

Appendix A

Draft Changes to the Core Strategy

Formatting explanation

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

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

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

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

Cross Boundary Issues

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SWOT

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

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

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

1. Tackling Climate Change

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

2. Housing Growth

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

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

3. Housing Needs

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

4. Economy

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

5. Infrastructure Requirements

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

6. Green Infrastructure

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

7. Transport

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

8. Retail

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

9. Heritage

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

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

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

The Spatial Strategy

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

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

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

Spatial Policy SP1 Spatial Strategy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Figure 3 Newbury Town Centre

Figure deleted

Area Delivery Plan Policy 2 Newbury

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

Employment

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

Area Delivery Plan Policy 3 Thattham

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

Employment

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

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

Environment

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

Figure 5 Eastern Area

Figure amended to remove hatching.

Eastern Area

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

Eastern Urban Area - The Vision

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

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

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

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

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

Pangbourne

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

Theale

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

Area Delivery Plan Policy 4

Eastern Area

Housing

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

Transport

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

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

Retail Centres

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

Employment

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

Community Infrastructure and Services

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

Environment

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

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

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

Delivery and Monitoring

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

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

North Wessex Downs AONB

North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - The Vision

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Development

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

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

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

Area Delivery Plan Policy 5

North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Development

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

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

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

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

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

Environment

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

Economy

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

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

Accessibility

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

Community Infrastructure and Services

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

Delivery and Monitoring

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

The East Kennet Valley

East Kennet Valley - The Vision

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

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

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

The East Kennet Valley

Housing

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

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

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

Employment

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

Environment

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

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

Community Infrastructure and Services

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

Accessibility

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

Delivery and Monitoring

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

Policy CS1 Delivering New Homes and Retaining the Housing Stock

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

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

New homes will be primarily developed on

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

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

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

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

Explanation of the Policy

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

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

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

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

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

Future economic performance is likely to have a key impact on the potential demand for homes. Economic forecasts produced in 2010¹ forecast a growth of just over 9,000 jobs between 2006 and 2026. Whilst Berkshire's complex commuting patterns do not encourage the drawing of too close a comparison at the district level between housing numbers and forecast economic growth, these figures do not suggest that the proposed 10,500 figure is likely to worsen the balance between the number of economically active residents and the number of local jobs over the plan period.

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

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

¹ Berkshire Observatory, Cambridge Econometrics, 2010

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

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

Delivery and Monitoring

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

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

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

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

Policy CS2

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

Policy CS3

Newbury Racecourse Strategic Site Allocation

Explanation of the Policy – new text following para 5.8

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

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

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

Residential Development

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

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

Non-Residential Development

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

- From 2013: All development - BREEAM Excellent

Policy CS4

Sandleford Strategic Site Allocation

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

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

Explanation of the Policy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Delivery and Monitoring

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

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

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

Policy CS5

Housing Type and Mix

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

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

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

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

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

Explanation of the Policy

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

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

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

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

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

**Policy CS6 Infrastructure
Infrastructure Requirements and Delivery**

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

Explanation of the Policy

No change.

Delivery and Monitoring

No change.

Affordable Housing

Policy CS 7

Provision of Affordable Housing

In order to address the need for affordable housing in West Berkshire a proportion of affordable homes will be sought from residential development. Affordable housing will be provided on-site, apart from in exceptional circumstances. The Council's priority and starting expectation will be for affordable housing to be provided on-site in line with Government guidance².

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

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

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

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

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

Explanation of the Policy

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

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

² PPS3 Housing (paragraph 29)

The West Berkshire Housing Need Assessment³ identifies a shortfall of between 560 and 850 new affordable homes across the District per year to 2011. This must be placed in the context of the West Berkshire housing allocation requirement set out in Policy CS 1 of an average of 525 new dwellings (both market and affordable) each year to 2026. Whilst the level of affordable housing need will be kept under review throughout the Plan period and may alter, the level of need remains extremely high and the policy must therefore seek to maximise opportunities for increased affordable housing delivery.

~~The South East Plan states that a substantial increase in the amount of affordable housing needs to be delivered, and Policy H3 requires local authorities to set policies appropriate for the local area to assist in achieving increased delivery. Methods for securing affordable housing as an element of market housing proposals have been well established in the West Berkshire District Local Plan⁴ and the Council's existing Supplementary Planning Guidance 4/04⁵. However, evidence from the Housing Need Assessment and the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment⁶ indicates that the current threshold for securing provision to date, as set out in the Local Plan, appears unlikely to meet the continuing need for affordable housing in the future.~~

A study of economic viability⁷ has been carried out on behalf of the Council which sets out the evidence for reducing affordable housing thresholds below the national indicative minimum site size threshold and the current adopted Local Plan policy of 15 units. The study and its update report support a policy approach which reduces the threshold to 5 units without unduly compromising the site viability. The Council recognises that in some circumstances there may be exceptional costs of development which need to be acknowledged and that the policy may represent the starting point for negotiation. The Council will carefully scrutinise proposals which appear to fall artificially below the required thresholds which may indicate a possible attempt to avoid making the appropriate contribution towards the delivery of affordable housing. Such proposals are likely to be refused planning permission where they fail to make efficient use of land.

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

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

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

⁴ West Berkshire District Local Plan, Saved Policies 2007

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

⁶ West Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (DTZ, 2007)

⁷ West Berkshire Economic Viability Assessment (Adams Integra, 2007&2009)

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

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

Rural Exception Sites

Policy CS 8

Rural Exception Sites

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

Proposals for small scale affordable housing development may be permitted on sites in the countryside⁸ provided certain criteria are met, including:

1. The applicant demonstrates that the proposal would help to meet a proven local need for affordable housing with evidence being derived from a recent Local Housing Needs Survey as per the West Berkshire Allocations policy⁹;
2. The development is well related to an existing settlement, ensuring consistency with the scale and form of surrounding development and does not adversely affect any landscape or historical features that are important to the rural character of the area;
3. The proposal does not include any element of market housing; and
4. The applicant enters into a legal agreement that ensures the accommodation will be managed so as to meet the need for affordable housing in perpetuity and reserves and prioritises occupancy for people in housing need who have a specified local connection (as specified in the West Berkshire Allocations policy).

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

Explanation of the Policy

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

National *and regional* guidance¹⁰ highlights the importance of providing affordable housing in rural areas, where opportunities for delivery tend to be more limited, in order to assist in creating and maintaining sustainable rural communities. Guidance also advises that rural exception sites are to be small in scale and developed solely for affordable housing, located on land that would not normally be released for housing. The site size must be based on proven local need and respect the scale and form of the surrounding settlement.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Policy CS 9

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

To meet the identified need for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople¹¹ pitches within the District, the Council will make appropriate provision through the identification of sites within the Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document (DPD). The requirement for transit sites will be addressed through the same DPD.

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

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

Explanation of the policy

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nuclear Installations – AWE Aldermaston and AWE Burghfield

NEW POLICY CS 9 A

Nuclear Installations – AWE Aldermaston and AWE Burghfield

In the interests of public safety, residential¹ development in the inner consultation zones² of AWE Aldermaston and AWE Burghfield is likely to be refused planning permission by the Council. All other development proposals in the consultation zones will be considered in consultation with the HSE NII³, having regard to the scale of development proposed, its location, population distribution of the area and the impact on public safety, to include how the development would impact on “Blue Light Services” and the emergency off site plan in the event of an emergency as well as other planning criteria.

Footnote

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

² Consultation Zones as defined by the HSE NII and shown on the West Berkshire Proposals Map

³ Consultation arrangements with the HSE NII

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

	Outer	5 - 8 km	Residential accommodation and non residential exceeding 500 people · 200 or more dwellings; · 11,000m ² , B1 · 24,000m ² B8	Outer	3 - 5 km	Residential accommodation and non residential exceeding 500 people · 200 or more dwellings; · 11,000m ² , B1 · 24,000m ² B8
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1 Explanation of Policy

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

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

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

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

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

Delivery and Monitoring

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

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

Policy CS10

Location and Type of Business Development

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

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

Location of business development:

Proposals for industry, distribution and storage uses will be directed to the District's defined Protected Employment Areas¹² and existing suitably located employment sites and premises. Any proposals for such uses outside these areas/locations will be assessed by the Council against the following:

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

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

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

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

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

Protected Employment Areas:

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

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

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

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

Scale, type and intensification of business development:

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

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

Explanatory Text

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

Evidence¹³ indicates that West Berkshire has a sufficient supply of employment land to meet demand to 2026, and thus no need to plan for a net increase in employment land stock. Whilst a sufficient supply exists, it is not necessarily in the correct use class. The Employment Land Assessment (ELA) concludes that over the plan period there is a shortfall of B1 floorspace by approximately 121,000sqm, a surplus of B2 space by approximately 65,000sqm due to declining demand and a potential shortfall in the longer term of B8 floorspace of approximately 24,000sqm. Policy CS10 therefore sets out the framework to ensure this imbalance in employment land supply is addressed over the plan period, through the effective utilisation of existing employment sites and premises. The Council seek to ensure that sufficient sites are provided in the right locations to foster sustainable economic growth. This means maintaining a portfolio of sites suitable to meet demand for B8 in suitable locations; managing an excess supply of B2 floorspace whilst ensuring enough sites and premises are retained for such uses; and, facilitating the growth of B1 floorspace to meet future requirements.

As the Core Strategy sets out a long term approach to business development, and circumstances surrounding economic development are constantly changing, the scale of development required within each use class to meet economic demands will be monitored¹⁴ and updated as appropriate.

¹³ Employment Land Assessment, DTZ 2007

¹⁴ See Monitoring Framework, Section 6

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

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

Location of business development:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Protected Employment Areas:

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

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

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

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

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

Scale, type and intensification of business development:

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

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

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

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

The Rural Economy

Policy CS 11

Rural Economy

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

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

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

Explanation of the Policy

The Council will encourage the retention of small and medium sized businesses in the rural areas, along with the promotion of appropriate farm diversification in order to sustain the viability of some agricultural enterprises. The Council recognises changes in the agricultural industry over recent years. Rural West Berkshire plays an important role within the District's economy and therefore it is essential that the rural communities are supported. Many rural areas host a large number of small and medium sized enterprises which are vital to providing local job opportunities and a diverse economy. With the conclusions in the Matthew Taylor Review¹⁵ and the increased emphasis on the contributions of the rural economy there is a continued need to protect and support the development of start-up businesses, and adequate provision should be made for them throughout the District. PPS4¹⁶ encourages this approach and outlines the need for local authorities to be supportive of small-scale development within rural settlements to meet business needs and sustain vitality. More detailed policies on the management of development contributing to the rural economy will be set out in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD. These will include farm diversification and conversion and reuse of existing buildings in the countryside consistent with national policy in PPS4.

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

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

¹⁶ Planning Policy Statement 4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (2009)

Policy CS 13

Equestrian/Racehorse Industry

Equestrian/Racehorse Industry Development

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

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

North Wessex Downs AONB Racehorse Industry

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

Newbury Racecourse

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

Explanation of the policy

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

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

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

Racehorse industry

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

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

The variety in yard sizes is an important feature for the industry in this area, this helps support the start up of new trainers and the movement to larger premises keeps their location and staff in the Lambourn area. Throughout a trainer's career they will require different sized yards at different times for a variety of reasons and a range of yard sizes allows them to move within the same area, retaining access to the public gallops on which they are experienced, retain staff and local owners. Access to gallops is important for yards and opportunities for improving access routes should be fully explored before a yard is considered for re-use or redevelopment. Given the Rules of Racing¹⁸ it is difficult to sub-divide yards. As such, spare box capacity does not demonstrate an ability to go without certain individual yards which are important for new trainers and for those who are down-sizing their operations.

The licensing requirements for a Trainer¹⁹ include, but not exclusively, a demonstration or confirmation of competence and ability to train, access to appropriate training facilities, security of tenure for the training premises, and have a minimum of three horses in training throughout the year. The licence requires access to gallops to be within hacking distance of the stables, and suitable yard and training facilities, which are

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

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

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

Applying the policy

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

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

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

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

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

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

Newbury Racecourse

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

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

Delivery and Monitoring

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

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

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

Policy CS 14 Transport

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

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

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

Explanation of the Policy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Delivery and Monitoring

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

The following indicators will be monitored in the AMR:-

- Accessibility of new residential development
- Sustainable travel to schools

Policy CS 17

Flooding

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

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

Proposed development will require a Flood Risk Assessment for:

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

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

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

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

²⁰ Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk, 2006. DCLG.

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

²² Advice on safe access and exit can be found in the SFRA.

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

Explanation of the policy

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

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

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

The policy seeks to ensure that development provides appropriate measures for the management of rainfall (surface water) as an essential element of reducing flood risk to both the site and its surroundings. Sustainable drainage methods, such as green roofs, ponds and permeable surfaces, should be incorporated where technically possible. The integration of a SuDS scheme is dependent upon the topography, geology and soil conditions of the site and its surrounding area or may not be acceptable due to contamination. Further information on SuDS can be found in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and the Quality Design – West Berkshire – Supplementary Planning Document Series, 2006²⁵.

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

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

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

²⁴ West Berkshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Jacobs (2008) available at www.westberks.gov.uk/ldfevidence

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

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

- Flood risk and/or flood resilience, such as floor levels should be set a minimum of 300mm above the 100 year flood level plus climate change;
- No additional residents will be located within the functional floodplain;
- Safe access and exit from the site can be provided for routine and emergency access under both frequent and extreme flood conditions²⁶;
- Development must not result in a loss of floodplain storage;
- Development must not impact on flood flows;
- The impacts of climate change must be assessed.

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

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

²⁶ Advice on safe access and exit can be found in the SFRA.

Policy CS 18

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

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

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

Development which may harm, either directly or indirectly

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

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

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

Explanation of the Policy

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

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

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

There are currently three SACs within the District:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Delivery and Monitoring

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

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

Policy CS 20

Historic Environment and Landscape Character

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

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

Proposals for development should be informed by and respond to:

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

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

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

BOX 1

Historic environment designations in West Berkshire

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Delivery and Monitoring

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

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

Monitoring Framework

Amend tables as follows:

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

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

Policy CS3 – Newbury Racecourse Strategic Site Allocation

Policy CS4 – Sandford Strategic Site Allocation

Linked Objectives - 2: Housing Growth

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

Policy CS5 – Housing Type and Mix

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

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

Policy CS6 – Infrastructure Requirements and Delivery

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

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

Policy CS7– Affordable Housing

Linked Objectives - 3: Housing Needs

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

Policy CS8– Rural Exception Sites

Linked Objectives - 3: Housing Needs

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

Policy CS9– Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Linked Objectives - 3: Housing Needs

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

Linked Objectives - 3: Housing Growth

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

Policy CS10- Employment and the Economy

Policy CS 11 – The Rural Economy

Linked Objectives - 4: Economy, 8: Retail

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Policy CS19 - Green Infrastructure

Linked Objectives - 6: Green Infrastructure

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

Policy CS20 – Historic Environment and Landscape Character

Linked Objectives - 9: Heritage

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

Appendix B

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

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

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

Housing Distribution: Spatial Areas

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

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

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

Glossary

Limited Infill Development

Explanation

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

Affordable Housing Definition:

Delete last sentence of definition

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

Strategic Road Network

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

Possible Inspector Proposed Change

Policy CS 16

Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency

Residential Development

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

Minor development – Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3

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

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

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

Non-Residential Development

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

Minor development – BREEAM Very Good

Major development – BREEAM Excellent

From 2013: All development – BREEAM Excellent

Renewable Energy

Major development²⁷ shall achieve the following minimum reductions in total CO₂ emissions (regulated and unregulated energy use)²⁸ from renewable energy or low/zero carbon energy generation on site or in the locality of the development as long as a direct physical connection is used, unless it can be demonstrated that such provision is not technically or economically viable.

The percentage reductions in CO₂ emissions should be based on the estimated CO₂ emissions of the development after the installation of energy efficiency measures related to either the Code for Sustainable Homes, BREEAM or equivalent method has been applied.

Residential Development:

A 10% reduction in CO₂ emissions
from 2014: A 20% reduction in CO₂ emissions
from 2016: Zero Carbon²⁹

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

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

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

Non-Residential Development:

A 10% reduction in CO₂ emissions
from 2014: A 20% reduction in CO₂ emissions
from 2019: Zero Carbon³⁰

Explanation of Policy

Carbon reduction is a key issue for West Berkshire. Sustainable construction and Renewable energy generation can help in achieving emissions reduction. Cost implications of installing CO₂ emissions reduction measures from the start of the development are less than if they were retro-fitted afterwards. In addition, the benefits derived by the end user in relation to reduced heating and fuel bills will be enhanced.

West Berkshire District is one of the highest electricity users in the south east and is in the upper quartile of local authorities for CO₂ emissions within the region.³¹ Fuel poverty levels in West Berkshire are also high, compared to other authorities.³² This is clear evidence and justification that West Berkshire needs to do more to meet national *and regional* targets in relation to CO₂ emissions reduction.

Code for Sustainable Homes / BREEAM

The Code for Sustainable Homes³³ is the Government's preferred method for implementing zero carbon homes national sustainability standard for new homes. In addition BREEAM³⁴ (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) is a well established national assessment tool for non-residential buildings.

Renewable Energy Generation

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

Existing Housing Stock

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

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

³¹ Department for Energy and Climate Change, Sub-national Energy Consumption Statistics Available at www.decc.gov.uk

³² Communities and Local Government, Places Analysis Tool, available at www.pat.communities.gov.uk

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

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

Changes to national targets

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

Thresholds

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