

Meeting of West Berkshire District Council

Tuesday, 22nd July, 2014

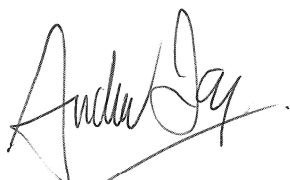
Summons and Agenda



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
Tuesday, 22nd July, 2014
at 7.00 pm



Andy Day
Head of Strategic Support
West Berkshire District Council

Date of despatch of Agenda: Monday, 14 July 2014

AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any).

2. **CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

The Chairman to report on functions attended since the last meeting and other matters of interest to Members.

3. **PRESENTATIONS**

The Chairman will make presentations to Members who are in receipt of long service awards.

4. **MINUTES**

The Chairman to sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 15 May 2014. **(Pages 1 - 14)**



Agenda - Council to be held on Tuesday, 22 July 2014 (continued)

5. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To remind Members of the need to record the existence and nature of any Personal, Disclosable Pecuniary or other interests in items on the agenda, in accordance with the Members' [Code of Conduct](#).

6. **PETITIONS**

Councillors may present any petition which they have received. These will normally be referred to the appropriate body without discussion.

7. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Members of the Executive to answer the following questions submitted by members of the public in accordance with the Council's Constitution:

(a) **Question to be answered by the Leader of the Council submitted by Mr David Peacock:**

“Why is there no publicly-available minute of West Berkshire Council's decision to give away the freehold to the whole of Marsh Lane in Newbury, which includes the access to Jack of Newbury's House (probably Newbury's most important historic building); and why was the Newbury public not consulted about this specific proposal?”

8. **MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES**

The Monitoring Officer to advise of any changes to the membership of Committees since the previous Council meeting.

9. **LICENSING COMMITTEE**

The Council is asked to note that since the last meeting of the Council, the Licensing Committee met on 03 June 2014. Copies of the Minutes of this meeting can be obtained from Strategic Support or via the [Council's website](#).

10. **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

The Council is asked to note that since the last meeting of the Council, the Personnel Committee met on 28 May 2014. Copies of the Minutes of this meeting can be obtained from Strategic Support or via the [Council's website](#).

11. **GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

The Council is asked to note that since the last meeting of Council, the Governance and Audit Committee has not met.

12. **DISTRICT PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The Council is asked to note that since the last meeting of the Council, the District Planning Committee has not met.

Agenda - Council to be held on Tuesday, 22 July 2014 (continued)

13. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

The Council is asked to note that since the last meeting of the Council, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission met on 20 May 2014, 01 July 2014 and the 21 July 2014 (Special). Copies of the Minutes of these meetings can be obtained from Strategic Support or via the [Council's website](#).

14. STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Council is asked to note that since the last meeting of the Council, the Standards Committee met on 16 June 2014. Copies of the Minutes of this meeting can be obtained from Strategic Support or via the [Council's website](#).

15. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14 (C2864)

To inform Members of the Scrutiny activity undertaken during the Municipal Year 2013/2014. **(Pages 15 - 20)**

16. RESPONSE TO S106 AND CIL COUNCIL MOTION SUBMITTED ON 12TH DECEMBER 2013 (C2820)

To provide a response to the Motion agreed at Council on 12th December 2013 concerning S106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy ("CIL"). **(Pages 21 - 34)**

17. NORTH WESSEX DOWNS AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN 2014-19 (C2847)

To consider the adoption of the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan for 2014-2019. **(Pages 35 - 196)**

18. WEST BERKSHIRE HOUSING SITE ALLOCATIONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (DPD): PREFERRED OPTIONS FOR CONSULTATION (C2844)

To consider the preferred options version of the West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document. **(Pages 197 - 336)**

19. NOTICES OF MOTION

No motions have been submitted.

20. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Members of the Executive to answer the following questions submitted by Councillors in accordance with the [Council's Constitution](#):

- (a) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operations), Emergency Planning, Newbury Vision submitted by Councillor Keith Woodhams:**

"Currently, when a single vehicle uses the left hand exit lane from the West Berkshire Community Hospital to access the A4 at Benham Hill, traffic lights on



Agenda - Council to be held on Tuesday, 22 July 2014 (continued)

the A4 and Lower Way change to red. This leads to unnecessary traffic queues and congestion leading up to the road junction especially at peak time. Can the Executive Member for Highways & Transport tell me what timescale she has in mind for converting the left hand exit lane to a 'Give Way' lane but retaining the pedestrian lighted crossing, to allow traffic at the junction to flow more freely?"

- (b) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operations), Emergency Planning, Newbury Vision submitted by Councillor Keith Woodhams:**

"Can the Executive Member for Finance give me a break down of the £300k 'estimated efficiency savings' that he says the Head of Service for Highways & Transport had 'pushed the highway contractors to achieve'?"

- (c) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operations), Emergency Planning, Newbury Vision submitted by Councillor Keith Woodhams:**

"Since the introduction of the 20 mph speed limit covering Market Street, a number of motorists are still driving well in excess of the new limit. Will the Executive Member for Highways & Transport take on board my urgent request to paint 20 mph roundels on the surface of the road on the approach to the mini roundabout outside the Council offices, to slow vehicles down so that pedestrians including the elderly and parents with young children are able to cross safely?"

- (d) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operations), Emergency Planning, Newbury Vision submitted by Councillor Keith Woodhams:**

"When will the Executive Member for Highways & Transport investigate the potential to save tax payer's money by sharing the Highways & Transport services with another Council such as Hampshire County Council?"

- (e) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Finance, Economic development, Health and Safety, HR, Pensions and Property submitted by Councillor David Rendel:**

"What is your estimate of the interest lost by the Council in the current financial year as a result of the decision made by the Executive on 08/05/14 to take £522,000 from balances to pay for flood repairs? "

- (f) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Finance, Economic development, Health and Safety, HR, Pensions and Property submitted by Councillor David Rendel:**

"What is your estimate of the interest lost by the Council for the full 2014/15 financial year as a result of the decision made by the Executive on 08/05/14 to take £522,000 from balances to pay for flood repairs?"



Agenda - Council to be held on Tuesday, 22 July 2014 (continued)

If you require this information in a different format or translation, please contact
Moira Fraser on telephone (01635) 519045.

COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

THURSDAY, 15 MAY 2014

Councillors Present: David Allen, Peter Argyle, Howard Bairstow, Pamela Bale, Jeff Beck (Vice-Chairman), Brian Bedwell, David Betts, Dominic Boeck, Jeff Brooks, Paul Bryant, George Chandler, Keith Chopping (Chairman), Hilary Cole, Roger Croft, Richard Crumly, Adrian Edwards, Sheila Ellison, Marcus Franks, Dave Goff, Manohar Gopal, Paul Hewer, Roger Hunneman, Carol Jackson-Doerge, Mike Johnston, Graham Jones, Alan Law, Tony Linden, Mollie Lock, Royce Longton, Gordon Lundie, Alan Macro, Gwen Mason, Geoff Mayes, Tim Metcalfe, Irene Neill, Graham Pask, James Podger, David Rendel, Andrew Rowles, Garth Simpson, Anthony Stansfeld, Julian Swift-Hook, Tony Vickers, Quentin Webb, Emma Webster and Laszlo Zverko

Also Present: John Ashworth (Corporate Director - Environment), Nick Carter (Chief Executive), David Holling (Head of Legal Services), Bryan Lyttle (Planning & Transport Policy Manager), Keith Ulyatt (Public Relations Manager), Rachael Wardell (Corporate Director - Communities), Moira Fraser (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager), Linda Pye (Principal Policy Officer), Robin Steel (Group Executive (Cons)), Jude Thomas (Member Services Officer) and Jo Watt (Member Services Officer)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Billy Drummond, Geoff Findlay, Councillor John Horton, Councillor Joe Mooney, Alan Thorpe, Councillor Ieuan Tuck, Councillor Virginia von Celsing and Councillor Keith Woodhams

PART I

1. Chairman's Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all those present to the meeting. Councillor Keith Chopping reported that it was with great sadness that he had to announce that the Council had recently lost one of its highly respected Officers, Chris Jones, and he asked Councillors Hilary Cole and Gwen Mason to say a few words about Chris on behalf of all Members.

Councillor Cole noted that Chris was a very valuable and competent Officer who had sadly passed away on the 27 April 2014. Chris had joined the Council on the 01 April 2011 and he had worked in local government since 1994. Councillor Cole went on to say that Chris was a 'super guy', a 'lovely man' who had built good relationships with the District's performing arts sector. Chris had risen to the challenge of making Adventure Dolphin a cost neutral venture and he was still working on this project when he had passed away. In addition he had also played a key role in the Olympic Torch project and its ongoing legacy through the Enjoy Programme. Councillor Cole stated that while Members were aware of all of this work what they might not have known was that Chris had also worked as a stand up comedian on the comedy circuit and that he had played a guitar in a band. Councillor Cole concluded by saying that Chris Jones had made a great contribution to the Culture Team and was well respected by colleagues and Members alike. He would be sorely missed.

Councillor Gwen Mason requested that the Council's condolences be conveyed to Chris's wife and family. Councillor Mason had worked with Chris on a number of projects where his wonderful sense of humour had come to the fore. Councillor Mason said that he would also be remembered for his flamboyant ties.

COUNCIL - 15 MAY 2014 - MINUTES

The Chairman joined all Members in thanking Chris Jones for his hard work and offered the Council's condolences to his family.

The Chairman explained that before he commenced his remarks there were two issues that he wished to report back on.

Escheat Motion

At Council in December 2013, Councillor David Rendel tabled a motion on the law and consequences of escheat. The Motion was adopted by Council and on behalf of Members the Chairman wrote initially to the Secretary of State at the Department of Communities and Local Government. The enquiry was passed to the Ministry of Justice and after some chasing a response was received on 24th April 2014.

The response outlined the general law relating to escheat and the position of the Crown once any estate or land was disclaimed for example by a Trustee in bankruptcy or liquidator. The explanation given regarding management of any such estates was that the Crown Estate did not undertake any acts of ownership or management; but if someone wished to acquire a title the policy of the Crown was to grant a new freehold title.

The Ministry of Justice acknowledged that practical problems occurred where sites deteriorated due to lack of maintenance but they advised that some action might be taken in limited circumstances. There were no plans to review the law of escheat. A copy of the letter has been forwarded to Councillor Rendel.

S106/ Community Infrastructure Levy

Councillor Chopping noted that as Members were aware there had been a sustained campaign fought by the Council to retain its S106 scheme and to fight against the imposition of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). A delegation led by Councillor Hilary Cole and comprising Councillor Tony Vickers, Councillor Chopping and Officers had met for an hour and a half with those responsible for such matters in Whitehall on the previous Tuesday, they had listened to the Council's case politely but no further action had arisen as a result of the meeting. Councillor Chopping stated that Members should continue to pursue this matter.

The Chairman started his remarks by noting that he had now come to the end of his second year as Chairman, an Office which he had held with considerable pride and he hoped he had done it justice.

The Chairman explained that he and the Vice Chairman, accompanied in the main by their wives, and assisted by Councillors Peter Argyle, Pamela Bale, Jeff Brooks and Adrian Edwards had attended in excess of 250 events throughout the Municipal Year. The range of those events had been many and varied and had been attended by residents covering a range of ages. Many of the events had also involved the District's numerous volunteers, a sector in which West Berkshire was particularly strong. The Chairman made special mention of his recently held, well attended, charity Golf day held at the beautiful Crookham course. He congratulated the Planning team who had won the competition.

The Chairman stated that there was so much ability, enthusiasm, application and willingness from the citizens of this marvelous, outstanding District which the Members of the Council represented. The Chairman noted that his year in office had reminded him just how talented, resourceful and enterprising the people of West Berkshire were in pursuing their many and varied activities. He reminded Members that they needed to support them as much as they were able to do.

The Chairman concluded by saying that it had been an exceptionally rewarding year and that he had been able to collect in excess of £2,700, including £500 from Ahmadi

COUNCIL - 15 MAY 2014 - MINUTES

Muslims, to his chosen charity Children with Cancer and he thanked all those who supported it.

Councillor Chopping thanked Councillor Jeff Beck, his Vice Chairman, who had readily stepped into the breach left by the untimely death of Councillor David Holtby. He also thanked Jo Watt, Jude Thomas, Moira Fraser and Linda Pye, for the support that they had provided to him throughout his year. He also thanked the Council for giving him the opportunity to be their Chairman for the second time. He gave special thanks to his wife Penee for being supportive and encouraging and accompanying him on most of his engagements throughout the year.

2. **Presentations**

The Chairman was pleased to announce that Long Service Awards would be made to long serving elected Councillors for ten and twenty five years service.

The following Members received an award for 10 years of service:

- Jeff Beck
- Richard Crumly

The following Member received an award for 25 years of service:

- Joe Mooney who had unfortunately given his apologies for the meeting.

The Chairman commended the Members on their outstanding efforts.

3. **Election of Chairman for the Municipal Year 2014/15 (C2686)**

The Motion was proposed by Councillor Adrian Edwards and seconded by Councillor Pamela Bale that Councillor Jeff Beck be elected Chairman of the Council for the Municipal Year 2014/15. There were no further nominations.

Councillor Edwards in proposing Councillor Beck for the role of Chairman noted that Councillor Beck had first been elected as the Ward Member for the then Turnpike Ward in 2000 although he had worked to help the residents of the area in various guises for over 30 years. After a break he had been re-elected in 2007 to the Clay Hill Ward. Councillor Edwards stated that Councillor Beck was hard working, experienced, well respected, diligent and meticulous. He was also a man who was always willing to 'get his hands dirty' as had been evidenced during both the 2007 and 2014 floods. Councillor Beck was supported by his wife of 58 years Alma and he believed that they would be a successful partnership during his year in office. He was therefore honoured to propose him for the role of Chairman.

Councillor Bale stated that it was a privilege to second Councillor Beck's nomination. Councillor Bale had known him since 2006 when he had helped her to get elected and that since then she had worked with him on a number of projects. She stated that Councillor Beck's commitment to his residents was an example to all Councillors and he was held in great esteem by them. His knowledge and attention to detail would be great attributes for his year in office. Councillor Beck and his wife Alma had been great ambassadors when he was Mayor of Newbury and she was therefore pleased to second this nomination.

Councillor Jeff Brooks stated that he would be pleased to support Councillor Beck's nomination. He stated that Councillor Beck was hard working and that he was confident that he would be both fair and thorough. Councillor Brooks stated that Councillor Beck was blessed with a high degree of wisdom and that he therefore felt he would represent the Council very well.

COUNCIL - 15 MAY 2014 - MINUTES

RESOLVED that Councillor Jeff Beck be elected as Chairman of Council for the Municipal Year 2014/15.

(Councillor Jeff Beck in the Chair)

The new Chairman read and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. Councillor Beck thanked the Council for electing him and Councillors Edwards and Bale for their kind words. He stated that he would endeavour to achieve the aims of the Council and serve the residents well. He acknowledged that the support of staff was essential and that he would strive to work with them to ensure the best outcome for residents.

Councillor Beck reported that his chosen charity for 2014/15 was the Cystic Fibrosis Trust. He explained that the reason for choosing this charity was that they had lost their eldest son Andrew to this disease and that the money raised by the charity contributed to research that helped to extend the lives of young people, in particular. He thanked his wife Alma and son Roger for supporting him.

Councillor Beck thanked the outgoing Chairman, Councillor Keith Chopping, for fulfilling his role with great integrity, good grace and purpose during his year of office. He had enjoyed supporting him as Vice-Chairman following the tragic death of Councillor David Holtby.

He also thanked Mrs Penee Chopping for the support she had afforded to Councillor Chopping during his year in office and that it had been a pleasure to work with them both.

Councillor Jeff Brooks thanked the outgoing Chairman Keith Chopping. He acknowledged that Councillor Chopping had worked really hard and had been very fair.

4. Appointment of Vice Chairman for the Municipal Year 2014/15 (C2687)

The Chairman requested nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman of Council for the Municipal Year 2014/15. In response to this request Councillor Graham Jones was nominated by Councillor Keith Chopping and the nomination was seconded by Councillor Emma Webster. There were no further nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman.

Councillor Chopping in proposing Councillor Jones noted that he had an exemplary pedigree and that he had first started in local government in 1987. He had been appointed as the Leader of the Conservative Group in 2005 a position that he had held until 2012.

Councillor Webster stated that she had known Councillor Jones since 2003. He worked tirelessly in his ward and he was always very supportive of new Members. His advice was always invaluable, he was a consummate performer in the chamber and he was a good friend and that she was therefore pleased to propose him for the role of Vice-Chairman as he would make a great ambassador for the District.

Councillor Jeff Brooks stated that he had enjoyed sparring with Councillor Jones in the chamber over the last few years. He was a Councillor that was well respected by both groups and he would be pleased to vote in favour of his appointment.

RESOLVED that Councillor Graham Jones be appointed Vice-Chairman of Council for the Municipal Year 2014/15.

The Vice-Chairman read and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. Councillor Jones thanked the Council for electing him. He noted that this was a huge honour and he would support Councillor Beck to the best of his ability. Councillor Jones thanked Councillors Chopping and Webster for nominating him and thanked his fellow Councillors for putting their trust in him. Councillor Jones thanked the outgoing Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the work they had undertaken in the previous year.

COUNCIL - 15 MAY 2014 - MINUTES

Councillor Jeff Beck then thanked Penee Chopping for all she had done for the Council and Councillor Chopping during his year as Chairman.

5. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2014 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the inclusion of the following amendments:

Item 83 - West Berkshire Council Strategy: Refresh (C2744)

- Fourth Paragraph, second line – delete the words ‘and this year’.
- Seventh paragraph, sixth line – replace the word ‘was’ with the word ‘would’.

Item 86 - Capital Strategy and Programme 2014/15 to 2018/19 (C2746)

- Fourth paragraph, first line and paragraph starting ‘Councillor Gordon Lundie noted that £115m’ – change the word ‘spend’ to spent’.
- Should refer to the ‘Castle’ School.

Item 87 - Revenue Budget: 2014/15 (C2749)

- Recommendation 2(a) insert the ‘£’ before 60,599.03.
- In the sentence starting ‘Councillor Bale noted that there were no proposals in place’ replace the word ‘se’ with ‘she’.

Item 89 - Community Infrastructure Levy - Adoption and Implementation of Charging Schedule (C2587)

Second paragraph below the Motion should say ‘s106’ and not ‘s06’.

6. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Emma Webster declared an interest in Agenda Item 14, and reported that, as her interest was personal and prejudicial and a disclosable pecuniary interest, she would be leaving the meeting during the course of consideration of the matter.

7. Appointment of the Executive by the Leader of the Council for the 2014/15 Municipal Year (C2688)

Councillor Gordon Lundie announced the appointment of Members to the Executive for 2014/15 as follows:

Councillor	Portfolio
Roger Croft	Deputy Leader, Strategy & Performance, Housing, ICT & Corporate Support, Legal and Strategic Support
Pamela Bale	Highways, Transport (Operations), Emergency Planning, Newbury Vision
Irene Neill	Children and Young People, Youth Service, Education
Joe Mooney	Adult Social Care, Insurance
Alan Law	Finance, Economic Development, Health & Safety, HR, Pensions, Property
Hilary Cole	Planning, Transport (Policy), Culture, Customer

COUNCIL - 15 MAY 2014 - MINUTES

Councillor	Portfolio
	Services, Countryside
Graham Pask	Partnerships, Equality, Communities, Hungerford and Eastern Area Visions, Community Safety
Dominic Boeck	Cleaner & Greener, Waste, Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Thatcham Vision
Marcus Franks	Health and Well Being

Councillor Lundie noted that there had been no changes to the composition of the Executive. Councillor Pamela Bale had however stood down as Deputy Leader. He thanked Councillor Bale for the support that she had afforded to both Councillor Jones and himself. Councillor Lundie noted that the role of Deputy Leader was a very important role. Not only did they have to stand in for the Leader when he was absent but they also needed to act as a counterbalance to the Leader and provide him with good guidance. He noted that Councillor Bale had done an excellent job of fulfilling all these requirements.

Councillor Lundie welcomed Councillor Roger Croft as his new deputy.

8. **Membership of Committees**

There had been no changes to the membership of Committees since the previous Council meeting.

9. **Appointment of and Allocation of Seats on Committees for the 2014/15 Municipal Year (C2689)**

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 10) concerning the appointment and allocation of seats on Committees and associated bodies for the next Municipal Year and the report also sought to agree the Council's Policy Framework for the 2014/15 Municipal Year.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Gordon Lundie and seconded by Councillor Brian Bedwell:

That the Council:

1. "notes that under paragraph 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, notice has been received that the Members set out in paragraph 1.1 of this report are to be regarded as Members of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat groups respectively;
2. agrees to the appointment of the various committees and to the number of places on each as set out in paragraph 2.2 (Table A);
3. agrees to the allocation of seats to the political groups in accordance with Section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1989 as set out in Paragraph 3.4 and Table B;
4. the number of substitutes on Committees and Commissions be as set out in Paragraph 4.1 (Table C);
5. in respect of the District and Area Planning Committees, the substitute Members are all drawn from Members representing wards within the Committee's area who are not appointed to the Committee. Where substitutes attend the District Planning Meeting they need to be drawn from the same Area Planning meeting as the Member they are substituting for;

COUNCIL - 15 MAY 2014 - MINUTES

6. approves the appointment of Members to the Committees as set out in Appendix A and in accordance with the wishes of the political groups;
7. in accordance with Regulation 4, Schedule 3 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000, and the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) (Amendment no.2) Regulations 2008, agrees the Council's Policy Framework for 2014/15 be as set out in Paragraph 6.1 and that any appropriate amendments be made to the Council's Constitution should this be necessary;
8. in accordance with Regulation 5, Schedule 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) regulations 2000, approves that all other plans, policies and strategies requiring approval and not included in the approved policy framework be delegated to the Council's Executive;
9. the Council agrees that Paragraph 2.6.5 of Article 6 of the Council's Constitution, setting out the Executive Portfolios, be amended to reflect any changes made at the Annual Council meeting by the Leader of the Council;
10. the appointment of two non voting co-opted parish/town councillors be made to the Standards Committee;
11. two parish/town councillors and two independent members be appointed to the Standards Committee's Advisory Panel;
12. to appoint James Rees and John Bingham to be its independent persons;
13. to agree the membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board as set out in paragraph 9.1;
14. authority be delegated to the Head of Legal Services to make any changes required to the Constitution as a result of the appointments to Committees".

In proposing the Motion Councillor Lundie also proposed the following **AMENDMENT** and this was seconded by Councillor Brian Bedwell:

That the Council:

"Amend Recommendation 2 by adding the following words after (Table A): "with the exception that the total number of seats on the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission shall be reduced from 16 to 12."

Amend Recommendation 6 by adding the following words: "with the exception that the total number of seats on the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission shall be reduced from 16 to 12."

Amend Table A to show 12 seats at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.

Amend Table B to show 12 seats at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission with 3 Liberal Democrats and 9 Conservatives.

Amend Paragraph 3.3 to reflect the above changes".

Councillor Lundie noted that the proposed modest reduction in numbers from 16 to 12 members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) would make the Commission more manageable, straightforward to resource and would ensure that all Members were fully engaged. The Chairman supported the reduction and the proposal also had the support of Officers. Councillor Lundie noted that the forthcoming Local Government Peer Review would look closely at the operation of the Council's Scrutiny function.

COUNCIL - 15 MAY 2014 - MINUTES

Councillor Jeff Brooks responded that the reduction amounted to a 25% decrease in the membership of the Commission and would mean that there would be less involvement in scrutiny for backbenchers. He felt that it would also mean a reduction in expertise on the Commission. Councillor Brooks was of the opinion that Scrutiny was already under resourced which meant that some proposed topics for scrutiny were being delayed on the work programme.

Councillor Emma Webster, speaking in favour of the amendment, noted that few meetings were attended by all Members of the OSMC. Reviews could be undertaken by Task Groups and not all Members of these Task Groups had to be drawn from the Commission so expertise would not be lost.

Councillor Mike Johnson stated that Scrutiny was at its most effective when it was conducted by a small number of people undertaking concentrated analysis. When there was a larger number of Members involved it was not possible to undertake in depth analysis and inevitably a lot of repetition occurred. He felt that it was the quality and not the quantity of the membership that mattered.

Councillor Tony Vickers stated that while he agreed that 12 Members could be just as effective as 16 he was concerned about the message the reduction would send out. He felt that at this time it was important that Scrutiny did more work and not less. Councillor David Rendel stated that Scrutiny would be more effective if it took place prior to decisions being made. Councillor Alan Macro commented that reducing the membership would lessen the breadth of knowledge on the Commission and this could lead to poorer quality Scrutiny taking place.

Councillor David Goff noted that the proposal was to reduce the membership of the Commission not the number of meetings that were being held and he therefore did not feel that this constituted a diminution of the function.

Councillor Brian Bedwell accepted that part of Scrutiny's function was to hold the Executive to account but that this was not its primary function. There would be an opportunity to set up Task Groups which could draw on expertise from the wider Member group. He noted that Officers were of the opinion that the small decrease in numbers would enhance the Scrutiny function.

Councillor Gordon Lundie stated that the role of Scrutiny was to undertake investigations but that it was not there to be used as a tool to undermine the Council. He congratulated the OSMC for the excellent work they had undertaken over recent years.

The Amendment was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.17.3 it was requisitioned that the voting on the Amendment be recorded. The names of those Members voting for, against and abstaining were read to the Council as follows:

FOR the Amendment: Councillors Peter Argyle, Howard Bairstow, Pamela Bale, Jeff Beck, Brian Bedwell, David Betts, Dominic Boeck, Paul Bryant, George Chandler, Keith Chopping, Hilary Cole, Roger Croft, Richard Crumly, Adrian Edwards, Sheila Ellison, Marcus Franks, Dave Goff, Manohar Gopal, Paul Hower, Carol Jackson-Doerge, Mike Johnson, Graham Jones, Alan Law, Tony Linden, Gordon Lundie, Tim Metcalfe, Irene Neill, Graham Pask, James Podger, Andrew Rowles, Garth Simpson, Anthony Stansfeld, Quentin Webb, Emma Webster, Laszlo Zverko (35)

AGAINST the Amendment:

Councillors David Allen, Jeff Brooks, Roger Hunneman, Mollie Lock, Royce Longton, Alan Macro, Gwen Mason, Geoff Mayes, David Rendel, Julian Swift-Hook, Tony Vickers (11)

ABSTAINED:

None

Councillor Lundie noted that the report also introduced a number of minor amendments. The membership of the Licensing Committee would be reduced from 14 to 12 Members to bring it in line with the Planning Committees. The membership of the Governance and Audit Committee would be increased from seven to eight Members and the Personnel Committee membership would increase from five to six Members.

The Substantive Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

10. Adjournment of Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 8.19pm.

RESOLVED that the meeting of Council be adjourned to enable the various Committees to determine their Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen.

11. Recommencement of Meeting

The meeting was reconvened at 8.29pm.

12. Standards Committee Annual Report 2013/14 (C2690)

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 13) which provided Members with an update of the activity undertaken by the Standards Committee over the previous Municipal Year.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Peter Argyle and seconded by Councillor Gwen Mason:

That the Council:

- “1. notes the content of the report.
2. circulates the document to all Parish/Town Councils in the District for information.”

Councillor Argyle in introducing the item reported the number of complaints received in 2013/14 was the lowest number of complaints since the Standards Committee was introduced in 2009/10. The reasons for this decrease in the number of complaints were unclear. It could be as a result of improved behaviour amongst District and Parish Councillors or that complainants were less willing to instigate a complaint given the reduction in severity of sanctions that the Standards Committee were able to impose.

Councillor Mason was also pleased to note the reduction in the number of complaints received.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

13. Draft Revised Statement of Community Involvement (C2726)

(Councillor Emma Webster declared a personal and a disclosable pecuniary interest in Agenda item 14 by virtue of the fact that she was employed by a company that worked for or with developers. As her interest was personal and a disclosable pecuniary interest she left the meeting and took no part in the debate or voting on the matter).

(Councillor Emma Webster left the meeting at 8.30pm and returned at 8.43pm).

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 14) concerning the draft revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Hilary Cole and seconded by Councillor Paul Bryant:

That the Council:

COUNCIL - 15 MAY 2014 - MINUTES

“approves the draft revised Statement of Community Involvement for formal public consultation”.

Councillor Cole noted the requirement to prepare and publicise a SCI had been introduced in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Council had adopted the first SCI in July 2006. However, as the planning process and relevant legislation had gone through some changes since that time, the SCI needed to be reviewed and updated to reflect the most up to date processes and procedures which would be used.

The revised draft SCI set out the policy for involving the community in:

- the plan making process such as Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents, the Community Infrastructure Levy and Neighbourhood Plans; and
- the consideration of planning applications within the district.

Councillor Cole explained that it was no longer necessary to gain approval from the Secretary of State for the SCI or for the SCI to be subject to Examination. If Members were minded to approve the SCI that evening it would be for Officers to invite comments on the draft document through a formal six week consultation (running from the 23 May to the 4 July 2014) before seeking Full Council approval to adopt the final revised SCI in September 2014.

Councillor Alan Macro reported that he had serious concerns about the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for this report. He noted that the EIA made reference to affected groups but the SCI did not state how these vulnerable groups would be consulted. He was also concerned about the publicity surrounding the consultation. Specific reference was made to one newspaper but not other newspapers covering the District. He also noted that many residents did not read the newspaper and the SCI made no mention of other mediums such as radio, social media etc.

Councillor Julian Swift-Hook also raised concerns about the EIA which made mention of Gypsies and Travellers and the elderly, young mothers and parents with children but made no mention of other vulnerable groups including those with disabilities.

Councillor Graham Pask drew Members' attention to paragraph 3.1 of the report on page 45 which stated that the 'Council will involve the whole community' and he reassured them that as the Portfolio Holder for Equalities he would ensure that it did.

Councillor Paul Bryant stated that he too hoped that the Council would use all available channels during the consultation. He noted that in developing the Core Strategy the Council had worked hard to ensure all relevant groups were consulted and on that basis he was sure the same would be done again. He did however welcome any suggestions for improving consultation with hard to reach groups.

Councillor Hilary Cole was disappointed that the Liberal Democrats would not be supporting this motion as the scheme had been discussed extensively at the cross party Planning Policy Task Group. She reiterated that this was not the final document. Officers were merely seeking authority to consult on the SCI. Councillor Cole drew Members attention to page 67 of the agenda which set out the specific bodies the Council was required to consult and which also stated that the Council would be consulting other bodies which included voluntary bodies, bodies representing the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups, bodies representing different religious groups and disabled persons and businesses

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

14. **Request for the Revision of the Constitution (C2758)**

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 15) concerning an amendment to the Constitution in relation to the petition threshold for triggering a debate at Full Council.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Jeff Brooks and seconded by Councillor Julian Swift-Hook:

That the Council:

1. "amends the Petition Protocol so that a petition of 1,500 or more signatures will trigger a debate at Full Council subject to this not applying to the Annual or Budget meeting and Extraordinary meetings except in circumstances where the special meeting has been called to consider an issue which is the subject of the petition.
2. authority be delegated to the Head of Legal Services to amend the Constitution to reflect the amendment."

Councillor Brooks reported that the proposal had been supported by the Governance and Audit Committee and would bring the Council's thresholds in line with those of neighbouring authorities in Berkshire. Councillor Brooks accepted the recommendation that in addition to petitions not being debated at the annual Council meeting, they would also not be debated at the budget meeting.

AMENDMENT: Proposed by Councillor Alan Law and seconded by Councillor Gordon Lundie:

That the Council:

"Amends Recommendation 1 by inserting a new paragraph at the end of the last sentence and adding the following words:

"In order to ensure that this is dealt with appropriately, the two Leaders must agree that the subject for debate is of real significance locally to the people of West Berkshire and its immediate surrounding area.

Failure of the two Leaders to agree will result in automatic referral to the Monitoring Officer, whose decision shall be final."

Amends Part 13 to Appendix C Procedure Rules for Dealing with Representations as follows:

At the end of 1.4(e) insert:

"In order to ensure that this is dealt with appropriately, the two Leaders must agree that the subject for debate is of real significance locally to the people of West Berkshire and its immediate surrounding area."

"Failure of the two Leaders to agree will result in automatic referral to the Monitoring Officer, whose decision shall be final."

In 1.4(f) insert the underlined text below:

Where a Full Council meeting debate is triggered by a petition and the Leaders (or Monitoring Officer) agree that the subject matter is of real significance locally, the Petition Organiser or their nominated spokesperson will have up to five minutes to present their petition and the petition will then be discussed by Councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes."

Councillor Law noted that while there was merit in reducing the threshold; in this electronic age it was possible that the Council could have petitions submitted that had no relevance locally. Councillor Law stated that the amendment proposed provided a common sense solution to the management of petitions.

COUNCIL - 15 MAY 2014 - MINUTES

Councillor Brooks was disappointed with the amendment and queried whether in fact it was legal. He also felt that it was unfair to ask the Monitoring Officer to determine whether or not a petition would be debated at Council where there was a dispute between the Leaders.

Councillor Julian Swift-Hook noted that the matter had been debated extensively by the Governance and Audit Committee. He felt that the introduction of this amendment would result in democratic accountability being eroded. Petition organisers could be faced with a situation where they collected the legitimate number of signatures to trigger a debate at full Council only to be told that the issue was not locally relevant.

Councillor Pamela Bale stated that she had inspected the recently submitted petition pertaining to Pangbourne Library which was referred to in the report. She stated that some of the signatures on the petition came from areas as far away as Brighton, London, Abingdon, Eastbourne and the east of Reading and she therefore urged caution and endorsed the need for a vetting process. Councillor Stansfeld indicated that the amendment was a sensible addition and urged the Council to approve the proposed change.

Councillor Tony Vickers opined that the wording in the amendment introduced an unnecessary degree of subjectivity. Councillor David Rendel stated that a ruling of the legality of the amendment was needed prior to the vote being taken to ensure that the Council was not making an ultra vires decision. Councillor Rendel stated that it was possible that signatories from further afield would have a legitimate interest in an issue and therefore their signatures should not be discounted. Councillor Rendel stated that the likely scenario was that a Liberal Democrat Leader would not discount the need to debate an item and therefore many determinations would have to be made by the Monitoring Officer which would place an additional burden on them.

Councillor Gwen Mason, while welcoming the proposed reduction in the number of signatures to trigger a debate, was concerned about the public perception of the amendment. She asked Members to reflect on how the petitioners would feel, if after collecting the requisite number of signatures, they were told that the issue was not of sufficient local interest. Councillor David Allen was concerned that the debate would be restricted to 15 minutes where a petition triggered a debate. Councillor Emma Webster believed that the two Group Leaders would be able to deal with this issue appropriately.

David Holling, the Monitoring Officer, explained that he had been afforded insufficient time to establish fully the legality of the amendment but he was willing to pursue the matter further after the meeting.

Councillor Law noted that the recommendation delegated authority to the Head of Legal Services to amend the Constitution and in the interest of taking the matter forward he asked that the Monitoring Officer be permitted to establish legality and then make the required changes as appropriate. The Council agreed that this would be a sensible way forward.

Councillor Lundie stated that this was a minor amendment, it was not about excluding debate, it was a reasonable caveat and would be an easy to implement mechanism.

Councillor Law stated that this was an administrative process and he trusted the two Group leaders to introduce common sense into the process.

The Amended Motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.17.3 it was requisitioned that the voting on the Amendment be recorded. The names of those Members voting for, against and abstaining were read to the Council as follows:

COUNCIL - 15 MAY 2014 - MINUTES

FOR the Amendment:

Councillors Peter Argyle, Howard Bairstow, Pamela Bale, Jeff Beck, Brian Bedwell, David Betts, Dominic Boeck, Paul Bryant, George Chandler, Keith Chopping, Hilary Cole, Roger Croft, Richard Crumly, Adrian Edwards, Sheila Ellison, Marcus Franks, Dave Goff, Manohar Gopal, Paul Hewer, Carol Jackson-Doerge, Mike Johnson, Graham Jones, Alan Law, Tony Linden, Gordon Lundie, Tim Metcalfe, Irene Neill, Graham Pask, James Podger, Andrew Rowles, Garth Simpson, Anthony Stansfeld, Quentin Webb, Emma Webster, Laszlo Zverko (35)

AGAINST the Amendment:

Councillors David Allen, Jeff Brooks, Roger Hunneman, Mollie Lock, Royce Longton, Alan Macro, Gwen Mason, Geoff Mayes, David Rendel, Julian Swift-Hook, Tony Vickers (11)

ABSTAINED:

None

Councillor Swift-Hook noted that in respect of planning objections they had to be taken into account irrespective of where they came from. He stated that although he was disappointed with the amendment he would be voting in favour of the substantive motion as the democratic situation would be improved by the reduction in numbers required to trigger a debate. Councillor Jeff Brooks concurred with this statement.

The Substantive Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

(Councillor Crumly left the meeting at 9.14pm).

15. Changes to the Constitution - Part 13 Codes and Protocols (C2776)

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 16) concerning amendments to sections of Part 13 (Codes and Protocols) i.e. Appendix I (Councillor Call for Action Protocol) and J ((Protocol for Council Representation on Outside Bodies) in light of legislative changes, policy changes and recent government guidance.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Quentin Webb and seconded by Councillor Tony Linden

That the Council:

1. "considers the amendment and agrees any additional changes required"
2. agrees the changes will come into effect on the 16 May 2014."

Councillor Webb noted that the changes were discussed at the previous Governance and Audit Committee. A small number of minor amendments had been required.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

16. Licensing Committee

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Licensing Committee had not met.

17. Personnel Committee

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Personnel Committee had not met.

18. Governance and Audit Committee

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Governance and Audit Committee had met on 28th April 2014.

COUNCIL - 15 MAY 2014 - MINUTES

19. District Planning Committee

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the District Planning Committee had not met.

20. Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee had met on 8th April 2014.

21. Standards Committee

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Standards Committee had met on 14th April 2014.

(The meeting commenced at 7.00pm and closed at 9.20pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

Agenda Item 15.

Title of Report:	Scrutiny Annual Report 2013/14
Report to be considered by:	Council
Date of Meeting:	22 July 2014
Forward Plan Ref:	C2864

Purpose of Report: To inform Members of the Scrutiny activity undertaken during the Municipal Year 2013/2014.

Recommended Action: To note the contents of the report.

Reason for decision to be taken: N/A

Other options considered: N/A

Key background documentation: N/A

The proposals will help achieve the following Council Strategy principle:

CSP8 - Doing what's important well

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Strategy principle by:
providing a public examination of the Council's decisions and operations.

Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Brian Bedwell
E-mail Address:	bbedwell@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	01 July 2014

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	David Lowe
Job Title:	Scrutiny and Partnerships Manager
Tel. No.:	01635 519817
E-mail Address:	dlowe@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy: None.
Financial: None.
Personnel: None.
Legal/Procurement: None.
Property: None.
Risk Management: None.

Is this item relevant to equality?	Please tick relevant boxes		Yes	No
Does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community and:				
• Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Will the policy have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Does the policy relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Does the policy relate to an area with known inequalities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Outcome (Where one or more 'Yes' boxes are ticked, the item is relevant to equality)				
Relevant to equality - Complete an EIA available at www.westberks.gov.uk/eia			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Not relevant to equality			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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 Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months		<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>
Report is to note only		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report outlines the scrutiny activity undertaken by the authority in the municipal year 2013/2014. It contains an overview of the year, giving detail on each of the activities undertaken and includes a commentary, where it is possible to give it, on the value that the activity has added.
- 1.2 This report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission on 1 July 2014.

2. Overview of the last twelve months

- 2.1 This year has seen the dissolution of the Health Scrutiny Panel and the Resource Management Working Group. The activity that was scheduled to be undertaken by these two bodies transferred (in the main) to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission, which had its membership expanded from twelve to sixteen.
- 2.2 The Commission has carried out scrutiny on sixteen topics, three of which were call-ins, perhaps the most high profile and in-depth being the review of Adult Social Care eligibility criteria. In addition there was, of course, its standing examination of performance activity and financial outturn.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that Council notes the contents of the report.

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report outlines the scrutiny activity undertaken by the authority in the municipal year 2013/2014. It contains an overview of the year, giving detail on each of the activities undertaken and includes a commentary, where it is possible to give it, on the value that the activity has added.
- 1.2 This report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission on 1 July 2014.

2. Overview of the last twelve months

- 2.1 This year has seen the dissolution of the Health Scrutiny Panel and the Resource Management Working Group. The activity that was scheduled to be undertaken by these two bodies transferred (in the main) to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission, which had its membership expanded from twelve to sixteen.
- 2.2 The Commission has carried out scrutiny on sixteen topics, three of which were call-ins, perhaps the most high profile and in-depth being the review of Adult Social Care eligibility criteria. In addition there was, of course, its standing examination of performance activity and financial outturn.

3. Activity in detail

- 3.1 *Schools performance.* The Commission explored the reasons behind the drop in English and maths GCSE attainment in the Districts' schools during 2012. Evidence was received from the Head of Education and the headteachers of John O Gaunt and Trinity schools.

Added value. The review showed that the causes of the drop in performance were complex. The Commission was reassured that appropriate action was being taken to make improvement.

- 3.2 *Youth justice.* The Commission considered an evaluation of the effect of the introduction by Thames Valley Police of the Youth Restorative Disposal and Youth Cannabis Warning.

Added value. Concerns that the introduction of Youth Restorative Disposals and Youth Cannabis Warnings were being used to skew crime figures were allayed and the Commission was satisfied that they were being appropriately applied.

- 3.3 *Schools early years and placement strategy.* As part of the consultation for the adoption of the strategy, the Commission gave its view on a number of aspects of it.

Added value. A number of recommendations were made to the Executive and work was followed up by the Commission itself.

- 3.4 *Housing allocations policy.* A small task group worked with officers in the Housing Service to develop a new policy for the allocation of housing.

Added value. The task group was able to influence and guide the content of the policy, supporting the shift to a focus on genuine need.

- 3.5 *Homelessness review and strategy.* The decision of the Executive to adopt the review and strategy was reviewed, following its call-in.

Added value. Detail was provided to the Commission that aided public understanding of the rationale for the adoption of the strategy.

- 3.6 *Fire Service.* In response to reports in the local media that targets for attendance at incidents were being missed, the Commission received information from the Fire and Rescue Service on its coverage, manning and deployment in West Berkshire.

Added value. Through its evidence to the Commission, the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service was able to demonstrate that despite the relatively poor results in one particular aspect of its performance, overall the safety of the West Berkshire had improved year on year since 2002.

- 3.7 *Disposal of assets of community value.* The Commission considered the mechanism through which assets that had been identified by communities as having local value, such as the Control Tower at Greenham, would be disposed of by the authority.

Added value. A number of refinements were made to the process to ensure transparency and consistency.

- 3.8 *Performance management in primary healthcare.* An item transferred from the Health Scrutiny Panel, the Commission sought assurance that the performance monitoring regime in place for Primary Care Trusts was maintained following their succession by Clinical Commissioning Groups.

Added value. An understanding which informed the wider public awareness, was gained by the Commission of the performance monitoring arrangements in place for primary care.

- 3.9 *Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).* A legacy item from the Resource Management Working Group, the Commission reviewed whether the MTFS remained fit for purpose.

Added value. The consideration of the MTFS by the Commission contributed to the document's wider consultation prior to its adoption.

- 3.10 *Blue Badge Improvement Scheme.* Another item from the Resource Management Working Group, the Commission sought to understand the operation of new scheme.

Added value. The examination demonstrated that there was no scope for the local determination of charges to allow the scheme to be financially self sustaining.

- 3.11 *Continuing Health Care (CHC).* The Commission examined concerns that an undue funding burden was being borne by the Council due to delays in CHC assessments.

Added value. The examination of the subject by the Commission prompted management action to address some of the systemic difficulties encountered in the assessment process

- 3.12 *Adult Social Care eligibility criteria.* A task group conducted a review to determine if the Council's application of a threshold of 'critical' for eligibility for Fair Access to Care Services was in anyway discriminatory or otherwise unlawful.

Added value. The review was able to inform the Council's determination that the 'critical' threshold was not discriminatory, thereby supporting its defence should any challenge be made through Judicial Review.

- 3.13 *A4 Calcot widening improvements.* The decision of the Executive to approve the adoption of the scheme was reviewed, following its call-in.

Added value. Road safety concerns were publicly aired and a recommendation was made to the Executive Member for Highways that a review of the scheme's operation be carried out 2 years after its implementation.

- 3.14 *Newbury on-street parking.* The decision of the Executive Member for Highways to approve the adoption of the scheme was reviewed, following its call-in

Added value. The Executive Member for Highways was requested to consider a phased introduction of the scheme, in order to assess the impact of each element as it was introduced.

- 3.15 *Home to school transport policy.* The Commission considered the changes that had been made to the policy following a radical re-write.

Added value. The Commission was able to obtain assurance that the revised policy would not have any unforeseen, or unwelcome, consequences.

- 3.16 *Welfare changes.* As more changes were being implemented, the Commission considered the impact of them locally.

Added value. The Commission was able to determine that there were a number of effects that were being felt locally and a number of recommendations were made to the Executive.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that Council notes the contents of the report.

Appendices

There are no Appendices to this report.

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: Councillor Brian Bedwell, Chairman OSMC, OSMC

Officers Consulted: Corporate Board

Trade Union: None

Title of Report:	Response to Council Motion submitted 12th December 2013 (Item 23 (b))
Report to be considered by:	Council
Date of Meeting:	22 July 2014
Forward Plan Ref:	C2820

Purpose of Report: To provide a response to the Motion agreed at Council on 12th December 2013 concerning S106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy ("CIL").

Recommended Action: To approve the report.

Reason for decision to be taken: In order to respond to the Motion.

Other options considered: None

Key background documentation: Adopted SPD "Delivering Investment from Sustainable Development"

The proposals will help achieve the following Council Strategy principle:

CSP8 - Doing what's important well

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Strategy principle by:

Examining current processes and procedures to confirm that they are fit for purpose

Portfolio Member Details

Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Hilary Cole - Tel (01635) 248542
E-mail Address:	hcole@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	20 May 2014

Contact Officer Details

Name:	Caroline Walsh
Job Title:	Developer Contributions Officer
Tel. No.:	01635 503018
E-mail Address:	cwalsh@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy: The policy for collection of developer contributions is well established and efficient and effective. Policy regarding CIL will be established in line with regulations in due course.

Financial: Effective systems and processes are necessary to ensure that developer contributions are received when due, and are spent in

the most efficient manner to ensure best value is achieved from the receipt.

Personnel: Not applicable.

Legal/Procurement: Contributions requested and paid pursuant to S106 Agreements must comply with the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended). The allocation and spend of contributions received as a result of a S106 agreement must at all times comply with the terms of the agreement.

Property: Not applicable.

Risk Management: Proper systems and procedures ensure that money received is spent in line with statutory requirements, thus minimising the risk of challenge and the possibility of being required to refund contributions.

Is this item relevant to equality?	Please tick relevant boxes		Yes	No
Does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community and:				
• Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Will the policy have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Does the policy relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Does the policy relate to an area with known inequalities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Outcome (Where one or more 'Yes' boxes are ticked, the item is relevant to equality)				
Relevant to equality - Complete an EIA available at www.westberks.gov.uk/eia			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not relevant to equality			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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 Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months		<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>
Report is to note only		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting on 12th December 2013 the following (amended) Motion was submitted by Councillor Longton and seconded by Councillor Macro.

“This Council:

Welcomes the Coalition Government's decision to delay the deadline for implementing the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for 12 months until April 2015;

Notes that the existing system involving "Section 106" financial contributions from developers, which CIL will replace, has proved to be fair and generates about one third more in capital receipts than is expected under CIL; also that West Berkshire's operation of Section 106 was endorsed by Government as exemplary under both Liberal Democrat and Conservative Administrations; but that Ward Members and local councils in this District are not always involved in every stage of the process;

Therefore we call:

- a. On the Leaders of both Parties on this Council to continue pressing for retention of the S106 system by writing to the Minister of Planning; and
- b. On the Planning Department to ~~amend~~ review its procedures so as to ensure that local town and parish councils and Ward Members are involved from the outset in the allocation of S106 and CIL funds, from the pre-application stage through to post-construction of new developments.”

- 1.2 The Motion as amended was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.
- 1.3 The report will detail actions taken in response to the Motion, and an explanation of procedures and processes in place with regard to S106 and also CIL.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes

- 2.1 This item is not relevant to equality.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 Members are asked to approve the report.

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The following amended Motion was submitted by Councillor Longton at a meeting of Council on 12th December 2013. The Motion was seconded by Councillor Macro, put to the vote and declared carried.
- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to respond to the Motion:

“This Council:

Welcomes the Coalition Government's decision to delay the deadline for implementing the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for 12 months until April 2015;

Notes that the existing system involving "Section 106" financial contributions from developers, which CIL will replace, has proved to be fair and generates about one third more in capital receipts than is expected under CIL; also that West Berkshire's operation of Section 106 was endorsed by Government as exemplary under both Liberal Democrat and Conservative Administrations; but that Ward Members and local councils in this District are not always involved in every stage of the process;

Therefore we call:

- a. On the Leaders of both Parties on this Council to continue pressing for retention of the S106 system by writing to the Minister of Planning; and
- b. On the Planning Department to amend review its procedures so as to ensure that local town and parish councils and Ward Members are involved from the outset in the allocation of S106 and CIL funds, from the pre-application stage through to post-construction of new developments.”

2. Contact with Ministers

- 2.1 West Berkshire Council has expressed its opposition to the introduction of CIL since it was first suggested, requesting time and again for the Government to rethink its proposals, and instead copy our approach to seeking contributions to fully mitigate the impact of development from developers.
- 2.2 More recently, Cllr Chopping made contact with Richard Benyon MP regarding S106 and CIL in West Berkshire. Cllr Chopping, Cllr Cole and officers met with Richard Benyon in January and had a full discussion about the situation at West Berkshire, our successful policy for securing developer contributions using S106 agreements, and in contrast, the drawbacks of the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- 2.3 Richard Benyon was subsequently able to secure a Westminster Hall Debate on 5th February entitled “Community Infrastructure Levy (West Berkshire). Members and officers were able to attend the televised debate which took place between Richard Benyon and the Under Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Minister, Brandon Lewis. The press release issued by Richard Benyon’s office following the debate is attached at Appendix A.

- 2.4 During the debate an offer was made by Mr Lewis for a further meeting with officials from the DCLG. Members and officers met with officials from DCLG at their offices on 13th May 2014 where a robust discussion took place.
- 2.5 Evidence was provided by officers showing the benefits of West Berkshire's current SPD for developer contributions, and members pressed officials to consider allowing it to continue, rather than implementing the CIL. Officials were unable to agree to Members' requests, but have agreed to take the evidence and discussion on board in their future work. During the meeting a number of detailed issues regarding CIL were discussed. It was agreed that a further meeting will take place in the coming months, where officials will travel to West Berkshire to find out more about our current processes and continue discussions on the detailed issues raised.
- 2.6 In addition, on 24th February 2014 Cllr Cole wrote to Richard Benyon regarding the most recent set of CIL Amendment Regulations 2014. This was sent on to Nick Boles MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Planning). A copy of this letter and the response from Nick Boles to Richard Benyon is attached at Appendices B and C. The opportunity was taken to further discuss this particular issue with DCLG officials at the meeting on 13th May 2014.
- 2.7 Members and Officers continue to press Ministers and Government officials regarding this issue.

3. S106 processes and procedures

- 3.1 As has been stated in the Motion, West Berkshire Council has been upheld as an example of good practice by the Audit Commission, and has been visited by Treasury officials and other authorities wanting to learn our practices and processes. Our streamlined, self funded system has brought in an average of £4.5m per annum since 2005, all to be used to mitigate the impact caused on local communities by development in West Berkshire.
- 3.2 Officers have reviewed the planning application procedures, and processes for allocating and spending developer contributions, with particular regard to the involvement of Members, and Town and Parish Councils.
- 3.3 The planning application process starts with Pre-Application advice, which is offered by the Council to any prospective developer of a site within West Berkshire. In particular, the Council encourages developers of major schemes to talk with Ward Members, the Parish or Town Council, and indeed engage with the public at this early stage of the development process. However this is not something which the Council can enforce – it is only something that we can advise they do.
- 3.4 Once a planning application has been submitted, the relevant Town or Parish Council, and the Ward Members will be consulted for their views of the proposed development. The Case Officer dealing with the application will take account of the consultation responses when assessing the application.
- 3.5 Where developer contributions may be required, in accordance with the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document ("SPD") "Delivering Investment from Sustainable Development", the case officer will also consult with relevant service units and partner organisations. Any requests for developer contributions received

from the service units or partner organisations will be considered by the case officer. Where the requests are considered to meet the requirements of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations, the applicant will be invited to enter into a S106 legal agreement, meaning that contributions will be required in order to mitigate the impact caused by the development.

- 3.6 When sending in their consultation responses, the Parish and Town Councils have the opportunity to request contributions towards necessary improvements to local facilities. This could reflect priorities that have been identified in their Parish or Town Plans. The requests will be considered by the case officer and will be discussed with the appropriate service unit where necessary.
- 3.7 Once a planning permission is granted, any S106 agreement attached to it is entered onto the developer contributions database. The S106 agreement will detail the amount of contribution payable, when it is due, and which service units will receive the money. In some instances a specific project is detailed in the agreement, but the contribution must always be spent to mitigate the impact of the development. Failure to do so could result in a legal challenge and a refund of any money collected.
- 3.8 In order that all Parish and Town Councils, and Ward Members are kept fully informed of developer contributions, officers send a report from the database each year. The report sets out S106 contributions agreed, received, allocated and spent, on a Parish and Town basis.
- 3.9 At the same time, Ward Members, and Parish and Town Councils will receive contact details for all service units in receipt of S106 money. This enables them to make contact with the service units to propose projects in their area which meet the terms of the legal agreements. The service unit will liaise with the Parish or Town Council before allocating the money to a project. The Portfolio Member for the service is involved with the decision making process.
- 3.10 In addition any Parish or Town Council and any Member are welcome to make contact with either the Developer Contributions Officer or the Developer Contributions Assistant to request information on any S106 agreement at any time. The contact details for these officers are included with the annual report.
- 3.11 The spending of developer contributions is monitored by the Developer Contributions Sub-Group of Capital Group on a regular basis.
- 3.12 The paragraphs above show that appropriate local consultation takes place before, during and after the planning application process, and information is readily available for any Parish or Town Council to engage fully with the allocation and spend of developer contributions.
- 3.13 Having reviewed the processes, officers consider that there is no opportunity to improve how Members, and Parish and Town Councils are involved in the planning application process or in allocating and spending developer contributions to mitigate the impact of development.

4. Parish and Town Plans

- 4.1 Parish and Town Plans set out the aspirations of local residents and highlight the future services and infrastructure required within those communities. The

mechanism of parish planning incorporates extensive community consultation and a strong evidence base which can be used as a guide to local priorities.

- 4.2 As good practice, community groups producing Parish and Town Plans are encouraged to include details of specific projects or targets to improve local facilities. This information can be used by the Parish or Town Councils in seeking funds to help mitigate the impact of development in their local area.

5. CIL procedures

- 5.1 Receipts of Community Infrastructure Levy are not linked to a particular service area. There is no requirement for the money to be spent in the vicinity of the development, or to mitigate the particular impact caused by the development that has paid the levy.
- 5.2 Proposals for the methodology to allocate and spend the CIL receipts are still being drawn up; however the use of CIL for projects will be reflected within the Council's Capital Programme. The Capital Programme is approved annually at a meeting of Council, so all Ward Members can see the projects being funded by the levy.
- 5.3 In addition the established Member Bid process (for capital projects in their Ward) can readily incorporate the use of CIL receipts if the project is an appropriate use of the levy.
- 5.4 CIL Regulations require 15% of all CIL receipts to be paid over to the Town or Parish Council where the development takes place. This will be paid over twice a year, in accordance with CIL Regulations, for the Parish or Town Council to use to improve the local area. This is subject to a cap of £100 per dwelling in any one year.
- 5.5 If a Parish or Town Council adopts a Neighbourhood Development Plan the percentage increases to 25% with no cap.
- 5.6 Reporting mechanisms will be put in place, in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Regulations, to ensure that all receipts passed to Parish or Town Councils are spent appropriately.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 Members are asked to approve the report.

Appendices

Appendix A – MP Press release February 2014

Appendix B – Letter from Cllr Cole 24th February 2014

Appendix C – Response letter from Nick Boles MP 27th March 2014

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: Not applicable

Officers Consulted: Bryan Lyttle, Jo Naylor, Sarah Clarke, Liz Patient, Corporate Board

Trade Union: Not applicable

This page is intentionally left blank



Media Release from Richard Benyon

Member of Parliament for Newbury

A: 6 Cheap Street, Newbury, RG14 5DD

T: 01635 551070 E: richard.benyon.mp@parliament.uk

5 February 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RICHARD BENYON MP SECURES DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT CALLS FOR MINISTER NOT TO FORCE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY UPON WELL RUN COUNCILS

This afternoon, Richard Benyon hosted a Westminster Hall debate on the Government's plan to replace current Section 106 regulations with a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Richard raised concerns with Communities and Local Government Minister, Brandon Lewis, following discussions with West Berkshire Councillors and officials.

Following his debate, Richard said, "It seems nonsensical that the Government wishes to mandate well run Councils, like West Berks, to implement the Community Infrastructure Levy. The current system has proven its worth over the years, winning praise from the Audit Commission and costing nothing to the taxpayer."

He continued, "I am glad to have been able to put the case to the Minister and ask that he consider removing the implementation date of 6 April 2015. I will continue to follow this matter closely."

ENDS

This page is intentionally left blank

24th February 2014



Mr Richard Benyon MP
6 Cheap Street,
Newbury

RG14 5DD

Planning and Countryside

Council Offices
Market Street Newbury
Berkshire RG14 5LD

Our Ref: CIL Regulations
Please ask for: Bryan Lyttle
Phone: (01635) 519638
e-mail: blyttle@westberks.gov.uk

Dear ,

Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) Regulations 2014

I write once more regarding the above Regulations. Officers have highlighted to members an issue that is causing us some disquiet, relating to the additional exemption from paying CIL for self build housing.

I appreciate that you will not be able to delay or influence the enactment of these latest Amendment Regulations but thought it appropriate to contact you with our latest concerns.

Officers have explained to members that the proposed regulations on "self build" are worded in such a way to allow not only the "genuine" self builder but also potentially a volume house builder.

It is now entirely possible for a volume housebuilder to apply for outline planning permission for residential development and then sell the land in parcels to individuals and offer to build their property for them as "self build" and the development would not be CIL chargeable.

Whilst this only works if the reserved matters application is submitted by the new 'self-builder' (and it may be purely hypothetical) it would result in a saving to the individual of between £ 3,375 and £15,625 at a direct cost to the tax payer.

In addition, the Council will now have to closely monitor land sales to ensure the 3 year "clawback" provision is not breached. So much for the easy and transparent system.

Regrettably, the West Berkshire members and myself remain firmly convinced that the latest reforms and amendments are only going to exacerbate the sponsorship of the development industry by the local taxpayer.

Yours Sincerely

Cllr Hilary Cole, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport (Policy), Culture Customer Services and Countryside (Chair of Planning Policy Task Group)

This page is intentionally left blank



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Richard Benyon MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Nick Boles MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Planning)

**Department for Communities and Local
Government**

Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

Tel: 0303 444 3459
Fax: 020 7821 0635
E-Mail: nick.boles@communities.gsi.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/dclg

Our Ref: NB/NB/006846/14
Your Ref: SP7758

27 MAR 2014

Thank you for your letter of 3 March 2014, enclosing a letter of 24 February 2014 from Cllr Hillary Cole of West Berkshire Council concerning the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) Regulations 2014.

I understand my officials are due to meet with representatives from West Berkshire on 13 May 2014 to discuss the concerns they have raised on the levy. The Government is absolutely committed to supporting anyone who wants to build their own home and wants to double the size of the self-build housing sector to make it a mainstream housing option. The levy can act as significant barrier for self-builders with many projects being held back due to their viability. The exemption will therefore help give this sector a much needed boost and give more people the chance to build their own home.

The exemption is temporary for three years and is designed to exempt all forms of self and custom build housing, whether such homes are built on single unit infill plots, multi-unit serviced plots offered by builders on larger housing sites or community-led self-build projects. To qualify for the exemption self-builders will need to complete a simple form at the start and end of their project and provide evidence that their project is a genuine self-build.

Our published guidance on the levy sets out further details on the application of the exemption, including its application on larger multi-unit sites. It also makes clear that the chargeable amount (i.e. the levy that would have been payable if the exemption had not been granted) will be registered as a 'local land charge' on the property for three years from completion. This enables charging authorities to claw back levy charges where a property is sold within three years of the completion of the property. The guidance can be found at: [www.http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/?s=Community+Infrastructure+Levy&post_type=guidance](http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/?s=Community+Infrastructure+Levy&post_type=guidance).

NICK BOLES MP

This page is intentionally left blank

Title of Report:	North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2014-2019
Report to be considered by:	Council
Date of Meeting:	22 July 2014
Forward Plan Ref:	C2847

Purpose of Report: To consider the adoption of the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan for 2014-2019.

Recommended Action: That the Council adopts the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan for 2014-2019 as a partnership document prepared by the North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners

Reason for decision to be taken: To meet the Council's statutory requirements under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Other options considered: None

Key background documentation: Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Strategy priorities:

- CSP2 – Promoting a vibrant district**
- CSP4 – Protecting the environment**

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Strategy principles:

- CSP5 - Putting people first**
- CSP7 - Empowering people and communities**
- CSP8 - Doing what's important well**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Strategy priorities and principles by:
working in partnership to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Hilary Cole - Tel (01635) 248542
E-mail Address:	hcole@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	25/06/14

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Paula Amorelli
Job Title:	Principal Planning Officer
Tel. No.:	01635 519233
E-mail Address:	pamorelli@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

- Policy:** The Management Plan will formulate this Authority's policies for the management of the AONB and for the carrying out of its functions in relation to it.
- Financial:** None arising from the production of the Management Plan. The Council of Partners already receives an annual contribution from this Authority.
- Personnel:** None
- Legal/Procurement:** The adoption of the Management Plan would meet the Council's statutory obligations under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to adopt and review a Management Plan for the North Wessex Downs AONB every five years
- Property:** None
- Risk Management:** None

Is this item relevant to equality?	Please tick relevant boxes	Yes	No
Does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community and:			
• Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Will the policy have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Does the policy relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Does the policy relate to an area with known inequalities?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Outcome (Where one or more 'Yes' boxes are ticked, the item is relevant to equality)			
Relevant to equality - Complete an EIA available at www.westberks.gov.uk/eia			<input type="checkbox"/>
Not relevant to equality			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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 Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months		<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>
Report is to note only		<input type="checkbox"/>

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) requires local authorities to produce management plans for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) within their areas. The North Wessex Downs AONB Partnership (Council of Partners) discharges this obligation on behalf of its nine local authority partners that have a presence in the North Wessex Downs.
- 1.2 A Management Plan has to be produced and reviewed at least every five years. It supports and complements the West Berkshire Local Plan, setting out a spatial policy framework that reflects national and local issues to ensure the AONB's natural heritage, landscape and built character are conserved, the local economy is supported and use of the AONB for recreation is encouraged.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 The revised Plan for the next five years, 2014-2019, sets out the North Wessex Downs AONB Partnership's vision for the management of the Area and policies to implement the vision. Its primary purpose is the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of this nationally important designated landscape, supported by vibrant rural economies and communities.
- 2.2 The revised Management Plan has been formally approved by the AONB Council of Partners and is being recommended to each of the constituent local authorities for their formal adoption before it is submitted to the Secretary of State at the end of July 2014.
- 2.3 As a partnership document it is recognised that the AONB Management Plan may not always take the same approach to an issue as an individual authority such as West Berkshire and so it is on this basis that the Management Plan for 2014-2019 is considered fit for purpose. The Management Plan clearly sets out the approach that the AONB Council of Partners will take on particular issues, but it will be up to this Council to take that into consideration as appropriate in the decision making process.
- 2.4 The delivery of the AONB Management Plan is monitored by the Partnership through an annual review of the delivery of the AONB Business Plan, and achievements are reported through the AONB's Annual Report.

3. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes

- 3.1 The AONB Management Plan has been prepared on the Council's behalf by the North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners. Its impact on equalities was considered by the AONB Partnership as an integral part of the process. A separate EIA has therefore not been undertaken as part of the preparation of this report.
- 3.2 There will be no negative impact of policies on particular groups of people or disadvantaged groups. Some objectives and policies will have a positive impact e.g. through aiming to retain services within rural communities, encouraging all groups of people to celebrate and share their cultural heritage, and improving accessibility of rights of way for those with limited mobility or sensory impairments.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Council adopts the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan for 2014-2019 as a partnership document prepared by the North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners.

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Preparation of a Management Plan for the North Wessex Downs AONB (AONB) is a statutory requirement placed upon the constituent local authorities by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. The Management Plan should 'formulate the policies of the local authority for the management of the AONB and the carrying out of their functions in relation to it.' A review of the Plan is required every five years. The current Management Plan for the North Wessex Downs (2009-2014) was adopted by the Council in 2009 and so now has to be reviewed.
- 1.2 The review, production and publication of the Management Plan, together with the coordination of its delivery, has been delegated by the Council to the North Wessex Downs AONB Partnership (Council of Partners). This Partnership was formed in July 2001 to oversee the future of the AONB. It includes not only the nine constituent local authorities of the North Wessex Downs but also representatives of the local communities, the farming and rural business community, and those representing nature conservation, heritage and landscape, and recreation interests, including members of government and voluntary agencies. The Partnership is underpinned by a small AONB delivery team.

2. Scope and content of the Review

- 2.1 Although there is a statutory duty on constituent local authorities to review AONB Management Plans on a five yearly basis, the advice from Natural England is to undertake a 'light touch' review only, in order to avoid diverting resources away from delivery.
- 2.2 The review of the current North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan has therefore reflected national guidance and has not been substantially re-drafted. The overall vision for the AONB, together with objectives and policies remain the same, but the Plan has been updated to take account of changing local, regional and national policy and new legislation, such as the revocation of regional strategies, publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the introduction of neighbourhood planning and the Community Infrastructure Levy, and to ensure that the actions for the next five years are fit for purpose. The Plan has also been redrafted to make it more concise and easily accessible.
- 2.3 The content of the Management Plan reflects the nature of the area; its economy, communities and land use management. In so doing the policies cover a diverse range of topics including: landscape, land management, biodiversity, historic environment, natural resources, development, communities, and leisure and tourism. A particular difference with the revised Plan is that the special qualities that contribute to the natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs have been highlighted.

3. Preparation of the Management Plan

- 3.1 The review of the Management Plan has included consultation with a range of organisations and stakeholders at various stages of the process. This began in May and June 2013 with initial informal consultation. A consultation draft of the Plan was then published between August and October 2013. In addition, arrangements were made with each constituent local authority to hold a

consultation 'surgery' event during this period. The one for West Berkshire was held in Market Street on 5th September and was well attended by officers.

- 3.2 When officers made comments on the published draft document there was some concern that although the role of the Management Plan is to set the context and framework for the AONB's approach to development it was starting to stray beyond those areas into trying to set policy, specifically in the Development chapter, where the approach contrasted with most other areas of the Management Plan. It was felt that there also needed to be a very clear distinction between the role of the Management Plan and the more detailed Position Statement on Housing which the Partnership had produced previously. These points were subsequently accepted by the AONB Partnership and the Plan underwent further modification to incorporate these and other comments into the final document. The amended Plan was then presented to the AONB Council of Partners at its meeting on 12th March 2014 where it was formally approved by the Partnership.
- 3.3 As a partnership document it is inevitably a compromise and although the points that West Berkshire officers had previously raised had been accepted in principle, the final document is still not as clear on some issues in the Development chapter as officers would have preferred. An unintentional consequence of this could be that some of the text, for instance on housing development, the Community Infrastructure Levy and minerals and waste, could be open to interpretation when being considered as part of the preparation of planning policy documents and potentially in the consideration of planning applications and appeals. Whilst there is no direct conflict with the West Berkshire Local Plan, the Management Plan is potentially more restrictive in some areas, such as housing development.
- 3.4 Although this is only considered a minor risk to the Council, in order to try and avoid any future potential ambiguity, officers have had discussions with the AONB team and have agreed that some minor factual, typographical and formatting changes could be made to the Development chapter before the final Plan is printed. This will ensure any possible risk to the Council is minimised. As a partnership document it is therefore recognised that the AONB Management Plan may not always take the same approach to an issue as an individual authority such as West Berkshire and so it is on this basis that the Management Plan for 2014-2019 is considered fit for purpose. The Management Plan clearly sets out the approach that the AONB Council of Partners will take on particular issues, but it will be up to this Council to take that into consideration as appropriate in the decision making process.

4. How the Management Plan will be used by the Council

- 4.1 The Management Plan indicates how relevant national and more local strategies will be delivered within the AONB for the benefit of the primary purpose of its designation, natural beauty. It does not set out to provide statutory planning policies for the District - that is the role of the West Berkshire Local Plan, however, as a statutory document in its own right it is a useful instrument for securing consistency across the AONB in planning matters. Along with other evidence, it is therefore an important consideration in the preparation of the West Berkshire Local Plan. Policy ADPP5 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) states that 'The AONB will be managed by working in partnership with the North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners and by implementing the statutory North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan'.

- 4.2 It is also used as a material consideration in the consideration of planning applications and also by inspectors at planning appeals. Despite this close relationship with the statutory planning system, though, it is important to clarify that as part of the Development Plan for West Berkshire, the Local Plan is the starting point for the consideration of all planning applications in the District. The status of the Development Plan will be used as the basis for clarifying any potential ambiguities that may arise in the future.
- 4.3 In West Berkshire it also forms a complementary plan to the Sustainable Community Strategy and provides strategic context to more local activities such as parish plans and Neighbourhood Development Plans.

5. Delivery of the Plan

- 5.1 The delivery of the AONB Management Plan is monitored by the Partnership through an annual review of the delivery of the AONB Business Plan, and achievements are reported through the AONB's Annual Report.
- 5.2 Successful implementation of the Management Plan is beyond the resources of the Council of Partners and AONB team alone and will require the active collaboration and participation of all those involved in its scope. This is a plan for the geographic area of the North Wessex Downs and not for any single organisation within it. Implementation needs the support and involvement of the many organisations and individuals who play key roles in the future of the Area. Many of these have been involved in drawing up the Plan.
- 5.3 Under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, it is 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. For West Berkshire Council, active support for the implementation of this Plan will be key to satisfying our Section 85 duty.

6. Adoption of the AONB Management Plan 2014-2019

- 6.1 The Management Plan has now been formally approved by the AONB Council of Partners and is being recommended to each of the constituent local authorities for their formal adoption before it is submitted to the Secretary of State at the end of July 2014.
- 6.2 The Management Plan is accompanied by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). An SEA was completed for the previous Plan (2009-2014). SEA aims to provide protection of the environment at a strategic level and contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans with a view to promoting sustainable development. An Environmental Statement (Appendix B) has been published which explains how the Plan has been influenced by the SEA process. As an update, it has been agreed that a full SEA is not required for this Plan.
- 6.3 In addition, the Partnership has undertaken and published an Appropriate Assessment (Appendix C) of the potential impact of the objectives of the Management Plan on the conservation objectives of sites of European importance

for nature conservation affected by the Plan. This is required by The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006. Natural England has confirmed that the Assessment complies with legislative requirements.

- 6.4 Once adopted, the AONB Management Plan will operate for a five year period. The process of reviewing the adopted plan will begin in late 2017 or early 2018 and include the Council's involvement. A reviewed and updated Management Plan for the North Wessex Downs AONB will then be published in 2019.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 It is recommended that the Council adopts the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan for 2014-2019 as a partnership document prepared by the North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners.

Appendices

Appendix A - North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2014-2019

Appendix B - North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Appendix C - North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan Appropriate Assessment

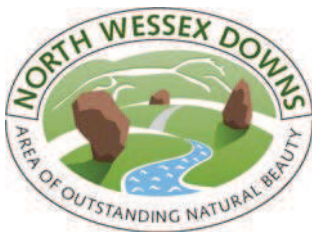
Consultees

Local Stakeholders: Consulted as part of the preparation of the Management Plan

Officers Consulted: Bryan Lyttle, Liz Alexander, Paul Hendry, Corporate Board

Trade Union: N/A

North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2014-19



Prepared on behalf of the Council of Partners

This document is the statutory Management Plan for the nationally designated and protected landscape of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as required under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. It is a plan for all those that have a responsibility to look after this precious and treasured landscape.

Following informal consultation in May 2013, an initial draft was published for comment between August and October 2013. Public events were held in each local authority area. Specialists reviewed the comments we received and brought their recommendations to a special meeting of the North Wessex Downs Management Working Group.

The North Wessex Downs Council of Partners and relevant local authorities have approved this plan for publication.

This Management Plan, the Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Landscape Character Assessment can all be found on the North Wessex Downs website:

www.northwessexdowns.org.uk

Enquiries about these documents or any other aspect of the review process can be made to the North Wessex Downs team through the website or by telephone: 01488 685440.

Foreword on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)



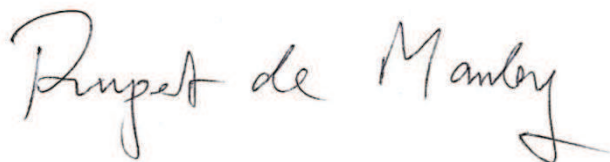
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are some of our finest landscapes. They are cherished by residents and visitors alike and allow millions of people from all walks of life to understand and connect with nature.

I am pleased to see that this management plan demonstrates how AONB Partnerships can continue to protect these precious environments despite the significant challenges they face. With a changing climate, the increasing demands of a growing population and in difficult economic times, I believe AONBs represent just the sort of community driven, collaborative approach needed to ensure our natural environment is maintained for generations to come.

AONB Partnerships have been the architects of a landscape-scale approach to land management. This approach is a key feature of the Government's Natural Environment White Paper and emphasises the need to manage ecosystems in an integrated fashion, linking goals on wildlife, water, soil and landscape, and working at a scale that respects natural systems.

This management plan also makes the important connection between people and nature. I am pleased to hear that local communities have been central to the development of the plan, and will be at the heart of its delivery. From volunteers on nature conservation projects, to businesses working to promote sustainable tourism, it's great to hear of the enthusiasm and commitment of the local people who hold their AONBs so dear.

AONBs are, and will continue to be, landscapes of change. Management plans such as this are vital in ensuring these changes are for the better. I would like to thank all those who were involved in bringing this plan together and I wish you every success in bringing it to fruition.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rupert de Mauley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lord de Mauley, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for natural environment and science



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Introduction by Chairman of the North Wessex Downs Council of Partners



This statutory plan has been drawn up after wide consultation and sets out objectives for the next five years. As well as informing the work of the AONB unit, we hope it will guide the relevant activities of local authorities, agencies, businesses and individuals.

The North Wessex Downs landscape and the AONB Partnership face greater pressure than ever before. As the restrictions on public finances tighten, it is important that we do our utmost to protect the huge benefit that such a high quality landscape brings. Our society benefits from its influence on our good health and the cultural value that it represents. The economy relies on the processes performed by the natural environment and benefits from it being an attractive place in which to do business.

Through our Management Plan, the AONB Partnership and unit are actively involved in a range of delivery projects. Over the past five years, the North Wessex Downs AONB has increased the amount of non-government and local authority funding by almost 600%. We have found significant benefit in partnerships with other protected landscapes, joining bids such as the Our Land project, promoting tourism in the AONB and 1SW, which aims to increase access to the countryside. We retain a Sustainable Development Fund that has distributed £0.5m in small grants to over 150 local projects to date, bringing match contributions in excess of £1.5m.

The North Wessex Downs LEADER programme 2009-13 was hosted by the AONB. It awarded £1.419m to 65 different projects - to farmers, foresters, small businesses and rural communities across the North Wessex Downs. The grants have facilitated a total investment in the area of more than £3 million since 2009. Money awarded will help grow the economy, developing business, creating and supporting jobs, improving competitiveness and sustainability and encouraging tourism.

We have worked with landscape-scale conservation projects including the successful farmer-led Marlborough Downs Nature Improvement Area, Stepping Stones Project and Winning Ways for Wildlife. We also contributed to the development of county-based Local Nature Partnerships where we have been working more closely with nearby AONBs.

This commitment to conservation of the natural environment has led the International Union for the Conservation of Nature to re-affirm the Category V status of the North Wessex Downs as “an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value”.

I would like to thank all the people who have contributed to the work of the North Wessex Downs Partnership and the development of this Plan, in particular our nine local authority partners. I hope that everyone who reads this Plan will be able to contribute in some way to its success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which reads "Byron Carron". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a period.

Byron Carron, Chairman of the North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners

Contents

Foreword on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	1
Introduction by Chairman of the North Wessex Downs Council of Partners	4
List of Figures	6
1. A Vision for the North Wessex Downs	7
2. Introduction	
2.1 About the North Wessex Downs	9
2.2 Definition of Natural Beauty	11
2.3 Why is this Management Plan important?	11
2.4 Monitoring Strategy	14
3. The Landscape	
3.1 Geology, Landform and Land Use	15
3.2 Landscape Character Types	18
3.3 Special Qualities: Landscape	24
4. Land management	
4.1 Agriculture	25
4.2 Forestry	26
4.3 Horse Related Activity	27
4.4 Field Sports	28
4.5 Special Qualities: Land Management	28
5. Biodiversity	
5.1 Chalk Grassland	29
5.2 Woodland	30
5.3 Chalk Rivers and Streams	30
5.4 Enclosed Farmland	30
5.5 Protecting Biodiversity	31
5.6 Special Qualities: Biodiversity	32
6. Historic environment	
6.1 Features of the North Wessex Downs	33
6.2 Historic Landscape Character	34
6.3 Settlement Pattern	38
6.4 Special Qualities: Historic Environment	38
7. Natural resources	
7.1 Accounting for Natural Benefits	39
7.2 Conserving Resources and Maintaining Ecosystem Function	42
7.3 Climate	44
7.4 Special Qualities: Natural Resources	45

8. Development	
8.1 Relationship with the National Planning Policy Framework.	46
8.2 The Approach to Development in AONBs	47
8.3 The Local Economy and Rural Business	47
8.4 Additional Guidance	48
8.5 Special Qualities; Development	52
9. Communities	
9.1 Employment and Training	54
9.2 Travel and transport	54
9.3 Special Qualities: Communities	55
10. Leisure and tourism	
10.1 Tourism	56
10.2 Rights of Way and Access	57
10.3 Special Qualities: Leisure Tourism	58
11. Key Issues, Objectives and Policies	
11.1 Landscape	59
11.2 Land Management	61
11.3 Biodiversity	63
11.4 Historic Environment	65
11.5 Natural Resources	67
11.6 Development	69
11.7 Communities	72
11.8 Leisure and Tourism	74
12. Stakeholder responsibilities	76
13. Glossary of Terms	79

List of Figures

<i>Figure 1 Map of the North Wessex Downs</i>	8
<i>Figure 2 The location of the North Wessex Downs</i>	10
<i>Figure 3 Local Authority Boundaries</i>	12
<i>Figure 4 The Geology of the North Wessex Downs</i>	17
<i>Figure 5 Landscape Character Types of the North Wessex Downs</i>	19
<i>Figure 6 Present Historic Landscape Character of the North Wessex Downs</i>	36
<i>Figure 7 HLC time depth analysis of the North Wessex Downs</i>	37
<i>Figure 8 Goods and Services Provided by the North Wessex Downs</i>	40
<i>Figure 9 Stakeholders and Opportunities to Contribute</i>	76
<i>Figure 10 Glossary of Terms used in Document</i>	79

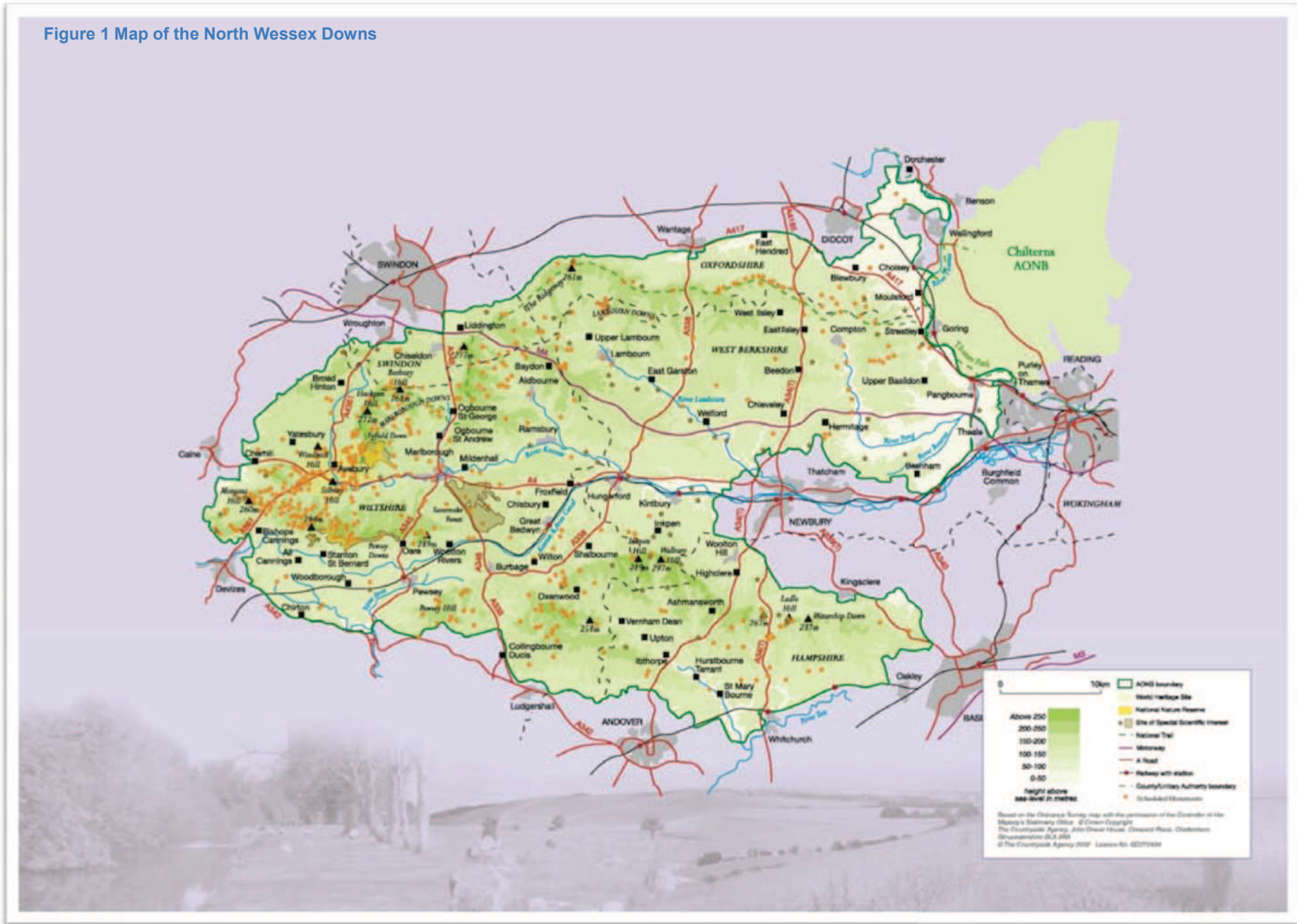
1. A Vision for the North Wessex Downs

Vast dramatic, undeveloped and distinct chalk downlands with nationally significant areas of semi-natural chalk grassland, contrasting with well-wooded plateaux, arable lands and intimate and secluded valleys, all rich in biodiversity and cultural heritage; a national landscape that stands apart from the increasing urban pressures that surround it; where people live, work and relax; and where visitors are welcomed and contribute to a vibrant rural economy.

We seek to make the North Wessex Downs:

- A place where actions meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and where people have the skills and energy to adapt to change in ways that respect the unique qualities of the North Wessex Downs and deliver wider environmental, economic and social benefits.
- A place where the highest environmental quality is seen as a key economic driver and where all economic activity is in harmony with maintenance of the landscape. New buildings and other forms of development display high quality design worthy of one of England's finest landscapes.
- A place with thriving land based and other rural enterprises where the sustainability of the North Wessex Downs is core to the business. Ensuring a countryside rich in wildlife and recreational opportunities while producing high quality products, including sustainable farming that benefit the local economy and surrounding countryside.
- A place with high quality habitats reflecting the distinctive character of the North Wessex Downs and stable and recovering populations of key species. Landscapes that are protected, expanded, linked and under beneficial management able to better respond to the pressures of climate change.
- A place with a rich and conserved cultural landscape where iconic monuments, designated heritage, archaeological sites and historic landscapes such as the Avebury World Heritage Site remain as indelible footprints in an evolving scene, managed to the very highest standards.
- A place where the integrated management of land conserves unpolluted soils and high quality water resources whilst retaining the distinctive seasonal winterbourne flows.
- A place whose character and tranquillity are recognised in development decisions around it, so that the natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs is protected
- A place where development is low-impact and affordable with a distinctive but subtle vernacular building style that combines the best of the old with the best of the new.
- A place where the integrated approach to transport and travel satisfies local needs and minimises negative effects on the environment. Where the dominance of roads and clutter are reduced.
- A place with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity; where vast night skies can thrill the eye, unaffected by light pollution.
- A place with vibrant and balanced rural communities, with villages and market towns meeting the needs of local people and visitors where there is great local pride and positive local contribution to the management of the landscape.
- A place that is a nationally recognised centre for sustainable tourism and the responsible enjoyment of the countryside, developed and promoted in ways that are in harmony with the high environmental quality and community needs of the area, helping to underpin the land based and broader rural economy.
- A place with wide public recognition in the AONB and surrounding communities of the protected status and special qualities of the North Wessex Downs. All responsible bodies understanding and respecting the protected status of the AONB in their plans and proposals.

Figure 1 Map of the North Wessex Downs



Page 50

2. Introduction

The first part of this Plan sets out a vision for the North Wessex Downs and illustrates the special qualities for each of the themes that make this landscape unique: Landscape, Land Management, Biodiversity, Natural Resources, Historic Environment, Development, Communities and Leisure and Tourism.

Key issues for the AONB have then been identified, with policies for our partners to follow. Details of how stakeholders can contribute are outlined and any technical terms explained in a glossary at the end of the document. The Management Plan sits alongside a business plan that defines the priorities for action, which will be updated each year.

2.1 About the North Wessex Downs

From its western tip at Calne in Wiltshire, the North Wessex Downs reach across the southwest and southeast of England in a broad arc through Swindon, Berkshire and Oxfordshire. They lie next to the Chilterns AONB along the River Thames, before sweeping south, encircling Newbury, to encompass the northern reaches of the rolling chalk hills of the Hampshire Downs. They then reach back towards Devizes, across the high chalk upland of Salisbury Plain and the low-lying Vale of Pewsey.

The area is the third largest AONB in the country, covering 1730 sq km, or 668 sq miles. Its resident population is only 125,000 people. Hungerford and Marlborough are the two largest settlements, with a combined population of 14,000¹. Yet around the North Wessex Downs, there are the significant urban centres of Reading, Newbury, Basingstoke, Andover, Swindon and Didcot. Together, these have a population of over 1.2 million people within 20 minutes of the AONB. The M4 crosses the area from east to west and the A34 crosses from north to south.

Designation of the North Wessex Downs as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was in 1972, under the National Parks and Access to Countryside Act 1949. Following the introduction of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the government confirmed that the landscape qualities of National Parks and AONBs are equivalent. The protection given by the land use planning system to natural beauty in both types of area should be equivalent.²

The North Wessex Downs take in 173 parishes. The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty straddles the boundaries of two counties, three unitary authorities and four district / borough councils (see figure 3). The boundaries of the South East and the South West bisect the area. Roughly, half of the area falls into each region.

The North Wessex Downs do not stand alone but form one of a family of nationally protected landscapes across England made up of 33 AONBs and ten National Parks. Together, this family of protected landscapes covers over 23% of the country.

¹ Countryside Agency (2002) The North Wessex Downs Landscape: A landscape assessment of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (CA7).

² Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, paragraph 21, HMSO 2004.

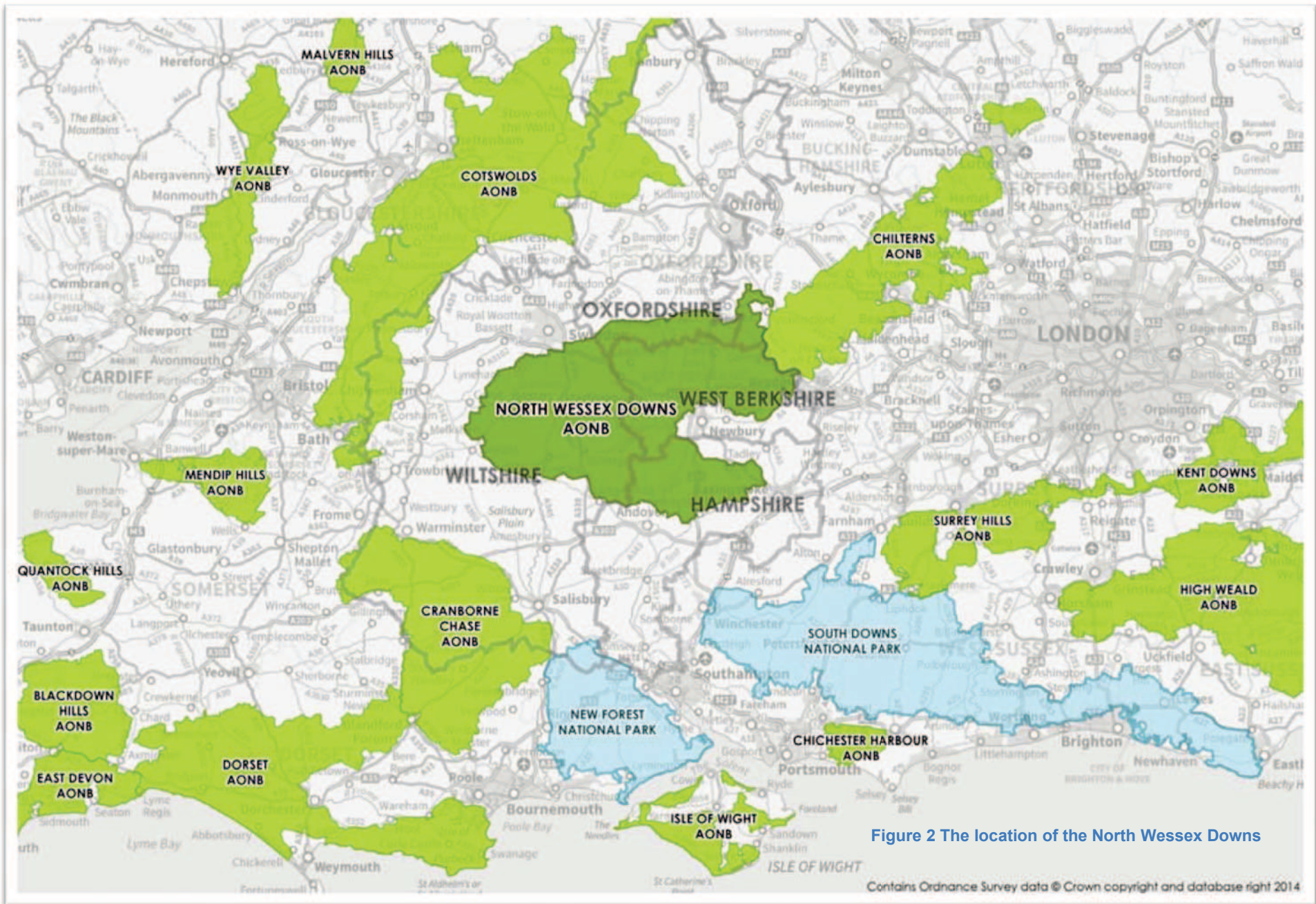


Figure 2 The location of the North Wessex Downs

Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2014

2.2 Definition of Natural Beauty

The primary purpose of AONB designation is '*conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area*'³.

'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.'⁴

The area's landscape is also of international importance, recognised as a Category V Protected Landscape by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). It is an evolved cultural landscape, managed and nurtured by people over millennia. Those who manage the land are central to the future of this landscape. The North Wessex Downs Partnership is committed to long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values in the protected landscape, as part of a network of terrestrial and marine protected areas. It is inevitable and appropriate that this cultural landscape will continue to develop but this needs to be in ways that conserve and enhance its special qualities.

Section 114 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 states that "references to the preservation or conservation of the natural beauty of an area shall be construed as including references to the preservation or, as the case may be, conservation of its flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features". This definition was further refined by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. In section 99 of that Act, it is stated that natural beauty can "include land used for agriculture or woodland, as a park or any other area whose flora, fauna or physiographical features are partly the product of human intervention in the landscape".

2.3 Why is this Management Plan important?

This Management Plan presents an agreed agenda for the North Wessex Downs. It sets out objectives and policies for AONB partners that are realistic and achievable in the next five years. Working together, the partners can realise these targets to the benefit of the landscapes and communities of this nationally designated area.

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 requires local authorities to prepare an AONB Management Plan and review it every five years. The North Wessex Downs Council of Partners prepared this plan on behalf of the constituent local authorities of the AONB⁵. This includes members of government and voluntary agencies. This Partnership includes representatives of:

- the constituent local authorities;
- the local communities;
- the farming and rural business community;
- nature conservation, heritage and landscape interests; and
- recreation interests.

³ Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, section 82

⁴ Countryside Commission Policy Statement on Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty 1991

⁵ For a current list of membership, please contact us or visit the [North Wessex Downs website](#).

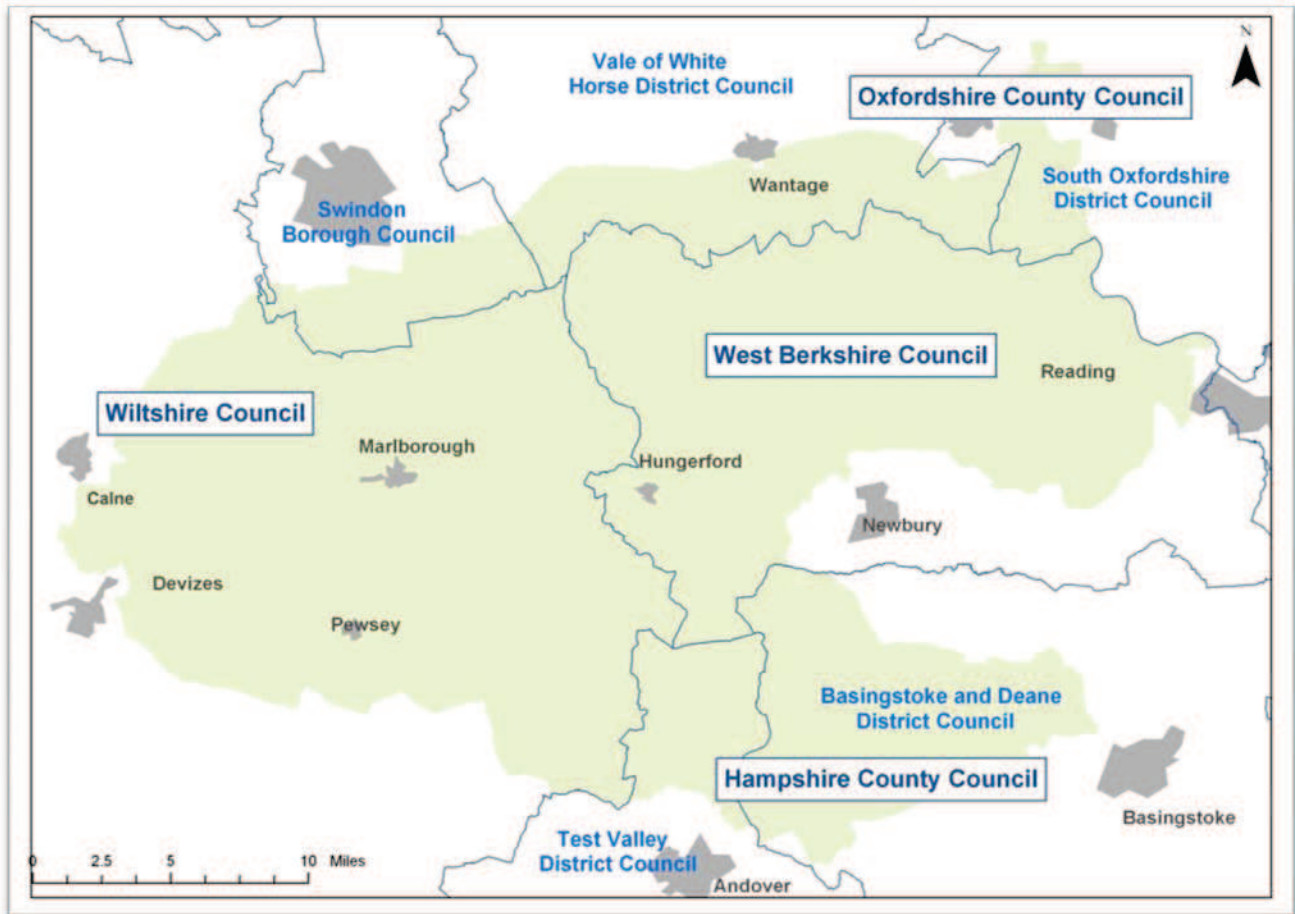


Figure 3 Local Authority Boundaries

The Management Plan 2014-19 will:

- seek to support a viable rural economy, so as to provide resources for those who manage the area's landscapes;
- outline the principles of our response to development that may affect the beauty and tranquillity of the North Wessex Downs;
- identify priorities for resources, including staff and money, that will maximise conservation and minimise damage; and
- inform people about the unique landscapes of the area and how best to enjoy these beautiful landscapes and support their conservation.

Under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, it is a legal duty for all relevant authorities to "have regard to" the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area 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.

In addition, the European Landscape Convention was ratified by the UK on the 1 March 2007. The Convention is a Treaty devoted exclusively to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe. The Convention seeks to ensure enhanced landscape planning, protection and management through quality objectives and an effective policy framework. The convention highlights the need to:

- recognise landscape in law
- develop landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and creation of landscapes
- establish procedures for the participation of the general public and other stakeholders in the creation and implementation of landscape policies

The Convention encourages the integration of landscape into all relevant areas of policy, including cultural, economic and social policies. There is a particular emphasis on the need for co-operation when administrative boundaries are crossed. The North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan is a significant contribution to the achievement of the aims of the Convention.

Successful implementation of this Management Plan is beyond the resources of the Council of Partners and AONB team alone. It will require the active collaboration and participation of all those involved in its scope. This is a plan for the geographic area of the North Wessex Downs and not for any single organisation within it. Implementation needs the support and involvement of the many organisations and individuals who play key roles in the future of the area. Many of these have been involved in drawing up the plan.

One way of satisfying the 'Section 85' duties placed on Government and other public bodies is by supporting the implementation of this plan. Local parish councils, statutory agencies and local bodies acting individually or through partnerships can all contribute to fulfilling the Management Plan vision.

This Management Plan forms part of a number of plans and strategies being prepared at the national and local level. National and local climate change policy is likely to affect most aspects of daily life, business and methods of land management. Sustainable development will continue to rise in importance. Agricultural support under the Common Agricultural Policy has moved away from subsidies for agricultural production and towards incentives for environmental management. Implementation of the Water Framework Directive will require significant changes to land management. Forestry policy now clearly focuses on supporting the wide range of benefits that woodlands can provide. There is a particular emphasis on the conservation of our ancient woodland resource. Where appropriate, there is either a description of, or a link to, these and other plans under the individual Themes. Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a statutory process⁶. A formal SEA is required for new plans and programmes that are likely to have significant effects on the environment. SEA aims to provide protection of the environment at a strategic level and contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans with a view to promoting sustainable development.

An SEA was completed for the previous plan (2009-14). This was undertaken in consultation with Natural England, the Environment Agency, English Heritage, the local authorities and partner organisations. An Environmental Report is available that assesses that plan's environmental impact. An Environmental Statement has also been published which explains how the plan has been influenced by the SEA process. As an update, it has been agreed that a full SEA is not required for this plan.

The Partnership also published an Appropriate Assessment of the potential impact of the Management Plan (2009-14) on the conservation objectives of sites of European importance for nature conservation affected by the plan⁷. Natural England has confirmed that the assessment complies with legislative requirements for the current plan.

⁶ Directive 2001/42/EC "on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment". Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 1633 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the "SEA Regulations").

⁷ The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Statutory Instrument No. 490 as amended by the 2012 amendment regulations (Statutory Instrument No. 1927).

2.4 Monitoring Strategy

Monitoring is needed to assess the effectiveness of this Management Plan. A distinction needs to be drawn between:

- **Monitoring**, which is the process of collecting data to describe condition and, when collected over time, change.
- **Indicators**, which are the elements of data collected during a monitoring programme to focus the monitoring activity and measure change.
- **Evaluation**, which is the consideration and use of the collected data to assess the effectiveness of the Plan and its delivery in meeting the AONB objectives and enhancing natural beauty.

The effectiveness of this Management Plan will be monitored against:

- **Outcomes:** the condition of the North Wessex Downs and the extent to which the **objectives** are being achieved as they focus on whether the quality of the area is being maintained and enhanced.
- **Outputs or activities:** monitoring the extent to which the targets identified in the Delivery Plan are achieved. These measure the achievement of the **policies** identified through this Management Plan. These will be monitored as an ongoing assessment of activity, which will be pulled together in quarterly or annual reports as a part of the AONB Business Plan.

The indicators of outcomes or condition were defined as part of producing the State of the North Wessex Downs AONB report, with the first edition published in 2012⁸. In some cases these are 'proxy indicators' i.e. measures that do not directly reflect the condition of the North Wessex Downs but from which judgements about their condition can be inferred.

⁸ North Wessex Downs AONB (2012). [State of the North Wessex Downs](#) Report.

3. The Landscape

The North Wessex Downs is a visibly ancient landscape of great beauty, diversity and size. It embraces the high, open arable sweeps of the chalk downs and dramatic scarp slopes with their prehistoric monuments and Beech knolls, the moulded dip slopes, sheltered chalk river valleys; intimate and secluded wooded areas and low-lying heaths with a rich mosaic of woodland, pasture, heath and commons. The North Wessex Downs form a surprisingly remote, expansive and tranquil landscape in the heart of southern England.

“The slopes of the downs, if they have general form, are continually changing and interchanging in localities, assuming new and strange shapes, charming and surprising with their grace and exquisiteness, forever reflecting the mood of the heavens” Alfred Williams 1877 – 1930⁹

The depth of history can still be seen in these landscapes, including the World Heritage Site of prehistoric Avebury; the royal hunting forest of Savernake, the Uffington White Horse, and the Ridgeway – the oldest road in England. The built environment makes a strong contribution to the beauty of the landscape, with historic towns and villages, churches, spectacular barns, manor houses with their parks and gardens, and the industrial heritage of the Kennet and Avon Canal. The Saxon name of Wessex reveals the area’s literary connections, revived by Thomas Hardy and used as the setting for many of his novels. More recently, Richard Adams provided a vivid evocation of this area in *Watership Down*.

3.1 Geology, Landform and Land Use

Geology, landform and the uses that humans have made of the land have together created the distinctive and beautiful landscapes of the area. The chalk forms an arc of high ground – the northern, western and southern parts of the AONB, cut through by the Vale of Pewsey to the west, and including, at Walbury Hill, the highest chalk hill in southern England. From this great rim, the land generally falls down the dip slope of the chalk, to the central basin of the east-flowing Rivers Kennet, Lambourn and Pang¹⁰.

The greater part of the area is underlain by chalk, resulting in the dramatic scarps and beautiful gentle rolling topography so characteristic of the North Wessex Downs. The steep scarp slopes of the chalk and Upper Greensand, with their expansive viewpoints, and the gentle rolling open chalk plateau are very obviously influenced by the underlying geology. These chalk landscapes were traditionally in sheep grazing – the wool being the source of much of England’s historic wealth. However, much of the chalk grassland has since been ploughed, and the resulting extensive, open arable land is now the most frequent land use and landscape of the chalk downs. Herb-rich chalk grassland remains in fragments on the steeper scarps.

Where the chalk has a thick capping of clay-with-flints, the topography is softer, with smaller hedged fields and much greater woodland cover – a very different, enclosed and intimate, landscape than the open sweep of the downs. Overlying the chalk are patches of more recent sediments, particularly in the lower part of the basin. These contrast with the chalk scenery by producing more acidic soils, with their associated heathland landscapes.

Some of the more impressive features of the landscape are the dry valleys or coombes, found across the chalk plateau and often forming deep rounded valleys. They are the result of torrents of water flowing over the surface of the chalk during cold periods when permafrost (frozen ground) made the chalk impermeable. The coombes are often associated with terrace features along the valleys, such as those at White Horse Hill

⁹ Williams, A. quoted in Watts, K *The Marlborough Downs* (West Country Landscapes Series) 1993

¹⁰ Adapted from the Oxford Geology Trust, Draft Local Geodiversity Action Plan for the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, January 2007

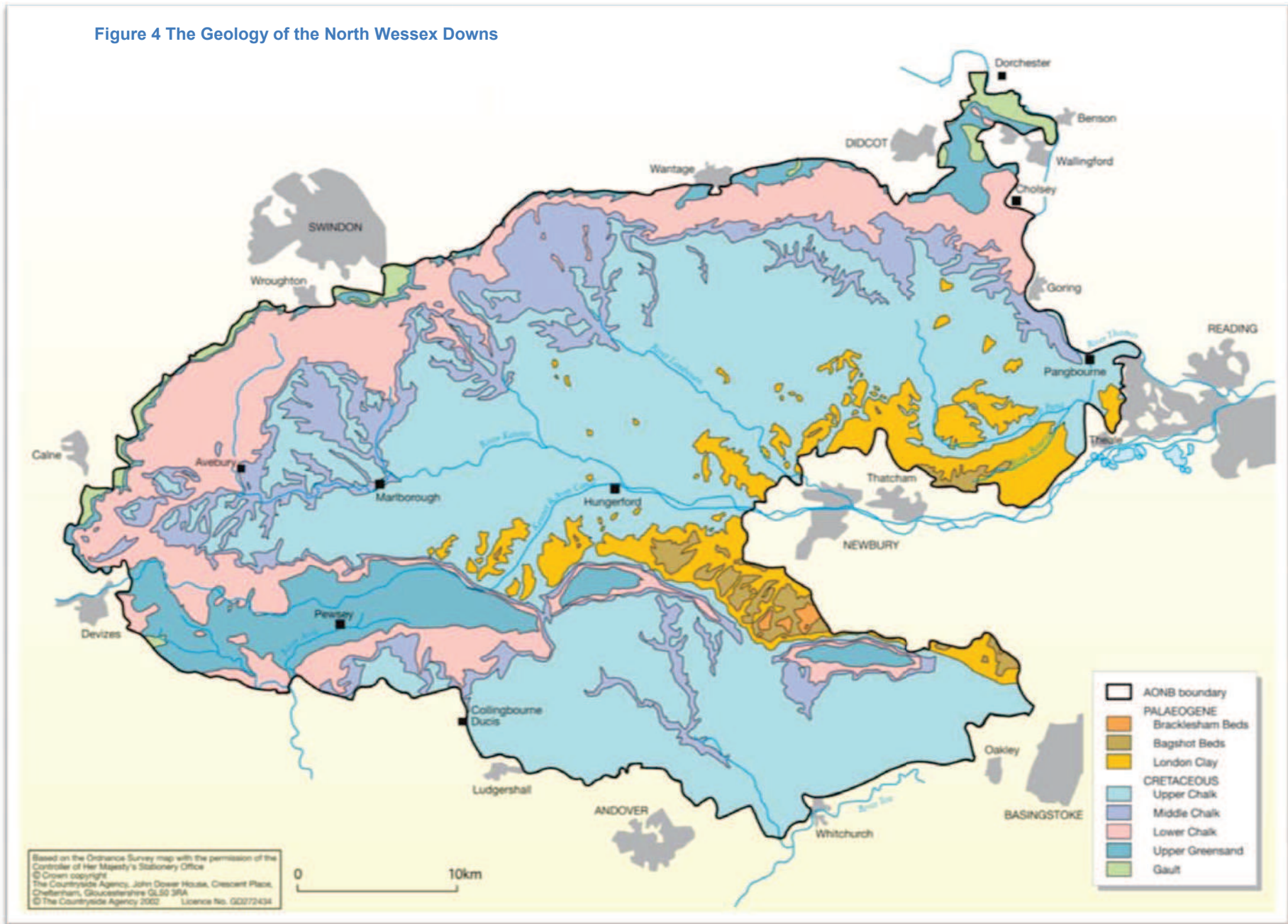
in Oxfordshire. These result from the movement downhill of frost-shattered chalk during times of partial thaw. Large amounts of material moving down the slope of the valley can accumulate in the valley bottom, forming a deposit known as head. Sarsen stones are one of the most identifiable and well-known features of the North Wessex Downs, forming the great stone circle and avenues at Avebury and the fields of 'grey wethers' (because they look like sheep) at Fyfield Down. Sarsens are silica-cemented sand or pebble deposits, often moved by natural processes a considerable way from their source.

Whilst many of the chalk valleys are dry, some have characteristic 'bournes', generally dry, but flowing when the ground water is high. England has 85% of the world's chalk streams and a large proportion of these are within or near the North Wessex Downs. These have a rich and highly characteristic ecology, and frequently support rich biodiversity.

Settlement is also strongly related to the underlying physical setting. The high, dry chalklands have no water to support settlement, so have remained open, remote, and tranquil, with farmsteads and villages on the spring lines and in the more sheltered and fertile valleys. Traditional building materials include bricks from local clays, flints, Melbourn Rock, Chalk Rock (not the soft chalk), cob, sarsens, thatch, and timber from the forests.

Further information regarding the geological history of the area can be found on the [North Wessex Downs website](#).

Figure 4 The Geology of the North Wessex Downs



3.2 Landscape Character Types

Designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty recognises the character, value and quality of the North Wessex Downs. The National Planning Policy Framework gives the highest level of protection to the overall diversity of landscape and scenic beauty of the area¹¹. The North Wessex Downs are of high scenic quality and with their wildlife and cultural heritage an integral part of their character and value. Although almost entirely a chalk landscape, character differs markedly across the area, depending on local surface geology, soils, landform, land use, vegetation and settlement patterns. The greatest contrast, for example, is between the open arable chalk downs and the acid heathlands of the lower river valleys. Natural England has set out a methodology for formally identifying what it is that makes one landscape different from another. This is known as landscape character assessment¹². A landscape assessment for the North Wessex Downs was published in 2002¹³. This identifies the overall diversity of the landscape, recognising eight Landscape Character Types across the North Wessex Downs, each with their own distinct sense of place. The study draws out the special qualities of the landscape, traces its evolution over the centuries and identifies the main issues that will need to be addressed to conserve its special character and outstanding qualities.

The eight landscape types are briefly described below. These are also reflected in the National Character Areas prepared by Natural England¹⁴. The North Wessex Downs spans five National Character Areas: Berkshire and Marlborough Downs, South Wessex Downs, Hampshire Downs, Thames and Avon Vales, and London Basin.

For further information, or to download the full North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment please visit the [North Wessex Downs website](#).

¹¹ National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 115

¹² The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, (2002) *Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland*,

¹³ Countryside Agency (2002) *The North Wessex Downs Landscape: A landscape assessment of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (CA7)*.

¹⁴ Natural England (2013). National Character Areas – defining England's natural boundaries.
<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications/nca>

- Downland with Woodland
- Downs Plain and Scarp
- High Chalk Plain
- Lowland Mosaic
- Open Downland
- River Valleys
- Vales
- Wooded Plateau

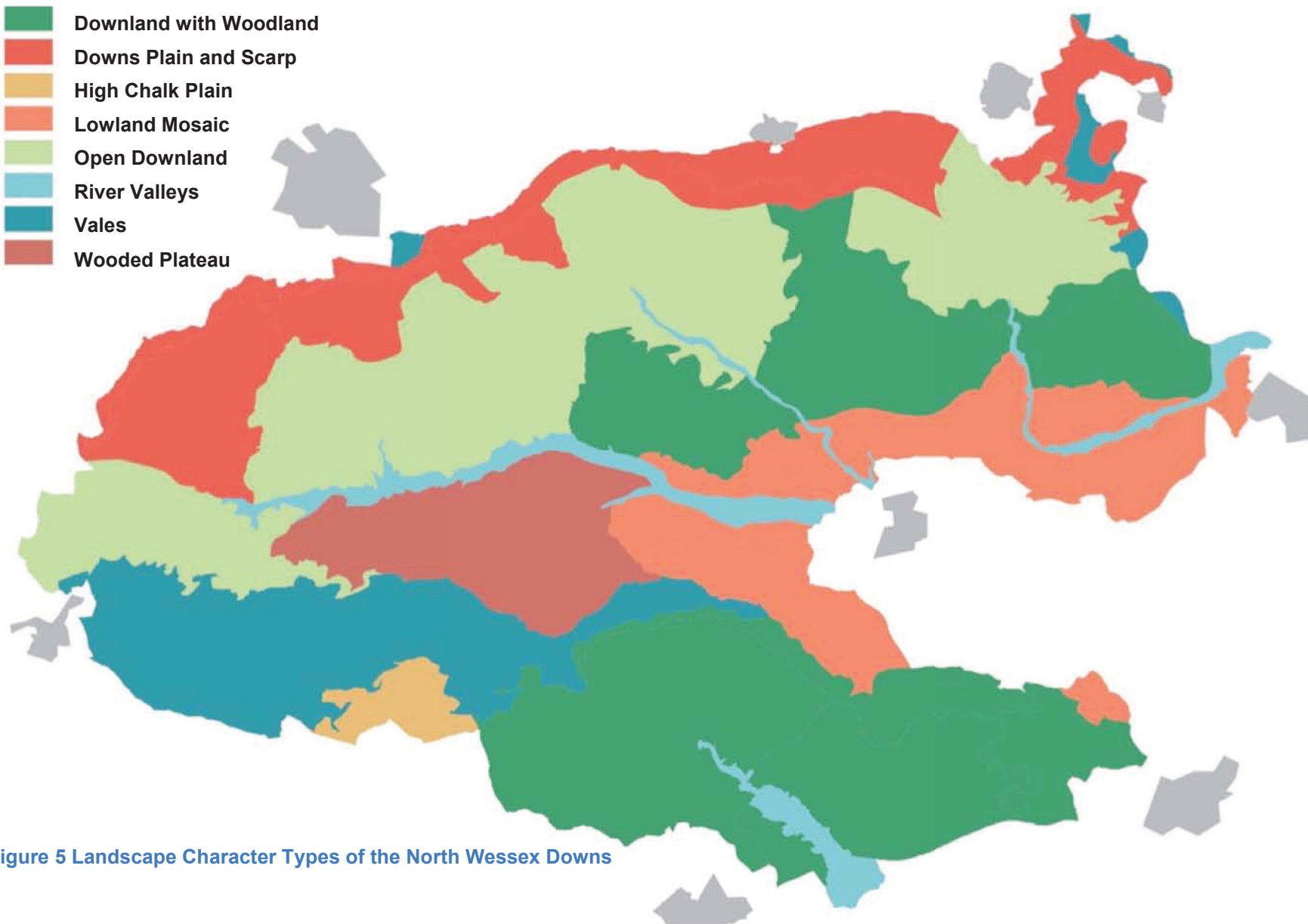


Figure 5 Landscape Character Types of the North Wessex Downs

Downs Plain and Scarp



The landscape of the Downs Plain and Scarp extends along the entire length of the northern boundary of the North Wessex Downs. The plain is formed by the eroded surface of the Lower Chalk, creating a low level surface extending as a wide ledge at the foot of the high Open Downland. The distinctive northern scarp plunges down from the chalk plain to the Vale of White Horse, creating a dramatic recognisable horizon when viewed from the north. This area is characterised by some of the most emblematic features of the North Wessex Downs: the Ridgeway, the oldest road in England – running along the top of the scarp; the Uffington White Horse on the scarp face; and Avebury on the open Downs Plain, forming part of the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site. The Downs Plain is characterised by vast arable fields, lack of surface water and a general absence of settlement. Conversely the dramatic scarp slope, cut by springs, creates a convoluted edge alternately under woodland and pasture, including significant areas of remnant chalk grassland. This is a landscape that feels as though it has hardly changed over the centuries, although it is increasingly affected by development at its foot, outside the AONB boundary.

The key issues for the Plan period will be ensuring that development beyond the boundary does not visually damage these critical scarp landscapes; management of users of the Ridgeway to maximise enjoyment and minimise conflicts; and maintenance and, where possible, extension of the chalk grassland habitats. A major ambition is to enhance prominent views of and within the area by reconnecting fragmented remaining grassland along the length of these chalk ridges. Much former grassland has been ploughed or overtaken by scrub and secondary woodland. Priorities include arable reversion, scrub clearance and reintroduction of grazing, carefully targeted to restore key views.

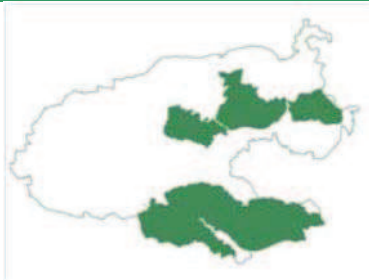
Open Downland



The Open Downland forms the backbone of the North Wessex Downs as an elevated plateau of the hard Middle and Upper Chalks. The landscape is of open, smoothly rounded downland dissected by dry valleys and long sinuous steep scarps, and is devoid of surface water. Tree cover is limited to distinctive Beech clumps crowning summits and occasional linear shelter belts. This is a remote, tranquil landscape of panoramic views where the sky forms a key part of the landscape, including the effect of cloud shadows on the ground and the wind creating swells through the crops. The dominant land use is of vast sweeping arable fields with small remnant patches of chalk grassland on steeper slopes. Settlement is extremely sparse and limited to scattered farmsteads and racing stables.

The key issues for the Plan period will be ensuring that the remoteness and expansive open scale of these core landscapes is maintained; that viable agriculture continues; that the internationally-important archaeological sites have sufficient resources for management and understanding; and that where possible chalk grassland habitats are restored, reconnected and extended.

Downland with Woodland



This landscape is distinctly different from the Open Downland. It is of lower elevation and has a thick capping of clay-with-flints over the chalk. It has softer contours and considerably greater woodland cover. The scale is smaller, with field patterns a mixture of small irregular medieval enclosures and larger regular Parliamentary enclosures. Hedgerows and a mosaic of woodland cover, notably on the clay summits and as sinuous hangers along steeper slopes, create a sense of containment. There are also considerable areas of wood pasture and parkland. Agricultural land use is more varied, with an intermixing of arable and pasture. Small villages nestle in sheltered valleys or are strategically located on ridge tops, with widespread scattered traditional farmsteads.



The key issues for the Plan period will be to maintain the remote, secluded and relatively undeveloped character of these wooded downs, including the character of the lanes; to support woodland management, including the viable use of timber products, particularly for fuel; and to ensure that large-scale developments outside the AONB boundary do not damage the scale and intimacy of these landscapes.

Wooded Plateau



Centred on the woodland tracts of Savernake Forest and West Woods, the extent of this largely wooded area reflects the bounds of the medieval royal hunting forest of Savernake, established by the time of the Domesday survey. Throughout this gently dipping plateau, a thick covering of clay-with-flints and Tertiary deposits mask the solid chalk and results in damp and heavy soils. Today, the Forest consists of extensive tracts of semi-natural ancient woodland, wood pasture with majestic veteran trees, and 18th and 19th Century Beech plantations, as well as more recent coniferous plantations. Reflecting its origins as a royal hunting forest, the countryside remains undeveloped, with settlement limited to villages in the valley of the River Dun – Great and Little Bedwyn.



The key issues for the Plan period will be to support woodland management, including the viable use of timber products, particularly for fuel, consistent with the heritage and nature conservation value of the forests; to maintain the remote and tranquil character of these historic landscapes, including encouraging restoration of wood pasture landscapes, husbandry and ecology and ensuring future veteran tree succession; to support maintenance and use of the Kennet and Avon Canal, and to encourage recreational enjoyment of the extensive woodland areas.

High Chalk Plain



This is the northernmost tip of Salisbury Plain. The open rolling landform of the Upper Chalk creates a bleak, spacious landscape under arable production and devoid of settlement, with long views and a strong sense of remoteness and isolation. A dramatic escarpment forms the northern boundary, as at Pewsey Hill and Fyfield Down, and provides panoramic views across the Vale of Pewsey to the north.



The key issues for the Plan period will be to maintain the open, remote and empty landscapes of the plain and scarp, including ensuring that developments beyond the AONB boundary do not cause visual damage; and to support land managers in maintaining the land as habitat for key species, including threatened arable plants, invertebrates and farmland birds.

Vales



The Vale of Pewsey separates the two main upland chalk blocks that dominate the North Wessex Downs. The towering shapes of the adjacent chalk scarps contain and enclose this Greensand vale. Numerous springs issue from the chalk and Greensand boundary where the water table comes to the surface, their streams meandering across the Vale floor. Rich loamy and alluvial soils create a productive agricultural landscape with a mix of arable, orchards and pasture now replacing a once predominantly pastoral scene important for dairying – hence the saying ‘chalk and cheese’, identifying the very different landscapes of the downs and the vale. The concentration of settlements is a defining feature of the Vale, including compact nucleated villages and hamlets, with widespread scattered farmsteads. The ‘Vales character type also occurs at the north-eastern edge of the North Wessex Downs, with the sections of the Thames valley floor that lie within this AONB. The eastern part of the Thames valley floor here lies within the adjoining Chilterns AONB.



The key issues for the Plan period will be to maintain the pattern of discrete villages set within a quiet rural landscape and ensure that the views to the surrounding dramatic scarps are undamaged.

River Valleys



The chalk rivers that cut through the chalk uplands form very distinct linear landscapes, characterised by a rich mix of grazed pastures, water meadows, wetland and woodland. The valleys are enclosed by steeply rising slopes, limiting views and creating an intimate and enclosed character. Historically, the main settlements of the chalk were concentrated in these river valleys, as the only source of accessible water in an otherwise dry downland landscape. These settlements took a long linear form, following the bottom of the valley, and this remains the dominant pattern to this day. The chalk uplands (in other character areas) are also cut by numerous dry valleys, which sometimes contain ephemeral 'winterbournes' only flowing when the chalk water table rises to the surface during the winter and early spring.

The key issues for the Plan period will be ensuring the maintenance of water quality and quantity in the rivers, supporting river managers in river course improvement for fisheries and wildlife; and maintaining and enhancing the adjacent seasonal flood meadows, grazed pastures, fen, damp woodlands and historic parkland.

Lowland Mosaic



This is the lowest part of the 'bowl', curving around Newbury and the lower Kennet valley. This landscape, of largely Medieval origins has a varied geology of clays, silts and sands giving rise to a diverse mix of soils and, in turn, a mosaic of ancient semi-natural woodlands, plantations, remnant heathland and more open farmland areas. This is a small-scale and intimate landscape, where lanes are frequently overhung by deep grassy and wooded banks, heightening the sense of seclusion. There are some limited longer views, as at Bucklebury Upper Common. The network of ancient semi-natural woodland, connecting hedgerows, areas of parkland, including wood pasture and veteran trees, create considerable ecological interest. Former Medieval deer parks are a particular feature, as at Englefield, Highclere and Hampstead, with a number of these having been re-fashioned in the 18th Century as formal designed landscapes. This is one of the most densely inhabited areas of the North Wessex Downs, with large manor houses, a network of hamlets, and lines of houses and villages that have grown along the network of lanes.

The key issues for the Plan period will be conserving and enhancing the small-scale, secluded and rural character of the area, including the fragile lowland heaths. Merging of small settlements or encroachment by larger settlements will be strongly resisted.

3.3 Special Qualities: Landscape

- The distinctive northern **Downs Plain and Scarp** plunges down from the chalk plain to the Vale of White Horse, creating a dramatic recognisable horizon.
- **Open Downland** extending from Roundway Down near Devizes to Lardon Chase overlooking the Thames at Streatley is dissected by dry valleys and long steep scarps, with limited tree cover and sense of remoteness and tranquility.
- **Downland with Woodland** on the dipslope descending to Kennet Valley and south across the Hampshire Downs; offering softer contours, woodland cover and a mix of field patterns.
- Centred on Savernake Forest and West Woods, the **Wooded Plateau** consists of extensive tracts of semi-natural ancient woodland, wood pasture with majestic veteran trees, and 18th and 19th Century Beech plantations, as well as more recent coniferous plantations.
- At the northernmost tip of Salisbury Plain, the open rolling landform of the **High Chalk Plain** creates a bleak, spacious landscape under arable production and devoid of settlement, with long views and a strong sense of remoteness and isolation
- The **Vales** of Pewsey and sections of the Thames Valley floor adjoining the Chilterns AONB offer productive loamy and alluvial soils where springs issue from the chalk and compact settlements contrast with scattered farmsteads.
- The **River Valleys** of the Kennet, Lambourn, Pang and Bourne form very distinct linear landscapes, characterised by a rich mix of grazed pastures, water meadows, wetland and woodland. Steeply rising slopes create an intimate and enclosed character
- The **Lowland Mosaic**, curving around Newbury and the lower Kennet valley has a varied geology of clays, silts and sands giving rise to a diverse mix of soils and, in turn, a mosaic of ancient semi-natural woodlands, plantations, remnant heathland and more open farmland areas where sunken lanes heighten the sense of seclusion.

4. Land management

Farmland and woodland dominates the landscape of the North Wessex Downs. Changes in these land uses have a major influence on the natural beauty of the area. Land-based enterprises play a significant role in acting as stewards of the landscape and contributing to an economic balance for communities. Additionally, equine activities and field sports are significant in terms of land use and management.

"I like to look at the winding side of a great down, with two or three numerous flocks of sheep on it, belonging to different farms; and to see, lower down, the folds, in the fields, ready to receive them for the night." William Cobbett 1763-1835 ¹⁵

4.1 Agriculture

The North Wessex Downs cover 1,730 sq km, or 668 sq miles. Approximately 84% of the land is classified as farmland, with over 60% under arable cultivation. Agriculture is the dominant land use and the major influence on landscape character and quality. According to a study in 2005, the North Wessex Downs is the most strongly agricultural of the South East AONBs. It found that the North Wessex Downs had 2,787 people working in agriculture (total farm labour), representing 5.9% of the total workforce. The average proportion for the South East was 1.3% ¹⁶.

Agricultural statistics since 1990 ¹⁷ show that the area of land in agricultural management appears to be fairly stable, with a slight net loss over time. This could be due to development but also changes in holding distributions may represent a move to other land uses not classified as agricultural. The total number of farms is also falling. The highest proportion of farms are over 100 hectares, a number that has steadily increased over the last decade.

Defra defines farm types for a holding as the crop or livestock enterprise (or group of enterprises) that contributes more than two thirds of the total standard gross margin for the holding. The North Wessex Downs have quite large areas of Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land, a high proportion of which is put down to potatoes and field scale vegetables around the Pewsey Vale. The most common farm type is *other* followed by *cereals* with some *cattle and sheep* (grazing livestock).

Farm profitability varies significantly by farm type and by farm size within farm type. The area has a high proportion of large holdings and a great many cereal farms. Though these are likely to remain profitable under current conditions, the proportion of farms specialising in cereals is slowly declining. So has the proportion of dairy farms. Pig and poultry farming have fluctuated over time, both by proportion of farms and number of animals. The proportion of 'other' farms has increased greatly, probably reflecting increased levels of specialisation and diversification, but also representing non-classifiable holdings. This category may be growing through an increase in specialist horses or specialist forage to support the horse racing industry in the area.

Profitable agriculture can sustain the natural resources that have created rich diversity and natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs. Support for an efficient farming sector is an important means of securing landscape management, as demonstrated through the North Wessex Downs Partnership support for initiatives such as the RDPE funded LEADER programme.

¹⁵ Cobbett, W. (1823). From Dover to the Wen (English Journeys)

¹⁶ Tantram, D, Shorten, J, Fecht, D, Briggs, D, Cole, L & Deane, R. (2005). Socio-economic profiles for protected landscape areas in South East England. Report to Countryside Agency. Terra Consult, Guildford.

¹⁷ Defra agricultural census 1990 - 2011

Trends identified in the previous plan appear to have continued, with a decline in livestock farming and greater sensitivity of arable production to prices of inputs. As with other sectors, consolidation will lead to larger farms and larger herd sizes to seek increases in efficiency. There have also been positive changes driven by the implementation of targeted agri-environment schemes. The North Wessex Downs has a higher take up of these schemes than the UK average.

The reform of the EU Common Agricultural Policy and the introduction of new agri-environment schemes in the UK are affecting farming, with a greater emphasis on wildlife conservation. The de-coupling of support payments from production is requiring farmers to respond more readily to world market conditions. Fluctuations in commodity prices and input costs are making future arable profitability hard to predict. There is a risk that such market influences may thwart initiatives designed to improve natural resource protection and environmental enhancement. An example in the North Wessex Downs has been the difficulty in promoting arable reversion to chalk grassland under higher-level stewardship schemes in the light of fluctuating, and occasionally very high, cereal prices. Issues concerning animal movement and the loss of skilled graziers compound this.

Coupled with the drive for sustainability, food and energy security considerations are likely to become major influences on land management over the next 10 to 20 years. Climate change may affect the types and varieties of viable crops. There are implications for sowing dates, irrigation, pests, diseases and soil erosion. Increased productivity needs careful management to maintain landscape character and the opportunity to expand wildlife habitats. There may also be diversification into novel crops and farming systems or related activities, such as equestrian businesses and leisure.

4.2 Forestry

The area of woodland within the North Wessex Downs is around 23,300 hectares, or 13.5% of the area. Just under a half of this woodland has some form of wildlife designation and a little over a third is Ancient Woodland. Broadleaf trees dominate (62%)¹⁸. The long-term decline in the market for UK timber has had a pronounced effect on the area's woodlands, with many suffering from a lack of management. The ageing Beech woodlands no longer produce significant volumes of timber and are more valuable as places for recreation than as a productive part of the rural economy. The promotion of wood as a renewable fuel may stimulate improved management of some woodlands.

A survey of local woodland professionals indicated that only 10,230 hectares (or 44%) of the woodland area was being managed¹⁹. The timber quality of a lot of the woodland area within the AONB is not high; many of the woodlands are extremely small; a number of the woodlands comprise crops for which there is no longer a viable market. Consequently, the economics of forestry operations are problematic. There is a role for energy production in helping to manage small woodlands and partners have made progress in supporting the forestry sector through initiatives such as the RDPE LEADER programme, ahead of an anticipated rise in demand for wood fuel and associated products²⁰.

The priority is to maintain the existing woodlands rather than establish new woodland areas. Any new woodland should meet the objectives of the North Wessex Downs AONB Woodland Strategy. This values woodland designated for their nature conservation interest, and all ancient and semi-natural woodland. New woodlands can act as a buffer to protect this resource and create wildlife links between woodlands. The

¹⁸ Matthews, R (2005) North Wessex Downs AONB Woodland Strategy, September 2005

¹⁹ Matthews, R (2005) North Wessex Downs AONB Woodland Strategy, September 2005

²⁰ Forestry Commission (2007), A woodfuel Strategy for England

Partnership encourages woodland owners to undertake Management Plans and will promote the accreditation of woodlands under the United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Scheme.

The dangers to woodland from pests and diseases is growing, with Ash Dieback (*Chalara Fraxinea*) and Oak Processionary Moth (*Thaumetopoea processionea*) two of the most recent examples. The damage caused by increasing numbers of deer, squirrels and other species is an ever-increasing problem. This highlights the need for the collaborative landscape-scale protection of our woodlands. The North Wessex Downs Partnership is working with the Forestry Commission and woodland owners and operators to raise awareness and, where appropriate, prevent or mitigate the effects of activity.

Climate change may lead to drought and lower summer rainfall. This is likely to affect the North Wessex Downs woodlands. For example, the shallow rooting Beech does not thrive on dry soils and is likely to decline but small leaved lime needs warmth to set seed and will probably increase. Veteran trees of all species are more likely to be felled by storm force winds. However, in woods the impact of these storms can be positive, creating glades that species adapted to sunlight can occupy. The recreational value may increase as people seek shade in the hottest months.

4.3 Horse Related Activity

Horse owning and riding is an increasingly popular activity across the South of England. Owners of horses have an important role to play in keeping the North Wessex Downs a beautiful place. How horses are cared for and the developments associated with keeping a horse can have a significant impact on the character and quality of the North Wessex Downs landscape. 'Horses, the Landscape and You', published in collaboration with Protected Landscapes in the South West, contains helpful guidance to make sure horses are well cared for and make a positive contribution to our landscape.

The Lambourn area and other racing yards make the North Wessex Downs second only to Newmarket in their importance as a centre of activity for the horseracing industry. It is a significant employer and economic contributor to the local economy. About 10% of Britain's racehorse trainers and approximately 3,700 racehorses are in the North Wessex Downs. The core businesses employ approximately 1,370 Full-Time Equivalent staff. That represents just over 20% of employment in the agriculture and entertainment sectors in the area. A survey identified 103 businesses within the area directly involved and a further 49 businesses associated with the racing industry²¹. The horseracing industry contributes between £16-38 million per annum of direct Gross Value Added to the local economy; its total economic output is up to £70 million per annum.

²¹ Smiths Gore (2007) A study of the key effects of the horseracing industry on the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

4.4 Field Sports

The rise of large-scale commercial shooting in recent years has had a significant influence on the landscape, especially in the downland. Much of the management of some small-scale woodland has been motivated by shooting whilst the downs and valleys, notably the steep scarps, provides an ideal landscape for Partridge shooting. This has led to the planting of large blocks of maize and complemented grant-aided conservation plots such as wild birdseed mix. Shooting brings in substantial income to the rural economy, and is thus beneficial to the area, but changes to the landscape may be viewed with mixed opinions. However, there is no doubt that the management of land for shooting brings significant benefits to wildlife in general.

Commercial fishing is also an important feature of the AONB, especially the world famous chalk streams, such as the Kennet and Lambourn. The income from let fishing helps to support the conservation of the rivers.

Further information regarding the influence of land management can be found in the Biodiversity and Natural Resources chapters.

4.5 Special Qualities: Land Management

- A landscape under the influence of **agricultural management** with typically large farmed estates, a high proportion of which are subject to agri-environment agreements.
- **Varied field patterns**; the open downlands are characterised by large regular fields, largely the product of 18th Century parliamentary enclosure, with more recent boundary removals creating vast fields, as on the Marlborough Downs. By contrast, the Vale of Pewsey in the south west of the AONB is the product of Medieval clearance which created numerous, small, irregularly-shaped fields or assarts.
- Stock fencing and extant **hedgerows** in the vales and river valleys containing some mature trees.
- A growing forestry sector and different **types of woodland**, many with public access. Although Oak and Ash are the main forest canopy species there is a wide range of stand types including Hornbeam coppice, Oak/Ash stands, Hazel/Oak stands, and Birch and Ash/Wych Elm coppice.
- **Equestrian activity**, including the 'Valley of the Racehorse' in the Lambourn area that attracts visitors and businesses.
- Significant land management for **field sports**, including highly valued game fishing which supports the native Brown Trout.

5. Biodiversity

“At length the snow ceases and the wind drops to a whisper; then over the hill-top the lapwings start up again and wheel in phantom flight, shrieking their weird night call.” Edward Thomas 1878-1917 ²²

The breadth of ecological diversity reflects the varied landscape character of the North Wessex Downs. It is the product of centuries of human influence and active management. Within the area, there are seven Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), part of the internationally important network of European Natura 2000 sites. Both Pewsey Downs SAC and Fyfield Downs SSSI are also National Nature Reserves. They have an outstanding chalk grassland flora and fauna that includes nationally important populations of rare species, including the endemic Early Gentian. The North Wessex Downs contains 66 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) covering 3,330 hectares (or 2% of the area).

The most ecologically important habitats within the North Wessex Downs are:

- the remnant chalk grasslands;
- semi-natural broadleaf woodlands and wood pasture;
- chalk rivers and associated wetlands; and
- arable farmland managed for conservation.

A wide variety of other habitats characterise particular parts of the area. These range from remnant heathland on river gravel deposits in the east, including areas of semi natural acidic grassland in the area around Inkpen, to the wide grassy verges of the droeways crossing the downs. At a local level, the hedgerow network, springs, remnant cressbeds, road verges and dew ponds also provide important refuges and habitats. Chalk cuttings having magnificent displays of Primrose and Cowslip each year. This mosaic of habitats is especially important for bats. They may commute many miles from their roosts in old trees or outbuildings to forage over a range of habitats including wetland, farmland, woodland and grassland.

5.1 Chalk Grassland

Chalk grassland is one of the most biologically rich and diverse habitats in the UK. Over 40 species of flowering plants are found in a single square metre of the best quality turf. Around 9% of the UK's chalk grassland resource lies within the area. Traditionally grazed by sheep, cattle and rabbits, the area's chalk grassland supports important populations of the Early Gentian. This is a scheduled protected species and one of Britain's few endemic plants. Unimproved chalk grassland is also important for the survival of many scarce invertebrate species such as the Wart-biter Cricket and the internationally threatened Marsh Fritillary Butterfly. Other scarce chalk grassland butterflies include the Adonis Blue, Chalkhill Blue and Small Blue whilst bird species include the Skylark.

Of the 66 SSSIs in the North Wessex Downs, 29 have a chalk grassland component, amounting to 1,421 hectares (0.8% of the area). In addition, 249 Local Wildlife Sites (known also as County Wildlife Sites or Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation) have a chalk grassland component. The total area of these sites amounts to 2,163 ha or 1.3% of the area. Unfortunately, the absolute figure for chalk grassland within the local sites is not available.

Nationally, areas of chalk grassland are a shadow of their extent in the 1900s. In the North Wessex Downs, there was a 32% decline in the area of chalk grassland between 1968 and 1998²³. The remaining areas are

²² Thomas, E (1897). The Woodland Life.

²³ RSPB (January 2001) Agricultural Change in the North Wessex Downs AONB between 1968 and 1998.

suffering increasing fragmentation. Today small isolated blocks of chalk grassland are largely restricted to the steep scarp slopes, dry valleys and areas maintained as pasture around archaeological sites. The total area of remaining chalk grassland within the area is not known but it is estimated that the Berkshire and Marlborough Downs Natural Area (which covers roughly two-thirds of the North Wessex Downs) supports at least 1,250 hectares (or 3-5%) of the total English resource of chalk grassland.

5.2 Woodland

According to the Woodland Trust, the North Wessex Downs contain two nationally important 'major concentrations'²⁴ of ancient woodland, centred on the Berkshire and Marlborough Downs and the Hampshire Downs; and areas of forest such as Savernake. In the area:

- less than 0.1% of the total woodland area is designated as a National Nature Reserve;
- 0.5% is designated as Special Areas for Conservation;
- 7.5% is a Site of Special Scientific Interest; and
- 42.3% is designated as a Local Wildlife Site.

The diverse woodland types that make up these ancient woodlands include significant areas of wood pasture and support a wide range of species, with roosting sites for a number of bat species. Of particular importance are the calcareous woodlands that support a range of rare plants including Herb-Paris and Green Hellebore and provide home to a high proportion of the world's population of Bluebells.

5.3 Chalk Rivers and Streams

The spring-fed fast flowing streams and rivers of the North Wessex Downs support an extremely diverse range of plant and animal communities. Pea Mussel, freshwater White Clawed Crayfish and internationally rare floating vegetation of River Water-dropwort can be found along their reaches. In turn, the rivers irrigate adjacent areas creating the distinctive valley landscape with its remnant fens and water meadows. The Summer Snowflake, a Red Data Book species, survives in seasonally flooded sites along the River Kennet. In recognition of their outstanding nature conservation value the Lambourn, Kennet and Hampshire Avon are all designated SSSIs, while the River Lambourn, the Hampshire Avon, and the Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain (a series of discrete sites supporting the Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) are SACs.

5.4 Enclosed Farmland

Arable cultivation is the dominant land management activity in the area (see chapter on Land Management). The North Wessex Downs support a wide range of nationally and regionally important species associated with arable farmland. They are adapted to colonise disturbed land achieved through tillage. They include farmland birds such as Stone-curlew and Tree Sparrow; rare arable plants such as Corn Buttercup and Shepherd's Needle; and mammals such as Brown Hare and Harvest Mouse. Many of these species are listed as Priority Species of Importance²⁵ and form targets for Biodiversity 2020. An Arable Strategy was prepared in 2008 to help protect and enhance the nationally important arable biodiversity found within the North Wessex Downs²⁶.

Although the downlands are essentially a large-scale landscape, traditional areas of mixed farming, responding to the underlying geology, have resulted in a range of habitats (grassland, scrub and arable

²⁴ Woodland Trust (2002) Space for Nature: Landscape-scale action for woodland biodiversity.

²⁵ Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

²⁶ Smart et al (2008). A Strategy for Arable Biodiversity in the North Wessex Downs AONB.

lands) co-existing in close proximity. This interlinking range of habitats provides some of the most favourable conditions for the characteristic birds and mammals of the North Wessex Downs, such as the Brown Hare, Skylark, Lapwing, Tree Sparrow, Corn Bunting, Linnet and Grey Partridge. Increased cover, nesting opportunities and a wider abundance of food supply occur where arable margins meet up with wildflower and insect rich downland and scrub. This allows bird and other species typical of arable and unimproved grassland to be present together. The North Wessex Downs Farmland Bird Project has helped to target agri-environment resources to benefit these species.

Changes to climate will alter the composition of the natural communities that are characteristic of chalk downland, woodland, streams and arable fields. Diverse natural communities of plants and animals are most likely to survive on soils and in streams with low nutrient status and in large patches of habitat. Given the pressures of climate change and the need for species migration, habitat corridors along rights of way and habitat networks are of increasing value.

For further information regarding the special habitats and species that can be found in the North Wessex Downs, please [visit our website](#).

5.5 Protecting Biodiversity

A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network, chaired by Professor Sir John Lawton CBE FRS was published in September 2010²⁷ and later adopted as policy²⁸. The authors describe the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty as having great potential "to establish a coherent and resilient ecological network".

To make space for nature we need more, bigger, better and joined up sites to create a sustainable, resilient and more effective ecological network for England. The North Wessex Downs Partnership encourages activities that:

- improve the quality of current sites by better habitat management.
- increase the size of current wildlife sites.
- enhance connections between or join up sites either through physical corridors, or through 'stepping stones'.
- create new sites.
- reduce the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment, including through buffering wildlife sites.

These actions will help to establish an ecological network that meets the needs for wildlife and people today, and one that is more resilient to the future. There are trade-offs between these actions: the more we do to improve the quality of existing sites or to enhance the wider environment, the less we will need to do to create new sites. Our actions need to be adaptive, adjusting to what works as we progress.

"Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services"²⁹ outlines the strategic direction for biodiversity policy for the next decade on land (including rivers and lakes) and at sea. Outcomes will be delivered through actions in four areas:

- a more integrated large-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea;

²⁷ Lawton et.al. (2010) *Making Space for Nature: a review of England's wildlife sites and ecological network*. Report to Defra.

²⁸ DEFRA (2010), *Natural Environment White Paper*.

²⁹ DEFRA (2011). *Biodiversity 2020: a strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services*

- putting people at the heart of biodiversity policy;
- reducing environmental pressures;
- improvement of knowledge.

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment as a core principle for planning. It makes clear that Local planning authorities are to actively plan for the creation and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure (paragraph 114). Green infrastructure is a coherent network of multifunctional green spaces providing for recreation, biodiversity, health and wellbeing. It helps address and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BDAs) are those areas with best opportunities for habitat creation, connectivity and biodiversity enhancements.

The North Wessex Downs Partnership is contributing to a more joined up approach through its involvement in and support for local landscape scale conservation projects. The Marlborough Downs Nature Improvement Area, Stepping Stones (based around Salisbury Plain) and Winning Ways for Wildlife (North Hampshire) are such examples. The North Wessex Downs has 33 Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) within or partly within its boundary. BOAs have been identified and mapped at county level. They are considered to provide the best opportunities for targeted biodiversity enhancements and habitat creation at the landscape scale.

5.6 Special Qualities: Biodiversity

- Designated wildlife sites that are home to rare habitats and species, including:
- A nationally significant area of **chalk grassland** including rare flora such as Field Fleawort, Bastard Toadflax and Burnt Orchid; invertebrate species such as the Wart-biter Cricket and important butterfly populations including: Adonis Blue, Silver Studded Blue, Marsh Fritillary, Chalkhill Blue, Small Blue, Silver Spotted Skipper and Duke of Burgundy Fritillary;
- **Arable habitats** home to rare and colourful arable weeds, such as dense flowered-fumitory, slender tare and shepherd's needle, which are dependent on a regular cropping regime and survive in the less intensively managed field margins a large number of scarce plant species including; Early Gentian, an Eyebright (*Euphrasia pseudokernerii*), Pasque Flower, Chiltern Gentian, Dwarf Mouse Ear, Tuberosus Thistle, Field Fleawort, Round-headed Rampion, Burnt Orchid, Bastard Toadflax and Musk Orchid; also feeding and breeding habitat for a number of rare and declining farmland birds including Skylark and Stone-curlew;
- **Broadleaved Woodland and Wood Pasture**, including a significant concentration of ancient woodlands which provide roosting and/or feeding sites for bats species including Bechstein's, Barbastelle, Greater Horseshoe and Noctule; long rotation Hazel coppice provides important habitat for mammals such as Dormice; concentrations of calcareous Bluebell woods; and a number of nationally scarce moss species;
- Rare **chalk streams and rivers** with a high diversity of aquatic plants, and invertebrate species including those that are nationally scarce, such as the White-clawed Crayfish; supporting nationally and locally scarce bird species; nationally declining mammals such as the Water Vole and Otter; and healthy fish populations including Brown Trout, Salmon, Grayling, Perch, Chub and Dace;
- A rich mosaic of associated **wetland habitats** creating distinctive valley landscapes including fens, floodplains, water meadows, carr and wet woodland. The Red Data Book Summer Snowflake survives, for example in seasonally flooded woodlands along the Kennet Valley.
- Opportunities for landscape scale conservation projects, working across a significant area and political boundaries.

6. Historic environment

The North Wessex Downs is an ancient man-made landscape. This cultural heritage makes a fundamental contribution to the present-day landscape. Bill Bryson neatly sums up the powerful impact of that landscape on our own lives in the introduction to the book *The English Landscape* (2000):

“What is truly remarkable about the White Horse [at Uffington] is not that people at some time in the ancient past took the trouble to cut it into the hillside... but that continuously for over twenty centuries others have made the effort to maintain it. Whatever religious or ritualistic significance the White Horse may have had to its creators has long since faded away. For most of its existence – through plague, war and famine... the White Horse has been preserved simply because people liked it. I think that is splendid.” Bill Bryson 1951-³⁰

In the three thousand years since the White Horse was carved the landscape of the North Wessex Downs has constantly evolved to serve the changing needs of the successive generations of the people who have lived and worked here. What we see today is a rich and many-layered patchwork of features that record different stages in its evolution. Together they contribute an irreplaceable sense of time and personality to the present day scene. Past human influence is etched in every facet of the landscape – in the shape of fields and woods, the alignment of tracks and lanes, the form and texture of villages and hamlets. In years to come the landscape of the North Wessex Downs will continue to evolve, but hopefully in ways that will allow the ingrained reminders of its past to add meaning and value to the lives of its future residents and visitors.

The importance of the historic environment is clearly recognised in the planning system. The NPPF confirms that significance of heritage assets lies not only in their interest and value to people today but also to future generations (paragraph 17). That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. The significance of an asset derives not only from physical presence, but also from its setting – in other words, its relationship to nearby historic places and within the wider landscape.

6.1 Features of the North Wessex Downs

A wide range of features of differing scale, visibility and significance make up the historic environment. Many of the area’s archaeological sites have national or even international recognition. The landscape that includes the complex of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age monuments centred on Avebury (but including Silbury Hill, West Kennet long barrow, the causewayed enclosure on Windmill Hill, dozens of Bronze Age barrows and many other important sites) is of such significance that it has been inscribed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site³¹.

Altogether, the North Wessex Downs are home to more than 520 Scheduled Monuments, one of the densest concentrations in the country. These include:

- Neolithic long barrows of Waylands Smithy high on the chalk ridge overlooking the Thames Valley and Adam’s Grave above the Vale of Pewsey;
- Bronze Age barrow cemeteries such the Lambourn Seven Barrows;
- the Uffington White Horse and its adjacent Iron Age hillfort, (one of a string of major late prehistoric defensive sites that occupy prominent positions on the higher downs);
- the small Roman town at *Cunetio* near Mildenhall and Roman villas such as Littlecote; and
- the medieval motte and bailey castles at Hamstead Marshall and Marlborough College.

³⁰ Bryson, B (2000). *The English Landscape*.

³¹ Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Site World Heritage Site (UNESCO 2013)

One Registered Battlefield is included within the North Wessex Downs: Roundway Down, near Devizes was the location of a major encounter fought in July 1643 when a Parliamentary army was heavily defeated by a significantly smaller Royalist force.

In addition to designated archaeological features, the local Historic Environment Records (HERs) maintained by the County Councils in Hampshire and Oxfordshire and the unitary authorities in Wiltshire and West Berkshire, contain records of more than 11,000 sites, monuments and finds of archaeological and historic interest that lie within the boundary of the North Wessex Downs. Even though they may not yet have been designated as scheduled monuments, many of these sites are of national importance. Many others are of local significance and make a real contribution to local distinctiveness and sense of place. The information contained on the HERs is a vital part of the jigsaw of information that allows us to understand how our communities have developed and our landscapes have evolved over more than six millennia.

Another important part of the local heritage is the extensive network of footpaths, bridleways and byways, including the ancient ridgeway paths along the Marlborough Downs to the Chilterns and beyond. These historic communication routes are now a valuable recreational resource.

The built environment also makes a fundamental contribution to the landscape. The North Wessex Downs contain over 4,000 Listed Buildings. More than 250 of these are listed at Grade I or II*, the two highest levels of importance. Buildings protected through listing take many different forms and reflect nearly a thousand years of human settlement. As well as grand country houses, the area's market towns are enriched by the town houses of wealthy merchants and its villages by many splendid medieval parish churches. Listed buildings in the North Wessex Downs also include some spectacular and very early barns; locks and other structures associated with the Kennet and Avon Canal; milestones, roadside pumps and signs related to turnpike roads; and pillboxes built as part of the planned defence of Britain in the early phase of the Second World War.

The North Wessex Downs include 15 Registered Parks and Gardens. One of these, Highclere Castle, is registered at Grade I, and four examples, Tottenham House, Purley Hall, Ashdown House and Inkpen House, are registered at II*. Although not on the national Register, many other areas of designed landscape, including historic parkland, gardens and cemeteries add significant local value, especially within and around some of the AONB's towns and larger villages.

As with the archaeological resource, many local buildings and structures remain unprotected through the listing mechanism. None the less, they contribute to the landscape or to our understanding of historic events or processes. Some of these lie within the 109 Conservation Areas designated by local authorities in settlements of particular historic character or significance. Many others, especially isolated structures or farm buildings, receive little or no formal protection.

6.2 Historic Landscape Character

Defining and mapping the Historic Landscape Character Areas for the North Wessex Downs has provided new insights in to the evolution of the landscape and the historic processes that have influenced the countryside. Historic landscape characterisation (HLC) is a way of analysing and recording how several millennia of human interaction with the land produces the rural landscape of today. It is nationally recognised as a means for understanding and managing the entire landscape and not just the isolated archaeological sites and buildings traditionally protected by scheduling or listing.

All Historic Landscape Characterisation Projects undertaken are underpinned by a series of guiding principles: -

- **Present not past:** it is the present-day landscape that is the main object of study
- **Landscape as history not geography:** the most important characteristic of landscape is its time-depth; change and earlier landscapes exist in the present landscape
- **Landscape not sites:** HLC-based research and understanding are concerned with area not point data
- **All aspects of the landscape,** no matter how modern, are treated as part of landscape character, **not just 'special' areas**
- Semi-natural and living features (woodland, land cover, hedges etc.) are as much a part of landscape character as archaeological features; **human landscape – bio-diversity is a cultural phenomenon**
- Characterisation of landscape is a matter of **interpretation not record, perception not facts;** understand 'landscape' as **an idea**, not purely as an objective thing
- **People's views:** it is important to consider collective and public perceptions of landscape alongside more expert views
- Landscape is and always has been dynamic: **management of change, not preservation** is the aim
- The process of characterisation should be **transparent**, with clearly articulated records of data sources and methods used
- HLC maps and text should be easy to understand, **jargon free** and **easily accessible** to users
- HLC results should be **integrated** into other environmental and heritage management records e.g. Sites and Monument Records (SMRs) or Historic Environment Records (HERs)

The main aims of the Historic Landscape Characterisation are to help the North Wessex Downs AONB to:

- Better understand the historic elements of the whole landscape of the AONB
- Raise awareness and understanding of the unique cultural heritage of the area amongst local people, visitors and the wider population
- Provide a tool for managing the historic environment and the integrated management of the landscape as a whole
- Inform planning decisions
- Provide a framework for policy making and research agendas
- Enhance the county based SMR/HERs

Whilst confirming that the landscape of the North Wessex Downs has always been predominantly rural, HLC has begun to show how its detailed character has changed over time. One of the most significant statistics concerns the loss of open chalk downland. Of the 18% of the area that could be characterised as unploughed pasture in 19th century just 3% survives today.

The rate of agricultural change is also illustrated by the fact that around 75% of pre-18th century field enclosures have been lost during the 20th century. In addition, some two-thirds of medieval assart enclosures (woodland clearances) have been lost or significantly modified in the same time.

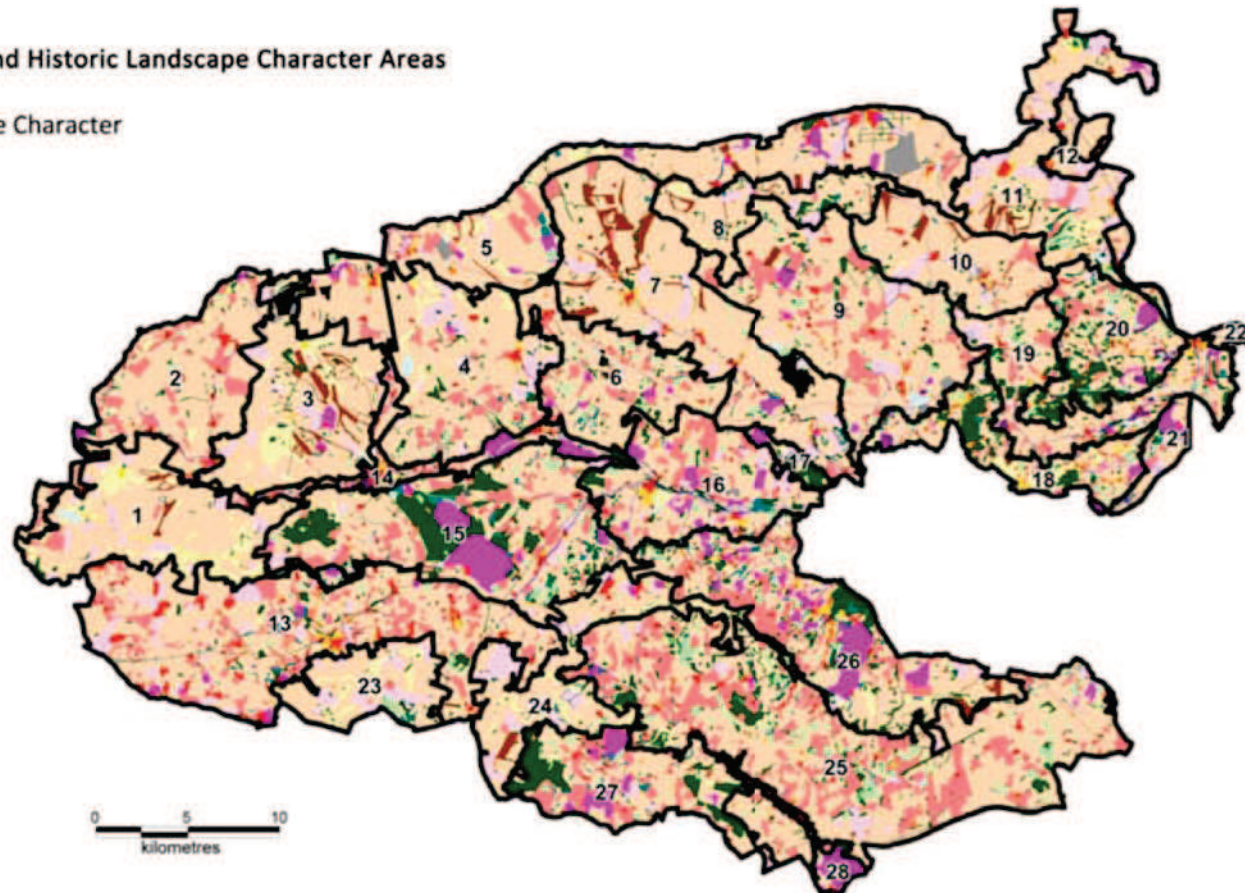
A full analysis of the Historic Landscape Characterisation of the North Wessex Downs is due for publication in 2014. For further information please contact the [North Wessex Downs office](#).

Figure 6 Present Historic Landscape Character of the North Wessex Downs

North Wessex Downs AONB
Historic Landscape Characterisation and Historic Landscape Character Areas

Overview Present Day Historic Landscape Character

1. Pewsey Downs
2. Avebury Plain
3. Barbury Downs
4. Aldbourne Downs
5. Northern Chalk Escarpment
6. Lambourn Wooded Plateau
7. Lambourn Valley
8. West Illsley and Dwonland
9. Winterbourne Valley and Downs
10. Upper Pang Valley
11. Greenhill and Thule Downlands
12. Thames Valley North
13. Pewsey Vale
14. Upper Kennet Valley
15. Savernake Forest and West Woods
16. Middle Kennet Valley
17. Stockcross-Wickham Heath
18. Snealsmore and Bucklebury Commons
19. Pang Valley and Sulham Gap
20. Pang-Thames Plateaux
21. Kennet Valley East
22. Thames Valley South
23. Milton Hill and Down
24. Shalbourne Vale and Wick Down
25. Linkenholt, Litchfield and Hannington
26. Highclere and Inkpen Common
27. Chute Forest - Facombe
28. Bourne Valley and Hurstbourne Park



- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| Pre 1700 Enclosure | 1600 to 1800 Woodland | Post 1700 Designed Landscape | Pre 1900 Water |
| 1700 to 1900 Enclosure | Post 1800 Woodland | Pre 1750 communications | Post 1800 Water |
| Post 1900 Enclosure | Pre 1700 Settlement | Post 1750 communications | Post 1900 Military |
| Other enclosure | 1700 to 1900 Settlement | Post 1800 Civic | Archaeology |
| Pre 1700 Open Land | Post 1900 Settlement | Post 1800 Industry | |
| Pre 1600 Woodland | Other Settlement | Post 1800 Recreation | |

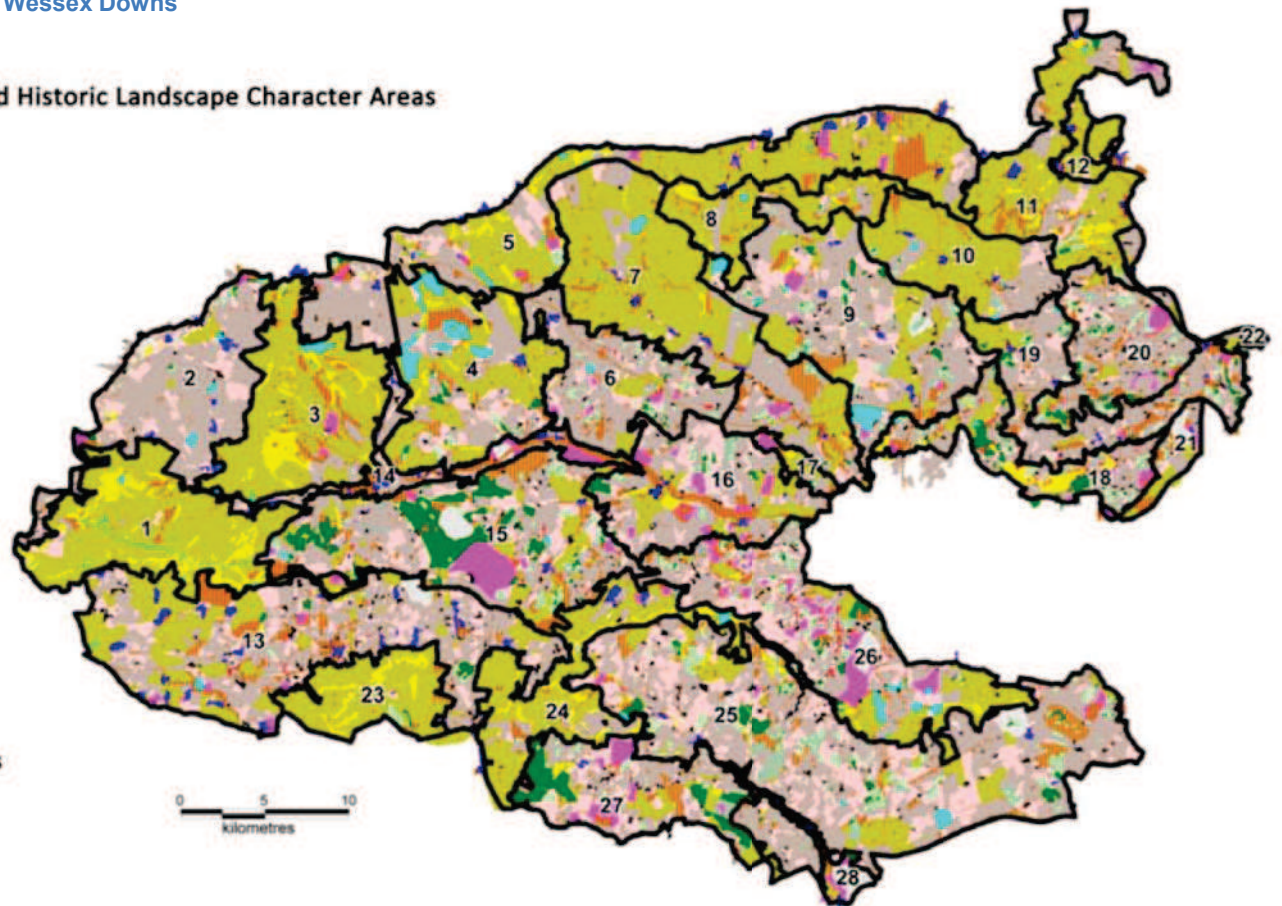
Map Produced by Wyvern Heritage and Landscape Consultancy 2012. © Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved (100049050) 2012.

Figure 7 HLC time depth analysis of the North Wessex Downs

North Wessex Downs AONB
Historic Landscape Characterisation and Historic Landscape Character Areas

Overview Timedepth in the Landscape

1. Pewsey Downs
2. Avebury Plain
3. Barbury Downs
4. Aldbourne Downs
5. Northern Chalk Escarpment
6. Lambourn Wooded Plateau
7. Lambourn Valley
8. West Illsley and Dwonland
9. Winterbourne Valley and Downs
10. Upper Pang Valley
11. Greenhill and Thule Downlands
12. Thames Valley North
13. Pewsey Vale
14. Upper Kennet Valley
15. Savernake Forest and West Woods
16. Middle Kennet Valley
17. Stockcross-Wickham Heath
18. Snealsmore and Bucklebury Commons
19. Pang Valley and Sulham Gap
20. Pang-Thames Plateaux
21. Kennet Valley East
22. Thames Valley South
23. Milton Hill and Down
24. Shalbourne Vale and Wick Down
25. Linkenholt, Litchfield and Hannington
26. Highclere and Inkpen Common
27. Chute Forest - Facombe
28. Bourne Valley and Hurstbourne Park



Map Produced by Wyvern Heritage and Landscape Consultancy 2012. © Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved (100049050) 2012.

6.3 Settlement Pattern

The pattern and distribution of settlement within the North Wessex Downs has evolved over millennia of human occupation. However, most of the current towns, villages, hamlets and farms are likely to have originated in medieval or post-medieval times. Some of the most characteristic features of the 'Downland' and 'Downland with Woodland' landscape character areas are the long linear settlements of the river valleys – the main concentrations of population in otherwise open uninhabited downland. Characteristically, these are loosely strung along a road on the first contour above the winter flood level, with the winterbourne or river forming an integral feature of the village. Examples are at St Mary Bourne in Hampshire, Collingbourne Kingston in Wiltshire and Hampstead Norreys in Berkshire.

The pattern in the 'Lowland Mosaic' landscape character area is distinctly different. This reflects its medieval origins in a network of hamlets, lines of houses and villages along roads. Some villages have a clear nucleus, typically associated with a village green or church, while others have a more dispersed pattern, typical of post-medieval squatter settlements. This pattern is also reflected in the 'Downland with Woodland' landscape type, which has small clustered hamlets and villages sheltering in folds in the chalk, as in the Chutes in Wiltshire, or exposed on ridgetops, as at Faccombe in Hampshire. Evidence from the Domesday Survey of 1086 suggests that the creation of many of these settlements were during the Early Medieval (Saxon) period.

Another distinct settlement type of the North Wessex Downs is the string of attractive, small, springline villages that developed along the base of the lower north-facing scarp. Examples are Clyffe Pypard, Clevancy, Liddington, Letcombe, Ashbury and Bishopstone.

Further information regarding the Heritage of the North Wessex Downs can be found by [visiting the North Wessex Downs website](#).

6.4 Special Qualities: Historic Environment

- **Neolithic and Bronze Age ritual and funerary monuments** including Knap Hill and Windmill Hill causewayed enclosures; West Kennet and Wayland's Smithy chambered tombs; Silbury Hill; Avebury stone circle and its surrounding ceremonial landscape; Bronze Age round barrows including Seven Sisters and Seven Barrows groups.
- **Iron Age, Roman and post-Roman defences and settlements**, including Oldbury, Barbury Castle and Uffington Castle; Cunetio (Mildenhall) Roman town, Littlecote villa and the Roman road through Savernake Forest; Fifield and Overton Down field systems; Wansdyke, Grim's Ditch and Devils Ditch linear earthworks.
- **Medieval and post-medieval settlements and buildings**, including castle earthworks; tithe barns; parish churches; the layouts and historic buildings of Marlborough, Hungerford, Ramsbury and many smaller villages.
- **Country houses and landscaped parks and gardens** such as at Basildon Park, Highclere Castle, Tottenham House and Ramsbury Manor and Savernake Forest, many originating as medieval deer parks.
- **Post-medieval buildings and infrastructure** including the Kennet and Avon Canal; extant and former railway lines and tunnels; watermills, windmills and pumping stations; water meadows; 18th–19th-century planned farmsteads; First and Second World War airfields, pillboxes, ammunition dumps and practice trenches.

7. Natural resources

“Our wealth as a nation and our individual well-being depend critically upon the environment. It provides us with the food, water and air that are essential for life and with the minerals and raw materials for our industry and consumption. Less obviously, it provides the processes that purify air and water, and which sequester or break down wastes. It is also in our environment where we find recreation, health and solace, and in which our culture finds its roots and sense of place”. UK National Ecosystem Assessment (2011) ³²

Whether we live in towns or in the countryside, we are part of and rely upon natural systems. The benefits or services which society obtains from the natural environment are commonly referred to as ‘ecosystem services’ or ‘natural benefits’. These natural benefits are grouped into four categories:

- Supporting – e.g. soil formation, nutrient cycling, primary production by plants.
- Provisioning – e.g. Woodland that provides timber for fuel, construction and manufacturing, or farmland that provides insects to pollinate crops, providing food to eat
- Regulating – e.g. Soils that absorb rainfall to prevent flooding, and filter water to give us healthy rivers and aquifers, where we get our water
- Cultural – landscapes, wildlife and heritage that give us our identity, support tourism, offer recreation and learning opportunities and delight the soul.

7.1 Accounting for Natural Benefits

The UK National Ecosystem Assessment (2011) identified that a contributing factor to the degradation of ecosystems was inadequate consideration full range of natural benefits in decision-making. While we pay for some ecosystem services, like food and fibre, we are often unaware of the importance of others, such as natural water or air purification. We would be alarmed at the cost of providing these artificially. This under-estimation of the value of natural processes means that we take poorly informed decisions on how to use these resources. The result is pollution, the loss of species and ecosystems and damage to the processes we need. There are real costs to either recover them or provide artificial alternatives.

Just as there are costs to degrading ecosystems, there are benefits and savings from a healthy natural environment. ³³ Degraded ecosystems present risks to businesses in terms of security of raw materials, waste disposal, insurance rates and brand image. In the North Wessex Downs, there are obvious direct links between ecosystems and the business activities of land-based industries such as farming, forestry and rural tourism. Associations can be less obvious or indirect for other businesses and relate, for example, to supply chains and investment choices.

In the rural landscape, sustainable agriculture and forestry could deliver widespread positive impact upon ecosystems in the area. Grants and advice can support sustainable approaches amongst farmers and foresters. For example, through agri-environment schemes, woodland grant schemes and LEADER.

The table below shows the natural benefits delivered by the natural environment of the North Wessex Downs, as they relate to the area’s special qualities.

³² UK National Ecosystems Assessment (2011). , UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge.

³³ UNEP (2010). Mainstreaming the Economics of Nature: a synthesis of the approach, conclusions and recommendations of TEEB

Theme	Special Qualities	Ecosystem Service	Provisioning				Regulating								Supporting				Cultural							
			Food	Raw materials	Fresh water	Medicinal resources	Local climate and air quality	Carbon sequest. and storage	Moderation of extreme events	Water treatment	Erosion prev. and soil fertility	Pollination	Biological control	Habitats for species	Genetic diversity	Soil Formation	Nutrient Cycling	Primary Production	Tourism	Recreation and health	Aesthetic and inspiration	Education and knowledge	Spiritual experience			
Natural Resources	Geological resources																									
	Soil types																									
	River gravel beds																									
	River channels																									
	Clean air																									
	Clear natural water																									
Development	Remoteness and tranquillity																									
	Distinctive architectural styles																									
	Sparse road network																									
	Traditional economy																									
Communities	Dispersed population																									
	Economic activity																									
	Influence of Armed Forces																									
	Good access to wider area																									
	Well resourced farming industry																									
	Strong Sense of Identity																									
	Affinity with the Landscape																									
Leisure and Tourism	Cultural landscape																									
	Historic attractions																									
	Picturesque market towns																									
	Rich archaeology																									
	Country houses																									
	Rights of Way Network																									
	Centre for Antiques																									

7.2 Conserving Resources and Maintaining Ecosystem Function

Protecting natural resources and the natural benefits arising from them by operating in a way that minimises damaging impacts is part of sustainable development. There is a particular need to conserve soil, water and clean air.

Soils

Soils are cultivated to produce essential items of food, clothing and fuel. Soils also deliver natural benefits – they manage water; store carbon, and support biodiversity and ecosystems³⁴. The government strategy for England's soils sets out a case for protecting our soils from three main threats – erosion, compaction and decline of organic matter.

Chalk forms the underlying structure to the North Wessex Downs but the overlying soils influence vegetation cover and land use. Each of the types of soil in the area has their own management requirements.

Sustaining Water Resources

The main rivers flowing through the Downs – the Pang, the Lambourn and the Kennet – drain eastward to the Thames. Watercourses flowing off the northern escarpment into the vales also feed the Thames catchment. The separate catchments of the Hampshire Avon and the Test flow southward, draining the Vale of Pewsey and Hampshire Downs respectively. The escarpment in the west around Calne falls into the Salisbury Avon catchment that flows westwards.

The state of surface waters and groundwaters in terms of quality, availability and flow is important to biodiversity and to people. The North Wessex Downs Partnership is committed to supporting Catchment Partnerships, water companies, planning authorities and other interested groups to help assess, protect and enhance these important assets.

One in six residential and commercial properties in England is at risk from flooding³⁵. In the North Wessex Downs, there has been localised flooding of villages in the river valleys in the winter. This is often associated with rising groundwater and springs rather than with river flooding. Flood alleviation and flood risk management may include the provision of sustainable measures to alleviate future flood risk (e.g. Sustainable Drainage Systems and flood plain management).

In summer, some rivers suffer from lack of flows because of water abstraction. This may then lead to a reduction in water quality and ecological diversity (through lack of dilution and silt deposition). Pressure for abstraction from the chalk aquifers that feed these rivers is directly related to the rising demand for water, including from new development. Drainage structures and other features modify natural flow regimes. Climate change, the deterioration of assets, as well as continuing pressure to build in areas at risk of flooding, will contribute to increased flood and coastal erosion risk in England³⁶.

The waters of the chalk aquifers and rivers are a major source of potable water. Ground waters from within the river catchments are abstracted for public water supply (the main source of demand) and for industry, agriculture and aquaculture (water cress and fish farms). The level of abstraction and effect on river flows

³⁴ DEFRA (2009), Safeguarding Our soils – A Strategy for England

³⁵ Environment Agency (2009), Investing for the future – flood and coastal risk management in England

³⁶ Environment Agency (2009), Investing for the future – flood and coastal risk management in England

varies across the area. The Lambourn has a near natural flow regime with minimal abstraction³⁷. Conversely, in the 1980s the Pang was one of 40 rivers in England identified as suffering from low flows caused by over abstraction (from a groundwater source at Compton). Despite abstraction ceasing in 1997 (as a result of increased nitrate levels), the Environment Agency is continuing to monitor the flow characteristics of the river³⁸.

In the case of the Kennet, there are numerous groundwater abstractions but these only amount to 5% of the available resource. The largest single abstraction adjacent to the river is at Axford (between Marlborough and Hungerford), with 70% of the water exported out of the catchment. Modelling indicates that this abstraction is having a detrimental impact on river flows.

At the same time, the operational requirements of the Kennet and Avon Canal have an effect on the Kennet. Between Bath and the summit at Crofton Pumping Station the Canal is fed by the Bristol Avon; between the summit and Kintbury by the River Dun (a tributary of the Kennet); and between Kintbury and Reading by the Kennet. In-flows into the Canal from these river sources can result in less than optimum flows in the rivers, particularly in the summer months and in drier years. This also has a severe effect in reducing the water quality of the river, particularly by increasing the turbidity (Environment Agency 2000). However, it is a clear objective of British Waterways to optimise the use of water resources in the Canal and to use back-pumping to conserve water in the 'artificial' section between Bath and the Canal summit.³⁹

Under the Nitrates Directive⁴⁰, the majority of the North Wessex Downs is designated as a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone. Within these zones, farmers are required to limit the application of manures and nitrogen fertilisers, subject to a closed season for the application of certain manures. They are also required to keep records of cropping, stocking and the application of nitrogen fertilisers and manures.

Further control of diffuse pollution comes from the Water Framework Directive⁴¹. This legislation requires river basins to be managed as an entity to deliver good environmental outcomes in both surface and groundwater. Agriculture is one of the main sources of diffuse pollution and Defra⁴² wishes to encourage Catchment Sensitive Farming. This manages land in a way that is sensitive to the ecological health of the water environment. Farming is not the sole cause of these problems but it does contribute approximately 60% of nitrates, 25% of phosphorus and 70% of sediments entering our waters, amongst other pollutants.

Maintaining Air Quality

A variety of air pollutants have known or suspected harmful effects on human health and the environment. In most areas of Europe, these pollutants are principally the products of combustion from space heating, power generation or from motor vehicle traffic. Pollutants from these sources may not only prove a problem in the immediate vicinity but can travel long distances, chemically reacting in the atmosphere to produce secondary pollutants such as acid rain or ozone⁴³. The nearest monitoring site to the North Wessex Downs is at Harwell. Other sites are in Reading Town Centre, Newbury, Thatcham, Bath and Oxford. Pollution is low but there may be local issues, such as environmental quality relating to traffic pollution.

³⁸ Environment Agency (2000) Kennet and Pang Local Environment Agency Plan Periodic Review.

³⁹ British Waterways (2000) Kennet and Avon Canal Conservation Plan.

⁴⁰ Council Directive 91/676/EEC introduced in December 2002

⁴¹ The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive England and Wales) Regulations 2003.

⁴² <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/environment/water/csf/index.htm>

⁴³ www.airquality.co.uk and Defra, Air Quality Strategy 2007

7.3 Climate

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change⁴⁴, the UK Government and local authorities now regard a changing global climate as an indisputable fact. People's activities are the principal cause. We are being encouraged by government to change the way we generate and use energy, and conduct other activities that release greenhouse gases. The precautionary principle is promoted. There is a broad consensus on the likely changes to the climate of Southern England over the next few decades⁴⁵. These changes will be gradual and may not be noticeable within the life of this plan but strategies are needed now because of the long lead-in time for actions to be effective. The changes are likely to be that summers will become warmer and drier; winters will become milder and wetter; and extreme weather conditions will become more frequent.

Climate change may give rise to more rainfall in winter deluges, when the ground is already saturated. An increase in soil erosion can be expected, resulting in damage to historic features and more silt, nutrients and pesticides washing into rivers. These inputs come predominantly from arable farmland and already have a significant impact on water quality and freshwater biodiversity. Drought and lower summer rainfall is likely to result in a contraction of the chalk stream network. Freshwater species will be lost from some of the winterbournes while some perennial streams will become seasonal winterbournes. There may be an increase in the popularity of streamside recreation as people seek shade in the hottest months.

Other significant changes also have the potential to affect the landscapes, wildlife and communities of the AONB. Woodlands may be dominated by Oak and Ash, which cope better than Beech with the likely changes in climate. The range of crops grown by farmers will change and there may be more growing of bio-fuels. We have already seen increases in agricultural disease including *African Horse Sickness*, *Blue Tongue* and *Schmallenberg Virus* that can be attributed in part to climate change. Water flows in rivers and streams could become more erratic. Habitats may expand, contract or migrate. New species may enter the area, some bringing disease or pests that may be detrimental to 'native' species. Tourism pressures could increase as more people decide to holiday in the UK. All of these factors would affect which flora and fauna can flourish in the area.

The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment and National Adaptation Programme are two initiatives that define these impacts. They are based on predictions put forward by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP09). The North Wessex Downs Partnership is keen to refine its understanding of the impacts of climate change and develop strategies for adaptation to these effects.

"Making Space for Nature" outlined four key ways that we can adapt our ecological networks to a changing climate.

- Ensure that all parts of the network are in the best possible management.
- Increase the population sizes of vulnerable species.
- Reduce the risks of local extinction.
- Provide colonists for new sites.

⁴⁴ The authoritative reference source for all climate change calculations and prediction is the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) <http://www.ipcc-data.org>

⁴⁵ Natural England (2009), Character Area Climate Change Project NE116R - Responding to the impacts of climate change on the natural environment: Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase Character Area

To do this we must:

- Allow species to migrate naturally to stay within their preferred climate envelope by increasing connectivity (stepping stones, corridors and a more benign matrix).
- Enhance the chances of species staying within their climate envelope through small-scale local movements rather than longer-distance dispersal by promoting landscape level heterogeneity within the AONB.

7.4 Special Qualities: Natural Resources

- Cretaceous, Tertiary and Quaternary **geological history**, with features such as Sarsen Stones.
- This geology in turn influences the main **soil types** of the North Wessex Downs;
 - Thin chalk soils of the open downland, now primarily under arable production.
 - The capping of Quaternary Clay with Flints over the chalk found as pockets of reddish brown clay containing flint pebbles. These areas are particularly characteristic of the Downland with Woodland and Wooded Plateau Landscape Types.
 - Quaternary Coombe deposits found where accumulated frost-weathered debris was carried down slope by melt waters at the end of the last glaciation. These have created till deposits in the dry valleys of the downs providing richer pockets of soil, often under arable production.
 - Deep well-drained loamy soils over Greensand and river alluviums in the Vale of Pewsey, traditionally under pasture with large areas forming winter flood meadows.
 - A mixed soil mosaic to the east of Newbury with nutrient-poor acidic soils over plateau gravels intermixed with fertile loamy soils overlying the London Clay, characterised by the Medieval landscape of the Lowland Mosaic Landscape Type.
- Carbon storage in the characteristic habitats of the North Wessex Downs such as chalk grassland and broadleaved woodland.
- **Clean air**, with low measurements of pollution.
- Rivers with shallow sloping banks, clean shallow 'washed' **river gravel beds** (riffles) contrasting with deeper shaded pools.
- Often a complex pattern of **river channels** (as on the Kennet downstream of Marlborough) reflecting the past use of the river to supply water to an extensive network of water meadows and mills, most of which are now disused. Upper winterbourne sections and winterbourne tributaries, flowing only during winter and spring when groundwater levels are at their highest.
- **Clear natural water** fed from the chalk aquifer by springs which issue in the valleys of the chalk dip slope at the point where the water table comes to the surface. Limited fluctuations in water temperature throughout the year, resulting from the filtration of groundwater as it percolates through the chalk.

8. Development

“Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.” National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

The North Wessex Downs are a sparsely populated landscape. Its population density is 72 people per square kilometre. (This compares to an average for West Berkshire of 205 people per square kilometre). The open, uninhabited uplands retain a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity, a very special perceptual characteristic within this densely populated part of southern England. 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. High environmental quality makes strong direct and indirect contributions to the wider regional economy⁴⁶.

Despite the relatively low density of population, there are particular development pressures on the North Wessex Downs. This is due in part to its location within the South East of England and its proximity to London. There is a need to manage these pressures with sensitivity both within and in the setting of the area 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 needs to be paramount when considering such issues.

There is also a need to ensure a consistent approach across the North Wessex Downs. The area lies across nine different local authority areas. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore, the North Wessex Downs looks to its constituent local authorities to consider the designation within their Local Plans. This is set out in the CRoW Act 2000 and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). To assist its local authority partners the North Wessex Downs Partnership will:

- actively engage in the policy making process;
- provide advice on specific planning applications and appeals; and
- provide guidance through its Management Plan and Position Statements.

8.1 Relationship with the National Planning Policy Framework.

The National Planning Policy Framework⁴⁷ provides specific guidance for plan makers and decision takers in relation to AONBs. It confirms that “great weight” should be given to conserving their landscape and scenic beauty; and that they have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. In relation to major development, the NPPF (paragraph 116) states that planning permission should be refused in AONBs, except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. The North Wessex Downs Partnership will define “major development” as set out in Statutory Instrument 2010 No.2184⁴⁸. It will then decide whether paragraph 116 is relevant in terms of impact on the area based on local context. Particular attention drawn to is paragraph 14 footnote (9) of the NPPF that restricts the “presumption in favour of sustainable development” in AONBs.

⁴⁶ Land Use Consultants, SQW, and Cambridge Econometrics (2002) The Environmental Economy of the South East of England, SEEDA.

⁴⁷ DCLG (2012). National Planning Policy Framework. Department for Communities and Local Government.

⁴⁸ Statutory Instrument 2010 No.2184 - The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure (England) Order 2010)

A core principle of the NPPF (paragraph 17) is that the planning system should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in the framework. Paragraph 156 confirms that local planning authorities should set out the strategic priorities for their areas within Local Plans. They should deliver the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including landscape. Paragraph 157 requires Local Plans to contain a clear strategy for enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

The NPPF states that local authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on, or affecting, protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged (paragraph 113). Local Plan policies should clearly differentiate between land within and outside AONBs. Recognition of the special qualities of the North Wessex Downs by local authority partners will strengthen Local Plans. The North Wessex Downs Partnership will:

- advise their local authority and neighbourhood partners in the preparation of plans;
- advise on forming decisions on planning applications and appeals; and
- monitor objectives of Local Plans and development control decisions.

8.2 The Approach to Development in AONBs

The North Wessex Downs Partnership supports pre-application discussions from applicants and with the relevant Local Planning Authorities. The area is a “sensitive area” under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (2011). Some forms of development may require an Environmental Impact or Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

8.3 The Local Economy and Rural Business

The North Wessex Downs Partnership believes that promoting and supporting local enterprise is a key part of conserving and enhancing the character and special qualities of the area. Local businesses are likely to:

- employ local people;
- provide services to improve the local quality of life;
- spend money locally;
- promote community cohesion; and
- have a smaller environmental footprint (by reducing the transportation of goods from across communities).

People like to live in a high quality environment. This attracts some businesses as it helps them retain staff. Support for small local businesses will provide local jobs and enhance the rural economy. For example, fast broadband is crucial for a healthy rural economy and we will work with relevant agencies to secure such infrastructure.

Significant employment sites do exist within the area, for example the Harwell Campus as part of Science Vale UK. That includes the Diamond Light Source, the UK national synchrotron facility. Opportunities exist within these sites for redevelopment and expansion without the need for new greenfield sites.

8.4 Additional Guidance

When preparing plans and planning applications, those responsible should make reference to:

- the Management Plan;
- relevant North Wessex Downs AONB Position Statements and Guidance Notes;
- the Integrated Landscape Character Assessment; and
- the Historic Landscape Character Assessment.

Planning Conditions, Community Infrastructure Levy and Mitigation

It may be possible to overcome a planning objection to a development proposal by imposing a condition on the planning permission or by entering into a planning obligation (Section 106 Agreement). Where this is appropriate, we may recommend planning conditions or a Legal Agreement to secure control over development and or forms of mitigation. This will accord with the tests of Government Circular 11/95 and will be secured by our local authority Partners in forming decisions on planning applications.

We will seek additional Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) rates or Section 106 contributions from new development where appropriate. local authority Partners should include these in their CIL Charging Schedules. Financial contributions should be raised to:

- highlight the increase in value for new houses being located in the area⁴⁹;
- reflect the likely lower numbers of new houses due to local constraints and more expensive supply of key services to more dispersed rural areas; and
- specifically support identified landscape, ecological, community, Green Infrastructure and environmental projects.

Remoteness and tranquillity

The sense of remoteness and tranquillity is fundamental to the character of the North Wessex Downs. It is central to the enjoyment and appreciation of the landscape. Darkness at night makes the countryside so different from surrounding urban areas. Darkness allows the majesty of the skies and stars to be seen away from the orange glow of our major urban areas. Light pollution can impact on wildlife. In some parts of the area there is already an ambient level of noise associated with transport networks and machinery. A certain level of activity and noise will always be expected within a largely farmed landscape and within the urban areas of the area.

These special perceptual qualities are a fragile resource and under threat from a combination of factors, including major development, such as wind turbines, intruding into the open downland. Concerns raised by local residents and users of the landscape over loss of these special perceptual qualities will inform decisions on particular development proposals. New uses or new developments that individually or cumulatively result in a material increase in lighting, noise and or activity into the countryside are likely to be opposed.

⁴⁹ buyers on average pay an additional 9% in value for all houses in English AONBs *“that reflects the quality of life benefits associated with living in some of our most idyllic beauty spots”* – Lloyds TSB 2012

Sensitivities and constraints of the landscape to wind turbines

The North Wessex Downs Partnership commissioned a study to identify the sensitivities and constraints of the landscape to wind turbines. The Study reveals that all landscapes within the area are constrained to a degree. There are specific sensitivities and values that would be adversely affected by such forms of development. There are four landscape types that are considered to be highly constrained to turbine development, namely the:

- Open Downland;
- High Chalk Plain;
- Downs Plain and Scarp; and
- River Valleys.

These are the landscapes where sensitivities to this form of development are high and any wind turbine is likely to have adverse impacts.

There are four landscapes which are considered to be moderately to highly constrained to wind turbine development, namely the:

- Downland with Woodland;
- Wooded Plateau;
- Vales; and
- Lowland Mosaic.

The particular landscape characteristics and configuration of these four landscape types means that it may be possible to find locations that are less constrained to some types of turbine development, although these locations are likely to be limited⁵⁰.

Other Renewable Energy Projects

As a response to climate change, there is a need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The security of energy supplies is also a concern. These factors are likely to lead to an increase in renewable energy generation. There are already many well established and sensitively located forms of renewable energy projects across the area. These include:

- micro-generation on individual residential and commercial properties;
- photovoltaic installations (some up to 1 ha in area);
- on farm bio-digesters;
- wood-fuel boilers; and
- hydro-electric generation projects within water courses.

Further information is contained with the North Wessex Downs AONB Position Statement on Renewable Energy as to the likely acceptability of differing forms of renewable energy projects.

⁵⁰ North Wessex Downs AONB (2006), A Study of Landscape Sensitivities and Constraints to Wind Turbine Development Approved by the North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners March 2006

‘Green infrastructure’

‘Green infrastructure’ (GI) is the physical environment within and between the towns and villages. It is a network of multi-functional open spaces, including formal parks, gardens, woodlands, green corridors, waterways, street trees and open countryside. There is an opportunity for new development to secure and enhance the area’s GI, including through the Community Infrastructure Levy. This will support the sustainable management of natural resources. Biodiversity gains by ensuring the connectivity of habitats. The recreational use of greenways and the drainage of flood water enhance public health and well-being⁵¹. Schemes that improve links for walkers and riders, as well as securing bio-diversity and landscape enhancements will win support.

Mono-culture urban parkland open spaces should be avoided when in or near the North Wessex Downs. They have a negative landscape impact and require more maintenance. There is less bio-diversity gain.

Urban fringe and Setting

A number of sizable and expanding towns lie just outside the North Wessex Downs. In the west, the most notable is Swindon for which there is a specific strategy. This is the Swindon Urban Fringe Action Plan, which includes a part of the North Wessex Downs. It notes that the agricultural economy close to Swindon is under pressure. This is due to uncertainty over the future, marginal viability and urban pressures (including vandalism and litter dumping). It concludes that it could become an area of immense opportunity and multiple uses. However, targeted action is required to deliver this potential⁵².

There are other proposals for growth outside but on the edge of the North Wessex Downs. These include at Wantage, Didcot, Andover and Devizes. The potential for harm on the setting of the area from large-scale urban extensions is substantial. Any new uses or development proposed outside but within the setting of the area should consider the North Wessex Downs AONB Position Statement on Setting. Proposals should include detailed measures to mitigate against harm on and into the area. Forms of mitigation may include strategic landscape buffers, restrictions on building heights, care over massing and scale, care over roofscape design, or avoidance of development in the most exposed locations.

Built environment and New Housing

The North Wessex Downs Partnership’s approach to the provision of new housing is contained within its Housing Position Statement. In general, strategic levels of new housing within the area should be avoided, in line with the recommendations of the NPPF. Land of lesser environmental value outside the designated area should be the first choice. Only where necessary to meet appropriate local needs will new housing be supported. This should be within existing settlements, preferably on suitable previously developed sites. Good design and siting of all new developments in the North Wessex Downs is essential. They should reflect the local landscape character and architecture and make use of local materials.

There will only be support for new open market housing development on greenfield land on the edges of Marlborough, Hungerford, Lambourn, Pewsey, and Pangbourne. In other areas there will be strict tests to minimise the impact on the landscape. In a far more limited role, small scale housing sites within or on the edges of the secondary larger villages may be supported where all landscape and other planning issues have been resolved. The provision of affordable homes through exception site policies could also be

⁵¹ From EU Green infrastructure Planning Guide - <http://www.greeninfrastructure.eu>

⁵² An Action Plan for the Southern Urban Fringe of Swindon prepared by Land Use Consultants for North Wessex Downs, March 2006

possible in these locations. Need has to be demonstrated and landscape and environmental harm minimised.

Housing may also be delivered through the Neighbourhood Plan process, in addition to that allocated by local authorities. Such provision should still be in general conformity with any Core Strategy and be appropriate in terms of landscape and environmental impact

Highways Infrastructure

The M4 (London to Wales) and the A34 (Southampton to Oxford) form the main arteries in a wider network of A-roads crossing the North Wessex Downs. Yet the overall impression is of a relatively sparse road network underlining the historical and current lack of settlement on the open downlands. The only part to have a dense network of winding rural lanes is the well wooded Hampshire Downs and the lowlands to the north east of Newbury – both areas with a Medieval settlement pattern.

More could be done to find imaginative and sensitive solutions to the maintenance of the existing highway network and the design of new roads. These should be sympathetic to the character and qualities of the North Wessex Downs. Many rural lanes have a rich character of their own. The challenge is to retain that character whilst meeting modern highway safety needs. Particular problems occur when urban solutions are imposed on the rural setting. This results in a loss of local character and the addition of lighting and clutter. The North Wessex Downs team will collaborate with the Highways Authorities to improve the existing highway environment and seek improvements to proposed new schemes. The development of new private driveways should retain rural character and to reflect the historic qualities of settlements.

The North Wessex Downs unit has contributed to work that is helping to reduce the impact of highways infrastructure, such as through the Avebury World Heritage Site Transport Strategy (currently in development). A Position Statement on Highways Design and Management will be produced to help provide guidance on this issue.

Minerals and Waste

It is national policy to exclude landbanks of non-energy minerals in AONBs (NPPF paragraph 144). Mineral schemes within the area will require exceptional circumstances and demonstrate public interest before they can be considered (NPPF paragraph 116).

Waste proposals should substantially be meeting local needs. They should be of a scale relevant to the proposal and avoid greenfield sites. In any case, they should not exceed 1 ha in area. The priority is to support existing provision for waste recovery and recycling rather than establish new facilities. Any new facilities should conform with the relevant Local Planning Authority Waste Local Plans in determining their need.

For current details of AONB planning positions and statements, please visit the [North Wessex Downs website](#).

8.5 Special Qualities; Development

- The sense of **remoteness and tranquility** that comes from an undeveloped and rural quality with only limited human intervention, containing typically modest villages with distinctive and ancient settlement patterns.
 - The Open Downlands, Downland with woodland and High Chalk Plateau areas are generally very sparsely populated, containing scattered isolated farms, equestrian establishments or small hamlets sheltering in the dry valleys and folds of the chalk upland.
 - Wooded Plateau contains a distinct pattern of settlement comprising a remote 'uninhabited' western plateau, smaller settlements such as Froxfield and a concentration of villages in the east of the area, in the valley of the River Dun.
 - In the Downs Plain and Scarp character area, attractive springline villages cluster along the base of the Northern ridge or along the valley of Avebury Plain. 20th century military installations, including Wroughton Airfield and a First World War camp near Draycot Foliat, are dominant and defining features of the area
 - The Vales are settled landscapes with a concentration of compact small towns, clustered villages, hamlets and many dispersed residential and farm buildings, while the River Valleys display a concentration of nucleated and linear settlement including tiny hamlets clustered around a church, many small villages and market towns
 - The Lowland Mosaic remains one of the most densely settled landscape types, with a diverse range of settlements ranging from large manor houses, villages, numerous hamlets and lines of houses along the roads and lanes.
- **Distinctive architectural styles** that vary throughout the AONB but within specific areas create a sense of place and vernacular local character due to the availability of local building materials and traditional building styles. This includes traditional knapped flint and brick, timber framed farm buildings, thatch and tiled roofs, use of Sarsen Stone, blue flint and tile and clunch and cobb walls.
- A **sparse road network**, but there is good access from a number of economically significant towns such as Swindon, Andover, Whitchurch, Basingstoke, Reading, Devizes, Newbury and Didcot resulting in an economy that is largely 'outward looking' towards these 'boundary towns' and beyond.
- Within the North Wessex Downs, the **traditional land based and rural economy** contrasts with a growing high tech and creative sector.

9. Communities

“Don't be led away to think this part of the world important and that unimportant. Every corner of the world is important. No man knows whether this part or that is most so, but every man may do some honest work in his own corner.” Thomas Hughes 1822-1896 ⁵³

The North Wessex Downs are not a wilderness. They are a distinct and recognisable area arising from a long history of human occupation and the sustainable use of their natural resources. There is a clear relationship between land stewardship, community, the economy and natural beauty. They combine to give the area its special character.

There are 173 parish councils and with two market towns (Marlborough and Hungerford). The total population of the North Wessex Downs is 125,000, with approximately 90,000 (72%) being economically active. Around 30% work within the AONB and 60% commute to the surrounding urban areas and London (assisted by good rail connections)⁵⁴. Many villages are now largely occupied by those commuting out of the area to work. This has stimulated rapidly rising house prices with very significant pressure placed on the affordable housing stock. In addition, villages are now left with a significantly reduced population during the day. This undermines the viability of village services such as post offices, pubs and doctors' surgeries. There is a need for a broad mix of housing to maintain sustainable communities and support village services.

To have sustainable communities in the North Wessex Downs they must be places where people want to live and work, now and in the future⁵⁵. Sustainable communities should be:

- Vibrant and inclusive, with many community networks in place that bring people together for leisure and peer support purposes.
- In charge of their own destiny, able to identify their own issues and access the skills and support needed to address them
- Places that provide straightforward access to the services and facilities needed by people of all ages
- Able to appreciate the unique nature of their environment and contribute towards its sustainability

A number of parishes in the North Wessex Downs have undertaken a community led planning approach. Although this is not consistent between local authority areas, such plans include actions relevant to the social, economic and environmental objectives of the North Wessex Downs. We support this approach and provide advice and support to parishes where requested.

The majority of the population within North Wessex Downs have poor access to services when compared to regional averages. The percentage of households without a car is less in the area (10.7%) when compared with the south east (19.4%) and south west (20.2%)⁵⁶.

⁵³ Hughes, T (1857). Tom Brown's School Days.

⁵⁴ Key Populations and Vital Statistics 2000 and 2007, Office for National Statistics.

⁵⁵ PSA 21 Build more cohesive, empowered and active communities

⁵⁶ Tantram, D., Craven A. (2007) Evidence for North Wessex Down Leader Bid prepared on behalf of the Local Action Group

9.1 Employment and Training

The majority of the local economy is part of a larger 'urban economy'. Many businesses benefit from the area's high landscape quality to either attract staff or customers⁵⁷. Only 5% of the economically active population of the North Wessex Downs is directly involved in agriculture. Where buildings have been re-used as part of economic activities, many of the new uses relate to high-tech industries. Small village industrial estates, such as that at Inkpen, are dominated by businesses whose employees commute in from surrounding areas. This is also true of employees in the horse racing industry.

The current fundamental changes in the area's land-based economy are requiring new skills and the re-learning of old skills. There is a need to understand, define and then meet training and education needs. Support comes from:

- National Training Organisations (such as LANTRA representing the land-based sector);
- further education and training colleges; and
- representatives of community groups.

9.2 Travel and transport

Local communities and visitors need access to services – a key issue for social inclusion. That access should be sustainable. The North Wessex Downs is within easy reach of three mainline railways:

- The Waterloo to Exeter line with stations at Basingstoke, Overton, Whitchurch and Andover;
- The Paddington to Penzance line with stations at Kintbury, and Hungerford, Bedwyn and Pewsey (with a rail-bus link from Marlborough to Bedwyn);
- The Paddington to Bristol and South Wales line with stations at Pangbourne, Goring, Cholsey, and Didcot.

Outside the main towns that ring the North Wessex Downs, bus services are limited. Although the distribution of bus routes suggests that rural areas are well served, many of these services run only infrequently. However, a number of innovative and flexible community transport schemes are operating within the North Wessex Downs. These often rely on the support of charitable funding and volunteers.

Click on the following links for further information about [community projects supported](#) through our Sustainable Development Fund, [examples of parish or community plans](#) and [guidance available](#) from the North Wessex Downs AONB team.

⁵⁷ Land Use Consultants (2003) Planning for Sustainable Rural Economic Development: A strategy for planning for sustainable rural economic development for the South East SEERA, GOSE, SEEDA and the Countryside Agency.

9.3 Special Qualities: Communities

- Containing a **dispersed and small population** spread over a large area, the majority live in the small villages and the two market towns of Marlborough and Hungerford with the high downs including large expanses, without any significant habitation. The number of young people within villages is declining as they leave to relocate to areas with better service provision and cheaper housing, resulting in a higher proportion of middle aged and elderly people
- Unemployment is low and **economic activity** rates are high, with many jobs in high value-added industries within a short journey from villages in the AONB. Swindon, Newbury and Basingstoke in particular have developed international reputations within the ICT industry with some of the lowest unemployment rates in the country. The economic influence London, the Thames Valley and north Hampshire is most keenly felt to the south east and east of the AONB and in particular those villages with good access to mainline stations.
- The **Armed Forces** still play a significant role in the local economy, especially in places such as Tidworth and Ludgershall to the south of the AONB on the Wiltshire Hampshire border.
- **Good access to the wider area** and road network means that much of the AONB is highly accessible to commuters working in the adjacent towns. The east of the AONB has a greater pressure on housing stock and recruitment in West Berkshire, Basingstoke and Deane and South Oxfordshire.
- A well-structured and resourced **farming industry**, with substantial assets of land, machinery, knowledge and entrepreneurial ability. Many examples of diversification into food processing, tourism and provision of space for economic activity can be seen across the North Wessex Downs.
- Villages and small towns with a **strong sense of identity**, active and resourceful community groups
- There is a strong local resonance and **affinity with the landscape** of the North Wessex Downs, particularly the individual downs and the river valleys and other outstanding features.

10. Leisure and tourism

“Out on that almost trackless expanse of billowy Downs such a track is in some sort humanly companionable; it really seems to lead you by the hand.” Kenneth Grahame 1859-1932⁵⁸

10.1 Tourism

The North Wessex Downs is a landscape rich in historic sites and natural features. This magical landscape has attracted naturalists, antiquarians and travellers throughout history. Tourist attractions of international renown within the North Wessex Downs include the 25 square kilometre (9.6 sq mile) Avebury World Heritage Site (taking in Avebury Village, the Avebury Henge complex, as well as Silbury Hill, Windmill Hill and the West Kennet long barrow); the White Horse at Uffington; the Ridgeway and Thames Path National Trails; and the Kennet and Avon Canal providing a strategic waterways link between the Thames and Bristol Channel. But it is the spectacular scenery, highly attractive villages, and sense of isolation that are the primary recreational and tourism attractions of the area.

Although not large in number, there is a range of paying visitor attractions within the North Wessex Downs. These include Basildon Park, Lower Basildon (run by the National Trust) and Highclere Castle, near Newbury (owned by the Earl of Carnarvon), the Crofton Beam Engines and Pumping Station on the Kennet and Avon Canal at Great Bedwyn and the Living Rainforest environmental centre at Hampstead Norreys. There are many more attractions that could benefit from greater collective promotion and support.

Despite its close proximity to major areas of population, the North Wessex Downs is not well used as a place for quiet enjoyment. Green tourism offers enormous opportunities for the North Wessex Downs and a good business reason for conserving and enhancing the landscape. There may be opportunities for the tourism sector to support investment in rights of way improvements and the provision of accommodation, facilities and information.

At present, visitors directly support around 2,200 full time jobs. Of all visitors, only 18% are from overseas, most of whom are business related, staying on a single night, Monday to Thursday. Nearly half of all visitors to the area stay with family or friends. Well over 90% of all foreign visitors are either business or family related. The average length of stay by UK visitors is 2 days and it is estimated that a visitor spends an additional £27 in the North Wessex Downs⁵⁹. More than half of all serviced accommodation providers are ungraded for quality. There is potential to improve the performance of the area as a short break destination. This is especially with the development of bespoke activity packages, such as self-guided off road cycle routes. The area can appeal particularly to affluent young and older couples from London and the Home Counties. That would bring real benefits to the rural economy.

The North Wessex Downs can be an area for green tourism, with easily accessible information about its wildlife, culture and history, and with many opportunities to explore, on foot, by bike and on horseback. In response the Partnership has implemented two projects, the South East Protected Landscapes ‘Our Land’ and RDPE LEADER funded Love Your Land initiative. Through a growing network of tourism businesses it is hoped that the value of the landscape will be reflected more widely in the tourism ‘offer’.

⁵⁸ Grahame, K (1894). Pagan Papers.

⁵⁹ LAG (2008) Local Development Strategy North Wessex Downs Leader, January 2008

10.2 Rights of Way and Access

Access to the countryside is an important part of the lives of people who live in the area and also for visitors as a tourism asset. The importance of using and enjoying woodlands and green spaces as part of an everyday healthy lifestyle has been demonstrated by Forestry Commission research⁶⁰. Exercise in the North Wessex Downs can have positive effects on many aspects of health. The North Wessex Downs will look to build on initiatives, such as the circular walks developed in partnership with the Ridgeway National Trail. The lack of convenient public transport imposes limits on the benefits and use of the resource.

Access and the needs of recreational users must be balanced with land managing interests, as well as other issues such as conservation. Greater and improved access should be encouraged where this can be achieved without undue cost to conservation or the landowner's use of the land. There may be opportunities from the growth of settlements on the fringes of the North Wessex Downs to offset some of the impact through improving and extending access.

The CRoW Act established access land which the public has the right to enjoy under certain conditions. There are 1189 hectares of open access land and 694 hectares of registered commons in the North Wessex Downs. There are also permissive arrangements which grant access as part of agri-environment or inheritance tax agreements. At present some of this access can be difficult to determine due to the patchwork nature of its provision. In addition, there are 100 hectares of National Trust land to which there is access. An analysis of accessible natural greenspace provision in the South East⁶¹ in February 2007 found that the North Wessex Downs has the smallest percentage of accessible natural greenspace (4%) of all of the SE Protected Landscapes.

Of that accessible natural greenspace, 59% was woodland. In general woodlands with open or partial access are owned by the Forestry Commission, the Woodland Trust or the National Trust. A surprising 69% of the woodland area has a public right of way either running through the woodland or along one edge of the woodland. The figures fall dramatically for open access to woodland, the total area of open access woodland is only 14% of the total woodland area.

One of the most important resources of the North Wessex Downs is its extensive rights of way network, providing access to some of the most spectacular views and secluded valleys in southern England. Not only does it underpin the recreational and tourism sectors but also affords some opportunities for sustainable and safe journeys to school and work. Important national and regional walking routes within the North Wessex Downs include (the length within the AONB): the Ridgeway National Trail (88km/55mi); the Thames Path National Trail (14km/9mi); the Test Way (22km/14mi); the Wayfarers Walk (27km/17mi); the Lambourn Valley Way (29km/18mi); and the towpath of the Kennet and Avon Canal (48km/30mi) which is a National waterways Link and one of the busiest paths in the British Waterways Network. In addition, a very large number of other paths are promoted as recreational walking routes by the National Trust, the constituent local authorities, and the Ramblers Association.

There are a large number of advertised cycle routes (on and off road) that pass through the area, taking advantage of lanes and bridleways. The entire network of legally accessible off road cycle routes across the North Wessex Downs have been mapped and graded according to International Mountain Biking Association guidelines as part of the 1SW project. In addition, Route 4 of the Sustrans National Cycle Network also runs for 47 km (29mi) through the North Wessex Downs, part following the Kennet and Avon Canal towpath.

⁶⁰ Forestry Commission (2005), Trees and woodlands: Nature's health service Liz O'Brien, Social Research Group, Forest Research.

⁶¹ McKernan P & Grose M (2007) An analysis of accessible natural greenspace provision in the South East

The Three Downs Link horse riding route offers huge potential for recreational riders linking the Ridgeway with both the Hampshire and the South Downs. There are a number of advertised shorter riding routes that utilise the Ridgeway and link with the much wider multi-use network. Responsible recreational cycling and horse riding are two of the key activities to encourage in the North Wessex Downs. Supporting the provision of facilities such as accommodation with access to stables or drying rooms and the construction of bike wash facilities and cycle hubs are examples of how this could be achieved.

The CRoW Act requires every county/unitary authority to set out their plans for improvement of the Rights of Way network. This is through the production of a Rights of Way or Countryside Management Plan (previously known as RoWIPs). These plans set out how an authority will maintain countryside access resources and take opportunities for improving and promoting access to the countryside. The North Wessex Downs Partnership supports the work of the Wiltshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Mid and West Berkshire Local Access Forums (LAF's).

Running a tourism business or visitor attraction? Why not sign up to be part of the [Our Land project](#), or download the [North Wessex Downs tourism toolkit](#).

10.3 Special Qualities: Leisure Tourism

- Offering some of the finest **cultural landscape** in England including chalk downland, river valleys, ancient woodland, historic sites. There is a recognition for the landscape in literature and the arts, with locations such as Watership Down, Uffington White Horse and the Whittenham Clumps inspiring well known works
- **Historic attractions** reflecting the industrial and socio economic history of the area including the Kennet and Avon Canal, Didcot and Swindon Railway Museums, Crofton beam engines and the Wilton Windmill.
- **Picturesque market towns** and small villages with independent shops, superb pubs, restaurants and plenty of B&Bs and hotels. A growing reputation for local food and produce.
- **Rich archaeological history** and evidence of our ancestors that can be found in greater concentrations than much of the country.
- **The great country houses** at Highclere, Basildon Park, Littlecote and Ashdown and the medieval, norman and Saxon churches.
- The **extensive Rights of Way** network offering many opportunities for quiet enjoyment of the countryside away from crowds, including the Thames Path and Ridgeway National Trails, access land, commons and accessible woodland.
- A **centre for antiques** between the towns of Hungerford, Marlborough and the village of Pewsey.

11. Key Issues, Objectives and Policies

This section sets out:

- the Key Issues relating to the different themes of the Management Plan;
- the overall strategic Objectives of the Management Plan; and
- the Policies of the North Wessex Downs Partnership that are aimed at addressing the Key Issues in line with the Objectives. The Policies are designed to guide and inform the policies and actions of all North Wessex Downs partners where they affect the area.

Actions identified as priorities for the work of the North Wessex Downs team and other partners (as identified) are set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Business Plan, reviewed annually. This sets out who is doing what, the role of the North Wessex Downs team in each action, and the desired outcome/s. Generally, in relation to actions the role of the North Wessex Downs team will be one of the following:

- Things we take whole or lead responsibility for (or co-ordinate): **Leader**.
- Things we take forward in partnership but do not lead: **Partner**.
- Things we help make happen by raising awareness or helping others to do: **Facilitator**.
- Things we support (e.g. with our name or endorsement) but neither fund directly nor actively participate in: **Supporter**.

11.1 Landscape

Key Issues

- The potential for development beyond the AONB boundary to visually damage or undermine the scale and critical qualities of landscape character areas.
- Management of the Ridgeway National Trail and other rights of way to maximise enjoyment by responsible users and minimise conflicts
- Maintenance and, where possible, extension of chalk grassland habitat.
- Conserving and enhancing the remoteness and expansive open scale of the downland landscape.
- The need for viable agriculture to continue to contribute to AONB purposes.
- Availability of sufficient resources for management and understanding of archaeological sites.
- Conserving and enhancing the remote, secluded and relatively undeveloped character of more enclosed and intimate landscapes, including the character of the lanes.
- The need for appropriate woodland management, including the viable use of timber products, particularly for fuel;
- Encouraging restoration of wood pasture landscapes, husbandry and ecology and ensuring future veteran tree succession
- The dominance of roads, in particular the impact of traffic noise, external lighting, road signs, insensitive materials and clutter on landscape character and people's experience of the landscape as they travel through it.
- Maintaining the pattern of discrete villages set within a quiet rural landscape and ensuring that the views to the surrounding dramatic scarps are undamaged.
- Ensuring the maintenance of water quality and quantity in the rivers, supporting river managers in river course improvement for fisheries and wildlife;
- Maintaining and enhancing adjacent seasonal flood meadows, grazed pastures, fen, damp woodlands and historic parkland.
- Conserving and enhancing the small-scale, secluded and rural character of the lowland mosaic, including the fragile lowland heaths.
- Intense pressure for development throughout the AONB and its setting that threatens the

<p>character and quality of its landscape and risks merging of small settlements or encroachment by larger settlements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The need to protect and enhance historic sites, buildings and landscapes and their setting.
Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>To maintain and enhance the distinctive landscape character of the North Wessex Downs.</i>• <i>To raise the profile of the North Wessex Downs AONB.</i>
North Wessex Downs AONB Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage all partners and other stakeholders to have regard for AONB purposes across all relevant policies, programmes and activities.• Wherever possible seek to identify and address the main factors that threaten the special qualities of the AONB landscape: e.g. water abstraction, agricultural practices; woodland neglect; damage to historic sites, built development.• Use the North Wessex Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment to inform policy and decision making across the AONB and its setting.• Support, encourage and promote good practice across all sectors that conserves and enhances the character and qualities of the North Wessex Downs landscape.• Support and encourage efforts to conserve and explain the rich heritage of the North Wessex Downs, including archaeological sites.• Ensure that all development in or affecting the setting of the AONB conserves and enhances the character, qualities and heritage of the North Wessex Downs landscape.• Raise the policy profile of the North Wessex Downs locally, regionally and nationally to secure the co-ordination and resourcing of policies and programmes for the benefit of the AONB.• Encourage responsible recreational enjoyment of woodland.• Support the maintenance and responsible use of the Kennet and Avon Canal.

11.2 Land Management

Key Issues

- The need to manage resources to achieve sustainable consumption and production.
- Potential for major investment in diversification and micro-enterprise in the land management sector from the next rural development programme.

Agriculture:

- Market volatility resulting in uncertainty regarding land management in the AONB. This influences the mix of farming types and farm sizes.
- Market forces and major policy reform influencing future land management, together with changing technology, climate risks and energy prices. Food security and biofuels will also have effects.
- Shortage of livestock needed to graze downland pasture.
- How best to harness demand for locally produced food and drink in line with AONB objectives, with increasing interest in producing and marketing local food in the North Wessex Downs.
- Climate change - increasingly identified by farmers in the North Wessex Downs AONB as a key threat and opportunity for the future. Opportunities for land managers to undertake activities both to adapt to climate change and to help mitigate its effects.
- Potential for improved co-ordination and consistency of provision of land management advice across the AONB.

Racing Industry:

- Small-scale changes to the smooth, rolling landform around new buildings, which cumulatively have an adverse effect on the character of the AONB.
- Opportunities to support the racing industry, ancillary businesses and local communities through diversification, e.g. in responsible tourism.
- Loss of biodiversity from the creation of new fields and paddocks on open chalk downland.
- Change in landscape character by the replacement of hedgerows with fencing, leading to the 'suburbanisation' of landscape.
- Pressure to widen and straighten minor roads to improve vehicle access leading to 'suburbanisation' and loss of sense of place.
- Loss of integrity of historic settlements/hamlets/farmsteads.

Forestry:

- Scope for more and better management of woodland in the AONB, especially smaller woods, to improve habitat for wildlife and provide an economic return.
- Risk of harmful impacts on wildlife, archaeology and recreation from increasing exploitation of woodland to meet demand for timber, if not done in an environmentally sensitive way.
- Opportunities for better co-ordination of forestry with agricultural land management under new environmental management schemes.
- Widespread threats from pests and disease (e.g. Phytophthora and Chalara).
- Rising deer numbers inhibiting the natural regeneration of some woodland. Deer Management Groups are helpful but are insufficient on their own to control deer numbers.

Objectives

- *To encourage initiatives that facilitate sustainable land management.*
- *To encourage diverse and viable agriculture, forestry, horseracing and other land based enterprises that support the delivery of a wide range of public benefits, including; the conservation and enhancement of the area's special qualities and features; the provision of opportunities for responsible access; and support for local markets.*
- *To create a diverse rural skills base to support traditional and emerging land based enterprises that enhance the special qualities and features of the North Wessex Downs.*

North Wessex Downs AONB Policies

- Encourage national, regional and local land management policies to be consistent with the purpose of AONB designation
- Encourage and support joint working and expansion/replication of existing landscape-scale conservation and land management projects, both within and beyond the AONB, to assist in the delivery of AONB objectives.
- Support sustainable farm diversification and multi-purpose woodland management where it achieves AONB objectives and accords with planning policy.
- Support efforts to identify future land use options that are best able to assist farm viability and reflect the environmental objectives of the AONB.
- Support local markets for local produce and the development of local supply networks.
- Encourage management of sites in public and tenanted ownership within the North Wessex Downs to be examples of best practice in the delivery of AONB objectives.
- Support and where appropriate co-ordinate efforts across the North Wessex Downs to reduce invasive or unsustainable populations of species where these threaten the sustainable management of woodland and other habitats.
- Encourage the active and environmentally sensitive use of woodland resources for viable products, helping to enhance biodiversity.
- Support and help guide publicly funded investment in rural development.
- Support investment in new agricultural infrastructure and redevelopment of farm buildings where it increases the economic, social and environmental sustainability of local businesses and does not conflict with AONB purposes.
- Encourage awareness of the special qualities of the AONB among local businesses to help them understand and embrace their responsibilities alongside running a profitable enterprise.
- Support improved co-ordination and consistency in provision of land management advice across the AONB.
- Support efforts to identify and develop the skills required to care for the landscape and its special qualities, with opportunities for all to acquire such skills.
- Encourage and support the local provision of practical training in traditional land management and the skills necessary for adding value and land-based diversification activities landscape.

11.3 Biodiversity

Key Issues

- General lack of knowledge about the full biological resource of the North Wessex Downs and how to manage it most effectively for biodiversity, including the management of sites that may support priority target species.
- Habitat fragmentation preventing proper functioning of ecosystems: wildlife populations unable to disperse or colonise new habitats, leading to loss of genetic diversity and local extinctions.
- Impacts of climate change on habitats and species with both losses and gains. In addition to direct impacts on habitats (e.g. drying out of wetlands) there are likely to be indirect effects such as those caused through colonisation by non-natives responding to climatic change. The ability of species to respond to climate change, and the associated shift in their distribution, will be strongly influenced by habitat availability and fragmentation.
- The uncertainty of CAP reform and the emerging Environmental Land Management Schemes. Budgetary constraints are likely to have serious implications for the ability to deliver significant biodiversity improvements across the farmed landscape, retain improvements secured through past land management schemes, and prevent further loss of wildlife habitat.
- Direct and indirect effects of agricultural intensification and land management changes having continued negative impacts on farmland wildlife.
- Continued decline of species, in particular those with very specific habitat requirements that have responded negatively to changes in land management practices.
- Nesting success and productivity is often insufficient to reverse declines or even to sustain current populations of many ground nesting birds
- Loss of once-common species of chalk streams and rivers such as the water vole and the white-clawed crayfish (both priority target species).
- Negative impacts of invasive non native species on native wildlife.
- Economic fragility of low input/extensive farming systems and cost of replacement infrastructure (fencing, water supplies etc) leading to loss or deterioration of semi-natural habitats through both undergrazing and overgrazing.
- Bovine Tuberculosis testing and movement regulations having a negative impact on availability of cattle for conservation grazing.
- Lack of grazing livestock to manage remaining areas of semi-natural chalk grassland.
- Problems, where grazing is still practised, from recreational pressures including dog worrying and trespass.
- Increasing erosion of remnant areas of chalk grassland as a result of recreational activities.
- Degradation and loss of river and wetland habitats through inappropriate management, development, increasing water demand, pollution, eutrophication and climate change.
- Lack of or poor management of much ancient woodland, causing a decline in biodiversity..
- Lack of resources for maintaining biodiversity and securing enhancements on the existing green infrastructure network, including road verges.
- Erosion of lane and byway verges by increased traffic use and larger vehicles.
- Change from the use of grass gallops (some of which retain remnant areas of chalk grassland) to artificial surfaces in the racing industry.
- The impact of access restrictions to areas important for vulnerable ground-nesting species, such as stone curlew.

Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that the characteristic habitats and species of the North Wessex Downs are conserved and enhanced.
North Wessex Downs AONB Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the delivery of Biodiversity 2020 outcomes, other landscape strategies, catchment management and forestry plans to ensure effective management of all priority habitats and species in the AONB landscape.• Encourage a co-ordinated and consistent approach to biodiversity conservation across the AONB and beyond (e.g. Big Chalk).• Support and encourage work to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the North Wessex Downs through support for landscape-scale projects for habitat management, restoration and creation, particularly where they deliver identified priorities within the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, including through management of existing wildlife sites and valuable habitat to the highest standards.• Support land managers in maintaining the land as habitat for key species, including threatened arable plants, invertebrates and farmland birds.• Support the development of a green economy locally that realises the opportunities afforded by greener goods and services, consistent with AONB purposes.• Support partnerships with key stakeholders to promote and deliver projects that contribute to the achievement of Water Framework Directive objectives in the AONB.• Encourage the restoration of lost connections with the natural environment and enable fairer access to its goods and services.• Support efforts to communicate the benefits of the local natural environment and its value to society.• Encourage innovative use of initiatives such as Environmental Land Management schemes to deliver biodiversity benefits and the provision and protection of ecosystem goods and services.• Support research into causes of declines in ground nesting birds and support appropriate projects that aim to rebuild populations.• Encourage and support efforts to identify the extent of spread and damage caused by invasive non-native species (INNS), to eradicate and/or control them, and to restore habitats and wildlife populations damaged by them.• Seek to secure readily accessible baseline biodiversity data across the North Wessex Downs.• Support the County Biological Record Centres and Sites and Monuments Records serving the North Wessex Downs as the main repositories for information on the biodiversity and cultural heritage of the AONB and support initiatives to engage the public in biological recording/monitoring.• Support and encourage mechanisms to enable grazing on all the main grassland areas of the AONB..

11.4 Historic Environment
Key Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge about the broader historic landscape of the North Wessex Downs – the landscape speaks eloquently of its cultural history, but this needs to be better understood and more closely applied to management objectives. • Many undiscovered archaeological sites, especially in wooded areas. • Insufficient understanding of the historical evolution of individual settlements and how this should influence their future development. • Need for more consistent approach to the designation and management of Conservation Areas, in particular the systematic use of Conservation Area appraisals and management plans. • Development pressure threats to the historic fabric and visual character of traditional market towns. • Poorly sited and designed new development that fails to reflect the historic form of settlements and building groups, their character and setting. • Infilling and over-expansion on small plots, which may erode the traditional mixed character of individual settlements. • Loss of local vernacular architecture and traditional farmstead layouts, especially through the insensitive conversion of traditional agricultural buildings. • Loss of grazing animals, which is threatening the important archaeological sites with damage from uncontrolled scrub encroachment. • Poorly managed recreational access to sensitive archaeological/cultural sites, including damage caused by irresponsible or illegal use of off-road motorised vehicles. • Continued deep ploughing over archaeological sites and remains, and damage from burrowing animals. • Impact of planting trees or biomass crops either its directly on archaeological features, or on the character of the historic landscape through poor design and siting. • Impact of modern farming practices on the character of the historic landscape.
Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To enhance the protection, management and setting of the archaeological and historic features, sites and landscapes that characterise the North Wessex Downs.</i> • <i>To promote an increased level of awareness, use and enjoyment of the historic and cultural fabric of the North Wessex Downs.</i> • <i>To realise the potential value of the Historic Environment data.</i>
North Wessex Downs AONB Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support efforts to ensure that sites, features and landscapes of historical importance are appropriately identified, recorded and managed • Encourage all stakeholders to use the English Heritage at Risk Register to focus on archaeological sites, historic buildings and conservation areas in special need of action. • Support a review of designated sites across the North Wessex Downs AONB to ensure that the lists are current and appropriate. • Work closely with the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site Partnership and other groups to develop shared objectives and deliver joint actions for the World Heritage Site Management Plan. • Encourage voluntary-sector research and collaboration on poorly understood aspects of the local

historic environment.

- Promote the production and publication of 'local lists' of heritage assets.
- Support initiatives that seek to provide long-term sustainable management of important heritage assets for social and economic benefits.
- Identify and promote opportunities to include the historic environment in community-generated Village Design Statements, Parish and Neighbourhood Plans etc., linked where appropriate to Conservation Area Appraisals.
- Promote and encourage the use of Historic Landscape and Historic Settlement Characterisation to inform land management, policy making and planning decisions.
- Support more and better explanation, interpretation and promotion of the historic environment for residents and visitors.
- Support collaborative historic environment activity involving professional and voluntary sectors., such as research and advice from historic environment experts.

11.5 Natural Resources
Key Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of agreement on the levels of acceptable environmental limits within the AONB. • The need to raise awareness of water quality issues. • Soil erosion, especially on steeper slopes and under 'open' arable crops, such as maize. • Opportunities to encourage minimum tillage and careful application of inputs, • Air quality is currently good but activities outside the AONB can have a significant effect across the area. • Over abstraction of groundwater and chalk aquifer. • Increasing water demand, especially during the summer months, as a result of climate change and changing lifestyles. • Increasing water demand for crop irrigation as a result of climate change and more erratic weather patterns resulting in prolonged dry periods and intense summer rainfall. • The influence of climate change on groundwater recharge patterns and overall water availability. • Increasing water demand as a result of major development in the urban areas in and around the North Wessex Downs, also sometimes leading to export of water out of the catchments of the North Wessex Downs. • Loss of river habitats as a result of historical land drainage and channel modifications associated with past flood alleviation works and past industry (although some man-made features, e.g. mill leats, are of considerable historical importance). • Decline in fish stocks and quality of fisheries. • Excessive removal of bankside vegetation (on occasion associated with fisheries management). • Weed cutting and river clearance to reduce downstream flooding (although this is carefully regulated by the Environment Agency). • Loss of winterbourne channels through agricultural cultivation. • Increasing lock movements on the Kennet and Avon Canal taking water from the River Kennet and its tributaries. • Pollution of rivers from point sources, including public and private domestic sewerage systems (with phosphorus discharges a particular problem), agriculture, commercial watercress beds, and fish farms. • Impacts on ecology of rivers from diffuse sources of pollution - often individually minor but collectively significant - including run-off from roads, houses and commercial areas, run-off from farmland, and seepage into groundwater from developed landscapes of all kinds, resulting in raised nutrient levels and toxic algal blooms. • Pollution pressure on the River Kennet generated by poor water quality and boat traffic on the Kennet and Avon Canal.
Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To conserve the depth and appropriate quality of soils in the North Wessex Downs.</i> • <i>To ensure that the water environment, including fisheries is sustainably managed.</i>
North Wessex Downs AONB Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and encourage management of soils that restricts their loss, impoverishment and pollution, particularly in the case of the thin chalk downland soils. • Support co-ordinated action and guidance on soil conservation measures. • Support initiatives to encourage sustainable management of soil by land managers to minimise pollution and loss through erosion.

- Support and provide landscape input to AONB catchment partnerships. Contribute to research, projects and co-operation of partners with an influence on watercourses and catchments. .
- Encourage all partners to take water demand and its consequences for landscape, ecology and fisheries fully into account in all relevant decisions regarding planning, changes to land use or cropping patterns within the North Wessex Downs.
- Support the introduction of demand management measures for water use in those settlements that draw on the aquifers of the North Wessex Downs, and measures to monitor and reduce water wastage.
- Support efforts to ensure that no water is abstracted from catchments that are classified as 'no water available', 'over licensed' or 'over abstracted' under the Environment Agency's Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy.
- Support work to identify and address the sources of diffuse and point pollution within the North Wessex Downs through agencies, local groups and volunteer initiatives.
- Promote and help co-ordinate remedial action through the Catchment Sensitive Farming Initiative and other partnership schemes to restore and enhance degraded river sections within the North Wessex Downs.
- Work to ensure that no new abstraction licences are granted within the North Wessex Downs which export water out of the catchments of the AONB. Support measures to reduce abstraction, such as Thames Water pipeline linking North and South Swindon.
- Promote Sustainable Drainage Systems and flood alleviation works which maximise all-round benefits, e.g. through restoration of traditional water meadow systems or shallow winter flooding in the floodplain of benefit to wildlife.
- Promote restoration of rivers and river corridors to further biodiversity / amenity objectives – re-creating natural river channels and re-linking rivers with their floodplains where this would not damage artificial channels of historic / cultural importance.
- Seek to develop a better understanding of the likely implications of climate change on the environment and economy of the North Wessex Downs
- Support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, such as carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane, from all possible sources. Support mitigation measures including better on-farm management of fertiliser and animal waste,, biomass heating from local fuel stocks and small-scale renewable energy generation appropriate within the protected landscape.
- Support and encourage greater domestic and commercial energy efficiency.
- Engage with opportunities to improve the availability, accessibility of sustainable modes of transport (e.g. bus and rail services, cycling) and promote use their use.
- Encourage greater use of timber in construction from sustainable woodland.
- Promote carbon sequestration as an objective and benefit of habitat creation and management of woodland and permanent grassland.
- Encourage simple greenhouse gas and carbon accounting to monitor the effectiveness of changes.
- Support efforts to influence behaviour in response to the impacts of climate change, including dissemination of advice on bio-security and disease control in domestic and wild animals and plants.
- Encourage modelling of groundwater response to climate change as a part of planning policy development.
- Support measures to manage the risk of flooding.
- Support measures to secure future water resources, e.g. by appropriate-scale water storage and transfer schemes that reduce abstraction.
- Encourage water efficiency in homes and businesses and encouraging reuse.
- Support collaborative initiatives with partners to link, extend and buffer fragmented habitats to improve opportunities for species migration and population stabilisation.

11.6 Development

Key Issues

In responding to planning applications or planning policy consultations within the North Wessex Downs AONB and its setting, the following key issues highlight examples of development which, if harmful, would be opposed by the AONB Unit subject to detailed consideration. As well as the following, the AONB Unit's Position Statements also contain further detailed advice on specific forms of development and should therefore also be considered. Each local planning authority may also have specific supplementary planning guidance, for example on replacement dwellings.

- The threat of expansion of the main urban areas just beyond the boundary of the North Wessex Downs, including the main centres of Swindon, Wantage, Didcot, Reading, Newbury, Basingstoke, Andover, and Devizes for example creating urban fringe pressures and impact on the setting of the AONB.
- New large free-standing dwellings as replacement dwellings in the open countryside.
- The change of use of land to domestic garden use.
- The loss of rural character through suburbanising influences from new development (new fencing, lighting, signage, parking areas, paved footpaths, loss of native hedgerows and creation of new garden areas).
- New housing developments on greenfield sites.
- The threat of incremental housing development outside settlements from unwarranted conversions and redevelopments; or unjustified rural workers accommodation.
- Impact on dark skies and tranquillity of high-powered external lighting, especially where poorly directed or in an exposed location (not usually subject to planning control).
- Potential for certain forms of development to intrude on the wider landscape, including masts, pylons, wind turbine developments, photovoltaic schemes, and minerals and waste schemes, threatening the senses of remoteness and tranquillity, and landscape quality and heritage assets.
- Potential for harm from smaller wind turbine developments if poorly located in exposed locations in landscapes recognised for their sensitivity to this form of development.
- Unsuitable development of redundant previously developed and part-developed sites within the North Wessex Downs, especially redundant airfields and military sites (e.g. as at Wroughton), and the impact upon landscape quality and heritage assets.
- New developments at the junction of the M4 and A34 or along their corridors which spread the impact from development yet further into the undeveloped parts of the AONB.
- Impact from the racing industry from new gallops and facilities where inappropriately located and or designed
- Impact from equestrian uses and structures generally where new development is expansive in area, in greenfield locations, poorly designed and/or located on exposed sites.
- Substantial new farm buildings where unjustified, poorly designed and or located in exposed locations.
- Development that results in a material loss of tranquillity and / or impact on the dark night skies within the North Wessex Downs or its setting.
- Development, where relevant, that does not provide for or support existing Green Infrastructure.
- Development where appropriate, that does not provide for appropriate mitigation (including through the Community Infrastructure Levy).
- New noise-creating activities for example from quad or bike courses, microlights, shooting schools, kennels, new industrial, minerals or waste operations.
- The illegal dumping of rubbish.
- Large-scale new commercial uses or inappropriate farm diversification projects.
- New road building.
- Impact of road signage, street lighting and other highway clutter on landscape character, including within settlements. Measures which have an urbanising effect on AONB character and are thus

<p>generally inappropriate include: oversized, multiple and yellow-backed road signs; new street lighting in previously unlit locations; lighting that allows spillage or glare; road markings; concrete kerbing; illuminated bollards; fencing; and elaborate traffic-calming schemes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to reduce costs and maintain or restore the character of rural roads through adoption of a low-key rural design approach to roads across AONB.
<p>Objectives</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To encourage appropriate sustainable development to jointly achieve economic, social and environmental benefits through the planning system in the context of a nationally protected landscape.</i> • <i>To ensure that the formulation and implementation of planning policies across the North Wessex Downs takes full account of the purposes of designation and the character and quality of the AONB and its setting.</i> • <i>To promote a sustainable rural economy.</i>
<p>North Wessex Downs AONB Policies</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage all proposals for new development, redevelopment and re-use to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs. Oppose forms of development that fail to conserve and enhance the character and quality of the AONB and its setting and to make reference to the AONB's published guidance. • Encourage high standards of design, comprehensive landscaping where required, traditional building styles, energy conservation and innovation that respect historic settlement patterns and the distinctive character of the North Wessex Downs. • Encourage Local Plans, Supplementary Planning Documents and other policies to take account of the statutory protection of the AONB, in terms of location of development affecting the AONB and its setting, and specific AONB policy. • Support the need for Local Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents and other policies to address issues such as landscape impact, local character, materials and historic structure and scale of settlements. • Encourage the consideration of landscape impacts at the earliest opportunity in the planning process and the provision of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments and Environmental Impact Assessments where required. • Resist noise-generating developments and activities both within the AONB and its setting. • Avoid and reduce light pollution, including control of lighting schemes or other developments that threaten the integrity of dark night skies within the North Wessex Downs. • Encourage, support and promote good practice in the design and management of roads in the AONB and its setting that conserves and enhances the character of the landscape and settlements. • Support appropriate and sustainable farm diversification activities where planning applications are supported by a whole farm plan and linked to design guidance. • Encourage the use of planning briefs or master plans which guide developments within and on the edge of the North Wessex Downs and take account of AONB purposes. • Encourage the retention of existing and provision of new 'Green Infrastructure'. Ensure that 'Green Infrastructure' (including new or enhanced biodiversity assets) is incorporated within the area of all "major developments", both within and near the AONB. • Support the development of strategies and integrated projects to manage the pressures and opportunities presented by the AONB's close proximity to its surrounding urban centres. • Work with local communities to increase capacity and involvement in development processes. • Support local communities to engage with local and national planning policy consultations. • Encourage local communities to identify local needs and assist in the conservation and

enhancement of local distinctiveness through the preparation and development of Neighbourhood Plans/Parish Plans, Village Design Statements, Neighbourhood Development Orders and other initiatives.

- Encourage economic growth, new responsible tourism opportunities and diversification of the local economy generally within the overall aim of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.
- Support broadband rollout where the installation of new equipment is in accordance with the Cabinet Siting and Pole Siting Code of Practice (DCMS June 2013) and where due consideration is given to AONB purposes.
- Support training courses to encourage businesses within the North Wessex Downs to adopt sustainable approaches consistent with AONB objectives
- Resist developments that would substantially increase traffic volume in sensitive areas.
- Encourage local planning authorities to use powers available to them under Section 106 of Town & Country Planning Act, Community Infrastructure Levy and similar legislation to achieve the North Wessex Downs Management Plan objectives and activities.
- Support economic activities that embrace sustainable development principles at a scale and nature compatible with the special qualities of the North Wessex Downs.
- Support initiatives that seek to add value to land-based products sympathetic to the natural beauty of the AONB.

11.7 Communities
Key Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widespread lack of awareness of the North Wessex Downs AONB among local residents and businesses. • The towns which surround the AONB are all expected to accommodate significant housing and employment development in the next 20 years. • Increased volumes of traffic or an increasing demand for quicker journey times may lead to pressure for road widening and other ‘improvement’ schemes on roads in the AONB. • Greater prosperity enjoyed by some people leads to other environmental impacts such as more over-flights by aircraft of all kinds, more use of roads and rights of way for motorised leisure pursuits, and increased demand for second homes. • Loss of affordable housing, reducing the social mix within settlements and leading to a loss of essential rural skills and services. • Potential changes in demographic profile, social exclusion, access to services and loss of public transport routes and other key facilities. • The trend of commuting to higher paid jobs outside the AONB whilst living in the area is resulting in rising house prices. • High demand for traditional buildings to convert to residential use, so reducing the opportunities for business conversions. • Strong and active community spirit in many AONB communities, including a rich artistic and cultural life. • Perceived limitations on opportunities for businesses in inaccessible locations. • Opportunities and risks for the AONB associated with new instruments such as Neighbourhood Plans, which may form an increasingly important element of local decision-making • Financial pressures reducing the ability of town and parish councils to participate in partnerships and community activities. • Lack of understanding of the impacts of daily life style decisions on the environment of the North Wessex Downs – from individual travel decisions to the use of water as if it were an unlimited natural resource. • Increasing volume of HGVs, delivery vans and commuter traffic on rural lanes. Rat running on minor lanes to escape congestion on the main arterial roads. • Government requirements that businesses running apprenticeship schemes must have business premises (many traditional land-based contractors do not have formal business premises). • The need for better understanding and awareness of the links between high environmental quality and ecosystem services and local business. • Opportunities to increase involvement in local community activities to improve social cohesion and sense of belonging. • The need for local sources of employment and opportunities for local people to develop skills that could support them into self-employment or enterprise, • The need for a wide range of skills training for land managers and other rural enterprises within the North Wessex Downs.
Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To enable vibrant communities to develop sustainably in the North Wessex Downs by stimulating economic prosperity and local culture.</i> • <i>To encourage an enhanced sense of ownership and respect for the distinctive character of the North Wessex Downs amongst local people.</i>

- *To provide transport that is more sustainable and meets the needs of residents and visitors of the North Wessex Downs.*

North Wessex Downs AONB Policies

- Support efforts to raise the profile of the North Wessex Downs AONB among communities within and surrounding the area.
- Seek to provide parishes and all other relevant community groups and individuals with information and training as necessary to raise awareness of the special qualities of the AONB and the need to conserve and enhance it.
- Encourage, support and celebrate local communities' engagement in the planning, conservation and enhancement of their local environment, enhancing the sense of local pride and ownership.
- Support projects to promote community use of renewable energy sources consistent with AONB objectives.
- Seek to publicise relevant community activities and events across the North Wessex Downs.
- Support community initiatives aimed at retaining rural services, including the combining of services where this will improve their viability.
- Encourage and support initiatives to foster awareness, understanding and appreciation of the AONB landscape in local schools.
- Support and encourage initiatives to address the specific needs of different groups within the AONB, such as access to training and social activities for young people.
- Support provision of reliable and affordable broadband and mobile telephone connections throughout the North Wessex Downs in ways that respect the special qualities of the area.
- Seek to ensure the development and implementation of transport plans and programmes addresses the needs of North Wessex Downs communities, reduces transport impacts on the environment, and conserves and enhances the special qualities of the landscape.
- Support and promote measures to provide integrated passenger transport, including easily accessible information, across the North Wessex Downs that serves the needs of local people and visitors.
- Secure Travel Plans for new developments with significant traffic generation within the North Wessex Downs to encourage sustainable travel.
- Support good practice examples of community approaches that respond to locally identified needs and promote them as an inspiration to others (e.g. the establishment of local housing trusts, support for new village shops, community transport schemes, or community energy schemes).

11.8 Leisure and Tourism
Key Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The opportunity to raise the profile of North Wessex Downs as a short break destination and the opportunities for quiet recreation and green tourism that it can offer. • Co-ordinated marketing of the North Wessex Downs as a whole remains weak, despite significant progress under the last AONB Management Plan. • Tourism provision in the AONB is fragmented and poorly co-ordinated, supporting few jobs and limited income. • Multiple destination management organisations across the AONB increase fragmentation. • Generally poor (but increasing) recognition amongst AONB communities of the opportunities that association with a landscape of national importance offers for quiet recreation and green tourism and their associated economic benefits, e.g. for local food. • Potential for insensitive, inappropriate or excessive tourism development to harm the special qualities of the AONB landscape. • Popularity of a few 'honeypot' locations with resulting sprawl of car parking, wear and tear on verges and paths, litter and lower enjoyment, and potentially intrusive traffic management measures. • Opportunities arising from changes to the management and promotion of the Ridgeway and Thames Path National Trails. • Infrequent public transport links to and between points of access, key attractions and accommodation. Very limited service at some railway stations e.g. Pewsey prevents their positive use for leisure and tourism. • Increasing pressure on funding for management and maintenance of rights of way and poor connectivity of the rights of way network in some areas for circular walks and rides. • Irresponsible use of the rights of way network by motorised vehicles, of particular concern along the route of the Ridgeway. • Noise associated with some recreation pursuits, including that from trail bike courses and powered aircraft, affecting tranquillity and others' enjoyment. • General lack of facilities for the non-horse owner to gain access to the recreational riding opportunities of the North Wessex Downs. • Lack of indication such as road signs that visitors are entering or in the AONB. • Lack of information and provision for the less able and other disadvantaged groups to access and enjoy the North Wessex Downs.
Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to access and enjoy the special qualities of the North Wessex Downs while minimising the negative impacts of visitors</i> • <i>To promote a recreation and tourism sector that is well managed, sustainable and adding value to the local economy whilst respecting the special qualities of the North Wessex Downs.</i>
North Wessex Downs AONB Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a strategic, partnership approach to planning and marketing green tourism and improved countryside access in the North Wessex Downs. • Work with destination management organisations, protected landscapes and other partners to promote responsible tourism in the North Wessex Downs, including through the Our Land and the

Visit North Wessex Downs initiatives.

- Support the development of markets for short break opportunities that emphasise the special qualities of the North Wessex Downs.
- Nurture tourism businesses and help to develop a tourism network across the North Wessex Downs. Support constructive and community-led projects that benefit the tourism economy.
- Promote greater accessibility to the North Wessex Downs for users of all abilities for quiet enjoyment and improved health and well being.
- Encourage the provision of easily accessible information regarding access to and around the North Wessex Downs by public transport.
- Identify and promote with relevant partners signs or other ways of indicating to visitors that they are in the North Wessex Downs that do not conflict with AONB purposes.
- Encourage and support greater recognition among commercial transport providers such as train operating companies of the recreational / leisure potential of stations in and around the North Wessex Downs.
- Support more and better monitoring of the distribution and demography of visitors and promote management approaches that reduce pressure on sensitive habitats.
- Support events that celebrate the special qualities of the North Wessex Downs and contribute to a viable visitor economy
- Work with local authorities, Local Access Forums and others to manage and improve the network of public rights of way, ensuring that relevant plans for development and delivery of access to the area take full account of the local distinctiveness, character and quality of the North Wessex Downs and its setting..
- Encourage the creation of new permissive and definitive routes that link existing routes and enable recreational walkers, cyclists and riders to avoid busy roads.
- Identify spinal and circular routes to be promoted in AONB publicity that are supported by the recreation and tourism infrastructure e.g. bicycle hire, farmhouse B&B / bunk barns and recreational bus links.
- Support increased provision and management of accessible greenspace and the promotion of new and existing recreation opportunities in line with AONB purposes.
- Support research, tools and projects which support the development of a thriving recreation and tourism sector.
- Support initiatives to help communities and businesses reduce the outflow of revenue, retaining and recycling wealth in the area for longer.
- Encourage and support research as appropriate into the demand and current provision of transport, accommodation and attractions for residents and visitors to the AONB.

12. Stakeholder responsibilities

Figure 9 Stakeholders and Opportunities to Contribute

The following table outlines some of the main stakeholder groups and the principle opportunities for them to contribute to the important work of the North Wessex Downs AONB Partnership. This is by no means an exhaustive list and we welcome suggestions for further partners or examples of how these groups can help to deliver the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2014-19.

Partner	Principal Opportunities	Delivery (examples)
Chambers of commerce	North Wessex Downs profile / marketing; tourism; local products.	Member information and events; North Wessex Downs tourism network; <i>Our Land</i> tourism initiative; local supplier networks; visitor payback.
Consultants and Agents	Awareness, understanding and recognition of the landscape and North Wessex Downs in particular.	Sensitivity to the heritage, natural environment, local economy and communities in bringing forward proposals and raising awareness among client base.
Educational institutions	Awareness, understanding and pride in the landscape.	Engagement with landscape through the curriculum; collaborative projects; field trips; farm visits; outdoor classrooms/Forest Schools.
Energy companies	Landscape conservation / enhancement; energy conservation; climate change.	Customer energy conservation advice; undergrounding powerlines; appropriate renewable energy generation; infrastructure planning and design.
Farmers and land managers	Wildlife habitat; landscape character; local food; public awareness and understanding; natural resources; tourism; responsible access; climate change.	Environmental Land Management Schemes; partnership conservation projects (e.g. Nature Improvement Areas); catchment-sensitive farming; control of outdoor lighting; diversification projects (e.g. LEADER); farm visits; carbon sequestration; rights of way maintenance; permissive access; appropriate farm-scale renewable energy generation.
National bodies <i>including</i> English Heritage Environment Agency Forestry Commission Highways Agency Natural England	Historic environment; landscape and nature conservation; rivers and water quality; tranquillity; ecosystem goods and services.	Land use planning; environmental land management schemes; land management advice; Local Nature Partnerships; partnership conservation projects (e.g. Nature Improvement Areas; North Wessex Downs Woodland Forum; River Basin Management Plans; Conservation Area Appraisals; Catchment Partnerships and Catchment Management Plans; Route Management Strategies;

Partner	Principal Opportunities	Delivery (examples)
		Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site Management Plan.
Highway authorities	Road decluttering; landscape character; dark skies, access; tranquillity; climate change; tourism; layout and design of new and redevelopment.	Local Transport Plans; road maintenance and safety programmes; signs audits; land use planning; National Trail partnerships; Local Access Forums; Rights of Way Improvement Plans.
Individuals	Natural resources; heritage and nature conservation; water abstraction; dark skies; tranquillity; local products; settlement character; climate change.	Participation in local projects; water and energy conservation; buying local; control of external lighting; conservation gardening; responsible access; green travel; pollution avoidance; planning and design.
Local businesses	Local products; tourism; North Wessex Downs profile; dark skies; natural resources; climate change.	Local sourcing; marketing; North Wessex Downs tourism network; <i>Our Land</i> tourism initiative; control of external lighting; energy/water conservation; waste minimisation.
Local Enterprise Partnerships <i>Including</i> Enterprise M3 Oxfordshire Solent Swindon and Wiltshire Thames Valley Berkshire	Diversification; sustainable prosperity; local products; ecosystem goods and services; climate change; tourism.	Strategic Investment Frameworks; LEADER programme/s; green travel; Local Nature Partnerships, Nature Improvement Areas; environmental land management schemes.
Local Nature Partnerships	Landscape and nature conservation and restoration; ecosystem goods and services; community engagement; climate change	Identifying local environmental networks; engaging the public, private and voluntary sector in collaborative protection and enhancement of the North Wessex Downs; educating young people and communities regarding the benefits of the natural environment.
Local authorities (including planning authorities)	Landscape and nature conservation; historic environment; settlement character; water abstraction; tranquillity; dark skies; affordable housing; diversification; ecosystem goods and services.	Development plans; planning advice, decisions, conditions and enforcement; green travel plans; supplementary planning guidance. Reporting on efforts to conserve and enhance the North Wessex Downs; duties specified by NERC act (2006)
Non-governmental organisations <i>including</i> Action for the River Kennet Canal and River Trust CPRE	Landscape, heritage and nature conservation and restoration; North Wessex Downs profile; settlement character; water abstraction; tranquillity; dark skies; affordable housing;	Member /supporter communications; public information and interpretation; estate management; collaborative projects; planning and design; recreation marketing and

Partner	Principal Opportunities	Delivery (examples)
<p>Earth Trust Friends of the Ridgeway Kennet and Avon Canal Trust National Trust RSPB Trust for Sustainable Living Wildlife Trusts</p>	<p>responsible access; tourism; farm diversification; ecosystem goods and services</p>	<p>management; green travel; North Wessex Downs tourism network; <i>Our Land</i> tourism initiative.</p>
<p>Parish and town councils</p>	<p>North Wessex Downs profile and marketing; community identity and pride; community engagement; tourism; landscape and nature conservation; decluttering; historic environment; settlement character; tranquillity; dark skies.</p>	<p>Public communications and events; parish / town / neighbourhood planning; community projects; Village Design Statements; property and grounds management; publications (e.g, walks leaflets); control of external lighting; community transport; local sourcing.</p>
<p>Rights of way and countryside access forums</p>	<p>Access to the North Wessex Downs; raising the profile and marketing; tourism; links to landscape and nature conservation.</p>	<p>Improving responsible access; contributing to collaborative marketing and tourism initiatives; recognition of the North Wessex Downs in Countryside Access Improvement Plans.</p>
<p>Tourism marketing bodies</p>	<p>North Wessex Downs profile / marketing; tourism; local products.</p>	<p>Destination marketing strategies; collaborative projects (e.g. Our Land); North Wessex Downs tourism network; local supplier networks; National Trail partnerships; visitor payback.</p>
<p>Transport operators</p>	<p>Green travel; access; North Wessex Downs profile / marketing; sustainable tourism; tranquillity.</p>	<p>Business and marketing strategies; collaborative initiatives with local businesses and communities; National Trail partnerships.</p>
<p>Water companies</p>	<p>Water abstraction and consumption; water quality; habitat conservation and enhancement;</p>	<p>Public information and advice; Water Resources Management Plans; Five-Year Plans; collaborative projects with local partners; demand management measures; use of abstraction licences; estate management; control of external lighting.</p>

13. Glossary of Terms

Figure 10 Glossary of Terms used in Document

Term used	Definition / Explanation
Affordable Housing	Low cost housing for sale or rent, often from a housing association, provided to meet the needs of local people who cannot afford accommodation through the open market.
Aggregates	Sand and gravel, crushed rock and other bulk materials used in the construction industry for purposes such as making concrete, mortar, asphalt or roadstone, drainage or bulk filling.
Agri-environment Schemes	A range of schemes operated by DEFRA designed to encourage environmentally friendly farming and public enjoyment of the countryside, includes Countryside Stewardship in England and Tir Gofal in Wales.
Alien species.	Plant or animal species that has either been transported accidentally through human activity, or purposefully introduced, from their historically known native ranges into new ecosystems where they did not evolve. Also known as non-indigenous, exotic, invasive or introduced species.
Amenity	The pleasant or normally satisfactory aspects of a location, which contribute to its overall character and the enjoyment of residents or visitors.
Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland	An ancient woodland site, believed to have had continuous woodland cover since 1600 AD, composed principally of native tree species that have not obviously been planted.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	Area designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, with the primary purpose of designation being to conserve natural beauty.
Biodiversity	The common term for "biological diversity", the variety of life and the natural processes of which living things are a part. The term includes living organisms, the genetic differences between them and the communities in which they occur.
Bio-fuels	currently methane, alcohols and biodiesel, all of which may be made from sustainable agricultural crops, producing valuable by-products
Bridleway	A public right of way for walkers and those on horseback, or leading a horse, together with permission by parliament for use by pedal bicyclists, provided they give way to walkers and horse riders. A bridleway may also have higher rights (see Public Rights of Way)
Broadleaved Trees	Trees belonging to the botanical group Angiospermae, carrying broad leaves, which usually shed all their foliage at the end of the growing season. Also known as deciduous or hardwood trees.
Browsing	A method of feeding by herbivores in which the leaves and peripheral shoots are removed from trees and shrubs.
Buffer Zone	The region near the border of a protected area providing a zone of transition between areas managed for different objectives.
Byway	A Byway open to all traffic (BOAT) is a Public Right of Way open to all users.
Carrying Capacity	Attempts made to measure the maximum amount of use that a resource can accommodate. Ecological capacity is the maximum level of use consistent with no reduction in the valued ecological attributes of an area; Physical capacity is the maximum level of use that can be accommodated in space or time; Perceptual capacity refers to the point at which enjoyment falls due to feelings of overcrowding. Burton (1974).

Term used	Definition / Explanation
Catchment Abstraction Management Plans (CAMs)	Implemented by Environment Agency since 2001 for every catchment in England and Wales to provide both a consistent approach to local water resource management and greater public involvement in water management.
Climate change	The anticipated impact of modern human activity on the global environment leading to an estimated 3 –8 degree centigrade rise in temperatures in the UK over the next 100 years, with additional environmental consequences.
Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)	European Union wide policy that supports agriculture through price support, market management and measures to improve the agriculture industry. Undergoing a Mid term review, introducing decoupling and more modulation and cross compliance.
Common Land	Defined in section 22 of the Commons Registration Act 1965 as land subject to rights of common (as defined in this Act) whether those rights are exercisable at all times or only during limited periods
Community Strategy	Defined in the Local Government Act 2000 as provision of a new duty and responsibility for local authorities to work closely with others to improve the local quality of life and promote well being. A Community Strategy links the work of key stakeholders in a local Authority area across the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.
Condition monitoring	Monitoring condition of the AONB to assess changes over time. Differs from performance monitoring that monitors completion of actions etc within the plan
Coniferous Woodland	Wooded land on which more than 75% of the tree crown cover consists of coniferous species.
Conservation	The management of the human use of the biosphere so that it may yield the greatest sustainable benefit to current generations while maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations: Thus conservation is positive; embracing preservation, maintenance, sustainable utilisation, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment.
Conservation Area	Defined by section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance.
Coppice	Woodland which has normally been regenerated from shoots formed at the cut stumps of the previous crop trees, root suckers, or both i.e. by vegetative means. Coppice is normally grown on a short rotation i.e. 5 – 25 years to yield small diameter material.
County Road	General purpose highways on ‘List of Streets’ maintained by local highways authority, includes minor roads and some not sealed or actively maintained.
Countryside	The term used for all land outside the built-up area boundaries defined in local plans. The rural environment and its associated communities.
Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act (2000)	Contains measures to improve public access to the open countryside and registered common land while recognising the legitimate interests of those who own and manage the land concerned; it amends the law relating to rights of way; it amends the law relating to nature conservation by strengthening protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest including tougher penalties and by providing extra powers for the prosecution of wildlife crime; it provides a basis for the conservation of biological diversity; and it provides for better management of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including the requirement for local authorities to produce AONB management plans every five years and places a duty on public bodies to have regard to the purposes of AONB designation.

Term used	Definition / Explanation
Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS)	An agri-environment scheme administered by DEFRA, which enabled farmers and land managers to enter ten year management agreements to maintain or enhance certain landscapes and features. Replaced by Environmental Stewardship in 2005
Cross Compliance	The linking of a farmer's eligibility for agricultural subsidies to environmental conditions and good farming practice.
Decoupling	Breaking the link between farm subsidies and production to reconnect farmers to their markets, reduce damaging environmental impacts and cut red tape.
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)	Central government body with the aim of sustainable development, which means a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come, including: a better environment at home and internationally, and sustainable use of natural resources; economic prosperity through sustainable farming, fishing, food, water and other industries that meet consumers' requirements; thriving economies and communities in rural areas and a countryside for all to enjoy.
Entry Level Scheme (ELS)	Agri-environment scheme introduced in 2005 with the aim to encourage a large number of farmers across a wide area of farmland to deliver simple yet effective environmental management.
Environmental Impact Assessment	Defined under the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988, where developers are required to provide in addition to a planning application, an environmental statement, evaluating the likely environmental impact of the development, together with an assessment on how impacts may be mitigated.
Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)	Operated from 1987 to 2005 offering incentives to encourage farmers to adopt agricultural practices, which would safeguard and enhance parts of the country of particularly high landscape, wildlife or historic value. There were 22 ESAs in England, covering some 10% of agricultural land. The Wye Valley was not an ESA. Replaced by Environmental Stewardship.
Erosion	It is the act or operation in which soil or rock at the earth's surface is worn away (weathered) by the chemical or mechanical action of water, wind or man. It can also refer to a gradual process of removing something which can be accelerated by human activity.
Food Miles	The distance food travels from farm to plate.
Footpath	A public right of way for walkers, which may also have higher rights (see Public Rights of Way)
Forest	An extensive track of land covered mainly with trees and undergrowth, sometimes intermingled with pasture.
Fragmentation	The breaking-up of continuous tracts of ecosystems, reducing the size of homogenous areas and creating barriers to the migration or dispersal of organisms.
General Permitted Development Order	The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 grants rights to carry out certain limited forms of development without the need to make an application for planning permission (the thresholds for GDP are generally smaller in AONBs).
Geographical Information System. (GIS)	Computer based systems for managing, analysis and presenting geographically referenced data.
Geomorphology	The branch of physical geography which deals with the form of the earth, the general configuration of its surface and the distribution of land and water etc. together with the natural processes that contribute to the evolution of landscapes.

Term used	Definition / Explanation
Grassland	Any plant community in which grasses and/or legumes comprise the dominant vegetation.
Grazing	A method of feeding by herbivores characterised by the repeated removal of only a part (usually the leaf) of the plant (most commonly herbage such as grass and clovers).
Green	Often used instead of 'sustainable' but implies something different in terms of 'green' tourism, which is concerned with the environment as an attraction rather than 'sustainable' tourism that considers the environmental, economic and social impact of tourism on an area.
Green Lane	A term with no legal definition which is often used to describe routes, normally bounded by walls or hedges, which appear to have no 'sealed' surface i.e. macadam or concrete, irrespective of whether they are rights of way or entirely private.
Habitat	A place in which a particular plant or animal lives, or the wider interaction of plants and animals that are found together.
Heath	A tract of uncultivated, generally nutrient poor land, with an open character, whose vegetation is dominated by dwarf shrubs, most typically belonging to the family Ericaceae – Heathers. Depending on levels of moisture heaths are further subdivided as dry heath, heather moor and moss-moor. Heath under 300 metres above sea level is referred to as Lowland Heath.
Hedgerow	Lines of trees and/or shrubs which delineate the boundaries of fields.
Heritage	Historic or cultural associations.
Higher Level Scheme (HLS)	Agri-environment scheme introduced in 2005 to concentrate on the more complex types of management needed to achieve the objectives of the ELS where land managers need advice and support, where agreements need to be tailored to local circumstances and where management needs to be carefully targeted.
Highway	Any way over which the public have a right to pass and repass, including footpath, bridleway, restricted byway and carriageway.
Highway Authority	The Highways Act 1980 defines a Highway Authority as the body responsible for maintaining all highways maintainable at public expense and keeping them free of obstruction, including responsibility for public rights of way. The Highway Authorities in the Wye Valley are Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire and Gloucestershire County Councils.
Historic Landscape Characterisation	A method used to define and map the historic and archaeological dimension of the present day landscape. It forms part of a National Programme developed by English Heritage in the early nineties and is continually evolving with ongoing development and changes in methodology, technology and application.
Historic Parks and Gardens	Parks and Gardens containing historic features dating from 1939 or earlier and registered by Cadw or English Heritage in three grades as with historic buildings.
Honeypot Site	Features or facilities which attract significant numbers of visitors through their reputation or position.
Infrastructure	Anything, whether buildings, apparatus or services, essential to the development and use of land. Planning permission can be withheld if infrastructure required by a development is not provided, including infrastructure needs arising outside the proposed site.
Interpretation	Interpretation is an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first hand experience and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information. It is the art of explaining the place of man in his environment, to increase visitor

Term used	Definition / Explanation
	or public awareness of this relationship and to awaken a desire to contribute to environmental conservation.
Landscape	An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.
Landscape Assessment	Non statutory document setting out the special qualities of the landscape, tracing its evolution and forces for change
Landscape Character	A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from one another, rather than better or worse.
Landscape Character Area	Are unique individual geographical areas in which landscape types occur, which share generic characteristics with other areas of the same type but have their own particular identity.
Landscape Character Assessment	Is a method for identifying, understanding and expressing the different patterns and features i.e. woodlands, hedgerows, building styles and historic artefacts which give a place a distinctive character.
Landscape Feature	A prominent eye-catching element, e.g. wooded hill top or church spire.
LEADER	European Union initiative for assisting rural communities in improving the quality of life and economic prosperity of their area.
Listed Building	A building of architectural or historical importance, graded according to its merit (I, II*, II) and subject to special controls.
Local Access Forum	Set up under CRoW Act to represent a balance of local interests and views, providing independent guidance to the relevant local authorities and the Countryside Agency on how to make the countryside more accessible and enjoyable for open air recreation in ways that address social, economic and environmental interests. Each county has one covering their respective areas of the Wye Valley.
Local Authority	An administrative unit of local government, specifically any body listed in section 270 of the Local Government Act 1972 or section 21(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
Local Distinctiveness	Essentially the sum of points of connection between the place and the person. Local distinctiveness is fundamentally about giving professionals a mandate to care for landscape detail, by linking meaning and identity. It is an expression of how landscapes are valued as places which have a distinctiveness and significance that communities cherish as their own and seek to find alternatives to the spread of uniformity in the countryside.
Localism	To empower communities to do things their way—by creating rights for people to get involved with, and direct the development of, their communities. To lift the burden of bureaucracy and strengthen accountability to local people.
Local Minerals Planning Authority	Mineral planning authorities (MPAs) process planning applications relating to minerals extraction. MPAs must take Government policies contained in Minerals Planning Guidance Notes (MPGs) and their replacements, Minerals Policy Statements (MPSs) into account in preparing their development plans.
Local Nature Partnership	Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) are partnerships of a broad range of local organisations, businesses and people who aim to help bring about improvements in their local natural environment. Established following the Natural Environment White Paper 2011.
Local Nature Reserve	Site acquired, declared and managed by local authorities in co-operation with EN in order to protect its wildlife value for the benefit of the local community.
Local Planning Authority	The local authority, normally the local borough or district council, which is empowered by law to exercise planning functions.
Local Produce	Local production and local producers from within a radius up to 30 miles of a

Term used	Definition / Explanation
	market, or 50 miles in the case of large cities or remote areas, but never more than 100 miles.
Local Transport Plan	A plan produced by the Highway Authority setting out future proposals for transport infrastructure over the following 5 years and attracting possible Government funding.
Meadow	Land, usually level and low lying, devoted to grasses and short herbs, which is mown annually for hay.
Methodology	The specific approach and techniques used for a given study or project.
Modulation	Modulation involves the transfer of money paid to farmers from direct CAP agricultural support payments to a wider range of rural development measures.
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	Designated by Government under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 to protect and conserve nationally important areas of wildlife habitat and geological formations and to promote scientific research.
National Parks	There are currently ten National Parks in England and Wales plus the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads that has equivalent status. National Parks are extensive areas each with their own managing authority to conserve and enhance their natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities.
National Trail	Routes based on Public Rights of Way through the nation's finest and most characteristic countryside, allowing an extensive journey on foot, horseback or by bicycle and capable of attracting tourist use from home and abroad.
Natural Beauty	Legislation and associated guidance defines natural beauty as including the physical elements of flora, fauna, geology and physiographic or geomorphological, the cultural and heritage elements, together with less tangible values such as intactness, rarity, wildness, remoteness, tranquillity and the appeal to the physical senses.
Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006)	Legislation that extends the CROW biodiversity duty to public bodies and statutory undertakers to ensure due regard to the conservation of biodiversity. It contains provisions to clarify the use of mechanically propelled vehicles on public rights of way. It made small change to the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 to define the meaning of "statutory undertaker", currently undefined in this Act and refined the definition of "natural beauty".
Organic Agriculture	A method of production, which puts the highest emphasis on environmental protection and, with regard to livestock production, animal welfare considerations. It avoids or largely reduces the use of synthetic chemical inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, additives and medical products. The word 'organic' may only be applied to products that have been obtained in accordance with EC Regulation 2092/01
Parkland	A large piece of ground usually comprising woodland, pasture and formal gardens, currently or once attached to a country house or mansion.
Pasture	An area of land dominated by grass, which is used only for grazing, as distinct from a meadow that is mown. Pasture may be enclosed fields or unenclosed common land.
Permanent Pasture	Any pasture composed of perennial or self-seeding annual plants kept indefinitely for grazing.
Permissive Path	A route where the landowner has granted permission for public use, usually for foot access but occasionally for horse riders, but which is not dedicated as

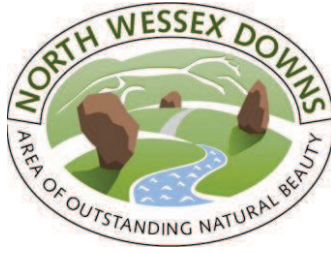
Term used	Definition / Explanation
	a public right of way.
Planted Ancient Woodland Sites	Ancient Woodland Sites in which the former tree cover has been replaced, often with non-native trees. PAWS often retain important ancient woodland features including characteristic flora, fauna and archaeology.
Pollard	A tree having its top cut off at some height above the ground to promote new and multiple growth, either to avoid the reach of browsing animals or to create aesthetically pleasing forms, extend the life of the tree and/or maintain wildlife habitat.
Precautionary Principle	Principle applied, to err on the side of caution where significant environmental damage may occur, but where knowledge on the matter is incomplete, or when the prediction of environmental effects is uncertain.
Protected Area	A geographically defined area which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives.
Public Right of Way	A route where the public has a right to walk, and in some cases ride horses, bicycles, motorcycles, wheeled carriages or drive motor vehicles which is designated either a footpath, a bridleway, Restricted Byway, Carriage or Cart Road used mainly as a Footpath (CR/F) or Bridleway (CR/B) or a byway open to all traffic (BOAT). These are shown on the 'Definitive Map' held by the county Highway Authority. A route may also have higher rights eg. be a County Road or other Highway; or simply be incorrectly signed or waymarked and/or have private rights of access.
Public Forest Estate	Woodland owned or leased by the government and primarily managed by the Forestry Commission.
Public Transport	Methods of transporting passengers including buses, trains and taxis but not car passengers.
Quiet Lane	Section 208 of the Transport Act 2000 makes provision for local traffic authorities to designate roads for which they are responsible as Quiet Lanes, enjoying voluntary speed restrictions and promotion for non-motorised traffic.
Recreation	Any pursuit engaged upon during leisure time, other than pursuits to which people are normally highly committed i.e. shopping, housework, child care etc.
Regional Route	Longer named paths, promoted on the initiative of local authorities, signed and fully waymarked, and based on public rights of way, offering more than a days travelling, perhaps following a theme or feature that offer tourism potential, such as the Wye Valley Walk
Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS)	Non-statutory sites of regional geological or geomorphological importance recognised by English Nature, Natural Resources Wales and local authorities.
Renewable energy	Energy generated from resources that are non-fossil fuels, and are unlimited, rapidly replenished or naturally renewable such as wind, water, sun, wave and refuse. Thus the technology includes wind turbines, wave generators, biofuels, solar power, wood fuel burners and boilers etc.
Rights of Way Improvement Plans	Sections 60 to 62 of the CROW Act 2000 require local highway authorities to prepare and publish Rights of Way Improvement Plans for improving rights of way in their areas, taking into account the needs of the public including people with disabilities.

Term used	Definition / Explanation
Riparian	Of or relating to, or located on, the banks of a stream or river.
Roadside Clutter	A perceived over provision of road signs, road surfaces, authorised and unauthorised advertising and other road furniture that impacts on the natural beauty of an area and potentially increases risks for motorists.
Run-off	Portion of rainfall, melted snow or irrigation water that flows across the ground's surface and is eventually returned to streams.
Rural Development Regulation	<p>Known as the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy and is concerned with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modernisation of farms • Safety and quality of food products • Fair and stable incomes for farmers • Environmental challenges • Supplementary or alternative job-creating activities to arrest rural depopulation • Improvement of living and working conditions and the promotion of equal opportunity. <p>The programme for England under European Regulation EC 1257/1999 is aimed at diversifying farming and forestry businesses and increasing competitiveness, developing new food and non-food products, ensuring the sustainable management of Less Favoured Areas and significantly increasing the areas covered by environmental schemes.</p>
Rural Regeneration	The process of undertaking initiatives for public benefit in areas of social and economic deprivation, through the maintenance or improvement of the physical, social and economic infrastructure and by assisting people who are at a disadvantage because of their social and economic circumstances.
Scheduled Monument (SAM)	A structure identified by Cadw and English Heritage for protection under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979
Second Home	A fixed property which is the occasional residence of a household that usually lives elsewhere.
Section 106 agreement	A binding agreement between a local planning authority and a developer associated with a grant of planning permission and regarding matters linked to the proposed development.
Sense of Place (Genius Loci)	Concept used to describe the memories and feelings of connectedness evoked by places where people live and work. The essential character of an area: 'Genius Loci' literally means 'spirit of the place'.
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Area identified by Natural Resources Wales and English Nature under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 for protection by reason of the rarity of its nature conservation, wildlife features or geological interest.
Sites and Monument Record (SMR)	A database of sites of archaeological interest and potential within a particular area, usually a county.
Social Exclusion	A summary term describing the collective difficulties experienced by people and/or areas which suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, inadequate housing, poor skills, low income etc.
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	Site designated according to the Habitats Directive 93/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora. SAC defines a site of Community Importance designated by member states through a statutory, administrative and/or contractual act, where the necessary conservation measures are applied for the maintenance or restoration, at a favourable conservation status, of the natural habitats and/or the populations of the

Term used	Definition / Explanation
	species for which the site is designated. All candidate SACs in UK are SSSIs.
Special Wildlife Sites	Categorisation developed by County Wildlife Trusts to identify the best places for wildlife outside legally protected areas.
Species	Organisms are named and classified by a system of taxonomy according to similarities in structure and origin. Species are the taxonomic group whose members can interbreed.
Statutory	Denotes something that is defined in legislation.
Statutory Undertaker	Statutory undertakers are organisations authorised by statute or licensed by central government to perform various public undertakings. Section 98 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 defines a statutory undertaker as any person authorised by any enactment to carry out any railway, light railway, tramway, road transport, canal, inland navigation, dock, harbour or pier undertaking or any relevant airport operator. The New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 defines as Statutory Undertakes all utilities namely electricity, gas, water, telephone, cable telephone, television and other telecommunications companies.
Sudden Oak Death	Popular name given to the fungus <i>Phytophthora ramorum</i> , which infects foliar (leaf) hosts such as <i>Rhododendron</i> and <i>Viburnum</i> and fatally infects bark canker hosts, principally Oaks.
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	Documents prepared to support and amplify policies in the Local Development Plan or Framework. Such guidance must be consistent with national and local planning policy
Sustainable	When equal consideration is made of the environmental, social and economic impacts of a development or project.
Sustainable Development	The widely used definition is "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".
Sustainable Drainage Schemes (SUDS)	Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) note 25 - Development and flood risk seeks to ensure that flood risk is considered on a catchment scale. It directly identifies the potential for SUDS to reduce flooding downstream of developments and promotes the development of teamwork to encourage the incorporation of sustainable drainage in developments. It suggests that local authorities should work closely with the Environment Agency, sewerage undertakers, navigation authorities and prospective developers to enable surface water run-off to be controlled as near to the source as possible through SUDS.
Sustainable Tourism	The aim of sustainable tourism is to ensure that development brings a positive experience for local people, tourism companies and the tourists themselves. To make as low an impact on the environment and local culture as possible, while helping to generate future employment for local people.
Sustrans	A sustainable transport charity, working on practical projects to encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport in order to reduce motor traffic and its adverse effects.
Tourism	Describes the activity of people taking trips away from home and the industry which has developed in response to this activity.
Town and Country Planning System	System by which all forms of development is planned and controlled. Currently based on the preparation of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and Local Development Frameworks (LDF) in England and Wales Spatial Strategy and Local Development Plans (LDP) in Wales
Traffic Management	Measures designed to improve the local environment through the reduction of

Term used	Definition / Explanation
	accidents, injuries, congestion and pollution.
Tranquillity	Composite feature which seeks to characterise elements of wildness, solitude, peace and quiet, relating principally to low levels of built development, traffic, noise and artificial lighting.
Unimproved Grassland	Grassland consisting of native grasses and herbs which have not been significantly affected by treatment with mineral fertilizers, pesticides, intensive grazing or drainage.
Utilities	Organisations performing a public service i.e. Water, gas, electricity etc.
Veteran Tree	Tree which by virtue of its great age, size or condition, is of exceptional value whether in cultural terms, for its landscape contribution or for the benefit of wildlife. 'Great age' is further defined as an individual tree older than half the natural lifespan for that species.
Viewpoint	Publicly accessible positions from which particularly impressive scenic views can be enjoyed. Viewpoints are often associated with interpretive material.
Viewshed	<p>A North American concept for a discrete area which may be mapped or viewed from one or more viewpoints which has inherent scenic qualities and/or aesthetic values as determined by those who view it. The immediate foreground of a viewshed often enjoys more consideration than the far distance or background.</p> <p>Building on the concept of the 'Viewshed' recent work in England has developed the concept of a Strategic View which either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contains clear views of readily recognisable natural and/or built elements • has a role in defining the visual attractiveness, context or sense of place of an area • contain good examples of landscape unique to the area
Wetland	Transitional areas between wet and dry environments; wetlands range from permanently or intermittently wet land to shallow water and water margins. The term can include marshes, swamps, bogs, some shallow waters and the intertidal zones. When applied to surface waters, it is generally restricted to areas shallow enough to allow the growth of rooted plants.
Whole Farm Conservation Plans	Plans that consider individual farms as a whole, producing tailor-made conservation plans considering farm type, location and any particular wildlife value, identifying adjustments to management practices that can significantly benefit wildlife.
Wildlife Corridor	A continuous feature, normally broadly linear, which facilitates the movement of wildlife through rural or urban environments.
Woodland Grant Scheme	A scheme administered by the Forestry Commission to provide grants to help create new woodlands and to encourage the good management and regeneration of existing woodlands.
World Heritage Site	A UNESCO Convention on the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage which encourages the designation of cultural and natural heritage sites.

This page is intentionally left blank



Environmental Report for the
Strategic Environmental Assessment of the
North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural
Beauty Management Plan

June 2009

Contents

Executive Summary	2
1. Context.....	3
Introduction	3
The SEA process	3
Summary of the draft North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan	7
2. Environmental Baseline Information	7
3. Environmental Assessment of the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan	8
Assessment methodology.....	8
Overall assessment results.....	9
Commentary of the assessment results	11
Considerations of alternatives	15
4. Monitoring and Technical Review	15
Quality of existing baseline data	15
Commentary on baseline data and recommendations for actions to improve data for ongoing monitoring purposes	19
APPENDICES.....	21
Appendix A: Timetable.....	21
Appendix B: Relevant Legislation, Plans and Programmes	22
Appendix C: Baseline Environmental Data	30
Appendix D: SEA Environmental Objectives and Indicators.....	40
Appendix E: SEA Assessment Matrix	42
References.....	49

Executive Summary

Under the SEA Directive the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2009 – 2014 is subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment. This process requires that the key environmental aspects of the North Wessex Downs AONB are identified and a baseline assessment be made of these attributes. The environmental impact of the proposed Management Plan must then be assessed, and indicators for monitoring of the Management Plan must be formulated. The key environmental issues and proposed baseline measures were identified in the SEA Scoping Report published in July 2008. This Environmental Report fulfils the baseline and assessment requirements of the Directive.

The baseline data was gathered for a total of 33 indicators in total across the 15 SEA Objectives. Current trends and relevant comparisons were included where available and appropriate. The full baseline information has been included in Appendix C.

For the environmental assessment the 19 proposed objectives under the 8 Management Plan themes were each individually assessed to measure their impact on the 15 SEA Environmental Objectives, a total of 285 individual assessments. A six point scale of effects was employed, as recommended by Natural England. No negative or uncertain effects were noted, though just over a third of the objectives had neutral effect. The remaining had a positive effect, with just over a fifth scoring 'strongly supports'.

A second assessment was conducted to test the level of positive effects on each of the 15 SEA Objectives by the cumulative effects of the 19 Management Plan Objectives taken together, and to assess whether there were any significant omissions in terms of positive environment effects from the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan Objectives.

The results show that nine SEA Environmental Objectives each have a score of over the average for the combined positive effects. Two objectives, EO 1 (landscape character) and EO 14 (life and health) each have a score of over 80% for the combined positive results. Objective EO 15 (interrelationships) has a 100% score for the combined positive result. Six objectives each have a score of less than the Average though objective EO 12 (use natural resources) is just below the midpoint. Objective EO 8 (catchment processes) received the lowest score. No SEA Environmental Objectives received negative scores, the balance is made up of neutral effect scores.

A technical review of the data was conducted in order to assess the current quality of the individual indicators and to indicate how effective these are likely to be for the required monitoring purposes. Each of the 33 baseline and monitoring indicators was assessed against a five point scale ranging from 1, ('Fit for purpose') to 5 ('No available data'). The overall assessment of the baseline data is that it is weak. This has already been identified by the Council of Partners and steps are in hand to address the issue.

As there is a significant shortfall of data to support the chosen indicators, there is an urgent need for a data collection and assessment strategy. The opportunity should be taken to reassess the range and focus of the chosen indicators in order to concentrate only on those that will assist with the long term management of the North Wessex Downs AONB.

1. Context

Introduction

- 1.1. The review and refresh of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan is subject to a process of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). This Environmental Report sets out the findings of the Strategic Environmental Assessment. The SEA followed the requirements of the European Directive 2001/42/EC¹ and The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004². The objective of the SEA Directive is to:
“provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development”. (2001/42/EC Article 1).
- 1.2. Article 2(b) of the Directive defines “environmental assessment” as a procedure comprising:
 - Preparation of an Environmental Report on the likely significant effects of the draft plan or programme
 - Consultation on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying Environmental Report
 - Taking into account the Environmental Report and results of consultation in decision making
 - Provision of information when the plan or programme is adopted and showing how the results of the environmental assessment have been taken into account.
- 1.3. The methodology used for this assessment is based on the SEA of AONB Management Plan guidance published by Natural England in 2007³. It has also been informed by the Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive produced by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2005⁴.
- 1.4. The Assessment runs alongside the development of the Management Plan and is to ensure that proposed policies are subjected to a strategic level assessment of options and alternative courses of action, in order to avoid or mitigate any adverse effects.

The SEA process

- 1.5. The SEA process has been developed in parallel with the revision of the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan. The timetable for the Management Plan review can be found at Appendix A, showing how the SEA process matches that review. The Management Plan Scoping Review was published for consultation in April 2008. Following this consultation the SEA process started in July 2008, using the following stages:
 1. Screening whether plan is likely to have significant effects
 2. Setting the context and objectives, establishing baseline and deciding on the scope
 - Identifying other relevant plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives
 - Collecting baseline information
 - Identifying environmental problems
 - Developing SEA Environmental Objectives
 - Consulting on the scope of SEA
 3. Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects
 - Testing the plan objectives against the SEA objectives
 - Developing strategic alternatives

- Predicting the effects of the plan, including alternatives
 - Mitigating adverse effects
 - Proposing measures to monitor the environmental effects of plan implementation
4. Preparing the Environmental Report
 5. Consulting on the draft plan or programme and the Environmental Report
 - Consulting the public and Consultation bodies on the draft plan and the Environmental Report
 - Assessing significant changes
 - Making decisions and providing information
 5. Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the plan on the environment
 - Developing aims and methods for monitoring
 - Responding to adverse effects
- 1.6. The SEA Scoping Report (Stage 2) was published for consultation in July 2008. This Draft SEA Environmental Report fulfils Stages 3 and 4 of the SEA process. SEA Scoping Report consultation responses were received from two of the Statutory consultees, Natural England and English Heritage. The responses received referred specifically to issues within the Scoping Report. Consultation responses have been considered and used to inform relevant sections of the SEA Environmental Report (this document). In particular, an additional indicator has been added¹.
- 1.7. In order to guide the scope of the environmental assessment, the SEA Scoping Report was required to examine the Environmental Topics and Key Issues of concern within the North Wessex Downs AONB, along with an assessment of the potential issues and impacts likely to arise. These have been considered in the context of the relevant national, regional and local Policies and Plans which impact upon the environmental quality of the North Wessex Downs. (A list of the relevant Policies and Plans is available in Appendix B).
- 1.8. Twelve key Environmental Topics were identified:
1. Landscape character and land management
 2. Habitats and species
 3. Historic features and landscapes
 4. Geodiversity
 5. Soils
 6. Water quality and levels
 7. Population
 8. Air quality
 9. Climate
 10. Energy
 11. Access, recreation and tourism
 12. Built environment
- 1.9. The key Environmental Issues and Constraints associated with these Topics within the North Wessex Downs AONB were then identified. Table 1 contains a summary of these.

¹ Under EO6: Use of land, by ALC grade, for new development.

Table 1: SEA Environmental Topics and key Environmental Issues and Constraints

Resource	Key Issues or constraints
Landscape character and land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss/lack of management of characteristic features • Land use change (e.g. woodland planting/energy crops/horticulture) • Changes in land ownership • Renewable energy developments • Impact of development (including farm diversification) • Impact of infrastructure (including telecommunications) • Noise and light pollution • Impact of recreation and associated infrastructure
Habitats & species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of climate change • Incomplete data • Market forces v financial incentives • Management issues, including grazing, labour and infrastructure • Need to enhance UK BAP and UK/EU protected species • Fragmentation of habitat • Impact of non-native species • Impact of recreation • Impact of development • Impact of air and water pollution
Historic features and landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damage/lack of management • Incomplete data • Recreation pressure • Changes in land use (e.g. energy crops) • Impact of climate change • Impact of development • Impact from cultivation
Geodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geodiversity Action Plan
Soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts from cultivation/compaction • Impacts of recreation • impacts of new development • impacts of climate change
Water quality and levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diffuse and point source pollution • River modification • Catchment and flood management • Extraction • Impacts of recreation • impacts of new development • impacts of climate change
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of access to services and facilities • Lack of public transport • Need for opportunities for access to natural green space, particularly in nearby urban centres and urban fringe areas

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of aging population on communities and services • Impact of new development and associated light and noise pollution on quality of life • Impact of climate change • Lack of affordable housing • Impact of out commuters on communities, traffic and local services
Air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atmospheric pollution
Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of data • Impact of carbon emissions
Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts of renewable energy developments • Use of non-renewables
Access, recreation and tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on landscape and biodiversity • Impact of/opportunities through development • Conflicts with land management (e.g. grazing) • Pressure on heritage features • Impact on communities • Impact of traffic and other development • Lack of public transport and other facilities • Damage/lack of management • Lack of data/understanding/identity • Needs of emerging Destination Management Organisations
Built environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of understanding of settlement form, character and local vernacular • Impact of development on settlement character and landscape setting • Damage or decay of listed buildings and conservation areas • Impact of infilling – loss of greenspace • Associated impacts of lighting, noise, pollution • Loss of traditional shops and services • Impact of farm diversification on tradition farmsteads and their landscape setting • Need for provision of green infrastructure as part of new development

1.10. From this, the SEA Environmental Objectives were developed against which the Management Plan Objectives have been assessed. These objectives have been chosen to represent environmental concerns and are written to reflect the fact that in an environment assessment there is a need to explore whether the Management Plan Objectives, (or their absence), create adverse impacts on the special qualities of the North Wessex Downs AONB identified as Key Environmental Topics.

1.11. The SEA Environmental Objectives are:

- EO 1 To conserve and enhance landscape character and diversity
- EO 2 To conserve and enhance remoteness and tranquillity
- EO 3 To conserve and enhance biodiversity (habitats)
- EO 4 To conserve and enhance the full range of species which are characteristic of the area

- EO 5 To conserve and enhance archaeological, historic and cultural features, sites and landscapes and their setting
- EO 6 To conserve and enhance geo-diversity and soil quality
- EO 7 To safeguard the environmental quality of water resources
- EO 8 To maintain catchment processes and hydrological systems
- EO 9 To safeguard the environmental quality of air
- EO 10 To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vulnerability to the effects of climate change
- EO 11 To maintain and enhance opportunities for sustainable access to, and enjoyment of the countryside
- EO 12 To use natural resources/material assets in a sustainable manner
- EO 13 To maintain and enhance the quality of the built environment
- EO 14 To safeguard quality of life and human health
- EO 15 To avoid significant adverse effects between the above interrelationships

Summary of the draft North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan

- 1.12. The Management Plan sets out a framework that gives guidance and direction towards achieving the long term (twenty year) Vision for the North Wessex Downs AONB. The Management Plan, and progress towards the Vision, is underpinned by a set of thematic aims. The Management Plan establishes a set of objectives, policies and actions to guide progress towards the Vision within the five year lifespan of the plan. The Management Plan objectives are presented under eight themes developed from the Aims:
- Landscape
 - Land management
 - Biodiversity
 - Historic Environment
 - Natural Resources
 - Development
 - Communities
 - Leisure and Tourism
- 1.13. The Draft Management Plan contains 19 objectives across the thematic chapters. A full list of these objectives is contained in the SEA Assessment Matrix.
- 1.14. For each of the Management Plan Objectives a set of Policies and Actions has been developed to outline how the Management Plan Objectives will be put into effect over the 5 year lifespan of the plan. The full list of Management Plan Objectives and Action Points are published in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2009-14 Consultation Draft 2009⁵.

2. Environmental Baseline Information

- 2.1. The SEA Directive requires detailed baseline information to be gathered as part of the assessment process. Information must be gathered on “relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan” and the “environmental characteristics of the areas likely to be significantly affected” (Annex I (b) (c)).
- 2.2. The baseline data is also required to highlight “any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC (Birds Directive) and 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive)” (Annex I (c)).
- 2.3. The baseline indicators were selected to represent the Key Environmental Topics defined at the Scoping Report stage and are intended to provide a snapshot of the

current state of the North Wessex Downs AONB along with providing the means for long term monitoring of the environmental impacts of the Management Plan objectives.

- 2.4. The full table of baseline information can be found in Appendix C. It shows the individual indicators that have been selected to monitor change over the period of the Management Plan. Where available, details of trends and relevant comparators are included. Appendix D presents 33 key indicators, grouped under the 15 SEA Environmental Objectives, to bring together groups of individual indicators found in the base-line table.
- 2.5. As far as possible all the data has been taken from original sources and is the most recent data currently available. In many cases it has proved not possible to gather the required information due to a lack of source data, while in other cases the data that does exist does not conform to the North Wessex Downs AONB boundaries. The Council of Partners is aware of this deficiency and is reviewing the situation and will confirm the relevant data set in the coming year. Brief comments have been included in the baseline data table on the source and quality of the data, and where required data is currently unavailable. More detailed discussion of issues of data quality and availability can be found in the Monitoring and Technical Review chapter of this report.

3. Environmental Assessment of the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan

Assessment methodology

- 3.1. The Management Plan Objectives were subjected to a systematic two stage assessment against the SEA Environmental Objectives identified in the Scoping Report. For the first stage, each of the Management Plan Objectives (along with each of the policies and actions outlined for the delivery of the particular Objective) was individually assessed against the 15 SEA Environmental Objectives. The assessment of the impact of the individual Objectives on the environment was quantified according to the six point scale recommended by the Natural England guidance.
- 3.2. For the purposes of this SEA the six point scale was as follows:
 - Strongly supports the SEA Environmental Objective
 - Supports the SEA Environmental Objective
 - Is neutral in effect
 - Potentially works against the SEA Environmental Objective
 - Strongly works against the SEA Environmental Objective
 - Effects uncertain
- 3.3. This assessment followed four key steps –
 - i. Defining the likely environmental outcomes arising from the Management Plan.
 - ii. Identifying the Key Environmental Topics and Issues likely to be affected.
 - iii. Identifying the baseline indicators likely to be affected.
 - iv. Subjective qualitative assessments of the Management Plan Objectives on the relevant SEA Environmental Objectives.

There is a weakness in step iii, as the set of baseline indicators is not complete. As a result, greater weight was put on a subjective assessment of the implications of implementing the stated policies and actions for each objective. This assessment identified the effects of the individual objectives within the Management Plan on the environmental issues underlying the SEA Environmental Objectives.

- 3.4. A second stage assessment was applied because AONB Management Plans are presumed to be beneficial to the environment and are unlikely to show negative effects. In order to test for possible omissions from the Management Plan and to examine whether its positive environmental effect is too limited, a second assessment was carried out on the cumulative impacts of all 19 Management Plan Objectives on each of the 15 SEA Environmental Objectives. For this the total impact on each of the SEA Environmental Objectives, taken from the first stage assessment, was summarised and assessed. The results of each Management Plan Objective was combined under their respective themes and the score for each theme under each SEA Environmental Objective was calculated and expressed as a percentage of the total.
- 3.5. The guidance suggests that a third stage test should be applied, namely an assessment as to the projected impact on the environment of not proceeding with the plan or programme. There is a statutory duty to produce the Management Plan and, under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, it is 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.
- 3.6. There is a risk that the partners will choose not to adopt the Management Plan as presented. That risk is low, given the process of consultation and partnership deployed in drawing up the plan. A full analysis has not been undertaken because of the low risk and because there are a range of other plans and strategies that support actions in the area (see Appendix B). It would be a significant task to test each of these strategies against the SEA Environmental Objectives. However, should the Management Plan be set aside then there would be a significant gap in the coordination of action, given that that was the underlying purpose of establishing the AONB Partynership.

Overall assessment results

3.7. The full results for the assessment of each of the individual Management Plan Objectives are shown in the SEA Assessment Matrix found in Appendix E. The assessment matrix of the 19 Management Plan Objectives against the 15 SEA Environmental Objectives shows in total:

- 27% of the entries strongly supporting the SEA Environmental Objective;
- 38.3% supporting the SEA Environmental Objective; and
- 34.7% having a neutral effect.

There were no negative or uncertain effects noted. Overall, just over 65% of the entries were assessed as having a level of positive environmental benefit.

3.8. The results of the secondary assessment are shown in Table 2 below. These show that the cumulative effect of all 19 Management Plan Objectives on the individual SEA Environmental Objectives is broadly positive.

SEA Environmental Objective	Strongly Supportive	Supportive	Combined Supportive	Neutral	Against	Strongly Against	Uncertain
EO 1 landscape character	57.9%	31.6%	89.5%	10.5%	0	0	0
EO 2 remoteness and tranquillity	21.1%	52.6%	73.7%	26.3%	0	0	0

EO 3 biodiversity (habitats)	15.8%	52.6%	68.4%	31.6%	0	0	0
EO 4 full range of species	21.05%	21.05%	42.1%	57.9%	0	0	0
EO 5 historic and cultural	36.8%	42.1%	78.9%	21.1%	0	0	0
EO 6 geo-diversity and soil	15.8%	31.6%	47.4%	52.6%	0	0	0
EO 7 water resources	15.8%	26.3%	42.1%	57.9%	0	0	0
EO 8 catchment processes	5.2%	21.1%	26.3%	73.7%	0	0	0
EO 9 quality of air	10.5%	31.6%	42.1%	57.9%	0	0	0
EO 10 emissions and climate change	26.3%	47.4%	73.7%	26.3%	0	0	0
EO 11 access and enjoyment	31.6%	42.1%	73.7%	26.3%	0	0	0
EO 12 use natural resources	26.3%	31.6%	57.9%	42.1%	0	0	0
EO 13 built environment	42.1%	36.8%	78.9%	21.1%	0	0	0
EO 14 life and health	21.1%	63.1%	84.2%	15.8%	0	0	0
EO 15 interrelationships	57.9%	42.1%	100%	0	0	0	0
		Average =	65.26%				

- 3.9. The Average % point for the combined positive results is 65.26%. The results show that 9 SEA Environmental Objectives each have a score of over the average for the combined positive effects. Two objectives, EO 1 (landscape character) and EO 14 (life and health) each have a score of over 80% for the combined positive results. Objective EO 15 (interrelationships) has a 100% score for the combined positive result.
- 3.10. Six objectives each have a score of less than the Average. Objective EO 12 (use natural resources) narrowly misses the midpoint with a score of 57.9%. Objective EO 8 (catchment processes) received the lowest score (26.3% for combined positive results).
- 3.11. No SEA Environmental Objectives received negative scores, the balance is made up of neutral effect scores.
- 3.12. Table 3 sets out a comparison of the supportive and neutral contributions each Management Theme makes to the achievement of the SEA Environmental Objectives (in total). The Average % point for the combined positive results is 65.65%. There are no negative contributions. The most positive actions are to be found under the Land Management, Landscape and Development Themes and these three are the only themes above the average. The most neutral contribution comes

from the Historic Environment, closely followed by Biodiversity and Natural Resources Themes.

MP Theme	Strongly Supportive	Supportive	Combined Supportive	Neutral	Against	Strongly Against	Uncertain
Landscape	23.3%	53.4%	76.7%	23.3%	0	0	0
Land Management	28.9%	53.3%	82.2%	17.8%	0	0	0
Biodiversity	20%	33.3%	53.3%	46.7%	0	0	0
Historic Environment	31.1%	9%	40.1%	48.9%	0	0	0
Natural Resources	20%	33.3%	53.3%	46.7%	0	0	0
Development	37.8%	37.8%	75.6%	24.4%	0	0	0
Communities	26.7%	33.3%	60%	40%	0	0	0
Leisure & Tourism	16.7%	43.3%	60%	40%	0	0	0
		Average =	62.65%				
Combined Scores	27%	38.3%	65.3%	34.7%	0	0	0

Commentary of the assessment results

BY ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVE:

General

- 3.13. Table 4 sets out the percentage for each SEA Objective of the total score achieved, ranked from the highest to the lowest. If all the objectives had received equal scores then the percentage for each would be 6.6%. Eight of the fifteen objectives received more than this, with EO 15 (interrelationships) receiving the greatest score (11.7%). EO 8 (catchment processes) received the lowest (2%).

Rank	SEA Environmental Objective	% of total SEA Objective score
1	EO 15 interrelationships	11.7
2	EO 1 landscape character	10.4
3	EO 13 built environment	9.2
4a	EO 5 historic and cultural	8.1
4b	EO 11 access and enjoyment	8.1
4c	EO 14 life and health	8.1
5	EO 2 remoteness and tranquillity	7.6

6	EO 10 emissions and climate change	7.2
7	EO 3 biodiversity (habitats)	6.4
8	EO 12 use natural resources	6
9a	EO 4 full range of species	4
9b	EO 6 geo-diversity and soil	4
10a	EO 7 water resources	3.6
10b	EO 9 quality of air	3.6
11	EO 8 catchment processes	2
		100

EO 15 interrelationships

3.14. This objective secured the greatest score. It figured prominently throughout the Management Plan Themes, which is a reflection of the prime purpose of the document; to co-ordinate actions across the area.

EO 1 landscape character

3.15. This objective shows the second highest score (10.4%), reflecting the central role of landscape in a Management Plan for an AONB.

EO 13 built environment and EO 5 historic and cultural

3.16. EO 13 (built environment) came third (9.2%), reflecting the significance given to the planning system in the area. The strength of this objective compliments the score achieved under EO 5 (historic and cultural) (8.1%), as there is some duplication between them.

EO 11 access and enjoyment and EO 14 life and health

3.17. As with EO 5 (historic and culture), these two objectives each scored 8.1%, suggesting a significant contribution across the plan for these objectives.

EO 2 remoteness and tranquillity

3.18. E) 2 (remoteness and tranquillity) scored above the average at 7.6%.

EO 10 emissions and climate change

3.19. With a score of 7.2%, this shows a response to the forces for change identified in the Management Plan. Climate change was highlighted as an issue and this is rightly reflected in the policies and actions.

EO 3 biodiversity (habitats)

3.20. EO 3 (biodiversity) is the first objective to lie below the average, though at 6.4% it is only just below the line. This score is influenced by EO 4 (full range of species), a fairer reflection may be achieved by combining their score. The objectives as drafted are quite narrow but a higher score could have been expected.

EO 12 use natural resources

3.21. A score of 6% is indicative of a topic treated narrowly within the management plan. Some of the actions are shared with EO 7, EO 8 and EO 9 (all of which get low scores).

EO 4 full range of species and EO 6 geo-diversity and soil

3.22. These objectives each have a score of 4%. They are only addressed in a few of the Management Plan Themes. This is a reflection of their narrow definition and specialist nature combined with the comment above (under EO 3). Therefore the relatively low score is not unexpected.

EO 7 water resources and EO 9 quality of air

3.23. These objective shows a score of only 3.6%. EO 9 (quality of air) is an ambitious objective to set for a plan with the primary purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty. Primary actions to safeguard air will be taken by agencies outside the North Wessex Downs AONB and the score assigned to this objective may be a realistic assessment of what can be expected of a landscape management plan.

3.24. EO 7 water resources may be better combined with EO 8 as discussed in the next paragraph.

EO 8 catchment processes

3.25. Catchment processes and hydrological systems (EO 8) have the lowest percentage score (2%). They are an important element in the North Wessex Downs and deserve recognition within the Management Plan but it is possible that the actions are picked up under EO 7 (quality of water resources). It may be that there is duplication between these two SEA Environmental Objectives and they could usefully be amalgamated.

BY THEME:

General

3.26. Table 5 sets out the percentage for each Management Plan Theme of the total score for SEA Objectives achieved, ranked from the highest to the lowest. If all the objectives had received equal scores then the percentage for each would be 12.5%. Four of the eight themes received more than this, four received less. The Development Theme received the greatest score (21.7%), the Biodiversity Theme secured the least (4.4%).

Table 5: Contributions to SEA Objectives by MP Theme		
Rank	MP Theme	% MP Theme score of total for SEA Objectives
1	Development	21.7
2	Communities	16.1
3	Historic Environment	14.9
4	Land Management	12.9
5	Landscape	12
6	Leisure & Tourism	9.2
7	Natural Resources	8.8
8	Biodiversity	4.4

Development

3.27. This theme scored the highest at 21.7% of the total score. But there were 2 SEA Environmental Objectives to which it made no positive contribution (EO 4 full range of species and EO 8 catchment processes). It was highest in EO 2 (remoteness and tranquillity) at 26.3%; EO 3 (biodiversity) at 31.25%; EO 12 (use natural resources) at 33.3%; and EO 13 (built environment) at 26%. This reflects the importance of the planning system in the management of the AONB. It was joint-highest for EO 5 (historic and cultural) at 30% with Historic Environment; EO 10 (emissions and climate change) at 27.8% with Communities. These scores are not unexpected, given the nature of the theme.

Communities

3.28. This theme scored 16.1%. Five SEA Environmental Objectives are marked as receiving no impact (EO3 biodiversity; EO 4 full range of species; EO 6 geo-diversity; EO 7 water resources; and EO 8 catchment processes) but this is not unexpected given the nature of the topics. It was highest for EO 9 (air quality) at 44.4% and EO 14 (life and health) at 30%; coming joint-highest for EO 10 (emissions and climate change) at 27.8%, equal with Development. This reflects the links through to actions with local people.

Historic Environment

3.29. Ranked third, this theme scored 14.9% of the total for the SEA Environmental Objectives. Six objectives are marked as receiving no impact (EO 4 full range of species; EO 6 geo-diversity; EO 7 water resources; EO 8 catchment processes; EO 9 air quality; and EO 10 emissions and climate change). Given the specify nature of these objectives, it is not surprising that they are not picked up under the Historic Environment Theme. The theme scored the highest for EO 1 (landscape character) at 23%; EO 11 access and enjoyment at 25%; and EO 15 interrelationships at 20.7%. It was joint-highest for EO 5 (historic and cultural) with Development at 30%.

Land management

3.30. This theme scored 12.9%, close to the average, showing that it contributes to all SEA Environmental Objectives. It scored highest for EO 4 (full range of species) at 30% and joint-highest for EO 6 (geo-diversity and soil) at 30% with Natural Resources.

Landscape

3.31. Landscape scored 12%, just below the average. The theme showed no impact upon three SEA Environmental Objectives (EO 8 catchment processes; EO 9 air quality; and EO 12 use of natural resources). Surprisingly, the theme did not score the highest under any SEA Environmental Objective. This may be because the landscape theme underpins all of the other themes and that the actions are presented under them.

Leisure and Tourism

3.32. This theme was received 9.2% of the score. Four SEA Environmental Objectives are marked as receiving no impact (EO 6 geo-diversity; EO 7 quality of water resources; EO 8 catchment processes; and EO 12 use natural resources). The theme did not score highest under and SEA Objective.

Natural Resources

- 3.33. Natural resources scored 8.8% of the score. There were five SEA Objectives upon which it made no impact (EO 1 landscape character; EO 2 remoteness and tranquillity; EO 5 historic and cultural; EO 9 air quality; and EO 13 built environment. With the exception of EO 9, these are unexpected given the nature of the theme. The strength of this theme lies under EO 8 (catchment processes), receiving by far the highest score (60%). It was highest for EO 7 (water resources) at 33.3%. The theme was joint-highest for EO 6 (geo-diversity and soil) at 30% with Land Management.

Biodiversity

- 3.34. Biodiversity only scored 4.4% of the total with no impact recorded for seven of the SEA Environmental Objectives (EO 2 remoteness and tranquillity; EO 5 historic and cultural; EO 9 air quality; EO 11 access and enjoyment; EO 12 use natural resources; EO 13 built environment; and EO 14 life and health). The low score reflects the narrow interpretation of the theme.

Considerations of alternatives

- 3.35. SEA guidance requires that where there are potentially adverse effects arising from the plan or policy, these must be subject to a process of review to establish whether there are viable alternative courses of action that could be taken to remove the threat of any adverse effect on the identified environmental assets of the area.
- 3.36. The assessment has not identified any adverse effects arising from the Management Plan Objectives and so no consideration of alternatives was completed.
- 3.37. Just over a third (34.7%) of the Management Plan Objectives are marked as having a neutral effect upon the SEA Environmental Objectives. This is probably reasonable, given the specific nature of some of the objectives. Thought could be given to combining some of the SEA Environmental Objectives as some areas are very tightly defined so as to exclude some theme area. Enhancing these elements may secure more positive scores. A strengthening of actions in response to climate change, globalisation and social issues should be considered during the consultation stage. This may increase the positive scores for EO 4 (full range of species), EO 6 (geo-diversity and soil), EO 8 (catchment processes) and EO 9 (quality of air).

4. Monitoring and Technical Review

Quality of existing baseline data

- 4.1. The prime purpose of the SEA process is to review the potential impacts of the Management Plan on the key environmental aspects of the North Wessex Downs AONB but there is also a requirement to monitor the implementation of the Management Plan and its impact on the environment over time. The SEA helps set a framework to monitor the effectiveness of the Management Plan policies and activities.
- 4.2. The baseline indicators (see Appendix C) have been selected with this in mind. As well as providing a baseline 'state of the environment' report, they will be developed into an effective set of monitoring data. As far as possible the indicators selected during the SEA Scoping Report stage and amended following consultation have been chosen to represent robust and available data sources that are likely to be available throughout the lifetime of the Management Plan and beyond.
- 4.3. Many of the required data sets are not currently available or are of poor quality. A 5-point quality scale has been used to assess the quality of each indicator (Table 6). It identifies where required data is weak or absent, so providing a framework for future data collection.

Table 6: Indicator 5-point quality scale			<i>Comment</i>
1	Fit for purpose		
2	Adequate	Some minor improvements desirable	
3	Indicative only		Not considered accurate
4	Inadequate	Little relevance to North Wessex Downs AONB	
5	Absent		No available data

4.4. Table 7 shows the assessment of each of the indicators against the five point scale:

Table 7: Assessment of SEA Indicators				
Objectives		Indicators	Quality Assessment	Comment
EO 1	To conserve and enhance landscape character and diversity	Change in land use and management patterns	2	Range of data available, no trends plotted.
		Change in locally distinctive landscape features (incl. condition)	5	No data currently exists.
		Changes in key strategic views	5	No data currently exists.
EO 2	To conserve and enhance remoteness and tranquillity	Proportion of tranquil areas	5	No data on noise and engineering. No mapping.
		Change in extent of dark night skies	2	Maps for 1993 & 2000 exist
EO 3	To conserve and enhance biodiversity (habitats)	Change in BAP habitats	5	No data presented
		Change in extent and condition of designated wildlife sites	1	
		Change in extent and condition of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland/PAWs	1	
EO 4	To conserve and enhance the full range of species which are characteristic of the area	Changes to populations of priority species and/or associated habitats	5	No data presented, will be held by a third party.
EO 5	To conserve and enhance archaeological, historic and cultural features, sites and landscapes and their setting	% SAMs in favourable condition	2	Numbers not presented but held by a third party.
		% Parks and Gardens at risk	5	No data presented but is held by a third party.
		% Battlefields at risk	5	No data presented but is held by a third party.

				party.
		Condition of historic routeways	5	No data presented
		No. sites/area of historic landscape under ES/CSS agreements	5	No data presented but is held by a third party.
EO 6	To conserve and enhance geo-diversity and soil quality	Change in condition of RIGS or SSSIs with geological importance	5	No data presented. SSSIs included above – needs dissemination, RIGS data may be held by a third party.
		Change in levels of diffuse pollution	5	No data presented
		Use of land, by ALC grade, for new development	5	No data presented
EO 7	To safeguard the environmental quality of water resources	Change in condition/extent of river/catchment SSSI	5	No data presented but will be included in data above – needs dissemination.
		Number of pollution incidents	5	No data presented, will be held by a third party. NWD AONB boundary may be an issue.
		Change in levels of diffuse pollution	5	No data presented
EO 8	To maintain catchment processes and hydrological systems	Annual river flows	5	No data presented, will be held by a third party. NWD AONB boundary may be an issue.
		No. of flood incidents	5	No data presented, will be held by a third party. NWD AONB boundary may be an issue.
		Water licensed for abstraction/uptake of licences	5	No data presented, will be held by a third party. NWD AONB boundary may be an issue.
EO 9	To safeguard the environmental quality of air	Air quality data/pollution incidents	5	No data presented, will be held by a third party. NWD AONB boundary may be an issue.
		Changes to distances travelled to work and to key services	5	No data presented, will be held by a third party.
		Changes to traffic volumes	5	No data presented, will be held by a third

				party.
EO 10	To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vulnerability to the effects of climate change	Number, type and capacity of renewable energy projects	5	No data presented, will be held by third parties.
		Change in area under biomass/bio-fuel crops	5	No data presented
		Implementation of Green Infrastructure/ecological framework strategies	5	No data presented, may be held by third parties.
EO 11	To maintain and enhance opportunities for sustainable access to, and enjoyment of the countryside	% PRoW in favourable condition	5	No data presented, will be held by third parties.
		Extent and quality of access to natural green space	5	No data presented, may be held by third parties.
EO 12	To use natural resources/material assets in a sustainable manner	Number, type and capacity of renewable energy projects	5	No data presented, will be held by third parties.
		% waste recycled	5	No data presented, will be held by third parties but NWD AONB boundary an issue.
EO 13	To maintain and enhance the quality of the built environment	% Listed buildings at risk	5	No data presented, will be held by a third party.
		Housing	5	No data presented and it is not clear what is to be measured.
		% Conservation Areas at risk	5	No data presented, will be held by a third party.
		Number of conservation area appraisal completed or reviewed in the last 5 years	5	No data presented, may be held by a third party.
EO 14	To safeguard quality of life and human health	Size and nature of population	5	No data presented – Census Data available down to Parish level (not a clear match to NWD AONB boundary)
		Proportion of tranquil areas	5	No data on noise and engineering. No mapping.
		Extent and quality of access to natural green space	5	No data presented, may be held by third parties.
		Changes to distances travelled to work and to key services	5	No data presented, will be held by a third party.

EO 15	To avoid significant adverse effects between the above interrelationships			
-------	---	--	--	--

Commentary on baseline data and recommendations for actions to improve data for ongoing monitoring purposes

- 4.5. Only the first 5 of the 15 Environmental Objectives (EO1-EO5) have indicators where data has been presented. The remaining 10 Environmental Objectives have not yet been populated with data. The Council of Partners is aware of this deficiency and is undertaking a study during the coming year to confirm which indicators can be brought to bear. Many organisations already collect data and there will be opportunities to secure material relevant to the North Wessex Downs.
- 4.6. EO1 (landscape character) – There is a reasonable data set available for land use and land use changes, though no trend data has been presented. No data is presented for changes to the distinctive features or strategic views within the North Wessex Downs. Proposed work on a landscape assessment for the area could help address this shortfall, as could a development of the Historic Landscape Characterisation monitoring programme. Overall, the data set is weak.
- 4.7. EO2 (remoteness and tranquillity) – The data for night skies is strong, made up of a set of night light maps. There is a need to add the surface area of the North Wessex Downs AONB covered by each map to assess changes in light emissions. Other aspects of tranquillity (such as noise and power-lines) have not been presented; and may not be readily available. The highway authorities may have the appropriate modelling tools based upon their traffic data. Other aspects need a desk top study. Overall, the data set is weak.
- 4.8. EO3 (biodiversity) – The data presented for statutory sites is strong. A weakness lies with other sites and habitats. Material may be held by local authority ecologists and the County Wildlife Trusts. Data will be available for BAP habitats. This may vary between counties and there may be a need for additional updated phase 2 surveys so there is consistent data across the AONB. Notwithstanding this short fall, the data is strong enough to monitor effectiveness, assuming that the statutory sites are representative of the area.
- 4.9. EO4 (full range of species) – No data is presented for this objective. Material is held by a range of bodies such as, Biological Records Centres, Wildlife Trusts, Natural England, RSPB and local authorities but species data will vary depending on the sources/records of information available through bodies. The AONB needs to agree a list of priority species relevant to the area which can be monitored easily. Overall, the data set is weak.
- 4.10. EO5 (historic and cultural) – Only limited data is presented, though it is known that English Heritage and the local authorities do hold material needed to support the indicators. The condition of the Scheduled Ancient Monuments is presented but not the number or area of the North Wessex Downs covered. Natural England has data on historic sites under Environmental Stewardship/Countryside Stewardship. There is scope for enhancing the data set by using material from the Historic Landscape Characterisation. This is being considered by the Council of Partners. Overall, the data set is weak but can quickly be strengthened.
- 4.11. For the remaining Environmental Objectives, the work required to secure data has not been completed. The data is not held by the AONB Team and they will need the support of the statutory agencies and key stakeholders if the indicators are to

become meaningful. Much of the data is held by third parties but is readily available. Some effort will be required to fit the data sets to the North Wessex Downs AONB boundary. In many cases, a 'near-fit' (such as parish boundary) will be quite acceptable, provided that this is noted and used consistently over time.

Conclusion

- 4.12. The overall assessment of the baseline data is that it is weak. As there is a significant shortfall of data to support the chosen indicators, there is an urgent need for a data collection and assessment strategy. The opportunity should be taken to reassess the range and focus of the chosen indicators in order to concentrate only on those that will assist with the long term management of the North Wessex Downs AONB.

APPENDICIES

Appendix A: Timetable

North Wessex Downs AONB - Management Plan Review Timetable																								
	2008												2009											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Notification to NE of MP review																								
Notification of SEA/SA																								
Review SEA/SA scoping report																								
Review of current Man Plan																								
EXECUTIVE - review report of current Man Plan and SEA																								
COUNCIL OF PARTNERS																								
External consultation on review report																								
External consultation on and amendments to SEA/SA report																								
EXECUTIVE - consider revised SEA and review plan following consultation responses																								
COUNCIL OF PARTNERS																								
Draft SEA/SA assessment report																								
Appropriate Assessment																								
Write draft Plan																								
Write draft SEA/SA environmental report																								
EXECUTIVE - submit final SEA report and draft plan																								
COUNCIL OF PARTNERS																								
Consultation - on draft review and SEA/SA report																								
Schedule of Modifications developed																								
EXECUTIVE - Approval of final reports and consultation																								
COUNCIL OF PARTNERS - Approval of Plan																								
Adoption by Local Authorities																								
Plan to Secretary of State																								
Launch of Plan / Local Auth Seminar																								

Appendix B: Relevant Legislation, Plans and Programmes

Relevant International, National, Regional and Local Legislation, Plans and Programmes
INTERNATIONAL
Agenda 21 (1992) http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2742
The Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Adopted December 1997)
Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (adopted by UNESCO in 1972).
EUROPEAN
Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage of Europe (revised) (Valletta, 1992) http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/conventions/Heritage/valletta_en.asp#TopOfPage
EC DIRECTIVE 2003/4/EC on public access to environmental information (2003)
The Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) (1979) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/nature_conservation/eu_nature_legislation/birds_directive/index_en.htm
The Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC) (2002) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/noise/home.htm
The European Landscape Convention (entered force March 1 st 2004)
The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) (1992) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/nature_conservation/eu_nature_legislation/habitats_directive/index_en.htm
The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC) (2001) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/home.htm
The Waste Framework Directive (75/442/EEC) (October 2000) http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/consleg/pdf/1975/en_1975L0442_do_001.pdf
The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) (2000) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/index_en.html
UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters 'The Aarhus Convention' (June 1998)
NATIONAL
LEGISLATION
Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. (2000) http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000037.htm
Heritage Protection Bill (Draft) DCMS (2008) http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Publications/archive_2008/pub_draftpb.htm?contextid=%7bE1CC8501-8793-4EF9-AD40-0BB73D05A11D
Housing Act (2004) http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2004/20040034.htm
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 , Section 40 which requires that "every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity".
Secure and Sustainable Buildings Act (2004)

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/20040022.htm
Sustainable Energy Act Department for Trade and Industry (2003) http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2003/20030030.htm
Traffic Management Act (2004) http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2004/20040018.htm
Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) (1981) http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-3614
Planning Policy
PPG 13: Transport Department for Communities and Local Government (2001) http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1144014
PPG 14: Development on Unstable Land Department for Communities and Local Government (1990) http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1144025
PPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment Department for Communities and Local Government (1994) http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1144041
PPG 16: Archaeology and Planning Department for Communities and Local Government (1990) http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1144057
PPG 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation Department for Communities and Local Government (2002) http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1144066
PPG 24: Planning and Noise Department for Communities and Local Government (1994) http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1144098
PPG 5: Simplified Planning Zones Department for Communities and Local Government (1992) http://www.communities.gov.uk/embedded_object.asp?id=1143961
PPG 8: Telecommunications Department for Communities and Local Government (2001) http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1143963
PPS 1: Delivering Sustainable Development Department for Communities and Local Government (2005) (Supplement to PPS1 Planning and Climate Change (December 2007)) http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1143804
PPS 10; Planning for Sustainable Waste Management Department for Communities and Local Government (2005) http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1501865
PPS 11: Regional Spatial Strategies Department for Communities and Local Government (2004) http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1143839
PPS 12: Local Spatial Planning Department for Communities and Local Government (2008) http://www.communities.gov.uk/archived/publications/planningandbuilding/pps12ldf
PPS 22: Renewable Energy Department for Communities and Local Government (2004) http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1143908
PPS 23: Planning and Pollution Control Department for Communities and Local Government (2004) http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1143916
PPS 25: Development and Flood Risk Department for Communities and Local Government (2006) http://www.communities.gov.uk/
PPS 3: Housing Department for Communities and Local Government (2006) http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1504592
PPS 4: Planning for Prosperity Department for Communities and Local Government (2009) http://www.communities.gov.uk/
PPS 6: Planning for Town Centres Department for Communities and Local Government (2005) http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1501955
PPS 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation Department for Communities and Local Government (2005) http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1501970
PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas Department for Communities and Local Government (2004) http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1143824

PLANS AND POLICY DOCUMENTS
Basingstoke and Dean Borough Council, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Landscape and Biodiversity Draft Supplementary Planning Document (2007)
Basingstoke and Dean Borough Council, Borough Rural Strategy http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/CFACA963-AF81-47D5-86C3-B5A5CBD5A199/0/rural_strategy.pdf
Basingstoke and Dean Borough Council, Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Draft Scoping Report (2007) http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/539F5E05-4520-4613-9ACF-9C58746B1081/0/12526CoreStrategySAscoping2.pdf
Berkshire BAPS - http://www.berksbap.org/
Berkshire County Council, Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (2003)
Berkshire County Council, Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan
Berkshire County Council, Berkshire Structure Plan - saved policies
Berkshire West PCT, The Health of the Population of Berkshire West 2007 http://www.berkshirewest-pct.nhs.uk/_store/documents/thehealthofthepopulationofberkshirewest2007hna.pdf
Culture South West, South West Culture Strategy - In search of chunky Dunsters (2000) www.culturesouthwest.org.uk/downloads
Defra, A Strategy for Non Food Crops and Uses Creating Value from Renewable Materials (2004) http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/crops/industrial/pdf/nfc-strategy.pdf
Defra, Agricultural Waste Regulations DEFRA (2006) http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/topics/agwaste.htm
Defra, Farming and Food: Our Healthy Future Delivery Plan for Sustainable Farming and Food Delivery Plan in the South East and London (2003)
Defra, Strategy for sustainable food and farming - SW Delivery Plan www.defra.gov.uk/farm/sustain/newstrategy/index.htm
Defra, The UK Climate Change Programme (2006) http://www.defra.gov.uk/ENVIRONMENT/climatechange/uk/ukccp/index.htm
Defra, The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy: Securing the Future (2005) http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/pdf/strategy/SecFut_complete.pdf
Defra, UK Biodiversity Action Plan UK Biodiversity Partnership (1994) www.ukbap.org.uk
Defra, UK Biomass Strategy (May 2007) http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/energy/renewablefuel/pdf/ukbiomassstrategy-0507.pdf
Defra, Working With the Grain of Nature: a Biodiversity Strategy for England (2002) http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/biodiversity/biostrat/index.htm
Department for Communities and Local Government “From Crises to Cutting Edge”: Draft Regional Transport Strategy (Proposed Alterations to RPG9) (2004) http://www.gos.gov.uk/gose/docs/171301/311174/RPG9AmendChap9.pdf
Department for Communities and Local Government No Time to Waste – Regional Waste Management Strategy (Proposed Alterations to RPG9)
Department for Communities and Local Government Regional Minerals Strategy (Proposed Alterations to RPG9) (2006) http://www.gose.gov.uk/gose/docs/167059/422271
Department for Communities and Local Government, RPG 9 Regional Planning Framework for the South East. (2001) http://www.gos.gov.uk/gose/docs/171301/311174/RPG9March2001.pdf

Department for Communities and Local Government, South West Regional Planning Guidance (RPG10) (2001) http://www.gosw.gov.uk/gosw/docs/166217/regional_planning_guidance
Department for Communities and Local Government, Sustainable Communities in the South East: Building for the future (2003) http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1163452
Department for Communities and Local Government, Sustainable Communities in the South East: Building for the future (2003) http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1163452
Department for Communities and Local Government, The South East Plan - Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of England (May 2009)
Department for Health, The Public Health White Paper: Choosing Health- Making Health Choices Easier (2004) http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4094550&chk=aN5Cor
Department for Transport, The Aviation White Paper: The Future of Air Transport. (2003) http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_aviation/documents/divisionhomepage/029650.hcsp
Department for Transport, The Future of Transport White Paper: A network for 2030 (2004) http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_about/documents/page/dft_about_031286.pdf
Department for Transport, The Transport White Paper: A New Deal for Transport (1998) http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_about/documents/page/dft_about_610276.hcsp
Department for Work and Pensions, UK National Action Plan for Employment (2004) http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2004/uk_action_plan/ukeep.pdf
Department of Culture, Media and Sport, Game Plan: A Strategy For Delivering Government's Sport and Physical Activity Objectives Social Exclusion Unit, (2002) http://www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/html/gameplan.html
Department of Culture, Media and Sport, The Historic Environment: A Force for Our Future (2001) http://www.culture.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/EB6ED76A-E1C6-4DB0-BFF7-7086D1CEFB9A/0/historic_environment_review_part1.pdf
English Heritage, Avebury World Heritage Site Management Plan (2005) http://www.english.gov.uk/archcom/projects/summaries/html98_9/2257aveb.htm#a2
English Heritage, Heritage Counts, South East (2006) http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/hc2006/server/show/nav.10740
English Heritage, Strategy for the Historic Environment in the South West (2004) www.english-heritage.org.uk
Environment Agency, Oxfordshire Local Environment Agency Plan
Environment Agency, State of the South West Environment Report (2006) http://www.swenvo.org.uk/publications/SOE_2006.asp
Environment Agency, The State of the Environment, South East, 2007 (2007) http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/regions/southern/1168940/
Forestry Commission, Seeing the Wood for the Trees – A Forestry and Woodlands Framework in the South East (2004) http://www.forestry.gov.uk/seeingthewoodforthetrees
Forestry Commission, SW regional woodlands and forestry framework 2005- 2015 (2005) http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-67ecty
Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism (May 2006)
Government Office South East, South East Workforce Skills Programme Learning and Skills Council/SEEDA (April 2003) http://www.go-se.gov.uk/gose/educationSkills/skills/workforceSkillsProg/

Hampshire County Council, Hampshire Downs Countryside Access Plan – Draft 2007 http://www3.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-downs.pdf
HM Treasury, Barker Review of Housing Supply: <i>Delivering Stability- Securing Our Future Housing Needs</i> (2004) http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/consultations_and_legislation/barker/consult_barker_index.cfm
Kennet District Council, Agenda 21 Strategy
Kennet District Council, Kennet Landscape Conservation Strategy (2005) http://documents.kennet.gov.uk/Policy/StrategyOnline.nsf/0770fe490dadd7b880256c2b0033adb1/418c9be4e68e1428802573cd0043a571/\$FILE/Kennet+Landscape+Conservation+Strategy+2005.pdf
Kennet District Council, Kennet Local Plan 2011 (2004) http://documents.kennet.gov.uk/planservices/kennet_local_plans.nsf/main_page?OpenPage
Natural England, State of the Countryside report (2004) http://www.swenvo.org.uk/publications/sec_reports.asp
Natural England, State of the Natural Environment report (2008)
Natural England, Target 2010 – South West: The Condition of the Region’s Sites of Special Scientific Interest (English Nature 2005) Available from: http://www.english-nature.org.uk/news/embargoed/Target%202010%20South%20West.PDF
Newbury District Council, Newbury District-wide Landscape Assessment
North Wiltshire District Council, North Wiltshire Countryside and Open Space Strategy (2007) http://www.northwilts.gov.uk/index/leisure/lt_parks_recreation-countryside-2/lt_parks_recreation-countryside_management-2/lt_parks_recreation-open_space_strategy.htm
North Wiltshire District Council, North Wiltshire Empty Homes Strategy 2007-2009 (2007) http://www.northwilts.gov.uk/index/housing/hou_housing_strategies.htm
North Wiltshire District Council, North Wiltshire Housing Strategy 2005-2008 (2005) http://www.northwilts.gov.uk/index/housing/hou_housing_strategies.htm
North Wiltshire District Council, North Wiltshire Local Development Framework (LDF) (In development 2006-) http://www.northwilts.gov.uk/index/env/planning/localplans/env_planning-localplans_what_plans/ldf_documents_.htm
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future (2003) http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1163452
Our South West, South West Sustainability Framework Sustainability South West (2001) http://www.oursouthwest.com/RegiSus/framework/framework.htm
Oxfordshire Biodiversity Partnership, Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan (2002) http://www.ukbap.org.uk/lbap.aspx?id=454
Oxfordshire Community Partnership, Oxfordshire Community Strategy (2004) http://content.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/OCP/Community+strategy/
Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire County Structure Plan 2011 (2016 update adopted see below)
Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Deposit Structure Plan 2016 (as proposed to be modified) (2005) http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/portal/publicsite/councilservices?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=http://content.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/Internet/Council+Services/Environment+and+planning/Planning/Planning+policy/Oxfordshire+Structure+Plan/
Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 (2006) http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Incorporated into Structure Plan 2016 (1996) http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk
Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2006-2011 , (February 2006). http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/rowip
Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) 2006-2026
South East England Biodiversity Forum , Action for Biodiversity in South East England (2000) http://www.sitatrust.org.uk/resources/documents/nature/South_East_action_for_Biodiversity.pdf
South East of England Development Agency, Action South East: FRESA (2003) http://www.seeda.co.uk/publications/learning_skills_&_workforce/docs/FRESA_Part_1_December_2002.doc
South East of England Development Agency, Regional Economic Strategy for South East England 2002 - 2012 (2006) http://www.seeda.co.uk/res/
South East of England Development Agency, South East Social Enterprise Strategy (2005) http://www.seeda.co.uk/
South East of England Development Agency, Valuing Culture in South East (August 2005)
South East Public Health Observatory, Health Priorities for the South East
South East Regional Assembly, European Strategy for South East England 2001-2006 (2001) http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/our_work/advocacy/europe/strategy.html
South East Regional Assembly, Integrated Regional Framework 2004: A Better Quality of Life in the South (2004) http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/our_work/planning/sus_dev/irf.html
South East Regional Assembly, South East Plan 2005 (2005) http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/plan/view_plan.html
South East Regional Assembly, South East Regional Housing Strategy (2004/2005) (2006)
South East Regional Assembly, The Regional Spatial Planning Strategy for Tourism (2003) http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/publications/strategies/tourism.html
South East South East Climate Change Partnership, Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change Summary of the South East South East Climate Change Partnership et al (2003) http://www.climatesoutheast.org.uk/downloads/Meeting_Challenge_Climate_Change.pdf
South Oxfordshire District Council, South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (2003) http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/cms-service/stream/asset/?asset_id=453375
South West Biodiversity, South West Biodiversity Action Plan (1997) http://www.swbiodiversity.org.uk/Regional/swbappage.htm
South West Food and Drink, A Strategy for the food and drink industry in the South West of England 2005- 2015 Strategy (2005) http://www.southwestfoodanddrink.com
South West Housing Body, Regional Housing Strategy 2005-2016 and Sustainable Communities South West (2005) http://www.southwesthousingbody.org.uk/pdf/strategy.pdf
South West Regional Assembly, South West Waste Strategy (November 2002) http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/swra/ourwork/waste/index.shtml
South West Regional Multi Modal Study (SWARMMS)
South West Regional Transport Strategy
South West Tourism, South West Tourism Strategy "Towards 2015" (2005) http://www.swtourism.co.uk/html/towards_2015_.asp
South West Wildlife Trust, Rebuilding Biodiversity (2004)

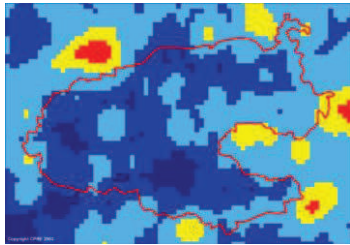
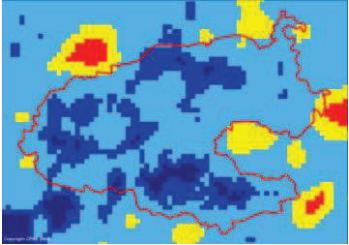
http://www.swbiodiversity.org.uk/Partners/RBBprimer_Nov04.doc
South West, State of the region 2005 South West www.swo.org.uk
Test Valley Borough Council, Local Development Framework
The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. (2000) http://www.defra.gov.uk/ENVIRONMENT/airquality/strategy/pdf/foreword.pdf
The South West Regional Assembly, 'Our Environment, Our Future' – Regional Strategy for the SW Environment (2004) http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=521&tt=swra
The South West Regional Assembly, South West Integrated Regional Strategy (2004) http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=2331
The South West Regional Assembly, South West Regional Economic Strategy 2006-2015 http://download.southwestrda.org.uk/file.asp?File=/res/general/RES2006-2015.pdf
The South West Regional Assembly, South West Regional Environment Strategy 2004-2014 (2004) http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/swra/ourwork/environment/index.shtml
The South West Regional Assembly, SW Rural Delivery Framework (2004) http://www.gosw.gov.uk/gosw/envrural/rrpolicy/swrdf/
The South West Regional Assembly, The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) 2006-2026 Regional Spatial Strategy from the South West Regional Assembly. http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=836
The Urban White Paper: Our Towns and Cities: the Future- Delivering an Urban Renaissance Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions (2000) http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1127167
The Waste Strategy for England and Wales Environment Agency (2000) http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/strategy/cm4693/pdf/wastvol1.pdf
Tourism ExSEllence - the Strategy for Tourism in the South East.
Vale of White Horse District Council, Vale Corporate Plan 2005 – 2008 http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/About_your_Council/Policies_and_plans/DetailPage-1942.asp
Vale of White Horse District Council, Vale of White Horse : A Community Strategy 2004 – 2008 (2004) http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/Images/The%20Vale%20Community%20Strategy%20FINAL%202_tcm4-5575_tcm4-1493.pdf
West Berkshire Council, Sustainable Community Strategy for West Berkshire
West Berkshire Council, West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 – 2006 Saved Policies (2007) http://www.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=12589&p=0
West Berkshire Council, West Berkshire Housing Strategy 2005 – 2010 (2005) http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=716
West Berkshire Council, West Berkshire Local Transport Strategy 2007 – 2011 (2007) http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=4401
West Berkshire Council, West Berkshire Rural Strategy 2007 – 2011 (2008) http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=9252
West Berkshire Health and Well-being Partnership Strategy 2006 – 2009 West Berkshire Partnership (2007) http://www.berkshirewest-pct.nhs.uk/_store/documents/wberks-health-strategy-march07.pdf
West Berkshire Partnership, Draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2009)
Wiltshire County Council and Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire and Swindon Structure

Plan 2011 (See Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016 below)
Wiltshire County Council and Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Local Plan (WLP) 2006-2011 (2004) http://www.swindon.gov.uk/environment-forward-waste
Wiltshire County Council, The Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016 http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning-home/planning-saved-local-plans/planning-structure-plan.htm
Wiltshire County Council, Wiltshire Agenda 21 Strategy (2002) http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/environmental-policies-agenda-21/environment-agenda21-strategy.htm
Wiltshire County Council, Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) (2002) http://www.ukbap.org.uk/lbap.aspx?id=484
Wiltshire County Council, Wiltshire Corporate Plan (2006) http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/council /wiltshire-2009.htm
Wiltshire County Council, Wiltshire Cultural Strategy (2004)
Wiltshire County Council, Wiltshire Draft Sustainable Strategy 2006-2014 “Creating a County Fit for Our Children” (2005) http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/a-strategy-for-wiltshire-2005-revised.pdf
Wiltshire County Council, Wiltshire Housing Strategy
Wiltshire County Council, Wiltshire Local Transport Plan (LTP)2006-2011 (2005) http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/business/transport-policy/local-transport-plan.htm
Wiltshire PCT, Strategic Framework 2008 – 2011 (2008) http://www.wiltshirepct.nhs.uk/Publications/Strategies/Strategic_Framework_2008_2011.pdf

Appendix C: Baseline Environmental Data

Key to quality of data assessed against a five point scale		
		Comment
1	Fit for purpose	
2	Adequate	Some minor improvements desirable
3	Indicative only	Not considered accurate
4	Inadequate	Little relevance to North Wessex Downs AONB
5	Absent	No available data

Resource	Baseline data	Key trends	Quality	Key Facts - Data Source	
Landscape					
Landscape character	Land use cover	Data from the Land Cover Map 2000. The data is a survey carried out in 2000. No North Wessex Downs AONB-wide survey has been completed since.	2	Description	Area (km2)
				Unassigned	134
				Broadleaved/mixed Woodland	20,515
				Coniferous Woodland	3,424
				Cereals	46,560
				Horticulture/non- cereal	39,155
				Not annual crop (ley, set-a-side)	256
				Improved grassland	45,299
				Setaside grass	2,341
				Rough grass	809
				Calcareous grass	6,603
				Acid grass	42
				Dwarf shrub heath	86
				Open shrub heath	85

Resource	Baseline data	Key trends	Quality	Key Facts - Data Source	
				Fen, marsh, swamp	4
				Water	241
				Inland bare ground	5,750
				Suburban/ rural development	4,302
				Continuous urban	1,341
				Source: Land Cover Map 2000	
	Change c.f underlying character (CQC et al)		5		
	Current extent and character of distinctive landscape features		5	No data currently exists. Need to address this as part of the State of North Wessex Downs Report	
	Key ridgelines and views		5	No data currently exists. Need to address this as part of the State of North Wessex Downs Report	
	Tranquillity/dark night skies (including air traffic data?)	Reduction in dark skies area. A partial measure, % change not calculated, no data on tranquillity mapping (noise and engineering elements).	2		
				Dark night skies image – 1993 Dark night skies image - 2000	

Resource	Baseline data	Key trends	Quality	Key Facts - Data Source
	Extent and distribution of woodland types	13.5% of North Wessex Downs AONB is woodland, which is 23310Ha.	2	<p>Figure 2. Woodland Composition for Each Landscape Character Type</p> <p>Source: Woodland Strategy 2005 from the Inventory of Forest Types (Forestry Commission), Ancient Woodland (Natural England) WGS and Mastermap.</p>
	Extent of woodland under management	44% of woodland managed	2	Source: Woodland Strategy 2005
	Extent of Woodland eligible for WGS	Roughly 84% of the NIWT woodland area is eligible for support through WGS. In 1999 approximately 11% was covered by an agreement; in 2003 the	2	Source: CQC Analysis for the AONBs of England. D. Cheshire & R Haines-Young. January 2009

Resource	Baseline data	Key trends	Quality	Key Facts - Data Source
		equivalent figure was 14%. The proportions for Ancient Woodland Sites for these periods were 16% and 16% respectively. Before 1999 new planting through WGS was approved for an area equivalent to 3% of the woodland area; the equivalent figure for 2003 was 3%.		
Land management	Area under agri-environment schemes	Countryside Stewardship Agreement Boundaries – 576km ² Environmental Stewardship Holding - 737 km ²	2	Source: Defra 2008

Resource	Baseline data	Key trends	Quality	Key Facts - Data Source										
	Farm type	Since 1990 the data shows little change in the numbers of farms engaged in cereals, general cropping, pigs and poultry and horticulture. There has been 53% decline in the number of dairy farms and a 41% decline in mixed farms. There has been 34% increase in grazing livestock. The increase in farms classed as Other has risen steeply as in 2000 small units were recorded as other.	1		Farm type - Cereals	Farm type - General Cropping	Farm type - Mixed	Farm type - Dairy	Farm type - Grazing Livestock (LFA)	Farm type - Grazing Livestock (lowland)	Farm type - Pigs and Poultry *	Farm type - Horticulture	Farm type - Other	Grand Total
				1990	331	36	137	86	0	145	48	35	193	1011
				1995	313	36	149	78	0	154	40	26	177	973
				2000	334	26	122	50	0	168	54	27	342	1123
				2001	325	21	112	53	0	179	70	30	411	1201
				2002	328	21	106	52	0	197	68	29	473	1274
				2003	338	17	104	51	0	195	62	26	501	1294
				2007	356	27	82	41	0	219	57	35	667	1484
				Source: Defra Agricultural Census										
	Cattle and sheep numbers	2003 to 2007 number of cattle has fallen by 16% and sheep by 8.5%.	2 No targets	No.	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007					
				Cattle	46523	45964	42588	39203	39982					
				Sheep	114334	110421	106468	108767	105318					
				Source: Defra Agricultural Census										

Resource	Baseline data	Key trends	Quality	Key Facts - Data Source		
Biodiversity						
Habitats	Extent and nature of UK BAP habitats					
	Designated sites – number, extent, condition	Decline of 4.8% in number of sites in target condition from 2003-2008. Target condition is sites in favourable and unfavourable condition improving. National target of 95% of sites to be in favourable or improving condition by 2010	1		Percentage of SSSI in target condition	
				1 st April 2003	63.5%	
				1 st April 2004	57.6%	
				1 st April 2005	60.4%	
				1 st April 2006	55.0%	
				1 st April 2007	56.0%	
				1 st April 2008	58.7%	
				© Natural England 2008		
	Ancient Semi-natural woodland/PAWS	37.1% (8646 hectares) of the total woodland in the North Wessex Downs AONB is Ancient Semi Natural Woodland	1	Woodland Strategy, North Wessex Downs AONB, 2005		
	Habitat potential maps					
Species	Presence of UK BAP priority species					
Historic environment						
Historic features	WHS		1	WHS Avebury Management Plan has its own monitoring criteria which include aspects of landscape, land management, tourism and biodiversity.		
	SAM's – number and condition		2		Stable	Declining
				Hampshire	64%	36%

Resource	Baseline data	Key trends	Quality	Key Facts - Data Source												
				<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Oxfordshire</td> <td>77%</td> <td>23%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>West Berkshire</td> <td>76%%</td> <td>24%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wiltshire</td> <td>NA</td> <td>NA</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Average</td> <td>72%</td> <td>28%</td> </tr> </table>	Oxfordshire	77%	23%	West Berkshire	76%%	24%	Wiltshire	NA	NA	Average	72%	28%
Oxfordshire	77%	23%														
West Berkshire	76%%	24%														
Wiltshire	NA	NA														
Average	72%	28%														
	Listed buildings at risk		5	© English Heritage 2008												
	Condition of historic routeways		5													
Historic landscapes	No. sites/area of historic landscape under ES/CSS agreements		5													
	Registered Parks and Gardens	There are at present 15 registered parks and gardens within the North Wessex Downs AONB.	5	No data was available on their condition. © English Heritage												
	Battlefield sites	There is 1 registered battlefields in North Wessex Downs AONB.	5	No data was available on its condition. © English Heritage												
Geodiversity/soils																
Geodiversity																
	RIGS sites, number, extent and condition		5													
	SSSI with geological importance, number, extent and condition		5													
Soils	Soil classification		5													
	Soil erosion risk areas		5													

Resource	Baseline data	Key trends	Quality	Key Facts - Data Source
	Data on diffuse pollution		5	
Water				
Water quality				
	Extent/condition of SSSI Rivers/Catchments		5	
	Reported pollution incidents (to EA)		5	
	NVZs			
	Catchment sensitive land			
Water levels	Annual river flow data.		5	
	No of flood incidents		5	
	Water licensed for abstraction/uptake of licences		5	
Population				
Population				
	Population no	93,709	2 No target	Census of population 2001, National Statistics, table KS02 – Age Structure
	Population within 10km of boundary	Approx 1million	2 No target	Source: Evidence for Leader Bid, Terra Consult 2007.
	Population density	0.54 people per km ²	1	
	Age structure			
	Health index			
	Housing			
Air				
Air quality				
	Air quality		5	

Resource	Baseline data	Key trends	Quality	Key Facts - Data Source
	(NETCEN)			
	No of pollution incidents		5	
	Changes to travel to work & travel to services distances		5	
	Changes to traffic volumes		5	
Climate				
Climate				
	Average annual precipitation			
	Average temperatures			
	Area of land under biomass crops			
	Implementation of Green Infrastructure / ecological framework strategies			
Energy	Number, type and capacity of renewable energy projects			
	Change in area under biomass/bio-fuel crops			
	% waste recycled			
Access and recreation				
Access				
	% PRow in favourable condition			

Resource	Baseline data	Key trends	Quality	Key Facts - Data Source
	National Trails, Cycle routes and long distance trails			
	Extent of open access land			
	Forestry Commission land			
	Extent of access to natural green space			
Recreation/ Tourism	Day visits			
	Visitor spend			
Built environment				
Built environment				
	Conservation areas			Local authority records
	Listed buildings at risk			English Heritage and Local Authorities

Appendix D: SEA Environmental Objectives and Indicators

SEA Environmental Objectives and Indicators			
Objectives		Indicators	
EO 1	To conserve and enhance landscape character and diversity	i 1	Change in land use and management patterns
		i 2	Change in locally distinctive landscape features (incl. condition)
		i 3	Changes in key strategic views
EO 2	To conserve and enhance remoteness and tranquillity	i 4	Proportion of tranquil areas
		i 5	Change in extent of dark night skies
EO 3	To conserve and enhance biodiversity (habitats)	i 6	Change in BAP habitats
		i 7	Change in extent and condition of designated wildlife sites
		i 8	Change in extent and condition of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland/PAWs
EO 4	To conserve and enhance the full range of species which are characteristic of the area	i 9	Changes to populations of priority species and/or associated habitats
EO 5	To conserve and enhance archaeological, historic and cultural features, sites and landscapes and their setting	i 10	% SAMs in favourable condition
		i 11	Number of archaeological sites/buildings at risk
		i 12	Condition of historic routeways
		i 13	No. sites/area of historic landscape under ES/CSS agreements
EO 6	To conserve and enhance geo-diversity and soil quality	i 14	Change in condition of RIGS or SSSIs with geological importance
		i 15	Change in levels of diffuse pollution
		i 16	Use of land, by ALC grade, for new development

EO 7	To safeguard the environmental quality of water resources	i 17	Change in condition/extent of river/catchment SSSI
		i 18	Number of pollution incidents
		i 15	Change in levels of diffuse pollution
EO 8	To maintain catchment processes and hydrological systems	i 19	Annual river flows
		i 20	No. of flood incidents
		i 21	Water licensed for abstraction/uptake of licences
EO 9	To safeguard the environmental quality of air	i 22	Air quality data/pollution incidents
		i 23	Changes to distances travelled to work and to key services
		i 24	Changes to traffic volumes
EO 10	To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vulnerability to the effects of climate change	i 25	Number, type and capacity of renewable energy projects
		i 26	Change in area under biomass/bio-fuel crops
		i 27	Implementation of Green Infrastructure/ecological framework strategies
EO 11	To maintain and enhance opportunities for sustainable access to, and enjoyment of the countryside	i 28	% PRoW in favourable condition
		i 29	Extent and quality of access to natural green space
EO 12	To use natural resources/material assets in a sustainable manner	i 25	Number, type and capacity of renewable energy projects
		i 30	% waste recycled
EO 13	To maintain and enhance the quality of the built environment	i 31	Listed buildings at risk
		i 32	Housing
EO 14	To safeguard quality of life and human health	i 33	Size and nature of population
		i 4	Proportion of tranquil areas
		i 29	Extent and quality of access to natural green space
		i 23	Changes to distances travelled to work and to key services
EO 15	To avoid significant adverse effects between the above interrelationships		

Appendix E: SEA Assessment Matrix

The assessment matrix provides the mechanism to measure the assumed impact of each of the 19 Management Plan Objectives against the 15 SEA Environmental Objectives.

Key to SEA Environmental Objectives		Key to 6 point scoring system		value
EO 1	To conserve and enhance landscape character and diversity	Strongly supports SEA Objective	++	2
EO 2	To conserve and enhance remoteness and tranquillity	Supports SEA Objective	+	1
EO 3	To conserve and enhance biodiversity (habitats)	Neutral in effect	0	0
EO 4	To conserve and enhance the full range of species which are characteristic of the area	Potentially works against SEA Objective	-	-1
EO 5	To conserve and enhance archaeological, historic and cultural features, sites and landscapes and their setting	Strongly works against SEA Objective	--	-2
EO 6	To conserve and enhance geo-diversity and soil quality	Effects uncertain	?	x
EO 7	To safeguard the environmental quality of water resources			
EO 8	To maintain catchment processes and hydrological systems			
EO 9	To safeguard the environmental quality of air			
EO 10	To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vulnerability to the effects of climate change			
EO 11	To maintain and enhance opportunities for sustainable access to, and enjoyment of the countryside			
EO 12	To use natural resources/material assets in a sustainable manner			
EO 13	To maintain and enhance the quality of the built environment			
EO 14	To safeguard quality of life and human health			
EO 15	To avoid significant adverse effects between the above interrelationships			

Theme	Management Plan Objective	SEA Objective	EO1	EO2	EO3	EO4	EO5	EO6	EO7	EO8	EO9	EO10	EO11	EO12	EO13	EO14	EO15	% MP Theme score of total SEA Objectives
LANDSCAPE	1. To maintain and enhance the distinctive landscape character of the North Wessex Downs.		++	++	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	+	0	0	++	+	++	
	2. To raise the profile of the North Wessex Downs AONB.		++	++	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	+	+	0	+	+	++	
		→30	4	4	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	2	1	0	3	2	4	12
		%→	13.3	13.3	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	0	0	6.7	3.3	0	10	6.7	13.2	
		%↓	15.4	21	12.5	20	10	20	22.2	0	0	11.1	5	0	13	10	13.8	
LAND MANAGEMENT	3. To encourage initiatives that facilitate sustainable land management.		++	+	++	++	++	++	++	+	+	+	0	+	0	0	+	

Theme	Management Plan Objective	SEA Objective	EO1	EO2	EO3	EO4	EO5	EO6	EO7	EO8	EO9	EO10	EO11	EO12	EO13	EO14	EO15	% MP Theme score of
	4. To encourage diverse and viable agriculture, forestry, horseracing and other land based enterprises that support the delivery of a wide range of public benefits, including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the conservation and enhancement of the area's special qualities and features; the provision of access opportunities; and support for local markets. 		++	0	++	++	+	++	+	0	+	++	+	++	+	+	++	
	5. To create a diverse rural skills base to support traditional and emerging land based enterprises that enhance the special qualities and features of the North Wessex Downs.		+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	
		→32	3	1	3	3	2	3	1	1	1	2	2	3	2	2	3	12.9
		%→	9.4	3.15	9.4	9.4	6.2	9.4	3.15	3.15	3.15	6.2	6.2	9.4	6.2	6.2	9.4	
		%↓	11.5	5.3	18.75	30	10	30	11.1	20	11.1	11.1	10	20	8.7	10	10.3	
BIODIVERSITY	6. To ensure that the characteristic habitats and species of the North Wessex Downs are conserved and enhanced.		+	0	++	++	0	+	++	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	+	

Theme	Management Plan Objective	SEA Objective	EO1	EO2	EO3	EO4	EO5	EO6	EO7	EO8	EO9	EO10	EO11	EO12	EO13	EO14	EO15	% MP Theme score of
		→11	1	0	2	2	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	4.4
		%→	9.1	0	18.2	18.2	0	9.1	18.2	9.1	0	9.1	0	0	0	0	9.1	
		%↓	3.8	0	12.5	20	0	10	22.2	20	0	5.6	0	0	0	0	3.4	
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT	7. To enhance the protection, management and setting of the archaeological and historic features, sites and landscapes that characterise the North Wessex Downs.		++	+	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	++	+	++	
	8. To promote an increased level of awareness, use and enjoyment of the historic and cultural fabric of the North Wessex Downs.		++	+	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	++	+	++	
	9. To realise the potential value of the Historic Environment data.		++	+	+	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	++	+	++	
		→37	6	3	1	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	6	3	6	14.9
		%→	16.2	8.1	2.7	0	16.2	0	0	0	0	0	13.6	2.7	16.2	8.1	16.2	
		%↓	23	15.8	6.25	0	30	0	0	0	0	0	25	6.7	26	15	20.7	
NATURAL RESOURCES	10. To conserve and improve the quality and depth of soils in the North Wessex Downs.		0	0	+	0	0	++	+	+	0	+	0	++	0	0	+	
	11. To ensure that the water environment, including fisheries, is managed		0	0	+	++	0	+	++	++	0	0	+	++	0	+	+	

Theme	Management Plan Objective	SEA Objective	EO1	EO2	EO3	EO4	EO5	EO6	EO7	EO8	EO9	EO10	EO11	EO12	EO13	EO14	EO15	% MP Theme score of
	sustainably.																	
		→22	0	0	2	2	0	3	3	3	0	1	1	4	0	1	2	8.8
		%→	0	0	9.1	9.1	0	13.6	13.6	13.6	0	4.55	4.55	18.25	0	4.55	9.1	
		%↓	0	0	12.5	20	0	30	33.3	60	0	5.6	5	26.7	0	5	6.9	
DEVELOPMENT	12. To encourage appropriate development that meets the economic and housing needs of the AONB and surrounding communities.		++	+	+	0	++	0	0	0	+	++	+	+	++	+	++	
	13. To ensure that the formulation and implementation of planning policies across the North Wessex Downs takes full account of the purposes of designation and the character and quality of the AONB and its setting.		++	++	+	0	++	0	+	0	+	+	++	++	++	+	++	
	14. To promote a sustainable rural economy.		+	+	+	0	++	+	0	0	+	++	0	++	++	++	+	
		→54	5	5	5	0	6	1	1	0	3	5	3	5	6	4	5	21.7
		%→	9.3	9.3	9.3	0	11	1.8	1.8	0	5.6	9.3	5.6	9.3	11	7.4	9.3	
		%↓	19.2	26.3	31.25	0	30	10	11.1	0	33.3	27.8	15	33.3	26	20	17.2	

Theme	Management Plan Objective	SEA Objective	EO1	EO2	EO3	EO4	EO5	EO6	EO7	EO8	EO9	EO10	EO11	EO12	EO13	EO14	EO15	% MP Theme score of
COMMUNITIES	15. To enable vibrant communities to develop sustainably in the North Wessex Downs by stimulating economic prosperity and local culture.		+	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	++	++	+	+	++	++	+	
	16. To encourage an enhanced sense of ownership and respect for the distinctive character of the North Wessex Downs amongst local people		+	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	++	+	
	17. To provide transport that is more sustainable and meets the needs of residents and visitors of the North Wessex Downs.		++	++	0	0	+	0	0	0	++	++	++	0	+	++	++	
		→40	4	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	4	5	4	2	4	6	4	16.1
		%→	10	10	0	0	7.5	0	0	0	10	12.5	10	5	10	15	10	
		%↓	15.4	21	0	0	15	0	0	0	44.4	27.8	20	13.3	17.4	30	13.8	
LEISURE & TOURISM	18. To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to access and enjoy the special qualities of the North Wessex Downs while minimising the impacts of visitors.		++	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	+	+	++	0	+	+	++	
	19. To promote a recreation and tourism sector that is well managed,		+	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	+	++	0	+	+	++	

Theme	Management Plan Objective	SEA Objective	EO1	EO2	EO3	EO4	EO5	EO6	EO7	EO8	EO9	EO10	EO11	EO12	EO13	EO14	EO15	% MP Theme score of
	sustainable and adding value to the local economy whilst respecting the special qualities of the North Wessex Downs.																	
		→23	3	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	4	0	2	2	4	9.2
		%→	13	8.7	4.3	4.3	4.3	0	0	0	4.3	8.7	17.5	0	8.7	8.7	17.5	
		%↓	11.5	10.5	6.25	10	5	0	0	0	11.1	11.1	20	0	8.7	10	13.8	
Total score for SEA Objectives 249↑			26	19	16	10	20	10	9	5	9	18	20	15	23	20	29	
% of total SEA Objective score per SEA Objective→			10.5	7.6	6.4	4	8	4	3.6	2	3.6	7.2	8	6	9.2	8	11.7	

References

¹ European Directive 2001/42/EC “on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment”, known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment or SEA Directive.

² The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (Statutory Instrument 2004 No.1633)

³ Guidance to English AONB Partnerships and Boards on Strategic Environmental Assessment of AONB Management Plans, Natural England April 2007

⁴ A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: London, ISBN 1851127887 September 2005

⁵ North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2009-14 Consultation Draft, Council of Partners, March 2009

North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan Consultation Appropriate Assessment Baseline

Introduction

The process of undertaking a review of the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan includes a requirement to undertake an Appropriate Assessment of the impact of policies contained in the revised Management Plan on any European designated sites within the North Wessex Downs AONB. The European sites identified are:

- Hackpen Hill SAC - (Oxfordshire)
- River Lambourn SAC - (West Berkshire)
- Little Wittenham SAC - (Oxfordshire)
- Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SAC - (West Berkshire)
- Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC - (West Berkshire)

The policies of the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan will be implemented in the context of pressure for increased development, as directed by the Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks which are, themselves, subject to Appropriate Assessment. The revised North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan does not propose any development or expansion of the built environment; its policies promote conservation and sustainable use of the natural environment and, if implemented, will have a positive effect on the five European sites.

Analysis of the Management Plan

Although the revised Management Plan encourages countryside recreation, policies encourage environmentally sustainable access, minimising car use wherever possible and encouraging visits to countryside close to home. There are no policies in the plan designed to promote or increase visits to the European Protected Sites. Each site is detailed in Appendix A (attached) and assessed against the policies of the revised North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan.

Conclusion

The policies (alone and in combination) in the revised Management Plan are considered to have no adverse effects on the European Protected Sites for a number of reasons, both general and site specific. It is determined that a full appropriate assessment of the revised North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan is not needed.

General Issues

The purpose of the North Wessex Downs AONB is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs AONB. Policies and actions relating to this purpose will have only positive or neutral effects on the European Protected Sites. These include policies to support:

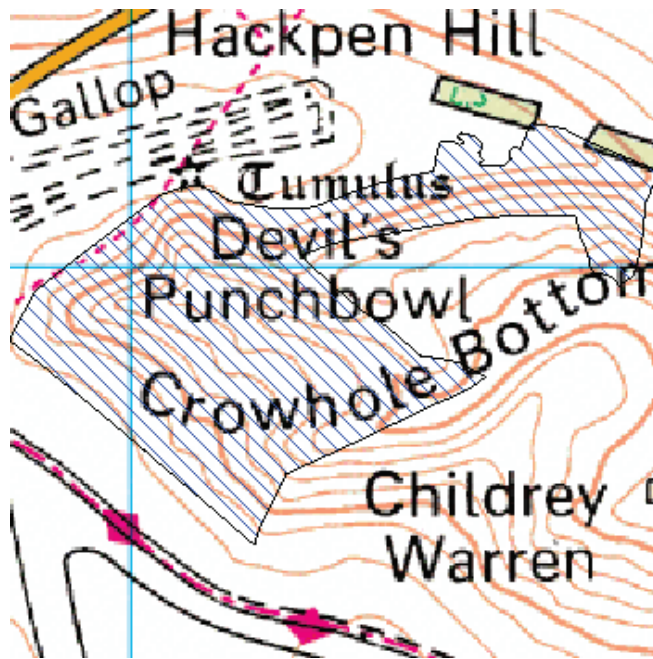
- The delivery of BAP targets
- The management and protection of all designated wildlife sites and European protected species to maintain favourable status
- Monitoring of the impact of visitor pressure and climate change on key habitats and species.
- Encouraging non-car use – including walking, cycling, horse riding
- Encouraging people to contribute to the area's conservation

Minimal air pollution is a Key Environmental Condition to support site integrity at all but one of the sites (Little Wittenham).

Although the revised North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan encourages countryside recreation, its policies encourage environmentally sustainable access, minimising car use wherever possible and encouraging visits to countryside close to home. There are no policies in the plan designed to encourage increasing number of visitors or visits to the European Protected Sites.

Site Specific Issues

1. Hackpen Hill, Vale of White Horse



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved NERC 100017897 2004
From: NBC Gateway Website: Used with permission 06/10/2006

The site, which is in private ownership, has a variety of aspects and gradients, with the grassland dominated by red fescue *Festuca rubra* and upright brome *Bromus erectus*. The herb flora includes a significant population of early gentian *Gentianella anglica*, as well as autumn gentian *Gentianella amarella*, fragrant orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea*, frog orchid *Coeloglossum viride*, horseshoe vetch *Hippocrepis comosa*, common rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium* and dwarf thistle *Cirsium acaule*.

Qualifying Feature

Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*)

Environmental status and Trends

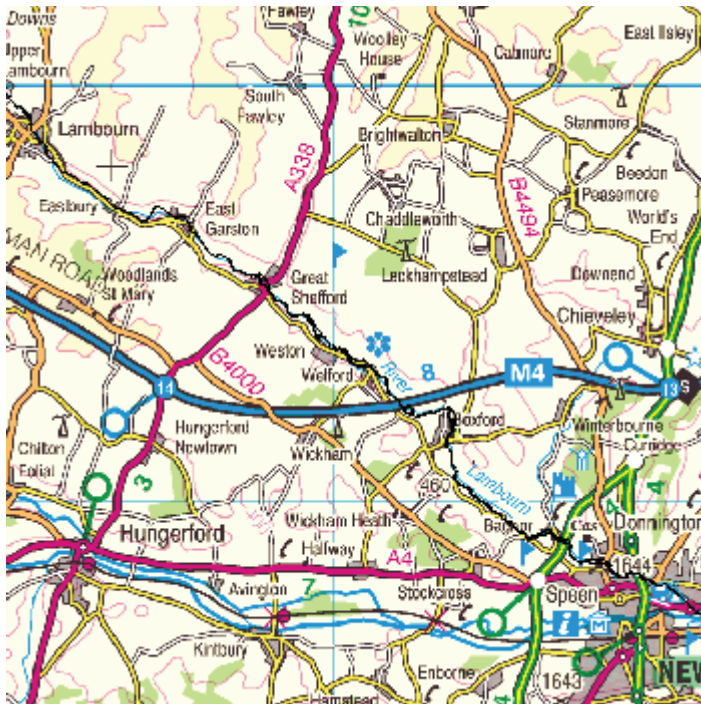
Hackpen Hill is an extensive area of unimproved chalk grassland in the Downs. A grazing regime which maintains suitable conditions for early gentian is supported financially through Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) funding under a Natural England management agreement. Nevertheless, the site is subject to periodic damage by rapid fluctuations in rabbit numbers. Means of reducing the threat from this source are being investigated.

This area is a designated area of Open Access Land under Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and subject to the right of access in perpetuity. There are also HLS access measures in place that connect the site to the surrounding public rights of way network, promoted through Natural England's Countryside Walks website as well as the County Council's Access land web-pages. Under the Leisure and Tourism section of the North Wessex Downs Management Plan access land is mentioned in the context of its value in increasing people's enjoyment of the countryside. Hackpen therefore forms a part of the countryside access resource to be promoted.

Conservation Objectives

To maintain, in favourable condition, the unimproved calcareous grassland, with particular reference to semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (CG3 & 5 grasslands).

2. River Lambourn



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved NERC 100017897 2004
From: NBC Gateway Website: Used with permission 06/10/2006

The River Lambourn is considered to have one of the least modified catchments in southern England and has one of the lowest levels of abstraction. The majority of its length is in private ownership with limited or no public access

Qualifying Feature

Bullhead fish *Cottus Gobio*

Environmental status and Trends

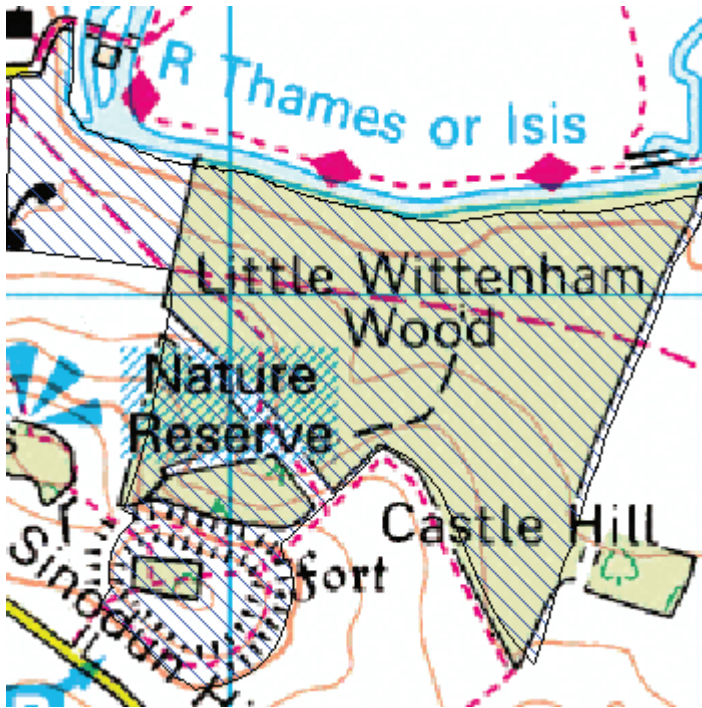
Water quality, water quantity and habitat quality are all considered to be high. However, localised higher water nutrient levels and siltation problems are associated with sewage treatment works though phosphate nutrient levels are being reduced by phosphate stripping. There are issues associated with diffuse pollution from agricultural land. Measures to reduce these problems are being investigated through the AMP5 water company investment programme.

River Lambourn is in unfavourable condition. Natural England and the Environment Agency have produced an agreed protocol for dealing with issues affecting the river.

Conservation Objectives

To reach unfavourable recovering status for habitats for the population of Bullhead fish *Cottus Gobio*

3. Little Wittenham, South Oxfordshire



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved NERC 100017897 2004
From: NBC Gateway Website: Used with permission 06/10/2006

The site is managed by the Northmoor Trust as a nature reserve. The areas which are most important to the population of great crested newts have restricted access which is designed to prevent conflicts between the visiting public, the newts and their habitat.

The revised North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan contains no proposals to encourage visits to Little Wittenham SAC.

Qualifying Feature

Great Crested Newt - *Triturus cristatus*

Environmental status and Trends

The site is comprised of a single unit which was considered in favourable condition at last assessment in August 2004

Conservation Objectives

Subject to natural change, to maintain in favourable condition the habitat for the Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus*.

4. Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved NERC 100017897 2004
From: NBC Gateway Website: Used with permission 06/10/2006

The site is comprised of inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (1%) Bogs; Marshes; Water fringed vegetation. Fens (59%) Humid grassland. Mesophile grassland (40%).

The revised North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan contains no proposals to encourage visits to the Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SAC.

Qualifying Feature

Desmoulin's whorl snail *Vertigo moulinsiana*

Environmental status and Trends

Within the entire site, current management practises are maintaining the required open, unshaded conditions. The management of one component part is supported by Countryside Stewardship grant-aid and two units are part of Higher Level Stewardship agreements (South East region only). *Vertigo moulinsiana* is critically dependent upon an adequate supply of high quality water. The Environment Agency and Natural England are working together to ensure that all parts of the site have appropriate water levels, through measures such as the production of water level management plans and regular monitoring of water quality.

Conservation Objectives

The cluster of sites selected in the Kennet and Lambourn valleys supports one of the most extensive known populations of Desmoulin's whorl snail *Vertigo moulinsiana* in the UK and is one of two sites representing the species in the south-western part of its range in the important chalk stream habitat. Integrity of the population is being maintained by taking measures, including habitat creation, to safeguard populations. The habitat occupied at this site differs from the Fenland sites in East Anglia in that it is predominantly reed sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima* swamp or tall sedges at the river margins, in ditches and in depressions in wet meadows.

5. Kennet Valley Alderwoods



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved NERC 100017897 2004
From: NBC Gateway Website: Used with permission 06/10/2006

These, the largest fragments of alder-ash woodland on the Kennet floodplain, lie on alluvium overlain by a shallow layer of moderately calcareous peat. The wettest areas are dominated by alder *Alnus glutinosa* over tall herbs, sedges and reeds, but dryer patches include a base-rich woodland flora with much dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* and also herb-Paris *Paris quadrifolia*. The occurrence of the latter is unusual, as it is more typically associated with ancient woodland, whereas the evidence suggests that these stands have largely developed over the past century.

The revised North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan contains no proposals to encourage increased access to the Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC.

Qualifying Feature

Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*) *
Priority feature

Environmental status and Trends

The conservation interest of the site is critically dependent upon maintenance of constantly high groundwater levels. There are, however, no known threats to groundwater levels. The site is subject to low levels of intervention and natural processes are allowed to prevail to a large extent. A WGS scheme is in place which favours the maintenance of the characteristic alder woodland composition.

Conservation Objectives

To maintain habitats in favourable condition.

Special Areas of Conservation within the North Wessex Downs AONB assessed for significant adverse effects of the revised North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan

Name	Location	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Comments on Nature Conservation Importance	Key Environmental Conditions to Support Site Integrity	Possible Impacts Arising From Plan	Risk of Significant Effect?	Other Plans To Be Considered in Combination	Risk of Significant Effect In Combination?
Hackpen Hill	Vale of White Horse District Oxfordshire	35.83	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>)	Hackpen Hill is an extensive area of unimproved chalk grassland in the Downs. The site has a variety of aspects and gradients, with the grassland dominated by red fescue <i>Festuca rubra</i> and upright brome <i>Bromus erectus</i> . The herb flora includes a significant population of early gentian <i>Gentianella anglica</i> , as well as autumn gentian <i>Gentianella amarella</i> , fragrant orchid	A grazing regime which maintains suitable conditions for early gentian is supported financially through Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) funding under a Natural England management agreement. Nevertheless, the site is subject to periodic damage by rapid fluctuations in rabbit numbers. Means of reducing the threat from this source are being	This area is a designated area of Open Access Land under Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and subject to the right of access in perpetuity. There are also HLS access measures in place that connect the site to the surrounding public rights of way network, promoted through Natural England's Countryside Walks website as well as the County Council's Access land web-pages. Under the Leisure and Tourism section of the North Wessex Downs Management Plan, access land is mentioned in the context of its value in increasing people's enjoyment of the	No	Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and Local Development Frameworks (LDF).	No Although RSS and LDFs propose housing growth, they will be subject to Appropriate Assessment themselves, and the revised Management Plan policies specifically encourage environmentally sustainable access.

				<p><i>Gymnadenia conopsea</i>, frog orchid <i>Coeloglossum viride</i>, horseshoe vetch <i>Hippocrepis comosa</i>, common rock-rose <i>Helianthemum nummularium</i> and dwarf thistle <i>Cirsium acaule</i></p>	investigated.	countryside. Hackpen therefore forms a part of the countryside access resource to be promoted. But the Management Plan only promote sustainable access.			
River Lambourn	West Berkshire	27.27	Bullhead Cottus Gobio	<p>The Lambourn represents Bullhead Cottus gobio (a bottom-living fish) populations inhabiting chalk streams in central southern England. Good water quality, coarse sediments and extensive beds of submerged plants again provide excellent habitat for the species. The community is characterised by pond water-</p>	<p>The River Lambourn is considered to have one of the least modified catchments in southern England and has one of the lowest levels of abstraction. Water quality, water quantity and habitat quality are all considered to be high. However, localised higher water nutrient levels and siltation problems are</p>	<p>No negative impacts. The plan actively promotes management of sites to meet conservation objectives.</p>	No	<p>Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and Local Development Frameworks (LDF).</p>	<p>No Although RSS and LDFs propose housing growth, they will be subject to Appropriate Assessment themselves, and the revised Management Plan policies specifically encourage environmentally sustainable access.</p>

				<p>crowfoot <i>Ranunculus peltatus</i> in spring-fed headwater streams (winterbournes), stream water-crowfoot <i>R. penicillatus</i> ssp. <i>pseudofluitans</i> in the middle reaches, and river water-crowfoot <i>R. fluitans</i> in the downstream sections. <i>Ranunculus</i> is typically associated in the upper and middle reaches with <i>Callitriche obtusangula</i> and <i>C. platycarpa</i>.. (Source: Joint Nature Conservation Committee)</p>	<p>associated with sewage treatment works though phosphate nutrient levels are being reduced by phosphate stripping. There are issues associated with diffuse pollution from agricultural land. Measures to reduce these problems are being investigated through the AMP5 water company investment programme. River Lambourn is in unfavourable condition. Natural England and the Environment Agency have produced an agreed protocol for dealing with issues affecting the river.</p>			
--	--	--	--	---	---	--	--	--

Little Wittenham	South Oxfordshire District Oxfordshire	68.76	Great crested newts <i>Triturus cristatus</i>	One of the best-studied great crested newt sites in the UK, Little Wittenham comprises two main ponds set in a predominantly woodland context (broad-leaved and conifer woodland is present). There are also areas of grassland, with sheep grazing and arable bordering the woodland to the south and west. The River Thames is just to the north of the site, and a hill fort to the south. Large numbers of great crested newts <i>Triturus cristatus</i> have been recorded in the two main ponds, and research has revealed that	Little Wittenham is managed primarily for nature conservation and environmental education. The great crested newt population has been the subject of intensive research and ongoing management includes the provision of new ponds and the creation of hibernation sites. The great crested newt population appears to be relatively stable and is not considered to be under any known threat. (Source: Natura 2000 Standard Data Form – Joint Nature Conservation	No negative impacts. The plan actively promotes management of sites to meet conservation objectives.	No	Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and Local Development Frameworks (LDF).	No Although RSS and LDFs propose housing growth, they will be subject to Appropriate Assessment themselves, and the revised Management Plan policies specifically encourage environmentally sustainable access.
------------------	--	-------	---	---	---	--	----	---	--

				they range several hundred metres into the woodland blocks.	Committee [JNCC]).				
Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain	West Berkshire	114.47	Desmoulin's whorl snail <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>	The majority of the Desmoulin's whorl snail <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> populations within the site are not considered to be under threat. Two of the component parts of the site lie immediately adjacent to the Newbury bypass. The road design has incorporated features to reduce possible impacts, such as spray and run-off. These measures are intended to prevent direct damage or habitat change to populations adjacent to the road. Monitoring is in place to determine the	The cluster of sites selected in the Kennet and Lambourn valleys supports one of the most extensive known populations of Desmoulin's whorl snail <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> in the UK and is one of two sites representing the species in the south-western part of its range in the important chalk stream habitat. Integrity of the population is being maintained by taking measures, including habitat creation, to safeguard populations.	No negative impacts. The plan actively promotes management of sites to meet conservation objectives.	No	Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and Local Development Frameworks (LDF).	No Although RSS and LDFs propose housing growth, they will be subject to Appropriate Assessment themselves, and the revised Management Plan policies specifically encourage environmentally sustainable access.

			<p>status of the populations potentially most at risk from impacts arising from the new road. The results of monitoring to date indicate that conditions for the species are favourable.</p> <p>Within the entire site, current management practises are maintaining the required open, unshaded conditions. The management of one component part is supported by Countryside Stewardship grant-aid and two units are part of Higher Level Stewardship agreements (South East region only). <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> is critically</p>	<p>The habitat occupied at this site differs from the Fenland sites in East Anglia in that it is predominantly reed sweet-grass <i>Glyceria maxima</i> swamp or tall sedges at the river margins, in ditches and in depressions in wet meadows.</p>				
--	--	--	--	---	--	--	--	--

				dependent upon an adequate supply of high quality water. The Environment Agency and Natural England are working together to ensure that all parts of the site have appropriate water levels, through measures such as the production of water level management plans and regular monitoring of water quality. (Source: Natura 2000 Standard Data Form – Joint Nature Conservation Committee [JNCC]).					
Kennet Valley Alderwoods	Bath and North East Somerset and West Berkshire	56.77	Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-</i>	These, the largest fragments of alder-ash woodland on the Kennet floodplain, lie on	The conservation interest of the site is critically dependent upon maintenance of	No negative impacts. The plan actively promotes management of sites to meet conservation objectives.	No	Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and Local Development Frameworks	No Although RSS and LDFs propose housing growth, they will be subject

			<p><i>Padion</i>, <i>Alnion</i> <i>incanae</i>, <i>Salicion</i> <i>albae</i>) * Priority feature</p>	<p>alluvium overlain by a shallow layer of moderately calcareous peat. The wettest areas are dominated by alder <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> over tall herbs, sedges and reeds, but dryer patches include a base-rich woodland flora with much dog's mercury <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> and also herb-Paris <i>Paris quadrifolia</i>. The occurrence of the latter is unusual, as it is more typically associated with ancient woodland, whereas the evidence suggests that these stands have largely developed over the past century.</p>	<p>constantly high groundwater levels. There are, however, no known threats to groundwater levels. The site is subject to low levels of intervention and natural processes are allowed to prevail to a large extent. A WGS scheme is in place which favours the maintenance of the characteristic alder woodland composition. (Source: Natura 2000 Standard Data Form – Joint Nature Conservation Committee [JNCC]).</p>			<p>(LDF).</p>	<p>to Appropriate Assessment themselves, and the revised Management Plan policies specifically encourage environmentally sustainable access.</p>
--	--	--	--	---	--	--	--	---------------	--

Title of Report:	West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD): Preferred Options for Consultation
Report to be considered by:	Council
Date of Meeting:	22 July 2014
Forward Plan Ref:	C2844

Purpose of Report: To consider the preferred options version of the West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations DPD.

Recommended Action: That Council resolve that:

1. The preferred options version of the West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations DPD is approved for public consultation.
2. Delegated authority is given to the Head of Planning and Countryside to agree any minor typographical and presentational changes to the preferred options version of the DPD and supporting documentation before publication.

Reason for decision to be taken: The production of the DPD will ensure an up to date planning framework for the District in terms of site allocations and updated policies.

Other options considered: None considered.

Key background documentation: Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
Town and Country Planning (Local Government) (England) Regulations 2012
West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026
Local Development Scheme May 2014

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Strategy priorities:

- CSP1 – Caring for and protecting the vulnerable**
- CSP2 – Promoting a vibrant district**
- CSP4 – Protecting the environment**

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Strategy principles:

- CSP5 - Putting people first**
- CSP7 - Empowering people and communities**
- CSP8 - Doing what's important well**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Strategy priorities and principles by:
Producing planning policy documents for the District to proactively guide development will help the Council in doing what's important well.

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Hilary Cole - Tel (01635) 248542
E-mail Address:	hcole@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	24 June 2014

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Liz Alexander
Job Title:	Planning Policy Team Leader
Tel. No.:	01635 519512
E-mail Address:	lalexander@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

- 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. The Housing Site Allocations DPD implements the spatial framework of the Core Strategy to allocate non-strategic housing sites to contribute towards meeting the District's longer term objectively assessed housing need. It is also an opportunity to update some parts of the planning policies that provide the starting point for development management decisions.
- Financial:** The Council is committed to producing planning policy documents in accordance with the stated timescale set out within the adopted Local Development Scheme. Budgetary provision has been made to carry out the relevant work.
- Personnel:** N/A
- Legal/Procurement:** The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires the local planning authority to keep under review the matters which may be expected to affect the development of their area or the planning of its development. The West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations DPD seeks to take forward a commitment to fulfil this obligation.
- Property:** N/A
- Risk Management:** The risks to development management are much higher without an up to date development plan in place (planning by appeal).

Is this item relevant to equality?	Please tick relevant boxes		Yes	No
Does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community and:				
• Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Will the policy have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Does the policy relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
• Does the policy relate to an area with known inequalities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Outcome (Where one or more 'Yes' boxes are ticked, the item is relevant to equality)				
Relevant to equality - Complete an EIA available at www.westberks.gov.uk/eia				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Not relevant to equality				<input type="checkbox"/>

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 Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Report is to note only	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following the adoption of the West Berkshire Core Strategy in July 2012, the Council is preparing a Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) to allocate non-strategic housing sites across the District and to allocate sites for Gypsies and Travellers. Some policies are also being updated as part of this process, namely those related to development in the countryside, residential parking standards and an amended policy to guide the future development of Sandford Park.

2. Key Issues

- (a) The DPD has been prepared in conformity with the Core Strategy, and allocates sites in accordance with the spatial strategy as set out in the Core Strategy – which defines four spatial areas with a settlement hierarchy of urban areas, rural service centres and service villages within them.
- (b) The housing requirement in the Core Strategy is ‘at least’ 10,500 dwellings. This was allocated to the district by the regional tier of government which has now been abolished.
- (c) The Council is required to prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to advise on the future ‘objectively assessed need’ of the District. The SHMA is underway, and being carried out in partnership with neighbouring authorities. The output of this SHMA will ultimately be a longer term housing number for the District.
- (d) The housing allocations within the Housing Site Allocations DPD are allocating the first part of this housing requirement. A new Local Plan will then be prepared to allocate the rest of any new housing requirement and to deal with other policy issues. A background paper explaining the Council’s approach is set out as Appendix B.
- (e) A Regulation 18 consultation was held as part of the preparation of the DPD and a summary of the responses received, together with the proposed officer response is attached as part of the Statement of Consultation (Appendix D).
- (f) The major part of the DPD is allocations for housing, which have been assessed in an objective and consistent manner, using site selection criteria together with the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment framework. The Preferred Options DPD is attached as Appendix A. The SA/SEA Environmental Report is Appendix C.
- (g) There is a requirement in national policy for West Berkshire Council to identify sites to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The preferred options sites are included as part of the DPD set out in Appendix A.
- (h) Policies on residential parking standards and an updated policy on Sandford Park are both included within the DPD at Appendix A.

3. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes

- 3.1 The Equalities Impact Assessment that is attached as Appendix G shows that the Housing Site Allocations DPD will have positive effects on a range of groups. No negative impacts have been identified.
- 3.2 A full Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out for the Core Strategy (adopted July 2012) and this was tested at Examination by an independent Planning Inspector.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 If Council considers that the draft Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document should be published for consultation, this will take place for a 7 week period from 25 July to 12 September 2014.
- 4.2 Following the consultation, officers will prepare a publication version of the plan for Council in December 2014, which takes account of the comments received.

Executive Report

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council adopted its Core Strategy in July 2012. This sets out a housing requirement for the District of 'at least' 10,500 dwellings from 2006-2026. The number was allocated via the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East (the South East Plan). The regional tier of Government has since been abolished.
- 1.2 The Core Strategy sets out an overall spatial strategy to accommodate this level of housing across the District and in addition it allocates two large strategic sites in Newbury (Newbury Racecourse and Sandford Park).
- 1.3 Whilst the Core Strategy allocates strategic development and sets out strategic policies, it only forms one part of the Local Plan. There is therefore a requirement to prepare additional document/s to allocate non-strategic housing sites across the District and to allocate sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople.

Non-strategic housing allocations for Newbury and the rest of the District are therefore being allocated through a Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (HSA DPD) in accordance with the spatial strategy of the Core Strategy.

- 1.4 In order to find the Core Strategy sound, the Inspector who examined the Core Strategy committed the Council to a review, within 3 years of its adoption, of the housing numbers for the District via the preparation of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), to be carried out in partnership with neighbouring authorities in the housing market area.

2. Approach to the DPD

- 2.1 The Council is required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to meet the 'full, objectively assessed needs' of the area. Work is underway to establish this requirement by undertaking a SHMA in partnership with other Berkshire authorities. Once the objectively assessed need has been established, agreement will then need to be reached about how this need will be met across the Housing Market Area, leading to a new housing requirement for the District's new Local Plan
- 2.2 By prioritising a HSA DPD at the earliest opportunity, rather than wait for the outcome of the SHMA, West Berkshire Council is pro-actively allocating non-strategic housing sites in accordance with the spatial strategy as set out in the adopted Core Strategy. This is positively planning for the District through the planned system as set out in the NPPF. This housing allocation will allocate the remainder of the 'at least' 10,500 housing figure from the Core Strategy, with added flexibility including Sandford Park and windfalls.
- 2.3 The approach is for the housing allocations within the HSA DPD to be seen as allocating the first part of any new housing requirement based on meeting the objectively assessed housing needs, in the short to medium term. Following the adoption of the HSA DPD, a new Local Plan will be prepared. This will allocate the rest of our new housing requirement and look longer term, as well as dealing with the other policy issues. Full details of the Council's approach are set out in a background paper, attached as Appendix B.

- 2.4 The timeline for the preparation of the HSA DPD as set out in the revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) is:
- (a) Consulting on scope of Sustainability Appraisal - September 2013 to October 2013
 - (b) Public participation in the preparation of the DPD - September 2013 to December 2014
 - (c) Publication of Proposed Submission Documents - December 2014
 - (d) Submission to Secretary of State - April 2015
 - (e) Start of Independent Examination - June 2015
 - (f) Adoption - December 2015

3. Progress on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

- 3.1 The Council was committed to a review of its housing numbers through the preparation of a SHMA by the Inspector for several reasons:
- (a) The revocation of the Regional Strategy which allocated the housing number for the District, and the timing of this.
 - (b) The emergence of the NPPF (March 2012) as the sole higher tier guidance for the preparation of Local Plans, and the key principle within this document to "boost significantly the supply of housing". The NPPF commits the local planning authority to "use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing..." (para 47) unless "...any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits...." (para 14).
 - (c) The Inspector's conclusion that the Core Strategy did not fulfil the NPPF requirement of meeting objectively assessed needs in full.
 - (d) Other evidence sources presented at the Core Strategy Examination that indicate that the level of housing need and demand may be higher than the South East Plan figure of 10,500.
- 3.2 In order to find the Core Strategy sound, the Inspector therefore committed the Council to a review of needs and demands for housing through a SHMA, to comply with the NPPF, within 3 years of the adoption of the Core Strategy.
- 3.3 The Council has a statutory duty to cooperate with its neighbouring authorities and it is therefore essential that the review of the SHMA is undertaken in conjunction with them. The output needs to quantify future housing need and demand for each of the local authority areas. Work on the SHMA has started, in conjunction with other Berkshire Authorities in the form of a project brief. Neighbouring authorities in Hampshire, Wiltshire and Oxfordshire will also need to be involved in order to comply with the duty to cooperate. The work is currently scheduled to conclude towards the end of the year (2014).

3.4 The SHMA will therefore help to identify the Council's 'objectively assessed' housing need as set out in the NPPF. The HSA DPD will identify site allocations to meet the first proportion of the objectively assessed need. A Local Plan will then be prepared, to look longer term, to allocate the rest of the housing requirement based on the objectively assessed housing need and to include all of the detailed development management policies which are needed to determine planning applications in the District. Timetables for both the HSA DPD and the Local Plan are set out in the Council's approved Local Development Scheme and demonstrate the Council's public commitment to assessing and proactively meeting the objectively assessed needs of West Berkshire through the plan-led system.

4. Consultation

4.1 Ongoing consultation work on the HSA DPD to date has included two newsletters to everyone who is registered as having an interest in planning policy matters. There have also been consultations with parish and town councils as part of the process of shortlisting and selecting sites to be included within the DPD.

4.2 A 'Regulation 18' consultation was held between 30 April and 11 June 2014. The Council is required to notify specified bodies and persons of the subject of the DPD which it proposes to prepare and invite each of them to make representations to the Council about what the DPD ought to contain in terms of scope and content. This consultation is a requirement under the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012.

4.3 Over 40 responses were received during the Regulation 18 consultation. A table of these responses and a proposed Council response, setting out how representations will be taken into account, is attached as part of the Statement of Consultation at Appendix D. A number of these comments are either promoting or objecting to SHLAA sites. Others are raising issues about the Council's approach to preparing the DPD.

4.4 If Council approves the preferred options draft of the HSA DPD, it will then be published for a 7 week period of consultation between 25 July and 12 September. Whilst this is an informal period of consultation, it is an important opportunity to gauge public opinion on the proposals within the DPD before it is formally published.

5. Duty to Cooperate

5.1 Section 110 of the Localism Act places a legal duty on local planning authorities and other prescribed bodies to cooperate with each other when preparing development plan documents in order to address strategic planning issues relevant to their areas.

5.2 Failure to satisfy the Duty will mean that plans cannot be adopted as a Planning Inspector cannot make main modifications to remedy this through the examination process.

5.3 Work on satisfying the Duty is taking place on an ongoing basis. As part of the preparatory work on the DPD, a paper was sent out to those with whom West Berkshire needs to cooperate which sets out how West Berkshire Council will deal with strategic planning issues as part of the preparation of the DPD. The paper

sought comments on the approach as part of the ongoing process of cooperation. The comments received and the Council's response forms part of the Statement of Consultation at Appendix D.

- 5.4 Two memorandums of understanding have also been signed by the Berkshire authorities on strategic planning and on minerals and waste issues. Additionally, one to one discussions are taking place with some of the relevant organisations as part of the process of site selection described further below.

6. Evidence Base

- 6.1 Several evidence base studies have informed the preparation of the DPD and their outcomes are reflected in the SA/SEA Environmental Report set out at Appendix C as they have been used to assess the sites. These include the Landscape Assessment, the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). These will be available on the Council's website as background information to support the consultation. Hard copies will be available in the Members Room, with electronic copies available on request.

7. Content of the Housing Site Allocations (HSA) Development Plan Document (DPD)

Housing Site Allocations

- 7.1 The major part of the DPD is the site allocations for housing. The purpose of the HSA DPD is to allocate smaller (non-strategic in scale and function) extensions to settlements within the settlement hierarchy in accordance with the spatial strategy of the adopted West Berkshire Core Strategy. It is a regulatory requirement of the HSA DPD to be in general conformity with the Core Strategy.
- 7.2 Following introductory text, the allocations are set out in the preferred options draft of the DPD (Appendix A) by spatial area, following the framework of the adopted Core Strategy which sets out housing numbers for each of these areas. There are four spatial areas of the District which 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. The four spatial areas are as follows:
- (i) Newbury/Thatcham
 - (ii) The East Kennet Valley
 - (iii) The Eastern Area and
 - (iv) The North Wessex Downs AONB
- 7.3 The table at paragraph 7.25 shows the current housing requirement. Officers have looked at new permissions since March 2013 and included a cautious windfall allowance for the first 5 years only (apart from in the AONB where a windfall allowance is included for the whole period due to the housing requirement being 'up to' 2,000 homes) to ensure an appropriate allocation of residential development. The District's settlement hierarchy forms the focus for development within each of the spatial areas, with the majority of development being directed firstly to the urban

areas, followed by the rural service centres, and lastly smaller amounts to the service villages.

7.4 Potential sites for allocation are shown in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (December 2013), following the 'Call for Sites' in the spring of 2013.

7.5 Sites within the SHLAA were assessed as:

- (1) Deliverable – realistic prospect of delivery within 5 years. Development here would be in general conformity with current planning policies
- (2) Developable – suitable location and reasonable prospect of viable development. Development here would be in general conformity with current planning policies
- (3) Potentially Developable – suitability needs to be assessed through the Local Plan.
- (4) Not currently developable – significant constraints to delivery within the plan period.

7.6 Those considered for allocation have typically been assessed as 'Potentially Developable' within the SHLAA. These form the basket of sites from which choices will be made through the plan-led process.

7.7 Consultation with Parish Councils and Ward Members on the SHLAA took place in January and February 2014. The outcomes are included in the Statement of Consultation at Appendix D. These events allowed the parish councils and Ward Members to discuss the sites with officers and to indicate any preferences they had regarding the sites within their parishes. The comments made through these consultation events have been used in the process of site assessment, as these identify local factors relating to each site.

7.8 Site Selection Criteria were drawn up to allow further assessment of the sites included within the SHLAA. The criteria themselves have their basis in national and local policy, focusing on all aspects of sustainability (environmental, social and economic). The criteria have been split into two sections,

(1) **Automatic Exclusion**

Criteria which automatically rule out a site as unsuitable for allocation in the HSA DPD. The first stage was assessing all of the sites against this set of criteria. This determined which sites progress for further consideration and which should be ruled out at an early stage.

The criteria under this heading include sites which are too small to be allocated and those within the settlement boundary, where there is a presumption in favour of development. Other criteria include factors that make a site unsuitable for development, such as significant flood risk (flood zone 3) or a national or international environmental or historical protection (including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Registered Battlefields or Historic Parks and Gardens). The impact on the AONB is also taken into consideration, and

where the impact on the landscape character has been shown to be unacceptable a site will be ruled out at this stage.

(2) **Other Considerations**

If not ruled out at the first stage, sites are assessed against other considerations via a set of criteria which allow further consideration of the suitability of the site for development. These factors look in more detail at the suitability of the site and include a wide range of factors from land use, to contamination, to accessibility and capacity (including scope to increase capacity) of local services and facilities.

The relationship to the surrounding area and other potential neighbouring sites is also taken into consideration in this section of the assessment (i.e. cumulative impact).

- 7.9 Members were consulted on the site selection criteria via the Planning Policy Task Group. The site selection criteria are included within Appendix B. The Automatic Exclusion ruled out 175 sites as being unsuitable for allocation. 77 of these were ruled out by the SHLAA, with 98 ruled out through the automatic exclusion factors.
- 7.10 Technical internal and external consultees were also asked for their comments on the sites. These consultees included the Highways Agency, the Environment Agency, Thames Water, the Council's ecologist, archaeologist, highways engineer and environmental health. Their comments have been used to assist in the process of site selection.
- 7.11 Due to the importance of landscape considerations in assessing the SHLAA sites in the AONB, technical landscape work was commissioned to assess the newly promoted sites in the AONB on the same basis as those previously submitted.
- 7.12 The detailed assessment of all of these factors forms a thorough basis from which to assess the sites in an objective and consistent manner to inform the decision making process.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- 7.13 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be carried out for all DPDs. Both of these appraisals can be carried out in one appraisal process. In order to avoid any confusion, all references to the SA will refer to both the SA and the SEA.
- 7.14 The objective of the SA is to promote sustainable development through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations in the preparation of new or revised DPDs. The SA focuses on the significant sustainability effects of the DPD and considers alternatives that take into account the social, environmental and economic objectives and the geographical scope of the documents.
- 7.15 The SA / SEA for each site was only carried out on those sites considered a realistic option for allocation following the two stages set out above. The SA Framework was included in the SA/SEA Scoping Report, which was consulted upon with the three statutory bodies (Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage) in September 2013.

- 7.16 As the HSA DPD is set within the framework set out by the adopted Core Strategy, the SA/SEA is an update to that prepared alongside the Core Strategy.
- 7.17 The SA/SEA Environmental Report is set out as Appendix C. This includes full details of how the sites have been assessed and shortlisted.

Housing Site Allocations

- 7.18 Details of the shortlisted sites, together with a map and a summary of the key issues affecting their development are included within Appendix A.
- 7.19 The spatial distribution of the sites reflects the spatial strategy of the Core Strategy and is therefore set out within the four spatial areas of the District. In some cases, it is proposed that more sites be included within the consultation than are needed to meet the housing numbers. Reasons for this include the need for flexibility within the housing numbers and to assess public opinion. In some cases there is a need to continue technical work where there are issues which could affect the future development of the site.
- 7.20 This is particularly the case in the east of the District where there are a number of technical issues affecting development including highways and amenity concerns. In this case, more evidence is sought through the consultation to aid final decision making on which sites would be the most appropriate to include within the publication version of the DPD in this area of the District.
- 7.21 Additional flexibility has been included within the numbers in the East Kennet Valley in case the outcome of the consultation is that the approximate numbers in the Eastern spatial area cannot be found.
- 7.22 A further example where choices are to be made is in Hungerford. The sites which are performing best in the site selection process are a group of sites on the Eddington side of the A4 and a site to the south of Salisbury Road. The sites have different positives and negatives in terms of potential impact on traffic through the town centre and also in terms of accessibility to facilities. Members at Planning Policy Task group therefore asked that they be presented as options to be tested through consultation.
- 7.23 In Lambourn, members of Planning Policy Task Group have asked that 2 sites be included for consultation. Both may not be needed in terms of meeting the requirement for the AONB. In Pangbourne, two sites are included for consultation but one has potential access issues which will be considered further through the consultation process. .
- 7.24 Public consultation is a key part of the preparation stage of the DPD and this informal consultation will provide useful information to assess the sites further.
- 7.25 The table below shows the housing requirement from the Core Strategy to be found in each spatial area, summarises the different elements of housing supply at June 2014 and also summarises (as the final line of the table in bold) the proposed allocation of housing sites by spatial area.

Newbury/Thatcham

Housing Requirement	6,300 approx.
----------------------------	----------------------

Housing Supply at June 2014	
Dwellings completed at March 2013	1,932
Dwellings with permission at March 2013	2,262
Sandleford Park – allocated strategic site	1,000
Permissions on sites of 10 or more units and prior approvals granted since March 2013	153
Identified sites within settlement boundaries	approx 385
Windfall allowance in 5 year supply	160
Proposed Allocations	
HSA DPD Preferred Options potential allocations	485

Eastern Spatial Area

Housing Requirement	1,400 approx.
----------------------------	----------------------

Housing Supply at June 2014	
Dwellings completed at March 2013	283
Dwellings with permission at March 2013	427
Permissions on sites of 10 or more units and prior approvals granted since March 2013	31
Identified sites within settlement boundaries	110
Windfall allowance in 5 year supply	14
Proposed Allocations	
HSA DPD Preferred Options potential allocations – choices to be made following consultation	Up to 815

North Wessex Downs AONB

Housing Requirement	2,000 max
----------------------------	------------------

Housing Supply at June 2014	
Dwellings completed at March 2013	855
Dwellings with permission at March 2013	493
Permissions on sites of 10 or more units and prior approvals granted since March 2013	7
Identified sites within settlement boundaries	16
Windfall allowance in 5 year supply	129
Windfall allowance 2019 - 2026	240
Proposed Allocations	
HSA DPD Preferred Options potential allocations – final choices to be made following consultation	Up to 468

East Kennet Valley

Housing Requirement	800 approx.
----------------------------	--------------------

Housing Supply at June 2014	
Dwellings completed at March 2013	364
Dwellings with permission at March 2013	166
Permissions on sites of 10 or more units and prior approvals granted since March 2013	0
Identified sites within settlement boundaries	0
Windfall allowance in 5 year supply	54
Proposed Allocations	
HSA DPD Preferred Options potential allocations – choices to be made following consultation	Up to 320

Review of Settlement Boundaries

- 7.26 Settlement boundaries identify the main built up area of a settlement within which development is likely to be considered acceptable in principle, subject to other policy considerations. While allowing for development, settlement boundaries protect the character of a settlement and prevent unrestricted growth into the countryside. They create a level of certainty about whether or not the principle of development is likely to be acceptable which is helpful for Development Control officers, Members, applicants and members of the public.
- 7.27 It is proposed that the settlement boundaries of those settlements within the defined settlement hierarchy will be re-drawn around the developable areas of the housing allocations, plus around those sites which have been identified as suitable to include within a revised settlement boundary (generally sites suitable for development which are below the usual threshold for allocation).
- 7.28 In addition to these changes, criteria for more detailed settlement boundary reviews are proposed for consultation at this time, to enable further work to be done on revising the settlement boundaries before the DPD is submitted to the Secretary of State. The criteria are included in Appendix A.

Policies to guide development in the countryside

- 7.29 The Core Strategy is a strategic document that provides an overall framework for the more detailed policy and site specific proposals to be contained in other parts of the Local Plan. Some of the policies in the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 have been saved and remain in force as part of the development plan.
- 7.30 The NPPF is clear, at para 215, that 'due weight' should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the framework. The closer the policies in the plan to the policies of the framework, the greater the weight to be given in planning decisions. The saved policies of the District Local Plan have all been assessed for consistency against the NPPF. Some of the policies were assessed as going further than the NPPF because of local circumstances, but matching the overall intent of national policy. There is therefore not a conflict with policy which necessitates urgent updating, and Inspectors are still treating the policies as having due weight.
- 7.31 However, there was some concern from Members that some of the saved policies should be reviewed and updated speedily in order to provide an up to date policy framework to guide planning applications. This relates particularly to those which guide new housing in the countryside.
- 7.32 A draft paper to guide development in the countryside was presented to Planning Policy Task Group in June and they will consider it more fully at the end of July. The policies will be considered by full Council on 18 September and if approved, a period of public consultation will follow. The proposed new policies reflect updated national policy and respond to local issues in West Berkshire. This work has been prepared by an external planning consultant working on a short term contract.

Parking Standards

- 7.33 Work on Parking Standards for residential development has been carried out and it is proposed to consult on these proposed parking standards as part of the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document. A policy on the revised parking standards is included in Appendix A. A background explanatory paper is attached as Appendix E.

Sandleford Park

- 7.34 Members will be aware that new evidence is available on two specific elements of the Core Strategy policy on Sandleford Park (CS3). These relate to highways access (where evidence shows benefits to the Highways network of additional all vehicle accesses onto Warren Road and to the A339) and to education provision where updated child yield figures show an increased primary requirement to accommodate pupil numbers arising from the site.
- 7.35 Officers have therefore taken the opportunity to update the policy to ensure that it reflects the most up to date element on highways and access. A requirement to masterplan the site holistically has also been included to ensure that the requirements of the SPD are properly taken into account. All other aspects of the policy remain unchanged. The policy is included in Appendix A with the technical information explaining the revised policy set out as Appendix F.

8. Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

- 8.1 There is a requirement for West Berkshire Council, as the Local Planning Authority, to identify sites to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The Council is required by national policy to set pitch and plot targets which address the likely permanent and transit accommodation needs in the area, working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities.
- 8.2 To provide the evidence to inform pitch provision, a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment has been undertaken. This is being carried out by an independent consultant, using a shared methodology with other Berkshire authorities. Duty to Cooperate work has been ongoing to date and will continue as the conclusions of the study are discussed further.
- 8.3 The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment has given initial information about the number of pitches required for the next 15 years. The study indicates a requirement for 14 permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and 24 for Travelling Showpeople.
- 8.4 A 'call for sites' for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople was held between 28 April and 27 May 2014, which asked for suitable pitches to be identified. 5 sites were submitted during this process with an additional 4 sites included in the site assessment work. All sites were assessed in accordance with Core Strategy policy CS7. Regard has also been had to the relevant national guidance. A SA/SEA has been carried out on each site to determine the potential effects on social, economic and environmental sustainability.
- 8.5 The conclusions of this work were presented to Members at the Planning Policy Task Group Meeting on 27 June. This has led to preferred sites for consultation being selected. These are included as part of Appendix A.

9. Next Steps

- 9.1 If Council considers that the draft Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document should be consulted upon, then the next steps will be for officers to invite comments on the draft document through an informal 7 week period of consultation.
- 9.2 It is proposed that the consultation takes place between 25 July and 12 September 2014 and is carried out in accordance with the Council's emerging Statement of Community Involvement.
- 9.3 Following the consultation, officers will prepare a publication version of the plan for Council in December 2014, which takes account of the comments received.

Appendices

Appendix A - Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD)

Appendix B – Background Paper – approach to the DPD

Appendix C - Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report **(electronically)**

Appendix D – Statement of Consultation **(electronically)**

Appendix E – background information to support policy on residential parking standards **(electronically)**

Appendix F – Technical information to support changes to policy CS3 of the Core Strategy (Sandleford Park) **(electronically)**

Appendix G – Equalities Impact Assessment.

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: As part of the consultation

Officers Consulted: Paula Amorelli, Caroline Peddie, Sarah Conlon, Bryan Lyttle, Corporate Board

Trade Union: N/a

This page is intentionally left blank

APPENDIX A

**HOUSING SITE ALLOCATIONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN
DOCUMENT**

PREFERRED OPTIONS

Contents

1	What is the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document?	2
1.1	Approach to Housing Numbers	2
1.2	Consultation	2
1.3	Duty to Cooperate	3
2	Spatial Strategy – where are the houses proposed to go and why?	4
2.1	How have the potential housing sites been selected?	4
2.2	Settlement Boundary Reviews	5
2.3	Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	5
2.4	Policies to Guide Development in the Countryside	6
2.5	Parking Standards for Residential Development	6
2.6	Updated Policy to guide development at Sandford Park	6
3	Housing Site Allocations	7
3.1	Spatial Area – Newbury and Thatcham including Cold Ash	7
3.1.1	Newbury	7
3.1.2	Thatcham	15
3.1.3	Cold Ash	19
3.2	Spatial Area – East Kennet Valley	22
3.2.1	Burghfield Common	22
3.2.2	Mortimer	26
3.2.3	Woolhampton	30
3.3	Spatial Area – North Wessex Downs AONB	33
3.3.1	Hungerford	33
3.3.2	Lambourn	37
3.3.3	Pangbourne	40
3.3.4	Bradfield Southend	42
3.3.5	Chieveley	45
3.3.6	Compton	49
3.3.7	Great Shefford	52
3.3.8	Hermitage	54
3.3.9	Kintbury	57
3.4	The Eastern Area	60
3.4.1	Eastern Urban Area	61
3.4.2	Theale	66
4	Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	70
4.1	Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment	70
4.2	Preferred Options for Gypsies and Travellers	70
4.3	Preferred Option for Travelling Showpeople	73
5	Residential Parking Policy for new development	76
5.1	Design of parking provision	76
5.2	Level of parking provision	76
5.3	Explanation of the policy	77
5.4	Delivery and Monitoring	77
6	Sandford Park	78
6.1	Sandford Strategic Site Allocation	78
6.2	Explanation of the Policy	79
6.3	Delivery and Monitoring	80
	Appendix 1 – Parking Design Guidance from Building for Life Partnership (2012)	81
	Appendix 2 - Residential Parking Policy Zones	83
	Appendix 3 - Settlement Boundary Review Criteria	88

Housing Site Allocations – Preferred Options

1 What is the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document?

The Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) is the second DPD within West Berkshire's Local Plan.

It has been prepared following the adoption of the West Berkshire Core Strategy in July 2012 which set out the overall planning framework for the site specific proposals and policies to be contained in other documents.

The Core Strategy allocates strategic development sites in Newbury (Newbury Racecourse and Sandford Park). It also sets out strategic policies. The role of the Housing Site Allocations DPD is now to implement the framework set by the Core Strategy by allocating non-strategic housing sites across the District in accordance with the spatial strategy of the Core Strategy. This means that the sites to be allocated are in the areas that the Core Strategy sets out as suitable for some level of future growth and that the proposals will conform to the policy details set out in the Core Strategy.

Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are also proposed for allocation and the Housing Site Allocations DPD will also include updated residential parking standards and a policy which updates part of adopted policy Core Strategy policy (CS3) on Sandford Park.

1.1 Approach to Housing Numbers

The Core Strategy sets out a housing requirement for the District of 'at least' 10,500 dwellings from 2006 to 2026. The Core Strategy was prepared at a time when the housing number for the District was allocated via the regional tier of Government which has now been abolished.

The Council is now required by national policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to meet the 'objectively assessed needs' of the area. Work is underway in partnership with other local authorities to establish how much housing West Berkshire will need in the future through the production of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).

The first part of the future housing requirement is being met through the preparation of the Housing Site Allocations DPD which will allocate the remainder of the 'at least' 10,500 housing figure from the Core Strategy, with some additional flexibility around these numbers. Once the DPD has been adopted, the remainder of the future housing requirement will be met through the preparation of a new Local Plan which will allocate additional development and look longer term to 2036, as well as dealing with other policy issues.

1.2 Consultation

Consultation so far on the Housing Site Allocations DPD has included two newsletters and workshops with Parish and Town Councils as part of the process of shortlisting and selecting sites to be included within the DPD.

Between 30 April and 11 June 2014 we held a consultation about the scope and content of the DPD. This is a regulatory consultation and we notified specified bodies and persons of the proposed subject of the DPD and asked them to make representations. We received over 40 responses and

have carefully considered and responded to the points made. This information is set out in the Statement of Consultation that accompanies the DPD.

This is a preferred options consultation, setting out shortlisted housing allocations, proposed sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople as well as a policy on residential parking standards and an updated policy to guide the future development of Sandford Park. This is an optional period of consultation, but in the Council's view an important one as it gives you an opportunity to comment at an early stage of the planning process and for us to be able to take your views into account before final decisions are made.

We would now like your comments on the soundness of the proposals within the draft Plan. This is a 7 week period of consultation which is taking place between 25 July and 12 September 2014. Copies of the documents will be available at the libraries in the District and at the Council Offices. You can comment via our consultation portal at <http://consult.westberks.gov.uk/portal> and register using the 'login/register' section. Alternatively please fill in the on-line consultation form which is available at www.westberks.gov.uk/housingsiteallocations and return it to us by email at planningpolicy@westberks.gov.uk. Hard copies of the consultation form are also available.

Following the consultation, a submission draft Housing Site Allocations DPD will be produced, taking into account the outcome of the consultation. This will then be submitted to the Secretary of State following a further period of consultation.

1.3 Duty to Cooperate

Section 110 of the Localism Act places a legal duty on local planning authorities and other prescribed bodies to cooperate with each other when preparing development plan documents in order to address strategic planning issues relevant to their areas.

Work is ongoing on satisfying the Duty including sending a paper out to those with whom West Berkshire needs to cooperate which sets out how West Berkshire Council will deal with strategic planning issues as part of the preparation of the DPD. The paper sought comments on the approach as part of the ongoing process of cooperation.

Additionally one to one discussions have taken place with some of the relevant organisations as part of the process of site selection.

A Statement of Consultation has been prepared and forms a background paper to the DPD.

2 Spatial Strategy – where are the houses proposed to go and why?

This DPD Preferred Options document contains shortlisted sites for future housing development. These are set out in four spatial areas, to deliver the framework of the adopted West Berkshire Core Strategy. The spatial strategy builds on the existing settlement pattern of West Berkshire, with a particular focus on Newbury as the District's main urban centre.

The four spatial areas reflect the distinct characteristics of the different parts of West Berkshire, and use the District's settlement hierarchy of Urban Areas, Rural Service Centres and Service Villages as the focus for development within these areas. The four spatial areas are:

- Newbury and Thatcham, including the Service Village of Cold Ash.
- The Eastern Area, which includes the Eastern Urban Area (Tilehurst, Calcot and Purley on Thames) and the Rural Service Centre of Theale.
- The North Wessex Downs AONB which includes the Rural Service Centres of Hungerford, Lambourn and Pangbourne and the Service Villages of Compton, Hermitage, Chieveley, Kintbury, Great Shefford and Bradfield Southend.
- The East Kennet Valley, including the Rural Service Centres of Burghfield Common and Mortimer and the Service Villages of Woolhampton and Aldermaston.

The settlement hierarchy of the Core Strategy sets out that whilst the urban areas will be the focus of development in West Berkshire, there will also be development in Rural Service Centres which provide the role of a focal point for the surrounding villages and rural areas in terms of the provision of services and facilities. Service Villages will accommodate more limited development, appropriate to the character and function of the village, in order to meet local needs.

The Core Strategy sets out a vision for each of the four spatial areas, showing how each area is expected to change and evolve to 2026. This is followed by a set of bullet points which show how the vision will be implemented, what the level of growth will be and how this level of growth for each area will be delivered.

Proposed housing allocations have been made in conformity with the Core Strategy. Information about these allocations is set out in summary form in **Section 1**, divided by spatial area. All of the detailed background information is set out in the Site Selection Process paper.

2.1 How have the potential housing sites been selected?

We held a 'call for sites' in the spring of 2013 which led to an update of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) being published in December 2013. The role of the SHLAA is to identify a range of sites that may have potential for housing development over the coming years. The SHLAA provides a basket of sites from which choices are made through the preparation of the DPD.

The DPD has to be based on evidence, and so all of the sites have been assessed against the same planning criteria to assess the suitability of each of the sites for development. These criteria are set out in the background paper which accompanies the Housing Site Allocations DPD. The site

selection criteria have their basis in national and local policy, focusing on the three elements of sustainability (environmental, social and economic).

Workshops were held with the Parish and Town Councils during the spring of 2014 in order to discuss the SHLAA sites and to get their views on them at an early stage of the process. Technical consultees were also asked for their comments on the sites during the site selection process to gain their early views. Further information on this is also set out in the background paper.

Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) is a key part of the site selection process. This focuses on the significant sustainability effects of the DPD and considers alternatives that take into account the social, environmental and economic objectives. The SA/SEA objectives have been used to assess the sustainability of the sites and the outcomes of this process have been set out in the SA/SEA Environmental Report.

2.2 Settlement Boundary Reviews

Settlement boundaries identify the main built up area of a settlement within which development is likely to be considered acceptable in principle, subject to other policy considerations. While allowing for development, settlement boundaries protect the character of a settlement and prevent unrestricted growth into the countryside. They create a level of certainty about whether or not the principle of development is likely to be acceptable which is helpful for Development Control Officers, Council Members, applicants and members of the public.

It is proposed that the settlement boundaries around the settlements within the settlement hierarchy will be re-drawn to include the proposed site allocations. Additional sites which are too small to be housing allocations (typically those which are below 5 dwellings) may also be included within revised settlement boundaries.

Criteria for reviewing the settlement boundaries have been prepared and are set out as **Appendix 3**. These form part of the preferred options consultation. The settlement boundaries themselves have not been re-drawn at this stage but will be as part of the submission version of the DPD.

2.3 Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

There is a requirement for West Berkshire Council, as the Local Planning Authority, to identify sites to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. National policy sets out a need to set pitch and plot targets which address the likely permanent and transit accommodation needs in the area, working in partnership with neighbouring authorities.

Any pitch provision must be based on evidence and so a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) has been carried out. This was carried out by an independent consultant, using a shared methodology with other Berkshire authorities. The GTAA has informed the number and location of pitches required.

A 'call for sites' exercise was held between 28 April and 27 May 2014 in which interested parties could suggest sites they considered suitable for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. A total of 5 sites were submitted, including requests from owners of some existing authorised sites to extend their sites and/or increase the number of pitches. In addition to these submitted sites 4 other sites have been considered for allocation; one existing unauthorised site, a site which was promoted through the SHLAA for Gypsies and Travellers (EUA035), a site where planning permission had

lapsed and a Council owned site. The potential suitability of each site has been assessed to see which would be suitable to take forward as preferred sites. This information is set out in **Section 2** of the DPD.

2.4 Policies to Guide Development in the Countryside

Given the importance of the landscape within West Berkshire, both inside and outside the AONB, and the pressures for development, it is important to provide clear, up to date planning policy guidance to ensure a sound starting point for development management decisions.

A review has therefore been undertaken of all the 'saved' policies from the previous Local Plan (West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006) which relate to the management of housing in the countryside and which remain in force as part of the development plan.

The proposed new policies reflect national policy and respond to local issues in West Berkshire. The policies do not form part of this consultation. Instead there will be a separate consultation on them for 6 weeks from September.

2.5 Parking Standards for Residential Development

Levels of parking provision and the way in which they are designed are important factors in creating good quality environments where people want to live. Standards for car parking have now been developed which seek to ensure the delivery of good quality developments in West Berkshire. These standards take into account national policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and take into account factors such as the accessibility of the development, the size, type, mix and use of the development, local car ownership levels, existing levels of parking provision and the overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles.

The draft parking standards for residential development are included within **Section 3** of the DPD and is accompanied by a background paper accompanying the DPD.

2.6 Updated Policy to guide development at Sandford Park

Since the adoption of the Core Strategy in July 2012, new evidence has become available on two specific elements of the Core Strategy policy on Sandford Park (CS3). These relate to highways access (where evidence shows benefits to the Highways network of additional all vehicle accesses onto Warren Road and to the A339) and to education provision where updated child yield figures show an increased primary requirement to accommodate pupil numbers arising from the site.

The policy has therefore been updated to ensure that it reflects the most up to date evidence on highways and access. The policy has also been updated to include reference to the need for masterplans for the site to be prepared as part of any planning application.

All other aspects of the policy remain unchanged. The revised policy is included within **Section 3** of the DPD.

The policy is supported by background technical evidence which is set out as a background paper accompanying the DPD.

3 Housing Site Allocations

3.1 Spatial Area – Newbury and Thatcham including Cold Ash

The Newbury and Thatcham area includes not only the two towns but the surrounding area, including the parishes of Greenham, Enborne, Shaw-cum-Donnington and parts of Speen and Cold Ash. Newbury is the main town and administrative centre for the District, with a wide range of retail, employment, leisure and community services and facilities. Thatcham has a more modest level of facilities and has experienced rapid housing growth over the last few decades. Both towns are surrounded by attractive countryside and the area has a number of important environmental and heritage assets including ancient woodlands, local wildlife sites, SSSIs and, in the case of Newbury, a designated battlefield site.

The Core Strategy sets out a housing requirement for the spatial area of approximately 6,300 new homes between 2006 and 2026. At March 2013 the completions and outstanding commitments (homes with planning permission or allocated for development) left a remaining requirement of approximately 1,100. The number needing to be allocated is reduced by taking account of permissions granted since March 2013, sites within the settlement boundary that have been identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), office sites that have been identified for conversion to residential use through permitted development and by the inclusion of a modest windfall allowance.

Newbury is the main focus for housing growth over the plan period with new housing development to be integrated into the town, supporting the vitality of the town centre and accompanied by enhanced services, facilities and infrastructure, as outlined in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Strategic sites have already been allocated at Newbury Racecourse, where development is well underway, and at Sandleford Park. There is significant potential on previously developed land, particularly in the town centre and periphery, including the Market Street site which will see the development of an “urban village” linking the railway station to the town centre.

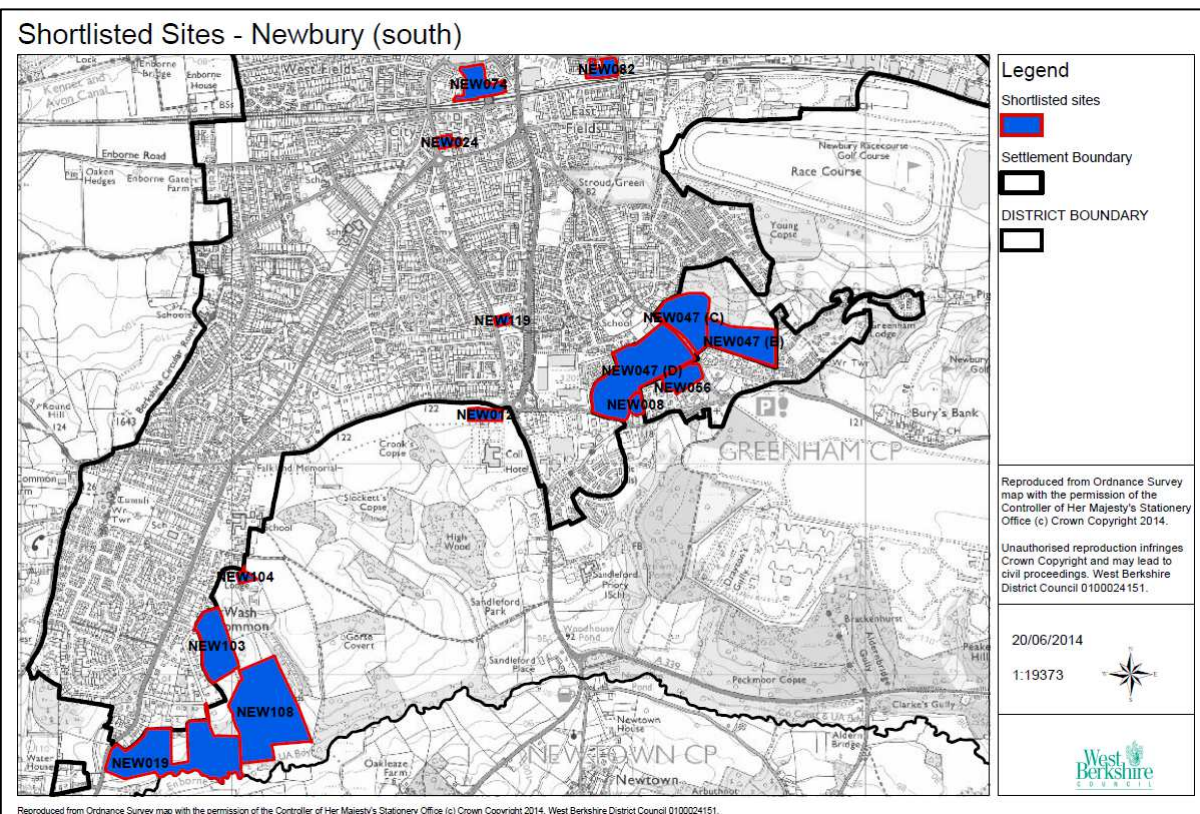
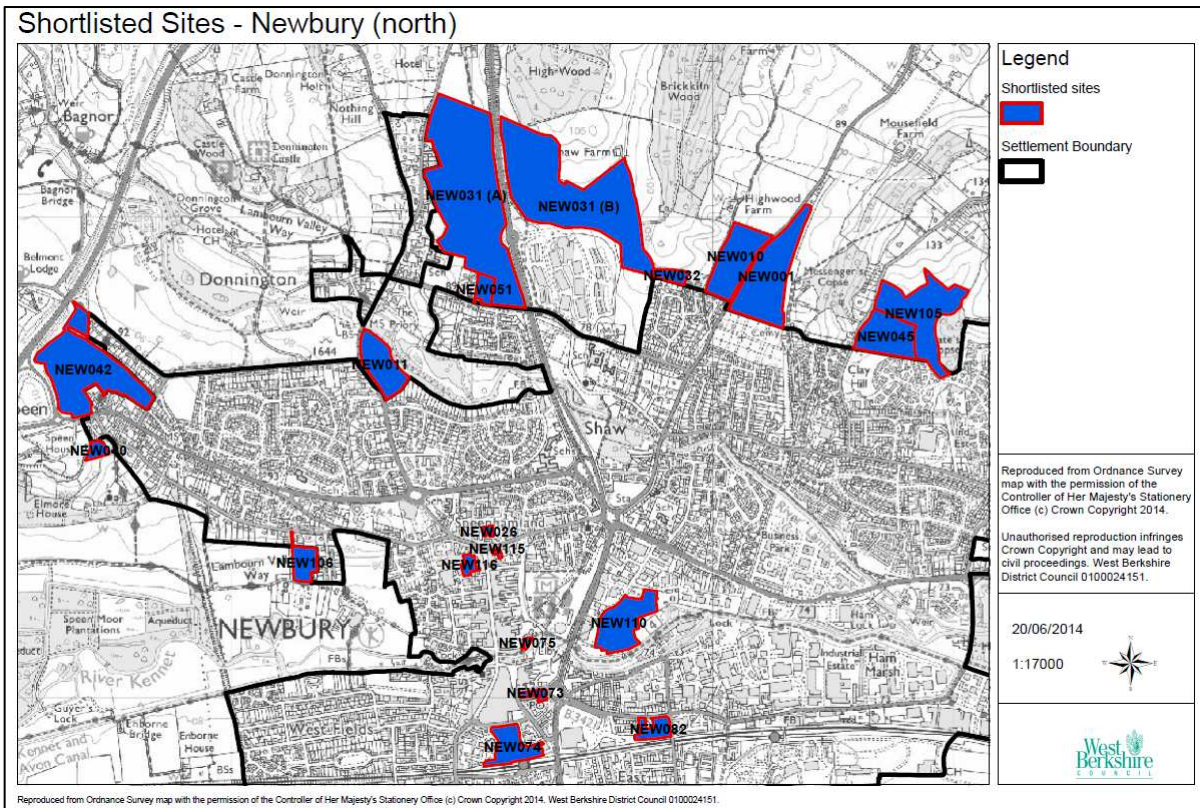
Thatcham has been identified for more limited growth. The Core Strategy requirement is for approximately 900 new homes over the plan period and at March 2013 over 800 had already been completed or had planning permission. The Core Strategy identifies Cold Ash as a Service Village where some limited development would be appropriate.

Proposed Housing Site Allocations

3.1.1 Newbury

There have been a significant number of sites promoted for housing in the Newbury area. The SHLAA assessed 34 sites as potentially developable. Some of these are in Protected Employment Areas which will be reviewed in the new Local Plan following an objective assessment of the needs for housing and employment growth. These sites, including the London Road Industrial Estate, have not therefore been assessed for potential allocation as part of this Housing Site Allocations DPD, although they may add some flexibility to the strategy in the medium to longer term.

The number of sites promoted meant that choices needed to be made through the site selection process. This information is set out in full in the SA/SEA Environmental Report and includes details about the sites which have been discounted through the site selection process.



Preferred Options

Land north of Newbury College (SHLAA site reference NEW012)

This site, immediately to the north of Newbury College, is just under a hectare in area and could accommodate approximately 23 dwellings. The site is adjacent to the strategic site at Sandleford Park, in a location close to local facilities and services and to open space. There are a number of walking and cycling routes from the site into Newbury town centre and a regular bus service.

It is proposed that the scheme will be developed for medium density housing with a mix of dwelling types and sizes including affordable housing. The site will be sensitively designed to enhance the gateway into Newbury from the south and take into account development at Sandleford Park. Access could be obtained from Monks Lane via the existing roundabout.

Land at Bath Road, Speen (SHLAA site reference NEW042)

This site covers an area of just over 9 hectares on the north western side of Newbury adjacent to existing residential development and is proposed for development of slightly over 100 new homes, with extensive open space in the western part of the site. The site is within walking distance of the town centre and there are regular bus services into Newbury.

It is proposed that the scheme be developed for medium density housing with a mix of dwelling types and sizes, including affordable housing. The site is adjacent to Speen Conservation Area and will need to be sensitively designed. The site also has archaeological potential which will need to be further assessed. Speen allotments will need to be retained or re-provided.

The site promoters have already held a public consultation exercise on the development of the site and carried out further technical work in response to the consultation process, including consideration of the potential to relocate the allotments and of access to the site, which is proposed from Bath Road and Lambourn Road. Access from Station Road would also improve the permeability through the site.

Land at Coley Farm, Stoney Lane (SHLAA site reference NEW045)

This site to the north east of Newbury covers an area of 3.6 hectares and could accommodate approximately 75 new homes. The site is adjacent to existing housing and to local amenity space with open farmland to the north and farmland and ancient woodland to the east. There are regular bus services to Newbury and Thatcham although the existing bus stops are some distance from the site.

It is proposed that the scheme be developed for medium density housing with a mix of dwelling types and sizes, including affordable housing. The site will be sensitively designed to protect the character of this part of Newbury. Access is proposed from Stoney Lane although the lane would need to be widened and footpaths provided. An extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey would be required as there is the potential for birds and reptiles on the site.

South East Newbury, Land to the north of Haysoms Drive and land adjoining Equine Way (SHLAA site reference NEW047D)

This site, between the Newbury and Greenham settlement boundaries, part of a former landfill site, covers an area of almost 10 hectares and is proposed for development of approximately 120 new homes on two parcels of land. Many facilities, including retail, employment and schools are within walking distance and there are regular bus services close by to a number of destinations, including Newbury and Basingstoke. The site is close to open space at Greenham Common, the proposed country parkland at Sandleford Park and sports facilities at Newbury Rugby Club.

It is proposed that the scheme be developed for medium density housing with a mix of dwelling types and sizes, including affordable housing. It is proposed that a large arc of open space would be managed as a habitat for local wildlife, providing footpaths and cycleways and retaining an element of separation between Newbury and Greenham. This open space would need to be retained for the existing colony of great crested newts and managed in perpetuity.

The traffic impact of the scheme would need to be assessed by a Transport Assessment. The routes in this area, particularly Greenham Road, are often congested during peak travel times and the development at Sandleford Park will also impact on traffic in this area.

South of Warren Road (SHLAA site reference NEW104)

This is a small site of approximately a third of a hectare, currently used as a vegetable plot ancillary to a residential property. It is well related to Wash Common, is adjacent to the allocated strategic site at Sandleford Park and could provide a continuation of the proposed residential development in this location.

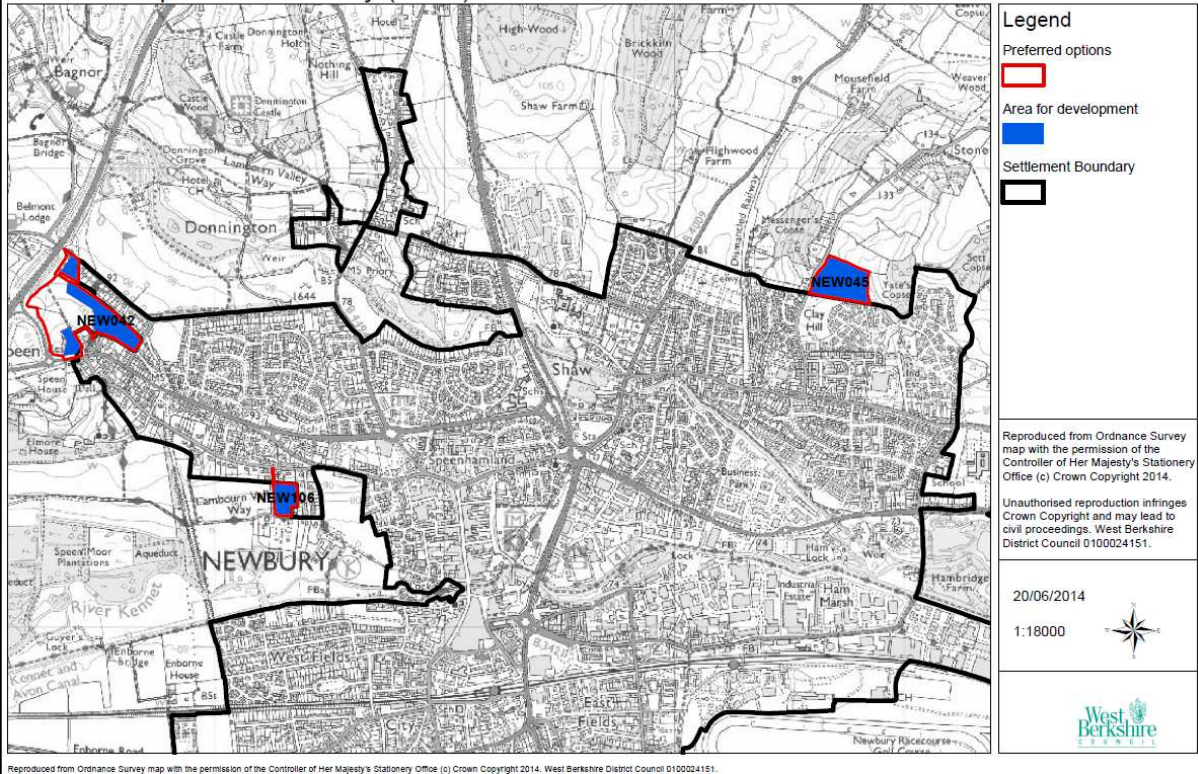
It is proposed that the scheme be developed at a relatively low density in keeping with the existing residential development and that proposed in the adjacent area of Sandleford Park. The site could potentially deliver approximately 5 new dwellings.

Land at Moor Lane Depot (SHLAA site reference NEW106)

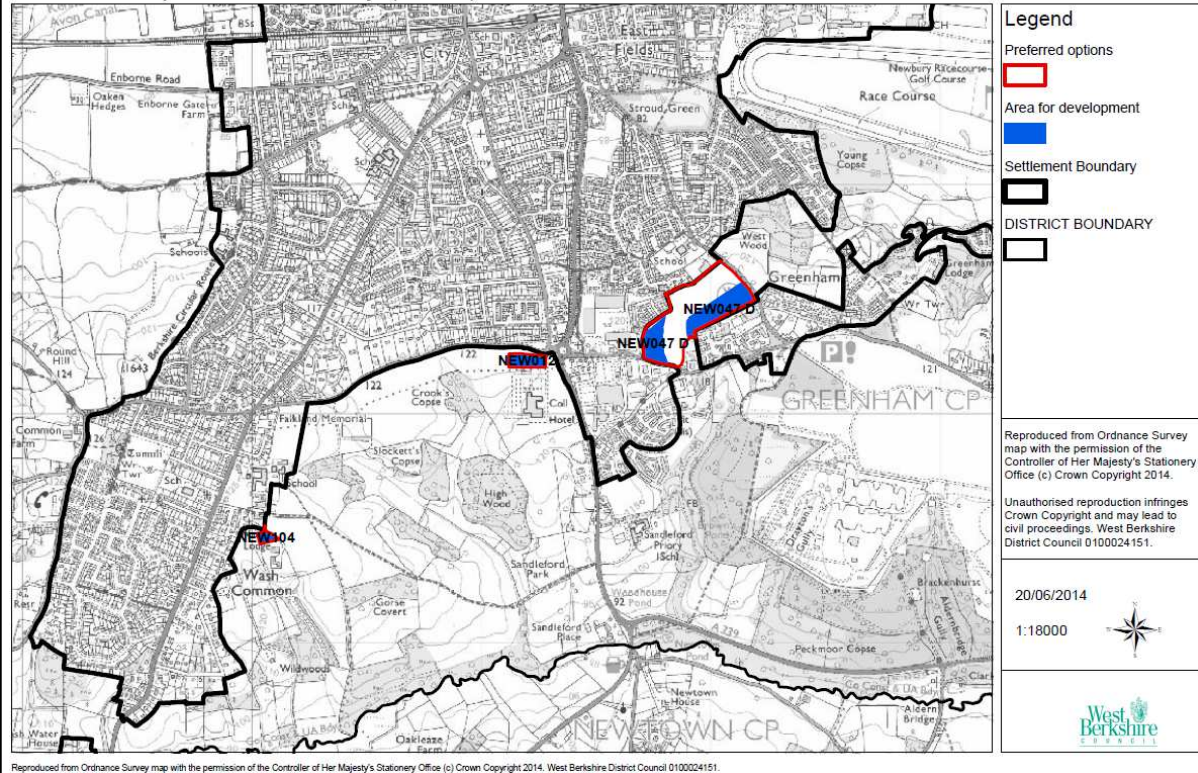
This site of just over a hectare could accommodate a development of approximately 40 dwellings. The site is in a very sustainable location, within easy walking distance of the town centre and close to open space and leisure facilities at Goldwell Park and Northcroft Leisure Centre.

It is proposed that the scheme be sensitively developed for medium density housing with a mix of dwelling types and sizes, including affordable housing. Existing access to the site by car is poor; access would be obtained via Hill Road which would need to be widened and improvements may be required to the Speen Lane junction.

Preferred Options - Newbury (north)



Preferred Options - Newbury (south)



London Road Industrial Estate: Proposed Future Allocation

The redevelopment of the London Road Industrial Estate is a long held vision of the Council, who has now confirmed a development partner to work with. The site has scope for comprehensive regeneration during the next 15 years in order to maximise the potential of the site, which at present is not efficiently laid out and does not provide an attractive environment for modern day use.

A key aspiration of the regeneration is to increase the type and level of employment opportunities on the site, including the potential to provide a high quality office environment to supplement current office provision in Newbury Town Centre and to attract inward investment. This would positively respond to the imbalance in employment uses identified within the adopted Core Strategy.

The wider site, both that within the protected employment area and that outside, has potential for mixed use development, including a mix of employment generating uses, and opportunities to provide residential development which could deliver additional homes in an attractive and sustainable environment within walking distance of Newbury town centre.

The site also has potential to provide other improvements in terms of access by opening up the London Road Industrial Estate to the A339, as well as environmental benefits utilising the site's location adjacent to the canal.

A comprehensive masterplan for the site is currently being prepared. Due to the timing of this, it is not yet possible to identify the site for allocation. It cannot therefore contribute to the delivery of housing numbers within the DPD. However, it is proposed to identify the site as an area for future allocation – in order to make clear the Council's intentions and to add further potential flexibility into the housing provision. It is expected that this site will come forward as part of the new Local Plan, which will also include a review of employment land.

Newbury Settlement Boundary

It is proposed that the settlement boundary of Newbury will be extended to include the areas where development is proposed. Any other changes to the settlement boundary will be carried out in accordance with the settlement boundary criteria once these have been confirmed through the consultation.

Site Options considered and rejected (excluding sites in Protected Employment Areas or within the settlement boundary)

Site Reference	Site Name	Development Potential	Key Reasons for Rejection
NEW001	Land at Long Lane	142	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant risk and history of flooding, both surface water and groundwater. • Lies within the possible area of the 2nd Battle of Newbury • Pylons run across the site.
NEW008	Land adjoining Mencap Respite Centre, Pinchington Lane	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only small area of the site proposed for development. • Ecology concerns relating to the pond on the site which is a breeding site for Newts.

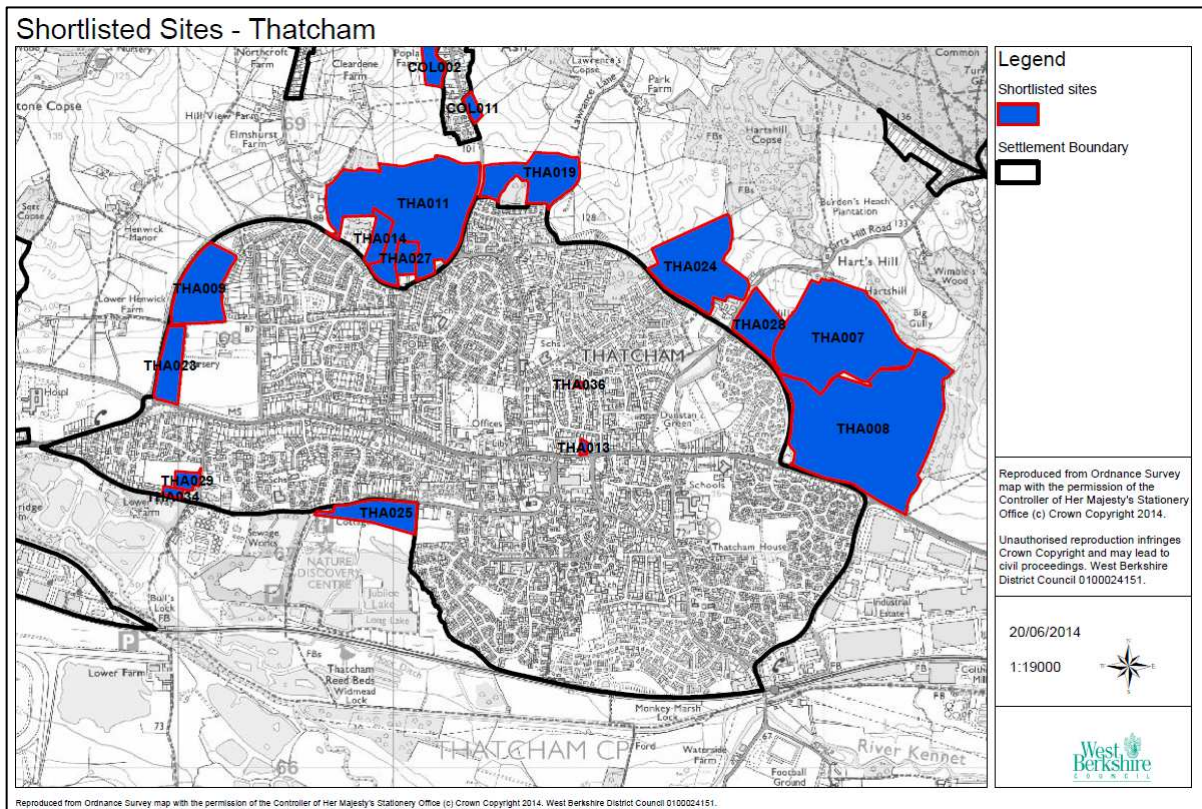
NEW010	Land at Long Lane, Shaw	85	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant risk of, and history of, surface and groundwater flooding • Lies within the possible area of the 2nd Battle of Newbury
NEW011	Land adjacent to Oxford Road	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant flood risk – half of the site lies within Flood Zone 3. • Within a local wildlife site • Adjacent Special Area of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest
NEW019	Land at Sandpit Hill / Andover Road	195	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor relationship to Newbury • Southern part of the site lies within Flood Zone 2. • Lies within a surface water flood risk area. • Contains a UKBAP woodland.
NEW031A and B	Land at Shaw, west and east of A339 (North Newbury)	550	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole site is not required and contrary to the framework for the preparation of the DPD. • Landscape impact • Flooding • Impact on heritage assets • Impact of dual carriageway running down middle makes an integrated, cohesive scheme on both sides of the road difficult.
NEW040	Land south of Kimbers Drive, Speen	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steep slope • Ecological impact • Medium/high landscape sensitivity • Within conservation area
NEW047 B	South East Newbury	69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjacent to ancient woodland • Great Crested Newts on part of site • Site, if developed along with NEW047D would reduce gap between Newbury and Greenham although proposed development area retains green corridor between the two settlements
NEW047 C	South East Newbury	84	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on Landscape character and views over Newbury • Adjacent to Ancient woodland • Great Crested Newts on part of site • Site, if developed along with NEW047D would reduce gap between Newbury and Greenham although proposed development area retains green corridor between the two settlements

NEW108	Land at Wildwoods, Kendrick Road, Wash Common	69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within Local Wildlife Site • Flooding • Number of trees on site means that the area considered developable is poorly related to the existing settlement and small
NEW103	Sanfoin, Sanfoin Cottage, Garden Close Lane, Newbury	50 - 90	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within area of surface water flood risk although no evidence that the site has ever flooded. • Medium/high landscape sensitivity • Improvements to access required if site developed • Adjacent to Sandford Park – significant development already allocated in the area
NEW105	Land at Yates Copse	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topography • Access proposed from Waller Drive • Surface water flooding (parts of site only) • Proximity to Ancient Woodland

3.1.2 Thatcham

There have been a significant number of sites promoted on greenfield land adjacent to Thatcham. The SHLAA assessed 11 sites as potentially developable. The Core Strategy does not, however, identify Thatcham for significant growth in this plan period. The role of Thatcham and its potential for strategic level development which can deliver infrastructure, such as schools and community facilities, will be considered through the preparation of the new Local Plan.

The number of sites promoted meant that choices needed to be made through the site selection process. This information is set out in full in the SA/SEA Environmental Report and includes details about the sites which have been discounted through the site selection process.



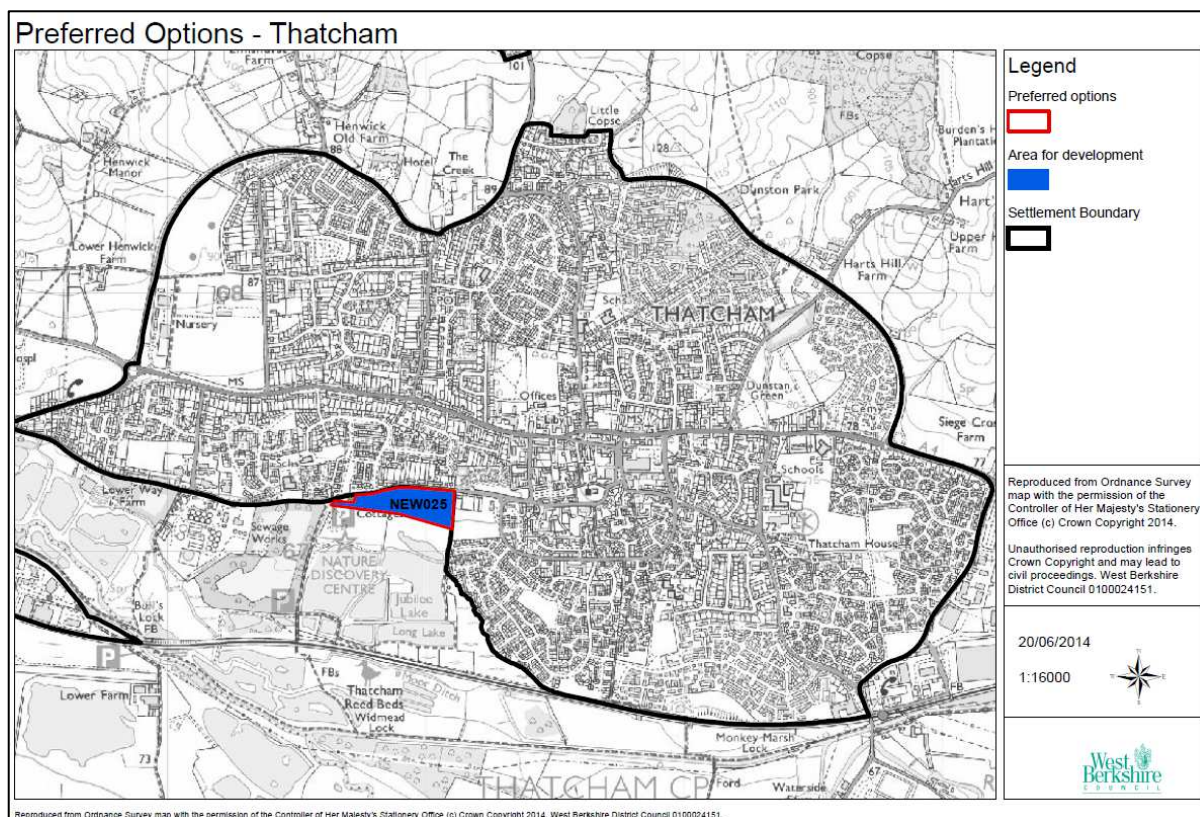
Preferred Options

Lower Way (SHLAA site reference THA025)

This site of approximately 4 hectares at Lower Way is in agricultural use and could accommodate approximately 87 new homes. It is close to Thatcham town centre, with its range of services and facilities, and there is a regular bus service close to the site on the A4 that connects Thatcham with Newbury and Reading.

It is proposed that the scheme be developed for medium density housing with a mix of dwelling types and sizes, including affordable housing. The site forms part of the Thatcham Moors Nature Reserve although it does not contain any protected species related to the nature reserve that would prevent development. The proposed development would incorporate an area of public open space/ landscape buffer to the countryside to the south,

The site would be accessed from Lower Way and the impact of additional traffic generation may be limited but would need to be assessed via a Transport Assessment.



Thatcham Settlement Boundary

It is proposed that the settlement boundary of Thatcham will be extended to include the area where development is proposed. Any other changes to the settlement boundary will be carried out in accordance with the settlement boundary criteria once these have been confirmed through the consultation.

Site Options considered and rejected (excluding sites within the settlement boundary)

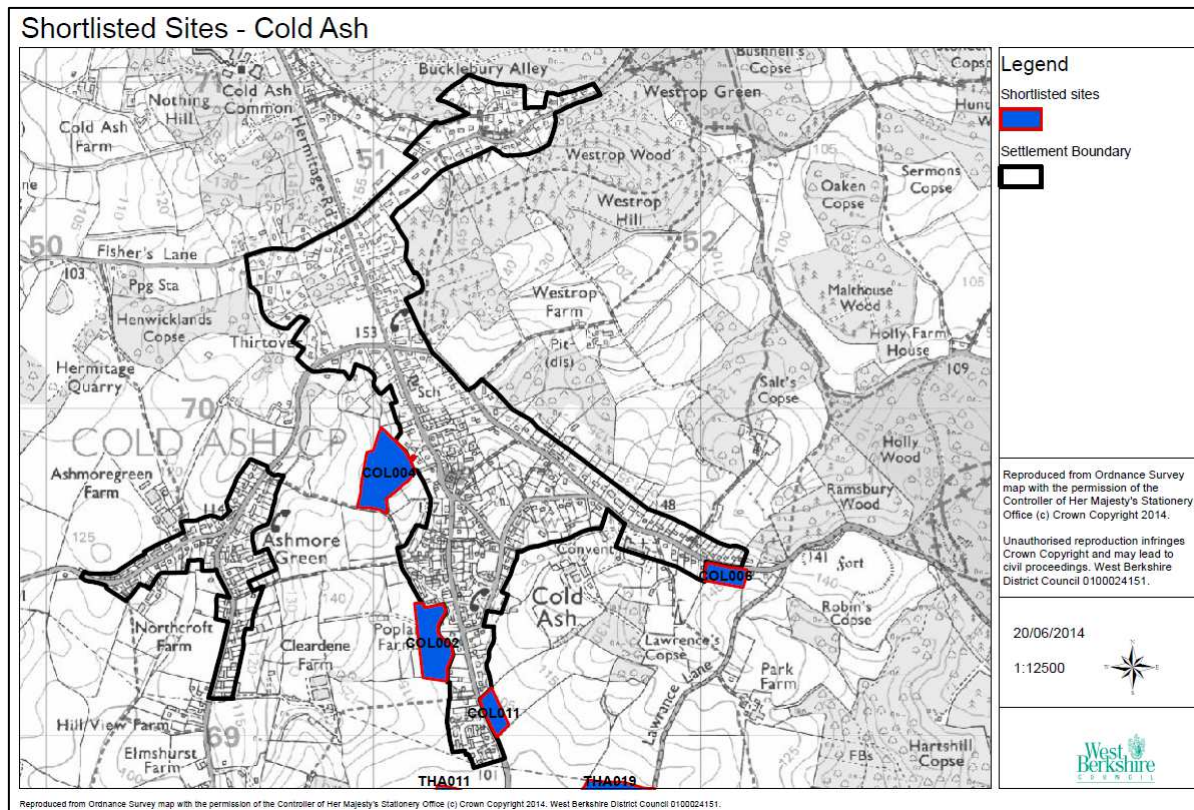
Site Reference	Site Name	Development Potential	Key Reasons for Rejection
THA007	Land at Harts Hill, Harts Hill, Thatcham	450	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thatcham only needs small amount of development over plan period – potential on site greater than required Rural character Site separated from built form by Floral Way Potential for flooding (topography and site is adjacent area of surface water flood risk) High archaeological potential

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overhead power lines
THA008	Land at Siege Cross Farm, Thatcham	353	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thatcham only needs small amount of development over plan period – potential on site greater than required • Flooding • Protected species present on site • Rural character • Site separated from built form by Floral Way • High archaeological potential • Overhead power lines
THA011	Land to the north of Bowling Green Road, Bowling Green Road, Thatcham	255	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thatcham only needs small amount of development over plan period – potential on site greater than required • Some distance from centre of Thatcham • Limited public transport options • Flooding • Rural in character • Part of site a Local Wildlife Site • Archaeological potential – further investigation required
THA014	Land at Regency Park Hotel, Thatcham	42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some distance from centre of Thatcham • Limited public transport options • Flooding
THA019	Land at Little Copse, Thatcham	72	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flooding • Some distance from centre of Thatcham • Limited public transport options • Rural character • High landscape sensitivity
THA024	Land at Harts Hill Farm, Thatcham	138	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thatcham only needs small amount of development over plan period – potential on site greater than required • Flooding • Rural character • Site separated from built form by Floral Way • High archaeological potential – further investigation required
THA027	The Creek, Heath Lane	41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site some distance from Thatcham centre • Detached from existing settlement boundary • Within wider area of archaeological potential – further investigation required

THA028	Land north of Floral Way and East of Harts Hill Road	103	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thatcham only needs small amount of development over plan period – potential on site greater than required • Good access to local facilities and services • Site has rural character • Separated from built form by Floral Way
--------	--	-----	---

3.1.3 Cold Ash

There have been a number of sites promoted for housing in Cold Ash. The SHLAA assessed 5 sites as potentially developable. Information on the choices that were assessed is set out in full in the SA/SEA Environmental Report. Site and includes details about the sites which have been discounted through the site selection process.



Preferred Options

Land at Poplar Farm (SHLAA site reference COL002)

The site is located on the edge of Cold Ash and is well related to the existing settlement. It is accessible for the services within the village and there is a two hourly bus service which links the village to Newbury and Tilehurst. The site could accommodate approximately 20 dwellings on a site which is partly previously developed land.

It is proposed that the scheme be developed for medium density housing with a mix of dwelling types and sizes, including affordable housing. The site will need sensitive design as there is a listed building on the site.

The existing access serving Poplar Farm is narrow but there may be potential for access south of Orchard End.

St Gabriel's Farm (SHLAA site reference COL006)

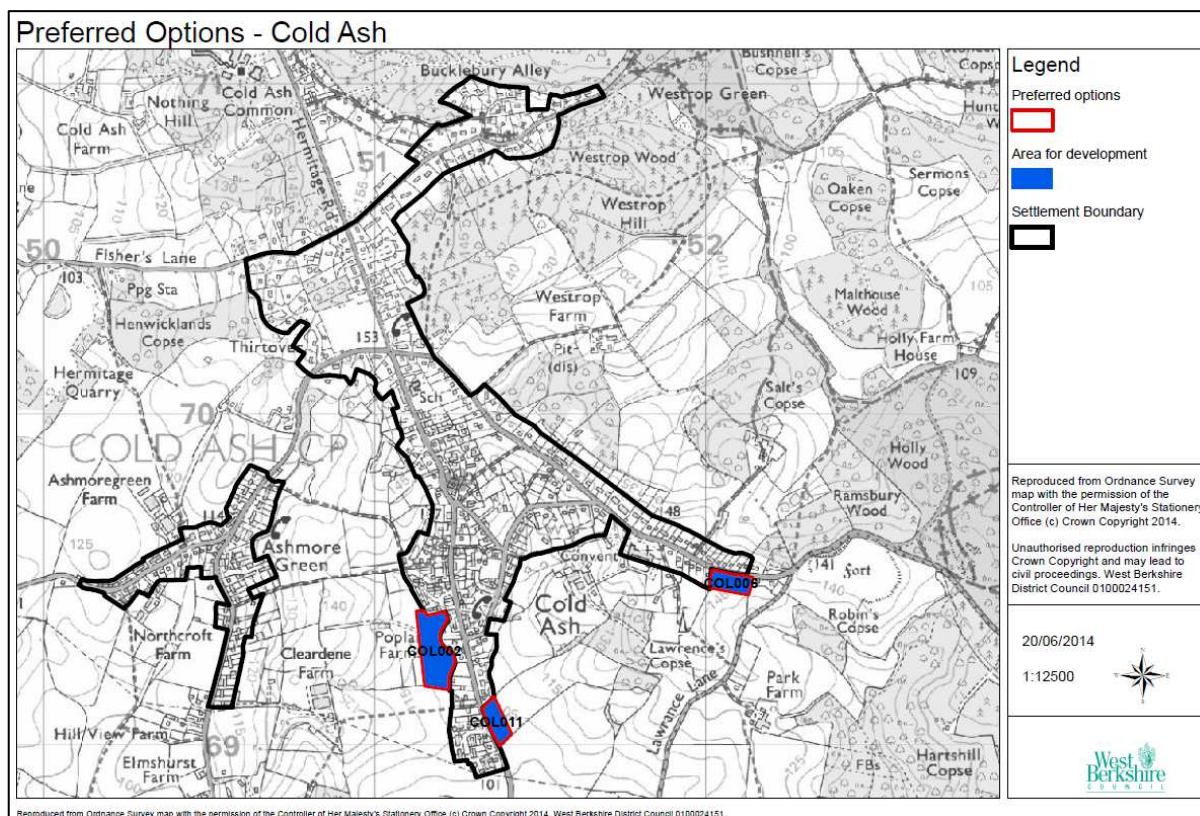
This is a small site of approximately half a hectare adjacent to existing residential development on the Ridge. The site is quite close to local services and facilities within the village.

It is proposed that the site be developed at low density, reflecting the adjacent residential development. Approximately 6 houses fronting on to The Ridge could be accommodated with access via private driveways.

Land at Cold Ash Hill (SHLAA site reference COL011)

This site is another small site of approximately 0.5 hectares, adjacent to existing residential development on Cold Ash Hill. It is close to local services and facilities within the village. An archaeological assessment may be required.

It is proposed that the site be developed at low density, reflecting the adjacent residential development. Approximately 6 houses could be accommodated with access via private driveways onto Cold Ash Hill.



Cold Ash Settlement Boundary

It is proposed that the settlement boundary of Cold Ash will be extended to include the area where development is proposed. Any other changes to the settlement boundary will be carried out in accordance with the settlement boundary criteria once these have been confirmed through the consultation.

Site Options considered and rejected

Site Reference	Site Name	Development Potential	Key Reasons for Rejection
COL004	Liss, Cold Ash Hill	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poorly related to existing settlement • Significant changes in topography across the site • Potential adverse impact on the setting and separate identities of Cold Ash and Ashmore Green • Potential conflict with the VDS which notes that there are notable views from St. Marks Churchyard • Flooding • Phase 1 Habitat Survey and bat survey required
COL010	Land at Westrop, The Ridge	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within AONB • Landscape Assessment indicates potential harm to AONB landscape. • TPO designations along boundary of site

3.2 Spatial Area – East Kennet Valley

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 North Wessex Downs AONB. The East Kennet Valley is characterised by a number of villages along the route of the River Kennet and the Kennet and Avon Canal and others dispersed across farmland and woodland. There are a number of important environmental assets in the area such as ancient woodlands, local wildlife sites and SSSIs.

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. The overall amount of growth is relatively low for two main reasons:

- The East Kennet Valley has fairly limited services and facilities as well as poor transport connections.
- The Atomic Weapons Establishment has two bases in this area, at Aldermaston and Burghfield. There is a restriction on development as set out in full in Core Strategy policy CS8.

The Core Strategy sets out a housing number of approximately 800 new homes for the East Kennet Valley between 2006 and 2026. At March 2013, approximately 270 remained to be identified and this number has been reduced further by permissions since then and by the inclusion of a modest windfall allowance. An element of flexibility is necessary however, in case houses cannot be delivered as planned elsewhere, specifically the Eastern area of the District.

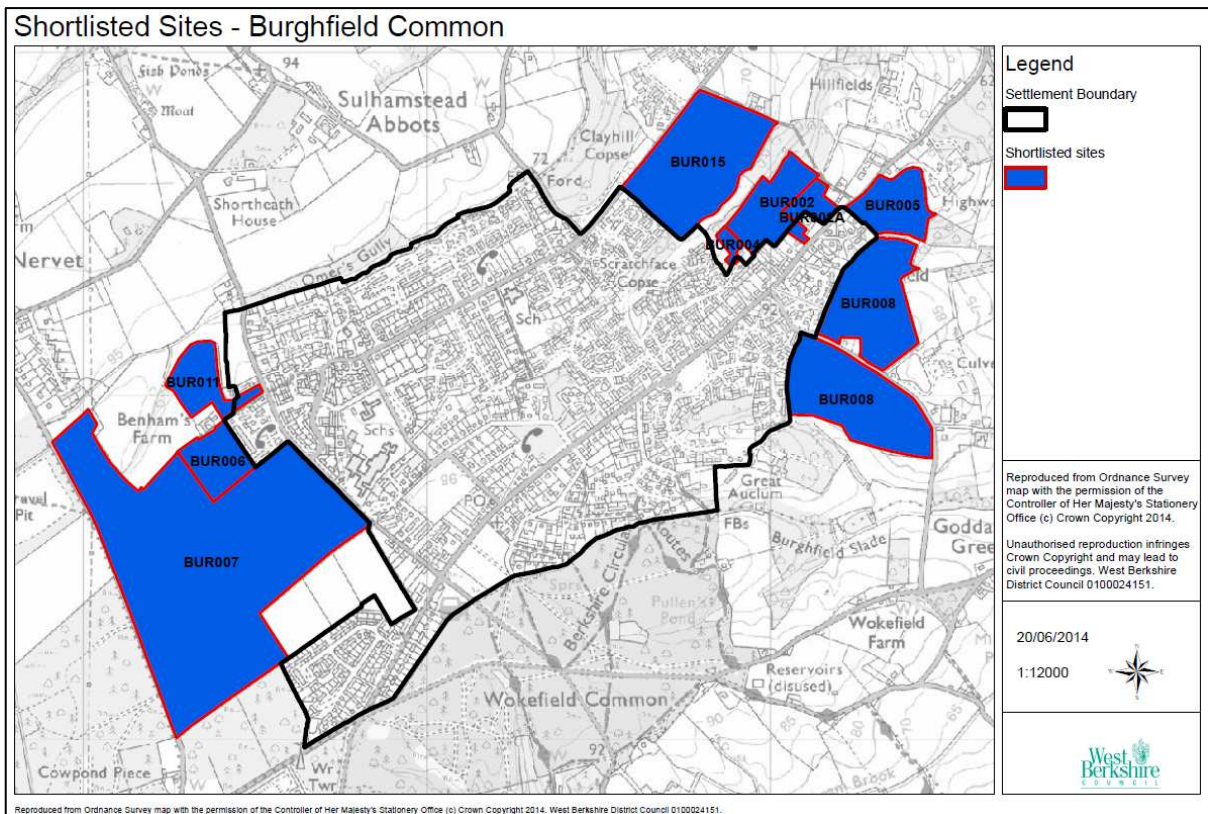
The Core Strategy defines Burghfield Common and Mortimer as Rural Service Centres in this area, with Woolhampton and Aldermaston as Service Villages. There are not proposed to be any allocations in Aldermaston due to its proximity to AWE Aldermaston. Development is proposed in Burghfield Common, Mortimer and Woolhampton in the form of small extensions to these villages.

Proposed Housing Site Allocations

3.2.1 Burghfield Common

Burghfield Common is one of the two Rural Service Centres within the East Kennet Valley and will be a focus for development within this area. There has been considerable developer interest in housing options around Burghfield Common and 11 of the sites promoted through the SHLAA were assessed as 'potentially developable'. These are shown on the map below.

The number of sites promoted meant that choices needed to be made through the site selection process. This information is set out in full in the SA/SEA Environmental Report and includes full details about the sites which have been discounted through the site selection process.



Preferred Options

Land to the rear of The Hollies Nursing Home, Land opposite 44 and 40 Lamden Way (SHLAA site references BUR002, 002A, and 004)

These sites are being considered as a single larger site. Together the sites have a developable area of just under 3 hectares. They have development potential for approximately 85 dwellings at a medium density of 30 dwellings per hectare. The sites are to the east of Burghfield Common and are well related to the village and close to existing local services and facilities. They have the potential to integrate with existing development.

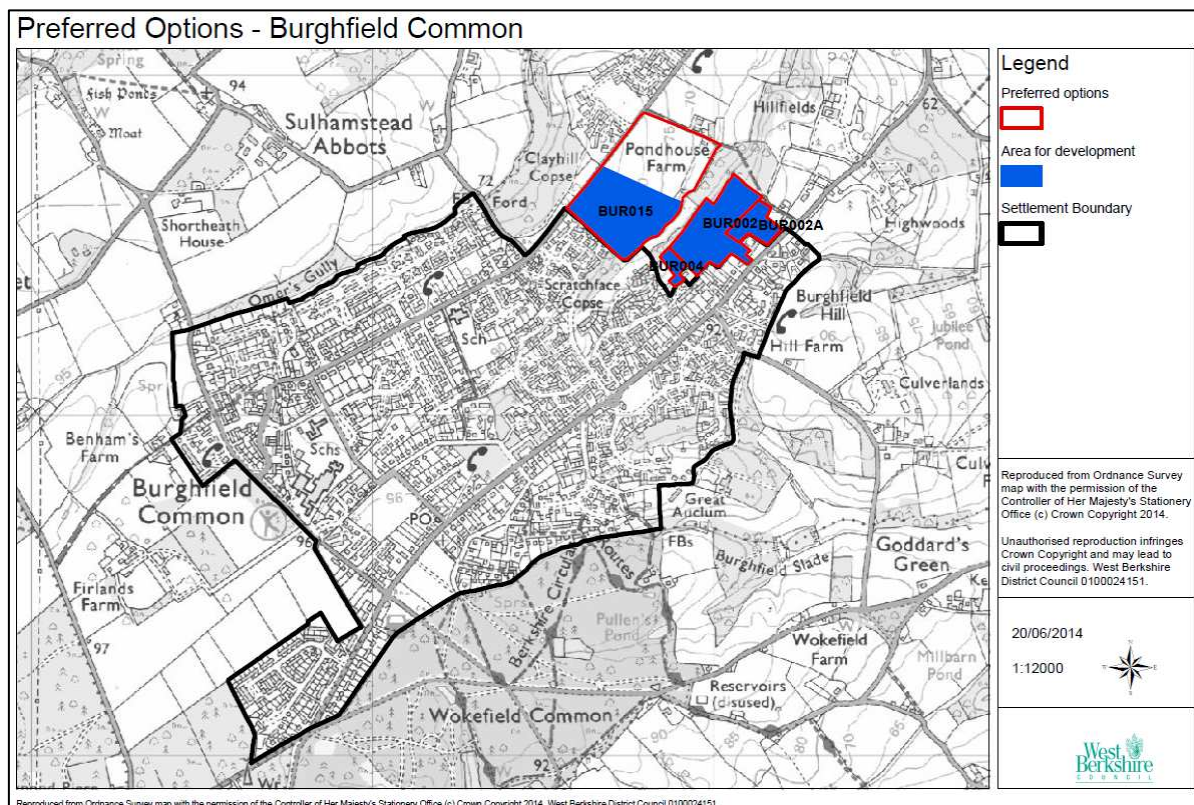
It is proposed that the site will be developed for medium density housing with a full mix of types and sizes. Affordable housing will be provided on the site in accordance with policy CS6 of the adopted Core Strategy and there may be scope for an element of sheltered housing. Access will be provided onto the Reading Road. Existing woodland will be retained.

Ecological surveys would be required to advise the detail of any development proposal.

Land adjoining Pondhouse Farm, Clayhill Road (SHLAA site reference BUR015)

Pondhouse Farm covers an area of 10 hectares, however only the western part of the site adjoining the existing settlement is being considered for allocation, for approximately 105 dwellings. The site is to the east of Burghfield Common and is close to local services and facilities. It has the potential to integrate well with existing development. Access will be provided onto Clayhill Road.

It is proposed that the scheme will be developed for medium density housing with a mix of dwelling types and sizes including affordable housing. The site will be sensitively designed to protect the character of this part of Burghfield Common. Ecological surveys will be required to advise the detail



of any development proposal. Appropriate landscape and biodiversity enhancements will be incorporated. Omer's Gully on the site will need to be protected.

Settlement Boundary

It is proposed that the settlement boundary of Burghfield Common will be extended to include the areas where development is proposed to be included in the submission version of the DPD. Any other changes to the settlement boundary will be carried out in accordance with the settlement boundary criteria once these have been confirmed through the consultation.

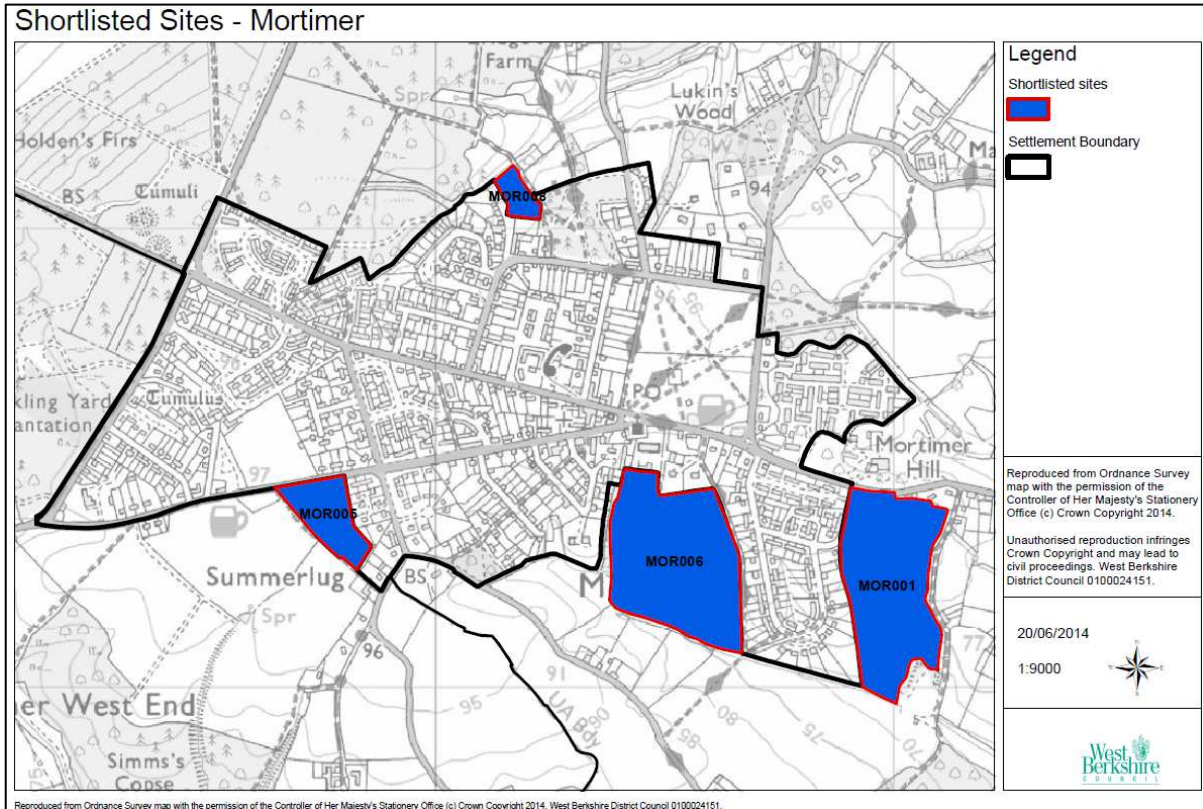
Site Options considered and rejected

Site Reference	Site Name	Development Potential	Key Reasons for Rejection
BUR005	Land between Reading Road and Gully Copse	71	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not as well related to the village as other sites. Development would extend beyond the existing building line of the village Potential access issue.

BUR006	Land adjacent to Bolt Hole, Hollybush Lane	58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not as well related to the village as other sites. • Development would extend the village beyond the existing furthest extent of the building line. • Public Right of Way on western boundary
BUR007	Land at Firlands	125	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Right of Way passes through site. • Ecological issues • Benham's Gully would need protecting.
BUR008	Land adjoining Mans Hill	315	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surface Water Flooding. • BAP habitat. • Scale of development proposed would impact on setting of village. • Concern over highways safety.
BUR011	Benhams Farm, Hollybush Lane	79	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development would extend beyond the existing building line of the village • Ecological Issues • Archaeological issues.

3.2.2 Mortimer

Mortimer is a Rural Service Centre within the East Kennet Valley, meaning that it will be a focus for development in this area. Four sites adjacent to the current settlement boundary of Mortimer were considered through the SHLAA process as potentially developable, with choices to be made through the plan-led process. These are shown on the map below.



Site selection work has been carried out on the sites in Mortimer in the same way as the other parts of the District. However, Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council is undertaking a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) to cover the parish area. The NDP will form part of the overall planning framework for the area and can allocate sites for development.

Two options are currently being considered:

Option 1 – Stratfield Mortimer is given a housing number of at least 100 dwellings and allocates sites for development through the NDP, in conformity with the policies of the Core Strategy. The settlement boundary of Mortimer would then be re-drawn around the site/sites.

Option 2 – West Berkshire Council allocate sites to fulfil the housing requirement.

If option 2 is taken forward the preferred options for Mortimer are set out below. All sites assessed as potentially developable in Mortimer have been assessed and the information is set out in full in the SA/SEA Environmental Report.

Land adjoining West End Road (SHLAA site reference MOR005).

Land adjoining West End Road, to the west of the existing settlement boundary of Mortimer, is a site of approximately 2 hectares with a developable area of just over 1.5 hectares. It has potential to accommodate approximately 47 dwellings in a medium density development.

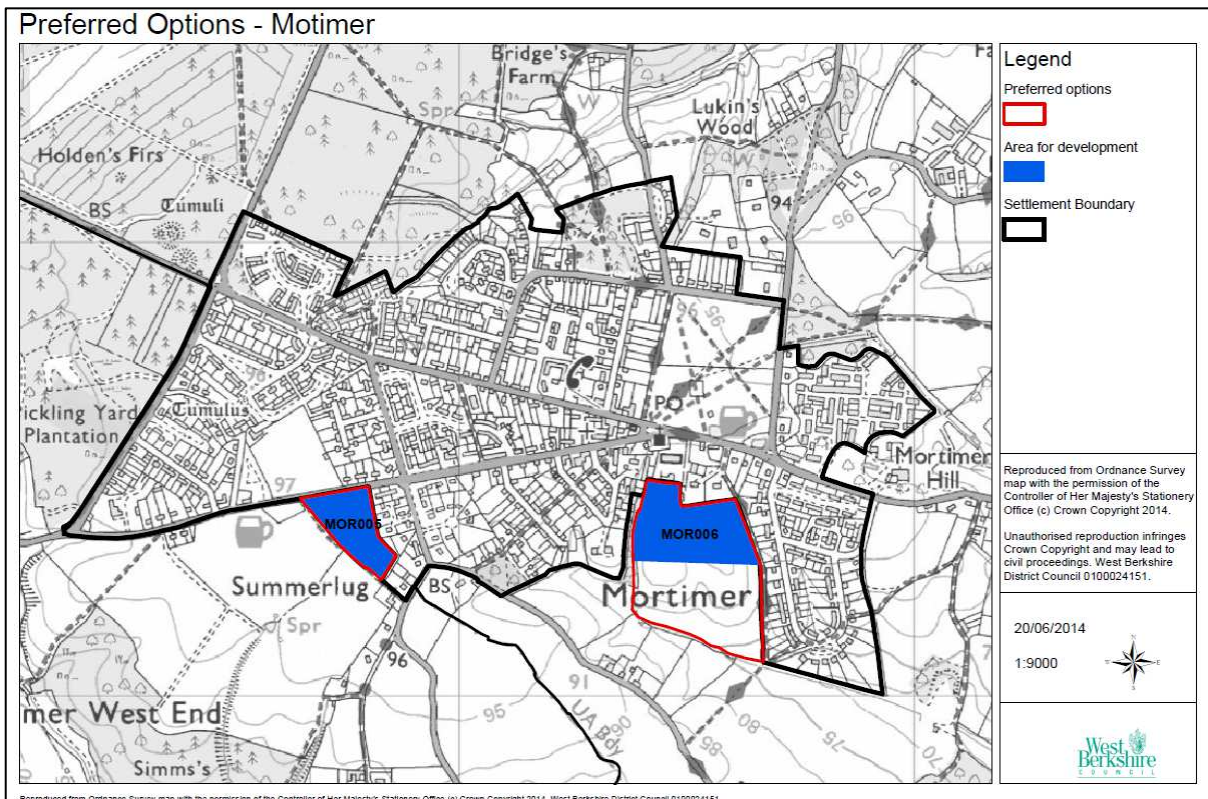
The site is close to local services and facilities and is surrounded by development on two sides. The scheme would include a mix of dwelling sizes and types, including affordable housing. Landscape and biodiversity enhancements would be incorporated into any scheme. Buffers would be provided around any protected trees.

It is likely that access would be provided onto West End Road.

Land to the south of St John's Church of England School, Victoria Road (SHLAA site reference MOR006)

Land to the south of St John's School is a site of approximately 8.4 hectares, however, is considered to have potential for development on about half of the site – for approximately 100 dwellings. Access is an issue which needs resolving (potentially through land acquisition) before this site could come forward for development. It is therefore probable that this site will be phased to come forward later in the plan period to give time to resolve this issue.

The site would be a medium density development providing a mix of dwelling types and sizes, including affordable housing. Open space would be provided on site and appropriate landscape and biodiversity enhancements would be incorporated to ensure that the character of the area is conserved and enhanced.



Settlement Boundary

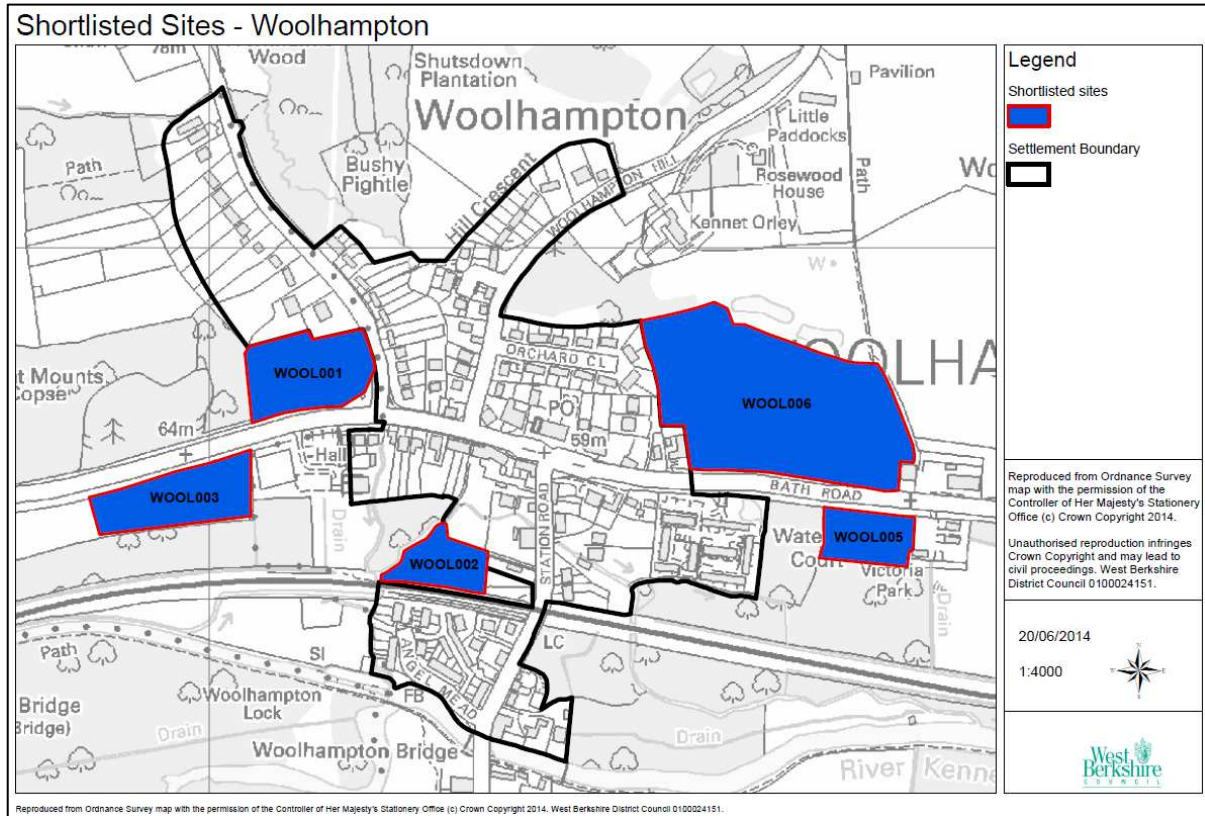
It is proposed that the settlement boundary of Mortimer will be extended to include the areas where development is proposed. Any other changes to the settlement boundary will be carried out in accordance with the settlement boundary criteria once these have been confirmed through the consultation.

Site Options considered and rejected

Site Reference	Site Name	Development Potential	Key Reasons for Rejection
MOR008	Land at north east corner of Spring Lane	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close to local services and facilities Spring Lane suffers from water run-off Flood risk on the site
MOR001	Land at Kiln Lane, Mortimer	151	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site further from local services and facilities within village than other sites (except junior school) Impact on landscape character – site surrounded by countryside on three sides Possible access issues

3.2.3 Woolhampton

Woolhampton is a Service Village within the East Kennet Valley, meaning that it has been assessed as suitable for a limited amount of development. Five sites promoted through the SHLAA process were considered to be potentially developable and are shown on the map below. These have been assessed and information is set out in full in SA/SEA Environmental Report.



Preferred option

There are two alternative preferred sites for Woolhampton, both to the north of the A4, one at the western and one at the eastern edge of the village. At this stage these are both put forward for consultation and a choice will be made as to which one is taken forward into the submission plan based on the outcome of consultation.

Land north of Bath Road (SHLAA reference WOOL001).

Land north of Bath Road is an approximately 0.83 hectare site which is well located to facilities and services in Woolhampton. It is proposed that it could accommodate 20 dwellings, with an appropriate type and mix of dwellings, including affordable housing. Development would need to take into account the oil pipeline which crosses the northern boundary of the site and the electricity pylons which run along the site boundary.

The site is adjacent to ancient woodland and trees with Tree Preservation Orders as well as a Local Wildlife Site. It is also adjacent to a Biodiversity Opportunity Area so there are opportunities to enhance biodiversity in the area. Ecological surveys would be required to inform any development proposal.

Access is proposed off New Road Hill.

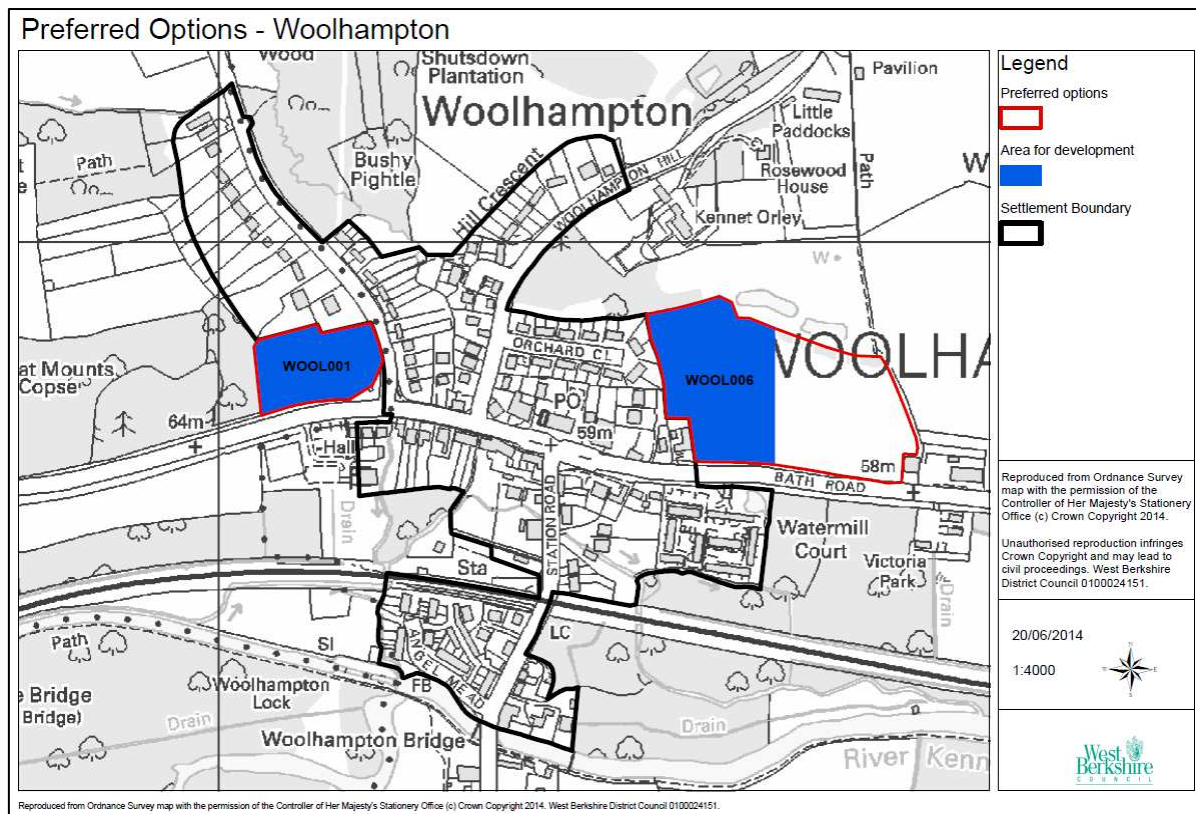
Land to the north of the A4 (SHLAA reference WOOL006)

Land to the north of the A4 is a 2.2 hectare site which has capacity for approximately 30 dwellings on part of the site at a medium density. The site is located on the edge of Woolhampton between the Village and the garage to the east of the village.

The site could be developed for a range of dwelling types and sizes and would include affordable housing. Development would need to take into account the electricity pylons that run along the site boundary and the oil pipeline that crosses the site.

The site is adjacent to a Biodiversity Opportunity Area so there are opportunities to enhance biodiversity in the area. Ecological surveys would be required to inform any development proposal.

Access is proposed off the Bath Road.



Settlement Boundary

The settlement boundary of Woolhampton will be redrawn around the developable area of the site that is chosen to be included in the submission version of the DPD. It is also proposed that it will be redrawn around site WOOL002 which has development potential for 4 dwellings only and is therefore too small for allocation.

Site Options Considered and Rejected

Site Reference	Site Name	Development Potential	Key Reasons for Rejection
WOOL003	Land adjoining Woolhampton Allotments, Bath Road	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flooding – SA/SEA highlights this as significant issue
WOOL005	Land adjacent to Victoria Park	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not immediately adjacent settlement boundary • Flood Zone 2 and part Flood Zone 3

3.3 Spatial Area – North Wessex Downs AONB

The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers almost three quarters of the District and is an area where the landscape is managed to conserve and enhance its natural beauty, in accordance with its national designation. It has a rich historical legacy and wealth of important environmental and heritage assets. The settlement pattern is one of dispersed villages and small towns that have a strong sense of identity. The Core Strategy proposes appropriate sustainable growth to support the local communities and the rural economy, with development focused on the Rural Service Centres and Service Villages.

The Core Strategy sets out a housing requirement of up to 2,000 new homes in the AONB between 2006 and 2026. Provision of this scale of housing is subject to the overarching objective for the AONB to conserve and enhance its special landscape qualities. At March 2013, the completions since 2006 and outstanding commitments (homes with planning permission) left a remaining requirement of approximately 650. The number needing to be allocated is less than this due to the inclusion of a windfall allowance based on evidence of past permissions on unidentified sites. It is considered appropriate to include this allowance for the entire plan period due to the Core Strategy policy that the provision is up to 2,000 dwellings.

Within the North Wessex Downs AONB there are three Rural Service Centres. In the western part of the AONB, development will be focused in Hungerford and Lambourn. Hungerford is considerably larger than Lambourn and has a town centre with a range of facilities and services providing for the town and surrounding area. Lambourn performs a more local level role, with a particular emphasis on the needs of the equestrian industry.

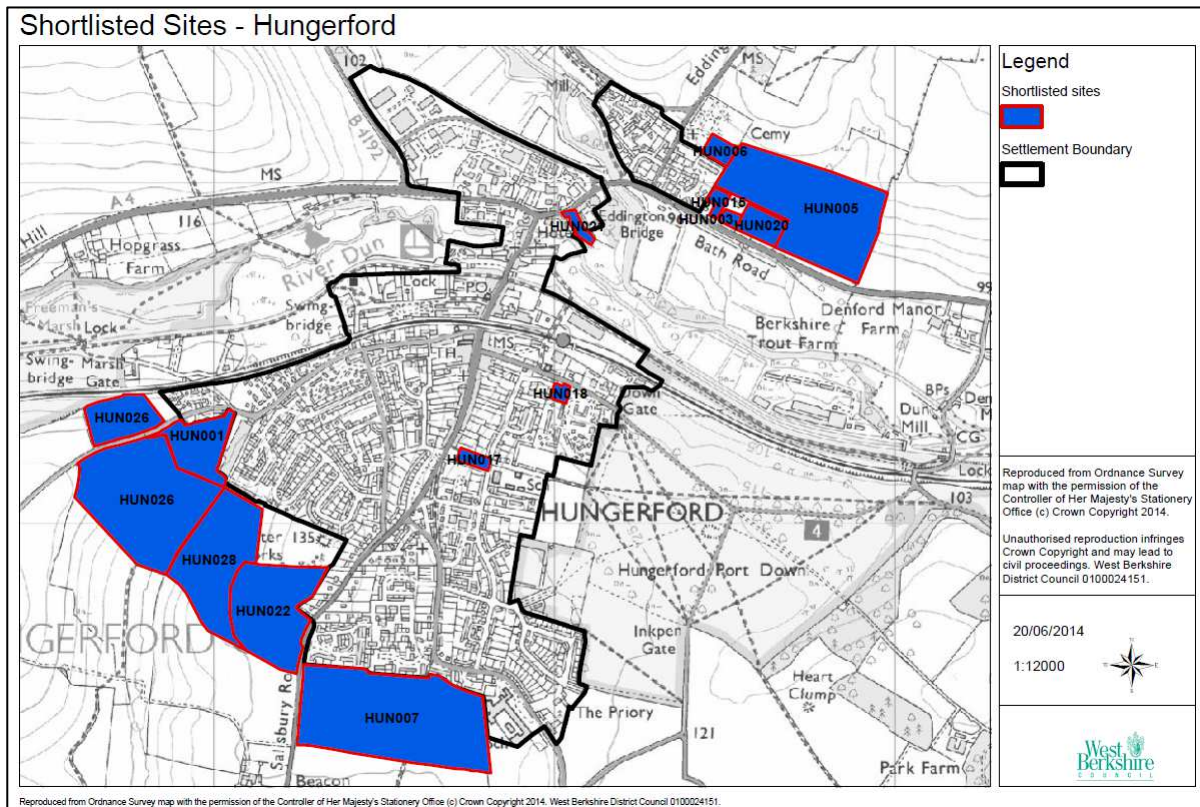
Pangbourne, in the east, is a thriving community which has an important role as a service centre for the eastern areas of the AONB. Opportunities for development outside the current settlement boundary are constrained by environmental considerations and will restrict the amount of housing growth to take place in Pangbourne.

There are six Service Villages in the AONB which provide a range of services to their communities and the surrounding areas. These service villages will generally have only a limited amount of new development depending on their role and function and the availability of sites. In Compton, the site of the Pirbright Institute was identified through the Core Strategy as an opportunity site for larger scale development. There is now an SPD adopted for the redevelopment of this brownfield site.

Proposed Housing Site Allocations

3.3.1 Hungerford

Within the Core Strategy, Hungerford has been defined as the more sustainable Rural Service Centre in the western part of the North Wessex Downs AONB due to its size and the role and the function that it performs for the wider area.



There were a number of sites in Hungerford promoted through the SHLAA process. Of these, 10 were considered to be potentially developable with choices to be made through the plan-led process. These are shown on the map above. Information on how the sites were selected is set out in full in SA/SEA Environmental Report.

Preferred Options for Hungerford

There are two main options for Hungerford which are located at different ends of the town. The reason for consulting on both options is to get a feel for which would be preferable in terms of local impacts. Both areas have advantages and disadvantages in terms of, for example, potential impact on traffic through the town centre and also in terms of accessibility to facilities.

The Town Council view is that sites to the north of Hungerford are preferable to those to the south as they have easy access to the M4 without contributing to congestion through Hungerford town centre.

Land east of Salisbury Road (SHLAA site reference HUN007)

The land east of Salisbury Road has an overall site area of over 13 hectares. However, the Landscape Assessment carried out to assess the sites within the AONB advises that just over 5 hectares of the site (between Salisbury Road and John O' Gaunt school) is allocated for development, for about 101 dwellings.

The site is located adjacent to the settlement boundary of south Hungerford giving easy access to local services, facilities and the open countryside. The site's proximity to local services may encourage walking and/or cycling.

It is proposed that the site is allocated for low to medium density development with a mix of dwelling sizes and types including affordable housing. Careful design will be required to enhance the gateway approach and to respect the site's semi-rural location. The site will be designed to include the creation of a woodland buffer to define the new edge of the settlement and to retain the existing mature tree cover and the views through the site to the wider landscape.

There may be potential to provide a site for a new primary school on land adjacent to the John O'Gaunt site as part of this scheme.

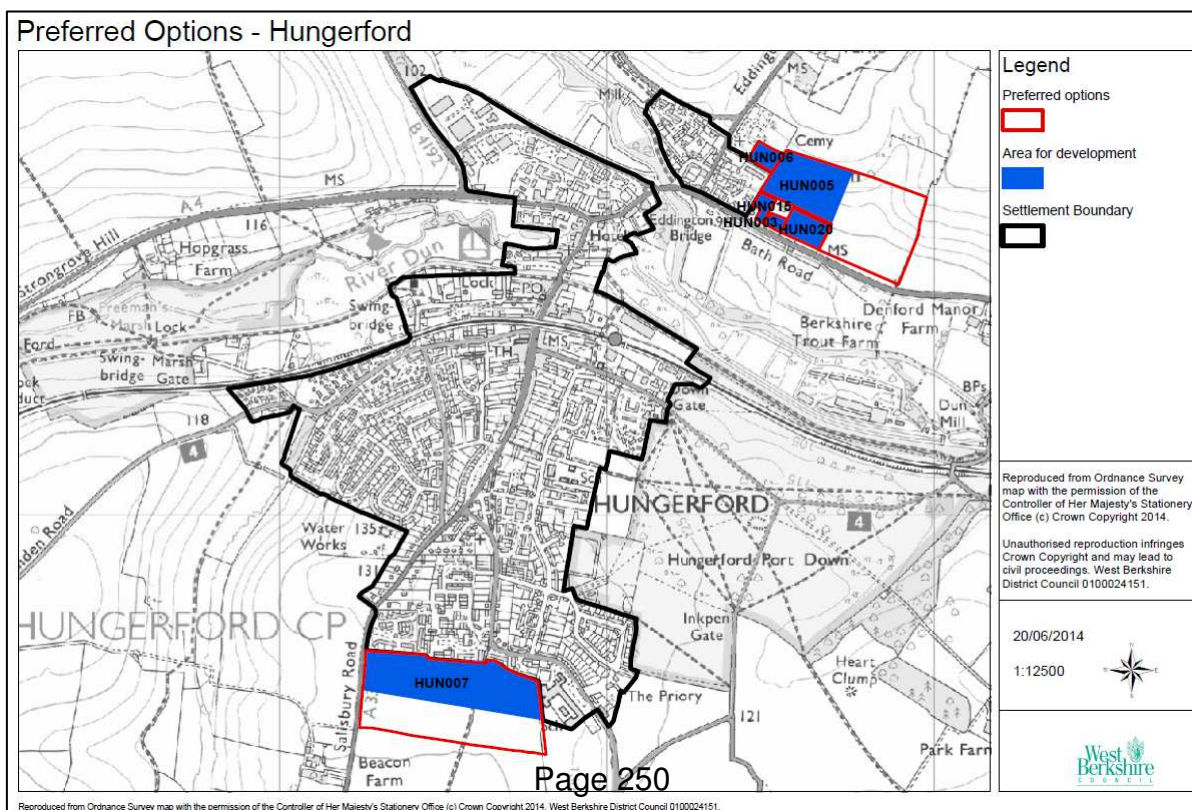
Eddington Sites: Hungerford Veterinary Centre; Folly Dog Leg Field (part of); land at Eddington and Hungerford Garden Centre (SHLAA site references HUN003, HUN005, HUN006, HUN015 and HUN020.

These sites are being viewed as a single location where development could take place as an alternative to the land east of Salisbury Road. Together the sites have development potential for about 87 dwellings.

The sites lie adjacent to the settlement boundary of Eddington, to the north of Hungerford. Though accessible to local services and facilities they are not as well related to Hungerford as some of the other sites promoted for development. They are well located for access to the countryside and there are opportunities for walking and cycling. The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment indicates that development in this area, subject to appropriate mitigation measures, would result in little harm to the natural beauty of the AONB.

It is proposed that the sites are allocated for low to medium density development with a mix of dwelling sizes and types including affordable housing. Development in this location would need to be in keeping with the existing development pattern at Eddington, with a soft edge to the development provided on the eastern boundary.

As the sites are located within a groundwater emergence zone, SuDS techniques would need to be



included to mitigate against the potential impact of flooding. Sensitive design and internal tree planting would be required to reduce the visual impact of the site on this prominent part of the gateway along the A4 into Hungerford.

Settlement Boundary

The settlement boundary of Hungerford will be redrawn around the developable boundary of the site/s chosen to be included in the submission version of the DPD. It is also proposed that it will be redrawn around the Five Bar and Grill/The Lamb in Charnham Street (SHLAA reference HUN021), which has development potential for 7 dwellings only and is therefore too small for allocation. Any other changes to the settlement boundary will be carried out in accordance with the settlement boundary criteria once these have been confirmed through the consultation.

Options Considered and Rejected

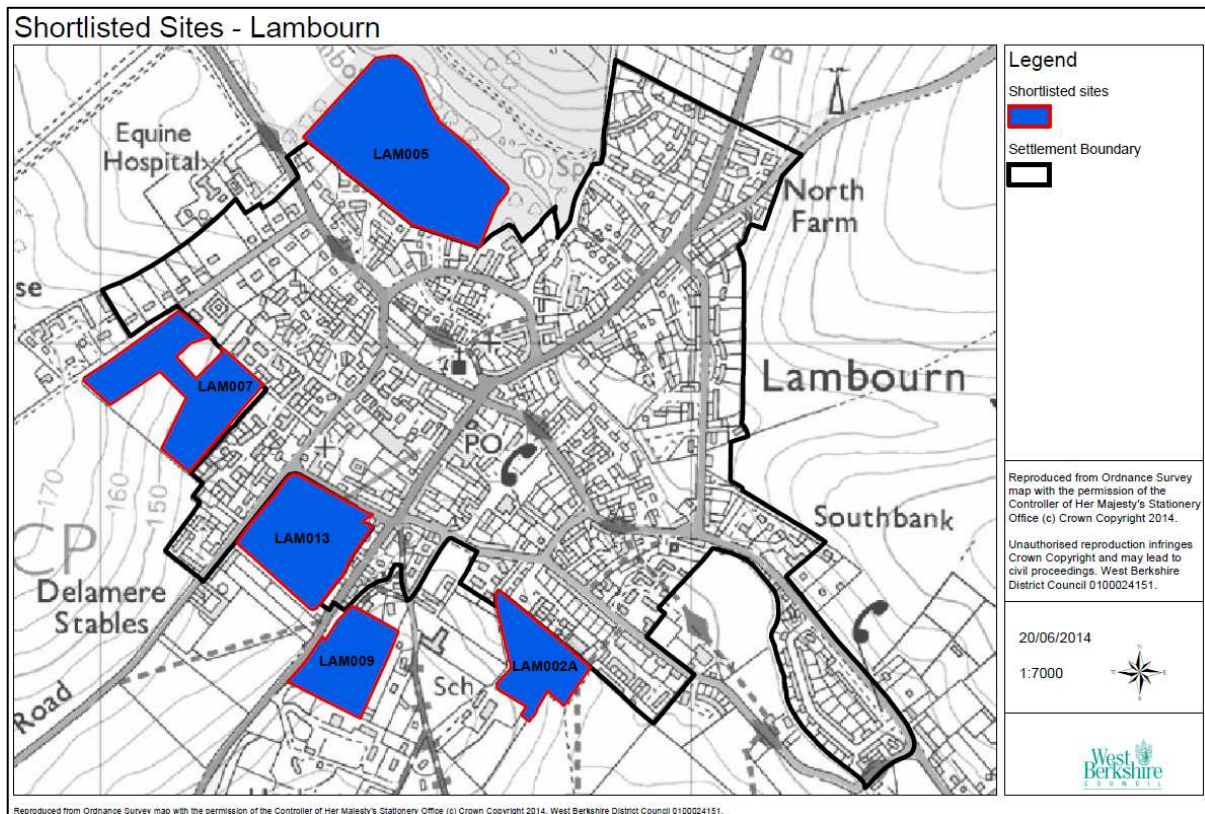
Site Reference	Site Name	Development Potential	Key Reasons for Rejection
HUN001	Rear of Westbrook Farmhouse, Smitham Bridge Road	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential flooding issues. • Adjacent to HUN008 – Hungerford Trading Estate – potential for looking at sites together following review of Protected Employment Areas
HUN022	Land to the west of Salisbury Road	53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape sensitivity – reduced area around Water Works
HUN028	Land south of Chilton Way	76	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development would impact on Shalbourne Valley
HUN026	Land at North Standen Road	159	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape assessment says potential for housing limited by important landscape and visual constraints. • Agent anticipates would only come forward with HUN001

3.3.2 Lambourn

Within the Core Strategy, Lambourn performs the role of a Rural Service Centre at a more local level than Hungerford due to its size and relatively remote location. This affects the amount of growth that will be appropriate in Lambourn.

Five sites in Lambourn were assessed as potentially developable with choices to be made through the plan-led process. These are shown on the map below.

Information on how the sites were selected is set out in full in the SA/SEA Environmental Report.



Preferred Options for Lambourn

There are two preferred sites in Lambourn.

Land adjoining Lynch Lane (SHLAA site reference LAM005).

Land adjoining Lynch Lane covers an area of 5.7 hectares, of which 2.8 hectares is considered to be developable for approximately 56 dwellings. The developable area excludes the part of the site which is at risk from flooding (Flood Zones 2 and 3).

The Landscape Assessment indicates that development on the site would be acceptable as long as the necessary mitigation measures are adhered to. This would require a buffer between the woodland and any development, along with the retention of tree and pedestrian linkages to existing housing.

The site is well related to the existing settlement and close to local services, facilities and open countryside. It is proposed that the site is allocated for low to medium density development, with a mix of dwelling sizes and types including affordable housing. Full ecological and archaeological surveys will be required to inform any development proposal.

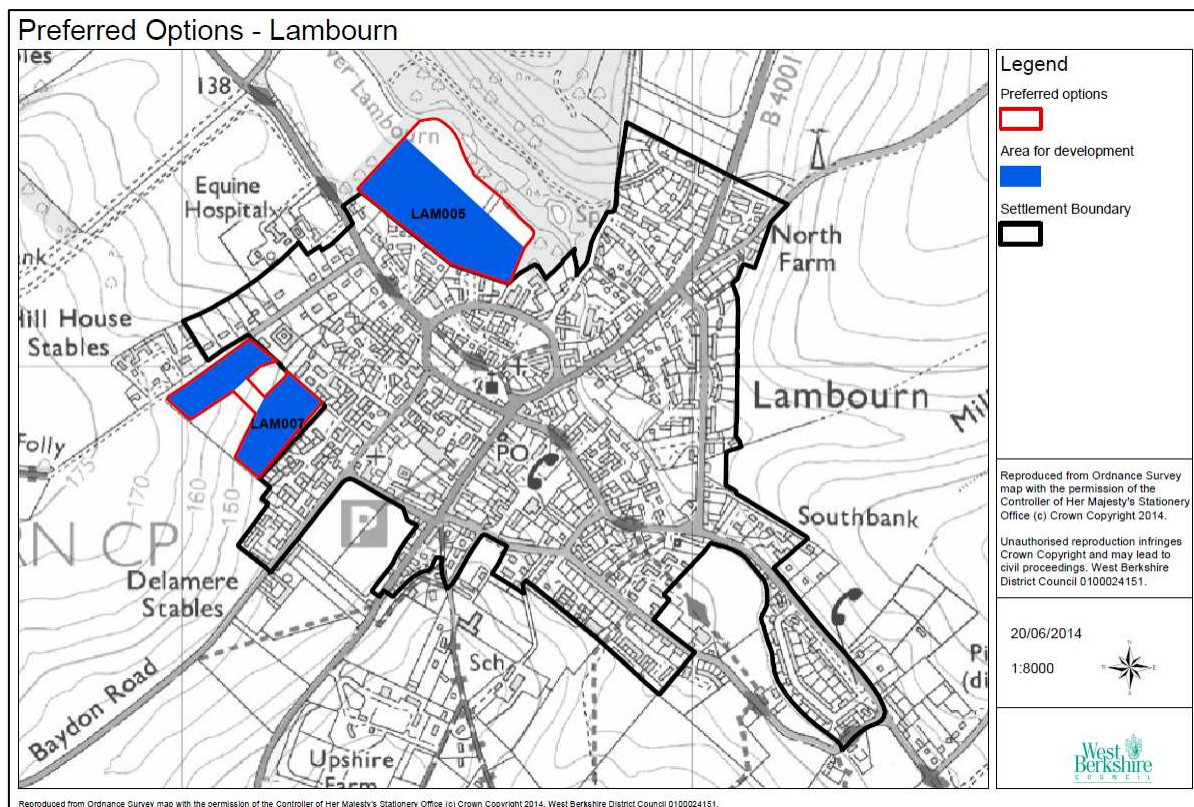
It is also proposed to improve the pedestrian/bridle link between Lynch Lane and the village centre to improve connectivity between Lower and Upper Lambourn.

Land between Folly Road, Rockfel Road and Stork House Drive (SHLAA site reference LAM007)

Just over one hectare of this site is considered to be developable for approximately 24 dwellings. The developable area excludes the middle section of the site, reflecting the outcome of the Landscape Assessment which indicates that development on part of the site would be acceptable as long as the required mitigation measures are adhered to.

The site is well related to the existing settlement and close to local services, facilities and open countryside. It is proposed that the site is allocated for low to medium density development, with a mix of dwelling sizes and types including affordable housing. Access can be obtained either from Folly Road or from Rockfel Road, with a potential additional pedestrian access onto Holly Road.

Full ecological and archaeological surveys will be required to inform any development proposal.



Settlement Boundary

The settlement boundary of Lambourn will be redrawn around the developable boundary of the site/s chosen to be included in the submission version of the DPD. Any other changes to the settlement boundary will be carried out in accordance with the settlement boundary criteria once these have been confirmed through the consultation.

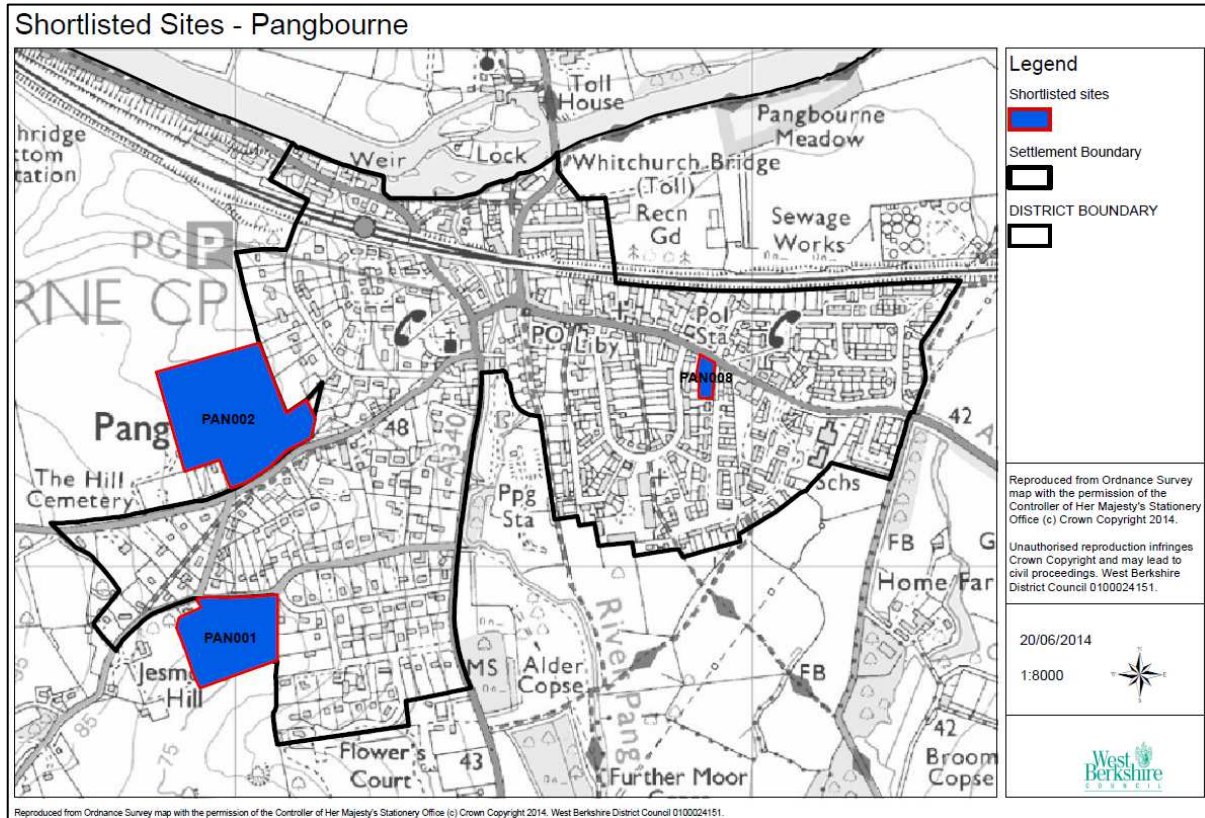
Site Options Considered and Rejected

Site Reference	Site Name	Development Potential	Key Reasons for Rejection
LAM002A	Land at Meridian House and Stud, Greenways	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access via Brockhampton Road is narrow and congested with parked vehicles • Local impact on views due to topography. • Part of site sits within Critical Drainage Area • Potential loss of paddock related to race horse industry
LAM009	Land east of Hungerford Hill	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the site is difficult as the site slopes towards the road and Hungerford Hill is narrow and steep • Development would be visually prominent. • Area of high archaeological potential • Part of the site is within Critical Drainage Area
LAM013	Windsor House Paddocks	42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant risk of flooding, resulted in highway flooding within village • Within Critical Drainage Area • Well related to existing settlement but flood risk too significant to take forward

3.3.3 Pangbourne

Pangbourne plays an important role in the east of the AONB as a Rural Service Centre for the surrounding villages. Within Pangbourne growth is constrained by the sensitivity of the landscape and the floodplain.

Two sites outside the settlement boundary were assessed as potentially developable through the SHLAA. Both of these are preferred options for allocation.



Land at Green Lane (SHLAA site reference PAN001)

This site has a developable area of 1.8 hectares for approximately 36 dwellings. Whilst the Landscape Assessment has advised that the site is visually exposed, low rise development in keeping with the surrounding area would not be visually intrusive if mitigation and enhancement works were carried out.

It is proposed that the site is allocated for low density development, with a mix of dwelling sizes and types including affordable housing.

Access can be obtained via Bere Court Road onto Pangbourne Hill and via Green Lane onto the A340. However, highways concerns have been raised regarding additional volumes of traffic onto narrow roads.

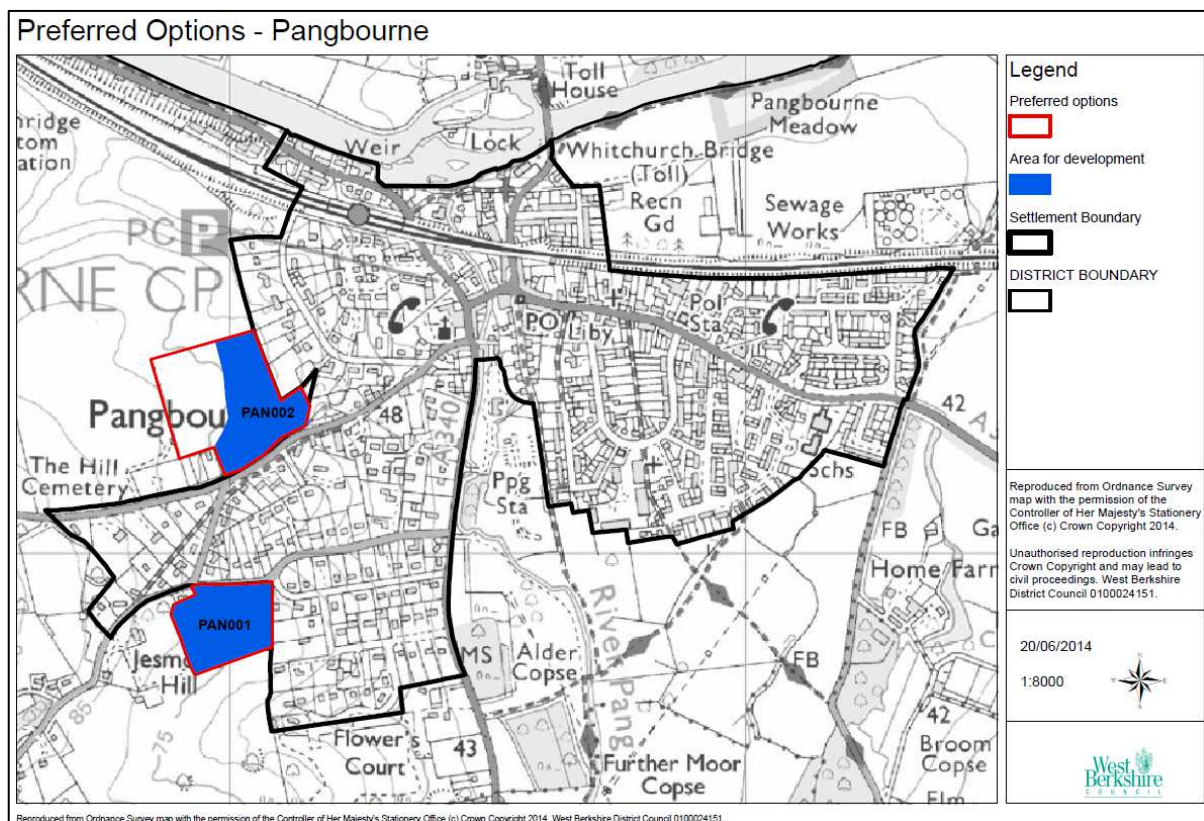
Ecological surveys would be required to inform any development proposal.

Land north of Pangbourne Hill and west of River View Road (SHLAA site reference PAN002)

This site has a developable area of 2.4 hectares. It has been assessed as having development potential for approximately 35 dwellings. The area for development has been assessed using information from the Landscape Assessment which has advised that the development of the whole area would have a significant impact upon the western side of Pangbourne. Mitigation and enhancement measures will be required to ensure that the site is acceptable in landscape terms.

It is proposed that the site is allocated for low density development, with a mix of dwelling sizes and types including affordable housing. Access onto Pangbourne Hill is achievable; however, further work will be needed to investigate the impact on the restricted Pangbourne Hill / A340 Tidmarsh Lane junction.

Further archaeological investigations will need to be carried out on the site to inform any development proposal.



Settlement Boundary

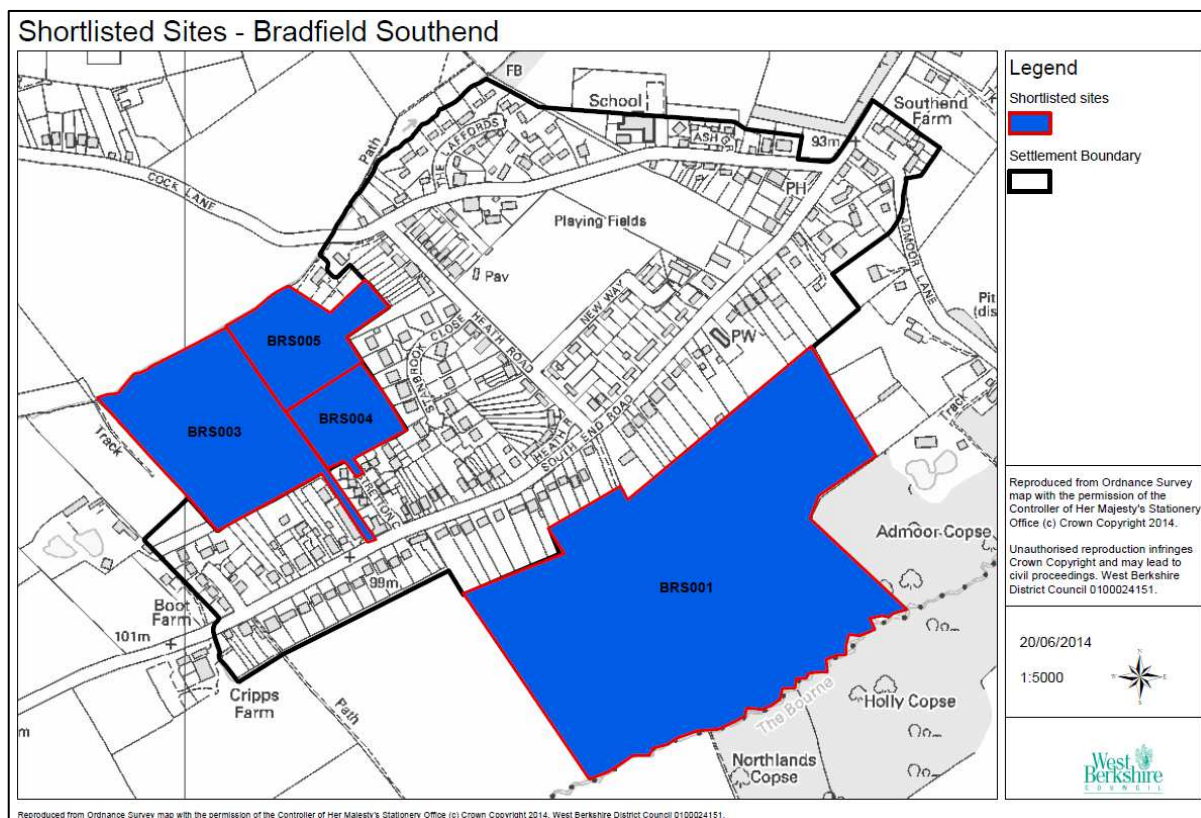
The settlement boundary of Pangbourne will be redrawn around the developable boundary of the site/s chosen to be included in the submission version of the DPD. Any other changes to the settlement boundary will be carried out in accordance with the settlement boundary criteria once these have been confirmed through the consultation.

Site Options Considered and Rejected

Both sites assessed as potentially developable in Pangbourne are preferred sites for allocation. There were not, therefore any other site options considered and rejected.

3.3.4 Bradfield Southend

Bradfield Southend is a Service Village in the eastern part of the North Wessex Downs AONB. Four sites promoted through the SHLAA process were assessed as potentially developable with choices to be made through the plan-led process. These are shown on the map below, with further information set out in full in the SA/SEA Environmental Report.



Preferred option for Bradfield Southend

Land off Stretton Close (SHLAA site reference BRS004)

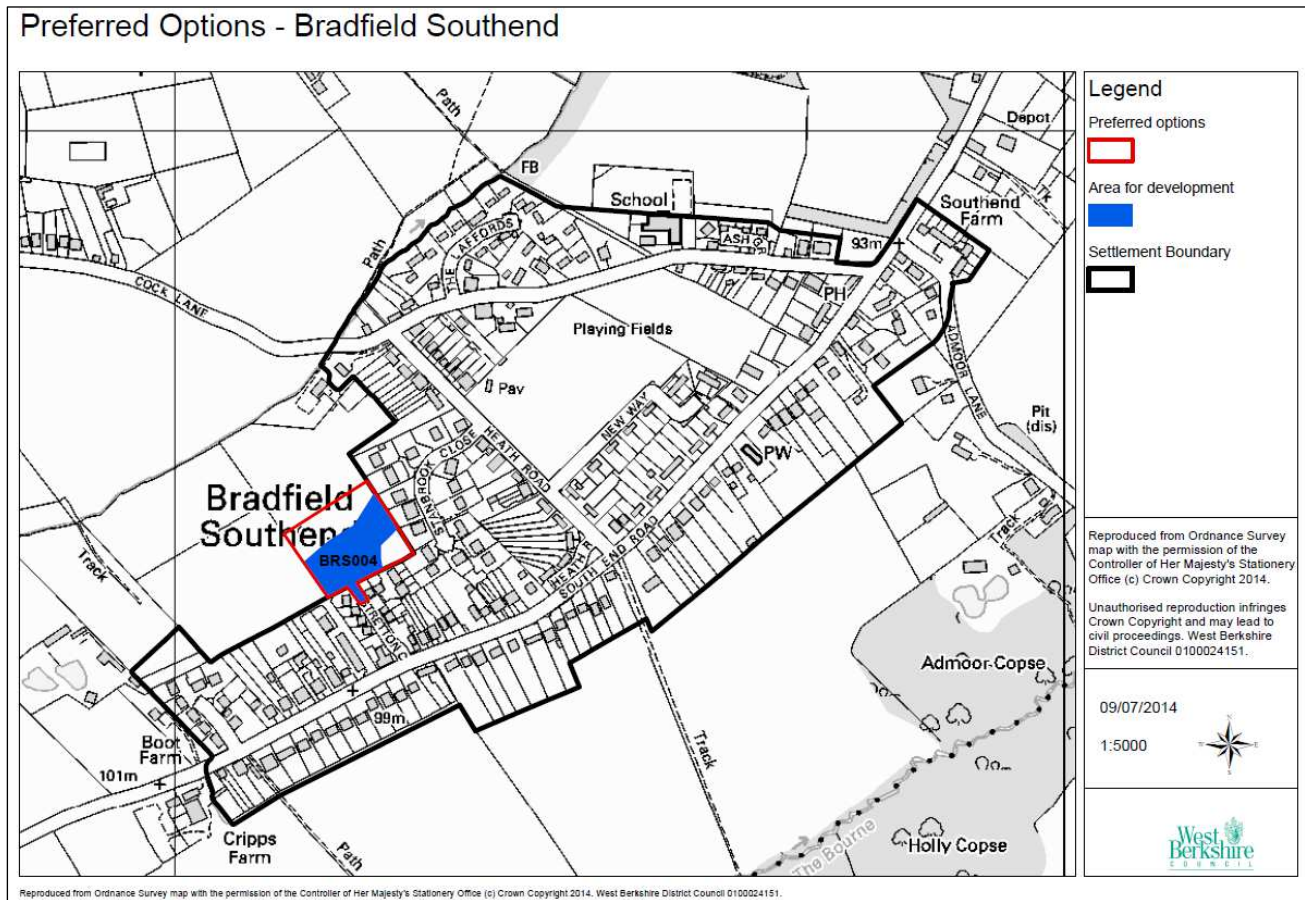
Land off Stretton Close is a 0.5 hectare site which has potential, at a low density for about 12 dwellings.

The site sits behind the existing building line but is well related to the existing settlement. The Landscape Assessment advises that the site is visually contained by the built form to the south and east and there is potential for housing. The site is well screened by trees.

Potential access options are via either Stretton Close, or an alternative access is possible to the west, off Southend Road if the land available is wide enough to provide sufficient sightlines. Access options will need to be resolved through any development proposal.

As the site is adjacent to an area of surface water flood risk, flood mitigation may be required and a flood risk assessment will be needed to inform any development of the site.

Full ecological surveys will be required to inform any development proposals.



Settlement Boundary

The settlement boundary of Bradfield Southend will be redrawn around the developable boundary of the site chosen to be included in the submission version of the DPD. Any other changes to the settlement boundary will be carried out in accordance with the settlement boundary criteria once these have been confirmed through the consultation.

Site Options Considered and Rejected

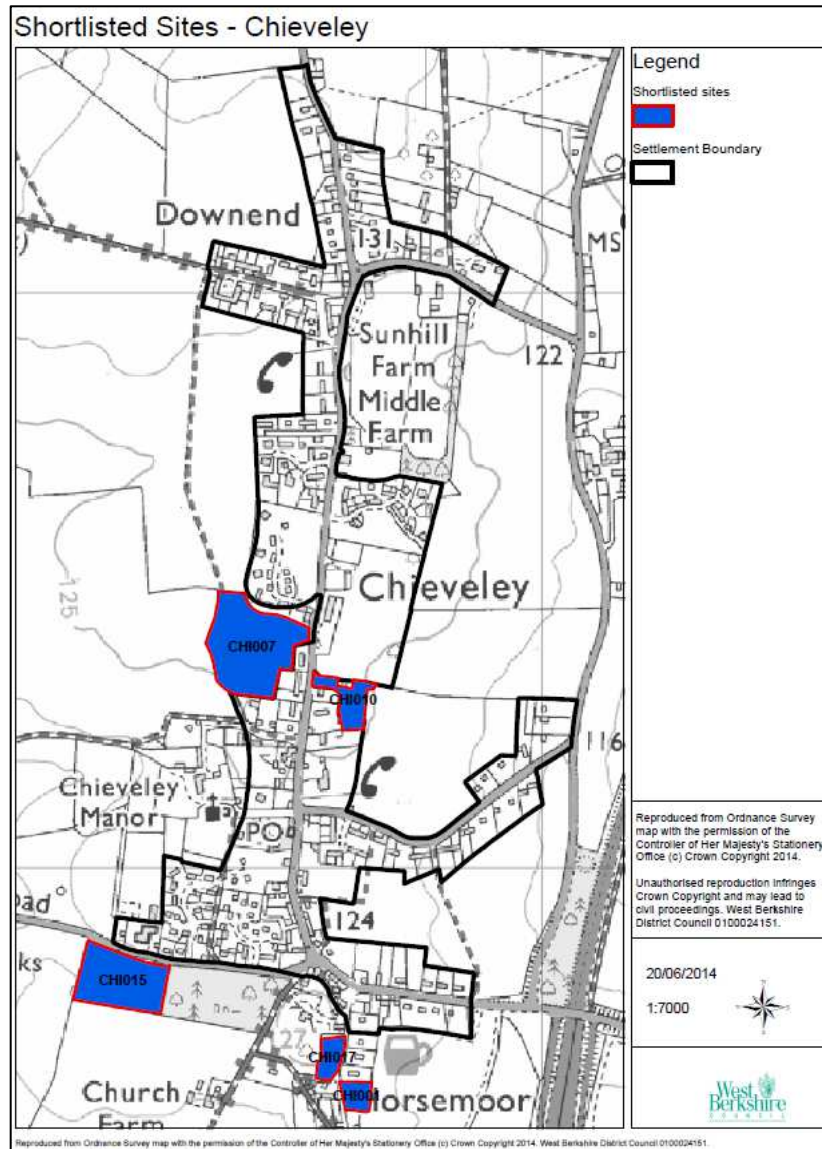
Site Reference	Site Name	Development Potential	Key Reasons for Rejection
BRS003	Land to the north of South End Road	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The north west section of the site extends well beyond the settlement limit. TPOs along eastern boundary would need protecting Surface water flood risk – evidence of standing water

			<p>early 2014.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access improvements needed – existing access is via a narrow track off South End Road.
BRS005	Land at Crackwillow, Cock Lane.	38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site is only considered to have potential as part of a wider development area with BRS003 and BRS004 rather than in isolation. • TPOs along southern boundary would need protecting. • Adjacent to area of surface water flood risk – Parish Council have reported standing water on the site.
BRS001	Land to the south of South end Road	128	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site is poorly related because it sits behind linear development. • Site is very large for size and function of village. • Landscape Assessment advises that the site is visually exposed and has a strong relationship with the wider valley landscape to the south west. • Surface water flood risk. Southern part of site adjoins River Pang and Flood Zones 2 and 3. • There are other sites within the village which are better related to the existing settlement.

3.3.5 Chieveley

Chieveley is a Service Village within the North Wessex Downs AONB. There has been a substantive amount of developer interest in Chieveley. Seven sites were assessed as potentially developable through the SHLAA process, and these are shown on the map below.

The number of sites assessed as potentially developable means that choices have to be made through the site selection process to select a preferred option. This information is set out in full in the SA/SEA Environmental Report and includes details about the sites which have been discounted through the site selection process.



Preferred Options

There are two preferred sites in Chieveley.

Land north of Manor Lane (SHLAA site reference CHI007)

Land north of Manor Lane is a 1.4 hectare site which has development potential for about 28 dwellings, at a low density (20 dwellings per hectare). The impact on the landscape character of the AONB has been assessed through a Landscape Assessment and the development of the site is not considered to cause harm to the character of the AONB as long as certain recommendations (set out in the Landscape Assessment) are followed.

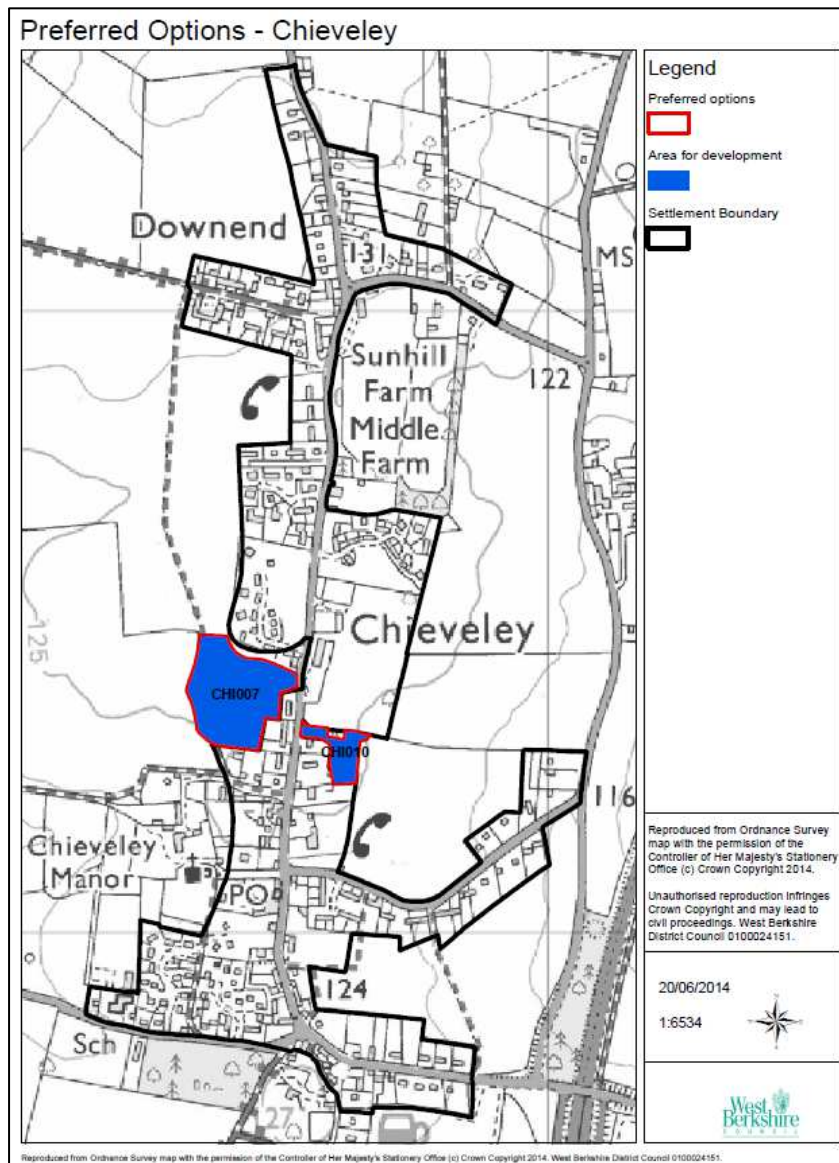
The scheme would include a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bed dwellings including 40% affordable housing in accordance with adopted policy. Access would be taken from the High Street and linkages would be made into existing footways.

Land adjacent to Coombe Cottage, High Street (SHLAA site reference CHI010)

Land adjacent to Coombe Cottage is a small site of approximately 0.4 hectares which would have capacity for approximately 7 dwellings at a low density of 20 dwellings per hectare. The impact on the landscape character of the AONB has been assessed through a Landscape Assessment and the development of the site is not considered to cause harm to the character of the AONB as long as certain recommendations (set out in the Landscape Assessment) are followed. The mature trees on the eastern boundary will be retained as part of any development proposal.

Access would be taken from the High Street and linkages would be made into existing footways.

Ecological surveys would be required to inform any development proposal.



Settlement Boundary

The settlement boundary of Chieveley will be redrawn around the developable boundary of the site chosen to be included in the submission version of the DPD. It is proposed that The Old Stables Green Lane (SHLAA site reference CHI017) and the Colt House, Green Lane (SHLAA site reference CHI001) are considered as part of the settlement boundary review as they are too small to be considered as allocations. Any other changes to the settlement boundary will be carried out in accordance with the settlement boundary criteria once these have been confirmed through the consultation.

Site Options Considered and Rejected

Site Reference	Site Name	Development Potential	Key Reasons for Rejection

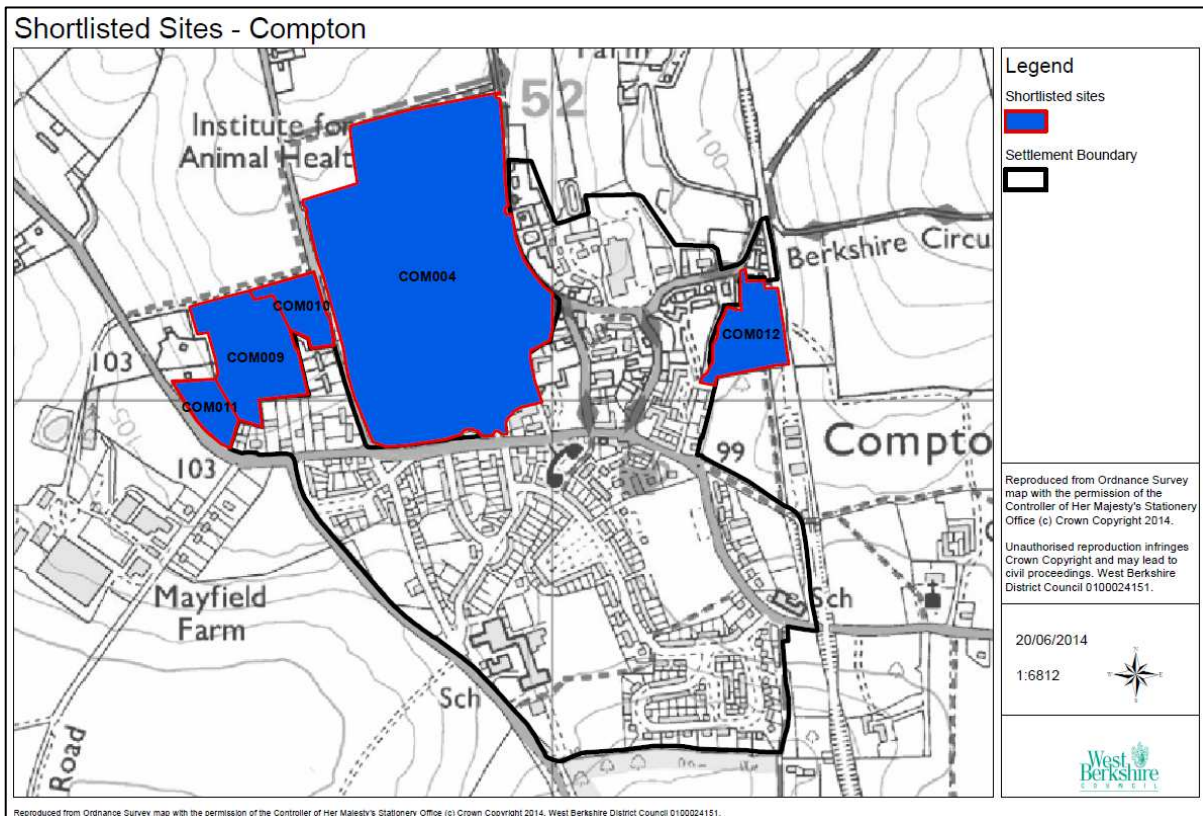
CHI001	The Colt House, Green Lane	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in character of existing development • Landscape Assessment indicates development of the site would be acceptable • Could be considered as part of settlement boundary review
CHI015	Land at School Lane	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape Assessment indicates development of the site would not be acceptable
CHI017	The Old Stables, Green Lane	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in character of existing development • Landscape Assessment indicates development of the site would be acceptable • Could be considered as part of settlement boundary review

3.3.6 Compton

Compton has been defined in the Core Strategy as a Service Village, but with an ‘opportunity site’ at the Pirbright Institute which is expected to close shortly and come forward for mixed use development during the plan period. This means that Compton has a greater level of growth than would normally be expected in a Service Village.

A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been prepared to set out a clear planning framework to guide any future development proposals at the Pirbright Institute Site. The SPD can be found at www.westberks.gov.uk/spd. Redeveloping the site in accordance with the adopted SPD provides the opportunity to positively enhance many aspects of sustainability.

Overall 8 sites in Compton were assessed as potentially developable. The brownfield opportunity available at the Pirbright Institute is the preferred site, and due to the scale of this opportunity site, no other sites in Compton are proposed for development.



Preferred Option

Pirbright Institute Site, High Street (SHLAA site reference COM004)

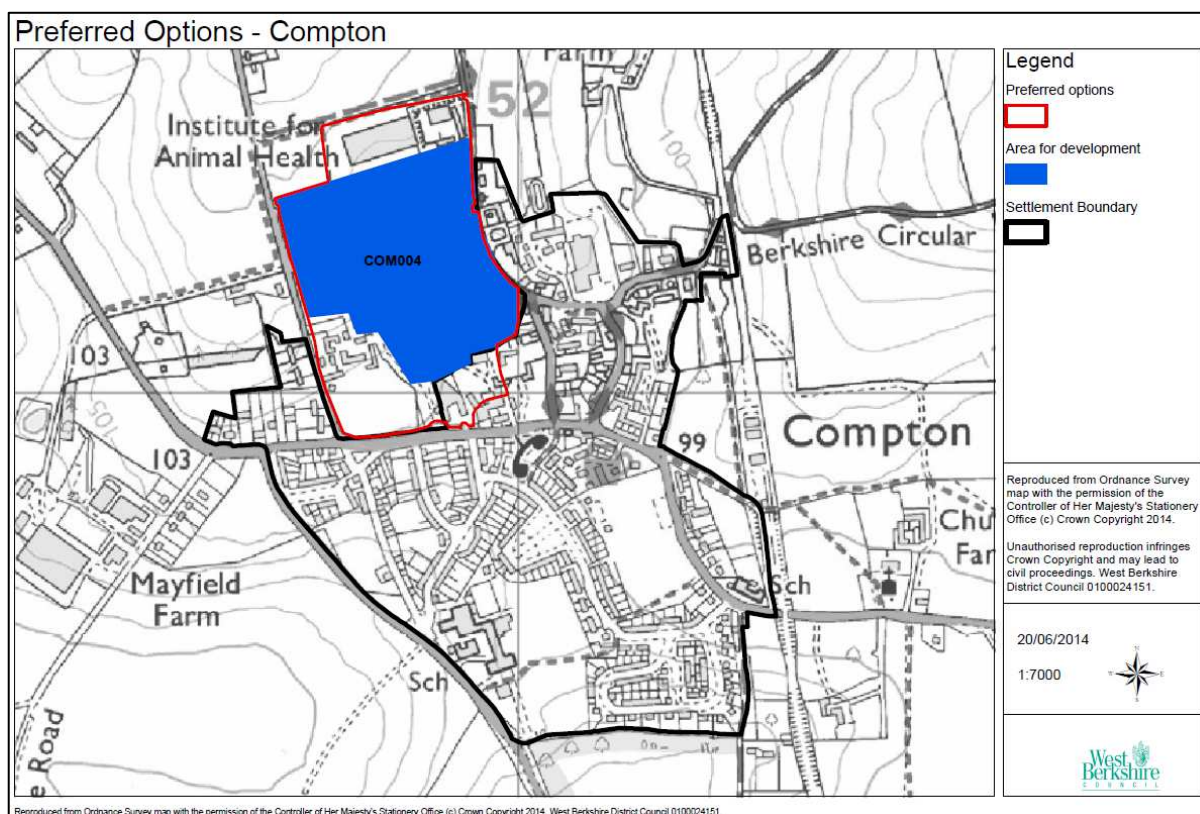
7 hectares of the Institute site are developable, which, at a low density of 20 dwellings per hectare, means that approximately 140 dwellings could be accommodated on the site. The developable area has been informed by the Landscape Assessment which indicates that development on parts of the site would be acceptable as long as mitigation measures as listed in the assessment and SPD are adhered to. Redevelopment of the site provides opportunities to enhance the green infrastructure

and biodiversity on this site and also provides a significant opportunity to improve soil quality and potentially water quality through decontamination.

Part of the site falls within Flood Zones 2 and 3, as well as a Groundwater Emergence Zone. This part of the site will be excluded from the developable area as set out within the SPD. A Flood Risk Assessment would be required to support any development on this site.

There is a preference for Churn Road to access the development, but the access arrangements will need to be confirmed through any development proposal.

It is proposed that the site is allocated for a mix of dwelling sizes and types including affordable housing.



Settlement Boundary

The settlement boundary of Compton will be redrawn around the developable area of the site chosen to be included in the submission version of the DPD. Any other changes to the settlement boundary will be carried out in accordance with the settlement boundary criteria once these have been confirmed through the consultation.

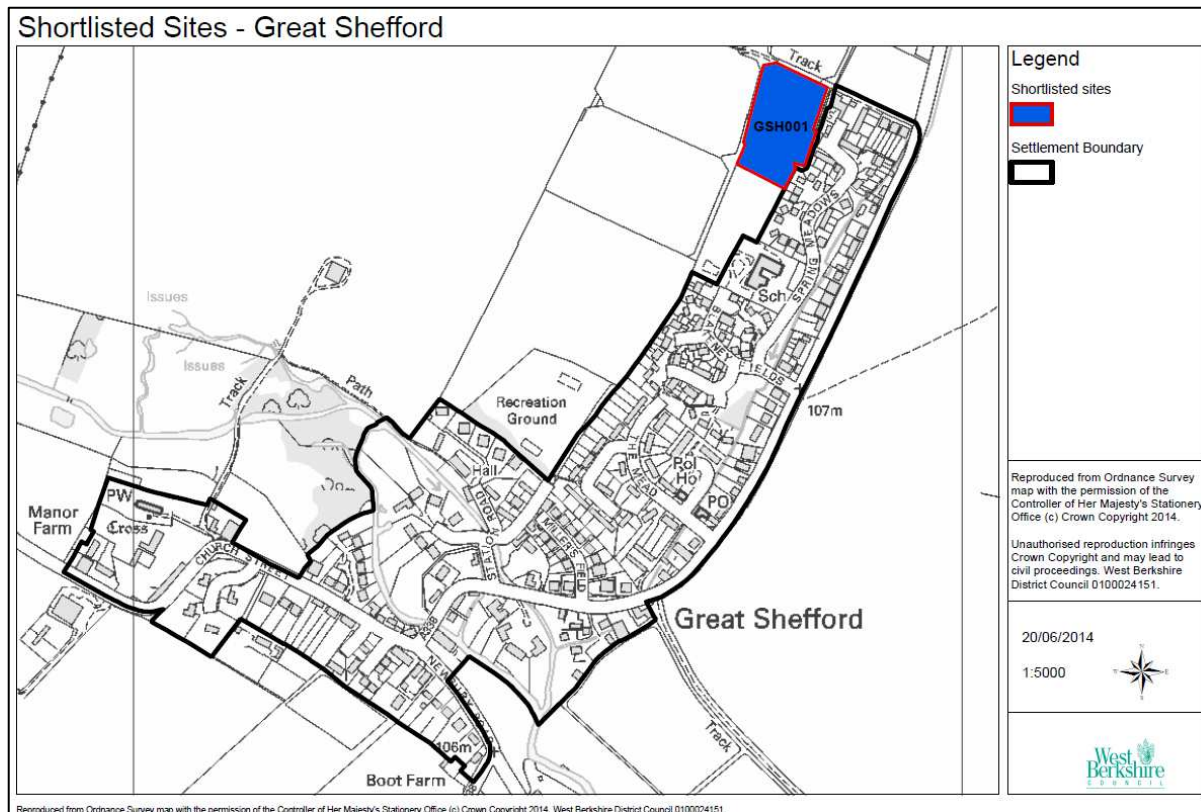
Site Options Considered and Rejected

Site Reference	Site Name	Development Potential	Key Reasons for Rejection
COM009	Land between Ilsley Road	56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site not required along with COM004

	and Churn Road		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape Assessment rules site out. • Partially within Groundwater Emergence Zone
COM001	Land to the east of Yew Tree Stables	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site not required along with COM004 • Flood risk – within Groundwater Emergence Zone
COM010	Land to the west of Churn Road	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site not required along with COM004 • Landscape Assessment indicates development potential but this will be limited by important landscape and visual constraints • Partially within Groundwater Emergence Zone • Parish Council raised concern over potential contamination on the site
COM011	Land to the north of Ilsley Road	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site not required along with COM004 • Landscape Assessment indicates development potential but this will be limited by important landscape and visual constraints • Partially within Groundwater Emergence Zone
COM012	The Paddocks east of Roden House, Wallingford Road	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site not required along with COM004 • Partially within Groundwater Emergence Zone and adjacent to Flood Zones 2 and 3
COM007	Land between Cheseridge Road and Ilsley Road	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flooding
COM008	Rear of Mayfield Cottages, Ilsley Road	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flooding

3.3.7 Great Shefford

Great Shefford is a Service Village within the North Wessex Downs AONB. Two sites in Great Shefford were promoted through the SHLAA, with one of these assessed as potentially developable through the site selection process.



However due to the severe flooding in the village which resulted in the village being largely cut off during the floods of early 2014, no additional development is proposed for Great Shefford.

Preferred Options - Great Shefford

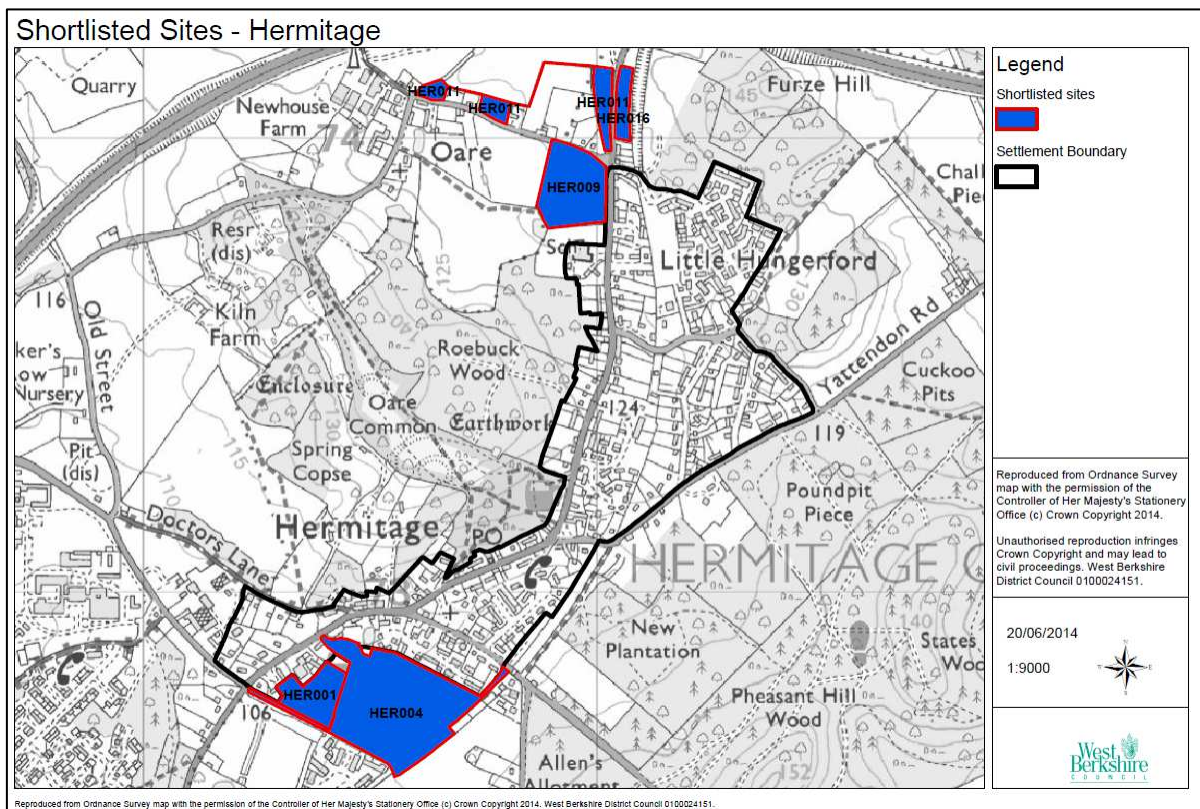


In terms of the settlement boundary, any minor changes to this will be carried out in accordance with the settlement boundary criteria once these have been confirmed through the consultation.

3.3.8 Hermitage

Hermitage is a Service Village within the North Wessex Downs AONB which is in a rural location but located close to both the M4 and A34 corridors running east west and north south.

Large areas of land around the edge of Hermitage were promoted through the SHLAA, 7 of which were assessed as potentially developable. Detailed site assessment work was then carried out on those assessed as potentially developable through the SHLAA, to enable informed choices to be made through the planning process. This information is set out in full in the SA/SEA Environmental Report and includes details about the sites which have been discounted through the site selection process.



Preferred Option

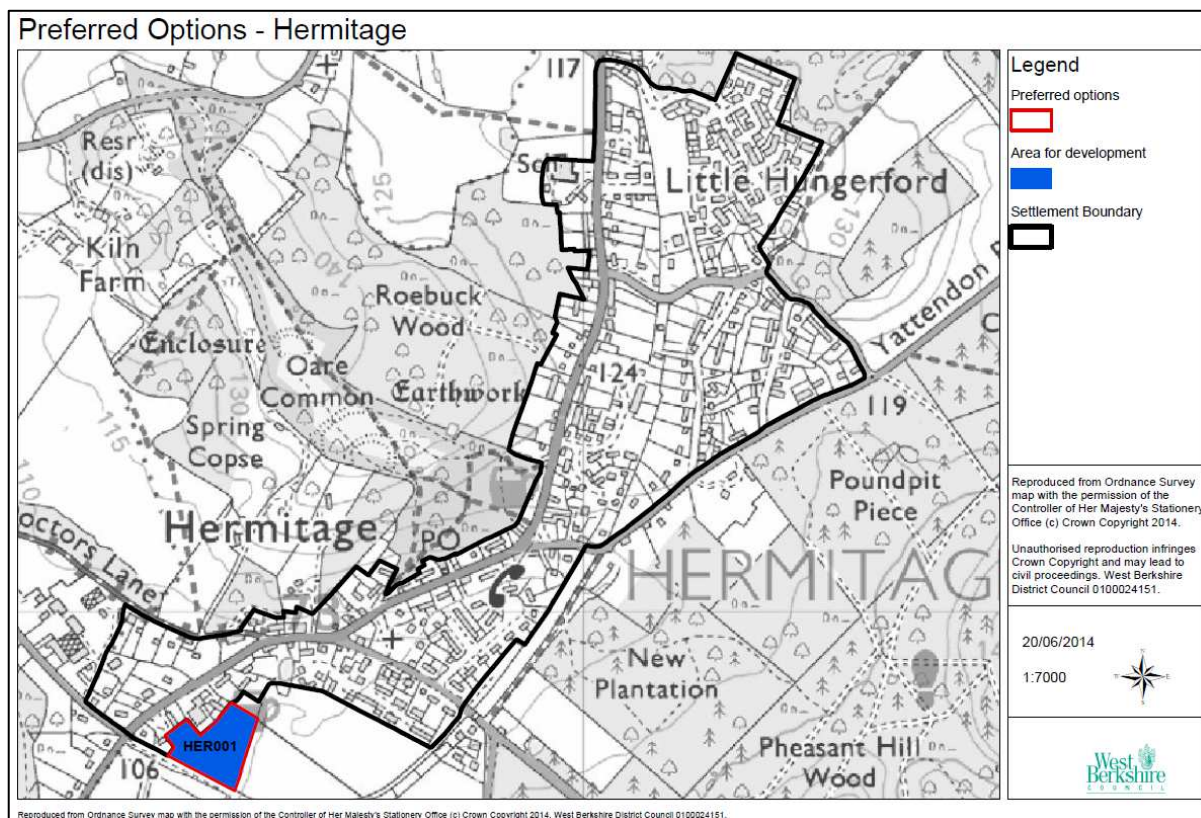
One site has been assessed as a preferred option for development in Hermitage, with part of a further site to be considered as part of the settlement boundary review.

Land off Charlotte Close (SHLAA site reference HER001)

Land off Charlotte Close is a 0.8 hectare site which could accommodate approximately 16 dwellings at a low density of 20 dwellings per hectare. The Landscape Assessment indicates that development on the site would be acceptable as long as enhancement and mitigation measures as listed in the assessment are adhered to.

The site falls within an area at risk from surface water flooding and a small part of the site is within a Critical Drainage Area so SuDS techniques would need to be deployed to mitigate against the potential impact of flooding in any development scheme.

The scheme would include a mix of dwelling sizes and types, including affordable housing. It is proposed that the site could be accessed via Station Road, although access details will need to be confirmed through any development proposal.



Ecological surveys would be required to inform any development proposal.

Settlement Boundary

The settlement boundary of Hermitage will be redrawn around the developable boundary of the site chosen to be included in the submission version of the DPD. It is also proposed to consider including part of the land to the south east of The Old Farmhouse (SHLAA reference HER004) within a revised settlement boundary for Hermitage, based on the area which has been assessed as acceptable through the Landscape Assessment.

Any other changes to the settlement boundary will be carried out in accordance with the settlement boundary criteria once these have been confirmed through the consultation.

Site Options Considered and Rejected

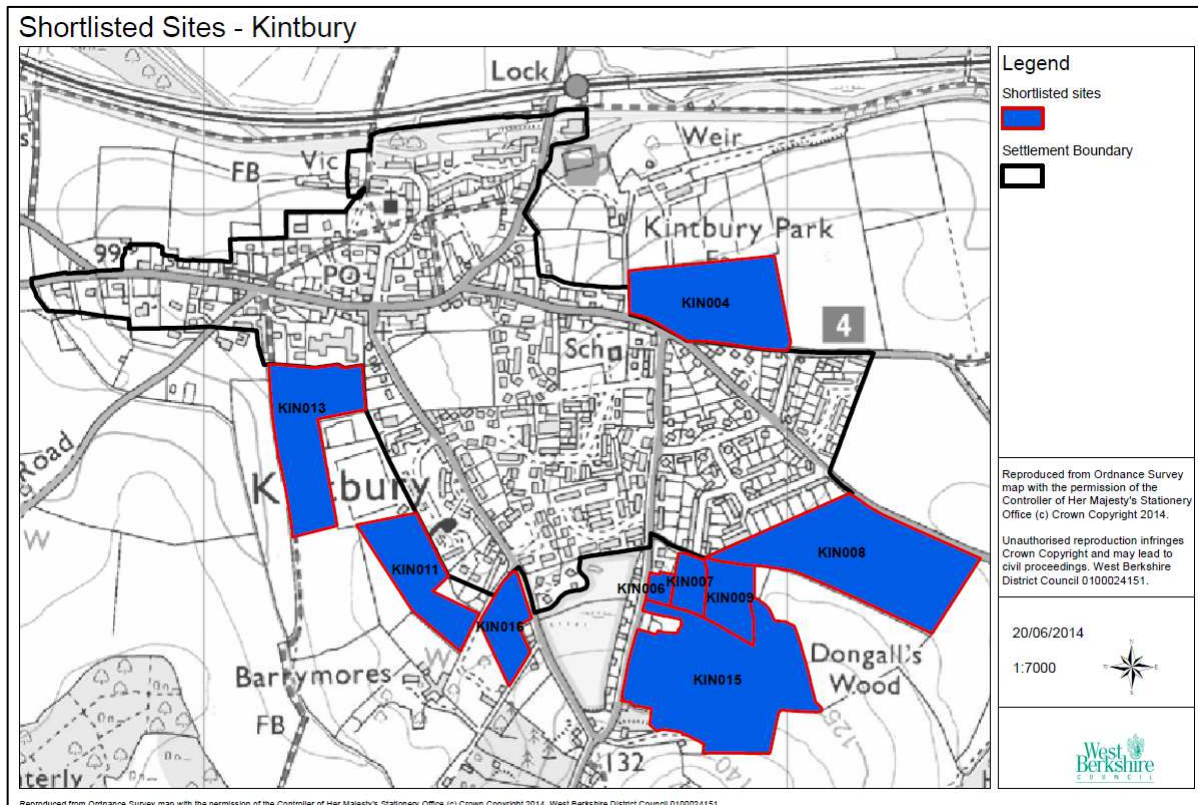
Site	Site Name	Development	Key Reasons for Rejection

Reference		Potential	
HER009	North of Primary School, Hampstead Norreys Road	28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape assessment indicates that the site is locally prominent but there is development potential (subject to further detailed outcomes) • Adjacent to settlement boundary with loose development to the north, south and west • Not as well related to the settlement pattern as HER001
HER004	Land to the south east of The Old Farmhouse	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape Assessment indicates that site is part of open gateway to Hermitage from the south. • Development on the whole site would be unacceptable, but a small area to the north east of the site would be acceptable if developed together with HER001 (the area of land between the public house and the access off Lipscomb Road).
HER011	Land north of Manor Lane	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only considering part of site extending along Hampstead Norreys Road – excluding two smaller parts of the site along Manor Lane • Poorly related to the settlement boundary
HER016	Land off Hampstead Norreys Road	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poorly related to the settlement boundary

3.3.9 Kintbury

Kintbury is a Service Village within the North Wessex Downs AONB. There has been considerable developer interest in housing options around Kintbury and 9 sites have been assessed as potentially developable through the SHLAA. These are shown on the map below.

The number of sites assessed as potentially developable means that choices have to be made through the site selection process to select a preferred option/s. This information is set out in full in the SA/SEA Environmental Report and includes details about the sites which have been discounted through the site selection process.



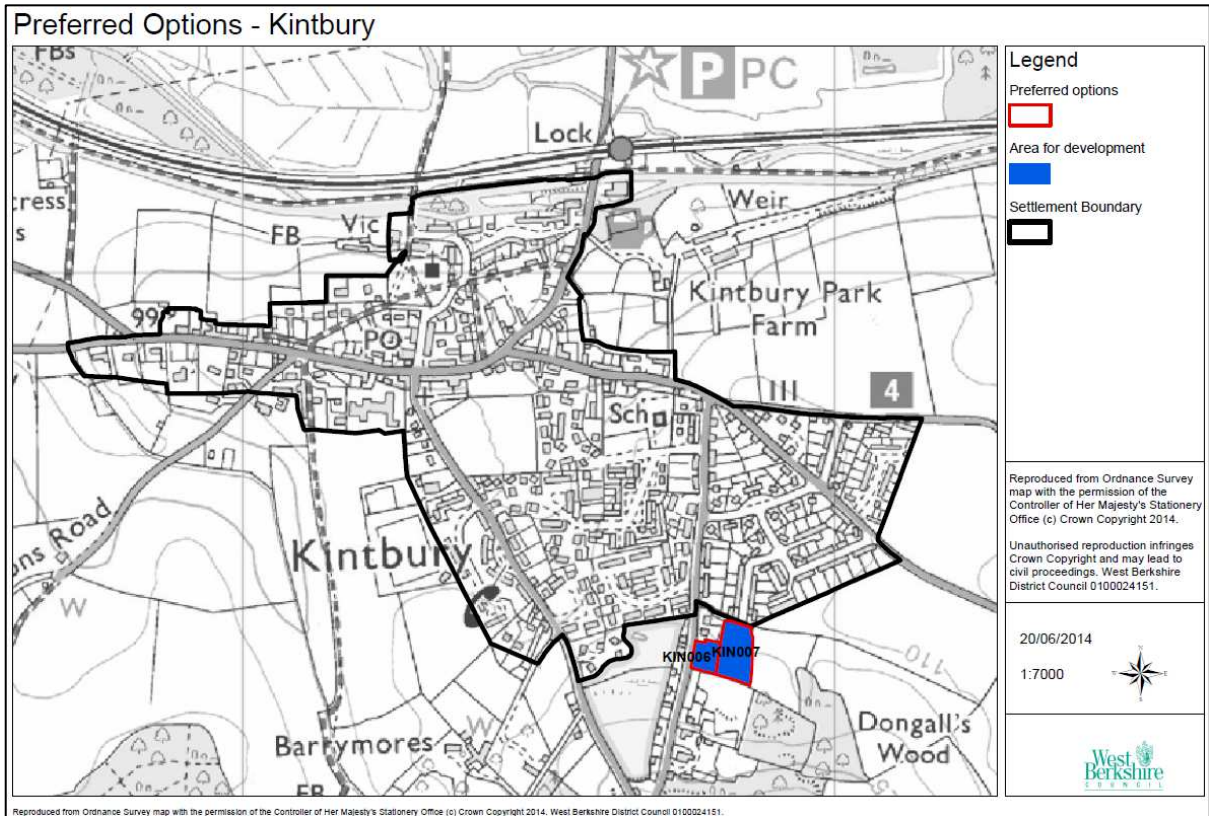
Preferred option

Land to the east of Layland Green (SHLAA site references KIN006 and KIN007)

These sites are being considered together which would give a site area of just over 0.6 hectares, with a development potential, at a low density, of approximately 13 dwellings. The Landscape Assessment indicates that development in this location would be acceptable as long as protection and enhancement measures as listed in the assessment are adhered to.

The scheme would include a mix of dwelling sizes and types, including affordable housing. Footways are nearby which the sites can connect to.

The site is within a Biodiversity Opportunity Area so there are opportunities for net gains in biodiversity. Ecological surveys will be required to inform any development proposals.



Settlement Boundary

The settlement boundary of Kintbury will be redrawn around the developable boundary of the site chosen to be included in the submission version of the DPD. Any other changes to the settlement boundary will be carried out in accordance with the settlement boundary criteria once these have been confirmed through the consultation.

Site Options Considered and Rejected

Site Reference	Site Name	Development Potential	Key Reasons for Rejection
KIN008	Land to the east of Layland Green and south of Holt Road	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape Assessment indicates that development would be prominent in views from the wider landscape to the north, east and south and that development of the whole site could constitute an unacceptable expansion to the settlement. A narrow wedge at the western end could be developed in conjunction with KIN009, 006 and 007. The site is at risk from surface water and groundwater flooding

KIN009	Land to the east of Layland Green	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site is at risk of groundwater flooding • Presence of old clay workings may affect development • Less well related to settlement than KIN006 and KIN007
KIN004	Kintbury Park Farm, Irish Hill Road	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape Assessment concluded development of the site as a whole would constitute an unacceptable expansion of the settlement. • The site is at risk from groundwater flooding.
KIN011	Land adjoining The Haven	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about the traffic impacts of development as most traffic to and from the site will pass through the centre of Kintbury. • The site is at risk from groundwater flooding
KIN013	Land to the west of recreation facilities, Inkpen Road	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site no longer available
KIN015	Land to the east of Layland Green	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site is poorly related to the existing settlement boundary • Landscape Assessment indicates that development on the site as a whole would be out of character. • The site is at risk from surface water flooding • Presence of old clay workings may affect development
KIN016	Land at Deane, Inkpen Road	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about the traffic impacts of development as most traffic to and from the site will pass through the centre of Kintbury.

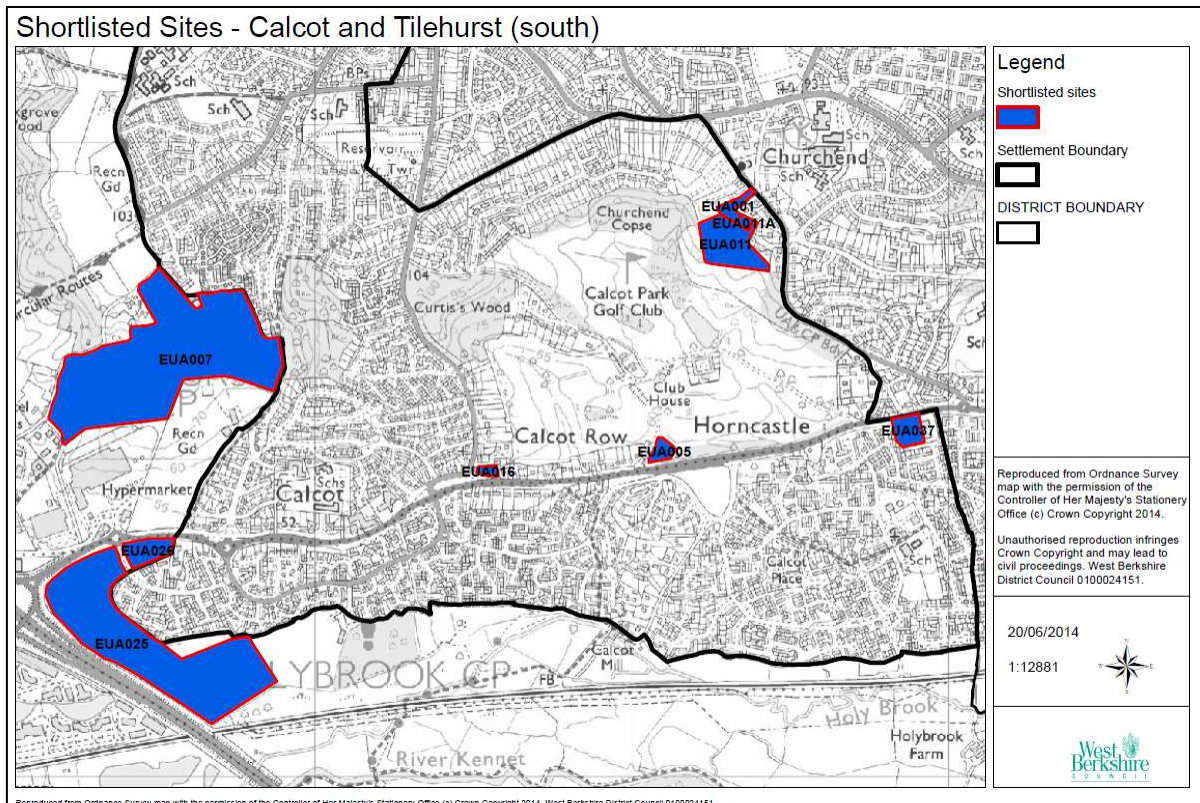
3.4 The Eastern Area

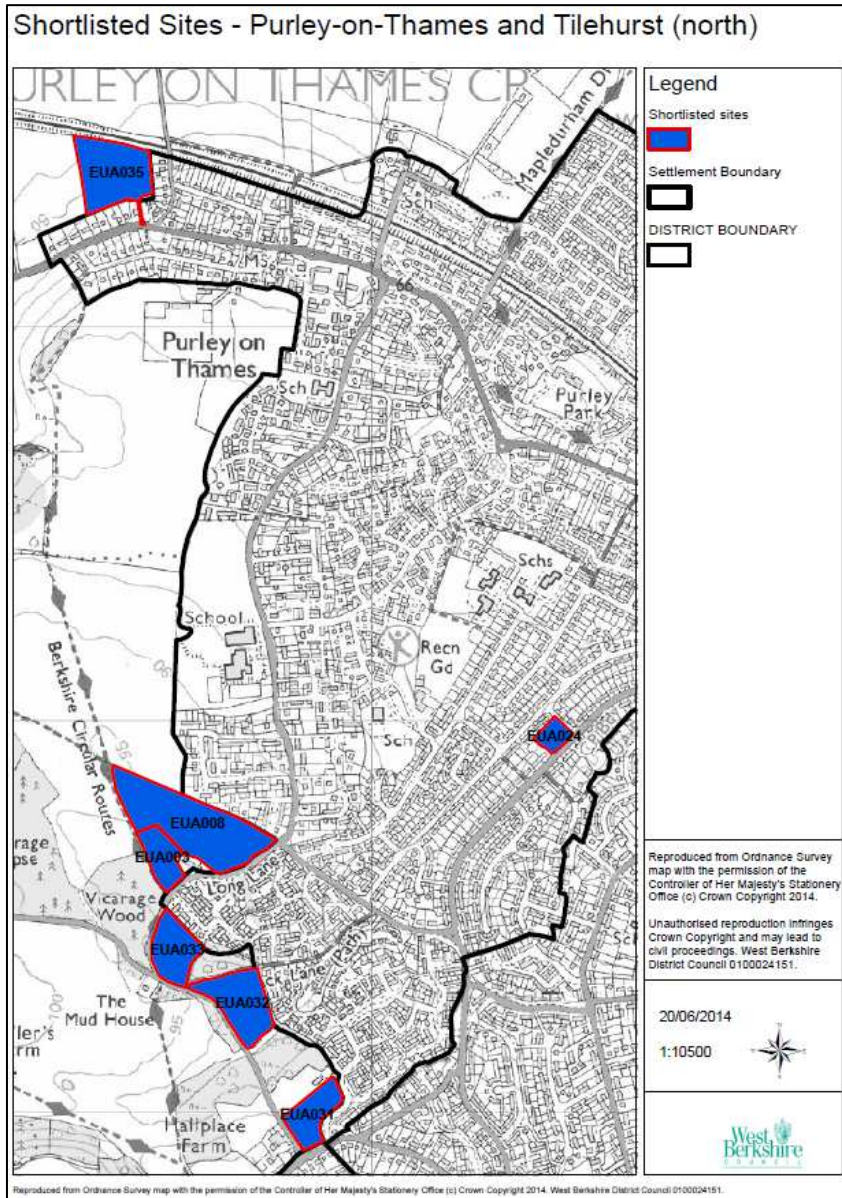
The Eastern Area includes Purley on Thames, Tilehurst and Calcot, which make up the Eastern Urban Area, together with the village of Theale. This area has a close functional relationship with Reading and is accessible facilities that Reading offers. The area has a number of high quality landscape and environmental assets, including the Thames National Path and the adjoining North Wessex Downs AONB.

The Core Strategy sets out a requirement for this area of approximately 1,400 new homes between 2006 and 2026. At March 2013 the completions and outstanding commitments (homes with planning permission) left a remaining requirement of approximately 700. The number needing to be allocated is reduced by taking account of permissions granted since March 2013, sites within the settlement boundary that have been identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and by the inclusion of a modest windfall allowance.

The Eastern Area is very constrained for environmental reasons. The AONB abuts the built up area of Purley, Tilehurst and Calcot. To the south of the urban area and the rural service centre of Theale, much of the land is within Flood Zones 2 and 3. There are also issues relating to traffic congestion, particularly in the vicinity of the motorway junction.

Whilst a number of sites have been assessed as potentially developable, there are some potential technical issues regarding development on some of these sites including access and amenity concerns. This had led to more sites being included as preferred options than are needed to make up the required numbers. Further assessment work on the sites will be continued and public consultation will be an important part of the site selection process.





Proposed Housing Site Allocations

3.4.1 Eastern Urban Area

The Eastern Urban Area consists of Purley on Thames, Tilehurst and Calcot. 9 sites were assessed as potentially developable through the SHLAA and these are shown on the map below.

This information is set out in full in the SA/SEA Environmental Report and includes details about the sites which have been discounted through the site selection process.

Preferred Options

There are 7 sites included as preferred options.

3.4.1.1 Tilehurst

Turnhams Farm, Pincents Lane (Pincents Hill) SHLAA site reference EUA007

The site is located on the edge of the AONB at Tilehurst linking Tilehurst to the retail park at Calcot. An area of 9.5 hectares is proposed for development at medium density, for approximately 285 dwellings. The site was subject to a refused planning application, which was upheld at appeal and an unsuccessful village green application in 2009/10. The proposed development takes into account the findings of the appeal and has therefore reduced the proposed developable area of the site. The areas proposed for development are not adjacent to existing residential development, although the southern development area is adjacent to Turnhams Green Industrial Estate and the Calcot retail park.

The scheme would include a mix of dwelling sizes and types, including affordable housing.

There are access concerns affecting the development of the site which will need to be addressed before any allocation can be confirmed. The site will be accessed via Pincents Lane to the south. It is considered that vehicular access to Pincents Lane north is likely to be resisted.

Any housing proposal would need to account for the expected traffic generation to and from Ikea during the PM peak periods and weekends. If mitigation is possible to accommodate traffic from any residential development, it is likely that it will be extensive.

The scheme would include retention of the public right of way and create a new area of public green open space with potential for part of the site to be retained for agricultural use.

Landscape and ecological corridors would be provided on site.

Ecological and archaeological surveys would be required to inform any development proposal.

Stonehams Farm (SHLAA reference EUA008).

Stonehams Farm is a 2.2 hectare site which, at a low density of development could accommodate approximately 44 dwellings. The site is well related to existing services and facilities on the edge of Tilehurst. The site is surrounded by residential development on two sides. The site has easy access to the countryside via a number of footpaths, with the footpath adjacent to the site needing to be preserved should development take place.

The site is located within the AONB, and therefore Landscape Assessment work has been carried out, which assesses that part of the site is acceptable in landscape terms if suitable mitigation is put in place. The site is adjacent to ancient woodland and trees with Tree Preservation Orders, meaning that appropriate buffers and protections would be required as part of any development proposal.

The scheme would include a mix of dwelling sizes and types, including affordable housing.

It is proposed that access can be obtained from Long Lane. Long Lane will need to be widened fronting the site and possibly other locations with the provision of footways to connect the site to existing footways in the vicinity.

Land to the east of Sulham Hill (SHLAA site reference EUA031)

Land to the east of Sulham Hill is just under 1 hectare in size and could accommodate, at medium density, approximately 29 dwellings. The site is well related to existing residential development, close to local services and facilities. The site is adjacent to a community hall and children's play area.

As the site is adjacent to the AONB, Landscape Assessment work has been carried out on the site which confirms that the site is acceptable in landscape terms, subject to mitigation.

The scheme would include a mix of dwelling sizes and types, including affordable housing.

It is proposed that access will be sought via Clements Mead.

Land to the east of Long Lane and south of Blackthorn Close (SHLAA site reference EUA033)

This is a 1 hectare site which could accommodate, at medium density, approximately 30 dwellings.

As the site is adjacent to the AONB, Landscape Assessment work has been carried out on the site which confirms that the site is acceptable in landscape terms, subject to mitigation.

The scheme would include a mix of dwelling sizes and types, including affordable housing.

Access is possible from Long Lane to be obtained into the site. Long Lane will therefore need to be widened fronting the site and possibly other locations with the provision of footways to connect the site to existing footways in the vicinity.

Ecological and archaeological surveys would be required to inform any development proposal. Appropriate buffers need to be provided between the site and the adjacent ancient woodland.

3.4.1.2 Purley on Thames

72 Purley Rise (SHLAA site reference EUA035)

This is a 1.2 hectare site, which if developed at a medium density could accommodate approximately 34 dwellings. The site is well related to the existing settlement with development on two sites, although it is located behind the currently building line.

The site was also promoted as an alternative option as a site for Gypsies and Travellers.

The scheme would include a mix of dwelling sizes and types, including affordable housing with scope for on-site open space provision.

An adoptable access would be required to serve this site. The existing access serving the site is narrow and it is not known if additional land can be acquired to provide an adequate access to the site. This issue may affect the numbers that could be developed on the site.

Ecological and archaeological surveys would be required to inform any development proposal.

3.4.1.3 Calcot

Land adjacent to junction 12 of M4, Bath Road, Calcot (SHLAA site reference EUA025)

This site could accommodate approximately 50 to 100 dwellings as a medium density development, depending on how much of the site is suitable. The site is located to the east of Calcot to the south of the A4, adjacent to junction 12 of the M4. Only part of the site is recommended for allocation due to air and noise pollution generated by the M4/A4 and the flood risk on the southern part of the site. The site is well related to the existing settlement, close to local service and facilities, including the

bus interchange at the retail park. The smaller area for development will reduce the likelihood of any conflict with the Highways Agency's Smart Motorway Scheme which starts at junction 12.

The scheme would include a mix of dwelling sizes and types, including affordable housing. At the scale proposed and in the location proposed, there are no highways concerns and access would be obtained onto Dorking Way. The proposed location of development will avoid the flood risk on the southern part of the site.

Ecological and archaeological surveys would be required to inform any development proposal. Noise and air quality could be a significant issue. A noise and air quality survey would be required and careful design and mitigation measures would be needed.

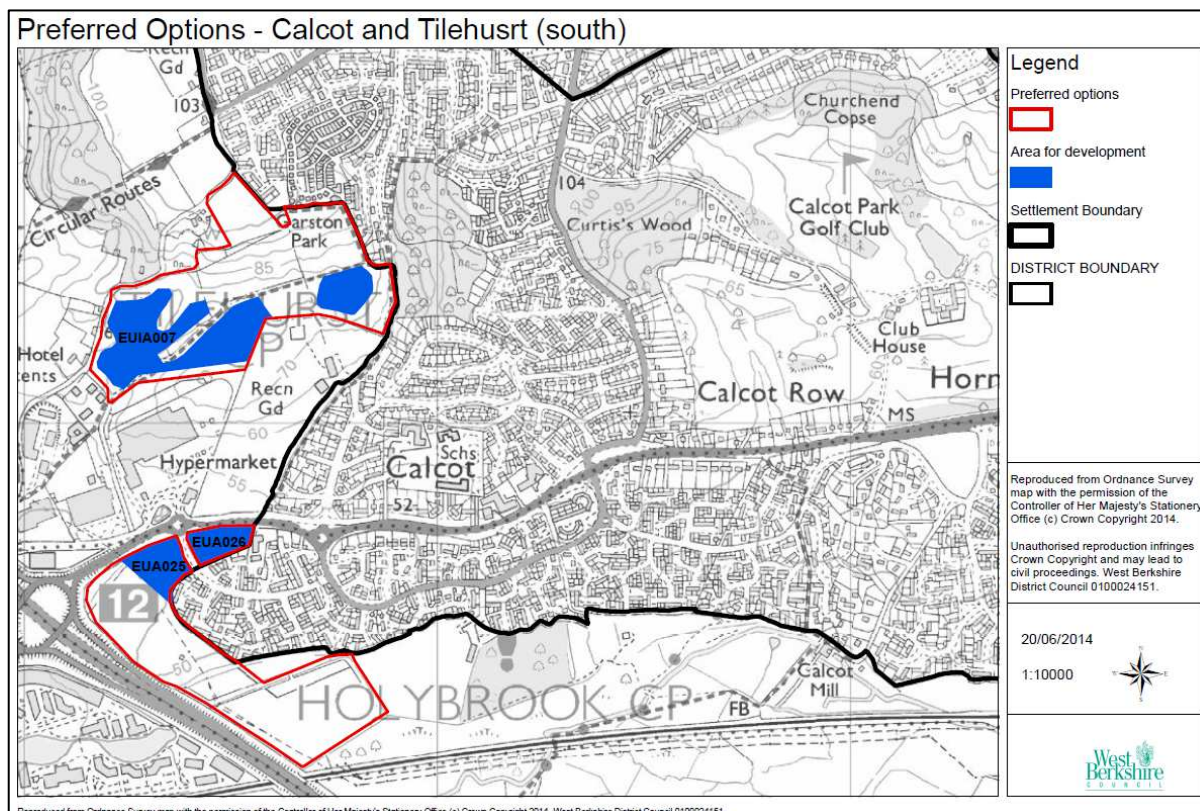
Land adjacent to Bath Road and Dorking Way, Calcot (SHLAA site reference EUA026)

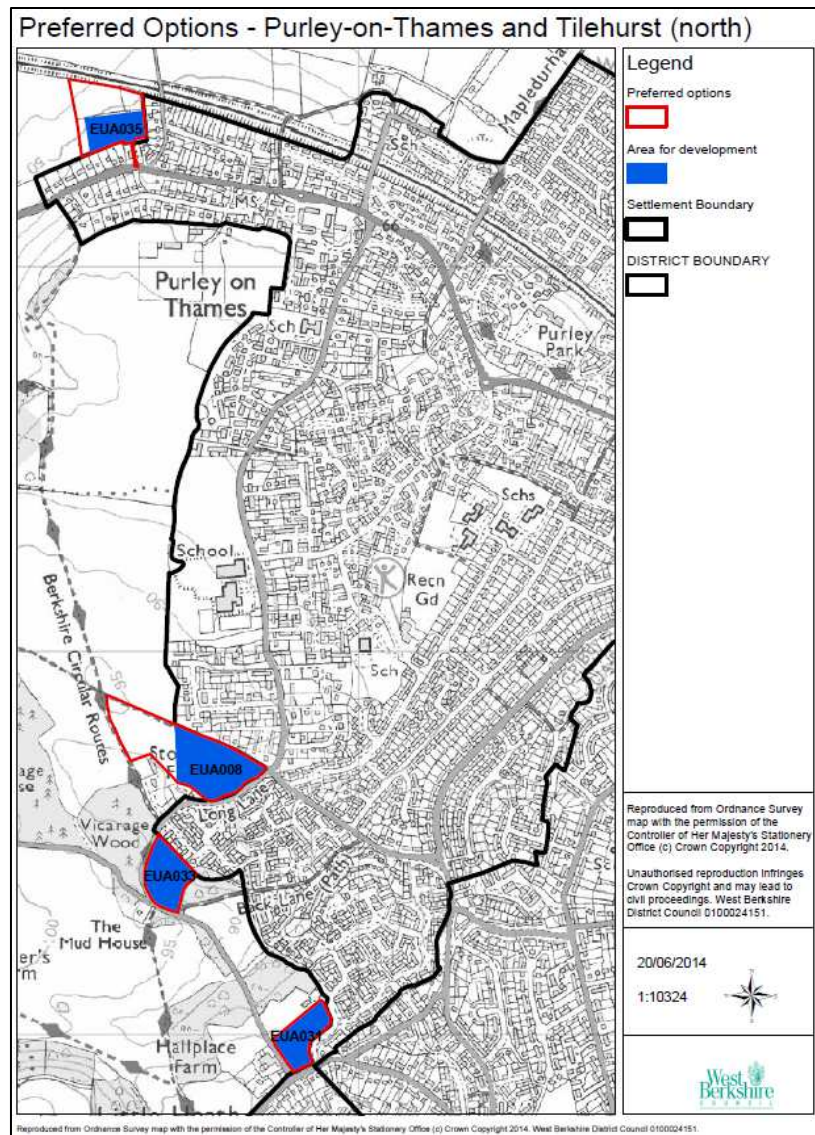
It is proposed that this site is considered in conjunction with EUA025. The site area is 0.8 hectares and this site could accommodate approximately 24 dwellings at a medium density.

The scheme would include a mix of dwelling sizes and types, including affordable housing.

The site would be accessed via Dorking Way. No highways concerns have been identified.

A small part of the western edge of the site is within a surface water flood risk area, therefore a flood risk assessment would be required, and appropriate SuDs provided. A noise and air quality survey would be required and careful design and mitigation measures would be needed.





Settlement Boundary

The settlement boundaries within the Eastern Urban Area will be redrawn around the developable boundary of the site chosen to be included in the submission version of the DPD. Any other changes to the settlement boundary will be carried out in accordance with the settlement boundary criteria once these have been confirmed through the consultation.

Site Options Considered and Rejected

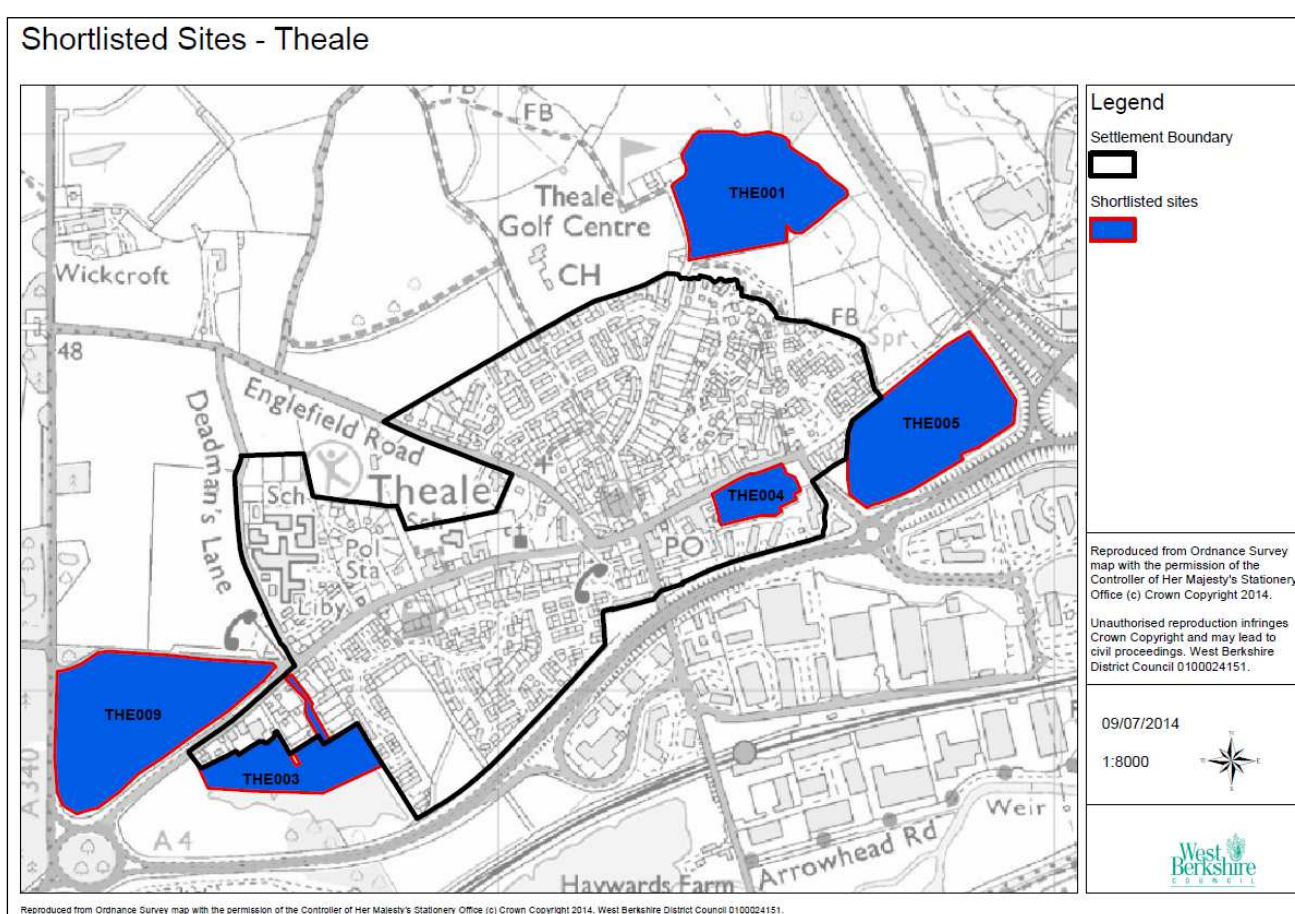
Site Reference	Site Name	Development Potential	Key Reasons for Rejection
EUA003	Stonehams Farm, Long Lane, Tilehurst	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB – Landscape Assessment indicates development would not be appropriate in conjunction with EUA008 and EUA033
EUA032	Land to the east of Sulham	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proximity to ancient woodland

	Hill between Barefoots Copse and Cornwell Copse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access concerns
--	---	---

3.4.2 Theale

Theale is the only Rural Service centre in the eastern area of the District. 5 sites on the edge of Theale assessed as potentially developable in the SHLAA. These are shown on the map below.

The number of sites assessed as potentially developable means that choices have to be made through the site selection process to select a preferred option/s. This information is set out in full in the Site Selection Framework paper and includes details about the sites which have been discounted through the site selection process.



Preferred Options

North Lakeside (SHLAA site reference THE003)

The site is located adjacent to the A4 close to the centre of Theale, which supports a range of facilities. The site is 1.4 hectares and could accommodate approximately 50 dwellings at a medium to high density.

The scheme would include a mix of dwelling sizes and types, including affordable housing. The site can be accessed onto The Green. Access could also be obtained through St Ives Close, but the Close will need to be upgraded to an adoptable standard.

An additional or alternative access could be obtained from the consented development of Lakeside South which lies to the south of THE003.

There are some Tree Preservation Orders on the site which would need to be taken into account in any development proposal.

Land between A340 and The Green (SHLAA site reference THE009)

This site is 4.1 hectares and at a medium density of 30 dwellings per hectare it could accommodate approximately 125 dwellings. The site is located adjacent the A340/A4 roundabout and is close to the centre of Theale, which supports a range of facilities.

Access would be preferred from The Green. A Transport Assessment will be required to assess the impact taking account of the consented Lakeside South residential development to the south. Consideration would need to be given to how any access would relate to the existing access that will serve Lakeside south.

The scheme would include a mix of dwelling sizes and types, including affordable housing. There is potential for part of this site to accommodate an extra care home.

Open space would be provided on site.

Land at Junction 12 (SHLAA site reference THE005).

The developable area of this site is constrained by access to the M4 junction 12 and a pylon crossing the site as well as the site's risk from flooding. A smaller part of the site has been assessed as having potential for approximately 50 dwellings.

The scheme would include a mix of dwelling sizes and types, including affordable housing.

Due to the expected size of the development, this proposal would have a limited impact on the highway network. Adequate access can be obtained from High Street.

Some development fronting the High Street would improve the High Street as a pedestrian and cyclist route from Theale to Calcot.

A flood risk assessment would be required, as would a noise and air quality survey. Careful design and mitigation measures would be needed. Ecological and archaeological surveys would be required to inform any development proposal.

Former Sewage Works (SHLAA site reference THE001)

This site has capacity for part of the site to be developed for approximately 88 dwellings at a medium density. The developable area of the site is constrained by the pylon crossing the site. The site was previously a sewage treatment works which is now vacant. There may, therefore, be a requirement for decontamination work.

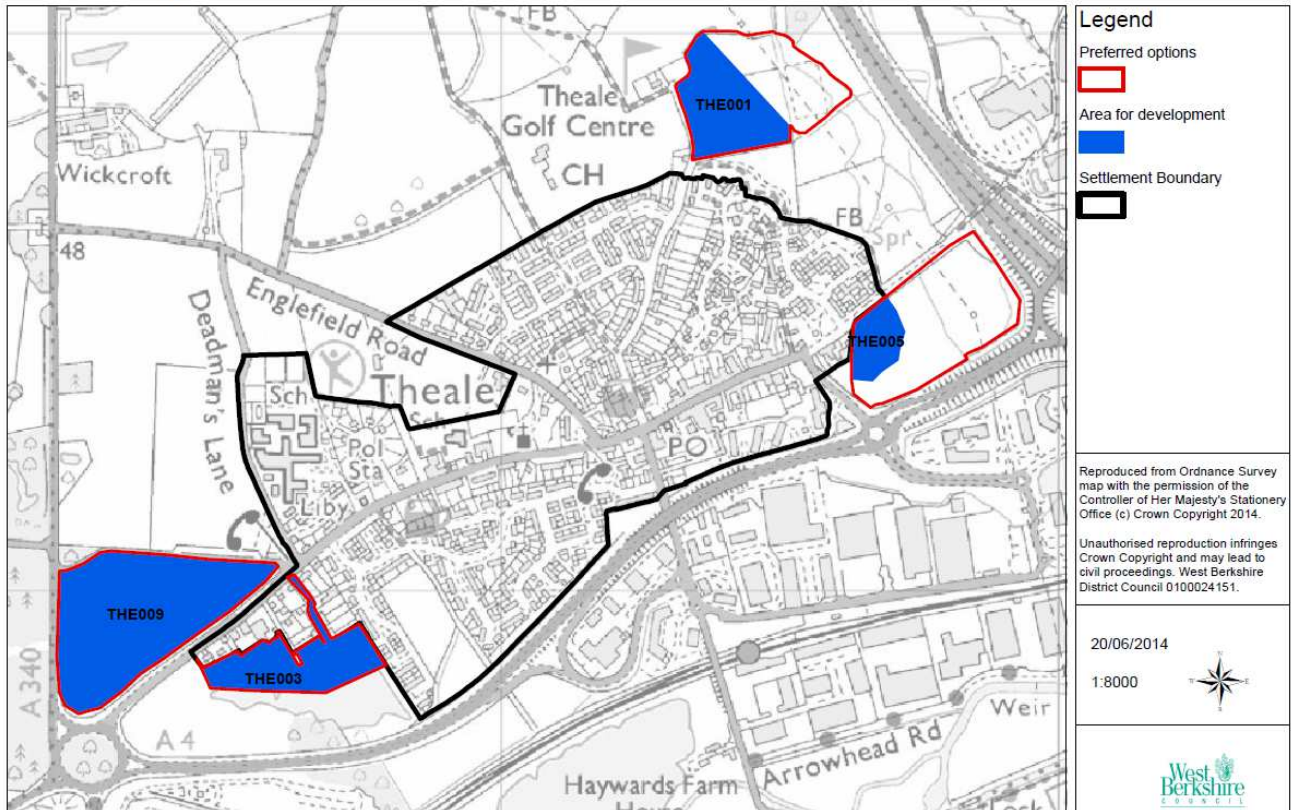
Whilst the site is separated from the existing settlement boundary by an area of public open space, it is well related to existing services and facilities within Theale.

The scheme would include a mix of dwelling sizes and types, including affordable housing.

There are access concerns affecting the development of the site. Blossom Lane would need to be widened or an alternative route provided.

Ecological and archaeological surveys would be required to inform any development proposal.

Preferred Options - Theale



Settlement Boundary

The settlement boundary of Theale will be redrawn around the developable boundary of the site chosen to be included in the submission version of the DPD. Any other changes to the settlement boundary will be carried out in accordance with the settlement boundary criteria once these have been confirmed through the consultation.

Site Options Considered and Rejected

Site Reference	Site Name	Development Potential	Key Reasons for Rejection
THE002	Whitehart Meadow	224	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within flood zone 2 plus groundwater and surface water flooding • Noise and air quality issues

			from the M4. • Overhead power lines
--	--	--	--

4 Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

4.1 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment

A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) has been carried out by independent consultants (Opinion Research Services) to establish the future need for Gypsy and Traveller site provision within West Berkshire. The study has involved using a shared methodology with other Berkshire authorities.

The study includes assessing the need for transit sites or emergency stopping places and site provision for Travelling Showpeople. The needs of those on existing sites are also considered as part of the study. The study assesses these needs over a 15 year period.

The GTAA is available as a background document.

The outcomes of the GTAA show a net requirement for 14 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and a net requirement of 24 pitches for Travelling Showpeople.

Meeting the Requirement:

4.2 Preferred Options for Gypsies and Travellers

New Stocks Farm, Paices Hill, Aldermaston (Site reference GTTS5)

This site of approximately 1.5 hectares is located next to the existing privately run Gypsy and Traveller site, Paices Hill, which has a total of 39 pitches (24 permanent and 15 transit pitches). It is proposed that the site is suitable for 9 permanent pitches. The principle of Gypsies and Travellers on the site has already been established in the area, and there would be no adverse visual impact from the site which currently sits behind a high fence.

The site could be accessed off Paices Hill using a separate entrance to the existing site or through the existing site. The site is located less than 1km to Tadley which hosts a variety of services and facilities including schools and shops, and employment areas (Calleva Park and Youngs Industrial Estate) are in close proximity. Most of the surrounding uses are commercial. The site is not located within a flood zone and there is no evidence of flood risk issues on the site. The site is located within the inner consultation zone for AWE Aldermaston.

GTTS5 - New Stocks Farm, Paices Hill, Aldermaston



Clappers Farm – corner of Bloomfieldhatch Lane and Cross Lane (Site reference GTTS6B)

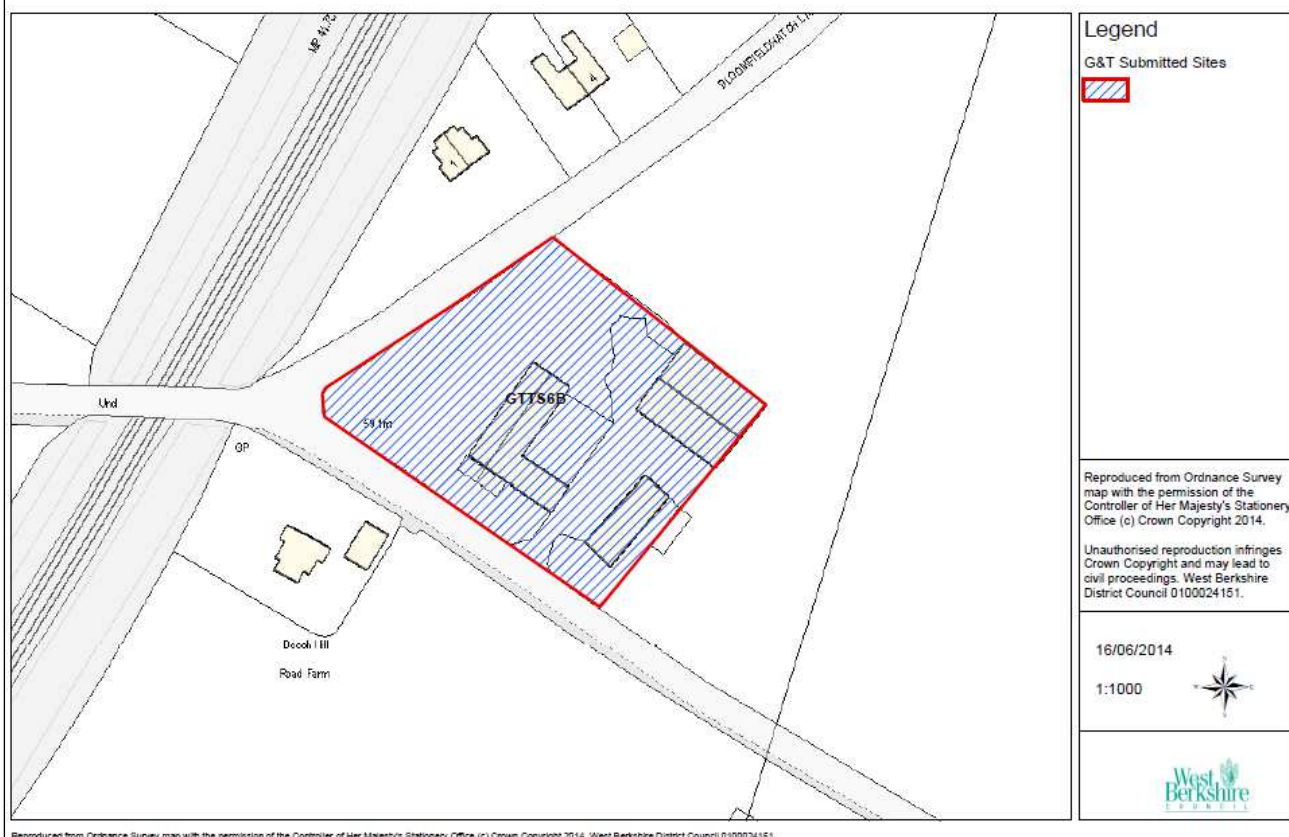
The site is located on junction of Bloomfield Hatch Lane and Cross Lane approximately 3 miles southwest of Junction 11 of the M4. It is a proposed allocation for up to 8 pitches for Gypsy and Travellers.

The Site is bounded by a mature hedgerow fronting the roads to the north west, west and south west, and contains a number of agricultural buildings.

The site is approximately 4km from Spencers Wood and 4km from Mortimer, both of which have services and facilities including shops and schools. The nearest primary school is approximately 1.5km from the site (within Wokingham Borough). The site is outside of any existing settlement and is rural in character, although there are residential properties directly opposite the site, both on Cross Lane and Bloomfield Hatch Lane

This site is likely to come forward later in the plan period, from 2021.

GTTS6B Clappers Farm - Corner of Bloomfieldhatch Lane and Cross Lane

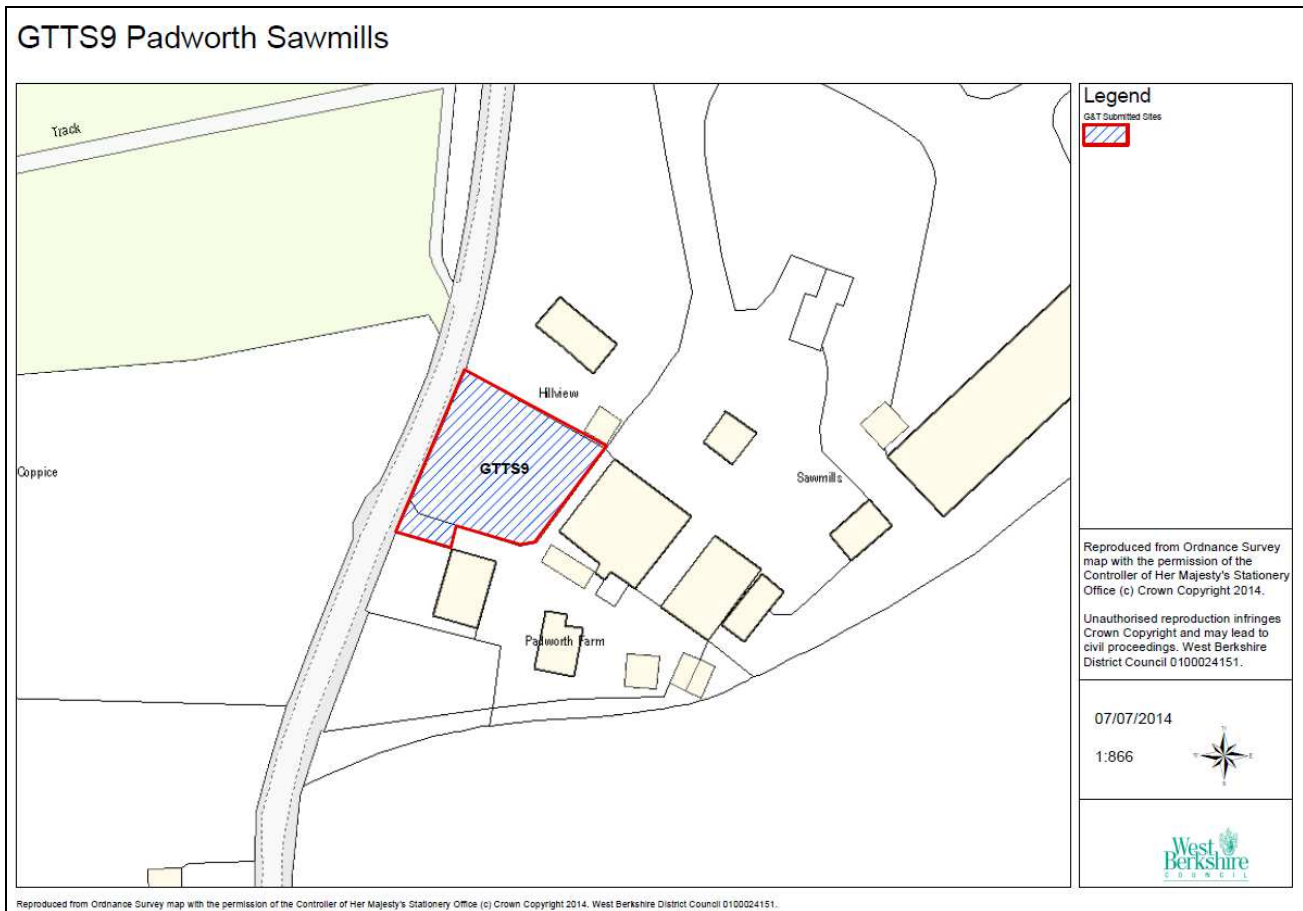


Padworth Farm, Rag Hill, Aldermaston (Site reference GTSS9)

This 0.08 hectare site is located at Padworth Sawmills, to the west of Padworth. It could accommodate one pitch. The site is situated along a rural road. The site has previously had planning permission, but this has subsequently expired.

The site is 2.5km from Aldermaston Village, where there is a local shop, pub and primary school. The site is a grassy paddock with residential properties to the west.

National policy (Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS)) seeks to restrict Gypsy and Traveller sites within open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan. However, the principal of this site being suitable for single Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision was established through the previous planning application (10/02684/FULD)



4.3 Preferred Option for Travelling Showpeople

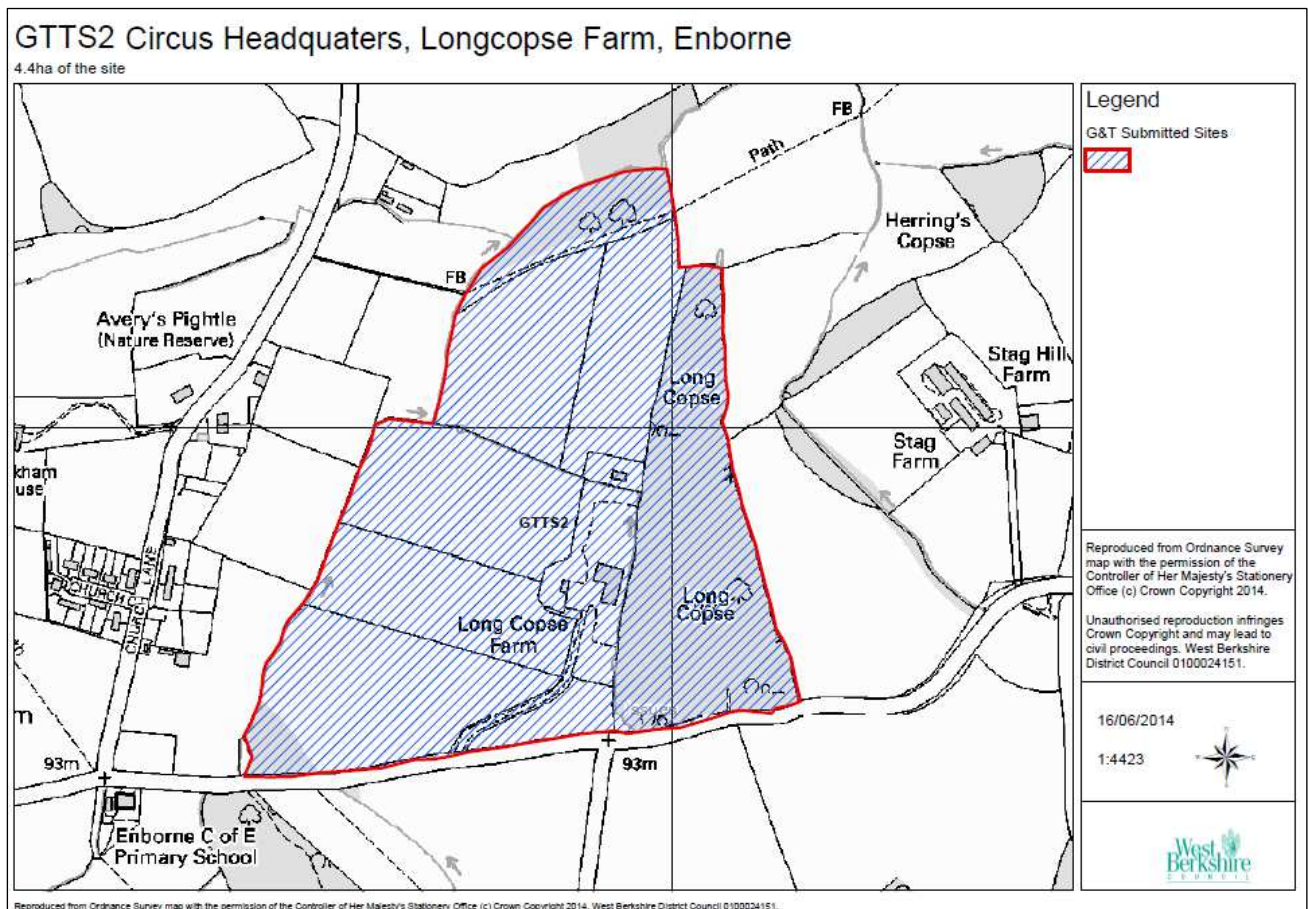
Circus Headquarters, Longcopse Farm, Enborne (Site reference GTTS2)

The site is located in Enborne to the west of Wash Common. This is a very large site of 19.8 hectares, accommodating existing four caravans for Travelling Showpeople and the storage of equipment associated with Zippos Circus. It is proposed that the 24 site requirement for Travelling Showpeople identified within the GTAA could be accommodated on this site. This would equate to an area of approximately 4.4 ha. The site contains areas of woodland which are designated Local Wildlife Sites, but the site is largely in agricultural use with the exception of the existing area accommodating Travelling Showpeople and associated storage.

The site is outside of any existing settlement and rural in character and as such there are no residential properties immediately adjacent to the site. Impact on the privacy and residential amenity of both site occupants and/or neighbouring uses will therefore be limited.

The northern most part of the site is within flood Zones 2 and 3. Development would need to be avoided on this area and a stream runs along the western and northern boundaries of the site. The site is contained to the east by Long Copse and to the north by an area of woodland, with views to neighbouring properties to the west.

National policy (Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS)) seeks to restrict Gypsy and Traveller sites within open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the



development plan. However, this is an existing site for Travelling Showpeople and is therefore established within the area.

Site Options considered and rejected

Site Reference	Site Name	Pitch Potential	Key Reasons for Rejection
GTTS1	Furze Hill, Hermitage	3 to 5 pitches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> landscape assessment considers the site to have an impact on the AONB and therefore evidence suggests the site should not be allocated at this stage.
GTSS3	Benhams Farm, Burghfield	Up to 15 pitches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant concern over the integration with the existing settlement form.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns over the proximity to existing settled community.
GTSS4	Paices Hill (large site)	Up to 15 pitches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern that this site would extend the existing Paices Hill site beyond an acceptable scale.
GTSS6A	Clappers Farm (north)	Up to 5 pitches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site is no longer available and can not be consulted upon as a preferred site for allocation.
GTSS7	Purley Rise, Purley on Thames	Up to 10 pitches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns over the proximity to existing settled community. Site also a preferred site for housing allocation.
GTSS8	Stable View, Oare	1 pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long planning history. 2 previous appeals have been dismissed by Inspector on landscape grounds.

5 Residential Parking Policy for new development

5.1 Design of parking provision

The layout and design of parking spaces should follow the parking design guidance from the Building for Life Partnership, 2012 (Appendix 1) and principles contained in Manual for Streets¹ in order that good quality homes and neighbourhoods are created.

5.2 Level of parking provision

The following levels of parking (as a minimum) should be provided for residential development within the curtilage of the dwellings and / or within formal parking areas. Zones 1, 2 and 3 are detailed on the accompanying maps (Appendix 2) and Zone 4 covers all other parts of the District.

Bedrooms	Flats*			Houses			
	1	2	3+	1	2	3	4+
Zone 1	0.75	1	2	1	1	2	2
Zone 2	1	1.5	2	1	2	2	2
Zone 3	1	1.5	2	1	2	2	3
Zone 4	1	2	2	1	2	2	3

* In addition to the above spaces, a further visitor space will be required per 5 flats

There may be exceptional circumstances where there is a case for providing parking that does not accord with the above levels. These cases will be considered on an individual basis.

Garages will not be counted as a parking space for the purposes of meeting the required levels of parking set out in this policy. Well designed car ports will be accepted as a parking space.

Developments within residential parking zones

Residential development resulting in an intensification of dwellings within an existing Residential Parking Zone will need to accommodate its parking needs within its site. The residents of the new development will not be eligible for a residents' parking permit under the Residents' Parking Scheme²

Travel plans and parking management plans

The above levels of parking are required irrespective of whether a travel plan is submitted for a given development. A residential travel plan will normally be required where 80 or more dwellings³ are proposed. Residential developments of 10 or more dwellings will be expected to provide new residents with a travel information pack containing relevant information to inform residents of their travel choices and encourage sustainable travel.

¹ Manual for Streets (2007) and Manual for Streets 2 (2010) available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets>

² Residents' Parking Scheme – Policy and Guidance'. This forms part of a suite of the Council's Operational Traffic Management Policies.

³ Based on DfT Guidance on Transport Assessment (2007) available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-transport-assessment>

Electric charging points

Electric charging points should be installed for new residential developments. These charging points may vary from communal points, more suited to flats or where there are shared parking areas, to individual points incorporated into houses.

Cycle and motorcycle parking

Cycle and motorcycle parking shall be provided in accordance with the Council's 'Cycling and Motorcycling Advice and Standards for New Development'. This sets out design standards and expected levels of provision for residential developments.

5.3 Explanation of the policy

Levels of parking provision and the way in which they are designed are important factors in creating good quality environments where people want to live. The residential parking policy seeks to ensure the delivery of good quality neighbourhoods for West Berkshire.

To reflect the different levels of accessibility across the District, the policy refers to four parking zones. A broad description of these zones is included in the table below and they are shown on the maps included in Appendices 2a – 2e.

Zone	Description	Area
Zone 1	Newbury Town Centre	
Zone 2	15 min walk to services and amenities or Urban Area	Central Newbury Central Thatcham Eastern Urban Area (Calcot, Tilehurst and Purley-on-Thames)
Zone 3	30 min walk to services and amenities or Urban Area or Rural Services Centre	Outer Newbury Outer Thatcham Theale Pangbourne Hungerford Lambourn Burghfield Common Mortimer
Zone 4	Service Village / Other	All areas not mentioned above

5.4 Delivery and Monitoring

This policy will be implemented through the determining of planning applications for residential developments.

6 Sandleford Park

This policy is an updated version of adopted policy CS3 from the West Berkshire Core Strategy. It has been updated to reflect new evidence on highways and education and to emphasise the need for the site to be masterplanned holistically. The changes are shown as follows: updated text is shown as underlined and deleted text is shown as ~~strikethrough~~.

6.1 Sandleford Strategic Site Allocation

Within the area identified at Sandleford Park, a sustainable and high quality mixed use development will be delivered 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. At least half the housing is 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 registered historic landscape and setting of the former Sandleford Priory;
- 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;
- Generation of on-site renewable energy;
- Two all vehicle ~~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; also~~
- A further all vehicle access link will be provided either through Warren Road or onto the A339 close to the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC).

If the further all vehicle access link option provided is the one to the A339, a sustainable transport link for pedestrians, cyclists and buses to and from the site, via Warren Road, to and from Andover Road shall also be provided.

Four, all vehicle accesses to the site is the favoured option and therefore the potential for the provision of all four of those accesses mentioned above, to an all vehicle standard, shall be examined by the developer/applicant and details of that examination and conclusions drawn from it shall be reported as part of any planning application.

- Further infrastructure improvements will be delivered in accordance with the most up to date Infrastructure Delivery Plan at the time of a planning application. Any infrastructure needs which are critical to the delivery of the site are set out in ~~Appendix D~~; within the IDP
- ~~Provision of a new primary school on site and the extension of Park House School.~~
- Provision of two 2 form entry primary schools (each with a nursery class), enlargement of Park House school, a stand alone pre-school and a satellite Children's Centre.

- 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, 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.
- Prior to the submission of a planning application for any part of the site, masterplans for the whole site (including a masterplan for the infrastructure delivery) will be prepared by the developer(s) and agreed with the Council in accordance with the requirements of Policy CS3 and the Sandleford Park Supplementary Planning Document unless otherwise agreed with the Council. Once agreed by the Council they will be an important material consideration in the determination of subsequent planning applications.

6.2 Explanation of the Policy

The Sandleford Park site to the south of Newbury comprises approximately 134 hectares of land. It is bordered to the north by existing development along Monks Lane and could 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 is set out at ~~(set out at Appendix C of the Core Strategy) has been produced~~ which shows how the development of the site could be delivered, taking into account the opportunities and constraints of the site. Only 39% of the site is proposed for development in this concept plan with the rest taken up by open space and woodland. The concept plan is indicative only and a ~~masterplan or SPD will be prepared to set out the more~~ detailed guidelines for the distribution of uses and design of the site are set out within the Sandleford Park SPD.

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, 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 CS17. It is also close to the Greenham and Crookham Common 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 the registered historic landscape and setting of the former Sandleford Priory, a Grade I listed building. 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. Two 2-form entry A new primary schools each with a nursery class, (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 a stand alone pre-school. n increase in early years provision. Alterations to Park House School are required to accommodate the secondary age pupils from the Sandleford site. A satellite children's centre is also required along with , and increased primary health care provision. Green Infrastructure, including open space and sports facilities, will need to be incorporated into the masterplanning of the site.

Consultation during the Core Strategy warranted consideration of additional all vehicle accesses onto the Sandleford site, including onto the A343 Andover Road via Warren Road and onto the A339 Newtown Road to the north of the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC).

Further technical work on traffic distribution was therefore carried out, and this work has shown that the provision of the additional accesses does make a considerable difference to how traffic is distributed to and from the site.

Based on the outcomes of this work, the Highways Authority consider that it is essential that at least three accesses serving the site be provided. The Highways Authority would prefer all four accesses to be provided.

Further details about any non-critical infrastructure which has site specific implications ~~will be set out~~ are set out within ~~an the Sandleford Park SPD or other supporting document to masterplan the site,~~ as will are detailed planning requirements and parameters for the development of the site. The total number of dwellings to be developed will depend on adequately accommodating the other requirements of the policy and the required mitigation.

6.3 Delivery and Monitoring

It is envisaged that the implementation of the Sandleford Site would commence in the latter half of the plan period, with 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.

A SPD has been ~~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 are set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Appendix 1 – Parking Design Guidance from Building for Life Partnership (2012)⁴

Recommended Approach to parking

Anticipating car parking demand should taking into account the location, availability and frequency of public transport together with local car ownership trends. The provision of spaces for visitors is also an important consideration.

Designing streets to accommodate on street parking but allowing for plenty of trees and planting to balance the visual impact of parked cars and reinforce the spatial enclosure of the street. On street parking has the potential to be both space efficient and can also help to create a vibrant street, where neighbours have more opportunity to see and meet other people.

Designing out opportunities for anti-social parking. Very regular and formal parking treatments have the potential to reduce anti-social parking. People are less prone to parking in places where they should not park and where street design clearly defines other uses, such as pavements or landscape features.

Making sure people can see their car from their home or can park somewhere they know it will be safe. Where possible rear parking courts should be avoided, where they are used they should be kept small, so that residents know who else should be using it. At least one property should be located at the entrance and within the parking courtyard to provide a sense of ownership and security. Multiple access points should be avoided. Boundary walls, surface treatments, soft landscaping and lighting are important ways to avoid creating an air of neglect and isolation, budget should be set aside for this. Proposals should be discussed with the local Police Architectural Liaison Officer to determine whether local crime trends justify securing the courtyard with electric gates.

A range of parking solutions appropriate to the context and the types of housing proposed should be used. Where parking is positioned to the front of the property, ensure that at least an equal amount of the frontage is allocated to an enclosed, landscaped front garden as it is for parking to reduce vehicle domination. Where rows of narrow terraces are proposed, consider positioning parking within the street scene, for example a central reservation of herringbone parking. For higher density schemes, underground parking with a landscaped deck above can work well.

To avoid a car dominated environment, parking should be broken up with trees or other landscaping every four bays or so but ensure that the landscaping still allows space for people to get into and out of their cars, without having to step onto landscaped areas.

Parking designs to be avoided

⁴ BfL 12 found at: http://www.hbf.co.uk/fileadmin/documents/briefings/BfL_A4_booklet_singlepages_.pdf

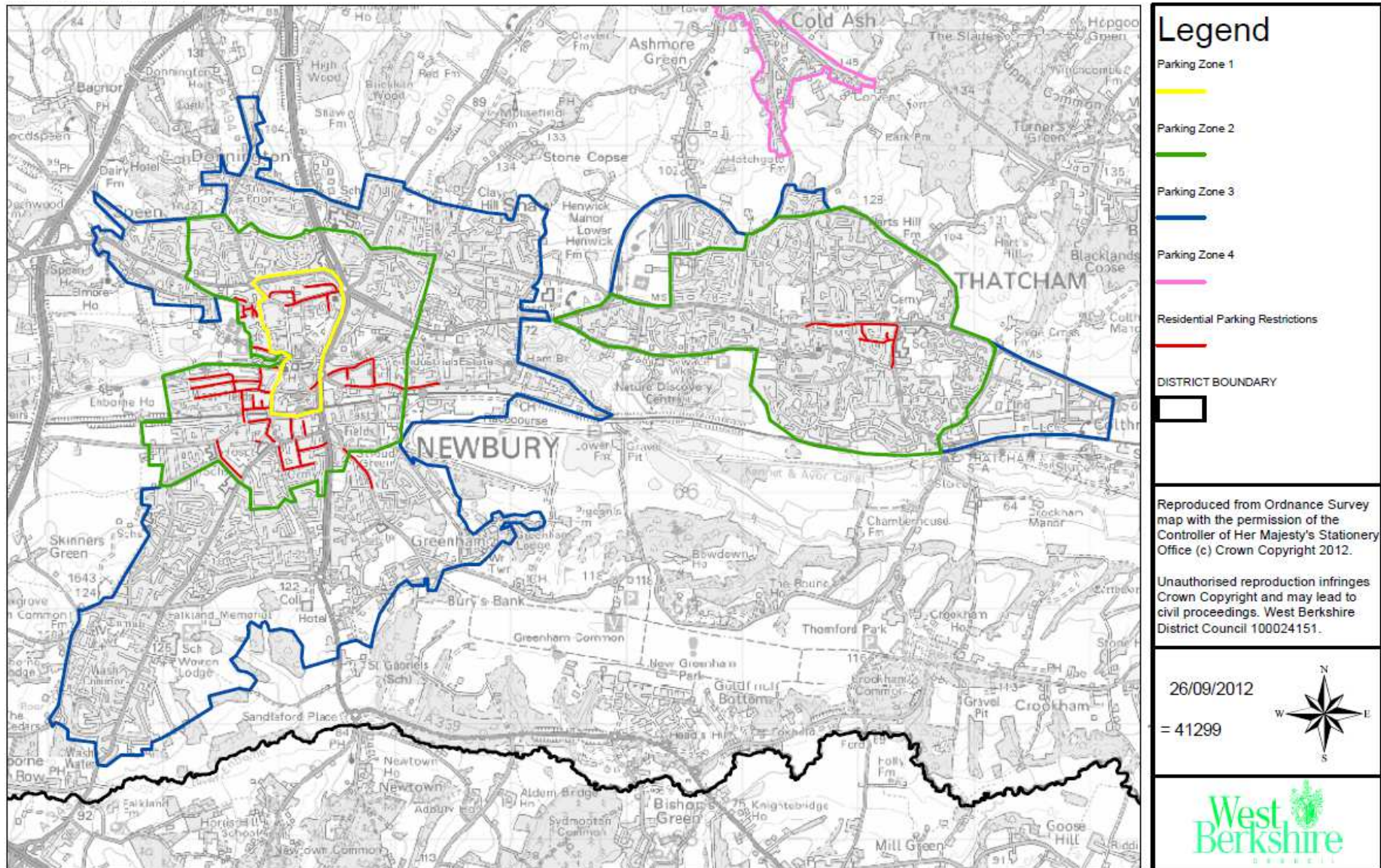
A single parking treatment should not be used. A combination of car parking treatments nearly always creates more capacity, visual interest and a more successful place.

Large rear parking courts should be avoided as they provide opportunities for thieves, vandals and those who should not be parking there.

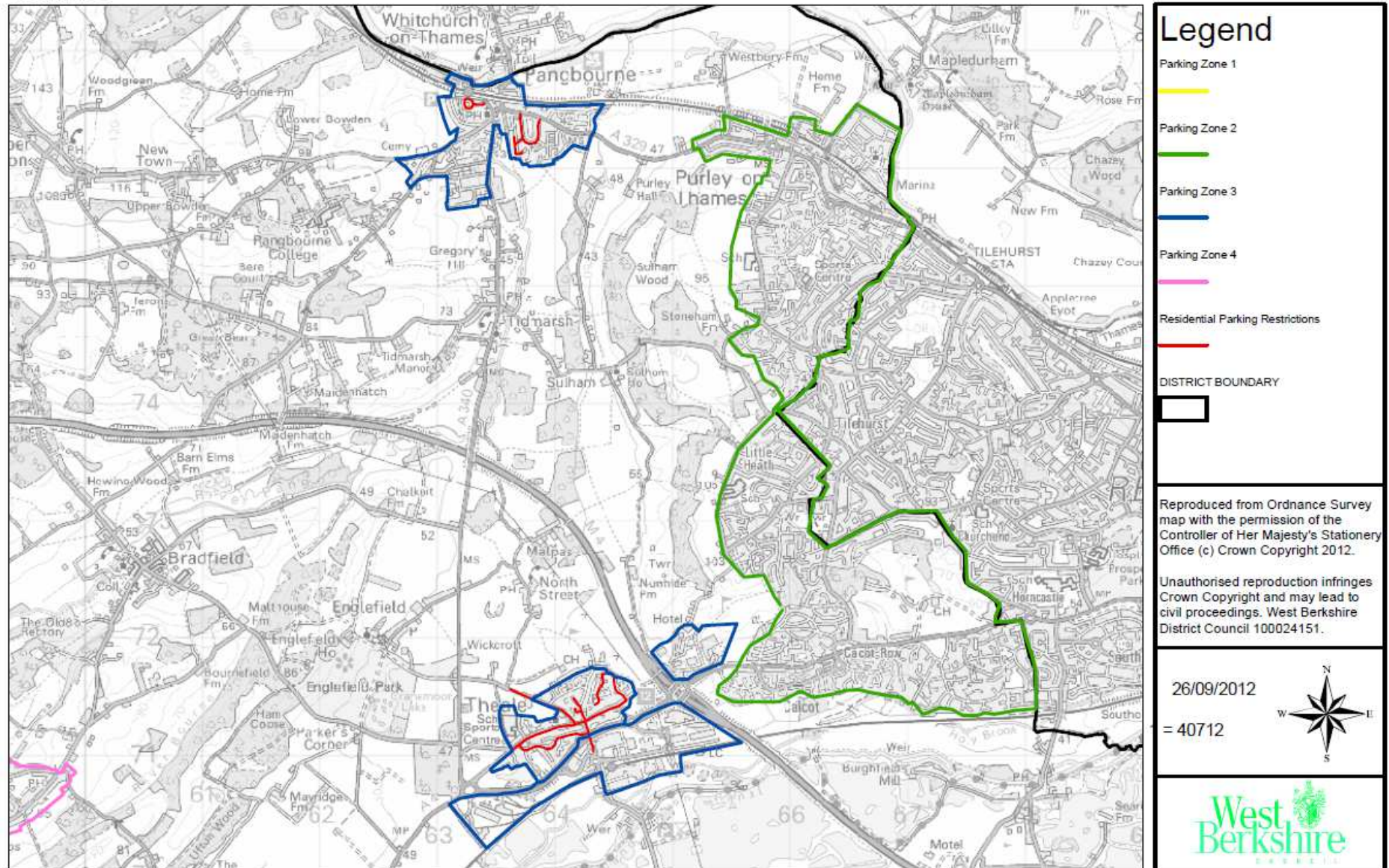
Parking that is not over looked should also be avoided.

Appendix 2 - Residential Parking Policy Zones

Residential Parking Policy Zones – Newbury and Thatcham

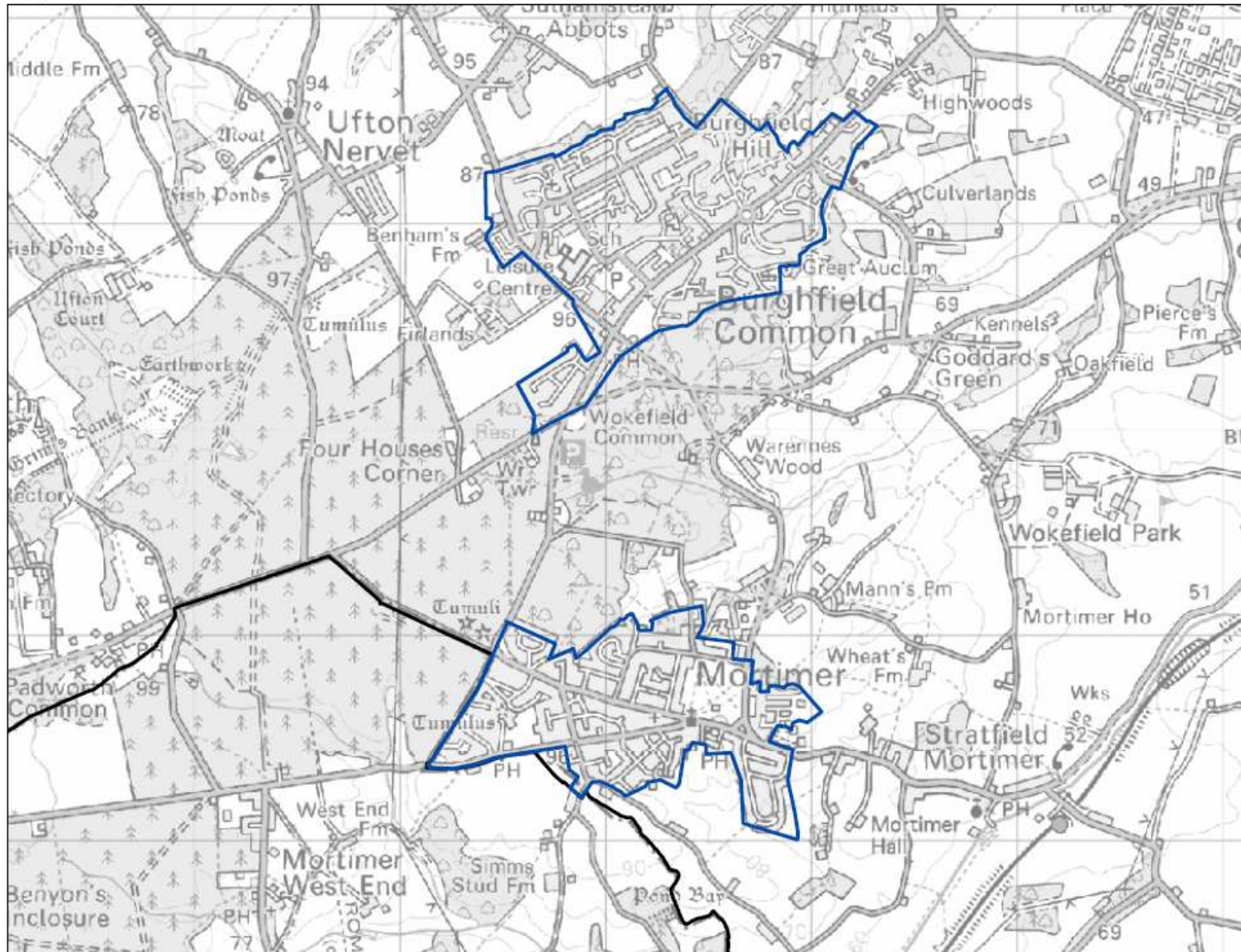


Residential Parking Policy Zones – Eastern Urban Area, Theale and Pangbourne



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office (c) Crown Copyright 2012. West Berkshire District Council 100024151.

Residential Parking Policy Zones – Burghfield Common and Mortimer




Legend


- Parking Zone 1 —
- Parking Zone 2 —
- Parking Zone 3 —
- Parking Zone 4 —
- Residential Parking Restrictions —
- DISTRICT BOUNDARY

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (c) Crown Copyright 2012.

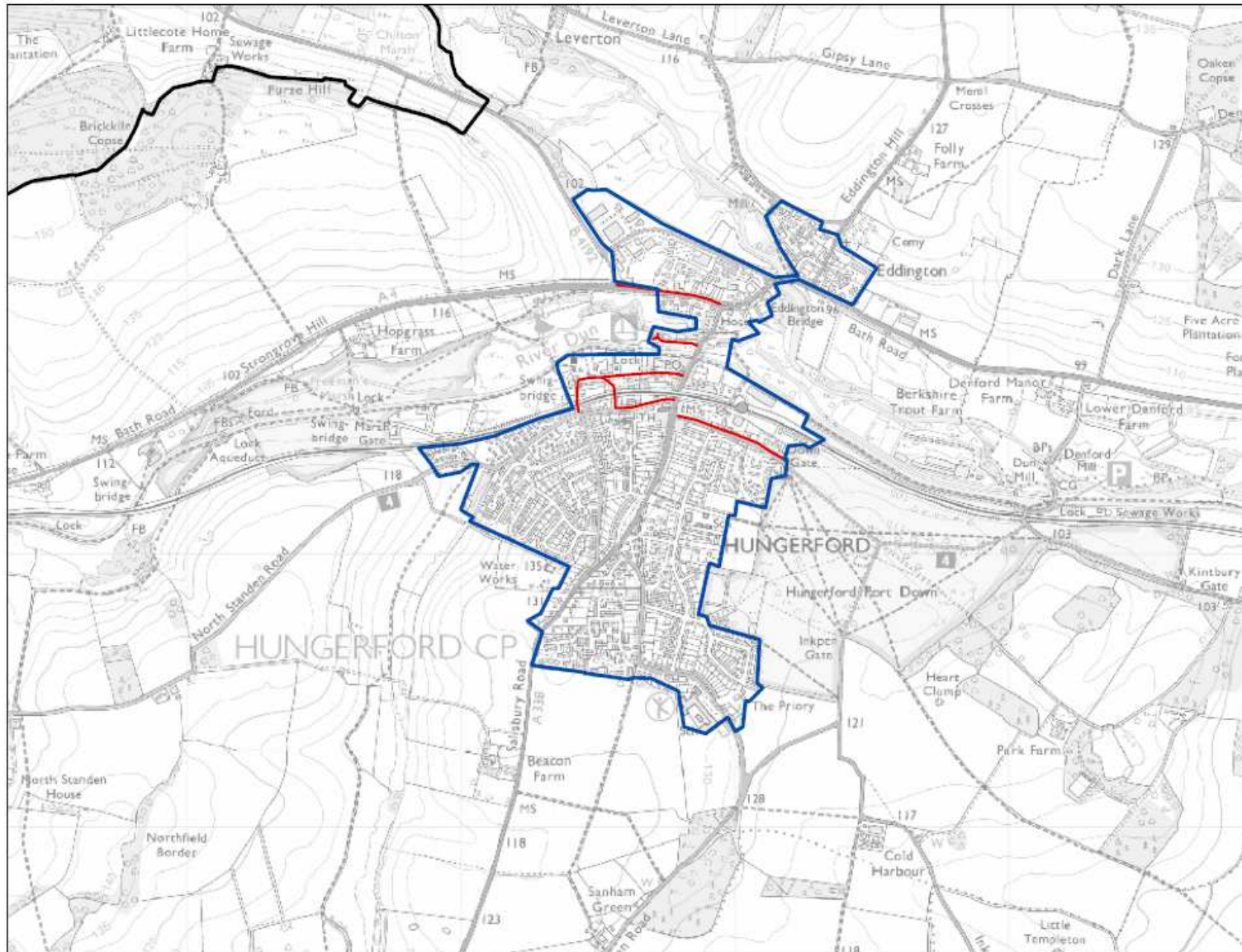
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to civil proceedings. West Berkshire District Council 100024151.

26/09/2012 

= 25534



Residential Parking Policy Zones – Hungerford



Legend

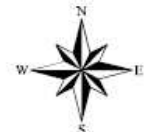
- Parking Zone 1
- Parking Zone 2
- Parking Zone 3
- Parking Zone 4
- Residential Parking Restrictions
- DISTRICT BOUNDARY

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (c) Crown Copyright 2012.

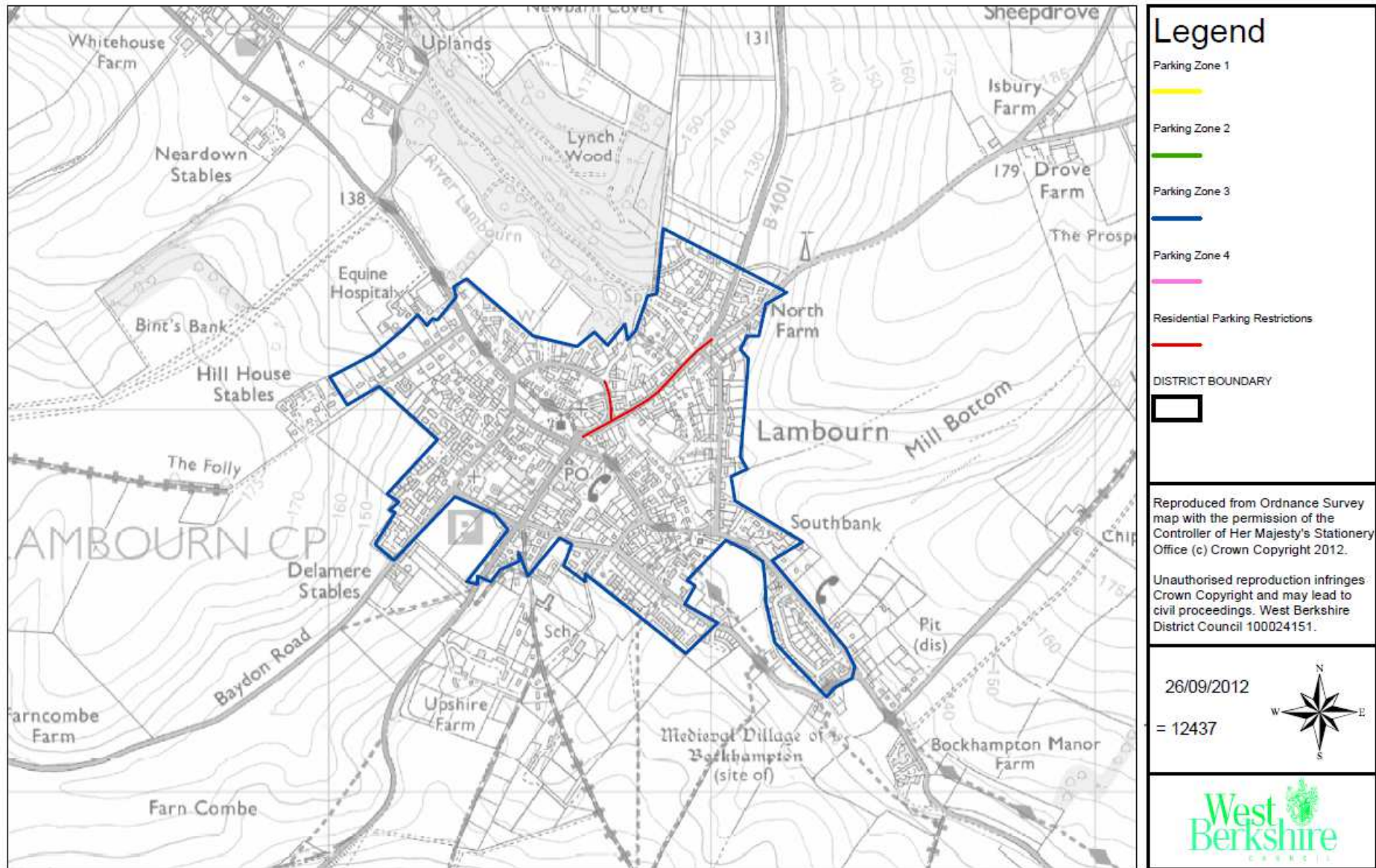
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to civil proceedings. West Berkshire District Council 100024151.

26/09/2012

= 19217



Residential Parking Policy Zones - Lambourn



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (c) Crown Copyright 2012. West Berkshire District Council 100024151.

Appendix 3 - Settlement Boundary Review Criteria

Settlement boundaries of those settlements within the defined settlement hierarchy will be re-drawn around the developable areas of the housing allocations, plus around those sites which have been identified as suitable to include within a revised settlement boundary (generally sites suitable for development which are below the usual threshold for allocation).

The proposed criteria are set out below:

- Settlements within the Settlement Hierarchy
- Long established close knit development (forming the main settlement)
- Follow clearly defined features
- The curtilage of dwellings are included (unless functionally separate)
- The developable areas of allocated housing sites are included (strategic sites and sites allocated through the DPD)
- Small sites submitted through the SHLAA considered suitable for development, but below the usual threshold for allocation
- Areas with planning permission adjacent to settlement
- Agricultural buildings are excluded

These criteria for more detailed settlement boundary reviews are being consulted upon as part of the Preferred Options consultation on the Housing Site Allocations DPD which runs from 25 July to 12 September 2014. This would enable further work to be done on revising the settlement boundaries before the DPD is submitted to the Secretary of State.

Following the preferred options consultation on the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document, the settlement boundaries will be reviewed for those settlements within the settlement hierarchy, taking into account the developable areas of the sites allocated for development and small sites considered suitable for development, but too small to be allocated through the DPD. Following the consultation, the settlement boundary criteria will be confirmed and the boundaries reviewed accordingly. The new boundaries will then be included in the publication version of the DPD, for further consultation at the end of 2014.

This page is intentionally left blank

BACKGROUND PAPER

APPROACH TO THE HOUSING SITE ALLOCATIONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

Background Topic Paper

Background

The Council adopted its Core Strategy in July 2012. This sets out a housing requirement for the District of 'at least' 10,500 dwellings from 2006-2026. The number was allocated via the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East (the South East Plan). The regional tier of Government has since been abolished.

The Core Strategy sets out an overall spatial strategy to accommodate this level of housing across the District and in addition it allocates two large strategic sites in Newbury (Newbury Racecourse and Sandford Park).

Whilst the Core Strategy allocates strategic development and sets out strategic policies, it only forms one part of the Local Plan. The Core Strategy does not contain the detail that is needed to complete the planning framework for the District. There is therefore a requirement to prepare additional document/s to allocate non-strategic housing sites across the District and to allocate sites for Gypsies and Travellers.

Non-strategic housing allocations for Newbury and the rest of the District are now being allocated through a Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (HSA DPD) in accordance with the spatial strategy of the Core Strategy. This is a more housing focused document than the previously proposed Site Allocations and Delivery DPD which is referred to in the Core Strategy. This background paper explains why this approach is being taken.

The Core Strategy was examined at a time of transition in the planning system. This led to the Inspector examining the Core Strategy committing the Council to a review of needs and demands for housing through a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Council was committed to this review by the Inspector for several reasons:

- The anticipated revocation of the Regional Strategy, which allocated the housing number for the District, and the timing of this.
- The emergence of the NPPF (March 2012) as the sole higher tier guidance for the preparation of Local Plans, and the key principle within this document to "boost significantly the supply of housing". The NPPF commits the local planning authority to "use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area..." (para 47) unless "...any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits..." (para 14).
- The Inspector's conclusion that the Core Strategy did not fulfil the NPPF requirement of meeting objectively assessed needs in full.
- Other evidence sources presented at the Core Strategy Examination that indicate that the level of housing need and demand may be higher than the South East Plan figure of 10,500 net additional dwellings.

Work on the SHMA has begun in conjunction with other Berkshire Authorities. The Council has a statutory duty to cooperate with its neighbouring authorities and it is therefore essential that the review of the SHMA is undertaken in conjunction with them. The output will quantify future housing need and demand for each of the local

authority areas. Neighbouring authorities in Hampshire, Wiltshire and Oxfordshire will also be involved in accordance with the duty to cooperate. The SHMA has to be completed within 3 years of the adoption of the Core Strategy (July 2012) and work is scheduled to conclude towards the end of the year (2014).

This will establish the objectively assessed need for the District, which will inform the longer term housing requirement.

Approach to the preparation of the Housing Site Allocations DPD

West Berkshire Council was originally proposing to progress a Site Allocations and Delivery DPD as set out in the adopted Core Strategy. This was intended to be a more comprehensive document, to sit beneath the Core Strategy and to include details of any additional housing and employment allocations, reviews of settlement and town centre boundaries plus policies for development management.

However, the approach has been altered following discussions about the most effective way to progress non-strategic housing allocations in a plan-led manner whilst undertaking a SHMA to assess the objectively assessed needs of the District and look to the longer term.

Waiting for the outcomes of the SHMA had the potential to delay the housing allocations process for the following reasons:

- The SHMA is being carried out in partnership with other authorities within the Housing Market Area. Following the assessment of the objectively assessed needs, there will be a necessity to discuss and agree the housing distribution across the Housing Market Area before beginning the process of allocating sites.
- A new housing requirement may result in the need to revise the spatial strategy which guides housing distribution in the District. The spatial strategy was based upon the 10,500 housing number as set out in the South East Plan and this will need to be reviewed. Any higher housing number will have implications in terms of how this increased level of housing is distributed across the District, and how this is taken forward through policy documents. Due to the characteristics of West Berkshire, it will not be possible just to pro-rata any additional housing across the District. A higher number will necessitate reassessing the housing distribution and potentially reconsidering the need for additional strategic level development. This would delay the allocations process and affect the Council's ability to maintain a healthy 5 year supply of housing land.
- A new housing number which looks longer term will necessitate a review of the evidence base upon which the Core Strategy is based.

Discussions were initially held with the Planning Inspectorate about how to address these issues in a constructive and timely way through the plan-led system. The Inspectorate suggested that there was a case for some pragmatism in terms of fast tracking the allocation of housing sites through the production of a specific Housing Site Allocations DPD.

This was then followed by discussions held with the Council's Planning Policy Task Group (a Member and officer working group) as to the best way to progress an allocations document. The following options were discussed as potential ways forward, with advantages, disadvantages and risks plus the timescales for the preparation of each explained to Members.

- (1) Option 1: Housing Site Allocations, SHMA, followed by new Local Plan.
- (2) Option 2: Housing Site Allocations, plus selected housing policies, SHMA, followed by new Local Plan.
- (3) Option 3: All Site Allocations plus all Development Management Policies, SHMA, followed by new Local Plan.
- (4) Option 4: New Local Plan based on new Housing Number

Each of the options had, as a key principle, the requirement to complete the SHMA, in partnership, at the earliest opportunity, to help to establish a revised housing requirement for the District, based upon the objectively assessed need figure established by the SHMA. The allocation of gypsy and traveller sites also needed to be taken forward regardless of which option was chosen. This is due to the necessity to put in place at the earliest opportunity a 5 year supply of sites to meet the identified need for gypsies and travellers.

The outcome of these discussions was an agreement to produce a focussed Housing Site Allocations DPD to fast track the allocation of housing sites, provide pitches for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople plus review selected housing policies (Option 2). This would allocate the remainder of the 'at least' 10,500 figure in accordance with the spatial strategy of the Core Strategy, with some additional flexibility included within the numbers. This option would enable the Council to boost the supply of housing land at the earliest opportunity in a genuinely plan-led manner, in accordance with the core planning principles in the NPPF (para 17), while taking the opportunity to update selected housing policies.

Regulation 18 consultation

Following the decision on the intended approach, the Council invited comments on the proposed scope and content of the Housing Site Allocations DPD during a six week period between 30 April and 11 June 2014. The comments received have all been summarised and a Council response prepared. These are set out in a separate Consultation Statement.

A number of representations were made which raised concerns about the Council's proposed approach as set out in the Regulation 18 Statement. In summary, these cover the following issues:

- The Core Strategy figure of 10,500 is out of date. It does not reflect the District's objectively assessed need.
- The Council should delay the process and start a Local Plan following the outcomes of the SHMA.
- The figure should be considerably higher (various assessments given) and the DPD should seek to significantly boost the supply of housing in the District.
- The Duty to Cooperate has not been complied with.

There has been a careful consideration of all of the points raised during the confirmation of the Council's approach to the DPD. The information below confirms how the issues raised have been taken into account.

Justification for the Council's Approach

One approach open to the Council was to wait for the completion of the SHMA and then to commence a new Local Plan with a revised housing number, as suggested by a number of planning agents (Option 4 above). However, the Council did not want to delay the preparation of an allocations plan. Delaying would undoubtedly threaten the level of housebuilding in the District and have implications for meeting housing need and for the Council's 5 year housing land supply. It would be likely to lead to speculative planning applications and appeals.

Instead, the Council's approach aims to actively encourage housing delivery by allocating sites through the plan-led system at the earliest opportunity. Preparing a Housing Site Allocations DPD within the framework of the adopted Core Strategy has the benefit of implementing an already adopted framework for this level of development. The approach aids certainty for the community and developers about both the location and quantum of future development in the short to medium term and allows infrastructure requirements to be considered holistically, through partnership working with providers.

A sound figure for the District's full objectively assessed need will be available before the Plan is examined which will in turn lead to a revised and longer term housing requirement for the District following effective cooperation on the spatial distribution with other local planning authorities.

The Council is planning to meet any revised housing requirement in a 2-phased approach.

Phase 1: The Housing Site Allocations DPD will allocate the first proportion of the housing requirement that results from assessing the objectively assessed needs of the District in the short to medium term. The sites will be allocated on the basis of the residual of the Core Strategy's 'at least' 10,500 housing figure (with additional flexibility) in accordance with the spatial strategy of the adopted Core Strategy. Pitch provision will also be made to meet the needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople. The DPD will also include selected housing policies including those to guide development in the countryside and other selected policies. This DPD will be followed by:

Phase 2: A new Local Plan for the District. This will allocate sites to fulfil the rest of the housing requirement that follows on from assessing the objectively assessed needs of the District and look to the medium and longer term. 1000 units at Sandford Park will contribute towards the longer term requirement. The Local Plan will also review the spatial strategy and include a full policy review.

Paragraph 10 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes it clear that plans and decisions need to take local circumstances into account. The Council considers that the 2-phased approach to addressing the housing requirement of the District is the most pragmatic, reasonable and justified approach to getting an up to date plan in place to allocate housing development. This requirement is emphasised by paragraph 12 of the NPPF.

Additionally, the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) issued by the Government on 6 March 2014 made it clear that local plans may be found sound conditional upon a review in whole or in part within 5 years of the date of adoption. The Council is able to clarify that any additional requirement for allocation of land for residential development to meet a revised housing requirement will not be an issue until later in the plan period and will have been addressed well within that timescale by progressing the Local Plan as timetabled.

The Council has set out timetables for both of these plans within an adopted Local Development Scheme which is publicly available on the Council's website at www.westberks.gov.uk/lds

This shows that the key milestones for their preparation are as follows:

	Consulting on scope of Sustainability Appraisal	Public Participation in the preparation of the DPD	Publication of Proposed Submission Documents	Submission to Secretary of State	Start of Independent Examination	Adoption
Housing Sites DPD plus selected housing policies	September 2013 to October 2013	September 2013 to December 2014	December 2014	April 2015	June 2015	December 2015
West Berkshire Local Plan	April 2015 to May 2015	December 2013 to July 2017	July 2017	February 2018	April 2018	December 2018

Duty to Cooperate

Section 110 of the Localism Act places a legal duty on local planning authorities and other prescribed bodies to cooperate with each other when preparing DPDs in order to address strategic planning issues relevant to their areas.

In May 2014 the Council produced a paper which set out how strategic planning issues would be dealt with as part of the preparation of the Local Plan. In order to take forward the Duty to Cooperate in a holistic way, the draft key strategic issues for West Berkshire both for the Local Plan as a whole and more specifically, the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (HSA DPD) were identified. Agreement was then sought on a finalised list of strategic issues for the HSA DPD and bodies were asked how they would prefer to be involved in dealing with them so that appropriate governance and support arrangements for taking them forward could be established. Details of which bodies were consulted, a summary of the representations received, the Council's response and subsequent outcomes, are outlined in a separate Consultation Statement.

Preparation of the DPD so far

Housing Distribution

The approach to the allocation of housing sites has been to use the spatial strategy of the Core Strategy as a starting point. This distribution has been tested and found sound at the Core Strategy Examination. This sets out an approximate requirement for the four spatial areas of the District – Newbury/Thatcham (including Cold Ash), the East Kennet Valley, the Eastern Area and the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NWD AONB). Within the four spatial areas is a settlement hierarchy of urban areas, rural service centres and service villages which have been defined based on the range of facilities and services that they contain plus the role that they play within the spatial area.

Monitoring work from March 2013 (the latest published data) shows the following requirement.

Spatial Areas	Requirement	Completions	Commitments and Sandlesford Park	Remaining
Newbury/Thatcham	6,300	1,932	3,262	1,106
Eastern Area	1,400	283	427	690
AONB	2,000	855	493	652
East Kennet Valley	800	364	166	270
TOTAL	10,500	3,434	4,348	2,718

The requirement is for at least 10,500 additional dwellings in the District. The figures for the spatial areas, apart from in the NWD AONB, are an approximate requirement and there is a need to add in additional flexibility and not see them as precise figures.

It is not necessary to allocate land for the entire remaining requirement shown in the table above. The figure is reduced by including in the supply more recent permissions on medium/large sites, identified sites within settlement boundaries that have been assessed as deliverable or developable and by the inclusion of a cautious windfall allowance. This is set out for the individual spatial areas in Appendix A.

Housing Sites Selection Process

Information on the site selection process for potential housing sites is set out in Appendix B and in the SA/SEA Environmental Report. The site assessment process focussed on those sites assessed as potentially developable in the SHLAA. Criteria were developed to further filter out sites that were not suitable for allocation. A SA/SEA was then carried out on each remaining site, as these were considered to be reasonable alternatives. Further technical information and comments from the parish

and town councils were taken into consideration before officer recommendations for potential allocations were made to the Planning Policy Task Group.

Approach to meeting the requirement for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

There is a requirement for West Berkshire Council, as the Local Planning Authority, to identify sites to meet the needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople. The Council is required by national policy to set pitch and plot targets which address the likely permanent and transit accommodation needs in the area, working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities.

To provide the evidence to inform pitch provision, a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) has been undertaken. This has been carried out by an independent consultant, using a shared methodology with other Berkshire authorities. The GTAA has assessed the requirement as 14 permanent pitches for gypsies and travellers and 24 for travelling showpeople.

A 'call for sites' for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople was carried out between 28 April and 27 May 2014. The Council invited landowners and developers to submit sites they felt were suitable and available for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. These sites have been assessed in terms of their suitability and the preferred sites are included within the DPD Preferred Options. Details of the approach to site assessments are set out in Appendix C.

Policy Reviews

The need to review policies to guide development in the countryside

The Core Strategy is a strategic document that provides an overall framework for the more detailed policy and site specific proposals to be contained in other parts of the Local Plan. Some of the policies in the previous Local Plan (West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006) have been saved and remain in force as part of the development plan.

Inspectors are still treating the policies as having due weight and the NPPF is clear, at para 215, that 'due weight' should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the framework.

However, the opportunity is being taken to review the policies that guide development in the countryside through the Housing Site Allocations DPD to ensure that they are up to date and fit for purpose. These do not form part of the current Preferred Options consultation, but instead are due to be reported to full Council on 18 September, with a period of public consultation to follow.

Reviewing the policy on Sandleford Park

Since the adoption of the Core Strategy in July 2012, new evidence has become available on two specific elements of the Core Strategy policy on Sandleford Park (CS3). These relate to highways access (where evidence shows benefits to the highways network of additional all vehicle accesses onto Warren Road and to the

A339) and to education provision where updated child yield figures show an increased primary requirement to accommodate pupil numbers arising from the site.

The policy has therefore been updated to ensure that it reflects the most up to date evidence on highways and access. The policy has also been updated to include reference to the need for masterplans for the site to be prepared as part of any planning application to ensure that the site is delivered holistically.

All other aspects of the policy remain unchanged.

Reviewing the Residential Parking Standards

Levels of parking provision and the way in which they are designed are important factors in creating good quality environments where people want to live. The opportunity has been taken to update the parking standards to seek to ensure the delivery of good quality neighbourhoods for West Berkshire. They take into account the guidance set out in the NPPF and the deletion of PPG13, and take into account a range of other publications (including the National Planning Practice Guidance) which reflect best practice.

The standards take into account the following elements:

- Accessibility of the development including-
 - Location
 - Availability of, and opportunities for public transport
- The size, type, mix and use of the development
- Local car ownership levels
- Levels of parking provision at existing developments across West Berkshire
- The Overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles.

The revised residential parking standards are set out in the Preferred Options document.

Reviewing the Settlement Boundaries

Settlement boundaries identify the main built up area of a settlement within which development is likely to be considered acceptable in principle, subject to other policy considerations. While allowing for development, settlement boundaries protect the character of a settlement and prevent unrestricted growth into the countryside. They create a level of certainty about whether or not the principle of development is likely to be acceptable which is helpful for Development Control officers, Council Members, applicants and members of the public.

It is proposed that the settlement boundaries around the settlements within the settlement hierarchy will be re-drawn to include the proposed site allocations. Additional sites which are too small to be housing allocations (typically those which are below 5 dwellings) may also be included within revised settlement boundaries.

Criteria for reviewing the settlement boundaries have been prepared and form part of the preferred options consultation.

The settlement boundaries themselves have not been re-drawn at this stage but will form part of the proposed submission documents, which will be subject to a further period of consultation before submission to the Secretary of State later this year.

Appendix A

Meeting the Housing Requirement

The tables below set out the housing requirement for each spatial area and how this can be met. The requirement for each spatial area other than for the AONB is an approximate requirement; for the AONB it is a maximum requirement, as set out in the Core Strategy.

The latest monitoring data is for March 2013. The information on permissions has been updated only by including sites of 10 or more units and prior approvals (for change of use through permitted development) that have been approved since March 2013. The figures will be updated to reflect the position at March 2014 before the proposed submission document is published.

A windfall allowance has been applied in all spatial areas, based on past trends. In the AONB a windfall allowance has been included up to 2026 because of the housing requirement of “up to 2,000”. In other spatial areas the windfall allowance is that included in the five year housing land supply.

In some areas the preferred options potential allocations are seen as alternative options – there will be further final choices to be made as a result of the current consultation. The figures for potential allocations are therefore approximate at this stage, they will be further refined following the analysis of consultation responses, work on design and capacity of individual sites and decisions on which sites to take forward into the submission version of the DPD. The tables below show potential allocations of sites for up to 2,000 dwellings.

There is flexibility in the housing numbers. The housing requirement for the spatial areas is an approximate one. There is potential to make slight amendments to this distribution to ensure that the overall housing requirement for the District is met in the most sustainable way.

There is also considerable flexibility in the housing supply figures. This includes:-

- Windfall - Other than for the AONB, there is no windfall allowance included beyond the first five years. Windfalls will inevitably continue to add to the supply.
- Residential institutions -The figures have not included any allowance for residential institutions that have been permitted. The national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that local planning authorities should count housing in residential institutions against their housing requirement (ID 3-038-20140306).
- Identified sites, some with planning applications pending determination – Unless these sites have been identified as deliverable or developable in the SHLAA they have not been included in the figures.
- Settlement boundaries - Changes to the settlement boundaries of the settlements in the settlement hierarchy will provide additional opportunities for small scale development.
- Potential flexibility of delivery at Sandlesford Park.

Newbury/Thatcham

Housing Requirement	6,300 approx.
Housing Supply at June 2014	
Dwellings completed at March 2013	1,932
Dwellings with permission at March 2013	2,262
Sandleford Park – allocated strategic site	1,000
Permissions on sites of 10 or more units and prior approvals granted since March 2013	153
Identified sites within settlement boundaries	approx 385
Windfall allowance in 5 year supply	160
Proposed Allocations	
HSA DPD Preferred Options potential allocations	485

Eastern Area

Housing Requirement	1,400 approx.
Housing Supply at June 2014	
Dwellings completed at March 2013	283
Dwellings with permission at March 2013	427
Permissions on sites of 10 or more units and prior approvals granted since March 2013	31
Identified sites within settlement boundaries	110
Windfall allowance in 5 year supply	14
Proposed Allocations	
HSA DPD Preferred Options potential allocations – choices to be made following consultation	Up to 815

AONB

Housing Requirement	2,000 max
Housing Supply at June 2014	
Dwellings completed at March 2013	855
Dwellings with permission at March 2013	493
Permissions on sites of 10 or more units and prior approvals granted since March 2013	7
Identified sites within settlement boundaries	16
Windfall allowance in 5 year supply	129
Windfall allowance 2019 - 2026	240
Proposed Allocations	
HSA DPD Preferred Options potential allocations – choices to be made following consultation	Up to 468

East Kennet Valley

Housing Requirement	800 approx.
Housing Supply at June 2014	
Dwellings completed at March 2013	364
Dwellings with permission at March 2013	166
Permissions on sites of 10 or more units and prior approvals granted since March 2013	0
Identified sites within settlement boundaries	0
Windfall allowance in 5 year supply	54
Proposed Allocations	
HSA DPD Preferred Options potential allocations – choices to be made following consultation	Up to 320

Appendix B: Site Selection Process

As part of the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) the council needs to allocate sites for housing in conformity with the Core Strategy.

The spatial strategy of the adopted Core Strategy divides the district into four spatial areas, each with an approximate housing requirement. Allocations to each spatial area have to be made in accordance with the District's settlement hierarchy of urban areas, rural service centres and service villages.

A "Call for Sites" was carried out in spring 2013 with the submitted sites being included in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) which was published later in 2013. The SHLAA is a technical background document; it does not make recommendations about which sites should be allocated. This is the role of the plan-making process, through the DPD.

The role of the SHLAA is to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified housing need over the plan period. The aim is to identify potential sites to choose from.

Sites in the SHLAA were assessed as:

- Deliverable – sites available now, with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within the next five years. Sites with Planning permission are considered deliverable.
- Developable – site in a suitable location for housing with reasonable prospect that the site is available and could be viably developed in the future
- Potentially Developable – these sites form the basket of sites' from which the most suitable will be allocated through the DPD. The suitability of the sites needs to be further assessed.
- Not Currently Developable – these sites are considered to have significant constraints that mean the site is unlikely to come forward in the plan period.

The Site Assessment process focuses on those sites which have been assessed as Potentially Developable in the SHLAA.

Site Assessment criteria were developed to assess the sites for their suitability for allocation in the DPD. The criteria have their basis in National (National Planning Policy Framework) and Local (the Core Strategy) policy, focusing on all aspects of sustainability (environmental, social and economic).

This assessment has two phases: Firstly all sites are assessed against 'automatic exclusion' factors. This determines which should progress further and which should be ruled out. These criteria cover significant issues such as where a site is too small to be allocated, or where a site's size would be out of keeping with a settlement's size and function within the settlement Hierarchy. Also included are those sites within the settlement boundary, where there is a presumption in favour of development and therefore no requirement to allocate. Other criteria include factors that make a site unsuitable for development, such as significant flood risk (flood zone 3) or a national or international environmental or historical protection (including SSSIs, SACs, SPAs, Registered Battlefields or Historic Parks and Gardens). The impact on the AONB is also considered at this stage of site selection.

Landscape assessments have been carried out for all SHLAA sites in the North Wessex Downs AONB that have been initially assessed as potentially developable. Where development would fail to conserve or enhance the special qualities or natural beauty of the AONB a site will be ruled out at this stage. The Landscape Assessment is being published as part of the Preferred Options Consultation.

The sites which are not automatically ruled out are then considered against a range of further considerations, set out as detailed criteria.

The list of criteria is shown in appendix 1 with justification for inclusion.

Automatic Exclusion

The Automatic Exclusion ruled out 175 sites as being unsuitable for allocation. 77 of these were ruled out by the SHLAA, with 98 ruled out through the Site Assessment Criteria.

Considerations

All the remaining sites have been assessed against the detailed criteria set out in the 'considerations' part of the site assessment criteria. These look in more detail at the suitability of the site for development and include a wide range of factors from land use, to contamination, to accessibility and capacity (including scope to increase capacity) of local services and facilities. The relationship to the surrounding area and other potential neighbouring sites is also taken into consideration in this section of the assessment (i.e. cumulative impact).

Early consultations were held with a number of technical experts to inform the site selection process. These included Highways and Transport, Ecology, Environmental Health, Archaeology, Thames Water, Environment Agency and the Highways Agency). Their comments have been taken into account as part of the site selection process and in some cases their comments have shown that sites can not be delivered.

This section of the assessment highlights where there could be a significant issue with development of a site, such as access, air quality or noise pollution, archaeological interest, or an ecological designation (e.g. Local Wildlife Site).

All sites not automatically excluded have been subject to the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) process. Full details of the SA/SEA process are set out within the SA/SEA Report.

Parish and Town Council comments

Consultation with Parish and Town Councils on the SHLAA sites within their areas was held in January and February 2014. The comments made by the Parish and Town Councils are included within the Site Assessment, as these identify local factors relating to each site. The comments made are also set out in a separate Consultation Statement.

Appendix B1

A) Automatic Exclusions		
Exclusion Criteria	Details	Justification
Less than 5 dwellings		Site is too small to be allocated, the majority of these sites will be considered as part of the settlement boundary review.
Planning Permission		These sites do not need to be allocated as they already have planning permission
Within flood zone 3		The NPPF states that residential development is not compatible or suitable in Flood Zone 3. Only sites completely in FZ3 have been excluded at this stage. Further details of the flood risk are taken into consideration at the next stage of assessment.
Within significant national or international habitat/environmental/historical protection	SSSI, SAC, SPA, Registered Battlefield Grade 1 / II* Park and Gardens	NPPF states that SSSIs, SACs and SPAs should have the same level of protection as European Sites. Therefore sites within these areas have been excluded. The NPPF also states that great weight should be given to significant heritage assets and their settings, and substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance (e.g. battlefield and Grade I and II* registered parks and gardens) should be wholly exceptional, therefore sites which these designations have also been excluded. The Registered Battlefield and Sandford Priory historic park and gardens are included on the English Heritage 'At Risk' Register.
Landscape	Adverse impact on the character of the AONB (from LSA)	The NPPF states that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in the AONB. Landscape Assessments have been carried out on the sites in the AONB, and where this indicates development would cause harm to the AONB the sites have been excluded.
SHLAA Assessment	Not currently developable	Sites assessed in the SHLAA as not currently developable imply that there are issues with the site that could not easily be resolved within the plan period, or would impact significantly on the deliverability or availability of the site.
Land Use	Protected Employment Land	Areas within a Protected Employment Land designation are protected by policy and without a review of the employment policy it is not acceptable to release land for housing development.
AWE consultation zone	Inner	Government policy limits development within inner Land Use planning consultation zones. This is regulated by ONR. Development within the inner zone is unlikely to receive approval from ONR.
Relationship to the surrounding area	Relative scale in relation to existing settlement	The focus for development is in the Settlement Hierarchy. Within in this each settlement has a role and function. Where the size of a site would be out of keeping with this the site has been excluded.
Within settlement boundary		Sites within the settlement boundary do not need to be allocated as there is a presumption in favour of development.

B) Considerations					
Criteria	Details	Justification	Response		
Land Use	Previously developed land	Sites on Brownfield land are considered more favourably than Greenfield sites.	N Greenfield		Y Brownfield
	Racehorse Industry	Some sites are currently used in the horse racing industry. Core Strategy Policy CS12 Would need to be taken into account if considering allocating a site within the settlement boundary.	Y Site is currently used for Racehorse industry		N Site is not used for Racehorse industry
Flood Risk	Flood Zone 2	Residential development is allowed in FZ2 where there are no alternative suitable sites. Flood Risk assessments and mitigation would be required.	Y In FZ2	A Adjacent to FZ2	N In FZ1
	Groundwater flood risk	Sites within the groundwater emergence zone, or with a history of groundwater flooding are highlighted here	Y In GW emergence zone or history of GW flooding	A Adjacent to GW emergence zone or site with history of GW flooding	N No risk of groundwater flooding
	Surface water flood risk	Sites at risk from surface water flooding, or with a history of surface water flooding area highlighted here	Y In SW flood risk area or history of SW flooding	A Adjacent to SE flood risk area or site with history of SW flooding	N no risk of SW flooding
	Critical Drainage Area	Sites within a Critical drainage area are highlight here	Y In Critical Drainage Area	A Adjacent to Critical Drainage Area	N Outside Critical Drainage Area
Contamination / Pollution	Air Quality	Where sites could be at risk from poor air quality (e.g. site is adjacent to major road / railway line) this is highlighted	Y At risk from poor air quality	U Potential for poor air quality	N No air quality issues
	Contaminated Lane	Where sites have had a previous land use which could have resulted in contamination being present on the site this is highlighted here.	Y Contamination present on the site	U Potential for contamination on the site	N No contamination

	Other				
Highways / Transport	Access issues	Where there are actual or potential issues with access onto a site this is highlighted as this could affect deliverability.	Y Access to the site is an issue	U Potential access issue onto the site	N No access issues
	Highways network suitability	Comments from consultation with internal Highways consultees. Including details on traffic generation and the likely impact on the highway network	Y Significant impact on the highway network	U Unknown/uncertain impact on the highway network	N Limited or no impact on the highway network
	Public Transport Network	Details regarding the public transport opportunities at each site. This does not take into account potential improvements.	N No public transport options	U Limited / intermittent public transport options within a reasonable distance of the site	Y Good public transport options within a reasonable distance of the site.
	Footways / Pavements	Information about the footways / pavements around a site, as this could have an impact on the safety for walking to/from the site	N No pavements or footways near to the site	U Poor quality or intermittent footways / pavements near to the site	Y Pavements serve the site
Landscape	Located in AONB	Some sites within the AONB are suitable for some, sensitively designed, development.	Y Within the AONB	N Outside the AONB	
	Located within an area of High Landscape Sensitivity (from Core Strategy LSS)	Landscape sensitivity work was carried out for the Core Strategy. This section highlights areas where the landscape is highly sensitive.	Y In area of High, medium/high landscape sensitivity	N In area of Medium, Medium/low or low landscape sensitivity	
	Other				
Green Infrastructure	Open Space / Playing fields / Amenity Space nearby	Access to open space, playing fields or amenity space is important for maintaining active healthy lifestyles. Facilities could be provided alongside some sites.	N No facilities within a reasonable distance of the	U Facilities are just within a reasonable	Y Facilities are close to the site.

			site (800m). Or site would remove open space facilities	distance of the site (800m). Or site could impact on open space facilities	
	Rights of Way affected	Development could have a negative impact on the rights of way network. This highlights where care is required to ensure that this does not happen	Y Right of Way passes through the site	U Right of way passes along the site boundary	N No right of ways on or adjacent to the site.
	Play Areas nearby	Access to play areas / facilities for children is important for maintaining active healthy lifestyles. Facilities could be provided alongside some sites.	N No facilities within a reasonable distance of the site (800m).	U Facilities are just within a reasonable distance of the site (800m).	Y Facilities are close to the site.
Ecology / Environmental / Geological	Protected Species	Certain species are protected by national policy and required certain habitats / areas to be maintained.	Y Protected species on the site	U Potential for protected species on the site	N No protected species on the site
	Ancient Woodland		Y Within ancient woodland	U Adjacent to Ancient woodland	N Not near to ancient woodland
	Tree Preservation Orders		Y TPOs on the site	U TPOs adjacent to the site	N No TPOs
	Local Wildlife Site		Y LWS on the site	U LWS adjacent to the site	N No LWS
	Nature Reserve		Y Nature Reserve on the site	U Nature Reserve adjacent to the site	N No Nature reserve

	Other (e.g. BOA)				
Relationship to surrounding area	Relationship to settlement		N Poorly related to the settlement		Y Well related to the settlement
	Incompatible adjacent land uses	Any land use that may not be compatible with residential development adjacent to it (due to pollution, noise generation etc)	Y Incompatible adjacent land use	U Potentially incompatible land use	N Compatible adjacent land uses
Heritage Impact	Archaeology	Protection of heritage assets is a requirement of the NPPF.	Y Significant archaeological material on the site	U Archaeological material on the site, or unknown potential	N No archaeological potential
	Conservation Area		Y Within conservation area	A Adjacent to conservation area	N No conservation area
	Listed Buildings		Y Listed building on the site	A Adjacent to listed building	N No listed building
	Scheduled Monument		Y Scheduled monument on the site	A Adjacent to scheduled monument	N No scheduled monument
Utility Services	Presence of over head cables / underground pipes	Overhead cables or underground pipelines could limit the development potential on a site.	Y Overhead cables / underground pipes on the site	A Overhead cables / underground pipes adjacent to the site	N No overhead cables or underground pipes

	Water supply	Comments from Thames Water. Could impact on the viability of a site where significant improvements are required.	N Concern over water supply infrastructure	U Unknown as TW not consulted on the site	Y No concerns over water supply infrastructure
	Wastewater	Comments from Thames Water. Could impact on the viability of a site where significant improvements are required.	N Concern over wastewater infrastructure	U Unknown as TW not consulted on the site	Y No concerns over wastewater infrastructure
	Groundwater source protection zone (SPZ)	Comments from Environment Agency. SPZ are areas around water extraction boreholes and indicate the amount of time taken for groundwater to reach the extraction point (Zone 1 is closest to the borehole, 3 furthest way). The zones can highlight where there is potential for groundwater sources to become contaminated.	Y In SPZ (including which zone, 1, 2 or 3)	N Not in an SPZ	
AWE consultation zone	Middle	Development near to AWE is restricted in the interest of public safety. Development within the consultation zones needs to be consulted on with ONR in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS8.	Y Middle zone	N Not within zone	
	Outer		Y Outer zone	N Not within zone	
Proximity to railway line		Network Rail. Need to be consulted on sites adjacent to railway lines.	Y Adjacent to railway line	A Close to railway line	N No railway line
Minerals and Waste	Minerals preferred area		Y Within minerals preferred area	A Adjacent to minerals preferred area	N No minerals preferred area
	Mineral consultation area		Y Within mineral consultation area		N Outside mineral consultation area
	Minerals/Waste Site	Minerals and waste sites could be an incompatible adjacent land use. Some sites are underlain by mineral deposits which could have	Y Within minerals / waste site	A Close to minerals / waste site. Site	N No minerals / waste site

		potential for future extraction.		underlain by deposits with potential for future extraction.	
	Other				
Relationship to / in combination effect of other sites	List of neighbouring sites.	The impact of several sites together could be different to an individual site.			
Other (anything else to be considered)					

Appendix C: Approach to site assessments for Traveller sites

The potential suitability of each site submitted to the Council for consideration as a Gypsy and Traveller or Travelling Showpeople site was assessed to determine which, if any would be suitable to take forward as preferred sites. Existing sites without the benefit of planning permission were also assessed to determine their suitability.

National policy requires local authorities to make their own assessment of need; identify and update annually a five year land supply of deliverable sites; identify a supply of developable sites for 6 – 10 years and 11 – 15 years of the plan period.

A call for sites was carried out in April/May 2014 at which time the Council invited landowners and developers to submit sites they felt were suitable and available as a site for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Five sites were submitted during this process and the Council are also considering a further three sites; one unauthorised development, one site which was submitted through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) process and one Council owned parcel of land, resulting in a total of 8 sites being assessed.

In accordance with the Core Strategy all sites were assessed against the criteria set out in policy CS7.

Core Strategy policy CS7 applies to proposed sites located outside settlement boundaries. Any sites proposed within settlement boundaries are considered acceptable in principle, as with conventional housing, subject to material considerations. Policy CS7 will assist in providing suitably located and designed sites. The Core Strategy policy complies with the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS).

Criteria as set out in Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy

Policy CS7 Criteria	Key considerations
Safe and easy access to major roads and public transport services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether access is of, or can be made to, an appropriate standard, including consideration of its adequacy, the character, width, alignment and speed of the road • Potential for pedestrian /vehicle conflict on either the access or roads in close proximity to the site – whether there are footways or cycleways, width, visual splays, lighting • Access to public transport and the frequency of the service • Any other highway issues or concerns
Easy access to local services including a bus route, shops, schools and health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether local services, including a bus route, shops, schools and health services are located in a nearby settlement • Distance to key local services (as above) and whether they are accessible by walking and/or cycling or accessible by public transport
Located outside areas of high flooding risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the site is located within Flood Zone 2 and/or 3

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the site is vulnerable to other sources of flood risk, such as surface water or ground water flooding • Whether evidence suggests there are flood risk issues affecting the site and/or its immediate surroundings
Provision for adequate on site facilities for parking, storage, play and residential amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size of the site • Any existing facilities/structures on the site • Potential number and density of pitches
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance from the site to nearest residential properties / settled community • Whether the amenity of neighbouring uses would be unacceptably affected by Gypsies and Travellers (noise, light, visual impact, general disturbance etc) and vice versa
Opportunities for an element of authorised mixed uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether a mix of uses and/or alternative uses have been proposed on the site. • Whether the site and its surrounding uses would lend itself to 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type and scale of surrounding uses • Whether the amenity of neighbouring uses would be unacceptably affected by Gypsies and Travellers (noise, vehicular movement etc) • Number of expected vehicle movements from site depending on proposed number of pitches and/or on site business activities
Will not materially harm the physical and visual character of the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual prominence and visual impact of the site • Impact on the character and appearance of the area with regard to the built and natural environment (including local and statutory designations) of the immediate locality and nearest settlement
Where applicable have regard for the character and policies affecting the North Wessex Downs AONB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the site is located within the North Wessex Downs AONB • Whether there is likely to be any impact on features that contribute to the landscape character • Whether development of the site will contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape

Other issues to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any site specific or local issues to be considered
--------------------------	--

In addition to assessing each site against the criteria set out within the policy, regard has also been had to the relevant national guidance, including the NPPF and PPTS. A SA/SEA has been carried out on each site to determine the potential effects on social, economic and environmental sustainability.

The site assessments and SA/SEA have then been considered against any technical evidence, supporting information provided with the site submissions and advice from internal consultees to draw conclusions on the suitability of each site for allocation.

Appendix G

Equality Impact Assessment Template

Name of item being assessed:	West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD)
Version and release date of item (if applicable):	July 2014
Owner of item being assessed:	Liz Alexander
Name of assessor:	Liz Alexander
Date of assessment:	13 June 2014

1 What are the main aims of the item?

(What does the item try to achieve?)

To ensure an up to date planning framework for the District in terms of site allocations for housing and the provision of sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and selected updated policies for the guidance of development.

2 What are the results of your research?

Note which groups may be affected by the item, consider how they may be affected and what sources of information have been used to determine this.

(Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.)

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this.
Age	The DPD will allocate housing across the District, together with some of the policies to guide appropriate development. Increasing the amount of housing development generally, as well as the amount of affordable housing. This will be of benefit to people of all ages who are currently unable to access a property.	The DPD sets out preferred housing allocations for about 2,000 units of additional accommodation. Core Strategy policy CS6 on affordable housing will be applied to each site.

Disability	<p>The term ‘disabilities’ covers a multitude of issues, such as physical mobility and sensory problems, as well as learning difficulties. Therefore the needs of people with disabilities are wide-ranging and solutions will be different for individuals. The DPD aims to address this by helping to provide suitable accommodation in accessible locations, in accordance with the spatial strategy and policy CS4 of the Core Strategy.</p>	<p>The DPD sets out preferred housing allocations for about 2,000 units of additional accommodation. Core Strategy policy CS4 on housing type and mix will be applied to each site.</p> <p>Housing sites have been accessed using accessibility criteria (included within Appendix B of the report)</p>
Gender	None as development is not gender specific.	
Marriage and civil partnership	The provision of more housing across West Berkshire will enable more household formation, regardless of marital status.	The DPD sets out preferred housing allocations as shown in Appendix E for about 2,000 units of additional accommodation
Pregnancy and Maternity	The provision of more housing across West Berkshire will enable more household formation.	The DPD sets out preferred housing allocations as shown in Appendix E for about 2,000 units of additional accommodation
Race	<p>The DPD is allocating pitches to meet the identified need for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Gypsies & Travellers are an ethnic minority, whose rights are protected from discrimination by the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Human Rights Act 1998, together with all ethnic groups who have a particular culture, language or values.</p> <p>The accommodation requirements of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople need to be specifically catered for. There is evidence that additional authorised pitches are required in West Berkshire to meet identified needs. Allocating the necessary pitches will help to address social exclusion for this group and should result in positive health and education outcomes from the allocation of good quality</p>	Appendix H is a table on Gypsy and Traveller sites promoted through the Call for Sites process.

	sites.	
Religion or belief	None, as development is not dependent on religion or belief.	
Sexual Orientation	None as development is not dependent on sexual orientation.	
Further Comments relating to the item:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A full Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out for the Core Strategy this was tested at examination by an independent Planning Inspector (adopted July 2012). The Housing Site Allocations DPD helps to implement the framework of the adopted Core Strategy. 2. The preferred options Housing Site Allocations DPD will be the subject of a 7 week consultation between 25 July and 12 September 2014. It will then be revised before consultation on a proposed submission version of the DPD. 3. No negative effects have been identified. 		

3 What actions will be taken to address any negative effects?			
Action	Owner	By When?	Outcome

<p>4 What was the final outcome and why was this agreed?</p> <p>(Was the item adjusted, rewritten or unchanged? Refer to page 15 of <i>Meeting the Equality Duty in Policy and Decision Making</i> for more information.)</p> <p>Not applicable</p>
--

<p>5 What arrangements have you put in place to monitor the impact of this decision?</p> <p>Not applicable</p>

<p>6 What date is the Equality Impact Assessment due for Review?</p> <p>Not applicable</p>

Signed: Liz Alexander

Date: 13 June 2014

This page is intentionally left blank