

# Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan



Submission version of the SA Report

September 2016

## Quality information

Document name	Ref	Prepared for	Prepared by	Date	Reviewed by
Submission version of the SA Report for the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan	60472397	Whitchurch Parish Council	Nick Chisholm-Batten Principal Consultant	23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2016	Alex White Associate Director

## Revision history

Revision	Revision date	Details	Name	Position
1	23.09.16	Draft for client comment	Nick Chisholm-Batten	Principal Consultant

AECOM Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited (hereafter referred to as "AECOM") has prepared this Report for the sole use of Whitchurch Parish Council in accordance with the Agreement under which our services were performed. No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this Report or any other services provided by AECOM. This Report is confidential and may not be disclosed by the Client or relied upon by any other party without the prior and express written agreement of AECOM.

The information contained in this Report is based upon information provided by others and upon the assumption that all relevant information has been provided by those parties from whom it has been requested and that such information is accurate. Information obtained by AECOM has not been independently verified by AECOM, unless otherwise stated in the Report.

The method adopted and the sources of information used by AECOM in providing its services are outlined in this Report. The work described in this Report is based on the conditions encountered and the information available during the said period of time. The scope of this Report and the services are accordingly factually limited by these circumstances.

AECOM disclaim any undertaking or obligation to advise any person of any change in any matter affecting the Report, which may come or be brought to AECOM's attention after the date of the Report.

Certain statements made in the Report that are not historical facts may constitute estimates, projections or other forward-looking statements and even though they are based on reasonable assumptions as of the date of the Report, such forward-looking statements by their nature involve risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from the results predicted. AECOM specifically does not guarantee or warrant any estimate or projections contained in this Report.

Unless otherwise stated in this Report, the assessments made assume that the sites and facilities will continue to be used for their current purpose without significant changes.

### Copyright

© This Report is the copyright of AECOM Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited. Any unauthorised reproduction or usage by any person other than the addressee is strictly prohibited.

# CONTENTS

Non-Technical Summary .....	1
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 SA explained .....	3
1.3 Structure of this SA Report.....	4
2 Introduction to Part 1 .....	7
2.1 Scope of the SA .....	7
2.2 What is the plan seeking to achieve? .....	7
2.3 Vision and objectives for the plan .....	7
2.4 What's the plan not trying to achieve? .....	10
2.5 Consultation on the scope .....	10
3 What's the sustainability 'context'?.....	13
4 What's the sustainability 'baseline'? .....	19
5 What are the key issues and objectives that should be a focus? .....	34
6 Introduction to Part 2 .....	39
6.1 Overview of plan-making / SA work undertaken since 2013 .....	39
6.2 Appraisal of reasonable alternatives for the Neighbourhood Plan .....	39
6.3 Appraisal of single vs multiple housing sites to deliver the Local Plan allocation for Whitchurch ....	39
6.4 Assessment of alternative housing sites for taking forward through the WNP .....	44
6.5 Assessment of alternative employment sites for taking forward through the WNP .....	57
6.6 Development of Neighbourhood Plan policies.....	63
7 Introduction to Part 3 .....	66
8 Appraisal of the Submission version of the WNP .....	66
8.1 Introduction .....	66
8.2 Biodiversity .....	67
8.3 Climate Change.....	68
8.4 Historic environment and landscape .....	69
8.5 Land, soil and water resources .....	70
8.6 Population and community .....	71
8.7 Health and wellbeing .....	73
8.8 Transportation.....	74
8.9 Economy and enterprise .....	75
8.10 Conclusions at this current stage .....	75
9 Introduction to Part 4 .....	79
9.2 Plan finalisation .....	79
Appendix I: Regulatory requirements .....	81
Appendix II: SA Framework.....	82

*[This page is intentionally blank]*

# Non-Technical Summary

## What is Sustainability Appraisal?

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

## What is the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan?

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) sets out a plan for Whitchurch Parish in the period to 2029. Prepared to be in conformity with the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan, the WNP sets out a vision, objectives and a range of policies for the Whitchurch area. These relate to a range of topics, including, but not limited to, housing, landscape, the built environment, community services, open space and transport.

The vision for the WNP is as follows:

### **Vision for the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan**

*“We love our town. We appreciate its setting in the Hampshire countryside, the variety of people who live here and the local facilities that support a self-contained community.*

*In the next 15 years, development of our town will take place at a steady pace, maintaining the variety of residents and respecting its existing architectural character. Developments will be of an appropriate size, and well-integrated with the town. They will be designed to minimise the impact of traffic, parking constraints and road noise that detract from our current enjoyment of the town.*

*Business and industry will be encouraged to develop in line with the growth in housing to provide local jobs, shopping and tourism opportunities. Infrastructure and services will be expanded in lockstep with housing growth. The river will be even more visibly the heart of the town, as we take opportunities to improve access to it. The town centre will be cleaner, brighter, and more accessible to pedestrians, cyclists and car users.*

*In 15 years’ time, those of us living here today will be proud to say that Whitchurch has changed for the better.”*

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

## Purpose of this SA Report

This SA Report, which accompanies the Submission version of the WNP, is the third document to be produced as part of the SA process. The first document was the SA Scoping Report, which includes information about Whitchurch’s environment and community. The second document was the SA Report to accompany the ‘Regulation 14’ consultation version of the WNP in November 2015.

The purpose of the SA Report is to:

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

The SA Report contains:

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

### Assessment of alternative approaches for the WNP

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

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

#### **Appraisal of single vs multiple housing sites to deliver the Local Plan allocation for Whitchurch**

Early consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan considered what size and form new housing sites should take during the life of the plan. This considered whether the remaining 200 dwellings to be allocated to deliver the housing numbers set out for the Whitchurch area by the emerging Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan should be delivered on one large site or several multiple sites.

To support decision-making on this element of the WNP, the SA process considered two broad options relating to the size and number of housing allocations taken forward to deliver the housing numbers set out for the Whitchurch area by the emerging Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan, as follows:

- Option 1: Delivery of the emerging Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan's housing allocation for the Whitchurch area through one large site; and
- Option 2: Delivery of the emerging Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan's housing allocation for the Whitchurch area through multiple smaller sites.

The findings of the appraisal of these two options subsequently informed the size and number of sites to be taken forward by the Neighbourhood Plan. Following consultation on this topic, it was considered that the most broadly accepted option for the allocation of housing sites was 1) to deliver housing over multiple sites and 2) to deliver housing through one medium sized site of approximately 100 dwelling and a number of smaller sites. Whilst consultation responses indicated a preference for smaller sites, the capacity of the sites available was deemed to be insufficient to meet the delivery requirements of the Local Plan in terms of housing numbers. Consultation also highlighted a strong preference for development to take place on brownfield sites where possible.

### Appraisal of alternative housing site options for the WNP

The WNP Steering Committee initially commenced the identification of potential sites for housing in the summer of 2013, and undertook a range of consultation and engagement exercises with landowners. As a result of this process nine potential housing sites were identified, as follows:

1. North West Whitchurch
2. Evingar Road North (Serendipity Sam's)
3. Whitchurch Car Centre
4. Dances Lane
5. Blosswood Lane Extension
6. North of the Cricket Ground
7. East of Knowlings
8. East of Winchester Road
9. Bere Hill

To support the consideration of the suitability of these sites, the SA process undertook an appraisal of the key constraints present at each of the nine sites and potential effects that may arise. This process informed the choice of housing sites for allocation through the plan.

### Appraisal of alternative employment site options for the WNP

The Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011-2029 does not allocate employment land in Whitchurch. However community consultation undertaken for the WNP highlighted that the community would like see an allocation of employment land through the Neighbourhood Plan which allowed for the growth of local businesses in Whitchurch.

On this basis the WNP Steering Committee commenced the identification of potential employment sites in the summer of 2013. As a result three potential employment sites were identified and screened by the Steering Committee to ensure they were viable and there were no immediate 'show stoppers'. No sites were rejected at this stage, and all were considered to be potentially deliverable.

The sites were as follows:

- North of the Railway Station
- Extension to Blosswood Lane
- NW Whitchurch

To support the consideration of the suitability of these sites, the SA process undertook an appraisal of the key constraints present at each of the three sites and potential effects that may arise as a result of these allocations. This process informed the choice of employment sites for allocation through the plan.

The appraisal of the three sets of alternatives highlighted above has been presented in **Part 2** of this SA Report.

### Appraisal of the current version of the WNP

Utilising the SA Framework of objectives and appraisal questions developed during the earlier scoping stage of the SA, the SA process has appraised the 28 policies put forward through the current Submission version of the WNP. The SA Report has presented the findings of the appraisal through eight sustainability themes, as follows:

- Biodiversity
- Climate change (including flood risk)
- Population and community
- Health and wellbeing

- Land, soil and water resources
- Historic environment and landscape
- Transportation
- Economy and enterprise

The appraisal has concluded that the Submission version of the WNP is likely to lead to **significant positive effects** in terms of the 'population and community' and 'health and wellbeing' sustainability objectives. These benefits largely relate to the carefully targeted spatial approach proposed by the plan, the focus on improving the quality of life of residents in Whitchurch and the WNP's impetus on supporting enhancements to transport networks and protecting and enhancing open space.

In terms of potential negative effects, the allocation of the NW Whitchurch site through the WNP will lead to losses of land classified as the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land. Whilst the loss of this land is unavoidable (in light of all of the options for medium sized sites being located on land classified as the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land), residual **significant negative effects** are likely to take place in relation to the 'land, soil and water resources' sustainability objectives. It is recognised however that the two smaller sites allocated through the plan are located on previously developed land.

There are also likely to be inevitable effects on landscape and townscape quality from new areas of development on the edge of Whitchurch associated with the allocation of the NW Whitchurch site. To help address this, the current version of the WNP presents a number of policy interventions which will help limit potential effects and achieve enhancements where possible. Potential effects on views from the North Wessex Downs AONB are also likely to be limited by the location of site, the topography of the site and town, and the visual containment brought by the rest of the town.

In relation to potential effects on biodiversity, the delivery of c.100 dwellings on this site raises the possibility of adverse effects on the River Test Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) without avoidance and mitigation measures. Negative effects are however likely to be limited by policy approaches put forward through the WNP, which have a strong focus on protecting the integrity of the nature conservation designations associated with the River Test. Whilst the other allocations proposed by the WNP are located in relative proximity to the SSSI, adverse effects on these nationally designated nature conservation sites are likely to be limited by the proposed size of the allocations.

Whilst the approach presented by the WNP will help initiate a range of beneficial approaches in relation to 'climate change', 'biodiversity' and 'historic environment and landscape', these are not considered as significant positive effects as the delivery of the allocations through the WNP will inevitably lead to some adverse effects in relation to these sustainability themes. For these themes therefore, the approach presented by the Submission version of the WNP will limit the potential magnitude of adverse effects linked to the delivery of housing allocations in the Neighbourhood Area.

In relation to the 'economy and enterprise' sustainability theme, a number of beneficial approaches are put forward by the Submission version of the plan. This includes relating to the provision of employment land for new and existing businesses, the economic vitality of Whitchurch town centre and the promotion of Whitchurch's visitor economy. As such, the Submission version of the WNP is likely to lead to **significant positive effects** in relation to this theme.

## Next steps

The WNP has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, for its consideration. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council will consider whether the plan is suitable to go forward to Independent Examination in terms of the WNP meeting legal requirements and its compatibility with the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan.

If the subsequent Independent Examination is favourable, the WNP will be subject to a referendum, organised by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the plan, then it will be passed to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council with a request it is adopted. Once adopted, the WNP will become part of the Development Plan for the area.

# *Introduction*

The image features a solid green background. A bright blue diagonal stripe runs from the bottom-left corner towards the top-right corner, creating a dynamic, modern look.

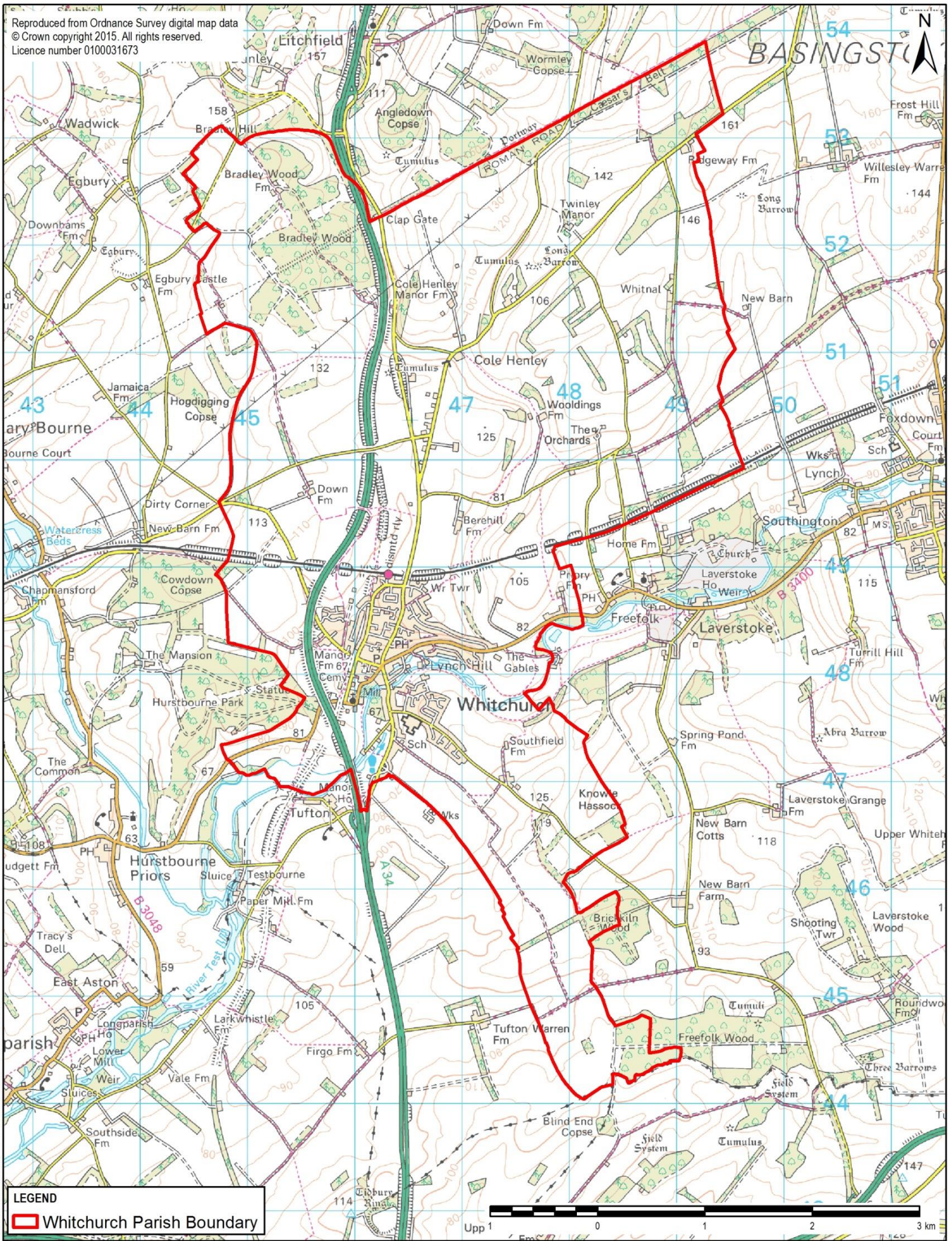
# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in support of Whitchurch's emerging Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.1.2 The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. The WNP, which covers Whitchurch Parish in Hampshire, is being prepared to be in conformity with the emerging Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan. It is currently anticipated that the WNP will be submitted in February 2016, with a view to undergoing referendum later in 2016.
- 1.1.3 Key information relating to the WNP is as follows:

**Table 1.1** Key facts relating to the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan

<b>Name of Responsible Authority</b>	Whitchurch Parish Council
<b>Title of Plan</b>	Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan
<b>Subject</b>	Neighbourhood Development Plan
<b>Purpose</b>	The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The plan will be in conformity with the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan.
<b>Timescale</b>	To 2029
<b>Area covered by the plan</b>	Whitchurch Parish (see Figure 1.1)
<b>Summary of content</b>	The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan will set out a vision, strategy and range of policies for the plan area. Box 2.1 below presents the vision for the Neighbourhood Plan.
<b>Plan contact point</b>	Catherine Burt, Clerk to Whitchurch Town Council, Town Hall, Newbury Street, Whitchurch, Hampshire, RG28 7DW Email address: clerks@whitchurch-hampshire-tc.gov.uk



**LEGEND**  
  Whitchurch Parish Boundary

Project Title/Drawing Title

**WHITCHURCH  
 NEIGHBOURHOOD  
 AREA**

Client **WHITCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL**

Drawn SS	Checked NCB	Approved NCB
Date 31/03/2015	Scale @ A4 1:45,000	Purpose of Issue FINAL

Drawing Number <b>FIGURE 1.1</b>	Rev 1
-------------------------------------	----------

AECOM  
 Scott House  
 Alençon Link, Basingstoke  
 Hampshire, RG21 7PP  
 Telephone (01256) 310200  
 Fax (01256) 310201  
 www.aecom.com



THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN PREPARED PURSUANT TO AND SUBJECT TO THE TERMS OF AECOM'S APPOINTMENT BY ITS CLIENT. AECOM ACCEPTS NO LIABILITY FOR ANY USE OF THIS DOCUMENT OTHER THAN BY ITS ORIGINAL CLIENT OR FOLLOWING AECOM'S EXPRESS AGREEMENT TO SUCH USE, AND ONLY FOR THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH IT WAS PREPARED AND PROVIDED.

File Name: Z:\TEMP\Whitchurch\GIS\project\_files\MXDs\Fig 1.1 Whitchurch Neighbourhood Area.mxd

## 1.2 SA explained

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

---

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

### 1.3 Structure of this SA Report

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

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

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

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

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

*[This page is intentionally blank]*

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

## 2 Introduction to Part 1

### 2.1 Scope of the SA

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

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

2.1.2 This next section answers the first question by outlining the WNP's vision and objectives.

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

- Biodiversity
- Climate change (including flood risk)
- Land, soil and water resources
- Historic environment and landscape
- Population and community
- Health and wellbeing
- Transportation
- Economy and enterprise<sup>4</sup>

### 2.2 What is the plan seeking to achieve?

2.2.1 The WNP is currently being developed as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2012, with a view to submission to Basingstoke and Deane Council in February 2016.

2.2.2 The WNP has been prepared in the context of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011-2029. The Local Plan was adopted in May 2016 and provides a framework for how future development across Basingstoke and Deane Borough will be planned and delivered.

2.2.3 The Local Plan identifies 350 dwellings to be delivered in Whitchurch by 2029. 150 dwellings have been allocated through Policy SS3.6, leaving in the region of 200 dwellings to be delivered in the plan period. However, the Local Plan does not identify where these should be located. The WNP therefore provides an opportunity for meeting community aspirations within Whitchurch whilst also helping deliver key objectives for the Neighbourhood Area.

### 2.3 Vision and objectives for the plan

2.3.1 The vision and objectives for the WNP were developed following the review of extensive consultation exercises carried out by the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee. The vision and objectives for the WNP are presented below.

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

<sup>4</sup> Through the scoping process, air quality was 'scoped out' for the purposes of the SA/SEA

**Box 2.1** Vision for the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan**Vision**

*“We love our town. We appreciate its setting in the Hampshire countryside, the variety of people who live here and the local facilities that support a self-contained community.*

*In the next 15 years, development of our town will take place at a steady pace, maintaining the variety of residents and respecting its existing architectural character. Developments will be of an appropriate size, and well-integrated with the town. They will be designed to minimise the impact of traffic, parking constraints and road noise that detract from our current enjoyment of the town.*

*Business and industry will be encouraged to develop in line with the growth in housing to provide local jobs, shopping and tourism opportunities. Infrastructure and services will be expanded in lockstep with housing growth. The river will be even more visibly the heart of the town, as we take opportunities to improve access to it. The town centre will be cleaner, brighter, and more accessible to pedestrians, cyclists and car users.*

*In 15 years’ time, those of us living here today will be proud to say that Whitchurch has changed for the better.”*

**Table 2.1** Objectives for the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan

<b>Objectives</b>	
<b>O1</b>	Maintain the current character and balance of countryside agriculture business, housing and retail facilities of Whitchurch as well as the community who live there.
<b>O2</b>	Ensure high quality and locally distinctive design which responds to local character to create inclusive, well connected and safe neighbourhoods
<b>O3</b>	Plan for the controlled development of Whitchurch of a type and design to meet the needs of Whitchurch Community such that today’s character and feel is maintained.
<b>O4</b>	In compliance with the Local Plan to allocate sites for 200 houses in addition to the site for 150 houses already allocated to be built in phases over the next 15 years. Provide new housing which incorporates a mix of tenure, size and type to enable accommodation for all, including older people, downsizers, smaller households and homes for younger people and young families and so counter the growing demographic imbalance.
<b>O5</b>	Focus the provision for new housing within a number of smaller development sites around and well integrated into the Town which respond to local needs. Ensure that the design and location of new development is resilient to the effects of climate change and flooding. Ensure that new development is of high quality design, is built to a high sustainability standard and reinforces local distinctiveness.
<b>O6</b>	Minimise our contribution to climate change through promotion of energy efficiency, low carbon technology and energy efficient design.
<b>O7</b>	Reduce the need to travel and shorten the length and duration of journeys providing sustainable and accessible transport opportunities. Promote walking and cycling across the Town. Link all developments to the Town centre with footpaths, where appropriate. Position development within easy walking distance of bus stops, the schools, the health centre, shops and other Town facilities.

---

**Objectives**


---

- O08** To position and promote infrastructure and new developments such that increased problems with traffic are minimised at the times and locations which currently are problematic. Promote the formulation and implementation of a traffic strategy for the Town to reduce the adverse impact of traffic upon the quality of lives of the community.
- 
- O09** Facilitate parking to meet the needs of the community including Whitchurch's commuters and promote parking for increased prosperity of the Town through visitors and Town Centre retail.
- 
- O10** Strengthen Whitchurch's Town Centre's role as a location of choice, for residents, workers and visitors for retail, culture and leisure. Progress the "Town Centre Plan" to promote a vibrant and attractive Town centre, while retaining the distinctive cultural and historic heritage
- 
- O11** Protect and enhance our green open spaces and promote the inclusion of green spaces within developments which occur within the Town. Protect, enhance and conserve the AONB, landscape and views. Protect and where possible enhance access to the countryside for the community and visitors. Use land efficiently and to preserve high quality agricultural land. To seek opportunities for landscape, recreational and ecological gain whilst minimising the environmental impact of new development.
- 
- O12** Maintain and enhance the quality and value of community, health, cultural, leisure and recreational facilities and open spaces that support and provide opportunities for participation in social and physical and good access to health services.
- 
- O13** Facilitate increased access to the River Test for local residents and visitors for their enjoyment and education. Conserve the River Test and its Tributaries reducing the risk of flooding and consequences of pollution through partnership working, active flood management and appropriate mitigation approaches.
- 
- O14** Maintain the character and vitality of Whitchurch and enhance Whitchurch's position as a prosperous economic community with a diverse economy by supporting a range of employment sectors through the allocation of employment land for premises of the right quality, type, location and size to meet the future needs of existing businesses in Whitchurch.
- 
- O15** Preserve important Town assets and rich historic and built environment to maintain and enhance its quality and distinctiveness while accommodating change. Build on and promote Whitchurch's natural and built heritage to attract visitors to the Town.
- 
- O16** Facilitate a well-educated and highly skilled local population and workforce with strong connections to the local business community. Provide local affordable housing for local employees.
- 
- O17** Protect and enhance Whitchurch's locally distinctive character of our priority habitats and landscapes, such as the North Wessex Downs AONB.
- 
- O18** Ensure that infrastructure is planned for prior to development and delivered alongside development to meet the changing needs of our residents and employers, including the broader infrastructure needs of an increasingly ageing population.
- 

2.3.2 To support these objectives, the WNP sets out a number of Neighbourhood Plan policies. The latest iteration (September 2016) of these policies has been appraised in Chapter 8 of this SA Report.

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

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

## 2.5 Consultation on the scope

- 2.5.1 The SEA Regulations require that: *“When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”*. In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, The Environment Agency and Historic England.<sup>5</sup>
- 2.5.2 As such, these authorities were consulted on the scope of the WNP SA in April 2015 and consultation responses were received from Historic England on the SA Scoping Report. These are presented in **Table 2.2**.

**Table 2.2** Consultation responses received on the SA Scoping Report

<i>Consultation response</i>	<i>How the response was considered and addressed</i>
<p><b>Historic England</b>  <b>Robert Lloyd-Sweet Historic Places Adviser (South East)</b></p>	
<p>For the first headline sustainability issue at 5.1, we would add “location” to “scale, design and layout” (and also in paragraph 5.3.10) and “character and appearance” in addition to “integrity” to reflect the wording of the appropriate Act with reference to Conservation Areas and to reflect the potential for the location of development to result in significant environmental impacts on heritage assets.</p>	<p>Wording of sustainability issue updated.</p>
<p>We welcome the identification of “set out a ‘positive strategy’ for the ‘conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment’, including those heritage assets that are most at risk” as one of the key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework. However, we would also like to see “contain a clear strategy for enhancing the natural, built and historic environment” (paragraph 157) identified as another key messages from the NPPF.</p>	<p>Additions made to context review in relation to NPPF.</p>
<p>We welcome the sustainability baseline for the historic environment of the parish set out in sub-section 5.3 (although the references to English Heritage should now be updated to “Historic England”).</p>	<p>Comment noted, references updated.</p>

<sup>5</sup> In-line with Article 6(3).of the SEA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected because *‘by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities,[they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programme.’*

**Consultation response****How the response was considered and addressed**

Historic England considers that Neighbourhood Development Plans should be underpinned by a thorough understanding of the character and special qualities of the area covered by the Plan. We welcome the consideration of the landscape character of the parish within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and note this has been achieved as a usefully brief summary statement. However, it would be helpful for the SEA to include some consideration of the landscape and townscape character of the parish outside the AONB, in order to consider where development might have a more or less significant impact on the environment. This might, for instance, include a brief consideration of the make-up of the town in terms of the influences on the location of its 'historic core' and the location and origin of identifiably later townscape character zones. We note the Whitchurch Design Statement provides an appropriate source of mapping within the urban area, which should provide the appropriate evidence and should be referred to in this section as an important evidence base document that should make an important contribution to the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. As the settlement pattern of the town and associated hamlets is specifically identified as a feature that is desirable to protect, the characteristics of this pattern and its positive value should be identified in the evidence base. We also note that the relationship of the town and the river is noted as significant and a potential area of enhancement through improved access within the document and suggest considering whether this is reflected in the town's historic environment or heritage assets.

The appraisal of the relevant elements of the plan and alternatives (including site assessments) has considered these elements related to landscape and townscape character. This includes associated with the parts of the Neighbourhood Area outside of the AONB.

We consider that it would be helpful to explain in more detail what the special interest of the Conservation Area (the reason for its designation) is in paragraph 5.3.5. The existing character appraisal (referred to in the document) should provide appropriate evidence to support a brief statement here. As the conservation area covers a large part of the main area of settlement within the parish it should be pointed out that settlement expansion or infilling is likely to have an impact on this designated heritage asset at paragraph 5.3.10. It would also be helpful to consider whether or not the topography of the parish gives rise to potential impacts on the setting of the Conservation Area from development that would affect longer distance views.

The site assessments undertaken for the SA process have considered the areas of special interest in the Conservation Area. They have also considered the effects of topography and setting in relation to the Conservation Area.

We welcome the reference to the presence of numerous listed buildings in the Parish at 5.3.6. Using the mapping evidence presented we feel it would be useful to highlight the clustering of many of these within the conservation area, reflecting its historic status as the principal historic settlement in the Neighbourhood Plan Area, as well as the scatter of historic buildings across the parish – perhaps representing the characteristic mixture of central settlement and hamlets referred to elsewhere in the document. This may also have implications for the potential likely effects of development in particular locations within the parish, such as impact of development on the character of historic farmsteads.

Baseline updated.

<i>Consultation response</i>	<i>How the response was considered and addressed</i>
<p>We welcome the proposed sustainability objectives in Table 5.1 of the Report. However, we would prefer the third sub-objective (or third first part of the SA Appraisal Question) to be “Conserve and enhance the significance of buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated” as better reflecting the guidance of the NPPF, and recognising that sensitive change can maintain, or even enhance, the significance of heritage assets. We would welcome an additional sub-objective “Conserve and enhance archaeological remains, both scheduled and non-scheduled, including historic landscapes”.</p>	<p>SA appraisal questions have been updated to reflect suggested additions.</p>
<p>We would expect the Scoping Report to set out the indicators or measures by which the policies and proposals of the Plan can be assessed against the objectives and sub-objectives. Appendix 4 of the Historic England advice on Strategic Environmental Assessments and the Historic Environment contains a range of possible indicators for assessing and monitoring the performance of the policies and proposals of the Plan against a historic environment objective.</p>	<p>It is recognised that monitoring indicators are an important aspect of the SA process. Monitoring indicators will be informed by the outcome of the appraisal, particularly where significant adverse environmental effects are predicted. At the scoping stage the focus has been on developing robust and appropriate appraisal criteria. This will subsequently be used to inform the framework of monitoring indicators and, if relevant, will include specific metrics as recommended by Historic England.</p>

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

## 3 What's the sustainability 'context'?

The SA Report must include...

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

### 3.1 Introduction

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

3.1.2 Broad problems / issues; and

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

3.1.3 Set out below is a summary and update to the context review presented within the April 2015 Scoping Report.

### 3.2 Biodiversity

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

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

- Contribute to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity by minimising impacts and achieving net gains in biodiversity wherever possible.
- Promote the 'preservation, restoration and recreation of priority habitats, ecological networks' and the 'protection and recovery of priority species'. Plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries.
- Set criteria based policies for the protection of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites, giving weight to their importance not just individually but as a part of a wider ecological network.
- Take account of the effects of climate change in the long term. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including green infrastructure (i.e. 'a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities').
- Plan positively planning for 'green infrastructure' as part of planning for 'ecological networks'.
- High quality open spaces should be protected or their loss mitigated, unless a lack of need is established.
- The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP)<sup>7</sup> sets out the importance of a healthy, functioning natural environment to sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal well-being. It was in part a response to the UK's failure to halt and reverse the decline in biodiversity by 2010 and it signalled a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity in nature reserves to adopting a landscape approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity.

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

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

- 3.2.3 At the local level the Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire reviews the status of wildlife in Hampshire and sets out a framework for action in two parts.
- 3.2.4 *Volume One, the Strategic Plan*, sets out the objectives of the Partnership, describes Hampshire's biodiversity, and identifies habitats and species of priority concern. It also presents a strategy for information, data and raising awareness of biodiversity. *Volume Two* contains individual action plans for priority habitats and species and topics that have a considerable influence on the conservation of biodiversity.

### 3.3 Climate change

- 3.3.1 In its 2007 strategy on climate change, the European Commission assesses the costs and benefits of combating climate change and recommends a package of measures to limit global warming to 2° Celsius.<sup>8</sup> In relation to energy, the Commission recommends that the EU's energy efficiency improves by 20% and the share of renewable energy grows to 20% by 2020.
- 3.3.2 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:
- Support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate as a 'core planning principle'.
  - There is a key role for planning in securing radical reductions in greenhouse gases (GHG), including in terms of meeting the targets set out in the Climate Change Act 2008<sup>9</sup>. Specifically, planning policy should support the move to a low carbon future through:
    - planning for new development in locations and ways which reduce GHG emissions;
    - actively supporting energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings;
    - setting local requirements for building's sustainability in a way that is consistent with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy;
    - positively promoting renewable energy technologies and considering identifying suitable areas for their construction; and
    - encouraging those transport solutions that support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion.
  - Direct development away from areas highest at risk of flooding, with development 'not to be allocated if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability of flooding'. Where development is necessary, it should be made safe without increasing levels of flood risk elsewhere.
  - Take account of the effects of climate change in the long term, taking into account a range of factors including flooding. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.
- 3.3.3 The Flood and Water Management Act<sup>10</sup> highlights that alternatives to traditional engineering approaches to flood risk management include:
- Incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings, and retro-fitting properties at risk (including historic buildings)
  - Utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding, for example through the management of land to reduce runoff and through harnessing the ability of wetlands to store water
  - Identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere
  - Planning to roll back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion

<sup>8</sup> Commission of the European Communities (2007) Limiting Global Climate Change to two degrees Celsius: The way ahead for 2020 and beyond [online] available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0002:FIN:EN:PDF>

<sup>9</sup> The Climate Change Act 2008 sets targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions through action in the UK of at least 80% by 2050, and reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of at least 26% by 2020, against a 1990 baseline.

<sup>10</sup> Flood and Water Management Act (2010) [online] available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

- Creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)<sup>11</sup>

3.3.4 Further guidance is provided in the document Planning for SuDS.<sup>12</sup> This report calls for greater recognition of the multiple benefits that water management can present. It suggests that successful SuDS are capable of ‘contributing to local quality of life and green infrastructure’.

### 3.4 Historic environment and landscape

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

- Protect and enhance valued landscapes, giving particular weight to those identified as being of national importance.
- Heritage assets should be recognised as an ‘irreplaceable resource’ that should be conserved in a ‘manner appropriate to their significance’, taking account of ‘the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits’ of conservation, whilst also recognising the positive contribution new development can make to local character and distinctiveness.
- Set out a ‘positive strategy’ for the ‘conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment’, including those heritage assets that are most at risk.
- Contain a clear strategy for enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.
- Consider the effects of climate change in the long term, including in terms of landscape. Adopt ‘proactive strategies’ to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.

3.4.2 The Government’s Statement on the Historic Environment for England<sup>13</sup> sets out its vision for the historic environment. It calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in an intelligent manner in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life.

3.4.3 The Consultation Draft of the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2014-2019 sets out a wide ranging vision for the AONB, incorporating aspects such as landscape quality and tranquillity; the protection and enhancement of the historic environment; the conservation and improvement of biodiversity, water and soil quality; the development of vibrant economy based on the area’s environmental qualities; thriving rural communities; and sustainable tourism. The Management Plan subsequently presents a series of policies and objectives to achieve this vision in the AONB, and proposes a Delivery Plan of actions.

### 3.5 Land, soil and water resources

3.5.1 The EU’s Soil Thematic Strategy<sup>14</sup> presents a strategy for protecting soils resources in Europe. The main aim of the strategy is to minimise soil degradation and limit associated detrimental effects linked to water quality and quantity, human health, climate change, biodiversity, and food safety.

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

<sup>11</sup> N.B. The provisions of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 came into force on the 1st of October 2012 and makes it mandatory for any development in England or Wales to incorporate SuDs.

<sup>12</sup> CIRIA (2010) Planning for SuDS – making it happen [online] available at: <http://www.ciria.org/service/knowledgebase/AM/ContentManagerNet/ContentDisplay.aspx?Section=knowledgebase&NoTemplate=1&ContentID=18465>

<sup>13</sup> HM Government (2010) The Government’s Statement on the Historic Environment for England [online] available at: [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference\\_library/publications/6763.aspx](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/6763.aspx)

<sup>14</sup> European Commission (2006) Soil Thematic Policy [online] available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/index_en.htm)

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

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

- Protect and enhance soils. The value of best and most versatile agricultural land should also be taken into account.
- Prevent new or existing development from being 'adversely affected' by the presence of 'unacceptable levels' of soil pollution or land instability and be willing to remediate and mitigate 'despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate'.
- Encourage the effective use of land' through the reuse of land which has been previously developed, 'provided that this is not of high environmental value'. Whilst there is no longer a national requirement to build at a minimum density, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to 'set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances'.
- Produce strategic policies to deliver the provision of a variety of infrastructure, including that necessary for water supply
- With regards to waste, the NPPF does not contain any specific waste policies as waste planning policy will be published as part of the National Waste Management Plan.

3.5.4 Other key documents at the national level include Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England<sup>15</sup>, which sets out a vision for soil use in England, and the Water White Paper<sup>16</sup>, which sets out the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector. It states the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources. In terms of waste management, the Government Review of Waste Policy in England<sup>17</sup> recognises that environmental benefits and economic growth can be the result of a more sustainable approach to the use of materials.

## 3.6 Population and community

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

- To 'boost significantly the supply of housing', local planning authorities should meet the 'full, objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing' in their area. They should prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to assess their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to need over the plan period.
- With a view to creating 'sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities' authorities should ensure provision of affordable housing onsite or externally where robustly justified.
- In rural areas, when exercising the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities, local planning authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. Authorities should consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs.
- The NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. It explains how good design is a key aspect in sustainable development, and how development should improve the quality of the area over its lifetime, not just in the short term. Good architecture

<sup>15</sup> Defra (2009) Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England [online] available at: <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/land/soil/documents/soil-strategy.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Defra (2011) Water for life (The Water White Paper) [online] available at <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm82/8230/8230.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Defra (2011) Government Review of Waste Policy in England [online] available at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13540-waste-policy-review110614.pdf>

and landscaping are important, with the use of design codes contributing to the delivery of high quality outcomes. Design should reinforce local distinctiveness, raise the standard more generally in the area and address the connections between people and places.

- The social role of the planning system involves ‘supporting vibrant and healthy communities’.
- The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities
- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
- Ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Places should contain clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public spaces, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
- Ensuring that there is a ‘sufficient choice of school places’ is of ‘great importance’ and there is a need to take a ‘proactive, positive and collaborative approach’ to bringing forward ‘development that will widen choice in education’.

### 3.7 Health and wellbeing

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

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

3.7.2 In relation to other key national messages in relation to health, Fair Society, Healthy Lives<sup>18</sup> (‘The Marmot Review’) investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them. Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that that there is: ‘overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities’.

3.7.3 The increasing role that local level authorities are expected to play in producing health outcomes is demonstrated by recent Government legislation. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 transfers responsibility for public health from the NHS to local government<sup>19</sup>, giving local authorities a duty to improve the health of the people who live in their areas. This will require a more holistic approach to health across all local government functions.

### 3.8 Transportation

3.8.1 European and UK transport policies and plans place emphasis on the modernisation and sustainability of the transport network. Specific objectives include reducing pollution and road

<sup>18</sup> The Marmot Review (2011) The Marmot Review: Implications for Spatial Planning [online] available at: <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/12111/53895/53895.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Upper tier and unitary local authorities

congestion through improvements to public transport, walking and cycling networks and reducing the need to travel. National policy also focuses on the need for the transport network to support sustainable economic growth. The Hampshire Local Transport Plan 2011-31 presents a long term strategy for the area and an implementation plan for the county.

### 3.9 Economy and enterprise

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

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

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

The SA Report must include...

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

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The baseline review tailors and develops the problems/issues identified through context review so that they are locally specific. A detailed understanding of the baseline can aid the identification and evaluation of 'likely significant effects' associated with the plan / alternatives.
- 4.1.2 Set out below is a summary and update to the baseline review presented within the April 2015 SA Scoping Report.

### 4.2 Biodiversity

#### Summary of current baseline

- 4.2.1 No sites internationally designated for their nature conservation interest are present in the Neighbourhood Area. The closest European designated site is the River Itchen SAC, which is approximately 12km to the south of the Neighbourhood Area.
- 4.2.2 In terms of nationally designated nature conservation sites, two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are present in the Neighbourhood Area (**Figure 4.1**).
- 4.2.3 The River Test passes through the centre of the parish in an east to west direction. The river has been designated as an SSSI for its interest as one of the most species-rich lowland rivers in England<sup>20</sup>.
- 4.2.4 The condition assessment for the River Test SSSI undertaken in February 2013 deemed that a main part of the SSSI within the Neighbourhood Area (comprising the river channel) is in an 'unfavourable no change' condition. This is due to the SSSI units not complying with existing river profile or river planform targets, and failing the targets for river bank vegetation and the target for the presence of non-native plant species<sup>21</sup>.
- 4.2.5 The area of the SSSI located south of Fulling Mill comprising neutral grassland has been assessed as 'unfavourable recovering' due to recent improvements to the management of the area<sup>22</sup>. The areas of the SSSI comprising wet alder woodland upstream and downstream of the town have been assessed as being in a 'favourable condition' due to the areas comprising good quality habitats for birds and invertebrates<sup>23</sup>.
- 4.2.6 Reflecting the presence of the River Test SSSI in the central areas of Whitchurch town, a significant part of the built up area of the Neighbourhood Area is within the SSSI's Impact Risk Zone<sup>24</sup> for the types of development likely to be proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan.

<sup>20</sup> River Test SSSI citation: [http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/citation/citation\\_photo/2000170.pdf](http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/citation/citation_photo/2000170.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> River Test - river channel unit - source to Bourne: <http://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/UnitDetail.aspx?UnitId=1027757> [accessed 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015]

<sup>22</sup> River Test – Unit 8 <http://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/UnitDetail.aspx?UnitId=1027730> [accessed 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015]

<sup>23</sup> <http://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/UnitDetail.aspx?UnitId=1027682> [accessed 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015]

<sup>24</sup> SSSI Impact Risk Zones are a GIS tool/dataset which maps zones around each SSSI according to the particular sensitivities of the

- 4.2.7 A further SSSI, the Bere Mill Meadows SSSI, is located on the eastern edge of the Neighbourhood Area, adjacent to the River Test. Bere Mill Meadows comprise a group of damp, unimproved herb-rich neutral grassland on the flood plain of the River Test. The meadows have an extensive frontage along the River Test providing a linear habitat that is particularly valuable for birds and invertebrates. The meadows represent a type of vegetation formerly widespread in the chalk stream valleys but now much diminished through extensive agricultural improvement, flood control and neglect<sup>25</sup>. The SSSI has been assessed as being in an 'unfavourable recovering' condition. Improved management is currently helping to reduce issues related to waterlogging, and is helping to address previous issues related to the frequency of positive indicator species.<sup>26</sup>
- 4.2.8 The Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) identifies a number of 'priority habitats' that are characteristic of Hampshire and for which Hampshire makes a significant contribution to the UK aims of the Biodiversity Action Plan.
- 4.2.9 Key areas of BAP Priority Habitat in the Neighbourhood Area include:
- Deciduous Woodland, Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, Good Quality Semi-improved Grassland and Lowland Meadow BAP Priority Habitat present along and close to the River Test;
  - numerous areas of Deciduous Woodland BAP Priority Habitat scattered along the disused and current railway line and the A34 road corridor;
  - Woodpasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat associated with Hurstbourne Park on the western edge of the parish; and
  - a large area of Deciduous Woodland BAP Priority Habitat present at Bradley Wood in the north of the parish.
- 4.2.10 Many of the areas covered by Deciduous Woodland BAP Priority Habitat have also been classified as ancient woodland (**Figure 4.1**).
- 4.2.11 In relation to geodiversity, the underlying rocks of the parish form part of the Hampshire Basin, a geological feature in which the rocks slope gently from the north to the south. The oldest rock in the Neighbourhood Area is Cretaceous chalk which was formed over 65 million years ago. This chalk is a porous, porous, fine grained limestone which is generally highly permeable and alkaline.

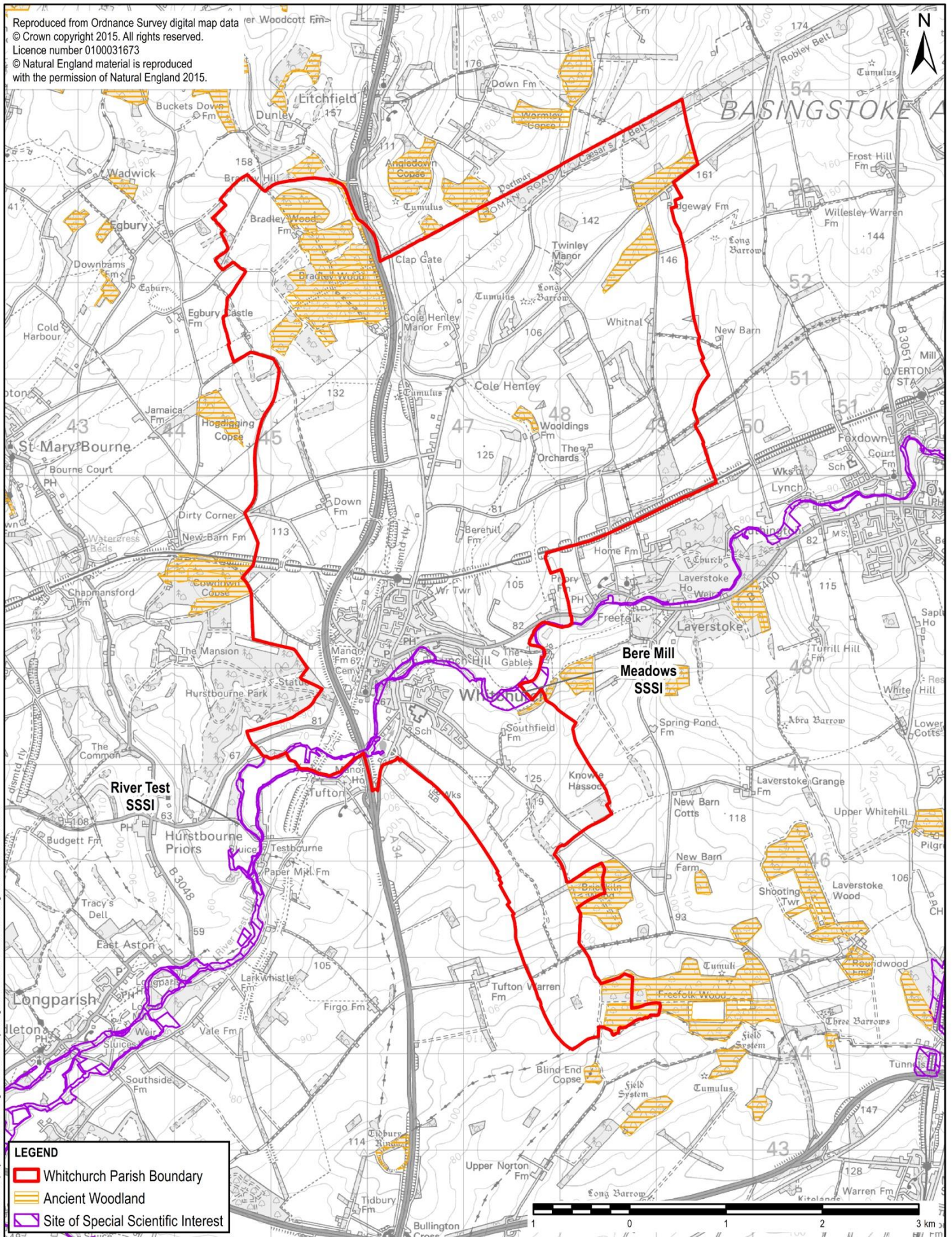
---

features for which it is notified. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location. Natural England is a statutory consultee on development proposals that might impact on SSSIs.

<sup>25</sup> Bere Mill Meadows SSSI citation: [http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/citation/citation\\_photo/1002517.pdf](http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/citation/citation_photo/1002517.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> <http://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/UnitDetail.aspx?UnitId=1007323> [accessed 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015]

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital map data  
 © Crown copyright 2015. All rights reserved.  
 Licence number 0100031673  
 © Natural England material is reproduced  
 with the permission of Natural England 2015.



**LEGEND**

- Whitchurch Parish Boundary
- Ancient Woodland
- Site of Special Scientific Interest

Project Title/Drawing Title

**BIODIVERSITY DESIGNATIONS  
 IN THE WHITCHURCH  
 NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA**

Client <b>WHITCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL</b>		
Drawn SJ	Checked BB	Approved NCB
Date 11/11/2015	Scale @ A4 1:50,000	Purpose of Issue FINAL
Drawing Number <b>FIGURE 4.1</b>		Rev 1

AECOM  
 Scott House  
 Alençon Link, Basingstoke  
 Hampshire, RG21 7PP  
 Telephone (01256) 310200  
 Fax (01256) 310201  
 www.aecom.com

**AECOM**

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN PREPARED PURSUANT TO AND SUBJECT TO THE TERMS OF AECOM'S APPOINTMENT BY ITS CLIENT. AECOM ACCEPTS NO LIABILITY FOR ANY USE OF THIS DOCUMENT OTHER THAN BY ITS ORIGINAL CLIENT OR FOLLOWING AECOM'S EXPRESS AGREEMENT TO SUCH USE, AND ONLY FOR THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH IT WAS PREPARED AND PROVIDED.

File Name: \\ukwim\p01\GIS\TEMP\Whitchurch\GIS\project\_files\MXD\Fig 4.1 Biodiversity designations in the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Area\_v2.mxd

### Summary of future baseline

- 4.2.12 Sites of biodiversity importance have the potential to come under increasing pressures from an increase in the plan area's population and associated development. This includes through a loss of habitats and impacts on biodiversity networks. This may be exacerbated by the effects of climate change, which has the potential to lead to changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition and character of habitats. In view of the location of the River Test within Whitchurch, the River Test SSSI and Bere Mill Meadows SSSI are particularly sensitive.
- 4.2.13 Biodiversity in the plan area has the potential to continue to be affected by the economic necessity for intensive farming in the area (as facilitated by the presence of high quality of agricultural land in the plan area). There is however the potential for gains for biodiversity in the farmed landscape to arise as a result of the New Environmental Land Management Scheme (NELMS), which is currently being implemented.
- 4.2.14 Benefits for biodiversity have the potential to arise from the increasing integration of biodiversity considerations within forward planning in Basingstoke and Deane and Hampshire and efforts to improve green infrastructure networks in the area.

## 4.3 Climate change

### Summary of current baseline

- 4.3.1 The outcome of research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released in 2009 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP09) team<sup>27</sup>. UKCP09 gives climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on simulations from climate models. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and the level of confidence in each prediction.
- 4.3.2 As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change for the South East by 2050 for a medium emissions scenario<sup>28</sup> are likely to be as follows:
- the central estimate of increase in winter mean temperature is 2.2°C and an increase in summer mean temperature of 2.8°C; and
  - the central estimate of change in winter mean precipitation is 16% and summer mean precipitation is –19%.
- 4.3.3 Resulting from these changes, a range of risks may exist for the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Area. These include:
- increased incidence of heat related illnesses and deaths during the summer;
  - increased incidence of illnesses and deaths related to exposure to sunlight (e.g. skin cancer, cataracts);
  - increased incidence of pathogen related diseases (e.g. legionella and salmonella);
  - increase in health problems related to rise in local ozone levels during summer;
  - increased risk of injuries and deaths due to increased number of storm events;
  - effects on water resources from climate change;
  - reduction in availability of groundwater for abstraction;
  - adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain;

<sup>27</sup> The data was released on 18th June 2009: See: <http://ukclimateprojections.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>28</sup> UK Climate Projections (2009) South East 2050s Medium Emissions Scenario [online] available at: <http://ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk/22290> (accessed 03/2015)

- increased risk of flooding, including increased vulnerability to 1:100 year floods;
- changes in insurance provisions for flood damage;
- a need to increase the capacity of wastewater treatment plants and sewers;
- a need to upgrade flood defences;
- soil erosion due to flash flooding;
- loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution;
- spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution;
- deterioration in working conditions due to increased temperatures;
- changes to global supply chain;
- increased difficulty of food preparation, handling and storage due to higher temperatures;
- an increased move by the insurance industry towards a more risk-based approach to insurance underwriting, leading to higher cost premiums for business;
- increased demand for air-conditioning;
- increased drought and flood related problems such as soil shrinkages and subsidence;
- risk of road surfaces melting more frequently due to increased temperature; and
- flooding of roads.

4.3.4 In terms of flood risk, fluvial flooding and, to a lesser extent, groundwater flooding are issues for the Neighbourhood Area. This includes related to the presence of the River Test and the chalk aquifer present under the parish. Key issues include obstructions by bridges when water levels are high on the River Test and the backup of water during high water levels.

4.3.5 The Basingstoke and Deane Strategic Flood Risk Assessment<sup>29</sup> summarises flood risk in Whitchurch as follows:

*'Whitchurch is at risk of fluvial flooding from the River Test. There are two instances of flooding from the drainage system, both of which are close to the river so may be partly due to backing up at high water level. A potential susceptibility to groundwater flooding is indicated in the groundwater emergence maps.'*

4.3.6 In relation to greenhouse gas emissions, source data from the Department of Energy and Climate Change<sup>30</sup> suggests that Basingstoke and Deane borough has had consistently higher per capita emissions than for Hampshire, the South East and England since 2005. The borough has also seen smaller reductions in emissions per capita between 2005 and 2012 (16.5%) compared to Hampshire (23.3%), the South East (18.3%) and England (a 17.7% reduction).

4.3.7 In relation to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by end user, between 2005 and 2012 the proportion of emissions originating from industrial and commercial sources in the borough rose fell slightly from 34% to 32%. In the same period the proportion of total emissions from domestic sources increased slightly from 25% to 27% and road transport remained the same.

### Summary of future baseline

4.3.8 Climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events in the Neighbourhood Area, with increases in mean summer and winter temperatures, increases in mean precipitation in winter and decreases in mean precipitation in summer. This is likely to increase the risks associated with climate change (including surface water flooding) with an increased need for resilience and adaptation.

<sup>29</sup> Halcrow (January 2010) Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Local Development Framework

<sup>30</sup> Department of Energy and Climate Change (2011) Official statistics: Local Authority carbon dioxide emissions [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-emissions-estimates> (accessed on 05/03/2015)

- 4.3.9 In terms of climate change mitigation, per capita emissions are likely to continue to decrease as energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies become more widely adopted. However road transport and domestic sources are likely to be increasing contributors proportionally.
- 4.3.10 The River Test provides opportunities for new renewable energy provision in the parish including low head hydropower schemes and water source heat pumps.

## 4.4 Historic environment and landscape

### Summary of current baseline

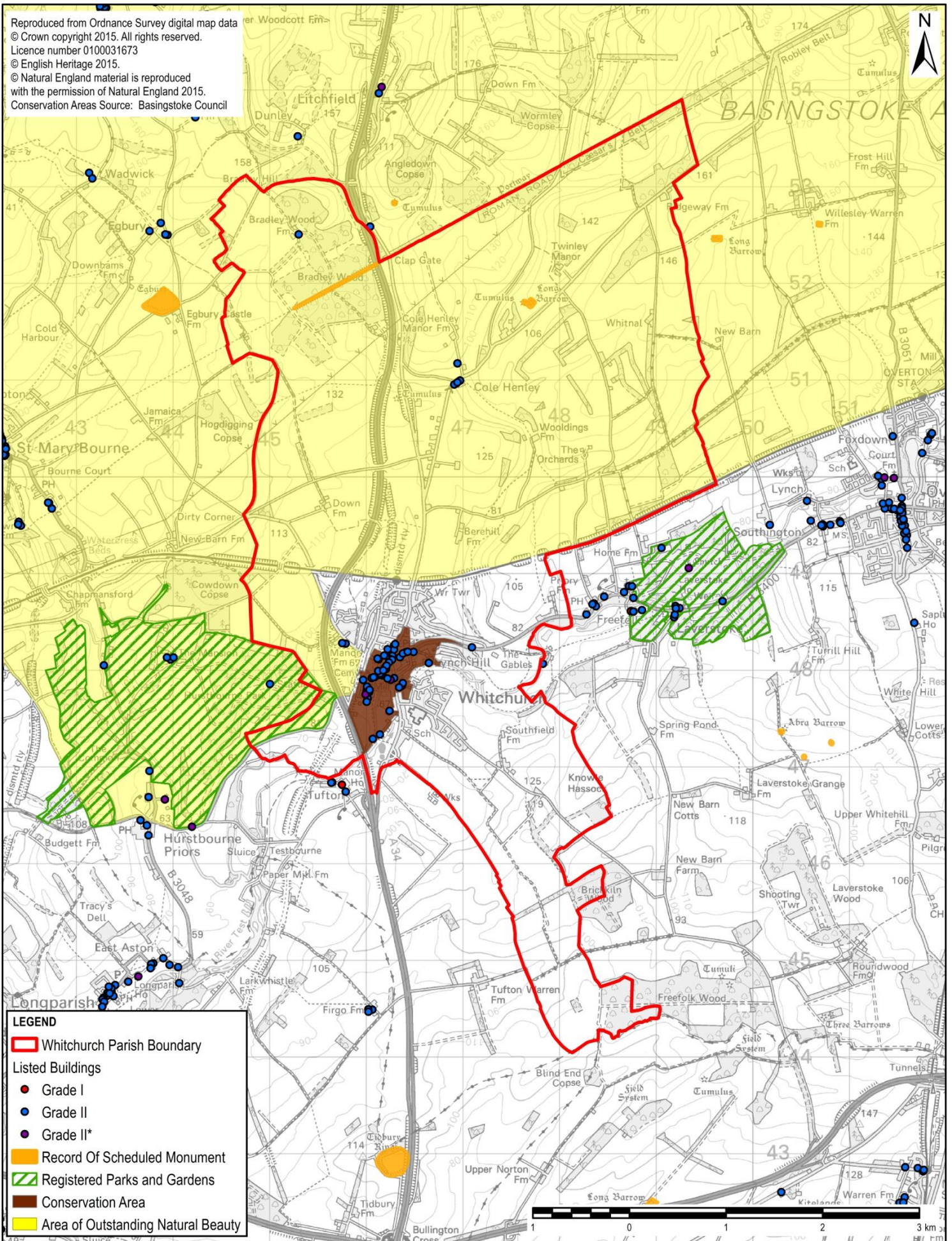
- 4.4.1 Part of the Neighbourhood Area falls within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This comprises the areas north of the railway line and west of Bloswood Lane, and, in the south west of the parish, north of the B3400 (**Figure 4.2**).
- 4.4.2 The North Wessex Downs were designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1972 under the National Parks and Access to Countryside Act 1949. Following the introduction of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the government confirmed that the landscape qualities of National Parks and AONBs are equivalent. As such the protection given by the land use planning system to natural beauty in both types of area should be equivalent
- 4.4.3 The primary purpose of AONB designation is 'conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area'. In this context the North Wessex Downs AONB was designated for its dramatic, undeveloped and locally distinct chalk downlands with extensive areas of semi-natural chalk grassland, interspersed with well-wooded plateaux, arable lands and secluded valleys. The northern part of the Neighbourhood Area within the AONB has been classified by the AONB Management Plan as 'Downland with Woodland', with the western part classified as 'River Valleys'.
- 4.4.4 The Neighbourhood Area has a rich historic environment. A number of features and areas for the historic environment in the plan area are recognised through historic environment designations. These include statutory listed buildings and scheduled monuments, which are nationally designated, and conservation areas, which are designated at the local level (**Figure 4.2**). Historic England is the statutory consultee for certain categories of listed building consent and all applications for scheduled monument consent. The historic environment is protected through the planning system, via conditions imposed on developers and other mechanisms.
- 4.4.5 There is one conservation area located within the plan area: the Whitchurch Conservation Area, which was designated in 1978. The conservation area covers the town centre and Lynch Hill and, to the south, All Hallows Church and the floodplain of the River Test. A Conservation Area Appraisal was prepared in 2003, which provides detailed information on key features and areas of the conservation area<sup>31</sup>.
- 4.4.6 The Neighbourhood Area contains numerous listed buildings. This includes three Grade II\* listed buildings (The Silk Mill, the Town Hall and the Church of All Hallows) and 58 Grade II listed structures. There are no Grade I listed buildings in the parish<sup>32</sup>. Many of these are present in the Conservation Area.
- 4.4.7 Scheduled monuments are sites of national importance and protected by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. According to the National Heritage List for England<sup>33</sup>, there are two scheduled monuments in the Neighbourhood Area, comprising part of a Roman road in Bradley

<sup>31</sup> Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (2003) Conservation Area Appraisal, Whitchurch <http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/page/33900/Conservation%20Area%20Appraisal%20for%20Whitchurch.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> National heritage List for England <http://list.historicengland.org.uk> [accessed 18/03/15]

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital map data  
 © Crown copyright 2015. All rights reserved.  
 Licence number 0100031673  
 © English Heritage 2015.  
 © Natural England material is reproduced  
 with the permission of Natural England 2015.  
 Conservation Areas Source: Basingstoke Council



**LEGEND**

- Whitchurch Parish Boundary
- Listed Buildings
  - Grade I
  - Grade II
  - Grade II\*
- Record Of Scheduled Monument
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Conservation Area
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Project Title/Drawing Title

**HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND  
 LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS  
 IN THE WHITCHURCH  
 NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA**

Client **WHITCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL**

Drawn SJ	Checked BB	Approved NCB
Date 11/11/2015	Scale @ A4 1:50,000	Purpose of Issue FINAL
Drawing Number FIGURE 4.2	Rev 1	

AECOM  
 Scott House  
 Alençon Link, Basingstoke  
 Hampshire, RG21 7PP  
 Telephone (01256) 310200  
 Fax (01256) 310201  
 www.aecom.com



THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN PREPARED PURSUANT TO AND SUBJECT TO THE TERMS OF AECOM'S APPOINTMENT BY ITS CLIENT. AECOM ACCEPTS NO LIABILITY FOR ANY USE OF THIS DOCUMENT OTHER THAN BY ITS ORIGINAL CLIENT OR FOLLOWING AECOM'S EXPRESS AGREEMENT TO SUCH USE, AND ONLY FOR THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH IT WAS PREPARED AND PROVIDED.

- 4.4.8 Since 2008, Historic England has released an annual Heritage at Risk Register. The Heritage at Risk Register highlights the Grade I and Grade II\* listed buildings, and scheduled monuments, conservation areas, wreck sites and registered parks and gardens in England deemed to be 'at risk'. The 2014 Heritage at Risk Register<sup>34</sup> highlighted that there are no features or areas deemed to be at risk in the Neighbourhood Area. It is understood that a survey of Grade II listed buildings has not yet been carried out in the parish.
- 4.4.9 It should be noted that not all of the area's historic environment resource is subject to statutory designations, and non-designated features comprise a large part of what people have contact with as part of daily life – whether at home, work or leisure. For example, although not listed, many buildings and areas are of historic interest, and which are seen as important by local communities. Examples of these in the plan area are likely to include parks and the wider historic landscape. Undesignated actual or potential archaeological finds in the area are also of significance

#### Summary of future baseline

- 4.4.10 New development areas in the Neighbourhood Area have the potential to impact on the fabric and setting of cultural heritage assets. This includes through inappropriate design and layout and through settlement expansion or infilling, which may have impacts on the Whitchurch Conservation Area. It should be noted, however, that existing historic environment designations and Local Plan policies will offer a degree of protection to cultural heritage assets and their settings. Also new development need not be harmful to the significance of a heritage asset; new development may be an opportunity to enhance the setting of an asset and better reveal its significance.
- 4.4.11 New development has the potential to lead to incremental but small changes in landscape and townscape character and quality in and around the plan area. This includes from the loss of landscape features and visual impact. There are also likely to be potential effects on landscape/townscape character and quality in the vicinity of the road network due to an incremental growth in traffic flows.
- 4.4.12 There are likely to be small scale and incremental changes in tranquillity in and around the plan area, affected by changes in the levels of light and noise pollution.

### 4.5 Land, soil and water resources

#### Summary of current baseline

- 4.5.1 The Agricultural Land Classification classifies land into five grades (plus 'non-agricultural' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are the 'best and most versatile' land and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality. In terms of the location of the best and most versatile agricultural land, land classified as Grade 2 and 3a agricultural land is located to the north west and south east of Whitchurch town. Whilst agricultural land quality the rest of the plan area has not recently been assessed, the Provisional Agricultural Land Classification established it as Grade 3 land<sup>35</sup>.
- 4.5.2 There is no Household Waste and Recycling Centre in the plan area. The nearest are located in Basingstoke at Wade Road and Andover at Walworth Industrial Estate.
- 4.5.3 The main watercourse in the parish is the River Test. The river flows westwards from its source near the village of Ashe in Overton Parish, passing through Overton village to the east and entering Whitchurch Parish west of Freefolk. It then passes through Whitchurch town before leaving the parish north of Tufton. Water supply and waste water provision in the area is provided by Southern

<sup>34</sup> Heritage at Risk Register (2014), <http://risk.historicengland.org.uk/register.aspx> [accessed 18/03/15]

<sup>35</sup> It should be noted that much of the data is from prior to 1976 when the distinction between Grades 3a and 3b was introduced. The maps are intended for strategic use and Natural England state '*these maps are not sufficiently accurate for use in assessment of individual fields, or sites and any enlargement could be misleading*'. A soil survey should be undertaken to verify the actual classification 'on the ground' – see <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/141047?category=2595819>

Water. The Test and Itchen Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy highlights that there is 'Restricted Water Available for Licensing' in the area. This indicates that if all licensed water is abstracted there will not be enough water left for the needs of the environment.

- 4.5.4 Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) have been defined by the Environment Agency in England and Wales to protect 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. Reflecting the vulnerability of groundwater in the area to pollution, a Zone 1 and Zone 2 SPZ underlays the eastern part of Whitchurch town, extending to the northern and eastern boundary of the parish. A further Zone 2 and 3 SPZ extends across the south east edge of the parish.
- 4.5.5 The Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) requires Member States to identify areas where groundwaters have nitrate concentrations of more than 50 mg/l nitrate or are thought to be at risk of nitrate contamination. Areas associated with such groundwaters are designated as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) within which, Member States are required to establish Action Programmes in order to reduce and prevent further nitrate contamination. The whole of the plan area is underlain by a eutrophic and groundwater NVZ.
- 4.5.6 There are existing issues surrounding sewage infrastructure in the Neighbourhood Area. These include related to the transfer of sewage from developments in the north of the town to the sewage works in the south, and issues related to the removal of nitrates and phosphates.

#### Summary of future baseline

- 4.5.7 In the absence of the plan, a higher proportion of development has the potential to take place on greenfield land. This is especially the case given the greater availability of such land in the plan area and the likely growth in the local population and economy which will make such development attractive. Development in the plan area also has the potential to lead to the loss of some areas of the best and most versatile agricultural land, including Grade 2 and 3a agricultural land.
- 4.5.8 Due to increasing legislative and regulatory requirements, there are increasing pressures to improve recycling and composting rates.
- 4.5.9 In terms of water quality, the requirements of the Water Framework Directive are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality in watercourses in the wider area. Water quality is also likely to continue to be affected by pollution incidents in the area, the presence of non-native species and physical modifications to water bodies.
- 4.5.10 Water availability in the wider area may be affected by regional increases in population and an increased occurrence of drought exacerbated by the effects of climate change.

## **4.6 Population and community**

#### Summary of current baseline

- 4.6.1 According to the most recent census data available, in 2011 the total population of the parish of Whitchurch was 4,870<sup>36</sup>. This was an increase of 334 from the 2001 census, or a 7.36% population growth (see Table 7.1). The rate of population growth in the parish during this period was slightly below regional and national comparators, and lower than that of borough averages.

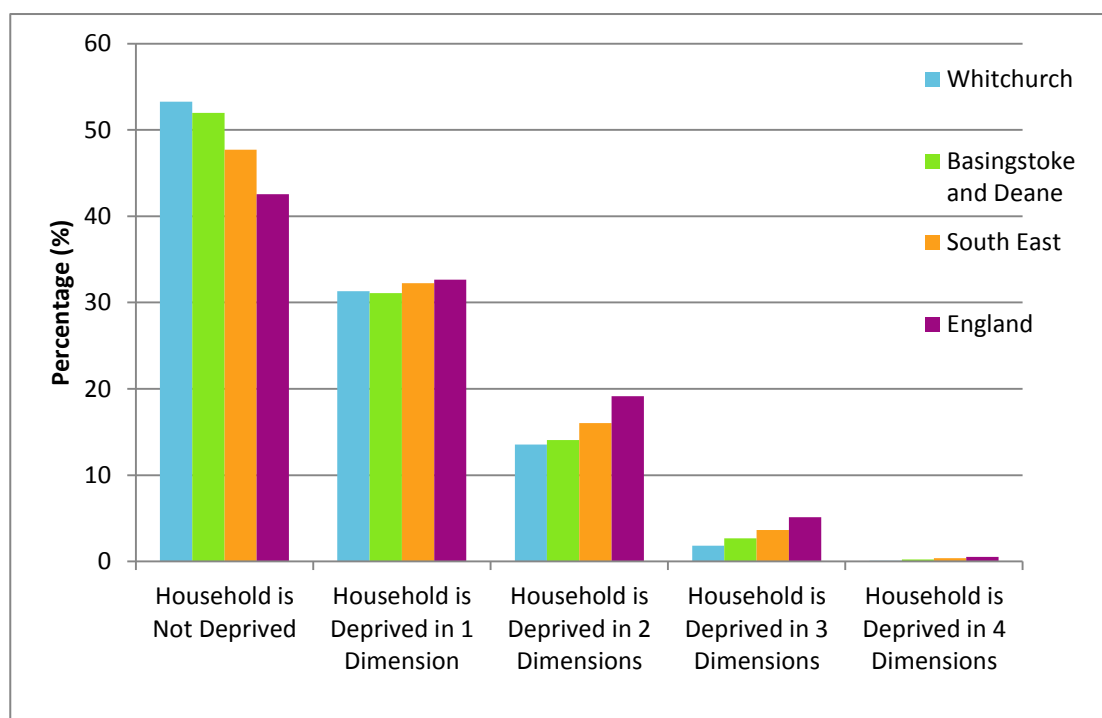
---

<sup>36</sup> Office for National Statistics (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics [online] available at: <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/>

**Table 4.1** Population growth, 2001-2011<sup>37</sup>

Date	Whitchurch	Basingstoke & Deane	South East	England
2001	4,536	152,573	8,000,645	49,138,831
2011	4,870	167,799	8,634,750	53,012,456
<b>Population Change 2001-2011</b>	7.36%	9.98%	7.93%	7.88%

- 4.6.2 The Neighbourhood Area has a significantly lower proportion of individuals across the 0-44 age range than all other comparators. There is a higher proportion of the 45-59 age group within the plan area than national, regional and borough averages, and a significantly higher proportion of residents aged 60 and over when compared to Basingstoke and Deane, the South-East and England. There are 1,265 people aged 60 or over living in the plan area, which comprises 26% of the population.
- 4.6.3 Census statistics which measure deprivation across the four 'dimensions' of deprivation<sup>38</sup> including: any member of a household not a full-time student is either unemployed or long-term sick; education (no person in the household has at least level 2 education, and no person aged 16-18 is a full-time student); health and disability (any person in the household has general health 'bad or 'very bad' or has a long term health problem); and housing (household's accommodation is either overcrowded, with an occupancy rating -1 or less, or is in a shared dwelling, or has no central heating), show that the parish of Whitchurch has deprivation levels that are slightly lower than that of the (see **Figure 4.3**), with a lower proportion of households with deprivation in 2 and 3 dimensions than the borough, regional and national averages.

**Figure 4.3** Relative deprivation dimensions<sup>37</sup> ONS (2011) Census 2011, Population Density, 2001 (UV02)<sup>38</sup> ONS (2011) Census 2011, Households by Deprivation Dimensions, 2011 (QS119EW)

- 4.6.4 In terms of the house price to income ratio, which illustrates the multiple of the average income in the area to average house price, the affordability ratio for Basingstoke & Deane in 2013 was 6.89, a decrease from 7.36 in 2010. This is higher than the ratio of 6.72 for England.<sup>39</sup>
- 4.6.5 A higher proportion of Whitchurch residents live in housing owned either outright or with a mortgage (69.3% in total), than borough (67.7%), regional (67.6%) or national (63.3%) averages. Conversely Whitchurch has a lower proportion of people that rent (11.5%) than tenure values at borough, regional and national level. The plan area has similar proportions of social rented tenures as borough and national averages, which are significantly higher than the regional level. In 2013 there were 6,673 households on local authority housing waiting lists in Basingstoke and Deane, an increase of 595 since 2010.<sup>40</sup> There has been a decrease of 409 households on local authority housing waiting lists in Hampshire as a whole from 2010 to 2013.

#### Summary of future baseline

- 4.6.6 The population of the Neighbourhood Area is likely to continue to grow and age.
- 4.6.7 The suitability (e.g. size and design) and affordability of housing for local requirements depends on the implementation of appropriate housing policies through the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan. Unplanned development may have wider implications in terms of transport and access to infrastructure, or the natural environment.
- 4.6.8 The adult population across the plan area is largely well educated, with a significant number of people with degree level qualifications resident above the borough, regional and national average. Increasing economic activity rates are likely to increase demand for new housing and employment opportunities in the area.

### 4.7 Health and wellbeing

#### Summary of current baseline

- 4.7.1 As highlighted in **Table 4.2** general health across Whitchurch Parish is broadly favourable when compared to regional and national averages, and slightly less favourable than the Basingstoke and Deane average. In this context 49% of people reported that they were in 'very good' health<sup>41</sup>, which is slightly below borough values, similar to regional averages and above national averages. The proportion of people in 'very bad health' is slightly higher than borough averages, and lower than regional and national averages.

---

<sup>39</sup> Government Statistics, Live tables on housing market and house prices, Table 577: ratio of median house price to median earnings by district, from 1997, [online] available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-housing-market-and-house-prices> (accessed 06/11/2015)

This data is not available at ward or parish level.

<sup>40</sup> DCLG (2012) Statistical data set Live tables on rents, lettings and tenancies. Table 600: numbers of households on local authorities' housing waiting lists, by district: England 1997 to 2013.

<sup>41</sup> ONS (2011) Census 2011, General Health (QS302EW)

**Table 4.2** General Health

	<i>Whitchurch</i>	<i>Basingstoke and Deane</i>	<i>South East</i>	<i>England</i>
Very Good Health	48.9%	50.7%	49%	47.2%
Good Health	34.3%	35.1%	34.6%	34.2%
Fair Health	12.8%	10.8%	12%	13.1%
Bad Health	3.2%	2.7%	3.4%	4.2%
Very Bad Health	0.8%	0.7%	1 %	1.2%

- 4.7.2 6.2% of residents of Whitchurch parish reported that they were limited 'a lot' with day to day activities due to long-term health problems or disabilities, with 8.46% of people limited 'a little'. The levels of long term health and disability<sup>42</sup> in Whitchurch are broadly in line with borough, regional and national averages.
- 4.7.3 No data exists for the plan area for life expectancy and health indicators; however at the borough level the 2014 Health Profile<sup>43</sup> shows that life expectancy in Basingstoke and Deane is 80.8 for men and 83.0 for women; slightly above the national average of 79.2 and 83, respectively. Life expectancy is 6.7 years lower for men and 4.7 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Basingstoke and Deane than in the least deprived areas. Local priorities in Basingstoke and Deane include lifestyle risks, healthy ageing, and mental health.

### Summary of future baseline

- 4.7.4 The population of the plan area is predicted to grow and age in the future. This will place pressure on existing health and community facilities that are likely to face greater demand from residents.
- 4.7.5 Obesity is seen as an increasing issue by health professionals, and one that will contribute to significant health impacts on individuals, including increasing the risk of a range of diseases, including heart disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer.
- 4.7.6 Noise pollution from the A34 has the potential to be an increasing issue as traffic flows increase on this major route.

## 4.8 Transportation

### Summary of current baseline

#### *Rail network*

- 4.8.1 The Neighbourhood Area is well connected by rail. The parish is served by Whitchurch railway station, which is located in the north of the town. Basingstoke station, which has a wider range of rail services, is located c.19km from Whitchurch town.
- 4.8.2 Whitchurch station is located on the London Waterloo to Salisbury / Exeter line with direct services to London Waterloo (approximately 65 minutes), Andover (8 minutes), Salisbury (29 minutes) and Woking (35 minutes).
- 4.8.3 Basingstoke station is located on the main London Waterloo to Southampton / Bournemouth / Weymouth line, the London Waterloo to Salisbury / Exeter line and the Cross Country Trains line to

<sup>42</sup> ONS (2011) Census 2011 , Long-Term Health Problem or Disability, 2011 (QS303EW)

<sup>43</sup> Public Health England (2014) Health Profile 2014 [online] available at:

<http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/view.aspx?RID=50215&SEARCH=basingstoke%20and%20deane&SPEAR> (accessed 17/03/2015)

Oxford, Birmingham and the north of England. Direct services include to Winchester (15 minutes), Reading (16 minutes), Andover (16 minutes), Woking (18 minutes), Southampton (33 minutes), Salisbury (35 minutes), Oxford (46 minutes), London Waterloo (46 minutes), Bournemouth (1 hour) and Birmingham (c.2hrs).

*Bus network*

- 4.8.4 Whitchurch is connected by bus to Basingstoke and Overton, Oakley, Andover and Winchester via Stagecoach services number 76 and 86. Journey times to Basingstoke are approximately 31 minutes from Whitchurch, approximately every half hour. On Sundays the 76 bus passes through Whitchurch on an hourly basis.

*Road network and congestion*

- 4.8.5 Whitchurch is located adjacent to the A34, which is the main north-south trunk road from the Midlands (via the M40) to the South Coast (via the M3). The A34 also provides the Neighbourhood Area with good connections to the M4 and the A303, although it should be noted that access to the A34 from the south of the town is limited to the southbound carriageway.
- 4.8.6 The other main route through the Neighbourhood Area is the B3400, which connects the Neighbourhood Area with Overton, Oakley and Basingstoke to the east and the A34 to the west.
- 4.8.7 Congestion issues occur in the town centre, Micheldever Road, Winchester Street and London Street. Due to junction layout, HGVs experience difficulties navigating a number of junctions in the town centre, including Town Square and London Road / Newbury Road.

*Availability of cars and vans*

- 4.8.8 The proportion of car or van ownership is largely in line with the borough average, in that the proportion of households with no access to a car/van is significantly lower than regional and national averages, whilst the proportion of the population with two or more cars/vans is significantly higher. The proportion of households with three or more vehicles is higher than all comparators. High car ownership in the Neighbourhood Area reflects the relative affluence of the plan area and its rural nature.

*Travel to work*

- 4.8.9 The proportion of people who travel to work by underground / tram Whitchurch is lower than national, regional and borough comparators. Conversely, a higher proportion of people travel to work driving a car or van. Fewer proportions of people travel to work by taxi or bicycle than all other comparable areas. A higher proportion of people travel to work by car or van than regional or national averages. This proportion however is lower than the borough average, with more people in Whitchurch working from home and travelling by train to work.

*Summary of future baseline*

- 4.8.10 An increase in the Neighbourhood Area's population has the potential to lead to increased traffic and congestion. This has the potential to be at least in part mitigated by measures outlined in the Local Plan and the Hampshire Local Transport Plan.
- 4.8.11 The viability of additional bus and rail services may be supported by future population growth.

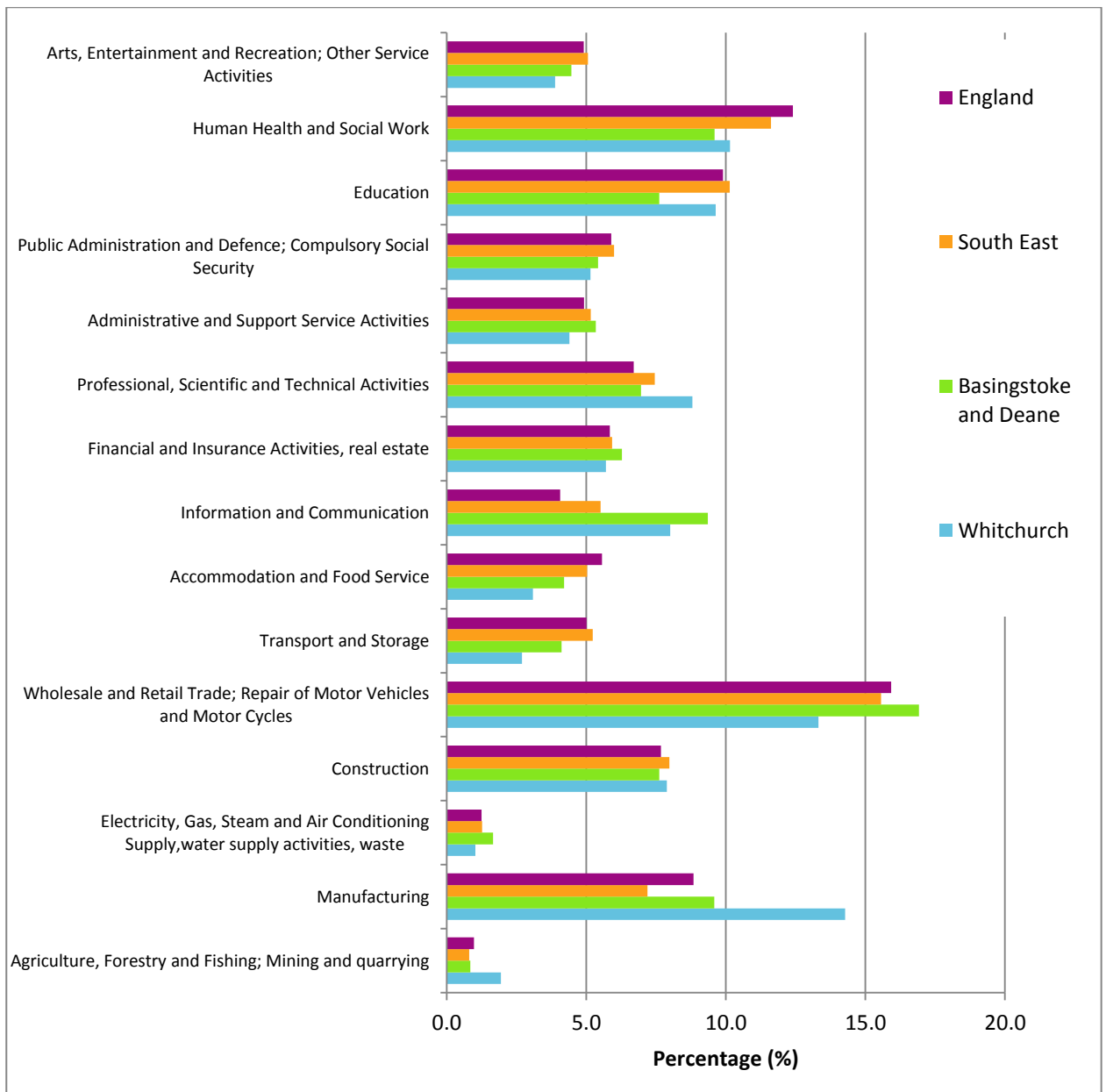
## 4.9 Economy and enterprise

### Summary of current baseline

- 4.9.1 Economic activity rates in the plan area are broadly in line with regional averages, but lower than borough values.
- 4.9.2 Rates of full time employment in Whitchurch (44.6%) are lower than across Basingstoke and Deane (47.9%) but are significantly higher than regional (40.5%) and national (38.6%) levels. Rates of part-time employment in Whitchurch are significantly lower than comparators.
- 4.9.3 Rates of self-employment (both with and without employees) are broadly in line with borough, regional and national levels.
- 4.9.4 The plan area has a highly qualified population compared to borough, regional and national averages, with 41.2% of working-age residents of the plan area qualified to NVQ level four or above.<sup>44</sup>
- 4.9.5 **Figure 4.4** shows the occupation of working-age residents. Overall, the occupation profile for Whitchurch is largely similar to borough, regional and national averages, with some notable exceptions. The plan area has larger proportions of people working in 'manufacturing' and 'professional, scientific and technical activities', with a higher proportion working in 'Education' than in the borough. Conversely, the plan area has lower proportions of workers in 'arts, entertainment and recreation', 'accommodation and food service activities', 'wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles', and 'transport and storage'.

---

<sup>44</sup> Level 4 qualifications include bachelors degrees, NVQs at Level 4, HNDs and HNCs.



**Figure 4.4** The industry of usual residents aged 16 to 74 in employment in the week of working-age residents<sup>45</sup>

Summary of future baseline

4.9.6 There will be an increased demand for services and facilities in the plan area with population growth. Increased economic activity in Basingstoke and Andover may provide economic opportunities for those living in the Neighbourhood Area.

<sup>45</sup> ONS (2011) Industry 2011 (QS605EW)

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

The SA Report must include...

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

### 5.1 Key issues

5.1.1 Drawing on the review of the sustainability context and baseline, the SA Scoping Report (April 2015) was able to identify a range of sustainability problems / issues that should be a particular focus of SA, ensuring it remains focused. These issues, which have been updated following scoping consultation, are as follows:

#### Biodiversity

- The River Test SSSI passes through the main built up areas of the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Area. The main river channel of the SSSI has been assessed as being in an 'unfavourable no change' condition. Sewage treatment is a key issue for the SSSI. Therefore the WNP should seek to support the nature conservation value of the SSSI, including through reflecting the presence of the SSSI Impact Risk Zone.
- Areas of biodiversity value within the Neighbourhood Area should be protected and enhanced. Their integrity should also be supported through improved ecological connections in the plan area, including through the provision of green infrastructure enhancements.
- Features of biodiversity value such as trees, hedgerows and meadows should be protected from the impacts of future development and where possible enhanced.
- The integrity of the Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation present in and around the Neighbourhood Area should be supported through the WNP, with due regard to the key habitats and species present at these sites.
- The WNP should seek to support the nature conservation value of the Bere Mill Meadows SSSI.

#### Climate change

- An increase in the built footprint of the Neighbourhood Area (associated with the delivery of new housing and employment land) has the potential to increase overall greenhouse gas emissions.
- Per capita greenhouse gas emissions for Basingstoke and Deane borough continue to be higher than for Hampshire, South East and England averages, and are also falling at a lower rate.
- Domestic sources are an increasing contributor to greenhouse gas emissions borough-wide.
- Fluvial flooding and groundwater flooding is an issue for the Neighbourhood Area.
- The WNP should seek to support adaptation to the risks associated with climate change in the area.

#### Historic environment and landscape

- Inappropriate location, scale, design and layout of development in the Neighbourhood Area has the potential to affect the integrity, character and appearance of the North Wessex Downs AONB and the Whitchurch Conservation Area.

- New development has the potential to lead to beneficial and adverse effects on the historic environment, including through affecting the setting of cultural heritage assets and landscape/townscape quality.
- Traffic and congestion has effects on the quality of the public realm in some parts of the Neighbourhood Area.
- New development could lead to pressures on non-designated sites and landscapes/townscapes, including from loss of key built and natural features.

### Land, soil and water resources

- There is a lack of availability of previously developed land in the parish.
- Significant areas of land classified as the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 2 and 3a) are present in the Neighbourhood Area, including in the vicinity of Whitchurch town.
- Developers should be encouraged to adopt sustainable construction practices, including handling waste arisings, recycling, and disposal in a sustainable manner as part of a life cycle approach to resource use.
- Water conservation and reuse should be supported in lieu of potential future issues linked to the regional availability of water.
- There are existing issues surrounding sewage infrastructure in the Neighbourhood Area. These include related to sewage transfer, and issues related to the removal of nitrates and phosphates. Sewage infrastructure in the plan area will therefore need to be updated to accompany new development areas.

### Population and community

- Population growth in the plan area will need to be appropriately managed to minimise potential impacts and maximise accessibility to services, facilities and amenities.
- An ageing population has the potential to lead to implications for service provision in the plan area.
- New community and employment provision in the plan area should reflect existing and future needs.

### Health and wellbeing

- General health in Whitchurch Parish as reported through the 2011 census is broadly favourable when compared to Basingstoke and Deane Borough averages.
- The Neighbourhood Area, in common with many other areas, is experiencing an ageing population. This will have implications for health service provision and the provision of other services, facilities and amenities.
- Deficits related to the provision of leisure facilities in the Neighbourhood Area have been highlighted as an issue by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
- Health, leisure and recreational facilities should be expanded to reflect population growth in the Neighbourhood Area. Investment in open space, sports facilities and walking and cycling infrastructure should be supported in order to encourage increased physical activity.
- Noise pollution from the A34 is a primary concern for residents.

### Transportation

- Congestion issues exist in the town centre, Micheldever Road, Winchester Street and London Street.
- Due to junction layout, HGVs experience difficulties navigating a number of junctions in the town centre, including Town Square and London Road / Newbury Road.
- HGV access to existing employment locations is an issue due to the necessity for HGVs to pass through the town centre.
- Car parking at Whitchurch railway station has been identified as a key issue for residents.

- New development areas should be situated in accessible locations which limit the need to travel by the private car.
- New development should seek to support improvements in bus routes.
- Continued enhancements to public transport and walking and cycling networks should be promoted.

### Economy and enterprise

- Economic activity rates in the parish are below those for Basingstoke and Deane.
- The vitality and viability of Whitchurch as a key local centre should be maintained and enhanced.
- Employment provision should be accessible by a range of sustainable transport modes.

5.1.2 These issues were then translated into an ‘SA Framework’ of objectives and decision making questions. This SA Framework provide a methodological framework for the appraisal of likely significant effects on the baseline. The SA objectives are set out below, with the full SA Framework of objectives and decision-making questions developed during the scoping stage of the SA, and against which the WNP has been appraised, presented in **Appendix II**.

## 5.2 Sustainability themes and objectives

<b>SA Topic</b>	<b>SA Objectives</b>
<b>Biodiversity</b>	Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features
<b>Climate change</b>	Promote climate change mitigation in Whitchurch Support the resilience of Whitchurch to the potential effects of climate change
<b>Historic environment and landscape</b>	Protect, maintain and enhance Whitchurch’s cultural heritage resource, including its historic environment and archaeological assets. Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and townscapes.
<b>Land, soil and water resources</b>	Ensure the efficient use of land. Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste. Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.
<b>Population and community</b>	Cater for existing and future residents’ needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve equality of access to local, high-quality community services and facilities. Reduce poverty and deprivation and promote more inclusive and self-contained communities. Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures.
<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	Improve the health and wellbeing of Whitchurch’s residents.
<b>Transportation</b>	Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.
<b>Economy and enterprise</b>	Enhance the vitality and viability of the Neighbourhood Area

*[This page is intentionally blank]*

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

## 6 Introduction to Part 2

The SA Report must include...

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

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

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

- 6.1.1 Plan-making for the WNP has been underway since mid-2013. Initial work incorporated an extensive number of informal and formal consultation exercises carried out by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee, including on the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan in August and September 2013.
- 6.1.2 A range of consultation events have since been carried out for the Neighbourhood Plan, including three 'Vision Events' undertaken in March 2014 and a series of 'Where Should the Housing Go' consultation events undertaken in October 2014. To accompany these events, a series of Neighbourhood Plan surveys have been undertaken, including residents surveys and business surveys. Engagement with stakeholders with an interest in the WNP has also been undertaken, including with developers and other interested parties.
- 6.1.3 The following sections discuss the evolution of the WNP in association with the SA process.

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

#### Reasonable alternatives

- 6.2.1 A key element of the SA process is the appraisal of 'reasonable alternatives' for the WNP. In this context a number of reasonable alternatives have been considered in relation to the scale and location of housing allocations put forward by the Neighbourhood Plan for the Neighbourhood Area. These allocations are designed to deliver the housing numbers set out by the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan.

### 6.3 Appraisal of single vs multiple housing sites to deliver the Local Plan allocation for Whitchurch

- 6.3.1 Undertaken as a central element of the development of the latest version of the Neighbourhood Plan, the WNP Steering Committee considered what size and form new housing sites should take during the life of the plan.
- 6.3.2 Early consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan considered what size and form new housing sites should take during the life of the plan. This considered whether the remaining 200 dwellings to be allocated to deliver the housing numbers set out for the Whitchurch area by the emerging (at that time) Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan should be delivered on one large site or several multiple sites.

6.3.3 To support decision-making on this element of the WNP, the SA process considered two broad options relating to the size and number of housing allocations taken forward to deliver the housing numbers set out for the Whitchurch area by the (then) emerging Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan, as follows:

- **Option 1:** Delivery of the emerging Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan's housing allocation for the Whitchurch area through one large site; and
- **Option 2:** Delivery of the emerging Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan's housing allocation for the Whitchurch area through multiple smaller sites.

6.3.4 These options were considered through the SA Framework of objectives and appraisal questions developed during scoping (see **Part 1**).

6.3.5 **Table 6.1** presents the findings of the appraisal of Option 1 and Option 2 outlined above. These are presented through the eight sustainability topics discussed in section 2.1.3. To support the appraisal findings, the two options have been ranked in terms of their sustainability performance against the relevant topic. It is anticipated that this will provide the reader with a likely indication of the comparative sustainability performance of the two options in relation to each topic.

**Table 6.1** Appraisal findings: reasonable alternatives linked to the size/number of housing sites

Option 1: Delivery of the emerging Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan's housing allocation for the Whitchurch area through one site			
Option 2: Delivery of the emerging Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan's housing allocation for the Whitchurch area through multiple sites			
SA topic	Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference	
		Opt 1	Opt 2
Biodiversity	<p>Option 1, through delivering housing allocations on one larger site has the potential to lead to an increased magnitude of localised effects on individual biodiversity assets. This includes through habitat loss and direct and indirect impacts on species. Option 2 may however lead to increases in incremental effects on biodiversity through smaller scale but multiple impacts on assets.</p> <p>All sites have the potential to have impacts on biodiversity assets if located inappropriately and have poor design and layout. Likewise all sites have the potential to promote net gains in biodiversity value. In this context, for all sites, potential effects on biodiversity depend on elements such as the provision of green infrastructure to accompany new development areas and the retention and incorporation of biodiversity features.</p>	2=	2=
Climate change	<p>In terms of greenhouse gas emissions, road transport is an increasingly significant contributor to emissions in the plan area. The extent to which the two options have the potential to support climate change mitigation through facilitating a reduced level of car dependency is therefore a key element. In this context, Option 2, through promoting housing provision in smaller sites across the plan area, has increased potential to facilitate the development of new housing at locations which are more integrated with the existing built up area of Whitchurch. This has the potential to allow at some locations easier access to services and facilities by sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling (this however depends on the location of sites- for example a number of the available sites likely to be considered under this option may be at some distance from public transport routes and the town centre). However Option 1, through promoting a larger scale site, may enable more effective improvements to walking and cycling and public transport links through the infrastructure opportunities afforded by larger allocations.</p> <p>In terms of climate change adaptation, enhancements to the plan area's green infrastructure networks will be a key means of helping the plan area adapt to the effects of climate change. This includes through helping to regulate extreme temperatures and regulate surface water run-off. Whilst the direct provision of green infrastructure improvements to accompany new development areas may be more tangible through the larger development proposed through Option 1, mechanisms including the community infrastructure levy provide opportunities for plan area-wide green infrastructure improvements through both options.</p> <p>The effect of new development areas on surface water and groundwater flooding depends on their location and the implementation of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).</p>	2=	2=

Option 1: Delivery of the emerging Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan's housing allocation for the Whitchurch area through one site			
Option 2: Delivery of the emerging Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan's housing allocation for the Whitchurch area through multiple sites			
SA topic	Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference	
		Opt 1	Opt 2
Land, soil and water resources	<p>Option 2, through spreading development across multiple sites, has the potential to limit development on the areas of the best and most versatile agricultural land (including Grade 2 and 3a land) which are present in the vicinity of Whitchurch. This includes the Grade 2 land present to the north west and south east of the town. This however depends on the location of development sites and the extent to which lower quality agricultural land is prioritised.</p> <p>In terms of water quality, it is difficult to come to a conclusion regarding the potential for development at any given location to result in negative effects without an understanding of the design measures that will be put in place. For example sustainable drainage systems – SuDS – are an effective means of minimising surface water runoff and hence pollution. However it should be noted that there is likely to be more scope for the implementation of measures such as SuDS within the larger developments promoted by Option 1.</p>	2	1
Historic environment and landscape	<p>Through concentrating new housing provision on one large site, Option 1 has increased potential to lead to impacts on landscape quality. This includes through loss of landscape features, visual impacts and impacts on noise quality linked to increased traffic flows. Whilst major new development areas are less likely to be located within the North Wessex Downs AONB, views from the AONB may be adversely affected by larger sites.</p> <p>Meeting housing provision through an increased number of smaller sites is less likely to have impacts on landscape quality in the plan area. This is due to increased opportunities through this option for assimilating new development within the existing fabric of the built-up area of Whitchurch. The option also increases opportunities for managing the cumulative landscape impacts of the housing provision for the plan area stipulated by the Local Plan.</p> <p>In terms of potential effects on the historic environment, Option 1, through promoting larger scale housing development in the Whitchurch area, has the potential to have significant effects on the existing historic setting of the town. Through promoting more compact housing development sites, Option 2 is more likely to facilitate housing provision which more effectively sits within the historic setting of the settlement.</p> <p>Option 2, through promoting smaller scale development, increases opportunities for supporting the reuse and rejuvenation of existing heritage assets in the town. This will support the plan area's historic environment resource, if high quality design and layout is incorporated within new provision.</p>	2	1

Option 1: Delivery of the emerging Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan's housing allocation for the Whitchurch area through one site			
Option 2: Delivery of the emerging Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan's housing allocation for the Whitchurch area through multiple sites			
SA topic	Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference	
		Opt 1	Opt 2
Population and community	<p>Both options will deliver the housing numbers set out for the plan area proposed by the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan.</p> <p>In terms of affordable housing, such provision may be easier to deliver through Option 1. This is linked to the delivery of Section 106 agreements likely to be levied on the larger development area promoted through this option. Whilst all new developments involving one or more dwellings are liable for the community infrastructure levy, concentrating the delivery of housing at fewer and larger sites may help enable the securing of additional contributions to site specific mitigation through Section 106 planning agreements. It should be noted however that such contributions are typically required to make a development proposal acceptable in planning terms that would not otherwise be acceptable. Alongside, recent legislation has introduced a 10 unit threshold for affordable housing contributions.</p> <p>In terms of education and skills, the effect of both options depends on the extent to which new housing provision is accompanied by new, expanded and improved education provision in the Neighbourhood Area.</p>	2=	2=
Health and wellbeing	<p>The delivery of housing provision through one larger site has the potential to concentrate effects on road safety and noise quality from increased traffic flows at certain locations. This may have effects on the health and wellbeing of residents at these locations. However, the cumulative effects of multiple development areas through Option 2 may also have similar effects. Effects therefore depend on the location of new development areas.</p>	2=	2=
Transport	<p>The provision of new and improved sustainable transport infrastructure to accompany new housing development, including pedestrian/cycle and public transport links may be more feasible with the concentrated nature of development proposed through Option 1.</p>	1	2
Economy and enterprise	<p>Through delivering in the region of 200 dwellings in the vicinity of Whitchurch, both options are likely to support the economic vitality and viability of the town.</p>	1=	1=

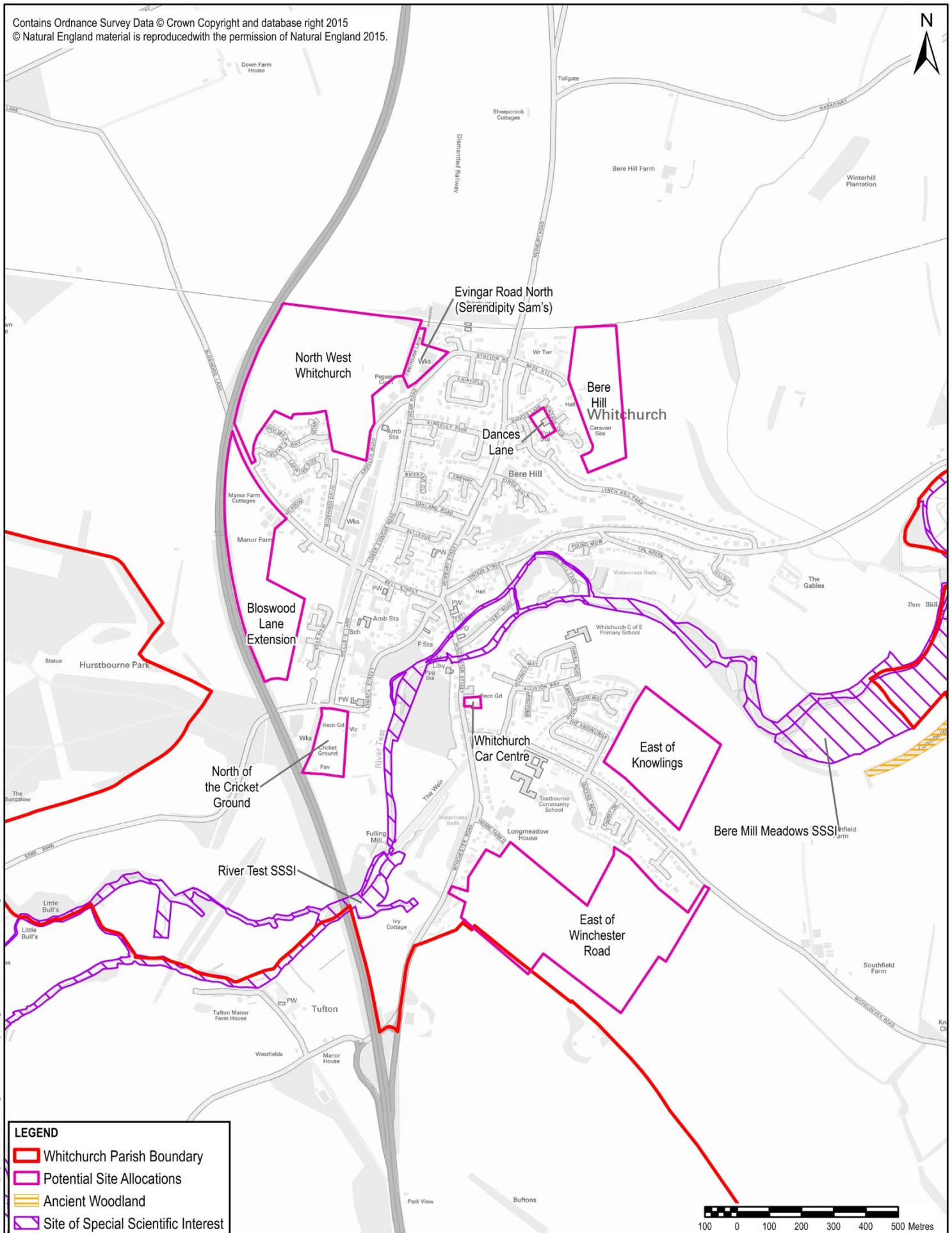
## 6.4 Assessment of alternative housing sites for taking forward through the WNP

- 6.4.1 The WNP Steering Committee initially commenced the identification of potential sites for housing in the summer of 2013. It identified and contacted the owners of land within and adjacent to Whitchurch town and identified potentially viable sites. In the autumn of 2013 the WNP Steering Committee also advertised in the Parish Magazine and on its website for landowners or developers who may wish to have land considered for development.
- 6.4.2 As a result of this process nine potential housing sites were identified and screened for their viability. No sites were rejected at this stage.
- 6.4.3 The Steering Committee met on a number of occasions with the landowners and developers to explore the potential detail of their sites and invited them to present their proposals to the “Where do the houses go” community consultation undertaken in October 2014.
- 6.4.4 Following consultation on the potential sites, it was considered that the most broadly accepted option for the allocation of housing sites was 1) to deliver housing over multiple sites and 2) to deliver housing through one medium sized site of approximately 100 dwelling and a number of smaller sites. Whilst consultation responses indicated a preference for smaller sites, the capacity of the sites available was deemed to be insufficient to meet the delivery requirements of the Local Plan in terms of housing numbers. Consultation also highlighted a strong preference for development to take place on brownfield sites where possible.
- 6.4.5 The sites considered for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan are presented in **Table 6.2** below. The locations of these sites, in conjunction with the environmental constraints present in the area, are presented in the maps below.

**Table 6.2** Sites considered for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan

Site no.	Site
1	North West Whitchurch
2	Evingar Road North (Serendipity Sam's)
3	Whitchurch Car Centre
4	Dances Lane
5	Bloswood Lane Extension
6	North of the Cricket Ground
7	East of Knowlings
8	East of Winchester Road
9	Bere Hill

- 6.4.6 To support the consideration of the suitability of these sites, the SA process has undertaken an appraisal of the key constraints present at each of the nine sites and potential effects that may arise. In this context the sites have been considered in relation to the SA Framework of objectives and decision making questions (Appendix II) developed during SA scoping and the baseline information.
- 6.4.7 The tables below present a summary of this appraisal, and provide an indication of each site's sustainability performance in relation to the eight SA topics.




**LEGEND**

- Whitchurch Parish Boundary
- Potential Site Allocations
- Ancient Woodland
- Site of Special Scientific Interest

Project Title/Drawing Title  
**WHITCHURCH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN,  
 HOUSING SITE OPTIONS: BIODIVERSITY  
 DESIGNATIONS**

Client <b>WHITCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL</b>		
Drawn SJ	Checked BB	Approved NCB
Date 11/11/2015	Scale @ A4 1:15,000	Purpose of Issue FINAL
Drawing Number <b>FIGURE 6.1</b>		Rev 1

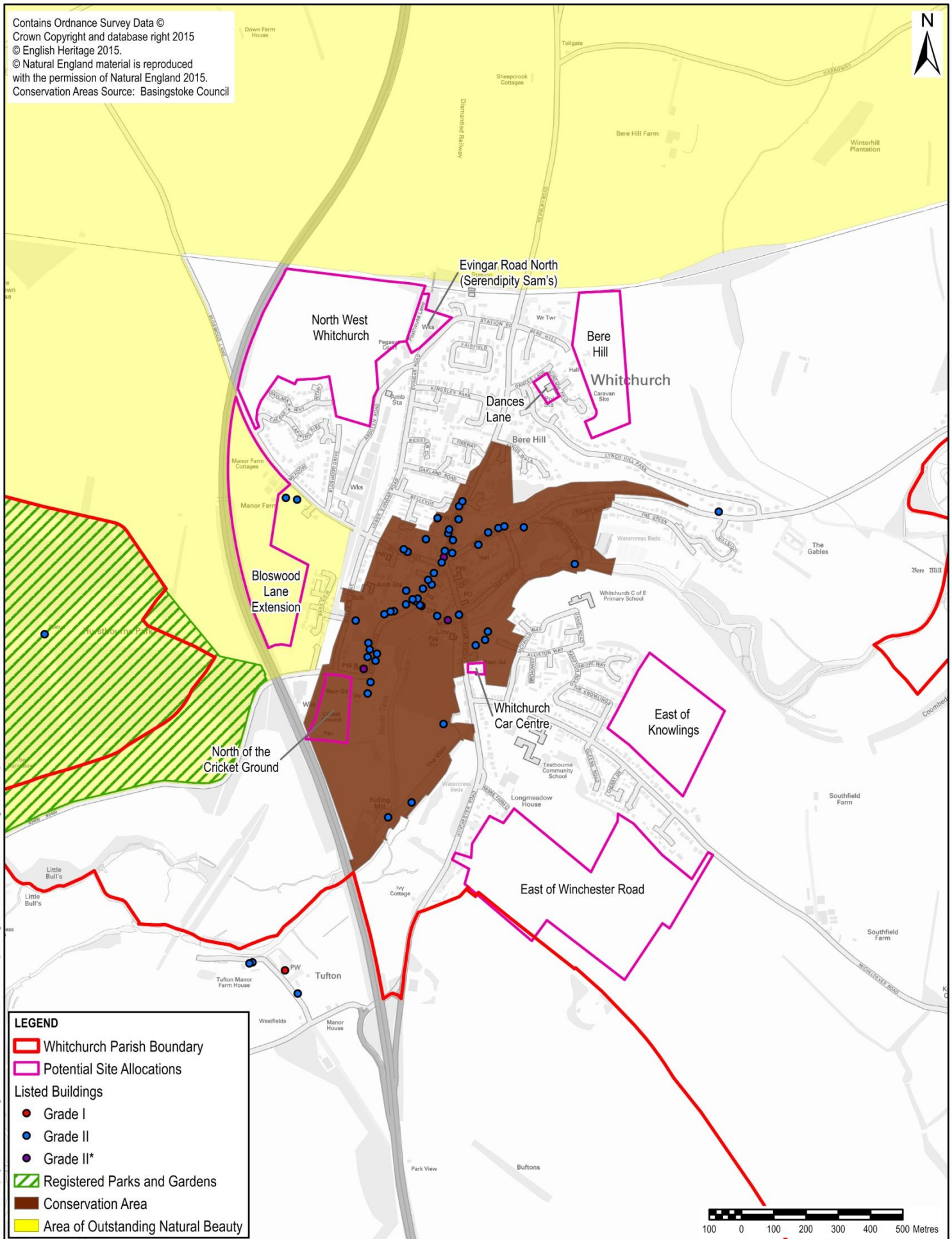
AECOM  
 Scott House  
 Alençon Link, Basingstoke  
 Hampshire, RG21 7PP  
 Telephone (01256) 310200  
 Fax (01256) 310201  
 www.aecom.com



THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN PREPARED PURSUANT TO AND SUBJECT TO THE TERMS OF AECOM'S APPOINTMENT BY ITS CLIENT. AECOM ACCEPTS NO LIABILITY FOR ANY USE OF THIS DOCUMENT OTHER THAN BY ITS ORIGINAL CLIENT OR FOLLOWING AECOM'S EXPRESS AGREEMENT TO SUCH USE, AND ONLY FOR THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH IT WAS PREPARED AND PROVIDED.

File Name: \\ukwmbp01\GIS\TEMP\Whitchurch\GIS\project\_files\MXD\Fig 6 - 1 Biodiversity designations in the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan.mxd

Contains Ordnance Survey Data ©  
 Crown Copyright and database right 2015  
 © English Heritage 2015.  
 © Natural England material is reproduced  
 with the permission of Natural England 2015.  
 Conservation Areas Source: Basingstoke Council



**LEGEND**

- Whitchurch Parish Boundary
- Potential Site Allocations
- Listed Buildings
  - Grade I
  - Grade II
  - Grade II\*
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Conservation Area
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Project Title/Drawing Title  
**WHITCHURCH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN,  
 HOUSING SITE OPTIONS: HISTORIC  
 ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE  
 DESIGNATIONS**

Client <b>WHITCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL</b>		
Drawn SJ	Checked BB	Approved NCB
Date 11/11/2015	Scale @ A4 1:15,000	Purpose of Issue FINAL
Drawing Number <b>FIGURE 6.2</b>		Rev 1

AECOM  
 Scott House  
 Alençon Link, Basingstoke  
 Hampshire, RG21 7PP  
 Telephone (01256) 310200  
 Fax (01256) 310201  
 www.aecom.com

**AECOM**

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN PREPARED PURSUANT TO AND SUBJECT TO THE TERMS OF AECOM'S APPOINTMENT BY ITS CLIENT. AECOM ACCEPTS NO LIABILITY FOR ANY USE OF THIS DOCUMENT OTHER THAN BY ITS ORIGINAL CLIENT OR FOLLOWING AECOM'S EXPRESS AGREEMENT TO SUCH USE, AND ONLY FOR THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH IT WAS PREPARED AND PROVIDED.

File Name: \\ukwimb01\GIS\TEMP\Whitchurch\GIS\project\_files\MXD\Fig 6-2 Historic environment and landscape designations in the Whitchurch Neighbourhood plan.mxd

**Table 6.3** Site 1, NW Whitchurch

SA topic	Commentary, Site 1: NW Whitchurch	
Biodiversity	<p>SSSI Impact Risk Zones are a GIS tool/dataset which maps zones around each Site of Special Scientific Interest according to the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location. Natural England is a statutory consultee on development proposals that might impact on SSSIs. In relation to the River Test SSSI, the site is within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for development which comprises 100 residential dwellings or more. In this context, the delivery of c.100 dwellings on this site raises the possibility of adverse effects on the River Test SSSI without avoidance and mitigation measures.</p> <p>Areas of Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat (Deciduous Woodland) are located in the north east of the site and the south west of the site.</p>	
Climate change	<p>The site is located in relative proximity to Whitchurch Railway Station. This will promote the use of sustainable modes of transport.</p> <p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, according to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial or surface water flooding. The site is also located entirely within Flood Zone 1.</p>	
Land, soil and water resources	<p>Development of this site would lead to the loss of Grade 2 and Grade 3a agricultural land. This is land classified as the 'Best and Most Versatile' agricultural land.</p> <p>The development of the site also has the potential to lead to the loss of allotments in the east of the area (which is also classified as Grade 2 agricultural land). This will lead to the loss of productive land in the area.</p> <p>Town-wide, Southern Water have stated that Whitchurch wastewater treatment works currently has insufficient capacity for additional development.</p>	
Historic environment and landscape	<p>Whilst the site is located close to the North Wessex Downs AONB, it is located on the southern side of the railway, which will limit effects on views from the AONB. Effects on landscape quality will be further limited by the presence of the A34 and the existing 'enclosed' nature of the site. In this context the high level of physical and visual containment of the site limits the impact on the scenic qualities or tranquility of the AONB.</p> <p>In terms of historic environment constraints, no designated historic environment sites, features or areas including listed buildings or scheduled monuments are located in the immediate vicinity of the site. The site is also located outside of the conservation area.</p>	
Population and community	The site's proximity to public transport networks (including the railway station) will support accessibility to services, facilities and job opportunities outside of the Neighbourhood Area.	
Health and wellbeing	Due to poor existing accessibility by road, and the potential for local traffic generation, the site has the potential to lead to additional noise issues in the area.	
Transport	The site currently has poor access by road. Improved access would be required from if this option was taken forward. Located in relative proximity to the railway station, the site has good access to the rail network.	
Economy and enterprise	The delivery of approximately 100 dwellings will support the viability and vitality of the town, including through supporting local shops and amenities and public transport networks.	

**Key**

Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)



Likely positive effect



Neutral/no effect



Uncertain effects



**Table 6.4** Site 2, Evingar Road North (Serendipity Sam's)

SA topic	Commentary, Site 2: Evingar Road North (Serendipity Sam's)	
Biodiversity	The site adjoins an area of Deciduous Woodland BAP Priority Habitat. No part of the site is subject to statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations. The site is not within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the scale of residential development deliverable on this site.	
Climate change	The site is located in very good proximity to Whitchurch Railway Station. This will promote the use of lower carbon modes of transport. In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, according to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial or surface water flooding. The site is also located entirely within Flood Zone 1.	
Land, soil and water resources	The site is a small brownfield site. This will support the sustainable use of land. Town-wide, Southern Water have stated that Whitchurch wastewater treatment works currently has insufficient capacity for additional development.	
Historic environment and landscape	Whilst the site is located within 200m of the North Wessex Downs AONB, the combination of site size, general urbanising principles and containment from the wider countryside limits potential effects on landscape quality. In this context the high level of physical and visual containment of the site limits the impact on the scenic qualities or views from the AONB. No designated features or areas of historic environment interest are present at the site, and due to its distance and lack of visibility from the Whitchurch Conservation Area, development at this site will not affect the conservation area's integrity.	
Population and community	The site's proximity to public transport networks (including the railway station) will support accessibility to services, facilities and job opportunities outside of the Neighbourhood Area.	
Health and wellbeing	The site does not have any significant constraints related to health and wellbeing.	
Transport	The site is located in relatively good proximity to the town centre, close to local employment, education and shopping facilities, which are accessible by walking and cycling. The site has very good access to the rail station.	
Economy and enterprise	The delivery of c.15-20 dwellings at this location will support the viability and vitality of local shops and amenities and public transport networks.	

**Key**

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

**Table 6.5** Site 3, Whitchurch Car Centre

SA topic	Commentary, Site 3: Whitchurch Car Centre	
Biodiversity	No part of the site is subject to statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations or BAP Priority Habitat. The site is not within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the scale of residential development deliverable on this site.	
Climate change	The site is located in very good proximity to Whitchurch town centre. This will promote walking and cycling, which are lower carbon modes of transport, and reduce the need to travel. In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, according to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial or surface water flooding. The site is also located entirely within Flood Zone 1.	
Land, soil and water resources	The site is a previously developed site. This will support the sustainable use of land. Due to previous land uses, the site may be subject to contamination. Town-wide, Southern Water have stated that Whitchurch wastewater treatment works currently has insufficient capacity for additional development.	
Historic environment and landscape	Whilst the site is located adjacent to the Whitchurch Conservation Area, due to the existing land uses on the site, small scale residential development has significant potential to deliver enhancements to the setting of the conservation area.	
Population and community	The site's proximity to the town centre and public transport networks will support accessibility to services, facilities and job opportunities in the Neighbourhood Area.	
Health and wellbeing	The site does not have any significant constraints related to health and wellbeing.	
Transport	The site is located in good proximity to the town centre, close to local employment, education and shopping facilities, which are accessible by walking and cycling.	
Economy and enterprise	The delivery of c.10 dwellings at this location will support the viability and vitality of local shops and amenities and public transport networks.	

**Key**

Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)



Likely positive effect

Neutral/no effect



Uncertain effects



**Table 6.6** Site 4, Dances Lane

SA topic	Commentary, Site 4: Dances Lane	
Biodiversity	No part of the site is subject to statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations or BAP Priority Habitat. The site is not within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the scale of residential development deliverable on this site.	
Climate change	The site is located in relatively good proximity to Whitchurch Railway Station and the town centre. This will promote the use of sustainable modes of transport and reduce the need to travel. In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, according to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial or surface water flooding. The site is also located entirely within Flood Zone 1.	
Land, soil and water resources	The site comprises previously developed land. This will support the sustainable use of land. Town-wide, Southern Water have stated that Whitchurch wastewater treatment works currently has insufficient capacity for additional development.	
Historic environment and landscape	Whilst the site is located within 300m of the North Wessex Downs AONB, the combination of sites, size, general urbanising principles and containment from the wider countryside limits potential effects on landscape quality. In this context the high level of physical and visual containment of the site limits the impact on the scenic qualities or views from the AONB. No designated features or areas of historic environment interest are present at the site, and due to its distance and lack of visibility from the Whitchurch Conservation Area, development at this site will not affect the conservation area's integrity.	
Population and community	The site's relative proximity to public transport networks (including the railway station) and the town centre will support accessibility to services, facilities and job opportunities outside of the Neighbourhood Area.	
Health and wellbeing	The site does not have any significant constraints related to health and wellbeing.	
Transport	The site is located in relatively good proximity to the town centre, close to local employment, education and shopping facilities, which are accessible by walking and cycling. The site has relatively good access to the rail station.	
Economy and enterprise	The delivery of c.15-20 dwellings at this location will support the viability and vitality of local shops and amenities and public transport networks.	

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

**Table 6.7** Site 5, Extension to Blosswood Lane

SA topic	Commentary, Site 5: Extension to Blosswood Lane	
Biodiversity	<p>No part of the site is subject to statutory or non statutory nature conservation designations and no areas of Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat are located on or adjacent to the site. Hurstbourne Park SINC is located 300m to the west of the site and is unlikely to be affected by development at this site.</p> <p>The site is within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for development which comprises 100 residential dwellings or more. In this context, the delivery of c.100 dwellings on this site raises the possibility of adverse effects on the River Test SSSI without avoidance and mitigation measures.</p>	
Climate change	<p>The site is located in relatively good proximity to Whitchurch town centre. This will promote walking and cycling and public transport use, with the potential to help limit emissions from transport.</p> <p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, according to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial or surface water flooding. The site is also located entirely within Flood Zone 1 and there are no known records of groundwater flooding at this site.</p>	
Land, soil and water resources	<p>The development of this site will lead to the loss of Grade 2 agricultural land. This is land classified as the 'Best and Most Versatile' agricultural land.</p> <p>Town-wide, Southern Water have stated that Whitchurch wastewater treatment works currently has insufficient capacity for additional development.</p> <p>The site overlies safeguarded minerals resources for sharp sand and gravel as identified through Policy 15- Mineral Resources of the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan.<sup>46</sup></p>	
Historic environment and landscape	<p>Whilst the site is located within the North Wessex Downs AONB, the combination of general urbanising principles and containment from the wider countryside limits potential effects on landscape quality. The site is heavily influenced by the adjoining A34 and existing residential areas and the site offers a significant degree of enclosure from the open countryside. In this context the high level of physical and visual containment of the site limits the impact on the scenic qualities or tranquility of the wider AONB.</p> <p>In terms of historic environment constraints, the Grade II listed Manor Farmhouse and Grade II listed granary to the west of the farmhouse are present to the north of the site. New development may affect the setting of these features.</p>	
Population and community	<p>The site is located in relatively good proximity to the town centre, close to local employment, education and shopping facilities, which are accessible by walking and cycling. It is also accessible to public transport networks (including bus services). This will support access to services, facilities and amenities.</p>	
Health and wellbeing	<p>The site is heavily influenced by noise issues resulting from its proximity to the A34. This has the potential to have significant negative effects on the health and wellbeing of residents.</p>	
Transport	<p>The site is located in relatively good proximity to the town centre, close to local employment, education and shopping facilities, which are accessible by walking and cycling.</p>	
Economy and enterprise	<p>The delivery of approximately 100 dwellings will support the viability and vitality of the town, including through supporting local shops and amenities and public transport networks.</p>	

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

<sup>46</sup> Hampshire County Council (October 2013) Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan  
<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/mineralsandwaste/planning-policy-home.htm>

**Table 6.8** Site 6, North of the Cricket Ground

SA topic	Commentary, Site 6: North of the Cricket Ground	
Biodiversity	The site is located adjacent to Deciduous Woodland BAP Priority Habitat (located to the west). The site is also located adjacent to Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh BAP Priority Habitat (to the south and south east). The site is not within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the scale of residential development deliverable on this site.	
Climate change	The site is located in relatively good proximity to Whitchurch town centre. This will promote walking and cycling and public transport use, with the potential to help limit emissions from transport. In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, according to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial or surface water flooding. The site is also located entirely within Flood Zone 1 and there are no known records of groundwater flooding at this site.	
Land, soil and water resources	The development of this site will take place on greenfield land. It is uncertain whether this is land classified as the 'Best and Most Versatile' agricultural land. Town-wide, Southern Water have stated that Whitchurch wastewater treatment works currently has insufficient capacity for additional development.	
Historic environment and landscape	The site is located opposite to the grounds of the Grade II* listed Church of All Hallows and is west of the Grade II listed St Cross House and Grade II listed vicarage. Whilst the site is well screened from the latter two features, development at this location is likely to affect the setting of the Church of All Hallows. Reflecting the historic sensitivities of the area, the site is located within the Whitchurch Conservation Area. It is likely that the loss of greenspace at this location will have effects on the setting and integrity of the conservation area. Whilst the site is located adjacent to the North Wessex Downs AONB, it is well screened from the AONB by a dense area of woodland. As such the high level of physical and visual containment of the site limits the impact on the scenic qualities or views from the AONB.	
Population and community	The site is located in relatively good proximity to the town centre, close to local employment, education and shopping facilities, which are accessible by walking and cycling. It is also relatively accessible to public transport networks (including bus services). This will support access to services, facilities and amenities.	
Health and wellbeing	The site is influenced by noise issues resulting from its proximity to the A34. This has the potential to have negative effects on the health and wellbeing of residents. Effects on the recreational amenity of the neighbouring cricket ground would depend on the design and layout of development at this location.	
Transport	The site is located in relatively good proximity to the town centre, close to local employment, education and shopping facilities, which are accessible by walking and cycling.	
Economy and enterprise	The delivery of in the region of 20-30 dwellings will support the viability and vitality of the town, including through supporting local shops and amenities and public transport networks.	

**Key**

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

**Table 6.9** Site 7, East of the Knowlings

SA topic	Commentary, Site 8: East of the Knowlings	
Biodiversity	<p>No part of the site is subject to statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations and no areas of Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat are located on or adjacent to the site.</p> <p>The site is within the River Test SSSI Impact Risk Zone for development which comprises 100 residential dwellings or more. In this context, the delivery of c.100 dwellings on this site raises the possibility of adverse effects on the River Test SSSI without avoidance and mitigation measures.</p>	
Climate change	<p>The site is located at relative distance (c.750m) to the services and facilities located in Whitchurch town centre and main bus routes. This may limit the use of sustainable modes of transport.</p> <p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, according to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial flooding. The site is also located entirely within Flood Zone 1 and there are no known records of groundwater flooding at this site. A small area of the site is at risk surface water flooding in a 1 in 200 year event.</p>	
Land, soil and water resources	<p>The development of this site will lead to the loss of Grade 2 agricultural land. This is land classified as the 'Best and Most Versatile' agricultural land.</p> <p>Town-wide, Southern Water have stated that Whitchurch wastewater treatment works currently has insufficient capacity for additional development.</p>	
Historic environment and landscape	<p>In terms of historic environment constraints, no designated historic environment sites, features or areas including listed buildings or scheduled monuments are located in the immediate vicinity of the site. Development of the site is unlikely to have significant effects on the setting and integrity of the Whitchurch Conservation Area.</p> <p>The Landscape Capacity Study 2010 highlighted that the site has a medium/high landscape capacity and that development on the site would not be out of keeping with previous settlement expansion, providing it respects the character of the town and limits visual intrusion into the wider landscape. The site is located outside of the AONB. However its edge of town location adjacent to open countryside will lead to effects on views to the southeast of the town.</p>	
Population and community	<p>The site is located at relative distance (c.750m) to the services and facilities located in Whitchurch town centre and main bus routes. It is also located approximately 1.5km to the railway station. This may reduce accessibility to services, facilities and employment opportunities.</p>	
Health and wellbeing	<p>No significant effects on health and wellbeing have been identified at this level of detail.</p>	
Transport	<p>The site is located at relative distance (c.750m) to the services and facilities located in Whitchurch town centre and main bus routes. It is also located approximately 1.5km to the railway station. The site has a number of accessibility issues which would require alleviation prior to development at this location. Development at the site also has the potential to increase pressures on the Micheldever Road / Winchester Road junction.</p>	
Economy and enterprise	<p>The delivery of approximately 100 dwellings will support the viability and vitality of the town, including through supporting local shops and amenities and public transport networks.</p>	

**Key**

Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)



Likely positive effect



Neutral/no effect



Uncertain effects



**Table 6.10** Site 8, East of Winchester Road

SA topic	Commentary, Site 8: East of Winchester Road	
Biodiversity	<p>No part of the site is subject to statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations and no areas of Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat are located on or adjacent to the site.</p> <p>The site is within the River Test SSSI Impact Risk Zone for development which comprises 100 residential dwellings or more. In this context, the delivery of c.100 dwellings on this site raises the possibility of adverse effects on the River Test SSSI without avoidance and mitigation measures.</p> <p>The Whitchurch Water Meadows SINC is located 80m to the north west. There are unlikely to be effects on the site due to the potential development area being isolated from the site by existing residential development.</p>	
Climate change	<p>The site is located at relative distance (c.1km) to the services and facilities located in Whitchurch town centre and main bus routes. This may limit the use of sustainable modes of transport. The proximity of Testbourne Community School will however promote walking and cycling to the school.</p> <p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, according to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial flooding. The site is also located entirely within Flood Zone 1 and there are no known records of groundwater flooding at this site. A small area of the site is at risk surface water flooding in a 1 in 200 year event.</p>	
Land, soil and water resources	<p>The development of this site will lead to the loss of Grade 2 and Grade 3a agricultural land. This is land classified as the 'Best and Most Versatile' agricultural land. 75% of the site has been classified as Grade 2 agricultural land and 24% of the site has been classified as Grade 3b agricultural land.</p> <p>The northwestern part of the site overlies safeguarded minerals resources for sharp sand and gravel as identified through Policy 15- Mineral Resources of the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan. Town-wide, Southern Water have stated that Whitchurch wastewater treatment works currently has insufficient capacity for additional development.</p>	
Historic environment and landscape	<p>The site is located outside of the AONB. However its edge of town location adjacent to open countryside will lead to effects on views to the south of the town.</p> <p>There may be minor effects on the wider setting of Whitchurch Conservation Area, due to the contribution that the slope of the site provides to the setting of the conservation area within the river valley.</p> <p>In terms of historic environment constraints, no designated historic environment sites, features or areas including listed buildings or scheduled monuments are located in the immediate vicinity of the site.</p>	
Population and community	<p>The site is located at relative distance (c.1km) to the services and facilities located in Whitchurch town centre and main bus routes. It is also located approximately 1.8km to the railway station. This may reduce accessibility to services, facilities and employment opportunities. The proximity of Testbourne Community School will however promote accessibility to the school.</p>	
Health and wellbeing	<p>No significant effects on health and wellbeing have been identified at this level of detail.</p>	
Transport	<p>The site is located at relative distance (c.1km) to the services and facilities located in Whitchurch town centre and main bus routes. It is also located approximately 1.8km to the railway station. This may limit the use of sustainable modes of transport. The proximity of Testbourne Community School will however promote walking and cycling to the school.</p>	
Economy and enterprise	<p>The delivery of approximately 100 dwellings will support the viability and vitality of the town, including through supporting local shops and amenities and public transport networks.</p>	

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

**Table 6.11** Site 9, East of Bere Hill

SA topic	Commentary, Site 9: East of Bere Hill	
Biodiversity	<p>No part of the site is subject to statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations and no areas of Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat are located on or adjacent to the site.</p> <p>In relation to the River Test SSSI, the site is within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for development which comprises 100 residential dwellings or more. In this context, the delivery of c.100 dwellings on this site raises the possibility of adverse effects on the River Test SSSI without avoidance and mitigation measures.</p>	
Climate change	<p>The site is located in good proximity to Whitchurch Railway Station. This will support the use of sustainable modes of transport for travel outside of the parish. The site is however located at relative distance (c.1km) to the services and facilities located in Whitchurch town centre.</p> <p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, according to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial or surface water flooding. The site is also located entirely within Flood Zone 1.</p>	
Land, soil and water resources	<p>Development at this site will lead to the loss of farmland. The site has been classified as Grade 3 agricultural land. As such it is uncertain whether this comprises farmland classified as 'the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land' (i.e. Grade 3a land).</p> <p>Town-wide, Southern Water have stated that Whitchurch wastewater treatment works currently has insufficient capacity for additional development.</p>	
Historic environment and landscape	<p>Whilst the site is located adjacent to the North Wessex Downs AONB, it is located on the southern side of the railway. Due to the area's topography, development at this location has the potential to have some effects on the scenic qualities of the AONB and views from the AONB. The topography of the area also suggests that there would be significant impacts on views from the east of Whitchurch.</p> <p>In terms of historic environment constraints, no designated historic environment sites, features or areas including listed buildings or scheduled monuments are located in the immediate vicinity of the site. The site is also located outside of the Whitchurch Conservation Area.</p>	
Population and community	<p>The site is located at relative distance (c.1km) to the services and facilities located in Whitchurch town centre. The site's proximity to the railway station will support accessibility to services, facilities and employment opportunities outside of the Neighbourhood Area.</p>	
Health and wellbeing	<p>No significant effects on health and wellbeing have been identified at this level of detail.</p>	
Transport	<p>The site's proximity to Whitchurch Railway Station will promote accessibility by rail. The site has good access to the A34 in the north.</p> <p>The site is however located at relative distance (c.1km) to the services and facilities located in Whitchurch town centre.</p>	
Economy and enterprise	<p>The delivery of approximately 100 dwellings will support the viability and vitality of the town, including through supporting local shops and amenities and public transport networks.</p>	

**Key**

Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)



Likely positive effect



Neutral/no effect



Uncertain effects



6.4.8 Following the appraisal of these sites, a number of recommendations were made by the SA team to the WNP Steering Committee to consider during the next stages of development for the WNP. These were as follows

- All of the medium size site options are located within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for development which comprises 100 residential dwellings or more. In this context, the delivery of medium scale allocations on these sites raise the possibility of adverse effects on the River Test SSSI without avoidance and mitigation measures. As such, robust policy approaches should be introduced through the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that adverse effects on the Nature Conservation value of the SSSI are avoided. These should, where possible, be developed in consultation with Natural England.
- Outside of designated nature conservation sites, the loss of key features of biodiversity value should be avoided, including woodland, trees and hedgerows. This included areas of Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat.
- The Neighbourhood Plan should seek to ensure that improvements to open space in the parish are delivered through a coordinated approach to green infrastructure planning. In this context the delivery of new and improved green infrastructure provision is most effective when it is planned at a range of scales, including at the sub-regional, county, borough and local level. This enables a coordinated approach to be taken which can seek to ensure the full range of benefits from a high quality green infrastructure network are realised. For this reason it is recommended that the Neighbourhood Plan provides clarification as to how open space provision should be delivered in the parish through a coordinated and joined up approach to green infrastructure, including in conjunction with existing green infrastructure work being carried out by Hampshire County Council, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, Natural England and other organisations.
- The Neighbourhood Plan should also seek to promote Whitchurch-wide ecological enhancements as part of the development of a coordinated green infrastructure strategy for the town.
- In light of Southern Water stating that the wastewater treatment works currently has insufficient capacity for additional development, the Neighbourhood Plan should seek to ensure that additional capacity is secured as new development progresses.
- Whilst most of the proposed options for development are located outside of the AONB, it is recommended that robust policies are put forward to protect the integrity of the AONB through the Neighbourhood Plan. If possible these policies should be prepared in consultation with Natural England and the North Wessex Downs AONB office.

#### *Choice of housing sites for the Neighbourhood Plan*

6.4.9 Subsequent to the “Where do the houses go” community consultation undertaken in October 2014, a site assessment was undertaken by the WNP Steering Committee. This considered each of the nine sites against a range of criteria in line with the assessment criteria of the Basingstoke and Deane SHLAA and the Vision and Objectives of the WNP. This process was supplemented by the SA site assessments presented in Section 6.4.

6.4.10 As highlighted above, following consultation on the potential sites, it was considered that the most broadly accepted option for the allocation of housing sites was to deliver housing through one medium sized site of approximately 100 dwellings and a number of smaller brownfield sites.

6.4.11 In line with these considerations, and drawing on the site assessment and site selection process, it was initially considered that four sites should be taken forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan, as follows:

**Medium size site:**

- Site 8: East of Winchester Road

**Smaller brownfield sites**

- Site 2 Evingar Road North (Serendipity Sam's)
- Site 3: Whitchurch Car Centre
- Site 4: Dances Lane

6.4.12 These allocations were evaluated as providing the required dwellings to deliver the remaining (from November 2015) requirement from the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan over the plan period.

6.4.13 In the interim however, Site 8, East of Winchester Road, received outline planning permission for 100 homes. In response to this, it was decided to allocate Site 1, North West Whitchurch for 60 dwellings as part of a mixed use development (**Section 6.5**). This is in addition to the 34 dwellings for which outline planning permission have already been granted on the site.

6.4.14 Alongside, it was considered that Site 2 (Evingar Road North) was no longer suitable for allocation given its location immediately next to an active employment site, which potentially conflicts with other policies in the WNP.

6.4.15 As such, **the three sites allocated for housing through the WNP** are as follows:

- Site 1: NW Whitchurch (60 dwellings as part of mixed use development)
- Site 4: Dances Lane (15 dwellings)
- Site 3: Whitchurch Car Centre (allocated as a reserve site for in the region of 10 dwellings)

6.4.16 The allocation of 85 dwellings is considered to exceed the remaining Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan requirement for Whitchurch.

## 6.5 Assessment of alternative employment sites for taking forward through the WNP

6.5.1 The Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011-2029 does not allocate employment land in Whitchurch. However community consultation undertaken for the WNP highlighted that the community would like see an allocation of employment land through the Neighbourhood Plan.

6.5.2 The consultation highlighted that an approach which allowed for the growth of local businesses in Whitchurch was the most popular option. This was preferred over a 'no growth' option and an option which placed an emphasis on attracting new businesses to the area.

6.5.3 On this basis the WNP Steering Committee commenced the identification of potential employment sites in the summer of 2013. It contacted landowners with land which may be suitable for development and also advertised in the Parish Magazine and on its website for landowners or developers who may wish to have land considered for development.

6.5.4 As a result three potential employment sites were identified and screened by the Steering Committee to ensure they were viable and there were no immediate 'show stoppers'. No sites were rejected at this stage, and all were considered to be potentially deliverable.

6.5.5 The sites were as follows:

- North of the Railway Station
- Extension to Bloswood Lane
- NW Whitchurch

- 6.5.6 The WNP Steering Committee subsequently met on a number of occasions with the relevant landowners and developers to explore the potential detail of their proposed site allocations and invited them to present their proposals at the “*Where do the houses go*” community consultation in October 2014.
- 6.5.7 In light of this process, the three proposed sites have been appraised as reasonable alternatives for employment allocations through the SA process. In this context the SA process has undertaken an appraisal of the key constraints present at each of these three sites and the potential effects that may arise as a result of the allocation of employment uses at these locations. Through this process the three sites have been considered in relation to the SA Framework of objectives and decision-making questions developed during SA scoping and the baseline information.
- 6.5.8 The following tables present a summary of this appraisal, and provide an indication of each site’s sustainability performance in relation to the eight SA themes.

**Table 6.12** Site E1, North of the Railway Station

SA topic	Commentary, Site E3: North of the Railway Station	
Biodiversity	<p>The potential employment site is located within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for ‘<i>large infrastructure such as warehousing / industry where net additional gross internal floorspace is &gt; 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or any development needing its own water supply</i>’. Depending on the scale of development (the 1.2ha site has capacity for over 3,250m<sup>2</sup> of employment floorspace), the allocation of employment land at this location therefore has the potential to lead to impacts on the SSSI without appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures. However it should be noted that the site is separated by residential and employment areas and the town centre from the SSSIs associated with the River Test. This limits the scope for direct effects on these sites.</p> <p>An area of Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat (Deciduous Woodland) is located at the southern boundary of the site.</p>	
Climate change	<p>The site is located in relative proximity to Whitchurch Railway Station. This will promote the use of sustainable modes of transport for employees.</p> <p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, according to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial or surface water flooding. The site is also located entirely within Flood Zone 1.</p>	
Land, soil and water resources	<p>It is uncertain whether development of this site for employment uses would lead to the loss of land classified as the ‘Best and Most Versatile’ agricultural land as detailed classification has not been undertaken. However the site currently comprises productive agricultural land.</p>	
Historic environment and landscape	<p>The site is located on the northern side of the railway line within the North Wessex Downs AONB. Development of this 4ha site has the potential to deliver 11,500m<sup>2</sup> of employment floorspace. Separated from the remaining built up part of Whitchurch, development of this site as employment land would act a significant encroachment of the town into open countryside within this nationally designated landscape.</p> <p>The development of the site as employment land therefore has the potential to lead to significant effects on landscape character at this location, including through changes to the historic settlement pattern of the town, visual impacts and adverse effects on tranquillity. This will undermine the integrity of the AONB designation.</p> <p>In terms of historic environment constraints, no designated historic environment sites, features or areas including listed buildings or scheduled monuments are located in the immediate vicinity of the site. The site is also located outside of the conservation area.</p>	
Population and community	<p>The site’s proximity to public transport networks (including the railway station) will support accessibility for employees for those living outside of the Neighbourhood Area. The delivery 11,500m<sup>2</sup> of employment floorspace would support employment opportunities in the town.</p>	
Health and wellbeing	<p>There are unlikely to be significant effects on health and wellbeing from allocation of this site as employment land.</p>	

SA topic	Commentary, Site E3: North of the Railway Station	
Transport	The site currently has good access by road to primary routes, including to the A34 to the north of Whitchurch. Located in close proximity to the railway station, the site has good access to the rail network.	
Economy and enterprise	The 4ha site has capacity for over 11,500m <sup>2</sup> of employment floorspace. This will encourage new businesses to locate in Whitchurch and promote the town's economic vitality.	

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

**Table 6.13** Site E2, Extension to Blosswood Lane

SA topic	Commentary, Site E1: Extension to Blosswood Lane	
Biodiversity	<p>The potential employment site is located within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for '<i>large infrastructure such as warehousing / industry where net additional gross internal floorspace is &gt; 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or any development needing its own water supply</i>'. Depending on the scale of development (the 8ha site has capacity for over 11,500m<sup>2</sup>) the allocation of employment land at this location therefore has the potential to lead to impacts on the SSSI without appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures. It should however be noted that the site is separated by residential areas and the town centre from the SSSIs associated with the River Test, which limits the potential for adverse effects. This limits the scope for direct effects on these sites.</p> <p>No part of the site is subject to statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations and no areas of Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat are located on or adjacent to the site. Hurstbourne Park SINC is located 300m to the west of the site. However the SINC is unlikely to be affected by development at this location.</p>	
Climate change	<p>The site is located in relatively good proximity to Whitchurch town centre. Whilst this will promote walking and cycling and public transport use for employees, greenhouse emissions from transportation activities have the potential to be increased due to the need for HGV traffic to travel through the town centre to access primary routes. This includes the northbound A34 (which is only accessible to the north of the town).</p> <p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, according to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial or surface water flooding. The site is also located entirely within Flood Zone 1 and there are no known records of groundwater flooding at this site.</p>	
Land, soil and water resources	<p>The development of this site as employment uses will lead to the loss of Grade 2 agricultural land. This is land classified as the 'Best and Most Versatile' agricultural land.</p> <p>The site overlies safeguarded minerals resources for sharp sand and gravel<sup>47</sup> as identified through Policy 15- Mineral Resources of the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan.</p>	
Historic environment and landscape	<p>An increase in HGV flows through the town centre (due to the need for such traffic to travel through the town centre to access northbound primary routes including the A34) has the potential to have adverse effects on cultural heritage assets in Whitchurch. This includes through impacts on the fabric and setting of key designations in the town centre, including the Whitchurch Conservation Area and listed buildings.</p> <p>Whilst the site is located within the North Wessex Downs AONB, the combination of general urbanising principles and containment from the wider countryside limits potential effects on landscape quality. The site is heavily influenced by the adjoining A34 and existing residential areas and the site offers a significant degree of enclosure from the open countryside. In this context the high level of physical and visual containment of the site limits the impact on the scenic qualities or tranquillity of the wider AONB. However the potential scale of employment development in this area has the potential to have adverse effects on townscape quality locally. This includes in the context of the setting of key historic environment constraints present to the north of the site, including the Grade II listed Manor Farmhouse and Grade II listed granary.</p>	
Population and community	<p>The development of the site as for these purposes will increase employment opportunities in the town.</p> <p>The quality of life of residents will be affected by the development of the site as employment land due to the need for HGV traffic to travel through the town centre to access primary routes (including the northbound A34 accessible to the north of the town). In this context an increase in HGV flows will affect noise and air quality in the town centre, contribute to congestion and increase road safety issues. This will have adverse effects on residents' quality of life.</p>	
Health and wellbeing	<p>The site is heavily influenced by noise issues resulting from its proximity to the A34. The health and wellbeing of residents will also be affected by the development of the site as employment due to the need for HGV traffic to travel through the town centre to access primary routes. In this context an increase in HGV flows has the potential to have adverse impacts on health and wellbeing through affecting noise and air quality in the town centre and increasing road safety issues.</p>	

<sup>47</sup> Hampshire County Council (October 2013) Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan  
<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/mineralsandwaste/planning-policy-home.htm>

SA topic	Commentary, Site E1: Extension to Blosswood Lane	
Transport	<p>Due to a requirement for HGV traffic to travel through the town centre to access some primary routes (including the northbound A34), the development of the site for employment uses has the potential to increase congestion issues in the town centre.</p> <p>In terms of access for employees, the site is located in relatively good proximity to the town centre, close to local employment, education and shopping facilities, which are accessible by walking and cycling. It is also accessible to public transport networks (including bus services).</p>	
Economy and enterprise	The site has the capacity for 11,500m <sup>2</sup> of employment floorspace. This will encourage new businesses to locate in the town and promote its economic vitality.	

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

**Table 6.14** Site E3, NW Whitchurch

SA topic	Commentary, Site E2: NW Whitchurch	
Biodiversity	<p>The potential employment site is located within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for '<i>large infrastructure such as warehousing / industry where net additional gross internal floorspace is &gt; 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or any development needing its own water supply</i>'. Depending on the scale of development (the 1.2ha site has capacity for over 3,250m<sup>2</sup> of employment floorspace), the allocation of employment land at this location therefore has the potential to lead to impacts on the SSSI without appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures. However it should be noted that the site is separated by an industrial estate, residential areas and the town centre from the SSSIs associated with the River Test.</p> <p>Areas of Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat (Deciduous Woodland) are located in the north east of the site and the south west of the site.</p>	
Climate change	<p>The site is located in relative proximity to Whitchurch Railway Station. This will promote the use of sustainable modes of transport for employees.</p> <p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, according to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial or surface water flooding. The site is also located entirely within Flood Zone 1.</p>	
Land, soil and water resources	<p>Development of this site for employment uses would lead to the loss of Grade 2 and Grade 3a agricultural land. This is land classified as the 'Best and Most Versatile' agricultural land.</p> <p>The development of the site also has the potential to lead to the loss of allotments in the east of the area (which is also classified as Grade 2 agricultural land). This will lead to the loss of productive land in the area.</p>	
Historic environment and landscape	<p>Whilst the site is located close to the North Wessex Downs AONB, it is located on the southern side of the railway, which will limit effects on views from the AONB. Effects on landscape quality will be further limited by the presence of the A34 and the existing 'enclosed' nature of the site. In this context the high level of physical and visual containment of the site limits the impact on the scenic qualities or tranquility of the AONB.</p> <p>In terms of historic environment constraints, no designated historic environment sites, features or areas including listed buildings or scheduled monuments are located in the immediate vicinity of the site. The site is also located outside of the conservation area.</p>	
Population and community	<p>The site's proximity to public transport networks (including the railway station) will support accessibility for employees for those living outside of the Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>The delivery of over 3,250m<sup>2</sup> of employment floorspace would support employment opportunities in the town.</p>	
Health and wellbeing	<p>Due to poor existing accessibility by road, and the potential for local traffic generation, employment development at this site has the potential to lead to additional noise issues in the area without improvements to transport infrastructure.</p>	
Transport	<p>The site currently has poor access by road. Improved access would be required from if this option was taken forward. Located in relative proximity to the railway station, the site has good access to the rail network.</p>	
Economy and enterprise	<p>The 1.2ha site has capacity for over 3,250m<sup>2</sup> of employment floorspace), This will encourage new businesses to locate in Whitchurch and promote its economic vitality.</p>	

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

Choice of employment sites for the Neighbourhood Plan

- 6.5.9 Subsequent to the “*Where do the houses go*” community consultation undertaken in October 2014, a site assessment was undertaken by the WNP Steering Committee. This considered each of the three sites against a range of criteria in line with the assessment criteria of the Basingstoke and Deane SHLAA and the Vision and Objectives of the WNP. This process was supplemented by the SA site assessments presented above.
- 6.5.10 Drawing on the site assessment / selection process, it was considered that the NW Whitchurch site should be supported for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.5.11 As such, in the absence of an allocation in the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan for employment land in Whitchurch, the WNP has allocated land for up to 4000m<sup>2</sup> of business development (classes B1 and B2) as part of a mixed use scheme on the North West Whitchurch site.

**6.6 Development of Neighbourhood Plan policies**

- 6.6.1 To support the implementation of the Vision and Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan discussed in **Section 2.3**, and to complement the proposed sites for development, the Regulation 14 version of the WNP put forward 28 policies to guide development in the Neighbourhood Area. These were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering.
- 6.6.2 The SA Report accompanying the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan (November 2015) presented an appraisal of these policies.
- 6.6.3 Three recommendations were made for improving the sustainability performance of the current version of the WNP. These are summarised as follows:
- There is further scope for the WNP to set out how improved open space provision can be delivered through a coordinated green infrastructure approach. This includes in conjunction with existing green infrastructure work being carried out by Basingstoke and Deane Council, Hampshire County Council, Natural England and other organisations. In this context the provisions for the Neighbourhood Area set out in the Basingstoke and Deane Green Infrastructure Strategy should be a key consideration.
  - Whilst no significant effects on the River Test SSSI or the Bere Mill Meadows SSSI have been identified as likely through the draft plan, there is potential for the WNP to further recognise the biodiversity value of the nationally designated River Test. It is therefore recommended that the biodiversity policies presented in the WNP include reference to the need for development proposals to be sensitive to, and support the integrity of the River Test SSSI and Bere Mill Meadows SSSI.
  - Whilst the Whitchurch Design Statement provides a robust basis for the protection of landscape/townscape quality and the historic environment in the town, there is further scope for the WNP to more explicitly seek to ensure that all development in and adjacent to the Whitchurch Conservation Area is carried out in conjunction with the Whitchurch Conservation Area Appraisal (Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, 2003) and its update.
- 6.6.4 These recommendations were then considered through the next iterations of plan making for the WNP.
- 6.6.5 In response to consultation on the Regulation 14 version of the plan, the policies of the WNP have been updated to take into account responses received, the findings of additional technical studies and the recommendations included in the SA Report.
- 6.6.6 As such 28 policies have been put forward for the current Submission version of the WNP.

6.6.7 The policies have been grouped into the following categories:

- General Design
- Traffic and Parking
- Infrastructure
- Employment
- Housing
- Community Projects

6.6.8 **Part 3** of this SA Report considers these policies through appraising the current 'Submission' version of the WNP.

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

## 7 Introduction to Part 3

The report must include...

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

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

- Chapter 8 presents an appraisal of the Submission version of the WNP under the eight SA theme headings; and
- Section 8.10 discusses overall conclusions at this current stage and recommendations for the next stage of plan-making.

## 8 Appraisal of the Submission version of the WNP

### 8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 The appraisal is structured under the eight sustainability themes discussed.

8.1.2 For each theme 'significant effects' of the draft plan on the baseline are predicted and evaluated. Account is taken of the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the Regulations.<sup>48</sup> So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects as far as possible. Cumulative effects are also considered. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment as appropriate.

8.1.3 Every effort is made to identify / evaluate effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high level nature of the plan. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline and the nature of future planning applications. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects and ensure all assumptions are explained. In many instances it is not possible to predict significant effects, but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) in more general terms.

8.1.4 It is important to note that effects are predicted taking into account the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations.<sup>49</sup> So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects as far as possible. Cumulative effects are also considered (i.e. where the effects of the Plan may combine with the effects of other planned or on-going activity that is outside the control of the WNP). These effect 'characteristics' are described within the appraisal as appropriate.

<sup>48</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

<sup>49</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

## 8.2 Biodiversity

### Relevant sustainability objectives

<i>SA Objectives</i>	<i>SA appraisal Questions:</i>
<b>Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features</b>	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support continued improvements to the status of the River Test SSSI?</li> <li>• Support continued improvements to the status of the Bere Mill Meadows SSSI?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance the integrity of the Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation present in the plan area?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance semi-natural habitats?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance priority habitats, and the habitat of priority species?</li> <li>• Achieve a net gain in biodiversity?</li> <li>• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Submission version of the Plan

- 8.2.1 A number of the proposed sites for allocation have the potential to lead to adverse effects on biodiversity interest without the introduction of appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures.
- 8.2.2 SSSI Impact Risk Zones are a GIS tool/dataset which maps zones around each SSSI according to the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location. Natural England is a statutory consultee on development proposals that might impact on SSSIs.
- 8.2.3 The proposed **NW Whitchurch** allocation is located within the River Test SSSI Impact Risk Zone for development which comprises 100 residential dwellings or more. In this context, the delivery of c.100 dwellings on this site raises the possibility of adverse effects on the River Test SSSI without avoidance and mitigation measures.
- 8.2.4 Whilst the remaining sites are in relatively close proximity to the River Test SSSI, no sites are within the established Impact Risk Zone for the SSSI. This is due to the limited size of these allocations (i.e. under 100 dwellings).
- 8.2.5 The Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) identifies a number of 'priority habitats' that are characteristic of Hampshire and for which Hampshire makes a significant contribution to the UK aims of the Biodiversity Action Plan. In this context the allocation proposed at **Evingar Road North** and **NW Whitchurch** are located adjacent to areas of Biodiversity Action Plan Habitat (Deciduous Woodland). In relation to Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, none of the proposed allocations are located in close proximity to areas covered by these designations.
- 8.2.6 The current version of the WNP sets out a number of provisions which will help limit potential effects from allocations on features and areas of biodiversity interest in the Neighbourhood Area. **Policy LD2 (Protection of Biodiversity)** seeks to enhance green infrastructure networks within the parish in conjunction with BDBC Green Infrastructure Strategy, linking habitats and improving ecological networks, enhancing the resilience of habitats and species to the effects of climate change, and ensuring that development which results in the loss or "significant harm" to the ecological value of private residential gardens is not permitted. **Policy LD3 (Protection of hedgerows, trees and tree planting)** seeks to prevent the loss of trees and hedgerows and encourage tree and hedgerow planting, **Policy LD1** also seeks to ensure that open spaces are protected and retained and **Policy GD1** seeks to promote new open space and enhance connections between areas of open space. In relation to designations on the River Test, the policy also seeks to "conserve and enhances the river Test, with particular regard to the ecological value of the river and the biodiversity of the SSSIs".

8.2.7 In this context the policy approaches proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan provide an appropriate and proactive context for protecting and enhancing ecological networks, protecting habitats and species and supporting the integrity of key national nature conservation designations in the Neighbourhood Area.

### 8.3 Climate Change

#### Relevant sustainability objectives

<b>SA Objectives</b>	<b>SA appraisal Questions:</b>
<b>Promote climate change mitigation in Whitchurch</b>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit the increase in the carbon footprint of the plan area from population growth?</li> <li>• Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport?</li> <li>• Reduce the need to travel?</li> <li>• Increase number of new developments meeting sustainable design criteria?</li> <li>• Improve green infrastructure networks in the plan area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change?</li> <li>• Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources?</li> <li>• Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?</li> </ul>
<b>Support the resilience of Whitchurch to the potential effects of climate change</b>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that no development takes place in areas at higher risk of flooding, taking into the likely effects of climate change into account?</li> <li>• Sustainably manage water run-off, ensuring that the risk of flooding is not increased (either within the plan area or downstream) and where possible reduce flood risk?</li> <li>• Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development in the plan area?</li> <li>• Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the plan area to the effects of climate change?</li> </ul>

#### Summary of the appraisal of the Submission version of the Plan

8.3.1 In terms of climate change mitigation, road transport is an increasingly significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the plan area. In this context **Policies GD1-GD2, TR1** and indirectly, **LD1, ES6** and **CP1** will promote the use of sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport use. This will support lower carbon alternatives to the private car, promoting climate change mitigation.

8.3.2 The three smaller sites proposed for allocations are located in good proximity to Whitchurch town centre with its range of services, facilities, amenities and public transport links. This will support climate change mitigation through reducing the need for residents to travel by the private car and limiting the need to travel. However the larger **NW of Whitchurch** allocation is located at relative distance (c.1km) to the services and facilities located in Whitchurch town centre and main bus routes (although is close to the rail station). This may undermine the use of sustainable modes of transport. It is noted though that the policy for the allocation (**Policy HA2**) seeks to initiate access improvements, including “...measures to improve accessibility by non-car transport modes”. As such the policy approach promoted by the draft plan recognises and seeks to overcome the accessibility limitations associated with the site.

8.3.3 In relation to renewable energy provision, the policy for the **NW Whitchurch** allocation supports the incorporation of renewable energy technologies and **Policy IP1 (Electricity Supply)** seeks to

ensure the use of renewable energy sources and low carbon sources will be encouraged. Policy IP1 also highlights the potential for small scale hydro on the River Test and air or water source heat pumps, and seeks to support the provisions of the Local Plan in relation to renewable energy. Similarly the Neighbourhood Plan supports the provisions of the Local Plan in regards to the sustainability and energy efficiency of new development.

- 8.3.4 Enhancements to green infrastructure networks promote climate change mitigation through supporting carbon sequestration and promoting sustainable modes of transport, and climate change adaptation through helping to limit the effects of extreme weather events and regulating surface water run-off. In this context the plan's focus on protecting and enhancing trees and woodland and open space provision and connections will support these elements.
- 8.3.5 In relation to flood risk in the Neighbourhood Area, the addressing of issues linked to fluvial, groundwater and surface water flooding are likely to be supported by the provisions of the NPPF. Likewise, the flood risk, SuDS and surface water flooding policies proposed by the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan would further help limit adverse effects in this regard.

## 8.4 Historic environment and landscape

### Relevant sustainability objectives

<i>SA Objectives</i>	<i>SA appraisal Questions:</i>
<b>Protect, maintain and enhance Whitchurch's cultural heritage resource, including its historic environment and archaeological assets.</b>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve and enhance cultural heritage assets and their settings?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance the Whitchurch Conservation Area?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance the significance of buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated?</li> <li>• Protect the historic settlement pattern of the town and hamlets in the plan area?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance local diversity and distinctiveness?</li> <li>• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic environment?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance archaeological remains, both scheduled and non-scheduled, including historic landscapes.</li> </ul>
<b>Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and townscapes.</b>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the integrity of the North Wessex Downs AONB?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance landscape and townscape features?</li> <li>• Support the integrity of the Whitchurch Conservation Area?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Submission version of the Plan

- 8.4.1 In relation to the North Wessex Downs AONB, all of the allocated sites are located outside of the AONB. In relation to the setting of and views from the AONB, for the three smaller allocations (**Evingar Road North**, **Whitchurch Car Centre** and **Dances Lane**), general urbanising principles and containment from the wider countryside limits potential effects on landscape quality. In this context the size and the high level of physical and visual containment of these sites limit the impact on the scenic qualities or views from the AONB from allocations at these locations.
- 8.4.2 In terms of the proposed NW Whitchurch allocation, whilst the site is located close to the North Wessex Downs AONB, it is located on the southern side of the railway, which will limit effects on views from the AONB. Effects on landscape quality will be further limited by the presence of the A34 and the existing 'enclosed' nature of the site. In this context the high level of physical and visual containment of the site limits the impact on the scenic qualities or tranquility of the AONB. However

the policy for the allocation (**Policy HA2**) seeks to ensure that new development at this location “*responds positively to the AONB.*”

- 8.4.3 In relation to historic environment designations, only the allocation for Whitchurch Car Centre is located within or adjacent to the Whitchurch Conservation Area. However, although the site is located immediately adjacent to the conservation area, due to the existing land uses on the site, small scale residential development has significant potential to deliver enhancements to the setting of the conservation area at this location.
- 8.4.4 More widely, the policies proposed for the WNP have a close focus on protecting and enhancing landscape and townscape quality in the Neighbourhood Area, and supporting the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. A key policy in this regard is **Policy GD1**. This seeks to ensure that all development proposals demonstrate that they adhere to the Whitchurch Design Statement. In this context the Design Statement provides a robust basis for the protection and enhancement of landscape and townscape quality and the historic environment in the vicinity of Whitchurch through setting out features which local people regard as important, and suggesting ways in which these can be maintained and enhanced through a series of development guidelines. Policy GD1 also seeks to ensure that the built form of new development ‘*reinforces the character of the Town and is positively integrated into the existing grain of the Town*’ and includes provisions for reinforcing views towards the Town Square, the Silk Mill and towards All Hallows Church, key historic environment assets for the town. The policy also includes provisions for ensuring that new development is sympathetic and maintains open views towards the countryside and supports the riverside setting of Whitchurch.
- 8.4.5 **Policies LD1-3** provide a focus on protecting and enhancing open spaces and supporting the protection of private gardens and trees and woodland. Landscape and townscape quality in the Neighbourhood Area and the setting of the historic environment will be further supported by the policy for tourism (**Policy GD8**), which seeks to support local distinctiveness and promote opportunities for enhancements to the historic environment, and the policies which seek to limit the effects of road and freight traffic in the town (**Policy TR1** and **Policy ES3**). The WNP also seeks to facilitate the updating of 1) the Conservation Area Appraisal for Whitchurch and 2) the Design Statement for Whitchurch.

## 8.5 Land, soil and water resources

### Relevant sustainability objectives

<b>SA Objectives</b>	<b>SA appraisal Questions:</b>
<b>Ensure the efficient use of land.</b>	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the use of previously developed land?</li> <li>Avoid the development of the best and most versatile agricultural land, in particular Grade 2 and Grade 3a agricultural land?</li> </ul>
<b>Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste.</b>	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the amount of waste produced?</li> <li>Move waste up the waste hierarchy?</li> <li>Maximise opportunities for local management of waste in order to minimise export of waste to areas outside?</li> <li>Encourage recycling of materials and minimise consumption of resources during construction?</li> </ul>

<b>SA Objectives</b>	<b>SA appraisal Questions:</b>
<b>Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.</b>	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support improvements to water quality?</li> <li>• Minimise water consumption?</li> <li>• Protect groundwater resources?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Submission version of the Plan

- 8.5.1 The WNP allocates housing on a mixture of greenfield sites and brownfield sites. The larger allocation, **NW Whitchurch** (which delivers a mixed use development), is located mostly greenfield land and the three smaller allocations (**Evingar Road North**, **Whitchurch Car Centre** and **Dances Lane**) are located on previously developed land.
- 8.5.2 In terms of the proposed greenfield allocation at the NW Whitchurch site, the development of this site will lead to the loss of Grade 2 and Grade 3a agricultural land. This is land classified as the 'Best and Most Versatile' agricultural land. The existing planning application will lead to the loss of allotments at this location.
- 8.5.3 In terms of water quality, **Policy IP3** seeks to limit the impacts of new development on Whitchurch's sewage system and treatment works through facilitating appropriate new infrastructure provision. The policy also seeks to limit the impact of effluent on water quality in the River Test. None of the sites for allocation are within a groundwater source protection zone. All of the proposed sites for allocation are located within a eutrophic and groundwater nitrate vulnerable zone; however the Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have effects in regard to nitrates.

## 8.6 Population and community

### Relevant sustainability objectives

<b>SA Objectives</b>	<b>SA appraisal Questions:</b>
<b>Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve equality of access to local, high-quality community services and facilities.</b>	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackle the causes of poverty and deprivation?</li> <li>• Encourage and promote social cohesion and encourage active involvement of local people in community activities?</li> <li>• Increase the ability of 'hard-to-reach' groups to influence decisions?</li> <li>• Minimise fuel poverty?</li> <li>• Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing local residents?</li> <li>• Promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible community, cultural and leisure facilities?</li> <li>• Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people?</li> <li>• Provide a range of housing</li> </ul>
<b>Reduce poverty and deprivation and promote more inclusive and self-contained communities.</b>	

<i>SA Objectives</i>	<i>SA appraisal Questions:</i>
<b>Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures.</b>	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an adequate supply of affordable housing?</li> <li>• Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes?</li> <li>• Meet the needs of all sectors of the community?</li> <li>• Provide quality and flexible homes that meet people's needs?</li> <li>• Ensure that best use is made of the existing housing stock?</li> <li>• Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction?</li> <li>• Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities?</li> <li>• Achieve minimum housing requirements?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Draft Plan

- 8.6.1 The Submission version of the plan allocates forward three sites for housing, a provision totalling in the region of 85 dwellings. This is anticipated to meet the requirements of the emerging Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan. It is assumed that this growth quantum is appropriate given objectively assessed housing needs arising locally. As such it is considered that the allocations promoted by the current version of the WNP will help meet established housing need in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 8.6.2 In addition to providing sufficient allocations to meet the requirement of the emerging Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (and as such objectively assessed need), the current version of the WNP sets out a number range of provisions relating to the type and tenure of housing to be provided through the plan. In this context **Policy HD1** sets out provisions for older people's housing, affordable housing and the provision of housing for those with a local connection. This is supported by **Policy HD2**, which sets out detailed provisions for delivering affordable housing for those residents with a local connection.
- 8.6.3 In terms of accessibility to services and facilities, this will be reinforced by **GD6** and **GD7's** promotion of mixed use development in the town centre, **Policy GD5's** focus on supporting new retail development in the town centre and **Policies GD1-GD2, TR1** (and indirectly) **LD1, ES3 and CP1**, which will support accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport use.
- 8.6.4 In relation to the allocations proposed for the WNP, the three smaller sites proposed for allocations are located in good proximity to Whitchurch town centre with its range of services, facilities, amenities and public transport links. However the larger **NW Whitchurch** site is located at relative distance (c.1km) to the services and facilities located in Whitchurch town centre and main bus routes. This may undermine accessibility without enhancements to walking and cycling routes and public transport networks. In this context the policy for the allocation (**Policy HA2**) seeks to ensure that measures are included to initiate access improvements, including "...*measures to improve accessibility by non-car transport modes*". This will be reinforced by **Policy GD2**, which stipulates that "...*new development will be expected to exploit opportunities to link in with and improve the existing cycle and footpath network of the Town...*". As such the policy approaches promoted by the Submission version of the plan recognises and seeks to overcome these limitations.
- 8.6.5 The quality of life of residents will be supported by **Policy CP1**, which sets out a range of provisions for Community Infrastructure Levy monies, including related to funding additional healthcare, education and leisure services. The policy is reinforced by an outline of infrastructure projects in Whitchurch which have been identified as a priority by community consultation. The availability of amenities in the town will be also be supported by **Policy GD3**, which seeks to ensure that the viability of community assets are not undermined by proposals in the Neighbourhood Area and the loss of community assets are resisted.

- 8.6.6 The quality of life of residents will also be promoted by **Policy LD1**, which seeks to ensure that open spaces are protected, **Policy LD2**, which has a strong focus on green infrastructure enhancements and retained and **Policy GD1**, which seeks to promote new open space and enhance connections between areas of open space. The WNP also has a strong focus on local distinctiveness and on the protection and enhancement of townscape and landscape quality (Section 8.4). This will contribute to the satisfaction of residents with their neighbourhood as a place to live.
- 8.6.7 Employment opportunities in the town will be supported by **Policies ES1 and ES2**, which seek to protect existing employment areas and support new employment uses, and **Policy ES4**, which supports rural employment.

## 8.7 Health and wellbeing

### Relevant sustainability objectives

<i>SA Objectives</i>	<i>SA appraisal Questions:</i>
<b>Improve the health and wellbeing of Whitchurch's residents.</b>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups?</li> <li>• Encourage healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities?</li> <li>• Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure, in accordance with Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards?</li> <li>• Improve access to the countryside for recreation?</li> <li>• Limit noise pollution?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Submission version of the Plan

- 8.7.1 **Policies LD1-3** provide a focus on protecting open spaces and green infrastructure networks. This will be supported by **Policy GD2** which sets out provisions for new walking and cycling routes and seeks to ensure that *'New developments adjacent to the River Test or Test Mill Stream must dedicate land to the river frontage to facilitate future public access to a riverside walk along the River Test'*. **Policies GD1, TR1, ES3 and CP1**, will also promote walking and cycling as alternatives to the private car.
- 8.7.2 In this context the draft plan's impetus on the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure networks and enhancements to walking and cycling networks will support the health and wellbeing of residents by facilitating improvements in levels of physical activity, enhancing social interaction between residents and promoting psychological well-being.
- 8.7.3 The health and wellbeing of residents will also be promoted by **Policy CP1**, which sets out a range of provisions for Community Infrastructure Levy monies, including related to funding additional healthcare, and leisure/recreational amenities services. The policy is reinforced by an outline of infrastructure projects in Whitchurch which have been identified as a priority by community consultation.

## 8.8 Transportation

### Relevant sustainability objectives

<i>SA Objectives</i>	<i>SA appraisal Questions:</i>
<b>Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.</b>	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the need to travel through sustainable patterns of land use and development?</li> <li>• Encourage modal shift to more sustainable forms of travel?</li> <li>• Enable transport infrastructure improvements?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Submission version of the Plan

- 8.8.1 In relation to the **spatial strategy**, the three smaller sites proposed for allocations are located in good proximity and accessibility to Whitchurch town centre with its range of services, facilities, amenities and public transport links. However the larger **NW Whitchurch** site is located at relative distance (c.1km) to the services and facilities located in Whitchurch town centre and main bus routes. This may undermine accessibility without enhancements to walking and cycling routes and public transport networks. In this context the policy for the allocation (**Policy HA2**) seeks to ensure that measures are included to initiate access improvements, including “...*measures to improve accessibility by non-car transport modes*”. This will be reinforced by **Policy GD2**, which stipulates that “...*new development will be expected to exploit opportunities to link in with and improve the existing cycle and footpath network of the Town...*”. As such the policy approaches promoted by the Submission version of the plan recognises and seeks to overcome these limitations. More widely in terms of the spatial strategy, **GD6** and **GD7**’s promotion of mixed use development in the town centre, and **Policy GD5**’s focus on supporting new retail development in the town centre will support accessibility to services and amenities.
- 8.8.2 The draft plan has a strong focus on improving transport options in Whitchurch. In this context **Policy GD2**, seeks to ensure that “...*new development will be expected to exploit opportunities to link in with and improve the existing cycle and footpath network of the Town*” and promotes the enhancement of walking and cycling routes along the River Test. **Policy GD1** sets out provisions for improving footpaths and interconnections between areas of open space and **Policy GD4** seeks to ensure that appropriate car parking provision is facilitated in the town. **Policy TR1** sets out measures for managing traffic growth in Whitchurch, which will be supported by **Policy ES3**, which seeks to manage freight traffic in the town and **Policy GD8**, which seeks to manage tourism traffic effectively.
- 8.8.3 Supporting these policies, **Policy CP1** sets out a range of provisions for Community Infrastructure Levy monies, including related to funding highway schemes. The policy is reinforced by an outline of infrastructure projects in Whitchurch which have been identified as a priority by community consultation. These include projects to enhance to cycle and pedestrian routes.
- 8.8.4 In terms of the future provision of new transport infrastructure, **Policy CS1** seeks to ensure the retention of the functionality of the disused railway tunnels in Whitchurch. This will facilitate the use of the tunnels as potential transport links in the future.

## 8.9 Economy and enterprise

### Relevant sustainability objectives

<i>SA Objectives</i>	<i>SA appraisal Questions:</i>
<b>Enhance the vitality and viability of the Neighbourhood Area</b>	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance the community offer of Whitchurch and the range of services and facilities available?</li> <li>• Support the economy of the Neighbourhood Area and provide access to employment opportunities?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Submission version of the Plan

- 8.9.1 The Submission version of the WNP allocates 4000m<sup>2</sup> of business development (classes B1 and B2) as part of a mixed use scheme on the site North West Whitchurch. Given the absence of an allocation in the Local Plan, this will help encourage new businesses to Whitchurch and enable existing ones to expand.
- 8.9.2 Economic opportunities in the town will be further supported by **Policies ES1 and ES2**, which seek to protect existing employment areas and support appropriate new employment uses, and **Policy ES4**, which supports rural employment.
- 8.9.3 The three housing allocations proposed through the plan will support the vitality and viability of the parish's economy. This will be reinforced by **Policy GD6** and **GD7's** promotion of mixed use development in the town centre and **Policy GD5's** focus on supporting new retail development in the town centre. The economic vitality of the parish will also be supported by the WNP's focus on improving transport options, as discussed in detail in Section 8.8.
- 8.9.4 In terms of the visitor economy, this will be promoted by **Policy GD8**, which seeks to draw on the parish's distinctive character and promote appropriate tourism development. The visitor economy will also be supported by the WNP policies which seek to promote local distinctiveness and character and protect and enhance landscape/townscape quality in the Neighbourhood Area (Section 8.4).

## 8.10 Conclusions at this current stage

### Potential significant effects

- 8.10.1 The appraisal has concluded that the current version of the WNP is likely to lead to **significant positive effects** in terms of the 'population and community' and 'health and wellbeing' sustainability objectives. These benefits largely relate to the carefully targeted spatial approach proposed by the draft plan, the focus on improving the quality of life of residents in Whitchurch and the WNP's impetus on supporting enhancements to transport networks and protecting and enhancing open space.
- 8.10.2 In terms of potential negative effects, the allocation of the NW Whitchurch site by the Neighbourhood Plan will lead to losses of land classified as the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land. Whilst the loss of this land is unavoidable (in light of all of the options for medium sized sites being located on land classified as the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land), residual **significant negative effects** are likely to take place in relation to the 'land, soil and water resources' sustainability objectives. It is recognised however that the two smaller sites allocated through the plan are located on previously developed land.
- 8.10.3 There are also likely to be inevitable effects on landscape and townscape quality from new areas of development on the edge of Whitchurch associated with the allocation of the NW Whitchurch site. To help address this, the Submission version of the WNP presents a number of policy interventions

which will help limit potential effects and achieve enhancements where possible. Potential effects on views from the North Wessex Downs AONB are also likely to be limited by the location of site, the topography of the site and town, and the visual containment brought by the rest of the town.

- 8.10.4 In relation to potential effects on biodiversity, the proposed NW Whitchurch allocation is located within the River Test SSSI Impact Risk Zone for development which comprises 100 residential dwellings or more. In this context, the delivery of c.100 dwellings on this site raises the possibility of adverse effects on the River Test SSSI without avoidance and mitigation measures. Significant negative effects are however likely to be limited by policy approaches put forward through the WNP, which explicitly seek to protect the integrity of the designations associated with the River Test. Whilst the smaller sites are located in relative proximity to the SSSIs, adverse effects on these nationally designated nature conservation sites are likely to be limited by the proposed size of the allocations. This is reflected by the smaller allocations not being located within an Impact Risk Zone for the SSSI for the type and scale of development being proposed.
- 8.10.5 Whilst the approach presented by the WNP will help initiate a range of beneficial approaches in relation to 'climate change', 'biodiversity' and 'historic environment and landscape', these are not considered as significant positive effects as the delivery of the allocations through the WNP will inevitably lead to some adverse effects in relation to these sustainability topics. For these topics therefore, the approach presented by the WNP will limit the potential magnitude of adverse effects linked to the delivery of housing and employment allocations in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 8.10.6 In relation to the 'economy and enterprise' sustainability objectives a number of beneficial approaches are put forward by the current version of the plan. This includes relating to the provision of employment land for new and existing businesses, the economic vitality of Whitchurch town centre and the promotion of Whitchurch's visitor economy. As such, the Submission version of the WNP is likely to lead to **significant positive effects** in relation to this theme.

#### Recommendations at this current stage

- 8.10.7 The three recommendations proposed in the Environmental Report accompanying the Regulation 14 consultation version of the Neighbourhood Plan (see **Section 6.6.3**) have been responded to through the updated policies presented in the Submission version of the WNP. As such no further recommendations are made at this stage.

*[This page is intentionally blank]*

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

## 9 Introduction to Part 4

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

### 9.2 Plan finalisation

9.2.1 The WNP has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, for its consideration. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council will consider whether the plan is suitable to go forward to Independent Examination in terms of the WNP meeting legal requirements and its compatibility with the Local Plan.

9.2.2 Subject to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's agreement, the WNP will then be subject to independent examination. The Examiner will consider whether the plan is appropriate having regard to national policy and whether it is in general conformity with the Local Plan.

9.2.3 The Examiner will be able to recommend that the WNP is put forward for a referendum, or that it should be modified or that the proposal should be refused. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council will then decide what should be done in light of the Examiner's report. Where the report recommends modifications to the plan, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council will invite the WNP Steering Group to make modifications to the plan, which will be reflected in an updated SA Report. Where the Examiner's Report recommends that the proposal is to be refused, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council will do so.

9.2.4 Where the examination is favourable, the WNP will then be subject to a referendum, organised by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the plan, then it will be passed to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council with a request it is adopted. Once adopted, the WNP will become part of the Development Plan for the area.

# *Appendices*



# Appendix I: Regulatory requirements

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

## Annex 1

### The report must include...

(a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;
(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan
(c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;
(d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;
(e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;
(f) the likely significant effects on the environment including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;
(g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan;
(h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information
(i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring.

## Interpretation of Annex I

### The report must include...

An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	i.e. answer - <i>What's the Plan seeking to achieve?</i>	i.e. answer - <i>What's the scope of the SA?</i>
Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'context'?</i>	
The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'baseline'?</i>	
The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan'		
The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	i.e. answer - <i>What are the key issues &amp; objectives?</i>	
Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance		
Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of appraisal		
An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (i.e. an explanation of the 'reasonableness of the approach)	i.e. answer - <i>What has Plan-making / SA involved up to this point?</i>	
The likely significant effects associated with alternatives, including on issues such as... ... and an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of the alternatives considered / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan.		
The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan	i.e. answer - <i>What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?</i>	
The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan		
A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring	i.e. answer - <i>What happens next?</i>	

## Appendix II: SA Framework

SA Topic	SA Objectives	SA appraisal Questions:
<b>Biodiversity</b>	Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support continued improvements to the status of the River Test SSSI?</li> <li>• Support continued improvements to the status of the Bere Mill Meadows SSSI?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance the integrity of the Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation present in the plan area?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance semi-natural habitats?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance priority habitats, and the habitat of priority species?</li> <li>• Achieve a net gain in biodiversity?</li> <li>• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?</li> </ul>
<b>Climate change</b>	Promote climate change mitigation in Whitchurch	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit the increase in the carbon footprint of the plan area from population growth?</li> <li>• Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport?</li> <li>• Reduce the need to travel?</li> <li>• Increase number of new developments meeting sustainable design criteria?</li> <li>• Improve green infrastructure networks in the plan area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change?</li> <li>• Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources?</li> <li>• Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?</li> </ul>
	Support the resilience of Whitchurch to the potential effects of climate change	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that no development takes place in areas at higher risk of flooding, taking into the likely effects of climate change into account?</li> <li>• Sustainably manage water run-off, ensuring that the risk of flooding is not increased (either within the plan area or downstream) and where possible reduce flood risk?</li> <li>• Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development in the plan area?</li> <li>• Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the plan area to the effects of climate change?</li> </ul>
<b>Historic environment and landscape</b>	Protect, maintain and enhance Whitchurch's cultural heritage resource, including its historic environment and archaeological assets.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve and enhance cultural heritage assets and their settings?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance the Whitchurch Conservation Area?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance the significance of buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated?</li> <li>• Protect the historic settlement pattern of the town and hamlets in the plan area?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance local diversity and distinctiveness?</li> <li>• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic environment?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance archaeological remains, both scheduled and non-scheduled, including historic landscapes.</li> </ul>

SA Topic	SA Objectives	SA appraisal Questions:
	Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and townscapes.	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the integrity of the North Wessex Downs AONB?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance landscape and townscape features?</li> <li>• Support the integrity of the Whitchurch Conservation Area?</li> </ul>
<b>Land, soil and water resources</b>	Ensure the efficient use of land.	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the use of previously developed land?</li> <li>• Avoid the development of the best and most versatile agricultural land, in particular Grade 2 and Grade 3a agricultural land?</li> </ul>
	Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste.	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the amount of waste produced?</li> <li>• Move waste up the waste hierarchy?</li> <li>• Maximise opportunities for local management of waste in order to minimise export of waste to areas outside?</li> <li>• Encourage recycling of materials and minimise consumption of resources during construction?</li> </ul>
	Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support improvements to water quality?</li> <li>• Minimise water consumption?</li> <li>• Protect groundwater resources?</li> </ul>
<b>Population and community</b>	Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve equality of access to local, high-quality community services and facilities.	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackle the causes of poverty and deprivation?</li> <li>• Encourage and promote social cohesion and encourage active involvement of local people in community activities?</li> <li>• Increase the ability of 'hard-to-reach' groups to influence decisions?</li> <li>• Minimise fuel poverty?</li> <li>• Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing local residents?</li> <li>• Promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible community, cultural and leisure facilities?</li> <li>• Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people?</li> <li>• Provide a range of housing</li> </ul>
	Reduce poverty and deprivation and promote more inclusive and self-contained communities.	
	Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures.	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an adequate supply of affordable housing?</li> <li>• Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes?</li> <li>• Meet the needs of all sectors of the community?</li> <li>• Provide quality and flexible homes that meet people's needs?</li> <li>• Ensure that best use is made of the existing housing stock?</li> <li>• Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction?</li> <li>• Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities?</li> <li>• Achieve minimum housing requirements?</li> </ul>

SA Topic	SA Objectives	SA appraisal Questions:
<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	Improve the health and wellbeing of Whitchurch's residents.	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups?</li> <li>• Encourage healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities?</li> <li>• Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure, in accordance with Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards?</li> <li>• Improve access to the countryside for recreation?</li> <li>• Limit noise pollution?</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation</b>	Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the need to travel through sustainable patterns of land use and development?</li> <li>• Encourage modal shift to more sustainable forms of travel?</li> <li>• Enable transport infrastructure improvements?</li> </ul>
<b>Economy and enterprise</b>	Enhance the vitality and viability of the Neighbourhood Area	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance the community offer of Whitchurch and the range of services and facilities available?</li> <li>• Support the economy of the Neighbourhood Area and provide access to employment opportunities?</li> </ul>

#### **About AECOM**

AECOM (NYSE: ACM) is built to deliver a better world. We design, build, finance and operate infrastructure assets for governments, businesses and organizations in more than 150 countries.

As a fully integrated firm, we connect knowledge and experience across our global network of experts to help clients solve their most complex challenges.

From high-performance buildings and infrastructure, to resilient communities and environments, to stable and secure nations, our work is transformative, differentiated and vital. A Fortune 500 firm, AECOM companies had revenue of approximately US\$19 billion during the 12 months ended June 30, 2015.

See how we deliver what others can only imagine at [aecom.com](http://aecom.com) and [@AECOM](https://twitter.com/AECOM).