

Extraordinary Meeting of West Berkshire District Council

Tuesday 20 February 2024

Summons and Agenda



To: All Members of the Council

*You are requested to attend an extraordinary
meeting of*

WEST BERKSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

to be held in the

**COUNCIL OFFICES, MARKET STREET,
NEWBURY**

on

Tuesday 20 February 2024

at 7.00pm



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

Date of despatch of Agenda: Monday 12 February 2024

AGENDA

Part I

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any). **(Pages 5 - 6)**

2. **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 7 - 8)**



WestBerkshire
C O U N C I L

3. REPORT BY THE RETURNING OFFICER ON THE COMPULSORY POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACE REVIEW (C4439)

Purpose: To seek approval from Council for the parliamentary polling districts and polling places within West Berkshire. **(Pages 9 - 36)**

4. COLD ASH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN (C4433)

Purpose: The Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has been subject to independent examination. The Examiner has recommended that the NDP with modifications can proceed to referendum. However, the Examiner's decision is not binding and only West Berkshire District Council can decide if the NDP progresses to referendum. This report provides the evidence for the Council to make that decision. **(Pages 37 - 230)**

5. HERMITAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN (C4432)

Purpose: The Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has been subject to independent examination. The Examiner has recommended that the NDP with a modification can proceed to referendum. However, the Examiner's decision is not binding and only West Berkshire District Council can decide if the NDP progresses to referendum. This report provides the evidence for Council to make that decision. **(Pages 231 - 338)**

If you require this information in a different format or translation, please contact Stephen Chard on telephone 01635 519462.



This page is intentionally left blank

Extraordinary Council – 20 February 2024

Item 1 – Apologies for Absence

Verbal Item

This page is intentionally left blank

Extraordinary Council – 20 February 2024

Item 2 – Declarations of Interest

Verbal Item

This page is intentionally left blank

Report by the Returning Officer on the compulsory polling district and polling place review

Committee considering report:	Extraordinary Council
Date of Committee:	20 February 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Jeff Brooks
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	18 January 2024
Report Author:	Clare Ockwell
Forward Plan Ref:	C4439

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Council for the parliamentary polling districts and polling places within West Berkshire.

2 Recommendations

2.1 That, in response to the Council's public consultation on the review of polling districts and polling places, the Council is asked to approve the recommendations set out in Appendix A.

2.3 That the existing polling districts remain unchanged with the following exceptions.

2.4 That polling places in polling districts Lambourn 2 (Lambourn Memorial Hall), Newbury 6/Greenham 3 (Newbury Rugby Club), Thatcham 3 (Thatcham Memorial Hall), Thatcham 7 and Thatcham 8 (Moorside Centre), and Purley-on-Thames (Purley Memorial Hall) are now subject to further review and will be agreed by the Returning Officer in time for elections to be held in spring 2024.

2.5 That the Returning Officer maintains delegated authority to agree any further changes to polling places.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	N/A

Report by the Returning Officer on the compulsory polling district and polling place review

Human Resource:	N/A			
Legal:	Under Section 18c of the Representation of the People Act 1983, a review of polling districts and polling places must take place at least every five years. The Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020 will extend the length of review to eight years, therefore the next review is due in 2031.			
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?		Y		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		Y		
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:	Yes, a four week public consultation has been carried out with stakeholders, disability and community groups, other Returning Officers and political groups.			

4 Executive Summary

Introduction

- 4.1 Following the recent amendments to Parliamentary boundaries, a review of the polling districts that make up the parliamentary constituencies must be carried out by each local authority. In some instances, the new constituency boundaries may cause authorities to split existing areas and polling districts or create new ones.
- 4.2 Polling Districts are geographical areas, based on parish boundaries. Some parishes are split into two or more polling districts to accommodate the district ward boundaries and parish council wards.
- 4.3 The polling district is where the voting takes place, and a polling station is the room within the polling place used for voting purposes.
- 4.4 A polling district should have reasonable facilities for voting, be convenient for voters, have good transport links, and be somewhere with community identity. No more than 2000 electors should be allocated to each polling station, therefore many polling places will have more than one polling station.
- 4.5 The Council is required to carry out a review of polling districts and polling places at least every five years in accordance with the Representation of the People Act 1983. The review period starts in October, but the authority can choose the exact dates and length of the review, however it must fall within a sixteen month period.
- 4.6 Parliamentary boundaries will be in place for the next parliamentary general election therefore it was prudent to start the review as soon as practicable after the 2 October 2023. Any constituency by-election run before the next parliamentary general election would be run on the former constituency boundaries, therefore the current electoral

Report by the Returning Officer on the compulsory polling district and polling place review

register published on the 1 December 2023 reflects the current polling districts and constituencies. Reference is however made to future parliamentary constituencies.

- 4.7 As a result of the parliamentary boundary review, West Berkshire will have two constituencies, a smaller Newbury County Constituency and a new Reading West and Mid Berkshire. The latter will take in three wards from Reading Borough Council, Norcot, Tilehurst and Kentwood.
- 4.8 The review commenced on the 14 November 2023.
- 4.9 A public consultation period started on the 14 November 2023, running until the 12 December 2023. During this time a questionnaire was made available online or in paper format, though any representation by letter or email was also accepted.
- 4.10 A 'live' document was maintained throughout the consultation period as required in legislation, allowing anyone with an interest in the review to see the comments made online. All responses are anonymous.
- 4.11 West Berkshire Council have gradually, over many years, stopped using schools as polling places. This prevents the closure of a school for all reserved polls. Schools could be closed at short notice should a snap parliamentary election be called.
- 4.12 Polling places/stations need to be accessible, where possible. As well as the buildings being Disability Discrimination Act (1999) compliant, consideration should be given to location, parking, transport routes, steep hills, rivers, main roads, railway lines and facilities for the election staff.
- 4.13 The polling place should be within the polling district, but in many cases, this is not possible due to a lack of community or publicly accessible facility within the parish area. In those instances, the electors are allocated a polling place in a neighbouring polling district. This location should be ideally in the same district ward and constituency to prevent confusion to polling staff and electors.
- 4.14 The recommendations should be in place prior to the Police and Crime Commissioner elections on the 2 May 2024 and possibly a general election if held before.
- 4.15 Maps of all polling districts and existing polling places/stations are available on the [West Berkshire Online Map](#) under the layer 'Administrative boundaries'.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 A full table of responses to the consultation is attached, with recommendations.
- 5.2 In many cases, suggested alternative polling places are not within the designated polling district and therefore cannot be considered. In some cases, a school has been suggested.
- 5.3 The designation of polling districts and polling places is a function of the Council, whereas decisions about polling stations are for the Returning Officer. Due to the desirability of approving the polling places in a compacted timescale, possibly due to the loss of a building, fire, flood or other unforeseen circumstances, it is recommended that the authority continues to designate the polling place decisions within the polling

Report by the Returning Officer on the compulsory polling district and polling place review

district to the Returning Officer rather than Full Council. This is recommended under the powers stated in section 18 and 18b of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

- 5.4 A total of 167 responses were received. Many of the comments made are useful and have been included in the recommendations on the attached document (appendix A).
- 5.5 76% of respondents voted in a polling station for the local elections in May 2023. The remaining 24% did not, mostly because they use post or proxy votes or not voted at all.
- 5.6 87.32% of respondents thought their current polling station is in the correct location for their polling district.
- 5.7 97.16% of respondents believe the current polling station has reasonable facilities for voting.
- 5.8 17.14% of respondents have a disability, long term illness or health condition.
- 5.9 The Returning Officer is attempting to address concerns as to the suitability of polling places in Thatcham, Lambourn, and Purley-on-Thames. Contact has been made with several alternative locations and visits will be carried out in January 2024.
- 5.10 The polling district identification letters will be modified to reflect the changes to the parliamentary boundaries, removing the reference to Wokingham, whereby 'Y' precedes the parish code and changing identification of the Reading West (and Mid Berkshire) area, currently marked with a 'Z'.
- 5.11 An updated register of electors will be published on the 1 February 2024 to reflect the changes in 5.10.

6 Appendices

Appendix A – Final consultation document dated 19th December 2023.

Appendix B - Parliamentary constituency maps

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Item is Urgent Key Decision | <input type="checkbox"/> |
-

Report is to note only

Wards affected: all

Officer details:

Name: Clare Ockwell

Job Title: Elections and Local Land Charges Manager

Tel No: 01635 519468

E-mail: clare.ockwell@westberks.gov.uk

Document Control

Document Ref:		Date Created:	
Version:		Date Modified:	
Author:			
Owning Service			

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1			
2			

Comments received for the West Berkshire Council Review of Polling Places consultation 2023/24 (Version: 09/02/2024)

Polling District	Parish	Current Polling Place	Electorate November 2023	Existing position	Returning Officer's Comments	Future Parliamentary Constituency	Comments made by respondents to the consultation	Recommendation
Aldermaston Ward								
AA1	Aldermaston	Aldermaston Parish Hall, The Street, Aldermaston	536	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at Aldermaston Parish Hall.
AA2	Aldermaston	Barlows Park Management Association, The Stacey Pavillion, Silchester Road, Tadley	331	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at Barlows Park.
BH	Brimpton	Brimpton Village Hall, Crookham Common Road, Brimpton	469	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfactory as a polling station but it is located at one end of a spread out parish and is not convenient for voters from Brimpton Common. Brimpton Primary School. 	Polling place to remain at Brimpton Village Hall.
WA	Wasing	Aldermaston Parish Hall, The Street, Aldermaston	28	No polling place available in the parish/polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain Aldermaston Parish Hall.
YBD	Beenham	Beenham Victory Hall, Beenham	929	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's really convenient, it has parking is next to school and in the middle of the village so many people walk to it. It is straightforward for those living in the village to get to I live in Aldermaston Wharf where 20% of the Parish are located. Victory Hall is not easily accessible other than by car, there are no transport links and the footpath are unlit and extremely muddy in winter months. The local pub, The Butt Inn could be used or, subject to a review of Parish boundaries, Aldermaston Wharf could and in my view should included in the Aldermaston ward and voting take place in Aldermaston Parish Hall where most residents feel more closely aligned to. There is a footpath and there are transport links. 	<p>Polling place to remain at Beenham Victory Hall. The division of the parish into two polling districts is not desirable as the parish is unwarded.</p> <p>A community governance review could consider moving this area of Beenham to Aldermaston parish in the future. This is a separate process.</p>
YPA	Padworth	Padworth Village Hall, Padworth Lane, Lower Padworth	715	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain Padworth Village Hall
Basildon Ward								
AB	Aldworth	Aldworth Village Hall, Bell Lane, Aldworth	230	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain Aldworth Village Hall

Polling District	Parish	Current Polling Place	Electorate November 2023	Existing position	Returning Officer's Comments	Future Parliamentary Constituency	Comments made by respondents to the consultation	Recommendation
AC	Ashampstead	Jubilee Hall, Church Lane, Ashampstead	298	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	One person commented that the hall is currently known as Jubilee Hall and Ashampstead Village Hall by residents.	Having spoken to a hall committee member, it is recommended that the polling place remains at The Jubilee Hall, but the name used for the location will be amended to Ashampstead Village Hall.
BA	Basildon	Basildon Village Hall, Bethesda Street, Upper Basildon	1389	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The church would be a more central location within the village and probably has easier access being on the main road rather than on a very narrow lane with limited sight lines for drivers and because of how narrow is more dangerous for walkers. St Stephen's Church. Village Hall is not in a central position, St Stephens church centre Upper Basildon. The roads leading to the village hall are very narrow. Lack of maintenance of verges means that much of Bathesda Street and Park Wall Lane are essentially single track. Possibly St Stephens Church, Upper Basildon, Plenty of parking space, easy toilet facilities. 	<p>Polling place to remain at Basildon Village Hall.</p> <p>St Stephen's Church, Newtown, Upper Basildon was previously used as a polling station, but is not easily accessible for residents in Lower Basildon. The Village Hall is geographically in the centre of the parish.</p>
SE	Streatley	The Morrell Room, Church Lane, Streatley	841	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at The Morrell Room.
Bradfield Ward								
BF1	Bradfield	Bradfield Village Hall, Southend Road, Bradfield Southend	421	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	One responds to confirm this is a good location	Polling place to remain at Bradfield Village Hall.
BF2	Bradfield	Bradfield Village Hall, Southend Road, Bradfield Southend	836	As above. Formerly used a room at Bradfield College Sports Centre which is no longer available.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	As above	Polling place to remain at Bradfield Village Hall.
YED	Englefield	Englefield Village Hall, The Street, Englefield	204	One polling station. The refurbished hall was used for elections in May 2023, having temporarily used the Tea Rooms whilst the updates took place. Prior to the village hall or social club being used, the former Fire Station accommodated a polling station. We	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at Englefield Village Hall.

Polling District	Parish	Current Polling Place	Electorate November 2023	Existing position	Returning Officer's Comments	Future Parliamentary Constituency	Comments made by respondents to the consultation	Recommendation
				are not aware of an alternative.				
YSG1	Sulhamstead (North)	Sulhamstead Village Hall, Sulhamstead Hill, Sulhamstead	241	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at Sulhamstead Village Hall.
YSG2	Sulhamstead (South)	The Leonard Room, St Oswald's Church, Abbey Park (off Clayhill Road) Burghfield Common	974	One polling station. Electors vote outside the polling district. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	Close to bus link to/from Reading. Easy walking distance for most local residents. There is a decent car park and other parking available on nearby residential roads for overflow (if needed). All reasonable locations in Burghfield Common / Sulhamstead are already polling stations. It is quick to vote here - I've rarely had to wait in a queue. It's a good, accessible location. All reasonable locations in Burghfield Common / Sulhamstead are already polling stations	Polling place to remain at St Oswald's Church.
YUA	Ufton Nervet	Sulhamstead Village Hall, Sulhamstead Hill, Sulhamstead	259	No polling station available in the parish/polling district. St Peter's Church formerly used.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at Sulhamstead Village Hall.
Bucklebury								
B11	Bucklebury (East)	The Victory Room, Bucklebury Village	636	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	The polling station is at the far north of the polling district and away from the centre of population. It means that the vast majority of the electorate have to drive to the station. An alternative based in Chapel Row would be far more convenient, allow many more to walk to vote and most likely result in a higher turnout. The Bladebone Public House or the Chapel Row Surgery	Polling place to remain at The Victory Room. There is no publicly accessible building within Chapel Row. A third polling district is not required as the parish is already warded into East and West.
B12	Bucklebury (West)	Bucklebury Memorial Hall, Broad Lane, Upper Bucklebury	1077	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	One responds to confirm this is a good location	Polling place to remain Bucklebury Memorial Hall.
MA	Midgham	St Matthew's Church, Church Hill, Midgham	256	One polling station. Midgham Village Hall was previously used for many years, but access is via a steep slope and there is no parking. The West Grange Hotel was also used for a period of time but is not central for the electorate.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	Regarding the polling station currently for Midgham (St Matthew's Church) I have spoken to 2 residents who did not vote as the polling station is an active church. No other residents I have spoken to have raised the matter (though my conversations were not about the polling station). I note your comment "One polling station. Midgham Village Hall was previously used for many years, but access is via a steep slope and there is no parking. The West Grange Hotel was also used for a period of time, but is not central for the electorate." I have to say I can think of no other public building available closest to the main population centre (Birds Lanes).	Polling place to remain St Matthew's Church.
SC	Stanford Dingley	The Clubroom, Stanford Dingley	170	One polling station. Whilst the hall was refurbished, the Bull	No amendment to the current polling	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at The Clubroom, Stanford Dingley Village Hall.

Polling District	Parish	Current Polling Place	Electorate November 2023	Existing position	Returning Officer's Comments	Future Parliamentary Constituency	Comments made by respondents to the consultation	Recommendation
		Village Hall, Stanford Dingley		Inn provided accommodation, which was not suitable, but necessary at the time.	arrangement is proposed			
WG	Woolhampton	Woolhampton Village Hall, Bath Road, Woolhampton	754	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at Woolhampton Village Hall.
Burghfield & Mortimer								
YBB	Beech Hill	Beech Hill Memorial Hall, Wood Lane, Beech Hill	244	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	One responds to confirm this is a good location	Polling place to remain at Beech Hill Memorial Hall.
YBJ1	Burghfield	Burghfield St Mary's Church, Church Lane, Burghfield Village	1093	Three polling stations. Burghfield Methodist Church was used temporarily whilst the village hall was refurbished. We are not aware of an alternative.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at Burghfield St Mary's Church.
YBJ2	Burghfield	Burghfield Village Hall, Recreation Road, Burghfield Common	3432	One polling station. The village school was formerly used. We no longer use schools. The alternative is to ask electors to travel into Burghfield Common to vote. We are not aware of an alternative.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's a centrally located, easy to access, location which has just been refurbished to improve accessibility, internal layout, and external lighting. Burghfield Common Methodist Church, Reading Road, Burghfield Common, RG7 3QA. It's a good central location and most residents of Burghfield Common can walk there. Burghfield Methodist Church 	<p>Polling place to remain at Burghfield Village Hall.</p> <p>As the population grows, a second location may be sought. We used the Methodist Church during the refurbishment of the Village Hall, but it is too small for a replacement location.</p>
YSD1	Stratfield Mortimer	Stratfield Mortimer Community Centre, The Street, Mortimer Common	2518	Two polling stations. We formerly used The Village Hall in West End Road. We are not aware of an alternative.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too small and no toilets. Queues form due to slowness of the voting system. Need to be reviewed for teams to be more proactive in turning over voters at peak periods. Easy access, good car parking and a central village location Central location Easy access Good parking Walking distance for many I know this happens at all polling stations, but I don't like the candidates's supporters hanging around by the entrance and asking for your polling card as you leave. I always politely refuse, but it makes me feel uncomfortable. Methodist Hall, St John's Hall- both in Mortimer. St Johns Hall, Mortimer 	Polling place to remain at Stratfield Mortimer Community Centre.

Polling District	Parish	Current Polling Place	Electorate November 2023	Existing position	Returning Officer's Comments	Future Parliamentary Constituency	Comments made by respondents to the consultation	Recommendation
							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> St Johns Hall, Mortimer The review identifies the Stratfield Mortimer Community Centre as the polling station for YSD1 and YSD2. We agree and would not propose any change to the current arrangements, which seem to work well. <p>Seven responses confirmed this is a good location</p>	
YSD2	Stratfield Mortimer	Stratfield Mortimer Community Centre, The Street, Mortimer Common	541	No polling place within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	See above	As above
YWF	Wokefield	Burghfield Community Sports Association, James Lane, Burghfield	265	No polling place within the parish therefore voters use the BCSA. Formerly used a caravan and then premises within Wokefield Park but neither satisfactory.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We live on the main Reading Road through Burghfield Common. The nearest polling station to us is Burghfield Village Hall, which would take 10 minutes to walk to (at most). Unfortunately, although we live in Burghfield Common, due to the way the boundaries are drawn, we fall into Wokefield, and so we have to drive for 10 minutes - we wouldn't walk, it's not a safe road to walk on - in order to vote at Burghfield Community Sports Association on James Lane. Every time we vote (and we've lived here for almost 20 years), we chuckle at how ludicrous the situation is. Transport links are dreadful. No footpaths in evidence, either. Anyone who has the misfortune to vote here has to drive there (unless they live in one of the half dozen houses which are nearby) Burghfield Village Hall is a lot closer to our postcode and is already used as a polling place It is not in walking distance. Village hall, rec pavillion, methodist hall, bland's school, garlands school, St Oswalds, guide dogs. The real problem is that our bit of Reading road is considered to be in Wokefield, so the best place, the village hall, seems to be already taken by Burghfield itself. Why it can't share is not clear to me at all. And it's also not clear why we can't just be part of Burghfield politically as well as in the very real sense in which we actually are. It's not the venue itslef I object to, after all it is far superior to the old caravan, it just doesn't make sense for us to drive 10 minutes out of our village when most of village votes right here. 	<p>Polling place to remain at Burghfield Community Sports Association.</p> <p>A community governance review could consider moving this area of Wokefield (28 properties) to Burghfield parish in the future. This is a separate process.</p>
Chieveley & Cold Ash								
CC1	Chieveley (Chieveley)	Chieveley Recreation Hall, High Street, Chieveley	1071	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	Limited public transport between Downland villages, so easy accessible parking, which Village Hall offers is required. Also it is centrally located in the village for walking and cycling	Polling place to remain Chieveley Recreation Hall

Polling District	Parish	Current Polling Place	Electorate November 2023	Existing position	Returning Officer's Comments	Future Parliamentary Constituency	Comments made by respondents to the consultation	Recommendation
CC2	Chieveley (Curridge)	Women's Institute Hall, Winterbourne Road, Curridge	856	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	Two responses to confirm this is a good location	Polling place to remain at the Women's Institute Hall
CD1	Cold Ash (Cold Ash)	Acland Memorial Hall, Hermitage Road, Cold Ash	1846	Two polling stations. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	Good parking and accessible for many on foot or by bike.	Polling place to remain at the Acland Hall.
HC	Hermitage	Hermitage Village Hall, Pinewood Crescent, Hermitage	1529	One polling station. Likely to become two with population growth. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	Some have suggested that the church could be used as a second area. But the VH is big enough to take a substantial increase in voter numbers and there is no safe parking at the church, so no need to even consider it.	Polling place to remain at Hermitage Village Hall.
WE	Winterbourne	St James the Less Church, Winterbourne	165	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at St James The Less Church.
Downlands								
BC	Beedon	Beedon Village Hall, Beedon Hill, Beedon	358	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	One responds to confirm this is a good location	Polling place to remain at Beedon Village Hall.
BG	Brightwalton	Brightwalton Village Hall, Brightwalton	291	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	Central to the Parish, and is a focal point for activities within the Parish. Easily accessible, well lit, etc. Car parking available. There are a very limited number of buses to Brightwalton each day and only during the day. These routes only serve a very limited number of communities outside Brightwalton village. So if you do not have access to private transport or do not live within walking distance of the Village Hall, then you have to pay for a taxi. That is assuming you can get one to come out to a rural village for a job within the village.	Polling place to remain Brightwalton Village Hall.
CA	Catmore	Brightwalton Village Hall, Brightwalton	21	No polling place available within the parish/polling district. Electors vote outside the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain Brightwalton Village Hall.
CB	Chaddleworth	Chaddleworth Village Hall, Chaddleworth	407	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain Chaddleworth Village Hall.

Polling District	Parish	Current Polling Place	Electorate November 2023	Existing position	Returning Officer's Comments	Future Parliamentary Constituency	Comments made by respondents to the consultation	Recommendation
EA	East Garston	East Garston Village Hall, Back Street, East Garston	441	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain East Garston Village Hall.
FA	Farnborough	Brightwalton Village Hall, Brightwalton	65	No polling place available in the parish/polling district. Electors vote outside the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain Brightwalton Village Hall.
FB	Fawley	Fawley Social Club, North Fawley	99	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain Fawley Social Club.
GA1	Great Shefford (Great Shefford)	Great Shefford Village Hall, Station Road, Great Shefford	638	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at Great Shefford Village Hall.
GA2	Great Shefford (Shefford Woodlands)	Great Shefford Village Hall, Station Road, Great Shefford	87	No polling place available in the parish/polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at Great Shefford Village Hall
LB	Leckhampstead	Leckhampstead Village Hall, Leckhampstead	311	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at Leckhampstead Village Hall.
PC	Peasemore	Peasemore Village Hall, Peasemore	255	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not possible to use public transport to any other polling station from Peasemore so we need this polling station to stay. Very local, well staffed, very easy. Great facilities It is in the centre of the village so the easiest location for people to get to. For most people it is possible to walk to it. It is a location people are familiar with, it is seen as the heart of the community so this encourages people to feel comfortable and welcome when they go to vote which encourages turnout. It is accessible for all, warm and easy to access. It is the best location in the community for polling to take place due to its location, access and facilities. It encourages voting because people are comfortable going there as it is used for many other activities and events. There is no other suitable location in the community. If voting could not take place there then it would involve travel to a nearby village eg Chieveley which would not be suitable for many people and this would discourage turnout. We have little in the way of public transport so the Peasemore site is essential 	Polling place to remain at Peasemore Village Hall.

Polling District	Parish	Current Polling Place	Electorate November 2023	Existing position	Returning Officer's Comments	Future Parliamentary Constituency	Comments made by respondents to the consultation	Recommendation
							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eight responses to confirm this is a good location 	
Hungerford & Kintbury								
BE	Boxford	Boxford Village Hall, Rood Hill, Boxford	391	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain Boxford Village Hall.
CE	Combe	Combe Manor, Combe	28	One polling station. We previously used a residential home, Keepers Bungalow, within the village. We are not aware of an alternative.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at Combe Manor.
EC	Enborne	The Parish Centre, The Barn, Enborne Church, Enborne	577	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	Short distance. Never busy so ample parking.	Polling place to remain at The Parish Centre.
HB	Hamstead Marshall	Hamstead Marshall Village Hall, Park Lane, Hamstead Marshall	210	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at Hamstead Marshall Village Hall.
HD1	Hungerford	Corn Exchange, High Street, Hungerford	3292	Three polling stations. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easily accessible and as it's in the centre everybody knows it. Poor lighting and dated decor, it's like a setting for from Dads Army Yes there is nothing wrong with the town hall, A lot of people couldn't vote as they were unable to get there as they didn't have transport. This is from Lindley Lodge and Redwood. There is British Legion also football club but they cause problems for others. 	Polling place to remain at the Corn Exchange.
HD2	Hungerford	Tally Ho, Wantage Road, Newtown, Hungerford	168	One polling station. Use of the former dis-used church (now residential) and a residential conservatory ceased as no longer suitable. No alternative known.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at The Tally Ho.
HD3	Hungerford	Croft Hall, The Croft, Hungerford	1050	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	One responds to confirm this is a good location	Polling place to remain at the Croft Hall.

Polling District	Parish	Current Polling Place	Electorate November 2023	Existing position	Returning Officer's Comments	Future Parliamentary Constituency	Comments made by respondents to the consultation	Recommendation
IA	Inkpen	Inkpen Village Hall, Upper Green, Inkpen	676	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	Pavilion	Polling place to remain at Inkpen Village Hall. The Sports Pavillion in Post Office Road is approximately half a mile from the existing location and does not appear to increase the accessibility to the polling place for residents.
KT	Kintbury	Coronation Hall, Inkpen Road, Kintbury	1998	Two polling stations. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	The Jubilee Center	Polling place to remain at the Coronation Hall. It is useful to know that an alternative exists at Kintbury Jubilee Centre should the Coronation Hall not be available.
WB	Welford	Wickham Village Hall, Wickham	416	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at Wickham Village Hall.
WD	West Woodhay	West Woodhay Village Hall, The Green, West Woodhay (No longer available)	82	One polling station. West Woodhay Estate Room at Highwood Farm will be used for May 2024.	The West Woodhay Estate Room will replace the Village hall as the Polling Place	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place will move to The West Woodhay Estate Room at Highwood Farm.
Lambourn								
LA1	Lambourn (Eastbury)	Eastbury Village Hall (no longer available)	237	One polling station. Eastbury Village Hall is no longer in use and closed before the elections in May 2023. The only other public facility is St James Church, Church Street, Eastbury which was used instead. We are not aware of any alternatives.	St James Church will replace the Village hall for the foreseeable future.	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at St James Church.
LA2	Lambourn (Lambourn)	Lambourn Memorial Hall, Oxford Street, Lambourn	2418	Two polling stations. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oaksey House If wet and raining voters drive to the polling station and there is no where near enough parking and zero parking available for disabled voters. Lambourn gym or Lambourn sports clubs are both located walking distance within the village but also benefit from enough parking if weather forced voters to drive. Walwyn Hall, Baydon Road. Parking could be better. Parking in Oxford Street is crowded most of the time so this puts additional pressure on parking and traffic movement Walwyn Hall, Lambourn Leisure Centre and Lambourn Sports Centre? The Memorial Hall is fine, has been used for voting all the time we have lived in village (47 years) and is 	<p>Parking is an issue at the Memorial Hall. The building is in the Market Place/Oxford Street opposite St Michael and all Angels Church.</p> <p>The Lambourn Sports Club have been contacted to see if the alternative but no response.</p> <p>Oaksey House are unable to help us, due to their own business and a lack of parking.</p> <p>Walwyn Hall (the former Catholic Hall) has been refurbished for community use and contact has been made as this facility appears to be more suitable than the Memorial Hall and has parking.</p> <p>If not, the polling place will remain at the Memorial Hall.</p>

Polling District	Parish	Current Polling Place	Electorate November 2023	Existing position	Returning Officer's Comments	Future Parliamentary Constituency	Comments made by respondents to the consultation	Recommendation
							central. The other options mentioned could be backups in case of problems. Six responses confirmed this is a good location	
LA3	Lambourn (Upper Lambourn)	Lambourn Memorial Hall, Oxford Street, Lambourn	201	No polling place available in the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	As above	As above
LA4	Lambourn (Woodlands St Mary)	Woodlands St Mary Village Hall, Ermin Street, Lambourn	249	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at Woodlands St Mary Village Hall.
Newbury Central								
NBY9	Newbury (West Fields)	Kennet Christian Centre, Enborne Road, Newbury	1292	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	One responds to confirm this is a good location	Polling place to remain at Kennet Christian Centre.
NBY10	Newbury (West Fields)	St Nicholas Church Hall, West Mills, Newbury	2274	Two polling stations. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	Parking in the local area is a pain when you just need to park, pop in and vote especially if your on the way home from work.	Polling place to remain at St Nicholas Church. Ace Space in St Nicholas Road was a possible alternative, but there is once again no parking for staff or electors.
NBY11	Newbury (West Fields)	Newbury Baptist Church, Cheap Street, Newbury	605	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	See NBY3 for comments under Newbury Greenham ward	Polling place to remain at Newbury Baptist Church.
NBY12	Newbury (West Fields)	2 nd Newbury Scout Hall, West Street, Newbury	740	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No free parking. No transport links. Useful for nearby flats of which many including over 50s. Also Northcroft Park estate.	Polling place to remain at the 2 nd Newbury Scout Hall.
NBY13	Newbury (West Fields)	St Joseph's Parish Hall, 105 London Road, Newbury	574	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at St Joseph's Parish Hall.
Newbury Clay Hill								
CD2	Cold Ash (Manor Park)	Riverside Community Centre, Rosemoor Gardens, Newbury	440	No polling place available in the parish/polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	See below	See below
NBY1	Newbury (Clay Hill)	Riverside Community Centre, Rosemoor Gardens, Newbury	2960	Three polling stations. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please dont move it, it has parking, it is easy to find, and has space inside for privacy. It's actually got a car park! Is a big hall, so easy to 'dry off' if raining. It's an obvious building and access is clearly signed. Frankly, a first class location! Fir Tree 	Polling place to remain at the Riverside Community Centre.

Polling District	Parish	Current Polling Place	Electorate November 2023	Existing position	Returning Officer's Comments	Future Parliamentary Constituency	Comments made by respondents to the consultation	Recommendation
				electors within the polling district.			School BUT selfishly further to walk and disruptive for the kids!	
NBY2	Newbury (Clay Hill)	Newbury Sea Cadets TS Victory, Craven Dene, London Road, Newbury	2194	Two polling stations. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at Newbury Sea Cadets TS Victory.
Newbury Greenham								
GB1	Greenham (Common)	West Berks Indoor Bowls Club, Pyle Hill, Newbury	3023	Two polling stations. The existing polling place is outside the polling district. The church hall at St Marys, Greenham was formerly the Polling Station. No alternative within the parish/polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	The building is easy to access and has a large spacious car park. The interior of the building had plenty of space for the electoral staff, electors and voting booths. All perfect	Polling place to remain at West Berks Indoor Bowls Club.
GB2	Greenham (Racecourse)	The Craft Filly, Adjacent to Car Park 2, Newbury Racecourse	1549	One polling station, likely to become two due to population growth. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed with The Racecourse named as the Polling Place	Newbury	I think a polling station at the Racecourse is an ideal location for the development in that part of Newbury. It has good walking routes to access it and also has good rail and bus routes should that be needed. As a commercial premise it is well catered for and looked after.	The Racecourse to be designated the polling place for GB2, allowing the polling station to be moved as required by if the owners need to relocate due to other events.
NBY3	Newbury (East Fields)	Newbury Baptist Church, Cheap Street, Newbury	1970	Two polling stations. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building itself is accessible once there - but not easy to get too as lack of parking. Not unless you can set something up in supermarkets where plenty of parking - so could vote whilst shopping. It's a pleasant, spacious room and easy to reach. 	Polling place to remain at Newbury Baptist Church. An increase in population within this area may cause issues in future.
NBY4	Newbury (East Fields)	Greenham Community Centre, The Nightingales, Newbury	1377	One polling station, sometimes two. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	I feel unsafe going to that area. It is a high crime area. Thames Valley police often have an exclusion zone in place for stop and search powers there; it is on a rough council estate. I will not park my car there and walk to the polling station. Newbury college sports hall, West Berkshire indoor bowls club. Please move it to a better part of town with CCTV coverage and not the worst area of Newbury. It is badly lit and feels very unsafe for a woman	Polling place to remain at Greenham Community Centre.
NBY5	Newbury (East Fields)	The Phoenix Centre, Newtown Road, Newbury	1217	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	I believe the centre is adequate. It is easy to find and is well laid out. It has sufficient parking and easy access for wheelchair users.	Polling place to remain at The Phoenix Centre.
Newbury Speen								

Polling District	Parish	Current Polling Place	Electorate November 2023	Existing position	Returning Officer's Comments	Future Parliamentary Constituency	Comments made by respondents to the consultation	Recommendation
NBY14	Newbury (Speenhamland)	The Royal British Legion, Pelican Lane, Newbury	807	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at The Royal British Legion.
NBY15	Newbury (Speenhamland)	The Scout Hut, Poplar Place, Newbury	1529	One polling station, sometimes two. The Judo Club was previously used whilst the Scout Hut was refurbished.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	One response to confirm this is a good location	Polling place to remain at The Scout Hut.
SA	Shaw-Cum-Donnington	Donnington Village Hall, Love Lane, Shaw-Cum-Donnington	1537	One polling station but likely to become two due to population increase. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	Trinity School and or gym	Polling place to remain at Donnington Village Hall. An increase in population within this area may cause issues in future.
SB1	Speen	Sutton Hall, Church Road, Stockcross, Newbury	440	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	It is inside Stockcross village, a short distance from Ermin St/ B4000. This is a main road from my house to Stockcross, mainly level, with a bus service, and a current cycleway/ pavement being installed. The hall has a capacious car park. It has all the facilities you quote, including internal toilets.	Polling place to remain at Sutton Hall.
SB2	Speen	Speen Village Hall, Speen Lane, Speen, Newbury	1550	One polling station, sometimes two. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is relatively easy to get to on foot but the transport links are poor. I walk and like others in the area, feel it is a neighbourly and friendly thing to do! Feels like voting has always felt, rather than an online experience. The biggest issue is with parking on n this narrow lane which at polling can cause huge disruption to local residents. Easy to access for all Speen residents I have to drive round the whole of Newbury to reach it, while there is a polling station in the Mencap building off Enborne Road about 200 yards from here. I don't understand why we vote in Speen. 18th century rules perhaps? All fine but far from me! Mencap building in close off Enborne Road. Already used as polling station. Robert Sandiland school 	<p>Polling place to remain at Speen Village Hall.</p> <p>There are six properties in Bonemill Lane but any move of these properties from Speen to Enborne could involve a community governance review in the future.</p>
Newbury Wash Common								
GB3	Greenham (Common)	Newbury Rugby Football Club, Monks Lane, Newbury	10	One shared polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	My main concern is that this polling station is in the wrong location for residents in the north-eastern half of polling district NBY6, particularly those in Willow Close, St John's Gardens, Old Newtown Road, Newtown Road and The Oaks. Turnout in these areas is affected by the distance to the rugby club. (And the fact that it is at the top of a steep hill.) Yet many of these electors have to pass a polling	To move the electors currently voting at Newbury Rugby Football Club from the location, returning to the Phoenix Centre in Newtown Road. The Rugby Club was introduced due to potential housing in Sandleford. Greenham 3 (GB3) has since been subject to a community governance review relating to the parish warding of

Polling District	Parish	Current Polling Place	Electorate November 2023	Existing position	Returning Officer's Comments	Future Parliamentary Constituency	Comments made by respondents to the consultation	Recommendation
				electors within the polling district.			station, the Phoenix Centre in Newtown Road. My plea is that they should be allowed to vote here. In fact there is a good argument in my view for the whole of NBY6 voting at the Phoenix Centre as only residents at the western end of Monks Lane are actually nearer the rugby club. A further concern about this polling station concerns accessibility. There are no pavements on either side of the road leading from Monks Lane to the rugby club. Not everyone chooses, or is able, to drive to vote. Those who walk have to do so along the road. This is the consequence of a scarcely credible planning failure to provide pavements when the rugby club, David Lloyd and doctors' surgery were developed. I think this is another argument in favour of the Phoenix Centre rather than the rugby club. Just because it is easily accessible by car does not make this location suitable as a polling station	Greenham, but remains part of the Newbury Wash Common district ward. These electors should therefore also vote at the Phoenix Centre along with NBY6. This may be a temporary move and the polling place may need to be addressed again in the future.
NBY6	Newbury (Wash Common)	Newbury Rugby Football Club, Monks Lane, Newbury	2228	Two polling stations. Electors are voting outside their polling district as no alternative is known.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	As above GB3	See GB3 above
NBY7	Newbury (Wash Common)	St George's Hall, Andover Road, Newbury	2389	Two polling stations. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	John Rankin Schools	Polling place to remain at St George's Hall.
NBY8	Newbury (Wash Common)	Mencap Centre, Enborne Gate, Newbury	2523	Two polling stations. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	One responds to confirm this is a good location	Polling place to remain at the Mencap Centre.
Pangbourne								
ZPB	Pangbourne	Pangbourne Village Hall, Station Road, Pangbourne.	2409	Two polling stations. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central. Flat. Disable friendly. On way to rail station. Car parking easy. Well run. Irritating people hassling at entrance asking how you voted- mostly conservatives It is a good location with ample parking, disabled access, it is light and airy. 	Polling place to remain at Pangbourne Village Hall.
ZSF	Sulham	Tidmarsh Village Hall, Tidmarsh	59	No polling place available in the parish/polling district	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at Tidmarsh Village Hall.
ZTC	Tidmarsh	Tidmarsh Village Hall, Tidmarsh	344	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at Tidmarsh Village Hall.
Ridgeway								

Polling District	Parish	Current Polling Place	Electorate November 2023	Existing position	Returning Officer's Comments	Future Parliamentary Constituency	Comments made by respondents to the consultation	Recommendation
CF	Compton	Compton Village Hall, Burrell Road, Compton	1238	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Downs School i access the site by car or alternately walk from home 10 minutes away. I find it easy to get to - if by car there is parking behind it so never too busy, I live close by and it's only a 10 minute walk from the house. it is never too busy - there is plenty of space internally to maintain the privacy of the vote in the booth. Five responses confirmed this is a good location 	Polling place to remain at Compton Village Hall.
EB	East Ilsley	The Swan Hotel, High Street, East Ilsley	450	One polling station. The primary school has been used in the past, along with the former Baptist Church (now a private home) and the skittle alley at The Crown and Horns Public House. None of these are suitable. We are not aware of an alternative building.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed, but the village of East Ilsley should be designated as the Polling Place.	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	No comments made in relation to this location	The village of East Ilsley is designated as the polling place, thus allowing for the polling place to be changed should the existing location become unavailable.
FC	Frilsham	Frilsham Club Room, Recreation Ground, Frilsham	248	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	It is very convenient and easy to use	Polling place to remain at Frilsham Club Room.
HA	Hampstead Norreys	Hampstead Norreys Village Hall, Newbury Hill, Hampstead Norreys	607	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	Warm, well equipped, spacious, nice views	Polling place to remain at Hampstead Norreys Village Hall.
WC	West Ilsley	West Ilsley Village Hall, Main Street, West Ilsley	257	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	West Ilsley Village Hall is convenient, and I have always been happy to use this polling station.	Polling place to remain at West Ilsley Village Hall.
YA	Yattendon	Yattendon Village Hall, Yattendon	280	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at Yattendon Village Hall.
Thatcham Central								
THA9	Thatcham (Central)	Moorside Community Centre, Urquhart Road, Kennet Heath, Thatcham	1437	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location See comments made for THA7 and THA8	Polling place to remain at Moorside Community Centre for THA9.

Polling District	Parish	Current Polling Place	Electorate November 2023	Existing position	Returning Officer's Comments	Future Parliamentary Constituency	Comments made by respondents to the consultation	Recommendation
THA10	Thatcham (Central)	1 st Thatcham Scout Group, Thackeray Lane, Thatcham	2284	Two polling stations. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	One responds to confirm this is a good location	Polling place to remain at the 1 st Thatcham Scout Group Hall.
THA11	Thatcham (Central)	Thatcham Baptist Church, Wheelers Green Way, Thatcham	1045	One polling station. Electors vote outside the polling district. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at Thatcham Baptist Church.
THA12	Thatcham (Central)	The Meeting Room, St Mary's Church, Church Gate, Thatcham	710	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain in The Meeting Room at St Mary's Church.
Thatcham Colthrop & Crookham								
THA6	Thatcham (Crookham)	Burdwood Community Centre, Wheelers Green Way, Thatcham	2069	Two polling stations. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location.	Polling place to remain Burdwood Community Centre.
THA7	Thatcham (Crookham)	Moorside Community Centre, Urquhart Road, Kennet Heath, Thatcham	103	One shared polling station. Electors vote outside the polling district. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed though attempts will continue to contact Thatcham Town Football Club.	Newbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I live in Thatcham North and voted by post. The ward X XX is Thatcham Colthrop & Crookham and the Burdwood Centre is where residents south of the River Kennet were obliged to vote. This involved crossing the level crossing and for residents e.g in Thornford Road, Burys Bank Road, Crookham Park Home site and similar are a considerable distance from the Polling Station but importantly added to the difficulty associated with crossing the railway level crossing. It should be relatively straightforward to open a Polling Station in the former shop at the entrance to the Park Home site which would be on the same side of the level crossing for ALL voters south of the River Kennet. As stated in the previous answer the Burdwood (which is appropriate for most of the Colthrop & Crookham ward) is wholly inappropriate for voters resident south of the River Kennet. <p>Also see comments made below for THA8</p>	<p>Please note the comment relates to the Moorside Centre and not the Burdwood Centre.</p> <p>Electors in this polling district live in Colthrop and at the bottom of Crookham Hill. It is recommended that these electors move to the Burdwood Centre, which is within the Thatcham Colthrop and Crookham Ward. If we are able to secure a polling station south of the railway line at the Thatcham Town Football Club, then voting can take place there instead. This would however mean that voters north of the railway line at Colthrop would have to travel to the south side.</p>
THA8	Thatcham (Crookham)	Moorside Community Centre, Urquhart Road, Kennet Heath, Thatcham	401	One shared polling station. Electors vote outside the polling district. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district. The Travellers Friend has been used for	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is on the opposite side of the railway level crossing. Brimpton Village Hall was previously used after the closing of The Travellers Friend Pub. This seemed to work well and I went there in person. It's OK if one lives on that side of the level of the level crossing. XXXXX requests that West Berkshire Council establishes a polling station south of the river to accommodate voters in the Thatcham Colthrop & Crookham Ward. 	<p>It is recommended that the electors in THA8, who live in Crookham Common move from the polling place at the Moorside Centre in Thatcham.</p> <p>A suggested move to Brimpton Village Hall is not suitable as this polling place is outside the ward of Thatcham Colthrop and Crookham. It lies in the Aldermaston ward and Reading West and Mid Berkshire constituency. This would not be suitable for a parliamentary election.</p>

Polling District	Parish	Current Polling Place	Electorate November 2023	Existing position	Returning Officer's Comments	Future Parliamentary Constituency	Comments made by respondents to the consultation	Recommendation
				several years prior to recent closure.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a resident of Crookham I would like to suggest Brimpton Village Hall as a polling station. Initially after the Travellers Friend Crookham was closed Brimpton Village Hall was used and the venue worked. There is parking there. 	It is there recommended that the polling place relocates to Thatcham Town Football Club and permission is being sought.
Thatcham North East								
CD4	Cold Ash (Little Copse)	Central Family Hub, Park Lane, Thatcham	362	No polling place available in the parish/polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at the Central Family Hub.
THA3	Thatcham (North East)	Thatcham Memorial Hall, Bath Road, Thatcham	1864	One polling station, sometimes two. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would be good if the memorial hall parking could be free on polling day As far as I know it is suitable and appropriate. For RG18 4DD and local area we need something in the Dustan Park - Bradley-Moore Shopping Center area. There is nothing wrong with this facility, however the Thatcham North East area needs a Polling Center closer to that community. 	<p>Parking is free for one hour at the neighbouring Gilbert Court (East) car park. The Memorial Hall use a private parking provider. For this reason, contact has been made with the Catholic Hall on the Bath Road as a possible alternative. Parking is free on their site.</p> <p>The comment regarding residents in RG18 4DD is incorrect and those electors currently vote at The Frank Hutchings Community Hall in Dunston Park.</p> <p>Polling place to relocate from Thatcham Memorial Hall to the Catholic Hall who can provide improved accommodation and parking.</p>
THA4	Thatcham (North East)	Central Family Hub, Park Lane, Thatcham	1501	Two polling stations. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at the Central Family Hub.
THA5	Thatcham (North East)	Frank Hutchings Community Hall, Bradley-Moore Square, Thatcham	2076	Two polling stations. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	Walking distance from my home. Good location and facilities for visitors and volunteers.	Polling place to remain at Frank Hutchings Community Hall.
Thatcham West								
CD3	Cold Ash (Florence Gardens)	Newbury & Thatcham Hockey Club, Henwick Lane, Thatcham	107	Electors vote outside the polling district. No Polling place is available in the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	See comments below THA2	Polling place to remain at Newbury and Thatcham Hockey Club.
THA1	Thatcham (West)	Swings and Smiles Children's Centre, A Place to Play, Lower Way, Thatcham	2870	Two polling stations. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's within walking distance or a short drive if weather inclement. There is a polling station at Thatcham memorial park which is less than 1 minute walk away. 	Polling place to remain at Swings and Smiles Childrens Centre in Lower Way.
THA2	Thatcham (West)	Newbury & Thatcham Hockey Club, Henwick Lane, Thatcham	2444	Two polling stations. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Newbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No need to change it Regency Park Hotel 	Polling place to remain at Newbury and Thatcham Hockey Club.

Polling District	Parish	Current Polling Place	Electorate November 2023	Existing position	Returning Officer's Comments	Future Parliamentary Constituency	Comments made by respondents to the consultation	Recommendation
Theale								
ZTA1	Theale	Theale Village Hall, Englefield Road, Theale	1021	One polling station. Population growth may mean two in future. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	The Theale Village hall is on the north side of the village. It is fine for the north-east but a more central location (e.g. Cumber Hall) might attract more electors.	Polling place to remain at Theale Village Hall. John Cumber hall is already used for polling district ZTA2.
ZTA2	Theale	John Cumber Hall, High Street, Theale	1287	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	No comments made in relation to this location	Polling place to remain at John Cumber Hall.
Tilehurst & Purley								
ZPD	Purley	Purley Memorial Hall, Glebe Road, Purley on Thames	3469	Three polling stations. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not much choice of locations in Purley with adequate parking congested access. Suggest goosecroft barn Easy access to building good parking Consider an additional polling place serving electors in the river estate should be considered - The Church? St Mary's Church. Although with population growth can seem crowded and confused despite signage. Parking and close to everything. The Barn? No it's great The Barn, Googecroft Lane, Purley on Thames? The Barn, Denefield School, Purley Primary School? It is central to the area. It is a good venue and has parking and is near a bus stop The Barn at Goosecroft - the location is good but the parking and access is harder 	Polling place could remain at Purley Memorial Hall. We have investigated using The Barn at Goosecroft Lane as a replacement location. The population size is increasing. This building is larger than the Memorial Hall with a vast car park so it is recommended that the polling place is relocated to this premises.
ZTH5	Tilehurst (North)	Cornwell Centre, Home Croft, Tilehurst	1341	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	One responds to confirm this is a good location	Polling place to remain at Cornwell Centre.
ZTH6	Tilehurst (North)	Cotswold Sports Centre, Downsway, Tilehurst	3500	Two polling stations. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	One responds to confirm this is a good location	Polling place to remain at Cotswold Sports Centre,
Tilehurst Birch Copse								

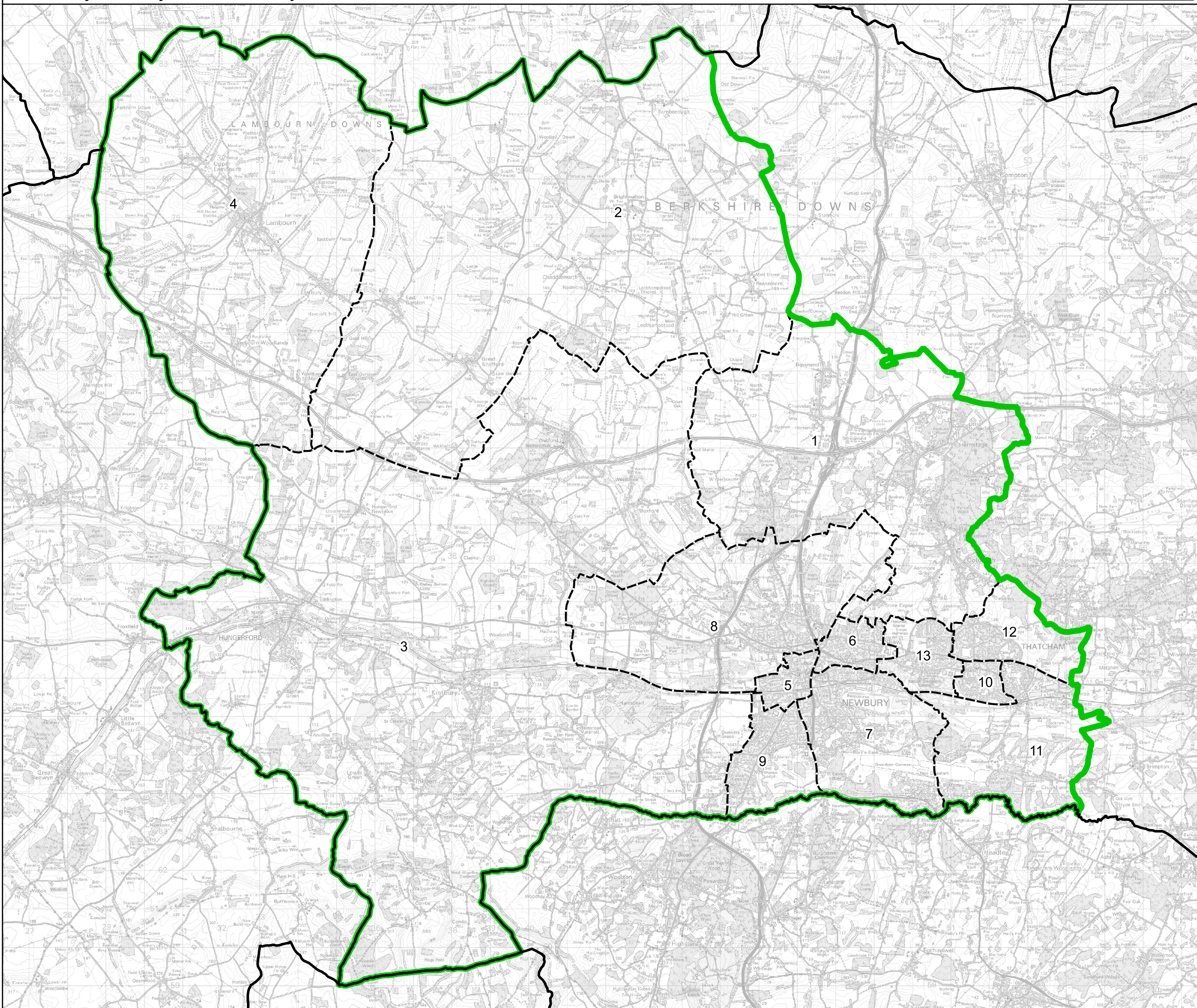
Polling District	Parish	Current Polling Place	Electorate November 2023	Existing position	Returning Officer's Comments	Future Parliamentary Constituency	Comments made by respondents to the consultation	Recommendation
ZTH2	Tilehurst (Central)	The Calcot Centre, Highview, Calcot	2355	One polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	Convenient location, ample parking facilities and the hall is just the right size.	Polling place to remain at The Calcot Centre.
ZTH3	Tilehurst (Central)	St Catherine's Hall, Wittenham Avenue, Tilehurst	1312	One polling station. Electors vote outside the polling district. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	Two responses to confirm this is a good location	Polling place to remain at St Catherine's Hall.
ZTH4	Tilehurst (Central)	St Catherine's Hall, Wittenham Avenue, Tilehurst	2269	Two polling stations. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	As above	Polling place to remain at St Catherine's Hall.
Tilehurst South & Holybrook								
ZH1	Holybrook (East)	Holybrook Centre, Carters Rise, Calcot	2601	Two polling stations. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kennet Valley Primary School Holybrook Centre is fine. However, I do feel that we should not be Tilehurst South and Holybrook. It should be Holybrook and Tilehurst South. There is only a very small section of Tilehurst and Holybrook Parish has many more homes and residents. Kennet Valley Free Church <p>Seven responses confirmed this is a good location</p>	<p>Polling place to remain at Holybrook Centre</p> <p>Name of the district ward is noted and could form part of a community governance review in the future.</p>
ZH2	Holybrook (West)	Beansheaf Community Centre, Charrington Road, Calcot	2936	Two polling station. We are not aware of an alternative building accessible to all electors within the polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No 26 bus goes past and easy to catch along route. Plenty of parking on site as well. Because this building is used by the community for other groups it has all the facilities needed for general public including disabled access It is convenient for many people, within walking distance for many. Has a good well lit car par with disabled bays, a ramp for access, toilets and good lighting in the building. It also has several rooms so has scope to take numbers if required. 	Polling place to remain at Beansheaf Community Centre.
ZTH1	Tilehurst (Calcot)	Beansheaf Community Centre, Charrington Road, Calcot	265	Electors vote outside the polling district. No polling station available in the parish/polling district.	No amendment to the current polling arrangement is proposed	Reading West and Mid Berkshire	As above	As above


Boundary Commission for England - Final Recommendations for the South East Region


Newbury County Constituency - Electorate 71,631




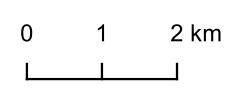
- Wards:
- 1 Chieveley & Cold Ash
 - 2 Downlands (Part)
 - 3 Hungerford & Kintbury
 - 4 Lambourn
 - 5 Newbury Central
 - 6 Newbury Clay Hill
 - 7 Newbury Greenham
 - 8 Newbury Speen
 - 9 Newbury Wash Common
 - 10 Thatcham Central
 - 11 Thatcham Colthrop & Crookham
 - 12 Thatcham North East
 - 13 Thatcham West



 Constituency

 Local Authorities

 Wards



© Crown copyright and database rights 2023 OS 100018289. You are permitted to use this data solely to enable you to respond to, or interact with, the organisation that provided you with the data. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form. Third party rights to enforce the terms of this licence shall be reserved to OS.

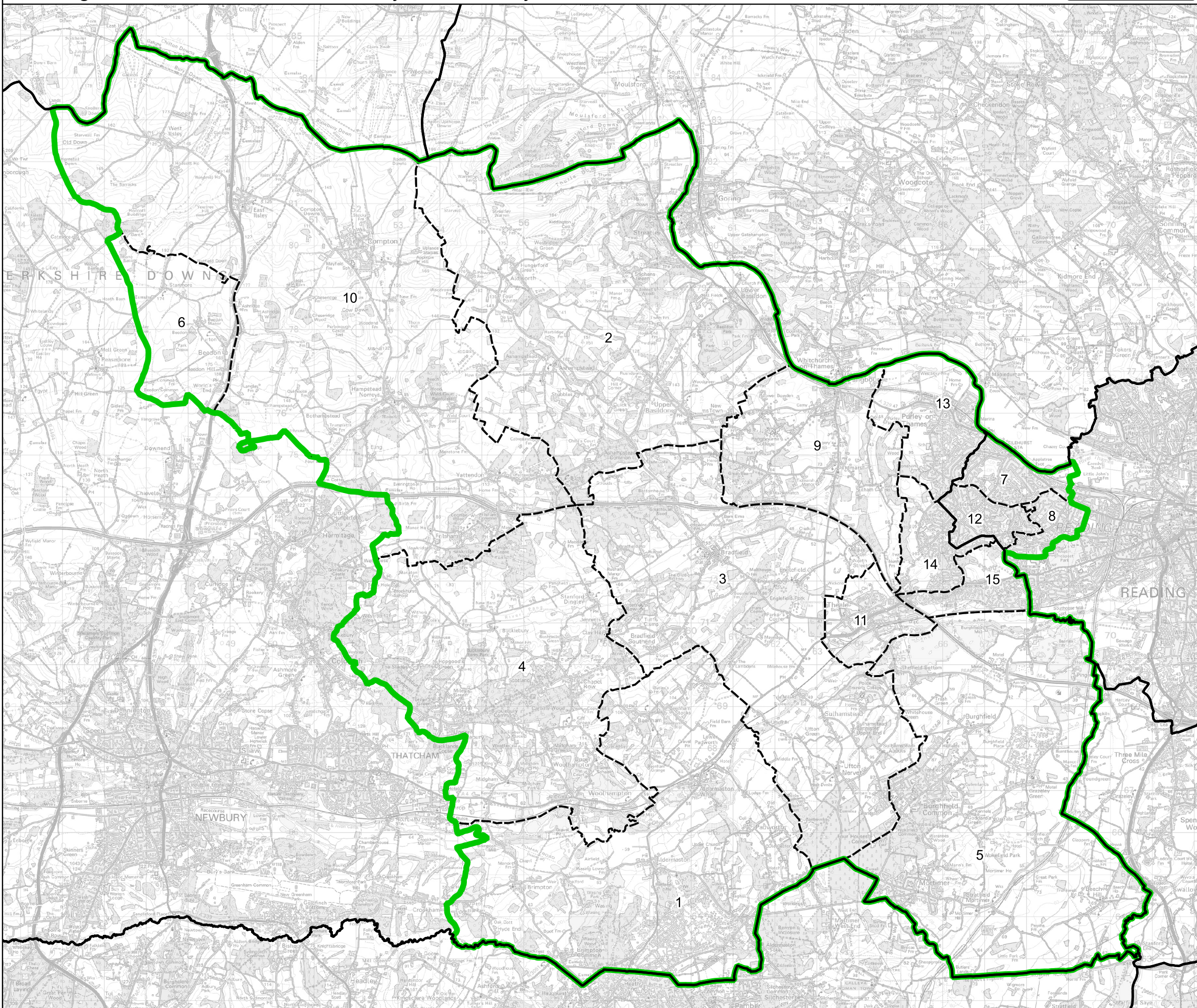
This page is intentionally left blank

Boundary Commission for England - Final Recommendations for the South East Region

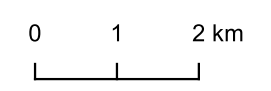
Reading West and Mid Berkshire County Constituency - Electorate 69,999



- Wards:
- 1 Aldermaston
 - 2 Basildon
 - 3 Bradfield
 - 4 Bucklebury
 - 5 Burghfield & Mortimer
 - 6 Downlands (Part)
 - 7 Kentwood
 - 8 Norcot
 - 9 Pangbourne
 - 10 Ridgeway
 - 11 Theale
 - 12 Tilehurst
 - 13 Tilehurst & Purley
 - 14 Tilehurst Birch Copse
 - 15 Tilehurst South & Holybrook



- Constituency
- Local Authorities
- Wards



© Crown copyright and database rights 2023 OS 100018289. You are permitted to use this data solely to enable you to respond to, or interact with, the organisation that provided you with the data. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form. Third party rights to enforce the terms of this licence shall be reserved to OS.

This page is intentionally left blank

Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan

Committee considering report:	Extraordinary Council
Date of Committee:	20 February 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Tony Vickers
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	2 January 2024
Report Author:	Laila Bassett
Forward Plan Ref:	C4433

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has been subject to independent examination. The Examiner has recommended that the NDP with modifications can proceed to referendum. However, the Examiner's decision is not binding and only West Berkshire District Council can decide if the NDP progresses to referendum. This report provides the evidence for the Council to make that decision.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To endorse the Decision Statement on the Cold Ash NDP which concludes that the Cold Ash NDP, with the inclusion of modifications, meets the Basic Conditions.
- 2.2 Because the modified Plan meets the Basic Conditions, it is recommended that:
- (a) The Plan should proceed to referendum;
 - (b) Upon a successful 'yes' vote at referendum, agreement is sought that the Cold Ash NDP is adopted immediately after the votes have been counted so that it becomes part of the development plan for West Berkshire; and
 - (c) The authority to make minor alterations and corrections to the Cold Ash NDP as set out in Appendices D and E, prior to its proceeding to referendum, be delegated to the Service Lead, Planning and Economy, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	<p>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. It should be noted there are three types of neighbourhood plans – NDPs, Neighbourhood Development Orders, and Community Right to Build Orders.</p> <p>The support programme has recently been extended to cover the period 2023/24 and LPAs can make the following claims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £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. <p>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 100 hours of officer time (direct support and excluding consultation responses) 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.</p> <p>The cost of the Cold Ash NDP examination was £5,640.</p> <p>On average referendums cost £5,000 per ballot box to deliver, plus the officer time associated with arranging the referendum.</p>
Human Resource:	<p>Not applicable</p>
Legal:	<p>An adopted neighbourhood plan forms part of the development plan.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>Qualifying Bodies (ie. Parish / Town Councils in parished areas, and Neighbourhood Forums in unparished areas) have the responsibility for leading the process; however, LPAs have a significant role in assisting certain stages of the process and</p>

Implication	Commentary			
	ensuring that certain criteria are met. The procedure comprises several stages which following submission to the LPA 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

Implication	Commentary		
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:	✓		<p>Having a neighbourhood plan meets the following priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling the Climate and Ecology Emergency – policies in neighbourhood plans provide the opportunity to protect and enhance the local environment for generations to come, whilst also increasing a community’s resilience to climate change. • A Prosperous and resilient West Berkshire – policies in neighbourhood plans can encourage development which supports a range of good quality local jobs, businesses, and services to meet the needs of local people. Policies can also make decisions on what type of housing is needed and where it should be built. • Thriving Communities with a Strong Local Voice – neighbourhood plans allow local communities to take the lead and enhance their local area, whilst also shaping where and how development takes place.
Core Business:		✓	

Implication	Commentary			
Data Impact:		✓		
Consultation and Engagement:	<p>Paula Amorelli – Planning Policy Team Leader</p> <p>Katharine Makant – Service Lead: Planning & Economy (Chief Planning Officer)</p> <p>Planning Advisory Group</p> <p>Operations Board</p> <p>The NDP has also been subject to substantial consultation during its production, and independent examination. It will need to pass a referendum of the local community before being adopted.</p>			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 Since 2019, Cold Ash Parish Council assisted by community volunteers, has been preparing a NDP. The purpose of the Cold Ash 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 Cold Ash NDP has been through independent examination. The Examiner has issued his final report which recommends that, subject to several modifications, the Plan can proceed to referendum.
- 4.3 The Examiner’s report is not binding. West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) must determine if the Cold Ash NDP, as modified, 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. WBDC must also determine if the plan should proceed to referendum.
- 4.4 On consideration of the recommendations and modifications contained within the Examiner’s report, officers have concluded that the modified plan 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 an NDP. Officers recommend that the modified Cold Ash NDP should proceed to referendum, and this is set out in a Decision Statement (see Appendix D).
- 4.5 If the Cold Ash NDP is successful at referendum, it will be adopted as part of the development plan for West Berkshire the day following the referendum (so as to allow for the possibilities of a legal challenge).

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. There are three different types of neighbourhood plans – NDPs, Neighbourhood Development Orders, and Community Right to Build orders.
- 5.2 West Berkshire is entirely parished, and legislation requires that neighbourhood plans are developed by Parish and Town Councils assisted by community volunteers. However, there are several parishes within the district which are so small they do not meet the threshold and instead have a Parish Forum, provided they meet the requirements of legislation. In such cases, a Neighbourhood Forum would need to be formed to develop neighbourhood plans. Plans must be in general conformity with national planning policies and the strategic policies of the development plan.
- 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 assist in the determination of planning applications.

Background

- 5.4 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 (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). 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 in March 2023 which they consulted on.
- 5.5 Following the submission of the Cold Ash NDP to WBDC on 20 June 2023, the Plan was publicised, and comments were invited from the public and stakeholders between 21 July and 1 September 2023.
- 5.6 At a meeting of Council on 5 October 2023, Members agreed that the Cold Ash NDP could proceed to independent examination. WBDC, in conjunction with Cold Ash Parish Council, appointed an independent examiner, Andrew Mead, to review whether the plan met the Basic Conditions required by legislation and should proceed to referendum. The independent examination of the Cold Ash NDP took place between November and December 2023. The Examiner's report was issued on 3 January 2024 and is included within Appendix C.
- 5.7 A NDP will meet the Basic Conditions if:
 - it has had 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.

Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan

5.8 Regulation 32 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).

5.9 The examiner concluded that with modifications to the green gaps, economic, public car parking and sunken lanes policies, the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and should proceed to referendum.

5.10 The Cold Ash NDP will guide development in the Parish of Cold Ash to 2039, and it contains 16 planning policies designed to preserve the distinctive rural villages of Cold Ash and Ashmore Green. It also seeks to enhance and protect the overall character and heritage of the Parish, whilst supporting development which meets identified needs in the most sustainable locations within the defined settlement boundaries of the villages.

5.11 The Plan also contains (inter alia) policies on dark skies, heritage, sunken lanes, sustainable transport, design and the rural economy. Iconic views are identified, where any development should be located and designed in such a way that does not significantly harm the views. Additionally, the Plan proposes six sites for Local Green Space designation.

Proposals

5.12 Following the independent examination of the Cold Ash NDP and the receipt of the Examiner's report, WBDC is required to make a decision on the next steps. As set out in Part 5 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) these are:

- (a) To decline to consider a plan proposal under paragraph 5 of Schedule 4B to the Town and County Planning Act 1990 (as amended) (as applied by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)) or a modification proposal under paragraph 5 of Schedule A2 to the 2004 act;
- (b) to refuse a plan proposal under paragraph 6 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 act (as applied by section 38A of the 2004 Act) or a modification proposal under paragraph 8 of Schedule A2 to the 2004 Act;
- (c) what action to take in response to the recommendations of an Examiner made in a report under paragraph 10 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 act (as applied by section 38A of the 2004 Act) in relation to a neighbourhood development plan or under paragraph 13 of Schedule A2 to the 2004 Act in relation to a proposed modification of a neighbourhood development plan;
- (d) what modifications, if any, they are to make to the draft plan under paragraph 12(6) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act (as applied by section 38A of the 2004 act) or paragraph 14(6) of Schedule A2 to the 2004 Act;
- (e) whether to extend the area to which the referendum is (or referendums are) to take place; or

- (f) that they are not satisfied with the plan proposal under paragraph 12(10) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act (as applied by section 38A of the 2004 Act) or the draft plan under paragraph 14(4) of Schedule A2 to the 2004 Act.

5.13 In accordance with Regulation 18(2) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), WBDC must produce a Decision Statement that sets out the Council's decision and the reasons for this. This is included in Appendix D.

5.14 The Decision Statement sets out that the recommendations and modifications made in the Examiner's report should be accepted. The modifications will ensure that the NDP meets the Basic Conditions.

5.15 WBDC published the submitted NDP and its supporting documents for a 6-week consultation which ran between 21 July and 1 September 2023. WBDC made representations on the submitted Plan, and within these it was identified that several minor amendments are required. The Examiner's report comments that these amendments are non-material in nature and would not affect the ability of the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions.

5.16 The Examiner also commented in his report that minor amendments to the supporting text of policy CAP5 (Minimising the Risk of Flooding) suggested by Thames Water are non-material in nature and do not affect the ability of the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions.

5.17 On 22 November 2023, all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) were renamed as National Landscapes. The references in the NDP to the North Wessex Downs AONB need to be amended to North Wessex Downs National Landscape. Such an amendment is non-material in nature and does not affect the ability of the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions.

5.18 Details of the non-material amendments are included within the Decision Statement (Appendix D) and are also shown in the version of the NDP with modifications (Appendix E).

5.19 Members are asked to:

- (a) Endorse the Decision Statement on the Cold Ash NDP which concludes that the Cold Ash NDP, with the inclusion of modifications, meets the Basic Conditions;
- (b) Agree that the Cold Ash NDP, upon a successful 'yes' vote at referendum, is adopted immediately after the votes have been counted so that it becomes part of the development plan for West Berkshire;
- (c) Agree that authority to make minor alterations and corrections to the Cold Ash NDP as set out in Appendices D and E, prior to its proceeding to referendum, be delegated to the Service Lead, Planning and Economy, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement.

5.20 Officers are currently liaising with the Elections Team to determine a date that the referendum could take place should Members endorse the Decision Statement.

6 Options for consideration

- 6.1 That the recommendations of the Cold Ash NDP independent examiner are not followed, and the plan does not proceed to referendum. There is however no justification for following this approach.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The Examiner's report on the Cold Ash NDP recommended that with modifications, the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and should proceed to referendum. The Examiner's report is not binding, and it is for WBDC to make the final recommendation.
- 7.2 Officers have considered each of the Examiner's recommendations and modifications and have decided on an action to take in response to each recommendation and what modifications should be made to the Plan to be satisfied that the Basic Conditions are met. This is set out in the Decision Statement. The Decision Statement concludes that the Cold Ash NDP, with the inclusion of several modifications, should proceed to referendum.
- 7.3 If the majority of those who vote in the referendum are in favour of the draft NDP (a successful 'yes' vote), WBDC must make the NDP within eight weeks (unless there is a legal challenge) part of the West Berkshire development plan. Officers consider that the NDP should be adopted, as part of the development plan for West Berkshire, as soon as practicable after the referendum.
- 7.4 Following a successful 'yes' vote at referendum it is proposed that the Cold Ash NDP automatically will be adopted by WBDC as part of the development plan and be used in part for the determination of planning applications.

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 Examiner's Report
- 8.4 Appendix D – Cold Ash NDP Decision Statement
- 8.5 Appendix E – Cold Ash NDP with Modifications

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

Document Control

Document Ref:	C4432	Date Created:	15 December 2023
Version:	1.02	Date Modified:	3 January 2024
Author:	Laila Bassett		
Owning Service	Development and Regulation		

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1	3 January 2023	Several amendments made to provide additional clarity	PA

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

We need to ensure that our strategies, policies, functions and services, current and proposed have given due regard to equality and diversity as set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act), which states:

- (1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:**
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;**
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; This includes the need to:**
 - (i) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;**
 - (ii) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;**
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, with due regard, in particular, to the need to be aware that compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.**
- (2) The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.**
- (3) Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.**

The following list of questions may help to establish whether the decision is relevant to equality:

- Does the decision affect service users, employees or the wider community?
- (The relevance of a decision to equality depends not just on the number of those affected but on the significance of the impact on them)
- Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?
- Is it a major policy, or a major change to an existing policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?
- Will the decision have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?
- Does the decision relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?
- Does the decision relate to an area with known inequalities?
- Does the decision relate to any equality objectives that have been set by the council?

Please complete the following questions to determine whether a full Stage Two, Equality Impact Assessment is required.

<p>What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:</p>	<p>To resolve that the Cold Ash NDP can be sent for independent examination under Regulation 17 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.</p>
<p>Summary of relevant legislation:</p>	<p>The relevant legislation setting out the neighbourhood planning process is included in the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council’s priorities for improvement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please indicate which priority and provide an explanation</p>
<p>Name of Budget Holder:</p>	<p>Katharine Makant</p>
<p>Name of Service/Directorate:</p>	<p>Development and Regulation / Place</p>
<p>Name of assessor:</p>	<p>Laila Bassett</p>
<p>Date of assessment:</p>	<p>15 December 2023</p>
<p>Version and release date (if applicable):</p>	

<p>Is this a ?</p>		<p>Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ?</p>	
<p>Policy</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>New or proposed</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Already exists and is being reviewed</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

Function	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Service	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

(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:	<p>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.</p> <p>Cold Ash Parish Council will receive 25% of CIL receipts should the plan be successful at referendum.</p> <p>Delivery of government policy regarding neighbourhood planning.</p> <p>Give more control to the local community of Cold Ash to shape their community going forward.</p>

(2) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?		
<i>(Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation)</i>		
Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Age	<p>Neighbourhood planning should have a positive impact on all groups.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>Neighbourhood Planning legislation, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Practice Guidance</p>
Disability		
Gender Reassignment		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		
Pregnancy and Maternity		
Race		
Religion or Belief		

Sex	<p>development of the neighbourhood plan.</p>
Sexual Orientation	<p>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.</p> <p>Neighbourhood planning should have a positive impact on all groups.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Neighbourhood planning should have a positive impact on all groups.</p> <p>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.</p>

	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 <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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.	

If your answers to question 2 have identified potential adverse impacts and you have answered ‘yes’ to either of the sections at question 3, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a EqlA 2.

If an EqlA 2 is required, before proceeding you should discuss the scope of the Assessment with service managers in your area. You will also need to refer to the EqlA guidance and template – <http://intranet/index.aspx?articleid=32255>.

(4) Identify next steps as appropriate:	
EqlA Stage 2 required	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Owner of EqlA Stage Two:	
Timescale for EqlA Stage Two:	

Name: Laila Bassett

Date: 15 December 2023

Please now forward this completed form to Pamela Voss, Equality and Diversity Officer (pamela.voss@westberks.gov.uk), for publication on the WBC website.

Appendix B

Data Protection Impact Assessment – Stage One

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:	15 December 2023

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

	Yes	No
<p>Will you be processing SENSITIVE or “special category” personal data?</p> <p><i>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”</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will you be processing data on a large scale?</p> <p><i>Note – Large scale might apply to the number of individuals affected OR the volume of data you are processing OR both</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will your project or system have a “social media” dimension?</p> <p><i>Note – will it have an interactive element which allows users to communicate directly with one another?</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will any decisions be automated?</p> <p><i>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?</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
Will your project/system involve CCTV or monitoring of an area accessible to the public?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Will you be using the data you collect to match or cross-reference against another existing set of data?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Will you be using any novel, or technologically advanced systems or processes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Note – this could include biometrics, “internet of things” connectivity or anything that is currently not widely utilised</p>		

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.

Cold Ash NDP Examiner's Report

See separate attachment.

Cold Ash NDP Decision Statement

See separate attachment.

Cold Ash NDP with Modifications

See separate attachment.



Intelligent Plans
and examinations

Report on the Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 to 2039

An Examination undertaken for West Berkshire District Council with the support of Cold Ash Parish Council on the June 2023 submission version of the Plan.

Independent Examiner: Andrew Mead BSc (Hons) MRTPI MIQ

Date of Report: 3 January 2024

Intelligent Plans and Examinations (IPE) Ltd, 3 Princes Street, Bath BA1 1HL
Registered in England and Wales. Company Reg. No. 10100118. VAT Reg. No. 237 7641 84

Contents

Main Findings - Executive Summary	4
1. Introduction and Background	4
Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021-2039	4
The Independent Examiner	5
The Scope of the Examination	5
The Basic Conditions.....	6
2. Approach to the Examination	6
Planning Policy Context	6
Submitted Documents.....	7
Site Visit.....	8
Written Representations with or without Public Hearing	8
Modifications	8
3. Procedural Compliance and Human Rights.....	8
Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area	8
Plan Period.....	8
Neighbourhood Development Plan Preparation and Consultation	8
Development and Use of Land	9
Excluded Development.....	9
Human Rights.....	9
4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions	9
EU Obligations	9
Main Issues.....	10
Vision and Objectives.....	11
Policy CAP1: Location of Development	11
Policy CAP2: Local Character and Heritage	12
Policy CAP3: Design of Development	12
Policy CAP4: Sustainable Design	12
Policy CAP5: Minimising the Risk of Flooding	12
Policy CAP6: Biodiversity and the Network of Green and Blue Infrastructure ...	13
Policy CAP7: Managing the Environment Impact of Development	13
Policy CAP8: Iconic Views	13
Policy CAP9: Local Green Spaces	14
Policy CAP10: Dark Skies.....	14
Policy CAP11: Encouraging Sustainable Movement.....	14
Policy CAP12: Sunken Lanes	14

Policy CAP13: Public Car Parking.....	15
Policy CAP14: Important Community Facilities	15
Policy CAP15: Supporting Commercial Businesses and Expansions	15
Policy CAP16: Supporting SMEs, Flexible Start-Ups and Homeworking	15
Non-Policy Actions.....	16
Overview	16
5. Conclusions.....	16
Summary.....	16
The Referendum and its Area	17
Concluding Comments	17
Appendix: Modifications	18

Main Findings - Executive Summary

From my examination of the Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan (CAPNDP/the Plan) and its supporting documentation including the representations made, I have concluded that subject to the policy modifications set out in this report, the Plan meets the Basic Conditions.

I have also concluded that:

- The Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body – the Cold Ash Parish Council;
- The Plan has been prepared for an area properly designated – the Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Area as shown on Figure 1 on page 7 of the Plan;
- The Plan specifies the period during which it is to take effect: 2021-2039; and
- The policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood area.

I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum on the basis that it has met all the relevant legal requirements.

I have considered whether the referendum area should extend beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates and have concluded that it should not.

1. Introduction and Background

Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021-2039

- 1.1 The Parish of Cold Ash is located on the southern fringe of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (previously known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)¹ about 3km to the north west of the centre of Thatcham and about 7km north east of Newbury. Cold Ash Parish includes the linear villages of Cold Ash and Ashmore Green which are set in undulating rural surroundings, the highpoints of which give wide and distant panoramic views, especially to the west and south. In 2011, the Parish population was 4,063.²
- 1.2 The formal process to prepare a neighbourhood plan for Cold Ash Parish began in 2017 when Cold Ash Parish Council (CAPC) announced its intention to develop one. An appeal for volunteers was issued and a Steering Group was formed. Evidence was collected and consultations were carried out. The Plan was finally submitted to West Berkshire District Council (WBDC/the Council) in June 2023, representing about 6 years work for those involved.

¹ [Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Renamed National Landscapes - North Wessex Downs National Landscape](#) (22 November 2023).

² CAPNDP: page 17, paragraph 2.13.

The Independent Examiner

- 1.3 As the Plan has now reached the examination stage, I have been appointed as the examiner of the CAPNDP by WBDC with the agreement of CAPC.
- 1.4 I am a chartered town planner and former government Planning Inspector and have experience of examining neighbourhood plans. I am an independent examiner, and do not have an interest in any of the land that may be affected by the Plan.

The Scope of the Examination

- 1.5 As the independent examiner, I am required to produce this report and recommend either:
- (a) that the neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum without changes; or
 - (b) that modifications are made and that the modified neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum; or
 - (c) that the neighbourhood plan does not proceed to a referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.
- 1.6 The scope of the examination is set out in Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) ('the 1990 Act'). The examiner must consider:
- Whether the plan meets the Basic Conditions.
 - Whether the plan complies with provisions under s.38A and s.38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) ('the 2004 Act'). These are:
 - it has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body, for an area that has been properly designated by the local planning authority;
 - it sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land;
 - it specifies the period during which it has effect;
 - it does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'; and
 - it is the only neighbourhood plan for the area and does not relate to land outside the designated neighbourhood area.

- Whether the referendum boundary should be extended beyond the designated area, should the plan proceed to referendum.
 - Such matters as prescribed in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) ('the 2012 Regulations').
- 1.7 I have considered only matters that fall within Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act, with one exception. That is the requirement that the Plan is compatible with the Human Rights Convention.

The Basic Conditions

- 1.8 The 'Basic Conditions' are set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act. In order to meet the Basic Conditions, the neighbourhood plan must:
- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
 - contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area;
 - be compatible with and not breach European Union (EU) obligations (under retained EU law)³; and
 - meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.
- 1.9 Regulation 32 of the 2012 Regulations prescribes a further Basic Condition for a neighbourhood plan. This requires that the making of the Plan does not breach the requirement of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.⁴

2. Approach to the Examination

Planning Policy Context

- 2.1 The current Development Plan for the Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Area, excluding policies relating to minerals and waste development, includes the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991–2006 (Saved Policies 2007) (as amended in 2012 and 2017), the West Berkshire Core Strategy (WBCS) 2006–2026, which contains most of the strategic policies, and the

³ The existing body of environmental regulation is retained in UK law.

⁴ This revised Basic Condition came into force on 28 December 2018 through the Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018.

West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (HSADPD) adopted in 2017.⁵

- 2.2 The planning policy for England is set out principally in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). I have examined the Plan in the context of the NPPF published on 5 September 2023 and all references in my report are to that version.⁶ In addition, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) offers advice on how the NPPF should be implemented.
- 2.3 The West Berkshire Local Plan Review (WBLPR) is also currently being examined.⁷ Whilst there is no requirement for the Plan to be in general conformity with any strategic policies in the emerging review of the Local Plan, there is an expectation that West Berkshire and the Parish Council will work together to produce complementary plans.⁸ I note in the context of the provision of future monitoring, that the CAPNDP makes a commitment to keeping the Plan up to date and an intention to review it within six months of the adoption of the Local Plan Review.⁹

Submitted Documents

- 2.4 I have considered all policy, guidance and other reference documents I consider relevant to the examination, as well as those submitted which include:
- the draft Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 – 2039 submission version, dated June 2023;
 - the map on page 7 of the Plan which identifies the area to which the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan relates;
 - the Consultation Statement, dated June 2023;
 - the Basic Conditions Statement, dated June 2023;
 - the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinions, dated December 2021 and November 2022 and the SEA and HRA Decisions, dated December 2021 and November 2022;
 - selected items from the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan evidence list¹⁰;
 - the responses dated 24 November and 28 November 2023 from CAPC and dated 27 November 2023 from WBDC to the questions in my letter of 13 November 2023; and

⁵ There is also the retained South East Plan Policy NRM6: Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.

⁶ A revised version of the NPPF was published on 19 December 2023. However my fact check (draft) report was dated 12 December 2023 and, therefore, provided prior to the updated version of the NPPF being published. Accordingly, given my examination was at the (very advanced) fact check stage, my assessment does not consider the December 2023 NPPF which reflects the standard practice in these circumstances.

⁷ [Examination of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022-2039 - West Berkshire Council](#)

⁸ PPG Reference ID: 41-009-20160211.

⁹ CAPNDP: pages 97-98, paragraphs 11.3-11.5.

¹⁰ View the documents at: https://www.westberks.gov.uk/media/55963/Cold-Ash-NDP-Evidence-List/pdf/Cold_Ash_NDP_Evidence_List.pdf?m=638254574153170000

Intelligent Plans and Examinations (IPE) Ltd, 3 Princes Street, Bath BA1 1HL

Registered in England and Wales. Company Reg. No. 10100118. VAT Reg. No. 237 7641 84

- all the representations that have been made in accordance with the Regulation 16 consultation.¹¹

Site Visit

- 2.5 I made an unaccompanied site inspection to the CAPNDP area on 9 November 2023 to familiarise myself with it and visit relevant locations referenced in the Plan and evidential documents.

Written Representations with or without Public Hearing

- 2.6 This examination has been dealt with by written representations. I considered hearing sessions to be unnecessary as the consultation responses clearly articulated the objections to the Plan and presented arguments for and against the Plan's suitability to proceed to a referendum. No requests for a hearing session were received.

Modifications

- 2.7 Where necessary, I have recommended modifications to the Plan (**PMs**) in this report in order that it meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. For ease of reference, I have listed these modifications separately in the Appendix to this report.

3. Procedural Compliance and Human Rights

Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area

- 3.1 The Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by CAPC, which is a qualifying body. The CAPNDP extends over all the area designated by WBDC on 19 March 2018.

Plan Period

- 3.2 The Plan period is from 2021 to 2039 as clearly stated on the front cover.

Neighbourhood Development Plan Preparation and Consultation

- 3.3 The comprehensive Consultation Statement (CS) describes the thorough preparation of the Plan with involvement of the public and various stakeholders at many stages of the process. The table on page 3 of the CS is very effective in listing the various stages of the consultation process which are then described in full in the statement.

¹¹ View all the documents at: <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/coldashnp>

- 3.4 The pre-submission Plan was published for consultation under Regulation 14 of the 2012 Regulations between 1 March and 19 April 2023. The list of organisations consulted is shown in Appendix B of the CS (page 45), together with the list of respondents, the matters raised, the responses of the Steering Group and any resulting changes to the Plan (pages 46 - 103).
- 3.5 The Plan was submitted to WBDC on 20 June 2023. Consultation in accordance with Regulation 16 was carried out for six weeks between 21 July 2023 until 1 September 2023. 12 representations were received plus comments from WBDC about the Plan. I am satisfied that a transparent, fair and inclusive consultation process has been followed for the CAPNDP, that has had regard to advice in the PPG on plan preparation and engagement and is procedurally compliant in accordance with the legal requirements.

Development and Use of Land

- 3.6 Subject to my recommend modification **PM3** in relation to Policy CAP12 (see paragraph 4.22 below), the Plan sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in accordance with s.38A of the 2004 Act.

Excluded Development

- 3.7 The Plan does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'.¹²

Human Rights

- 3.8 I have read the Basic Conditions Statement (BCS) which states that the CAPNDP does not breach and is not otherwise incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights, incorporated into UK law by the Human Rights Act 1998. I am aware from the thorough CS that considerable emphasis was placed throughout the consultation process to ensure that no sections of the community were isolated or excluded. I have considered this matter independently and I am satisfied that the policies will not have a discriminatory impact on any particular group of individuals.

4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions

EU Obligations

- 4.1 The Basic Conditions Statement notes that the Plan was screened for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) by WBDC. The Council's initial conclusion was that a SEA of the Cold Ash Parish NDP was not necessary under the SEA

¹² See section 61K of the 1990 Act.

Directive and Regulations because it was demonstrated that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects as a result of the Plan. It was also WBDC's initial conclusion that a HRA was not required because there are no internationally designated sites within or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Therefore, on the basis of the screening process it was the Council's opinion that the CAPNDP is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and, as such, did not require an SEA under EU Directive 2001/42/EC and The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004), or a Habitats Regulations Assessment under EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.¹³ The statutory consultees did not dissent from these conclusions¹⁴ and the determination was made on 29 November 2022. I have read the SEA and the HRA Screening Reports of December 2021 and November 2022 and the Screening Determination dated 13 December 2021 and the other information provided and, having considered the matter independently, I also agree with the conclusions. Therefore, I am satisfied that the CAPNDP is compatible with EU obligations as retained in UK law.

Main Issues

- 4.2 Having considered whether the Plan complies with various procedural and legal requirements, it is now necessary to deal with whether it complies with the remaining Basic Conditions, particularly the regard it pays to national policy and guidance, the contribution it makes to the achievement of sustainable development and whether it is in general conformity with strategic development plan policies. I test the Plan against the Basic Conditions by considering specific issues of compliance of all the Plan's policies.
- 4.3 As part of that assessment, I consider whether the policies are sufficiently clear and unambiguous, having regard to advice in the PPG. A neighbourhood plan policy should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision maker can apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. It should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence.¹⁵
- 4.4 Accordingly, having regard to the Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan, the consultation responses, other evidence¹⁶ and the site visit, I consider that the main issues in this examination are whether the CAPNDP policies (i) have regard to national policy and guidance; (ii) are in general conformity with the adopted strategic planning policies; and (iii) would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development? I

¹³ [2017](#) (SI No. 1012).

¹⁴ Details in Table 8.1 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report: November 2022.

¹⁵ PPG Reference ID: 41-041-20140306.

¹⁶ The other evidence includes the responses from CAPC and WBDC to my questions of 13 November 2023 and dated 24 and 28 November and 27 November 2023 respectively.

Intelligent Plans and Examinations (IPE) Ltd, 3 Princes Street, Bath BA1 1HL

Registered in England and Wales. Company Reg. No. 10100118. VAT Reg. No. 237 7641 84

shall assess these issues by considering the policies in the sequence in which they appear in the Plan.

Vision and Objectives

- 4.5 The overall vision for the CAPNDP is described in paragraph 3.2 on page 22 of the Plan. The vision is then used to develop 6 objectives listed in paragraph 3.4 which set the context for the 16 subsequent land use policies.

Policy CAP1: Location of Development

- 4.6 Cold Ash is defined in the WBCS as a service village in which limited small scale development will be located, appropriate to the character and function of the village, in order to meet local needs, including residential infill or minor development adjacent to the settlement as defined in the HSADPD. Policy CAP1 indicates that development will be focused within the settlement boundaries of Cold Ash and Ashmore Green and lists circumstances where development proposals will be supported. The policy also gives substantial weight to the value of using brownfield land within the settlement boundaries.
- 4.7 The second paragraph of Clause 2 of Policy CAP1 seeks to prevent development which would result in the coalescence and loss of identity of the individual settlements in the Parish. The policy states that the green gaps shown in Figure 6 of the Plan demonstrate the areas most sensitive to this. The green gaps are extensions of those defined in Policy DM2 of the WBLPR and shown on the WBLPR Policies Map, the aim of which is to prevent coalescence of Newbury and Thatcham. The WBLPR is quite specific that Policy DM2 is to preserve the gaps between Newbury and Thatcham, between Thatcham and Cold Ash and between Thatcham and Ashmore Green.
- 4.8 I consider that it is extremely confusing for the Neighbourhood Plan to delineate green gaps which significantly extend those in the emerging Local Plan, whatever the planning merits of the extended areas might be. In my opinion, the confusion results from the definition of the different green gaps in two documents which would eventually become part of the development plan. WBDC in their representation further consider that “the final paragraph of Criterion 2 of policy CAP1 is not in general conformity with policy CS 19”.¹⁷ Whilst, as pointed out by the CAPC, I am testing the CAPNDP against the extant development plan, I also have regard to the advice in the PPG that complementary neighbourhood and local plan policies are produced.¹⁸ Both the CAPNDP and WBLPR are emerging and, in my view, preceding consideration should be given to the delineation in the strategic plan.

¹⁷ WBCS Policy CS 19: Historic Environment and Landscape Character.

¹⁸ PPG Reference ID: 41-009-20190509.

4.9 Nevertheless, the text of Policy CAP1 includes the prevention of the coalescence of individual settlements, which would also cover the separation of Cold Ash and Ashmore Green, and which I consider is important but less strategic than maintaining the gaps between Thatcham and Newbury (sought by Policy DM2 of the WBLPR). Therefore, I shall recommend modifying Policy CAP1 by the deletion of the final sentence of paragraph 2 and an amendment to Figures 6 and 7 to delete the green gaps; alter the title of Figure 6 to "*Settlement boundaries outside which development should be avoided which would result in further coalescence*" and delete Green Gaps from the notation of Figure 7. **(PM1)** The policy would then have regard to national guidance¹⁹, generally conform with Area Delivery Plan Policy 5 and Policy CS 19 of the WBCS (and emerging Policy DM2 of the WBLPR). The policy would meet the Basic Conditions.

Policy CAP2: Local Character and Heritage

4.10 Policy CAP2 deals with development management in Character Zones defined in Figure 7 of the Plan and also heritage assets. I consider the policy has regard to national guidance²⁰, generally conforms with Policy CS 19 of the WBCS and meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy CAP3: Design of Development

4.11 Policy CAP3 considers comprehensive detailed design criteria for development management and refers to the Quality Design West Berkshire Supplementary Planning Guidance and the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan. The policy has regard to national guidance²¹, generally conforms with Policy CS 14 of the WBCS and meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy CAP4: Sustainable Design

4.12 Policy CAP4 supports development which incorporates sustainable design features, environmental performance measures and standards to reduce energy consumption. The policy has regard to national guidance²², generally conforms with Policies CS 14 and CS 15 of the WBCS and meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy CAP5: Minimising the Risk of Flooding

4.13 Policy CAP5 seeks to minimise the risk of flooding and has regard to national guidance²³, generally conforms with Policy CS 16 of the WBCS and meets the Basic Conditions.

¹⁹ NPPF: paragraphs 11, 60, 79, 80, 120, 121, 124, 130, 174, 176, 190 & 197.

²⁰ NPPF: Section 12 Achieving well-designed places; Section 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

²¹ NPPF: paragraphs 108, 120 & 152 and Section 12 Achieving well-designed places.

²² NPPF: paragraphs 130, 152–155.

²³ NPPF: paragraphs 159–169.

Policy CAP6: Biodiversity and the Network of Green and Blue Infrastructure

4.14 Policy CAP6 aims to secure a net biodiversity gain of at least 10% for all new development, considers other aspects of biodiversity and the network of green and blue infrastructure. The policy has regard to national guidance²⁴, generally conforms with Policies CS 17 and CS 18 of the WBCS and meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy CAP7: Managing the Environment Impact of Development

4.15 Policy CAP7 states that development proposals should maintain and, where practicable, enhance the natural environment, landscape character and rural setting of the Parish. The policy has regard to national guidance²⁵, generally conforms with Policies CS 14 and CS 17 of the WBCS and meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy CAP8: Iconic Views

4.16 Policy CAP8 lists 10 views which are considered iconic and are identified on the map at Figure 13 of the Plan and explained in fuller detail in Appendix B. Paragraph 6.34 of the Plan provides clear justification for the policy and states that development proposals should be designed in a way that does not significantly harm the iconic view concerned identified from publicly accessible viewpoints, and that the policy attempts to provide the flexibility required for the wide range of development proposals which will come forward.

4.17 I note the intended flexibility and it would be unacceptable for all development to be precluded from within the mostly panoramic views which would otherwise be sustainable. I also note that the viewpoints should be publicly accessible and have the following comments. As confirmed in the response dated 24 November from the CAPC to one of my questions²⁶, the photograph illustrating Viewpoint 2 was taken from within privately owned land and has the effect of minimising the visual dominance of the field in the foreground. However, I still recognise the quality of the view from The Ridge through the boundary foliage looking in a broad easterly direction and, therefore, agree to its inclusion as an iconic view in Policy CAP8.

4.18 The CAPC acknowledged that the photograph illustrating Viewpoint 6 was taken from a drone which, in my opinion, would not normally be considered a publicly accessible point. I realise that there are wide views to the north west from the gardens on the north side of Fisher's Lane, but their protection is a matter of safeguarding the private outlook from a property. Otherwise, having seen the views on my site visit, I agree that Policy CAP8 should apply to them and, subject to the recommended

²⁴ NPPF: paragraphs 174–176, 179 & 180.

²⁵ NPPF: paragraphs 174–177, 179 & 180.

²⁶ Question 2, letter of 13 November 2023.

deletion of Viewpoint 6, consider the policy has regard to national guidance²⁷, generally conforms with Policy CS 19 of the WBLP and meets the Basic Conditions. **(PM2)**

Policy CAP9: Local Green Spaces

4.19 Policy CAP9 designates 6 Local Green Spaces (LGS). LGS designation should only be used where the green space is: a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; b) 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 c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.²⁸ LGS should also be capable of enduring beyond the end of the Plan period.²⁹ I visited each LGS on my inspection of the area and I agree that each LGS meets the designation criteria. Therefore, the policy has regard to national guidance³⁰, generally conforms with Policy CS 18 of the WBCS and meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy CAP10: Dark Skies

4.20 Policy CAP10 aims to safeguard the area defined as a “dark sky zone” on Figure 15 of the Plan from development which would cause unnecessary light pollution to the night sky. The policy has regard to national guidance³¹, generally conforms with Policy CS 19 of the WBCS and meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy CAP11: Encouraging Sustainable Movement

4.21 Policy CAP11 promotes safe pedestrian and cycle access to the various facilities within the Parish. The policy has regard to national guidance³², generally conforms with Area Delivery Plan Policy 5 and Policy CS 13 of the WBCS and meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy CAP12: Sunken Lanes

4.22 Policy CAP12 seeks to protect sunken lanes which are shown on Figure 18 of the Plan. However, the details within the policy refer to not raising the level of the road; not reducing the heights of embankments; retaining the existing width of the road; and minimising road markings, none of which are land use policies as noted in the Regulation 16 comments of WBDC and all of which would be dealt with under Highways Asset Management.

²⁷ NPPF: paragraphs 130 & 174.

²⁸ NPPF: paragraph 102.

²⁹ NPPF: paragraph 101.

³⁰ NPPF: paragraphs 100, 101 & 102. Also see PPG Reference IDs: 37-005-20140306 to 37-022-20140306.

³¹ NPPF: paragraph 185.

³² NPPF: paragraphs 92, 104–106.

Therefore, I shall recommend the deletion of the final sentence of the policy including the items a. to d. **(PM3)** so that it has regard to national guidance and generally conforms with Policy CS 13 of the WBCS, thus meeting the Basic Conditions.

Policy CAP13: Public Car Parking

4.23 Policy CAP13 safeguards publicly accessible car parking. The policy has regard to national guidance³³ and generally conforms with Policy CS 13 of the WBCS, subject to one reservation which is the reference in paragraph 3 b. of the policy to the detail of electric charging points. This is now covered by the recently approved Building Regulations Part S which came into effect in June 2022.³⁴ Therefore I shall recommend the deletion of paragraph 3 b. **(PM4)** Policy CAP13 will then meet the Basic Conditions.

Policy CAP14: Important Community Facilities

4.24 Policy CAP14 seeks to safeguard important community facilities and to support their upgrading or expansion. The policy would have regard to national guidance³⁵, would generally conform with Policy CS 10 of the WBCS and meet the Basic Conditions.

Policy CAP15: Supporting Commercial Businesses and Expansions

4.25 Policy CAP15 supports new and the expansion of existing commercial, business and service activities at the Red Shute industrial estate or other locations subject to criteria described in the Plan. WBDC suggest in their Regulation 16 comments, which is expanded in the response to one of my questions³⁶, that the policy should be modified in order to generally conform with Policy CS 9 of the WBDC. For the reasons outlined in the WBDC response, to which I agree, I shall recommend that Policy CAP15 is modified as described in **PM5**. The policy will then also have regard to national guidance³⁷ and meet the Basic Conditions.

Policy CAP16: Supporting SMEs³⁸, Flexible Start-Ups and Homeworking

4.26 Policy CAP16 supports home based and other small businesses and seeks to encourage opportunities for them. WBDC objected to the phrasing of the policy seeking the removal of references to home working because, in most cases, it is permitted development. In order for the policy to have regard to national guidance³⁹ and generally conform with Policy CS 9 of

³³ NPPF: paragraphs 104–106.

³⁴ The Building Regulations 2010: Infrastructure for the charging of electric vehicles: Approved document S.

³⁵ NPPF: paragraphs 92 & 93.

³⁶ Question 3, letter of 13 November 2023.

³⁷ NPPF: paragraphs 81–85.

³⁸ Small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

³⁹ NPPF: paragraphs 80, 83 & 84.

the WBCS, WBDC suggested a redraft with which I agree, for the reasons included in the response by the Council to one of my questions.⁴⁰ Therefore, I recommend that Policy CAP16 is modified as shown in the Appendix. **(PM6)**

Non-Policy Actions

4.27 The table in paragraph 10.1 of the Plan lists 20 non land use planning issues to be addressed alongside possible actions, together with the lead agency or partner. These are items which the community is seeking but cannot be delivered through planning policies, which are not considered as part of the examination and which will not form part of the statutory Development Plan. Nevertheless, they represent aspirations which would benefit the community and demonstrate an attribute of the neighbourhood planning process.⁴¹

Overview

4.28 Therefore, on the evidence before me, with the recommended modifications, I consider that the policies within the CAPNDP are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the WBCS, have regard to national guidance, would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and so would meet the Basic Conditions.

4.29 A consequence of the acceptance of the recommended modifications would be that amendments will have to be made to the explanation within the Plan in order to make it logical and suitable for the referendum. Further amendments might also include incorporating factual updates, correcting minor inaccuracies, text improvements suggested helpfully by WBDC in their Regulations 14 and 16 consultation responses and Thames Water, and any paragraph renumbering. None of these alterations would affect the ability of the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions and could be undertaken as minor, non-material changes.⁴²

5. Conclusions

Summary

5.1 The Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan has been duly prepared in compliance with the procedural requirements. My examination has investigated whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements for neighbourhood plans. I have had regard to all the responses made following consultation on the CAPNDP, and the evidence documents submitted with it.

⁴⁰ Question 4, letter of 13 November 2023.

⁴¹ PPG Reference ID: 41-004-20190509.

⁴² PPG Reference ID: 41-106-20190509.

- 5.2 I have made a recommendation to modify six of the sixteen policies to ensure the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum.

The Referendum and its Area

- 5.3 I have considered whether or not the referendum area should be extended beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates. The CAPNDP, as modified, has no policy or proposal which I consider significant enough to have an impact beyond the designated Neighbourhood Plan boundary, requiring the referendum to extend to areas beyond the Plan boundary. I recommend that the boundary for the purposes of any future referendum on the Plan should be the boundary of the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Concluding Comments

- 5.4 The CAPC, the Steering Group and other voluntary contributors are to be commended for their efforts in producing a concise but comprehensive Plan. The Plan is logical, very informative and well-illustrated. I enjoyed examining it and visiting the area, particularly seeing the countryside from the various viewpoints. The Consultation Statement and the Basic Conditions Statement were extremely useful. The Plan benefitted significantly from heeding the constructive representations from WBDC in its comprehensive Regulation 14 comments.
- 5.5 Subject to the recommended modifications, the CAPNDP will make a positive contribution to the Development Plan for the area and should enable the attractive character and appearance of Cold Ash Parish to be maintained whilst enabling sustainable development to proceed.

Andrew Mead

Examiner

Appendix: Modifications

Proposed modification no. (PM)	Page no./ other reference	Modification
PM1	Policy CAP1	<p>Delete the final sentence of the second paragraph.</p> <p>Delete the Green Gaps from Figure 6.</p> <p>Amend the title of Figure 6 to: "Settlement boundaries outside which development should be avoided which would result in further coalescence";</p> <p>Delete the Green Gaps from Figure 7 and from the notation for Figure 7.</p> <p>Delete the Green Gaps from the Policies Maps on pages 101 and 102.</p>
PM2	Policy CAP8	Delete Viewpoint no.6 from the policy, Figure 13, paragraph 6 and Appendix B.
PM3	Policy CAP12	Delete the final sentence, including items listed a. to d.
PM4	Policy CAP13	Delete paragraph 3.b.
PM5	Policy CAP15	<p>Amend the title of the policy to "Supporting Commercial Businesses."</p> <p>Amend the policy to: " Proposals for new or expanded commercial and business activity (Use Classes B2, B8 and E(g) will be supported within the Red Shute industrial estate where they bring redundant or vacant land based rural operations back into use, or where they help to diversify the rural economy subject to the following criteria:</p> <p>a. ... b. ... c. ... d. the proposal respects the character and appearance of the immediate locality in terms of height, scale, design and massing; e. the proposal would encourage the re-use of previously developed land where opportunities exist."</p>

PM6	Policy CAP16	<p>Amend the title of the policy to: "Supporting SMEs and flexible start-ups."</p> <p>Amend the policy to:</p> <p>"1. Proposals to provide working spaces that encourage creative small industries, for instance through incubator/start-up business space on flexible terms, will be supported through the provision of new buildings, or extensions to, or conversion of existing buildings, including redundant farm and rural buildings."</p> <p>Add to paragraph 2:</p> <p>"f. respect the character and appearance of the immediate locality in terms of height, scale, design and massing, and; g. encourage the re-use of previously developed land where opportunities exist."</p>
-----	-----------------	--

This page is intentionally left blank

WEST BERKSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
COLD ASH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2039
POST-EXAMINATION DECISION STATEMENT

February 2024

Regulation 18 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

This document is the decision statement required to be prepared under Regulation 18(2) of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended). It sets out the Council's response to each of the recommendations contained within the report to West Berkshire District Council of the independent examination of the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan ("the Plan") by Independent Examiner, Andrew Mead, which was received by the Council on 3 January 2024.

This decision statement, the independent Examiner's report, and the submission version of the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and supporting documents are available to view on the Council's website:

<https://www.westberks.gov.uk/coldashnp>.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), West Berkshire District Council ("the Council") has a statutory duty to assist communities in the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans and to take plans through a process of examination and referendum. The Localism Act 2011 sets out the responsibilities under Neighbourhood Planning.
- 1.2. Following receipt of the Examiner's report, the Council must make a decision on the next steps. As set out in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) these are:
 - (a) to decline to consider a plan proposal under paragraph 5 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act (as applied by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) or a modification proposal under paragraph 5 of Schedule A2 to the 2004 Act;
 - (b) to refuse a plan proposal under paragraph 6 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act (as applied by section 38A of the 2004 Act) or a modification proposal under paragraph 8 of Schedule A2 to the 2004 Act;
 - (c) what action to take in response to the recommendations of an examiner made in a report under paragraph 10 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act (as applied by section 38A of the 2004 Act) in relation to a neighbourhood development plan or under paragraph 13 of Schedule A2 to the 2004 Act in relation to a proposed modification of a neighbourhood development plan;

- (d) what modifications, if any, they are to make to the draft plan under paragraph 12(6) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act (as applied by section 38A of the 2004 Act) or paragraph 14(6) of Schedule A2 to the 2004 Act;
 - (e) whether to extend the area to which the referendum is (or referendums are) to take place; or
 - (f) that they are not satisfied with the plan proposal under paragraph 12(10) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act (as applied by section 38A of the 2004 Act) or the draft plan under paragraph 14(4) of Schedule A2 to the 2004 Act.
- 1.3. In accordance with Regulation 18(2) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), this report forms the Council's Decision Statement, and sets out the Council's decision and the reasons for this.

2. Background to the Cold Ash NDP

Designation of the Neighbourhood Area

- 2.1. On 19 March 2018, the Council designated the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Area for the purpose of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. The plan area covers the parish of Cold Ash and lies solely within the West Berkshire Local Planning Authority Area.

Submission of the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan

- 2.2. Cold Ash Parish Council, the qualifying body, submitted the draft Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and supporting documents to the Council on 20 June 2023.
- 2.3. Following submission of the NDP, the Council publicised the Plan and supporting documents and invited representations during the consultation period which ran from 21 July to 1 September 2023. At a meeting of Council on 5 October 2023, it was agreed that the Cold Ash NDP could proceed to independent examination.

3. Independent examination of the Cold Ash NDP

- 3.1. The Council, with the consent of Cold Ash Parish Council, appointed an independent examiner, Mr. Andrew Mead MRTPI MIQ, to review the NDP and consider whether it should proceed to referendum.
- 3.2. The examination of the plan took place by way of written representations between November and December.
- 3.3. The Examiner's final report was received on 3 January 2024. The report concluded that subject to modifications, the Cold Ash NDP should proceed to referendum. The Examiner also recommended that the referendum area be

based on the Neighbourhood Area that was designated by the Council on 19 March 2018.

4. Post examination

- 4.1. Regulations 17A and 18 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) requires the local planning authority to outline what action to take in response to the recommendations of the examiner following the formal examination.
- 4.2. The examiner's report is not binding, and it is the responsibility of the Council to ultimately decide if the examiner's suggested recommendations and modifications should be followed or not.

5. Decision and reasons

- 5.1. Having considered the recommendations in the Examiner's report and the reasons for them, the Council, with the consent of Cold Ash Parish Council, has decided to accept the modifications to the submitted Plan under Paragraph 12(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 5.2. The Council is satisfied that, subject to the modifications which it considers should be made, as set out in Table 5.1 below, that the Cold Ash NDP meets the Basic Conditions set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), is compatible with the Convention rights and complies with the provision made by or under 61E(2), 61J and 61L of the said Act.

Table 5.1: Examiner’s proposed modifications to the Cold Ash NDP

Policy (page no.)	Examiner’s modifications (insertion <u>underlined</u> , deletion as strikethrough)	Decision and justification	Action taken and revised modification
Title of Figure 6, policy CAP1: Location of Development, p.26	Amendments to the title wording: Figure 6: Settlement boundaries and green gaps, <u>outside which</u> where development should be avoided to prevent <u>result in further coalescence</u>	The Council agree with the Examiner’s recommendation.	No further action required. Modification to be taken forward to the final plan.
Figure 6, CAP1: Location of Development, p.26	Deletion of the Green Gaps from Figure 6	The LPR and Cold Ash NDP will both become part of the same development plan. Planning Practice Guidance (Reference ID: 41-009-20190509) is clear that complementary neighbourhood and local plan policies are produced.	
Criterion 2, policy CAP1: Location of Development, p27	Deletion of the final sentence of the second paragraph: 2. Development proposals outside the settlement boundaries will only be supported where: a.... b.... c.... d.... 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.	Policy ADPP1 of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) sets out the development approach based on three spatial areas, one of which is Newbury and Thatcham. The parish of Cold Ash lies within this spatial area. The approach of policy ADPP1 is maintained within policy SP1 of the LPR. As part of the preparation of the LPR, it has been identified that the pressure for development within the Newbury and Thatcham spatial area has the potential to lead to the loss of the separate and distinct identity of both settlements, in addition to the settlements surrounding them, through coalescence.	
Figure 7, policy CAP2: Local character and heritage, p.30	Deletion of Green Gaps from Figure 7 and from the notation for Figure 7	Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy DPD seeks to ensure that new development is appropriate in terms of location, scale and design in the context of the existing settlement form, pattern and character, so as to create a strong sense of place and local identify. The principles of policy CS19 have been maintained within policy SP8 of the LPR.	
Policies Maps, p.101-104	Deletion of the Green Gaps from the Policies Map		

Policy (page no.)	Examiner's modifications (insertion <u>underlined</u> , deletion as strikethrough)	Decision and justification	Action taken and revised modification
		<p>Policy DM2 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review (LPR) identifies green gaps between Newbury and Thatcham, between Thatcham and Cold Ash, and between Thatcham and Ashmore Green. Policy CAP1 identifies different green gaps to those in policy DM2.</p> <p>The modifications are necessary to ensure that the Plan meets the Basic Conditions, in particular, have regard to national guidance and be in general conformity with policies contained within the development plan.</p>	
Figure 6, policy CAP8: Iconic Views, p.65	Deletion of the image of View 6 from Fishers Lane to Snelsmore Common	The Council agree with the Examiner's recommendation.	No further action required. Modification to be taken forward to the final plan.
Paragraph 6.33, 6 th point, policy CAP8: Iconic Views, p.65	Deletion of viewpoint number 6: 6. From Fishers Lane to Snelsmore Common	The purpose of policy CAP8 is to ensure that development proposals are designed in such a way that they do not significantly harm iconic views from publicly accessible viewpoints.	
Figure 13, policy CAP8: Iconic Views, p.67	Deletion of viewpoint number 6 from Figure 13	The photograph illustrating viewpoint 6 was taken from a drone and is not a publicly accessible viewpoint.	
Policy CAP8: Iconic Views, p.68	Deletion of viewpoint number 6: 6. From Fishers Lane to Snelsmore Common		
Appendix B: Iconic Views, p.117	Deletion of viewpoint number 6.		
CAP12: Sunken Lanes, p.84	<p>Deletion of the final sentence, including items listed a. to d:</p> <p>Development proposals should respect the character and appearance of sunken lanes within the neighbourhood area. Development proposals which</p>	<p>The Council agree with the Examiner's recommendation.</p> <p>Planning is concerned with the use and development of land. Therefore, transport matters can only be considered where they relate to the</p>	No further action required. Modification to be taken forward to the final plan.

Policy (page no.)	Examiner's modifications (insertion <u>underlined</u> , deletion as strikethrough)	Decision and justification	Action taken and revised modification
	<p>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:</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>changes of use and / or the physical development of sites.</p> <p>Policy CAP12 sets out specific requirements for roads. These are matters for the local highway authority, and not planning.</p>	
Policy CAP13: Public Car Parking, p.86	<p>Deletion of paragraph 3.b:</p> <p>3. Any new or replacement car parks should incorporate the following facilities:</p> <p>a. 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.</p>	<p>The Council agree with the Examiner's recommendation.</p> <p>The detail of electric charging points is covered by Part S of the Building Regulations which came into effect in June 2022, and it is therefore not a matter for the NDP to consider.</p>	No further action required. Modification to be taken forward to the final plan.
Sub-heading 'Policy CAP15: Supporting commercial businesses and expansions, p.91	Policy CAP15: Supporting commercial businesses and expansions	<p>The Council agree with the Examiner's recommendation.</p> <p>The modifications are necessary to bring the policy in line with paragraphs 84 and 85 of the NPPF, and policies CS9 and CS10 of the Core Strategy DPD.</p>	No further action required. Modification to be taken forward to the final plan.
CAP15: Supporting Commercial Businesses,	<p>Amendments to the title of the policy and the policy to:</p> <p>POLICY CAP15: SUPPORTING COMMERCIAL BUSINESSES, EXISTING AND EXPANSIONS</p>	<p>The modifications are necessary to ensure that the Plan meets the Basic Conditions, in particular, have regard to national guidance and be in general</p>	

Policy (page no.)	Examiner's modifications (insertion <u>underlined</u> , deletion as strikethrough)	Decision and justification	Action taken and revised modification
Existing and Expansions, p.92	<p>Proposals for new or expanded commercial, <u>and</u> business and service activity (<u>Use</u> Classes B2, B8 and E(g)) will be supported <u>at within</u> the Red Shute industrial estate or, where they bring redundant or vacant land based rural operations back into use, <u>or where they help to diversify the rural economy</u> subject to the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>the proposal respects the character and appearance of the immediate locality in terms of height, scale, design and massing;</u> <u>the proposal would encourage the re-use of previously developed land where opportunities exist.</u> 	conformity with policies contained within the development plan.	
Sub-heading 'Policy CAP16: Supporting SMEs, Flexible Start-ups and Homeworking', p.93	Policy CAP16: Supporting SMEs, and flexible start-ups, and homeworking		
CAP16: Supporting SMEs, Flexible Start-ups and Homeworking, p.94	<p>Amendments to the title of the policy and the policy to:</p> <p>POLICY CAP16: SUPPORTING SMES, <u>AND</u> FLEXIBLE START-UPS AND HOMEWORKING</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The <u>provision of new buildings, or extensions to,</u> or conversion of existing buildings, including redundant farm and rural buildings; and 	<p>The Council agree with the Examiner's recommendation.</p> <p>The modifications are necessary to bring the policy in line with paragraphs 84 and 85 of the NPPF, and policies CS9 and CS10 of the Core Strategy DPD.</p> <p>The modifications are necessary to ensure that the Plan meets the Basic Conditions, in particular, have regard to national guidance and be in general conformity with policies contained within the development plan.</p>	No further action required. Modification to be taken forward to the final plan.

Policy (page no.)	Examiner's modifications (insertion <u>underlined</u> , deletion as strikethrough)	Decision and justification	Action taken and revised modification
	<p>b. enabling extensions and small new garden buildings to facilitate homeworking, within Use Class (E(g)(i)).</p> <p>2. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, proposals must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. b. c. d. 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; <u>and</u> f. <u>respect the character and appearance of the immediate locality in terms of height, scale, design, and massing; and</u> g. <u>encourage the re-use of previously developed land where opportunities exist.</u> 		

- 5.3. Several minor modifications have been identified by the Council which are required to correct typographical and factual errors within the Plan. The Examiner's report at paragraph 4.29 comments that *"further amendments might also include incorporating factual updates, correcting minor inaccuracies, text improvements suggested helpfully by WBDC...none of these alterations would affect the ability of the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions and could be undertaken as minor, non-material changes."*
- 5.4. These modifications, which have been agreed with Cold Ash Parish Council, do not affect the nature of the Plan. The minor modifications and the justification for them is set out in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2: The Council’s minor modifications to the Cold Ash NDP

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council’s minor modification (insertion <u>underlined</u> and deletion as strikes through)	Justification
Throughout the document, reference to Cold Ash Parish	Cold Ash P parish	Typographical modification.
1 st sentence, Executive summary, p.3	Cold Ash parish is diverse in nature, sitting partially within an area of the North Wessex Downs <u>National Landscape</u> (previously known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB))	Factual modification to reflect the name change of all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs were renamed as National Landscapes.
1 st sentence, paragraph 1.10, p.8	The CANDP has regard to the policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); <u>and was independently examined in the context of the NPPF published on 5 September 2023.</u> most recently updated in July 2024. All references are to that version of the NPPF.	Factual and explanatory modification. A revised version of the NPPF was published on 19 December 2023, and the additional text explains that the NDP was examined within the context of the NPPF that was published on 5 September 2023.
1 st sentence, paragraph 1.18, p.9	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 <u>National Landscape</u> (previously known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)) area .	Factual modification to reflect the name change of all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs were renamed as National Landscapes.
Sub-section heading before paragraph 1.22, p.9	As set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the primary purpose of the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> is to ‘conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area’.	
2 nd sentence, paragraph 1.22, p.9	As set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the primary purpose of the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> is to ‘conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area’.	
1 st and 2 nd sentences, paragraph 1.23, p.10	A small part of the north-eastern part of Cold Ash Parish is located within the eastern end of the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> . Whilst the remainder of the parish sits outside the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> , it does form part of the setting of the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> and therefore the Wessex Downs Management Plan is relevant as is the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> Design guidance.	

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification (<u>insertion underlined and deletion as strikethrough</u>)	Justification
Diagram after paragraph 1.23, p.10	Facts about the North Wessex Downs <u>National Landscape, previously known as AONB</u> (source: North Wessex AONB <u>National Landscape</u> Unit)	
Final sentence, paragraph 1.25, p.12	Full details of the consultation will be <u>were</u> included in the Consultation Statement that will accompany <u>ied</u> the Submission Version Plan, in due course.	Typographical modification
Table 1: Main stages of engagement activity, p.12	<p><u>Date column, final row:</u></p> <p>Stage 4: 2021-20243</p> <p><u>Milestone column, final row:</u></p> <p>Finalising Policies & Plan: Including final consultation and agreement via Referendum).</p> <p>Key activities column, final row:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission Version Plan submitted to LPA. • <u>Examination and Referendum.</u> 	Factual modifications to reflect that the NDP has been through independent examination.
1 st bullet point, paragraph 2.21, p.18	a small proportion of the parish is in the Wessex Downs <u>National Landscape (previously known as AONB)</u> , as it flows down from the Ridge into the Pang Valley	Factual modification to reflect the name change of all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).
Final sentence, paragraph 2.26, p.19	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 <u>National Landscape</u> AONB or is part of the natural buffer area flowing into it.	The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs were renamed as National Landscapes.
4 th bullet point, paragraph 3.1, p.22	Virtually the only predominantly rural or semi-rural parish in West Berks that is not protected by <u>National Landscape (previously known as AONB)</u> designation (although a small part of the north-eastern parish lies within the AONB <u>National Landscape</u>).	
Objective 2, paragraph 3.4, p.23	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 Downs AONB <u>National Landscape</u> ...	

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification (insertion <u>underlined</u> and deletion as strikethrough)	Justification
Final sentence, paragraph 4.4, p.24	Beyond this, the parish is 'open countryside', with parts to the north-east falling within the North Wessex Downs <u>National Landscape (previously known as AONB)</u> .	
Final sentence of criterion iii, paragraph 4.6, p.25	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 <u>National Landscape</u> and its setting.	
Point 2, criterion b, policy CAP1, p.27	the development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area, including the setting of the North Wessex Downs <u>National Landscape (previously known as AONB)</u> ; or	
Criterion 2e, Policy CAP1: Location of Development, p.27	e. it is on sites allocated for those uses in the West Berkshire <u>Housing</u> Site Allocations Development Plan or its successor.	Factual modification to provide the correct name of the document.
Policy CAP1, conformity refs, p.27	...NPPF: 11, 29, 60, 79 , <u>83, 804</u> , 149 23 , 120, 124 5 , 124 8 , 13 50 , 174 80 , 176 82 , 190 6 , 197 200	Factual modification to include the correct NPPF paragraph numbers.
2 nd sentence, paragraph 5.2, p.28	The largely rural parish contributes to the setting of the North Wessex Downs <u>National Landscape (previously known as AONB)</u> ,...	Factual modification to reflect the name change of all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs were renamed as National Landscapes.
Table 2: Local Character Zones Zone 1b. Ashmore Green, final sentence, p.32	Given the variety of housing, there is no single style that dominates, however a key feature throughout is single storey housing which complements <u>complements</u> and blends into both the settlement boundary itself and the fields or woodland surrounding it.	Typographical modification
Table 2: Local Character Zones 2 nd sentence, Zone 3: Rural Zone, p.33	It is not anticipated that any development will happen in these rural environments – part of which are situated within the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> , and all of which contribute towards the AONB's <u>National Landscape's</u> setting	Factual modification to reflect the name change of all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs were renamed as National Landscapes.
Policy CAP2, conformity refs, p.35	NPPF: 131 26 to 139 4 , 195 89 , 190 6 , 192 05-9 to 205 10	Factual modification to include the correct NPPF paragraph numbers.

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification (insertion <u>underlined and</u> deletion as strikethrough)	Justification
Final sentence, paragraph 5.11, p.36	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 <u>National Landscape</u> .	Factual modification to reflect the name change of all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs were renamed as National Landscapes.
Paragraph 5.13, final bullet point, p.36	The North Wessex Downs AONB <u>National Landscape</u> Management Plan: contains policies relating to design within the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> . This is particularly relevant to Cold Ash, part of which is sited within the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> , whilst the villages are located within the broader setting.	
Paragraph 5.17, p.37	... (para 127 <u>32</u>).	Factual modification to include the correct NPPF paragraph numbers.
Paragraph 5.17, penultimate sentence, p.37	Context and identity; Nature; Built form; Homes and Buildings; and Movement (see Figure 8 overleaf).	Typographical modification
2 nd and final sentences, paragraph 5.20, p.38	Cold Ash and Ashmore Green villages, located within the Village Zone, contribute significantly to the setting of the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> , by way of their geographical location. It will be important, therefore, to ensure that the guidance contained within the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> Management Plan	Factual modification to reflect the name change of all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs were renamed as National Landscapes.
Criterion b, policy CAP3: Design of Development, p.43	the guidance contained in the Quality Design West Berkshire Supplementary Planning Document and the North Wessex Downs AONB <u>National Landscape</u> Management Plan.	
Policy CAP3, conformity refs, p.43	NPPF: 104 8 , <u>11208</u> , 120 4 , <u>12631</u> to 141 <u>36</u> , 15 7 <u>2</u>	Factual modification to include the correct NPPF paragraph numbers.
Policy CAP4, conformity refs, p.45	NPPF: 13 5 <u>0</u> , 15 2 <u>7</u> to <u>15560</u>	
New criteria to be included after criterion a and before criterion b, paragraph 5.75, p.47	<u>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.</u> <u>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.</u>	Explanatory modification suggested by Thames Water who are the statutory water supply and sewerage undertaker for West Berkshire district. The modification provides greater information on sewerage and water supply infrastructure. The Examiner's report at paragraph 4.29 comments that "further amendments might also include text improvements suggested by...Thames Water...none of these alterations would affect the ability of the Plan to meet the Basic

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification (insertion <u>underlined</u> and deletion as strikethrough)	Justification
	<p>The Local Planning Authority will seek to ensure that there is <u>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.</u></p>	<p>Conditions and could be undertaken as minor, non-material changes.”</p>
Policy CAP5, conformity refs, p.51	NPPF: 159 <u>65</u> – 175 <u>69</u>	Factual modification to include the correct NPPF paragraph numbers.
Final sentence, paragraph 6.3, p.51	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 <u>Parish</u> where possible.	Typographical modification
2 nd sentence, paragraph 6.5, p.52	It has been informed by the Landscape Character Assessment and biodiversity work undertaken by the AONB <u>North Wessex Downs National Landscape</u> unit	Factual modification to reflect the name change of all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).
1 st and final sentences, paragraph 6.13, p.56	Covering much of the northern part of the parish, including those areas falling within the North Wessex Downs AONB <u>National Landscape</u> This chimes with the priorities for the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> for this type of landscape.	The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs were renamed as National Landscapes.
Policy CAP6, conformity refs, p.56	NPPF: 180–74, 175, 176 <u>182, 179</u> 85, 180 <u>6</u>	Factual modification to reflect the correct paragraphs of the NPPF.
2 nd sentence, paragraph 6.15, p.57	This is particularly important in the context of the Parish being located within the setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB <u>National Landscape</u> .	Factual modification to reflect the name change of all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).
Final bullet point, paragraph 6.16, p.57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a comprehensive network of Public Rights of w<u>Way</u>, (see Public Rights of Way), including a network of bridleways 	The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs were renamed as National Landscapes.
1 st row, Table 3, paragraph 6.18, p.57	[Designation column] North Wessex Downs AONB <u>National Landscape</u>	Typographical modification
		Factual modification to reflect the name change of all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification (<u>insertion</u> <u>underlined</u> and <u>deletion</u> as <u>striketrough</u>)	Justification
	[Sites column] The north-eastern part of the parish lies within the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> . The remainder of the parish contributes to the setting of the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> .	The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs were renamed as National Landscapes.
Criterion a, policy CAP7: Managing the environmental impact of development, p.63	The guidance and advice contained in the Quality Design West Berkshire SPD, the North Wessex Downs AONB <u>National Landscape</u> Management Plan	
Policy CAP7, conformity refs, p.64	NPPF: 170 80 – 188 2	Factual modification to include the correct NPPF paragraph numbers.
First sentence, paragraph 6.35, p.68	It should be noted that the <u>CAP</u> NDP policy...	Typographical modification
Policy CAP8, conformity refs, p.68	NPPF: 131 26 , 127 32 , 135 0	Factual modification to include the correct NPPF paragraph numbers.
Final sentence, paragraph 6.38, p.69	Paragraph 10 6 2 of the NPPF...	
Policy CAP8, conformity refs, p.70	NPPF: 104 5 – to 103 7 , 137 42 to –15 6 4	
3 rd and final paragraphs, paragraph 6.41, p.72	An additional consideration is that parts of Cold Ash, to the north and east, lie within the North Wessex Downs AONB <u>National Landscape</u> and light spill is detrimental to this area of outstanding natural beauty and to its wildlife. The AONB <u>National Landscape</u> supports dark skies...	Factual modification to reflect the name change of all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs were renamed as National Landscapes.
Final bullet point, paragraph 6.42, p.72	...(Figure 6.7 15).	Editorial modification to reflect amendments to figure numbers.
Figure 6.7, p.72	Figure 6.7: <u>Figure 15</u> : Map showing levels of radiance for Cold Ash Parish (source: CPRE, www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk)	
Policy CAP10, conformity refs, p.73	NPPF: 194 85	Factual modification to include the correct NPPF paragraph numbers.
3 rd sentence, criterion 2, policy CAP11: Encouraging Sustainable Movement, p.81	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 <u>National Landscape</u> Management Plan.	Factual modification to reflect the name change of all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs were renamed as National Landscapes.

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification (insertion <u>underlined</u> and deletion as strikethrough)	Justification
Policy CAP11, conformity refs, p.81	NPPF: 92 <u>96</u> , 104 8 to 110 06	Factual modification to include the correct NPPF paragraph numbers.
Figure 18, p.83	Figure 19 <u>18</u> : Sunken lanes in Cold Ash Parish	Editorial modification to reflect amendments to figure numbers.
Paragraph 7.19, p.84	The policy supports the objectives of the North Wessex Downs <u>National Landscape</u> AONB, which seeks...	Factual modification to reflect the name change of all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs were renamed as National Landscapes.
Policy CAP12, conformity refs, p.84	NPPF: 126 31 , 127 32 , 178 04 , 175 81 , 179 85 , 195 <u>89</u> , 196 0	Factual modification to include the correct NPPF paragraph numbers.
First sentence, paragraph 7.24, p.85	The provision of electric vehicle charging points (<u>EVCPs</u>) at such locations	Typographical modification
Policy CAP13, conformity refs, p.86	NPPF: 96 <u>2</u> , 108 4 , 405, 406 -110	Factual modification to include the correct NPPF paragraph numbers.
First sentence, paragraph 8.2, p.87	Table 48 -4 shows the...	Editorial modification to reflect amendments to figure numbers.
Table 4, p.87	<u>Table 4: Community Facilities and supported improvements</u>	Editorial modification to include table name and reference
First sentence, paragraph 8.3, p.88	Proposals for new development, which involve these important community facilities, identified in the table <u>Table 4 above</u> , will be supported	Editorial modification to reflect amendments to table numbering.
Paragraph 8.4, p.88	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 <u>the Parish Council</u>	Typographical modification
Figure 19, p.89	Figure 20 <u>19</u> : Map showing key community facilities	Editorial modification to reflect amendments to figure numbers.
Policy CAP14, conformity refs, p.90	NPPF: 90 <u>86</u> , 92 6 , 93 7	Factual modification to include the correct NPPF paragraph numbers.
Sub-heading 'Policy CAP15: Supporting commercial businesses and expansions', p.91	Policy CAP15: Supporting commercial businesses and expansions	The title refers to 'expansions'. Through supporting commercial businesses, proposals for the expansion of new and existing premises will in turn be supported. For clarity, the reference to 'expansions' needs to be removed.
Final sentence, paragraph 9.2, p.91	Notwithstanding this, the CAPNDP would be supportive of proposals...	Typographical modification

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification (insertion <u>underlined</u> and deletion as strikethrough)	Justification
2 nd sentence, paragraph 9.3, p.91	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, <u>a designated Protected Employment Area in the Local Plan</u> ...	<p>Factual modification to reflect designation of Red Shute Hill as a Protected Employment Area in the Local Plan.</p> <p>The Examiner's report at paragraph 4.29 comments that <i>"further amendments might also include factual updates...none of these alterations would affect the ability of the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions and could be undertaken as minor, non-material changes."</i></p>
3 rd sentence, paragraph 9.3, p.91	Larger-scale commercial activity should continue to be focussed on this site, although <u>smaller-scale</u> 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 <u>in the Parish</u> ; 'suitably located' means where they do not adversely affect the locality and the amenities of residents.	<p>For clarity, and to align with the strategic policies of the Local Plan (Core Strategy policy CS9 and submission LPR policy SP20), it needs to be specified that <u>smaller scale</u> sustainable growth will be supported in areas within the Parish. This is because larger scale proposals will take place at Red Shute Hill.</p> <p>The Examiner's report at paragraph 4.29 comments that <i>"further amendments might also include text improvements...none of these alterations would affect the ability of the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions and could be undertaken as minor, non-material changes."</i></p>
Policy CAP15, conformity refs, p.92	Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 6; Adopted Core Strategy: <u>ADPP2</u> , CS9; Local Plan Review: <u>SP1</u> , SP20; NPPF: 84 <u>5</u> , 82 <u>6</u> , 848 – 90, 85, 86	Factual modification to include reference to the relevant Local Plan and Local Plan Review policies.
Sub-heading 'Policy CAP16: Supporting SMEs, flexible start-ups, and homeworking', p.93	Policy CAP16: Supporting SMEs, <u>and</u> flexible start-ups, and homeworking	<p>The supporting text to the policy suggests that the purpose of the policy is to encourage small businesses, which may be from a home environment. However, it seems to be confusing this with homeworking in the sense where office workers work from home. Homeworking is generally permitted development (in which case this policy would not need to be considered), but the intention is to allow non-residents to be employed, thus going beyond what is 'home working'.</p> <p>For clarity, the references to homeworking need to be removed.</p>

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification (<u>insertion</u> underlined and deletion as strikethrough)	Justification
Final sentence, paragraph 9.6, p.93	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.	<p>The supporting text to the policy suggests that the purpose of the policy is to encourage small businesses, which may be from a home environment. However, it seems to be confusing this with homeworking in the sense where office workers work from home. Homeworking is generally permitted development (in which case this policy would not need to be considered), but the intention is to allow non-residents to be employed, thus going beyond what is 'home working'.</p> <p>For clarity, the references to homeworking need to be removed.</p>
2 nd sentence, paragraph 9.7, p.93	This suggests a need to consider attracting specialist companies to relocate to the Parish (as supported in our in Policy CAP15)	Typographical modification
Paragraph 9.8, p.93	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	<p>The supporting text to the policy suggests that the purpose of the policy is to encourage small businesses, which may be from a home environment. However, it seems to be confusing this with homeworking in the sense where office workers work from home. Homeworking is generally permitted development (in which case this policy would not need to be considered), but the intention is to allow non-residents to be employed, thus going beyond what is 'home working'.</p> <p>For clarity, the references to homeworking need to be removed.</p>
New paragraph 9.8, p.93	<u>The roll-out and continued improvement of digital infrastructure will be supported to enable SMEs, start-up businesses</u> To support homeworking and other activities, all new residential, commercial and community properties within the parish should be served by (or be ready for) Fibre to Premises a superfast broadband (fibreoptic) 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	<p>Although the Government and the NPPF support and encourage the inclusion of highspeed broadband, there are no statutory requirements which support this aspiration. Policies can, however, encourage and support high speed broadband provision within new development sites. For clarity, the supporting text must reflect this.</p> <p>To reflect the fast-changing nature of technology, it is more appropriate to use the term 'digital infrastructure'.</p>

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification (insertion <u>underlined</u> and deletion as strikethrough)	Justification
	providers, opportunities for this and the deployment of improved mobile coverage in the parish. Through the Berkshire 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.	Through the Berkshire 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 DigOnce approach, and a universal wayleaves agreement.
CAP16, conformity refs, p.94	Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 6; Adopted Core Strategy: CS9; Local Plan Review: <u>SP1</u> , SP20; NPPF: 850 , 836 , 848	Factual modification to include the correct NPPF paragraph numbers.
First sentence, paragraph 10.1, p.95	<u>Table 5</u> he table below identifies...As such, they are not the subject of planning policies in the Neighbourhood Plan <u>CAPNDP</u> .	Editorial modifications to include table name and acronym
Table 5: Non-policy actions, p.95	<u>Table 5: Non-policy actions</u>	
Table 5: Non-policy actions, p.95	Undertake regular star counts to feed into <u>National Landscape</u> and CPRE data....	Factual modification to reflect the name change of all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).
Ref 6, possible actions column		The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs were renamed as National Landscapes.
Table 5: Non-policy actions, p.95	Local astronomical group, local community, schools, North Wessex Downs <u>National Landscape</u> AONB Unit	
Ref 6, lead agencies and partners column		
Policies Map	Figure 21 <u>20</u> : Parish-wide policies map	Editorial modification to reflect amendments to figure numbers.
Figure 20, p.103		
Policies Map	Figure 22 <u>24</u> : Parish-wide policies - villages	
Figure 21, p.104		
1 st row (Dark Skies of the North Wessex Downs: A Guide to Good External	[Author column] North Wessex AONB <u>National Landscape</u> Unit	Factual modification to reflect the name change of all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification (insertion <u>underlined</u> and deletion as striethrough)	Justification
Lighting), chapter 15: Reference Pack, p.108		The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs were renamed as National Landscapes.
11 th row (Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development), chapter 15: Reference Pack, p.108	[Author column] North Wessex AONB <u>National Landscape</u> Unit	
29 th row, North Wessex Downs Management Plan 2019 to 2024 chapter 15: Reference Pack, p.108	[Author column] North Wessex AONB <u>National Landscape</u> Unit	

- 5.5. This Decision Statement confirms that the recommendations proposed in the Examiner's report have been considered and accepted, that the Plan has been altered as a result of it, and that it may now be submitted to local referendum.

6. The referendum area

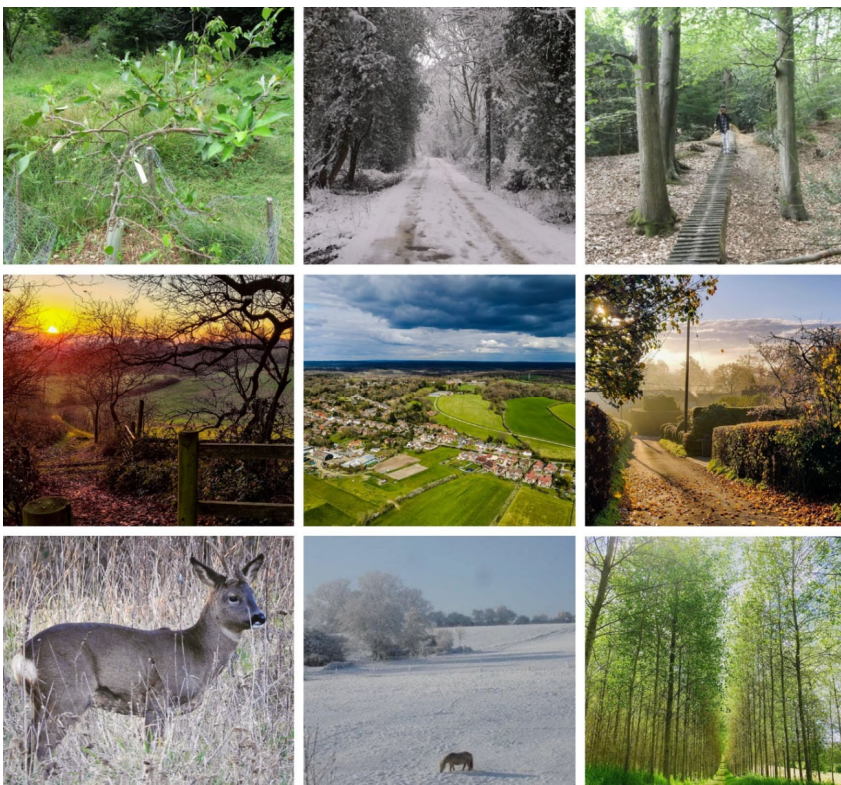
- 6.1. The Council is in agreement with the Examiner's recommendation that there is no policy or proposal significant enough to have an impact beyond the designated Neighbourhood Area. Any referendum which takes place in due course must be contiguous with the boundary of the designated Neighbourhood Area as illustrated in Figure 6.1 below.

Figure 6.1: Cold Ash Neighbourhood Area



© Crown copyright and database rights 2023. West Berkshire District Council 0100024151.

Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 to 2039



~~Submission-Referendum Version~~
~~Plan for consultation at Regulation 16~~
~~June-January 2023~~4

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND.....	5
2. OVERVIEW OF COLD ASH PARISH.....	16
3. A VISION FOR COLD ASH PARISH.....	22
4. SPATIAL STRATEGY	24
POLICY CAP1: LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT	24
5. CHARACTER, DESIGN, AND HERITAGE	28
POLICY CAP2: LOCAL CHARACTER AND HERITAGE	28
POLICY CAP3: DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT	36
POLICY CAP4: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN	44
POLICY CAP5: MINIMISING THE RISK OF FLOODING.....	46
6. ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE.....	51
POLICY CAP6: BIODIVERSITY AND THE NETWORK OF GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE	51
POLICY CAP7: MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT	57
POLICY CAP8: ICONIC VIEWS	65
POLICY CAP9: LOCAL GREEN SPACES	69 68
POLICY CAP10: DARK SKIES	72 71
7. GETTING AROUND THE PARISH.....	7574
POLICY CAP11: ENCOURAGING SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT	77 76
POLICY CAP12: SUNKEN LANES	82 81
POLICY CAP13: PUBLIC CAR PARKING.....	85 84
8. COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL	8786
POLICY CAP14: IMPORTANT COMMUNITY FACILITIES	87 86
9. COMMERCIAL AND LOCAL EMPLOYMENT	9190
POLICY CAP15: SUPPORTING COMMERCIAL BUSINESSES	91 90
POLICY CAP16: SUPPORTING SMES AND FLEXIBLE START-UPS	93 92
10. NON-POLICY ACTIONS	9594
11. IMPLEMENTATION AND PLAN REVIEW	9998
12. INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AND PROVISION.....	101100
13. POLICIES MAPS	102101

14. GLOSSARY	105104
15. REFERENCE PACK	108107

Appendix A – Prevailing housing densities

Appendix B – Iconic views

Appendix C – Local Green Spaces

Figure 1: The designated Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan area covers the whole of the Parish of Cold Ash	7
Figure 2: River Lambourn SAC Catchment Area	14
Figure 3: Map showing the area of Cold Ash Parish that falls within the Nutrient Neutrality Zone.....	15
Figure 4: Map showing Cold Ash and surrounding areas	16
Figure 5: WBC proposed green gaps in Cold Ash Parish.....	25
Figure 6: Settlement boundaries outside which development should be avoided which would result in further coalescence	26
Figure 7: Identified Character Zones and local heritage assets within the Parish	30
Figure 8: Applying the characteristics of well-designed places to Cold Ash Parish.....	38
Figure 9: Green infrastructure (Parish wide).....	53
Figure 10: Green infrastructure (villages).....	54
Figure 11: Priority habitats in Cold Ash Parish	6059
Figure 12: Roadside Nature Reserves in West Berkshire, with Cold Ash highlighted	62
Figure 13: Map showing the location of the iconic views relating to Policy CAP8.....	6766
Figure 14: Local Green Spaces	7170
Figure 15: Map showing levels of radiance for Cold Ash Parish.....	7271
Figure 16: Area considered as a dark skies zone	7473
Figure 17: Existing rights of way in the Parish (Parish-wide)	7978
Figure 18: Existing rights of way in the Parish (Cold Ash Village).....	8079
Figure 19: Sunken lanes in Cold Ash Parish	8382
Figure 20: Map showing key community facilities	8988
Figure 21: Parish-wide policies map	103102
Figure 22: Parish-wide policies - villages	104103



Front cover images were supplied by parishioners as part of the photographic competition that took place 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 [National Landscape \(previously known as 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

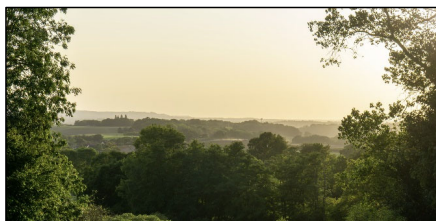
Cold Ash Parish Council thanks all those who have so generously given their time to make it possible to develop the Cold Ash NDP:

- 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 [P](#)arish 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 [P](#)arish 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.

Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan
~~Submission-Referendum~~ Version Plan

- 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 ~~and~~, 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

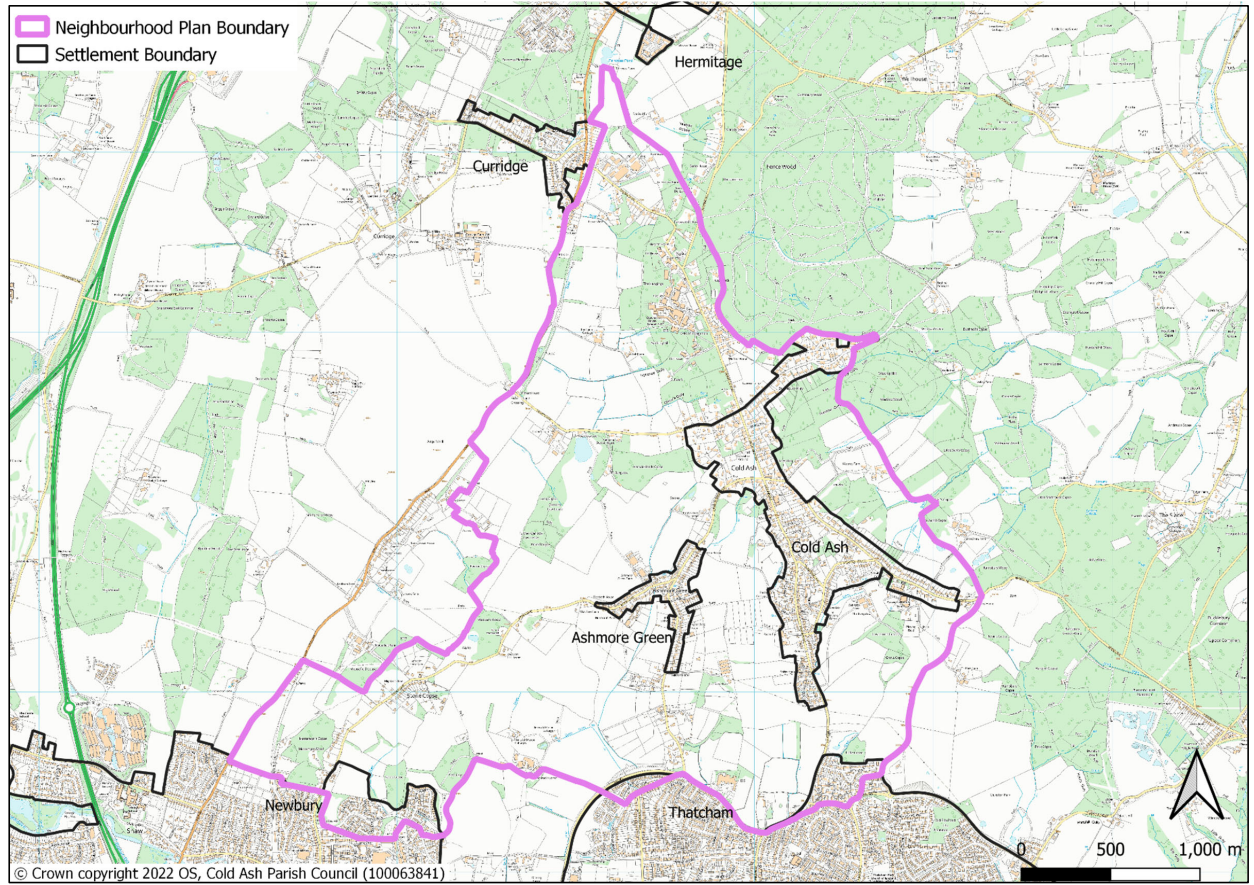


Figure 1: The designated Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan area covers the whole of the Parish of Cold Ash

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), [and was independently examined in the context of the NPPF published on 5 September 2023, most recently updated in July 2024. All references are to that version of the NPPF.](#) Paragraphs 29 and 30 of the NPPF 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 10~~1~~.

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 Downs ~~National Landscape (previously known as~~ 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)~~ National Landscape

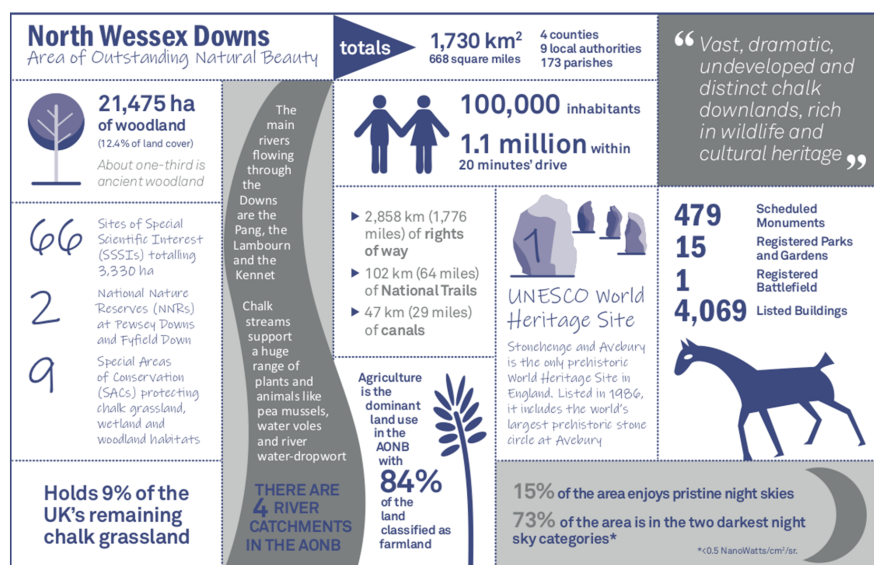
- 1.22. Straddling four counties, the North Wessex Downs is one of Britain's most beautiful chalk landscapes, recognisable by its dramatic scarp slopes, swathes of ancient woodland and sheltered

valleys criss-crossed by rivers and streams. As set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the primary purpose of the [National Landscape 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 [North Wessex Downs AONB National Landscape](#). Whilst the remainder of the parish sits outside the [North Wessex Downs AONB](#), it does form part of the setting of the [National Landscape AONB](#) and therefore the Wessex Downs Management Plan is relevant as is the [National Landscape AONB](#) Design guidance.



Facts about the North Wessex Downs [National Landscape AONB](#) (source: North Wessex [National Landscape 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 ~~P~~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 were~~ included in the Consultation Statement that ~~will accompaniedy~~ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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: 2021-2024	Finalising Policies & Plan: Including final consultation and agreement via Referendum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of the Pre-Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan. SEA/ HRA screening undertaken. Regulation 14 consultation. Submission Version Plan submitted to LPA. <u>Examination and Referendum.</u>

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.

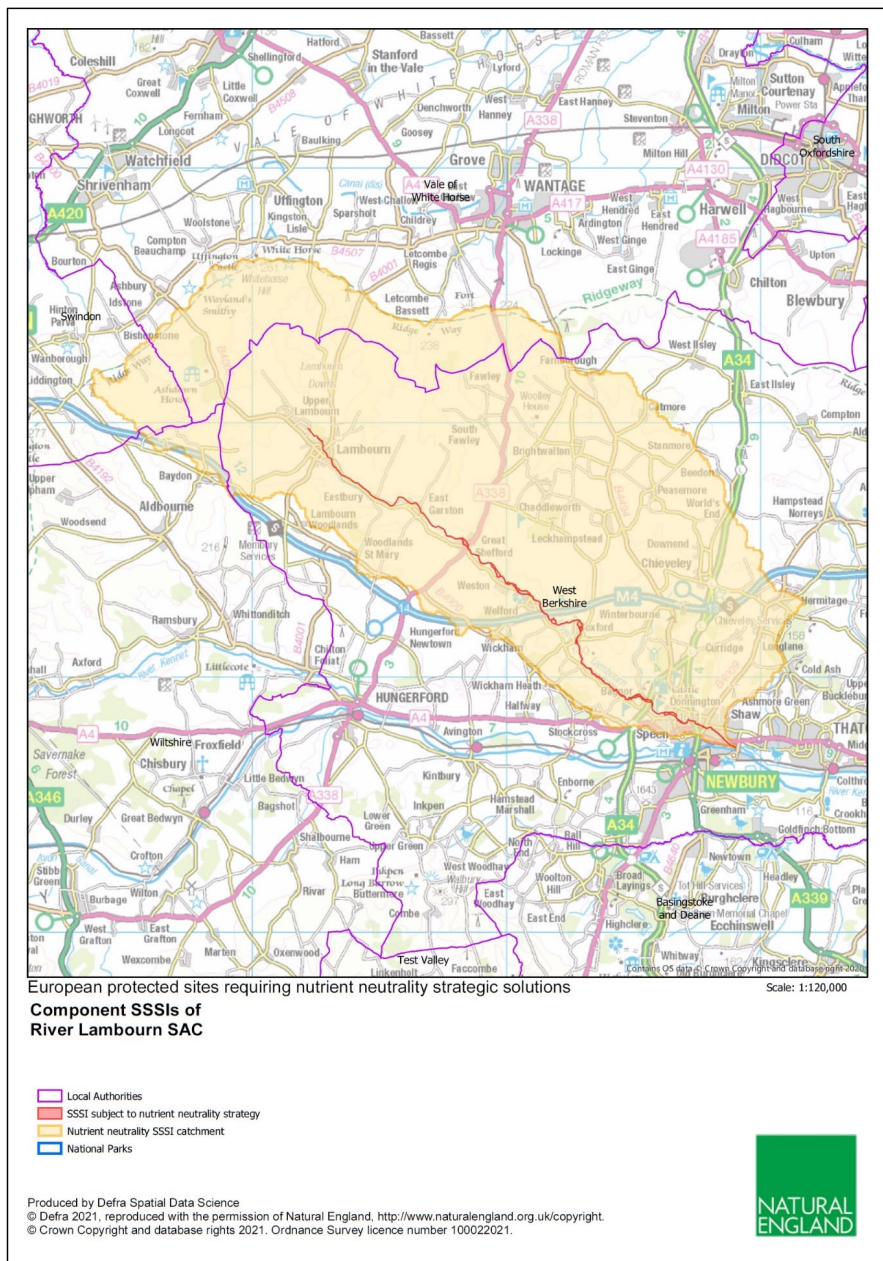


Figure 2: River Lambourn SAC Catchment Area

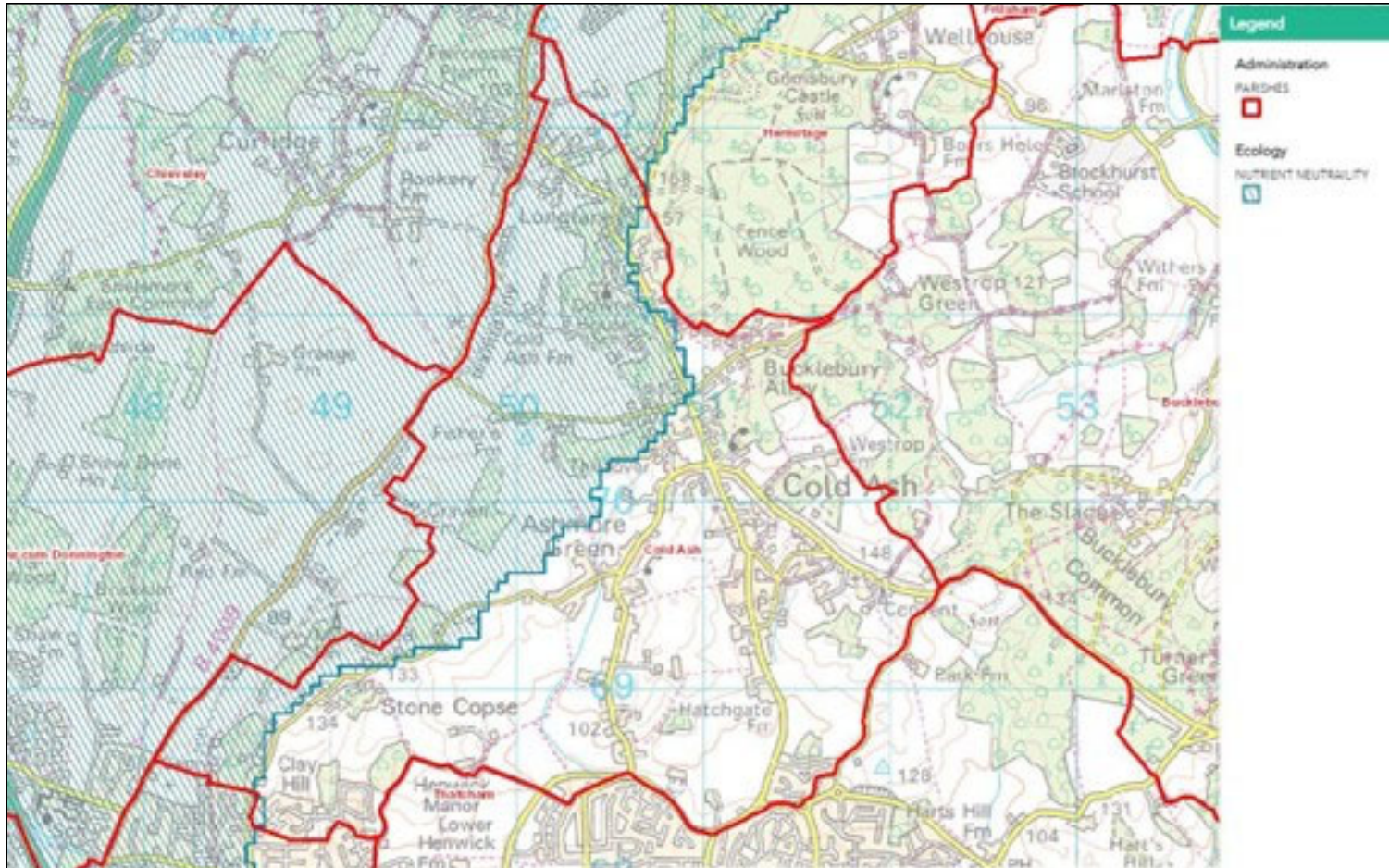


Figure 3: Map showing the area of Cold Ash Parish that falls within the Nutrient Neutrality Zone

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.

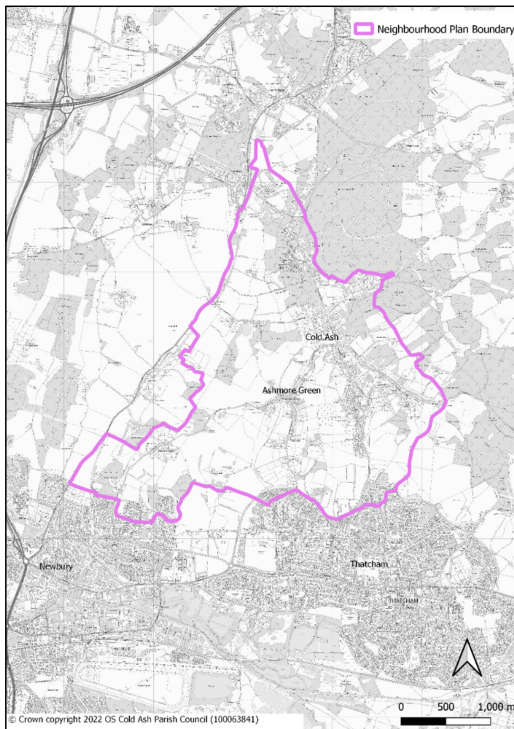


Figure 4: Map showing Cold Ash and surrounding areas

- 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 [National Landscape \(previously known as AONB\)](#), 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 [National LandscapeAONB](#) 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 ~~located~~ within the North Wessex Downs ~~National Landscape-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 Seascapes 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 ~~P~~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 ~~P~~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 [National Landscape \(previously known as AONB\)](#) designation (although a small part of the north-eastern Parish lies within the [National Landscape 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 Pparish 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 Pparish
- Minimise disturbance and disruption (noise, traffic congestion) through the Pparish
- Preserve the PParish'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 Downs National LandscapeAONB, 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 Pparish 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 [National Landscape \(previously known as AONB\)](#) 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 National Landscape 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 WBC to inform the identification of green gaps between settlements to restrict coalescence.

Figure 5 shows the two green gaps proposed within Cold Ash Parish.

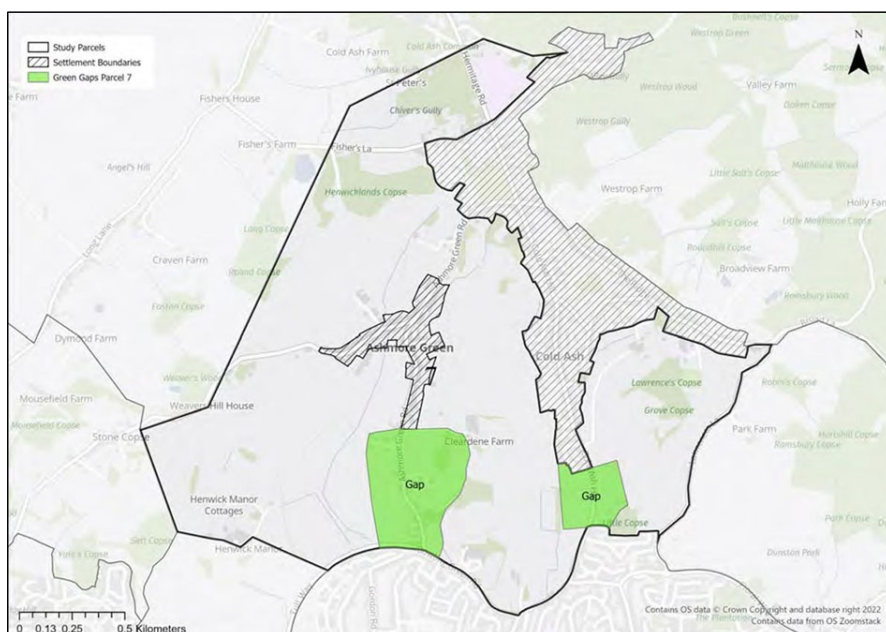


Figure 5: WBC proposed green gaps in Cold Ash Parish (source: West Berkshire Appropriate Countryside Designation Study)

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, are illustrated in Figure 6 and on the Policies Map.

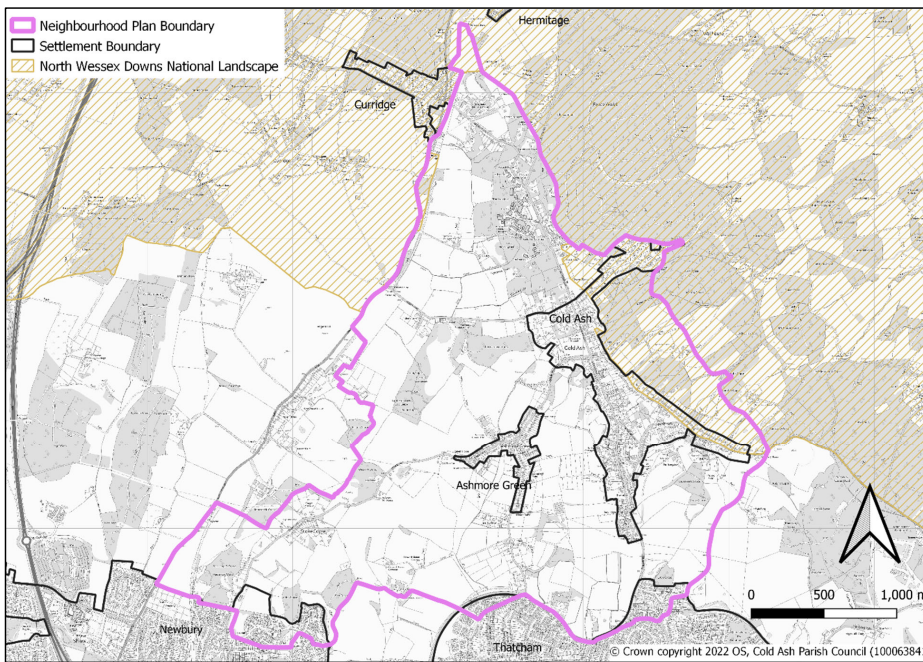


Figure 6: Settlement boundaries ~~and green gaps, outside which where~~ development should be avoided ~~which would to prevent result in~~ further coalescence

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 ~~National Landscape (previously known as AONB)~~~~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 ~~Housing~~ 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, 83, 804, 14923-120,-1245, 1248, 1350, 17480, 17682, 1906, 197200~~

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 [National Landscape \(previously known as AONB\)](#), 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 2093 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)

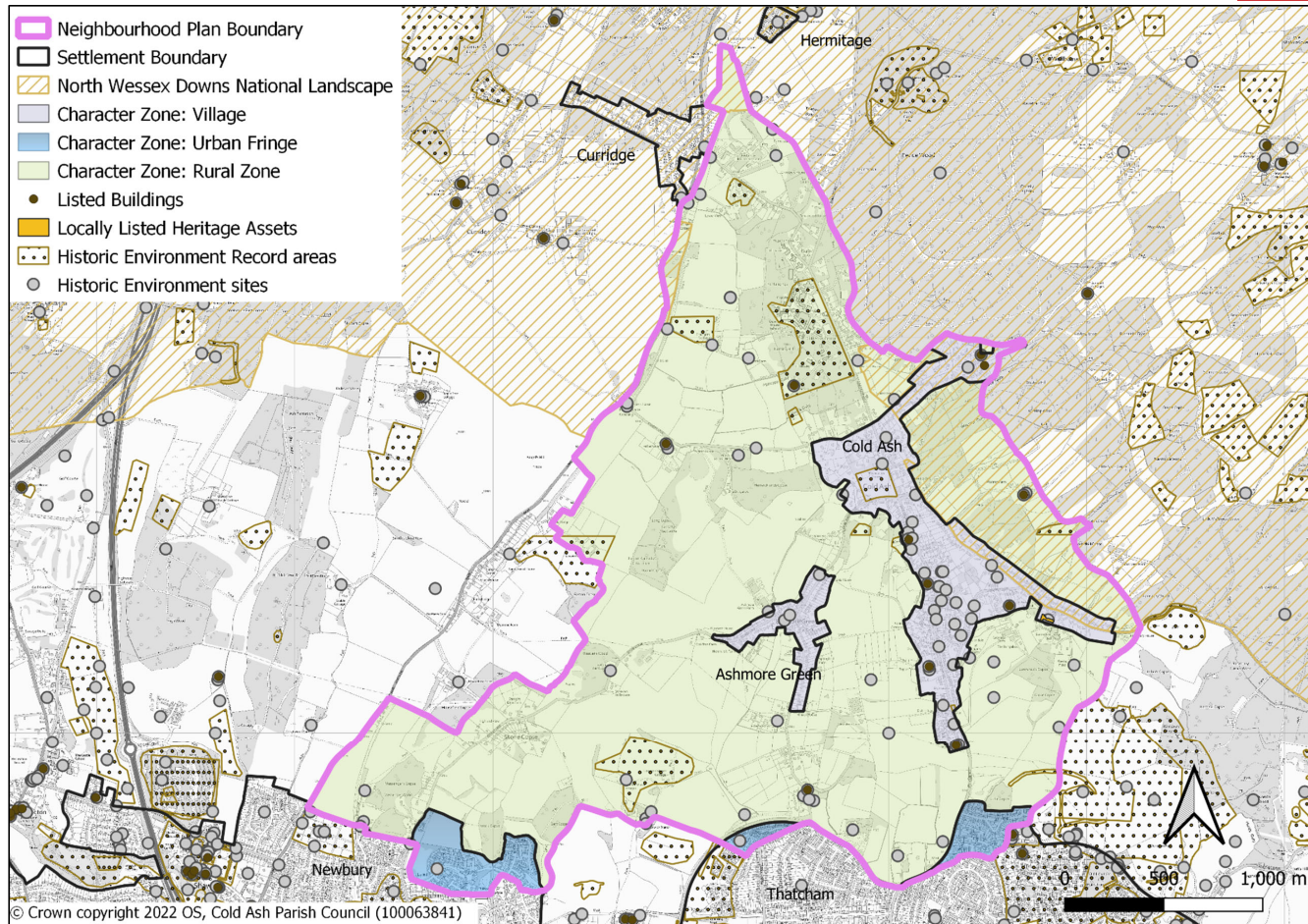


Figure 7: Identified Character Zones and local heritage assets within the Parish

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.

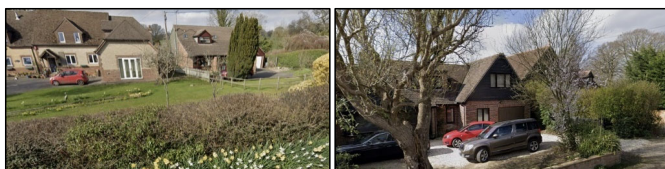
Cold Ash village is defined in the Local Plan as a local service village, where a small amount of development (particularly economic, or which extends the range of services available) may be appropriate. The village contains the majority of the Village Zone facilities with schools, pubs, and a post office/general 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

Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan
~~Submission-Referendum~~ Version Plan

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~~complements 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 ~~am~~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 [National Landscape AONB](#), and all of which contribute towards the [National Landscape 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: ~~13126~~ to ~~1394~~, ~~19589~~, ~~1906~~, ~~19205-9 to 20510~~

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 [National Landscape AONB](#).

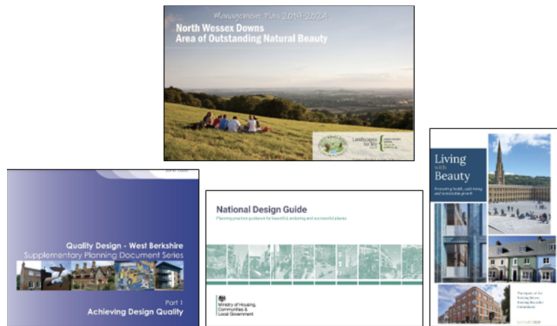
Justification

- 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 National Landscape AONB Management Plan](#): contains policies relating to design within the [National Landscape AONB](#). This is particularly relevant to Cold Ash, part of which is sited within the [National Landscape 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 12732).
- 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.

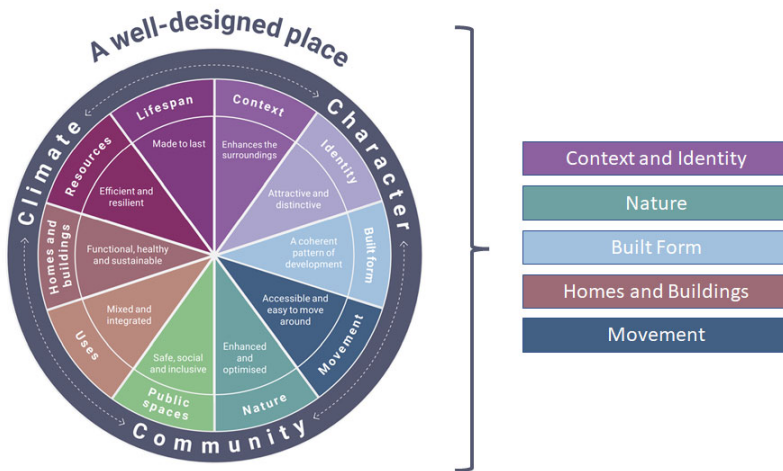


Figure 8: Applying the characteristics of well-designed places to Cold Ash Parish (taken from 'The National Design Guide' 2021)

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 [National LandscapeAONB](#), by way of their geographical location. It will be important, therefore, to ensure that the guidance contained within the [National LandscapeAONB](#) 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 [PP](#) 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 National Landscape-AGNB 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: 1048, 11208, 1204, 12631-to-14136, 1572

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 Sustainable Drainage Systems (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: 1350, 1527-~~to-15560~~

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 1527 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 riparian 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.
 - ~~a-b.~~ 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. 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.
 - ~~b-c.~~ 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.

~~e-d.~~ 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:

	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
	<p>In areas where natural green space is lacking, small rain gardens can be created to capture surface water before it enters the drain.</p> <p>The use of larger stone and cobbles can assist in removing sediment from the water</p>
	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

- 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 pParish 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: ~~15965-~~
~~17569~~

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~~ Parish 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 [North Wessex Downs AONB National Landscape 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.

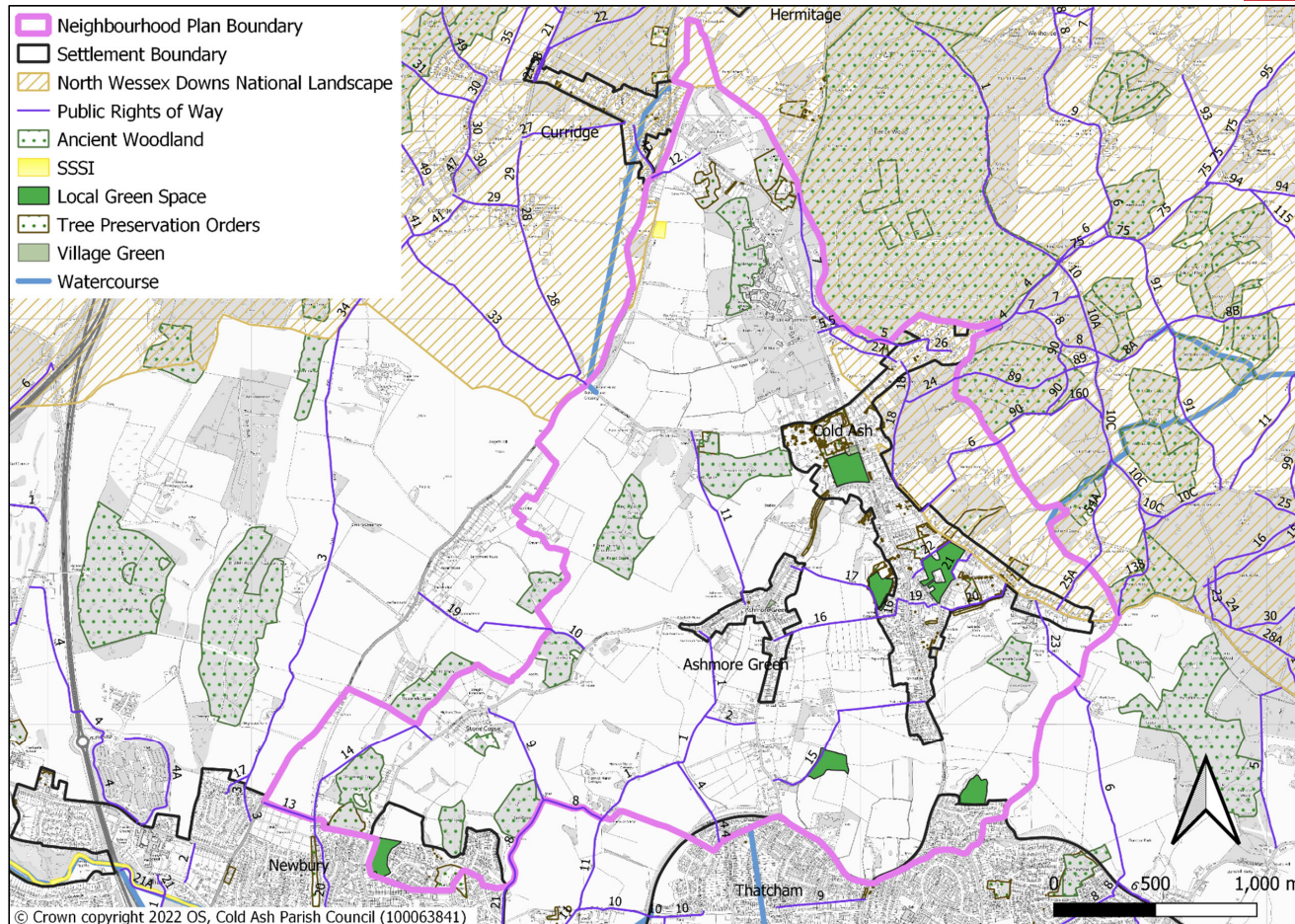


Figure 9: Green infrastructure (Parish wide)

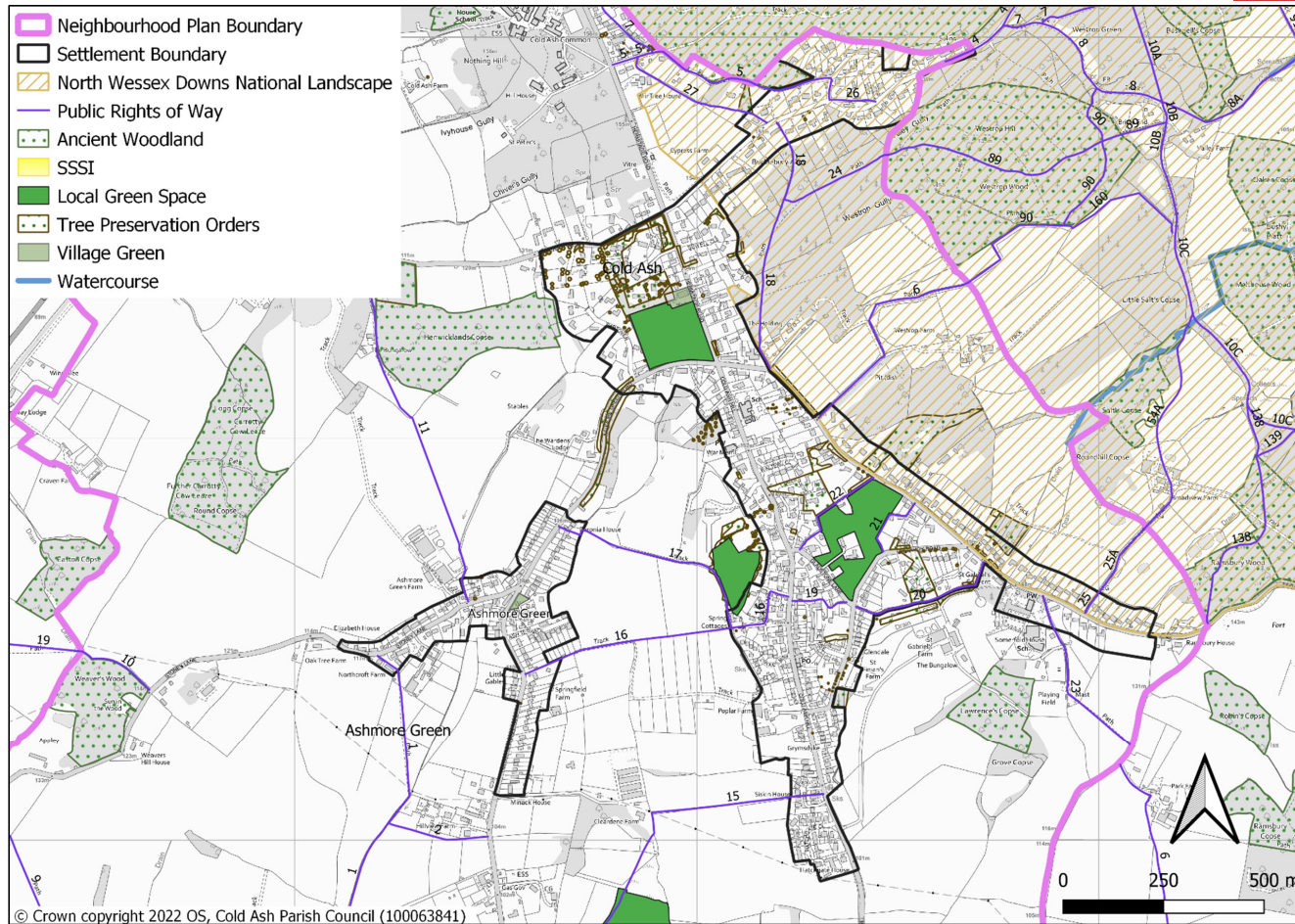
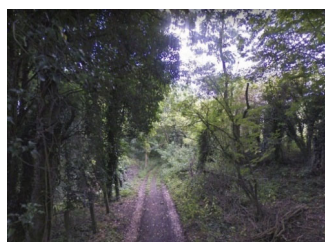


Figure 10: Green infrastructure (villages)

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 134~~6~~, 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 [National Landscape 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 [National Landscape 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: [180-74](#), [175](#), [176](#)[182](#), [179](#)[85](#), [180](#)[6](#)

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 [National LandscapeAONB](#). It also seeks to ensure that development proposals contribute to the provision of adequate open space.

Justification

- 6.16. The NPPF, at para 1896, 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 ~~w~~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 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 National LandscapeAONB	The north-eastern part of the parish lies within the National LandscapeAONB . The remainder of the parish contributes to the setting of	Protected by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act).

Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan
Submission-Referendum Version Plan

Designation	Sites	Level of protection
	the National Landscape AONB .	
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 <i>must</i> 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 are important for wildlife in West Berkshire. See Figure 12.	They are not non-statutory sites but are home to a wide variety of flora and fauna. 20% of the Road Verge Nature Reserves (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	Protected landscape within the NPPF. See advice note: Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions

58

Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan
Submission-Referendum Version Plan

Designation	Sites	Level of protection
	Hardwick Copse Lawrence’s Copse SU56E04 Messengers Copse SU46Z01 Sett Copse SU46Z05 Stone Copse SU46Z04 The Hangings SU57A02 Weavers’ Wood SU46Z06 Yates’ Copse SU46Z03	
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.

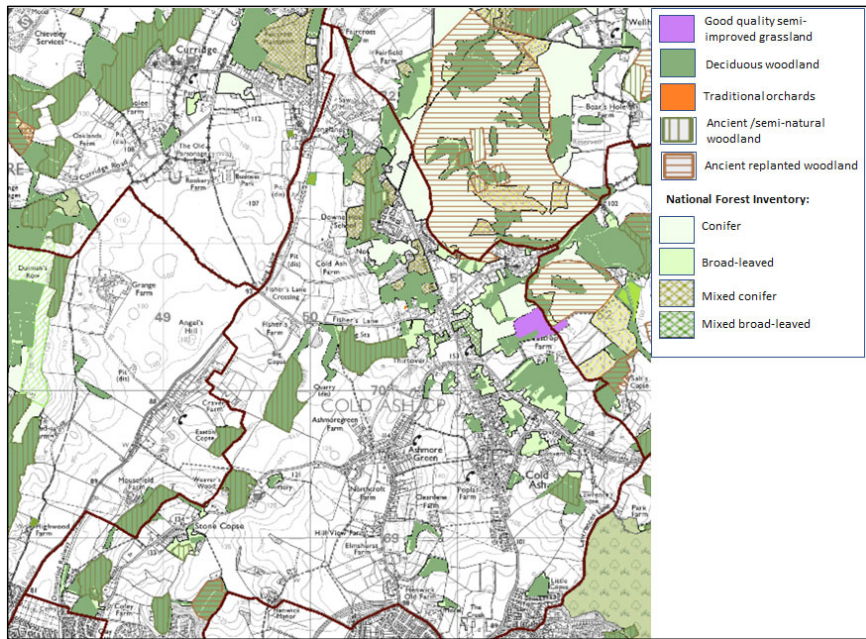
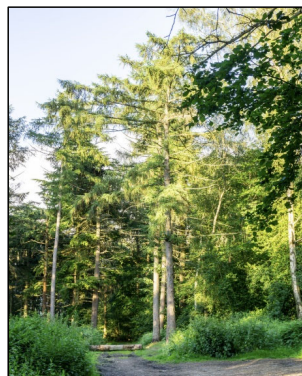


Figure 11: Priority habitats in Cold Ash Parish (Source: Magic Map, Defra)



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.

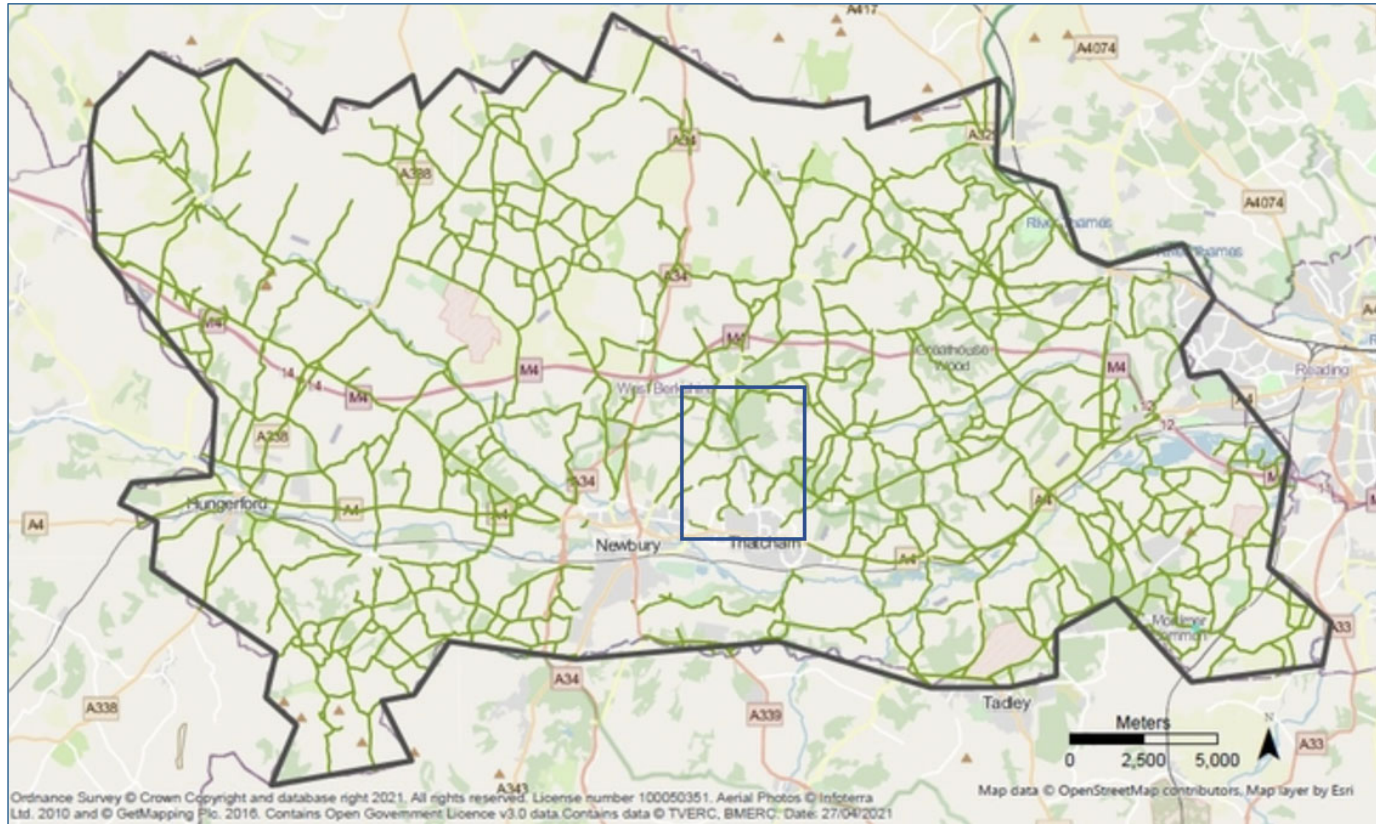


Figure 12: Roadside Nature Reserves in West Berkshire, with Cold Ash highlighted (source: Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)) – source: <https://www.bbowl.org.uk/west-berkshire-wild-verges> - it is recommended that the BBOWT is engaged



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 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 National Landscape 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: ~~17080-to-1882~~

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 36 footpath 15 looking SW, towards Newbury
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~~
- ~~7-6.~~ From Footpath 15 looking south
- ~~8-7.~~ From Footpath 16 looking south
- ~~9-8.~~ From footpath 15 looking east, towards Cold Ash Hill
- ~~10-9.~~ View looking south east towards the Downs from the Quiet Garden off Gladstone Lane

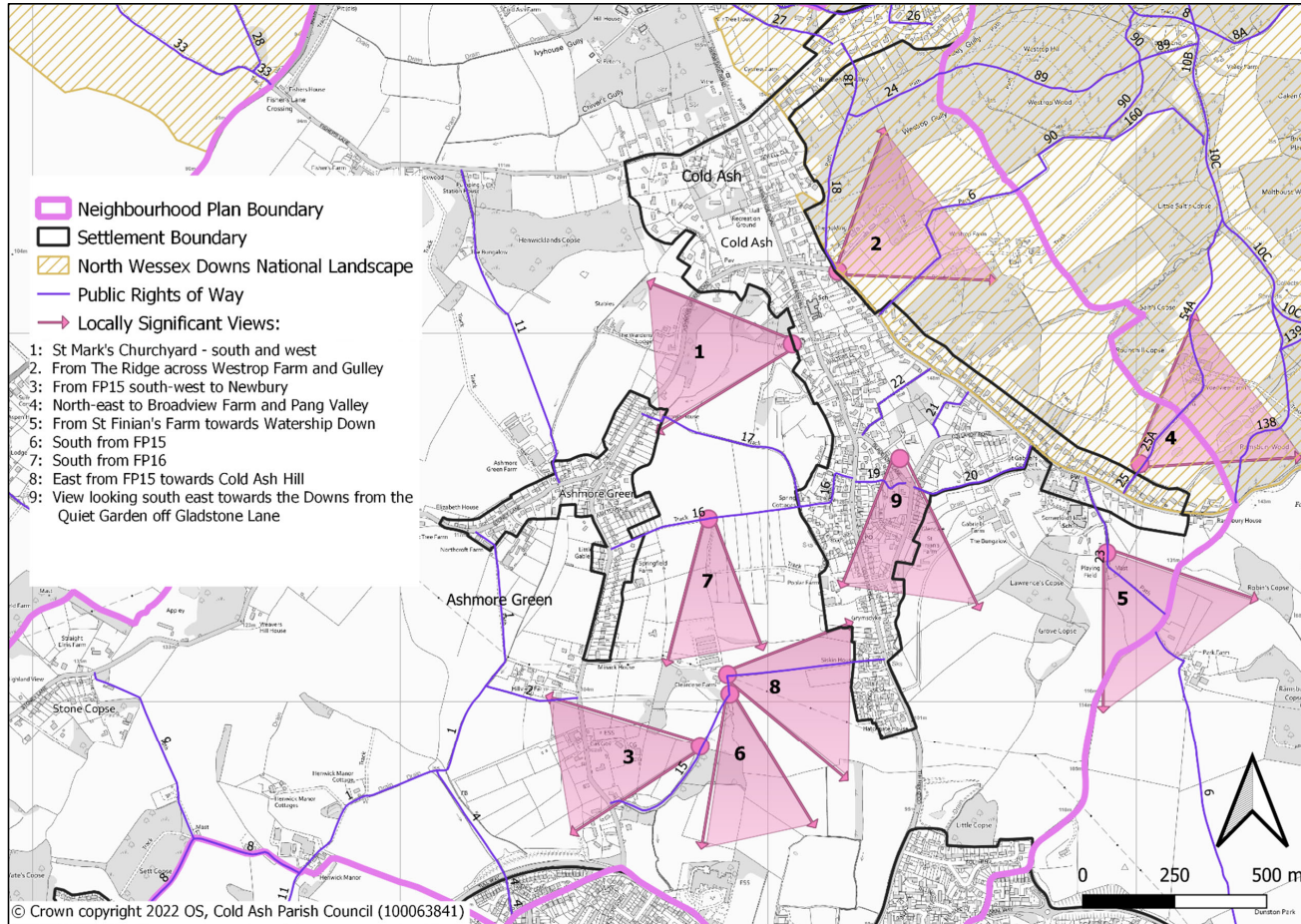


Figure 13: Map showing the location of the iconic views relating to Policy CAP8

- 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 CAPNDP 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~~
- ~~7.6. From Footpath 15 looking south~~
- ~~8.7. From Footpath 16 looking south~~
- ~~9.8. From footpath 15 looking east, towards Cold Ash Hill~~
- ~~10.9. 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: [13126](#), [12732](#), [1350](#)

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 1062 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:
~~1045-to-1037, 13742-to-1564~~

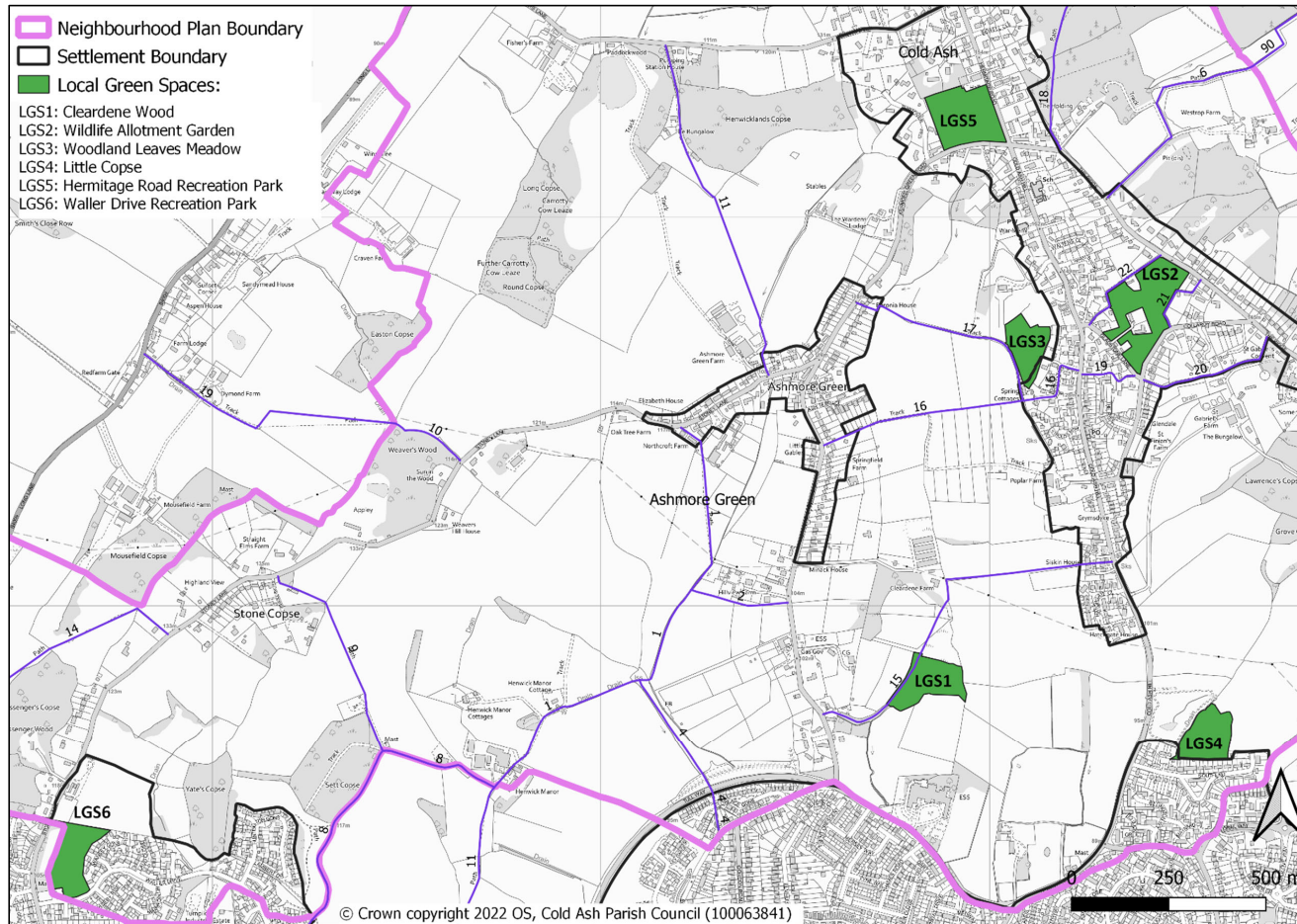


Figure 14: Local Green Spaces

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 National Landscape AONB and light spill is detrimental to this ~~area of outstanding natural beauty~~ National Landscape and to its wildlife. The National Landscape 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 6.715).

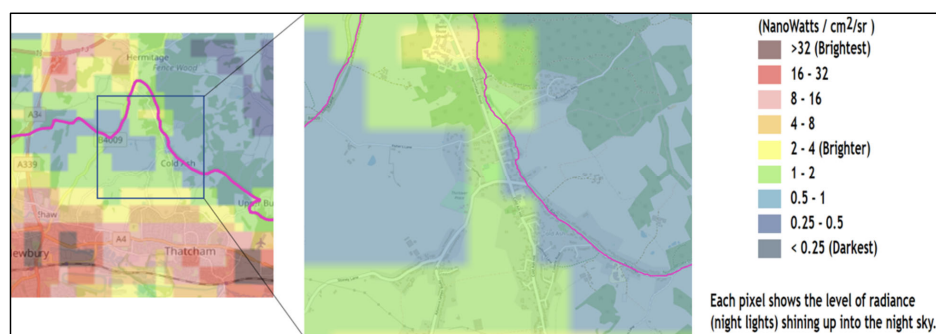


Figure 15: Map showing levels of radiance for Cold Ash Parish (source: CPRE, www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk)

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 15.6), 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 16. 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: ~~19185~~

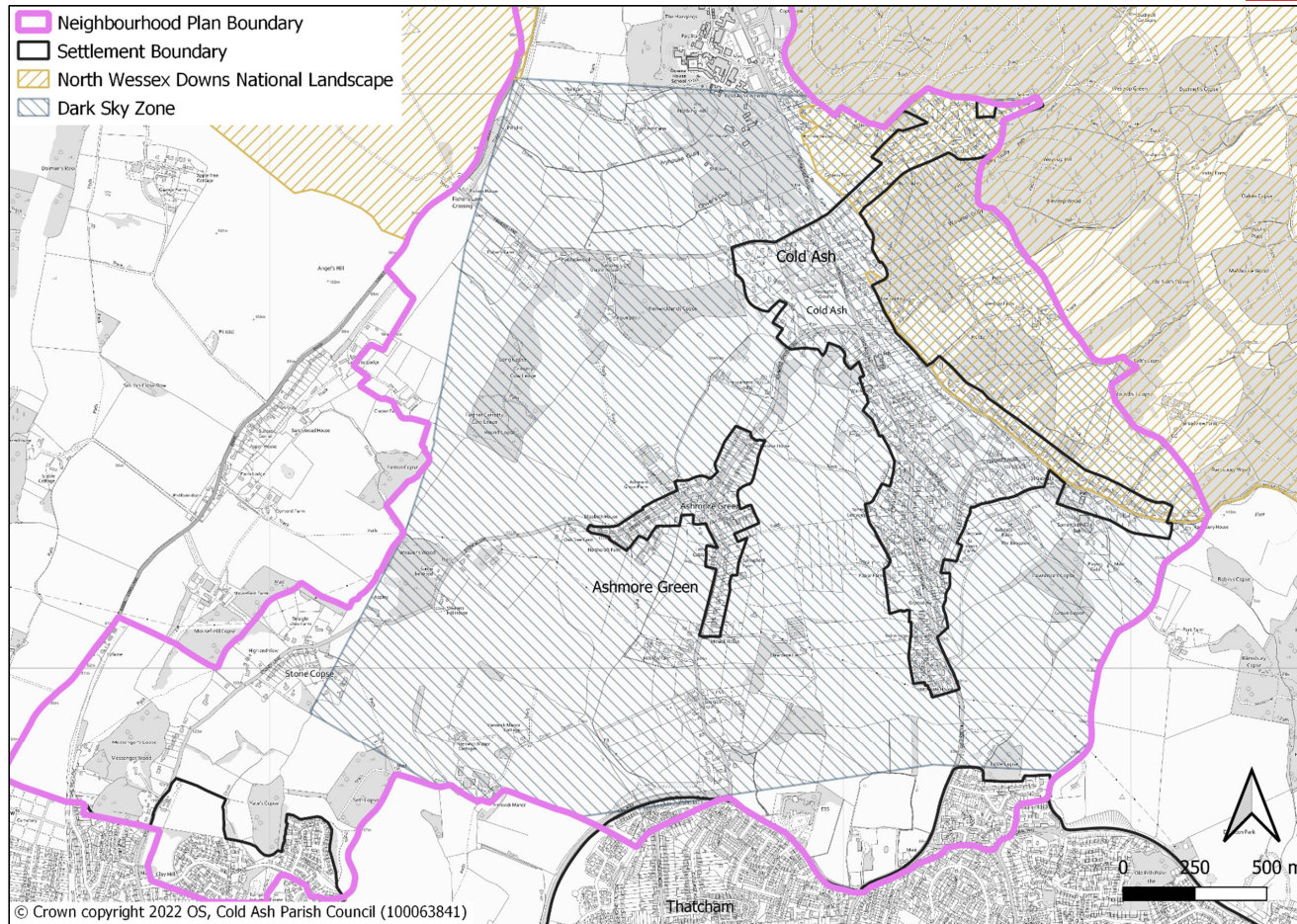


Figure 161615: Area considered as a dark skies zone

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 base 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. Finian'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 14.0 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 ~~P~~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:

- a. To maintain and where possible improve the existing rights of way network within the ~~P~~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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.

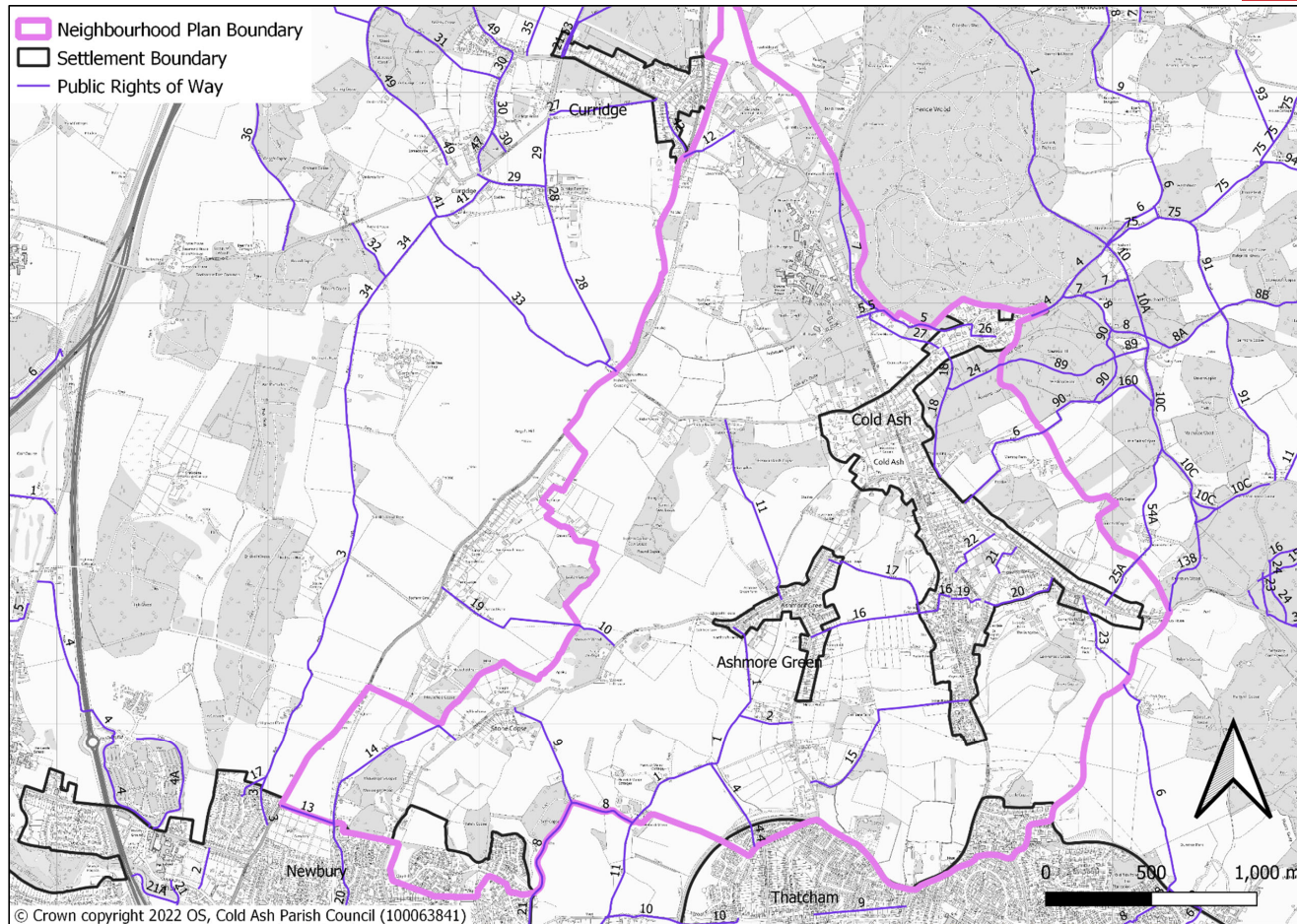


Figure 174716: Existing rights of way in the Parish (pParish-wide)

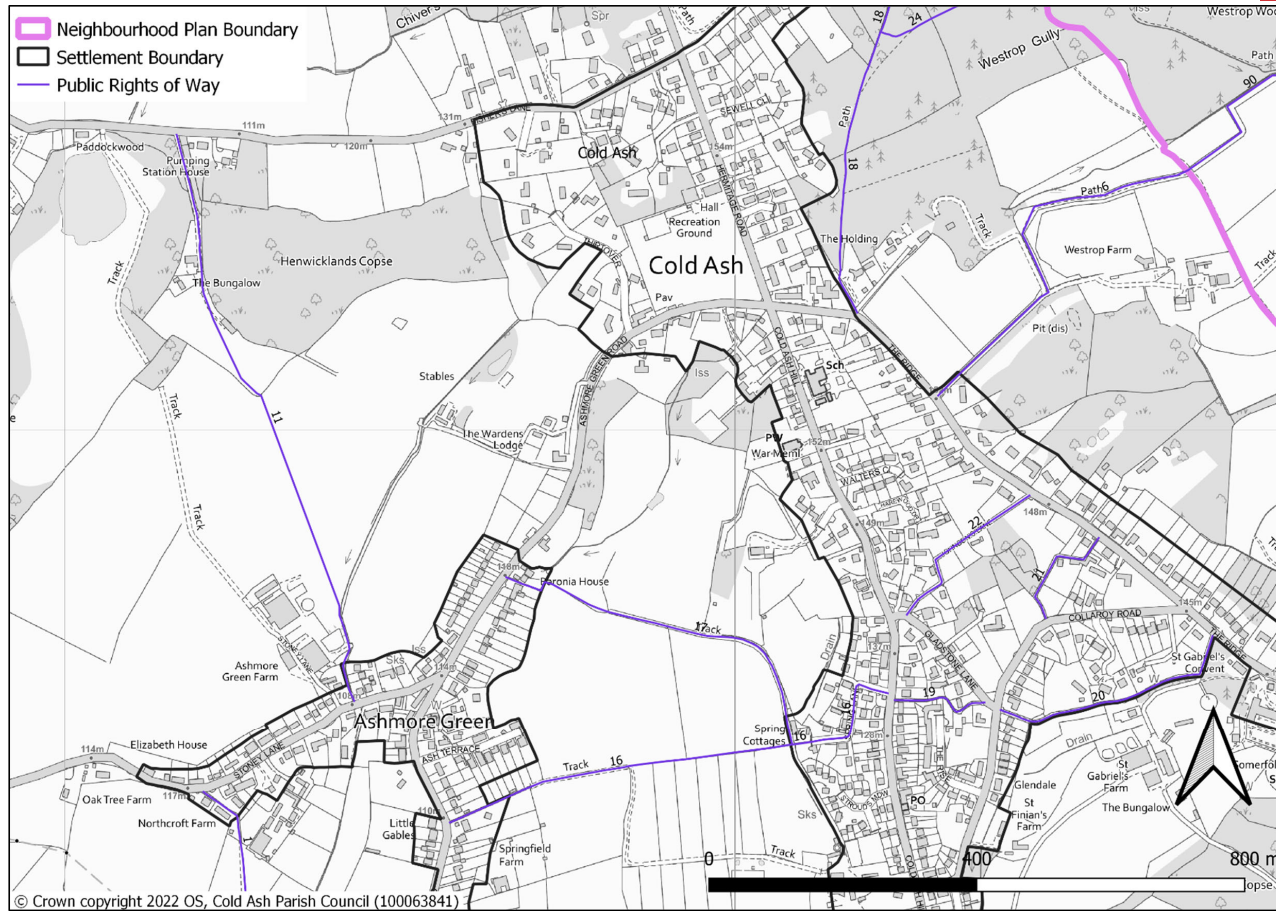


Figure 181817: Existing rights of way in the Parish (Cold Ash Village)

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 17 and 18. 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 ~~National Landscape 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: ~~9296~~,
1048 to 11096

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 19, 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

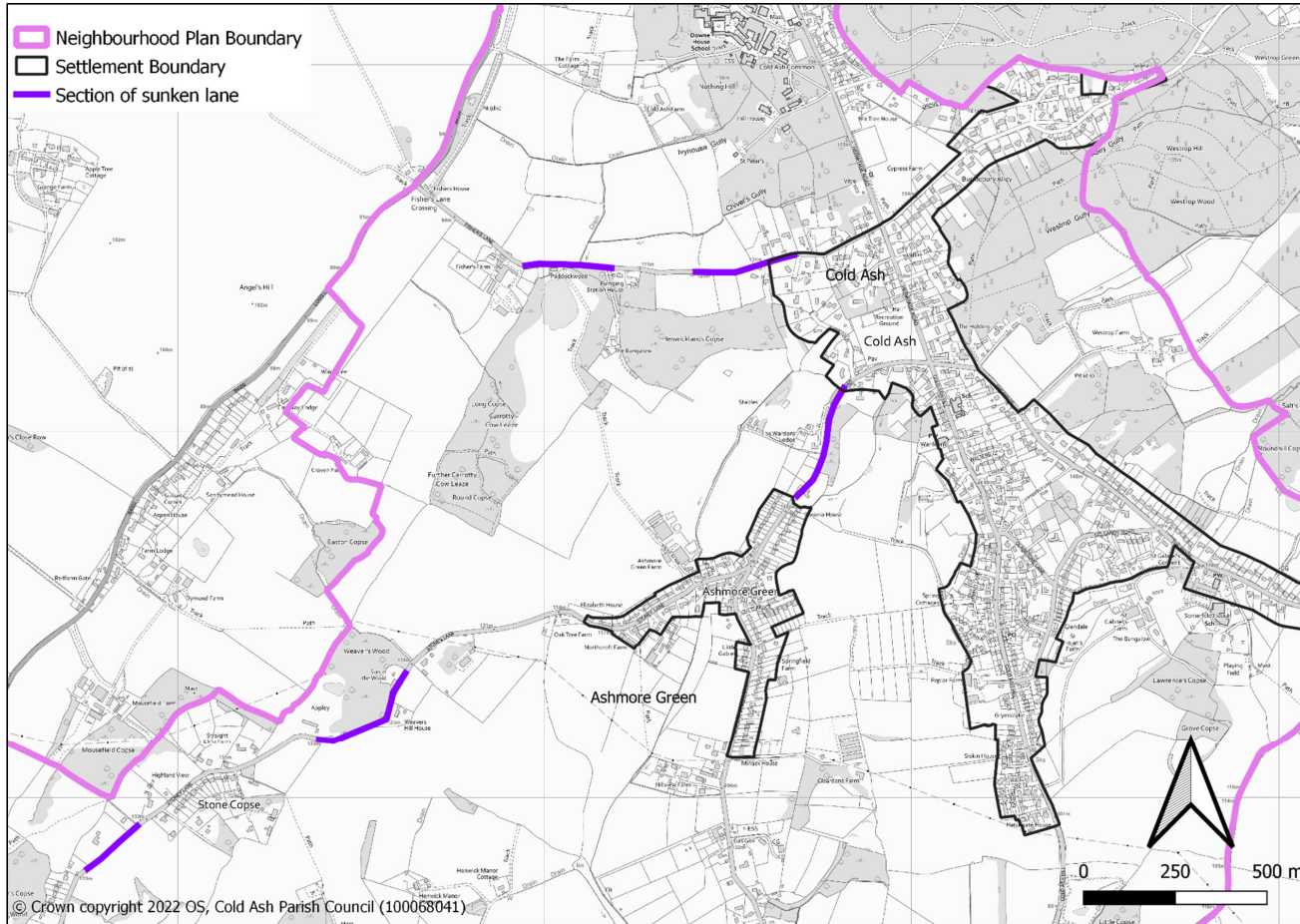


Figure 191918: Sunken lanes in Cold Ash Parish

- 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 10.
- 7.19. The policy supports the objectives of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, 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.

Formatted: Default, Indent: Left: 0 cm, First line: 0 cm, Numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: A, B, C, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 0 cm + Indent at: 0 cm

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 2, 3; Adopted Core Strategy: CS19; Local Plan Review: SP8 SP9; NPPF: 12631, 12732, 17804, 17581, 17985, 19589, 1969

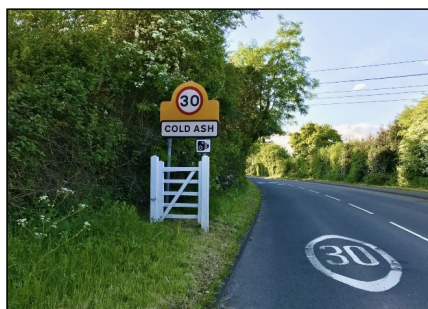
Policy CAP13: Public car parking

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 ([EVCPs](#)) 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: 962, 1084, 105, 106-110

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 [49-1](#) 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 20.



The village shop and post office

Table 4: Community Facilities and supported improvements

Important Community Facility	Description	Supported improvements
Acland Hall	Provides a community hub with meeting rooms and pre-school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 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”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repurposing the rifle shed to offer additional facilities. • 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~~Table 4-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 EPC~~the Parish Council~~.



Acland Hall

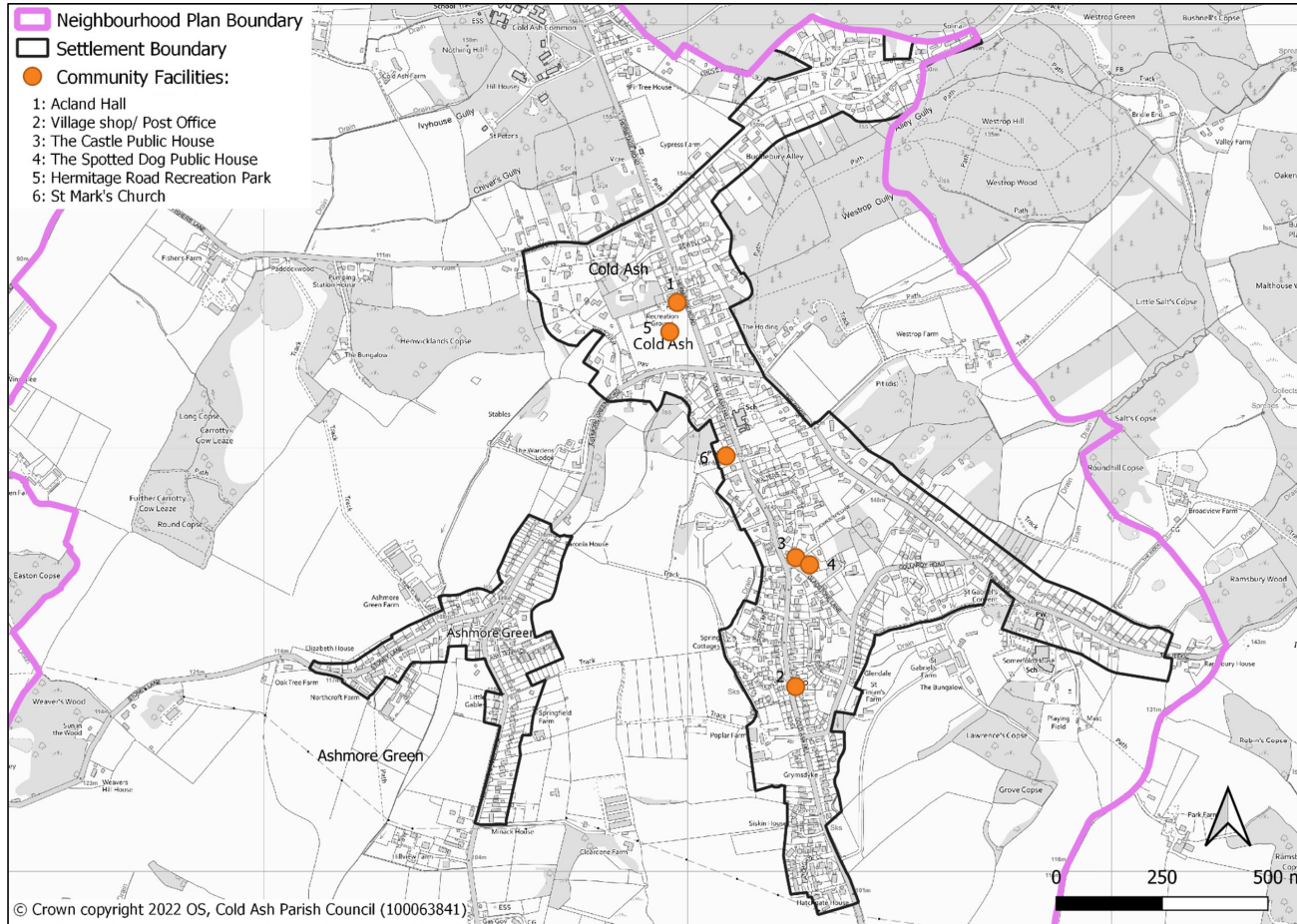


Figure 202019: Map showing key community facilities

- 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: ~~9086~~, ~~926~~, ~~937~~

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 ~~p~~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 ~~p~~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 ~~CAPNDP~~ would be supportive of proposals that would support the agricultural sector in the ~~P~~Parish.
- 9.3 Cold Ash village has retained a post-office, general-purpose grocery shop, and two pubs. The main commercial area in the ~~P~~Parish is the Red Shute industrial estate, ~~a designated Protected Employment Area in the Local Plan, located~~ in the northern part of the ~~P~~Parish. Larger-scale commercial activity should continue to be focussed on this site, ~~although smaller-scale~~ 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 ~~in the Parish~~; '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 its 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 ~~and~~ business ~~and service~~ activity (Use Classes B2, B8 and E(g)) will be supported ~~within~~ the Red Shute industrial estate, ~~or~~ where they bring redundant or vacant land based rural operations back into use, or where they help to diversify the rural economy, 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; and~~
- d. the proposal respects the character and appearance of the immediate locality in terms of height, scale, design and massing; and
- e. ~~the proposal would encourage the re-use of previously developed land where opportunities exist.~~

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 6; Adopted Core Strategy: ADPP2, CS9; Local Plan Review: SP1, SP20; NPPF: ~~845, 826, 848-90, 85, 86~~

Policy CAP16: Supporting SMEs, and 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~~ 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.~~

~~9.9.8 The roll-out and continued improvement of digital infrastructure will be supported to e support enable SMEs, start-up businesses homeworking and other activities. Through the Berkshire 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. 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 ~~AND~~, 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 extensions to, 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; and-
- f. respect the character and appearance of the immediate locality in terms of height, scale, design and massing; and
- g. encourage the re-use of previously developed land where opportunities exist.

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 6; Adopted Core Strategy: CS9; Local Plan Review: SP1, SP20; NPPF: ~~856, 836,~~
848

10. NON-POLICY ACTIONS

10.1 [Table 5](#) ~~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](#) CAPNDP. 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.

[Table 5: Non-policy actions](#)

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 National Landscape 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 National Landscape 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	CAPC, volunteers, landowners, Local Wildlife

Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan
~~Submission-Referendum~~ Version Plan

		<p>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.</p> <p>Parish Council to explore the development of a Biodiversity Action Plan, to set out preferred planting in the Parish.</p> <p>Consideration to be given to trees in the Parish that should be protected by a Tree Protection Order and pursuing this with WBC.</p>	Trust, WBC, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (managing the Habitat Recovery Network covering the wider strategic area)
8.	Difficulties for pedestrians (including children) crossing Cold Ash Hill.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<p>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.</p> <p>Consider whether there are other lanes (e.g. sections of Lawrences Lane) that might meet the criteria of a sunken lane.</p>	CAPC, WBC, CPRE
13.	Speeding traffic	<p>Options to help manage traffic speeds include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	CAPC, WBC

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a new 'gateway' feature, with signage on both sides of the road near the industrial estate in Red Shute Hill. • 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	<p>Explore potential to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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)

Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan
Submission-Referendum Version Plan

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 businesses 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 pursuing 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

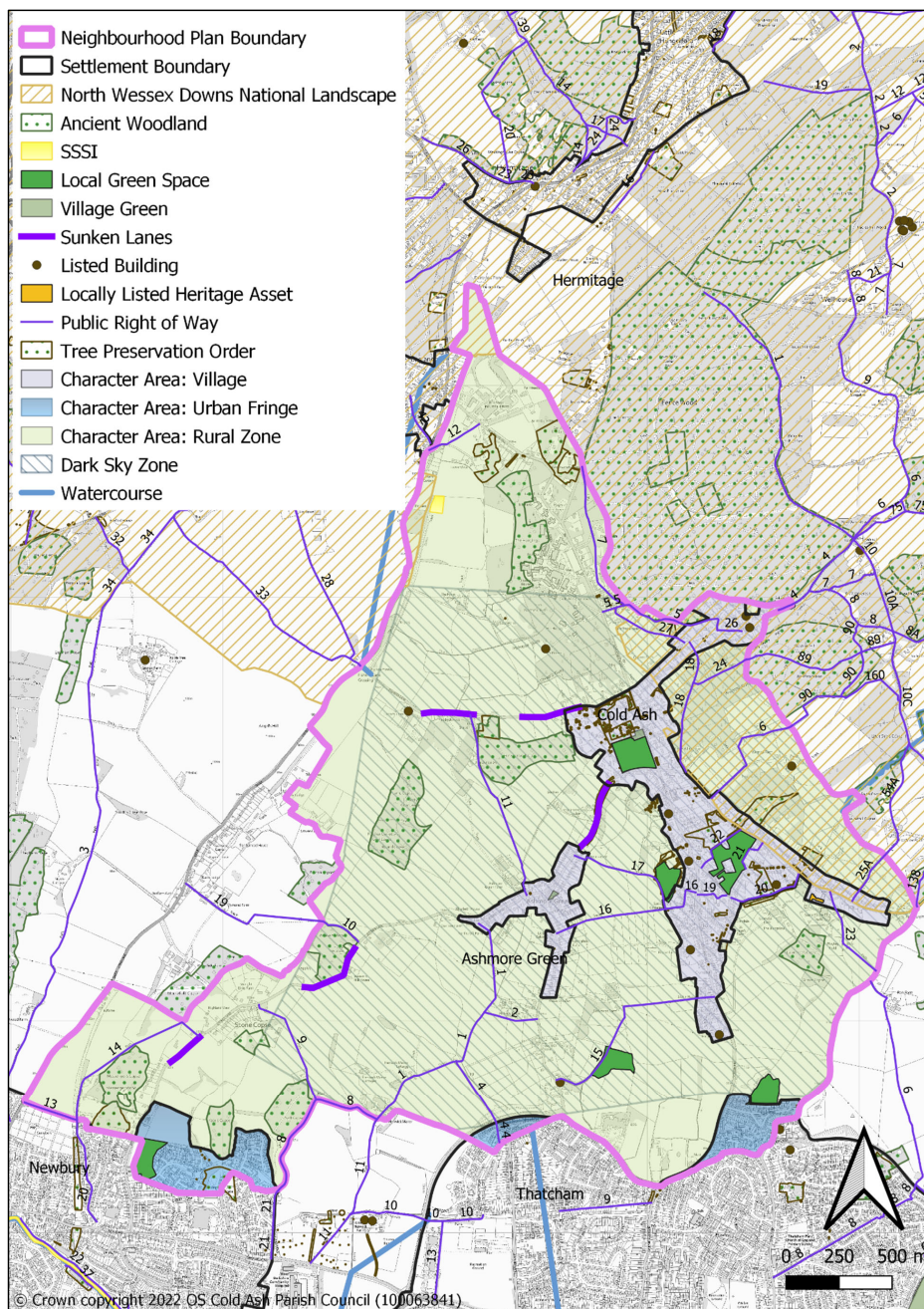


Figure 212120: Parish-wide policies map

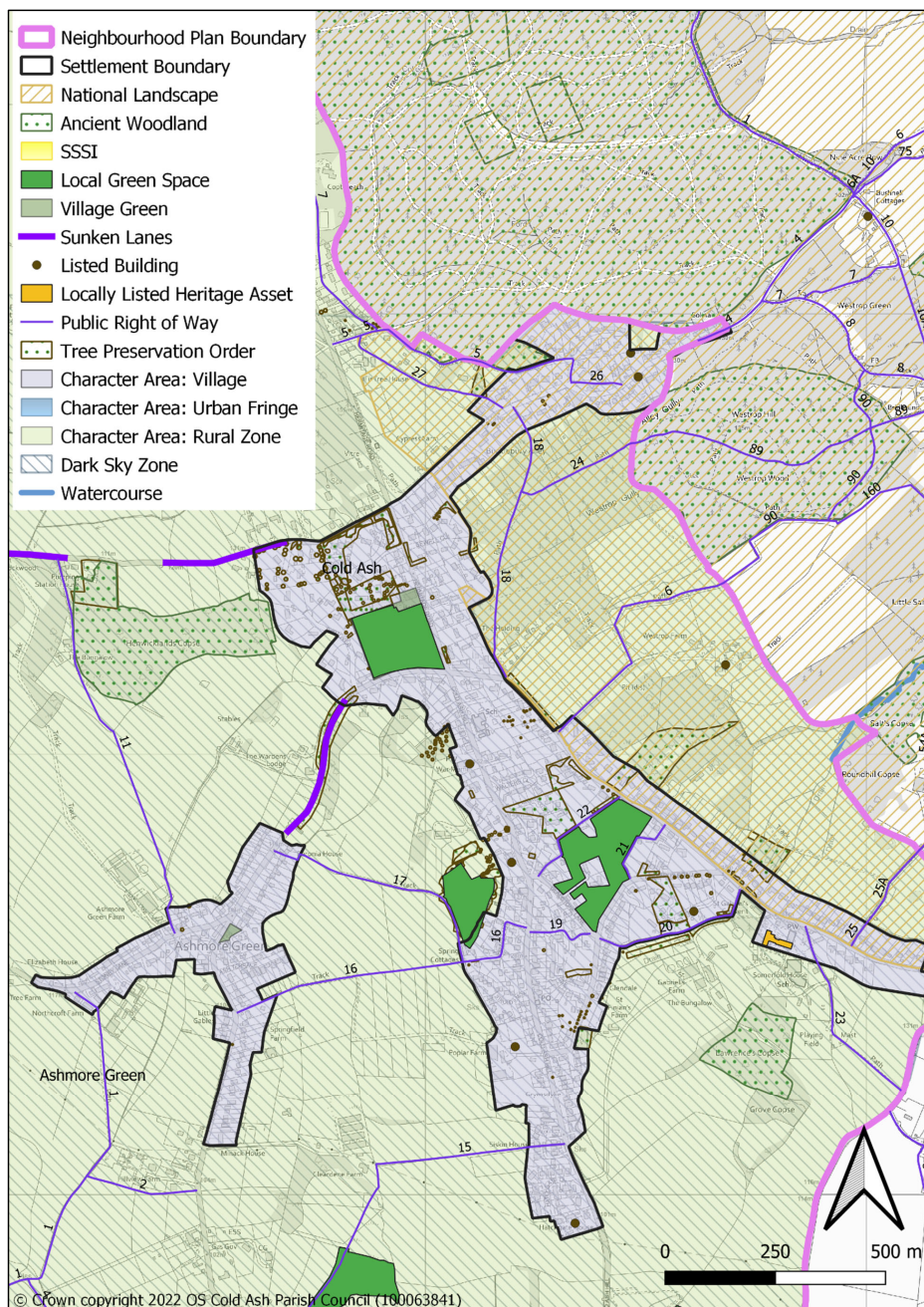


Figure 222221: Parish-wide policies - villages

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 Downs AONB National Landscape 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	North Wessex Downs National Landscape 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	North Wessex Downs AONB National Landscape Unit	2019
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004	HM Government	2004
Quality Design West Berkshire	WBC	2006

Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan
~~Submission-Referendum~~ Version Plan

Document/ Evidence	Author	Year
Saved policies from the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 to 2006	WBC	Saved policies 2007
Secured by Design	Police Crime Prevention Initiatives	ongoing
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	

Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan
~~Submission-Referendum~~ Version Plan

	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	<p>From St Mark’s Churchyard south and west</p> <p>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)</p> 

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 pParish towards Newbury, including Berkshire and Hampshire. This view is important to residents as it provides views across the last open landscape between the pParish 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 ~~P~~Parish, off The Ridge, the view from Footpath 23 provides an idyllic view across the Kennet Valley, to the south of the ~~P~~Parish. This view is important to residents as it provides one of the few remaining views now that the introduction of five new homes has ~~ve~~ 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	
V67	<p>From the high point of Footpath 15 looking south towards Ashmore Green Road and Cold Ash Hill</p> <p>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.</p> 

V78 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.



V89 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.

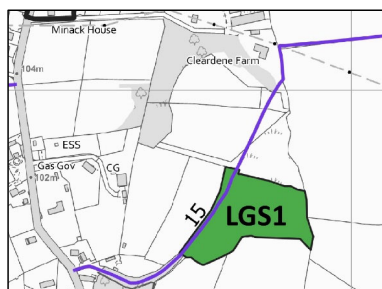


V910	This view is from the Wildlife Allotment Garden across the valley to Hannington, in Hampshire. The viewpoint is situated in a Quiet Garden, specifically designed for visitors to sit surrounded by nature while they enjoy the view. The view is particularly important as the site is owned by a charitable trust, of which Cold Ash Parish Councillors are trustees, and is for the benefit of parishioners.



Appendix C - Local Green Spaces

1. Clardene Woods



Site Name	Clardene 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 through 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

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

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

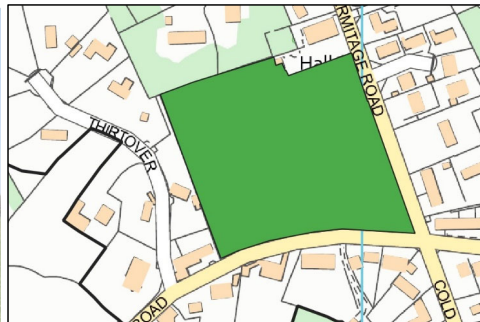
Tranquility	Top part of land subject to road noise from Cold Ash Hill, remainder of it is tranquil, particularly North-West side abutting on neighbouring woodland and open farmland.
Wildlife Value	Offers a haven for wildlife and could potentially be enhanced as a in important transit point for wildlife 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

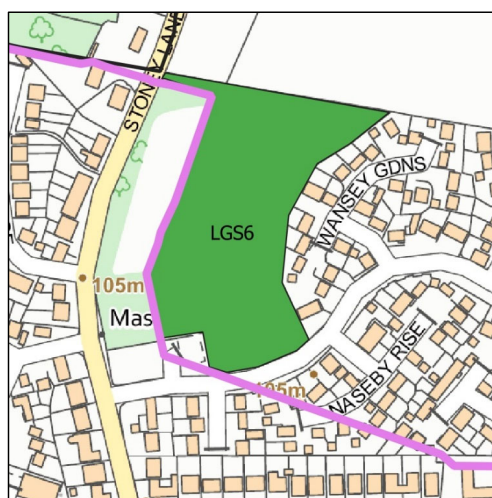
5. Hermitage Road Recreation Ground



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

This page is intentionally left blank

Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan

Committee considering report:	Extraordinary Council
Date of Committee:	20 February 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Tony Vickers
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	4 December 2023
Report Author:	Laila Bassett
Forward Plan Ref:	C4432

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has been subject to independent examination. The Examiner has recommended that the NDP with a modification can proceed to referendum. However, the Examiner's decision is not binding and only West Berkshire District Council can decide if the NDP progresses to referendum. This report provides the evidence for Council to make that decision.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To endorse the Decision Statement on the Hermitage NDP which concludes that the Hermitage NDP, with the inclusion of a modification, meets the Basic Conditions.
- 2.2 Because the modified Plan meets the Basic Conditions, it is recommended that:
- (a) The Plan should proceed to referendum;
 - (b) Upon a successful 'yes' vote at referendum, agreement is sought that the Hermitage NDP is adopted immediately after the votes have been counted so that it becomes part of the development plan for West Berkshire; and
 - (c) The authority to make minor alterations and corrections to the Hermitage NDP as set out in Appendix D, prior to its proceeding to referendum, be delegated to the Service Lead, Planning and Economy, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	<p>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. It should be noted there are three types of neighbourhood plans – NDPs, Neighbourhood Development Orders, and Community Right to Build Orders.</p> <p>The support programme has recently been extended to cover the period 2023/24 and LPAs can make the following claims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £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. <p>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 100 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.</p> <p>The cost of the Hermitage NDP examination was £5,519.</p> <p>On average referendums cost £5,000 per ballot box to deliver, plus the officer time associated with arranging the referendum.</p>
Human Resource:	<p>Not applicable</p>
Legal:	<p>An adopted neighbourhood plan forms part of the development plan.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>Qualifying Bodies (ie. Parish / Town Councils in parished areas, and Neighbourhood Forums in unparished areas) have the responsibility for leading the process; however, LPAs have a significant role in assisting certain stages of the process and ensuring that certain criteria are met. The procedure</p>

Implication	Commentary			
	comprises several stages which following submission to the LPA 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

Implication	Commentary		
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:	✓		<p>Having a neighbourhood plan meets the following priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling the Climate and Ecology Emergency – policies in neighbourhood plans provide the opportunity to protect and enhance the local environment for generations to come, whilst also increasing a community’s resilience to climate change. • A Prosperous and resilient West Berkshire – policies in neighbourhood plans can encourage development which supports a range of good quality local jobs, businesses, and services to meet the needs of local people. Policies can also make decisions on what type of housing is needed and where it should be built. • Thriving Communities with a Strong Local Voice – neighbourhood plans allow local communities to take the lead and enhance their local area, whilst also shaping where and how development takes place.
Core Business:		✓	

Implication	Commentary			
Data Impact:		✓		
Consultation and Engagement:	<p>Bryan Lyttle – Planning Policy, Infrastructure and Place Manager</p> <p>Paula Amorelli – Planning Policy Team Leader</p> <p>Katharine Makant – Service Lead: Planning & Economy (Chief Planning Officer)</p> <p>Planning Advisory Group</p> <p>Operations Board</p> <p>The NDP has also been subject to substantial consultation during its production, and independent examination. It will need to pass a referendum of the local community before being adopted.</p>			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 Since 2019, Hermitage Parish Council assisted by community volunteers, has been preparing a NDP. 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 Hermitage NDP has been through independent examination. The examiner issued his final report on 9 November 2023 which recommends that, subject to one modification to the low energy and energy efficient design (including Sustainable Drainage Systems) policy, the Plan can proceed to referendum.
- 4.3 The Examiner’s report is not binding. West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) must determine if the Hermitage NDP, as modified, 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. WBDC must also determine if the plan should proceed to referendum.
- 4.4 On consideration of the recommendations and modifications contained within the Examiner’s report, officers have concluded that the modified plan 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 an NDP. Officers recommend that the Hermitage NDP should proceed to referendum, and this is set out in a Decision Statement (see Appendix D).

- 4.5 If the Hermitage NDP is successful at referendum, it will be adopted as part of the development plan for West Berkshire the day following the referendum (so as to allow for the possibilities of a legal challenge).

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. There are three different types of neighbourhood plans – NDPs, Neighbourhood Development Orders, and Community Right to Build orders.
- 5.2 West Berkshire is entirely parished and legislation requires that neighbourhood plans are developed by Parish and Town Councils assisted by community volunteers. However, there are several parishes within the district which are so small they do not meet the threshold and instead have a Parish Forum, provided they meet the requirements of legislation. In such cases, a Neighbourhood Forum would need to be formed to develop neighbourhood plans. Plans must be in general conformity with national planning policies and the strategic policies of the development plan.
- 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 assist in the determination of planning applications.

Background

- 5.4 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 (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). Since the designation of the Neighbourhood Area, Hermitage Parish Council alongside its local community, have been working together to create a plan and they produced a draft of this in October 2022 which they consulted on.
- 5.5 Following the submission of the Hermitage NDP to WBDC on 17 February 2023, the Plan was publicised, and comments were invited from the public and stakeholders between 21 July and 1 September 2023.
- 5.6 At a meeting of Council on 5 October 2023, Members agreed that the Hermitage NDP could proceed to independent examination. WBDC, in conjunction with Hermitage Parish Council, appointed an independent examiner, Andrew Mead, to review whether the plan met the Basic Conditions required by legislation and should proceed to referendum. The independent examination of the Hermitage NDP took place between October and November 2023. The Examiner's final report was received on 9 November 2023 and is included within Appendix C.
- 5.7 A NDP will meet the Basic Conditions if:
- it has had regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the plan;

Hermitage Neighbourhood Development 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.

5.8 Regulation 32 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).

5.9 The examiner concluded that the Plan meets the Basic Conditions, and that subject to modifications proposed in his report, the plan should proceed to referendum.

5.10 The Hermitage NDP will guide development in the Parish of Hermitage to 2039, and it contains nine planning policies designed to retain the unique character and identity of the parish and the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (previously known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) in which it lies. It makes no housing allocations, but it does contain a detailed design policy to ensure that new development demonstrates high quality design and layout which respects the local character of Hermitage, as identified in the Hermitage Design Guidelines and Codes. The NDP places considerable emphasis on the protection and enhancement of the local wildlife and biodiversity with two policies dedicated to that theme. It also contains policies (inter alia) on the safeguarding of countryside views between existing properties, low energy and energy efficient design and sustainable transport provision. In addition, the NDP proposes 25 buildings/structures as non-designated heritage assets and puts forward six sites for Local Green Space designation.

Proposals

5.11 Following the independent examination of the Hermitage NDP and the receipt of the Examiner's Report, WBDC is required to make a decision on the next steps. As set out in Part 5 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) these are:

- (a) To decline to consider a plan proposal under paragraph 5 of Schedule 4B to the Town and County Planning Act 1990 (as amended) (as applied by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)) or a modification proposal under paragraph 5 of Schedule A2 to the 2004 act;
- (b) to refuse a plan proposal under paragraph 6 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 act (as applied by section 38A of the 2004 Act) or a modification proposal under paragraph 8 of Schedule A2 to the 2004 Act;
- (c) what action to take in response to the recommendations of an Examiner made in a report under paragraph 10 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 act (as applied by section 38A of the 2004 Act) in relation to a neighbourhood development plan or under paragraph 13 of Schedule A2 to the 2004 Act in relation to a proposed modification of a neighbourhood development plan;

Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan

- (d) what modifications, if any, they are to make to the draft plan under paragraph 12(6) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act (as applied by section 38A of the 2004 act) or paragraph 14(6) of Schedule A2 to the 2004 Act;
- (e) whether to extend the area to which the referendum is (or referendums are) to take place; or
- (f) that they are not satisfied with the plan proposal under paragraph 12(10) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act (as applied by section 38A of the 2004 Act) or the draft plan under paragraph 14(4) of Schedule A2 to the 2004 Act.

5.12 In accordance with Regulation 18(2) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) Regulations, WBDC must produce a Decision Statement that sets out the Council's decision and the reasons for this. This is included in Appendix D.

5.13 The Decision Statement sets out that the recommendations and modification made in the Examiner's report should be accepted. The modification will ensure that the NDP meets the Basic Conditions. A version of the NDP with the modifications is included in Appendix E.

5.14 WBDC published the submitted NDP and its supporting documents for a 6-week consultation which ran between 21 July and 1 September 2023. WBDC made representations on the submitted Plan, and within these it was identified that several factual amendments are required. The examiner in his report commented that these amendments were non-material in nature and would not affect the ability of the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions.

5.15 Hermitage Parish Council has made WBDC aware of several factual and typographical inaccuracies within the NDP. WBDC considers that amendments to correct these inaccuracies are non-material in nature and would not affect the ability of the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions.

5.16 On 22 November, all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) were renamed as National Landscapes. The references in the NDP to the North Wessex Downs AONB need to be amended to North Wessex Downs National Landscape. Such an amendment is non-material in nature and would not affect the ability of the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions.

5.17 Details of the non-material amendments are included within the Decision Statement (Appendix D) and are also shown in the version of the NDP with modifications (Appendix E).

5.18 Members are asked to:

- (a) Endorse the Decision Statement on the Hermitage NDP which concludes that the Hermitage NDP, with the inclusion of one modification, meets the Basic Conditions;

- (b) Agree that the Hermitage NDP, upon a successful 'yes' vote at referendum, is adopted immediately after the votes have been counted so that it becomes part of the development plan for West Berkshire;
- (c) Agree that the authority to make minor alterations and corrections to the Hermitage NDP as set out in Appendices D and E, prior to its proceeding to referendum, be delegated to the Service Lead, Planning and Economy, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement.

5.19 Officers are currently liaising with the Elections Team to determine a date that the referendum could take place should Members endorse the Decision Statement.

6 Options for consideration

6.1 That the recommendations of the Hermitage NDP independent examiner are not followed, and the plan does not proceed to referendum. There is however no justification for following this approach.

7 Conclusion

7.1 The Examiner's report on the Hermitage NDP recommended that, with the inclusion of several modifications, it meets the Basic Conditions and should proceed to referendum. The Examiner's report is not binding, and it is for WBDC to make the final recommendation.

7.2 Officers have considered each of the Examiner's recommendations and modifications and have decided on an action to take in response to each recommendation and what modifications should be made to the plan in order to be satisfied that the Basic Conditions are met. This is set out in the Decision Statement. The Decision Statement concludes that the Hermitage NDP, with the inclusion of several modifications, should proceed to referendum.

7.3 If the majority of those who vote in the referendum are in favour of the draft NDP (a successful 'yes' vote), WBDC must make the NDP within eight weeks (unless there is a legal challenge) part of the West Berkshire development plan. Officers consider that the NDP should be adopted, as part of the development plan for West Berkshire, as soon as practicable after the referendum.

7.4 Following a successful 'yes' vote at referendum it is proposed that the Hermitage NDP automatically will be adopted by WBDC as part of the development plan and be used in part for the determination of planning applications.

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 – Hermitage NDP Examiner's Report
- 8.4 Appendix D – Hermitage NDP Decision Statement

8.5 Appendix E – Hermitage NDP with Modifications

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

Document Control

Document Ref:	C4432	Date Created:	29 November 2023
Version:	1.02	Date Modified:	29 November 2023
Author:	Laila Bassett		
Owning Service	Development and Regulation		

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1	1 December 2023	Several amendments made to provide additional clarity	ABL
2	4 December 2023	Correction to typographical error in paragraph 5.13	TV

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

We need to ensure that our strategies, policies, functions and services, current and proposed have given due regard to equality and diversity as set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act), which states:

- (1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:**
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;**
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; This includes the need to:**
 - (i) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;**
 - (ii) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;**
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, with due regard, in particular, to the need to be aware that compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.**
- (2) The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.**
- (3) Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.**

The following list of questions may help to establish whether the decision is relevant to equality:

- Does the decision affect service users, employees or the wider community?
- (The relevance of a decision to equality depends not just on the number of those affected but on the significance of the impact on them)
- Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?
- Is it a major policy, or a major change to an existing policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?
- Will the decision have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?
- Does the decision relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?
- Does the decision relate to an area with known inequalities?
- Does the decision relate to any equality objectives that have been set by the council?

Please complete the following questions to determine whether a full Stage Two, Equality Impact Assessment is required.

<p>What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:</p>	<p>To resolve that the Hermitage NDP can be sent for independent examination under Regulation 17 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.</p>
<p>Summary of relevant legislation:</p>	<p>The relevant legislation setting out the neighbourhood planning process is included in the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council’s priorities for improvement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please indicate which priority and provide an explanation</p>
<p>Name of Budget Holder:</p>	<p>Katharine Makant</p>
<p>Name of Service/Directorate:</p>	<p>Development and Regulation / Place</p>
<p>Name of assessor:</p>	<p>Laila Bassett</p>
<p>Date of assessment:</p>	<p>13 December 2023</p>
<p>Version and release date (if applicable):</p>	

<p>Is this a ?</p>		<p>Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ?</p>	
<p>Policy</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>New or proposed</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Already exists and is being reviewed</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

Function	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Service	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

(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:	<p>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.</p> <p>Hermitage Parish Council will receive 25% of CIL receipts should the plan be successful at referendum.</p> <p>Delivery of government policy regarding neighbourhood planning.</p> <p>Give more control to the local community of Hermitage to shape their community going forward.</p>

(2) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?		
<i>(Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation)</i>		
Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Age	<p>Neighbourhood planning should have a positive impact on all groups.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>Neighbourhood Planning legislation, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Practice Guidance</p>
Disability		
Gender Reassignment		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		
Pregnancy and Maternity		
Race		
Religion or Belief		

Sex	development of the neighbourhood plan.
Sexual Orientation	<p>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.</p> <p>Neighbourhood planning should have a positive impact on all groups.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Neighbourhood planning should have a positive impact on all groups.</p> <p>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.</p>

	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 <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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.	

If your answers to question 2 have identified potential adverse impacts and you have answered ‘yes’ to either of the sections at question 3, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a EqlA 2.

If an EqlA 2 is required, before proceeding you should discuss the scope of the Assessment with service managers in your area. You will also need to refer to the EqlA guidance and template – <http://intranet/index.aspx?articleid=32255>.

(4) Identify next steps as appropriate:	
EqlA Stage 2 required	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Owner of EqlA Stage Two:	
Timescale for EqlA Stage Two:	

Name: Laila Bassett

Date: 13 December 2023

Please now forward this completed form to Pamela Voss, Equality and Diversity Officer (pamela.voss@westberks.gov.uk), for publication on the WBC website.

Appendix B

Data Protection Impact Assessment – Stage One

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:	13 December 2023

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

	Yes	No
<p>Will you be processing SENSITIVE or “special category” personal data?</p> <p><i>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”</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will you be processing data on a large scale?</p> <p><i>Note – Large scale might apply to the number of individuals affected OR the volume of data you are processing OR both</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will your project or system have a “social media” dimension?</p> <p><i>Note – will it have an interactive element which allows users to communicate directly with one another?</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will any decisions be automated?</p> <p><i>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?</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
Will your project/system involve CCTV or monitoring of an area accessible to the public?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Will you be using the data you collect to match or cross-reference against another existing set of data?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Will you be using any novel, or technologically advanced systems or processes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Note – this could include biometrics, “internet of things” connectivity or anything that is currently not widely utilised</p>		

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.

Hermitage NDP Examiner's Report

See separate attachment

Hermitage NDP Decision Statement

See separate attachment

Hermitage NDP with Modifications

See separate attachment



Intelligent Plans
and examinations

Report on the Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan 2022 – 2039

An Examination undertaken for West Berkshire Council with the support of Hermitage Parish Council on the February 2023 submission version of the Plan.

Independent Examiner: Andrew Mead BSc (Hons) MRTPI MIQ

Date of Report: 9 November 2023

Intelligent Plans and Examinations (IPE) Ltd, 3 Princes Street, Bath BA1 1HL
Registered in England and Wales. Company Reg. No. 10100118. VAT Reg. No. 237 7641 84

Contents

Main Findings - Executive Summary	4
1. Introduction and Background	4
Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan 2022–2039	4
The Independent Examiner	5
The Scope of the Examination	5
The Basic Conditions.....	6
2. Approach to the Examination	6
Planning Policy Context	6
Submitted Documents.....	7
Site Visit.....	8
Written Representations with or without Public Hearing	8
Modification.....	8
3. Procedural Compliance and Human Rights.....	8
Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area	8
Plan Period.....	8
Neighbourhood Development Plan Preparation and Consultation	8
Development and Use of Land	9
Excluded Development.....	9
Human Rights.....	9
4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions	9
EU Obligations	9
Main Issues.....	10
Vision and Objectives.....	10
Policy HER1: Addressing Hermitage’s Housing Needs	11
Policy HER2: Design	11
Policy HER3: Countryside Views Between Properties	11
Policy HER4: Low Energy and Energy Efficient Design, including Sustainable Drainage Systems	11
Policy HER5: Wildlife Friendly Development	12
Policy HER6: Irreplaceable Habitats and Local Wildlife-Rich Habitats and Species	12
Policy HER7: Local Green Spaces	12
Policy HER8: Non-Designated Heritage Assets.....	12
Policy HER9: Access for Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding	13
Non-Policy Actions.....	13

Overview	13
5. Conclusions.....	14
Summary.....	14
The Referendum and its Area	14
Concluding Comments	14
Appendix: Modification.....	16

Main Findings - Executive Summary

From my examination of the Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan (HNP/the Plan) and its supporting documentation including the representations made, I have concluded that subject to the policy modification set out in this report, the Plan meets the Basic Conditions.

I have also concluded that:

- The Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body – the Hermitage Parish Council;
- The Plan has been prepared for an area properly designated – the Hermitage Neighbourhood Area as shown on Figure 1.1 on page 3 of the Plan;
- The Plan specifies the period during which it is to take effect: 2022 - 2039; and
- The policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood area.

I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum on the basis that it has met all the relevant legal requirements.

I have considered whether the referendum area should extend beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates and have concluded that it should not.

1. Introduction and Background

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan 2022–2039

- 1.1 The Parish of Hermitage is located in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) about 8km to the north-east of the centre of Newbury. The attractive and spacious village of Hermitage is set in rural, well wooded surroundings. The M4 motorway forms part of the northern boundary of the Parish. In 2011, the Parish population was 1,943.¹
- 1.2 The formal process to prepare a neighbourhood plan for Hermitage began in 2018 when Hermitage Parish Council (HPC) announced its intention to produce one. A Steering Group was formed, evidence was collected and consultations were carried out. The Plan was finally submitted to West Berkshire Council (WBC/the Council) in February 2023, representing nearly 5 years work for those involved.

¹ HNP: page 6 paragraph 2.17.

The Independent Examiner

- 1.3 As the Plan has now reached the examination stage, I have been appointed as the examiner of the HNP by WBC with the agreement of HPC.
- 1.4 I am a chartered town planner and former government Planning Inspector and have experience of examining neighbourhood plans. I am an independent examiner, and do not have an interest in any of the land that may be affected by the Plan.

The Scope of the Examination

- 1.5 As the independent examiner, I am required to produce this report and recommend either:
- (a) that the neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum without changes; or
 - (b) that modifications are made and that the modified neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum; or
 - (c) that the neighbourhood plan does not proceed to a referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.
- 1.6 The scope of the examination is set out in Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) ('the 1990 Act'). The examiner must consider:
- Whether the plan meets the Basic Conditions.
 - Whether the plan complies with provisions under s.38A and s.38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) ('the 2004 Act'). These are:
 - it has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body, for an area that has been properly designated by the local planning authority;
 - it sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land;
 - it specifies the period during which it has effect;
 - it does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'; and
 - it is the only neighbourhood plan for the area and does not relate to land outside the designated neighbourhood area.

- Whether the referendum boundary should be extended beyond the designated area, should the plan proceed to referendum.
 - Such matters as prescribed in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) ('the 2012 Regulations').
- 1.7 I have considered only matters that fall within Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act, with one exception. That is the requirement that the Plan is compatible with the Human Rights Convention.

The Basic Conditions

- 1.8 The 'Basic Conditions' are set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act. In order to meet the Basic Conditions, the neighbourhood plan must:
- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
 - contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area;
 - be compatible with and not breach European Union (EU) obligations (under retained EU law)²; and
 - meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.
- 1.9 Regulation 32 of the 2012 Regulations prescribes a further Basic Condition for a neighbourhood plan. This requires that the making of the Plan does not breach the requirement of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.³

2. Approach to the Examination

Planning Policy Context

- 2.1 The current Development Plan for the Hermitage Neighbourhood Area, excluding policies relating to minerals and waste development, includes the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991–2006 (Saved Policies 2007) (as amended in 2012 and 2017), the West Berkshire Core Strategy (WBCS) 2006–2026, which contains most of the strategic policies, and the

² The existing body of environmental regulation is retained in UK law.

³ This revised Basic Condition came into force on 28 December 2018 through the Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018.

West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (HSADPD) adopted in 2017.⁴

- 2.2 The planning policy for England is set out principally in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).⁵ In addition, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) offers advice on how the NPPF should be implemented.
- 2.3 The West Berkshire Local Plan Review (WBLPR) is also currently being examined.⁶ Whilst there is no requirement for the Plan to be in general conformity with any strategic policies in the emerging review of the Local Plan, there is an expectation that West Berkshire and the Parish Council will work together to produce complementary plans.⁷ I note in the context of the provision of future monitoring and review, that the HNP makes a commitment to maintaining and periodically revisiting the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure relevance.⁸

Submitted Documents

- 2.4 I have considered all policy, guidance and other reference documents I consider relevant to the examination, as well as those submitted which include:
- the draft Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan 2022–2039, February 2023 submission version;
 - the map on page 3 of the Plan which identifies the area to which the proposed Neighbourhood Plan relates;
 - the Consultation Statement, dated February 2023;
 - the Basic Conditions Statement, dated February 2023;
 - the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Reports, dated October 2022 and November 2022 and the SEA and HRA Decision, dated November 2022;
 - the Hermitage Green Spaces Audit, dated January 2023;
 - the West Berkshire Density Pattern Book for West Berkshire District Council, dated September 2019;
 - the Hermitage Design Guidelines and Codes, dated September 2022; and
 - all the representations that have been made in accordance with the Regulation 16 consultation.⁹

⁴ There is also the retained South East Plan Policy NRM6: Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.

⁵ A new version of the NPPF was published on 5 September 2023. It sets out focused revisions (to the previously published version of 20 July 2021) to the extent that it updates national planning policy for onshore wind development. As such, all references in this report read across to the latest 5 September 2023 version.

⁶ View at: [Examination of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022-2039 - West Berkshire Council](#)

⁷ PPG Reference ID: 41-009-20160211.

⁸ HNP: page 4 paragraph 1.13.

⁹ View all the documents at: [Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan - West Berkshire Council](#)
Intelligent Plans and Examinations (IPE) Ltd, 3 Princes Street, Bath BA1 1HL

Registered in England and Wales. Company Reg. No. 10100118. VAT Reg. No. 237 7641 84

Site Visit

- 2.5 I made an unaccompanied site inspection to the HNP Area on 18 October 2023 to familiarise myself with it and visit relevant locations referenced in the Plan and evidential documents.

Written Representations with or without Public Hearing

- 2.6 This examination has been dealt with by written representations. I considered hearing sessions to be unnecessary as the consultation responses clearly articulated the objections to the Plan and presented arguments for and against the Plan's suitability to proceed to a referendum. No requests for a hearing session were received.

Modification

- 2.7 Where necessary, I have recommended a modification to the Plan (**PM**) in this report in order that it meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. For ease of reference, I have listed this modification separately in the Appendix to this report.

3. Procedural Compliance and Human Rights

Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area

- 3.1 The Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by HPC, which is a qualifying body. The HNP extends over all the area designated by WBC on 26 April 2019.

Plan Period

- 3.2 The Plan period is from 2022 to 2039 as clearly stated on the front cover.

Neighbourhood Development Plan Preparation and Consultation

- 3.3 The comprehensive Consultation Statement (CS) describes the thorough preparation of the Plan with involvement of the public and various stakeholders at many stages of the process. A list of the events in the timeline on page 3 covers the period from 2018 until late 2022, following the pre-submission consultation.
- 3.4 The pre-submission Plan was published for consultation under Regulation 14 of the 2012 Regulations from 25 October 2022 until 5 December 2022. The list of organisations consulted is shown at paragraphs 3.6 – 3.8 of the CS. The list of respondents, the matters raised, the responses of the Steering Group and any resulting changes to the Plan are described in Appendix B on pages 18 – 57 of the CS.

- 3.5 The Plan was submitted to WBC on 17 February 2023. Consultation in accordance with Regulation 16 was carried out for six weeks from 21 July 2023 until 1 September 2023. 8 representations were received together with comments from WBC about the Plan. I am satisfied that a transparent, fair and inclusive consultation process has been followed for the HNP, that has had regard to advice in the PPG on plan preparation and engagement and is procedurally compliant in accordance with the legal requirements.

Development and Use of Land

- 3.6 The Plan sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in accordance with s.38A of the 2004 Act.

Excluded Development

- 3.7 The Plan does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'.¹⁰

Human Rights

- 3.8 I have read the Basic Conditions Statement (BCS) which states that the HNP does not breach and is not otherwise incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights, incorporated into UK law by the Human Rights Act 1998. I am aware from the CS that considerable emphasis was placed throughout the consultation process to ensure that no sections of the community were isolated or excluded. I have considered this matter independently and I am satisfied that the policies will not have a discriminatory impact on any particular group of individuals.

4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions

EU Obligations

- 4.1 The Basic Conditions Statement notes that the Plan was screened for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) by WBC. The Council's initial conclusion was that a SEA of the Hermitage NP was not necessary under the SEA Directive and Regulations because it was demonstrated that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects as a result of the Plan. It was also WBC's initial conclusion that a HRA was not required because there are no internationally designated sites within or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Area. Therefore, on the basis of the screening process, it was the Council's opinion that the HNP is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and as such did not require an SEA under EU Directive 2001/42/EC and The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations

¹⁰ See section 61K of the 1990 Act.

(2004), or a Habitats Regulations Assessment under EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (*sic*).¹¹ The statutory consultees did not dissent from these conclusions¹² and the determination was made on 29 November 2022. I have read the SEA and the HRA and the Screening Determination and the other information provided and, having considered the matter independently, I also agree with the conclusions. Therefore, I am satisfied that the HNP is compatible with EU obligations as retained in UK law.

Main Issues

- 4.2 Having considered whether the Plan complies with various procedural and legal requirements, it is now necessary to deal with whether it complies with the remaining Basic Conditions, particularly the regard it pays to national policy and guidance, the contribution it makes to the achievement of sustainable development and whether it is in general conformity with strategic development plan policies. I test the Plan against the Basic Conditions by considering specific issues of compliance of all the Plan's policies.
- 4.3 As part of that assessment, I consider whether the policies are sufficiently clear and unambiguous, having regard to advice in the PPG. A neighbourhood plan policy should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision maker can apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. It should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence.¹³
- 4.4 Accordingly, having regard to the Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan, the consultation responses, other evidence and the site visit, I consider that the main issues in this examination are whether the HNP policies (i) have regard to national policy and guidance; (ii) are in general conformity with the adopted strategic planning policies; and (iii) would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development? I shall assess these issues by considering the policies in the sequence in which they appear in the Plan.

Vision and Objectives

- 4.5 The overall vision for the HNP is described in paragraph 3.2 on page 11 of the Plan. The vision is then used to develop 8 objectives listed in paragraph 3.3 which set the context for the 9 subsequent land use policies.

¹¹ 2017 (SI No. 1012).

¹² Details in the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report: November 2022.

¹³ PPG Reference ID: 41-041-20140306.

Policy HER1: Addressing Hermitage’s Housing Needs

4.6 Hermitage is defined in the WBCS as a service village and it is located within the North Wessex Downs AONB. Policy HER1 seeks to provide a mix of dwelling types which reflect the identified housing needs of Hermitage. The policy has regard to national guidance¹⁴, generally conforms with both Area Delivery Plan Policy 5 and Policy CS 4 of the WBCS and meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy HER2: Design

4.7 Policy HER2 states that development should respect the local character of Hermitage as identified in the Hermitage Design Guidelines and Codes (HDGC) 2022. The policy also describes six factors which should be taken into account, which include having regard to the guidance in the West Berkshire Density Pattern Book and limiting the building heights and rooflines to no more than two storeys.

4.8 I note the Regulation 16 comments from WBC that the Plan has not been amended consistent with the Regulation 14 response (CS page 35). However, as currently drafted in the Plan, although there is a general limitation on two storeys, taller buildings will be permitted where it is clearly demonstrated that they can complement or enhance the local character. Therefore, Policy HER2 has regard to national guidance¹⁵, generally conforms with Area Delivery Plan Policy 5 and Policy CS 14 of the WBCS and meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy HER3: Countryside Views Between Properties

4.9 Policy HER3 seeks to safeguard views of the surrounding countryside between buildings when development within or adjacent to the settlement boundary of Hermitage is considered. The policy has regard to national guidance¹⁶, generally conforms with Policy CS 19 of the WBCS and meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy HER4: Low Energy and Energy Efficient Design, including Sustainable Drainage Systems

4.10 Policy HER4 requires new development to demonstrate how the consumption of natural resources have been minimised in order to provide resilience to the effects of climate change and how it has been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. The policy also seeks the minimisation of surface water runoff through sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). The policy generally conforms with Policy CS 16 of the WBCS but, in order to have regard to the various elements of national guidance, I shall recommend a modification to include a reference to

¹⁴ NPPF: paragraphs 60, 62 & 65.

¹⁵ NPPF: paragraph 126, 127 & 130.

¹⁶ NPPF: paragraphs 130, 174 & 176.

improvements in green and other infrastructure based on paragraph 154 (a) of the NPPF. **(PM1)** The policy would then meet the Basic Conditions.

Policy HER5: Wildlife-Friendly Development

4.11 Policy HER5 aims to secure a net biodiversity gain of at least 10% for all new development and also to safeguard the dark skies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. The policy has regard to national guidance¹⁷, generally conforms with Area Delivery Plan Policy 5 and Policy CS 17 of the WBCS and meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy HER6: Irreplaceable Habitats and Local Wildlife-Rich Habitats and Species

4.12 Policy HER6 seeks to protect irreplaceable habitats and local habitats which are rich in wildlife. The policy has regard to national guidance¹⁸, generally conforms with Policy CS 17 of the WBCS and meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy HER7: Local Green Spaces

4.13 Policy HER7 designates 6 Local Green Spaces (LGS). LGS designation should only be used where the green space is: a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; b) 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 c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.¹⁹ LGS should also be capable of enduring beyond the end of the Plan period.²⁰

4.14 I visited each LGS on my inspection of the area and I agree that each LGS meets the designation criteria. Therefore, the policy has regard to national guidance²¹, generally conforms with Policy CS 18 of the WBCS and meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy HER8: Non-Designated Heritage Assets

4.15 Policy HER8 lists 25 non-designated heritage assets (NDHAs) and describes the method of assessment should any loss or alteration be proposed. The policy has regard to national guidance²², generally conforms with Policy CS 19 of the WBCS and meets the Basic Conditions.

¹⁷ NPPF: paragraphs 161, 169, 174, 179 & 185.

¹⁸ NPPF: paragraphs 179 & 180.

¹⁹ NPPF: paragraph 102.

²⁰ NPPF: paragraph 101.

²¹ NPPF: paragraphs 100, 101 & 102. Also see PPG Reference IDs: 37-005-20140306 to 37-022-20140306.

²² NPPF: paragraph 203.

Policy HER9: Access for Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding

- 4.16 Policy HER9 promotes and aims to safeguard access to the countryside for walkers, cyclists and horse riders and encourages proposals to develop the Eling Way. The policy has regard to national guidance²³, generally conforms with Area Delivery Plan Policy 5 and Policy CS 13 of the WBCS and meets the Basic Conditions.

Non-Policy Actions

- 4.17 Table 9.1 of the Plan lists 11 non land issues to be addressed alongside possible actions, together with the lead agency or partner. These are items which the community is seeking but cannot be delivered through planning policies, which are not considered as part of the examination and which will not form part of the statutory Development Plan. Nevertheless, they represent aspirations which would benefit the community and demonstrate an attribute of the neighbourhood planning process.²⁴ A representation objected to the intention to provide play equipment in the Lipscomb Close Green LGS, but that is not before me to consider and so I shall not pass comment.

Overview

- 4.18 Therefore, on the evidence before me, with the recommended modification, I consider that the policies within the HNP are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the WBCS, have regard to national guidance, would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and so would meet the Basic Conditions.
- 4.19 A consequence of the acceptance of the recommended modification would be that amendments may have to be made to the explanation within the Plan in order to make it logical and suitable for the referendum. Further amendments might also include incorporating factual updates, correcting minor inaccuracies, text improvements suggested helpfully by WBC in the Regulation 16 consultation and any paragraph renumbering. None of these alterations would affect the ability of the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions and could be undertaken as minor, non-material changes.²⁵

²³ NPPF: paragraphs 104 & 106.

²⁴ PPG Reference ID: 41-004-20190509.

²⁵ PPG Reference ID: 41-106-20190509.

5. Conclusions

Summary

- 5.1 The Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan has been duly prepared in compliance with the procedural requirements. My examination has investigated whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements for neighbourhood plans. I have had regard to all the responses made following consultation on the HNP, and the evidence documents submitted with it.
- 5.2 I have made a recommendation to modify a policy to ensure the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum.

The Referendum and its Area

- 5.3 I have considered whether or not the referendum area should be extended beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates. The HNP, as modified, has no policy or proposal which I consider significant enough to have an impact beyond the designated Neighbourhood Plan boundary, requiring the referendum to extend to areas beyond the Plan boundary. I recommend that the boundary for the purposes of any future referendum on the Plan should be the boundary of the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Concluding Comments

- 5.4 The HPC, the Steering Group and other voluntary contributors are to be commended for their efforts in producing a concise but comprehensive Plan. The Plan is logical, very informative and well-illustrated. I enjoyed examining it, visiting the area and reading about the history, particularly the background to the splendid Village Hall. The Consultation Statement and the Basic Conditions Statement were extremely useful. The Plan benefitted from heeding advice not to duplicate policies²⁶ found elsewhere in the Development Plan (See paragraphs 3.4 – 3.6 in the Plan), the guidance from WBC evident from the meetings listed in the Consultation Statement and the comprehensive and constructive Regulation 14 comments from the Council.
- 5.5 Subject to the recommended modification, the HNP will make a positive contribution to the Development Plan for the area and should enable the attractive character and appearance of Hermitage to be maintained whilst enabling sustainable development to proceed.

²⁶ NPPF: paragraph 16 f).

Andrew Mead

Examiner

Appendix: Modification

Proposed modification no. (PM)	Page no./ other reference	Modification
PM1	Page 20 Policy HER4: C.	Add a final sentence: “When new development is bought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaption measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure.”

WEST BERKSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
HERMITAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2039
POST-EXAMINATION DECISION STATEMENT

February 2024

Regulation 18 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

This document is the decision statement required to be prepared under Regulation 18(2) of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended). It sets out the Council's response to each of the recommendations contained within the report to West Berkshire District Council of the independent examination of the Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan ("the Plan") by Independent Examiner, Andrew Mead, which was received by the Council on 9 November 2023.

This decision statement, the independent Examiner's report, and the submission version of the Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and supporting documents are available to view on the Council's website:

<https://www.westberks.gov.uk/hermitagenp>.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), West Berkshire District Council ("the Council") has a statutory duty to assist communities in the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans and to take plans through a process of examination and referendum. The Localism Act 2011 sets out the responsibilities under Neighbourhood Planning.
- 1.2. Following receipt of the Examiner's report, the Council must make a decision on the next steps. As set out in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) these are:
 - (a) to decline to consider a plan proposal under paragraph 5 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act (as applied by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) or a modification proposal under paragraph 5 of Schedule A2 to the 2004 Act;
 - (b) to refuse a plan proposal under paragraph 6 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act (as applied by section 38A of the 2004 Act) or a modification proposal under paragraph 8 of Schedule A2 to the 2004 Act;
 - (c) what action to take in response to the recommendations of an examiner made in a report under paragraph 10 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act (as applied by section 38A of the 2004 Act) in relation to a neighbourhood development plan or under paragraph 13 of Schedule A2 to the 2004 Act in relation to a proposed modification of a neighbourhood development plan;

- (d) what modifications, if any, they are to make to the draft plan under paragraph 12(6) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act (as applied by section 38A of the 2004 Act) or paragraph 14(6) of Schedule A2 to the 2004 Act;
 - (e) whether to extend the area to which the referendum is (or referendums are) to take place; or
 - (f) that they are not satisfied with the plan proposal under paragraph 12(10) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act (as applied by section 38A of the 2004 Act) or the draft plan under paragraph 14(4) of Schedule A2 to the 2004 Act.
- 1.3. In accordance with Regulation 18(2) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), this report forms the Council's Decision Statement, and sets out the Council's decision and the reasons for this.

2. Background to the Hermitage NDP

Designation of the Neighbourhood Area

- 2.1. On 26 April 2019, the Council designated the Hermitage Neighbourhood Area for the purpose of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. The plan area covers the parish of Hermitage and lies solely within the West Berkshire Local Planning Authority Area.

Submission of the Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan

- 2.2. Hermitage Parish Council, the qualifying body, submitted the draft Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and supporting documents to the Council on 17 February 2023.
- 2.3. Following submission of the NDP, the Council publicised the Plan and supporting documents and invited representations during the consultation period which ran from 21 July to 1 September 2023. At a meeting of Council on 5 October 2023, it was agreed that the Hermitage NDP could proceed to independent examination.

3. Independent examination of the Hermitage NDP

- 3.1. The Council, with the consent of Hermitage Parish Council, appointed an independent examiner, Mr. Andrew Mead MRTPI MIQ, to review the NDP and consider whether it should proceed to referendum.
- 3.2. The examination of the plan took place by way of written representations between October and November.
- 3.3. The Examiner's final report was received on 9 October 2023. The report concluded that subject to one modification, the Hermitage NDP should proceed to referendum. The Examiner also recommended that the

referendum area be based on the Neighbourhood Area that was designated by the Council on 26 April 2019.

4. Post examination

- 4.1. Regulations 17A and 18 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) requires the local planning authority to outline what action to take in response to the recommendations of the examiner following the formal examination.
- 4.2. The examiner's report is not binding, and it is the responsibility of the Council to ultimately decide if the examiner's suggested recommendations and modifications should be followed or not.

5. Decision and reasons

- 5.1. Having considered the recommendations in the Examiner's report and the reasons for them, the Council, with the consent of Hermitage Parish Council, has decided to accept the modification to the submitted Plan under Paragraph 12(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 5.2. The Council is satisfied that, subject to the modification which it considers should be made, as set out in Table 5.1 below, that the Hermitage NDP meets the Basic Conditions set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), is compatible with the Convention rights and complies with the provision made by or under 61E(2), 61J and 61L of the said Act.

Table 5.1: Examiner’s proposed modifications to the Hermitage NDP

Policy (NDP page no.)	Examiner’s modifications (insertion <u>underlined</u> , deletion as strikethrough)	Decision and justification	Action taken and revised modification
<p>Criterion C, Policy HER4: Low energy and energy efficient design, including Sustainable Drainage Systems (pp.21-22)</p>	<p>The addition of a final sentence to criterion C of the policy:</p> <p>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 [footnote 6]. The design of SuDS should be in accordance with best practice and national standards [footnote 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.</p> <p><u>When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaption measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure.</u></p> <p><i>Footnote 6: The WBDC [West Berkshire District Council] Sustainable Drainage Systems Supplementary Planning Document provides guidance (https://www.westberks.gov.uk/sudsspd)</i></p> <p><i>Footnote 7: DEFRA Non-statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-drainage-systems-non-statutory-technical-standards</i></p>	<p>The Council agree with the Examiner’s recommendation.</p> <p>Policy HER4 requires new development to demonstrate how the consumption of natural resources has been minimised to provide resilience to the effects of climate change, and how it has been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change.</p> <p>Paragraph 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, published September 2023) states that new development should be planned in a way that avoids increased vulnerability to the impacts arising from climate change and helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Green infrastructure is identified in the NPPF as being a way in which the risks can be managed.</p> <p>The Examiner’s modification to include the additional sentence should be accepted to ensure the Basic Condition for plans to have regard to national planning policy and guidance is met.</p>	<p>No further action required. Modification to be taken forward to the final plan.</p>

- 5.3. Several minor modifications have been identified by the Council which are required to correct typographical and factual errors within the Plan. These modifications, which have been agreed with Hermitage Parish Council, do not affect the nature of the Plan. The minor modifications and the justification for them is set out in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2: The Council’s minor modifications to the Hermitage NDP

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council’s minor modification (insertion underlined and deletion as strikethrough)	Justification
List of policies	Inclusion of page numbers	<p>Editorial modification to improve readability.</p> <p>The Council, in its representations on the submission NDP, advised that the inclusion of page numbers would assist with navigation.</p> <p>The Examiner’s report at paragraph 4.19 commented that the minor inaccuracies and text improvements identified by the Council would not affect the ability of the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions and could be undertaken as minor, non-material changes.</p>
Policy context, paragraph 1.5 (p.2)	<p>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) <u>and the Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2022-2037). The Core Strategy, Housing Site Allocations DPD and the 2007 saved policies collectively make up the District Local Plan.</u></p>	<p>Factual and explanatory modifications to provide greater clarity on the documents that form part of the development plan for West Berkshire.</p> <p>The Council, in its representations on the submission NDP, advised that reference needed to be made to the adopted Minerals and Waste Plan as it is one of the documents that forms part of the development plan.</p> <p>The Council also advised that it needed to be explained that the Core Strategy, Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document, and the Saved Policies of the West Berkshire District Local Plan together form part of the Local Plan. Such a modification would also provide context to paragraph 1.11 which talks about the review of the Local Plan.</p> <p>The Examiner’s report at paragraph 4.19 commented that the minor inaccuracies and text improvements identified by the Council would not affect the ability of the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions and could be undertaken as minor, non-material changes.</p>
Policy context, paragraph 1.11 (p.4)	A review of the West Berkshire Local Plan is being undertaken by West Berkshire District Council. This will cover the period to	Factual modification to reflect the current position of the Local Plan Review.

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification (<u>insertion underlined and deletion as strikethrough</u>)	Justification
	<p>2039, the same end date as the Neighbourhood Plan. A draft of the The Local Plan Review was consulted on between December 2020 and February 2024 <u>submitted for examination in March 2023</u>. 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 <u>completed</u> independent examination has been completed. <u>As of late-2023, it is expected that the Local Plan Review will be adopted in September 2024. Upon adoption, the current Local Plan will be superseded.</u></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>The Council, in its representations on the submission NDP, advised that the preparation of the Local Plan Review had progressed since the submission version of the Hermitage NDP was prepared. The text therefore needs to be updated to reflect the progress that had been made and the expected adoption date.</p> <p>The Examiner's report at paragraph 4.19 commented that the minor inaccuracies and text improvements identified by the Council would not affect the ability of the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions and could be undertaken as minor, non-material changes.</p>
Hermitage today, socio-economic profile, paragraph 2.16 (p.6)	<p>Whilst there was a <u>The socio-economic profile of Hermitage is derived from the</u> 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.</p>	<p>Factual modification to take account of updated demographic data.</p> <p>The 'Hermitage today' section of the Plan provides background context on the Neighbourhood Area, and it refers to 2011 Census data which was available at the time the submission version of the Plan was prepared. This section of the Plan does not contain any policies.</p>
Hermitage today, socio-economic profile, paragraph 2.17 (pp.6-7)	<p>In 20<u>21</u>, the population of Hermitage parish was <u>2,078</u> 1,943 persons, living in <u>766</u> 722 household spaces:</p>	<p>The 2021 Census data is now available, and Hermitage Parish Council have suggested this is used to provide a more</p>

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification (<u>insertion underlined and deletion as strikethrough</u>)	Justification
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15.1% 17.4% of the population is aged 6560 or over, compared with 19.5% <u>21.7%</u> of the population in West Berkshire district. • 24.1% 25.4% of the population is aged 154 or under, compared with 19.0% <u>18.9%</u> of the population in West Berkshire. 	<p>up-to-date context of the Neighbourhood Area. The Council agree that such a modification would be helpful.</p> <p>The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>
Hermitage today, socio-economic profile, paragraph 2.18 (p.7)	<p>In 20<u>2</u>11, Hermitage parish had <u>766</u> 741 dwellings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>55.2</u> 54.7% of these dwellings were detached, compared with 33.18% in West Berkshire; • <u>19.5</u> 20.5% of dwellings were semi-detached, compared with 32.58% in West Berkshire; • <u>76.8</u> 69.8% of properties were owned, which is broadly the same as <u>higher than the figure</u> for West Berkshire (<u>67.5%</u>); • only <u>8.4</u> 9.1% were social rented properties, whereas the figure for West Berkshire was <u>14.0</u> 13.8%; and • Hermitage has a low proportion of 1-bed properties at <u>43.9</u>% (West Berkshire has 9.8%) and a high proportion of properties of at least 4 bedrooms at 44 <u>46.5</u>% (West Berkshire has 29.8%): 	
Hermitage today, socio-economic profile, paragraph 2.19 (p.6)	<p>79.0 <u>68.4</u>% of the resident population aged between 16 and 74 <u>over</u> was economically active, compared with 76.2 <u>65.4</u>% of those in West Berkshire.</p>	
Hermitage today, socio-economic profile, paragraph 2.20 (p.7)	<p>A large proportion of the resident population of Hermitage aged 16 to <u>74 and over</u> that were in employment were in highly skilled occupations. <u>44.1</u>% were employed either as managers, directors or senior officials or in professional occupations compared with <u>38.4</u> 33.3% in West Berkshire.</p>	
Key features, paragraph 2.21, 1 st paragraph (p.7)	<p>Hermitage lies less than 5 miles north-east of Newbury in the heart of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) <u>National Landscape (previously known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)</u>.</p>	<p>Factual modification to reflect the name change of all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs were renamed as National Landscapes.</p>

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification (<u>insertion</u> <u>underlined</u> and <u>deletion</u> as strikethrough)	Justification
		The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.
Hermitage today, Community facilities, paragraph 2.24 (p.8)	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 <u>Playground</u> Park (off Chapel Lane next to the Scout Hut)	Factual modification to provide the correct name of a play area. Hermitage Parish Council have advised that the reference to Pinewood Park is incorrect, and the correct name is Pinewood Playground. The Council consider that an amendment is needed to ensure factual accuracy. The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.
Hermitage today, Community facilities, paragraph 2.25 (p.8)	<u>Holy Trinity</u> Hermitage Parish Church	Factual modification to provide the correct name of the church. Hermitage Parish Council have advised that the correct name of Hermitage Parish Church is Holy Trinity Church. The Council consider that an amendment is needed to ensure factual accuracy. The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.
Hermitage today, Community facilities, paragraph 2.32 (p.9)	Pinewood Park <u>playground</u>	Factual modification to provide the correct name of a play area. Hermitage Parish Council have advised that Pinewood Park is correctly known as Pinewood Playground. The Council consider that an amendment is needed to ensure factual accuracy. The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.
Community facilities, paragraph 2.34, 1 st sentence (p.9)	Located well within the North Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) <u>National Landscape</u> , Hermitage is surrounded...	Factual modification to reflect the name change of all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification (insertion <u>underlined</u> and deletion as strikethrough)	Justification
		<p>The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs were renamed as National Landscapes.</p> <p>The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>
Hermitage today, Local businesses, paragraph 2.43 (p.10)	<p>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. <u>In late-2023, c</u>Construction work has already begun to expand the retail area and parking facilities <u>was completed</u>.</p>	<p>Factual modification to provide an update on the development progress at Hillier Garden Centre.</p> <p>The 'Hermitage today' section of the Plan provides background context on the Neighbourhood Area, and included is an overview of local businesses. This section does not contain any policies.</p> <p>The Hillier Garden Centre is a local business, and at the time of the preparation of the submission version of the Plan, expansion works were in progress. Hermitage Parish Council have advised that construction work is now complete, and the text should be updated to provide a more up-to-date context of the Neighbourhood Area. The Council agree that such a modification would be helpful.</p> <p>The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>
Hermitage today, Shopping, paragraph 2.44 (p.10)	<p>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 <u>Silver Clay Academy, a jewellers that also offers workshops where people can make their own jewellery.</u> an independent supplier of yarn and associated craft supplies. It also holds informal, friendly community knitting and crochet sessions.</p>	<p>Factual modification to provide an update on the retail offer in the Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>The 'Hermitage today' section of the Plan provides background context on the Neighbourhood Area, and included is an overview of the local retail offer. This section does not contain any policies.</p> <p>Yarnfest is referenced as being one shop located within the Neighbourhood Area. Hermitage Parish Council have advised that Yarnfest has been replaced by the Silver Clay Academy, and the text should be updated to provide a more up-to-date</p>

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification (<u>insertion underlined and deletion as strikethrough</u>)	Justification
		<p>context of the Neighbourhood Area. The Council agree that such a modification would be helpful.</p> <p>The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>
Hermitage today, New development, paragraph 2.50 (p.11)	<p>As at April <u>November</u> 20232, the following developments were in the planning pipeline (ie. have permission but have yet to be constructed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pasture behind Charlotte Close - 16 dwellings approved October 2021, <u>with the site being prepared for construction to commence</u> • 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, <u>with construction close to completion.</u> 	<p>Factual modification to provide an update on the development progress of residential developments within the Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>The 'Hermitage today' section of the Plan provides background context on the Neighbourhood Area, and included is an overview of residential developments in the pipeline. This section does not contain any policies.</p> <p>Hermitage Parish Council have advised that the development progress at two sites has changes since the submission version of the Plan was prepared, and the text should be updated to provide a more up-to-date context of the Neighbourhood Area. The Council agree that such a modification would be helpful.</p> <p>The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>
Vision for Hermitage, paragraph 3.2 (p.12)	<p>The village will provide an environment that supports residents of all ages to live, work and enjoy leisure with access to the surrounding AONB <u>National Landscape</u> to enjoy social activities safely and remain a service village for the wider area.</p> <p>The village will provide an environment that supports residents of all ages to live, work and enjoy leisure with access to the surrounding AONB <u>National Landscape</u> to enjoy social activities safely and remain a service village for the wider area.</p>	<p>Factual modification to reflect the name change of all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs were renamed as National Landscapes.</p> <p>This is a minor, non-material change which would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>
Matters not covered by Neighbourhood Plan policies, paragraph 3.5, 2 nd sentence (p.13)	<p>The parish is in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) <u>National Landscape (previously known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)</u>, affording it protection at a national level.</p>	

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification (<u>insertion underlined and deletion as strikethrough</u>)	Justification
Policy HER2 (Design), criteria 2, 2 nd sentence (p.16)	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 <u>National Landscape</u> .	
Policy HER2 (Design), criteria 4, 1 st sentence (p.16)	Building heights and rooflines should generally be no more than two storeys but all buildings should respect the surrounding countryside and AONB <u>National Landscape</u>	
Views, paragraph 5.4, 2 nd sentence (p.19)	Its designation as <u>a</u> AONB <u>National Landscape (previously known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)</u> means that it has a high level of protection provided by the NPPF at national level, complemented by the West Berkshire Local Plan.	
Views, paragraph 5.5, 1 st and 2 nd sentences	However, this does not mean that all development is banned in the <u>a</u> AONB <u>National Landscape</u> . Hermitage village is within the AONB <u>North Wessex Downs National Landscape</u> yet strategic planning policy enables this to continue, reflecting its role as an AONB <u>National Landscape</u> village.	
Views, paragraph 5.6, 3 rd sentence (p.19)	This has been assisted by the large number of detached residential properties in the village. Whilst the heart of the National Landscape <u>AONB</u> is a short distance away, it is easy when it the middle of the village to lose that connection.	
Policy HER5 (Wildlife Friendly-Development), criterion D, 1 st paragraph (p.23)	Development proposals should respect the dark skies that are characteristic of the North Wessex Downs AONB <u>National Landscape</u> .	
Wildlife-friendly design, paragraph 6.11, 1 st sentence (p.24)	The location of the parish within the North Wessex Downs AONB <u>National Landscape (previously known as National Landscape)</u>	
Policy HER7: Local Green Spaces (p.26)	6. Pinewood P playground	Factual modification to provide the correct name of a play area. Hermitage Parish Council have advised that the reference to Pinewood Park is incorrect, and the correct name is Pinewood Playground. The Council consider that an amendment is needed to ensure factual accuracy.

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification (<u>insertion</u> underlined and deletion as strikethrough)	Justification
		The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.
Historic Environment, paragraph 7.18, 1 st sentence (p.40)	Former Police Station , Marlston Road <u>(now East House and Westham)</u>	Factual modification to provide the correct name of a property. The supporting text to policy HER8 refers to the Former Police Station on Marlston Road. Hermitage Parish Council have advised that this is now known as East House and Westham. The Council consider that an amendment is required to ensure factual accuracy. The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.
Historic Environment, paragraph 7.18, 2 nd sentence (p.40)	According to Berkshire Records Office, Hermitage Police Station was built <u>completed on</u> 28 October 1920 at a cost of £3,570.	Factual modification to make clear when Hermitage Police Station was completed. Hermitage Parish Council have advised that Hermitage Police Station was completed, and not built, on 28 October 1920. The Council consider that an amendment is required to ensure factual accuracy. The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.
Historic Environment, paragraph 7.18, final sentence (p.40)	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.	Factual modification to correct a road name. Hermitage Parish Council have advised that the supporting text to policy HER8 includes the incorrect spelling of a road name. The Council consider that an amendment is required to ensure factual accuracy. The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.
Historic Environment, paragraph 7.26 (p.44)	It closed when Simonds Brewery (Reading) was taken over by <u>merged with</u> Courage Barclay.	Factual modification regarding the history of the Simonds Brewery.

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification (insertion <u>underlined</u> and deletion as strikethrough)	Justification
		<p>Hermitage Parish Council have advised that the Simonds Brewery was merged and not taken over by Courage Barclay. The Council agree that an amendment should be made to ensure factual accuracy.</p> <p>The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>
<p>Non-policy actions, table 9.1 (non-land use issues to be addressed), 2nd row (p.51)</p>	<p><u>Engage with residents to consider the provision of</u> Provide play equipment for Lipscomb Close Green</p>	<p>Explanatory modification to provide greater context to one of the non-policy actions.</p> <p>Some aspects of the NDP vision cannot be delivered through planning policies alone because they are not planning matters. Instead, they will need to be delivered by the Parish Council working with the wider community and other organisations.</p> <p>Hermitage Parish Council have advised that, to reflect joint working with the community, the non-policy action needs to be amended to include reference to residents.</p> <p>The Council agree such a modification would provide greater explanation on how the action will be delivered.</p> <p>The non-policy actions are not required to meet the Basic Conditions. The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>

- 5.4. This Decision Statement confirms that the recommendations proposed in the Examiner's report have been considered and accepted, that the Plan has been altered as a result of it, and that it may now be submitted to local referendum.

6. The referendum area

- 6.1. The Council is in agreement with the Examiner's recommendation that there is no policy or proposal significant enough to have an impact beyond the designated Neighbourhood Area. Any referendum which takes place in due course must be contiguous with the boundary of the designated Neighbourhood Area as illustrated in Figure 6.1 below.

Figure 6.1: Hermitage Neighbourhood Area



© Crown copyright and database rights 2023. West Berkshire District Council 0100024151.

Hermitage Parish Council

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2039



Referendum Version

December 2023

Unless otherwise stated, all maps are © Crown copyright and database rights 2022, West Berkshire District Council 0100024151.

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	2
	Purpose of the plan.....	2
	Policy context.....	2
	Monitoring the Plan.....	4
2	LOCAL CONTEXT.....	5
	History of Hermitage.....	5
	Hermitage today.....	6
3	VISION AND OBJECTIVES.....	12
	Challenges for Hermitage.....	12
	Vision for Hermitage.....	12
	Neighbourhood Plan objectives.....	13
	Matters not covered by Neighbourhood Plan policies.....	13
4	HOUSING.....	14
5	DESIGN AND VIEWS.....	16
	Design.....	16
	Views.....	19
6	SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENT.....	21
	Sustainable design.....	21
	Wildlife-friendly design.....	23
	Irreplaceable and wildlife-rich habitats and species.....	24
	Local Green Spaces.....	256
7	HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT.....	34
8	MOVEMENT.....	47
9	NON-POLICY ACTIONS.....	51

List of policies

HER1: Addressing Hermitage’s housing needs.....	14
HER2: Design.....	16
HER3: Countryside views between properties.....	19
HER4: Low energy and energy efficient design, including Sustainable Drainage Systems.....	21
HER5: Wildlife-friendly development.....	23
HER6: Irreplaceable habitats and local wildlife-rich habitats and species.....	24
HER7: Local Green Spaces.....	26
HER8: Non-designated heritage assets.....	34
HER9: Access for walking, cycling and horse riding.....	47

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) and the West Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2022-2037). The Core Strategy, Housing Site Allocations DPD and the 2007 saved policies collectively make up the District Local Plan.
- 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 submitted for examination in March 2023.~~ 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 completed~~ independent examination ~~has been completed.~~ As of late-2023, it is expected that the Local Plan Review will be adopted in September 2024. Upon adoption, the current Local Plan will be superseded.
- ~~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

- 1.12 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 Yattendon 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~~The socio-economic profile of Hermitage is derived from the 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 20121, the population of Hermitage parish was 2,0781,943 persons, living in 766722 household spaces:

- ~~15.1%~~17.4% of the population is aged ~~65~~60 or over, compared with ~~19.5%~~21.7% of the population in West Berkshire district.
- ~~24.1%~~25.4% of the population is aged ~~15~~4 or under, compared with ~~19.0%~~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 20~~21~~1, Hermitage parish had ~~766~~741 dwellings:

- ~~55.2~~54.7% of these dwellings were detached, compared with 33.18% in West Berkshire;
- ~~19.5~~20.5% of dwellings were semi-detached, compared with 32.58% in West Berkshire;
- ~~76.8~~69.8% of properties were owned, which is ~~broadly the same as~~higher than the figure for West Berkshire (~~67.5~~);
- only ~~8.4~~9.1% were social rented properties, whereas the figure for West Berkshire was ~~14.0~~13.8%; and
- Hermitage has a low proportion of 1-bed properties at ~~43.9~~% (West Berkshire has 9.8%) and a high proportion of properties of at least 4 bedrooms at ~~44.4~~6.5% (West Berkshire has ~~29.8~~%):
 - Hermitage's housing stock is dominated by very large, detached properties.

2.19 ~~79.0~~68.4% of the resident population aged ~~between~~16 and ~~74~~over was economically active, compared with ~~76.2~~65.4% of those in West Berkshire.

2.20 A large proportion of the resident population of Hermitage aged 16 ~~to 74~~and over that were in employment were in highly skilled occupations. ~~44.1~~% were employed either as managers, directors or senior officials or in professional occupations compared with ~~38.4~~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 ~~National Landscape (previously known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)~~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 [Playground 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 ~~**Holy Trinity 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 playground~~ - 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 ~~National Landscape 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. ~~In late-2023, c~~Construction work ~~has already begun~~ to expand the retail area and parking facilities ~~was completed~~.

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~~Silver Clay Academy, a jewellers that also offers workshops where people can make their own jewellery, 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-November 2023~~², the following developments ~~we~~^are in the planning pipeline (ie. have permission but have yet to be constructed):

- Pasture behind Charlotte Close - 16 dwellings approved October 2021, with the site being prepared for construction to commence
- 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, with construction close to completion.

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 ~~National Landscape~~~~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~~ National Landscape 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 [National Landscape \(previously known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty\)](#) ~~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](https://www.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.

¹ Arc4 (2021) *Hermitage Housing Needs Survey*

4.4 The Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2016² suggested a housing mix as follows for West Berkshire:

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

4.5 This was taken forward by the West Berkshire Housing Needs Assessment work, published in 2020 and updated in 2022³. 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.

² GL Hearn (2016) *Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment*

³ Icen (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 Book⁴. 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 [National LandscapeAONB](#).
 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 [National LandscapeAONB-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.

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

- 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.

Hermitage's range of architectural styles



- 5.2 The Hermitage Design Guidelines and Codes report⁵ 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
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 [a National Landscape \(previously known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty\)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 [National LandscapeAONB](#). Hermitage village is within the [National Landscape AONB](#) yet strategic planning policy enables this to continue, reflecting its role as a [National Landscape 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 [National Landscape AONB](#) is a short distance away, it is easy when in 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 factors⁶. The design of SuDS should be in accordance with best practice and national standards⁷. It should also be ensured that they are multi-functional and can deliver additional benefits where**

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>

possible, including biodiversity, environmental net gains and water quality. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaption measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure.

- 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.
- 6.3 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 **National Landscape**⁸. 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 Professionals⁸ 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;

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

- 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.
- 6.10 Good outcomes can be achieved by design following good practice guidance, for example by the NHBC Foundation⁹ and the Wildlife Trusts¹⁰.
- 6.11 The location of the parish within the North Wessex Downs [National Landscape \(previously known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty\)](#)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.**

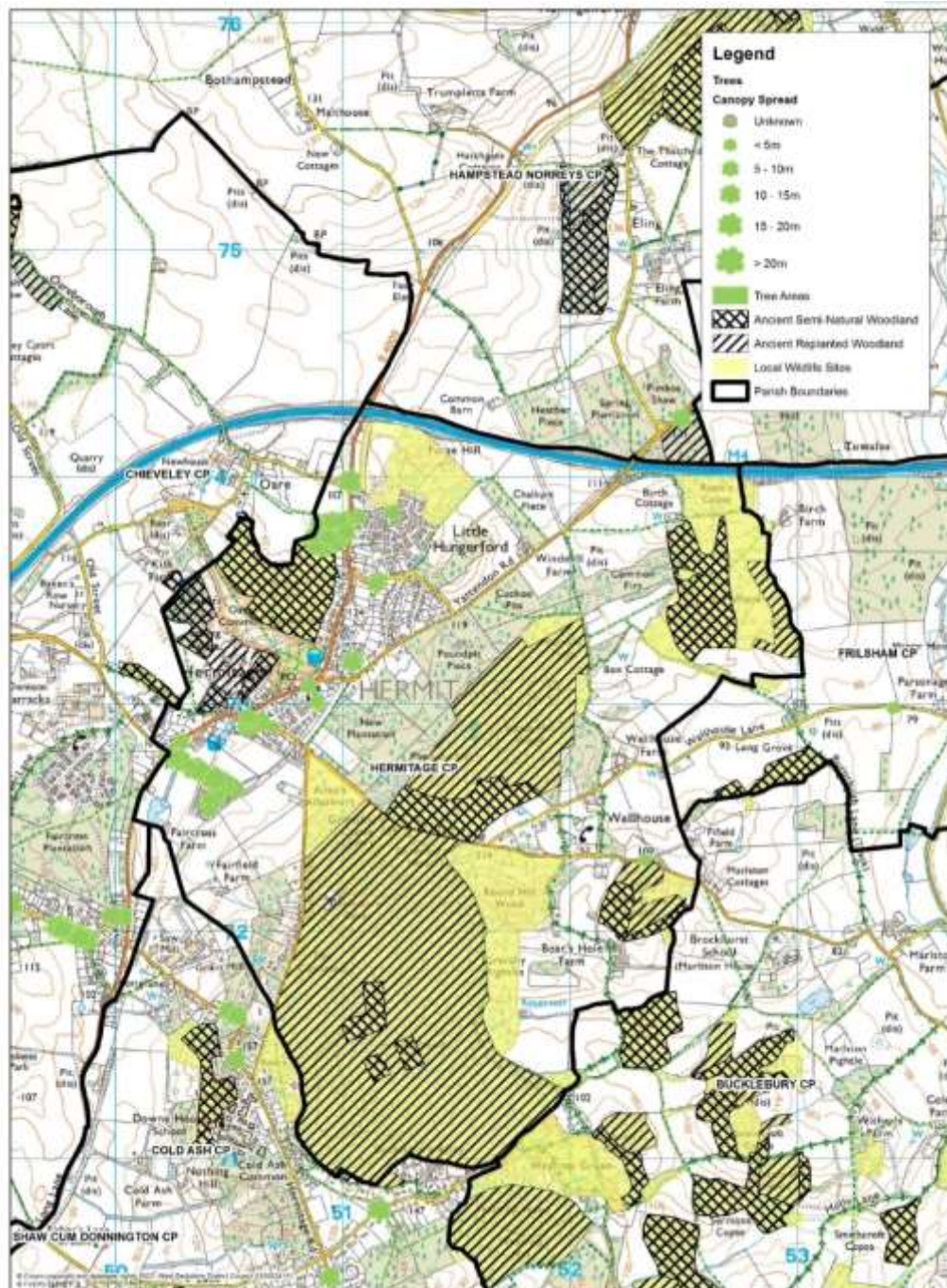
- 6.12 One of the major assets of Hermitage village is that it is surrounded by beautiful countryside. For many reasons it is becoming increasingly important and urgent that the countryside is protected, especially the areas where wildlife in all its forms can flourish. The NPPF also recognises the importance of the natural countryside and requires planning authorities to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by 'protecting and enhancing

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

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



© Crown copyright and database rights 2022, West Berkshire District Council 0100024151

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 features¹¹.

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

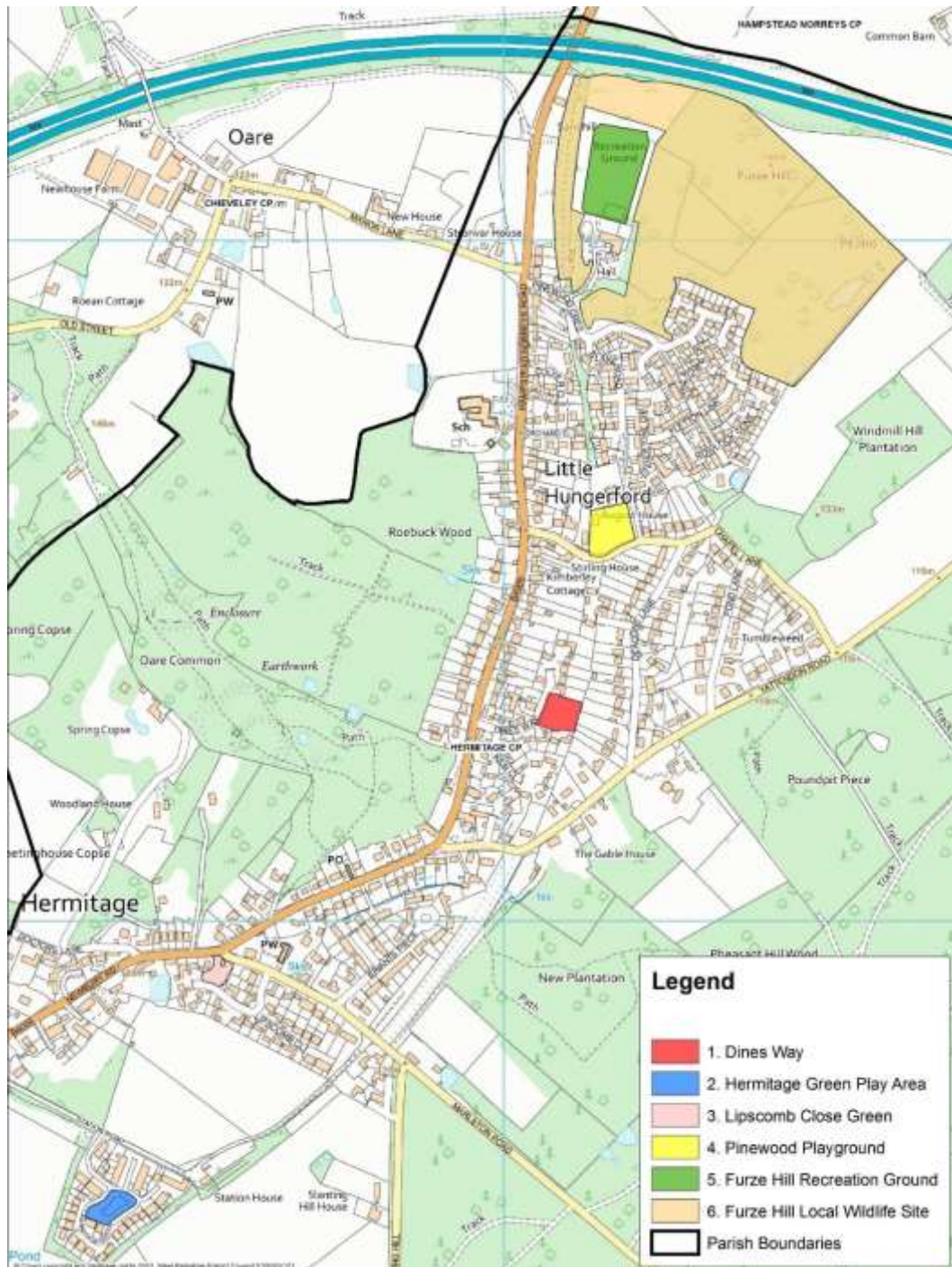
B. Proposals for built development on this Local Green Space will be permitted only in very special circumstances.

- 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.

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/>

- 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:

Figure 6.2: Location of Local Green Spaces



© Crown copyright and database rights 2022, West Berkshire District Council 0100024151

1. Dines Way Green



© Crown copyright and database rights 2022, West Berkshire District Council 0100024151



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



© Crown copyright and database rights 2022, West Berkshire District Council 0100024151



- 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



© Crown copyright and database rights 2022, West Berkshire District Council 0100024151



- 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



© Crown copyright and database rights 2022, West Berkshire District Council 0100024151



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



© Crown copyright and database rights 2022, West Berkshire District Council 0100024151



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



© Crown copyright and database rights 2022, West Berkshire District Council 0100024151



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 (now East House and Westham) - 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-completed on 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~~ merged with 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



© Crown copyright and database rights 2022, West Berkshire District Council 010024151

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



© Crown copyright and database rights 2022, West Berkshire District Council 010024151

- 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 Engage with residents to consider the provision of 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

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

This page is intentionally left blank