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Meeting of West Berkshire District Council

Thursday, 5 October, 2023

Summons and Agenda

West Berkshire Council

To: All Members of the Council

You are requested to attend a meeting of
WEST BERKSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
to be held in the
COUNCIL OFFICES, MARKET STREET, NEWBURY
on
Thursday, 5 October, 2023
at **7.00 pm**

Sarah Clarke.

Sarah Clarke
Service Director – Strategy & Governance
West Berkshire District Council

Date of despatch of Agenda: Wednesday, 27 September 2023

AGENDA

Part I

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

   To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any). **(Pages 7 - 8)**

2. **CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

   The Chairman to report on functions attended since the last meeting and other matters of interest to Members. **(Pages 9 - 10)**

3. **PRESENTATIONS**

   The Chairman to present Councillor Billy Drummond with his long service award **(Pages 11 - 12)**

4. **MINUTES**

The Chairman to sign as a correct record the Minutes of the extraordinary Council meeting held on 20 July 2023 and the ordinary meeting held on 20 July 2023. **(Pages 13 - 24)**

5. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To remind Members of the need to record the existence and nature of any personal, disclosable pecuniary or other registrable interests in items on the agenda, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct. **(Pages 25 - 26)**

6. **PETITIONS**

Councillors may present any petition which they have received. These will normally be referred to the appropriate body without discussion. **(Pages 27 - 28)**

7. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by members of the public in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution. **(Pages 29 - 30)**

8. **MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES**

The Council to agree any changes to the membership of Committees. **(Pages 31 - 32)**

9. **LICENSING COMMITTEE**

The Council is asked to note that since the last **ordinary** meeting of the Council the Licensing Committee has not met. **(Pages 33 - 34)**

10. **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

The Council is asked to note that since the last ordinary meeting of the Council, the Personnel Committee met on 11 September 2023. A copy of the Minutes of this meeting can be obtained from Democratic Services or via the Council's website when available.

11. **GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

The Council is asked to note that since the last ordinary meeting of the Council, the Governance Committee met on 25 September 2023. A copy of the Minutes of this meeting can be obtained from Democratic Services or via the Council's website. When available.

12. **DISTRICT PLANNING COMMITTEE**

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

13. **SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

The Council is asked to note that since the last ordinary meeting of the Council, the Scrutiny Commission met on 14 September 2023. A copy of the Minutes of this meeting can be obtained from Democratic Services or via the Council's website. When available.

14. **HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Council is asked to note that since the last ordinary meeting of the Council, the Health Scrutiny Committee met on 12 September 2023. A copy of the Minutes of this meeting can be obtained from Democratic Services or via the Council's website. When available.

15. **HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**

The Council is asked to note that since the last ordinary meeting of the Council, the Health and Wellbeing Board met on 3 October 2023. A copy of the Minutes of this meeting can be obtained from Democratic Services or via the Council's website when available.

16. **JOINT PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

The Council is asked to note that since the last ordinary meeting of the Council, the Joint Public Protection Committee met on 2 October 2023. A copy of the Minutes of this meeting can be obtained from Democratic Services or via the Council's website when available.

17. **DRAFT COUNCIL STRATEGY 2023-2027 (C4417)**

Purpose: To inform Members of the feedback received from the consultation on the Draft Council Strategy 2023 – 2027 and to request that the Strategy (amended in response to the consultation feedback and including the Council Strategy Delivery Plan) is adopted by the Council. A new strategy is needed to set the Council's direction for the next four years by defining new priority areas based on changes to the external and internal intelligence about residents' needs, including the feedback received from our residents' surveys, consultations and the results of the local elections. **(Pages 35 - 78)**

18. **ENHANCEMENT OF CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARATION (C4447)**

Purpose: to propose changes to the Council's climate emergency declaration (made in July 2019). The changes that are sought will enhance, strengthen and bring clarity to the original declaration following the initial 4 years of delivery and all that has been learnt in that period. **(Pages 79 - 94)**

19. **HERMITAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN (C4432)**

Purpose: To seek approval of the submission of the Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for independent examination. **(Pages 95 - 310)**

20. **COLD ASH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN (C4433)**

Purpose: To seek approval for the submission of the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for independent examination. **(Pages 311 - 650)**

21. **ANNUAL REPORT - GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS COMMITTEE (C4323)**

Purpose: an annual summary of the activities of the Governance & Ethics Committee for the 2022-23 municipal year. The report is intended for Full Council to provide a summary of key areas that the Committee has considered during the Municipal Year 2022-23 as well as some of the actions and changes that have occurred due to the Committee's activities. **(Pages 651 - 656)**

22. **REPORT BY THE RETURNING OFFICER (C4411)**

Purpose: To inform Council of the results of the Local Elections held in May 2023 and any issues concerning the conduct of the elections. **(Pages 657 - 672)**

23. **MONITORING OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23 - CONDUCT AND ETHICS (C4412)**

Purpose: To provide an update on any local and national issues relating to ethical standards and to bring to the attention of Members a summary of complaints or other problems within West Berkshire. **(Pages 673 - 684)**

24. **NOTICES OF MOTION**

Please note that the list of Motions is shown under Item 24 in the agenda pack. **(Pages 685 - 686)**

25. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by Members of the Council in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution. **(To Follow)**

If you require this information in a different format or translation, please contact David Cook on telephone 01635 50329.

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Council – 05 October 2023

Item 1 – Apologies for Absence

Verbal Item

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Council – 05 October 2023

Item 2 – Chairman's Remarks

Verbal Item

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Council – 05 October 2023

Item 3 – Presentations

Verbal Item

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DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

THURSDAY, 20 JULY 2023

Councillors Present: Adrian Abbs, Antony Amirtharaj, Phil Barnett, Dennis Benneyworth, Jeff Brooks, Nick Carter, Patrick Clark, Heather Codling, Martin Colston, Jeremy Cottam (Chairman), Iain Cottingham, Laura Coyle, Carolyne Culver, Paul Dick, Lee Dillon, Denise Gaines, Stuart Gourley, Clive Hooker, Owen Jeffery, Jane Langford, Janine Lewis, Ross Mackinnon, Alan Macro, David Marsh, Geoff Mayes (Via Zoom), Biyi Oloko, Justin Pemberton, Vicky Poole (Via Zoom), Christopher Read, Richard Somner, Stephanie Steevenson, Joanne Stewart, Louise Sturgess, Clive Taylor, Martha Vickers, Tony Vickers and Howard Woollaston.

Also Present: Sarah Clarke (Service Director (Strategy and Governance), Stephen Chard (Democratic Services Manager), Paul Coe (Interim Executive Director People), Joesph Holmes (Executive Director Resources), (Nigel Lynn (Chief Executive), Eric Owens (Service Director Development and Regulation), Honorary Alderman Brian Bedwell, Honorary Alderman Graham Jones, Honorary Alderman Quentin Webb and David Cook (Principal Democratic Services Officer).

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Honorary Alderman Paul Bryant, Honorary Alderman Adrian Edwards, Honorary Alderman Anthony Stansfield, Councillor Dominic Boeck, Councillor Billy Drummond, Councillor Nigel Foot, Councillor Paul Kander, Councillor Erik Pattenden and Councillor Matt Shakespeare.

PART I

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

2. Honorary Aldermen Nominations

Council considered Agenda Item 2 which proposed that a number of retired or no longer serving Councillors be conferred the title of Honorary Alderman in recognition of their eminent service rendered on behalf of the Council and residents of West Berkshire over a period of time.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Ross Mackinnon and seconded by Councillor Lee Dillon:

"That the Council confer the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillors listed in Appendix A for the reasons contained therein."

The Chairman welcomed comments from the floor on the proposed nominations.

Councillor Howard Woollaston said that former Councillor Jeff Beck had been a Councillor for 19 years in total and had recently decided to retire gracefully at the local elections. As well as being Chairman of West Berkshire Council in 2014 and Chairman of many committees, and a Newbury Town Councillor, he would be remembered best for his work as a ward member where he worked tirelessly representing his residents. His words of wisdom would be missed.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon said that former Councillor Graham Bridgman was a great friend as well as a colleague and he showed great leadership as Deputy Leader of Council during the pandemic. The former Leader appreciated his support during those times. Graham was all about the detail, which was not surprising given his legal background before entering politics. He had been an effective Councillor, Committee Chairman and Portfolio Holder and his presence would be missed.

Councillor Joanne Stewart said that former Councillor Hilary Cole had served as an elected member for a total of 16 years during which she had held many important positions including Vice-Chairman, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for a number of areas. She had been a dedicated councillor with a great deal of experience and knowledge, always striving to do the best for her residents.

Councillor Richard Somner said that it was unfortunate that former Councillor Rick Jones could not be present today due to illness. He had served as a councillor for 9 years and in that time had been the Vice-Chairman, held many portfolio positions, had chaired a number of committees and for his final year was an effective Chairman of Council. He wished Mr Jones a quick recovery.

Councillor Somner also addressed Council about former Councillor Alan Law. He said that his first recollection of Councillor Law was during his first term as a councillor, about half way through Alan's 16 years as a Councillor, on planning issues for which Alan was an advocate. Alan Law had held many positions including a variety of Portfolio Positions and Chairmanships during his time as a councillor. They had held many of the same positions and he was pleased to support the nomination.

Councillor Howard Woollaston said about former Councillor Gordon Lundie that he had a long political career in West Berkshire representing Lambourn Valley. During his 16 years as a Councillor, he had success as an advocate for transformation, being a Portfolio Holder and Leader of Council. He had helped transform the Council and the Portfolio he held. He did the right things for the Council, improving outcomes for residents.

Councillor Joanne Stewart said that it was a remarkable achievement that former Councillor Tony Linden had been a Councillor for 35 years representing his residents with due diligence. They had been supportive of each other during their time as Councillors, and he had been pleased to have received commendation for his role as Councillor representative on the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority. His nomination was well deserved.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon said that former Councillor Graham Pask had represented his residents for over 36 years and had provided guidance to himself and many colleagues. He had held the Chairmanship of Council for two terms as well as many Portfolio positions, and many Chairmanship roles. He was an excellent advocate for the role of a councillor, and he wished him and his supportive family all the best. The nomination was well deserved.

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

(The meeting commenced at 7.00pm and closed at 7.31pm)

CHAIRMAN ……

Date of Signature ……

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DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

THURSDAY, 20 JULY 2023

Councillors Present: Adrian Abbs, Antony Amirtharaj, Phil Barnett, Dennis Benneyworth, Jeff Brooks, Nick Carter, Patrick Clark, Heather Codling, Martin Colston, Jeremy Cottam (Chairman), Iain Cottingham, Laura Coyle, Carolyne Culver, Paul Dick, Lee Dillon, Denise Gaines, Stuart Gourley, Clive Hooker, Owen Jeffery, Jane Langford, Janine Lewis, Ross Mackinnon, Alan Macro, David Marsh, Geoff Mayes (Via Zoom), Biyi Oloko, Justin Pemberton, Vicky Poole (Via Zoom), Christopher Read, Richard Somner, Stephanie Steevenson, Joanne Stewart, Louise Sturgess, Clive Taylor, Martha Vickers, Tony Vickers and Howard Woollaston

Also Present: Sarah Clarke (Service Director (Strategy and Governance), Stephen Chard (Democratic Services Manager), Paul Coe (Interim Executive Director People), Joesph Holmes (Executive Director Resources), (Nigel Lynn (Chief Executive), Eric Owens (Service Director Development and Regulation), Honorary Alderman Brian Bedwell, Honorary Alderman Graham Jones, Honorary Alderman Quentin Webb and David Cook (Principal Democratic Services Officer).

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Honorary Alderman Paul Bryant, Honorary Alderman Adrian Edwards, Honorary Alderman Anthony Stansfeld, Councillor Dominic Boeck, Councillor Billy Drummond, Councillor Nigel Foot, Councillor Paul Kander, Councillor Erik Pattenden and Councillor Matt Shakespeare.

PART I

18. Chairman's Remarks

The Chairman reported that he and the Vice-Chairman had attended a number of events since the last Council meeting. He highlighted attending Newbury Library receiving the Library of Sanctuary Status, the launch of the Community Alcohol Partnership and a Citizenship Ceremony. He also mentioned visiting Thrive, an organisation that used gardening to bring about positive changes in the lives of people living with disabilities or ill health, or who were isolated, disadvantaged or vulnerable.

The Chairman also mentioned that the Vice-Chairman had attended events such as the getting to know the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Day, the Newbury Street Pastors AGM and a supper party for the Reading Episcopal Area held by the Diocese of Oxford.

19. Presentations

The Chairman made presentations to the following Councillors and former Councillors celebrating their long service:

Tony Linden for being a Councillor for 35 years.

Councillor Jeff Brooks for being a Councillor for 25 years.

Councillor Phil Barnett for being a Councillor for 20 years.

Councillor Billy Drummond for being a Councillor for 20 years. (Councillor Drummond had given his apologies and would be given his certificate outside the meeting).

20. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2023 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

21. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

22. Petitions

There were no petitions received.

23. Public Questions

A full transcription of the public and Member question and answer sessions are available from the following link: Transcription of Q&As.

A question standing in the name of Ken Omor on the subject of road works in the area of Hambridge Road / Boundary Road and Kings Road received a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel.

A question standing in the name of John Gotelee on the subject of the Faraday Road Football Pitch was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement.

A question standing in the name of Miss Staniforth on the subject of the budget received a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Services.

A question standing in the name of Paula Saunderson on the subject of Flood Risk Management was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel.

A question standing in the name of John Gotelee on the subject of the Faraday Road Football Pitch was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement.

A question standing in the name of Paula Saunderson on the subject of Flood Risk Management was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel.

A question standing in the name of John Gotelee on the subject of surface water drainage was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement.

A question standing in the name of Paula Saunderson on the subject of the Local Plan Review was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement.

A question standing in the name of Paula Saunderson on the subject of the predicted future population figures was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement.

A question standing in the name of Paula Saunderson on the subject of Green / Blue infrastructure work was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement.

24. Membership of Committees

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

25. Hedgehog Highways - Petition Response

Council considered a report regarding the response to a petition, received on 6 October 2022, regarding Hedgehog Highways (Agenda Item 9).

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Tony Vickers and seconded by Councillor Owen Jeffery.

That the Council:

Recognise that the aims of the motion are already covered by policies in both the West Berkshire Local Plan and also the Local Plan Review 2039.

Investigate the possibility of a Hedgehog Positive Campaign to encourage all residents to adopt Hedgehog Highways.

Councillor T Vickers said that he had welcomed the initiative undertaken by Newbury Town Council that had been referred to in the petition. However, he could not support this petition as it was worded and he did not have the powers to change the wording of the petition tonight. He mentioned that he would have supported an alternative wording of the petition if this had been possible. Newbury Town Council had requested that new housing developments be required to provide hedgehog highways, but as the report detailed in section 5.13 any planning conditions must pass legal tests and be backed by evidence. There would be certain developments where it would not be relevant or possible to impose the proposed conditions such as industrial sites. There would also be certain major housing developments that would be unsuitable habitats for hedgehogs. He would have supported the petition if it could have been amended to suitable new developments having hedgehog highways. He pointed Council to the second recommendation in the report that encouraged existing homes in the district to have hedgehog friendly homes where possible by having holes in their boundaries. No sensible planning authority could accept the petition unamended, even though he applauded the sentiments behind it.

Councillor Richard Somner was glad to see in the report that the officer recommendations had been positively taken as they were the experts and did not block things for the sake of it. He mentioned that his garden had fences but also a gate that hedgehogs could pass through. Campaigning and education was the right way forward to get better outcomes.

Councillor Adrian Abbs said that this was a new Administration and they were open to listening. He recommended that petitioners come and speak to the Executive prior to submission to see if an acceptable outcome could be achieved.

Councillor Carolyne Culver mentioned that the petition had been presented to Council back in October 2022 but the petitioner could not attend tonight as they had such short notice that it was being considered. It was regrettable that it had taken so long to get the response before Council without any meaningful dialogue with the petitioner. She mentioned that the report said the environmental impact would be neutral but helping hedgehogs survive would be positive. The report also mentioned that positive action would be detrimental on other species, but the Council had policies to recommend boxes for barn owls. As a Member of a planning committee, she was frustrated that the Council did not have a policy that would help hedgehogs when policies were heldfor other animals.

Councillor Culver explained that when the Environment Act was implemented, the Councilhad an obligation to work with local nature recovery networks and would have the Ecologist from Windsor and Maidenhead Council working with West Berkshire. She said that paragraph 5.18 of the report mentioned that one of the reasons for decline in the hedgehog population was obesity yet the Government's report did not mention obesity. It seemed that this was yet another report trying to find excuses not to do something positive. The report also said that some people may block the holes, but Councillor Culver felt it was right to be positive and accept that most would not. If Council adopted what the petition was asking, we would also be meeting one of the requirements in the Local Plan. The report also lacked detail in what an education campaign would be, over 1500 residents had signed the petition and wanted action.

Councillor David Marsh was disappointed in the Administration as the petition arose out of a proposal by the Liberal Democrat Newbury Town Council. There were many people in the chamber that voted for the proposals at Newbury Town Council. It seemed that the Administration was trying to find reasons not to do something that had previously been supported. He asked Council to agree in principle what the petition was asking for and find wording to put it into the Local Plan and planning policy.

Councillor Lee Dillon said that there had been numerous petitions brought to Council where Members agreed on most points but not all and the Monitoring Officer had advised that we could not amend a petition. Constitutionally, it was necessary to respond to the wording of the petition. He was sure that the Portfolio Holder would look at working up a policy on this issue. It was not possible to pick and choose which part of the petition to reply to.

Councillor Owen Jeffery said that the majority of the chamber supported the principle of the petition but as had been stated, Council could not pick which parts of the petition to support and the wording of the petition could not be changed.

In summary, Councillor T Vickers said that the Administration were not against hedgehog highways but could not support all that the petition asked. There was no reason why Council should not support the recommendations before them.

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

26. Composition of the Joint Public Protection Committee

Council considered the report (Agenda Item 10) that considered the recommendation from the Joint Public Protection Committee (JPPC), to each partner authority, that the membership of the Committee be increased to three Members from each authority.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Lee Dillon and seconded by Councillor Ross Mackinnon:

"That the Council:

Approves the amendments to Part 6.5 (Appendix Joint Public Protection Committee) of the Constitution to reflect the revised membership of the Committee as set out in paragraph 4.7 and paragraph 4.8.

Approves the amendments to Part 3.1 (JPPC) of the Constitution as set out in paragraph 4.6.

Delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer to make any additional minor amendments to the Constitution arising from this decision.

Appoints a Member contained in Appendix A to represent the Council on the Joint Public Protection Committee in line with the updated amendments to the Constitution and such

appointment shall commence upon the Inter Authority Agreement being amended and approved by both Councils.

Councillor Lee Dillon said that it would come as no surprise to those who had attended Council meetings that he was recommending that the membership of the JPPC be politically balanced. He provided some background in how the partnership had evolved and said that as the partnership could make policy decisions it should be politically balanced. He proposed that if the recommendations were approved, that Councillor Howard Woollaston be appointed as the additional Council representative.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon said that the Leader had been consistent in his ambition to have an opposition representative on the JPPC and it was to his credit that he had brought the report forward. Members all had the same ambition to do the best for our residents, it was just that we may disagree how to achieve this. He said that Councillor Woollaston would be a great addition to the JPPC.

Councillor Dillon summed up by saying that it may have been a long time coming but he was happy to put forward the recommendations to Council.The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED.**

27. Motions from Previous Meetings

Members were asked to note the following responses to motions to Council:

Response to the Motion from Councillor Tony Vickers. On Public Funds for Public Access considered by the Executive on 23 March 2023.

Response to the Motion from Councillor Jeff Brooks. On assist the regeneration of the Newbury evening economy and provide support to hospitality businesses, including cafes, restaurants and pubs, considered by the Executive on 23 March 2023.

Response to the Motion from Councillor Jeff Brooks. On booking system at our two HWRCs considered by the Executive on 23 March 2023.

Response to the Motion from Councillor Adrian Abbs. On adopt telephone boxes for use as an Open Access Defibrillator location considered by the Executive on 23 March 2023.

Response to the Motion from Councillor Carolyne Culver. On declare an ecological emergency. Considered by the Executive on 23 March 2023.

Response to the Motion from Councillor Carolyne Culver. On response to COP26 in Glasgow. Considered by the Executive on 23 March 2023.

Response to the Motion from Councillor Adrian Abbs. On response to High Street Canopies. Considered by the Executive on 23 March 2023.

28. Licensing Committee

Council noted that since the last ordinary meeting of the Council, the Licensing Committee met on 25 May 2023 and 10 July 2023.

29. Personnel Committee

Council noted that since the last ordinary meeting of the Council, the Personnel Committee met on 25 May 2023 and 4 July 2023.

30. Governance Committee

Council noted that since the last ordinary meeting of the Council, the Governance Committee met on 25 May 2023 and twice on 26 June 2023.

31. District Planning Committee

Council noted that, since its last ordinary meeting, the District Planning Committeemet on 25 May 2023.

32. Scrutiny Commission

Council noted that since the last ordinary meeting of the Council, the Scrutiny Commission met on 25 May 2023, 20 June 2023 and 17 July 2023.

33. Health Scrutiny Committee

Council noted that since the last ordinary meeting of the Council, the Health Scrutiny Committee met on 25 May 2023 and 13 June 2023.

34. Health and Wellbeing Board

Council noted that since the last ordinary meeting of the Council, the Health and Wellbeing Board met on 28 June 2023 and 13 July 2023.

35. Joint Public Protection Committee

Council noted that since the last ordinary meeting of the Council, the Joint Public Protection Committee met on 12 June 2023.

36. Notices of Motion

The Council considered the under-mentioned Motion (Agenda item 20 refers) submitted in the name of Councillor Carolyne Culver.

The Chairman informed the Council that the motion would be referred to the Executive for consideration.

MOTION: As amended proposed by Councillor Carolyne Culver and seconded by Councillor Martha Vickers:

That the Council:

Recognises the precarious state of the natural world.

Recruit a new ecologist urgently, and ideally more than one, to ensure a.) planning applications are examined by a trained ecologist and b.) the Council has an appropriate expert who can liaise with Windsor and Maidenhead Council to fulfil the collective responsibility of local authorities in Berkshire to create a Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Work with residents and campaign groups to encourage action for nature, by promoting initiatives like #NoMowMay, the planting of trees, the installation of bird boxes, the creation of hedgehog highways, and so on, using Council communication channels and public education opportunities.

Undertake the green infrastructure work promised under the current Local Plan 2012-2026 including mapping and categorisation of all public open spaces to form the basis of a current state assessment of all Council managed lands.

Councillor Culver addressed Council and thanked Councillor Adrian Abbs for enabling the discussion of the motion at Environment Advisory Group (EAG) prior to going to the

Executive and that future meetings of EAG would be in public. She said that the UK was one of the nature depleted countries in the world. Local Authorities had declared Ecological Emergencies as well as Climate Emergencies, however the motion before Council today had to be amended as the ecological emergency had been discussed within the last 6 months. The original motion had been submitted 18 months ago but because of constant delays the motion had to be amended removing ecological emergency.

Councillor Culver went on to say that the Council had assisted wildlife by reducing verge cutting, planting wildflowers and supporting woodlands. These and other initiatives were welcome as we would be doomed if we lost our pollinators. Councils would soon be obliged to produce a Nature Recovery Strategy and the Council needed to recruit an ecologist as a matter of urgency to help support the planning process. We could all help improve the world be it small or large projects, we should not let the challenge before us stop our endeavours. We may not all be able to purchase new equipment but re wilding our gardens would cost nothing. Council needed a proper blue green infrastructure policy in the Local Plan.

Councillor Adrian Abbs said that unfortunately the motion came to him after the Council agenda had been published rather than beforehand when pre discussion could have been undertaken. He had offered that the issue goes to EAG prior to Executive and he had instructed officers to look at the issues.

37. Members' Questions

A full transcription of the public and Member question and answer sessions are available from the following link: Transcription of Q&As.

A question standing in the name of Councillor Woollaston on the subject of the pedestrianisation of Newbury Town Centre was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel.

A question standing in the name of Councillor Mackinnon on the subject of the pedestrianisation of Newbury Town Centre was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel.

A question standing in the name of Councillor Woollaston on the subject of the pedestrianisation of Newbury Town Centre was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel.

A question standing in the name of Councillor Mackinnon on the subject of the Statutory Guidance on highway network management was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel.

A question standing in the name of Councillor Woollaston on the subject of the pedestrianisation of Newbury Town Centre was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel.

A question standing in the name of Councillor Mackinnon on the subject of the pedestrianisation of Newbury Town Centre was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel.

A question standing in the name of Councillor Clark on the subject of the Local Plan Review was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement.

(The meeting commenced at 7.42pm and closed at 9.07pm)

CHAIRMAN ……

Date of Signature ……

Council – 05 October 2023

Item 5 – Declarations of Interest

Verbal Item

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Council – 05 October 2023

Item 6 – Petitions

Verbal Item

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Council – 05 October 2023

Item 7 – Public Questions

To Follow

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Council – 05 October 2023

Item 8 – Membership of Committees

Verbal Item

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Council – 05 October 2023

Item 9 to 16 – Meeting Minutes

Verbal Item

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Draft Council Strategy 2023-2027

Committee considering report:	Council
Date of Committee:	05 October 2023
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Lee Dillon
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	14 September 2023
Report Author:	Catalin Bogos - Performance, Research and Consultation Manager
Forward Plan Ref:	C4417

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To inform Members of the feedback received from the consultation on the Draft Council Strategy 2023 – 2027 and to request that the Strategy (amended in response to the consultation feedback and including the Council Strategy Delivery Plan) is adopted by the Council. A new strategy is needed to set the Council's direction for the next four years by defining new priority areas based on changes to the external and internal intelligence about residents' needs, including the feedback received from our residents' surveys, consultations and the results of the local elections.

2 Recommendation(s)

2.1 That Council adopts the West Berkshire Council Strategy for 2023 – 2027, including the Council Strategy Delivery Plan, (see Appendix B) which includes the changes proposed within this report as a result of feedback from consultation.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	The MTFS (Medium Term Financial Strategy) will be fully aligned with the new Council Strategy.
Human Resource:	None.
Legal:	None.

Risk Management:	None.			
Property:	None.			
Policy:	The Council Strategy is part of the Council's approved Policy Framework.			
	Positive	**Neutral**	**Negative**	**Commentary**
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	☑			The decision to note and use the feedback from consultation in finalising the Council Strategy aims to expand the understanding of the impact of the proposed outcomes and priorities have on local residents and reduce inequalities.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	☑			The new Council Strategy is setting the strategic direction for the next four years with expected improvements on a number of prioritised areas. Changes in policy impacting on groups of population with protected characteristics will involve specific Equality Impact Assessments.
Environmental Impact:	☑			The approval of the strategy results in prioritising a number of outcomes which are expected to positively impact the environment.
Health Impact:	☑			The approval of the strategy results in prioritising a number of outcomes which are expected to positively impact the health of the residents.

ICT Impact:	☑			The approval of the strategy results in prioritising a number of outcomes which are expected to positively impact the ICT infrastructure of the Council.
Digital Services Impact:	☑			The approval of the strategy results in prioritising a number of outcomes which are expected to positively impact the digitisation of service.
Council Strategy Priorities:	☑			The report highlights respondents' views about proposed/draft priorities which informed the final version of the strategy, setting out the priorities for 2023-2027.
Core Business:		☑		The proposed strategy focuses on priorities for 2023-2027 providing assurance that core business/mandatory services will continue to be delivered by the services as part of the priorities and also monitored in detail through service plans.
Data Impact:		☑		The report expands the evidence base used to produce the Council Strategy by reporting respondents' views on the draft Council strategy 2023 – 2027.
Consultation and Engagement:	This paper reports the findings following public consultation on the draft Council Strategy 2023 – 2027 and how these have informed the final version of the strategy. Council staff and Portfolio Holders have been engaged in finalising the council strategy based on this feedback.			

4 Executive Summary

4.1 Extensive consultation and engagement have taken place to produce a draft Council Strategy 2023 – 2027. In addition, the Council has further consulted on this draft before producing the final version of the Strategy (see Appendix B) and consideration was given to pledges in the political programme voted by residents at the local elections in May 2023.

4.2 A new strategy is needed to cover the next electoral cycle, setting up the priority areas, the goals and the outcomes the Council will be focusing on, whilst continuing to deliver

all the mandatory services. The previous Council Strategy expired on the 31st of March 2023.

4.3 This paper is summarising the findings of the consultation on the draft Council Strategy 2023 – 2027. These findings informed the process of finalising the Council Strategy document (see Appendix B).

4.4 The response rate to the consultation has exceeded the levels achieved for previous similar consultations on the draft council strategies. Responses have been received from residents, partner organisations and service providers, councillors and council employees.

4.5 The majority of the respondents stated that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' with the proposed priorities and associated outcomes. The priority about the environment had the highest percentage of positive responses (75%). 'The one focusing on our Communities had the lowest (63%) as a relatively higher proportion of respondents (23%) 'Neither agreed nor disagreed' with this priority.

4.6 Some of the residents who responded to the consultation provided additional qualitative feedback to express support for particular aspects of the priorities and outcomes included in the draft strategy or to highlight areas that they would prioritise.

4.7 The qualitative responses have been grouped into a few broader themes. The feedback received from respondents has been considered by officers and councillors. The response to the feedback has informed the proposals included in this report which are reflected in the version of the Council Strategy 2023 – 2027 enclosed as Appendix B.

4.8 This paper asks for Council's approval of the final version of the Council Strategy 2023 – 2027, including the Council Strategy Delivery Plan.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

5.1 The Council Strategy 2023 - 2027 sets out what the Council aims to achieve over the next four years. This includes its priority areas and the outcomes it seeks to achieve through the delivery of the strategy. It includes the Council Strategy Delivery Plan which provides details about the specific performance measures and targets associated with the outcomes and priorities of the strategy.

5.2 A new strategy is needed as the previous Council Strategy expired on the 31st of March 2023.

5.3 A draft strategy has been produced based on a statistical analysis of the needs of West Berkshire's residents and based on residents' views about what is important for them. These views have been collected through residents' surveys and other engagement session with 'seldom heard' residents. In addition, the Council has conducted a further consultation about the outcomes included in the draft Strategy, which were grouped under five priorities.

5.4 Comments were invited on the draft Council Strategy 2023 – 2027 between 13th January and 26th February 2023. Comments were able to be submitted by the public or organisations via an online survey or through paper copies. The consultation was published on the Council's website and social media channels, and media releases were sent to the local media. Key target groups, organisations and stakeholders were also contacted directly by email and encouraged to comment. Posters have been distributed and displayed at key Council's locations promoting the consultation and hard copies were available at corporate buildings.

Background

5.5 A total of 178 responses were received to the consultation exercise, which is higher than the numbers received in response to previous similar consultations on draft council strategies. These responses can be summarised as follows (multiple options selection was allowed):

(a) 161 (90.4%) from residents of West Berkshire;

(b) 8 (4.5%) from West Berkshire Business owners,

(c) 3 (1.7%) from employees of a West Berkshire Business

(d) Other responses were from West Berkshire Council employees (9.6%), Town and Parish Councillors (5.6%), District Councillors (1.1%), partner organisations (2.2%), West Berkshire Council service providers (0.6%), other (Education and School governors).

5.6 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the public sector equality duty which, in the exercise of its functions, includes the requirement to have due regard to eliminate discrimination, to advance equal opportunity and foster good relations. As a result, it was decided to offer an opportunity for respondents to provide information on their equalities characteristics:

(a) The age groups 45-54, 55-64 and 65-74 had the highest proportion of respondents (ranging from 14.9% to 33.1%).

(b) A total of 91.1% of the people that responded were from a White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British ethnic background.

(c) Of the total respondents: more females responded to the consultation and 0.8% selected 'Other' for their gender;

(d) 27.5% of total respondents considered themselves to have a disability.

(e) 9.6% were the primary carer for an elderly or disabled person.

(f) Between 23% and 37% of respondents did not respond to some of the equalities questions.

6 Themes resulting from the qualitative analysis of the responses to the consultation

6.1 A number of distinct themes have resulted from the qualitative analysis of the 178 responses received as part of the consultation activity.

6.2 The themes are listed starting with the one that included the highest number of comments/responses.

Theme 1: Clarity about the reassurance provided that the Council will continue to deliver the statutory functions

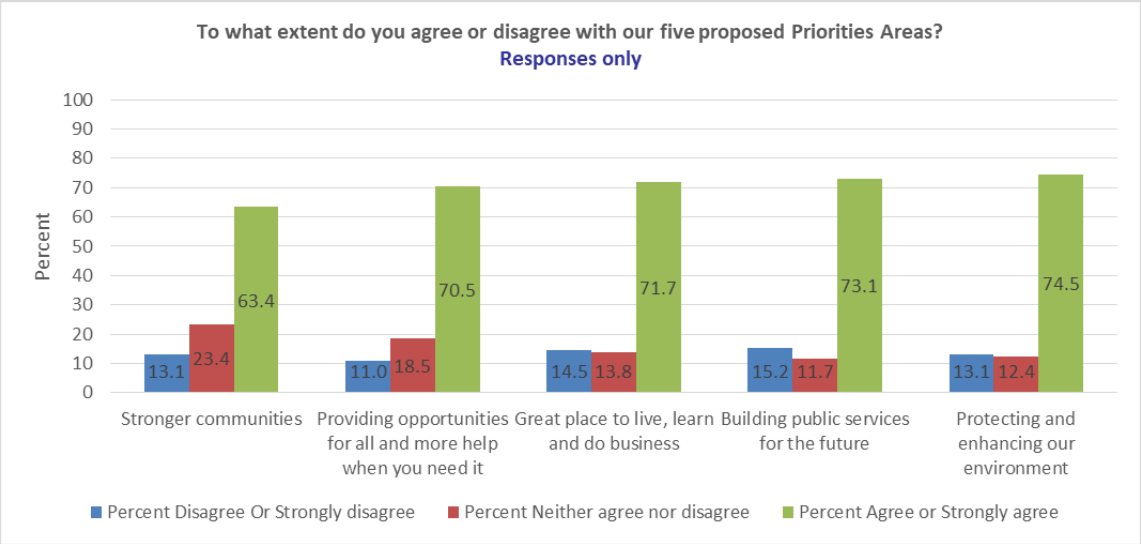
6.3 The vast majority of respondents (139 of 173 respondents) agreed that it is clearly stated in the strategy that the Council will continue to deliver its statutory functions, in addition to the proposed priority areas of the Council Strategy.

6.4 21 of the 34 respondents that disagreed with this statement went on to explain their answers through similar responses to the other questions of the survey and which are listed below.

6.5 **Response:** To provide further assurance, a Council Strategy Delivery Plan is included as part of the Council Strategy to ensure that the core statutory functions are performance managed under the relevant priorities.

Theme 2: Positive feedback on the proposed priorities and commitments

6.6 68 of the 147 respondents who rated the priorities, 'Agreed' or 'Strongly Agreed' with **all five** priority areas. Individual priorities scored between 108 (75%) positive responses for the environment related priority, to 92 (63%) for priority about our communities. For the latter there is a relatively higher proportion of people that provided a neutral answer (23%), compared to 12% to 19% for the other priorities.



6.7 Comments included: 'These areas of importance are central to us all', 'We agree with and support your priority areas, but would like to know more. [additional suggestions are provided for partnership working]', Agree with the priorities but would like to see the

details about how these will be delivered, 'Looks like they have been given good thought and analysis.', 'All these are vital parts of what WBDC should do, and they should not be played off against one another.', 'I agree with them.', 'I think that the priority areas are wholly appropriate and reflecting high quality services provided by the Council and the ambition to improve them further.'

6.8 **Response:** All five priority areas are included in the final version of the Council Strategy 2023 - 2027.

Theme 3: Priorities and outcomes are too generic

6.9 21 of 178 respondents expressed views that the way in which the priorities and outcomes were written could potentially make it difficult to measure progress towards the delivery of the Council's priorities. They suggested that 'SMART' (Simple, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound) objectives should be included. Some indicated that the text should be clearer. A few respondents suggested that financial information for the delivery of the priorities and outcomes should be included.

6.10 **Response**: These comments are noted and addressed by further detailing the goals, outcomes and actions for each priority, including using Gantt charts for easier understanding. The purpose of the Strategy is to set the strategic direction, for the Council's services to focus on, over the medium term. As part of the Strategy's approval, a Council Strategy Delivery Plan is included providing performance measures and targets. The delivery plan will be updated annually, based on progress made with the delivery of the outcomes and considering the internal and external context for the Council. The Delivery Plans will be considered for approval by the Executive at the start of each financial year. Financial information from the Medium Term Financial Strategy is added.

6.11 **Proposal**: Further details are provided against each priority, including Gantt charts and more information about key goals and outcomes. A "Council Strategy Delivery Plan" is included for approval together with the Council Strategy, which will be updated annually and the updates will be approved by the Executive. As a result, the text of the draft Council Strategy was amended to explain how the delivery of the strategy will be detailed as part of the Delivery Plan and that it will be performance managed on a quarterly basis. Financial information and further clarifications of the wording have been included. The wording for priorities is slightly amended to better reflect the focus of the contributing outcomes.

Theme 4: Roads' resurfacing and fixing potholes

6.12 18 of the 178 respondents commented that repairing or resurfacing the roads in the district should be prioritised. Some of the answers were more specific, for example mentioning repairs of rural roads, re-painting faint markings, or the broader aspects of path and pavement repairs, addressing drainage issues and overhanging vegetation.

6.13 **Response**: The quality of roads and the broader aspects related to travel infrastructure are prioritised as outcomes under 'A Prosperous and Resilient West Berkshire' priority.

6.14 **Proposal**: Related performance measures and targets are included in the Council Strategy Delivery Plan and are approved as part of the approval of the Council Strategy.

Theme 5: Planning policies and planning process to protect the environment and heritage

6.15 14 of the 178 respondents added comments suggesting that planning should be prioritised. Their comments included demands to ensure that housing developments are allowed only in the right places, are accompanied by the appropriate developments of infrastructure and services (schools, health centres, roads, shops/supermarkets etc.) and that the unique character and 'village' heritage is preserved and conservation areas are protected. Some also commented about improvements needed regarding the timeliness of the planning process. It is also suggested that the Council Strategy should reference key initiatives and infrastructure developments included in the Council's Capital Programme.

6.16 **Response**: The draft Strategy already included outcomes about carbon neutrality, protecting and enhancing our land, increasing resilience to draughts, sustainable building. However, for clarity and further assurance, an additional outcome is suggested about infrastructure and services linked to new housing developments.

6.17 **Proposal:** It is proposed to add the following outcome under the priority 'A Prosperous and Resilient West Berkshire': '*4.12. Major new housing developments come with suitable infrastructure and enhanced amenities to properly support them'*.

Theme 6: Climate emergency actions

6.18 14 of the 178 answers showed support for prioritising actions to address the climate emergency. A range of suggestions have been made, including setting up the response to the climate crisis as the overarching priority, greener transport/more charging points for Electric Vehicles, installing recycling bins in all public areas, decarbonisation of public services, nature-based solutions to address climate resilience, flood protection, air quality (increasing tree canopy, more climate- and nature- friendly use or land, procurement processes to support a green economy, the Council to support change of behaviours relating to pollution and litter, increase biodiversity, water quality of rivers, river habitats, environmental housing policies, dis-investment from petrochemical industry. Five respondents consider it important that the Council should show leadership, be an exemplar in this area and produce better plans to tackle climate emergency related issues.

6.19 In addition, four respondents expressed some disagreement with prioritising climate emergency actions, considering that the terminology of 'climate emergency' should be better defined, the evidence should be clearer and actions costed. They made links with the cost of such actions compared to the benefits which could be achieved, expressing reservations about deciding on massive spending on this area.

6.20 **Response**: Most of the suggestions were already included draft Strategy under the 'Protecting and enhancing our environment' priority. However, for clarity amendments are suggested to the wording of the priority itself – changing to '*Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency*' - and the outcome relating to protecting and enhancing West Berkshire's natural beauty includes actions about the quality of water and

waterways. In terms of giving more importance to the environmental priority above the others, this was avoided when drafting the Strategy and will not be changed in the final version, as we recognise the need to ensure a balanced and integrated approach in setting the strategic direction for Council's services and because all five priorities are impacting each other. This is also in line with feedback from consultation (see 6.7) about not 'playing priorities against each other'. In response to the feedback, this is clarified in the final version of the Strategy.

6.21 **Proposal:** It is proposed to amend the wording of one of the priorities: 'Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency'. One outcome (Protecting and enhancing West Berkshire's natural beauty) includes actions about protecting the quality water and watercourses.

Theme 7: Improve recycling

6.22 12 of the 178 responses added suggestions to enhance recycling. These suggestions focused on a number of specific areas, including easier access to the waste and recycling centres (by reducing rules, eliminate booking and charges), to add recycling bins to all public areas, that a wider range of materials should be recycled through kerb collection service, to reduce the number of bins/boxes by adopting mixed recycling to make it easier for residents to recycle more, the availability of food waste collection should be expanded to reach all residents.

6.23 **Response**: As the overarching strategic document, the Council Strategy focuses on priorities and the outcomes that we will seek to achieve. The suggestions from consultation focus on the ways in which the outcome about more recycling can be achieved. For clarity, an amendment of the outcome has been considered and specific targets about the delivery of the outcome are included in the Council Strategy Delivery Plan.

6.24 **Proposal:** It is proposed to amend the wording of one outcome to: 'Increased level of waste reused, recycled or composted at home, from public spaces and through our recycling centres'.

Theme 6: Support businesses, the high street, town centres and rural communities (local shops etc.)

6.25 12 of the 178 respondents highlighted that it is important to support businesses, our high streets, our rural and small businesses. Responses included suggestions that individual shops should be supported, employers enabled to remain in the district, support should be provided to local farmers. Expected outcomes in this area relate to thriving town centres and services available locally to residents in urban and rural areas.

6.26 **Response**: The points raised by residents are in line with the outcomes already included in the draft Council Strategy. For clarity the wording of the priority is changed to reflect the broader perspective of a prosperous district.

6.27 **Proposal:** It is proposed to amend the wording of the priority to: 'A Prosperous and Resilient West Berkshire'.

Theme 7: Focus on health and wellbeing, provide recreational, sports and leisure facilities

6.28 11 of the 178 responses included suggestions about focusing on the health and wellbeing of the residents. These range from prioritising working with the Council's health sector partners (e.g. Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership) to build a dementia-friendly world, or continuing to support young people's mental health after they leave school, to ensuring sport and leisure facilities (indoors and outdoors) are available for the benefit of residents' health and wellbeing.

6.29 **Response**: A number of similar outcomes covering these aspects are rationalised into two key ones.

6.30 **Proposal:** A number of outcomes are grouped/rationalised into the following two: 'Residents are supported to access the mental health services that they need' and 'Residents facing the greatest challenges are prioritised by wellbeing and social care services'.

Theme 8: Streets' and other public spaces' cleanliness

6.31 9 of the 178 respondents provided comments recommending that the strategy should include outcomes relating to cleaner streets and public spaces. The areas mentioned include care of green spaces, tackling overhanging greenery, roadside rubbish, fly tipping, more street/pavement sweeping, keeping pavements and car parking areas tidy.

6.32 **Response**: As outcomes are already included in the draft Council Strategy about these issues, no further amendments are suggested.

Theme 9: Supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable residents, including helping them to help themselves

6.33 8 of the 178 respondents commented on the importance of supporting the most vulnerable residents. The majority of these answers focused on the importance of providing help to people with additional needs, disabilities and carers. Suggested actions include, to encourage vulnerable people to be part of the community, to ensure provision for children with special educational needs, to support older people, including by providing quality care homes and tackling loneliness/isolation. In contrast, three of the responses suggested that people should be helped to help themselves or to reduce reliance on public services which they see as unaffordable.

6.34 **Response**: The respondents' points are covered by the outcomes already included in the draft Council Strategy. As per paragraph 6.30 above, further clarification is proposed to two of the outcomes. No other amendments are proposed.

Theme 10: Education, skills, apprenticeships

6.35 8 of the 178 responses provided comments to highlight the importance of education and skills for prioritisation in the Council Strategy. They fed back that education is an essential outcome for residents and that they would like to see better schools which

should not be overcrowded. In addition to focusing on education attainment and vocational education, comments suggest a focus on other educational opportunities such as apprenticeships, upskilling people already in employment, but also on ensuring sufficient teachers for West Berkshire's schools.

6.36 **Response**: Education attainment, high quality schools, life-long learning, apprenticeships and work experience outcomes are already included in the Strategy. No other amendments are proposed to the outcomes. However, combined with theme 9 (see paragraph 6.33) a clarification is suggested to the wording of the priority to capture the fairness in West Berkshire so everyone, including the residents facing challenges can benefit of the opportunities in the district.

6.37 **Proposal**: The wording of the priority is changed to Fairer West Berkshire with Opportunities for All.

Theme 11: Public transport/alternative transport options

6.38 7 of the 178 responses considered that public transport and alternatives to the more polluting options should be included in the Strategy. Some also linked the prioritisation of public transport with enabling residents to opt for solutions supporting a cleaner environment. It is also seen as an essential service for rural communities. Better train service to London is also mentioned, in particular following the electrification of the line.

6.39 **Response**: Outcomes in the draft Strategy are covering the suggestions about leading on and supporting residents to make choices for a cleaner environment, including in relation to transport. There is a specific outcome referring to better travel solutions, including for our rural areas. No other amendments are proposed.

Proposals

6.40 It is proposed that the feedback from the public consultation is noted and that the amended version of the Council Strategy (see Appendix B Council Strategy 2023 – 2027), which includes the proposed changes made in response to the feedback received, is adopted by the Council.

7 Other options considered

7.1 An alternative option was to continue to focus on the priorities set in 2019 for the Council Strategy 2019 – 2023. However, this option was disregarded due to significant changes in the internal and external context in which the Council operates, evolving needs of our residents, as highlighted by the evidence base and by the feedback received from residents, through the representative residents' survey and from consultation exercises, and the results of the local elections in May 2023.

7.2 In producing the draft Council Strategy there has been extensive consultation and engagement (residents' surveys, targeted engagement sessions with residents that do not usually take the opportunity to express their views through consultations, consultation on other specific strategies and plans). The alternative to adopt the draft Council Strategy 2023-2027, without additional public consultation on the draft version, was disregarded as the Council recognises that it has not only a duty to consult, but a

responsibility and ambition to consult residents in finalising the plans that impact them. This report highlights the changes made following this additional consultation process.

8 Conclusion

8.1 A better level of response was received to the consultation on the Draft Council Strategy 2023 - 2027 from individuals and on behalf of a number of organisations, compared to previous similar exercises.

8.2 The feedback received in response to the public consultation on the Council Strategy shows that a high proportion of respondents agree or strongly agree with the priority areas and the outcomes suggested in the draft Council Strategy.

8.3 Some of the respondents have provided additional details, highlighting the importance of particular priorities or outcomes for them. All responses have been analysed and grouped by themes. A response is provided to these themes and where relevant, changes have been proposed and included in an amended version of the Strategy. An important change is that the Strategy includes the Council Strategy Delivery Plan which will be updated annually. The Council is asked to adopt this amended version of the Strategy.

9 Appendices

9.1 Appendix A - Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

9.2 Appendix B – Council Strategy 2023-2027 (the version amended following consultation in Jan 2023)

Background Papers:

Council Strategy 2019 – 2023

West Berkshire Council Strategy 2023 – 2027 Consultation Feedback - Summary Report (Executive Committee 23 Mar 2023)

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☐ No: ☒

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	☒
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	☐
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	☐
Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months	☐
Item is Urgent Key Decision	☐

Report is to note only ☐

Wards affected: All wards

Officer details:

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Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:	To inform the Council about the feedback to consultation and ask for the approval of the amended version of the Council Strategy 2023 – 2027 based on this feedback.
Summary of relevant legislation:	Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the public sector equality duty which, in the exercise of its functions, includes the requirement to have due regard to eliminate discrimination, to advance equal opportunity and foster good relations.
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's priorities for improvement? • Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes • Support everyone to reach their full potential • Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire • Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy Maintain a green district • Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships	**Yes ☐ No ☒** The feedback from consultation is detailed in this report and has informed the production of the Council Strategy 2023-27.
Name of Budget Holder:	**n/a**
Name of Service/Directorate:	**Strategy and Governance/Resources**
Name of assessor:	Catalin Bogos
Date of assessment:	30/08/2023
Version and release date (if applicable):	n/a

Is this a …. ?		**Is this policy, strategy, function or service … ?**	
Policy	**Yes ☐ No ☐**	**New or proposed**	**Yes ☒ No ☐**
Strategy	**Yes ☒ No ☐**	**Already exists and is being reviewed**	**Yes ☐ No ☐**
Function	**Yes ☐ No ☐**	**Is changing**	**Yes ☐ No ☐**

Service	Yes ☐ No ☐

(1) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	To adopt the Council Strategy 2023 -27 updated based on the feedback from public consultation.
Objectives:	Decision makers note the feedback from consultation and adopt the final version of the Council Strategy 2023 – 2027.
Outcomes:	The approved Council Strategy 2023 – 2027 sets the strategic direction for council services for the next four years.
Benefits:	West Berkshire residents, local businesses and other stakeholders will benefit of even better outcomes as the Council ensures focus on prioritised outcomes which are most important for residents whilst continuing to deliver its statutory functions.

(2) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?		
Group Affected	**What might be the effect?**	**Information to support this**
Age	If approved, the suggested priorities and outcomes within the draft strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for all local people.	The draft Council Strategy has been developed using a wide range of evidence about residents' needs, including resident's views. This paper further expands on highlighting the feedback from consultation and how this was used to finalise the Strategy.
Disability		
Gender Reassignment		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		
Pregnancy and Maternity		
Race		
Religion or Belief		
Sex		
Sexual Orientation		
Further Comments:		

(3) Result	
Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☒
If approved, the suggested priorities within the draft strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for all local people.	
Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☒
If approved, the suggested priorities within the draft strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for all local people.	

(4) Identify next steps as appropriate:	
EqIA Stage 2 required	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☒
Owner of EqIA Stage Two:	
Timescale for EqIA Stage Two:	

Name: Catalin Bogos **Date: 30/08/2023**

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Council Strategy 2023-2027







Making West Berkshire greener, fairer and more prosperous, with thriving communities and services we are proud of





West Berkshire COUNCIL





Making West Berkshire greener, fairer and more prosperous, with thriving communities and services we are proud of





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Foreword



Lee Dillon
Leader of the Council

I am delighted to introduce the new Council Strategy for 2023-2027. This strategy takes on board feedback from the consultation carried out earlier in the year and also reflects the manifesto commitments that saw the Liberal Democrats win 29 of the 43 council seats on offer and become the new administration.

This strategy lays out what we want to achieve and, for the first time for West Berkshire Council, includes specific, measurable goals and a clear timeline for the objectives that underpin our priorities – all in one document for clarity and transparency. This new approach will clearly signal to you, our residents and local businesses, how we will work to improve the Council and deliver outcomes that matter.

As you will see in the timelines, I'm proud to say that we have already implemented some key changes: Council meetings are more open than ever before, we have asked the Opposition councillors to take over chairing the main scrutiny committee, so we don't mark our own homework, and we have re-introduced Community Forums so we can get your input and feedback directly on issues that are important for the district.

As we proceed over the next four years we do so with a commitment to bring change, but we also understand the limited resources we are working with. This Administration will deliver change, but we will also ensure we get the Council back onto a secure financial footing. The long-term future of the Council will always be our biggest priority as that secures the services that are delivered within our community. By transforming the way we work we can deliver more for less and can embrace new technologies to support us on our journey.

West Berkshire is a beautiful place to live and work in, and over the next four years we work hard everyday to make it ***greener, fairer and more prosperous, with thriving communities and services we are proud of.***



Nigel Lynn
Chief Executive

Welcome to the New Council Strategy 2023 to 2027, setting out the strategic direction for the Council's services. It defines our priorities over the next four years and our contribution toward the aspirations of the West Berkshire Vision 2036. The strategy ensures that all services are working together to deliver these priorities, whilst ensuring that all the mandatory services are also being provided.

A statistical analysis of the evolving environmental, economic, health and social care needs of our residents has been used to inform our priorities. It confirmed, once again, that West Berkshire has a wonderful environment, strong economy, an overall healthy and affluent population. We should be proud that the district has shown strong resilience to unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic challenges, delivering essential services, whilst supporting residents to save lives and livelihoods. The impacts of the pandemic and international humanitarian crises, and the rise in the cost of living, have informed the approach for this strategy, which focuses on exciting new projects to enhance the lives of local people.

We have given particular attention to capture the feedback from our residents to fully understand their needs. This included a Covid-19 survey, a representative residents' survey and engagement with residents that are not usually taking their opportunities to make their voices heard. In addition, we have consulted on the draft priorities and outcomes, and ensured it reflects the agenda of the new Liberal Democrat's administration. As a result, over the next four years, we will strive for operational excellence, while delivering the Council priorities. The priorities have equal importance, as we recognise that we need to ensure a balanced and integrated approach.

Our progress will be assessed against measures and targets included in the Council Strategy Delivery Plan, which will be updated annually and reported quarterly to the Council's Executive. I know that a strategic plan directs the organisation for the future. It also helps us establish realistic and stretching goals that are in line with the vision and mission of the Council's new administration. This strategy will help empower our staff to continuously improve our services to our residents.

What the Council Does and Role of the Strategy

West Berkshire Council provides over 700 statutory services for our residents and businesses. Our residents rely on us to:

- ensure older people and vulnerable adults are looked after and supported to live independently
- maintain our roads and transport infrastructure, parks, open spaces and buildings
- offer housing services
- support education, early years and children with special educational needs
- keep children safe and families together
- encourage economic development
- provide planning services
- support culture, museums and libraries
- provide benefits and collect council taxes and business rates
- collect bins and provide recycling services
- work with communities to support public health and wellbeing

This is what we do every day, and the way we do it is mapped out in our Service Plans. Some parts of the Service Plans are about what we do now and some are about areas that the Council, based on the evidence base and the consultation with residents, wants to prioritise as part of the Council Strategy.





The Council Strategy is about the future, improvements and/or change:

- improving or changing what we do or how we do it
- the introduction of new services or amenities

The strategy sets out what key changes we want to make, what key actions we will take to implement the changes and when, and when the changes will be introduced. As we implement this strategy, the Council will become better at delivering the services you need and will also provide some of the additional things you have asked for.

Having a clear strategy is important because:

- it shows what our priorities are and therefore helps with decision-making
- it gives direction to everyone in the organisation, ensuring all services are working together towards the priorities set in the strategy
- it provides the context and key themes for a range of more specific strategies within the Council, such as the Adult Social Care strategy or the Environment strategy
- it provides focus for the Executive and Senior Leadership
- it provides a framework for evaluating the Council's performance

The strategy is supported by the Delivery Plan which contains more detail on the actions we will take and when, and what improvements we expect as a result. **The link to the Delivery Plan, including a QR code for easy access, are provided at the end of this document.**

The rest of this document highlights the key goals, outcomes and actions which are further detailed in the Delivery Plan. To make the strategy clearer and easier to understand, each section starts with a visual summary showing what we plan to do each year from 2023 to 2027. These summary plans are then supported with more detailed explanations.

Council Strategy Framework

The Purpose of the strategy:

Making West Berkshire greener, fairer and more prosperous, with thriving communities and services we are proud of

Overarching values:

Integrity
'we act with integrity ensuring all decisions are lawful, transparent and impartial'

Customer focused
'we listen to our customers and do our best for them'

Fairness
'we will always treat everyone fairly'

The Priorities of the strategy:

Services We Are Proud of

- Ensure West Berkshire Council continues to offer good customer service to our residents and businesses
- Transform the way the Council works
- Treat our residents with respect, be transparent in our decision making
- Make West Berkshire Council an employer of choice

A Fairer West Berkshire with Opportunities for All

- Prioritise support for those who need it most
- Deliver more homes that people can afford
- Support our Local Authority maintained schools to drive up standards

Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency

- West Berkshire Council to achieve net zero by 2030 and improves biodiversity
- Help our residents and businesses to save money and the environment
- Help to make the whole of West Berkshire net zero

A Prosperous and Resilient West Berkshire

- Proactively engage with and support businesses to grow and thrive
- Regeneration of Bond Riverside and build a new community sports stadium
- Continue to invest in key infrastructure and public transport
- Ensure new housing developments come with suitable infrastructure and enhanced amenities

Thriving Communities with a Strong Local Voice

- Encourage and support our local communities to take the lead in driving what is important to them
- Help our residents lead fulfilled and active lives
- Work with partners and the local communities to enhance our main towns and large villages
- Help our villages to remain vibrant long term

The Council Strategy Delivery Plan:

Detailed actions, measures and timescales to deliver the goals and outcomes are included in the Council Strategy Delivery Plan which will be reviewed at least annually and for which progress will be reported as part of the quarterly performance management report to the Executive.

Priority: 1. Services We Are Proud of – goals and key milestones/initiatives

2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
1.A. Ensure West Berkshire Council offers good customer service to our residents and businesses				
Support all our customers through ongoing delivery of our service plans				
1. Introduce strong budgetary control	1. Peer review to drive best practice	Take actions to improve following Peer Review		
	Improve digital access for our customers Increase reach of our resident communications			
1.B. Transform the way the Council works to deliver operational excellence				
1. Identify areas for Transformation 2. Agree Transformation Plan with resources and deliverables	Ongoing implementation of Transformation Plan			
		1. Renew Vision for West Berkshire		
1.C. Treat our residents with respect, be transparent in our decision making and accountable for our actions				
1. Scrutiny chaired by opposition **2. Advisory Group open to public** **3. Initial response to ≥ 80% of Petitions & Motions in ≤4 months** **4. Planning notification letters** **5. Respect for Public questions**	Regular updates on progress and performance. Update Council policies and processes to underpin transparency, accountability and respect			
	2. Review the CIL process			
1.D. Make West Berkshire Council an employer of choice				
1. Begin switching agency staff to permanent **2. Simplify the application process for jobs at WBC**	Reduce staff turnover. Reduce number of agency workers. Increase staff engagement and % staff who would recommend working at WBC			
	1. Staff Engagement Survey 2. Develop Employee value proposition & review how we recognise staff 3. Deliver WBC apprenticeship & work experience scheme	Changes based on survey	1. Staff Engagement Survey	Changes based on survey 1. Staff engagement >73% 2. % staff recommend WBC >50% 3. Staff turnover down to < 13.5%

Services We Are Proud of – details about goals, outcomes and actions

1.A. Ensure West Berkshire Council offers good customer service to our residents and businesses



1.1. Good quality public services for all (compared to similar local authorities in England)
- 1.1.1. Support all our customers through ongoing delivery of our service plans

1.2. Continually improving customer experience and enable digital access to services for the residents that want and can access them

1.3. Increase the reach of Council communications to residents and explore new channels to better engage

1.4. Ask other councils to review our policies and processes (a peer review) in 2024 to highlight our strengths and show where we need to improve

1.5. Strong budgetary control, use of resources and initiatives to maximise financial efficiency
- 15.1. Always aiming for investments that save money / generate revenue and provide a benefit to our community. For example saving money and the environment by investing in solar panels
- 1.5.2. Considering the social, environmental and ethical impact of West Berkshire Council investment

1.6. Maintain cleanliness of our streets and other public spaces

1.B. Transform the way the Council works to deliver operational excellence

1.7. The Council continues to deliver our statutory services to our residents and businesses in the face of economic uncertainty and increasing demand, by transforming the ways of working (and Council infrastructure) to achieve operational excellence. By the end of 2023, we will agree a plan to transform the following six priority areas:
- Business support review- bring together and simplify administrative functions into a central support unit
- Strategic asset and locality service delivery model review - rationalisation of corporate buildings and co-location of Council Services
- Place Service Improvement Plan- improve efficiency and customer service in the Council's Planning Service
- Corporate review of recruitment- considering ways to improve our recruitment processes whilst reducing agency costs
- Review of Care Home provision- development of in-depth business case for the future role of the Council in local residential care provision
- Review of Home to School Transport- review of the service delivery model for home to school transport to identify efficiencies

1.8. Implement the Transformation Plan starting in 2024

1.9. Renew the Vision for West Berkshire, starting in 2025

1.C. Treat our residents with respect, be transparent in our decision making and accountable for our actions

1.10. Residents more engaged through more transparent decision-making processes about the services that impact them

1.10.1. Ensure an Opposition Party Councillor chairs the Council's scrutiny committee and change the Council constitution / standing orders to make this a requirement in future

1.10.2 Reduce the amount of information being considered in private by West Berkshire Council, including opening advisory groups to public scrutiny

1.11. Residents are more aware of the Council's services and how well we are performing

1.11.1. Make clear, measurable commitments and regularly review and publish our progress against them

1.11.2. Keep residents informed of changes in their local area by re-introducing neighbour notification letters for planning applications in 2024

1.12. Our residents and partners feel they are treated with respect

1.12.1. Listen carefully to questions from members of the public during our meetings, allow reasonable follow-up questions and provide written answers within five working days

1.12.2. Ensure the Council provides at least an initial response to at least 80% of motions and petitions within a maximum of four months, and seek to reduce this response time further

1.12.3. Carry out a full review of West Berkshire's Community Infrastructure Levy process (2024)

1.D. Make West Berkshire Council an employer of choice

1.13. West Berkshire Council is an employer of choice

1.13.1. Increase staff engagement to above average for the public sector and carry out employee attitude surveys (2024 and then 2026)
Take improvement actions following the results of each survey, benchmark, and increase the proportion of staff who would recommend West Berkshire as a great place to work

1.13.2. Deliver an effective apprentice and work experience programme to offer opportunities to residents and to help develop our own talent pipeline

1.13.3. Staff turnover reduced to < 13.5% by 2027

1.13.4. Develop an Employee Value Proposition, to ensure we are as competitive and attractive as possible (2024)

1.13.5. Carry out a review of how we recognise staff performance and make changes accordingly (2024)

1.13.6. Switch agency staff to become permanent employees of the council

1.13.7. Simplify the application process for jobs at West Berkshire Council

Priority: 2. A Fairer West Berkshire with Opportunities for All – goals and key milestones/initiatives

2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
2.A. Prioritise support for those who need it most				
Drive standards in Adult Social Care and Children's Care. Increase the number of foster carers. Reduce poverty related hunger.				
1. Prioritise funding for mental health services	1. Review early intervention options 2. Identify solutions for homelessness 3. Review SEND provision 4. Create housing forum for tenants 5. Adult Social Care provision review	Reduce wait time for children's mental health support Reduce homelessness Improve SEND provision Give voice to tenants		1. ASC & CFS services Good/Excellent 2. Foster carers up 12% since 2022 3. Wait time for children's mental health down by 40% vs 2022
2.B. Deliver more homes that people can afford				
Deliver ≥ 125 affordable homes per year. Bring more empty homes back into use.				
1. Review how many dwellings are Affordable vs Social Rent, and link to policy	1. Deliver more houses for Social Rent and Affordable Rent ourselves and JV - create plan to deliver			1. > 500 new affordable homes delivered since May 2023
2.C. Support our local authority maintained schools to drive up standards				
Good / excellent education attainment, exceeding national levels. Work to retain current schools within the Local Authority.				
1. Endeavour to retain current schools within the Local Authority rather than becoming academies / joining multi academy trusts	1. Review WBC education support 2. Create plan to close attainment gap; focus on early years & deprivation 3. Create plan for targeted additional support for staff & governors pre-Ofsted	Improve education support and structure Reduce the attainment gap Better support staff and governors pre-Ofsted		1. Attainment gap reduced vs 2022 2. All LA Maintained schools rated Good or Excellent

A Fairer West Berkshire with Opportunities for All – details about goals, outcomes and actions

2.A. Prioritise support for those who need it most



2.1. Good or better (with ambition for excellent) Adult Social Care and Children and Family Services (Ofsted and Care Quality Commission ratings)

2.2. Vulnerable children and families supported at early stages to prevent the need for more critical or statutory social services

- 2.2.1. Ensure care packages are in place as early as possible through earlier initial care assessments
- 2.2.2. Work with families and stakeholders to keep children safe in their homes. If children do have to go into care, we will increase the number of successful Children in Care placements

2.3. Solutions are identified to prevent homelessness and avoid rough sleeping

- 2.3.1. Offer accommodation to verified rough sleepers in West Berkshire and support households at risk of homelessness

2.4. Improved enforcement of good standards in rented and supported housing

- 2.4.1. Create a housing forum to take place in public (to include registered providers of housing and licensed houses for multiple occupancy within West Berkshire), to give tenants a greater voice

2.5. Residents are supported to access the mental health services that they need

- 2.5.1. Prioritise funding to reduce wait times for children's mental heath services
- 2.5.2. Conduct a full review of Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) capacity and model in West Berkshire

2.6. Residents facing the greatest challenges are prioritised by wellbeing and social care services

- 2.6.1. Increase the number of foster carers
- 2.6.2. Tackle hunger-related poverty in young people

2.7. Review the way that we provide services for those requiring Adult Social Care to ensure that we provide the highest quality services, in the most sustainable way, in the medium and long term. The review and the resulting strategy to be published by March 2024

2.B. Deliver more homes that people can afford

2.8. Increased number of homes that people can afford

- 2.8.1. Deliver over 1000 affordable new homes by 2030
- 2.8.2. Work with housing providers to develop local home ownership models
- 2.8.3. Bring more empty homes back into use
- 2.8.4. Deliver more social rent and affordable housing ourselves and with housing associations through joint ventures with partners
- 2.8.5. Review the share of dwellings that are affordable rent (versus social rent) and consider changing the policy

2.C. Support our local authority maintained schools to drive up standards

2.9. Good education attainment results, exceeding National levels

2.9.1. Work hard to close the attainment gap across the district in our Local Authority maintained schools, as we believe that education is the key to future life-chances. We will focus on early years attainment especially in areas of deprivation. We will develop a clear plan in 2024 and start to implement it in 2025

2.9.2. Review the way the Council provides support to our Local Authority maintained schools in 2024, and start to implement improvements from 2025

2.10. Good and Outstanding schools (Ofsted rating)

2.10.1. Strive for all our Local Authority maintained schools to be Ofsted rated 'good' or 'outstanding', and supporting academies to do the same. We will support school staff and governors with additional preparation and checks prior to their Ofsted inspections. In 2024, we will develop a clear plan with agreed targets and start to implement it in 2025

2.11. Endeavor to retain all current Local Authority maintained schools within the Local Authority, rather than becoming academies or part of a multi academy trust

Priority: 3. Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency – goals and key milestones/initiatives

2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
3.A. West Berkshire Council to achieve net zero by 2030				
Reduce CO2 emissions from Council assets & activities year on year including installation of solar panels, efficient lighting & heating and proper insulation; and converting fleet to EVs				
	1. Update Environment Strategy to include improving biodiversity 2. Agree environmental standard for all WBC buildings to meet	Implement updated Environment Strategy (ongoing to 2030) 1. Grazeley solar farm switch on		
3.B. Help our residents and businesses to save money and the environment				
Group purchasing schemes to enable residents to switch to greener energy, install solar panel and improve insulation				
Increase the number of on-street EV charge points by > 40 p.a. Ensure all suitable Council car parks have EV charge points				
	1. Allow EVs to be charged overnight in Council-owned car parks			All Car Club vehicles to be electric by end 2027
3.C. Help to make the whole area of West Berkshire Net Zero				
1. Create a new West Berkshire Sustainability Hub	1. Review kerbside recycling & plan 2. Start phase out of green bin charge 3. Create an Active Travel Plan 4. Use Council procurement processes and terms to drive lower / carbon neutral projects 5. Work with our transport providers to convert their fleets to EVs 6. Trial extended pedestrianisation	Implement updated kerbside recycling plan. Continue phase out of green bin charge. Implementation of the Active Travel Plan. Continue to use Council procurement to drive down CO2. Our transport providers continue to convert fleets to EVs.		

Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency – details about goals, outcomes and actions

3.A. West Berkshire Council to achieve net zero by 2030 and improve biodiversity



3.1. West Berkshire Council achieves net zero by 2030, with clear targets and regular independent audits

- 3.1.1. Install solar panels, proper insulation and efficient lighting and heating systems in council-owned buildings and other assets
- 3.1.2. Grazeley Solar farm going live by the end of the 2024 /25 financial year
- 3.1.3. Ensure the use of low/ zero carbon energy tariffs wherever possible
- 3.1.4. Convert the Council 'light' vehicle fleet to Electric Vehicles
- 3.1.5. Review and update the Council Environment Strategy and plans in 2024, so that we can confirm further initiatives with timescales and their expected impact. The new strategy will include increasing biodiversity

3.2. Over time, Council properties are enhanced to meet a newly agreed environmental standard

- 3.2.1. Agree an environmental standard for Council properties to meet, and then develop a pipeline of assessments and upgrades to meet this new standard. The standard to be agreed in 2024, and then investigate funding options

3.B. Help our residents and businesses to save money and the environment

3.3. Residents have opportunities to switch to greener energy providers at lower cost, through group switching schemes

3.4. Residents have opportunities to install solar panels and other clean energy systems, through group purchasing schemes

3.5. Support the move to electric vehicles by expanding the number of Electric Vehicle charging points where needed, and allowing residents to use council car parks to charge their cars overnight

3.6. All Car Club vehicles to be electric by end 2027

3.C. Help to make the whole of West Berkshire net zero

3.7. Residents and businesses contribute to achieve net-zero carbon emissions for the District

3.7.1. Use West Berkshire Council's purchasing power to encourage the reduction of carbon emissions in the wider community, updating all our procurement policies to reflect this. The future carbon impact will become a key aspect of tender assessments, with bidders being encouraged to aim for carbon neutrality, and required to report the actual levels achieved. Implement in 2024

3.8. Increased level of waste reused, recycled or composted at home, from public spaces and through our recycling centres

3.8.1. Conduct a full review of kerbside recycling with the aim of increasing what can be collected. Providing grants and officer support to set up recycling clubs, for items not recycled at the kerbside

3.9. The green bin charge to be phased out

3.10. Increase education around recycling and its benefits, by working with schools and communities

3.11. More opportunities for Active Travel in the district

3.11.1. Trial an extension to pedestrianisation hours in Newbury town centre

3.11.2. Create an Active Travel Plan in 2024 with clear vision and annual targets. This will subsequently form part of the updated Local Transport Plan

3.11.3. Focus on walking and cycling in transport plans

3.11.4. Create a plan with annual targets, to provide new / additional secure bike storage at key locations, e.g. bus stations and busy high density residential areas and flats

3.12. Our transport providers are converting their fleets to Electric Vehicles

3.12.1. Work with our transport providers to convert their fleets to Electric Vehicles

3.13. Create a West Berkshire Sustainability Hub, to help deliver communications between residents, communities, environmental groups and businesses on how everyone can do their part in helping West Berkshire on its path to a healthier future whilst also improving outcomes for the ecology

3.14. Protecting and enhancing West Berkshire's natural beauty (e.g. our Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty), working collaboratively with the Government and other local authorities and organisations

3.14.1. Fulfill our legal responsibilities to the watercourses in the Council's ownership

3.14.2. Using the power of the Council, wherever possible, to hold Thames Water to account over continued sewage discharges into our watercourses, blocked sewers and leaks in our district

Priority: 4. A Prosperous and Resilient West Berkshire – goals and key milestones/initiatives

2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
4.A. Proactively engage with, attract and support businesses in West Berkshire to grow and thrive				
Annual Rural Business Forum & Annual Business Conference. Support our rural business clusters. Work with the Newbury BID. Attract new businesses to West Berkshire. Support start-ups.				
Support ongoing skills development by working with partners to deliver lifelong learning opportunities, apprenticeships, work clubs, mentoring and on the job training.				
		1. Pilot first landed Estate Plan	Deliver at least one new landed Estate Plan per year	
4.B. Regeneration of Bond Riverside and build a new community sports stadium				
	1. Complete Bond Riverside Regeneration Programme review 2. Work with the local sporting community to finalise plans for new Community Sports Stadium at Faraday Road	Regeneration of Bond Riverside. (Will continue beyond 2027)		
		Commission and build new Community Sports Stadium		1. Our ambition is to open a new Community Sports Stadium in Faraday Road in 2027
4.C. Continue to invest in key infrastructure and public transport				
Primary & secondary road network maintained in good state of repair. Expand flood prevention schemes.				
	1. Potholes strategy and plan 2. Public Transport Plan	Implement Potholes Plan and incorporate into new Highway Asset Management Plan		
		Implement Public Transport Plan and incorporate into new Local Transport Plan		
4.D. Ensure new housing developments come with suitable infrastructure and enhanced amenities				
Amend Local Plan to ensure new housing developments come with suitable infrastructure and enhanced amenities				

A Prosperous and Resilient West Berkshire – details about goals, outcomes and actions

4.A. Proactively engage with, attract and support businesses in West Berkshire to grow and thrive



4.1. Routes to employment are enhanced, including through lifelong learning, apprenticeships and further education

- 4.1.1. Work with local education providers, the Local Enterprise Partnership and Chambers of Commerce to create work clubs and programmes to gain skills while in work
- 4.1.2. Launch a mentoring programme for children with local businesses

4.2. Businesses continue to invest in West Berkshire to remain competitive through a mixed economy

- 4.2.1. Attract businesses to move to West Berkshire, and encourage and support new businesses to start up

4.3. Continued support for rural-based jobs by working with our existing rural clusters and supporting the environment around centres of excellence

- 4.3.1. Hold an annual Rural Business Forum, to enable better support for farmers, land owners and rural businesses
- 4.3.2. Regular meetings and working with our existing rural clusters (viticulture, horse racing, technology, traditional farming, etc) and supporting the environment around centres of excellence

4.4. Landowners supported to develop (landed) Estate Plans that deliver clear community benefits in terms of employment and environmental and biodiversity gains, as well as affordable housing for their key workers

Pilot first Estate Plan in 2025, and aim for at least one per year from 2026 onwards

4.5. Better engage with local businesses and help make West Berkshire more attractive for businesses to create more jobs for residents

- 4.5.1. Hold an annual Business Conference with local businesses

4.6. Local economic growth supported by infrastructure developments

4.B. Regeneration of Bond Riverside and build a new community sports stadium

4.7. The Bond Riverside regeneration programme is progressed

- 4.7.1. Bond Riverside regeneration programme review completed by early 2024
- 4.7.2. Work with local businesses, leaseholders, developers and Newbury Town Council, to start the regeneration of Bond Riverside in 2025 and make it an attractive place for businesses and their employees

4.C. Continue to invest in key infrastructure and public transport

4.9. Our primary, secondary and local road networks are maintained in a good state of repair

4.9.1. Potholes strategy and plan ready in 2024. This will then be incorporated into the updated Highway Asset Management Plan in 2025

4.10. Increase resilience to climate change by expanding flood prevention and minimising impacts of droughts

4.11. Better travel options available to our residents, including in rural areas

4.11.1. Work with transport providers and local businesses to develop a Public Transport Plan in 2024, which will investigate more evening bus services. This will feed into the updated Local Transport Plan in 2025

4.D. Ensure new housing developments come with suitable infrastructure and enhanced amenities

4.12. Local plan revised to make sure that major new housing developments come with suitable infrastructure and enhanced amenities to properly support them

Priority: 5. Thriving Communities with a Strong Local Voice – goals and key milestones/initiatives

2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
5.A. Encourage and support our local communities to take the lead in driving what is important to them				
	Quarterly Community Forums with resulting actions to feed into updated strategy and delivery plans. Support local communities with NDPs. Support the Youth Council.			
1. Re-establish Community Forums **2. Town Councils to chair Masterplan steering groups**	1. Work with local communities on plan to fund local youth workers	Implement plan on local youth worker provision		
5.B. Help our residents lead fulfilled and active lives				
	Continue Members' Bids to enable councillors to work with their ward communities to make improvements.			
	Work with partners to maintain a safe District and improve Health and Wellbeing. Increase visits to Council leisure and cultural facilities.			
1. Open new Newbury Lido 2. Return football to Faraday Road	1. Update Playing Pitch Strategy 2. Plan renewal and reprovision of Leisure Facilities 3. Plan to reduce social isolation, especially in rural areas	Start implementing the playing pitch strategy Begin phased update of our leisure facilities Deliver plan to reduce social isolation		
5.C. Work with the local communities and partners to enhance our main towns and large villages				
	Implement Masterplans in partnership with local communities and funder organisations. 20mph zones where communities want them.			
	1. Re-establish Kennet & Avon Canal Partnership	1. Targeted packages of lower cost parking 2. System to link public transport and local attraction tickets 3. Commission Lambourn Masterplan	1. Commission Theale Masterplan	
5.D. Help our smaller villages to remain vibrant long term				
	Help ensure villages remain vibrant by supporting local communities with their local plans			
	Support village halls. Increase the number of EV charge points in our villages			
	1. Plan a refreshed Home to School Transport offer	Deliver refreshed Home to School Transport offer		

Thriving Communities with a Strong Local Voice – details about goals, outcomes and actions

5.A. Encourage and support our local communities to take the lead in driving what is important to them



5.1. Closer and more effective working with our communities and partner organisations (including Town and Parish Councils and the private sector commissioned service providers) so residents achieve the outcomes that they need

- 5.1.1. Re-establish community forums to pro-actively invite residents' input and feedback at in-person meetings, committing to report back on our resulting action plan within four weeks of each meeting
- 5.1.2. Town Councils will be offered the chair of the steering group that determines the priorities for implementation within their Town Centre Masterplans
- 5.1.3. Continue to support local communities in developing their own Neighbourhood Development Plans
- 5.1.4. Work with Town and Parish councils to fund youth workers in their areas.

5.2. Enable the seldom heard, including young people, to have a voice in local issues, including by involving the new Youth Council and holding a Community Forum for Young People

5.B. Help our residents lead fulfilled and active lives

5.3. Improved health and wellbeing of our residents, including those with long-term conditions, through our own actions and working with partner organisations

5.4. West Berkshire continues to be a safe place, through our own actions and working with partner organisations

- 5.4.1. Deliver initiatives with partner organisations to prevent and reduce crime
- 5.4.2. Enable 20 mph limits for residential streets where residents want it

5.5. Increased number of visits to Council-owned culture, arts and heritage facilities

5.6. More people enabled to be physically active supported by the sports and leisure opportunities available in the District

- 5.6.1. Begin a programme of renewal and re-provision of our Council-owned leisure facilities. Plan with annual objectives in 2024
- 5.6.2. Open the refurbished Newbury Lido and look to expand opening times even further
- 5.6.3. Re-open the grass football pitch at Faraday Road in 2023
- 5.6.4. Refresh the playing pitch strategy by early 2024

5.7. Reduced social isolation, especially in rural areas and for young people

5.7.1. Plan a programme to tackle social isolation (in 2024)

5.7.2. Start implementation in 2025

5.8. Valued improvements delivered by residents working with Members by continuing the successful Members Bid Programme

5.8.1. Continue the successful Members Bids programme, to enable Members to work with residents and community groups in their wards, to deliver improvements they value

5.C. Work with partners and the local communities to enhance our main towns and large villages

5.9. Town and village centres prioritise enhancements outlined in their respective Masterplans

5.9.1. Work with the town councils, the local communities and stakeholders in Hungerford, Newbury and Thatcham to first prioritise the potential enhancements outlined in their respective Masterplans, and then begin implementation in 2024

5.9.2. Commission Masterplans for Lambourn in 2025 and Theale in 2026

5.10. Kennet & Avon Canal maintained and enhanced as an important asset of the district

5.10.1. We recognise the canal as an important part of West Berkshire life and will resurrect the Kennet & Avon Canal partnership (in 2024) to ensure we can effectively maintain and enhance this wonderful asset

5.11. Our town centres remain vibrant and accessible, by working with our partner organisations

5.11.1. Introducing a local ticketing systems (in 2025) that links to discounted bus / train travel

5.11.2. Create a fund starting (in 2025) to offer a package of targeted lower cost / free parking, in consultation with town & parish councils

5.D. Help our villages to remain vibrant long term

5.12. Villages remain vibrant in the long term by working with local communities, as they develop their local plans

5.12.1. As our villages develop their local plans, make sure they are clear what their village needs, in the medium and long term, so that local amenities like schools, shops, pubs and local businesses can be sustained, and that their plans reflect these needs

5.12.2. Plan a refreshed offer for Home to School Transport in 2024, and begin to implement in 2025

5.12.3. Support ongoing viability of local village halls with grants for solar panels and better digital connectivity, starting in 2024

5.12.4. Increase the number of Electric Vehicle charge points in our villages

Key Facts About West Berkshire

In 2019 West Berkshire had an estimated population of

161,400

which is an increase of 4.9%, from around 153,800 in 2011. This is lower than the overall increase for the South East (7.5%) and England (6.6%).

The total number of households (in 2022) is estimated as

66,700

an increase of 7% since 2011. It is expected that households will become smaller, with one person households increasing by an estimated 21.9% by 2043.

In 2020, for every resident aged 16-64, there were on average

1.1 jobs

jobs in West Berkshire. This is higher than the South East and Great Britain.

Nearly three quarters

of West Berkshire is classified as part of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

In 2021,

56%

of our households were not deprived in any of the four dimensions (Employment, education, health and disability, and household overcrowding) compared to 48.3% average for England.

Highly qualified workforce, **71.5%**

of 16 – 64 year olds living in the area qualified at level NVQ3 and above or general education equivalent. Better than South East (63.8%) and Great Britain (61.5%) (Dec 2021).

85.2%

of **16 to 64** year olds are economically active (people that are not retired, a student, a carer or unemployed). This is higher than the South East and Great Britain averages (June 2022).

20.85%

the rate of violent crime per 1,000 population for 2021/22, is below that for Thames Valley overall (27.74).

Access to Heathrow Airport in less than

60 minutes

and goodconnectivity North to South (A34) and East to West (M4).

Healthy life expectancy at birth at 70.1 years for females and 69.4 for males are

higher

than the England average (2018-20).

Similarly, life expectancy at birth, at 84.4 for females and 80.2 for males is higher than the national average (2018-20).

West Berkshire has

1,900 listed buildings, 90 scheduled monuments, 53 conservation areas, 39 locally listed heritage assets, 14 registered parks and gardens and 1 registered battlefield – all these heritage assets contribute to the sense of place of West Berkshire

As of 2021, West Berkshire is the ninth

least densely

populated of the South East's 64 local authority areas, with around two people living on each football pitch-sized area of land.

West Berkshire has **27.7 miles** of motorway, **78.5 miles** of A roads and **782.4 miles** of minor roads

1,792

older people and vulnerable adults accessing long term support (Sep 2022)

A vibrant economy with **8,345 businesses,** an increase of **6.9%** since 2012.

1251

Children in Need (including those subject to a CP or in LA Care) were supported, which is slightly above the England average (as a rate per 10,000 children) (Mar 2022).

West Berkshire covers an area of

272 square miles

which is over half of the geographical area of the county of Berkshire.

166 Children in Care were receiving services, which is below the England average (as a rate per 10,000 children) (Mar 2022).

West Berkshire has

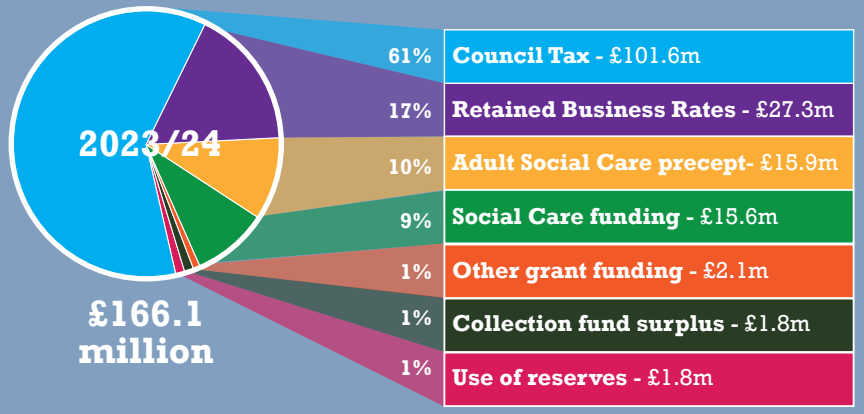
51 Sites

of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which are of national importance for animal and plant life.

Where the Council's Money Comes From and How it is Spent

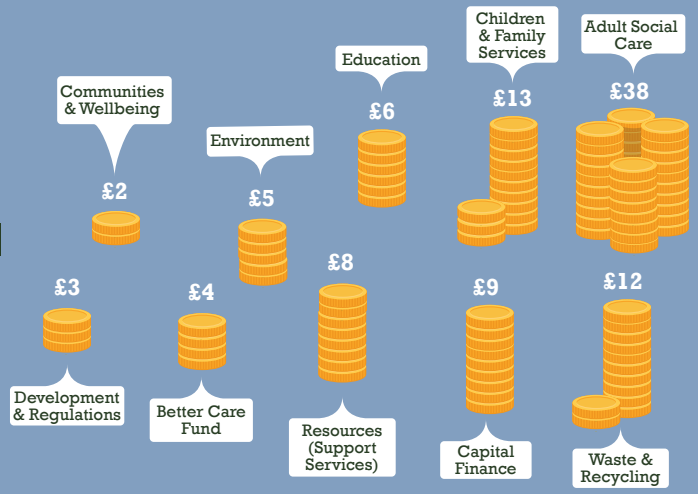
Our sources of funding, and our expenditure as a council

Where does our funding come from?



How the money is spent

In 2023-24 our budget for all the services we provide is £166.1m. For every £100 we receive this is how it is spent.



Council Strategy Delivery Plan

Progress in delivering the priorities, goals and outcomes included in the Council Strategy will be measured and reported against performance measures and milestones which are detailed in the Council Strategy Delivery Plan.

As progress is made, the Delivery Plan will be updated annually in order to ensure it remains relevant to the changing economic, environmental and social context.

The first version of the Delivery Plan is available from the following link or by scanning the following QR code:

www.westberks.gov.uk/strategy-performance

Annual updates of the Delivery Plan will be accessible from the same link.





www.westberks.gov.uk

WBC/SG/CB/0923

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Enhancement of Climate Emergency Declaration

Committee considering report:	Council
Date of Committee:	5th October 2023
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Adrian Abbs
Report Author:	Kofi Adu-Gyamfi and Environment Delivery Team
Forward Plan Ref:	C4447

1 Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to propose changes to the Council's climate emergency declaration (made in July 2019). The changes that are sought will enhance, strengthen and bring clarity to the original declaration following the initial 4 years of delivery and all that has been learnt in that period.

2 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that Council approve the following enhancements to the original climate emergency declaration:

(a) The ecological emergency is recognised through the new declaration being a **'climate and ecological emergency'**.

(b) Changing the language used in the declaration from **'carbon neutral'** to **'net zero'** to bring us in line with Government and business terminology.

(c) **Clarification of targets** within the declaration with the following being the Council's focus in relation to reducing emissions:

- Achieving net zero by 2030 for the Council's operations and activities.
- Facilitating, influencing, promoting and encouraging a reduction in emissions across West Berkshire to enable net zero to be achieved as soon as practicable for the District.

2.2 The proposed new wording for the declaration and recommended actions relating to the ecological emergency are included in section 8 of this report.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	The proposals in this report do not create a specific financial pressure. Financial implications could be that thought is given as to how a range of projects using existing budgets can reflect and address the ecological emergency. Many actions are already taken to protect and enhance our natural environment and existing budgets include investing in nature. The proposed inclusion in the declaration is about bringing the recognition of the ecological work that needs to be done front and centre and enhancing what we are already doing rather than adding any significant financial pressures.
Human Resource:	The proposals do not create any new Human Resource implications. The need for an in-house Ecologist to be recruited has already been recognised and is underway. This is important to help support the delivery of the enhanced declaration.
Legal:	No new Legal implications at this stage.
Risk Management:	The proposals do not introduce any new risks to the Council. The delivery of actions flowing from the declaration are managed through the Environment Strategy and its associated Delivery Plan. The risks involved in achieving the objectives are managed through the Strategy and individual projects.
Property:	Significant actions to achieve net zero for the Council are focused on our own estate and making changes to our properties. This is not new as a result of this report but remains a key challenge on our pathway to net zero.
Policy:	The addition of an ecological emergency highlights the importance of nature in West Berkshire and the ecological recovery sought across the UK. It helps to support the Council's Environment Strategy and the regional work developing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Berkshire. It is also in line with and supports policies in West Berkshire's Local Plan which in turn is in line with national policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

	Positive	**Neutral**	**Negative**	**Commentary**
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		It is considered that there are no aspects of these proposals that could impact on inequality.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		The proposals should not have a specific impact on people with protected characteristics.
Environmental Impact:	X			The key driver for these proposals is to protect and enhance our environment. This report specifically seeks a focus on ecological priorities and recognition within a newly declared climate and ecological emergency.
Health Impact:	X			Action to improve our environment, especially our natural environment, has key links with supporting residents' health and wellbeing. The Environment Strategy Delivery Plan includes actions that seek to encourage people to use local green and blue spaces and increase access to the countryside as well as encouraging children to spend more time in nature.
ICT Impact:		X		There are no ICT impacts.

Digital Services Impact:		X		There are no impacts for Digital Services.
Council Strategy Priorities:	X			The proposals support the overall Council priority of **'Maintaining a Green District'**
Core Business:		X		
Data Impact:		X		There are no data impacts.
Consultation and Engagement:	The proposed enhancements to the original declaration have been shared with the following groups and people and relevant comments have been incorporated into this report: Environment Advisory Group (Open Forum) 31st July Environment Strategy Delivery Board (internal officer group) 17th August Natural Solutions Delivery Partnership 21st August Officers in the following areas: Environment, Development and Regulation, Communities & Wellbeing			

4 Executive Summary

4.1 The purpose of this report is to seek changes to the 2019 climate declaration that will enhance and strengthen it and provide clarity for the remainder of the period of the Environment Strategy up to 2030 and beyond.

4.2 The proposal is focused around 3 main changes:

- It is proposed that the current climate emergency declaration is strengthened to reflect the need to protect and enhance West Berkshire's natural environment, wildlife, and biodiversity. The ecological and climate emergencies are closely linked and to solve one we must address the other. Therefore, it is proposed that a new declaration for 2023 will be a 'climate and ecological emergency'.

- Currently the climate emergency declaration uses the term 'carbon neutrality' to describe the aim of the Council and intention for the District. 'Carbon neutrality' means balancing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by offsetting and does not require a commitment to reduce overall emissions. The term 'net zero' means making changes to reduce GHG emissions to the lowest amount and offsetting as a last resort. It is proposed to amend the current terminology and use 'net zero' which is a true reflection of what we are working towards.

- The last proposal brings clarity to the targets for net zero included in the declaration. It makes a distinction between actions that the Council can take to reduce the impact from its own operations and activities and the emissions across the District where it has less control. The clarified targets are therefore:
    - Achieving net zero by 2030 for the Council's operations and activities
    - Facilitating influencing, promoting and encouraging a reduction in emissions across West Berkshire to enable net zero to be achieved as soon as practicable for the District

4.3 Over the last 4 years, the Council has been delivering projects and taking action in response to the original declaration of the climate emergency. With greater knowledge and experience in this area, it is proposed that the above changes are made creating an enhanced declaration for 2023.

5 Introduction / Background

Introduction

5.1 This report is seeking to take the bold and positive action of the 2019 climate emergency declaration and update and enhance it now that we have 4 years more experience. The changes being sought will enhance, strengthen, and bring clarity to the original declaration.

Background

5.2 On 2nd July 2019, the Council unanimously declared a climate emergency. The declaration was as follows:

This Council notes that:

1. All levels of government (national, regional and local) have a responsibility to limit the negative impacts of climate breakdown. It is important for the residents of West Berkshire and the UK that we commit to working towards carbon neutrality as quickly as possible.
2. The consequences of global temperature rising above 1.5°C are so severe that preventing this from happening must be of the utmost urgency.
3. Bold climate action can deliver economic benefits in terms of new jobs, economic savings and market opportunities (as well as improved health and wellbeing) but will also require changes in individuals' lifestyles and have a cost implication to both the individual and the state.

West Berkshire Council therefore:

- Declares a Climate Emergency.
- Will create a strategic plan for West Berkshire that aims to deliver carbon neutrality by 2030.
- Calls on HM Government to provide the Council with the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible.
- Will work with other authorities to determine and implement where practicable best practice methods to limit global warming to less than 1.5°C.

5.3 Since the declaration, many things have happened to help deliver the Council's aims. Some of the key elements are listed below:

- A new Environment Delivery Team was formed in July 2020
- The Environment Strategy was approved on 16th July 2020 (the strategic plan mentioned in the declaration)
- A Delivery Plan has been established for the Environment Strategy with progress against the delivery plan being reported to the Executive through Annual Progress Reports. These are published each autumn on the Council's website.
- Groups have been set up to help deliver effectively on actions some examples being:
    - An informal Natural Solutions Delivery Partnership was formed in September 2021 to seek to coordinate and collaborate on nature recovery, biodiversity enhancement, carbon sequestration and anything relevant to our natural environment.
    - A Parish Climate Forum was established in May 2021 to provide a regular space for Parish and Town Councils to meet to discuss what they are doing relevant to the Environment Strategy, learn from each other and be kept informed regarding various actions across West Berkshire.
- A strategic policy has been included in the Local Plan Review (submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in March 2023) which sets out how all development will be

expected to contribute to West Berkshire reaching net zero by including principles of climate change mitigation and adaptation. This policy is 'Policy SP5 Responding to Climate Change'.

- A Climate Change Service has been formed with a new Service Lead for Climate Change bringing together Countryside, Environment Delivery and Waste teams.

5.4 Whilst the Council is continuing to make progress following the 2019 declaration, there have also been recent proposals and motions seeking to amend and enhance the original wording. The proposals in this report focus on the amendments that are considered most appropriate at this point in the Council's journey to net zero.

Proposals

5.5 There are three key areas for enhancement / amendment that are being proposed. These are each dealt with in the following paragraphs and can be summarised as:

(a) adding the ecological emergency,

(b) changing the language we use, and

(c) clarifying our targets.

Adding the ecological emergency

5.6 It is proposed that the current climate emergency declaration is strengthened to reflect the need to protect and enhance West Berkshire's natural environment, wildlife, and biodiversity. This could be achieved by amending our existing climate emergency declaration to a 'climate and ecological emergency'. The ecological and climate emergencies are closely linked and to solve one we must address the other. The Environment Strategy and Delivery Plan have already taken steps to protect our District's natural environment. Changing the declaration to specifically mention the ecological emergency will reinforce the Council's commitment and raise awareness of the importance of protecting all aspects of the natural environment.

5.7 A range of evidence exists which provides reasons for why this important. The 2019 State of Nature report shows that 41% of UK species have decreased in abundance in the last 50 years and around 15% of UK species are threatened with extinction. West Berkshire has biodiversity of significant importance including 51 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), 500 local wildlife sites (11% of the District) and three Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) which are of international importance. Improving nature also contributes to creating a strong economy and improves the health and wellbeing of residents.

Changing the language we use from 'carbon neutral' to 'net zero'

5.8 The 2019 declaration of the climate emergency makes use of the term 'carbon neutrality' as the aim of the Council and for West Berkshire as a District. There are other terms that are used nationally, and by other organisations relating to managing and reducing

carbon and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The use of different terminology and interchanging terms can lead to confusion.

5.9 The Environment Delivery Team, set up as a result of the Climate emergency declaration, have revisited terms used to describe actions around carbon and GHGs. This aims to reset and clarify terminology to members, officers, residents, businesses and community groups and support effective and accurate communication.

5.10 Based on research, a separate briefing paper has been prepared which outlines several key definitions and how these definitions relate to the Council's activity at a Council and District wide level. This will be communicated separately. In relation to the climate emergency declaration wording, it is proposed to amend the carbon/GHG terminology used and provide clarity on the actual approach the Council has adopted on carbon and GHGs.

5.11 Currently the climate emergency declaration uses 'carbon neutrality'. It is proposed to amend this and use 'net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (operational)' or 'net zero' for short.

5.12 'Carbon neutrality' means balancing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by offsetting – or removing from the atmosphere – an equivalent amount of carbon for the amount produced. This means a commitment to carbon neutral does not require a commitment to reduce overall emissions. In contrast, a commitment to 'net zero carbon' / 'net zero GHG' / 'net zero' means making changes to reduce carbon or GHG emissions to the lowest amount – and offsetting as a last resort. The definition of net zero that is being proposed relates to operational carbon and not whole life carbon which would include calculating all the emissions from materials and the manufacturing and construction period, operational use and the disposal of buildings and infrastructure. There is not an agreed approach to measure this therefore operational carbon emissions is where the focus is for purposes of the Council's reporting.

5.13 Proposing this change to using the term 'net zero' will bring the Council in line with Government and business terminolog

Clarification on targets

5.14 Since the declaration of the climate emergency in 2019, there has been a growing distinction between actions that the Council can take to reduce the impact from its own operations and activities and those actions that can seek to influence and affect the net zero journey for the District as a whole.

5.15 Data showing progress for both are reported separately within the Environment Strategy Annual Progress Reports. The control that West Berkshire Council has in each of these cases is very different. It is therefore proposed that the amended declaration clarifies the targets that West Berkshire Council is focused on. These are:

- Achieving net zero by 2030 for the Council's operations and activities
- Facilitating, influencing, promoting and encouraging a reduction in emissions across West Berkshire to enable net zero to be achieved as soon as practicable for the District

5.16 This recognises that there are factors affecting the District emissions that are outside the control of the Council. However, there is a key role for the Council to play in demonstrating climate action leadership and using its position to bring about action within communities and amongst businesses.

6 Supporting Information

6.1 Research has been carried out into how other authorities have dealt with the ecological emergency alongside their declarations of a climate emergency. Some feedback relating to this can be found in Appendix A.

6.2 Research was also undertaken to ensure that the terminology used for the Council's work on Climate Change was correct, consistent and in line with language used nationally. An internal reference document relating to this has been prepared to guide Officers and Members and help achieve consistency across the Council.

6.3 A motion was submitted to the Full Council meeting held on 20 July 2023. The full motion can be found at Appendix B. Part of this motion calls for the Council to declare an 'ecological emergency'. The proposals in this report and the motion submitted by Councillor Culver were discussed at the Environment Advisory Group Open Forum meeting on 31st July 2023. As part of the discussion, it was proposed that as well as declaring the ecological emergency the essence of the 3rd point in Councillor Culver's motion should be incorporated into the enhanced declaration. This point from the motion reads:

> *Work with residents and campaign groups to encourage action for nature, by promoting initiatives like #NoMowMay, the planting of trees, the installation of bird boxes, the creation of hedgehog highways, and so on, using council communication channels and public education opportunities.*

7 Options for consideration

7.1 There are two main options for consideration:

(a) The Climate Declaration made in July 2019 remains unchanged.

(b) The July 2019 Declaration is enhanced to reflect the importance of the ecological emergency and to bring it up to date in terms of language and targets based on the experience of the Council over the last 4 years.

7.2 There are no clear benefits to option (a). If this was chosen, the lack of the inclusion of the ecological emergency and the fact that language is used which is out of sync with how the Council is operating would cause frustration and confusion.

7.3 The preferred option is (b). It ensures our work on improving biodiversity is recognised as important through declaring the ecological emergency and provides the opportunity for updates and clarity where it has been highlighted as necessary.

8 Proposals

8.1 The explanation for the proposed changes has been provided in section 5. The proposed declaration of a 'Climate and Ecological Emergency' is as follows:

The Council notes that:

1. All levels of government (national, regional, and local) have a responsibility to limit the negative impacts of climate breakdown. It is important for the residents of West Berkshire and the UK that we commit to working towards Net Zero as quickly as possible.
2. The consequences of global temperature rising above 1.5°C are so severe that preventing this from happening must be of utmost urgency.
3. The current rate of habitat degradation and loss of biodiversity within West Berkshire and the UK is likely to be having a detrimental impact and needs to be prevented.
4. Bold climate and ecological action can deliver social and economic benefits in terms of new jobs, economic savings, and improved health and wellbeing but will also require changes in individuals' lifestyles and have a cost implication to both the individual and the state.

West Berkshire Council therefore:

- Declares a Climate and Ecological Emergency
- Will take action to reduce emissions from its operations and activities in order to achieve Net Zero by 2030
- Will continue to revise and deliver on our strategic plan for West Berkshire that aims to facilitate and influence the achievement of Net Zero for the District as soon as practicable.
- Will ensure the ecological emergency is highlighted alongside our climate action to maximise benefits.
- Calls on HM Government to provide the Council with the powers and resources to make the achievement of our Climate and Ecological targets possible.
- Will work with other authorities and external stakeholders and residents to determine and implement where practicable to best practice methods to limit global warming to less than 1.5°C and to act for nature to protect the environment within West Berkshire and beyond.

8.2 There are some specific actions proposed alongside the enhanced declaration that particularly pick up on the 'ecological emergency' element. As well as the motion to Council (detailed in 6.3) being picked up in the last bullet point of the proposed new declaration, it is further re-enforced in the list of actions below. Executive will therefore be asked to consider the following:

- Ensure the Environment Strategy and the Environment Strategy Delivery Plan emphasise the importance of ecological protection alongside Net Zero.

- Work with local authorities and other partners in the development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Berkshire ensuring the opportunities for biodiversity protection and recovery in West Berkshire are maximised.

- Introduce a 'Sustainability impact assessment tool'. This will ensure ecological, climate and other sustainability priorities such as health and wellbeing are at the forefront of the decision making and project planning processes within the Council.

- Develop a Green and Blue Infrastructure framework for the Council to highlight our priorities for ensuring the environment is managed for biodiversity and our residents.

- Work with residents and campaign groups to encourage action for nature, by promoting relevant initiatives using council communication channels and public education opportunities.

8.3 The above actions will form part of the Environment Strategy Delivery Plan. Monitoring of progress will be included in the Annual Progress Reports published each autumn.

9 Conclusion

9.1 Over the last 4 years, the Council has been delivering projects and taking action in response to the declaration of the climate emergency. With greater knowledge and experience in this area, there are some changes proposed that will result in an enhanced declaration.

9.2 The most significant change proposed is the addition of the ecological emergency which recognises the decline there has been in nature and the importance of the work we need to do to bring about nature recovery. The other changes enable clarity of both terms used and targets for delivery.

9.3 The recommendations in section 2 and the full proposal detailed in section 8 highlight the importance of the natural environment alongside tackling climate change and reduce any confusion around how West Berkshire is working towards net zero. The new proposed declaration for 2023 will bring greater focus for the remainder of the period of the Environment Strategy up to 2030 and beyond.

9.4 Appendix A – How other Councils have dealt with the ecological emergency

9.5 Appendix B – Motion by Councillor Culver to Council 23rd July 2023

Background Papers:

None

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☐ No: ☒

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	☒
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	☐
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	☐
Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees or Task Groups within preceding six months	☐
Item is Urgent Key Decision	☐
Report is to note only	☐

Wards affected: The proposals are District-wide

Officer details:

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Job Title: Service Lead - Climate Change
Tel No: 01635 519216
E-mail: Kofi.Adu-Gyamfi1@westberks.gov.uk

Appendix A

How other Councils have dealt with the ecological emergency

The research below has helped to inform proposals in this report. It relates to how other Councils have considered the ecological emergency in their declarations.

Ecological Emergency

- South Oxfordshire District Council: Ecological Emergency declared 11/02/21 which builds on the Climate Emergency declared in April 2019. Actions:
    - Renamed the Climate Emergency advisory committee to Climate and Ecological Emergencies advisory committee
    - Add ecological impact implications alongside those for climate and sustainability in committee and council reports.
    - Ensure the climate and ecological emergencies are considered strategic priorities for planning policy and design guides for new development.
    - Establish a biodiversity steering group.
    - Set measurable targets and standards for biodiversity increase, in both species and quantities.
    - Work with partners to develop the nature recovery networks and nature recovery strategy for Oxfordshire.
    - Look for opportunities to work in partnership with local charities and environmental organisations to deliver nature recovery in South Oxfordshire
    - Develop a district wide Tree Planting Policy and Strategy, including having Member Tree Champions, to support nature protection and recovery and carbon sequestration
    - Build on the work of the Thames Champion to improve the ecology of the Thames and its banks and flood plains, a hugely important habitat in our District
    - Ensure the Strategic Property Review considers opportunities for biodiversity enhancements and tree planting on Council landholdings
    - Investigate new approaches to nature recovery such as habitat banking that deliver biodiversity objectives and provide new investment opportunities
    - Embed climate action and ecological initiatives within all council work areas, including COVID-19 recovery projects and programmes.

- Bristol City Council: In February 2020 Bristol City Council declared an Ecological Emergency. Vision: *From today, we will work together as a city to ensure that 30% of Bristol's land is managed for nature. We will create space for nature, and unite to find new, fair and inclusive ways to reduce and eliminate the threats to habitats and wildlife. Together we will take action for nature so that both people and wildlife can benefit.* They developed an ecological emergency strategy for the city. In response

to the strategy they then produced an ecological emergency action plan. The strategy has four main goals to support nature recovery by 2030:

- 30% of land in Bristol to be managed for the benefit of wildlife
- To reduce the use of pesticides in Bristol by at least 50%
- For all waterways to have excellent water quality which supports healthy wildlife
- To reduce the consumption of products that undermine the health of wildlife and ecosystems around the world.

- South Cambridgeshire District Council: In July 2019 South Cambridgeshire recognised both a climate and ecological emergency. They agreed to support the aim of doubling nature in South Cambridgeshire through the doubling nature strategy which sits alongside the sister document South Cambridgeshire's zero carbon strategy. Vision: *Our vision is to double nature in South Cambridgeshire by 2050 and, in so doing, enable wildlife and people to thrive and businesses to prosper, this means more wildlife rich habitats, an increase in tree canopy cover and better accessibility to green space.*

- Bath and North East Somerset Council: An ecological emergency was declared in July 2020. In response to this they produced an action plan. Vision: *Our vision is to be nature positive as an organisation by 2030. This means that B&NES Council will be making a positive contribution to nature recovery, with all parts of the council integrating the response to the Ecological Emergency into their decision-making. It will also mean that we are taking a regional and national lead in responding to the Ecological Emergency, working in step with communities and partners across the district to restore nature.* The actions follow the following themes:
  - Mainstreaming nature recovery in leadership and decision-making
  - Increasing the extent of land and waterways managed positively for nature
  - Increasing investment into nature-based solutions and wildlife-friendly interventions
  - Increasing the abundance and distribution of key species across B&NES
  - Enabling more people to access and engage with nature
  - Improving our evidence base and monitoring
  - Working in partnership

A combined climate and ecological emergency

- Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole (BCP) Council: A Climate and ecological emergency was declared in July 2019. No wording to indicate how biodiversity is being tackled as everything seems to be focused on climate change.

- Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council: In June 2019 an environment and climate emergency was declared. Vision: *Our vision is to be a Borough where the community collectively works together to achieve a sustainable future, protecting and enhancing our natural environment and achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050.* The Environment and Climate Strategy focuses on four key themes:

  - Circular Economy: More sustainable resource use, increasing recycling rates and supporting less resource-intensive lifestyles.
  - Energy: Reducing consumptions and decarbonising our supply of energy.
  - Natural Environment: Supporting biodiversity, health and wellbeing.
  - Transport: Reduce the need for carbon intensive travel by encouraging walking and cycling, as well as investing in digital infrastructure.

- Brighton and Hove City Council: Declared a climate and biodiversity emergency in December 2018.

Changing climate emergency to incorporate ecological emergency

- Herefordshire Council: In March 2019 Herefordshire Council declared a climate emergency, this was then strengthened to a 'Climate and ecological emergency' in December 2019.

- Dorset Council: Declared a climate emergency in May 2019 and updated it to a climate and ecological emergency in November 2019.

Appendix B

Motions submitted for debate at the Council meeting on 20 July 2023

(a) The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Culver:

This council **notes**:

The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world.

The explicit and commendable reference to 'biodiversity' in the relevant portfolio holder's job title.

Many local authorities have declared an ecological emergency as well as a climate emergency.

This council's officers have assisted wildlife by reducing verge cutting, planting wildflowers and supporting the Lockdown Woods project.

The Environment Act includes an obligation for local authorities to publish a Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

This council's sole ecologist left in June.

We can all help to protect and restore the natural world and any positive action, large or small, should be encouraged.

The draft Local Plan is being revisited by the current council administration.

This council **resolves**:

To recognise the precarious state of the natural world by declaring an ecological emergency.

To recruit a new ecologist urgently, and ideally more than one, to ensure a.) planning applications are examined by a trained ecologist and b.) the council has an appropriate expert who can liaise with Windsor and Maidenhead Council to fulfil the collective responsibility of local authorities in Berkshire to create a Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Work with residents and campaign groups to encourage action for nature, by promoting initiatives like #NoMowMay, the planting of trees, the installation of bird boxes, the creation of hedgehog highways, and so on, using council communication channels and public education opportunities.

Undertake the green infrastructure work promised under the current Local Plan 2012-2026 including mapping and categorisation of all public open spaces to form the basis of a current state assessment of all council managed lands.

Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan

Committee considering report:	Council
Date of Committee:	5 October 2023
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Tony Vickers
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	12 September 2023
Report Author:	Laila Bassett
Forward Plan Ref:	C4432

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To seek approval for the for the submission of the Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for independent examination.

2 Recommendation

2.1 To resolve that the Hermitage NDP can be sent for independent examination under Regulation 17 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	For the past few years, the Government has had a support programme in place to support the role of Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in the neighbourhood planning process. The support programme has recently been extended to cover the period 2023/24 and LPAs can make the following claims: • £20,000 in areas where a plan has not previously been adopted. The claim can only be made once the LPA has issued a decision statement detailing their intention to send a plan to referendum. This would apply to the Hermitage NDP. • £5,000 for the first five neighbourhood areas designated. West Berkshire no longer qualify for this support. • £10,000 for substantive modifications to a NDP which require examination but not referendum because the nature of the plan remains unchanged. Once such a claim

	is made, further claims for the revisions of the NDP are restricted to every 5 years. • £20,000 for a full review and replacement of an adopted NDP or more substantive modifications to a NDP which require examination and referendum. Once such a claim is made, further claims for the revisions of the NDP are restricted to every 5 years. The cost to the council is largely through officer time, and in the organisation of the independent examination and referendum. It is estimated that approximately 80 - 90 hours of officer time is required to support a community develop a neighbourhood plan, at a cost of approximately £2,500. This is based on the time given to support the development of the Stratfield Mortimer NDP. Most NDP examinations are held by way of written representation, and the cost for this is expected to be £5,700. Should the independent examiner choose to conduct the examination through earing sessions, then the cost will be £8,000. The Council has, via a competitive tendering process, appointed Intelligent Plans and Examinations (IPe) to supply an examiner for the independent examination. IPe have quoted a fixed price for written representation examinations and a fixed price for formal hearings. On average referendums cost £5,000 per ballot box to deliver, plus the officer time associated with arranging the referendum.
Human Resource:	Not applicable
Legal:	An adopted NDP forms part of the development plan. The relevant legislation setting out the neighbourhood planning process is included in the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). Parish/Town Councils have the responsibility for leading the process; however local planning authorities have a significant role in assisting certain stages of the process and ensuring that certain criteria are met. The procedure comprises a number of stages which following submission to the LPA become a statutory function who must undertake public consultation and examination. The procedure comprises a number of stages which include public consultation and examination. If the NDP is found to be satisfactory, a local referendum must take place

	where more than 50% of those voting must agree to it, before the NDP is brought into legal force and becomes part of the development plan.			
Risk Management:	Not applicable			
Property:	Not applicable			
Policy:	National planning policy makes provision for the development of Neighbourhood Planning. An adopted plan forms part of the district's development plan.			
	Positive	**Neutral**	**Negative**	**Commentary**
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		✓		Neutral impact as neighbourhood plans applies to all
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		✓		Neutral impact as neighbourhood plans applies to all
Environmental Impact:	✓			Neighbourhood plans, in particular NDPs, can include policies which seek to protect the environment.
Health Impact:		✓		Not applicable
ICT Impact:		✓		Not applicable

Digital Services Impact:		✓		Not applicable
Council Strategy Priorities:	✓			Having a neighbourhood plan meets Priority 2 – Supporting everyone to reach their full potential – Enabling residents and communities to help themselves and others. In addition, when neighbourhood plans are adopted at Referendum they will also meet Priority 4 – Develop local infrastructure, including housing to support and grow the local economy and Priority 5 – Maintain a Green District by minimising the impact on the environment.
Core Business:		✓		
Data Impact:		✓		
Consultation and Engagement:	Bryan Lyttle, Planning Policy Manager Eric Owens, Service Director – Development & Regulation Katharine Makant, Service Lead – Planning & Economy Sharon Armour, Principal Lawyer – Planning & Governance Planning Advisory Group Corporate Board Operations Board			

4 Executive Summary

4.1 The Hermitage NDP has been prepared by Hermitage Parish Council assisted by community volunteers. The purpose of the Hermitage NDP is to provide planning policies to guide development in the designated Hermitage Neighbourhood Area. The Neighbourhood Area covers the Parish of Hermitage.

4.2 The NDP contains a series of Development Management policies which cover the following themes:

- Housing
- Design

- Views
- Sustainable design and environment
- Wildlife-friendly design
- Irreplaceable and wildlife-rich habitats and species
- Local Green Spaces
- Historic Environment
- Movement

4.3 The NDP does not include any allocations for residential or employment development.

4.4 Hermitage Parish Council undertook a consultation on a draft version of the plan (known as the Regulation 14 pre-submission version) between 24 October and 5 December 2022. In total 14 representations were received including one from WBDC. Details of the comments received, and any subsequent changes made to the Plan by Hermitage Parish Council prior to its submission to WBDC, are set out within the Consultation Statement included at Appendix D.

4.5 The NDP was submitted to WBDC on 17 February 2023, and upon submission WBDC took on responsibility for taking the NDP forward. If a NDP is to progress beyond the submission stage, a set of submission requirements as defined in legislation must be met. A legal compliance check was undertaken (see Appendix F) which confirmed that the submission requirements have been met.

4.6 In line with legislation, the submitted Plan must be publicised for a 6-week period. This took place between 21 July until Friday 1 September 2023. 8 representations were received and a summary of these is included in Appendix G. In addition, WBDC has also provided a response, and this is included in Appendix H.

4.7 Following the close of the 6-week publicity period, the NDP must undergo independent examination. The submitted NDP, its accompanying documents, and any representations received must be passed on to an appointed examiner. The examiner will consider if the NDP meets a set of tests known as Basic Conditions, with or without modifications. A report will be issued at the end of the examination by the independent examiner.

4.8 Council is now asked to agree that the Hermitage NDP can progress to independent examination. The NDP has been assessed by WBDC to meet the submission requirements as set out in legislation, and there are no reasons why it should not now progress to independent examination.

5 Supporting information

Introduction

5.1 The 2011 Localism Act has encouraged communities and local people to come together and shape the future of their local areas through neighbourhood plans.

5.2 West Berkshire is predominantly parished and the legislation requires that they are developed by Parish and Town Councils assisted by community volunteers. However, we have several parishes that are so small they do not meet the threshold and have a Parish Forum meaning they must set up a Neighbourhood Forum to develop such plans,

provided they meet the requirements of the legislation. Plans must be in general conformity with national planning policies and the strategic policies contained within Local Plans.

5.3 Neighbourhood plans must be subject to consultation, independent examination and a referendum. If successful at referendum, they form part of the statutory development plan for West Berkshire. In other words, they are used to determine the outcome of planning applications.

5.4 There are three different types of neighbourhood plans:

- **Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs):** a planning document that contains planning policies. Site allocations can also be included.
- **Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDOs):** grant planning permission for specific types of development in a particular area; and
- **Community Right to Build Orders (CRtBOs):** grant planning permission for small-scale community-led developments.

Background

5.5 Hermitage Parish Council, as the qualifying body, successfully applied for the designation of the Hermitage Neighbourhood Area on 26 April 2019 under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. Since the designation of the Neighbourhood Area, Hermitage Parish Council alongside its residents, have been working together to create a plan and they produced a draft of this in March 2023 which they consulted on. Details of the comments received and how they were taken into consideration is set out in Appendix D Consultation Statement.

5.6 The NDP contains 9 Development Management policies that have been grouped around the following themes:

- Housing
- Design
- Views
- Sustainable design and environment
- Wildlife-friendly design
- Irreplaceable and wildlife-rich habitats and species
- Local Green Spaces
- Historic Environment
- Movement

5.7 Whilst NDPs can include site allocations, the Hermitage NDP does not contain any.

5.8 Hermitage Parish Council submitted the NDP (see Appendix C) to WBDC on 17 February 2023. Accompanying the NDP was the Consultation Statement and the Basic Conditions Statement (Appendix E). After submission, responsibility for taking the plan forward lies with the LPA.

5.9 The first task upon submission is for the LPA to check that the submission requirements set out in Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and Schedule 4b of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted

into Schedule 10 of the Localism Act 2011) have been met. The Legal Compliance Check of the Hermitage NDP (see Appendix F) confirms that the submission requirements have been complied with.

5.10 If the submission requirements have been met, then Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) requires plans to be publicised for a 6-week period as soon as possible after submission. The Hermitage NDP was publicised, and comments were invited from the public and stakeholders between 21 July and 1 September 2023. 8 representations were received, and a summary of these is included within Appendix G.

Proposals

5.11 In line with Regulation 17 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), the Hermitage NDP must now be subject to independent examination. The independent examination will consider whether the NDP meets a set of tests known as Basic Conditions. A NDP will meet the Basic Conditions if:

- it has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the plan;
- it contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- it is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan; and
- it does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations.

5.12 Regulation 32 of the of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) also prescribes the following Basic Condition:

- The making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017(7).

5.13 The NDP, its accompanying documents, in addition to the representations made during to 6-week publicity period will be passed on to an appointed examiner.

5.14 Following the independent examination, the examiner will issue a report. If the NDP meets the Basic Conditions, the examiner will recommend that the plan proceed to the referendum. However, the examiner may recommend that modifications need to be made to the plan so it meets the Basic Conditions before it can proceed to referendum.

5.15 The examiner's report however is not binding, and only LPAs can decide if a NDP can ultimately proceed to referendum. Following the receipt of the examiner's report, WBDC will need to determine if the NDP meets the Basic Conditions, is compatible with the Convention rights, complies with the definition of a NDP, and the provisions that can be made by a NDP. This determination will be set out in a Decision Statement.

5.16 The Decision Statement will need to be endorsed by Council. If the Decision Statement recommends that the NDP proceed to referendum, Council will also be asked to agree that the NDP be adopted immediately after the votes have been counted so that it becomes part of the development plan for West Berkshire.

6 Options for consideration

6.1 A do-nothing approach was considered and rejected because Regulation 17 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) requires that neighbourhood plans must be subject to independent examination.

6.2 LPAs have a statutory duty to assist qualifying bodies preparing neighbourhood plans, and this includes taking responsibility for taking the NDP forward once it has been submitted.

6.3 WBDC have undertaken a legal compliance check of the Hermitage NDP which confirms that the submission requirements as set out in legislation have been complied with. There is therefore no reason that the Hermitage NDP should not progress to independent examination.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Hermitage Parish Council submitted the Hermitage NDP to WBDC on 17 February 2023, and WBDC now have responsibility for taking the NDP forward.

7.2 WBDC have reviewed the submitted NDP and its accompanying documents, and concluded that the submission requirements, as defined in legislation, have been met.

7.3 In line with legislation, the submitted NDP was publicised for a 6-week period between 21 July until Friday 1 September 2023, and comments were sought. Now that the NDP has been publicised, it must undergo independent examination. The submitted NDP, its accompanying documents, and any representations received will be passed on to an appointed examiner.

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment Stage 1

8.2 Appendix B – Data Protection Impact assessment – Stage O

8.3 Appendix C – Hermitage NDP

8.4 Appendix D – Hermitage NDP Consultation Statement

8.5 Appendix E – Hermitage NDP Basic Conditions Statement

8.6 Appendix F – Legal Compliance Check of the Hermitage NDP

8.7 Appendix G – Responses to the Regulation 16 publication consultation

8.8 Appendix H – WBDC comments on the submission Hermitage NDP

Background Papers:

None

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☐ No: ☒

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	☒
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	☐
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	☐
Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees or Task Groups within preceding six months	☐
Item is Urgent Key Decision	☐
Report is to note only	☐

Wards affected: Chieveley and Cold Ash

Officer details:

Name: Laila Bassett
Job Title: Principal Planning Officer
Tel No: 01635 519 540
E-mail: laila.bassett@westberks.gov.uk

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:	To resolve that the Hermitage NDP can be sent for independent examination under Regulation 17 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
Summary of relevant legislation:	The relevant legislation setting out the neighbourhood planning process is included in the following: • Localism Act 2011; • Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) • Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) • Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) • Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's priorities for improvement? • Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes • Support everyone to reach their full potential • Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire • Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy Maintain a green district • Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☒
Name of Budget Holder:	Bryan Lyttle
Name of Service/Directorate:	Development and Regulation / Place
Name of assessor:	Laila Bassett
Date of assessment:	22 August 2023
Version and release date (if applicable):	

Is this a …. ?		**Is this policy, strategy, function or service … ?**	
Policy	**Yes ☒ No ☐**	**New or proposed**	**Yes ☒ No ☐**
Strategy	**Yes ☐ No ☒**	**Already exists and is being reviewed**	**Yes ☐ No ☒**
Function	**Yes ☐ No ☒**	**Is changing**	**Yes ☐ No ☒**
Service	**Yes ☐ No ☒**		

(1) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	To help deliver the government's policy for neighbourhood planning in the parish of Hermitage.
Objectives:	To allow the community of Hermitage to development planning policies to shape the future of their communities.
Outcomes:	Completion and adoption of a NDP for the parish of Hermitage.
Benefits:	If the Hermitage NDP receives a successful 'yes' vote at referendum, then it will hold the same weight as the Local Plan and form part of the development plan for West Berkshire. Hermitage Parish Council will receive 25% of CIL receipts should the plan be successful at referendum. Delivery of government policy regarding neighbourhood planning. Give more control to the local community of Hermitage to shape their community going forward.

(2) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?		
Group Affected	**What might be the effect?**	**Information to support this**
Age	Neighbourhood planning should have a positive impact on all groups. Communities are more aware of the specific groups and issues within their communities and therefore,	Neighbourhood Planning legislation, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Practice Guidance
Disability		
Gender Reassignment		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		

Pregnancy and Maternity	can ensure that minority groups and those with protected characteristics are fully informed of the process and are invited to fully engage with the development of the neighbourhood plan. Neighbourhood Planning has the opportunity to fully engage all members of society ensuring that they all have a say in the future development of their community. Neighbourhood planning should have a positive impact on all groups. Communities are more aware of the specific groups and issues within their communities and therefore, can ensure that minority groups and those with protected characteristics are fully informed of the process and are invited to fully engage with the development of the neighbourhood plan. Neighbourhood Planning has the opportunity to fully engage all members of society ensuring that they all have a say in the future development of their community. Neighbourhood planning should have a positive impact on all groups. Communities are more aware of the specific groups and issues within their communities and therefore, can ensure that minority groups and those with		
Race			
Religion or Belief			
Sex			
Sexual Orientation			

	protected characteristics are fully informed of the process and are invited to fully engage with the development of the neighbourhood plan. Neighbourhood Planning has the opportunity to fully engage all members of society ensuring that they all have a say in the future development of their community.	

Further Comments:
None

(3) Result	
Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?	**Yes ☐ No ☒**
Please provide an explanation for your answer: Neighbourhood Planning allows communities to shape the future of their local area in land use planning terms.	
Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	**Yes ☐ No ☒**
Please provide an explanation for your answer: Development of a neighbourhood plan should have a positive impact upon a local community as all members of the community are encouraged to engage with the process of developing the plan.	

(4) Identify next steps as appropriate:	
EqIA Stage 2 required	**Yes ☐ No ☒**
Owner of EqIA Stage Two:	
Timescale for EqIA Stage Two:	

Name: Laila Bassett **Date: 22 August 2023**

Appendix B

Data Protection Impact Assessment – Stage O

The General Data Protection Regulations require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for certain projects that have a significant impact on the rights of data subjects.

Should you require additional guidance in completing this assessment, please refer to the Information Management Officer via dp@westberks.gov.uk

Directorate:	Place
Service:	Development and Regulation
Team:	Planning Policy
Lead Officer:	Laila Bassett
Title of Project/System:	Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan
Date of Assessment:	22 August 2023

Do you need to do a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)?

	Yes	No
Will you be processing SENSITIVE or "special category" personal data? Note – sensitive personal data is described as "*data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation*"	☐	☒
Will you be processing data on a large scale? Note – Large scale might apply to the number of individuals affected OR the volume of data you are processing OR both	☐	☒
Will your project or system have a "social media" dimension? Note – will it have an interactive element which allows users to communicate directly with one another?	☐	☒
Will any decisions be automated? Note – does your system or process involve circumstances where an individual's input is "scored" or assessed without intervention/review/checking by a human being? Will there be any "profiling" of data subjects?	☐	☒

	Yes	No
Will your project/system involve CCTV or monitoring of an area accessible to the public?	☐	☒
Will you be using the data you collect to match or cross-reference against another existing set of data?	☐	☒
Will you be using any novel, or technologically advanced systems or processes? Note – this could include biometrics, "internet of things" connectivity or anything that is currently not w idely utilised	☐	☒

If you answer "Yes" to any of the above, you will probably need to complete Data Protection Impact Assessment - Stage Two. If you are unsure, please consult with the Information Management Officer before proceeding.

Appendix C

Hermitage NDP

See separate attachment

Appendix D

Hermitage NDP Consultation Statement

See separate attachment

Appendix E

Hermitage NDP Basic Conditions Statement

See separate attachment

Appendix F

Legal Compliance Check of the Hermitage NDP

See separate attachment

Appendix G

Summary of responses received to the Regulation 16 publication consultation

See separate attachment

Appendix H

WBDC comments on the submission Hermitage NDP

See separate attachment

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Hermitage Parish Council

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2039



Pre-Submission (Regulation 16) Consultation Version

February 2023

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HER4: Low energy and energy efficient design, including Sustainable Drainage Systems

HER5: Wildlife-friendly development

HER6: Irreplaceable habitats and local wildlife-rich habitats and species

HER7: Local Green Spaces

HER8: Non-designated heritage assets

HER9: Access for walking, cycling and horse riding

1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the plan

1.1 This document represents the Neighbourhood Plan for Hermitage parish for the period 2022 to 2039. The Plan contains a vision for the future of Hermitage and sets out clear planning policies to realise this vision.

1.2 The principal purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to guide development within the parish. It also provides guidance to anyone wishing to submit a planning application for development within the parish. The process of producing a plan has sought to involve the community as widely as possible. The different topic areas are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance to Hermitage, its residents, businesses and community groups.

1.3 Some of the Neighbourhood Plan policies are general and apply throughout the Plan area, whilst others are site or area-specific and apply only to the appropriate areas illustrated on the relevant map. Nevertheless, in considering proposals for development, West Berkshire District Council will apply all relevant policies of the Plan. It is therefore assumed that the Plan will be read as a whole, although some cross-referencing between Plan policies has been provided.

1.4 The process of producing the Neighbourhood Plan has identified a number of non-policy actions which have not been included in the policies' sections. This is because these are not specifically related to land use matters and therefore sit outside the jurisdiction of a Neighbourhood Plan. These actions will be addressed by the Parish Council outside of the Neighbourhood Plan process. They are presented in Section 9.

Policy context

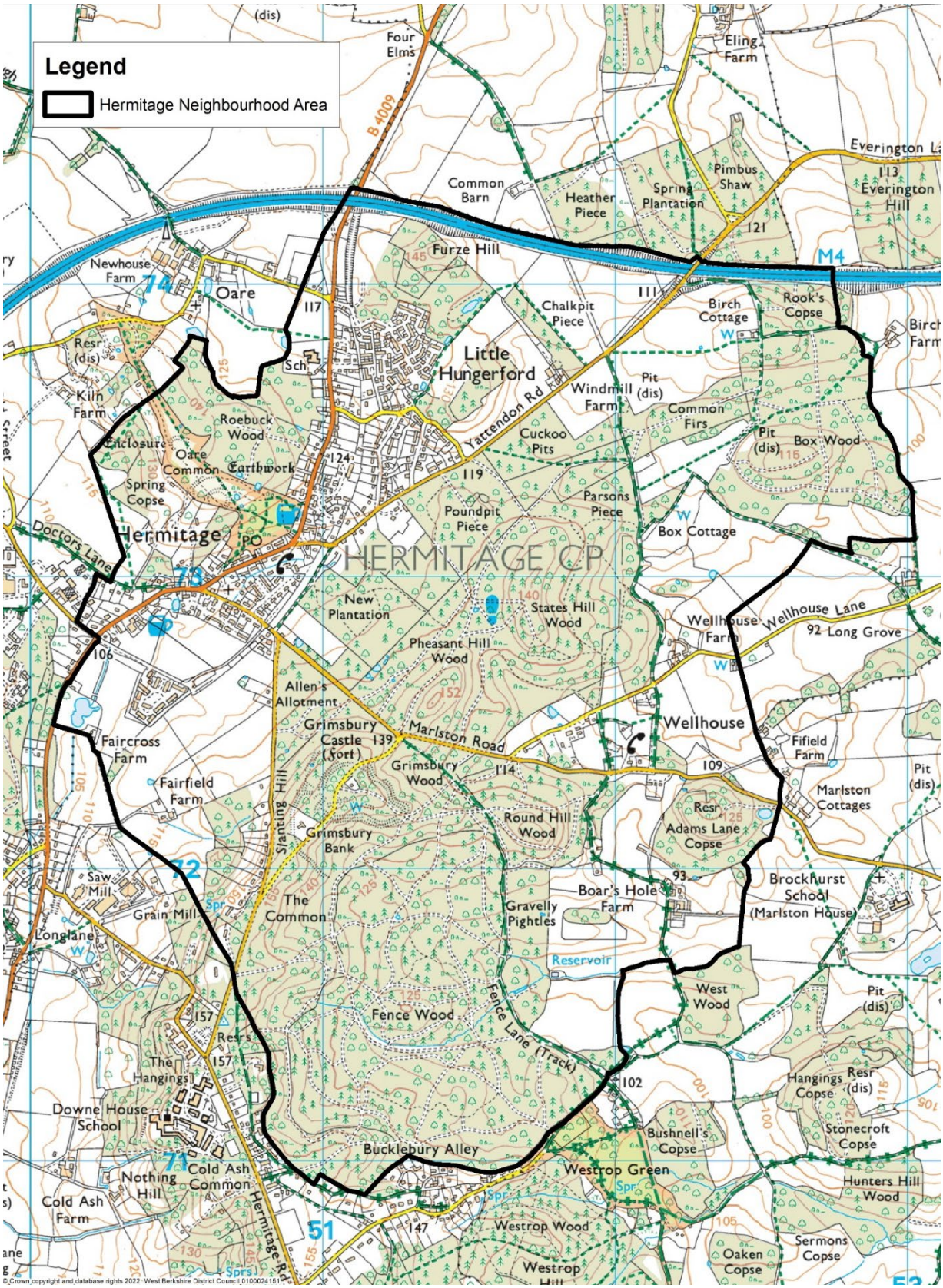
1.5 The Neighbourhood Plan represents one part of the development plan for the neighbourhood area over the period 2022 to 2039, the other parts being the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2012), the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2017) and the saved policies of the West Berkshire District Local Plan (saved 2007).

1.6 West Berkshire District Council, as the local planning authority, designated the Hermitage Neighbourhood Area in April 2019 to enable Hermitage Parish Council to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan has been prepared by the community through the Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) Steering Group.

1.7 The HNP has been prepared in accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended). The HNP Steering Group has prepared the plan to establish a vision for the future of the parish and to set out how that vision will be realised through planning and controlling land use and development change over the plan period.

1.8 The map in Figure 1.1 below shows the boundary of the Neighbourhood Area, which is the same as the administrative boundary of Hermitage parish.

Figure 1.1: Hermitage Neighbourhood Area/parish boundary



Prepared under Hermitage Parish Council's Ordnance Survey Public Sector Geospatial Mapping Agreement (PSGA) no. 100055937

1.9 The current strategic planning context for Hermitage is provided primarily by the West Berkshire Core Strategy. This was adopted in 2012 and covers the period to 2026. As such, it has a limited time to run and the Neighbourhood Plan period runs well beyond its end date. Alongside the Core Strategy are the saved policies from the West Berkshire Local Plan 1991-2006; these are used for the purpose of determining planning applications and provide limited up-to-date guidance for how the neighbourhood plan relates to strategic plan-making matters.

1.10 As well as the Core Strategy and Local Plan saved policies is the West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) which was adopted in 2017. In addition to addressing matters relating to housing in the countryside, parking standards and accommodation for gypsy, traveller and travelling show people, this allocates two sites in Hermitage for housing development:

- HSA24 - Land off Charlotte Close - allocated for 15 dwellings but with full planning permission for 16 dwellings.
- HSA25 - Land south-east of the Old Farmhouse - allocated for 10 dwellings but with outline planning permission for up to 21 dwellings (the difference in numbers being accounted for by the fact that a larger area than was allocated, by incorporating the Old Farmyard site, was granted permission).

1.11 A review of the West Berkshire Local Plan is being undertaken by West Berkshire District Council. This will cover the period to 2039, the same end date as the Neighbourhood Plan. A draft of the Local Plan Review (Regulation 18) was consulted on between December 2020 and February 2021. Amongst other things, this proposed a minimum housing requirement for Hermitage of 20 dwellings to 2039 (the lifetime of the emerging Local Plan). This is in addition to the two sites allocated in the existing Housing Allocations DPD and to any windfall sites that have come forward recently (including the Co-op site for 8 dwellings, the White Horse pub site for 4 dwellings and the Crown Butchers site for 3 dwellings). This figure will be kept under review until the Local Plan Review has reached a more advanced stage, ie independent examination has been completed.

1.12 In October 2022 West Berkshire District Council published its timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan Review. The Regulation 19 Proposed Submission version of the Plan was consulted on in January and February 2023. The intention is then to submit the plan for independent examination in March 2023, with an adoption date of September 2024.

Monitoring the Plan

1.13 Hermitage Parish Council, as the qualifying body, will be responsible for maintaining and periodically revisiting the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure relevance and to monitor delivery. This may be done through the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

2 LOCAL CONTEXT

History of Hermitage

2.1 Hermitage has a long and rich history which has shaped the settlement and parish today.

2.2 **Origins –** an Iron Age hillfort called Grimsbury Castle is an important monument on high ground, overlooking two valleys in the middle of the parish. Its origins are probably between the 8th and 5th centuries BC as early Iron Age pottery was found there. There was then a strong Roman presence, with villas found in the 19th century at Wellhouse and Birch Farm as well as other features in Box Wood.

2.3 **13th Century -** Hermitage, part of the parish of Hamstead Norris (sic), lay within the local administrative area (or 'Hundred') of Faircross which seems to have taken its name from a spot near Hermitage, where two ancient trade routes crossed. The name Faircross is still retained in the nearby plantation and farm. These crossroads formed the original settlement nucleus of Hermitage around what is now the junction of Marlston Road and the B4009, Newbury Road.

2.4 **Pre-19th Century -** Little is known apart from a reference to Cromwell's army marching through Hermitage enroute to the Second Battle of Newbury in 1641 and evidence of a Quaker Meeting House and burial ground on Oare Common in 1678. Rocque's map published in 1761 showed Hermitage (and the larger settlement of Little Hungerford to the north) as being mostly rough open ground with a cluster of houses around the junctions of Marlston and Yattendon Roads with what is now known as the B4009.

2.5 **1830 –** Farmworkers from both Hermitage and Little Hungerford took part in the Swing Riots (a widespread uprising by agricultural workers protesting at harsh working conditions and unemployment arising from the introduction of agricultural mechanisation) and won a 20% wage rise from the farm owner at Hampstead Norris.

2.6 **1840 -** Hermitage separated from the parish of Hampstead Norris (sic) becoming an ecclesiastical parish in its own right. It was a thriving, mainly agricultural, community with a bakery, a Methodist Chapel (in Chapel Lane), a Parochial School with up to 50 pupils and three Public Houses - the Plough Inn (Hampstead Norreys Road), the White Horse and the Fox.

2.7 **1872 -** Hermitage is recorded as having a post office, 95 houses and a population of 434.

2.8 **1882 –** The Didcot, Newbury and Southampton Railway opened and ran right through Hermitage, transforming goods transport between the Midlands and the South Coast and contributing greatly to the growth of Hermitage. As wealthier city dwellers chose to migrate towards rural areas, their demand for substantial villas meant that the small local brick kilns located close to The Fox couldn't keep pace with demand.

2.9 **Early 1900s -** Pinewood Brickworks at the northern edge of Hermitage opened in 1908. Ribbon development along both sides of the B4009 and within the triangle of land between Hampstead Norreys and Yattenden Roads, effectively merged the settlement of Hermitage with Little Hungerford. Housing for local workers began to appear and various businesses servicing village and farm needs sprang up along the B4009.

2.10 **1920 -** Hermitage is recorded as 'a considerable village' with several shops, a butcher, baker, a blacksmith's workshop, carpenters, Hackney Carriage business and a police station!

2.11 **1960s –** The intervening years of Depression and WWII brought little, if any change until home-ownership became a wider aspiration and estate development became popular. 33 bungalows were built on the local cricket green at Briant's Piece, off Marlston Road.

2.12 **1970s -** Completion of the Maidenhead to Swindon section of the M4 in December 1971 fuelled further demand for housebuilding in Hermitage, just one mile from the crossroads of England! 34 dwellings built on pastureland to the south west of Marlston Road, became Lipscomb Close. Along the B4009, older houses with large grounds were demolished or large gardens sub-divided giving rise to much uncoordinated infill development and the emergence of unsympathetic house design. Widening of the B4009 to accommodate increased traffic led to considerable loss of native hedgerows, mature trees and to urbanisation of the rural street-scene. Increased car ownership, retail expansion in Newbury, only 4 miles distant, contributed to the demise of shops and businesses in the village.

2.13 **1980s – 1990s -** Two brownfield sites were constructed on the former Hermitage Brickworks site near the Fox Pub. These delivered a total of 44 dwellings (14 at Kiln Close and 30 at Dines Way). A further 8 dwellings were developed on pastureland at Lipscomb Close around 1990.

2.14 **2000s –** This saw the biggest increase in housing development in Hermitage's history. In 2007, 201 dwellings were completed at the northern end of Hermitage creating Forest Edge estate on the site of Pinewood Brick and Tile company (latterly Cementation Construction site storage) plus 28 dwellings at Blake Road. A further 70 dwellings were built beyond the southern end of the village settlement area on the former Hermitage Railway Station sidings and WWII cold storage area (latterly Arena Promotions site) - establishing Hermitage Green.

2.15 **2015 – now –** Along the B4009 at the southern end of Hermitage, the substantial 19th century Hermitage House and parish school (later village hall), were demolished and replaced with 10 detached houses. The large Co-op store, with 8 more dwellings on the brownfield site of a disused motor business, was completed late-2021.

Hermitage today

Socio-economic profile

2.16 Whilst there was a national Census undertaken in 2021, a comprehensive set of data was not available at parish level at the time of drafting. The data below therefore relate to the 2011 Census. This is dated and therefore needs to be considered in the context of change over the intervening period. However, its purpose is to give a high-level understanding of the broad profile of Hermitage parish.

2.17 In 2011, the population of Hermitage parish was 1,943 persons, living in 722 household spaces:

- 17.4% of the population is aged 60 or over, compared with 21.7% of the population in West Berkshire district.
- 25.4% of the population is aged 14 or under, compared with 18.9% of the population in West Berkshire.
    - Hermitage has a larger proportion of children and a lower proportion of retirees than the district as a whole.

2.18 In 2011, Hermitage parish had 741 dwellings:

- 54.7% of these dwellings were detached, compared with 33.8% in West Berkshire;
- 20.5% of dwellings were semi-detached, compared with 32.8% in West Berkshire;
- 69.8% of properties were owned, which is broadly the same as for West Berkshire;
- only 9.1% were social rented properties, whereas the figure for West Berkshire was 13.8%; and

- Hermitage has a low proportion of 1-bed properties at 4% (West Berkshire has 9%) and a high proportion of properties of at least 4 bedrooms at 44% (West Berkshire has 28%):
    - Hermitage's housing stock is dominated by very large, detached properties.

2.19 79.0% of the resident population aged between 16 and 74 was economically active, compared with 76.2% of those in West Berkshire.

2.20 A large proportion of the resident population of Hermitage aged 16 to 74 that were in employment were in highly skilled occupations. 41% were employed either as managers, directors or senior officials or in professional occupations compared with 33.3% in West Berkshire.

Key features

2.21 Hermitage lies less than 5 miles north-east of Newbury in the heart of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). A 5-minute drive from the intersection of the main Midlands-South A34 and London-Wales M4 and surrounded by woodlands and rolling farmland it's become a highly desirable place to live. Still predominantly agricultural, the largest local employer is the village primary school. Two pubs, a motor vehicle sales and repair business, the Post Office/general store and the Coop grocery store provide additional employment. Other local employers outside the parish boundary but within a 1-mile radius are a small military base, garden retail centre, woodyard and light industrial units.

Community facilities

2.22 **Hermitage Village Hall** was built in 2014 at Furze Hill, adjacent to the Forest Edge development, on the northern edge of the village. Recently completed, it now provides two halls, a committee room, toilets with disabled facilities and catering facilities. It's the venue for a wide range of users and activities. This includes the Hermitage Annual Parish Assembly, occasional community social events, a variety of weekly fitness classes and Horticultural Society exhibitions and meetings. Both halls are available for private hire and are in use seven days a week.

2.23 Also at Furze Hill, adjacent to the Village Hall, a variety of sports facilities can be found - playing field, multi-use ball courts and exercise equipment.

2.24 **Children's play areas -** Hermitage boasts three well-equipped children's play areas spaced throughout the settlement area, with a variety of activity equipment - Furze Hill, Pinewood Park (off Chapel Lane next to the Scout Hut) and at the heart of Hermitage Green in the south of the village. All play areas are well-used but inconsiderate dog-fouling continues to create problems, despite ample provision of dog waste bins.

2.25 **Hermitage Parish Church** on Marlston Road conducts regular services of worship as well as online services and also hosts fortnightly meetings of Trinity Tones, a community choir. Its adjacent Adelaide room is available for hire.

2.26 **Education -** Hermitage Primary School at the northern end of the village, on the B4009 caters for children from 4-11 years old. Secondary Education is provided by:

- The Downs School at Compton, roughly 5 miles north
- Trinity School at Shaw, roughly 4 miles south-west
- St Bartholomew's School at Newbury, about 5 miles south-west

2.27 A private nursery, Acres of Fun, is located just outside the parish boundary on Priors Court Road. Other pre-school provision is available at Hermitage Village Hall, close to Hermitage Primary School.

2.28 Two independent schools - Brockhurst and Marlston House Preparatory School and Downe House Girls Boarding School - lie within 2 miles.

2.29 **Children's Clubs -** Hermitage has thriving Cubs, Rainbows and Brownies sections at various locations with Guides available at Compton and Cold Ash and Scouts at Compton and Thatcham.

2.30 **Library -** West Berkshire Mobile Library service visits two locations in Hermitage regularly.

2.31 **Healthcare -** The nearest surgery and pharmacy is over 1 mile away in Chieveley, inaccessible by public transport and hazardous to walk or cycle to along the busy Priors Court Road which leads to the motorway. Nearest major hospitals are Reading, Basingstoke and Oxford. There's a limited facility community hospital at Thatcham. Dentists are in Thatcham or Newbury, each over 4 miles away.

2.32 **Green spaces -** Green spaces owned and maintained by the Parish Council (HPC):

- the Millennium memorial area at Lipscomb Close
- the tree-bordered green space at Dines Way
- part of the grassed verge on Pinewood Crescent
- Furze Hill (recreation ground and designated Local Wildlife Site) - formerly clay and sandpits for M4 construction and Pinewood Brickworks
- Pinewood Park - near the Scout Hut on site of former Pinewood Halt Station
- the Burial Ground off Marlston Road.

2.33 The Parish Council has recently negotiated to lease the children's play area at Hermitage Green.

2.34 Located well within the North Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Hermitage is surrounded by a mix of coniferous forest and deciduous woodlands, some of which is classed as ancient woodland. The Eling Estate (part of the Gerald Palmer Eling Trust, a registered charity) forms the backdrop to the south and south-east of the settlement and includes numerous permitted paths. Complementing these, beyond the settlement area of the parish are numerous Public Rights of Way footpaths, bridleways and ancient byways. Traversing local woods and farmland they enable pleasant, healthy recreation and off-road access to neighbouring parishes.

2.35 Directly south of Hermitage, bordered by Marlston Road and Slanting Hill lies Grimsbury Hill Fort, a substantial Iron Age construction dating from around 100BC.

2.36 West of the B4009, current Ordnance Survey maps show no public rights of way through privately owned Roebuck Woods and Spring (or Meetinghouse) Copse. Clearly signposted from Doctors Lane and from several points along the B4009 are Public Rights of Way skirting the north and western edges of Spring Copse and dissecting Oare Common, the site of ancient earthworks and enclosures. The proximity of woodland and public access is highly valued by residents.

2.37 Eling Way, an Active Travel Route connecting Hermitage with Hampstead Norreys opened in 2019 and is extremely popular with cyclists, walkers, runners and horse riders. However, users come from further afield, creating additional parking pressures at the Village Hall and on Pinewood Crescent, especially at weekends when sports fixtures are held at the adjacent Furze Hill playing field.

2.38 Much of Hermitage lies within the Berks Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)'s core zone of high value for wildlife. South-west of Hermitage and increasingly vulnerable to development are several lots of rough pasture, presently outside the settlement boundary, home to local muntjac deer, other wildlife and songbirds. Red kites can frequently be seen soaring on air currents over the village and at dusk, bats can be glimpsed darting around in the vicinity of the Church. BBOWT is actively searching for ways to help offset local development and achieve 'Biodiversity Net Gain'

and has declared nature recovery zones (best places to restore and create new habitats) around the Dines Way and Hermitage Green developments as well as the area bordered by Lipscomb Close, B4009 and Station Road.

2.39 **Hospitality -** Hermitage has two pubs that have been serving the community for over 150 years and are well-patronised today, The Fox operating as a public house from 1864 and the White Horse Inn, a public house since at least 1847.

Local businesses

2.40 A variety of small businesses serve the local community and surrounding villages but most residents rely on internet purchasing or travel by car to Newbury, Thatcham, Reading or Basingstoke for household needs.

2.41 Hermitage Garage provides auto repairs, performs MOTs and sells used vehicles.

2.42 Hermitage Brewery is a micro-brewery operating out of premises on Slanting Hill. Its products may be purchased at the village Post Office shop.

2.43 Hilliers Garden Centre, situated just outside the parish boundary is very popular with residents and nearby locals, providing plants, a wide range of gardening supplies and services as well as a very popular café and restaurant. Construction work has already begun to expand the retail area and parking facilities.

Shopping

2.44 Just to the south of Hermitage, but within the parish boundary in the Old Telephone Exchange building at the side of the B4009 is Yarnfest, an independent supplier of yarn and associated craft supplies. It also holds informal, friendly community knitting and crochet sessions.

2.45 The Post Office and shop has been at the heart of Hermitage for over 120 years, supplying essential food and household supplies as well as firewood, confectionery, newspapers and journals to locals as well as a steady stream of passers-by. It also provides banking facilities, foreign currency, parcel and prescription pick-up plus the usual Post Office services.

2.46 In 2021, a branch of the Co-op foodstore opened further south on the B4009, next to the White Horse and has proved popular, offering a wider range of foodstuffs. Unfortunately, customer parking and delivery unloading facilities have proved inadequate, creating congestion which impacts adversely on traffic flows at an already busy section of the B4009 close to the Priors Court roundabout.

Public transport

2.47 Reading Buses operates the Number 6 bus service 5 times daily at two-hourly intervals for 6 days a week (not Sundays) through Hermitage into Newbury Wharf and onto the rail station. In the other direction, the number 6 travels from Hermitage via Hampstead Norreys and Compton to West Ilsley. Since the Covid pandemic, the service is not particularly well-used.

2.48 Contracted school buses provide transport to secondary schools at Compton, Donnington and Newbury.

2.49 There is no public transport to the nearest Doctors Surgery at Chieveley but Downland Patient Transport, run by volunteers can be requested. It is theoretically possible to get to West Berkshire Community Hospital and even to Thatcham or Reading via public transport with a change of bus at Shaw or Newbury, although service frequency of the Hermitage-Newbury leg proves very restrictive when attempting to arrange and attend medical appointments.

New development

2.50 As at April 2022, the following developments are in the planning pipeline (ie. have permission but have yet to be constructed):

- Pasture behind Charlotte Close -16 dwellings approved October 2021
- Pasture behind the Old Farmhouse - 21 dwellings approved May 2021
- Pasture behind the White Horse Pub - 4 dwellings approved January 2021
- Land at Crown Butchers, 4 High Street - 3 dwellings approved November 2021.

3 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Challenges for Hermitage

3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address, as far as is possible, the challenges that face the community of Hermitage. In summary these challenges are:

- maintaining heritage and feel of village;
- lack of active travel routes/non-vehicular access outside Hermitage;
- retention of the high-quality environment, including dark skies;
- poor communication networks, eg mobile phones;
- importance of retaining countryside views;
- inadequate parking at community venues; and
- shortage of allotments/growing spaces.

Vision for Hermitage

3.2 In consultation with the community, the established vision for Hermitage is as follows:

By 2039, Hermitage will be a strong and thriving community with residents from all age groups and backgrounds.

It will retain its unique character and identity both within the parish and in the surrounding Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The green spaces and local wildlife site that it cherishes will continue to thrive, creating a desirable location by maintaining its separation from neighbouring villages.

The village will provide an environment that supports residents of all ages to live, work and enjoy leisure with access to the surrounding AONB to enjoy social activities safely and remain a service village for the wider area.

Hermitage will provide a strong contribution to support and exceed local and national environmental policies for green low energy housing, striving to become a beacon of excellence.

Residents will benefit from being in as safe an environment as possible with traffic posing less of a threat and with safe links for cyclists and pedestrians both within the village and to access other villages and local transport hubs.

The effects of new development, traffic measures and car parking on the local landscape will be managed carefully and sensitively.

Neighbourhood Plan objectives

3.3 The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are as follows:

- ensure that new housing addresses the needs of Hermitage community;
- ensure that new development reflects the rural character of Hermitage parish;

- ensure that new development minimises its environmental impact;
- preserve the views from Hermitage village which help to make it special;
- preserve and enhance Hermitage's heritage;
- improve access to the countryside for walkers, cyclists and horse riders;
- conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity; and
- protect green spaces of value in and around Hermitage village.

Matters not covered by Neighbourhood Plan policies

3.4 The policies that follow in the Neighbourhood Plan seek to help achieve the identified objectives. When determining planning applications, these policies must be read alongside those in the West Berkshire Local Plan (i.e. the Core Strategy, Local Plan saved policies and the Housing Allocations DPD). Many of the policies in these plans already address matters that have been identified in the course of the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. As such, it is not appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan to simply duplicate these policies. This follows paragraph 30 of the NPPF which states, *"Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict."*

3.5 One example is the protection of the countryside, an issue of considerable importance to the community of Hermitage. The parish is in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), affording it protection at a national level. Moreover, the West Berkshire Local Plan has a number of policies which restrict development in the countryside to uses that are appropriate for that location. It is not necessary or appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan to have a similar policy. Policy protection at a national level is also already in place covering ancient woodland and veteran trees.

3.6 Therefore, if a policy is not explicitly included within the Neighbourhood Plan, it does not mean that this is because it is not important and should not be a consideration when determining planning applications. Rather it is because it is already part of the development plan and all policies should be taken into account together in the decision-making process.

4 HOUSING

POLICY HER1: ADDRESSING HERMITAGE'S HOUSING NEEDS

A. To address the identified housing needs in Hermitage, developments should provide a mix of dwelling sizes (market and affordable) and types that reflect the requirements of the West Berkshire Strategic Housing Needs Assessment 2022 or any successor document.

B. An alternative dwelling mix will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that more current evidence of need should apply or where the required mix would fundamentally compromise the viability of the development, taking into account other requirements of the development.

4.1 The mix of housing in terms of dwelling size is an important issue in Hermitage. As identified in the socio-economic profile in Section 2, Hermitage parish has a high proportion of children (aged 14 and under), suggesting a large proportion of families in the parish. This is reinforced by consultation with local estate agents which suggests that Hermitage is very popular with families. As such, there is strong demand for 3- and 4-bed properties.

4.2 Whilst the most common type of housing in Hermitage is 4-bed properties or larger, prices are high. The median selling price of detached properties was nearly £600,000 in January 2022 (source: home.co.uk) which is unaffordable to many, particularly young families. Therefore it is important the provision of housing sold on the open market reflects the need for it to be as affordable as possible.

4.3 The Hermitage Housing Needs Survey (undertaken in May 2021)[1] identified a need for a range of housing:

- in the affordable sector (eg social rented, intermediate housing, etc) there was a need, over the next five years, for a number of dwellings that exceeded the overall requirement for Hermitage established in the emerging West Berkshire Local Plan for the period to 2039. Whilst all sizes and types of dwellings were needed, there was an emphasis on bungalows for older people and 2- or 3-bed properties for growing families;
- in the market sector, the need is similarly broad, again with a particular need for bungalows (recognising that the actual need is for homes suitable for the needs of older people, with bungalows being one possible type of provision). The survey also confirmed the need for larger family dwellings.

4.4 The Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2016[2] suggested a housing mix as follows for West Berkshire:

- 1-bed – 15%
- 2-bed – 30%
- 3-bed – 35%
- 4+ bed – 20%

[1] Arc4 (2021) *Hermitage Housing Needs Survey*
[2] GL Hearn (2016) *Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment*

4.5 This was taken forward by the West Berkshire Housing Needs Assessment work, published in 2020 and updated in 2022[3]. This recommended the split of market and affordable housing shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Proposed housing mix

	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ bed
Market housing	5-10%	40-45%	35-40%	10-15%
Affordable home ownership	20-25%	45-50%	20-25%	5-10%
Affordable housing (rented)	30-35%	35-40%	20-25%	5-10%

4.6 Policy CS6 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2012 requires the following split of market and affordable housing:

- On sites of 15+ dwellings (or 0.5 hectares or more):
  - 30% affordable housing on previously developed land
  - 40% affordable housing on greenfield land
- On sites of less than 15 dwellings:
  - 30% affordable housing on sites of 10-14 dwellings
  - 20% affordable housing on sites of 5-9 dwellings

4.7 In light of these policy requirements, the housing mix in Table 4.1 broadly reflects the need identified in the Hermitage Housing Needs Survey. Development should seek to deliver this mix of dwellings, particularly the 3-bed properties which are popular with families and should be cheaper than the 4-bed or larger properties which currently form the main stock in Hermitage.

4.8 It should be noted that other matters of importance to the community of Hermitage that were raised through the Neighbourhood Plan process were the provision of affordable housing and making homes wheelchair accessible. Both matters are addressed through the West Berkshire Local Plan and the application of the relevant policies to ensure that these matters are properly addressed by planning applications is supported.

[3] Iceni (2022) *West Berkshire Housing Needs Assessment Update*, for West Berkshire District Council

5 DESIGN AND VIEWS

Design

POLICY HER2: DESIGN

A. Development should demonstrate high quality design and layout which respects the local character of Hermitage identified in the Hermitage Design Guidelines and Codes 2022 (or any successor document).

B. In delivering high quality design, development proposals must demonstrate the appropriate use of design, layout, materials and features. The following principles should be considered as part of design proposals:

1. **Development should integrate with and enhance the form of its existing surroundings, with all connections including road patterns ensuring permeability for cyclists and pedestrians.**
2. **Developments should be informed by the density guidance provided in the West Berkshire Density Pattern Book[4]. In particular, development should ensure that densities are reduced on the rural edge of Hermitage village in order to retain the open feel of the village and its relationship with the AONB.**
3. **A mix of house types (where appropriate) and plot layouts should be used.**
4. **Building heights and rooflines should generally be no more than two storeys but all buildings should respect the surrounding countryside and AONB landscape. Taller buildings will only be permitted where it is clearly demonstrated that they can complement or enhance the local character.**
5. **New development should be respectful of the architectural styles and use of materials of surrounding buildings, particularly in the case of residential development.**
6. **Parking to support residential uses should generally be provided within the development and should include a proportion of well-designed on-street parking provisions, in accordance with West Berkshire District Council parking standards.**

C. All development proposals should include a proportionate statement and illustrations demonstrating how the principles and guidance in the Hermitage Design Guidelines and Codes have been addressed.

5.1 The character of Hermitage was identified by the local community as a strong positive feature of the built environment and its surroundings. People value how attractive Hermitage is and want new development to fit in with this.

[4] David Lock Associates (2019) *West Berkshire Density Pattern Book*, for West Berkshire District Council

Hermitage's range of architectural styles



5.2 The Hermitage Design Guidelines and Codes report[5] was commissioned in order to provide a clear understanding of the nature of design issues that new development must consider to assemble high quality schemes. This identified a series of design principles that are specific to Hermitage parish. In total, 27 design 'codes' have been identified under four themes:

[5] AECOM (2022) *Hermitage Design Guidelines and Codes*, for Hermitage Parish Council

Theme	Code	Title
DC.01 In keeping with local character	1	Set in rural landscape/ settlement edges
	2	Patterns of growth and layout of buildings and gardens
	3	Heritage, views and landmarks
DC.02 Built form	4	Overlooking the public space
	5	Boundary lines and boundary treatments
	6	Corner treatment
	7	Continuity and enclosure
	8	Legibility and wayfinding
	9	Building heights, density and housing mix
	10	Infill development
	11	Housing extensions and conversions
	12	Materials and architectural details
DC.03 Access and movement	13	Accessible and attractive footpath network/ Access to the countryside
	14	Prioritise walking and cycling
	15	People friendly streets
	16	Street lighting
	17	Parking and servicing
DC.04 Sustainable Design and Environment	18	Create a green network
	19	Biodiversity
	20	Water management
	21	Trees
	22	Open spaces
	23	Sustainable design

5.3 Some of these matters are further addressed in other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. However, in respect of ensuring high quality design, it is important that development proposals – and particularly major developments (as defined by the NPPF) – actively demonstrate how they have been informed by these design codes. Their purpose is not to expect all development to slavishly adhere to all codes in all circumstances; rather it is to inform development so that what is built represents high quality development in the context of Hermitage.

Views

POLICY HER3: COUNTRYSIDE VIEWS BETWEEN PROPERTIES

In order to preserve its setting within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, development within or adjacent to the settlement boundary of Hermitage must be designed and arranged in a manner which would safeguard views of the surrounding countryside that occur between buildings.

5.4 Hermitage is located within the North Wessex Downs which reflects its location in a very attractive rural landscape. Its designation as AONB means that it has a high level of protection provided by the NPPF at national level, complemented by the West Berkshire Local Plan.





5.5 However, this does not mean that all development is banned in the AONB. Hermitage village is within the AONB yet strategic planning policy enables this to continue, reflecting its role as an AONB village. In this regard it is the features of the landscape at a micro-scale where development that is permitted can have a disproportionate impact.

5.6 A particular feature of historic development in Hermitage has been the wide spacing of properties affording views and glimpses of the countryside behind and between properties. This has been assisted by the large number of detached residential properties in the village. Whilst the heart of the AONB is a short distance away, it is easy when it the middle of the village to lose that connection. These views between properties help to sustain that link.





5.7 With a push for development to use land more efficiently, coupled with the common wish of many residents to extend properties, there is a danger that some of these views between properties will be lost. The Neighbourhood Plan includes a wish to ensure that development which requires planning permission is not only well designed and well laid out in terms of how it is used but also that it retains views and glimpses of the countryside beyond. This does not have to mean that development in a gap between existing buildings is not permitted but such development should be at a low level, particularly where the view is of a mature tree belt behind, as is commonly the case in Hermitage.

6 SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENT

Sustainable design

POLICY HER4: LOW ENERGY AND ENERGY EFFICIENT DESIGN, INCLUDING SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

A. Proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, must demonstrate how the design of buildings and site layouts minimise consumption of energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources in order to provide resilience to the effects of climate change.

B. All developments must demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. The following measures shall be incorporated into development:

1. **wherever possible, new buildings shall be orientated to maximise the opportunities for both natural heating and ventilation and reducing exposure to wind and other elements;**
2. **proposals involving both new and existing buildings shall demonstrate how they have been designed to maximise resistance and resilience to climate change for example by including measures such as solar shading, thermal mass, heating and ventilation of the building and appropriately coloured materials in areas exposed to direct sunlight, green and brown roofs, green walls, etc;**
3. **use of trees and other planting, where appropriate as part of a landscape scheme, to provide shading of amenity areas, buildings and streets and to help to connect habitat, designed with native plants that are carefully selected, managed and adaptable to meet the predicted changed climatic conditions; and**
4. **water efficiency and measures to reduce water consumption. Refurbishments and other non-domestic development will be expected to meet BREEAM water-efficiency credits. Residential development must not exceed a maximum water use of 105 litres per head per day (excluding the allowance of up to 5 litres for external water consumption).**

C. All development must minimise surface water runoff to prevent surface water flooding through implementation of suitable sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), and where possible incorporate mitigation and resilience measures for any increases in surface water flood risk that may occur due to climate change or other factors[6]. The design of SuDS should be in accordance with best practice and national standards[7]. It should also be ensured that they are multi-functional and can deliver additional benefits where possible, including biodiversity, environmental net gains and water quality.

6.1 In June 2019, the UK Government made a commitment for the country to be net zero carbon by 2050. To achieve this will be a substantial feat that will require everyone to be engaged, from households and communities to businesses and local and national government.

6.2 In terms of the UK's change to housing stock, this means that new homes will have to be designed to minimise energy use by adopting a fabric first approach and following the Energy Hierarchy to develop net zero carbon design. This will include minimising heating and heat loss through effective insulation, installing or connecting to renewable energy systems and reducing. In this context, the orientation of buildings can be important in order to make best use of available sunlight.

[6] The WBDC Sustainable Drainage Systems Supplementary Planning Document provides guidance (https://www.westberks.gov.uk/sudsspd)
[7] DEFRA Non-statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-drainage-systems-non-statutory-technical-standards

6.3 With the UK no longer part of the European Union, the EU's Energy Performance of Buildings Directive - which required all new buildings to be nearly zero-energy by the end of 2020 - will not apply.

6.4 The Neighbourhood Plan aims to improve and promote sustainability in respect of minimising the emissions from built development in the parish by, for instance:

- integrating renewable energy systems into new development and retrofitting existing buildings;
- reducing water consumption through the use of grey water systems; and
- developing community energy schemes.

6.5 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to encourage energy efficient and sustainable well-designed development.

Sustainable Drainage Systems

6.6 In addition it is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for surface water drainage to ground, water courses or surface water sewer. It must not be allowed to drain to the foul sewer, as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding. Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) are an important mechanism to achieve this.

6.7 SuDS not only provide mitigation of potential flooding problems but, if designed to be multi-functional, can mitigate wider issues as well as providing extensive benefits. Mitigation could include ameliorating heating and air pollution and storing carbon and benefits could be making a contribution to biodiversity net gain targets or provision of opportunities for amenity and recreation.

Wildlife-friendly design

POLICY HER5: WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY DEVELOPMENT

A. New development should contribute towards the goal of carbon neutrality and incorporate resilience to climate change in its design. All development proposals are expected to deliver net biodiversity gains of at least 10% in addition to protecting existing habitats and species. Proposals to create or enhance existing green wildlife corridors are strongly encouraged.

B. In particular, the incorporation of design features into new development that encourages local wildlife to thrive, is strongly encouraged. This includes new planting (see clause C).

C. As part of its requirements to demonstrate net biodiversity gain, development should be designed to retain trees, shrubs and hedgerows of arboricultural, habitat and amenity value on-site and to conserve and enhance connectivity to the wider green infrastructure networks. Where this is accompanied by new planting, this should consist of native species of trees, shrubs and grasses acting as stepping stones for wildlife.

D. Development proposals should respect the dark skies that are characteristic of the North Wessex Downs AONB. This should ensure no adverse impact on wildlife, in particular to foraging and commuting bats. Other than householder development, development proposals are required to demonstrate that they meet or exceed the Institute of Lighting Professionals[8] guidance and other relevant standards or guidance for lighting.

6.8 National planning guidance requires development to achieve net biodiversity gain. The Environment Act 2021 requires all development to deliver a minimum uplift of 10% in the amount of biodiversity. In practice this is challenging, highlighting firstly the importance of retaining the biodiversity assets on the site if at all possible.

6.9 The design of individual buildings and of neighbourhood scale green and open spaces, including private gardens, will help to ensure that many of the species that are present in Hermitage parish can not only survive but thrive. Examples of the simple, small scale but positive solutions that well-thought-out design can easily incorporate are:

- integral bird and bat boxes under the eaves of new or redeveloped houses, or artificial nests sited in places away from windows and doors, can create vital new roosting sites to support populations of birds and bats;
- boundaries between dwellings can be made hedgehog friendly by including pre-cut holes for hedgehogs to more effectively move across neighbourhoods to forage; and
- new planting schemes can support bees and other pollinators by including nectar-rich plants.

[8] Institute of Lighting Professionals (2021) *Guidance Note 1 for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light*, GN01/21, www.theilp.org.uk/documents/obtrusive-light/.

6.10 Good outcomes can be achieved by design following good practice guidance, for example by the NHBC Foundation[9] and the Wildlife Trusts[10].

6.11 The location of the parish within the North Wessex Downs AONB, in connection with the large extent of woodland and local bat records, means that light pollution should be minimised so as to avoid disturbance to foraging and commuting bats and to maintain dark skies.

Irreplaceable and wildlife-rich habitats and species

POLICY HER6: IRREPLACEABLE HABITATS AND LOCAL WILDLIFE-RICH HABITATS AND SPECIES

A. Hermitage parish's irreplaceable habitats are shown on Figure 6.1 and consist of:
1. **ancient woodland**
2. **ancient and veteran trees, which may be in the identified Tree Areas**

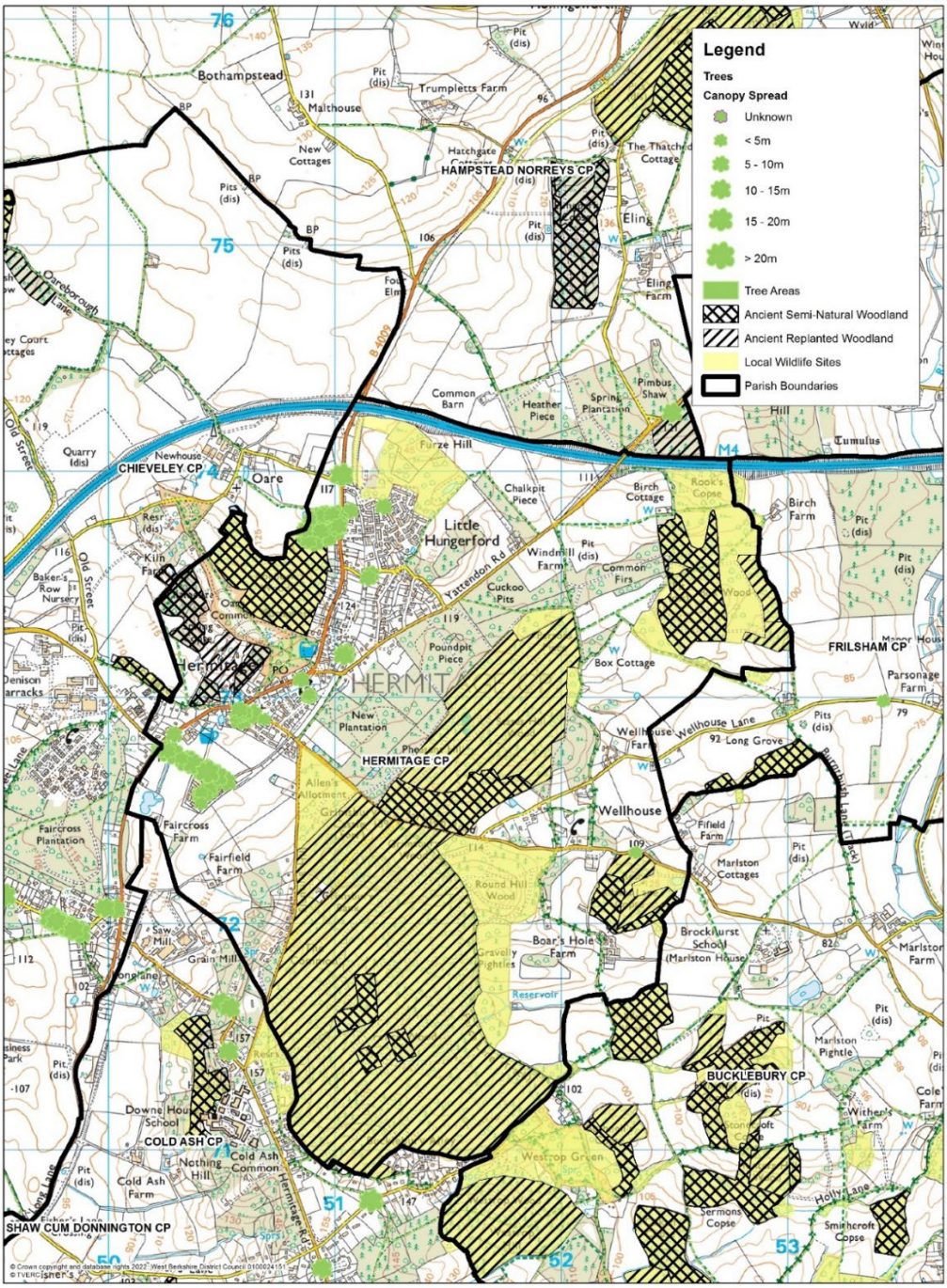
B. As directed by the NPPF, development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats or the loss of legally protected and priority species should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy (including its delivery and ongoing upkeep) exists.

C. Local Wildlife Sites are identified on Figure 6.1. These are locally designated areas of importance for biodiversity and are protected appropriately. Proposals to restore and, as necessary, improve management of these Local Wildlife Sites is supported.

6.12 One of the major assets of Hermitage village is that it is surrounded by beautiful countryside. For many reasons it is becoming increasingly important and urgent that the countryside is protected, especially the areas where wildlife in all its forms can flourish. The NPPF also recognises the importance of the natural countryside and requires planning authorities to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by 'protecting and enhancing valued landscapes' and 'minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures' (NPPF paragraph 174).

Figure 6.1: Environmental asset areas

[9] https://www.nhbcfoundation.org/publication/biodiversity-in-new-housing-developments-creating-wildlife-friendly-communities/
[10] https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/homes_for_people_and_wildlife_lr_-_spreads.pdf



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6.13 Hermitage parish has a large number of sizeable ecological assets which must be protected in order that wildlife can thrive. As shown in Figure 6.1 this includes ancient woodland and Local Wildlife Sites. Within the ancient woodland – which is the most extensive habitat remaining in West Berkshire – there are large numbers of ancient and veteran trees. In addition, the tree areas shown in Figure 6.1 are likely to contain a number of veteran and possibly ancient trees. All must be protected appropriately from development.

6.14 Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states that, when determining planning applications "development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists."

6.15 Similarly, Local Wildlife Sites, as identified by the NPPF, are locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity and must be protected accordingly.

6.16 All planning applications for new development should be accompanied by appropriate ecological surveys and measures that seek to protect the most important biodiversity features[11].

Local Green Spaces

POLICY HER7: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

A. The following space as shown on Figure 6.2 are designated as Local Green Spaces:

1. **Dines Way Green**
2. **Hermitage Green Play Area**
3. **Lipscomb Close Green**
4. **Pinewood playground**
5. **Furze Hill Recreation Ground**
6. **Furze Hill Local Wildlife Site**

B. Proposals for built development on this Local Green Space will be permitted only in very special circumstances.

6.17 Under the NPPF, Neighbourhood Plans have the opportunity to designate Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to them. This will afford protection from development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 102 of the NPPF says that the Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

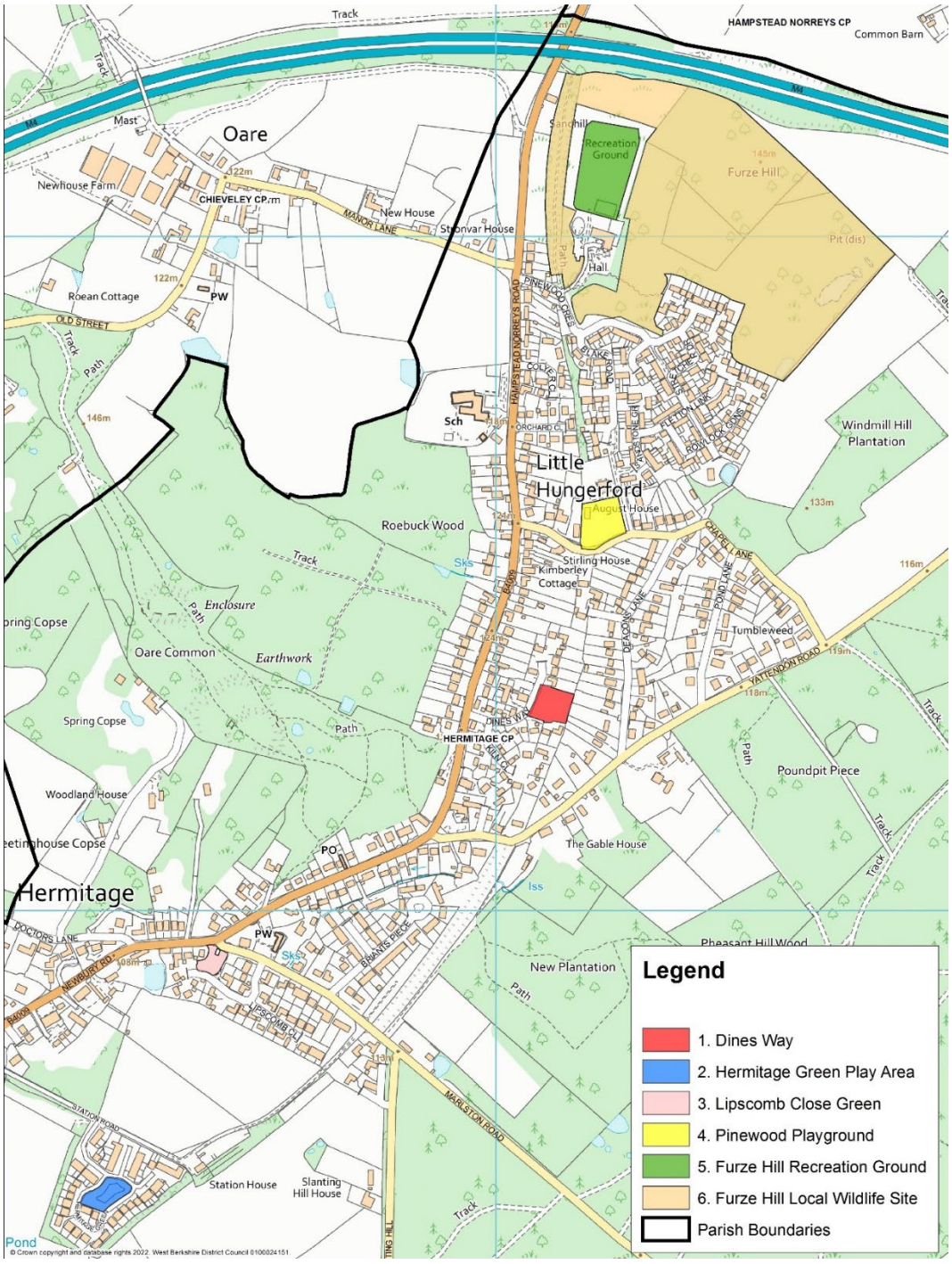
- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

6.18 Through the community engagement on the Neighbourhood Plan, many of the residents of Hermitage stressed the importance of green open spaces. Whilst they recognised the value and beauty of the woodland and countryside surrounding the village, the open spaces within the village were held to be important too. This importance was not only seen as practical – for leisure, exercise and community events – but also for biodiversity.

6.19 The six areas (shown on Figure 6.2) are considered to fulfil all of the criteria of the NPPF:

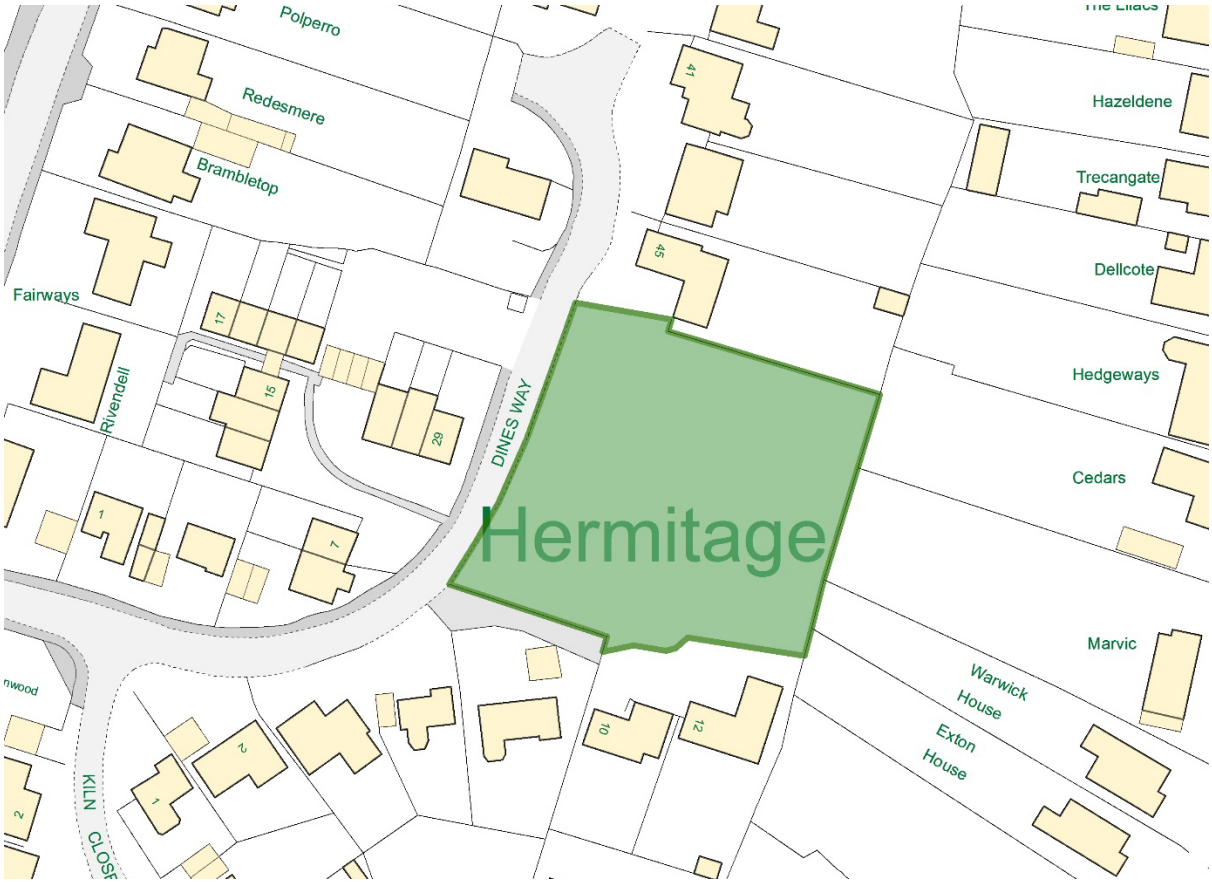
[11] Guidance on the appropriate types of ecological surveys and reports and the content and standards for such reports can be found at: https://cieem.net/resource/guidelines-for-ecological-report-writing/

Figure 6.2: Location of Local Green Spaces



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1. Dines Way Green



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6.20 This space is used by lots of children in Dines Way to play football, run around, practise bike riding and enjoy healthy exercise in the fresh air. The green is used by local dog owners as well as for informal community events. The mature trees and brush provide a rich haven for wildlife.

2. Hermitage Green Play Area



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6.21 This play area is both popular and very well used by children during summer months. It consists of a number of items of play equipment securely mounted within a child-safe, fenced area with latched entrance gates. The play area itself is surrounded by a small area of landscaping containing bushes, shrubs and some 14 young trees planted as part of the development.

3. Lipscomb Close Green



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6.22 This informal space is used by residents as a quiet, peaceful space to spend time and also for informal celebrations. Many children use it to play football. There are ancient oak trees on the green which support a myriad of wildlife.

4. Pinewood playground



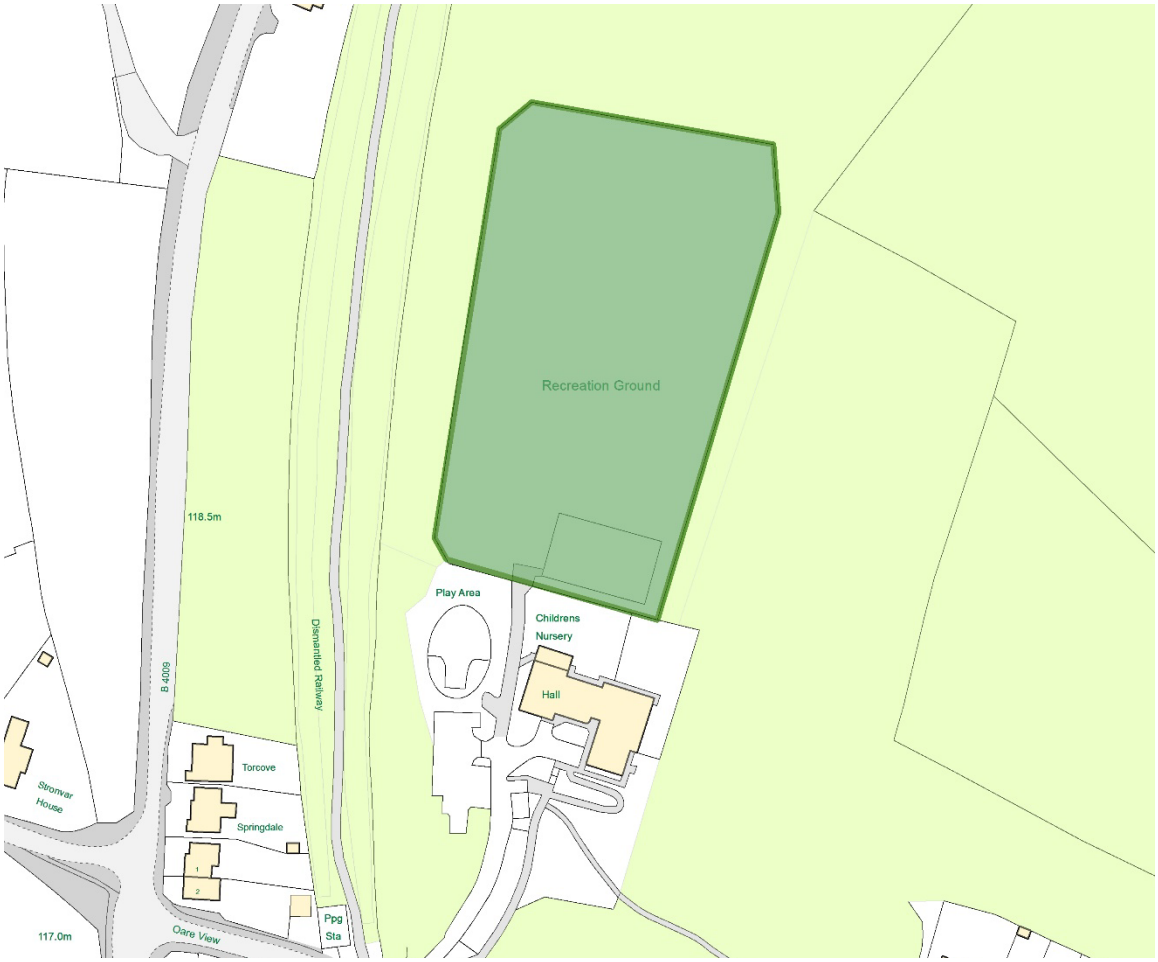
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6.23 This is a very well used play area, popular with local families and children after school and at weekends. It is also used by the local Cub Pack, offering a safe enclosed area, to run a large number of their weekly sessions and other activities.

5. Furze Hill Recreation Ground

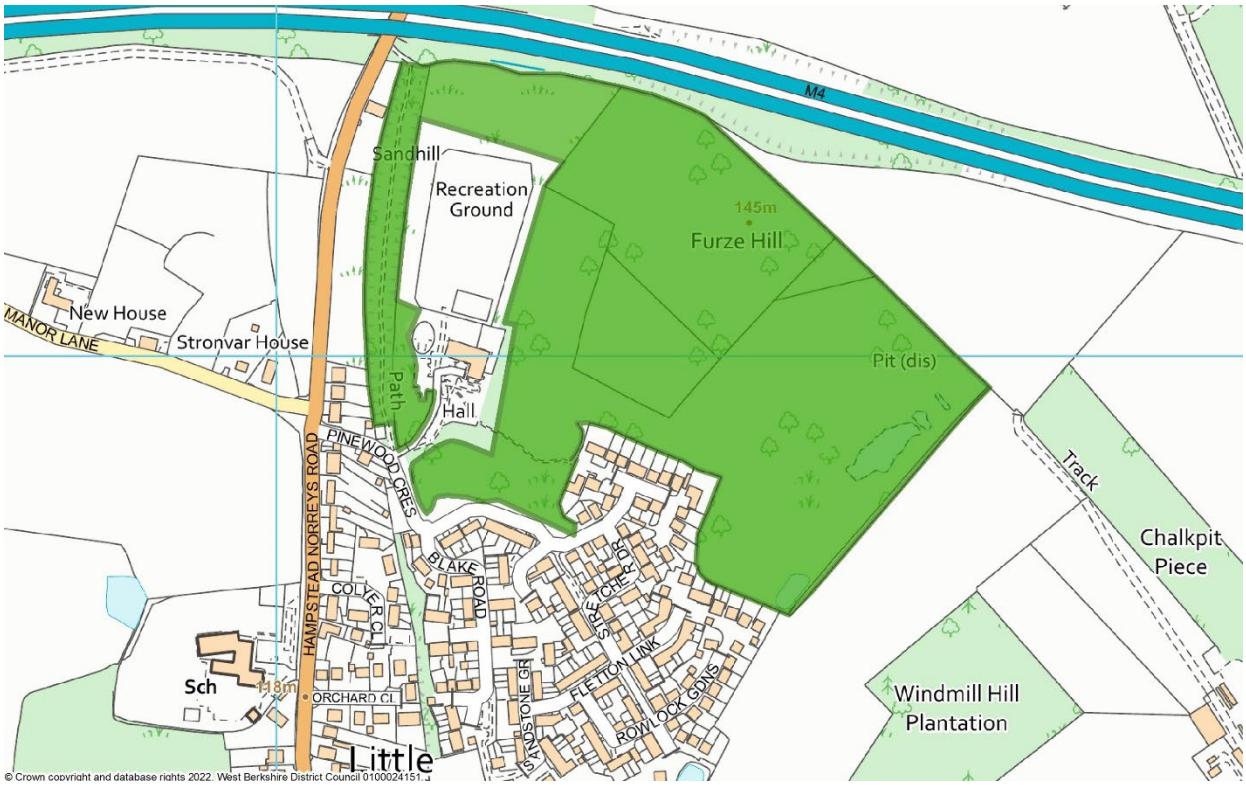


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6.24 This is a space that is well used for dog walking, regular junior football training and matches by a local football club, exercise classes and informal recreation. The multi-use games area is popular with local youngsters. This is a wonderful community space and ever more important when it comes to staying healthy. It is also a centre for village activities such as fetes.

6. Furze Hill Local Wildlife Site



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6.25 This site – a designated Local Wildlife Site - includes a butterfly meadow, woods and the Eling Way. Only some of the woods are open to the public in order to protect the safety of both humans and resident wildlife. The Eling Way is a very popular and well used active travel route. Residents enjoy walking their dogs and seeing the flora and fauna which often receive comments on local social media pages. It is even used for training the rescued birds of prey owned by a local resident.

7 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

POLICY HER8: NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

A. The following, as shown on Figure 7.1, are identified as non-designated heritage assets:

1. **Vine Cottage**
2. **Sarnia**
3. **Yew Tree House**
4. **Hope Cottage**
5. **Reigate Villas**
6. **Hillside Villa**
7. **Bridge Cottage**
8. **Poplar Cottage**
9. **Fir Tree Cottage**
10. **Marlston Road sign**
11. **The Yews**
12. **Lynton Cottage and Fernlea**
13. **Honey Oak Cottage**
14. **Long Barn**
15. **Langstroth House**
16. **Former Police Station**
17. **Holy Trinity Church**
18. **Old Farmhouse**
19. **Fairlight**
20. **Wolverton Lodge**
21. **Old Cottage (site of Little Hungerford Farm)**
22. **Warborough Cottages**
23. **Pinewood Cottage**
24. **Simonds Plough**
25. **Hermitage Railway Station building**

B. In considering proposals which involve the loss or alteration of a non-designated heritage asset, consideration will be given to:

1. **whether the asset is structurally unsound and beyond feasible and viable repair (for reasons other than deliberate damage or neglect); or**
2. **the extent to which measures to sustain the existing use, or find an alternative use/user, have been investigated.**

Where a development proposal would result in the loss of, or harm to a non-designated heritage asset, a balanced judgement will be made as to the acceptability of the proposal having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

7.1 Hermitage is part of the Snelsmore and Buckleberry Commons Historic Environment Character Area of West Berkshire. Evidence of settlement within Hermitage Parish boundary since around 750BC can be found at:

- Grimsbury Castle to the south-east, settled during the Iron-Age (Scheduled monument)

- Roman villa remains - walls and mosaics, discovered in the early 19th century around Birch Farm and Box Wood to the north east
- Wellhouse Farm - east of Hermitage village on Wellhouse Road, documented as a late 17th century farmstead. It and five associated outbuildings are all Grade II listed buildings
- Barnaby Thatch - on Newbury Road is a late 18th Century (1751) cottage, also Grade II listed.

7.2 In total there are eight nationally listed buildings or structures within the parish boundary. In addition to this, the Neighbourhood Plan has identified a number of buildings which are considered to have special local architectural, archaeological or historic interest. These are shown below.

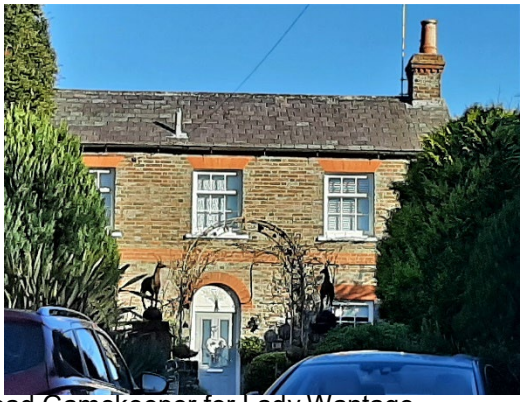
7.3 **Vine Cottage**, Newbury Road. 18th century, two storey brick house with whitewashed front, attached to the west end of Barnaby Thatch. The property is of architectural interest substantially retaining its original design and architecture. The front centre entrance porchway, clay tiled roof with catslide roof at rear and relieving arched ground floor windows are typical of rural cottages in this area during this period. The Sivier family lived here: Mr Sivier being the local chimney sweep and village school caretaker.



7.4 **Sarnia**, High Street - Of historic interest this building was constructed in 1875 by Charles Merritt who ran a butcher's business there, having moved it from The Fox Inn. The building is of particular architectural interest being a detached red brick house ornamented with blue brick quoins, window accents and median line, with clay tiled roof topped by coxcomb/fleur de lis ornamental ridge tiles. A single-storey annexe attached to west side of building appears to be a later addition, possibly housing a small business. The small building to the left of the house (recently demolished and replaced with Merritt Holt, a private house) was the butcher's shop and the range of buildings behind were carriage sheds and slaughter house. Cattle for beef supplies were kept in the field behind which adjoined the old Quaker meeting place.



7.5 **Yew Tree House**, High Street - Of architectural and historic interest, this large detached house built in approximately 1850 substantially retains its original design and architecture. The blue brick elevations with red brick quoins and window arches plus one arched stained-glass sash window on the eastern elevation are typical features of the more expensive houses of this period. The slate roof (as opposed to local clay tiles) with prominent ornamental chimney stacks and yellow clay chimney pots indicate this was built for someone of significance in the village. Before World War I it was occupied by Mr Bushell, Head Gamekeeper for Lady Wantage



7.6 **Hope Cottage**, High Street - Of architectural interest this property retains its original design and architecture and is one of two remaining examples in Hermitage of a modest Victorian rural dwelling. It is a rectangular house of blue Flemish bond brickwork with redbrick quoins, window recesses and window arches to ground floor. It has a clay tile roof with twin clay chimney pots at each end and a catslide roof at the rear housing a single storey extension. Shown on First Edition of Ordnance Survey map published in 1883.



7.7 **Reigate Villas**, Yattendon Road - Of architectural interest, this pair of semi-detached late Victorian houses are illustrative of 'company housing' providing accommodation for important managerial staff. They are brick built under a clay-tiled roof, gable-fronted with an angular bay, situated close to the old Didcot Newbury and Southampton (DNSR) railway line. They were originally built to house workers from the Hermitage Brickworks but occupied for many years by the Deacon and Stroud families. The external appearance and boundary walls remain little changed.



7.8 **Hillside Villa**, Hampstead Norreys Road - The architectural interest of this imposing 1900's house on the main road through the village is that it reflects the late Victorian, early Edwardian growth in Hermitage of larger villa-style residences constructed as rural retreats for wealthier families wishing to escape congested towns and cities. The original deeper frontage was drastically cut back to permit road widening in the 1960's but the white stuccoed elevations, sliding sash windows and corrugated iron-roofed veranda over the angular double bay fronts and front elevations remain substantially unchanged It still has the original door with stained glass above and arched first floor window above.



7.9 **Bridge Cottage**, Chapel Lane - Late 19th century red brick house (one of a semi-detached pair) is of architectural interest. It was built around 1880 with blue brick quoins and median lines. It has a clay tiled roof over red brick dentil course at the gable end and eaves. It has a segmental brick arched ground floor window. A curved low clay brick with flint infill boundary wall marks the front curtilage, which is unusual for this area.



7.10 **Poplar Cottage**, Chapel Lane - Of architectural interest, appearing on Roque's map of 1761 within a cluster of buildings in Little Hungerford, this two-storeyed thatched cottage contains a beam inscribed with the date 1779. Although subsequently significantly, sympathetically extended, its original part-timbered red brick design and architecture, with eyebrow windows to the first floor, has been retained.



7.11 **Fir Tree Cottage**, High Street - Of architectural interest and listed on the West Berkshire Heritage Environment Record (MWB21471), this grey brick house with red brick dressings is said to date from 1820. The grey brick, slate roof (as opposed to local clay tiles) with prominent ornamental chimney stacks and yellow clay chimney pots are design features typical of the more expensive houses of this period. It is in a prominent position at the junction of the Marlston and Newbury Roads. It was significantly extended in the 20th and 21st centuries.



7.12 **Marlston Road sign** – Of architectural interest this old metal road sign is attached to boundary brick wall of Crossways House. Most of the road signs in Hermitage are white lettering on a green background and bear the crest of West Berkshire District Council so this is of significant historical interest in that it predates the formation of WBDC in 1998. This metal road sign is thought to date from before the 1960s when Hermitage was part of Wantage Rural District Council (1894-1974) and is the only remaining sign of this type in the village.



7.13 **The Yews,** High Street – Large detached house in extensive grounds with two external workshops/garage buildings. Of particular artistic interest on the east side of the hipped porch entrance is an Arts and Crafts style entrance door. It has a brick well in the front.



7.14 **Lynton Cottage and Fernlea**, between The Yews and Hermitage Garage on The High Street - thought to possibly have been late 19th century workers' cottages. The decorative bargeboard and ridge tiles are of particular architectural interest. Originally called Lynton Villas, it is believed they were linked to Hermitage Farm on Newbury Road.



7.15 **Honey Oak Cottage**, Marlston Road (at junction with Slanting Hill) - Two-storey Victorian detached house, shown as Ivy Cottage on First edition OS map published 1883. With white stucco elevations under a clay tiled roof and a single tall chimney and clay pot at NW end, its design and architecture is characteristic of the late Victorian period. It was subject to later significant extension eastwards with whitewashed brick elevations. It has a central arched porch entrance and a single storey clay tiled catslide roof to the NW side.



7.16 **Long Barn**, Yattendon Road (next to The Fox pub) – From the Victorian era (shown on First Edition Ordnance Survey map published 1883), the site and building are of historic interest containing significant physical remains, including kiln ovens, of the early brickmaking industry in Hermitage. One drying barn of the former Hermitage Brickworks now forms part of the house, built with brick from the brickworks. A second, dilapidated drying barn remains.



7.17 **Langstroth House**, High Street – Of historic and architectural interest, it was built in 1896 and is shown on the Ordnance Survey map revised 1910, published 1913. It was built on land owned by William Brain, Stationmaster and subsequently sold in 1896 to William Stephen Rivers, Blacksmith, who built Myrtle Cottage. One of a pair of detached houses close to the junction with Yattendon Road, it was thought to have been built for high-ranking officials of the nearby DNS Railway. It was originally called Myrtle Cottage then Resthaven. Architecturally notable for retaining its original design, being characteristic of the period, it is constructed of local red clay brick under a slate roof with decorative ridge tiles and grey brick quoins. It also has segmental grey brick arched windows and a recessed central entrance with white decorative architrave over.



7.18 **Former Police Station**, Marlston Road – Of historic interest due to its distinctive role in civic history as a Police Station. According to Berkshire Records Office, Hermitage Police Station was built 28 October 1920 at a cost of £3,570. The Police Station is marked on the 4th Epoch Ordnance Survey mapping of 1933 on the outskirts of Hermitage. The plan form shows two wings and it would probably have contained secure accommodation for offenders pending trial. It is a substantial redbrick building with large windows. The village constable lived next door. The building has largely survived but was converted in the later 20th century to two semi-detached homes, numbers 6 and 7 Marlstone Road, also called Westam House and East House.



7.19 **Holy Trinity Church**, Marlston Road – Of historic religious interest, the Church was built in 1835 under the patronage of Queen Adelaide whose private chaplain Rev J Reed was the Vicar of Hampstead Norris. It was constructed as a chapel of ease for parishioners living in Little Hungerford, Wellhouse and Bucklebury Alley. A new chancel and small vestry were added in 1887, and another extension, the Adelaide room, was built in 1971, when the original west facing entrance was demolished and the current porch and entrance, on the north side, added. The lychgate with woodcarving was erected in 1947.



7.20 **Old Farmhouse**, Newbury Road - Of historic interest having played a significant role in the agricultural history of Hermitage, Hermitage Farm is recorded on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (1872-75) as Hermitage Farm although it is thought to date from the late 18th century. Buildings at this location are clearly shown on John Roque's map of 1761. Now known as The Old Farmhouse, constructed of red brick under a clay tile roof with Georgian style sash windows, the current building has undergone significant changes in the latter part of the 20th century and now features two clay tile-hung gables and a central roof dormer with verge. Of architectural and artistic interest, notable features are the ornamental clay ridge tiles with decorative finials and decorative bargeboards. Today, several of the original farm outbuildings remain around the farmyard edges - to the south, a prominent clay tile roofed wooden shiplap granary with double doors and to the west, cart shed, livestock housing and a two-storey white-washed brick stable with clay tiled hay loft above, topped with an interesting weathervane. The red brick farmyard wall (running along the B4009) with ornamental brick-built entrance pillars also remains.



7.21 **Fairlight**, High Street - This is only one of two remaining dwellings (the other is Grade II listed Barnaby Thatch) in the original Hermitage settlement that date from around the time of the Civil War so is of historic interest. It is also of architectural interest in that it substantially retains its original timber frame design and architecture. it is a small black and white timber framed cottage with a roof of weathered old clay tiles. It is shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey mapping (1877-78) and its appearance suggests possibly an 18th century or earlier date but it is thought to date from the mid 17th century and the Civil War. A



building at this location can be seen on John Roque's map of 1761. In 1867 Holy Trinity Church purchased the cottage which was named Vicarage Cottage. In 1932 it was sold to Col West, a prominent figure in the community, who renamed it 'Fairlight' after a favourite village of his near Hastings. *(Photo courtesy of owner)*.

7.22 **Wolverton Lodge**, High Street - A building of architectural interest displaying architecture characteristic of the Victorian era. It also has historic interest having been the home for many years of Col John West, a man of significant local importance within Hermitage. It is a large, imposing Victorian house featuring prominent decorative tile-hung gable ends with ornamental barge boards under a clay tiled roof. Constructed of red brick, the yellow brick quoins and median dressings to all elevations including the central chimney stack are a notable feature. Subsequently replaced windows retain the original carved stone lintels. It is first shown on the Second Edition Ordnance Survey mapping of 1899 as a relatively modest sized building within a small plot. Col West purchased additional ground when threatened with development so that by the 3rd Epoch map (1912-24), outbuildings in a courtyard and an enlarged garden were clearly identifiable.



7.23 **Old Cottage (site of Little Hungerford Farm)**, Yattendon Road - Of interest historically as the last visible remains of Little Hungerford Farm, this 19th century farm is recorded on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map 1872-1885 but by the third epoch map 1912-24, most of the L-shaped farmyard had been demolished and redeveloped for housing. However, the smaller former farmhouse to the east was not removed, and in the early 21st century is named Old Cottage. The design and architecture of this two-storey red brick rectangular dwelling is typical of the Victorian period, featuring a central entrance porch under a clay- tile roof with tall brick chimneys and yellow brick pots at either end. Front elevations are mainly decorative clay tile-hanging over white-washed brick. The farm's original barn and high brick wall can still be seen on Deacons Lane towards the junction with Yattendon Road.



7.24 **Warborough Cottages**, Pond Lane - Of historic interest because of its association with nationally famous author DH Lawrence, this building probably originates from the 18th century and was formerly known as Chapel Farm cottage. It is also of architectural interest, featuring the original timber framing typical of this period. The hipped slate roof, using slate probably transported from Wales, would have been more expensive than locally produced clay tiles which would suggest a wealthy owner. A building in this location can be seen on John Roque's map of 1761 and on the Ordnance Survey First edition map surveyed between 1877 - 1878 and published in 1883. Also visible from Chapel Lane, it is built of red brick, under a hipped slate roof with clay ridge tiles. The original timber framing is clearly visible on the upper storey northern end wall. The present building has been extended and modified from its original L-shape and is now two cottages each featuring a small front-facing gable with black and white mock timber framing over the first storey casement window. From early 1917 to November 1919, Chapel Farm Cottage was intermittently home to the author D.H. Lawrence and his wife. Life in Hermitage and various local characters he met during his stay in Hermitage are reflected in his novels 'The Fox' and in a chapter of 'Aaron's Rod' both written during his stays in Hermitage.





7.25 **Pinewood Cottage**, Chapel Lane - Pinewood Cottage was located at the entrance to the site of the former Pinewood Brickworks (1908-1967). Its architectural interest lies chiefly in its unusual roofing profile. It was apparently constructed to illustrate the range of bricks and tiles manufactured at the site. During World War II the cottage was used as a guardroom when the brickworks became an RAF maintenance unit. It is uncertain when Pinewood Cottage was built since it is not shown on the 3rd epoch Ordnance Survey Map (1912-24) but is believed to date from the late 1920s or early 1930s.



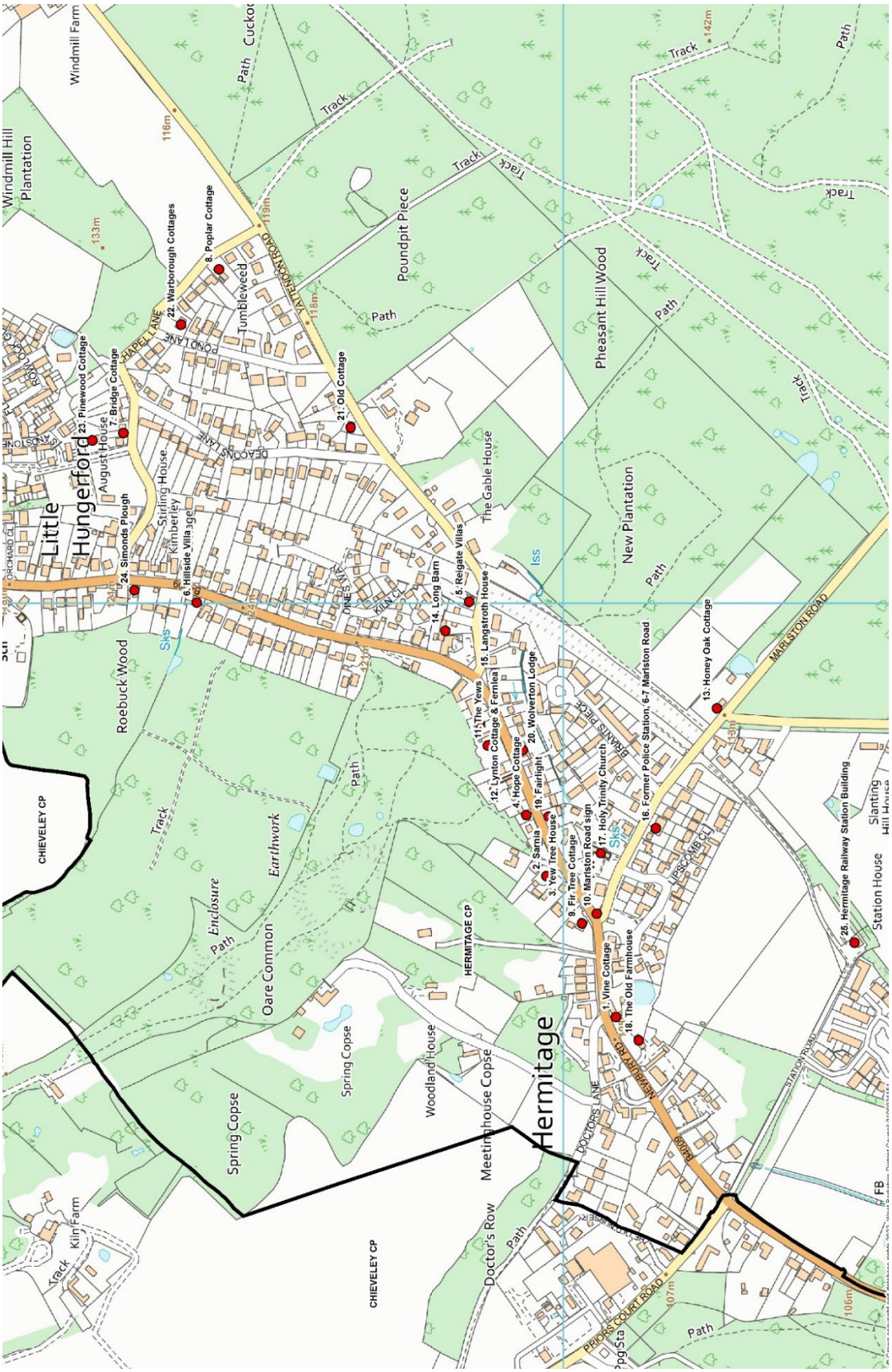
7.26 **Simonds Plough**, Hampstead Norreys Road – Of local historic significance, this 19th century (shown on the OS First edition map of 1880 and the Second edition of 1899) former public house was the only public house situated in Little Hungerford. It was a social centre for local farm labourers, and latterly, Pinewood Brickworks and Didcot-Newbury-Southampton railway employees. It closed when Simonds Brewery (Reading) was taken over by Courage Barclay. Elevations of blue brick with redbrick window surrounds are typical of more expensive buildings of the Victorian era. It is known to have been in operation from at least 1891 when, according to the Census of that year, the innkeeper was James Burgess (also a wood merchant). It is now a private dwelling, displaying the red Hop Leaf trademark of Reading brewing family, H&G Simonds, on the front of the house.



7.27 **Hermitage Railway Station building** - Hermitage railway station opened in 1882 as a single track but was converted to a double track during the Second World War. This building is of significant historic interest being one of only two remaining local stations serving the Didcot-Newbury-Southampton Railway (the other lies to the north just outside Compton Village) The railway was critical to the development of Pinewood Brickworks, delivering coal for its kilns from the Midlands. During World War II it played a significant role in the transport of locally extracted sand to London for sandbags as well as for troop transportation to Southampton. Hermitage Station was where injured US servicemen returning from the war disembarked for treatment at the nearby American Military Hospital at Denison Barracks. The line closed in 1964. The station building has substantially retained its original architectural features, including decorative bargeboards, typical of the Victorian Era. It has subsequently been converted to residential use (the postal address is Station House, though a plaque shows it as The Old Station House). The platforms and the awning over the up (northbound) platform were substantially present in 2015.



Figure 7.1: Map of Non-Designated Heritage Assets



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8 MOVEMENT

POLICY HER9: ACCESS FOR WALKING, CYCLING AND HORSE RIDING

A. Access to the countryside will be promoted through protection and maintenance of the existing Public Rights of Way (PROW) network, its enhancement where possible, provision of bridleways and the safety of users of rural roads and lanes.

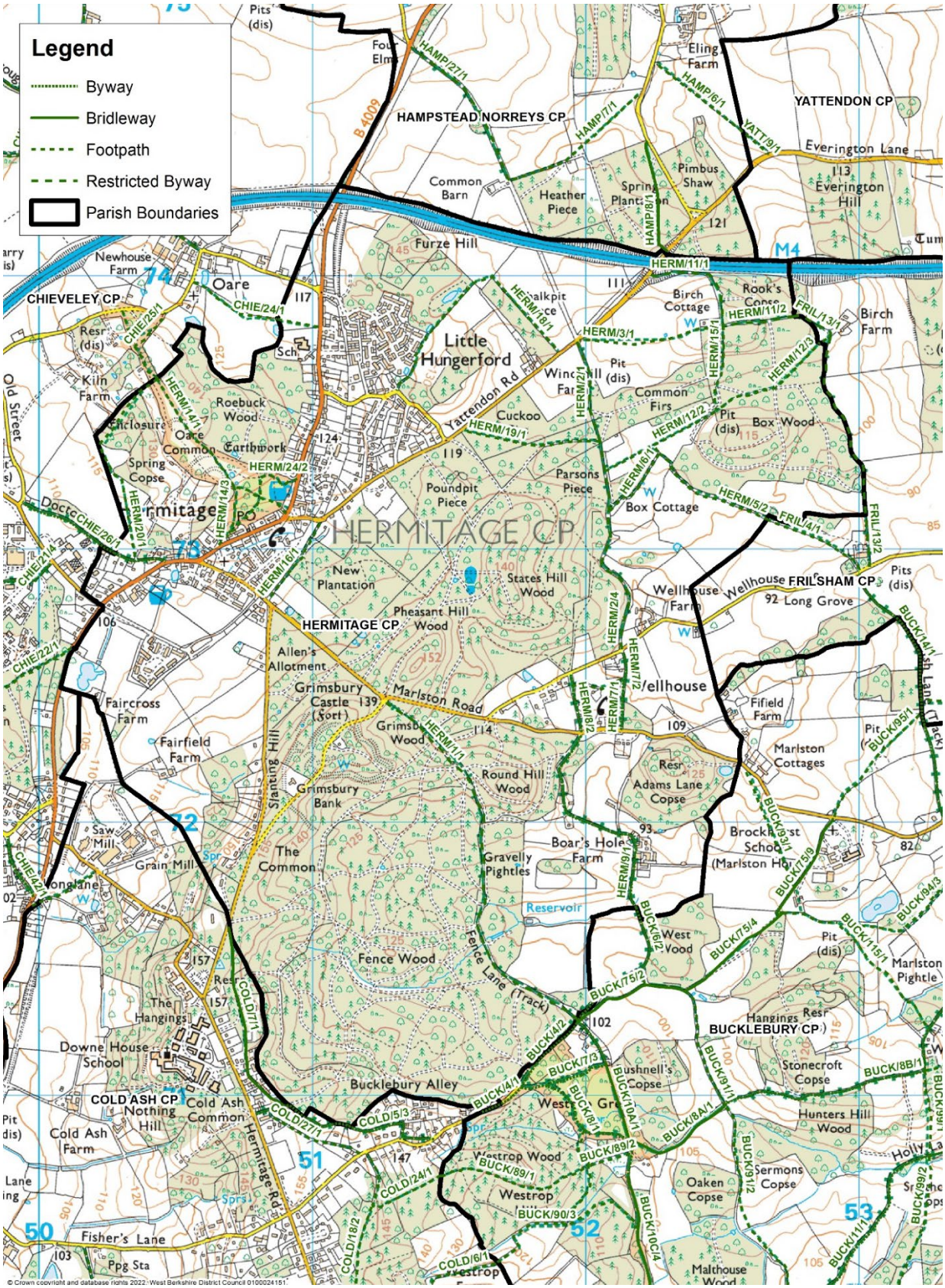
B. Any developments which leads to the loss or degradation of any PROW will not be permitted in other than very special circumstances. Proposals to divert PROWs or cycleways should provide clear and demonstrable benefits for the wider community. Where possible, development should enhance PROWs by improving existing routes and improving connectivity through the creation of new routes. In all cases it should seek to ensure that routes are suitable for those with disabilities.

C. Proposals to develop the Eling Way for safe off-road access by walkers, cyclists, horse riders and those with disabilities will be encouraged.

8.1 Hermitage is surrounded by wonderful and accessible countryside available to walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Details of various public rights of way can be found in the online leaflet: https://hermitage.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Hermitage-Public-footpath-leaflet.pdf and are shown on Figure 8.1. This also includes details on a number of permissive paths. In addition, Oare Common is designated as Access Land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and therefore people are not limited to the footpaths.

8.2 An important literal barrier to access to the countryside is stiles and gates. It is therefore recommended that all new gates should comply with British Standard 5709 'Gaps, gates and stiles – specification' (or any subsequent update) and existing structures should be replaced where possible with ones that comply with this standard.

Figure 8.1: Public rights of way in Hermitage parish



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8.3 The Eling Way currently links Hermitage with Hampstead Norreys. It runs from the track to the west of the Hermitage Village Hall, under the motorway bridge, then follows the line of the old railway track up to Hampstead Norreys Village Hall. It is totally off-road. The route north of the motorway is outside Hermitage parish. This is shown on Figure 8.2.

8.4 The current access points to the Eling Way are:

a. Off Pinewood Crescent (adjacent to the Village Hall entrance)

b. Off the B4009, either side of the M4 bridge

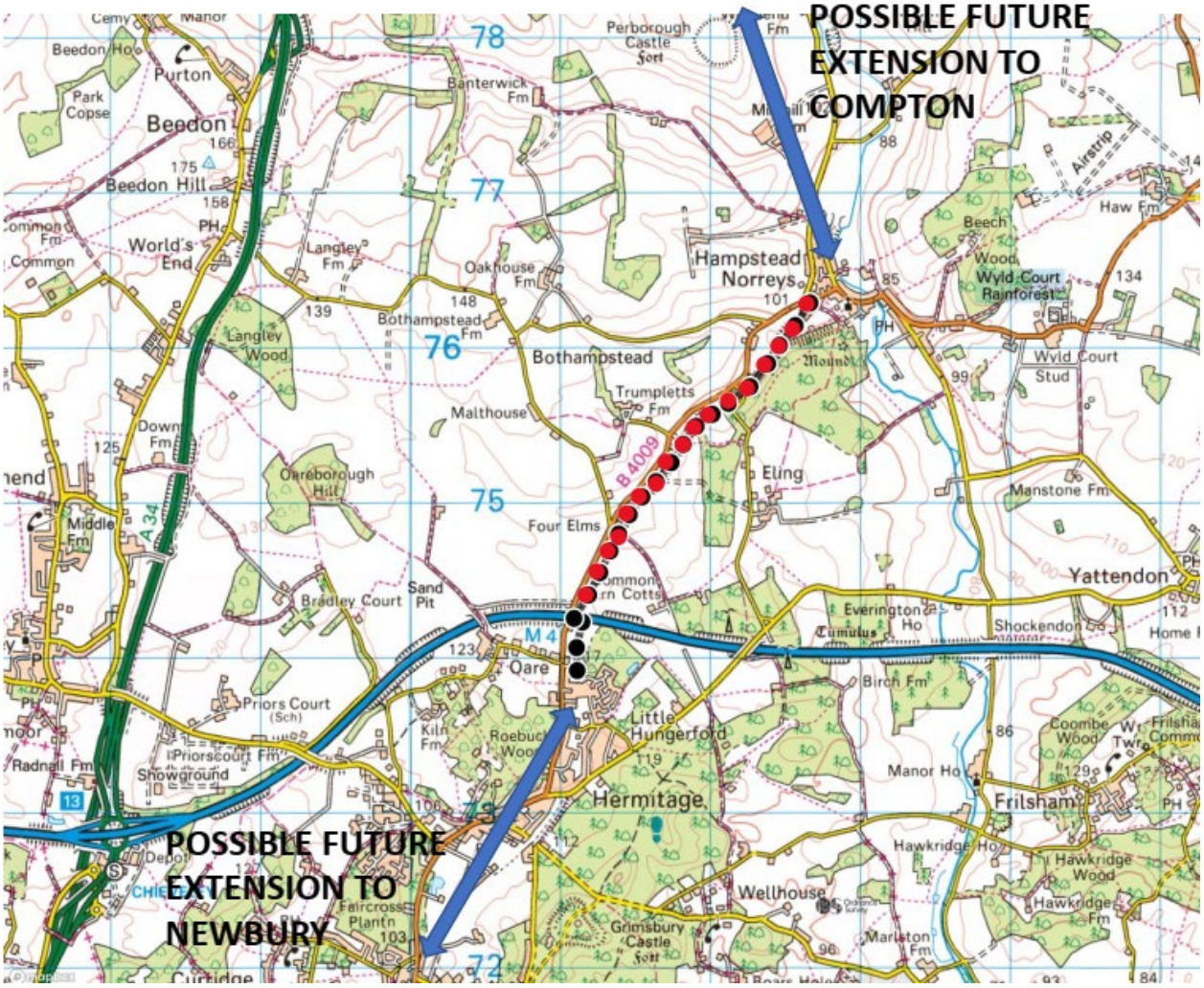
c. Off the B4009 at the junction to Eling and

d. Hampstead Norreys.

8.5 Discussions are ongoing between Hermitage Parish Council, West Berkshire District Council, local cycling groups (West Berkshire Spokes - www.westberkshirespokes.org - and the West Berkshire Cycle Forum) and the British Horse Society in order to expand this route to both Newbury and Compton and eventually, possibly all the way to Didcot. Such provision will expand the existing recreational offer to encourage sustainable travel to the urban conurbations to the north and south of Hermitage.

8.6 Whilst of great importance to the local community, road and traffic issues and provision of bus services are outside of the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan. Actions and lobbying to address issues and improve services will be undertaken by the Parish Council directly with the relevant authorities.

Figure 8.2: Map of Eling Way, including possible extensions



Key:

- Existing route inside Hermitage parish
- Existing route outside Hermitage parish

Prepared under Hermitage Parish Council's Ordnance Survey Public Sector Geospatial Mapping Agreement (PSGA) no. 100055937

9 NON-POLICY ACTIONS

9.1 It must be recognised that the Neighbourhood Plan cannot deliver the full vision; it is either beyond the scope of planning laws or requires remedial action to deal with existing shortcomings. For that to happen individuals and groups in the community as well as the Parish Council must continue their work of building and maintaining a strong community and in working with developers, landowners, businesses and other agencies to provide the facilities best targeted to meet community needs.

9.2 The areas in which issues to work on have arisen in the course of consultations are noted in Table 9.1. Ownership of the issues has been suggested and when agreed active action planning should follow. Inclusion in this list is not meant to signify approval or prioritisation of these issues.

Table 9.1: Non-land use issues to be addressed

Issue	Possible actions	Lead agencies and partner
Play facilities	Use local Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions to enhance facilities at Pinewood playground	HPC
Play facilities	Provide play equipment for Lipscomb Close Green	HPC
Biodiversity	Improve parts of all public open spaces to enhance biodiversity through the provision of wildflower grassland/pollinator patches, more native trees and shrubs, pond/scrapes and bat/bird boxes	HPC
Biodiversity	Set up a working group of volunteers to increase biodiversity in all existing public open spaces	HPC Berks Bucks Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)
Biodiversity	Engage with local landowners to encourage the development of ecological management plans which enhance biodiversity on their land, for example the removal of invasive bracken and silver birch	HPC Berks Bucks Oxon Wildlife Trust
Biodiversity/community	If any further open space is provided for the parish, consider planting a community orchard or setting up allotments	HPC
Biodiversity/wildlife	Explore the potential to designate Furze Hill as a Local Nature Reserve	HPC BBOWT
Wildlife	Ensure developers assess need for licences in respect of legally protected species as appropriate	HPC WBDC
Public transport	Improve bus services	HPC WBDC Bus providers
Traffic speed	Undertake speed monitoring to understand the extent of speeding in the village	HPC
Communication	Work with providers to encourage improved mobile phone coverage throughout the village	HPC, WBDC, Mobile comms infrastructure providers

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Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2039 Consultation Statement

February 2023

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1 CONSULTATION PROCESS

Introduction

1.1 This Consultation Statement has been prepared to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 in respect of the Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan (HNP).

1.2 The legal basis of this Consultation Statement is provided by Section 15(2) of Part 5 of the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (as amended), which requires that a consultation statement should:

- contain details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
- explain how they were consulted;
- summarise the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and
- describe how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.

1.3 The policies contained in the Neighbourhood Plan are as a result of considerable interaction and consultation with the community and businesses within the parish. Work over a period of four years has involved Steering Group members carrying out individual research with a variety of stakeholders, commissioning surveys, conducting presentations, manning display stands at public meetings and hosting public events.

Organisational structure of the Neighbourhood Plan

1.4 Hermitage Parish Council (HPC) delegated the work of producing the Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) to a Steering Group comprising a cross-section of volunteer residents and parish councillors. Terms of Reference were agreed with HPC. The Steering Group met monthly and throughout the period provided verbal updates to HPC. The Steering Group changed somewhat over the period of time it took to complete the HNP. Originally comprising 5 residents and 4 councillors its size reduced in the early phases and for most of its 4 years of existence comprised either 3 or 4 residents and 1 or 2 councillors. At various points over the early part of this period, 1 or 2 other residents volunteered to replace departing members but the Steering Group consistently comprised just a handful of volunteers. The Steering Group has met at monthly intervals and continued to meet electronically via Zoom during the 2020 Covid restrictions. Minutes of each meeting have been shared monthly with HPC and updates published both on the HPC website and in the local Pathfinder print magazine. Each member of the Steering Group has taken responsibility for one or more strands of emerging themes taken forward in the HNP. Resources were always tight despite several recruitment drives, and so external technical support was sought from the national support body 'Locality' and an external planning consultant.

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan timeline

Date	Action	Notes
19 April 2018	HPC announces its intention, at the Annual Parish Assembly, to develop a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)	
10 January 2019	Initial meeting of Hermitage NP Steering Group (5 residents and 4 councillors). Terms of Reference given	
18 April 2019	NP Presentation and information stand at Annual Parish Assembly Email address set up Annual Parish Assembly flier including info on NDP sent to all households	
26 April 2019	NDP Area designation granted	
30 May 2019	Initial meeting with West Berkshire Planning Dept	
June 2019	NDP landing page on HPC website set up	
6 August 2019	Communications strategy reviewed	
Oct 2019	Budget prepared	
May 2019 – Aug 2022	Developer consultations	
Jan 2020	WBDC HELAA published	This informed where potential development sites were likely to be allocated
March 2020	NP publicity delivered to each household for open event 17 March (which had to be cancelled due to Covid restrictions)	
Dec 2019 – Aug 2020	Series of conversations posted at monthly intervals on Hermitage Village Facebook and hard copies posted on HPC noticeboards throughout Hermitage to promote community engagement.	Feedback identified 5 emerging key themes – Housing need Housing design Highways Environment Green spaces
Sept 2020	October Open Event flyers - delivered to each household; posters throughout village; Hermitage Village Facebook alerts posted with links to HPC and NDP websites	
Sep-Oct 2020	Series of 5 'Shock and Awe' statements posted at weekly intervals on Hermitage Village Facebook in run-up to Open Day to elicit comment and increase awareness of the event.	Feedback from this informed development of NDP
10 Oct 2020	Open Day held at Hermitage Primary School; Displays, Maps and Questionnaires. Purpose: • To educate attendees about the NDP • To prepare people for Housing Needs Survey • To gather views on future development	Feedback used to confirm emerging themes
October 2020	Open event feedback published on website, Hermitage Village Facebook and Pathfinder magazine	
11 Dec 2020 – 4 Feb 2021	WBDC HELAA consultation	
Feb 2021	Arc4 commissioned to conduct Housing Needs Survey - delivered to each household in Hermitage parish	
29 April 2021	Presentation to Annual Parish Assembly. Information display stand included HELAA map, draft Vision Statement and request for SG members	Feedback from this informed development of vision and objectives
May 2021	Communications strategy drafted	
June 2021	Draft vision finalised	
June 2021	Arc 4 Housing Need Assessment final report received. Summary of findings published on website	

Date	Action	Notes
12 July 2021	AECOM site assessment report received which endorses WBDC conclusions	
24 July 2021	Small NDP display at Hermitage Village Hall, for opening of newly completed small hall by MP Laura Farris	
August 2021	SG attends AECOM webinar on affordable housing	
25 Jan 2022	Virtual meeting with WBC Highways to discuss residents' traffic concerns	
Jan 2022 – Oct 2022	Meeting, site visit and ensuing discussions with West Berkshire Heritage Forum	Feedback and advice used to inform list of Non-Designated Heritage Assets
15 Feb 2022	Limited capacity and technical expertise leads SG to relinquish responsibility for site allocation in NDP.	
21 Feb 2022	WBCD confirms they will assume site allocation for Hermitage will be undertaken within the Local Plan review	
27 April 2022	Presentation to Annual Parish Assembly	
April 2022	Initial skeleton Draft NDP produced	
May/June 2022	NDP rework in light of emerging evidence from Design Code	
June 2022	Notices delivered to each NDHA property identified for potential listing	Used to inform inclusion on final NDHA list (see Appendix A)
25 June 2022	Public Exhibition at Hermitage Primary School of initial draft. Skeleton Plan and draft Design Code. Flyer delivered to all households in Hermitage. Posters sited throughout parish. Alerts issued on Hermitage Facebook and in Pathfinder magazine.	
	Public exhibition collated feedback	Only positive comments received. Feedback informed NDP
Aug/Sept 2022	Draft NDP rework in light of event feedback	
September 2022	Final Design Codes report received from AECOM	
Sept /Oct 2022	Final draft NDP approved by HPC for Reg 14 consultation	
October 2022	SG requests screening for SEA/HRA from WBDC	
29 Nov 2022	WBDC decision received that no SEA/HRA is required	
22 Oct 2022	Reg 14 public consultation notifications sent All statutory bodies emailed. Local stakeholders emailed.	
25 Oct – 5 Dec 2022	Reg 14 public consultation period	
Dec 2022 - early 2023	Review of Reg 14 representations and engagement with WBDC on certain matters raised	

1.5 Alongside the above events the following communications were included throughout the process:

- A dedicated Neighbourhood Plan landing page was created on the Hermitage Parish Council website (https://hermitage.org.uk/neighbourhood-development-plan/) to which regular reports and updates were posted. Updates were also published in the local Pathfinder magazine which is delivered each month to around half the households in Hermitage as well as to the neighbouring village of Curridge.
- A dedicated NDP email address was created for residents to communicate with Steering Group and publicised as above

- Links to the website updates were posted regularly on Hermitage Village Facebook site.
- Posters were displayed on Hermitage Parish Noticeboards throughout the village.
- Each Public Open event was advertised with flyers hand-delivered to each household in the parish; posters on Parish Noticeboards and at other prominent locations throughout the village; repeated announcements on Hermitage Facebook.
- At each Annual Parish Assembly (to which all residents and local group representatives are invited) a verbal presentation was made and an information stand set up with handouts and questionnaires.

1.6 Minutes of each Steering Group meeting were provided to the Parish Council and a verbal update given by the PC member at their monthly meetings.

Public events and other consultation activities

1.7 The following is a summary of the public consultation events and how they were advertised:

18 April 2019 – Annual Parish Assembly: Flyers including a brief introduction to the NDP were sent to each household. Handouts were placed on each seat at the assembly asking for volunteers and questions about what residents want for Hermitage and an information stand were available at the event. An illustrated presentation was given to attendees.

January – August 2020 – Conversations: A series of 5 conversations was posted on the Hermitage Community Facebook Group with the aim of building community engagement and eliciting views. Hard copies and response boxes were placed at pubs, Post Office and Holy Trinity Church. Topics covered were:

- January - Current and future developments for Hermitage
- February - Old Farmhouse development; active travel routes; traffic
- March/April - West Berkshire proposed site allocations (HELAA)
- July – What do you like about Hermitage?
- August – What do you dislike about Hermitage?

Responses to these conversations was used to inform further development of the NDP.

17 March 2020 - First Public Event: This was publicised with flyers delivered to each household and posters throughout the village. Unfortunately, this event had to be postponed to the Autumn because of Covid.

10 October 2020 – Public Event: Publicity consisting of flyers delivered to each household and posters throughout the village was supplemented with a series of ‘conversations’ published in Pathfinder magazine, on NDP website and on Hermitage Facebook weekly, during the run-up to the event.

Purpose of event - to educate about the NDP, inform on upcoming Housing Needs survey and to gather views. A series of display boards on emerging key themes of Housing Needs, Infrastructure, Green Spaces, Environment. Display map of potential development sites. Questions asked to elicit opinions on how Hermitage should develop – housing needs; green spaces; infrastructure needs. Members of Steering Group were present throughout the day to talk to visitors and answer their questions. Visitors were invited to

write their ideas and comments on post-it notes to say what they valued in Hermitage and in response to questions posed. Around 60 people attended and left 162 comments.

February 2021 - Housing Needs Survey: The questionnaire was delivered to each household with a reply-paid envelope. Residents were given approximately 6 weeks to respond. Of 799 surveys delivered, 277 responses were received.

June 2021 – Housing Needs Survey summary: This was posted on NDP website. Reminders posted on Hermitage Village Facebook provided a direct weblink and invited comments**.**

24 July 2021 – Official opening of Village Hall by Laura Farris MP: Display stand.

27 April 2022 – Annual Parish Assembly: Publicised with flyers delivered to each household. Verbal NDP report given to attendees. Information display stand with handouts, questionnaires on Heritage and Green Spaces present at the event.

25 June 2022 – Public Event at Hermitage Primary School: Publicised with flyers delivered to each household and posters sited extensively throughout the village; Weekly alerts posted on Hermitage Community Facebook.

Purpose of event – to present first draft of NDP and emerging Design Code; gather views on Green Spaces and Heritage assets prior to finalising draft NDP for formal Reg 14 consultation. Display boards were set up with maps of development sites, potential extensions to the Active Travel Route, details of local green spaces and potential non-designated heritage assets. Copies of the latest draft NDP and the draft Design Code were available to view. SG members were on hand to elicit further views and to answer visitor questions.

1.8 Appendices C to G provide a summary of the material used to engage with the community and some of the outputs.

Stakeholder consultations

1.9 Throughout the process, HNP SG worked closely with West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) Planning Department. Other consultees that the SG engaged with included:

- West Berkshire District Council Highways Department
- Local District Councillors
- Local landowners – Baker Estate, Eling Estate
- West Berkshire Countryside Society
- Hermitage Primary School
- Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)
- SPOKES (a local cycling action group with connections with WBDC)
- West Berkshire Heritage Forum

Engaging with hard-to-reach groups

1.10 Throughout the process the HNP Steering Group has been aware of the potential for engagement to fail to reach certain groups. The Steering Group reviewed all feedback received from the main sources of engagement as well as individual emails submitted to see whether there was any under-representation from particular sections of the community. By locating Open Events at the local primary school (frequented by young working families) as well as manning display stands at the Annual Parish Assemblies

(more commonly attended by older community members) and using a variety of traditional as well as electronic communications (i.e. the Pathfinder magazine, HPC website and the village Facebook page), it was felt that community engagement covered a good cross-section of the community.

2 KEY RESPONSES FROM CONSULTATION

2.1 The range of consultation events were based on the evidence gathered up to that point and the need to gather further evidence to inform the plan. Below is a summary of the content of the consultation events and how the output from these events informed the next stages of the plan:

Annual Parish Assembly - 18 April 2019

- **Aim –** To promote awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan and recruit volunteers.
- **Outcome –** Short list of volunteers.
- **Next Steps –** Volunteers invited to join Steering Group.

Conversations - Jan-Aug 2020

Key responses indicated 4 emerging themes –

- **Housing –** Resistance to additional housing, in particular housing unsuited to local needs.
- **Infrastructure –** Concerns around impact of future development on traffic, drainage, schools and GP surgery.
- **Green Spaces –** Importance of retaining existing woodland, open green spaces and unrestricted views to AONB.
- **Environment/sustainability –** Need for any future housing development to be less crowded and built in sympathy with surrounding rural environment; importance of sustainable design, unrestrictive road widths and adequate off-road parking to prevent congestion experienced on more recent development at Forest Edge.

Open Event - 10 October 2020

- **Aim -** To educate, inform on upcoming Housing Needs survey and to gather evidence to inform development of NDP.
- **Outcome -** Feedback was collated under the 4 theme headings (listed above) plus comments on WBDC's recently published Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).

  The key issues identified are summarised below –

  Housing

  Some opposition to further development.

  Need for range of affordable homes suitable for both young and old who wish to remain in Hermitage.

  Housing design to be eco-friendly and sustainable, in keeping with surrounding environment and not higher than 3 storeys.

  Infrastructure

  Widespread concern about impact on infrastructure and services.

  Transport

  Lack of off-road parking on newer development and on B4009 at Post Office and school.

Inadequate bus service increases car dependency.

Safety concerns re B4009 congestion and increased HGV usage.

Green spaces, footpaths, cycle and bridleways

The Active Travel Route should be extended to Newbury and other options explored for walkers, cyclists and runners.

Preservation of existing woodland from development.

Provision of a community orchard and allotments.

Desire for new homes to have enough space for gardens front and back.

HELAA

Improved and widespread simpler communication from WBDC about planning matters.

Risk of loss of green spaces from more development.

Need for affordable homes for locals.

Inadequacy of infrastructure to cope with more development.

- **Next Steps –** Key topics identified for further investigation included commissioning of a Design Codes report, meetings with WBDC Traffic Department, SPOKES and BBOWT to gather additional evidence inform development of NDP.

Housing Needs Survey – January - February 2021

- **Aim -** To identify housing needs for Hermitage.
- **Outcome –** Need identified for affordable home ownership rather than rental, in particular for 2-3 bed dwellings for young and growing families as well as bungalows for older residents.
- **Next Steps** – A summary of the findings was posted on the NDP website and links to it were publicised on the Hermitage Facebook page and in the Pathfinder magazine. Data from the survey was used to inform development of NDP and discussions with landowners about their development intentions and any proposals**.** The Housing Needs Survey also **c**ontributed to the development of the Design Codes.

Open Event - 25 June 2022

- **Aim –** To elicit views on the first draft of the NDP and to get responses to questions on Green Spaces and Heritage Assets. Feedback from the October 2020 event indicated that proximity and public accessibility to the extensive woodlands adjacent to Hermitage were highly valued and should be preserved. That event also highlighted a keen desire to ensure any future development was sustainable and ecologically sound. This open event sought to explore this in more detail and test emerging policy proposals. Views were also sought on the first draft of the Design Codes.
- **Outcome –** Feedback indicated general satisfaction with draft Plan and stressed the importance of retaining all proposed Local Green Spaces. Pursuit of Active Travel routes and retention of heritage assets were supported.
- **Next Steps -** Additional evidence gathering and plan reworking prior to commencement of Reg 14 consultation.

3 REGULATION 14 PRE-SUBMISSION CONSULTATION

3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group finalised the Draft Neighbourhood Plan in October 2022. The Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Consultation ran for a 6-week period from Monday 24 October to Monday 5 December 2022. To announce and promote awareness of the consultation with the local community:

- a flyer was hand-delivered to every household in the parish;
- posters were displayed throughout the village; and
- announcements were made on the Hermitage Village Facebook and in the Pathfinder magazine.

3.2 Paper copies were made available for viewing at three locations throughout the village –

- The Adelaide Room at Holy Trinity Church,
- The Fox Inn and
- The White Horse.

3.3 The plan could be viewed online at https://hermitage.org.uk/NDP14.

3.4 Representations could be made either by email or post to:

- Email: HermitagePC@outlook.com
- Post: Clerk to Hermitage Parish Council, Farm Gate, High Street, Chieveley RG20 8TA

Distribution to statutory and non-statutory consultees

3.5 In accordance with requirements of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, relevant statutory consultees were notified by email. In addition, a range of parties that the Steering Group considered were likely to have an interest in the plan were also written to. All parties were advised to download a copy of the plan, but were advised that hard copies could be issued on request.

3.6 The full list of statutory that were written to was as follows:

Atomic Weapons Establishment
Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council
Berks Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust
Berkshire Local Nature Partnership
Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Cadent Gas Ltd
CPRE Berkshire
Energy Networks Association
Environment Agency
Footpath Secretary Mid Berks Ramblers
Forestry Commission
Friends, Families and Travellers
Gypsy Council
Hampshire County Council
Historic England
Homes England

Marine Management Organisation
Mid & West Berks Local Access Forum
Mobile UK
National Grid
National Highways (formerly Highways England)
National Housing Federation
Natural England
Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
NHS England South East
NHS Newbury & District Clinical Commissioning Group
North & West Reading Clinical Commissioning Group
Office for Nuclear Regulation
Openreach
Oxfordshire County Council
Parish and Town Councils adjoining West Berkshire
Parish and Town Councils in West Berkshire
Planning Adviser North Wessex Downs AONB
Police and Crime Commissioner
Reading Borough Council
Scottish & Southern Energy Power Distribution
South Oxfordshire District Council
Sport England
Test Valley District Council
Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce
Thames Water
The National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups
Vale of White Horse District Council
West Berkshire Green Exchange
West Berkshire Heritage Forum
Wiltshire Council
Wokingham Borough Council

3.7 West Berkshire District Council advised that all parish councils and parish meetings in the district should be written to about the Regulation 14 consultation. The list is as follows:

Ardington and Lockhinge Parish Council
Ashbury Parish Council
Ashford Hill with Headley Parish Council
Aston Tirrold Parish Council
Aston Upthorpe Parish Council
Baughurst Parish Council
Baydon Parish Council
Blewbury Parish Council
Burghclere Parish Council
Buttermere Parish Council
Childrey Parish Council
Chilton Foliat Parish Council

Chilton Parish Council
Cholsey Parish Council
Compton Beauchamp Parish Council
East Hendred Parish Council
East Woodhay Parish Council
Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Parish Council
Faccombe Parish Meeting
Froxfield Parish Council
Goring Parish Council
Ham Parish Council
Heckfield Parish Council
Highclere Parish Council
Kingston Lisle Parish Council
Letcome Bassett Parish Council
Linkenholt Parish Meeting
Mapledurham Parish Council
Mortimer West End Parish Council
Moulsford Parish Council
Newtown Parish Council
Pamber Parish Council
Ramsbury & Axford Parish Council
Shalbourne Parish Council
Shinfield Parish Council
South Stoke Parish Council
Sparsholt Parish Council
Stratfield Saye Parish Council
Swallowfield Parish Council
Tadley Town Council
Uffington Parish Council
Upton Parish Council
Wantage Town Council
West Hendred Parish Council
Whitchurch-On-Thames Parish Council
Woolstone Parish Meeting
Aldermaston Parish Council
Aldworth Parish Council
Ashampstead Parish Council
Basildon Parish Council
Beech Hill Parish Council
Beedon Parish Council
Beenham Parish Council
Boxford Parish Council
Bradfield Parish Council
Brightwalton Parish Council
Brimpton Parish Council
Bucklebury Parish Council
Burghfield Parish Council
Catmore Parish Meeting
Chaddleworth Parish Council

Chieveley Parish Council
Cold Ash Parish Council
Combe Parish Meeting
Compton Parish Council
East Garston Parish Council
East Ilsley Parish Council
Enborne Parish Council
Englefield Parish Council
Farnborough Parish Meeting
Fawley Parish Meeting
Frilsham Parish Council
Great Shefford Parish Council
Greenham Parish Council
Hampstead Norreys Parish Council
Hamstead Marshall Parish Council
Holybrook Parish Council
Hungerford Town Council
Inkpen Parish Council
Kintbury Parish Council
Lambourn Parish Council
Leckhampstead Parish Council
Midgham Parish Council
Newbury Town Council
Padworth Parish Council
Pangbourne Parish Council
Peasemore Parish Council
Purley on Thames Parish Council
Shaw-cum-Donnington Parish Council
Speen Parish Council
Stanford Dingley Parish Council
Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council
Streatley Parish Council
Sulhamstead Parish Council
Thatcham Town Council Parish Council
Theale Parish Council
Tidmarsh with Sulham Parish Council
Tilehurst Parish Council
Ufton Nervet Parish Council
Wasing Parish Meeting
Welford Parish Council
West Ilsley Parish Council
West Woodhay Parish Meeting
Winterbourne Parish Meeting
Wokefield Parish Council
Woolhampton Parish Council
Yattendon Parish Council

3.8 The following non-statutory consultees were written to:

Organisations

Holy Trinity Church

Hermitage Cubs

Hermitage Brownies

Hermitage Rainbows

Hermitage pre-school playgroup

Hermitage Primary School

Hermitage Horticultural Society

Hermitage Village Hall

Hermitage Village Hall users eg Yoga, Ballet, Dance, Circuit classes

Landowners

Eling Estate (Eling Trust)

West Berkshire Youth

Baker Estate

Barlow family

Hermitage Farms

Businesses

The White Horse pub

The Fox pub

Hermitage garage & Car sales

Hermitage Post Office & stores

Yarnfest

Downland surgery

West Berkshire Countryside Society

Hermitage Co-op

Spokes

Responses

3.9 In total there were 14 representations. One representation (from Natural England) was received after the deadline but was taken into consideration.

3.10 The representations and the responses are shown in Appendix B.

4 EU OBLIGATIONS

4.1 In September 2022, Hermitage Parish Council formally requested that West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) carry out a screening opinion on the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

4.2 In October 2022 WBDC prepared the draft reports which concluded that, in its opinion, the draft Neighbourhood Plan was not likely to have significant effects on the environment or on protected habitats. It then issued these draft reports to the statutory bodies - the SEA to the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England and the HRA to Natural England. All of the above bodies agreed with WBDC's opinion. The draft reports were then finalised and the screening decisions issued in November 2022.

Appendix A Letter to owners of proposed Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Hermitage NDP

10 June 2022

Are you living in one of Hermitage's valued Heritage Assets?

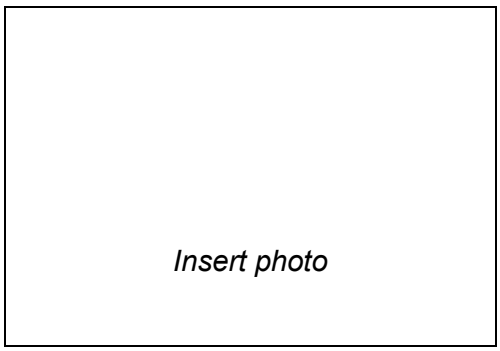
People have told us (the Neighbourhood Development Plan steering group) that they love the way Hermitage looks and feels – especially the older houses along the main road and scattered throughout our village that make up its unique character. Some of these buildings are already listed by West Berkshire Council on their Historic Environment Record (HER) as being of significant interest but we believe there are more, not yet formally identified, that have historic, architectural or artistic interest for the people of Hermitage.

We're thinking of including some of these older buildings in the Hermitage NDP as "Non-Designated Heritage Assets". This status would give their heritage features a greater degree of protection from inappropriate future development. Local Planning Authorities would have to take into consideration the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset when determining planning applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets.

This doesn't give buildings the same protected status as nationally listed properties (although Hermitage does have a couple of Grade II nationally listed buildings!). Nor does it stop you making changes to your property if, for example, you want to add solar panels, change the windows or add a conservatory. It simply seeks to ensure that such high-quality properties are not easily demolished by potential developers, unsympathetically altered or lose their setting.

We think *(insert asset name)* fits the definition of a Local Heritage Asset and we'd like to include it in our list of "Non-Designated Heritage Assets" within the Hermitage NDP.

We'd love to hear what you think about this. Also, if there's any further information you may have which would provide additional evidence of the history or other significance of your property, please let us know. Here's what we've gathered so far:



Property address and brief description of entry.

You can email us at: Hermitagendp@gmail.com (please put Heritage as the subject heading) or come along on 25 June, between 10am and 4 pm, to our Open Day at Hermitage Primary School where you can find out more and look through the first, informal draft of the Hermitage NDP.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Rosie Healy
NDP Steering Group

Appendix B Regulation 14 representations and responses

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
P 13 3.3	(2) British Horse Society	**Specific suggestions for inclusion:** These suggestions will bring the Plan into line with the west Berkshire Council Active Travel Plan. **Para 3.3** Please add horse riders to **'***improve access to the countryside for walkers and cyclists'* to read '*improve access to the countryside for walkers, cyclists and horse riders'.*	Agreed	Amend para 3.3
P45 8.1	(2) British Horse Society	**Section 8 Movement.** **Policy HER9**: Please add horse riding to the title to read '*Access for walking, cycling and horse riding'.* **Para 8.1:** - Please insert 'horse riders' to '*Hermitage is surrounded by wonderful and accessible countryside available to walkers, cyclists and horse riders'*. - We ask that correct terminology is used when describing the public rights of way network. Footpaths are just one category of public right of way and one which horse riders (and cyclists) cannot legally use. Please replace ' *Details of various footpaths'* by '*Details of various public rights of way'*. We note that the referenced leaflet is inaccurately named but nothing can be done here about that.	Agreed	Amend HER9 and para 8.1
P47 8.4	(2) British Horse Society	Please include the British Horse Society in the list of consultees involved in future extensions of the Eling Way. We were consultees in the Eling Way and are in contact with the project manager for the extensions. Please feel free to contact me *(name redacted)* as the local representative of the British Horse Society for any clarification and further information, for example, of horse kept in the area, road accident statistics involving horses etc.	Agreed	Amend para 8.1
P8 2.21	(4) Resident	Hermitage village hall is a busy hall with a variety of clubs and societies who meet weekly, your comments seem to suggest it is just fitness groups and Hort Soc. that meet there. This is not the case …the hall is in regular use 7 days a week by many clubs.	Agreed	Amend para 2.21

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
P18 table - code 14	(4) Resident	The correct word is “prioritise” I think this may be a spelling error.	Agreed	Amend table on p18
P22 6.5	(4) Resident	Whilst we all appreciate the trees and the contribution they make to our green spaces and overall village surrounds …it must be noted that not all trees serve a purpose and some are poorly positioned on private properties and have been poorly positioned - these could even be classed as a nuisance in some areas. Lack of knowledge and tree management causes issues for some residents and we are powerless to get a solution especially when the tree has a TPO on it. It would be helpful if the parish council were to assist in such situations to help residents in the village.	Noted. This will be passed to the Parish Council as a separate action	
P12 3.2	(6) Resident	I agree it would be good if traffic were “less of a threat” but please bear in mind we should recognise the need for personal road transport, especially for the elderly and for those who need to travel in our fairly rural area merely to reach essential facilities such as doctors, dentists, and many types of retail premises they can’t get to otherwise. This is a theme that occurs elsewhere in the Plan and I am especially concerned that the case for cycling is at risk of being overstated - which carries a potential implication for disenfranchising those who need their motor vehicles, not least the elderly mentioned above. As is clear from the Plan and the HNS the fraction of older people in the village is and will continue to grow, so we need to recognise their needs, which are likely to increase into the future.	The needs of older people are recognised through other aspects of the plan, e.g. housing needs. Whilst the plan’s coverage of movement issues does focus on walking and cycling, this is because these are matters where it has the greatest prospect of success. However, the proportion of trips made on foot and by bicycle in particular is very small and is not likely to have any detrimental impact on car users. Indeed, Policy HER9 focuses on routes which are away from car traffic.	
P12 3.1	(6) Resident	Despite what’s said later about traffic issues not being the business of the NDP, I believe it’s worth including mention of traffic volumes, speeding and traffic management issues, and the sometime poor road engineering that are factors in what needs to be addressed in the village. It might not be for the NDP to suggest policies or practices to deal with those issues, but they are part of the holistic whole in village	Noted, although traffic volume is a function of the number of people that use their cars. The plan is seeking to improve alternatives to the car which will help to reduce traffic volumes.	Add a non-policy action related to speeding into Table 9.1.

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		life and are I feel worthy of mention. Failure to do so might suggest there are no such problems.	The NDP cannot have a core objective which relates to matters it cannot address, e.g. traffic.	
P12 3.2	(6) Resident	I would avoid committing Hermitage to being a "beacon of excellence". Such sentiments are likely to be more expensive and time consuming than quicker and more feasible solutions. Also, I'm not aware that such an aspiration appears elsewhere in the Plan, so it seems out of keeping to highlight this particular policy aspect. I suggest deleting the phrase.	The vision does not commit Hermitage to any particular course of action. It is an aspirational commentary on how Hermitage can, over the plan period, achieve its objectives for the benefit of the community. It is from this vision that the objectives and then the policies are derived.	
P12 3.3	(6) Resident	The penultimate objective should, I believe, include making access to the countryside for leisure easier for motorists as well as cyclists, otherwise those who are less mobile on foot or cycle are again being disadvantaged. As an example, car parking in the various locations around Hermitage which give access to footpaths is often very limited if it exists at all. For example, the parking area at the top of the Marlston Road hill coming east out of Hermitage under the old railway bridge is a postage stamp compared with the one on The Common on Slanting Hill near the Cold Ash end which is usefully sized for those taking to the woods at that point.	We disagree. At the heart of national planning policy is the requirement for development and change to be sustainable. Increasing access into the countryside by the private car we consider to be contrary to this principle.	
P13 3.4, 3.5	(6) Resident	It is said that it isn't appropriate for the NDP to simply duplicate existing national or regional & policies. However, that could mean reliance being placed on a policy at the time of NDP publication which is later changed – something over which the HPC has no control. Even if a higher level policy isn't to be duplicated it seems sensible to summarise those elements of that policy on which the NDP is based. At the very least it must be made clear which versions of higher level policies are being relied on in publishing this NDP so that any future interrogation can resolve potential disparities. As it seems unlikely that NDP will take precedence over higher level policies, any discord will inevitably mean the original desire expressed in the NDP will be	The supporting documents that have been submitted to West Berkshire District Council include the Basic Conditions Statement which addresses these matters. It is also summarised in Section 1 of the Plan.	

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		overturned unless that fact is recognised early enough to enable HPC to affect the outcome of the higher policy.		
P18 DC03.14	(6) Resident	Again, I dislike the intention to prioritise walking and cycling as it seems to disadvantage those who find difficulty walking or cycling – the increasing fraction of the population of the village, in fact. Could the Plan instead promote walking and cycling without suggesting that those activities necessarily displace vehicular journeys? Alternatively, walking and cycling should be safeguarded or must be accommodated.	Agreed	Amend Policy HER9.
P45 Policy HER9	(6) Resident	This policy is to be welcomed and is well worded.	Noted	
P21 Policy HER4 B (d)	(6) Resident	In the final sentence the focus on climate change is not helpful as it suggests other reasons for increasing risk of flooding. I therefore suggest instead "… flood risk that may occur due to climate change or other factors."	Agreed	Amend Policy HER4
P22 6.6	(6) Resident	If there is a standardised and agreed method of measuring any increase in biodiversity, it should be referenced in some way for the benefit of readers and future debaters about what HPC might have meant when it drafted this NDP. If there isn't one, the aspiration needs some embellishment to be at all meaningful.	Whilst there are methods of measuring biodiversity net gain, these are in their relative infancy and are being improved, amended or superseded regularly. It would therefore not be appropriate to specifically identify one method. It should be noted that this is not an aspiration, it is part of an Act of Parliament.	
P7 2.11 &2.15	(6) Resident	The following are points of wording or grammar which HPC might feel merit correction: 2.11 Lipscomb Close is not really to the west of the Marlston Road but to the south west. 2.15 In the 2nd line: "data" is a Latin plural, so "data … relate …"	Agreed	Amend paras 2.11 and 2.15
P17 5.2	(6) Resident	I'm not sure the sense of the first sentence is obvious. If it means "In order to provide … must consider *in order to* assemble high quality	Agreed	Amend para 5.2

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		schemes …" then it's too tortuous. Starting instead with "The Hermitage Design guidelines and Codes report was commissioned in order to …" would help, but it's the objective which then follows that I don't find to be brimming with clarity.		
P26 HER7 B	(6) Resident	Should read "Proposals for … will be permitted only in …"	Agreed	Amend Policy HER7
P28 6.15	(6) Resident	Should read "This space … practise bike riding …"	Agreed	Amend para 6.15
	(8) Thames Water	Thames Water therefore recommends that developers engage with them at the earliest opportunity (in line with paragraph 26 of the revised NPPF) to establish the following: • The developments demand for water supply infrastructure; • The developments demand for Sewage/Wastewater Treatment and network infrastructure both on and off site and can it be met; and • The surface water drainage requirements and flood risk of the development both on and off site and can it be met. Thames Water offer a free Pre-Planning service which confirms if capacity exists to serve the development or if upgrades are required for potable water, waste water and surface water requirements. Details on Thames Water's free pre planning service are available at: https://www.thameswater.co.uk/developers/larger-scale-developments/planning-your-development/water-and-wastewater-capacity In light of the above comments and Government guidance, the Neighbourhood Plan should include a specific reference to the key issue of the provision of wastewater/sewerage and water supply infrastructure to service development proposed in a policy. This is necessary because it will not be possible to identify all of the water/sewerage infrastructure required over the plan period due to the way water companies are regulated and plan in 5 year periods (Asset Management Plans or AMPs). We recommend that the Neighbourhood Plan include the following policy/supporting text:	Noted. Whilst such explanations of process are important, it is unclear how this relates directly to this Neighbourhood Plan, its objectives or specifically any of its policies. The importance of early engagement by developers with utility providers is as important as the early and positive engagement of utility providers with the local planning authority in order to ensure effective planning of infrastructure capacity. It is unclear how adding an out-of-context statement into this NDP will assist it to achieve its objectives.	

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		"Where appropriate, planning permission for developments which result in the need for off-site upgrades, will be subject to conditions to ensure the occupation is aligned with the delivery of necessary infrastructure upgrades." ***"The Local Planning Authority will seek to ensure that there is adequate water and wastewater infrastructure to serve all new developments. Developers are encouraged to contact the water/waste water company as early as possible to discuss their development proposals and intended delivery programme to assist with identifying any potential water and wastewater network reinforcement requirements. Where there is a capacity constraint the Local Planning Authority will, where appropriate, apply phasing conditions to any approval to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of the relevant phase of development."***		
P21 Policy HER4	(8) Thames Water	**Water Efficiency/Sustainable Design** We support part A of the policy in principle where it relates to water efficiency, but consider that this needs to be strengthened. The Environment Agency has designated the Thames Water region to be "seriously water stressed" which reflects the extent to which available water resources are used. Future pressures on water resources will continue to increase and key factors are population growth and climate change. **Water conservation and climate change** is a vitally important issue to the water industry. Not only is it expected to have an impact on the availability of raw water for treatment but also the demand from customers for potable (drinking) water. Therefore, Thames Water support the mains water consumption target of 110 litres per head per day (105 litres per head per day plus an allowance of 5 litres per head per day for gardens) as set out in the NPPG (Paragraph: 014 Reference ID: 56-014-20150327) and support the inclusion of this requirement in the Policy.	Agreed, although it is not considered necessary to amend the title as water efficiency is a part of sustainable design.	Amend Policy HER4

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		Thames Water promote water efficiency and have a number of water efficiency campaigns which aim to encourage their customers to save water at local levels. Further details are available on the our website via the following link: https://www.thameswater.co.uk/Be-water-smart It is our understanding that the water efficiency standards of 105 litres per person per day is only applied through the building regulations where there is a planning condition requiring this standard (as set out at paragraph 2.8 of Part G2 of the Building Regulations). As the Thames Water area is defined as water stressed it is considered that such a condition should be attached as standard to all planning approvals for new residential development in order to help ensure that the standard is effectively delivered through the building regulations. Within Part G of Building Regulations, the 110 litres/person/day level can be achieved through either the 'Calculation Method' or the 'Fittings Approach' (Table 2.2). The Fittings Approach provides clear flow-rate and volume performance metrics for each water using device / fitting in new dwellings. Thames Water considers the Fittings Approach, as outlined in Table 2.2 of Part G, increases the confidence that water efficient devices will be installed in the new dwelling. Insight from our smart water metering programme shows that household built to the 110 litres/person/day level using the Calculation Method, did not achieve the intended water performance levels. Proposed policy text: ***"Development must be designed to be water efficient and reduce water consumption. Refurbishments and other non-domestic development will be expected to meet BREEAM water-efficiency credits. Residential development must not exceed a maximum water use of 105 litres per head per day (excluding the allowance of up to 5 litres for external water consumption) using the 'Fittings Approach' in Table 2.2 of Part G of Building Regulations. Planning conditions will be applied to new residential***		

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		development to ensure that the water efficiency standards are met."		
P21 Policy HER4	(8) Thames Water	**POLICY HER4** **Comments in Relation to Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage Systems** We support part B of the policy in principle where it relates to SuDS, but consider that this needs to be strengthened. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) states that a sequential approach should be used by local planning authorities in areas known to be at risk from forms of flooding other than from river and sea, which includes "Flooding from Sewers". Flood risk sustainability objectives and policies should also make reference to 'sewer flooding' and an acceptance that flooding can occur away from the flood plain as a result of development where off site sewerage infrastructure and capacity is not in place ahead of development. With regard to **surface water drainage** it is the responsibility of the developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, watercourses or surface water sewer. It is important to reduce the quantity of surface water entering the sewerage system in order to maximise the capacity for foul sewage to reduce the risk of sewer flooding. Limiting the opportunity for surface water entering the foul and combined sewer networks is of critical importance to Thames Water. Thames Water have advocated an approach to SuDS that limits as far as possible the volume of and rate at which surface water enters the public sewer system. By doing this, SuDS have the potential to play an important role in helping to ensure the sewerage network has the capacity to cater for population growth and the effects of climate change. SuDS not only help to mitigate flooding, they can also help to: improve water quality; provide opportunities for water efficiency; provide	Agreed but this text is considered to be more appropriate as supporting text rather than policy.	Amend Section 6

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		enhanced landscape and visual features; support wildlife; and provide amenity and recreational benefits. **HER4(d)** With regard to surface water drainage, Thames Water request that the following paragraph should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan "***It is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for surface water drainage to ground, water courses or surface water sewer. It must not be allowed to drain to the foul sewer, as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding***." **Site Allocations** There are no new allocations in the draft Neighbourhood Plan and the level of information does not enable Thames Water to make an assessment of the impact the proposed development will have on the waste water/sewerage network infrastructure and sewage treatment works. To enable us to provide more specific comments we require details of the type and scale of development together with the anticipated phasing. There are 2 allocations, but it is understood that these already have planning approval. We recommend Developers contact Thames Water to discuss their development proposals by using our pre app service via the following link: https://www.thameswater.co.uk/developers/larger-scale-developments/planning-your-development/water-and-wastewater-capacity It should be noted that in the event of an upgrade to our sewerage network assets being required, up to three years lead in time is usual to enable for the planning and delivery of the upgrade. As a developer has the automatic right to connect to our sewer network under the Water Industry Act we may also request a drainage planning condition if a network upgrade is required to ensure the infrastructure is in place ahead of occupation of the development. This will avoid adverse environmental impacts such as sewer flooding and / or water pollution. We recommend developers attach the information we provide to their planning applications so that the Council and the wider public are		

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		assured wastewater and water supply matters for the development are being addressed.		
P3 1.1	(9) Resident	The Plan contains a vision for the future of Hermitage and sets out clear planning policies to realise this vision. I have to say that nothing I have read fills me with any optimism, especially given that we are already braced to suffer the consequences of the developments at Charlotte Close, the Old Farmhouse, the White Horse, and Crown Butchers, which already amounts to over forty additional dwellings. Ironically, these developments are mostly in the same area that the report itself states are already affected by the poor design of the Co-op creating congestion which impacts adversely on traffic flows at an already busy section of the B4009 close to the Priors Court roundabout. It is not difficult to predict the effect of a further forty houses!	Noted. The housing requirements are set by West Berkshire District Council through its Local Plan, not the NDP. The NDP is seeking to use policy to ensure that this growth is delivered in a manner which minimises the impact and addresses matters such as local housing need.	
P13 3.3	(9) Resident	The plan states one of its objectives is to ensure that new housing addresses the needs of Hermitage community. Surely, the main need of the Hermitage community is to say enough is enough, and no more houses are needed, incidentally a view once given by the chairman of West Berks Planning Committee at an Annual Parish Assembly, who agreed that Hermitage had suffered enough!	See above. The NDP cannot say no to the level of growth set by WBDC.	
P14 (General) Housing needs	(9) Resident	Interestingly, having stated that the requirement for a range of housing was identified by the Hermitage Housing Needs Survey, most attention is given to provision of the 3-bed properties which are popular with families. This conveniently forgets the fact that the survey also stated there was an emphasis on bungalows for older people, presumably because no developer would build a bungalow on any plot where a more lucrative possibility exists.	Whilst it is recognised that bungalows were a specifically identified need, what that actually says is that there is a demand for housing that is suitable for the needs of older people. Whilst bungalows are popular, over time they often get developed into multi-storey family homes so are lost. The NDP needs to be make clearer that there is the need for this type of housing.	Amend para 4.3.
P7 2.16	(9) Resident	To use data from the 2011 census to compare the housing stock across West Berkshire to that in Hermitage seems to me to be a	The analysis compares Hermitage parish with West Berkshire district	

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		pointless exercise. Obviously, the housing stock in any village dictates to a large extent the demographic of the village and will not be the same as that in a town. To connect this in any way to the future housing needs of the village seems somewhat bizarre, or is this the same sort of reasoning that appears to decide that Newbury always requires thousands more flats.	which is the next largest geography that the Census data is collated at. This section provides a snapshot of what housing was in the parish in 2011. It is not solely or directly used to justify housing requirements.	
	(1) Resident	I have read and considered the approved plan sent out for public consultation and fully support the adoption decision of the Parish Council and its submission, as drafted, to WBC in due course. In my view it provides a comprehensive blueprint to inform any future development proposals affecting Hermitage. It clearly identifies and sets out the many issues and challenges that we as a community will want future decision makers to take into account when making decisions which directly impact on our Community.	Noted	
	(5) Resident	Have finally read and (hopefully!!) absorbed the plan but before I go further, I would like to thank the NDP team for all the work they have put into it. I do hope they all had at least one glass of wine to celebrate - I very much appreciate all the hard work they have put into the plan. I believe the plan covers just about all my thoughts and concerns for the future of the village. In case I did miss one particular part which I think would be detrimental is whether there are any future plans for the land next to the school to be developed into another estate. I sincerely hope that will not happen for some of my reasons below. Any further developments would only increase the amount of traffic going through the village to either Newbury, Hampstead Norreys, Marlston or Cold Ash. The traffic now includes the large lorries from and to the AMP site going towards Hampstead Norreys. I know the Council is working on the speeding though all parts of the village but things don't seem to be improving.	Noted. Neither the NDP or the emerging West Berks Local Plan allocate any land next to the school for development.	

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		My other concerns with further development are the impact on Thames Water and whether they could cope, those of us using BT for internet access and probably most importantly the impact on the doctor's surgery particularly since they cover such a wide range of villages. My thanks again for all the effort put in by everyone - as I say it is much appreciated.		
	(7) National Grid	Extract from standard response letter: **Proposed development sites crossed or in close proximity to National Grid assets:** An assessment has been carried out with respect to National Grid's electricity and gas transmission assets which include high voltage electricity assets and high-pressure gas pipelines. National Grid has identified that it has no record of such assets within the Neighbourhood Plan area.	Noted	
	(10) Resident	Thank you for the work on the NDP, I have very few comments but wonder where the baseline capacity of all services (gas, water, drainage, schools, GPs as well as internet and 'phone) is covered and how much the capacity will be challenged by planned and future new developments. I'm concerned that the flats and houses around the Co-op haven't yet been occupied and that most of the building work planned has not commenced even tho' planning permission was given some years ago – are actions required to ensure progress on building / completion and hand over for social housing happens within agreed timescales?	This is addressed through the emerging West Berkshire Local Plan and its supporting assessment of infrastructure needs to support growth. This has established that there is sufficient capacity for the sites allocated in that plan. It is not within the gift of an NDP to require developers to build out schemes that have planning permission or have been started.	
	(11) Historic England	Thank you for inviting Historic England to comment on the above neighbourhood plan. On the basis of the information currently available, we do not wish to offer any detailed comments at this stage. We would refer you to our general advice on successfully incorporating historic environment considerations into your neighbourhood plan, which can be found here:	Noted	

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		https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/plan-making/improve-yourneighbourhood/. For further specific advice regarding the historic environment and how to integrate it into your neighbourhood plan, we recommend that you consult your local planning authority conservation officer. We may wish to make specific comments on proposals later in the planning process.		
	(12) Resident	I have just gone through the NDP for Hermitage and would like to convey my support to its compilation and completion. I wish to endorse the policies put forward to protect and conserve the environmental integrity of the Parish and help future proof against climate change. Sustainability, in both the short and long term, in all its guises, must take precedence over growth. I particularly the promotion of wildlife and the desire to create more opportunities for it to be maintained and indeed be encouraged further in line with national guidance. I also like that the provision of more bungalows has been recognised to support the retention of the elderly and less able to remain in the village. I would like to thank all the volunteers who have spent much time and effort into putting the document together. Please continue to keep me informed of any future amendments or formal adoption decisions.	Noted	
Front Cover	(3) West Berkshire District Council	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: The front cover is clear and it sets a positive first impression of the document.	Noted	
Contents Page	(3) West Berkshire District Council	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: The contents page is clear however the policies could be listed in the contents page in the same way the subsections have been presented therefore making it easier to navigate the policies in the document.	Agreed	Add list of policies to contents page

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Purpose of the Plan	(3) West Berkshire District Council	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: Clarification regarding paragraph 1.3: the plan is to be read as a whole. Policies should not be duplicated. This is however made clear later in the document in paragraph 3.4. What is meant by "actions" in paragraph 1.4? Are the actions not listed in the Non-Policy Actions in Table 9.1 at the end of the document? Make reference to this section if this is what you are referring to or be clear on what is meant by the terminology.	Noted Agreed	 Amend para 1.4
Policy Context	(3) West Berkshire District Council	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: For information purposes, the Council is formally referred to as West Berkshire District Council therefore the abbreviation "WBDC" is appropriate. Suggested amendment for consistency: to refer to the "Neighbourhood Plan area" as the designated "Neighbourhood Area" in Paragraph 1.8, as stated previously in paragraph 1.6. See comments on mapping at the end of this document. Regarding paragraph 1.12, a revised timetable for the Local Plan Review (LPR), also known as the Local Development Scheme (LDS), was published at the end of October: https://www.westberks.gov.uk/lds. The proposed submission version of the LPR was considered recently at a meeting of Council on 1 December 2022, and Members agreed that the plan can go out to consultation. As such the consultation will commence before the 6th January 2023 for a 6 week period. WBDC hope to submit the plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination in March 2023. Assuming the examination goes okay, WBDC anticipate adoption of the LPR in September 2024. Please see: https://www.westberks.gov.uk/local-plan-review.	Agreed Agreed Agreed	Various amendments Various amendments Amend para 1.12

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Monitoring the Plan	(3) West Berkshire District Council	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: Suggested amendment to wording in paragraph 1.13: Hermitage Parish Council as the qualifying body. Suggested clarification (amend accordingly): "*The HPC Steering Group is a sub-group of Hermitage Parish Council. As per the Terms of Reference, the Parish Council, as the qualifying body, will be responsible for maintaining…"* Regarding the above comment, do you have a Terms of Reference in place which states the role and responsibilities of the HPC SG and the Parish Council?	Agreed It is not within the ToR of the Steering Group that it monitors the plan. At this stage it is most appropriate that this responsibility rests with the Parish Council.	Amend para 1.13
History of Hermitage	(3) West Berkshire District Council	Comments from the Archaeology Team: The history of the area could go back a bit further than the 13th century in that the **Iron Age** hillfort called Grimsbury Castle is an important monument on high ground overlooking two valleys, more or less in the middle of the current parish. It does get mentioned in a few other places in the NDP but the fact that it's covered with trees probably means it's well preserved earthworks aren't easily understood (and have been vulnerable to some damage from recreational use e.g. mountain bikes). Its origins are older than 100BC as Early Iron Age pottery was found in the limited excavations there – so it was probably built between the 8th and 5th centuries BC. There are springs in the interior but there hasn't yet been evidence found of buildings, so we don't know how much of a settlement was there. However there is certainly a strong local **Roman** presence with villas found in the 19th century at both Wellhouse and Birch Farm as well as other features in Box Wood. One of the notable features of the parish is how wooded it is, and there is certainly scope for more archaeological investigation, both through development and community/academic work. For example, the two earthwork enclosures on Oare Common might be Iron Age or medieval but have received very little attention.	Agreed	Amend para 2.2
Hermitage today	(3) West Berkshire District Council	Comments from the Planning Policy Team:		

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		Note regarding the statement in paragraph 2.15, the 2021 Census is now available: https://census.gov.uk.	Noted although as at early-Jan2023, there is only limited data available at Output Area level which can be aggregated up to the parish level	
Challenges for Hermitage	(3) West Berkshire District Council	No comments.	Noted	
Vision for Hermitage	(3) West Berkshire District Council	No comments.	Noted	
Neighbourhood Plan Objectives	(3) West Berkshire District Council	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: General comment: Do a consistency check against the objectives and policies in the NDP – are they clearly aligned?	Agreed. Certain objectives do need to be adjusted	Various amendments
Matters not covered by NP policies	(3) West Berkshire District Council	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: Paragraphs 3.4 to 3.6: give clarity as to why some matters are not covered by a NP. Note: paragraph 30 in the NPPF states, "*Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently".*	Agreed	Amend para 3.4
Policy HER1: Addressing Hermitage's Housing Needs	(3) West Berkshire District Council	No comments received from the Housing Team. Comments from the Planning Policy Team: In addition to the Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2016, Policy HER1 should also consider the updated Iceni Local Housing Need (LHN) assessments 2020 and July 2022, particularly as relating to housing type and mix. Additionally the Government has a new policy on First Homes. It requires the first 25%	Agreed	Various amendments to Policy HER4 and supporting text in Section 4.

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		of all affordable housing provision to be for First Homes suitable for first-time buyers. WBDC is expecting to undertake consultation on the publication version of the Local Plan (Regulation 19) in the New Year. It will contain strategic and non-strategic policies dealing with housing supply, provision and need. The proposed housing policies in the NP should therefore aim to align with the strategic polices of the emerging LPR.		
Policy HER2: Design	(3) West Berkshire District Council	<u>Comments from the Transport Policy Team:</u> Criterion B 1. *"Development should integrate with and enhance the form of its existing surroundings, with all connections including road patterns ensuring permeability for cyclists and pedestrians."* It is expected that new residential development will need to take into account the Council's emerging "Highway Design Guidance for Residential Development". This will include details relating to ensuring that pedestrian and cycling permeability is achieved. Criterion B 6. Car parking for new residential developments will be expected to be compliant with WBDCs Residential Parking Standards outlined in Policy P1 in the Housing Sites Allocations DPD. Cycle parking for new development will be expected to comply with standards outlined in the Council's "Cycle and Motorcycle Advice and Standards for New Development Guidance Note. <u>Comments from the Highways Team:</u> "*The Plan looks good*". <u>Comments from the Conservation Team:</u> *"No comments to make on Policy HER2, as this seems to be well thought through. The Design Code is a thorough piece of work and provides a good analysis of the local character".* <u>Comments from the Planning Policy Team:</u>	Noted Noted Noted Noted	

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		Criterion B2: Rather than specifying that development densities should not exceed 25 dwellings per hectare (criterion 2), the policy should instead outline that developments should be in accordance with the WBDC Pattern Book Study, which is a researched document, and is flexible across different development sites throughout the District. This element of the policy may conflict with the LPR, particularly the site allocations (if the SG were to exceed 25 dph, or even 20dph as the newly allocated site is on the rural edge). Criterion B4: Rather than specifying that buildings shall not be greater than 2 storey's in height, it would be better to say that the design, scale, bulk and massing should respond to the prevailing character of the local area. However, the NDP does state that taller buildings may be permitted where they complement or enhance the local character. Both could lead to confusion at decision taking, as to which policy/documents take precedent – the NDP or the LPR. <u>Additional comments from the Planning Policy Team:</u> The Policy sets a very low density in part B; what is the evidence for this? Is it not an efficient use of land? The aforementioned Pattern Book Study is a starting point, but there are some very good much higher density developments already in the village, and if you encourage more low density expensive housing you just encourage greater encroachment of development into the AONB, causing more harm to the AONB and not delivering much housing.	Agreed. Agreed Noted	Amend Policy HER2 and supporting text Amend Policy HER2 and supporting text Amend Policy HER2 and supporting text
Policy HER3: Country-side Views Between Properties	(3) West Berkshire District Council	No comments received.	Noted	

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Sustain-able design	(3) West Berkshire District Council	Comments from the Environment Delivery Team: Suggested amendments to Para 6.2: *"In terms of the UK's change to housing stock ~~of housing~~, this means that new homes will have to be designed to minimise energy use by adopting a fabric first approach and following the Energy Hierarchy to develop net zero carbon design ~~and create very low net carbon emissions through their design~~. This will include minimising heating and heat loss through effective insulation, ~~having low water demand, and being fitted with or directly connected to renewable energy systems~~* (Move/amend this sentence: 'installation or connection to a renewable energy systems, reducing water demand'). *In this context, the orientation of buildings can be important in order to make best use of available sunlight".* Suggested amendments to Para 6.3: "*With the UK ~~Britain~~ no longer part of the European Union, the EU's Energy Performance of Buildings Directive - which required all new buildings to be nearly zero-energy by the end of 2020 - will not apply. ~~The UK's equivalent - the Code for Sustainable Homes - was withdrawn by the Government in 2015 and this has been replaced by new national technical standards, which include optional Building Regulations standards regarding water and access as well as a new national space standard (this is in addition to the existing mandatory Building Regulations)".~~* At a national and local level, net zero carbon target within developments are being addressed through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Building Regulations, the Future Homes Standard and the West Berkshire Local Plan.	Agreed Agreed	Amend para 6.2 Amend para 6.3
Policy HER4: Low Energy	(3) West Berkshire District Council	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: In respect of criteria d of policy HER4 (Low Energy and Energy Efficient design):		

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and Energy Efficient Design		Policy CS16 of the Core Strategy has regard to flood risk, and the policy requires that on all development sites surface water must be managed in a sustainable manner through the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). There is no need for neighbourhood plans to repeat Local Plan policies particularly as the development plan must be read as a whole. Nonetheless, if the Parish Council is minded to include the criteria on SuDS, it is recommended that the policy wording is strengthened and that some additional changes are made to provide clarity: *"All development ~~shall~~ must minimise surface water runoff to prevent ~~off-site~~ surface water flooding through the ~~design of a~~ implementation of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), and where possible incorporate mitigation and resilience measures for any increase in surface water flood risk that may occur due to climate change".* WBDC adopted in 2018 a Sustainable Drainage Systems Supplementary Planning Document (https://www.westberks.gov.uk/sudsspd) which provides guidance on the approach that should be taken to SuDS in new developments in West Berkshire, and there should be a cross reference to this document in the policy. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on flood risk was updated in August 2022, and this includes sections on SuDS – see paragraph 056 (ref ID: 7-056-20220825). This paragraph identifies that preference should be given to multi-functional SuDS, and this should be reflected in the policy. The supporting text to the policy needs explain why the policy has a criteria on SuDS, and it would be helpful if there could be further clarification around the 'mitigation and resilience measures' that are mentioned in the policy – perhaps some examples could be provided? The PPG on flood risk does include some paragraphs on flood resistance and flood resilience.	Agreed Agreed Agreed Agreed	Amend Policy HER4 Amend Policy HER4 Amend Policy HER4 Amend supporting text to Policy HER4

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		Comments from the Drainage and Flood Risk Team: The only element of flood risk and drainage in this section: d) all development shall minimise surface water runoff to prevent off-site flooding through the design of a suitable sustainable drainage system (SuDS), and where possible incorporate mitigation and resilience measures for any increases in flood risk that may occur due to climate change. This is a non-specific requirement and is therefore not worth including without reference to specific means of restricting discharge or to different types of flood risk. SuDS should be plural here. 1. When discussing discharge rates the following applies: a. All developments should attempt to restrict runoff to the 1 in 1 year greenfield discharge rate up to the 1 in 100 year event plus climate change. b. Failing the above, the applicant should review whether long term storage can be provided. In this instance the greenfield discharge rate would still be used, but the rate would match the return period of the design storm up to the 1 in 100 year event plus climate change. c. On brownfield sites only where there is no space for storage, if the above measures cannot be implemented then a 50% betterment on the 1 in 1 year existing discharge rate might be considered acceptable depending on the circumstances. d. Further guidance here: Sustainable Drainage Systems: Non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems (publishing.service.gov.uk) and here: https://www.susdrain.org/files/resources/other-guidance/lasoo_non_statutory_suds_technical_standards_guidance_2016_.pdf 2. With respect to flooding due to climate change, where a property is subject to flood risk:	It is considered excessive for a planning policy to contain this level of detail. Whilst it is appropriate to point to best practice and national standards, these could change and therefore the policy should be able, as far as is reasonably possible, to endure.	Amend Policy HER4 to make reference to best practice and national standards.

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		a. Typically a flood risk assessment will be required to demonstrate that the development is safe over its lifetime, that it does not increase flood risk and that safe access/egress can be provided on site. Further guidance here: Flood risk assessments if you're applying for planning permission - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and Preparing a flood risk assessment: standing advice - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) b. Where the above is not possible applications will be refused. 3. In terms of implementing SUDS, it's important to note that they shouldn't be an afterthought. SuDS should be designed during the concept phase even for small scale developments and worked into the landscape. a. West Berkshire SPD has further advice: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - West Berkshire Council b. The SuDS Manual from CIRIA pretty much covers every elements of SuDS design: SuDS Manual (susdrain.org) c. The SuDS construction guidelines from CIRIA also has useful information: Item Detail (ciria.org) Comments from the Environment Delivery Team: The updated energy and carbon policy within the LPR and supporting SPD (which is to be drafted) will cover specific detail on achieving net zero carbon within developments.	Noted	
Wildlife-friendly design	(3) West Berkshire District Council	Comments from the Ecology Team: **Legally Protected Sites** There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) within the Parish of Hermitage and no Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) or Special Protection Areas (SPA's) designated under the Conservation of	All points noted	

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		Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017 (as amended) or any Ramsar Sites (wetland sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention). There are no National Nature Reserves or Local Natures Reserves designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949 within the Parish. However, part of the western Parish lies within the Nutrient Impact Zone (NIZ) of the River Lambourn SAC and within which all new residential development and certain types of other development that may lead to an increase in phosphorous loads, are subject to the requirement to demonstrate nutrient neutrality as advised by Natural England. WBDC as a competent authority under the Habitats Regulations is required to consider whether plans or projects within the NIZ are likely to have a significant effect on the River Lambourn SAC and if so, to undertake an Appropriate Assessment of any such plans or projects. This includes plans or projects which would normally be considered as permitted development under the General Permitted Development Order. Most of the Parish lies within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ). It is also within a water Source Protection Zone although this is a non-statutory designation. **Priority Habitats** The main habitats that occupy a significant proportion of the land surface of the Parish are broadleaved mixed and yew woodland and coniferous woodland (please see Figure 1 below). Much of this is plantation woodland on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) with significant remnants of ancient woodland in the north west (near Oare) and centrally (near Wellhouse) see Figure 2. The Priority Habitat Lowland		

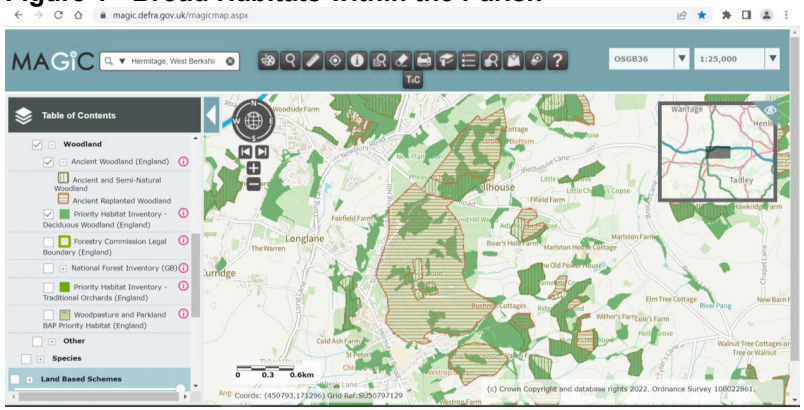
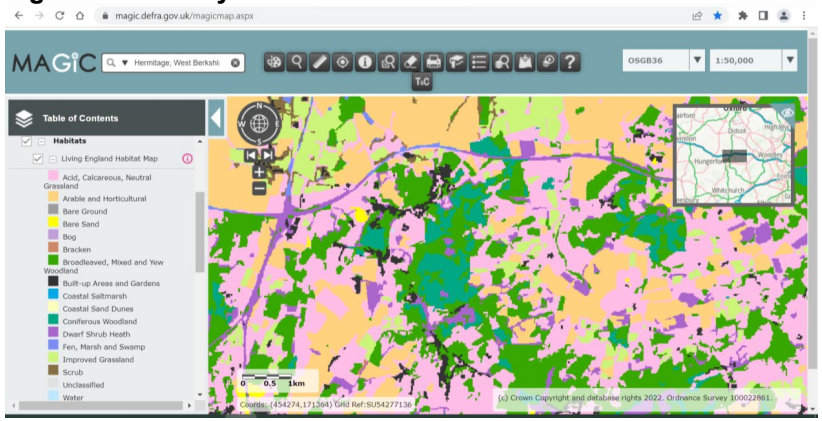
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		Deciduous Woodland is widespread both within and outside of these ancient woodland sites. There are no other Priority Habitats within the Parish. **Figure 1 - Broad Habitats within the Parish**  		

Figure 2 – Priority Habitats within the Parish



Under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006, all public bodies (Including Parish Councils) have a duty to conserve biodiversity. This duty includes "… in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat". Section 41 sets out the lists of priority habitats and priority species to which this duty especially applies.

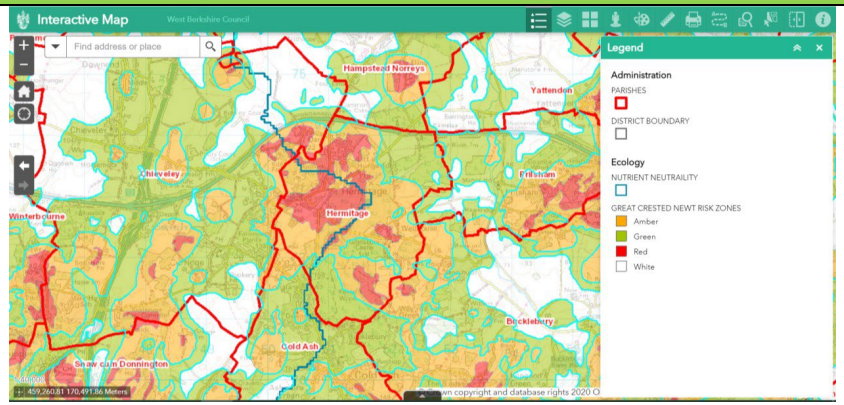
There are a number of Local Wildlife Sites within the Parish including land at Furze Hill which is owned and managed by the Parish Council and which is a Lowland Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat.

Legally Protected Species

There are a number of records confirming the presence of legally protected species within the Parish. These species are fully protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) and under Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017 (as amended).

There are records of three approved applications for licences to affect protected mammal species within the Parish. These are as follows:

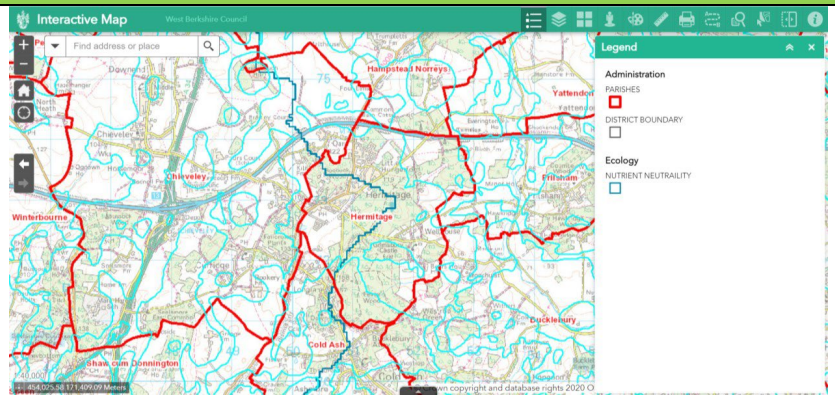
Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		Hazel Dormouse – Case reference of granted application 2019-39430-EPS-MIT Licence Start Date 29/03/2019 Licence End Date 31/12/2022 ***Bats*** – Case reference of granted application 2016-24643-EPS-MIT Species on the licence Brown long-eared (BLE),common pipistrelle (C-PIP) and soprano pipistrelle (S-PIP) Licence Start Date 03/08/2016 Licence End Date 02/08/2026 Case reference of granted application 2014-4812-EPS-MIT Species on the licence brown long-eared (BLE) and common pipistrelle (C-PIP) Licence Start Date 24/03/2015 Licence End Date 31/03/2020 There is also survey data records for two waterbodies within the Parish that have confirmed great crested newt populations: ***Great crested newt –*** **Survey Date** **OS Grid Ref** **GCN Present?** 21/04/2016 SU504729 Y 03/05/2016 SU504729 Y 16/05/2016 SU504729 Y 11/05/2016 SU505729 Y 07/06/2016 SU505729 Y Some 25% of the Parish is assessed as being within the highest Red Risk Zone for GCN, 50% within the Amber Risk Zone and 25% within the lowest Green Risk Zone (please see Figure 3). **Figure 3 – GCN Risk Zones within the Parish**		

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		 Therefore, whilst there are no legally protected biodiversity sites within the Parish, large areas of the Parish are covered by priority habitats and support legally protected species. These all place constraints on new development. Development proposals that may result in the killing or injury or disturbance of such species or which may result in the loss of breeding sites and resting places or other supporting habitat, will need to be subject to careful assessment and may require licences from Natural England under Regulation 55 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017 (as amended).		
Policy HER5: Wildlife-Friendly Develop-ment	(3) West Berkshire District Council	Comments from the Ecology Team: We would suggest that this policy should be titled Development and Biodiversity and have as its key objective conserving, restoring, and enhancing biodiversity in line with the strengthened duty to conserve biodiversity in the new Environment Act, 2021: *The Environment Act passed into legislation in November 2021. It will require significant additional protections for the natural environment including, air, water and soil quality and biodiversity. The mandatory requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is intended to come into force in November 2023 from which time all planning applications for new development*	Agreed that the NDP objective should be amended to reflect the need to conserve restore and enhance. However, it is unnecessary to amend the title of the section – all sections and policy of a land use plan relate to development.	Amend objective

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		will need to demonstrate a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity. The Act also requires the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies for all English Counties to be prepared by County Councils and Unitary Authorities.		
		Reference should be made to the relevant current Local Plan Policies for West Berkshire including Policies CS17 and CS18 of the Core Strategy: https://www.westberks.gov.uk/media/36371/Core-Strategy-CS17-Biodiversity-and-Geodiversity/pdf/Core_Strategy_-_CS17_-_Biodiversity_and_Geodiversity.pdf?m=637408701786400000. https://www.westberks.gov.uk/media/36372/Core-Strategy-CS18-Green-Infrastructure/pdf/Core_Strategy_-_CS18_-_Green_Infrastructure.pdf?m=637408701874570000.	Insofar as all parts of the development plan should be read together, it is not considered necessary to make reference to the Core Strategy policies.	
		It should be noted that the mandatory requirement for BNG does not come into effect until November 2023.	Noted. Given the passage of the plan as at January 2023, it is unlike that it will be made (having passed Examination) until Autumn 2023.	
		Examples of good practice could be referenced for example using Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to create new ponds and wetland habitats both to improve water quality and provide new wildlife habitats. In this context we would advise moving the reference to SuDS from HER4 B(d to HER 5 where it seems more relevant.	Given other comments made by WBC, it is considered appropriate to retain reference to SuDS in Policy HER4.	
		HER5 should also reference the opportunities for helping to deliver carbon neutrality and incorporating climate change resilience e.g. by planting trees.	Agreed	Amend Policy HER5.
		Good practice guidance could be referenced e.g. https://www.nhbcfoundation.org/publication/biodiversity-in-new-housing-developments-creating-wildlife-friendly-communities/ and	Agreed	Amend supporting text to Policy HER5

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		https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/homes_for_people_and_wildlife_lr_-_spreads.pdf. The policy should also acknowledge the location of the Parish within the North Wessex Downs AONB, which in connection with the large extent of woodland and local bat records means that light pollution should be minimised so as to avoid dicsurbance to foraging and commuting bats and to maintain dark skies. More detailed information can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/light-pollution.	Agreed	Amend Policy HER5 and supporting text
Policy HER6: Irreplace-able Habitats and Local Wildlife-Rich Habitats	(3) West Berkshire District Council	Comments from the Ecology Team: We would suggest this policy should be incorporated into HER5 as there are significant overlaps between the two policies. Reference should be made to the need for all planning applications for new development to be accompanied by appropriate ecological surveys and measures that seek to protect the most important biodiversity features such as those shown in Figure 6.1. Guidance on the appropriate types of ecological surveys and reports and the content and standards for such reports can be found at: https://cieem.net/resource/guidelines-for-ecological-report-writing/. The policy must also reference the Natural England advice on the requirement for new development within the catchment of the River Lambourn SAC to be nutrient neutral. Figure 4 below shows the extent of the Parish that is within the catchment and where the nutrient neutrality requirement applies.	Whilst it is recognised that there is a close relationship between the 2 policies, amalgamation would result in an excessively long policy. There is no specific reason why having 2 policies is less effective. Agreed The point is noted. However, it not considered that the Neighbourhood Plan must reference this. The plan does not seek to allocate sites for development. As such, the plan as a whole is not considered likely to have a significant impact on water quality. The HRA screening of the	Amend Policy HER6

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			Neighbourhood Plan considered that an Appropriate Assessment was not necessary and that no specific policy wording be added to address this issue. This was informed by consultation with Natural England which concurred with this view.	
		<u>Comments from the Archaeology Team:</u> Section 6 Sustainable Design and Environment and Policy HER6 could also be beneficial for the historic environment, planted and managed flora being part of the definition of this. There is a big overlap between Local Wildlife Sites and areas of high sensitivity assessed through Historic Landscape Characterisation. Retaining habitats for wildlife may also prevent damage or destruction to underlying archaeological sites. This could also be the case for the Local Green Spaces, although I cannot find much historic background to the ones identified in Policy HER7, most being of 20th century or later date.	Noted	

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		 **Figure 4 – Catchment of the River Lambourn SAC (blue line)** Policy HER6 as currently titled refers only to important habitats. In this context, the policy also needs to make reference to the requirements for legally protected and priority species neither of which are currently mentioned. The Parish Council may wish to consider seeking the designation of Furze Hill Local Wildlife Site as a Stautory Local Nature Reserve. Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are a statutory designation made under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 by principal local authorities. Parish and Town Councils can also declare LNRs but they must have the powers to do so delegated to them by a principal local authority i.e. West Berkshire Council in this case. LNRs are for people and wildlife. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally.More information can be found at: https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/acdf4a9e-a115-41fb-bbe9-603c819aa7f7/local-nature-reserves-england. We would of course be happy to provide further advice and support to Hermitage Parish Council in refining its Neighbourhood Plan.	Agreed Agreed	Amend Policy HER6 Include as a non-policy action

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Policy HER7: Local Green Spaces	(3) West Berkshire District Council	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: A neighbourhood plan's capacity to designate land as Local Green Space (LGS) provides the highest level of protection to green space. There are strict criteria set out in paragraphs 101 and 102 of the NPPF, which effectively allows communities to identify and protect valued green areas. One of the criteria is that the green space must be demonstrably special to a local community and hold a particular significance. It gives examples of such significance e.g. for its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or the richness of its wildlife. The WBC Landscape Character Assessment could be used to inform matters such as tranquillity. Regard should be given to the NPPG on Local Green Space , in particular the NPPG states that *'the qualifying body (in the case of neighbourhood plan making) should contact landowners at an early stage about proposals to designate any part of their land as Local Green Space'.* It is noted in paragraph 2.31, the NDP states that the LGS is owned by HPC however for information purposes the owners should be contacted if any LGS falls in private ownership. The HPC Steering Group will need to be able to show the Examiner that this has been done and should be evidenced. The Group may find that they want to expand some of the evidence in the appendices to clearly show that the proposed LGS meets the NPPF criteria. It may be useful to look at some made NDP's to see what type of information was included. 4.3 Locality guidance suggests using a LGS assessment tool which should provide the name of the space, the address, and the grid reference. See page 19: 4.4 https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/making-local-green-space-designations-neighbourhood-plan/.	A Green Spaces Audit was prepared which addresses these criteria. This Audit was included as part of the evidence base consulted on at Reg 14. All proposed LGSs are owned by Hermitage Parish Council.	

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		4.5 Also see page 21 for policy themes and guidance on what a policy specific to LGS could include. 4.6 Which objective(s) in the draft NDP does HER7 meet? See Box 1 on page 6 of the Locality guidance on top tips for writing planning policies: https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/How-to-write-planning-policies-for-your-Neighbourhood-Plan-2021.10.08.pdf Policy HER7 is explicit in designating LGS. The policy text provides a list of the sites (locations) being designated, supplemented by a map(s) of the LGS. This is done as a LGS location plan which identifies the following areas: 1. *Dines Way Green* 2. *Hermitage Green Play Area* 3. *Lipscomb Close Green* 4. *Pinewood Playground* 5. *Furze Hill Recreation Ground* 6. *Furze Hill Local Wildlife Site*		
Heritage	(3) West Berkshire District Council	Comments from the Archaeology Team: This document is impressive, it's really well-thought out, and clear. The NDP has actually woven heritage through several sections, as the character of the parish's historic environment is clearly important to the community. Should section 7 be named Historic Environment to better tie in with NPPF? Might it still be useful for the nationally designated heritage assets to be put into a table here, if only to show how few there are!? I.e. there is only one Scheduled Monument and seven Listed Buildings (six of which are clustered at Wellhouse Farm, though rather poorly identified in the original listing e.g. the Dairy was more likely a Stable and their	Agreed It is not considered necessary to show these. The policy relates to non-designated heritage assets and therefore it avoids confusion if mapping only relates to these.	Amend title of Section 7

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		dating has been more clearly unpicked in survey work when they were converted). There are no Registered Battlefields or Parks and Gardens (and little likelihood of these being added) but also no Conservation Areas.		
Policy HER8: Non-Designated Heritage Assets	(3) West Berkshire District Council	Comments from the Conservation Team: In the section listing the non-designated heritage assets it would be useful if reference were made to how they meet the local listing criteria set out in the Local Listing Process https://www.westberks.gov.uk/article/41022/Local-List-of-Heritage-Assets. There are no further comments to make on Policy HER8 which appears to align with the NPPF. *Comments from the Archaeology Team:* The group have done excellent work looking at buildings of heritage interest, presented as a list in Policy HER8. It might be helpful if the criteria for our local list was applied to these, as I presume this would strengthen the policy? Some have interesting links to the former brick making industry, eg Pinewood Cottage, and Long Barn (which we didn't know about). I have no objection to the ones identified being included as NDHAs (possibly not the metal road sign?), but do feel that there are some notable omissions: Within the village, The Old Vicarage is an early 19th century building noted by Betjeman in the 1940s as "the pretty little vicarage in a late Georgian Perpendicular style". It appears to be contemporary with the church. I thought the carved lychgate of the church was of note when I walked round the village. Both The Old Vicarage and nearby Crossways House in Marlston Road were mentioned in the Hermitage VDS.	Agreed Additional NDHAs were considered but it was not felt they met the criteria.	Expand descriptions in Section 7.

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		Another very attractive building probably of similar age is the folly or lodge called Grimsbury Castle Tower. This does not lie within a scheduled area of the hillfort. The former pub called the Fox and Hounds Cottages and the Forester's Cottage at Wellhouse might be considered, as well as perhaps some other farm buildings eg at Boars Hole Farm which was developed as a model farm. We'd be happy to provide more information from the HER to justify these suggestions. A brief mention is made in 7.1 of the Historic Environment Character Area (HECA) that Hermitage falls in – this is one of the projects that Archaeology has undertaken in the past https://www.westberks.gov.uk/historicenvironmentprojects. It can be used to better understand the evolution of the district but also be more specific about actions. Within this larger HECA are 3 Historic Environment Character Zones (See our online map https://gis2.westberks.gov.uk/webapps/OnlineMap/?vln=HISTORIC%20ENVIRONMENT%20CHARACTER%20ZONES&x=451534&y=172813&scale=8) with bullet points for Conservation Issues and Research Priorities. These might be of interest to add in under Section 9 if not in policies, e.g. for HECZ PPC_Plantation_Parliamentary_Commons (westberks.gov.uk), issues include: Management of woodlands, conservation of surviving ancient woodlands and replacement of plantations with more mixed tree coverage. CHCAS_Curridge_Hermitage_ColdAsh (westberks.gov.uk): Historic building stock is poorly understood and little protection is currently afforded to this resource. What are the earthwork features on Oare Common? What period do they represent and what type of site is present here? PASS_Plantation_Assarts (westberks.gov.uk): Use of Grimsbury Castle by cyclists and off-road motorcycles. Comments from the Planning Policy Team:		

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		The local listing process is separate to the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan process. Therefore sites identified within the plan as non-designated heritage assets won't automatically be locally listed: https://www.westberks.gov.uk/locallist. If the Parish Council wanted the non-designated heritage assets to be selected for the Local List then they would need to nominate them and it would be for the West Berkshire Heritage Forum to consider whether they should be included at a Selection Panel meeting.	Noted. The heritage assets identified are designated through the Hermitage NDP. It is understood that they are identified and considered as NDHAs through the NDP process and that the local listing is a separate process.	
Policy HER9: Access for Walking and Cycling	(3) West Berkshire District Council	Comments from the Transport Policy Team: Criterion C: Proposals to extend the Eling Way walking and cycling route are supported, both south towards Newbury and north towards Compton. The Eling Way is recognised as an important leisure active travel and potential commuter cycling route, particularly in terms of a southern extension of the route from Hermitage towards Newbury, which is recognised in WBC's Local Walking & Cycling Infrastructure Plan. WBC would be supportive of initiatives to develop and deliver extensions of the Eling Way route both to the north and south of Hermitage, and would be willing to work with local communities and cycle groups to help develop any proposals. This may need to include the development of a route through Hermitage village to link the existing Eling Way scheme near to the village hall with any southern extension towards Newbury.	Noted	
Table 9.1	(3) West Berkshire District Council	Comments from the Infrastructure Team: "*There do not appear to be any red flags in what the NDP is proposing to use CIL funds on. Some of the other items (like providing new play equipment and biodiversity enhancements through wildflower planting) might also be reasonably funded from CIL in my opinion. Coupled with the fact there are no site allocations in the NDP, I do not think there are any CIL specific comments to make".* Comments from the Transport Policy Team: Public Transport – Improve Bus Services: "*The Council is aware of the desire to increase desire to improve bus services in Hermitage. The current 6/6a service forms part of the West Berkshire bus network*	Noted Noted	

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		which is financially supported by WBDC, and unfortunately with the limited resource funding available it is difficult to increase frequencies. Other ways of supporting travel choice in areas outside of the main urban areas of West Berkshire will be explored through the Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan and review of the Local Transport Plan".		
Consist-ency Check	(3) West Berkshire District Council	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: Now the Plan is drafted it would be good to check the policies for consistency and whether there is any repetition. As the Plan is prepared by many different people it is useful for someone to have a full read through to check for duplication and policies do not create any conflicts with any other policies. Also it may be worth checking the policies against the agreed vision and objectives of the NDP to ensure they will help to achieve the aspirations of the Hermitage NP. It is also a good opportunity to check that nothing important is missing in terms of addressing the vision and all of the objectives in your plan.	Noted and agreed	Amend the wording of various objectives
Mapping	(3) West Berkshire District Council	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: Check of all maps within the document should be undertaken to ensure that they are readable. The following sets out good practice principles which should be considered (Hermitage may already be aware of the information below): **Ordnance Survey base map** Parish Councils can sign up to Ordnance Survey's Public Service Mapping Agreement (PSMA). This will licence your parish council to use a range of Ordnance Survey mapping products for council business. Use of Parish Online mapping software will cover this. Maps should also display the Ordnance Survey licence number. **A black and white base map** The base map should be black and white to enable all designations and allocations to be viewed clearly.	This is noted. All maps in the Plan were prepared by WBC officers. Agreed Disagree. The maps are all clear and a colour base helps the reader to	Add licence no. to all maps

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		Map must be of an appropriate scale The base map should be of an appropriate scale relative to what the map is showing. As a general rule, for most villages when showing the whole parish a scale of 1:25,000 is likely to work best however this will vary depending on the size of the Parish. However when showing more detailed maps of the village a lower scale might be appropriate for example 1:8000. Ideally you should be able to see individual plots and boundaries clearly. This scale should also be clearly labelled and the Map must include a key / legend.	identify locations and content more clearly. Noted. The maps are of an appropriate scale.	
Para 3.3, HER3	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	We welcome the bullet in paragraph "preserve the views to and from Hermitage village which help to make it special". However, Policy HER3 and paragraphs 5.4 to 5.7 only address views from the village to the countryside. We suggest that consideration is given to including 'valued views' towards Hermitage and within the countryside in the Neighbourhood Plan – including views from public rights of way and open spaces.	This is acknowledged however no evidence came forward detailing which of these views should be preserved. It is accepted therefore that the objective should be drafted more precisely.	Amend wording of objective relating to views.
Section 6 and HER7	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	We strongly support policy HER7 on Local Green Spaces and the supporting paragraphs.	Noted	
Section 8 and Policy HER9	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	We strongly support policy HER9 (currently titled Access for Walking and Cycling) and its objectives A, B & C, which reflect the Forum's objectives. We particularly welcome the references in HER9A to provision of bridleways and to the need to improve the safety of rural roads and lanes. The title of HER9 might therefore be modified to "Access for Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding".	Agreed	Amend HER9 title
Policy HER9A	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	We warmly welcome the objective in this policy to promote access to the countryside through enhancement where possible of the PROW network. An important barrier (literally!) to access to the countryside is	This is acknowledged however it is not considered appropriate to include this level of detail in policy, not least	Add supporting text in Section 8.

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		stiles and gates. We therefore recommend that all new gates should comply with British Standard 5709 'Gaps, gates and stiles – specification', and existing structures should be replaced where possible with ones that comply with this standard.	when this may not require planning permission. It is considered appropriate however for inclusion in the supporting text.	
Paragraph 8.1	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	The word 'footpaths' is used when what is meant is all public rights of way - as currently shown in fig 8.1 and the referenced leaflet (the name of the link is also inaccurate but that cannot be changed). Thus we suggest 'Details of various footpaths…' is replaced by 'Details of public rights of way…..'	Agreed	Amend para 8.1.
Paragraph 8.1	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	The leaflet of Hermitage Footpaths, Bridleways and Byways shows a number of Permissive Paths – one around Furze Hill and several within States Hill and Fence Woods. While it might be editorially difficult to add these to Figure 8.1, we suggest that these could be described in an additional paragraph.	Agreed, although it is easiest to simply point this out.	Amend para 8.1.
Fig 8.1	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	The public rights of way network in Hermitage Parish includes byways which are legally open to equestrians and public motor vehicles. Hence the title to fig 8.1 is inaccurate. We suggest a title of 'Public rights of way in Hermitage parish'.	Agreed	Amend title of Fig 8.1.
Paragraph 8.1	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	For the same reason we suggest adding horse riders to the first sentence of this paragraph: 'Hermitage is surrounded by wonderful and accessible countryside available to walkers, cyclists and horse riders.'	Agreed	Amend para 8.1.
Section 8.4	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	As the Eling Way is used by walkers and equestrians as well as cyclists, we would welcome the opportunity for the Forum to be involved in the ongoing discussions on the extension of the route.	Noted	
Section 8	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	As mentioned above, circular routes are particularly valued by users. The permissive path around Furze Hill completes a number of possible circular walking routes using the Eling Wayiii. It would be helpful if this could be shown on Ordnance Survey maps.	It is not considered appropriate to show such permissive paths that may not be accurately mapped. Reference to the leaflet is considered sufficient.	
Section 8	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	Access land: Oare Common is designated as Access Land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (shown on figure 8.1 by the light brown border). This means that people are not limited to the public footpaths across it. You might wish to mention this in the Plan.	Agreed	Amend para 8.1.

Comments received after the end of the consultation period

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
	(13) Natural England	Water Quality/Nutrient Neutrality Advice Natural England issued guidance earlier this year regarding the impacts of increased nutrient loads on certain designated sites. West Berkshire Council is one of the Local Planning Authorities affected by this new guidance and we would therefore ask you to please refer to our letter and accompanying documents sent to the LPA on the 16th March 2022 for further information on this matter. In light of this guidance, the neighbourhood plan should seek to preserve water quality on the River Lambourn Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and ensure that development discharging within the Lambourn catchment will not increase the phosphorus loading on the SAC from wastewater and surface run off. Any net increase in overnight accommodation will need to ensure the nutrient impact is considered and addressed where appropriate. This includes developments that propose to connect to the mains or off grid treatment works, such as package treatment plants (PTPs), or composting toilets. Whilst the current nutrient neutrality tools that have been developed are only relevant to development which would result in a net increase in population served by a wastewater system, the Habitats Regulations apply to all plans or projects, and therefore Natural England may additionally advise on other potential nutrient generating applications such as industry or agriculture. Nutrient neutrality could be a solution for these types of developments as well, however this would need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Calculators for wholesale assessment of this type of development are not currently available however we acknowledge individual authorities may be in the process of developing their own approaches to assessing certain applications.	The point is noted. The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate sites for development. As such, the plan as a whole is not considered likely to have a significant impact on water quality. The HRA screening of the Neighbourhood Plan considered that an Appropriate Assessment was not necessary. This was informed by consultation with Natural England which concurred with this view.	

Appendix C January-August 2020 Conversations – example of a response

Conversation #3

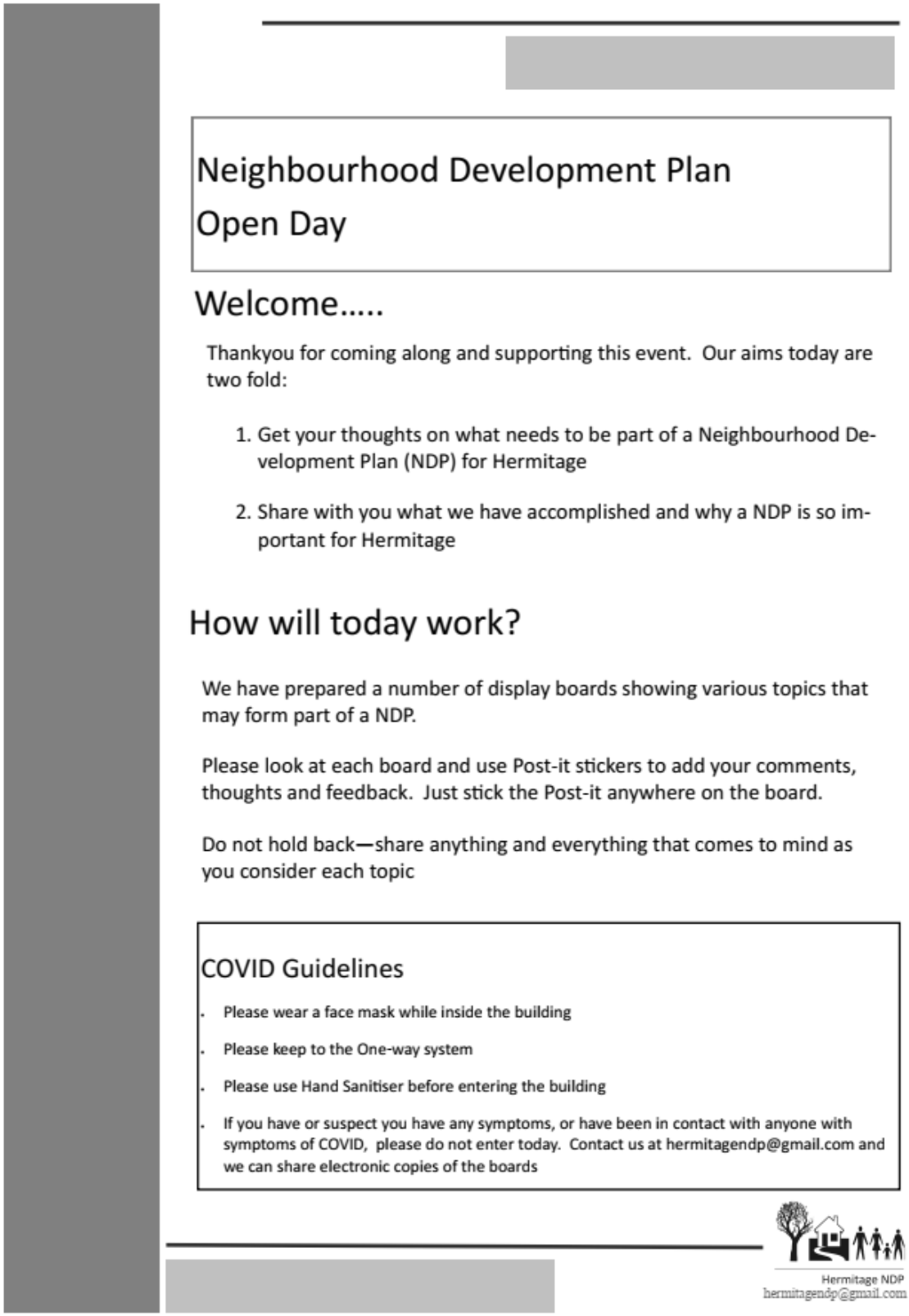
March/April – 2020 email responses (redacted)

1 April 2020

These two sites should not be developed as Hermitage is in danger of being over developed for its size, facilities and infrastructure.

In particular, HER5 should definitely not go ahead being adjacent to the school and will also add even more traffic to what is an over used B road. Since Forest Edge was built the traffic has increased enormously and enough is enough.

Appendix D October 2020 event – sample display boards



Neighbourhood Development Plan
Open Day

Welcome.....

Thankyou for coming along and supporting this event. Our aims today are two fold:

1. Get your thoughts on what needs to be part of a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for Hermitage
2. Share with you what we have accomplished and why a NDP is so important for Hermitage

How will today work?

We have prepared a number of display boards showing various topics that may form part of a NDP.

Please look at each board and use Post-it stickers to add your comments, thoughts and feedback. Just stick the Post-it anywhere on the board.

Do not hold back—share anything and everything that comes to mind as you consider each topic

COVID Guidelines

- Please wear a face mask while inside the building
- Please keep to the One-way system
- Please use Hand Sanitiser before entering the building
- If you have or suspect you have any symptoms, or have been in contact with anyone with symptoms of COVID, please do not enter today. Contact us at hermitagendp@gmail.com and we can share electronic copies of the boards

Hermitage NDP
hermitagendp@gmail.com



Green Spaces

A few questions to help you get a feel for the topic

but don't feel these are the only topics—leave us comments on anything that comes to mind.

Did you know these are all designated green spaces:

- Furze Hill RG18 9WL (formerly clay and sandpits for M4 construction and Pinewood Brickworks)
- Pinewood Park - RG18 9RP (Near the Scout Hut on site of former Pinewood Halt Station)
- Dines Way Green
- Lipscombe Close Green
- Hermitage Green play area
- Burial Ground on Marlston Road

Are there other Green Spaces you would want to be designated?

Habitats / Bio-diversity

Hermitage is surrounded by woodland and countryside. Are there any specific habitats or areas of bio-diversity our NDP should aim to protect?

Areas you particularly like?

Let us know where these are and why you like them

Appendix E June 2022 event flyer

Hermitage NDP

HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF OUR VILLAGE

The future development of Hermitage will be strongly influenced by a Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). This can only be created with input and feedback from our community.

The NDP Team need to actively consult with village residents so your views and visions can be considered when creating the NDP for submission to the West Berkshire Council. Once adopted, the NDP will carry legal weight, affecting future planning decisions.

YOUR VIEWS ARE IMPORTANT!

Please make time to visit our **open day workshop** and give us your thoughts. We need feedback on topics such as:

- what future housing will look like;
- where it will be;
- which green spaces need protecting;
- what the future needs of the village are;
- which historic buildings need protecting;

Please give us your thoughts and ideas on the day or via email @

hermitagendp@gmail.com

SATURDAY 25th JUNE at HERMITAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Doors open between 10.00am and 4.00pm

Appendix F June 2022 event – collated feedback

Feedback from 35 Attendees

Overall

Excellent work with Neighbourhood Plan. Thank you for the hard work you are doing.

Good stuff in the draft design code. Look forward to seeing it in Public Consultation of NDP - AWB

Draft NDP document

Para 6.6 – wording here could be strengthened to encourage all development to achieve a minimum 10% net gain and to encourage more than 10%

Could measures to protect, create and enhance priority habitat and habitats for protected and notable species be encouraged in the Plan?

Green Spaces – 19 comments

- Greater protection of trees and hedgerows
- All green spaces are important for reasons listed and for biodiversity. If managed properly also good for health
- Love this – green space should be left
- Green spaces very important! Please keep for villagers to enjoy
- Green areas to be protected. Love this green space too
- All the green spaces are very important. Although we have woods around open areas essential for us too
- Green spaces and recreation areas to be protected
- Protect the green spaces
- Please keep all the green spaces; they are needed in Hermitage

Trees *(backdrop)* visible from Hampstead Norreys Road keep the rural view /feel
Fences – A few properties seem to be 'fencing' - not in keeping with open space gardens – creates encroachment.

Recreation ground is a wonderful community space and ever more important when it comes to staying healthy

Green spaces and **HER4**: Pond and scrub area in rear of Old Farmhouse on Newbury Road, rear of Lipscombe Clos needs to be preserved along its margins. It hosts moorhens and Great Crested Newts and should be protected from the impending development on 'Bakers Field' – RW Bird

Pinewood Playground – we love our park!
Please do protect our parks especially **Pinewood**. Children love coming here after school and weekends to play

Pinewood Crescent

- This is an eyesore.
- Agreed
- Native trees sound good
- There is a great opportunity to enhance biodiversity in this area through native tree/shrub planting. Conifers are low value to native wildlife!

Getting around – 11 responses (2 comments, 9 questionnaire respondents)

- Could road between Slanting Hill and Marlston Road, past Grimsbury Castle, very peaceful, used by walkers & cyclists & occasional horse riders be made into a "Quiet Lane"? Short cut for Brockhurst parents!
- As above, Wellhouse Lane could be a "Quiet Lane"
- Would be good to have cycle path from Eling Way to the Bothampstead Road. Presently have to go along B4009 from Hermitage
- Love the walk from Hermitage to Hampstead Norreys but worried if you make a walk to Newbury or Shaw it will create too much traffic and make Hermitage too busy
- Any options to create similar paths should be explored. Safe green routes would prove to be an asset. If (bus) services ran later in the evening I would be less inclined *to drive my car?* to/from Newbury
- Cycle route to Curridge & Newbury would be great. Cycling up the B4009 in the village is dangerous because of cars parking at the village shop and also cars turning into Co-op. Need a safer option
- I support proposal for footpath/cycle way from Hermitage to Shaw
- We love the new path – more of these please – to Newbury? – to Yattendon? – walking + cycling + buggy friendly
- With all the traffic on the roads we need to explore other options ie walking, running, cycling, to other local areas for these reasons: Lower traffic rate; Health & fitness; CO2 emissions
- I fully support a cycle route to Newbury first - then to Compton secondly. I would like to see much better paths through the woods

Responses to Questions on leaflet:

- **Do we need more routes like this?**
  - Yes x 3

- **Where should they go?**
  - Other villages
  - in all directions to connect to Newbury and neighbouring villages

- **Would you walk/cycle more if new off-road paths were created?**
  - Yes x 3

- **Do you know where all accessible footpaths are?**
  - No, a map/online site would be fab
  - Yes x2

- **Are bus services adequate?**
  - Can't use them – timings/children
  - No x 2

- **Do we need more cycle racks?**
  - Yes x2
  - Do we have any at all?

Development & Design - 17 comments

Development

- Limit infill development; no new houses in old gardens
- Don't build on field near M4 – who would want to leave near such noise/fumes?
- **Forest Edge** – Way too cramped!! Unreasonable planning based on Utopian vision of a society with fewer cars – daft
- **HER4**
  - The developments behind the White Horse and Hermitage Farm are not well connected and HER4 will be another application considered separately. The whole area should have been considered as one. Biodiversity in particular has not been considered well between all sites. The NDP should consider measures to prevent this piecemeal development in future.
  - If developed for housing, concerned re impact of access via B4009 +/or Marlston Road. Suggest alternative use – allotments; recreation area – tennis courts, football pitch etc etc

Design

- I think they should allow for more bungalows to be built in village for older people who want to move to 1 level property. This will save *folk?* having to go into homes.
- No flats to be built in village – will spoil the whole lookof village and take away character
- Any new buildings please build in character with village
- If we have to accept more buildings please build bungalows

- No buildings more than 2 storeys high. No flats to be built in village otherwise it will become like a town.
- Please do not change the character of Hermitage. We must keep villages different from towns.
- No street lighting on High Street
- Noise pollution from M4 throughout Hermitage is very high. A sound reduction type fence along M4 that borders village would make a difference to all.
- Good insulation for new houses
- New buildings to give due regard to car use, parking and emergency vehicle access. Sufficient parking to allow for two vehicles per property
- High boundary wood fence – Deacons Lane – allowed? If all hedges replaced like that it would be awful
- Has consideration been given to increased school places + availability at Doctor's surgery with all the proposed new homes? Any chance of a doctor's surgery in Hermitage? What will happen when Downland Practice reaches capacity? Needs for good infrastructure!!!

Heritage – 9 comments

- Please protect – adds character to the village and of historical interest
- Once lost can never be replaced. Please keep as many as possible
- If these properties were to disappear so would village status in the future. Please protect
- Protect them all
- Keep external, front facing faces but allow for internal reconfiguration and extensions not visible to public or changing the look
- Aim to preserve existing properties as far as possible, with due regard to safety etc
- Please protect but allow sympathetic extensions or enhancements
- Protect always!
- Could you suggest an annual tour of Hermitage Historic sights to drum up support and show value to the community? Or links via the School too?

Email Feedback

Housing & Design:

Architects should sign a declaration that housing they have designed is fit for human consumption so as then to be responsible for inevitable consequences of dire design on the social health and welfare of it's inhabitants.

APALLING lack of car spaces and spacing balance and allocation ratio of greenery to car; both can be attained with superior house design - chimney pot scheme Salford*; carports raised allow freed up roads for guests both in flats and terrace design.

SPEED LIMITS TO 10MPH in a built up area.

The effect of insensitive builds; built up areas overwhelmingly decide best optionis to build high rise flats as opposed to well designed terraced. These flats create a feeling of overwhelm and a vacuum; only far wider expanses of road and space warrants such height.

Essential atrium of play outside houses without a road/danger aspect - ie. Not like whoever designed station road hermitage estate - fantastic idea to have play for young children around an encircled large square of houses... but NOT great how they put a road right round the play area.

A community hub in the parish hall building.

Green Spaces:

Community allotment; and enough car spaces so there's no arguing that green space is dog area or potential offroad car parking. A lot of people don't have a car or petrol makes driving expensive and we need more soil enriched to grow things.

Large football field area surround and play areas to have allotment areas. Stipulation that if housing has to have 20% social housing 10% has to be area to grow food.

More fenced in accessible areas to nature more green space access close within living area; the pinewood forest edge play area too remote or rather..too big and it's where our children growing up could say they were going to play and where the druggies would be...out of sight of parents. A lot more little green areas to grow wildflowers orchards etcetera.

Future needs of the village

- Community hub
- High street bookshop/hairdresser
- A reliable busy bus service

Heritage:

- If there are any they should be highlighted.
- Pinewood crescent should have a plaque saying the bricks made at the old cementation site on which the estate is built on built a lot of Newbury.

Movement:

Make the old train station route to thatcham a more cleared out walking route.

We moved to Hermitage in 1986 and have always loved it. It was so different then, I fact it was delightful. Now with all the big houses it seems to be out of most people’s grasp. It would be better if some attempt was to keep it as a village but that is fast disappearing. Does there have to be any more building ? There was a time when

neighbours were always there to help if needed and they did during Covid but that is disappearing too. . Please bring back the old Hermitage !!

Appendix G Pathfinder articles – examples

February 2021

Dear Pathfinder readers,

Happy New Year! I know by the time you read this, it will be February (already!), but this is the first update I have written in 2021, so Happy New Year to you all. I saw a number of birthday cards describing 2020 as "the year our Bins went out more than we did" – I hope 2021 proves to be different….

Since my last letter a number of exciting things have happened. Hermitage NDP has been awarded a grant by the Locality trust – allowing us to move forward with the next few things on our plan. The biggest is to enable us to commission a Housing Needs Study for Hermitage. Through 2020 you were very generous with your feedback and two topics stood out:

- Traffic – too much, too fast through our village with huge concerns for the safety of motorists, cyclists and pedestrians
- Housing – "we have enough" seems to be the consistent theme

West Berkshire recently published it's draft Planning Review for 2026 to 2037. If you are interested in the document itself, a link to it is available on our Web Page on hermitage.org.uk : Just select the "Neighbourhood Development Plan" drop down option, then "New Houses for Hermitage" menu option. Very brief summary: Hermitage will likely see an additional 20 homes being built.

While further development of Hermitage may be inevitable, we in the NDP Steering Group believe the right way to determine whether this is really needed, is to ask a completely independent consultant to undertake a Housing Needs Study on our behalf. The Study will poll all villagers with a survey to complete. From your responses to that, the consultants will advise whether Hermitage needs further homes and, if so, what type, amount etc. The point is – future development would be based on need for our Village (and hence benefit us), rather than just be what a developer decides they wish to build. We hope the survey will be launched mid February 2021. Please, please complete and return it when it drops through your door – this is probably the single most important thing we will organise this year.

As we walk into 2021, the rollout of vaccinations brings a hope for a year that is not completely dominated by COVID. I have to say a second Lockdown is hardly what I would wish for, but the drop in traffic volume and the peace and quiet that brings continues to be quite a pleasant benefit……

Stay safe and well all you lovely people, but don't forget to get out and enjoy the gorgeous countryside that immediately surrounds our wonderful Village.

Andy Bunyan
Chairman, Hermitage NDP Steering Committee

November 2021

Build Back Better? - 100 more houses to be built in Hermitage

Hermitage NDP

Despite being in the South Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Hermitage could be in for almost 100 more houses* in the next few years.

An AONB is a nationally protected green space but our green space at the south of the village - a vast meadow, home to wildlife and feeding ground for deer could be lost forever, buried in bricks and mortar.

The Government tells us we need more houses. Our own housing survey of residents, carried out in February, agrees - Hermitage needs more housing for young and growing families as well as for older residents to downsize to.

We can't stop development but we can influence what developers plan to build, how it will look and what benefits it will bring to the village. Creating a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for our village is the only way for the people of Hermitage to have their say on the village of the future, what it will be for our children and grandchildren.

We are determined to continue with the struggle to keep Hermitage a healthy and harmonious place to call home. We've been working throughout the pandemic, gathering evidence to create an NDP that reflects what residents have told us they want. It's a big task but we're now getting support from professionals and aim to have a draft plan ready next Spring which everyone will be able to comment on.

We don't have the skills to do wizzy stuff but we do have a space on Hermitage Village website (https://hermitage.org.uk/neighbourhood-development-plan/) where you can find out more. You can also contact us by email on mailto:Hermitagendp@gmail.com

We'll keep you posted through the website, Facebook, The Pathfinder and village notice boards.

*Land east of Station Road (extending towards Lipscombe Close and south towards the old railway line) identified as HER004 in West Berkshire's Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) published December 2020 – potential for up to 60 units (https://info.westberks.gov.uk/helaa Click on Appendix 4, Excel tab "Stage 2a", scroll down to line 136)

*Land and buildings at The Old Farmhouse, Newbury Road (ref 21/00783/COND3) – 21 units approved 26 May 2021

*Land at rear of Charlotte Close (ref 20/00912/FULEXT) – 16 units approved 8 October 2021

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Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan

2022-2039

Basic Conditions Statement

February 2023

info@navigusplanning.co.uk
www.navigusplanning.co.uk

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Basic Conditions Statement has been produced to accompany the Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan (HNDP).

1.2 The relevant legal framework for the preparation and making of neighbourhood plans is supported by the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 and found in the:

- Town and Country Planning Act 1990: ss. 61F, 61I, 61M-P and Schedule 4B
- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004: ss 38A-C
- Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (2012 No.637) (as amended)

1.3 Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 requires a neighbourhood plan to meet five[1] basic conditions before it can proceed to a referendum. These are:

1. Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan;

4. The making of the neighbourhood development plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;

5. The making of the neighbourhood development plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);

6. The making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations; and

7. Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the neighbourhood plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the neighbourhood plan. The prescribed condition is that the 'making' of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) or a European offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 2007) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).

1.4 This document sets out how the Plan meets the Basic Conditions.

Key statements

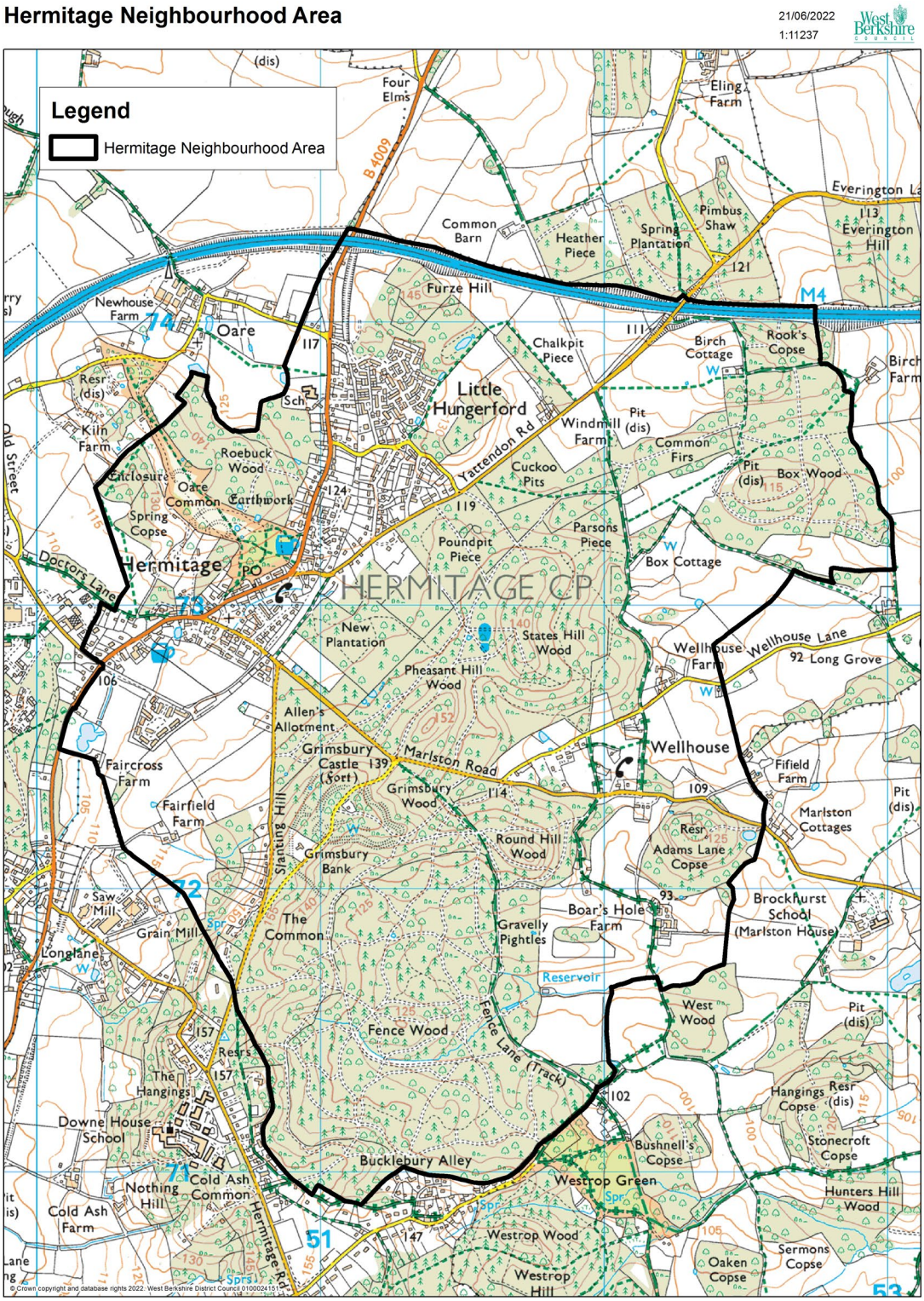
1.5 West Berkshire Council (WBC), as the local planning authority, designated the Hermitage Neighbourhood Area in April 2019. This enabled the HNDP Steering Group to prepare the Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan.

1.6 The HNDP sets out policies that relate to the development and use of land within only the Hermitage Neighbourhood Area. This area is shown in Figure 1.

[1] There are two further basic conditions (2 and 3), which are relevant only to the making of a Neighbourhood Development Order and are therefore not considered in this document.

Figure 1:

Hermitage Neighbourhood Area



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Supporting documents and evidence

1.7 The HNDP is supported by a Consultation Statement, a Strategic Environment Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report, this Basic Conditions Statement and an extensive evidence base.

2. Basic Condition (i) – Conformity with National Planning Policy

2.1 To meet this condition, the Plan must be shown to have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State. National policy and guidance is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') and the Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG').

National Planning Policy Framework

2.2 The NPPF has 13 key objectives which are:

1. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
2. Building a strong, competitive economy
3. Ensuring the vitality of town centres
4. Promoting healthy and safe communities
5. Promoting sustainable transport
6. Supporting high quality communications
7. Making effective use of land
8. Achieving well-designed places
9. Protecting Green Belt land
10. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
11. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
13. Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals

2.3 This statement explains how the Plan contributes to meeting these objectives. It also explains how the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan intend to meet, support and supplement specific national policies.

2.4 The Plan has eight objectives (A-H). These are summarised in Table 2.1 alongside the NPPF goals that each objective seeks to address.

Table 2.1: Assessment of the HNDP objectives against NPPF goals

Objective	Relevant NPPF goal
1. Ensure that new housing addresses the needs of Hermitage community	• Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Objective	Relevant NPPF goal
2. Ensure that new development reflects the rural character of Hermitage parish	• Achieving well-designed places • Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
3. Ensure that new development minimises its environmental impact	• Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
4. Preserve the views from Hermitage village which help to make it special	• Achieving well-designed places • Promoting healthy and safe communities
5. Preserve and enhance Hermitage's heritage	• Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
6. Improve access to the countryside for walkers, cyclists and horse riders	• Promoting sustainable transport • Conserving and enhancing the natural environment • Achieving well-designed places • Promoting healthy and safe communities
7. Conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity	• Conserving and enhancing the natural environment • Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
8. Protect green spaces of value in and around Hermitage village	• Promoting healthy and safe communities • Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

2.5 Table 2.2 sets out each policy of the HNDP alongside the policies in the NPPF that is has had regard to and analyses how each Plan policy contributes to achieving the key objectives of the NPPF.

Table 2.2: Assessment of how each policy in the HNDP conforms to the NPPF

Policy Title and Reference	NPPF Reference (paragraph)	Commentary
HER1: Addressing Hermitage's housing needs	60, 62, 65	This policy contributes to the NPPF requirement of delivering a sufficient supply of homes. The supporting text identifies the specific types and sizes of housing that are required to meet the housing needs of the local community and the policy directs development to meet this mix.
HER2: Design	126, 127, 130	This policy contributes to the NPPF requirement of achieving well-designed places. It direct development to respect the local character in the Design Codes Report and to be informed by other relevant guidance, e.g. on density.
HER3: Countryside views between properties	130, 174, 176	This policy contributes to the NPPF requirements of achieving well designed places and promoting healthy communities. It establishes the importance of preserving the setting of the AONB and seeks to ensure that views out to the AONB are preserved.
HER4: Low energy and energy efficient design, including Sustainable Drainage Systems	152, 153, 154	The policy supports the national objective of designing development to minimise its negative impact on climate change. In particular it seeks to encourage a series of environmentally sustainable design features aimed at minimising energy consumption. It also seeks to ensure that SuDS are provided creatively.
HER5: Wildlife-friendly development	161, 169, 174, 179, 185	This policy contributes to the NPPF objectives of meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change and conserving and enhancing the natural environment. The policy seeks to ensure that biodiversity is maximised and that development does not have an unacceptable impact on the dark skies of the AONB.
HER6: Irreplaceable habitats and local wildlife-rich habitats and species	179, 180	This policy contributes to the NPPF objective of conserving and enhancing the natural environment. It identifies irreplaceable habitats and directs that development should not result in their loss or deterioration.
HER7: Local Green Spaces	101, 102, 103	National policy enables local communities to identify, for special protection, green areas of importance to them known as Local Green Spaces. This policy designates 6 areas, identified by the local community as important, as Local Green Spaces which will be protected.
HER8: Non-designated heritage assets	190	A key objective of the NPPF is to conserve and enhance the historic environment. This policy seeks to conserve and enhance heritage assets of local importance in Hermitage.
HER9: Access for walking, cycling and horse riding	104, 106	This policy contributes to the NPPF objective of promoting sustainable transport. It seeks to protect and enhance the public rights of way network for all users, with specific focus on expanding the Eling Way through the parish.

3. Basic Condition (iv) – Contribution to Sustainable Development

3.1 The NPPF states in paragraph 10 that a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF.

3.2 For the Plan, sustainable development has been the fundamental basis of each of its policies. The National Planning Practice Guidance advises that 'sufficient and proportionate evidence should be presented on how the draft neighbourhood plan … guides development to sustainable solutions'. The evidence base presented alongside the Plan, coupled with the reasoned justification for each policy in the Plan, demonstrates how the Plan guides development towards sustainable solutions.

3.3 Table 3.1 summarises how the objectives and policies in the HNDP contribute towards sustainable development, as defined in the NPPF. Many of the objectives of the HNDP overlap the three strands of sustainability, so for the purposes of this document, the most relevant strand has been taken to illustrate conformity.

Table 3.1: Assessment of HNDP objectives and policies against sustainable development

Deliver economic sustainability	
NPPF definition – 'Contribute to building a strong, responsive economy'	
HNDP Objectives	1. Ensure that new housing addresses the needs of Hermitage community
HNDP Policies	HER1: Addressing Hermitage's housing needs
Commentary	Addressing the residential needs of the community is key to the HNDP, including ensuring a suitable housing mix and that supply meets demand through, for example, the increased provision of smaller homes (Policy HER1).
Deliver social sustainability	
NPPF definition: 'Supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities' and 'support its health, social and cultural well-being'	
HNDP Objectives	2. Ensure that new development reflects the rural character of Hermitage parish 4. Preserve the views from Hermitage village which help to make it special 5. Preserve and enhance Hermitage's heritage 6. Improve access to the countryside for walkers, cyclists and horse riders 8. Protect green spaces of value in and around Hermitage village
HNDP Policies	HER2: Design HER3: Countryside views between properties HER7: Local Green Spaces HER8: Non-designated heritage assets HER9: Access for walking, cycling and horse riding
Commentary	High quality development is important to the community of Hermitage, both in terms of what development looks like and how it is laid out. Policy HER2 identifies the character of the area and the design principles that will maintain this. This is complemented by Policy HER2 which establishes the importance of space between buildings to maintain views of the countryside. Within the settlement of Hermitage, Policy HER7 protects green spaces of value to the community. Hermitage has a rich heritage which is part of what makes it so special to its community. Policy HER8 seeks to protect heritage assets of local importance. Similarly, the high quality countryside is an important feature of life in Hermitage and Policy HER9 seeks to protect and enhance that for all types of user.

Deliver environmental sustainability	
NPPF definition: 'Contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment'	
HNDP Objectives	3. Ensure that new development minimises its environmental impact 7. Conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity 8. Protect green spaces of value in and around Hermitage village
HNDP Policies	HER4: Low energy and energy efficient design, including Sustainable Drainage Systems HER5: Wildlife-friendly development HER6: Irreplaceable habitats and local wildlife-rich habitats and species HER7: Local Green Spaces
Commentary	Enhancing the green infrastructure in the area is important to integrate physical resources and natural systems with West Berkshire's ecological, geological and historical assets. This ensures high environmental quality and ensures aesthetic, ecological and recreational benefits. Policies HER5 and HER6 seek to protect and enhance this. Within settlements there are important green spaces that are protected by Policy HER7, some of which are special because of their wildlife and biodiversity value. Where development is proposed, it is important that it minimises its impact on climate and the environment. Policy HER4 addresses this by encouraging development to be designed to maximise the potential to harness renewable technologies and minimise its impact on the environment.

4. Basic Condition (v) – General Conformity with the Strategic Policies of the Development Plan

4.1 The development plan currently consists of:

- **The West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026)** – adopted July 2012.
- **The West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document** – adopted May 2017.
- **The West Berkshire Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies)** – policies were saved in 2007 and then amended in July 2012 and May 2017.
- **The West Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan** – adopted December 2022.

4.2 Table 4.1 details the HNDP policies alongside a consideration of how they are in general conformity with each strategic policy in the development plan. Where a policy is not identified in Table 4.1, it is considered that the HNDP does not contain any policies that directly relate to it.

4.3 It is confirmed that there are no policies in the West Berkshire Local Plan 1991-2006 (saved policies) or the West Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan that the Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan policies have any relevance to.

Table 4.1: Assessment of conformity with policies in the development plan

Local Plan Policy	Hermitage NP policy
West Berkshire Core Strategy 2012	
Area Delivery Plan Policy 5	Area Delivery Plan Policy 5 covers the North Wessex Downs AONB. It identifies Hermitage as a service village that will continue to provide a range of services to its community, with a limited level of development to meet local needs including housing and community facilities. Policy HER1 seeks to ensure that a mix of housing is delivered which addresses local needs and Policy HER7 protects a number of green spaces that play an important role as community spaces. Area Delivery Plan Policy 5 also requires development to conserve and enhance local distinctiveness and preserve the dark night skies. Policy HER2 provides design guidance to ensure that development reflects the character of Hermitage. Policy HER5 provides specific direction for lighting provision in respect of preserving bat habitats. Area Delivery Plan Policy 5 encourages opportunities to improve accessibility to and within the AONB. Policy HER9 identifies the Eling Way as a specific route where improvements can be made for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and those with disabilities.
CS4: Housing Type and Mix	Policy CS4 requires development to deliver a mix of housing types and sizes to meet the housing needs of all sectors of the community, as evidenced in Housing Market Assessments and other evidence. Policy HER1 specifies that new development must reflect the housing mix in the West Berkshire Housing Needs Assessment 2022 or any successor document.
CS13: Transport	Policy CS13 requires development to improve and promote opportunities for healthy and safe travel and improve sustainable travel. Policy HER9 identifies public rights of way as a key part of sustainable travel and specifically the expansion of the Eling Way as a vital opportunity to improve sustainable travel.
CS14: Design Principles	Policy CS14 requires new development to demonstrate high quality and sustainable design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area. Policy HER2 requires development to reflect the Hermitage Design Guidelines and Codes document which addresses character and design in the Hermitage context. Policy HER4 identifies specific ways that sustainable design can be achieved.
CS15: Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency	Policy CS15 establishes the levels of energy efficiency that development must achieve. Policy HER4 identifies specific ways that the design of new development can achieve this.
CS17: Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Policy CS17 requires biodiversity and geodiversity assets to be conserved and enhanced. Policy HER5 identifies way that development can be wildlife-friendly. Policy HER6 identifies the habitats specific to Hermitage that should be conserved.
CS18: Green infrastructure	Policy CS18 seeks to protect against the loss of green infrastructure that is enjoyed by the public. Policy HER7 protects a number of local green spaces that are special to the local community.
CS19: Historic Environment and Landscape Character	Policy CS19 seeks to ensure that the local distinctiveness of the landscape character of the district is conserved and enhanced. Policy HER3 seeks to preserve views of the countryside from Hermitage village. Policy CS19 also requires development to be informed by the potential for heritage assets identified through

Local Plan Policy	Hermitage NP policy
	the Historic Environment Record. Policy HER8 identifies specific non-designated heritage assets that are of local significance.
West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations DPD 2017	
P1: Residential parking for new development	Policy P1 requires the layout and design of parking spaces should follow Building for Life and Manual for Streets guidance. Policy CC2 takes this guidance on board and through the Design Codes Report, provides guidance on the appropriate design of parking spaces in the Hermitage context.

5. Basic Condition (vi) – Conformity with EU Obligations

5.1 The Plan and the process under which it was made conforms to the SEA Directive (EU 2001/42/EC) and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations). In October 2022, a draft screening report was prepared by West Berkshire Council. This was consulted on with the statutory bodies (the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England) to assist in the determination of whether or not the Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan would have significant environmental effects in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

5.2 Following this consultation, the Screening Report concluded that the Plan was unlikely to have any significant environmental effects. In November 2022 the final version of the screening report was published.

5.3 The Screening Report has been submitted at Regulation 16 stage as part of the evidence base for the Plan.

5.4 In addition to conforming to its EU obligations, the Plan does not breach and is not otherwise incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights.

6. Basic Condition (vii) – Conformity with the Prescribed Conditions

6.1 Under Directive 92/43/EEC, also known as the Habitats Directive[2], it must be ascertained whether the draft Plan is likely to have significant effects on a European site designated for its nature conservation interest. The Directive is implemented by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Assessments under the regulations are known as Habitats Regulation Assessments (HRA). An Appropriate Assessment is required only if the Plan is likely to have significant effects on a European protected species or site. To ascertain whether or not it is necessary to undertake an assessment, a screening process is followed.

6.2 An HRA Screening was undertaken by West Berkshire Council in October 2022. This was consulted on with Natural England. West Berkshire Council was of the opinion that significant effects were unlikely to occur with regards to the integrity of the European sites within and around West Berkshire Council, due to the implementation of the HNDP. Natural England agreed with this opinion and the final screening was published in November 2022.

6.3 The Screening Report has been submitted at Regulation 16 stage as part of the evidence base for the Plan.

[2] Directive 92/43/EEC 'on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora': http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:31992L0043.

7. Conclusion

7.1 The relevant Basic Conditions as set out in Schedule 4B to the TCPA 1990 are considered to be met by the Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan and all the policies therein. It is therefore respectfully suggested to the Examiner that the Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan complies with Paragraph 8(1)(a) of Schedule 4B of the Act.



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Legal Compliance Check – Submission of Neighbourhood Plan

Neighbourhood Plan	Hermitage
The Qualifying Body	Hermitage Parish Council
Date Submitted	17 February 2023
Date of Assessment	14 July 2023

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	**West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments**	**Legally compliant?**
Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) – Regulation 15 requirements: *A qualifying body is required to submit:* *(a) A map or statement which identifies the area to which the proposed neighbourhood development plan relates*	A map identifying the neighbourhood plan area can be found in the Submission Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan (NP) – see Figure 1.1 in Chapter 1 Introduction (page 3).	Yes
(b) A consultation statement; (the statement must contain details of (a) those consulted, (b) how they were consulted, (c) summarises the main issues and concerns raised and (d) how these have been considered, and where relevant addressed in the proposed Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 15 (2) Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012).	(a) A Consultation Statement accompanies the Submission Hermitage NP. Chapter 3 of the Consultation Statement includes details of statutory and local consultees consulted. These include: • Local Planning Authorities which adjoin West Berkshire • Parish and Town Councils within and adjoining West Berkshire • Local organisations, eg. Primary School, Hermitage Village Hall users, Holy trinity Church. • Local landowners • Local businesses, eg. pubs, Hermitage Post Office and Store, Downland Surgery. • Environment Agency	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
	• Historic England • Mid and West Berks Local Access Forum • Mobile UK • National Grid • National Highways • Natural England • NHS England South East • NHS Newbury and District Clinical Commissioning Group • North Wessex Downs AONB • Police and Crime Commissioner • Scottish and Southern Electricity • Sport England • Thames Water • The National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups • West Berkshire Heritage Forum The Consultation Statement also indicates that a flyer was delivered to all households within Hermitage Parish. (b) The way in which interested parties were consulted is set out within paragraphs 3.1 to 3.4 of the Consultation Statement. This explains that statutory consultees and other parties were sent email notifications. Flyers were delivered to every household in the Parish, posters were displayed throughout the village, and announcements were made on the Hermitage Village Facebook and in the Pathfinder magazine. Paper copies were made available at three locations within Hermitage, whilst the plan was also made available to view online.	

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
	(c) A summary of the main issues and concerns raised as a result of the pre-submission consultation are contained within Appendix B of the Consultation Statement. (d) The pre-submission consultation representations can be found within Appendix B. This appendix also details the response to each representation received and how they have been considered in the Submission Hermitage NP.	
(c) The proposed neighbourhood development plan;	The Local Planning Authority received the Submission Hermitage NP on 17 February 2023. It was accompanied by: <u>Core documents:</u> • Consultation Statement • Basic Conditions Statement • Hermitage Strategic Environmental Assessment / Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report – Consultation Version (October 2022) • Hermitage Strategic Environmental Assessment / Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report – Post Consultation Version (November 2022) • Hermitage Strategic Environmental Assessment / Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Decision (November 2022) <u>Evidence documents:</u> • AECOM (2022) Hermitage Design Guidelines and Codes, for Hermitage Parish Council • Arc4 (2021) Hermitage Housing Needs Survey, for Hermitage Parish Council • Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing, Second Edition	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
	• David Lock Associates (2019) West Berkshire Density Pattern Book, for West Berkshire District Council • DEFRA (2015) Non-statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems • GL Hearn (2016) Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment, for West Berkshire Council • Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan Group (2023) Hermitage Green Spaces Audit • Hermitage Parish Council (2014) Hermitage Footpaths, Bridleways and Byways • Iceni (2022) West Berkshire Housing Needs Assessment Update, for West Berkshire District Council • Institute of Lighting Professionals (2021) Guidance Note 1 for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light, GN01/21 • NHBC (2021) Biodiversity in new housing developments: creating wildlife-friendly communities, NF89 • West Berkshire Council (2018) Sustainable Drainage Systems Supplementary Planning Document • Wildlife Trusts (2018) Homes for people and wildlife	
(d) A statement explaining how the proposed neighbourhood development plan meets the 'basic conditions', i.e. the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act. The local planning authority has to be satisfied that a basic conditions statement has been submitted but it is not required at this stage to consider whether the draft plan or order meets the basic conditions. (PPG - Paragraph: 053 Reference ID: 41-053- 20140306)	A Basic Conditions Statement accompanies the Submission Hermitage NP. This considers each Basic Condition in turn and explains how the policies in the plan meets these.	Yes
(e) Environmental Assessment; The Plan needs to be submitted with one of the following:	Hermitage Parish Council requested a HRA screening opinion on 23 September 2023, and provided a draft version of the NDP. This included all the necessary information that WBDC required	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
(i) a statement of reasons for a determination under regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 that the proposal is unlikely to have significant environmental effects OR (ii) an environmental report in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 ((Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.) If an Environmental Report is required, then this needs to have been subject to the required level of consultation and should comply with the government's SEA guidance. In terms of consultation, the 'consultation bodies' (Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England) must have been consulted at scoping stage (for 5 weeks). There is no requirement for public consultation on the scoping report. The draft Environmental Report on the pre-submission neighbourhood plan will need to be subject to public consultation for 6 weeks. The draft Environmental Report must be made available at the same time as the draft plan, as an integral part of the consultation process, and the relationship between the two documents clearly indicated. (See A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive, ODPM – 2005)	for the purposes of conducting an HRA screening assessment. The final determination was issued on 29 November 2022 following a 5-week consultation with the three statutory bodies in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The screening concluded that the NDP will not give rise to significant effects on Habitats Sites either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. The screening report was submitted alongside the NP.	
The draft neighbourhood Plan should be checked to ensure it is not a 'repeat' proposal. If so, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) can decline to consider the plan (1990 Act Schedule 4B Paragraph 5 and Regulation 18).	The Submission Hermitage NP is not a repeat proposal.	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
The body submitting the neighbourhood plan is authorised to act (2004 P & CP Act as amended by Localism Act 2011 Section 38 A (2) and 1990 Act schedule 4B as it applies- 61F (2)).	The qualifying body is Hermitage Parish Council. The neighbourhood area was designated on 26 April 2019. Hermitage Parish Council, as the qualifying body, have formally (at a Parish Council meeting on 16 February 2023) resolved to submit the NP to WBDC. The Plan was produced by the Hermitage NP Steering Group, a group of volunteers, having been commissioned to do so by the Parish Council.	Yes
The pre-submission publication requirements need to have been satisfied. Before submission to the LPA the qualifying body should: 1. Publicise (but this does not have to be on a web site) in a way that is likely to bring to the attention of people who live work or carry on business in the area details of: (a) the proposals (b) when and where they can be inspected (c) how to make representations, and (d) the deadline for making representations – not less than 6 weeks from first publicised. 2. Consult any consultation body whose interests they consider may be affected by the proposals for a NP (please see Appendix A below). 3. Send a copy of the NP to the LPA. (Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.	The Consultation Statement demonstrates that these requirements have been satisfied: 1. The Regulation 14 consultation version of the plan has complied with the regulations, and this is evidenced by the Consultation Statement which accompanies the Submission Hermitage NP. It shows in Chapter 3 that the Regulation 14 consultation was publicised by a variety of means including a leaflet drop to all households, on the Hermitage Village Facebook page, in a local magazine, and posters were displayed around the village. The plan was available to view online at https://hermitage.org.uk/NDP14. The publicity material also explained how representations could be made and the address and website to be used. The consultation lasted for 6 weeks and ran from 24 October 2022 to 5 December 2022. 2. The Consultation Statement includes a list of Statutory Consultees and non-statutory consultees who were consulted as part of the Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation. This is included in Chapter 3 of the Consultation Statement.	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
	3. The NP Steering Group emailed WBDC on 9 October 2022 and the NP was included as an attachment. A notification letter was also attached and this included a link to the consultation documents on the Hermitage Parish Council website.	
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 Regulations 105 and 106: *A qualifying body which submits a proposal for a neighbourhood development plan must provide such information as the competent authority may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment under regulation 105 or to enable them to determine whether that assessment is required*	On 29 November 2022, WBDC issued its screening opinion concerning the need for a HRA in relation to the Hermitage NP. The screening process undertaken concluded that a HRA was not required. The three 'consultation bodies' were consulted on the screening opinion, and responses were received from Historic England and Natural England who both agreed that a HRA was not required. No response was received from the Environment Agency.	Yes
Meets the definition of a 'neighbourhood development plan': *"A plan which sets out policies (however expressed) in relation to the development and use and of land in the whole or any part of a particular neighbourhood area specified in the plan"* (2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act as amended by Localism Act 2011 Section 38 A (2))	The Submission Hermitage NP meets the definition of a 'neighbourhood development plan'.	Yes
Meets the scope of neighbourhood plan provisions, ie. specifies the period for which it covers, does not include provision about development that is 'excluded development' (as set out in section 61K of the 1990 Act) and does not relate to more than one neighbourhood area. (2004 Act s 38B (1, 2) (4))	The Submission Hermitage NP specifies that it covers the period 2022 to 2039. The Submission Hermitage NP does not contain policies relating to 'excluded development'. It does not relate to more than the neighbourhood area.	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
Meaning of 'excluded development': The following development is excluded development for the purposes of section 61J— (a) development that consists of a county matter within paragraph 1(1)(a) to (h) of Schedule 1, (b) development that consists of the carrying out of any operation, or class of operation, prescribed under paragraph 1(j) of that Schedule (waste development) but that does not consist of development of a prescribed description, (c) development that falls within Annex 1 to Council Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (as amended from time to time), (d) development that consists (whether wholly or partly) of a nationally significant infrastructure project (within the meaning of the Planning Act 2008), (e) prescribed development or development of a prescribed description; and (f) development in a prescribed area or an area of a prescribed description.		

Conclusion: West Berkshire District Council confirms that the Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan meets the legislative requirements.

Where the draft neighbourhood plan submitted to a Local Planning Authority meets the requirements in the legislation, the Local Planning Authority must publicise the neighbourhood plan for a minimum of 6 weeks, invite comments, notify any consultation body referred to in the consultation statement and send the draft neighbourhood plan to independent examination (see regulations 16, 17, 23 and 24 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), Planning Practice Guidance - Paragraph: 054 Reference ID: 41-054-20140306).

Following examination, the Council will determine whether or not the plan is ready for a public referendum or if further modifications are required (Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as varied by s38A & 38C of the Town and Country Planning Act)). Please note that all references to primary and secondary legislation are to those enactments as amended.

Appendix A – Consultation Bodies

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Schedule 1 Consultation bodies that the Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum should consult (at pre-submission stage):

- In a London Borough, the Mayor of London
- A Local Planning Authority, county council or parish council any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the Local Planning Authority
- The Coal Authority
- The Homes and Communities Agency (now known as Homes England)
- Natural England
- The Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
- National Highways
- The Marine Management Organisation
- Any person to whom the electronic communications code applies, or who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the area of the Local Planning Authority
- Where they exist a Primary Care Trust, licensee under the Electricity Act 1989, Licensee of the Gas Act 1986, sewerage undertaker and water undertaker
- Voluntary bodies whose activities benefit all or part of the neighbourhood area
- Bodies representing the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the neighbourhood area
- Bodies representing the interests of different religious groups in the neighbourhood area and
- Bodies representing the interests of disabled people in the neighbourhood area.

Summary of representations received by West Berkshire District Council on the Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) as part of the Regulation 16 consultation

Consultation dates: 21 July 2023 – 1 September 2023

Respondent	Policy / paragraph	Summary of comment
Canal and River Trust	General	Canal and River Trust have no waterways, assets or land interests within the Neighbourhood Area and therefore have no comment to make.
Historic England	General	Welcome the NDP and are pleased to see that the historic environment of the Parish features throughout Although the Neighbourhood Area does contain a number of designated heritage assets, at this point Historic England do not consider a need to be involved in the detailed development of the strategy for your area. However, advice and guidance is provided which may be of assistance: • Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment in line with paragraph 190 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It is important that as a minimum, the strategy for the area safeguards those elements of the Neighbourhood Area that contribute the significance of these assets. • Planning Practice Guidance is clear that, where relevant, NDPs need to include enough information about local heritage to guide local authority planning decisions and to put broader strategic heritage policies from the local authority's local plan into action but at a neighbourhood scale. The NDP is therefore an important opportunity for a community to develop a positive strategy for the area's locally important heritage assets that are not recognised at a national level through listing or scheduling. Historic England have produced an advice note on Local Listings. • NDP could also include consideration of any Grade II listed buildings or locally designated heritage assets which are at risk or in poor condition, and which could then be the focus of specific policies aimed at facilitating their enhancement. Historic England have published advice on how to write effective NDP policies. • Speak to staff at the local authority archaeological advisory service who can provide details of designated heritage assets and non-designated locally important buildings, archaeological remains, and landscape. Involvement of local voluntary groups may be useful. • The local authority may be able to provide general support in the preparation of the NDP. Ther eare also funding opportunities available form Locality that could enable the community to hire appropriate expertise. • The Conservation Area may have an appraisal document that would ordinarily set out what the character and appearance of the area is that should be preserved and enhanced. Historic England have produced am advice note on conservation area designation, appraisal, and management. • NPPF places emphasis on the importance of good design. NDPs policies should therefore ensure that developments in the area establish a strong sense of place, and respond to local character and history by reflecting the local identity of the place – for instance through the use of appropriate materials, and attractive design. • The NDP is an opportunity for the community to designate Local Green Spaces. Green spaces are often integral to the character of place for any given area, and your plan could include policies that identified any deficiencies with

Respondent	Policy / paragraph	Summary of comment
		existing green spaces or access to them or aimed at managing development around them. Locality has guidance on this. • The NDP process could be used to identify any potential Assets of Community Value. Often these can be important elements of the local historic environment, and whether or not they are protected in other ways, designating them as an ACV can offer an additional level of control to the community with regard to how they are conserved. • Communities with an adopted NDP are entitled to claim 25% of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Historic England strongly recommends that the community therefore identifies the ways in which CIL can be used to facilitate the conservation of the historic environment, heritage assets and their setting, and sets this out in the NDP. • If concerned about the impact of high traffic levels thorugh the area, the 'Traffic in Villages' toolkit developed by Hamilton- Baillie Associates in conjunction with Dorset AONB Partnership may be a useful resource.
Ian Develin	6.2.2, 9.2 and Table 9.1	Already clear what the existing use of the green space at Lipscomb Close is, and it has been used for this purpose for many years. Objection to the proposal for the green space in Lipscomb Close to have play equipment located on it. It will turn into a non-peaceful place for residents who live in close proximity, and this will impact upon quality of life. The intention to place play equipment on the green space in in contradiction to 6.22 and what the residents want the space to be used for. There are many wildlife species in the trees, which are also protected. Play equipment would have an adverse impact on the flora and fauna. Lipscomb Close is not suitable to park cars on as the road is curved and narrow. There are other more adequate play areas in the village – a play area is under development as part of the residential development (planning application ref: 20/00912/FULEXT) of land at Charlotte Close. The Section 106 agreement for this development states there is play area for children. There is a pedestrian walkway from Lipscombe Close to the Charlotte Close play area which is approximately 70 metres from the Lipscomb Close green space. There should be a balance and diversity of quiet and reflective spaces, and play spaces should not dominate.
National Highways	General	Following a review of the consultation documents, National Highways have no comments to make.
Sport England	General	No specific comments made on the NDP. General advice provided in respect of : • compliance with paragraphs 98 and 99 of the NPPF; • compliance with the health and well-being section of Planning Practice Guidance • evidence base and assessing needs;

Respondent	Policy / paragraph	Summary of comment
		• demand for sport as a result of new development; • Sport England's statutory consultee role in protecting playing fields and the presumption against the loss of playing field land; and • design.
Thames Water	General	A key sustainability objective for the preparation of Local Plans and NDPs should be for new development to be co-ordinated with the infrastructure it demands and to take into account the capacity of existing infrastructure. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and the NPPF have regard to the provision of infrastructure: • Paragraph 11: Plans should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development that aligns growth and infrastructure. • Paragraph 20: plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that should make sufficient provision to water supply and wastewater. • Paragraph 26: effective and on-going joint working between strategic policy-making authorities and relevant bodies is integral to the production of a positively prepared and justified strategy. In particular, joint working should help to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary. • Paragraph 28: non-strategic policies can include allocations for the provision of infrastructure. • PPG: Local Plans should be the focus for ensuring that investment plans of water and sewerage/wastewater companies align with development needs. The NDP should include a specific reference to the key issue of the provision of wastewater/sewerage and water supply infrastructure to service development proposed in a policy. This is necessary because it will not be possible to identify all of the water/sewerage infrastructure required over the plan period due to the way water companies are regulated and plan in 5 year periods (Asset Management Plans or AMPs). It is recommended that the NDP include the following text: Where appropriate, planning permission for developments which result in the need for off-site upgrades, will be subject to conditions to ensure the occupation is aligned with the delivery of necessary infrastructure upgrades." "The Local Planning Authority will seek to ensure that there is adequate water and wastewater infrastructure to serve all new developments. Developers are encouraged to contact the water/waste water company as early as possible to discuss their development proposals and intended delivery programme to assist with identifying any potential water and wastewater network reinforcement requirements. Where there is a capacity constraint the Local Planning Authority will,

Respondent	Policy / paragraph	Summary of comment
		where appropriate, apply phasing conditions to any approval to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of the relevant phase of development.
	HER4	PPG requires a sequential approach by local planning authorities in areas to be known to be at risk flooding, including flooding from sewars. Flood risk sustainability objectives and policies should also make reference to 'sewer flooding' and an acceptance that flooding can occur away from the flood plain as a result of development where off site sewerage infrastructure and capacity is not in place ahead of development. With regard to surface water drainage it is the responsibility of the developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, watercourses or surface water sewer. It is important to reduce the quantity of surface water entering the sewerage system in order to maximise the capacity for foul sewage to reduce the risk of sewer flooding. Limiting the opportunity for surface water entering the foul and combined sewer networks is of critical importance to Thames Water. Thames Water have advocated an approach to Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) that limits as far as possible the volume of and rate at which surface water enters the public sewer system. By doing this, SUDS have the potential to play an important role in helping to ensure the sewerage network has the capacity to cater for population growth and the effects of climate change. SuDS not only help to mitigate flooding, they can also help to: improve water quality; provide opportunities for water efficiency; provide enhanced landscape and visual features; support wildlife; and provide amenity and recreational benefits. With regard to surface water drainage, Thames Water request the following paragraph is added into the NDP: It is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for surface water drainage to ground, water courses or surface water sewer. It must not be allowed to drain to the foul sewer, as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding.
	General	The Environment Agency has designated the Thames Water region to be "seriously water stressed" which reflects the extent to which available water resources are used. Future pressures on water resources will continue to increase and key factors are population growth and climate change. Water conservation and climate change is a vitally important issue to the water industry. Not only is it expected to have an impact on the availability of raw water for treatment but also the demand from customers for potable (drinking) water. Therefore, Thames Water support the mains water consumption target of 110 litres per head per day as set out in the PPG (Paragraph: 014 Reference ID: 56-014-20150327) and support the inclusion of this requirement in the Policy. Understanding of Thames Water that the water efficiency standards of 105 litres per person per day is only applied through the building regulations where there is a planning condition requiring this standard (as set out at paragraph 2.8 of Part G2 of the Building Regulations). As the Thames Water area is defined as water stressed it is considered that

Respondent	Policy / paragraph	Summary of comment
		such a condition should be attached as standard to all planning approvals for new residential development in order to help ensure that the standard is effectively delivered through the building regulations. Within Part G of Building Regulations, the 110 litres/person/day level can be achieved through either the 'Calculation Method' or the 'Fittings Approach' (Table 2.2). The Fittings Approach provides clear flow-rate and volume performance metrics for each water using device / fitting in new dwellings. Thames Water considers the Fittings Approach, as outlined in Table 2.2 of Part G, increases the confidence that water efficient devices will be installed in the new dwelling. Insight from their smart water metering programme shows that household built to the 110 litres/person/day level using the Calculation Method, did not achieve the intended water performance levels. Proposed policy text recommended for inclusion: Development must be designed to be water efficient and reduce water consumption. Refurbishments and other non-domestic development will be expected to meet BREEAM water-efficiency credits. Residential development must not exceed a maximum water use of 105 litres per head per day (excluding the allowance of up to 5 litres for external water consumption) using the 'Fittings Approach' in Table 2.2 of Part G of Building Regulations. Planning conditions will be applied to new residential development to ensure that the water efficiency standards are met.
	General	There are no new allocations in the NDP and the level of information does not enable Thames Water to make an assessment of the impact the proposed development will have on the waste water/sewerage network infrastructure and sewage treatment works. To enable us to provide more specific comments we require details of the type and scale of development together with the anticipated phasing. Paragraph 1.35 of the NDP states: "*When submitting the Nutrient calculator you will also need to provide evidence that you have received permission for connection or have applied for connection to Thames Water systems and which precise wastewater treatment works you have applied to connect to. It is recommend that developers contact Thames Water to discuss their development proposals by using their pre app service*." Thames Water recommends that developers contact them to discuss their development proposals by their pre app service and therefore support the second sentence of paragraph 1.35 in this respect. In the event of an upgrade to Thames Water sewerage network assets being required, up to three years lead in time is usual to enable for the planning and delivery of the upgrade. As a developer has the automatic right to connect to their sewer network under the Water Industry Act they may also request a drainage planning condition if a network upgrade is required to ensure the infrastructure is in place ahead of occupation of the development. This will avoid adverse environmental impacts such as sewer flooding and / or water pollution.
The Downland Practice	General	The Practice do not object to any housing developments in the Cold Ash/Hermitage area, the increase in patient numbers will have a direct effect on services from the Downland Practice. This will be mainly GP appointments and

Respondent	Policy / paragraph	Summary of comment
		Nursing care but also the provision of pharmacies services. The Downland Practice will be interested in accessing any S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy contribution for health services to meet the increased demand associated with the aggregate impact of housing developments in Cold Ash/Hermitage area.
Transport for London	General	No comments

Representations will be available to view in full on West Berkshire District Council's website: https://www.westberks.gov.uk/hermitagenp and on the Council's Planning Policy Consultation Portal: https://consult.westberks.gov.uk/kse/.

West Berkshire District Council

Representations to the Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan Submission (August 2023)

1. Background to the Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

1.1. For a neighbourhood plan to be put to referendum, they must meet a set of tests that are set out within paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The tests are known as the basic conditions, and those relevant to neighbourhood plans are as follows:

(a) having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the order (or neighbourhood plan).

(d) the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.

(e) the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area).

(f) the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.

(g) prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Order (or plan) and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the order (or neighbourhood plan).

1.2. Hermitage Parish Council, as the qualifying body, applied for the designation of the Hermitage Neighbourhood Area. This was formally designated by West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) on 26 April 2019. The Neighbourhood Area covers the Parish of Hermitage.

1.3. Since the designation of the Neighbourhood Area, Hermitage Parish Council alongside its residents, have been working together to create a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

1.4. Following evidence gathering and preparing the plan, the pre-submission version of the Hermitage NDP was subject to a 6-week consultation between 24 October and 5 December 2022. Following this consultation, the feedback provided to the NDP Steering Group was reviewed and considered alongside feedback from statutory stakeholders. WBDC submitted representations to the consultation which aimed to provide advice as to where policies, sections or paragraphs within the NDP may be improved with a view to ensuring conformity with the Basic Conditions. For this consultation we have provided further advice on each of the policies and the plan in general. This is set out within Section 3 below.

1.5. Points (f) and (g) above relate to certain obligations which plans must adhere to, primarily in relation to habitats and environmental impacts. Some plans require a Strategic Environmental Assessment and/or a Habitat Regulations Assessment.

1.6. A screening opinion to determine if Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and/or Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) was prepared by WBDC in November

2022. This was subject to a 5-week consultation with the three statutory bodies (Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England) who concurred with WBDC that neither a SEA nor HRA were required.

2. WBDC's acceptance of the Hermitage NDP

2.1. Hermitage Parish Council submitted the NDP to West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) on 17 February 2023 and this was accompanied by the following documents:

- Basic Conditions Statement
- Consultation Statement
- SEA/HRA Screening Report – Consultation Version (October 2022)
- SEA/HRA Screening Report – Post-consultation Version (November 2022)
- SEA/HRA Screening Decision (November 2022)
- Hermitage Design Guidelines and Codes for Hermitage Parish Council
- Hermitage Housing Needs Survey for Hermitage Parish Council (Arc4, 2021)
- Guidelines for Ecological report Writing, 2nd Ed. (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, 2017)
- West Berkshire Density Pattern Book for WBDC (David Lock Associates, 2019)
- Non-statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (DEFRA, 2015)
- Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment for WBDC (GL Hearn, 2016).
- Hermitage Green Spaces Audit (Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan Group, 2023)
- Hermitage Footways, Bridleways and Byways (Hermitage Parish Council, 2014).
- West Berkshire Council Housing Needs Assessment Update for WBDC (Iceni, 2022)
- Guidance Note 1 for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light, GN01/21 (Institute of Lighting Professionals, 2021)
- Biodiversity in new housing developments: creating wildlife-friendly communities, NF89 (NHBC, 2021)
- Sustainable Drainage Systems Supplementary Planning Document (WBDC, 2018)
- Homes for People and Wildlife (Wildlife Trusts, 2018)

2.2. The above documents are considered to adequately fulfil the submission requirements under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and Schedule 4b of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as inserted into Schedule 10 of the Localism Act 2011.

2.3. WBDC are therefore satisfied that the qualifying body of Hermitage Parish Council had satisfied the relevant regulatory requirements to advance the Hermitage NDP to the publicity and consultation stage (Regulation 16) and subsequent submission of the NDP for independent examination.

2.4. In addition, WBDC is satisfied that the Hermitage NDP does not include any development which would be defined as 'excluded development' as prescribed by Schedule 9, Section 61k of the Localism Act.

2.5. At submission, WBDC undertook a Legal Compliance Check to determine if the submission requirements as set out in legislation have been met. The Legal Compliance Check, which is included within Appendix A.

3. WBDC's representations on the submission Hermitage NDP

3.1. At this 'draft plan' stage of the neighbourhood plan making process, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) is not required to consider whether the draft plan meets the basic conditions. It is only after the independent examination has taken place, and after the independent examiner's report has been received, that a LPA must comes to a formal view on whether the draft neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions.

3.2. The LPA should provide constructive comments on an emerging plan before it is submitted.

3.3. WBDC made representations as part of the consultation on the pre-submission (Regulation 14) version of the Hermitage NDP. To inform the response, the Planning Policy Team requested the following service areas review the NDP:

- Archaeology
- Development Management
- Drainage and Flood Risk
- Conservation & Design
- Ecology
- Environment Delivery
- Environmental Health
- Highways
- Housing
- Infrastructure
- ITS and Sustainable Transport
- Planning Policy
- Transport Policy

3.4. Table 3.1 below shows WBDC's representations made in December 2022, and a further response to the submission consultation. The above mentioned services were also contacted for comments on the submission version of the NDP.

3.5. It should be noted that since the representations were made, there have been staff changes within the Planning Policy Team. Some additional matters have therefore been identified that were not previously identified within the Council's pre-submission representations.

Table 3: WBDC's representations on the Hermitage NDP regulation 16 submission consultation

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
Front cover	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: The front cover is clear and it sets a positive first impression of the document.	No further comments
Contents page	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: The contents page is clear however the policies could be listed in the contents page in the same way the subsections have been presented therefore making it easier to navigate the policies in the document.	Change made. To further assist with navigation, it would be helpful if page numbers could be included against each policy listed.
Introduction		
Purpose of the Plan	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: Clarification regarding paragraph 1.3: the plan is to be read as a whole. Policies should not be duplicated. This is however made clear later in the document in paragraph 3.4.	No further comments.
	What is meant by "actions" in paragraph 1.4? Are the actions not listed in the Non-Policy Actions in Table 9.1 at the end of the document? Make reference to this section if this is what you are referring to or be clear on what is meant by the terminology.	Change made and no further comments.
Policy Context	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: For information purposes, the Council is formally referred to as West Berkshire District Council therefore the abbreviation "WBDC" is appropriate.	Change made and no further comments.
	None	Paragraph 1.5 mentions the other documents that form part of the development plan which have relevance to Hermitage. Not included, but which has relevance is the Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2022-2037), which was adopted in December 2022. A modification should be made to paragraph 1.15 to include reference to this document. Paragraph 1.5 includes reference to the Core Strategy, Housing Site Allocations DPD, and the Saved Policies of the West Berkshire District Local Plan. These three documents together make up the current Local Plan,

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
		however this is not stated and should be. Such a modification will also provide context to paragraph 1.11. which states that the Local Plan is being reviewed.
	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: Suggested amendment for consistency: to refer to the "Neighbourhood Plan area" as the designated "Neighbourhood Area" in Paragraph 1.8, as stated previously in paragraph 1.6.	Change made and no further comments.
	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: See comments on mapping at the end of this document.	See comments below
	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: Regarding paragraph 1.12, a revised timetable for the Local Plan Review (LPR), also known as the Local Development Scheme (LDS), was published at the end of October: https://www.westberks.gov.uk/lds. The proposed submission version of the LPR was considered recently at a meeting of Council on 1 December 2022, and Members agreed that the plan can go out to consultation. As such the consultation will commence before the 6th January 2023 for a 6 week period. WBDC hope to submit the plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination in March 2023. Assuming the examination goes okay, WBDC anticipate adoption of the LPR in September 2024. Please see: https://www.westberks.gov.uk/local-plan-review.	Change made and no further comments.
		It would be helpful for a modification be made to paragraph 1.12 could include a modification t A modification should be made to paragraph 1.12 to specify that upon adoption of the Local Plan Review, the current Local Plan (Core Strategy, HSA DPD, Saved Policies) will be superseded
Monitoring the Plan	Comments from the Planning Policy Team:	Change made and no further comments.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	Suggested amendment to wording in paragraph 1.13: Hermitage Parish Council as the qualifying body.	
	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: Suggested clarification (amend accordingly): "The HPC Steering Group is a sub-group of Hermitage Parish Council. As per the Terms of Reference, the Parish Council, as the qualifying body, will be responsible for maintaining…" Regarding the above comment, do you have a Terms of Reference in place which states the role and responsibilities of the HPC SG and the Parish Council?	As steering groups are often disbanded following the making of a neighbourhood plan, it is accepted that the monitoring of the plan is best undertaken by the Parish Council. No further changes needed.
Local context		
History of Hermitage	Comments from the Archaeology Team: The history of the area could go back a bit further than the 13th century in that the **Iron Age** hillfort called Grimsbury Castle is an important monument on high ground overlooking two valleys, more or less in the middle of the current parish. It does get mentioned in a few other places in the NDP but the fact that it's covered with trees probably means it's well preserved earthworks aren't easily understood (and have been vulnerable to some damage from recreational use e.g. mountain bikes). Its origins are older than 100BC as Early Iron Age pottery was found in the limited excavations there – so it was probably built between the 8th and 5th centuries BC. There are springs in the interior but there hasn't yet been evidence found of buildings, so we don't know how much of a settlement was there. However there is certainly a strong local **Roman** presence with villas found in the 19th century at both Wellhouse and Birch Farm as well as other features in Box Wood. One of the notable features of the parish is how wooded it is, and there is certainly scope for more archaeological investigation, both through development and community/academic work. For example, the two earthwork enclosures on Oare Common might be Iron Age or medieval but have received very little attention.	Change made. No further comments received from the Archaeology Team.
Hermitage today	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: Note regarding the statement in paragraph 2.15, the 2021 Census is now available: https://census.gov.uk	It is noted that only limited data is available at Output Area level, so continued reference to the 2011 in the para (now para 2.17 and 2.18) is therefore necessary. No further changes needed.
Challenges for Hermitage	No comments.	No further comments to make

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
Vision for Hermitage	No comments.	Comments from the Environmental Health Team: One objective is to minimise environmental impact. There is no mention of the promotion of future development on brownfield land nor the promotion of electric vehicle charging provisions
Neighbourhood Plan Objectives	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: General comment: Do a consistency check against the objectives and policies in the NDP – are they clearly aligned?	Several objectives have been amended to ensure consistency. No further changes needed.
Matters not covered by NP policies	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: Paragraphs 3.4 to 3.6: give clarity as to why some matters are not covered by a NP. Note: paragraph 30 in the NPPF states, "Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently".	Paragraphs amended to provide clarity. No further changes needed.
Housing		
	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: The updated LPR housing evidence is now available: https://www.westberks.gov.uk/local-plan-evidence#housing	No further comments
Policy HER1: Addressing Hermitage's Housing Needs	No comments received from the Housing Team. Comments from the Planning Policy Team: In addition to the Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2016, Policy HER1 should also consider the updated Iceni Local Housing Need (LHN) assessments 2020 and July 2022, particularly as relating to housing type and mix. Additionally the Government has a new policy on First Homes. It requires the first 25% of all affordable housing provision to be for First Homes suitable for first-time buyers.	No further comments received from the Housing Team. Changes made.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	WBDC is expecting to undertake consultation on the publication version of the Local Plan (Regulation 19) in the New Year. It will contain strategic and non-strategic policies dealing with housing supply, provision and need. The proposed housing policies in the NP should therefore aim to align with the strategic polices of the emerging LPR.	
Policy HER2: Design	Comments from the Transport Policy Team: Criterion B 1. *"Development should integrate with and enhance the form of its existing surroundings, with all connections including road patterns ensuring permeability for cyclists and pedestrians."* It is expected that new residential development will need to take into account the Council's emerging "Highway Design Guidance for Residential Development". This will include details relating to ensuring that pedestrian and cycling permeability is achieved.	No further comments received from the Transport Policy Team.
	Comments from the Transport Policy Team: Criterion B 6. Car parking for new residential developments will be expected to be compliant with WBDCs Residential Parking Standards outlined in Policy P1 in the Housing Sites Allocations DPD. Cycle parking for new development will be expected to comply with standards outlined in the Council's "Cycle and Motorcycle Advice and Standards for New Development Guidance Note".	No further comments received from the Transport Policy Team.
	Comments from the Highways Team: "The Plan looks good".	No further comments from the Highways Team
	Comments from the Conservation Team: No comments to make on Policy HER2, as this seems to be well thought through. The Design Code is a thorough piece of work and provides a good analysis of the local character.	No further comments from the Conservation Team
	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: Criterion B2: Rather than specifying that development densities should not exceed 25 dwellings per hectare (criterion 2), the policy should instead outline that developments should be in accordance with the WBDC Pattern Book Study, which is a researched document, and is flexible across different development sites throughout the District. This element of the policy may conflict with the LPR, particularly the site allocations (if the SG were to exceed 25 dph, or even 20dph as the newly allocated site is on the rural edge).	Changes made.

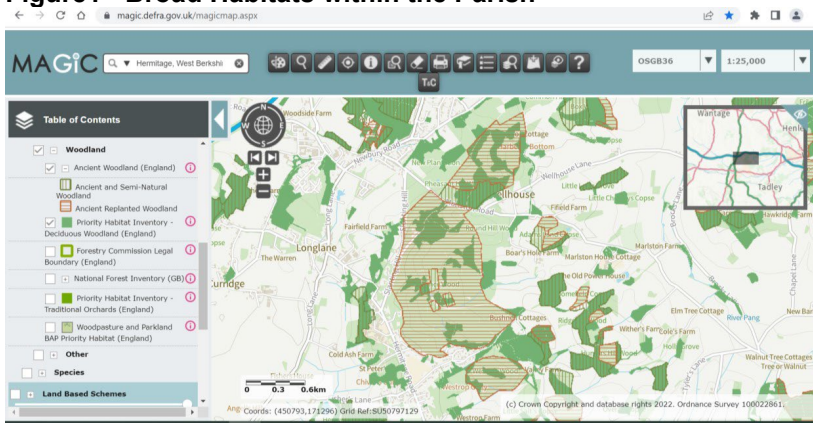
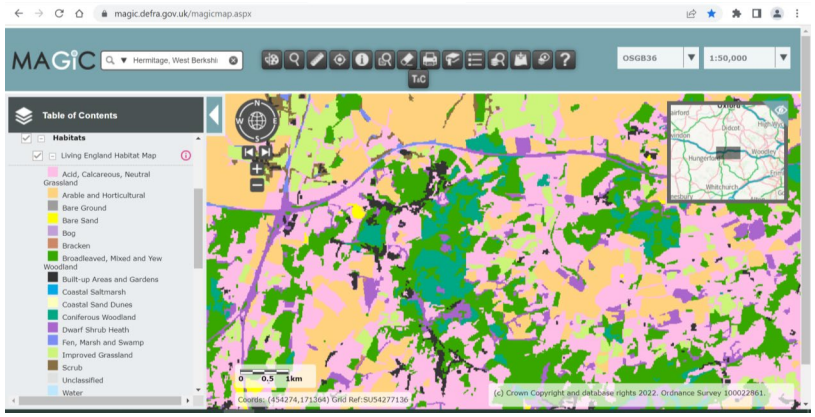
Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: Criterion B4: Rather than specifying that buildings shall not be greater than 2 storey's in height, it would be better to say that the design, scale, bulk and massing should respond to the prevailing character of the local area. However, the NDP does state that taller buildings may be permitted where they complement or enhance the local character. Both could lead to confusion at decision taking, as to which policy/documents take precedent – the NDP or the LPR.	The Consultation Statement comments on page 35 that the policy and supporting text have been amended to reflect this comment, however it does not appear that any changes have been made within the submission version of the NDP. Regarding the comment about precedence, Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 084 Reference ID: 41-084-20190509) states that *"…policies in a neighbourhood plan may become out of date, for example if they conflict with policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area that is adopted after the making of the neighbourhood plan. In such cases, the more recent plan policy takes precedence."*
	Additional comments from the Planning Policy Team: The Policy sets a very low density in part B; what is the evidence for this? Is it not an efficient use of land? The aforementioned Pattern Book Study is a starting point, but there are some very good much higher density developments already in the village, and if you encourage more low density expensive housing you just encourage greater encroachment of development into the AONB, causing more harm to the AONB and not delivering much housing.	Criterion B2 has been amended to refer to the WBDC Pattern Book Study and does not specify a particular density. No further changes needed.
Policy HER3: Countryside Views Between Properties	No comments received.	No further comments.
Sustainable Design and Environment		
Sustainable design	Comments from the Environment Delivery Team: Suggested amendments to Para 6.2: "In terms of the UK's change to housing stock ~~of housing~~, this means that new homes will have to be designed to minimise energy use by adopting a fabric first approach and	Changes made. No further comments received from the Environment Delivery Team

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	following the Energy Hierarchy to develop net zero carbon design ~~and create very low net carbon emissions through their design~~. This will include minimising heating and heat loss through effective insulation, ~~having low water demand, and being fitted with or directly connected to renewable energy systems~~ (Move/amend this sentence: 'installation or connection to a renewable energy systems, reducing water demand'). In this context, the orientation of buildings can be important in order to make best use of available sunlight". Suggested amendments to Para 6.3: "With the UK ~~Britain~~ no longer part of the European Union, the EU's Energy Performance of Buildings Directive - which required all new buildings to be nearly zero-energy by the end of 2020 - will not apply. ~~The UK's equivalent - the Code for Sustainable Homes - was withdrawn by the Government in 2015 and this has been replaced by new national technical standards, which include optional Building Regulations standards regarding water and access as well as a new national space standard (this is in addition to the existing mandatory Building Regulations)".~~ At a national and local level, net zero carbon target within developments are being addressed through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Building Regulations, the Future Homes Standard and the West Berkshire Local Plan.	
Policy HER4: Low Energy and Energy Efficient Design	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: In respect of criteria d of policy HER4 (Low Energy and Energy Efficient design): Policy CS16 of the Core Strategy has regard to flood risk, and the policy requires that on all development sites surface water must be managed in a sustainable manner through the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). There is no need for neighbourhood plans to repeat Local Plan policies particularly as the development plan must be read as a whole. Nonetheless, if the Parish Council is minded to include the criteria on SuDS, it is recommended that the policy wording is strengthened and that some additional changes are made to provide clarity: "All development ~~shall~~ must minimise surface water runoff to prevent ~~off-site~~ surface water flooding through the ~~design of a~~ implementation of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), and where possible incorporate mitigation and resilience measures for any increase in surface water flood risk that may occur due to climate change".	Changes made. No further changes required.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	WBDC adopted in 2018 a Sustainable Drainage Systems Supplementary Planning Document (https://www.westberks.gov.uk/sudsspd) which provides guidance on the approach that should be taken to SuDS in new developments in West Berkshire, and there should be a cross reference to this document in the policy. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on flood risk was updated in August 2022, and this includes sections on SuDS – see paragraph 056 (ref ID: 7-056-20220825). This paragraph identifies that preference should be given to multi-functional SuDS, and this should be reflected in the policy. The supporting text to the policy needs explain why the policy has a criteria on SuDS, and it would be helpful if there could be further clarification around the 'mitigation and resilience measures' that are mentioned in the policy – perhaps some examples could be provided? The PPG on flood risk does include some paragraphs on flood resistance and flood resilience. Comments from the Drainage and Flood Risk Team: The only element of flood risk and drainage in this section: d) all development shall minimise surface water runoff to prevent off-site flooding through the design of a suitable sustainable drainage system (SuDS), and where possible incorporate mitigation and resilience measures for any increases in flood risk that may occur due to climate change. This is a non-specific requirement and is therefore not worth including without reference to specific means of restricting discharge or to different types of flood risk. SuDS should be plural here. 1. When discussing discharge rates the following applies: a. All developments should attempt to restrict runoff to the 1 in 1 year greenfield discharge rate up to the 1 in 100 year event plus climate change. b. Failing the above, the applicant should review whether long term storage can be provided. In this instance the greenfield discharge rate	

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	would still be used, but the rate would match the return period of the design storm up to the 1 in 100 year event plus climate change. c. On brownfield sites only where there is no space for storage, if the above measures cannot be implemented then a 50% betterment on the 1 in 1 year existing discharge rate might be considered acceptable depending on the circumstances. d. Further guidance here: Sustainable Drainage Systems: Non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems (publishing.service.gov.uk) and here: https://www.susdrain.org/files/resources/other-guidance/lasoo_non_statutory_suds_technical_standards_guidance_2016_.pdf 2. With respect to flooding due to climate change, where a property is subject to flood risk: a. Typically a flood risk assessment will be required to demonstrate that the development is safe over its lifetime, that it does not increase flood risk and that safe access/egress can be provided on site. Further guidance here: Flood risk assessments if you're applying for planning permission - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and Preparing a flood risk assessment: standing advice - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) b. Where the above is not possible applications will be refused. 3. In terms of implementing SUDS, it's important to note that they shouldn't be an afterthought. SuDS should be designed during the concept phase even for small scale developments and worked into the landscape. a. West Berkshire SPD has further advice: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - West Berkshire Council b. The SuDS Manual from CIRIA pretty much covers every elements of SuDS design: SuDS Manual (susdrain.org) c. The SuDS construction guidelines from CIRIA also has useful information: Item Detail (ciria.org) Comments from the Environment Delivery Team:	

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	The updated energy and carbon policy within the LPR and supporting SPD (which is to be drafted) will cover specific detail on achieving net zero carbon within developments.	
Wildlife-friendly design		
	Comments from the Ecology Team: **Legally Protected Sites** There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) within the Parish of Hermitage and no Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) or Special Protection Areas (SPA's) designated under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017 (as amended) or any Ramsar Sites (wetland sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention). There are no National Nature Reserves or Local Natures Reserves designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949 within the Parish. However, part of the western Parish lies within the Nutrient Impact Zone (NIZ) of the River Lambourn SAC and within which all new residential development and certain types of other development that may lead to an increase in phosphorous loads, are subject to the requirement to demonstrate nutrient neutrality as advised by Natural England. WBDC as a competent authority under the Habitats Regulations is required to consider whether plans or projects within the NIZ are likely to have a significant effect on the River Lambourn SAC and if so, to undertake an Appropriate Assessment of any such plans or projects. This includes plans or projects which would normally be considered as permitted development under the General Permitted Development Order. Most of the Parish lies within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ). It is also within a water Source Protection Zone although this is a non-statutory designation. **Priority Habitats** The main habitats that occupy a significant proportion of the land surface of the Parish are broadleaved mixed and yew woodland and coniferous woodland (please see Figure 1 below). Much of this is plantation woodland on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) with significant remnants of ancient woodland in the north west (near Oare) and centrally (near Wellhouse) see Figure 2. The Priority Habitat Lowland Deciduous	The comments originally provided by the Ecology Team provide background information. No further comments received from the Ecology Team.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	Woodland is widespread both within and outside of these ancient woodland sites. There are no other Priority Habitats within the Parish. **Figure1 - Broad Habitats within the Parish**  **Figure 2 – Priority Habitats within the Parish**  Under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006, all public bodies (Including Parish Councils) have a duty to conserve biodiversity. This	

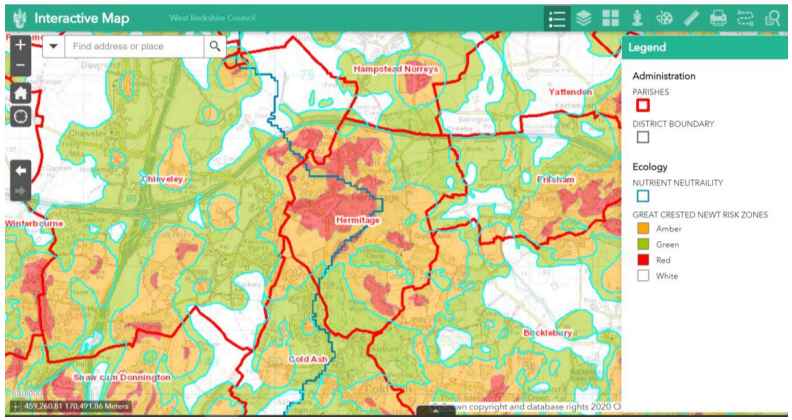
Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	duty includes "… in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat". Section 41 sets out the lists of priority habitats and priority species to which this duty especially applies. There are a number of Local Wildlife Sites within the Parish including land at Furze Hill which is owned and managed by the Parish Council and which is a Lowland Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat. **Legally Protected Species** There are a number of records confirming the presence of legally protected species within the Parish. These species are fully protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) and under Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017 (as amended). There are records of three approved applications for licences to affect protected mammal species within the Parish. These are as follows: **Hazel Dormouse** – Case reference of granted application 2019-39430-EPS-MIT Licence Start Date 29/03/2019 Licence End Date 31/12/2022 **Bats** – Case reference of granted application 2016-24643-EPS-MIT Species on the licence Brown long-eared (BLE),common pipistrelle (C-PIP) and soprano pipistrelle (S-PIP) Licence Start Date 03/08/2016 Licence End Date 02/08/2026 Case reference of granted application 2014-4812-EPS-MIT Species on the licence brown long-eared (BLE) and common pipistrelle (C-PIP) Licence Start Date 24/03/2015 Licence End Date 31/03/2020 There is also survey data records for two waterbodies within the Parish that have confirmed great crested newt populations: **Great crested newt –** **Survey Date OS Grid Ref GCN Present?**	

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments

21/04/2016	SU504729	Y
03/05/2016	SU504729	Y
16/05/2016	SU504729	Y
11/05/2016	SU505729	Y
07/06/2016	SU505729	Y

Some 25% of the Parish is assessed as being within the highest Red Risk Zone for GCN, 50% within the Amber Risk Zone and 25% within the lowest Green Risk Zone (please see Figure 3).

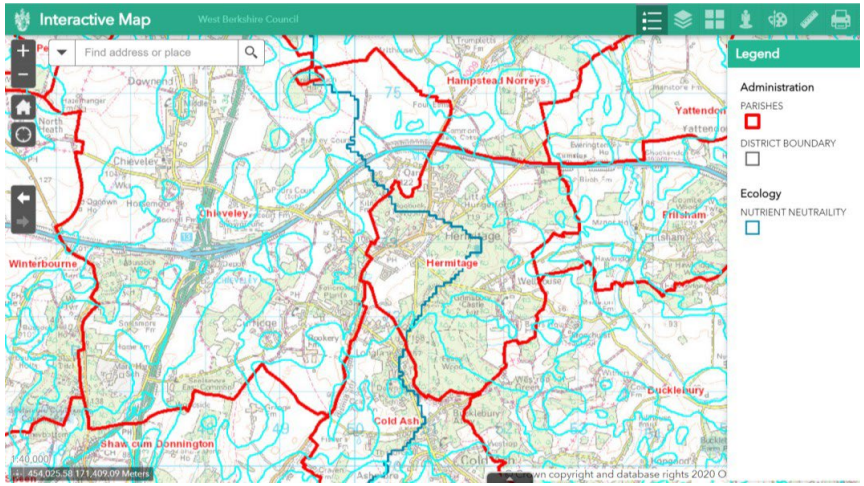
Figure 3 – GCN Risk Zones within the Parish



Therefore, whilst there are no legally protected biodiversity sites within the Parish, large areas of the Parish are covered by priority habitats and support legally protected species. These all place constraints on new development. Development proposals that may result in the killing or injury or disturbance of such species or which may result in the loss of breeding sites and resting places or other supporting habitat, will need to be subject to careful assessment and may require licences from Natural England under Regulation 55 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017 (as amended).

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
Policy HER5: Wildlife-Friendly Development	Comments from the Ecology Team: We would suggest that this policy should be titled Development and Biodiversity and have as its key objective conserving, restoring, and enhancing biodiversity in line with the strengthened duty to conserve biodiversity in the new Environment Act, 2021: The Environment Act passed into legislation in November 2021. It will require significant additional protections for the natural environment including, air, water and soil quality and biodiversity. The mandatory requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is intended to come into force in November 2023 from which time all planning applications for new development will need to demonstrate a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity. The Act also requires the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies for all English Counties to be prepared by County Councils and Unitary Authorities. Reference should be made to the relevant current Local Plan Policies for West Berkshire including Policies CS17 and CS18 of the Core Strategy: https://www.westberks.gov.uk/media/36371/Core-Strategy-CS17-Biodiversity-and-Geodiversity/pdf/Core_Strategy_-_CS17_-_Biodiversity_and_Geodiversity.pdf?m=637408701786400000. https://www.westberks.gov.uk/media/36372/Core-Strategy-CS18-Green-Infrastructure/pdf/Core_Strategy_-_CS18_-_Green_Infrastructure.pdf?m=637408701874570000. It should be noted that the mandatory requirement for BNG does not come into effect until November 2023. Examples of good practice could be referenced for example using Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to create new ponds and wetland habitats both to improve water quality and provide new wildlife habitats. In this context we would advise moving the reference to SuDS from HER4 B(d to HER 5 where it seems more relevant. HER5 should also reference the opportunities for helping to deliver carbon neutrality and incorporating climate change resilience e.g. by planting trees.	The NDP objective has been amended. No further comments from the Ecology Team. Title of the policy has not been amended . No further comments from the Ecology Team. As specified on page 44 of the Consultation Statement, the development plan should be read as a whole. Modifications are therefore not required. No changes made and no further comments from the Ecology Team. No changes made and no further comments from the Ecology Team. Changes made. No further comments from the Ecology Team.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	Good practice guidance could be referenced e.g. https://www.nhbcfoundation.org/publication/biodiversity-in-new-housing-developments-creating-wildlife-friendly-communities/ and https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/homes_for_people_and_wildlife_lr_-_spreads.pdf. The policy should also acknowledge the location of the Parish within the North Wessex Downs AONB, which in connection with the large extent of woodland and local bat records means that light pollution should be minimised so as to avoid dicsurbance to foraging and commuting bats and to maintain dark skies. More detailed information can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/light-pollution.	Changes made. No further comments from the Ecology Team. Changes made. No further comments from the Ecology Team.
Policy HER6: Irreplaceable Habitats and Local Wildlife-Rich Habitats	Comments from the Ecology Team: We would suggest this policy should be incorporated into HER5 as there are significant overlaps between the two policies. Reference should be made to the need for all planning applications for new development to be accompanied by appropriate ecological surveys and measures that seek to protect the most important biodiversity features such as those shown in Figure 6.1. Guidance on the appropriate types of ecological surveys and reports and the content and standards for such reports can be found at: https://cieem.net/resource/guidelines-for-ecological-report-writing/. The policy must also reference the Natural England advice on the requirement for new development within the catchment of the River Lambourn SAC to be nutrient neutral. Figure 4 below shows the extent of the Parish that is within the catchment and where the nutrient neutrality requirement applies.	No changes made. No further comments from the Ecology Team. Changes made. No further comments from the Ecology Team. No changes made. No further comments from the Ecology Team.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	Figure 4 – Catchment of the River Lambourn SAC (blue line)  Policy HER6 as currently titled refers only to important habitats. In this context, the policy also needs to make reference to the requirements for legally protected and priority species neither of which are currently mentioned. The Parish Council may wish to consider seeking the designation of Furze Hill Local Wildlife Site as a Stautory Local Nature Reserve. Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are a statutory designation made under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 by principal local authorities. Parish and Town Councils can also declare LNRs but they must have the powers to do so delegated to them by a principal local authority i.e. West Berkshire Council in this case. LNRs are for people and wildlife. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. More information can be found at: https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/acdf4a9e-a115-41fb-bbe9-603c819aa7f7/local-nature-reserves-england. We would of course be happy to provide further advice and support to Hermitage Parish Council in refining its Neighbourhood Plan. Comments from the Archaeology Team:	Changes made. No further comments from the Ecology Team. Changes made and included as non-policy action. No further comments from the Ecology Team.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	Section 6 Sustainable Design and Environment and Policy HER6 could also be beneficial for the historic environment, planted and managed flora being part of the definition of this. There is a big overlap between Local Wildlife Sites and areas of high sensitivity assessed through Historic Landscape Characterisation. Retaining habitats for wildlife may also prevent damage or destruction to underlying archaeological sites. This could also be the case for the Local Green Spaces, although I cannot find much historic background to the ones identified in Policy HER7, most being of 20th century or later date.	No further comments from the Archaeology Team.
Policy HER7: Local Green Spaces	Comments from the Planning Policy Team: A neighbourhood plan's capacity to designate land as Local Green Space (LGS) provides the highest level of protection to green space. There are strict criteria set out in paragraphs 101 and 102 of the NPPF, which effectively allows communities to identify and protect valued green areas. One of the criteria is that the green space must be demonstrably special to a local community and hold a particular significance. It gives examples of such significance e.g. for its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or the richness of its wildlife. The WBC Landscape Character Assessment could be used to inform matters such as tranquillity. Regard should be given to the NPPG on Local Green Space , in particular the NPPG states that *'the qualifying body (in the case of neighbourhood plan making) should contact landowners at an early stage about proposals to designate any part of their land as Local Green Space'.* It is noted in paragraph 2.31, the NDP states that the LGS is owned by HPC however for information purposes the owners should be contacted if any LGS falls in private ownership. The HPC Steering Group will need to be able to show the Examiner that this has been done and should be evidenced. The Group may find that they want to expand some of the evidence in the appendices to clearly show that the proposed LGS meets the NPPF criteria. It may be useful to look at some made NDP's to see what type of information was included. Locality guidance suggests using a LGS assessment tool which should provide the name of the space, the address, and the grid reference. See page 19: https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/making-local-green-space-designations-neighbourhood-plan/. Also see page 21 for policy themes and guidance on what a policy specific to LGS could include.	No further comments or changes required. It is noted that the Local Green Spaces are within the ownership of Hermitage Parish Council.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	Which objective(s) in the draft NDP does HER7 meet? See Box 1 on page 6 of the Locality guidance on top tips for writing planning policies: https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/How-to-write-planning-policies-for-your-Neighbourhood-Plan-2021.10.08.pdf Policy HER7 is explicit in designating LGS. The policy text provides a list of the sites (locations) being designated, supplemented by a map(s) of the LGS. This is done as a LGS location plan which identifies the following areas: 1. *Dines Way Green* 2. *Hermitage Green Play Area* 3. *Lipscomb Close Green* 4. *Pinewood Playground* 5. *Furze Hill Recreation Ground* 6. *Furze Hill Local Wildlife Site*	
Section 7. Heritage	Comments from the Archaeology Team: This document is impressive, it's really well-thought out, and clear. The NDP has actually woven heritage through several sections, as the character of the parish's historic environment is clearly important to the community. Should section 7 be named Historic Environment to better tie in with NPPF? Might it still be useful for the nationally designated heritage assets to be put into a table here, if only to show how few there are!? I.e. there is only one Scheduled Monument and seven Listed Buildings (six of which are clustered at Wellhouse Farm, though rather poorly identified in the original listing e.g. the Dairy was more likely a Stable and their dating has been more clearly unpicked in survey work when they were converted). There are no Registered Battlefields or Parks and Gardens (and little likelihood of these being added) but also no Conservation Areas.	Changes made. No further comments from the Archaeology Team. No changes made. No further comments from the Archaeology Team.
Policy HER8: Non-Designated Heritage Assets	Comments from the Conservation Team:	

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	In the section listing the non-designated heritage assets it would be useful if reference were made to how they meet the local listing criteria set out in the Local Listing Process https://www.westberks.gov.uk/article/41022/Local-List-of-Heritage-Assets. There are no further comments to make on Policy HER8 which appears to align with the NPPF. *Comments from the Archaeology Team:* The group have done excellent work looking at buildings of heritage interest, presented as a list in Policy HER8. It might be helpful if the criteria for our local list was applied to these, as I presume this would strengthen the policy? Some have interesting links to the former brick making industry, eg Pinewood Cottage, and Long Barn (which we didn't know about). I have no objection to the ones identified being included as NDHAs (possibly not the metal road sign?), but do feel that there are some notable omissions: Within the village, The Old Vicarage is an early 19th century building noted by Betjeman in the 1940s as "the pretty little vicarage in a late Georgian Perpendicular style". It appears to be contemporary with the church. I thought the carved lychgate of the church was of note when I walked round the village. Both The Old Vicarage and nearby Crossways House in Marlston Road were mentioned in the Hermitage VDS. Another very attractive building probably of similar age is the folly or lodge called Grimsbury Castle Tower. This does not lie within a scheduled area of the hillfort. The former pub called the Fox and Hounds Cottages and the Forester's Cottage at Wellhouse might be considered, as well as perhaps some other farm buildings eg at Boars Hole Farm which was developed as a model farm. We'd be happy to provide more information from the HER to justify these suggestions. A brief mention is made in 7.1 of the Historic Environment Character Area (HECA) that Hermitage falls in – this is one of the projects that Archaeology has undertaken in the past https://www.westberks.gov.uk/historicenvironmentprojects. It can be used to better understand the evolution of the district but also be more specific about actions. Within this larger HECA are 3 Historic Environment Character Zones (See our online map https://gis2.westberks.gov.uk/webapps/OnlineMap/?vln=HISTORIC%20ENVIRONMENT%20CHARACTER%20ZONES&x=451534&y=172813&scale=8) with bullet points for Conservation Issues and Research Priorities.	Changes made. No further comments from the Conservation Team. No changes made. The Archaeology Team have not provided any further comments.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	These might be of interest to add in under Section 9 if not in policies, e.g. for HECZ PPC_Plantation_Parliamentary_Commons (westberks.gov.uk), issues include: Management of woodlands, conservation of surviving ancient woodlands and replacement of plantations with more mixed tree coverage. CHCAS_Curridge_Hermitage_ColdAsh (westberks.gov.uk): Historic building stock is poorly understood and little protection is currently afforded to this resource. What are the earthwork features on Oare Common? What period do they represent and what type of site is present here? PASS_Plantation_Assarts (westberks.gov.uk): Use of Grimsbury Castle by cyclists and off-road motorcycles. Comments from the Planning Policy Team: The local listing process is separate to the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan process. Therefore sites identified within the plan as non-designated heritage assets won't automatically be locally listed: https://www.westberks.gov.uk/locallist. If the Parish Council wanted the non-designated heritage assets to be selected for the Local List then they would need to nominate them and it would be for the West Berkshire Heritage Forum to consider whether they should be included at a Selection Panel meeting.	No changes made. Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph: 040 Reference ID: 18a-040-20190723) states that non-designated heritage assets can be identified through the neighbourhood plan-making processes. No further changes required.
Movement		
Policy HER9: Access for Walking and Cycling	Comments from the Transport Policy Team: Criterion C: Proposals to extend the Eling Way walking and cycling route are supported, both south towards Newbury and north towards Compton. The Eling Way is recognised as an important leisure active travel and potential commuter cycling route, particularly in terms of a southern extension of the route from Hermitage towards Newbury, which is recognised in WBC's Local Walking & Cycling Infrastructure Plan. WBC would be supportive of initiatives to develop and deliver extensions of the Eling Way route both to the north and south of Hermitage, and would be willing to work with local communities and cycle groups to help develop any proposals. This may need to include the development of a route through Hermitage village to link the existing Eling Way scheme near to the village hall with any southern extension towards Newbury.	Comments from the ITS and Sustainable Travel Team: We welcome the active engagement to date of Hermitage's NDP team and the wider Parish Council for the planned Phase 1 extension of Eling Way within the village (tying-in with the new developments referenced in 2.50), and also their input and advocacy in support of proposed future extensions of this route southwards toward Newbury, and potentially north of Hampstead

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
		Norreys to Compton and eventually Upton and Didcot, as reflected in 8.5. We would welcome their support as appropriate in further engagement moving forwards with landowners and with neighbouring Parishes including Chieveley (as the Hermitage-Curridge section will likely run within Chieveley Parish). Acknowledge the public support received via consultation on extension of Eling Way. Highlight the challenges involved in developing a route toward Curridge; as 2.31 notes, Priors Court Road is heavily-trafficked and the verge alongside B4009 is largely in private ownership, so mitigation measures and/or land acquisition will be needed depending on the route selected. Initial assessment of options has commenced. Agree with focus on protecting and enhancing the PROW network. We draw the NDP team's attention to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and the need to tie in with that document, which has been subject to recent consultation. Potential to improve signing on the Highway side to existing and new Public Rights of Way. Make reference to the plan to translate Hermitage Footpath 16 to a multi-user path, to form part of the Eling Way. 8.6 – note the Parish's intention to lobby on traffic, Highway and public transport. Note that bus 6 is wholly subsidised by WBC (2.47 seems to suggest it is operated commercially by the bus company when that's not the

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
		case). Encourage them to respond to the current Bus Survey 2023 on the WBDC website. Make reference to the substantial costs associated with public transport enhancements; needs to be clear definition on how any enhancements are to be funded and sustained. We are open to discussing sites for cycle parking, on the basis of capital provision of new or additional cycle stands or similar facilities at publicly-accessible community hubs e.g. Hermitage Village Hall or near to the Primary School, the Garden Centre currently undergoing expansion, or Yarnfest subject to feasibility assessment, if the Parish or other local party is responsible for and maintains those facilities thereafter. Noted supportive comments on provision of cycle parking from residents responding to the consultation. Encourage the NDP to consider including within the finalised, adopted document provision of public infrastructure to support electric vehicle use. Advocate provision not only of sufficient space but also incoming electricity feeds to feeder pillars that will be capable of supporting rapid EV charging points in car parks such as by the village hall and other public car parks within the Parish, and ensuring that all charge points meet the requirements of PAS 1899:2022 Electric

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
		vehicles: Accessible charging – Specification, and with consideration being given to sufficient spaces allocated for mobility-impaired users.
Non-policy actions		
Table 9.1	<u>Comments from the Infrastructure Team:</u> There do not appear to be any red flags in what the NDP is proposing to use CIL funds on. Some of the other items (like providing new play equipment and biodiversity enhancements through wildflower planting) might also be reasonably funded from CIL in my opinion. Coupled with the fact there are no site allocations in the NDP, I do not think there are any CIL specific comments to make. <u>Comments from the Transport Policy Team:</u> Public Transport – Improve Bus Services: *The Council is aware of the desire to increase desire to improve bus services in Hermitage. The current 6/6a service forms part of the West Berkshire bus network which is financially supported by WBDC, and unfortunately with the limited resource funding available it is difficult to increase frequencies. Other ways of supporting travel choice in areas outside of the main urban areas of West Berkshire will be explored through the Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan and review of the Local Transport Plan.*	No changes made. No further comments from the Infrastructure Team. No changes made. No further comments received from the Transport Policy Team.
General comments from the Planning Policy Team		
Consistency Check	Now the Plan is drafted it would be good to check the policies for consistency and whether there is any repetition. As the Plan is prepared by many different people it is useful for someone to have a full read through to check for duplication and policies do not create any conflicts with any other policies. Also it may be worth checking the policies against the agreed vision and objectives of the NDP to ensure they will help to achieve the aspirations of the Hermitage NP. It is also a good opportunity to check that nothing important is missing in terms of addressing the vision and all of the objectives in your plan.	The plan has been checked for consistency and it is noted that the wording of several objectives has been amended in light of this.
Mapping	Check of all maps within the document should be undertaken to ensure that they are readable. The following sets out good practice principles which should be considered (Hermitage may already be aware of the information below): **Ordnance Survey base map**	

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (date)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	Parish Councils can sign up to Ordnance Survey's Public Service Mapping Agreement (PSMA). This will licence your parish council to use a range of Ordnance Survey mapping products for council business. Use of Parish Online mapping software will cover this. Maps should also display the Ordnance Survey licence number. **A black and white base map** The base map should be black and white to enable all designations and allocations to be viewed clearly. **Map must be of an appropriate scale** The base map should be of an appropriate scale relative to what the map is showing. As a general rule, for most villages when showing the whole parish a scale of 1:25,000 is likely to work best however this will vary depending on the size of the Parish. However when showing more detailed maps of the village a lower scale might be appropriate for example 1:8000. Ideally you should be able to see individual plots and boundaries clearly. This scale should also be clearly labelled and the Map must include a key / legend.	The license number has been included on all maps. No further changes needed. It is not a statutory requirement for the maps to in black and white. No further changes required. All of the maps included in the NDP include a legend. The maps in the NDP clearly show boundaries. No further changes required.

Appendices

Appendix A: Legal Compliance Check of the Hermitage NDP

Legal Compliance Check – Submission of Neighbourhood Plan

Neighbourhood Plan	Hermitage
The Qualifying Body	Hermitage Parish Council
Date Submitted	17 February 2023
Date of Assessment	14 July 2023

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	**West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments**	**Legally compliant?**
Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) – Regulation 15 requirements: *A qualifying body is required to submit:* *(a) A map or statement which identifies the area to which the proposed neighbourhood development plan relates*	A map identifying the neighbourhood plan area can be found in the Submission Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan (NP) – see Figure 1.1 in Chapter 1 Introduction (page 3).	Yes
(b) A consultation statement; (the statement must contain details of (a) those consulted, (b) how they were consulted, (c) summarises the main issues and concerns raised and (d) how these have been considered, and where relevant addressed in the proposed Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 15 (2) Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012).	(a) A Consultation Statement accompanies the Submission Hermitage NP. Chapter 3 of the Consultation Statement includes details of statutory and local consultees consulted. These include: • Local Planning Authorities which adjoin West Berkshire • Parish and Town Councils within and adjoining West Berkshire • Local organisations, eg. Primary School, Hermitage Village Hall users, Holy trinity Church. • Local landowners • Local businesses, eg. pubs, Hermitage Post Office and Store, Downland Surgery. • Environment Agency	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
	• Historic England • Mid and West Berks Local Access Forum • Mobile UK • National Grid • National Highways • Natural England • NHS England South East • NHS Newbury and District Clinical Commissioning Group • North Wessex Downs AONB • Police and Crime Commissioner • Scottish and Southern Electricity • Sport England • Thames Water • The National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups • West Berkshire Heritage Forum The Consultation Statement also indicates that a flyer was delivered to all households within Hermitage Parish. (b) The way in which interested parties were consulted is set out within paragraphs 3.1 to 3.4 of the Consultation Statement. This explains that statutory consultees and other parties were sent email notifications. Flyers were delivered to every household in the Parish, posters were displayed throughout the village, and announcements were made on the Hermitage Village Facebook and in the Pathfinder magazine. Paper copies were made available at three locations within Hermitage, whilst the plan was also made available to view online.	

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
	(c) A summary of the main issues and concerns raised as a result of the pre-submission consultation are contained within Appendix B of the Consultation Statement. (d) The pre-submission consultation representations can be found within Appendix B. This appendix also details the response to each representation received and how they have been considered in the Submission Hermitage NP.	
(c) The proposed neighbourhood development plan;	The Local Planning Authority received the Submission Hermitage NP on 17 February 2023. It was accompanied by: <u>Core documents:</u> • Consultation Statement • Basic Conditions Statement • Hermitage Strategic Environmental Assessment / Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report – Consultation Version (October 2022) • Hermitage Strategic Environmental Assessment / Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report – Post Consultation Version (November 2022) • Hermitage Strategic Environmental Assessment / Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Decision (November 2022) <u>Evidence documents:</u> • AECOM (2022) Hermitage Design Guidelines and Codes, for Hermitage Parish Council • Arc4 (2021) Hermitage Housing Needs Survey, for Hermitage Parish Council • Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing, Second Edition	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
	• David Lock Associates (2019) West Berkshire Density Pattern Book, for West Berkshire District Council • DEFRA (2015) Non-statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems • GL Hearn (2016) Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment, for West Berkshire Council • Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan Group (2023) Hermitage Green Spaces Audit • Hermitage Parish Council (2014) Hermitage Footpaths, Bridleways and Byways • Iceni (2022) West Berkshire Housing Needs Assessment Update, for West Berkshire District Council • Institute of Lighting Professionals (2021) Guidance Note 1 for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light, GN01/21 • NHBC (2021) Biodiversity in new housing developments: creating wildlife-friendly communities, NF89 • West Berkshire Council (2018) Sustainable Drainage Systems Supplementary Planning Document • Wildlife Trusts (2018) Homes for people and wildlife	
(d) A statement explaining how the proposed neighbourhood development plan meets the 'basic conditions', i.e. the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act. The local planning authority has to be satisfied that a basic conditions statement has been submitted but it is not required at this stage to consider whether the draft plan or order meets the basic conditions. (PPG - Paragraph: 053 Reference ID: 41-053- 20140306)	A Basic Conditions Statement accompanies the Submission Hermitage NP. This considers each Basic Condition in turn and explains how the policies in the plan meets these.	Yes
(e) Environmental Assessment; The Plan needs to be submitted with one of the following:	Hermitage Parish Council requested a HRA screening opinion on 23 September 2023, and provided a draft version of the NDP. This included all the necessary information that WBDC required	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
(i) a statement of reasons for a determination under regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 that the proposal is unlikely to have significant environmental effects OR (ii) an environmental report in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 ((Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.) If an Environmental Report is required, then this needs to have been subject to the required level of consultation and should comply with the government's SEA guidance. In terms of consultation, the 'consultation bodies' (Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England) must have been consulted at scoping stage (for 5 weeks). There is no requirement for public consultation on the scoping report. The draft Environmental Report on the pre-submission neighbourhood plan will need to be subject to public consultation for 6 weeks. The draft Environmental Report must be made available at the same time as the draft plan, as an integral part of the consultation process, and the relationship between the two documents clearly indicated. (See A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive, ODPM – 2005)	for the purposes of conducting an HRA screening assessment. The final determination was issued on 29 November 2022 following a 5-week consultation with the three statutory bodies in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The screening concluded that the NDP will not give rise to significant effects on Habitats Sites either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. The screening report was submitted alongside the NP.	
The draft neighbourhood Plan should be checked to ensure it is not a 'repeat' proposal. If so, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) can decline to consider the plan (1990 Act Schedule 4B Paragraph 5 and Regulation 18).	The Submission Hermitage NP is not a repeat proposal.	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
The body submitting the neighbourhood plan is authorised to act (2004 P & CP Act as amended by Localism Act 2011 Section 38 A (2) and 1990 Act schedule 4B as it applies- 61F (2)).	The qualifying body is Hermitage Parish Council. The neighbourhood area was designated on 26 April 2019. Hermitage Parish Council, as the qualifying body, have formally (at a Parish Council meeting on 16 February 2023) resolved to submit the NP to WBDC. The Plan was produced by the Hermitage NP Steering Group, a group of volunteers, having been commissioned to do so by the Parish Council.	Yes
The pre-submission publication requirements need to have been satisfied. Before submission to the LPA the qualifying body should: 1. Publicise (but this does not have to be on a web site) in a way that is likely to bring to the attention of people who live work or carry on business in the area details of: (a) the proposals (b) when and where they can be inspected (c) how to make representations, and (d) the deadline for making representations – not less than 6 weeks from first publicised. 2. Consult any consultation body whose interests they consider may be affected by the proposals for a NP (please see Appendix A below). 3. Send a copy of the NP to the LPA. (Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.	The Consultation Statement demonstrates that these requirements have been satisfied: 1. The Regulation 14 consultation version of the plan has complied with the regulations, and this is evidenced by the Consultation Statement which accompanies the Submission Hermitage NP. It shows in Chapter 3 that the Regulation 14 consultation was publicised by a variety of means including a leaflet drop to all households, on the Hermitage Village Facebook page, in a local magazine, and posters were displayed around the village. The plan was available to view online at https://hermitage.org.uk/NDP14. The publicity material also explained how representations could be made and the address and website to be used. The consultation lasted for 6 weeks and ran from 24 October 2022 to 5 December 2022. 2. The Consultation Statement includes a list of Statutory Consultees and non-statutory consultees who were consulted as part of the Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation. This is included in Chapter 3 of the Consultation Statement.	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
	3. The NP Steering Group emailed WBDC on 9 October 2022 and the NP was included as an attachment. A notification letter was also attached and this included a link to the consultation documents on the Hermitage Parish Council website.	
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 Regulations 105 and 106: *A qualifying body which submits a proposal for a neighbourhood development plan must provide such information as the competent authority may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment under regulation 105 or to enable them to determine whether that assessment is required*	On 29 November 2022, WBDC issued its screening opinion concerning the need for a HRA in relation to the Hermitage NP. The screening process undertaken concluded that a HRA was not required. The three 'consultation bodies' were consulted on the screening opinion, and responses were received from Historic England and Natural England who both agreed that a HRA was not required. No response was received from the Environment Agency.	Yes
Meets the definition of a 'neighbourhood development plan': *"A plan which sets out policies (however expressed) in relation to the development and use and of land in the whole or any part of a particular neighbourhood area specified in the plan"* (2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act as amended by Localism Act 2011 Section 38 A (2))	The Submission Hermitage NP meets the definition of a 'neighbourhood development plan'.	Yes
Meets the scope of neighbourhood plan provisions, ie. specifies the period for which it covers, does not include provision about development that is 'excluded development' (as set out in section 61K of the 1990 Act) and does not relate to more than one neighbourhood area. (2004 Act s 38B (1, 2) (4))	The Submission Hermitage NP specifies that it covers the period 2022 to 2039. The Submission Hermitage NP does not contain policies relating to 'excluded development'. It does not relate to more than the neighbourhood area.	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
Meaning of 'excluded development': The following development is excluded development for the purposes of section 61J— (a) development that consists of a county matter within paragraph 1(1)(a) to (h) of Schedule 1, (b) development that consists of the carrying out of any operation, or class of operation, prescribed under paragraph 1(j) of that Schedule (waste development) but that does not consist of development of a prescribed description, (c) development that falls within Annex 1 to Council Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (as amended from time to time), (d) development that consists (whether wholly or partly) of a nationally significant infrastructure project (within the meaning of the Planning Act 2008), (e) prescribed development or development of a prescribed description; and (f) development in a prescribed area or an area of a prescribed description.		

Conclusion: West Berkshire District Council confirms that the Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan meets the legislative requirements.

Where the draft neighbourhood plan submitted to a Local Planning Authority meets the requirements in the legislation, the Local Planning Authority must publicise the neighbourhood plan for a minimum of 6 weeks, invite comments, notify any consultation body referred to in the consultation statement and send the draft neighbourhood plan to independent examination (see regulations 16, 17, 23 and 24 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), Planning Practice Guidance - Paragraph: 054 Reference ID: 41-054-20140306).

Following examination, the Council will determine whether or not the plan is ready for a public referendum or if further modifications are required (Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as varied by s38A & 38C of the Town and Country Planning Act)). Please note that all references to primary and secondary legislation are to those enactments as amended.

Appendix A – Consultation Bodies

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Schedule 1 Consultation bodies that the Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum should consult (at pre-submission stage):

- In a London Borough, the Mayor of London
- A Local Planning Authority, county council or parish council any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the Local Planning Authority
- The Coal Authority
- The Homes and Communities Agency (now known as Homes England)
- Natural England
- The Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
- National Highways
- The Marine Management Organisation
- Any person to whom the electronic communications code applies, or who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the area of the Local Planning Authority
- Where they exist a Primary Care Trust, licensee under the Electricity Act 1989, Licensee of the Gas Act 1986, sewerage undertaker and water undertaker
- Voluntary bodies whose activities benefit all or part of the neighbourhood area
- Bodies representing the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the neighbourhood area
- Bodies representing the interests of different religious groups in the neighbourhood area and
- Bodies representing the interests of disabled people in the neighbourhood area.

Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan

Committee considering report:	Council
Date of Committee:	5 October 2023
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Tony Vickers
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	12 September 2023
Report Author:	Laila Bassett
Forward Plan Ref:	C4433

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To seek approval for the submission of the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for independent examination.

2 Recommendation

2.1 To resolve that the Cold Ash NDP can be sent for independent examination under Regulation 17 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	For the past few years, the Government has had a support programme in place to support the role of Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in the neighbourhood planning process. The support programme has recently been extended to cover the period 2023/24 and LPAs can make the following claims: • £20,000 in areas where a plan has not previously been adopted. The claim can only be made once the LPA has issued a decision statement detailing their intention to send a plan to referendum. This would apply to the Cold Ash NDP. • £5,000 for the first five neighbourhood areas designated. West Berkshire no longer qualify for this support. • £10,000 for substantive modifications to a NDP which require examination but not referendum because the

	nature of the plan remains unchanged. Once such a claim is made, further claims for the revisions of the NDP are restricted to every 5 years. • £20,000 for a full review and replacement of an adopted NDP or more substantive modifications to a NDP which require examination and referendum. Once such a claim is made, further claims for the revisions of the NDP are restricted to every 5 years. The cost to the council is largely through officer time, and in the organisation of the independent examination and referendum. It is estimated that approximately 80 - 90 hours of officer time is required to support a community develop a neighbourhood plan, at a cost of approximately £2,500. This is based on the time given to support the development of the Stratfield Mortimer NDP. Most NDP examinations are held by way of written representation, and the cost for this is expected to be £5,700. Should the independent examiner choose to conduct the examination through earing sessions, then the cost will be £8,000. The Council has, via a competitive tendering process, appointed Intelligent Plans and Examinations (IPe) to supply an examiner for the independent examination. IPe have quoted a fixed price for written representation examinations and a fixed price for formal hearings. On average referendums cost £5,000 per ballot box to deliver, plus the officer time associated with arranging the referendum.
Human Resource:	Not applicable
Legal:	An adopted NDP forms part of the development plan. The relevant legislation setting out the neighbourhood planning process is included in the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). Parish/Town Councils have the responsibility for leading the process; however local planning authorities have a significant role in assisting certain stages of the process and ensuring that certain criteria are met. The procedure comprises a number of stages which following submission to the Local Planning Authority become a statutory function who must undertake public consultation and examination. If the NDP is found to be satisfactory, a local referendum must take place (funded by the

	LPA) where more than 50% of those voting must agree to it, before the NDP is brought into legal force and becomes part of the development plan.			
Risk Management:	Not applicable			
Property:	Not applicable			
Policy:	National planning policy makes provision for the development of Neighbourhood Planning. An adopted plan forms part of the district's development plan.			
	Positive	**Neutral**	**Negative**	**Commentary**
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		✓		Neutral impact as neighbourhood plans applies to all
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		✓		Neutral impact as neighbourhood plans applies to all
Environmental Impact:	✓			Neighbourhood plans, in particular NDPs, can include policies which seek to protect the environment.
Health Impact:		✓		Not applicable
ICT Impact:		✓		Not applicable

Digital Services Impact:		✓		Not applicable
Council Strategy Priorities:	✓			Having a neighbourhood plan meets Priority 2 – Supporting everyone to reach their full potential – Enabling residents and communities to help themselves and others. In addition, when neighbourhood plans are adopted at Referendum they will also meet Priority 4 – Develop local infrastructure, including housing to support and grow the local economy and Priority 5 – Maintain a Green District by minimising the impact on the environment.
Core Business:		✓		
Data Impact:		✓		
Consultation and Engagement:	Bryan Lyttle, Planning Policy Manager Eric Owens, Service Director – Development & Regulation Katharine Makant, Service Lead – Planning & Economy Sharon Armour, Principal Lawyer – Planning & Governance Planning Advisory Group Corporate Board Operations Board			

4 Executive Summary

4.1 The Cold Ash NDP has been prepared by Cold Ash Parish Council assisted by community volunteers. The purpose of the Cold NDP is to provide planning policies to guide development in the designated Cold Ash Neighbourhood Area. The Neighbourhood Area covers the Parish of Cold Ash.

4.2 The NDP contains a series of Development Management policies which cover the following themes:

- Spatial strategy
- Character, design and heritage

- Environment and landscape
- Getting around the Parish
- Community and social
- Commercial and local employment.

4.3 The NDP does not include any allocations for residential or employment development.

4.4 Cold Ash Parish Council undertook a consultation on a draft version of the plan (known as the Regulation 14 pre-submission version) between 1 March and 19 April 2023. In total 67 representations were received including one from West Berkshire District Council (WBDC). Details of the comments received and any subsequent changes made to the Plan by Cold Ash Parish Council prior to its submission to WBDC, are set out within the Consultation Statement included at Appendix D.

4.5 The NDP was submitted to WBDC on 20 June 2023, and upon submission WBDC took on responsibility for taking the NDP forward. If a NDP is to progress beyond the submission stage, a set of submission requirements as defined in legislation must be met. A legal compliance check was undertaken (see Appendix F) which confirmed that the submission requirements have been met.

4.6 In line with legislation, the submitted Plan must be publicised for a 6-week period. This took place between 21 July until Friday 1 September 2023. 12 representations were received and these are included in Appendix G. In addition, WBDC has also provided a response, and this is included in Appendix H.

4.7 Following the close of the 6-week publicity period, the NDP must undergo independent examination. The submitted NDP, its accompanying documents, and any representations received must be passed on to an appointed examiner. The examiner will consider if the NDP meets a set of tests known as Basic Conditions, with or without modifications. A report will be issued at the end of the examination by the independent examiner.

4.8 Council is now asked to agree that the Hermitage NDP can progress to independent examination. The NDP has been assessed by WBDC to meet the submission requirements as set out in legislation, and there are no reasons why it should not now progress to independent examination.

5 Supporting information

Introduction

5.1 The 2011 Localism Act has encouraged communities and local people to come together and shape the future of their local areas through neighbourhood plans.

5.2 West Berkshire is predominantly parished and the legislation requires that they are developed by Parish and Town Councils assisted by community volunteers. However, we have several parishes that are so small they do not meet the threshold and have a Parish Forum meaning they must set up a Neighbourhood Forum to develop such plans, provided they meet the requirements of the legislation. Plans must be in general conformity with national planning policies and the strategic policies contained within Local Plans.

5.3 Neighbourhood plans must be subject to consultation, independent examination and a referendum. If successful at referendum they form part of the statutory development plan for West Berkshire. In other words, they are used to determine the outcome of planning applications.

5.4 There are three different types of neighbourhood plans:

- **Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs):** a planning document that contains planning policies. Site allocations can also be included.
- **Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDOs):** grant planning permission for specific types of development in a particular area; and
- **Community Right to Build Orders (CRtBOs):** grant planning permission for small-scale community-led developments.

Background

5.5 Cold Ash Parish Council, as the qualifying body, successfully applied for the designation of the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Area on 19 March 2018 under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. Since the designation of the Neighbourhood Area, Cold Ash Parish Council alongside its residents, have been working together to create a plan and they produced a draft of this (known as the Regulation 14 pre-submission version) in March 2023 which they consulted on. Details of the comments received and how they were taken into consideration is set out in Appendix D Consultation Statement.

5.6 The NDP contains 16 Development Management policies that have been grouped around the following themes:

- Spatial strategy
- Character, design and heritage
- Environment and landscape
- Getting around the Parish
- Community and social
- Commercial and local employment.

5.7 Whilst NDPs can include site allocations, the Cold Ash NDP does not contain any.

5.8 Cold Ash Parish Council submitted the NDP (see Appendix C) to WBDC on 20 June 2023. Accompanying the NDP was the Consultation Statement and the Basic Conditions Statement (Appendix E). After submission, responsibility for taking the plan forward lies with the LPA.

5.9 The first task upon submission is for the LPA to check that the submission requirements set out in Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and Schedule 4b of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted into Schedule 10 of the Localism Act 2011) have been met. The Legal Compliance Check of the Cold Ash NDP (see Appendix F) confirms that the submission requirements have been complied with.

5.10 If the submission requirements have been met, then Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) requires plans to be publicised for a 6-week period as soon as possible after submission. The Cold Ash

NDP was publicised and comments were invited from the public and stakeholders between 21 July and 1 September 2023. 12 representations were received, and a summary of these is included within Appendix G.

Proposals

5.11 In line with Regulation 17 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), the Cold Ash NDP must now be subject to independent examination. The independent examination will consider whether the NDP meets a set of tests known as Basic Conditions. A NDP will meet the Basic Conditions if:

- it has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the plan;
- it contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- it is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan; and
- it does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations.

5.12 Regulation 32 of the of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) also prescribes the following Basic Condition:

- The making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017(7).

5.13 The NDP, its accompanying documents, in addition to the representations made during the 6-week publicity period will be passed on to the appointed examiner.

5.14 Following the independent examination, the examiner will issue a report. If the NDP meets the Basic Conditions, the examiner will recommend that the plan proceed to the referendum. However, the examiner may recommend that modifications need to be made to the plan so it meets the Basic Conditions before it can proceed to referendum.

5.15 The examiner's report however is not binding, and only LPAs can decide if a NDP can ultimately proceed to referendum. Following the receipt of the examiner's report, WBDC will need to determine if the NDP meets the Basic Conditions, is compatible with the Convention rights, complies with the definition of a NDP, and the provisions that can be made by a NDP. This determination will be set out in a Decision Statement.

5.16 The Decision Statement will need to be endorsed by Council. If the Decision Statement recommends that the NDP proceed to referendum, Council will also be asked to agree that the NDP be adopted immediately after the votes have been counted so that it becomes part of the development plan for West Berkshire.

6 Options for consideration

6.1 A do-nothing approach was considered and rejected because Regulation 17 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) requires that neighbourhood plans must be subject to independent examination.

6.2 LPAs have a statutory duty to assist qualifying bodies preparing neighbourhood plans, and this includes taking responsibility for taking the NDP forward once it has been submitted.

6.3 WBDC have undertaken a legal compliance check of the Cold Ash NDP which confirms that the submission requirements as set out in legislation have been complied with. There is therefore no reason that the Cold Ash NDP should not progress to independent examination.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Cold Ash Parish Council submitted the Cold Ash NDP to WBDC on 20 June 2023, and WBDC now have responsibility for taking the NDP forward.

7.2 WBDC reviewed the submitted NDP and its accompanying documents, and concluded that the submission requirements, as defined in legislation, have been met.

7.3 In line with legislation, the submitted NDP was publicised for a 6-week period between 21 July until Friday 1 September 2023, and comments were sought. Now that the NDP has been publicised, it must undergo independent examination. The submitted NDP, its accompanying documents, and any representations received will be passed on to an appointed examiner.

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment Stage 1

8.2 Appendix B – Data Protection Impact assessment – Stage 1

8.3 Appendix C – Cold Ash NDP

8.4 Appendix D – Cold Ash NDP Consultation Statement

8.5 Appendix E – Cold Ash NDP Basic Conditions Statement

8.6 Appendix F – Legal Compliance Check of the Cold Ash NDP

8.7 Appendix G – Summary of responses to the Regulation 16 publication consultation

8.8 Appendix H – WBDC comments on the submission Cold Ash NDP

Background Papers:

None

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☐ No: ☒

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	☒
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	☐
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	☐
Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees or Task Groups within preceding six months	☐
Item is Urgent Key Decision	☐
Report is to note only	☐

Wards affected: Chieveley and Cold Ash, Newbury Clay Hill (part), Thatcham West (part), Thatcham North West (part).

Officer details:

Name: Laila Bassett
Job Title: Principal Planning Officer
Tel No: 01635 519 540
E-mail: laila.bassett@westberks.gov.uk

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:	To resolve that the Cold Ash NDP can be sent for independent examination under Regulation 17 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
Summary of relevant legislation:	The relevant legislation setting out the neighbourhood planning process is included in the following: • Localism Act 2011; • Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) • Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) • Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's priorities for improvement? • Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes • Support everyone to reach their full potential • Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire • Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy Maintain a green district • Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships	**Yes** ☐ **No** ☒
Name of Budget Holder:	Bryan Lyttle
Name of Service/Directorate:	Development and Regulation / Place
Name of assessor:	Laila Bassett
Date of assessment:	22 August 2023
Version and release date (if applicable):	

Is this a …. ?		Is this policy, strategy, function or service … ?	
Policy	**Yes ☒ No ☐**	**New or proposed**	**Yes ☒ No ☐**
Strategy	**Yes ☐ No ☒**	**Already exists and is being reviewed**	**Yes ☐ No ☒**
Function	**Yes ☐ No ☒**	**Is changing**	**Yes ☐ No ☒**
Service	**Yes ☐ No ☒**		

(1) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	To help deliver the government's policy for neighbourhood planning in the parish of Cold Ash.
Objectives:	To allow the community of Cold Ash to development planning policies to shape the future of their communities.
Outcomes:	Completion and adoption of a NDP for the parish of Cold Ash.
Benefits:	If the Cold Ash NDP receives a successful 'yes' vote at referendum then it will hold the same weight as the Local Plan and form part of the development plan for West Berkshire. Cold Ash Parish Council will receive 25% of CIL receipts should the plan be successful at referendum. Delivery of government policy regarding neighbourhood planning. Give more control to the local community of Cold Ash to shape their community going forward.

(2) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?		
Group Affected	**What might be the effect?**	**Information to support this**
Age Disability Gender Reassignment Marriage and Civil Partnership	Neighbourhood planning should have a positive impact on all groups. Communities are more aware of the specific groups and issues within their communities and therefore,	Neighbourhood Planning legislation, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Practice Guidance

Pregnancy and Maternity	can ensure that minority groups and those with protected characteristics are fully informed of the process and are invited to fully engage with the development of the neighbourhood plan. Neighbourhood Planning has the opportunity to fully engage all members of society ensuring that they all have a say in the future development of their community. Neighbourhood planning should have a positive impact on all groups. Communities are more aware of the specific groups and issues within their communities and therefore, can ensure that minority groups and those with protected characteristics are fully informed of the process and are invited to fully engage with the development of the neighbourhood plan. Neighbourhood Planning has the opportunity to fully engage all members of society ensuring that they all have a say in the future development of their community. Neighbourhood planning should have a positive impact on all groups. Communities are more aware of the specific groups and issues within their communities and therefore, can ensure that minority groups and those with	
Race		
Religion or Belief		
Sex		
Sexual Orientation		

	protected characteristics are fully informed of the process and are invited to fully engage with the development of the neighbourhood plan. Neighbourhood Planning has the opportunity to fully engage all members of society ensuring that they all have a say in the future development of their community.	

Further Comments:
None

(3) Result	
Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?	**Yes ☐ No ☒**
Neighbourhood Planning allows communities to shape the future of their local area in land use planning terms.	
Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	**Yes ☐ No ☒**
Development of a neighbourhood plan should have a positive impact upon a local community as all members of the community are encouraged to engage with the process of developing the plan.	
(4) Identify next steps as appropriate:	
EqIA Stage 2 required	**Yes ☐ No ☒**
Owner of EqIA Stage Two:	
Timescale for EqIA Stage Two:	

Name: Laila Bassett **Date: 22 August 2023**

Appendix B

Data Protection Impact Assessment – Stage O

The General Data Protection Regulations require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for certain projects that have a significant impact on the rights of data subjects.

Should you require additional guidance in completing this assessment, please refer to the Information Management Officer via dp@westberks.gov.uk

Directorate:	Place
Service:	Development and Regulation
Team:	Planning Policy
Lead Officer:	Laila Bassett
Title of Project/System:	Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan
Date of Assessment:	22 August 2023

Do you need to do a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)?

	Yes	No
Will you be processing SENSITIVE or "special category" personal data? Note – sensitive personal data is described as "*data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation*"	☐	☒
Will you be processing data on a large scale? Note – Large scale might apply to the number of individuals affected OR the volume of data you are processing OR both	☐	☒
Will your project or system have a "social media" dimension? Note – will it have an interactive element which allows users to communicate directly with one another?	☐	☒
Will any decisions be automated? Note – does your system or process involve circumstances where an individual's input is "scored" or assessed without intervention/review/checking by a human being? Will there be any "profiling" of data subjects?	☐	☒

	Yes	No
Will your project/system involve CCTV or monitoring of an area accessible to the public?	☐	☒
Will you be using the data you collect to match or cross-reference against another existing set of data?	☐	☒
Will you be using any novel, or technologically advanced systems or processes? Note – this could include biometrics, "internet of things" connectivity or anything that is currently not w idely utilised	☐	☒

If you answer "Yes" to any of the above, you will probably need to complete Data Protection Impact Assessment - Stage Two. If you are unsure, please consult with the Information Management Officer before proceeding.

Appendix C

Cold Ash NDP

See separate attachment

Appendix D

Cold Ash NDP Consultation Statement

See separate attachment

Appendix E

Cold Ash NDP Basic Conditions Statement

See separate attachment

Appendix F

Legal Compliance Check of the Cold Ash NDP

See separate attachment

Appendix G

Summary of responses received to the Regulation 16 publication consultation

See separate attachment

Appendix H

WBDC comments on the submission Cold Ash NDP

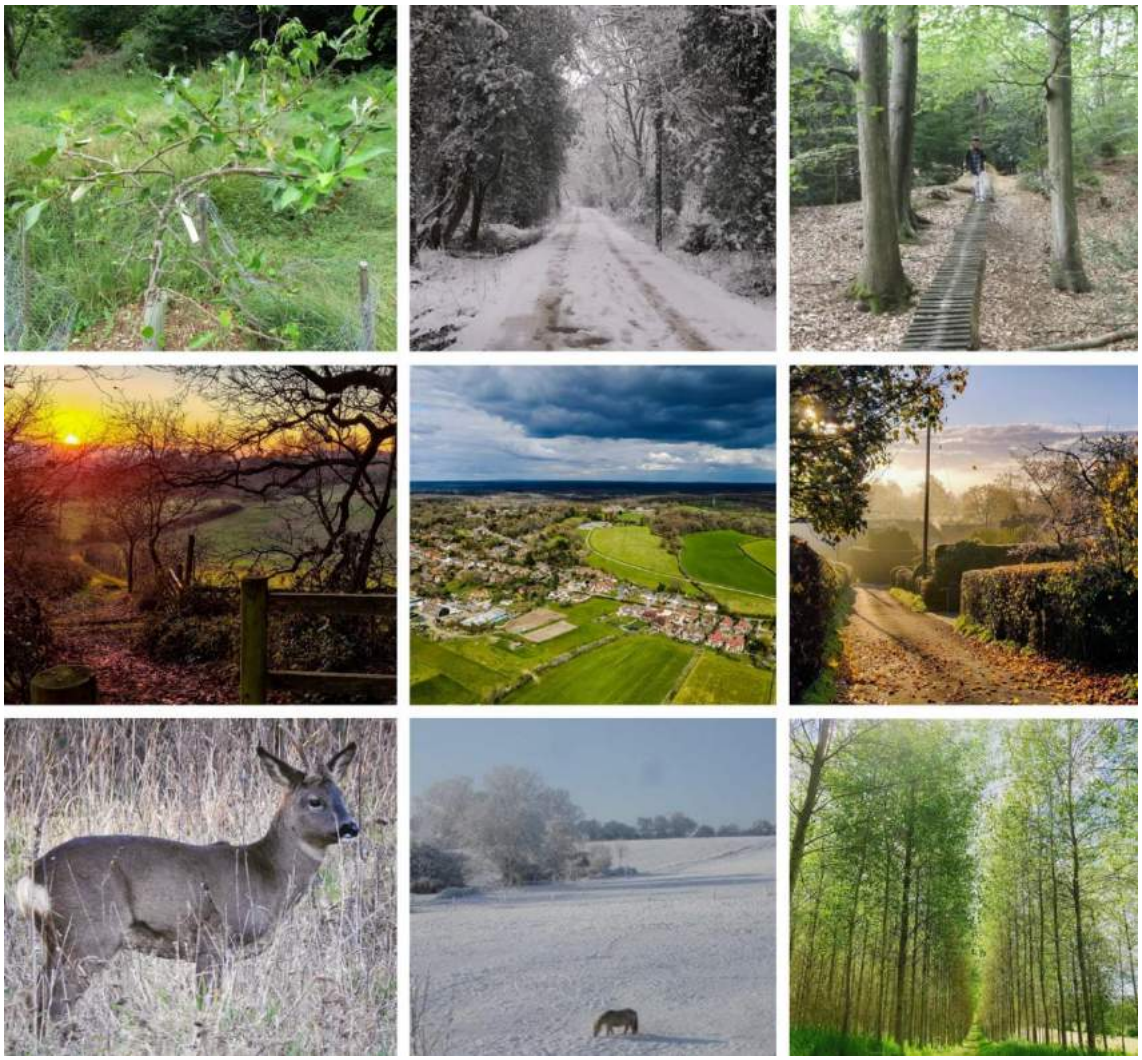
See separate attachment

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Cold Ash Parish

Neighbourhood Development Plan

2021 to 2039



Submission Version Plan for consultation at Regulation 16

June 2023

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Front cover images were supplied by parishioners as part of the photographic competition that took places to support the Neighbourhood Development Plan Open Day in 2021.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cold Ash parish is diverse in nature, sitting partially within an area of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and comprising two village settlements, elements of two urban settlements, a small industrial area and large areas of countryside that includes wooded areas and agricultural land. It also has a rich history, centred around the villages of Cold Ash and Ashmore Green, and the hamlet of Henwick. It has therefore been essential that this plan takes account of this variety, aiming to protect those rural and historical elements that give the parish its identity, and recognising that the urban and industrial areas have differing needs. To address this, our policies recognise the assets within the parish, many of which are the result of the parish being among the highest points in Berkshire. These include policies on iconic views, open green space, biodiversity and the blue and green infrastructure, and dark skies. Our policies on heritage cover protection of assets, which include key buildings and our sunken lanes. We intend to use these policies to assess development within the parish as well as the potential impact on the parish from neighbouring, adjacent, or nearby developments.

To handle the varying design considerations of the different areas of the parish, we have identified three distinct zones:

1. Villages Zone – comprising the villages of Cold Ash and Ashmore Green, each with their own distinctive characteristics.
2. Urban Fringe Zone – comprising the more urbanised areas found on the outskirts of the Parish, which adjoin Thatcham (Southend and Florence Gardens) and Newbury (Manor Park). These areas are essentially part of those larger conurbations.
3. Rural Zone – comprising land within the Parish but located outside the other zones, where little to no development is expected to take place. If exceptional approval is given, then the design principles for the Villages Zone would apply.

The design considerations for each zone support the areas in question, with additional clarity being provided on the Villages Zone; the design considerations for the Urban Fringe Zone are to be in-line with those of the settlements of which they are part.

Movement around the parish is a recognised issue, as many of the roads are little more than upgraded country tracks, several without public rights of way and some are single-track sunken lanes. The only substantial road is north-to-south through the centre of the parish. Resolving these issues would be a challenge, as any potential improvements would adversely impact on the character of the parish. It is for this reason that this plan has been developed based on the premise that no significant changes will be made to the road network (non-policy actions have been included to address the management of motorised traffic). The parish is well served with a network of Public Rights of Way (PROW), which are heavily used by pedestrians. Whilst the parish doesn't lend itself to bicycle traffic, being so hilly, there is a desire to develop further cycle networks, away from the main highways. Further non-policy actions are identified to further explore opportunities in this area.

Parking is a significant issue within the parish, particularly around the two schools at drop-off and pick-up times. These have been known issues for many years and all actions to address them to date have not had the desired effect. Further options will be explored during the lifetime of this plan. It is hoped that this plan meets our vision of maintaining the parish as: ***A beautiful, desirable place to live, preserving the distinctive rural villages of Cold Ash and Ashmore Green, with their own identities,***

whilst also providing a variety of settings and dwellings across the whole parish that take advantage of modern infrastructure and transport links to local towns and beyond.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cold Ash Parish Council thanks all those who have so generously given their time to make it possible to develop the Cold Ash NDP:

- All NDP Steering Group members, past and present, including Peter Adams, Anu Bailey, Bernard Clarke, Peter Ebdon, Marie Fenner, Richard Marsh, Ivor McArdle, Ian Mercer, Pete Murray, Ed Redhill, David Silsby, and Garth Simpson
- Alison Eardley, NDP consultant, without who's expert guidance this plan would have struggled to see the light of day
- Simon Vanstone for his highly detailed and comprehensive housing analysis
- Suzanne Jackson for her detailed work on the Design elements of the plan
- All those in the community who took the time to come to public events and respond to the questionnaires
- Volunteers who delivered leaflets and helped run events
- Linda Randall, Parish Clerk
- Members of West Berkshire Council for their support and engagement
- Entrants to the Neighbourhood Development Plan photograph competition

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

What is the Neighbourhood Development Plan?

1.1. This document is the Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan (CAPNDP). Its purpose is to guide land-use and set out locally specific planning policies, applicable in the period to 2039, that should be considered by anyone wishing to submit a planning application for development within the designated neighbourhood area.

1.2. The designated area shares its boundary with the parish boundary and was confirmed as a neighbourhood area by West Berkshire Council (WBC), as the local planning authority, on 19 March 2018. Figure 1 shows the designated Cold Ash Neighbourhood area.

1.3. The CAPNDP is being prepared in accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Development Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended).



Images show: View looking east towards Cold Ash from Public Right of Way 16; and view looking West from St. Mark's Church, Cold Ash

Who has prepared the Plan?

1.4. The Parish Council is the "Qualifying Body" leading on the development of the Plan and it established a Steering Group comprising local councillors and members of the community to oversee the process. In consultation with the local community, the Steering Group has put together a long-term vision for the parish and identified a series of objectives to deliver this. The process of producing the Plan has sought to involve the community as widely as possible and the different topic areas covered in the Plan are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance.

How is the Plan set out?

1.5. Each section of the plan covers a different topic; under each heading there is a justification for the policies, which provides the necessary understanding of the policy, what it is seeking to achieve and, where relevant, how it should be applied. The policies themselves are presented in the **green** boxes.

1.6. It is these policies, in parallel with the Local Plan policies, against which planning applications in Cold Ash parish will be assessed. It is advisable that, to understand the full context of any individual policy, each policy is read in conjunction with its supporting text and the relevant evidence documents that have been compiled to underpin the CAPNDP.

1.7. In addition to the policies, the Plan identifies local needs and community aspirations that are not met through the planning system, but which are nevertheless important to the well-being of the community. These projects will be met through community actions supported by a range of organisations, and these are set out in Section 10. The Plan also identifies priorities for any developer contributions, and a framework for monitoring and implementation.

1.8. This document has been designed to be read standalone so that the reader is informed sufficiently to understand it, what it means for the parish, and ultimately if applicable, to vote whether to approve it at the Parish Referendum.

1.9. That said, no single document can represent all the details or include all the content associated with a neighbourhood development plan and there are several other documents that form part of the full CAPNDP 'Reference Pack', to which all readers are welcome to refer, should they wish to obtain more details about general issues such as planning or more specific information about either the Local Plan or this NDP. Full details about this NDP Reference Pack are shown in Section 15.









1: Looking south towards Newbury and Thatcham from Footpath 17

2: Looking south on Cold Ash Hill

3: St Mark's Church

4: Henwick Old Farm

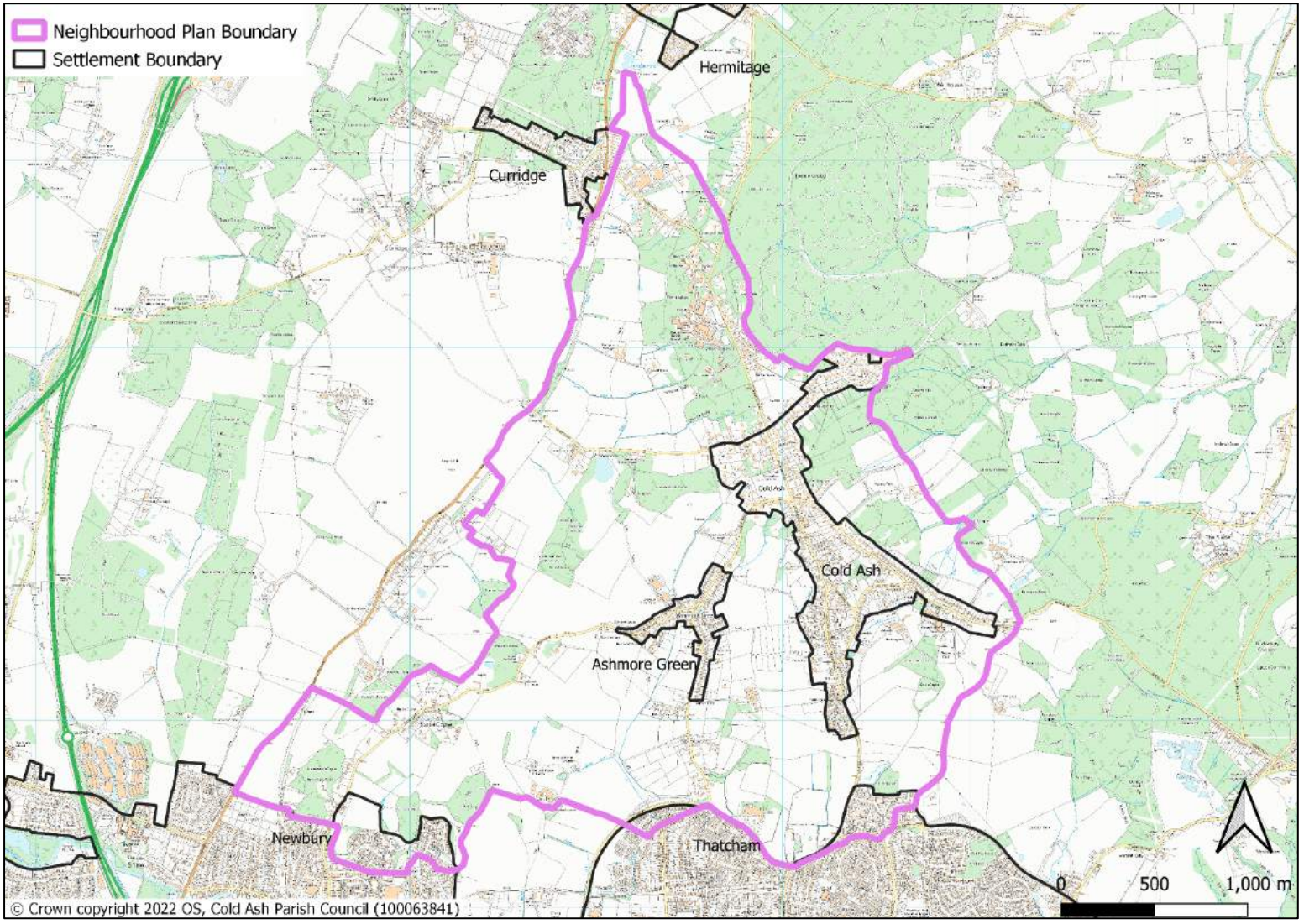


Figure 1: The designated Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan area covers the whole of the Parish of Cold Ash

The Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy

1.10. The CAPNDP has regard to the policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), most recently updated in July 2021. Paragraphs 29 and 30 state:

> *"Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan**. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies** (NB: Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area).*
>
> *Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, **the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict**; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently.*

Local Planning Policy

1.11. A Neighbourhood Plan needs to be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area. The current Development Plan for West Berkshire comprises:

- Core Strategy Development Document 2006 to 2026 (adopted 2012)
- Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (adopted May 2017)
- Saved policies from the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 to 2006 – as amended in July 2012 and May 2017
- South East Plan Natural Resource Management Policy 6 - relating to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
- West Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2022-2037 (adopted 1 December 2022)

1.12. The current Local Plan plans for development up to 2026 and, in line with the NPPF, must be kept up-to-date and look ahead over a minimum 15-year period. The Local Plan is therefore undergoing a review to cover the period to 2039. Upon adoption, the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022-2039 will replace in one document the first three existing documents mentioned above.

1.13. Of the sites allocated in Cold Ash in the Housing Site Allocations DPD 2006-2026, Policy HSA7 (St. Gabriels Farm The Ridge Cold Ash) has already been built out/nearing completion and Policy HSA6 (Poplar Farm Cold Ash) is not considered deliverable at this time.

1.14. The West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022-2039 (the LPR) was submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2023 so that it can undergo independent examination. The Local Development Scheme states that the Local Plan Review is anticipated to be adopted in September 2024.

1.15. Whilst the CAPNDP must conform to the strategic Local Plan policies of the adopted Local Plan, as the LPR is at a fairly advanced stage, the CAPNDP has sought to synchronise with it.

1.16. Should the CAPNDP be made prior to the adoption of the Local Plan Review, this could trigger a light touch review of the CAPNDP. This is considered further in Section 11.

What does the West Berkshire Local Plan Review say about Cold Ash?

1.17. For West Berkshire as whole, the LPR seeks to provide 8,721 to 9,146 net additional homes in West Berkshire for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2039; 513 to 538 dwellings per annum. The target figure of 538 dwellings per annum does not constitute a ceiling or cap to development. For the local economy, it seeks to deliver a minimum of 91,109 sqm commercial, industrial and office space.

1.18. The LPR's overarching strategy divides West Berkshire into three core spatial areas where Cold Ash Parish is located predominantly within the Newbury and Thatcham area, although a sliver to the east lies in the North Wessex Down Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) area. The LPR policies seek to support the existing role and separate identity of the villages by identifying settlement boundaries. It states that smaller rural settlements (Service Villages), such as Cold Ash village, may offer some limited and small-scale development potential, appropriate to the character and function of the village, to meet local needs through:

- Infill, changes of use or other minor development within the settlement boundary; and
- Non-strategic sites allocated for housing and economic development through other policies in this Plan or Neighbourhood Plans; and
- Rural exceptions affordable housing schemes.

1.19. Ashmore Green, as a smaller village with a settlement boundary, may be suited to minor infill.

1.20. A housing requirement figure (of 40 dwellings) was originally identified for Cold Ash within the emerging draft of the LPR that was published for a Regulation 18 consultation between December 2020 and February 2021. The Steering Group undertook site selection work to try and identify suitable sites to meet this requirement. Further information about this can be found in the Reference Pack (Section 15), notably the document, "Evidence underpinning the Spatial Strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan". Whilst this work identified one suitable site, it is located within the settlement boundary whereby there is a presumption in favour of development. The approach for the Local Plan has been not to allocate sites within settlement boundaries because the principle of development is already established. In light of the site selection work, the Submission version of the Local Plan Review did not identify a housing requirement for Cold Ash. It is considered that there are other sites that will meet the housing need in the District. For this reason, the CAPNDP does not seek to allocate housing and this position has been agreed with WBC. There may be scope to reassess this in any future review of the CAPNDP.

1.21. Further information about this is contained in the Reference Pack.

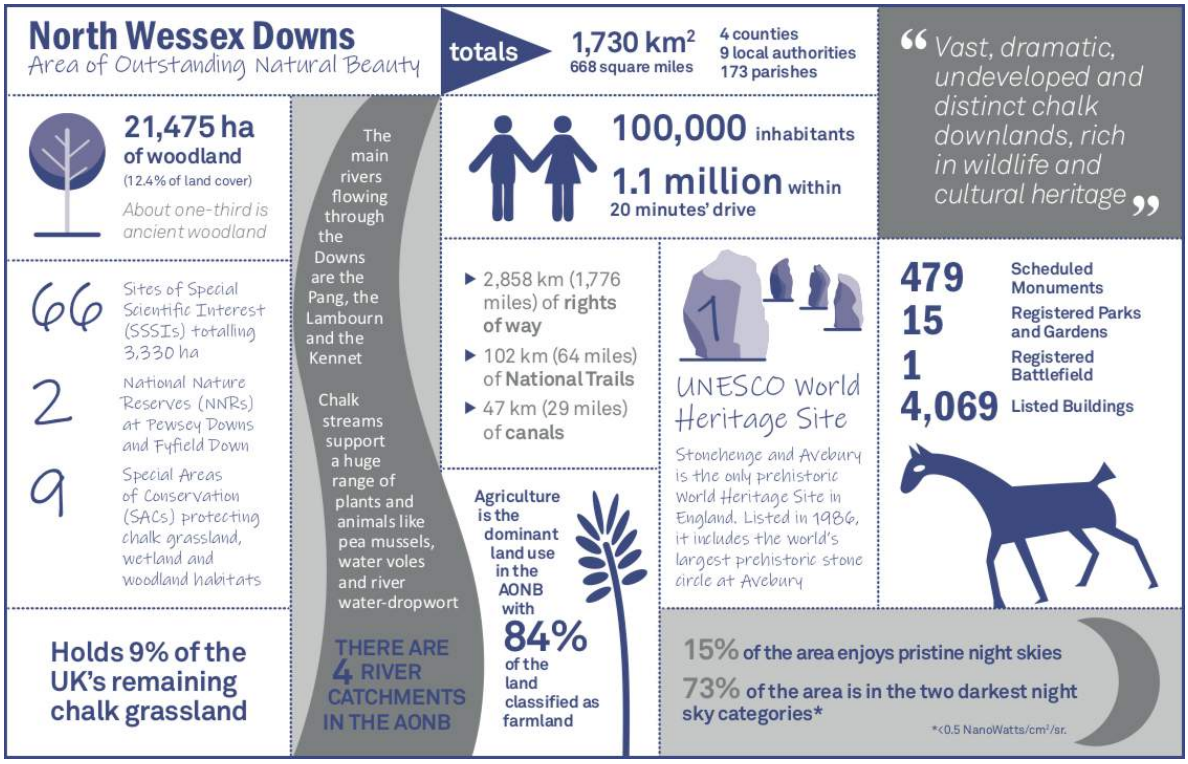
The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

1.22. Straddling four counties, the North Wessex Downs is one of Britain's most beautiful chalk landscapes, recognisable by its dramatic scarp slopes, swathes of ancient woodland and sheltered valleys criss-crossed by rivers and streams. As set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the primary purpose of the AONB is to 'conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area'.



The distinctive landscape of the North Wessex Downs

1.23. A small part of the north-eastern part of Cold Ash Parish is located within the eastern end of the AONB. Whilst the remainder of the parish sits outside the AONB, it does form part of the setting of the AONB and therefore the Wessex Downs Management Plan is relevant as is the AONB Design guidance.



Facts about the North Wessex Downs AONB (source: North Wessex AONB Unit)

Existing Parish policies

1.24. The Cold Ash Village Design Statement (VDS) was prepared in 2002 and was thoroughly reviewed during the process of producing this CAPNDP. Where content is still considered relevant, it has been incorporated into the policies of this Plan; as the CAPNDP carries greater weight than the VDS, the planning policies effectively replace it. The main differences between this NDP and the VDS are summarised as follows:

- The NDP applies across the whole parish, not just the villages of Ashmore Green and Cold Ash.
- The NDP ***policies*** carry more authority in terms of planning law than the previous VDS ***guidelines***. In practical terms this means that developers must take these policies into consideration and demonstrate how they comply with them when planning and implementing new housing developments.

Community engagement

1.25. Work on the CAPNDP has sought to engage as widely as possible with the community, local businesses, and others with an interest in Cold Ash. Activities have included local surveys, workshops, and exhibitions. Table 1 summarises the engagement activities, comprising four main overlapping stages. Full details of the consultation will be included in the Consultation Statement that will accompany the Submission Version Plan, in due course.

Table 1: Main stages of engagement activity

Date	Milestone	Key activities
Stage 1: 2017	**Establishment:** Setting up the SG committee structure and building capacity	• Steering Group and Working Groups established. • Training on neighbourhood planning. • Neighbourhood area formally designated. • Regular (monthly) SG meetings inaugurated. • Webpages developed. • Social media used to raise awareness, post invitations to meetings, etc. • Engagement and communications approach established.
Stage 2: 2018-2020	**Engagement:** Gathering and analysing evidence (from surveys, etc.).	• 3 x village public meetings held. • Engagement and activity on the Green Infrastructure Plan. • Exhibitions, including Village Show, Christmas Fayre. • Initial 'Village Development Survey". • Local Housing Needs Survey. • Parish-Wide questionnaire. • Working Groups fact-finding and preparing evidence base. • Meetings with LPA officers and committees. • Meetings with landowners and developers.
Stage 3: 2018-22	**Documentation:** Producing key documents, i.e. Draft Policies and Plan.	• Researching other NDPs • Selecting preferred format for CANP. • Response to emerging Local Plan consultation • Inputting findings from the NP process. • Initial drafting of Neighbourhood Plan policies and gaining feedback from the local community.
Stage 4: 2021-2023	**Finalising Policies & Plan:** Including final consultation and agreement via Referendum).	• Preparation of the Pre-Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan. • SEA/ HRA screening undertaken. • Regulation 14 consultation. • Submission Version Plan submitted to LPA.

1.26. Discussions with officers at WBC have taken place on each of the topic areas covered by the Plan. In addition, communication with local interest groups and neighbouring parishes has been undertaken.

Sustainability of the Neighbourhood Development Plan

1.27. **Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment:** The CAPNDP has been screened by WBC to ascertain whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and/or Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) will be required. Following consultation with the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England, the Screening Determination Statement, issued on 27 November 2022, concluded that neither an SEA nor an HRA are required.

1.28. **Nutrient neutrality:** At a strategic level, on 16 March 2022 Natural England declared a "Nutrient Neutrality" Zone (NNZ) for the River Lambourn and its catchment area, one of 27 catchments across 74 Local Planning Authorities that are affected.

1.29. In rivers and estuaries, increased levels of nutrients (especially nitrogen and phosphorus) can harm wildlife. These nutrients are affecting the condition of internationally protected rivers - such as the River Lambourn.

1.30. Natural England and the Government have provided advice and support to help local planners and developers tackle two challenges that can sometimes be seen as in competition: building the homes the country needs while also protecting and restoring nature.

1.31. Under the guidance provided by Natural England, local planning authorities and developers are advised on how planning proposals can stop the expected increase in nitrogen and phosphorus from a new development so that they can become nutrient neutral.

1.32. It will be important that there are no bad effects in order to meet the requirements of the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended).

1.33. This means that, for planning applications in the River Lambourn catchment area (and the River Test catchment area), WBC needs to consider the possibility of adverse effects, as a result of additional nutrient loads (including from residential developments), as part of a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). Figure 2 shows the River Lambourn catchment areas on a map, where the very western part of the neighbourhood plan area falls within this zone. Figure 3 shows the area of Cold Ash Parish that falls within the Nutrient Neutrality Zone.

1.34. New development proposals within, and next to, the designated area will require statements on how drainage and surface water runoff will be treated at the time of submission. Failure to provide this information may lead to an automatic refusal.

1.35. When submitting the Nutrient calculator you will also need to provide evidence that you have received permission for connection or have applied for connection to Thames Water systems and which precise wastewater treatment works you have applied to connect to. It is recommend that developers contact Thames Water to discuss their development proposals by using their pre app service. Cold Ash Parish Council has agreed that issues surrounding nutrient neutrality will be dealt with at the strategic level a opposed to through the neighbourhood plan.

1.36. **Infrastructure provision:** Development should be of the size and scale that it can be mitigated in the schools and other local service providers within Cold Ash. This would reduce the need for movements outside the village and improve the sustainability of any development.

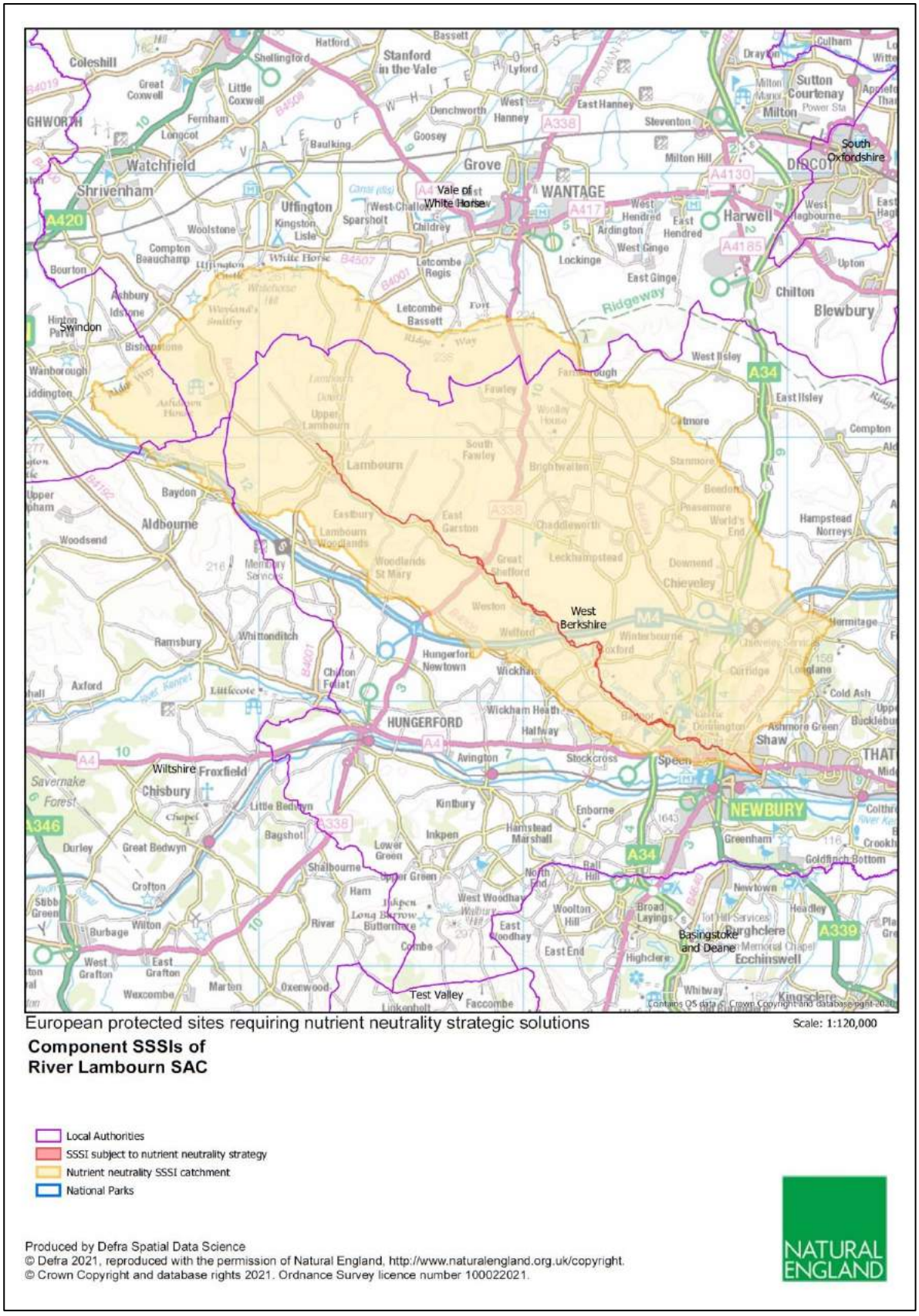


Figure 2: River Lambourn SAC Catchment Area

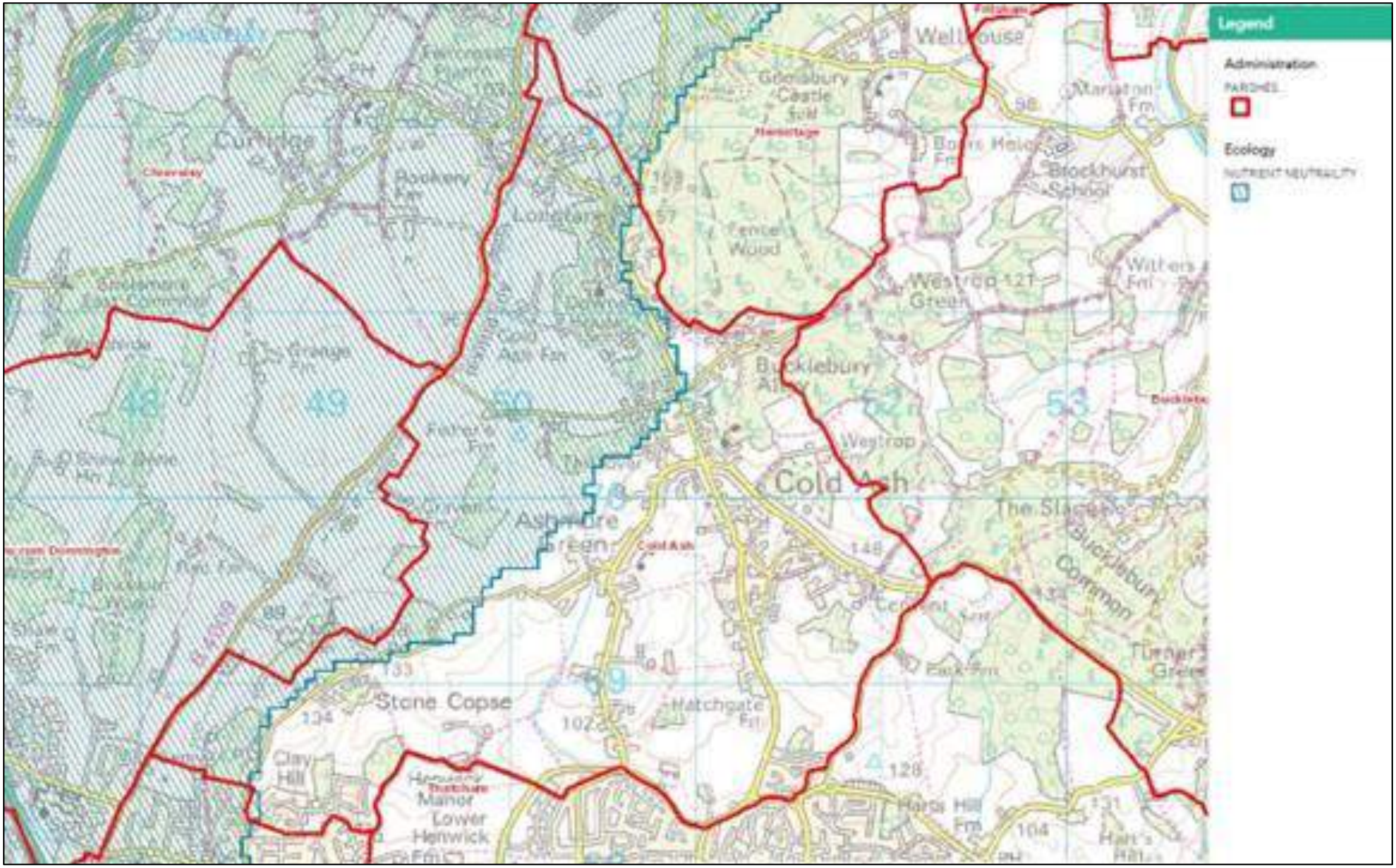


Figure 3: Map showing the area of Cold Ash Parish that falls within the Nutrient Neutrality Zone

2. OVERVIEW OF COLD ASH PARISH

2.1. **Location & Geography:** Cold Ash Parish lies in West Berkshire, centred around 51.42 degrees North and 1.27 degrees West (c SU 502 703). The parish boundary is loosely triangular in shape and lies on the northern boundary of Thatcham and parts of Newbury (Figure 4). It is also bounded by the parishes of Bucklebury to the east, Hermitage to the north, and Shaw-cum-Donnington and Chieveley to the west. It has an area of about 3 square miles (7.9 square kilometres) and a population of 4,063 (2011 Census). About 65% of the population resides in the villages of Cold Ash and Ashmore Green. The parish is primarily rural in nature, much of the land being open fields or woodland, though there are also some urban areas, principally in Manor Park, a term understood by residents for the area which is contiguous in its southern boundary with the area between Shaw and Benham Hill.

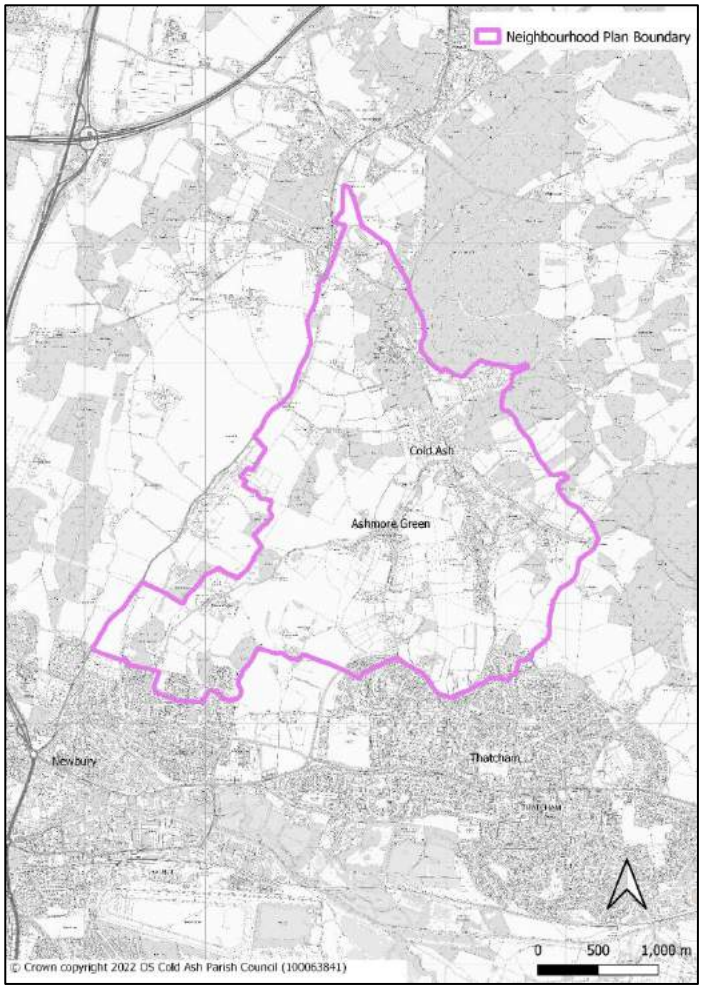


Figure 4: Map showing Cold Ash and surrounding areas

2.2. The centre of the Parish, population and facility-wise is Cold Ash village. Most of the community facilities are concentrated here, namely the village shop and Post Office, two public houses, three schools, church, village hall and the recreation ground. There is also a nationally recognised centre for Guides at Thirtover, between Cold Ash and Ashmore Green.

2.3. Some scattered coniferous woods remain, predominantly to the north and west. There is a

network of 27 well-used public rights of way through the fields and woods. All roads coming into Cold Ash pass through either open farmland or woodland, thus all the approaches to the parish are rural.

2.4. **History of Cold Ash & Ashmore Green:** The area was sparsely populated before about 1800 within a landscape of commons and a lot of early enclosed farmland with historic farmsteads.

2.5. During the Civil War, troops camped on Cold Ash Common before taking part in the Battle of Newbury.

2.6. In 1864 work commenced on the construction of St Mark's Church, which at that time came under the jurisdiction of the vicar and churchwardens of Thatcham. At 500ft above sea level this became one of the highest church sites in Berkshire.

2.7. St Mark's School was built in 1873 next to the church and remained there for some 100 years until it was rebuilt on the other side of the road on land originally owned by the St Helier family of Poplar Farmhouse, on Cold Ash Hill.

2.8. In 1894 Cold Ash broke away to form its own civil parish, a move that was vigorously opposed at the time by Thatcham. Most of newly formed Cold Ash parish was previously in Thatcham parish but the eastern part included part of what was previously in Bucklebury parish. The first vicar of Cold Ash, The Rev Walter Smith Grindle, served in the parish for nearly 55 years and helped bring about considerable change in the life of the village.

2.9. In the early 1900's Sir Reginald Acland had a family home built at Thirtover, and in 1925 his family donated land upon which the Acland Memorial Hall was built, and this remains in use today as the village hall. By the end of the 20th century Cold Ash & Ashmore Green had expanded considerably, and the whole parish now has about 1330 dwellings.

2.10. **Housing:** A comprehensive assessment of housing in the parish was performed by Simon Vanstone in 2017, and he updated this in 2019. It can be found on the CAPNDP website. There is a wide range of housing across the parish as shown by:

- Housing density in the parish varies from around 1 house per acre to over 12 houses per acre.
- Half of the dwellings are smaller houses (3 beds or less) and half are 4 bedrooms or more.
- About one third of dwellings are semi-detached or terraced houses.
- Around 15% of dwellings are bungalows.

2.11. Policy ADPP1 (Spatial Strategy) of the Core Strategy DPD identified Cold Ash village as a Service Village. Service Villages are settlements which have a more limited range of services and have some limited development potential.

2.12. Of the local service villages within West Berkshire, Cold Ash took the second highest increase in housing between 2001 and 2011. Only Hermitage took more, which underlines the pressure that has been put in and around our parish.

2.13. **Demographics:** According to the Census 2011, Cold Ash parish had a population of 4,063, living in 1,365 dwellings. In the previous Census (2001) the population of Cold Ash was 3,623, living in 1,154 dwellings. This reveals a 12% increase in population over the 10 years and an 18% increase in dwellings.

2.14. The mean age of the population is 37.5 and the make-up of age groups is as follows:

- 5% of 0 – 4 age group
- 11% of 5 – 9 age group
- 36% of 10 – 19 age group
- 9% of 20 – 34 age group
- 40% of 35 – 64 age group
- 15% of 65+ age group
- 2% of 85+ age group

2.15. The Summer Survey conducted in 2019 reveals residents' strong desire to accommodate elderly housing (61%) and assisted housing (25%). 44% of the respondents also highlighted affordable housing for young families and for downsizing as important.

2.16. **Commerce:** There is a small light industrial area at the northern "point" of the Parish in the Red Shute estate. The Core Strategy DPD identifies the Red Shute Industrial Estate as a Protected Employment Area There are also small businesses scattered in various farm units across the parish.

2.17. **Our parish and what's important to us:** Cold Ash Parish contains one of the highest points in West Berkshire, within the village of Cold Ash, which is about 155 metres (approx. 500 feet) above sea level. The villages within the parish are 'Ribbon Villages' with the village settlements of Cold Ash and Ashmore Green being on the key north/south and east/west routes of Cold Ash Hill/Hermitage Road and The Ridge/Ashmore Green Road. The Ridge, as its name suggests, runs along the top of a ridge that divides the Pang and Kennet valleys. From the parish's vantage points it is possible to view three other counties: Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire.

2.18. The heights provide iconic views, the protection of which have been a major influence on the siting of development within the centre of the parish. This has seen sensitive development to protect the views. This continues to be particularly important to the parish as, being able to see most of the parish from the key viewpoints, any development that breaks up the aesthetic qualities of the landscape, its flowing patterns, and colours, would have a major detrimental impact.

2.19. The height of the centre of the parish means that it is an ideal spot for stargazing. It is for this reason that it is important that the Dark Sky in the highest point of the parish is protected from light pollution. This means that both street lighting and private lighting, in particular security lighting, needs to be closely managed in this area.

2.20. The way the parish has developed historically has produced two unique villages, Cold Ash and Ashmore Green, each with distinctive characters. It is essential to parishioners that we maintain these.

2.21. There are also important environmental areas within the parish that attract a higher level of protection. These are:

- a small proportion of the parish is in the Wessex Downs AONB, as it flows down from the Ridge into the Pang Valley
- Cold Ash Quarry, which is a Geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (GSSSI)
- eleven designated Local Wildlife Areas fully within the parish and two partially within the parish

- numerous ancient woodlands

2.22. Whilst most of the parish is predominantly rural or comprising the village settlements, there are areas of "urban fringe" mainly on the southern border and some industrial /commercial in the north.

2.23. In the south of the parish lies the hamlet of Henwick. There are also the smaller settlements of Little Copse (Southend) and Floral Way, and in the south-west, the parish ward of Manor Park, which are more in keeping with the neighbouring urban developments of Thatcham and Newbury. In fact, some of these areas align themselves more closely with their neighbouring districts (the element of the parish that is in Manor Park does not cover the whole of the Manor Park development). In the west of the parish there is a small development along Long Lane, which forms the western border of the parish. These dwellings and the residents also tend to align themselves to the other properties on Long Lane.

2.24. At the north end of the parish the Red Shute Industrial Estate is the main non-agricultural commercial area of employment.

2.25. The history and landscape of the parish has therefore resulted in two distinct characters, one rural and the other more urban. It is therefore important that the Neighbourhood Development Plan recognises and makes specific allowance for each of these.

2.26. The village and hamlet settlements in the centre of the parish are close to capacity. This, together with the need to protect the iconic views and the pattern and colours of the land, as it falls away from the heights, means that the majority of land that is suitable for development is predominantly on the fringes of the parish, particularly in the south and west. The one exception to development on the fringe of the parish is the area to the north of The Ridge, which is either in the Wessex Downs AONB or is part of the natural buffer area flowing into it.

2.27. The parish has several important green spaces covering land that is either owned or managed by the Parish Council. For instance, the Wildlife Allotment Garden and Hermitage Road Recreation Ground are owned by charitable trusts and managed by the Parish Council. Additional open spaces are owned by West Berkshire Council, and there is further land which is privately owned. There are also further green spaces in the parish that will be identified through this NDP, with the aim of securing Local Green Space designation for them.

2.28. The parish is rich in biodiverse wildlife, which is evidenced by the presence of eleven Local Wildlife Sites and several areas of Ancient Woodlands. Richness of biodiversity is something that it is critically important to support, both for the benefit of the parish and the surrounding countryside. This fact further supports the need to protect the land in and around the village settlements, as a large proportion of it is critical to providing healthy biodiverse wildlife environments and provide corridors for wildlife to move around and colonise wider areas of the parish. These areas, together with the trees and hedgerows of the parish, have been identified as requiring active protection. Further sites have already been identified as having potential for securing an appropriate designation. The plan is to develop an Environmental Baseline for the parish, which will be used to drive further improvements.

2.29. The parish is well serviced by a network of Public Rights of Way (PROW), including public footpaths, public bridleways and byways open to all traffic (BOATS). There are in fact 27 PROW that link the various and disparate elements of the parish. The rights of way pass through and

around landowner's woods and fields, and other important Green Space. In some ways these rights of way are more important than the roads in connecting the various communities. In fact, they link both the rural and urban areas of the parish, providing parishioners living in both settings easy access into the countryside. The aesthetic quality of the walks brings together the sense of place and nature for the people using them. The landscape is therefore essential to the community in maintaining the perception of place (the collective memories, feelings, and sense of awe). This plan aims to support the various landscape elements that make up the perception of place, so that when viewing it from the key vantage points or walking through it on the various PROW, it retains the ability for people to connect with nature and provide a sense of awe. There is a BOAT on the northern edge of the parish (numbered COLD/5, COLD/25 and COLD/26), which is important to horse riders.

2.30. The key landscape characteristics have been formed by the geology and history of the parish. These influences have resulted in a diverse pattern of land use that, along with the emotionally engaging natural landscape, provide the rural sense of place for the communities in rural areas of the parish. These include, but are not limited to:

- generously scaled rolling landscape with some pronounced wooded ridges
- a complex pattern of landscape, dominated by woodland; coniferous, or mixed with beech and birch
- pastures
- heathland and woodland habitats – deciduous and mixed woodland to pasture and arable
- linear settlements within wooded areas; clustered farmsteads and private residences
- road pattern with complex winding sunken lanes (see 'Sunken lanes') with banks and hedgerows
- a comprehensive network of Public Rights of way (see Public Rights of Way), including a network of bridleways

2.31. A small area of the parish, to the north and east of The Ridge and Hermitage Road, is within the North Wessex Down Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

2.32. The area abounds with natural drains, issues and sinks, all of which help to ensure natural drainage and control the run-off of excessive rainfall. These are particularly evident in the local gaps between Cold Ash and the neighbouring parishes and are clearly marked on larger scale Ordnance Survey maps (see Flood Risk Management).

2.33. Woodland is a dominant natural feature in this area. The gravel plateau, for instance, is very acidic, and has created a typical landscape of Pine and Birch. The area along and round Hermitage Road, in particular, is densely treed and provides a contrast to the more open Oak dominated landscape of the clay soils which surround The Ridge. The Government's Landscape and Seascape Assessments document provides guidance on preparing landscape character assessments to identify and describe variation in the character of the landscape. The West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment provides further detail for Cold Ash.

2.34. Main tree species can be found including:

- Ash, throughout the parish
- Beech in Ashmore Green Road
- Oak in Ashmore Green Road, Bucklebury Alley, Collaroy Road, Stoney Lane and The Ridge
- Hornbeam in Stoney Lane

- Scots Pine at Downe House and on Hermitage Road and Slanting Hill
- occasional Sweet Chestnut and Cherry.

2.35. It is noticeable that the older parts of the villages are more wooded and have larger and more mature species than the newer parts. This arises largely from the earlier dates of planting and the larger gardens usually associated with the older properties. This creates a different character from the newer areas where the houses are more visible and where cypresses tend to dominate the vegetation. The smaller gardens and open space areas mean that most of the native trees such as Oak, Ash and Beech cannot be established, especially on the clay areas where set distances have to be maintained to avoid root damage to properties. The lack of large trees could have an adverse effect on the parish if sufficient open space is not provided in new developments to allow for planting larger trees. For these reasons, it is essential that a significant proportion of the mature trees in the parish be protected. There has been limited use of Tree Preservation Orders to date; this is something that will be rectified as part of the planning process.

3. A VISION FOR COLD ASH PARISH

Issues facing Cold Ash Parish

3.1. The parish is unique in facing the combination of the following circumstances, which the CAPNDP seeks to address:

- Predominantly rural or semi-rural but bordered by Newbury and Thatcham urban areas to the south.
- Severely impacted by the huge prospective housing development in north-east Thatcham.
- Service Village status, but relatively little in terms of facilities.
- Virtually the only predominantly rural or semi-rural parish in West Berks that is not protected by AONB designation (although a small part of the north-eastern parish lies within the AONB).
- A limited road network with increasing traffic.
- Some flood risks because of the prevailing topography.

Vision for the Neighbourhood Development Plan

3.2. The vision for Cold Ash Parish to 2039 that has been agreed with the community is:

A beautiful, desirable place to live, preserving the distinctive rural villages of Cold Ash and Ashmore Green, with their own identities, whilst also providing a variety of settings and dwellings across the whole parish that take advantage of modern infrastructure and transport links to local towns and beyond.

Underlying principles

3.3. Cold Ash is a lovely parish and one worthy of protecting for current and future residents. Poorly planned or excessive (in the context of the rural nature of Cold Ash) housing developments constitute a serious threat, so it is vital that development is carefully and sympathetically planned. Development should be designed and managed in a way that enhances the parish. Thus, the principle underpinning the CAPNDP can best be described as:

To enhance and protect the character and heritage of Cold Ash Parish.

By **enhance** we mean:

- Ensure limited, sustainable high-quality development in keeping with the ambience and character of the parish localities.
- Ensure all developments are soundly integrated into the existing community, considering quality of life, traffic, transport, health, education, economy, and environment.
- Take advantage of modern design and materials to ensure the infrastructure is as cost effective and environmentally friendly as possible.
- Ensure any housing developments demonstrate how they avoid excessive traffic congestion.
- Identify important community assets and green spaces and how they could be enhanced in years to come.

By **protect** we mean:

- Ensure the overall rural character and setting of the parish remains, with the minimum of intrusion on the existing surrounding green and agricultural space.
- Preserve the fundamental character and identity of Cold Ash and other villages as small, discrete, distinctive villages, avoiding creeping urbanisation.
- Ensure that the mix of new housing reflects the tradition / profile and style of the villages and locales across the parish
- Minimise disturbance and disruption (noise, traffic congestion) through the parish
- Preserve the Parish's rural nature and landscape.

Neighbourhood Development Plan Objectives

3.4. The following six objectives aim to deliver the overarching vision:

1. **To support sustainable, high quality, energy efficient and carbon neutral development that is in keeping with and seeks to preserve the heritage and character of the village in terms of design and scale. Development should meet an identified need and be directed to the most sustainable locations within the defined settlement boundaries.**

2. **To protect the rural character and green spaces in and around the villages and other settlements, conserving and enhancing the attractiveness of the landscape, including its contribution to the North Wessex AONB, enabling access to the countryside, encouraging biodiversity, supporting the aims of the Local Nature Recovery Network Strategy for Berkshire and maintaining the Parish's distinct boundaries.**

3. **To reduce the reliance on cars by improving opportunities for walking, cycling, equestrian and public transport both within the Parish and to other nearby villages, towns, and services, which will help to improve people's physical and mental health and wellbeing as well as and road safety for all.**

4. **To maintain and enhance the existing 'village' atmosphere, ensuring the Parish remains a safe and friendly place to live, work and visit with a strong sense of community and a range of community facilities.**

5. **To support measures that will help to mitigate climate change that will improve air and water quality, tackle plastic pollution and restore habitats to allow plants and wildlife to thrive.**

6. **To encourage a thriving rural economy by supporting existing businesses operating in the parish and providing opportunities for new ones where this can be achieved sustainably.**

4. SPATIAL STRATEGY

Policy CAP1: Location of Development

Purpose

4.1. This policy sets out the CAPNDP's approach to the location of development within the parish. It emphasises the importance of new development being directed to the most sustainable locations, near to local services and amenities, which will help to protect the valued green spaces and corridors in the area and avoid sprawl and coalescence between both the individual settlements within the parish and those nearby urban areas, notably Thatcham and Newbury.

Justification

4.2. In a predominantly rural parish such as Cold Ash, it is particularly important that development is directed to appropriate locations, where it minimises the impact on the natural environment and avoids sprawl and coalescence with surrounding settlements. The purpose of a settlement boundary is to provide that direction.

4.3. Within the Parish, two villages have a settlement boundary: Cold Ash is classified in the WBC Core Strategy as a 'service village', having a limited range of services and some limited development potential. It acts as a hub to Ashmore Green, which itself has a settlement boundary and is defined as a 'smaller village with settlement boundary', suitable only for limited infill development subject to the character and form of the settlement.

4.4. At the southern end of the parish, parts of the settlement boundaries for Thatcham and Newbury extend into the Cold Ash Parish boundary, and consequently the neighbourhood area. Beyond this, the parish is 'open countryside', with parts to the north-east falling within the North Wessex Downs AONB.

4.5. The LPR does not identify a housing figure to be delivered through the Neighbourhood Plan, and it is considered that housing supply – to address both local and strategic housing needs - is being addressed adequately at the strategic level. The CAPNDP is a non-allocating neighbourhood plan and this position has been agreed with WBC. That is not to say that suitable sites may not become available in the future. An early review of the CAPNDP, therefore, will be undertaken to consider the policies of the LPR, once adopted, and the implications of these. This will provide greater clarity about the amount of growth that Cold Ash may be expected to accommodate over the new plan period.

4.6. The CAPNDP sets out a series of parameters to support WBC's proposed growth strategy and to reflect the comments received during the engagement on the Plan. These are:

i. supporting the provision of new dwellings in the period 2020 to 2039 in accordance with WBC's Core Strategy, Site Allocations Plan and Local Plan Review;

ii. directing development to take place within the existing settlement boundaries, as the most sustainable locations;

iii. protecting the individual and distinctive character of the villages within the parish and retaining the predominantly rural character and landscape of the parish. The rural gap between the villages and the Newbury and Thatcham settlement areas, which incorporate the urban elements of the parish, should be protected from development as this will restrict coalescence and reduce impacts on the North Wessex Downs AONB and its setting.

iv. strongly supporting the use of previously developed or 'brownfield' sites;

v. ensuring that the overall quantum of development does not put an unacceptable strain on infrastructure capacity.

4.7. In November 2022 the West Berkshire Appropriate Countryside Designation Study was prepared by WBDC to inform the identification of green gaps between settlements to restrict coalescence. Figure 5 shows the two green gaps proposed within Cold Ash Parish.

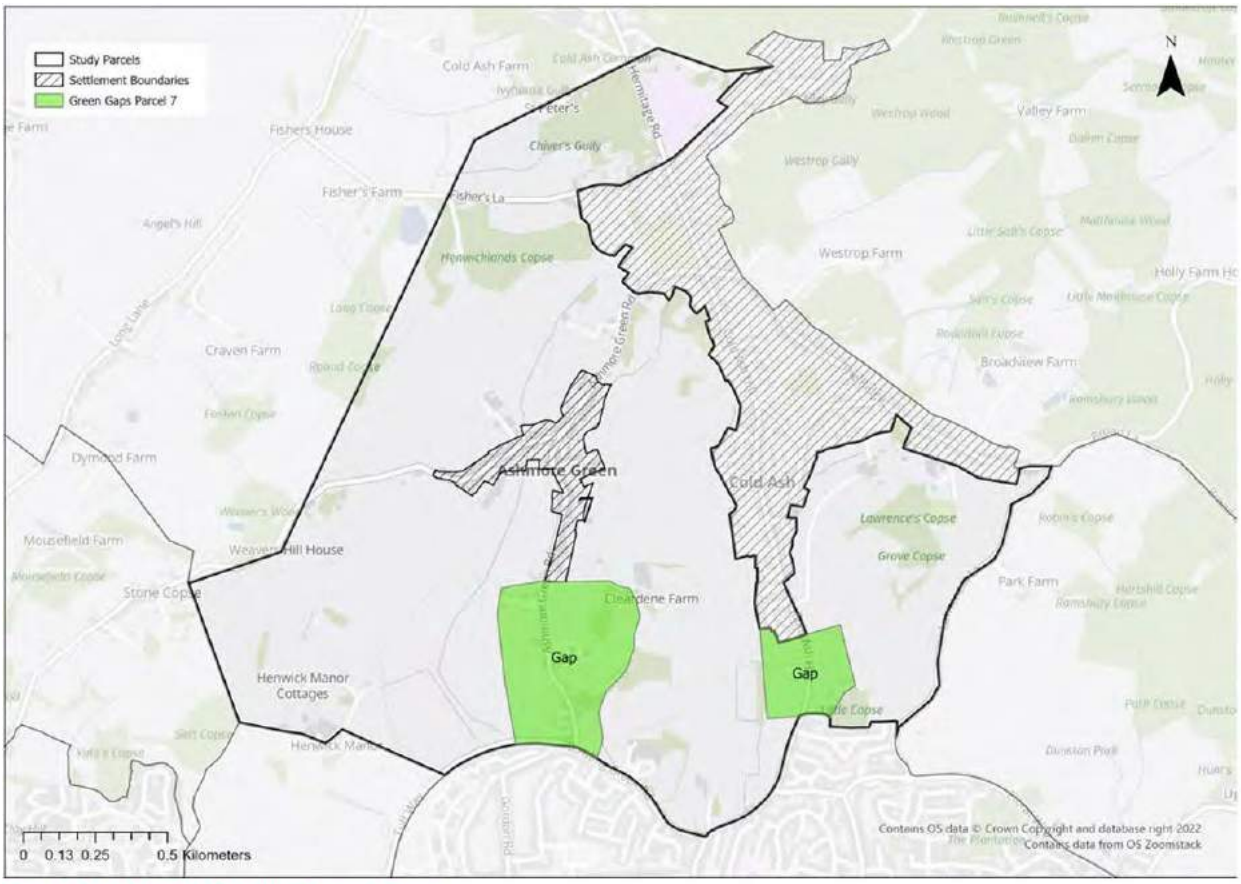


Figure 14 – Parcel 7 Potential Green Gaps

Figure 5: WBC proposed green gaps in Cold Ash Parish (source: West Berkshire Appropriate Countryside Designation Study)

4.8. The CANP seeks to slightly extend these gaps, in order to ensure that it is fully effective in restricting coalescence or encirclement of the village. Development should be avoided in these buffer zones, but any development that significantly compromises or reduces the green space buffers between any of the settlements will not be supported by policy CAP1.

4.9. The settlement boundaries, which mirror those in the LPR, and the buffer zones are illustrated in Figure 6 and on the Policies Map.

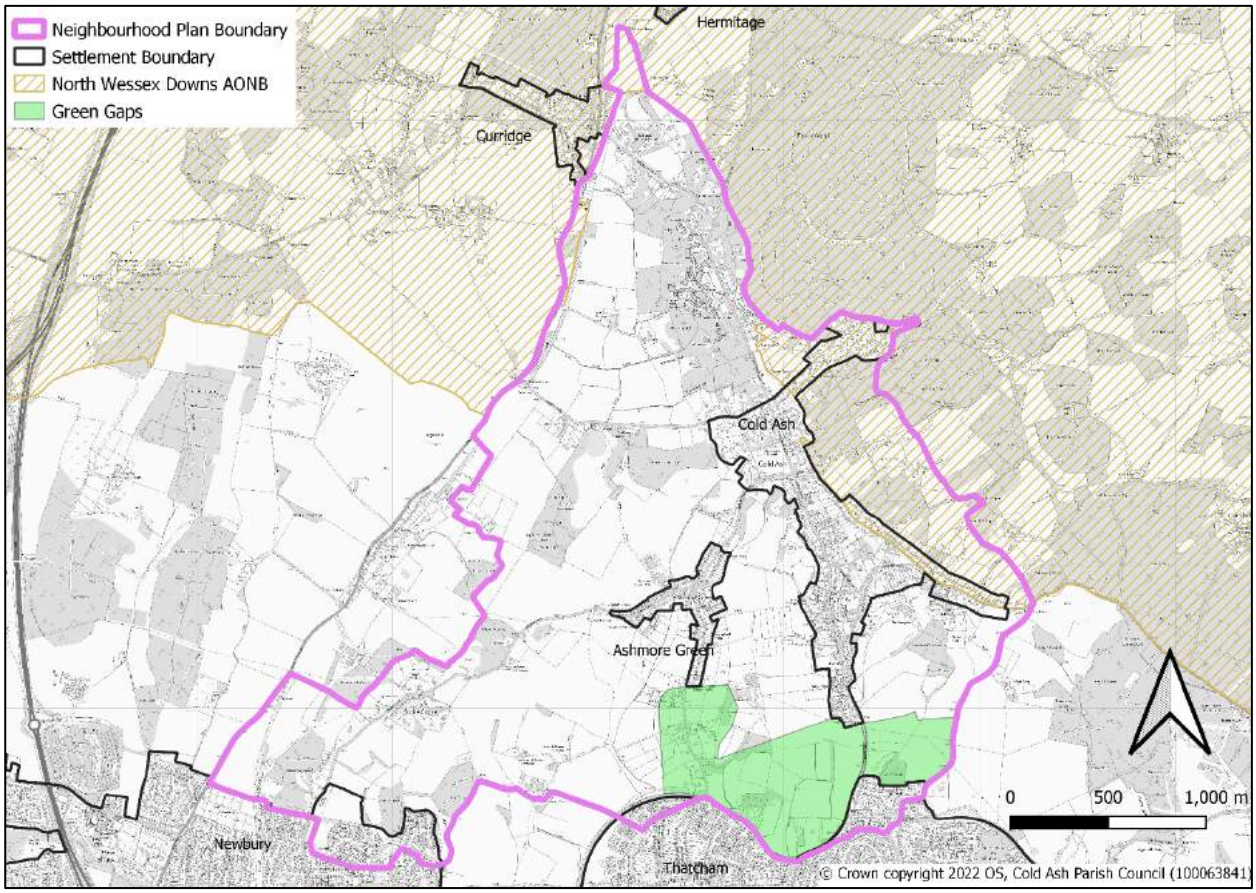


Figure 6: Settlement boundaries and green gaps, where development should be avoided to prevent further coalescence

POLICY CAP1: LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

1. **Development shall be focused within the settlement boundaries (as defined in Figure 6).**

2. **Development proposals outside the settlement boundaries will only be supported where:**

    a. **it relates to appropriate uses in the countryside; or**
    b. **the development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area, including the setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB; or**
    c. **the development brings redundant or vacant agricultural/farm buildings or historic buildings of heritage value back into optimum beneficial use in a manner that does not cause harm in terms of additional traffic or compromise the amenity of residents in terms of size, light pollution, noise, dirt, loss of wildlife habitat; or**
    d. **it relates to necessary utilities infrastructure and where no reasonable alternative location is available; or**
    e. **it is on sites allocated for those uses in the West Berkshire Site Allocations Development Plan or its successor.**

    Such development must not individually or cumulatively result in physical and/or visual coalescence and loss of separate identity of the individual settlements in the parish (Cold Ash or Ashmore Green) from neighbouring settlements, and from each other. The green gaps shown in Figure 6 demonstrate the areas most sensitive to this.

3. **In determining development proposals substantial weight will be given to the value of using suitable brownfield land within the settlement boundaries for either homes and/or other identified needs, or to support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land.**

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 1, 2; Adopted Core Strategy: ADP Policy 1 and 5, CS1; Housing Site Allocations DPD: C1; Local Plan Review: SP1, SP2, SP3, DM1; NPPF: 11, 29, 60, 79, 80, 119, 120, 121, 124, 130, 174, 176, 190, 197

5. CHARACTER, DESIGN, AND HERITAGE

Policy CAP2: Local character and heritage

Purpose

5.1. This policy defines what is meant by 'local character' in the context of Cold Ash Parish. It identifies three Local Character Zones and describes the essence of what makes each distinctive. This will help to guide applicants on how any development proposal can be in-keeping with the local area in which it is located and, where possible enhance it. The policy reinforces Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy and Policy SP7 of the Local Plan Review, expanding on them to include more locally specific detail.

Justification

5.2. Both the underlying geology and landscape, coupled with the activities of past generations of people and development, have created the features that give the parish its distinctive identity today. The largely rural parish contributes to the setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB, with the north-eastern part falling within its boundary. Despite modest growth over the years, the parish's two main settlements, Cold Ash and Ashmore Green villages, have each been able to retain their own distinctive character, and it is essential to parishioners that these individual identities are maintained. It is important that coalescence both with one another, as well as with nearby Newbury and Thatcham – parts of which already extend into Cold Ash parish – is restricted, a factor which is addressed in Policy CAP1 through the definition of buffer zones.

Heritage assets in Cold Ash



Old Henwick Cottage, Grade II listed

5.3. Whilst there are no Conservation Areas in Cold Ash Parish, there are several notable heritage assets including 11 Grade II listed buildings, comprising traditional cottages, farmhouses and barns, and the War Memorial. In addition, the West Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER) details on local archaeological sites and finds, historic buildings and historic landscapes within the parish. Not all of these are considered non-designated assets within the meaning and definition contained within the NPPF. Each entry within the HER will have varying levels of heritage significance. To merit identification as a non-designated heritage assets, the heritage significance would need to be towards the higher level.

5.4. WBC maintains a Local List of Heritage Assets that have special local architectural, archaeological, or historic interest, but are not nationally listed. They are considered to be significance to the local community and contribute to the environmental and cultural heritage of the district. The most recent list (May 2022) includes St Gabriel's Convent Chapel as a Local Heritage Asset and should be considered as a non-designated heritage asset for the purpose of Policy CAP2. Paragraph 203 of the NPPF states: *'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non- designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'* An associated action with Section 10 of this CAPNDP will be to work with the Archaeology Team at WBC to consider additional locally important heritage assets.

5.5. Local Heritage at Risk: Historic England produces an annual Register of Heritage at Risk. Outside of London it does not include Grade II listings, apart from churches. Whilst no assets within Cold Ash have been identified at this time, an audit of buildings and assets should be undertaken in partnership with WBC. Where necessary, opportunities to restore assets should be taken when they arise, in partnership with the owner.

5.6. Local Character: In order to differentiate between different areas of the Parish and provide fuller detail of what is meant by 'local character' in the Cold Ash context, three broad 'Local Character Zones' have been identified, all of which are located within the neighbourhood boundary:

Villages Zone – comprising the villages of Cold Ash (Zone 1a) and Ashmore Green (Zone 1b), each with their own distinctive characteristics. This Zone falls wholly within the settlement boundary.

Urban Fringe Zone – comprising the more urbanised areas found on the outskirts of the Parish, which adjoin Thatcham (Southend and Florence Gardens) and Newbury (Manor Park). These areas are essentially part of those larger conurbations. This Zone falls within the settlement boundary.

Rural Zone – comprising land within the Parish but located outside the other zones, where little to no development is expected to take place. If exceptional approval is given, then the design principles for the Villages Zone would apply.

5.7. The zones are mapped in Figure 7 and fuller descriptions of each are provided in Table 2. Alongside Table 2, it is advised to review the information produced as a result of WBC's Historic Landscape Characterisation project. This work, undertaken between 2004 and 2007, analysed and recorded historic elements that make up the landscape today, using historic and modern mapping, aerial photographs and documents. The work fed into the identification of 91 Historic Environment Character Zones (HECZ). Three of these are relevant to Cold Ash Parish and the relevant reports summarise historic character, known archaeology and potential, conservation issues and research questions. These documents should be actively considered as part of the design of development. The relevant documents are:

- Villages Zone: HECZ: Curridge, Hermitage, Cold Ash Settlement (CHCAS)
- Rural Zone: HECZ: Shaw-Thatcham Open Field (STOF)
- Urban Fringe Zone: HECZ: Newbury Suburban Area (NSA) and Thatcham Suburban Area (TSA) (Interactive maps showing the HECZs can be found on the WBC website)

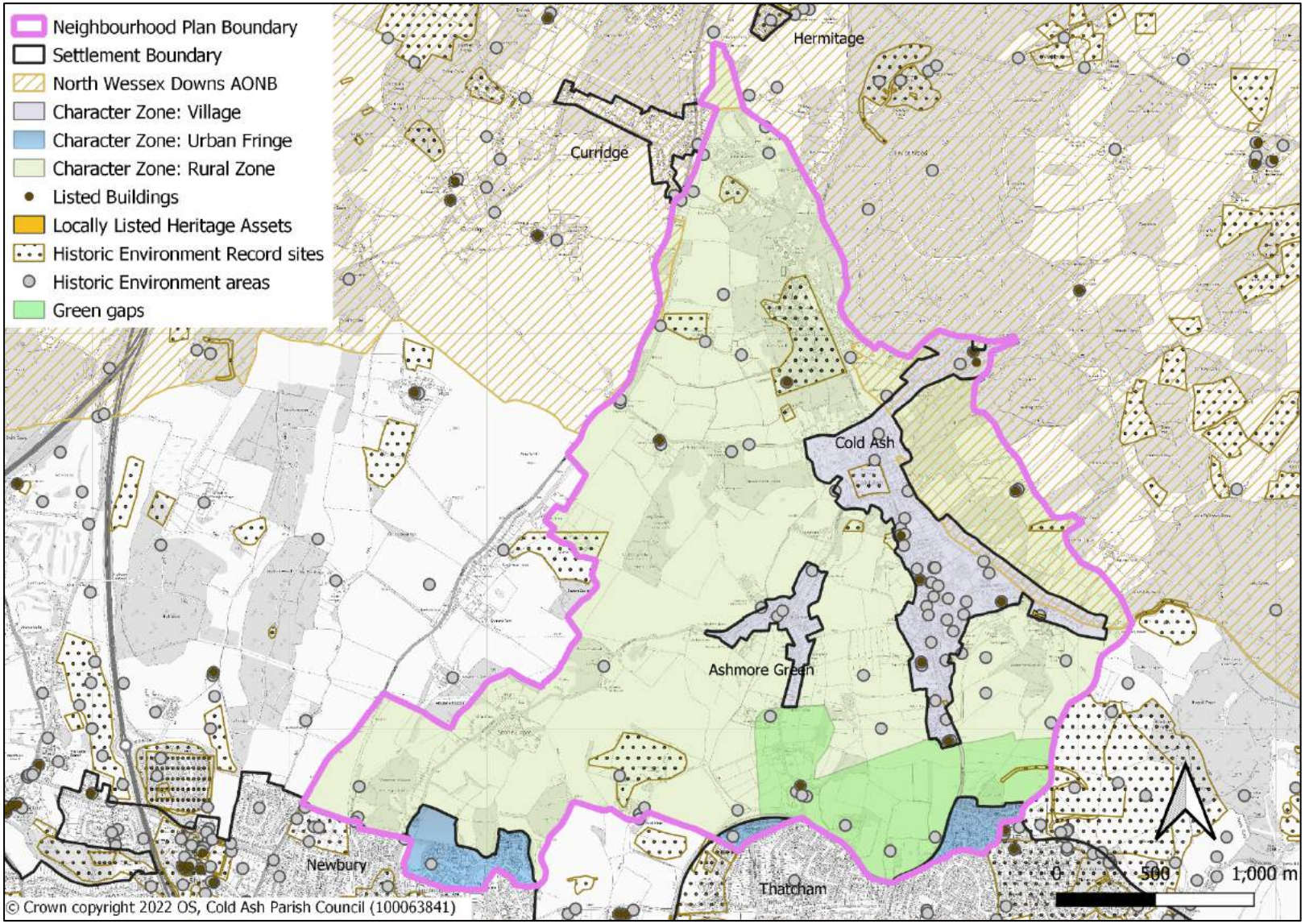


Figure 7: Identified Character Zones and local heritage assets within the Parish

Table 2: Local Character Zones

Zone 1: Village Zones – Cold Ash and Ashmore Green

Zone 1a. Cold Ash village is at the centre of the Parish, approximately four miles north-east of Newbury and less than two miles north of Thatcham. Much of the village stands on a ridge of the Berkshire Downs overlooking the Kennet Valley to the south and the Pang Valley to the north.




Older properties in Bucklebury Alley; Bungalows along The Ridge

It has a broadly linear pattern of development along Cold Ash Hill, The Ridge and Bucklebury Alley.

Cold Ash village is defined in the Local Plan as a local service village, where a small amount of development (particularly economic, or which extends the range of services available) may be appropriate. The village contains the majority of the Village Zone facilities with schools, pubs, and a post office/general store.

Housing styles are mixed across Cold Ash. The Ridge and Bucklebury Alley predominantly contain some of the oldest homes in the village – these comprise large houses, in traditional or semi traditional brick or wood clad styles, some thatched, set back from the road and mostly in substantial gardens with woodland or fields surrounding them.

Where the Ridge joins Cold Ash Hill, we see a mix of terrace styled cottages, two-storey mixed character dwellings, aged buildings and more modern bungalows. Cold Ash main village has a higher density of housing with traditional cottage styles, newer build brick houses and mid-20th Century bungalows. There is also a wider variety of house sizes than in the rest of the area allowing for a variety of household types ranging from young families through to the more elderly.

Many of the terrace styled or semi-detached cottages are set close to the main road, with bungalows and larger houses set further back behind front gardens and predominantly low scale fences. Leading off Cold Ash Hill there are single track lanes providing access to older cottages to the west and some later developments to the east.

Zone 1b. Ashmore Green Ashmore Green lies at a lower elevation, less than a mile to the south-west of Cold Ash Village. It also has a broadly linear pattern of development with its central spine being Ashmore Green Road, branching off to Stoney Lane. The linear development provides a strong connection to the countryside, with gaps between houses providing access to views both to the east and west.




Single storey housing, set within greenery and detached houses set back from the road Cold Ash

To the west of Ashmore Green, the land is mostly agricultural. There is a mixture of housing with detached larger properties, bungalows and attached (terrace styled) cottages near the small Village Green. In the

main the larger or detached properties are set back from the road and well-spaced, with front and rear gardens and established hedgerows prevailing. Low open fences (post and rail in the main), walls and hedgerows delineate the boundaries between properties and throughout the characteristic is predominantly rural in nature. Given the variety of housing, there is no single style that dominates, however a key feature throughout is single storey housing which compliments and blends into both the settlement boundary itself and the fields or woodland surrounding it.

Overall, the two Village Zones share a rural characteristic with a significant focus on the sympathetic siting of properties within the settlement so that they conserve and enhance the surrounding landscape. The majority of any future development is envisioned to be infill within the existing settlement where it will be critical to maintain and enhance the village character.

Zone 2: Urban Fringe Zone

The Urban Fringe Zone is where the rural landscape meets the urban areas of Thatcham and Newbury which have, over the years, slowly extended into Cold Ash Parish.

In the main the housing in these areas is more modern and homogenous in style and scale. Predominantly red brick and tiled roofs, the majority of properties have gardens which can vary in size. These areas have a more 'planned' layout than the older areas in the Villages Zone.

In order to restrict the erosion of the rural and villages zones, it will be important to restrict significant expansion of the urban fringe zone.

Development within the urban fringe zone is effectively considered to be part of those larger settlement – Thatcham and Newbury - and should take their design cues from the prevalent styles in those areas. Where development sits alongside the open rural landscape, however, the density and massing of development should reduce, to establish a more gradual shift between 'urban' and 'open countryside'.



Modern housing in the north-east part of Newbury – the style is in stark contrast to the Villages Zone

Zone 3: Rural Zone

The Rural Zone is effectively the open countryside space that weaves between the settlements and in the main is largely agricultural. It is not anticipated that any development will happen in these rural environments – part of which are situated within the AONB, and all of which contribute towards the AONB's setting - however should any replacement dwellings or exceptionally agreed developments be proposed, they should take their cue from the character of the Villages Zone as opposed to the Urban Fringe.

In this way, the character of the rural zone reflects the fact that Cold Ash Parish is not homogeneous and therefore will require any proposed development to have a different design response to ensure it will be completely complementing the landscape and its character.



Open countryside between Cold Ash village and the urban fringe zone of Thatcham – green 'buffers' should be protected from development, to restrict coalescence

5.8. As demonstrated above, the built character across each Local Character Zone ranges in style, age, size, and density (see Appendix A). For each Zone to maintain its identifiable character, a balance needs to be struck between the scale, bulk, density, and height of the built form and that of open green spaces and, where relevant, the countryside.

5.9. All development should be designed to a high quality and reinforce and enhance local character, heritage assets and the landscape setting of the area. The density of development should create a character that is appropriate to the site's context, including the landscape in which it is set, whilst making best use of the land available. Lower density housing should be located towards the outer edges of the settlement where it abuts open countryside, to maintain views from and into the individual settlements, and to establish a more sensitive 'edge' to development.

5.10. Development should have regard to both the character of the Zone in which it is set and to the character of the area overall.

POLICY CAP2: LOCAL CHARACTER AND HERITAGE

A. Development should conserve and enhance the character of the Zone in which it is located, as shown on Figure 7 and described in Table 2. Design proposals which exhibit design that responds to local context and reflects the character and vernacular of the area will be supported. Innovation in design will be supported, where this demonstrably enhances the quality of the built form in a character area.

B. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should address the following criteria:

i be guided by the character descriptions contained in Table 2 and the information and advice contained in the Historic Environment Character Zones (HECZ) relevant to each Character Zone.

ii make a positive contribution to the character of the Zone and wider area, when viewed from the main highway and public rights of way approaches into the parish (Hermitage Road, Cold Ash Hill and Stoney Lane) as shown in Figure 7. Improvements and enhancements should include, where appropriate, additional tree planting, the enhancement of roadside green space, the reduction/consolidation of road signs and other street furniture and wider green infrastructure improvements that are identified as being necessary. Contributions from major development in the neighbourhood area will be used to enable this, collected through Section 106 Agreements or the Community Infrastructure Levy mechanism.

iii development proposals affecting heritage assets – including non-designated heritage assets - either directly or indirectly, should enhance the significance and setting of the asset. This could include, where appropriate, the delivery of development that will make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of, the heritage asset, or reflect and enhance local character and distinctiveness with particular regard given to the prevailing styles of design and use of materials in a local area. Proposals are expected to be accompanied by a Heritage Statement.

iv development proposals should demonstrate that they have taken into account the potential impact on above and below ground archaeological deposits to ensure that evidence which could contribute to the understanding of human activity and past environments is not lost. Where a scheme has a potential impact on archaeological remains (below or above ground) a Heritage Statement or similar should be prepared in support of planning applications.

C. A proactive stance will be taken to any heritage assets that may be at risk. This will include working with property owners to find a use that will enable them to be put back into optimum viable use.

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 1; Adopted Core Strategy: CS19; Local Plan Review: SP7, SP8, SP9; NPPF: 126 to 134, 189, 190, 199 to 205

Policy CAP3: Design of development

Purpose

5.11. This policy supports high-quality inclusive design standards that reflect, integrate, and enhance - without overwhelming - the rural character of the parish. It complements existing design guidance, at the national and strategic level, and adds a local dimension to this, reflecting issues of importance raised by the local community and bearing in mind the proximity of the AONB.

Justification

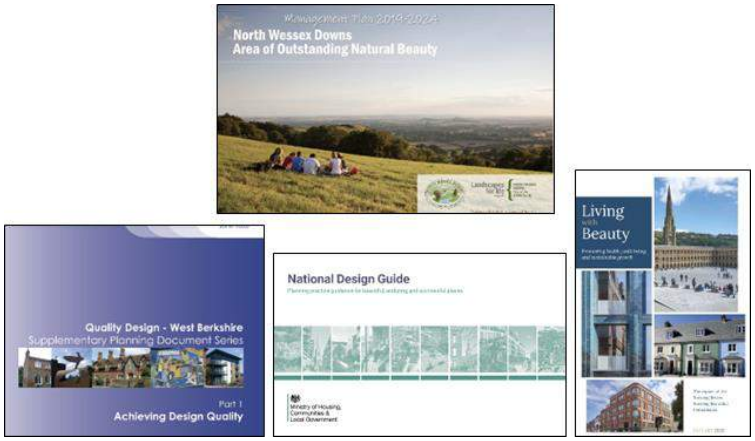
5.12. Good quality design has an important role to play in supporting the social wellbeing and quality of life for residents by improving the built environment, reducing crime, improving public health, easing transport problems and providing supportive neighbourhoods. Throughout the engagement on the CAPNDP, the community has stressed the need for new development (including smaller scale build, such as extensions to existing properties) to be sustainable and of a high quality that respects the character and rural feel of the parish and is in keeping with its immediate surroundings.

Strategic Design Guidance to draw on

5.13. Several strategic design guides exist that should be drawn upon by developers, homeowners and others, to inform development proposals in Cold Ash Parish, including:

- National Design Guide, 2021: in October 2019, the National Design Guide was published, forming part of the Government's collection of Planning Practice Guidance. It forms a material consideration in the decision-making process, particularly in the absence of local design guidance. The document sets out the ten characteristics necessary for creating a well-designed place, contributing to its physical character, a sense of community and addressing environmental issues affecting climate.
- Living with Beauty: promoting health, well-being and sustainable growth, 2020: a report by the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission, promoting an integrated approach to place-making that seeks to safeguard the values that matter to people – beauty, community, history, landscape.
- Building for a Healthy Life, 2020: the Government-endorsed industry standard for assessing the design quality of homes and neighbourhoods. Its criteria also link to other standards for housing design, including the Housing Quality Indicators (HQI) standards and Secured by Design. It provides a framework that stakeholders should use for development along with other policies contained within this plan for the neighbourhood area to achieve the industry standard's 'Built for a Healthy Life' commendation.
- The Quality Design West Berkshire: comprises 10 chapters covering different aspects of design, and this should be consulted as a technical guide to inform development proposals.
- The North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan: contains policies relating to design within the AONB. This is particularly relevant to Cold Ash, part of which is sited within the AONB, whilst the villages are located within the broader setting.

5.14. When these building standards and guides are updated or superseded, this Neighbourhood Development Plan should use the updated standards for good quality, well-designed homes and neighbourhoods.



Design guides relevant to Cold Ash Parish

Local Design Principles for Cold Ash Parish

5.15. In addition to these overarching strategic design guidelines, the NPPF states that *"neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development, both through their own plans and by engaging in the production of design policy, guidance and codes by local planning authorities and developers*" (para 127).

5.16. Cold Ash Parish Council prepared a Village Design Statement in 2002 and this has been reviewed for the purposes of the neighbourhood plan; some elements are no longer relevant, while others remain important factors for any development proposals to consider.

5.17. A reworked set of local design principles has been established, informed using the feedback from the neighbourhood plan process. These principles are framed within the context of the characteristics for well-designed places, as set out in the National Design Code Planning practice guidance. In particular, the following characteristics have been focussed on: Context and identity; Nature; Built form; Homes and Buildings; and Movement (see Figure 8 overleaf). Lifespan and Resources are considered within Policy CAP4 (Sustainable Design).

5.18. The guidance will have most relevance to the Village and Rural Zones and the rural edges of the Urban Zone. Urban Zones themselves will have greater scope to consider the prevailing character and design, reflecting their immediate areas.

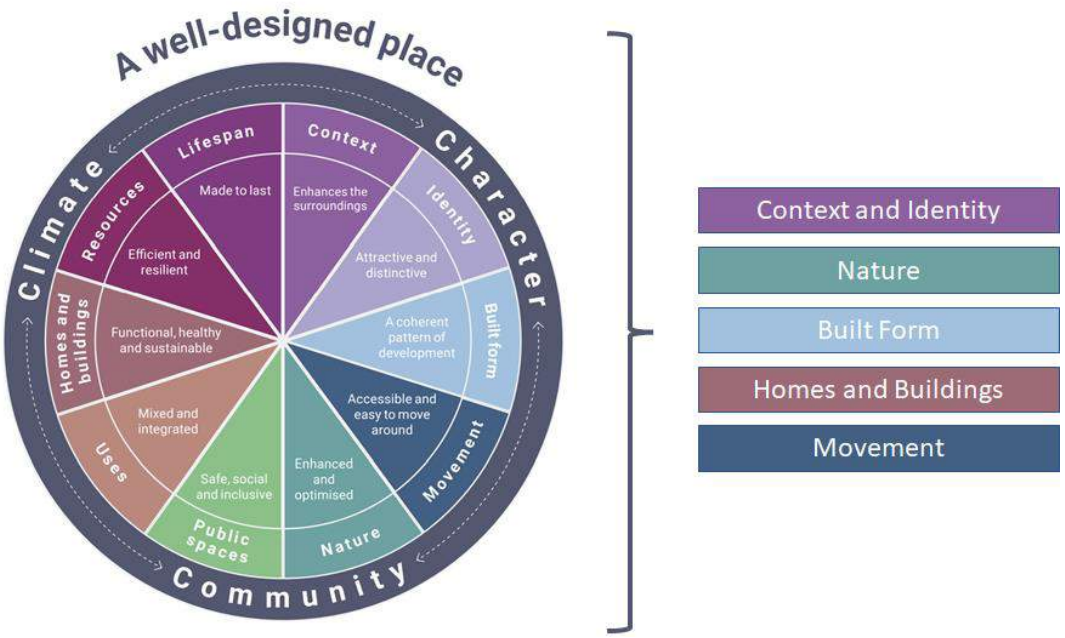


Figure 8: Applying the characteristics of well-designed places to Cold Ash Parish *(taken from 'The National Design Guide' 2021)*

Context and Identity



5.19. The **context** of any development is the location of the development and the attributes of its immediate, local and regional surroundings. The **Identity**, or character, of the Parish stems from the way that buildings, spaces, landscape and infrastructure combine and how parishioners experience them.

5.20. Within Cold Ash Parish, development should be landscape-led. Cold Ash and Ashmore Green villages, located within the Village Zone, contribute significantly to the setting of the AONB, by way of their geographical location. It will be important, therefore, to ensure that the guidance contained within the AONB Management Plan is carefully considered and applied, particularly on higher, more visible ground and towards the settlement edges.

5.21. There are many iconic views within the Parish and, as outlined in Policy CAP8 (Significant Local Views), these are of particular importance to parishioners. Developments should not negatively impact the aesthetic qualities of the landscape. In addition to the views across the five counties, it is also important that the views from the villages of Cold Ash and Ashmore Green to the wider countryside are maintained.

5.22. Developers are encouraged to conduct a landscape appraisal and demonstrate how the particular site context and existing green infrastructure shapes and informs the layout and how approaches to landscape and building form have been adopted.

5.23. Any proposed development should conserve the diversity and mix of landscape character types in the parish, e.g. the wooded setting of Cold Ash. The expectation is that any new development will enhance the existing surroundings and be of an appropriate scale for the site. Developers are encouraged to provide perspective (isometric) drawings to show how new developments would appear in relation to their overall rural surroundings and to the character and context of adjacent buildings and neighbouring properties. Any developments must also consider the context outlined in Section 2 of this Plan (Overview of Cold Ash Parish).

Nature

5.24. Nature contributes to the quality of the Parish, and to residents' quality of life. It is a critical component of well-designed places. The siting of any new developments should consider the need to retain open spaces and the rural nature of the Parish, together with maintaining and considering access to the numerous PROW enjoyed by the parishioners.



5.25. All new developments should prioritise nature so that a diverse ecosystem can flourish. Further detail on this is provided in Policy CAP6 (Biodiversity and the network of green infrastructure).

5.26. In any proposed development, grass verges, hedgerows, ditches, ponds and open spaces should be conserved and, where possible, enhanced in order to improve the habitat for wildlife and to maintain the rural nature of the area.

5.27. Environmentally friendly features, such as bat boxes, bird boxes, and hedgehog holes shall be specified in any ecology strategy and included in the landscape and building design.

5.28. In any development, mature trees and hedgerows should be retained. If it can be demonstrated that trees critically need to be felled, they should be replanted with native species of local provenance; the Emergency Tree Plan for the UK (2020) stipulates that 'if a tree must be removed, local authorities should implement minimum replacement planting ratios, which stipulate that for every non-woodland tree removed at least three new trees should be planted. These new trees should be located as close to the original location as possible and be the same type of planting (for example, street trees replaced by street trees)'.

5.29. Light pollution concerns are predominantly covered under the Dark Skies Policy CAP10. To support this policy any new development should aim as much as possible to reduce the creation or transmission of artificial light. Encouragement will be given to ensure that exterior lighting is both neighbourly and considers the impact on local wildlife, which are picked up in CAP 10 (Dark Skies):

- lighting should be deflected downwards rather than outwards or upwards and should be switched off after midnight at the latest; and
- any movement-sensitive triggers should be regulated to reduce illumination periods to a minimum; and
- habitats, particularly woodlands, should not be considered as a 'natural shield' to lighting, because of the impact on the unlit habitat. Non-native species of plants should not be planted near or next to habitats as these non-native species have the real potential to compromise the habitat a certain amount. These habitats, particularly if linear, are likely to be utilised by nocturnal fauna feeding and commuting.

Built Form

5.30. The Built Form contributes significantly to the character of the Parish and is the interrelationship between all the elements that create an attractive place to live, work or visit.

5.31. Development should be in-keeping with local character (with reference to the Local Character Zone it sits within) and be beautiful, as described in the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission report, Living with Beauty: promoting health, well-being and sustainable growth (section 5.16).

5.32. It is expected that the majority of new developments will be positioned within a limited number of infill sites within the existing Village Zone and Urban Fringe Zone. Any more substantial developments will be expected to produce a detailed Design Code.

5.33. Developments should incorporate areas of usable, accessible open space, utilising the natural topography to create a 'soft' edge to the residential development with attractive views into and from the surrounding countryside, and neighbouring properties.

5.34. Developments should respect the rural nature of the parish and be designed to promote spaciousness between dwellings, with uniform houses and plots being avoided.

5.35. The scale of development – height, massing and density - should diminish as the open countryside (defined as beyond the settlement boundaries and within Identity Zone 3) is approached, blending in seamlessly.

5.36. The use of green space within developments is encouraged. For example, through front gardens, greenspaces between developments, trees and shrubs in roadside verge. This is important to create a greener, softer look and feel to new housing developments and create habitats for local wildlife while providing a natural and sustainable drainage system.

Homes and Buildings

5.37. Well-designed homes and buildings are those which are functional, accessible, and sustainable. They provide environments that support the health and well-being of their users, and all who experience them.

5.38. New developments should demonstrate how the types of dwellings provided will help ensure a balanced mix of housing for Cold Ash Parish, particularly by the provision of homes designed for smaller households, and accessible purpose-designed homes for older people.

5.39. The Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) principles are useful in this context. They are based on 10 key design criteria, many of which are recognisable from good design generally - good light, ventilation, room to move around and good storage - but they have particular relevance to the spectrum of older persons' housing which needs to both offer an attractive alternative to the family home and be able to adapt over time to meet changing needs.

5.40. Any new development, or extension, should have a scale and form which would be complementary to surrounding properties and would not result in any significant loss of amenity to existing residents.

5.41. Cold Ash Parishioners have emphasised the need to respect the local vernacular in any new development. The characteristics of what exists already in the Village Zone and Urban Fringe Zone (as described in Table 5.1) should therefore be considered, and developments should be similar in character and scale to existing housing in the area being developed.

5.42. Given the individual nature of many of the existing properties in the Parish, building materials are not specified other than the need to complement local styles and be sustainable in nature. Sustainability is covered in Policy CAP4 (Sustainable Design); however it is worth noting from a design perspective that eco design principles do not prescribe any particular architectural style and can be adapted to fit a wide variety of built characters. A wide range of solutions is also available to retrofit existing buildings, including listed properties, to improve their energy efficiency.

5.43. Adequate storage for bins should be designed into development from the outset.

5.44. The height of new buildings should be in proportion to their surroundings. It is expected that new developments shall be no more than two storeys in height, or three storeys where roof space is utilised; any apartment buildings (for example retirement homes) should respect the scale of the surrounding houses.

5.45. Without compromising the overall design principles, groups of buildings should include variations to ensure variety and interest. Innovative designs, however, which respect and are sympathetic to the rural vision of the Neighbourhood Plan and the style of the surrounding homes/buildings, will not be discouraged.

5.46. Extensions of existing buildings should be in keeping with, and in proportion to, the size of the original building.

5.47. In addition to the Policy CAP10 (Dark Skies), light spill from within buildings is a cause for concern in maintaining the rural environment and will be reduced by:

i) All glazing to adhere to the appropriate building codes and standards; and

ii) Avoiding, recessing or containing behind permanent landscaping, large areas of vertical fenestration; and

iii) Avoiding glazing which is facing upwards (whether horizontal or angled) including conservatory roofs; and

iv) Within a site, locating and orientating development as sensitively as possible.

5.48. Native hedgerows of local provenance (such as hawthorn or beech) and/or post or rail fences should be used to define boundaries of new properties. Close boarded or similarly styled fencing or brick walls are regarded as urbanising features; wherever possible, these should be confined to visually non-prominent places, such as the division of back gardens.

Movement

5.49. Patterns of **movement** for our Parishioners are integral to well-designed places. Movement includes walking and cycling, transport, parking and access to facilities.

5.50. Suggested improvements to road usage (to encourage more sustainable modes of transport locally) are covered in Policy CAP11 (Encouraging Sustainable Movement), however development should additionally take road safety and environmental factors into account. Development along narrow lanes or single-track roads, for instance, is discouraged due to the increased traffic levels which would result and the difficulties that may be posed for pedestrians accessing those developments.

5.51. Sufficient off-road car parking – including the provision of electric car charging capability - should be provided for residents, visitors and service vehicles, in line with the West Berkshire Parking Standards. Equally, secure, covered bicycle parking/storage space should be provided. Where appropriate, garages or car ports should be set back from the street frontage and the style of provision be appropriate to the houses to which they belong, and the rural character of the area. They should not be larger in scale than the dwellings they service, nor should they be visually obtrusive. The Institute of Highways Engineers sets out considerations for parking solutions in the Residential Parking Policy for New Development.

5.52. All new developments will provide electric vehicle charging points for each dwelling.

5.53. Sufficient space must be provided for the storage of, and access to, refuse and recycling.

5.54. Existing PROW are to be maintained, with new landscaped connections into the site and the wider PROW network encouraged.

5.55. Policy CAP2 sets out the criteria to enable excellent design in Cold Ash Parish. It has a close relationship with Policies CAP4 (Sustainable design), CAP5 (Minimising the risk of flooding), CAP6 (Conserving and enhancing the natural landscape), and CAP8 (Iconic Views), of this Plan. Developments should take account of each of the policies.

POLICY CAP3: DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT

A. Development proposals are expected to incorporate a high quality of design, which demonstrate an appreciation and understanding of vernacular and local character, including existing buildings, landscape and local architectural precedents.

B. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals, including for infill, are expected to address the following criteria:

a. design should be landscape-led, supported by a landscape strategy and in-keeping with the Local Character Zone in which it is located.

b. the guidance contained in the Quality Design West Berkshire Supplementary Planning Document and the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan. It should seek to address the Local Design Principles for Cold Ash, in particular it should:

i. respect the height, scale and local vernacular of the surrounding buildings in the context of the local topography; and

ii. be of a density in keeping with the immediate local context, respecting the rural nature of the parish, whilst ensuring the efficient use of land and, where appropriate, meeting identified local housing needs. It is recognised that some sites may be able to accommodate a higher density where it can be clearly demonstrated this would respect, and be sensitive to, the character and particular context of the locality in which it is located;

iii. provide high quality boundary treatment, comprising native flora, including the retention and enhancement of established trees and hedgerows; and

iv. demonstrate how the particular site context and existing green infrastructure shapes and informs the layout and how approaches to landscape and building form have been adopted; and

v. reflect architectural variety – such as roof and window styles - found locally and using materials that are in keeping with those used in existing buildings in the immediate locality; and

vi. Incorporate accessible and attractive public open spaces and creative use of Sustainable Drainage Systems; and

vii. Not have a significantly detrimental impact on the iconic views; and

viii. Provide adequate off-road parking – cars and bicycles - for residents, visitors and service vehicles, in accordance with the West Berkshire Parking Standards; and

ix. Provide adequate storage for waste and recycling containers.

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 1; Adopted Core Strategy: CS14; Local Plan Review: SP7; NPPF: 104, 108, 120, 126 to 136, 152

Policy CAP4: Sustainable design

Purpose

5.56. This policy seeks to ensure that development meets the highest environmental standards in terms of its construction, energy use and resource energy use such as materials, water, waste etc, to help mitigate climate change.

Justification

5.57. On 12 June 2019 the Government voted to amend the Climate Change Act 2008 by introducing a new target for at least a 100% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990 levels) in the UK by 2050. This is otherwise known as a net zero target. In preparation for this, by 2035, emissions will need to be reduced emissions by 78% (compared to 1990 levels). Locally, West Berkshire Council declared a Climate Change Emergency in July 2019 with an aim to deliver carbon neutrality for the District by 2030.

5.58. These are demanding targets, which will require everyone to contribute, from households and communities to businesses and local and national government. Being '2050 ready' will require new buildings to have minimal energy use and net carbon emissions over the year. They should follow the energy hierarchy, looking at such measures as insulation, energy efficient lighting and being fitted with or connected to low/zero carbon technologies (which includes renewable technologies. Consideration should also be given to the development reducing water demand through water efficiency methods and technologies.



Examples of discreet solar panels (source: Historic England)

5.59. Notwithstanding current building regulations, standards for low/zero carbon homes and developments are set out in WBC policy. Planners and developers are strongly encouraged to make use of energy efficient materials and to ensure that the design and layout of new development maximises its potential to be as energy efficient as possible and to encourage the use of renewable energy.

5.60. There is an opportunity to improve and promote sustainability in Cold Ash by:

- supporting passive environmental design, maximising the use of 'natural' sources of heating, cooling and ventilation to create comfortable conditions inside building;
- Integrating renewable energy systems into new development, including existing and new public buildings. Where appropriate and viable, there is support locally for solar panels to be incorporated into new development;

- reducing water consumption through grey water systems and water efficient systems;
- ensuring all further development incorporates high quality sustainable drainage systems and, where possible, retro-fits SuDS to existing properties and the public highway.
- promoting sustainable forms of transport through priority systems for pedestrians and cyclists and provision of individual and communal electric vehicle charging points;
- promoting public transport.

5.61. Policy CAP4 seeks to provide a local iteration of the national and local policy context for this important matter. While taking account of the importance of the Building Regulations in regulating and delivering energy efficiency measures, it identifies a series of locally distinctive design features which would be supported where they are incorporated into development.

POLICY CAP4: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

1. **Proposals which incorporate design and environmental performance measures and standards to reduce energy consumption, carbon emission and adapt to current and projected climate change scenarios will be supported.**

2. **Proposals which incorporate the following sustainable design features as appropriate to their scale, nature and location will be strongly supported, where measures will not have a detrimental impact on character, landscape and views:**

   a. **siting and orientation to optimise passive solar gain.**

   b. **the use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials and measures such as loft and wall insulation and double glazing.**

   c. **installation of energy efficiency measures such as LED lighting.**

   d. **providing low carbon sustainable design and avoid or mitigate all regulated emissions by following the energy hierarchy. For example, use less energy and manage energy demand during operation through fabric and service improvements; where feasible exploit local energy sources such as secondary heat and supply energy efficiently and cleanly, via low carbon technologies; maximise the use of zero carbon technology / renewable energy by producing, storing and using zero carbon / renewable energy on-site; only where necessary, off-site measures to deal with any remaining emissions.**

   e. **Providing the infrastructure for adequate electric vehicle charging points for each dwelling, where new parking provision is expected to be made.**

   f. **alterations to existing buildings should be designed with energy reduction in mind and comply with current sustainable design and construction standards, as set out in the Quality Design – West Berkshire SPD and the Building Regulations.**

   g. **Reducing water consumption through water re-use measures including rainwater harvesting, surface water harvesting and / or grey water recycling systems.**

3. **The retrofitting of historic buildings is encouraged to reduce energy demand and to generate low/zero carbon energy where appropriate, providing it safeguards historic characteristics.**

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 1, 5; Adopted Core Strategy: CS14, CS15; Local Plan Review: SP5, SP7; NPPF: 130, 152 to 155

Policy CAP5: Minimising the risk of flooding

Purpose

5.62. This policy supports the essential requirement for development proposals to consider both existing risk and potential risk from flooding, as set out in Paragraph 152 of the NPPF, by maintaining sinks and drains and requiring new developments to include sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS).

5.63. Risks should not solely be considered for the new development site but must also consider the secondary effect of that development, or lack of a long-term maintenance plan, to other residents and the wider environment. A prime example of this is the potential impact to residents of Thatcham of developments in Cold Ash Parish.

5.64. This policy seeks to work in tandem with the West Berkshire Local Flood Risk Strategy document, and the Thatcham Surface Water Management Plan.

Justification

5.65. The hilly nature of the parish introduces a significant level of flood risk to the lower reaches of the parish and surrounding areas, including affecting areas of Newbury and Thatcham. Nature has addressed this through several natural solutions, notably sinks and ordinary watercourses forming around the parish. The parish had, historically therefore, benefited from natural features to contain and reduce the risk of flooding.

5.66. As development has taken place, however, some of these natural drainage solutions have been compromised or ceased to be fully effective. Whilst a number of man-made solutions have been introduced, it is now a priority that attention is paid to maintaining the remaining natural issues, sinks and ordinary watercourses.

5.67. There are four types of flooding that impact Cold Ash and its surrounding areas, notably:

- Fluvial flooding (from ordinary watercourses)
- Surface water flooding
- Groundwater flooding
- Sewer flooding

5.68. As recently as in the winter of 2013/ 2014, residents in Cold Ash have experienced flooding, including the flood water flowing down into Waller Drive and Turnpike Industrial Estate around 1.5m deep flooding all six of the industrial units and 11 properties on Turnpike Road. A farmhouse was flooded off B4009 Long Lane due to excessive surface water run-off. Properties along Ashmore Green Road frequently suffer from surface water flooding.

5.69. It is worth noting that the significant flooding to Thatcham in 2007 was not caused by fluvial (river) flooding but by a combination of surface and sewer flooding.

5.70. Properties along Ashmore Green Road, at present, frequently suffer from surface water flooding.

5.71. Whilst national policy includes robust guidance on fluvial (river) sources of flooding, this policy seeks to strengthen guidance to ensure that development proposals in Cold Ash Parish acknowledge the localised issues faced by communities from land drainage issues. The majority of the watercourses in the parish, for instance, are not main rivers and therefore fall under private

ownership and there is less robust national policy for these with regards to new development. There is a responsibility on the riperian owner for the maintenance of watercourses. In addition, the clearing of mature trees and areas rich in biodiversity contributes to the concerns regarding land drainage.

5.72. The Cold Ash Parish Flood Warden sits on the Thatcham Flood Forum and collaboration on the shared issues in the management and reduction of flood risk is ongoing.

5.73. The policy supports the need for development proposals to consider both existing risk and potential risk from flooding:

5.74. Existing risk:

a. Watercourses should remain open, and land safeguarded for management of existing flood risk, to avoid passing this risk on to others. New development should not alter or impede existing drainage patterns/overland flow-paths, as this can result in the displacement of surface water, causing increased flood risk to existing communities and infrastructure.

b. Highways drainage systems within the Parish are already impacted by heavy rainfall and there is a concern about how adequately these are being maintained, due to local authority budget constraints. As a result, the potential secondary impact on highway drainage of any new development should be considered.

5.75. Potential risk:

a. Where practicable, existing land drainage features should be retained (these are often lost to make room for development, provide access and amend site boundaries). Roadside ditches also perform an important function in the village. Development will be encouraged to protect and complement the existing drainage networks, providing betterment and more robust maintenance plans for these, both in the short and long term, to improve drainage within the village in the future. It should be noted that riparian owners have responsibility for maintenance of waterways in their ownership.

b. With climate models projecting an increase in rainfall, it is essential that any new developments factor in the potential impact of the development on surface water. As referenced in paragraph 5.66, the impact on the surrounding Parish should be considered in addition to the new development itself.

c. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are expected to be delivered on all new development and should be made attractive and accessible to people, as well as being designed to enhance biodiversity, as now required by the NPPF. SuDS plans are expected to be available for review at the early stage of any planning application. WBC have an adopted SuDS Supplementary Planning Document; this and any other relevant national planning and environmental legislation should be referred to. *It is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for surface water drainage to ground, water courses or surface water sewer. It must not be allowed to drain to the foul sewer, as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding*.

Natural flood management

5.76. Rainwater runoff, particularly because of heavy rainfall, can quickly overburden the drainage system. In these circumstances, it is helpful to reduce the amount of the sediment in the run-off, which will help to maintain the full capacity of pipes; slow the water down so that there is more time for it to be naturally soaked into the earth; and provide additional opportunities for water to be soaked up into the earth so that it does not enter the pipes in the first place.

5.77. In Cold Ash, this might be achieved by maximising the use of "natural" SuDS features, including swales, streams, storage ponds, reed beds and the use of leaky dams and woody debris to retain water up stream.

5.78. These natural systems manage flood risk and can also secure other objectives, such as providing additional public open space integrated with cycling and walking routes, providing additional habitat, and contributing to the character of the new "place". Examples are shown below:

	Planting additional trees and hedgerows in public green spaces and along verges. Soakaway crates can be installed beneath trees, which serve to capture excess water, slowing its movement until it can be naturally soaked into the earth or taken in by the tree. Verges in the village could be used in this way, whereby kerbs beside green spaces can be lowered to enable water to flow into the green space.
	In areas where natural green space is lacking, small rain gardens can be created to capture surface water before it enters the drain. The use of larger stone and cobbles can assist in removing sediment from the water
	The use of ponds and reed beds to capture surface water. Ponds are noted for their biodiversity value as a habitat for a number of species and would therefore play a dual role in the parish. Great crested newts are found across the district and WBC has recently received a license to study these more closely. Additional ponds will enable further habitats for this important species.

5.79. Developers are required to consult as appropriate with the relevant water authority on sewage and drainage infrastructure. They are strongly encouraged to commence pre-application discussions with the water authority at the earliest possible opportunity.

POLICY CAP5: MINIMISING THE RISK OF FLOODING

1. **Existing watercourses (inclusive of all ditches, sinks and land drains) will be expected to remain open and properly maintained by the Riparian Landowner and the land safeguarded for management of existing flood risk.**

2. **Development proposals that protect or improve and complement existing drainage networks (watercourses and land drains specifically as well as highway drainage and storm water drains/public sewers) while providing long-term betterment and more robust maintenance of these to improve drainage within the village in the long term, will be supported.**

3. **Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) must be provided on site unless there are critical and compelling reasons why this is not possible. The absence of any on-site SuDS will only be permissible in such developments where a specific reason can be evidenced that prevents the use of SuDS. Should the development negatively impact surface, fluvial, groundwater or sewer flooding, the application is unlikely to be supported.**

4. **SuDS provision must demonstrate how its design will enhance wildlife and biodiversity, for example through the provision of SuDS as part of green spaces, and that includes green roofs, permeable surfaces and rain gardens, as well as minimising the impacts of flooding.**

5. **Applications for major developments, and those in a flood risk area, as identified by West Berkshire Council and on Environment Agency mapping, shall be accompanied by a drainage scheme maintenance and management plan. Other developments shall be accompanied by details that make clear the responsibilities for the long-term management of all surface and land drainage components on the site. This strategy should include:**

    a. **What actions the developer will take to adhere to the published and approved SuDS plans.**
    b. **How, if at any point, the defined targets/goals/standards of this plan are not met, this would be mitigated.**
    c. **How the developer will ensure the residents understand the performance and progress of the plan in the long, medium and short term.**
    d. **What safeguards, steps and mitigation are proposed should the management company fail, or is taken over, to ensure the SuDs commitment for the development is maintained.**
    e. **Clarification of who maintains responsibility for the longer-term oversight of any management body set up to enforce a SuDS agreement on behalf of the developer and/or the residents.**
    f. **Specifics as to how communication and appropriate working relations with the parish are to be put in place should SuDs based issues or mitigations be required.**

6. **All applications for development will be expected to consider the potential risk to the surrounding environment and in particular the impacts of surface water, ground water and sewage systems to properties and residents further down the flood risk chain from any high ground.**

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 5; Adopted Core Strategy: CS16; Local Plan Review: SP6; NPPF: 159-169

6. ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE

Policy CAP6: Biodiversity and the network of green and blue infrastructure

Purpose

6.1. This policy seeks to ensure that the multiple benefits of green spaces and corridors within the parish – including their importance in combating pressure on wildlife, habitats, biodiversity and geodiversity and in off-setting the effects of air pollution - are recognised and enhanced. This applies particularly where individual spaces have a greater collective value as part of wider chains of green infrastructure. This will serve to support the requirement to conserve and, where possible, provide a net gain in biodiversity through planning policy whilst accommodating sustainable development.

Justification

6.2. The NPPF states that planning policies should seek to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity including by identifying and mapping habitats and networks. The Environment Act includes a provision for a mandatory requirement for new developments to provide a biodiversity net gain of a minimum of 10%, either on-site, off-site or as a combination of the two.



Looking North-East towards the Broadview Farm and the Pang Valley

6.3. The Environment Act also recognises the need to protect what it describes as “Nature Recovery Networks”, joined-up system of places important for wildlife on land and at sea. It is considered important, therefore, to seek to enhance the green infrastructure assets (green spaces, wildlife sites, access routes and historic sites) of the Neighbourhood area where possible.

The Defra biodiversity metric has been designed to determine and quantify existing biodiversity value in terms of habitats and the consequent measures required to ensure measurable net gain. Net gain involves a post development increase in biodiversity units of 10%. Natural England considers this to be the most appropriate mechanism for determining current ecological value and delivering biodiversity net gain. Ecological assessment by suitably qualified people must utilise this metric on all habitats to determine net gain.

Ecological reports must be consistent with BS 42020 Biodiversity – code of practise for planning and development.

6.4. The landscape of the parish has been formed over many centuries by the geology and climate of the natural and human interactions. These influences have resulted in a diverse pattern of land use that, along with the emotionally engaging natural landscape, provide the rural sense of place for the communities in rural areas of the parish. Defined as Woodland and Heathland mosaic in the Landscape Character Assessment, the area is dominated by an east-west orientated, heathland ridge and characterised by varied topography, from flat plateau areas to steeply undulating slopes. Woodland is a key component in the varied and attractive land cover mosaic, giving it a distinctive role in providing a rural setting.

6.5. Figures 9 and 10 identifies on a map the green stepping-stones and, importantly, the unbroken green corridors within the area. It has been informed by the Landscape Character Assessment and biodiversity work undertaken by the AONB unit, WBC and the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC). It should be noted that Local Wildlife Sites boundaries are subject to change and should be obtained from the TVERC.

6.6. These are important spaces for the local community for recreational purposes and for visitors to the area, threading through the villages themselves. Access to open spaces is important for well being and mental health. They also provide critical spaces as wildlife refuges and routes for wildlife, such as bats, to prevent species becoming isolated.

6.7. The green and blue infrastructure assets of the Parish should be maximised and made properly accessible, where feasible. Development proposals are encouraged to facilitate improved connectivity between wildlife areas and green spaces that are used by the community. If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (for instance by locating to an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

6.8. Planning permission should also be refused for any development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland, veteran trees, trees of high conservation value and linear habitats (i.e. hedgerows, streams and ditches), unless the need for and benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss. In this instance, substantial compensation as quantified by the Defra biodiversity metric will be considered.

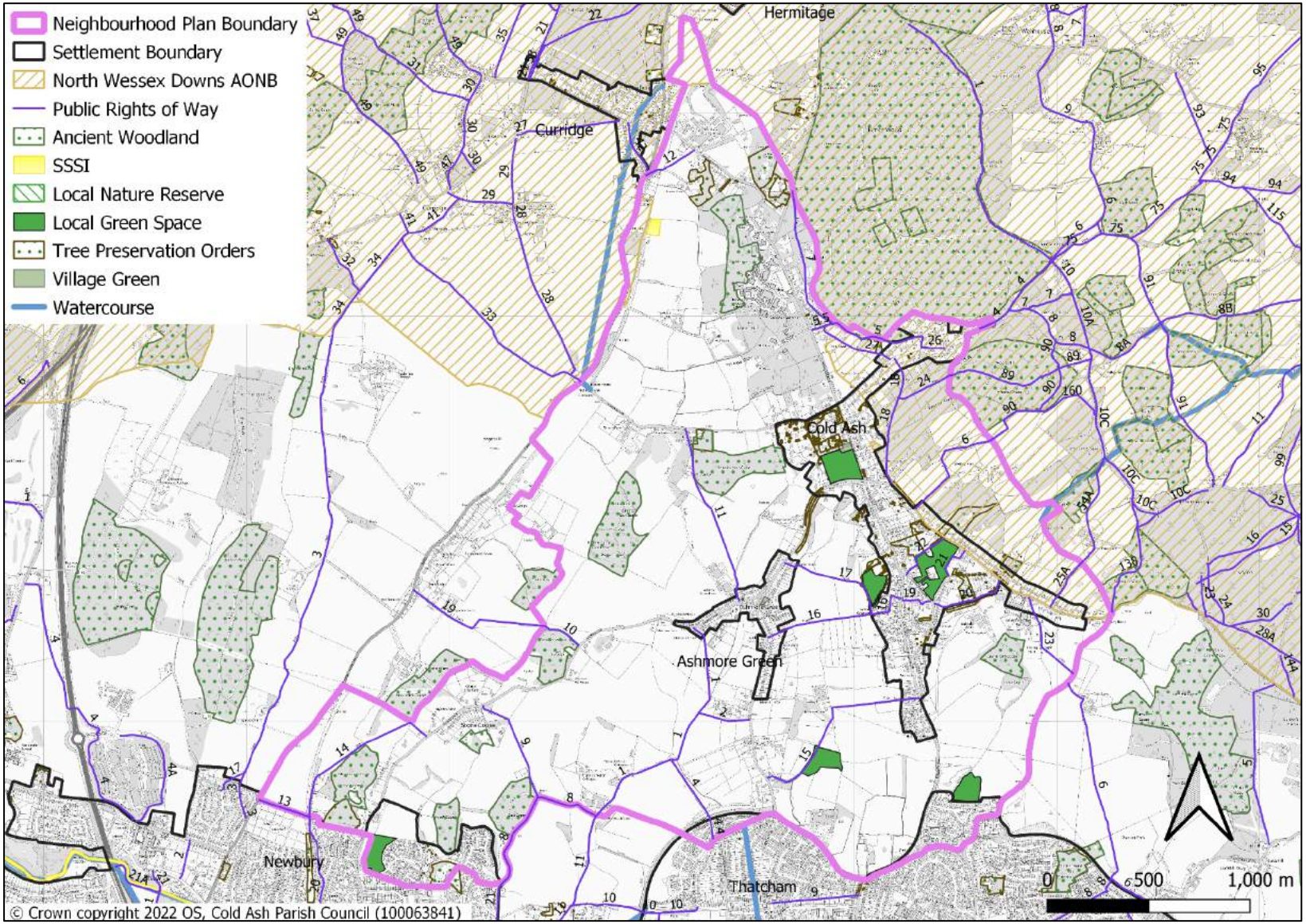


Figure 9: Green infrastructure (Parish wide)

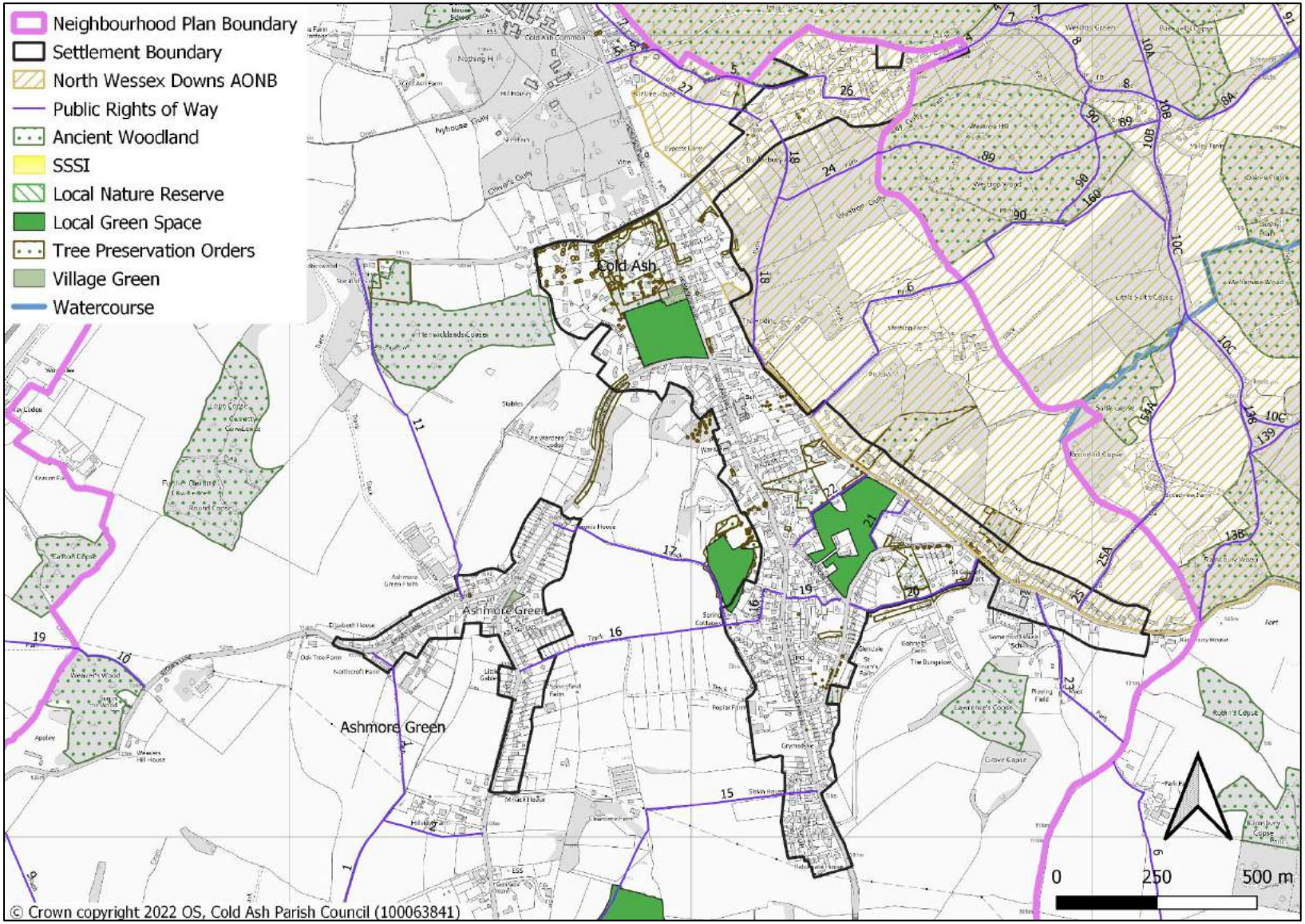


Figure 10: Green infrastructure (villages)

Trees and ancient woodland

6.9. The parish retains a significant number of trees and woodland – including veteran trees and ancient woodland – many of which are protected through Preservation Orders. As noted in the NPPF at paragraph 131, trees play a vital part in dealing with the effects of climate change and managing pollution. They provide shade, reduce flood risk, enable carbon capture, improve air quality and contribute to the purification of water. They also contribute to local character. While the parish has many existing Tree Protection Orders (TPOs), the Parish Council encourages all residents to come forward to recommend, and even apply for, new TPOs where it would benefit the parish.





Tree Preservation Orders along Ashmore Green Road and Weaver's Wood ancient woodland

6.10. Ancient woodland and veteran trees are irreplaceable habitats, which have both heritage and cultural value. Natural England advises that development which would result in the loss of, or damage to, ancient woodland and ancient or notable trees will not be permitted except in wholly exceptional circumstances, as set out in paragraph 180 of the NPPF. They also advise that it is preferable to link up fragmented areas of woodland, which might be divided by development, with green bridges or tunnels. Also, to buffer ancient woodland and notable/veteran trees by leaving an appropriate zone of semi-natural habitat between the development and the woodland, providing wildlife corridors, and balancing new developments and residential areas with green infrastructure and allowing space for trees.

Biodiversity opportunity areas within Cold Ash Parish

6.11. Many developments are able to deliver biodiversity gain on-site, which might include the provision of sustainable urban drainage systems. Whilst developments are encouraged to deliver in this way, this is not always possible; equally there may be opportunities to enhance other parts of the Parish in need of attention. It is therefore useful to consider where Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA) exist within Cold Ash. 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. There is one BOA that has been identified by the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership and recorded within the TVERC. The parish intends to continue to explore BOA opportunities for the Local Green Space sites, and other green space within the parish, with local landowners. Once potential sites are identified, we will aim to establish the necessary baseline data against which any Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) can be tracked and managed. Should we, in time, achieve any BNG, we will aim to establish the appropriate BOA(s) enabling the relevant landowner(s) to sell the BNG.

6.12. Within 18 months to two years, the Habitat Recovery Network for Berkshire will be in place. This process is being managed by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

6.13. **Bucklebury Plateau** – Covering much of the northern part of the parish, including those areas falling within the North Wessex Downs AONB, this plateau extends between the Kennet Valley and the Pang Valley, incorporating, in the Cold Ash area, small patches of glacial deposits. The BOA extends across the Cold Ash Quarry, Site of Special Scientific Interest, and habitats include lowland meadow and woodland and, to a lesser extent in Cold Ash, heathland. Particular enhancements sought to the area are heathland management and restoration, lowland meadow management, restoration and re-creation, and woodland management. Woodland planting should be restricted to forming links but needs to carefully consider the value and potential of land for other habitats. This chimes with the priorities for the AONB for this type of landscape.

6.14. As associated action will be to consider the development of a Biodiversity Action Plan to set out preferred planting and habitat management principles.

Policy CAP6: BIODIVERSITY AND THE NETWORK OF GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

1. **Proposals should be designed from the outset to create, conserve, enhance and manage green and blue spaces and connect chains of green and blue infrastructure, as identified on the Policies Maps, delivering a measurable net gain in biodiversity of a minimum 10% using the most up to date biodiversity accounting metric developed by Natural England for local people and wildlife. Development which would result in the loss of ancient woodland, aged trees or veteran trees will not be supported unless there are wholly exceptional reasons as envisaged in the NPPF and a suitable compensation strategy exists.**

2. **Subject to their scale, nature and location, proposals for development must be supported by a biodiversity appraisal, which must demonstrate how negative impacts would be minimised, mitigated and biodiversity net gain achieved.**

3. **Proposals that seek to improve the connectivity between wildlife areas and green and blue spaces will be encouraged in order to enhance the green and blue infrastructure of the Neighbourhood area. In particular, proposals that support the enhancement and management of the identified Biodiversity Opportunity Areas will be supported. Conversely, proposals which threaten to damage such connectivity will be strongly resisted.**

4. **The planting of additional native species trees and/ or continuous hedgerows to provide wildlife corridors and to offset the effects of air pollution and to provide cooling and shelter for people as well as a habitat for wildlife will be supported.**

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 2; Adopted Core Strategy: CS17, CS18; Local Plan Review: SP10, SP11; NPPF: 174, 175, 176, 179, 180

Policy CAP7: Managing the environmental impact of development

Purpose

6.15. This policy seeks to ensure that development proposals have considered how they can enhance the natural environment – both flora and fauna – including the features of it that are particularly distinctive to Cold Ash. This is particularly important in the context of the Parish being located within the setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB. It also seeks to ensure that development proposals contribute to the provision of adequate open space.



Fishers Lane to Selsmore Common

Justification

6.16. The NPPF, at para 180, stresses that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment including requiring net gain in biodiversity. The landscape of the parish comprises:

- generously scaled rolling landscape with some pronounced wooded ridges;
- a complex pattern of landscape, dominated by woodland; coniferous, or mixed with beech and birch;
- pastures;
- heathland and woodland habitats – deciduous and mixed woodland to pasture and arable, some of which is ancient;
- linear settlements within wooded areas; clustered farmsteads and private residences;
- road pattern with complex winding sunken lanes (see 'Sunken lanes') with banks and hedgerows; and
- a comprehensive network of Public Rights of way (see Public Rights of Way), including a network of bridleways

6.17. The area abounds with natural drains, issues and sinks, all of which help to ensure natural drainage and control the run-off of excessive rainfall. These are particularly evident in the local gaps between Cold Ash and the neighbouring parishes and are marked on larger scale Ordnance Survey maps. Further strategic SuDS sites should be sought.

6.18. There are many natural assets within in the parish (Table 3), some of which are afforded a level of statutory protection.

Table 3: Environmental designations in the parish

Designation	Sites	Level of protection
North Wessex Downs AONB	The north-eastern part of the parish lies within the AONB. The remainder of the parish contributes to the setting of the AONB.	Protected by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act).
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Cold Ash Quarry SSSI – a 0.4-hectare Geological Conservation Review site. The quarry is unique in Britain for the collection of fossil plants and insects which occur in a layer of silt and clay within the Reading Beds.	An area of particular interest to science due to the rare species of fauna or flora it contains - or even important geological or physiological features that may lie in its boundaries. Owners *must* manage the site appropriately to conserve its special features.
Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)	11 sites in the Parish: SU46Z01 Messenger's Copse SU46Z03 Yate's Copse SU46Z04 Stone Copse SU46Z05 Sett Copse SU46Z06 Weaver's Wood SU46Z08 Carrotty Cow Leaze/Round Copse SU56E01 Cleardene Farm Wood SU56E04 Lawrence's Copse SU57A02 The Hangings SU57A05 New Farm Gully SU46Z01 Messenger's Copse Proposed Extension	While they have no direct legal protection, Local Wildlife Sites are recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which gives them some protection from being developed.
Roadside Nature Reserves (RNR)	The TVERC are currently reviewing road verges that	They are not non-statutory sites but are home to a wide variety of flora and fauna. 20% of the Road Verge Nature Reserves

Designation	Sites	Level of protection
	are important for wildlife in West Berkshire. See Figure 12.	(RVNR) across the whole region were classified as high risk.
Ancient woodland	Areas of ancient woodland, as shown in Figure 11: Big Copse / Round Copse Hardwick Copse Lawrence's Copse SU56E04 Messengers Copse SU46Z01 Sett Copse SU46Z05 Stone Copse SU46Z04 The Hangings SU57A02 Weavers' Wood SU46Z06 Yates' Copse SU46Z03	Protected landscape within the NPPF. See advice note: Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions
Local Green Spaces	As set out in Policy CAP9 (Local Green Space)	Protected to the level of Green Belt, once designated.
Priority habitats	See Figure 11	Species and Habitats of Principal Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

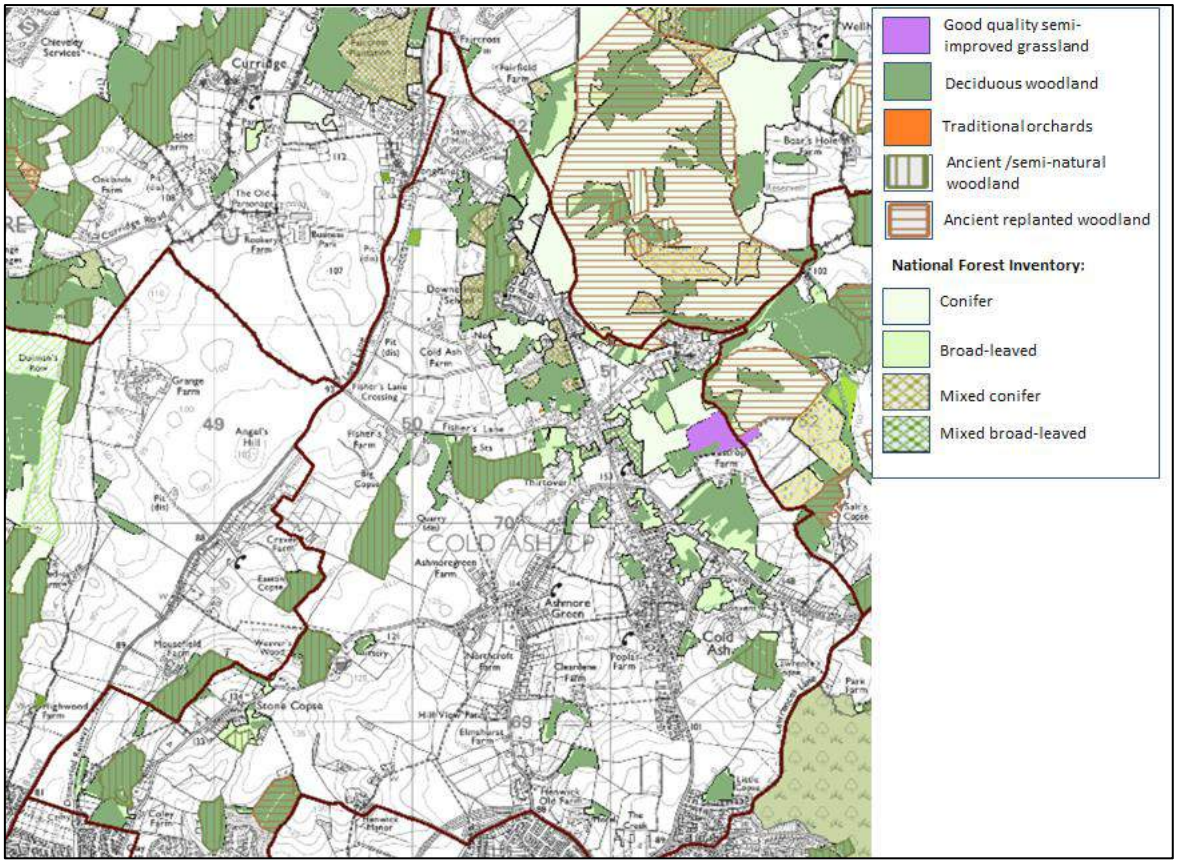


Figure 11: Priority habitats in Cold Ash Parish (Source: Magic Map, Defra)



Looking from Drove Lane into Fence Wood

6.19. Further distinctive natural features particular to Cold Ash Parish that are not protected, yet provide vital habitats for flora and fauna, include veteran and mature trees and established woodland, hedgerows, mature planted gardens, agricultural and grazing land and small waterways. Such features form vital corridors for many animals and birds, especially those migrating, to safely navigate around their domains.

6.20. **Trees, woodland, and hedgerows:** These are dominant natural feature in this area and help to maintain the rural nature of the parish. The gravel plateau, for instance, is very acidic, and has created a typical landscape of Pine and Birch. The area along and round Hermitage Road is densely treed and provides a contrast to the more open Oak dominated landscape of the clay soils that surround The Ridge. The main tree species are Ash, throughout the parish; Beech in Ashmore Green Road; Oak in Ashmore Green Road, Bucklebury Alley, Collaroy Road, Stoney Lane and The Ridge; Hornbeam in Stoney Lane; Scots Pine at Downe House and on Hermitage Road and Slanting Hill; and the occasional Sweet Chestnut and Cherry. Hedgerow species found locally include Hawthorn, Blackthorn and Beech.

6.21. These features provide important habitats and green corridors for the movement of a wide variety of wildlife: Dormice, Badger, Fox, Hedgehog, Muntjac and Roe Deer can often be seen, as well as Rabbits, Grey Squirrels and the occasional Weasel and Stoat. Adders, Grass Snakes and Slow Worms can also be observed in certain parts. It is critical, therefore, that the interconnectivity between trees and hedgerows is maintained.

6.22. It is noticeable that the older parts of the villages are more wooded and have larger and more mature species than the newer parts. This arises largely from the earlier dates of planting and the larger gardens usually associated with the older properties. This creates a different character from the newer areas where the houses are more visible and where cypresses tend to dominate the vegetation.

6.23. The smaller gardens and open space areas mean that most of the native trees such as Oak, Ash and Beech cannot be established, especially on the clay areas where set distances have to be maintained to avoid root damage to properties. The lack of large trees could have an adverse effect on the parish if sufficient open space is not provided in new developments to allow for planting larger trees. For these reasons, it is essential that a significant proportion of the mature trees in the parish be protected. There has been limited use of Tree Preservation Orders to date; this is something that will be rectified as part of this planning process.

6.24. It should be noted that where trees have died, they should be left dead standing where possible, because they are a great biodiversity resource for wildlife and if left as a monolith pose little risk.

6.25. **Small waterways and ponds:** Although there are no permanent streams or rivers, small waterways run most of the year. The Environment Agency advises that a suitable buffer strip is retained along the banks of these waterways to protect their corridors, surrounding habitats and encourage their use as a wildlife corridor. The use of leaky dams and woody debris to retain water up stream is also advisable. These waterways provide a suitable environment for frogs and toads, which also make use of garden ponds.

6.26. Ponds also provide an important habitat locally, supporting a range of freshwater species. WBC has a district licence enabling them to closely study Great Crested Newts, which are found across the area. This licence will increase the numbers of ponds in the district and the Newts terrestrial habitat connectivity.

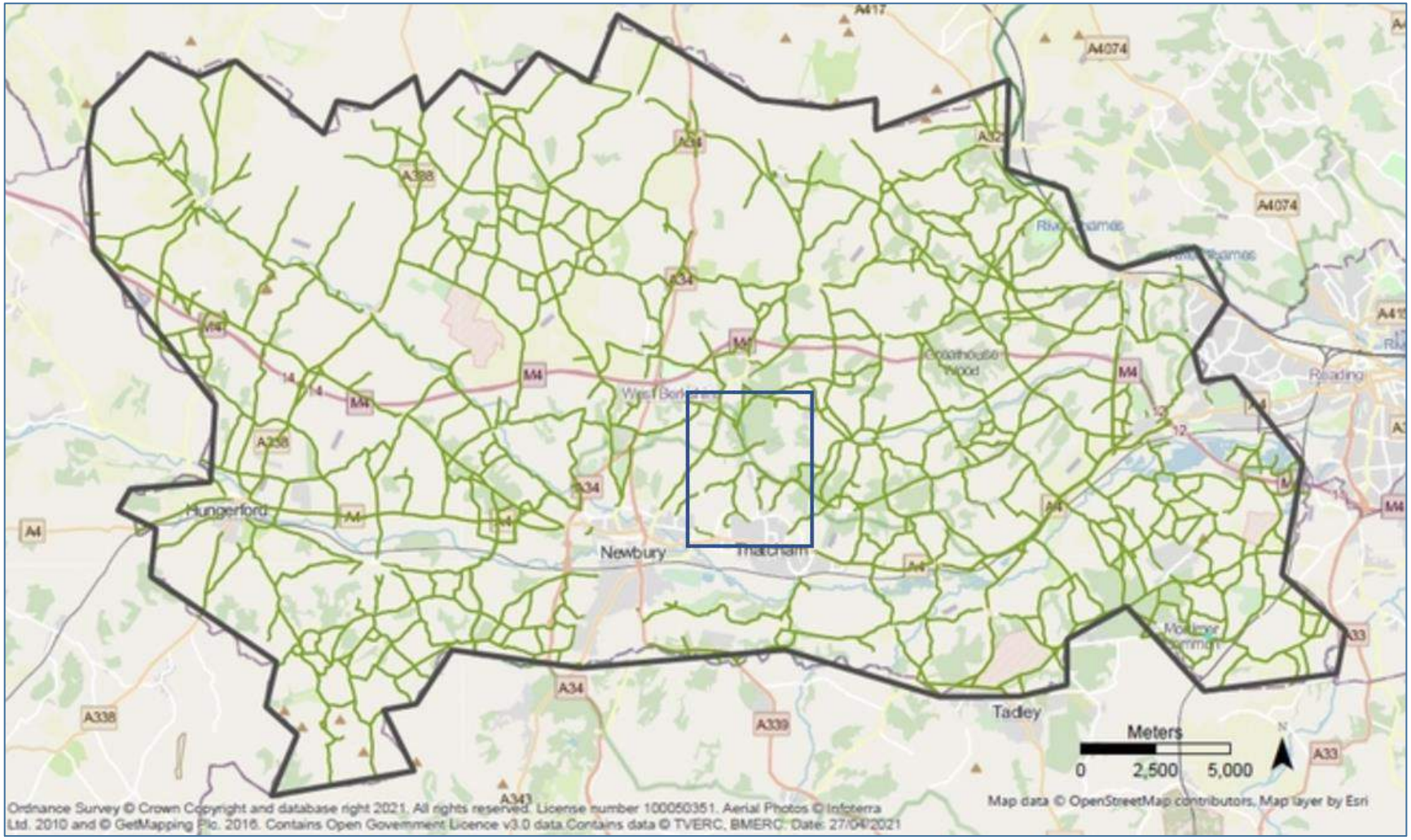


Figure 12: Roadside Nature Reserves in West Berkshire, with Cold Ash highlighted (source: Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)) – source: https://www.bbowt.org.uk/west-berkshire-wild-verges - it is recommended that the BBOWT is engaged




Small waterways are a feature of the landscape; Looking north from PROW 8 - red kite in flight

6.27. **Ancient turf and road verges:** St Mark's Churchyard retains an area of ancient turf with its rare wildflowers. A wide selection of wildflowers can also be found along the road verges, particularly where these are uncut.

6.28. Each of the features also supports the wide variety of birds found in the parish. Sightings include Green and Greater Spotted Woodpeckers, various finches, Jays, Herons, Magpies, Skylarks, Sparrow Hawks, Buzzards, migrating Thrushes such as Fieldfare and Redwing, and the re-introduced Red Kite. Night birds include tawny and barn owls. Ground nesting birds are found in the area too and are often the most are affected by development.

6.29. Development proposals are expected to retain, protect, and enhance both the protected habitats and natural features that are important to Cold Ash. Where appropriate they should include a landscape and ecological management plan including a list of trees and shrubs to be planted to ensure the rural and green character of the parish is enhanced and which should involve the planting of new trees and hedgerows of native and locally sourced species in gardens, communal areas or on roadsides where practical.

POLICY CAP7: MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT

Development proposals should maintain and, where practicable, enhance the natural environment, landscape character, and the rural setting of the parish. This includes both designated sites and important landscape features including woodland, trees, hedgerows, waterways, verges and ponds, which contribute to local character and biodiversity. Proposals should demonstrate that they have addressed the following matters, as appropriate to their scale, nature and location:

a. **The guidance and advice contained in the Quality Design West Berkshire SPD, the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan, and the West Berkshire Council Landscape Character Assessment for the Cold Ash woodland and lowland meadow landscape;**

b. **Existing natural features, including grass verges, ditches, ponds and open spaces should be conserved and enhanced in order to improve the habitat for wildlife and to maintain the rural beauty of the area;**

c. **Providing wildlife-friendly features, for instance hedgehog holes in new residential fencing and bird and bat nesting boxes;**

Trees, hedgerows and planting

d. Existing trees shall be retained unless sufficient evidence is provided (in the form of a Tree Survey or Arboricultural Assessment) to justify their removal although where possible trees should be left as dead standing. Where there is an unavoidable loss of trees on site, replacement trees will be required to be planted on site at the rate of three trees for every one lost.

e. Proposals which include additional native tree or woodland planting will be supported, in particular where this enables public access;

f. Development that would result in the loss of, or the deterioration in the quality of, hedgerows will not be supported, with the exception of removal for vehicular access; in this case, the access should include trees at either end of the retained hedgerow to aid wildlife to cross overhead from crown to crown;

g. The use of non-native evergreen plants (such as laurel and leylandii) is discouraged.

Incorporate open space that is:

h. in usable parcels of land and not fragmented and that design layout does not enable land grab post development.

i. safe, easily accessible and not severed by any physical barrier.

j. is accessible to the general public.

k. creates a safe environment considering lighting and layout.

l. complemented by high quality landscaping schemes.

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 2; Adopted Core Strategy: CS14, CS17; Local Plan Review: SP10, SP11; NPPF: 170 to 182

Policy CAP8: Iconic views

Purpose

6.30. This policy details a series of views in and across the parish, which have been identified by the community as being important to safeguard from inappropriate development. This is because they are considered to incorporate locally important feature, such as landscape and historic features that are characteristic of the Parish.

Justification

6.31. Views and viewpoints are important; they provide a sense of place to local people, enabling enjoyment and appreciation of the features of an area. They can also act as way markers, where they take in notable features or historic assets.



View 6 from Fishers Lane to Snelsmore Common

6.32. Development in the parish has been focussed on the centre because of the topography and nature of the landscape. Cold Ash has some of the highest points in Berkshire and parishioners are afforded views of both the parish and its villages, as well as longer-distance views to the four counties beyond, and this is greatly valued. Any development that breaks up the aesthetic qualities of the landscape, its flowing patterns and colours, would have a major detrimental impact.

6.33. The engagement process revealed nine favourite views that hold particular local significance and which should be safeguarded from detrimental development. Full details of the views, including photographs and text explaining why they are special, are included in Appendix B. A map, illustrating the views, is shown in Figure 13. The views, all from publicly accessible points, are:

1. From St Mark's Churchyard - south and west
2. From The Ridge across Westrop Farm and Gulley
3. From footpath 15 looking SW, towards Newbury
4. Looking NE towards Broadview Farm and the Pang Valley
5. From St Finian's Farm towards Watership Down
6. From Fishers Lane to Snelsmore Common
7. From Footpath 15 looking south
8. From Footpath 16 looking south
9. From footpath 15 looking east, towards Cold Ash Hill
10. View looking south east towards the Downs from the Quiet Garden off Gladstone Lane

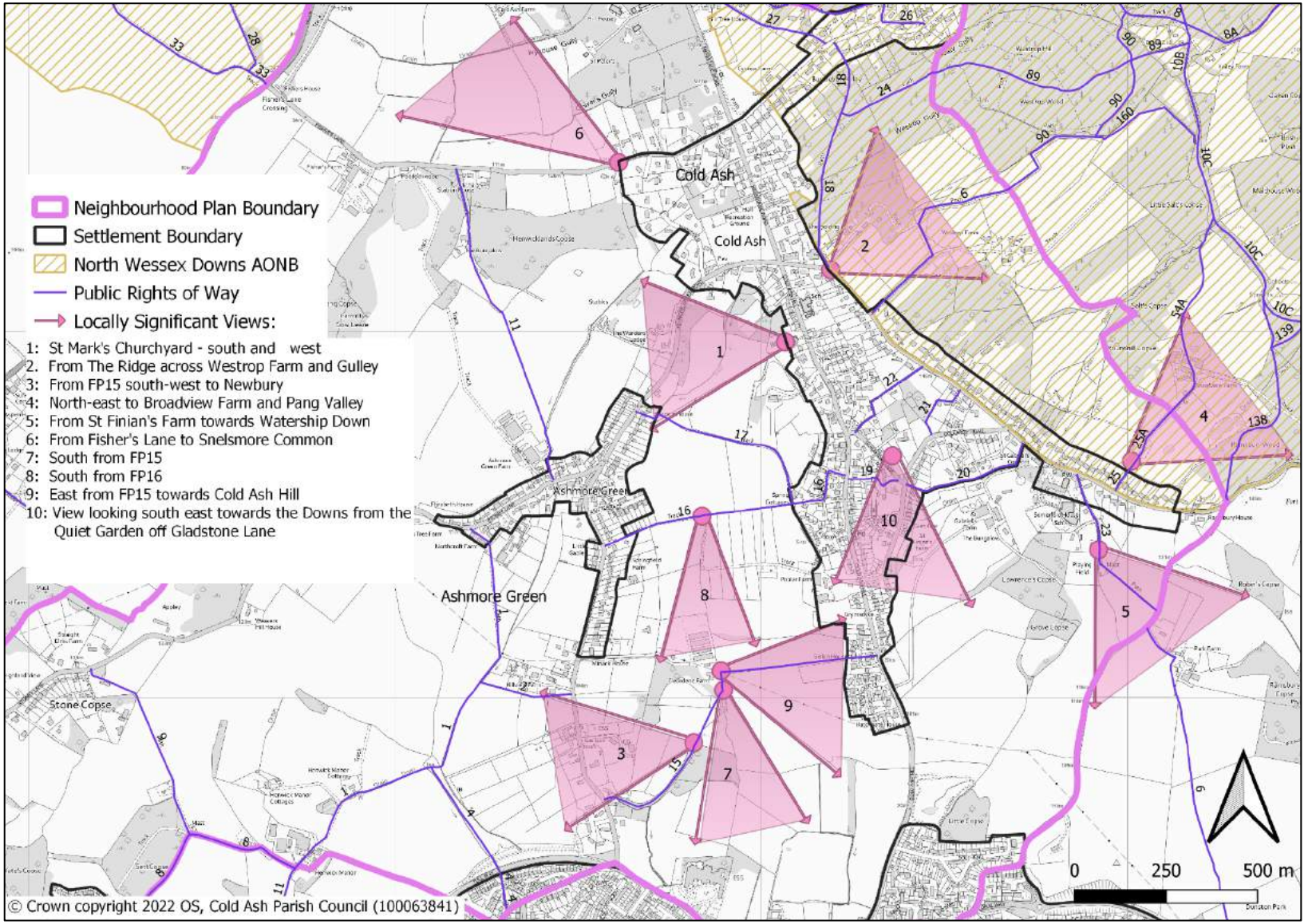


Figure 13: Map showing the location of the iconic views relating to Policy CAP8

6.34. Policy CAP8 requires that development proposals should be designed in a way that does not significantly harm the iconic view or views concerned, identified from publicly accessible locations. It attempts to provide the flexibility required for the wide range of development proposals which will come forward within the Plan period.

6.35. It should be noted that the NDP policy is only relevant to sites within the neighbourhood boundary. Some of the views extend beyond this boundary, as illustrated on Figure 13, and in these cases the Parish Council will liaise with neighbouring parishes to consider if there is support to safeguard the views in those part of the neighbouring parishes.

6.36. In the majority of cases proposals will be of a minor nature and will have little or no effect on the identified views. In circumstances where the proposed development would be likely to have an impact on any identified key view, the planning application concerned should be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment that is proportionate to the scale of the development proposed. Any appropriate mitigation measures – for instance retaining view corridors or glimpses, or considering the impact of building height, scale and colour - should be incorporated within the design of the development proposed and captured in the assessment.

POLICY CAP8: ICONIC VIEWS

Development should be located and designed in a way that does not significantly harm the iconic view or views concerned, identified from publicly accessible locations. Proposals will not be supported if potential impacts on landscape cannot be adequately mitigated through design and landscaping. Particular sensitivity should be shown for the iconic views, as listed below and identified on Figure 13:

1. **From St Mark's Churchyard - south and west**
2. **From The Ridge across Westrop Farm and Gulley**
3. **From footpath 15 looking SW, towards Newbury**
4. **Looking NE towards Broadview Farm and the Pang Valley**
5. **From St Finian's Farm towards Watership Down**
6. **From Fishers Lane to Snelsmore Common**
7. **From Footpath 15 looking south**
8. **From Footpath 16 looking south**
9. **From footpath 15 looking east, towards Cold Ash Hill**
10. **View looking south east towards the Downs from the Quiet Garden off Gladstone Lane**

Development proposals that could affect the above Iconic Views should be supported by a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment that is proportionate to the scale of the development.

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 2; Adopted Core Strategy: ADP5, CS19; Local Plan Review: SP7, SP8, SP9; NPPF: 126, 127, 130

Policy CAP9: Local Green Spaces

Purpose

6.37. Protecting green spaces was revealed as a top priority for residents in the engagement process for the CAPNDP. This policy seeks to designate a series of Local Green Spaces that are demonstrably special, so that they can be safeguarded from inappropriate development.

Justification

6.38. Under the NPPF, Neighbourhood Plans can designate Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to them. This will afford protection from development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 102 of the NPPF says that the Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community, it serves;
- demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.



Woodland Leaves Local Green Space

6.39. The following six areas (shown on Figure 14 and described and mapped in greater detail in Appendix C) are considered to fulfil all of the criteria of the NPPF:

1. Cleardene Wood
2. Wildlife Allotment Garden
3. Woodland Leaves Meadow
4. Little Copse
5. Hermitage Road Recreation Ground
6. Waller Drive Recreation Park

POLICY CAP9: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The following six green spaces, as shown on Figure 14 and defined in Appendix C, are designated as Local Green Spaces:

1. **Cleardene Wood**
2. **Wildlife Allotment Garden**
3. **Woodland Leaves Meadow**
4. **Little Copse**
5. **Hermitage Road Recreation Ground**
6. **Waller Drive Recreation Park**

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 2; Adopted Core Strategy: CS18; Local Plan Review: SP10, SP11; NPPF: 101 to 103, 137 to 151

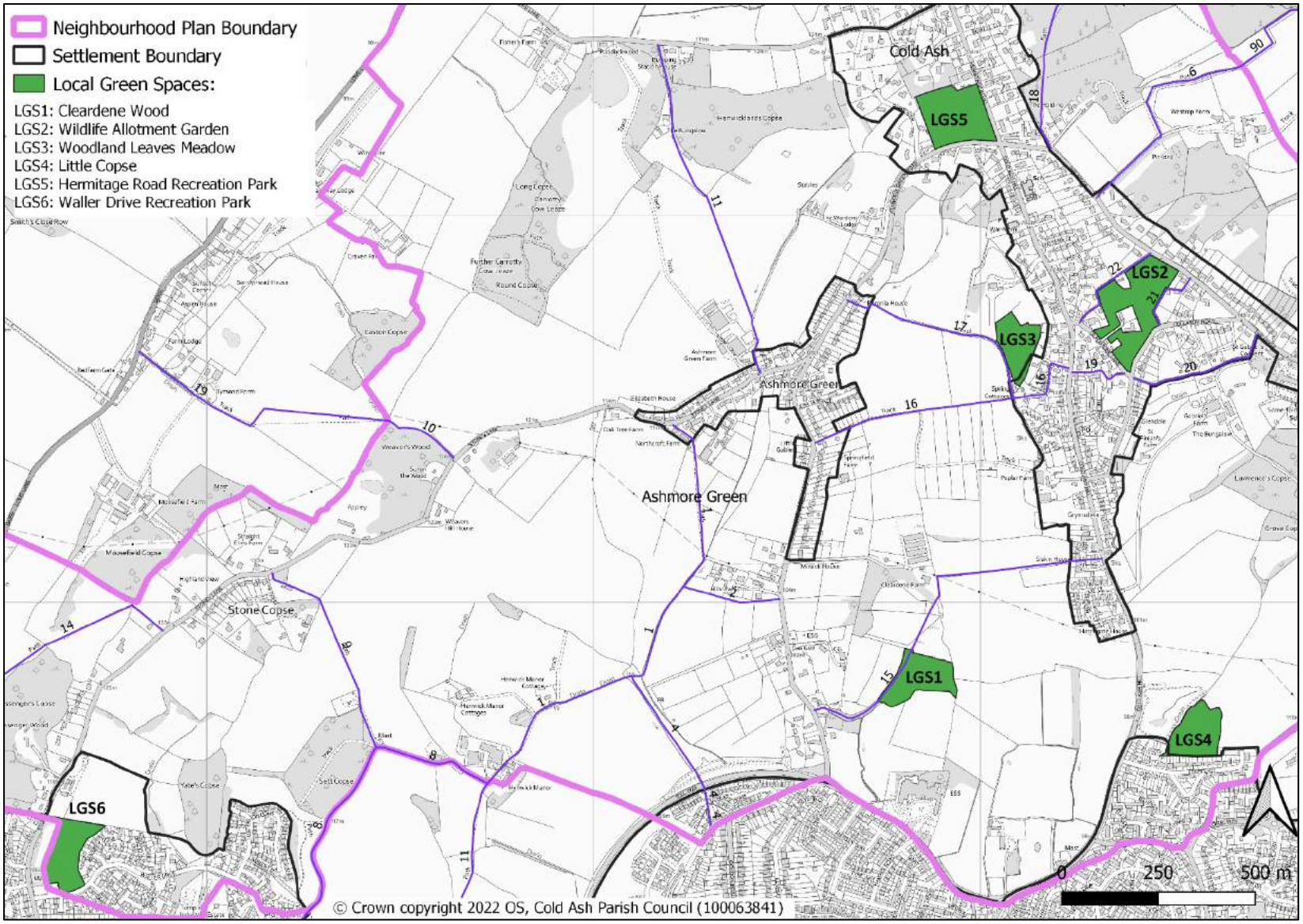


Figure 14: Local Green Spaces

Policy CAP10: Dark skies

Purpose

6.40. Cold Ash, being one of the higher parts of West Berkshire (it is approximately 150 meters above sea level) and a predominantly rural parish, provides an ideal location from which to enjoy dark skies and naturally lends itself to stargazing. The dark skies support both nocturnal and diurnal wildlife and provide enjoyment for parishioners. Policy CAP10 seeks to ensure that development does not encroach on this valued aspect of parish.

Justification

6.41. Cold Ash is still largely unlit, with very few streetlights outside the main villages. The dark night skies are predominantly unspoilt, and it is important that they are kept that way. An additional consideration is that parts of Cold Ash, to the north and east, lie within the North Wessex Downs AONB and light spill is detrimental to this area of outstanding natural beauty and to its wildlife. The AONB supports dark skies, seeking to be a place where a sense of remoteness and tranquillity predominates and where vast night skies can thrill the eye, unaffected by light pollution

6.42. The benefits derived from the prevention of light pollution include:

- Enjoyment and appreciation – improving quality of life and providing creative inspiration
- Health – promoting better sleep patterns and reducing stress
- Wildlife – supporting a more natural environment for both nocturnal and diurnal animals
- Energy efficiency – reducing wastage from unnecessary or excessive lighting, thus reducing the parish's carbon footprint.
- The Parish Council is working with the Newbury Astronomical Society to undertake a star count in the parish. It will add additional detail to the Countryside Charity's (CPRE) existing data on dark skies, which reveals that Cold Ash Parish affords some of the darkest skies in the wider region (Figure 6.7).



Figure 6.7: Map showing levels of radiance for Cold Ash Parish (source: CPRE, www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk)

6.43. The Steering Group has identified a dark sky zone for the parish (Figure 15), based on the CPRE mapping, but broadening it slightly to assist in retaining – and where possible – reversing light pollution. This area should be safeguarded from superfluous night lights.

6.44. The creation of artificial light is a factor that threatens the survival of protected and threatened local wildlife. In the case of security and other outside lighting on private and public premises, including floodlighting, encouragement will be given to ensure that it is neighbourly in its use:

- lighting should be deflected downwards rather than outwards or upwards and should be switched off after midnight at the latest; and
- any movement-sensitive triggers should be regulated to reduce illumination periods to a minimum.

6.45. These guidelines should be applied to all public premises and will be strongly encouraged on private premises by ensuring that businesses and householders are aware of the adverse effects of outside lighting on the environment and their neighbours. The Parish Council will continually seek to inform and educate businesses and householders to respect the Parish's dark skies policy.

POLICY CAP10: DARK SKIES

Development should not detract from the area identified as a 'dark sky zone' within the Parish, shown on Figure 15. Within this zone, proposals for development will be supported where it is demonstrated that, if external lighting is required, it protects the night sky from light pollution, where:

a. the lighting is necessary for operational, safety or security reasons
b. any light spillage beyond the application site is eliminated, or reduced by measures such as timing and proximity controls, orientation, screening, shielding or glazing
c. there is no adverse impact on nearby residential properties, wildlife, local heritage assets or the wider landscape
d. the guidance on lighting provided in the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Note GN01: The Reduction of Obtrusive Light (and any subsequent revisions) is adhered to. Proposals should consider carefully, and provide details of, the light source and intensity being used, the luminaire design, height, and angle, adding baffles and cut-off shields where required, and details of control mechanisms to dim or switch off lighting schemes when not required. Where appropriate, lights should be controlled by passive infrared detectors so that they only come on when needed.

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 2; Adopted Core Strategy: CS19; Local Plan Review: SP8; NPPF: 185

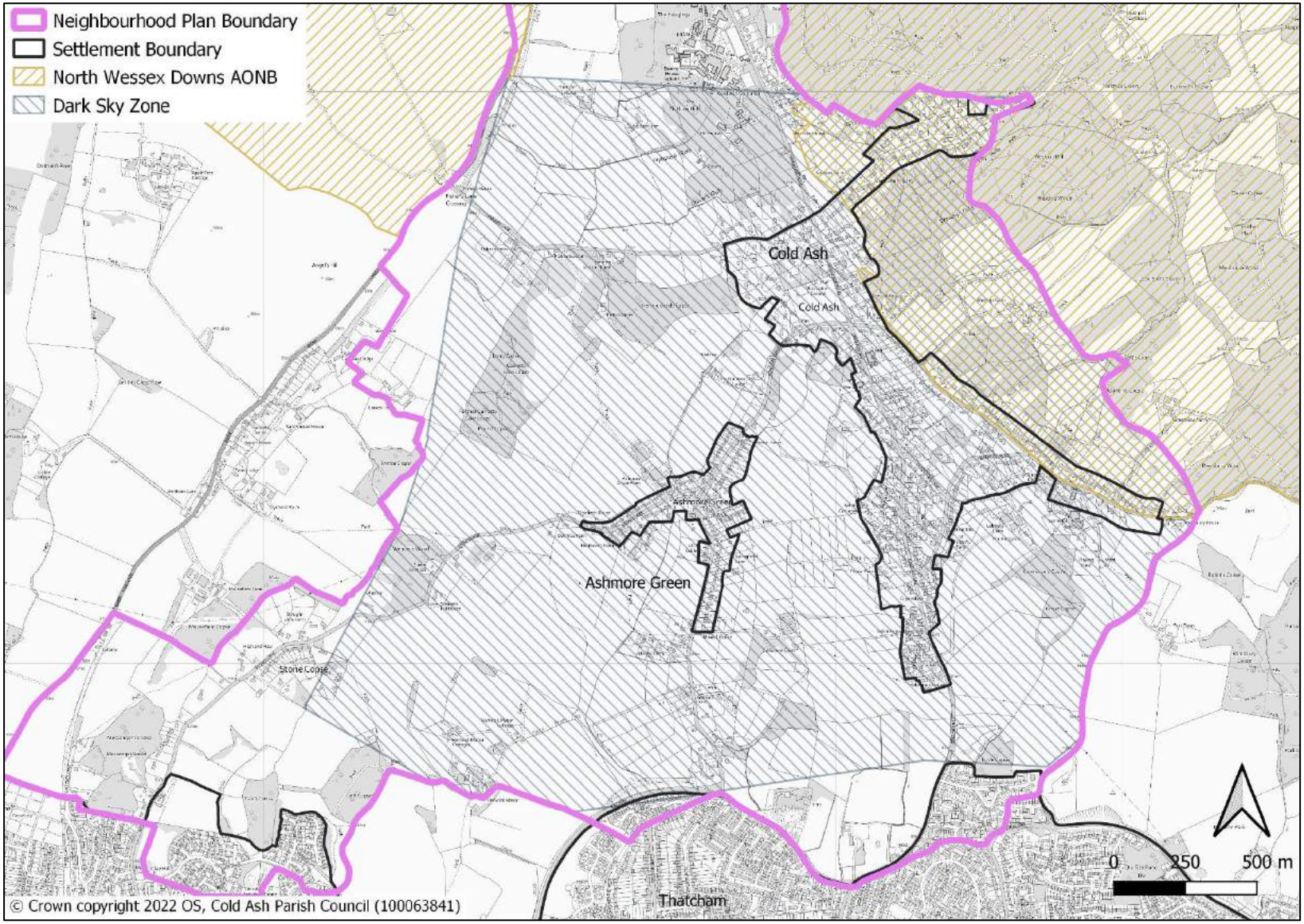


Figure 15: Area considered as a dark skies zone

7. GETTING AROUND THE PARISH

7.1. The community have commented frequently about traffic within the Parish, notably the volume and speed. A preliminary piece of work, Technical Appendix - Traffic, Transport and Travel, was commissioned by Cold Ash Parish Council, which draws on the West Berkshire Strategic Traffic Model. It seeks to appraise the current transport conditions and issues, consider future traffic forecasts for the parish and the potential impacts these will have, and set out possible mitigation measures to address both the current problems and help alleviate the impacts of future traffic growth. An update to the preliminary piece of work, "West Berkshire Local Plan - Review of Transport Evidence Base" was prepared in February 2023, specifically to comment on the emerging West Berkshire Local Plan evidence bae relating to transport issues. It can be found on the Cold Ash Parish Council website. The work highlights the following main issues:

7.2. **Existing footways** – many of the roads lack footways or have very narrow ones. Footway provision is generally limited to the main north-south route, comprising Cold Ash Hill, Hermitage Road and Red Shute Hill, plus short sections of The Ridge, Collaroy Road, Ashmore Green Road and Stoney Lane. There are also no controlled pedestrian crossings and limited locations with dropped kerbs.

7.3. **Narrow lanes and blind bends** - The twisting alignment and undulating profile of the parish's rural lanes means that visibility along the carriageway is severely restricted in places and well below the standards that would be expected in new highway construction. The safe use of these routes relies on good driver awareness and cautious behaviour. Reported traffic accidents involving personal injury are low but anecdotally there are frequent near misses and minor collisions that are unreported.



Many roads lack footways and have blind bends

7.4. **Car parking** - Parking pressure has increased over time with growing demand from new development. There are ongoing problems associated with limited capacity and associated overspill street parking, and these problems are likely to persist unless additional capacity can be found.

7.5. **Access to schools** – neither St Mark's nor St Finian's have adequate on-site parking provision to cope at pick-up and drop-off times. This leads to an uncontrolled situation whereby footways are blocked, children are forced to walk between vehicles and on the roads. The current travel plans for St. Marks (2005) and St. Finnian's (2009) are now somewhat out of date and ideally should be refreshed.

7.6. **Bus services and bus stops** – Bus services are very limited in terms of both frequency and routes. There are no weekend services. Passenger numbers are very low. Many bus stops have no shelters or seats.



Bus stop at Cold Ash Hill with no shelter or footway

7.7. Many of the mitigation measures proposed sit outside the scope of the neighbourhood plan. For instance, the introduction of speed restrictions, the extension of traffic calming measures, the provision of a school minibus service from Thatcham, the reduction of on-street car-parking and associated enforcement, and the introduction of weight limits to deter HGVs from the village centre. These issues are considered in Section 11 as associated actions and could be funded through, for instance, developer contributions. They will require further discussion with the Highways Authority.

7.8. Where the neighbourhood plan can make a tangible difference is in supporting proposals that would improve opportunities for walking and cycling in the parish, improving public transport infrastructure and safeguarding existing car parking space. The policies in this section address these points.

Policy CAP11: Encouraging sustainable movement

Purpose

7.9. This policy seeks to encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport, particularly for shorter journey within the parish, by supporting proposals that enable active travel and improve the provision of infrastructure associated with public transport.

Justification

7.10. Encouraging active travel (walking, cycling and equestrian) will contribute to improving people's mental and physical health and wellbeing. This includes journeys taken for work purposes, to each local facilities or to engage in recreational activities, such as dog walking. Indeed for residents of Florence Gardens and north west Thatcham, for example, Footpaths COLD/4, COLD/1, THAT/11 and THAT/10 provide a popular circular walk for recreation and dog walking. Sport England, supported by Public Health England, has developed a set of principles - Active Design - designed to create the right conditions within existing and proposed development for individuals to be able to lead active and healthy lifestyles.

7.11. Policy CAP11 supports these and has the following main aims:

1. To maintain and where possible improve the existing rights of way network within the parish and to ensure that any new development is accessible to this network. This includes improving the wider movement network, particularly where it will enable pedestrian, cycle and, where possible equestrian, connectivity to surrounding areas, including to services and facilities in neighbouring areas of Thatcham and North Newbury. There are a number of quiet, less trafficked lanes that could be promoted for cycle access to neighbouring areas alongside the PROW network.

2. Where feasible, to widen footways to enable access for all users, including those with mobility issues and pushchairs. This will make it easier for journeys to be made by foot. WBC's draft Local Transport Plan 4 Strategy document seeks to introduce shared mobility initiatives in rural areas, which may be option for Cold Ash in due course.

3. To continue to investigate opportunities to introduce cycle lanes, away from mechanised traffic, where possible.



PROW through the Wildlife Allotment Garden

7.12. The policy will assist in promoting healthier lifestyles, reducing the impacts of traffic and congestion and improving air quality. It is supported by a series of non-policy actions in Section 10, including identifying additional circular off-road recreational routes.

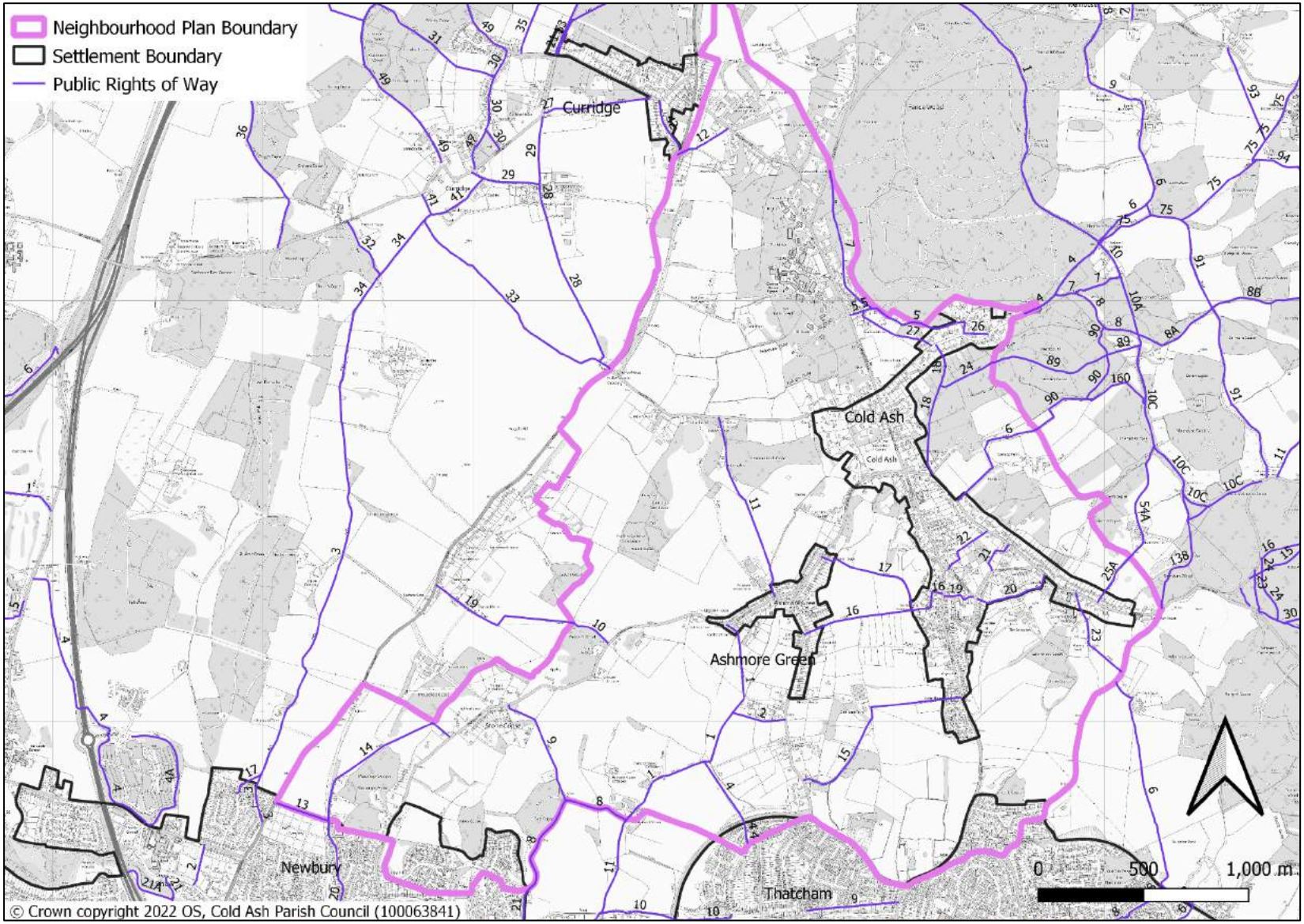


Figure 16: Existing rights of way in the parish (parish-wide)

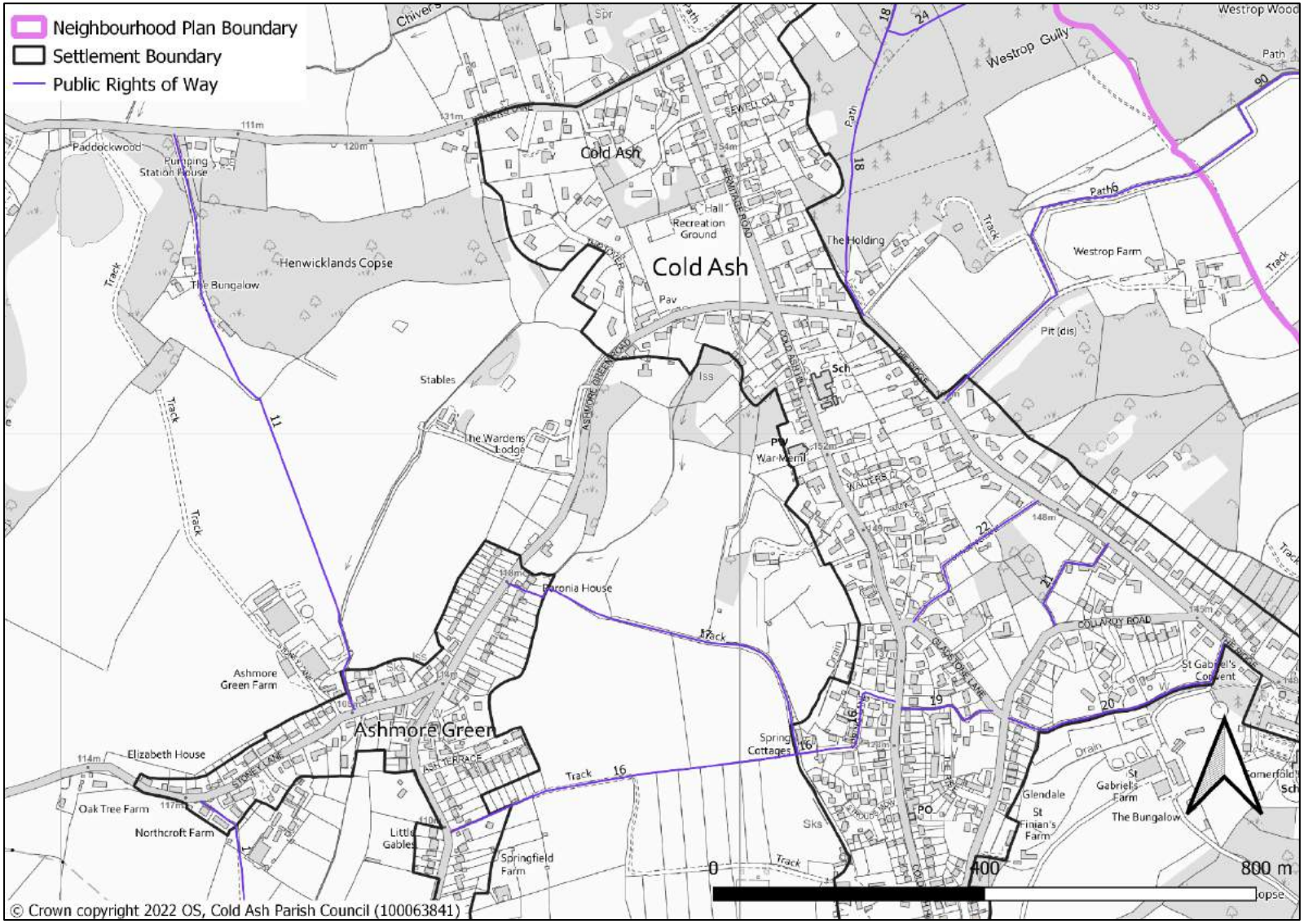


Figure 17: Existing rights of way in the parish (Cold Ash Village)

POLICY CAP11: ENCOURAGING SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT

1. **To ensure that residents can access social, community, public transport, schools, the recreation ground local shops and other important facilities both within Cold Ash Parish and in neighbouring settlements (notably Newbury and Thatcham), new developments should ensure safe pedestrian, and where feasible, cycle access to link up with the existing public transport, public rights of way network, as shown in Figures 16 and 17. Opportunities should be sought to protect and enhance the Public Rights of Way network to make their use more attractive, for instance through planting and wayfinding.**

2. **The widening of footways, introduction of dropped kerbs, and installation of traffic calming measures, including a controlled crossing near to St Mark's School on Cold Ash Hill, will be supported. The design and layout of such works should enhance the rural, village character, for example retaining hedgerows, trees and soft verges where possible. Materials and layout must be sympathetic to local character, in accordance with Policy CAP2 (Character and Design) of this Neighbourhood Development Plan, the Quality Design guidance for West Berkshire, and the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan. Development should have regard to the government's best practice advice for road and street design, Manual for Streets 1 and 2 and Historic England's 'Streets for All'.**

3. **The provision of new public rights of way and cycle routes that, where feasible, are physically separated from vehicular traffic will be strongly supported. Such routes should be of permeable material where possible and ensure that access by disabled users and users of mobility scooters is secured.**

4. **Loss of public rights of way will not be approved unless suitable alternatives are provided.**

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 3; Adopted Core Strategy: CS13; Local Plan Review: SP23; NPPF: 92, 104 to 106

Policy CAP12: Sunken Lanes

Purpose

7.13. The policy seeks to identify and protect the network of historic sunken lanes, which provide a valuable movement network through the parish, particularly for horse riders, as well as contributing to the rural character of the area and providing an important network of wildlife corridors.

Justification

7.14. Some of the parish's narrow lanes are 'sunken lanes', i.e. the road surface is lower than the adjoining bank/land and/ or the lane is overhung by trees forming a natural arch. It is particularly important to retain the integrity of the banks of Cold Ash's remaining sunken lanes, which necessitates preventing the creation of additional property accesses off them. This does not necessarily preclude development along them; simply that any new development must make use of existing accesses.

7.15. The network of sunken lanes is shown in Figure 18, and sections of:

- Stoney Lane
- Fishers Lane
- Ashmore Green Road

7.16. Sections of Lawrences Lane have also been mentioned by some residents as potentially meeting the requirements of a sunken lane. Section 10 includes a non-policy action to explore this further.



Stoney Lane

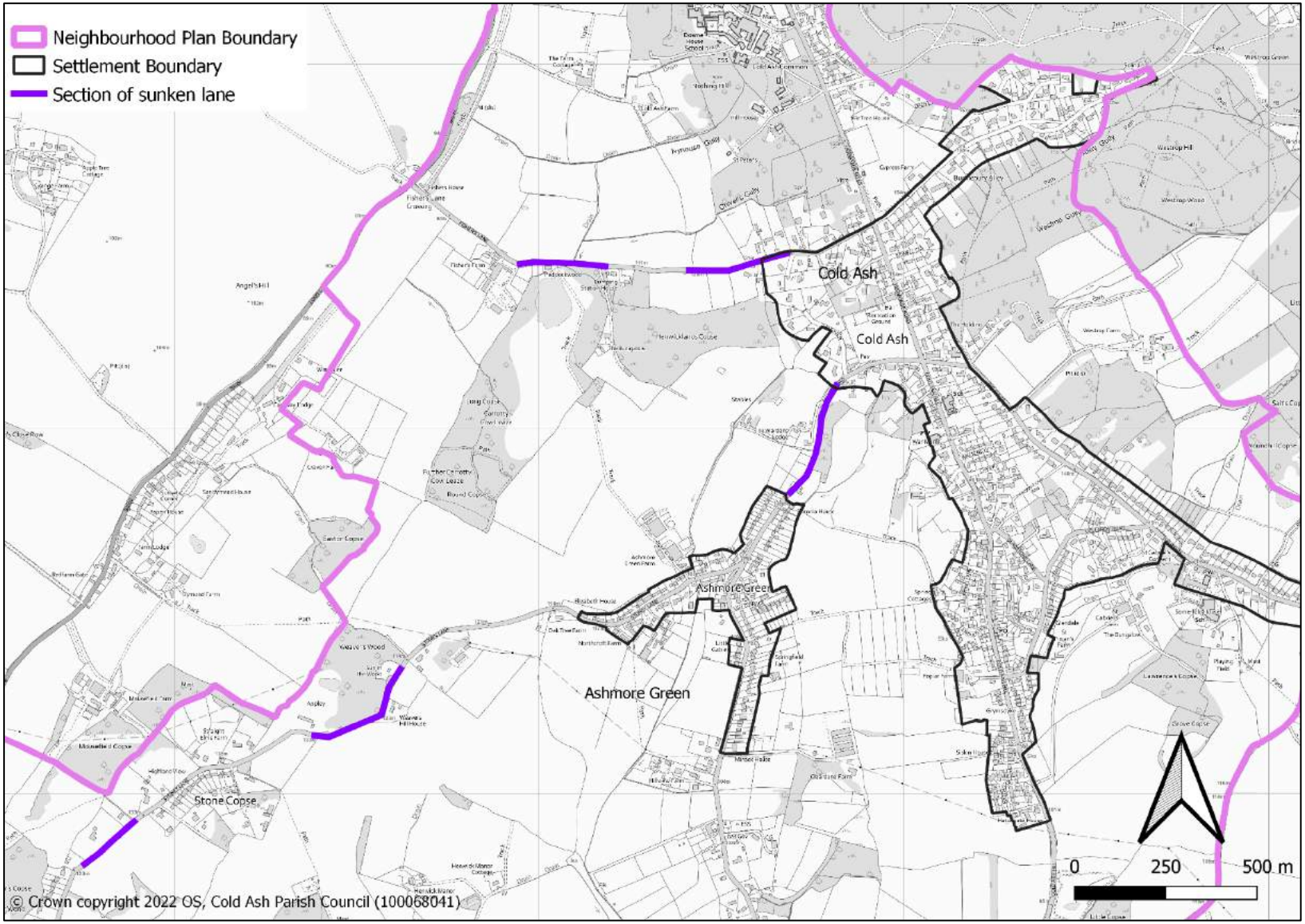


Figure 18: Sunken lanes in Cold Ash Parish

7.17. The nature of 'sunken lanes' is that they are roads or tracks that are significantly lower than the land on either side and that have not been formed by the recent engineering of a road cutting but are of a much greater age. The sunken lanes have been formed in a variety of ways over the years, including erosion by water and traffic, digging embankments to assist with the herding of livestock and/or to mark natural boundaries. These are the historic natural routes through the parish and, as such, are part of the heritage and landscape of the parish to be protected. They also provide important wildlife corridors, for instance for bat movements.

7.18. Whilst the parish is well serviced by public rights of way, the number of bridleways in the parish is limited, resulting in horse riders sharing the roads with vehicles. The roads that are used by horse riders are, in the main, those that are also sunken lanes. It is for this reason consideration is being given to establishing them as 'Quiet Lanes', as an associated action within Section 11.

7.19. The policy supports the objectives of the North Wessex Downs, which seeks to conserve and enhance the intricate network of sunken and other country lanes through the sympathetic management of banks and verges.

Policy CAP12: SUNKEN LANES

Development proposals should respect the character and appearance of sunken lanes within the neighbourhood area. Development proposals which would detrimentally affect the character of a sunken lane or create a new access onto such a lane will not be supported. In particular, the following will need to be incorporated:

a. the level of the road or track should not be raised;
b. the height of the embankments should not be reduced;
c. the existing width should be retained, with no widening; and
d. minimal or, ideally, no road markings.

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 2, 3; Adopted Core Strategy: CS19; Local Plan Review: SP8 SP9; NPPF: 126, 127, 174, 175, 179, 189, 190

Policy CAP13: Public car parking

Purpose

7.20. This policy seeks to protect the provision of existing public parking and, where opportunities arise, provide additional parking, which should include infrastructure to support electric vehicles use and cycling.

Justification

7.21. Whilst the Plan seeks to promote, as far as possible, walking and cycling, the area is rural and there is a high car reliance. The village is rather spread out and there are either no footways or very narrow ones in some of the areas, making it difficult for pedestrians.



Parts of the village lack adequate footways

7.22. The issue of car parking, and particularly, the limited availability of parking spaces serving the Hermitage Road Recreation Ground and the schools. This was raised as a concern by the community during the engagement process.

7.23. There are limited areas for expansion of parking, however, it will be important to retain what exists and, where opportunities arise, to provide additional accessible public parking; this will be encouraged.

7.24. The provision of electric vehicle charging points at such locations, and secure bicycle parking, will support the shift towards less polluting modes of transport.

POLICY CAP13: PUBLIC CAR PARKING

1. **Development proposals that would result in the loss of publicly accessible car parking will not be supported unless they include alternative and equivalent provision in an accessible location near to the Cold Ash village facilities.**

2. **Proposals that enable the provision of additional, publicly accessible car parking, particularly serving the village centre facilities, Hermitage Road Recreation Ground and the schools, will be strongly supported.**

3. **Any new or replacement car parks should incorporate the following facilities:**

    a. **dedicated bicycle parking facilities, preferably covered and secure; and**
    b. **future-proofed four hour or faster electric vehicle charging points (or wireless charging facilities) that are affordable, reliable and open access electric vehicle charging points. At minimum, proposals for EVCP's should conform to the requirements for electric vehicle charge points in non-residential buildings outlined in the English Buildings Regulations, Approved Document S.**

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 3; Adopted Core Strategy: CS13; Local Plan Review: SP23; NPPF: 92, 104, 105, 106

8. COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL

Policy CAP14: Important community facilities

Purpose

8.1. Cold Ash Parish has a wide range of community, recreational and cultural facilities, however the Parish is reliant on the nearby urban areas of Thatcham and Newbury for doctors, dentists and larger shops. This policy identifies the community facilities particularly valued by the community and seeks to protect them from loss or change of use, where possible. It supports proposals to enhance these facilities.

Justification

8.2. Table 8.1 shows the community facilities that have been identified as particularly important to the community and which should be safeguarded from loss. It also details improvements, where noted by the community, that would be supported by the policy. These are mapped on Figure 19.



The village shop and post office

Important Community Facility	Description	Supported improvements
Acland Hall	Provides a community hub with meeting rooms and pre-school.	• Enhancement /expansion of the village hall to act as a community hub.
Village Shop/Post Office	A small community shop providing post office services.	
Village Pubs (The Spotted Dog & The Castle)	Two well established pubs next to each other in the village.	
Hermitage Road Recreation Ground	The field includes a playground for younger children, playing	• Repurposing the rifle shed to offer additional facilities.

	fields, tennis courts and a cricket square. It also hosts numerous community activities such as football clubs and fitness activities, as well as informal parishioner enjoyment. The site also includes a storage building known as the "rifle shed".	• Provision of facilities for older children and teenagers. • Provision of outdoor fitness equipment. • Provision of public toilets
St Mark's Church	Provides religious services as well as a community hub with meeting rooms.	

8.3. Proposals for new development, which involve these important community facilities, identified in the table above, will be supported only if the proposal does not result in the loss of, or have an adverse effect on, the asset or facility concerned, unless satisfactory alternative facilities are provided or unless it can be clearly proven that such assets are no longer required; or unless the new development will provide sufficient community benefit to outweigh the loss of the existing facility, meeting evidence of a strong local need.

8.4. In terms of sporting and recreational facilities, opportunities to enable wider community access to sporting facilities with Downe House School are being explored by CPC.



Acland Hall

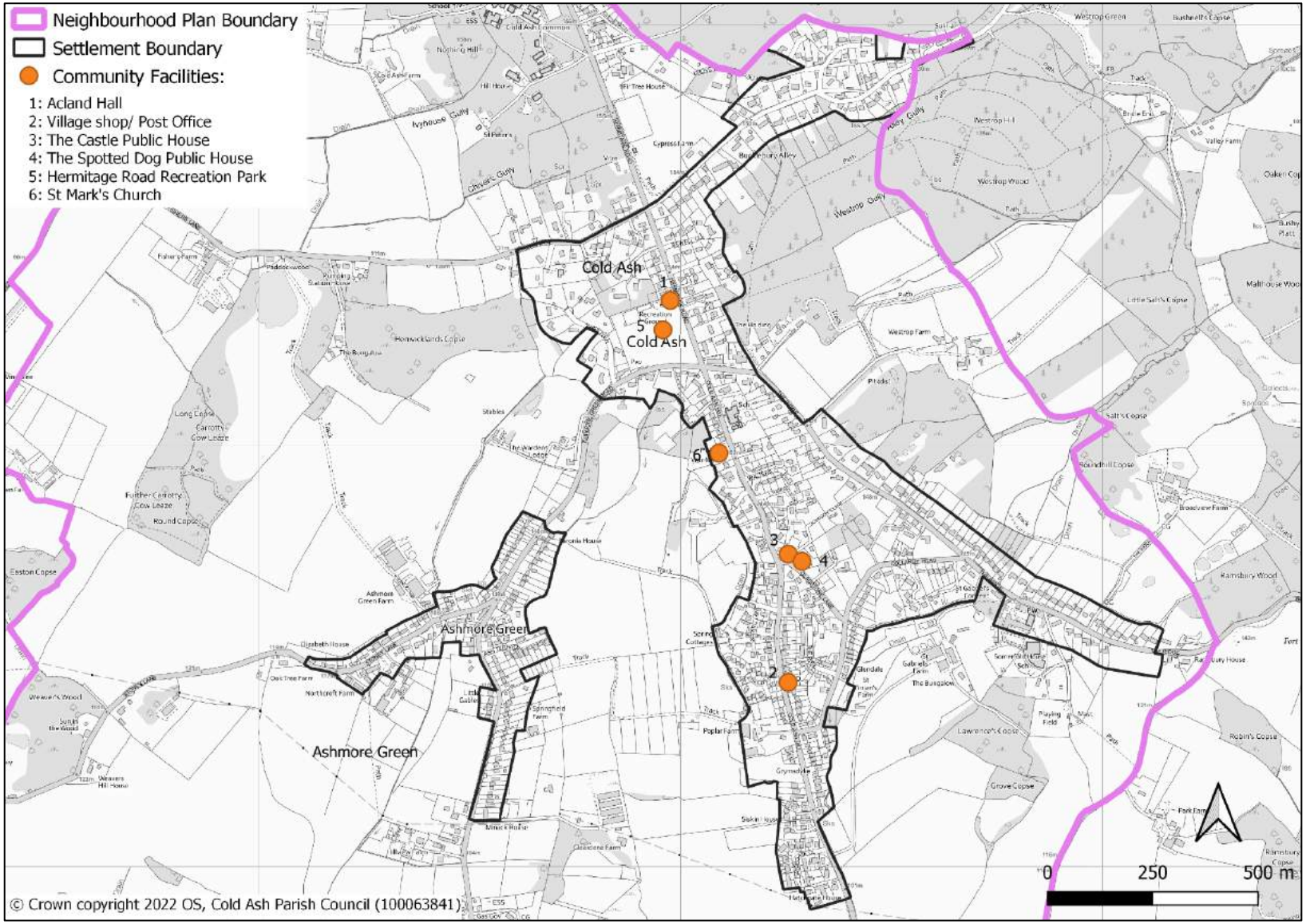


Figure 19: Map showing key community facilities

8.5. In parallel with this policy, Cold Ash Parish Council will explore options to formally list the facilities as Assets of Community Value.

POLICY CAP14: IMPORTANT COMMUNITY FACILITIES

1. **Development proposals that would result in the loss of all or part of the following important community facilities, will not be supported unless alternative facilities of equivalent standard and convenience have been agreed incorporating adequate safeguards for delivery:**

   a. **Acland Memorial Hall**
   b. **Cold Ash Village Shop and Post Office**
   c. **The village pubs: The Spotted Dog, and The Castle**
   d. **The facilities at Hermitage Road Recreation Ground**
   e. **St. Mark's Church**

2. **Development proposals to upgrade or expand these facilities, or to provide new ones, to enable either their continued operation or for an alternative community use, which deliver the following shall be strongly supported:**

   a. **the provision of additional and improved youth facilities, including improvements to the facilities at the Hermitage Road Recreation Ground;**
   b. **the provision of additional play areas to serve the needs of children of all ages, in line with the WBC's quantity and quality Standards and designed in accordance with Sport England's design guidance notes. Where possible, these should incorporate areas for 'natural play'.**
   c. **the provision of outdoor gym equipment at the Hermitage Road Recreation Ground;**
   d. **the provision of accessible toilet facilities.**

   Such proposals will be required to address the following criteria:
   a. **the proposal would not have significant harmful impacts on the amenities of surrounding residents and the local environment; and**
   b. **the proposal would not have significant unacceptable impacts upon the local road network; and**
   c. **the proposal would respect the historic importance and integrity of the buildings.**

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 4; Saved Local Plan Policy: RL2, SHOP5; Adopted Core Strategy: ADP2; Local Plan Review: SP24, DM39; NPPF: 86, 92, 93

9. COMMERCIAL AND LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

Policy CAP15: Supporting commercial businesses and expansions

Purpose

9.1 This policy seeks to encourage a thriving, sustainable parish economy, by encouraging commercial activities within the parish.

Justification

9.2 Historically, farming has been the key driver behind the prosperity of the parish. But in line with experiences across the British countryside, employment opportunities in the agricultural sector have reduced. Cold Ash parish has seen a steady growth in population with a substantial number of residents working outside the parish commuting to the local towns of Newbury, Thatcham and Reading, and further afield to Basingstoke, Swindon and London. Notwithstanding this, the CNP would be supportive of proposals that would support the agricultural sector in the parish.

9.3 Cold Ash village has retained a post-office, general-purpose grocery shop, and two pubs. The main commercial area in the parish is the Red Shute industrial estate, in the northern part of the parish. Larger-scale commercial activity should continue to be focussed on this site, although sustainable growth, for instance through the conversion of existing vacant or underused buildings, which are 'suitably located' and of appropriate scale, form and high-quality design, and which adhere in total to the policies set out in this plan, will be supported; 'suitably located' means where they do not adversely affect the locality and the amenities of residents.

9.4 A further significant organisation in the parish is Downe House School, established in 1907 and widely recognised as one of the leading all-girls' schools in the UK, Downe House also features in the independently researched Fortune/Statista list of 100 World's Top Boardings Schools 2023. It is a traditional boarding and day school for girls aged 11-18 and is noted for it's contribution to sustainability and environmental awareness, having been awarded the Green Flag Award, the highest Eco-Schools achievement.

9.5 Supporting proposals for local employment opportunities will not only provide greater prospects for local people to access local jobs but will ensure that these are sustainable in terms of the patterns of commuting that they generate.

POLICY CAP15: SUPPORTING COMMERCIAL BUSINESSES, EXISTING AND EXPANSIONS

Proposals for new or expanded commercial, business and service activity (Classes B2, B8 and E(g)) will be supported at the Red Shute industrial estate or where they bring redundant or vacant land based rural operations back into use, subject to the following criteria:

a. **the proposal, including any associated premises, would not have unacceptable harmful impacts on the local environment;**
b. **the proposal would not have unacceptable harmful impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses, particularly residential, through excessive noise, smell, lighting, vibration or other emissions or pollution; and**
c. **the proposal would not have unacceptable adverse impacts upon the local road network.**

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 6; Adopted Core Strategy: CS9; Local Plan Review: SP20; NPPF: 81, 82, 84, 85, 86

Policy CAP16: Supporting SMEs, flexible start-ups, and homeworking

Purpose

9.6 This policy recognises the growing contribution of home-based and smaller businesses to the parish and seeks to encourage opportunities for them. This would provide a greater incentive and opportunity for local people to work locally. Homeworking is defined as a person who is working from their house, apartment, or place of residence, rather than working from the office.

Justification

9.7 Cold Ash has a well-qualified workforce, but with most people working outside the parish, the supply of higher value job opportunities in the parish is limited. This suggests a need to consider attracting specialist companies to relocate to the parish (as supported in our in Policy CAP15) and/or encouraging new start-ups. To provide flexible start-up space, it is necessary to encourage appropriate buildings that can be rented out at sufficiently low rents to attract their use by business start-ups and existing home workers. A potential source of such space in Cold Ash Parish is vacant farm and rural buildings.

9.8 As homeworking becomes more possible, this can be encouraged by supporting the creation of spaces for uses which can be carried out in a residential area without detriment to its amenity, for instance home office spaces. The intention is to allow non-residents to be employed from the domestic premises, albeit subject to the activity meeting the limitations set out in Clause 2 of the policy. Such a policy does give encouragement to economic activity within the parish whilst incorporating controls to prevent activities having a detrimental impact on the amenity of the locality. This policy only applies where the scale of activity is such that there is a need for planning permission, as much working from home can take place without planning consent being required.

9.9 To support homeworking and other activities, all new residential, commercial and community properties within the parish should be served by (or be ready for) a superfast broadband (fibre-optic) connection, unless it can be demonstrated through consultation with British Telecom that this would not be either possible, practical or economically viable. The Parish Council will explore, with the local authorities and commercial providers, opportunities for this and the deployment of improved mobile coverage in the parish.

POLICY CAP16: SUPPORTING SMES, FLEXIBLE START-UPS AND HOMEWORKING

1. **Proposals to provide working spaces that encourage homeworking and creative small industries, for instance through incubator/start-up business space on flexible terms, will be supported through:**
   a. **The provision of new buildings or conversion of existing buildings, including redundant farm and rural buildings; and**
   b. **enabling extensions and small new garden buildings to facilitate homeworking, within Use Class (E(g)(i).**

2. **As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, proposals must:**
   a. **respect the surrounding rural landscape and not compromise or reduce the amenities of neighbouring residents and other users and its setting in regard to size, light pollution, noise, dirt, smells or smoke, air pollution, or loss of wildlife habitat; and**

b. not have any unacceptable impact on the local road network; and
c. work in harmony with agriculture and other land-based activities and rural recreational activities and
d. be accompanied by appropriate protected species and habitat surveys, avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity and seek to achieve a net gain through enhancements; and
e. seek, where possible, to sustain any historic, architectural or archaeological interest the building may have either individually or through association with one or more heritage assets, unless unavoidable harm is justified on the basis of the public benefits, including the enabling of the building's optimum viable future use.

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 6; Adopted Core Strategy: CS9; Local Plan Review: SP20; NPPF: 80, 83, 84

10. NON-POLICY ACTIONS

10.1 The table below identifies a series of actions that have arisen through the community engagement in preparing the CAPNDP. These were considered by the community to be important matters but do not necessarily require planning permission. As such, they are not the subject of planning policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. These non-policy actions will be reviewed in line with the rest of the Neighbourhood Plan as part of the Local Plan Review, to take account of changing circumstances and community aspirations.

Ref	Issue	Possible actions	Lead agencies and partners
1.	Potential to identify locally significant heritage assets to add to the Local List.	Review any local heritage site candidates with WBC to ascertain if any are worthy of adding to the Local List.	CAPC, WBC Archaeology Team, Local history society, Downe House School
2.	Improve access to local heritage assets	Review access arrangements and improve.	WBC, heritage assets
3.	Improve information about local history and heritage	Seek funding for information boards at sites where appropriate, and erect interpretation boards to enhance understanding and appreciation of local heritage sites.	WBC, landowners
4.	Community energy	Explore, with the community, options for a community energy scheme.	CAPC, local residents, landowners
5.	Potential to improve areas in the parish for biodiversity, including both sites and wildlife corridors	Establish a local wildlife group to explore locations where biodiversity improvements could be made and sources of funding to enable this. A first step is to develop an Environmental Baseline against which to consider future improvements.	CAPC, volunteers, landowners
6.	Protecting the dark skies against light pollution	Undertake regular star counts to feed into AONB and CPRE data. Consider ways to highlight the importance of dark skies to local homeowners with examples of how this can be achieved at the very local level.	Local astronomical group, local community, schools, North Wessex Downs AONB Unit
7.	Potential to establish Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA)	We intend to explore BOA opportunities for the Local Green Space sites, and other green space within the parish, with local landowners. Once potential sites are identified, we will aim to establish the necessary baseline data against which any Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) can be tracked and managed.	CAPC, volunteers, landowners, Local Wildlife Trust, WBC, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (managing the Habitat

		Should we, in time, achieve any BNG, we will aim to establish the appropriate BOA(s) enabling the relevant landowner(s) to sell the BNG. Parish Council to explore the development of a Biodiversity Action Plan, to set out preferred planting in the Parish. Consideration to be given to trees in the parish that should be protected by a Tree Protection Order and pursuing this with WBC.	Recovery Network covering the wider strategic area)
8.	Difficulties for pedestrians (including children) crossing Cold Ash Hill.	• Investigate options for a formal crossing point on Cold Ash Hill, in the vicinity of St Mark's School and the church. • Maintain existing footpaths and footways to keep them clear of undergrowth. Explore options to upgrade surfacing in a way that is sympathetic to local character.	CAPC, WBC
9.	Lack of cycle parking	Provide a bike rack adjacent to the rifle club shed.	CAPC
10.	Lack of cycle lanes	To continue to investigate opportunities to introduce cycle Lanes, away from mechanised traffic, where possible	CAPC, WBC
11.	Lack of bus services	Work with stakeholders to identify funding to materially improve bus frequencies, route choice and operating hours.	CAPC, WBC, bus operators
12.	Safeguarding sunken lanes against inappropriate traffic volumes	Work with partners to have these lanes officially designated as Quiet Lanes. Explore whether other lanes in the parish might be suitable to designate as Quiet Lanes. Consider whether there are other lanes (e.g. sections of Lawrences Lane) that might meet the criteria of a sunken lane.	CAPC, WBC, CPRE
13.	Speeding traffic	Options to help manage traffic speeds include: • Extend existing traffic calming measures on Hermitage Road (between Slanting Hill and Ashmore Green Road) to include Cold Ash Hill and Red Shute Hill. • Add frequent 30mph roundels (road markings) throughout the route from the village gateway on Cold Ash Hill through to Red Shute Hill. • Provide a new 'gateway' feature, with signage on both sides of the road near the industrial estate in Red Shute Hill.	CAPC, WBC

		• Additional vehicle actuated speed limit signs to be installed to supplement the existing signs on Cold Ash Hill (near Hatchgate Close) and on The Ridge. Three additional signs are proposed, one near St Mark's School, one near the Post Office and one in Red Shute Hill. • 20mph zones are introduced outside both schools; with associated entry signs and 20mph road markings.	
14.	Need to reduce congestion and improve pedestrian safety at schools	Explore potential to: • Remove some street parking to allow room for improved footway/verge provision in places, increase capacity for pedestrians and reduce conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. However, further waiting restrictions (Traffic Regulation Orders) would be needed to enforce the parking restrictions and the displaced parking would need to be replaced with additional off-street parking, subject to land availability either at or near the schools or extensions to existing ones. • a subsidised school mini-bus service from Thatcham to reduce the numbers of pupils travelling by car. • Investigate potential for 'school walking bus' or car sharing schemes.	CAPC, WBC, Schools, existing car park providers/ those with land that could be used for car parking (the church?)
15.	HGVs using inappropriate routes through the villages (despite existing weight limits)	• Additional signs to increase awareness of both the weight limit and the fact that routes are unsuitable for HGV's. • At Stoney Lane, the existing weight limit sign, with supplementary warning "No turning area beyond this point", near Waller Drive, is mounted on the off-side of the road and not prominent for approaching drivers. A duplicate sign is proposed on the nearside (this could be attached to the street lamp column opposite Waller Drive). Similar signage is proposed in Ashmore Green Road at the junction with Stoney Lane. • Additional signs stating "Unsuitable for heavy good vehicles" on Stoney Lane, near Pine Ridge. • At Fisher's Lane, place a supplementary sign plate with a warning message "No turning area beyond this point" at the entry to Fisher's Lane from the B4009. Provide a further sign stating "Unsuitable for heavy good vehicles" at the entrance to Fisher's Lane.	CAPC, WBC (Traffic and Road Safety Team)
16.	Longer term aspirations for the recreation ground	Produce a sustainability plan for the recreation ground	CAPC

17.	Support the ongoing provision of community amenities	Consider additional local community facilities to nominate as Assets of Community Value, based on the list in Policy CAP14.	CAPC
18.	Scope to improve the facilities offered at the Recreation Park.	In consultation with the community, consider which improvements are feasible.	CAPC, community, teens
19.	Establish an online business directory for the parish.	Local businesses will be encouraged to contribute to the setting up of a Cold Ash specific business directory and website.	CAPC, local busineses and facilities
20.	Supporting active travel	Identifying additional recreational routes to encourage walking, cycling and equestrian. There are opportunities for circular routes in particular. Explore, with Downe House, the creation of a circular walk within the school grounds, to be available for local schools and the wider community to access through the appropriate channels.	CAPC, Local Access Forum, neighbouring parishes, British Horse Society, Downe House School

11. IMPLEMENTATION AND PLAN REVIEW

11.1 Cold Ash Parish Council is the qualifying body responsible for the CAPNDP.

11.2 Once the Plan has been 'made', there will be a series of actions that will need to be undertaken to ensure that the policies within the CAPNDP are being interpreted and used in the way intended. It will also be necessary to maintain a watching brief on changes to the planning policy landscape, both at the national and local planning authority levels, which may have an impact on the Plan's policies. Finally, any non-planning-related projects and activities that were identified will need to be prioritised for delivery, in partnership with other organisations.

11.3 Specific actions to be undertaken are as follows:

- Pursuing the projects and activities that are not policy-based, but nevertheless contribute to the delivery of the Plan - these are set out in Section 10, divided into priorities towards which developer contributions may be directed and broader, community projects, which have been collated throughout the process, but which sit beyond planning policy. A range of organisations may be involved in delivering these projects and there will be a need for a co-ordinated approach. Many will require funding and therefore it would be helpful to consult with the community to understand the potential costs and achievability of each. Funding may be sourced from developer contributions or tailored funds, such as the Big Lottery Fund, member's bids, Greenham Trust, and other WBC funding opportunities to provide potential sources of funding.

- Commenting on planning applications or consultations relating to the neighbourhood plan area – the Parish Council has a role in ensuring that the CAPNDP policies are being adequately considered, where relevant, in decisions to determine the outcome of planning applications in the Parish. A meeting between local councillors, planning committee members and the supporting planning officers at WBC would be a useful step in ensuring that the purpose and application of the policies is fully understood by all parties. This will assist in ensuring that policies are interpreted and applied in the way intended.

- Monitoring the application of the CAPNDP policies to ensure they have been applied consistently and interpreted correctly in response to planning applications – there is scope to identify indicators to measure the effect that each policy is having and the extent to which this is delivering against the associated objective. As a minimum, the Parish Council would wish to maintain a log of planning applications relating to the neighbourhood area, detailing which policies have informed the Parish Council response and the outcome of the decision. This will assist in understanding whether the policies have been used in the manner intended or whether changes may be required, for instance in any future review of the CAPNDP.

- Maintaining a dialogue with WBC regarding the timing and content of the Local Plan Review adoption – it will be important to consider the policies in the document and how these may impact the CAPNDP policies. The adoption of the Local Plan Review may trigger a light-touch review of the CAPNDP.

- Maintaining a dialogue with WBC and the promoter/developers of any sites allocated within the Local Plan or coming forward as windfall.

- Maintaining a watching brief on the national policy landscape – changes at the national level may impact on the policies contained in the Local Plan Review and the Neighbourhood Plan. It is therefore important to keep abreast of this, as this could also provide a trigger to undertake a light-touch review of the CAPNDP.
- Maintaining a dialogue with neighbouring parishes on cross-boundary projects.
- Maintaining a dialogue with the local community on the plan implementation – ensuring that all records of how the plan has been used should be made public. It is also recommended that a regular update – for instance at the Annual Parish Meeting – is provided, to feed back to the community on progress about both the effectiveness of the policies and the pursing of the projects.
- Considering gaps in the CAPNDP – local issues, concerns or opportunities may arise during the lifespan of the Plan that trigger the need for the inclusion of a new policy. Such issues can be most effectively understood by maintaining open dialogue with the community and other partners.

11.4 Whilst it is not a legislative requirement to review a Neighbourhood Plan, it is good practice to do so periodically. This may be because of any of the points noted above. A light-touch review will enable the Parish Council to keep the CAPNDP up to date in general terms, and to ensure that it remains in general conformity with the wider development plan. Any review should be undertaken in partnership with and ensuring the engagement of the wider community.

11.5 The CAPNDP has been prepared whilst WBC is preparing a Local Plan Review. This Local Plan Review will cover the period up to 2039. The Parish Council recognises that it will be important to keep the neighbourhood plan up to date in general terms, and to ensure that it remains in general conformity with the wider development plan. In this context it intends to commence a review of the CAPNDP within six months of the adoption of the Local Plan Review.

12. INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AND PROVISION

12.1. The Parish Council wishes to influence how developer contributions are spent in the neighbourhood area to the full extent of their powers under national legislation and planning guidance.

12.2. There are different types of contributions arising from section 106 agreements, section 278 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

- A section 106 agreement (based on that section of The 1990 Town & Country Planning Act) or planning obligation is a private agreement made between local authorities and developers and can be attached to a planning permission to make acceptable development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms.
- A section 278 agreement refers to a section of the Highways Act 1980 that allows developers to enter into a legal agreement with the local authority to make alterations or improvements to a public highway as part of a planning application. It is paid directly to the planning authority for highway alterations rather than to the Parish Council for them to utilise.
- The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a non-negotiable charge on development based on a fixed rate per square metre of net additional development on a site and is levied by WBC. Different charge rates apply for different types of uses and in different areas. The levy is intended to fund the provision, improvement, replacement, or maintenance of infrastructure required to support development in an area as set out in its Local Plan.

12.3. With a 'made' Neighbourhood Plan, the local community will benefit from an uplift in the level of CIL received, from 15% (capped at £100 per existing property) to an uncapped 25% of CIL receipts from the Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Area.

13. POLICIES MAPS

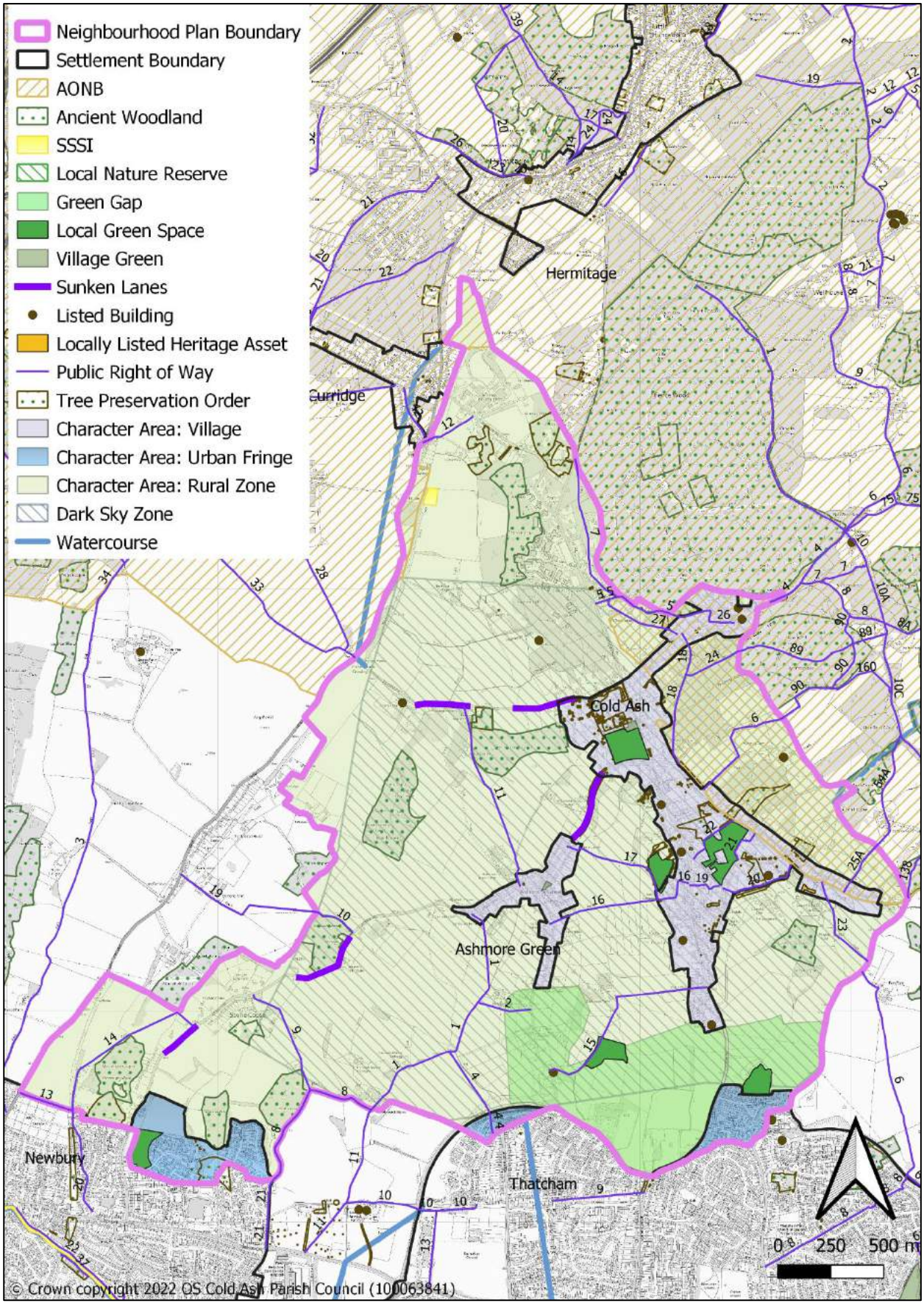


Figure 20: Parish-wide policies map

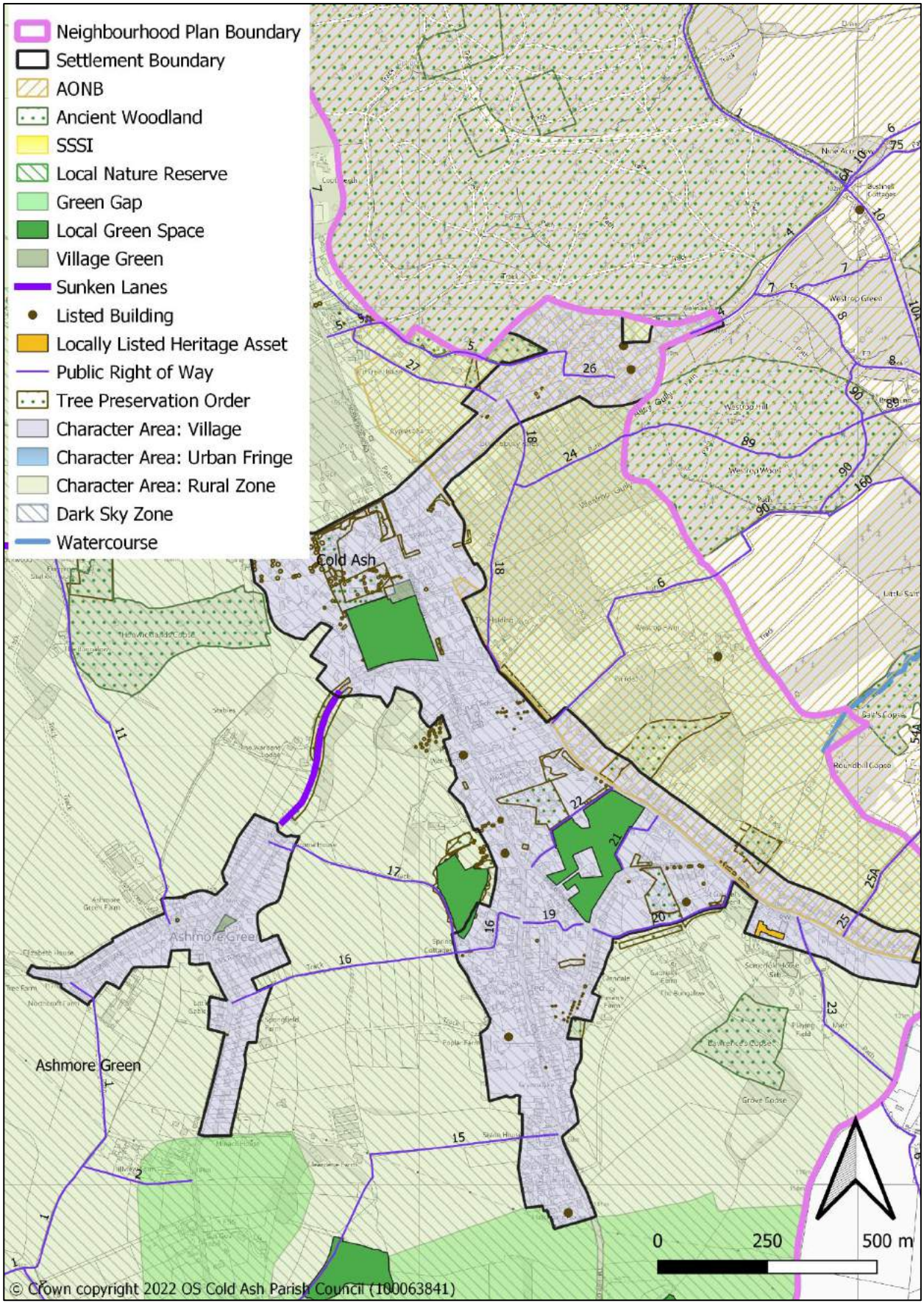


Figure 21: Parish-wide policies - villages

14. GLOSSARY

- **Ancient Woodland:** an area that's been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD.
- **Affordable housing:** housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers).
- **Archaeological interest:** There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- **Buffer Zones**: Relatively sensitive and narrow gaps of undeveloped countryside outside of Green Belt, where there is a risk of coalescence, as a result of development pressure.
- **Change of Use** - A change in the way that land or buildings are used (see Use Classes Order). Planning permission is usually necessary to change a "use class".
- **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** – a fixed, non-negotiable contribution that must be made by new development. It is chargeable on each net additional square metre of development built and is set by WBC.
- **Conservation (for heritage policy):** The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.
- **Conservation area:** an area of notable environmental or historical interest or importance which is protected by law against undesirable changes.
- **Consultation Statement**: a statement submitted by the qualifying body detailing the public consultations undertaken in its neighbourhood Development Plan
- **Dark Sky:** a place where the darkness of the night sky is relatively free of interference from artificial light.
- **Designated heritage asset:** A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.
- **Development Plan:** A document setting out the local planning authority's policies and proposals for the development and use of land and buildings in the authority's area. This includes adopted Local Plans and neighbourhood plans, together with any regional strategies that remain in force. It is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- **Footway:** A pedestrian route along the side of a road.
- **Green infrastructure:** A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.
- **Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA):** is a process that determines whether or not development plans could negatively impact on a recognised protected European site beyond reasonable scientific doubt.
- **Habitats site:** Any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites.
- **Heritage Statement:** outlines the overall significance of a building, conservation area, neighbouring heritage assets and its setting.

- **Homeworking:** is defined as a person who is working from their house, apartment, or place of residence, rather than working from the office.
- **Local Green Space:** is a designation that provides special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.
- **Local Plan:** Local Plans set out a vision and a framework for the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure – as well as a basis for safeguarding the environment, adapting to climate change and securing good design for the area they cover. They are a critical tool in guiding decisions about individual development proposals, as Local Plans (together with any Neighbourhood Development Plans that have been made) are the starting point for considering whether applications can be approved. It is important for all areas to put an up-to-date Local Plan in place to positively guide development decisions.
- **Local planning authority:** The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. For Cold Ash, this is West Berkshire Council.
- **Local Wildlife Sites (LWS):** are areas with locally significant nature conservation value. They come in all shapes and sizes, from small wildflower meadows and secluded ponds to ancient woodlands. Most are owned by private individuals.
- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**: the national planning policy document which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- **Non-strategic policies:** Policies contained in a neighbourhood plan, or those policies in a local plan that are not strategic policies.
- **Open space:** All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.
- **Previously developed land/ brownfield land:** Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be PDL Previously Developed Land developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.
- **Priority habitats and species:** Species and Habitats of Principal Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
- **Public Right of Way:** There are three types of PROW in Cold Ash parish; public footpaths, public bridleways and byways open to all traffic (BOATS). A pedestrian route along the side of a road is described as a 'footway' in this document.
- **Qualifying Body:** The makers of a neighbourhood plan – in our case, Cold Ash Parish Council
- **Section 106 agreement (or s106):** A mechanism under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which makes a development proposal acceptable in planning terms that would not otherwise be acceptable.

- **Section 278 agreement (or s278):** is a section of the Highways Act 1980 that allows developers to enter into a legal agreement with the council (in our capacity as the Highway Authority) to make permanent alterations or improvements to a public highway, as part of a planning approval.
- **Settlement boundaries: These** identify the areas in the district of primarily built form, rather than countryside the main built-up area of a settlement within which development is considered acceptable, subject to other policy considerations. While allowing for development, settlement boundaries protect the character of a settlement and prevent unrestricted growth into the countryside. They create a level of certainty about whether or not the principle of development is likely to be acceptable.
- **Stepping-stones:** Pockets of habitat that, while not necessarily connected, facilitate the movement of species across otherwise inhospitable landscapes.
- **Strategic environmental assessment:** A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.
- **Sunken lanes:** these are lanes that have been developed through historical use. Their appearance is sunken, due to the erosion through use over many years. They are seen as a strong historical feature, and one that needs to be protected.
- **Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS):** are drainage systems that are considered to be environmentally beneficial, causing minimal or no long-term detrimental damage. They are designed to manage stormwater locally (as close its source as possible), to mimic natural drainage and encourage its infiltration, attenuation and passive treatment.
- **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):** Supplementary Planning Documents may cover a range of issues, both topic and site specific, which may expand policy or provide further detail to policies contained in a Development Plan Document, where they can help applicants make successful applications or aid infrastructure delivery.
- **Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC):** manages and shares information on species, habitats and important wildlife and geological sites in Berkshire and Oxfordshire.
- **Tree Preservation Order:** an order made by a local planning authority in England to protect specific trees, groups of trees or woodlands in the interests of amenity.
- **Use Classes Order:** The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (As amended in 1995, 2005, 2013 and 2020) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories. Planning permission is not needed for changes of use within the same use class.
- **Wildlife corridor:** Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations.
- **Windfall Sites:** those sites which become available for development unexpectedly and are therefore not included as allocated land in a planning authority's development plan.

15. REFERENCE PACK

All evidence base documents are available to view on the CAPNDP website: https://coldashpc.org.uk/
Document website addresses shown below are correct at February 2023.

Document/ Evidence	Author	Year
Dark Skies of the North Wessex Downs: A Guide to Good External Lighting	North Wessex AONB Unit	2021
Biodiversity metric	Defra	2021
Building for a Healthy Life	Design for Homes	2020
Census	Office for National Statistics	2011
Climate Change Act 2008	HM Government	2008
Cold Ash Village Design Statement	CAPC	2002
Core Strategy Development Document 2006 to 2026	WBC	Adopted 2012
Environment Act 2021	HM Government	2021
Biodiversity metric: calculate the biodiversity net gain of a project or development	Defra	2021
Guidance Note: Residential Parking	The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation	No date
Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development	Wessex Downs AONB Unit	2020
Heritage at Risk Register	Historic England	ongoing
Housing Density Analysis for Cold Ash Parish (available from the CAPC website)	Prepared for CAPC by Simon Vanstone	2017/ 2019
Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI)	Housing LIN	2012
Housing Quality Indicators	Homes and Communities Agency	2011
Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document	WBC	Adopted May 2017
Housing Standards Review	HM Government	2012 (and amended)
Living with Beauty: promoting health, well-being and sustainable growth	HM Government	2020
Local Development Scheme	WBC	April 2020
Local List of Heritage Assets	WBC	2020
Local Plan Review to 2037 – Regulation 18 version	WBC	2020
Local Plan Review to 2039 – Regulation 19 version	WBC	2023
Localism Act 2011	HM Government	2011
National Design Guide		2021
National Heritage List for England (NHLE)	Historic England	ongoing
National Planning Policy Framework (amended July 2021)	HM Government	Amended 2021
Neighbourhood Development Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended)	HM Government	2012
Nightblight: Reclaiming our skies	CPRE	ongoing
North Wessex Downs Management Plan 2019 to 2024	Wessex Downs AONB Unit	2019
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004	HM Government	2004
Quality Design West Berkshire	WBC	2006
Saved policies from the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 to 2006	WBC	Saved policies 2007
Secured by Design	Police Crime Prevention Initiatives	ongoing

Document/ Evidence	Author	Year
South East Plan Natural Resource Management Policy 6 - relating to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. In February 2013 the South East Plan was formally abolished except for Policy NRM6 which relates to new residential development close to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.	South East Plan	From 2013
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Decision Notice	WBC	13 December 2021
Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report Post Consultation Version	WBC	13 December 2021
Technical Appendix - Traffic, Transport and Travel	SW Transport Planning Ltd	March 2021
Town and Country Planning Act 1990	HM Government	1990
Urban Air Quality	Woodland Trust	2012
Use Classes	Planning Portal	2021
West Berkshire Historic Environment Characterisation Project	WBC	2004-2007
West Berkshire Historic Environment Record	Historic England in partnership with ALGAO and IHBC	ongoing
West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment	WBC	2019
West Berkshire Local Plan Local Development Scheme	WBC	January 2023
West Berkshire Local Plan - Review of Transport Evidence Base	SW Transport Planning Ltd	February 2023
West Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2022-2037	WBC	1 December 2022
West Berkshire Parking Standards	WBC	2014

Appendix A – Prevailing housing densities

The following table has been prepared for the CAPNDP to illustrate the housing densities of different parts of the parish.

	Acres	M^2	Total Houses	Houses per Acre	Houses per Hectare	Comment
Ashmore Green North	7.29	29543	35	4.80	11.86	
Ashmore Green Road (Recreation Ground)	3.96	16020	10	2.53	6.24	
Ashmore Green South	21.06	85224	73	3.47	8.57	
Ashmore Green West	10.45	42272	46	4.40	10.88	
Bucklebury Alley	22.14	89608	51	2.30	5.69	
Cold Ash Hill	19.42	78615	113	5.82	14.38	Omits The Vicarage
Cold Ash Hill - Harewood Drive	3.44	13933	9	2.62	6.46	
Cold Ash Hill - Hatchgate Close	4.76	19273	26	5.46	13.50	
Cold Ash Hill - Spring Lane	4.15	16810	22	5.30	13.10	
Cold Ash Hill - Strouds Meadow	2.57	10382	24	9.34	23.08	
Cold Ash Hill - Walters Close	2.77	11201	12	4.33	10.70	
Cold Ash Hill - Total	37.11	150214	206	5.55	13.72	
Colloroy Road	13.58	54996	48	3.53	8.73	
Colloroy Road - The Rise & Hazels Paddock	2.15	8712	26	12.09	29.88	
Drove Lane	13.81	55888	30	2.17	5.37	
Fishers Lane	23.46	94938	35	1.49	3.69	Omits Fishers Farm
Gladstone Lane	3.81	15443	15	3.94	9.73	
Hermitage Road	29.45	119259	60	2.04	5.03	
Johnson Lane	0.85	3459	3	3.53	8.72	
Long Lane	5.44	21993	18	3.31	8.18	Omits Cold Ash Farm
Red Shute Hill	23.58	95408	24	1.02	2.52	
Slanting Hill	8.81	35649	5	0.57	1.40	
Stoney Lane (Excl Ashmore Green West)	40.19	162657	46	1.14	2.83	
The Ridge	55.28	223704	106	1.92	4.74	

	Acres	M^2	Total Houses	Houses per Acre	Houses per Hectare	Comment
The Ridge - Westrop Farm	1.43	5771	3	2.10	5.18	Area = curtilage of residential part of farm only
Thirtover	10.24	41447	12	1.17	2.90	
Henwick	12.92	52289	18	1.39	3.44	Omits Elmhurst Farm
Pear Tree Lane	3.47	14056	3	0.86	2.14	
Heath Lane (The Creek)	4.83	19541	11	2.28	5.63	
Southend	17.46	70643	181	10.37	25.62	
Thatcham (Florence Gardens)	6.79	27466	60	8.84	21.84	
Manor Park	22.87	92567	243	10.63	26.26	
Total Village	**323.64**	**1309933**	**806**			Omits Cold Ash Farm, Elmhurst Farm, Fishers Farm, The Vicarage
Total Ward (Old Definition)	**369.11**	**1493928**	**1079**			
Total Parish	**391.98**	**1586495**	**1322**			

Appendix B – Iconic views

Ref	Name and description
V1	**From St Mark's Churchyard south and west** From the rear of St Mark's Church, over the graveyard and beyond, provides an idyllic view of the west of the parish including Berkshire and Wiltshire. This view is important to residents as it provides the backdrop to the tranquil space enjoyed by parishioners when they spend time in the church grounds, graveyard and the Fisher Rooms (the church function room) 

V2	**From The Ridge across Westrop Farm and Westrop Gulley** From the western end of The Ridge, the view to Frilsham and Yattendon provides an idyllic view across the Pang Valley to the north-west of the parish. This view is important to residents as it provides one of the few remaining views from The Ridge, as most are now masked by buildings. 

V3	**From Footpath 15 looking SW towards Newbury** From Footpath 15, provides an idyllic view of the south-west of the parish towards Newbury, including Berkshire and Hampshire. This view is important to residents as it provides views across the last open landscape between the parish and Newbury and Thatcham. It also adds to the enjoyment of walking Footpath 15. 

V4	**View looking NE towards Broadview Farm and the Pang Valley** From the eastern end of The Ridge, the view from the proposed redirection of Footpath 25 provides an idyllic view across the Pang Valley, to the north-west of the parish. This view is important to residents as it provides one of the few remaining views from The Ridge, as Footpath 25 runs behind the houses that mask the view. It adds to the enjoyment of walking Footpath 25. 

V5	**From the aerial position at St Finian's Farm to Beacon Hill, Greenham and Watership Down** At the eastern end of the parish, off The Ridge, the view from Footpath 23 provides an idyllic view across the Kennet Valley, to the south of the parish. This view is important to residents as it provides one of the few remaining views now that the introduction of five new homes have masked the last remaining view from The Ridge. The view includes Berkshire and Hampshire, and the iconic sites of Beacon Hill and Watership Down. It adds to the enjoyment of walking Footpath 23. 

V6	**From Fishers Lane across B4009 to Snelsmore East Common** From Fishers Lane provides an idyllic view of the west of the parish including Berkshire and Wiltshire. This view is important to residents as it provides the backdrop to an area that includes a sunken lane and a tranquil rural setting. 

V7	**From the high point of Footpath 15 looking south towards Ashmore Green Road and Cold Ash Hill** From the high point of Footpath 15, provides an idyllic view of the south of the parish towards Newbury, including Berkshire and Hampshire. This view is important to residents as it provides views across the last open landscape between the parish and Newbury and Thatcham. It also adds to the enjoyment of walking Footpath 15. This is part of the panoramic view that also includes view V3. 

V8	**From Footpath 16 at Ashmore Green looking south to Spring Lane by Cold Ash Hill** From the high point of Footpath 16, provides an idyllic view of the south of the parish towards Newbury, including Berkshire and Hampshire. This view is important to residents as it provides views across the last open landscape between the parish and Newbury and Thatcham. It also adds to the enjoyment of walking Footpath 16.  

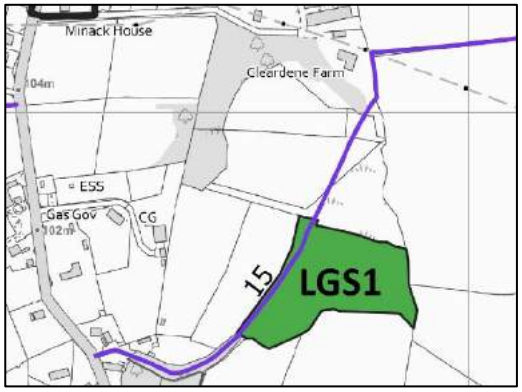
V9	**From Footpath 15 looking east, towards Cold Ash Hill**  From the high point of Footpath 15, provides an idyllic view of the heart of the parish, including the village of Cold Ash. This view is important to residents as it provides views across the green space around the village, giving it the rural character and feel that is so important to residents. It also adds to the enjoyment of walking Footpath 15.

V10	 This view is from the Wildlife Allotment Garden across the valley to Hannington, in Hampshire. The viewpoint is situated in a Quiet Garden, specifically designed for visitors to sit surrounded by nature while they enjoy the view. The view is particularly important as the site is owned by a charitable trust, of which Cold Ash Parish Councillors are trustees, and is for the benefit of parishioners.

Appendix C - Local Green Spaces

1. Cleardene Woods





Site Name	Cleardene Wood
Site Owner	Ian Young & Suzanne Jackson
Location	On the outskirts of Cold Ash and Ashmore Green villages, between Cold Ash Hill and Ashmore Green Road
Status/Designations	Local Wildlife Site
Size	1.55ha
Description	A local woodland that provides a good habitat, supporting biodiversity, and a tranquil setting for the Public Right of Way that passes through it.
Boundaries	Hedges and wire fencing
Distance from Village	Close to the settlement boundaries of the two main villages in the parish, Cold Ash and Ashmore Green, and adjacent to the Hamlet of Henwick
Uses	Wildlife landing space, as part of the wildlife corridors. Supports biodiversity
Quality	A significant area of high-quality trees and land that supports biodiversity and provides a transit point for the wildlife corridors
Facilities	No direct facilities, but a Public Right of Way passes though the space
Visual Attractiveness	An attractive copse which has been enhanced by additional planting of trees
Historical Significance	There is no specific historical significance associated with the site
Recreational Value	The area is not open to the public, but adds to the enjoyment of using adjacent Public Rights of Way

Tranquility	**A tranquil setting that is surrounded by open farmland and farm buildings**
Wildlife Value	**Offers a haven for wildlife and could potentially be a transit point for wildlife corridors. Although a Local Wildlife Site, boundaries for such sites can alter, hence the local desire to designate the space a Local Green Space.**
Recommend as an LGS	**Proposed on the basis of its importance for local wildlife, as a transit point, and being a tranquil route for the Public Right of Way**

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2. Wildlife Allotment Garden





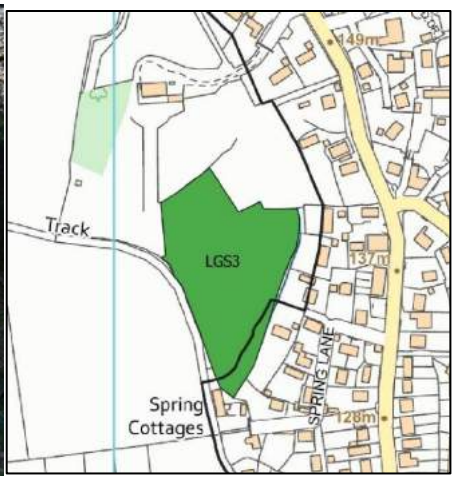
Site Name	Wildlife Allotment Garden
Site Owner	**Poor's Allotment and Recreation Ground Charity (no. 300138), of which Cold Ash Parish Council is trustee**
Location	**The Wildlife Allotment Garden (WAG) covers some 3.03ha in the heart of the parish.**
Status/Designations	**The land was given to the poor of the parish in 1852. A charitable trust was established to manage the land in 1922 (the Poor's Allotment and Recreation Ground Charities), of which Cold Ash Parish Councillors are trustees.**
Size	**3.03ha**
Description	**A local woodland that provides a good habitat, supporting biodiversity, and a tranquil setting for recreational use by the public, bordered on two sides by Public Right of Ways. The site includes paths, a Quiet Garden, allotments, and fields that house sheep and goats. It has been recognised as an ideal mix of woodland and meadow**
Boundaries	**Hedges and Public Rights of Way**
Distance from Village	**Within the settlement boundary of Cold Ash village**

Uses	**Wildlife biodiversity, allotments, housing livestock and recreation**
Quality	**The quality of the site has been assessed and it is recognised as having the ideal mix of woodland, meadows, and fields for livestock. It has standing water that also supports biodiversity. It also houses 29 allotments for use by local parishioners.**
Facilities	**Allotments, grazing fields, Quiet Area, picnic areas and educational zone, with various benches, paths and green space. A number specific wildlife habitats have been added to enhance biodiversity**
Visual Attractiveness	**The site is very visually attractive with views across several counties. It is viewed by parishioners as the environmental heart of the parish.**
Historical Significance	**The site was given to the poor of the parish in the late nineteenth century for growing their own fruit and vegetables and grazing their livestock (it was originally known as the 'Labouring Poor Allotments').**
Recreational Value	**A tranquil oasis for walking, picnicking and generally socialising**
Tranquility	**A green oasis in the centre of Cold Ash village**
Wildlife Value	**Offers a haven for wildlife and could potentially be a transit point for wildlife corridors**
Recommend as an LGS	**Proposed on the basis of its importance for local wildlife and the local community**

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3. Woodland Leaves Meadow





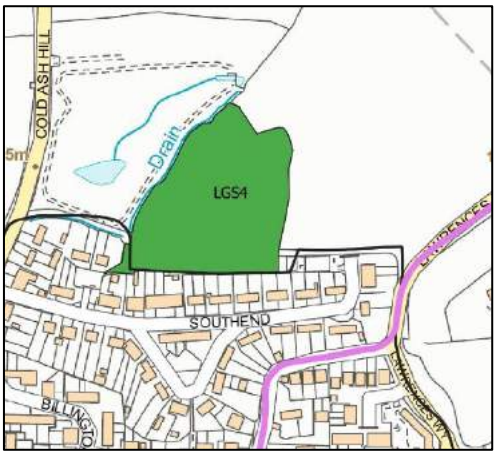
Site Name	**Woodland Leaves Meadow**
Site Owner	**Michael and Alice Liebreich**

Location	**On the edge of Cold Ash village settlement boundary, forming part of the space between Cold Ash and Ashmore Green villages**
Status/Designations	**None, but numerous mature trees of various species with TPOs**
Size	**1.27 ha**
Description	**A local meadow with woodland boundaries that provides a good habitat, supporting biodiversity, and a tranquil setting in the heart of Cold Ash village, lying between a Public Right of Way and Cold Ash Hill**
Boundaries	**Hedges and wire fencing**
Distance from Village	**On the edge of Cold Ash village settlement boundary, forming part of the space between Cold Ash and Ashmore Green villages**
Uses	**Wildlife and flora biodiversity, and ground water management**
Quality	**Very high potential. Neglected for many years, several issues currently in need of attention (ground water flows, some trees in bad state, overgrowth of wet areas reducing biodiversity).**
Facilities	**No direct facilities, but a Public Right of Way passes adjacent to the space. Significant impact on views from neighbouring properties, potential for important public view from Cold Ash Hill.**
Visual Attractiveness	**A highly attractive site with views across several counties**
Historical Significance	**Part of the grounds of a property previously owned by a notable local parishioner**
Recreational Value	**No direct recreational value but forms an attractive setting for the Public Right of Way that borders it**

Tranquility	**Top part of land subject to road noise from Cold Ash Hill, remainder of it is tranquil, particularly North-West side abutting on neighbouring woodland and open farmland.**
Wildlife Value	**Offers a haven for wildlife and could potentially be enhanced as a in important transit point for wildlife corridors**
Recommend as an LGS	**Proposed on the basis of its importance for local wildlife and being a tranquil site linking a Public Right of Way and Cold Ash Hill**

4. Little Copse





Site Name	Little Copse
Site Owner	West Berkshire Council
Location	Adjacent to the built-up area of Southend
Status/Designations	None
Size	1.48 ha
Description	A local woodland that provides a good habitat, supporting biodiversity, and a tranquil setting for recreational use by the public
Boundaries	Hedges and streams
Distance from Village	Located between the settlement boundary of Cold Ash village and the area known as Southend
Uses	Wildlife biodiversity and recreation
Quality	A good quality woodland that provides both a home for local wildlife and a welcome space for parishioners to walk and exercise their dogs
Facilities	Woodland walks and green space
Visual Attractiveness	An attractive setting that is an important addition to the Southend area of the parish
Historical Significance	The site has no know historical significance
Recreational Value	A tranquil oasis for walking, exercising dogs and for children to play in
Tranquility	A green oasis adjacent to Southend
Wildlife Value	Offers a haven for wildlife and could potentially be a transit point for wildlife corridors
Recommend as an LGS	Proposed on the basis of its importance for local wildlife and the local community

5. Hermitage Road Recreation Ground





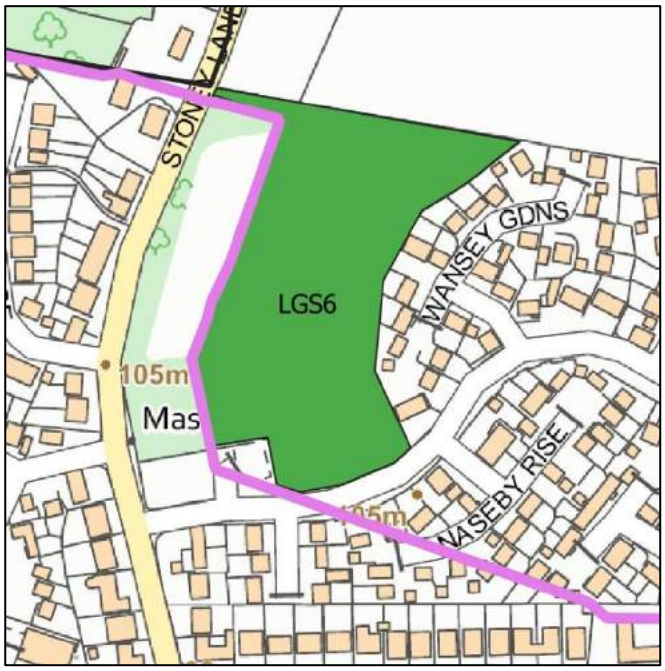
Site Name	Hermitage Road Recreation Ground
Site Owner	Poor's Allotment and Recreation Ground Charity (no. 300138), of which Cold Ash Parish Council is trustee
Location	Within Cold Ash village settlement area
Status/Designations	The land was given to the poor of the parish in 1852. A charitable trust was established to manage the land in 1922 (the Poor's Allotment and Recreation Ground Charities), of which Cold Ash Parish Councillors are trustees.
Size	2.44 ha
Description	A recreational park with provision for cricket, football and tennis, plus a children's play park. It is the recreational heart of the villages within the parish
Boundaries	Hedges
Distance from Village	Located within the settlement boundary of Cold Ash village
Uses	Recreation
Quality	The site has high quality sporting facilities, including tennis courts, football pitches and a cricket pitch
Facilities	Cricket pitch, football pitch, tennis courts and play park with children's play apparatus
Visual Attractiveness	An attractive green space in the heart of Cold Ash village
Historical Significance	The site was given to the poor of the parish in the late nineteenth century for recreational purposes
Recreational Value	A good site for recreation and sport

Tranquility	**This is not the main aim of the site, due to the nature of the facilities and it's uses**
Wildlife Value	**Has a number of trees and a lot of hedgerow, which enable the transit of wildlife through the parish**
Recommend as an LGS	**Proposed on basis of its importance to local community for recreation and for local wildlife**

6. Waller Drive Recreation Park







Site Name	**Waller Drive Recreation Park**
Site Owner	**West Berkshire Council**
Location	**The site is located in the south of the neighbourhood area and within the Newbury settlement boundary. The neighbourhood boundary crosses the site; it is the area within the**

	neighbourhood plan boundary that would be subject to a Local Green Space designation.
Status/Designations	**The site has no statutory designations. It is managed as an open space by West Berkshire Council.**
Size	**1.6 ha**
Description	**This is an open space, laid to grass, surrounded by trees on all sides.**
Boundaries	**Mature trees surround the site. Residential to the west, south and east. Open fields to the north.**
Distance from Village	**The space is located within the settlement boundary of Newbury.**
Uses	**Its main use is recreational, for walking and exercising dogs. It is an important area for the more urban area of the parish**
Quality	**The site provides high quality green space for local residents to exercise and enjoy**
Facilities	**Laid to grass with benches.**
Visual Attractiveness	**An attractive site within the urban area of Manor Park.**
Historical Significance	**The site has no known historical significance**
Recreational Value	**Used by dog walkers and residents from the surrounding housing estate for informal games and outdoor fun.**
Tranquility	**This open space is surrounded by mature trees on all sides and is an oasis within an otherwise residential area, where residents can play where the surrounded housing is obscured from view.**
Wildlife Value	**The nature of the site makes it good for wildlife and link to the wildlife corridors**
Recommend as an LGS	**Proposed on the basis of recreational and tranquility value**

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Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2037



Consultation Statement

Submission Version (Regulation 16)

June 2023

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. The policies contained in the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan (referred to s the "CAPNDP" or "Neighbourhood Plan") have been developed as a result of extensive interaction and consultation with the community and businesses within the area. This engagement process has been an integral part of the work since the inception of the Neighbourhood Plan in 2018 and has included articles in the parish newsletter, surveys, public exhibitions, meeting, focus groups and presentations to community groups.

1.2. This Consultation Statement has been prepared in accordance with regulation 15(2) of Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, which requires that a consultation statement should:

- contain details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
- explain how they were consulted;
- summarise the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and
- describe how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed Neighbourhood Plan.

Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

1.3. In 2017, Cold Ash Parish Council took the decision to develop a neighbourhood plan for the entire parish to enable it to have a greater influence over land-use and planning in the area. It applied to West Berkshire Council (WBC) as the strategic local authority, to designate the neighbourhood area, and this was confirmed on 19 March 2018 (Designation Statement). An appeal for volunteers was issued and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was formed, along with a series of Working Groups comprising members of the Steering Group and volunteer parishioners to explore topics that were considered to be of relevance to the local area.

1.4. The Steering Group has been the focal point and driving force behind the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Planning process. Throughout it has acted as a key link between parishioners (and other stakeholders) and the Parish Council. A copy of the Terms of Reference for the Steering Group is available on the Cold Ash Parish Council website.

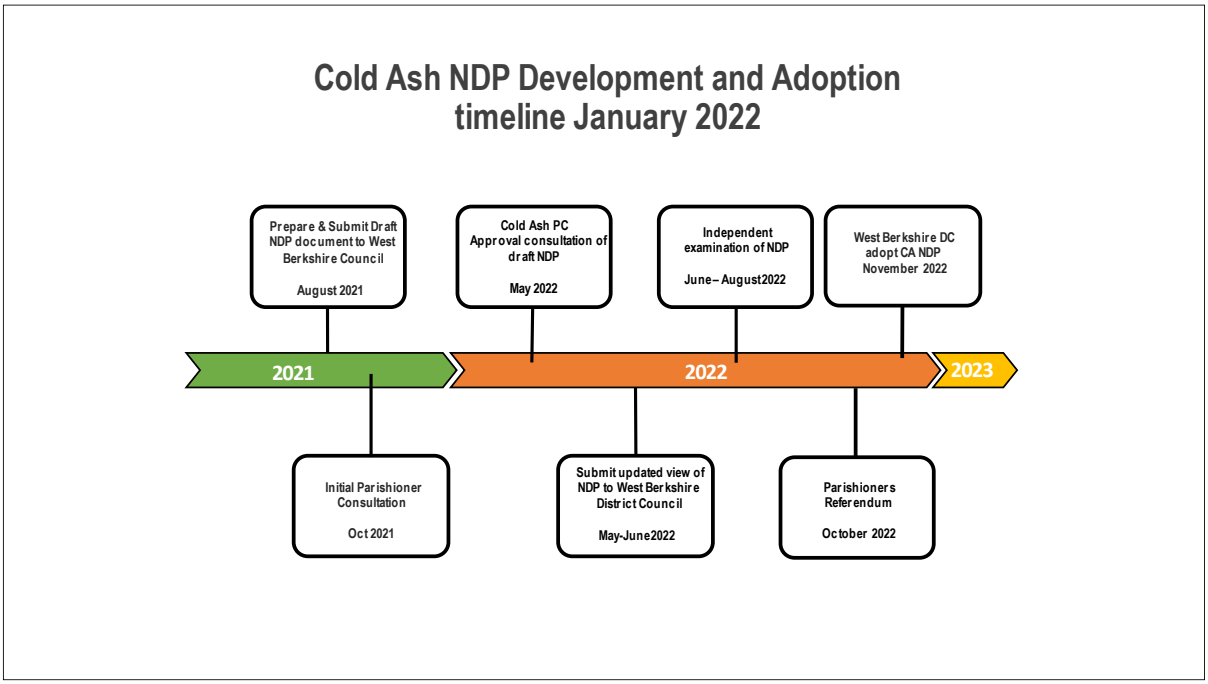
2 SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES, ISSUES AND OUTCOMES

2.1. An important part of the Neighbourhood Plan process has been to ensure that all residents and those with an interest in Cold Ash parish have had an opportunity to input into the work. The Steering Group has spent a great deal of time and energy speaking to as many individuals, local groups and businesses as possible throughout the process. There has been ongoing engagement with the community – to share and disseminate information and to seek input – and also some key consultation activities at strategic points in the process. Throughout the whole process the Steering Group has met frequently.

2.2. A summary of the significant programme of engagement and consultation activity is illustrated in the table below.

Date	Milestone	Key activities
Stage 1: 2017	**Establishment:** Setting up the SG committee structure and building capacity	• Steering Group and Working Groups established. • Training on neighbourhood planning. • Neighbourhood area formally designated. • Regular (monthly) SG meetings inaugurated. • Webpages developed. • Social media used to raise awareness, post invitations to meetings, etc. • Engagement and communications approach established.
Stage 2: 2018-2020	**Engagement:** Gathering and analysing evidence (from surveys, etc.).	• 3 x village public meetings held. • Engagement and activity on the Green Infrastructure Plan. • Exhibitions, including Village Show, Christmas Fayre. • Initial 'Village Development Survey". • Local Housing Needs Survey. • Parish-Wide questionnaire. • Working Groups fact-finding and preparing evidence base. • Meetings with LPA officers and committees. • Meetings with landowners and developers.
Stage 3: 2018-22	**Documentation:** Producing key documents, i.e. Draft Policies and Plan.	• Researching other NDPs • Selecting preferred format for CANP. • Response to emerging Local Plan consultation • Inputting findings from the NP process. • Initial drafting of Neighbourhood Plan policies and gaining feedback from the local community.
Stage 4: 2021-2023	**Finalising Policies & Plan:** Including final consultation and agreement via Referendum).	• Preparation of the Pre-Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan. • SEA/ HRA screening undertaken. • Regulation 14 consultation. • Submission Version Plan submitted to LPA.

2.3. An ongoing, and therefore dynamic timescale project plan has also been maintained and shared with the parish as part of this NDP. An example of this is shown below from January 2022.



2.4. The sections below describe, in fuller detail, the engagement and consultation process which took place during the course of the Plan preparation. This is divided into four main stages:

Stage I: Engaging the local community to understand main issues

Stage II: Developing and testing the emerging planning policies

Stage III: The Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) Draft Neighbourhood Plan

Stage IV: The Submission Version Plan

Stage I: Engaging the local community to understand main issues (2015 to 2019)

2.5. Following the decision by the Parish Council to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan, Cold Ash parish was formally designated as the Neighbourhood Area on 19 March 2018.

2.6. A call for volunteers led to a number of people coming forward to commit to the neighbourhood plan process (known colloquially as the 'Village Plan'). Over the next months, a Steering Group was formed alongside Working Groups and workstreams, whose members would explore in more detail the following broad themes: environment, wildlife, heritage, economy and housing. Work would cover issues such as design and density.

2.7. The groups undertook some training organised by WBC, to get to grips with the process of neighbourhood planning and the steps involved. This was followed by three community Open Day events held from 1 to 3 June 2018 at the local Acland Parish Hall to launch the project.

NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS ARE COMING TO YOUR AREA



Come to Cold Ash Parish Council's 'New Housing Event' to find out what is happening!

Neighbourhood Development Plan Event

Find out more by attending our drop in event. Come for half an hour, or stay all day. With maps, proposed sites, ideas and lively discussion on your neighbourhood.

When: **Fri 1st June 2-7pm**
Sat 2nd June 10-5pm
Sun 3rd June 10-4pm

Where: **Committee Room, Acland Memorial Hall, Cold Ash**

If you can't make it, check out our neighbourhood development website:

www.ColdAshNDP.com

Join our e-mail newsletter by emailing us:

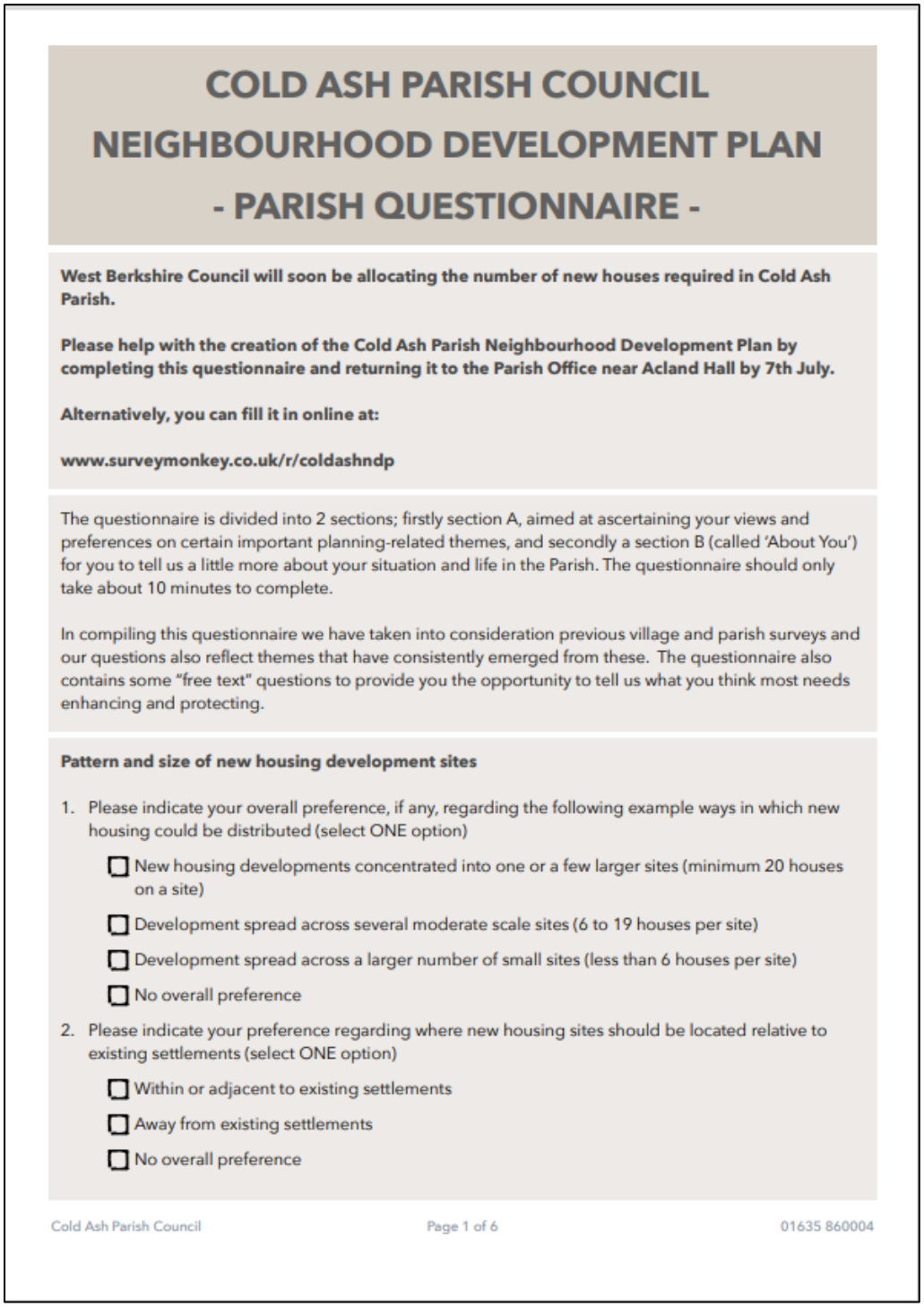
coldashndp@gmail.com

Note: we will add your details to our email database and will send you updates about the neighbourhood development plan

Cold Ash Parish Council www.coldash.org.uk 01635 860004

The Open Day Flier

2.8. During these Open Days the community was engaged with presentations about what neighbourhood planning is, what it could include and the process involved. Notably at this early stage, attendees were asked to fill in an initial questionnaire which was used to steer the direction and thoughts of the NDP Steering Committee. An example of the first page of that survey is shown below.



COLD ASH PARISH COUNCIL
NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN
- PARISH QUESTIONNAIRE -

West Berkshire Council will soon be allocating the number of new houses required in Cold Ash Parish.

Please help with the creation of the Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan by completing this questionnaire and returning it to the Parish Office near Acland Hall by 7th July.

Alternatively, you can fill it in online at:

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/coldashndp

The questionnaire is divided into 2 sections; firstly section A, aimed at ascertaining your views and preferences on certain important planning-related themes, and secondly a section B (called 'About You') for you to tell us a little more about your situation and life in the Parish. The questionnaire should only take about 10 minutes to complete.

In compiling this questionnaire we have taken into consideration previous village and parish surveys and our questions also reflect themes that have consistently emerged from these. The questionnaire also contains some "free text" questions to provide you the opportunity to tell us what you think most needs enhancing and protecting.

Pattern and size of new housing development sites

1. Please indicate your overall preference, if any, regarding the following example ways in which new housing could be distributed (select ONE option)
   - ☐ New housing developments concentrated into one or a few larger sites (minimum 20 houses on a site)
   - ☐ Development spread across several moderate scale sites (6 to 19 houses per site)
   - ☐ Development spread across a larger number of small sites (less than 6 houses per site)
   - ☐ No overall preference
2. Please indicate your preference regarding where new housing sites should be located relative to existing settlements (select ONE option)
   - ☐ Within or adjacent to existing settlements
   - ☐ Away from existing settlements
   - ☐ No overall preference

Cold Ash Parish Council Page 1 of 6 01635 860004

Extract from the first parish survey

2.9. Paper copies of the survey were made available to complete on the day. Surveys were also available to complete online and a hard copy was also sent to each parish household.

2.10. The questions sought input and views on a range of local issues. They also invited comments about how the village might develop now and in the future. The survey was available to complete online by the 28 June 2018 and via the local parish office by 7 July 2018. It was promoted through the Parish Council Newsletter, via the dedicated CAPNDP website, via leaflets, at the Annual Parish Meeting and on local social media platforms.

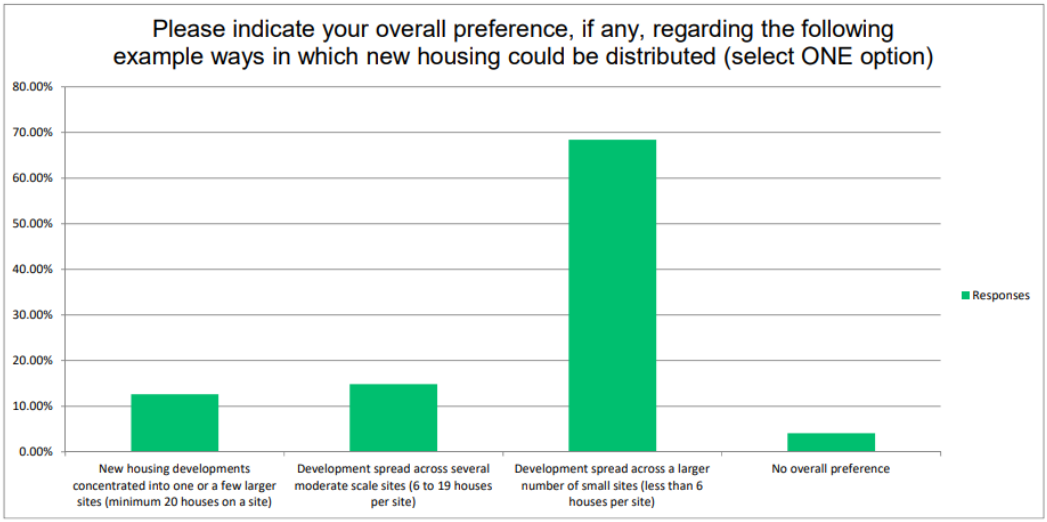
2.11. The information from the first survey was collated by the Steering Group and used to inform the work of the individual working groups.

2.12. A second, more formal survey was conducted in the summer of 2019 as a way of gathering more in-depth material. The survey was designed to ascertain parishioner views and preferences on housing and important planning-related themes, and to learn about their views about life in the Parish. It was distributed to all parish households directly and over 250 replies were received. The survey consisted mainly of multiple-choice questions because these aided the collation and presentation of results. However, for completeness, several free text questions to enable respondents to raise ideas and issues without the restrictions of the multiple-choice format were also included.

2.13. It was not possible to integrate all the free text answers into the overall results report, but the main themes were summarised and can be viewed on the CANDP website: NDP Summer 2019 Survey Results.

Please indicate your overall preference, if any, regarding the following example ways in which new housing could be distributed

Answer Choices	Responses	
New housing developments concentrated into one or a few larger site	12.64%	34
Development spread across several moderate scale sites (6 to 19 ho	14.87%	40
Development spread across a larger number of small sites (less than	68.40%	184
No overall preference	4.09%	11
	Answered	**269**
	Skipped	**0**



An example of the survey output gained

Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019 Summer Survey
Summary of free text answers

Introduction

There were four questions in the survey questionnaire that enabled respondents to provide free text answers. These are shown in italics below:

Q9: Are there any particular types of housing, which you would like to see more of in the Parish? For example sheltered or assisted housing for elderly people.

Q11: Please identify any "important assets" in the Parish that you feel particularly need to be protected from development. For example such an asset could be a building or facility, a recreation area, landmark, an important view or space, hedgerow, trees or a wood.

Q12: What are the 3 most important changes or improvements you would like to see in the Parish?

Q13: Any other comments? Please use this box to include any other comment you wish to make for consideration in the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Q9 results summary

There were 100 questionnaires that answered YES to this question, and then provided text in the answer box. The categories are not mutually exclusive; so if a response highlighted the need for elderly housing and affordable housing then that generates two "ticks", one counting in each category. Using this method all the ticks were then added up and the total came to 151 categorised answers.

The most common preferences for particular types of housing were in order:

1. Housing for the elderly
2. Affordable / starter housing
3. Assisted housing
4. Bungalows

The analysis clearly shows that providing housing for elderly people is the dominant response, followed by affordable housing.

- 61% of the 100 highlight elderly housing and 25% highlight assisted housing (which is associated with elderly housing).
- Affordable housing (ie smaller homes, often for younger people, but also mentioned for elderly too – eg downsizing) is highlighted by 44%.
- The need to provide bungalows is highlighted by 10% - basically pointing to the elderly again.
- Other (ie comments not directly related to housing) = 9, three of which were about having better public transport.

Overall, 96 out of 151 categorised comments (63.5%) relate to providing accommodation for the elderly, making it easily the dominant response, followed by affordable housing at 44 out of 151 (29%).

Cold Ash Parish NDP Steering Group Page 1 of 2

Example of a summary of the free form text comments with the key themes emerging

Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019 Summer Survey
Summary of free text answers

Q11 to Q13 summary

Top 5 Important assets

1. Cold Ash Recreation Ground [91 out of 428 categorised responses = 21%]
2. Local woods (this includes both specific woods local to the responder and a more general designation across the parish) [48 out of 428 = 11%]
3. Open spaces / fields [31 = 7%]
4. Acland Hall [30 = 7%]
5. Cold Ash WAG [29]

Around half of the categorised responses related to specific community buildings or recreation areas. The other half related to green spaces and views.

Ranking 1, 4 and 5 relate to a specific "asset". However, this does not mean that a general category is not helpful. Moreover, a high-scoring theme probably underscores a very important issue for parishioners – such as the importance of green spaces or beautiful views.

Top 5 improvements / changes

1. Controlling / reducing traffic speed [81 out of 510 categorised responses = 16%]
2. Better bus service [42 out of 510 = 8%]
3. Improved roads and paths / pavements [42 out of 510 = 8%]
4. Restricting housing development in the villages [29 = 6%]
5. Less traffic through Cold Ash and Ashmore Green villages [23] / More community spirit / events [23]

The overall theme of reducing traffic volume and speed (principally in/through the villages) represents 30% of all categorised responses (roughly 1 in 3 of answered questions).

Top 3 responses to Q13 other comments

1. Keep rural nature of villages [18 out of 109 categorised responses = 17%]
2. Concern over pressures on infrastructure / services from more housing [11 = 10%]
3. Curb traffic volume / speed [9 = 8%]
4. Prevent light pollution in Cold Ash village [6 = 6%]

Example of a summary of the free form text comments with the key themes emerging

Stage II: Developing and testing the emerging planning policies (2020 to 2021)

2.14. The summer 2019 survey, combined with the findings of the initial community survey, provided the Steering and Working Groups with a good understanding of the issues most important to parishioners and their views on how the future of the parish might develop in the future.

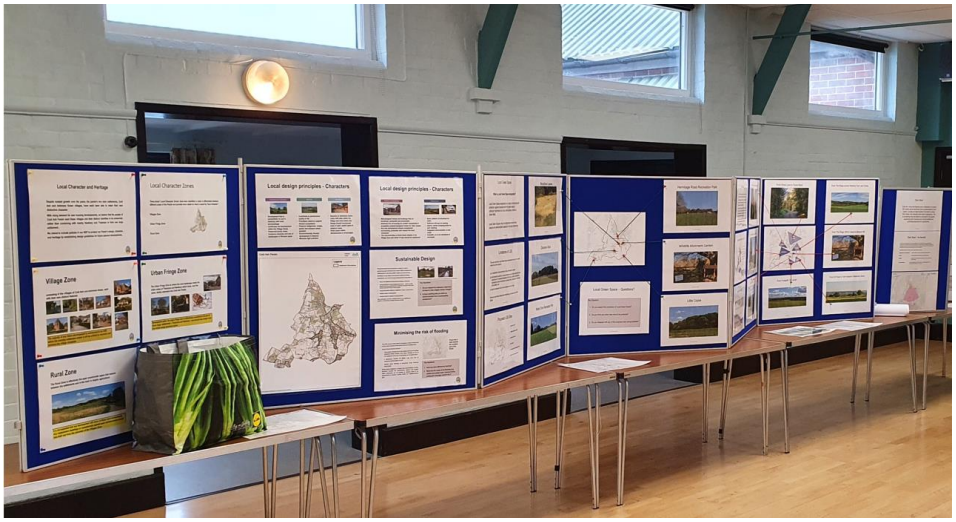
2.15. This enabled the Steering Group to put together a series of draft objectives, which would effectively guide the scope of work for the Working Groups to undertake further engagement and evidence gathering activities during 2020/21. As additional detail was gathered, so the objectives were further refined and consideration was given to how they might be delivered, either through planning policy or community actions.

2.16. Other activities at this time included:

- Creating the structure for the NDP document, based on researching other Neighbourhood Plans around the District and nationally.
- Exploring and defining the requirements for a traffic analysis in the Parish. Raw data for the parish was collected in September 2020, including monitoring traffic speeds and quantity at specifically chosen locations in the parish. Further information can be found on the CANDP website. The work was used to inform a report prepared for the parish by independent traffic expert Simon Watts.
- Attending local workshops in Thatcham and Newbury to learn more about potential housing developments in the urban areas, which may impact on the Parish.
- Reviewing the previous village design statement to inform policy in the emerging Neighbourhood plan and to ensure continuity.
- Ongoing discussions with West Berkshire Planning Officers.
- Attending WBC's Thatcham and Newbury consultation workshops, to informally discuss the sites that had been identified as part of the emerging Local Plan process.
- Identifying environmental features in the parish, including notable trees and hedgerows, and prized views, which were termed "iconic views".

2.17. It was important that the community was kept informed of progress on the project and on 23 October 2021, a further Open Day was held at the local Parish Hall. This provided an opportunity to share information on the emerging objectives for the parish and how these might evolve into projects and policies. Potential policy options were displayed for feedback. Attendees were invited to comment on the information presented and the Steering Group were on hand to answer questions.





Images from the Open Day, October 2021

2.18. The Open Day was attended by 180 people and received very positive feedback. All materials presented on the day were later shared via the CANDDP website and multiple updates were shared on social media and through the local parish magazine.

2.19. During the Open Day each attendee was asked to complete a questionnaire and 73 questionnaires were completed on the day; the actual number of respondents is considered to be much higher however, as many questionnaires were completed by couples or households.

2.20. A summary of the survey findings is shown below and a fuller detail of findings is presented in Appendix A.

- There is strong support for protection of the village character, heritage, and the environment of the parish, with votes in favour of the proposed policies being:
  - Village character & Heritage – 99%
  - Local Green Space – 100%
  - Iconic Views – 100%
  - Dark Skies – 100%
  - Buffer Zones – 100%
  - Sunken Lanes – 98%

- The support for sustainability is very high, but on specific design points there was less support:
  - Sustainability measures – 97% in favour
  - Electric charging points – 66% in favour
  - Cycle storage – 34% in favour

- Many of our residents are users of the footpaths in the parish (98%) and many would support the use of parish funds, from development (s106 & CIL) to improve walking and cycling routes through the parish (92%)

- Although flooding is seen as an issue within the parish, only 14% of those surveyed said they have had a problem with flooding in the past

- Views on parking in the parish were more balanced with:
  - 45% of respondents believing there is insufficient parking, whilst 55% disagree with this position
  - 52% think there are areas where additional parking would be useful, but 48% didn't think this was the case

- Parking around the schools at drop-off and pick-up times elicited a lot of comment and is clearly seen as a major issue within the parish. There's support for resolving the issues, with:
  - 93% of respondents thinking that we should look to the RC diocese to release land to provide parking for St Finian's School
  - 59% supporting looking for local land and/or use of verges to resolve the issues around St Mark's school

- Traffic and management of its movement around the parish received good support from respondents, except on the subject of a Pelican-crossing. The results in favour of action are:
  - Additional traffic management, in general – 88%
  - 30mph roundels – 76%
  - New Gateway features – 75%
  - Vehicle Actuated Speed Signs – 83%
  - Pedestrian Safety Signs – 80%
  - Pelican-crossing – 47%

- There is good support for the local economy, with:
  - Support for protection of existing commercial employment - 100%
  - Support for future large-scale employment in the Red Shute Hill area – 83%
  - Support for start-up opportunities – 87%

- The support for provision of more local services is mixed, with:
  - Support for additional facilities – 50%
  - Improvement to existing facilities – 55%
  - Support for the creation of a Community Hub – 86%
  - Repurpose of the Rifle Shed for community use – 95%
  - Support for specific facilities (Shop/Post Office, Pubs, Acland Hall, Hermitage Road Recreation Park, Fisher Room) – 82%

2.21. Residents had been invited to submit photographs from around the parish and winners were announced at the Open Day.

2.22. The feedback was communicated with the community using the Parish Council Newsletter, the Facebook page and local council meetings. Information was also displayed on the Parish Council Website.

2.23. In parallel to the Open Day, the scope of the emerging CAPNDP was sent to WBC in order to screen the policies to ascertain if they were likely to have significant environmental impacts thus requiring a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and/or Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). A Screening Determination Statement was prepared, dated 13 December 2021, which confirmed that neither an SEA nor HRA would be required.

Site allocations:

2.24. It should be noted that a housing requirement figure (of 40 dwellings) had been originally identified for Cold Ash within the emerging draft of the WBC Local Plan Review (LPR) that was published for a Regulation 18 consultation between December 2020 and February 2021. The Steering Group undertook site selection work to identify suitable sites to meet this requirement. Further information about this can be found in the Reference Pack (Section 15), notably the document, "Evidence underpinning the Spatial Strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan".

2.25. Whilst this work identified one suitable site, that site is located within the settlement boundary whereby there is a presumption in favour of development. The approach for the LPR has been not to allocate sites within settlement boundaries because the principle of development is already established.

2.26. In light of the site selection work, the Submission version of the LPR did not identify a housing requirement for Cold Ash. It is considered that there are other sites that will meet the housing need in the District. For this reason, the CAPNDP does not seek to allocate housing and this position has been agreed with WBC. This position took some time to agree, however, which added on a significant amount of time to the overall Plan programme.

Other challenges faced:

2.27. A series of challenges were faced by the Steering Group in developing the CAPNDP including:

- The delays and uncertainties surrounding the Local Plan Review, which severely impacted on the overall timescale and project plan. The Steering Group has maintained communications with WBC about this.
- Communicating the difference between the emerging Neighbourhood Plan (which is a non-allocating plan) and those site allocations that were already included in the DPD site allocations, such as Coley Farm. The Steering Group has been mindful to assist parishioners in understanding that new housing developments already allocated will still occur, despite the CAPNDP being non-allocating.
- The need to communicate to parishioners that some of the most emotive issues, such as traffic speed and volume, are not actually issues that the CAPNDP process can directly address because these are the territory of Highway or other agencies. This is an ongoing communications and consultation challenge in order to correctly set parishioners' expectations of what effect the CAPNDP will have in the Parish.

Stage III: Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) Draft Neighbourhood Plan Consultation (2022 to 2023)

2.28. The group contracted support via Locality to enable them to finalise the Pre-Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan. Feedback from the Open Day was used to inform the selection of policies and projects. This draft document was sent to WBC, who recommended that it be rescreened to take account of the fact that the policies had now evolved since the previous screening. While the rescreening was taking place, they were able to provide informal feedback to the Steering Group.

2.29. The Determination Statement, dated 29 November 2022, reconfirmed that neither an SEA nor HRA would be required.

2.30. The Steering Group finalised its Pre-Submission draft in early 2023 and formally agreed by the Parish Council.

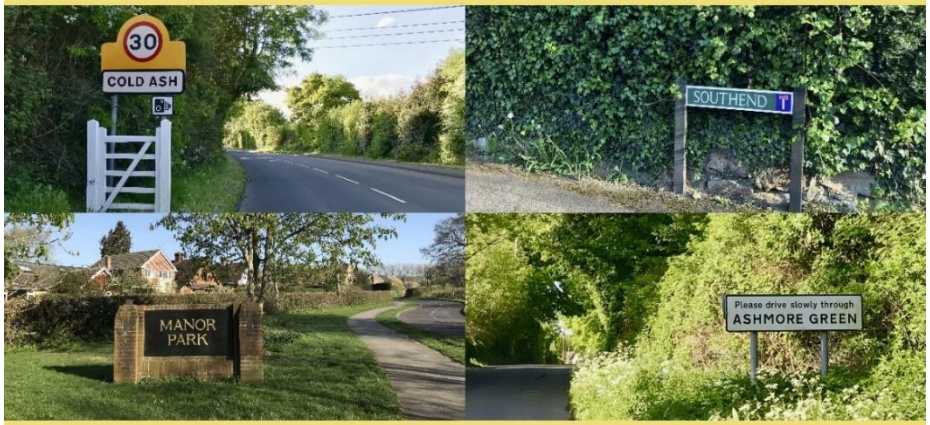
2.31. The Pre-Submission Regulation 14 consultation took place between 1 March and 19 April 2023.

2.32. All documents were uploaded to the Parish Council website and the consultation was communicated to the local community via social media and an article in the Parish newsletter. All those on the mailing list were emailed and hard copies of the Plan were made available on request. Fliers and posters were produced to promote the consultation.

2.33. A survey was prepared that could be completed online or as a hard copy. This asked respondents to set out their relative support for the individual policies and also provided an opportunity for free text feedback.

2.34. The Steering Group invited residents to Q&A sessions about the Plan; one was online via Zoom (5 April) and one was in person (28 March).

COLD ASH PARISH COUNCIL
NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN
- CONSULTATION -



Invitation to comment on the Pre-Submission Version of the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan.

Cold Ash Parish Council is asking all parishioners to take part in the formal consultation by completing our short questionnaire by 19th April 2023.

Neighbourhood Development Plan
The Neighbourhood Plan is a document that sets out planning and land-use policies relating to Cold Ash Parish. It is a formal document that sets out, in development terms, how land should be used within the parish, as well as planning policies to influence development proposals.

The Plan must undergo a rigorous process, including a series of consultations, an independent examination and finally a local referendum. If successful, it will be used alongside the Local Plan policies to determine the outcome of planning applications within Cold Ash Parish.

Questionnaire
We are asking all Parishioners to answer the questions in our online questionnaire - paper versions can also be collected from Cold Ash Post Office or the Parish Office (nr. Acland Hall).

Please complete online (scan QR code or use the link below) or return paper copies to the Parish Office by **19th April 2023**.

https://tinyurl.com/ColdAshNDPConsultation

Cold Ash Parish Council www.coldashpc.org.uk 01635 860004

Regulation 14 consultation flier



Cold Ash Parish Council: Pre-Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan Feedback Survey (Regulation 14 Consultation)

About this Survey

Residents of Cold Ash Parish, together with other interested parties, are invited to comment on the Pre-Submission Version Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan sets a vision and planning policies for our parish for the coming years to 2039.

Please read the full text of the Neighbourhood Plan and the policies and indicate how strongly, or otherwise, you agree with each policy. You can open a copy of the Plan in a new window by visiting the Cold Ash Parish Council website.

Please tick the appropriate box to record your views on each policy and add any additional comments you wish to make.

We estimate that it should take approximately 5 to 10 minutes to complete.

Please try to complete the whole survey, as your views are extremely important to us.

Our 16 Neighbourhood Plan policies:

1. To what extent do you agree with the following policies?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Policy CAP1: Location of development	○	○	○	○	○
Policy CAP2: Local character and heritage	○	○	○	○	○
Policy CAP3: Design of development	○	○	○	○	○
Policy CAP4: Sustainable design	○	○	○	○	○
Policy CAP5: Minimising the risk of flooding	○	○	○	○	○
Policy CAP6: Biodiversity and the network of green and blue infrastructure	○	○	○	○	○
Policy CAP7: Managing the environmental impact of development	○	○	○	○	○
Policy CAP8: Iconic views	○	○	○	○	○
Policy CAP9: Local Green Spaces	○	○	○	○	○
Policy CAP10: Dark skies	○	○	○	○	○
Policy CAP11: Encouraging sustainable movement	○	○	○	○	○
Policy CAP12: Sunken lanes	○	○	○	○	○
Policy CAP13: Public car parking	○	○	○	○	○
Policy CAP14: Important community facilities	○	○	○	○	○
Policy CAP15: Supporting commercial businesses and expansions	○	○	○	○	○

Extract from the Regulation 14 consultation survey

2.35. As well as residents, the Steering Group wrote to statutory consultees (Appendix B) and the owners of the proposed local green spaces.

2.36. In total 52 residents completed the survey/provided feedback on the Pre-Submission Draft Plan. In addition, responses were received from the following:

- Newbury District Council
- National Highways
- Historic England
- South Oxfordshire DC and Vale of White Horse DC
- Thames Water
- Downe House Girls' School
- Mid and West Berkshire Local Access Forum
- Croudace Homes Ltd.
- Thatcham Town Council
- Local Green Space owner (Woodland Leaves Meadow)
- Local Green Space owner (Cleardene Wood)
- British Horse Society Access & Bridleways Officer for West Berkshire & Southern region
- St Gabriel's Convent and Retreat Centre
- Avison Young (on behalf of National Gas Transmission)
- West Berkshire District Council

2.37. Representations received at the Pre-Submission Consultation were recorded by topic/policy and carefully considered by Steering Group members. A summary of the comments, and responses from the Steering Group, are set out in Appendix C. The following paragraphs provide a summary, by topic area, of the comments received during this process and how these were integrated into the Submission Version Plan.

2.38. General comments: The online survey provoked 50 responses from community members, who were asked to what extent they supported the individual policies and invited to submit any additional free text comments. A summary of the relative support for each policy is provided below and free text comments have been added to the overall summary table in Appendix C.

Policy number	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Policy number	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Policy number	Strongly Agree/ Agree
CAP 1	78.9%	CAP 7	84.3%	CAP 13	70.6%
CAP 2	82.7%	CAP 8	76.9%	CAP 14	78.9%
CAP 3	80.8%	CAP 9	80.8%	CAP 15	73.1%
CAP 4	78.9%	CAP 10	84.6%	CAP 16	80.4%
CAP 5	88.2%	CAP 11	92.7%		
CAP 6	82.7%	CAP 12	75.1%		

Support for the policies taken from feedback from the local community consultation

2.39. The majority of comments were in general support of the Plan and its policies. WBC requested additional maps relating to nutrient neutrality to be added, which was actioned. There was also a comment from the Local Access Forum requesting greater clarity on the terminology surrounding public rights or way, and the Plan has been amended accordingly.

2.40. Amendments have been made to the document so that it meets the accessibility requirements.

2.41. Spatial Strategy: The most significant comments related to the identification of a buffer zone (renamed as a green gap to align with WBC terminology) to the south of the parish. The

intention of this is to ensure that there is no further coalescence between the villages of Cold Ash and Ashmore Green, and the north of Thatcham. This was strongly supported by the community, many of whom did not consider that the green gap proposed by WBC was adequate. WBC signposted to work undertaken as part of the LPR preparation, which has led to the identification of two 'green gaps' in Cold Ash Parish. The Steering Group discussed these and, in the context of comments received from others at the Regulation 14 consultation, has acknowledged these spaces but broadened them out to enable greater protection against coalescence. They have also been renamed as green gaps to enable greater read across to the LPR.

2.42. Character, Design and Heritage: Additional information about the Historic Environment Record has been provided as a source of information relating to heritage assets in the parish. WBC commented on the length of the Design and Character supporting information and suggested that this might be better placed in an Appendix. The Steering Group consider that the text is fundamental to the policies related to Design and Character and have agreed to retain the text as is.

2.43. Additional information about non-native planting was provided by the WBC Ecologist and this has been incorporated into the policy and supporting text. The policy relating to environmental design was strongly supported and additional information supplied by the WBC Environmental Officer has been added.

2.44. Environment and Landscape: The policies in this section were strongly supported. An additional significant local view has been added to Policy CAP8 (Iconic Views) as it relates to a view visible from the community Quiet Garden, which was introduced after the draft Plan was completed. View 4 has also been amended slightly on the map to ensure it is in the precise location. At least one additional view was suggested as part of the feedback, but it is considered that as it had not been raised at previous community consultations, it was unclear as to the level of support and therefore significance of the view. The Steering Group agreed that additional views could be reconsidered as part of any future review of the CAPNDP.

2.45. The names of two of the local green spaces have been amended slightly on the request of the owners. One (Cleardene Wood) to address a spelling error and the other (Woodland Leaves Meadow) to describe more fully the site in question. The map for Cleardene Woods has also ben amended for accuracy. No other fundamental comments were received about the local green spaces and support overall for this policy was significant.

2.46. Getting Around: The policies in this section were strongly supported. Additional clarity about the definitions of different types of rights of way has been provided. The maps were also amended to show the individual rights of way numbers.

2.47. Community and Social: A number of comments received from the community raised concerns about descriptions relating to the future use of the rifle shed. The text here has been amended so that it is less prescriptive about how the shed might be repurposed in the future. A supportive response was received from Downe House School, which is a significant facility in the parish. The plan has been amended to include detail of where partnership working with the school can be achieved, in relation to both community facilities and local access.

2.48. Commercial and Local Employment: Further information about the role of the agricultural sector locally has been provided in response to comments received. In addition, information about the role of Downe House School as an employer has been added. Additional information has been added to the supporting text of Policy CAP16 (Supporting SMEs, flexible start-ups and homeworking) in order to provide clarity about the sort of homeworking that would be considered suitable within a residential area.

2.49. A number of non-policy actions have been added to with additional detail. The Policies Maps have been amended to take account of minor changes noted above.

Stage IV: The Submission Version Plan (2023)

2.50. Following the changes made to the Plan, as a result of the Regulation 14 consultation, the Submission Version was formally submitted to WBC who, once satisfied that the correct set of documents have been received, will undertake the Regulation 16 consultation. It will then proceed to Examination and, assuming a favourable outcome, to referendum.

3 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND HABITATS REGULATION ASSESSMENT

Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.1. The Plan, and the process under which it was made, conforms to the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (EU 2001/42/EC) and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations).

3.2. In accordance with Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations 2004, West Berkshire Council, as the responsible authority, determined first on 13 December 2021 and again, on the updated Plan, on 29 November 2022 that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan is not required as it is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.

3.3. A copy of the most recent Screening Decision Notice can be found on the WBC website.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

3.4. Under Directive 92/43/EEC, also known as the Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC 'on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora': http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:31992L0043), it must be ascertained whether the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Assessments under the regulations are known as Habitats Regulation Assessments ("HRA"). An appropriate assessment ("AA") is required only if the Plan is likely to have significant effects on a European protected species or site. To ascertain whether or not it is necessary to undertake an assessment, a screening process is followed.

3.5. West Berkshire Council, as the responsible authority, determined first on 13 December 2021 and again, on the updated Plan, on 29 November 2022 that the Cold Ash NP is unlikely to have significant impact on European sites and therefore the Cold Ash NP does not require a full HRA to be undertaken.

3.6. A copy of the most recent Screening Decision Notice can be found on the WBC website.

3.7. In addition to conforming to its EU obligations, the Plan does not breach and is not otherwise incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights.

4 CONCLUSION

4.1. The Steering Group has undertaken a very thorough engagement programme in order to develop and document the Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of the Parish. It has set out a comprehensive vision and objectives. In developing the policies to achieve the vision and objectives, the Steering Group has actively engaged with a wide range of stakeholders and the Plan has evolved accordingly.

4.2. Gratitude is extended to everybody who has contributed to the Plan's development, either as a valued member of the Steering Group and Working Groups as well as those who have taken the time to contribute their views and opinions. This has been invaluable in helping to shape the scope and content of the Neighbourhood Plan.

APPENDIX A – Details of findings from the 2021 Public Open Day

The tables over leaf provide a general overview of findings and detailed comments made in answer to the individual questions.

Section	Question no	Question	Yes (and %)	No (and %)	Summary
1.1 Village Character & Heritage	1.1 (a)	Do you support the protection of our parish character for each of the zones identified?	68 (99%)	1 (1%)	Strong support for protecting the character of the parish
	1.1 (b)	Do you have any additional thoughts on how we can further protect our village character or any changes you would like to see?	N/A	N/A	
1.2 Flood Defence	1.2 (a)	Have you been affected by flooding?	10 (14%)	60 (86%)	Less than 15% of parishioners have been impacted by flooding
	1.2 (b)	What was the cause of flooding (e.g. rainfall, blocked drains, inadequate sewage network, etc)?	N/A	N/A	
1.3 Sustainability	1.3 (a)	Do you support the measures noted here as ways to help climate change?	58 (97%)	2 (3%)	Strong support for the measures to combat climate change
	1.3 (b)	Is there anything else you think we should promote from a sustainability perspective?	N/A	N/A	

2.1 Local Green Space	2.1 (a)	Do you support the protection of local green space?	67 (100%)	0	100% support for the protection of Local Green Space
	2.1 (b)	Do you think any other sites should be protected?	N/A	N/A	
	2.1 (c)	Do you disagree with any of the proposed sites being protected?	2 (4%)	53 (96%)	
2.2 Iconic Views	2.2 (a)	Do you support the protection of Iconic Views?	62 (100%)	0	100% support for the protection of Iconic Views
	2.2 (b)	Do you think any other views should be protected?	N/A	N/A	
	2.2 (c)	Do you disagree with any of the proposed views being protected?	4 (6%)	58 (94%)	
2.3 Dark Skies	2.3 (a)	Do you support the protection of Dark Skies?	66 (100%)	0	100% support for the Dark Skies initiative
	2.3 (b)	Do you agree with the zone we've mapped or do you think it should be more or less extensive?	More = 33 (97%)	Less = 1 (3%)	
	2.3 (c)	Would you be prepared to get involved in a star count exercise to support this initiative?	15 (26%)	43 (74%)	
2.4 Buffer Zones	2.4 (a)	Do you support the protection of the gaps between the villages in the parish and the urban	64 (100%)	0	100% support for the Buffer Zones and 100% support that they should be extended further

		settlement areas of Newbury and Thatcham?			
	2.4 (b)	Do you agree with the zones we've mapped or do you think it should be more/less extensive?	More = 57 (100%)	Less = 0	
2.5 Car Parking	2.5 (a)	Do you believe there is sufficient public car parking in the parish?	29 (45%)	36 (55%)	Balanced views on car parking . Moderate support for electric charging points
	2.5 (b)	Do you believe there are areas where additional parking would be useful and where?	26 (52%)	24 (48%)	
	2.5 (c)	Do you believe the parish should provide electric charging points in the parish?	39 (66%)	20 (34%)	
2.6 Parish schools and traffic	2.6 (a)	Drop off and pick up times at both parish schools can be problematic. How do you think this can be eased?	N/A	N/A	Strong support for actions to reduce the impact on traffic around schools during drop-off and pick-up times. More support for resolution of the issue around St Finian's than St Mark's
	2.6 (b)	Would you support requesting the RC diocese to release land to St Finian's school for an additional 42-57 parking spaces as	54 (93%)	4 (7%)	

		suggested in the parking survey?			
	2.6 (c)	Would you support the conversion of existing verges and release of land from local landowners to St Mark's School for the additional 14-24 parking spaces suggested by the parking survey?	33 (59%)	23 (41%)	
2.7 Sunken Lanes	2.7 (a)	Do you agree with the aspiration to protect the parishes Sunken Lanes?	59 (98%)	1 (2%)	Strong support for protecting sunken lanes
2.8 Footpaths and Cycling	2.8 (a)	Do you use the footpaths in the parish?	66 (99%)	1 (1%)	Significant use of footpaths. Strong support for using parish funds on improving footpaths. Limited support for cycle storage
	2.8 (b)	Do you know or can you recommend where improvements to parish footpaths could be made?	N/A	N/A	
	2.8 (c)	Would you be in favour of using funds from local development to improve cycling or walking routes through the parish?	59 (92%)	5 (8%	

	2.8 (d)	Would you like to see some form of cycle storage within the parish and, if so, where?	18 (34%)	35 (66%)	
2.9 Traffic and Development	2.9 (a)	Are you in favour of additional traffic management initiatives in the parish?	49 (88%)	7 (12%)	Strong support for most traffic management ideas, except for a formal pelican crossing
	2.9 (b)	Would you support:			
	a	Extra 30 mph roundels at Cold Ash Hill, Hermitage Road and Red Shute Hill?	45 (76%)	14 (24%)	
	b	New Gateway feature at each end of the parish with 30mph roundels?	45 (75%)	15 (25%)	
	c	Vehicle Actuated Speed Signs near St Mark's School, the village Post Office and Red Shute Hill?	53 (83%)	11 (17%)	
	d	Pedestrian Safety Signs?	49 (80%)	12 (20%)	
	e	Formal Pelican Crossing for pedestrians?	28 (47%)	31 (53%)	
3. Local Economy	3 (a)	Do you support the protection of existing commercial employment areas within the parish?	61 (100%)	0	Strong support for local businesses and for keeping large-scale operations in the Red Shute Hill area. Strong support for a Community Hub
	3 (b)	Do you agree with concentrating future large scale operations in the	49 (83%)	10 (17%)	

		existing commercial employment areas?			
	3 (c)	Would you support opportunities for business start-up units locally - including on vacant farm buildings?	54 (87%)	8 (13%)	
	3 (d)	Are there any other ways we could support businesses locally?	N/A	N/A	
	3 (e)	Do you support in principle the creation of a community hub?	54 (86%)	9 (14%)	
4. Projects	4 (a)	Would you like us to consider any other facilities for the parish?	21 (50%)	21 (50%)	Balanced views on enhancing existing facilities or providing additional facilities. Several existing facilities viewed as important. Strong support for doing something with the Rifle Shed
	4 (b)	Would you like to consider improvements to any other existing facilities?	23 (55%)	19 (45%)	
	4 (c)	Is there any particular local facility(s) which if lost would be particularly missed by the community?	32 (82%)	7 (18%)	
	4 (d)	The parish owns the rifle shed on the recreation ground which is currently used for storage. There may	52 (95%)	3 (5)%	

		be scope in the future to repurpose the building for community use. Would you be supportive of this idea?			

Do you have any additional thoughts on how we can further protect our village character or any changes you would like to see?

- Preservation of views and protection of nature/wildlife is very important to me
- Play area for older/teenage children on the green please
- Increase number of affordable housing to stimulate new blood in village
- Views preserved. You could see 6 counties from Cold Ash. If The Ridge is filled in by St Mary's House you will only be able to see 4 from public places. Oxon & Bucks will no longer be able to be seen.
- Stop any development along The Ridge near Westrop Farm
- Consideration to be given to sympathetic infill housing in the rural zone, i.e. stretch of Hermitage Road to Red Shute Hill. Such sites to include low cost housing for starter homes.
- Do not allow exessive infill
- Ensure house designs are sympathetic with village character
- Ensure new developments are completed in sensible timescale (e.g. name redacted development at Ridge House now in 10th year and nowhere near completion. Eyesore - blight on the village)}
- Kerbside maintenance of footpaths / public rights of way
- All of Vicarage Lane should be included in the Cold Ash Village zone
- Protect our footpaths - many have disappeared over the last years
- Supporting this via very small scale developing outside settlement boundary - well designed eco self build single dwellings & conversions
- Can Cold Ash Parish Councils approach to objecting to all planning applications o/s settlement boundary and looking at them ommerit and impact
- Measures to encourage traffic to and from M4 junction / Cheively to use alternative routes - weight restrictions, signage, further traffic calming & speed limits. This will get worse with additional development in Thatcham
- Better use of Acland Hall for evening events (community and hire)
- To put preservation orders on trees (Large) established ones in the area
- Encourage small houses for small family / retired couples / not 4,5,6 bed houses
- Create more of a central village feel - coffee shop, meeting place
- There should be more 'infill' rather than extending the 'spinal' development of the village (ie. make a small estate on New Farm - on The Ridge)
- Protecting nature is the most important. Most important to me is affordable housing. Also traffic is worse
- Land decisions & pathways
- Historical footpaths - reviewed - are they fit for purpose. The farm off Ridge had a footpath - not practical as through it's yard - redirected but not clear how to navigate (St Finian's end)
- 2007 in Southend
- Range of house sizes. Far too many huge houses. To retain a village character need variety of sizes / families
- Stop mass development
- Tree Preservation TPO
- Closer and stronger liaison with WBC to counter poor planning
- Create a more efficient traffic calming method through the village

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What was the cause of flooding (e.g. rainfall, blocked drains, inadequate sewage network, etc)?

- Rainfall, surface water and sewage. Surface water issues from planning agreed for large garage next door but built over a natural pond. Sewage flooding from their septic tank into our garden
- Not quite - very near to us in 2007 - extreme rain
- High rainfall and council failure to clear drains on Ridge and elevate driveway curbs after resurfacing resulted in collapsed retaining wall due to saturated land = £40k damage
- Rainfall
- Large amount of rain and blocked drains that couldn't cope with the volume. Inadequate maintenance of clearing culvert next to the Regency Park Hotel that gets blocked with twigs and leaves. Local people need to do this to protect us from further flooding
- Run off from fields Cold Ash Hill
- Occassional water running off during heavy rain (Bucklebury Alley verges)
- Development of farm behind my home and significant lack of land drainage
- Drains

Is there anything else you think we should promote from a sustainability perspective?

- 100% for solar and air heat pumps. There is a lot of goor roof area on existing houses - solar tiles are less intrusive than panels
- WBC to provide herbside recycling of more products
- Not able to read comment
- Environmental Agency need to revisit guidance of sewage disposal. Allow natural filtering not improve pumps to mains
- Wildlife havens / reserves in flood aleviation schemes - could be done in conjunction with BBOWT
- Sloar Farms to prevent housing development
- More identification and protection of wildlife habitats - in addition to LGS initiative
- I think we should address the real need for more housing in the first place. The importance of keeping land so we survive as a race. Land is so valuable. Anything to help climate change is paramount.
- Grow more trees
- Solar panels on new homes
- Make sure when cars are queuing to drop off at school sites their engines are turned off.
- Community energy schemes, wind solar
- Renewables
- Local heat networks
- Connecting up footpaths so you can walk to Newbury/Thatcham. Cyclepaths in the area
- Proper facilities within property plans to store recycling + bins effectively for each property
- Discourage car use fpor school drop-off. Car sharing events on rec - football, etc
- No more building
- Should not be a primary focus - down to individual action

Green Space - Do you think any other sites should be protected?

- Land north-east of The Ridge
- Downe House playing field
- The LGS designation is unfortunately far too restrictive to be of any help in a rural area!!
- Farmland in parish
- Some sites shown are in private ownership - assume no plans for public to use the areas?
- Other local sites
- Stongly
- Public accessible green space
- Area between Westop Farm and The Ridge - where recent development has been proposed - would change character of this area considerably
- Lawrence's Lane area
- Cold Ash Woods
- Personally I feel all green spaces should be protected including driveways and mot astroturfing gardens
- All green field spaces should be protected. Only browne field sites should be developed
- Fence Wood?
- Connecting strips between areas. Path edges
- Agricultural land opposite Hatchgate Close including up to St Gabriel's Farm & down to Southend, up to Little Copse
- Disagree with CA12 / CA16
- Disagree with land on Ridge (10 houses)
- AOB
- Cold Ash Common
- As many as possible

Views- Do you think any other views should be protected?

- Yes, see answer to 1.1b
- All of the additional suggestions shown, at least
- View north from The Ridge
- View from junction of Ridge and Collaroy Road
- A lovely concept - but there can be no control of development a 'distance away' so not sure how this can be controlled
- Footpath COLD/17/1 looking east, back towards St Mark's Church
- From middle of Stoney Lane across valley towards Beacon Hill
- From near 'radio' mast across towards Cold Ash
- From footpath by radio mast to Hewwick Manor Farm. Looking towards Beacon Hill. From Stoney Lane looking towards Henwick ?Manor Farm
- Yes. Views should be protected & perhaps adapted by addition of seating / benches etc to encourage use (footpath is east woods)
- Especially those views which are accessible by wheelchair users (i.e. across Westrop Farm from Ridge)
- View from mast at rear of St Finian's
- Drove Lane is not a view and should be removed
- WAG is not a view and should be removed - it will be covered by Local Green Space designation
- Views from footpath 17

- St Mark's Church from the south
- Yes - view over Broadview Farm x2 (highest point in W Berks apparently)
- View by the mast
- All of the potential iconic views on table (there were no names attached - sorry)
- Footpath COLD/6/1 at left turn down path from drive. Landowner has blocked this even though he thought we chould all see it, when he asked to divert this path sometime ago
- Yes & No - it's not black & white. Development in keeping can add to views
- Those on the photo sheet entitled 'other potential iconic views'. Land opposite Hatchgate close up to St Gabriel's down to Southend
- Behind St Finian's School across footpath to the view behind across to Lawrence's Lane + over to Watership Down
- Land to rear of Collaroy Road
- No but the proposed development of the land across to Westrop Farm is a major concern. This is a wonderful view and should be protected
- These make the parish special
- These should be protected
- Mr Clark's farm? Westrop Farm
- The one on the Ridge at New Farm

Dark Sky: Do you agree with the zone we've mapped or do you think it should be more or less extensive?

- Further south
- The whole area between Cold Ash Hill and Ashmore Green Road
- Domestic floodlights need shielding
- Appreciate 'dark skies' & little street lighting. BUT householders must be 'encouraged' to keep hedges cut & verges tidy. Too many pavements are difficult in the dark, especially Hermitage Rd & Cold Ash Hill
- Questionable objectives
- Come further down to encompass Southend area / Lawrence's Lane are
- Why not try to remove some of the 'street lighting' in those 1970 + 1980 developments (Walter Close)
- More to north & east (other parishes)
- Dark skies are important but it will be difficult in Cold Ash due to the proximity to Thatcham

Buffer Zone (Green gap): Do you agree with the zones we've mapped or do you think it should be more/less extensive?

- More extensive to include area N of ring road to W of the area already proposed
- A zone north of Tull Way / west of Ashmore Green Road is also required
- Should include one on Stoney Lane
- More extensive between Cold Ash & Thatcham & Ashmore Green
- Add buffer zones across the south of the parish, from Lawrence's Lane to Manor Park
- Buffer Zone should cover more area to the east between CA2 & CA4 - to protect from planned and possible development in Thatcham
- Could come more west
- Think the zone should includee NW & NE of the zone
- It should include the area around the B4009 NW of the cemetry
- More extensive

- Should be larger

Do you believe there are areas where additional parking would be useful and where?
St Finian's

- At the Acland Hall
- St Finian's School - additional off-road parking spaces for child safety
- West-side of Acland Hall rec ground, entry from the Rifle Club
- By St Mark's Church - but where?
- School children should have safe routes provided to walk to school
- Around the school for drop-off / pick-up
- By both schools - but more families should be encouraged to walk
- Acland Hall
- Recreation Ground
- Add one on Ashmore Green Road by the back entrance to recreation ground
- St Finian's
- St Finian's & St Mark's Schools & Post Office
- Possible enlarge village hall car park
- Bend of Ashmore Green Road, just south of village green
- For St Finian's and St Mark's schools
- Near St Finian's school - purchase part of farmers field behind ribbon development on Ridge
- St Finian's school
- St Mark's school
- Near the schools
- Not enough parking near pubs - should encourage pubs to offer car parking during non-peak times
- Road past St Finian's school - often children / adults in road & congestion at school drop off / pick up times
- The 2 school sites
- Ashmore Green Road end of recreation ground
- Convent, Rifle Shed, Scout area
- Try walking/cycling more
- St Finian's School requires to be self-sufficient not on road. So support using St Gabriel's Convent. Land to sort that should be a priority
- Acland Hall
- St Mark's school
- In the school/church area but difficult to see where it would go. Keeping the sports field is valuable
- Schools
- Building on the Rodge will lead to cars parking on the road
- Rifle Club area

Do you believe the parish should provide electric charging points in the parish?
Acland car park

- At Acland Hall. However, I don't think it would be used much with fast chargers available at Chievely. Most locals are able to install their own charge point (p.s. I own a fully electric car)
- Acland Hall
- Red Shute Hill work sites
- Acland Hall
- Not by schools - it will encourage extended periods of cars being parked there
- No need - people charge at home
- You will have to at some point
- Acland Hall
- Acland Hall Car Park
- If infrastructure can support concept
- Acland Hall, St Mark's & St Finian's schools and WAG layby
- Acland Hall & Pubs
- No preference although charging points good as we are getting more into electric cars
- Not off steet lights
- Recreation Ground
- Parish Council should NOT be doing this. Commercial organisations could be found if there is a need. Parish should not use money on this
- Acland Hall
- Village Hall
- Each new property should add as needed. May be an option in build spec for environmental measurement on new build
- Acland Hall
- Acland Hall

Drop off and pick up times at both parish schools can be problematic. How do you think this can be eased?

- Use of parking restrictions during school run hours to encourage use of the proper park and stride locations
- Flashing speed restriction signs either side of St Finian's, also to curb speeding on The Ridge
- More parking at schools to reduce highway parking. Parking bay provision
- I don't feel entitled to comment on these parking suggestions but loss of verges undesirable unless it creats pedestrian ways as well
- Stagger arrival / departure times
- Childrem walk to school. Staggered drop-off times
- Staggerred drop-off / pick up
- More car sharing, walking to school
- Additional car parking. Continue promoting park and stride.
- Parking at St Finian's. Staggerred drop off times
- Additional parking.
- 20mph speed limit
- Ensure local children to local school
- Additional parking.

- More off-road parking
- Near St Finian's school - purchase part of farmers field behind ribbi=on development on Ridge
- It could be if people were more considerate and less selfish
- Enc walking to school
- Increased parking / improved accessibility to traffic so reduce cars on the road
- Any proposals would need the support of the schools, diocese and local land owners
- At St Finian's assign more space on site or near for parking during drop-off/pick-up times
- Kids encouraged to walk to school
- Additional parking within the school grounds if possible or as close as possible
- More parking at recreation ground
- Improve birth control?
- There must be more actuated speed signs on The Ridge - why has this not been added to the board? Cars are speeding in average 47mph - it is incredibly dangerous during school bus & drop-off times. Why is there not being more done to address this?
- Vary times of pick up
- One way system?
- Mitigation to stop people Rat Running up Cold Ash Hill to the M4
- Own car parks. Not on grass verges. Staggerred pick up times. Passing cars too dangerous - no parking areas. Marked clearly to help in interim
- 2.6(c) needs a more robust solution (ie. field round corner on where planning request gone in)
- Better spaces
- Scheme - live under 1/2 mile - walk / live over 1/2 mile parking permit
- Walking bus - leaders collect
- Reduce out of area pupils
- Car sharing
- Difficult but it should be examined
- Not sure how, but it can be a problem on the Ridge, despite double-yello lines
- For St Mark's school - parking on the corner of the Ridge is dangerous
- Ni idea how they can be eased, but they do cause traffic chaos
- Drop off No Stopping = school to meet children at gate
- Stagger frop off / pick up times
- Increase available parking at both schools
- Extend double-yellow lines at both schools
- Is better than it was though still not really that efficient

Do you know or can you recommend where improvements to parish footpaths could be made?

- Please don't forget bridlepaths & make sure these remain properly accessible to horse riders
- Along The Ridge
- Regular footpath maintenance, removal of barbed-wire
- Better discipline by dog owners would be a big help

- More volunteers to maintain specific footpaths. Some way to dealing with the muddy sections in winter - difficult one to solve!
- Put a footpath inside the perimeter of the Acland Hall playing field parallel to the road.
- Improve the width and safety of the footpath along the main road between Acland Hall and Bucklebury Alley / Fisher's Lane
- The Ridge is good example. Can see the attraction of no lights but need safe walk route
- Better drainage at Westrop
- Protect / improve existing paths
- PRIORITY: Footpath along Ridge between St Finian's and Hermitge Rod. This would allow children to walk to those schools in more safety alleviating parking congestion
- From footpath 15 (east woods) down to Ashmore Green (public footpath from footpath 15 down to Ashmore Green is dangerous and unmaintained)
- Concerned about the re-routing of several pathways. The fencing in of some pathways.
- Local support for maintaining them
- Landowner closure and diversion of footpaths should be more stictly monitored - eg. around Westop Farm - many footpaths now closed around the Ridge
- Where footpaths are restricted, should not be allowed to reduce the extent (eg. footpath from Ridge to Bucklebury Alley)
- Better signage. Cut back when overgrown
- Maintenance of surface, especially in winter
- Many of the woodland paths that have been created by (Name redacted) are dangerous. Barbed-wire on handrails should be removed immediately.
- Better surfacing for wet weather
- Westrop Farm - stop blocking the views that you promised by diverting the footpath! Sort out drainage more
- Broadview Farm - Reinstate public footpath! Stop blocking views
- Connect footpaths - create a path to Hermitage, so avoiding road
- More cycle lanes
- Paths need to be kept clear from overgrowth, etc
- Access which has been avoided should be reviewed and made available (ie. map area 148)
- They keep changing - landowners need to stop this as well questionable track laying without permission
- They need attention - Fishers Lane to Hall still not done
- I would like to see PC take over the maintenance of footpaths in the village - WBC do not do what is asked
- Footpaths to be kept clear. Ensure land owners are involved to stop blocking of paths

Would you like to see some form of cycle storage within the parish and, if so, where?

- Not needed
- Not sure where
- At Acland Hall
- Help with school drop-offs, etc
- Acland Hall

- At schools so more children can cycle
- Acland Hall for the school
- Post Office, Cold Ash Hll
- Acland fields
- Recreation Ground. Outside Post Office / Pubs
- Not a priority
- Acland Hall
- Acland Hall
- In the area of the Acland Hall

Feedback on traffic and development:

- Speeding on The Ridge is a big problem and greater speed restriction signage is greatly needed. Thank you
- The chicanes in Cold Ash don't work very well. Ashmore Green Road could do with some extra protection perhaps vehicle accenuated signs
- Pedestrian crossing - Not while lollipop person at school
- Supports traffic management but - 'Not speed bumps though!!'
- Permanent speed camera on Ridge and/or Hermitage Road
- Current double-yellow lines position on The Ridge can cause difficulties on the bend as when parked reduces visibility
- Also need some way of protecting vehicles emerging from area around pubs, Gladstone Lane and The Old Bakery - visibility is really poor and have to 'take a chance' when exiting - consider mirrors
- 30mph roundel - Heath Lane
- Pelican crossing - Heath Lane
- 30mph roundel - & The Ridge
- Vehicle actuated sign - & The Ridge
- Pedestrian Safety Signs - particularly where there are children with additional needs
- Proper policing of parking - yes
- Mini-roundabouts to slow traffic

Are there any other ways we could support businesses locally?

- Follow example of Hampstead Norris & encourage local café/walking centre
- Creation of work hub for people working from home to create meeting spaces, etc
- Depends on the size if business and impacts
- Communal meeting area with café for home workers
- Improve the railway bridge road - difficult for large lorries
- Café
- Would be good to have a community shop (like Hampstead Norreys)
- Update planning designations to allow people to work from home / small businesses - currently our title removes the ability to do this
- But, need to be vetted carefully for noise, smell, environmental impact, etc
- Better transport links to area other than car
- Consider projects that would benefit the community & employment & financial input

- Many people now work from home. I would like Acland Hall fcility to be extended to include coffee shop to encourage community interaction. Hampstead Norreys shop / courtyard great example of this
- Put a café in the village
- Employ more locals where possible to save on traffic coming in
- Prefer no more large scale operations
- No more large scale commercial operations please!
- Better bus service

Would you like to consider improvements to any other existing facilities? Please expand

- Play area for older/teenage children on the green
- More use for church and parish room as a public facility
- Village Hall should be the hub
- Community Café
- A new village hall - achieved by other villages (often smaller than CA) in locality
- Hall could be redeveloped / replaced
- New village store to replace current one - like Hampstead Norreys
- Exercise / trail course around green or woods
- Protection of disused raiwat line in CA15 (HELAA)
- Café
- Support for shop & PO - parlking issues - difficult to resolve
- Fitness equipment on rec
- Facilities for teenagers
- Indoor skatepark / BMX track
- Relocation of the basketball hoop please
- Better use of Acland Hall for community or private events.Currently unable to rent out for private events & lack of village activities (eg. quiz, social events)
- Skatepark, BMX, Mountain Bike Trail
- Would love a little coffee shop / farm shop in the village to give it a social area
- Additional dog poo bins
- Coffee Shop in central location
- Recreation Ground - deperately need things for older children
- Recreation Ground - needs a café to enhance community spirit
- Small incremental improvements in the WAG
- Cycle path along Ridge
- Better football facilities for teenagers
- Toilets / sculpture trail / consider coffee van at weekends for refreshments
- Better use of recreation ground - more facilities. Outdoor gym, etc. Need coffee shop at rec
- Public toilets

Is there any particular local facility(s) which if lost would be particularly missed by the community? Please expand

- St Mark's Church is an asset the community should make more use of
- Any large housing development >6 houses is a loss to the local area and its character
- St Mark's Church

- WAG, Acland Hall, the pubs
- Acland Hall, Playground, Tennis Courts, Woodland, WAG, pubs, village shop, church
- Recreation Ground / local footpaths
- Unable to read
- Disused railway line
- Acland Hall
- Fisher Room
- Shop & PO
- Post Office, etc
- Church & pub
- Shop
- Basketball Hoop to Spotted Dog, WAG, Acland Field
- Post Office / Castle / Spotted Dog / WAG / Acland Rec / Waller Drive Park
- Recreation Ground
- Cold Ash PO/store
- Woodland views, Buffer Zone, Lawrence Lane being developed - The Goats! The WAG, Recreation Ground
- WAG, Acland Hall, the pubs
- Acland Hall
- Post Office, Acland Hall & playing fields
- Village Hall and land
- Woodland walks
- Tennis / Football
- Playing fields must be kept + as much of the rural 'feel of Cold Ash' aas possible
- The rec ground + wildlife allotment
- Post office
- Shop
- Shop & PO

The parish owns the rifle shed on the recreation ground which is currently used for storage. There may be scope in the future to repurpose the building for community use. Would you be supportive of this idea?

- Sports Pavilion (on Rifle She site)
- But what about replacing the storage facilities. Will we have a Cold Ash Fete in future years?
- What's wrong with the Village Hall? What are the implications for the Village Hall?
- Council can decide surely!
- Would love a community hub like at Hampstead Norreys
- Café
- Redevelop Acland field & use site for facilities
- Great place for the shop & Café
- Rebuild as purpose-built café
- Use it for storage of young childrens gaming materials to encourage greater fresh air / exercise
- Café

- Young people in parish need more suitable activities - age appropriate NOT more community centres or young children play areas
- Don't know - would depend on the proposal and impact
- Coffee Shop / additional parking
- Alternative meeting room
- A café
- Mens shed / other community use
- Youth activities / cubs or scouts / brownies / guides
- Possibly - suject to usage & how that impacts residents who live nearby
- Car park
- Unsure
- Possible coffee shop / café

Other general comments:

- Protection of views is most important
- No more urbanisation
- Thank you - a very good & informative event
- Cycle storage on rec ground
- May need to find use for church and a redundant pub in the future could these become community hubs
- Very useful. Thanks
- Keep up the good work
- Please consider the feasibility of a car-share scheme for the village
- Thanks for all your hard work
- Cycle storage on rec ground
- Improve / provide pavements in well-used pedestrian verges
- Excellent display, well prepared - informative
- HUGE MISSED OPPORTUNITY: The flood alleviation schemes on CA Hill and West of Henwick should be dual-purpose to provide wildlife reserves (}i.e. ponds / wetlands) so that in intervening periods between 1/50 yer floods the siutes provide wildlife reserves that could have limited access for recreation
- Park and ride (e-cycle, e-scooters) with charging points at both schools. I've seen this used successfully in Norway. Would need parking field with e-cycles & e-scooters for kids
- Follow-up development audits by WBC to ensure developers don't misbehave (name redacted) should be banned from village)
- I'm concerned that Stoney Lane wonderful curves and winding lane - as you say, going back to 'sunken lane' description, is being eroded on the sides by heavy traffic - i.e. lorries, etc. Concerned that the tree roots will be destroyed
- Thanks you for organising the event. I was concerned to receive info about CA3 (Ridge): AONB, amazing views, didn't like the approach of the developer
- How about financial encouragement from the PC to help people provide more hedges (rather than walls) in front of their property
- Please can proposed development inc activities for young adults such as skatepark
- Don't need new building - should use existing (eg. Acland Hall)

- Please publish all details of NDP and slides on website - also invite further comment here - people more likely to comment and provide views from home than visit physical event. Put form on website (this survey) and encoourage as many as possible to fill in
- Could land be made available for new buld homes?
- We strongly support the retention of a buffer zone so that Cold Ash does not become a suburb of Thatcham
- having wild flowers in specific areas would be great for wildlife and helping the environment.
- Thin an outside gym in the park is a great idea
- I really feel the government and councils should address the need for more housing and address this rather than keep building
- Having 200+ houses built at the Creek would create hundreds of cars that would impact on Cold Ash. Smaller infill areas better
- Very impressed by this event & quality of information provided. Thank You!
- Some dog poo bins at the end of Bucklebury Alley (although it's in Bucklebury Parish)
- Widen the pavement on the west-side of Hermitge Road from Foxlea to Fisher Lane. It is difficult for one person to walk safely, let alone two
- It would be a good idea to be more explicit on how these days work. In the leaflet it looked as if you had to be here from 11-4pm! Perhaps explain it's a drop-in via a photo or written explanation
- You might also have more people turn up if you post it on the community website - all you have done here today - ahead of the actual day. I'm sure that would bump up engagement too
- Congratulations on all your hard work!!
- I would happily join a team to monitor speed through the village. If it will help to slow traffic down!
- Really need genuine affordable housing & the opportunity for self-build
- More wild flowers & setting up wilding projects, including apple trees, cherries, etc
- Community Hub - use existing facilities {(ie. village pubs, hall, church)
- When looking at development spaces there should be clear conditions for usage applied (eg. car parking - what can that car park be used for outside of school times - ie. no sudden planning request for floodlighting to convert space for use by basketball / netball teams)
- The developments (ie. building houses) should not be squeeze as many in as possible! Infill should be sensitive + to scale of surrounding properties
- The 30mph should go all the way down the hill to the roundabout, not go to 40mph; it does this past houses
- Very well organised, instructive/informative
- Priority signs on Cold Ash Hill
- Stop building more houses in a countryside area
- I would have loved to have spent more time on the questionnaire but am particularly pressed for time today. Apologies.
- Great event - would have been great to discuss what plans have been passed + what is coming up

- I would prefer farm building conversions to new build homes on the Ridge. The barns are hidden from view + fit in with other houses in the area. Entrance already exists
- We need to retain a buffer zone all round the village, especially Thatcham

APPENDIX B - List of consultees written to at the Pre-submission (Regulation 14) consultation

Consultee
West Berkshire Council
The Coal Authority
Homes England (previously Homes and Communities agency)
Natural England
Environment Agency
Historic England
Network Rail
National Highways
Marine Management Organisation
Berkshire Primary Care Trust
Water supplier (Thames)
Gas (Cadent Gas)
Electric (UK Power Networks)
National Grid
Voluntary bodies - at the local level
Racial, Ethnic groups
Religious groups
Businesses
Disabled persons representatives
Adjoining Authorities - Parish, District, County (see next tab)
Others sent to:
Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce
North Wessex Downs AONB
Campaign to Protect Rural England
Ramblers
The Gardens Trust
Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust
Sport England
The Woodland Trust
Local Access Forum for Berkshire

Appendix B - Statutory consultee and Community comments received at Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) Consultation and proposed responses from the Steering Group

Responses were received from 18 sources (numbering corresponds to the 'Respondent' column in the table 1):

1. Newbury District Council
2. National Highways
3. Historic England
4. South Oxfordshire DC and Vale of White Horse DC
5. Thames Water
6. Downe House Girls' School
7. Mid and West Berkshire Local Access Forum
8. Local resident (by email)
9. Local resident (via Facebook)
10. Residents (via Surveymonkey) x 50
11. Croudace Homes Ltd.
12. Thatcham Town Council
13. Local Green Space owner (Woodland Leaves Meadow)
14. Local Green Space owner (Cleardene Wood)
15. British Horse Society Access & Bridleways Officer for West Berkshire & Southern region
16. St Gabriel's Convent and Retreat Centre
17. Avison Young (on behalf of National Gas Transmission)
18. West Berkshire District Council

Table 1 contains a summary of the feedback from Respondents 1 to 17, along with a response from the SG.
Table 2 contains the feedback received from West Berkshire District Council, along with a response from the SG.

Table 1: Comments are listed by paragraph number / policy, with general comments at the end

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
1.	General	2	No comments.	Noted.	✓
2.	General	3	Although your neighbourhood area does contain a number of designated heritage assets, at this point we don't consider there is a need for Historic England to be involved in the detailed development of the strategy for your area, but we offer some general advice and guidance, which may be of assistance. General guidance contained in full response.	Noted.	✓
3.	General	4	No comments.	Noted.	✓
4.	General	7	We warmly welcome the emphasis in this draft NDP on public rights of way (PROW), active travel, iconic views and access to green spaces. We support all of the proposed policies and projects that promote these. Our comments are therefore intended to assist in strengthening these aspects of the Neighbourhood Development Plan, and in clarifying some small points. Walking, cycling and horse riding in the countryside offer huge benefits for 'wellbeing' (mental and physical health), quality of life and sustainable living. These benefits might be mentioned at appropriate places in the document. Dog walking also provides exercise and wellbeing for many residents. This is recognised in Appendix C for the three local green spaces that are open to the public. However, many residents of Cold Ash (and the parts of Thatcham and Newbury that border Cold Ash) will walk	Add into the supporting text. Add into the supporting text.	✓ ✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
			their dogs on PROW, and we suggest that this is recognised in the NDP. Circular routes are particularly valuable for recreation and exercise. We therefore suggest that you might consider in the NDP how a number of off-road circular routes of different lengths and types could be developed. Many of the PROW in Cold Ash parish form part of wider circular routes – and we suggest that this is also recognised in the NDP. Equestrian activities are only mentioned in relation to sunken lanes. However, there are many paddocks and equestrian centres within the parish or close to it. Horse riders need continuous routes of bridleways, BOATs and safe country lanes. We suggest that these equestrian aspects are mentioned in the NDP.	Add in as a non-policy action – PC has a footpaths leaflet and circular routes could be added to this. Include as a non-policy action.	✓ ✓
5.	General	10	Generally good policies. Sceptical about sustainable development - how is building houses better for environment and resources? But good job overall, well done.	Noted.	✓
6.	General	10	Good document overall.	Noted.	✓
7.	General	10	I feel Cold Ash has become rather offensive in the way they protest to every planning that is put forward unless it is for themselves, in their gardens etc.. We own a farm. We have found on the whole that Cold Ash Parish Council feel they own our land and not my dear	Noted. The CNP is not seeking to allocate sites, however the policies included in the document serve to	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
			Father who is in his 80's now. I saw a drone photo published last week of our farm as if it is owned by The parish council. We were not asked . Let alone thanked for the hard work that goes into the daily running of a farm to keep it up. We have suffered vandalism and harsh words . We are gentle folk . I think giving this kind of power, these 'steering groups goes to peoples heads. I wish it was more friendly.	influence development so that it can be undertaken in a sustainable way, managing its impacts on the economy, local community and environment. The plan includes a policy with a clause to bring back into viable use former/vacant agricultural buildings.	
8.	General	10	Thank you for an extremely thorough document w which We support Thanks for all the hard work that has gone into it.	Noted.	✓
9.	General	10	Where is the infrastructure to sustain all this development! Site plans and existing and future developments would have been helpful. Traffic will increase, what provision for highway maintenance of new roads when they can't maintain existing, no mention about public transport, we cannot even have gas or mains sewage so how will this affect existing?	This is understood, acknowledged and agreed. The CNP is not seeking to allocate sites and it would be the responsibility of other agencies to provide the infrastructure required. The PC seeks to ensure that other authorities deliver against this need.	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
10.	General	17	No substantive comments.	Noted.	✓
11.	Terminology	7	The terminology to describe access for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians is ambiguous, and in some places is incorrect. There are three types of PROW in Cold Ash parish; public footpaths, public bridleways and byways open to all traffic (BOATS). The term 'public rights of way' should be used, except where a specific type of PROW is intended. Where a landowner gives permission for the public to use a route that is not a PROW, this is a 'permissive footpath' or 'permissive bridleway'. To avoid ambiguity, we suggest that a pedestrian route along the side of roads are described by its legal term 'footway'.	Noted – amend within the document and include in the Glossary.	✓
12.	Para 1.35	5	Paragraph 1.35 of the draft NP states: *When submitting the Nutrient calculator you will also need to provide evidence that you have received permission for connection or have applied for connection to Thames Water systems and which precise WwTW you have applied to connect to.* We recommend Developers contact Thames Water to discuss their development proposals by using our pre app service via the following link: https://www.thameswater.co.uk/developers/larger-scale-developments/planning-your-development/water-and-wastewater-capacity	Noted and add to the supporting text.	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
13.	Para 2.3	7	This describes all PROW, so 'footpaths' should be replaced by 'public rights of way'.	See Ref. 11.	✓
14.	Para 2.29	7	The Forum welcomes and supports the statements in this paragraph. However, there is a BOAT on the northern edge of the parish (numbered COLD/5, COLD/25 and COLD/26); This is important to horse riders, and should be mentioned.	Noted – add into the text at this paragraph.	✓
15.	CAP 1 (Location of Development)	1	Please consider the establishment of green gaps between Cold Ash Parish and Clay Hill Parish/Ward in relation to the West Berks Appropriate Countryside Designations Study (Nov 2022) & various Landscape Character Assessments and ask for Parcel 9 which includes these areas below to be designated as Local Green Gap/Wedge: a. Stoney Lane, Stone Copse & Ashmore Green b. Messenger Wood & Copse between Pear Tree Lane & Stoney Lane c. Area North of Shaw Cemetery between Long Lane & Pear Tree Lane	The buffer zones have been reviewed by the SG. The green gaps identified in the West Berkshire Study have been incorporated, but extended to ensure that coalescence and encirclement is restricted.	✓
16.	CAP 1	9	Concerned at lack of green gap identified between Ashmore Green and North Newbury and east side of B4009 and North Newbury.	As above.	✓
17.	CAP1	10	CAP1 1. Irrespective of the number of houses mandated to be built (I understand to be currently zero) I believe there should be a goal to build a small number each year to fulfill the previously stated need for housing to bring in	The feedback from the engagement on the CNP has stressed that the community does not wish to go above and	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
			young families to the commmunity and, secondly, housing to allow those with large houses and gardens to downsize but stay within the community. 2. Given the huge national shortage of housing our own community should be prepared to make a contribution by scheduling a limited number of houses per year. 3. The current Settlement Boundaries effectively prevent development. Given that 'ribbon development' along the major parish roads already exists (Red Shute Hill, Hermitage Road, The Ridge etc.) the Settlement Boundaries should be redrawn to include these roads to a depth of, say, 100m either side. Given the number of access points already existing it would be possible to build individual houses and small developments with very little visual impact.	beyond the quantum of development being promoted by WBC and the emerging Local Plan. This does not preclude windfall coming forward within the settlement boundaries. The SG have considered the settlement boundaries, but as the SNP is not allocating sites, any changes to the current boundaries would come forward via the WB Local Plan. PC has reviewed the settlement boundaries in the last 1-2 years as part of the WBC review and suggested some minor changes.	
18.	CAP1	10	CAP1 - Strikes of nimbyism - whilst non-settlement boundary development should be avoided, diverse housing requirement should be considered. Small,	The CNP does not preclude development proposals coming forward outside the	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
			sensitive developments outside of settlements can be done well. It's just that effort is required.	settlement boundaries – normally this would be an exception to policy (as a rural exception site). Housing mix is dealt with at the WBC level.	
			CAP10 - Should not prioritise dark skies over safety which itself is unmentioned within the policy CAP.	The two are not considered to be mutually exclusive.	✓
			CAP12 - Some urgency should be given to the condition of these sunken roads. Fisher's Lane for example, should be considered as a quiet lane given the otherwise lack of safe East-West pedestrian or cycle access until Red Chute or North Thatcham.	Include within non-policy actions to explore whether this (and other) lanes in the parish might be suitable to designate as Quiet Lanes.	✓
			CAP14 - There should be no permitted circumstances where development may result in the loss of any public community facility whether in terms of buildings, developed areas (car parks, tennis courts, etc) or a loss of community space.	Agreed and this is supported in the CNP.	✓
19.	CAP1	10	Protecting settlement boundaries is very important to keep Cold Ash a village and protect wildlife and green spaces.	Noted.	✓
20.	CAP1	10	CAP 1: I believe the maintenance of the settlement boundaries is paramount	Noted.	✓
21.	CAP1	11	Object to the buffer zone identified:	As above	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
			• The location and size of the 'buffer zone' is entirely contrary to Draft LPR Policy DM2 which identifies two new 'green gaps' to the north of Thatcham. • Draft Neighbourhood Plan Policy CAP1 is not supported by any evidence to justify its inclusion and is at odds with the findings of various landscape studies in the Council's LPR evidence base.		
22.	CAP1	12	Buffer Zone: Thatcham Town Council agrees with paragraph 4.7 of the draft NDP, that there should be a 'buffer zone' south of Cold Ash and Ashmore Green, to prevent these communities coalescing with Thatcham. We note that the 'West Berkshire District Council: Appropriate Countryside Designation Study' (Arup, 21 November 2022)1 identifies two separate potential 'green gaps' between Thatcham and Cold Ash and between Thatcham and Ashmore Green. We suggest that these 'green gaps' achieve the objectives of policy CAP1 and paragraph 4.7 of the Draft NDP more fully than the buffer zone shown in figure 4.1 of the draft NDP.	As above	✓
23.	CAP1	16	Our objection relates to the failure of The Plan to acknowledge the development potential of St Gabriel's Convent and Retreat Centre, Cold Ash RG18 9HU (The site), which has previously been granted planning permission for the development of 11 dwellings. We believe that this is a significant shortcoming in the Plan that could have serious implications for the future of the Site. Amend Plan as follows: • The Plan should remove unsupported, negative references to the development of new housing;	The site noted in the representation and accepted for 11 dwellings is within the settlement boundary. The CNP seeks to reinforce the settlement boundaries as they are currently designated as the areas within which	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
			• The Plan should support appropriate housing on the Site; and • The Plan should support the potential of its inclusion within the settlement boundary of Cold Ash	housing and other development should be directed (as the most sustainable, closest to local facilities).	
24.	Para 5.57	7	Existing public footpaths are to be maintained, with new landscaped connections into the site and the wider footpath network encouraged.' It is unclear whether the 'footpaths' and 'connections' are meant to be public footpaths and/or footways, and we suggest that this is clarified.	See Ref. 11.	✓
25.	CAP2/3	10	CAP2, CAP3. personally I have no problem with modern building design sitting along side older buildings. I think it is more honest than attempting a recreation of a design from the 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s just because that is what is next door. We should allow the world to move forward and if different materials and philosophies dictate different building designs then they should not be asked to replicate something older. Deliberately avoiding challenging someone's view of what is aesthetically pleasing to them, based on what they have today is not the right approach. A specific example would be if a passiv house (ultimate eco friendly approach) was proposed. There would be very specific design criteria driven by the need to maximise solar gain (large windows on south side), prevent heat loss (small windows on north side), and potentially other	Noted and the Policy does not seek to stifle innovative design where it reinforces a defined Character Area. This is addressed in CAP4 (Sustainable Design), which supports solar energy.	✓ ✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
			impacts to roof design based on air circulation and the need for optimal angle for solar panels. These policies should not provide an excuse for someone to object to change because 'it doesn't look like a proper traditional house'. Separately, I have pointed out a mistake to the labelling of Cleardene Woods.	 Noted and amended the LGS name.	 ✓
26.	CAP3 (Design of development)	10	Policy CAP3 - Design of Development - crucial	Noted.	✓
27.	CAP3	11	The Character Zones set out within draft Neighbourhood Plan Policies CAP2 and CAP3 are unduly restrictive and do not make adequate provision for development which responds to its location at the Urban Fringe of Thatcham as opposed to elsewhere in the Parish.	The CNP is not seeking to extend the urban fringe zone further than necessary, which would be counter to CAP1, in terms of avoiding coalescence.	✓
28.	CAP4 (Sustainable design)	5	The Environment Agency has designated the Thames Water region to be "seriously water stressed" which reflects the extent to which available water resources are used. Future pressures on water resources will continue to increase and key factors are population growth and climate change. It is our understanding that the water efficiency standards of 105 litres per person per day is only applied through the building regulations where there is	The SG has discussed this point. It was agreed that the policy should continue to be in conformity with national policy (building regulations requirements) any amendments to this. This accords with the	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
			a planning condition requiring this standard (as set out at paragraph 2.8 of Part G2 of the Building Regulations). As the Thames Water area is defined as water stressed it is considered that such a condition should be attached as standard to all planning approvals for new residential development in order to help ensure that the standard is effectively delivered through the building regulations. Within Part G of Building Regulations, the 110 litres/person/day level can be achieved through either the 'Calculation Method' or the 'Fittings Approach' (Table 2.2). The Fittings Approach provides clear flow-rate and volume performance metrics for each water using device / fitting in new dwellings. Thames Water considers the Fittings Approach, as outlined in Table 2.2 of Part G, increases the confidence that water efficient devices will be installed in the new dwelling. Insight from our smart water metering programme shows that household built to the 110 litres/person/day level using the Calculation Method, did not achieve the intended water performance levels. Proposed policy text: "Development must be designed to be water efficient and reduce water consumption. Refurbishments and other non-domestic development will be expected to	text within Policy DM7 (Water resources and waste water) of the Regulation 19 WBC Local Plan Review. Retain text as is.	

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
			meet BREEAM water-efficiency credits. Residential development must not exceed a maximum water use of 105 litres per head per day (excluding the allowance of up to 5 litres for external water consumption) using the 'Fittings Approach' in Table 2.2 of Part G of Building Regulations. Planning conditions will be applied to new residential development to ensure that the water efficiency standards are met."		
29.	Para 5.80	5	Support paragraph 5.80 in principle, but consider that the wording and Policy CAP5 wording can be improved to cover both sewerage and water supply infrastructure. Recommend the Neighbourhood Plan should include a specific reference to the key issue of the provision of wastewater/sewerage and water supply infrastructure to service development proposed in a policy. Add following to supporting text at para 5.80: ***"Where appropriate, planning permission for developments which result in the need for off-site upgrades, will be subject to conditions to ensure the occupation is aligned with the delivery of necessary infrastructure upgrades."***	This would be dealt with at the Local Plan level as it is a strategic matter applying across the whole district.	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
			The Local Planning Authority will seek to ensure that there is adequate water and wastewater infrastructure to serve all new developments. Developers are encouraged to contact the water/waste water company as early as possible to discuss their development proposals and intended delivery programme to assist with identifying any potential water and wastewater network reinforcement requirements. Where there is a capacity constraint the Local Planning Authority will, where appropriate, apply phasing conditions to any approval to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of the relevant phase of development."		
30.	CAP5 (Minimising the risk of flooding)	5	We support Policy CAP5 in principle in relation to SuDS and drainage systems, but consider that this needs to be strengthened. With regard to surface water drainage, Thames Water request that the following paragraph should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan "***It is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for surface water drainage to ground, water courses or surface water sewer. It must not be allowed to drain to the foul sewer, as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding***."	Added into the supporting text.	✓
31.	CAP5	12	The Town Council supports the proposals in Policy CAP5. We suggest that paragraph 6 of this policy should also	Added in a sentence to supporting text to	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
			mention the flood risk to areas of Newbury and Thatcham from water courses originating in Cold Ash parish. The Town Council would be happy to collaborate with Cold Ash Parish Council on any shared issues in the management and reduction of flood risk.	acknowledge this – para 5.66. Noted and PC to pursue – already the CAP Flood Warden sits on the Thatcham Flood Forum.	
32.	CAP6 Biodiversity and the network of green and blue infrastructure)	12	Figure 6.1: Green Infrastructure' does not show public footpath COLD/8, which runs along the boundary between Cold Ash and Thatcham parishes to the west of Henwick Manor (it might be obscured by the Neighbourhood Plan boundary being a 'higher layer' in the drafting of the diagram). As the draft NDP refers to some public rights of way by their number, it would be helpful if this numbering is shown on this or another diagram.	Amended the map to uplift the footpath layer. Shown PROW numbers on the map.	✓
33.	CAP 7 (Environmental impact)	10	Policy CAP7 - Managing the environmental impact of development - crucial	Noted.	✓
34.	CAP 8 (Iconic Views)	7	We warmly welcome this policy, and we note that many of these views are only visible from PROW.	Noted.	✓
35.	CAP8	10	V4 is incorrectly shown on fig 6.5 map. Please amend.	The map has been amended as advised.	
36.	CAP8	10	Inclusion of another Iconic view, looking south east towards the Downs, from the Quiet Garden off Gladstone Lane?	The SG discussed the inclusion of additional views. It was agreed that the list of views within the Plan has been selected following local	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
				consultation and these should be prioritised.. This particular view however is considered an exception because the Parish Council has only recently opened the Quiet Garden and this is a significant view that can be seen from this location and which adds to the appeal and tranquility of the garden. from which this view is viewable. Therefore the SG concluded that this view should be included in the CNP. The map and plan have been amended accordingly.	
37.	CAP8	10	CAPC8: it's disappointing that one of the iconic views of Ashmore Green and up to Cold Ash one way and into Thatcham and Newbury the other, comes from the footpath next to Stone Copse across to Henwick Farm doesn't get mentioned here. This was submitted at the time of asking but this end of Ashmore Green seems to have been missed out.	The SG discussed the inclusion of additional views. It was agreed that the list of views within the Plan has been selected following local	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
				consultation and these should be prioritised.	
38.	CAP 8	11	Draft Neighbourhood Plan Policy CAP8 identifies a view which looks southwards towards Thatcham across Henwick Park, as 'iconic'. There is little evidence to suggest that it is notably specific, nor what valuable attributes should be protected.	The SG discussed the inclusion of additional views. It was agreed that the list of views within the Plan has been selected following local consultation and these should be prioritised.	✓
39.	CAP8	12	We suggest that the view to the east from just north of Henwick Manor from COLD/1/1 might be added as an 'iconic view' in paragraph 6.32 and figure 6.5.	The SG discussed the inclusion of additional views. It was agreed that the list of views within the Plan has been selected following local consultation and these should be prioritised.	✓
40.	CAP9 (Local Green Spaces)	1	This council endorses the request by Cold Ash NDP in Appendix C, Local Green Spaces , to designate No.6 - Waller Drive Recreational Park - as a Local Green Space on the basis of recreational and tranquillity value.	Noted.	✓
41.	CAP9	13	Please refer to the designated green space as Woodland Leaves Meadow, rather than just Woodland Leaves. It's correctly marked on the map, but for avoidance of doubt I would rather be precise with the name.	Amended.	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
42.	CAP9	14	The map for Cleardene (and spelling of the Local Green Space) needs amending – a map showing the site is enclosed in the response.	Amended.	✓
43.	CAP10 (Dark skies)	10	CAP 10 The dark skies policy could go further to cover adding lighting, whether security or garden enhancement to existing homes. Consider how to make homeowners aware of policy particularly in an area of AONB?	The policy has been constructed based on guidance from the AONB Units and refers to guidance prepared by the Institution of Lighting Professionals. The point on homeowner awareness has been included in the non-policy actions (Section 10)	✓
44.	CAP 10	10	Regarding CAP 10 point d. There are alternative technology's to passive Infrared detection for movement detection such as Microwave doppler. I suggest adding text in[] to cover: "Where appropriate, lights should be controlled by passive infrared detectors [or by other suitable means] so that they only come on when needed".	As above.	✓
45.	CAP10	10	CAP 10: Dark skies retention is very important	Noted.	✓
46.	CAP11 (Encouraging sustainable movement)	7	Public footpaths as well as pavements should, where possible, be accessible for people with disabilities, the elderly and parents with buggies and prams. The surface and any necessary gates should be appropriate	Noted. The bund in question has been constructed by WBC and	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
	And Para 7.11		for as many types of users as possible, with any existing stiles replaced by gates and steps removed. It is particularly disappointing that the bund constructed at the southern end of COLD/4/1 by West Berkshire Council has two long sets of steps and gates that are too small for a buggy. We welcome and strongly support all elements of this policy.	is outside the scope of influence of the CNP.	
47.	Para 7.1 and 7.2	7	It would be helpful if the PROW could be numbered using the numbering of the West Berkshire Council definitive map – especially as some PROW are referred to by their number in the text. The public footpath to the west of Henwick Manor, which runs along the boundary to the parish, is hidden by the line for the boundary.	This has been added to the relevant maps.	✓
48.	Section 7	10	More should be done to create cycle facilities. Why not a leisure track along the Ridge?	Noted but feasibility unclear.	✓
49.	CAP11 supporting text	12	Dog walking is an important activity for many people, for both leisure and exercise. We are pleased to see this mentioned in the draft NDP, but this is only in relation to local green spaces. For residents of Florence Gardens and north west Thatcham, Footpaths COLD/4, COLD/1, THAT/11 and THAT/10 provide a popular circular walk for recreation and dog walking. We suggest that this is mentioned in the draft NDP (and there may be other similar circular walks elsewhere in Cold Ash parish). The draft NDP mentions accessibility in relation to public open spaces, but not public rights of way. It is	Added into the text at 7.10.	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
			disappointing that the southern end of footpath COLD/4/3 was not made accessible when the flood attenuation scheme was constructed by West Berkshire Council. There are two sets of steps over the bund of the drainage scheme, and the gates are too small for a buggy to get through.	See ref. 46.	✓
50.	Para 7.17	7	The sunken lanes do not by themselves form a continuous route for horse riding. Bucklebury Alley, Fishers Lane and the BOAT from Hermitage Road to Bucklebury Alley are also important.	Noted.	✓
51.	CAP12 (Sunken Lanes)	7	Lawrences Lane, on the east of the parish, fulfils the criteria of a 'sunken lane' in paragraph 7.14, so we suggest that it is added to the list of sunken lanes in paragraph 7.15 and Policy CAP12. The Forum supported the experimental traffic regulation order for Lawrences Lane; the Advice of the Forum to West Berkshire Council is attached (see full response).	This lane was considered but did not meet the criteria for a sunken lane. It has been mentioned in the supporting text, and in the non-policy action table as one to consider further.	✓
52.	CAP12	10	CAP 12 The sunken lanes are an interesting link with the past, and should be preserved as far as possible.	Noted.	✓
53.	CAP11 and CAP12	10	Response from British Horse Society – see full detail below table.	Noted. This appears to mirror the feedback from the Local Access Forum.	✓
54.	CAP12	10	CAP 12: The protection of the sunken lanes as these, once lost, cannot be recovered	Noted.	✓
55.	CAP12	12	Lawrences Lane lies on the boundary between Thatcham and Cold Ash parishes. Much of its length meets the	See Ref. 51.	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
			definition of a 'sunken lane' in paragraph 7.16, so we suggest that it is added to the list of sunken lanes in paragraph 7.15 and figure 7.2.		
56.	CAP13 (parking)	10	CAP 13: Promoting the use of bikes/e-bikes and electric cars will be beneficial, but sufficient parking should be available for all vehicles as restricting car park spaces rarely stops people using them, they just park on verges, etc	Policy CAP13 protects existing parking and supports additional parking that would alleviate issues in the village centre and near to the school.	✓
57.	Section 8 (Community and Social)	10	Some good ideas, but not regarding development of the rifle club, which does not have the parking and is already congested. The Acland Hall already provides good facilities and has the space and facilities and parking and is the logical place to develop any further facilities.	This is acknowledged by the SG. A number of comments have raised this point and the SG agreed to amend text in the table to refer to rifle shed, which could benefit from additional upgrade, but removing the specific examples of what it might be.	✓
58.	CAP14 (Important community facilities)	10	CAP14 - danger of over developing rec ground. Loud music and antisocial behaviour increased in last few years so further development must be carefully thought through and put no noise or loud music notices up. Rifle shed ok as storage but not sensible to use as café or meetings; not enough parking and would add to congestion on Ashmore Green Rd. Acland hall is	See ref 57. Noted.	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
			obvious place to put a cafe because the car parking and kitchen & toilets are already there!		
59.	CAP14 (Important community facilities	10	CAP14 -I feel that the recreation ground is already fully utilised, in fact getting over used -the sports activites tend to dominate the area to the detriment of picnics, dog walking etc I would striongly object to any development of the rifle shed -the parking on ashmore green road for the current sporting activities already causes obstruction and danger. There is already a commuity space in Acland hall which if necessary could be maximised. This contains toilets and i can see no legitimate reason for public toilets being added to the site -this will only attract antisocial behaviour. There is a well used play ground and the teenagers have the tennis courts, basketball hoops and the field to play in. The provision of set gym equiptment and/or other youth play areas will again over develop the recreation ground in my opinion -any development should respect the village ambiance	Noted.	✓
60.	CAP14 (Important community facilities	10	Cap14. I would have expected the NDP to highlight more significantly what services are NOT currently available within the area. There is a brief mention in 8.1, but I think it is important in a planning document to highlight this more strongly, as it is an important consideration when considering future development as to whether the area can support the extra population requirements. So I would also think it would be useful	The infrastructure referred to is strategic and within the remit of the Local Plan.	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
			to include the distances/maps showing the nearest secondary schools, doctors, dentists, shops, fuel station, train stations, etc. Are local schools full or is there capacity to support new residents? I appreciate this will change with time, but an indication would be helpful.		
61.	CAP14	10	CAP14 - Don't try to do too much, especially with recreation ground. Trying to squeeze too much into the ground will cause problems. Stick with little improvements. Don't turn it into a suburban leisure park - it will lose its character. One of its appeals is its general quietness for dog walkers and people just walking around or sitting on benches.	Noted.	✓
62.	CAP14	10	care needed when considering any further development of the Hermitage rd rec ground, which should not risk destroying the essentially village ambience and relaxed, tranquil nature of the rec ground. It must not be turned into a suburban park with all the associated anti-social behaviour. There is already a great deal of use of the rec ground and it cannot be made into all things for all people without ruining it.	Noted.	✓
63.	CAP 16	10	CAP16 - would want to ensure that no commercial activity is permitted in peoples houses or gardens which reduces residents amenity.	Noted – this would not be the intention of the policy, as set out in Clause 2. Additional supporting text has been added to emphasise this.	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
64.	Section 9 (Commercial and Local Employment) Para 9.2	8	Notes the lack of representation for farming, the agricultural industries and rural businesses. Section 9.2 reads: "In line with experiences across the British countryside, employment opportunities in the agricultural sector have reduced". "Employment opportunities in the agricultural sector" have not "reduced" – the truth is in fact, the exact opposite. Registrations to study land-based degrees are on the rise, and the agricultural industry has the highest level of new entrants (from non-farming backgrounds) and diversity than ever seen previously. As the sector transitions to meet net-zero targets and work towards food production in light of ever-changing legislation and sustainability goalposts, the industry has welcomed a wealth of new career opportunities and working professionals. Farming and agricultural industries permeate a far larger social sphere than you have given credit, and to imply that the sector offers up no new opportunities is damaging and frankly insulting. It highlights a stark disconnect of the councillors with the parish and rural landscape within which they live, and supposedly represent. More than ever, the sector needs agronomists, meteorologists, geologists, data analysts, recruiters, PR, journalists, lawyers, policy writers, policy analysts, vets, land agents and estate agents, quality assurance	This is acknowledged and suggest adding the following to Para 9.2: "Notwithstanding this, the CNP would be supportive of proposals that would support the agricultural sector in the parish."	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
			(especially in light of the recent food fraud scandal unearthed by *Farmers Weekly)*, renewables specialists…. The list goes on. I have linked below an article which I hope will be enlightening as to the vast opportunity that exists within the land-based industries, and I hope you will take this into account and revise the above statement in section 9.2 of the NDP.		
65.	Non-Policy Actions	6	Ways in which Downe House could engage with the Development Plan Non-Policy Actions: **Relevant Non-Policy Actions and areas of possible engagement:** <u>Potential to identify locally significant heritage assets to add to the Local List</u>: Providing access to the site in line with Health and Safety and Safeguarding guidelines. This might include access to sporting facilities and a developing plan to create a Downe House Site Circular Walk that would be available for local schools and the wider community to access through the appropriate channels. <u>Improve information about local history and heritage:</u> Provide historical information about the history of the school.	Following a meeting with the representative, the SG acknowledge the role of the School as a major employer and the employment/ economy chapter has been amended to include a description of this – School as a key employer. The SG (and PC) would be keen to work with the school going forward. Include wording into the non-policy actions.	✓ ✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
			Establish an online business directory for the parish: We would be happy to feature in the directory.		
66.	Non-policy actions	10	More should be done to create cycle facilities. Why not a leisure track along the Ridge.	The creation of new recreational routes is supported.	✓
67.	Non policy actions	10	18. Agree. Play areas need to be larger with more equipment for toddlers and primary school age. Equipment for teenagers needs to be considered.	Noted.	✓
68.	Non policy actions	10	All of the actions seem very appropriate	Noted.	✓
69.	Non policy actions	10	Any 20mph zones outside schools be operational only at school opening/closing times.	Noted.	✓
70.	Non policy actions	10	Apart from the "dark skies initiative, most of these ideas are of little practical value.	Noted.	✓
71.	Non policy actions	10	Attempt to address the sheer volume and speeding of traffic in the village, including 'rat running' on Cold Ash Hill to M4/A34 and on Collaroy Road to St Finians School?	Action 13 seeks to explore this further.	✓
72.	Non policy actions	10	Cold ash and its surrounding areas need to stay the way it is ! We don't need more houses or people destroying the wild life and it's natural beauty. Corporate greed needs to stop .	Noted.	✓
73.	Non policy actions	10	Community is important and should be inclusive, not exclusive	Noted.	✓
74.	Non policy actions	10	Good re biodiversity / wildlife. What would community energy scheme look like? Protect trees / hedges.	Noted.	✓
75.	Non policy actions	10	I broadly agree with these actions. I (we) would like to see a local planning bylaw added whereby anyone who	Noted and could be picked up in Non Policy	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
			fells trees or otherwise clears land without the Parish Council (PC)'s knowledge and agreement prior to applying for planning permission is compelled to replace all trees 3 fold as a penalty and any subsequent planning application refused until the matter has been addressed to the complete satisfaction of the PC.	Action 7, for instance by exploring the use of additional TPOs in the Parish.	
76.	Non policy actions	10	i strongly disagree with the proposal to re-purpose the rifle shed as a community amenity such as a cafe -we have a village hall which is purpose built for such activity and has adequate parking, in addition we have the church meeting rooms - any developemt of the rifle shed will impact parking on ashmore green road already under pressure with the increased football activities taking place. any proposal to increased community faciities should clearly demonstrate why the Acland hall is not meeting this need. Ideas to develop options for older children /teenagers beyond the activities already provided should have been articulated in the project list -the older children have football clubs and cricket -any formal further development will impact the rural ambiance of the recreation ground and be less family and older people friendly	Noted. See Ref 57.	✓
77.	Non policy actions	10	In particular I support No 12, making the sunken lanes into 'quiet lanes' [NB in No 12 there is a typo 'quite' for 'quiet'	Noted and typo amended.	✓
78.	Non policy actions	10	No more houses should be built without public transport and more doctors as Thatcham Medical Practice is already over capacity.	Noted. These are outside the SNP scope.	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
79.	Non policy actions	10	Providing cycle parking next to a rifle club shed? Quite frankly, ridiculous that that has even made it to such a document, along with the dark skies item (6) which is well covered in CAP10.	See Ref 57.	✓
80.	Non policy actions	10	Some good ideas, but not regarding development of the rifle club, which does not have the parking and is already congested. The Acland Hall already provides good facilities and has the space and facilities and parking and is the logical place to develop any further facilities.	See Ref 57.	✓
81.	Non policy actions	10	Some ideas seem sensible like protecting trees and WAG. But community cafe in rifle shed sounds nuts, when there is the Acland Hall with much better parking and kitchen etc already.	See Ref 57.	✓
82.	Non policy actions	10	There is a wide variety of subjects/interests covered by these actions, only a few of which are of direct interest to myself. None though would cause me any particular concern.	Noted.	✓
83.	Non policy actions	10	We would like to see 'Quiet lanes' mentioned here	Noted – these are included.	✓
84.	Non policy actions	10	Typo in Ref 12 (quiet)	Noted.	✓
85.	Non-policy actions	12	Many roads in Thatcham parish outside of the town lack pavements or have very narrow pavements, as described in paragraph 7.2 of the draft NDP for Cold Ash. While there is a footway on Cold Ash Hill, this is narrow and in some places two buggies or mobility scooters would be unable to pass. We therefore agree with the 'Non-Policy Action' "for improved footway/verge provision in places, increase	Noted.	✓

Ref.	Page/ Para	Respondent	Summary of comment	Response from Steering Group	✓
			capacity for pedestrians and reduce conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles" in the table in Section 10.		

COLD ASH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN. Response of the British Horse Society. (some wording overlaps with Access Forum Response)

I am responding to CAP 11 and CAP 12 and making some general points on behalf of the British Horse Society as its local Access & Bridleways Officer. I have submitted these comments both online and by email as the online submission removes the formatting which makes the submission less easy to read. A neutral response has been given where that policy is outside the Society's remit.

The Society supports CAP11 and 12 but would like to suggest some different wording in places, if it is possible at this stage, to ensure equestrians are not excluded and are catered for. This is essential if the parish is to remain horse friendly. It might be noted that horse keeping in the parish helps to keep a rural ambience which the plan mentions a number of times. It also makes a significant contribution to the local economy.

1. CAP 11 point 3: The current wording says ' The provision of new footpaths and cycle routes that, where feasible, are physically separated from vehicular traffic will be strongly supported'. The Society requests that the wording is amended as follows 'The provision of new public and permissive rights of way, and cycle routes that, where feasible, are physically separated from vehicular traffic will be strongly supported'. Footpaths are not legally open to horse riders. Broadening the term will mean they are not excluded. If amended, the Society strongly supports this policy. You will no doubt be aware of the permissive bridleway through Westrop Farm created by Bernard Clarke. This is a godsend to local horse riders as it provides safe access to the Pang Valley bridleway network especially as the definitive bridleway though Broad View Farm was inhospitable for many years. Further permanent (definitive) or permissive bridleways would be much welcomed by the equestrian community and, of course, bridleways can also be used by walkers and cyclists.

2. CAP 12 Sunken Lanes. 7.13 and 7.17: The Society welcomes and appreciates the inclusion and needs of horse riders here. Although not mentioned in the plan, there are a number of horses kept in the parish, some owned by Cold Ash residents, some not, particularly at Elmshurst Farm and Poplar Farm. In addition, many riders from Hermitage, Curridge, and Bucklebury parish ride through Cold Ash parish using these lanes and the bridleways and byways, the Ridge and even the Hermitage Rd as part of their circular rides in the area. Furthermore, horse drawn carriage drivers, with horses kept at Poplar Farm, use the local roads. These horses support rural economies and help keep the parish rural.

The Society will strongly support the concept of 'Quiet lanes' and any measures to make the roads safer for horse riding and carriage driving in the hope that these roads will remain suitable for horses. We do not see this listed in section 10 as a non-policy action. The focus on sunken lanes, while interesting as a feature, does lead to the lack of mention of the other lanes, Bucklebury Alley and Lawrences Lane. Bucklebury Alley is particularly important for horse travel and favoured by horse riders.

The public rights of way network is mentioned throughout the plan and appears to be very much valued. Thus it is a somewhat surprising that it does not have its own headed section. However, it is covered in Section 7 and policy CAP 11. Inaccuracies and unclear statements: There are some inaccuracies in the description of the public rights of way network. We request these are corrected because, while walkers can use all types of public rights of way, other user groups cannot.

Para 2.3 is not factually correct as not all the public rights of way in the area covered by the plan are footpaths. We suggest the word 'footpaths' is changed to 'public rights of way.'

Para 2.29: The Society welcomes and supports the statements here. However, we suggest that for accuracy mention should be made that the parish does have three BOATs (byways open to all traffic): Cold 5/1, COLD 5/2, COLD 5/3, COLD25/1 and COLD26 /1. We suggest mention is made of these because they legally cater for more than just walkers, ie. horse riders, cyclists, horse drawn carriages and public motor vehicles. This needs to be recognised by all to avoid confusion and conflict.

Para 5.57. 'Existing public footpaths are to be maintained, with new landscaped connections into the site and the wider footpath network encouraged.' It is unclear whether this is referring to footpaths as part of the public rights of way network or footways (pavements) alongside roads. If footways (pavements) are meant, we suggest the correct term is used according to Highway designation. If public rights of way are being referred to, we suggest the term 'public rights of way' is used. This point also applies to the summary where footways (pavements) may be meant in this statement 'Movement around the parish is a recognised issue, as many of the roads are little more than upgraded country tracks, several without footpaths'

6.16. '• a comprehensive network of Public Rights of way (see Public Rights of Way), including a network of bridleways': there really isn't a network of bridleways. As alluded to elsewhere, most of the public rights of way are of footpath status.

Page 104 V4: 'footpath' 25 is not a public footpath but a byway (BOAT) and bridleway. This needs to be corrected. Ridden horses and cyclists can thus use this path and need to be accommodated along it.

Table 2: Comments from West Berkshire District Council and SG response

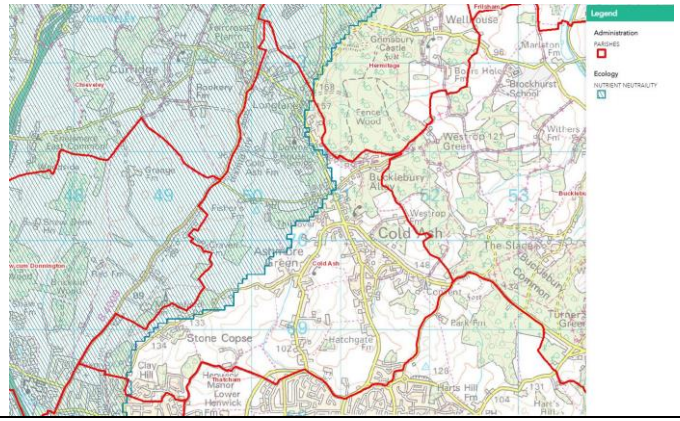
Comments received at the Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) consultation from West Berkshire District Council and response from the Steering Group

NDP page number	NDP Paragraph or Policy Reference	Comment	SG Response	✓
1-2	Contents page	In the contents page it would be helpful if the policy references could be included.	Noted – and added back in.	✓
3	First paragraph, Executive Summary	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: Incorrect that parts of Cold Ash are the highest point in Berkshire – look at Combe and Streatley land heights.	Amend to **'among some of the highest points'**	✓
3	First paragraph, Executive Summary	It is suggested for clarity that the first sentence refers to the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). You could reword to: 'Cold Ash parish is diverse in nature, sitting partially within an area of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and comprising….' Overall the Executive Summary provides a clear and succinct summary of the Plan, and links back to the overall vision of the Plan.	This has been amended.	✓

8	Paragraph 1.11	The West Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2022-2037) was adopted on 1 December 2022 (https://www.westberks.gov.uk/mwlp) and this supersedes both the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire and the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire. The bullet points should therefore be updated as follows: • ~~Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire – incorporating alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001~~ • ~~Waste Local Plan for Berkshire adopted December 1998~~ • West Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2022-2037)	This has been amended as has the evidence Base list.	✓
8	Paragraph 1.12	This paragraph could be re-worded to clarify that the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD), the Housing Site Allocations DPD and the Saved Policies of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 to 2006 together comprise the current Local Plan. The paragraph could also explain why the Local Plan is being reviewed The paragraph could be reworded into two paragraphs as follows: The current Local Plan comprises of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD), the Housing Site Allocations DPD, and the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policis). The current Local Plan plans for development up to 2026 and in line with the NPPF, must be kept up-to-date and look ahead over a minimum 15 year period. The ~~A~~ Local Plan is therefore undergoing review to cover the period to 2039. Upon adoption, the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022-2039 ~~is currently being developed and~~ will replace in one document the three ~~existing WBC~~ documents mentioned above. Of the sites allocat~~ion~~sed in Cold Ash ~~noted~~ in ~~the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 and~~ the Housing Site Allocations DPD 2006-2026 ~~relating to Cold Ash~~, ~~Site~~ Policy HSA7 (St. Gabriels Farm The Ridge Cold	This has been amended, although reference retained to the WB Minerals and Waste Local Plan.	✓

		Ash) has already been built out/nearing completion and ~~Site~~ Policy HSA6 (Poplar Farm Cold Ash) is not considered deliverable at this time.		
8	Paragraph 1.13	The first sentence in this paragraph can be updated to reflect that the Local Plan Review was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in March 2023. It could be updated to read as follows: The West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022-2039~~: Proposed Submission (Regulation 19 draft)~~ (the LPR) was ~~published for consultation in January 2023~~ submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2023 so that it can undergo independent examination.	This has been amended.	✓
8	Paragraph 1.13	The Local Development Scheme is updated periodically and the URL currently provided in this paragraph is to the current version (published in January 2023). To future proof this paragraph, it is suggested that the following URL is used https://www.westberks.gov.uk/lds as any updates to the LDS will be published on this page.	The URL has been updated.	✓

9	Paragraph 1.19	It would be useful for this paragraph to clarify that a housing requirement figure (of 40 dwellings) was originally identified for Cold Ash within the emerging draft of the Local Plan Review that was published for a Regulation 18 consultation between December 2020 and February 2021. The Steering Group undertook site selection work to try and identify suitable sites to meet this requirement, and this work should be linked to in this paragraph and included in Section 15 Reference Pack. Whilst this work identified one suitable site, it is located within the settlement boundary whereby there is a presumption in favour of development. The approach for the Local Plan has been to not allocate sites within settlement boundaries because the principle of development is already established. In light of the site selection work, the Proposed Submission version of the Local Plan Review did not identify a housing requirement for Cold Ash. As specified in paragraph 1.19 of the NDP, there are other sites that will meet the housing need in the District.	The paragraph (now 1.20) has been updated to reflect this.	✓
9	Paragraph 1.21	For clarity, it could be mentioned within this paragraph that the primary purpose of AONBs, as set out withinthe Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. Additional text could be added to the paragraph as follows: Straddling four counties, the North Wessex Downs is one of Britain's most beautiful chalk landscapes, recognisable by its dramatic scarp slopes, swathes of ancient woodland and sheltered valleys criss-crossed by rivers and streams. As set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 20000, the primary purpose of the AONB is to 'conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area'.	This has been added.	✓

13	Figure 1.2	<u>Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist:</u> It might also be useful to include a map which shows the area of Cold Ash Parish that falls within the Nutrient Neutrality Zone, eg. 	The map has been included.	✓
11	Paragraph 1.26	<u>Comments from Fiona Simmonds, Education Place Planning Team Leader:</u> The section on sustainability could include that development should be of the size and scale that it can be mitigated in the schools within Cold Ash. This would reduce the need for movements outside the village and improve the sustainability of any development.	Added in.	✓

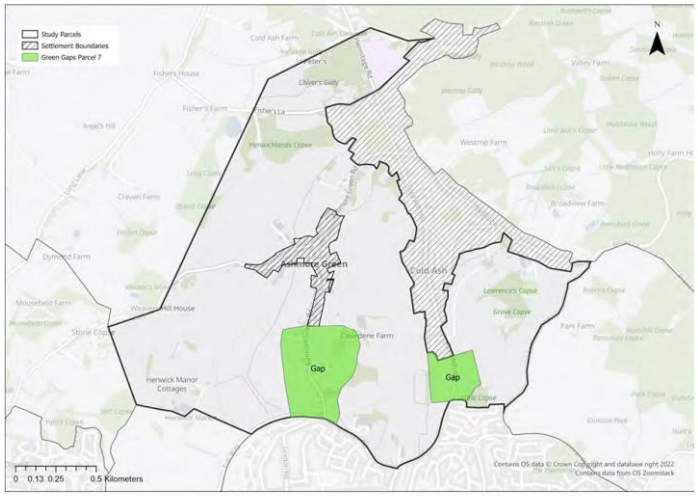
15	Paragraph 2.6	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: Check Combe to see if the highest church site was here.	Text amended.	✓
15	Paragraph 2.10	Include a link in the paragraph to the assessment of housing by Simon Vanstone	Link added.	✓
15	Paragraph 2.11	For clarity, it would be helpful to mention that it is policy ADPP1 (Spatial Strategy) of the West Berkshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document (which forms part of the Local Plan) that identifies Cold Ash as a Service Village. The paragraph could be reworded as follows: Policy ADPP1 (Spatial Strategy) of the Core Strategy DPD identifies Cold Ash village ~~is defined~~ as a ~~local~~ Sservice V~~v~~illage. Service ~~v~~Villages are ~~places~~ settlements which have a more limited range of services and have some limited development potential ~~where a small amount of development (particularly economic, or which extends the range of services available) may be appropriate~~.	Amended.	✓

16	Paragraph 2.12	Is it Simon's study that identifies that Cold Ash took the second highest increase in housing? If not, include a reference to the relevant source.	The information ("Cold Ash has had the second highest allocations after Hermitage in West Berks' service villages") was taken from the minutes of a WBC Planning Advisory Group meeting.	✓
16	Paragraph 2.12	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: Of all the local Service Villages within West Berkshire, Cold Ash ….	Added in.	✓
16	Paragraph 2.16	It could be mentioned here that the Core Strategy DPD identifies the Red Shute Industrial Estate as a Protected Employment Area.	Added in	✓

16	First sentence of paragraph 2.17	<u>Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist:</u> The OS Maps states 155m above sea level.	Amended.	✓
16	Final sentence of paragraph 2.17	<u>Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist:</u> Which four counties can be seen? I can only think of three – Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire.	Amended.	✓
17	2nd bullet point, paragraph 2.21	<u>Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist:</u> Cold Ash Quarry is a Geological Site of Special Scientific Interest.	Amended.	✓

17	4th bullet point, paragraph 2.21	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: It appears there are more than seven Ancient Woodlands. Paragraph 2.28 mentions there are nine Ancient Woodlands.	Amended to numerous/several.	✓
17	1st sentence, paragraph 2.28	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: The number of Ancient Woodlands specified is different to the number given in paragraph 2.21 (4th bullet point)	As above.	✓
18	Paragraph 2.32	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: Reference should be made to https://www.gov.uk/guidance/landscape-and-seascape-character- assessments.	Reference to this – and the WB Landscape Character Assessment - has been added.	✓

20	3rd bullet point, paragraph 3.1	The third bullet point incorrectly identifies Lambourn as a Service Village. Lambourn is in fact a Rural Service Centre and in the settlement hierarchy, Rural Service Centres sit above Service Villages.	Removed reference to Lambourn as the comparison is unhelpful.	✓
21	Objective 2, 3.4	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: It might be worth adding something around the Local Nature Recovery Network for Berkshire here.	Reference to this has been added.	✓
24	Criteria 1 and 2, Policy CAP1: Location of Development	Paragraph 16 F) of the NPPF states: '*Plans should: …f) serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area (including policies in this Framework, where relevant)'.* Criteria 1 and 2 requires compliance with other policies in the West Berkshire development plan and therefore contrary to the NPPF. The policy should be reworded to avoid deferring to other development plan policies and be tailored more to Cold Ash's requirements. Please see a recent NDP Examiner's Report (paras 70, 76, 80) where this was identified as an issue by the Examiner and modifications made to remove sections of policy which deferred to the Development Plan.	Removed duplicating text in Clause 1. Removed duplication in Clause 2 and rephrased.	✓

24	Criteria 2, Policy CAP1: Location of Development	The policy identifies a Buffer Zone and it is unclear what evidence sits behind this. In November 2022 the West Berkshire Appropriate Countryside Designation Study was prepared by WBDC (https://www.westberks.gov.uk/local-plan-evidence#Other%20evidence%20base%20documents) and this study identifies if appropriate and specific planning designation for the countryside around the towns of Newbury and Thatcham is needed. The study recommends two parcels of land between Thatcham and Cold Ash and Thatcham and Ashmore Green (as shown in the diagram below) for potential green gap designation in the Local Plan Review:  Figure 14 – Parcel 7 Potential Green Gaps Policy DM2 (Separation of Settlements Around Newbury & Thatcham) of the Local Plan Review (which was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in March 2023) identifies that the two parcels of land as shown in the diagram above should be maintained to avoid coalescence and maintain the	This has been reconsidered.	✓

		separate identifies of the settlements. The Buffer Zone is inconsistent with these two parcels of land.		
25	Paragraph 5.3	<u>Comments from Debra Inston, Principal Conservation and Design Officer:</u> The Historic Environment Record (HER) contain details on local archaeological sites and finds, historic buildings and historic landscapes. Not all buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes contained in the HER are considered non-designated assets within the meaning and definition contained within the NPPF. Each entry within the HER will have varying levels of heritage significance. To merit identification as a non-designated heritage assets the heritage significance would need to be towards the higher level. Paragraph 5.3 also states that non-designated heritage assets should be 'conserved'. This does not comply with national and local policy as there is no requirement in either national or local policy to conserve these assets. Instead the correct requirement is set out in paragraph 203 of the NPPF, which states that: *'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'*	The text has been amended to reflect this, noting that within the parish, St Gabriel's convent is contained in the Local List of Heritage Assets prepared by WBC and therefore would be considered as a non-designated heritage asset in policy terms.	✓

30-31	Policy CAP2: Local Character and Heritage	<u>Comments from Debra Inston, Principal Conservation and Design Officer:</u> Policy CAP2 requires the submission of heritage statements for applications affecting heritage assets. The Council are currently updating our local validation list which will require heritage statements to be submitted with all listed building consent applications, and any planning application that has the potential to impact the significance of a heritage asset either directly or through development within their setting.	Noted.	✓
32-38	Paragraphs 5.15-5.58	The supporting text is quite lengthy and some of it reads as a policy, however the role of supporting text is to aid in the interpretation of the policy but cannot be used to prevail over the policy itself or insert new requirements. Paragraph 16 (f) of the NPPF states that: *'Plans should …f) serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area (including policies in this Framework, where relevant)'.* This policy refers to other policies which is unnecessary and could cause confusion – any planning application would need to comply with all relevant policies.	The text underpins the policy and should be retained. Reference to other policies has been removed.	✓
32	Final bullet point, paragraph 5.16	The URL for the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan is required	This has been added.	✓

36	3rd bullet point, paragraph 5.32	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: Non-native species of plants should not be planted near or next to habitats as these non-native species have the real potential to compromise the habitat a certain amount. These habitats, particularly if linear, are likely to be utilised by nocturnal fauna feeding and commuting.	This text has been added.	✓
39	Criteria B (b), Policy CAP3: Design of Development	Typographical error: the guidance contained in the Quality Design West Berkshire Supplementary Planning Document and the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan	This has been amended.	✓
39	Criteria B (b), Policy CAP3: Design of Development	It would be helpful to include URLs, perhaps as footnotes, to both the Quality Design Supplementary Planning Document (https://www.westberks.gov.uk/spd-quality-design) and the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan (https://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/our-work/management-plan/	These have been added.	✓

39	Criteria B, b (iii) and (iv), Policy CAP3: Design of Development	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist Add a couple of words saying native flora somewhere here	Reference added.	✓
40	Paragraph 5.59	Comments from Emily Jellie-Ashton, Principal Environment Delivery Officer: Suggest re-wording to the following: This policy seeks to ensure that development meets the highest environmental standards in terms of its construction, ~~materials,~~ energy use and resource energy use such as materials, water, waste etc. ~~and energy use,~~ to help mitigate ~~against~~ climate change.	(Now para 5.57). The text is proposed is considered to add greater clarity and has been added.	✓
40	Paragraph 5.60	Comments from Emily Jellie-Ashton, Principal Environment Delivery Officer: Suggest re-wording to the following: On 12 June 2019 the Government voted to amend the Climate Change Act 2008 by introducing a new target for at least a 100% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990 levels) in the UK by 2050. This is otherwise known as a net zero target. In preparation for this, by 2035, emissions will need to be reduced emissions by 78% (compared to 1990 levels). Locally, West Berkshire Council declared a Climate Change Emergency in July 2019 with an aim to deliver carbon neutrality for the District by 2030. These are demanding targets, which will require everyone to contribute, from households and communities to usinesses and local and national government. Being '2050 ready' will require new buildings to have minimal energy use and net carbon emissions over the year. They should follow the ~~be highly~~ energy hierarchy, looking at such measures as	(Now paras 5.58 and 5.59): The text is proposed is considered to add greater clarity and has been added.	✓

		insulation, energy efficient lighting and being fitted with or connected to low/zero carbon technologies (which includes renewable technologies. Consideration should also be given to the development reducing water demand through water efficiency methods and technologies. ~~Insulated have low water demand and be fitted with or directly connected to renewable energy systems.~~		
40	Paragraph 5.61	Comments from Emily Jellie-Ashton, Principal Environment Delivery Officer: It is not optional, it is within WBDC planning policy. Also terms like ecologically sustainable are confusing. It should be environmentally sustainable homes, or given the context Net Zero Carbon homes or low/zero carbon homes would be more appropriate.	The text has been amended.	✓
40	2nd bullet point, paragraph 5.62	Comments from Emily Jellie-Ashton, Principal Environment Delivery Officer: Sometimes PV is not the most appropriate option for the development due to the orientation of the building. Suggest re-wording to the following: Integrating renewable energy systems into new development, including existing and new public buildings. ~~In particular~~ Where appropriate and viable there is support locally for solar panels to be incorporated into new development;	Noted and text has been amended.	✓

40	3rd bullet point, paragraph 5.62	Comments from Emily Jellie-Ashton, Principal Environment Delivery Officer: Suggest re-wording to the following: Reducing water consumption through grey water systems and water efficient systems;	This has been added.	✓
41	Policy CAP4: Sustainable Design	Comments from Emily Jellie-Ashton, Principal Environment Delivery Officer: Suggest re-wording to the following: 1. Proposals which incorporate design and environmental performance measures and standards to reduce energy consumption, carbon emissions and adapt to current and projected climate change scenarios ~~and climate effects~~ will be supported. 2. Proposals which incorporate the following sustainable design features as appropriate to their scale, nature and location will be strongly supported, where measures will not have a detrimental impact on character, landscape and views: a. Siting and orientation to optimise passive solar gain. b. The use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials and measures such as loft and wall insulation, and double glazing. c. Installation of energy efficiency measures such as ~~loft and wall insulation and double glazing~~ LED lighting. d. ~~Incorporating on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as solar panels, ground source~~	The suggested wording provides greater clarity without diluting the policy intent. Text amended.	✓

		~~heating and energy generation etc.~~ e. ~~Reducing water consumption through water re-use measures including rainwater harvesting, surface water harvesting and/or grey water recycling systems.~~ d f. Providing low carbon sustainable design and avoid or mitigate all regulated emissions by following the energy hierarchy. For example, use less energy and manage energy demand during operation through fabric and service improvements; where feasible exploit local energy sources such as secondary heat and supply energy efficiently and cleanly, via low carbon technologies; maximise the use of zero carbon technology / renewable energy by producing, storing and using zero carbon / renewable energy on-site; only where necessary, off-site measures to deal with any remaining emissions ~~using a combination of on-site energy efficiency measures (such as insulation and low energy heating systems), on-site zero-carbon technologies (such as solar panels) and, only where necessary, off-site measures to deal with any remaining emissions~~. e ~~g~~. Providing the infrastructure for adequate electric vehicle charging points for each dwelling, where new parking provision is expected to be made. f ~~h~~. Alterations to existing buildings should be designed with energy reduction in mind and comply with current sustainable design and construction standards, as set out in the Quality Design – West Berkshire SPD and the Building Regulations. g. Reducing water consumption through water re-use measures including rainwater harvesting, surface water harvesting and / or grey water recycling systems. 3. The retrofitting of historic buildings is encouraged to reduce energy demand and to generate ~~renewable~~ low / zero carbon energy where		

		appropriate, providing it safeguards historic characteristics.		
43	Final sentence of Criterion c, paragraph 5.76	Typographical error: WBDC have ~~prepared a~~ an adopted SuDS Supplementary Planning Document;	Amended and URL provided.	✓
47	1st sentence, paragraph 6.8	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: Also include mention of Ancient Woodland and linear habitats (ie. hedgerows, streams and ditches, etc.). With retaining water in upland areas reducing the wildfire risk and improving habitat quality across the catchment.	This has been added.	✓

50	Paragraph 6.12	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: Within 18 months to two years, the Habitat Recovery Network for Berkshire will be in place. This process is being managed by the ~~Berkshire Nature Partnership~~ Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.	Amended.	✓
51	Criteria 1 and 3, Policy CAP6: Biodiversity and the Network of Green and Blue Infrastructure	Comments from Emily Jellie-Ashton, Principal Environment Delivery Officer: Policy needs to include reference to blue infrastructure. Suggest re-wording to the following: 1. Proposals should be designed from the outset to create, conserve, enhance and manage green and blue spaces and connect chains of green and blue infrastructure, as identified on the Policies Maps, delivering a measurable net gain in biodiversity of a minimum 10% using the most up to date biodiversity accounting metric developed by Natural England for local people and wildlife. Development which would result in the loss of ancient woodland, aged trees or veteran trees will not be supported unless there are wholly exceptional reasons as envisaged in the NPPF and a suitable compensation strategy exists. 3. Proposals that seek to improve the connectivity between wildlife areas, ~~and~~ green and blue spaces will be encouraged in order to enhance the green and blue infrastructure of the Neighbourhood area. In particular, proposals that support the enhancement and management of the identified Biodiversity Opportunity Areas will be supported. Conversely, proposals which threaten to damage such connectivity will be strongly resisted.	Added in. Added in.	✓

58-59	Policy CAP7: Managing the Environmental Impact of Development	<u>Comments from Emily Jellie-Ashton, Principal Environment Delivery Officer:</u> This policy all makes sense to me and in line with best practice detailed in such methodologies as BREEAM. It also supports the work we are doing on Green and Blue Infrastructure, however I'm not a landscape specialist or ecologist.	Noted.	✓
59	Criteria d, Policy CAP7: Managing the Environmental Impact of Development	<u>Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist:</u> Where possible trees should be left as dead standing because they are a great biodiversity resource for wildlife and if left as a monolith pose little risk.	Added into the policy / supporting text.	✓
59	Criteria f, Policy CAP7: Managing the Environmental Impact of Development	Unless trees/hedges are under Tree Protection Order or within a Conservation Area they are not protected and it is not development to remove them. It might be difficult in practice to seek to retain hedgerows under this policy – the Council's Development Management Team tend to refuse loss of hedgerow in terms of the impact on the character of an area and/or impact on biodiversity, which this policy does not seem to cover.	Noted – additional wording added into the second sentence of the policy.	✓

59	Criteria g, Policy CAP7: Managing the Environmental Impact of Development	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: Laurel and leylandii would not be permitted by us.	Noted. This wording was added following the comments received during the informal consultation (pre-Reg 14) on the CNP.	✓
64	Policy CA9: Local Green Spaces	Paragraph 16 F) of the NPPF states: 'Plans should: …f) serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area (including policies in this Framework, where relevant)'. The final sentence of the policy should therefore be deleted.	Noted and removed.	✓
74	Policy CAP11: Encouraging Sustainable Movement	Comments from Chris Sperring, Principal Transport Policy Officer: This policy is supported in principle. • Any proposed footway or cycleway improvements will need to be developed in partnership with West Berkshire Council (as local highway authority). It should be noted that cycle improvements will need to be designed in accordance with Department for Transport Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design, July 2020). Improvements around schools may require the school in question to refresh their School Travel Plan (see comments for Section 10). • Policy CAP11 or the supporting text in Section 7 could include the provision of broadband to allow opportunities for home working/shopping that could help reduce the need for travel.	Noted. Suggest this may be better placed in Policy CAP16.	✓

		The draft LTP4 Strategy document recently subject to public consultation seeks to introduce shared mobility initiatives in rural areas, which may be option for Cold Ash in due course.	Added into the supporting text.	
77	Policy CAP12: Sunken Lanes	<u>Comments from Chris Sperring, Principal Transport Policy Officer:</u> The unique nature of the sunken lanes in the parish is recognised. It is likely that this would be a Highways Asset Management issue.	Noted. Reference within the CNP seeks to acknowledge their contribution to local character.	✓
79	Paragraph 7.23	<u>Comments from Chris Sperring, Principal Transport Policy Officer:</u> Any proposals for public Electric Vehicle Charging Points would be supported.	Noted.	✓

86-88	Section 10: Non-Policy Actions	<u>Comments from Fiona Simmonds, Education Place Planning Team Leader:</u> The section on non-policy improvements does touch on subsidised school transport from Thatcham. Whilst families from Thatcham do choose the school this is a matter of choice and is not necessary, as these are not catchment pupils. Any transport considered would have to take into account whether this transport was necessary, the sustainability of this transport and the potential impact on schools in Thatcham. There is sufficient capacity in Thatcham for these families to be allocated places without needing transport.	Noted, although this might be something pursued by the parish council.	✓
87	Section 10 Non-Policy Actions Ref 12: Safeguarding sunken lanes against inappropriate traffic volumes	<u>Comments from Chris Sperring, Principal Transport Policy Officer:</u> The current WBDC Local Transport Plan (LTP) Active Travel (AT) Strategy (2011) notes that Quiet Lanes have been previously used in the Bucklebury Area and that they could be used in other rural villages to help all AT modes in their use of the countryside. The AT strategy is due to be reviewed, along with other supporting LTP strategies, following completion of WBDC's new LTP4 Strategy document, and it is likely the role of Quiet Lane's will be given further consideration as part of the review of the AT strategy.	Noted and for CPC to consider.	✓
87-88	Section 10 Non-Policy Actions Ref 14: Need to reduce congestion and improve pedestrian safety at schools	<u>Comments from Chris Sperring, Principal Transport Policy Officer:</u> If school travel measures and physical improvement works (such as pedestrian crossing points) are to be taken forward, it is likely that the relevant school will be required to refresh its School Travel Plan to demonstrate commitment to improving safety and encouraging Active Travel and sustainable means of travel to/from school. The current travel plans for St. Marks (2005) and St. Finnian's (2009) are now somewhat out of date and ideally should be refreshed.	Noted – have made reference to school travel plans in papa 7.5.	✓

88	Section 10 Non-Policy Actions Ref 15: HGVs using inappropriate routes through the villages (despite existing weight limits)	<u>Comments from Chris Sperring, Principal Transport Policy Officer:</u> The road network in Cold Ash parish (including Cold Ash Hill) does not form part of the West Berkshire Freight Route Network as defined in the Local Transport Plan Freight Strategy 2014. Any amendments to weight restrictions and advisory signing would need to be developed with WBDC's Traffic and Road Safety Team.	Noted and added in reference to this team.	✓
94-96	Section 14 Glossary	Suggest including a definition of what is meant by the 'development plan', ie. A document setting out the local planning authority's policies and proposals for the development and use of land and buildings in the authority's area. This includes adopted Local Plans and neighbourhood plans, together with any regional strategies that remain in force. It is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.	Added in.	✓
95	Section 14 Glossary: Previously developed land / brownfield land	The definition used should be that as given in the NPPF, ie. Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be PDL Previously Developed Land developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the	This has been amended.	✓

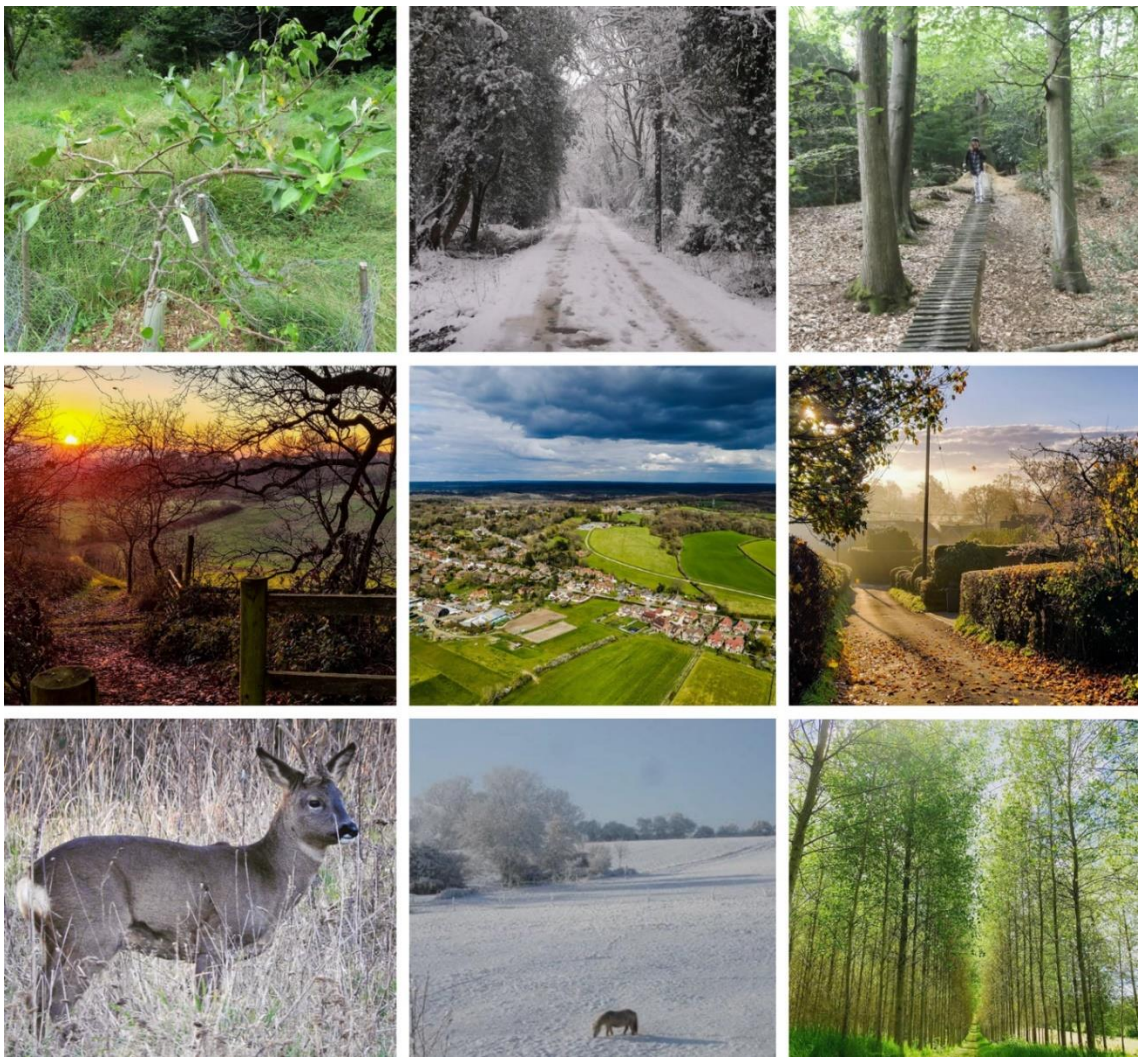
		landscape.		
95	Section 14 Glossary: Settlement Boundaries	Suggest rewording to accord with the definition given in the Local Plan Review: These identify the ~~areas in the district of primarily built form, rather than countryside~~ the main built up area of a settlement within which development is considered acceptable, subject to other policy considerations. ~~They identify areas within which development of brownfield land may normally be appropriate, including infilling, redevelopment and conversions in accordance with Government Policy and Guidance (NPPF and NPPG).~~ ~~They do not include a presumption for the development of greenfield land such as playing fields and other open space. Identified built-up area boundaries do ot necessarily include all existing developed areas.~~ While allowing for development, settlement boundaries protect the character of a settlement and prevent unrestricted growth into the countryside. They create a level of certainty about whether or not the principle of development is likely to be acceptable.	The definition has been amended.	✓
96	Section 14 Glossary: Use Classes Order	Definition needs to reflect that the Use Classes Order was amended in 2020.	Amended.	✓

110-118	Appendix C: Local Green Spaces	Some of the Local Green Spaces are in private ownership, have the owners been contacted? The Group will need to be able to show the Examiner that this has been done and should be evidenced.	All owners have been contacted.	✓

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Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan

2021 to 2039



Basic Conditions Statement

June 2023

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1. Introduction

1.1. This Basic Conditions Statement has been produced to accompany the Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan (CAPNDP).

1.2. The relevant legal framework for the preparation and making of neighbourhood plans is supported by the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 and found in the:

- Town and Country Planning Act 1990: ss. 61F, 61I, 61M-P and Schedule 4B
- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004: ss 38A-C
- Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (2012 No.637) (as amended)

1.3. Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 requires a neighbourhood plan to meet five basic conditions before it can proceed to a referendum. These are:

i. Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan;
ii. The making of the neighbourhood development plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
iii. The making of the neighbourhood development plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);
iv. The making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, (retained) EU obligations; and
v. Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the neighbourhood plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the neighbourhood plan. The prescribed condition is that the 'making' of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) or a European offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 2007) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).

1.4. Note that there are two further basic conditions which are relevant only to the making of a Neighbourhood Development Order and are therefore not considered in this document.

1.5. This document sets out how the CAPNDP meets the Basic Conditions.

Supporting documents and evidence

1.6. The Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan, with its policies, is supported by a Consultation Statement, this Basic Conditions Statement and an extensive evidence base. It has also been subject to a Screening, organised by West Berkshire Council (WBC), to ascertain whether or not it requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment and/or a Habitat Regulations Assessment, and the Determination Statement is included as part of the accompanying documentation.

1.7. Alongside the planning policies, the CAPNDP contains both infrastructure priorities and a series of projects which fall outside planning policy. These are intended to contribute towards the achievement of the Plan's vision and form the basis of the principles for the use of any developer funding and other monies arising from other planning obligations. They complement the Neighbourhood Plan document but are not a formal part of the Development Plan.

Key statements

1.8. Cold Ash Parish Council, as the qualifying body, has prepared the Neighbourhood Plan which has the same boundary as the parish area of Cold Ash, as shown in Figure 1. The Neighbourhood Area was designated by WBC on 19 March 2018.

1.9. The CAPNDP sets out planning policies that relate to the development and use of land within only the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Area.

1.10. The CAPNDP refers only to the administrative boundary of Cold Ash. There are no other adopted Neighbourhood Plans that cover all or part of the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Area.

1.11. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has prepared the CAPNDP to establish a vision for the future of the parish and a series of objectives to deliver this. It has engaged with the community to set out how the vision will be realised through planning and controlling land use and development change over the plan period 2021 to 2039.

1.12. The Plan does not contain any policies which relate to excluded development as defined by section 61K of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

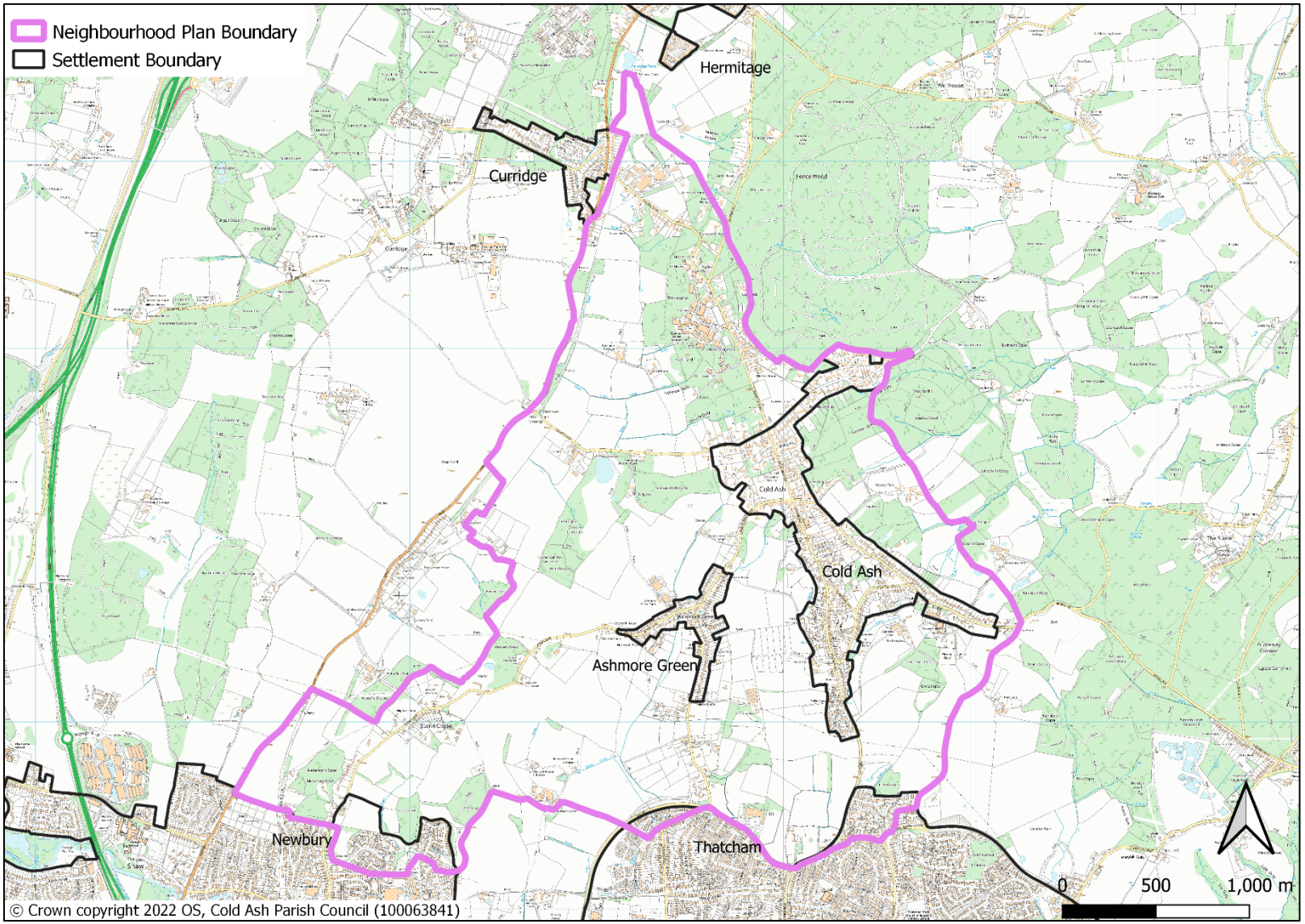


Figure 1: Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan designated area

2. Basic condition (i) - conformity with national planning policy

2.1. To meet this condition, it is necessary to demonstrate that the CANP has regard to national planning policies and the advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State. National policy and guidance is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') and the Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG').

2.2. It should be noted that the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the NPPF, most recently revised in July 2021.

National Planning Policy Framework

2.3. The NPPF has 13 key objectives which are:

- Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- Building a strong, competitive economy
- Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Promoting sustainable transport
- Supporting high quality communications
- Making effective use of land
- Achieving well-designed places
- Protecting Green Belt land
- Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
- Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals

2.4. This basic conditions statement explains how the CAPNDP policies contribute to meeting these objectives, where relevant, and also notes the specific national policies that the Plan is intended to support and supplement.

2.5. The CAPNDP has six objectives, which are shown in Table 1 alongside the corresponding NPPF objective or objectives that each one seeks to address.

2.6. Table 2 then provides further detail by detailing each of the 16 policies of the CAPNDP and which specific paragraphs of the NPPF it has had regard to along with a commentary.

Table 1: Assessment of the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan objectives against NPPF goals

CAPNDP objective	Relevant NPPF goal
Objective 1: To support sustainable, high quality, energy efficient and carbon neutral development that is in keeping with and seeks to preserve the heritage and character of the village in terms of design and scale. Development should meet an identified need and be directed to the most sustainable locations within the defined settlement boundaries.	• Promoting healthy and safe communities • Making effective use of land • Achieving well-designed places • Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change • Conserving and enhancing the natural environment • Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change • Conserving and enhancing the natural environment • Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
Objective 2: To protect the rural character and green spaces in and around the villages and other settlements, conserving and enhancing the attractiveness of the landscape, including its contribution to the North Wessex AONB, enabling access to the countryside, encouraging biodiversity, supporting the aims of the Local Nature Recovery Network Strategy for Berkshire and maintaining the Parish's distinct boundaries.	• Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Objective 3: To reduce the reliance on cars by improving opportunities for walking, cycling, equestrian and public transport both within the Parish and to other nearby villages, towns, and services, which will help to improve people's physical and mental health and wellbeing as well as and road safety for all.	• Promoting sustainable transport • Promoting healthy and safe communities
Objective 4: To maintain and enhance the existing 'village' atmosphere, ensuring the Parish remains a safe and friendly place to live, work and visit with a strong sense of community and a range of community facilities.	• Promoting healthy and safe communities • Achieving well-designed places • Ensuring the vitality of town centres
Objective 5: To support measures that will help to mitigate climate change that will improve air and water quality, tackle plastic pollution and restore habitats to allow plants and wildlife to thrive.	• Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change • Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Objective 6: To encourage a thriving rural economy by supporting existing businesses operating in the parish and providing opportunities for new ones where this can be achieved sustainably.	• Building a strong, competitive economy • Ensuring the vitality of town centres

Table 2: Assessment of how each policy in the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan conforms to the NPPF

Policy Title and Reference	NPPF Reference (paragraph)	Commentary
POLICY CAP1: LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT	11, 29, 60, 79, 80, 119, 120, 121, 124, 130, 174, 176, 190, 197	A core principle of national policy is the need for the planning system to contribute to sustainable development. The NPPF states that plans should support strategic development needs as set out in the adopted Local Plan and actively manage patterns of growth. Policy CAP1 supports the development strategy set out in the adopted Core Strategy, while also synchronising with that of the Local Plan Review (LPR), which is at an advanced stage. The LPR does not identify a housing figure to be delivered through the Neighbourhood Plan, and it is considered that housing supply – to address both local and strategic housing needs - is being addressed adequately at the strategic level. The CAPNDP is a non-allocating neighbourhood plan and this position has been agreed with WBC. That is not to say that suitable sites may not become available in the future. An early review of the CAPNDP, therefore, will be undertaken to consider the policies of the LPR, once adopted, and the implications of these. This will provide greater clarity about the amount of growth that Cold Ash may be expected to accommodate over the new plan period. The policy seeks to ensure that any development within (including within the setting of) the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is carefully planned, to take account of this special landscape. Finally, the policy seeks to minimise coalescence between the individual settlements within the Parish and those nearby, notably Thatcham and Newbury. This will help to retain the distinctive character of the villages and retain the green gaps separating them. This will contribute to sustainable development by ensuring that development takes place in the most appropriate places.

POLICY CAP2: LOCAL CHARACTER AND HERITAGE	126 to 134, 189, 190, 199 to 205	National policy encourages neighbourhood plans to develop policies that achieve well-designed places that reflect local aspirations and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Policy CAP2 contributes to this aim by ensuring that development in the neighbourhood area is designed to respect the prevailing character of the parish – to inform this, three Character Zones have been identified, informed by the built and natural landscape. Each is described and development proposals are encouraged to take their cue from the descriptions. The policy also maps, at the local level, the heritage assets – both above and below ground – in the parish, which should be considered carefully in the context of development and its potential impact.
POLICY CAP3: DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT	104, 108, 120, 126 to 136, 152	Good quality design is an integral aim within the NPPF. Communities, through neighbourhood plans, are encouraged to provide clarity about design expectations at an early stage. This policy seeks to do that and is underpinned by a series of design characteristics local to the area. These have drawn from the National Design Guide and also make reference to strategic guidance including the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan. The policy will help to ensure that developments function well in the area over the long term, are visually attractive, are sympathetic to local character, establish a sense of place and create safe, inclusive and accessible places.
POLICY CAP4: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN	130, 152 to 155	The policy supports the national objective of designing development to mitigate climate change, a government priority. Notwithstanding the fact that energy efficiency matters are largely controlled by the Building Regulations, the policy identifies a series of design features which would be supported where they are incorporated into development. In particular it supports features aimed at reducing carbon emissions, energy consumption and energy loss that should be incorporated into both new development and to retrofit sensitively historic buildings.

POLICY CAP5: MINIMISING THE RISK OF FLOODING	159 to 169	The NPPF requires policies to make sufficient provision for infrastructure including for water supply, wastewater and flood risk. Flooding is a problem in Cold Ash and the policy seeks to ensure that new development will not exacerbate this and supports solutions that not only mitigate the new development but that will assist in improving the overall system.
POLICY CAP6: BIODIVERSITY AND THE NETWORK OF GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE	174, 175, 176, 179, 180	This policy supports the national objective of ensuring that development contributes to and enhances the natural environment and biodiversity. It maps out, at the neighbourhood level, components of wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation through protecting designated and non-designated landscape assets. It recognises the importance of trees and the variety of roles they play, seeking to safeguard them against loss and planting of new ones. In line with the Environment Act, the policy requires developments to deliver a biodiversity net gain of at least 10%. Where this cannot be achieved on-site, the locally mapped network of green infrastructure offers locations, including biodiversity opportunity areas, where units can most effectively make a positive contribution to local habitats and landscapes.
POLICY CAP7: MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT	170 to 182	The policy supports the national aims of policies to improve biodiversity. In particular, it identifies, at a local level, the significant landscape features, such as trees, verges, waterways, ponds and hedgerows – that are particularly important within the Cold Ash context. These features should be retained and, where possible enhanced. The policy also provides guidance to applicants on how they can best incorporate open space within development as well as wildlife-friendly features.

POLICY CAP8: ICONIC VIEWS	126, 127, 130	The NPPF states that neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of their area and explaining how these should be reflected in development, both through their own plans and by engaging in the production of design policy, guidance and codes by local planning authorities and developers. This policy identifies views and viewpoints that are considered to be locally distinctive – either because they encompass a local landmark or notable landscape. The policy seeks to ensure that any development that takes place within the view 'arcs' limits its impact on the view itself and, where possible, enhances it.
POLICY CAP9: LOCAL GREEN SPACES	101-103, 137-151	The NPPF enables communities to designate spaces that are demonstrably special to them as Local Green Spaces. The policy identifies six such spaces in Cold Ash parish and provides the justification as to how they meet the NPPF criteria.
POLICY CAP10: DARK SKIES	185	The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. One aspect of this is to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation. Cold Ash parish benefits from dark skies, which contribute positively to health, local wildlife and enjoyment of the area. The policy seeks to safeguard this important natural resource.
POLICY CAP11: ENCOURAGING SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT	92, 104 to 106,	Policy CAP11 supports the NPPF objective of encouraging sustainable modes of transport by mapping the movement routes within the neighbourhood area that enable people to access local facilities most easily and directly by foot or by bike, rather than relying on less sustainable modes of transport. The policy seeks to ensure that all development links up to the movement route network and that the routes are protected, maintained and, where

		feasible, enhanced, to encourage greater and safer usage.
POLICY CAP12: SUNKEN LANES	126, 127, 174, 175, 179, 189, 190	The policy seeks to identify and protect the network of historic sunken lanes, which provide a valuable movement network through the parish, particularly for horse riders, as well as contributing to the rural character of the area and providing an important network of wildlife corridors. This contributes to national aims of ensuring good design and identifying and protecting the special qualities at the local level. Sunken lanes also provide a valuable resource as wildlife corridors as part of the green and blue infrastructure network.
POLICY CAP13: PUBLIC CAR PARKING	92, 104 to 106	Whilst the CAPNDP seeks to encourage sustainable modes of transport through Policy CAP11, continued car usage is inevitable in a largely rural parish such as Cold Ash. Policy CAP13 seeks to address concerns related to public car parking, which has been highlighted as a problem, particularly within the village centre and near to key facilities such as the school. The policy supports the retention of existing public car parking spaces and, in accordance with the NPPF's call for convenient, safe and secure car parking, supports new provision; as part of this, notably, the policy supports the provision of electric car and bicycle charging points, to encourage a shift towards less polluting vehicles.
POLICY CAP14: IMPORTANT COMMUNITY FACILITIES	86, 92, 93	This policy identifies the community facilities particularly valued by the community and seeks to protect them from loss or change of use, where possible. It supports proposals to enhance these facilities. This will help to maintain the viability of the village as a local service provider as well as supporting healthy, active, inclusive and safe communities, which offer social, recreational and cultural facilities.

POLICY CAP15: Supporting commercial businesses and expansions	81, 82, 84, 85, 86	The policy supports the ongoing provision of employment opportunities locally. This will help to enable a viable community with opportunities for employment within the parish, in turn reducing the need to out-commute. This is particularly important in terms of supporting the economy in rural areas.
POLICY CAP16: SUPPORTING SMES, FLEXIBLE START-UPS, AND HOMEWORKING	81, 82, 84	The NPPF underlines the importance of sustainable economic growth. Policy CAP16 applies this to the neighbourhood level, providing support for development that will provide additional employment opportunities within the parish, taking advantage of new ways of working. In doing so, the policy supports the national objectives of creating healthy, inclusive, safe places that allow for new and flexible working practices.

3. Basic condition (iv) - contribution to sustainable development

3.1. The NPPF states in paragraph 7 that '*the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development*.'

3.2. For the CAPNDP, sustainable development has provided the fundamental basis of each of its policies. The National Planning Practice Guidance advises that '*sufficient and proportionate evidence should be presented on how the draft neighbourhood plan … guides development to sustainable solutions*'[1].

3.3. Table 3 below summarises how the objectives and policies in the CAPNDP contribute towards economic, social and environmental sustainable development, as defined in the NPPF. Many of the objectives of the CAPNDP overlap the three strands of sustainability, so for the purposes of this document, the most relevant strand has been taken to illustrate conformity.

Table 3: Assessment of the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan objectives and policies against sustainable development

Deliver economic sustainability
NPPF definition – *'to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.'*
NP Objectives: **Objective 6:** To encourage a thriving rural economy by supporting existing businesses operating in the parish and providing opportunities for new ones where this can be achieved sustainably.
NP Policies: CAP15: Supporting commercial businesses and expansions CAP16: Supporting SMEs, flexible start-ups and homeworking
Commentary: The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan collectively seek to support the environment required for a vibrant and viable economy, recognising the role of the village centre as the focal point for the community, providing a range of retail, social and other amenities. Opportunities for providing flexible working space and enabling homeworking are supported, which will support local innovation and, in turn, additional employment opportunities within the parish itself. The provision of additional car parking at the village hall will provide access and greater footfall to facilities. In these ways, the Plan seeks to contribute to building a sustainable economy.
Deliver social sustainability
NPPF definition – *'to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient*

[1] Planning Practice Guidance, Paragraph: 072 Reference ID: 41-072-20140306

number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.'

NP Objectives:

Objective 1: To support sustainable, high quality, energy efficient and carbon neutral development that is in keeping with and seeks to preserve the heritage and character of the village in terms of design and scale. Development should meet an identified need and be directed to the most sustainable locations within the defined settlement boundaries.
Objective 4: To maintain and enhance the existing 'village' atmosphere, ensuring the Parish remains a safe and friendly place to live, work and visit with a strong sense of community and a range of community facilities.

NP Policies:
CAP1: Location of development
CAP3: Design of development
CAP14: Important community facilities

Commentary:

The NPPF underlines the importance of supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high-quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being.

The CAPNDP has been developed as a result of extensive local engagement to understand local priorities to contribute to this national objective. The plan does not seek to allocate homes at this time (as it is considered and agreed with WBC that need across the strategic area is being adequately addressed through strategic sites and windfall). The Plan therefore focusses on ensuring that new homes are located into the most sustainable locations, which reinforce the identity and character of the parish ands its settlements and in protecting the special features of the AONB and its setting.

The Plan includes a range of policies to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs. These are based on community engagement and each policy provides locally specific detail on what is required and how this can be supported through planning.

In these ways, the Plan aims to support a strong, vibrant and healthy community.

Deliver environmental sustainability

NPPF definition – ***'to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy,'***

NP Objectives:

Objective 2: To protect the rural character and green spaces in and around the villages and other settlements, conserving and enhancing the attractiveness of the landscape, including its contribution to the North Wessex AONB, enabling access to the countryside, encouraging biodiversity, supporting the aims of the Local Nature Recovery Network Strategy for Berkshire and maintaining the Parish's distinct boundaries.

Objective 3: To reduce the reliance on cars by improving opportunities for walking, cycling, equestrian and public transport both within the Parish and to other nearby villages, towns, and services, which will help to improve people's physical and mental health and wellbeing as well as and road safety for all. **Objective 5:** To support measures that will help to mitigate climate change that will improve air and water quality, tackle plastic pollution and restore habitats to allow plants and wildlife to thrive.
NP Policies: CAP2: Local character and heritage CAP4: Sustainable design CAP5: Minimising the risk of flooding CAP6: Biodiversity and the network of green and blue infrastructure CAP7: Managing the environmental impact of development CAP8: Iconic views CAP9: Local Green Spaces CAP10: Dark skies CAP11: Sustainable movement CAP12: Sunken lanes CAP13: Public car parking
Commentary: Protecting the natural and built environment of the parish is an extremely important part of the CAPNDP and conforms to the national aims set out in the NPPF. Locally specific design guidance has been developed and forms an integral part of the plan's policies. This sets out expectations in terms of local character, design, biodiversity and environmental considerations. Locally important heritage assets are mapped as have natural features and habitats, so that they can be safeguarded and, where possible, enhanced. This includes the designation of Local Green Spaces, the identification of important local views and viewpoints and the importance of the dark skies that much of Cold Ash Parish enjoys. The Plan emphasises the need to promote non-car modes of transport in order to reduce traffic congestion and travel by the private car to reduce carbon emissions. In these ways, the Plan seeks to contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment of the neighbourhood area.

3.4. As demonstrated in Table 3, the strategic objectives of the Plan are considered to comprise a balance of social, economic, and environmental goals. The policies in the Plan demonstrably contribute to sustainable development.

4 Basic condition (v) - general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan

4.1. The current development plan for West Berkshire consists of:

- Core Strategy Development Document 2006 to 2026 (adopted 2012)
- Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (adopted May 2017)
- Saved policies from the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 to 2006 – as amended in July 2012 and May 2017
- South East Plan Natural Resource Management Policy 6 - relating to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
- West Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2022-2037 (adopted 1 December 2022)

4.2. The policies of the CAPNDP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Core Strategy, Housing Site DPD and the saved policies of the Local Plan (1991 to 2006). A Local Plan Review (LPR) for the Borough is currently being developed. The emerging policies within it have been carefully considered to ensure that the neighbourhood plan is in synchronicity with these. A commentary of how the CDNDP policies confirm to both adopted and LPR policies is set out in Table 4.

4.3. Where a strategic policy is not identified in Table 4, it is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan does not contain any policies that directly relate to it.

4.4. It is confirmed that there are no policies in the strategic documents relating to minerals and waste that are of relevance to the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.5. To note, policies starting with "CS" in the table below are considered to be the core strategic policies of the adopted Core Strategy. Policies starting with “SP” are considered to be the core strategic policies of the Local Plan Review.

Table 4: Relevant strategic policies

Policy Title and Reference	Adopted policy	LPR	Commentary
POLICY CAP1: LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT	Adopted Core Strategy: ADP Policy 1 and 5, CS1 Housing Site Allocations DPD: C1	SP1, SP2, SP3, DM1	The strategic planning policies set out the development strategic and level of growth to be accommodated across the Borough, defining the settlement boundary for the villages in the parish. The LPR strategic allocations, combined with windfall allowance, are anticipated to deliver the level of growth required at the local level to meet local housing need, while contributing to the strategic need. Policy CAP1 provides a spatial strategy for the parish, aligning to the strategic policies in terms of directing development to the most sustainable locations within the settlement boundaries. This will also help to protect the special landscape of the North Wessex Downs AONB and its setting. The policy adds additional local detail, for instance by seeking to restrict sprawl and coalescence between Cold Ash, Ashmore Green and other settlements to the south, notably Thatcham, by way of identifying green gaps.
POLICY CAP2: LOCAL CHARACTER AND HERITAGE	Adopted Core Strategy: CS19	SP7, SP8, SP9	The policy adds additional local detail to the strategic policies, which seek to ensure that development conserves and enhances the diversity and local distinctiveness of the landscape character of the District, and the natural, cultural, and functional components of its character as a whole. It does this by three local Character Zones and describing the features that contribute to them and how proposals should seek to reinforce them. The policy also maps out local heritage assets at a local level to ensure that impacts on these can be fully assessed.

POLICY CAP3: DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT	Adopted Core Strategy: CS14	SP7	The policy adds additional local detail to the strategic policies by setting out, within the Cold Ash context, how design can be used to achieve the strategic objectives of demonstrating high quality and sustainable design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area, and makes a positive contribution to the quality of life in West Berkshire.
POLICY CAP4: SUSTIANABLE DESIGN	Adopted Core Strategy: CS14, CS15	SP5, SP7	The policy sets out detail at a neighbourhood level about how development proposals can contribute to mitigating climate change. Sustainable design policy has evolved greatly since the publication of the adopted Core Strategy and, in the absence of a more recently adopted Local Plan, this policy seeks to align itself to the national objectives.
POLICY CAP5: MINIMISING THE RISK OF FLOODING	Adopted Core Strategy: CS16	SP6	Flooding is a particular problem in the parish, exacerbated by the antiquated sewerage system and natural topography of the area. The policy sees to emphasise this and the importance of ensuring that new development provides adequate drainage that does not worsen the situation.
POLICY CAP6: BIODIVERSITY AND THE NETWORK OF GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE	Adopted Core Strategy: CS17, CS18	SP10, SP11	The policy addresses the green and blue infrastructure assets of the Plan area, including their importance in combatting pressure on wildlife, habitats, biodiversity and geodiversity and in offsetting the effects of air pollution. The policy conforms to strategic policies, which seek to safeguard and enhance biodiversity and landscapes across the borough. It provides additional local detail by mapping out, at the local level, the network of green and blue infrastructure. It requires a net gain in biodiversity and the local map identifies areas where this can most helpfully be delivered, should the net gain not be possible wholly on-site.
POLICY CAP7: MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT	Adopted Core Strategy: CS14, CS17	SP10, SP11	The policy adds additional local detail to strategic policies by identifying the specific features of the landscape (both designated and non-designated) that should be safeguarded. These might also provide inspiration for development proposals seeking to integrate natural features within their schemes.

POLICY CAP8: ICONIC VIEWS	Adopted Core Strategy: ADP5, CS19:	SP7, SP8, SP9	Strategic policy recognises the contribution that views can make to the character of an area, helping to create a 'sense of place' and identity for local people. The policy adds additional local detail by identifying a series of view corridors and views that are considered to be particularly significant in the parish – because they take in a landscape feature or historic asset – that epitomises the character and place of the parish.
POLICY CAP9: LOCAL GREEN SPACES	Adopted Core Strategy: CS18	SP10, SP11	The policy identifies six Local Green Spaces that are demonstrably special to the community and evidences this in the context of the criteria set out in the NPPF. This adds additional local detail to strategic policies by setting out the areas of green infrastructure that should be protected as local green space.
POLICY CAP10: DARK SKIES	Adopted Core Strategy: CS19	SP8	Strategic policy sets out that proposals should have regard to the natural, cultural, and perceptual components of the character of the landscape. The areas of dark sky within Cold Ash contribute to this and are important not only for wildlife but also for the mental health and wellbeing of local people. The policy has been developed with support from the AONB Unit.
POLICY CAP11: SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT	Adopted Core Strategy: CS13	SP23	The policy supports the strategic aim of encouraging, as far as possible, sustainable transport modes. It adds additional local detail by mapping the movement routes within the parish that offer the most direct and quickest routes between key facilities and residential areas. Opportunities for greater linkages and improvements are described where this would further assist active travel.
POLICY CAP12: SUNKEN LANES	Adopted Core Strategy: CS19	SP8, SP9, SP10	The sunken lanes found in the parish contribute significantly to local character and also local biodiversity, acting as natural wildlife corridors. The policy maps them at the local level so that development proposals can take them fully into account and ensure that they are safeguarded against impacts that would negatively impact their character and function.

POLICY CAP13: PUBLIC CAR PARKING	Adopted Core Strategy: CS13	SP23	Notwithstanding the overarching aim of encouraging sustainable modes of transport, particularly for journeys within the parish, car dependency remains higher than average across the wider area. The policy supports the ongoing provision of car parking, including specific support for additional space to serve the village centre facilities, Hermitage Road Recreation Ground and the schools. This aligns with strategic policy. In parallel, however, it seeks electric charging points and cycle storage to support a shift toward less polluting forms of transport..
POLICY CAP14: IMPORTANT COMMUNITY FACILITIES	Saved Local Plan Policy: RL2, SHOP5 Adopted Core Strategy: ADP2	SP24, DM39	The policy adds additional local detail to the strategic policies, which support the provision and safeguarding of community recreational facilities. In particular, it sets out specific projects that are desired locally, as informed by local engagement.
POLICY CAP15: SUPPORTING COMMERCIAL BUSINESSES, EXISTING AND EXPANSIONS	Adopted Core Strategy: CS9	SP20	Strategic policy provides broad protection of existing employment sites. Policy CAP15 adds additional local detail by setting out the specific locations within the parish that are considered to be important to safeguard as employment sites and which could offer modest expansion.
POLICY CAP16: SUPPORTING SMES, FLEXIBLE START-UPS AND HOMEWORKING	Adopted Core Strategy: CS9	SP20	Policy CAP16 of the CAPNDP supports proposals that will help to deliver a flexible working environment, in line with evolving ways of working. This will help to contribute to a more sustainable economy, offering additional employment opportunities within the parish.

5 Basic Condition (vi) - conformity with EU obligations

5.1 The Plan, and the process under which it was made, conforms to the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (EU 2001/42/EC) and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations).

5.2 In accordance with Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations 2004, West Berkshire Council, as the responsible authority, determined in November 2022 that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is not required as the Neighbourhood Plan's policies are unlikely to have significant environmental effects, either individually or collectively.

5.3 The Screening Report and Decision Notice are available to view on the WBC website.

6 Basic condition (vii) - conformity with the prescribed conditions

6.1 Under Directive 92/43/EEC, also known as the Habitats Directive Directive 92/43/EEC 'on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora': http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:31992L0043), it must be ascertained whether the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

6.2 Assessments under the regulations are known as Habitats Regulation Assessments ("HRA"). An appropriate assessment ("AA") is required only if the Plan is likely to have significant effects on a European protected species or site. To ascertain whether or not it is necessary to undertake an assessment, a screening process is followed.

6.3 WBC, as the responsible authority, determined in November 2022 that the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant impact on European sites and therefore does not require a full HRA to be undertaken.

6.4 The Screening Report and Decision Notice are available to view on the WBC website.

6.5 In addition to conforming to its EU obligations, the Plan does not breach and is not otherwise incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights.

7 Conclusion

7.1. The relevant basic conditions as set out in Schedule 4B to the TCPA 1990 are considered to be met by the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan and all the policies therein. It is therefore respectfully suggested to the Examiner that the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan complies with Paragraph 8(1) (a) of Schedule 4B of the Act.

Legal Compliance Check – Submission of Neighbourhood Plan

Neighbourhood Plan	Cold Ash
The Qualifying Body	Cold Ash Parish Council
Date Submitted	20 June 2023
Date of Assessment	14 July 2023

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	**West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments**	**Legally compliant?**
Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) – Regulation 15 requirements: *A qualifying body is required to submit:* *(a) A map or statement which identifies the area to which the proposed neighbourhood development plan relates*	A map identifying the neighbourhood plan area can be found in the Submission Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) – see Chapter 1, Figure 1 on page 7. A map is also included at Figure 1 within the Basic Conditions Statement.	Yes
(b) A consultation statement; (the statement must contain details of (a) those consulted, (b) how they were consulted, (c) summarises the main issues and concerns raised and (d) how these have been considered, and where relevant addressed in the proposed Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 15 (2) Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012).	(a) A Consultation Statement accompanies the submission Cold Ash NDP. Appendix B of the Statement lists the statutory and local consultees who were notified of the Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation. These include: • West Berkshire District Council • Adjoining local authorities • Adjoining Parish Councils • Berkshire Primary Care Trust • Environment Agency • Homes England	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
	• Natural England • National Grid • National Highways • North Wessex Downs AONB • Landowners of proposed Local Green Spaces • Local businesses • Thames Water • UK Power Networks It also indicates that all those on the NDP mailing list were notified. (b) How interested parties were consulted is set out is set out within paragraphs 2.32 to 2.35. Paragraphs 2.32 and 2.25 explain that the consultation was communicated to the local community via social media, an article in the Parish newsletter, and fliers and posters. All those on the NDP mailing list were notified by email, whilst statutory consultees were written to. Two Q&A sessions were held, with one session held online with a second in person. All of the consultation documents were placed on the Parish Council's website, and hard copies were made available upon request. A survey was prepared which respondents could complete either online or in hard copy. (c) A summary of the main issues and concerns raised as a result of the pre-submission consultation are contained within Appendix C of the Consultation Statement. An overview is also provided in paragraphs 2.38 to 2.49. The comments in full are contained within the document 'Cold Ash Parish Council pre-submission draft NDP feedback survey'.	

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
	(d) Consideration of how the matters have been addressed within the NDP are set out within Appendix B. An overview is also provided within paragraphs 2.38 to 2.49.	
(c) The proposed neighbourhood development plan;	The Local Planning Authority received the Submission Cold Ash NDP on 20 June 2023. It was accompanied by the following documents: • Consultation Statement; • Basic Conditions Statement; • Evidence underpinning the spatial strategy for the NDP; • SEA/HRA final (post-consultation) screening opinion (Nov 2022); • SEA/SRA screening decision notice (Nov 2022); • SEA/HRA final (post-consultation) screening opinion (Dec 2021); • SEA/SRA screening decision notice (Dec 2021); • Evidence list; • Contact details of Reg 14 consultees for Reg 16 consultation; • Regulation 14 statutory consultees and Parish Council contacts; and • Pre-submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan Feedback Survey (Regulation 14 consultation).	Yes
(d) A statement explaining how the proposed neighbourhood development plan meets the 'basic conditions', i.e. the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act. The local planning authority has to be satisfied that a basic conditions statement has been submitted but it is not required at this stage to consider whether the draft plan or order meets the basic conditions. (PPG - Paragraph: 053 Reference ID: 41-053- 20140306)	A Basic Conditions Statement accompanies the submission Cold Ash NDP. This considers each Basic Condition in turn and explains how the policies in the plan meets these.	Yes
(e) Environmental Assessment;	WBDC conducted a screening opinion on a draft of the Cold Ash NDP and consulted within the three statutory bodies (the Environment Agency, Natural England, and Historic England) on the draft screening determination	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
The Plan needs to be submitted with one of the following: (i) a statement of reasons for a determination under regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 that the proposal is unlikely to have significant environmental effects OR (ii) an environmental report in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 ((Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.) If an Environmental Report is required, then this needs to have been subject to the required level of consultation and should comply with the government's SEA guidance. In terms of consultation, the 'consultation bodies' (EA, NE and HE) must have been consulted at scoping stage (for 5 weeks). There is no requirement for public consultation on the scoping report. The draft Environmental Report on the pre-submission neighbourhood plan will need to be subject to public consultation for 6 weeks. The draft Environmental Report must be made available at the same time as the draft plan, as an integral part of the consultation process,	for the minimum 5-week period (from 5 November 2021 until 10 December 2021). Drawing on the feedback form the consultees, WBDC concluded that the NDP was unlikely to have significant environmental effects and therefore does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The Council also determined that the NDP will not give rise to significant effects on Habitats Sites (which include Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas) either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. It was therefore considered that a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Appropriate Assessment was not required. On 16 March 2022 Natural England designated the hydrological catchment of the River Lambourn (which is a Special Area of Conservation) as a Nutrient Neutrality Zone (NNZ) due to the unfavourable condition of the watercourse because of unnaturally high levels of phosphorus. The River Lambourn NNZ covers the northern and western parts of Cold Ash Parish, and because of this WBDC advised that the draft NDP would need to be re-screened to consider its impact upon the NNZ. A revised screening opinion was prepared, and the three statutory bodies were consulted between 24 October 2022 and 28 November 2022. The final conclusions remained unchanged from the original screening opinion, ie. SEA and HRA Appropriate Assessment are not required.	

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
and the relationship between the two documents clearly indicated. (See A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive, ODPM – 2005)		
The draft neighbourhood Plan should be checked to ensure it is not a 'repeat' proposal. If so, the LPA can decline to consider the plan (1990 Act Schedule 4B Paragraph 5 and Regulation 18).	The Submission Cold Ash NDP is not a repeat proposal.	Yes
The body submitting the neighbourhood plan is authorised to act (2004 P & CP Act as amended by Localism Act 2011 Section 38 A (2) and 1990 Act schedule 4B as it applies- 61F (2)).	The qualifying body is Cold Ash Parish Council. The neighbourhood area was designated on 19 March 2018. Cold Ash Parish Council, as the qualifying body, have formally (at a Parish Council meeting on 13 June 2023) resolved to submit the NDP to the WBDC. The Plan was produced by the Cold Ash NDP Steering Group, a group of volunteers, having been commissioned to do so by the parish council.	Yes
The pre-submission publication requirements need to have been satisfied. Before submission to the LPA the qualifying body should: 1. Publicise (but this does not have to be on a web site) in a way that is likely to bring to the attention of people who live work or carry on business in the area details of: (a) the proposals (b) when and where they can be inspected (c) how to make representations, and (d) the deadline for making representations – not less than 6 weeks from first publicised.	The Consultation Statement demonstrates that these requirements have been satisfied: 1. The Regulation 14 consultation version of the plan has complied with the regulations, and this is evidenced in paragraphs 2.28 to 2.34 of the Consultation Statement which accompanies the submission Cold Ash NDP. It shows that the Regulation 14 consultation was publicised by a variety of means including social media, notifications to those on the NDP mailing list, and fliers and posters were placed around the village. The plan was available to view online at https://coldashpc.org.uk/ndp/ndp-consultations/cold-ash-ndp-pre-submission-consultation/, whilst hard copies were available at Cold Ash Parish Council office. The publicity material also explained how representations could be made and the address and website to be used.	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
2. Consult any consultation body whose interests they consider may be affected by the proposals for a NDP (please see Appendix A below). 3. Send a copy of the NDP to the LPA. (Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.	The consultation lasted for 6 weeks and ran from 1 March 2023 until 19 April 2023. 2. Appendix B of the Consultation Statement includes a list of Statutory Consultees and non-statutory consultees who were consulted as part of the Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation. 3. The NDP Steering Group emailed WBDC on 16 March 2023 to advise of the consultation, and a link to the consultation documents on the NDP website was included.	
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 Regulations 105 and 106: *A qualifying body which submits a proposal for a neighbourhood development plan must provide such information as the competent authority may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment under regulation 105 or to enable them to determine whether that assessment is required*	Cold Ash Parish Council requested a HRA screening opinion on 1 August 2021, and provided a draft version of the NDP. This included all the necessary information that WBDC required for the purposes of conducting an HRA screening assessment. The final determination was issued on 13 December 2021 following a 5-week consultation with the three statutory bodies in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The screening concluded that the NDP will not give rise to significant effects on Habitats Sites either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. A new screening opinion was requested on 20 September 2022 following the designation of the River Lambourn NNZ which covers parts of Cold Ash Parish. The revised screening opinion, which was issued on 29 November 2022, concluded that the NDP will not give rise to significant effects on Habitats Sites either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. Both screening opinions were submitted to WBDC alongside the NDP.	Yes
Meets the definition of a 'neighbourhood development plan': *"A plan which sets out policies (however expressed) in relation to the development and use and of land in the whole or any part of a*	The Submission Cold Ash NDP meets the definition of a 'neighborhood development plan.'	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
particular neighbourhood area specified in the plan" (2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act as amended by Localism Act 2011 Section 38 A (2))		
Meets the scope of neighbourhood plan provisions, ie. specifies the period for which it covers, does not include provision about development that is 'excluded development' (as set out in section 61K of the 1990 Act) and does not relate to more than one neighbourhood area. (2004 Act s 38B (1, 2) (4)) Meaning of 'excluded development': The following development is excluded development for the purposes of section 61J— (a) development that consists of a county matter within paragraph 1(1)(a) to (h) of Schedule 1, (b) development that consists of the carrying out of any operation, or class of operation, prescribed under paragraph 1(j) of that Schedule (waste development) but that does not consist of development of a prescribed description, (c) development that falls within Annex 1 to Council Directive 85/337/EEC on the	The Submission Cold Ash NDP specifies that it covers the period 2021 to 2039. The Submission Cold Ash NDP does not contain policies relating to 'excluded development.' It does not relate to more than the neighborhood area. These points are reiterated in the Basic Conditions Statement.	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (as amended from time to time), (d) development that consists (whether wholly or partly) of a nationally significant infrastructure project (within the meaning of the Planning Act 2008), (e) prescribed development or development of a prescribed description; and (f) development in a prescribed area or an area of a prescribed description.		

Conclusion: West Berkshire District Council confirms that the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the legislative requirements.

Where the draft neighbourhood plan submitted to a Local Planning Authority meets the requirements in the legislation, the Local Planning Authority must publicise the neighbourhood plan for a minimum of 6 weeks, invite comments, notify any consultation body referred to in the consultation statement and send the draft neighbourhood plan to independent examination (see regulations 16, 17, 23 and 24 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), Planning Practice Guidance - Paragraph: 054 Reference ID: 41-054-20140306).

Following examination, the Council will determine whether or not the plan is ready for a public referendum or if further modifications are required (Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as varied by s38A & 38C of the Town and Country Planning Act)). Please note that all references to primary and secondary legislation are to those enactments as amended.

Appendix A – Consultation Bodies

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Schedule 1 Consultation bodies that the Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum should consult (at pre-submission stage):

- In a London Borough, the Mayor of London
- A Local Planning Authority, county council or parish council any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the Local Planning Authority
- The Coal Authority
- The Homes and Communities Agency (now known as Homes England)
- Natural England
- The Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
- National Highways
- The Marine Management Organisation
- Any person to whom the electronic communications code applies, or who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the area of the Local Planning Authority
- Where they exist a Primary Care Trust, licensee under the Electricity Act 1989, Licensee of the Gas Act 1986, sewerage undertaker and water undertaker
- Voluntary bodies whose activities benefit all or part of the neighbourhood area
- Bodies representing the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the neighbourhood area
- Bodies representing the interests of different religious groups in the neighbourhood area and
- Bodies representing the interests of disabled people in the neighbourhood area.

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Summary of representations received by West Berkshire District Council on the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan as part of the Regulation 16 consultation

Consultation dates: 21 July 2023 – 1 September 2023

Respondent	Policy / paragraph	Summary of comment
Canal and River Trust	General	Canal and River Trust have no waterways, assets or land interests within the Neighbourhood Area and therefore have no comment to make.
Donnington New Homes	CAP1	Promotion of land at Ashmore Green Farm, Stoney Lane, Ashmore Green. Residential development on this land would accord with the principles of the policy. If as part of a future review of the NDP Cold Ash Parish Council decide to allocate sites for residential development, the site should be considered.
Exolum Pipeline System	General	Plan of client's apparatus submitted. Exolum should be contacted if there are any works in the vicinity of their pipeline.
Historic England	General	Do not consider it necessary to provide detailed comments at this time. Reference is made to comments submitted to the pre-submission Regulation 14 submission. Link provided to Historic England guidance.
National Highways	General	Following a review of the consultation documents, National Highways have no comments to make.
Nexus Planning for Croudace Homes Ltd	CAP1	Croudace Homes has an option agreement with the landowners of Henwick Park in Thatcham. Policy CAP1 seeks to introduce a Buffer Zone that includes Henwick Park. The Buffer Zone largely relates to landscape matters. There is no justification in the evidence base for the Buffer Zone. The respondent commissioned a review of the landscape evidence and evidence base documents which concludes: • Buffer Zone is contrary to policy DM2 in the Local Plan Review which identifies two new green gaps to the north of Thatcham. • Buffer Zone is not supported by any evidence to justify its inclusion and is at odds with the findings of the landscape evidence prepared for the West Berkshire Local Plan Review (LPR). • The Character Zones set out within NDP policies CAP2 and CAP3 are unduly restrictive and do not make adequate provision for development which responds to its location at the Urban Fringe of Thatcham as opposed to elsewhere in the Parish. • NDP policy CAP8 identifies a view which looks southwards towards Thatcham across Henwick Park as 'iconic'. There is little evidence to suggest that it is notably specific, nor what valuable attributes should be protected. West Berkshire Council's evidence base for the LPR indicates that Henwick Park is suitable for development:

Respondent	Policy / paragraph	Summary of comment
		• Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment: site assessed as 'potentially developable in part'. • West Berkshire Appropriate Countryside Designation Study: site formed part of the assessment to determine whether specific designations for countryside areas around Newbury and Thatcham would be appropriate for green gap/wedge designations. Whilst the study does identify two pieces of land between Ashmore Green and Cold Ash and Thatcham, the site lies outside of these parcels. • West Berkshire Strategic Vision 2050: site referenced as being within an area identified for future growth. • Thatcham Strategic Growth Study: site referenced as being within an area identified for future growth. The construction of drainage basins associated with the Thatcham Flood Alleviation Strategy has altered the landscape within which this site sits. The urbanising effect of this development, which has commenced. Has further breached the landscape quality and has already breached the Buffer Zone. The NDP fails to meet the Basic Conditions: • having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State: there is no mention within national planning policy, other that in relation to Green Belt, where coalescence should be minimised and the distinctive character of villages retained. There is no Green Belt land within Cold Ash; • the making of the plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development: the NDP does not have sustainable development at its heart and is seeking to restrict development in areas not restricted as district-level. Without evidence, it does not promote sustainable development or meet the Basic Conditions test; • Be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained within the development plan: the NDP fails to accord with adopted and emerging planning policy. By seeking to implement a 'buffer zone' which is not present in the adopted Core Strategy and which is greater in area than that proposed by the LPR, the NDP, by default, promotes less development than adopted policy and based on the recently submitted LPR, will soon be out of date due to its lack of accordance with the emerging policies.
Plainview Planning Ltd on behalf of Mr and Mrs Liebreich	Paragraph 1.18	This paragraph discusses the LPR overarching strategy in relation to settlement boundaries which it seeks to align with. Comments in relation to that policy were submitted through the Regulation 19 pre-submission consultation on the LPR.
	Paragraph 3.4	This paragraph includes a table of objectives. Objective 1 references that new development will be directed to within settlement boundaries only. This indicates that any development outside an existing

Respondent	Policy / paragraph	Summary of comment
		tightly drawn boundary (which in some cases cuts through domestic curtilages for example) will not be considered sustainable. However, this does not recognise that there could be more sustainable locations for development adjacent to settlement boundaries, depending on very particular circumstances – such as existing non-residential buildings, brownfield or contaminated land, hydrology or the like. Objective 1 should be amended as follows: Development should meet an identified need and be directed to the most sustainable locations generally within the defined settlement boundaries.
	CAP1	Objective 1 of the NDP is reflected through CAP1 which sets out a number of circumstances within which development outside settlement boundary will be acceptable. The list does not include previously developed/brownfield land, or land immediately adjacent to settlement boundaries which could potentially be more sustainable than that within. We suggest that the redevelopment of previously developed land on sites that are well related to identified settlement boundaries, and/or where there are clear local benefits be supported. The following two further exceptions should be added: f) it is within and/or well related to settlements with defined development boundaries, and represents limited infill or the redevelopment of previously developed or degraded land; g) it results in meaningful landscape, biodiversity, flood risk or other benefits in accordance with other policies within the NDP. Paragraph 3 of the policy also fails to recognise that brownfield land outside the settlement boundary can be sustainably developed and indeed its reuse is encouraged at national level. The policy should be amended as follows: 3. In determining development proposals substantial weight will be given to the value of using suitable brownfield land within and adjacent or well related to the settlement boundaries for either homes and/or other identified needs, or to support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land. Making specific reference to supporting opportunities for development in sustainable locations which provide landscape, biodiversity and other enhancements is suggested. This would reflect the overarching vision and objectives of the NDP by ensuring such development is sustainable, makes the best use of

Respondent	Policy / paragraph	Summary of comment
		previously developed land, is of the highest quality, enhances the landscape and produces carbon efficient homes. The following additional text should be added: 4. Positive weight will be afforded to developments that exceed sustainability standards, provide enhancements to the landscape, enhance local character or amenities, or provide environmental or climate enhancements beyond the requirements of BNG.
	CAP2	Support for reference to innovative design. There is an opportunity to positively support wider visual enhancements to the village, and the following modification is proposed to paragraph Bii of the policy: Improvements and enhancements should include, where appropriate, additional tree planting, the enhancement of roadside green space, the reduction/consolidation of road signs and other street furniture, the opening up views, and wider green infrastructure improvements that are identified as being of value.
	Paragraph 5.41 (supporting text to policy CAP3)	No reference is made to replacement dwellings as a potential form of new development that will be supported. This is particularly relevant when existing housing is life-expired/no longer fit for purpose and where a replacement dwelling can offer benefits in terms of energy efficiency. A new paragraph should be included: Replacement dwellings will be supported where the dwelling they replace is no longer fit for purpose and life expired. The siting and scale of replacement dwellings should reflect the specifics of the individual site and consider whether alternative siting would allow wider improvements to the landscape, biodiversity and to maximise the inclusion of sustainable design principles.
	CAP4	Support for policy
	CAP5	Support for policy
	CAP6	Support for policy
	Paragraph 6.11 (supporting text to policy CAP6)	Welcome the aspiration to explore Biodiversity Opportunity Areas for the local green space sites as described in paragraph 6.11. As owners and promoters of part of their land for inclusion as a Local Green Space, they look forward to being included in discussions.
	CAP7	Support for policy
	CAP8	Support for policy
	CAP9	Support for policy
	CAP10	Support for policy
Rectory Homes	n/a	The respondent has a land option for a site at New Farm, The Ridge, Cold Ash.

Respondent	Policy / paragraph	Summary of comment
		The NDP does not include any housing allocations. The LPR is at examination and there is therefore scope that it may be amended dependent on the Inspector's conclusions following the hearing sessions. Rectory Homes representations to the Regulation 19 proposed submission consultation on the LPR cite concerns with the approach to housing delivery – minimum housing requirement is not specified, no provision to assist with Reading's unmet housing need, the housing land supply will be marginal, no certainty that the windfall allowance accounted for in the supply will come forward, and LPR may be out of date shortly after adoption. Additional sites will need to be identified for allocation in order to provide a Plan that is positively prepared and sound. There are opportunities within the Newbury and Thatcham sub-area to provide a mix of additional large and small site allocations within the settlements of Newbury and Cold Ash to provide a robust strategy on housing delivery. As such, there is a high probability that through the examination of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review it is established that Cold Ash will need to allocate sites for housing within the NDP. The site at New Farm, The Ridge, Cold Ash is considered to be an appropriate location for small-scale infill development of new homes.
	CAP1	The criteria in part 2 of the policy is too restrictive, and a very limited amount of sites would receive support from the policy. As the housing strategy in the LPR relies on 20% of the housing requirement being delivered on windfall sites, planning policies which relate to the location of housing should be flexibly worded and with a broader range of circumstances in which proposals can receive policy support. One such addition would be to include a criterion which allows for the development of infill sites outside of the defined settlement boundaries if the proposal would reflect the existing settlement pattern and such sites are already substantially enclosed (on at least three sides) by existing built form.
	CAP2	Support for general thrust and principles of policy, however part B iii is not entirely consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The policy requires development proposals to enhance the significance and setting of an asset however this is not always possible. The NPPF is more flexibly worded, stating at Paragraph 197 local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets. It does not explicitly require development proposals to result in an enhancement of the significance and setting of a heritage asset. The NPPF even sets out circumstances in which development proposals can be supported even where it has been established that there will be harm to a heritage asset. Depending on the level of harm considered, paragraphs 201 and 202 of the NPPF provide the policy tests where development can be supported.

Respondent	Policy / paragraph	Summary of comment
		Part B iii should be reworded to remove any reference to proposals needing to enhance the significance and setting of a heritage asset as such assets are already afforded due protection through the NPPF and with appropriate policy tests. Instead, the policy should require the provision of a Heritage Statement with every planning application for development which is considered to / or has the potential to, affect a heritage asset. This will ensure any impacts of a proposed development will be appropriately considered.
	CAP3	Support for policy.
	CAP4	Generally supportive of policy, however part d is not specific enough in what is required. As currently drafted, it is unclear exactly what constitutes 'low carbon sustainable design' and what is meant by 'avoid or mitigate all regulated emissions by following the energy hierarchy.' The policy is not specific enough for an applicant or indeed the decision maker to be certain of what is expected. This is contrary to Paragraph 16 of the NPPF which requires local planning policies to be unambiguous. Policy SP5 of the LPR had similar issues in requiring 'all development to achieve the highest viable levels of energy efficiency.' Such an approach will require a viability assessment to be submitted with every planning application, leading to further delays due to negotiations regarding what level of efficiency can be achieved. Part d should either re-written to be clearer in what is expected and required, with appropriate justification and compliance with adopted and emerging planning policy or removed from the policy altogether.
	CAP6	Support for policy.
	CAP8	Acknowledgement of the purpose of the policy in protecting important views across the Neighbourhood Area. However, such views must undoubtedly be from publicly accessible areas and legitimate in order to benefit from protection under the policy. Viewpoint 2 extends over the area known as Land at New Farm, The Ridge. Figure 13 in the NDP shows this perceived view on plan form as taken from the point along The Ridge where the road meets the private road serving The Birches and The Holding and the Public Right of Way which extends to the northwards. Appendix B to the Neighbourhood Plan forms photos showing each iconic view deemed worthy of protection. The photo included for viewpoint 2 (From The Ridge across Westrop Farm and Westrop Gulley) does not accurately reflect any public viewpoints from The Ridge or any other publicly accessible location within the immediate area. The site at New Farm, The Ridge is not publicly accessible and the site boundary with The Ridge is formed of mature trees – albeit, this boundary is 'gappy' in places and there is an agricultural field gate located at the north-western corner of the site which does permit some views across the site from these points. However, the photo enclosed at Appendix B in the NDP does not represent any achievable public views from these locations.

Respondent	Policy / paragraph	Summary of comment
		Clarification is needed on where exactly the photo shown at Appendix B for viewpoint is taken from. Appears the photo has been taken from the site itself, which is private land and from an elevated position. If this cannot be suitably evidenced, Viewpoint 2 as currently shown should be removed from Policy CAP8.
Sport England	General	No specific comments made on the NDP. General advice provided in respect of : • compliance with paragraphs 98 and 99 of the NPPF; • compliance with the health and well-being section of Planning Practice Guidance • evidence base and assessing needs; • demand for sport as a result of new development; • Sport England's statutory consultee role in protecting playing fields and the presumption against the loss of playing field land; and • design.
Thames Water	Paragraph 5.79 and CAP5	Support for paragraph 5.79 in principle, however the wording could be improved to cover both sewerage and water supply infrastructure. A key sustainability objective for the preparation of Local Plans and NDPs should be for new development to be co-ordinated with the infrastructure it demands and to take into account the capacity of existing infrastructure. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and the NPPF have regard to the provision of infrastructure: • Paragraph 11: Plans should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development that aligns growth and infrastructure. • Paragraph 20: plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that should make sufficient provision to water supply and wastewater. • Paragraph 26: effective and on-going joint working between strategic policy-making authorities and relevant bodies is integral to the production of a positively prepared and justified strategy. In particular, joint working should help to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary. • Paragraph 28: non-strategic policies can include allocations for the provision of infrastructure. • PPG: Local Plans should be the focus for ensuring that investment plans of water and sewerage/wastewater companies align with development needs. The NDP should include a specific reference to the key issue of the provision of wastewater/sewerage and water supply infrastructure to service development proposed in a policy. This is necessary because it will not be possible to identify all of the water/sewerage infrastructure required over the plan period due to the way water companies are regulated and plan in 5 year periods (Asset Management Plans or AMPs).

Respondent	Policy / paragraph	Summary of comment
		It is recommended that the NDP include the following text: Where appropriate, planning permission for developments which result in the need for off-site upgrades, will be subject to conditions to ensure the occupation is aligned with the delivery of necessary infrastructure upgrades." "The Local Planning Authority will seek to ensure that there is adequate water and wastewater infrastructure to serve all new developments. Developers are encouraged to contact the water/waste water company as early as possible to discuss their development proposals and intended delivery programme to assist with identifying any potential water and wastewater network reinforcement requirements. Where there is a capacity constraint the Local Planning Authority will, where appropriate, apply phasing conditions to any approval to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of the relevant phase of development.
	CAP5	Support for policy CAP5 in principle in relation to Sustainable Drainage Systems and drainage systems, but this needs to be strengthened. PPG states that a sequential approach should be used by local planning authorities in areas known to be at risk from forms of flooding other than from river and sea, which includes "Flooding from Sewers". Flood risk sustainability objectives and policies should also make reference to 'sewer flooding' and an acceptance that flooding can occur away from the flood plain as a result of development where off site sewerage infrastructure and capacity is not in place ahead of development. With regard to surface water drainage it is the responsibility of the developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, watercourses or surface water sewer. It is important to reduce the quantity of surface water entering the sewerage system in order to maximise the capacity for foul sewage to reduce the risk of sewer flooding. Limiting the opportunity for surface water entering the foul and combined sewer networks is of critical importance to Thames Water. Thames Water have advocated an approach to SuDS that limits as far as possible the volume of and rate at which surface water enters the public sewer system. By doing this, SuDS have the potential to play an important role in helping to ensure the sewerage network has the capacity to cater for population growth and the effects of climate change. SuDS not only help to mitigate flooding, they can also help to: improve water quality; provide opportunities for water efficiency; provide enhanced landscape and visual features; support wildlife; and provide amenity and recreational benefits.

Respondent	Policy / paragraph	Summary of comment
		The following paragraph should be included in the NDP: It is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for surface water drainage to ground, water courses or surface water sewer. It must not be allowed to drain to the foul sewer, as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding.
	General	The Environment Agency has designated the Thames Water region to be “seriously water stressed” which reflects the extent to which available water resources are used. Future pressures on water resources will continue to increase and key factors are population growth and climate change. Water conservation and climate change is a vitally important issue to the water industry. Not only is it expected to have an impact on the availability of raw water for treatment but also the demand from customers for potable (drinking) water. Therefore, Thames Water support the mains water consumption target of 110 litres per head per day as set out in the PPG (Paragraph: 014 Reference ID: 56-014-20150327) and support the inclusion of this requirement in the Policy. Understanding of Thames Water that the water efficiency standards of 105 litres per person per day is only applied through the building regulations where there is a planning condition requiring this standard (as set out at paragraph 2.8 of Part G2 of the Building Regulations). As the Thames Water area is defined as water stressed it is considered that such a condition should be attached as standard to all planning approvals for new residential development in order to help ensure that the standard is effectively delivered through the building regulations. Within Part G of Building Regulations, the 110 litres/person/day level can be achieved through either the ‘Calculation Method’ or the ‘Fittings Approach’ (Table 2.2). The Fittings Approach provides clear flow-rate and volume performance metrics for each water using device / fitting in new dwellings. Thames Water considers the Fittings Approach, as outlined in Table 2.2 of Part G, increases the confidence that water efficient devices will be installed in the new dwelling. Insight from their smart water metering programme shows that household built to the 110 litres/person/day level using the Calculation Method, did not achieve the intended water performance levels. Proposed policy text recommended for inclusion: Development must be designed to be water efficient and reduce water consumption. Refurbishments and other non-domestic development will be expected to meet BREEAM water-efficiency credits. Residential development must not exceed a maximum water use of 105 litres per head per day (excluding the allowance of up to 5 litres for external water consumption) using the ‘Fittings Approach’ in Table 2.2 of Part G of Building Regulations. Planning conditions will be applied to new residential development to ensure that the water efficiency standards are met.

Respondent	Policy / paragraph	Summary of comment
		There are no new allocations in the NDP and the level of information does not enable Thames Water to make an assessment of the impact the proposed development will have on the waste water/sewerage network infrastructure and sewage treatment works. To enable us to provide more specific comments we require details of the type and scale of development together with the anticipated phasing. Paragraph 1.35 of the NDP states: "*When submitting the Nutrient calculator you will also need to provide evidence that you have received permission for connection or have applied for connection to Thames Water systems and which precise wastewater treatment works you have applied to connect to. It is recommend that developers contact Thames Water to discuss their development proposals by using their pre app service*." Thames Water recommends that developers contact them to discuss their development proposals by their pre app service and therefore support the second sentence of paragraph 1.35 in this respect. In the event of an upgrade to Thames Water sewerage network assets being required, up to three years lead in time is usual to enable for the planning and delivery of the upgrade. As a developer has the automatic right to connect to their sewer network under the Water Industry Act they may also request a drainage planning condition if a network upgrade is required to ensure the infrastructure is in place ahead of occupation of the development. This will avoid adverse environmental impacts such as sewer flooding and / or water pollution.
The Downland Practice	General	The Practice do not object to any housing developments in the Cold Ash/Hermitage area, the increase in patient numbers will have a direct effect on services from the Downland Practice. This will be mainly GP appointments and Nursing care but also the provision of pharmacies services. The Downland Practice will be interested in accessing any S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy contribution for health services to meet the increased demand associated with the aggregate impact of housing developments in Cold Ash/Hermitage area.
Transport for London	General	No comments

Representations will be available to view in full on West Berkshire District Council's website: https://www.westberks.gov.uk/coldashnp and on the Council's Planning Policy Consultation Portal: https://consult.westberks.gov.uk/kse/.

West Berkshire District Council

Representations to the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan Submission (August 2023)

1. Background to the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

1.1. For a neighbourhood plan to be put to referendum, they must meet a set of tests that are set out within paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The tests are known as the basic conditions, and those relevant to neighbourhood plans are as follows:

(a) having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the order (or neighbourhood plan).

(d) the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.

(e) the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area).

(f) the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.

(g) prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Order (or plan) and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the order (or neighbourhood plan).

1.2. Cold Ash Parish Council, as the qualifying body, applied for the designation of the Hermitage Neighbourhood Area. This was formally designated by West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) on 19 March 2018. The Neighbourhood Area covers the Parish of Cold Ash.

1.3. Since the designation of the Neighbourhood Area, Cold Ash Parish Council alongside its residents, have been working together to create a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

1.4. Following evidence gathering and preparing the plan, the pre-submission version of the Cold Ash NDP was subject to a 6-week consultation between1 March and 19 April 2023. Following this consultation, the feedback provided to the Neighbourhood Plan Group was reviewed and considered alongside feedback from statutory stakeholders. WBDC submitted representations to the consultation which aimed to provide advice as to where policies, sections or paragraphs within the NDP may be improved with a view to ensuring conformity with the Basic Conditions. For this consultation we have provided further advice on each of the policies and the plan in general. This is set out within Section 3 below.

1.5. Points (f) and (g) above relate to certain obligations which plans must adhere to, primarily in relation to habitats and environmental impacts. Some plans require a Strategic Environmental Assessment and/or a Habitat Regulations Assessment.

1.6. A screening opinion to determine if Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and/or Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required was originally prepared by

WBDC in December 2021. This was subject to a 5-week consultation with the three statutory bodies (Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England) who concurred with WBDC that neither a SEA nor HRA were required.

1.7. On 16 March 2022, Natural England designated the hydrological catchment of the River Lambourn (which is a Special Area of Conservation) as a Nutrient Neutrality Zone due to the unfavourable condition of the watercourse because of unnaturally high levels of phosphorus. The NNZ covers the northern and western parts of Cold Ash Parish, and the draft plan was re-screened to consider its impact upon the NNZ.

1.8. The second screening opinion was published in November 2022. This was subject to a 5-week consultation with the three statutory bodies (Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England) who concurred with WBDC that neither a SEA nor HRA were required.

2. WBDC's acceptance of the Cold Ash NDP

2.1. Cold Ash Parish Council submitted the NDP to West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) on 20 June 2023 and this was accompanied by the following documents:

- Basic Conditions Statement
- Consultation Statement
- SEA/HRA Screening Report – Post-consultation Version (December 2021)
- SEA/HRA Screening Decision (December 2021)
- SEA/HRA Screening Report – Post-consultation Version (November 2022)
- SEA/HRA Screening Decision (November 2022)
- Cold Ash NDP Evidence Lost
- Cold Ash NDP Evidence Underpinning the Spatial Strategy for the NDP
- Cold Ash NDP Regulation 14 Feedback

2.2. The above documents are considered to adequately fulfil the submission requirements under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and Schedule 4b of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as inserted into Schedule 10 of the Localism Act 2011.

2.3. WBDC are therefore satisfied that the qualifying body of Cold Ash Parish Council had satisfied the relevant regulatory requirements to advance the Cold Ash NDP to the publicity and consultation stage (Regulation 16) and subsequent submission of the NDP for independent examination.

2.4. In addition, WBDC is satisfied that the Cold Ash NDP does not include any development which would be defined as 'excluded development' as prescribed by Schedule 9, Section 61k of the Localism Act.

2.5. At submission, WBDC undertook a Legal Compliance Check to determine if the submission requirements as set out in legislation have been met. The Legal Compliance Check, which is included within Appendix A.

3. WBDC's representations on the submission Cold Ash NDP

3.1. At this 'draft plan' stage of the neighbourhood plan making process, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) is not required to consider whether the draft plan meets the basic conditions. It is only after the independent examination has taken place, and after the independent examiner's report has been received, that a LPA must come to a formal view on whether the draft neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions.

3.2. The LPA should provide constructive comments on an emerging plan before it is submitted.

3.3. WBDC made representations as part of the consultation on the pre-submission (Regulation 14) version of the Cold Ash NDP. To inform the response, the Planning Policy Team requested the following service areas review the NDP:

- Archaeology
- Development Management
- Drainage and Flood Risk
- Conservation & Design
- Ecology
- Environment Delivery
- Highways
- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Planning Policy
- Transport Policy

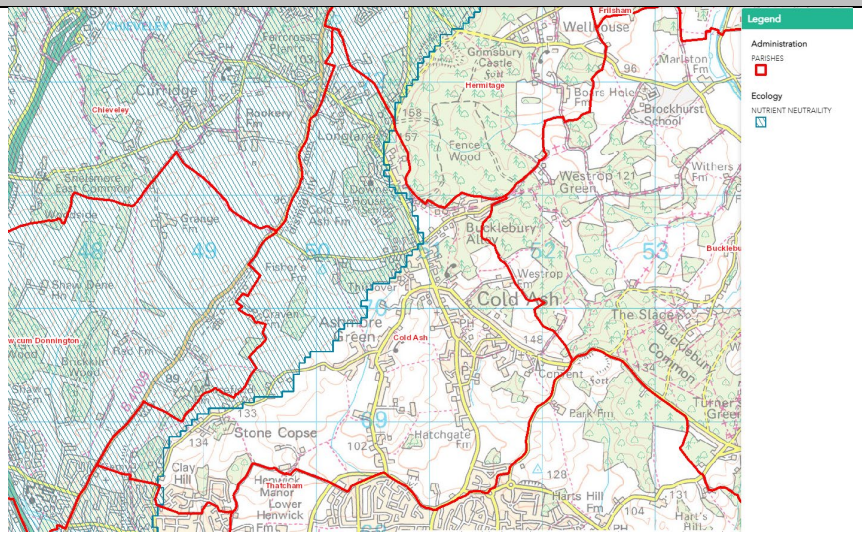
3.4. Table 3.1 below shows WBDC's representations made in April 2023, and a further response to the submission consultation. The above-mentioned services were also contacted for comments on the submission version of the NDP.

Table 3: WBDC's representations on the Cold Ash NDP regulation 16 submission consultation

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
Contents page	In the contents page it would be helpful if the policy references could be included.	Change made and no further comments.
First paragraph, Executive Summary	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: Incorrect that parts of Cold Ash are the highest point in Berkshire – look at Combe and Streatley land heights.	Change made to refer to some of the highest points in West Berkshire. No further comments received from the Ecology Team.
First paragraph, Executive Summary	It is suggested for clarity that the first sentence refers to the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). You could reword to: 'Cold Ash parish is diverse in nature, sitting partially within an area of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and comprising….' Overall the Executive Summary provides a clear and succinct summary of the Plan, and links back to the overall vision of the Plan.	Change made and no further comments.
Paragraph 1.11	The West Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2022-2037) was adopted on 1 December 2022 (https://www.westberks.gov.uk/mwlp) and this supersedes both the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire and the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire. The bullet points should therefore be updated as follows: • ~~Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire – incorporating alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001~~ • ~~Waste Local Plan for Berkshire adopted December 1998~~ • West Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2022-2037)	Change made and no further comments.
Paragraph 1.12	This paragraph could be re-worded to clarify that the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD), the Housing Site Allocations DPD and the Saved Policies of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 to 2006 together comprise the current Local Plan. The paragraph could also explain why the Local Plan is being reviewed The paragraph could be reworded into two paragraphs as follows:	Change made and no further comments.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	The current Local Plan comprises of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD), the Housing Site Allocations DPD, and the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies). The current Local Plan plans for development up to 2026 and in line with the NPPF, must be kept up-to-date and look ahead over a minimum 15 year period. The ~~A~~ Local Plan is therefore undergoing review to cover the period to 2039. Upon adoption, the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022-2039 ~~is currently being developed and~~ will replace in one document the three ~~existing WBC~~ documents mentioned above. Of the sites allocat~~ions~~ed in Cold Ash ~~noted~~ in ~~the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 and~~ the Housing Site Allocations DPD 2006-2026 ~~relating to Cold Ash~~, ~~Site~~ Policy HSA7 (St. Gabriels Farm The Ridge Cold Ash) has already been built out/nearing completion and ~~Site~~ Policy HSA6 (Poplar Farm Cold Ash) is not considered deliverable at this time.	
Paragraph 1.13	The first sentence in this paragraph can be updated to reflect that the Local Plan Review was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in March 2023. It could be updated to read as follows: The West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022-2039~~: Proposed Submission (Regulation 19 draft)~~ (the LPR) was ~~published for consultation in January 2023~~ submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2023 so that it can undergo independent examination.	Change made (now paragraph 1.14) and no further comments.
Paragraph 1.13	The Local Development Scheme is updated periodically and the URL currently provided in this paragraph is to the current version (published in January 2023). To future proof this paragraph, it is suggested that the following URL is used https://www.westberks.gov.uk/lds as any updates to the LDS will be published on this page.	Change made (now paragraph 1.14) and no further comments.
Paragraph 1.19	It would be useful for this paragraph to clarify that a housing requirement figure (of 40 dwellings) was originally identified for Cold Ash within the emerging draft of the Local Plan Review that was published for a Regulation 18 consultation between December 2020 and February 2021. The Steering Group undertook site selection work to try and identify	Change made (now paragraph 20) and no further comments.

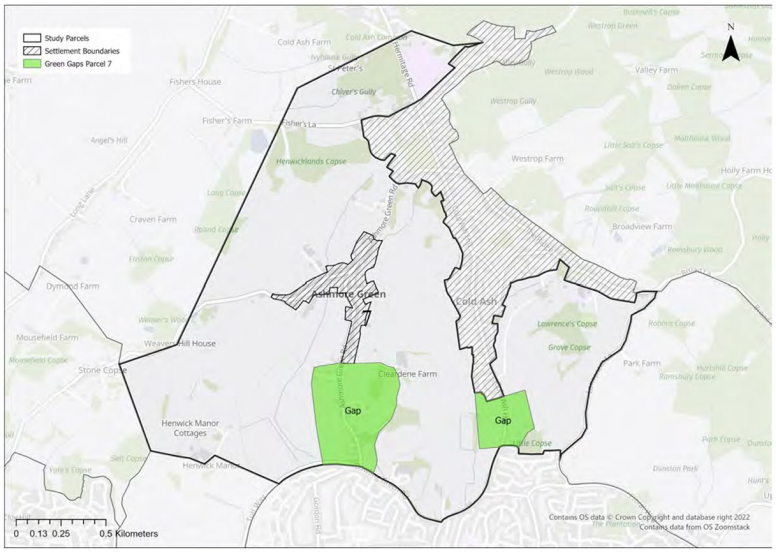
Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	suitable sites to meet this requirement, and this work should be linked to in this paragraph and included in Section 15 Reference Pack. Whilst this work identified one suitable site, it is located within the settlement boundary whereby there is a presumption in favour of development. The approach for the Local Plan has been to not allocate sites within settlement boundaries because the principle of development is already established. In light of the site selection work, the Proposed Submission version of the Local Plan Review did not identify a housing requirement for Cold Ash. As specified in paragraph 1.19 of the NDP, there are other sites that will meet the housing need in the District.	
Paragraph 1.21	For clarity, it could be mentioned within this paragraph that the primary purpose of AONBs, as set out within the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. Additional text could be added to the paragraph as follows: Straddling four counties, the North Wessex Downs is one of Britain's most beautiful chalk landscapes, recognisable by its dramatic scarp slopes, swathes of ancient woodland and sheltered valleys criss-crossed by rivers and streams. As set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 20000, the primary purpose of the AONB is to 'conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area'.	Change made (now paragraph 1.22) and no further comments.
Figure 1.2	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: It might also be useful to include a map which shows the area of Cold Ash Parish that falls within the Nutrient Neutrality Zone, eg.	Change made and new Figure 3 included. No further comments received from the Ecology Team.

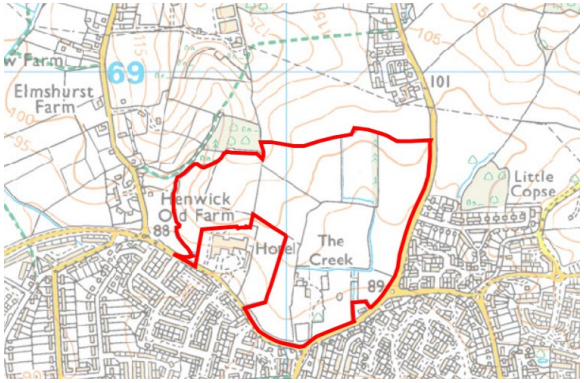
Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
		
Paragraph 1.26	<u>Comments from Fiona Simmonds, Education Place Planning Team Leader:</u> The section on sustainability could include that development should be of the size and scale that it can be mitigated in the schools within Cold Ash. This would reduce the need for movements outside the village and improve the sustainability of any development.	Change made and new paragraph (1.36) included. No further comments received from the Education Team.
Paragraph 2.6	<u>Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist:</u> Check Combe to see if the highest church site was here.	Change made to reflect that St. Mark's Church one of the highest in Berkshire. No further comments received from the Ecology Team.
Paragraph 2.10	Include a link in the paragraph to the assessment of housing by Simon Vanstone	Link to assessment included. No further comments.
Paragraph 2.11	For clarity, it would be helpful to mention that it is policy ADPP1 (Spatial Strategy) of the West Berkshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document (which forms part of the Local Plan) that identifies Cold Ash as a Service Village. The paragraph could be reworded as follows:	Change made and no further comments.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	Policy ADPP1 (Spatial Strategy) of the Core Strategy DPD identifies Cold Ash village ~~is defined~~ as a ~~local~~ Sservice Vvillage. Service ~~v~~Villages are ~~places~~ settlements which have a more limited range of services and have some limited development potential ~~where a small amount of development (particularly economic, or which extends the range of services available) may be appropriate~~.	
Paragraph 2.12	Is it Simon's study that identifies that Cold Ash took the second highest increase in housing? If not, include a reference to the relevant source.	The Consultation Statement comments that the reference is taken from the minutes of a meeting of West Berkshire District Council's (WBDC's) Planning Advisory Group (PAG). PAG is an officer and Member working group set up to support the execution of the Council's function relating to the development of the Local Plan and associated documents. It is a Part 2 meeting meaning that it is confidential, and the minutes are not in the public domain. Nonetheless, it is unclear at what PAG meeting this was discussed in and who made the comment. It is recommended that a modification is made to remove reference to this statement.
Paragraph 2.12	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: Of all the local Service Villages within West Berkshire, Cold Ash ….	Change made and no further comments received from the Ecology Team.
Paragraph 2.16	It could be mentioned here that the Core Strategy DPD identifies the Red Shute Industrial Estate as a Protected Employment Area.	Change made and no further comments.
First sentence of paragraph 2.17	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: The OS Maps states 155m above sea level.	Change made and no further comments received from the Ecology Team.
Final sentence of paragraph 2.17	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: Which four counties can be seen? I can only think of three – Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire.	Change made and no further comments received from the Ecology Team.
2nd bullet point, paragraph 2.21	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist:	Change made and no further comments received from the Ecology Team.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	Cold Ash Quarry is a Geological Site of Special Scientific Interest.	
4th bullet point, paragraph 2.21	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: It appears there are more than seven Ancient Woodlands. Paragraph 2.28 mentions there are nine Ancient Woodlands.	Change made and no further comments received from the Ecology Team.
1st sentence, paragraph 2.28	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: The number of Ancient Woodlands specified is different to the number given in paragraph 2.21 (4th bullet point)	Change made and no further comments received from the Ecology Team.
Paragraph 2.32	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: Reference should be made to https://www.gov.uk/guidance/landscape-and-seascape-character-assessments.	Change made and no further comments received from the Ecology Team.
3rd bullet point, paragraph 3.1	The third bullet point incorrectly identifies Lambourn as a Service Village. Lambourn is in fact a Rural Service Centre and in the settlement hierarchy, Rural Service Centres sit above Service Villages.	Reference to Lambourn removed. No further comments
Objective 2, paragraph 3.4	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: It might be worth adding something around the Local Nature Recovery Network for Berkshire here.	Reference to the Nature Recovery Network has been made. No further comments from the Ecology Team.
Criterion 1 and 2, Policy CAP1: Location of Development	Paragraph 16 F) of the NPPF states: '*Plans should: …f) serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area (including policies in this Framework, where relevant)'.* Criteria 1 and 2 requires compliance with other policies in the West Berkshire development plan and therefore contrary to the NPPF. The policy should be reworded to avoid deferring to other development plan policies and be tailored more to Cold Ash's requirements. Please see a recent NDP Examiner's Report (paras 70, 76, 80) where this was identified as an issue by the Examiner and modifications made to remove sections of policy which deferred to the Development Plan.	Reference to compliance with policies within the West Berkshire Development Plan removed. No further comments.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
Criterion 2a, Policy CAP1: Location of Development		The policy as written supports development proposals outside of the settlement boundary where it relates to 'appropriate uses in the countryside. Policy ADPP1 of the Core Strategy sets out the spatial strategy for West Berkshire district, and it identified a settlement hierarchy. Below the settlement hierarchy are two additional types of area, one of which is 'open countryside'. Open countryside refers to anywhere that lies outside of a defined settlement boundary. Within open countryside, only appropriate limited development will be allowed which focuses on addressing identified needs and maintaining a strong rural economy. To ensure that the policy is in general conformity with policy ADPP1, criterion 2 a should make reference to development that addresses identified needs and maintaining a strong rural economy.
Criterion 2e, Policy CAP1: : Location of Development		Reference is made to the 'West Berkshire Site Allocations Development Plan'. The correct name of this document is the 'Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document'.
Criterion 2 (final paragraph), Policy CAP1: Location of Development	The policy identifies a Buffer Zone and it is unclear what evidence sits behind this. In November 2022 the West Berkshire Appropriate Countryside Designation Study was prepared by WBDC (https://www.westberks.gov.uk/local-plan-evidence#Other%20evidence%20base%20documents) and this study identifies if appropriate and specific planning designation for the countryside around the towns of Newbury and Thatcham is needed. The study recommends two parcels of land between Thatcham and Cold Ash and Thatcham and Ashmore Green (as shown in the diagram below) for potential green gap designation in the Local Plan Review:	The buffer zones as originally identified in Figure 4.1 of the pre-submission NDP have been removed from the submission version. Figure 6 (p.26) in the submission NDP now identifies a green gap. The supporting text to the policy at paragraphs 4.7 and 4.8 state that the green gap is based on that identified within the West Berkshire Appropriate Countryside Designation Study that was published in November 2022, but it has been "…extended out slightly". The Appropriate Countryside Designation Study has assessed the area to the north west of Thatcham (including

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	 Figure 14 – Parcel 7 Potential Green Gaps Policy DM2 (Separation of Settlements Around Newbury & Thatcham) of the Local Plan Review (which was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in March 2023) identifies that the two parcels of land as shown in the diagram above should be maintained to avoid coalescence and maintain the separate identifies of the settlements. The Buffer Zone is inconsistent with these two parcels of land.	the settlements of Ashmore Green and Cold Ash) and it is referred to as Parcel 7. The assessment of Parcel 7 is contained within Appendix C (pp.140-150), and it concludes that parts of this parcel provide an essential gap between settlements, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them. The green gap identified within the NDP covers a significantly larger area than the two parcels recommended for green gap designation in the Appropriate Countryside Designation Study. It should be noted that the Appropriate Countryside Designation Study has taken into consideration the Historic Environment Characterisation (2007), West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (2019), Thatcham Landscape Sensitivity study (2009) Local Landscape Areas, Thatcham Landscape Sensitivity Study (2009) Potential Strategic Development Sites, and the Landscape Capacity Assessment of Potential Housing Sites Within and Adjacent to the North Wessex Downs AONB: Thatcham (2015). Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy is a strategic policy that seeks to conserve and enhance the diversity and local distinctiveness of the District's landscape character. The policy states that regard must be given to a set of criteria that includes: • the sensitivity of the area to change; and • ensuring new development is appropriate in terms of location, scale and design in the context of the existing settlement form, pattern and character.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
		The policy goes on to require that proposals for new development should be informed by and respond to a set of criteria that includes: • the distinctive character areas and key characteristics identified in relevant landscape character assessments; and • features identified in various settlement character studies. It is worth noting an appeal decision (ref: APP/WO340/W/16/3144193, LPA ref: 15/01949/OUTMAJ) for the site 'Land west of Heath Lane and North of Bowling Green Road, Thatcham' for residential development. This site (which is illustrated in the plan below) falls within the gap identified in the submitted NDP, however only a small part of the site falls within the gaps identified by the Appropriate Countryside Designation Study:  Whilst the appeal was dismissed, at paragraph 56 it states: *"The Secretary of State also weighs against the proposal the replacement of agricultural land with suburban development*

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
		which would lead to a change in character of the land. However the Secretary of State considers that the impact of this change would be limited, not out of keeping with the present character of the area, and without having an unduly damaging effect on the setting of either Thatcham or Cold Ash. As such he gives this conflict moderate weight." The final paragraph of Criterion 2 of policy CAP1 is not in general conformity with policy CS19. It has not been demonstrated that the gap as identified in Figure 6 has been informed by any consideration of the sensitivity of the area to change. WBDC's evidence identifies that only part of the area identified in Figure 6 should be designated as a green gap.
Paragraph 5.3 (supporting text to policy CAP2: Local Character and Heritage)	<u>Comments from Debra Inston, Principal Conservation and Design Officer:</u> The Historic Environment Record (HER) contain details on local archaeological sites and finds, historic buildings and historic landscapes. Not all buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes contained in the HER are considered non-designated assets within the meaning and definition contained within the NPPF. Each entry within the HER will have varying levels of heritage significance. To merit identification as a non-designated heritage assets the heritage significance would need to be towards the higher level. Paragraph 5.3 also states that non-designated heritage assets should be 'conserved'. This does not comply with national and local policy as there is no requirement in either national or local policy to conserve these assets. Instead the correct requirement is set out in paragraph 203 of the NPPF, which states that: *'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required*	Change made and no further comments received from the Conservation Team.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'	
Criterion A, policy CAP2		This criterion requires development to conserve and enhance the character of the Zone that it is located in. The Zones are illustrated within Figure 7 which is included within the supporting text to the policy. Figure 7 includes a green gap which is introduced within policy CAP1. As set out above in the comments against policy CAP1, it has not been demonstrated that the gap has been informed by any consideration of the sensitivity of the area to change. WBDC's evidence does not suggest that the area identified in Figure 6 should be designated as a green gap.
Policy CAP2: Local Character and Heritage	<u>Comments from Debra Inston, Principal Conservation and Design Officer:</u> Policy CAP2 requires the submission of heritage statements for applications affecting heritage assets. The Council are currently updating our local validation list which will require heritage statements to be submitted with all listed building consent applications, and any planning application that has the potential to impact the significance of a heritage asset either directly or through development within their setting.	No changes made and no further comments received from the Conservation Team.
Paragraphs 5.15-5.58	The supporting text is quite lengthy and some of it reads as a policy, however the role of supporting text is to aid in the interpretation of the policy but cannot be used to prevail over the policy itself or insert new requirements. Paragraph 16 (f) of the NPPF states that: *'Plans should …f) serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area (including policies in this Framework, where relevant)'.* This policy refers to other policies which is unnecessary and could cause confusion – any planning application would need to comply with all relevant policies.	Changes have been made to remove references to other policies, however no further changes have been made to the paragraphs (which are now 5.11 to 5.55). The Consultation Statement explains that the text underpins the policy so should be retained. Examples of where the supporting text reads like a policy includes the following paragraphs: • 5.21 – Developments should not negatively impact the aesthetic qualities of the landscape. In addition to the views across the five counties, it is also important that

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
		the views from the villages of Cold Ash and Ashmore Green to the wider countryside are maintained. • 5.23 – any proposed development should conserve the diversity and mix of landscape character types in the parish. The expectation is that any new development will enhance the existing surroundings and be of an appropriate scale for the site. Developers are encouraged to provide perspective (isometric) drawings to show how new developments would appear in relation to their overall rural surroundings and to the character and context of adjacent buildings and neighbouring properties. Any developments must also consider the context outlined in Section 2 of this Plan. • 5.24 – the siting of any new developments should consider the need to retain open spaces and the rural nature of the Parish, together with maintaining and considering access to the numerous PROW enjoyed by the parishioners. • 5.26 – in any proposed development, grass verges, hedgerows, ditches, ponds and open spaces should be conserved and, where possible, enhanced in order to improve the habitat for wildlife and to maintain the rural nature of the area. • 5.27 – environmentally friendly features, such as bat boxes, bird boxes, and hedgehog holes shall be specified in any ecology strategy and included in the landscape and building design. • 5.28 – in any development, mature trees and hedgerows should be retained. If it can be demonstrated that trees critically need to be felled, they should be replanted with native species of local provenance; the Emergency Tree Plan for the UK (2020) stipulates that 'if a tree must be removed, local authorities should implement minimum replacement planting ratios, which stipulate that for every non-woodland tree removed at least three new

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
		trees should be planted. These new trees should be located as close to the original location as possible and be the same type of planting (for example, street trees replaced by street trees)'. • 5.32 – any more substantial developments will be expected to produce a detailed Design Code. • 5.52 – all new developments will provide electric charging points for each dwelling.
Final bullet point, paragraph 5.16	The URL for the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan is required	Change made and no further comments.
3rd bullet point, paragraph 5.32	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: Non-native species of plants should not be planted near or next to habitats as these non-native species have the real potential to compromise the habitat a certain amount. These habitats, particularly if linear, are likely to be utilised by nocturnal fauna feeding and commuting.	Change made (now paragraph 5.29) and no further comments received from the Ecology Team.
Criterion B (b), Policy CAP3: Design of Development	Typographical error: the guidance contained in the Quality Design West Berkshire Supplementary Planning Document and the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan	Change made and no further comments.
Criterion B (b), Policy CAP3: Design of Development	It would be helpful to include URLs, perhaps as footnotes, to both the Quality Design Supplementary Planning Document (https://www.westberks.gov.uk/spd-quality-design) and the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan (https://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/our-work/management-plan/)	Change made and no further comments.
Criterion B, b (iii) and (iv), Policy CAP3: Design of Development	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: Add a couple of words saying native flora somewhere here.	Change made and no further comments received from the Ecology Team.
Paragraph 5.59	Comments from Emily Jellie-Ashton, Principal Environment Delivery Officer: Suggest re-wording to the following:	Change made (now paragraph 5.57) and no further comments received from the Environment Delivery Team.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	This policy seeks to ensure that development meets the highest environmental standards in terms of its construction, ~~materials,~~ energy use and resource energy use such as materials, water, waste etc. ~~and energy use~~, to help mitigate ~~against~~ climate change.	
Paragraph 5.60	Comments from Emily Jellie-Ashton, Principal Environment Delivery Officer: Suggest re-wording to the following: On 12 June 2019 the Government voted to amend the Climate Change Act 2008 by introducing a new target for at least a 100% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990 levels) in the UK by 2050. This is otherwise known as a net zero target. In preparation for this, by 2035, emissions will need to be reduced emissions by 78% (compared to 1990 levels). Locally, West Berkshire Council declared a Climate Change Emergency in July 2019 with an aim to deliver carbon neutrality for the District by 2030. These are demanding targets, which will require everyone to contribute, from households and communities to businesses and local and national government. Being '2050 ready' will require new buildings to have minimal energy use and net carbon emissions over the year. They should follow the ~~be highly~~ energy hierarchy, looking at such measures as insulation, energy efficient lighting and being fitted with or connected to low/zero carbon technologies (which includes renewable technologies). Consideration should also be given to the development reducing water demand through water efficiency methods and technologies. ~~Insulated, have low water demand and be fitted with or directly connected to renewable energy systems.~~	Change made (now paragraphs 5.58 and 5.59) and no further comments received from the Environment Delivery Team.
Paragraph 5.61	Comments from Emily Jellie-Ashton, Principal Environment Delivery Officer: It is not optional, it is within WBDC planning policy. Also terms like ecologically sustainable are confusing. It should be environmentally sustainable homes, or given the context Net Zero Carbon homes or low/zero carbon homes would be more appropriate.	Change made (now paragraph 5.59) and no further comments received from the Environment Delivery Team.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
2nd bullet point, paragraph 5.62	Comments from Emily Jellie-Ashton, Principal Environment Delivery Officer: Sometimes PV is not the most appropriate option for the development due to the orientation of the building. Suggest re-wording to the following: Integrating renewable energy systems into new development, including existing and new public buildings. ~~In particular~~ Where appropriate and viable there is support locally for solar panels to be incorporated into new development;	Change made (now paragraph 5.60) and no further comments received from the Environment Delivery Team.
3rd bullet point, paragraph 5.62	Comments from Emily Jellie-Ashton, Principal Environment Delivery Officer: Suggest re-wording to the following: Reducing water consumption through grey water systems and water efficient systems;	Change made (now paragraph 5.60) and no further comments received from the Environment Delivery Team.
Policy CAP4: Sustainable Design	Comments from Emily Jellie-Ashton, Principal Environment Delivery Officer: Suggest re-wording to the following: 1. Proposals which incorporate design and environmental performance measures and standards to reduce energy consumption, carbon emissions and adapt to current and projected climate change scenarios ~~and climate effects~~ will be supported. 2. Proposals which incorporate the following sustainable design features as appropriate to their scale, nature and location will be strongly supported, where measures will not have a detrimental impact on character, landscape and views: a. Siting and orientation to optimise passive solar gain.	Change made and no further comments received from the Environment Delivery Team.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	b. The use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials and measures such as loft and wall insulation, and double glazing. c. Installation of energy efficiency measures such as ~~loft and wall insulation and double glazing~~ LED lighting. ~~d. Incorporating on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as solar panels, ground source heating and energy generation etc.~~ ~~e. Reducing water consumption through water re-use measures including rainwater harvesting, surface water harvesting and/or grey water recycling systems.~~ d ~~f~~. Providing low carbon sustainable design and avoid or mitigate all regulated emissions by following the energy hierarchy. For example, use less energy and manage energy demand during operation through fabric and service improvements; where feasible exploit local energy sources such as secondary heat and supply energy efficiently and cleanly, via low carbon technologies; maximise the use of zero carbon technology / renewable energy by producing, storing and using zero carbon / renewable energy on-site; only where necessary, off-site measures to deal with any remaining emissions ~~using a combination of on-site energy efficiency measures (such as insulation and low energy heating systems), on-site zero carbon technologies (such as solar panels) and, only where necessary, off-site measures to deal with any remaining emissions~~. e ~~g~~. Providing the infrastructure for adequate electric vehicle charging points for each dwelling, where new parking provision is expected to be made. f ~~h~~. Alterations to existing buildings should be designed with energy reduction in mind and comply with current sustainable design and construction standards, as set out in the Quality Design – West Berkshire SPD and the Building Regulations. g. Reducing water consumption through water re-use measures including rainwater harvesting, surface water harvesting and / or grey water recycling systems.	

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	3. The retrofitting of historic buildings is encouraged to reduce energy demand and to generate ~~renewable~~ low / zero carbon energy where appropriate, providing it safeguards historic characteristics.	
Final sentence of Criterion c, paragraph 5.76	Typographical error: WBDC have ~~prepared a~~ an adopted SuDS Supplementary Planning Document;	Change made (now paragraph 5.75) and no further comments.
1st sentence, paragraph 6.8	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: Also include mention of Ancient Woodland and linear habitats (ie. hedgerows, streams and ditches, etc.). With retaining water in upland areas reducing the wildfire risk and improving habitat quality across the catchment.	Change made and no further comments received from the Ecology Team.
Paragraph 6.12	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: Within 18 months to two years, the Habitat Recovery Network for Berkshire will be in place. This process is being managed by the ~~Berkshire Nature Partnership~~ Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.	Change made and no further comments received from the Ecology Team.
Criterion 1 and 3, Policy CAP6: Biodiversity and the Network of Green and Blue Infrastructure	Comments from Emily Jellie-Ashton, Principal Environment Delivery Officer: Policy needs to include reference to blue infrastructure. Suggest re-wording to the following: 1. Proposals should be designed from the outset to create, conserve, enhance and manage green and blue spaces and connect chains of green and blue infrastructure, as identified on the Policies Maps, delivering a measurable net gain in biodiversity of a minimum 10% using the most up to date biodiversity accounting metric developed by Natural England for local people and wildlife. Development which would result in the loss of ancient woodland, aged trees or veteran trees will not be supported unless there are wholly exceptional reasons as envisaged in the NPPF and a suitable compensation strategy exists.	Change made and no further comments received from the Environment Delivery Team.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	3. Proposals that seek to improve the connectivity between wildlife areas, ~~and~~ green and blue spaces will be encouraged in order to enhance the green and blue infrastructure of the Neighbourhood area. In particular, proposals that support the enhancement and management of the identified Biodiversity Opportunity Areas will be supported. Conversely, proposals which threaten to damage such connectivity will be strongly resisted.	
Policy CAP7: Managing the Environmental Impact of Development	Comments from Emily Jellie-Ashton, Principal Environment Delivery Officer: This policy all makes sense to me and in line with best practice detailed in such methodologies as BREEAM. It also supports the work we are doing on Green and Blue Infrastructure, however I'm not a landscape specialist or ecologist.	No further comments received from the Environment Delivery Team.
Criterion d, Policy CAP7: Managing the Environmental Impact of Development	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: Where possible trees should be left as dead standing because they are a great biodiversity resource for wildlife and if left as a monolith pose little risk.	Change made and no further comments received from the Ecology Team.
Criterion f, Policy CAP7: Managing the Environmental Impact of Development	Unless trees/hedges are under Tree Protection Order or within a Conservation Area they are not protected and it is not development to remove them. It might be difficult in practice to seek to retain hedgerows under this policy – the Council's Development Management Team tend to refuse loss of hedgerow in terms of the impact on the character of an area and/or impact on biodiversity, which this policy does not seem to cover.	Change made and no further comments received from the Ecology Team.
Criterion g, Policy CAP7: Managing the Environmental Impact of Development	Comments from Gareth Ryman, Principal Ecologist: Laurel and leylandii would not be permitted by us.	Change made and no further comments received from the Ecology Team.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
Policy CA9: Local Green Spaces	Paragraph 16 F) of the NPPF states: 'Plans should: …f) serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area (including policies in this Framework, where relevant)'. The final sentence of the policy should therefore be deleted.	Change made and no further comments.
Policy CAP11: Encouraging Sustainable Movement	<u>Comments from Chris Sperring, Principal Transport Policy Officer:</u> This policy is supported in principle. • Any proposed footway or cycleway improvements will need to be developed in partnership with West Berkshire Council (as local highway authority). It should be noted that cycle improvements will need to be designed in accordance with Department for Transport Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design, July 2020). • Improvements around schools may require the school in question to refresh their School Travel Plan (see comments for Section 10). • Policy CAP11 or the supporting text in Section 7 could include the provision of broadband to allow opportunities for home working/shopping that could help reduce the need for travel. • The draft LTP4 Strategy document recently subject to public consultation seeks to introduce shared mobility initiatives in rural areas, which may be option for Cold Ash in due course.	No changes made. No changes made No changes made Change made to the supporting text at paragraph 7.11
Policy CAP12: Sunken Lanes	<u>Comments from Chris Sperring, Principal Transport Policy Officer:</u> The unique nature of the sunken lanes in the parish is recognised. It is likely that this would be a Highways Asset Management issue.	No further comments received from the Transport Policy Team. Many highways matters fall outside the scope of planning, and those covered in criteria a to d are such examples.
Paragraph 7.23	<u>Comments from Chris Sperring, Principal Transport Policy Officer:</u> Any proposals for public Electric Vehicle Charging Points would be supported.	No changes made
Policy CAP15: Supporting Commercial Businesses,		Policy CS9 of the Core Strategy has regard to the location and type of business development. The policy identifies that industrial, distribution and storage uses will be directed to Protected Employment Areas, and existing suitable located

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
Existing and Expansions		employment sites and premises. Outside of these areas, consideration must be given to compatibility with and impacts on surrounding uses in addition to the capacity and impact on the road network and access by sustainable modes of transport. Policy CAP15 supports employment development at Red Shute Industrial Estate. Red Shute Industrial Estate is defined as a Protected Employment Area within the Core Strategy and the supporting text to the policy should acknowledge this. Policy CAP15 also supports new or expanded commercial activity if they bring back into use vacant land based rural operations back into use. Both the NPPF and the Core Strategy policy CS10 have regard to the rural economy. Paragraph 84 of the NPPF requires planning policies to enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. It also identifies that policies should enable the diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses. In addition, the NPPF seeks to support a prosperous rural economy, and paragraph 85 states that *"the use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to the existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist."* Core Strategy CS10 (The Rural Economy) supports proposals to diversify the rural economy particularly if they are located in or adjacent to Rural Service Centres and Services Villages.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
		Policy CAP15 does not include any consideration of the design of buildings, diversification, the relationship to existing settlements, nor does it encourage the use of previously developed land. To ensure that the Basic Conditions are met, modifications are required.
Paragraph 9.9 (supporting text to policy CAP16)		Although Government (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/resources-for-local-authorities#guidance-for-the-local-planning-authority) and the NPPF support and encourage the inclusion of high-speed broadband, there are no statutory requirements which support this aspiration. Policies can, however, encourage and support high speed broadband provision within new development sites. Since 1 April 2020, developers building sites of 20 or more dwellings have been eligible to have full fibre connectivity built across their sites at no cost if they register with Openreach. Through the Berkshire Digital Infrastructure Group (http://www.thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/digital-infrastructure-group), the Berkshire Unitary Authorities are implementing a Digital Strategy and have set-out a "Connected Berkshire Vision and Strategy" to ensure that over 95% of households and business have access to full fibre coverage (providing Gigabit capable connectivity) and to eliminate all 4G poor coverage areas by 2025. To help achieve the strategy, a suite of guidance is in preparation which will include planning guidance, a Dig-Once approach, and a universal wayleaves agreement. In light of the above, the paragraph should be amended.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
Part 2, Policy CAP16: Supporting SMEs, Flexible start-ups and homeworking		Part 2 of policy CAP16 states that proposals will be appropriate to, amongst others, their location. Cold Ash Parish is predominantly rural in nature. Paragraph 84 of the NPPF requires planning policies to enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. It also identifies that policies should enable the diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses. In addition, the NPPF seeks to support a prosperous rural economy, and paragraph 85 states that *"the use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to the existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist."* Core Strategy CS10 (The Rural Economy) supports proposals to diversify the rural economy particularly if they are located in or adjacent to Rural Service Centres and Services Villages. For development proposals coming forward within rural areas, policy CAP16 does not include any consideration of the design of buildings, diversification, the relationship to existing settlements, nor does it encourage the use of previously developed land. To ensure that the Basic Conditions are met, modifications are required.
Section 10: Non-Policy Actions	<u>Comments from Fiona Simmonds, Education Place Planning Team Leader:</u> The section on non-policy improvements does touch on subsidised school transport from Thatcham. Whilst families from Thatcham do choose the school this is a matter of choice and is not necessary, as these are not catchment pupils. Any transport considered would have to	No changes made. The Consultation Statement comments that this is something that might be pursued by the Parish Council. No further comments received from the Education Team.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	take into account whether this transport was necessary, the sustainability of this transport and the potential impact on schools in Thatcham. There is sufficient capacity in Thatcham for these families to be allocated places without needing transport.	
Section 10 Non-Policy Actions Ref 12: Safeguarding sunken lanes against inappropriate traffic volumes	Comments from Chris Sperring, Principal Transport Policy Officer: The current WBDC Local Transport Plan (LTP) Active Travel (AT) Strategy (2011) notes that Quiet Lanes have been previously used in the Bucklebury Area and that they could be used in other rural villages to help all AT modes in their use of the countryside. The AT strategy is due to be reviewed, along with other supporting LTP strategies, following completion of WBDC's new LTP4 Strategy document, and it is likely the role of Quiet Lane's will be given further consideration as part of the review of the AT strategy.	No changes made. The Consultation Statement comments that this is a matter for the Parish Council to consider. No further comments received from the Transport Policy Team.
Section 10 Non-Policy Actions Ref 14: Need to reduce congestion and improve pedestrian safety at schools	Comments from Chris Sperring, Principal Transport Policy Officer: If school travel measures and physical improvement works (such as pedestrian crossing points) are to be taken forward, it is likely that the relevant school will be required to refresh its School Travel Plan to demonstrate commitment to improving safety and encouraging Active Travel and sustainable means of travel to/from school. The current travel plans for St. Marks (2005) and St. Finnian's (2009) are now somewhat out of date and ideally should be refreshed.	No changes made. The Consultation Statement comments that paragraph 7.5 make reference to school travel plans.
Section 10 Non-Policy Actions Ref 15: HGVs using inappropriate routes through the villages (despite existing weight limits)	Comments from Chris Sperring, Principal Transport Policy Officer: The road network in Cold Ash parish (including Cold Ash Hill) does not form part of the West Berkshire Freight Route Network as defined in the Local Transport Plan Freight Strategy 2014. Any amendments to weight restrictions and advisory signing would need to be developed with WBDC's Traffic and Road Safety Team.	Change made to make reference to WBDC's Traffic and Road Safety Team.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
Section 14 Glossary	Suggest including a definition of what is meant by the 'development plan', ie. A document setting out the local planning authority's policies and proposals for the development and use of land and buildings in the authority's area. This includes adopted Local Plans and neighbourhood plans, together with any regional strategies that remain in force. It is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.	Change made and no further comments.
Section 14 Glossary: Previously developed land / brownfield land	The definition used should be that as given in the NPPF, ie. Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be PDL Previously Developed Land developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.	Change made and no further comments.
Section 14 Glossary: Settlement Boundaries	Suggest rewording to accord with the definition given in the Local Plan Review: These identify the ~~areas in the district of primarily built form, rather than countryside~~ the main built up area of a settlement within which development is considered acceptable, subject to other policy considerations. ~~They identify areas within which development of brownfield land may normally be appropriate, including infilling, redevelopment and conversions in accordance with Government Policy and Guidance (NPPF and NPPG). They do not include a presumption for the development of greenfield land such as playing fields and other open space. Identified built-up area boundaries do ot necessarily include all existing developed areas.~~ While allowing for development, settlement	Change made and no further comments.

Section / Policy reference	Pre-submission (Regulation 14) comments (April 2023)	Submission consultation (Regulation 16) comments
	boundaries protect the character of a settlement and prevent unrestricted growth into the countryside. They create a level of certainty about whether or not the principle of development is likely to be acceptable.	
Section 14 Glossary: Use Classes Order	Definition needs to reflect that the Use Classes Order was amended in 2020.	Change made and no further comments.
Appendix C: Local Green Spaces	Some of the Local Green Spaces are in private ownership, have the owners been contacted? The Group will need to be able to show the Examiner that this has been done and should be evidenced.	The Consultation Statement comments that all owners have been contacted.

Appendices

Appendix A: Legal Compliance Check of the Hermitage NDP

Legal Compliance Check – Submission of Neighbourhood Plan

Neighbourhood Plan	Cold Ash
The Qualifying Body	Cold Ash Parish Council
Date Submitted	20 June 2023
Date of Assessment	14 July 2023

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	**West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments**	**Legally compliant?**
Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) – Regulation 15 requirements: *A qualifying body is required to submit:* *(a) A map or statement which identifies the area to which the proposed neighbourhood development plan relates*	A map identifying the neighbourhood plan area can be found in the Submission Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) – see Chapter 1, Figure 1 on page 7. A map is also included at Figure 1 within the Basic Conditions Statement.	Yes
(b) A consultation statement; (the statement must contain details of (a) those consulted, (b) how they were consulted, (c) summarises the main issues and concerns raised and (d) how these have been considered, and where relevant addressed in the proposed Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 15 (2) Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012).	(a) A Consultation Statement accompanies the submission Cold Ash NDP. Appendix B of the Statement lists the statutory and local consultees who were notified of the Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation. These include: • West Berkshire District Council • Adjoining local authorities • Adjoining Parish Councils • Berkshire Primary Care Trust • Environment Agency • Homes England	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
	• Natural England • National Grid • National Highways • North Wessex Downs AONB • Landowners of proposed Local Green Spaces • Local businesses • Thames Water • UK Power Networks It also indicates that all those on the NDP mailing list were notified. (b) How interested parties were consulted is set out is set out within paragraphs 2.32 to 2.35. Paragraphs 2.32 and 2.25 explain that the consultation was communicated to the local community via social media, an article in the Parish newsletter, and fliers and posters. All those on the NDP mailing list were notified by email, whilst statutory consultees were written to. Two Q&A sessions were held, with one session held online with a second in person. All of the consultation documents were placed on the Parish Council's website, and hard copies were made available upon request. A survey was prepared which respondents could complete either online or in hard copy. (c) A summary of the main issues and concerns raised as a result of the pre-submission consultation are contained within Appendix C of the Consultation Statement. An overview is also provided in paragraphs 2.38 to 2.49. The comments in full are contained within the document 'Cold Ash Parish Council pre-submission draft NDP feedback survey'.	

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
	(d) Consideration of how the matters have been addressed within the NDP are set out within Appendix B. An overview is also provided within paragraphs 2.38 to 2.49.	
(c) The proposed neighbourhood development plan;	The Local Planning Authority received the Submission Cold Ash NDP on 20 June 2023. It was accompanied by the following documents: • Consultation Statement; • Basic Conditions Statement; • Evidence underpinning the spatial strategy for the NDP; • SEA/HRA final (post-consultation) screening opinion (Nov 2022); • SEA/SRA screening decision notice (Nov 2022); • SEA/HRA final (post-consultation) screening opinion (Dec 2021); • SEA/SRA screening decision notice (Dec 2021); • Evidence list; • Contact details of Reg 14 consultees for Reg 16 consultation; • Regulation 14 statutory consultees and Parish Council contacts; and • Pre-submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan Feedback Survey (Regulation 14 consultation).	Yes
(d) A statement explaining how the proposed neighbourhood development plan meets the 'basic conditions', i.e. the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act. The local planning authority has to be satisfied that a basic conditions statement has been submitted but it is not required at this stage to consider whether the draft plan or order meets the basic conditions. (PPG - Paragraph: 053 Reference ID: 41-053- 20140306)	A Basic Conditions Statement accompanies the submission Cold Ash NDP. This considers each Basic Condition in turn and explains how the policies in the plan meets these.	Yes
(e) Environmental Assessment;	WBDC conducted a screening opinion on a draft of the Cold Ash NDP and consulted within the three statutory bodies (the Environment Agency, Natural England, and Historic England) on the draft screening determination	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
The Plan needs to be submitted with one of the following: (i) a statement of reasons for a determination under regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 that the proposal is unlikely to have significant environmental effects OR (ii) an environmental report in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 ((Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.) If an Environmental Report is required, then this needs to have been subject to the required level of consultation and should comply with the government's SEA guidance. In terms of consultation, the 'consultation bodies' (EA, NE and HE) must have been consulted at scoping stage (for 5 weeks). There is no requirement for public consultation on the scoping report. The draft Environmental Report on the pre-submission neighbourhood plan will need to be subject to public consultation for 6 weeks. The draft Environmental Report must be made available at the same time as the draft plan, as an integral part of the consultation process,	for the minimum 5-week period (from 5 November 2021 until 10 December 2021). Drawing on the feedback form the consultees, WBDC concluded that the NDP was unlikely to have significant environmental effects and therefore does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The Council also determined that the NDP will not give rise to significant effects on Habitats Sites (which include Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas) either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. It was therefore considered that a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Appropriate Assessment was not required. On 16 March 2022 Natural England designated the hydrological catchment of the River Lambourn (which is a Special Area of Conservation) as a Nutrient Neutrality Zone (NNZ) due to the unfavourable condition of the watercourse because of unnaturally high levels of phosphorus. The River Lambourn NNZ covers the northern and western parts of Cold Ash Parish, and because of this WBDC advised that the draft NDP would need to be re-screened to consider its impact upon the NNZ. A revised screening opinion was prepared, and the three statutory bodies were consulted between 24 October 2022 and 28 November 2022. The final conclusions remained unchanged from the original screening opinion, ie. SEA and HRA Appropriate Assessment are not required.	

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
and the relationship between the two documents clearly indicated. (See A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive, ODPM – 2005)		
The draft neighbourhood Plan should be checked to ensure it is not a 'repeat' proposal. If so, the LPA can decline to consider the plan (1990 Act Schedule 4B Paragraph 5 and Regulation 18).	The Submission Cold Ash NDP is not a repeat proposal.	Yes
The body submitting the neighbourhood plan is authorised to act (2004 P & CP Act as amended by Localism Act 2011 Section 38 A (2) and 1990 Act schedule 4B as it applies- 61F (2)).	The qualifying body is Cold Ash Parish Council. The neighbourhood area was designated on 19 March 2018. Cold Ash Parish Council, as the qualifying body, have formally (at a Parish Council meeting on 13 June 2023) resolved to submit the NDP to the WBDC. The Plan was produced by the Cold Ash NDP Steering Group, a group of volunteers, having been commissioned to do so by the parish council.	Yes
The pre-submission publication requirements need to have been satisfied. Before submission to the LPA the qualifying body should: 1. Publicise (but this does not have to be on a web site) in a way that is likely to bring to the attention of people who live work or carry on business in the area details of: (a) the proposals (b) when and where they can be inspected (c) how to make representations, and (d) the deadline for making representations – not less than 6 weeks from first publicised.	The Consultation Statement demonstrates that these requirements have been satisfied: 1. The Regulation 14 consultation version of the plan has complied with the regulations, and this is evidenced in paragraphs 2.28 to 2.34 of the Consultation Statement which accompanies the submission Cold Ash NDP. It shows that the Regulation 14 consultation was publicised by a variety of means including social media, notifications to those on the NDP mailing list, and fliers and posters were placed around the village. The plan was available to view online at https://coldashpc.org.uk/ndp/ndp-consultations/cold-ash-ndp-pre-submission-consultation/, whilst hard copies were available at Cold Ash Parish Council office. The publicity material also explained how representations could be made and the address and website to be used.	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
2. Consult any consultation body whose interests they consider may be affected by the proposals for a NDP (please see Appendix A below). 3. Send a copy of the NDP to the LPA. (Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.	The consultation lasted for 6 weeks and ran from 1 March 2023 until 19 April 2023. 2. Appendix B of the Consultation Statement includes a list of Statutory Consultees and non-statutory consultees who were consulted as part of the Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation. 3. The NDP Steering Group emailed WBDC on 16 March 2023 to advise of the consultation, and a link to the consultation documents on the NDP website was included.	
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 Regulations 105 and 106: *A qualifying body which submits a proposal for a neighbourhood development plan must provide such information as the competent authority may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment under regulation 105 or to enable them to determine whether that assessment is required*	Cold Ash Parish Council requested a HRA screening opinion on 1 August 2021, and provided a draft version of the NDP. This included all the necessary information that WBDC required for the purposes of conducting an HRA screening assessment. The final determination was issued on 13 December 2021 following a 5-week consultation with the three statutory bodies in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The screening concluded that the NDP will not give rise to significant effects on Habitats Sites either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. A new screening opinion was requested on 20 September 2022 following the designation of the River Lambourn NNZ which covers parts of Cold Ash Parish. The revised screening opinion, which was issued on 29 November 2022, concluded that the NDP will not give rise to significant effects on Habitats Sites either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. Both screening opinions were submitted to WBDC alongside the NDP.	Yes
Meets the definition of a 'neighbourhood development plan': *"A plan which sets out policies (however expressed) in relation to the development and use and of land in the whole or any part of a*	The Submission Cold Ash NDP meets the definition of a 'neighborhood development plan.'	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
particular neighbourhood area specified in the plan" (2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act as amended by Localism Act 2011 Section 38 A (2))		
Meets the scope of neighbourhood plan provisions, ie. specifies the period for which it covers, does not include provision about development that is 'excluded development' (as set out in section 61K of the 1990 Act) and does not relate to more than one neighbourhood area. (2004 Act s 38B (1, 2) (4)) Meaning of 'excluded development': The following development is excluded development for the purposes of section 61J— (a) development that consists of a county matter within paragraph 1(1)(a) to (h) of Schedule 1, (b) development that consists of the carrying out of any operation, or class of operation, prescribed under paragraph 1(j) of that Schedule (waste development) but that does not consist of development of a prescribed description, (c) development that falls within Annex 1 to Council Directive 85/337/EEC on the	The Submission Cold Ash NDP specifies that it covers the period 2021 to 2039. The Submission Cold Ash NDP does not contain policies relating to 'excluded development.' It does not relate to more than the neighborhood area. These points are reiterated in the Basic Conditions Statement.	Yes

Requirements and relevant legislation and/or guidance	West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) comments	Legally compliant?
assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (as amended from time to time), (d) development that consists (whether wholly or partly) of a nationally significant infrastructure project (within the meaning of the Planning Act 2008), (e) prescribed development or development of a prescribed description; and (f) development in a prescribed area or an area of a prescribed description.		

Conclusion: West Berkshire District Council confirms that the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the legislative requirements.

Where the draft neighbourhood plan submitted to a Local Planning Authority meets the requirements in the legislation, the Local Planning Authority must publicise the neighbourhood plan for a minimum of 6 weeks, invite comments, notify any consultation body referred to in the consultation statement and send the draft neighbourhood plan to independent examination (see regulations 16, 17, 23 and 24 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), Planning Practice Guidance - Paragraph: 054 Reference ID: 41-054-20140306).

Following examination, the Council will determine whether or not the plan is ready for a public referendum or if further modifications are required (Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as varied by s38A & 38C of the Town and Country Planning Act)). Please note that all references to primary and secondary legislation are to those enactments as amended.

Appendix A – Consultation Bodies

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Schedule 1 Consultation bodies that the Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum should consult (at pre-submission stage):

- In a London Borough, the Mayor of London
- A Local Planning Authority, county council or parish council any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the Local Planning Authority
- The Coal Authority
- The Homes and Communities Agency (now known as Homes England)
- Natural England
- The Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
- National Highways
- The Marine Management Organisation
- Any person to whom the electronic communications code applies, or who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the area of the Local Planning Authority
- Where they exist a Primary Care Trust, licensee under the Electricity Act 1989, Licensee of the Gas Act 1986, sewerage undertaker and water undertaker
- Voluntary bodies whose activities benefit all or part of the neighbourhood area
- Bodies representing the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the neighbourhood area
- Bodies representing the interests of different religious groups in the neighbourhood area and
- Bodies representing the interests of disabled people in the neighbourhood area.

Annual Report – Governance and Ethics Committee

Committee considering report:	Council
Date of Committee:	5 October 2023
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Jeff Brooks
Report Author:	Joseph Holmes
Forward Plan Ref:	C4323

1 Purpose of the Report

This report is an annual summary of the activities of the Governance & Ethics Committee for the 2022-23 municipal year. The report is intended for Full Council to provide a summary of key areas that the Committee has considered during the Municipal Year 2022-23 as well as some of the actions and changes that have occurred due to the Committee's activities.

2 Recommendation

To note the contents of the report.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	None
Human Resource:	None
Legal:	None
Risk Management:	Included within the activity of the Governance Committee
Property:	None

Policy:	This report supports the overall CIPFA/SOLACE governance framework			
	Positive	**Neutral**	**Negative**	**Commentary**
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		None required – this is a summary report of other reports which will have had EIAs considered as part of their reports to the Committee.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		See above
Environmental Impact:		X		None
Health Impact:		X		None
ICT Impact:		X		None
Digital Services Impact:		X		None
Council Strategy Priorities:		X		None
Core Business:	X			Report highlighting the work of the committee and its contribution to good governance.

Data Impact:		x		
Consultation and Engagement:	Officers of the Finance Governance Group Corporate Board			

4 Executive Summary

4.1 This report is an annual summary of the activities of the Governance Committee for 2022-23. The report is for Full Council to provide a summary of key areas that the Committee has considered during the Municipal Year 2022-23 as well as some of the actions and changes that have occurred due to the Committee's activities.

4.2 As well as the summary included in the supporting information below, the Committee also has oversight of Standards issues and this report needs to be read in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer's report for 2022-23.

4.3 The Committee also approved that an independent person becomes a member of the committee (with no voting rights) to support and advise the committee as a non-Council member, and he has started during 2022-23, making a contribution to the work of the Governance Committee

4.4 Members also had training on key areas of the remit of the Committee during the Municipal Year.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

The summary below highlights the key items that have come to the Committee over the previous year and what action was taken as a result of these. The summary is of the themes and individual reports highlighted alongside commentary on the action taken.

Summary table

Theme	Summary of reports	Actions
Internal Audit	Regular update reports provided for the committee to highlight progress during the 2022-23 financial year. The overall internal audit opinion is expected to be satisfactory for 2022-23 as well as 2021-22. The committee commented upon the summary reports, especially those individual	The committee commented upon and noted the reports.

Theme	Summary of reports	Actions
	reports that were not highlighted as satisfactory or well-controlled.	
Financial statements and External Audit	Draft financial statements highlight report, going concern and Annual Governance Statement all presented for approval in line with statutory deadlines. The external audit of the financial statements going back to 2020-21 remain outstanding. The Committee raised this with the external auditors at committee meetings, but the delays continue with both 2020-21 and 2021-22 audits not being completed. The start of the external audit of the 2022-23 financial statements is unlikely to commence until late in 2023-24. The committee did not received the External audit plan for 2021-22 until the March 2022 meeting, 11 months after the year end to which that external audit relates. The committee received a report in January 2023 on preparations by the Council for the 2022-23 year end and production of draft financial statements. This delay has been highlighted in the Annual Governance Statement, and though not an issue for the Council (as WBC has provided draft financial statements in line with Government deadlines) to control, it is becoming an increasing governance concern.	Approved for external audit review. The committee raised their concerns with the Council's external auditors.
Treasury Management	Mid-year report taken to Jan. 23 meeting; the committee received more information during the year on treasury management now that it is included within the remit of the committee.	Report noted

Theme	Summary of reports	Actions
Constitution Review	A variety of updates to the constitution were considered by the Committee with the majority of the Constitution reviewed.	Approved and recommended to Full Council (where decision was approved)
Risk Management	Q2 Risk management report considered (in part II) by the committee where a number of questions were posed to officers.	Report noted by the committee.
CIPFA Audit Committee guidance	A report was provided to the committee on CIPFA's latest view on the functions of an audit committee. Subsequent to the meeting, an informal workshop was undertaken whereby current members of the committee considered the WBC position against CIPFA's view on their self-assessments.	Informal workshop completed The self-assessment will be used with new Governance Committee members to discuss arrangements for the committee's remit.
Community Governance Review	The committee received a report on a Community Governance Review of parish wards to the south of Newbury	Report was approved to Full Council

6 Other options considered

There is the option to have no annual report of the work of the Governance and Ethics Committee though this has been rejected on the basis that it is important there is a summary of the Committee's work during the year.

7 Conclusion

The Committee have considered a variety of reports as well as approving reports for Full Council to consider. There has been significant input from members of the committee and the new independent member to question officers and external auditors on the reports that have been presented, with a number of reports then being provided to Full Council to support the Council's governance framework.

8 Appendices

None.

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☐ No: ☒

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	☒
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	☐
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	☐
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	☐
Item is Urgent Key Decision	☐
Report is to note only	☐

Wards affected: All

Officer details:

Name: Joseph Holmes
Job Title: Executive Director (Resources)
Tel No: 01635 503540
E-mail: Joseph.holmes1@westberks.gov.uk

Report by the Returning Officer

Committee considering report:	Council
Date of Committee:	05 October 2023
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Jeff Brooks
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	07 September 2023
Report Author:	Clare Ockwell
Forward Plan Ref:	C4411

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To inform Council of the results of the Local Elections held in May 2023 and any issues concerning the conduct of the elections.

2 Recommendation

2.1 For Council to note the attached report.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	Budgetary provision of £60K per annum is currently transferred into the budget to fund the cost of District Council elections, which would include any by-election mid-term. The cost of the town and parish elections will be recovered from the individual councils.
Human Resource:	N/A
Legal:	Ensuring that elections are run in accordance with legislation
Risk Management:	N/A
Property:	N/A

Policy:	N/A			
	Positive	**Neutral**	**Negative**	**Commentary**
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		N		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		N		
Environmental Impact:		N		
Health Impact:		N		
ICT Impact:		N		
Digital Services Impact:		N		
Council Strategy Priorities:		N		
Core Business:		N		
Data Impact:		N		

Consultation and Engagement:	N/A

4 Executive Summary

Not applicable

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

5.1 The local elections were held on Thursday 4th May 2023 for West Berkshire Council and all parish and town councils across the district.

Background

District Council:

5.2 125 candidates contested 43 seats on the district council in 24 wards.

43 Liberal Democrats
43 Conservatives
18 Greens
15 Labour
1 UKIP
2 Reform UK
1 Heritage Party – Traditional Family Values
2 Independent

The 24 wards are:

10 Single member
9 Two member
5 Three member

Parishes and Towns:

5.3 492 seats in total

90 seats were contested, 330 uncontested seats, the remaining 72 seats subsequently available for co-option.

5.4 Elections were held in 11 parishes/wards (Thatcham. Newbury, East Ilsley and Stanford Dingley)

5.5 No candidates stood in Wokefield parish, therefore the election was re-run on the 22nd of June, whereby four candidates were successfully elected.

The Election Process

5.6 Polling stations opened at 7am on Thursday 4th May, closing at 10 pm on the same day. A total of 120,384 electors had the opportunity to vote.

5.7 A total of 30,362 ballot papers were issued for the District Council Election. These were supplemented by 15,383 valid postal votes. This resulted in a turnout of 38%, a 2% increase on the same elections held in 2019.

5.8 Verification of ballot papers took place on Friday 5th May and was followed by the counts for District seats and Town/parish council seats on the same day. Due to the Coronation of King Charles III taking place on Saturday 6th May, the count was completed in one day, rather than the more usual two days. Verification commenced at 9.30am and was complete by 6.20pm, shortly followed by the announcement of the final results. The Returning Officer employed 130 counters in six teams to mitigate against any delays and make sure the event was concluded in a timely manner.

5.9 There were no particular issues at the count and both elements progressed as I anticipated. The Returning Officer would like to express thanks to all those staff who supported the event at Newbury Racecourse. Thanks is also offered to all the candidates, agents, and party activists who assisted with making the event a success.

Voter ID and accessibility

5.10 The Elections Act 2022 introduced the first tranche of changes from the act in time for the Local Elections, requiring electors to provide Voter ID in the polling station and for Returning Officers to make sure that the voting process was accessible to all.

5.11 Many of the new provisions were supported by New Burdens funding from central government, allocated by size of authority and the likely cost of additional equipment required to fulfil the requirements.

5.12 The team created a communication plan to make sure that the new requirements were translated to our electorate, encouraging participation and engaging with those less likely to have one of the approved Voter ID documents in their procession. This supported the national campaign run by the Electoral Commission.

5.13 The team at West Berkshire have been applauded nationally for their TikTok campaign. Four videos, specifically about Voter ID, were produced to remind people of the need to take identification and how to get some if they hadn't got anything suitable. It was aimed at young voters, using graphics that were trending at the time, and all four videos had a total of 3810 views.

5.14 The accessibility of all 96 polling places used was accessed prior to election-day and Electoral Commission guidance followed, introducing further aids for disabled voters and training staff to be aware of those in need of particular help in casting their vote.

5.15 The Electoral Commission have since issued an interim analysis of Voter ID pending a final report due in September 2023.

5.16 Data showed that 99.8% of electors voting in West Berkshire brought ID to the polling station. Figures reveal that 101 electors were initially turned away, but of those, 67 returned with acceptable ID and were able to cast their vote. This was officially recorded using a form supplied by the Electoral Commission for their research. No account was taken of the number of voters who reached the polling place, but did not enter the building having realised that they had forgotten to bring identification. The number of voters without ID upon arrival was therefore greater than officially recorded. The Returning Officer employed additional staff at stations to greet electors where possible to make sure they had brought valid ID before they entered the building. Additional work will now commence to build on this work so electors are prepared for the next national polls.

5.17 A new portal was introduced, allowing electors to apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate online, should they not have one of the 23 approved items of photographic identification. The Electoral team received 192 applications via the portal and in person requests. Take up of the Voter Authority Certificate was much lower than expected. Nationally 89,500 people applied, but of those only 25,000 certificates were used on polling day. Take up is likely to increase amongst the less habitual voters when the national polls occur next year.

Staffing

5.18 The new requirements meant that staffing levels had to be increased to help voters and meet electors at the polling stations. Staffing polling stations is now recognised as a rising problem, partly caused by the responsibility of new requirements, the amount paid for undertaking the role and elections often happening near bank holidays. The Returning Officer would like to thank everyone for their hard work and particularly the additional help given by those employed by West Berkshire Council alongside their normal role. Thanks is also given to many volunteers from outside the organisation who offered to assist, many in the last few days prior to the polls. The elections team is already preparing to address this situation for future elections as recruitment and retention will continue to cause problems.

Royal Mail performance

5.19 Across the country, the service provided by Royal Mail has been called into question. We have made a written complaint to Royal Mail who have responded, sharing the knowledge that operational problems exist locally. Staffing is an ongoing issue within their sorting and delivery offices.

5.20 Royal Mail have assured the Returning Officer that first class postal packs should be delivery next day, though they are aware that their performance is below target. As an authority we only re-issued 65 postal packs prior to election-day as many were slow to arrive, taking far longer than usual.

5.21 In total 31227 postal votes were issued across the two sets of polls. The number of District postal votes rejected for incomplete postal voting statements, incorrect signatures and dates of birth, or the lack of a statement or ballot paper was 327. All those electors who did not submit their vote correctly received a letter informing them of their error to make sure this is not replicated at future polls. There were also a number of rejected parish/town council votes. Virtually all 144 incomplete parish packs were from the same electors, meaning votes were lost at both polls.

5.22 Following the close of poll, between the 5th May and the 28th June 2023, 212 completed postal voting packs were delivered to the Returning Officer and marked as received, but too late to be taken into account.

5.23 The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, along with the Association of Electoral Administrators, print providers and other stakeholders are now engaging with Royal Mail to address the problems ahead of a UK Parliamentary General election.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Overall, the Local Elections were delivered as planned with few issues. Staffing shortages was the greatest problem faced by the core team, along with the additional burden of voter identification being introduced by Government at such speed. We now prepare for the next tranche of changes, relating to absent voting applications and handling, the rights of EU citizens to vote in elections, along with the introduction of 'votes for life' for those British citizens living overseas.

7. Appendices

Appendix A – Summary of results

Background Papers:

None

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☐ No: ☒

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	☒
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	☐
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	☐
Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months	☐
Item is Urgent Key Decision	☐
Report is to note only	☐

Wards affected: all

Officer details:

Name: Clare Ockwell

Job Title: Elections and Local Land Charges Manager
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E-mail: clare.ockwell@westberks.gov.uk

Appendix

See attached

Election of DISTRICT COUNCILLORS for the Electoral Wards of West Berkshire Council

Summary of Results

Date of Election : Thursday 04 May 2023

Contested Elections

Aldermaston

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
BOECK Dominic Kevin	The Conservative Party Candidate	562 ELECTED
BURNE Zdena	Liberal Democrats	333
HEATH Phillippa Marie	Labour Party	128
LOWE Matthew Thomas	Green Party	80

Vacant Seats: 1 Electorate: 3,010 Ballot Papers Issued: 1,108 Turnout: 36.81%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 4 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 1 Rejected: 0

Basildon

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
COYLE Laura Rose	Liberal Democrats	727 ELECTED
PRESTON-BARNES Hazel Elizabeth	The Conservative Party Candidate	513

Vacant Seats: 1 Electorate: 2,757 Ballot Papers Issued: 1,249 Turnout: 45.30%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 5 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 4 Rejected: 0

Bradfield

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
BUCKNALL Richard William Gordon	Liberal Democrats	357
MACKINNON Ross	The Conservative Party Candidate	601 ELECTED
WOODWARD Michael William	Labour Party	93

Vacant Seats: 1 Electorate: 2,905 Ballot Papers Issued: 1,054 Turnout: 36.28%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 0 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 3 Rejected: 0

Printed and published by: The Returning Officer, West Berkshire Council, Council Offices, Market Street, Newbury

Contested Elections

Bucklebury

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
LOADER Graham Andrew	Green Party	164
READ Christopher Colin James	Liberal Democrats	828 ELECTED
WOODS Georgina Lilias Cheyne	The Conservative Party Candidate	521

Vacant Seats: 1 Electorate: 2,879 Ballot Papers Issued: 1,519 Turnout: 52.76%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 1 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 5 Rejected: 0

Burghfield & Mortimer

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
BRIDGMAN Graham Henry	The Conservative Party Candidate	1,146
CARTER Nicholas John	Liberal Democrats	1,499 ELECTED
GOWER Peter John McDonald	Green Party	434
KILSHAW David Andrew	The Conservative Party Candidate	1,055
MACKINNON Amanda Jane	The Conservative Party Candidate	1,032
MAYES Geoffrey Brian	Liberal Democrats	1,330 ELECTED
POOLE Vicky	Liberal Democrats	1,438 ELECTED
SAVILL Christian James Brook	Labour Party	306
TIMMS Sarah Elizabeth	Labour Party	450

Vacant Seats: 3 Electorate: 8,052 Ballot Papers Issued: 3,058 Turnout: 37.98%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 2 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 9 Rejected: 0

Chieveley & Cold Ash

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
CODLING Heather Carol	Liberal Democrats	1,156 ELECTED
DICK Paul Gerard	Conservative Party Candidate	1,049 ELECTED
HOBLIN Jill Caroline	Green Party	585
MCCANN Thomas Diamond	Liberal Democrats	829
WITHERIDGE Philip Charles Gilbart	Conservative Party Candidate	878

Vacant Seats: 2 Electorate: 5,431 Ballot Papers Issued: 2,440 Turnout: 44.93%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 0 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 10 Rejected: 0

Contested Elections

Downlands

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
BOYD John Andrew	Liberal Democrats	288
GARTSHORE Jane Anne	Green Party	146
HOOKER Clive Arthur	The Conservative Party Candidate	644 ELECTED
MCKAY Ian	Labour Party	81

Vacant Seats: 1 Electorate: 2,999 Ballot Papers Issued: 1,167 Turnout: 38.91%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 2 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 5 Rejected: 0

Hungerford & Kintbury

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
BENNEYWORTH Dennis Charles	Conservative Party Candidate	1,572 ELECTED
GAINES Denise Anne	Liberal Democrats	2,036 ELECTED
PODGER Benjamin James Galbraith	Conservative Party Candidate	1,356
SWIFT-HOOK Julian Mark	Liberal Democrats	1,509
TOMPKINS Peter David	Conservative Party Candidate	1,380
VICKERS Anthony James Muschamp	Liberal Democrats	1,704 ELECTED
WHITHAM Patricia Grace	Green Party	829

Vacant Seats: 3 Electorate: 8,877 Ballot Papers Issued: 3,738 Turnout: 42.11%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 5 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 10 Rejected: 0

Lambourn

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
MILLINGTON Susan	Green Party	153
PATTENDEN Diana Jean	Liberal Democrats	262
WOOLLASTON Howard Robert	The Conservative Party Candidate	618 ELECTED

Vacant Seats: 1 Electorate: 3,102 Ballot Papers Issued: 1,037 Turnout: 33.43%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 0 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 2 Rejected: 0

Contested Elections

Newbury Central

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
COLSTON Martin Eric	Liberal Democrats	1,358 ELECTED
DOHERTY Sean	Conservative Party Candidate	650
JARDIM Jean-Claude	Conservative Party Candidate	619
POP Bogdan-Adrian	Green Party	399
STURGESS Louise Elizabeth	Liberal Democrats	1,316 ELECTED

Vacant Seats: 2 Electorate: 5,526 Ballot Papers Issued: 2,272 Turnout: 41.11%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 2 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 8 Rejected: 0

Newbury Clay Hill

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
ALMOND Richard John	Conservative Party Candidate	432
CLIFFORD Jeanette	Conservative Party Candidate	422
FOOT Nigel Peter	Liberal Democrats	1,077 ELECTED
GOTELEE John Peter	Independent	263
GOURLEY Stuart William	Liberal Democrats	1,131 ELECTED
MCMAHON David John	Heritage Party - Traditional Family Values	86
SWAFFIELD Karen Margaret	Green Party	242

Vacant Seats: 2 Electorate: 5,593 Ballot Papers Issued: 1,896 Turnout: 33.90%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 2 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 5 Rejected: 0

Newbury Greenham

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
ANFIELD James Andrew	Reform UK	143
BARNETTPhilip Ashley	Liberal Democrats	1,716 ELECTED
CLARKE Joseph Alvin	Conservative Party Candidate	713
DRUMMOND William	Liberal Democrats	1,532 ELECTED
JAMES Sarah	Conservative Party Candidate	754
PATTENDEN Erik	Liberal Democrats	1,484 ELECTED
PUFFETT Gary John	Labour Party	426
VERNER Linda Elizabeth	Conservative Party Candidate	725
WAKELYN-GREEN Michael John	Green Party	918

Vacant Seats: 3 Electorate: 9,176 Ballot Papers Issued: 3,100 Turnout: 33.78%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 2 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 8 Rejected: 0

Contested Elections

Newbury Speen

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
AMIRTHARAJ Antony Madalairaj	Liberal Democrats	1,062 ELECTED
DOHERTY Lynne	Conservative Party Candidate	791
DUDMAN David Andrew	Conservative Party Candidate	748
FERREIRA Jose Miguel Vieira	Reform UK	79
MASTERS Stephen Michael	Green Party	831
VICKERS Mary Martha	Liberal Democrats	1,109 ELECTED

Vacant Seats: 2 Electorate: 5,770 Ballot Papers Issued: 2,487 Turnout: 43.10%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 8 Excess Marks: 2 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 8 Rejected: 0

Newbury Wash Common

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
ABBS Adrian Neil	Liberal Democrats	1,712 ELECTED
CLARK Patrick James	Liberal Democrats	1,774 ELECTED
DAVIES James Jeffrey Leighton	Conservative Party Candidate	686
HUNT Clive	Conservative Party Candidate	676
KIRBY Simon James	Independent	433
MARSH David Ralph	Green Party	1,495 ELECTED
MILLER Vaughan John	Liberal Democrats	1,480
STEPHENSON Andrea Louise	Conservative Party Candidate	627

Vacant Seats: 3 Electorate: 7,101 Ballot Papers Issued: 3,305 Turnout: 46.54%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 10 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 9 Rejected: 0

Pangbourne

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
FARRINGTON Mark Jonathan	Labour Party	94
HALL Timothy Leslie	Green Party	61
MALE Michael Raymond	The Conservative Party Candidate	444
SHAKESPEARE Matthew James	Liberal Democrats	678 ELECTED

Vacant Seats: 1 Electorate: 2,791 Ballot Papers Issued: 1,282 Turnout: 45.93%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 1 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 4 Rejected: 0

Contested Elections

Ridgeway

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
CULVER Carolyne Lindsey	Green Party	952 ELECTED
ILIFFE Edward Richard	Conservative Party Candidate	345
LUSBY TAYLOR Pamela Jean	Liberal Democrats	87

Vacant Seats: 1 Electorate: 3,075 Ballot Papers Issued: 1,387 Turnout: 45.11%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 1 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 2 Rejected: 0

Thatcham Central

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
BROOK Michael John	Labour Party	196
COLLINS Estella Jasmine Rose	Green Party	267
COTTINGHAM Iain David	Liberal Democrats	1,024 ELECTED
CRUMLY Richard John	Conservative Party Candidate	511
MURPHY Iain Anthony David	Conservative Party Candidate	482
STEEVENSON Stephanie Diane	Liberal Democrats	1,040 ELECTED

Vacant Seats: 2 Electorate: 5,395 Ballot Papers Issued: 1,858 Turnout: 34.44%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 5 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 12 Rejected: 0

Thatcham Colthrop & Crookham

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
ARDAGH-WALTER Stephen John	The Conservative Party Candidate	339
JEFFERY Owen Edward	Liberal Democrats	794 ELECTED

Vacant Seats: 1 Electorate: 2,575 Ballot Papers Issued: 1,145 Turnout: 44.47%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 0 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 12 Rejected: 0

Thatcham North East

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
CARR Simon Matthew	Conservative Party Candidate	514
COTTAM Jeremy Richard	Liberal Democrats	1,048 ELECTED
DILLON Lee Raymond James	Liberal Democrats	1,131 ELECTED
HODGSON Kathryn Wendy	Green Party	376
PARRY Dominic John	Conservative Party Candidate	432

Vacant Seats: 2 Electorate: 5,779 Ballot Papers Issued: 1,849 Turnout: 32.00%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 2 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 6 Rejected: 0

Contested Elections

Thatcham West

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
BROOKS Jeffrey Charles George	Liberal Democrats	1,100 ELECTED
COLLIS Jason Paul	Conservative Party Candidate	439
EAST Nicholas John	Labour Party	99
HUTT-BERRINGTON Sarah Anne	Labour Party	121
JOHNSON Gary Edward	UK Independence Party	89
PARSLOE Elizabeth Jane	Green Party	215
PEARSON Jonathan Charles	Conservative Party Candidate	344
PEMBERTON Justin Alexander	Liberal Democrats	871 ELECTED

Vacant Seats: 2 Electorate: 5,367 Ballot Papers Issued: 1,741 Turnout: 32.44%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 4 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 6 Rejected: 0

Theale

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
FERGUSON Suzanne Elizabeth	Labour Party	94
MACRO Alan Michael	Liberal Democrats	585 ELECTED
PARKHILL Thomas Alexander	The Conservative Party Candidate	148

Vacant Seats: 1 Electorate: 2,306 Ballot Papers Issued: 830 Turnout: 35.99%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 1 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 2 Rejected: 0

Tilehurst & Purley

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
BILLOWS Simon	Liberal Democrats	1,133
KANDER Paul Christopher Stephen	Conservative Party Candidate	1,183 ELECTED
LANGFORD Jane Monica	Conservative Party Candidate	1,191 ELECTED
LEWISJanine	Liberal Democrats	1,195 ELECTED
MARINO Thomas Joseph	Conservative Party Candidate	1,097
NORMAN Gary Arthur	Liberal Democrats	633
PAYNTER Jacqueline	Green Party	545
WARREN James Christopher	Labour Party	599

Vacant Seats: 3 Electorate: 8,224 Ballot Papers Issued: 2,831 Turnout: 34.42%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 1 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 9 Rejected: 0

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Contested Elections

Tilehurst Birch Copse

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
LALLY Ceinwen Delia	Liberal Democrats	438
LINDEN Anthony Nicholas	Conservative Party Candidate	736
MOORE Andrew Gregory	Liberal Democrats	345
STEWART Joanne Lisa	Conservative Party Candidate	777 ELECTED
TAYLOR Clive	Labour Party	737 ELECTED

Vacant Seats: 2 Electorate: 5,938 Ballot Papers Issued: 1,719 Turnout: 28.95%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 1 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 1 Rejected: 0

Tilehurst South & Holybrook

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes
BELL Elizabeth Rowena Jane	Labour Party	554
BROWNE Andre Anthony	Liberal Democrats	261
CROAL Charles Spalding	Labour Party	620
GROUT John Berkeley	Liberal Democrats	203
OLOKO Akinbiyi	Conservative Party Candidate	716 ELECTED
SOMNER Richard James	Conservative Party Candidate	827 ELECTED

Vacant Seats: 2 Electorate: 5,722 Ballot Papers Issued: 1,673 Turnout: 29.24%

Rejected Votes: No Marks: 0 Excess Marks: 8 Voter Identity: 0 Void: 4 Rejected: 0

Totals for District Election

Ballot Papers Issued	=	45,745	Votes Cast	=	89,291
Electorate	=	120,35	Votes Rejected	=	214
Turnout %	=	38.01 %			

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Monitoring Officer's Annual Report 2022/23 – Conduct and Ethics

Committee considering report:	Council
Date of Committee:	05 October 2023
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Jeff Brooks
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	13 September 2023
Report Author:	Sarah Clarke
Forward Plan Ref:	C4412

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To provide an update on any local and national issues relating to ethical standards and to bring to the attention of Members a summary of complaints or other problems within West Berkshire.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are requested to note the content of the report.

2.2 It is proposed that the report be circulated to all Parish/Town Councils in the District for information.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	There are no financial issues arising from this report. However the costs associated with external investigations may lead to a budget pressure.
Human Resource:	None
Legal:	There are no legal issues arising from this report. The matters covered by this report are generally requirements of the Local Government Act 2000 in so far as appropriate and the Localism Act 2011 and its supporting regulations.

Risk Management:	The benefits of this process are the maintenance of the Council's credibility and good governance by a high standard of ethical behaviour. The threats are the loss of credibility of the Council if standards fall. Adherence to the requirements of the Code of Conduct also reduce the risk of the Council's decisions being subject to legal challenge.			
Property:	None			
Policy:	None			
	Positive	**Neutral**	**Negative**	**Commentary**
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		
Environmental Impact:		X		
Health Impact:		X		
ICT Impact:		X		
Digital Services Impact:		X		

Council Strategy Priorities:		X		
Core Business:		X		
Data Impact:		X		
Consultation and Engagement:	Finance & Governance Group			

4 Executive Summary

4.1 This report is the Monitoring Officer's annual report for the Governance Committee, which will be presented to Full Council on 5 October. The report will also be circulated to all Town and Parish Councils.

4.2 The key findings identified in the report are:

(a) Standards of ethical conduct across the district remain good.

(b) The number of gifts and hospitality declared remains lower than pre-Covid.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

5.1 The Localism Act 2011 was enacted on 15th November 2011 and it made fundamental changes to the system of regulation of the standards of conduct for elected and co-opted members of Councils and Parish Councils.

5.2 In order to ensure that the process was working effectively locally it was agreed that the Monitoring Officer would produce an annual report which would be presented to the Governance Committee. The report would set out the number and nature of complaints received and inform Members of any other activity that was taking place around the Code of Conduct regime. It would also provide a means of updating the Committee on the progress of investigations.

5.3 It was also agreed that the report would be presented to Full Council and that it would be circulated to all Town and Parish Councils.

Background

5.4 During the Municipal Year 2022/23 the Governance Committee was comprised of eleven members (nine District Councillors appointed on a proportional basis and two co-opted non-voting Parish/Town Councillors). The membership for 2022/23 was agreed at the Annual Council meeting.

5.5 The Advisory Panel comprised ten Members: two from the Liberal Democrat party, two from the Conservative Party, two from the Green Party, two parish/town councillors and two Independent Persons.

5.6 A revised Code of Conduct was adopted in September 2016. The Code and Governance arrangements are supported by a number of documents including:

- Terms of Reference for the Governance Committee and Advisory Panel;
- Gifts and Hospitality Protocol;
- Complaints procedures for breaches of the Code of Conduct;
- Dispensations procedure;
- Social Media Protocol.

Independent Persons

5.7 Under Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011 the Council has a duty to ensure that it has appointed at least one Independent Person who is consulted before it makes a decision on an allegation it has determined to investigate. It was agreed by Council that the Independent Person may be consulted directly either by the person who has made the complaint or the person the complaint has been made about. Three Independent Persons have therefore been appointed in order to ensure that a conflict situation does not arise.

5.8 A person is not considered to be "independent" if:-

- They are or have been, within the last five years, an elected or co-opted Member or officer of the Council or of any Parish Councils within this area. This also applies to committees or sub-committees of the various Councils.

- They are a relative or close friend of a current elected, or co-opted, Member or officer of the Council or any Parish Council within its area, or any elected or co-opted member of any committee or sub-committee.

- The definition of relative includes the candidate's spouse, civil partner, grandparent, child etc.

5.9 The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 require provisions to be made relating to the potential dismissal or disciplining of the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer or Section 151 Officer. At least two Independent Persons who have been appointed under section 28 of the Localism Act 2011 to be appointed to the panel. The role of the Independent Persons therefore includes the requirement of this legislation.

5.10 Council appointed Mike Wall MBE, Alan Penrith and Lindsey Appleton as the Council's Independent Persons for the 2022/23 Municipal Year. All three Independent Persons have agreed to remain as Independent Persons for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

5.11 The Council is asked to recognise the significant contribution of the Independent Persons and thank them for their ongoing contributions.

Governance Committee

5.12 The overall purpose of the Governance Committee is to provide effective challenge across the Council and independent assurance on the risk management and governance framework and associated internal control environment to members and the public, independently of the Executive. The Governance Committee is also responsible for receiving the annual Audit Letter and for signing off the Council's final accounts.

5.13 The Committee is also charged with promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct throughout the Council. They promote, educate and support Councillors (both District and Parish) in following the highest standards of conduct and ensuring that those standards are fully owned locally. The roles and functions of the Governance Committee are set out in the Constitution (Part 2 Articles of the Constitution).

5.14 At the conclusion of 2022/23 the Governance Committee comprised the following Members:

Conservative Group (5 Members)	Jeff Beck, Jeff Cant, Rick Jones(Chairman), Tony Linden, Biyi Oloko
Conservative Substitutes (2 Members)	Graham Pask, Claire Rowles (part year), Alan Law (remaining year)
Liberal Democrat Group (3 Members)	Jeremy Cottam (Vice-Chairman), Geoff Mayes, Andy Moore
Liberal Democrat Substitutes (2 Members)	Adrian Abbs, Owen Jeffery
Green Party Group (1 Member)	David Marsh
Green Party Substitutes (1 Member)	Steve Masters

5.15 The Governance Committee has a special responsibility regarding the 55 Town and Parish Councils within the District. It is responsible for ensuring that high standards of conduct are met within the parishes and that all Parish and Town Councillors are aware of their responsibilities under their Codes of Conduct.

5.16 The District Councillors are therefore supported on the Governance Committee by two co-opted Parish Councillors who are appointed in a non-voting capacity. Two substitute non-voting parish councillors are also appointed to this Committee. During 2022/23 the Governance Committee included the following Parish Councillors:

- Bill Graham (co-opted non-voting Parish Councillor)
- David Southgate (co-opted non-voting Parish Councillor)
- Anne Budd (substitute co-opted non-voting Parish Councillor)
- John Downe (substitute co-opted non-voting Parish Councillor)

5.17 The Council is asked to recognise the contribution of the Parish Councillors and thank them for their contributions.

Advisory Panel

5.18 The Advisory Panel is responsible for dealing with complaints where evidence of a breach of the Code has been investigated by an independent investigator. The Advisory Panel considers the investigators report. The views of the Advisory Panel are reported to the Governance Committee, which makes the formal decision in respect of any allegations which have been investigated where it is considered that a breach of the relevant code of conduct has occurred.

5.19 The District Councillors on the Advisory Panel were representatives of all three political groups within the Council and are not appointed in accordance with the proportionality rules. During 2022/23 the Advisory Panel comprised the following District Councillors:

Conservative Group (2 Members)	Dennis Benneyworth, Alan Law
Liberal Democrats (2 Members)	Phil Barnett, Lee Dillon
Green Party Group (2 Members)	Carolyne Culver, Steve Masters

5.20 During the 2022/23 Municipal Year the following Parish Councillors were appointed to the Advisory Panel:

- Bill Graham
- David Southgate
- Anne Budd
- John Downe

5.21 The Council is asked to thank the Parish Councillors for agreeing to be members of the Panel and their contribution for the one occasion it met.

The Monitoring Officer

5.22 The Monitoring Officer is a statutory post and in West Berkshire rests with the Service Director Strategy & Governance. The Monitoring Officer (Sarah Clarke) in 2022/23 was supported by three deputies (Leigh Hogan, Shiraz Sheikh (part year) and Nicola Thomas (part year)). The Monitoring Officer has a key role in promoting and maintaining standards of conduct. The Monitoring Officer also has a statutory responsibility to establish and maintain a register of interests for members and co-opted members of the authority. The Monitoring Officer acts as legal adviser to the Governance Committee and Advisory Panel.

5.23 The Committee for Standards in Public Life wrote, via the LGA, to local authorities requesting a progress report against the 15 best practice recommendations regarding local government Ethical Standards, which highlighted that West Berkshire Council already complies with most of the recommendations.

5.24 There were some areas where the Council will need to review existing processes and procedures, which will be considered by the Constitution Review Task Group at the relevant time. The areas for review include matters such as the recommendation that

Members be required to comply with formal standards investigations, and a recommendation that the Code of Conduct be reviewed on an annual basis.

The Work of the Committee 2022-2023

5.25 During the 2022/23 Municipal Year the work undertaken by the Committee has to date included:

- Consideration of the monitoring cycle for both internal and external audit.
- The Committee Considered Reports from Internal Audit on the work being undertaken by the Team.
- The Committee considered a report into the findings of a review of the effectiveness of the Governance Committee and an action plan was developed to meet the recommendations of the review. An updated Terms of Reference for the Committee was agreed, which will be considered by Council.
- The Constitution Review Task Group has met and phases one and two of the Constitution review have been completed and approved by Council following consideration by the Governance Committee. The last phase of this complete review of the Constitution will be progressed in 2023/24.

5.26 As discussed during the meeting of the Governance Committee which took place on the 25th September 2023, the final phase of the Constitution review will include a review of the Code of Conduct and the local procedure for dealing with allegations against councillors.

5.27 The Monitoring Officer, under delegated authority, granted a dispensation to all West Berkshire Councillors in 2022/23 to speak and vote on any items pertaining to Council Tax.

Register of Interests

5.28 Following the election in May 2023 all elected Members of West Berkshire Council completed and submitted their Register of Interest forms. These forms have been published on the Council's website. A number of interests that have been declared by Members have been withheld from publication where the Monitoring Officer has been satisfied that the interest is a sensitive interest in accordance with the provisions of section 32 of the Localism Act 2011.

5.29 District Councillors are reminded to review their interests on a regular basis and to notify the Democratic Services Manager of any amendments.

5.30 Parish Councils are reminded via their Clerks to complete and return Declarations of Interest forms to the Monitoring Officer in order that compliance with the Localism Act 2011 is maintained.

Local Assessment of Complaints

5.31 Quarter 1 – 2022/23

During this period six complaints were received and processed by the Monitoring Officer. Three of these complaints (NDC08/22, NDC10/22, and NDC13/22) pertained

to District Councillors, of which one was withdrawn. Following the initial assessment, it was agreed that no further action should be taken on any of the complaints. There were three complaints (NPC09/22, NPC11/22, and NPC12/22) submitted about parish councillors. Following the initial assessment, it was agreed that no further action should be taken on any of the complaints.

5.32 Quarter 2 – 2022/23

During this period four complaints were received and processed by the Monitoring Officer. All four of these complaints (NPC14/22, NPC15/22, NPC16/22, and NPC17/22) pertained to District Councillors, of which one was withdrawn. Following the initial assessment, it was agreed that no further action should be taken on two of the complaints, and one complaint was referred for informal resolution. There were no complaints submitted about parish councillors.

5.33 Quarter 3 - 2022/23

During this period three complaints were received and processed by the Monitoring Officer. Two of these complaints (NDC19/22 and NDC20/22) pertained to District Councillors. Following the initial assessment, it was agreed that no further action should be taken on one of the complaints, and one complaint was referred for informal resolution. There was one complaint (NPC18/22) submitted about parish councillors. Following the initial assessment, it was agreed that no further action should be taken on the complaint.

5.34 Quarter 4 - 2022/23

During this period nine complaints were received and processed by the Monitoring Officer. Seven of these complaints (NDC01/23, NDC04/23, NDC05/23, NDC06/23, NDC07/23, NDC08/23, and NDC09/23) pertained to District Councillors. Following the initial assessment, it was agreed that no further action should be taken on five of the complaints, one complaint was referred for informal resolution, and one complaint was referred to independent investigation. There were two complaints (NPC02/23 and NPC03/23) submitted about parish councillors. Following the initial assessment, it was agreed that no further action should be taken on any of the complaints.

Year on Year Comparison of Complaints

Table 1 – The Number of District and Parish Council Complaints received 2018/19 – 2022/23

Table 1	**18/19**	**19/20**	**20/21**	**21/22**	**22/23**
District Councillors	1	9	12	20	16
Parish Councillors	20	5	21	12	6
Co-Optees	1	0	0	0	0
Total	22	14	33	32	22

Table 2 - Action Taken on Complaints received 2018/19 to 2022/23.

	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Withdrawn/not progressed	**4**	**5**	**7**	**0**	**2**

No Further Action	**14**	**7**	**24**	**28**	**16**
Other Action	**2**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**3**
Investigation	**2**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**1**
Outcome Awaited	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Total	**22**	**14**	**33**	**32**	**22**

5.35 Table 2 shows that, in respect of the complaints received to date during 2022/23, in the majority of cases no further action was taken on the complaint.

Learning Points Arising from Complaints

5.36 The number of complaints have reduced overall in the past year. In addition, it is significant to note that the large majority of these result in no further action. However, 3 have resulted in other action and 1 has been referred for an independent investigation.

5.37 It was noted that a number of the complaints referred for independent investigation took a considerable length of time to complete, and although there were reasons for those delays, procedures have been reviewed to reduce the likelihood of similar delays occurring in future cases.

5.38 A further point of learning was the need for officers ensure better communication with the parties involved in a complaint once a matter was referred for investigation, to ensure that they are kept informed of progress.

Gifts and Hospitality

5.39 The Gifts and Hospitality Protocol is incorporated into the Members Code of Conduct and is set out in Appendix H to Part 13 of the Constitution (Codes and Protocols).

5.40 Officers are also subject to restrictions on those Gifts and Hospitality that are deemed to be acceptable under the Officers' Code of Conduct, which is set out in Part 13 of the Constitution. Like Members, Officers are required to declare gifts or hospitality received.

5.41 The intention of the rules governing Gifts and Hospitality is to ensure that the Council can demonstrate that no undue influence has been applied or could be said to have been applied by any service user, supplier or anyone else dealing with the Council and its stewardship of public funds. The rules therefore set out the obligations imposed on Members and Officers to declare relevant gifts and hospitality which have been offered to or received by them.

5.42 It should be noted that in addition to the risk that there could be a perception of impropriety, the acceptance of a gift or hospitality could amount to an offence under the Bribery Act 2010.

5.43 The Bribery Act 2010 creates a number of offences where a gift or other benefit is given or offered, which may amount to an offence of bribing another person, and/or of being bribed. Therefore, if Members or Officers are offered a 'gift' or other benefit by a third party, this could amount to an offence not just by the person offering the gift, but also

by the Member or Officer concerned and by the Council. It is important to note that offences under this legislation can be committed by a person offering a gift or reward, even if the gift is not accepted.

5.44 In view of the above, it is very important that both Officers and Members understand the potentially serious implications of accepting gifts when it is not appropriate to do so.

5.45 There were 41 declarations of hospitality received by Members during the year 2022/23. This represents an increase on the previous year, reflecting that Covid restrictions on socialising are no longer in place. This information is published on the Council website.

5.46 There was also an increase in the number of gifts / hospitality declared by officers with 45 declarations made during 2022/23, which is an increase in the previous year. This number remains lower than pre-Covid figures.

5.47 The number of gifts or hospitality received by each directorate, and the number refused can be summarised as follows:

Directorate	Number of Declarations	Number refused
People	4	0
Place	35	0
Resources	6	0

Proposals

5.48 Members are asked to note the content of the report.

5.49 It is proposed that this report also be circulated to all Town and Parish Councils for information.

6 Other options considered

6.1 Not to produce the report. There is no legal obligation to produce this report, so not doing so would be an option. However, it is considered that an annual report provides a good overview of work being undertaken and may assist in identifying any significant problems or developing trends. This overview is also helpful in ensuring full transparency regarding complaints. Not producing this report is therefore not recommended as an option.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Despite the number of complaints over the past year, it is considered that Members in West Berkshire continue to maintain high standards of ethical conduct, which is to be applauded.

7.2 The number of Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality has increased, reflective of the restrictions around COVID 19 being lifted. The levels remain lower than prior to the pandemic. The recommendation that the register of Gifts and Hospitality be published on a quarterly basis will no doubt assist to highlight the need to declare such matters on a regular and consistent manner.

8 Appendices

None

Background Papers:

None

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☐ No: ☒

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	☒
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	☐
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	☐
Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months	☐
Item is Urgent Key Decision	☐
Report is to note only	☒

Wards affected: All Wards

Officer details:

Name: Sarah Clarke
Job Title: Service Director Strategy & Governance
Tel No: 01635 519596
E-mail: Sarah.Clarke@westberks.gov.uk

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Agenda Item 24:

Motion submitted for debate at the Council meeting on 05 October 2023

(a) The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Denise Gaines:

Asylum Seekers

We the council note:

1. *As a result of the government's asylum process and its efforts to reduce the backlog of asylum decisions, we are seeing increased demand for homelessness prevention services in West Berkshire.*

2. *The home office has reduced the move-on period from 28 to 7 days, the time an asylum seeker must transition from their temporary accommodation to become independent. This is an unacceptably short period of transition.*

3. *As a result of the Government's decision to drastically reduce this move-on period there has been an escalation of homelessness and rough sleeping here in West Berkshire.*

4. *The Government has effectively abdicated the responsibility for asylum seekers granted leave to remain and passed responsibility to local authorities.*

5. *We have inherited the responsibility, from the Home office, to accommodate and support any person, given the status of right to remain, and currently residing in West Berkshire.*

6. *This has placed a heavy burden on this authority and created an impossible target for us to source accommodation and house people within a very narrow time period of just 7 days. This burden comes without any additional funding from central government.*

7. *We are committed, as an authority, to playing our part in welcoming and safeguarding the welfare of all people in our communities, including people granted right to remain.*

8. *In an area the size of West Berkshire, rental properties and temporary accommodation is at a premium and having this additional pressure could make costs for this accommodation spiral in an already inflated market.*

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. *Write to the Home Secretary to request that the Government:*

- extend the transition period to a more realistic time period of 8 weeks to enable local authorities and the newly recognised refugees sufficient time to have all the official documentation in place to apply for work and to find accommodation;

Agenda Item 24:

- provide Local Authorities with emergency funding to support those who have a right to remain.

2. *Request the LGA as the national voice of local govt to lobby relevant ministers on the plight facing Local Authorities*

3. *Ask the three MPs within the Council area to support this Motion and to raise at the highest levels of government.*