is set out in more detail in the Area Delivery Plan policies.

Settlements below the service village level in the hierarchy would deliver additional housing but this would be limited to infill windfall of minor development where a settlement boundary has been defined, and to rural exception schemes for affordable housing to meet local needs. Some limited development is important for the long-term sustainability of rural communities. As no allocations are proposed for villages that are not listed in the settlement hierarchy, infill and rural exceptions sites in these settlements would be additional sources of housing supply which would introduce a further element of flexibility to help meet the development objectives of the strategy. Outside these settlements, in the countryside, a more restrictive approach to development will be taken. Specific exceptions to this approach could include barn conversions and agricultural workers dwellings to support the rural economy. Any development within the North Wessex Downs AONB will be more restrictive than in the general countryside, reflecting the national designation of the landscape.

It is anticipated that part of the housing supply throughout the rural areas of the District, will be affordable homes to meet local identified needs, which may come forward as rural exception sites rather than through site allocations.

## Figure 3 Newbury Town Centre

Figure deleted

### Area Delivery Plan Policy 2 Newbury

Policy remains unchanged except for text within the Employment section as set out below.

#### Employment

- Newbury will be the main focus for business development over the plan period. Protected Employment Areas, especially those in more accessible locations, will play a vital role in meeting the existing and future economic demands of the District. The role, function and boundaries of these Protected Employment Areas will be reviewed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.
- Business development within other existing employment areas, including New Greenham Park and the Vodafone HQ site at The Connection will be supported to ensure the vitality of the District's economy is maintained.
- ~~Existing employment areas including New Greenham Park and the Vodafone site will continue to play a crucial role in the economy of the District. *There may be limited opportunities for re-allocation to residential or mixed uses in appropriate locations and this will be assessed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.*~~
- ~~No net additional employment floorspace is required across the District over the Core Strategy period (40). Employment development will take place through the implementation of existing commitments, with any new opportunities for employment development directed towards existing employment sites and suitable brownfield sites. Any opportunities for re-allocation of existing employment land will be assessed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.~~

### Area Delivery Plan Policy 3 Thattham

Policy remains unchanged except for text within the Employment and Environment sections as set out below.

#### Employment

- Thattham will continue to support local employment through the designated Protected Employment Areas at Colthrop and Green Lane, which will continue to sustain a strong employment base. The role, function and boundaries of these sites will be reviewed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.
- Thattham town centre will accommodate small scale office development in keeping with the scale and character of the existing centre.
- ~~No net additional employment floorspace is required across the District over the Core Strategy period (40). Employment development will take place through the implementation of existing commitments, with any new opportunities for employment development directed towards existing employment sites and suitable brownfield sites. Any opportunities for re-~~

allocation of existing employment land will be assessed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.

## **Environment**

- The risk of flooding within the area will be reduced and managed through the implementation of schemes within the Thatcham Surface Water Management Plan (2009) and in accordance with Policy CS17.

## **Figure 5 Eastern Area**

**Figure amended to remove hatching.**

### **Eastern Area**

The Eastern Area is made up of the Eastern Urban Area consisting of Purley on Thames, Tilehurst and Calcot plus the two rural service centres of Pangbourne and Theale. Pangbourne functions as part of the Eastern Area and is also located within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Policy SP5).

#### **Eastern Urban Area - The Vision**

The individual identities of Purley on Thames, Tilehurst and Calcot will be maintained and enhanced, as will the quality of the built environments. This area will have a close functional relationship with the Reading area and will benefit from the facilities and services that Reading offers.

Transport infrastructure will be enhanced to tackle issues of car dependency and congestion. Capacity on the road network will be increased through traffic management measures and upgrades to key routes. Public transport services will be improved through working with Reading Borough Council to increase accessibility to employment and services in Reading. Walking and cycling routes will be improved and more people will use these modes of travel. Additionally, traffic calming measures will improve the quality of the local environment.

Local centres will serve the needs of the communities of Calcot, Tilehurst and Purley on Thames. The area's retail offer will be improved and scope for improving the provision and enhancing the quality of the environment at the Pincents Lane Retail Park will be explored. Young people will have access to improved facilities and the community will benefit from better local sports provision. Education provision will be enhanced in the Tilehurst area. Regeneration opportunities and enhancement schemes such as at Underwood Road in Calcot will be completed.

The high quality landscape and environmental assets in this part of West Berkshire, which includes the Thames National Path and the North Wessex Downs AONB will be protected and enhanced as a resource for the local population and for green tourism. As part of the Kennet Valley East Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) the Kennet Valley Meadows to the south of Calcot will be enhanced through better management and will provide a higher quality resource for the local community.

Whilst Pangbourne lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB, it maintains strong functional linkages with the eastern area. There are therefore references to these linkages within this policy.

## **Pangbourne**

~~Pangbourne will remain an accessible thriving village community in an attractive and accessible setting within the AONB, and which will serve as a Rural Service Centre for the surrounding villages. Small scale extensions in keeping with the existing character and pattern of development and in line with Pangbourne's role as a Rural Service Centre will address issues of local housing need and provide opportunities for local people to buy a home in the village. The thriving district centre will continue to provide a good range of retail and leisure facilities, in the form of shops, pubs and restaurants. The diverse range of retail and leisure outlets will also help to form an important tourism base.~~

## **Theale**

Theale will remain a vibrant village which maintains a distinct identity and sense of community. The new Lakeside development will provide a range of different sizes and types of houses and will become a well integrated part of the Theale community. Following this development, Theale will need to undergo a period of consolidation without further strategic scale development, to provide an opportunity for facilities and services to be upgraded. The wide range of shops and businesses in the High Street will be maintained and enhanced. Important countryside assets such as Hosehill Local Nature Reserve will be managed and enhanced as an important resource for recreation and leisure during this period. Linkages between the town and railway station will be improved.

## **Area Delivery Plan Policy 4**

### **Eastern Area**

#### **Housing**

- The Eastern Area of West Berkshire will accommodate approximately ~~1500~~ 1400 new homes during the plan period, in order to support the growth of the Reading area and to sustain services in the rural service centres of Pangbourne and Theale. A significant development of 350 homes which already has planning permission will be delivered at Theale Lakeside while development the scale of in Pangbourne will be more limited due to the town's location in the floodplain and North Wessex Downs AONB. Further development will take place through the implementation of existing commitments and infill development. A number of sites which have future potential for development have been identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

#### **Transport**

- Cycle and pedestrian accessibility between Theale and Calcot will be enhanced by the construction of a new bridge over the M4 in partnership with the Highways Agency.
- Better cycle provision between Pangbourne and Tilehurst, through Purley on Thames; as well as safe and attractive cycle links between Pangbourne and Theale will be delivered in accordance with the Transport Vision.
- Facilities at Theale and Pangbourne railway stations will be improved in partnership with First Great Western; including additional parking where possible, and greater accessibility to facilitate interchange between modes.
- Existing and new businesses, particularly around junction 12 of the M4 at Pincent's Lane Retail Park and Arlington Business Park will engage with the Council in travel planning. Highways infrastructure will be upgraded to reduce congestion along the A4 corridor, including improvements to the Langley Hill / A4 junction and potentially dualling the A4 from Langley Hill to the M4.



Upgrades are identified and prioritised in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan with details of any critical infrastructure set out in Appendix Ci.

### Retail Centres

- The retail park at Pincents Lane will be retained and enhanced as an important retail centre for the residents of Calcot, Tilehurst and Theale.
- The retail and service offer in the district centres of Pangbourne and Theale will be protected and enhanced. The district centre boundaries and its their primary shopping frontages will be reviewed in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.
- Local centres will be identified through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.
- The former Underwood Road shopping area will be redeveloped with residential units, a shop and a doctors' surgery as set out in the planning consent.
- ~~Pangbourne will be a key service centre within the North Wessex Downs AONB and will also form a base for the sale of local produce through local markets including the Farmers' Market and the Quality Market.~~

### Employment

- Theale town centre will accommodate small scale office development, whilst Arlington Business Park, Station Road and adjacent estates in Theale, which comprise of a mix of high quality office and distribution floorspace, and Horseshoe Park in Pangbourne will continue to provide sustainable employment opportunities for local residents.
- The role, function and boundaries of the Protected Employment Areas of Arlington Business Park, Station Road and adjacent Estates will reviewed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.
- ~~No net additional employment floorspace is required across the District over the Core Strategy period (40). Employment development will take place through the implementation of existing commitments, with any new opportunities for employment development directed towards existing employment sites and suitable brownfield sites. Any opportunities for re-allocation of existing employment land will be assessed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.~~

### Community Infrastructure and Services

- Educational facilities will be improved through the refurbishment of Denefield and Brookfields Schools, and expansion of Theale Primary School. The need for any other educational facilities will be assessed using a formulaic approach.
- ~~The youth activity centre of Adventure Dolphin will be rebuilt at Pangbourne, providing a Centre of Excellence for a wide range of outdoor and adventurous activities for young people.~~

### Environment

- As part of a Biodiversity Opportunity Area, a strategic approach will be taken towards the Kennet Valley Meadows to ensure that the habitat continues to be able to support a diverse range of species and that the area's recreational function is maximised. Cross boundary work with Reading Borough Council on the management of this area will continue.
- Access to opportunities for leisure and tourism on the Thames National Path, the Kennet and Avon Canal and in the North Wessex Downs AONB will be

improved through signposting and communication methods. They will be an important resource for both local residents and for visitors to the area.

- Conservation Area Appraisals will be undertaken for ~~Pangbourne~~ and Theale Conservation Areas in accordance with the Council's programme.

### **Delivery and Monitoring**

The strategy for the Eastern Area will be delivered through the range of core policies identified in Section 5 'Core Policies'.

Monitoring will be through a range of indicators which are outlined in Section 6 'Monitoring Framework'.

## **North Wessex Downs AONB**

### **North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - The Vision**

The North Wessex Downs AONB includes the Rural Service Centres of Hungerford, Lambourn and Pangbourne, together with the Service Villages of Bradfield Southend, Chieveley, Compton, Great Shefford, Hermitage and Kintbury. Pangbourne is located within the North Wessex Downs AONB and also functions as part of the Eastern Area in Policy SP4.

The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) will be a place where the landscape is managed to conserve and enhance its natural beauty in accordance with its national designation. With its legacy of historical associations and richness in historic sites and features the area will be a focus for conservation with low impact leisure and green tourism activities which help to sustain vibrant and balanced rural communities. As a primarily agricultural landscape the traditional land based and rural economy of the area, such as agriculture and the racehorse industry, will continue to thrive and support the social and economic needs of the communities of which they are a part.

The North Wessex Downs AONB covers 74% of West Berkshire and makes a significant contribution to the uniqueness of the District. The settlement pattern will be maintained as both distinctive and ancient with a small and dispersed population within villages and small towns that have a strong sense of identity. The AONB includes the Rural Service Centres of Lambourn, Hungerford and Pangbourne together with the Service Villages of Bradfield Southend, Chieveley, Compton, Great Shefford, Hermitage and Kintbury. The AONB will have appropriate sustainable growth throughout the plan period to meet identified local needs and support the local communities and rural economy.

As a Rural Service Centre Hungerford will prosper as a self-sufficient, historic medieval market town, serving the needs of its residents and the surrounding rural areas. The town will have an enhanced role as a tourist destination within the AONB based on its wealth of independent stores, local produce and stronger retail offer, markets and festivals/events and also as a base to explore the surrounding countryside. Some housing and employment development will take place and this will respect the historic form of the built environment within the AONB. The Commons, River Kennet and the Kennet and Avon Canal will be protected and enhanced as important areas of recreation and nature conservation recognising their contributions to the economy and environment.

Lambourn will be a busy working village that serves as the heart of one of the most important areas for horseracing in the country. As a key service centre for the surrounding rural area it will continue to provide a range of employment, shops and facilities for the local community while being well connected via public transport to Swindon and Newbury. A modest level of housing growth will have maintained the viability of services and contributed towards the housing needs of the local people and the local economy whilst respecting the historic built environment and unique character associated with the horseracing industry.

Pangbourne will remain an accessible thriving village community in an attractive and accessible setting within the AONB, and which will serve as a Rural Service Centre for the surrounding villages. Small scale extensions in keeping with the existing character and pattern of development and in line with Pangbourne's role as a Rural Service Centre will address issues of local housing need and provide opportunities for local people to buy a home in the village. The thriving district centre will continue

to provide a good range of retail and leisure facilities, in the form of shops, pubs and restaurants. The diverse range of retail and leisure outlets will also help to form an important tourism base

The Service Villages will continue to meet the needs of their residents and surrounding communities for facilities and services. Some small-scale development will have taken place to meet identified local needs, support the rural economy and sustain local facilities.

### **North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Development**

The North Wessex Downs AONB will have appropriate and sensitive growth that conserves and enhances its special landscape qualities. During the Core Strategy period the area will accommodate approximately 2,000 2400 dwellings, of which almost half have already been built or have planning permission. There will be further opportunities for infill development and for development on previously developed land. New dwellings will be allocated through the Sites Allocation and Delivery DPD, amongst Hungerford, Pangbourne and Lambourn, with some small scale developments for the service villages and development to meet local need in the other villages within the AONB. A number of sites which have future potential for development have been identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

The sites of the Institute of Animal Health at Compton and Dennison Barracks at Hermitage have been identified as becoming vacant during the Core Strategy period and therefore having potential for future development. There may be opportunities to redevelop these sites and this will be assessed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.

The Service Villages will continue to provide a range of services to their communities and surrounding areas. A limited level of development will be accommodated to meet local needs, support the rural economy and sustain local economy

### **Area Delivery Plan Policy 5**

#### **North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

##### **Development**

- The North Wessex Downs AONB will have appropriate and sustainable growth that conserves and enhances its special landscape qualities. During the Core Strategy period the area will accommodate approximately 2,100 2,000 dwellings, of which over almost half have already been built or have planning permission.
- There will be further opportunities for infill development and for development on previously developed land. New housing allocations will be focussed on the Rural Service Centres and Service Villages within the North Wessex Downs, with the emphasis on meeting identified local needs. The development will be allocated through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD or a subsequent planning document, and will depend on the role and function that the settlement performs, supported by suitable development opportunities, identified through the SHLAA.
- The SHLAA has assessed the future development opportunities in the AONB. Landscape sensitivity work has been a critical part of the assessment, given the 'great weight' to be given to the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and countryside within the AONB. The outcome of this work has

shown a 'basket' of potentially developable sites from which to select at the Site Allocations stage.

- Within the North Wessex Downs AONB there are 3 Rural Service Centres; Hungerford and Lambourn in the west of the district and Pangbourne in the east. In the western part of the AONB, development will be focused in Hungerford as the more sustainable Rural Service Centre. Hungerford is considerably larger than Lambourn and performs a more significant function for a large catchment area. Hungerford town centre is defined as one of only two town centres in the district, reflecting the range of goods and services which it provides for the surrounding area. More information is set out below which describes Hungerford's role, and these factors will be used to inform decisions about the level of growth to be allocated to the town. The capacity for growth on the edge of Hungerford has been assessed.
- Lambourn, whilst performing the role of a Rural Service Centre, does so at a more local level, due to its size and location, and this will influence the future level of growth. In terms of services and facilities, there is a particular emphasis in Lambourn on the needs of the equestrian industry. More limited growth will take place in Lambourn due to the town's comparatively smaller district centre and relative remoteness.
- Pangbourne, in the east, is a thriving community similar in size to Lambourn. It plays an important role as a service centre for the eastern areas of the AONB and provides a district centre shopping function with a range of services and facilities. Whilst there are some opportunities for growth at Pangbourne, those outside the current settlement boundary are partly constrained by environmental considerations in terms of the floodplain and the sensitivity of the landscape. This will restrict the amount of development to take place at Pangbourne.
- There are 6 service villages within the AONB in West Berkshire. The service villages will continue to provide a range of services to their communities and surrounding areas. A limited level of development will be accommodated to meet local needs, including employment, housing, amenity and community facilities, to maintain the areas as vibrant and balanced communities with their own sense of identity.
- The level of development to be allocated to each will depend on the role and function which they are to perform for the surrounding area and the availability of suitable sites identified through the SHLAA. Compton and Hermitage have opportunity sites adjacent to the existing village settlement boundary at Compton Institute of Animal Health and Dennison Barracks as set out above. These could potentially provide a greater level of growth than that normally expected in a service village, which will have implications for the distribution of development. However, well as infrastructure and sustainability issues associated with these sites, there is not yet any clarity about any timescales for developing them or the appropriate scale of development. Therefore the extent of any contribution from these sites cannot be clarified at this stage.
- In terms of the "basket of sites" identified by the SHLAA, no further development opportunities have been identified at this time in Bradfield Southend, so development opportunities here may be more limited. Great Shefford shows limited future development opportunities through the SHLAA, whilst Kintbury and Chieveley demonstrate a wider range of opportunities to be assessed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.
- New dwellings will be allocated through the Sites Allocation and Delivery DPD, amongst Hungerford, Pangbourne and Lambourn, with some small scale developments for the service villages and development to meet local

~~need in the other villages within the AONB. A number of sites which have future potential for development have been identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).~~

- ~~• The sites of the Institute of Animal Health at Compton and Dennison Barracks at Hermitage have been identified as becoming vacant during the Core Strategy period and therefore having potential for future development. There may be opportunities to redevelop these sites and this will be assessed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.~~
- ~~• Hungerford and Lambourn will accommodate a level of housing which is appropriate to their role as Rural Service Centres and to meet local housing need, including accommodation for equestrian industry workers in Lambourn, contributing to the creation of mixed and inclusive communities. This will be delivered through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.~~
- Smaller villages within the AONB will continue to support the needs of their residents and surrounding communities for facilities and services.
- The AONB will be managed by working in partnership with the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Council of Partners, and by implementing the statutory North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan.

### **Environment**

- Recognising the area as a national landscape designation, development will conserve and enhance the local distinctiveness, sense of place and setting of the AONB whilst preserving the strong sense of remoteness, tranquillity and dark night skies, particularly on the open downland. Development will respond positively to the local context, and respect identified landscape features and components of natural beauty.
- Development will respect and respond to the historic environment of the AONB. In Hungerford the historic features, character and identity of the burgage plots extending either side of the High Street, and its highly distinctive medieval market town character will be respected.
- Conservation Area Appraisals will be undertaken for the Hungerford, Lambourn and Pangbourne Conservation Areas in accordance with the Council's programme.
- Traditional and local rural skills, such as the skills of hedge laying, woodland management and thatching will be supported so that they help to deliver a wide range of public benefits which include the conservation and enhancement of the area's special qualities and features and sustaining the vibrancy of the rural economy.
- In the Hungerford area, Portdown Common, Freeman's Marsh, the River Kennet and the Kennet and Avon Canal will be protected and enhanced as important areas of recreation and nature conservation. Improvements to access to these areas and the surrounding countryside will be implemented when opportunities arise.

### **Economy**

- The equestrian and racehorse industry will continue to be supported as a nationally and locally important part of the economy, including Lambourn's role as a nationally important centre for the racehorse industry, in accordance with Policy CS 13 'Equestrian/Racehorse Industry'.
- With an accessible economic base with good access to the road and rail network Hungerford will continue as a self-sufficient Rural Service Centre providing a focus for local employment and local businesses.

- New small scale office developments in Hungerford, Lambourn and Pangbourne will be directed towards the town centre and existing office developments within these centres will be protected.
- The Protected Employment Areas within the AONB will continue to play a vital role in supporting the local economy, especially those in edge of centre locations. The role, function and boundaries of these Protected Employment Areas will be reviewed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.
- Small, local businesses will be supported, encouraged and protected within the AONB providing local job opportunities and maintaining the rural economy.
- Positive management of the AONB will take place through partnership working to ensure its continuation as a location for leisure and green tourism. The AONB will continue to play an important role in attracting visitors and investment. The landscape and recreational role of the waterways, which make a positive contribution to the character and cultural heritage of the AONB, will be strengthened as part of this.
- Hungerford will have an enhanced role as a tourist destination within the AONB (within and beyond the District boundary), promoting its diverse retail offer, regular market and acting as a base to explore the surrounding countryside.
- Economic development will be supported through the North Wessex Downs LEADER programme, and any similar subsequent schemes, which offers grants for farmers, foresters, rural businesses and community organisations within the AONB to enable them to strengthen their support for the local economy. The funding is available for a wide range of activities such as farm diversification, adding value to timber, tourism activities and projects that will benefit local communities.
- Opportunities for appropriate small scale renewable energy schemes, which use local resources will be encouraged if they can be accommodated within the landscapes of the North Wessex Downs.
- ~~No net additional employment floorspace is required across the District over the Core Strategy period. Employment development will take place through the implementation of existing commitments, with any new opportunities for employment development directed towards existing employment sites and suitable brownfield sites. Any opportunities for re-allocation of existing employment land will be assessed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.~~

### **Accessibility**

- Opportunities will be sought to improve the accessibility to and within the AONB, bringing improved public transport links and the retention of services and facilities as well as stronger signage to enhance the identity of the North Wessex Downs.
- Opportunities will be taken to manage congestion and improve accessibility linkages within Hungerford, in particular the north/south links within the community and encouraging the use of public transport.
- Opportunities will be sought to provide improved and safe pedestrian and cycling access within the town and to the surrounding countryside.
- Demand for improved accessibility to and from Lambourn will be managed through enhanced public transport to Newbury, Hungerford and across the District boundary to Swindon.
- Facilities at Pangbourne railway stations will be improved in partnership with First Great Western; including additional parking where possible, and greater accessibility to facilitate interchange between modes.

## Community Infrastructure and Services

- The retail offer in Hungerford town centre will be encouraged and supported whilst preserving its unique character and local, independent businesses. The town centre commercial boundary and primary shopping frontage will be reviewed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.
- Fibre broadband will be installed in Hungerford enabling super-fast broadband speeds for businesses, schools and homes in the area. This will contribute towards reducing the need to travel as residents will have better access to online services, and will have benefits for education and the economy.
- Lambourn will be defined as a District Centre as outlined in Policy CS 12 'Hierarchy of Centres'. The historic market District Centre will continue to provide a range of shops and services meeting the needs of local people and visitors. Opportunities will be sought to strengthen its role in serving surrounding communities.
- The retail and service offer in the district centre of Pangbourne will be protected and enhanced. The district centre-boundary and its primary shopping frontages will be reviewed in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.
- Local centres will be identified through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD. Pangbourne will be a key service centre within the North Wessex Downs AONB and will also form a base for the sale of local produce through local markets including the Farmers' Market and the Quality Market.
- The youth activity centre of Adventure Dolphin has been rebuilt at Pangbourne, providing a Centre of Excellence for a wide range of outdoor and adventurous activities for young people.

## Delivery and Monitoring

The strategy for the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be implemented through the range of core policies identified in Section 5 'Core Policies'. Infrastructure requirements are set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Monitoring will be through a range of indicators which are outlined in Section 6 'Monitoring Framework'.



## The East Kennet Valley

### East Kennet Valley - The Vision

The East Kennet Valley is the name given to the rural south-east of the District that lies to the east of Thatcham and outside of the AONB. Distinct features of this area are the Kennet and Avon Canal and River Kennet which both run from west to east across the breadth of this area, parallel to the Newbury – Reading train line and the A4. The East Kennet Valley is also characterised by a number of villages along the route of the canal/river such as Woolhampton and Aldermaston Wharf and others dispersed across farmland and some woodland including Aldermaston, Brimpton, Burghfield Common and Mortimer.

The Atomic Weapons Establishment has two bases in this area, at Aldermaston and Burghfield. AWE, and is an important provider of local jobs but ~~may have~~ has implications for the future level of development in this area. There is a business park at Arlington near Theale, and a number of other employment areas comprising small industrial estates. The main transport links include the mainline railways linking the West Country with Reading and London and Reading with Basingstoke and the south coast. There are stations at Midgham, Aldermaston, and Stratfield Mortimer. The people of this area interact significantly with the surrounding larger centres, with Reading, Newbury, Thatcham and Basingstoke and to a lesser extent Tadley all providing jobs, shopping and leisure facilities.

This area has a number of environmental assets, notably the canal and river but also a large number of ancient woodlands, local wildlife sites and SSSI. *A small area in the very south east around Beech Hill is within the designated Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area for birds. A small area in the very south east around Beech Hill falls within the 5km boundary of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). The 5km boundary has been determined by Natural England as a buffer area to regulate development near the SPA. However, it is possible that certain types of development up to 7km from the boundary of the SPA could have an impact on the SPA. (Both of these zones will be shown on the Proposals Map)* In terms of the historic environment, there is an Elizabethan Manor at Ufton Court, two Historic Parks and Gardens, Folly Farm near Sulhamstead and The Manor House near Aldermaston. Minerals have been extracted from the Kennet Valley since the first settlements appeared in the area. Due to its gravel deposits, the River Kennet will continue to be a focus for extraction over the next plan period.

## The East Kennet Valley

### Housing

- Some growth is planned for this area to help meet the needs of the village communities and to assist with the viability of village shops and services. This amounts to approximately 800 homes between 2006 and 2026, an average of around 40 new homes a year. The relatively low growth proposed for this area of the District reflects the more limited services, poorer transport connections and issues relating to the proximity of the AWE establishments. At March 2010 there have already been considerable housing commitments and completions in the East Kennet Valley, leaving only about 330 dwellings to be allocated.
- With regard to the presence of AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield, the Council will monitor housing completions and population levels in conjunction with the HSE / NII and neighbouring authorities. Development will be strictly controlled for health and safety reasons within the zones set out in Appendix C 'AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield' until the HSE/NII is satisfied that there is capacity to accommodate an increase in population with safety. Development in the inner consultation zone is likely to be refused planning permission unless advice from the HSE/NII changes. This has implications for the service village of Aldermaston, where new permissions will be limited to new isolated

single dwellings and some residential extensions. However, Aldermaston will continue to play the wider role of a service village, in terms of the provision of a range of services to the community and surrounding areas.

- The two identified rural service centres of Burghfield Common and Mortimer will be a focus for development in this area, together with the more modest development of the identified service villages, Woolhampton and Aldermaston. There will be opportunities for infill development and for development on previously developed land. Further development may take the form of small extensions to these villages, based on information set out in the SHLAA, which has shown a 'basket' of potentially developable sites from which to select through and infill development and the location and detail of this will be set out in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.

## Employment

- Existing Protected Employment Areas, employment areas such as Young's Industrial Estate and Calleva Park near Aldermaston, Beenham Industrial Area Grange and Theale Lakes Business Park at Sheffield Bottom will be protected. continue to play a vital role in the local economy. The role, function and boundaries of these Protected Employment Areas will be reviewed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.
- *No net additional employment floorspace is required across the District over the Core Strategy period. Employment development will take place through the implementation of existing commitments, with any new opportunities for employment development directed towards existing employment sites and suitable brownfield sites. Any opportunities for allocation of existing employment land will be assessed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.*

## Environment

- The character of all the settlements in this area will be conserved and enhanced by ensuring that any development responds positively to the local context. Conservation Area Appraisals will be carried out in accordance with the Council's programme.
- The environmental and leisure assets, including the river and its floodplain, the canal and the boating lakes will be conserved and enhanced, and development in the open countryside will be strictly controlled.
- The Council will continue to implement strategic biodiversity enhancements in conjunction with Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT), within the area covered by the Living Landscape project.
- *New residential development of one or more net additional dwellings proposed up to 5km from the Thames Basin Heaths SPA will require screening to assess whether it will have an adverse effect on the integrity of a likely significant effect on the SPA. Where a significant effect exists or cannot be excluded, Where necessary, an Appropriate Assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (48) should be undertaken.* Proposals will only be permitted if they do not adversely affect the integrity of the SPA. The Thames Basin Heaths SPA Delivery Framework will be used to guide assessment and any avoidance or mitigation measures that may be needed.
- *Residential development of over 50 dwellings located between 5 and 7km of the boundary of the SPA will require screening to assess whether it will have an adverse effect on the integrity of a likely significant effect on the SPA. Where a significant effect exists or cannot be excluded, Where necessary, an Appropriate Assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Species*

Regulations 2010 (49) should be undertaken. Proposals will only be permitted if they do not adversely affect the integrity of the SPA. The Thames Basin Heaths SPA Delivery Framework will be used to guide assessment and any avoidance or mitigation measures that may be needed.

### **Community Infrastructure and Services**

- A new Integrated Waste Management Facility will be constructed at Padworth Sidings to improve the management of waste and significantly improve recycling and composting rates in West Berkshire.
- The boundaries of any local centres for retail and other services will be defined through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD and opportunities for a more distinct centre offering shops and services in Burghfield Common will be explored.

### **Accessibility**

- Through partnership working, opportunities to improve public transport links between the villages and nearby towns including Newbury, Thatcham and Reading will be sought, and the area will benefit from the planned electrification of the London to Newbury railway line.
- Improvements to the accessibility of Mortimer railway station will be sought, for example through enhancements to the road bridge. This will be taken forward through partnership working.
- Opportunities for the improvement of cycle and pedestrian routes between Burghfield Common and Mortimer; between Mortimer railway station, and between the schools in Burghfield will be explored in partnership with landowners, Network Rail and education providers.

### **Delivery and Monitoring**

The strategy for the East Kennet Valley will be implemented through the range of core policies identified in Section 5 'Core Policies'. Infrastructure requirements are set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Monitoring will be through a range of indicators which are outlined in Section 6 'Monitoring Framework'.

## **Policy CS1 Delivering New Homes and Retaining the Housing Stock**

Provision will be made for the delivery of 10,500 net additional dwellings and associated infrastructure over the period 2006 – 2026. Delivery will be phased and managed in order to meet ~~the~~ an annual average net additional dwelling requirement of 525 dwellings per annum ~~set out in the South East Plan~~ and to maintain a rolling five year supply of housing land.

New homes will be located in accordance with the settlement hierarchy outlined in the spatial strategy and area delivery plan policies.

New homes will be primarily developed on

- Suitable previously developed land within settlement boundaries.
- Other suitable land within settlement boundaries.
- Strategic sites and broad locations identified on the Core Strategy Key Diagram.
- Land allocated for residential development in subsequent Development Plan Documents.

The Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document will identify specific sites to accommodate the broad distribution of housing indicated above. The focus will be on previously developed sites where opportunities occur within and on the edge of settlements.

All settlement boundaries will be reviewed in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD

There should be no net losses from the existing stock of homes in West Berkshire. Existing homes should be retained in residential use (or replaced at least in equal numbers, normally on the proposal site), unless there is a reasoned justification in the form of a benefit to the wider community for a change of use. Developments should utilise opportunities to make better use of the existing housing stock.

### **Explanation of the Policy**

The Core Strategy needs to demonstrate how the housing ~~allocation set out in the adopted South East Plan~~ required to meet household growth and support the local economy can be accommodated in West Berkshire. The housing requirement in Policy H1 of the South East Plan is for 10,500 net additional dwellings over the period 2006 to 2026. The Core Strategy will therefore demonstrate how this minimum requirement can be met, with flexibility to allow for contingencies. The amount of new homes for which the Core Strategy should plan is set out in Policy H1 of the South East Plan, which requires provision for 10,500 net additional dwellings over the period 2006 - 2026. The government has clearly signalled its intention to abolish all Regional Spatial Strategies but the South East Plan currently remains part of the Development Plan to which the Core Strategy is required to conform.

The Council has considered a range of evidence sources in order to assess the most appropriate amount of housing over the plan period and has concluded that the Core Strategy should continue to plan for 10,500 homes, with built-in flexibility to meet contingencies.

The main sources of evidence used to consider the potential need and demand for new homes have been the Berkshire Housing Market Assessment (HMA), the government's demographic projections and forecasts of economic growth. Though the HMA demonstrates a high level of need it is clear that delivery is strongly influenced by economic viability and demand for market housing.

The Council has also had regard to household projections and economic growth forecasts in order to provide some indication of potential future demand. The most recent household projections (2008-based: DCLG 2010) project an increase of 16,000 households in the District between 2006 and 2026. However, these trend-based projections are based on the assumption that recent high levels of internal migration into the district will continue, and are substantially higher than previous projections, which informed the preparation of the Core Strategy. The projections cannot be considered in isolation; they do not critically evaluate likely future outcomes and are heavily influenced by very recent trends, which in turn have been overtaken by recent economic events.

A further issue of constraint is caused by the presence of AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield, which causes development to be strictly controlled within the consultation zones set out within Appendix C.

Future economic performance is likely to have a key impact on the potential demand for homes. Economic forecasts produced in 2010<sup>1</sup> forecast a growth of just over 9,000 jobs between 2006 and 2026. Whilst Berkshire's complex commuting patterns do not encourage the drawing of too close a comparison at the district level between housing numbers and forecast economic growth, these figures do not suggest that the proposed 10,500 figure is likely to worsen the balance between the number of economically active residents and the number of local jobs over the plan period.

The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) has indicated that, though sufficient sites can be identified to more than meet the 10,500 requirement, the potential cumulative impacts need careful consideration and the environmental constraints of landscape, particularly in the AONB, floodplain and historic character of the settlements in the District, together with the constraint to development caused by the proximity of the 2 AWE establishments within the East Kennet Valley are factors which weigh against a substantial increase on the numbers set out in the South East Plan.

The current situation with regard to housing supply is set out in the supporting Topic Paper and in the Annual Monitoring Report 2009/10 available to view on the Council's website and is summarised in Appendix B. The 2009/10 AMR reports that a five year housing supply can be demonstrated and that commitments and identified developable sites, including the proposed strategic sites, should be sufficient to meet the housing requirements at least until 2016. Further supply will come from sites to be allocated in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD. This Document will allocate sufficient non-strategic sites (between 10 and 499 dwellings) to meet the housing requirements of the District in accordance with the principles established in the Core Strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> Berkshire Observatory, Cambridge Econometrics, 2010

The indicative housing trajectory does not include an allowance for “windfall” development but this type of housing will contribute towards meeting the overall housing land requirements when permitted. The Council will monitor the amount of housing that is built on these “windfall” sites. This contribution to the housing land supply will introduce some flexibility as it will reduce the residual land requirement over the period to 2026, will influence the rate at which land allocated in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD will need to be developed in order to demonstrate an adequate housing supply and may help to meet any future higher housing requirement without the need to change the Spatial Strategy.

The policy also aims to retain the existing stock of dwellings, to avoid a net loss of existing homes as a result of redevelopment or change of use, and so minimise the need to build additional dwellings to meet housing requirements.

### **Delivery and Monitoring**

The delivery of new homes will be phased in order to manage the release of housing sites. Phasing will ensure that infrastructure and community needs are delivered in a planned manner. Strategic sites, which are critical to delivering the Core Strategy spatial vision, have been identified and additional sites will be identified and phased in subsequent Development Plan Documents to ensure that delivery meets requirements. A housing land supply of deliverable sites for at least five years will be maintained.

The policy will be implemented through subsequent policies and guidance in further Local Development Documents, particularly the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD, and through the determination of planning applications. Implementation of individual sites may involve preparation of SPDs, masterplans or development briefs and partnership working with the private sector and Registered Social Landlords.

The policy will be monitored through the production of the Housing Trajectory, published in the Annual Monitoring Report, and by regular updating of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment in order to identify the scope for redevelopment and intensification in urban areas, to provide an up-to-date evidence base for future DPDs and to demonstrate a five year housing land supply. Appendix B contains details of the components of housing supply and the housing trajectory as at ~~2009~~10.

The geographical distribution of housing completions and the completions within the settlements in the District Settlement Hierarchy will be monitored to assess the delivery of the spatial strategy.

### **Policy CS2**

**Deletion of entire policy.** The spatial distribution is set out in the Area Delivery Plan Policies and second part of policy now merged with CS1.

## Policy CS3

### Newbury Racecourse Strategic Site Allocation

#### Explanation of the Policy – new text following para 5.8

Planning permission for the site was granted in April 2010, meaning the application was determined in accordance with the planning policies in place at this time. This included the provision of affordable housing provision at 30% of the total units on site in accordance with policy HSG. 9 'Affordable Housing for Local Needs' of the saved policies of the West Berkshire Local Plan 1996-2006.

Any new application for the site would be determined in accordance with the policies of the Core Strategy. This means that affordable housing would need to meet the requirements set out in policy CS7.

Any new application for Newbury Racecourse will represent a site specific opportunity to apply higher standards of building sustainability, reflecting the site's strategic significance and its importance to the delivery of the Core Strategy. Should the extant planning permission be renewed the Council would seek the following standards of sustainable construction:

#### **Residential Development**

New residential development will meet the following minimum standards of construction:

- From 2013: All development - Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4
- From 2016: All development - Code for Sustainable Homes Level 6

#### **Non-Residential Development**

New non-residential development will meet the following minimum standards of construction

- From 2013: All development - BREEAM Excellent

## Policy CS4

### Sandleford Strategic Site Allocation

Within the area identified at Sandleford Park, a sustainable and high quality mixed use development will be delivered including in accordance with the following parameters:

- Phased delivery of up to 2,000 dwellings of which at least 40% will be affordable and with an emphasis on family housing. Approximately At least half the housing is anticipated planned to be delivered by 2026;
- Development to be limited to the north and west of the site in order to respect the landscape sensitivity of the wider site and to protect the historic landscape of Sandleford Priory and the surrounding historic parkland as set out in the concept plan at Appendix Cii.
- Residential densities on the site to be in an average range of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare to reflect the predominant mix of family sized homes;
- All residential development to meet (as a minimum standard of construction) Code for Sustainable Homes level 6;
- All non-residential development to meet as a minimum standard of construction BREEAM excellent.
- Generation of on-site renewable energy;
- Two vehicular accesses will be provided off Monks Lane with an additional sustainable transport link for pedestrians, cyclists and buses provided from Warren Road onto the Andover Road;
- Further Measures infrastructure improvements will be delivered in accordance with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Any infrastructure needs which are critical to the delivery of the site are set out in Appendix Ci.
- ~~Social and physical infrastructure (including provision for a new primary school and extension of Park House School);~~
- ~~Measures to improve accessibility by non-car transport modes, particularly to Newbury town centre and along the A339 route to Basingstoke;~~
- Provision of a new primary school on site and the extension of Park House School
- Provision for retail facilities in the form of a local centre and business employment;
- A network of green infrastructure to be provided which will
  - Conserve the areas of ancient woodland and provide appropriate buffers between the development and the ancient woodland;
  - Mitigate the increased recreational pressure on nearby sensitive wildlife sites and, secure strategic biodiversity enhancements ;
  - Provide a country park or equivalent area of public open space in the southern part of the site and
  - Respect the landscape significance of the site on the A339 approach road into Newbury.



## Explanation of the Policy

The Sandleford Park site to the south of Newbury comprises approximately 140 <sup>134</sup> hectares of land. It is bordered to the north by existing development along Monks Lane and could potentially accommodate around 2,000 dwellings with associated community facilities and services. Some flexibility in delivery is anticipated, with at least 1,000 dwellings proposed to be delivered by 2026, but with the ability to increase this amount if monitoring or changing circumstances indicate that this is necessary.

A concept plan (set out at Appendix Cii) has been produced which shows how the development on the site could be delivered, taking into account the opportunities and constraints of the site. Only 39% of the site is proposed for development with the rest taken up by open space and woodland.

The area is accessible to facilities and services in Newbury town centre and is also close to other retail and educational facilities. A local centre is proposed for the site to deliver day-to-day shopping needs, and employment provision will be made at the site to assist in the creation of a sustainable community.

The development would need to be designed with significant green infrastructure, taking account of the site's *location*, complex topography and landscape importance. *The site is located within the Greenham and Crookham Plateau Biodiversity Opportunity Area and will be expected to deliver strategic biodiversity enhancements in line with Policy CS 18. It is also close to the Greenham and Crookham Commons SSSI which supports a range of important species including ground nesting birds which are particularly sensitive to disturbance and will be expected to mitigate against increased recreational pressure.* Sandleford Park has the potential to form a high quality southern gateway to Newbury.

The formation of a Country park or equivalent area of public open space in the southern part of the site will protect that sensitive landscape area in perpetuity as well as protecting views and vistas from the former Sandleford Priory. It will also protect the views when approaching Newbury along the A339.

*Infrastructure requirements, set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan will include junction improvements on the A339 and on Monks Lane/Andover Road, improvements to the bus service and to pedestrian/cycle links and road crossings. A new primary school (one-form entry to accommodate the first 1,000 dwellings to 2026, and expanding to two-form entry to accommodate the rest of the development beyond 2026) will need to be provided along with an increase in early years provision, extensive alterations to Park House School and increased primary health care provision. Green Infrastructure including open space and sports facilities will be incorporated into the masterplanning of the site.*

Further details about any non-critical infrastructure which has site specific implications will be set out within an SPD or other supporting document to the Masterplan for the site, as will detailed planning requirements and parameters for the development of the site.

The development of Sandleford Park represents a site specific opportunity to apply high standards of building sustainability, reflecting the site's strategic significance and its importance to the delivery of the Core Strategy. The site circumstances justify seeking Code for Sustainable Homes level 6 for the residential development on the

site, with non-residential development being built to the standard of BREEAM Excellent.

### **Delivery and Monitoring**

It is envisaged that the implementation of the Sandleford Site would commence in the latter half of the plan period with approximately at least 1,000 homes delivered by the end of the plan period with development continuing beyond 2026. This allows for some flexibility in phasing with the potential to bring development forward if other sites do not deliver as anticipated.

An SPD or masterplan will be prepared for the site in order to demonstrate how the housing and associated infrastructure will be delivered and provide the context for more detailed design.

Infrastructure requirements and phasing will be set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

## Policy CS5

### Housing Type and Mix

Residential development will be expected to contribute to the delivery of an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the housing needs of all sectors of the community, including those with specialist requirements. The mix on an individual site should have regard to:

- The character of the surrounding area;
- The accessibility of the location and availability of existing and proposed local services, facilities and infrastructure;
- The evidence of housing need and demand from Housing Market Assessments and other relevant evidence sources;
- ~~Forecast demographic changes;~~
- ~~Market considerations.~~

Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how these matters have been addressed within the proposed dwelling mix.

Developments will make efficient use of land with greater intensity of development at places with good public transport accessibility.

- Higher densities ~~above 50 dwellings per hectare~~ above 50 dwellings per hectare may be achievable in town centres, particularly in parts of Newbury town centre, and along main transport routes and close to transport nodes.
- In the areas outside town centres new residential development will predominantly consist of family sized housing, which should ~~achieve densities of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare and should~~ achieve densities of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare and should enhance the distinctive suburban character and identity of the area.
- Lower density developments ~~below 30 dwellings per hectare~~ below 30 dwellings per hectare will be ~~may be~~ appropriate in certain areas of the District. Some parts of the urban areas and some villages are particularly sensitive to the impact of intensification and redevelopment because of the prevailing character of the area and the sensitive nature of the surrounding countryside or built form and/or the relative remoteness from public transport.

### Explanation of the Policy

In addition to ensuring that an appropriate amount of housing is provided in suitable locations, it is also important to ensure that there is a wide choice and mix of housing to meet local needs, and help secure mixed and balanced communities. Housing provision must support the needs of the whole community, include the provision of both market and affordable housing and reflect the needs of specific groups such as families with children, single person households, the elderly and those households with special needs. Developers will therefore be expected to consider housing mix in their proposals, including any local evidence of housing needs or evidence in Parish Plans which may be important considerations even for small sites, particularly in rural areas.

A Housing Market Assessment for Berkshire prepared during 2006, defined the housing market area relevant to West Berkshire. It highlighted characteristics of current housing supply and demand, potential future trends and considered options

to intervene to redress imbalances in the housing market. The outcome of the Housing Market Assessment and any future reviews may inform more detailed policies on housing mix and type, which would be prepared in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.

The Housing Market Assessment identified demographic trends towards smaller households and an ageing population but stressed that the relationship between household size and type and dwelling size is not straightforward. Demand for market homes will reflect a complex set of factors relating to household income and life stage rather than simply household size. In recognition of the changing needs and demographics within the District, developments should include the provision of lifetime homes. This will assist the Council in meeting the needs of an ageing population in the District.

In order to implement the spatial strategy of concentrating development in the most accessible locations, it is proposed that higher densities be sought in town centres or areas with high accessibility to public transport. Densities will be related to the character of the surrounding area, the accessibility of the location and the availability of existing and proposed local services, facilities and infrastructure.

**Policy CS6 Infrastructure  
Infrastructure Requirements and Delivery**

The Council will work with infrastructure providers and stakeholders to identify requirements for infrastructure provision and services for new development and will seek to co-ordinate infrastructure delivery, whilst protecting local amenities and environmental quality. The key infrastructure schemes required to facilitate development and secure the delivery of the Core Strategy include, but are not limited to those schemes set out within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. A schedule of the infrastructure which has been assessed as critical to the delivery of the Core Strategy and without which development cannot commence is included within the Core Strategy as Appendix Ci.

**Explanation of the Policy**

No change.

**Delivery and Monitoring**

No change.

## Affordable Housing

### Policy CS 7

#### Provision of Affordable Housing

In order to address the need for affordable housing in West Berkshire a proportion of affordable homes will be sought from residential development. Affordable housing will be provided on-site, apart from in exceptional circumstances. The Council's priority and starting expectation will be for affordable housing to be provided on-site in line with Government guidance<sup>2</sup>.

Subject to the economics of provision, the following levels of affordable housing will be sought by negotiation:-

- On development sites of 15 dwellings or more (or 0.5 hectare or more) ~~a~~ proportion of 30% provision will be sought on previously developed land, and 40% on greenfield land;
- On development sites of less than 15 dwellings a sliding scale approach will be used to calculate affordable housing provision, as follows :-
  - 30% provision on sites of 10 – 14 dwellings; and
  - 20% provision on sites of 5 – 9 dwellings.

Where schemes fall short of the policy requirements specified, an open book approach will be taken and the onus will be on the developer/landowner to clearly demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower affordable housing contribution. Proposed provision below the levels set out above should be fully justified by the applicant through clear evidence set out in a viability assessment (using an agreed toolkit) which will be used to help inform the negotiated process.

In determining residential applications the Council will assess the site size, suitability and type of units to be delivered. The Council will seek a tenure split of 70% social rented and 30% intermediate affordable units, taking but will take into consideration the identified local need and the site specifics, including funding and the economics of provision.

The affordable units will be dispersed throughout appropriately integrated within the development, and remain affordable in perpetuity. The Council will expect units to remain affordable so as to meet the needs of both current and future occupiers. Where this is not relevant or possible, the subsidy will be recycled for the provision of future affordable housing.

#### Explanation of the Policy

West Berkshire is an area of high property prices compared to the level of income and as a result many local people have difficulty gaining access to suitable housing on the open market. Housing triggers a wider range of factors than affordability alone, having widespread implications on health, education and employment opportunities.

Affordable housing is defined in Planning Policy Statement 3 – Housing (PPS3). The definition can be found in Appendix F 'Glossary'.

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<sup>2</sup> PPS3 Housing (paragraph 29)

The West Berkshire Housing Need Assessment<sup>3</sup> identifies a shortfall of between 560 and 850 new affordable homes across the District per year to 2011. This must be placed in the context of the West Berkshire housing allocation requirement set out in Policy CS 1 of an average of 525 new dwellings (both market and affordable) each year to 2026. Whilst the level of affordable housing need will be kept under review throughout the Plan period and may alter, the level of need remains extremely high and the policy must therefore seek to maximise opportunities for increased affordable housing delivery.

~~The South East Plan states that a substantial increase in the amount of affordable housing needs to be delivered, and Policy H3 requires local authorities to set policies appropriate for the local area to assist in achieving increased delivery. Methods for securing affordable housing as an element of market housing proposals have been well established in the West Berkshire District Local Plan<sup>4</sup> and the Council's existing Supplementary Planning Guidance 4/04<sup>5</sup>. However, evidence from the Housing Need Assessment and the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment<sup>6</sup> indicates that the current threshold for securing provision to date, as set out in the Local Plan, appears unlikely to meet the continuing need for affordable housing in the future.~~

A study of economic viability<sup>7</sup> has been carried out on behalf of the Council which sets out the evidence for reducing affordable housing thresholds below the national indicative minimum site size threshold and the current adopted Local Plan policy of 15 units. The study and its update report support a policy approach which reduces the threshold to 5 units without unduly compromising the site viability. The Council recognises that in some circumstances there may be exceptional costs of development which need to be acknowledged and that the policy may represent the starting point for negotiation. The Council will carefully scrutinise proposals which appear to fall artificially below the required thresholds which may indicate a possible attempt to avoid making the appropriate contribution towards the delivery of affordable housing. Such proposals are likely to be refused planning permission where they fail to make efficient use of land.

Taking account of housing need and past delivery trends and the South East Plan, the Council will seek an overall target of 35% of all new housing to be affordable. With an average housing allocation of 525 dwellings per annum, this overall target for affordable housing delivery would equate to an average of 184 units per annum, depending on overall housing completions in any given year. The requirement for affordable housing will be applied to the total number of gross dwellings on the proposed development site.

The Council seek a tenure split on each development site of 70% social rented and 30% intermediate affordable units. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the Housing Need Assessment conclude that the core requirement to meet the need within the District is for social rented housing. There is, however, still a significant proportion of existing and newly arising households that require access to intermediate accommodation. To ensure flexibility in the policy the tenure split is a target, with the tenure on each site taking into consideration the identified local need

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<sup>3</sup> West Berkshire Housing Need Assessment (DTZ, 2007), Berkshire Housing Market Assessment, available on the Council's website

<sup>4</sup> West Berkshire District Local Plan, Saved Policies 2007

<sup>5</sup> West Berkshire Supplementary Planning Guidance 4/04, Delivering Investment from Sustainable Development (Topic Paper 1 – Affordable Housing)

<sup>6</sup> West Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (DTZ, 2007)

<sup>7</sup> West Berkshire Economic Viability Assessment (Adams Integra, 2007&2009)

and site specifics. On smaller schemes, for example those of 5 units, a 70/30 split would be impractical given the provision of affordable housing on such a site would only be one unit and therefore in this case the tenure will be determined based on local need. Given the nature of the policy there will be instances when the proportion of affordable housing sought will result in the provision of a part unit. In these cases, the part unit will be rounded up or down to provide the nearest whole unit. On small schemes, any rounding will be considered along with the appropriate size and tenure type of units required.

Affordable housing should be provided as built units on the application site as part of well designed mixed tenure schemes, helping to create mixed inclusive communities. In exceptional circumstances where site specific issues inhibit the provision of on-site affordable housing or where provision can be better met on an alternative site in the District, off-site contributions may be accepted as an alternative.



## Rural Exception Sites

### Policy CS 8

#### Rural Exception Sites

Land may be released for affordable housing under the provisions of the Government's rural exception site policy.

Proposals for small scale affordable housing development may be permitted on sites in the countryside<sup>8</sup> provided certain criteria are met, including:

1. The applicant demonstrates that the proposal would help to meet a proven local need for affordable housing with evidence being derived from a recent Local Housing Needs Survey as per the West Berkshire Allocations policy<sup>9</sup>;
2. The development is well related to an existing settlement, ensuring consistency with the scale and form of surrounding development and does not adversely affect any landscape or historical features that are important to the rural character of the area;
3. The proposal does not include any element of market housing; and
4. The applicant enters into a legal agreement that ensures the accommodation will be managed so as to meet the need for affordable housing in perpetuity and reserves and prioritises occupancy for people in housing need who have a specified local connection (as specified in the West Berkshire Allocations policy).

The proposal should also comply with all other relevant policies, particularly those relating to character, design and sustainability.

#### Explanation of the Policy

With a large part of the District classed as rural the specific housing needs of small settlements and local communities are a key concern for the Council and this policy provides for the development of affordable housing in areas that would not normally be acceptable for residential development.

National *and regional* guidance<sup>10</sup> highlights the importance of providing affordable housing in rural areas, where opportunities for delivery tend to be more limited, in order to assist in creating and maintaining sustainable rural communities. Guidance also advises that rural exception sites are to be small in scale and developed solely for affordable housing, located on land that would not normally be released for housing. The site size must be based on proven local need and respect the scale and form of the surrounding settlement.

It is intended that this policy (CS8) applies to those areas within the countryside designated as 'rural areas' in Statutory Instrument 1997 No. 625; The Housing (Right to Acquire and Enfranchise) (Designated Rural Areas in the South East) Order 1997 in accordance with national guidance. The Statutory Instrument lists the areas (parishes by list and part parishes by map) where there is an exemption from 'Right

<sup>8</sup> Designated as rural areas within Statutory Instrument 1997 No. 625; The Housing (Right to Acquire or Enfranchise) (Designated Rural Areas in the South East) Order 1997

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=705>

<sup>10</sup> Planning Policy Statement 3 – Housing (2006), and its companion guide Delivering Affordable Housing (2006); ~~South East Plan (2009)~~

to Acquire' on social rented properties in these areas. This assures that properties built on rural exceptions sites within these designated areas remain affordable in perpetuity.

The Council requires expects exception schemes to be supported by the local Parish Council and actively encourages Parishes which are aware of a need for affordable housing to work with the Rural Housing Enabler to undertake a local housing needs survey. Occupation of rural exception housing should be restricted to people either living in, or having a local connection to, the village (or surrounding villages) where the development is proposed, in accordance with the Council's Allocations Policy. Rural exception schemes make an important contribution to the affordable housing stock and it is important that opportunities to provide affordable housing are maximised to help meet the needs of local people within the District's rural areas.

## Policy CS 9

### Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

To meet the identified need for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople<sup>11</sup> pitches within the District, the Council will make appropriate provision through the identification of sites within the Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document (DPD). The requirement for transit sites will be addressed through the same DPD.

In allocating sites and for the purposes of considering planning applications relating to sites not identified in the relevant DPD, the following criteria will need to be satisfied for sites outside settlement boundaries:

- Safe and easy access to major roads and public transport services;
- Easy access to local services including a bus route, shops, schools and health services;
- Located outside areas of high flooding risk;
- Provision for adequate on site facilities for parking, storage, play and residential amenity;
- The possibility of the integrated co-existence between the site and the settled community, including adequate levels of privacy and residential amenity both within the site and with neighbouring occupiers;
- Opportunities for an element of authorised mixed uses;
- The compatibility of the use with the surrounding land use, including potential disturbance from vehicular movements, and on site business activities;
- Will not materially harm the physical and visual character of the area.
- Where applicable have regard for the character and policies affecting the North Wessex Downs AONB.

### Explanation of the policy

West Berkshire Council as the Local Planning Authority is required to identify sites to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Policy CS9 applies to proposed sites located outside settlement boundaries. Proposed sites within settlement boundaries are considered acceptable in principle, as with conventional housing, subject to material considerations and some of the policy criteria will assist in providing a suitably located and designed site.

There is a corporate commitment to supporting sustainable communities and a good supply of affordable housing including social rented housing to address housing needs. This applies to the travelling communities as well as settled communities.

In order to assess the housing needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, local authorities are required to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). This assessment was used by West Berkshire Council at the recent Examination in to the Partial Review of the South East Plan with regard to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

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<sup>11</sup> The term 'Gypsies and Travellers' is as defined in Circular 01/2006 'The Provision of Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites', and 'Travelling Showpeople' is as defined in Circular 04/2007 'Planning for Travelling Showpeople', available to view at [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk).

The Council has accepted the need for an additional 18 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, and an additional 3 pitches for Travelling Showpeople in the period to 2016. The location of pitches will be determined by the Council through the Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document (DPD) notes the GTAA evidence indicating 4 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers up to 2011, and for up to an additional 4 Travelling Showpeople pitches up to 2017. The Council recognises that there will be a continued need for pitches and will update the evidence base to inform the Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document (DPD) which will determine the number and location of pitches up to 2026. The criteria that will be used to identify such sites and to determine planning applications relating to sites not identified in the relevant DPD is set out in the above policy.

For the purpose of this policy, the criteria for high flooding risk refers to the vulnerability of caravans and mobile homes as identified in Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk (PPS25) and Circulars 01/2006 and 04/2007. PPS25 identifies such land as Highly Vulnerable and appropriate for location within Flood Zone 1 and only in Flood Zone 2 where the Exception Test can be passed. The District is also vulnerable to surface water and groundwater flooding and so sites should be located outside areas susceptible to such flooding. Sites should also consider onsite drainage in accordance with Policy CS 17 'Flooding'.

## **Nuclear Installations – AWE Aldermaston and AWE Burghfield**

### **NEW POLICY CS 9 A**

#### **Nuclear Installations – AWE Aldermaston and AWE Burghfield**

**In the interests of public safety, residential<sup>1</sup> development in the inner consultation zones<sup>2</sup> of AWE Aldermaston and AWE Burghfield is likely to be refused planning permission by the Council. All other development proposals in the consultation zones will be considered in consultation with the HSE NII<sup>3</sup>, having regard to the scale of development proposed, its location, population distribution of the area and the impact on public safety, to include how the development would impact on “Blue Light Services” and the emergency off site plan in the event of an emergency as well as other planning criteria.**

#### **Footnote**

**<sup>1</sup> Residential for the purpose of this policy includes any development resulting in a permanent resident night time population, e.g. residential institutions.**

**<sup>2</sup> Consultation Zones as defined by the HSE NII and shown on the West Berkshire Proposals Map**

**<sup>3</sup> Consultation arrangements with the HSE NII**

Health and Safety Executive (who consults with the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate)	Development within the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ)					
	AWE Aldermaston			AWE Burghfield		
	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Distance</b>	<b>Development Type</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Distance</b>	<b>Development Type</b>
	Inner	0 - 3 km	All residential or non residential - Where one or more additional person may live. Work, shop (all applications save listed buildings, conservation area consent, house extensions, shop fronts, prior notifications and telecommunications).	Inner	0 - 1.5 km	All residential or non residential - Where one or more additional person may live. Work, shop (all applications save listed buildings, conservation area consent, house extensions, shop fronts, prior notifications and telecommunications).
	Middle	3 - 5 km	Residential accommodation or non residential accommodation exceeding 50 people. · 20 or more dwellings; · 1000m2 , B1 · 2,400m2 B8	Middle	1.5 - 3 km	Residential accommodation or non residential accommodation exceeding 50 people. · 20 or more dwellings; · 1000m2 , B1 · 2,400m2 B8

	Outer	5 - 8 km	Residential accommodation and non residential exceeding 500 people · 200 or more dwellings; · 11,000m2 , B1 · 24,000m2 B8	Outer	3 - 5 km	Residential accommodation and non residential exceeding 500 people · 200 or more dwellings; · 11,000m2 , B1 · 24,000m2 B8
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## **1 Explanation of Policy**

There are two licensed nuclear installations located in West Berkshire the Atomic Weapons Establishment in Aldermaston (AWE A) and in Burghfield (AWE B) both of which are identified as a Control of Major Accident Hazard Regulations (COMAH) sites by the Health and Safety Executive.

The United Kingdom's Fifth National Report on Compliance with the Convention on Nuclear Safety Obligations (Department of Energy and Climate Change, Sept 2010) states in its forward that "The safety of the other UK nuclear facilities that fall outside the scope of this Convention are also regulated to the same standards, so as to ensure that they are operated in a manner that maintains a high level of safety"

Planning advice contained in Circular 04/00 'Planning Controls for Hazardous Substances', states that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) must be consulted on developments near such Nuclear Installations. Such consultation is required in order to ensure that new development is appropriately located (in relation to such installations) in order to limit any potential health and safety risks to the general public and the environment. Therefore, planning applications for development of a specified size and distance from hazardous sites will be referred to the HSE for consultation. Applicants considering new development within the DEPZs as shown on the proposals map are strongly encouraged to enter into early discussions with the Council.

The consultation zones for the installations cross over into neighbouring councils; Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, Reading Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council. Given the potential cumulative effects of any population increase surrounding the installations, it will be necessary to monitor committed and future development proposals in partnership with neighbouring councils and the HSE NII in order to assess whether new development can be safely accommodated or not. The Councils will monitor housing completions and commitments as part of the Annual Monitoring Report and send this information directly to the HSE for them to make informed judgements when assessing future development proposals within the DEPZs.

During the period covered by the plan significant development and redevelopment will occur at both sites as older buildings are replaced. As a result of these changes the HSE will review the boundaries of the consultation zones after development has been completed. West Berkshire Council will undertake a review of the consultation zones requirements as part of the annual monitoring process in consultation with the HSE, local blue light services and neighbouring authorities.

### **Delivery and Monitoring**

The demographic characteristics surrounding the two AWE facilities will be preserved via the monitoring of potential development throughout the area contained within the consultation zones regardless of administrative boundaries and consultation with the HSE NII.



All new residential development proposals within the consultation zones will be jointly monitored by the individual councils annually and passed to the HSE NII.

## Policy CS10

### Location and Type of Business Development

The Council seek to facilitate and promote the growth and change of business development to achieve:

- the growth of B1 floorspace to meet future requirements;
- the managed reduction of land for B2 uses, whilst maintaining a sufficient portfolio of sites suitable for such uses; and
- the retention of a portfolio of sites for B8 uses in suitable locations.

#### **Location of business development:**

Proposals for industry, distribution and storage uses will be directed to the District's defined Protected Employment Areas<sup>12</sup> and existing suitably located employment sites and premises. Any proposals for such uses outside these areas/locations will be assessed by the Council against the following:

- compatibility with uses in the area surrounding the proposals and potential impacts on those uses; and
- capacity and impact on the road network and access by sustainable modes of transport.

New office development will be directed towards West Berkshire's town and district centres as outlined in policy CS12. The scale of development will be appropriate to the size and character of the centre.

If no suitable sites are available within an existing centre, then the focus must take the following sequential approach:

- Protected Employment Area or suitably located brownfield site on the edge of centre and Newbury Business Park;
- Protected Employment Area or brownfield site out of centre, with good accessibility by alternative modes of transport;
- Other existing employment areas.

Existing office developments within defined town and district centres and small scale business units within settlement boundaries will be protected to ensure such uses are retained in the most sustainable locations. Proposals seeking the loss of office floorspace within these locations will need to demonstrate that the proposal maintains the vitality of the existing centre and does not prejudice the overall supply of office floorspace over the Core Strategy period.

#### **Protected Employment Areas:**

The continued designation, role and boundaries of existing Protected Employment Areas will be reviewed in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD (or other subsequent Development Plan Document) to achieve a balanced portfolio of fit for purpose sites to meet future requirements. In the interim, major proposals for business development within other existing employment sites will need to demonstrate how they are consistent with the overall strategy of this policy and the wider Core Strategy. Proposals for

<sup>12</sup> Protected Employment Areas are currently outlined within the West Berkshire District Local Plan, Saved Policies. These designations will continue to be in use until reviewed under the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.

employment generating uses, other than B class uses, within Protected Employment Areas will need to demonstrate that they would not prejudice the required supply of employment land over the Core Strategy period in terms of quantity, mix and location.

Business development will be supported on existing employment sites, particularly on those sites seen as strategically important for the District's economy – New Greenham Park, Vodafone and the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE). The Site Allocations and Delivery DPD will assess the role and function of these three sites to determine whether they should be designated as Protected Employment Areas or an alternative bespoke designation consistent with their importance to the local economy.

**Scale, type and intensification of business development:**

A range of types and sizes of employment sites and premises will be encouraged throughout the District to meet the needs of the local economy. Proposals for business development should be in keeping with the surrounding environment, not conflict with existing uses and promote sustainable transport.

More efficient use of existing sites and premises should be made in order to attract inward investment, respond to modern business requirements and meet the demand for employment land over the plan period. The Council will promote the intensification, redevelopment and upgrade of existing, vacant and/or derelict employment sites and premises for business development.

**Explanatory Text**

The overall aim of this policy is to set the framework to facilitate and promote the growth and forecasted change of business development across the District over the plan period.

Evidence<sup>13</sup> indicates that West Berkshire has a sufficient supply of employment land to meet demand to 2026, and thus no need to plan for a net increase in employment land stock. Whilst a sufficient supply exists, it is not necessarily in the correct use class. The Employment Land Assessment (ELA) concludes that over the plan period there is a shortfall of B1 floorspace by approximately 121,000sqm, a surplus of B2 space by approximately 65,000sqm due to declining demand and a potential shortfall in the longer term of B8 floorspace of approximately 24,000sqm. Policy CS10 therefore sets out the framework to ensure this imbalance in employment land supply is addressed over the plan period, through the effective utilisation of existing employment sites and premises. The Council seek to ensure that sufficient sites are provided in the right locations to foster sustainable economic growth. This means maintaining a portfolio of sites suitable to meet demand for B8 in suitable locations; managing an excess supply of B2 floorspace whilst ensuring enough sites and premises are retained for such uses; and, facilitating the growth of B1 floorspace to meet future requirements.

As the Core Strategy sets out a long term approach to business development, and circumstances surrounding economic development are constantly changing, the scale of development required within each use class to meet economic demands will be monitored<sup>14</sup> and updated as appropriate.

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<sup>13</sup> Employment Land Assessment, DTZ 2007

<sup>14</sup> See Monitoring Framework, Section 6

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 4 sets out the definition of economic development which goes beyond B uses to include main town centre uses, community and public uses, as well as any other development which generates wealth, employment and/or a product. This policy (CS10) specifically deals with business development (B1/B2/B8) in order to ensure the health of the District's business areas and Protected Employment Areas are maintained. Other uses falling under the definition within PPS4 are addressed through policy CS12 and/or the Area Delivery Plan policies.

Policy CS10 applies to business uses throughout the whole District. Given the rural nature of West Berkshire and the importance of sustaining the District's rural areas, policy CS11 presents additional policy provision for the rural economy.

**Location of business development:**

The policy seeks to support and build upon West Berkshire's vibrant and successful economy through continued business development in sustainable locations.

Industrial, warehousing and distribution developments will be focused in areas of existing employment activity and within defined Protected Employment Areas. The location of any B2 and B8 uses should be in areas with good access to major road/freight route networks and should not conflict with surrounding uses. The Council's ELA highlights that although the level of B2 activity in the District is low, most of the B2 floorspace is located to the east of Newbury, south east Thatcham mainly at Colthrop, and close to the A4 at Beenham. It also indicates that the majority of B8 floorspace is located to the south of Newbury at New Greenham Park, to the south east of Thatcham and in the west of the District near Hungerford and north of the M4 near Lambourn.

Office development will be directed towards West Berkshire's town and district centres, where development will be accessible and well served by a choice of transport modes in accordance with national policy. Policy CS12 sets out the District's hierarchy of centres based on their scale, character and function. The main focus for office development is Newbury town centre given its role within the District and the nature and size of development which already exists. With Newbury being the focus for housing development over the plan period it is important that any new employment development is balanced with housing locations and is suitably located to cater for future demand and reduce out-commuting from the District. More limited office development will also be directed towards West Berkshire's other town and district centres, Thatcham, Hungerford, Pangbourne, Lambourn and Theale. As the character of these centres is more rural in nature with small unit sizes and low density development, it is important that the scale of any new office development in these locations is appropriate to the size and character of the centre.

Policy CS10 takes a sequential approach to office development in accordance with national guidance. This means the Council will seek to locate office development within existing centres in the first instance. However, given the size and character of existing centres not all office development can be accommodated within the District's centres and therefore flexibility must be applied to the location of B1a office space through the sequential approach. If no suitable available sites can be found within an existing centre then a suitable edge of centre location will be sought, followed by an accessible out of centre location. These locations, such as Newbury Business Park, Hambridge Road/Lane and Arlington Business Park for example, already host some of the District's

office floorspace and play a strategic role in providing offices for businesses that demand large floorplates and modern accommodation. Other edge of centre locations, such as London Road Industrial Estates, have the potential for redevelopment and the ability to deliver a greater employment base on these sites. It is the Council's preferred approach that if an edge of centre or out of centre site must be utilised for office development, then the site should be located within an existing Protected Employment Area or suitable brownfield site which is in a sustainable location, well served by a choice of transport modes.

In terms of sequentially preferable locations for office development, the Council consider the following order appropriate in accordance with PPS4:

- Sites within existing town and district centres;
- Suitably located brownfield sites in edge of centre locations, with preference given to Protected Employment Areas (London Road Industrial Estates/Hambridge Road/Lane/Green Lane/Charnham Park/Station Yard/Arlington/Station Road and adjacent Estates) and Newbury Business Park;
- Brownfield sites in out of centre locations with good accessibility by alternative modes of transport. Preference will be given to Protected Employment Areas within these locations (Turnpike Road Estate/Castle Estate/Colthrop Estate/Smitham Bridge Hungerford Trading Estate/Horseshoe Park/Calleva Park).
- Other existing employment areas in out of town locations, with preference given to such Protected Employment Areas.

Newbury Business Park, although located in an out of centre location in accordance with the PPS4 definitions, has been placed within the edge of centre category in terms of the sequential approach to B1a uses. The Council feel that given the characteristics of the Business Park and the scale of B1a floorspace which currently exists, the sequential approach could undermine the role, vitality and function of the site if it was to be considered as an out of centre location, second to those sites in edge of centre locations. Any proposals for office development within Newbury Business Park would need to comply with policy CS14 and provide appropriate travel planning measures.

As well as providing for new development, existing office sites and premises must be protected, especially within town centres in order to maintain vitality but also to help address the shortfall forecasted over the Core Strategy plan period.

#### **Protected Employment Areas:**

In order to address the imbalance in employment land supply mentioned above, a comprehensive assessment of existing Protected Employment Areas and their boundaries will take place in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD. The review of the Protected Employment Areas will provide the scope and flexibility to reinforce the existing employment land stock to provide a balanced portfolio of sites to meet future demand.

The Employment Land Assessment will be used as a starting point for the review of the role and function of each Protected Employment Area. The review will also take into account other evidence such as the outcomes from the business survey for the Local Economic Assessment, annual monitoring reports, capacity and the mix of uses within each Protected Employment Area. Other circumstances such as vacancy levels, the age

and quality of sites and premises and the relationship of the Protected Employment Area with surrounding uses will also be evaluated. This may lead to some sites being released for alternative uses, and the possible allocation of new employment sites to meet the District's economic requirements.

In the meantime, the Council will ensure that key sites located within sequentially preferable town centre and edge of centre locations are not lost to alternative uses which could negatively impact upon the employment land supply required to meet future demands.

New Greenham Park, Vodafone HQ at The Connection and the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) are three strategically important employment locations for the West Berkshire economy. All three sites comprise of a large amount of business floorspace and are large local employers, but at the same time their role and functionality within the economy differ. The Council will support business development within these sites, particularly that which enhances the contribution to the local economy. The Site Allocations and Delivery DPD will assess their role and function to determine whether they should be designated as Protected Employment Areas or be given an alternative bespoke designation consistent with their importance to the local economy.

**Scale, type and intensification of business development:**

Policy CS10 promotes appropriate intensification and redevelopment of existing sites and premises in accordance with national policy. The approach encourages a strong mix/range of premises and promotes the redevelopment of vacant and/or derelict buildings in order to keep the market attractive to modern investment.

To ensure the health of the local economy is maintained it is important to provide a variety of size and type of employment premises of an appropriate scale and intensity. The Council will therefore encourage proposals which seek to upgrade or redevelop existing or vacant premises, especially within Protected Employment Areas, which will enhance the flexibility and availability of employment space.

Intensification of office development will be looked upon favourably especially within existing centres and edge of centre locations in Newbury and Theale where demand for office space is high, provided the scale and intensity is not out of proportion with the character of the surrounding areas.

Business development within the District is dominated by small and medium sized units, typically in B1 use. Demand for such accommodation is likely to be met through smaller individual sites and within multi-occupancy employment areas. The Council will therefore seek to ensure that sites for small and medium sized businesses are protected and that opportunities are provided for them to grow within the District.

## **The Rural Economy**

### **Policy CS 11**

#### **Rural Economy**

Proposals to diversify the rural economy will be encouraged, particularly where they are located in or adjacent to Rural Service Centres and Service Villages. Existing small and medium sized enterprises within the rural areas will be ~~protected, providing~~ supported in order to provide local job opportunities and maintaining the vitality of smaller rural settlements. Proposals seeking the loss of such existing sites and premises must demonstrate that the proposal does not negatively impact upon the local economy and the vitality and viability of the surrounding rural area.

Proposals for appropriate farm diversification will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will make a long-term contribution to sustaining the agricultural enterprise as a whole.

~~Any employment generating development within rural areas should be of a scale and character appropriate to the location, with particular regard given to the amount and nature of traffic generated.~~

#### **Explanation of the Policy**

The Council will encourage the retention of small and medium sized businesses in the rural areas, along with the promotion of appropriate farm diversification in order to sustain the viability of some agricultural enterprises. The Council recognises changes in the agricultural industry over recent years. Rural West Berkshire plays an important role within the District's economy and therefore it is essential that the rural communities are supported. Many rural areas host a large number of small and medium sized enterprises which are vital to providing local job opportunities and a diverse economy. With the conclusions in the Matthew Taylor Review<sup>15</sup> and the increased emphasis on the contributions of the rural economy there is a continued need to protect and support the development of start-up businesses, and adequate provision should be made for them throughout the District. PPS4<sup>16</sup> encourages this approach and outlines the need for local authorities to be supportive of small-scale development within rural settlements to meet business needs and sustain vitality. More detailed policies on the management of development contributing to the rural economy will be set out in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD. These will include farm diversification and conversion and reuse of existing buildings in the countryside consistent with national policy in PPS4.

In relation to this, the race-horse industry and tourism also make a vital contribution to the local economy, and the management of both these sectors is key to fostering economic growth without detriment to the environment.

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<sup>15</sup> A living Working Countryside – The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing (2008)

<sup>16</sup> Planning Policy Statement 4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (2009)

## Policy CS 13

### Equestrian/Racehorse Industry

#### Equestrian/Racehorse Industry Development

Proposals for equestrian related development that provides diversification opportunities for farmers, helps to strengthen the rural economy, and increases opportunities for people to enjoy the countryside in a sustainable way, will be supported.

Development associated with equestrian activities will be encouraged where the reuse of existing buildings is considered before any new build; and the scale, form, impact, character, siting and level of activity is in keeping with its location. Proposals for associated new residential accommodation in the countryside will be permitted where genuine need is suitably demonstrated through a business case and accommodation cannot be reasonably secured within existing settlements.

#### North Wessex Downs AONB Racehorse Industry

The racehorse breeding and training industry in the AONB will be maintained and its sensitive growth will be allowed for. ~~Proposals for change of use should be essential to the horseracing industry. (Bullet point formatting removed)~~ For suitable existing establishments or facilities, fragmentation will be resisted, and redevelopment away from uses essential to the horseracing industry will not be permitted, apart from in exceptional circumstances.

#### Newbury Racecourse

Newbury Racecourse's viability as a major tourist attraction and economic driver will be maintained and future development proposals should have a positive impact upon the ability of the racecourse to continue operations as normal and potentially expand in the future. Proposals within and adjacent to Newbury Racecourse will be design and community led to secure high quality sustainable development that is sensitive to the environmental quality and historic character of the area.

#### Explanation of the policy

Equestrian activities and related development, and the racehorse breeding and training industry are characteristic features of West Berkshire and are of particular importance to the rural economy. The North Wessex Downs AONB is home to around 10%<sup>(15)</sup> of Britain's racehorse trainers and the Lambourn area is a nationally important centre of activity for the horseracing industry second only to Newmarket<sup>(17)</sup>. The policy recognises the important links between the various aspects of the equestrian industry and the shared facilities and infrastructure that supports it, such as farriers, veterinary practices and horse feed merchants and the important role riding schools and recreational uses play in providing the racehorse industry with people interested in equine matters.

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<sup>17</sup> A study of the key effects of the horseracing industry on the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Council of Partners, 2007) available to view at [www.northwessexdowns.org.uk](http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk)



~~Within an overall context of development restraint in the countryside, the policy aims to allow for the sensitive development and growth of the industry whilst conserve conserving environmental quality and countryside character, including This includes the built and natural form, and social and economic aspects (such as the influence of the racehorse industry as part of the local economy which gives Lambourn its unique character). Development proposals will need to be in keeping with the character and appearance of the local area and prevent the spread of the built form in the countryside and AONB. Outside of settlements, preference will be given to proposals that seek to locate within valleys and avoid development on hilltops or ridgelines, and limit new development in the countryside, focusing on addressing local needs and maintaining a healthy rural economy.~~

### **Racehorse industry**

In relation to the racehorse industry within the North Wessex Downs AONB, the policy aims to prevent pressure for redevelopment of existing facilities to other uses, and fragmentation of existing sites; pressures which could lead to the decline of the industry locally, threaten the form and character of settlements, or and increase pressure for replacement facilities in environmentally sensitive areas. The yards in Lambourn contribute to the identity and historic environment of the Rural Service Centre. Protecting training yards from development for alternative uses is particularly important in difficult times for the Industry. Once a yard has gone it is gone and this can have detrimental impact on the critical mass required to support the public training area, on the Industry as a whole, and alter the character of the local area.

~~Within an overall context of development restraint in the countryside, this policy allows for sensitive development and growth of the industry. Preference will be given to proposals that seek to locate within valleys and avoid development on hilltops or ridgelines.~~

The variety in yard sizes is an important feature for the industry in this area, this helps support the start up of new trainers and the movement to larger premises keeps their location and staff in the Lambourn area. Throughout a trainer's career they will require different sized yards at different times for a variety of reasons and a range of yard sizes allows them to move within the same area, retaining access to the public gallops on which they are experienced, retain staff and local owners. Access to gallops is important for yards and opportunities for improving access routes should be fully explored before a yard is considered for re-use or redevelopment. Given the Rules of Racing<sup>18</sup> it is difficult to sub-divide yards. As such, spare box capacity does not demonstrate an ability to go without certain individual yards which are important for new trainers and for those who are down-sizing their operations.

The licensing requirements for a Trainer<sup>19</sup> include, but not exclusively, a demonstration or confirmation of competence and ability to train, access to appropriate training facilities, security of tenure for the training premises, and have a minimum of three horses in training throughout the year. The licence requires access to gallops to be within hacking distance of the stables, and suitable yard and training facilities, which are

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<sup>18</sup> Rules of Racing by British Horseracing Authority are available to view at <http://rules.britishhorseracing.com>

<sup>19</sup> Licensing information from the British Horseracing Authority , <http://www.britishhorseracing.com>

undefined. A small yard could range in size from 10 to 40 horses, and could work with as few as six boxes. In considering access to gallops, a trainer would consider safety of the horses and the time taken to get to the gallops which will depend on the number of horses in training, how many riders are used, and how many outings to the gallops are needed. Some jockeys will depend upon the public facilities provided and maintained by the Jockey Club Estate.

### **Applying the policy**

In terms of interpreting Policy CS13, existing establishments or facilities includes land and buildings relating to the racehorse industry, including residential development.

It is not the intention of the policy to retain training and breeding establishments that are no longer appropriate, however it is important to retain a supply of yards within the Lambourn area which are of various sizes to allow for market churn. In addition, applications for re-use or redevelopment should conserve the character and amenities of the settlement, the landscape and rural quality of the surrounding countryside and not materially harm the availability of local employment opportunities.

Proposals for redevelopment or change of use will need to show that the yard or facility is no longer required in its current use and a robust marketing plan, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, will be required as evidence from the applicant. Any proposal for the loss of a training yard will need to demonstrate how it will not detrimentally alter the critical balance and/or range of yard sizes available.

In considering exceptional circumstances for the redevelopment or change of use of a vacant yard or facility, the Council will take a sequential approach in order to maintain the vitality of the industry within the local area and District as a whole. In considering proposals for redevelopment or change of use, the Council would firstly expect any proposal to be essential to the horseracing industry, if this cannot be achieved the proposal would need to demonstrate its specific benefit to the industry, or failing the above, the proposal should be for other equestrian related uses, before consideration is given to other uses. By way of example, a proposal for a use essential to the horseracing industry could be a related use for which there is a proven greater need for rather than for the site continuing as a vacant training yard.

Proposals for the fragmentation or redevelopment of establishments or facilities will need to demonstrate how it is essential to the racehorse industry, such as in terms of its specific benefits to the industry and how it will not be detrimental to the industry or the area. Fragmentation and should not adversely affect the operational use of the site or the industry as a whole.

It is acknowledged that there is a need in some circumstances to provide accommodation close to hand in order to provide 24 hour supervision as part of licensing requirements or for the effective running of an establishment. It is the Council's preference for workers to be accommodated within existing nearby villages, so as to contribute to the overall sustainability of settlements and limit development in the countryside.

### **Newbury Racecourse**

For Newbury Racecourse, the policy aims to ensure that the racecourse maintains its status as a premier sporting and major events venue. The policy seeks to allow for

sensitive development of the racecourse and surrounding areas which do not have a negative impact upon the ability of the racecourse to continue operations as normal or restrain expansion opportunities in the future.

### **Delivery and Monitoring**

This policy will be implemented through the determination of planning applications relating to the equestrian industry and further guidance may be prepared through a supplementary planning document.

~~The Newbury Racecourse is to be, whilst allocated as a strategic site within the Core Strategy for a sustainable and high quality mixed use development and will be delivered through a masterplan or supplementary planning document, gained planning consent in April 2010 and is likely to be implemented through the terms of that consent.~~

The policy will be monitored through development completed/permitted within the AONB and the monitoring of the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan.

## Policy CS 14 Transport

~~The Council will use its planning and transport powers to:~~  
Development that generates a transport impact will be required to:\*

- Reduce the need to travel;
- Improve and promote opportunities for healthy and safe travel;
- Improve travel choice and facilitate sustainable travel particularly within, ~~and~~ and to main urban areas and rural service centres;
- ~~Provide improved~~ Demonstrate good access to key services and facilities;
- ~~Facilitate sustainable travel to major destinations regional hubs and growth points along key transport corridors;~~
- Minimise the impact of all forms of travel on the environment and help tackle climate change;
- ~~Maintain and improve~~ Mitigate the impact on the local transport network and the strategic road network;
- ~~Influence the appropriate movement of freight through and within the district.~~  
Take into account the West Berkshire Freight Route Network (FRN).
- Prepare Transport Assessments/Statements and Travel Plans will be required to support planning proposals in accordance with national guidance. (73)

\*Development proposals may not need to fulfil each bullet point. The supporting text below clarifies the types and scale of development which will be required to meet the specific parts of this policy.

### Explanation of the Policy

West Berkshire Council is a unitary authority and as such is both the Local Planning Authority and the Local Highway Authority for the District. The Council is responsible for producing both the Local Development Framework (LDF) and the Local Transport Plan (LTP) which specifically addresses transport issues; and there are strong links between these two forward planning documents. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies the key infrastructure projects required to support the delivery of the LDF, and infrastructure that is critical to the delivery of the Core Strategy is set out in Appendix Ci. The LTP is supported by an Implementation Plan which sets out how schemes and initiatives will deliver the LTP, and this will be updated annually. This Transport Policy in particular, is supported in delivery terms by the Local Transport Plan.

The provision of a sustainable transport network to serve the communities of West Berkshire is essential for improving accessibility, enhancing economic vitality, protecting the environment and promoting quality of life. The policy therefore seeks to encourage sustainable travel in order to achieve these goals and to minimise the impact on the strategic and local road network.

~~The policy is based upon the premise of *Reduce, Manage and Invest*, which is in accordance with regional policy and the Local Transport Plan. By aiming to reduce the quantity and length of journeys that are made, manage the way in which people travel and the efficiency of the local transport network, and invest in infrastructure, the policy will work towards a sustainable transport network for West Berkshire.~~

Reducing the need to travel reflects the Council's desire to plan for people to live in places where there are local facilities and services, whether these are fixed or mobile (development that is in accordance with the settlement hierarchy in SP1 will help to achieve this). Reducing the need to travel ~~It~~ also reflects the changing nature of technology and how this facilitates working from home and access to services through the world wide web. The policy seeks to encourage and facilitate the best use of technology to enable a reduction in travel. All development will be required to demonstrate how it will reduce the need to travel.

~~Reducing casualties associated with road traffic accidents~~ Road safety in West Berkshire is a key consideration for all development in the planning of any transport scheme. Particular focus ~~will~~ should be given to the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians and other vulnerable road users. These active travel modes benefit people's health and are promoted through the LTP. Safer travel also has links to West Berkshire's Community Safety Strategy and the personal safety element of travel. ~~It is recognised that active travel such as walking and cycling also has benefits for people's health.~~ All development will be required to show how it promotes safer and healthy travel.

Improving travel choice is a key way of working towards modal shift away from single occupancy car use in favour of more sustainable travel (walking, cycling, bus and rail travel, car sharing). ~~Focusing on~~ Improving sustainable travel choice within and between the main urban areas and rural service centres of West Berkshire and key destinations in neighbouring authorities will help to facilitate regular journeys for example ~~for~~ to work and education. All development will be required to show how it improves travel choice and reduces the use of single occupancy cars.

The rural nature of West Berkshire poses a significant challenge for accessibility to key services and facilities ~~within the District. The Council will~~ Residential development should seek to improve demonstrate good accessibility by:

- Promoting development Locating where there is already good access to key services and facilities
- Safeguarding essential local services and facilities
- Contributing towards improving connections between communities and key services and facilities

~~Journeys are not affected by administrative boundaries and travel from and to West Berkshire is influenced by factors beyond the District. Significant growth is planned for West Berkshire and all adjoining authorities which will increase the number of movements to, from and through West Berkshire and neighbouring authorities. Working with others to facilitate sustainable cross boundary journeys will help to achieve the aims of this policy.~~

The quality of the environment is a key factor in the attractiveness of West Berkshire, ~~The environment can be protected through the careful design of traffic schemes and through reducing in carbon emissions.~~ and the part that changing travel behaviour can play in reducing carbon emissions is recognised in the Council's Climate Change Strategy. West Berkshire's air quality is strongly linked to transport, so where air quality becomes a cause for concern, the Council will seek to manage it through transport related *reduce, manage and invest* measures. All development will be required to demonstrate how it minimises the impact of travel on the environment and helps to tackle climate change.

The Council is responsible for maintaining the local highway, cycle and walking, and public right of way networks. The Highways Agency is responsible for the strategic road network (SRN) which, in West Berkshire, comprises the M4 and the A34. Planning proposals All development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they do not adversely affect these networks or that they can mitigate the adverse impact can be suitably mitigated. The Council will seek to improve these networks in order to offer greater travel choice and more reliable journey times. Where a Transport Assessment for a significant development illustrates that there will be a material reduction in capacity on the SRN, the developer will need to undertake detailed traffic modelling as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and in accordance with national guidance. Developers will need to work with the Council and the Highways Agency to establish a suitable mitigation package. Junctions that are likely to require such attention during the life of the plan up to 2026 are (but not exclusively):

- Junction 12 of the M4
- Junction 13 of the M4
- A34 / A343 junction

Through the Local Transport Plan, The Council has established a preferred Freight Route Network (FRN) for West Berkshire. This which identifies a hierarchy of routes that freight should be used for freight movements to, through and within the District. The FRN provides information on the best routes for freight movement and balances the different needs of supporting the economy, protecting the environment and respecting quality of life. Decisions on future development will take into account the FRN framework when considering location and access routes. Development which results in freight movements, including construction traffic should take into consideration the FRN.

Transport Assessments / Statements and Travel Plans are vital to support planning proposals so that the impact of the proposed development can be assessed and mitigated. The Council recognises the wider benefits of travel plans in reducing the impact of travel on the environment, improving access and travel choice, and reducing reliance on the car; so in addition to new developments, the Council will support and encourage existing organisations within the District to implement travel plans. All development which meets the thresholds set out in national guidance will be required to prepare the appropriate Transport Assessments / Statements and Travel Plans.

Standards for parking provision will be related to levels of accessibility. The basis for this will be established through the Local Transport Plan, and subsequently a supplementary planning document (SPD) will be prepared.

### **Delivery and Monitoring**

Implementation will be through the development management process with production of Transport Assessments, Statements and Travel Plans, and through implementation of the Local Transport Plan.

The following indicators will be monitored in the AMR:-

- Accessibility of new residential development
- Sustainable travel to schools

## Policy CS 17

### Flooding

The sequential approach in accordance with PPS25<sup>(20)</sup> will be strictly applied across the District, with the preference for new development to be located within the Environment Agency's Flood Zone 1. Development within areas of flood risk from any source of flooding, including Critical Drainage Areas and areas with a history of groundwater or surface water flooding, will only be accepted if it is demonstrated that it is appropriate at that location and that there are no suitable and available alternative sites at a lower flood risk.

When development has to be located in flood risk areas it should be safe and not increase flood risk elsewhere, reducing the risk where possible and taking into account climate change.

Proposed development will require a Flood Risk Assessment for:

- Sites of 1 ha or more in Flood Zone 1;
- Sites in Flood Zone 2 or 3;
- Critical Drainage Areas;
- Areas with historic records of groundwater and/or surface water flooding;
- Areas near ponds or the Kennet and Avon Canal, that may overtop;
- Sites where access would be affected during a flood;
- Areas behind flood defences;
- Sites with known flooding from sewers;
- ~~To meet Code for Sustainable Homes requirements<sup>(24)</sup> of Policy CS16.~~

Development will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that:

- Through the sequential test and exception test (where required), it is demonstrated that the benefits of the development to the community outweigh the risk of flooding;
- It would not have an impact on the capacity of an area to store floodwater;
- It would not have a detrimental impact on the flow of fluvial flood water, surface water or obstruct the run-off of water due to high levels of groundwater;
- Appropriate measures required to manage any flood risk can be implemented;
- Provision is made for the long term maintenance and management of any flood protection and or mitigation measures;
- Safe access and exit from the site can be provided for routine and emergency access under both frequent and extreme flood conditions<sup>(22)</sup>.

*On all development sites surface water will be managed in a sustainable manner through the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Methods (SuDS)<sup>(23)</sup> in accordance*

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<sup>20</sup> Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk, 2006. DCLG.

<sup>24</sup> Category 4: Surface Water Run-off, Code for Sustainable Homes, Technical Guide, May 2009, Version 2.

<sup>22</sup> Advice on safe access and exit can be found in the SFRA.

*with best practice and the proposed national standards and to provide attenuation to Greenfield run-off rates and volumes, for all new development and re-development and provide other benefits where possible such as water quality, biodiversity and amenity.*

## **Explanation of the policy**

The risk of flooding within West Berkshire is widespread, arising not only from rivers, but also from surface water and groundwater flooding. This policy aims to achieve a planning solution to flood risk management wherever possible, steering vulnerable development away from areas affected by flooding.

Definitions for the following terms used in this policy can be found in PPS25 or the West Berkshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)<sup>24</sup>:

- Sequential approach.
- Flood Risk Area.
- Low, medium, high probability of flooding.
- Functional floodplain.
- Flood Zone 1, 2, 3.
- More of highly vulnerable use.
- Safe and dry access.
- Critical Drainage Areas.

The policy seeks to ensure that development provides appropriate measures for the management of rainfall (surface water) as an essential element of reducing flood risk to both the site and its surroundings. Sustainable drainage methods, such as green roofs, ponds and permeable surfaces, should be incorporated where technically possible. The integration of a SuDS scheme is dependent upon the topography, geology and soil conditions of the site and its surrounding area or may not be acceptable due to contamination. Further information on SuDS can be found in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and the Quality Design – West Berkshire – Supplementary Planning Document Series, 2006<sup>25</sup>.

The Council has undertaken an SFRA of the District which has been agreed with the Environment Agency. This study supports this policy and has been used to evaluate the strategic development sites and other broad locations for development. The SFRA has identified areas that may be most at risk from groundwater and surface water flooding as 'Critical Drainage Areas'. The SFRA maps and the Environment Agency's Flood Maps should be used to inform planning applications and the selection of sites for allocation in the LDF.

The policy identifies when a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required. These areas can be identified from the SFRA, the Environment Agency Flood Maps and also from local information. The content of the FRA will vary depending on the scale and

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<sup>23</sup> Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) is a term used to describe the various approaches that can be used to manage surface water drainage in a way that mimics the natural environment.

<sup>24</sup> West Berkshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Jacobs (2008) available at [www.westberks.gov.uk/ldfevidence](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/ldfevidence)

<sup>25</sup> Quality Design – West Berkshire SPD, 2006 available on the Council's website



nature of the development, and the source of the flooding, and can range from a brief report to a more detailed assessment. Guidance on content can be found in the SFRA and PPS25: Development and Flood Risk Practice Guide. The FRA should seek to reduce overall flood risk, and outline how flood risk to and from the site will be managed. As a minimum an FRA should address the following:

- Flood risk and/or flood resilience, such as floor levels should be set a minimum of 300mm above the 100 year flood level plus climate change;
- No additional residents will be located within the functional floodplain;
- Safe access and exit from the site can be provided for routine and emergency access under both frequent and extreme flood conditions<sup>26</sup>;
- Development must not result in a loss of floodplain storage;
- Development must not impact on flood flows;
- The impacts of climate change must be assessed.

It is recommended that all sites within Flood Zone 1 should carry out an assessment of localised flood risks, including surface water (flash) flooding, ~~to meet the requirements of Policy CS16 for Code for Sustainable Homes, or if required to achieve the appropriate BREEAM rating.~~ Development in the upstream vicinity of critical drainage areas could also raise flood risk issues. The cumulative impact of minor development, including development permitted without the need for a planning application, could also affect local flood storage capacity or flood flows. The Environment Agency's Standing Advice should be referred to prior to designing a development.

The Council will consult the Environment Agency where it has indicated that it wishes to be involved in the planning process. The Environment Agency's Flood Risk Standing Advice provides information to local planning authorities on which applications it wishes to be consulted on in relation to flood risk.

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<sup>26</sup> Advice on safe access and exit can be found in the SFRA.

## **Policy CS 18**

### **Biodiversity and Geodiversity**

Biodiversity and geodiversity assets across West Berkshire will be conserved and enhanced.

Habitats designated or proposed for designation as important for biodiversity or geodiversity at an international or national level or which support protected, rare or endangered species, will be protected and enhanced. The degree of protection given will be appropriate to the status of the site or species in terms of its international or national importance.

Development which may harm, either directly or indirectly

- locally designated sites (Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites), or
- habitats or species of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity, or
- the integrity or continuity of landscape features of major importance for wild flora and fauna

will only be permitted if there are no reasonable alternatives and there are clear demonstrable social or economic benefits of regional or national importance that outweigh the need to safeguard the site or species and that adequate compensation and mitigation measures are provided when damage to biodiversity/geodiversity interests are unavoidable.

In order to conserve and enhance the environmental capacity of the District all new development should maximise opportunities to achieve net gains in biodiversity and geodiversity in accordance with the Berkshire Biodiversity Action Plan and the Berkshire Local Geodiversity Action Plan. Opportunities will be taken to create links between natural habitats and in particular, strategic opportunities for biodiversity improvement will be actively pursued within the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas identified on the proposals map in accordance with the Berkshire Biodiversity Action Plan.

### **Explanation of the Policy**

West Berkshire supports a rich and diverse range of biodiversity and geodiversity assets which reflect both the underlying geology and soils and traditional management practices that have been carried out over many years. The aim of this policy is to provide a framework for conserving and enhancing this richness and diversity both for its own sake but also the positive contribution that it makes to the overall quality of life and sense of place for residents and visitors to West Berkshire in both urban and rural areas.

The most important sites for biodiversity and individual wildlife species which receive statutory protection have protection under international and national legislation. Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) are internationally important and are afforded the highest level of protection. Candidate

SACs and proposed SPAs will be afforded the same level of protection as those already designated.

There are currently three SACs within the District:

- Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain
- River Lambourn
- Kennet Valley Alderwoods

There are no SPAs within West Berkshire although there is a very small part of the District (256 hectares) around Beech Hill within 5km of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. The 5km boundary has been determined by Natural England as a buffer area to regulate development near the SPA. ~~It is possible that certain types of development within this area may affect the SPA. They would therefore require an Appropriate Assessment under the Habitat Regulations Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) to determine whether or not they would have an adverse effect on the integrity of the SPA. However, it is possible that certain types of development up to 7km from the boundary of the SPA could have an impact on the SPA. Proposals for new residential development of one or more net additional dwellings up to 5km from the boundary of the SPA and residential development of over 50 dwellings located between 5 and 7km of the boundary of the SPA will therefore require screening to assess whether they will have a likely significant effect on an adverse effect on the integrity of the SPA. Where necessary, a significant effect exists or cannot be excluded, an Appropriate Assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 would need to be undertaken.~~ Proposals will only be permitted if they do not adversely affect the integrity of the SPA. The Thames Basin Heaths SPA Delivery Framework will be used to guide assessment and any avoidance or mitigation measures that may be needed. The provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to attract new residents away from the SPA is a key part of these avoidance measures together with strategic access management on the SPA and monitoring. Since the level of development expected to come forward in this area of the District is extremely low, the Council will explore opportunities for cross boundary working in this regard. Alternatively, SANG may be provided by developers for individual developments where it complies with Natural England's guidelines and there is an appropriate contribution to strategic access management and monitoring. In all cases SANGs will need to be agreed with Natural England.

An Appropriate Assessment of all Core Strategy policies has been carried out to ensure that the Core Strategy will not be detrimental to the conservation objectives of European sites. This concluded that the Core Strategy, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of any of the European sites within the District or those within 5 km of the District boundary.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are nationally designated sites which have important wildlife or geological value. There are currently 51 SSSIs within West Berkshire covering 1470 hectares.

The District contains a range of habitats and geological features of local significance designated as Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites. Local Wildlife Sites <sup>(51)</sup> are non-statutory sites of significant value for the conservation of wildlife. These sites represent local character and distinctiveness and have an important role to play in

meeting local and national targets for biodiversity conservation. Site selection criteria have been devised and agreed across the three counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. Local Wildlife Site designations will continue to be assessed by the Council throughout the lifetime of this plan, following recommendations by the Berkshire Nature Conservation Forum, in order to keep them up to date. There are currently 493 Local Wildlife Sites covering 6325 hectares.

Site selection criteria for Local Geological Sites have been drawn up by the Berkshire Geoconservation Group and there are currently five sites in West Berkshire covering 150 hectares.

Habitats and Species of Principal Importance for Biodiversity in England are published by the Government under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Ancient woodland is also identified as important in PPS9 and is the most extensive natural habitat remaining in West Berkshire. Ancient semi natural woodland currently covers 2894 hectares. There are a further 1164 hectares of plantation on ancient woodland sites which could potentially be restored.

Regulation 37 of the Habitats Regulations<sup>(52)</sup> requires the encouragement of the management of features in the landscape that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna. These features are defined as linear features or stepping stones which are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species. By protecting these natural habitats and networks across the District, the Council will be able to avoid or repair fragmentation and isolation of natural habitats and ultimately conserve and enhance our priority natural areas and the connections between them. This element of the policy closely links with the Green Infrastructure policy.

The Berkshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)<sup>(53)</sup> builds upon national and regional targets for biodiversity enhancement. Therefore the Council will seek opportunities to support the delivery of the Berkshire BAP. There are many opportunities for biodiversity and geological enhancement in all parts of the District and not just on identified sites.

Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA) have been identified by the Berkshire Nature Conservation Forum and agreed by the South East England Biodiversity Forum (SEEBF). There are 17 which have currently been identified across the District (see Appendix D 'Biodiversity Opportunity Areas'). BOAs do not represent a statutory designation or a constraint upon development, rather they are the areas where biodiversity improvements are likely to have the most beneficial results at a strategic scale. The Council will therefore pursue net gains for biodiversity in and around BOAs and projects which seek to enhance biodiversity within West Berkshire, particularly based on Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, will be supported.

The West Berkshire Living Landscape project is one example of where the Council is actively working to implement strategic biodiversity enhancements in partnership with the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT). There are other areas across the district where there may be the potential for similar projects, such as the Kennet Valley East BOA to the south of Reading.<sup>(54)</sup>

## Delivery and Monitoring

The Council will deliver this policy through a variety of mechanisms, but primarily through more detailed policies contained in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD and the development management process, together with partnership working in the Living Landscape project, the Pang, Kennet and Lambourn Countryside Projects, the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre and as a member of the Berkshire Nature Conservation Forum and the AONB Council of Partners.

Changes in areas of biodiversity importance; the condition of SSSIs; the distribution and status of selected species; and the active management of local sites will be reported in the AMR

## Policy CS 20

### Historic Environment and Landscape Character

In order to ensure that the diversity and local distinctiveness of the intrinsic landscape character of the District is protected conserved and enhanced, the natural, cultural and functional components of its character will be considered as a whole. In adopting this holistic approach, particular regard will be given to:

- a) The sensitivity of the area to change
- b) ~~The retention of the individual identity of separate settlements and parts thereof~~  
Ensuring that new development is appropriate in terms of location, scale and design in the context of the existing settlement form, pattern and character
- c) The conservation and, where appropriate, enhancement of heritage assets and their settings (including those designations identified in Box 1)
- d) Accessibility to and participation in the historic environment by the local community

Proposals for development should be informed by and respond to:

- a) the distinctive character areas and key characteristics identified in relevant landscape character assessments including Historic Landscape Characterisation for West Berkshire and Historic Environment Character Zoning for West Berkshire.
- b) features identified in various settlement character studies including Quality Design – West Berkshire Supplementary Planning Document, the Newbury Historic Character Study, Conservation Area Appraisals and community planning documents which have been adopted by the Council such as Parish Plans and Town and Village Design Statements.
- c) the nature of and the potential for heritage assets identified through the Historic Environment Record for West Berkshire and the extent of their significance.

One of the key issues facing West Berkshire is the conservation and enhancement of the distinctive local character of both the natural and built environment. The high quality diverse landscape character with its rich cultural and natural heritage contributes to the overall quality of life of everyone in the District. Using this as a positive tool in accommodating necessary change is an important challenge for element of the Core Strategy.

The character of the landscape <sup>(97)</sup> in West Berkshire is defined by historic processes that have shaped and formed the landscapes that exist today. Having an understanding of these processes and the way the historic environment of the District has influenced settlement patterns, ~~the individual identity of separate settlements~~ and ~~their sense of place of particular areas~~, is essential when accommodating future development. The conservation, protection and enhancement of the District's historic environment, including individual heritage assets and their settings, is therefore a key aim of the policy.

### **BOX 1**

#### **Historic environment designations in West Berkshire**

- 52 Conservation Areas
- Approximately 1900 Listed Buildings
- Approximately 90 Scheduled Monuments
- 12 Historic Parks and Gardens - 3 of which, Aldermaston Court, Sandlesford Priory and Shaw House, are currently on the English Heritage Register of 'Heritage at Risk'
- 1 Registered Battlefield, Newbury 1 (1643) - currently on the English Heritage Register of 'Heritage at Risk'
- Over 5000 other heritage assets recorded in the Historic Environment Record

~~The ability of a particular area to accommodate future growth without it having any adverse effects on its character will continue to be an important factor when considering the future location and nature of development. It is essential that new development should help sustain and/or create landscapes with a strong sense of place and local identity. Conserving and enhancing the distinctive landscape character of the District is therefore given considerable weight in line with national and regional policy which acknowledges that landscape character varies and that a suitable approach to development in one part of the District may not be acceptable in another part.~~

74% of the District is part of the North Wessex Downs AONB which adjoins the Chilterns AONB along the River Thames, the District boundary, before sweeping south, encircling Newbury, to encompass the northern reaches of the rolling chalk hills of the Hampshire Downs. The AONB is characterised by the quality of its chalk landscape which ranges from remote open downland, dramatic skyline escarpments, contrasting wooded downland, and the small scale intimate settled river valleys of the Lambourn and Pang.

Outside the AONB the River Kennet from Newbury to Reading lies within a distinctive broad corridor of an open lowland landscape characterised by a variety of wetland habitats including wet meadow, reed bed and flooded gravel workings. Further south there are small areas of remnant heath with the Ministry of Defence also occupying large tracts of land at Aldermaston and Burghfield.

Settlements are a key component of the landscape and in West Berkshire most settlements can trace their origins back over many millennia. A variety of rural settlement forms can be seen from the nucleated patterns common on the chalk downs to the more dispersed patterns found in the southern part of the District. A key feature of even the larger settlements is the way in which few have coalesced in recent times and so the blurring of the physical distinction between places has largely been avoided. The ability

of a particular area to accommodate future growth without it having any adverse effects on its character will continue to be an important factor when considering the future location and nature of development.

It is essential that new development should help sustain and/or create landscapes with a strong sense of place and local identity and this is another key aim of the policy. The policy aims to will protect and enhance this diversity and local distinctiveness through the use of Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) rather than through the use of local landscape designations. This provides the framework for informed decisions to be made as to whether different landscapes should evolve by:

- Conserving the existing and historic character;
- Enhancing existing character by introducing new features into the landscape;
- Strengthening or restoring a previous character; or
- Creating a new character when a sense of place and local distinctiveness have been eroded or lost.

There are a number of relevant landscape assessments covering the District, including the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Landscape Character Assessment<sup>(98)</sup>, The Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment<sup>(99)</sup> and the Newbury District Landscape Assessment<sup>(100)</sup>. LCA is particularly valuable when looking at landscape sensitivity, whether that be the inherent sensitivity of the landscape itself or its sensitivity to a particular type of change.

In addition, Historic Landscape Characterisation<sup>(101)</sup> and Historic Environment Character Zoning<sup>(102)</sup> will be used by the Council to inform and support planning decisions. At a more detailed level these will be supplemented by the use of relevant settlement character studies, including the Newbury Historic Character Study<sup>(103)</sup> and adopted Conservation Area Appraisals. The Council is currently undertaking a programme of Conservation Area Reviews, through the production of Conservation Area Appraisals. These will be formally adopted and published by the Council to support the policies contained within this Core Strategy and other subsequent DPDs. The Council also intends to compile a 'local list' of heritage assets across the District which will be used to support and inform policies.

It is essential that as the landscape evolves in a holistic way it also reflects the value that the public places on it. The Council actively encourages the production of community planning documents such as Town and Village Design Statements and Parish Plans and where they have been adopted or endorsed by the Council will use them to inform and support the policies contained within this Core Strategy and other subsequent DPDs.

Successful conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and landscape character of the District can only be achieved through partnership and co-operation. To this end the Council will work with the heritage sector to produce a Historic Environment Action Plan (HEAP). This will provide a strategic view of the historic environment resource in the District, identify key issues and opportunities and produce a targeted action plan. By promoting a multi-agency approach to the management of the historic environment it aims to increase public understanding and enjoyment and promote local community participation in the management of the historic environment.

### **Delivery and Monitoring**

The Council will deliver this policy through a variety of mechanisms, but primarily through more detailed policies contained in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD, and the development management process, as a partner in the production of the West Berkshire Historic Environment Action Plan and by actively supporting the West Berkshire Heritage Forum as a mechanism for engaging communities and interest groups.

The number of Listed Buildings, Battlefields, and Historic Parks and Gardens at risk, together with the number of Conservation Areas with an up to date Conservation Area Appraisal will be reported in the AMR.



## Monitoring Framework

Amend tables as follows:

<b>Policy SP1 – Spatial Strategy and Policies SPADPP2-6 are monitored through the whole range of indicators for the Core Policies and are linked to all of the Core Strategy Objectives</b>			
Core Strategy Outcome	Delivery Indicators	Target	Data Source
A focus on previously developed land	Core H3: New and converted dwellings on PDL  Core BD2: Employment floorspace <u>by type</u> on PDL	60% of new development on PDL over plan period	<del>Berkshire JSPU and in house monitoring</del>
Development in accord with the spatial strategy	Dwelling completions within settlements of District Hierarchy and geographical areas	Distribution in accordance with Policies <del>SP1– SP6</del> ADPP2 - ADPP6	In house monitoring
<b>Policy CS1 – Delivering New Homes and Retaining the Housing Stock</b>			
<b>Linked Objectives - 2: Housing Growth, 3: Housing Needs</b>			
Core Strategy Outcome	Delivery Indicators	Target	Data Source
Housing Delivery to <del>meet requirements of South East Plan of</del> <u>10,500 additional homes</u>	Core H1: Plan period and housing targets	Maintaining residual annual average rates of completions	<del>Berkshire JSPU and in house monitoring</del>
	Core H2: Housing trajectory	To maintain at least a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites	In house monitoring
	Completions on windfall sites	To assess trends	In house monitoring
A focus on previously developed land	Core H3: New and converted dwellings on PDL	60% of new development on PDL over plan period	<del>Berkshire JSPU and in house monitoring</del>
Development of allocated sites	Housing completions on allocated sites	Phased development to maintain housing land supply	In house monitoring
<b>Policy CS2 – Housing Distribution</b>			
<b><u>Linked Objectives – 2: Housing Growth, 3: Housing Needs, 4: Economy, 5: Infrastructure Requirements, 6: Transport</u></b>			

Core Strategy Outcome	Delivery Indicators	Target	Data Source
Housing distribution in accordance with spatial strategy	Housing completions within settlements of District Hierarchy and areas of District	Distribution in accordance with Policies SP1 – SP6 and CS2	In house monitoring
A focus on previously developed land	Core H3: New and converted dwellings on PDL	60% of new development on PDL over plan period	Berkshire JSPU and in house monitoring
Development of allocated sites	Housing completions on allocated sites	Phased development to maintain housing land supply	In house monitoring

**Policy CS3 – Newbury Racecourse Strategic Site Allocation**

**Policy CS4 – Sandford Strategic Site Allocation**

**Linked Objectives - 2: Housing Growth**

Core Strategy Outcome	Delivery Indicators	Target	Data Source
Development of strategic sites with associated infrastructure	Housing completions	Phased delivery	In house monitoring
	Completed infrastructure projects	Meet requirements set out in infrastructure delivery plan.	Service providers and in house monitoring

**Policy CS5 – Housing Type and Mix**

**Linked Objectives - 2: Housing Growth, 3: Housing Needs**

Core Strategy Outcome	Delivery Indicators	Target	Data Source
Delivery of a mix of housing types and sizes	Density of new development	Higher densities in more accessible locations. Further density targets for different parts of the District may be set out in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD or through SPD.	In house monitoring
	Housing mix by type and size on completed sites	Mix of housing types and sizes to reflect local needs	In house monitoring

**Policy CS6 – Infrastructure Requirements and Delivery**

**Linked Objectives - 3: Housing Needs, 5: Infrastructure Requirements, 7: Transport**

Core Strategy Outcome	Delivery Indicators	Target	Data Source
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Delivery of infrastructure to meet community needs	Completed infrastructure projects in accordance with infrastructure delivery plan	Meet requirements set out in infrastructure delivery plan.	Service providers and in house monitoring
	Developer contributions through Section 106 legal agreements	Development to meet requirements set out in SPG "Delivering Investment through Sustainable Development" or any replacement guidance.	In house monitoring

**Policy CS7– Affordable Housing**

**Linked Objectives - 3: Housing Needs**

Core Strategy Outcome	Delivery Indicators	Target	Data Source
Affordable Housing to meet local needs	Core H5: Gross affordable housing completions	35% of total net completions over plan period to meet South East Plan target	In house monitoring
	Net affordable completions		
	Location of completions		
	Applications including contribution to affordable housing	100% of applications where policy applies	In house monitoring
	Amount paid in financial contributions for the provision of affordable housing	No target	In house monitoring

**Policy CS8– Rural Exception Sites**

**Linked Objectives - 3: Housing Needs**

Core Strategy Outcome	Delivery Indicators	Target	Data Source
Affordable Housing to meet local needs in rural areas	Gross affordable housing completions on rural exception sites	To meet local needs demonstrated through Local Housing Needs Surveys	In house monitoring
	Location of completions		

**Policy CS9– Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

**Linked Objectives - 3: Housing Needs**

Core Strategy Outcome	Delivery Indicators	Target	Data Source
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Provide requirement set out in South East Plan To meet identified needs	Core H4: Net additional pitches	Target will be set in partial review of South East Plan Target to be determined following update to evidence base - current evidence indicates 4 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers up to 2011 and up to 4 for Travelling Showpeople up to 2017.	In house monitoring
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**Policy CS9A- Nuclear Installations - AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield**

**Linked Objectives - 3: Housing Growth**

Core Strategy Outcome	Delivery Indicators	Target	Data Source
Development in accordance with spatial strategy. Preservation of demographic characteristics in area of the two facilities	Commitments and completions of residential and commercial development within the defined boundaries of the DEPZ	To ensure population does not exceed recommendations of Health and Safety Executive	In house monitoring in conjunction with the HSE NII and the Planning Departments of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, Reading Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council on an annual basis.

**Policy CS10- Employment and the Economy**

**Policy CS 11 – The Rural Economy**

**Linked Objectives - 4: Economy, 8: Retail**

Core Strategy Outcome	Delivery Indicators	Target	Data Source
Support economic development and provision of diverse range of job opportunities	Core BD1: total amount of additional employment floorspace by type	No target but assess trend  Target set out in ELA 2007. Requirements to 2026:  B1 = 121,000 sq. m.  B8 = 24,000 sq. m.  B2 = -65,000 sq. m.  Targets may be	Berkshire JSPU and In house monitoring

		<u>updated in any future ELA</u>	
	Core BD3: Employment land available <u>by type</u>	No target but assess trend	<del>Berkshire JSPU and In house monitoring</del>
	Amount of floorspace developed for employment by type in employment or regeneration areas	No target but assess trend	<del>Berkshire JSPU and In house monitoring</del>
	Losses of employment land <u>by type</u>	No target but assess trend	<del>Berkshire JSPU and In house monitoring</del>
<b>Policy CS12 - Hierarchy of Centres</b>			
<b>Linked Objectives - 8: Retail</b>			
Core Strategy Outcome	Delivery Indicators	Target	Data Source
Attractive and vibrant town and district centres	Core BD4: Total amount of floorspace for town centre uses	No target, assess trends	<del>Berkshire JSPU and In house monitoring</del>
	Retail vacancy rates	No target, assess trends	In house monitoring
<b>Policy CS13- Equestrian/Racehorse Industry</b>			
<b>Linked Objectives - 3: Housing Needs, 4: Economy</b>			
Core Strategy Outcome	Delivery Indicators	Target	Data Source
Support for Equestrian/Racehorse Industry	Commitments and completions of equestrian related development	No target, assess trends	<del>Berkshire JSPU and In house monitoring</del>
<b>Policy CS14 - Transport</b>			
<b><u>Linked Objectives - 1: Tackling Climate Change, 7: Transport</u></b>			
Core Strategy Outcome	Delivery Indicators	Target	Data Source
More sustainable travel and improved accessibility to services	Accessibility of new residential development – percentage within 30 minute public transport time of specific facilities	To assess trends.	In house monitoring
	Sustainable travel to schools - percentage of pupils arriving at primary and secondary school by car	To reduce the percentage of pupils arriving at school by car	In house monitoring

	Additional indicators set out in Local Transport Plan		
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<b>Policy CS15 – Design Principles</b>			
<b>Linked Objectives - 1: Tackling Climate Change, 2: Housing Growth, 3: Housing Needs, 7: Transport, 9: Heritage</b>			
Core Strategy Outcome	Delivery Indicators	Target	Data Source
Improved design quality	Core H6: Housing quality – Building for Life Assessments	No target yet established, other than positive trend over time	In house assessments

<b>Policy CS16 – Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency</b>			
<b>Linked Objectives - 1: Tackling Climate Change, 2: Housing Growth</b>			
Core Strategy Outcome	Delivery Indicators	Target	Data Source
New development should support the aim of achieving sustainable development	Core E3: Renewable energy generation	Positive trend	Thames Valley Energy statistics and in house monitoring
	Number and percentage of developments meeting required BREEAM and Code for Sustainable Homes standard	100% of eligible applications	In house monitoring

<b>Policy CS17- Flooding</b>			
<b>Linked Objectives - 1: Tackling Climate Change</b>			
Core Strategy Outcome	Delivery Indicators	Target	Data Source
No increase in properties and people at risk from flooding	Core E1: Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding and water quality grounds	0	EA and in house monitoring
	The number of properties at risk from flooding (Flood Zones 2 and 3)	No increase in properties at risk from flooding	In house monitoring

<b>Policy CS18 Biodiversity and Geodiversity</b>			
<b>Linked Objectives - 6: Green Infrastructure, 9: Heritage</b>			
Core Strategy Outcome	Delivery Indicators	Target	Data Source
Protection and	Core E2: Changes in	To assess trends	Thames Valley

enhancement of biodiversity	areas of biodiversity importance		Environmental Records Centre (TVERC)
	Condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	Natural England target: 95% of area of SSSIs in favourable or recovering condition	TVERC
	Distribution and status of selected species	To assess trends	TVERC
	NI 197 Improved local biodiversity – active management of local sites	To assess trends	TVERC

**Policy CS19 - Green Infrastructure**

**Linked Objectives - 6: Green Infrastructure**

Core Strategy Outcome	Delivery Indicators	Target	Data Source
Provision of network of green infrastructure	Gains and losses of open space	To assess trends	In house monitoring
	Provision of new sports and recreation facilities	To assess trends	In house monitoring
	Open space managed to Green Flag Award Standards		In house monitoring

**Policy CS20 – Historic Environment and Landscape Character**

**Linked Objectives - 9: Heritage**

Core Strategy Outcome	Delivery Indicators	Target	Data Source
To respect and enhance the townscape and landscape character	Number of listed buildings at risk	Decrease in numbers	Heritage at Risk Register
	Number of battlefields and historic parks and gardens at risk	Decrease in numbers	Heritage at Risk Register
	Number of Conservation Areas and percentage with up to date Conservation Area Appraisal	All Conservation Areas to have Conservation Area Appraisal	In house monitoring

**Appendix B**

<b>Housing Land Availability Position at 31st December 2009 - March 2010</b>	
<b><del>South East Plan Requirement 2006 - 2026</del> <u>Housing Target 2006-2026</u></b>	<b>10,500</b>
Dwellings completed April 2006 - March <del>2009</del> <u>2010</u>	<del>2,275</del> <u>2,521</u>
Dwellings with outstanding planning permission at March <del>2009</del> <u>2010</u>	<del>2,228</del> <u>2,318</u>
<del>Dwellings granted planning permission April - Dec 2009</del> <u>Soft Commitments at March 2010 - approved subject to S106 (including 1,500 dwellings on Racecourse strategic site)</u>	<del>376</del> <u>1,588</u>
Subtotal of dwellings completed and with planning permission at <del>Dec 2009</del>	<del>4,879</del> <u>6,427</u>
Remaining dwellings for which land is required to 2026	<del>5,621</del> <u>4,073</u>
<u>Sandleford Strategic site allocations</u>	<u>2,450</u> <u>1,000</u>
Small site windfall allowance for period 2019-21 - 2026	<u>490</u> <u>350</u>
Identified sites, allocations in Sites Allocation and Delivery DPD	<del>2,681</del> <u>2,723</u>

<b>Housing Distribution: Settlement Hierarchy</b>					
<b>Tier of Hierarchy</b>	<b>Completions to March 2009 (based on parish figures)</b>	<b>Commitments at March 2009</b>	<b>New permissions March - Dec 2009</b>	<b>Approx Additional Requirement</b>	<b>Approximate Total</b>
<b>Urban Areas</b>					
Newbury, Thatcham and Eastern Urban Area	1,323	1,219	232	4,126	6,900
<b>Rural Service Centres</b>					
Burghfield	215	511	51	1,223	2,000



Common, Hungerford, Lambourn, Mortimer, Pangbourne and Theale					
<b>Service Villages</b>  Aldermaston, Bradfield Southend, Chieveley, Gold Ash, Compton, Great Shefford, Hermitage, Kintbury and Woolhampton	427	329	7	337	1,100
Remainder of West Berkshire	310	169	86	-	500
<b>Total</b>	<b>2275</b>	<b>2228</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>5,621</b>	<b>10,500</b>

Housing Distribution: Spatial Areas

Spatial Area	Completions to March 2009 2010 (based on parish figures)	Commitments at March 2009 2010	New permissions March-Dec 2009-Soft Commitments	Approx Additional Requirement	Approximate Total
Newbury/Thatcham	4202 1,340	4068 1,119	237 1,588	3,793 2,253	6,300
Eastern Area	206 188	598 561	4	692 651	1,500 1,400
AONB	627 702	434 459	71	968 839	2,100 2,000
East Kennet Valley	262 291	150 179	65	323 330	800
<b>Total</b>	<b>2275 2,521</b>	<b>2228 2,318</b>	<b>376 1,588</b>	<b>5621 4,073</b>	<b>10,500</b>

*Note: figures do not total as Spatial Areas have a degree of overlap*

The housing land supply position will be reviewed annually and reported in the AMR, together with the specific list of deliverable sites which form the five year land supply required by PPS3.

## Glossary

### Limited Infill Development

#### Explanation

Minor development within settlement boundaries which may consist of development in a gap in an otherwise built-up frontage, development on previous undeveloped land or small-scale redevelopment.

Affordable Housing Definition:

*Delete last sentence of definition*

It is important that affordable housing units are retained within affordable housing stock in perpetuity, regardless of tenure.

### Strategic Road Network

A national network of major roads which are managed by the Highways Agency. In West Berkshire the M4 and the A34 are part of the Strategic Road Network.

# Possible Inspector Proposed Change

## Policy CS 16

### Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency

#### Residential Development

New residential development will meet the following minimum standards of construction:

Minor development – Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3

Major development(76) – Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4

From 2013: All development – Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4

From 2016: All development – Code for Sustainable Homes Level 6

#### Non-Residential Development

New non-residential development will meet the following minimum standards of construction:

Minor development – BREEAM Very Good

Major development – BREEAM Excellent

From 2013: All development – BREEAM Excellent

### **Renewable Energy**

Major development<sup>27</sup> shall achieve the following minimum reductions in total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (regulated and unregulated energy use)<sup>28</sup> from renewable energy or low/zero carbon energy generation on site or in the locality of the development as long as a direct physical connection is used, unless it can be demonstrated that such provision is not technically or economically viable.

The percentage reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions should be based on the estimated CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of the development after the installation of energy efficiency measures related to either the Code for Sustainable Homes, BREEAM or equivalent method has been applied.

Residential Development:

A 10% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions  
from 2014: A 20% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions  
from 2016: Zero Carbon<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> For dwellings: where 10 or more are to be constructed, or if the site is more than 0.5 hectares. For all other uses: where the floor space will be 1000sq metres or greater. Floor space is defined as the sum of the floor area within the building measured to the external wall faces at each level.

<sup>28</sup> Unregulated emissions are those arising from energy used within the dwelling for cooking and appliances. The standard assessment procedure does not account for such energy uses, but the ZCH standard requires these emissions to be offset

<sup>29</sup> Requirements for zero carbon in line with stated Government aspirations, which may be subject to change.

Non-Residential Development:

A 10% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions  
from 2014: A 20% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions  
from 2019: Zero Carbon<sup>30</sup>

### Explanation of Policy

Carbon reduction is a key issue for West Berkshire. Sustainable construction and Renewable energy generation can help in achieving emissions reduction. Cost implications of installing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction measures from the start of the development are less than if they were retro-fitted afterwards. In addition, the benefits derived by the end user in relation to reduced heating and fuel bills will be enhanced.

West Berkshire District is one of the highest electricity users in the south east and is in the upper quartile of local authorities for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions within the region.<sup>31</sup> Fuel poverty levels in West Berkshire are also high, compared to other authorities.<sup>32</sup> This is clear evidence and justification that West Berkshire needs to do more to meet national *and regional* targets in relation to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction.

### Code for Sustainable Homes / BREEAM

The Code for Sustainable Homes<sup>33</sup> is the Government's preferred method for implementing zero carbon homes national sustainability standard for new homes. In addition BREEAM<sup>34</sup> (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) is a well established national assessment tool for non-residential buildings.

### Renewable Energy Generation

South East Plan policies NRM13 and NRM14 implement renewable energy targets for the sub-region. Further, Progress towards meeting these targets will on the implementation of renewable energy will need to be investigated through a future Renewable Energy Local Development Document SPD, which will highlight the potential in West Berkshire for commercial scale renewable energy. In order to reduce local carbon emissions and meet regional and national targets, a policy approach that supports and reflects the significant challenge ahead needs to be adopted. Any renewable energy schemes should be efficient.

### Existing Housing Stock

Measures to increase the adoption of retro-fitting energy efficiency measures for the existing housing stock may be explored in subsequent local development documents.

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<sup>30</sup> Requirements for zero carbon in line with stated Government aspirations, which may be subject to change.

<sup>31</sup> Department for Energy and Climate Change, Sub-national Energy Consumption Statistics Available at [www.decc.gov.uk](http://www.decc.gov.uk)

<sup>32</sup> Communities and Local Government, Places Analysis Tool, available at [www.pat.communities.gov.uk](http://www.pat.communities.gov.uk)

<sup>33</sup> <http://communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/buildingregulations/legislation/codesustainable/>

<sup>34</sup> Definition of BREEAM at <http://www.breeam.org/page.jsp?id=66>

### **Changes to national targets**

This policy may be revised and updated periodically, for example to reflect changing national and regional guidance or changing circumstances.

### **Thresholds**

The Council will carefully scrutinise proposals which appear to fall artificially below any thresholds which may indicate a possible attempt to avoid implementing the relevant measures described above.

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## **TOPIC PAPER TO SUPPORT THE POST-EXAMINATION PROPOSED FOCUSED CHANGES TO THE CORE STRATEGY**

### **Introduction**

This topic paper has been prepared in order to support the post examination proposed focused changes consultation for the West Berkshire Core Strategy.

These are the outcome of additional work on the Core Strategy which was necessary following the suspension of the Examination in November.

The Core Strategy examination began on 2 November 2010 and ran for 8 days. Under Inspector guidance, the Council asked for a suspension to the Examination at the end of the scheduled hearings to enable the Council to consider matters that had arisen from the discussions. The Examination was suspended on 11 November to enable the Council time to undertake the extra work that the Inspector had asked for

The Inspector published 2 notes (available on the Council's website at <http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=20791>) setting out matters highlighted in discussions at the hearings, with further work suggested for the Council to undertake. This has resulted in some focused and some minor changes to the submitted Core Strategy.

The focused changes require consultation under regulation 30 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008. The consultation will take place between 4 February and 18 March 2011. A schedule of responses will then be prepared and sent to the Inspector. Any minor amendments do not require consultation.

The Examination will then resume to allow the additional information to be examined. The Inspector has indicated that in terms of his timescales, the Examination process could resume on 2 May, with further hearing sessions to be held in late June/early July.

A sustainability appraisal has been carried out on the focused changes and this is also available as background information. The updated SHLAA and the detailed landscape sensitivity analysis is also available as part of the consultation.

## Inspector's Post Hearing Note 1

### 1. The planning response to the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) at Aldermaston and Burghfield and the advice from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

- 1.1. Following the suspension of the Examination a meeting was held between representatives of the Health and Safety Executive Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (HSE NII), Health and Safety Laboratories (HSL), Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, Reading Borough Council, Wokingham Borough Council and West Berkshire Council at the end of November. The minutes of this meeting have been submitted to the Inspector and will be included on the list of Core Documents.
- 1.2. Details of all developments with planning permission and those which had been allocated in an approved DPD were then forwarded to the HSL for inclusion in their modelling work in December.
- 1.3. The HSE NII, has responded to West Berkshire Council stating that the proposal for an additional 330 dwellings in the East Kennet Valley in the Burghfield Common and Mortimer area ***“has no impact on the site population factors for AWE Burghfield. Accordingly, HSE can conclude that these forecasted levels of population, for residential development between now and 2016 and beyond to 2021 based on the very speculative forecasts, can be accommodated without breaching the semi urban population criteria for constraint limits”*** (West Berkshire Council emphasis).
- 1.4. The Council has introduced a new policy and changes to the proposals map to reflect this.

### Zone of Extendibility

- 1.5. During the course of the examination the issue of an extendable Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) was raised in relation to evacuation purposes and the emergency plan. This issue has not been raised before by the HSE with the West Berkshire Emergency Planning Officer or by any of the “Blue Light Services”, it has also not been used by the HSL in the additional modelling work recently undertaken and it is not referred to in the HSE letter or appendices.
- 1.6. The Council has therefore not included any proposals relating to the zone of extendibility.



## **Inspector's Post Hearing Note 2**

### **1. Justification of the Overall Housing Provision**

- 1.1. This section of the topic paper addresses the approach to the level of housing provision to be included in the Core Strategy. It has been produced in the light of changes to national planning policy and following the discussion at the examination hearing on Main Matter 3: Overall Housing Provision, Distribution and Delivery on 3 November 2010. The paper addresses the matters raised in the Inspector's note of 15 November 2010. The Inspector, in this note, considered that the Council had not sufficiently drawn conclusions on the factors that should be taken into account in determining the appropriate level of housing.
- 1.2. This paper therefore covers the factors that have influenced the proposed level of housing provision and how the Council has weighed the evidence to conclude that the Submission Core Strategy contains the most appropriate provision for the District.

### **Changing National and Regional Policy Context**

- 1.3. Preparation of the Core Strategy commenced in the context of an emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South East. The draft RSS published in March 2006 indicated that 10,500 homes, an average of 525 dwellings per annum should be built in West Berkshire from 2006 to 2026.
- 1.4. The emerging South East Plan was subject to an Examination in Public in November 2006 – March 2007. The report of the examination panel recommended to the Secretary of State an increase of 7,500 homes in West Berkshire, specifically to accommodate a strategic development area at south Reading (north of the M4).
- 1.5. This proposed increase for West Berkshire was not subject to a sustainability appraisal and was not carried through into the South East Plan adopted in May 2009. The location proposed for the strategic development area was primarily in the functional floodplain and the prospective developer has since indicated that the site is no longer considered viable for this scale of development. The consortium and landowner agreement has been terminated.
- 1.6. The adopted South East Plan contains a housing target, in Policy H1: Regional Housing Provision, of 10,500 dwellings, an average annual provision of 525 net dwellings. Most of West Berkshire lies within the Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley sub-region. Policy WCBV3: Scale and Distribution of Housing Development sets out the requirement for 9,500 dwellings in this part of the District with the remaining 1,000 dwellings, an average of 50 additional units per annum, to be provided in the area outside the Western Corridor (AOSR1).
- 1.7. With the change in Government, the new Secretary of State made clear his intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies. The revocation of the RSS on 6 July 2010 was quashed by the High Court and the RSS re-instated as part of the Development Plan in November 2010. This was during the course of the examination hearings into the West Berkshire Core Strategy,

but after the discussions on the overall housing provision had taken place. Though the Government has clearly signalled its intention to abolish all RSSs through the publication of the Localism Bill in December 2010, the South East Plan will still be in place when the Core Strategy hearings resume in the summer of 2011.

- 1.8. Section 19 of the 2004 Act deals with the preparation of local development documents (LDD) and 19 (2) states that a local planning authority must have regard to: (a) national policies, (b) the regional strategy (f) the sustainable community strategy, (i) the resources likely to be available for implementing the proposals in the document and (j) such other matters as the Secretary of State prescribes.
- 1.9. Furthermore, Section 24 (1) specifies that a LDD must be in general conformity with the regional strategy, this requirement is also repeated in PPS 12.

### **Consultation and Council's approach to West Berkshire's Housing Requirement**

- 1.10. The original figure submitted to the Regional Spatial Strategy examination was 10,500 additional dwellings over the plan period (the Option 1 number). This represents a continuation of the requirement in the former Berkshire Structure Plan 2001 - 2016 and was the figure recommended by the Council in 2005, following public consultation between September and October 2005 on the Draft South East Plan. It was assessed as a balanced level of development, taking into account demographic needs of the community and the ability to deliver housing, whilst allowing for a realistic and deliverable amount of affordable housing through the planning system. With regard to economic needs the 525 per annum figure was considered by the Council to be appropriate to foster the economy and allow for the local workforce.
- 1.11. The figure of 525 dwellings per annum was also agreed by the other Unitary Authorities in Berkshire as appropriate in meeting the needs of the economy, the needs of the community whilst reflecting the environmental constraints of the District.
- 1.12. The Council responded to consultation on the South East Plan in 2006 with broad support for the majority of the principles, including the scale and distribution of housing in the sub-region, subject to environmental designations being properly addressed and the provision of appropriate infrastructure.
- 1.13. The Council consulted on the Core Strategy "Options for Delivering Homes" in November 2007. At that time, the report of the Panel into the South East Plan had been published. The Council took the approach that in looking at potential options, it should be looking at how the 10,500 dwellings requirement could be met and this formed the basis of the consultation. The additional 7,500 homes recommended by the Panel were specifically associated with the expansion of Reading and the location, which was primarily in the functional floodplain, broadly identified in the Panel Report. The "Options for Delivering Homes" consultation document estimated that sites for approximately 4,000 dwellings would need to be identified through

the LDF process in order to ensure delivery of the 10,500 dwelling requirement of the emerging South East Plan.

- 1.14. The “Options for the Future” consultation in April 2009 proposed to plan for the delivery of approximately 11,000 homes. This was in order to meet the South East Plan requirement plus an allowance for under-provision of 451 units in the plan period up to 2006. At that time there was uncertainty over whether any under- or over-provision had been included within the South East Plan figure, and the Council wanted to ensure flexibility was built into the Core Strategy. In October 2009 the Government Office confirmed that the 2006 RSS baseline figures included an estimate for previous undersupply (CD07/28). In the light of this, the Proposed Submission Core Strategy proposed provision be made for approximately 10,500 new homes, to conform to Policy H1 of the South East Plan. This figure was not intended to be a ceiling but a deliverable target, with the Core Strategy demonstrating how this could be met with flexibility built in to respond to changing circumstances or requirements.
- 1.15. The requirement to conform to the South East Plan remains as a legal requirement under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 S20(5)(a), as the RSS forms part of the Development Plan. Nevertheless the Council has carried out some further analysis of the factors set out in PPS3 to justify the level of housing required, including recent information and policy directions which were either not available or apparent at the time of submission of the Core Strategy. The explanatory text to Policy CS1 in the Core Strategy has been expanded to clarify the decision of the Council to retain the 10,500 new home requirement in conformity with the adopted South East Plan.

### **Assessing an appropriate level of housing for West Berkshire**

- 1.16. On revocation of the RSS, guidance (CD11/01) was issued to local planning authorities to clarify how they could continue to bring forward their LDFs. On the issue of housing provision this guidance is clear that local planning authorities will be responsible for establishing the right level of housing, that the process needs to be transparent and that policies will need to be justified and defended during the LDF examination process. Despite the Court’s verdict on the legality of the revocation, the advice from the Department for Communities and local Government (DCLG) is that planning authorities should still have regard to the intention to abolish Regional Strategies in the Localism Bill as a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 1.17. Pending the introduction of the Government’s new National Planning Framework, PPS3 has been retained. Paragraphs 32 to 35 of the PPS, last published in June 2010, set out the approach to assessing an appropriate level of housing. However, the approach in the PPS is still based on the regional structure and not all of this section is therefore directly applicable to the determination of an appropriate level of housing by local planning authorities.
- 1.18. Paragraph 32 states that the level of housing provision should be determined taking a strategic, evidence-based approach that takes into account relevant local, sub-regional and national policies achieved through

widespread collaboration with stakeholders. The Council believes that the level of 10,500 additional dwellings has been determined in this manner, subject to significant consultation and to prior examination through the South East Plan as well as the Core Strategy.

1.19. Paragraph 33 of PPS3 refers to a number of factors to be taken into account in determining housing provision which continue to have relevance. These are:

- Evidence of current and future levels of need and demand for housing and affordability levels based upon:
  - Local and sub-regional evidence of need and demand<sup>1</sup>, set out in Strategic Housing Market Assessments and other relevant market information such as long-term house prices.
  - Advice from the National Housing and Planning Advice Unit (NHPAU) on the impact of the proposals for affordability in the region.
  - The Government's latest published household projections and the needs of the regional economy, having regard to economic growth forecasts.
- Local and sub-regional evidence of the availability of suitable land for housing using Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments.
- The Government's overall ambitions for affordability across the housing market area, including the need to improve affordability and increase housing supply.
- Sustainability Appraisal
- An assessment of the impact of development upon existing or planned infrastructure and of any new infrastructure required.

1.20. Paragraphs 34 and 35 relate to Regional Spatial Strategies. Paragraph 34 states that the RSS should set out the level of overall housing provision to enable local planning authorities to plan for housing over a period of at least 15 years. This level has been set out for West Berkshire in the South East Plan.

### **Factors set out in PPS3 Paragraph 33**

#### **Evidence of current and future levels of need and demand for housing and affordability levels.**

##### **Local evidence of need and demand**

1.21. The Council's evidence base for housing affordability and housing need is set out in the Berkshire Housing Market Assessment (HMA) of 2007 (CD09/14). Because of the timing of this study in relationship to the preparation of regional and local plans, the objective of the HMA and associated housing needs assessment was about informing the elements of policy that were not yet determined, including the type and tenure of development rather than the overall number of new dwellings.

1.22. The HMA found that Berkshire is split into two housing markets, one in the east strongly influenced by London, and one in the west (West Central Berkshire) comprising Reading, Wokingham, Bracknell Forest and West

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<sup>1</sup> PPS3 Annex B defines housing demand as the quantity of housing that households are willing and able to buy or rent.

Berkshire. The West Central housing market area is more self-contained with Reading as the main employment centre. The HMA brings out the strong functional relationship between West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham, supporting the strategic approach to assessing housing requirements.

- 1.23. The HMA looks at the drivers of the housing market, both housing demand and housing need. It examines population and household formation as well as external and economic drivers of demand and the historic supply of new housing. The HMA is clear that economic growth in the area will be contingent upon the provision of an increased supply of new dwellings, given that activity rates at the time were high and unemployment low in the housing market area. It also is clear that the provision of housing on the scale envisaged in the RSS is challenging, particularly if market conditions change (this was written in 2007) and that a key challenge to delivering the allocation appears to be environmental, given the extensive areas of land with high-order environmental designations. It should also be noted that the HMA did not take account of the HSE NII issues surrounding AWE.

### **Affordability**

- 1.24. Appendix A of the HMA sets out the methodology of the Housing Needs Assessment and Appendix B presents the calculation by Unitary Authority. Estimating the number of households unable to afford to meet their housing needs in the housing market is a key element of understanding the nature of the local housing market and formed an integral part of the Berkshire HMA.
- 1.25. The estimates were produced in accordance with the methodology in the CLG draft Housing Market Assessment Guidance. A minimum and upper estimate of housing need was calculated for each authority. Housing need in West Berkshire was assessed at a minimum of 560 and a maximum of 730 units per annum under a baseline scenario. Alternative scenarios illustrated housing need if household growth were to occur above the projections current at the time. Assuming a 50% increase in population growth, the housing need was estimated to be between 680 and 850 units per annum.
- 1.26. The key conclusion of the assessment is that the level of need in each authority and across Berkshire as a whole far exceeds what can realistically be delivered in the future in terms of affordable housing supply, and also exceeds the total housing allocation for Berkshire.
- 1.27. The HMA stresses that the ability to deliver new affordable housing and create mixed communities is highly dependent on the delivery of new market housing. Though the HMA does not consider the issue of overall demand for housing it points out the importance of the Berkshire authorities remaining on track to adopt local development documents, particularly in relation to the allocation of sites.

## House Prices

- 1.28. West Berkshire has traditionally been an expensive place to buy property. While the economic downturn has seen house prices fall slightly, they remain consistently some £50,000 higher than the national average. The HMA identifies the influence of London with the highest house prices in the Berkshire area in the eastern half of West Berkshire and in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. The need for affordable housing is far greater than the market's ability to deliver, having a knock-on effect on other aspects of the District, such as the economy, health and education.

### **Advice from the National Housing and Planning Advice Unit (NHPAU) on the impact of the proposals for affordability in the region.**

- 1.29. The advice from the NHPAU relates to the region as a whole and is no longer applicable to the local determination of the appropriate housing requirement. The NHPAU was recently closed by the Government and its advice on the impact of proposed housing levels in West Berkshire cannot be sought.
- 1.30. Nevertheless recent reports published by the NHPAU contain some useful pointers to interpreting the evidence for housing demand. The Advice Unit's paper<sup>2</sup> of May 2009 looked at the impact of the changing economic context and the national household projections released in March 2009. These projections indicate a higher level of household growth compared to the previous 2004-based projections, with the growth attributable to net immigration accounting for two-fifths of the total. The paper concludes that accessibility to both the market and social sectors has dramatically contracted, whilst housing pressures continue to rise. Levels of building are dropping to historically low levels across the country, whilst projections of future housing requirements are rising. It emphasises how critical it is to get delivery moving by having the right plans in place, based on long term requirements, not distorted by current events.
- 1.31. The NHPAU published two papers in July 2009 commenting on the national picture. In the paper "Building the right homes in the right places"<sup>3</sup> the Unit highlights two main factors that are likely to have a significant impact on the number of extra homes we will need over the next 20 years: the likelihood that there will be more households wanting homes, even after allowing for the impact that the recession may have on net migration to the country and the impact of the recession on income growth, which is likely to dampen demand for housing for a number of years. These factors will to some extent cancel each other out with the net result likely to be a small increase in the number of homes we need to build. The report does point out the appropriateness of using housing market areas when deciding on allocations: it is not always possible or appropriate to build in the areas of greatest pressure as some places will have overriding environmental or physical constraints, and building homes in one area will also affect affordability across a wider geographical area.

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<sup>2</sup> Housing requirements and the impact of recent economic and demographic change: NHPAU, May 2009

<sup>3</sup> More homes for more people: building the right homes in the right places: NHPAU, July 2009

1.32. In the Unit's July 2009 advice on housing levels to be considered in regional plans<sup>4</sup> the central message is that the recession will have little impact on the number of homes that need to be built over the next 20 years. There are serious economic and social consequences if the supply and demand for housing is not brought back towards balance and the backlog of unmet need at the national level tackled. The NHPAU used their demographic method to derive a housing supply range to be tested. They advised that changes to the housing supply ranges should be set half-way between old figures and numbers suggested by latest demographic evidence. In the South East they advise testing a bottom of the range increase of 1% and top of the range increase of 8%.

### The Government's latest published household projections

1.33. The Government's latest published household projections for West Berkshire are provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The DCLG published its latest set of household projections on 26 November 2010 after the timetabled hearings for the West Berkshire Core Strategy had concluded. They were not, therefore, part of the evidence base on submission of the Core Strategy. Table 1 shows a comparison with previous sets of DCLG/ODPM projections which are based on the corresponding demographic trend-led Office for National Statistics (ONS) population projections. The 2008-based projections show an increase of 16,000 (27.1%) households over the plan period 2006 to 2026. These projections superseded the 2006-based sub-regional household projections (published in March 2009) which suggested an increase of 14,000(23.3%) households over the plan period, which in turn superseded the 2004 based projection (published in February 2008), of an increase of 9,000 (15.3%) households between 2006 and 2026. Neither the 2006- or 2008-based projections were available at the time the South East Plan was in preparation.

**Table 1**

DCLG/ODPM Household Projections	Households (thousands)		Household Change 2006 - 2026	
	2006	2026	Number	Percentage
2008-based (26 Nov 2010)	59	75	16,000	27.1
2006-based (11 Mar 2009)	60	74	14,000	23.3
Revised 2004-based (28 Feb 2008)	59	68	9,000	15.3

**Source: Department for Communities and Local Government – Household Estimates and Projections**

1.34. The household projections are highly dependent on the level and structure of population used as the baseline. The Revised 2004 Household projections used the information from the 2001 Census, whereas the 2006

<sup>4</sup> More homes for more people: advice to Ministers on housing levels to be considered in regional plans: NHPAU, July 2009

based and 2008 based household projections used the corresponding Mid Year Estimates. The projected level of household growth has increased substantially as population projections have also increased.

- 1.35. The 2008-based household projections and the corresponding ONS population projections for West Berkshire are considered high, largely because of the assumed high levels of projected in-migration. The population projections are discussed in more detail below.

### Population Projections for West Berkshire

- 1.36. The Office for National Statistics has produced a series of demographically-led population projections which have increased substantially from the 2004- based (equivalent to a projected increase of 3.7% over the plan period) to the 2008-based projection (equivalent to a 19.1% increase).

**Table 2**

Projection	Projected Population in thousands				
	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026
2008-based		155.3	162.3	170.1	177.2
2006-based	148.8	153.9	159.2	164.7	169.9
2004-based	145.2	145.5	146.7	148.6	150.5
2003-based	144.9	146.4	148.6	151.3	153.8

- 1.37. The projections are based on past trends. They show what the population will be if recent trends continue. They do not take account of future Government policy or local development policies that have not yet been implemented and take no account of dwelling supply.

- 1.38. The components of population change in recent years are shown in Table 3 and illustrated in Figure 1. They show how net migration has increased in recent years. For each year in the period 1996 to 2003 out-migration exceeded in-migration but since 2003 net migration has been positive.

**Table 3**

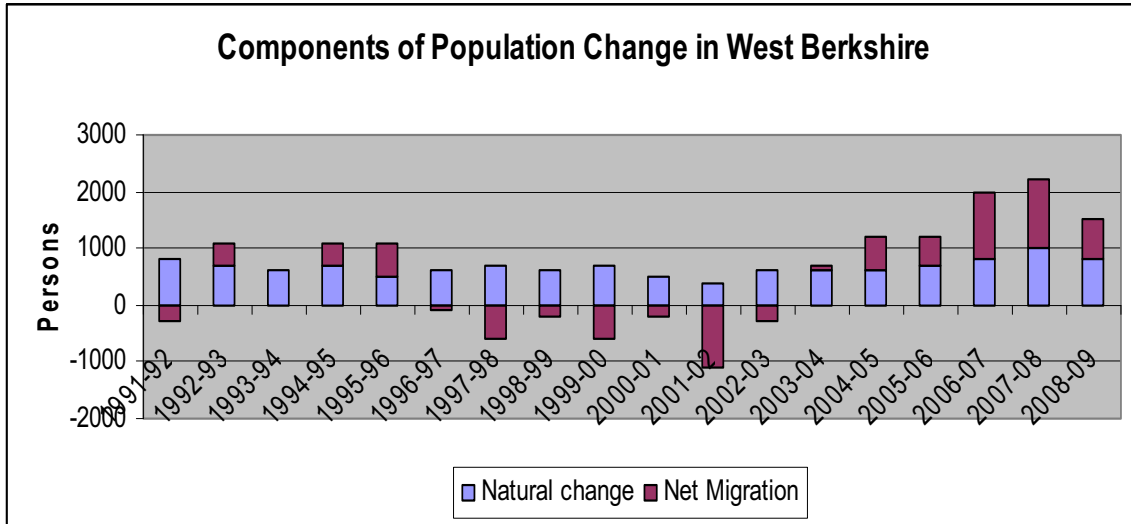
	Natural change	Net Migration	Population
1991-92	800	-300	139,300
1992-93	700	400	140,400
1993-94	600	0	141,000
1994-95	700	400	142,100
1995-96	500	600	143,100
1996-97	600	-100	143,600
1997-98	700	-600	143,700
1998-99	600	-200	144,100
1999-00	700	-600	144,200
2000-01	500	-200	144,500
2001-02	400	-1,100	143,800
2002-03	600	-300	144,100
2003-04	600	100	144,800
2004-05	600	600	146,000
2005-06	700	500	147,200



2006-07	800	1,200	149,300
2007-08	1000	1,200	151,400
2008-09	800	700	153,000

Source: Office for National Statistics – Mid Year Population Estimates.

**Figure 1**



1.39. The ONS projections are based on recent trends which may not necessarily be repeated within the Core Strategy period. These include a high point in the economic cycle, high levels of in-migration and high levels of dwelling completions. In the period from 2004 to 2008 dwelling completions averaged almost 945 per annum in West Berkshire, a rate that is unsustainable over a longer period given the environmental constraints of the District.

1.40. The components of change from the ONS 2008-based projection are set out in Table 4 below. The high levels of internal migration, (that is moves within England) have implications for projected total population change, the age structure of the population and consequently the level of births.

**Table 4**

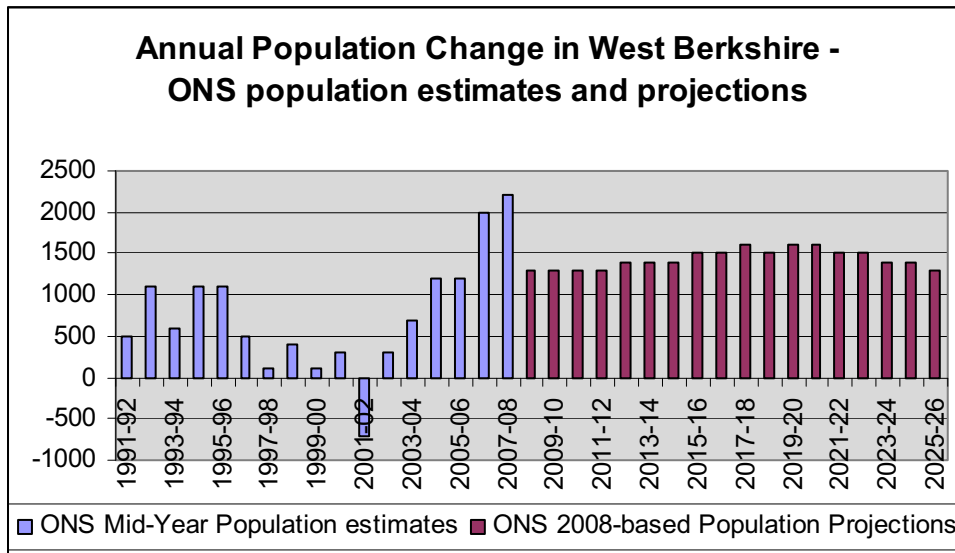
**Main components of population change in West Berkshire 2006 – 26: ONS 2008-based population projection**

	<b>Total change 2006 - 2026</b>	<b>Annual Average change 2006 – 2026</b>
Natural change	14,800	740
Internal Net Migration	18,900	950
Cross border Net Migration	-1,500	-80
International Net Migration	-3,600	-180
<b>Total change</b>	<b>28,400</b>	<b>1,420</b>

1.41. Longer term population trends within West Berkshire have showed cycles of growth and stability and the recent growth in population, largely due to net in-migration, is not typical of growth over the past two decades. The ONS projections only use a short-term trend, the preceding five-year period,

and therefore do not represent the longer term migration trends. Figure 2 below contrasts the estimated annual population change in the past with the continuous high levels of change suggested by the 2008-based ONS population projections.

**Figure 2**



**Economic Growth Forecasts**

1.42. West Berkshire is set within the Thames Valley - a buoyant economic sub-region. The District is surrounded by large towns which have been designated as Growth Points / Diamonds for Investment. Whilst the District can benefit from the knock-on effects of inward investment in these areas, West Berkshire seeks to continue to support its wealth of small and medium sized businesses, whilst encouraging large multi-national companies to locate in and remain located within the District.

1.43. The Employment Land Review (ELA, 2007) sets out the estimated supply of and demand for future employment land and floorspace in the District over the next 20 years.

1.44. Within the demand side the ELA takes the approach recommended within Government guidance note: Employment Land Reviews (ODPM, 2004), and sets out 3 approaches to estimate future requirements.

1. Labour Demand - estimates how the number of employees across different employment sectors could change in West Berkshire i.e. the demand for jobs.
2. Labour Supply - estimates the number of jobs likely to be required in different business sectors to meet the needs of future working residents, including an element of commuting (in and out), i.e. the availability of jobs.
3. Commercial led assessment - projection of recent trends in business property development in the District i.e. take up trends.

- 1.45. A best estimate of each use class was then taken forward to identify land requirements in West Berkshire.
- 1.46. These approaches are based on the regional growth forecasts and the delivery of 10,500 new homes over the Core Strategy period.
- 1.47. Economic forecasts produced by Cambridge Econometrics for the Berkshire unitary authorities in 2010 forecast a growth of just over 9,000 jobs between 2006 and 2026. Whilst Berkshire's complex commuting patterns do not encourage the drawing of too close a comparison between housing numbers and forecast economic growth, these figures do not suggest that the 10,500 housing figure is likely to worsen the balance significantly between the number of economically active residents and the number of local jobs over the Core Strategy period. Labour supply is not forecast to grow as fast as job growth because of stagnant activity rates and changing age structure, but the effects of the current recession and of later retirement ages are also likely to affect this balance.

**Table 5**  
**Forecasted Number of Total Jobs (Actual Numbers)**

	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026
West Berkshire	92,827	94,097	94,269	96,381	99,353	103,421
Berkshire	526,056	525,473	512,922	536,926	564,790	599,604

Source: Berkshire Observatory, Cambridge Econometrics 2010

### **Land Availability**

- 1.48. PPS3 indicates that evidence of availability of suitable land for housing should be taken into account. Evidence regarding land availability has been drawn from residential commitments monitoring and from the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), which includes an assessment of the five year deliverable supply.
- 1.49. These issues were subject to discussion in the examination hearings. The Council felt that it had demonstrated that sufficient sites had been identified to enable the delivery of the Strategy for each of the spatial areas, with sufficient alternative sites to enable choices to be made during the preparation of subsequent development plan documents.
- 1.50. The Inspector, however, felt that the Council had not produced a clear list of developable sites to demonstrate that the Core Strategy was deliverable, as the Council were relying on sites outside settlement boundaries, "currently not developable" to meet the requirement. The Council's approach had always been that the initial assessment contained within the SHLAA for these sites outside settlement boundaries and promoted by developers and agents, would be further evaluated through consultation and sustainability appraisals as part of the updated evidence base for the next stage of development plan preparation. The Sites Allocation and Delivery DPD would then allocate the smaller, non-strategic sites in conformity with the approved Core Strategy

- 1.51. The Council, at the Inspector's request, has therefore carried out further work on the SHLAA, particularly for the sites within the North Wessex Downs AONB, in order to produce a "basket of sites" which are considered potentially developable. This work is separately published and subject to consultation along with the proposed post-hearings changes to the Core Strategy. It demonstrates that there are potentially developable sites to more than meet both the total 10,500 requirement, and the requirements set out in the spatial policies for the different geographical areas of the District, with flexibility to make choices.
- 1.52. The Council is convinced that though land supply is not in itself a constraint, there are broader sustainability issues - environmental designations, flooding, AWE impact, historic environment, landscape character, infrastructure - which will pose constraints on overall development. The SHLAA only takes account of these to a limited degree as it makes an assessment of individual sites rather than the cumulative impact across the District.
- 1.53. In each of the geographical areas covered by the Area Delivery Plan Policies there are severe constraints on delivery. In the AONB, which covers three-quarters of the District, the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape will be the paramount consideration, in accordance with the Council's statutory duty of regard to the purpose of designation of the AONB. Though the SHLAA has classified a number of sites as not developable on grounds of landscape impact, those remaining as potentially developable need to be seen as alternatives – in some settlements the potential cumulative impact of development would be considerable. The SHLAA has indicated where there are particular issues and choices to be made.
- 1.54. In the Eastern Area, development is limited by the fact that the AONB abuts the Eastern Urban Area settlement boundary along much of its length and the area south of Reading is in the functional floodplain. In addition there are issues of infrastructure, particularly transport impact to take into consideration.
- 1.55. In the East Kennet Valley there are issues related to the AWE sites, AWE Aldermaston and AWE Burghfield in the area, which have meant a relatively limited level of development is proposed. The situation with regard to AWE will continue to be monitored and reviewed in conjunction with the HSE NII and neighbouring local authorities.
- 1.56. It is the Newbury/Thatcham area which has the greatest development potential and where the majority of growth is proposed to be focused. Nevertheless, there are also substantial constraints in this area, including highways infrastructure, flooding and issues related to conservation, historical character and landscape quality. There would also be potential delivery issues if development were focused too heavily on one particular area of the District. Thatcham has experienced rapid growth in the recent past and the Council's intention is that development over this Core Strategy plan period should be more modest.

## Government's overall ambitions for affordability

- 1.57. PPS3 paragraph 9 sets out the Government's key housing policy goal to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home, which they can afford, in a community where they want to live. To achieve this the Government is seeking to improve affordability, increase supply of housing and create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities in all areas, both urban and rural.
- 1.58. The Coalition Government has attempted to revoke Regional Spatial Strategies and its intention remains to remove the regional targets for delivery of new homes as set out in the Localism Bill<sup>5</sup>. It is understood that this means the Government no longer retains a national target for delivering 3,000,000 homes by 2020 as set out by its predecessor. The new Government has not quantified its approach to improving affordability and to increasing supply. It has however indicated its intention to move from the target based approach to housing delivery to an incentive based approach.
- 1.59. The White Paper "Local growth: realising every place's potential"<sup>6</sup> states that one of the planning system's main functions is to provide sufficient housing to meet demand, but that the planning system has alienated communities through centrally imposed policies and targets and consequently is often seen as a barrier to development, despite the desire of almost every local community to see new homes, more jobs, extra investment and a better local environment (paragraph 3.2).
- 1.60. The Coalition Government therefore retains the objective of increasing supply to meet demand but believes that the drivers of growth are local and that decisions should be made at the local level. The Government has invited businesses and councils to come together to form Local Enterprise Partnerships (for West Berkshire, the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP), whose geography properly reflects the natural economic areas of the country, which are encouraged to work in respect of transport, housing and planning as part of an integrated approach to growth and infrastructure delivery. This approach supports that of assessing requirements as part of a wider functional market area, whilst devolving more power to local communities.
- 1.61. The 10,500 housing requirement for West Berkshire in the South East Plan has been supported by the Council but is still seen by many locally as a centrally imposed target. Although this level of housing is undoubtedly needed to support the local economy, it would not seem appropriate to increase this requirement at a time when policies are evolving and the top-down target is not seen as the way forward. The White Paper and the subsequent proposals in the Localism Bill outline the concepts of neighbourhood plans where communities will have the freedom to bring forward more development than that set out in the local authority plan. This emerging approach brings extra flexibility to the challenge of increasing housing delivery over the plan period without any increase to the overall requirement in the Core Strategy.

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<sup>5</sup> Localism Bill – Bill 126 House of Commons 13 December 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Local growth: realising every place's potential: HM Government 28 October 2010

## **Sustainability Appraisal Information**

- 1.62. The Core Strategy has been subject to a sustainability appraisal process. Both the Options for the Future and the Publication version were accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal report which included consideration of the policy to provide for the delivery of the South East Plan housing requirement.
- 1.63. The sustainability appraisal carried out as part of the Options for the Future consultation considered a housing requirement for 11,000 net additional dwellings, to include the shortfall from the previous plan period, as explained earlier in Section 1.14, and examined the sustainability impact of options for less or more than this amount. An increase in the housing requirement above this level emerged as the least sustainable option; though it would assist in providing housing, considerations relating to landscape character, flooding and infrastructure requirements are all constraints on delivering higher housing numbers. The conclusion on the preferred approach for an 11,000 requirement was that there were some positive environmental, economic and social sustainability impacts, with limited negative effects that can be mitigated against through complementary policies in the Core Strategy.
- 1.64. At the formal consultation stage when the Core Strategy was published, the policy was amended to reflect the adopted South East Plan as the Government Office had confirmed the housing requirement. The sustainability appraisal concluded that the amendment to 10,500 additional homes was not considered to have significant effects which would warrant further SA being undertaken, particularly as this was being dealt with through adjusting the phasing for the development of the strategic site at Sandleford. Flexibility has been built into the longer term planning by allocating this site which is programmed to deliver housing in the latter half of the plan period and continue delivery beyond 2026.

## **Implications on Infrastructure provision**

- 1.65. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) sets out the key infrastructure requirements needed to support the level of growth proposed in the Core Strategy for 10,500 new homes. The infrastructure providers worked with the figure of 10,500, together with the proposed distribution for the four spatial areas and the two strategic sites. An increase in housing beyond this figure on a modest scale, to reflect the inbuilt flexibility and the potential for neighbourhood plans to propose limited additional development, would be unlikely to raise any significant issues of under provision in terms of infrastructure and could be accommodated in any work to support the Community Infrastructure Levy proposals put forward by the Council in the future, but any new large scale residential proposals would require significant transport modelling and other infrastructure appraisal to identify additional needs.

## **Conclusions**

- 1.66. PPS3 identifies a number of considerations to be taken into account in determining the level of housing provision, including relevant local and national policies. This paper shows that a range of factors have been taken

into account in determining the level of new housing to be delivered over the Core Strategy period. The implications of the approach have been explored as far as is possible at the local level with the evidence available.

- 1.67. The Council has concluded that, having regard to the prevailing economic climate and forecasts of growth in jobs, the delivery of approximately 10,500 homes would be unlikely to result in significant imbalance in the number of homes and jobs created. The evidence does show quite clearly that the patterns of commuting in Berkshire are complex and that there is significant inter-relationship between the urban centres in the housing market area.
- 1.68. In terms of need and demand, both the HMA and Government household projections imply a high requirement. The HMA does point out, however, that to meet the housing need it would require a substantial increase in overall provision that could not realistically be met. The HMA also indicates that there are significant challenges already to meeting the South East Plan requirement.
- 1.69. There are always uncertainties involved in the use of projections, both economic forecasts and demographic projections. In the case of the demographic projections the Council would question the realism of the latest projections which take forward the trend of the last few years when the economic climate was different and when local house building rates were at a peak. These latest projections contrast with earlier projections which informed both the South East Plan and the Core Strategy, when rates of immigration were significantly less. In addition, projections are recognised as significantly less reliable at the level of the District than at the wider regional or national level. The Council does not therefore propose to increase the requirement in response to the latest household projections, which were published after Submission and since the timetabled hearings ended. The Council has therefore concluded that it will continue to use the plan, monitor and manage approach, rather than the approach of predict and provide, and will continue to be responsive and flexible in managing the supply, with allowance for contingencies built into the Strategy.
- 1.70. The level of new housing proposed is also considered appropriate having regard to evidence of land supply. Though the SHLAA does demonstrate that there are sites available to deliver significantly in excess of the 10,500 figure, the analysis at a site level takes no account of the cumulative impacts, whether this is on the character of the settlements, the impact on the landscape or the pressure on infrastructure. In a District with significant constraints, with 74% of the area within the AONB, large areas of floodplain, health and safety considerations in respect of the presence of the AWE establishments in the District and historic environment issues to consider, the constraints are considerable.
- 1.71. The level of housing proposed is in conformity with the South East Plan, which has been through consultation and examination and was subject to sustainability appraisal. This remains an adopted part of the Development Plan. Conformity with this is required to meet the legal compliance test. The Council feels it is appropriate to continue to plan for this requirement, but to build in some flexibility to respond to the changing policy environment. It is apparent that the Government's intention is that communities will be empowered to produce plans to deliver higher levels of housing if they have

local support and feel it would benefit their community. The housing requirement is not intended to set a ceiling to development, but neither is it intended to impose an additional requirement before the emerging policies of the new Government have become clearer.



## **2. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Updated to November 2010**

### **Reason for Review**

2.1. The SHLAA has been reviewed in order to be as up-to-date as possible and to take on board the concerns of the Inspector expressed at the hearings into the Core Strategy and in his post hearing note. The Inspector has stated that the SHLAA has not produced a clear list of developable sites to demonstrate that the Core Strategy is deliverable. His stance is that the Council is relying on some of the sites that are “currently not developable” including those outside existing settlement boundaries, which creates uncertainties regarding the extent to which land supply is a constraint on supply, on the deliverability of the strategy and the justification for distribution between spatial areas. His particular concerns with regard to the spatial strategy were the landscape constraints within the AONB and the potential AWE constraints in the East Kennet Valley.

### **Changes to the SHLAA**

2.2. The main focus in the SHLAA update has been on sites within the AONB, where additional landscape work has been carried out in order to provide evidence for elimination of sites, or parts of sites, that would be likely to cause unacceptable harm to the special qualities and natural beauty of the AONB.

2.3. The changes to the SHLAA include:

- Update of the five year supply to November 2010
- Amendment of the schedules to include an assessment of all sites according to suitability, availability and achievability, rather than the more general assessment included in the previous schedules for sites outside current settlement boundaries.
- Sites both within and outside settlement boundaries classified as either deliverable, potentially developable or not developable.
- Some commentary on the cumulative constraints for particular settlements, with reference to additional landscape work in the AONB and AWE impact in East Kennet Valley.

2.4. The SHLAA continues to show that there are sufficient sites within all spatial areas to demonstrate flexibility in choices for allocation.

### **Publication**

2.5. The SHLAA, with the supporting additional landscape evidence, will be published for consultation with the Core Strategy changes on 4 February 2011. The document and the webpage will make clear that the sites are not allocated for development and that decisions regarding which sites will be allocated will be made through the development plan process, following full public consultation. The estimates of housing potential are not based on detailed design and should not prejudice any decision that may be made on the site at a later date.

### 3. AONB

#### Meeting the Identified Housing Needs of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in West Berkshire

- 3.1. The Inspector was concerned that there had been no ‘explicit consideration’ by the Council of what the national advice in PPS7 of meeting ‘identified local needs’ means. This section of the topic paper explains the Council’s approach to the proposed housing allocation set out in the Core Strategy in this part of the district, supported by evidence and set in the context of the wider policy background.

#### Policy Background

##### National Policy

- 3.2. The North Wessex Downs was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1972 under the National Parks and Access to Countryside Act 1949. The primary purpose of the AONB designation is –

*“conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area”*. (Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 section 82)

*‘In pursuing the primary purpose of designation, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry and other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of economic and social development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment. Recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses’.*

- 3.3. Under Section 85 of the CRoW Act 2000, it is also a legal duty for all relevant authorities to “have regard to” the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB in exercising or performing any functions affecting land in the area. These relevant authorities include all statutory bodies and all tiers of government, including parish councils and holders of public office.

- 3.4. Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7) Sustainable Development in Rural Areas sets out the Government’s planning policies for rural areas, including AONBs. It states:

*“Para 21. Nationally designated areas comprising National Parks, the Broads, the New Forest Heritage Area and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), have been confirmed by the Government as having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and countryside should therefore be given great weight in planning policies and development control decisions in these areas..... As well as reflecting these priorities, planning policies in LDDs and where appropriate, RSS, should also support suitably located and designed development necessary to facilitate the economic and social well being of*

*these designated areas and their communities, including the provision of adequate housing to meet **identified local needs.**” (Council’s emphasis).*

## **Regional Policy**

- 3.5. Policy C3 of the South East Plan sets out that proposals for development should be considered in the context of the purpose of designation of the AONB, and that the development must be accommodated within the landscape features and special qualities of the AONB and be suitably located and designed. The policy states that “.....proposals which support economic and social well-being of the AONBs and their communities, **including** (Council’s emphasis) affordable schemes will be encouraged provided they do not conflict with the aim of conserving and enhancing natural beauty.”
- 3.6. The supporting text of the policy clarifies the important role that the AONBs in the South East region play, not just in contributing to distinctiveness, but to supporting and sustaining the region’s high quality of life and economic success.

## **North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan**

- 3.7. For the Council, active support for the implementation of the North Wessex Downs AONB (NWDAONB) Management Plan (October 2009) is the key to satisfying its “Section 85” duty. The Management Plan provides a policy and action framework to influence and help determine planning decision making. In particular the Management Plan provides an underpinning for the development of AONB specific policy in LDFs.
- 3.8. The NWDAONB Management Plan notes on page 61 : *“Attractive villages nestle in the river valleys of the Pang, Bourne, Kennet and Lambourn and cluster in the low lying land to the east of the AONB. **Appropriate economic regeneration and development are essential to support sustainable communities** (Council’s emphasis). High environmental quality is recognised as making strong direct and indirect contributions to the wider regional economy.*

*There is a need to manage development pressures with sensitivity both within the AONB and in the adjacent area where development could impact on the setting of the AONB in order to maintain a balance in promoting economic and social viability whilst retaining the character of the North Wessex Downs.*

*Communities need to be economically viable and have adequate housing, amenities and facilities. However, the primary purpose of designation of the AONB needs to be paramount when considering such issues.”*

- 3.9. The Management Plan also seeks to make the AONB a place with ‘vibrant and balanced rural communities with villages and market towns meeting the needs of local people and visitors.....’. The Management Plan also sets out a desire for sustainable communities (page 34).
- 3.10. Objective 12 of the NWDAONB Management Plan seeks to “*encourage appropriate development that meets the economic and housing needs of the AONB and surrounding communities*”. Objective 14 is “*to promote a sustainable rural economy*”.

- 3.11. Other background is set out within the Matthew Taylor Review: “A Living, Working Countryside’ which is a useful analysis of the role of the planning system in promoting and delivering sustainable rural communities. The review sets out the implications of an overly restrictive approach to development, with resultant increasingly unsustainable communities. Sensitive and appropriate development is necessary which balances the social, economic and environmental factors to promote sustainable communities.

## Local Policy

- 3.12. The West Berkshire Core Strategy proposals for the area reflect one of the Councils’ key outcomes from the Council Plan. This is therefore of corporate importance to West Berkshire Council. This outcome “Vibrant Villages” sets out the importance of retaining successful and vibrant villages as key to improving the quality of life within rural communities and its key objectives of
- Supporting the economic and social fabric of our market towns and villages, and
  - Enabling sufficient housing to accommodate continued economic prosperity and increasing the provision of affordable housing
- 3.13. This priority is also reflected in the Sustainable Community Strategy objective on housing needs which seeks “*the provision of affordable and market housing to help meet local needs in both urban and rural areas of the District. To provide homes in a way that promotes sustainable communities, providing a mix of house sizes, types and tenures to meet identified local needs and respond to the changing demographic profile of the District.*”

## What is the identified local need for housing in the AONB part of West Berkshire?

- 3.14. There are two types of local needs relating to housing – open market housing and affordable housing.
- 3.15. This reflects national guidance contained in PPS 3 (para 38) which notes “*the need to provide housing in rural areas, not only in market towns and local service centres but also in villages in order to enhance or maintain their sustainability; and the need to develop mixed sustainable communities across the wider local authority area*”.
- 3.16. In addition, paragraph 21 of PPS 7 which states local planning policies in designated areas should “*support suitably located and designed developments necessary to **facilitate** the economic and social well-being of the designated area and its communities, **including** the provision of adequate housing to meet identified local needs*” (Council emphasis).
- 3.17. The Council currently has just over 4,500 residents registered on its Common Housing Register with just over 80% expressing a need for either a one or two bed property. The need for affordable housing throughout the District has also been assessed as part of the Berkshire Housing Market Assessment (HMA) which demonstrated a very high level of need, well above what could realistically be developed.

- 3.18. Under the Councils' "Home Choice" scheme households have the opportunity to make multiple expressions of interest in housing across the District and the Council currently has 7,800 choice preferences for housing within the NWDAONB part of West Berkshire. 80% of this expression of interest is in the one and two bed properties. This information is set out in Appendix A.
- 3.19. Of the households on the Council's Common Housing Register, 1,192 have indicated that they have a local connection. Of this total, 560 households have indicated their local connection to a parish within the AONB. Hungerford, Lambourn, Pangbourne and Kintbury all have over 40 households on this waiting list with a local connection to the parish.
- 3.20. Completed parish level housing needs surveys will help to inform the specific levels of provision made in each service village through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.
- 3.21. Local housing needs surveys have already been undertaken for Hungerford, Lambourn, Pangbourne, Chieveley, Kintbury, Compton Great Shefford and Bradfield Southend the results of which are shown below.

**Table 6: Local Housing Needs Surveys in the AONB**

Settlement	Identified Need	Response Rate	Date of Completion
Hungerford	65 units	28.7%	February 2007
Lambourn	27 units	17%	November 2008
Pangbourne	21 units	18%	June 2009
Bradfield Southend	7 units	23%	April 2008
Chieveley	21 units	25.5%	April 2006
Compton	8 units	16%	July 2009
Great Shefford	2 units	14%	July 2009
Hermitage	No survey undertaken		N/A
Kintbury	10 units	22%	December 2009
Total Requirement	121 Units		

- 3.22. It should be noted that the identified need referred to above relates to identified need of "affordable housing" only and also only relates to that specific need at the time of the survey.
- 3.23. There is clearly a high demand for affordable housing within the North Wessex Downs AONB, which, in a similar way to the rest of the District, it will not be possible to meet in full. However, opportunities must be made to respond to this high level of need, including a proactive approach to rural exceptions sites in accordance with policy CS8 of the submitted Core Strategy.
- 3.24. Affordable housing is, however, only part of the housing need within the AONB. There are a number of factors which point towards a high requirement for private housing. These include high house prices and other

evidence including information from the 'barriers to housing and services' score from the Indices of Deprivation 2004. The indicator measures the following:

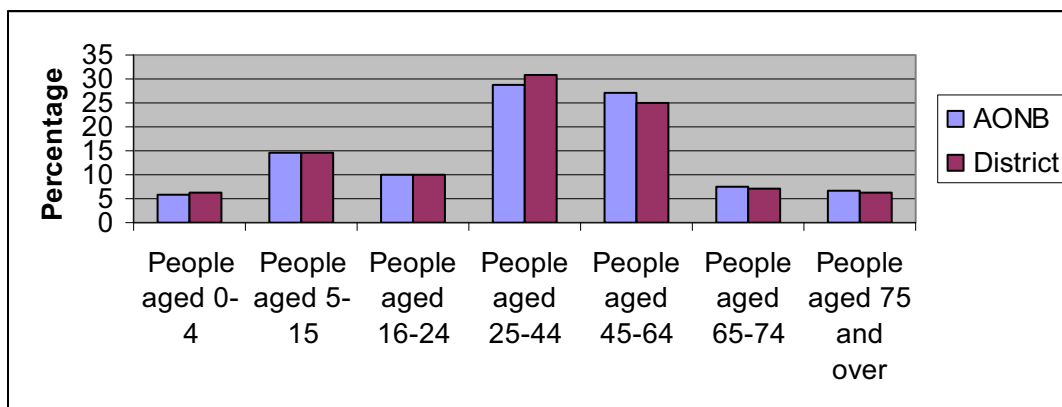
- housing overcrowding
- % of households for whom a decision has been made on their application for assistance under the homeless provisions of housing legislation
- difficulty of access to owner occupation such as affordability
- road distance to GP premises, primary school, supermarket/convenience store and post office.

3.25. Of the 140 'local super output areas' in the North Wessex Downs as a whole (not West Berkshire specific), 64 (45.7%) are in the bottom 20% of most deprived local super output areas in the South East and South West for barriers to housing and services. These include much of the Lambourn Valley and Downs area.

3.26. Additionally the West Berkshire Place Survey which was carried out in 2008/9 identified 'access to affordable decent housing' for people in rural communities in West Berkshire as a key issue.

3.27. The population of the AONB represents some 29% of the total population of the District, and the growth of this population is a further indicator of the level of local need for housing. Figure 3 shows the age structure at 2001 of the population in the parishes largely within the AONB compared to that of the District as a whole. It is broadly similar, with a slightly lower proportion of younger adults and young children and slightly higher proportion of those over 45. In terms of the pattern of projected natural growth it is unlikely to differ markedly from the district as a whole.

**Figure 3**



**Past Housing Delivery in the AONB**

3.28. Past housing delivery in the AONB over the period 2001 – 2010 has averaged approximately 140 net new dwellings per annum. This figure includes some housing sites allocated in the West Berkshire District Local Plan. In the period 2001 to 2006 Local Plan housing sites were completed in Chieveley for 50 units and in Hungerford for 84. Since 2006 Hermitage has

seen considerable growth with 209 dwellings completed on the former Cementation site and the Local Plan site at Bucklebury has been developed to provide 40 homes.

### **Housing Growth**

- 3.29. The housing allocation of 2,000 dwellings within the AONB over the Core Strategy period 2006 – 2026 is equivalent to an average annual growth of 100 net dwellings per annum. When the dwellings already completed are taken into account the figure represent an average annual addition of 81 new homes across the AONB in West Berkshire over the period 2010 to 2026.
- 3.30. The growth proposed in the AONB is equivalent to 19% of the total growth over the whole plan period and 16% of the growth planned across the District for the period 2010 to 2026. The policy to focus development in the more sustainable settlements, particularly the urban areas of the District, coupled with compliance with the Council's duty to have regard to the purposes of designation of the AONB has influenced the housing distribution. The evidence of housing need from the HMA and the housing waiting list demonstrates that additional housing is needed throughout the District, including the AONB; the issues in the rural areas are exacerbated by the limited supply and high cost of housing. The SHLAA has demonstrated that there are potential housing sites within and adjacent to the more sustainable rural service centres and service villages in the AONB which could be developed without unacceptable harm to the special qualities and natural beauty of the AONB and which could provide much needed housing to meet local need and demand and support the rural economy.

### **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment taking into account the importance of the AONB landscape**

- 3.31. The SHLAA has identified a large number of potential sites within the AONB that have been submitted for consideration by landowners and developers. In the AONB, the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape will be the paramount consideration in assessing these sites, in accordance with the Council's statutory duty of regard to the purpose of designation of the AONB.
- 3.32. Further detailed work has been undertaken on the landscape sensitivity of the sites being promoted for development through the SHLAA. The work has summarised the key characteristics of each rural service centre and service village within the AONB and the landscape constraints on the extent and location of development, and assesses the impact of each site.
- 3.33. Though the SHLAA has classified a number of sites as not developable on grounds of landscape impact, those remaining as potentially developable need to be seen as alternatives – in some settlements the potential cumulative impact of development would be considerable. The SHLAA has indicated where there are particular issues and choices to be made.

## Conclusion

- 3.34. The policy background for the AONB sets out a priority of protecting and enhancing the quality of the designated landscape. However, it also emphasises the need to meet identified local needs for housing and facilitate the continued social and economic well being of the North Wessex Downs AONB.
- 3.35. None of the policy background restricts development within the AONB to purely affordable housing and the Council considers that this approach would be inappropriate, and would not address wider housing need, or contribute to sustainable communities. As well as being of national landscape importance, the North Wessex Downs is an area where people live and work and this has been taken into account through the Council's preparation of the Core Strategy. Whilst the Core Strategy as a whole has an urban focus, it is important that rural communities, particularly those identified in the settlement hierarchy as Rural Service Centres or Service villages, are given the right development opportunities to enable them to continue to fulfil their role and function for the surrounding area.
- 3.36. In the AONB the Councils' primary aim is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and landscape quality, whilst at the same time having regard to the economic and social well-being of the area. In terms of the District's Settlement Hierarchy, the rural service centres of Hungerford, Lambourn and Pangbourne all lie within the boundaries of the AONB, as do the service villages of Compton, Hermitage, Bradfield Southend, Kintbury, Great Shefford and Chieveley. Implementation of the West Berkshire Core Strategy approach of strengthening these communities and enhancing their role in line with national guidance will result in additional development to 2026, dependent on the role and function that the settlement performs, supported by suitable development opportunities, identified through the SHLAA. This is a justified and proportionate approach in the context of the wider Core Strategy objectives to build stronger sustainable communities and meet the social and in particular the housing and economic needs of the area.
- 3.37. The outcomes of the landscape sensitivity work have confirmed that the development proposed within the spatial strategy of the Core Strategy for the North Wessex Downs can be accommodated without having a detrimental impact on the national landscape, and the outcomes of this will be used to help identify suitable development opportunities through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.



#### **4. Clarification of the presentation of housing distribution**

- 4.1. The presentation of the housing figures within the Core Strategy has been simplified to respond to the Inspector's concerns about this element of the document. Within the submitted Core Strategy, housing figures were set out both for the spatial areas, and for the different levels of the settlement hierarchy. This reflected the evolution of the Core Strategy, with the spatial strategy initially developed based around the different tiers of the settlement hierarchy, with figures set out for the urban areas; the rural service centres and the service villages. Following the consultation on the Options for the Future, the spatial strategy took a broader place-shaping approach in order to better reflect the distinctive characteristics of different parts of West Berkshire. This resulted in the District being divided into four spatial areas with policy frameworks developed for each of these areas, and housing figures set out for these spatial areas.
- 4.2. The Inspector asked that the housing figures be presented in a consistent manner, building on the spatial approach set out in the Area Delivery Plan policies. This has led to the Core Strategy being amended with one set of housing figures set out in the Area Delivery Plan Policies, setting out the scale of development for each of the four spatial areas, and removing the figures from the different levels of the settlement hierarchy in Policy SP1 (Spatial Strategy). New explanatory text to Policy SP1 explains the role of the different parts of the settlement hierarchy in terms of the functions that they perform for the surrounding area. The presentation has been simplified by transferring some of the policy content from Policy CS2 (Spatial Distribution) into CS1 (Delivering New Homes and Retaining the Housing Stock) and the deletion of Policy CS2.
- 4.3. The Inspector also felt that it was confusing to have Pangbourne in two overlapping spatial areas. Within the submitted Core Strategy, Pangbourne was within both the Eastern Area and the North Wessex Downs AONB. This was intended to reflect the functional relationship of Pangbourne with the Eastern Area. As Pangbourne is factually in the North Wessex Downs AONB, references to it have been moved from the Eastern Area to the spatial policy on the North Wessex Downs AONB. Adjustments have been made to the housing numbers to reflect this move, and the hatching, indicating the Eastern Area broad location for development has been removed from figure 5.
- 4.4. The Inspector also wanted further information about the appropriate scale of development to be set out for the Rural Service Centres and Service Villages within the AONB, with the scale of development that might be appropriate for Hungerford contrasted, for example, with the scale of development for Lambourn and for Pangbourne. This has been progressed through adding more detail to the wording of the Area Delivery Plan policies to draw out in more detail local distinctiveness and the issues affecting the appropriate housing distribution for each Rural Service Centre and Service Village. This has included reference to the opportunity sites at Compton Institute of Animal Health and Dennison Barracks at Hermitage.
- 4.5. The Area Delivery Plan policies also reflect the current availability of SHLAA sites and other factors, including, for example, the constraint caused by the AWE sites to any future development within the Service Village at

Aldermaston. There will also be further information provided through the evidence base about the availability of SHLAA sites in each area.

## **5. Business Development**

- 5.1 This section of the topic paper focuses on the B1 element of the employment land stock and assesses whether the forecasted shortfall of B1 floorspace can be accommodated on existing sites and premises.

### **Background – Employment Land Assessment**

- 5.2 The West Berkshire Employment Land Assessment (ELA, 2007) (CD09/21) was conducted as part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework (LDF), and was published in May 2007. The study assesses the demand for and supply of employment land over the plan period to 2026, ensuring the appropriate provision of land for business development. The ELA follows the advice contained within the 2004 Employment Land Reviews Guidance Note (ODPM) (CD04/09).
- 5.3 The ELA takes a long term approach to business development, examining the supply and demand in order to draw conclusions on how the existing portfolio of employment land stock meets, or falls short of, future requirements. It is considered that this study, given its long term approach, still provides useful and relevant information to inform policy development over the Core Strategy plan period to 2026.
- 5.4 The key conclusion to be drawn from the ELA is that the District has ‘a sufficient quantity of supply to meet demand in overall terms and thus no need to plan for a net increase in employment land stock’ (ELA, 2007, CD09/21). This, therefore, is the approach taken forward in the Core Strategy, which sets out a strategic framework to retain the existing quantity of employment stock through policy CS10.
- 5.5 Whilst the ELA concludes that no net additional employment land stock needs to be planned for, there is a mismatch in the supply and demand amongst the different use classes. The study highlights that over the plan period there is insufficient supply of B1 space to meet the likely future requirements (121,000sqm shortfall); a forecasted decline in demand for B2 space means there is an excess of supply in B2 (65,000sqm surplus); and in terms of B8 there is sufficient quantity of supply to meet demand in the short-term but in the longer term there is the potential for a small shortfall (24,000sqm shortfall). The shortfall in office floorspace is made up if B1a, B1b and B1c. The ELA does not distinguish the proportion of shortfall under each use class. This imbalance will be proactively addressed through a comprehensive review of the Protected Employment Area (PEA) boundaries within the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD, along with detailed Development Management policies. The review of the PEAs will provide the scope and flexibility to reconfigure the existing employment land stock to address the outcomes of the ELA and provide for business needs in the future.

### **Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 4**

- 5.6 Updated national guidance, PPS4 (CD03/04), was published in December 2009. The policy document sets out a series of policies aimed at guiding economic development, both regionally and locally, to deliver sustainable

economic growth. PPS4 encompasses not only B use classes but also main town centre uses as well as public and community uses.

- 5.7 PPS4 sets out that offices, B1a, are a main town centre use and should be located within town centres to maintain the diversity of uses and ensure the vitality and viability of centres. Any proposal for such a use outside of the town centre must demonstrate that a sequential approach to site selection has been undertaken as set out in policy EC5. According to national guidance the sequential approach is intended to achieve two policy objectives; firstly, the assumption that town centre sites are most readily accessible by alternative means of transport and therefore reducing the need to travel; and secondly, by accommodating such uses within town centres customers have the ability to make linked trips, reinforcing the vitality and viability of the existing centre.
- 5.8 Adopting a sequential approach to site selection means wherever possible seeking to direct new development to sites within town centres, or failing that directing them to well located sites on the edge of an existing defined centre. Only if town centre or edge of centre sites are not available will out of centre locations be likely to be appropriate, provided they are well served by alternative means of transport and are acceptable in all other aspects including impact. Some of the District's offices are already located on sites which are classified as out of centre, such as Newbury Business Park and these locations play an important role in the District's economy.
- 5.9 PPS4 outlines the following set out definitions to assist in the sequential approach.

Town centre: Defined area, including the primary shopping area and areas of predominantly leisure, business and other main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. The extent of the town centre should be defined on the proposals map.

Edge of centre: For office development, locations outside the town centre boundary but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange including railway and bus stations, within the urban area should be considered as edge of centre locations for the purposes of the sequential approach.

Out of centre: A location which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.

Out of town: An out of centre development outside the existing urban area.

## **West Berkshire Context**

- 5.10 During the Examination hearing sessions (November 2010) the Inspector highlighted the need to ensure that the approach taken to office development was consistent with that set out in PPS4 and to show that the shortfall of B1 floorspace could be accommodated on existing sites through the sequential approach outlined above.
- 5.11 The ELA concludes that over the plan period there will be a shortfall in B1 floorspace of approximately 121,000sqm. This shortfall includes B1a Offices, B1b Research and Development and B1c Light Industry. The ELA also concludes that this shortfall can be accommodated through the efficient utilisation of existing sites across the District, and that there is not a need to allocate any additional employment land.

- 5.12 The Council, through policy CS10, will seek to effectively utilise existing sites and premises for business development and to direct office developments to town and district centres in the first instance, in accordance with PPS4. However, not all office development will take place within the District's centres, given their size and character and the nature of the existing employment distribution. Policy CS12 sets out the District's hierarchy of centres based on their scale, character and function. Newbury is outlined as a major town centre, and is the only centre within the District which is best suited to larger office development, given the nature and size of development already within the centre. The other town and district centres of Thatcham, Hungerford, Pangbourne, Lambourn and Theale, given their size and character, would only be able to accommodate small office development, more limited and in keeping with their character. It is important therefore, that in addressing the shortfall of B1 floorspace across the District flexibility is applied to its location.
- 5.13 Protected Employment Areas (PEAs), as designated under the West Berkshire District Local Plan Saved Policies (CD06/01), are specified business areas across the District where B class uses are clustered. Some of these PEAs are well located in terms of accessibility and already host a large amount of office development within them, for example Arlington Business Park, Theale. Others, given the rural nature of West Berkshire, are more remote and less sustainable but nonetheless provide a vital contribution to the local economy. Pending the comprehensive review to take place through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD, the Council considers it necessary to sustain and where appropriate enhance what is already within these locations, ensuring the scale and nature of the development is consistent with the location and function of the PEA.
- 5.14 In terms of meeting the potential shortfall of B1 as set out in the ELA, policy CS10 will utilise the sequential approach to office development. It is imperative that all office development seeks to locate within the town centre in the first instance and following this if no suitable sites are available then an edge of centre location can be sought, preferably within a PEA. However, it should be noted that as the shortfall is not made up entirely of B1a floorspace, the whole 121,000sqm outlined within the ELA would not be subject to a sequential approach. The ELA does not distinguish the proportion of shortfall under each use class.
- 5.15 The table below sets out the relationship between the town and district centres and West Berkshire's PEAs in terms of the PPS4 sequential approach for site selection for main town centre uses. This demonstrates how the sequential approach will be applied.

**Table 7 - Status of Protected Employment Areas in relation to the sequential approach to site selection.**

	<b>Centre</b>	<b>Edge of centre</b>	<b>Out of centre</b>	<b>Out of town</b>
<b>Major Town Centre</b>	<b>Newbury</b>	- London Road Estates - Hambridge Road/Lane - Newbury Business Park*	- Turnpike Road Estate - Castle Estate	
<b>Town Centre</b>	<b>Thatcham</b>	- Green Lane	- Colthrop Estate	
	<b>Hungerford</b>	- Charnham Park - Station Yard	- Smitham Bridge/Hungerford Trading Estate	
<b>District Centre</b>	<b>Pangbourne</b>		- Horseshoe Park	
	<b>Lambourn</b>			- Membury Estate - Lowesdon Works
	<b>Theale</b>	- Arlington Business Park - Station Road and adjacent Estates		- Theale Lakes at Sheffield Bottom
<b>Smaller settlements</b>	<b>Aldermaston</b>		- Calleva Park	- Paices Hill/Youngs Industrial Estate
	<b>Hermitage</b>			- Red Shute Hill
	<b>Beenham</b>			- Beenham Industrial Area

\* See paragraph 5.33 for explanation.

### **Updating B1 Employment Land Supply**

- 5.16 In establishing if this shortfall of B1 floorspace can be met through existing sites and premises it has been necessary to update the B1 employment land supply figures from 2006, as set out within the ELA, to 2010. This will provide a more up to date picture of current circumstances and determine whether the shortfall of 121,000sqm still exists. The ELA was completed in 2007 and used base-date information from 2006, which means that since the study was conducted four years of development activity has taken place across the District.
- 5.17 The ELA calculated the available supply of employment land within Section 2 of the study by assessing the available commercial floorspace, unimplemented commitments and supply at New Greenham Park. This supply at New Greenham Park is essentially unimplemented planning commitments and in order to update the figures this element will be taken into account as part of the current unimplemented planning commitments.

5.18 Taking each element of the land supply in turn, starting with the available commercial floorspace, a comprehensive list of West Berkshire's available commercial premises has been compiled using the commercial property market database from Focus CoStar. This is the same source used within the ELA in 2006. The table below sets out the District's total available floorspace as at January 2011, and depicts a total of 262,448sqm of available commercial floorspace across the District with just over 50% of this space being B2/B8 and just under 50% as B1 (43%).

**Table 8 - Available Commercial Floorspace**

	<b>Available Commercial Floorspace (sqm)</b>	<b>%</b>
Office (B1)	113,970	43%
Industrial/Warehouse (B2/B8)	148,478	57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>262,448</b>	

Source: Focus CoStar, 2011

5.19 To ensure the supply of available B1 floorspace facilitates market churn and does not result in an over estimate the ELA assesses available floorspace against the total stock in use and applies a 10% discount to allow for market churn. In 2006 West Berkshire had a total stock of B1 floorspace of 473,664 sqm. Since this time there have been 38,685sqm of net completions (internal floorspace), which if added to the stock in 2006 gives a total stock of B1 floorspace in 2010 of 512,349sqm. The table below sets out the available commercial floorspace with the discount applied.

**Table 9 - Available Commercial Floorspace accounting for market churn**

	<b>Total stock in use (sqm)</b>	<b>Available commercial floorspace (sqm)</b>	<b>Total stock (sqm)</b>	<b>10% of total stock (to be discounted) (sqm)</b>	<b>Available commercial floorspace with discount applied (sqm)</b>
B1	398,379	113,970	512,349	51,235	62,735

Source – DTZ, Focus

5.20 Taking into account for market churn the available B1 floorspace within West Berkshire is 62,735sqm.

5.21 Unimplemented planning commitments are the second key element of employment land supply. These are sites with planning permission that have not yet been implemented. The ELA used planning commitments as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006, and in order to update these figures the table below sets out the number of unimplemented planning commitments as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010. These figures are net internal floorspace.

**Table 10 - Unimplemented Planning Commitments as at March 2010.**

<b>March 2010</b>	<b>B1</b>	<b>B2</b>	<b>B8</b>	<b>B1-B8</b>	<b>Total</b>
Net floorspace (Internal floorspace sqm)	193,845	52,340	32,861	14,924	293,970

Source: West Berkshire Planning Commitments for Employment, JSPU, 2010

5.22 To calculate the total supply of B1 floorspace in 2010, the available commercial floorspace must be added to unimplemented planning commitments for B1 uses, giving a total supply figure of 256,580sqm. When this figure is compared against that of 2006 it is evident that the supply of B1 floorspace has increased by approximately 96,023sqm. This has the knock-on effect of reducing the forecasted shortfall of B1 floorspace from 121,000sqm to 25,420sqm.

**Meeting the requirements for B1 floorspace:**

5.23 Whilst the current supply of B1 space is making a significant contribution to meeting the forecasted future requirements, there remains a shortfall in quantitative terms up to 2026. According to the maximum levels of demand forecasted within the ELA and the updated supply figures above, this shortfall equates to 25,420sqm.

5.24 This shortfall could be met through the redevelopment, and possible intensification, of existing sites and premises that are currently in use classes where there is excess supply and lower forecasted demand over the plan period. The total available commercial floorspace figures set out above (in Table 8) illustrate that 148,478sqm of available B2/B8 floorspace exists across West Berkshire, which is more than enough to meet the forecasted shortfall of B1, and the potential shortfall in B8 set out in the ELA.

5.25 B1a office developments are a town centre use and therefore the sequential approach would need to be applied to any proposal for new office developments outside of an existing centre. Appendix C therefore sets out the available B2/B8 floorspace in relation to this sequential approach.

5.26 Appendix C shows that within existing centres there is no available B2/B8 floorspace, but this is to be expected since such uses would not normally be acceptable in town centre locations. There is however, a strong supply of available B1 floorspace within the District's existing centres as set out in Appendix B. This supply is predominantly made up of existing premises rather than large scale redevelopment opportunities, and therefore it is imperative that the Council retain and encourage the take-up or upgrade of existing available space, whilst monitoring the unimplemented planning commitments to ensure a sufficient supply of B1a floorspace is maintained within town centre locations.

5.27 Following the sequential approach, if no suitable available sites exist within town centre locations, edge of centre sites can be examined for their suitability. Appendix C sets out that within edge of centre locations 33,105sqm of B2/B8 floorspace is currently available. All of this available floorspace can be found within Protected Employment Areas categorised as



edge of centre within Table 7 above and is therefore sequentially preferable to out of centre locations. This available supply would, in quantitative terms, be sufficient to meet the forecasted shortfall of B1 space over the plan period. It should also be noted that B1a space is often developed at higher densities than B2/B8 space and therefore it is possible that these available B2/B8 sites could be redeveloped to provide more business than currently exists.

- 5.28 Out of centre and out of town locations host the rest of the available B2/B8 floorspace (115,373sqm), much of which is accommodated within either Protected Employment Areas or existing business areas/parks, such as New Greenham Park, Benham Valance or Easter Park. Whilst these out of centre and out of town locations are less accessible, they are often well established employment areas with appropriate infrastructure in place and existing compatible and/or supporting uses within close proximity. Most of these areas contain some of the District's existing B1 stock and it is considered appropriate to sustain and where necessary enhance what is already within these locations, provided the appropriate sequential approach has been carried out. These locations, through positive and proactive management of existing sites, could also assist in meeting any future requirements for B8, whilst managing the demand in B2.

#### **Additional factors to be considered when addressing the shortfall of B1 space**

- 5.29 In determining whether the forecasted demand of B1 floorspace can be accommodated on existing sites and premises the factors set out below should be considered.

#### Flood Risk

- 5.30 The Inspectors Post Hearing Note 2, highlights the need to apply the sequential flood risk assessment to any sequentially preferable locations for B1a use that are at high risk of flooding, in accordance with national policy. Appendix D of PPS25 (CD03/12) states that B1a offices are a less vulnerable use and therefore in terms of location such uses are appropriate within Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3a with the possible need for some flood mitigation measures depending on individual site circumstances and in compliance with policy CS17 of the Core Strategy. Within Flood Zone 3b B1a office developments should not be permitted unless they are located on the same footprint of the existing built form, in accordance the West Berkshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (WBSFRA) (Cd09/22 & 09/23).
- 5.31 The paper sets out that as there is no available floorspace for B1a uses within existing centres, except for that already factored into the supply, the most sequentially preferable locations to meet the demand for B1a floorspace are those edge of centre sites within Protected Employment Areas which host available B2/B8 floorspace. In accordance with the EA Flood Zone Maps and the WBSFRA these identified sequentially preferable locations are for the most part not considered to be at high risk of flooding as they lie within either Zones 1, 2 or 3a. Only a very small part of Arlington Business Park and very small pocket of the London Road Industrial Estates lie within Flood Zone 3b, however it is not considered to be significant enough to pose a problem to the employment land supply at this strategic level.

### Redevelopment of London Road Industrial Estates

5.32 The Newbury Vision 2025 (Cd10/01) sets out the desire to redevelop the Faraday Road area of Newbury. This is supported within Area Delivery Plan Policy 2 of the Core Strategy and a feasibility study is already underway by the Council to assess the potential for redevelopment of the London Road Industrial Estates. Within this redevelopment there is potential to enhance the employment base of these sites to create some high quality B1a floorspace. At this stage the quantity of any potential B1a floorspace could not be quantified but this provides contingency within the Core Strategy plan period to utilise a key edge of centre site within a Protected Employment Area to assist in meeting requirements for B1.

### Newbury Business Park

5.33 Newbury Business Park is a Protected Employment Area containing high quality B1a floorspace close to Newbury town centre. As this site does not fall specifically within the definition of edge of centre in accordance with PPS4, it is categorised as out of centre and therefore would be considered second to those sequentially preferable sites on the edge of Newbury town centre. However, the Council feel that given the characteristics of Newbury Business Park and the supply of B1a floorspace that currently exists, the sequential approach to B1a development could undermine the Business Park's role, function and vitality. It is considered appropriate therefore to make an exception to the edge of centre category and make Newbury Business Park sequentially preferable in the same manner as sites on the edge of Newbury town centre, such as Hambridge Road. It is intended that this approach is set out in policy CS10 of the Core Strategy.

### **Strategy going forward – Core Strategy/SAD DPD**

- 5.34 This paper demonstrates that the forecasted requirements of B1 floorspace over the plan period can be accommodated on existing sites in sequentially preferable locations, in quantitative terms. It highlights that the shortfall of B1 space has decreased from approximately 121,000sqm in 2006 to approximately 25,500sqm in 2011. This is due to a large amount of unimplemented planning commitments and more available commercial floorspace, both of which could be attributed to the downturn in the current economic climate. Nevertheless there is still sufficient available B2/B8 floorspace to accommodate the forecasted business requirements over the plan period.
- 5.35 In assessing the capacity of existing sites a sequential approach was taken to accommodating the shortfall in B1 floorspace, looking at available floorspace within existing centres first, and then looking outwards at edge of centre and out of centre locations. The shortfall of B1 comprises of B1a, B1b and B1c but only B1a development is subject to the sequential approach under PPS4. However, as the ELA does not distinguish the proportion of the shortfall under each use class, capacity for the whole of the shortfall (25,420sqm) was examined through the sequential approach.
- 5.36 To address the conclusions of this paper policy CS10 has been updated to reflect in more detail the sequential approach to be taken to office development in accordance with national policy.

- 5.37 Given that a shortfall of B1 floorspace continues to exist it is pertinent to retain the quantity of existing employment land until a comprehensive review of the District's Protected Employment Areas is conducted through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD. At this stage, the role, function and boundaries of these areas will be assessed to achieve a balanced portfolio of fit for purpose sites to meet future requirements. This review will provide the scope and flexibility to reinforce the existing employment land stock and if necessary reconfigure the Protected Employment Areas.
- 5.38 As economic circumstances are constantly changing it is important to continuously and effectively monitor the supply of employment land across the District, along with the possible need to review the projected floorspace requirements and assumptions set out within the ELA when appropriate throughout the plan period.

## **6. Other Changes**

- 6.1 The Inspector highlighted a number of other changes to the Core Strategy which he recommended the Council should consider. These have been included in the Schedule of Post Examination Proposed Focused Changes.

## Appendix A:

### Choices by Parish in the AONB as at 25/11/10

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed	Total
Hungerford	303	194	57	25	6	585
Pangbourne	264	187	102	24	7	584
Cold Ash	232	171	58	18	7	486
Yattendon	208	133	45	11	6	403
Purley	140	141	69	20	4	374
Hermitage	155	130	49	11	4	349
Bucklebury	159	109	51	10	5	334
Bradfield	155	94	59	12	3	323
Kintbury	161	109	40	7	2	319
Chieveley	162	101	34	13	6	316
Compton	94	78	40	11	0	223
Sulham and Tidmarsh	89	67	40	10	2	208
Englefield	90	64	39	8	1	202
Beenham	84	62	40	9	5	200
Lambourn	104	57	25	11	1	198
Inkpen	78	47	59	8	1	193
Hampstead Norreys	90	62	29	7	2	190
Basildon	65	55	24	8	2	154
Hamstead Marshall	80	50	19	4	1	154
Great Shefford	77	51	19	3	3	153
Boxford	78	47	14	6	2	147
Ashampstead	65	44	27	7	0	143
Chaddleworth	61	42	26	3	2	134
Streatley	65	37	14	5	0	121
East Ilsley	61	34	15	5	1	116
Beedon	54	35	12	9	2	112
Winterbourne	49	29	14	1	3	96
West Woodhay	51	29	9	1	1	91
East Garston	45	33	9	2	1	90
Frilsham	43	26	15	2	1	87
Stanford Dingley	48	25	10	1	1	85
West Ilsley	46	26	8	4	1	85
Brightwalton	36	29	15	3	1	84
Aldworth	44	23	12	4	0	83
Welford	40	29	9	2	2	82
Leckhampstead	34	31	9	2	1	77
Farnborough	32	24	8	8	1	73
Peasemore	31	21	11	2	2	67
Combe	31	19	7	3	0	60
Fawley	22	15	3	1	0	41
Catmore	19	10	4	2	1	36
	<b>3745</b>	<b>2570</b>	<b>1149</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>7858</b>

## APPENDIX B:

### Available Commercial Floorspace in West Berkshire

The table below illustrates the total available commercial floorspace for B1, B2 and B8 uses within West Berkshire in sequentially preferable locations.

Location	Available commercial floorspace (sqm) (B1-B8)
<b>Town/District Centre</b>	
Newbury town centre	17,067
Thatcham town centre	169
Hungerford town centre	60
Pangbourne town centre	831
Theale town centre	124
<b>Town/District centre total</b>	<b>18,251</b>
<b>Edge of centre (EOC)</b>	
EOC Protected Employment Area	60,145
EOC Newbury	45
EOC Thatcham	761
EOC Hungerford	2,288
EOC Pangbourne	154
EOC Theale	0
EOC Rest of West Berkshire	117
<b>EOC Total</b>	<b>63,510</b>
<b>Out of centre (OOC)</b>	
OOC Protected Employment Area	76,693
OOC Newbury	718
OOC Thatcham	1,273
OOC Hungerford	0
OOC Pangbourne	156
OOC Theale	0
OOC Rest of West Berkshire	1,537
<b>OOC Total</b>	<b>80,377</b>
<b>Out of town (OOT)</b>	
OOT Protected Employment Area	11,640
OOT New Greenham Park	55,136
OOT Other Business Parks (Easter Park/Benham Valance)	7,692
OOT Rest of West Berkshire	25,842
<b>OOT Total</b>	<b>100,310</b>
<b>Total West Berkshire Available Commercial Floorspace</b>	<b>262,448</b>

Source: Focus CoStar, Jan 2011

## APPENDIX C:

### Available Commercial Floorspace in West Berkshire for B2/B8 uses only

The table below illustrates the total available B2 and B8 floorspace within West Berkshire in sequentially preferable locations.

Location	Available commercial floorspace (sqm) (B2/B8)
<b>Town/District Centre</b>	
Newbury town centre	0
Thatcham town centre	0
Hungerford town centre	0
Pangbourne town centre	0
Theale town centre	0
<b>Town/District centre total</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Edge of centre (EOC)</b>	
EOC Protected Employment Area	33,105
EOC Newbury	0
EOC Thatcham	0
EOC Hungerford	0
EOC Pangbourne	0
EOC Theale	0
EOC Rest of West Berkshire	0
<b>EOC Total</b>	<b>33,105</b>
<b>Out of centre (OOC)</b>	
OOC Protected Employment Area	43,685
OOC Newbury	0
OOC Thatcham	0
OOC Hungerford	0
OOC Pangbourne	0
OOC Theale	0
OOC Rest of West Berkshire	1,168
<b>OOC Total</b>	<b>44,853</b>
<b>Out of town (OOT)</b>	
OOT Protected Employment Area	9,363
OOT New Greenham Park	54,366
OOT Other Business Parks (Easter Park/Benham Valance)	3,966
OOT Rest of West Berkshire	2,825
<b>OOT Total</b>	<b>70,520</b>
<b>Total West Berkshire Available B2/B8 Floorspace</b>	<b>148,478</b>

Source: Focus CoStar, Jan 2011

# Agenda Item 4.

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Independent Remuneration Panel 2011</b>
<b>Report to be considered by:</b>	Council
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	31 January 2011
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	C2204

**Purpose of Report:**

- 1) To agree the membership of the West Berkshire Council Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 2) To re-appoint Mr John Marsh as the Panel's Chairman.
- 3) To agree the scope of the allowances it will consider at its next meeting.

**Recommended Action:**

- 1) That the membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) be agreed.
- 2) That Members agree that the IRP consider the whole Members Allowances Scheme (as set out below) at their next meeting:
  - Basic Allowance.
  - Special Responsibility Allowances.
  - Co-optees Allowance (including the independent members of the Standards Committee).
  - Childcare and Dependent Carers Allowance.
  - Appeals Allowance.
  - ICT Allowance.
  - Travelling Allowance.
  - Subsistence Allowance.
  - Conference Allowance.
  - Pensions.
  - The administration of the scheme.

**Reason for decision to be taken:**

The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require Councils to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel. In light of the forthcoming District Council Elections in May 2011 and the need for the Council to set its budget, it is proposed that the IRP meet in February 2011 to review the whole Scheme of Members Allowances. The report of the IRP will then be considered by Full Council in March 2011 in order to coincide with budget setting arrangements.

**Key background documentation:**

None

The establishment and maintenance of the IRP is a statutory requirement.

Portfolio Member Details	
<b>Name &amp; Telephone No.:</b>	Councillor Graham Jones (01235) 762744
<b>E-mail Address:</b>	gjones@westberks.gov.uk
<b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>	1/1/2011

Contact Officer Details	
<b>Name:</b>	Jo Watt
<b>Job Title:</b>	Member Services Officer
<b>Tel. No.:</b>	01635 519242
<b>E-mail Address:</b>	jwatt@westberks.gov.uk

### Implications

<b>Policy:</b>	None
<b>Financial:</b>	There will be financial implications arising from this report. The s151 Officer will be consulted on the findings of the IRP Panel and the full implications included in the Independent Remuneration Panel's report to Council.
<b>Personnel:</b>	None
<b>Legal/Procurement:</b>	It is a statutory requirement that the Council establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel.
<b>Property:</b>	None
<b>Risk Management:</b>	None
<b>Equalities Impact Assessment:</b>	One of the purposes of reviewing the Allowances Scheme is to ensure that financial considerations are not a barrier to any person entering public office or assuming a particular role on the Council. By the same token the levels of allowances should be such that financial gain is not seen as an incentive for taking up public office.

<b>Is this item subject to call-in?</b>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position		<input type="checkbox"/>
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months		<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>



# Executive Summary and Report

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require Councils to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP). The IRP will broadly have the functions of providing the Council with advice on its Members Allowances Scheme, the amounts to be paid and the pensionability of allowances where relevant. The Council has to have regard to the advice of the IRP.
- 1.2 Under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended) the Council is required to ensure that the composition of the Panel meets the following requirements:
- (a) The Panel should consist of at least three members.
  - (b) The Panel members cannot be members of any local authority in respect of which that Panel makes recommendations. Anyone who would be disqualified from being elected as an elected member of a local authority is also disqualified from being a member of the Panel.
  - (c) The members of the Panel cannot also be members of a Committee or Sub-Committee of an authority in respect of which the Panel makes recommendations. This includes Co-opted members and members of the Standards Committee.
- 1.3 Before the last meeting of the panel in August 2009, the Council advertised the then vacant position on the panel. Unfortunately, no responses were received. The Council then approached Mr Mike Harris, a qualified Solicitor and former Local Government Director to join the panel and he accepted the position. Due to the unavailability of Mr Geoffrey Mayes in August 2009, Mr Geoff Wilde, an experienced IRP member with Wokingham Borough Council also joined the panel on that occasion.
- 1.4 Based on the statutory requirements, the proposed membership of the Panel for February 2011 is as follows:
- |                      |                                  |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1) Mr J Marsh        | Retired Local Government Officer |
| 2) Mr Geoffrey Mayes | Chartered Civil Engineer         |
| 3) Mr Robin Cops     | Chairman of the Wokingham IRP    |

## 2. Scope of Potential Changes to be discussed by the IRP

- 2.1 In light of the forthcoming District Council Elections in May 2011 and the need for the Council to set its budget, it is proposed that the IRP will meet in February 2011 to consider the whole Members Allowances Scheme as follows:

- a) Basic Allowance.
- b) Special Responsibility Allowances.
- c) Allowances for co-optees (including the independent members of the Standards Committee).
- d) Childcare and Dependent Carers Allowance.
- e) Appeals Allowance.
- f) ICT Allowance.
- g) Travelling Allowance.
- h) Subsistence Allowance.
- i) Conference Allowance.
- j) Pensions.
- k) The administration of the scheme (including the renunciation and suspension of allowances).

### **3. Conclusion**

- 3.1 A report setting out the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel will be brought to Full Council in March 2011.

### **Appendices**

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There are no Appendices to this report.

### **Consultees**

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**Local Stakeholders:** None

**Officers Consulted:** Andy Day, David Holling and Moira Fraser.

**Trade Union:** Not consulted

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Council Motion - Renewable Energy In West Berkshire</b>
<b>Report to be considered by:</b>	Special Council
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	31 January 2011
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	N/a

**Purpose of Report:** To report back the findings of the Greener Select Committee's deliberations into two separate but related Council motions concerning renewable energy.

**Recommended Action:** That the Council agrees that:

1. The Local Strategic Partnership are best placed for taking on responsibility for, and producing, a West Berkshire Renewable Energy Strategy.
2. That the Council's Energy Team finalise an Energy Strategy, to include policy on renewable energy, for West Berkshire Council's estate that includes school buildings.
3. That the Council examine ways in helping / facilitating others to take up projects under the Localism Bill.
4. That the Council investigates introducing a loan scheme to assist schools undertaking renewable energy projects.

**Reason for decision to be taken:** To respond to a petition to Council regarding renewable energy.

**Other options considered:** None.

**Key background documentation:** Report to the Greener Select Committee – Appendix 1.

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Theme:

**CPT5 - Cleaner and Greener**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:  
Setting the Council's position with regards to renewable energy.

Portfolio Member Details	
<b>Name &amp; Telephone No.:</b>	Councillor Hilary Cole
<b>E-mail Address:</b>	hcole@westberks.gov.uk
<b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>	20/01/11

Contact Officer Details	
<b>Name:</b>	David Cook
<b>Job Title:</b>	Principal Policy Officer
<b>Tel. No.:</b>	01635 519475
<b>E-mail Address:</b>	dcook@westberks.gov.uk

## Implications

<b>Policy:</b>	This report identifies a need for a West Berkshire Renewable Energy Strategy in support of UK targets and also explains that an overarching Energy Strategy is currently being developed for West Berkshire Council. Production of these Strategies / Policies will be done in consultation with local stakeholders and Council Services to ensure that implications for Council policy are clearly understood.
<b>Financial:</b>	The introduction of a Council Energy Strategy will improve the targeting of the Carbon Management budget, making this more objective.
<b>Personnel:</b>	None identified at this stage
<b>Legal/Procurement:</b>	The introduction of a Council Energy Strategy will provide a more structured approach to the procurement of goods, services and specialist support.
<b>Property:</b>	The introduction of a Council Energy Strategy should ensure that energy efficiency and renewables are considered as part of the scoping and design stages for building refurbishment and new building works where it is more cost effective.
<b>Risk Management:</b>	N/A
<b>Equalities Impact Assessment:</b>	None identified at this stage

# Executive Report

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the Council meetings of March 2010 and September 2010 the Council received motions from Councillor Royce Longton with regards to renewable energy.
- 1.2 As there was considerable overlap between the two motions it was agreed that they would both be considered as a single report by the Greener Select Committee. This report highlights the deliberations of the Greener Select Committee and their recommendations to Council.
- 1.3 The motions to Council are as follows:
- 1.4 “This Council notes:
- (a) That generation of energy from renewable sources must be a significant factor in any realistic solution to the problems posed by climate change;
  - (b) That the South East Plan sets targets for renewable electricity generation in the Thames Valley and Surrey of 140 MW by 2010 and 209 MW by 2016;
  - (c) That indicative targets for West Berkshire, derived from these figures by Thames Valley Energy, are 12.5 MW by 2010 and 18.5 MW by 2016;
  - (d) That the renewable electricity generating capacity in West Berkshire at the end of 2009 was only 0.4 MW, or approximately 3.5% of the 2010 target, a lower percentage than achieved by any of the other Berkshire authorities.

This Council therefore resolves:

- (e) To take urgent and concerted action to stimulate renewable electricity generation within West Berkshire with the objective of achieving the 18.5 MW target by 2016;
- (f) To be equally vigorous in seeking to meet emerging targets for the generation of heat and other forms of energy using renewable technologies.”

and

- 1.5 “This Council:
- 1. Welcomes the recent statement from Climate Change Secretary Chris Huhne that local authorities are to be allowed to sell surplus electricity generated by renewable technologies to the national grid;
  - 2. Notes that early estimates from the LGA suggest that across the country this could yield anything up to £100 million per year;
  - 3. Also notes that this will drastically reduce any disincentive to investing in photovoltaics and other renewables on Council buildings, currently imposed by the high capital cost, and indeed that it could provide a valuable source of income assisting the Council in maintaining its services in these difficult financial times;

4. And therefore resolves to move swiftly towards maximising the potential to generate environmentally sustainable green energy on its offices, schools, leisure centres and other property.”

## **2. Greener Select Committee**

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Greener Select Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2010 members considered a report from the Council’s Building Energy Officer in response to the two motions to Council.
- 2.2 The report is attached as Appendix 1 and should be used as a reference point to the discussions undertaken by the Greener Select Committee and the reasoning behind this reports recommendations.
- 2.3 Members were informed that recently there had been a number of developments relating to sources of renewable energy, encouraging administrations to adopt a more proactive stance to national and local targets.
- 2.4 The Select Committee were provided with background information setting out the legislative framework behind the Council’s current targets and the current position regarding powers and incentives to produce renewable energy.
- 2.5 As there was no overall local authority target within the South East Plan the Greener Select Committee endorsed officers recommendation that the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) be best placed for taking on the responsibility for a West Berkshire Renewable Energy Strategy.
- 2.6 Even though overall responsibility for driving forward this strategy would be with the LSP the select committee also agreed with officers’ recommendation that the Council should have its own Energy Strategy in place. The Select Committee also requested the addition of school properties within the Council’s definition of its estates.
- 2.7 The Select Committee also requested that two additional recommendations be added:
- 2.8 Members requested that officers examine ways, under the Localism Bill, to help organisations and communities wishing to establish projects such as Community Land Trusts.
- 2.9 Members also requested that the Council investigate the possibility of introducing a loan scheme for schools wishing to introduce their own projects. This would enable schools to borrow money without having to get written permission from the Secretary of State.

## **Recommendations**

- 2.10 The Local Strategic Partnership are best placed for taking on responsibility for, and producing, a West Berkshire Renewable Energy Strategy.
- 2.11 That the Council’s Energy Team finalise an Energy Strategy, to include policy on renewable energy, for West Berkshire Council’s estate that includes school buildings.

- 2.12 That the Council examine ways in helping / facilitating others to take up projects under the Localism Bill.
- 2.13 That the Council investigates introducing a loan scheme to assist schools undertaking renewable energy projects.

## **Appendices**

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Appendix 1 – Report to the Greener Select Committee 14<sup>th</sup> December 2010.

## **Consultees**

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**Local Stakeholders:** Councillor Hilary Cole

**Officers Consulted:** John Ashworth and Adrian Slaughter.

**Trade Union:** Not Applicable.

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<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Renewable Energy in West Berkshire</b>
<b>Report to be considered by:</b>	Greener Select Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> December 2010
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	N/A

**Purpose of Report:** This report is in response to two separate but related Council motions, dated March and September 2010, concerning renewable energy within West Berkshire and West Berkshire Council.

**Recommended Action:**

- 1) That the LSP Greener Partnership are best placed for taking on responsibility for, and producing, a West Berkshire Renewable Energy Strategy.
- 2) That the Council Energy Team finalise an Energy Strategy, to include policy on renewable energy, for West Berkshire Council.

**Reason for decision to be taken:** To set out the Council's current position regards renewable energy in West Berkshire

**Other options considered:** None

**Key background documentation:** 'The Energy Act 2008', 'The Climate Change Act 2008', 'The UK Renewable Energy Strategy 2009', 'Berkshire Renewable Energy - 2020, Evidence Base & Recommendations' 2010.

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Theme:

**CPT5 - Cleaner and Greener**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:

Responding to motions presented to Council.

Portfolio Member Details	
<b>Name &amp; Telephone No.:</b>	Councillor Hilary Cole - Tel (01635) 248542
<b>E-mail Address:</b>	hcole@westberks.gov.uk
<b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>	01 December 2010
Contact Officer Details	
<b>Name:</b>	Adrian Slaughter
<b>Job Title:</b>	Building Energy Officer
<b>Tel. No.:</b>	01635 503265
<b>E-mail Address:</b>	aslaughter@westberks.gov.uk

## Implications

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- Policy:** This report identifies a need for a West Berkshire Renewable Energy Strategy in support of UK targets and also explains that an overarching Energy Strategy is currently being developed for West Berkshire Council. Production of these Strategies / Policies will be done in consultation with local stakeholders and Council Services to ensure that implications for Council policy are clearly understood.
- Financial:** The introduction of a Council Energy Strategy will improve the targeting of the Carbon Management budget, making this more objective.
- Personnel:** None identified at this stage
- Legal/Procurement:** The introduction of a Council Energy Strategy will provide a more structured approach to the procurement of goods, services and specialist support.
- Property:** The introduction of a Council Energy Strategy should ensure that energy efficiency and renewables are considered as part of the scoping and design stages for building refurbishment and new building works where it is more cost effective.
- Risk Management:** N/A
- Equalities Impact Assessment:** None identified at this stage

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position		<input type="checkbox"/>
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months		<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>

# Executive Summary

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report is in direct response to two separate but related Council motions on renewable energy, dated March and September 2010, which were passed for consideration to the Greener Select Committee. The motions can be found in full in Appendix A and B respectively.
- 1.2 The aim of the report is to first put into context the national, regional and local policy and financial drivers for renewable energy. It will then provide a high level summary of the current level of renewable energy within West Berkshire Council and West Berkshire. Finally it will outline the potential next steps for consideration by the Greener Select Committee.

## 2. Background & Context

- 2.1 The last few years, and especially the last 6 months, have seen a number of developments relating to sources of renewable energy, encouraging administrations to adopt a more proactive stance at the national, regional and local level.
- 2.2 In 2007, the UK agreed with other EU Member States to an EU-wide target of 20% of the EU's *total energy consumption* to come from renewable sources by 2020. The UK share of this overall target is to achieve 15% of the UK's total energy consumption to come from renewable sources by 2020.
- 2.3 One of the drivers employed by the Government is greater financial support for renewable energy in the form of the 'Feed in Tariff' and the 'Renewable Heat Incentive'.
- 2.4 The situation with regards the South East Plan, referred to in Appendix A, is currently unclear. Revoked by the Communities Secretary, Eric Pickles, this action has, however, been successfully challenged in the High Court. The case was specifically concerned with housing targets but it means that the South East Plan is legally still in force.
- 2.5 Since late August 2010, when the Government removed the restriction on Local Authorities being able to take full advantage of the Feed in Tariff (FITs) the Energy team have been liaising with other Berkshire Local Authorities, external organisations, key West Berkshire Council Service Areas and renewable energy suppliers.
- 2.6 In order to move forward, there first needs to be greater clarity of where, as a Council and as a District, we are currently positioned with regards to renewables
- 2.7 Drawn from SEE-STATS and Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) figures, Table 1 in Appendix D shows the latest available information for Berkshire with regards the level of energy from renewable sources as a percentage of total energy consumption (3.1%). It also uses available planning information, and the assumption that all projects will be implemented, to predict a 'Business as Usual' scenario of 5.3% of total energy consumption in Berkshire coming from renewable sources by 2020.

- 2.8 As part of a larger piece of work across Berkshire started by the Berkshire Economic Strategy Board, the LSP Greener sub-partnership is currently undertaking a feasibility study for district energy schemes in West Berkshire.
- 2.9 Appendix D, Table 2, highlights that within West Berkshire Council there are a number of current sites with renewable energy generating technologies installed. The total peak capacity of all these technologies is 746 kW or 0.7 MW.
- 2.10 The Council is also working with 'Partnership for Renewables', an arm of the Carbon Trust, to review the potential for large wind turbine development on its own land. This study has now identified a preferred site and further consultation work is required to ensure that this is feasible and does not impact on any other Council strategy.

### **3. Conclusion and Recommendations**

- 3.1 With West Berkshire being part of the area covered by the overall target for the Thames Valley and Surrey region there is an absence of specific Local Authority targets within the South East Plan. There is therefore a requirement for a more detailed bottom-up study for renewable energy within West Berkshire. Encompassing the results of high level Berkshire studies already undertaken by Thames Valley Energy and potentially looking in more detail at those sites identified in Appendix C, it is recommended that responsibility for undertaking such a study best sits with the LSP Greener sub-partnership.
- 3.2 The Cleaner Greener group responsible for delivering the Council's Cleaner Greener agenda have made a request of the Energy Team for a generic high level Council Policy on renewable energy. To include policy and procedure for large and small scale implementation of renewable energy, this will be taken on as part of a more expansive piece of work to design and implement an Energy Strategy for West Berkshire Council

#### **Recommendations**

- 3.3 **That the LSP Greener Partnership are best placed for taking on responsibility for, and producing, a West Berkshire Renewable Energy Strategy.**
- 3.4 **That the Council Energy Team finalise an Energy Strategy, to include policy on renewable energy, for West Berkshire Council.**

# Executive Report

---

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report is in direct response to two separate but related Council motions on renewable energy, dated March and September 2010, which were passed for consideration to the Greener Select Committee. The motions can be found in full in Appendix A and B respectively.
- 1.2 As there is considerable overlap between the two individual motions it was agreed with the chairman of the Greener Select Committee that they could be dealt with in one report.
- 1.3 The aim of the report is to first put into context the national, regional and local policy and financial drivers for renewable energy. It will then provide a high level summary of the current level of renewable energy within West Berkshire Council and West Berkshire. Finally it will outline the potential next steps for consideration by the Greener Select Committee.

## 2. Background and Context

- 2.1 The last few years have seen a number of developments relating to sources of renewable energy, encouraging administrations to adopt a more proactive stance at the national, regional and local level. This section reviews the key policies and drivers that will impinge on West Berkshire and sets the context within which any renewable energy strategy will have to be delivered.

### National

- 2.2 In 2007, the UK agreed with other EU Member States to an EU-wide target of 20% of the EU's *total energy consumption* to come from renewable sources by 2020. The UK share of this overall target is to achieve 15% of the UK's total energy consumption to come from renewable sources by 2020.
- 2.3 The UK Renewable Energy Strategy, 2009, outlines the path to achieving this target by 2020 and the size of the challenge.
- 2.4 One of the drivers employed by the Government is greater financial support for renewable energy in the form of the 'Feed in Tariff' and the 'Renewable Heat Incentive'.
- 2.5 Introduced in April 2010, the 'Feed in Tariff' scheme (FITs) guarantees a minimum payment for all electricity generated by certain types of microgeneration technology up to 5 MW, as well as a separate payment for the electricity exported to grid. The tariff levels vary depending on the microgeneration technology installed and any payments are in addition to the bill savings made by using the electricity generated on-site.
- 2.6 The technologies covered by FITs are:
  - (a) Solar Photovoltaics,

- (b) Wind,
- (c) Hydro,
- (d) Anaerobic Digestion, and
- (e) MicroCHP (limited to a pilot at this time).

2.7 Within the recent Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), it was confirmed that in the next formal review of FITs, due in 2012, the scheme will be refocused on the most cost effective technologies. The Government have also reserved the right to undertake an earlier review if take up is greater than expected. At this moment in time it is unclear what impact this may have but it could involve changing the tariff levels for each technology.

2.8 The CSR also confirmed that the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) will go ahead in June 2011. This scheme is similar to FITs in that it guarantees payment for heat generated by certain types of renewable heat technologies. Unlike FITs, there is no export tariff as there is no 'national grid' for heat. However, there is no upper limit on the size of the technologies that can be employed and therefore the scheme is open to large community type projects such as combined heat and power (CHP).

2.9 The technologies covered by RHI are:

- (a) Air source heat pumps,
- (b) Ground source heat pumps,
- (c) Solar thermal heat and hot water,
- (d) Biomass heat generation and CHP
- (e) Anaerobic digestion to produce biogas for heat generation, and
- (f) Liquid biofuels (but only when replacing oil fired heating systems).

2.10 More detailed information on FITs and RHI can be found on the Department for Energy and Climate Change website.  
([http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/what\\_we\\_do/uk\\_supply/energy\\_mix/renewable/renewable.aspx](http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/what_we_do/uk_supply/energy_mix/renewable/renewable.aspx))

### **Regional**

2.11 The situation with regards the South East Plan, referred to in Appendix A, is currently unclear. Revoked by the Communities Secretary, Eric Pickles, this action has, however, been successfully challenged in the High Court. The case was specifically concerned with housing targets but it means that the South East Plan is legally still in force.

### **Berkshire**

2.12 One of the key Strategic organisational groups in Berkshire is called Climate Berkshire. This is a partnership of Local Authorities and other key organisations from across Berkshire. Working to address the challenges and opportunities

associated with climate change at a strategic level across the County, the partnership reports to the Berkshire Economic Strategy Board. Its mission is to provide leadership through encouraging organisational commitment, providing and informing strategic direction and assisting in the delivery of projects. It will pave the way to the development of a market in low carbon technology in Berkshire.

- 2.13 Working very closely with a local renewable energy consultancy, Thames Valley Energy, Climate Berkshire has produced two reports on renewable energy in Berkshire. The second of these reports, titled 'Berkshire Renewable Energy – 2020 Evidence Base & Recommendations', identifies a number of renewable energy opportunities across Berkshire representing an initial high-level scan rather than a bottom-up scoping. The list representing those opportunities in West Berkshire is reproduced in Appendix C.

### **West Berkshire**

- 2.14 Within the district of West Berkshire, as part of the development of a Local Development Framework for West Berkshire, the West Berkshire Planning Service has proposed a Core Strategy for 'Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency' (CS16). This strategy outlines new development target values for carbon dioxide emissions associated with renewable energy in all major residential and non-residential development. This is based on the estimated carbon dioxide emissions of the development after the installation of energy efficiency measures related to either the Code for Sustainable Homes, BREEAM or equivalent has been applied.
- 2.15 The Local Development Framework, and CS 16, referred to in paragraph 2.14 has very recently undergone an independent review by the Planning Inspector. The review has been suspended and results will not be known until the report is published later in 2011.
- 2.16 The Town and Country Planning Association have recently published two guides regarding community energy 'Urban Planning for a Low Carbon Future' & 'Planning, Development and Delivery'. These guides provide some of the information needed for West Berkshire to recognise and understand the opportunities for decentralised energy in the District.
- 2.17 The Government's White Paper introducing the Localism Bill, entitled "Local Growth: realising every place's potential", was published this month. When the Localism Bill becomes law, local communities may start bringing forward proposals themselves, possibly in the form of Community Land Trusts, which are mechanisms for public bodies to hold land on behalf of a community. The Council may wish to investigate the most appropriate financial vehicle that would assist the development of renewable energy technologies in the District, such as an Energy Services Company (ESCO). This information/research could be used to help develop and build on the existing Core Strategy policy CS16, which could be included in the Council's forthcoming Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document.
- 2.18 Although FITs were introduced in April 2010, see paragraph 2.5, it wasn't until late August 2010 that the Government removed the restriction on Local Authorities taking full advantage of the scheme by being able to sell electricity back to the national grid. Since August the Energy team have been liaising with other Berkshire Local Authorities and some of the potential scheme suppliers who have appeared since the introduction of FITs.

- 2.19 Research led by Reading Borough Council, and supported by Climate Berkshire and Thames Valley Energy, has looked at different Solar Photovoltaic investment options currently available on the market for implementation within a Local Authority. The three options considered were 'private investment', 'Council investment' and a combination of the two.
- 2.20 One of the issues arising out of this research is that there are a number of 'leaseback' or financial loan schemes on the market targeted specifically at Schools. Under current Department for Education guidance, with the exception of loan schemes run by the Local Authority, it appears that governing bodies may only borrow money with the written permission of the Secretary of State.

### **3. Where are we now?**

- 3.1 In order to move forward, there first needs to be greater clarity of where, as a Council and as a District, we are currently positioned with regards to renewables. Given the timescales it is not possible within this report to provide a detailed study of current and planned renewable energy installations. Instead it will use historical studies undertaken by Thames Valley Energy, available planning information, and local knowledge to provide a high level indication of current levels of renewable energy in West Berkshire Council and West Berkshire.

#### **Berkshire**

- 3.2 Drawn from SEE-STATS and Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) figures, Table 1 in Appendix D shows the latest available information for Berkshire with regards the level of energy from renewable sources as a percentage of total energy consumption (3.1%). It also uses available planning information, and the assumption that all projects will be implemented, to predict a 'Business as Usual' scenario of 5.3% of total energy consumption in Berkshire coming from renewable sources by 2020.

#### **West Berkshire Partnership**

- 3.3 As part of a larger piece of work across Berkshire started by the Berkshire Economic Strategy Board, the LSP Greener sub-partnership is currently undertaking a feasibility study for district energy schemes in West Berkshire. The initial desk top study has now been focused on one potential village where further detailed investigation is being undertaken.

#### **West Berkshire Council**

- 3.4 Appendix D, Table 2, highlights that within West Berkshire Council there are a number of current sites with renewable energy generating technologies installed. The total peak capacity of all these technologies is 746 kW or 0.7 MW.
- 3.5 The Council is also working with 'Partnership for Renewables', an arm of the Carbon Trust, to review the potential for large wind turbine development on its own land. This study has now identified a preferred site and further consultation work is required to ensure that this is feasible and does not impact on any other Council strategy.
- 3.6 A very recent development is that the Energy Team have been contacted by a number of developers enquiring about the potential for Solar Parks on Council



owned land. A number of other Local Authorities have been investigating the potential for Solar Parks and notably Cornwall County Council have reached the stage where they have identified land and a preferred partner organisation with whom they will work with to develop the sites.

#### **4. Conclusion & Recommendations**

- 4.1 The full impact of the financial incentives introduced by the Government, FITs and RHI, are yet to be seen as they have either only just been introduced or will not come into play until 2011. There is also the added complication that not all renewable energy schemes require planning permission, raising concerns regards how the necessary detailed and accurate information could be sourced.
- 4.2 There is a degree of uncertainty surrounding the long term viability of the South East Plan, the current situation is that CALA Homes has won its latest legal wrangle with the Government and the court has placed a temporary block on the Government's claim that its plans to abolish Regional Strategies must be regarded as a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 4.3 With West Berkshire being part of the area covered by the overall target for the Thames Valley and Surrey region there is an absence of specific Local Authority targets within the South East Plan. There is therefore a requirement for a more detailed bottom-up study for renewable energy within West Berkshire. Encompassing the results of high level Berkshire studies already undertaken by Thames Valley Energy and potentially looking in more detail at those sites identified in Appendix C, it is recommended that responsibility for undertaking such a study best sits with the LSP Greener sub-partnership.
- 4.4 Coming out of this study, would be a Renewable Energy Strategy for West Berkshire and associated local targets that will be transparent, repeatable, meaningful and support the national target of 15% of the UK's total energy consumption to come from renewable sources by 2020.
- 4.5 As alluded to in paragraph's 2.18 to 2.20, the Council's Energy Team are currently proactively engaged with other Berkshire Local Authorities, external organisations / suppliers, and internal Service Areas in looking at the potential implementation of renewable energy in the Council's estate.
- 4.6 The Cleaner Greener group responsible for delivering the Council's Cleaner Greener agenda have made a request of the Energy Team for a generic high level Council Policy on renewable energy. To include policy and procedure for large and small scale implementation of renewable energy, this will be taken on as part of a more expansive piece of work to design and implement an Energy Strategy for West Berkshire Council.
- 4.7 Any specific renewable energy policy has to be in context of the current situation and where the Council wishes to position itself with regards renewable energy technologies in a developing and evolving market. The question that needs to be answered is 'does the Council wish to adopt a high risk strategy by being seen as a leader, implementing relatively new technologies in potentially untested situations?', or, 'does it prefer to adopt a low risk strategy by following the market, allowing others to take the risk?'

- 4.8 There also needs to be an understanding that renewables is not the only solution to energy concerns and that they need to be considered as part of a balanced strategic approach to energy reduction and efficiency.

### **Recommendations**

- 4.9 **That the LSP Greener Partnership are best placed for taking on responsibility for, and producing, a West Berkshire Renewable Energy Strategy.**
- 4.10 **That the Council Energy Team finalise an Energy Strategy, to include policy on renewable energy, for West Berkshire Council.**

### **Appendices**

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Appendix A – Council Motion dated March 2010

Appendix B – Council Motion dated September 2010

Appendix C – West Berkshire selected site opportunities

Appendix D – Renewable Energy Statistics

### **Consultees**

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**Local Stakeholders:** Cllr Hilary Cole

**Officers Consulted:** John Ashworth, Gabrielle Esplin, Philip Newton, Alistair Buckley, Anthony Armitage, Andy Green, Andrew Deacon

**Trade Union:** N/A

## **Appendix A – Council Motion dated March 2010.**

1.1 At the meeting of Council on 4 March 2010 the following motion was submitted in the name of Councillor Royce Longton:

1.2 “This Council notes:

(a) That generation of energy from renewable sources must be a significant factor in any realistic solution to the problems posed by climate change;

(b) That the South East Plan sets targets for renewable electricity generation in the Thames Valley and Surrey of 140 MW by 2010 and 209 MW by 2016;

(c) That indicative targets for West Berkshire, derived from these figures by Thames Valley Energy, are 12.5 MW by 2010 and 18.5 MW by 2016;

(d) That the renewable electricity generating capacity in West Berkshire at the end of 2009 was only 0.4 MW, or approximately 3.5% of the 2010 target, a lower percentage than achieved by any of the other Berkshire authorities.

This Council therefore resolves:

(a) To take urgent and concerted action to stimulate renewable electricity generation within West Berkshire with the objective of achieving the 18.5 MW target by 2016;

(b) To be equally vigorous in seeking to meet emerging targets for the generation of heat and other forms of energy using renewable technologies.”

1.3 The motion was put to the vote and passed and subsequently passed to the Greener Select Committee for consideration.

## **Appendix B: Council Motion dated September 2010.**

This Council:

1. Welcomes the recent statement from Climate Change Secretary Chris Huhne that local authorities are to be allowed to sell surplus electricity generated by renewable technologies to the national grid;
2. Notes that early estimates from the LGA suggest that across the country this could yield anything up to £100 million per year;
3. Also notes that this will drastically reduce any disincentive to investing in photovoltaics and other renewables on Council buildings, currently imposed by the high capital cost, and indeed that it could provide a valuable source of income assisting the Council in maintaining its services in these difficult financial times;
4. And therefore resolves to move swiftly towards maximising the potential to generate environmentally sustainable green energy on its offices, schools, leisure centres and other property.”

## Appendix C: West Berkshire selected site opportunities

The following information has been reproduced from a high level study undertaken by Thames Valley Energy into renewable energy in West Berkshire and identifies sites with potential that may be worth further more detailed investigation.

- Biomass CHP (new mixed) –
  - AWE Aldermaston – 12 MWe, 46 MWth
  - AWE Burghfield – 4 MWe, 14 MWth
- Biomass CHP (existing high demand) –
  - Southern Refining, Membury – 1.1 MWe, 4 MWth
- Onshore wind (cluster large turbines) – *site to be advised* – 4 MWe
- Onshore wind (single on-site) – New Greenham Park – 2 MWe
- Landfill gas electricity – Beenham landfill – 0.1 MWe
- Bio/sewage gas electricity – *site to be advised* – 0.5 MWe
- Hydro electricity –
  - Streatley weir – 0.1 MWe
  - Aldermaston Wharf – 0.07 MWe
  - Old Mill Hotel – 0.03 MWe
  - Newbury centre sites 1 & 2 – 0.02 MWe
  - Thatcham & Colthrop – 0.02 MWe
  - Brimpton Mill – 0.02 MWe
- Solar PV (LA arrays) – Faraday Road & *other sites* – 0.04 MWe
- Solar PV (existing homes) – 879 existing homes – 0.9 MWe
- Landfill gas waste heat – Beenham landfill – 0.02 MWth
- Solar thermal (new/existing homes) – 1,046 homes – 2.9 MWth
- Biomass heat-only (large residential/district heating) –
  - Cold Ash 2,176 residents, hotel, 3 schools – 5 MWth
  - Aldermaston 927 residents, 2 hotels, 2 schools – 2 MWth
  - Lambourn 2,955 residents, 1 vets, 1 hotel, 1 school – 7 MWth
  - Kintbury 2,086 residents, 1 hotel, 1 school – 5 MWth
  - Mortimer 3,099 residents, 2 schools – 8 MWth
  - Hermitage 1,537 residents, 2 schools – 4 MWth
  - Compton 1,407 residents, 2 schools – 4 MWth
- Biomass heat-only (medium residential/hotels/schools) –
  - Padworth 228 residents, 1 hotel, 2 schools – 0.6 MWth
  - Bradfield 520 residents, 2 schools – 1.3 MWth
  - E. Ilsley - *tba* residents, 1 hotel, 1 school – *tba* MWth
  - Yattendon - 331 residents, 1 hotel, 1 school – 0.8 MWth
  - Woolhampton - 684 residents, 2 schools – 1.7 MWth
  - Streatley - 307 residents, 1 hotel, 1 school – 0.8 MWth
- Biomass heat-only (small residential/schools) –
  - Snelsmore Common - *tba* residents, 1 school – *tba* MWth
  - East Garston - 532 residents, 1 hotel – 1 MWth
  - Midgham - 371 residents, 1 hotel – 1 MWth
  - Great Shefford - 970 residents, 1 school – 2 MWth
  - U. Bucklebury - 914 residents, 1 school – 2 MWth
  - Beenham - 796 residents, 1 school – 2 MWth
  - Stockcross - 679 residents, 1 school – 2 MWth
  - Chieveley - 587 residents, 1 school – 1 MWth
  - Hampstead Norreys - 541 residents, 1 school – 1 MWth
  - Enborne - 492 residents, 1 school – 1 MWth

Chaddleworth - 482 residents, 1 school – 1 MWth  
Beedon - 440 residents, 1 school – 1 MWth  
Inkpen - 382 residents, 1 school – 1 MWth  
Brimpton - 357 residents, 1 school – 1 MWth  
Brightwalton - 350 residents, 1 school – 1 MWth  
Aldermaston Wharf - 320 residents, 1 school – 1 MWth  
Ufton Nervet - 317 residents, 1 school – 1 MWth  
Englefield - 303 residents, 1 school – 1 MWth  
Curridge - *tba* residents, 1 school (+existing boiler) – *tba* MWth  
Wickham - *tba* residents, 1 school – *tba* MWth  
Southend - 765 residents – 2 MWth  
Upper Lambourn - 431 residents – 1 MWth  
Beech Hill - 311 residents – 1 MWth  
Aldworth - 308 residents – 1 MWth  
Eastbury - 293 residents – 1 MWth

## Appendix D: Renewable Energy Statistics

**Table 1: Summary of current renewable energy in Berkshire, as a percentage of consumption. (taken from report by Thames Valley Energy, Feb 2010)**

	<b>End 2008</b>	<b>End 2009</b>	<b>2020, business as usual planned</b>
Electricity	7.2%	7.3%	8.9%
Heat	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%
Transport	2.0%	3.2%	8.3%
<b>All Energy</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>

**Table 2: Summary of current renewable energy in West Berkshire**

	<b>Solar PV</b>	<b>Wind</b>	<b>Biomass</b>	<b>Solar Thermal</b>	<b>Ground Source Heat Pumps</b>	<b>CHP</b>
<b>West Berkshire Council</b>	2 sites with another in pipeline	1 site under investigation for potential large scale wind turbines	3 sites	2 sites	2 sites	
<b>West Berkshire Council Contractors</b>						1 site (Northcroft Leisure Centre)
<b>West Berkshire Partnership</b>						1 site (Brightwalton Village)
<b>District*</b>	6 sites	13 sites	3 sites	2 sites		1 site

\* data for the district is based on approved planning applications and current local knowledge.

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