

WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL

**LANDSCAPE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL HOUSING SITES WITHIN AND ADJACENT TO THE
NORTH WESSEX DOWNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY IN WEST BERKSHIRE**

FINAL PHASE 2 REPORT: KINTBURY

KINTBURY

Settlement	Kintbury
North Wessex Downs AONB Character areas: LCA 7A: Kennet Valley LCA; 8D Hungerford Farmland (site is within 8D)	
Date of site survey	2 May 2014
Surveyor	AG

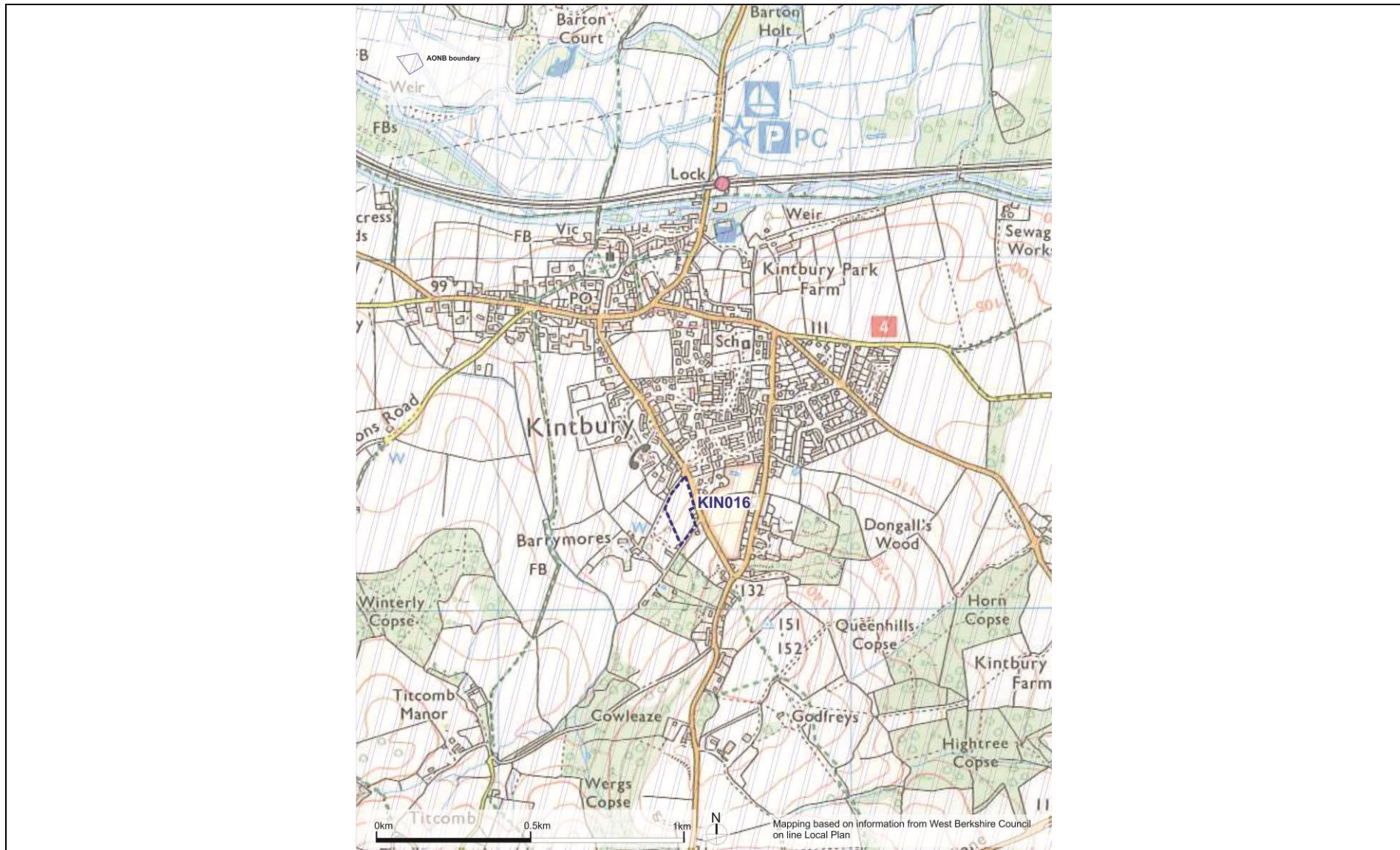


Figure KIN.1: Kintbury potential housing sites

Key landscape characteristics

AONB LCA 7A: Kennet Valley (unless source noted otherwise)

- Relatively steep sides and a narrow valley floor providing a strong sense of enclosure in its upper reaches, broadening out to a wider lowland landscape east of Hungerford
- Valley floor dominated by pasture, although east of Hungerford pasture is intermixed with arable fields. Valley sides are generally under arable cultivation
- Diverse vegetation including lush floodplain pasture, marsh and reedbeds, lines of willow pollards and poplars; remnants of valley floor flooded water meadows
- Sinuous belts of woodland line the valley sides and some larger broadleaved woodland blocks on the valley floor
- An important lowland chalk river - much of the length downstream from Marlborough is designated as a SSSI
- Kennet and Avon Canal is a dominant feature merging with the river east of Hungerford and includes industrial archaeological sites (sluices, locks and warehouses etc.) and World War II military structures
- Potential changes in farming practices including loss of livestock, with some remaining valley pastures and meadows no longer being grazed resulting in scrub encroachment
- Loss of hedgerow boundaries and particularly mature hedgerow trees, plus poor management of remaining hedgerows
- Conserve the river valley floor woodland and replant hedges (NDLCA – Kennet Valley)

Key visual characteristics

AONB LCA 7A: Kennet Valley

- Wider lowland landscape east of Hungerford
- Overall, an intimate, pastoral rural valley character
- The overall management objective is to conserve and enhance the tranquil, intimate character of the Kennet Valley
- St Mary's church is an important landmark, within the Conservation Area of the settlement (Kintbury Parish Plan)

Key settlement characteristics

AONB LCA 7A: Kennet Valley (unless source noted otherwise)

- Kintbury is one of many attractive settlements of detached houses located at regular intervals along the whole length of the valley, typically on the south facing side
- Development pressures, particularly for new housing on the edge of settlements
- Sensitivity of narrow, intimate scale valley to any form of large scale development
- The aim should be to maintain the distinctive pattern of settlement, with discrete villages characteristically located along a road on the first contour above the winter flood level
- Open spaces and footpaths important to the local residents (Kintbury Parish Plan)
- Locally important to restrict housing to the Village Envelope (Kintbury Parish Plan)
- Infilling of valley margins and valley floor should be strongly resisted (NDLCA – Kennet Valley)
- New tree planting of appropriate species should be a condition of any development (NDLCA – Kennet Valley)
- Take positive measures to prevent light pollution and restrict the urbanising influence of street and floodlighting on rural nature of the valley (NDLCA – Kennet Valley)
- Important to retain the distinct character of settlements in the area, and to preserve their clear relationship with the surrounding countryside (BLCA)

Key landscape characteristics

AONB LCA 8D: Hungerford Farmland (unless source noted otherwise)

- An open, rolling landscape; a transitional lowland area between the valley and the chalk downs
- Predominantly arable land use, with free-range pig units and occasional pastoral fields, with an increasing number of 'hobby farms' and horse paddocks characterised by rank weedy grassland and poorly managed boundaries
- Field patterns immediately around Kintbury are small and intimate with a good hedgerow structure - this is not reflected in the wider area, where field boundary features are virtually non-existent with the only definition, in many areas being low grassy banks
- Varied field pattern, but dominated by large regular fields of Parliamentary enclosure, with more recent removal of boundaries
- Woodland blocks are a feature across the area and include small woods and copses on the clay capped ridgetops
- Associated with the river valley but settlement extends out onto the slopes above the valley
- Presence of water with many wells and numerous small streams influencing the landform
- Majority of historic fields have been reorganised into modern fields, but this has been carried out within the existing grain of the landscape and has not adversely affected character (HECZ Kintbury Hinterland)
- Maintain ridgetop shelterbelts and favour broadleaf (NDLCA – Chalk Dipslopes and lowland)
- Maintain lowland woodlands (NDLCA – Chalk Dipslopes and lowland)
- Replant hedgerows and hedgerow oaks (NDLCA – Chalk Dipslopes and lowland)

Key visual characteristics

AONB LCA 8D Hungerford Farmland(unless source noted otherwise)

- Very large scale open landscape in places, smaller scale and more intimate, with more enclosure immediately around Kintbury
- Quiet, rural character
- St Mary's church is an important landmark, within the Conservation Area of the settlement (Kintbury Parish Plan)
- Views to the Downs are important features of the settlements in the area (BLCA)

Key settlement characteristics

AONB LCA 8D Hungerford Farmland (unless source noted otherwise)

- Sparsely settled, with occasional isolated farms, manor houses and hamlets connected by a fairly dispersed pattern of lanes
- Kintbury is one of many attractive settlements of detached houses located at regular intervals along the whole length of the valley
- Recent housing developments have enveloped previously separate zones of historic settlement at Blandy's Hill and Leyland's Green. These settlements were in existence by the 18th century (HECZ Kintbury Suburban Area)
- Open spaces and footpaths important to the local residents (Kintbury Parish Plan)
- Locally important to restrict housing to the Village Envelope (Kintbury Parish Plan)
- Historic development along east – west linear corridor of the High Street, with inter-war and post-war development spreading south and south east, with late 20th century development to the southern edge (QD)
- Large scale development would be visually intrusive in this open farming landscape (NDLCA – Chalk Dipslopes and lowland)
- The continued expansion of large settlements including Kintbury and linear expansion infill to join smaller settlements (e.g Chieveley – Downend to Beadon) should be avoided to prevent loss of character and local identity (NDLCA – Chalk Dipslopes and lowland)
- Limited infill within defined settlement boundaries would be preferable (NDLCA – Chalk Dipslopes and lowland)
- Kintbury has retained a strong rural character despite having expanded out onto the adjacent higher slopes (BLCA)
- Important to retain the low density and distinctiveness of settlements in the area (BLCA)

Summary of the key characteristics of the settlement and landscape constraints on the extent and location of development

The potential housing site in Kintbury lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB 8D Hungerford Farmland. This capacity study builds upon the previous assessment *Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of the Potential Impact of the Scale and Distribution of Development in the North Wessex Downs AONB* (2011) (LSA 2011) by examining southern Kintbury and its landscape setting in greater detail, specifically concentrating on the special qualities and key characteristics which contribute to the natural beauty of the AONB.

The village of Kintbury is one of a number of settlements found along the Kennet Valley and the line of the Kennet and Avon Canal. The settlement is contained within the AONB landscape character areas: LCA 7A: Kennet Valley and 8D Hungerford Farmland. The older development is found along the east – west linear corridor of the High Street, with inter-war and post-war development spreading south and south east, with late 20th century development to the southern edge. This newer development has occurred on the lower, shallow slopes away from the river corridor, in areas of former agricultural hinterland made up of generally larger fields. Development on the northern edge of the village, including parts of the Conservation Area, extends right down to the canal on the 95-100m AOD contours. On the southern edge of Kintbury it starts to climb the hill to the 130m AOD contour in a linear pattern related to the road, with low density housing enclosed by the wooded slopes to the south. The newer development is contained on flatter ground below the 115m contour north of the high point (152m AOD) on a part wooded hill to the south.

The landscape to the east, west and south of Kintbury is noted for being of smaller scale and more enclosed than the wider area, though the valley landscape is in a wider stretch of the valley than is found further west. The relative enclosure of the areas around Kintbury offers opportunities for locating new development whilst still retaining the visual enclosure. Infilling of the valley margins and valley floor should be strongly resisted. Limited infill within the defined settlement boundary would be the preferred approach to prevent further expansion at the outer edges. In particular, medium or large scale expansion in open land, which becomes progressively wider, between radial roads should be avoided.

Sources:

North Wessex Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment 2002

Additional information from:

- Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of the Potential Impact of the Scale and Distribution of Development in the North Wessex Downs AONB (2011) (LSA 2011)
- Newbury District Landscape Character Assessment 1993 (NDLCA)

- Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2003 (BLCA)
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)
- Historic Environment Character Area Report (HECA)
- Historic Environment Character Zoning (HECZ)
- Quality Design SPD Part 3 (QD)
- Kintbury Parish Plan

A. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: KIN016: Land at Deane, Inkpen Road

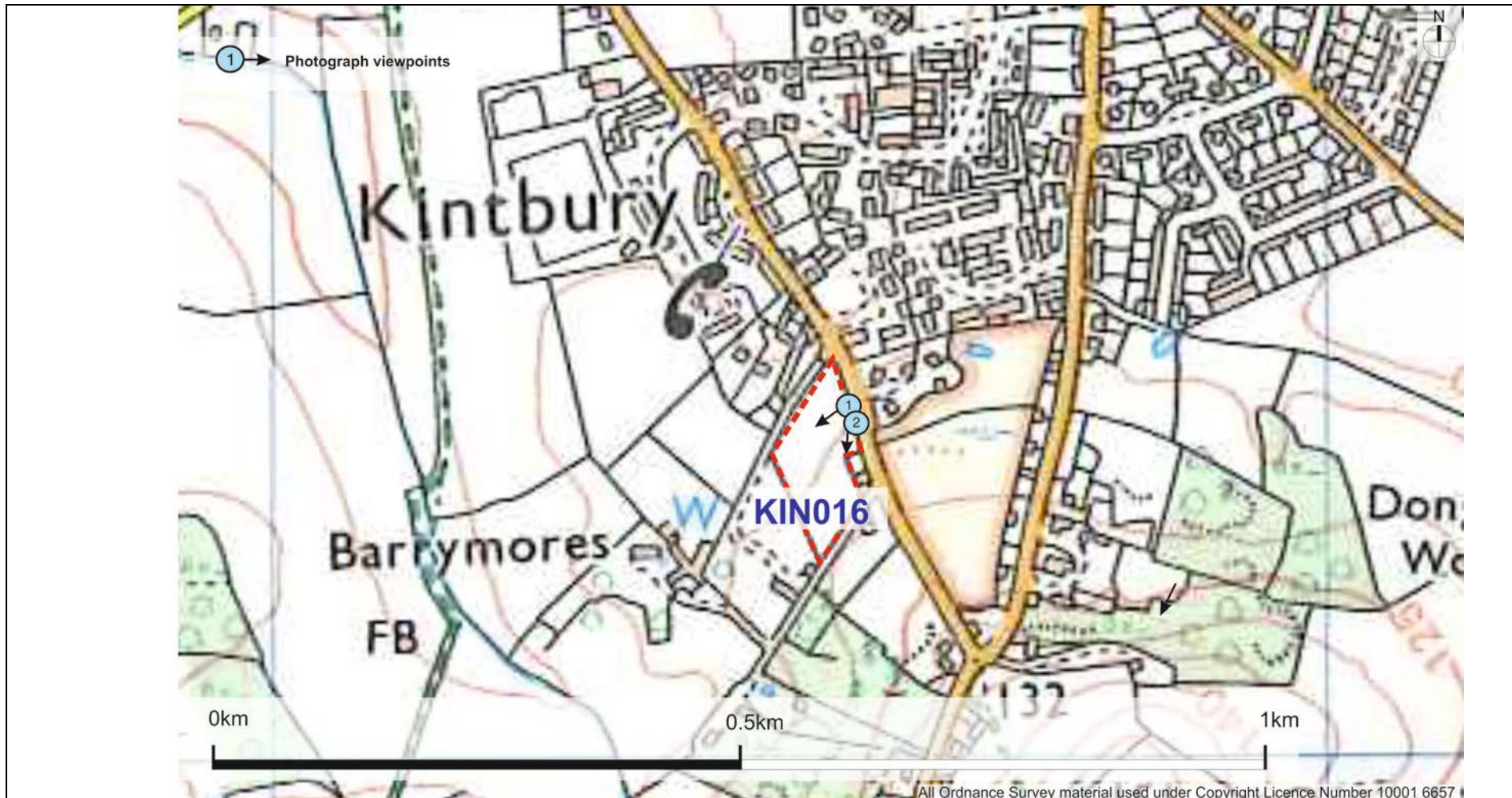


Figure KIN016.1: Site and viewpoint locations

PHOTOGRAPHS



Viewpoint 1: Small site sub-divided by fences and enclosed by woodland on ground sloping away to the south west



Viewpoint 2: Partly enclosed by tree belt along Inkpen Road

Site description

Site KIN016 lies to the south of Kintbury, entirely within the North Wessex Downs AONB. The site is defined by Inkpen Road to the east, with the southern parts of the settlement beyond (north east) and a wooded Local Wildlife Site beyond the road to the south east. The housing along the west side of Inkpen Road is arranged in a linear form which becomes less dense and defined south of the site. The northern part of site is defined by a fence with a private drive, tree belt and the linear form of settlement beyond. The south eastern part of the site wraps around the residential property called Deane. The western boundary is formed by woodland, with a hedge to the southern boundary, with an access drive and tree belt beyond. The land slopes down south westwards from the road. The site is sub-divided by fencing and is used for horsiculture. No public rights of way cross the site. The site is visible from the road and a small number of houses but otherwise is visually well contained.

<p>Relationship with adjacent settlement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The site is at the southern end of the ribbon of residential development on the west side of Inkpen Road with less dense linear development beyond to the south• Limited intervisibility with the village
<p>Relationship with adjacent wider countryside</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cut off from the wider AONB landscape to the south and west by tree cover• Part of the small scale, enclosed landscape around the southern part of Kintbury
<p>Impact on key landscape characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potential impact on tree belts to boundaries
<p>Impact on key visual characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Site is largely well screened with only partial views from the road• Some intervisibility with a small number of nearby houses• Unlikely to have impact on views from the wider AONB
<p>Impact on key settlement characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of the whole site would extend the settlement south beyond the current development along Inkpen Road and west which would erode the linear nature of the settlement along the west side of Inkpen Road
<p>Summary of compliance with NPPF</p> <p>Development of this site, subject to the recommendations below, could be accommodated without harm to the natural beauty of the AONB though the settlement form would be affected. Development would, however, need to be subject to important measures to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.</p>
<p>Recommendations</p> <p>It is recommended that only part of the site is considered further as a potential housing site. Development should be contained in the northern part of the site, as indicated in Figure KIN016.2. Development would be subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The retention, protection and enhancement of the tree belt along Inkpen Road with new infill tree planting and planting of a hedgerow• The preferred access in landscape terms is from Inkpen Road through a gap in the tree belt and subject to assessment of impacts on existing trees• Careful assessment of impacts on significant landscape features and wider visibility• The retention and enhancement of existing tree belts and new hedgerow planting• A full detailed landscape and visual impact assessment will be required to inform the final capacity of the site.

Cumulative effect of development with sites identified in the LSA 2011 as having potential for development

A site (KIN011) adjacent to the western edge of KIN016 was assessed as having some potential for development in LSA 2011. If that were to be developed the linearity of this part of Kintbury would be lost and more of site KIN016 might be appropriate for development. Any further development in the south part of Kintbury would be heavily constrained by woodland, landform and the linear pattern of development. A detailed landscape and visual assessment would be required to determine the scope of development within KIN016 and KIN011 should both sites be considered further as potential housing sites.

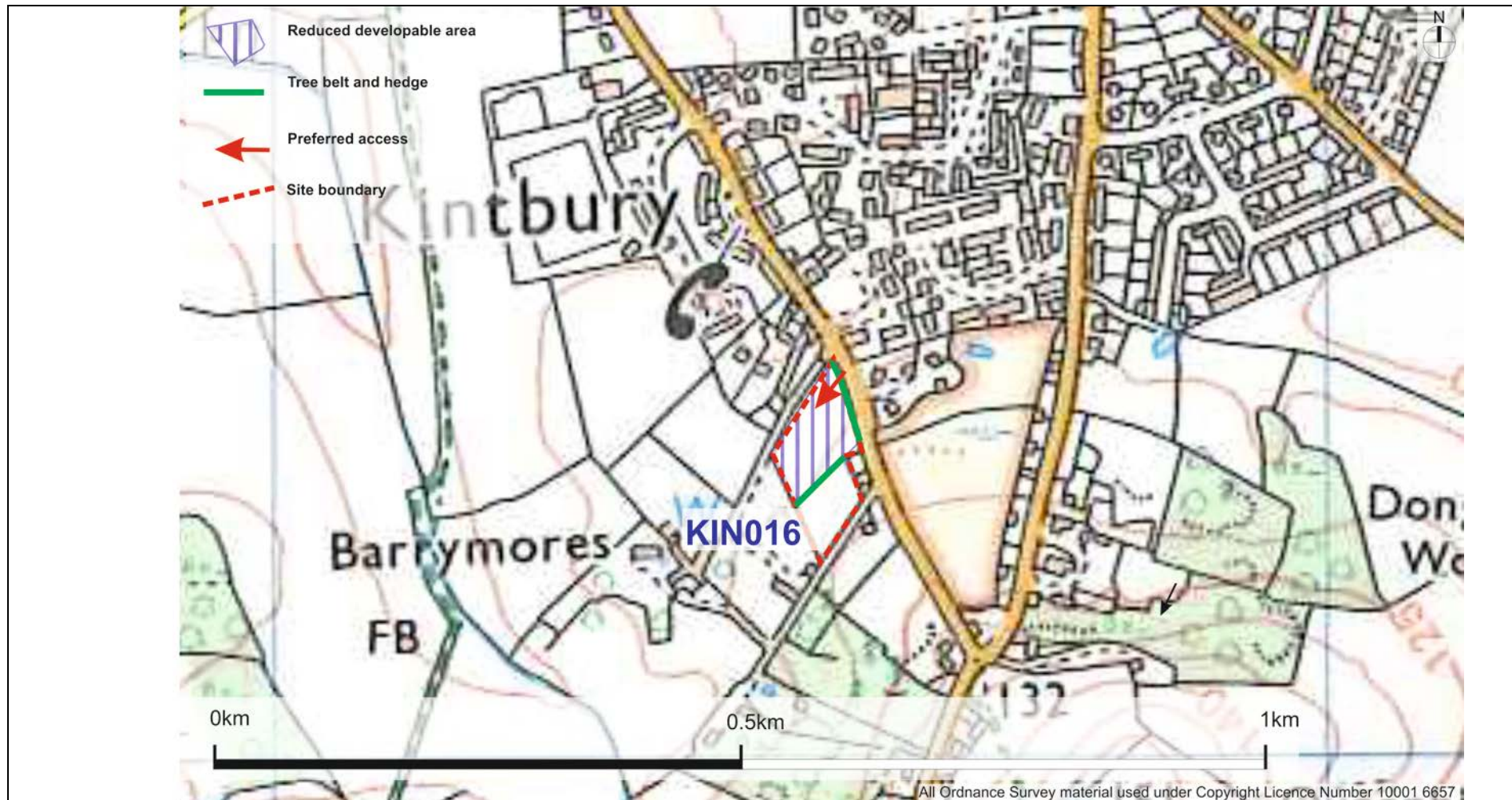


Figure KIN016.2: Potential development area, Green Infrastructure and preferred access

