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# Compton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020 – 2037

Basic Conditions Statement  
April 2021

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## 2. Introduction

2.1 When a neighbourhood plan proposal is submitted to the local planning authority, it needs to be accompanied by a statement, known as the basic conditions statement, which explains how:

- the plan meets the legal requirements in terms of its contents and coverage
- the plan has had regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State
- the plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area
- the plan will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
- the plan does not breach, and is compatible with EU obligations, and would not be likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) or a European offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations 2007) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).

### 3. Legal Requirements

**Has the draft plan been submitted by a qualifying body?**

- 3.1 Yes – Compton Parish Council agreed the submission of the draft plan and supporting documents at its meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

**Does the proposed neighbourhood plan state the period for which it is to have effect?**

- 3.2 Yes – the plan makes clear on the front cover and in paragraphs 1.2, 6.1 and 8.2 that it is intended to cover the period from 2020-2037.

**Is what is being proposed a neighbourhood development plan making provision in relation to land or sites in the Neighbourhood Plan Area?**

- 3.3 Yes - the Neighbourhood Plan policies relate to planning matters (the use and development of land) and to the designated Neighbourhood Plan area or parts thereof.

**Do any of the policies relate to excluded development?**

- 3.4 The policies are contained in Section 4 of the plan and cover:
- Policy C1 – Development Strategy for the Parish
  - Policy C2 – Development Strategy for the Pirbright Site Allocation HSA DPD Policy HSA23
  - Policy C3 – Provision of well-designed energy efficient buildings and places
  - Policy C4 – District Heating
  - Policy C5 – Housing within the HSA DPD Policy HSA23 Allocation at Pirbright Institute
  - Policy C6 – Hostel retention at the HSA DPD Policy HSA23 Allocation at Pirbright Institute
  - Policy C7 – Development Density at the HSA DPD Policy HSA23 Allocation at Pirbright Institute
  - Policy C8 – Design
  - Policy C9 – Design at the HSA DPD Policy HSA23 at the Pirbright Site
  - Policy C10 – Existing employment facilities
  - Policy C11 – HSA DPD Policy HSA23 Allocation Pirbright Business Hub

- Policy C12 – Existing Community Facilities
- Policy C13 – Community uses at the HSA DPD Policy HSA23 at the Pirbright Site
- Policy C14 – Open Space and Recreation
- Policy C15 – Public Rights of Way
- Policy C16 – Local Green Space
- Policy C17 – Biodiversity
- Policy C18 – Sustainable Drainage
- Policy C19 – Sustainable Transport Network
- Policy C20 – Provision of Electric Charging Points
- Policy C21 – Vehicle Parking Space in the Village
- Policy C22- Residential Parking Standards
- Policy C23 – Infrastructure Priorities

3.5 The Neighbourhood Plan policies do not deal with county matters (mineral extraction and waste development), nationally significant infrastructure or development that falls within Annex 1 to Council Directive 85/337/EEC.

**Do any of the policies extend beyond the neighbourhood area or cover an area where there is a neighbourhood development plan already in place?**

3.6 No - the Neighbourhood Plan policies relate only to Compton parish (which is the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area) and to no other area.

3.7 Figure 1 shows the extent of the Compton Designated Neighbourhood Area.

3.8 There are no other neighbourhood plans relating to Compton Parish.

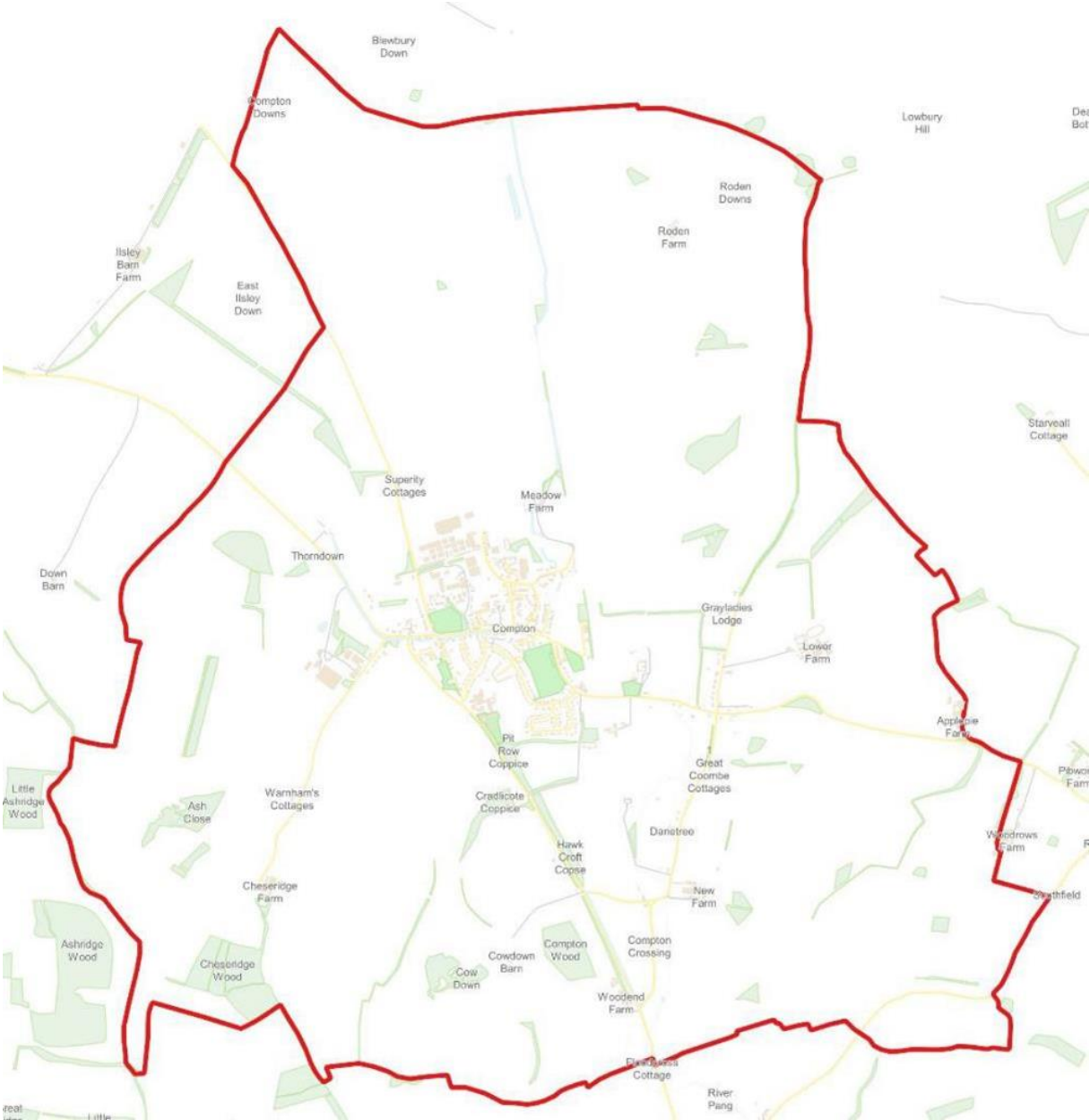


Figure 1 - Extent of the Compton designated neighbourhood area

## 4. Consideration of National and Strategic Policies

- 4.1 The Neighbourhood Plan must have regard to national policy and guidance from the Secretary of State and be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan that covers the area.
- 4.2 A neighbourhood plan should support the delivery of strategic policies set out in the local plan or spatial development strategy and should shape and direct development that is outside of those strategic policies
- 4.3 The following conformity assessment summarises how the Neighbourhood Plan relates to the relevant national planning guidance and strategic development plan policies.

### National Planning Policy and Guidance

- 4.4 National planning guidance comes primarily from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>1</sup> as revised July 2018<sup>2</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> February 2019, but where appropriate, reference is made to the online National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)<sup>3</sup> and Ministerial Statements.

### The Development Plan for the Neighbourhood Plan area

- 4.5 Strategic policies are described in the NPPF paragraph 20 as setting out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and making sufficient provision for:
- (a) housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;
  - (b) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
  - (c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and
  - (d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- 4.6 It is expected that plans should make explicit which policies are strategic policies – however this will not necessarily have been the case in pre-2018 plans, such as the West Berkshire Core Strategy (CS). The NPPF advises that strategic policies should be limited to those necessary to address the strategic priorities of the area (and any relevant cross-boundary issues), to provide a clear starting point for any non-strategic policies that are needed, and that they “*should not*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>

<sup>2</sup> As the neighbourhood plan is submitted after the 24<sup>th</sup> January 2019, the revised NPPF is relevant – as per paragraph 214 of the NPPF

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

*extend to detailed matters that are more appropriately dealt with through neighbourhood plans or other non-strategic policies.”* The NPPG<sup>4</sup> sets out the considerations in reaching a view whether a policy is a strategic policy.

- 4.7 West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 (CS) contains the bulk of the strategic planning policies for the area. It includes topic-based policies, place-based policies and development management policies that together are considered to provide the strategic policy framework to 2026. In addition, the retained saved policies from the West Berkshire District Local Plan (1991 - 2006) (LP) are relevant but are not considered strategic as these matters are covered by the CS. The West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations DPD (HSADPD) was adopted May 2017. The HSADPD allocates land within the designated neighbourhood area under Policy HSA23 at the former Pirbright Institute site for approximately 140 dwellings. The neighbourhood plan includes a number of policies which seek to expand on and add detail to policy HSA23.
- 4.8 West Berkshire Council has a Replacement Minerals Local Plan (updated May 2001) (RMLP) that sets out the spatial vision, key objectives and overall principles for development covering minerals provision. In addition, the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire (adopted December 1998) (WLPB) sets out the spatial vision, key objectives and overall principles for development covering the provision of sustainable waste management facilities. West Berkshire are currently in the process of producing a new Minerals and Waste Local Plan that will replace the outdated RMLP and WLPB. Neither the waste plan or minerals plan contain proposals for the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

### **Conformity Testing**

- 4.9 The NPPG<sup>5</sup> makes clear that in considering whether a policy is in general conformity, the following should be considered:
- whether the neighbourhood plan policy or development proposal supports and upholds the general principle that the strategic policy is concerned with
  - the degree, if any, of conflict between the draft neighbourhood plan policy or development proposal and the strategic policy
  - whether the draft neighbourhood plan policy or development proposal provides an additional level of detail and/or a distinct local approach to that set out in the strategic policy without undermining that policy
  - the rationale for the approach taken in the draft neighbourhood plan or Order and the evidence to justify that approach
- 4.10 The NPPG<sup>6</sup> also states that it is important to minimise any conflicts between policies in a neighbourhood plan and an emerging Local Plan, and that the reasoning and evidence

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<sup>4</sup> NPPG Paragraph: 076 Reference ID: 41-076-20190509

<sup>5</sup> NPPG Paragraph: 074 Reference ID: 41-074-20140306

<sup>6</sup> NPPG Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 41-009-20190509



informing the Local Plan process may be relevant to the consideration of the basic conditions against which a neighbourhood plan is tested. Work is already progressing by West Berkshire Council on the Local Plan Review<sup>7</sup> to address the period to 2037. The LPR includes the review of the spatial strategy and allocations to deliver growth, alongside a review of the more detailed development management and detailed saved policies carried forward from the former Local Plan. An emerging draft plan was produced for consultation in December 2020<sup>8</sup>. This consultation ran until the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and enabled people to comment and help to shape the draft plan before any decision is made on where to allocate housing, employment and other infrastructure. Following this, West Berkshire will consider all responses received and prepare a draft version of the Local Plan Review for publication in spring 2021.

- 4.11 The emerging draft LPR carries forward the HSA allocation at the Pirbright Site (Policy HSA23) but does not identify any additional development sites or housing requirement figure for the Compton neighbourhood area.
- 4.12 It is evident from the consultation papers that there will be no substantive changes in relation to the approach to the sustainable growth of villages within the North Wessex Downs AONB in the period to 2037. The plan period for the neighbourhood plan will therefore extend to 2037 to be consistent with the emerging Local Plan Review on the advice of West Berkshire Council.
- 4.13 The following table considers each policy in turn, against the relevant national and local policies for that particular policy. The development plan policies that support each Neighbourhood Plan policy is also identified within the Plan itself.

<b>Policy C1 – Development Strategy for the Parish</b>
The purpose of this Policy is to provide a positive framework to encourage infill housing development within the adopted settlement boundary for Compton village as a component of local housing supply that would help to support local services.
<b>Summary of relevant national policy and guidance</b>
59. To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed
68. Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly. To promote the development of a good mix of sites local planning authorities should:
...(c) support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions – giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes; and...

<sup>7</sup> <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/lids>

<sup>8</sup> <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/localplanreview2037>

78. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.

79. Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside (five possible exceptions given).

**Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies**

The following development plan policies support: CS Policies ADPP1: ‘Spatial Strategy’; ADPP5: ‘North Wessex Downs AONB’; CS1: ‘Delivering new homes and retaining the housing stock’; CS4 ‘Housing type and mix’; CS14 ‘Design principles’; Policy CS17 ‘Biodiversity and Geodiversity’; CS19 ‘Historic Environment and Landscape Character’. HSADPD Policies C1: ‘Location of new housing in the countryside’;

**Assessment of general conformity**

Policy C1 is considered to be in conformity with national policy and the development plan. It is consistent with the CS given it does not alter the extent of the settlement boundary or the list of exemptions defined in the HSADPD Policies C1-C8. Policy C1 identifies six local criteria upon which to assess planning applications for new infill housing development that draw upon various development management policies from the CS. As such, there are no conformity issues identified.

**Policy C2 – Development Strategy for the Pirbright Site Allocation HSA DPD Policy HSA23**

This Policy seeks to reinforce the requirements in HSA Policy HSA23 for development of approximately 140 homes on the Pirbright Site.

**Summary of relevant national policy and guidance**

57. Where up-to-date policies have set out the contributions expected from development, planning applications that comply with them should be assumed to be viable. It is up to the applicant to demonstrate whether particular circumstances justify the need for a viability assessment at the application stage. The weight to be given to a viability assessment is a matter for the decision maker, having regard to all the circumstances in the case, including whether the plan and the viability evidence underpinning it is up to date, and any change in site circumstances since the plan was brought into force. All viability assessments, including any undertaken at the plan-making stage, should reflect the recommended approach in national planning guidance, including standardised inputs, and should be made publicly available.

59. To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed

63. Provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments, other than in designated rural areas (where policies may set out a lower threshold of 5 units or fewer).

77. In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs. Local planning authorities should support opportunities to

bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this.

78. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.

122. Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

- a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;
- b) local market conditions and viability;
- c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;
- d) the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and
- e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

#### Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies

The following development plan policies support: CS Policies ADPP5: ‘North Wessex Downs AONB’; CS1: ‘Delivering new homes and retaining the housing stock’; CS4 ‘Housing type and mix’; CS14 ‘Design principles’; Policy CS17 ‘Biodiversity and Geodiversity’; CS19 ‘Historic Environment and Landscape Character’. HSADPD Policies HSA23 ‘Pirbright Institute site, High Street, Compton’.

#### Assessment of general conformity

Policy C2 is considered to be in conformity with national policy and the development plan. It is consistent with the HSA23 and identifies three local criteria upon which to assess planning applications which propose a greater number of housing than the allocation. As such, there are no conformity issues identified.

### Policy C3 – Provision of well-designed energy efficient buildings and places

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that development delivers secure low carbon growth, increases future energy resilience and delivers on the Climate Emergency declared by West Berkshire Council.

#### Summary of relevant national policy and guidance

149. Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.

150. New development should be planned for in ways that:

- a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; and
- b) can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government’s policy for national technical standards.

#### Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies

The following development plan policies support: CS Policies ADPP5: ‘North Wessex Downs AONB’; CS14: ‘Design Principles’; CS15: ‘Sustainable construction and Energy Efficiency’.

#### Assessment of general conformity

National Planning guidance sets the target for new development to improve energy performance targets by 19%. Policy C3 therefore recognises this and expands on the West Berkshires Declaration of Climate Emergency by setting local criteria for the assessment of any development proposal. There are no conformity issues as Policy C3 provides a local response in the context of Policy CS15 and the NPPF.

### Policy C4 – District Heating

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that development delivers secure low carbon growth, increases future energy resilience and delivers on the Climate Emergency declared by West Berkshire Council through encouragement of renewable heat sources.

#### Summary of relevant national policy and guidance

149. Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.

150. New development should be planned for in ways that:

- a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; and
- b) can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government’s policy for national technical standards.

151. To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should:

- a) provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts);
- b) consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development; and

c) identify opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers.

152. Local planning authorities should support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside areas identified in local plans or other strategic policies that are being taken forward through neighbourhood planning.

#### Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies

The following development plan policies support: CS Policies CS15: 'Sustainable construction and Energy Efficiency'.

#### Assessment of general conformity

Policy C4 is considered to be in conformity with national policy and the development plan. National Policy encourages the development of community-led initiatives for renewable energy and low carbon energy. Policy C4 supports the West Berkshires Declaration of Climate Emergency by actively encouraging the use of district heating networks. As such, there are no conformity issues identified.

### Policy C5 – Housing within the HSA DPD Policy HSA23 Allocation at Pirbright Institute

The intention of this policy is to encourage the appropriate mix and tenure of residential redevelopment within the allocation site to meet local housing needs.

#### Summary of relevant national policy and guidance

61. Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).

63. Provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments, other than in designated rural areas (where policies may set out a lower threshold of 5 units or fewer).

64. Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the homes to be available for affordable home ownership, unless this would exceed the level of affordable housing required in the area, or significantly prejudice the ability to meet the identified affordable housing needs of specific groups. Exemptions to this 10% requirement should also be made where the site or proposed development:

- a) provides solely for Build to Rent homes;
- b) provides specialist accommodation for a group of people with specific needs (such as purpose-built accommodation for the elderly or students);
- c) is proposed to be developed by people who wish to build or commission their own homes; or
- d) is exclusively for affordable housing, an entry-level exception site or a rural exception site.

#### Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies

CS Policies ADPP5: 'North Wessex Downs AONB'; CS1: 'Delivering new homes and retaining the housing stock'; CS4 'Housing type and mix'. HSADPD Policies HSA23 'Pirbright Institute site, High Street, Compton'.

#### Assessment of general conformity

Policy C5 is consistent with Policy HSA23 and development plan policies for the provision of affordable housing. No conformity issues are identified.

### Policy C6 – Hostel retention at the HSA DPD Policy HSA23 Allocation at Pirbright Institute

The intention of this policy is to encourage the re-use of the existing former hostel building on the Pirbright site to deliver housing consisting on 1 and 2 bedroom units.

#### Summary of relevant national policy and guidance

118. Planning policies and decision should:

...(c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;

d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure)

#### Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies

CS Policies ADPP5: 'North Wessex Downs AONB'; CS1: 'Delivering new homes and retaining the housing stock'; CS4 'Housing type and mix'. HSADPD Policies HSA23 'Pirbright Institute site, High Street, Compton'.

#### Assessment of general conformity

National Policy encourages the re-use of existing buildings and Brownfield land. Policy C6 is consistent with Policy HSA23 which requires the hostel site to form an integrated part of the development. No conformity issues are identified.

### Policy C7 – Development Density at the HSA DPD Policy HSA23 Allocation at Pirbright Institute

The purpose of this policy is to ensure appropriate density of homes in line with the Village of Compton and the housing needs of the local area.

#### Summary of relevant national policy and guidance

59. To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed

61. Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).

**Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies**

CS Policies CS1: ‘Delivering new homes and retaining the housing stock’; CS4 ‘Housing type and mix’. HSADPD Policies HSA23 ‘Pirbright Institute site, High Street, Compton’.

**Assessment of general conformity**

Policy HSA23 requires that *‘the overall density of the site will reflect the character of Compton. The northern part of the developable area (known as Area B) will be built to a lower density than the southern part (known as Area C) so as to reflect the built form pattern on the northern edge of the village and to prevent an adverse impact on the AONB’*. Policy C7 is in conformity with this policy and add local requirements for the market homes to meet the evidenced need of the local area.

**Policy C8 – Design**

The purpose of this policy is to set out the design parameters expected from any new development within the Parish, and to bring forward the guidance of the Compton Village Design Statement within policy.

**Summary of relevant national policy and guidance**

124. The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

125. Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area’s defining characteristics. Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.

126. To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, plans or supplementary planning documents should use visual tools such as design guides and codes. These provide a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design. However their level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified.

**Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies**

CS Policies CS14: ‘Design Principles’; CS19: ‘Historic Environment and Landscape Character’; HSADPD Policy C3: ‘Design of Housing in the Countryside’.
<b>Assessment of general conformity</b>
The policy is consistent with the higher level CS and Government Policy that requires high-quality design in new development. The policy adds local criteria for consideration in any planning application, reflective of the village location within the AONB and Conservation Area. As such there are no conformity issues.

<b>Policy C9 – Design at the HSA DPD Policy HSA23 at the Pirbright Site</b>
The purpose of this policy is to ensure the redevelopment of the Pirbright Site is informed by a detailed design brief that has undergone community consultation.
<b>Summary of relevant national policy and guidance</b>
<p>124. The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.</p> <p>125. Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area’s defining characteristics. Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.</p> <p>126. To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, plans or supplementary planning documents should use visual tools such as design guides and codes. These provide a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design. However their level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified.</p> <p>128. Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.</p>
<b>Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies</b>
CS Policies CS14: ‘Design Principles’; CS19: ‘Historic Environment and Landscape Character’; HSADPD Policy C3: ‘Design of Housing in the Countryside’; HSA Policy HSA23: ‘Pirbright Institute site, High Street, Compton’.
<b>Assessment of general conformity</b>
National policy encourages developers to engage with the Local Authority and community about the design and style of emerging schemes. The policy is consistent with this, as well as the higher level CS and



Government Policy that requires high-quality design in new development. As such there are no conformity issues.

### **Policy C10 – Existing Employment Facilities**

Policy C10 seeks to facilitate local aspirations to ensure Compton remains as a working village through retention and expansion of employment facilities.

#### **Summary of relevant national policy and guidance**

80. Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.

83. Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and
- d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

84. Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

#### **Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies**

The following development plan policies support: CS Policies ADPP5: 'North Wessex Downs AONB'; CS9: 'Location and type of new business'; CS10: 'Rural Economy'; LP Policies ENV16: 'Farm Diversification'; ENV19: 'The re-use and adaptation of rural buildings'.

#### **Assessment of general conformity**

Policy C10 is consistent with CS Policy CS10 that confirms the diversification of the rural economy will be positively supported, and that the loss of employment facilities must not negatively impact on the local economy. The policy is also in broad conformity with LP policy ENV16 and ENV19. The policy adds additional

criteria to compliment these policies. No conformity issues as both national and local policies seek to plan positively for the sustainable growth of the rural economy.

### **Policy C11 – HSA DPD Policy HSA23 Allocation Pirbright Business Hub**

Policy C11 seeks to facilitate local aspirations to ensure Compton remains as a working village through the inclusion of employment floorspace within the redevelopment of the Pirbright Site.

#### **Summary of relevant national policy and guidance**

80. Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.

83. Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and
- d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

84. Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

#### **Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies**

The following development plan policies support: CS Policies ADPP5: 'North Wessex Downs AONB'; CS9: 'Location and type of new business'; CS10: 'Rural Economy'; HSA Policy HSA23: 'Pirbright Institute site, High Street, Compton'; LP Policies ENV16: 'Farm Diversification'; ENV19: 'The re-use and adaptation of rural buildings'.

#### **Assessment of general conformity**

Policy C11 is consistent with HSADPD Policy HSA23 that confirms an element of employment floorspace is required as part of the mixed-use development. The policy is also in broad conformity with the higher-level CS which seeks to encourage the re-use of existing buildings before the erection of new in the AONB. No

conformity issues as both national and local policies seek to plan positively for the sustainable growth of the rural economy.

## Policy C12 – Existing Community Facilities

Policy C12 seeks to facilitate local aspirations to retain valued community facilities that contribute to the social fabric.

### Summary of relevant national policy and guidance

84. Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

91. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

(a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;

(b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and

(c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

92. To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

(a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;

(b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;

(c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;

(d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and

(e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.

### Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies

The following development plan policies support: CS Policies ADPP5: 'North Wessex Downs AONB'; HSA Policy HSA23: 'Pirbright Institute site, High Street, Compton'.

#### Assessment of general conformity

Policy C12 is consistent with ADPP5 which allows limited development to meet local needs, including for community facilities. The policy adds criteria not currently set out in the Development Plan to allow sustainable growth of the community facilities. No conformity issues as both national and local policies seek to plan positively for the provision of community facilities to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.

#### Policy C13 – Community uses at the HSA DPD Policy HSA23 at the Pirbright Site

The intention of this policy is to ensure the retention and reopening of the existing community buildings on the Pirbright Site in order to meet the demands of the village and improve the availability of community opportunities.

#### Summary of relevant national policy and guidance

84. Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

91. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

(a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;

(b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and

(c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

92. To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

(a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;

(b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;

- (c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs;
- (d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and
- (e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.

**Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies**

The following development plan policies support: CS Policies ADPP5: ‘North Wessex Downs AONB’. HSA Policy HSA23: ‘Pirbright Institute site, High Street, Compton’.

**Assessment of general conformity**

Policy C13 is consistent with ADPP5 which allows limited development to meet local needs, including for community facilities. The policy is also in broad conformity with the higher-level CS which seeks to encourage the re-use of existing buildings before the erection of new. No conformity issues as both national and local policies seek to plan positively for the provision of community facilities to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.

**Policy C14 – Open Space and Recreation**

This policy defines and establishes a framework to protect any area of public open space and recreational facility.

**Summary of relevant national policy and guidance**

91. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

- (c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

96. Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.

97. Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- (a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- (b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or

(c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

#### Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies

The following development plan policies support: CS Policy ADPP5 ‘North Wessex Downs AONB’; CPS17: ‘Biodiversity and Geodiversity’; CS18: ‘Green infrastructure’; CS19: ‘Historic Environment and Landscape Character’; LP Policies RL1: ‘Public open space provision in residential development schemes’; RL2: ‘Provision of Public Open Space’.

#### Assessment of general conformity

The policy is consistent with the higher-level CS that confirms under Policy CS18 that existing green infrastructure should be protected and enhanced. The policy does not go beyond the requirement of Policy CS18 that any loss must be compensated, but recognises that development for alternative recreational uses of the open space may be appropriate. As such there are no conformity issues.

### Policy C15 – Public Rights of Way

Policy C15 seeks to encourage the creation of new Footpaths, whilst protecting and enhancing existing rights of way for future generations.

#### Summary of relevant national policy and guidance

98. Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.

#### Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies

The following development plan policies support: CS Policy ADPP5 ‘North Wessex Downs AONB’; CS13: ‘Transport’; CS14: ‘Design Principles’; CS18: ‘Green infrastructure’; LP Policy TRANS1: ‘Meeting the Transport needs of new development’.

#### Assessment of general conformity

The policy is consistent with the higher-level CS Policy CS18 that defines rights of way as part of the green infrastructure network. The CS seeks improvements to the Green Infrastructure of the District, Policy C15 does not go beyond this requirement, but draws attention the importance of the footpaths within Compton and recognises that mitigation will be required for development that affects the rights of way network across the Parish. As such no conformity issues are identified.

### Policy C16 – Local Green Space

This policy defines Local Green Space that meets the criteria in paragraph 100 of the NPPF.

#### Summary of relevant national policy and guidance

99. The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

100. The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

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

101. Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.

#### Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies

The following development plan policies support: CS Policies CS18: 'Green Infrastructure'; CS19: 'Historic environment and Landscape Character'.

#### Assessment of general conformity

National policy encourages local communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them, while Policy CS18 confirms the role of green infrastructure to ensure that growth can be delivered and access to open space is maintained. In this case, the identification of the seven areas as LGS recognises the role and importance of these green spaces to the local community that meets the criteria for designation at paragraph 100 of the NPPF, as such no conformity issues are identified.

### Policy C17 – Biodiversity

This policy requires the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity assets within the Parish and the provision of a measurable biodiversity net gain.

#### Summary of relevant national policy and guidance

170. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- (a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- (b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
- (d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

174. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

(a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and

(b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

#### Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies

The following development plan policies support: CS Policies ADPP5 'North Wessex Downs AONB'; CS14: 'Design Principles'; CS17: 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity'; CS18: 'Green Infrastructure'; CS 19: 'Historic Environment and Landscape Character'.

#### Assessment of general conformity

This policy is consistent with national and local policy that requires plans to distinguish between the hierarchy of designated sites and that development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale. Policy C17 does not go beyond CS Policy CS17 which requires all new development to maximise opportunities to achieve net gains.

### Policy C18 – Sustainable Drainage

The purpose of this policy is to ensure developments incorporate appropriate sustainable urban drainage measures to prevent and improve drainage capacity of the site.

#### Summary of relevant national policy and guidance

163. When determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific flood-risk assessment<sup>50</sup>. Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, in the light of this assessment (and the sequential and exception tests, as applicable) it can be demonstrated that:

- a) within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location;
- b) the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient;
- c) it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate;
- d) any residual risk can be safely managed; and
- e) safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan.

165. Major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate. The systems used should:

- a) take account of advice from the lead local flood authority;
- b) have appropriate proposed minimum operational standards;
- c) have maintenance arrangements in place to ensure an acceptable standard of operation for the lifetime of the development; and
- d) where possible, provide multifunctional benefits.



<b>Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies</b>
The following development plan policies support: CS Policies ADPP5 ‘North Wessex Downs AONB’; CS16: ‘Flooding’.
<b>Assessment of general conformity</b>
This policy is consistent with national and local policy that requires surface water to be managed in a sustainable way. No conformity issues are identified.

<b>Policy C19 – Sustainable Transport Network</b>
Policy C19 seeks to facilitate local aspirations to retain, improve and extend the existing sustainable transport opportunities including for new development to be well connected to public transport.
<b>Summary of relevant national policy and guidance</b>
<p>103. The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.</p> <p>104. Planning policies should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) support an appropriate mix of uses across an area, and within larger scale sites, to minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities;</li> <li>b) be prepared with the active involvement of local highways authorities, other transport infrastructure providers and operators and neighbouring councils, so that strategies and investments for supporting sustainable transport and development patterns are aligned;</li> <li>c) identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice and realise opportunities for large scale development;</li> <li>d) provide for high quality walking and cycling networks and supporting facilities such as cycle parking (drawing on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans);</li> <li>e) provide for any large scale transport facilities that need to be located in the area, and the infrastructure and wider development required to support their operation, expansion and contribution to the wider economy. In doing so they should take into account whether such development is likely to be a nationally significant infrastructure project and any relevant national policy statements; and</li> <li>f) recognise the importance of maintaining a national network of general aviation airfields, and their need to adapt and change over time – taking into account their economic value in serving business, leisure, training and emergency service needs, and the Government’s General Aviation Strategy</li> </ul>
<b>Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies</b>
The following development plan policies support: CS Policies ADPP5 ‘North Wessex Downs AONB’; CS13: ‘Transport’; CS14: ‘Design Principles’; LP Policy TRANS1: ‘Meeting the Transport needs of new development’.
<b>Assessment of general conformity</b>

This policy is consistent with national and local policy that requires development to be located in a sustainable location with good access to sustainable forms of transport. The policy recognises the importance of the existing footpaths and cycleways around the village and does not go beyond CS Policy CS13 in seeking improvements to this network. No conformity issues are identified.

### **Policy C20 – Provision of Electric Charging Points**

Policy 20 seeks to facilitate local aspirations to support the transition to a low carbon economy.

#### **Summary of relevant national policy and guidance**

149. Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.

#### **Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies**

The following development plan policies support: CS Policies ADPP5 ‘North Wessex Downs AONB’; CS14: ‘Design Principles’; CS15: ‘Sustainable construction and Energy Efficiency’

#### **Assessment of general conformity**

This policy is consistent with national and local policy that requires development to seek opportunities for reducing carbon emissions. The policy supports the West Berkshire Declaration of Climate Emergency and the LPAs ambition to become carbon neutral. No conformity issues are identified.

### **Policy C21 – Vehicle Parking Space in the village**

Policy C21 seeks to facilitate local aspirations to increase the provision of public parking within the village.

#### **Summary of relevant national policy and guidance**

105. If setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account:

- a) the accessibility of the development;
- b) the type, mix and use of development;
- c) the availability of and opportunities for public transport;
- d) local car ownership levels; and
- e) the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

106. Maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or for optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served

by public transport (in accordance with chapter 11 of this Framework). In town centres, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking so that it is convenient, safe and secure, alongside measures to promote accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.

#### Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies

The following development plan policies support: CS Policies ADPP5 'North Wessex Downs AONB'; CS13: 'Transport'; LP Policy TRANS1: 'Meeting the Transport needs of new development'.

#### Assessment of general conformity

Policy C21 is consistent with national and local policy that requires the appropriate infrastructure within sustainable locations. No conformity issues are identified.

### Policy C22 – Residential Parking Standards

The intention of Policy C22 is to reinforce the Councils adopted parking standards and encourage all parking to be provided within the curtilage of the dwelling.

#### Summary of relevant national policy and guidance

105. If setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account:

- a) the accessibility of the development;
- b) the type, mix and use of development;
- c) the availability of and opportunities for public transport;
- d) local car ownership levels; and
- e) the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

106. Maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or for optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport (in accordance with chapter 11 of this Framework). In town centres, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking so that it is convenient, safe and secure, alongside measures to promote accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.

#### Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies

The following development plan policies support: CS Policies ADPP5 'North Wessex Downs AONB'; CS13: 'Transport'; LP Policy TRANS1: 'Meeting the Transport needs of new development'; HSADPD policy P1: 'Residential parking for New Development'.

#### Assessment of general conformity

Policy C22 is consistent with Policy P1 of the HSADPD. It does not go beyond the requirements for parking spaces of new development but recognises the local requirement for these to be provided off-street in line with the character of the parish. No conformity issues are identified.

<b>Policy C23 – Infrastructure Priorities</b>
The purpose of this policy to add detail to higher level policy and provide certainty for residents and developers through the provision of a list of agreed local priorities for infrastructure investment.
<b>Summary of relevant national policy and guidance</b>
34. Plans should set out the contributions expected from development. This should include setting out the levels and types of affordable housing provision required, along with other infrastructure (such as that needed for education, health, transport, flood and water management, green and digital infrastructure). Such policies should not undermine the deliverability of the plan.
<b>Summary of potentially relevant adopted development plan policies</b>
The following development plan policies support: CS Policies ADPP5: ‘North Wessex Downs AONB’; CS5: ‘Infrastructure Requirement and Delivery’
<b>Assessment of general conformity</b>
The policy is consistent with the higher-level CS that confirms the timely delivery of new infrastructure to support development proposals must be secured. CS Policy CS5 itself sets out infrastructure priorities and the identification of local priorities at Compton is consistent with the overarching approach, whilst not being exhaustive, nor as being conveyed in a particular order of preference.

### Conformity conclusions

- 4.14 The Neighbourhood Plan includes a positive vision for the future of the area and explains how this translated into objectives and in turn relate to the relevant policies.
- 4.15 The analysis of the plan in relation to national planning policy and guidance and the strategic policies of the local plan, as shown in the preceding tables, does not highlight any fundamental conformity issues. Where the plan does vary, the changes are considered to be relatively minor in nature and justified by locally-specific evidence, and therefore still in general conformity.
- 4.16 On this basis, there are no apparent reasons to conclude other than the Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic condition of having regard to national policy and guidance from the Secretary of State and being in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area.

## 5. EU and sustainability obligations

**The making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations**

- 5.1 The Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018 came into force on 28 December 2018. These Regulations amend the basic condition prescribed in Regulation 32 and Schedule 2 (Habitats) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). It now states, *'The making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.'* The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 include regulations on the assessment of plans (including neighbourhood plans) and projects on European sites or European offshore marine sites.
- 5.2 To decide whether a draft neighbourhood plan might have significant environmental effects, it needs to be assessed (screened) at an early stage of the plan's preparation according to the requirements set out in regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. These include a requirement to consult the environmental assessment consultation bodies.
- 5.3 West Berkshire Council, as the 'Responsible Authority' under the SEA Regulations, is responsible for undertaking this screening process of the Compton NDP. It will determine if the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, and hence whether SEA is required. This process has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC, often known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive, which has been transposed into English law by the SEA Regulations.
- 5.4 A *'Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening determination for the Compton Neighbourhood Plan'* was published August 2020 (**Appendix A**). The screening decision confirms:

*'On the basis of the screening process detailed in this report, it is the Council's opinion that the NDP is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and as such does not require an SEA under EU Directive 2001/42/EC and The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004), or a Habitats Regulations Assessment under EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.'*

- 5.5 An appropriate assessment, under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), identifies whether a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This assessment must determine whether significant effects on that site can be ruled out on the basis of

objective information. The NPPG<sup>9</sup> states that if the conclusion is that the plan is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site then an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan for the site, in view of the site's conservation objectives, must be undertaken. If the plan is determined to require an appropriate assessment then it will normally also require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Given the above, neither of these were considered necessary for the Compton NDP.

**The making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.**

5.6 The Neighbourhood Plan's policies have also been assessed against the three overarching objectives considered in achieving sustainable development as identified in the NPPF (paragraph 8), ie:

- an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

5.7 The assessment is summarised in the following table. This allows an overview of the combined impacts of the plan's policies. It demonstrates that the plan's policies should help contribute towards sustainable development, and that no significant adverse impacts have been identified.

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<sup>9</sup> Paragraph: 047 Reference ID: 11-047-20190722

NDP Policies	Economic	Social	Environmental	Notes / Explanation
1 – Development Strategy for Parish	✓	✓	?	This policy altogether articulates the limited housing needs to be delivered in the NP area as per the CS that could also help support existing services and businesses. The environmental impact depends on the location due to the windfall nature.
2 – Development Strategy for the Pirbright Site Allocation HSA DPD Policy HSA23	✓	✓	✓	The redevelopment of brownfield land would utilise an existing rare resource and protection of Area A as greenfield buffer will have environmental benefits. Associated social benefits through the provision of a approximately 140 new homes within the village, alongside construction and post-construction economic benefits through job creation (temporary) and future residents supporting local services and facilities (permanent).
3 – Provision of well-designed efficient building and places	-	✓	✓	Environmental benefits and social well-being benefits for occupants living in well-designed communities.
4 – District Heating	-	-	✓	Main benefit relates to the environment, no adverse impacts identified
5 – Housing within the HSA DPD Policy HSA23 Allocation at Pirbright Institute	✓	✓	-	Social benefits associated to mixed communities and new homes within the village, alongside construction and post-construction economic benefits through job creation (temporary) and future residents supporting local services and facilities (permanent).
6 – Hostel retention at the HSA DPD Policy HSA23 Allocation at Pirbright Institute	?	✓	✓	Environmental benefits to conversion of existing buildings, and provision of smaller units will present opportunities for social benefits. Unknown, but potentially positive effects to the economy arising from re-use of building.
7 – Development density at the HSA DPD Policy HSA23 Allocation at Pirbright Institute	-	✓	✓	The redevelopment of brownfield land would utilise an existing rare resource and protection of Area A as greenfield buffer will have environmental benefits. Associated social benefits through the provision of a approximately 140 new homes within the village.

8 – Design	-	✓	✓	High-quality and well-designed places will respect the character of the area in terms of its historic core and location within the AONB.
9 – Design at the HSA DPD Policy HSA23 Allocation at Pirbright Institute	-	✓	✓	High-quality and well-designed places will respect the character of the area in terms of its historic core and location within the AONB.
10 – Existing employment facilities	✓	✓	?	Protection of, and improvements to employment space will bring obvious economic benefits and potentially also bring further social benefits. Environmental impacts will depend on location and proposal.
11 – HSADPD Policy HSA23 Allocation Pirbright Business Hub	✓	✓	?	Protection of, and improvements to employment space will bring obvious economic benefits and potentially also bring further social benefits. Environmental impacts will depend on location and proposal
12 – Existing community facilities	✓	✓	?	Protection of, and improvements to facilities potentially also bringing further economic as well as social benefits. Environmental impacts will depend on location and proposal.
13 – Community uses at the HSA DPD Policy HSA23 Allocation at Pirbright Institute	✓	✓	?	Protection of, and improvements to facilities potentially also bringing further economic as well as social benefits. Environmental impacts will depend on location and proposal.
14 – Open Space and Recreation	-	✓	✓	Protection of, and improvements to open space and recreational facilities will bring social and environmental benefits.
15 – Public Rights of Way	-	✓	✓	Protection of, and improvements to public rights of way will bring social and environmental benefits.
16 – Local Green Space	-	✓	✓	The limited LGS protected is considered critically important for recreation and no adverse impacts identified.
17 – Biodiversity	-	-	✓	Main benefit relates to the environment, no adverse impacts identified
18 – Sustainable drainage	-	-	✓	Main benefit relates to the environment, no adverse impacts identified
18 – Sustainable Transport network	-	✓	✓	Main benefit relates to the environment. May also bring further social benefits through promotion of healthy travel choices.
20 – Provision of Electric Charging points	?	-	✓	Main benefit relates to the environment and support for low carbon economy.



21 – Vehicle Parking Space in the village	-	✓	?	Main benefit relates to the social improvements to the village, potential environmental benefits from removal of street parking. No adverse impacts identified	
22 – Residential parking standards	-	✓	?	Main benefit relates to the social improvements to the village, potential environmental benefits from removal of street parking. No adverse impacts identified	
10 Infrastructure Priorities	-	✓	✓	✓	Infrastructure priorities cover economic, social and environmental areas and no adverse impacts identified.

Key	✓	Positive impact likely
	-	Neutral / no effect likely
	✗	Likely adverse effect
	?	Uncertain effects but unlikely to be adverse

### Human Rights

5.8 No issues have been raised in relation to the possible contravention of Human Rights in the preceding consultations, and given the conclusions on the plan’s general conformity with the strategic policies of the Development Plan and regard to National Planning Policy, it is reasonable to conclude that the making of the plan should not breach human rights.

## **6. Appendix A – West Berkshire Council Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening determination for the Compton Neighbourhood Plan August 2020**



**West Berkshire District Council**

**Compton Neighbourhood Development Plan**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment  
Screening Report**

**Post Consultation Version**

**August 2020**

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## Strategic Environmental Screening Report

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document sets out whether or not the contents of the Compton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2036 (NDP) require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with European Directive 2001/42/EC<sup>1</sup> and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.2. The purpose of the Compton NDP is to provide planning policies to guide development in the designated Compton Neighbourhood Area.
- 1.3. SEA is required for all plans which may have a significant effect on the environment. A SEA aims to protect the environment at a high level, and ensures the environment is considered during the preparation and adoption of plans. This promotes sustainable development.
- 1.4. Not all neighbourhood plans will require a SEA to be carried out. To decide if a SEA is required, a screening exercise is used to look at the proposals in a neighbourhood plan, and see if a significant effect is likely.
- 1.5. This document also assesses whether a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) to consider potential impacts on sites of European importance for Nature Conservation is necessary. The HRA screening is set out on pages 13-14.
- 1.6. The legislative background set out below outlines the regulations that require the need for this screening exercise. A screening assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the Compton NDP and the need for a full SEA has been undertaken.

### 2. Legislative background

- 2.1. European Directive 2001/42/EC is the legislative basis for SEA, and it was transposed into UK law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or SEA Regulations. Detailed Guidance of these regulations can be found in the Government Publication 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (ODPM 2005)<sup>3</sup>.
- 2.2. Under these requirements, plans that set the framework for future development consent of projects must be subject to an environmental assessment. This is to determine if the plan, in this case the Compton NDP, will have any significant effects on the environment.
- 2.3. There are exceptions to this requirement for plans that determine the use of a small area at local level, and for minor modifications if it has been determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.
- 2.4. In accordance with the provisions of the SEA Directive and Regulation 9 (1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, the West

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<sup>1</sup> European Directive 2001/42/EC: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042>

<sup>2</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004:  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/contents/made>

<sup>3</sup> A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (ODPM 2005):  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-environmental-assessment-directive-guidance>

Berkshire District Council must determine if a plan requires an environmental assessment. If the Council determines that a SEA is not required, then under Regulation 9 (3) it must produce a statement that sets out the reason for this determination. This screening report is the Council's Regulation 9 (3) statement.

### 3. The emerging Compton NDP

- 3.1. West Berkshire District Council designated a Neighbourhood Area for the whole of Compton Parish in January 2017. The Parish and Plan boundaries are the same and that is shown on Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Compton Neighbourhood Area



- 3.2. The NDP will sit alongside, and complement the West Berkshire Local Plan, which comprises of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) Development Plan

Document<sup>4</sup> (adopted July 2012), the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (HSA DPD)<sup>5</sup> (adopted May 2017), and the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-1996 (Saved Policies 2006) as amended in July 2012 and May 2017<sup>6</sup>.

- 3.3. In the adopted Core Strategy, the village of Compton is identified as a Service Village within the district settlement hierarchy meaning that, along with the other Service Villages, it has a limited range of services and has some limited development potential. However, as identified within Core Strategy policy ADPP5, Compton contains an 'opportunity site', the Pirbright Institute, which has now closed and will come forward for mixed use development during the plan period. The Core Strategy Inspector's report identifies that the site could provide a higher level of growth than is normally expected in a service village, and paragraph 77 of the report notes that: *"There are also 2 large brownfield sites in Compton and Hermitage where substantial redevelopment for housing or mixed use might take place whilst achieving positive outcomes for the landscape. Accordingly, there is evidence to indicate that the scale of development could be delivered in a way likely to meet the aim of ADPP5."*
- 3.4. To this end Compton will have a greater level of growth that would normally be expected in a Service Village in order to respond effectively to this brownfield opportunity. A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the site has been prepared and adopted<sup>7</sup>. This SPD sets out West Berkshire District Council's planning guidance for the redevelopment of the site.
- 3.5. During the preparation of the HSA DPD, a daughter document of the Core Strategy which also forms part of the Local Plan, technical work and the outcomes of public consultation confirmed that the Pirbright site should be included as an allocation. In accordance with Core Strategy policy ADPP5, the Council's paramount consideration for the site is that development does not cause harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NWD AONB). The HSA DPD was adopted in 2017, and the Pirbright site is included as an allocation.
- 3.6. The Compton NDP will supplement policies within the West Berkshire Local Plan. The Core Strategy and HSA DPD were both subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and SEA. The SA/SEA for the West Berkshire Core Strategy was produced in order to ensure that sustainability issues were considered throughout the preparation of the Core Strategy. The SA/SEA was an iterative process which identified the likely significant effects of the Core Strategy and the extent to which its implementation would achieve social, environmental and economic objectives.
- 3.7. The SA/SEA was published at key stages of the Core Strategy process and updated as necessary. Each of the stages was assessed against the 11 SA framework objectives and the 29 sub objectives to determine the predicted economic, environmental and social effects of the Core Strategy on the District. At each stage, the findings of the SA/SEA were used to inform the formulation of policies, thereby improving the sustainability of the Core Strategy in the process. The process of the SA/SEA means that the overall spatial strategy and the housing distribution strategy of the Core Strategy have been tested.

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<sup>4</sup> West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) Development Plan Document:  
<https://info.westberks.gov.uk/corestrategy>.

<sup>5</sup> Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2006-2026): <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/hsa>.

<sup>6</sup> West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007):  
<https://info.westberks.gov.uk/article/28783>.

<sup>7</sup> Pirbright Institute Site, Compton Supplementary Planning Document:  
<https://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=36532&p=0>.



3.8. The SA/SEA for the HSA DPD considered reasonable alternatives for the scope of the HSA DPD, and for each of the sites and policies included within the DPD. The SA/SEA clearly demonstrates the progression of the preferred strategy from the regulation 18 stage through to the submission stage. The social, economic and environmental dimensions were therefore taken into account throughout the preparation of the DPD to ensure sustainable development.

3.9. The vision statement for the draft Compton NDP is as follows:

*2036 Compton will have enabled self-sustaining development in a way that retains the rural character and beauty of the village, allowing people to live, work and play in the village for the whole of their lives.*

*Development will have been managed to deliver the necessary housing, facilities, and employment opportunities, providing for a diverse population, that is limited to a scale appropriate for a service village within the existing settlement. This will maintain the rural character of the village in the wider landscape control of the North Wessex Downs AONB.*

*The Parish will have responded to the Climate Emergency declared by West Berkshire, providing for long-term sustainability and significant adaptation to low carbon lifestyle.*

3.10. The objectives of the draft NDP are:

- To ensure the village remains small and well contained within its downland valley setting, retaining its feeling of remoteness and the special visual qualities of the AONB in which it sits.
- To support future development at a limited scale within the existing settlement, that will ensure Parish sustainability and a thriving community and business opportunities.
- To support West Berkshire's declaration of a Climate Emergency and ensure that all development in the Parish is built to be carbon neutral, mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change, through use of low carbon building materials, energy efficient design, renewable energy generation, and low carbon transport measures.
- To ensure that existing employment space within the Parish is retained and to encourage provision of new employment space, in particular for the scientific and technological sectors.
- To enhance the lifestyle of the community by ensuring that the Parish of Compton is well supported with sports, social and education facilities, providing for all age groups and addressing short-term key priorities of the Parish.
- To protect and enhance existing amenities and open space including the Rights of Way network that are valued for recreational and aesthetic value, allowing continued benefits to the physical and mental wellbeing and long-term sustainability of the community.
- To create integrated and safe greenspaces in new developments that are linked to the existing green infrastructure network and wider AONB and to ensure conservation of key habitats with biodiversity net-gain across the Parish.
- To tackle transport problems, including parking, vehicle speed, public transport and necessary improvements to footpaths and pavements. To ensure that new development within the village does not worsen transport sustainability within the Parish.

- To encourage the comprehensive development of the Pirbright Site Allocation HSA DPD Policy HSA23, to deliver an appropriate residential-led scheme with employment floor space, community facilities and green infrastructure, that integrates with the village and addresses the resultant infrastructure challenges that will be faced by the community.
- 3.11. The draft Compton NDP contains a number of policies which are categorised under the following headings:
- Pirbright Institute site;
  - Sustainable design and construction;
  - Housing mix and tenure;
  - Design;
  - Existing employment facilities;
  - Community facilities;
  - Local greenspace;
  - Biodiversity;
  - Sustainable transport;
  - Infrastructure.
- 3.12. No site allocations are proposed in the draft NDP.
- 3.13. Section 5 below provides a summary of the policies proposed in the draft Neighbourhood Plan. It also considers the potential for environmental effects to occur as a result of these policies. It is based on the emerging draft (Draft 9 Pre-Submission Screening Draft) of the NDP as at July 2020.

#### **4. The SEA screening process**

- 4.1. Producing the Compton NDP requires the Council to look at whether a SEA is required; this is known as the screening process. The screening is based on the criteria set out in Annex II of European Directive 2001/42/EC and Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, and considers the likely significant environmental effects as a result of the NDP.

#### **5. SEA determination and reasons for determination**

- 5.1. The Council has assessed the Compton NDP against the criteria set out within Annex II of European Directive 2001/42/EC and Schedule 1 of the Regulations (as summarised in Table 5.1).

##### Overview of the plan area

- 5.2. Compton is a rural parish located in the northern part of West Berkshire district. It lies within the NWD AONB, a nationally important and legally protected landscape, and within the upper valley of the River Pang. The main settlement within the parish is the village of Compton.
- 5.3. There are various constraints to development in Compton, not least its location within the NWD AONB. There is a conservation area and many listed buildings, several Local Wildlife Sites, areas of ancient semi-natural woodland and ancient replanted woodland, and parts of Compton lie within Flood Zones 2 and 3. There are issues of groundwater flooding and surface water flooding, and the village was badly affected

in the February 2014 floods. Whilst Compton is located close to the A34 and M4, the local roads are rural in nature and not suitable for heavy traffic.

### Screening analysis

#### *Development strategy*

- 5.4. No allocations are proposed in the draft NDP. The designated Neighbourhood Area includes a settlement boundary around the built up area of the village of Compton. The settlement boundary is identified within the Local Plan. Settlement boundaries identify the main built up area of the settlement within which development is considered acceptable in principle, subject to other policy considerations. While allowing for development, settlement boundaries protect the character of a settlement and prevent unrestricted growth into the countryside.
- 5.5. The draft NDP does however include a policy that supports proposals for infill development within the settlement boundary subject to certain criteria (scale, form, provision of suitable access, provision of services, net biodiversity gain) and compliance with other policies within the development plan.
- 5.6. It is unlikely that this policy will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area.

#### *Housing*

- 5.7. No housing allocations are proposed. Policies proposed in the draft NDP relate to sustainable design and construction, appropriate scale, mix, tenure, and density. It is unlikely that this policy will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area.

#### *Economy and employment*

- 5.8. No new employment allocations are proposed. Draft policies support existing employment facilities, and in particular the diversification of existing farms and equestrian businesses. The policies allow for small-scale expansion, subject to criteria being met (the criteria relates to design and impact upon the landscape and the locality).
- 5.9. A policy is included which allows for the redevelopment of existing employment sites for an alternative use, subject to some criteria including no material harm to the environmental qualities of the site and to the surrounding countryside, and evidence to confirm the property has been marketed.
- 5.10. In addition, there is a policy which requires the redevelopment of the Pirbright site to include a business hub for a range of small-scale employment floorspace. As aforementioned, the Pirbright site is included as an allocation in the adopted HSA DPD and a SPD has been adopted which sets out a detailed framework to guide the redevelopment of the site. Policy HSA23 of the HSA DPD identifies that an element of employment floorspace will be replaced within the site.
- 5.11. It is unlikely that these policies will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area.

### *Transport*

- 5.12. A number of draft policies are included which seek to ensure the provision of electric charging points in all new dwellings, integrate new development with the current green infrastructure network and provide access to public transport, and ensure that new residential development complies with parking standards set out in policy P1 of the HSA DPD. There is also a policy which seeks to establish new public car parking in the village at a suitable location within the village or support any proposals that improve existing parking areas.
- 5.13. It is unlikely that these policies will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area.

### *Social infrastructure*

- 5.14. There is a policy in the draft NDP which seeks to restrict against the loss of existing community facilities. The same policy supports the alteration, extension or redevelopment of existing facilities subject to a set of criteria being met (suitable access arrangements and off-street parking, no highways impact, no generation of unacceptable noise, fumes, smell or other disturbance to neighbouring properties, and consultation with the Parish Council and other significant entities).
- 5.15. There is also a policy which seeks to protect existing community uses on the Pirbright site. Should this not be possible, the policy sets criteria that must be met: proposals must not result in a highways impact, compliance with design policies in the NDP, no adverse impact on the locality or amenities of local residents, and satisfactory provision of access arrangements and off-street parking.
- 5.16. It is unlikely that these policies will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area.

### *Green spaces and the natural environment*

- 5.17. A draft policy seeks to designate a number of areas within the district as local green spaces. A separate draft policy seeks to restrict against the loss of existing open space and recreational facilities and buildings unless a set of criteria is met (ie. surplus to requirements, the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision, or the development is for alternative sports or recreation provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss).
- 5.18. In addition, there is a policy which seeks to create new Public Rights of Way within new development sites and prevent unacceptable harm to existing Public Rights of Way, and another policy which seeks a measurable net gain for biodiversity and which restricts against the loss or deterioration of existing green infrastructure that supports protected habitats and species.
- 5.19. It is unlikely that these policies will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area. It is likely that these policies will result in minor improvements to the local environment.

### *Climate change*

- 5.20. There is a policy in the draft NDP which requires the design and standard of new development to meet a high level of sustainable design and construction. There is a separate policy which encourages the infrastructure required for a local district

heating network. It is unlikely that these policies will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area. It is likely that these policies will result in minor improvements to the local environment.

- 5.21. The Council has assessed the Compton NDP against the criteria set out within Annex II of European Directive 2001/42/EC and Schedule 1 of the Regulations (as summarised in Table 5.1 below).

Table 5.1: Assessment of likely significant effects (screening)

Criterion (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of Regulations)	West Berkshire District Council's Response
<i>1. Characteristics of plans or programmes, having regard, in particular, to:</i>	
(a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	<p>The NDP, if adopted, will become part of the development plan for the area. It will not set a framework for other plans or policies outside of the Compton NDP area. It will help inform decisions within the parish relating to development up to 2036.</p> <p>It sets out a local policy framework for development proposals but does not allocate sites for development. It supports the implementation of policies in the Local Plan which have been subject to SEA and assessed as having no significant effects.</p> <p><b>Overall there would be no significant effect</b></p>
(b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	<p>The NDP does not influence other plans or programmes in the Local Plan; instead it supplements them. The NDP will form part of the Development Plan for the District and will only apply to the designated Neighbourhood Area, the parish of Compton. Neighbourhood Plans by their nature are locally driven and focused, providing detailed guidance to local development.</p> <p><b>Overall there would be no significant effect</b></p>
(c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	<p>A number of policies seek to promote sustainable development that can be considered to be in conformity with the NPPF. This is a 'basic condition'/requirement of the Neighbourhood Plan making process.</p> <p>The draft plan includes support for low carbon developments, electric charging points, public transport improvements, sustainable construction and design, enhancements to biodiversity, sustainable drainage, protection of the local character of the area and conservation of views into the countryside.</p> <p><b>Overall there would be no significant effect, and it is likely that the draft policies proposed will result in minor improvements to the local environment.</b></p>

Criterion (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of Regulations)	West Berkshire District Council's Response
(d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	<p>The Parish is located within the NWD AONB, and there are several Local Wildlife Sites and areas of ancient woodland within the Parish boundary. There are no Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas, however there are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) close to the Parish boundary, namely Ashridge Wood (c.0.1km to the west), Streatley Warren (c.1.1m to the east), and Aston Upthorpe Downs (c.0.8m to the north).</p> <p>The draft Compton NDP seeks to minimise existing environmental problems in the area. The plan does not allocate sites or propose development that would give rise to environmental problems.</p> <p>The NDP Vision Statement comments that “2036 Compton will have enabled self-sustaining development in a way that retains the rural character and beauty of the village allowing people to live, work and play in the village for the whole of their lives.</p> <p><i>Development will have been managed to deliver the necessary housing, facilities, and employment opportunities, providing for a diverse population, that is limited to a scale appropriate for a service village within the existing settlement. This will maintain the rural character of the village in the wider landscape control of the North Wessex Downs AONB.</i></p> <p><i>The Parish will have responded to the Climate Emergency declared by West Berkshire, providing for long-term sustainability and significant adaptation to low carbon lifestyles.”</i></p> <p>The policies of the NDP will therefore supplement policies within the adopted Core Strategy and relevant policies within the adopted HSA DPD and saved policies of West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007). The NDP proposes policies on energy efficient buildings, district heating networks, sustainable drainage, environmental gain, biodiversity, and green spaces which would supplement relevant Local Plan policies.</p> <p><b>Overall there would be no significant effect, and it is likely that the draft policies proposed will result in minor improvements to the local environment.</b></p>
(e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of [European] Community legislation on the environment (eg. plans and	<p>Strategies relating to waste disposal or water protection, and other community legislation on the environment, are dealt with in higher tier plans which have already been tested in full. The NDP will not impact on EU legislation on the environment.</p>

Criterion (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of Regulations)	West Berkshire District Council's Response
programmes linked to waste management or water protection)	<b>Overall there would be no significant effect.</b>
<i>2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected [by the plan or programme], having regard, in particular, to:</i>	
(a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	<p>The NDP will provide a context and framework to guide future development within the Neighbourhood Area and will supplement adopted planning policy. It will guide development up to 2036.</p> <p>The NDP does not allocate sites for development. It includes policies that seek to protect and improve the environment, and to minimise the effects of development on its immediate surroundings and ensure development is delivered to high levels of sustainability.</p> <p><b>No significant effects are envisaged due to the scope and duration of the NDP.</b></p>
(b) The cumulative nature of the effects	<p>As above.</p> <p><b>No significant effects are envisaged.</b></p>
(c) The transboundary* nature of the effects  <i>* Transboundary effects are understood to be in other Member States</i>	<p>Effects will be local with limited effects on neighbouring areas. No transboundary effects are expected.</p> <p>The NDP will supplement adopted policy and <b>is not envisaged, in itself, to have a significant effect.</b></p>
(e) The risks to human health or the environment (eg. due to accidents)	<p>No risks to human health have been identified as a result of the proposed policies in the NDP. Policies relating to environmental nuisance, pollution control and noise pollution are included in higher tier planning documents.</p> <p><b>Overall there would be no significant effect.</b></p>
(f) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	<p>The Neighbourhood Area is just over 1500 hectares in size. At the last census in 2011, the population was 1,571.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plans cover small geographical areas and their policies must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. As such they contain non-strategic development plan policies to address specific local issues. (NPPF paragraph 18).</p> <p>The NDP will provide a context and framework to guide future sustainable development in the area. The majority of effects would be focused within or immediately adjacent to Compton village.</p> <p><b>Overall there would be no significant effect.</b></p>

Criterion (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of Regulations)	West Berkshire District Council's Response
<p>(g) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• special natural characteristics or cultural heritage</li> <li>• exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values</li> <li>• intensive land-use</li> </ul> <p>And</p> <p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status</p>	<p>The built and natural environmental designations within or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Area, along with the proposed NDP policies to protect these are considered below.</p> <p>Compton Parish has the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listed Buildings</li> <li>• Conservation Area</li> <li>• Local Wildlife Sites</li> <li>• Biodiversity Opportunity Area</li> <li>• Areas of Ancient Woodland</li> <li>• Tree Preservation Orders</li> <li>• NWD AONB</li> </ul> <p>Within the NDP area there are no known:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International or national conservation designations (or adjacent to it), including SSSIs or other ecological or wildlife designations outside of those listed above;</li> <li>• World or National Heritage Sites;</li> <li>• Registered Historic Parks and Gardens;</li> <li>• Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) or Local Geological Sites</li> </ul> <p>The NDP will protect the above with a vision of <i>“2036 Compton will have enabled self-sustaining development in a way that retains the rural character and beauty of the village...development will have been managed to deliver the necessary housing, facilities, and employment opportunities...that is limited to a scale appropriate for a service village within the existing settlement...this will maintain the rural character of the village in the wider landscape control of the North Wessex Downs AONB...the Parish will have responded to the climate emergency declared by West Berkshire, providing for long-term sustainability and significant adaptation to low carbon lifestyles.”</i></p> <p>The draft plan includes support for low carbon developments, electric charging points, public transport improvements, sustainable construction and design, enhancements to biodiversity, sustainable drainage, protection of the local character of the area and conservation of views into the countryside.</p> <p><b>It is not considered that the NDP is likely to have any significant effects on local heritage assets or nature conservation interests and it is likely that the draft policies proposed will result in minor</b></p>



<b>Criterion (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of Regulations)</b>	<b>West Berkshire District Council's Response</b>
	<b>improvements to the local environment. As such, an SEA of the plan is not considered necessary.</b>

- 5.22. Based on these findings, the Council's initial conclusion is that a SEA of the Compton NDP is not necessary under the SEA Directive and Regulations because it has been demonstrated that there will be no significant environmental effects as a result of the NDP.

## Habitat Regulation Assessment Screening Report

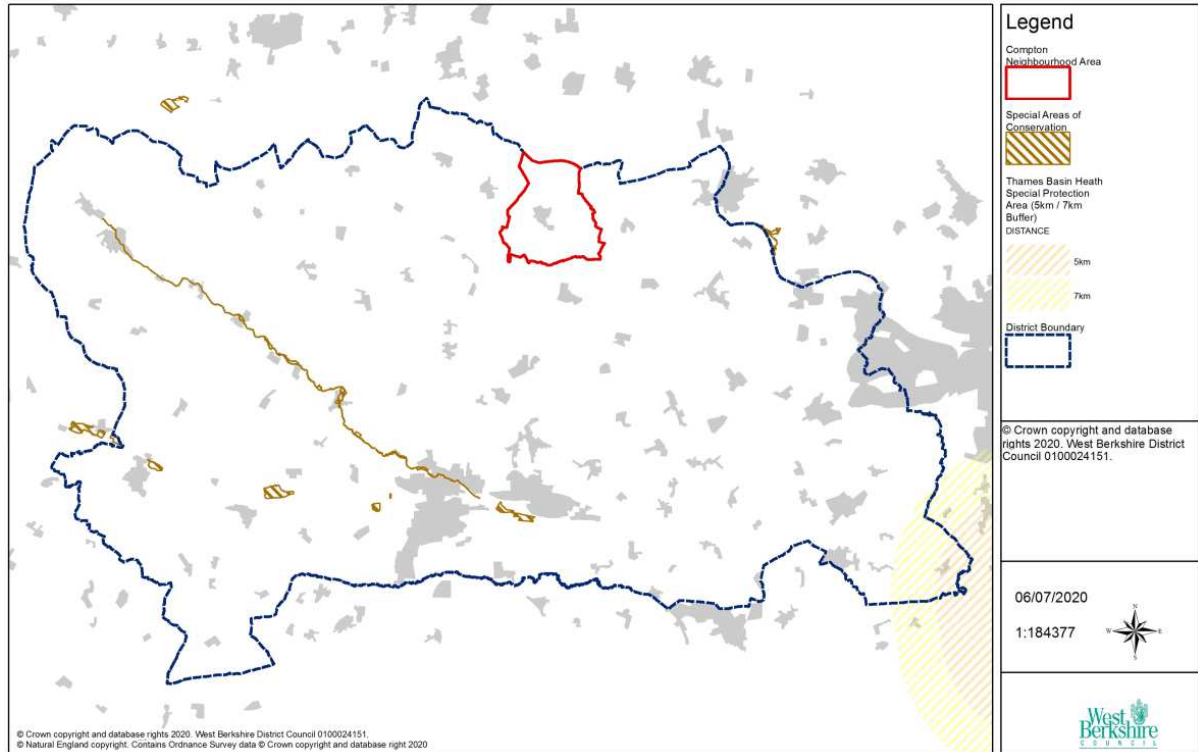
- 6.1. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required to determine if a neighbourhood plan would have a significant impact upon the integrity of nature conservation sites of international importance, ie. Ramsar sites, Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), and Special Protection Areas (SPA). The principal aim of this part of the document is to 'screen' the potential of the Compton NDP for its likely effect, either alone or in combination, on these sites.
- 6.2. This is a requirement under EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC<sup>8</sup>, and has been transposed into British law by Regulation 102 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010<sup>9</sup>. The Directive states that any plan or project not connected or necessary to a sites management, but likely to have significant effects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment. An Appropriate Assessment determines the impact that plans and projects would have on internationally important nature conservation sites.
- 6.3. Within West Berkshire there are three SACs (River Lambourn, Kennet and Lambourn floodplain and Kennet Valley Alderwoods), and no Ramsar sites or SPAs. However, a very small area of the district around Beech Hill falls within the 5km buffer area of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA which Natural England has determined as being needed to regulate development near the SPA. This is illustrated in Figure 6.1 below.

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<sup>8</sup> EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1992L0043:20070101:EN:PDF>

<sup>9</sup> Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010:  
[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2010/490/pdfs/ukSI\\_20100490\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2010/490/pdfs/ukSI_20100490_en.pdf)

Figure 6.1: Location of SACs and Thames Basin Heaths SPA buffer within West Berkshire District



- 6.4. An Appropriate Assessment of all Core Strategy policies has been undertaken to ensure that either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, the policies do not adversely affect any of the SACs or the buffer area for the Thames Basin Heath SPA.
- 6.5. In addition, a HRA screening was undertaken on the HSA DPD and this concluded that an Appropriate Assessment was not required because the allocations and policies would not result in impacts and effects divergent to those assessed in the Core Strategy. The screening also concluded that there would be no negative effects on nature conservation sites of international importance.
- 6.6. The Neighbourhood Area is not in any close proximity to the SPAs or the Thames Basin Heaths SPA buffer area. The Compton NDP is therefore unlikely to have significant effects on nature conservation sites of international importance, and therefore, an Appropriate Assessment for the Compton NDP is not required.

## **Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment - Conclusions of West Berkshire District Council**

- 7.1. Based on the findings in Sections A and B, WBDC's initial conclusion was that a SEA of the Compton NDP is not necessary under the SEA Directive and Regulations because it has been demonstrated that there will be no significant environmental effects as a result of the NDP.
- 7.2. It was also WBDC's initial conclusion that a HRA is not required because there are no internationally designated sites within or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Area.
- 7.3. Nonetheless, a final determination cannot be made until the three statutory bodies (Historic England, Environment Agency, and Natural England) have commented on this SEA Screening Report. This SEA Screening Report was subject to such consultation for a five week period commencing on **Monday 20 July 2020** and running through **until 5pm on Monday 24 August 2020**.
- 7.4. Responses from all three statutory bodies were received by 7 August 2020.

## Consultation

- 8.1. The consultation responses from the three statutory bodies to the SEA and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report are detailed below and are also included in full in Appendix 1:

Table 8.1: Responses from the statutory bodies

Consultation body	Comments	Action
Environment Agency	Based on our review of the draft scoping report, we agree with the environmental issues that have been included and do not have any further comments to make	No further action necessary
Historic England	I am happy to confirm our agreement that the plan should not merit completion of SEA due to any likely significant effects within areas of interest to Historic England.	No further action necessary
Natural England	<p>In our review of the Compton Neighbourhood Plan SEA and HRA screening we note that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there are no allocations for housing or for new employment use proposed in the draft NDP;</li> <li>• there are no sites of international importance within or adjacent to the NDP area.</li> </ul> <p>As a result we agree with the assessment that the Neighbourhood Plan does not require an SEA or HRA.</p> <p>However, we would like to draw your attention to the requirement to conserve biodiversity and provide a net gain in biodiversity through planning policy (Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and section 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework). Please ensure that any development policy in your plan includes wording to ensure “all development results in a biodiversity net gain for the parish”.</p> <p>The recently produced Neighbourhood Plan for Benson, in South Oxfordshire provides an excellent example. We are of the opinion that the policy wording around the Environment, Green Space and Biodiversity is exemplar. We would</p>	<p>No further action necessary in respect of SEA/HRA.</p> <p>Advice given in respect of biodiversity and Green Infrastructure policies should be considered by Compton Parish Council when preparing the NDP.</p>

Consultation body	Comments	Action
	<p>recommend you considering this document, when reviewing yours.</p> <p>Natural England would also like to highlight that removal of green space in favour of development may have serious impacts on biodiversity and connected habitat and therefore species ability to adapt to climate change. We recommend that the final neighbourhood plan include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies around connected Green Infrastructure (GI) within the parish. Elements of GI such as open green space, wild green space, allotments, and green walls and roofs can all be used to create connected habitats suitable for species adaptation to climate change. Green infrastructure also provides multiple benefits for people including recreation, health and wellbeing, access to nature, opportunities for food growing, and resilience to climate change. Annex A provides examples of Green Infrastructure;</li> <li>• Policies around Biodiversity Net Gain should propose the use of a biodiversity measure for development proposals. Examples of calculation methods are included in Annex A [see Appendix A to this Screening Report].</li> </ul>	

### **Conclusions following consultation with the statutory bodies**

- 9.1. On the basis of the screening process detailed in this report, it is the Council's opinion that the NDP is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and as such does not require an SEA under EU Directive 2001/42/EC and The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004), or a Habitats Regulations Assessment under EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.
- 9.2. This determination has been made on 12 August 2020.

## **Appendix 1 Responses from the three statutory bodies (Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England)**



## PlanningPolicy

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**From:** Planning\_THM <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 07 August 2020 11:49  
**To:** PlanningPolicy  
**Subject:** RE: Consultation on the SEA and HRA Screening Report for the Compton Neighbourhood Development Plan

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

### Categories:

This is an **EXTERNAL EMAIL**. **STOP. THINK** before you **CLICK** links or **OPEN** attachments.

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Dear Laila Bassett,

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on the scoping report for the Compton Neighbourhood Plan. We are a statutory consultee in the SEA process and aim to reduce flood risk and protect and enhance the water environment. Based on our review of the draft scoping report, we agree with the environmental issues that have been included and do not have any further comments to make.

For your information we have published joint advice with Natural England, English Heritage and the Forestry Commission on neighbourhood planning which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans.

This is available at:

[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/LIT\\_6524\\_7da381.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/LIT_6524_7da381.pdf)

Please note that the Local Authority can advise if there are areas at risk from surface water flood risk (including groundwater and sewerage flood risk) in your neighbourhood plan area. The Surface Water Management Plan is the evidence base for this and contains recommendations and actions to reduce the risk of flooding. This may be useful when gathering baseline data and drafting key sustainability issues and objectives on which to appraise the neighbourhood plan.

Kind regards,

**Alex Swann**

Planning Advisor - Thames Sustainable Places Team

**Environment Agency** | Red Kite House, Wallingford, OX10 8BD

[Planning\\_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Planning_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk)

External: [REDACTED]

	<p>For the latest guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- INTRANET.EA.GOV</li><li>- NHS.UK/coronavirus</li><li>- GOV.UK/coronavirus</li></ul>	
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## PlanningPolicy

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**From:** Lloyd Sweet, Robert <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 28 July 2020 20:18  
**To:** PlanningPolicy  
**Subject:** Fw: Consultation on the SEA and HRA Screening Report for the Compton Neighbourhood Development Plan

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

### Categories:

This is an **EXTERNAL EMAIL. STOP. THINK** before you **CLICK** links or **OPEN** attachments.

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Dear Ms. Basset

Thank you for consulting Historic England on the draft screening opinion for the Compton Neighbourhood Plan.

I am happy to confirm our agreement that the plan should not merit completion of SEA due to any likely significant effects within areas of interest to Historic England.

Yours sincerely

Robert Lloyd-Sweet

Robert Lloyd-Sweet | Historic Places Adviser | South East England | Historic England  
Cannon Bridge House | 25 Dowgate Hill | London | EC4R 2YA  
Mobile: [REDACTED]

Date: 06 August 2020  
Our ref: 323726



West Berkshire District Council

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

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Cheshire  
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Laila Bassett,

**Planning Consultation: Compton Neighbourhood Development Plan - Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 20 July 2020.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Natural England is a statutory consultee in neighbourhood planning and must be consulted on draft neighbourhood development plans by the Parish/Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forums where our interests would be affected by the proposals made.

In our review of the Birtton with the Compton Neighbourhood Plan SEA and HRA screening we note that;

- there are no allocations for housing or for new employment use proposed in the draft NDP;
- there are no sites of international importance within or adjacent to the NDP area.

As a result we agree with the assessment that the Neighbourhood Plan does not require an SEA or HRA.

However, we would like to draw your attention to the requirement to conserve biodiversity and provide a net gain in biodiversity through planning policy (Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and section 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework). Please ensure that any development policy in your plan includes wording to ensure "all development results in a biodiversity net gain for the parish".

The recently produced [Neighbourhood Plan for Benson](#), in South Oxfordshire provides an excellent example. We are of the opinion that the policy wording around the Environment, Green Space and Biodiversity is exemplar. We would recommend you considering this document, when reviewing yours.

Further Recommendations

Natural England would also like to highlight that removal of green space in favour of development may have serious impacts on biodiversity and connected habitat and therefore species ability to adapt to climate change. We recommend that the final neighbourhood plan include:

- Policies around connected Green Infrastructure (GI) within the parish. Elements of GI such as open green space, wild green space, allotments, and green walls and roofs can all be used to create connected habitats suitable for species adaptation to climate change. Green infrastructure also provides multiple benefits for people including recreation, health and well-being, access to nature, opportunities for food growing, and resilience to climate change. Annex A provides examples of Green Infrastructure;
- Policies around Biodiversity Net Gain should propose the use of a biodiversity measure for development proposals. Examples of calculation methods are included in Annex A;

Annex A provides information on the natural environment and issues and opportunities for your Neighbourhood planning.

Yours sincerely,

Eleanor Sweet-Escott  
Lead Adviser  
Sustainable Development  
Thames Solent Team

# Annex A - Neighbourhood planning and the natural environment: information, issues and opportunities

## Natural Environment Information Sources

The [Magic](http://magic.defra.gov.uk/)<sup>1</sup> website will provide you with much of the nationally held natural environment data for your plan area. The most relevant layers for you to consider are: **Agricultural Land Classification, Ancient Woodland, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Local Nature Reserves, National Parks (England), National Trails, Priority Habitat Inventory, public rights of way (on the Ordnance Survey base map) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (including their impact risk zones)**. Local environmental record centres may hold a range of additional information on the natural environment. A list of local record centres is available [here](#)<sup>2</sup>.

**Priority habitats** are those habitats of particular importance for nature conservation, and the list of them can be found [here](#)<sup>3</sup>. Most of these will be mapped either as **Sites of Special Scientific Interest**, on the Magic website or as **Local Wildlife Sites**. Your local planning authority should be able to supply you with the locations of Local Wildlife Sites.

**National Character Areas** (NCAs) divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each character area is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. NCA profiles contain descriptions of the area and statements of environmental opportunity, which may be useful to inform proposals in your plan. NCA information can be found [here](#)<sup>4</sup>.

There may also be a local **landscape character assessment** covering your area. This is a tool to help understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place. It can help to inform, plan and manage change in the area. Your local planning authority should be able to help you access these if you can't find them online.

If your neighbourhood planning area is within or adjacent to a **National Park** or **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** (AONB), the relevant National Park/AONB Management Plan for the area will set out useful information about the protected landscape. You can access the plans on from the relevant National Park Authority or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty website.

General mapped information on **soil types** and **Agricultural Land Classification** is available (under 'landscape') on the [Magic](http://magic.defra.gov.uk/)<sup>5</sup> website and also from the [LandIS website](http://www.landis.org.uk/)<sup>6</sup>, which contains more information about obtaining soil data.

## Natural Environment Issues to Consider

The [National Planning Policy Framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2)<sup>7</sup> sets out national planning policy on protecting and enhancing the natural environment. [Planning Practice Guidance](http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/)<sup>8</sup> sets out supporting guidance.

Your local planning authority should be able to provide you with further advice on the potential impacts of your plan on the natural environment and the need for any environmental assessments.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nbn-nfbr.org.uk/nfbr.php>

<sup>3</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

<sup>5</sup> <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.landis.org.uk/index.cfm>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

<sup>8</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/>

## Landscape

Paragraph 172 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlights the need to protect and enhance valued landscapes through the planning system. Your plan may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes. You may want to consider identifying distinctive local landscape features or characteristics such as ponds, woodland or dry stone walls and think about how any new development proposals can respect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness.

If you are proposing development within or close to a protected landscape (National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) or other sensitive location, we recommend that you carry out a landscape assessment of the proposal. Landscape assessments can help you to choose the most appropriate sites for development and help to avoid or minimise impacts of development on the landscape through careful siting, design and landscaping.

## Wildlife habitats

Some proposals can have adverse impacts on designated wildlife sites or other priority habitats (listed [here](#)<sup>9</sup>), such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or [Ancient woodland](#)<sup>10</sup>. If there are likely to be any adverse impacts you'll need to think about how such impacts can be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for.

## Priority and protected species and habitat

You'll also want to consider whether any proposals might affect priority species (listed [here](#)<sup>11</sup>) or protected species. Natural England has produced advice [here](#)<sup>12</sup> to help understand the impact of particular developments on protected species. Consideration should also be given to the potential environmental value of brownfield sites, often found in urban areas and former industrial land, further information including links to the open mosaic habitats inventory can be found [here](#).

## Ancient woodland and veteran trees-link to standing advice

You should consider any impacts on ancient woodland and veteran trees in line with paragraph 175 of the NPPF. Natural England maintains the Ancient Woodland [Inventory](#) which can help identify ancient woodland. Natural England and the Forest Commission have produced [standing advice](#) for planning authorities in relation to ancient woodland and veteran trees. It should be taken into account by planning authorities when determining relevant planning applications. Natural England will only provide bespoke advice on ancient woodland/veteran trees where they form part of a SSSI or in exceptional circumstances.

## Biodiversity net gain

Under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Local Planning Authorities are required to conserve biodiversity. The NPPF section 170 states the requirement for *"minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity"*. Suitable methods for calculating biodiversity net gain can include the Defra biodiversity offsetting metric<sup>13</sup> and the environment bank biodiversity impact calculator<sup>14</sup>. Natural England would expect a policy within the Neighbourhood Plan to include wording to ensure that net biodiversity gain is achieved.

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<sup>9</sup><http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>

<sup>11</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/biodiversity-offsetting#guidance-for-offset-providers-developers-and-local-authorities-in-the-pilot-areas> Note; the 'Guidance for developers' and 'Guidance for offset providers' documents provide a calculation method.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.environmentbank.com/impact-calculator.php> , and [http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&ved=0ahUKEwi7vcbI0aDQAhVMDcAKHb8IDEUQFggsMAI&url=http%3A%2F%2Fconsult.welhat.gov.uk%2Ffile%2F4184236&usq=AFQjCNFfkbJJJQ\\_UN0044Qe6rmiLffxckg](http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&ved=0ahUKEwi7vcbI0aDQAhVMDcAKHb8IDEUQFggsMAI&url=http%3A%2F%2Fconsult.welhat.gov.uk%2Ffile%2F4184236&usq=AFQjCNFfkbJJJQ_UN0044Qe6rmiLffxckg)

## Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

Soil is a finite resource that fulfils many important functions and services for society. It is a growing medium for food, timber and other crops, a store for carbon and water, a reservoir of biodiversity and a buffer against pollution. If you are proposing development, you should seek to use areas of poorer quality agricultural land in preference to that of a higher quality in line with National Planning Policy Framework para 170. For more information, see our publication [Agricultural Land Classification: protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land](#)<sup>15</sup>.

## **Green Infrastructure, Improving Your Natural Environment.**

Inclusion of Green Infrastructure (GI) in to development plans can provide multifunctional benefits to the area. These can include opportunities for recreation, health and wellbeing and access to nature as well as providing connected habitats for wildlife.

Your plan or order can offer exciting opportunities to enhance your local environment through inclusion of GI. If you are setting out policies on new development or proposing sites for development, you may wish to consider identifying what environmental features you want to be retained, connected, enhanced or new features you would like to see created as part of any new development. Examples might include:

- Providing a new footpath with landscaping through the new development to link into existing rights of way or other green spaces.
- Restoring a neglected hedgerow or creating new ones.
- Creating a new pond as an attractive feature on the site.
- Planting trees characteristic to the local area to make a positive contribution to the local landscape.
- Using native plants in landscaping schemes for better nectar and seed sources for bees and birds.
- Incorporating swift boxes or bat boxes into the design of new buildings.
- Considering how lighting can be best managed to encourage wildlife.
- Adding a green roof or walls to new or existing buildings.

You may also want to consider enhancing your local area in other ways, for example by:

- Setting out in your plan how you would like to implement elements of a wider Green Infrastructure Strategy in your community.
- Assessing needs for accessible greenspace and setting out proposals to address any deficiencies or enhance provision.
- Identifying green areas of particular importance for special protection through Local Green Space designation (see [Planning Practice Guidance on this](#)<sup>16</sup>).
- Managing existing (and new) public spaces to be more wildlife friendly (e.g. by sowing wild flower strips in less used parts of parks, changing hedge cutting timings and frequency).
- Planting additional street trees.
- Identifying any improvements to the existing public right of way network, e.g. cutting back hedges, improving the surface, clearing litter or installing kissing gates) or extending the network to create missing links.
- Restoring neglected environmental features (e.g. coppicing a prominent hedge that is in poor condition or clearing away an eyesore).

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<sup>15</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35012>

<sup>16</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/local-green-space-designation/>

### Green Roofs

Natural England is supportive of the inclusion of living roofs in all appropriate development. Research indicates that the benefits of green roofs include reducing run-off and thereby the risk of surface water flooding; reducing the requirement for heating and air-conditioning; and providing habitat for wildlife.

We would advise your council that some living roofs, such as sedum matting, can have limited biodiversity value in terms of the range of species that grow on them and habitats they provide. Natural England would encourage you to consider the use of bespoke solutions based on the needs of the wildlife specific to the site and adjacent area. I would refer you to <http://livingroofs.org/> for a range of innovative solutions.



