



# Sustainability Appraisal of the Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan

2015 - 2026

SA Report to accompany the Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan

6<sup>th</sup> September 2016



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# Non-Technical Summary

## What is Sustainability Appraisal?

A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been carried out to inform the Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan. This has incorporated a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process as required by the SEA Regulations. Neighbourhood Groups use SA to assess Neighbourhood Plans against a set of sustainability objectives developed in consultation with interested parties. The purpose of the appraisal is to avoid adverse environmental and socio-economic effects and identify opportunities to improve the environmental quality of Ashton Keynes and the quality of life of residents through the Neighbourhood Plan.

## What is the Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan?

The Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan (AKNP) presents a plan for Ashton Keynes Parish in the period to 2029. Prepared to be in conformity with the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the AKNP sets out a vision, objectives and a range of policies for the Ashton Keynes area. These relates to a range of topics, including, but not limited to, housing, landscape, the built environment, community services, open space and transport.

The overarching vision for the AKNP is as follows:

*“A thriving sustainable community in the Cotswold Water Park where people want to be, and which continues to evolve by developing in harmony with its character and natural environment”.*

It is currently anticipated that the AKNP will undergo a referendum in early 2017.

## Purpose of this SA Report

This SA Report, which accompanies the Submission version of the AKNP, is the second document to be produced as part of the SA process. The first document was the SA Scoping Report, which includes information about Ashton Keynes' environment and community.

The purpose of the SA Report is to:

- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the AKNP and alternatives; and
- Provide an opportunity for statutory consultees, interested parties and the public to offer views on any aspect of the SA process which has been carried out to date.

The SA Report contains:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the AKNP and its relationship with other relevant policies, plans and programmes;
- Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and key sustainability issues;
- The SA Framework of objectives and appraisal questions against which the AKNP has been assessed;
- The appraisal of alternative approaches for the AKNP;
- The likely significant effects of the AKNP in environmental terms;
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects as a result of the AKNP; and
- The next steps for the AKNP and accompanying SA process.

## Assessment of alternative approaches for the AKNP

A key requirement of the SEA Regulations is to appraise 'reasonable alternatives' for the AKNP. To address this requirement, a number of alternative approaches have been considered in relation to the scale and location of new housing development to be taken forward through the Neighbourhood Plan.

Two sets of options were considered through the SA process as 'reasonable alternatives'. These are described below.

### 1) Options for housing numbers

- **Option 1:** Delivery of the minimum number of dwellings to meet the indicative housing requirement for the Core Strategy (c.12 dwellings)
- **Option 2:** Delivery of in the region of c.40-60 dwellings through the Neighbourhood Plan
- **Option 3:** Delivery of over 75 dwellings through the Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group came to the conclusion that the delivery of housing through the AKNP should reflect Option 2. It was viewed that delivering housing to this level would provide an appropriate balance between ensuring the protection of landscape character, local distinctiveness, the historic environment and biodiversity whilst also providing opportunities for delivering housing need and supporting the vitality and viability of the village. It was also viewed that such an approach would enable enhancements to be secured to cultural heritage assets, green infrastructure networks and local services and facilities whilst also limiting the adverse effects of development in the Neighbourhood Area.

### 2) Site options

A number of sites were then considered for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan. Following a Call for Sites undertaken in late 2014, ten sites were made available by landowners for consideration in the Neighbourhood Plan. Due to the existing physical constraints of the village, Site 4 is the only site within the Settlement Boundary.

The ten sites are as follows.

Site 1 –	Land at Church Farm, Cox's Hill
Site 2 –	Land at Dairy Farm Bungalow and Dairy Fields
Site 3 –	Land fronting Derry Fields
Site 4 –	Land at AB Carter Haulage, Happy Land
Site 5 –	Land at the Old Piggery, The Derry
Site 6 –	the former Cotswold Community
Site 7 –	Land at Vine View, Back Street
Site 8 –	Land at Wheatleys Farm, High Road
Site 9 –	Land at Derry Fields
Site 10 –	Land at Grove Farm, High Road

To support decision making on the sites to be taken forward for the AKNP, the SA process has undertaken an appraisal of the key constraints present at each of these ten sites and potential effects that may arise.

Consultation on the ten potential housing sites considered above was undertaken in January 2015. This included two public events, accompanied by a community survey on the sites. Following the receipt of responses, the results were analysed.

This process has led to the current allocation of two sites in the latest version of the Neighbourhood Plan, as follows:

Site 4 – Land at AB Carter Haulage, Happy Land

Site 8 – Land at Wheatleys Farm, High Road.

The appraisal findings for the assessment of the options for housing numbers and site options are presented in Chapter 6 of this SA Report.

## Appraisal of the Submission version of the AKNP

Utilising the SA Framework of objectives and appraisal questions developed during the earlier scoping stage of the SA, the SA process has appraised the 26 policies put forward through the current version of the AKNP. The SA Report has presented the findings of the appraisal through nine sustainability themes, as follows:

- Biodiversity
- Land and soil resources
- Water resources and flood risk
- Air quality and environmental pollution
- Climatic factors
- Historic environment and landscape
- Population and community
- Transport
- Economy and enterprise

The appraisal has concluded that the Submission version of the AKNP is likely to lead to **significant positive effects** in terms of the **'population and community'** and **'transport'** sustainability objectives. These benefits largely relate to the focus on improving the quality of life of residents in the Neighbourhood Area, enhancements in accessibility to services and facilities and the AKNP's impetus on protecting and enhancing open space and the quality of the public realm.

In terms of potential negative effects, the allocation of two previously developed sites through the Submission version of the AKNP will help limit losses of land classified as the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land. As such no significant effects are likely to take place in relation to the **'land and soil resources'** sustainability objectives. Whilst there are likely to be inevitable effects on landscape and villagescape character from new areas of development, the current version of the AKNP presents a range of policy interventions which will help limit potential effects and achieve enhancements where possible.

In terms of potential effects on the nationally designated Pikes Corner and Upper Waterhay Meadow Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), whilst the proposed allocations are located in relatively close proximity to the SSSIs, adverse effects on these nationally designated nature conservation sites are likely to be limited by the proposed size of the allocations. In terms of other biodiversity constraints, one of the allocations, Wheatley Farm, is located adjacent to Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Biodiversity Action Plan Habitat. However, this is recognised through the policy for the allocations. The AKNP otherwise sets out a number of provisions which will help limit potential effects from allocations on features and areas of biodiversity interest in the Neighbourhood Area and supports enhancements to ecological networks.

Whilst the draft plan approach will help initiate a range of beneficial approaches in relation to **'climatic factors'**, **'biodiversity'** and **'historic environment and landscape'**, these are not considered as significant positive effects as the delivery of the allocations and potential employment areas through the AKNP will inevitably lead to some adverse effects in relation to these sustainability themes. For these themes therefore, the approach promoted through the AKNP will limit the potential magnitude of adverse effects linked to the delivery of housing allocations and employment areas in the Neighbourhood Area.

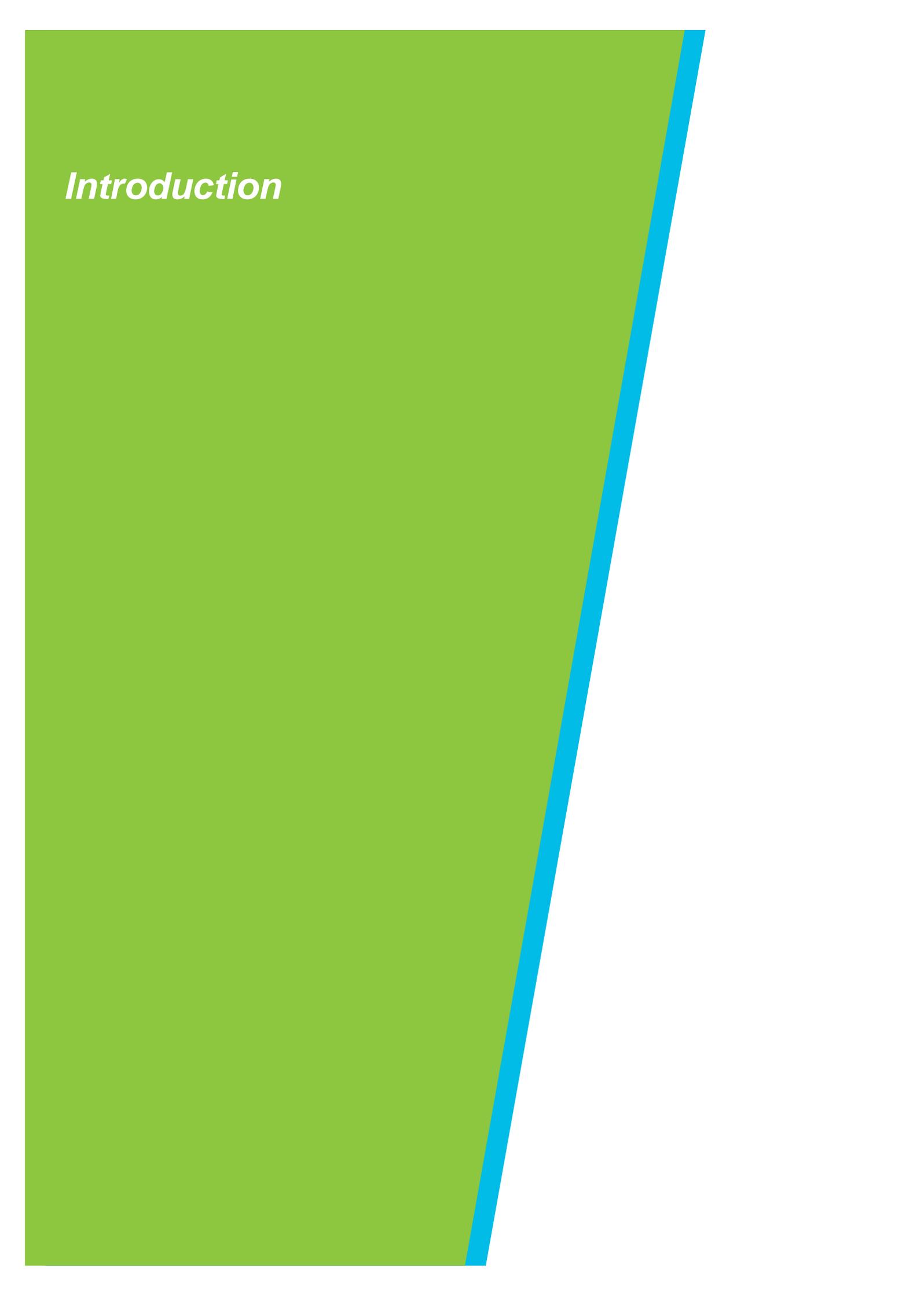
In relation to the **'economy and enterprise'** sustainability objective a number of beneficial approaches are put forward by the current version of the plan which will support the economic vitality of the Neighbourhood Area. This includes relating to a promotion of the Neighbourhood Area's tourism and visitor economy and supporting existing employment uses.

## Next steps

The AKNP and this SA Report has been submitted to Wiltshire Council for its consideration. In particular Wiltshire Council will consider whether the plan is suitable to go forward to Independent Examination in terms of the AKNP meeting legal requirements and its compatibility with the Wiltshire Core Strategy

If the subsequent Independent Examination is favourable, the AKNP will be subject to a referendum, organised by Wiltshire Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the plan, then it will be passed to Wiltshire Council with a request it is adopted. Once adopted, with the Wiltshire Local Plan, the AKNP will become part of the Development Plan for Ashton Keynes.

# *Introduction*

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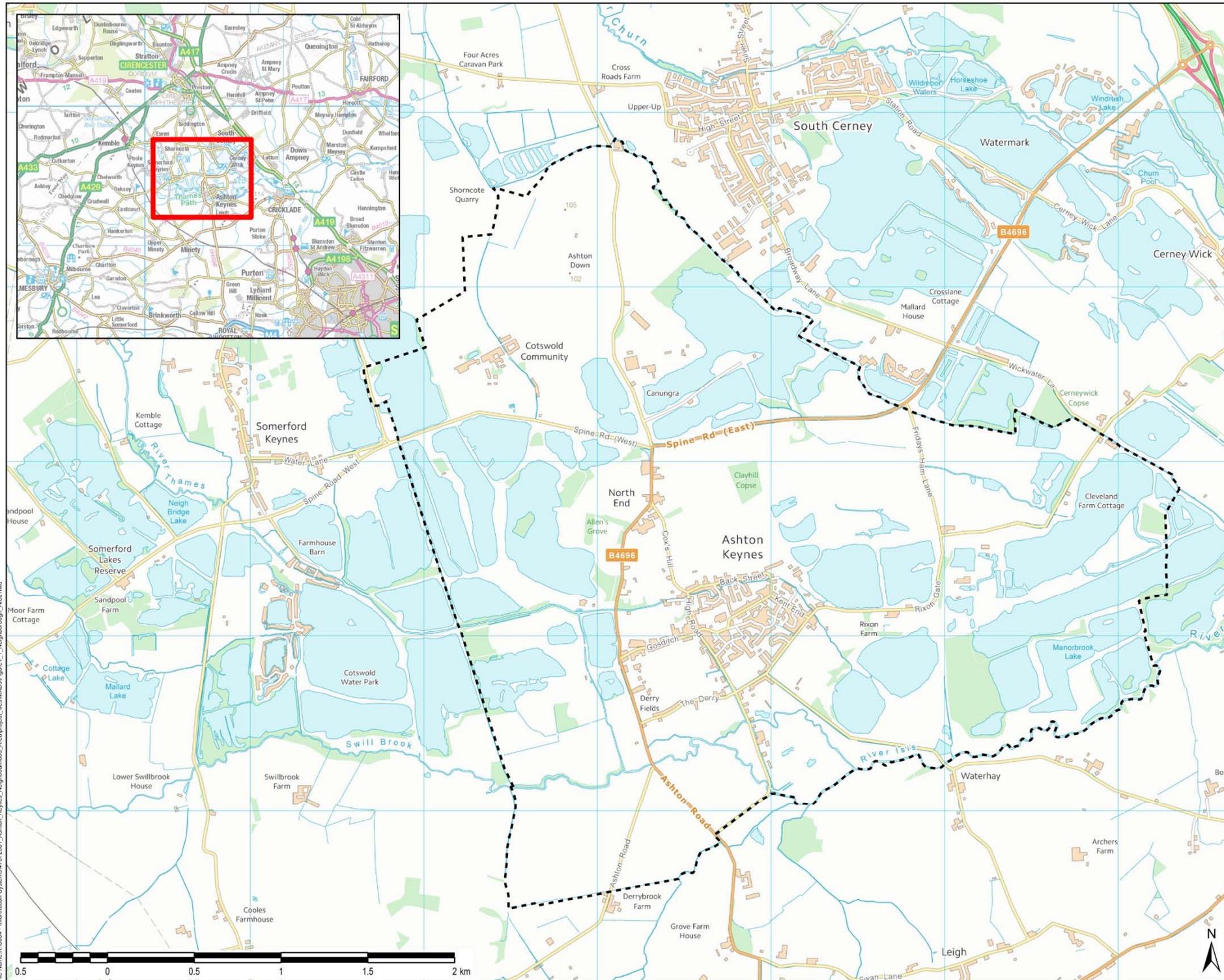
# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in support of Ashton Keynes's emerging Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.1.2 The Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan (AKNP) is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2012. The AKNP, which covers Ashton Keynes parish in Wiltshire, is being prepared in the context of the Wiltshire Local Plan.
- 1.1.3 This SA Report accompanies the Submission version of the AKNP, which was submitted to Wiltshire Council in September 2016.
- 1.1.4 Key information relating to the AKNP is as follows:

**Table 1.1** Key facts relating to the Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan

<b>Name of Responsible Authority</b>	Ashton Keynes Parish Council
<b>Title of Plan</b>	Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan
<b>Subject</b>	Neighbourhood plan
<b>Purpose</b>	The Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The plan will be in conformity with the Wiltshire Local Plan.
<b>Timescale</b>	To 2026
<b>Area covered by the plan</b>	Ashton Keynes Parish (see Figure 1.1)
<b>Summary of content</b>	The Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan will set out a vision, objectives and range of policies for the plan area. Box 3.1 below presents the vision and aims of the Neighbourhood Plan
<b>Plan contact point</b>	Malcolm Carter Project Co-ordinator, Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Email address: <a href="mailto:coordinator@ashtonkeynesneighbourhood.com">coordinator@ashtonkeynesneighbourhood.com</a>



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**LEGEND**

- Ashton Keynes
- Neighbourhood Area

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Project Title **ASHTON KEYNES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Drawing Title **ASHTON KEYNES NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA**

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## 1.2 SA explained

- 1.2.1 SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely significant effects of an emerging plan, and reasonable alternatives in terms of key sustainability issues. The aim of SA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding or mitigating negative effects and maximising positive effects. Through this approach, the SA for the AKNP seeks to maximise the emerging Neighbourhood Plan's contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.2.2 SA is in line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations) which transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive<sup>1</sup>. It also widens the scope of the assessment from focussing on environmental issues to also include social and economic issues. SA is a legal requirement for the Wiltshire Local Plan; however Neighbourhood Development Plans do not require a SA through planning legislation.
- 1.2.3 The AKNP has been determined to require SEA by Wiltshire Council. To meet this requirement, the AKNP is undergoing an SA process which incorporates the requirements of the SEA Regulations. This mirrors the approach currently being taken for the Wiltshire Local Plan.
- 1.2.4 The SEA Regulations require that a report is published for consultation alongside the draft plan that 'identifies, describes and evaluates' the likely significant effects of implementing 'the plan, and reasonable alternatives'. The report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.
- 1.2.5 In line with the SEA Regulations this report - which for the purposes of SA is known as the 'SA Report' – must essentially answer four questions:
1. What's the scope of the SA?
  2. What has Plan-making / SA involved up to this point?  
  
Preparation of the draft plan must have been informed by at least one earlier plan-making / SA iteration. 'Reasonable alternatives' must have been appraised.
  3. What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?  
  
i.e. in relation to the draft plan.
  4. What happens next?
- 1.2.6 These questions are derived from Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations, which present 'the information to be provided within the report'. Table 1.1 presents the linkages between the regulatory requirements and the four SA questions.

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 2001/42/EC

### 1.3 Structure of this SA Report

1.3.1 This document is the SA Report for the AKNP and hence needs to answer all four of the questions listed above with a view to providing the information required by the Regulations. **Each of the four questions is answered in turn within this report, as follows:**

**Table 1.1:** Questions to be answered by the SA Report in order to meet Regulatory<sup>2</sup> requirements

SA REPORT QUESTION		IN LINE WITH SCHEDULE II THE REPORT MUST INCLUDE...
<b>Part 1: What's the scope of the SA?</b>	What's the plan seeking to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes</li> </ul>
	What's the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The relevant environmental protection <b>objectives</b>, established at international or national level</li> <li>Any existing environmental <b>problems</b> which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance</li> </ul>
	What's the sustainability 'baseline'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan</li> <li>The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected</li> <li>Any existing environmental <b>problems</b> which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance</li> </ul>
	What are the key issues & objectives that should be a focus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key <b>problems / issues</b> and <b>objectives</b> that should be a focus of (i.e. provide a 'framework' for) appraisal</li> </ul>
<b>Part 2: What has plan-making / SA involved up to this point?</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline reasons for selecting the <b>alternatives</b> dealt with (and thus an explanation of the 'reasonableness' of the approach)</li> <li>The likely significant effects associated with <b>alternatives</b></li> <li>Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of <b>alternatives</b> appraisal / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the submission version of the plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Part 3: What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The likely significant effects associated with <b>the submission version of the plan</b></li> <li>The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing <b>the submission version of the plan</b></li> </ul>
<b>Part 4: What happens next?</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The next steps for plan making / SA process.</li> </ul>

*N.B. The right-hand column of Table 1.1 does not quote directly from Schedule II of the Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation. This interpretation is explained in Appendix I of this report.*

<sup>2</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004  
Submission version of the SA Report- September 2016

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***Part 1: What is the  
Scope of the SA?***

## 2 What is the Scope of the SA?

### 2.1 Scope of the SA

2.1.1 This is Part 1 of the SA Report, the aim of which is to introduce the reader to the scope of the SA. In particular, and as required by the SEA Regulations<sup>3</sup>, this Part of the SA Report answers the series of questions below.

- What's the plan seeking to achieve?
- What's the sustainability 'context'?
- What's the sustainability 'baseline'?
- What are the key issues and objectives that should be a focus of SA?

2.1.2 This chapter answers the first question by outlining the AKNP's vision and objectives.

2.1.3 The other three scoping questions are answered in **Chapters 3-5**, with each question answered for the following nine sustainability themes:

- Biodiversity
- Land and soil resources
- Water resources and flood risk
- Air quality and environmental pollution
- Climatic factors
- Historic environment and landscape
- Population and community
- Transport
- Economy and enterprise

### 2.2 Consultation on the scope

2.2.1 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"*. In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, The Environment Agency and Historic England.<sup>4</sup> As such, these authorities were consulted on the scope of the AKNP SA in July 2015. The Scoping Report, which was subsequently agreed by the consultation bodies as providing an appropriate 'basis' for appraisal, is available at the AKNP website:

<http://www.ashtonkeynesneighbourhood.com/>

2.2.2 Information presented in this SA Report has reflected the comments received on the Scoping Report.

<sup>3</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

<sup>4</sup> In-line with Article 6(3).of the SEA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected because *'by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities,[they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programme'*.

## 2.3 What is the plan seeking to achieve?

- 2.3.1 The AKNP is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2012, with a view to submission to Wiltshire Council in September 2016.
- 2.3.2 The AKNP is being prepared in the context of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, which was adopted in January 2015. The Core Strategy sets out a framework for how future development across Wiltshire will be planned and delivered in the period to 2026.
- 2.3.3 The Core Strategy sets out an indicative number of 116 homes to be identified in the Malmesbury Community Area between 2015 and 2026<sup>5</sup>. The five large villages in the Community Area, including Ashton Keynes, have been identified as the most sustainable settlements outside of Malmesbury Town and are therefore expected to provide the majority of this supply.
- 2.3.4 The AKNP therefore provides an opportunity for meeting the community aspirations of Ashton Keynes whilst also helping to deliver the Core Strategy's main objectives for the Neighbourhood Area.

## 2.4 Vision for the plan

- 2.4.1 The vision for the AKNP was developed following the review of extensive consultation exercises carried out by the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The vision for the AKNP is presented in Box 3.1.

### Box 3.1: Vision for the Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan

***We wish to make our neighbourhood an even better place to live, work and visit. We wish to sustain or enhance the beauty and vitality of our neighbourhood and make sure our infrastructure is capable of supporting us.***

*Ashton Keynes is a large village with lots of character, traditional buildings, a good school and amenities. It is located in the Cotswold Water Park and it is surrounded by wildlife open spaces, lakes and watercourses, including the infant river Thames which runs through the Parish. We must ensure that any increase in population also brings enhanced infrastructure.*

***We want community led development.***

*We want development that will stand the test of time, provide high quality accommodation for all of our community, respect the individual character of the Parish, support the local economy and protect our natural environment. We want a stronger voice in local development when planning applications are decided by Wiltshire council.*

***We want the opportunity to plan for future development.***

*We want a greater say about where, how, what and when development occurs in our community. We want our community to have a chance to get good impartial advice from experts about what kind of growth would benefit the Parish. We want to use this advice to work in partnership with all those involved so as to manage what is eventually built. We want to maintain the Village as the vibrant central core of the Parish and to ensure that development does not result in a coalescence of disparate settlements.*

***Over-arching Vision***

*The over-arching vision for how Ashton Keynes should be regarded by 2026 is:*

***“A thriving sustainable community in the Cotswold Water Park where people want to be, and which continues to evolve by developing in harmony with its character and natural environment”.***

<sup>5</sup> Wiltshire Council Housing Land Supply Statement – September 2015

- 2.4.2 To support this vision, the AKNP sets out a range of objectives and Neighbourhood Plan policies. The latest iteration (Submission Version, September 2016) of these policies has been appraised in Chapter 8 of this SA Report.

## 2.5 What's the plan not trying to achieve?

- 2.5.1 It is important to emphasise that the plan is strategic in nature. Even the allocation of sites should be considered a strategic undertaking, i.e. a process that omits consideration of some detailed issues in the knowledge that these can be addressed further down the line (through the planning application process). The strategic nature of the plan is reflected by the scope of the SA.

# 3 What's the sustainability 'context'?

The SA Report must include...

- The relevant sustainability objectives, established at international / national level
- Any existing sustainability problems / issues which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas / populations etc. of particular importance

## 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 An important step when seeking to establish the appropriate 'scope' of an SA involves reviewing 'sustainability context' messages. From the SEA Regulations it is understood that there is a need to focus on context messages relating to:

- 3.1.2 Broad problems / issues; and

- Objectives
- i.e. 'things that are aimed at or sought'.

- 3.1.3 Set out below is a summary and update to the context review presented within the Scoping Report.

## 3.2 Biodiversity

- 3.2.1 At the European level, the EU Biodiversity Strategy<sup>6</sup> was adopted in May 2011 in order to deliver an established new Europe-wide target to 'halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020'.

- 3.2.2 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Contribute to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity by minimising impacts and achieving net gains in biodiversity wherever possible.
- Promote the 'preservation, restoration and recreation of priority habitats, ecological networks' and the 'protection and recovery of priority species'. Plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries.
- Set criteria based policies for the protection of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites, giving weight to their importance not just individually but as a part of a wider ecological network.
- Take account of the effects of climate change in the long term. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including green infrastructure (i.e. 'a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities').
- Plan positively for 'green infrastructure' as part of planning for 'ecological networks'.

<sup>6</sup> European Commission (2011) Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 [online] available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/pdf/2020/1\\_EN\\_ACT\\_part1\\_v7%5b1%5d.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/pdf/2020/1_EN_ACT_part1_v7%5b1%5d.pdf)

- High quality open spaces should be protected or their loss mitigated, unless a lack of need is established.
- The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP)<sup>7</sup> sets out the importance of a healthy, functioning natural environment to sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal well-being. It was in part a response to the UK's failure to halt and reverse the decline in biodiversity by 2010 and it signalled a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity in nature reserves to adopting a landscape approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity.

3.2.3 At the local level, the Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), adopted in 2008, sets out Species and Habitat Action Plans for a range of specific and a wider range of habitats and species. The BAP will shortly be supplemented by a new Wiltshire and Swindon Landscape Conservation Framework which aims to refocus biodiversity conservation and enhancement from habitats and species to the landscape or ecosystem scale, with an impetus on ecological connections and a more coherent, resilient ecological network of habitats.

3.2.4 The Core Strategy highlights that proposals should contribute towards enhancement of biodiversity within the Cotswold Water Park.

### 3.3 Land and soils resources

3.3.1 EU's Soil Thematic Strategy<sup>8</sup> presents a strategy for protecting soils resources in Europe. The main aim of the strategy is to minimise soil degradation and limit associated detrimental effects linked to water quality and quantity, human health, climate change, biodiversity, and food safety. It seeks to establish rational land use planning practices at all levels of government to ensure the sustainability of soils, consistent with a "precautionary principle" used by the EU in establishing environmental policy.

3.3.2 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include -

- Protect and enhance soils. The value of best and most versatile agricultural land should also be taken into account.
- Prevent new or existing development from being 'adversely affected' by the presence of 'unacceptable levels' of soil pollution or land instability and be willing to remediate and mitigate 'despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate'.
- Encourage the effective use of land' through the reuse of land which has been previously developed, 'provided that this is not of high environmental value'. Whilst there is no longer a national requirement to build at a minimum density, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to 'set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances'.
- With regards to waste, the NPPF does not contain any specific waste policies as waste planning policy will be published as part of the National Waste Management Plan. Nonetheless, local authorities who are preparing waste related plans should have regard to the NPPF so far as it is relevant. Until then, Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management<sup>9</sup> remains in force. The overall objective of PPS10 is to reduce the production of waste and use it as a resource where possible.

3.3.3 In Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England<sup>10</sup>, a vision is set out for the future of soils in the country. An element of this vision is the condition of soils in urban areas, which are to be '*sufficiently valued for the ecosystem services they provide and given appropriate weight in the planning system*'. Good quality soils in urban areas are recognised as being '*vital in supporting ecosystems, facilitating drainage and providing urban green spaces for communities*'. That planning decisions

<sup>7</sup> Defra (2012) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (Natural Environment White Paper) [online] available at: <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> European Commission (2006) Soil Thematic Policy [online] available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/index_en.htm)

<sup>9</sup> Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste (2011) [online] available at: <http://www.communitites.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1876202.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Defra (2009) Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England [online] available at: <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/land/soil/documents/soil-strategy.pdf>

take sufficient account of soil quality is a concern of the report, in particular in cases where 'significant areas of the best and most versatile agricultural land are involved'. Preventing the pollution of soils and addressing the historic legacy of contaminated land is another element of the reports vision. Changing demands on our soils need to be better understood and it must be ensured that '*appropriate consideration is given to soils in the planning process.*'

- 3.3.4 The Waste Core Strategy for Wiltshire and Swindon (adopted 2009) sets out the strategic planning policy framework for waste management for the 20 year period up to 2026. The strategy sets out:
- how new facilities will be delivered to meet population increases and in waste arising from the associated projected growth
  - future site locations for waste management sites
  - the approach to waste management in Wiltshire and Swindon.
- 3.3.5 Three key documents address minerals planning in Wiltshire and Swindon. The Minerals Core Strategy (adopted June 2009) sets out the spatial vision, key objectives and overall principles for development covering minerals provision up to 2026. The Minerals Development Control Policies DPD (adopted September 2009) sets out a limited suite of generic development control policies designed to assist with the process of determining planning applications for minerals development. The Wiltshire and Swindon Aggregate Minerals Site Allocations Local Plan (adopted May 2013) sets out allocations for aggregates and minerals workings.
- 3.3.6 The Wiltshire Core Strategy promotes sustainable construction which '*encourages building practices that reduce construction, demolition and excavation waste to landfill*', and seeks to ensure that the provision of essential infrastructure, including waste and recycling, will have been coordinated and provided within all new development.

### 3.4 Water resources and flood risk

- 3.4.1 National water policies are primarily driven by the aims of the EC Water Framework Directive, as translated into national law by the Water Framework Regulations 2003. Key objectives include improving the quality of rivers and other water bodies to 'good ecological status' by 2015; considering flood risk at all stages of the plan and development process in order to reduce future damage to property and loss of life; and incorporating water efficiency measures into new developments.
- 3.4.2 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include -
- Direct development away from areas highest at risk of flooding, with development 'not to be allocated if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability of flooding'. Where development is necessary, it should be made safe without increasing levels of flood risk elsewhere.
  - Take account of the effects of climate change in the long term, taking into account a range of factors including flooding. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.
  - Produce strategic policies to deliver the provision of a variety of infrastructure, including that necessary for water supply.
  - Take account of the effects of climate change in the long term, taking into account a range of factors including water supply. Adopt 'proactive strategies' to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.
- 3.4.3 The Flood and Water Management Act <sup>11</sup> sets out the following approaches to flood risk management:

<sup>11</sup> Flood and Water Management Act (2010) [online] at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

- Incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings, and retro-fitting at risk properties (including historic buildings);
- Utilising the environment, such as management of the land to reduce runoff and harnessing the ability of wetlands to store water; and
- Identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage.
- Planning to roll back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion.
- Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)

3.4.4 The Water Framework Directive drives a catchment-based approach to water management. In England and Wales there are 100 water catchments and it is Defra's intention is to establish a 'framework for integrated catchment management' across England by the end of 2013. The Environment Agency is currently seeking to establish 'Significant Water Management Issues' within catchments with a view to presenting second River Basin Management Plans to ministers in 2015. The Plans will seek to deliver the objectives of the WFD namely:

- Enhance the status and prevent the further deterioration of aquatic ecosystems and associated wetlands which depend on aquatic ecosystems;
- Promote the sustainable use of water;
- Reduce the pollution of water, especially by 'priority' and 'priority hazardous' substances; and
- Ensure the progressive reduction of groundwater pollution.

3.4.5 The Core Strategy sets out a number of considerations in relation to water resources and flood risk. In terms of water resources the Core Strategy states:

- Non-residential development will be required to incorporate water efficiency measures
- Development proposals within a Source Protection Zone, Safeguard Zone or Water Protection Zone must assess any risk to groundwater resources, and groundwater quality, and demonstrate that these would be protected throughout the construction and operational phases of development.

3.4.6 In terms of flooding the Core Strategy highlights that:

- Development proposed in Flood Zones 2 and 3 as identified within the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will need to refer to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment when providing evidence to the local planning authority in order to apply the Sequential Test in line with the requirements of national policy and established best practice
- All new development will include measures to reduce the rate of rainwater run-off and improve rainwater infiltration to soil and ground (sustainable urban drainage) unless site or environmental conditions make these measures unsuitable.

### 3.5 Air quality and environmental pollution

3.5.1 The EU Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution<sup>12</sup> aims to cut the annual number of premature deaths from air pollution-related diseases by almost 40% by 2020 (using 2000 as the base year), as well as substantially reducing the area of forests and other ecosystems suffering damage from airborne pollutants.

3.5.2 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include -

- 'Planning policies should sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality

<sup>12</sup> Commission of the European Communities (2005) Thematic Strategy on air pollution [online] available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2005:0446:FIN:EN:PDF>

Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas is consistent with the local air quality action plan’.

- New and existing developments should be prevented from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of air pollution.

3.5.3 The recent Defra report Action for air quality in a changing climate<sup>13</sup> focuses on the synergies between the two issues of air quality and climate change. In particular, it notes the potential for additional health benefits through the closer integration of climate and air pollution policy. It is suggested that co-benefits can be realised through a variety of means, including promoting low-carbon vehicles and renewable energy.

3.5.4 Wiltshire Council has produced an Air Quality Strategy for Wiltshire (2011)<sup>14</sup>, which includes a 17 point plan focusing on strategic actions to help deliver improved air quality. The Air Quality Strategy will be underpinned by the emerging Air Quality Action Plan which has been designed to assist with the targeted delivery of improvements in the designated Air Quality Management Areas.

3.5.5 The Core Strategy seeks to ensure that development, which is likely to exacerbate existing areas of poor air quality, demonstrates that measures can be taken to effectively mitigate emissions and make a positive contribution to the Air Quality Strategy and Air Quality Action Plan. This includes through:

- landscaping, bunding or separation to increase distance from highways and junctions;
- possible traffic management or highway improvements to be agreed with the local authority;
- abatement technology and incorporating site layout / separation and other conditions in site planning;
- traffic routing, site management, site layout and phasing; and
- where appropriate contributions will be sought toward the mitigation of the impact a development may have on levels of air pollutants.

## 3.6 Climatic factors

3.6.1 In its 2007 strategy on climate change, the European Commission assesses the costs and benefits of combating climate change and recommends a package of measures to limit global warming to 2° Celsius.<sup>15</sup> On energy, the Commission recommends that the EU's energy efficiency improves by 20% and the share of renewable energy grows to 20% by 2020.

3.6.2 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include -

- Support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate as a ‘core planning principle’.
- There is a key role for planning in securing radical reductions in GHG, including in terms of meeting the targets set out in the Climate Change Act 2008<sup>16</sup>. Specifically, planning policy should support the move to a low carbon future through:
  - planning for new development in locations and ways which reduce GHG emissions;
  - actively supporting energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings;
  - setting local requirements for building's sustainability in a way that is consistent with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy;

<sup>13</sup> Defra (2010) Air Pollution: Action in a Changing Climate[online] available at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13378-air-pollution.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Wiltshire Council (2011) Air Quality Strategy for Wiltshire 2011-15

<sup>15</sup> Commission of the European Communities (2007) Limiting Global Climate Change to two degrees Celsius: The way ahead for 2020 and beyond [online] available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0002:FIN:EN:PDF>

<sup>16</sup> The Climate Change Act 2008 sets targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions through action in the UK of at least 80% by 2050, and reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of at least 26% by 2020, against a 1990 baseline.

- positively promoting renewable energy technologies and considering identifying suitable areas for their construction; and
- encouraging those transport solutions that support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion.

- 3.6.3 The Department of Energy and Climate Changes' (DECC) report 'The Future of Heating'<sup>17</sup> points out that around half (46%) of the final energy consumed in the UK is used to provide heat, contributing roughly a third of the nation's greenhouse gas emissions. Renewable heat currently represents 1% of heat generation in the UK, although this is expected to grow significantly if decarbonisation targets are to be met. The Government's vision is of: 'buildings benefiting from a combination of renewable heat in individual buildings, particularly heat pumps, and heat networks distributing low carbon heat to whole communities...focusing first on the energy efficiency of our buildings...'
- 3.6.4 In terms of climate change mitigation, the Core Strategy highlights that all proposals for major development will be required to submit a Sustainable Energy Strategy alongside the planning application which will outline a low-carbon strategy for the proposal. It also requires all new homes to meet Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes and require non-residential development to meet the BREEAM "Excellent" standards from 2019. The Core Strategy also encourages the retrofitting of existing buildings to improve energy efficiency.
- 3.6.5 The Core Strategy supports climate change adaptation through setting out a range of policies seeking to improve the resilience of Wiltshire to the effects of climate change, including through proposals related to sustainable construction, green infrastructure, flood risk and water resources.

### 3.7 Historic environment and landscape

- 3.7.1 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:
- Protect and enhance valued landscapes, giving particular weight to those identified as being of national importance.
  - Heritage assets should be recognised as an 'irreplaceable resource' that should be conserved in a 'manner appropriate to their significance', taking account of 'the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits' of conservation, whilst also recognising the positive contribution new development can make to local character and distinctiveness.
  - Set out a 'positive strategy' for the 'conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment', including those heritage assets that are most at risk.
  - Consider the effects of climate change in the long term, including in terms of landscape. Adopt 'proactive strategies' to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.
- 3.7.2 The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England<sup>18</sup> sets out its vision for the historic environment. It calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in an intelligent manner in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life
- 3.7.3 Wiltshire's Core Strategy seeks to ensure that designated heritage assets, as well as distinctive non-designated assets (monuments, sites and landscapes and areas of historic and built heritage significance) which contribute to a sense of local character, are conserved and where possible enhanced. Buildings at Risk are also acknowledged by the Core Strategy, which promotes the monitoring of their condition and seeks to encourage their improvement.

<sup>17</sup> DECC (2012) The Future of Heating: A strategic framework for low carbon heat in the UK [online] available at: <http://www.decc.gov.uk/assets/decc/11/meeting-energy-demand/heat/4805-future-heating-strategic-framework.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> HM Government (2010) The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England [online] available at: [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference\\_library/publications/6763.aspx](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/6763.aspx)

- 3.7.4 The Core Strategy seeks to ensure that a high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality. Applications for new development must be accompanied by appropriate information to demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of the local area.
- 3.7.5 The Core Strategy highlights that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and should not have an unacceptable harmful impact upon landscape character. Any negative impacts should be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures. Proposals should be informed by and sympathetic to the distinctive character areas identified in the relevant Landscape Character Assessments which have been carried out locally, as well as parish and village design statements. It also seeks to ensure that landscape protection is carried out in conjunction with the forthcoming Landscape Strategy for Wiltshire which is currently anticipated to undergo adoption in 2016.

### 3.8 Population and community

3.8.1 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- To 'boost significantly the supply of housing', local planning authorities should meet the 'full, objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing' in their area. They should prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to assess their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to need over the plan period.
- With a view to creating 'sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities' authorities should ensure provision of affordable housing onsite or externally where robustly justified.
- In rural areas, when exercising the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities, local planning authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. Authorities should consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs.
- The NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. It explains how good design is a key aspect in sustainable development, and how development should improve the quality of the area over its lifetime, not just in the short term. Good architecture and landscaping are important, with the use of design codes contributing to the delivery of high quality outcomes. Design should reinforce local distinctiveness, raise the standard more generally in the area and address the connections between people and places.
- The social role of the planning system involves 'supporting vibrant and healthy communities'.
- The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities
- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
- Ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Places should contain clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public spaces, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
- Ensuring that there is a 'sufficient choice of school places' is of 'great importance' and there is a need to take a 'proactive, positive and collaborative approach' to bringing forward 'development that will widen choice in education'.
- The social role of the planning system involves 'supporting vibrant and healthy communities'.
- A core planning principle is to 'take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all'.

- The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities'
- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
- Set out the strategic policies to deliver the provision of health facilities.
- Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.
- Planning policies should aim to avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life.

3.8.2 In relation to key national messages in relation to health, Fair Society, Healthy Lives<sup>19</sup> ('The Marmot Review') investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them. Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that there is: '*overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities*'.

3.8.3 Key messages from the Core Strategy include:

- Development outside of the 'limits of development' (settlement boundary) will only be permitted where it has been identified through community-led planning policy documents including neighbourhood plans.
- Proposals which will focus on improving accessibility between towns and villages, helping to reduce social exclusion, isolation and rural deprivation, such as transport and infrastructure improvements, will be supported where the development will not be to the detriment of the local environment or local residents.
- Wherever practicable, accommodation should seek to deliver and promote independent living for older and vulnerable people. Developers will be required to demonstrate how their proposals respond to the needs of an ageing population.
- Affordable housing provision of 40% (net) will be provided on sites of 5 or more dwellings, with a financial contribution on sites of 4 dwellings or fewer. Provision of affordable housing may vary on a site-by-site basis taking into account evidence of local need, mix of affordable housing proposed and where appropriate, the viability of the development.
- Housing tenure will be negotiated on a site-by-site basis to reflect the nature of the development and local needs. Housing size and type, including any distinction between flats and houses, will be expected to reflect the demonstrable needs of the community (as evidenced in the Wiltshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment).
- Accommodation should seek to deliver and promote independent living for older and vulnerable people. Developers will be required to demonstrate how their proposals respond to the needs of an ageing population.

3.8.4 All new development will be required to provide for the necessary on-site and, where appropriate, off-site infrastructure requirements arising from the proposal.

## 3.9 Transport

3.9.1 European and UK transport policies and plans place emphasis on the modernisation and sustainability of the transport network. Specific objectives include reducing pollution and road congestion through improvements to public transport, walking and cycling networks and reducing the need to travel. National policy also focuses on the need for the transport network to support sustainable economic growth.

<sup>19</sup> The Marmot Review (2011) The Marmot Review: Implications for Spatial Planning [online] available at: <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/12111/53895/53895.pdf>

### 3.9.2 Key messages from the Core Strategy include

- New development should be located and designed to reduce the need to travel and to encourage the use of sustainable transport alternatives.
- Developments should provide appropriate mitigating measures to offset any adverse impacts on the transport network at both the construction and operational stages.
- Demand management measures will be promoted where appropriate to reduce reliance on the car and to encourage the use of sustainable transport alternatives.
- Proposals which will focus on improving accessibility between towns and villages, helping to reduce social exclusion, isolation and rural deprivation, such as transport and infrastructure improvements, will be supported where the development will not be to the detriment of the local environment or local residents.
- Non-strategic growth should be phased throughout the plan period to deliver homes in a balanced manner that will enable infrastructure and traffic congestion issues to be addressed.
- All new development will be required to provide for the necessary on-site and, where appropriate, off-site infrastructure requirements arising from the proposal.

3.9.3 The third Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-26 presents a long term strategy for the area and an implementation plan for the county.

## 3.10 Economy and enterprise

3.10.1 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- The planning system can make a contribution to building a strong, responsive economy by 'ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure'.
- Capitalise on 'inherent strengths', and to meet the 'twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future'.
- Support new and emerging business sectors, including positively planning for 'clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries'.
- Support competitive town centre environments.
- Edge of town developments should only be considered where they have good access. This should be followed with an impact assessment to ensure the town centre remains viable in the long term.
- Enhance and retain markets is also outlined.
- Support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas and promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.

## 4 What's the sustainability 'baseline'?

The SA Report must include...

- The relevant aspects of the current state of the sustainability baseline and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan'
- The characteristics of areas / populations etc. likely to be significantly affected.
- Any existing sustainability problems / issues which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas / populations etc. of particular importance

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The baseline review tailors and develops the problems/issues identified through context review so that they are locally specific. A detailed understanding of the baseline can aid the identification and evaluation of 'likely significant effects' associated with the plan / alternatives.
- 4.1.2 Set out below is a summary of the baseline review presented within the October 2014 Scoping Report, which was prepared by the Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

### 4.2 Biodiversity

- 4.2.1 **Internationally designated sites:** One site internationally designated for its nature conservation interest is located close to the Neighbourhood Area. In this context two parts of the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC are located 1) 1.5 km west of parish boundaries and 2) 1.3km to the east of parish boundaries. The site comprises lowland hay and wildflower meadow with a very high proportion of surviving population of snakeshead fritillary. The Neighbourhood Plan was screened out as requiring a Habitats Regulations Assessment in July 2015.
- 4.2.2 **SSSIs:** There are two sites of Special Scientific Interest within the parish. These include Pikes Corner, which is a site of unimproved grassland and Upper Waterhay Meadow, which is a wildflower meadow important for the presence of the snakeshead fritillary.
- 4.2.3 **County Wildlife Sites:** The area includes large areas designated as County Wildlife Sites operated by the Wildlife Sites Project under the auspices of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust:

*"County Wildlife Sites are areas of land of recognised value for wildlife, which fall outside the legal protection given to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Wiltshire Wildlife Sites Project identifies, designates and monitors County Wildlife Sites and, to date, over 1,500 such sites have been designated in Wiltshire. These sites provide a vital network of threatened habitats such as chalk grassland, ancient woodland, hay meadows and wetlands, and act as reservoirs of declining animal and plant species."*

### 4.3 Land and soil resources

- 4.3.1 **Mineral Extraction:** The area has been a rich source of aggregate minerals for decades. In recent years mineral extraction has been reduced and gravel extraction sites have largely become man-made lakes used for wildlife or leisure. There are still reserves of gravel in the area which may be economically extracted. The Wiltshire and Swindon Aggregates Mineral Site Allocations Local Plan 2013 identifies land at the Cotswold Community site in the parish as potential to yield 2.76 million tonnes, being the single largest site in the plan.
- 4.3.2 **Agricultural Land Quality:** The National Soil Resources Institute soilscape assessment of the shows the area is largely comprised of freely draining lime-rich loamy soil, with smaller areas of slightly acid and lime-rich loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage. As a result of minerals extraction in the area farming has been diminished and is evident in only a few sites.

4.3.3 **Landfill/Waste Sites:** The Barnground Landfill site in the north of the parish managed by Hills Minerals & Waste Ltd is no longer being used for landfill of waste and is in the process of restoration of the land. The landfill licence allowed taking non-biodegradable wastes.

#### 4.4 Water resources and flood risk

4.4.1 **Water and Sewerage Services:** Water to the parish is supplied by Thames Water from a water treatment works located in the village which sources and treats water from an aquifer. Thames Water supply the majority of this water to Flaxlands reservoir near Wootton Bassett through a recently upgraded pipeline. Treatment of water supply is by chlorination. The hardness of the water supply is very high leading to the need for above average replacement of plumbing fixtures and appliances which consequently makes a negative contribution to carbon emissions and sustainability.

4.4.2 **Sewage treatment** for the area is provided by Thames Water and this is routed from the village to the Waterhay Sewerage Treatment Works in the adjacent parish of Leigh to the south of the area. Thames Water advise that the capacity of this facility is at or near capacity for the plant.

4.4.3 **Flood Risk:** Large parts of the Neighbourhood Area are categorised as a Flood Risk Zone 3 and Flood Risk Zone 2 by the Environment Agency. Actual flooding over recent years has not reached these flood risk levels. Poor maintenance of drainage ditches and watercourses in the local area have led to flooding incidents in recent years.

#### 4.5 Air quality and environmental pollution

4.5.1 There are no known significant issues with air quality in the area from industrial pollution. There is a degree of air pollution from vehicle emissions using the B4696, which is a designated Lorry Route on the Western and Northern sectors of the parish. Mineral extraction and processing activities can give rise to dust being spread in local the atmosphere by machinery and transport during dry warm periods. This may decline during the plan period, however, the impact of mineral extraction operations at the former Cotswold Community site is unknown.

#### 4.6 Climatic factors

4.6.1 The outcome of research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK, released in 2009 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP09) team<sup>20</sup>, highlights the effects of climate change for the South West by 2050 for a medium emissions scenario are likely to be as follows:

- Under medium emissions, the central estimate of increase in winter mean temperature is 2.1°C and an increase in summer mean temperature of 2.7°C; and
- Under medium emissions, the central estimate of change in winter mean precipitation is 17% and summer mean precipitation is –20%.

4.6.2 Resulting from these changes, a range of risks may exist for the Ashton Keynes area. These include:

- Increased incidence of heat related illnesses and deaths during the summer;
- Increased incidence of illnesses and deaths related to exposure to sunlight (e.g. skin cancer, cataracts);
- Increased incidence of pathogen related diseases (e.g. legionella and salmonella);
- Increase in health problems related to rise in local ozone levels during summer;
- Increased risk of injuries and deaths due to increased number of storm events;
- Effects on water resources from climate change;

<sup>20</sup> The data was released on 18th June 2009: See: <http://ukclimateprojections.defra.gov.uk/>

- Reduction in availability of groundwater for abstraction;
- Adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain;
- Increased risk of flooding, including increased vulnerability to 1:100 year floods;
- Changes in insurance provisions for flood damage;
- A need to increase the capacity of wastewater treatment plants and sewers;
- A need to upgrade flood defences;
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding;
- Loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution;
- Spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution;
- Deterioration in working conditions due to increased temperatures;
- Changes to global supply chain;
- Increased difficulty of food preparation, handling and storage due to higher temperatures;
- An increased move by the insurance industry towards a more risk-based approach to insurance underwriting, leading to higher cost premiums for business;
- Increased demand for air-conditioning;
- Increased drought and flood related problems such as soil shrinkages and subsidence;
- Risk of road surfaces melting more frequently due to increased temperature; and
- Flooding of roads.

4.6.3 Risk of flooding is one of the most significant climatic factors affecting the area due to the location of the Neighbourhood Area within the Upper Thames Basin and the high water table present.

4.6.4 In relation to greenhouse gas emissions, source data from the Department of Energy and Climate Change<sup>21</sup> suggests that Wiltshire has had consistently higher per capita emissions than regionally and nationally since 2005. The unitary authority has however seen greater reductions in emissions per capita between 2005 and 2011 (2.8 kt CO<sub>2</sub>, or a 28% reduction) compared to the South West (1.7 kt CO<sub>2</sub>, a 21% reduction), and England (1.8 kt CO<sub>2</sub>, a 21% reduction).

4.6.5 In relation to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by end user, between 2005 and 2011 the proportion of emissions originating from industrial and commercial sources in Wiltshire fell from 39% to 31%. In the same period the proportion of total emissions from domestic sources increased from 28% to 31%. With the proportion of emissions originating from road transport increasing from 31% in 2005 to 37% in 2011, road transport is now the largest contributor to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Wiltshire.

## 4.7 Historic environment and landscape

### *Historic evolution of the parish*

4.7.1 The name Ashton means 'farm by the ash tree'. The later addition of Keynes is a family name; in the 13th century the manor was occupied by a William de Keynes.

4.7.2 Neolithic axe heads found in the Neighbourhood Area shows that the land was inhabited as early as 3000-1800BC. Crop marks in the centre of the parish near Kent End reveal a Bronze Age site. Earthworks believed to date from the original settlement at Ashton Keynes still remain close to Church Farm; these are now a Scheduled Monument. Ashton Keynes was a place of some significance during the Saxon and Norman periods and there is evidence of a battle taking place nearby in 1016 between the Danes and the Saxons. In the 2nd century this was a Romano/British settlement. Many of these settlements existed, notably the preserved Ancient Monument close to the

<sup>21</sup> Department of Energy and Climate Change (2011) Official statistics: Local Authority carbon dioxide emissions [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-emissions-estimates>

currently deserted Ashton Fields Farm. There was possibly a Roman villa here and it is believed that Cleveland Farm, near the eastern boundary, is on the site of a Roman Temple.

- 4.7.3 From the early 1100s nearly all the land of Ashton Keynes descended as a single estate belonging to Tewkesbury Abbey and after the Dissolution, the Manor changed hands several times. In 1848 the estate was sold to Lord Henry Vane (later Duke of Cleveland), who in turn left it in his will of 1891 to Arthur Hay-Drummond. Both men increased the size of the estate through purchases of land and cottages. In 1913 the whole estate was put up for auction. The numerous farms and cottages were sold separately and the Manor ceased to exist, although the title Lord of the Manor was bought by Mr. A.W. Bowley, who also bought Church Farm and Kent End Farm.
- 4.7.4 The Church of the Holy Cross is mostly Norman, and consists of a chancel with north chapel, a nave of four bays with aisles, north and south porches and a western tower containing five bells. It was restored in 1876-7 by William Butterfield. There were Congregational and Primitive Methodist chapels in the village until the 1970s; both buildings are now private houses.
- 4.7.5 Ashton Keynes has been described as the village of the four crosses. These crosses were put up for a variety of purposes, including places of worship, boundary marks and meeting places. The four at Ashton were all erected in either the 14th or 15th century, but only the bases and parts of the shafts remain, the tops probably having been smashed during the Civil War. The churchyard cross was re-erected in 1917, the stone pieces having been discovered in various parts of the village. The other crosses are at Park Place, Gumstool Bridge and High Road. The first of these was re-located in c.1910 to accommodate road-making.
- 4.7.6 During the Second World War American soldiers were stationed in the village and several households took in evacuees.

#### ***Designated sites***

- 4.7.7 Reflecting this historic evolution, the Neighbourhood Area has a rich historic environment. A number of features and areas for the historic environment in the plan area are recognised through historic environment designations. These include listed buildings and scheduled monuments, which are nationally designated, and conservation areas, which are designated at the local level. Historic England is the statutory consultee for certain categories of listed building consent and all applications for scheduled monument consent. The historic environment is protected through the planning system, via conditions imposed on developers and other mechanisms.
- 4.7.8 There is one conservation area located within the plan area: the Ashton Keynes Conservation Area, which was designated in 1974 and extended in 1994 to include the whole built up area of the village. A Conservation Area Statement was initially prepared in 1998 and adopted by Wiltshire Council. It was substantially revised in August 2015, with the intention of submitting this to Wiltshire Council for adoption to supersede the 1998 version.
- 4.7.9 The Neighbourhood Area contains 66 listed buildings. In this context, one Grade I listed building, the Church of the Holy Cross and 65 Grade II listed buildings are present in the parish. No Grade II\* listed structures are present in the parish.
- 4.7.10 Scheduled monuments are sites of national importance and protected by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. According to the National Heritage List for England, there are seven scheduled monuments in the Neighbourhood Area, as follows:
- Settlement E of Ashtonfield (Cotswold Community)
  - Hall's Close: a ringwork and bailey 100m west of Kent End Farm
  - Moated site at Church Farm
  - Medieval cross 40m east of village hall

- Medieval village cross at the junction of Park Place and the High Road 210m south of Gumstool Bridge
- Medieval cross immediately south of Gumstool Bridge
- Medieval cross 40m east of Holy Cross Church

4.7.11 There are no registered parks and gardens or historic battlefields in the parish.

### ***Heritage at risk***

4.7.12 Since 2008, English Heritage has released an annual Heritage at Risk Register. The Heritage at Risk Register highlights the Grade I and Grade II\* listed buildings, and scheduled monuments, conservation areas, wreck sites and registered parks and gardens in England deemed to be 'at risk'. The 2014 Heritage at Risk Register<sup>22</sup> highlighted that there is one feature or areas deemed to be at risk in the Neighbourhood Area, the scheduled monument at the Settlement E of Ashtonfield (Cotswold Community). This is due to arable ploughing.

### ***Notable historic buildings***

4.7.13 Notable historic buildings include as follows:

- Cove House was built in the 17th century and is believed to have been the residence of the Lord of the Manor, remaining so until the breakup of the estate in 1913. It remained a family home until the Second World War, when, at different times, British, Canadian and American troops were stationed there. It has now been separated into two residences.
- There is a Mill at Ashton mentioned in Domesday, probably on the same site as the current Mill House. The present building originates from the 16th century, with later additions. It was converted into a house in c.1910 when the mill section was pulled down and made into a garden.
- The Old Rectory is an 18th century building on the site of a Rectory built in 1584. There is a date stone inside the house, at one time on the north wall, which reads 'Thomas Aubrey 1584'. There are also remains of a malting kiln.
- The Long House and Long Cottage are in Park Place. (There is another Long House in High Road). A date stone on the house is marked TMC1765. These are the initials of Thomas Carter, who built a bake house and two cottages on the land.
- Ashton Fields Farm, 1½ miles NW of the village and within the NPA, was the focus of a development in the 1920s by the Bruderhof, an international European movement who set up a community there. A number of buildings from that era are now Grade II listed.

### ***Landscape character***

4.7.14 North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment: In 2004 North Wiltshire District Council commissioned a landscape character assessment. The particular area covering the parish of Ashton Keynes is referred to as the Thames Valley Floor. This low lying area is centred on the River Thames and its floodplain. It is a varied landscape which includes large areas of open water from former gravel pits, and field patterns which vary from the small and irregular to larger fields on reclaimed, drained land. Historical features indicate how mankind has adapted to the challenge of this predominantly wet land, with raised ancient roadways, a network of drainage channels, and pollarded waterside willows.

4.7.15 There is little settlement in this wet landscape, although Ashton Keynes is an exception, and is distinctive in the presence of open canalised water courses within the village. In general the area has a strong sense of place due to the contained views and distinctive ditched field boundaries, pollarded willows and relative lack of settlement. It has a calm remote character, with a feeling of historical

<sup>22</sup> Heritage at Risk Register (2014), <http://risk.english-heritage.org.uk/register.aspx>

continuity, disturbed only by the traffic on the B4696 which runs through the area to connect with the A419.

- 4.7.16 This landscape is highly sensitive to change. The overriding sense of tranquillity, and the feeling that this is a landscape imprinted with history, could easily be lost through insensitive landscape change, especially new development. The proximity to Swindon and the A419 brings with it particular pressure for development. The landscape is therefore vulnerable to change either through cumulative small scale development which over time will change the area's character, or through larger scale developments which have a more obvious immediate effect.
- 4.7.17 Cotswold Water Park Landscape Character Assessment: In 2006 Wiltshire Council commissioned a landscape character assessment of the Cotswold Water Park. Ashton Keynes lies in a character area designated as River Basin Clay Vale which is described as low lying, flat to very gently undulating floodplain landscape underlain by extensive deposits of alluvial clay and silt, and sand and gravel that mask the solid geology.
- 4.7.18 The area is underlain by the youngest rock formations of the Jurassic period, comprising the Kellaways Beds and Oxford Clay formations. These impervious clays are overlain by extensive superficial deposits of alluvium and River Terrace sands and gravels. The pattern and depths of these drift deposits have had a significant effect on local character through their varying influence on agricultural activity and the potential for mineral extraction.
- 4.7.19 Ashton Keynes is one of the main settlements associated with this character area, and is described as a compact nuclear village with the central historic core designated as a Conservation Area. Many of the older buildings are constructed in the local vernacular and limestone typical of Cotswold villages, together with more recent development, particularly on the village perimeter. The juvenile River Thames flows through the village and is an integral part of the village form with a series of pedestrian stone bridges linking dwellings. Although surrounded to the west, north and east by restored lakes and a wetland landscape, this is not immediately evident within the village and it presents a sense of a detachment from the nearby water based activities.

## 4.8 Population and community

- 4.8.1 A Housing Needs Survey was conducted with Wiltshire and the AK Parish Councils in 2013, concentrating on those households who are unable to afford accommodation on the open market. At the time of the 2011 Census, there were 82.5% of households in the parish were owner-occupying, 7.3% were renting from social landlords, 6.4% were privately renting, 2.4% were living in shared ownership (part owned, part rented) homes, and 1.4% of households were living rent free. The 2011 Census recorded 42 social homes in the parish. These properties represent 7.3% of the total housing in Ashton Keynes, which is lower than the Wiltshire affordable housing average of 14.7%. Social housing in Ashton Keynes had a zero re-let rate in the past year: from the first to the fourth quarter of 2012/13, no social homes were re-let in the parish. There were thirty three households on the Wiltshire Council Housing Register seeking affordable accommodation in Ashton Keynes parish. The low levels of turnover of the social housing in Ashton Keynes suggest that none of the households responding to the survey and in need of affordable accommodation could meet their needs through accessing the existing social housing of the parish.
- 4.8.2 Local facilities for healthy activities are good – playing fields with play equipment, and a sports field. Walking in the area has good accessibility for the local community and visitors with well identified paths. Cycle ways are minimal and need to be expanded especially to interconnect with cycle ways in other parts of the Cotswold Water Park.
- 4.8.3 The village has a visiting GP facility in the village hall as a satellite of a GP Surgery in Cricklade, the nearest service centre town.

- 4.8.4 Access to hospitals is by travel to Swindon GWH, the nearest major Wiltshire NHS hospital (16 miles away), and Malmesbury (10 miles away) and Cirencester, Glos (7 miles away) Primary Care Centres. Defibrillator cabinets are located at the village hall and sports field.
- 4.8.5 Road safety is generally good with only a few locations on surrounding roads considered to be of high risk with recorded accident rates. Cycling on the surrounding roads is considered risky by the local community. There is an issue with speeding traffic in the area, notably on the B4696 on the west side of the village where a Community Speed Watch Scheme has been introduced by local residents and improved signage has been implemented. Several road locations in the village suffer from blind corners, or junctions, which constitute a road hazard. These have arisen as a result of the historic layout of the village.
- 4.8.6 Crime in the area is considered to be low, and there have been no reports of violent crime in recent decades. Consequently residents generally feel safe in their homes and in the wider area. There are continuing incidents of burglaries in the parish.
- 4.8.7 Ethnicity: According to the 2011 Census the population mix of the parish was 98.6% (1,381) White British and 1.4% (19) Black or Minority Ethnic Group.
- 4.8.8 Community activity: There are numerous active community groups in the area ranging from junior sports to those for older people. Ashton Keynes is known for its strong sense of community and residents are encouraged to participate in social activities as they wish. The main community groups involving the youth of the community are sports groups.
- 4.8.9 There are a number of groups and organisations supported by dedicated volunteers, examples being; the Parish Council, Helpline, Womens Institute, Football, Tennis and Cricket Clubs, and Friends of Holy Cross.
- 4.8.10 The Thames Path National Trail, which follows the course of the River Thames from its source to the Thames Barrier in London runs through Ashton Keynes and is an important recreational asset.
- 4.8.11 The parish has a Church of England Voluntary Controlled primary school with a 'good' OFSTED rating, which is well attended by pupils from the parish and outside the parish. The nearest secondary education is available from schools in Purton near Swindon, and Cirencester (Glos).
- 4.8.12 The 2011 Census reveals the range of occupational skills in the working age population to be:
- Professional Occupations (22.9%)
  - Director, Manager or Senior Official (18.8%)
  - Associate Professional or Technical (13.8%)
  - Administrative or Secretarial (12.8%)
  - Skilled Trade (9.1%)
  - Caring, Leisure or other Service (8.7%)
  - Sales and Customer Service (5.4%)
  - Process, Plant and Machine Operator (4.3%)
  - Elementary Occupations (4.3%)

## 4.9 Transport

- 4.9.1 **Buses:** There is a limited two runs per day Monday to Saturday bus service from Cirencester to Swindon which stops at Ashton Keynes. A change merging two services from April 2014 for cost saving now includes Wootton Bassett on the route to Swindon.
- 4.9.2 A local school bus service to Braden Forrest comprehensive school at Purton near Swindon is operated by a village based private coach company.
- 4.9.3 **Trains:** The nearest available train service is operated by First Great Western from Kemble station 6 miles to the west of the village. This connects Gloucester to Swindon, and also has a direct service to London Paddington.
- 4.9.4 **Cars:** This represents the predominant form of transport in the area, and the majority of residents and families have accessibility to the use of a private vehicle. In line with the national trend there has been an increase in car ownership in the parish, which is evident in the level of on street parking.
- 4.9.5 To support the older population who do not have access to a personal vehicle, the community operate a Helpline service backed by the Wiltshire Link organisation and operated by volunteers who use their own vehicles to transport people to and from places of importance, such as hospitals and doctor's surgeries.

## 4.10 Economy and enterprise

- 4.10.1 The 2011 Census revealed that there were 848 (61%) of people in the parish of working age, and of these 704 (70%) were economically active. Approximately 78% travelled to work outside of the parish, and 22% (148) work in the parish.
- 4.10.2 The large business employers have been the aggregate minerals and manufacturing companies on the outskirts of the village, however, operations have been in decline in recent years, with an associated decline in employment in these sectors.
- 4.10.3 A local business survey carried out in 2014 revealed that the largest employment sector is Services (70%) with the majority of companies being classified as small.
- 4.10.4 There are an undefined number of small home-based businesses in the area providing services or expertise to the local community and farther afield. This is an important part of the local economy which has the potential for expansion to dedicated premises and contributes towards a sustainable local economy.
- 4.10.5 As the Cotswold Water Park is predicted to expand further as a regional and national visitor attraction, there are likely to be opportunities for local employment and start-up businesses in the leisure and tourism sectors.
- 4.10.6 The lack of high-speed broadband and mobile phone coverage in the area is a known drawback to businesses located in the area. The Wiltshire Online project 'Fibre-to-the-Cabinet' was implemented in April 2015 which now provides an option for improved broadband speed for fibre subscribers. Mobile phone coverage is marginal in the village and no plans have been announced by the network operators to improve this as of yet.

## 5 What are the key issues and objectives that should be a focus?

The SA Report must include...

- Key problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of / provide a framework for appraisal

### 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Drawing on the review of the sustainability context and baseline, the SA Scoping Report (October 2014) was able to identify a range of sustainability problems / issues that should be a particular focus of SA, ensuring it remains focused. These issues were then translated into sustainability 'objectives'. These SA Objectives provide a methodological framework for the appraisal of likely significant effects on the baseline.

### 5.2 Sustainability theme and objectives

SA theme	SA Objectives
<b>Biodiversity</b>	Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features and avoid irreversible losses
<b>Land and soil resources</b>	Ensure efficient and effective use of land and give priority to the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings  Protect those areas identified as being Grade 1 agricultural land from inappropriate development
<b>Water resources and flood risk</b>	Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner
<b>Air quality and environmental pollution</b>	Protect people and property from all sources of flooding and seek to reduce flood risk overall  Minimise all sources of environmental pollution
<b>Climatic factors</b>	Seek to minimise impact on climate change and reduce vulnerability to future climate change effects
<b>Historic environment and landscape</b>	Protect, maintain and enhance the historic environment – with particular reference to the designated ancient monuments, listed buildings and the Conservation Area  Conserve and enhance the character and quality of the landscape, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place?
<b>Population and community</b>	Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures?  Provide a safe and healthy environment in which to live  Retain existing community facilities and provide additional facilities where such a need has been identified  Improve access to, and engagement in, local community services and facilities

SA theme	SA Objectives
	Provide good quality educational facilities capable of meeting the needs of the local community, and provide opportunities for people to improve their workplace skills
<b>Transport</b>	Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable transport choices
<b>Economy and enterprise</b>	<p>Encourage a vibrant and diversified economy and provide for long-term sustainable economic growth</p> <p>Ensure adequate provision of high quality employment land and diverse employment opportunities to meet the needs of local businesses and a changing workforce</p>

5.2.1 The full SA Framework of objectives and decision-making questions developed during the scoping stage of the SA and against which the plan has been appraised are presented in **Appendix II**.

***Part 2: What has plan making / SA involved to this point?***

## 6 What has plan making / SA involved to this point?

The SA Report must include...

- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with
- The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives / an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives appraisal (and hence, by proxy, a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan)

The 'narrative' of plan-making / SA up to this point is told within this part of the SA Report. Specifically, this section explains how preparation of the current version of the Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan has been informed by an appraisal of a number of alternative approaches to delivering the Local Plan allocation for housing in the Neighbourhood Area.

### 6.1 Overview of plan-making / SA work undertaken since 2013

- 6.1.1 Plan-making for the AKNP has been underway since 2013 and the Neighbourhood Area was designated in November 2013. Initial work incorporated an extensive number of informal and formal consultation exercises carried out by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, including consultation events, resident surveys, and engagement with local organisations. This was accompanied by the collation of baseline information from existing surveys and studies.
- 6.1.2 Initial public consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan was undertaken between May and July 2014. An article was published on the Neighbourhood Plan, and a number of consultation events carried out. Drawing on the findings of these events, a questionnaire was then prepared, which sought residents' views on the likely content of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.1.3 Following these preliminary consultation exercises, the Vision and Objectives for the AKNP were developed. A number of housing delivery site options were also considered for potential inclusion in the plan, which were consulted on in January 2015. The site allocations and policies for the Neighbourhood Plan were then further worked up in the period to September 2015.
- 6.1.4 The following sections discuss in more detail the evolution of sites and policies for the AKNP in association with the SA process.

### 6.2 Appraisal of reasonable alternatives for the Neighbourhood Plan

#### Reasonable alternatives

- 6.2.1 A key element of the SA process is the appraisal of 'reasonable alternatives' for the AKNP. In this context a number of reasonable alternatives have been considered in relation to the scale and location of housing allocations put forward by the AKNP for the Neighbourhood Area.
- 6.2.2 The Wiltshire Core Strategy sets out an indicative number of 116 homes to be identified in the Malmesbury Community Area between 2015 and 2026<sup>23</sup>. The five large villages in the Community Area, including Ashton Keynes, have been identified as the most sustainable settlements outside of Malmesbury Town and are therefore expected to provide the majority of this supply.

<sup>23</sup> Wiltshire Council Housing Land Supply Statement – September 2015

**Table 6.1** Supply and remaining housing to be identified for Malmesbury Community Area

Area	Indicative requirement 2006-2026	Housing already provided for		Indicative remaining requirement
		Completions 2006-2015	Developable commitments 2015-2026	
Malmesbury Town	885	492	521	0
Remainder	510	299	95	116

Source: Wiltshire Council – Housing Land Supply Statement – September 2015 – Appendix 6

- 6.2.3 The Core Strategy provides a methodology to calculate the number of new homes required in Ashton Keynes by 2026. This states that the general starting point for allocation will be proportionality in relation to their existing number of dwellings, but that this will be modified by consideration of such factors as the individual vision for each village, the existence of designations such as greenfield sites, the conservation area, the settlement boundary and the individual sustainability credentials of villages in relation to local facilities and transport links and the existence of particular local needs and opportunities.
- 6.2.4 Using the methodology detailed in the Core Strategy, a proportional allocation of houses based on population produces a requirement for 12 new homes to be built in Ashton Keynes by 2026. However the Neighbourhood Steering Group recognise the benefits of potentially delivering a higher level of housing for the Neighbourhood Plan, including for the vitality of the village, the provision of homes for younger and older people, and the opportunities provided by the development of housing at particular sites.

#### Appraisal of alternative housing numbers to deliver through the AKNP

- 6.2.5 To support decision-making on this element of the AKNP, the SA process considered three broad options relating to the number of houses to be taken forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan. The three options are as follows:
- **Option 1:** Delivery of the minimum number of dwellings to meet the indicative housing requirement for the Core Strategy (c.12 dwellings)
  - **Option 2:** Delivery of in the region of c.25-60 dwellings through the Neighbourhood Plan
  - **Option 3:** Delivery of over 75 dwellings through the Neighbourhood Plan
- 6.2.6 These options were considered through the SA Framework of objectives and appraisal questions developed during scoping (see **Part 1**).
- 6.2.7 **Table 6.2** presents the findings of the appraisal of Option 1 to Option 3 outlined above. These are presented through the nine sustainability themes discussed in Section 2.1.3. To support the appraisal findings, the three options have been ranked in terms of their sustainability performance against the relevant theme. It is anticipated that this will provide the reader with a likely indication of the comparative sustainability performance of the three options in relation to each theme.

**Table 6.2** Appraisal findings: reasonable alternatives linked to overall housing numbers

Option 1: Delivery of the minimum number of dwellings to meet the indicative housing requirement for the Core Strategy (c.12 dwellings)				
Option 2: Delivery of in the region of c.25-60 dwellings through the Neighbourhood Plan				
Option 3: Delivery of over 75 dwellings through the Neighbourhood Plan				
SA theme	Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference		
		Opt 1	Opt 2	Opt 3
Biodiversity	<p>Effects on biodiversity are likely to be increased through the delivery of a higher level of housing in the Neighbourhood Area. In this context, Option 3, through delivering a larger number of dwellings has the potential to lead to an increased magnitude of effects on biodiversity assets locally. This includes through habitat loss and direct and indirect impacts on species. However, a larger scale of housing delivery may increase opportunities for biodiversity enhancements, such as green infrastructure improvements and enhancements to ecological networks.</p> <p>All allocations have the potential to have impacts on biodiversity assets if located inappropriately and have poor design and layout. Likewise all allocations have the potential to promote net gains in biodiversity value. In this context, for all sites, potential effects on biodiversity depending on elements such as the provision of green infrastructure to accompany new development areas and the retention and incorporation of biodiversity features.</p>	1	2	3
Land and soil resources	<p>Option 2 and 3, which will deliver a higher level of development in the Neighbourhood Area have the potential to increase development on greenfield land in the Neighbourhood Area. The options also have increased potential to lead to the loss of areas of the best and most versatile agricultural land present in the parish (including Grade 1, 2 and 3a land). This includes the Grade 1 and 2 land present in the northern part of the Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>However increased delivery of housing through the AKNP may also increase the viability of rejuvenating larger sites in the Neighbourhood area. In this context Option 2, may enable a scale of development which leads to increased opportunities for rejuvenating underutilised land, whilst also not leading to the significant loss of greenfield land.</p>	2	1	3

Option 1: Delivery of the minimum number of dwellings to meet the indicative housing requirement for the Core Strategy (c.12 dwellings)				
Option 2: Delivery of in the region of c.25-60 dwellings through the Neighbourhood Plan				
Option 3: Delivery of over 75 dwellings through the Neighbourhood Plan				
SA theme	Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference		
		Opt 1	Opt 2	Opt 3
Water resources and flood risk	<p>The effect of new development areas on fluvial, surface water and groundwater flooding depends on their location and the implementation of sustainable urban drainage systems.</p> <p>In terms of water quality, it is difficult to come to a conclusion regarding the potential for development at any given location to result in negative effects without an understanding of the design measures that will be put in place. For example sustainable drainage systems – SuDS – are an effective means of minimising surface water runoff and hence pollution. However it should be noted that there is likely to be more scope for the implementation of measures such as SuDS within the larger scale of development promoted by Options 2 and 3.</p>	3	2	1
Air quality and environmental pollution	<p>Existing air quality issues in the parish relate to vehicle emissions on the B4696 and dust relating to minerals extraction and processing activities. Increases in emissions of air pollutants are more likely through the increased scale of development through Option 3, although this depends on the location of development and the integration of elements such as sustainable transport provision and green infrastructure provision.</p>	1	2	3

Option 1: Delivery of the minimum number of dwellings to meet the indicative housing requirement for the Core Strategy (c.12 dwellings)				
Option 2: Delivery of in the region of c.25-60 dwellings through the Neighbourhood Plan				
Option 3: Delivery of over 75 dwellings through the Neighbourhood Plan				
SA theme	Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference		
		Opt 1	Opt 2	Opt 3
Climatic factors	<p>In terms of climate change mitigation, the options which facilitate an increased level of development (Option 3, and to a lesser extent, Option 2) will lead to an increased level of greenhouse gas emissions due to an enlarged built footprint of the Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>Otherwise, in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, road transport is an increasingly significant contributor to emissions in the plan area. The extent to which the three options have the potential to support climate change mitigation through facilitating a reduced level of car dependency is therefore a key element. In this context, Option 1, through promoting smaller scale housing provision across the plan area, has increased potential to facilitate the development of new housing at locations which are more integrated with the existing built up area of Ashton Keynes. This has the potential to allow at some locations easier access to services and facilities by sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling. However Options 2 and 3, through facilitating larger scale sites, may enable more effective improvements to walking and cycling and public transport links through the infrastructure opportunities afforded by larger allocations.</p> <p>In terms of climate change adaptation, enhancements to the Neighbourhood Area's green infrastructure networks will be a key means of helping the plan area adapt to the effects of climate change. This includes through helping to regulate extreme temperatures and regulate surface water run-off. In this context the direct provision of green infrastructure improvements to accompany new development areas may be more achievable through the larger scale development proposed through Options 2 and 3, including through mechanisms such as the community infrastructure levy.</p>	1	2	3

Option 1: Delivery of the minimum number of dwellings to meet the indicative housing requirement for the Core Strategy (c.12 dwellings)				
Option 2: Delivery of in the region of c.25-60 dwellings through the Neighbourhood Plan				
Option 3: Delivery of over 75 dwellings through the Neighbourhood Plan				
SA theme	Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference		
		Opt 1	Opt 2	Opt 3
Historic environment and landscape	<p>Through increasing the scale of development to be taken forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan, Option 3 has increased potential to lead to impacts on landscape character and the setting of the historic environment. This includes through loss of landscape features, visual impacts and impacts on noise quality linked to increased traffic flows. In this context Option 1 through promoting a limited scale of development, is less likely to lead to significant effects on landscape and townscape character.</p> <p>Options 2 and 3 increase opportunities for supporting the reuse and rejuvenation of existing heritage assets in the Neighbourhood Area. This will support the plan area's historic environment resource, if high quality design and layout is incorporated within new provision.</p> <p>Option 2 however provides a balance between providing opportunities to rejuvenate existing underutilised heritage assets and protecting landscape character, visual amenity and the setting of the historic environment.</p>	1=	1=	3

Option 1: Delivery of the minimum number of dwellings to meet the indicative housing requirement for the Core Strategy (c.12 dwellings)				
Option 2: Delivery of in the region of c.25-60 dwellings through the Neighbourhood Plan				
Option 3: Delivery of over 75 dwellings through the Neighbourhood Plan				
SA theme	Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference		
		Opt 1	Opt 2	Opt 3
Population and community	<p>In terms of affordable housing, such provision may be easier to deliver through the larger allocations likely to be delivered through Option 2 and Option 3. Whilst all new developments involving one or more dwellings are liable for the community infrastructure levy, concentrating the delivery of housing at larger sites may help enable the securing of additional contributions to site specific mitigation through Section 106 planning agreements (it should be noted however that such contributions are typically required to make a development proposal acceptable in planning terms that would not otherwise be acceptable). Recent legislation has introduced a 10 unit threshold for affordable housing contributions. As such Options 2 and 3 have increased opportunity for delivering affordable housing in the village</p> <p>In terms of the provision of services and facilities, the delivery of CIL monies and similar mechanisms are likely to be more achievable through the larger scale allocations facilitated through Options 2 and 3. Similarly potential enhancements to the vitality of the village provided by an increased population growth through these options may support the availability and viability of services, facilities and amenities.</p> <p>The delivery of housing provision through larger scale allocations has the potential to concentrate effects on road safety and noise quality from increased traffic flows at certain locations. This may have effects on the health and wellbeing of residents. Effects however depend on the location of new development areas and the integration of elements such as sustainable transport and green infrastructure provision.</p>	3	2	1
Transport	<p>Option 1, through promoting smaller scale housing provision across the plan area, has increased potential to facilitate the development of new housing at locations which are more integrated with the existing built up area of Ashton Keynes. This has the potential to allow at some locations easier access to services and facilities by sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling.</p> <p>However, the provision of new and improved sustainable transport infrastructure to accompany new housing development, including pedestrian/cycle and public transport links may be more feasible with the larger scale of development proposed through Options 2 and 3.</p>	3	2	1
Economy and enterprise	<p>Through delivering a larger number of dwellings in the vicinity of Ashton Keynes, Options 2 and 3 has increased potential to support the economic vitality and viability of the village. This is linked to an increase in the population of the Neighbourhood Area through these options.</p>	3	2	1

Assessment of alternative sites for taking forward through the AKNP

- 6.2.8 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group came to the conclusion that the delivery of housing through the AKNP should reflect Option 2. It was viewed that delivering housing to this level would provide an appropriate balance between ensuring the protection of landscape character, local distinctiveness, the historic environment and biodiversity whilst also providing opportunities for delivering housing need and supporting the vitality and viability of the village. It was also viewed that such an approach would enable enhancements to be secured to cultural heritage assets, green infrastructure networks and local services and facilities whilst also limiting the adverse effects of development in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 6.2.9 A number of sites were then considered for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan. Following a Call for Sites undertaken in late 2014, ten sites were made available by landowners for consideration in the Neighbourhood Plan. Due to the existing physical constraints of the village, no sites were made available which are located within the settlement boundary of Ashton Keynes.
- 6.2.10 The ten sites are as follows, with their location presented in Figure 6.1 and 6.2.
- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Site 1 –  | Land at Church Farm, Cox’s Hill              |
| Site 2 –  | Land at Dairy Farm Bungalow and Dairy Fields |
| Site 3 –  | Land fronting Derry Fields                   |
| Site 4 –  | Land at AB Carter Haulage, Happy Land        |
| Site 5 –  | Land at the Old Piggery, The Derry           |
| Site 6 –  | the former Cotswold Community                |
| Site 7 –  | Land at Vine View, Back Street               |
| Site 8 –  | Land at Wheatley’s Farm, High Road           |
| Site 9 –  | Land at Derry Fields                         |
| Site 10 – | Land at Grove Farm, High Road                |
- 6.2.11 To support decision making on the sites to be taken forward for the AKNP, the SA process has undertaken an appraisal of the key constraints present at each of these ten sites and potential effects that may arise. In this context the sites have been considered in relation to the SA Framework of objectives and decision making questions (**Appendix II**) developed during SA scoping and the baseline information.
- 6.2.12 The tables below present a summary of this appraisal, and provide an indication of each site’s sustainability performance in relation to the nine sustainability themes.

**LEGEND**

-  Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Area
-  Potential Housing Sites Considered as Reasonable Alternatives
-  Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
-  Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
-  Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

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Purpose of Issue **DRAFT**

Client **ASHTON KEYNES PARISH COUNCIL**

Project Title **ASHTON KEYNES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

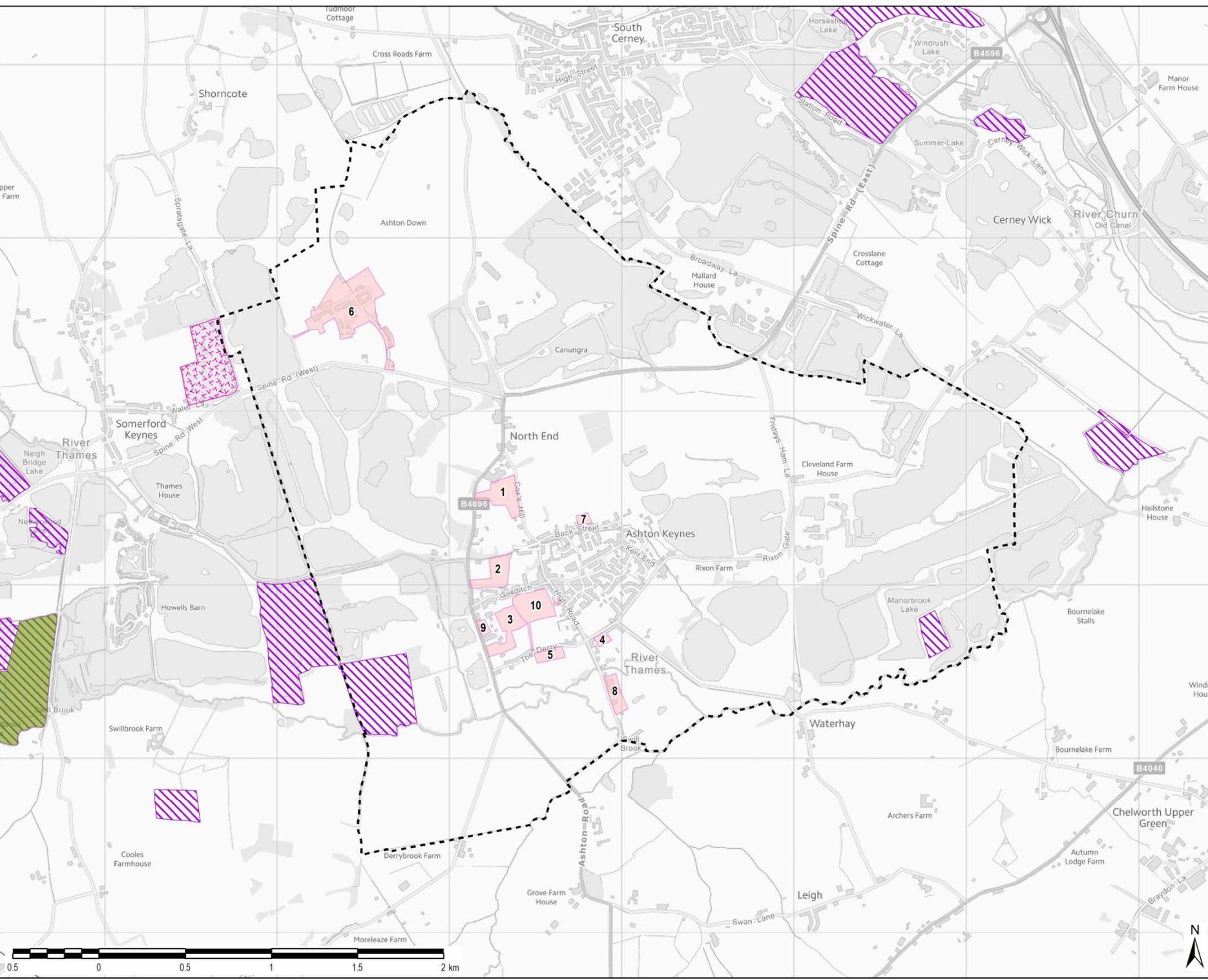
Drawing Title **BIODIVERSITY DESIGNATIONS IN THE ASHTON KEYNES NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA**

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**LEGEND**

- Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Area
- Potential Housing Sites Considered as Reasonable Alternatives
- Listed building Grade I
- Listed building Grade II
- Listed building Grade II\*
- Record of Scheduled Monument
- Conservation Area

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Project Title **ASHTON KEYNES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

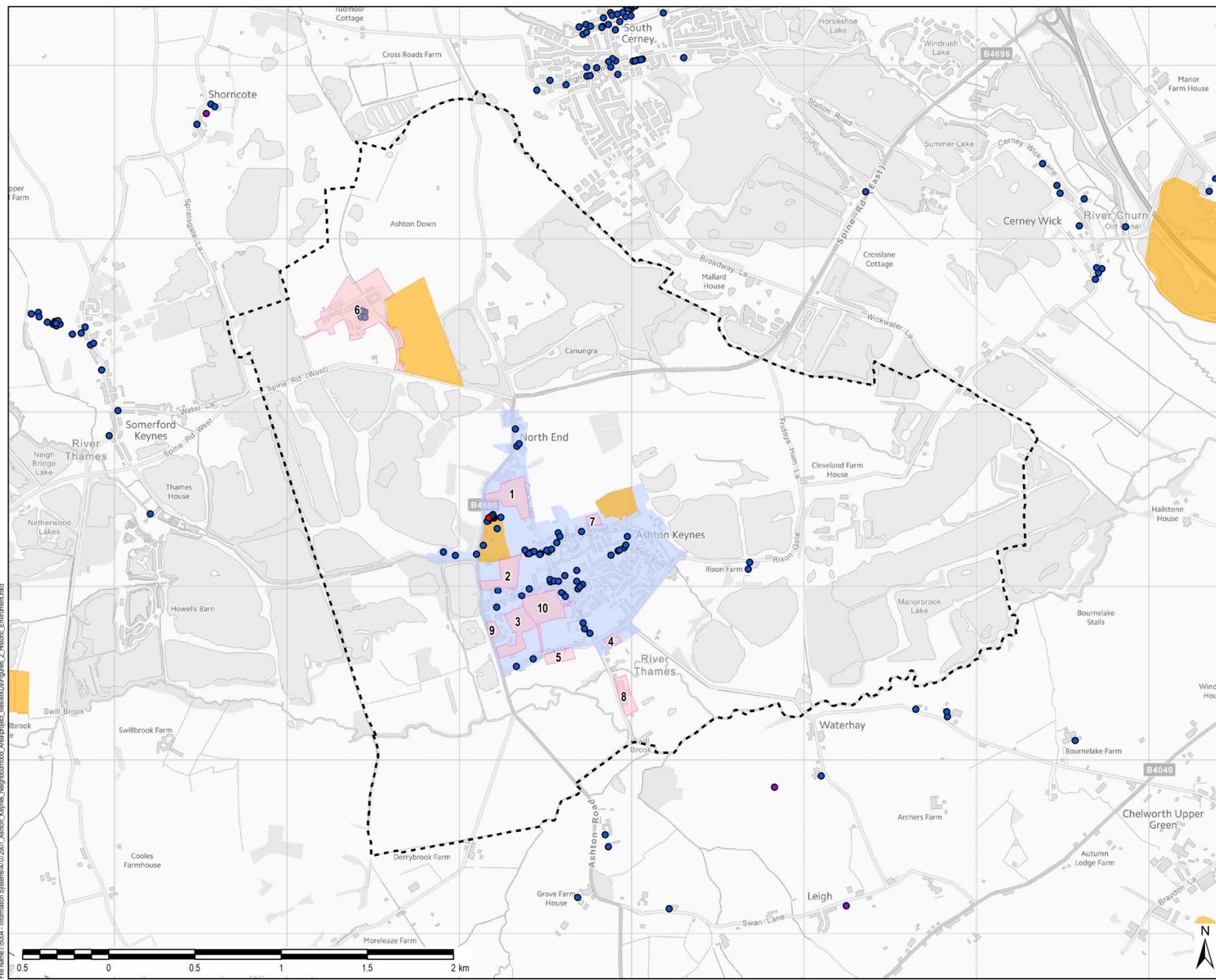
Drawing Title **HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS IN THE ASHTON KEYNES NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA**

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Key	
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)	Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect	Uncertain effects

Site 1 – Land at Church Farm, Cox’s Hill								
Biodiversity	Land and Soil Resources	Water resources and flood risk	Air quality and environmental pollution	Climatic factors	Historic environment and landscape	Population and community	Transport	Economy and enterprise

Site 1 is located within the Ashton Keynes Conservation Area. Development on this greenfield site at this location therefore has the potential to have impacts on the setting of the conservation area. The site is located approximately 120m from the cluster of ten historic buildings at the Church of Holy Cross. This includes the Grade I listed Church of the Holy Cross. It is also located a similar distance from the two scheduled monuments at this location, the Medieval Cross 40m east of Holy Cross Church and the significantly larger (2.9ha) Moated Site at Church Farm. As such there is potential for development at this location to lead to adverse effects on the setting of these important cultural heritage assets.

The site is not within an SSSI Impact Zone for the scale of development proposed for the AKNP (it is within an Impact Risk Zone for ‘Any residential development of 100 or more houses outside existing settlements/urban areas’). The site is also not located in the vicinity of Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats.

The site is situated within a Minerals Safeguarding Zone and a Surface Water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone. Part of the site is within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone 1. Whilst recent classification of agricultural land has not been carried out in the area, there is potential for the site to be located on land classified as the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land. The site is not located within a Flood Zone 2 or 3.

The site is located approximately 750m from the village hall.

### Site 2 – Land at Dairy Farm Bungalow and Dairy Fields

Biodiversity	Land and Soil Resources	Water resources and flood risk	Air quality and environmental pollution	Climatic factors	Historic environment and landscape	Population and community	Transport	Economy and enterprise
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In terms of biodiversity constraints, Site 2 is located adjacent to a County Wildlife Site and is located adjacent to Lowland Meadows Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat. An area of Unimproved Neutral Grassland Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat is also potentially present on the site. The site is not within an SSSI Impact Zone for the scale of development proposed for the AKNP (it is within an Impact Risk Zone for 'Residential development of 100 units or more').

The site is located within the Ashton Keynes Conservation Area. Development on this existing area of open space therefore has the potential to have impacts on the setting of this important area designated for its historic environment value. The site is located adjacent to the Moated Site at Church Farm scheduled monument, which is present to the north and the cluster of listed buildings at Church Walk, which is located to the north east. The site is also located to the north of the listed building at Dairy Farm. As such there is potential for development at this site to lead to adverse effects on the setting of these key cultural heritage assets.

The site is located within a Minerals Safeguarding Zone and a Minerals Resource Zone. It is also located in a Surface Water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone and a Groundwater Source Protection Zone 1. Whilst recent classification of agricultural land has not been carried out in the area, there is potential for the site to be located on land classified as the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land. A small part of the northern section of the site is within a Flood Zone 2.

The site is located approximately 350m from the village hall.

### Site 3 – Land fronting Derry Fields

Biodiversity	Land and Soil Resources	Water resources and flood risk	Air quality and environmental pollution	Climatic factors	Historic environment and landscape	Population and community	Transport	Economy and enterprise
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Site 3 is located within the Ashton Keynes Conservation Area. Development on this existing area of open space therefore has the potential to have impacts on the setting of the conservation area.

The site is located within a Minerals Safeguarding Zone. It is also located in a Surface Water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone and a Groundwater Source Protection Zone 1. Whilst recent classification of agricultural land has not been carried out in the area, there is potential for the site to be located on land classified as the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land. The site is not located within a Flood Zone 2 or 3.

An area of Lowland Meadows Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat is located on the north western part of Site 3. The site is not within an SSSI Impact Zone for the scale of development proposed for the AKNP (it is within an Impact Risk Zone for 'Residential development of 100 units or more'.)

The site is located approximately 300m from the village hall.

#### Site 4 – Land at AB Carter Haulage, Happy Land

Biodiversity	Land and Soil Resources	Water resources and flood risk	Air quality and environmental pollution	Climatic factors	Historic environment and landscape	Population and community	Transport	Economy and enterprise
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In terms of biodiversity constraints, no Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats are present on site. An area of Lowland Meadows Priority Habitat is located to the south east of the site. The site is not within an SSSI Impact Zone for the scale of development proposed for the AKNP (it is within an Impact Risk Zone for 'Residential development of 100 units or more'.)

Site 4 is located within the Ashton Keynes Conservation Area. Development on this site therefore has the potential to have impacts on the setting of the conservation area. However the site comprises previously developed land, is relatively small in size (0.36ha), and parts of the site are currently built up. This will limit the effect of new development at this location on the integrity of the conservation area. The site is approximately 100m from the nearest listed building on High Road.

As a previously developed site, the site will not lead to the loss of agricultural land. The site is located within a Surface Water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone and a Groundwater Source Protection Zone 3. The site is not located within a Flood Zone 2 or 3.

The site is located approximately 400m from the village hall.

#### Site 5 – Land at the Old Piggery, The Derry

Biodiversity	Land and Soil Resources	Water resources and flood risk	Air quality and environmental pollution	Climatic factors	Historic environment and landscape	Population and community	Transport	Economy and enterprise
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A key constraint of the site is flood risk. In this context the site is located wholly within a fluvial Flood Zone 2.

An area of Lowland West Grassland Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat is potentially present on the site. The site is not within an SSSI Impact Zone for the scale of development proposed for the AKNP (it is located within an Impact Risk Zone for 'Residential development of 100 units or more').

Part of the site (comprising the existing farm buildings) is located within the Ashton Keynes Conservation Area. Development on this existing area of open space therefore has the potential to have impacts on the setting of the conservation area. The site is approximately 50m east of the nearest listed building on the Derry, Lea Cottage and Garden Wall.

The site is located within a Surface Water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone and a Groundwater Source Protection Zone 3. Whilst recent classification of agricultural land has not been carried out in the area, there is potential for the site to be located on land classified as the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land.

The site is located approximately 600m from the village hall.

## Site 6 – The former Cotswold Community

Biodiversity	Land and Soil Resources	Water resources and flood risk	Air quality and environmental pollution	Climatic factors	Historic environment and landscape	Population and community	Transport	Economy and enterprise
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Site 6 is located outside of the Ashton Keynes Conservation Area. Four listed buildings are present on the site, including Ashtonfields Community Hall and Chapel, Ashtonfields and Attached Staff Rooms, Ashtonfields Reception Offices and Ashton Field Farmhouse. These buildings form a quadrangle in the centre of the former Cotswold Community. The Settlement E of Ashtonfield (Cotswold Community) scheduled monument, which comprises 14ha, is located to the east of the site. The scheduled monument has been included on the Heritage at Risk Register, due to arable ploughing.

The site is currently unoccupied, and the buildings are currently deteriorating. As such new development at this location has the potential to support the reuse and rejuvenation of cultural heritage assets on the site.

In terms of biodiversity assets, areas of Deciduous Woodland Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat are present on the southern part of the site, with a potential area of Traditional Orchard Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat present on the eastern part of the site. The site is not within an SSSI Impact Zone for the scale of development proposed for the AKNP (it is within an Impact Risk Zone for 'Any residential development of 100 or more houses outside existing settlements/urban areas'). As highlighted by work associated with the Minerals Allocation Plan, the site is a known location for notable species of birds, invertebrates, mammals and amphibians, including protected species, and development of the site would have the potential to affect overwintering water birds. The site is located close to County Wildlife Sites associated with the Cotswold Water Park.

The site is located within a Surface Water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone and a Groundwater Source Protection Zone 3. The site is not located within a Flood Zone 2 or 3.

The site is located at some distance (c.2km) from village services and amenities.

### Site 7 – Land at Vine View, Back Street

Biodiversity	Land and Soil Resources	Water resources and flood risk	Air quality and environmental pollution	Climatic factors	Historic environment and landscape	Population and community	Transport	Economy and enterprise
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Site 7 – Land at Vine View, Back Street is located within the Ashton Keynes Conservation Area. Development on this existing area of open space therefore has the potential to have impacts on the setting of the conservation area. The site is approximately 50m from the closest listed building, the Grade II listed Plough public house. The site is 30m west of the Hall's Close Ringwork and Bailey scheduled monument.

The site is not constrained by biodiversity designations or Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat. The site is also not within an SSSI Impact Zone for the scale of development proposed for the AKNP (it is within an Impact Risk Zone for 'Residential development of 100 units or more'.)

The site is located within a Surface Water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone and a Groundwater Source Protection Zone 3. Whilst recent classification of agricultural land has not been carried out in the area, there is potential for the site to be located on land classified as the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land. The site is not located within a Flood Zone 2 or 3.

The site is located approximately 600m from the village hall.

### Site 8 – Land at Wheatley's Farm, High Road

Biodiversity	Land and Soil Resources	Water resources and flood risk	Air quality and environmental pollution	Climatic factors	Historic environment and landscape	Population and community	Transport	Economy and enterprise
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The sequential test undertaken for this site indicates that although the Farm has no history of flooding, areas of agricultural land adjacent to the River Thames (Isis) have been known to flood, and that development at this location would require the incorporation of appropriate road levels.

In terms of biodiversity considerations, part of the site comprises Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Biodiversity Action Plan Habitat. The site is not within an SSSI Impact Zone for the scale of development proposed for the AKNP (it is within an Impact Risk Zone for 'Any residential development of 100 or more houses outside existing settlements/urban areas').

The site is located within a Surface Water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone and a Groundwater Source Protection Zone 3. Whilst recent classification of agricultural land has not been carried out in the area, there is potential for the site to be located on land classified as the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land.

Effects on the historic environment will be limited as the site is not within the Ashton Keynes Conservation Area, and no listed buildings or scheduled monuments are present locally. Effects on landscape character will also be limited through the site comprising previously developed land.

The site is located approximately 600m from the village hall.

### Site 9 – Land at Derry Fields

Biodiversity	Land and Soil Resources	Water resources and flood risk	Air quality and environmental pollution	Climatic factors	Historic environment and landscape	Population and community	Transport	Economy and enterprise
--------------	-------------------------	--------------------------------	---	------------------	------------------------------------	--------------------------	-----------	------------------------

Site 9 is located within the Ashton Keynes Conservation Area. Development on this existing area of open space fronting the road therefore has the potential to have impacts on the setting of the conservation area. However the site is relatively small and is currently screened from the road. No listed buildings or scheduled monuments are located in the immediate vicinity of the site.

No Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats are located on or in the immediate vicinity of the site. The site is not within an SSSI Impact Zone for the scale of development proposed for the AKNP (it is within an Impact Risk Zone for 'Residential development of 100 units or more'.)

The site is located within a Minerals Safeguarding Zone. It is also located in a Surface Water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone and a Groundwater Source Protection Zone 1. Whilst recent classification of agricultural land has not been carried out in the area, there is potential for the site to be located on land classified as the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land. The site is not located within a Flood Zone 2 or 3. The site is located 700m from the village hall.

### Site 10 – Land at Grove Farm, High Road

Biodiversity	Land and Soil Resources	Water resources and flood risk	Air quality and environmental pollution	Climatic factors	Historic environment and landscape	Population and community	Transport	Economy and enterprise
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Site 3 is located within the Ashton Keynes Conservation Area. Development of this site has the potential to have effects on the existing historic settlement pattern of the village, including through providing infill to the existing linear pattern of development in this part of the village. As such development on this existing area of open space therefore has the potential to have impacts on the setting of the conservation area. Development at this location also has the potential to lead to effects on the setting of a number of listed buildings, including the three Grade II listed buildings at the Grove and at Lancrease Cottage.

No Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats are located on or in the immediate vicinity of the site. The site is not within an SSSI Impact Zone for the scale of development proposed for the AKNP (it is within an Impact Risk Zone for 'Residential development of 100 units or more'.)

The site is located within a Minerals Safeguarding Zone. It is also located in a Surface Water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone, and part of the site is within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone 1. Whilst recent classification of agricultural land has not been carried out in the area, there is potential for the site to be located on land classified as the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land. A very small part of the northern boundary of the site is within a Flood Zone 2.

Located less than 100m from the village hall, the site has good access to village amenities.

6.2.13 **Table 6.3** presents an overall summary of the relative merits of the sites in terms of the nine sustainability themes.

**Table 6.3** Summary of relative sustainability merits of sites

Site	Biodiversity	Land and Soil Resources	Water resources and flood risk	Air quality and environmental pollution	Climatic factors	Historic environment and landscape	Population and community	Transport	Economy and enterprise
<b>Site 1:</b> Land at Church Farm, Cox's Hill	Yellow	Blue	Red	Red	Blue	Red	Green	Yellow	Green
<b>Site 2:</b> Land at Dairy Farm Bungalow and Dairy Fields	Red	Blue	Red	Yellow	Blue	Red	Green	Yellow	Green
<b>Site 3:</b> Land fronting Derry Fields	Red	Blue	Red	Yellow	Blue	Red	Green	Yellow	Green
<b>Site 4:</b> Land at AB Carter Haulage, Happy Land	Yellow	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Blue	Blue	Green	Yellow	Green
<b>Site 5:</b> Land at the Old Piggery, The Derry	Blue	Blue	Red	Yellow	Red	Blue	Green	Yellow	Green
<b>Site 6:</b> The former Cotswold Community	Red	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Green
<b>Site 7:</b> Land at Vine View, Back Street	Yellow	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Blue	Blue	Green	Yellow	Green
<b>Site 8:</b> Land at Wheatley's Farm, High Road	Red	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green
<b>Site 9:</b> Land at Derry Fields	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Blue	Blue	Green	Yellow	Green
<b>Site 10:</b> Land at Grove Farm, High Road	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Blue	Red	Green	Green	Green

6.2.14 Consultation on the ten potential housing sites considered above was undertaken in January 2015. This included two public events, accompanied by a community survey on the sites. Following the receipt of responses, the results were analysed, and showed clear community support for two sites, as follows:

- Site 4 – Land at AB Carter Haulage, Happy Land
- Site 6 – The former Cotswold Community site.

6.2.15 As a result of this process, these two sites were allocated in the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan (September 2015).

6.2.16 Following consultation on the Regulation 14 version of the AKNP, Wiltshire Council deemed the former Cotswold Community Site as unsuitable for inclusion as an allocation in the AKNP. This included due to the following:

- The allocation not being consistent with the Wiltshire Core Strategy due to its location outside of the adopted Core Strategy settlement framework.

- The allocation not being consistent with the Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Core Strategy in terms of existing provisions for gravel and sand extraction at the site. This includes in relation to the location being critical to meeting the locally derived apportionment for sand and gravel in the county.

6.2.17 Due to a desire to support the community vitality of the village, the decision was taken to allocate an additional site through the Neighbourhood Plan as a replacement for the previous allocation of the Cotswold Community Site.

6.2.18 During the preparation period for the AKNP, outline planning permission was granted, on appeal, for the development of land at Wheatleys Farm for 18 new homes. In light of this, it was seen that the outline planning permission provided opportunity for the Neighbourhood Plan to shape development at this location. As such, the current Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan has incorporated the site as an allocation, with a view to supporting high quality development at this location.

### 6.3 Development of Neighbourhood Plan policies

6.3.1 To support the implementation of the Vision for the Neighbourhood Plan discussed in Section 2.4, the Regulation 14 consultation version of the AKNP put forward 31 policies to guide development in the Neighbourhood Area. These were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering. This included policies for the two sites at that stage being taken forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

6.3.2 The policies were grouped under the following categories:

- Housing
- Amenities
- Environment
- Historic conservation
- Economy
- Infrastructure

6.3.3 To provide context on their sustainability performance, the SA Report accompanying the Regulation 14 consultation version of the AKNP (September 2015) presented an appraisal of these policies.

6.3.4 The key recommendations arising from this appraisal were as follows:

#### *Green infrastructure provision*

6.3.5 There is potential for the plan to further clarify how green infrastructure provision can be delivered through a coordinated approach to green infrastructure (GI) planning in the Neighbourhood Area.

6.3.6 In this context the delivery of new and improved GI provision is most effective when it is planned at a range of scales, including regional, sub-regional and local levels. This enables a coordinated approach to be taken which can seek to ensure the full range of benefits from a high quality GI network can be realised. It is anticipated that such an approach will also be significantly more effective in designing and managing GI as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for the Neighbourhood Area than a more piecemeal approach.

6.3.7 For this reason there is further scope for the AKNP to set out how improved open space provision can be delivered through a coordinated green infrastructure approach. This includes in conjunction with existing green infrastructure work being carried out by Wiltshire Council, Natural England and other organisations.

*Biodiversity and open space*

- 6.3.8 There is potential for Policy ENP2 (Environmental Infrastructure and Accessibility) and Policy AMP4 (Green Spaces) to further recognise the value of open spaces and environmental infrastructure networks for biodiversity in conjunction with wider green infrastructure provision. As such these policies could be augmented to further support the enhancement of habitats, species and ecological connections.

*Minerals sites*

- 6.3.9 Policy ECP4 (Use of former Minerals Extraction and Manufacturing Sites) seeks to protect biodiversity at former minerals sites. Due to the importance of such sites for geodiversity, there is further scope for the policy to recognise the value of such sites for providing formal and informal educational opportunities. This could include through seeking to ensure that key features of geodiversity interest at the sites, including geological exposures, are preserved, and accessibility to such features is promoted.
- 6.3.10 Following Regulation 14 consultation on the AKNP, the Neighbourhood Plan was updated to take into account responses received during the twelve week period of consultation. The AKNP was also updated to reflect the recommendations included in the SA Report accompanying the Regulation 14 consultation version of the AKNP.
- 6.3.11 In light of this, the Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan has been presented through 26 policies, as follows:

**Table 6.4** Policies presented in the Submission version of the AKNP

<b>Housing policies</b>	
Policy HSP1	Site Allocations
Policy HSP2	AB Carter Haulage
Policy HSP3	Wheatleys Farm
Policy HSP4	Additional Housing Developments
Policy HSP5	Mix of Housing Types and Tenure
Policy HSP6	Affordable Housing Provision
Policy HSP7	Affordable Housing and Inclusive Development
Policy HSP8	Housing for Older People
<b>Infrastructure policies</b>	
Policy INP1	Flood Risk Mitigation in New Developments
Policy INP2	Road and Pedestrian Safety
Policy INP3	Rural Health Service Enhancement
Policy INP4	Communication Infrastructure Service Improvement
<b>Amenities policies</b>	
Policy AMP1	Village Centre Amenities
Policy AMP2	Holy Cross Church
Policy AMP3	Village School
Policy AMP4	Open Spaces
Policy AMP5	Car Parking
<b>Environment Policies</b>	
Policy ENP1	Protection of Biodiversity and Wildlife Sites
Policy ENP2	Environmental Infrastructure and Accessibility
Policy ENP3	Water Based Protection and Improvement
Policy ENP4	Enhancing the landscape character of the Parish and retaining the character of the village including the tranquillity of its setting
<b>Historic Conservation</b>	
Policy HCP1	Local Character
<b>Economy policies</b>	
Policy ECP1	Employment Land
Policy ECP2	Mixed Use Development
Policy ECP3	Use of former Minerals Extraction and Manufacturing Sites
Policy ECP4	Recreation and Tourism

6.3.12 Part 3 of this SA Report considers the latest version of the AKNP policies, as presented in the current Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan.

***Part 3: What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?***

## 7 What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?

The report must include...

- The likely significant effects associated with the Submission version of the AKNP
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan approach

The aim of Part 3 is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the current Submission version of the AKNP. Part 3 is structured as follows:

- Chapter 8 presents an appraisal of the current Submission version of the AKNP under the nine sustainability themes; and
- Section 0 discusses overall conclusions at this current stage and recommendations.

## 8 Appraisal of the Submission version of the AKNP

### 8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 The appraisal is structured under the nine sustainability theme headings discussed. For each theme a range of sustainability objectives are listed, which are further supported by the decision-making questions developed during scoping. Taken together, these provide the assessment framework for the appraisal of likely significant effects on the baseline (**Appendix II**).
- 8.1.2 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high level nature of the plan. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline as a result of incomplete data. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects and ensure assumptions are explained in full.<sup>24</sup> In many instances it is not possible to predict significant effects, but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) in more general terms.
- 8.1.3 It is important to note that effects are predicted taking into account the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations.<sup>25</sup> 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. where the effects of the Plan may combine with the effects of other planned or on-going activity that is outside the control of the AKNP). These effect 'characteristics' are described within the appraisal as appropriate.

<sup>24</sup> As stated by Government Guidance (The Plan Making Manual, see <http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelid=156210>):

*"Ultimately, the significance of an effect is a matter of judgment and should require no more than a clear and reasonable justification."*

<sup>25</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

## 8.2 Biodiversity

### Relevant sustainability objectives

SA Objectives	SA appraisal Questions:
Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strive to protect priority habitats and species?</li> <li>• Strive to protect locally designated biodiversity sites?</li> <li>• Strive to avoid habitat fragmentation?</li> <li>• Ensure all new developments protect local biodiversity as much as possible?</li> <li>• Contribute to the achievement of objectives and targets within local BAPs?</li> <li>• Result in greater community engagement with biodiversity?</li> <li>• Consider protection and provision of green corridors and river corridors, with use of buffer strips, where necessary?</li> <li>• Aid in the preservation of a network of multifunctional Green Infrastructure, where possible?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Submission version of the AKNP

- 8.2.1 SSSI Impact Risk Zones are a GIS tool/dataset which maps zones around each SSSI according to the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location. Natural England is a statutory consultee on development proposals that might impact on SSSIs. In this context, whilst the sites are in relatively close proximity to Pikes Corner SSSI and Upper Waterhay Meadow SSSI, they are not within the established Impact Risk Zone for the SSSIs. This is due to the limited size of the two allocations proposed through the AKNP (i.e. under 50 dwellings).
- 8.2.2 The Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) identifies a number of 'priority habitats' that are characteristic of Wiltshire and for which Wiltshire makes a significant contribution to the UK aims of the Biodiversity Action Plan. In this context part of the Wheatleys Farm site comprises Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Biodiversity Action Plan Habitat. This is however recognised by the policy for the site, which seeks to minimise the loss of such habitat.
- 8.2.3 The current version of the AKNP sets out a number of provisions which will help limit potential effects from allocations on features and areas of biodiversity interest in the Neighbourhood Area. In this regards Policy ENP1 (Protection of Biodiversity and Wildlife) seeks to ensure that potential effects on biodiversity from new development is minimised and mitigation measures implement in association with the provisions of international, national and Wiltshire policy.
- 8.2.4 Biodiversity networks will also be supported through the Neighbourhood Plan by the Design and Access Statement, which seeks to ensure that green hedging for highways boundaries are used wherever possible, allow the provision for trees and planting, and avoid infringement on open spaces. Policy ENP3 (Water Based Protection and Improvement) sets out provisions for allowing biodiversity enhancements on identified Flood Store Zones, and Policy ECP3 (Use of former Minerals Extraction and Manufacturing Sites) seeks to protect biodiversity at these sites.
- 8.2.5 Policy ENP2 (Environmental Infrastructure and Accessibility) sets out a range of provisions for enhancing pedestrian and cycle links in the Neighbourhood Area through enhancements to 'Environmental Infrastructure'. This is supported by Policy AMP4 (Open Spaces), which seeks to protect four key open spaces in Ashton Keynes. However, neither policy recognises the value of such provision for habitats and species and ecological networks. Given the green infrastructure provision is most effective when it is planned as multifunctional resource capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for the Neighbourhood Area, there is further scope

for elements related to biodiversity enhancements and the protection and enhancement of ecological networks to be incorporated within these policies.

### 8.3 Land and soil resources

#### Relevant sustainability objectives

SA Objectives	SA appraisal Questions:
Ensure efficient and effective use of land and give priority to the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guide development to be in sustainable locations that have good access to local facilities and key infrastructure?</li> <li>• Re-use Previously Developed Land where possible/appropriate?</li> <li>• Guide development to be within the Settlement Boundary where possible/appropriate?</li> <li>• Protect the best and most versatile agricultural land?</li> <li>• Encourage remediation of contaminated land?</li> <li>• Avoid loss of natural floodplain?</li> </ul>
Protect those areas identified as being Grade 1 agricultural land from inappropriate development	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect the best and most versatile agricultural land?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance soil quality?</li> </ul>

#### Summary of the appraisal of the Submission version of the AKNP

- 8.3.1 The AKNP exclusively allocates sites on previously developed land. This will help protect the productivity of agricultural land, including through avoiding development on land classified as the best and most versatile agricultural land.
- 8.3.2 In terms of sustainable waste management, the Design and Access Statement seeks to ensure that adequate provision is provided for recycling and waste disposal within new development.

### 8.4 Water resources and flood risk

#### Relevant sustainability objectives

SA Objectives	SA appraisal Questions:
Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take into account predicted future impacts of climate change, including water scarcity issues?</li> <li>• Encourage sustainable and efficient management of water resources?</li> <li>• Ensure that essential water infrastructure is co-ordinated with all new development?</li> <li>• Consider the need for adequate provision of surface water and foul drainage?</li> <li>• Promote provision of pollution prevention measures?</li> <li>• Protect, and where possible, improve surface, ground and drinking water quality?</li> </ul>

SA Objectives	SA appraisal Questions:
Protect people and property from all sources of flooding and seek to reduce flood risk overall	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimise the risk of flooding to people and property (new and existing development)?</li> <li>• Take into account the predicted future impacts of climate change in the location and design of development, ensuring that development can adapt to any future flood risk scenarios?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance the natural function of floodplains?</li> <li>• Ensure the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in appropriate circumstances?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Submission version of the AKNP

- 8.4.1 In relation to flood risk in the Neighbourhood Area, the addressing of issues linked to fluvial, groundwater and surface water flooding are likely to be supported by the provisions of the NPPF. Likewise, the flood risk, SuDS and surface water flooding policies proposed by the Wiltshire Core Strategy will further help limit adverse effects in this regard. However additional flood risk policies have been presented by the AKNP. This is appropriate given the significant issues related to flood risk present in the Ashton Keynes area.
- 8.4.2 In this context, Policy INP1 (Flood Risk Mitigation in New Developments) provides added context to the national and Wiltshire policy relating to flood risk by seeking to address local issues relating to 'existing and potential' flood risk and surface water runoff. This includes through promoting the use of SuDS and limiting paved areas within new areas of development. Policy ENP3 (Water Based Protection and Improvement) also seeks to ensure that development proposals with the potential to increase the risk of residential flooding are not supported, and the Flood Store Zones present in the Neighbourhood Area are protected.
- 8.4.3 In relation to water availability, the Design and Access Statement encourages the sustainable use of water within new development areas (including the provision of facilities for the reuse of water) and ensure the adoption of 'sustainable urban drainage'.

## 8.5 Air quality and environmental pollution

### Relevant sustainability objectives

SA Objectives	SA appraisal Questions:
Minimise all sources of environmental pollution	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect, and where possible, improve surface, ground and drinking water quality? Minimise, and where possible, improve on unacceptable levels of noise, light pollution, odour and vibration?</li> <li>• Minimise all forms of contamination to soils?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Submission version of the AKNP

- 8.5.1 In terms of water quality, Policy ENP3 (Water Based Protection and Improvement) seeks to ensure that proposals with the potential to increase the risk of contamination of groundwater are not supported, through seeking to ensure that a contamination risk assessment is carried out for development on land covered by the Source Protection Zone 1 underlying the Neighbourhood Area. The proposed sites for allocation are not located within a Source Protection Zone 1; however they are located within a groundwater Source Protection Zone 3, as well as a surface water nitrate vulnerable zone.
- 8.5.2 Light pollution is addressed by the Design and Access Statement. In relation to air and noise pollution, the AKNP's promotion of sustainable transport use and modal shift will help support

enhancements to air and noise quality in the Neighbourhood Area. This has been discussed further in Section 8.9.

## 8.6 Climatic Factors

### Relevant sustainability objectives

SA Objectives	SA appraisal Questions:
Seek to minimise impact on climate change and reduce vulnerability to future climate change effects	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources? Minimise emissions of greenhouse gases and ozone depleting substances?</li> <li>• Minimise the likely impacts of future development on climate change through appropriate adaptation?</li> <li>• Promote the development of renewable and low carbon sources?</li> <li>• Promote energy efficiency in buildings and new development?</li> <li>• Minimise contributions to climate change through sustainable building practices?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Submission version of the AKNP

- 8.6.1 In terms of climate change mitigation, road transport is an increasingly significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the plan area. This has been discussed in detail in Section 8.9. Both sites proposed for allocations through the Neighbourhood Plan are located in the immediate vicinity of Ashton Keynes village with its services and facilities. This will support climate change mitigation through limiting the need to travel.
- 8.6.2 Aside from elements related to transport, the AKNP policies seek to promote elements which will support climate change mitigation, including the energy efficiency of new development and relating to the delivery of low carbon energy infrastructure. In particular the Design and Access Statement sets out a number of provisions for encouraging low carbon sustainable design and '*maximising the use of renewable energy provision*'.
- 8.6.3 Enhancements to green infrastructure networks promote climate change mitigation through supporting carbon sequestration and promoting sustainable modes of transport, and climate change adaptation through helping to limit the effects of extreme weather events and regulating surface water run-off. This is reflected by the Natural Environment White Paper, which recognises that green infrastructure is "*one of the most effective tools available*" to manage "*environmental risks such as flooding and heat waves.*" In this context the plan's focus on the protection and enhancement of open spaces in the Neighbourhood Area will support these elements.
- 8.6.4 Policies ENP1 (Protection of Biodiversity and Wildlife) and ENP3 (Water Based Protection and Improvement) will further help increase the resilience of ecological networks to the effects of climate change through making provision for habitat management and enhancing biodiversity corridors.
- 8.6.5 Increases in flood risk have the potential to be the most significant implication of climate change in the Neighbourhood Area. Whilst the addressing of issues linked to fluvial, groundwater and surface water flooding are likely to be supported by the provisions of the NPPF and the Wiltshire Core Strategy, additional flood risk policies have been presented by the AKNP. This is appropriate given the significant issues related to flood risk present in the Ashton Keynes area. As such, Policy INP1 (Flood Risk Mitigation in New Developments) provides added context to the national and Wiltshire policy relating to flood risk by seeking to address local issues relating to 'existing and potential' flood risk and surface water runoff. This includes through promoting the use of SuDS and limiting paved areas within new areas of development. In this regard the 'existing and potential' element of the policy recognises the likelihood of climate change on increasing the risk of flooding in the parish.

- 8.6.6 Policy ENP3 (Water Based Protection and Improvement) also seeks to ensure that development proposals with the potential to increase the risk of residential flooding are not supported, and the Flood Store Zones present in the Neighbourhood Area are protected.
- 8.6.7 The allocation included in the Submission version of the AKNP for the Wheatleys Farm site was subject to a sequential test. This highlighted that flood risk is not a significant issue for the site can be appropriately managed through appropriate design and layout of new development.

## 8.7 Historic environment and landscape

### Relevant sustainability objectives

SA Objectives	SA appraisal Questions:
Protect, maintain and enhance the historic environment – with particular reference to the designated ancient monuments, listed buildings and the Conservation Area	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve and enhance features and areas of historical and cultural value, including Listed Buildings, archaeology, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, and the Conservation Area?</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate archaeological assessment prior to development?</li> <li>• Promote sensitive re-use of historical buildings and buildings of significant local interest where appropriate?</li> <li>• Improve and broaden access to, and understanding of, local heritage and historic sites?</li> <li>• Maintain and enhance the character and distinctiveness of settlements through high quality and appropriate design?</li> <li>• Support the delivery of actions in the adopted Ashton Keynes Conservation Area Statement?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Submission version of the AKNP

- 8.7.1 In relation to the protection and enhancement of the historic environment and landscape character, the key Neighbourhood Plan policy is Policy HCP1 (Local Character). This seeks to protect the setting of listed buildings and scheduled monuments in the Neighbourhood Area; ensure development reflects the current settlement pattern of the village; minimise the impact of street furniture and signage; discourage the ‘urbanisation’ of the street scene of the village; and encourage utility companies to place their services underground. A further key policy is Policy ENP4 (Enhancing the Landscape Character of the Parish), which states that new development should “...protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character” and “...also retain the character of the settlement including the tranquillity of its setting and its sense of place.”
- 8.7.2 These two key policies are supported by the other policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, which have a close focus on the protection and enhancement of the public realm and villagescape of Ashton Keynes. This includes: Policy HSP7 (Affordable Housing and Inclusive Development), which seeks to ensure that affordable housing design is appropriate in terms of its scale, character and location; Policy INP4 (Communication Infrastructure Service Improvement), which seeks to ensure that the impact of new mobile phone service masts on visual amenity is minimised; Policy ECP3 (Use of former Minerals Extraction and Manufacturing Sites), which seeks to protect landscape character in the vicinity of former minerals extraction sites and maintain the character of settlements and their settings; and Policy ECP4 (Recreation and Tourism), which seeks to limit effects of visitor and tourism provision on landscape character and tranquillity.
- 8.7.3 The AKNP’s focus on protecting and enhancing open spaces and supporting improvements to green infrastructure networks will also support landscape and townscape quality in the Neighbourhood Area and the setting of the historic environment.

- 8.7.4 The rich historic environment of Ashton Keynes is reflected by the extent of the Ashton Keynes Conservation Area, which covers the whole village. Reflecting this, the current version of the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that the 2015 Ashton Keynes Conservation Area Statement is the key document informing planning requests and documents. This is an appropriate approach to the protection and enhancement of the integrity of the Conservation Area. Of the two proposed allocations, the AB Carter Haulage site is within the Conservation Area. Whilst the policy for the allocation (Policy HSP2) does not recognise its location within the Conservation Area, it seeks to retain the walling on the frontage of the site and screen the development from adjacent properties. It is also considered that the provisions of the AKNP outlined above relating to the Conservation Area will help ensure that the integrity of the Conservation Area at this location is protected.
- 8.7.5 A key area for the historic environment and local distinctiveness in Ashton Keynes is in the vicinity of the Church of Holy Cross Church. In this context, a cluster of ten listed structures are present at this location, including the Grade I listed church itself, as well as two scheduled monuments. The historic environment value of the area is recognised by the AKNP, which presents a dedicated policy for the area, Policy AMP2 (Holy Cross Church), which sets out provisions for protecting the villagescape in the vicinity of this location.

## 8.8 Population and community

### Relevant sustainability objectives

SA Objectives	SA appraisal Questions:
Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures	<p>Will the option/proposal help to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the development of an adequate supply of affordable housing?</li> <li>• Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes to meet the needs of all sectors of the community – particularly the elderly?</li> <li>• Ensure adequate provision of land to meet housing needs?</li> <li>• Provide quality and flexible homes that meet people's needs?</li> <li>• Ensure that best use is made of the existing housing stock?</li> <li>• Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction?</li> <li>• Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities?</li> <li>• Provide for an adequate range of housing?</li> </ul>
Provide a safe and healthy environment in which to live	<p>Will the option/proposal help to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote design of buildings and spaces to reduce crime and the fear of crime?</li> <li>• Increase opportunities for regular participation in sports/exercise?</li> <li>• Promote outdoor recreational and leisure opportunities?</li> <li>• Promote the use of an integrated green network of footpaths and cycle ways?</li> </ul>
Retain existing community facilities and provide additional facilities where such a need has been identified	<p>Will the option/proposal help to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including healthcare, education, retail and leisure?</li> <li>• Promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible, community, cultural and leisure facilities?</li> <li>• Maintain and enhance local facilities?</li> </ul>

SA Objectives	SA appraisal Questions:
Improve access to, and engagement in, local community services and facilities	Will the option/proposal help to... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage and promote social cohesion?</li> <li>• Encourage active involvement of local people in community activities?</li> <li>• Increase the ability of 'Hard-to-Reach' groups to influence decisions?</li> </ul>
Provide good quality educational facilities capable of meeting the needs of the local community, and provide opportunities for people to improve their workplace skills	Will the option/proposal help to... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the provision of adequate pre-school and primary school places to meet need resulting from additional new housing development?</li> <li>• Encourage the retention and formation of new businesses in the locality capable of providing training for employees?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Submission version of the AKNP

- 8.8.1 The draft plan puts forward two sites for housing, a provision totalling 29 dwellings. In light of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requirement of approximately 12 dwellings, and the results of the housing needs survey<sup>26</sup>, it is assumed that this growth quantum is appropriate given objectively assessed housing needs arising locally. As such it is considered that the allocations promoted by the current version of the AKNP will help meet established housing need in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 8.8.2 In addition to providing sufficient allocations to meet objectively assessed need, the current version of the AKNP sets out a range of provisions relating to the type, tenure and size of housing to be provided through the AKNP. This includes through Policy HSP5 (Mix of Housing Types and Tenure), Policy HSP6 (Affordable Housing Provision) and Policy HSP7 (Affordable Housing and Inclusive Development). Provision of housing for older people is also addressed through Policy HSP8, which sets out a number of requirements relating to the delivery of housing to address the current local need for older people's housing in Ashton Keynes.
- 8.8.3 The current version of the AKNP also seeks to ensure that the delivery of housing is focused on meeting and providing for local needs. In particular Policy HSP5 (Mix of Housing Types and Tenure) seeks to provide a tenure mix and house types and sizes capable of meeting the local need identified through the Housing Register and Local Housing Needs Surveys and Policy, and Policy HSP8 (Housing for Older People) seeks to support developments which meet the local need for older people. Policy HSP6 (Affordable Housing Provision) also seeks to ensure that all new affordable housing provided through the AKNP contributes to meeting the affordable housing needs of people with local connections in terms of types and sizes of dwelling, affordability, and mix of tenures.
- 8.8.4 In terms of the quality of housing, Policy HSP7 (Affordable Housing and Inclusive Development) seeks to ensure that affordable housing is fully integrated with the village in terms of its scale, character and location, and the Design and Access Statement sets out a number of provisions for high quality design, including relating to low carbon and sustainable design, sufficient external and garden amenity space, and promoting the integration of 'Secured by Design' principles within new design.
- 8.8.5 The current version of the AKNP will also support accessibility to services, facilities and amenities in the Neighbourhood Area. In this context the Infrastructure Projects element of the AKNP seeks financial contributions from developers to support improvements to centrally located community facilities, including enhancements to the village hall and facilities at Bradstone Sports Field and at

<sup>26</sup> Which highlighted that in terms of subsidised rented housing, four one-bedroom homes, one two-bedroom home and two-three bedrooms were required, and in terms of shared/low cost home ownership, one two-bedroom home and three three-bedroom homes are required.

the Millennium Green. Likewise Policy AMP1 (Village Centre Amenities) seeks to support development proposals for new and improved amenities in the village centre and Policy AMP3 seeks to support enhancements to the village school.

- 8.8.6 The health and wellbeing of residents will be further supported by: Policy INP3 (Rural Health Service Enhancement), which supports improvements to health provision; Policy AMP4, which designates four open spaces in the village; and Policy ENP2, which sets out a range of provisions for additional pedestrian and cycle routes and bridleways. Health and wellbeing will also be supported by Policy INP2 which focuses on road and pedestrian safety, and the policies' support for green infrastructure improvements. Health and wellbeing will be further supported by the proposed Neighbourhood Plan 'Projects'.
- 8.8.7 The quality of life of residents will additionally be promoted through the AKNP's strong focus on local distinctiveness and the protection and enhancement of villagescape and landscape character (Section 8.7). This will contribute to the satisfaction of residents with their neighbourhood as a place to live.

## 8.9 Transport

### Relevant sustainability objectives

SA Objectives	SA appraisal Questions:
Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable transport choices	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote developments that reduce the need to travel and reliance on the private car?</li> <li>Promote the uptake of sustainable travel choices i.e. walking and cycling?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Submission version of the AKNP

- 8.9.1 The two sites proposed as allocations through the Neighbourhood Plan are both located in the immediate vicinity of Ashton Keynes village with its services and facilities. This will support access the village's amenities by walking and cycling.
- 8.9.2 The current version of the AKNP has a close focus on improving transport options in the Neighbourhood Area. In this context Policy HSP7 (Affordable Housing and Inclusive Development) seeks to ensure that new housing is well integrated within the village, with short and direct routes for pedestrians and cyclist connecting to the rest of the village, including the school, shop and village hall. The projects proposed and promoted through the Neighbourhood Plan will support sustainable transport use through securing contributions to enhancements to footpaths, verges and the riverside, improvements to community facilities and the protection and enhancement of public rights of way. The AKNP's Design and Access Statement seeks to ensure that safe access is secured for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists and enhancements to pedestrian and cycle routes.
- 8.9.3 Walking and cycling will also be supported by Policy INP2 (Road and Pedestrian Safety) which focuses on road safety for vulnerable users, and the Environmental Infrastructure and Accessibility policy (Policy ENP2), which supports proposals for enhancing existing pedestrian and cycle routes in the Neighbourhood Area and facilitating additional public rights of way across the parish.
- 8.9.4 The AKNP's close focus on local distinctiveness and the protection and enhancement of villagescape and landscape character (Section 8.7) will also promote walking and cycling within the village.

## 8.10 Economy and enterprise

### Relevant sustainability objectives

SA Objectives	SA appraisal Questions:
Encourage a vibrant and diversified economy and provide for long-term sustainable economic growth	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote business development – particularly high value technology based businesses?</li> <li>• Seek to prevent the loss of existing business premises?</li> <li>• Seek to identify replacement businesses for brownfield and declining employment sites?</li> </ul>
Ensure adequate provision of high quality employment land and diverse employment opportunities to meet the needs of local businesses and a changing workforce	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist businesses in finding appropriate land and/or premises?</li> <li>• Protect existing employment sites?</li> <li>• Promote the development of workplace skills?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Submission version of the AKNP

- 8.10.1 Whilst the current version of the AKNP does not allocate employment land, the housing allocations proposed through the plan will support the vitality and viability of the parish's economy. In terms of existing employment sites, Policy ECP1 (Existing Employment Land) seeks to retain existing employment sites wherever possible, whilst seeking to ensure that change of use would only be allowed where it can be shown that the site is no longer viable for employment use- and the proposed alternative use would provide equal or greater benefits for the local community than the current use. Policy ECP2 (Mixed Use Development) will also support proposals for development incorporating small businesses and 'live-work' opportunities. This will support the economic vitality of the Neighbourhood Area.
- 8.10.2 The economic vitality of the Neighbourhood Area will also be supported by enhancements to high speed broadband services and mobile phone coverage facilitated by Policy INP4 (Communication Infrastructure Service Improvement) as well as the transport enhancements discussed in Section 8.9.
- 8.10.3 In terms of the visitor economy, this will be promoted by Policy ECP4 (Recreation and Tourism), which promotes the development of recreation and tourism facilities, and the current version of the AKNP's focus on protecting and enhancing local distinctiveness, the public realm and landscape/villagescape character. Policy ECP3 (Use of Former Minerals Extraction and Manufacturing Sites) also supports the use of former minerals sites for leisure and tourism purposes if certain conditions are met.

## 8.11 Conclusions at this current stage

### Potential significant effects

- 8.11.1 The appraisal has concluded that the Submission version of the AKNP is likely to lead to **significant positive effects** in terms of the **'population and community'** and **'transport'** sustainability objectives. These benefits largely relate to the focus on improving the quality of life of residents in the Neighbourhood Area, enhancements in accessibility to services and facilities and the AKNP's impetus on protecting and enhancing open space and the quality of the public realm.
- 8.11.2 In terms of potential negative effects, the allocation of two previously developed sites through the Submission version of the AKNP will help limit losses of land classified as the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land. As such no significant effects are likely to take place in relation to the **'land and soil resources'** sustainability objectives. Whilst there are likely to be inevitable effects on landscape and villagescape character from new areas of development, the current version of the AKNP presents a range of policy interventions which will help limit potential effects and achieve enhancements where possible.
- 8.11.3 In terms of potential effects on the nationally designated Pikes Corner SSSI and Upper Waterhay Meadow SSSI, whilst the proposed allocations are located in relatively close proximity to the SSSIs, adverse effects on these nationally designated nature conservation sites are likely to be limited by the proposed size of the allocations. This is reflected by the proposed AKNP allocations not being located within an Impact Risk Zone for the SSSIs for the type and scale of development being proposed. In terms of other biodiversity constraints, one of the allocations, Wheatley Farm, is located adjacent to Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Biodiversity Action Plan Habitat. However this is recognised through the policy for the allocations. The AKNP otherwise sets out a number of provisions which will help limit potential effects from allocations on features and areas of biodiversity interest in the Neighbourhood Area and supports enhancements to ecological networks.
- 8.11.4 Whilst the draft plan approach will help initiate a range of beneficial approaches in relation to **'climatic factors'**, **'biodiversity'** and **'historic environment and landscape'**, these are not considered as significant positive effects as the delivery of the allocations and potential employment areas through the AKNP will inevitably lead to some adverse effects in relation to these sustainability themes. For these sustainability themes therefore, the approach promoted through the AKNP will limit the potential magnitude of adverse effects linked to the delivery of housing allocations and employment areas in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 8.11.5 In relation to the **'economy and enterprise'** sustainability objective a number of beneficial approaches are put forward by the current version of the plan which will support the economic vitality of the Neighbourhood Area. This includes relating to a promotion of the Neighbourhood Area's tourism and visitor economy and supporting existing employment uses.

***Part 4: What are the  
next steps?***

## 9 *What are the next steps?*

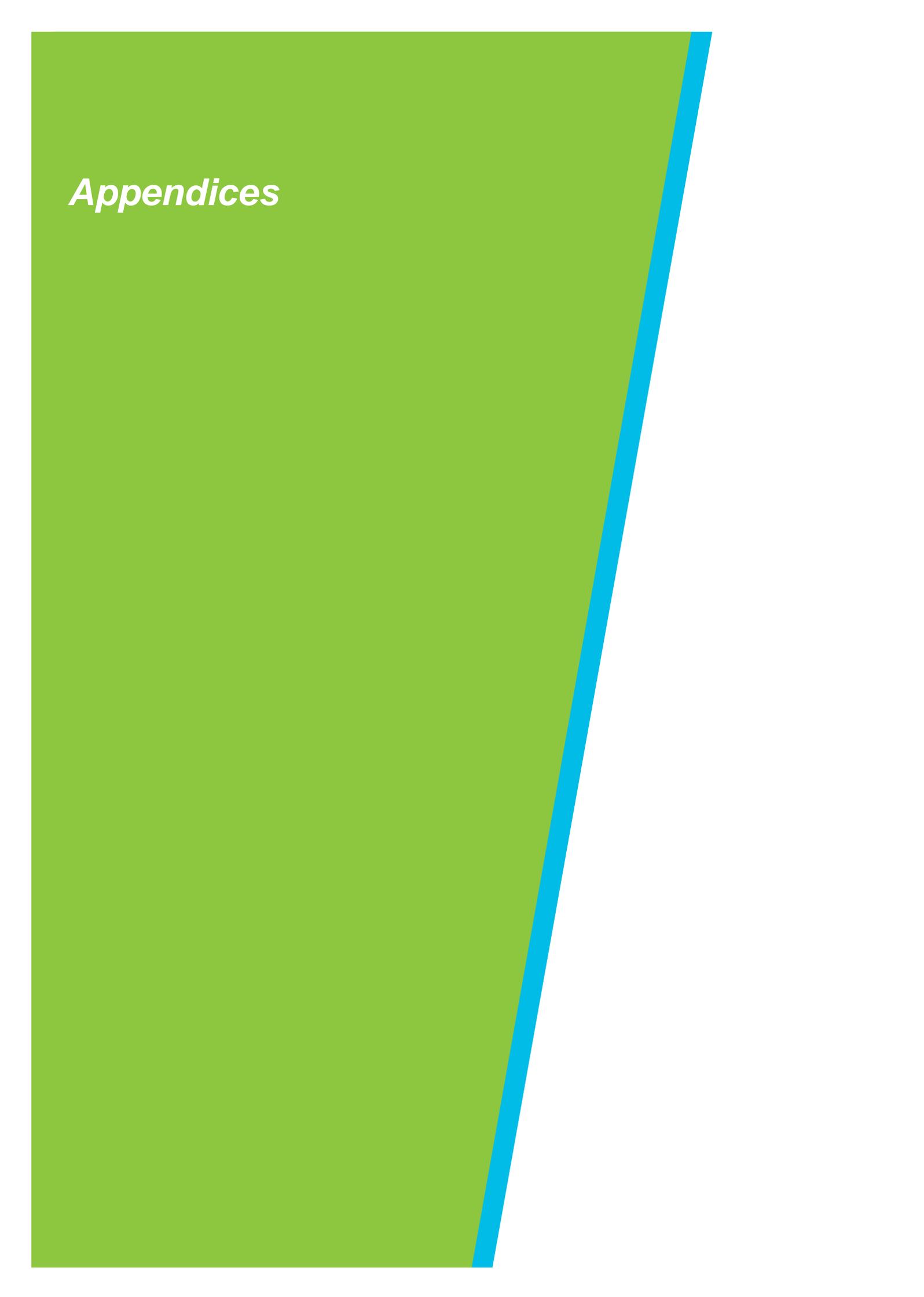
This Part of the SA Report explains the next steps that will be taken as part of the plan-making / SA process.

### 9.1 **Plan finalisation**

- 9.1.1 The AKNP has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority, Wiltshire Council, for its consideration. Wiltshire Council will consider whether the plan is suitable to go forward to Independent Examination in terms of the AKNP meeting legal requirements and its compatibility with the Local Plan.
- 9.1.2 Subject to Wiltshire Council's agreement, the AKNP will then be subject to independent examination. The Examiner will consider whether the plan is appropriate having regard to national policy and whether it is in general conformity with the Local Plan.
- 9.1.3 The Examiner will be able to recommend that the AKNP is put forward for a referendum, or that it should be modified or that the proposal should be refused. Wiltshire Council will then decide what should be done in light of the Examiner's report. Where the report recommends modifications to the plan, Wiltshire Council will invite the AKNP Steering Group to make modifications to the plan, which will be reflected in an updated SA Report. Where the Examiner's Report recommends that the proposal is to be refused, Wiltshire Council will do so.
- 9.1.4 Where the examination is favourable, the AKNP will then be subject to a referendum, organised by Wiltshire Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the plan, then it will be passed to Wiltshire Council with a request it is adopted. Once adopted, the AKNP will become part of the Development Plan for the area.



# *Appendices*

The image features a solid green background. A thick, bright blue diagonal stripe runs from the bottom-left towards the top-right, starting near the bottom edge and ending near the top edge. The word "Appendices" is written in a white, italicized serif font in the upper-left quadrant of the green area.

# Appendix I: Regulatory requirements

Annex I of the SEA Directive prescribes the information that must be contained in the SA Report; however, interpretation of Annex I is not straightforward. The table below 'interprets' Annex I requirements.

## Annex 1

### The report must include...

(a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;
(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan
(c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;
(d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;
(e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;
(f) 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;
(g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan;
(h) 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
(i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring.

## Interpretation of Annex I

### The report must include...

An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	i.e. answer - <i>What's the Plan seeking to achieve?</i>	i.e. answer - <i>What's the scope of the SA?</i>
Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'context'?</i>	
The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'baseline'?</i>	
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	i.e. answer - <i>What are the key issues &amp; objectives?</i>	
Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance		
Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of appraisal		
An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (i.e. an explanation of the 'reasonableness of the approach)	i.e. answer - <i>What has Plan-making / SA involved up to this point?</i>	
The likely significant effects associated with alternatives, including on issues such as... ... and an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of the alternatives considered / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan.		
The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan	i.e. answer - <i>What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?</i>	
The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan		
A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring	i.e. answer - <i>What happens next?</i>	

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## Appendix II: SA Framework

Sustainability theme	Sustainability Appraisal objective	Decision aiding questions. Will the policy ... ?
<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features and avoid irreversible losses</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strive to protect priority habitats and species?</li> <li>2. Strive to protect locally designated biodiversity sites?</li> <li>3. Strive to avoid habitat fragmentation?</li> <li>4. Ensure all new developments protect local biodiversity as much as possible?</li> <li>5. Contribute to the achievement of objectives and targets within local BAPs?</li> <li>6. Result in greater community engagement with biodiversity?</li> <li>7. Consider protection and provision of green corridors and river corridors, with use of buffer strips, where necessary?</li> <li>8. Aid in the preservation of a network of multifunctional Green Infrastructure, where possible?</li> </ol>
<b>Land and soil resources</b>	<b>Ensure efficient and effective use of land and give priority to the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Guide development to be in sustainable locations that have good access to local facilities and key infrastructure?</li> <li>2. Re-use Previously Developed Land where possible/appropriate?</li> <li>3. Guide development to be within the Settlement Boundary where possible/appropriate?</li> <li>4. Protect the best and most versatile agricultural land?</li> <li>5. Encourage remediation of contaminated land?</li> <li>6. Avoid loss of natural floodplain?</li> </ol>
	<b>Protect those areas identified as being Grade 1 agricultural land from inappropriate development</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Protect the best and most versatile agricultural land?</li> <li>2. Protect and enhance soil quality?</li> </ol>
<b>Water resources and flood risk</b>	<b>Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Take into account predicted future impacts of climate change, including water scarcity issues?</li> <li>2. Encourage sustainable and efficient management of water resources?</li> <li>3. Ensure that essential water infrastructure is co-ordinated with all new development?</li> <li>4. Consider the need for adequate provision of surface water and foul drainage?</li> <li>5. Promote provision of pollution prevention measures?</li> <li>6. Protect, and where possible, improve surface, ground and drinking water quality?</li> </ol>

Sustainability theme	Sustainability Appraisal objective	Decision aiding questions. Will the policy ... ?
	<b>Protect people and property from all sources of flooding and seek to reduce flood risk overall</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Minimise the risk of flooding to people and property (new and existing development)?</li> <li>2. Take into account the predicted future impacts of climate change in the location and design of development, ensuring that development can adapt to any future flood risk scenarios?</li> <li>3. Protect and enhance the natural function of floodplains?</li> <li>4. Ensure the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in appropriate circumstances?</li> </ol>
<b>Air quality and environmental pollution</b>	<b>Minimise all sources of environmental pollution</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Minimise, and where possible, improve on unacceptable levels of noise, light pollution, odour and vibration?</li> <li>2. Minimise all forms of contamination to soils?</li> </ol>
<b>Climatic factors</b>	<b>Seek to minimise impact on climate change and reduce vulnerability to future climate change effects</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Minimise emissions of greenhouse gases and ozone depleting substances?</li> <li>2. Minimise the likely impacts of future development on climate change through appropriate adaptation?</li> <li>3. Promote the development of renewable and low carbon sources?</li> <li>4. Promote energy efficiency in buildings and new development?</li> <li>5. Minimise contributions to climate change through sustainable building practices?</li> </ol>
<b>Historic environment and landscape</b>	<b>Protect, maintain and enhance the historic environment – with particular reference to the designated ancient monuments, listed buildings and the Conservation Area</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conserve and enhance features and areas of historical and cultural value, including Listed Buildings, archaeology, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, and the Conservation Area?</li> <li>2. Ensure appropriate archaeological assessment prior to development?</li> <li>3. Promote sensitive re-use of historical buildings and buildings of significant local interest where appropriate?</li> <li>4. Improve and broaden access to, and understanding of, local heritage and historic sites?</li> <li>5. Maintain and enhance the character and distinctiveness of settlements through high quality and appropriate design?</li> <li>6. Support the delivery of actions in the adopted Ashton Keynes Conservation Area Statement?</li> </ol>
	<b>Conserve and enhance the character and quality of the landscape, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Protect and enhance the landscape character and scenic quality of the countryside?</li> <li>2. Conserve and enhance areas with landscape designations?</li> <li>3. Maintain and enhance the character and distinctiveness of settlements?</li> <li>4. Deliver good quality design that reflects local character?</li> <li>5. Protect rights of way, open space and common land?</li> <li>6. Improve the quality and quantity of access to the wider countryside for recreation?</li> </ol>

Sustainability theme	Sustainability Appraisal objective	Decision aiding questions. Will the policy ... ?
<b>Population and community</b>	<b>Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote the development of an adequate supply of affordable housing?</li> <li>2. Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes to meet the needs of all sectors of the community – particularly the elderly?</li> <li>3. Ensure adequate provision of land to meet housing needs?</li> <li>4. Provide quality and flexible homes that meet people's needs?</li> <li>5. Ensure that best use is made of the existing housing stock?</li> <li>6. Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction?</li> <li>7. Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities?</li> <li>8. Provide for an adequate range of housing?</li> </ol>
	<b>Provide a safe and healthy environment in which to live</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote design of buildings and spaces to reduce crime and the fear of crime?</li> <li>2. Increase opportunities for regular participation in sports/exercise?</li> <li>3. Promote outdoor recreational and leisure opportunities?</li> <li>4. Promote the use of an integrated green network of footpaths and cycle ways?</li> </ol>
	<b>Retain existing community facilities and provide additional facilities where such a need has been identified</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including healthcare, education, retail and leisure?</li> <li>2. Promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible, community, cultural and leisure facilities?</li> <li>3. Maintain and enhance local facilities?</li> </ol>
	<b>Improve access to, and engagement in, local community services and facilities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage and promote social cohesion?</li> <li>2. Encourage active involvement of local people in community activities?</li> <li>3. Increase the ability of 'Hard-to-Reach' groups to influence decisions?</li> </ol>
	<b>Provide good quality educational facilities capable of meeting the needs of the local community, and provide opportunities for people to improve their workplace skills</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure the provision of adequate pre-school and primary school places to meet need resulting from additional new housing development?</li> <li>2. Encourage the retention and formation of new businesses in the locality capable of providing training for employees?</li> </ol>
<b>Transport</b>	<b>Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable transport choices</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote developments that reduce the need to travel and reliance on the private car?</li> <li>2. Promote the uptake of sustainable travel choices i.e. walking and cycling?</li> </ol>

Sustainability theme	Sustainability Appraisal objective	Decision aiding questions. Will the policy ... ?
<b>Economy and enterprise</b>	<b>Encourage a vibrant and diversified economy and provide for long-term sustainable economic growth</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote business development – particularly high value technology based businesses?</li> <li>2. Seek to prevent the loss of existing business premises?</li> <li>3. Seek to identify replacement businesses for brownfield and declining employment sites?</li> </ol>
	<b>Ensure adequate provision of high quality employment land and diverse employment opportunities to meet the needs of local businesses and a changing workforce</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assist businesses in finding appropriate land and/or premises?</li> <li>2. Protect existing employment sites?</li> <li>3. Promote the development of workplace skills?</li> </ol>

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## ***ABOUT AECOM***

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