

19th March 2024.

To: Councillors Phil Barnett, Vera Barnett, Jo Day, Sam Dibas, Nigel Foot, David Harman, Roger Hunneman, Ian Jee, David Marsh, Vaughan Miller, Andy Moore and Tony Vickers

Substitutes: All remaining Members of the Council

Dear Councillor,

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the **Planning & Highways Committee** on **Monday 25th March 2024 at 7:30 pm.**

The meeting will be held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Place, Newbury, RG14 5AA. The meeting is open to the press and public and will be streamed via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88501346271?pwd=cTJNVkQ1cnBSTE56NEVjZDJPMVFrQT09>

Meeting ID: 885 0134 6271 Passcode: 565269

Kym Heasman
Corporate Services Officer

AGENDA.

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**
To receive any declarations of interest relating to business to be conducted in this meeting and confirmation of any relevant dispensations.
- 3. Minutes (Appendix 1)**
 - 3.1 To approve** the minutes of a meeting of the Planning & Highways Committee held on Monday 26th February 2024.
 - 3.2 Officer's report** on actions from previous meeting.
- 4. Questions and Petitions from Members of the Public**
Questions, in writing, must be with the Corporate Services Officer by 2pm on Friday 22nd March 2024.

Town Hall, Market Place, Newbury, RG14 5AA

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5. Members' Questions and Petitions

Questions, in writing, must be with the Corporate Service Officer by 2pm on Friday 22nd March 2024

6. Sandlesford Park East

To Receive a presentation from Bloor Homes updating the committee on the currently status of Sandlesford Park East application.

7. Schedule of Planning Applications (Appendix 2)

To Comment on the planning applications listed at the attached schedule.

8. Applications for Prior Approval (Appendix 3)

To comment, if relevant, on prior approval applications listed at the attached schedule.

9. Licensing Application (Appendix 4)

To Comment on the licensing application received.

10. Consultation on the draft Hungerford Neighbourhood Development Plan (Regulation 14) (Appendix 5 & 6)

10.1 - To Comment or suggest any alternative wording of Proposals on the Hungerford Neighbourhood Development Plan.

10.2 - To Comment or suggest any alternative wording of Proposals on the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

11. Update from the Flood and Drainage Forum

To Receive an update.

12. Update from The Western Area Planning Committee

Councillor Tony Vickers

To Receive an update on any relevant business from the Western Area Planning Committee.

13. Forward Work Programme for Planning & Highways Committee (Appendix 7)

To Note and to agree any other items that Members resolve to add to the Forward Work Programme.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, NEWBURY TOWN COUNCIL, MARKET PLACE, NEWBURY ON MONDAY 26th FEBRUARY AT 7.30PM.

PRESENT

Councillors, Jo Day, Sam Dibas (19.39pm), Billy Drummond (substitute), Nigel Foot, David Harman, Roger Hunneman, Ian Jee, David Marsh (19.59pm), Andy Moore (Chairperson) and Sarah Slack (substitute)

In Attendance

Kym Heasman, Corporate Services Officer

113. APOLOGIES

Councillor Phil Barnet (Billy Drummond - substitute), Vera Barnett (Sarah Slack - substitute), Vaughan Miller and Tony Vickers.

114. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Corporate Services Officer declared that Councillors Billy Drummond, Nigel Foot and David Marsh are also Members of West Berkshire Council, which is declared as a general interest on their behalf and a dispensation is in place to allow them to partake in discussions relating to West Berkshire Council business.

The Corporate Services Officer made the following statement on behalf of Councillor Nigel Foot and David Marsh who are also Members of West Berkshire Council's Licensing Committee "I wish to make it clear that any comments I may make tonight are only being made in relation to the formulation of the Town Council's view and is not in any way prejudging the way that I may vote when any application is considered by West Berkshire Council. At that time, I will weigh up all the evidence."

115. MINUTES

PROPOSED: Councillor Roger Hunneman

SECONDED: Councillor Ian Jee

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning & Highways Committee held on Monday 29th January 2024, be approved, and signed by the Chairperson.

116. ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

The Corporate Services Officer Reported that the applications received from the planning authority for consultation, these are now accessible via the West Berkshire Council parish online portal. As well as the returning resolutions and comments on the application that are considered by this committee.

117. QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions or petitions from members of the public.

118. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**Question Received form Councillor Elizabeth O'Keeffe:**

"On 4th December 2023 the committee considered a request from an independent pharmacy provider who was having difficulty in opening a much a needed new pharmacy in Newbury. Boots were objecting to NHS England to have the application denied. I believe any objection results in the applicant having to go to appeal. This of course would prolong any application decision. This committee resolved to write to the relevant authority urging them to expedite any suitable application.

You may have seen the item on the front page of NWN on 15th February concerning the matter Mr Chaudhry Abass is still trying to obtain his licence. The reporter mentioned me and referred to my being a former mayor and town councillor, (not a point I made in our brief conversation.) However, this prompted Mr Chaudhry to contact me referring to his earlier communication with NTC. As you will know people do tend to think our Civic mayors have the powers of Municipal Mayors.

From my personal experience I know that we are dreadfully short of pharmacies to meet the public need in Newbury. Why should the community suffer because a large company with a monopoly in town wants to keep its income as high as possible from its prescription numbers. That is the only conclusion I can draw from the objection. I say suffer that is in waiting times, long queues, repeated visits when prescriptions are not available. Not everyone is mobile, has unlimited time or lives nearby. Just look at last week's letter page in NWN and social media. In a free society we have a right to choose.

I ask that this committee write asking again how the application is progressing. I accept that this committee does not have any authority in this matter. However, we do have a responsibility to the people we represent, and they are the ones who are being deprived. They have a right to know what goes on. I could quote other incidents of this behaviour by the large companies."

The Chairperson responded with the following answer:

"We will write to the relevant authoritative bodies".

Question Received form Councillor David Harman:

"Following refusal of the planning application relating to the former Scout Hut on Battery End, would this Council regularise and firmly establish our ownership of the adjoining hedge in the north-east corner of Wash Common Recreation Ground."

The Chairperson responded with the following answer:

"We will do as requested and initiate the process of registering our ownership; further activity on the issue and future care of the hedge will be managed through the Community Services Committee."

Question Received form Councillor Meg Thomas read by Councillor Roger Hunneman:

"We have had requests for at least one pedestrian crossing here (junction of Andover Rd, Essex St & Monks Lane) over the years. It's busy with public footfall and serves two schools and Monument Close. There have been several near misses. Paul Goddard has told me they are aware of the issue and are looking at it in the context of Sandleford Developments. A crossing is vital, especially if a Warren Road exit is to go ahead as proposed. And we would like to see action sooner than this. We understood there would be a crossing as part of the new Vet's scheme, but nothing has appeared."

The Chairperson responded with the following answer:

"We will Write to West Berkshire Council Highways Department".

Question Received form Councillor Roger Hunneman:

"Can this Council ask West Berkshire Council's Highway Dept as to why there is an extensive Pick Up and Drop Off Zone with 20 min waiting allowed on the North side of the Newbury Railway Station whilst on the South Side there is a much smaller Drop Off Zone (only) backed up with a No Parking sign on the wall. Presumably you are not allowed to wait to pick up passengers from the train using this Zone. Why is this the case and why is this more accessible South side of the station treated differently to the North side? After all there is actually more space on the south side to allow a sensible good-sized Pick Up and Drop Off Zone with a 20-minute waiting allowed. Can we as a Council make representations to get this inconvenient arrangement for residents of South Newbury changed."

The Chairperson responded with the following answer:

"We will write to West Berkshire District Council's Highways Department".

119. SANDLEFORD PARK EAST

The presentation updating the committee on the currently status of Sandleford Park East application has been deferred to the next schedule meeting.

120. SCHEDULE OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Resolved that the observations recorded at Appendix 1 to these minutes be submitted to the planning authority.

121. SCHEDULE OF PRIOR APPROVAL APPLICATIONS

Resolved that the observations recorded at Appendix 2 to these minutes be submitted to the planning authority.

122. SCHEDULE OF LICENSING APPLICATIONS

It was agreed that the following observation be submitted:

- **Premises Licence ref:** Case reference 23825 (New) 13 Northbrook Street, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 1DJ

Applicant: Camp Hopson (Newbury) Ltd

No objection.**123. UPDATE FROM THE WESTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Member received and update on the Western Area Planning Committee meeting, in which two applications relevant to the Newbury parish were discussed.

- Covered Reservoir at Speen – 3 applications were considered in relation to the Reservoir and all 3 were approved.
- Scout Hut, Battery End, Wash Common – The Western Area Planning Committee refused the application on the Grounds of over development and Potential damage caused to the hedge.

124. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2023/24

The Forward work Programme was received and noted by the committee with the additional amendments.

- To receive the deferred presentation of Sandford East at meeting Scheduled Monday 25th March 2024.
- To Considered the Public Rights of Way on the Forward work programme at the meeting Scheduled Monday 22nd April 2024.

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRPERSON DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 20.58 HRS

CHAIRPERSON

Signature: _____ Date: _____

**PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE MEETING
SCHEDULE OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS – RESOLUTIONS**

RUNNING ORDER	RESOLUTION	APPLICATION NUMBER	LOCATION AND APPLICANT	PROPOSAL
1	Objection / Comment: - Overdevelopment. - Concerns of inadequate parking.	24/00140/FUL	15 Cresswell Road, Newbury for BPC Property Limited	Proposed new 3no bedroom detached dwelling with 2no. parking spaces for cars, cycle storage, bin storage and private amenity on land adjacent to the donor property no.15 Cresswell Road, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 2PQ
2	Objection / Comment: Windows are out of keeping with original and other houses.	24/00043/FUL	30 Donnington Square, Newbury for Mr Jack Tribble	Retrospective application of new UPVC windows.
3	No objection	24/00170/HOUSE	14 Linden Close, Newbury for Mr & Mrs Burden	Proposed two storey side annexe for family use ancillary to the main dwelling.
4	No objection / Comment: Provided it is consistent with what is there and that the lights have a minimal impact on bats and insects in the area.	24/00219/FUL	Newbury Lawn Tennis Club Poplar Place Newbury for Newbury Tennis Club	Section 73 Variation of Condition 5 (Floodlighting) of previously approved application 16/03368/FUL - Section 73 Variation of Condition 5 - (Floodlighting) of previous application 15/03380/FUL - Variation of Condition Extension of floodlighting from two tennis courts to all four courts.
5	No objection	24/00248/HOUSE	20 Castle Grove Newbury for Mr & Mrs Theodore	Retrospective: Outbuilding at rear of existing garage.
6	No objection	24/00185/COND	Gandlake House London Road Newbury for Envision Contracting Ltd	Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Conditions 3 and 4 (2) and (3) of planning permission 22/00725/PACOU Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: Change of use from offices (Use Class E (G)(i) to dwellinghouses (Use Class C3), to provide 8 self-contained flats.

7	No objection	24/00144/HOUSE	1 Sutherlands Newbury for Mrs Sarah Wernham.	Demolition of linked garage and gym; Erection of single-storey wraparound extension creating a self-contained annex; Annex comprises 1no bedroom, kitchenette/dining/living space, bathroom, WC and storage. Creation of additional off-road parking space.
8	<p>Objection / Comment: In line with the Previous Comments Submitted 18.09.2023.</p> <p>The Sole proposed access point to the site, Warren Road, runs alongside Park House School, is opposite a day nursery and is less than 30 meters from Falkland Primary School. It is also next to one church, and opposite another. A Sainsbury's filling station and supermarket and the main entrance to Park House are Close by.</p> <p>This generates a lot of daily activity involving hundreds of children, and a large amount of traffic, particularly at pick-up and drop-off times.</p> <p>There are already long queues of cars along Andover Road, at these periods, from the Monks Lane junction to the north, to Gorselands to the south. The road network is already stretched to</p>	23/01585/OUTMAJ	Sandleford Park West New Warren Farm Warren Road Newbury for Donnington New Homes	Outline application for the phased delivery of up to 360 dwellings; demolition of Warren House and other buildings; widening of Warren Road to provide access through to Andover Road to the west; emergency access via Kendrick Road; provision of open space; drainage, walking, cycling, green and other associated infrastructure, including 40% affordable housing provision. All matters to be reserved, except for access into the site for vehicles, pedestrians and cycles along the Warren Road corridor.

	<p>capacity. It beggars' belief that the extra traffic generated by this development would not make the problem worse, during both construction of the site and beyond.</p> <p>The Hugh increase in traffic will generate pollution which in the committee's view represents a risk to the health and wellbeing of children. It will make local roads less safe. Kendrick Road is not fit for purpose as an emergency access route.</p> <p>Even the inspector at the Bloor Homes appeal side that Warren Road with unsuitable.</p>			
9	Support / Comment: Consideration to be given to the maintenance of drainage ditches and to drainage of the entrance area.	23/01361/FULMAJ	Land North of Spring Gardens Andover Drove Wash Water Newbury for Calleva Community Energy Ltd.	The installation and operation of a solar farm with ancillary equipment including inverter and substation house, security cameras, deer fence, new highway access and landscaping scheme.
10	No objection	23/01423/FUL	Phoenix House, 9 London Road, Newbury for Magnolia Homes Ltd & Santorini Holdings	The Change of Use from offices (Use Class E) to provide 15 residential units (Use Class C3) with associated works.
11	No objection	23/01424/LBC	Phoenix House, 9 London Road, Newbury for Magnolia Homes Ltd & Santorini Holdings	The Change of Use from offices (Use Class E) to provide 15 residential units (Use Class C3) with associated works.
12	No objection – Members noted minor changes to the applications.	23/01666/FULMAJ	17 Bartholomew Street Newbury for Eden Retirement	Erection of a part four and part five storey 68 bed care home (class c2) with access and

				parking provisions (existing office building to be demolished)
13	No objection	24/00190/LBC	St Nicolas House West Mills Newbury for St Nicolas Church Newbury	Replace hardwood window sills on North and East elevations which are rotten. We want to replace like for like - no variations.

APPENDIX 1**APPLICATION FOR PRIOR APPROVAL**

RUNNING ORDER	RESOLUTION	APPLICATION NUMBER	LOCATION AND APPLICANT	PROPOSAL
1	No Objection	24/00133/PASHE	53 Queens Road Newbury for Mr & Mrs Howson	Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed Larger Home Extension: Single storey rear extension. Dimensions 6m from rear wall, 2.5m maximum height, 2.20m eaves height.

**Planning and Highways Committee Meeting
Schedule of Planning Applications to be considered.**

Monday 25th March 2024

Running Order	Ward	Application Number	Location and Applicant	Proposal
1.	CLAY HILL	24/00348/FUL	Coley Farm Stoney Lane Ashmore Green Thatcham for CALA Homes Chiltern Ltd	Erection of 6 dwellings with associated access, car parking and landscaping.
2.	EAST FIELDS	23/01100/RESMAJ	History 3 Newbury Racecourse, Racecourse Road Newbury for David Wilson Homes (Southern)	Application for Approval of Reserved Matters following Outline Approval 09/00971/OUTMAJ - Redevelopment of Newbury Racecourse to provide new and enhanced leisure, racing, administrative, and visitors facilities; new hotel and hostel; replacement children's nursery; the permanent retention of the Mill Reef Stand; replacement maintenance buildings, yard and workshops; replacement golf club house and apartment, floodlit driving range and remodelling of the golf course; up to 1,500 dwellings; local centre; combined heat and power district heating system; new and improved accesses; parking for visitors, staff and residents; open space and landscaping, signage, service infrastructure, and associated uses (minor changes to application 08/02201/OUTMAJ). Matters to be considered: Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and scale.
3.	EAST FIELDS	23/02667/RESMAJ	History 2 Newbury Racecourse Racecourse Road Newbury for David Wilson Homes (Southern)	23/02667/RESMAJ Application for Approval of Reserved Matters following Outline Approval 14/03109/OUTMAJ - Section 73: To vary condition 32: No more than 250 dwellings shall be completed prior to the completion and opening to traffic of a new bridge, to 421 dwellings. Of approved reference 09/00971/OUTMAJ for redevelopment of Newbury Racecourse to provide new and enhanced leisure, racing, administrative and visitors facilities; new hotel and hostel; replacement children's nursery; permanent retention of the Mill Reef Stand; replacement maintenance buildings, yard and workshops; replacement golf club house and apartment, floodlit driving range and remodelling of golf course; up to 1,500 dwellings. Matters to be considered: Appearance, Landscaping, Layout And Scale.
4.	SPEENHAMLAND	24/00313/LBC	Wessex House 22 Oxford Road Newbury for Greenham Trust	Change of use of original building at Wessex House to HMO with 7 bedrooms, communal kitchen/dining area and communal bathrooms, and 7 flatlets in annexe with ancillary meeting room and laundry area.

5.	SPEENHAMLAND	24/00312/FUL	Wessex House 22 Oxford Road Newbury for Greenham Trust	Change of use of original building at Wessex House to HMO with 7 bedrooms, communal kitchen/dining area and communal bathrooms, and 7 flatlets in annexe with ancillary meeting room and laundry area.
6.	WEST FIELDS	24/00069/FUL	Festival House 39 Oxford Street Newbury for Quintons (Newbury) Limited	Internal Alterations to regularise the changes to the fabric of building and to facilitate the Change of Use permitted under 23/01031/FUL (B1 office use to C3 residential use (single residential dwelling))
7.	WEST FIELDS	23/02094/FULMAJ	The Mall The Kennet Centre Newbury for Lochailort Newbury Ltd	Full planning permission for the redevelopment of the Kennet Centre comprising the partial demolition of the existing building on site and the development of new residential dwellings (Use Class C3) and residents ancillary facilities; commercial, business and service floorspace including office (Class E (a, b, c, d, e, f, and g)); access, parking, and cycle parking; landscaping and open space; sustainable energy installations; associated works, and alterations to the retained Vue Cinema and multi storey car park.
8.	WEST FIELDS	24/00428/FUL	Radnor House 28 Bartholomew Street Newbury for Heartwood Group	S73: Variation of Conditions 2 (Approved Plans), 3 (CMS) and 4 (Cycle Parking) of previously approved application 21/02176/FUL: Change of use of 28 and 28A from office use (Class E) to hotel use (Class C1) and use of 26 as a restaurant with ancillary flexible work space (as permitted under the current use of the building under Class E)
9.	WEST FIELDS	24/00249/LBC	Radnor House 28 Bartholomew Street Newbury for Heartwood Group	S73: Variation of Conditions 2 (Approved Plans), 3 (CMS) and 4 (Cycle Parking) of previously approved application 21/02176/FUL: Change of use of 28 and 28A from office use (Class E) to hotel use (Class C1) and use of 26 as a restaurant with ancillary flexible work space (as permitted under the current use of the building under Class E)
10.	WEST FIELDS	24/00398/FUL	The Old Farmhouse 3 Kennet Road Newbury for Four Acre	Erection of a replacement dwelling (consented under planning reference: 23/00870/FUL for the change of use of outbuilding to one dwelling at The Old Farmhouse 3 Kennet Road Newbury RG14 5JA) together with associated cycle, refuse, EV charging, and landscape works.
11.	WEST FIELDS	24/00376/FUL	81 - 82 Northbrook Street Newbury for Rosedale Property Holdings Limited	Change of use of part (rear) ground-floor, first and second floors (Use Class E) to 7no. self-contained (2no. one-bedroom and 5no. two-bedroom) residential units (Use Class C3); together with provision of balconies, alterations to elevations, bicycle parking, and residential and commercial refuse facilities

Application for Prior Approval
Monday 25th March 2024

These are applications for Prior Approval under the 2013 amendments to Permitted Development. Because West Berkshire Council are required to inform nearby residents and display a public notice, West Berkshire Council is notifying the Parish / Town Council of the proposals in case interested parties should contact us. However, **we are not required to comment**, and the decision can only be taken based on the criteria set out in The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2013 [SI 2013No1101]. **Please be aware NTC are not allocated plans for us to consider**, but on-line details are available via the Application Number link.

Running Order	Ward	Application Number	Location and Applicant	Proposal
1.	EAST FIELDS	24/00315/PACOU	West Street House West Street Newbury for BMR Edgware Ltd	Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: The proposal comprises the change of use of all four floors of the existing building (ground-third) from office floorspace (Class E) to provide 2,810 sqm of residential floor space (Class C3). This proposal seeks to deliver 49 self-contained units.

Planning and Highways Committee Meeting
Schedule of Licensing Applications

Monday 25th March 2024

Licence	Applicant(S)	Premises
Licensing Act 2003 (Premises Licences & Club Premises Certificates) Regulations 2005 Premises Licence – New Ref: 24039	Applicant: West W Holding Ltd	Location: Le Otto Campana, 1-2 Eight Bells Arcade, Bartholomew Street, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 5DY Proposal: Supply of Alcohol (on and off sales) Monday to Sunday 10:00 to 23:00

Application for a premises licence to be granted under the Licensing Act 2003

I/We West W Holding Ltd

(Insert name(s) of applicant)

apply for a premises licence under section 17 of the Licensing Act 2003 for the premises described in Part 1 below (the premises) and I/we are making this application to you as the relevant licensing authority in accordance with section 12 of the Licensing Act 2003

Part 1 – Premises details

Postal address of premises or, if none, ordnance survey map reference or description.			
Le Otto Campane 1-2 Eight Bells Arcade Bartholomew street			
Post town	Newbury	Postcode	RG14 5DY

Telephone number at premises (if any)	
Non-domestic rateable value of premises	£ 18,000 Band B

Part 2 - Applicant details

Please state whether you are applying for a premises licence as **Please tick as appropriate.**

- a) an individual or individuals * please complete section (A)
- b) a person other than an individual *
 - i as a limited company/limited liability partnership please complete section (B)
 - ii as a partnership (other than limited liability) please complete section (B)
 - iii as an unincorporated association or please complete section (B)
 - iv other (for example a statutory corporation) please complete section (B)
- c) a recognised club please complete section (B)
- d) a charity please complete section (B)
- e) the proprietor of an educational establishment please complete section (B)
- f) a health service body please complete section (B)
- g) a person who is registered under Part 2 of the Care Standards Act 2000 (c14) in respect of an independent hospital in Wales. please complete section (B)
- ga) a person who is registered under Chapter 2 of Part 1 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (within the meaning of that Part) in an independent hospital in England. please complete section (B)
- h) the chief officer of police of a police force in England and Wales please complete section (B)

* If you are applying as a person described in (a) or (b) please confirm (by ticking yes to one box below):

I am carrying on or proposing to carry on a business which involves the use of the premises for licensable activities; or

I am making the application pursuant to a statutory function or

a function discharged by virtue of Her Majesty's prerogative

(A) INDIVIDUAL APPLICANTS (fill in as applicable)

Mr <input type="checkbox"/>	Mrs <input type="checkbox"/>	Miss <input type="checkbox"/>	Ms <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Title (for example, Rev)	
Surname			First names		
Date of birth		I am 18 years old or over <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Please tick yes	
Nationality					
Current residential address if different from premises address					
Post town				Postcode	
Daytime contact telephone number					
E-mail address (optional)					
Where applicable (if demonstrating a right to work via the Home Office online right to work checking service), the 9-digit 'share code' provided to the applicant by that service (please see note 15 for information)					

SECOND INDIVIDUAL APPLICANT (if applicable)

Mr <input type="checkbox"/>	Mrs <input type="checkbox"/>	Miss <input type="checkbox"/>	Ms <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Title (for example, Rev)	
Surname			First names		
Date of birth		I am 18 years old or over <input type="checkbox"/>		Please tick yes	
Nationality					
Where applicable (if demonstrating a right to work via the Home Office online right to work checking service), the 9-digit 'share code' provided to the applicant by that service: (please see note 15 for information)					

Current residential address if different from premises address			
Post town		Postcode	
Daytime contact telephone number			
E-mail address (optional)			

(B) OTHER APPLICANTS

Please provide name and registered address of applicant in full. Where appropriate please give any registered number. In the case of a partnership or other joint venture (other than a body corporate), please give the name and address of each party concerned.

Name West W Holding Ltd
Address 7 September Court Craven Road Newbury RG14 5BZ
Registered number (where applicable) 14919125
Description of applicant (for example, partnership, company, unincorporated association etc.)
Telephone number (if any)
E-mail address (optional)

Part 3 Operating Schedule

When do you want the premises licence to start?

DD	MM	YYYY
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

If you wish the licence to be valid only for a limited period, when do you want it to end?

DD	MM	YYYY
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Please give a general description of the premises (please read guidance note 1)

A high class restaurant, serving the local community, high quality food and service.

If 5,000 or more people are expected to attend the premises at any one time, please state the number expected to attend.

What licensable activities do you intend to carry on from the premises?

(please see sections 1 and 14 and Schedules 1 and 2 to the Licensing Act 2003)

Provision of regulated entertainment (please read guidance note 2)

Please tick all that apply

- a) plays (if ticking yes, fill in box A)
- b) films (if ticking yes, fill in box B)
- c) indoor sporting events (if ticking yes, fill in box C)
- d) boxing or wrestling entertainment (if ticking yes, fill in box D)
- e) live music (if ticking yes, fill in box E)
- f) recorded music (if ticking yes, fill in box F)
- g) performances of dance (if ticking yes, fill in box G)
- h) anything of a similar description to that falling within (e), (f) or (g) (if ticking yes, fill in box H)

Provision of late night refreshment (if ticking yes, fill in box I)

Supply of alcohol (if ticking yes, fill in box J)

In all cases complete boxes K, L and M

A

Plays Standard days and timings (please read guidance note 7)			<u>Will the performance of a play take place indoors or outdoors or both – please tick</u> (please read guidance note 3)	Indoors	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Outdoors	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day	Start	Finish	<u>Please give further details here</u> (please read guidance note 4)		
Mon					
Tue					
			<u>State any seasonal variations for performing plays</u> (please read guidance note 5)		
Wed					
Thur					
			<u>Non-standard timings. Where you intend to use the premises for the performance of plays at different times to those listed in the column on the left, please list</u> (please read guidance note 6)		
Fri					
Sat					
Sun					

B

Films Standard days and timings (please read guidance note 7)			Will the exhibition of films take place indoors or outdoors or both – please tick (please read guidance note 3)	Indoors	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Outdoors	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day	Start	Finish	Please give further details here (please read guidance note 4)		
Mon					
Tue			State any seasonal variations for the exhibition of films (please read guidance note 5)		
Wed					
Thur			Non-standard timings. Where you intend to use the premises for the exhibition of films at different times to those listed in the column on the left, please list (please read guidance note 6)		
Fri					
Sat					
Sun					

C

Indoor sporting events Standard days and timings (please read guidance note 7)			<u>Please give further details</u> (please read guidance note 4)
Day	Start	Finish	
Mon			
Tue			<u>State any seasonal variations for indoor sporting events</u> (please read guidance note 5)
Wed			
Thur			<u>Non-standard timings. Where you intend to use the premises for indoor sporting events at different times to those listed in the column on the left, please list</u> (please read guidance note 6)
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

D

Boxing or wrestling entertainments. Standard days and timings (please read guidance note 7)			Will the boxing or wrestling entertainment take place indoors or outdoors or both – please tick (please read guidance note 3)	Indoors	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Outdoors	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day	Start	Finish	Please give further details here (please read guidance note 4)		
Mon					
			State any seasonal variations for boxing or wrestling entertainment (please read guidance note 5)		
Tue					
			Non-standard timings. Where you intend to use the premises for boxing or wrestling entertainment at different times to those listed in the column on the left, please list (please read guidance note 6)		
Wed					
Thur					
Fri					
Sat					
Sun					

E

Live music Standard days and timings (please read guidance note 7)			Will the performance of live music take place indoors or outdoors or both – please tick (please read guidance note 3)		Indoors <input type="checkbox"/>
					Outdoors <input type="checkbox"/>
					Both <input type="checkbox"/>
Day	Start	Finish	Please give further details here (please read guidance note 4)		
Mon					
			State any seasonal variations for the performance of live music (please read guidance note 5)		
Tue					
			Non-standard timings. Where you intend to use the premises for the performance of live music at different times to those listed in the column on the left, please list (please read guidance note 6)		
Wed					
Thur					
Fri					
Sat					
Sun					

F

Recorded music. Standard days and timings (please read guidance note 7)			<u>Will the playing of recorded music take place indoors or outdoors or both – please tick</u> (please read guidance note 3)	Indoors	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Outdoors	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day	Start	Finish	<u>Please give further details here</u> (please read guidance note 4)		
Mon					
			<u>State any seasonal variations for the playing of recorded music</u> (please read guidance note 5)		
Tue					
			<u>Non-standard timings. Where you intend to use the premises for the playing of recorded music at different times to those listed in the column on the left, please list</u> (please read guidance note 6)		
Wed					
Thur					
Fri					
Sat					
Sun					

G

Performances of dance Standard days and timings (please read guidance note 7)			<u>Will the performance of dance take place indoors or outdoors or both – please tick</u> (please read guidance note 3)	Indoors	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Outdoors	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day	Start	Finish	<u>Please give further details here</u> (please read guidance note 4)		
Mon					
			<u>State any seasonal variations for the performance of dance</u> (please read guidance note 5)		
Tue					
			<u>Non-standard timings. Where you intend to use the premises for the performance of dance at different times to those listed in the column on the left, please list</u> (please read guidance note 6)		
Wed					
Thur					
Fri					
Sat					
Sun					

H

Anything of a similar description to that falling within (e), (f) or (g) Standard days and timings (please read guidance note 7)			Please give a description of the type of entertainment you will be providing.		
Day	Start	Finish	<u>Will this entertainment take place indoors or outdoors or both – please tick</u> (please read guidance note 3)	Indoors	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mon				Outdoors	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tue			<u>Please give further details here</u> (please read guidance note 4)		
Wed					
Thur			<u>State any seasonal variations for entertainment of a similar description to that falling within (e), (f) or (g)</u> (please read guidance note 5)		
Fri					
Sat			<u>Non-standard timings. Where you intend to use the premises for the entertainment of a similar description to that falling within (e), (f) or (g) at different times to those listed in the column on the left, please list</u> (please read guidance note 6)		
Sun					

I

Late night refreshment Standard days and timings (please read guidance note 7)			Will the provision of late night refreshment take place indoors or outdoors or both – please tick (please read guidance note 3)	Indoors	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Outdoors	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day	Start	Finish		Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mon				<u>Please give further details here</u> (please read guidance note 4)	
Tue					
Wed			<u>State any seasonal variations for the provision of late night refreshment</u> (please read guidance note 5)		
Thur					
Fri			<u>Non-standard timings. Where you intend to use the premises for the provision of late night refreshment at different times, to those listed in the column on the left, please list</u> (please read guidance note 6)		
Sat					
Sun					

J

Supply of alcohol Standard days and timings (please read guidance note 7)			Will the supply of alcohol be for consumption – please tick (please read guidance note 8)	On the premises	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Day	Start	Finish		Off the premises	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mon	1000	2300	State any seasonal variations for the supply of alcohol (please read guidance note 5) From the start of permitted hours New Years Eve to the close of permitted hours New Years Day		
Tue	1000	2300			
Wed	1000	2300			
Thur	1000	2300		Non-standard timings. Where you intend to use the premises for the supply of alcohol at different times to those listed in the column on the left, please list (please read guidance note 6)	
Fri	1000	2300			
Sat	1000	2300			
Sun	1000	2300			

State the name and details of the individual whom you wish to specify on the licence as designated premises supervisor (Please see declaration about the entitlement to work in the checklist at the end of the form):

Name Ervis Koloshi

Please highlight any adult entertainment or services, activities, other entertainment or matters ancillary to the use of the premises that may give rise to concern in respect of children (please read guidance note 9).

Not applicable

L

Hours premises are open to the public. Standard days and timings (please read guidance note 7)			State any seasonal variations (please read guidance note 5) From the start of permitted hours New Years Eve to the close of permitted hours New Years Day
Day	Start	Finish	Non-standard timings. Where you intend the premises to be open to the public at different times from those listed in the column on the left, please list (please read guidance note 6) From the start of permitted hours New Years Eve to the close of permitted hours New Years Day
Mon	0700	2330	
Tue	0700	2330	
Wed	0700	2330	
Thur	0700	2330	
Fri	0700	2330	
Sat	0700	2330	
Sun	0700	2330	

M

Describe the steps you intend to take to promote the four licensing objectives:

a) General – all four licensing objectives (b, c, d, and e) (please read guidance note 10)

The premises will have a positive impact on the community, which includes employees, suppliers, customers, the environment, and the people in the local area. It will always show due diligence to the licensing objectives and ensure it has a positive impact.

Policies and procedures will be in place for the safe and efficient running of the premises and for events, including (not least):

1. Staff training and operations manual
2. Refusals log
3. Challenge 25
4. DPS Authorisations

As the applicant, I will ensure that I fully uphold all of the licensing objectives, at all times.

I have therefore submitted a robust operating schedule with reasonable hours of operation, demonstrating a commitment to due diligence at the premises.

b) The prevention of crime and disorder

CCTV will be installed, operated, and fully maintained at all times; images will be retained for at least 28 days and be produced on request of any Responsible Authority. The CCTV will be operational at all times whilst the premises are trading.

Warning notices will be displayed in public areas of the premises advising that CCTV is in operation. .

A refusals register will be maintained at all times, and will be checked and signed off by the DPS at regular intervals. These will be made available for inspection by any Responsible Authority, upon reasonable request.

Customers carrying open or sealed bottles or glasses will not be admitted to the premises at any time.

Customers will not be permitted to take open containers of alcoholic drinks from the premises.

c) Public safety

The premises licence holder or DPS will carry out pre-opening checks of the restaurant, to ensure that there are no risks to patrons and that all safety precautions are in place.

The licence holder will ensure that all staff receive appropriate staff training. The licence holder would ensure that all staff are aware of their social and legal obligations and their responsibilities regarding the sale of alcohol.

All safety certificates and inspection reports would be kept on site and made available by officers of relevant statutory bodies.

The premises will comply with all food safety regulations. The staff involved in food preparation will be fully trained.

d) The prevention of public nuisance

As the Licence holder, I will ensure that the disturbance caused to the general public is kept to a minimum, signage will be placed in a prominent place near the exit, asking customers to respect our neighbours.

All doors and windows will be kept closed when music is played (although its generally ambient background music), other than for access and egress.

All staff will ensure that the frontage of the restaurant is checked regularly for litter and rubbish, clearing any debris away.

No rubbish, including bottles, shall be moved, removed, or placed in outside areas between 2300hours and 0800hours.

As and when deliveries are made to customers, the third party will ensure they carry out Challenge 25 polices, deliveries will only be made to residential/commercial addresses with a post code and not to open space or public roads.

e) The protection of children from harm

A challenge 25 policy is in place and only recognised forms of ID will be accepted. {PASS accredited ID, passport, or photo driving licence}.

Checklist:

Please tick to indicate agreement

- I have made or enclosed payment of the fee.
- I have enclosed the plan of the premises.


- I have sent copies of this application and the plan to responsible authorities and others where applicable.
- I have enclosed the consent form completed by the individual I wish to be designated premises supervisor, if applicable.
- I understand that I must now advertise my application.
- I understand that if I do not comply with the above requirements my application will be rejected.
- [Applicable to all individual applicants, including those in a partnership which is not a limited liability partnership, but not companies or limited liability partnerships] I have included documents demonstrating my entitlement to work in the United Kingdom or my share code issued by the Home Office online right to work checking service (please read note 15).

IT IS AN OFFENCE, UNDER SECTION 158 OF THE LICENSING ACT 2003, TO MAKE A FALSE STATEMENT IN OR IN CONNECTION WITH THIS APPLICATION. THOSE WHO MAKE A FALSE STATEMENT MAY BE LIABLE ON SUMMARY CONVICTION TO A FINE OF ANY AMOUNT.

IT IS AN OFFENCE UNDER SECTION 24B OF THE IMMIGRATION ACT 1971 FOR A PERSON TO WORK WHEN THEY KNOW, OR HAVE REASONABLE CAUSE TO BELIEVE, THAT THEY ARE DISQUALIFIED FROM DOING SO BY REASON OF THEIR IMMIGRATION STATUS. THOSE WHO EMPLOY AN ADULT WITHOUT LEAVE OR WHO IS SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS AS TO EMPLOYMENT WILL BE LIABLE TO A CIVIL PENALTY UNDER SECTION 15 OF THE IMMIGRATION, ASYLUM AND NATIONALITY ACT 2006 AND PURSUANT TO SECTION 21 OF THE SAME ACT, WILL BE COMMITTING AN OFFENCE WHERE THEY DO SO IN THE KNOWLEDGE, OR WITH REASONABLE CAUSE TO BELIEVE, THAT THE EMPLOYEE IS DISQUALIFIED.

Part 4 – Signatures (please read guidance note 11)

Signature of applicant or applicant’s solicitor or other duly authorised agent (see guidance note 12). **If signing on behalf of the applicant, please state in what capacity.**

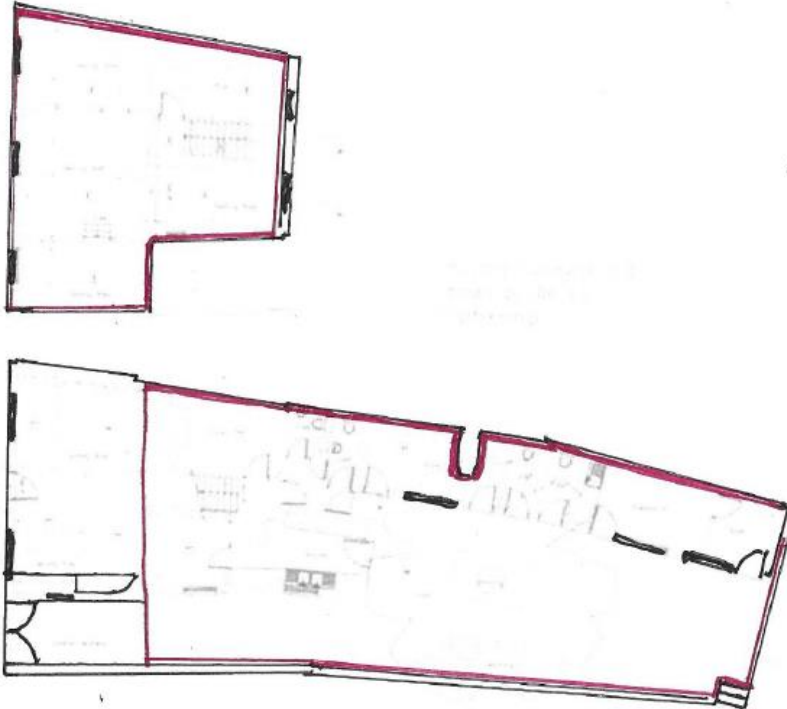
Declaration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Applicable to individual applicants only, including those in a partnership which is not a limited liability partnership] I understand I am not entitled to be issued with a licence if I do not have the entitlement to live and work in the UK (or if I am subject to a condition preventing me from doing work relating to the carrying on of a licensable activity) and that my licence will become invalid if I cease to be entitled to live and work in the UK (please read guidance note 15). • The DPS named in this application form is entitled to work in the UK (and is not subject to conditions preventing him or her from doing work relating to a licensable activity) and I have seen a copy of his or her proof of entitlement to work, or have conducted an online right to work check using the Home Office online right to work checking service which confirmed their right to work (please see note 15)
Signature	

Date	11 March 2024
Capacity	Agent on behalf of the applicant (Licence Leader Ltd)

For joint applications, signature of 2nd applicant or 2nd applicant's solicitor or other authorised agent (please read guidance note 13). If signing on behalf of the applicant, please state in what capacity.

Signature	
Date	
Capacity	

<p>Contact name (where not previously given) and postal address for correspondence associated with this application (please read guidance note 14)</p> <p>Rob Edge Licence Leader Ltd 25, Hemyock Road Selly Oak</p>			
Post town	Birmingham	Postcode	B29 4DG
Telephone number (if any)	07982917819		
<p>If you would prefer us to correspond with you by e-mail, your e-mail address (optional)</p> <p>rob.edge@licence-leader.co.uk</p>			



LICENCE LEADER
LICENSING MADE EASY

Licence Leader Ltd

www.licence-leader.co.uk
rob.edge@licence-leader.co.uk

Rob. 07982917819

Premises Licence
Plans- 2 pages

1-2 Eight Bells Arcade
Bartholomew street
Newbury
RG14 5DY

Job No. 014.9
Drawing prepared from
information supplied
Scale 1:50

Key.

WC – Toilets

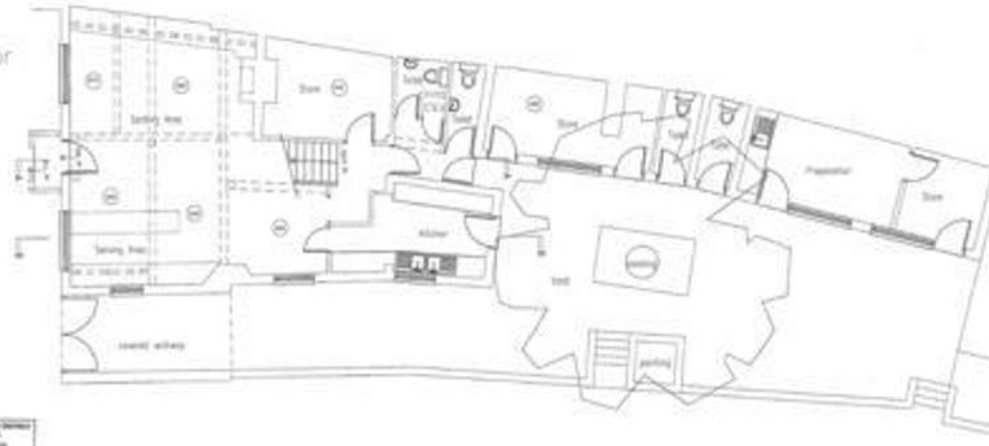
Red Line – Licensable Area

First Floor



Building surveyed and
drawn by Welling
Partnership

Ground Floor



Scale 1:500

Scale 1:500

Hungerford Town Council

Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan 2024-2041

**Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) Version
December 2023**



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Photos

Front cover photo: Market Day on the High Street. Credit: Moore-Photographics. There are several other photos in the plan from Moore-Photographics which are abbreviated as *M-P.

All other photos have been donated by members of the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan Group.

1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the plan

- 1.1 This document represents the Neighbourhood Plan for Hungerford parish for the period 2023 to 2041. The Plan contains a vision for the future of Hungerford and sets out clear planning policies to realise this vision.
- 1.2 The Plan builds on the extensive work carried out by the community in the development of the Hungerford 2010+ Plan (2005) and Town Plan Refresh from 2013. These included detailed household survey work, policies and actions for all the main issues. Several of the Town Plan team members are also part of the Neighbourhood Plan team, which has helped to develop a continuity of approach.
- 1.3 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 Hungerford, its residents, businesses and community groups.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 The process of producing the Neighbourhood Plan has identified a number of non-policy actions which have been included in the policies' sections as 'Actions'. Note however that these non-policy actions are not specifically related to land use matters.



Policy context

- 1.6 The Neighbourhood Plan represents one part of the development plan for the neighbourhood area over the period 2023 to 2041, the other parts being the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2012), the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2017) and the saved policies of the West Berkshire District Local Plan (saved 2007).
- 1.7 West Berkshire District Council, as the local planning authority, designated the Hungerford Neighbourhood Area in April 2018 to enable Hungerford Town Council to prepare the

Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan has been prepared by the community through the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) Steering Group.

- 1.8 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.
- 1.9 The map in Figure 1.1 overleaf shows the boundary of the Neighbourhood Area, which is the same as the administrative boundary of Hungerford parish. Note that the western boundary is also the boundary of Berkshire and the Southeast region.



*M-P

Figure 1.1: Hungerford neighbourhood plan area



Monitoring the Plan

- 1.10 Hungerford Town Council, as the responsible body, will be responsible for maintaining and periodically revisiting the Plan to ensure relevance and to monitor delivery.

2 LOCAL CONTEXT

History of Hungerford

2.1 **The location:** The attractive town of Hungerford stands at the very western end of Berkshire, near the borders with Wiltshire and Hampshire. It lies in the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and forms part of the Great West Way. A walk around the town and its immediate surrounding countryside will reveal the inherent charm of the area.

2.2 **Its growth through the centuries:** Hungerford can be traced back to the 11th century, and the historic core of the town was laid out as a planned town in the 12th century. Since then, it has grown through the centuries as a rural market town supplying goods and services to the surrounding villages. Much of the town has remained unaltered for generations.

2.3 **On key transport routes:** The town benefitted by lying on key transport routes. The Bath Road (later the A4) passes through the town, and the prosperity of the coaching trade on both the London to Bath and Bristol route and the Oxford to Salisbury route led to its greatest period of prosperity in the 18th and early 19th century.



2.4 The Kennet and Avon Canal was dug through the heart of the town in 1798, and this brought additional prosperity until the railway came in 1847, leading to a modest population decline as large towns like Reading prospered.



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2.5 When the nearby M4 motorway opened in 1971, the town grew again, as it became a popular rural home for commuters to London and other nearer towns and cities.

2.6 **The Town and Manor:** In the 14th century the townspeople were given important rights to the market and fishing by John of Gaunt, who is much celebrated in the town. The Town and Manor of Hungerford (now a registered charity) administers the town common land (over 400 acres) around the town, much of which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Town and Manor also manages the Town Hall and Corn Exchange, the John O'Gaunt Inn and much other property.



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2.7 Hocktide – two weeks of events and celebrations which take place after Easter each year are nationally famous. On Tutti Day (the second Tuesday after Easter) the Commoners’ Court sits to conclude the financial year, and a celebratory luncheon is held in the Corn Exchange. Hungerford is now the only town in the country still practising these ancient customs.

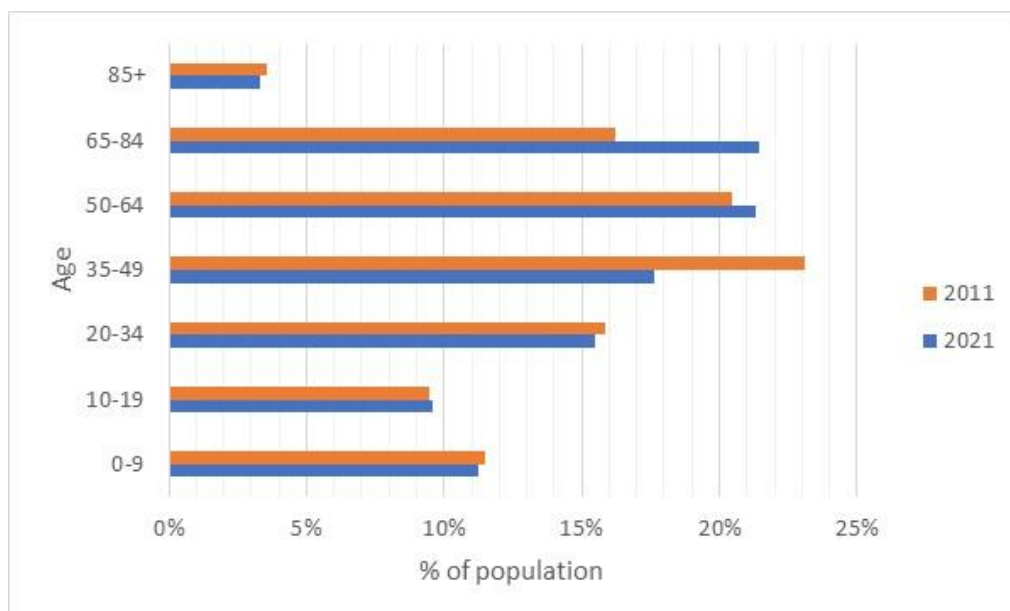
2.8 In 1688, having landed at Brixham on his quest for the throne of England, William of Orange met the commissioners of King James II at The Bear in Hungerford. These successful negotiations led to ‘The Glorious Revolution’ and to William acceding to the throne as King William III. *M-P



Profile of the community

2.9 In 2021, the population of Hungerford parish stood at 5,864 persons and 2,695 households. The population has increased by 97 people (1.7%) since 2011 and households by 95 (3.7%) (sources 2021 and 2011 Census). Whilst this growth is comparatively low (the population of West Berkshire as a whole grew by 5%), there have been some significant changes in the age profile of the population. Figure 2.1 shows that there has been a significant increase in the population of retirement age (65+) yet there has been a correspondingly large decline in the population most likely to form family households with dependent children (aged 35-49). The population of Hungerford is ageing.

Figure 2.1: Age profile of Hungerford, 2011 and 2021

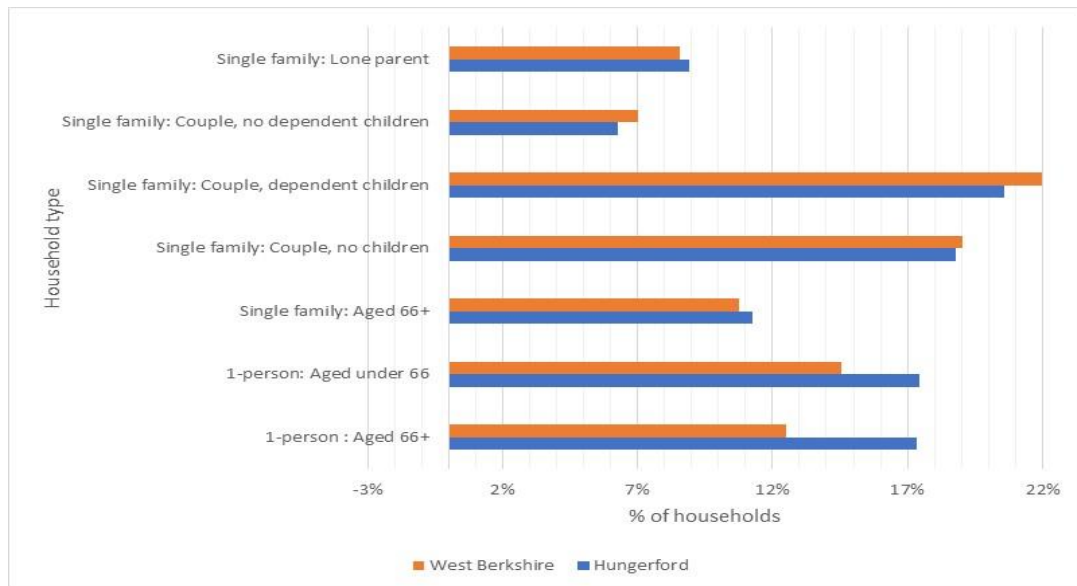


Source: 2011 and 2021 Census

2.10 This is supported by evidence from the 2021 Census on the profile of households. Figure 2.2 shows that whilst the largest share of households in Hungerford are families with dependent

children, the proportion of those forming smaller households is very high when compared with West Berkshire as a whole. Couples with no children and single person households account for 54% of households compared with just 46% in West Berkshire.

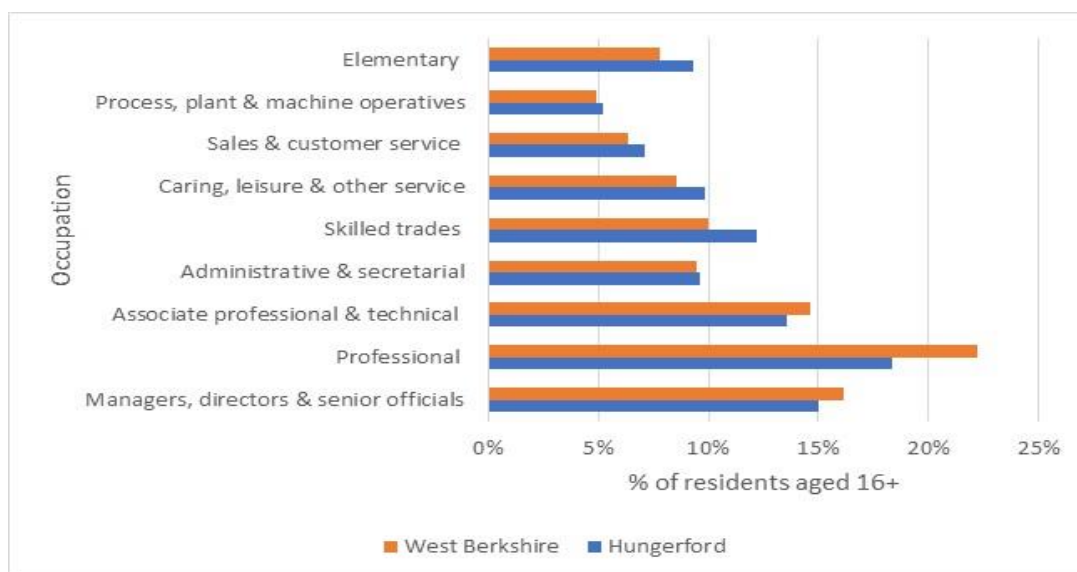
Figure 2.2: Household composition, 2021



Source: 2021 Census

2.11 Figure 2.3 shows the types of occupations that people from Hungerford work in. This shows that comparatively lower skilled occupations are strongly represented (compared with West Berkshire), with higher skilled occupations comparatively less well represented. Hungerford is well represented however in skilled trades.

Figure 2.3: Occupations, 2021



Source: 2021 Census

Hungerford today

2.12 Hungerford is a lively and well-connected town on the boundary between the south east and southwest of England. Economically it tends to look more eastwards, with the pull of Newbury, Reading and London.

2.13 Hungerford is well provided for with schools which serve the local community and villages in the area. There is the Croft Nursery School, the Primary School and John O'Gaunt Secondary School. This provides education from birth to 16 years of age, with sixth form education regrettably withdrawn, although this is available in Marlborough and Newbury.



2.14 Medical facilities are largely provided through the Croft Surgery. After a challenging few years following the Covid-19 pandemic and a shortage of GPs, the Hungerford Surgery team is looking forward to stability and maintaining a high standard of primary care to its 7,500 patients in the town and surrounding areas. The addition of a variety of healthcare professionals, including pharmacists, musculoskeletal physio, mental health practitioner and social prescriber, in collaboration with neighbouring member practices of the West Berkshire Rural Primary Care Network, has given patients better access to a wider range of services.



2.15 Emergency services have a tri service facility that helps to coordinate activities for fire, police and ambulance, which is largely utilised by the fire service. The police force has to cover a large rural area and resource to cover this is a challenge. The fire station is the local base for the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service which provides a well trained and diverse service.

2.16 The town has good transport links. It is at the crossroads of the A4, the old London to Bath route and the A338 between Oxford and Salisbury. Nearby is the M4 and A34 providing excellent access to the rest of the country. Along the High Street which forms part of the A338, there is a tension between high volumes of traffic and local residents and businesses. There is high car ownership and car dependence within the town. Cycle facilities are poor, but walking facilities and footpaths are extensive.

2.17 Public transport is mainly provided by rail along the Thames Valley. There is a rail station with regular services to Reading and Paddington and westwards to Westbury, Taunton and Exeter. The hourly direct service to Paddington was cut in 2021 causing much concern and disruption. The rail station has inadequate parking supply and lacks facilities. Bus services are provided

to Swindon, Marlborough and Newbury, but they struggle with patronage and require subsidies.

- 2.18 There are excellent sporting facilities for the size of the town. The Leisure Centre boasts a 25m swimming pool and covered facilities that are shared with the adjacent secondary school. A professional standard 3G football pitch was constructed in 2023 and there is a successful football club, in the highest league of any club in West Berkshire. There is a cricket pitch with club facilities. The 'triangle field' with clubhouse is mainly used by Hungerford Rugby Club.



- 2.19 Playground facilities are well distributed around the town and maintained to a high standard by the Town Council. A new skate park was constructed in 2023 to replace an older facility at Bulpit Lane.



- 2.20 Outdoor leisure and recreational facilities are available on the Common, the Marsh, the canal and the towpath. There is an extensive network of public footpaths and bridleways which are generally well cared for, with some landowners better than others at maintaining the pathways.
- 2.21 There are several cultural locations that include the town hall, the library and hub, the Croft Hall and Croft Field Project.

Antiques and other shops

- 2.22 Hungerford has been widely known as a centre for antiques since the mid-20th century, and today it has many antique shops and several arcades. There are many other independent retail premises such as a florist, a prize-winning bookshop, several jewellers and clothing shops. Each Wednesday morning there is a street market on the west side of the High Street, as shown on the Plan front cover. There are also regular farmers' markets and trade fairs.

Tourism

- 2.23 Tourism is hugely important to the modern town of Hungerford, with visitors enjoying the antique shops, the canal (with its ever-popular trip boat "The Rose of Hungerford"), the nearby Hungerford Common and water meadows, the independent shops in the town and its heritage buildings and



town trails. There are Sustrans cycle routes through the town, and it is surrounded by magnificent rolling countryside with numerous walking routes.

2.24 The town is served well by a wide variety of hotels, restaurants and coffee shops.



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2.25 Nearby are several popular tourist destinations:

- Littlecote Roman Villa (recently renovated and displaying one of the largest and finest mosaics in Britain).
- Crofton Pumping Station on the Kennet and Avon Canal (with two historic steam powered beam engines dating from the early 1800s).
- Wilton Windmill (a working flour mill dating from 1821).
- Highclere Castle (made famous as Downton Abbey on the BBC TV series).
- Uffington White Horse (England's oldest chalk horse), and several nearby monuments along the ancient Ridgeway.
- Avebury Stone Circle (a Neolithic stone circle – one of the greatest marvels of prehistoric Britain).

The Town and Manor

2.26 A key organisation of the town is the Town and Manor. The extensive land holding of the Town and Manor charity has undoubtedly shaped the development of the town over the centuries and continues to do so. Today the charity's land extends to over 400 acres (170 hectares) of which approximately 75 hectares are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The land lies primarily to the north, east and west of the town and this, together with boundaries defined by the railway and the canal, has resulted in most greenfield development over the past 50 years being to the south of the town.



*M-P



*M-P

- 2.27 The estate includes large areas of common land such as the Common Port Down, Freeman's Marsh and the Croft which is the town's registered village green. The land is managed in an environmentally sustainable way for the benefit of local people and visitors to the town using money generated from the charity's assets such as the Fishery, the John O'Gaunt public house and the Town Hall complex. The common land includes land used by the Hungerford Town Football Club, the Cricket Club and the War memorial avenue. This means that these are all well protected.
- 2.28 In addition to the ancient lands, which have been owned for many centuries, the Town and Manor has more recently been able to acquire several substantial parcels of land from owners who wished to see them managed sympathetically and protected from built development. The most recent acquisition in 2018 was a 40-acre site known as Undy's Meadow, lying to the north of the town between Charnham Park road and the River Kennet. The charity is planning to develop a wetland nature reserve on the site.
- 2.29 Figure 2.4 below shows a map of the Town and Manor estate. The areas in green are owned by Town and Manor.

Figure 2.4: The Town and Manor Land Estate, 2023



Credit: Town & Manor of Hungerford

Main issues and challenges in Hungerford

2.30 The main issues and challenges facing Hungerford can be summarised as:

- Retaining the traditional character of Hungerford while optimising its potential.
- Protecting the Marsh, Common and surrounding countryside.
- Local and strategic traffic impacts and speeds compromising the local environment.
- Improving the town centre environment.
- Climate change and trying to reduce the town's carbon footprint.
- Affordable housing for local residents.
- Retaining the mix of independent shops along the High Street.
- Inadequate car parking supply in the town centre, especially on Wednesday mornings when there is the street market.
- Providing more jobs in the town centre and Charnham Park area.
- Improvements to rail station and rail services which have recently been cut back.
- An ageing population which notably impacts on health and education services.
- The challenge of improving pedestrian and cycle infrastructure.



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3 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Vision for Hungerford

3.1 The vision for Hungerford over the plan period to 2041 is as follows:

Hungerford sits at the heart of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and is treasured for being an historic market town set within beautiful and accessible countryside and waterways.
The residents of Hungerford seek to work together to embrace constructive change that ensures a vibrant, robust and sustainable economy that will enhance their prosperity and provide an affordable and nurturing environment for current and future generations.
This should be achieved whilst conserving Hungerford's natural and manmade heritage and enhancing its strong sense of being a caring community and a fulfilling place to live.



*M-P

Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

3.2 The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan as identified through engagement with the community are as follows:

Housing

Aim: Ensure that new housing in Hungerford meets the needs of current and future generations of residents in a way which complements the character of the town and the countryside surrounding it.

Objective A: Allocate sites to meet the housing requirements in the West Berkshire Local Plan to 2041, where possible making best use of previously developed land and minimising encroachment into the countryside.

Objective B: Ensure that housing development provides a range of house types, sizes and tenures that meets the needs of all age groups and incomes.

Objective C: Seek to ensure that new housing reflects the character of its neighbourhood whilst embracing high quality design principles and modern energy efficiency standards.

Employment and Economy

Aim: Support growth in the variety of shops, restaurants and businesses in the town and the employment opportunities which they create. Promote Hungerford as an attractive place to live and work (particularly for young people), with good facilities, services and transport links.

Objective D: Encourage businesses and support initiatives, including those which promote a vibrant high street and increase the range of shops, services and eating places in the town for the benefit of residents, tourists and visitors of all ages. Recognise that Hungerford acts as a service centre providing facilities to neighbouring villages.

Objective E: Promote an increase in the number and quality of employment opportunities within the town.

Getting About

Aim: Seek improvements to Hungerford's transport infrastructure so that safe, effective, sustainable and efficient travel is available and accessible to all.

Objective F: Minimise the effects of traffic in the town centre and especially the High Street for the benefit of pedestrians and all road users.

Objective G: Increase walking and cycling in the town.

Objective H: Encourage public transport usage to and from the town.

Leisure, Wellbeing, Public Safety and Learning

Aim: Hungerford should offer young people and children a safe, healthy and nurturing environment in which to develop and mature. This will include a full range of educational services and plenty of leisure and sports activities. Develop Hungerford's thriving sports, arts and social community and protect its green, open spaces. Ensure that Hungerford remains a safe, healthy and caring place to live.

Objective I: Protect and maintain existing public playgrounds and open spaces to a high standard and look at ways of increasing the range of facilities provided as the town grows.

Objective J: Support the development of sports, arts, youth clubs, social and leisure facilities, including the widest possible range of activities for young people.

Objective K: Support and develop services which assist and encourage people to maintain their own health.

Objective L: Minimise crime and anti-social behaviour in and around the town.

Objective M: Support and enhance the schools in Hungerford.

Our Heritage

Aim: Conserve and, where practicable, enhance Hungerford's natural and built environment.

Objective N: Protect and enhance the appearance and historic environment of the town and parish.

Objective O: Improve the approaches to the town by road, rail and canal to create favourable first impressions and a soft boundary between the countryside and the town.

Objective P: Protect the landscape around Hungerford and support the charities and agencies which are responsible for its conservation.

Objective Q: Enhance the environment of Hungerford High Street and Bridge Street between the Bridge Street/A4 roundabout and the Atherton Road/High Street roundabout.

Climate Change and Biodiversity

Aim: Hungerford will encourage low carbon development to promote lower energy costs, cleaner air and healthier lifestyles, contributing to the well-being of current and future generations. It will also ensure that development enhances the biodiversity of the parish.

Objective R: Reduce carbon emissions with more energy efficient buildings.

Objective S: Encourage new development to maximise the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.

Objective T: Support proposals for individual and community scale renewable energy generation provided the benefits outweigh any adverse impacts.

Objective U: Increase resilience to climate change.

4 HOUSING

Housing mix

Objective B: Ensure that housing development provides a range of house types, sizes and tenures that meets the needs of all age groups and incomes.

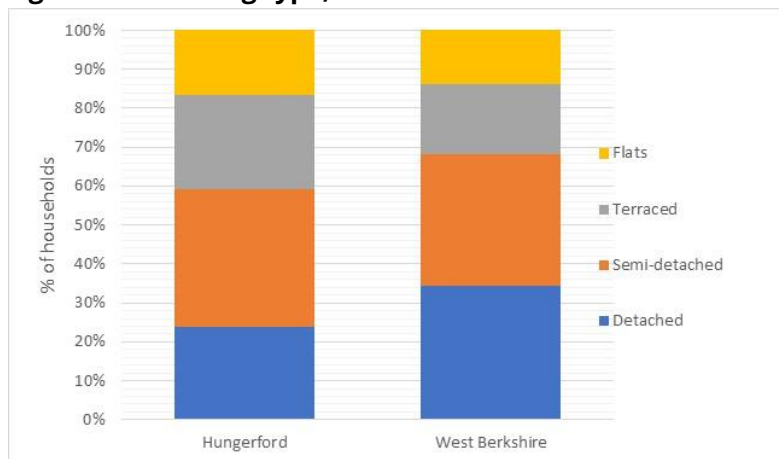
- 4.1 Hungerford has a different housing mix and need to the rest of West Berkshire. As reported in the Hungerford Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) 2019¹, the parish has a much higher proportion of one-person households than West Berkshire which in turn has a higher proportion of families with dependent children. Hungerford has a higher share of older residents while West Berkshire has a higher proportion of younger ones. This is supported by the 2021 Census with 35% of Hungerford's households being single person compared with 27% in West Berkshire; moreover, 20% of Hungerford's population is aged 65 or over compared with 15% in West Berkshire.



- 4.2 Over the period 2011 to 2021, the number of households in Hungerford grew by 95 to 2,695. Of this increase, 72 households were housed in properties of at least 3-beds with just 36 in 1- or 2-bed properties. Figure 4.1 shows the breakdown of housing by type in Hungerford in 2021 compared with West Berkshire as a whole. This shows that semi-detached and terraced housing dominates Hungerford's stock. Such housing typically provides the bulk of 2- and 3-bed housing. 60% of Hungerford's stock of properties are at least 3 bedrooms in size.



Figure 4.1: Housing type, 2021

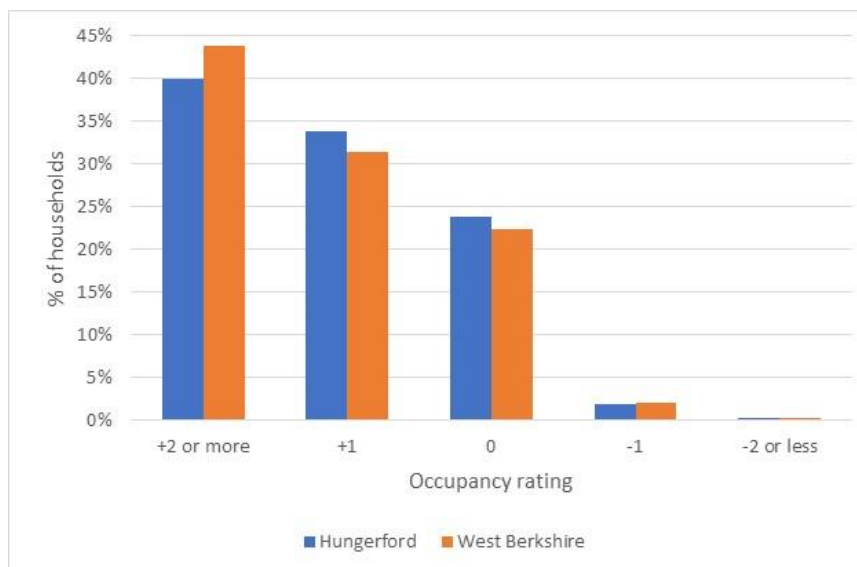


Source: 2021 Census

¹AECOM (2019) *Hungerford Housing Needs Assessment (HNA)*, for Hungerford Town Council

- 4.3 This is not only the case historically but been continuing more recently. Housing development in West Berkshire in recent years has been skewed towards larger housing. Whilst this creates the potential for growth in family households, it does not address the needs of the ageing population; in 2021, 29% of Hungerford’s households were aged over 65. The Hungerford HNA forecast that this would increase to 48% by 2036. If one looks at the household profile of Hungerford in 2021, the picture is the same – 62% of households are either single person or a co-habiting couple. These households may choose to have, but do not necessarily require family-sized housing.
- 4.4 This is supported by occupancy rate analysis. Figure 4.2 shows the occupancy rate of houses in Hungerford and West Berkshire in 2021. A +1 or +2 figure means that a house is under-occupied, i.e., it has either 1 or 2 more bedrooms than required by that size of household. Conversely, a -1 or -2 figure means a house is over-occupied, i.e., over-crowded. This shows that Hungerford has significant levels of under-occupation with 40% of households having at least 2 spare bedrooms. Again, this supports the profile of a housing stock that is increasingly not meeting the needs of the changing population.

Figure 4.2: Occupancy rate, 2021



Source: 2021 Census

- 4.5 Policy CS4 in the West Berkshire Core Strategy requires development to provide an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the housing needs of all sectors of the community. This should have regard to the evidence of housing need and demand from Housing Market Assessments and other relevant sources. Similarly, Policy SP18 in the emerging West Berkshire Local Plan Review sets a specific ‘base mix’ from its Local Housing Needs Assessment Update 2022² as shown in Table 4.1 below:

² Icen (2022) *West Berkshire Housing Needs Assessment Update*, for West Berkshire Council

Table 4.1: Mix of housing by size and tenure (informing emerging Local Plan policy)

	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4+ bedrooms
Market	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%

Source: West Berkshire Local Plan Review, Proposed Submission, Table 3

- 4.6 If the midpoint of the ranges shown is taken and the two types of affordable housing amalgamated, this requires 42.5% of both the market and affordable housing on any scheme of at least 10 dwellings to be 2-bed properties. In seeking to address the main need for smaller properties – for first-time entrants to the housing market and for older downsizers from existing larger family properties – this is the key property size.
- 4.7 It is important to recognise however that there is a wealth of different types of 2-bed property that can be delivered, most commonly small houses (terraces, semi-detached), bungalows or flats. Depending on their design, they will clearly appeal to different markets – a bungalow is likely to be more popular for older downsizers than first-time buyers for example. In recognising the need to cater for a range of different household types, it is important that larger developments (of at least 10 dwellings) deliver either a mix of types of 2-bed property or seek to focus the 2-bed properties on a design that can best cater for the needs of as wide a range of the market for such properties as possible. It is not considered appropriate for example to deliver just 2-bed flats or 2-bed bungalows. Whilst the physical context of any particular site may provide certain limitations on what can be delivered, this should be an important principle informing the mix of 2-bed dwellings.
- 4.8 In addition, Hungerford is likely to see a proportion of its growth over the plan period on smaller developments through windfall development. Such developments – which could be up to 9 properties – should still be expected to deliver the housing needed in Hungerford. As such, the requirement to deliver a mix of properties also applies to developments of between 5 and 9 dwellings.

POLICY HUNG1: HOUSING MIX

- A. To address the identified housing needs in Hungerford, developments of 5 dwellings or more 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. For developments of 5 dwellings or more, the 2-bed properties shall provide a mix of dwelling types that reflects the needs of both first-time entrants to the housing market and older downsizers. Any departure from this mix of 2-bed properties shall only be permitted in the following circumstances:**
- a. Any physical site factors that limit the mix.**
 - b. If there is clear evidence for the need for a particular type of housing, e.g., specialist older persons' housing.**

5 DESIGN AND CHARACTER

Objective C: Seek to ensure that new housing reflects the character of its neighbourhood whilst embracing high quality design principles and modern energy efficiency standards.

- 5.1 The design of new housing in Hungerford parish is important. It needs to reflect the locally distinctive character. Policy SP7 (Design Quality) of the West Berkshire emerging Local Plan requires development to take opportunities that are available for conserving and enhancing the character, appearance and quality of an area and the way it functions.
- 5.2 Hungerford does not have a homogenous style of design. Whilst it does have a large Conservation Area covering the centre of the town, this has been effective in demonstrating how different buildings can sit alongside one another and represent good quality design. Hungerford's community has a desire to see this eclectic mix of styles continue, provided quality is maintained. In particular within the context of new residential development outside the town centre and Conservation Area, the concern is twofold: that large developments will seek homogeneity of design and that parking and movement, if not properly managed, can erode the character of Hungerford's neighbourhoods.

Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan is not supported by a specific set of detailed design codes, the principles of West Berkshire emerging Local Plan Policy SP7 – which itself references the National Design Guide – are reinforced with respect to these specific local issues of diversity and movement.

POLICY HUNG2: DESIGN AND CHARACTER

- A. Development should demonstrate high quality design and layout which respects the local character of Hungerford.**
- B. In delivering high quality design, development proposals must demonstrate the appropriate use of building design, layout, materials and features. The following principles should be considered as part of design proposals:**
- a. Development should integrate with and enhance the form of its existing surroundings, with all connections including road patterns ensuring permeability for cyclists and pedestrians.**
 - b. A range of densities, house types (where appropriate) and plot layouts should be used.**
 - c. Building heights and rooflines should provide diversity of frontage, scale and form, with building heights that reflect the prevailing height of surrounding buildings unless it can be demonstrated that a taller building could complement or enhance the local character.**
 - d. Parking to support residential uses should be provided within the development in accordance with West Berkshire Council parking standards.**

Landscape and Town approaches

Objective O: Improve the approaches to the town by road, rail and canal to create favourable first impressions and a soft boundary between the countryside and the town.

Objective P: Protect the landscape around Hungerford and support the charities and agencies which are responsible for its conservation.

- 5.3 Hungerford is entirely within the North Wessex National Landscape. The purpose of this designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. It is a national designation and, therefore, represents a significant level of protection from inappropriate development. Nevertheless, this does not prevent all development and it is important that the growth and change of Hungerford over time continues to reflect the role of the National Landscape.
- 5.4 Of relevance to this are the entry points into Hungerford along main and smaller routes. These include Bath Road (A4), Charnham Street, the B4192, North Standen Road, Park Street, Salisbury Road and Priory Road. These provide a range of views of the entry to the town as you move from countryside to urban area. Most provide a soft, rural feel that only becomes more visually urbanised comparatively close to the main built-up area of the town. It is important that any development retains this soft feel.



Bath Road and Priory Road gateways – good examples of a rural feel with significant landscaping

- 5.5 The overall setting of the town, with an abundance of trees and shrubs, is important for preserving its identity. In this regard, its gateways are key to this. Any development that might occur in the future along the gateway routes into and out of Hungerford therefore needs to ensure that the transition from rural countryside to urban settlement is gradual, avoiding dense, bulky buildings with large, bare walls as the first built development one sees on entering the town. Development can achieve this through effective landscaping buffers along boundaries, including lining the gateway routes with trees, and through ensuring that development avoids creating an overly dense feel close to the gateways.
- 5.6 Equally significant gateways to Hungerford are the routes in along the Kennet and Avon Canal. Whilst not subject to the same levels of traffic as the road routes, it is important that the view

of Hungerford by those entering along the Canal is a positive one. These users tend to be tourists who, if they feel compelled to stop in Hungerford, will increase spending in the local area. A good first impression is important to this.

5.7 The gateways are shown on Figure 5.1.

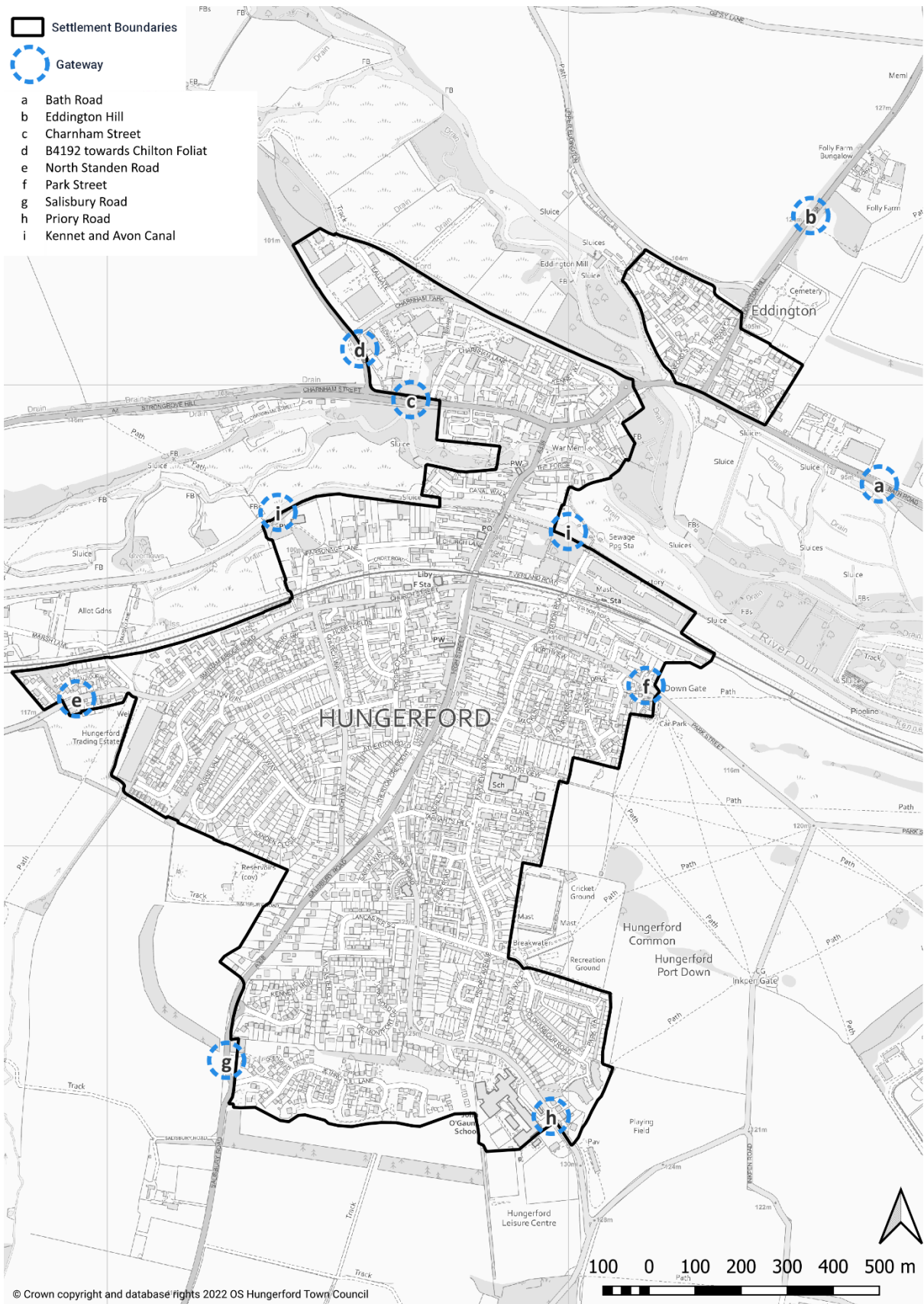
POLICY HUNG3: GATEWAYS INTO AND OUT OF HUNGERFORD TOWN

- A. Development proposals adjacent to the gateways into Hungerford town should demonstrate how they contribute to creating a gradual transition from rural countryside to urban settlement (and vice versa). Development proposals should avoid creating an overly dense feel and appropriate planting or other natural boundary treatments should be used to mitigate the impact of development and retain the open feel. This should include the use of trees to line the gateway routes.**
- B. The gateways into Hungerford town are on the following approaches:**
- a. Bath Road**
 - b. Eddington Hill**
 - c. Charnham Street**
 - d. B4192 (towards Chilton Foliat)**
 - e. North Standen Road**
 - f. Park Street**
 - g. Salisbury Road**
 - h. Priory Road**
 - i. Kennet and Avon Canal**

ACTION A: CONSERVATION OF HUNGERFORD'S LANDSCAPE

Support the charities and agencies which are responsible for the conservation of the landscape around Hungerford.

Figure 5.1: Gateways into Hungerford town



Heritage

Objective N: Protect and enhance the appearance and historic environment of the town and parish.

- 5.8 The town of Hungerford has a significant history, much of which is still evident today. Its Conservation Area was designated in 1974 and covers much of the town centre. West Berkshire is undertaking the preparation of a series of Conservation Area Appraisals which will include Hungerford. Once this has been prepared and adopted it will outline the items of special interest particular to that Conservation Area and proposals for its preservation and enhancement. It then acts as a framework that guides future development in the Conservation Area.
- 5.9 In addition, Hungerford parish has 139 listed buildings, all grade II listed and three of these have grade II* status. The vast majority of the listed buildings are located along the High Street. It also has one scheduled monument, the bowl barrow on Barrow Hill in Hungerford Newtown. These listed buildings and monuments are already well protected through Local Plan policy.
- 5.10 A particular issue in Hungerford is the quality of refurbishment of listed buildings and the Conservation Area. It is important that the energy efficiency of buildings is maximised, but this has often been used as justification for replacement features, particularly windows, that are not considered in keeping with the heritage of the building in question. It is now possible to source energy efficient wooden window frames and other replacement features in similar materials that are sympathetic to heritage concerns. These should be used unless there is clear justification why not.

POLICY HUNG4: RETROFITTING HISTORIC BUILDINGS FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- A. The sensitive retrofitting of energy efficiency measures in historic buildings will be encouraged, including the retrofitting of listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas, provided that it safeguards the historic characteristics of these heritage assets.**
- B. Where this is to be achieved through measures to reduce heat loss, this could include secondary, double or triple glazing in conservation areas and listed buildings. Such measures should seek to use timber framed windows, with alternative materials only permitted where it is demonstrated that this would not result in harm to the significance of listed buildings or character and appearance of conservation areas.**
- C. The sensitive retrofitting of solar panels in the Conservation Area is encouraged, provided they are of a design and colour that integrates well with the existing architecture and does not compromise the visual integrity of the Conservation Area.**

5.11 There are a number of buildings in Hungerford which, whilst not worthy of national listing, do have local heritage merit. These 'non-designated heritage assets' can be identified and, where appropriate, added to the West Berkshire Local List of Heritage Assets.



*M-P

5.12 Other heritage objectives O, P and Q are covered elsewhere in the plan: O & P earlier in Section 5 and Q in Section 6. These objectives specifically look to address improvements to the public realm of Hungerford town and also the heritage landscape character of the approaches to the town.



*M-P



*M-P

ACTION B: IDENTIFY NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Undertake a review of non-designated heritage assets (buildings of heritage merit which are not nationally listed) and seek their addition to the West Berkshire Local List of Heritage Assets.

6 ECONOMY

Hungerford Town Centre

Objective D: Encourage businesses and support initiatives, including those which promote a vibrant high street and increase the range of shops, services and eating places in the town for the benefit of residents, tourists and visitors of all ages. Recognise that Hungerford acts as a service centre providing facilities to neighbouring villages.

Objective Q: Enhance the environment of Hungerford High Street and Bridge Street between the Bridge Street/A4 roundabout and the Atherton Road/High Street roundabout.

- 6.1 Hungerford town centre (see Figure 6.1) has been at the heart of Hungerford's role as a market town for many centuries. It has always thrived and continues to do so despite the changing ways that modern communities use their town centres. It will be important that Hungerford continues to adapt to the needs of the community. Hungerford is also a tourist venue which brings significant spending into the town. It is vital that this continues to be nurtured so that local shops, restaurants and facilities which rely on this trade can prosper.
- 6.2 A town centre strategy for Hungerford is being prepared by West Berkshire Council³. The purpose of the study is to develop a set of ideas that will enable Hungerford Town Centre to adapt and respond to the continuing changes in what is demanded of a town centre. This has been informed by the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.3 The key issues that the Town Centre Strategy proposes projects to address align closely with a number of the Neighbourhood Plan's objectives:
- Encouraging tourism by promoting Hungerford's heritage.
 - Encouraging visitors to stay longer and explore more of the town centre.
 - Promoting the use of the canal and green spaces for recreation and leisure.
 - Integrating community facilities within the town centre.
 - Reducing the impact of traffic on the High Street.
 - Increasing opportunities for independent cafes, restaurants, retail and other start-up businesses.
 - Improving space for indoor and outdoor markets and events.
 - Improving walking routes to the High Street from car parks and the railway station.
 - Enhancing arrival to the town centre.
- 6.4 The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to endorse specific projects in the Town Centre Strategy. However, there is a common desire to address the issues that were identified

³ New Masterplanning, Urban Movement and Hemingway Design (2023) *Hungerford Town Centre Strategy: Final Draft*, for West Berkshire Council

through the survey work that was used to inform the Strategy. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to provide an appropriate policy framework to realise this.

- 6.5 Convenient and adequate car parking is important to the success of the town centre. On Wednesdays when it is market day there is an under supply, which is a classic market town problem with the street market taking up parking at the very time when there is most demand. Queuing traffic from the Tesco car park regularly extends onto the High Street which blocks the main road. Additional short stay off street parking would be welcomed.



*M-P



*M-P

- 6.6 In order to protect the retail uses in Hungerford, it is important that the main retail area – signified by the Primary Shopping Frontages – is retained for mainly retail and food and drink uses. The existing uses provide a good balance of shops and services which underpin the heart of the town centre. If these ground floor units are lost to other uses then it will harm the vitality of the town as a whole.

- 6.7 As part of the development of the Plan, the Primary Shopping Frontages have been reviewed. On the eastern side of the High Street, the Primary Shopping Frontage has been extended to incorporate a number of shops and services that are integral to the success of the town centre. More detail of this extension is provided in Appendix A. Figure 6.1 shows the full extent of the extended Primary Shopping Frontage.

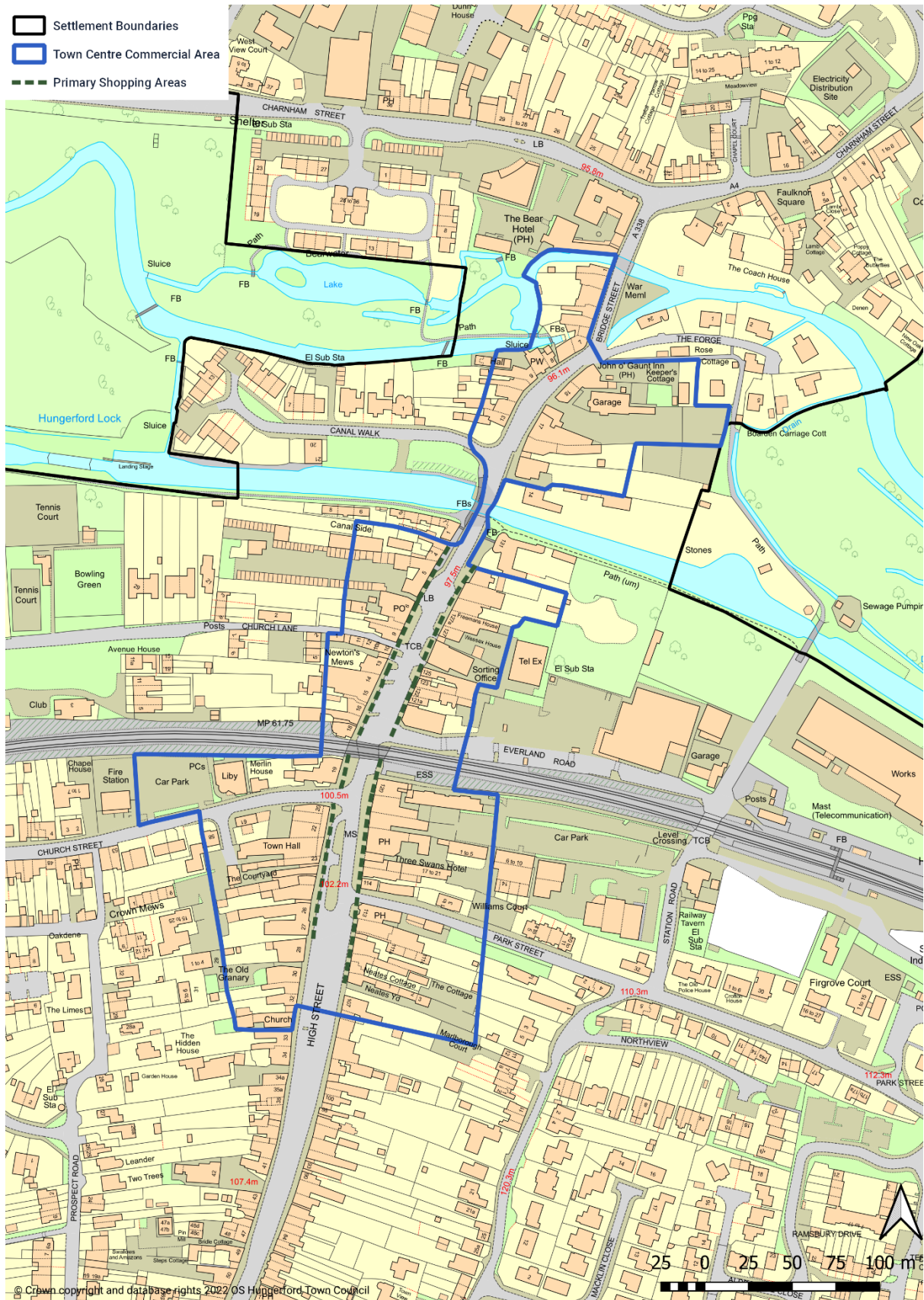


*M-P



*M-P

Figure 6.1: Hungerford Town Centre



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POLICY HUNG5: RETAINING AND ENHANCING THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF HUNGERFORD TOWN CENTRE

- A. To secure the ongoing vitality of Hungerford Town Centre Commercial Area, proposals which protect, enhance and promote a diverse range of town centre uses – including retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural and community – will be supported, subject to the other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.

Primary Shopping Frontages

- B. To maintain the vitality of the Hungerford Town Centre Commercial Area, the predominant uses in the primary shopping frontages, as shown on the Policies Map, are expected to be retail and food and drink uses. Proposals for non-Class E uses will only be permitted where they do not result in a disproportionate concentration of non-Class E units that would be harmful to the vitality of Hungerford Town Centre.

Temporary uses

- C. The use of premises for main town centre uses on a temporary basis will be supported in the Hungerford Town Centre. Such uses include 'pop up' shops and cultural, creative and leisure uses introduced on a temporary basis or for specific events.
- D. Such uses must demonstrate that they will not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring uses, particularly residential through excessive noise and pollution.
- E. Such uses will generally not be considered appropriate if the operation of the business requires large amounts of vehicle parking in order to function unless sufficient parking arrangements have been presented.

Public realm

- F. Proposals which enhance the quality and accessibility (specifically for pedestrians and disabled users) of the public realm in Hungerford Town Centre will be supported.

ACTION C: HUNGERFORD TOWN CENTRE

- i. Work with West Berkshire Council, local businesses and business groups to deliver the main initiatives which promote a vibrant high street.**
- ii. Enhance Hungerford High Street and Bridge Street between Charnham Street and Atherton Road by slowing traffic and improving the pedestrian environment.**
- iii. Support the introduction of additional off street short stay car parking within easy reach of the town centre.**

Employment


Objective E: Promote an increase in the number and quality of employment opportunities within the town.

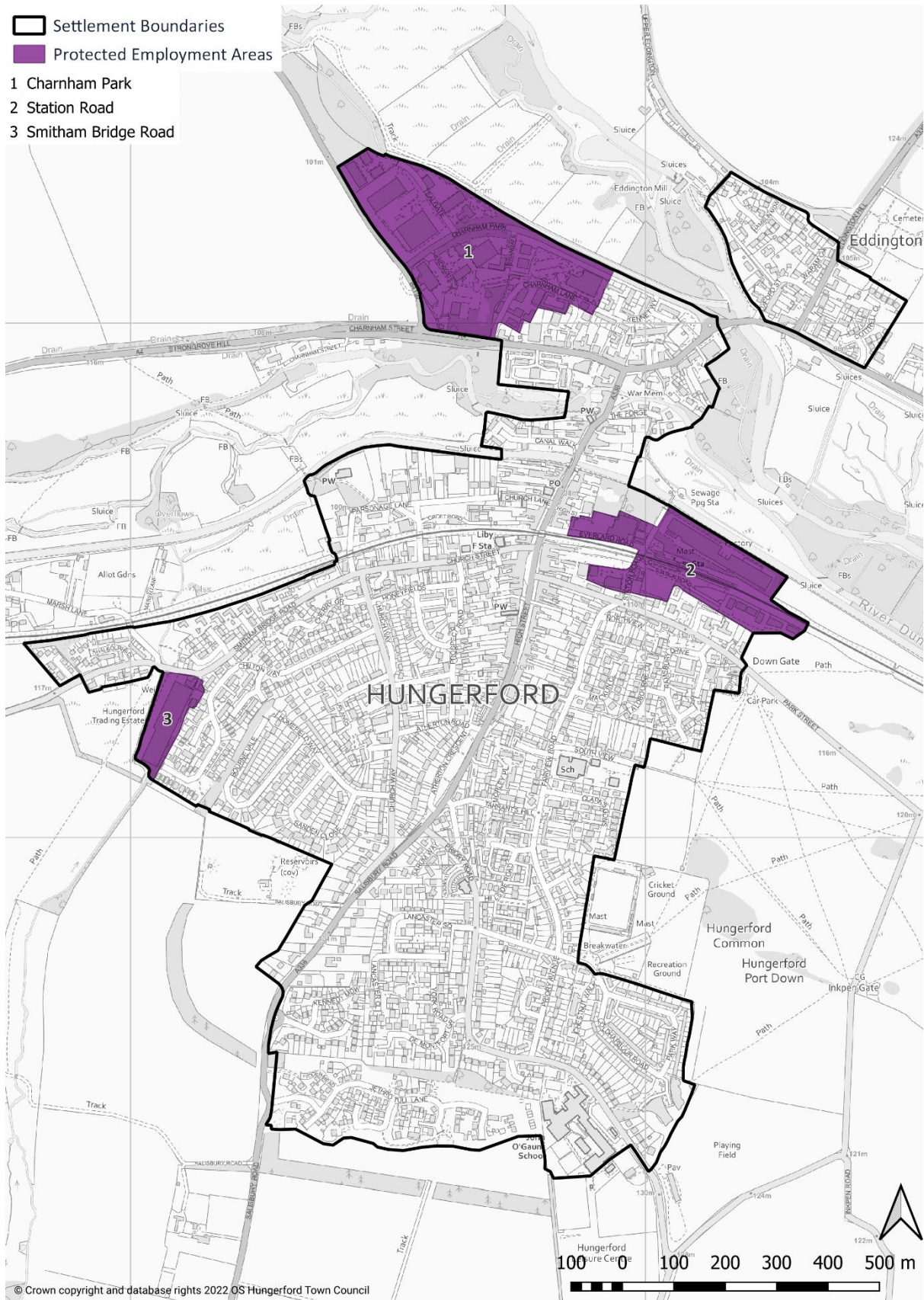
- 6.8 Hungerford has three Protected Employment Areas, at Charnham Park, Station Road and Smitham Bridge Road (see Figure 6.2). These are the main centres for traditional office and light industrial employment in the town. West Berkshire Local Plan policy protects these areas from loss of employment use. For Hungerford to thrive it is important that these centres are successful but that other opportunities to provide a wide range of employment within the town and, where appropriate, the wider parish are also taken.



- 6.9 The Station Road employment area has some significant access difficulties for goods vehicles. The junctions of Park Street with the High Street and Station Road are particularly constrained and sub-standard. Those sites north of the railway also require crossing the railway line at the level crossing. The former Oakes Brother's site and an adjacent site, located south of the railway station, are being converted to residential. Relocation of the employment uses which generate heavy goods vehicle movements to and from this area would be welcomed.

Figure 6.2: Protected Employment Areas

-  Settlement Boundaries
-  Protected Employment Areas
- 1 Charnham Park
- 2 Station Road
- 3 Smitham Bridge Road



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- 6.10 There is a need to provide space, ideally on flexible terms, for micro-businesses to help establish new businesses in the town. The Barrs Yard area was set up as a mixed use enterprise centre with small units with some retail. Since this time it has become almost entirely retail. Several employment sites have been set up outside of Hungerford town in farm or equestrian buildings such as at Leverton to the north of the town. Figure 6.3 shows six locations known about, although it is acknowledged that there are likely to be several others. Some of these have developed informally and offer starter unit type facilities. However, key concerns with these sites are goods vehicle access along narrow lanes and car dependence for access to employment and visitors. There are business and access advantages in having a concentrated location within the town which could form an enterprise hub or centre.
- 6.11 Tourism is important for the town as referred in Section 2 (para 2.23) and there is considerable potential to develop this further. The High Street, Bridge Street and Charnham Street still retain much of the historic integrity. It is surrounded by beautiful and unspoilt countryside in the National Landscape. There is the canal and excellent road and rail links which suggests that the town should be a greater draw for visitors.

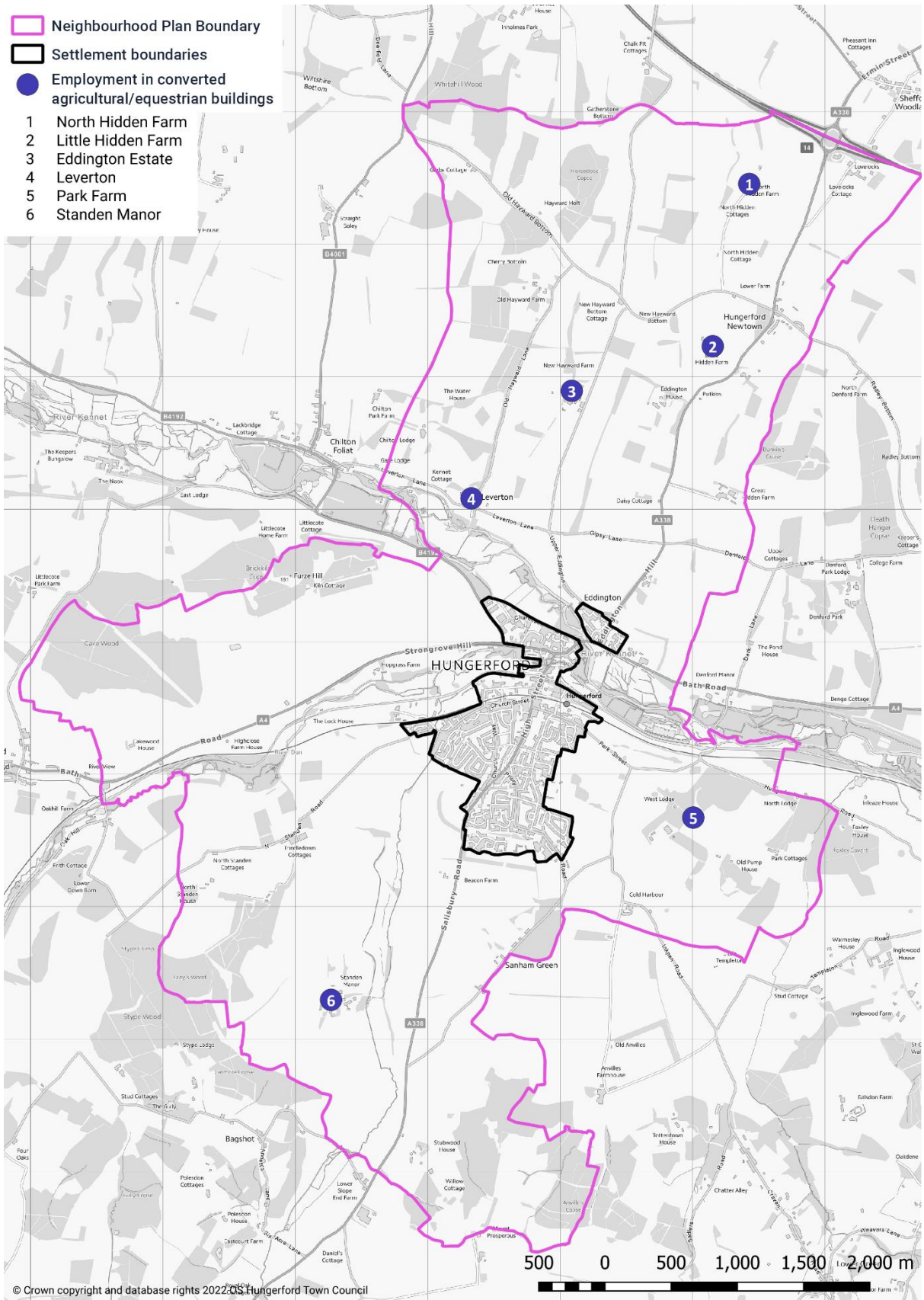
ACTION D: EMPLOYMENT IN HUNGERFORD

- i. Work with local businesses, business groups and West Berkshire Council Economic Development Team to promote an increase in the number and quality of employment opportunities within the town.**
- ii. Encourage the relocation of Station Road employment area sites that generate heavy goods vehicle movements via Park Street.**
- iii. Investigate the establishment of an additional enterprise centre for the town.**
- iv. Ensure employment uses at farm or equestrian buildings address the impacts of traffic and especially heavy goods vehicles.**

ACTION E: TOURISM IN HUNGERFORD

- i. Promote Hungerford as an historic market town for visitors.**
- ii. Provide a drop off point and parking for a minimum of two coaches with level access to the High Street.**
- iii. Work with local organisations to promote Hungerford as a tourist destination.**
- iv. Continue to emphasise Hungerford's role in the antiques trade, historical surroundings, the canal and the 'Great West Way' initiative.**

Figure 6.3: Employment in Converted Agricultural /Equestrian Buildings



7 GETTING ABOUT

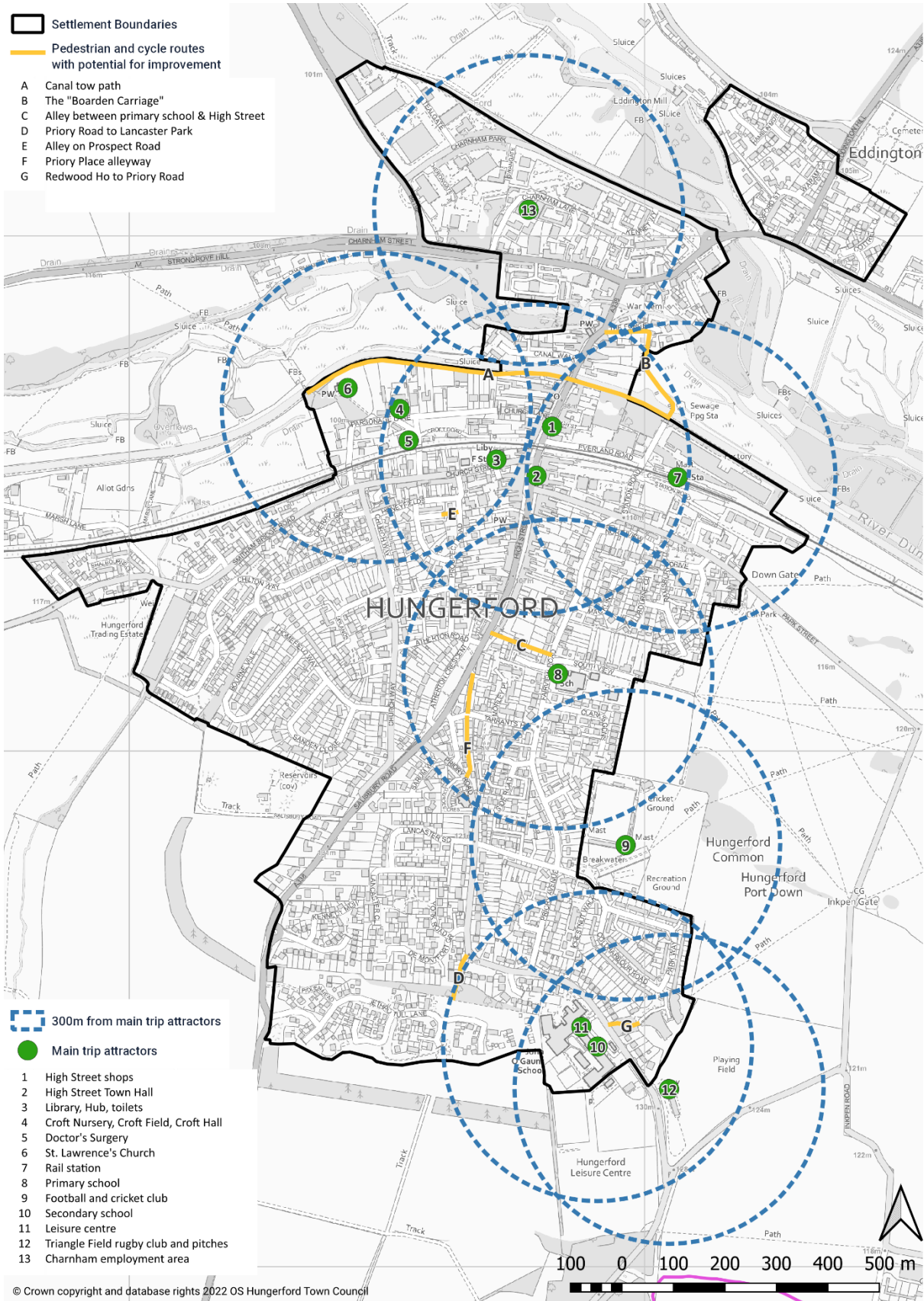
Objective F: Minimise the effects of traffic in the town centre and especially the High Street for the benefit of pedestrians and all road users.

Objective G: Increase walking and cycling in the town.

Objective H: Encourage public transport usage in and to and from the town.

- 7.1 In terms of trying to positively influence future patterns of movement into and around Hungerford town, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to focus on making improvements for pedestrians and cyclists in order to encourage more walking and cycling. Linking the new housing allocations, as well as the existing parts of the town, into a network of safe walking and cycling routes is vital to encourage more walking/cycling and less use of the car. Such improvements have a range of benefits including:
- Providing genuine alternatives to the private car as a means of accessing key shops and services, the schools and other community facilities.
 - Providing health benefits through increased walking.
 - Reducing congestion at busy times by encouraging children to walk to and from school and people to walk to the shops rather than jumping in the car for a short journey.
 - Providing a safer environment for the community of Hungerford, including vulnerable users.
- 7.2 To help address this, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to improve access to safe and high-quality walking and cycling routes. A series of Key Walk/Cycle Routes has been identified where improvements will have the greatest potential to increase levels of walking and cycling and at the same time reduce pollution and improve road safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Figure 7.1 shows the seven routes with potential for improvement (the Key Walk/Cycle Routes) and how they link up the important, regular destinations (the 'main trip attractors') where residents make regular local journeys. It also shows how many parts of the town are within 300m of these main trip attractors.
- 7.3 The improvement of these routes for pedestrians and also for cyclists will be particularly important as development comes forward. This includes ensuring that where possible footways have street lighting and are wide enough to accommodate all users, including disabled users, and that crossings are provided as necessary. Where appropriate traffic calming and improvements to enhance pedestrian and cyclist priority will also be supported.

Figure 7.1: Key Walk/Cycle Routes



POLICY HUNG6: KEY WALK/CYCLE ROUTES

- A. Development proposals which would improve cycling and walking in the Neighbourhood Plan area will be supported. In particular, provision of segregated cycle and pedestrian routes will be strongly supported. Such routes should also ensure that access by disabled users, the blind and deaf and users of mobility scooters is secured.**
- B. To ensure that residents can access public transport facilities, schools, leisure and other important facilities serving Hungerford, where practicable development proposals should ensure safe and continuous pedestrian routes that connect to the Key Walk/Cycle Routes shown on the Policies Map and Figure 7.1.**
- C. Proposals to enhance the identified Key Walk/Cycle Routes will be supported.**
- D. Development proposals should not have an unacceptable impact on the safety and accessibility of Key Walk/Cycle Routes. Development proposals should provide a strategy to mitigate the impact of additional traffic movements on the safety and flow of pedestrian and cycle access on the identified Key Walk/Cycle Routes.**
- E. Development within or close to Hungerford Town Centre Commercial Area which is designed to reduce dependence on car use will be strongly supported.**

- 7.4 Hungerford benefits from having a rail station with a direct service to London Paddington and routes to the southwest. However, in recent years the direct service has been significantly cut back and facilities at Hungerford Station need improvement. The number of car parking spaces at the station has been reduced recently with the Oakes site no longer being available so there is a significant shortfall which is impacting on other car parks in the town. The poor state of the rail station and the reduced service is despite it being an important transport hub for a wide hinterland, being one of only two stations in the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. As the station sign says, Hungerford is at the 'Heart of the Area of Outstanding Beauty'⁴.
- 7.5 HGVs cause problems associated with their size on country lanes and the historic town layout. This is especially the case along Park Street and its junctions as referred in the Employment Chapter. On a number of narrow and bendy country lanes 'rat-running' is taking place with excess speed and HGVs are causing hazardous situations and verge damage when they meet on-coming traffic.
- 7.6 As vehicles transition from petrol and diesel to electric (eVs) there will be traffic noise and local air quality benefits. However, battery charging infrastructure is required to enable residents and visitors to charge their vehicles.

⁴ Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was the former title for what are now referred to as 'National Landscapes'.

ACTION F: TRAFFIC IMPACTS IN HUNGERFORD

- i. Work with West Berkshire Council Highways Team to explore possible schemes to minimise the effects of traffic in the town centre and especially the High Street for the benefit of pedestrians and all road users.**
- ii. Work with the local train operator to improve the rail services and facilities at Hungerford Station by:**
 - a. Improving rail station facilities to include a warm waiting room with toilets.**
 - b. Providing addition rail station long stay car parking.**
 - c. Bringing back 60-minute frequency off-peak direct services between Hungerford and London Paddington.**
 - d. Enhancing rail services to the West Country and support the Kennet & Avon Rail Partnership which aims to provide regular services between Westbury and Reading.**
- iii. Discourage the use of Park Street by heavy goods vehicles.**
- iv. Discourage goods vehicle and rat-running traffic from unsuitable country lanes. Also endeavour to slow this traffic to improve highway safety. These lanes include:**
 - a. Roads through the Common (Park Street, Inkpen Road & Hungerford Road).**
 - b. Old Hayward Bottom between the A338 and B4001.**
 - c. Upper Eddington between the A338 and Leverton Lane.**
 - d. Leverton Lane and Gipsy Lane between the A338 and B4192.**
 - e. Inkpen Road through Sanham Green and Hornhills between the Triangle Field and the A338.**
- v. Support the introduction of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.**



*M-P

8 LEISURE, WELLBEING, PUBLIC SAFETY AND LEARNING

Play facilities

Objective I: Protect and maintain existing public playgrounds and open spaces to a high standard and look at ways of increasing the range of facilities provided as the town grows.

Objective J: Support the development of sports, arts, youth clubs, social and leisure facilities, including the widest possible range of activities for young people.

8.1 Play facilities in the town are provided at the following locations as shown on Figure 8.1:

- Bulpit Play Area
- Bulpit skate park
- Smitham Bridge Play Area
- Ramsbury Drive Play Area
- Kennedy Meadows Play Area
- Lancaster Park Play Area



- 8.2 Most of the above are in good condition and an annual survey is carried out and appropriate maintenance undertaken. The Bulpit play area is the largest and oldest and most years replacement of at least one feature takes place. Maintenance funding would be welcomed to enhance and improve some of the facilities. The skate park refurbishment undertaken in 2023 was part funded by developer contributions. Similarly, contributions will be sought from the site allocations to ensure that the existing play facilities are of a modern standard and provide sufficient play space for the growing population of the town.

POLICY HUNG7: PLAY AND YOUTH FACILITIES

The provision and maintenance (including periodical upgrades) of play and youth facilities to serve the community of Hungerford will be strongly supported.

ACTION G: MAINTAIN HIGH QUALITY PLAY FACILITIES

- i. Maintain existing public play areas and open spaces used for informal play to a high standard.**
- ii. Where appropriate, provide accessible equipment/facilities for older residents on play areas.**

Leisure and sports facilities

Objective J: Support the development of sports, arts, youth clubs, social and leisure facilities, including the widest possible range of activities for young people.

- 8.3 The Town is well provided for with sports and leisure activities. The main facilities are as follows as shown on Figure 8.2:

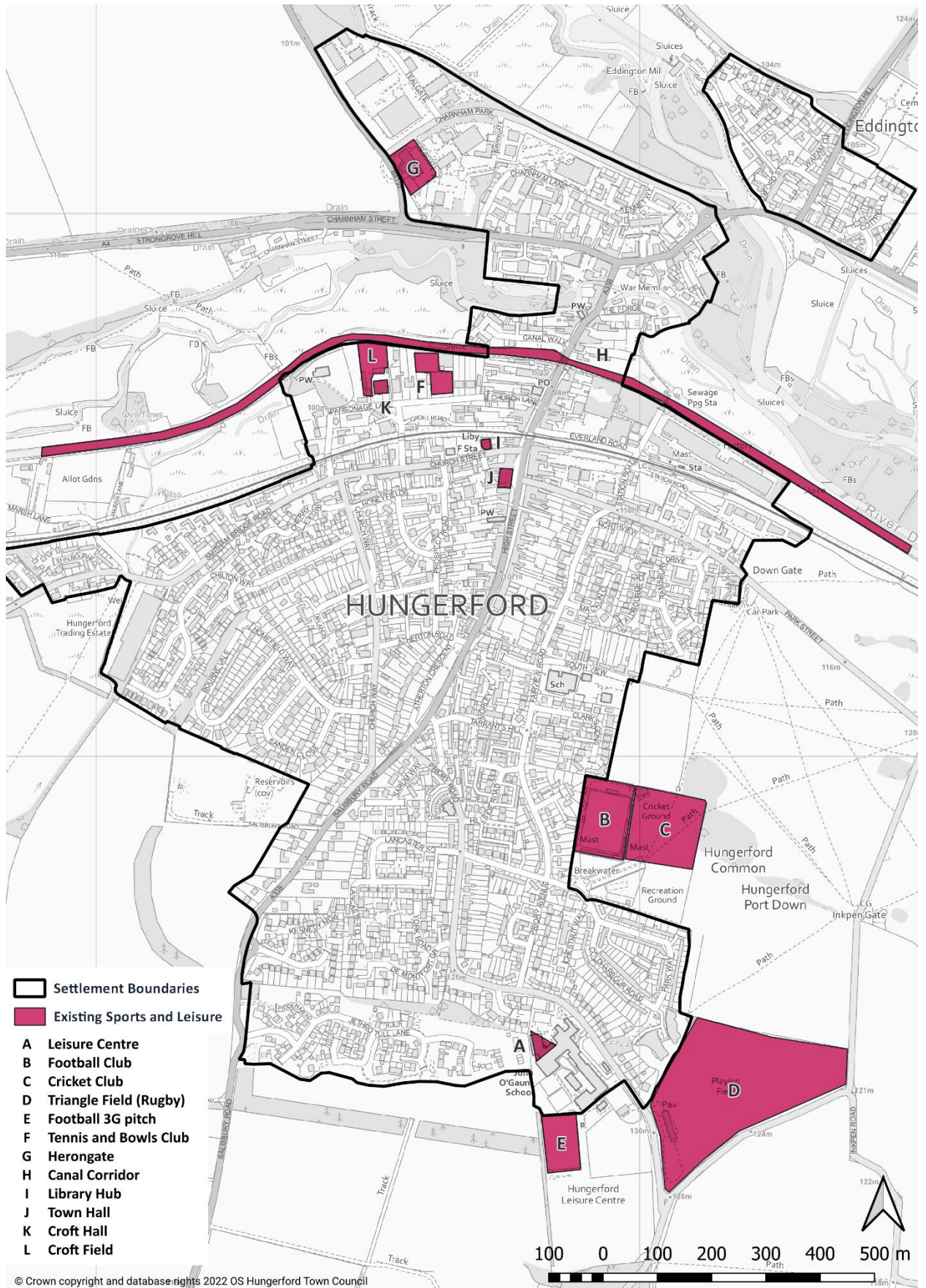
- Hungerford Leisure Centre, which includes a 25m swimming pool, gym and a sports hall.
- Hungerford Town Football Club, This has a small stadium and is currently in the 7th tier of English football.
- The Cricket Club with pavilion.
- The Triangle Field with club house. This has two rugby pitches and is the home of the rugby club. There are two other pitches mainly used for football.



- The football 3G pitch. A pitch was installed in 2023 in the John O' Gaunt school grounds. This is a full sized pitch largely funded by the Football Association.
- Herongate with a swimming pool, squash courts, a gym and other indoor facilities.
- Hungerford Tennis and Bowls Club.
- Canal corridor which facilitates boating, water sports, walking, cycling and other activities.
- Library and hub facilities, which is now run as a charity and includes the Town Council Office.
- The Town Hall, a key building in the town on the High Street with three rooms available.
- The Croft Hall, an arts and craft building with a hall where events regularly take place.
- The Croft Field, which includes a building that was refurbished in 2023 and a field popular for fetes. There is also a scouts hut on the Field.



Figure 8.2: Existing sports and leisure facilities



- 8.4 There is potential to expand facilities, especially to accommodate the needs of the youth sections of sports clubs. The Football Club require new changing room facilities for the club juniors. Also, the Youth Council are keen to have more flexible covered areas and specifically have requested a table tennis hall.



ACTION H: EXPANDING HUNGERFORD'S FACILITIES
Explore ways of increasing the range of facilities provided as the town grows.

ACTION I: SUPPORTING YOUTH SPORT
Support youth clubs and the junior sections of local sports clubs. To include support for a junior football changing facilities and a table tennis hall.

Local green spaces

Objective 1: Protect and maintain existing public playgrounds and open spaces to a high standard and look at ways of increasing the range of facilities provided as the town grows.

- 8.5 Green spaces are important to Hungerford and the town benefits from several of these within easy reach of residents. Notably there is the Common Port Down to the east and Freeman's Marsh to the west, both owned and managed by the Town and Manor. These areas are already protected along with the Memorial Avenue and the Croft.



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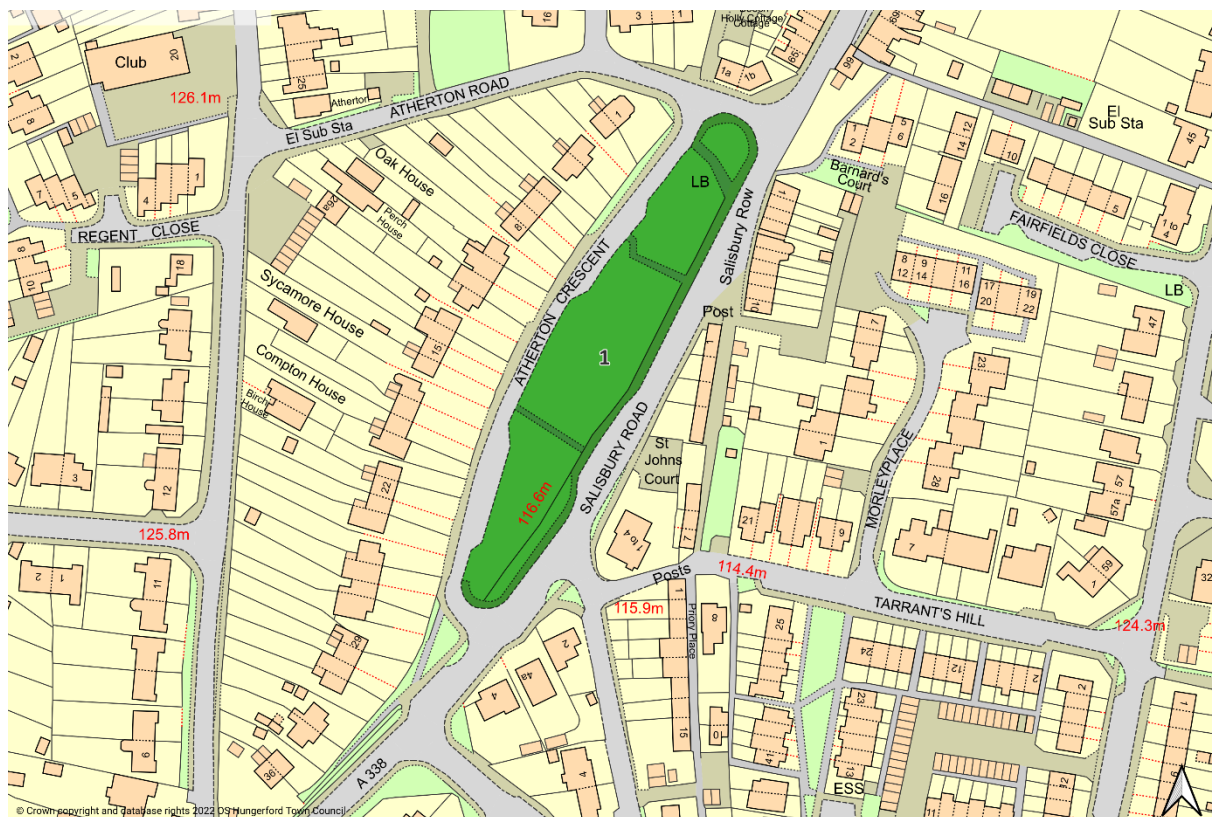
8.6 Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Neighbourhood Plans have the opportunity to designate Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to them. This will afford protection from development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 106 of the NPPF says that the 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.

8.7 The following four areas are considered to fulfil all of the criteria of the NPPF:

- Atherton Crescent green space.
- The canal wharf.
- Land adjacent to Smitham Bridge play area.
- Lancaster Park green spaces.

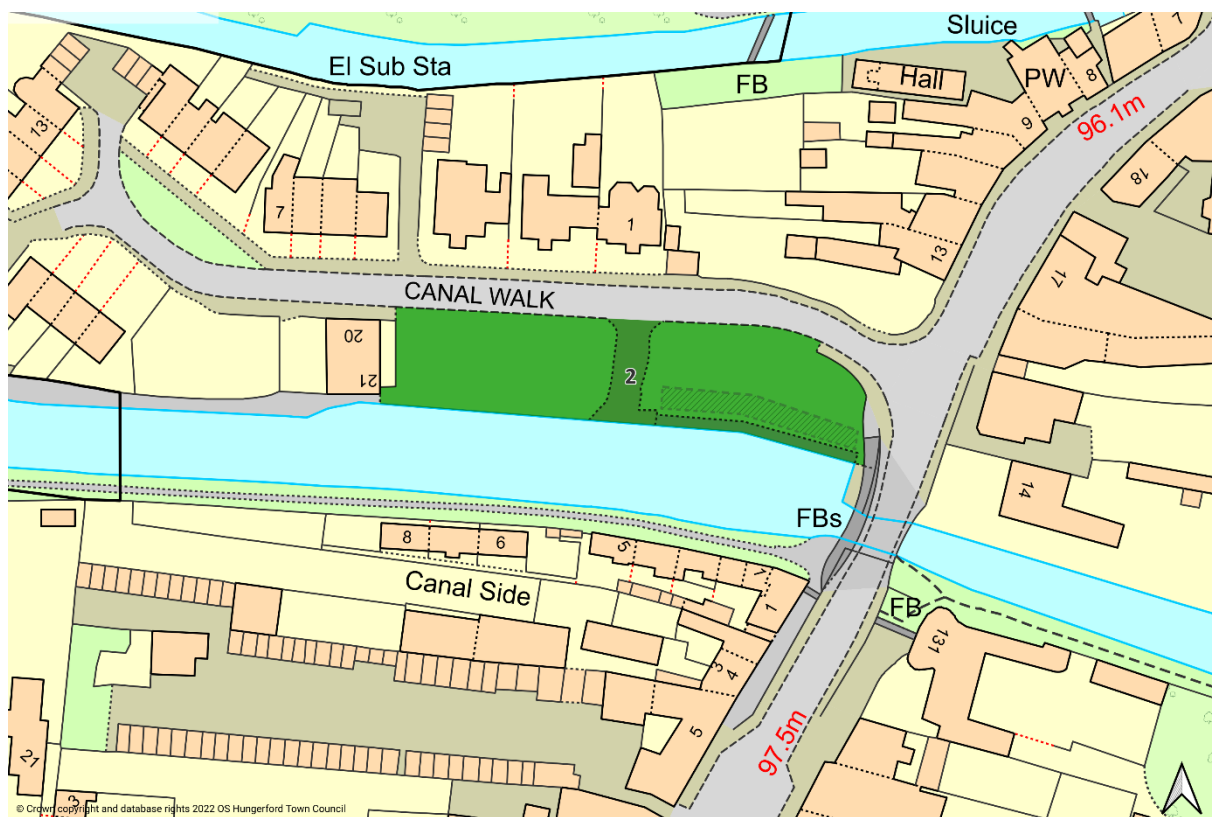
Atherton Crescent



- 8.8 Atherton Crescent green space is an important frontage to the Crescent on the southern approach to the town centre Conservation area. The Crescent constructed in the early 20th century is set out in a curve that fronts the green space which is essential for the setting of the dwellings. There are a number of significant established trees. In spring the green area is renowned for its carpet of daffodils that are a delight for all those passing through or living in the area.



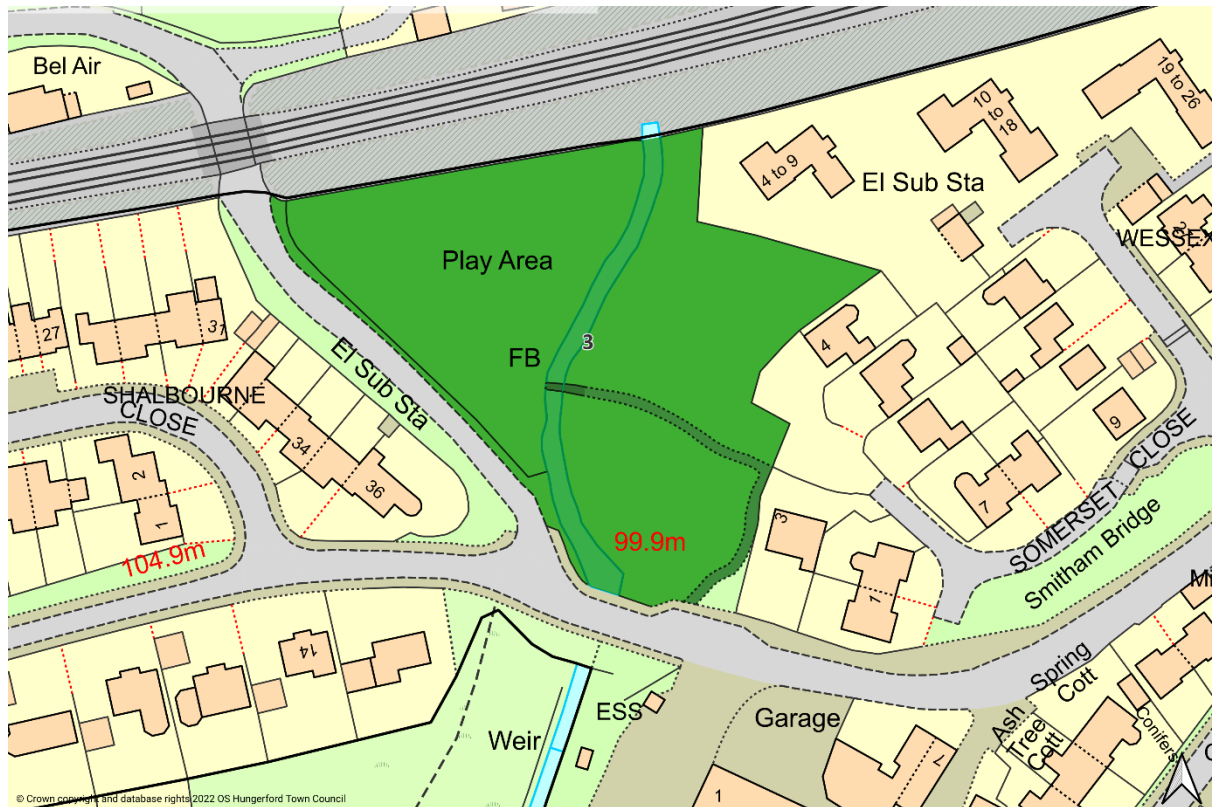
The canal wharf



- 8.9 The canal wharf is an area to the north of the canal just west of the town bridge. It has several benches, including the first 'friendship bench' in Hungerford and a gentle south facing slope. It functions as a small park and is well used especially at lunch times by residents, employees and visitors. The Rose of Hungerford, a narrow boat offering trips during the summer season, also sets off and returns from the wharf.



Land adjacent to Smitham Bridge Play Area



8.10 The land adjacent to the Smitham Bridge play area is a plain grassed area that is also next to the Shalbourne chalk stream and is needed for the setting of the area between the railway embankment and Smitham Bridge Road.



Lancaster Park green spaces



8.11 Lancaster Park is Hungerford's most recent development and benefits from several green spaces which need protection to retain its character and setting on the edge of the town within the National Landscape.



POLICY HUNG8: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

A. The following areas shown on the Policies Map are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- a. Atherton Crescent green space**
- b. The canal wharf**
- c. Land adjacent to Smitham Bridge play area**
- d. Lancaster Park green spaces**

B. Proposals for built development on these Local Green Spaces will not be permitted unless the proposal is for an ancillary feature, and it can be clearly demonstrated that it is required to support or enhance the role and function of the identified Local Green Space.

Health and wellbeing

Objective K: Support and develop services which assist and encourage people to maintain their own health.

- 8.12 The health and wellbeing of the community in Hungerford is fundamental to its prosperity. This does not only mean access to medical services to address ill health but access to nature and the development of local resilience in matters such as food supply as a way of preventing ill health. Many communities thrive by ensuring that development is embedded into its natural environment with care and in a way that enables its residents to gain the benefits of living in that environment.
- 8.13 Relevant to this is the Environment Act 2022 which requires all development other than at the smallest householder scale to deliver a net biodiversity gain. In other words, it must ensure that there is more biodiversity – at least 10% more – once the development is complete as compared with what is there prior to development. This represents a challenge, particularly for greenfield development, and all avenues to enhance biodiversity need to be considered.
- 8.14 One area where this can be achieved is through the design of green spaces in developments. This means not only the private gardens of houses but the communal green spaces that stitch a development together. Often these spaces are simply laid to grass with limited planting to provide basic landscape buffers. However, the opportunities to reimagine these spaces as places rich in biodiversity and as spaces where people will want to gather and share in their community are substantial. As a minimum, major development that must address flood risk through the use of sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) should be encouraged to design these so they become havens for wildlife and have amenity value, providing a place for residents and others to enjoy and be closer to nature and green infrastructure.



Examples of multi-functional SuDS provision

Credit: Pinterest

Credit: Open House London

- 8.15 Communal spaces also offer the opportunity for community food growing and planting of biodiversity-rich habitats. Food growing in a more natural way that mimics nature – forest gardening – is distinct from allotments which provide more formal growing areas often away from where people live. Such growing can be done by the community that lives there on their doorstep, with this approach having the added advantage of requiring less upkeep.



Examples of forest gardening

Credit: Regenerative Farmers of America

Credit: Ourwildgarden.com

Public Safety

Objective L: Minimise crime and anti-social behaviour in and around the town.

8.16 Hungerford has a relatively low crime rate statistically. But, there is crime that notably includes burglaries and traffic incidents. Speeding traffic has become a significant issue and the Common now benefits from a 30mph speed limit. The Town Council has recently introduced some Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs), which has helped reduce speeds.

8.17 Development should actively seek to demonstrate, through its design, how it will minimise the opportunities for crime to occur. One commonly used framework for this is the Police's 'Secured by Design' framework⁵.



ACTION J: CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY

- i. Work in partnership with the police on crime prevention initiatives, such as CCTV.**
- ii. Retain the emergency services building (tri service building shown in photo, known as the 'tri-station'), encourage its full use by all forces and support improvement and/or expansion of the facility.**
- iii. Reduce traffic speeds by encouraging more enforcement by the police, introducing more Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) and trialling of 20mph zones.**

⁵ <https://www.securedbydesign.com/guidance/design-guides>

POLICY HUNG9: WELLBEING AND SAFETY THROUGH DESIGN

- A. Development should be designed to maximise the wellbeing of its residents, visitors and users. The landscaping and layout of green infrastructure and spaces should demonstrate that all opportunities have been taken to create a high quality environment that people can actively engage with. This should be supported by an appropriate ongoing programme of maintenance.**
- B. Where development is required to mitigate the risk of flooding through use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), these should be designed to be multi-functional and where possible, create the opportunity to be enjoyed by residents and/or the community. SuDS should not only be a well-integrated and attractive part of a development but it should be designed where possible for use as public open space.**
- C. Development is encouraged to design green spaces that not only create and enhance habitats for wildlife but create the opportunity for food growing, e.g. food forests.**
- D. Development is encouraged to demonstrate, through its design, how it will minimise the opportunities for crime to occur.**

Schools

Objective M: Support and enhance the Schools of Hungerford.

8.18 Hungerford is a focal point for children's services. The Nursery school not only provides basic educational needs, but is also a centre for a number of parent and children activities offering support and help in learning, development and health areas.

8.19 The Croft Nursery School is a successful and popular facility which has had challenges to its funding in recent years. Ensuring that there remains an inflow of young families with children so that pupil demand remain high is important for the future.



8.20 Hungerford Primary School is a larger than average primary school currently catering for the needs of about 360 children across 14 classes across two per year group. There are two separate buildings that make up the school and both were originally built in 1910. The school has extensive grounds, a forest school area, an outdoor gym area and large playing fields that back onto Hungerford Common. Approximately 27% of the children have a special educational need and about 30% are classed as disadvantaged.



8.21 John O'Gaunt Secondary School has a growing number pupils and has classes from years 7 to 11 (ages 11 to 16). It no longer has a sixth form, but operates as part of the Excalibur Academies Trust group of schools which includes St John's at Marlborough (which has a sixth form). Many of the students are from villages and hamlets surrounding Hungerford and the school offers a wide range of facilities including drama, art and sports in addition to core academic subjects.

8.22 Many residents feel that there is not enough provision for young people in Hungerford. Whilst there may be room for improvement in some areas, this view also may be in part due to a lack of publicity. It is important that clubs and organisations maintain a high profile, making information on their activities and facilities available to the general public.

ACTION K: SCHOOLS

- i. Ensure the Croft Nursery School continues to operate.**
- ii. Support the development of facilities at Hungerford Primary School and John O'Gaunt Secondary School.**
- iii. Encourage the development of a youth council linking up youth with organisations in the town.**

9 CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

Sustainable design

Objective R: Reduce carbon emissions with more energy efficient buildings.

- 9.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 committed the UK to an 80% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2050. In June 2019, an announcement was made by Government to reduce this further to almost 100% by 2050. This will be a major task that will require everyone to be engaged, from households and communities, to businesses and local and national government.
- 9.2 In 2016, the residential sector alone accounted for over 16% of the UK's annual greenhouse gas emissions (source: Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy). The total emissions from all building types will therefore be much greater. Standards for ecologically sustainable homes and developments are established through Building Regulations and West Berkshire Local Plan policies. However, in order for built development to make a meaningful contribution towards achieving net zero by 2050, development needs to go as far as it possibly can. New development is therefore encouraged to exceed the requirements of Local Plan policy⁶ or, at very least, to ensure that new properties are designed so that they are ready to receive the technologies that are crucial to minimising their energy use, e.g. underfloor heating to increase the effectiveness of heat pumps, buildings orientated south to maximise the potential from solar panels if installed.

Flooding and heating

Objective U: Increase resilience to climate change

- 9.3 Flooding associated with more extreme weather events linked to climate change needs to be planned for. The town is in the Kennet valley and benefits from the Marsh to the west which functions as a sponge to absorb much of the water. But with more extreme weather and other areas such as Denford being prone to flooding, risks are increasing. Where possible, hard surfaces with faster run-off should be discouraged and the use of porous surfaces encouraged. For example, when adding a driveway, ensure the surface is porous.
- 9.4 More extreme heat during the summer periods is also forecast and ensuring all buildings are well insulated reduces overheating in the summer as well as keeping them warmer during the winter.

ACTION L: MINIMISING FLOOD RISK, DAMAGE AND OVER-HEATING

- i. Encourage the use of porous surfaces where possible to minimise the speed of run-off that contributes to flooding.**
- ii. Keep the flood risk emergency action plan up to date and ensure its proposals include materials that are readily available such as sand bags, sand and signage.**

⁶ West Berkshire Core Strategy 2012 Policy CS15 and West Berkshire Emerging Local Plan Policy DM4

- iii. Encourage the installation of high levels of insulation in existing buildings to reduce over-heating during hotter periods and to keep warmer during the winter.**

POLICY HUNG10: LOW ENERGY AND ENERGY EFFICIENT DESIGN

- 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 minimise carbon emissions.**
- B. All developments will demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. The following measures shall be incorporated into development:**
- a) 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;**
 - b) 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;**
 - c) 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**
 - d) All development shall minimise surface water runoff to prevent off-site flooding through the design of a suitable SuDS-based drainage system, and where possible incorporate mitigation and resilience measures for any increases in flood risk that may occur due to climate change. In particular development should also maximise the use of porous surfaces on open areas such as driveways.**

Community scale energy generation

Objective T: Support proposals for individual and community scale renewable energy generation provided the benefits outweigh any adverse impacts.

- 9.5 The Neighbourhood Plan is supportive in principle of proposals to provide community-scale energy generation schemes that serve the community of Hungerford. The importance of maximising both energy generation from renewable sources and the ability to withstand outside influences on the market for energy has increased substantially in recent years. The Neighbourhood Plan does not designate any specific sites for a community energy scheme, nor does it express a preference for any particular type of provision (e.g. solar, water, wind, combined heat and power). Policy DM4 in the West Berkshire Emerging Local Plan provides the supportive policy framework for such provision, subject to it being in a suitable location and not causing harm to residential amenity. Hungerford Town Council will work with any interested landowners to explore the potential for such provision.

ACTION M: PROVIDING RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES

Work with landowners to explore the delivery of community scale renewable energy generation projects.

Wildlife-friendly design

Objective S: Encourage new development to maximise the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.

Objective P: Protect the landscape around Hungerford and support the charities and agencies which are responsible for its conservation.

- 9.6 The design of individual buildings and of neighbourhood scale green and open spaces, including private gardens, will help to ensure that existing habitats present in Hungerford can thrive and a range of new habitats can be created. This is in line with the requirement of the Environment Act 2021 for all new development (excluding small householder proposals) to achieve net biodiversity gain of at least 10%.
- 9.7 Planting is an important aspect of development and habitat creation. Not only does a well-considered planting scheme provide high quality landscaping, it is a fundamental aspect of enhancing biodiversity that otherwise would be lost. Planting schemes should ensure that tree species should be carefully selected to be responsive to landscape and historic character and to suit the planting location⁷. Planting should not simply consist of trees but a range of shrubs and grasses too and should seek to include native species.

⁷ See 'Right Tree in the Right Place for a Resilient Future' by Forest Research - <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/ftth/urban-tree-manual/>

9.8 Other creative ways of providing habitats can be designed easily into developments of any size (see image below).



A bin store with green roof and habitat features

Credit: Green Roof Shelters

9.9 Protecting species present in the area is also important. Examples of the simple solutions that well-thought out design can easily incorporate are:

- Integral bird and bat boxes under the eaves of the new 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. Hungerford has a long tradition of swifts in the town during the summer and support of this population with more roosting bricks would be welcomed.
- Boundaries between dwellings can be made hedgehog friendly by including pre-cut holes for hedgehogs to more effectively move across neighbourhoods to forage.
- New planting schemes can support bees and other pollinators by including nectar-rich plants.



Bricks that allow birds to nest

Credit: Pinterest



Hedgehog-friendly fencing

Credit: Pinterest

- 9.10 Development is encouraged to be informed by the full list of considerations in Natural England's 'Green Infrastructure Framework 2023'⁸.

POLICY HUNG11: WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY DEVELOPMENT

- A. All development proposals should aim to protect existing habitats and species, including hedgerows and mature trees. In particular, developments required to deliver measurable biodiversity net gain (a minimum of 10%) that propose the removal or reduction of existing habitats will be expected to deliver biodiversity net gain on site.**
- B. The incorporation of design features into new development that encourages local wildlife and biodiversity to thrive will be supported. This includes the use of green roofs, swift bricks and hedgehog-friendly fencing.**
- C. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals 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 and blue infrastructure networks. Where practicable, any new planting should consist of native species of trees, shrubs and grasses and be designed in a way that would allow their use as stepping stones for wildlife. Any new planting should recognise the need for support through an appropriate ongoing programme of maintenance.**

ACTION N: WILDLIFE FRIENDLY PROPOSALS

Support organisations to provide wildlife friendly schemes, such as the Town and Manor's planned wetland nature reserve at Undy's Meadow.

⁸ <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Home.aspx>

10 SITE ALLOCATIONS

Objective A: Allocate sites to meet the housing requirements in the West Berkshire Local Plan to 2041, where possible making best use of previously developed land and minimising encroachment into the countryside.

10.1 The West Berkshire Local Plan Review Submission Version (January 2023) requires a minimum of 55 dwellings to be delivered on allocated sites within the Hungerford Neighbourhood Area over the plan period. The process to allocate those sites is expected to be undertaken through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. Accordingly, the following sites are allocated for residential development in the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Land at Smitham Bridge Road – for a minimum of 44 dwellings (Policy HUNG12).
- Land north of Cottrell Close – for a minimum of 12 dwellings (Policy HUNG13).

Land at Smitham Bridge Road

10.2 The site is 2.78 hectares and is currently pasture land. It slopes down to the south east, therefore screening will be important on the eastern side to minimise the visual impact of the neighbouring commercial uses.

Figure 10.1: Land at Smitham Bridge Road



10.3 Due to the presence of a stream bordering the east side of the site, there is a high risk flooding along the eastern part of the site. Development should not be proposed in this area which offers a good opportunity to provide for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and public open space.

- 10.4 Vehicular access will be on to North Standen Road. This is an identified gateway into the town (See Policy HUNG3), therefore it is expected that the gradual transition from countryside to town is not impacted by the proposed development. The site access will specifically need to be designed to appropriately reflect the North Standen Road gateway into the town. This should include a footway connection from the site to the existing footway heading eastwards from Pennyfarthing Close. During construction it is important to minimise the impacts of construction traffic along Church Street and Smitham Bridge Road.
- 10.5 There is an existing Public Right of Way (HUNG46) which must be retained along its current route on the eastern side of the site. In order to provide safe pedestrian access into Hungerford town centre, this Public Right of Way should be upgraded so that it is capable of year-round use, including after dark by way of suitable lighting.
- 10.6 The site is allocated to deliver a minimum of 44 dwellings and should reflect the required mix in Policy HUNG1 as well as the affordable housing requirements in the West Berkshire Local Plan.

POLICY HUNG12: LAND AT SMITHAM BRIDGE ROAD

Land at Smitham Bridge Road (approximately 2.78 hectares as identified on the Policies Map and in Figure 10.1) is allocated for a minimum of 44 dwellings and development proposals will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- a. It provides a mix of dwelling sizes in accordance with relevant policies in the development plan.
- b. Affordable housing is provided to meet the requirements of the relevant policies in the development plan.
- c. The design of the dwellings reflects the character of the surrounding area and protects North Standen Road's role as a gateway into Hungerford (Policy HUNG3).
- d. The upgrading of Public Right of Way HUNG46 so that it is capable of everyday use all year-round and has suitable lighting for use after dark. Such lighting must be designed to protect the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- e. The provision of appropriate vehicular access into the site from North Standen Road. This should reflect the role of North Standen Road as a gateway to the town.
- f. Creation of a footway connection from the site to the existing footway along North Standen Road (east of Pennyfarthing Close).
- g. Provision of a Construction Traffic Management plan to help minimise construction traffic impacts along Church Street and Smitham Bridge Road.
- h. The provision of high quality public open space.
- i. Development is located away from areas at high risk of surface water flooding.
- j. Provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to the satisfaction of the lead flood authority.
- k. Contributions towards improvement of the Smitham Bridge Play Park.
- l. Ecological surveys are undertaken which are able to demonstrate that the presence of any protected species on the site can be adequately mitigated.

Land north of Cottrell Close

- 10.7 The site is 1 hectare and is currently pasture land. It slopes down to the south/south west, therefore development will need to take care not to be overly visible from Hungerford Common. There is also a grade II listed building to the west of the site that should be protected from heritage harm.

Figure 10.2: Land north of Cottrell Close



- 10.8 Vehicular access will be via Cottrell Close and it is expected that development will ensure safe pedestrian access can be achieved through to Cottrell Close. During construction it is important to minimise the impacts of construction traffic. To maximise accessibility and permeability by sustainable modes, a lit footway link should also be provided between the site and Eddington Hill via the cemetery. Any footway should remain open to the public through the site.
- 10.9 The site is allocated to deliver a minimum of 12 dwellings and should reflect the required mix in Policy HUNG1 as well as the affordable housing requirements in the West Berkshire Local Plan.

POLICY HUNG13: LAND NORTH OF COTTRELL CLOSE

Land north of Cottrell Close (approximately 1 hectare as identified on the Policies Map and in Figure 10.2) is allocated for a minimum of 12 dwellings and development proposals will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- a. It provides a mix of dwelling sizes in accordance with relevant policies in the development plan.
- b. Affordable housing is provided to meet the requirements of the relevant policies in the development plan.
- c. The design of the dwellings reflects the character of the surrounding area and minimises the impact on views from Hungerford Common.
- d. The provision of appropriate vehicular access into the site from Cottrell Close and appropriate pedestrian access from the site to Cottrell Close.
- e. Provision of a Construction Traffic Management plan to help minimise construction traffic impacts through Cottrell Close.
- f. Provision of a pedestrian connection to the neighbouring cemetery with appropriate financial contributions towards a footway between the site and the A338 Eddington Hill.
- g. Provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to the satisfaction of the lead flood authority.
- h. The setting of the grade II listed building to the west of the site and the Hungerford Conservation Area is preserved.
- i. Ecological surveys are undertaken which are able to demonstrate that the presence of any protected species on the site can be adequately mitigated.

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Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report

Hungerford Town Council

February 2024

Quality information

Prepared by	Checked by	Verified by	Approved by
OM Graduate Environmental Planner	RC Senior Environmental Planner	IM Associate Planner	IM Associate Planner

Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Name	Position
V1	13/02/24	Draft for internal review	RC	Senior Environmental Planner
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V3	16/02/24	Final for consultation	RC	Senior Environmental Planner

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Non-Technical Summary

Introduction

AECOM is commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan (HNP).

SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative effects and maximising positive effects. SEA of the HNP is a legal requirement. This is a Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of the SEA Environmental Report.

The Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the Town Council in the context of the adopted West Berkshire Local Plan, and the emerging Local Plan Review (submitted for Independent Examination in 2023).

Once 'made' the Neighbourhood Plan will have material weight when deciding on planning applications, alongside the West Berkshire Local Development Framework.

This Environmental Report is published alongside the 'pre-submission draft' version of the Plan, under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended).

Structure of the Environmental Report

SEA reporting essentially involves answering the following questions in turn:

1. What has plan-making / SEA involved **up to this point?**
 - including in relation to 'reasonable alternatives'.
2. What are the SEA findings **at this stage?**
 - i.e., in relation to the pre-submission plan.
3. What happens next?

Each of these questions is answered in turn within a discrete 'part' of the Environmental Report and summarised within this NTS. However, firstly there is a need to set the scene further by answering the questions 'What is the Plan seeking to achieve?' and 'What's the scope of the SEA?'

What is the Plan seeking to achieve?

The vision for Hungerford over the plan period to 2041 is as follows:

“Hungerford sits at the heart of the North Wessex Downs AONB and is treasured for being an historic market town set within beautiful and accessible countryside and waterways.

The residents of Hungerford seek to work together to embrace constructive change that ensures a vibrant, robust and sustainable economy that will enhance their prosperity and provide an affordable and nurturing environment for current and future generations.

This should be achieved whilst conserving Hungerford’s natural and manmade heritage and enhancing its strong sense of being a caring community and a fulfilling place to live.”

This vision is supported by a number of objectives, set out in Chapter 2 of the main Environmental Report.

What is the scope of the SEA?

The scope of the SEA is reflected in a list of themes, objectives, and assessment questions, which, taken together indicate the parameters of the SEA and provide a methodological ‘framework’ for assessment. A summary framework is presented below, and a full framework which includes assessment questions is provided within **Appendix B** to the main report.

Table NTS.1 Summary SEA Framework

SEA theme	SEA objective(s)
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect and enhance all biodiversity.
Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the neighbourhood area and increase resilience to the potential effects of climate change.
Community wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities.
Historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.
Land, soil and water resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the efficient and effective use of land, and protect and enhance water quality, using water resources in a sustainable manner.
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape.
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote sustainable transport use and active travel opportunities and reduce the need to travel.

Plan-making/ SEA up to this point

An important element of the required SEA process involves assessing 'reasonable alternatives' in time to inform development of the draft proposals, and then publishing information on reasonable alternatives for consultation alongside the draft proposals.

As such, Part 1 of the Environmental Report explains how work was undertaken to develop and assess a 'reasonable' range of alternative approaches to the allocation of land for housing, or alternative sites.

Specifically, Part 1 of the report:

- Explains the process of establishing the reasonable alternatives.
- Presents the outcomes of assessing the reasonable alternatives; and
- Explains reasons for establishing the preferred option, considering the assessment (and other factors).

The decision was taken to develop and assess reasonable alternatives in relation to the matter of allocating land for housing given the following considerations:

- The draft HNP objectives, particularly the objective to ensure that housing development provides a range of house types, sizes and tenures that meets the needs of all age groups and incomes.
- Housing growth is known to be a matter of key interest amongst residents and other stakeholders; and
- The delivery of new homes is most likely to have a significant effect compared to the other proposals within the Plan. National Planning Practice Guidance is clear that SEA should focus on matters likely to give rise to significant effects.

Establishing the reasonable alternatives

The Environmental Report explains how reasonable alternatives were established after the process of considering the strategic policy context ('top down' factors) and the site options in contention for allocation ('bottom-up' factors).

This work identified three site options with the potential to deliver growth within Hungerford. These site options can be delivered in a number of different 'packages' and these form the reasonable alternatives for appraisal.

- Option 1 – Land at Smitham Bridge Road and land north of Cottrell Close (56 homes)
- Option 2 – Land at Salisbury Road (65 homes)
- Option 3 – Land at Salisbury Road + land north of Cottrell Close (77 homes)
- Option 4 – Land at Smitham Bridge Road + land at Salisbury Road (109 homes)
- Option 5 – Land at Smitham Bridge Road + land at Salisbury Road + land north of Cottrell Close (121 homes)

These spatial options are further detailed in **Chapter 5** of the main Report (**Figures 5.2 – 5.6** and **Table 5.2**).

Assessing the reasonable alternatives

The table below and supplementary narrative presents summary findings for the assessment of the five spatial options, with detailed findings presented in **Chapter 6** of the Environmental Report.

Table NTS.2: Summary of assessment of reasonable alternative options

SEA theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Rank	3	1	4	2	5
	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
Climate change and flood risk	Rank	2	1	3	4	5
	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
Community wellbeing	Rank	5	1	2	3	4
	Significant effect?	Yes - positive	Yes - positive	Yes - positive	Yes - positive	Yes - positive
Historic environment	Rank	1	2	4	3	5
	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
Land, soil, and water resources	Rank	1	2	3	4	5
	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
Landscape	Rank	1	2	4	3	5
	Significant effect?	Yes – negative	Yes – negative	Yes – negative	Yes – negative	Yes – negative
Transportation	Rank	1	2	4	3	5
	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No

With regard to biodiversity and geodiversity, climate change and flood risk, and community wellbeing, Option 2 is the most favourable option. This is given that Option 2 only includes one site (HUN14), that is not particularly constrained by biodiversity sites or flood risk, and will exceed local housing needs on one site on the edge of the town, with the potential to deliver a mix of homes that are well located to access local services and facilities/ amenities (without significant exacerbating existing capacity issues). Option 1 is ranked the lowest for community wellbeing, which is due to being the only option to not include site HUN14. However, it is important to note that all five options present potential for significant positive effects if taken forward.

Option 1 is the most favourable of all of the options under the SEA themes of historic environment, land, soil, and water resources, landscape, and transportation. This is due to the fact that the sites included under Option 1 are the least constrained, as well as have the lowest level of growth/ level of greenfield loss. In comparison, Option 5 is considered to be the least favourable across all four of these themes, given the high level of growth and in-combination effects of delivering all three greenfield sites around the town and within the NL.

Taking a precautionary approach, all options are concluded as having the potential to lead to significant negative effects at this stage in relation to the landscape SEA theme. This reflects the loss of greenfield land in the NL.

Developing the preferred approach

Consultation was carried out with the local community in November 2023 with the aim of identifying a preferred option for allocation through the Neighbourhood Plan. The five options were set out and respondents were asked to identify their preferred option and provide the main reasons for their preference. The town council took the responses produced from the two survey methods and collated all the information received. The report detailing the housing site consultation can be found [here](#).

The summary of responses (see Table 7.1), alongside the SEA findings presented above (and in Chapter 6), suggests that Options 3, 4 and 5 are least preferable and therefore not progressed for allocation through the Neighbourhood Plan.

Option 1 received the greatest support through the survey responses, with 46% preferring this approach. Option 2 is a clear second at 30% and in practice Option 3 is similar to Option 2 as it includes the large site at Salisbury Road, with the addition of the site to the rear of Cottrell Close. However support for both Option 2 and 3 (40%) is still less than Option 1 at 46%.

Option 1 has therefore been identified as the preferred Option, reflective of the consultation responses set out above and the findings of the SEA. This was presented to the Hungerford Town Council who unambiguously agreed with this approach.

Assessment findings at this stage

The assessment of the draft HNP viewed ‘as a whole’ can be found within Chapter 9, with a summary of conclusions and recommendations set out overleaf:

Conclusions

Overall, **significant positive effects** are predicted in relation to community wellbeing, reflective of the allocation of relatively sustainably located sites that should ensure that the identified local housing need is met in full. The policy framework seeks to deliver an appropriate housing mix, including affordable housing, and supports improvements to the public realm, community facilities, and employment opportunities.

Minor positive effects are considered most likely in relation to both biodiversity, and climate change. This reflects the avoidance of impacts expected by the spatial strategy (site allocations), and additional policy measures which seek to improve biodiversity and increase climate resilience (once recommendations have been adopted).

Minor negative effects have been concluded for landscape given the development of 56 homes on greenfield land in the NL. While it is recognised that the NL Management Plan sets out support for appropriately located development on the edge of key settlements in the NL, and policy provisions set out design requirements, etc.; given evidence identifies the sites as being of medium sensitivity, negative effects are unlikely to be wholly avoided.

Minor negative effects have also been concluded in relation to the land, soil and water SEA theme, reflective of the loss of approximately 4ha of greenfield, high quality agricultural land. This loss is permanent and negative but largely unavoidable in the absence of brownfield alternatives.

Neutral effects are identified for the transportation SEA theme as development will likely integrate well with the town and will be sustainably located supported by policy provisions to ensure growth does not exacerbate existing local issues.

Neutral effects are also identified in relation to the historic environment. The draft NP policy framework performs well through seeking to protect and enhance the local historic environment and setting out support for retrofitting and positive design. However, recommendations set out could strengthen the potential for residual positive effects overall.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for consideration:

While the Local Plan (alongside higher level policy provisions) provides a level of protection to assets, it is considered that the draft HNP could be strengthened by including a heritage policy. This policy could set localised requirements for the protection and enhancement of the historic environment, including designated and non-designated assets, and establish development guidelines for the area. The PPG and Historic England provide guidance in this respect, and it is considered that there is opportunity for a local heritage policy to be “distinct to reflect and respond to the unique characteristics and planning context of the neighbourhood area”. This would supplement Local Plan policy while addressing the absence of a Conservation Area

Appraisal (CAA). As identified through scoping this is a clear evidence gap for the neighbourhood area.

Supporting draft HNP policy text includes Action F 'Traffic Impacts in Hungerford', which sets out support for the introduction of Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure. It is recommended that this be translated into Neighbourhood Plan policy, providing more weight to the ambition as development will be required to comply with policy. This could be included within Policy HUNG10, for example, and help contribute towards transport and climate objectives.

The overarching Neighbourhood Plan policy in relation to biodiversity is Policy HUNG11 (Wildlife Friendly Design), which provides protection for biodiversity, habitats and species, and ensures that biodiversity net gains are achieved in development. Biodiversity 'net gain' has been introduced through the Environment Act, and mandates that all qualifying schemes secure a net gain of 10%. Now the mandatory requirement for BNG is in place, there is no technical need to repeat the legal requirements in local policy. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore presents an opportunity to set policy requiring a higher percentage net gain, where there is evidence to support such an approach. Requiring 'at least 10% measurable BNG', or an exceedingly ambitious '20% BNG', can be calculated using Natural England's biodiversity metric, to ensure the delivery of maximum biodiversity on site.

Policy HUNG11 performs sets out support for the use of green roofs, swift bricks and hedgehog-friendly fencing; recognising the importance of design features that can encourage local wildlife and biodiversity to thrive. Positive effects are also likely to be delivered in this respect through Policy HUNG9 (Wellbeing and Safety Through Design), which encourages development to deliver green infrastructure and design green spaces that create and enhance habitats for wildlife. This policy could however be strengthened through setting support for connectivity of green infrastructure and green spaces, recognising the benefits of creating biodiversity links to support habitat improvement; alongside improving the public realm.

It is recommended that the site allocation policies be revised to reference the need for consideration to be given to the North Wessex NL and its Management Plan; recognising that the Management Plan includes specific development guidelines for sustainable growth in the NL.

Next steps

This Environmental Report accompanies the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan for Regulation 14 consultation.

Following consultation, any representations made will be considered by the Town Council and the Neighbourhood Plan and Environmental Report will be updated as necessary. The updated Environmental Report will then accompany the Neighbourhood Plan for submission to the Local Planning Authority, West Berkshire Council (WBC), for subsequent Independent Examination.

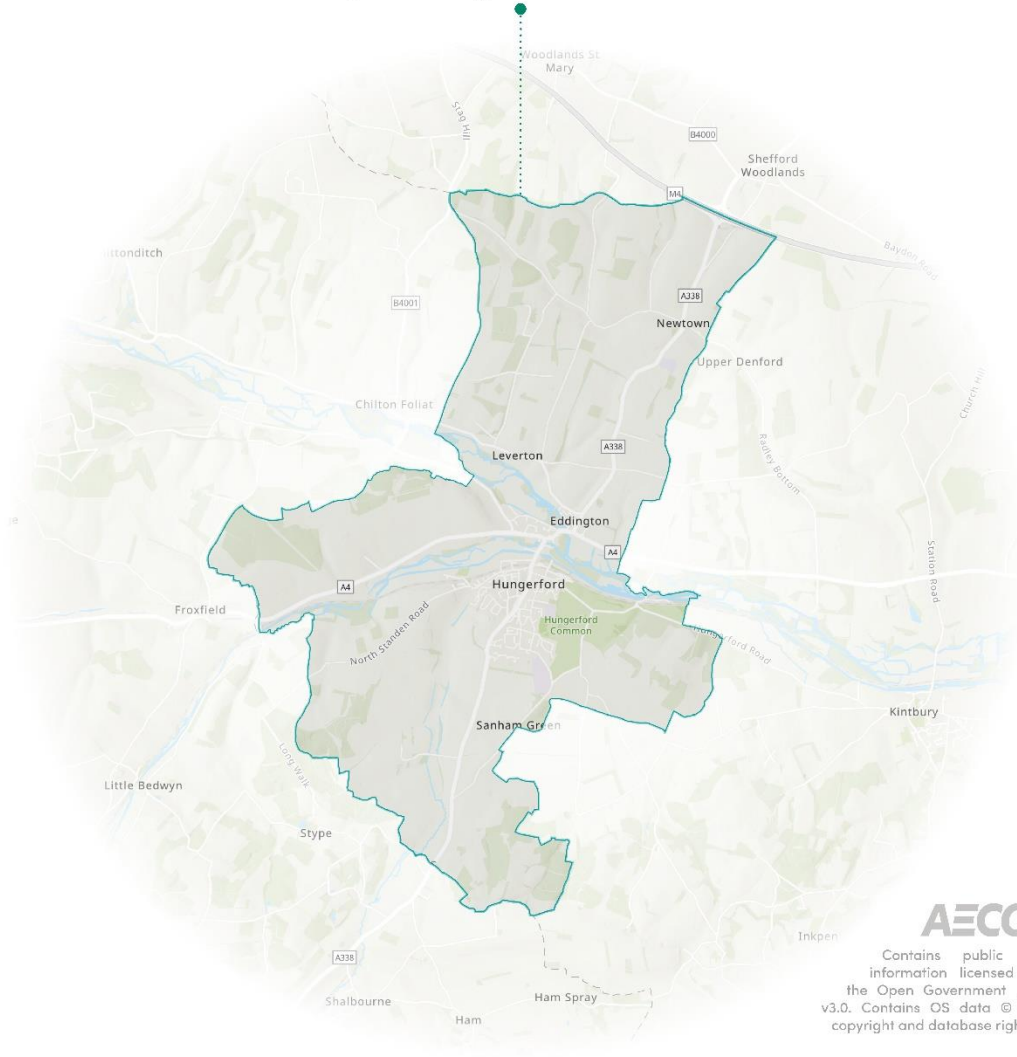
At Independent Examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with local planning policy.

If the Independent Examination is favourable, the Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to a referendum, organised by WBC. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once made, the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Development Plan for the Hungerford.

There is a need to prepare an SEA Statement following 'adoption' of the HNP, and this is where measures for monitoring significant effects will be established.

Introduction

Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan Area



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West Berkshire



Great Britain



1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan (HNP).
- 1.2 The HNP is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, and in the context of the local planning framework of West Berkshire Council.
- 1.3 The neighbourhood area (see above), designated in April 2018, covers the parish of Hungerford in West Berkshire. Hungerford is located in the southwest corner of West Berkshire and is located directly west of Newbury and southeast of Swindon. The neighbourhood plan area is a predominantly rural landscape with the majority of the population living within the town of Hungerford, with the village of Eddington to the north.

SEA Screening

- 1.4 SEA is a required process for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative effects and maximising potential positive effects.¹
- 1.5 The HNP has been screened for SEA by West Berkshire Council (October 2022), stating:

“SEA is required if the proposals in an emerging Plan are likely to result in significant effects on the environment. Given Hungerford’s location within the North Wessex Downs AONB and the presence of historic and nature conservations designations (e.g. Conservation Area, Listed Buildings, Local Wildlife Sites, Special Areas of Conservation, and Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and because the NDP will include residential allocation(s), there is the potential for the NDP to have significant effects. Our initial view is that SEA will be required.”
- 1.6 In light of the above, SEA is required to assess the potential for significant environmental effects.

¹ Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended) requires that each Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to the Local Authority alongside either: A) an Environmental Report, or B) a statement of reasons why SEA is not required, prepared following a ‘screening’ process.

SEA explained

- 1.7 It is a requirement that the SEA process is undertaken in-line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The Regulations stipulate that a report (known as the Environmental Report) must be published for consultation alongside the draft plan that “*identifies, describes, and evaluates*” the likely significant effects of implementing “*the plan, and reasonable alternatives*”.² The report must then be considered when finalising the plan.
- 1.8 More specifically, the report can be structured to address requirements by answering the following three questions:
4. What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?
 - including in relation to ‘reasonable alternatives’.
 5. What are the SEA findings at this stage?
 - i.e., in relation to the current draft plan.
 6. What happens next?

This Environmental Report

- 1.9 This report is the Environmental Report for the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan. It is published alongside the ‘pre-submission draft’ version of the Plan, under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended). The report answers the three questions outlined above in turn, as discrete ‘parts’ of the report. However, before answering these questions, two further introductory sections are presented to further set the scene (**Chapters 2 and 3**).

² Regulation 12(2) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

2. What is the plan seeking to achieve?

Local Plan context for the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.1 The strategic policy context is set by the adopted [West Berkshire Local Plan 2006-2026](#), adopted in 2012. This consists of a number of development plan documents (DPD), including the [Core Strategy DPD](#) and the [Housing Site Allocations DPD](#). It also includes the saved policies³ of West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006. The Core Strategy DPD defines Hungerford as a ‘Rural Service Centre’ and West Berkshire Council have set a housing requirement of 55 dwellings. There is a potential for up to 150 homes to be built, with the aim being to either deliver or exceed the 55 necessary, as allocated by West Berkshire Council.
- 2.2 West Berkshire are in the process of producing a new Local Plan, known as the [West Berkshire Local Plan Review](#). The Local Plan Review will replace the current adopted Local Plan and will cover the period 2022 – 2039. Although the programme is delayed and it is expected to cover the period 2024-2041. The Local Plan Review was submitted in March 2023 to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination.

Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan vision and objectives

- 2.3 The vision for Hungerford over the plan period to 2041 is as follows:

“Hungerford sits at the heart of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and is treasured for being an historic market town set within beautiful and accessible countryside and waterways.

The residents of Hungerford seek to work together to embrace constructive change that ensures a vibrant, robust and sustainable economy that will enhance their prosperity and provide an affordable and nurturing environment for current and future generations.

This should be achieved whilst conserving Hungerford’s natural and manmade heritage and enhancing its strong sense of being a caring community and a fulfilling place to live.”

³ Saved policies by directive of the Secretary of Statement on 25 September 2007.

2.4 The vision is underpinned by a number of Neighbourhood Plan objectives, identified through engagement with the local community. These are as follows:

- **Housing:** Ensure that new housing in Hungerford meets the needs of current and future generations of residents in a way that complements the character of the town and the countryside surrounding it.
 - Allocate sites to meet the housing requirements in the West Berkshire Local Plan to 2041, where possible making best use of previously developed land and minimising encroachment into the countryside
 - Ensure that housing development provides a range of house types, sizes and tenures that meets the needs of all age groups and incomes.
 - Seek to ensure that new housing reflects the character of its neighbourhood whilst embracing high quality design principles and modern energy efficiency standards.
- **Employment and Economy:** Support growth in the variety of shops, restaurants and businesses in the town and the employment opportunities which they create. Promote Hungerford as an attractive place to live and work (particularly for young people), with good facilities, services and transport links.
 - Encourage businesses and support initiatives, including those which promote a vibrant high street and increase the range of shops, services and eating places in the town for the benefit of residents, tourists and visitors of all ages. Recognise that Hungerford acts as a service centre providing facilities to neighbouring villages.
 - Promote an increase in the number and quality of employment opportunities within the town.
- **Getting About:** Seek improvements to Hungerford's transport infrastructure so that safe, effective, sustainable and efficient travel is available and accessible to all.
 - Minimise the effects of traffic in the town centre and especially the High Street for the benefit of pedestrians and all road users.
 - Increase walking and cycling in the town.
 - Encourage public transport usage to and from the town.

- **Leisure, Wellbeing, Public Safety and Learning:** Hungerford should offer young people and children a safe, healthy and nurturing environment in which to develop and mature. This will include a full range of educational services and plenty of leisure and sports activities. Develop Hungerford's thriving sports, arts and social community and protect its green, open spaces. Ensure that Hungerford remains a safe, healthy and caring place to live.
 - Protect and maintain existing public playgrounds and open spaces to a high standard and look at ways of increasing the range of facilities provided as the town grows.
 - Support the development of sports, arts, youth clubs, social and leisure facilities, including the widest possible range of activities for young people.
 - Support and develop services which assist and encourage people to maintain their own health.
 - Minimise crime and anti-social behaviour in and around the town.
 - Support and enhance the schools in Hungerford.
- **Our Heritage:** Conserve and, where practicable, enhance Hungerford's natural and built environment.
 - Protect and enhance the appearance and historic environment of the town and parish.
 - Improve the approaches to the town by road, rail and canal to create favourable first impressions and a soft boundary between the countryside and the town.
 - Protect the landscape around Hungerford and support the charities and agencies which are responsible for its conservation.
 - Enhance the environment of Hungerford High Street and Bridge Street between the Bridge Street/A4 roundabout and the Atherton Road/High Street roundabout.
- **Climate Change and Biodiversity:** Hungerford will encourage low carbon development to promote lower energy costs, cleaner air and healthier lifestyles, contributing to the well-being of current and future generations. It will also ensure that development enhances the biodiversity of the parish.
 - Reduce carbon emissions with more energy efficient buildings.
 - Encourage new development to maximise the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.
 - Support proposals for individual and community scale renewable energy generation provided the benefits outweigh any adverse impacts.
 - Increase resilience to climate change.

3. What is the scope of the SEA?

Summary of SEA Scoping

- 3.1 The SEA Regulations require that: “When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”.
- 3.2 In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, the Environment Agency, and Historic England⁴. These authorities were consulted on the scope of the SEA in November 2023.
- 3.3 The purpose of scoping was to outline the ‘scope’ of the SEA through setting out the following information:
 - A context review of the key environmental and sustainability objectives of national, regional, and local plans and strategies relevant to the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan.
 - Baseline data against which the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed.
 - The key sustainability issues for the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan; and
 - An ‘SEA Framework’ of objectives against which the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed.
- 3.4 Further information on the scope of the HNP, alongside the full SEA framework as consulted on, is presented in **Appendix B**.
- 3.5 The comments provided by the consultees on the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan SEA Scoping Report, and how they have been addressed, can be read in **Table 3.1** overleaf. The full SEA Scoping Report is available [here](#).

⁴ These consultation bodies were selected “by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effect of implementing plans and programmes” (SEA Directive, Article 6(3)).

Table 3.1 Scoping consultation responses

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
Historic England	
<i>Historic Places Advisor (email response received on 9th January 2024)</i>	
In terms of the historic environment, we consider that the report has identified the plans and programmes which are of most relevance to the development of the plan, that it has established an appropriate baseline against which to assess the plan's proposals and that it has put forward a suitable set of objectives and indicators. Overall, we believe that it provides an appropriate framework for assessing significant effects which this plan might have upon the historic environment.	Thank you for your response.
Historic England strongly advises that conservation and archaeological advisers are closely involved throughout the preparation of the SEA of this plan. Historic England has produced guidance for all involved in undertaking SEA exercises which gives advice on issues relating to the historic environment. This can be found here: https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/	Comment noted. Thank you for providing the linked resource.
Environment Agency	
<i>No response received</i>	N/A
Natural England	
<i>No response received</i>	N/A

Part 1: What has plan-making/ SEA involved to this point?

4. Introduction (to Part 1)

Overview

- 4.1 The aim of this part of the report is to explain work undertaken to develop and assess reasonable alternatives. Whilst work on the HNP has been underway for some time, the aim here is not to provide a comprehensive explanation of work undertaken to date, but rather to discuss the evolution of the HNP in association with the SEA process. More specifically, this part of the report presents information on the consideration given to reasonable alternative approaches to a particular issue that is of central importance to the plan, namely the broad location of development in the neighbourhood area.
- 4.2 Structure of this part of the report:
- **Chapter 5** – explains the process of establishing reasonable alternatives
 - **Chapter 6** – presents the outcomes of assessing reasonable alternatives
 - **Chapter 7** – explains reasons for establishing the preferred option, in light of the assessment.

5. Establishing alternatives

Introduction

- 5.1 The aim here is to explain a process that led to the establishment of reasonable alternatives, and thereby present “an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with”.

Strategic parameters

- 5.2 As discussed in Chapter 2, the draft HNP has been prepared in the context of the West Berkshire Local Plan (2012), and the forthcoming Local Plan Review. Policy SP15 of the Submission Version of the Local Plan Review identifies the housing requirement for Hungerford as 55 dwellings over the plan period, and that this need will be delivered by the Parish Council allocating sites through the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.3 In March 2023 the Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination. That examination is ongoing, with public hearings expected to be held later in 2024. The minimum figure of 55 dwellings is therefore considered, for the purpose of neighbourhood plan-making, to be a robust figure on which to base allocations in the HNP.
- 5.4 The first step in establishing reasonable alternatives that can achieve this dwelling need was to identify site options.

Site options

- 5.5 The site selection process was led by the Town Council, with support from independent consultants. A three stage approach was taken to arrive at reasonable alternative options to meet the 55 minimum dwelling figure. This is summarised below, with full Report available [here](#).

Stage 1: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)

- 5.6 25 sites were assessed through West Berkshire Council's (WBC) HELAA between 2016 and 2023. These sites were identified through WBC's Call for Sites (CfS) process, and two local CfS's published by HTC (in 2018 and 2022).
- 5.7 The HELAA assessment of sites resulted in the following categorisation of each site:
- Potentially developable (or potentially developable in part);
 - Not developable within the next 15 years; or
 - Not available.
- 5.8 The categorisation of some sites changed throughout the process, specifically due to the fact that their availability had changed. Also, some sites were removed from the process due to the fact that they had received planning permission. Of the 19 sites remaining in the Stage 1 process, **Figure 5.1** overleaf shows that eight were considered potentially developable (or

potentially developable in part). All other sites were considered not developable within the next 15 years.

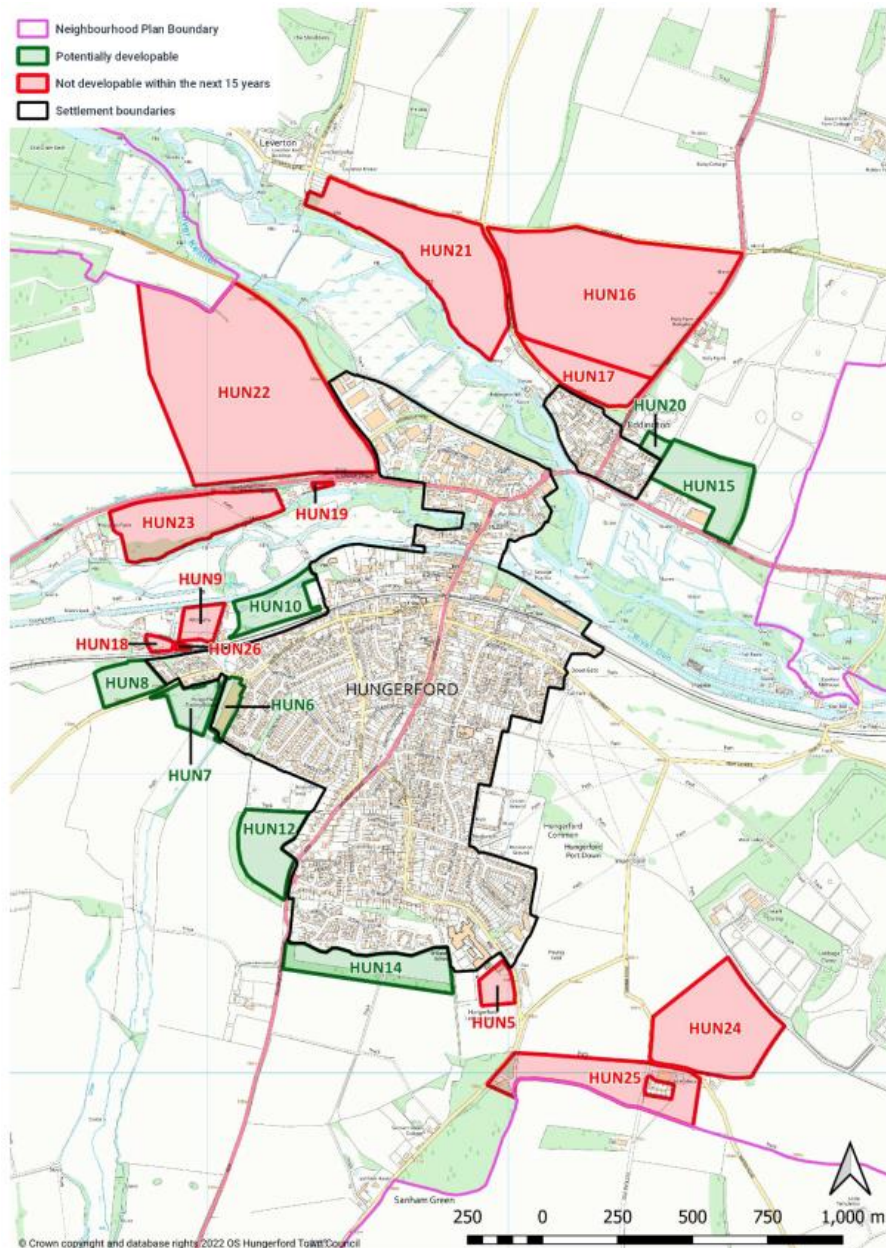


Figure 5.1 Stage 1 site assessment

5.9 The eight sites that were considered by the HELAA assessment to potentially be developable were then subject to the Stage 2 assessment.

Stage 2: Assessment against the objectives of the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan

5.10 The purpose of the Stage 2 assessment was twofold. First it was to identify the most sustainable options when set against the context of Policy SP15 in the West Berkshire Local Plan Review for Hungerford (and the HNP) which requires the allocation sites to deliver a minimum of 55 dwellings over the plan period.

- 5.11 The list of sites that were identified through the Stage 1 process as being potentially developable had a collective housing capacity far in excess of the dwelling requirement. It was therefore necessary and appropriate to identify a shortlist of sites that would clearly enable the requirement to be met in a sustainable manner.
- 5.12 The second purpose of the assessment was to consider which sites could make the greatest contribution towards achieving the objectives of the HNP.
- 5.13 The Stage 2 assessment concluded, taking each site in turn:
- **Smitham Bridge Industrial Estate (Site HUN6):** This site is designated as an existing Protected Employment Area, and is not considered suitable for housing. The proposal to redevelop one half of a larger commercial unit for residential dwellings is considered unrealistic, and would lead to loss of employment land. ***The site is not taken forward for further consideration.***
 - **Shalbourne River (land at Smitham Bridge Road) (HUN7):** This site is merited for meeting a number of draft HNP objectives, although has limited access to some of the town's facilities/ services. ***The site is taken forward for further consideration.***
 - **Adjacent to Pennyfarthing Close (HUN8):** This site is presently active allotment space and is not considered suitable for residential use. ***The site is not taken forward for further consideration.***
 - **Adjacent to Church (HUN10):** This site is to be considered for marina use, and is not considered suitable for residential use. ***The site is not taken forward for further consideration.***
 - **Land west of Salisbury Road (HUN12):** Significant constraints identified, including isolated location on the edge of the town into the open countryside, distant from services/ facilities, potential to significantly impact upon the NL. ***The site is not taken forward for further consideration.***
 - **Land east of Salisbury Road (HUN14):** This site is merited for meeting a number of draft HNP objectives, although has limited access to some of the town's facilities/ services. ***The site is taken forward for further consideration.***
 - **Follydog Field (HUN15):** Significant constraints identified, including separation from Hungerford, distance from services/ facilities, potential to significantly impact upon the NL and the Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SAC and River Kennet SSSI. ***The site is not taken forward for further consideration.***
 - **North of Cottrell Close (HUN20):** This site is merited for meeting a number of draft HNP objectives, although has limited access to some of the town's facilities/ services, being on the edge of smaller settlement Upper Eddington. Listed building adjacent however edge of development location alongside mitigation is considered likely to address any adverse effects. ***The site is taken forward for further consideration.***

Stage 3: Deriving reasonable spatial options

5.14 Of the eight sites assessed, three were considered to have the potential to deliver positive impacts when assessed against the HNP's objectives, and have been taken forward for further consideration.

- Shalbourne River (now known as **Land at Smitham Bridge Road**) (HUN7) – minimum of 44 dwellings.
- Land east of Salisbury Road (now known as **Land at Salisbury Road**) (HUN14) – minimum of 65 dwellings.
- **Land north of Cottrell Close** (HUN20) – minimum of 12 dwellings.

5.15 It is considered that these three sites alone or in combination could deliver the identified housing need of 55 dwellings. Given the choice of sites, spatial strategy options range from 56 homes to exploring the sustainability merits of a high growth option (121 homes).

5.16 It was considered that higher growth options would explore the merits of meeting and exceeding the housing target for Hungerford, addressing affordable housing need as identified through the local Housing Needs Assessment (2019), and the West Berkshire Strategic Housing Needs Assessment (2022).

5.17 These options identified are listed below, with full options set out in **Table 5.2**, and shown spatially in **Figures 5.2 to 5.6** overleaf:

- Option 1 – Land at Smitham Bridge Road land north of Cottrell Close
- Option 2 – Land at Salisbury Road
- Option 3 – Land at Salisbury Road + Land north of Cottrell Close
- Option 4 – Land at Smitham Bridge Road + Land at Salisbury Road
- Option 5 – Land at Smitham Bridge Road + Land at Salisbury Road + Land north of Cottrell Close

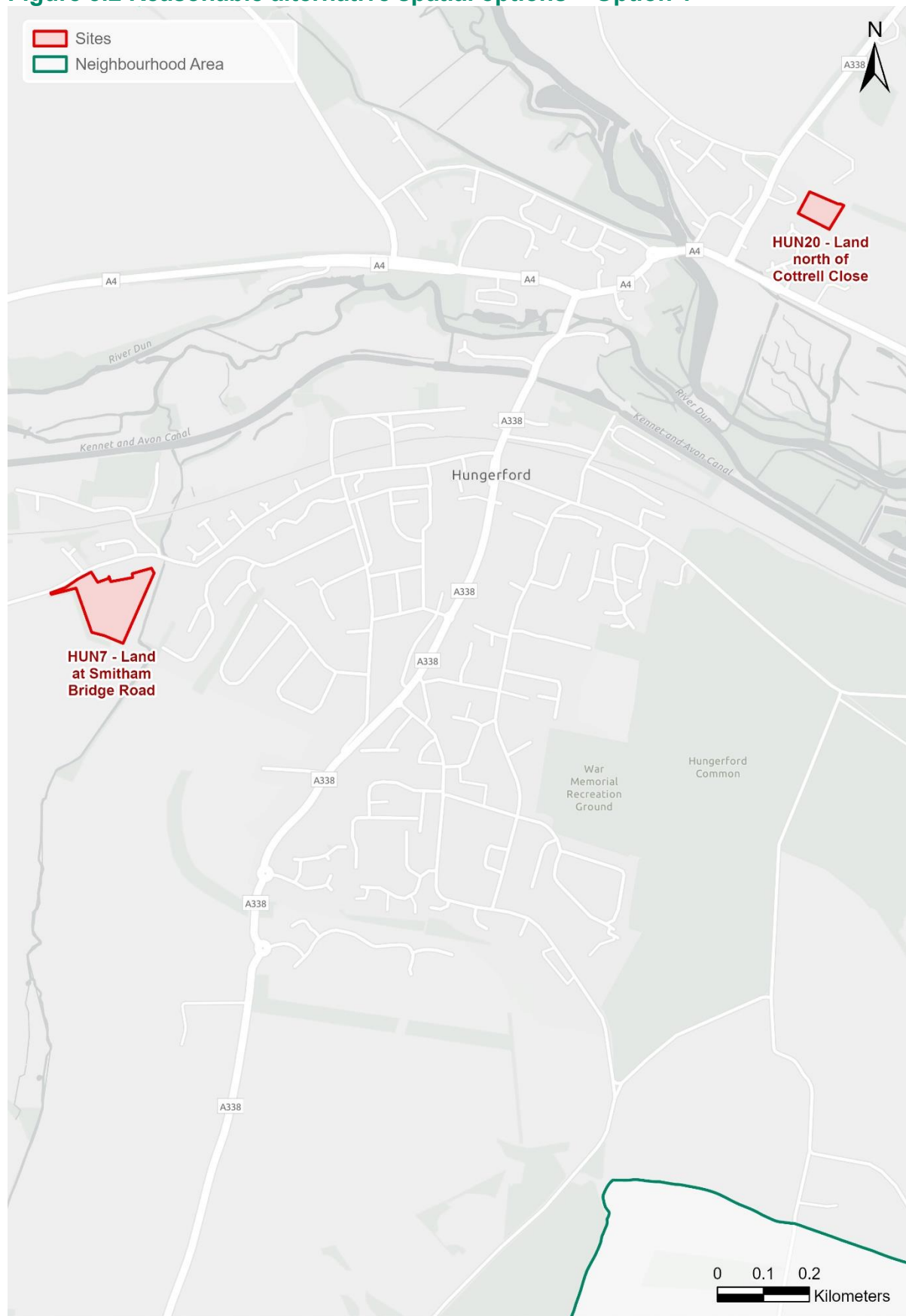
5.18 **Table 5.2** shows the sites that comprise each option, detailing the number of homes apportioned to each site.

5.19 These five reasonable alternative options have been taken forward for consideration through the SEA.

Table 5.2: HNP reasonable alternative spatial options

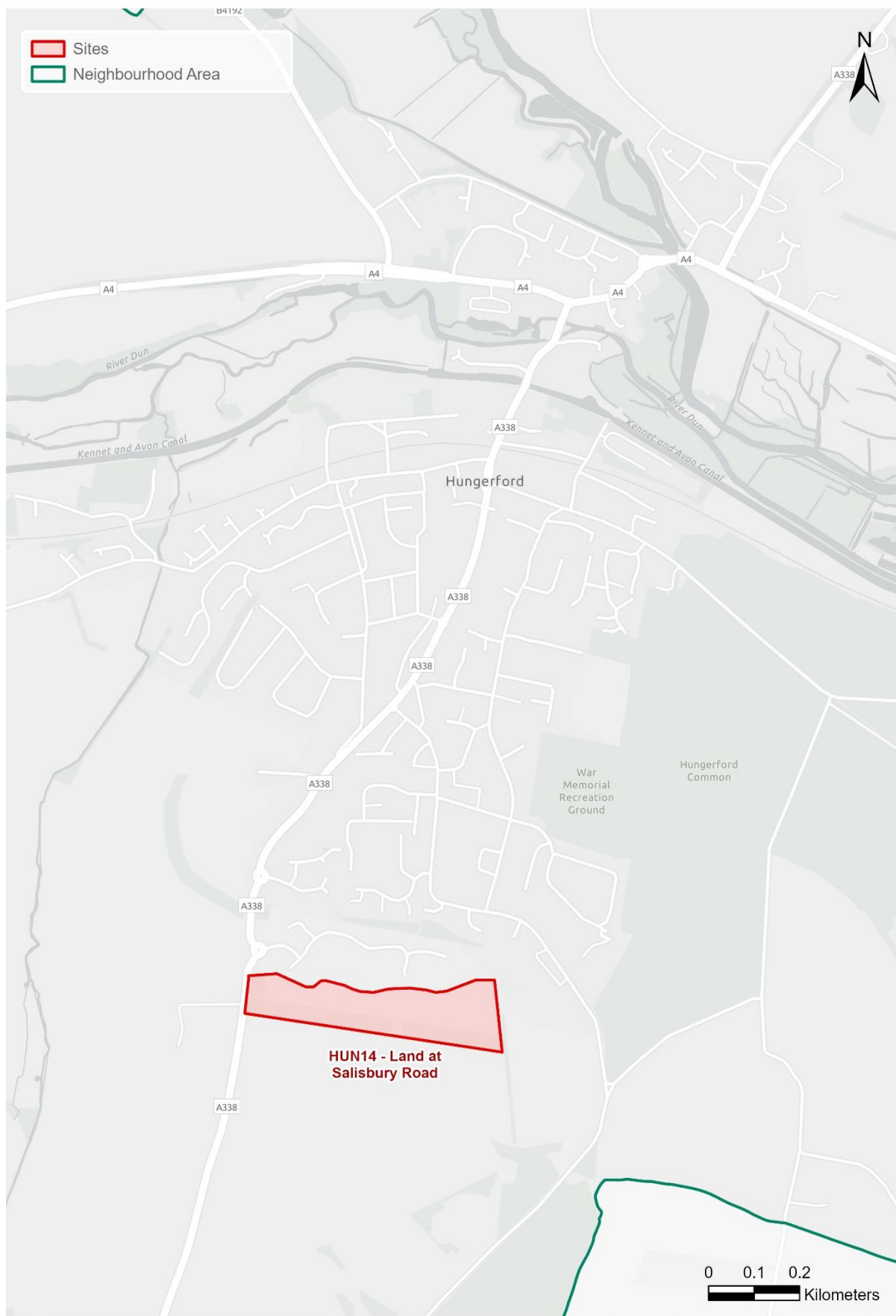
Site	Size (ha)	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Land at Smitham Bridge Road (HUN7)	2.8	44			44	44
Land at Salisbury Road (HUN14)	5.7		65	65	65	65
Land north of Cottrell Close (HUN20)	1.0	12		12		12
Total housing number		56	65	77	109	121

Figure 5.2 Reasonable alternative spatial options – Option 1



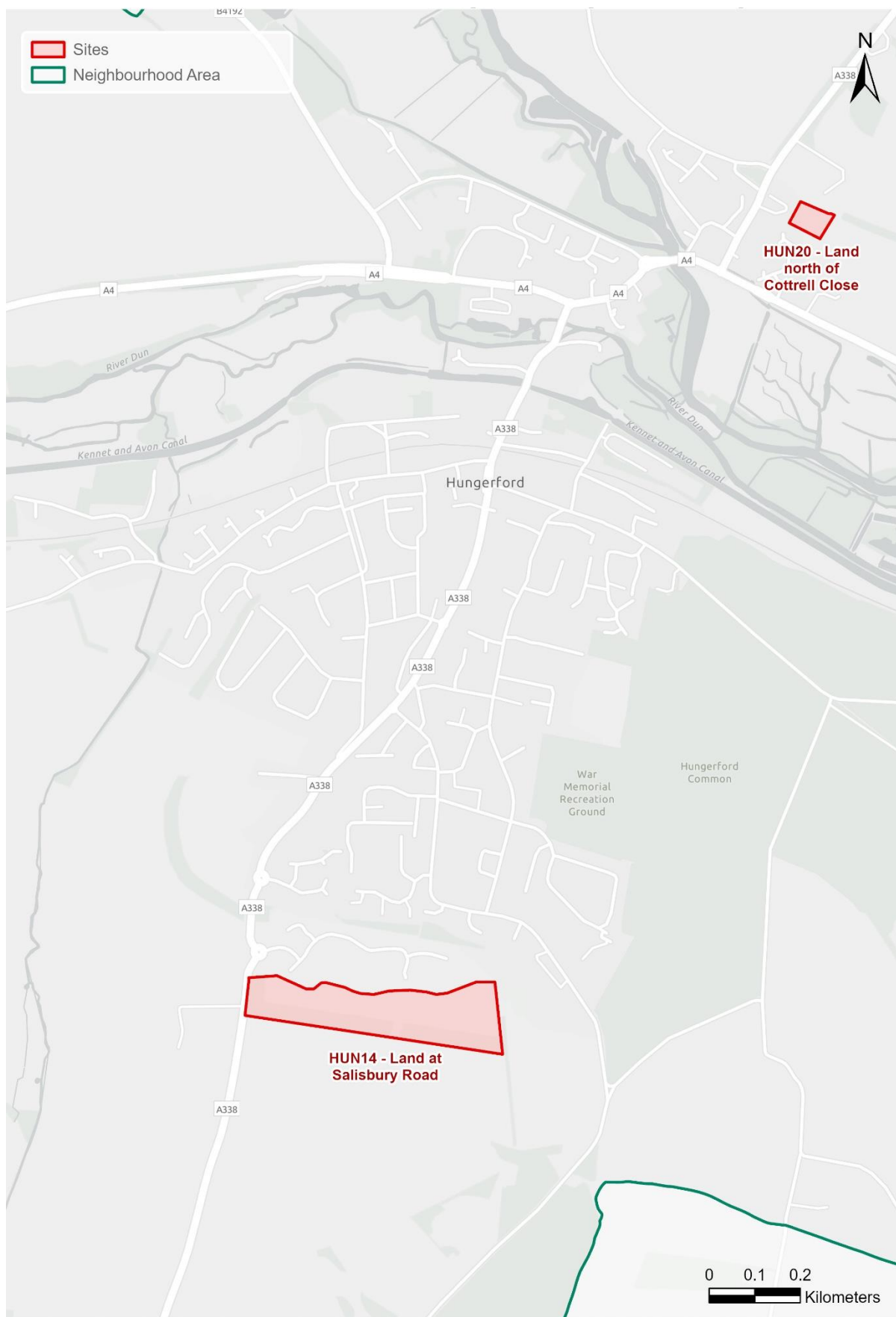
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Figure 5.3 Reasonable alternative spatial options – Option 2



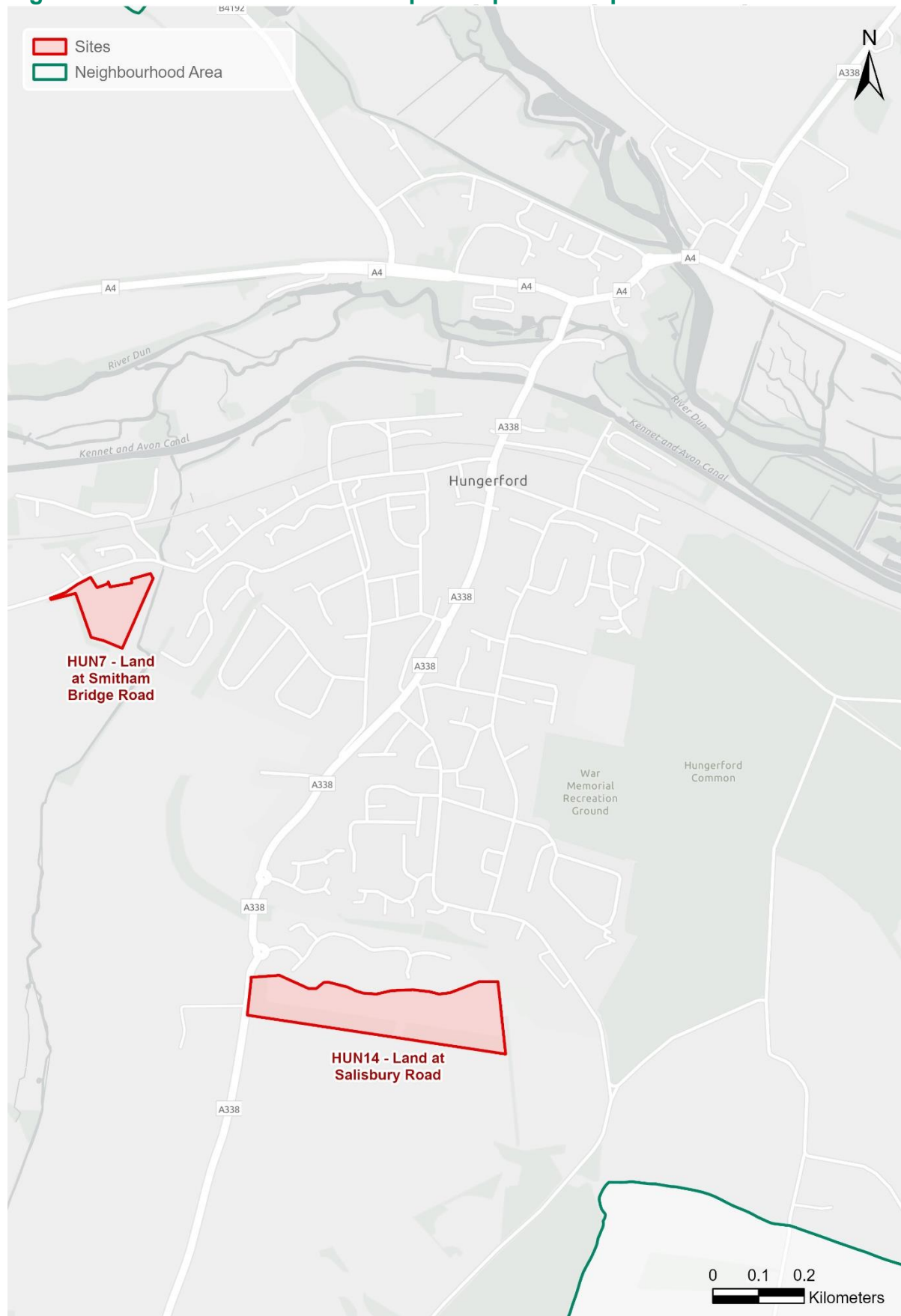
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Figure 5.4 Reasonable alternative spatial options – Option 3



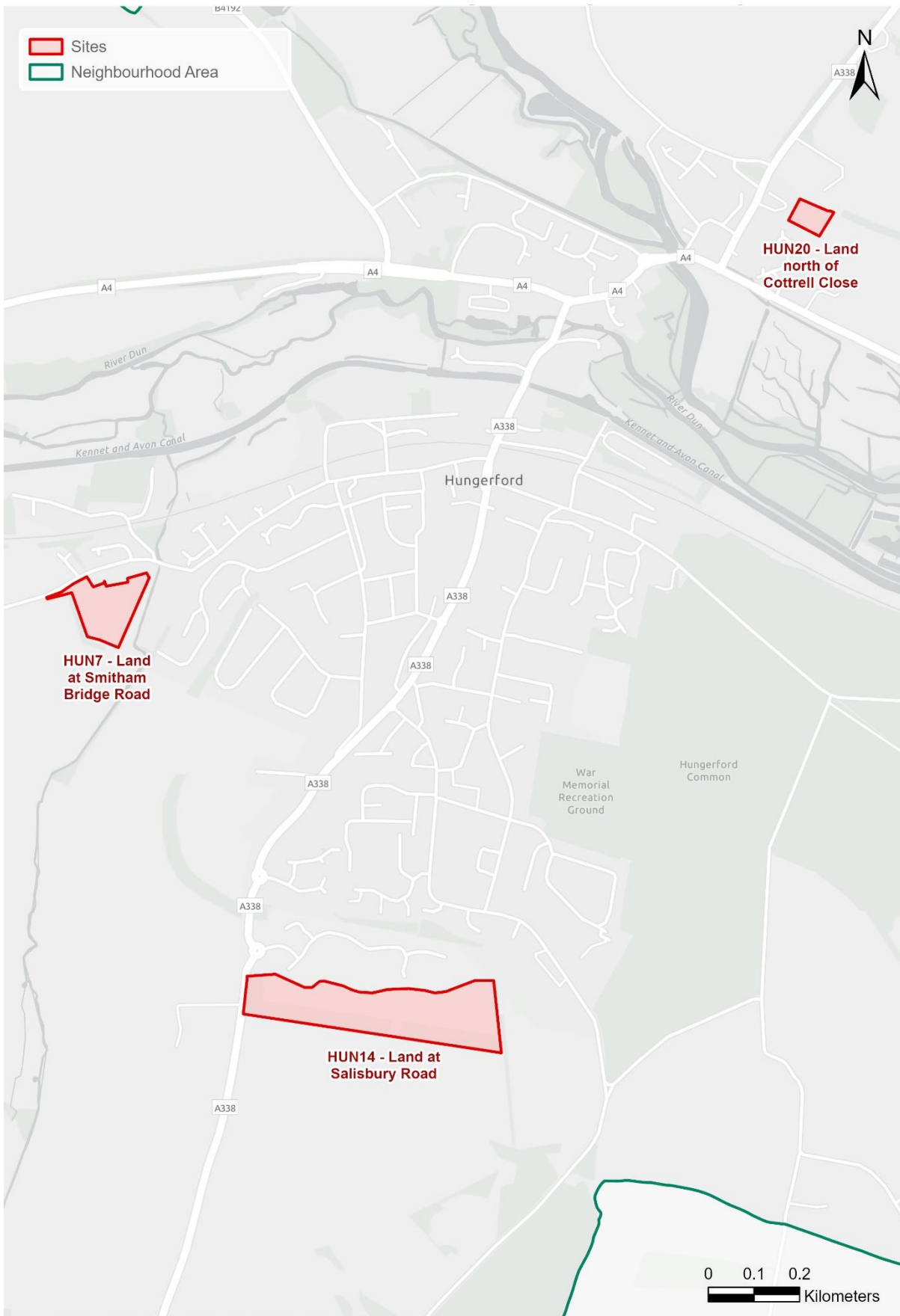
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Figure 5.5 Reasonable alternative spatial options – Option 4



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Figure 5.6 Reasonable alternative spatial options – Option 5



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6. Assessing reasonable alternatives

Introduction

- 6.1 This chapter provides the detailed findings of the assessment of the five alternative spatial strategy options within Hungerford (established in the previous chapter). The options are as follows:
- Option 1 – Land at Smitham Bridge Road + land north of Cottrell Close (56 homes)
 - Option 2 – Land at Salisbury Road (65 homes)
 - Option 3 – Land at Salisbury Road + land north of Cottrell Close (77 homes)
 - Option 4 – Land at Smitham Bridge Road + land at Salisbury Road (109 homes)
 - Option 5 – Land at Smitham Bridge Road + land at Salisbury Road + land north of Cottrell Close (121 homes)

Methodology

- 6.2 For each of the options, the assessment examines likely significant effects on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability topics and objectives identified through scoping (see **Appendix B**) as a methodological framework. Green shading is used to indicate significant positive effects, whilst red shading is used to indicate significant negative effects, however this is also stated in the text. Where appropriate, neutral effects, or uncertainty will also be noted. Uncertainty is noted with grey shading.
- 6.3 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, where there is a need to rely on assumptions to reach a conclusion on a 'significant effect' this is made explicit in the appraisal text.
- 6.4 Where it is not possible to predict likely significant effects based on reasonable assumptions, efforts are made to comment on the relative merits of the alternatives in more general terms and to indicate a rank of preference. This is helpful, as it enables a distinction to be made between the alternatives even where it is not possible to distinguish between them in terms of 'significant effects'. Numbers are used to highlight the option or options that are preferred from an SEA perspective with 1 performing the best.
- 6.5 Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted considering the criteria presented within the Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the duration, frequency, magnitude, likelihood and reversibility of effects.

Biodiversity

	Option 1 (HUN7 and HUN20)	Option 2 (HUN14)	Option 3 (HUN14 and HUN20)	Option 4 (HUN7 and HUN14)	Option 5 (HUN7, HUN14 and HUN20)
No. of homes	56	65	77	109	121
Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
Rank	3	1	4	2	5

- 6.6 Site HUN20 is in close proximity to Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and Site HUN7 is in close proximity to Freeman’s Marsh SSSI. However, while sites HUN20 and HUN7 fall within SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ), this is for development of more than 50 units. Growth proposed at the sites (44 and 12 homes respectively) would not meet this threshold, and therefore consultation with Natural England would not be required, which indicates that significant effects would not be likely.
- 6.7 In terms of the SAC, the quantum of development to be provided by site HUN20 is considered to be in conformity with the overarching Local Plan. The local plan has been subject to HRA that concluded no adverse effects on integrity, impact pathways relating to increased water demand and increased water treatment provided by the additional development that could result in an increase in water abstraction and increased effluent. This issue has therefore been addressed at a higher tier level within the West Berkshire Local Plan. All options are therefore considered likely to avoid significant negative effects on international and national designated sites.
- 6.8 In terms of the local biodiversity resource, none of the options are constrained by local designated sites nor priority habitat. The majority of sites HUN7 and HUN14 sites fall within Network Expansion Zones, which is land beyond a Network Enhancement Zone with potential for expanding and linking / joining networks across the landscape⁵. Along the northern border of HUN7 there is a strip of Network Enhancement Zone, areas of land that connect existing patches of primary and associated habitat – in this case associated with the Freeman’s Marsh SSSI. HUN20 is entirely within a Network Enhancement Zone, associated with the Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and SSSI. Options including HUN7 and HUN14 will therefore likely result in the loss of greenfield sites that have a role in supporting local biodiversity networks.
- 6.9 However, it is also noted that there is potential for all options to deliver residual positive effects in terms of biodiversity through biodiversity net gain (noting the 10% mandatory requirement that came into place February 12th, 2024)⁶. Network Enhancement Zones demonstrate where development has a greater opportunity to bring forward biodiversity net gain, and therefore options including site HUN7 and HUN14 perform most positively in this respect.

⁵ Natural England (2020): ‘National Habitat Network Maps User Guidance v.2’, [online] available to access via [this link](#)

⁶ UK Gov (2021): ‘Environment Act 2021’, [online] available to access via [this link](#)

6.10 Overall, options are not considered to be particularly constrained in relation to biodiversity. Options including site HUN7 and HUN20 present an opportunity to maximise connectivity between habitats and biodiversity features given their locations within Network Expansion/ Enhancement Zones, however this could also be seen as a constraint, particularly given the extent of the Zones covering the sites. It is therefore difficult to rank options at this stage.

6.11 For the purposes of the assessment, **Option 2** is considered the most favourable, as it is least constrained by any level of biodiversity designation. While it is considered that adverse effects would be avoided, Options in close proximity to European designated sites (therefore including site HUN20) are ranked least favourably. **Option 4** therefore is ranked highly, as it does not include site HUN20. **Option 1, 3 and 5** have been ranked following by their level of growth, recognising that higher levels of growth has the potential to lead to increased effects on the local biodiversity resource. Furthermore, growth at sites is not considered strategic in scale (at which point higher growth could lead to positive effects through landscape-led masterplanning and connectivity between sites).

Climate change and flood risk

	Option 1 (HUN7 and HUN20)	Option 2 (HUN14)	Option 3 (HUN14 and HUN20)	Option 4 (HUN7 and HUN14)	Option 5 (HUN7, HUN14 and HUN20)
No. of homes	56	65	77	109	121
Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
Rank	2	1	3	4	5

6.12 As explored under the transportation topic (below), it is likely that any additional growth in the neighbourhood area will place increased pressure on localised congestion and capacity of roads within Hungerford, notably the A338 (High Street) and Bridge Street. Any level of new housing will result in more vehicles on the local road network, which adds to the overall greenhouse gas emissions originating in the neighbourhood area. The higher the level of growth, the greater this contribution will likely be – with Option 5 performing least favourably overall in this respect.

6.13 However, as the growth level increases, as does the potential for sustainable infrastructure to be delivered alongside development. This could include EV charging points to reduce tailpipe emissions, and small-scale renewable energy schemes to help power new development. It is however recognised that growth proposed at sites is not considered strategic in scale (at which point higher growth could be merited for utilising strategic opportunities to deliver low carbon/ renewable development). Nonetheless, it will be important under all options to support minimalised per capita emissions, including reductions in domestic energy consumption and uptake of renewable resources.

6.14 From a climate change adaptation perspective, **Options 1, 4 and 5** contain site HUN7, of which the eastern part of site is within the functional floodplain and Flood Zone 2. There is also surface water flood risk along entire eastern boundary of site. It is however noted that the areas at risk of flooding are limited in size and development can likely be focused away from it. Furthermore, in line with national policy, proposals are required to guide development away from areas at risk of flooding and ensure appropriate mitigation measures are implemented where necessary. Sites HUN20 and HUN14 are entirely within Flood Zone 1.

6.15 Overall, **Option 2** is considered the best performing, directing a lower level of growth to a site not constrained by flood risk. This is followed by **Option 3** which also does not include site HUN7, which is considered the most constrained from a climate change perspective. **Options 4 and 5** rank least favourably as HUN7 falls within these options, the options are of higher growth levels, and will likely lead to increases in CO2 emissions.

Community wellbeing

	Option 1 (HUN7 and HUN20)	Option 2 (HUN14)	Option 3 (HUN14 and HUN20)	Option 4 (HUN7 and HUN14)	Option 5 (HUN7, HUN14 and HUN20)
No. of homes	56	65	77	109	121
Significant effect?	Yes - positive	Yes - positive	Yes - positive	Yes - positive	Yes - positive
Rank	5	1	2	3	4

6.16 The outstanding local housing requirement is 55 new dwellings, and all options perform positively through meeting and exceeding this need. The higher levels of growth delivered through **Options 4 and Option 5**, through increasing delivery, has the potential to accommodate a wider range of housing mix in terms of type and tenure. This is likely to lead to positive impacts for the vitality of Hungerford and the wider neighbourhood area. However, higher growth options also have the potential to increase pressures on the capacity of existing services and facilities. For example, an increased number of new homes in the town will likely see an increased demand for limited primary school places, and place pressure on the local road network.

6.17 However, site HUN14, which forms part of **Option 2, 3, 4 and 5** is the largest site proposed through the options, and it is recognised that as the scale of growth increases, so does the potential for development contributions. While not strategic in scale, the delivery of site HUN14 could lead to positive effects in this respect, delivering a level of on-site amenities, or contributing to improvements to existing facilities, which could include open space or community buildings.

6.18 Access to services and facilities is an important contributor to the quality of life of residents, and site HUN14 is considered to perform most positively in this respect. Site HUN14 is adjacent to the local secondary school, and within 1km of the local primary school. This is an advantage over the other two sites in consideration (HUN7 and HUN20), both of which are outside preferred maximum distance (over 2km) to either one or the other of these schools.

- 6.19 The nursery school and doctor's surgery are in close proximity to each other, so these are considered together. Site HUN7 is within 800m, while sites HUN20 and HUN14 are within 1.6km, with footpaths available providing access via active travel. **Option 2** therefore performs most positively in terms of access to health and educational facilities in the town, given HUN14 is the most accessible site. However, it is recognised that the town is struggling with the capacity of a number of facilities, particularly the doctor's surgery. Higher growth options could exacerbate this issue, despite being well located in terms of accessibility.
- 6.20 All of the sites in consideration are no more than 400 metres away from nearby green infrastructure/ green spaces, which support recreational activities. As such, growth through any option has the potential to support physical and mental health and wellbeing through enhancing access to the natural environment. Notably, HUN7 is directly opposite a play area, and HUN14 is directly adjacent to a recreational facility. In addition to the existing resource, it is noted that the delivery of higher growth presents the opportunity to coordinate green infrastructure delivery between three sites (**Option 5**) or over the larger area of site HUN14 (**Option 2**). This could bring forward greater benefits for physical and mental health, however this is dependent on the design of the option taken forward. **Options 2 - 5** (which include site HUN14) therefore perform most positively in this respect.
- 6.21 In light of the above, significant positive effects are considered likely for all options regarding community wellbeing, delivering housing in relatively sustainable locations to meet (and exceed) residual local housing needs. **Option 2** is best performing, as it delivers a moderate level of growth and is well located to access to health and education facilities, as well as having increased potential to deliver on-site amenities/ improvements to. Following this, **Option 3** is considered to be the next best performing option. **Option 3** includes site HUN14 and slightly exceeds the indicative housing target for the neighbourhood area (which could deliver a wider mix of homes), whilst having a more limited impact on the services and facilities in Hungerford.
- 6.22 High growth **Options 4 and 5** would further exceed the local housing requirement and have an increased opportunity to deliver a wider mix of housing types and tenures. **Options 4 and 5** also present an opportunity to coordinate greater green infrastructure delivery; however, these higher growth options could lead to additional pressures on existing services and facilities in the neighbourhood area which are struggling with capacity. Options are therefore ranked less well than **Options 2 and 3**, but better than **Option 1**. **Option 1** is worst performing as site HUN7 and HUN20 are more than 2km away from either the secondary or primary school.

Historic environment

	Option 1 (HUN7 and HUN20)	Option 2 (HUN14)	Option 3 (HUN14 and HUN20)	Option 4 (HUN7 and HUN14)	Option 5 (HUN7, HUN14 and HUN20)
No. of homes	56	65	77	109	121
Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
Rank	1	2	4	3	5

- 6.23 When considering designated heritage assets within the neighbourhood area, it is noted that HUN20 is within 50m of the Eddington Conservation Area. Options 1, 3 and 5 (which include site HUN20) therefore have the potential to impact upon the setting of the Conservation Area, its intrinsic qualities and features. It is recognised that the land in this part of the neighbourhood area is relatively flat, which could reduce the visual impact of development at site HUN20 on the setting of the Conservation Area. Furthermore, the site is connected to existing residential dwellings to the south and west, and is well screened with vegetation. In addition, it is anticipated that sensitive development design and layout could further reduce the potential for adverse effects.
- 6.24 When considering non-designated heritage assets, Site HUN14 is entirely within the boundaries of a Historic Environment Record allocated space for an 'enclosure or ring ditch, linear features and dark patches visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs'. It also covers the area of an 'irregular annular feature visible as faint cropmark'. Site HUN20 is also constrained in this respect, being directly adjacent to a 'churchyard surrounding, and next to, a 19th century former church converted to residential use, but with the northern part retained as the parish cemetery'.
- 6.25 Site HUN14, which forms part of **Options 2, 3, 4 and 5**, is the largest proposed site in the neighbourhood area. This site, which includes significant growth on large greenfield sites on the edge of the settlement, has the potential to lead to adverse effects on the local townscape / wider historic landscape. It is also important to recognise that allocating site HUN14 for development will extend the settlement boundary of Hungerford to the south, whereas the other two sites act more as infills to current settlement boundaries. Whilst lower growth (**Option 1 or 2**) is unlikely to significantly change the size and character of the settlement, higher growth options (**Options 4 and 5**) are more likely to do so. This could impact upon the setting and character of the historic environment within Hungerford and within the wider neighbourhood area.

6.26 Overall, **Option 1** is ranked most favourably as the sites within this option are not constrained by heritage assets and seeks to deliver a low level of growth within the existing settlement. It is also the only option that does not include site HUN14 which is particularly constrained, both by non-designated heritage within the site boundary and the nature of the site in the context of the historic market town. As **Options 2-5** all include site HUN14, **Option 2** is considered to be ranked second most favourable, due to the lower level of growth in comparison to the other options, however, is notably less favourable than **Option 1**. **Option 4** does not contain HUN20, which is constrained due to proximity to the Conservation Area and being adjacent to the churchyard, and as such is ranked higher than **Option 3 and Option 5**. Max growth **Option 5** is worst performing, including all site options.

Land, soil and water resources

	Option 1 (HUN7 and HUN20)	Option 2 (HUN14)	Option 3 (HUN14 and HUN20)	Option 4 (HUN7 and HUN14)	Option 5 (HUN7, HUN14 and HUN20)
No. of homes	56	65	77	109	121
Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
Rank	1	2	3	4	5

6.27 Sites HUN7 and HUN14 are predominately underlain by Grade 2 agricultural land which is high quality (Best and Most Versatile). Sites also include small areas of Grade 3b and Grade 4 agricultural land which is lower quality, i.e. all options include at least one site that is underlain by Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land. For site HUN20, provisional data is relied upon as no detailed surveying has been undertaken at the site. This indicates the site is underlain by Grade 3 land, which could be BMV (if found to be Grade 3a).

6.28 In light of the above it is difficult to differentiate between the options in terms of their impact on the loss of productive agricultural land, as all options will result in the loss of BMV agricultural land, with the potential for additional loss through site HUN20. Nevertheless, it is fair to assume that as the level of growth increases, so does the potential loss of BMV land. Options are therefore ranked in terms of size, with Option 5 worst performing overall.

6.29 All of the sites are greenfield in nature, the loss of which cannot be mitigated for. As above, as the level of growth increases, so does the loss of greenfield land, and therefore Option 5 is worst performing.

6.30 All of the sites fall within the Berkshire Downs Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) (groundwater). However, the widescale nature of NVZs, combined with their strong correlation with agricultural practices, means that residential development in the neighbourhood area is unlikely to lead to adverse effects.

6.31 Taking the above into consideration, all options will lead to the loss of greenfield, high quality agricultural land, and are therefore all considered to lead to minor adverse effects on land, soil and water quality objectives. This loss is permanent and negative but largely avoidable in the absence of brownfield alternatives. Options are therefore ranked by their level of land take, although it is recognised that a level of uncertainty exists relating to the grading of agricultural land at site HUN20.

Landscape

	Option 1 (HUN7 and HUN20)	Option 2 (HUN14)	Option 3 (HUN14 and HUN20)	Option 4 (HUN7 and HUN14)	Option 5 (HUN7, HUN14 and HUN20)
No. of homes	56	65	77	109	121
Significant effect?	Yes – negative	Yes – negative	Yes – negative	Yes – negative	Yes – negative
Rank	1	1	3	2	4

6.32 All of the sites sit within the North Wessex National Landscape (NL – previously AONB), which needs to be taken into consideration through development so as to not adversely impact on the special qualities of the NL. All three of the sites also sit within the Hungerford Farmland Character Area of the North Wessex NL. This area has the overall management objective to conserve and enhance the quiet, rural agricultural character of the Hungerford Farmland, and enhance the landscape through restoration of the hedgerow network and planting of new woodland blocks to provide enclosure and link isolated hilltop woodland blocks.

6.33 Taking each site in turn, HUN20 is small site adjacent to existing development to the south and west. The site is elevated in terms of topography, and is visible from Hungerford Common, also with important views of the skyline.

6.34 Site HUN7 is low lying and naturally enclosed, and links well to the existing development area, although the land does rise up to the west and north and particularly on the western side. This is adjacent to open countryside, which is a valued feature of the NL, and therefore new development could adversely impact upon rural setting and views. In order to ensure it did not have a detrimental impact on the NL, site HUN7 would need to be very carefully designed to ensure that it did not sit well above the existing tree belt on the western boundary, where visibility would be high.

6.35 Site HUN14 is the largest site and is located outside the town's boundary. The site has some natural screening to the southern boundary but has a change in elevation that makes it visible and prominent in the local landscape. Notably however, since the adjoining land is already under construction the inclusion of the remaining part of the field as residential development has less impact to the overall landscape. It is therefore considered that, with sensitive design, the site would not result in harm.

6.36 All of the sites have a 'medium' landscape sensitivity. For sites HUN7 and HUN14 this is due to the sparse settlement pattern, tranquil nature, and long views and intervisibility with more sensitive adjacent areas, however the location of these sites should not majorly impact upon the sensitivities due to their adjacency to the current settlement. HUN20 is within the Leverton and

Eddington Dipslopes area, which is sensitive due to the fact that it is open in nature and exposed to views from sensitive landscapes.

- 6.37 Finally, it is worth noting here in relation to local landscape character, that all three of the sites sit in the Farmed Chalk Mosaic landscape type. One of the main concerns in this landscape area is the unsympathetic and incremental expansion of settlements, which fail to reflect the historic form of these settlements and building groups, their character and setting. Whilst adjacent to the current settlement boundary, HUN20 would extend outwards to the north and HUN14 extends a large area to the south, which could be described as urban sprawl into the open landscape. Less constrained in this respect is site HUN7, which infills an area of the settlement, providing connectivity to the existing built-up area and limiting adverse effects on the landscape (when compared with other sites).
- 6.38 In conclusion, it is considered that all options have the potential to lead to significant adverse effects on the landscape, reflective of the greenfield nature of sites within the NL, and that all sites are considered to be of 'medium' landscape sensitivity. It is however recognised that the National Landscape Management Plan Position Statement states that only on the edges of Marlborough, Hungerford, Lambourn, Pewsey, and Pangbourne will there be support for new open market housing development on greenfield land. As such, significant adverse effects could be avoided, particularly if supported by landscape-led masterplanning and green infrastructure provision, which will be explored further at the next stage of plan-making. In this respect higher growth options could be seen to perform better, for example in terms of connecting sites through a holistic approach to planning for green infrastructure within the neighbourhood area.
- 6.39 However, without further detail in terms of design and layout of new development, precautionary approach is taken at this stage. As such, lower levels of greenfield development in the NL are preferred in terms of protecting special features and meeting national landscape objectives. Therefore, in terms of ranking options at this stage, **Option 5** is considered to be the worst performing. This is due to the incremental expansion of the settlement and highest level of greenfield loss in the NL. **Option 4** is preferable over **Option 3** as it does not include site HUN20, which is potentially more sensitive than site HUN14, reflective of its elevated topography and visibility. However, site HUN14 is the largest in scale and would extend the settlement south into the open landscape. **Option 1** is considered to be best performing given its position within the existing built-up area and the low level of growth proposed, alongside **Option 2**, which is also considered to be the most favourable. These are on par due to **Option 1** including HUN20.

Transportation

	Option 1 (HUN7 and HUN20)	Option 2 (HUN14)	Option 3 (HUN14 and HUN20)	Option 4 (HUN7 and HUN14)	Option 5 (HUN7, HUN14 and HUN20)
No. of homes	56	65	77	109	121
Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
Rank	1	2	4	3	5

6.40 All three sites have existing vehicle, pedestrian, and cycle access, or in the case of HUN20, has the potential to create suitable access (with access currently limited in this respect). In terms of active travel, site HUN14 is intersected through the centre by a public right of way (PRoW), which should be maintained through any development, while site HUN7 is directly adjacent to a PRoW along the western boundary. Site HUN7 is directly adjacent to a cycle route along Smitham Road, and HUN20 is within 200m of the closest cycle route.

6.41 In terms of wider sustainable transport opportunities, all options perform reasonably well. Site HUN7 is within 300m of a bus stop, and Hungerford train station is 1.2km away; HUN14 is within 450m of a bus stop, and the station is 1.5km away; while site HUN20 has a bus stop within 300m, and the station is 1.5km away. Options including HUN7 (**Options 1, 4 and 5**) are therefore preferable in terms of access to sustainable, including active, travel.

6.42 Site HUN20 is the furthest from the town centre, at 1.4km away, HUN14 the next furthest at 1.3km and HUN7 the closest, 1km from the centre. All three of the sites have paved footpaths and roads directly to the centre, therefore accessible on foot, as well as by car, or bus, as all three have bus stops within 500m. Options that include site HUN7 are therefore more favourable with regard to proximity to the town centre (**Options 1, 3 and 5**). HUN20 is in close proximity to the A4, and HUN14 is directly adjacent to the A338, which makes these sites more preferable with regard to proximity to the road network. **Option 3, and Option 5** include both HUN14 and HUN20 and therefore perform well in this respect. However, options in close proximity to the road network could also be more likely to increase private vehicle usage, which would exacerbate congestion issues locally.

6.43 Site HUN14 is likely to be worst performing in this respect, as (reflective of its location and elevation) it is more likely that residents would utilise private vehicles instead of sustainable transport such as walking or cycling. This is likely to increase congestion within the centre of Hungerford, notably at the A338 (High Street) and Bridge Street which are already constrained in this respect. For this reason, **Option 1** is best performing as does not include site HUN14.

6.44 Overall, **Option 1** ranks the highest as it has the closest proximity to public transport networks and the town centre, and is immediately adjacent to cycle paths and PRow. The development of HUN14 would mean the disruption of PRow due to the path running through the area. Further, it is not entirely accessible for sustainable travel methods and on a gradient for cycling and walking, which makes options including this (**Option 2, 3, 4 and 5**) less favourable, however this site does provide access and walking proximity to both the town's primary and secondary schools. HUN20 is not currently accessible, furthest from the town centre, and in close proximity to the strategic road network which could lead to increase private vehicle use. Options including this site have been ranked lowest (**Options 3 and 5**). As higher housing numbers could result in an increased amount of traffic using the key routes into and out of the town and around the neighbourhood area (further exacerbating congestion issues), **Option 5** is considered worst performing of the options overall.

Conclusions

6.45 Table 6.1 below, and the subsequent narrative, summarises the above assessment of reasonable alternatives.

Table 6.1: Summary of assessment of reasonable alternative options

SEA theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Rank	3	1	4	2	5
	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
Climate change and flood risk	Rank	2	1	3	4	5
	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
Community wellbeing	Rank	5	1	2	3	4
	Significant effect?	Yes - positive	Yes - positive	Yes - positive	Yes - positive	Yes - positive
Historic environment	Rank	1	2	4	3	5
	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
Land, soil, and water resources	Rank	1	2	3	4	5
	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No
Landscape	Rank	1	1	3	2	4
	Significant effect?	Yes – negative	Yes – negative	Yes – negative	Yes – negative	Yes – negative
Transportation	Rank	1	2	4	3	5
	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No

- 6.46 With regard to biodiversity and geodiversity, climate change and flood risk, and community wellbeing, Option 2 is the most favourable option. This is given that Option 2 only includes one site (HUN14), that is not particularly constrained by biodiversity sites or flood risk, and will exceed local housing needs on one site on the edge of the town, with the potential to deliver a mix of homes that are well located to access local services and facilities/ amenities (without significant exacerbating existing capacity issues). Option 1 is ranked the lowest for community wellbeing, which is due to being the only option to not include site HUN14. However, it is important to note that all five options present potential for significant positive effects if taken forward.
- 6.47 Option 1 is the most favourable of all of the options under the SEA themes of historic environment, land, soil, and water resources, landscape, and transportation. This is due to the fact that the sites included under Option 1 are the least constrained, as well as have the lowest level of growth/ level of greenfield loss. In comparison, Option 5 is considered to be the least favourable across all four of these themes, given the high level of growth and in-combination effects of delivering all three greenfield sites around the town and within the NL.
- 6.48 Taking a precautionary approach, all options are concluded as having the potential to lead to significant negative effects at this stage in relation to the landscape SEA theme. This reflects the loss of greenfield land in the NL.

7. Establishing the preferred approach

- 7.1 The reasons for selection and rejection of the five reasonable alternative options assessed in **Chapter 6** above has been set out below. This has been provided by Hungerford Town Council:
- 7.2 Consultation was carried out with the local community in November 2023 with the aim of identifying a preferred option. Two survey methods took place:
- Direct consultation on three two-hour occasions at the Hungerford Town Hall. These took place on Wednesday 1st at 14.00-16.00, 19.00-21.00 and Saturday 4th 10.00-12.00.
 - A web-based consultation accessed via the Town Council website.
- 7.3 The five options were set out and respondents were asked to identify their preferred option and provide the main reasons for their preference. The main reasons provided by respondents were as follows:
- Option 1 was ranked highly as residents did not wish to see increased traffic on the High Street.
 - Option 2 was ranked highly as residents did not wish to see increased traffic on Smitham Bridge and/or Church Street.
 - Lower growth options (Options 1 and 2) were ranked highly in relation to local infrastructure. It was often mentioned that the town was struggling with a number of facilities, especially the doctors surgery. The higher growth options were considered likely to lead to more significant impacts on the capacity of facilities.
 - Lower growth options (Option 1 and 2) were ranked highly in relation to the landscape, reflecting the importance of protecting the National Landscape which covers the entire neighbourhood area.
 - Options including Land at Smitham Bridge Road (Option 1 & 4) were ranked highly reflecting the need to retain the allotments.
 - The need for more affordable housing was a key reason for supporting growth under all options – as all options would meet (and exceed) the identified local housing need.
- 7.4 The town council took the responses produced from the two survey methods and collated all the information received. **Table 7.1** overleaf shows a summary of the results. The report detailing the housing site consultation can be found [here](#).

Table 7.1: Summary of Site Preference Surveys from all Responses

Option	Description	No. of responses in support of option	% of responses
1	Land at Smitham Bridge Road + Land north of Cottrell Close	112	46
2	Land at Salisbury Road	74	30
3	Land at Salisbury Road + Land north of Cottrell Close	25	10
4	Land at Smitham Bridge Road + Land at Salisbury Road	12	5
5	Land at Smitham Bridge Road + Land at Salisbury Road + Land north of Cottrell Close	16	7
N		4	2
Total		243	100%

7.5 Table 7.1, alongside the SEA findings presented above in Chapter 6, suggests that Options 3, 4 and 5 are least preferable and therefore not progressed for allocation through the Neighborhood Plan.

7.6 Option 1 received the greatest support through the survey responses, with 46% preferring this approach. Option 2 is a clear second at 30% and in practice Option 3 is similar to Option 2 as it includes the large site at Salisbury Road, with the addition of the site to the rear of Cottrell Close. However, support for both Option 2 and 3 (40%) is still less than Option 1 at 46%.

7.7 Option 1 has therefore been identified as the preferred Option, reflective of the consultation responses set out above and the findings of the SEA. This was presented to the Hungerford Town Council who unambiguously agreed with this approach.

Part 2: What are the SEA findings at this stage?

8. Introduction (to Part 2)

Introduction

8.1 The aim of this chapter is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the current 'pre-submission' version of the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan. This chapter presents:

- An appraisal of the current version of the HNP under the SEA theme headings; and
- The overall conclusions at this current stage and recommendations for the next stage of plan-making.

HNP policies

8.2 The draft HNP puts forward a number of policies to guide development in the Neighbourhood Plan area. These are set out in Table 8.1 below.

Table 8.1 HNP policies

Policy number	Name
HUNG1	Housing Mix
HUNG2	Design and Character
HUNG3	Gateways into and out of Hungerford Town
HUNG4	Retrofitting Historic Buildings for Energy Efficiency
HUNG5	Retaining and Enhancing the Vitality and Viability of Hungerford Town Centre
HUNG6	Key Walk/ Cycle Routes
HUNG7	Play and Youth Facilities
HUNG8	Local Green Spaces
HUNG9	Wellbeing and Safety through Design
HUNG10	Low Energy and Energy Efficiency Design
HUNG11	Wildlife-friendly Development
HUNG12	Land at Smitham Bridge Road
HUNG13	Land north of Cottage Close

Methodology

- 8.3 The assessment identifies and evaluates 'likely significant effects' on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability objectives identified through scoping (see Table 3.1) as a methodological framework.
- 8.4 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the strategic nature of the policies under consideration and understanding of the baseline (now and in the future under a 'no plan' scenario) that is inevitably limited. Given uncertainties there is a need to make assumptions, e.g., in relation to plan implementation and aspects of the baseline that might be impacted. Assumptions are made cautiously and explained within the text (with the aim of striking a balance between comprehensiveness and conciseness). In many instances, given reasonable assumptions, it is not possible to predict 'significant effects', but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) of the draft plan in more general terms.
- 8.5 Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking account of the criteria presented within Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of effects as far as possible. Cumulative effects are also considered, i.e., the potential for the Neighbourhood Plan to impact an aspect of the baseline when implemented alongside other plans, programmes, and projects. Policies are considered as a whole when determining significance, but there is no need to systematically appraise policies individually. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment as appropriate.

9. Appraisal of the draft Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan

Biodiversity

9.1 The neighbourhood area is constrained by the following three European designated biodiversity sites, being within 10km of the Hungerford Parish boundary:

- River Lambourn Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Kennet & Lambourn Floodplains SAC
- Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC

9.2 A Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) has therefore been carried out for the draft HNP (2024), identifying any aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan that could cause any adverse effect on the integrity of European sites. HRA screening of the draft HNP found that the two policies (site allocation policies HUNG12 and HUNG13) had the potential to cause a likely significant effect upon the European sites with regards to water quantity level and flow, and water quality impact pathways.

9.3 These two policies were taken forward for Appropriate Assessment (AA), which found that:

“The overarching Local Plan, West Berkshire Local Plan, was subject to an HRA which concluded that there would be No Significant Effects from the development it outlined, given the Water Resource Management Plans that have been prepared by Thames Water. The allocations within the Hungerford Neighbourhood plan are within the quanta provided for by the West Berkshire Local plan and therefore in combination impacts from this development can be excluded.

The possibility for these developments to impact the European sites via increased surface run-off was considered. However, given that these site allocations are located over 1km away from the SACs in question, and that Policy HUNG10 requires that development minimises surface run off utilising Sustainable drainage systems it was concluded that these developments will not have any negative impacts with regards to surface water run-off.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan will not provide any negative impacts on European site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.”

9.4 The SEA supports these conclusions, recognising the role of Policy HUNG10 in ensuring negative effects on the integrity of European sites are avoided.

- 9.5 When considering nationally designated biodiversity within the area, noteworthy are Freeman's Marsh Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SSSI, which coincides with the SAC discussed above. The neighbourhood area is also constrained by Ancient Woodland, eight Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs), and priority habitat; which extends across the neighbourhood area. Site allocations are not considered to be particularly constrained in this respect, however for both site allocations, supporting policy requires that ecological surveys are undertaken which are able to demonstrate that the presence of any protected species on the site can be adequately mitigated.
- 9.6 The overarching Neighbourhood Plan policy in relation to biodiversity is Policy HUNG11 (Wildlife Friendly Design), which provides protection for biodiversity, habitats, and species, and ensures that biodiversity net gains are achieved in development. Biodiversity 'net gain' has been introduced through the Environment Act, and mandates that all qualifying schemes secure a net gain of 10%. Now that the mandatory requirement for BNG is in place⁷, there is no technical need to repeat the legal requirements in local policy. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore presents an opportunity to set policy requiring a higher percentage net gain, where there is evidence to support such an approach. Requiring 'at least 10% measurable BNG', or an exceedingly ambitious '20% BNG', can be calculated using Natural England's biodiversity metric, to ensure the delivery of maximum biodiversity on site.
- 9.7 Policy HUNG11 performs sets out support for the use of green roofs, swift bricks and hedgehog-friendly fencing; recognising the importance of design features that can encourage local wildlife and biodiversity to thrive. Positive effects are also likely to be delivered in this respect through Policy HUNG9 (Wellbeing and Safety Through Design), which encourages development to deliver green infrastructure and design green spaces that create and enhance habitats for wildlife. This policy could however be strengthened through setting support for connectivity of green infrastructure and green spaces, recognising the benefits of creating biodiversity links to support habitat improvement; alongside improving the public realm.
- 9.8 Overall, no significant impacts are predicted for biodiversity. The draft HNP policy framework performs broadly positively through ensuring the mitigation of any adverse effects on biodiversity sites/ features, and setting out support for BNG. There is the potential for **minor positive effects** assuming recommendations set out above are considered.

⁷ [Biodiversity Net Gain for local authorities | Local Government Association](#)

Climate change

- 9.9 Flood risk is a key issue for Hungerford, with large sections of the neighbourhood area, specifically those adjacent to water bodies being at high risk of flooding (within Flood Zone 3). However, these are largely concentrated to the areas adjacent to rivers, as well as the Kennet and Lambourn Floodplains, which runs through the centre of the neighbourhood area to the north of the town. In terms of the two site allocations, only Land at Smitham Bridge is constrained by flood risk, with the eastern part of the site falling within the functional floodplain and Flood Zone 2.
- 9.10 In accordance with Policy HUNG12, development at Land at Smitham Bridge Road is expected to be located away from areas at high risk of surface water flooding, and incorporate sustainable drainage schemes (SuDS) to the satisfaction of the lead flood authority. This is alongside other measures that should contribute to reducing flood risk such as retention and enhancement of biodiversity features (Policies HUNG9 and HUNG11), and infrastructure upgrades alongside new development (Policies HUNG2 and HUNG9).
- 9.11 While not specifically constrained by existing flood risk within the site, reflective of the changing climate and flood risk more widely within the area, SuDs is also required for site allocation Land north of Cottrell Close; and wider policies discussed above are also of relevance here. On this basis, no significant impacts in relation to flood risk are anticipated.
- 9.12 With a climate emergency declared in West Berkshire in 2019, and a recently adopted West Berkshire Environment Strategy and Delivery Plan, the draft HNP recognises the importance of planning for climate resilience. Of note in this respect is Policy HUNG10 (Low Energy and Energy Efficient Design), which features many development requirements that will contribute to increasing resilience, including sustainable construction methods, sustainable drainage systems, modern energy efficiency standards, and high quality design principles including utilisation of trees, planting, and wider landscaping. Many of these requirements are also detailed in individual policies such as Policy HUNG9 protecting and enhancing biodiversity, as well as requiring sustainable drainage to minimise flood risk; and Policies HUNG2 and HUNG6 which seek to improve and extend footpaths and cycleways.
- 9.13 Furthermore, while not specifically within policy, the draft HNP sets out support for community scale energy generation, with a key action of the draft HNP being to work with landowners to explore the delivery of projects in this respect. This supplements emerging Local Plan Policy DM4, which provides the supportive policy framework for such provision.
- 9.14 Supporting policy text also includes Action F 'Traffic Impacts in Hungerford', which sets out support for the introduction of Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure. It is recommended that this be translated into Neighbourhood Plan policy, providing more weight to the ambition as development will be required to comply with policy. This could be included within Policy HUNG10, for example.
- 9.15 Overall, it is considered that the Draft HNP is likely to lead to **minor positive effects** in relation to the climate change SEA topic. The draft HNP sets out policies that support both climate change adaptation and mitigation, through

sustainably located growth, sustainable design and construction, and support for renewable energy and active travel uptake. The use of ultra-low emission vehicles is also supported through the wider draft HNP, however this is recommended to be moved into policy to further strengthen residual positive effects.

Community wellbeing

- 9.16 The draft HNP allocates two sites for 44 and 12 dwellings respectively, which if developed, would meet identified housing requirements in the West Berkshire Local Plan to 2041. Sites are located on the settlement edge, which minimises encroachment into the countryside and supports sustainable growth of the town.
- 9.17 Both site allocations are required to deliver a mix of dwelling sizes and affordable housing in accordance with the wider policy framework, which highlights affordable housing as a key issue for the town. A key objective of the draft HNP is therefore to ensure housing development provides a range of house types, sizes and tenures that meets the needs of all age groups and incomes. To meet this objective, Policy HUNG1 (Housing Mix) requires that developments of five dwellings or more should provide a mix of dwelling sizes and types that reflect the requirements of the West Berkshire Strategic Housing Needs Assessment (SHNA) (2022), and the needs of both first-time entrants to the housing market and older downsizers. Policy HUNG2 further requires a range of densities, house types (where appropriate) and plot layouts should be used by all development coming forward in the town.
- 9.18 West Berkshire promotes Hungerford as an attractive place to live and work (particularly for young people), with good facilities, services, and transport links; and is subsequently developing a town centre strategy for the area. The strategy has been informed by the Neighbourhood Plan objectives and shares the same ambitions for the area. Investing in the high street is a key objective of both the town centre strategy and the emerging HNP, with Policy HUNG5 performing particularly well.
- 9.19 The draft HNP further seeks to improve space for indoor and outdoor markets and events, and therefore Policy HUNG4 also supports temporary uses in the town centre, alongside proposals which enhance the quality and accessibility of the town centre's public realm.
- 9.20 More broadly, draft Neighbourhood Plan policies and proposals have a strong emphasis on delivering public realm improvements (including through green infrastructure provision) and community infrastructure provision. With a focus on health, policy HUNG7 (Play and Youth Facilities) supports provision and maintenance of play and youth facilities; serving the local community and supporting health and wellbeing. The policy highlights that leisure facilities are extensive locally, including outdoor leisure and recreational facilities available on the Common, the Marsh, the canal and the towpath. Both site allocations are notably within 400m of green infrastructure/ green space.
- 9.21 Nonetheless, it is recognised that as the population grows the need for facilities may increase, and as such contributions will be sought from site allocations. Notably site allocation Land at Smitham Bridge Road will be (as set out in Policy HUNG12) required to contribute towards improvement of the Smitham

Bridge Play Park. In addition to this, policy HUNG8 (Local Green Spaces) allocates four LGSs within the neighbourhood area, which will be protected from development. This will support physical and mental health and wellbeing of the local community.

- 9.22 Hungerford is well provided for with schools and health facilities which serve the local community and villages in the area, although it is noted that a number of the town's facilities struggle in terms of capacity, especially the doctor's surgery. Furthermore, both site allocations are outside the preferred maximum distance (2km) to either the primary or secondary school. The draft HNP also identifies that the ageing population places pressure on Hungerford's health and education services. Policy provisions throughout the draft HNP (discussed above and below) therefore seek to address demographic issues locally and support infrastructure investment; however it is recognised that, particularly in relation to school places, this is primarily the role of West Berkshire.
- 9.23 Hungerford has three employment areas protected through Local Plan policy; these are at Charnham Park, Station Road and Smitham Bridge Road. The draft HNP sets out a number of actions to support employment locally, both investing further in protected sites and maximising other opportunities in the town, including growing tourism.
- 9.24 Finally, whilst the draft Neighbourhood Plan is not supported by a specific set of detailed design codes, the principles of West Berkshire emerging Local Plan Policy SP7 – which itself references the National Design Guide – are reinforced through Policy HUNG2 (Design and Character) with respect to specific local issues of diversity, landscape and movement. High quality design and layout is required, which respects the local character of Hungerford.
- 9.25 Policy HUNG9 (Wellbeing and Safety Through Design) states that development should be designed to maximise the wellbeing of its residents, visitors and users. The landscaping and layout of green infrastructure and spaces should demonstrate that all opportunities have been taken to create a high quality environment that people can actively engage with. Development is also encouraged to demonstrate, through its design, how it will minimise the opportunities for crime to occur, recognising that this is an issue for the town.
- 9.26 Overall, the draft HNP performs well from a community wellbeing perspective by allocating sustainably located sites to meet the identified local housing need. The policy framework seeks to deliver an appropriate housing mix, including affordable housing, and supports improvements to the public realm, community facilities, and employment opportunities. Hence, **significant positive effects** are concluded.

Historic environment

- 9.27 Hungerford town is rich in history, with a conservation area extending throughout the town centre. Hungerford also includes many Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings, which are predominately focused along the High Street, and a scheduled monument.
- 9.28 While the Local Plan (alongside higher level policy provisions) provide a level of protection to assets, it is considered that the draft HNP could be strengthened by including a heritage policy. This policy could set localised requirements for the protection and enhancement of the historic environment, including designated and non-designated assets, and establish development guidelines for the area. [Planning Practice Guidance](#) and [Historic England](#) provide guidance in this respect, and it is considered that there is opportunity for a local heritage policy to be “distinct to reflect and respond to the unique characteristics and planning context of the neighbourhood area”. This would supplement Local Plan policy while addressing the absence of a Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA). As identified through scoping this is a clear evidence gap for the neighbourhood area.
- 9.29 Policy HUNG4 does however consider designated assets and is merited from a heritage perspective. Specifically, the policy addresses the issue of the quality of refurbishment of Listed Buildings and the conservation area. Policy HUNG4 supports sensitive retrofitting of energy efficiency measures in historic buildings, provided that it safeguards the historic characteristics of heritage assets. Also noteworthy is Policy HUNG2 (Design and Character), which places focus on building heights and rooflines; supporting diversity of frontage, scale and form, with building heights that reflect the prevailing height of surrounding buildings. This is unless it can be demonstrated that a taller building could complement or enhance the local character.
- 9.30 In terms of the wider historic landscape, the draft HNP highlights that it will be important to retain the traditional character of Hungerford and to protect the Marsh, Common and surrounding countryside. Policy HUNG3 (Gateways into and out of Hungerford Town) is noteworthy in this respect, protecting and enhancing the historic landscape and setting of the town that is important to the Wessex Downs NL. This is discussed further under the landscape SEA theme.
- 9.31 In terms of the two site allocations, Land north of Cottrell Close is ‘constrained’ by Grade II listed building to the west of the site. The Hungerford Conservation Area is also relatively close to the site. Policy HUNG12 states that the setting of the Grade II listed building to the west of the site and the Hungerford Conservation Area will be preserved.
- 9.32 Land at Smitham Bridge Road is not constrained by designated heritage assets, however vehicular access will be on to North Standen Road which is an identified gateway into the town (through Policy HUNG3). Policy HUNG12 therefore requires that the design of the dwellings will reflect the character of the surrounding area and protects North Standen Road’s role as a gateway into Hungerford. Policy HUN3 sets out the importance of the setting of the town and it’s gateways in terms of preserving local identity. This reflects the presence of the NL, discussed further under the landscape SEA theme below.

- 9.33 Overall, the draft HNP performs well by ensuring that the site allocations are appropriately designed to minimise potential adverse impacts on the setting and significance of nearby heritage assets and historic landscape features. It is considered that this would largely be achieved through appropriate siting and building height, as well as screening around the perimeter of sites.
- 9.34 The policy framework supports the site-specific policies by highlighting the importance of protecting and enhancing the historic environment through development design and retrofitting, however recommendations set out above could strengthen the potential for residual positive effects in this respect. As any adverse effects are likely to be avoided and/ or mitigated, **neutral effects** are concluded at this stage.

Land, soil and water resources

- 9.35 It is important that the draft HNP seeks to protect the neighbourhood area's land, soil and water resources, particularly where resources are irreplaceable. In terms of the area's agricultural land resource, a key consideration is the development of two site allocations on the settlement edge. Post 1988 data is available for Land at Smitham Bridge Road, which shows that the majority of area is Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Grade 2, with an area of Grade 3b to the western border of the site and a strip of Grade 4 land adjacent to the eastern border of the site. Grade 1 – 3a is considered to be Best and Most Versatile (BMV), and therefore the permanent loss of Grade 2 ALC is identified as a significant negative effect.
- 9.36 Post 1988 data is not available for Land north of Cottrell Close, and therefore indicative Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) is relied upon. This shows that Grade 3 land covers the entire site, however it does not distinguish between Grade 3a (which is BMV), or Grade 3b (which is not). Uncertainty therefore exists at this stage without undertaking detailed land classification. Nonetheless, the allocation of the two sites for housing will inevitably lead to the loss of up to 4ha greenfield land, reinforcing the significant negative effects concluded above. Though the magnitude of effects is relatively low with regards to the agricultural land resource across Wiltshire, it is considered that the effects are significant in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan area and the loss of a higher grade of land (i.e. Grade 2).
- 9.37 Water is supplied to the neighbourhood area by Thames Water, who are also responsible for sewerage services in this area. Their Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) identifies how they expect to balance the demand for water with available supplies over an 80-year plan period. The WRMP indicates that there is adequate supply over this period without a need to develop new sources of water. Policy HUN10 (Low Energy and Efficient Design) requires that 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 water.

- 9.38 There are a number of waterbodies that run through the neighbourhood area, and as such it will be important for appropriate drainage and mitigation to be delivered alongside development. All development will therefore be required to (Policy HUN10) minimise surface water runoff, incorporating mitigation and resilience measures – notably maximising the use of porous surfaces on open areas such as driveways.
- 9.39 Overall **minor long-term negative effects** are concluded as a result of new housing development and subsequent loss of approximately 4ha of greenfield land and a level of BMV agricultural land in the neighbourhood area. This loss is permanent and negative but largely avoidable in the absence of brownfield alternatives. It is also noted that the extent of effects in relation to the loss of BMV agricultural land are uncertain until a site-level assessment can determine precise soil quality at Land north of Cottrell Close.

Landscape

- 9.40 The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (NL) (previously Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). Notably in this respect are the entry points into Hungerford along main and smaller routes, which provide a range of views of the entry to the town as the landscape changes from rural to urban. Policy HUNG3 (Gateways into and out of Hungerford Town) recognises the importance of preserving the open feel and rural countryside of the NL within the urban town. Specifically, 'Gateways' are identified on Figure 5.1 within the draft HNP and listed in Policy HUNG3, to further reinforce the importance of key routes. Protecting and enhancing key 'gateways' is anticipated to support the wider landscape, creating favourable first impressions and a soft boundary between the countryside and the town.
- 9.41 Site allocation Land at Smitham Bridge Road (44 dwellings) is relevant in this respect, as vehicular access will be on to North Standen Road which is one of the identified gateways into the town. The site allocation policy (HUNG11) therefore requires that the design of the dwellings reflects the character of the surrounding area and protects North Standen Road's role as a gateway into Hungerford.
- 9.42 More broadly it is important to consider both site allocations in the context of the NL, recognising that Hungerford is one of the two largest settlements inside the NL boundary (alongside Marlborough). The [National Landscape Management Plan](#) Position Statement states that only on the edges of Marlborough, Hungerford, Lambourn, Pewsey, and Pangbourne will there be support for new open-market housing development on greenfield land. This is compared to in other areas, where there will be strict tests to minimise the impact on the landscape. It is considered that this includes sites such as the draft HNP site allocations, being well connected to the existing settlement, and supported policy provisions which seek to ensure design and layout respect the landscape.
- 9.43 Site allocation Land north of Cottrell Close (12 dwellings) is not constrained by a gateway to the town, but the site does slope down to the south/south west and as such could be visible from Hungerford Common. This is addressed through Policy HUNG2, which requires that the design of dwellings reflect the character of the surrounding area and minimises the impact on views from Hungerford Common (Policy HUNG12).

- 9.44 The site allocations are therefore considered likely to be able to minimise any potential adverse effects on the landscape, particularly when supported by the wider policy framework (notably Policy HUNG2 which further ensures respect of the local character of Hungerford); alongside higher level planning policy. However, it is recommended that the site allocation policies be revised to reference the need for consideration to be given to the NL and its Management Plan; recognising that the Management Plan includes specific development guidelines for sustainable growth in the NL.
- 9.45 Finally, other policies that consider impacts on landscape character include HUNG5 (Retaining and Enhancing the Vitality and Viability of Hungerford Town Centre), HUNG6 (Key Walk/ Cycle Routes), HUNG8 (Local Green Spaces), HUNG10 (Low Energy and Energy Efficient Design), and HUNG11 (Wildlife-Friendly Development). Notably Policy HUNG8 designates Lancaster Park green spaces as LGS to retain its character and setting on the edge of the town within the NL.
- 9.46 Overall, the draft HNP performs well by seeking to ensure that the site allocations on greenfield land within the NL are designed to reduced adverse impacts on the landscape, its intrinsic qualities, features, and setting. Furthermore, it is recognised that growth on the settlement edge is broadly supported through the NL Management Plan, reflecting the need for Hungerford (as a key market town) to sustainably grow.
- 9.47 The wider policy framework supports the site-specific policies by designating local green spaces to protect important green areas in the neighbourhood area. This is in addition to protecting habitats and wildlife, alongside wider landscape character through appropriate design and layout.
- 9.48 Nevertheless, given the development of 56 homes on greenfield land in the NL, **minor negative effects** are concluded.

Transportation

- 9.49 In terms of accessibility, Hungerford town lies within key transport routes, notably being at the crossroads of the A4, the old London to Bath route and the A338 between Oxford and Salisbury. The M4 and A34 are also close by, providing access to the rest of the country.
- 9.50 However, in response to strategic accessibility, there is high car ownership and car dependence within the town. Subsequently, along the High Street which forms part of the A338, there is a tension between high volumes of traffic and local residents and businesses. A key issue identified for the town is the local and strategic traffic impacts and speeds compromising the local environment, notably around the Hungerford Town Centre Commercial Area.
- 9.51 In terms of public transport, Hungerford train station connects the town with regular services to Reading and Paddington, and westwards to Westbury, Taunton and Exeter. The rail station has inadequate parking supply and lacks facilities. Furthermore, rail services have recently been cut back, and the draft HNP identifies the need for further improvements to the station and its services as a key issue for the town. The Town Council seek to work with West Berkshire Council Highways team and the local train operator to improve the rail services and facilities at Hungerford Station.

- 9.52 Bus services run frequently through the town to Swindon, Marlborough and Newbury, however footpaths and cycleways are less extensive given the size of the town. The draft HNP therefore seeks to focus on making improvements for pedestrians and cyclists in order to encourage active travel uptake. The draft HNP notably identifies a series of Key Walk/Cycle Routes where improvements will have the greatest potential to increase levels of walking and cycling and at the same time reduce pollution and improve road safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Policy HUNG6 sets out support for any proposals to enhance these routes, and also requires development proposals to ensure safe and continuous pedestrian routes that connect to these Key Walk/Cycle Routes.
- 9.53 Policy HUNG6 also sets out specific support for provision of segregated cycle and pedestrian routes. This is likely to increase modal shift, delivering multiple health benefits for residents and visitors alike.
- 9.54 Policy HUNG2 supplements Policy HUNG6, requiring all new development to integrate with and enhance the form of its existing surroundings, with all connections including road patterns ensuring permeability for cyclists and pedestrians. Site allocations perform reasonably positively in this respect; Land north of Cottrell Close is the furthest from the town centre at 1.4km away, while Land at Smitham Bridge Road is within 1km. Both sites benefit from access to nearby bus stops, and paved footpaths and roads directly to the centre, which the site allocation policies seek to capitalise upon.
- 9.55 For example, development at Land at Smitham Bridge Road (Policy HUNG12) will be required to upgrade Public Right of Way HUNG46 so that it is capable of everyday use all year-round and has suitable lighting for use after dark. Linking the new housing allocations, as well as the existing parts of the town, into a network of safe walking and cycling routes will likely encourage modal shift, reducing vehicular use in the town centre.
- 9.56 Finally, parking is notably identified as a local issue, particularly in the town centre where supply is limited and markets are held weekly, drawing residents and visitors to the town. Policy HUNG2 (Design and Character) recognises that new development could exacerbate this issue, and therefore requires that parking to support residential uses should be provided within the development, in accordance with West Berkshire Council parking standards. Supporting connectivity and accessibility to the town centre via public/ sustainable transport will also contribute positively to addressing parking issues through reducing demand for parking. Policies HUNG2, HUNG5, HUNG6, HUNG8, HUN10 and the site allocation policies all perform positively in this respect.
- 9.57 Overall, it is recognised that the neighbourhood area is broadly well connected, with good access to sustainable travel. While there are also notable transportation and movement constraints to growth in the neighbourhood area (parking, congestion, PRow), the draft HNP works to address the constraints head on in new development, with great emphasis placed on the sustainable location of sites, improving infrastructure and connectivity, and maximising active travel opportunities. On this basis, **neutral effects** are considered most likely (i.e. the increased traffic associated with housing growth is likely to be offset by a number of improvements to transport locally).

10. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

- 10.1 Overall, **significant positive effects** are predicted in relation to community wellbeing, reflective of the allocation of relatively sustainably located sites that should ensure that the identified local housing need is met in full. The policy framework seeks to deliver an appropriate housing mix, including affordable housing, and supports improvements to the public realm, community facilities, and employment opportunities.
- 10.2 **Minor positive effects** are considered most likely in relation to both biodiversity, and climate change. This reflects the avoidance of impacts expected by the spatial strategy (site allocations), and additional policy measures which seek to improve biodiversity and increase climate resilience (once recommendations have been adopted).
- 10.3 **Minor negative effects** have been concluded for landscape given the development of 56 homes on greenfield land in the NL. While it is recognised that the NL Management Plan sets out support for appropriately located development on the edge of key settlements in the NL, and policy provisions set out design requirements, etc.; given evidence identifies the sites as being of medium sensitivity, negative effects are unlikely to be wholly avoided.
- 10.4 **Minor negative effects** have also been concluded in relation to the land, soil and water SEA theme, reflective of the loss of approximately 4ha of greenfield, high quality agricultural land. This loss is permanent and negative but largely avoidable in the absence of brownfield alternatives.
- 10.5 **Neutral effects** are identified for the transportation SEA theme as development will likely integrate well with the town and will be sustainably located supported by policy provisions to ensure growth does not exacerbate existing local issues.
- 10.6 **Neutral effects** are also identified in relation to the historic environment. The draft NP policy framework performs well through seeking to protect and enhance the local historic environment and setting out support for retrofitting and positive design. However, recommendations set out could strengthen the potential for residual positive effects overall.

Recommendations

10.7 The following recommendations are made for consideration:

- 10.8 While the Local Plan (alongside higher level policy provisions) provides a level of protection to assets, it is considered that the draft HNP could be strengthened by including a heritage policy. This policy could set localised requirements for the protection and enhancement of the historic environment, including designated and non-designated assets, and establish development guidelines for the area. The PPG and Historic England provide guidance in this respect, and it is considered that there is opportunity for a local heritage policy to be “distinct to reflect and respond to the unique characteristics and planning context of the neighbourhood area”. This would supplement Local Plan policy while addressing the absence of a Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA). As identified through scoping this is a clear evidence gap for the neighbourhood area.
- 10.9 Supporting draft HNP policy text includes Action F ‘Traffic Impacts in Hungerford’, which sets out support for the introduction of Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure. It is recommended that this be translated into Neighbourhood Plan policy, providing more weight to the ambition as development will be required to comply with policy. This could be included within Policy HUNG10, for example, and help contribute towards transport and climate objectives.
- 10.10 The overarching Neighbourhood Plan policy in relation to biodiversity is Policy HUNG11 (Wildlife Friendly Design), which provides protection for biodiversity, habitats and species, and ensures that biodiversity net gains are achieved in development. Biodiversity ‘net gain’ has been introduced through the Environment Act, and mandates that all qualifying schemes secure a net gain of 10%. Now the mandatory requirement for BNG is in place, there is no technical need to repeat the legal requirements in local policy. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore presents an opportunity to set policy requiring a higher percentage net gain, where there is evidence to support such an approach. Requiring ‘at least 10% measurable BNG’, or an exceedingly ambitious ‘20% BNG’, can be calculated using Natural England’s biodiversity metric, to ensure the delivery of maximum biodiversity on site.
- 10.11 Policy HUNG11 performs sets out support for the use of green roofs, swift bricks and hedgehog-friendly fencing; recognising the importance of design features that can encourage local wildlife and biodiversity to thrive. Positive effects are also likely to be delivered in this respect through Policy HUNG9 (Wellbeing and Safety Through Design), which encourages development to deliver green infrastructure and design green spaces that create and enhance habitats for wildlife. This policy could however be strengthened through setting support for connectivity of green infrastructure and green spaces, recognising the benefits of creating biodiversity links to support habitat improvement; alongside improving the public realm.
- 10.12 It is recommended that the site allocation policies be revised to reference the need for consideration to be given to the North Wessex NL and its Management Plan; recognising that the Management Plan includes specific development guidelines for sustainable growth in the NL.

Part 3: What are the next steps?

11. Next steps and monitoring

11.1 This part of the report explains the next steps that will be taken as part of plan-making and SEA.

Next steps

11.2 This Environmental Report accompanies the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan for Regulation 14 consultation.

11.3 Following consultation, any representations made will be considered by the Town Council and the Neighbourhood Plan and Environmental Report will be updated as necessary. The updated Environmental Report will then accompany the Neighbourhood Plan for submission to the Local Planning Authority, West Berkshire Council (WBC), for subsequent Independent Examination.

11.4 At Independent Examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with local planning policy.

11.5 If the Independent Examination is favourable, the Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to a referendum, organised by WBC. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once made, the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Development Plan for the Hungerford.

Monitoring

11.6 The SEA regulations require 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring' to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of the Neighbourhood Plan to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.

11.7 It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the Neighbourhood Plan will be undertaken by WBC as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). No significant effects are considered likely in the implementation of the Hungerford NP that would warrant more stringent monitoring over and above that already undertaken by WBC.

11.8 Though significant positive effects are predicted in relation to Community Wellbeing, it is considered that the existing monitoring framework within the WBC AMR includes sufficient indicators to monitor such effects.

11.9 Monitoring arrangements will be confirmed in an SEA Statement, which is prepared once a plan is 'adopted'.

Appendix A Regulatory Requirements

As discussed in **Chapter 1** above, Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans Regulations 2004 (the Regulations) explains the information that must be contained in the Environmental Report; however, interpretation of Schedule 2 is not straightforward. **Table AA.1** overleaf links the structure of this report to an interpretation of Schedule 2 requirements, whilst **Table AA.2** explains this interpretation. **Table AA.3** identifies how and where within the Environmental Report the regulatory requirements have/ will be met.

Table AA.1 Questions answered by this Environmental Report, in-line with an interpretation of regulatory requirements

Environmental Report question	In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include... ⁸
What is the plan seeking to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan.
What is the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship with other relevant plans and programmes. The relevant environmental protection objectives established at international or national level. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.
What's the scope of the SEA?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.
What is the sustainability 'baseline'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.
What are the key issues and objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key problems/issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e., provide a 'framework' for) assessment.
What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with. The likely significant effects associated with alternatives. Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives appraisal/a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the current version of the plan.
What are the assessment findings at this stage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The likely significant effects associated with the submission version of the plan. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the submission version of the plan.
What happens next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The next steps for the plan making /SEA process.

⁸ NB this column does not quote directly from Schedule II of the Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation.

Table AA.2 ‘Checklist’ of how (throughout the SA process) and where (within this report) regulatory requirements have been, are and will be met.

Regulatory requirement	Discussion of how requirement is met
Schedule 2 of the regulations lists the information to be provided within the SA Report	
1. An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Chapter 2 (‘What is the plan seeking to achieve’) presents this information.
2. The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	These matters have been considered in detail through scoping work, which has involved dedicated consultation on a Scoping Report. The ‘SEA framework’ – the outcome of scoping – is presented within Chapter 3 (‘What is the scope of the SEA?’) and Appendix B.
3. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	
4. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.;	
5. The environmental protection, objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been considered during its preparation;	The SEA framework is presented within Appendix B. Also, Appendix B presents key messages from the context review. With regards to explaining “how...considerations have been taken into account”, Chapter 7 explains the Town Council’s ‘reasons for supporting the preferred approach’, i.e., explains how/ why the preferred approach is justified in light of alternatives appraisal.
6. The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects);	Chapter 6 presents alternatives appraisal findings (in relation to housing growth, which is a ‘stand-out’ plan policy area). Chapters 9 presents an appraisal of the plan. With regards to assessment methodology, Chapter 8 explains the role of the SEA framework/scope, and the need to consider the potential for various effect characteristics/ dimensions, e.g., timescale.
7. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	The assessment highlights certain tensions between competing objectives, which might potentially be actioned by the Examiner, when finalising the plan. Also, specific recommendations are made in Chapter 10.
8. An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Chapter 5 deals with ‘Reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with’, in that there is an explanation of the reasons for focusing on particular issues and options. Also, Chapter 7 explains the Town Council’s ‘reasons for selecting the preferred option’ (in-light of alternatives assessment).
9. Description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Art. 10;	Chapter 11 presents measures envisaged concerning monitoring.

10.A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings

The NTS is provided at the beginning of this Environmental Report.

The SA Report must be published alongside the Draft Plan, in accordance with the following regulations

authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the Draft Plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1, 6.2)

This draft Environmental Report is published alongside the 'pre-submission' version of the Neighbourhood Plan, with a view to informing Regulation 14 consultation.

The SA must be considered, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.

The environmental report prepared pursuant to Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of any transboundary consultations entered into pursuant to Article 7 shall be taken into account during the preparation of the plan or programme and before its adoption or submission to the legislative procedure.

This Regulation 14 Environmental Report, alongside consultation responses, will inform plan finalisation.

Appendix B SEA Scoping

Introduction

This appendix presents additional information on the SEA scope, namely key issues under each of the SEA framework headings. As set out in the Scoping Report, these key issues were identified following a review of the context and baseline.

Additionally, this appendix presents a summary of responses received as part of the scoping consultation, followed by the SEA Framework.

Air quality

- The HNP is intending to allocate housing sites and these are likely to generate more trips by private car than would likely be the case in the absence of the Plan. This has potential to generate increased particulates and nitrogen dioxide.
- There are no AQMAs within or in proximity to the Hungerford neighbourhood area. The closest AQMA is the Marlborough AQMA, located approximately 9.4km west in Wiltshire.
- Given the distance of the neighbourhood area from AQMAs, existing air pollution is at a low baseline and that the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to deliver a significant level of development, the potential for the HNP to lead to significant negative effects in relation to air quality is negligible. In combination with the fact that no air quality exceedances have been recorded within the neighbourhood plan area, this theme is **SCOPED OUT** of the SEA. This means that the plan will not be assessed for its performance against air quality objectives (given that no significant issues or opportunities are expected to arise through the HNP).
- Nevertheless, positive planning could be beneficial for air quality through opportunities to improve accessibility, particularly in terms of active travel and encouraging more local journeys and sustainable connections. Therefore, opportunities which address issues such as accessibility and sustainable communities whilst also enhancing air quality are encouraged.

Biodiversity

- The NP should seek to protect the SSSIs and SACs within and surrounding the neighbourhood area, utilising opportunities for biodiversity net-gain to recover these designations.
- There are areas within the Hungerford neighbourhood area that present an opportunity to enhance biodiversity value and connectivity. The HNP should take advantage of these opportunities where possible to secure biodiversity net-gain in line with national policy.
- The HNP presents an opportunity to improve biodiversity and geological quality in the neighbourhood area by encouraging development to incorporate biodiversity net-gain techniques and features. Furthermore, the HNP could encourage the creation and / or recovery of habitats in identified Network Enhancement Zones and Network Expansion Zones, which will bring biodiversity benefits to the neighbourhood area and within its setting.

Climate change

- Large sections of the neighbourhood area, specifically those adjacent to water bodies are at high risk of flooding, falling into Flood Zone 3. However, these are largely concentrated to the areas adjacent to rivers, as well as the Kennet and Lambourn Floodplains, which runs through the centre of the neighbourhood area. New development in the neighbourhood area has the potential to exacerbate flood risk if it is built within and in proximity to areas at higher risk of fluvial and surface water flooding. Development should be focused away from these areas where possible.
- It is likely CO₂ emissions originating from the neighbourhood area will increase as the population grows. It will be important for new development to adopt best building practices to limit the increase in emissions, such as using sustainable materials and incorporating renewable energy infrastructure.
- CO₂ emissions associated with the transport sector remain higher than other sectors in West Berkshire. This highlights the importance of accessible development and the delivery of sustainable transport infrastructure. The HNP can seek to address this locally, particularly by strengthening active travel routes and opportunities to increase self-containment.

Community Wellbeing

- The neighbourhood area experiences higher levels of deprivation with regards to the barriers to housing and services deprivation domain. The HNP presents an opportunity to reduce this type of deprivation by encouraging housing development in more accessible locations and supporting increased affordable housing.
- New housing development in the neighbourhood area has the potential to increase pressure on existing community infrastructure if this is not improved alongside development. This could lead to negative impacts in the longer term, for example if the capacity of health facilities is not increased to cater for the growing population.

Historic environment

- The neighbourhood area includes numerous heritage assets, all of which present a constraint to future development due to the need to avoid impacts to the heritage assets and their setting. The HNP can help overcome this by ensuring any development that comes forward during the plan period is sensitive to the historic setting of the neighbourhood area in terms of design and layout.
- The lack of CAAs and management plans for the conservation areas present a gap in the evidence base, Hungerford Council should seek to work with West Berkshire to develop the evidence base in this respect.
- The neighbourhood area has a unique heritage that is represented by its former land uses. Especially taking into regard the advice from the Historic Environment Action Plan, encouraging opportunities to preserve this heritage through the HNP should be taken where appropriate, which will

allow for the historic environment to continue to contribute to Hungerford's unique character.

Land, soil and water resources

- Allocating land for development could influence changes to land, soil and water resources. It will be important for development to be focused away from BMV land, as well as Grade 2 ALC land and consider potential impacts on the overlapping waterbody catchments and water quality. This could include implementing mitigation measures to ensure water pollution does not occur throughout the development phases.
- It will be important to use the HNP as an opportunity to improve and protect the waterbodies within the area, especially the Middle Kennet (Hungerford to Newbury) which is currently in poor condition and the Shalbourne (source to Kennet at Hungerford) which is currently in moderate condition.

Landscape

- Due to the location of the neighbourhood area within the North Wessex Downs NL, the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan should have regard to its setting, and to the aims and objectives of the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan.
- It will be important for the Hungerford NP to protect the local landscape, including its coherence and characteristics with regard to its NCAs and LCAs. This will bring benefits to other SEA themes, including biodiversity and climate change, by maintaining features which support wildlife and natural processes, such as meadows and parklands.

Transportation

- Future development in the neighbourhood area has the potential to increase the number of vehicles on local roads. This could exacerbate existing traffic and congestion during peak periods and potentially lead to parking issues in the neighbourhood area.
- Car use in the neighbourhood plan area is significantly higher than the district, and region average. Given the rural nature of the neighbourhood plan area, Hungerford will likely continue the reliance on the private vehicle for travel.
- The cycle routes and PRow within the neighbourhood area could be improved, with better connectivity throughout the area.

SEA Framework

SEA theme	SEA objective	Supporting assessment questions
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance nationally and locally designated sites, including supporting habitats and mobile species that are important to the integrity of these sites? • Protect and enhance semi-natural habitats as well as priority habitats and species, including ancient woodland? • Achieve biodiversity and environmental net gains and support the delivery of ecosystem services and multifunctional green infrastructure networks? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?
Climate change and flood risk	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the neighbourhood area and increase resilience to the potential effects of climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of journeys made and reduce the need to travel? • Promote the use of more sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling, public transport, and electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure? • Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources, or reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources? • Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the neighbourhood area? • Sustainably manage water run-off, and reduce runoff where possible? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?
Community wellbeing	Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing? • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes? • Meet the needs of all sectors of the community?

SEA theme	SEA objective	Supporting assessment questions
	accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's needs, particularly the needs of an ageing population? • Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including health infrastructure? • Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities? • Facilitate green infrastructure enhancements, including improved access to open space? • Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing residents?
Historic environment	Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings? • Conserve and enhance nationally designated heritage assets? • Conserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historical interest, and their settings? • Protect the integrity of the historic setting of key monuments of cultural heritage interest as listed in the HER? • Support the undertaking of early archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the neighbourhood area?
Land, soil, and water resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land, and protect and enhance water quality, using water resources in a sustainable manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of previously developed land wherever possible? • Identify and avoid the development of BMV agricultural land? • Support the minimisation, reuse, and recycling of waste? • Avoid any negative impacts on water quality and support improvements to water quality? • Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside proposed development?

SEA theme	SEA objective	Supporting assessment questions
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect waterbodies from pollution? • Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/or water recycling? • Avoid any negative impacts on mineral and waste infrastructure? • Improve waste infrastructure in the area? • Protect and/ or enhance the integrity and setting of North Wessex Downs NL? • Protect and / or enhance local landscape character and quality of place? • Conserve and enhance local identity, diversity, and settlement character? • Identify and protect locally important viewpoints which contribute to character and sense of place? • Retain and enhance landscape features that contribute to the neighbourhood area’s rural setting, including trees and hedgerows?
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and active travel opportunities and reduce the need to travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the objectives within the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan to encourage the use of more sustainable transport modes? • Encourage a shift to more sustainable forms of travel and enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements? • Improve local connectivity and pedestrian and cyclist movement? • Facilitate working from home to reduce the use of private vehicles to access workplaces outside of the neighbourhood area? • Reduce the impact of the transport sector on climate change? • Improve road safety and reduce pollution from vehicles?

Newbury Town Council

Forward Work Programme for Planning and Highways Committee: 25 March 2023.

Standing Items on each (ordinary meeting) agenda:

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interests and Dispensations
- 3.1 Approval of Minutes of previous meeting
- 3.2 Officer’s report on actions from previous meeting
4. Questions/Petitions from members of the Public
5. Questions/Petitions from Members of the Council
6. Schedule of Planning Applications
7. Schedule of Prior Approval Applications (if any)
8. Schedule of Licensing Applications (if any)
9. Schedule of Appeal Notifications (if any)
10. Schedule of Appeal Decisions (if any)
11. Neighbourhood Development Plan – Update (if any)
12. The Western Area Planning Committee – Update

At the first Committee meeting after the annual meeting of the Council	Election of Chair/ Deputy
	Approval of ToRs and memberships of Working Groups
June/September/December/March (Quarterly)	Updates on Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Acts.
Each November	Review of KPI’s for Planning and Highways Committee
	Send Budget and Strategy proposals to RFO
2024	
25 th March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flood and Drainage Forum - Sandleford West Presentation
22 nd April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To identify potential and existing public rights of way and actions which might be taken to enhance these (see minutes 06.11.2023) - Section 215 Updates