

# WEST BERKSHIRE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW 2022-2039

Proposed Submission

January 2023



West Berkshire  
COUNCIL

# Local Plan Review 2022-2039 Proposed Submission

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## Local Plan Review 2022-2039 Proposed Submission

# 1 Introduction and Background

## Setting the scene

1.1 West Berkshire District Council is preparing new planning policies to plan for development across the District up to 2039. Our new planning policies are contained in the West Berkshire Local Plan Review (LPR).

1.2 We have now reached a formal consultation stage in the production of the LPR (known as Regulation 19) and are publishing our Draft LPR for comment. This phase of the consultation process provides local communities, businesses and other interested stakeholders with the opportunity to comment on the policy content of the LPR, within a specific remit. The remit for public consultation relates to the 'Tests of Soundness' and also includes legal compliance, as set out in the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#). The consultation on this document starts on Friday 20th January 2023. It will run for 6 weeks and **close at 4.30pm on Friday 3rd March 2023**. The best way to respond to the consultation is via our [online consultation portal](#). You will need to register, but then any comments you make will be stored in your account for your future reference.

## What is the Local Plan Review and what is it for?

1.3 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development<sup>(1)</sup> which is defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs<sup>(2)</sup>. Put another way, the planning system tries to ensure that the right development happens in the right place at the right time, benefiting communities and the economy.

1.4 The planning system should be plan-led. Concise and up-to-date development plans should provide a positive vision for the future of an area; a framework for meeting housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a way for local people to shape their surroundings. Planning applications must be decided in accordance with the development plan, unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise.

1.5 The West Berkshire Local Plan Review is an important part of the development plan. It identifies the development that is required to meet local needs until 2039. It sets out the strategy for distributing development within the District and the policies for protecting, conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment. It helps local people in West Berkshire achieve sustainable development.

**1.6 It is important that the LPR is read as a whole. All LPR policies should be viewed together and not in isolation in the preparation and consideration of planning applications. Development proposals will be judged against all relevant policies. All development plan policies will be taken into account in determining planning applications, along with other material considerations in a proportionate manner. Please note that the policies in the LPR do not list or cross-refer to all other policies that may be relevant.**

## Why are we reviewing the Local Plan?

1.7 The [current West Berkshire Local Plan](#) comprises:

- West Berkshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) (2006-2026) (adopted 2012)
- Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (adopted 2017)
- West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies)

1.8 The current Local Plan plans for development up to 2026. National policy, contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that a local plan is kept up-to-date. It also requires that a local plan should look ahead over a minimum 15 year period. Therefore to ensure we meet these policy expectations, and the related legislative requirements<sup>(3)</sup>, the Council is reviewing the West Berkshire Local Plan.

1.9 Importantly, we are also establishing a new housing requirement which will look forward to 2039. This is informed by the local housing need (LHN) conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance.

1.10 Local plans can be reviewed in whole or in part. The intention is that this review of the Local Plan will replace in one document the three documents listed above.

1 Paragraph 7, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

2 Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future (1987)

3 As contained in The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017

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### What is the wider context?

#### Nationally:

1.11 Local plans must be consistent with the principles and policies contained within the NPPF. <sup>(4)</sup> The NPPF covers most forms of development and sets out the government's economic, environmental and social priorities for planning in England. Local plans must also be produced in line with relevant primary and secondary legislation.

#### Regionally:

1.12 Local planning authorities are expected to work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure that strategic priorities are properly co-ordinated across administrative boundaries. Joint working is expected between neighbouring authorities to enable local planning authorities to meet development requirements which cannot wholly be met within their own areas.

#### Locally:

##### Minerals and Waste

1.13 West Berkshire Council is also responsible for producing minerals and waste local plans. The [West Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2022-2037](#) was adopted on 1 December 2022.

##### Neighbourhood Planning

1.14 Parish and town councils within West Berkshire can produce neighbourhood plans (NDP) which, when adopted, also form part of the development plan, together with the LPR and the West Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with, and reflect the strategic policies in, the LPR. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the LPR, but can promote more development. Appendix 6 sets out how the LPR policies will be applied in the neighbourhood planning context. In West Berkshire we have two made neighbourhood plans – the [Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan](#) (2017) and the [Compton Neighbourhood Development Plan](#) (2022).

##### Other Council Strategies

1.15 The Council has adopted a number of [strategies](#) which the LPR has taken account of. These include, but are not limited to: the Council Strategy (2021); the Environment Strategy (2021); the Economic Development Strategy (2021) and; the Housing Strategy (2021)

### What has happened so far?

1.16 The review of the West Berkshire Local Plan started in 2018. We set out the scope and content of our LPR in our [LPR Scoping Report](#) and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report which we consulted on between February and March 2018. The feedback we received is contained within our [LPR Scoping Report Consultation Statement](#).

1.17 We then undertook a [second round of consultation](#) between November and December 2018 seeking views on our proposed:

- Vision for the Local Plan Review
- Revision of the existing spatial areas
- Methodology for reviewing the existing settlement hierarchy
- Criteria for the settlement boundary review
- Update of our assessment of existing Local Plan policies

1.18 The feedback we received is contained in our [Consultation Statement](#).

1.19 In February 2020, we published our assessments of sites that were submitted to us as part of the [Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment \(HELAA\)](#). We also undertook focused consultation with parish and town councils, and NDP groups seeking views on the sites assessed in the HELAA.

4 References to specific paragraph numbers throughout the LPR relate to the NPPF published in July 2021

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**1.20** In December 2020 we published the emerging draft version of the LPR for public consultation. The feedback we received is contained in our Consultation Statement.

**1.21** We have taken into account all of the views expressed during these consultations in preparing the Draft LPR.

### Duty to Cooperate

**1.22** Section 110 of the Localism Act places a legal duty on local planning authorities and other prescribed bodies to cooperate with each other when preparing development plan documents in order to address strategic planning issues relevant to their areas. The LPR is being produced through close partnership working with our neighbouring local authorities to ensure that cross-boundary planning issues are being taken into account. We have also co-operated with all authorities within a 60 minute “drive time” of Newbury with regards to employment issues. Key work on satisfying the duty takes place on an ongoing basis. A [Duty to Cooperate Statement](#) accompanies the Draft LPR and sets out in detail how the Council is co-operating on strategic cross-boundary issues in order to create and deliver a positively prepared plan.

### What evidence supports the LPR?

**1.23** One of the key features of the plan-led system is that development plans should be based on up-to-date evidence. The LPR is underpinned by a wide-ranging [evidence base](#), which has been prepared, reviewed and updated as necessary as part of the LPR preparation. The aim has been to understand how West Berkshire functions as a place, what makes it unique, and what is required to conserve and enhance that uniqueness.

**1.24** The evidence can be broken down into two parts:

- The views and experiences of our local communities and those with a stake in the future of the District; and
- Technical research in the form of published studies

**1.25** The LPR is supported by a vast amount of national and local information and numerous professional studies. These are referred to at various points in the LPR and are published on the Council’s website. This evidence base will be added to as the LPR progresses.

### Structure of the LPR

**1.26** The LPR includes a vision, strategic objectives and a set of policies which together provide a policy framework for assessing planning applications and guiding development across West Berkshire. It is set out as follows:

- **Introduction and context**
- A **spatial portrait** which describes and sets out a snapshot of West Berkshire in facts and figures
- Our **Vision** of what West Berkshire will look like in 2039
- Our **Strategic Objectives** which represent the key delivery outcomes that the LPR should achieve and against which its success will be measured
- Our **Development Strategy** which sets out our overall approach for managing growth and change across the District up to 2039 and which outlines our place based approach focusing on the following spatial areas:
  - Newbury and Thatcham
  - Eastern Area
  - North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- **Strategic policies (SP)** which set out the overarching principles for development and which are considered fundamental to achieving the vision and strategic objectives, focusing on:
  - Our place based approach
  - Our environment and surroundings
  - Delivering housing
  - Fostering economic growth and supporting local communities
- **Non-strategic site allocation policies (RSA and ESA)** which, led by the capacity of the landscape, allocate large, medium and small residential and mixed-use sites (RSA) and also employment sites (ESA) for development within each of the spatial areas
- **Development management policies (DM)** which are considered in the context of the strategic policies, providing more detail on specific issues



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- **Appendices** which set further technical information and guidance to assist in implementing the policies, including **Implementation and Monitoring**
- **Policies Map** which geographically illustrates the LPR policies

### Testing the LPR

1.27 All local plans must be accompanied by a [sustainability appraisal](#) (SA) of the plan. The SA offers a systematic and robust way for checking and improving on plans and their policies as they are being developed. It helps planning authorities to fulfil the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in preparing their plans, and thus contributes to sound plan making.

1.28 The SA process is intended to be an integral part of preparing a local plan, rather than separate to it. The SA of the Draft LPR has been fully integrated into the plan-making process, so that it has informed and influenced the LPR as it has evolved. The SA will continue to evolve as the LPR progresses.

### Next steps

1.29 Once the Regulation 19 stage is complete, the Council will submit an updated Draft LPR to the Secretary of State who will then appoint an independent Planning Inspector to undertake a 'public examination' of the Draft LPR. During the examination process, the Secretary of State and the independent Planning Inspector will use the NPPF and comments submitted during the Regulation 19 consultation to determine whether the LPR is sound and legally compliant.

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## The Spatial Strategy

### Policy SP1

#### Spatial Strategy

The overarching spatial strategy for West Berkshire will deliver the spatial vision and strategic objectives for the District over the plan period and inform the preparation of neighbourhood plans (NDPs). The strategy:

- a. Directs development to areas of lower environmental value;
- b. Optimises the use of previously developed land; and
- c. Optimises the density of development to make the best use of land whilst conserving and enhancing the distinctive character and identity of the built, historic and natural environment.

The development approach will be based on three spatial areas:

- Newbury and Thatcham
- Eastern Area
- North Wessex Downs AONB

The focus of development in each spatial area will be required to follow the District-wide settlement hierarchy set out in Policy SP3 which takes account of the function and sustainability of settlements and promotes sustainable communities.

Development and redevelopment within the settlement boundaries of those settlements identified in Appendix 2 and outlined on the Policies Map will be supported. Outside of settlement boundaries, land will be treated as open countryside where development will be more restricted, as set out in Policy DCM1 and DM35.

In each spatial area, opportunities should be taken to make the best use of previously developed land with higher densities of development in locations such as town centres, where the extent and capacity of supporting infrastructure, services and facilities is the greatest.

Density on individual sites will vary according to their location and context, size of developable area and site specific issues such as shape and access:

- Within Newbury, Thatcham, Tilehurst, Purley on Thames, and Calcot, developments are expected to secure a net density of at least 35 dwellings per hectare with densities of at least 70 dwellings per hectare in town centres and for flatted developments along main transport routes and close to transport nodes.
- Within other defined settlements developments are expected to secure a net density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare with higher densities achievable in the centres of Hungerford, Pangbourne and Theale.
- Developments on the edge of defined settlements are generally expected to secure a net density of 30 dwellings. However, lower density developments will be appropriate in certain areas of the District that are particularly sensitive to the impact of intensification and redevelopment. This may be because of the prevailing character of the area, the sensitive nature of the surrounding countryside or built form, and/or the relative remoteness from public transport.

The strategy will deliver a range of site sizes for residential development. There are already significant existing commitments throughout the District. Additional development will come forward on both large strategic sites and smaller non-strategic sites allocated in the LPR and in some neighbourhood plans, together with infill development, including that on windfall sites within settlement boundaries. Allocations will be related to the role and function of settlements and the development opportunities identified through the HELAA.

Town centres will be expected to continue to play a vital role for communities and will need to adapt to meet the changing needs of communities. Main town centre uses will be located in accordance with Policy SP22. Within town centres, schemes will be of an appropriate scale and character to respond to the role and function of the centre and to support sustainable communities.

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Employment development to meet the existing and future economic demands of businesses will be directed to sites allocated for employment land, to sites within settlement boundaries, to Designated Employment Areas (DEA) and to existing suitably located employment sites, to help promote sustainable patterns of development, prioritise the use of previously developed land and support the retention of these areas for employment uses. In accordance with Policy SP20 and Policy SP22, proposals for office development will be directed to town and district centres and DEAs.

Proposals to strengthen and diversify the rural economy will be encouraged, particularly where they are located in or adjacent to Rural Service Centres and Service Villages identified in the settlement hierarchy. Existing small and medium sized enterprises within the countryside will be supported in order to provide local job opportunities and maintain the vitality of smaller rural settlements and their communities.

Demand for travel will be managed, and accessibility to sustainable transport opportunities increased through improving choice in transport modes. Existing community infrastructure will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced. Infrastructure requirements will be set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

The District's historic environment and environmental assets will continue to be protected and enhanced and used positively in development to establish a distinctive sense of place that nurtures human health and wellbeing.

### **Newbury and Thatcham**

Newbury will retain its traditional market town heritage and continue to fulfil its key role as the administrative centre and major town centre for the District. Opportunities will continue to be taken to regenerate and enhance the townscape of the town centre and its periphery.

Newbury will be a focus for housing development. An urban extension on greenfield land to the south of Newbury, at Sandford Park will provide a new residential neighbourhood with supporting facilities and green infrastructure in accordance with Policy SP16. Smaller scale developments will include redevelopment of previously developed land.

Thatcham will be a focus for regeneration, for new housing and for improved provision of services and facilities. A new urban extension to the north east of the town will provide a new residential neighbourhood with supporting facilities and green infrastructure in accordance with Policy SP17. Opportunities will be taken to maintain and enhance the identity of Thatcham separate to that of Newbury and its surrounding rural settlements in accordance with Policy DM2.

Newbury and Thatcham will remain the focus for business development, with Newbury the main focus for office development. DEAs in this spatial area will play a vital role in meeting the existing and future economic needs of the District.

The villages in the surrounding area will retain their existing role and separate identity, with settlement boundaries and Policies SP8, DM1 and DM2 ensuring that physical separation is maintained.

### **Eastern Area**

The individual identities of the separate settlements within this area will be maintained and the high quality landscape and environmental assets in this part of West Berkshire will be conserved and enhanced.

Theale will be a focus for additional housing through existing commitments and new allocations.

The area will continue to be important for business development with the retention of DEAs.

### **North Wessex Downs AONB**

The North Wessex Downs AONB will have appropriate and sustainable growth that conserves and enhances its special landscape qualities as set out in Policy SP2.

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### Supporting text

4.18 The principles which underlie the spatial distribution stem from the overriding objective of enabling sustainable development, development that will meet the social and economic needs of the District while conserving and enhancing the environmental assets of the District and meet the objective to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and minimise demand for energy and other resources.

4.19 The LPR aims to build on the principles of the Core Strategy with regard to the spatial distribution of development. The focus will be on existing settlements, using the settlement hierarchy, set out in Policy SP3. This steers development to the most sustainable areas, with an appropriate balance between urban and rural development, in order to meet local needs and maintain vibrant and balanced communities with their own sense of identity, while conserving and enhancing the environmental assets of the District. The existing urban areas are regarded as the most suitable locations for future development by virtue of their existing access to services and facilities, thereby providing the opportunity to reduce out-commuting and the need to travel. Development in Newbury and the smaller towns of the District is seen as contributing not only to their regeneration, through provision of additional services and facilities, but also to the rural areas they serve.

4.20 The strategy seeks to make effective use of brownfield land. Opportunities for infill development and for re-use of brownfield land are greatest in those settlements at the upper levels of the hierarchy, particularly in Newbury. Further greenfield allocations are, however, needed, and the plan allocates a range of sites of varying sizes. The allocation of sites takes account of the evidence from the HELAA, SA and the settlement hierarchy, with higher levels of development at the higher levels of the hierarchy.

4.21 The approach in the different spatial areas reflects the different characteristics of the different parts of West Berkshire. Policies SP13 -15 set out the proposed allocations for residential and mixed use development in the separate spatial areas and the housing requirements for neighbourhood plans.

4.22 The NPPF indicates that the efficient use of land is a priority<sup>(7)</sup> and that planning policies should support development that makes efficient use of land. West Berkshire is a diverse area and densities achieved will reflect this diversity. Higher densities will be sought in town centre locations, having regard to the sustainability of the location and the character and amenity of the surroundings. The policy makes clear that site specific constraints and local character may justify variations from the densities set out in the policy.

4.23 The [West Berkshire Density Pattern Book](#) <sup>(8)</sup> provides more information on the densities that are typical in the different part of the District and will be used by the Council as a starting point to guide development.

7 NPPF Paragraphs 119 and 120

8 West Berkshire Density Pattern Book: David Lock Associates, September 2019

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## Settlement Hierarchy

### Policy SP3

#### Settlement Hierarchy

Development in West Berkshire will be required to comply with the spatial strategy set out in Policy SP1. The focus of development will follow the District-wide settlement hierarchy which takes account of the function and sustainability of settlements across the District and promotes sustainable communities. The scale of development proposals will be expected to be relative to the existing or proposed level of facilities and services in the settlement, together with their accessibility.

**Urban Areas:** Newbury, Thatcham, Eastern Urban Area (Tilehurst, Calcot, Purley on Thames)

The urban areas will be the prime focus for housing and economic development, offering development potential through:

- a. Regeneration and change in the existing built up area including the redevelopment of suitable previously developed sites for both housing and employment purposes;
- b. Strategic and non-strategic sites allocated for housing and economic development through other policies in the LPR or neighbourhood plans;
- c. The retention of the individual identity of adjacent settlements; and
- d. The necessary supporting infrastructure.

**Rural Service Centres:** Burghfield Common, Hungerford, Lambourn, Mortimer, Pangbourne, Theale

These larger rural settlements offer development potential appropriate to the character and function of the settlement through:

- e. Infill or changes of use within the settlement boundary;
- f. Non-strategic sites allocated for housing and economic development through other policies in the LPR or neighbourhood plans; and
- g. Rural exceptions affordable housing schemes

**Service Villages:** Bradfield Southend, Chieveley, Cold Ash, Compton, Great Shefford, Hermitage, Kintbury, Woolhampton

These smaller rural settlements may offer some limited and small-scale development potential, appropriate to the character and function of the village, in order to meet local needs through:

- h. Infill or changes of use within the settlement boundary;
- i. Non-strategic sites allocated for housing and economic development through other policies in the LPR or neighbourhood plans; and
- j. Rural exceptions affordable housing schemes.

Development in smaller settlements with settlement boundaries, and which are not included in the settlement hierarchy, will be delivered in accordance with Policy SP1. Development outside of these settlements, in other rural hamlets and in isolated groups of development will be restricted to that which is appropriate in a rural area as set out in Policy DM1.

## Supporting Text

**4.29** The policy has been informed by a re-assessment of the existing settlement hierarchy used for the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006 – 2026) Development Plan Document. The revised and updated [settlement hierarchy](#) ensures that new development planned throughout the Plan period continues to be directed to the more sustainable settlements, is appropriate for the settlement in question and is adequately supported by infrastructure and services.

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4.30 The hierarchy categorises the District's settlements according to their different roles, and groups them accordingly. At the top of the hierarchy are the larger towns and areas that fulfil the most functions and which are the most sustainable. The smaller settlements with fewer functions are towards the bottom of the hierarchy.

**Table 1 District Settlement Hierarchy**

Type	Role and function	Settlements
Urban Areas	The main urban areas with a wide range of services and opportunities for employment, community and education. Serving a large catchment area with good levels of accessibility and frequent public transport provided to a large number of destinations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newbury</li> <li>• Thatcham</li> <li>• Eastern Urban Area (Tilehurst, Calcot, Purley on Thames)</li> </ul>
Rural Service Centres	Settlements with a good range of key services and opportunities for employment, community and education. They serve a wide catchment area and contain reasonable accessibility and regular public transport provided to a number of destinations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burghfield Common</li> <li>• Hungerford</li> <li>• Lambourn</li> <li>• Mortimer</li> <li>• Pangbourne</li> <li>• Theale</li> </ul>
Service Villages	Smaller settlements with a more limited, yet valued, range of key services and opportunities for community and education with some localised employment. They serve a small local catchment, contain a lower level of accessibility and provide often limited public transport in terms of destination choice and ease of commuting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bradfield Southend</li> <li>• Chieveley</li> <li>• Cold Ash</li> <li>• Compton</li> <li>• Great Shefford</li> <li>• Hermitage</li> <li>• Kintbury</li> <li>• Woolhampton</li> </ul>

4.31 Development over the plan period will build upon the existing settlement pattern and direct most development to those urban areas which have the infrastructure and facilities to support sustainable growth. The main focus for growth will therefore be Newbury, Thatcham and the east of the District. Focusing further growth in these areas has the potential to make the best use of previously developed land and house residents close to jobs, shops, leisure and cultural facilities and public transport.

4.32 Outside of these areas, the six rural service centres across the District provide a focal point for the surrounding villages and rural areas in terms of the provision of services and facilities. Although they do not have as wide a range of services as the urban areas, they are still sustainable locations.

4.33 There are a number of other villages across the District which have been identified as service villages. Most are in the AONB. These offer a more limited range of services but act as focal points for their surrounding rural areas.

4.34 The characteristics of the individual rural service centres and service villages vary, reflective of the diverse nature of West Berkshire. They are not intended to have the same amount of growth as each other; instead, the level of growth will depend on the role and function that they perform for the surrounding spatial area, and will be related to their location, size, range of facilities and services as well as the availability of suitable development opportunities. Their sustainability will be considered alongside other factors, particularly environmental constraints such as the AONB or the DEPZ around the AWE sites of Aldermaston and Burghfield. Due to these environmental constraints the development potential within these areas could be more limited and specific regard should be given to Policies SP2 North Wessex Downs AONB and SP4 Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Aldermaston and Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Burghfield.

4.35 Settlements outside of the settlement hierarchy will deliver additional development but this will be limited to infill or change of use within the settlement where a settlement boundary has been defined, and to rural exception schemes for affordable housing to meet local needs. Some limited development is important for the long-term sustainability of rural communities. Outside these settlements, in the countryside, a more restrictive approach to development will be taken as set out in other policies in the LPR .

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## AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield

## Policy SP4

**Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Aldermaston and Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Burghfield**

In the interests of public safety, and to ensure that any proposed developments do not pose an external hazard to the AWE sites, any new development of a type more particularly described in the table below <sup>(10)</sup> located in the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ)<sup>(11)</sup> of AWE Aldermaston and AWE Burghfield is likely to be refused planning permission by the Council, especially when the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and/or Ministry of Defence (MoD) have advised against that development and/or object.

The ONR will be consulted on applications for new development in the DEPZ, Outer Consultation Zone (OCZ)<sup>(12)</sup> and any other consultation zone as detailed on [ONR-website](#) which meets the consultation criteria described in the table below (as may be amended by the ONR from time to time).

For development proposals in the DEPZ and OCZ for each of AWE's sites, consideration will be given as to how the proposed development would impact on the AWE Off-Site Emergency Plan and supporting documents.

**Development within the Land Use Planning Consultation Zones: Office for Nuclear Regulation**

AWE Aldermaston (AWE A)		AWE Burghfield (AWE B)
Zone	Development Type	
DEPZ	Any new development, re-use or re-classification of an existing development that could lead to an increase in residential or non-residential populations thus impacting on the off-site emergency plan.	
	Any new development, re-use or re-classification of an existing development that could pose an external hazard to the site.	
OCZ	Any new residential development of 200 dwellings or greater.	
	Any re-use or re-classification of an existing development that will lead to a material increase in the size of an existing development (greater than 500 persons).	
	Any new non-residential development that could introduce vulnerable groups to the OCZ.	
	Any new development, re-use or re-classification of an existing development that could pose an external hazard to the site.	
12km zone	A circular zone of 12km radius around all nuclear sites, for certain types of significant development due to the potential for such developments to pose an external hazard to sites.	

ONR's website provides non-exhaustive examples of the types of developments that could pose an external hazard to a nuclear licensed site and the examples of the type of developments ONR would expect to be consulted on.

The maps set out in Appendix 3 provide the mapping information, as at March 2020 in relation to the DEPZs, OCZs (5km) and the 12km consultation zones for each AWE site as per the ONR consultation criteria.<sup>(13)</sup>

**Supporting Text**

**4.36** There are two nuclear licensed sites located in West Berkshire, the Atomic Weapons Establishment in Aldermaston (AWE A) and in Burghfield (AWE B). These are operated by AWE plc on behalf of the Ministry of Defence and regulated by the Office of Nuclear Regulation (ONR) (as well as other regulators).

10 This table reflects the ONR's consultation criteria as at 2022 – please note that these may change over time and the Policy SP4 reflects the Council's intention to follow the latest ONR guidance from time to time

11 Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) as defined by REPPiR and as detailed on the Council's [website](#)

12 Outer Consultation Zone (OCZ) and 12km zones defined on ONR website along with relevant distances and centre points

13 It should be noted that the ONR 12km land use planning area should not be confused with the REPPiR Outer Planning Zones (OPZ) for the AWE sites. OPZs are for emergency planning use only. In 2022 they were AWE Aldermaston 15km and AWE Burghfield 12km.

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4.37 Both AWE sites are core to sustaining the UK government's nuclear deterrent and support national defence and security.

4.38 There are hazards associated with the authorised use of these sites including conventional chemicals, explosives and radiation sources. As a result of the quantities and types of material involved, the sites are also regulated under the following key legislation:

- a. The Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2019 (REPPIR)<sup>(14)</sup>. Both sites fall within the scope of REPPIR legislation. The regulator for these sites is the ONR;
- b. Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 2015 (COMAH)<sup>(15)</sup>. Under these regulations AWE A is a Lower Tier COMAH site. The joint regulators for this site are the ONR and the Environment Agency (EA). AWE B does not fall under the COMAH regulations at the present time (2022);
- c. Explosive Regulations 2014<sup>(16)</sup>. Both AWE A and AWE B sites have explosives on site and AWE plc holds an explosives licence for both sites. The regulator is the ONR.
- d. Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 (EPR). Both sites generate and dispose of radioactive wastes. The regulator is the EA.

4.39 The NPPF states at paragraph 45: "*Local planning authorities should consult the appropriate bodies when considering applications for the siting of, or changes to, major hazard sites, installations or pipelines, or for development around them.*"

4.40 Furthermore, the NPPF at paragraph 95 states:

*"Planning policies and decisions should promote public safety and take into account wider security and defence requirements by:*

- i. *anticipating and addressing possible malicious threats and natural hazards, especially in locations where large numbers of people are expected to congregate. Policies for relevant areas (such as town centre and regeneration frameworks), and the layout and design of developments, should be informed by the most up-to-date information available from the police and other agencies about the nature of potential threats and their implications. This includes appropriate and proportionate steps that can be taken to reduce vulnerability, increase resilience and ensure public safety; and security and*
- ii. *recognising and supporting development required for operational defence and security purposes, and ensuring that operational sites are not affected adversely by the impact of other development proposed in the area."*

4.41 Paragraph 97(b) (ensuring that operational defence and security sites are not adversely affected by the impact of other development in the area) is complemented by paragraph 187 of the NPPF which provides, amongst other things, that "*planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development can be integrated effectively with existing businesses...*" and that existing businesses "*should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established*".

4.42 These national policies should be read alongside other relevant policies relating to economic development within the LPR.

4.43 The NPPF defines major hazard sites, installations and pipelines as: '*Sites and infrastructure, including licensed explosive sites and nuclear installations, around which Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (and Office for Nuclear Regulation) consultation distances to mitigate the consequences to public safety of major accidents may apply.*'

4.44 The preface to the [guidance](#) accompanying REPPIR 2019 states: "*The provisions in REPPIR have been developed with consideration of provisions in the Control of Major Hazards Regulations 2015 (COMAH) [10] and the Pipelines Safety Regulations 1996 [11] to maximise emergency preparedness consistency between Regulations for major hazards sectors.*"

4.45 Nuclear installations which are regulated by REPPIR present a potential major hazard as a result of the quantities of radioactive materials on the site.

14 Radiation - Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2019 (REPPIR)

15 [COMAH Guidance](#)

16 [Explosives Regulations 2014 -L150](#)



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- 4.46** Under the REPPiR legislation a DEPZ must be determined by the local authority where the relevant nuclear site is situated, for the AWE sites this is West Berkshire District Council.
- 4.47** The DEPZ determination process, including the data behind the information provided in the Consequence Report prepared and issued by AWE, in 2019, was subject to an unsuccessful Judicial Review brought against the Council.
- 4.48** The DEPZ for the AWE sites is the geographic area that in respect of which the AWE Off-Site Emergency Plan must have detailed plans in place and the Council, along with the other agencies involved in the AWE Off-Site Emergency Plan, must be able to respond effectively. The regulators therefore require assurances that the AWE Off-Site Emergency Plan owned by the Council is adequate and can be implemented effectively in order to protect the public.
- 4.49** The OCZ and 12km land use planning consultation zones for the AWE sites are determined by the ONR and extends from a geographical centre point on each AWE sites.
- 4.50** The DEPZs and OCZs for the AWE sites cross over into the following neighbouring councils: Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, Reading Borough Council, and Wokingham Borough Council (see further below).
- 4.51** In respect of both AWE sites the ONR is consulted on any applications for new development within the DEPZ, the OCZ and the 12km zone (and any other consultation zone determined by the ONR from time to time) which meet the consultation criteria. These developments may have an adverse impact on the viability and operability of the AWE Off-Site Emergency Plan and/or pose an external hazard to the nuclear sites.
- 4.52** The ONR provides advice to the local planning authorities on planning applications for developments around the AWE nuclear licensed sites. This advice seeks to limit the radiological public health consequences to members of the public in the event of a radiation emergency and to ensure that the developments do not pose an external hazard to the sites.
- 4.53** Given the potential cumulative effects of any population increase surrounding the AWE sites, it will be necessary to monitor committed and future approved but not built development in partnership with neighbouring councils. The councils will monitor housing completions and commitments as part of the Annual Monitoring Report and send this information directly to the Emergency Planning Services in each council and the ONR for them to make informed judgements when assessing future development proposals.
- 4.54** The ONR's decision making process is detailed on its website. <sup>(17)</sup> The ONR will normally advise against a particular development should they not receive adequate assurance from the owner of the Off-Site Emergency Plan that the development can be accommodated within that Plan. As a result, the ONR will consider feedback provided by West Berkshire District Council Emergency Planning Service, as the Plan owner under REPPiR. This feedback is often based on wider consultation with the AWE Off-Site Planning Group (a group of responding local, regional and national agencies). Should it be considered by the responding agencies that the AWE Off-Site Emergency Plan (the Plan) would be adversely affected with no viable and sustainable mitigation options available, such that the Plan would not be able to accommodate the development and therefore protect public health, then normally West Berkshire District Council Emergency Planning Service would submit advice against the development to the local planning authority and inform the ONR. Consideration will be given taking into account the Guidance currently under development.
- 4.55** The ONR will provide advice for developments that potentially pose an external hazard to the AWE sites.
- 4.56** Policy SP4 reflects the Council's intention to normally follow the ONR's advice in the ONR's consultation zones.
- 4.57** During the plan period there may be changes in the inputs to the ONR's process which may result in consequential changes to the consultation zones or criteria. These will be kept under review.
- 4.58** During the plan period there may also be changes to the DEPZ as a result of the requirement under REPPiR legislation to undertake formal reviews of the DEPZ at least on a 3 yearly basis or because of a material change in work with ionizing radiation. This may result in the DEPZ for either AWE site remaining the same, extending or reducing in size and geography over time. These will be kept under review.

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## Design quality

## Policy SP7

## Design Quality

New development will be required to strengthen a sense of place through high quality locally distinctive design and place shaping. This will enable healthy place making, creating places that are better for people, taking opportunities available for conserving and enhancing the character, appearance and quality of an area and the way it functions.

Development proposals will be expected to show how they have responded positively to both national and local design guidance. At a national level this includes the characteristics of a well-designed place as set out in the National Design Guide (2021), or as superseded, and at a local level, this includes neighbourhood plans and relevant community planning documents that identify the local character and distinctiveness of an area which is valued by local communities.

## Supporting Text

**5.28** A sense of place is about ensuring that development responds in a holistic way. The Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission <sup>(25)</sup> notes that new development should be designed to fit into the life and texture of the place where it occurs and should also aim to be an improvement of that place. It promotes beautiful buildings in beautiful places, where they are also beautifully placed.

**5.29** In that context, the purpose of this policy is to ensure that all new development across West Berkshire is of the highest possible design quality, in line with both national and local design guidance.

**5.30** For new development to comply with the [National Design Guide](#) <sup>(26)</sup> and be of the highest possible design quality, proposals for new development should demonstrate a positive response to the following characteristics of a well-designed place:

- a. Context – Proposals for new development should enhance the surroundings by beginning with an understanding of an area’s existing character and context and its design should evolve from West Berkshire’s high quality and diverse landscape character and rich built and cultural heritage.
- b. Identity – New development should be attractive and distinctive, complementing and enhancing existing areas, using architectural distinctiveness (through both the quality and choice of construction materials and techniques) and high quality design, to reinforce local identity and to create a sense of place; one that is successful and enjoyed. Architectural design should be appropriate and sympathetic to the setting, in terms of height, massing, scale, proportions, roof form, materials, night and day visibility, elevation, vernacular detailing (where relevant), hard and soft landscaping, curtilage and boundary treatment.
- c. Built form – All forms of development should be designed appropriately in terms of nature, location and scale. When assessing an application consideration will be given to the impact of the scheme taking into account existing approved and proposed development in the same locality and considering the cumulative impact of development over time.
- d. Movement - Proposals will be designed to enhance the way an area functions in practical terms through a mix of land uses, by ensuring the development is well connected, accessible, safe and easy for people to find their way through and around.
- e. Nature – Development will be designed to strengthen green infrastructure in accordance with policy SP10 and should include arrangements for its long term maintenance and management. Design proposals will create habitats and select species that are locally characteristic, taking opportunities to design wildlife habitats into the fabric of buildings and enhance wildlife connectivity in accordance with Policy SP11.
- f. Public spaces - A sense of place can be created through a full understanding of how new development contributes to the character of an area and adapting design techniques to create places that feel safe, and secure; places that feel inclusive and people enjoy using; places that promote physical activity, enhance social connections and strengthened mental health; and places that people can identify with and can take pride in or responsibility for their upkeep. Development will be comprehensive at a human scale using gateways, focal points and

25 Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission

26 National Design Guide

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landmarks as appropriate. Landscape treatment, street furniture and infrastructure will be of the highest quality and have a clear purpose. Opportunities for the integration of high quality public art will be considered. Opportunities for the planting of trees and other soft landscaping will be maximised.

- g. Uses – New development will help to create more sustainable and socially inclusive places by contributing towards the provision of a mix of uses that support everyday activities including living, working and playing; and by delivering an integrated mix of tenures and housing types.
- h. Homes and buildings – New development should be designed to be functional, healthy and sustainable, and all residential development should comply with the nationally described space standards, as set out in the Technical Housing Standards (2015) or as superseded, in line with Policy DM30. New development should provide a high quality of amenity and privacy for occupants of the development and neighbouring properties and land, having regard to overlooking, access to natural sunlight, outlook and amenity space, in line with Policy DM31. Development will be designed to provide appropriate open space provision in terms of amount, layout and location in accordance with Policy DM40.
- i. Resources – New development should respond positively to the challenge of climate change and be designed for climate resilience, including maximising the efficient use of sustainable technologies, resources, materials, solar gain, in accordance with Policy SP5. New development should be designed to include the provision of high quality, secure, accessible and where possible integrated storage for general and recycling waste, heating fuel, and transport related equipment.
- j. Lifespan – New development should be made to last and able to adapt to changing future needs and technologies over time.

**5.31** New waterside development adjacent to the Kennet & Avon Canal should seek to positively address the water, integrate the towing path and open up access to the water, link the waterside space to the water, make use of the water itself, incorporate access improvements, engage with the benefits of being by the water, and reflect the scale of the local waterway to the wider neighbourhood.

**5.32** Use of the National Design Guide and other national design guidance, including [Secured By Design](#) <sup>(27)</sup> principles will be supplemented through the use of more detailed local design guidance. These currently include the Council's Supplementary Planning Document '[Quality Design – West Berkshire](#)', [Conservation Area Appraisals](#), and [Shopfronts and Signs Supplementary Planning Guidance](#), and [neighbourhood plans](#).

**5.33** The Council also actively encourages the production of non-statutory community planning documents such as [town and village design statements](#) and [parish plans](#). Where they have been adopted or endorsed by the Council will use the relevant elements within them to inform and support the policies contained within the Local Plan. Local design guidance can emphasise the unique characteristics which give a particular place its local distinctiveness and also highlight the importance of the richness in detail. Choosing the right materials which are appropriate and sympathetic to the local vernacular, for instance, will greatly help new development to fit harmoniously with its surroundings and ensure that it reflects and respects existing local character.

**5.34** For development which affects the North Wessex Downs AONB these documents also include 'Guidance on the Selection and Use of Colour in Development' (2021) <sup>(28)</sup> and 'A Guide to Good External Lighting' (2021) <sup>(29)</sup> published by the North Wessex Downs AONB.

**5.35** Development proposals should be accompanied by all necessary supporting information. The Council publishes a [local list of documents](#) that are required as part of planning applications and developers are encouraged to ensure their proposals comply with this list.

27 Secured By Design

28 'Guidance on the Selection and Use of Colour in Development'

29 'A Guide to Good External Lighting'

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## Landscape character

## Policy SP8

**Landscape Character**

Landscape led development which conserves and enhances the diversity and local distinctiveness of the landscape character of the District will be supported.

The natural, cultural, and perceptual components of the character of the landscape will be considered as a whole. Particular regard will be given to:

- a. Its valued features and qualities;
- b. The sensitivity and capacity of the area to change; and
- c. Ensuring that new development is appropriate in terms of location, scale and design in the context of the existing settlement form, pattern and character.

Development should be demonstrably informed by and respond positively to the evaluation of the distinctive landscape character areas set out in the [West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment](#) (2019) and other relevant landscape character assessments. These assessments provide an understanding of the valued characteristics, features and qualities of identified local landscape character areas across West Berkshire.

Proposals for development should be accompanied by an appropriate landscape assessment carried out in accordance with the current guidance from the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment. The level of information provided should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed but should be sufficient to allow an informed assessment of the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed development. The assessment should demonstrably inform the detailed design of the development, including its layout, form, scale and appearance in accordance with Policy SP7.

**Supporting Text**

**5.36** One of the key issues facing West Berkshire is the conservation and enhancement of the distinctive local character of both the natural, and built and historic environment. It helps local people in West Berkshire achieve sustainable development. The high quality diverse landscape character with its rich cultural and natural heritage contributes to the enjoyment and overall quality of life of everyone in the District. Having an understanding of this distinctive character and using this as a positive tool in accommodating necessary change will ensure that the inherent qualities and valued features of West Berkshire's landscape will continue to be appreciated.

**5.37** Conserving and enhancing the distinctive landscape character of the District is given considerable weight in line with national policy which sets out that valued landscapes should be protected in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan.

**5.38** 74% of the District lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB, extending from Wiltshire in the west and Oxfordshire in the north, over the Berkshire Downs. At West Berkshire's eastern boundary, the River Thames, the North Wessex Downs AONB adjoins the Chilterns AONB above Purley-on-Thames and then curves back around the north of Newbury before returning south to cover part of the Hampshire Downs. The AONB is characterised by the quality of its chalk landscape which ranges from remote open downland, dramatic skyline escarpments, contrasting wooded downland, and the small scale intimate settled river valleys of the Lambourn and Pang. As a nationally valued and designated landscape, the North Wessex Downs AONB will be conserved and enhanced in accordance with its national status and this is set out in Policy SP2.

**5.39** A landscape does not have to have a designation to be valued locally. Outside the AONB, the River Kennet and the inter-connected Kennet & Avon Canal, from Newbury to Reading, lies within a distinctive broad corridor of an open lowland landscape characterised by a variety of wetland habitats including wet meadow, reed bed, and flooded gravel workings. Further to the south and east there are small areas of remnant heath with the Ministry of Defence owning large tracts of land at Aldermaston and Burghfield.

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**5.40** Value can apply to areas of landscape as a whole or to individual elements, features and aesthetic or perceptual dimensions which contribute to the character of the landscape. There are no locally designated landscapes in West Berkshire. All landscapes across the District have some degree of value and all development should therefore respond positively to the identified character and valued qualities inherent in that local landscape. The West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2019 evaluates and provides an understanding of what is important and why, for each identified local landscape character area across the District. It provides a framework for informed decisions to be made as to whether different landscapes should evolve by:

- Conserving the existing and historic character;
- Enhancing existing character by introducing new features into the landscape;
- Strengthening or restoring a previous character; or
- Creating a new character when a sense of place and local distinctiveness have been eroded or lost.

**5.41** Other relevant landscape character assessments include the North Wessex Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment (2002), which was produced in order to manage and guide change across a designated area extending beyond West Berkshire. In addition, [Historic Landscape Characterisation](#) (2007) and [Historic Environment Character Zoning \(2007\)](#) <sup>(30)</sup>, which provide a sound understanding of the historic environment context of West Berkshire, can also be used by the Council to inform and support planning decisions.

**5.42** The character of the landscape in West Berkshire is defined by the historic processes that have shaped and formed the landscapes that exist today. Having an understanding of these processes and the way the historic environment of the District has influenced settlement patterns and the sense of place of particular areas is essential when accommodating future development. Settlements are a key component of the landscape, and in West Berkshire most settlements can trace their origins back over many hundreds of years. The separate and distinctive identity of these individual settlements helps to define communities and is an important feature of the local character of West Berkshire. A variety of rural settlement forms can be seen, from the nucleated patterns common on the chalk downs to the more dispersed patterns found in the southern part of the District. Much of the pressure for development is around the edges of settlements, which can physically lead to coalescence or introduce an increase in activity which has an urbanising effect. Despite this, a key feature of even the larger settlements is the way in which few have coalesced in recent times and so the blurring of the physical distinction between places has largely been avoided. The retention of these actual and perceived visual breaks remains important for the continued maintenance of the existing settlement form, pattern and character.

**5.43** The policy makes clear that proposals for development should be accompanied by an appropriate landscape assessment carried out in accordance with the current guidance from the Landscape Institute and IEMA. Depending on the scale and nature of the proposals this will either be a formal Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) typically as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or less formally as a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA). Regardless of the scale of the assessment, it should address both the potential landscape effects and also the potential visual effects that may result from the development. Detailed development proposals will then be expected to respond positively to this assessment to ensure they conserve and enhance landscape character by strengthening a sense of place in accordance with Policy SP7.

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## Historic environment

## Policy SP9

**Historic Environment**

Positive action will be taken to ensure that opportunities for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment are maximised. The historic character, sense of place, environmental quality and local distinctiveness of West Berkshire will also be sustained and enhanced through new development. Development proposals will be required to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance those aspects of the historic environment which are recognised as being of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest, or of landscape or townscape significance. These heritage assets include:

- a. Listed Buildings;
- b. Scheduled Monuments and archaeological sites of national importance;
- c. Registered Parks and Gardens;
- d. Registered Battlefields;
- e. Conservation Areas;
- f. Buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas and landscapes that have been added to the [West Berkshire Local List of Heritage Assets](#); and
- g. Other places, spaces, structures and features which may not be formally designated but are recognised as significant elements of West Berkshire's heritage and are positively identified on the [West Berkshire Historic Environment Record](#), or through the development management or other planning processes.

Development that has an impact upon a heritage asset, whether designated or non-designated, will be expected to maximise opportunities to preserve, enhance, or better reveal the asset's significance and/or setting, and make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness through high standards of design in accordance with Policy SP7.

All proposals affecting a heritage asset, including its setting, should be accompanied by a 'Statement of Heritage Significance', in accordance with the current guidance from Historic England. For known assets of archaeological interest, or on land where there is archaeological potential, an archaeological desk-based assessment will be required as a minimum. The level of information provided should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed but should be sufficient to allow an informed assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage asset.

Weight will be given to the conservation of the District's heritage assets in a manner according to their importance. Any harm to the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset must be justified. Proposals will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal: whether it has been demonstrated that all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain the existing use, find new uses, or mitigate the extent of the harm to the significance of the asset; and whether the works proposed are the minimum required to secure the long term use of the asset.

Development which would lead to substantial harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset or its setting will not be permitted, unless –

- h. This harm is demonstrated necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that cannot otherwise be achieved and which outweigh that harm; or
- i. The nature of the asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- j. No viable use of the asset can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;
- k. Conservation by grant funding or some other form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- l. The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Development which would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset or its setting will not be permitted, unless this harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

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Where development would affect the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, a balanced judgement will be made which has regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Development proposals for enabling development which would otherwise conflict with other policies in the Local Plan but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset will be permitted where:

- i. the proposals will not materially harm the heritage value of the asset or its setting;
- ii. it can be demonstrated that alternative solutions have failed;
- iii. the proposed development is the minimum necessary to protect the significance of the heritage asset;
- iv. it meets the tests and criteria set out in Historic England guidance GPA4: Enabling Development and Heritage Assets;
- v. it is subject to a legal agreement to secure the restoration of the asset prior to completion of the enabling development; and
- vi. it enables public appreciation of the saved heritage asset.

Where material change to a heritage asset has been agreed, recording and interpretation should be undertaken to document and understand the asset's archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance. The scope of the recording should be proportionate to the asset's significance and the impact of the development on the asset. The information and understanding gained should be made available for public benefit, as a minimum through the deposition of evidence with the West Berkshire Historic Environment Record. Archaeological archives resulting from investigations in West Berkshire should be deposited in West Berkshire Museum or an appropriate digital depository, with provision made for ongoing conservation, storage, access and interpretation.

Proposals for development will be informed by and respond to:

- m. The nature and potential of heritage assets identified through the West Berkshire Historic Environment Record and the extent of their significance;
- n. Relevant historic landscape character assessments;
- o. Other features identified in various settlement character studies including the Newbury Historic Character Study and Conservation Area Appraisals; and
- p. The West Berkshire Historic Environment Action Plan (HEAP).

### Supporting Text

**5.44** People have left their mark on our landscape for over ten thousand years, modifying natural features, utilising local materials, cultivating the soil and creating monuments, buildings and settlements. This multi-layered interaction of humans and their environment tells our story and gives us a perspective on our own times. West Berkshire's historic environment is therefore a positive and irreplaceable resource, valuable not only in social, educational and economic terms, but as a frame and reference point for the creation of distinctive places for existing and future generations to enjoy. It shapes the District's sense of identity and is intrinsically linked to the quality of life of its residents, the success of its existing businesses and the wider cultural profile that West Berkshire projects to potential investors and visitors. The Local Plan therefore sets out to implement a positive strategy for the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the historic environment across the District as a fundamental approach to sustainable development.

**5.45** The policy gives great weight to conserving the significance of heritage assets and their settings in a manner according to their importance. Heritage assets include any valued component of the historic environment, be it a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape, identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the Council, 'non-designated' heritage assets.

**5.46** There are a wide variety of heritage assets across West Berkshire, ranging in age from the early prehistoric to the modern day and in scale from landscape parks to milestones.

**5.47** Designated heritage assets in 2020 include:

- 53 Conservation Areas
- Approximately 1900 Listed Buildings
- Approximately 90 Scheduled Monuments

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- 12 Registered Parks and Gardens
- 1 Registered Battlefield, the First Battle of Newbury 1643

### 5.48 Non-designated heritage assets include:

- Those that have been entered onto the [West Berkshire Local List of Heritage Assets](#)
- Assets not yet on the West Berkshire Local List of Heritage Assets but which have been identified as having heritage interest
  - In the West Berkshire Historic Environment Record;
  - During the development management process;
  - Through other planning processes to assess local character, such as conservation area and village character appraisals;
  - Through neighbourhood plans; and
  - Through site assessments undertaken as part of the Local Plan
- 1 Battlefield included in the Appendix of the Battlefields Register, the Second Battle of Newbury 1644
- Nationally important but non-scheduled archaeological remains, which should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets
- Registered commons
- Historic Public Rights of Way

**5.49** Historic England produces an annual register of designated heritage assets known to be at risk as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development. In West Berkshire the Heritage at Risk register (HAR) has included Grade I or II\* Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, the Registered Battlefield, and Places of Worship. The Battlefield of the First Battle of Newbury 1643 was removed from the Heritage at Risk Register in 2017. The Council in collaboration with the West Berkshire Heritage Forum will also maintain a list of other local heritage assets which are at risk but which do not meet the criteria for inclusion on the HAR. These may be Grade II listed buildings or non-designated heritage assets. Emphasis will continue to be given to finding solutions for those assets that are at risk through discussions with owners, management plans, stewardship schemes and partnership working.

**5.50** Under the NPPF, local authorities should maintain or have access to a Historic Environment Record (HER). The [West Berkshire HER](#) is the principal register of the physical remains of past human activity in the area, including designated and non-designated assets and those on the Heritage at Risk register. It is the primary index to the archaeological investigations that have taken place in the District as well as to a wide range of sources of information from books to unpublished reports, and historic maps to aerial photographs, and the locations of these sources in libraries and record offices. The HER is a dynamic information service and public record, which serves both as an evidence base for the planning process and as the recipient of new knowledge gained through developer-funded fieldwork and community projects.

### 5.51 The HER will be used to:

- Assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make; and
- Predict the likelihood that currently unidentified heritage assets, particularly sites of historic and archaeological interest, will be discovered in the future. Many heritage assets remain undiscovered.

**5.52** Where development will lead to the loss (wholly or in part) of heritage assets, developers will be required to record and advance our understanding of the significance of the asset or relevant part of it. However the ability to investigate and record a heritage asset is not a factor in deciding whether consent for its destruction should be given. Knowledge which advances our understanding of the past is the core purpose of archaeological work. This public benefit will be best achieved if the recording is undertaken by a professionally accredited organisation or individual with appropriate expertise, complying with best practice and taking account of research frameworks. The resultant report should be deposited with the West Berkshire HER, but for investigations with particular important or unusual findings, publication through books and journals may be appropriate.

**5.53** Any archaeological recording project will also involve the compilation, deposition and conservation of an archaeological archive as the record of the original findings and the raw material for future research. The West Berkshire Museum is the collecting body for physical documentary and material archaeological archives derived from



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any site researched or investigated within the unitary authority of West Berkshire. Digital archives should be deposited with an accredited digital repository. Provision should be made for the curation and safe-guarding of archaeological archives to ensure continued public engagement for the purposes of exhibition, learning and enjoyment.

**5.54** Development proposals likely to affect the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset, or its setting, are required to demonstrate a thorough understanding of context, the significance of the asset and any potential impacts on that significance through the preparation of a proportionate heritage statement. This should be in the form of a 'Statement of Heritage Significance', in accordance with Historic England Advice Note 12 'Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets'. Statements of Heritage Significance must be proficient, objective and impartial in order to be of greatest value to the decision making process and should provide sufficient information to demonstrate how the proposals would contribute to the asset's conservation. For known heritage assets of archaeological interest, an archaeological desk based assessment should be provided and, where there is archaeological potential, pre-determination field evaluation may be necessary. As a minimum the West Berkshire Historic Environment Record should be consulted.

**5.55** Heritage assets rarely prevent development schemes where their significance has been properly assessed and understood from the outset. Indeed, the most successful schemes often arise from this understanding and an appreciation of the social, cultural, economic, and environmental value that can be gained from their retention, sympathetic re-use and successful integration. Preserving embodied energy through the re-use and adaption of existing historic buildings for example, can be more sustainable than constructing new buildings. Proposals for energy saving measures should be designed with the knowledge and understanding of the building's significance. Getting the balance right and avoiding unintended consequences, is best done with a holistic 'whole building' approach in accordance with the current guidance from Historic England. This helps to highlight and resolve uncertainties and reconcile conflicting aims, ensuring that energy efficient measures are suitable, robust, well integrated, properly coordinated and sustainable.

**5.56** A clear understanding of the significance of a heritage asset and its setting is necessary to develop proposals which avoid or minimise harm. Advice from the Council's officers should be sought in the process of creating proposals; early assessments, a conservation plan or targeted specialist investigation can help to identify constraints and opportunities arising from the asset at an initial stage. This is particularly relevant where heritage assets have received little previous attention, or where there is archaeological potential. Such studies can reveal alternative development or design options, such as more compatible uses or a more appropriate scale of development. These schemes are more likely to minimise harm and deliver public benefits in a sustainable and appropriate way.

**5.57** The long-term conservation of a small minority of heritage assets can sometimes present particular problems. Enabling development is a planning mechanism which, in extreme cases, permits a departure from planning policies in order to enable the conservation of a relevant heritage asset in cases where the future of that asset would not otherwise be secured. Where planning applications propose enabling development, the Council will use the detailed and rigorous tests set out by Historic England in order to determine whether planning permission would be appropriate.

**5.58** Having an understanding of the way the historic environment of the District has influenced settlement patterns, and the sense of place of particular areas across West Berkshire, is essential when accommodating future development. Relevant landscape character assessments, including [Historic Landscape Characterisation](#) (2007) and [Historic Environment Character Zoning](#) (2007) will be used by the Council to inform and support planning decisions. At a more detailed level, these will be supplemented by the use of relevant settlement character studies, including the [Newbury Historic Character Study](#) (2006), and adopted [Conservation Area Appraisals](#).

**5.59** The historic environment belongs to the whole community and everyone should be able to participate in sustaining this shared resource. One mechanism for achieving this is through the West Berkshire Heritage Forum, a partnership established in 2009 to recognise, promote and protect the District's heritage. The West Berkshire Historic Environment Action Plan (HEAP), published by the West Berkshire Heritage Forum, describes the character and evolution of the area as a whole and identifies its significant historic components. These include Mesolithic sites in the Kennet Valley; transport routes such as the Ridgeway and other old drove roads, the Kennet & Avon Canal and the Great Western Railway; pottery and brick manufacture and the cloth industry; Civil War battles; and the sites associated with the Cold War, nuclear technologies and peace protests. The HEAP identifies key issues and opportunities and provides an overview of the actions required to ensure long term conservation. Its aims encompass the promotion of greater awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment and advocacy of a multi-agency approach to sustainable management.

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**5.60** Since 2012 the Council has also been working with the West Berkshire Heritage Forum and local communities to compile a '[West Berkshire Local List of Heritage Assets](#)'. The list is regularly updated as new assets are identified. Successful conservation and enhancement of the historic environment of the District can only be achieved through partnership and co-operation. To this end the Council will continue to work closely with the West Berkshire Heritage Forum and local communities to ensure that decisions continue to reflect the value the public places on it.

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## Green Infrastructure

## Policy SP10

## Green Infrastructure

The Council will strengthen both local and strategic green infrastructure (GI) assets across the District. This will be achieved by protecting and enhancing existing GI assets and linkages and adding to the local network for the benefit of both the natural environment and the health and wellbeing of the community. This policy will be considered in conjunction with other policies in the LPR affecting the status and provision of GI in the District.

Depending on their location, nature and scale, development proposals should:

- a. Protect and/or enhance existing GI and the functions this performs,
- b. Create additional GI which is integrated into the overall development design from the outset; and
- c. Take opportunities to achieve multi-functionality by bringing GI functions together.

Proposals for GI will be supported where they:

- d. Help to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change and boost resilience through sustainable drainage measures which minimise urban heating, flood risk and maximising GI habitats to sequester carbon and provide environmental cooling and insulation functions;
- e. Generate high quality GI which creates an attractive and distinctive setting to new development, enhancing any existing asset that may be present. This should be planned and designed from the outset as a network of multifunctional green and blue spaces and other natural features which identify and respond to the site's local context. Proposals for GI will be expected to be designed in accordance with the most up to date recognised GI standards;
- f. Can provide pleasant and safe 'green routes' to commute or travel on foot, cycle and horseback which help to link parts of urban areas and to the surrounding countryside along blue (water) and green corridors;
- g. Enhance the natural environment and natural processes to improve biodiversity and increase natural capital whilst seeking opportunities to use green infrastructure to extend wildlife corridors and provide habitat connectivity, particularly in urban areas and where it contributes to nature recovery networks;
- h. Use the GI network to help improve health and wellbeing and promote local social interaction and community networks;
- i. Increase its attractiveness as a recreation opportunity and support accessibility to public open spaces which are adaptable and capable of accommodating multiple uses of varying ability;
- j. Restore and open up historic routeways such as hollow ways and drovers roads, avenues and access to historic parks;
- k. Does not involve the culverting of watercourses, except where essential to allow highways and / or other infrastructure to cross;
- l. Protect, enhance and support the creation of integrated constructed wetlands, 'wet woodland' habitats, ponds, lakes, reed beds, raingardens, and floodplain meadows;
- m. Make appropriate provision to protect, enhance, improve and maintain accessible networks of blue corridors, including the restoration of chalk streams and their catchments, de-culverting, back water creation, de-silting, naturalising the channel through in-channel habitat enhancements and removal of structures where appropriate;
- n. Maintain and enhance natural drainage features; and
- o. Provide 'buffer strips' of vegetation along the banks of water courses.

Development proposals will be required to take account of existing access networks within and around the site. Opportunities should be sought to protect and enhance the Public Rights of Way network within and adjacent to development proposals in line with the NPPF, having particular regard to ensuring the needs of all users have been provided throughout the year. The addition of new connections and status upgrades to the existing rights of way network will be supported.

Proposals involving the loss of green or blue spaces and other natural features will not be supported unless there is no longer a need for the existing infrastructure or an alternative is provided to meet the local needs that is both accessible and of equal or greater quality and benefit to the community.

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Proposals for major development will be required to consider the long-term management and maintenance of GI infrastructure and should clearly demonstrate how these considerations have informed site proposals. Details of maintenance requirements and arrangements will be required to be set out, including who is responsible for these requirements. Appropriate funding arrangements for delivery of the long-term maintenance requirements should be clearly demonstrated to the Council before construction starts, including measures to secure biodiversity net gain through all phases and stages of the development.

The amount, type and design of GI will be informed by the appropriate national and local standards, guidance and best practice current at the time of the application.

### Supporting text

**5.61** The NPPF defines green infrastructure as ‘a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity’. It is integral to successful place-making through the range of multi-faceted benefits well-designed and integrated green infrastructure can bring to an area. In West Berkshire the Green Infrastructure network will be The network is planned, designed and managed to:

- promote healthier living and positive well-being;
- lessen the impacts of climate change;
- improve air quality and water quality;
- support economic growth and investment via greener settings;
- boost tourism and support tourism related jobs;
- encourage walking, cycling, horse riding and other recreational and sensory experiences;
- store carbon; and
- improve biodiversity and ecological resilience.

**5.62** Examples of GI assets include:

- Natural and semi-natural rural and urban green and blue spaces – including woodland and scrub, hedgerows, individual trees and groups of trees grassland (e.g. downland and meadow), heath, wetlands, open and running water, brownfield sites and bare rock habitats (e.g. quarries);
- Parks and gardens – urban and country parks, formal gardens, and institutional grounds (e.g. schools and hospitals);
- Amenity green space – informal recreation spaces, play areas, outdoor sports facilities, housing greenspaces, community gardens, roof gardens, village greens, commons, living roofs and walls, trees and hedgerows, civic spaces, and highway trees and verges;
- Allotments, orchards, and farmland;
- Cemeteries and churchyards;
- Green/blue corridors - rivers and canals (including their banks and towpaths), road verges and rail embankments, cycling routes and public rights of way;
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites and Nature Reserves;
- Local Green Spaces;
- Accessible archaeological and historic sites;
- Functional green space such as sustainable drainage schemes (SuDS) and flood storage areas;
- Green and brown roofs and green walls on buildings; and
- Lakes and reservoirs.

**5.63** The government’s 25 Year Environment Plan (2018) highlights that ‘The provision of more and better quality green infrastructure, including urban trees, will make towns and cities attractive places to live and work, and bring about key long term improvements in people’s health’. The document makes a commitment to the production of a GI Framework, <sup>(31)</sup> currently being produced by Natural England, which will help to target the creation and/or improvement of GI across the District. The Framework complements Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Nature Recovery Strategies which both form part of the Environment Act (2021). To ensure high quality multi-functional GI is delivered in West Berkshire as set out in the policy, development proposals will be expected to be designed having regard to the Natural

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England Framework, and any future relevant national, regional or local guidance which could be brought forward. Proposals will be supported which use the most up to date recognised GI principles and standards. For example, The Building with Nature Standards developed by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) or the emerging Natural England Green Infrastructure Standards. In addition, if a development falls under BREEAM, consideration of Land Use and Ecology Credits should be undertaken at the design stage to ensure the requirements of Policy DM4 Building Sustainable Homes and Businesses is met.

**5.64** The policy makes clear the Council's commitment for strengthening both local and strategic GI across the District for the benefit of both the natural environment and the health and wellbeing of the community. New GI provision will add to the integrity of the wider GI network of the District and those of neighbouring authorities. Key opportunities include:

- Adopting Sustainable Drainage systems to alleviate flooding and, while supporting broader biodiversity aims and providing local amenity;
- Creating green and blue spaces and planting within development to provide shade, cooling and wind interception and an insulation role in winter;
- Forming buffers zones and wildlife corridors for key habitats and species;
- Providing good quality, accessible green and blue spaces and infrastructure within development to improve health and wellbeing, creating an attractive place to live and work;
- Maximising the number of functions and benefits delivered by each GI asset;
- Interconnecting GI assets to form a strong GI network of green and blue spaces and corridors which deliver the range of GI functions and improve off road connectivity;

**5.65** The West Berkshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Level 1) (2019) recommends that all new development close to rivers and culverts should consider the opportunity presented to improve and enhance the river environment and contribute to national, county and local biodiversity targets. This can be achieved through proposals exploring opportunities for river restoration and enhancement, and projects which reconnect rivers with their floodplains. Options include, backwater creation, de-silting, de-culverting and naturalising the channel through in-channel habitat enhancements and removal of structures. Special consideration needs to be given the Rivers Pang and Lambourn which are groundwater-fed chalk streams, and are fragile hydrological systems, supporting diverse, rare habitats. The Chalk Stream Strategy (2021) sets out the key foundations and principles of chalk stream restoration. It highlights that chalk stream restoration should include the following considerations: the natural gradient of the river, an intact river bed, a dynamic interconnection between the river and the floodplain, and the ecological processes and habitat requirements of the ecosystem engineers (fish, insects, mammals and plants) to shape the habitat.

**5.66** The Council will work in partnership with the local community, statutory advisors, developers, landowners and other organisations to identify and prioritise areas which will provide the best opportunities to protect, maintain and enhance the District's network of high quality 'multi-functional' green and blue spaces and other natural features.

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**Biodiversity and geodiversity****Policy SP11****Biodiversity and geodiversity**

Development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they conserve and enhance biodiversity and/or geodiversity including their long-term future management and deliver a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain.

Development will be permitted where it:

- a. Protects biodiversity and/or geodiversity value and implements appropriate conservation management. The degree of protection will be proportionate to the status of the site or species in terms of its international, national and/or local importance;
- b. Avoids fragmentation and maximises opportunities for restoration, enhancements and connection of linear features which enables strong connectivity of biodiversity as part of an integrated habitat network (including links to habitats outside the district);
- c. Incorporates beneficial biodiversity and/or geodiversity conservation features and enhances existing features, including those that will help wildlife to adapt to climate change where appropriate;
- d. Provides or retains appropriate buffer zones between development proposals and designated sites, habitats for protected or priority species or main rivers, which are informed by detailed site-based assessment;
- e. Provides coherent ecological connectivity and permeability that is integrated and linked to the wider green infrastructure and any nature recovery network identified as relevant to the location;
- f. Seeks to eradicate or control any invasive non-native species present on site; and
- g. Is compatible with any Biodiversity Action Plan, Local Nature Recovery Strategy and /or other strategic conservation management plans for species or habitats that have been formally adopted by the Council.

In addition to the above, where specific identified sites are to be affected the following will be taken into account:

**Internationally Designated Sites**

Development likely to result in a significant effect on an internationally designated site will be subject to assessment under the Habitats Regulations and will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there are no alternatives following/through appropriate derogation tests for the proposal and that any adverse effects on the integrity of the site can be fully avoided, mitigated and/or compensated and proposals are in the public interest.

**Nationally Designated Sites**

Development which is likely to have any adverse impact on the notified features of a nationally designated site will not normally be permitted. In exceptional circumstances, a proposal may be found acceptable where it can be demonstrated that:

- j. A suitable alternative site with a lesser impact than that proposed is not available;
- k. The on-site benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the impacts on the notified features of the site and where applicable, the overall site or habitat network;
- l. All appropriate mitigation measures have been proposed and secured through the development management process; and
- m. Does not prevent future attainment of nationally protected sites from meeting Favourable Condition, or to provide enhancements to enable the nationally designated sites to meet Favourable Condition as per their Conservation Objectives.

**Irreplaceable Habitats**

Proposals which are likely to result in the loss or deterioration of an irreplaceable habitat (such as ancient woodland, ancient or veteran trees, ancient hedgerows, traditional unimproved meadows/ancient grasslands and lowland fens) will only be permitted for wholly exceptional reasons where:

- o. The need and benefits of the development in that location clearly and unambiguously outweigh the loss;

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- p. It has been adequately demonstrated that the irreplaceable habitat cannot be retained with the proposed scheme; and
- q. Appropriate compensation measures are provided on site wherever possible and off site where this not is feasible. The scale and quality of the compensation measures required will be commensurate to the loss or deterioration of the irreplaceable habitat and will be considered on a site by site basis, including long term management and maintenance.

### Sites of Local Importance

Development proposals affecting sites of local importance should always seek to contribute to their favourable management in the long term.

Where a proposal is likely to result in harm to sites of local importance (including habitats or species of principal importance for biodiversity, and sites that meet the criteria for designation as a Local Wildlife Site or designation as a Local Geological Site), developers will be required to accord with the following sequential approach:

- r. Firstly, seek an alternative site in the District with a lesser impact than that proposed;
- s. Secondly, if the first is not possible, demonstrate mitigation measures can be taken on site; and
- t. Thirdly, and as a last resort, seek appropriate compensation measures, on site wherever possible and off site where this is not feasible including long term management and maintenance.

### Biodiversity Net Gain

All proposals should demonstrate a minimum biodiversity net gain of 10% via a Biodiversity Net Gain Plan using the most up to date biodiversity accounting metric developed by Natural England and provide details of the long-term maintenance and management of the net gain. This should be delivered on site in the first instance, or through biodiversity off setting where appropriate.

Major developments in particular must include measures to deliver biodiversity gains through opportunities to:

- u. Restore and enhance existing features on site;
- v. Create additional habitats and ecological networks on site which help support the District's wider ecological network; and
- w. The linking of existing habitats within West Berkshire to create links between ecological networks and where possible, with adjoining features.

## Supporting text

**5.67** West Berkshire supports a rich and diverse range of biodiversity and geodiversity assets which reflect both the underlying geology and soils and traditional management practices that have been carried out over many years. The aim of this policy is to provide a framework for conserving and enhancing this richness and diversity both for its own sake, but also the positive contribution that it makes to the overall quality of life and sense of place for residents and visitors to West Berkshire in both urban and rural areas. Policy SP11 sets out how new development in West Berkshire will be expected to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment at a landscape scale as well as sites of biodiversity importance at different levels. Where appropriate, new development should promote conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and should secure opportunities for a net gain for biodiversity.

**5.68** The 2019 'State of Nature Report' indicates that biodiversity across the UK is continuing to decline and as such change is required in relation to how we manage land. The Report highlights that urbanisation can fragment landscapes by creating barriers between habitats, thus isolating some populations but also recognises the wide variety of green spaces which exist within urban environments including domestic gardens, parks, allotments, cemeteries, ponds, and road verges which can all add to biodiversity value. Habitat connectivity is a key challenge for biodiversity and linked to the challenge of the climate crisis it is important that habitats do not become isolated with metapopulations and local populations of faunal and flora species finding themselves less able to respond to natural fluctuations where they can face heightened risk of decline and extinction.

**5.69** Linear features, or stepping stones, which form part of the connected habitat includes networks of hedgerows and ditches; habitats along all water courses; roadside verges; and (cumulatively) private gardens (including links to habitats outside the District) are essential for the migration, dispersal, and genetic exchange of wild species. Examples of linear features within West Berkshire include waterways such as the River Kennet, River Lambourn and the Kennet and Avon Canal and they play an important role in providing strong connecting links across the biodiversity network.

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By protecting these natural habitats and networks across the District, the Council may be able to avoid or repair fragmentation and isolation of natural habitats and ultimately conserve and enhance our priority natural areas and the connections between them. This element of the policy closely links with Policy SP10.

**5.70** A buffer zone is a landscape feature which can be used to protect a sensitive area from the impacts of development (or other harmful neighbouring land use). Buffers which are linked to corridors will be supported as a means of increasing connectivity across the District to help nature thrive. Buffers should be appropriately designed and informed by an understanding of what needs to be protected and/or mitigated. Regard should also be given to Policy DM6 in regards to providing appropriate buffers along watercourses.

**5.71** The policy takes a hierarchical approach according to the designation and significance of the natural assets and will apply the principle of net gain through delivery in line with paragraph 179 a) of the NPPF and wider government policy including the 25 year Environment Plan (2018).

### Sites of International and National Importance

**5.72** The most important sites for biodiversity and individual wildlife species receive statutory protection under international and national legislation and form part of the national site network. Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) are internationally important and are afforded the highest level of protection. Candidate SACs and proposed SPAs will be afforded the same level of protection as those already designated.

**5.73** SACs are internationally important conservation sites which are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Under these regulations, it is a requirement to seek and protect the most valuable and threatened habitats and species. In accordance with the policy, any developments which are likely to have significant effects on SACs will be required to prepare an appropriate assessment to identify the implications for the site in respect of the site's conservation objectives. There are three SACs in the district (which are all sensitive to surface and groundwater quality and quantity):

- Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain
- River Lambourn
- Kennet Valley Alderwoods.

**5.74** The Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SAC is ecologically important as it contains a cluster of sites which supports one of the most extensive known populations of Desmoulin's whorl snail in the UK and is one of two sites representing the species in the south-western part of its range in the important chalk stream habitat. Integrity of the population is being maintained by taking measures, including habitat creation, to safeguard populations.

**5.75** The River Lambourn SAC is an example of a chalk river characterised by an abundance of water-crowfoots. These species help to modify water flow, promote fine sediment deposition and provide shelter and food for fish and invertebrate animals. The River provides a habitat which is only found in southern and eastern England. For part of its length it is a winterbourne, drying through the summer months. It is one of the least-modified rivers of this type, with a characteristic flora dominated by pond water-crowfoot upstream and water-crowfoot further downstream. It is adversely affected by nutrient enrichment, mainly from sewage inputs and agriculture, but is also vulnerable to artificial reduction in river flows. In March 2022 Natural England advised that the SAC was in unfavourable condition due to unnaturally high levels of phosphorus. It also advised that future development within the hydrological catchment of the River Lambourn SAC must achieve 'nutrient neutrality' to ensure that it does not impact on the condition of the protected site. The Council's approach to nutrient neutrality is set out in Policy DM6 and a more detailed Supplementary Planning Document will also be produced.

**5.76** The Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC is an alluvial forest with Alder and Ash and which contains the largest fragments of alder-ash woodland on the Kennet floodplain. The wettest areas are dominated by alder over tall herbs, sedges and reeds, but dryer patches include a base-rich woodland flora with much dog's mercury and also herb-Paris. The occurrence of the latter is unusual, as it is more typically associated with ancient woodland, whereas evidence suggests that these stands have largely developed over the past century.

**5.77** The Council also has a duty to ensure that future development does not adversely affect the integrity of SACs outside of its geographical area. This includes the Solent Maritime SAC, which receives water from the River Test. The catchment for the River Test extends into a very small part of the district around Combe. It is also adversely affected by nutrient pollution and in March 2022 Natural England advised that the SAC was in unfavourable condition due to excessive levels of nitrogen. It also advised that future development within the hydrological catchment of the River Test must achieve 'nutrient neutrality' to ensure that it does not impact on the condition of the protected site.



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**5.78** There are no SPAs within West Berkshire, although there is a very small part of the District (256 hectares) around Beech Hill within 5km of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. The 5km boundary has been determined by Natural England as a buffer area to regulate development near the SPA. However, it is possible that certain types of development up to 7km from the boundary of the SPA could have an impact on the SPA. Proposals for new residential development of one or more net additional dwellings up to 5km from the boundary of the SPA, and residential development of over 50 dwellings located between 5 and 7km of the boundary of the SPA, will therefore require screening to assess whether they will have a likely significant effect on the SPA. Where a significant effect exists or cannot be excluded, an Appropriate Assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) would need to be undertaken. Proposals will only be permitted if they do not adversely affect the integrity of the SPA. The Thames Basin Heaths SPA Delivery Framework will be used to guide assessment and any avoidance or mitigation measures that may be needed. The provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to attract new residents away from the SPA is a key part of these avoidance measures, together with strategic access management on the SPA and monitoring. Since the level of development expected to come forward in this area of the District is extremely low, the Council will explore opportunities for cross boundary working in this regard. Alternatively, SANG may be provided by developers for individual developments where it complies with Natural England's guidelines and there is an appropriate contribution to strategic access management and monitoring. In all cases SANGs will need to be agreed with Natural England.

**5.79** Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are nationally designated sites which have important wildlife or geological value. There are currently 51 SSSIs within West Berkshire covering 1470 hectares. Six fall within the SACs. The pre-dominant (60%) designated habitats are chalk streams and grassland, and ancient woodland.

### Irreplaceable habitats

**5.80** The NPPF states that 'development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists. Within West Berkshire there are a number of irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland, ancient or veteran trees, ancient hedgerows, traditional unimproved meadows/ancient grasslands and lowland fens. However, this list is not definitive and applicants should assess whether there are any other irreplaceable habitats present on a site by site basis. Compensation measures for irreplaceable habitats will not be considered acceptable where the replacement habitat provided results in a neutral impact. Instead, the compensation to be provided will be based on the nature or extent of damage or loss to the irreplaceable habitat and will contribute towards the enhancement of biodiversity. Compensation could be in the form of habitat creation, enhancement or restoration and potentially be large in nature to reflect the irreplaceability of the habitat loss or damage. This will be assessed on a site by site basis in consultation with the relevant conservation body. If a proposal impacts upon Ancient Woodland, ancient or veteran trees or ancient hedgerows, development will also need to be in accordance with Policy DM16 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows.

### Sites of Local Importance

**5.81** The District contains a range of habitats and geological features of local significance designated as Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites. Local Wildlife Sites are non-statutory sites of significant value for the conservation of wildlife. These sites represent local character and distinctiveness, and have an important role to play in meeting local and national targets for biodiversity conservation. There are 508<sup>(32)</sup> sites (c.7600 ha) designated for their county level importance and covering 11% of West Berkshire, many of which are ancient semi-natural woodland.

**5.82** Site selection criteria for Local Geological Sites have been drawn up by the Berkshire Geoconservation Group, and there are currently five sites in West Berkshire covering 150 hectares.

### Protected and Priority Species

**5.83** Some species, such as bats, great crested newts and badgers, have special protection under international and national legislation (such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.) and must be considered as part of the planning application process. Similarly, priority species are identified under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act as of principal importance for the purposes of conserving biodiversity in England. The Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre also holds information for rare, scarce and notable (but not limited to) species in West Berkshire.

**5.84** Where there is a reasonable likelihood that a protected or priority species may be present and affected by a proposal, comprehensive surveys will need to be undertaken to provide the evidence needed to allow a determination to be made and licenses to be sought where necessary. Appropriate compensation measures should be provided

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where development would disadvantage the conservation of a priority species. For example, the Sky Lark, Lapwing and other ground nesting birds require suitable habitats so that the species are not displaced as part of development which would limit the success of the species. There are many opportunities for biodiversity and geological enhancement in all parts of the District and not just on identified sites.

**5.85** Ponds are critical to great crested newts for breeding. Whilst on land, great crested newts are also dependent upon other habitats such as woodland, hedgerows, rough grassland and scrub. They are generally found within 500m of ponds, although may travel further than this. West Berkshire Council has been granted a District Licence as part of the Nature Space supported District Licence Scheme for Great Crested Newts. This enables the Council through its planning function to authorise activities affecting Great Crested Newts. Developers will be required to pay compensation for their impacts of the proposed development which will enable long term management agreements to be put in place with land owners and managers to fund and maintain newt habitats which is more effective for newts on sites and on a landscape scale.

### **Biodiversity Net Gain**

**5.86** Paragraph 174 of the NPPF highlights the need to provide net gains for biodiversity by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) can be defined as “Development that leaves the environment in a measurably better state than beforehand” (DEFRA, 2018). BNG will be achieved through a combination of retaining important features of the site and by making on site biodiversity enhancements to ensure an overall measurable minimum 10% net biodiversity gain is achieved, which contributes to restoring and enhancing the wider ecological networks and biodiversity of the District. To achieve net gain, a development must have a higher biodiversity unit score after development than before development. The most up to date Natural England Biodiversity Metric should be used to allow the assessment of biodiversity impact of a given development, and where appropriate the size of contribution required to offset the ecological impact of that development. The Council will deliver Biodiversity Net Gain in line with latest national guidance and the Environment Act 2021.

**5.87** To demonstrate that development proposals have met the requirements of Policy SP11, they will need to be accompanied by an appropriate ecological impact assessment (EclA) where this is relevant to the type of development proposed and its relationship with biodiversity and geodiversity interests. These assessments should be undertaken by a suitably qualified and/or experienced ecologist, be consistent with nationally accepted standards and guidance from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, and will need to include a Biodiversity Gain Plan (including the completed Metric calculator) to measure the net gain achieved on site or loss that would need to be compensated. The assessment should be proportionate to the scale and impact of the development and so for householder and most minor applications this will initially involve a Preliminary Protected Species Survey or Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in order to assess if further work is required.

### **Compensatory measures and long term management**

**5.88** Compensatory measures refer to all measures designed to help offset the adverse effects that cannot be further reduced by mitigation measures. Compensation for residual harm is considered the last step and will be considered where it can be evidenced that on-site improvements are not possible, may result in piecemeal mitigation on small sites, or where better opportunities exist to secure net gain elsewhere. Compensatory measures (also known as biodiversity offsetting) will normally involve off-site measures to balance losses within the development site or to offset residual effects on affected wildlife sites. Compensatory measures should provide a biodiversity net gain in accordance with Policy SP11. In addition newly created habitats should be in place in time to provide fully the ecological functions that they are intended to compensate for.

**5.89** Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA) have been identified by the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership. There are 17 which have currently been identified, either whole or in part, across the District. BOAs do not represent a statutory designation or a constraint upon development, rather, they are the areas where biodiversity improvements are likely to have the most beneficial results at a strategic scale. The Council will pursue net gains for biodiversity in and around BOAs and projects which seek to enhance biodiversity within West Berkshire, particularly based on Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, will be supported.

**5.90** Local Nature Recovery Strategies are a new system of spatial strategies for nature they will: map the most valuable existing habitat for nature; map specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environment goals; and agree priorities for nature’s recovery. Once the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is produced for the District it will guide the delivery of biodiversity net gain and other nature recovery measures through illustrating where the most valuable existing habitats are located and will focus on habitat creation and/or improvement where it will achieve the best outcomes. Prior to the Local Nature Recovery Strategies being produced the Council will work

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with applicants and relevant stakeholders to identify strategic locations for the delivery of off-setting as part of the Local Nature Recovery Network. The Biodiversity Opportunity Areas are likely to be incorporated into the Local Nature Recovery Network.

**5.91** Where compensation is required, regard will be had for the risks associated with the difficulty of success and the time-lag between any loss of biodiversity, and the achievement of the requisite habitat quality or other feature in determining the level of compensation required. To ensure the successful delivery and conservation in perpetuity, management arrangements will also need to be considered. Policy SP11 requires the long term management and maintenance of a site, and this should be achieved through a Habitat Management Plan. Details of maintenance requirements and arrangements must be set out, including who is responsible for these requirements. Funding arrangements for delivery of the long-term maintenance requirements should be demonstrated to the Council before construction starts, including measures to secure biodiversity through all phases and stages of the development.

**5.92** The Environment Act 2021 sets out that in relation to biodiversity net gain any on-site or off-site biodiversity increase must be secured for 30 years. To allow for a consistent approach the Council will define long term management and maintenance to be a minimum of 30 years. To assist in undertaking appropriate compensatory measures, the Council will require the developer to use prevailing guidance by respective designating bodies.

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## Transport

### Policy SP23

#### Transport

Development that generates a transport impact will be required to:

- Minimise the impact of all forms of travel on the environment, in accordance with West Berkshire's declared Climate Emergency and Environment Strategy;
- Improve and promote opportunities for active travel;
- Improve travel choice and facilitate sustainable travel particularly within, between and to main urban areas and rural service centres;
- Demonstrate good access to key services and facilities;
- Mitigate any adverse impact on local transport networks and the strategic road network; and
- Have regard to the West Berkshire Freight Route Network and availability of lorry parking where development will need the support of these facilities.

Non-residential developments will be required to prepare Transport Assessments or Transport Statements as appropriate in support of the proposed development. The judgement regarding the need for such documents lies with the Council and will be guided by indicative thresholds for various uses.

For residential development, a full Transport Assessment will be required where 60 or more dwellings are proposed. Where 30 or more dwellings are proposed, a Transport Statement will be required. Where appropriate, any development below 60 dwellings may be requested to produce a full Transport Assessment. Development proposals should follow the advice set out in the Council's 'Highway Design Guidance for Residential Developments.'

Travel Plans and the implementation of associated measures will be required for all developments which generate a significant amount of transport movement and in accordance with Policy DM45 relating to travel planning measures.

### Supporting Text

**7.42** The provision of a sustainable transport network to serve the communities of West Berkshire is essential for improving accessibility, enhancing economic vitality, protecting the environment, and promoting quality of life. The policy therefore seeks to encourage sustainable travel in order to achieve these goals, and to minimise the impact on local transport networks and the strategic road network.

**7.43** Central to this policy is the recognition of the part that transport needs to play in adapting to help achieve the local Climate Emergency target of carbon neutrality by 2030. The development of new ideas and technologies in relation to reducing the environmental harm caused by our travel activities is moving at pace. It is essential that new development in the District adopts the latest standards and practices in reducing carbon in order that transport and travel is leading the way in West Berkshire in tackling climate change and minimising harm to our environment.

**7.44** Improving and promoting opportunities for active travel should be considered for all development and be carried out in a way that recognises safety as a key consideration. Particular focus should be given to the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians, and other vulnerable road users. These active travel modes benefit people's health and are promoted through the [Local Transport Plan](#) and supporting [Active Travel Strategy](#), and the [Environment Strategy](#).

**7.45** Improving travel choice is a key way of working towards a modal shift away from single occupancy car use in favour of more sustainable travel (walking, cycling, bus and rail travel, car sharing, car clubs). Improving sustainable travel choice within and between the main urban areas and rural service centres of West Berkshire and key destinations in neighbouring authorities will help to facilitate regular journeys for example to work and education. All development will be required to show how it improves travel choice and reduces the use of single occupancy cars.

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**7.46** The Council's desire to plan for people to live in places where there are local facilities and services, whether these are fixed or mobile will support the ambition to reduce the need to travel which is one of the best ways of reducing the impact on the environment or stress on local transport networks. The changing nature of technology and how this facilitates working from home and access to services through the world wide web also contributes to this.

**7.47** The nature of West Berkshire poses a significant challenge for accessibility to key services and facilities. Residential development should seek to demonstrate good accessibility by:

- locating where there is already good access to key services and facilities;
- contributing towards improving connections between communities and key services and facilities.
- having or developing good technology infrastructure

**7.48** The Council is responsible for the local highway, cycle and walking, and public right of way networks as well as supporting public transport networks. National Highways is responsible for the strategic road network (SRN) which, in West Berkshire, comprises the M4 and the A34. All development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they do not adversely affect these networks or that they can mitigate the adverse impact. Where a Transport Assessment for a significant development illustrates that there will be an impact on the capacity of the SRN or local networks, the developer will need to undertake detailed traffic modelling in accordance with national guidance. Developers will need to work with the Council and National Highways to establish a suitable mitigation package.

**7.49** The Council has established a preferred Freight Route Network (FRN) for West Berkshire which identifies a hierarchy of routes that should be used for freight movements to, through and within the District. Development which results in freight movements, including construction traffic should take into consideration the FRN. Developments that have associated travel activity that is likely to require the use of local lorry parking facilities should have regard to the capacity of these facilities in support of their proposed development.

**7.50** Transport Assessments / Statements and Travel Plans are vital to support planning proposals so that the impact of the proposed development can be assessed and mitigated. All developments which are judged to generate significant transport movement will be required to provide a suitable level of assessment.

**7.51** Details around requirements for parking provision (relating to cycle, motorcycle and car parking) are dealt within Policy DM44, and details travel planning measures in Policy DM45.

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## 9 Development Management Policies: Our place based approach

### Policy DM1

#### Residential Development in the Countryside

Exceptionally, new residential development outside of adopted settlement boundaries will be permitted. These exceptions are solely limited to development which is appropriately designed and located and which satisfies one or more of the following criteria:

- a. Sites allocated as part of the development plan;
- b. Sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople;
- c. Rural exception housing and/or First Homes exception sites;
- d. The conversion of redundant or disused buildings;
- e. Housing to accommodate rural workers;
- f. The extension to or replacement of existing residential dwellings;
- g. The subdivision of existing residential dwellings; or
- h. Limited residential infill in settlements in the countryside with no defined settlement boundary where:
  - i. It is within a closely knit cluster of 10 or more existing dwellings adjacent to, or fronting an existing highway; and
  - ii. The scale of development consists of infilling a small undeveloped plot commensurate with the scale and character of existing dwellings within an otherwise built up frontage; and
  - iii. It does not extend the existing frontage at either end; and
  - iv. The proposed plot size and spacing between dwellings is similar to adjacent properties and respects the rural character and street scene of the locality.

Planning permission will not be granted where a proposal harms or undermines the existing relationship of a settlement within the open countryside, where it does not contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the rural area, including the special qualities and natural beauty of the landscape of the AONB or where development would have an adverse cumulative impact on the environment or highway safety.

### Supporting text

**9.1** New development is easiest to assimilate when located within existing settlements. The overall spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy for West Berkshire is set out in Policies SP1 and SP3. The policies seek to accommodate development in the most sustainable way, focusing development in settlements with existing facilities and services. Policy SP1 sets out that the principle of development is acceptable inside settlement boundaries and makes clear that only appropriate limited development in the countryside will be allowed.

**9.2** In this context, this policy makes clear that land outside of settlement boundaries will be treated as open countryside where there is a presumption against new residential development. National planning guidance currently advises that blanket policies restricting development should be avoided unless there is robust evidence on why this is necessary. In West Berkshire, the conservation and enhancement of the North Wessex Downs AONB and its setting is clearly a key consideration. At the same time, planning guidance also makes clear that planning policies and decisions should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. The appreciation that all countryside will have some such qualities means that it needs to be protected or safeguarded. Responding to that acknowledgement whilst maintaining the vitality of rural communities is also a key consideration in West Berkshire. This policy therefore sets out the exceptional circumstances whereby residential development outside settlement boundaries may be acceptable. Further detail is also set out in Policies DM16, DM17, DM20, DM23, DM24, DM25, DM27, DM28 and DM29.

**9.3** The countryside of West Berkshire is characterised by small settlements and dispersed farmsteads. Due to the constant pressure for development, these settlements and farmsteads are at risk from piecemeal development. Cumulative impact is an important consideration in these areas, as incremental changes when viewed collectively can significantly change the character of a landscape.

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**9.4** The conversion of rural buildings to residential use for instance can have a considerable impact on the character of the surrounding area. Similarly, the intensification of modest rural properties through extensions and the addition of large ancillary buildings and/or redevelopment can result in a disproportionate number of larger country houses, resulting in a loss of smaller and mid-sized properties and increased suburbanisation undermining a balance in the historic settlement pattern and rural character. Whilst there may be no increase in the actual number of dwellings, a scene that was once comprised of isolated agricultural workers cottages and barns set within open fields is urbanised and the rural character altered.

**9.5** An assessment therefore, has to be made of the sensitivity of the landscape to a particular type of change and the subsequent capacity of that area to absorb the change. For some areas, the character may be so fragile that new development is not acceptable even on a small scale. All development proposals are expected to respond positively to their context by conserving and enhancing landscape character in accordance with Policy SP8 and by strengthening a sense of place in accordance with Policy SP7 and also SP5.

**9.6** In particularly exceptional cases there may be a very special circumstance where an isolated new home of truly outstanding design standards, reflecting the highest standards of architecture, is proposed. Such proposals will be extremely rare and will be considered on their individual merits.

**9.7** For all development proposals in the countryside, robust evidence will need to be provided to support the application to demonstrate that an exceptional approach is fully justified. The Council publishes a [list of local documents](#) that are required as part of planning applications and developers are encouraged to ensure their proposals comply with this list. Proposals will be expected to clearly illustrate the appropriateness of the development within the rural context.

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### Policy DM10

#### Listed Buildings

Proposals for development affecting a Listed Building and/or its setting will be determined in accordance with Policy SP9 and will be required to clearly demonstrate:

- a. Why the proposed development and related works are desirable or necessary; and
- b. How the significance of the Listed Building and/or its setting will be preserved.

Development will not be permitted if applicants fail to provide adequate or accurate detailed information to show the effect on the significance and architectural and historic interest of the Listed Building and its setting and any curtilage listed features.

Development will not be permitted if it would:

- i. Adversely affect the character, scale, proportion, design, detailing, or materials used in the Listed Building; or
- ii. Result in the loss of/or irreversible change to original features or other features of importance or interest; or
- iii. Harm the setting of the Listed Building.

In particular, development will not be permitted if it would directly, indirectly or cumulatively lead to any of the following:

- iv. Removal of original walls, stairs, or entrances, or subdivision of large interior spaces;
- v. Removal, alteration or replacement of structural elements including walls, roof structures, beams and floors;
- vi. Removal, alteration or replacement of original or historic features such as windows, doors, fireplaces and plasterwork;
- vii. Repairs or alterations involving materials, techniques and detailing inappropriate to the Listed Building;
- viii. The unnecessary replacement of traditional features other than with like for like, authentic or original materials and using appropriate techniques;
- ix. Extensions to the principal elevation/s of the Listed Building;
- x. The installation of satellite antennae, solar panels or other renewable energy features that are sited in a prominent location, either on the Listed Building, or within its curtilage; or
- xi. The removal of historic boundary treatments;

unless justified to the satisfaction of the Council, that the proposed changes, loss or irreversible damage, and/or addition of new features to the Listed Building and its setting are:

- Less than substantial in terms of impact/harm on the character and significance of the Listed Building and its setting; and
- Is off-set by the public benefit from making the changes, including enabling optimal viable use, and net enhancement to the Listed Building and its setting. Clear justification for this harm should be set out in full in the Statement of Heritage Significance accompanying the proposals.

Where change to a Listed Building is acceptable, provision for appropriate recording will be required in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved in writing by the Council prior to any works commencing.

### Supporting Text

**10.86** The purpose of this policy is to set out more detailed criteria for development proposals affecting Listed Buildings.

**10.87** Buildings and structures are listed in recognition of their special architectural or historic interest and any works which affect their character require Listed Building Consent. The NPPF makes clear that substantial harm to or loss of grade II Listed Buildings should be exceptional and for grade II\* and grade I Listed Buildings it should be wholly exceptional.



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**10.88** Within West Berkshire there are approximately 1900 Listed Buildings, varying in age, character and size. Not all are actually buildings: structures such as milestones, war memorials, gate piers and walls are included. The oldest buildings are parish churches and the castle at Donnington, whereas the most recently constructed are associated with the Cold War at Greenham Common airbase. Architectural styles vary from the vernacular (particularly using timber framing, thatch and local bricks) to the polite examples of gentry houses. West Berkshire is rich in agricultural buildings; almshouses and canal locks and bridges are also well represented in the List. The majority of properties which are listed are private dwellings.

**10.89** One of the principal aims of listing is to prevent alterations that are detrimental to the special character of the designated asset, including the interior of buildings. Listed Buildings are a finite, non-renewable resource, which in many cases are highly fragile and vulnerable to damage and destruction, as once historic fabric is removed or altered it is lost forever. It is therefore important that they are protected through the planning system. The setting of a listed building is also important and proposals that detract from the setting will be resisted. The Council will not grant consent for the demolition of a listed building other than in the most exceptional circumstances and applicants will need to demonstrate that every effort has been made to keep the building.

**10.90** It is a statutory requirement for local planning authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Preservation in this context means not harming the interest in the building, as opposed to keeping it utterly unchanged.

**10.91** The Council will seek solutions for assets at risk of loss or harm through decay, neglect or other threats. This will be pursued through proactive discussion with owners and a readiness to engage with development proposals with the potential to secure repair and continued maintenance. Where appropriate the Council may resort to the use of its statutory powers, Urgent Works or Repair Notices, to arrest decay of the asset.

**10.92** Applications for development or other work affecting a Listed Building will be expected to show why the works are desirable or necessary. The development might be related to the Listed Building and curtilage itself or could be separate but still affect its setting. The applicant should therefore provide a thorough but proportionate assessment of the architectural or historic significance of the Listed Building, its features and setting in accordance with policy SP9. This will include taking a whole building approach to retrofitting energy efficiency measures in accordance with the current guidance published by Historic England. The Statement of Heritage Significance will both inform the design proposals and reach a planning decision. Information should include appropriate floor plans, elevations, sections and details (at an appropriate scale); specifications, providing information on proposed materials and detailing, and (where external work is involved) plans and elevations showing the context of the Listed Building. It should also include research into the evolution of the building as originally built and subsequently altered, with the presumption that where unfortunate/inappropriate changes have occurred, the opportunity will be taken to rectify them, in order to strengthen the building's significance.

**10.93** In terms of appropriate uses for historic buildings, the best use is very often that for which they were designed. However, without appropriate uses to fund their long-term maintenance and repair, they can be at considerable risk. Whilst adaptation to a new use can pose a threat, new commercial, residential or other uses that enhance their historic character and significance are encouraged.

**10.94** Conversion of non-residential Listed Buildings to residential use can often pose many challenges. For example, where there are large open internal spaces (e.g. in barns and chapels) they would need to be sub-divided to achieve residential use, and this can often destroy the character of the building. However, virtually any conversion of a Listed Building from its original use involves some loss of character. Where conversion is accepted, the types and levels of use of the building itself or its setting will be strictly controlled to minimise any loss of character. Domestication of outside areas with gardens, washing poles and new outbuildings for instance is often wholly inappropriate because it would fail to conserve and enhance the heritage asset and such domestication cannot always be controlled through planning conditions. Where proposals would fail to conserve and enhance the heritage asset an alternative scheme should be sought.

**10.95** Some alterations to Listed Buildings are not classed as 'development' and may not require planning permission. However, most works to Listed Buildings, for example internal alterations and minor external works will require Listed Building Consent. Where planning permission is required for works to a Listed Building there is always a requirement to obtain Listed Building Consent as well. In these cases, both should be applied for concurrently. The impact of 'development' on features separately considered under Listed Building Consent can be a reason for refusal of planning permission.

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### Policy DM14

#### Assets of Archaeological Importance

Proposals for development affecting heritage assets of archaeological interest and their settings will be determined in accordance with Policy SP9 and will be expected to clearly demonstrate:

- a. Why the proposed development and related works are desirable or necessary; and
- b. How the significance of the assets will be preserved

Development may not be permitted if applicants fail to provide adequate or accurate detailed information to show the impact on the nature, extent and significance of the assets. For known assets of archaeological interest, or on land where there is archaeological potential, an appropriate archaeological desk-based assessment will be required which should allow informed decisions to be made about options for mitigating or offsetting that impact.

Where appropriate, pre-determination field evaluation may be necessary as a further stage. This is a limited programme of fieldwork to determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, artefacts or ecofacts and their research potential, and to define their character, extent, quality and preservation to enable assessment of significance.

Archaeological evaluation may include:

- i. Non-destructive methods such as geophysical survey, earthwork survey, building survey;
- ii. Intrusive methods of varying destructive potential such as augering, test pits, trial trenches and fieldwalking; and
- iii. In the case of buildings, physical intervention such as the removal of modern materials to reveal older fabric.

Proposals will be permitted where the proposal accords with other relevant policies and includes:

- Provision to preserve the archaeological remains in situ, by sensitive layout and design. This is the preferred outcome for archaeological assets of the highest significance (Scheduled Monuments and those non-designated assets of equivalent significance); and/or
- Provision for the investigation and recording of any archaeological remains that cannot or are not required to be preserved, including at least the deposition of evidence with the West Berkshire Historic Environment Record and any archaeological archive with the appropriate depository, in accordance with a detailed Written Scheme of Investigation approved before the start of development.

### Supporting Text

**10.117** The purpose of this policy is to set out more detailed criteria for development proposals affecting Assets of Archaeological Interest.

**10.118** There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset, whether it is a building, monument, site, place, area of landscape, if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

**10.119** The survival into the present day of any given archaeological material depends on many factors. Below ground conditions are not always conducive to site formation, and natural processes or later human activity can erode or destroy archaeological evidence whether buried or upstanding. Heritage assets of archaeological interest can therefore be fragile and fragmentary. They form a finite resource which is irreplaceable.

**10.120** The potential knowledge which may be unlocked by investigation of archaeological assets may be harmed even by minor disturbance, because the context in which evidence is found is crucial to furthering understanding. It is therefore generally desirable for archaeological assets to be preserved in situ.

**10.121** Archaeological sites, monuments and buildings vary in type, scale and character as well as state of preservation, and they may be of national, regional or local significance and designated or non-designated. Only a very small percentage of archaeological sites are designated in any way, and many await discovery.

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**10.122** The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 provides specific protection for archaeological monuments of national interest, including the maintaining of a Schedule of Monuments. The NPPF makes it clear that Scheduled Monuments are heritage assets of the highest significance and that substantial harm to or loss of them should be wholly exceptional. However, scheduling is discretionary, and non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest may be demonstrably of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments, either because they have yet to be formally assessed, or because discretion has been exercised not to designate them. A third category of nationally important archaeological assets is those types of site which are not eligible for scheduling because their physical nature falls outside the scope of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. These non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

**10.123** Prior written permission for works to a Scheduled Monument is required and undertaking works without consent is a criminal offence. Scheduled Monument Consent is administered by Historic England. An application for planning permission may also be necessary for work affecting a Scheduled Monument which constitutes 'development', and there is a requirement to consult Historic England for development likely to affect the site of a Scheduled Monument.

**10.124** Where the partial or total loss of an archaeological asset is to be permitted due to public benefit, developers will be required to commission recording to offset this loss, generally through a programme of archaeological work or building recording, specified through an approved Written Scheme of Investigation. Archaeological excavation is controlled intrusive fieldwork which examines, records and interprets archaeological features, structures and deposits; artefacts are retrieved and environmental samples are collected where appropriate. As the archaeological site is removed through the process, it is essential that important evidence is not thoughtlessly destroyed. Those carrying out the work should seek to answer questions within a current research framework and to advance understanding. The records made and objects gathered from the archaeological archive should be studied in order to compile a report, and this evidence should be made publicly accessible. The explicit purpose of development-led archaeological work therefore is to make useful contributions to knowledge, for public benefit.

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**Policy DM15****Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows**

Development which conserves and enhances trees, woodland and hedgerows will be supported.

Development proposals should be accompanied by an appropriate Arboricultural Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and/or an Arboricultural Method Statement. Proposals will be expected to clearly demonstrate that wherever possible existing trees, woodland and hedgerows have been incorporated into the design and layout of a scheme from the outset. Where this cannot be achieved the onus is on the applicant to justify the loss of trees and/or other features as part of the proposals.

The loss or deterioration of protected trees, groups of trees, woodland or important hedgerows will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and in accordance with the relevant legislation, policy and good practice recommendations. Where protected trees are subject to felling, a replacement of an appropriate number, species and size in an appropriate location will be required.

Ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees and ancient hedgerows are irreplaceable habitats. Development resulting in their loss or deterioration will be considered in accordance with Policy SP11. The scale and quality of the compensation measures required will be commensurate to the loss or deterioration of the irreplaceable habitat.

Development proposals which could potentially result in the loss of ancient wood pasture; or trees, woodlands and hedgerows located within historic parks and gardens will be considered in accordance with policy DM13, for those within Registered Parks and Gardens, or Policy DM12 for those forming part of non-designated heritage assets.

Where loss or damage of non-protected trees, woodland or hedgerows is unavoidable, appropriate replacement or compensation planting including appropriate measures to secure their long term maintenance will be required.

Development proposals will provide appropriate protection for retained trees, woodland and hedgerows in advance of any work on site to prevent damage to root systems and to take account of future sustainable growth.

Where appropriate, suitable opportunities should be identified and incorporated for the restoration and planting of new trees, woodland and hedgerows. New planting should:

- a. Be suitable for the site conditions;
- b. Use appropriate tree pit sizes and soil volumes;
- c. Use native species wherever appropriate;
- d. Be informed by and contribute to local character; and
- e. Enhance or create new habitat linkages.

To ensure the sustainable growth of restored or newly planted trees, development will be required to include appropriate measures to secure their long term maintenance.

**Supporting text**

**10.125** The purpose of this Policy is to ensure the management, including conservation and enhancement, of existing trees, woodland and hedgerows, and to ensure that opportunities for restoration and new planting are realised where appropriate. Development proposals will be considered in accordance with the latest guidance in British Standard BS5837 'Trees in relation to demolition, design and development'.

**10.126** This policy does not prevent the appropriate management of trees, woodlands and hedgerow or removal of trees and hedges that are not in character with their locality particularly if they are a non-native species of flora. For new planting the use of UK and Ireland sourced and grown tree stock is encouraged.

**10.127** West Berkshire's trees, woodland and hedgerows are valued visual and ecological assets in our towns, villages and countryside, adding local character and distinctiveness to the landscape, streets, parks, gardens, public rights of way and other open spaces. They have an inherent biodiversity value and can help integrate new development into the landscape, its character, and environment. They are important components of the historic environment as

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planted or managed flora, and often historically important as indications of past land use and ownerships. They assist in mitigating for the effects of climate change, increase the tree canopy cover in the district and make both public and private areas within a development more attractive, enjoyable and healthy places to be.

**10.128** The protection of existing trees, woodland and hedgerows and the addition of new planting contributes greatly to conserving and enhancing the local character of an area. Boundary treatments are particularly important and the character of an area can easily be lost if front gardens or boundary hedgerows are removed. There is evidence in both rural and urban areas of the district of long established boundary hedgerows being ripped out and replaced by close boarded fencing or walls. A proportion of these result in retrospective applications to retain fences or walls in excess of 1 metre next to highways. Where planning applications are required to propose new boundary treatments or retrospective applications are required to regularise works already undertaken and it is clear that an established hedgerow will or has been removed, the Council will require sufficient space to be left to allow for the retention of an existing hedge or planting of a new one to replace the one that has been removed.

**10.129** The retention of existing trees and hedgerows within new gardens adds a sense of establishment and maturity to any new development. New planting can also add value, with the use of dwarfing rootstocks a way of accommodating trees in smaller gardens.

**10.130** In the public realm, street trees and appropriate planting can help soften the streetscape and ensure it is not dominated by hard surfaces and parked cars. Structural landscaping is encouraged in publicly managed areas. The specification and choice of design, materials and planting should take account of the pressures placed upon the public realm through the movement of both people and vehicles.

**10.131** Individual trees, groups and lines of trees and woodlands important to the character of Conservation Areas, to their setting and to the approaches to Conservation Areas should be retained and appropriately managed.

**10.132** Protected trees includes trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order or those located within a Conservation Area. They also include those hedgerows meeting the criteria of "important hedgerow" in the Hedgerow Regulations.

**10.133** Ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees are identified as irreplaceable in the NPPF. Ancient woodland is the most extensive habitat remaining in West Berkshire. It also has a high archaeological value as a type of land use as it often contains much older features such as prehistoric field systems and barrows and also evidence of management such as sawpits and charcoal burning. Ancient semi-natural woodland currently covers 2894 hectares. There are a further 1164 hectares of plantation on ancient woodland sites which could potentially be restored. Ancient woodlands and veteran trees once lost cannot be recreated, their unique character, high archaeological value and valuable biodiversity resource will be safeguarded and not allowed to be lost or lose condition.

**10.134** Development should buffer any ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees and ancient hedgerows it affects by providing sufficient space to afford surrounding protection and allow for future growth and expansion where possible. Development near ancient woodland will be treated in accordance with the most up to date joint Natural England and Forestry Commission Standing Advice. This currently advises that development proposals should have a buffer zone of at least 15 metres from the boundary of the woodland to avoid root damage. For ancient and veteran trees the buffer zone should be at least 15 times larger than the diameter of the tree. The buffer zone should be 5 metres from the edge of the tree's canopy if that area is larger than 15 times the tree's diameter. Precise buffers would need to be determined through detailed assessment and design when proposals are submitted for development. The Council will adopt a precautionary approach as to what would be considered appropriate in order to ensure that any buffer fulfils the specific requirements of its location and the type of development proposed.

**10.135** It is important that a buffer zone consists of semi-natural habitats such as woodland and/or a mix of scrub, grassland, heathland and wetland. Development proposals, including gardens would not be appropriate. Sustainable drainage schemes would only be considered acceptable if they did not affect root protection areas and any changes to the water table did not negatively affect ancient woodland or ancient and veteran trees. The Woodland Trust <sup>(44)</sup> highlights the importance of protecting and enhancing natural habitats around ancient woodland in order to help reverse the historic fragmentation of this irreplaceable habitat and to improve ecological connectivity with the surrounding landscape.

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**10.136** Ancient woodland is greatly at risk from ammonia pollution and so all ammonia-emitting developments, such as intensive livestock units, which fall within 5 kilometres of an ancient woodland site will require an additional assessment to include a detailed Ancient Woodland Nitrogen Impact Assessment of the ancient woodland(s) of concern. This will need to demonstrate that there will be no deterioration as a result of the contributions from the development.

**10.137** Within the district there are historic ancient wood pastures and historic parkland, both of which are also irreplaceable habitats. These form important elements of West Berkshire's heritage and it is essential their significance is taken into account in development proposals.

**10.138** The Council needs to better understand what proportion of the district has tree canopy cover and the extent of the functions this cover provides. A canopy cover assessment will be undertaken for West Berkshire. This will provide the basis for setting targets for canopy cover within the district, supporting both this policy and Policy SP10, in the consideration of future development proposals.

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**Policy DM20****Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

The Council will meet the identified permanent and transit need for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople by allocating land for pitches and/or plots.

Existing authorised sites for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople will be safeguarded for use by Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, unless acceptable replacement accommodation/pitches/plots can be provided. This is to ensure that there remains a good supply of pitches and plots in the District.

Permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites and sites for Travelling Showpeople will be developed:

- a. On sites allocated in Policies RSA24 and RSA25;
- b. As expansions to existing authorised Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites, unless in conflict with criterion d;
- c. On sites located in, or well related to, existing settlements; or
- d. When in rural settings, ensuring the scale of the site(s) do not dominate the nearest settled community, whether singly or cumulatively with any other Gypsy and Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople sites. Isolated locations in the countryside should be avoided.

Where possible sites will be on previously developed land. The Council will seek compatibility of use with that of the surrounding land use and promote the integrated co-existence between the site and the settled community, including adequate levels of privacy and residential amenity both within the site and with neighbouring occupiers.

Proposals for development should satisfy the following criteria:

- i. Site planning will be landscape-led and development will be in accordance with Policies SP7 and SP8;
- ii. Ensure each pitch can accommodate space for a mobile home and touring caravan, parking, and if to be provided, a day room/amenity building. Provision will be made for play and residential amenity space. A layout plan shall be submitted with a planning application to demonstrate how the site and each pitch is laid out;
- iii. Provide safe access with appropriate turning space(s);
- iv. The development would not generate traffic of a type or amount that would result in substantial harm to local roads, and/or would require improvements that would adversely affect the character and nature of such roads. A Transport Assessment or Transport Statement should accompany a planning application, which would also detail appropriate mitigation;
- v. The site has easy access to local services including public transport, shops, schools and health services;
- vi. Measures to improve accessibility by, and encourage use of, non-car transport modes including internal walking routes linked to any existing Public Rights of Way network are provided. These measures should be set out in a Travel Plan for the site;
- vii. Development avoids areas of high flood risk and if required provide a Flood Risk Assessment, in accordance with Policy SP6;
- viii. It is demonstrated that surface water will be managed in a sustainable manner through the implementation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Methods (SuDS), in accordance with Policy SP6;
- ix. Adequate and appropriate infrastructure is provided for the supply of electricity and water, facilities for drainage and waste disposal;
- x. Development will be informed by an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA). Appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures will need to be implemented to ensure any designated sites and/or protected habitats and or species are not adversely affected; and
- xi. Development will not harm the value of any heritage assets and their setting and proposals will be in accordance with Policy SP9.

Proposals for Travelling Showperson sites will be required to satisfy the above criteria and additionally demonstrate that the site is appropriately designed to accommodate the storage and maintenance of show equipment and associated vehicles.

This policy supplements the detailed provisions for each of the sites set out in Policies RSA24 and RSA25.

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### Supporting Text

**11.24** West Berkshire Council, as the local planning authority, is required to identify sites to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople. Proposed sites within settlement boundaries are considered acceptable in principle, as with conventional housing, subject to material considerations. Some of the policy criteria will assist in providing a suitably located and designed site.

**11.25** There is a corporate commitment to supporting sustainable communities, and a good supply of affordable housing including social rented housing to address housing needs. This applies to the Travelling communities as well as settled communities.

**11.26** The Council is required by national policy to set pitch and plot targets which address the likely permanent and transit accommodation needs in the area, working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities. A [Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment](#) has been undertaken to inform the LPR.

#### 11.27 Need

**11.28** The following tables set out the need for Traveller pitches and for Travelling Showperson plots. For clarity, the cultural and the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) need figures are two different representations of need. The PPTS need based on the PPTS definition of 'Gypsies and Travellers', and cultural need, which is defined as those Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople who do not travel and identify themselves as part of the Traveller and Travelling Showpeople community.

**Table 7 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Identified Need 2021/22 to 2037/38 cultural need/PPTS need**

	Cultural Need	Of which PPTS need
<b>5 year Authorised Pitch Shortfall (2021/22 to 2025/26)</b>	13	9
<b>Longer term need</b>		
2026/27 to 2030/31	5	3
2031/32 to 2035/36	9	6
2036/37 to 2037/38	3	2
<b>Longer term need total to 2037/38</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Net Shortfall 2021/22 to 2037/38</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>20</b>

**Table 8 Travelling Showperson plot requirements 2021/22 to 2037/38**

	2021/22 to 2025/26	2026/27 to 2037/38	Total
<u>Travelling Showperson plots</u>	20	4	24

**11.29** The GTAA identifies a need for four transit pitches, which would accommodate eight caravans.

**11.30** The GTAA does not identify a need for houseboat dwellers and thus the LPR does not provide for any permanent houseboats.

### Supply

**11.31** There is an existing private site at New Stocks Farm, Paices Hill, Aldermaston. There are 24 permanent pitches, with 15 transit sites. Policy RSA32 seeks to allocate 8 permanent pitches at Paices Hill, which uses the land used as transit sites. This results in the reduction of 8 transit pitches.



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**11.32** There is an existing Council operated site at Four Houses Corner, Reading Road, Ufton Nervet, which is due to be refurbished. When it reopens there will be 17 pitches. The updated GTAA is clear that when the site reopens a survey of households is required to determine the long term needs from children and young people living on the site.

**11.33** There are other authorised small private traveller sites in the District.

**11.34** There is currently one Showperson's Yard in the district which is located at Long Copse Farm. The 2019 GTAA concludes there is no additional need for Travelling Showperson yards and any need that does arise can be addressed on the Long Copse yard.

**11.35** To address the longer term need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches and for transit sites/short term stopping places a Development Plan Document will be prepared. The Local Development Scheme outlines the timetable, with evidence being prepared between February 2023 and December 2025, leading up to adoption by September 2027.

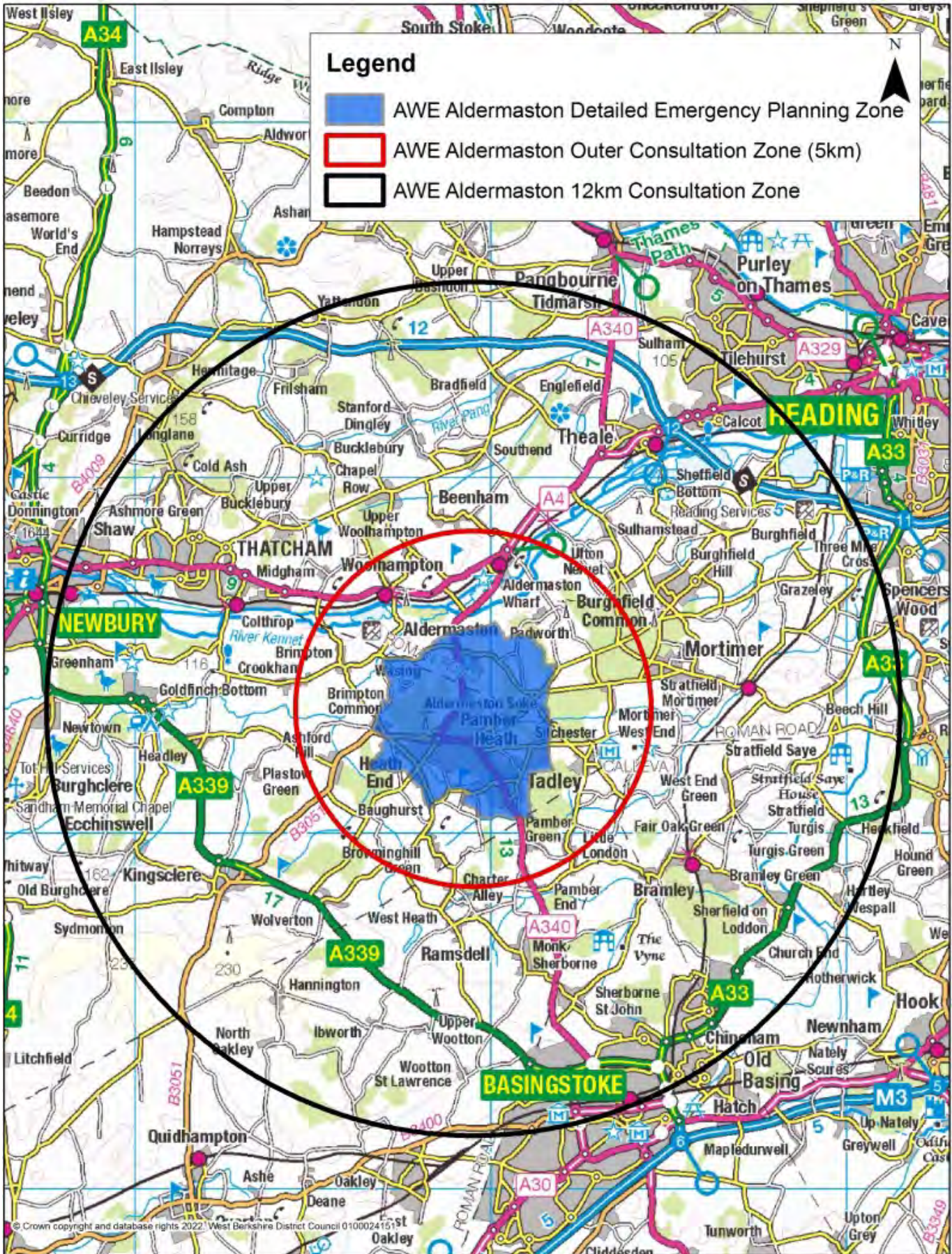
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## Appendix 3 AWE land use planning consultation zones

3.1 The maps set out below provide the mapping information, as at March 2020 in relation to the DEPZs, OCZs (5km) and the 12km planning consultation zones for each AWE site as per the ONR consultation criteria.

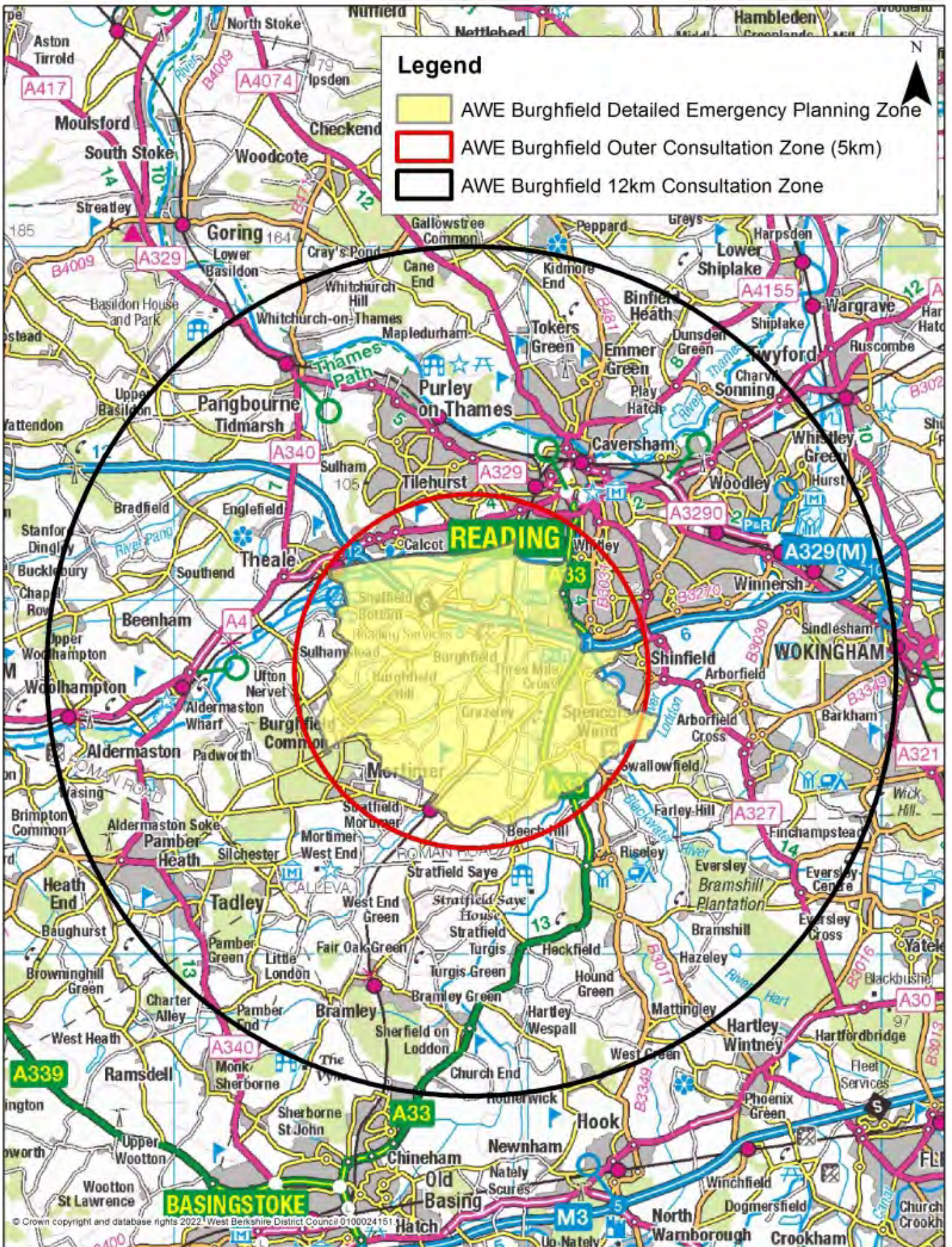
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## AWE Aldermaston



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## AWE Burghfield



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## Appendix 9 Glossary

Table 19

Term	Acronym	Explanation
Affordable housing		<p>Affordable housing is defined in the NPPF as:</p> <p><i>Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Affordable housing for rent:</b> meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).</li> <li><b>Starter homes:</b> is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.</li> <li><b>Discounted market sales housing:</b> is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.</li> <li><b>Other affordable routes to home ownership:</b> is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.</li> </ol>
Air quality management areas	AQMA	Areas designated by local authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines.
Ancient or veteran tree		A tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient, but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage.
Ancient woodland		An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).

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Term	Acronym	Explanation
Annual Monitoring Report	AMR	Annual statement monitoring progress on the Local Plan and on the implementation of policies. Also known as Authority Monitoring Report.
Best and most versatile agricultural land		Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.
Brownfield land		See 'Previously Developed Land'.
Carbon neutral/ Carbon neutrality		The act of reducing a person's/events/ organisations/products carbon footprint to zero through energy efficiency measures and external emission reductions projects
Community Infrastructure Levy	CIL	A levy charged on most new development within the local authority area. The money is used to pay for new infrastructure supporting the development of an area by funding the provision, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure. CIL will be used to fund: roads and other transport facilities, schools and other educational facilities, flood defences, medical facilities, open spaces and sports and recreational areas
Density		A measurement of how intensively land is occupied by built development
Derogation (in relation to a Habitats Site)		Tests to consider if proposals that would have an adverse effect on a European site qualify for an exemption.
Designated rural areas		Designated rural areas include Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and areas designated as 'rural' under Section 157 of the Housing Act 1985. The parishes which are designated within West Berkshire are listed in <a href="#">The Housing (Right to Acquire or Enfranchise) (Designated Rural Areas in the South East) Order 1997</a>
Detailed Emergency Planning Zone	DEPZ	A defined zone around the nuclear site where it is necessary to pre-define protective actions which would be implemented without delay to mitigate the likely consequences of a radiation emergency. It is the zone that the AWE Off-Site Emergency Plan must cover in detail and the Council, along with the other agencies involved in the AWE Off-Site Emergency Plan, must be able to support.
Development Plan		Is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and includes adopted local plans, neighbourhood plans that have been made together with any regional strategy policies that remain in force.
Ecological Impact Assessment	EclA	A process of identifying, quantifying and evaluating the potential effects of development-related or other proposed actions on habitats, species and ecosystems. It can be used for the appraisal of projects of any scale.
Edge of centre		Defined in the NPPF as: ' <i>For retail purposes, a location that is well connected to, and up to 300 metres from, the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses, a location within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre, account should be taken of local circumstances.</i> '
Environmental Impact Assessment	EIA	A procedure to be followed for certain types of project to ensure that decisions are made in full knowledge of any likely significant effects on the environment.
Flood risk areas (as defined by the Environment Agency)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Flood Zone 2:</b> comprises land assessed as having between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000 annual probability of river flooding (1% – 0.1%) or between a 1 in 200 and 1 in 1000 annual probability of sea flooding (0.5% – 0.1%) in any year.</li> </ul>

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Term	Acronym	Explanation
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Flood Zone 3a:</b> comprises land assessed as having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding (&gt;1%) or a 1 in 200 or greater annual probability of sea flooding (&gt;0.5%) in any year.</li> <li>• <b>Functional flood plan (3b):</b> defined as land where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood.</li> <li>• Any other land is classed as Flood Zone 1; land at no appreciable risk of flooding from rivers or tidal flooding.</li> </ul>
Greenfield land		Land which does not fall within the definition of previously developed land.
Green infrastructure	GI	A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.
Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople		<p>Annex 1 of the government's 'Planning Policy for Traveller sites' (PPTS, August 2015) defines, Gypsies and Travellers for the purposes of planning policy as:</p> <p><i>"Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such."</i></p> <p>In determining whether persons are "Gypsies and Travellers", for the purposes of planning policy, Annex 1 (of the PPTS) identifies that consideration should be given to the following:</p> <p>a) whether they previously led a nomadic habit of life</p> <p>b) the reasons for ceasing their nomadic habit of life</p> <p>c) whether there is an intention of living a nomadic habit of life in the future, and if so, how soon and in what circumstances.</p> <p>Travelling Showpeople are defined in the PPTS for the purposes of planning policy as:</p> <p><i>"Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family's or dependants' more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above."</i></p>
Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment	GTAA	Government guidance requires local planning authorities to assess need and use a robust evidence base to inform the preparation of local plans. The GTAA establishes the future need for Gypsy and Traveller site provision, along with the provision of plots for Travelling Showpeople within West Berkshire.
Habitats Regulations Assessment	HRA	<p>An assessment of the potential effects of a land-use plan against the conservation objectives of any international Habitats Site protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended (known as the Habitats Regulations). These sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).</p> <p>The first stage in the HRA process is a screening for potential impacts on European sites. If there is a probability or a risk that there will be significant effects on site integrity, alone, or in-combination with other relevant plans or</p>

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Term	Acronym	Explanation
		projects, (having regard to the site's conservation objectives) then the plan or project must be subject to an Appropriate Assessment of its implications on the site.
Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment	HELAA	A technical study which aims to identify as many potential sites as possible for residential and economic development uses in West Berkshire. Most of the sites are submissions from landowners and developers for possible future development potential. Importantly, the HELAA does not allocate sites. It is for the plan-making process to determine which sites are appropriate for residential and economic development, with any potential sites being subject to consultation and independent examination.
Infrastructure Delivery Plan	IDP	A document which identifies future infrastructure and service needs for the District
Irreplaceable habitat		Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. In West Berkshire they include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, ancient hedgerows, traditional unimproved meadows/ancient grassland and lowland fen.
Landscape Capacity Assessment	LCA	The ability of a landscape to accommodate different amounts of change or development of a specific type.
Landscape Character Assessment		An assessment to develop a consistent and comprehensive understanding of the character of the landscape.
Landscape Sensitivity Assessment	LSA	The degree to which the character and qualities of the landscape are affected by specific types of development and land-use change. Sensitivity depends upon the type, nature and magnitude of the proposed change as well as the characteristics of the landscape.
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	LVIA	An assessment of both the landscape and the visual effects of a proposed development undertaken in accordance with the Landscape Institute <i>Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment</i> 3 <sup>rd</sup> ed. 2013.
Local Enterprise Partnership	LEP	A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area. West Berkshire is covered by the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
Local Housing Need	LHN	An unconstrained assessment of the number of homes needed in an area, and the first step in the process of deciding how many homes should be planned for. The standard method of assessing LHN is set out in the Planning Practice Guidance in a formula which takes account of household growth projections and affordability in the local area.
Local Nature Partnership	LNP	A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, established for the purpose of protecting and improving the natural environment in an area and the benefits derived from it. West Berkshire is covered by the Berkshire LNP.
Local Plan		A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two.



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Term	Acronym	Explanation
Local Plan Review	LPR	This document. It sets out the strategy for distributing development within the District up to 2039 and the policies for protecting, conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.
Main town centre uses		Defined in the NPPF as: <i>'Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).</i>
Major development		Defined by the government in the NPPF as follows:  <i>Major development<sup>70</sup>: For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.</i>  <i><sup>70</sup> Other than for the specific purposes of paragraphs 176 and 177 in this Framework.</i>
Material consideration		Factors which will be taken into account when reaching a decision on a planning application or appeal. Under Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, decisions on planning applications 'must be made in accordance with the [development] plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise'. Material considerations include issues regarding traffic, wildlife, economic impacts and the historical interest of the area (this list is not exhaustive). Issues such as the loss of a view or the impact on property values are not material to planning decisions.
Mineral Safeguarding Area	MSA	An area designated by the minerals planning authority which covers known deposits of minerals which are desired to be kept safeguarded from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development.
Minor development		Development that does not fall within the definition of major development.
National Planning Policy Framework	NPPF	The NPPF sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.
Natural Flood Management	NFM	Managing flood risk by protecting, restoring and emulating the natural 'regulating' function of catchments, rivers and floodplains.
Nature Recovery Network		An expanding, increasingly connected, network of wildlife rich habitats supporting species recovery, alongside wider benefits such as carbon capture, water quality improvements, natural flood risk management and recreation. It includes the existing network of protected sites and other wildlife rich habitats as well as landscape or catchment scale recovery areas where there is coordinated action for species and habitats.
Neighbourhood Plan	NDP	A plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area. In law it is described as a neighbourhood development plan in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
Nutrient neutrality		An approach by Natural England which highlights the need to carefully consider the nutrient impacts of any new plans and projects on internationally protected Habitats Sites. Developments need to demonstrate that they do no harm, and are 'nutrient neutral' before they can go ahead. Competent authorities and

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Term	Acronym	Explanation
		<p>developers have to assess a site's current nutrient status and the likely impact of any new development and then identify the level of mitigation required to cancel out any additional nutrient pollution expected from a particular project.</p> <p>Pollution most typically arises from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agricultural activity - fertilisers, animal waste, slurry</li> <li>- Use / occupation of buildings (homes especially) – untreated or partially treated sewage and wastewater entering rivers over and above the limits that water companies' permits allow.</li> <li>- Surface water 'run-off' - from development</li> </ul> <p>Development achieves nutrient neutrality when the nutrient load created through additional wastewater (including surface water) from the development is mitigated. By designing development alongside suitable mitigation measures, additional nutrient loads can often be avoided or mitigated. It essentially allows developments to be permitted without impacting on the condition of protected sites.</p>
Nutrient neutrality zone	NNZ	The geographical area in which the Council needs to consider the possibility of adverse effects to Habitats Sites, as a result of additional nutrient loads (including from residential developments), as part of a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). In West Berkshire these are the catchments of the River Lambourn and the River Test.
Older people		People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.
Original building		A building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.
Out of centre		Defined in the NPPF as: <i>'A location which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.'</i>
Out of town		Defined in the NPPF as: <i>'A location out of centre that is outside the existing urban area.'</i>
Parish Plan		Non statutory community led document which sets out a 5 year vision for a community and the actions it needs to take to achieve that vision.
People with disabilities		People have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. These persons include, but are not limited to, people with ambulatory difficulties, blindness, learning difficulties, autism and mental health needs.
Perception (of landscape)		Our own personal appreciation of landscape and how we relate to or make use of it as individuals and communities through sight, sound, smell and feel
Permitted Development	PD	Certain types of minor changes to houses or businesses can be made without needing to apply for planning permission. These changes can be made under 'permitted development rights'. They derive from a general planning permission granted not by the local authority but by Parliament. The permitted development rights which apply to many common projects for houses do not apply to flats, maisonettes or other buildings.

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Term	Acronym	Explanation
Planning condition		A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)).
Planning obligation		A legal agreement entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.
Planning Policy for Traveller Sites		Government planning policy for traveller sites which should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework.
Planning Practice Guidance	PPG	On-line guidance produced by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities that supplements the NPPF and supersedes previous planning practice guidance.
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal or Preliminary Protected Species Survey	PEA	A rapid assessment of the ecological features present, or potentially present, within a site or the surrounding area. It normally comprises a desk study and a walkover survey. A PEA report does not replace an EclA (see above), but for very straightforward projects, where no further ecological surveys are needed, an EclA Report can be produced following completion of the PEA.
Policies Map		Map showing policy areas on an Ordnance Survey map base
Previously Developed Land	PDL	Also known as brownfield land. Defined by the NPPF as: <i>Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.</i>
Priority habitats and species		Species and Habitats of Principal Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
Public Rights of Way	PROW	Public footpath and bridleways as defined in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The phrase 'rights of way' include the above and permissive routes where there is no legal right of way but access is permitted by the landowner.
Renewable and low carbon energy		Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).
Rural exception sites		Defined in the NPPF as <i>"Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding"</i> .
Section 106 Agreements		Legal agreements entered into under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) between a planning authority and a developer, or undertakings offered unilaterally by a developer to ensure that specific works are carried out, payments made or other actions undertaken which would otherwise be outside the scope of the planning permission. Also referred to as

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		Planning Obligations. Section 106 Agreements differ to CIL in that whilst they secure monies to be paid to fund infrastructure to support new developments, the agreements are negotiable and not all new development is subject to such agreements.
Self-build and custom-build housing		Housing built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. Such housing can be either market or affordable housing. A legal definition, for the purpose of applying the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended), is contained in section 1(A1) and (A2) of that Act.
Setting of a heritage asset		The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.
Settlement Boundary		Settlement boundaries identify the main built up area of a 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. They create a level of certainty about whether or not the principle of development is likely to be acceptable.
Site of Special Scientific Interest	SSSI	Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
Source Protection Zone	SPZ	SPZs are defined by the Environment Agency for groundwater sources such as wells, boreholes and springs that are used for public drinking water supply. The zones show the risk of contamination from activities that might cause groundwater pollution in the area. The size and shape of a zone depends upon subsurface conditions, how the groundwater is removed, and other environmental factors.
Special Areas of Conservation	SAC	Areas defined by regulation 3 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which have been given special protection as important conservation sites.
Special Protection Areas	SPA	Areas classified under regulation 15 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds.
Stepping stones		Pockets of habitat that, while not necessarily connected, facilitate the movement of species across otherwise inhospitable landscapes.
Strategic Environmental Assessment	SEA	A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.
Sustainable Development		The NPPF states ' <i>At a very high level, sustainable development is that which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways; a) economic, b) social and c) environmental.</i> ' It goes on to note that these objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in the Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should

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Term	Acronym	Explanation
		<p>play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.</p> <p>The NPPF contains a “presumption in favour of sustainable development” requiring plan making to positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of the area with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change and approve development proposals that accord with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.</p>
Supplementary Planning Document	SPD	A document which adds further detail to the policies in the development plan. It can be used to provide further guidance for development on a specific site, or on a particular issue, such as design. It is capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but it is not part of the development plan.
Sustainability Appraisal	SA	An appraisal of the economic, social and environmental impacts of policies and proposals. It incorporates Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – see above. The SA Scoping Report identifies the information needed for the appraisal, and describes the methodology for undertaking sustainability appraisal.
Sustainable Drainage System	SuDS	A sequence of management practices and control structures designed to drain surface water in a sustainable manner.
Town centre		Defined in the NPPF as: 'Area defined on the local authority's policies map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in the development plan, existing out-of-centre developments, comprising or including main town centre uses, do not constitute town centres.'
Transit site		Refers to Gypsy and Traveller site which is intended for short stays and contains a range of facilities. There is normally a limit on the length of time residents can stay.
Transport Assessment	TA	A comprehensive and systematic process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies what measures will be required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport and what measures will need to be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development.
Transport Statement	TS	A simplified version of a transport assessment where it is agreed the transport issues arising from development proposals are limited and a full transport assessment is not required.
Travel Plan	TP	A long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives and is regularly reviewed.
Village Design Statement	VDS	A parish, town or village design statement (VDS) is a non-statutory community led document which is intended to influence the operation of the statutory planning system. A VDS describes the distinctive visual qualities and characteristics of a particular area and sets out clear design guidance for any future development in it.
Wildlife corridor		Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations.

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Windfall allowance		An allowance within the anticipated housing supply for windfall sites that will come forward in the future. This allowance needs to be realistic, having regard to the land availability assessment, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends.
Windfall sites		Defined in the NPPF as ' <i>Sites not specifically identified in the development plan</i> '