Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Site Assessment Report

September 2017
1 Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 1
   Background and Summary ........................................................................................................ 1
   Consultation and joint working ............................................................................................... 1

2 Legal and Policy Context .............................................................................................................. 2
   Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty .................................................................................... 2
   The Chilterns AONB .................................................................................................................. 2
   The National Planning Policy Framework ............................................................................. 4
   Implications for Wycombe District .......................................................................................... 7

3 Methodology ................................................................................................................................ 10

4 Stage 1 – Findings on Broad Location ...................................................................................... 13

5 Stokenchurch Findings ................................................................................................................ 14
   Identification of candidate sites at Stokenchurch for assessment .......................................... 14
   Stage 2 - Initial Suitability Assessments – Stokenchurch ....................................................... 16
   Stage 3 - Specialist Landscape Assessments - Stokenchurch ................................................... 19
   Stokenchurch Landscape Overview ....................................................................................... 19
   Individual Site Landscape Capacity Assessments .................................................................... 21
   Conclusions to Stage 3 Specialist Landscape Assessments ................................................... 45
   Stage 4: Assessment of Major Development Criteria – Stokenchurch ..................................... 47
   Overall conclusions and recommendations – Stokenchurch ................................................ 51

6 Lane End Findings ...................................................................................................................... 52
   Identification of candidate sites at Lane End .......................................................................... 52
   Stage 2: Initial Suitability Assessments – Lane End ................................................................. 54
   Stage 3 - Specialist Landscape Assessments – Lane End ....................................................... 57
   Lane End Landscape Overview: ............................................................................................. 57
   Individual Site Landscape Capacity Assessments .................................................................... 59
   Conclusions to Stage 3 Specialist Landscape Assessments ................................................... 72
   Stage 4: Assessment of Major Development Criteria – Lane End .......................................... 73
   Overall conclusions and recommendations – Lane End ........................................................ 77

7 Around High Wycombe, Marlow and Princes Risborough ....................................................... 78
   Scope and Method ..................................................................................................................... 78
   Stage 4: Assessment of Major Development Criteria High Wycombe, Marlow and Princes Risborough .................................................................................................................. 79
   Stage 3+ Specialist Landscape Capacity Assessments – Green Belt sites ............................... 91
   Conclusions and Recommendations (Green Belt Sites) ........................................................ 117

8 Overall Conclusions and Recommendations .............................................................................. 118
List of Appendices

Appendix 1 Stage 2 Suitability Site Pro Formas

Appendix 2 Stage 2 Suitability Criteria

Appendix 3 Stage 3 Landscape Methodology
1 Introduction

Background and Summary

1.1 This assessment has been undertaken in the context of preparing a new Local Plan for the District, where work on assessing the Objectively Assessed Needs for housing and economic development, and sites to meet these needs, have identified an insufficient supply of sites to meet the full OAN. In response to this the Council is required to assess whether there are opportunities to meet housing and economic development needs that should be identified in the Local Plan within the Chiltern’s Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

1.2 For context, the final HEDNA\(^1\) identifies the FOAN for WDC as 13,200. Work on the emerging HELAA suggests a total supply of 10,610 with no AONB allocations, or 10,927 with AONB allocations, but without any allocations that would amount to major development in the AONB.

1.3 This report addresses the scope for development allocations in the AONB. The two main conclusions of the report are that:

- In our local context, allocations that would be likely to result in major development in the AONB would be contrary to the NPPF, and should not be included in the new local plan.

- There is scope for meaningful small scale growth around the main non-Green Belt settlements in the AONB – Lane End and Stokenchurch, and in the AONB on the fringes of High Wycombe, Marlow and Princes Risborough.

Consultation and joint working

1.4 Following consultation on the draft report in July 2016 the Council has continued to work closely with neighbouring authorities, the Chilterns Conservation Board, and Natural England. Consequently the scope of this report has broadened to include more detail on:

- Sites in the AONB located around the edge of High Wycombe (which feature in the Part 2 Green Belt Assessment)

- The rationale for discounting ‘major development’ in the AONB

\(^1\) Buckinghamshire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment Update (December 2016, Opinion Research Services and Atkins)
The approach to assessing whether possible allocations are likely to result in ‘major development’ in the AONB

1.5 The authors of this report have also had regard to the public consultation feedback received in response to the draft New Local Plan. A summary report of this feedback will be published separately.

2 Legal and Policy Context

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

2.1 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are designated by the Government for the purpose of ensuring that the special qualities of the finest landscapes are conserved and enhanced. In policy terms they have the same planning status as National Parks. They were originally established under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, though the legislation was reformulated in 2000 through the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. There is a general duty on all relevant authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of AONBs.

2.2 This ‘duty of regard’ recognises that a wide range of bodies have a direct influence over the future of these protected landscapes. Wycombe District Council and the Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) have a statutory duty for managing the Chilterns. The objectives of the CCB are to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB; increase the understanding and enjoyment of the AONB and seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the AONB.

2.3 The requirement to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB is also identified in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, section 92. This includes the conservation of its flora, fauna and geological physical features, as part of its natural beauty.

The Chilterns AONB

2.4 In 1965 an area of 800 square kilometres of the Chilterns Hills was designated as an AONB. (This was increased to 833 km2 in 1990 following a boundary review.) The Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) was established in 2004. The CCB’s most recent Management Plan (MP) covers the period 2014 – 2019. The MP provides a comprehensive picture of the special qualities and

characteristics of the Chilterns (pages 18 to 20) and the key issues affecting the Chilterns (pages 20 to 24).

2.5 The MP also contains a number of policies that are relevant to considering new development. These objectives are also relevant to possible plan allocations in the AONB.

- Policy L6 requires that “degraded aspects of the landscape should be enhanced including the removal or mitigation of intrusive development and features”. It acknowledges that removal of some developments may be unlikely or impossible and should be mitigated instead.

- Policy L10 requires consideration of the cumulative impact of development and land use change on landscape quality and character.

- Policy D1 requires that “the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB should be conserved and enhanced by encouraging the highest design standards, reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting the landscape, settlement character and special qualities of the AONB.”

- Policy D6 states that “Where new housing development is proposed this should only be permitted if its scale, massing and density reflect the local context and have regard to the special qualities of the AONB.”

- Policy D11 requires that “Enhancement of the landscape of the AONB should be sought by the removal or mitigation of intrusive developments.”

- Policy D12 states that “Developments should be sought that represent the highest environmental and design standards whilst complementing the character of the AONB.”
The National Planning Policy Framework

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

2.6 Specific NPPF policies for the AONB come within the section which deals with “Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment” (paragraphs 109-125). NPPF 109 and 110 provide important context to the more specific policies in NPPF 115 and 116.

NPPF 109 begins: “The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by [amongst other things] protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils”

NPPF 110: “In preparing plans to meet development needs, the aim should be to minimize pollution and other adverse effects on the local and natural environment. Plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework.”

NPPF 115: “Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.”

NPPF 116: “Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy

the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way

any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated”
Major Development in the AONB

2.7 At paragraphs 115 and 116 of the NPPF a distinction is made between the approach to planning proposals in the AONB applicable in all cases (NPPF paragraph 115) and the additional policy tests applicable in the case of ‘major’ developments (NPPF paragraph 116). This states that planning permission should be refused for major development within an AONB except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest. This should include consideration of the 3 bullet points noted above. Whilst NPPF116 is a ‘development management’ policy (written in terms addressed to planning applications, not plan-making) this test should also be applied to potential plan allocations. This is because allocations which would result in major development would only be ‘suitable’ or ‘developable’ allocations to include in a new Local Plan in exceptional circumstances and where they would be in the public interest. The clear implication is that major development in the AONB is deemed to be intrinsically harmful to the AONB – as otherwise no special justification would be required.

2.8 The NPPF does not define “major development” and the identification of development that is ‘major’ (as distinct from ‘not major’) is therefore a matter of judgement in the context of the site and proposal being considered. This approach is now enshrined in current NPPG guidance. Major development in this context therefore does not refer to the familiar planning application thresholds (10 dwellings) or any other numerical threshold but instead requires the Council to judge the significance of a proposal in its specific context. To help ensure a consistent and robust approach the Council has been working with the other Buckinghamshire Authorities, the Chilterns Conservation Board and Natural England to develop a common approach to assessing this question. This is detailed further in section 3 of this report.

2.9 All of the above provides important context for the more general policies and duties applicable to plan-making, including the duty in s39(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the housing and economic development policies elsewhere in the NPPF.

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3 Guidance on assessing suitability is given in the PPG (Paragraph: 019 Reference ID: 3-019-20140306) Revision date: 06 03 2014.) This includes a requirement to “…be guided by [amongst other things] national policy” and having regard to “potential impacts including the effect upon landscapes including landscape features, nature and heritage conservation” It may be noted therefore that Framework policies for development management (such as NPPF116) will also be directly relevant to preparing a new local plan, as they will impact on suitability.

4 NPPG Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 8-005-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014

5 This section requires the Council to prepare the new Local Plan “with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.”
The presumption in favour of sustainable development

2.10 Overall, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) identifies that Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are a constraint to meeting full OAN (NPPF paragraph 14, footnote 9 and elsewhere). The presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in paragraph 14 does not require meeting OAN to be fully met. It should also be noted that the Housing White Paper proposes an amendment to the NPPF to say that AONBs are “…a strong reason for development to be restricted.”

Increasing the supply of housing

2.11 The Framework policy on housing begins:

*NPPF 47: “To boost significantly the supply of housing, local planning authorities should [amongst other things] use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in this Framework, including identifying key sites which are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy over the plan period.”*

Assessing the suitability of sites

2.12 NPPF 47 continues from here to discuss the need to identify a deliverable/developable supply of housing. The footnote explains that this includes consideration of whether the location is “a suitable location for housing development” (see footnote 2).

2.13 NPPF 21 says that “In drawing up Local Plans, local planning authorities should [amongst other things]:

- set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth
- set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period

2.14 As can be seen from the NPPG an assessment of suitability is also required for potential allocations for economic development. This assessment should consider not only environmental constraints and planning policies but also the

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“likely market attractiveness for the type of development proposed”\textsuperscript{7}. In Wycombe District, the level of market attractiveness in different locations is particularly relevant for employment investment.\textsuperscript{8}

**Implications for Wycombe District**

2.15 As noted in the introduction to this report, the Council is unable to meet full development needs without allocating (or permitting) a significant quantum of development in the AONB (including sites which are currently Green Belt). In our local circumstances\textsuperscript{9} meeting full development needs would be highly likely to require allocations for major development in the AONB. As noted above, major development within an AONB should only be approved (or allocated) in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that this is in the public interest.\textsuperscript{10}

2.16 The NPPF identifies three issues that should be considered as part of this assessment:

- the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy
- the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way
- any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated

2.17 Increasing the supply of housing across the Country is a clear national consideration. At a local level this translates to the requirements set out in NPPF47 (and elsewhere). The scale of need is quantified by the HEDNA, and as noted previously, meeting full housing needs would require major development in the AONB. Allocating major sites for greenfield development in the AONB would not only help to meet the need for housing but it would also have some benefit to the local economy in terms of construction activity and consumer spending. However, as there is scope to meet these needs outside of the AONB but still in the same economic and housing market areas, any

\textsuperscript{7} Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 3-020-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014
\textsuperscript{8} Wycombe Commercial Assessment (February 2016, Boyer Planning); Wycombe District Council Economy Study and Employment Land Review (January 2014, Peter Brett Associates)
\textsuperscript{9} Having regard to the settlement hierarchy/strategy and other suitability factors including other main constraints such as the Green Belt and Flood Risk, alongside the earlier assessment stages leading to this report.
\textsuperscript{10} The interpretation of NPPF 116 was recently considered in Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor v Wealden District Council [2017] EWCA Civ 39 (31 January 2017).
benefits of developing in the AONB would not be additional benefits overall, and should not attract significant weight.

2.18 The scope for meeting a large proportion of development needs beyond the AONB is demonstrated by the combination of the other emerging allocations in the plan (including the significant growth planned at Princes Risborough) and the scope for accommodating unmet need within the Housing Market Area (HMA) in Aylesbury Vale. (There is no obvious cost penalty in meeting these needs beyond the AONB.)

2.19 The final bullet point requires a site specific consideration of specific impacts. In general however, most (if not all) potential allocations in the AONB would have to be greenfield allocations on farmland or other countryside. Given the sensitivity of the AONB landscape and the weight to be given to its conservation it is reasonable to conclude that such allocations are likely to have some “detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities”, although the degree will vary site-by-site.

2.20 Taking all of the above into account the Council has concluded firstly that there is nothing exceptional about an AONB acting as a constraint on housing supply. Indeed the NPPF at paragraphs 14 and 47 assume that this will be case.

2.21 We have also concluded that the balance of public interest does not weigh in favour of allocating sites that would be considered to be major development in the AONB. Increasing the supply of housing is in the public interest, but so too is conserving the AONB. This requires a balance to be struck and in striking this balance the NPPF advises that we give great weight to the AONB. This mirrors and supports local aspirations (expressed in the draft new local plan) to ‘Cherish the Chilterns’. The Council’s view is that in balancing the harm against the benefits it would not be in the public interest to allocate for major development in the Wycombe District portion of the Chilterns AONB in order to meet the margin of unmet need that exists.

2.22 Finally, whereas we are able to consider removing land from the Green Belt as part of the Local Plan, we are not able to alter the AONB boundaries, which are established under parliamentary approval. That is why Framework 115 and 116 are unavoidable constraints on the suitability of possible allocations in the AONB.

2.23 As such, the Council has concluded that in our local circumstances any allocation that would result in ‘major development in the AONB’ would strongly conflict with the NPPF and would result in significant harm to the AONB. The presumption in favour of sustainable development is set out in NPPF14. This advises that local plans should meet objectively assessed needs unless either
the adverse impacts clearly outweigh the benefits, or when specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted. In this case both points apply. Consequently, in our local context, and acknowledging that full OAN cannot be met without development of this nature, allocations that would result in major development in the AONB would not be sustainable development. They would not be suitable, and could not be considered deliverable or developable. Their inclusion in the plan would not be sound. Allocations in the AONB should therefore be restricted to development which is not major. But even with this category of development great weight should still be given to any adverse impacts on the AONB, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 115.
3 Methodology

Overview

3.1 This report assesses the suitability of potential local plan allocations in the AONB – with a particular focus on issues affecting the AONB. This comprised four stages of sifting:

Stage 1 - Identifying broad locations generally capable of contributing to sustainable development, relative to the settlement hierarchy.

Stage 2 – An initial suitability assessment of sites in the above locations.

Stage 3 – A specialist landscape assessment for remaining sites.

Stage 4 – An assessment of whether the allocation of each remaining site would be major development in the AONB.

Note: Stages 1 to 3 are considered in the Green Belt Assessment (for sites which are in the Green Belt as well as the AONB).

3.2 Whilst these stages are generally progressive and sequential there was also an element of iteration over time. The presumption is that sites which pass all four stages should be recommended for allocation in the new local plan (subject to HELAA findings). The methodology was consulted on with Natural England and the Chilterns Conservation Board, and with adjoining Districts including those within and adjoining the Housing Market Area. (This included Chiltern DC and South Oxfordshire DC, who together with Wycombe DC account for the majority of the Chilterns AONB area.,)

3.3 The Green Belt Assessment appraises a number of sites which are also within the AONB. Sites in the Green Belt that did not pass the Part 2 Green Belt Assessment have therefore already been identified as unsuitable for allocation in the Local Plan. These sites are not considered further in this AONB report.

3.4 The first step to identifying possible sites in the AONB (above and beyond those identified through the Green Belt assessment) was to consider the Settlement Hierarchy and the emergent spatial strategy it embodies. As part of the evidence for the Local Plan the Council has produced a Settlement Hierarchy based on the provision of services and infrastructure which define the sustainability of the location. The Council’s approach is that only sites at
settlements of Tier 4 and above have been considered in this assessment, as the lower tier settlements are not considered to be appropriate locations for housing or employment allocations. (Windfall development and development to directly support local rural communities may still occur in villages below Tier 4, as it has done so in the past.)

**Stage 2 - Initial Suitability Assessment**

3.5 This assessment has been carried out in parallel with the HELAA. A joint Central Bucks HELAA Methodology was agreed (based on up-to-date PPG) and this informed the draft Wycombe HELAA published in November 2015. As noted in the draft HELAA at 3.5 a further assessment of the suitability of AONB sites was considered necessary before a conclusion could be reached on suitability. (The HELAA assessment of landscape sensitivity and AONB impacts is necessarily ‘light touch’ and could not reach the depth of this report) Appendix 2 sets out the initial suitability criteria for the Stage 2 assessment.

**Stage 3 - Landscape Assessment**

3.6 The full landscape assessment methodology is included in Appendix 3 and is summarized below. Each site is then assessed for its sensitivity and capacity by following eight steps set out below:

Step 1: Identify boundary of area to be assessed  
Step 2: Assessment of visual sensitivity  
Step 3: Assessment of landscape sensitivity  
Step 4: Determination of resulting landscape character sensitivity  
Step 5: Assessment of wider sensitivity  
Step 6: Determination of resulting landscape sensitivity  
Step 7: Assessment of landscape value  
Step 8: Determination of resulting landscape capacity

3.7 Sites which demonstrate a low landscape capacity for development will not be appropriate for allocation and are not considered further. The allocation of sites with a medium/low - high capacity may have some adverse impact, but
AONB Site Assessment Report

(subject to detailed design stage) it should normally be possible to mitigate any impacts to an acceptable degree through careful design that takes account for the identified sensitivities of the sites. A list of landscape development guidelines is provided for sites with a medium/low - high capacity to ensure that the adverse impacts of development are adequately mitigated.

Stage 4 - Major Development Classification

3.8 Working jointly with the Chilterns Conservation Board, Natural England and our neighbouring authorities in Buckinghamshire we have developed a detailed assessment methodology, as set out below.11

Factors to consider in identifying whether a proposed allocation is likely to result in ‘major development’ in the AONB:

Q1 What is the local context for each site, in terms of:

- The scale of the allocation in proportion to the existing settlement?
- The spatial relationship of the allocation to the existing settlement in the context of settlement form, taking account of the guidance on settlement forms in the Chilterns Building Design Guide?

Q2 What potential is there for a serious adverse impact on the AONB, in terms of:

- Landscape impact?
- The impact on the quiet enjoyment of the AONB?
- Wildlife/habitat impact?
- Heritage impact?

Q3 Can the proposed allocation be sensibly described as ‘major’ in the normal meaning of the word?

Notes: Any one of these three core questions could potentially trigger a classification as ‘major development’ in the AONB but this is to be approached with care. In particular, development which cannot sensibly be described as major in the normal meaning of the word should not be classified as ‘major’. This is not an assessment of whether development would necessarily be acceptable in the AONB, it is simply an assessment of whether development would be classified as ‘major’.

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11 This was informed in particular by a written legal opinion of James Maurici QC dated July 2014 and subsequently published by the South Downs National Park Authority
4 Stage 1 – Findings on Broad Location

4.1 With reference to the figure below it can be seen that most of the AONB land around the higher order settlements is also within the Green Belt (High Wycombe, Marlow and Princes Risborough). The initial assessment of these sites is set out in the Green Belt assessment. The only non-Green Belt locations within the AONB that are generally capable of contributing to sustainable development (because they are related to higher order settlements) are the south and west sides of Lane End and Stokenchurch.

4.2 Consequently, the broad locations that satisfy stage 1 and which (where appropriate have passed the Green Belt assessment process) are:

- Stokenchurch – Section 5 of this report
- Lane End – Section 6 of this report
- Green Belt locations at High Wycombe, Marlow and Princes Risborough – Section 7 of this report.
5 Stokenchurch Findings

Identification of candidate sites at Stokenchurch for assessment

5.1 Stokenchurch is a linear village on the A40 located on a plateau. The main part of the village lies north of the M40 motorway where a number of local services and facilities are located. The area south of the M40 is mixed residential and employment uses, but with no shops or services. This area is characterised by typical Chiltern AONB characteristics with rolling hills and woodland on hilltops.

5.2 The village lies at the north western edge of the Metropolitan Green Belt, with the eastern end of the village tightly contained by the Green Belt. There were no sites on the east side of Stokenchurch which passed the Green Belt assessment. This assessment focussed its area of search on the west side of the village, beyond the Green Belt (but excluding the area further south which is entirely divorced from the villages by the M40 motorway).

OS mapping: © Crown Copyright and database rights 2017 Ordnance Survey 100023306.
5.3 These areas were sub-divided into a number of parcels for assessment purposes. This includes both developer promoted sites identified through the earlier options consultation and the July 2016 draft plan consultation and sites identified by council officers.

Stokenchurch (Area of Search) Site Index Plan

OS mapping: © Crown Copyright and database rights 2017 Ordnance Survey 100023306.
### Summary table of Stage 2 (Stokenchurch)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Reference</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Initial Suitability Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SSC0034</td>
<td>Land at Wood Farm, Stokenchurch</td>
<td>Majority unsuitable due to landscape quality and topography issues Eastern plateau portion recommended for stage 3 Existing developed area at Wood Farm may be suitable for redevelopment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSC0049</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSC0035</td>
<td>Land off Mill Road, Stokenchurch</td>
<td>No environmental designations Well situated for footpath access to main village Highway concerns, but engineering solutions possible Minor flooding issues Recommended for stage 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSC0036</td>
<td>Fanes Field and M40 Barnfield south site, Stokenchurch</td>
<td>Part of much larger site High landscape quality Site is open and characterises western settlement edge Contains ancient woodland and associated biological and geological Not suitable for development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSC0037</td>
<td>Land adjoining 20-22 Mill Road, Stokenchurch</td>
<td>Well connected to existing built form Well situated for footpath links to main village Access would need to be provided by adjacent parcel to the west (originally SSC0005) Recommended for stage 3 assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSC0038</td>
<td>Land to the rear of Wormsley Crescent, Stokenchurch</td>
<td>No environmental designations other than minor surface water flooding Access only available through SSC0037 Well connected to built form Recommended for stage 2 assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Reference</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Initial Suitability Conclusion</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSC0039</td>
<td>Land north of The Ridgeway, Ibstone Road</td>
<td>Poorly connected to built form&lt;br&gt;Feels beyond the settlement and located far from facilities&lt;br&gt;Well contained with little motorway noise&lt;br&gt;Not suitable for development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSC0040</td>
<td>Land to the south of Wormsley Lodge Wellground</td>
<td>Contains ancient woodland and associated biological and geological sites&lt;br&gt;Feels beyond settlement and located far from facilities&lt;br&gt;Not suitable for development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSC0041</td>
<td>Wallace Hill Farm, Wellground</td>
<td>Adjoins ancient woodland and associated biological and geological sites&lt;br&gt;Feels beyond settlement and located far from facilities&lt;br&gt;Not suitable for development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSC0043</td>
<td>Land to the rear of Stokenchurch Business Park, Mill Lane</td>
<td>Poorly connected to existing residential development&lt;br&gt;Adjoins existing employment area identified for expansion&lt;br&gt;Site recommended for stage 3 assessment for employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSC0048</td>
<td>Land to the west of Tower Farm, Oxford Road</td>
<td>Poorly located to existing village&lt;br&gt;Detached from any residential development&lt;br&gt;Not visually contained&lt;br&gt;High landscape quality&lt;br&gt;Large site with no scope for subdivision&lt;br&gt;Not suitable for development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSC0045</td>
<td>Land to the east of Tower Farm, Oxford Road</td>
<td>Poorly located to existing village&lt;br&gt;Detached from any residential development&lt;br&gt;Not visually contained&lt;br&gt;High landscape quality&lt;br&gt;Large site with no scope for subdivision&lt;br&gt;Not suitable for development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSC0046</td>
<td>Land between Coopers Court Farm and M40</td>
<td>Poorly located to existing village&lt;br&gt;Detached from any residential development&lt;br&gt;Not visually contained&lt;br&gt;High landscape quality&lt;br&gt;Large site with no scope for subdivision&lt;br&gt;Not suitable for development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSC0050</td>
<td>Little Studdridge Farm, Ibstone Road</td>
<td>Poorly connected to built form&lt;br&gt;Feels beyond the settlement and located far from facilities&lt;br&gt;Well contained with little motorway noise&lt;br&gt;Not suitable for development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.5 The figure below identifies those sites which were considered generally suitable at this stage, and which were then assessed at Stage 3. Four sites (or groups of sites) passed the Stage 2 assessment and were considered generally suitable. These are:

- Wood Farm (SSC0034)
- Land at Wood Farm (East part of SSC0049)
- Land to the rear of Stokenchurch Business Park (SSC0043)
- Land southeast of Mill Road (SSC005, 0035, 0037 and 0038)
Stokenchurch is located on Junction 5 of the M40 which partly splits the village in two. The development north of the motorway forms the main part of the village where a number of local services and facilities are located. The existing development sits on top of a Chiltern Hill plateau and steeply descends northwards from where the existing built form stops. This area is characterised by typical Chiltern AONB characteristics with rolling hills and woodland on hilltops.

Stokenchurch is a linear village located on an elevated, undulating plateau. The topography has largely influenced the location and spread of the settlement. It is bisected by the A40 and partly by the M40 which create both an audible and visual impact. Most of the settlement is on the northern side of the M40 but a smaller amount is located on the southern side at the western edge of the settlement. It is surrounded by mixed farmland interspersed by large blocks of woodland which create visual enclosure in some areas.

Three main areas beyond the Green Belt were initially considered for their potential to support development.
Northern settlement edge:

5.9 There is a strong, unbroken edge to the existing settlement on this side. It has a rolling, valley topography and the land falls away quickly beyond the existing edge of settlement. The large, open fields slope away steeply to the north into a dry valley and the valley sides on the opposite side are topped with characteristic blocks of hanging woodlands. These features combine to create an inspiring landscape which can be viewed from the public footpath that provides access from the village out into the countryside. The sloping topography, expansive views and the lack of any existing natural boundary to form a new, logical settlement edge combine to create a significant development constraint.

Rear of Stokenchurch Business Park/Stockwells Yard:

5.10 The settlement edge is less complete on the western side, but there is a strong boundary created by existing development and continued by a well-established, mature hedgerow. On the settlement side of this hedged boundary the land uses are industrial or urban fringe such as paddocks and building material storage.

5.11 Westwards, beyond this boundary, the large open fields begin to fall away towards large blocks of woodland that hug the steeper valley sides. A network of public footpaths gives access from the settlement to these fields and woodlands.

Rear of Mill Road:

5.12 The settlement edge is weak on this side, broken by outbuildings and a salvage yard that encroach out into the countryside. Near to the settlement edge the topography is flatter and there are no public footpaths giving access. A lost historic field boundary and the existing rear boundaries of the salvage yard and outbuildings combine to offer a logical extent to a settlement extension.
Individual Site Landscape Capacity Assessments

East part of SSC0049 - Land at Wood Farm, Stokenchurch

5.13 The site is located on the plateau at the northern side of Stokenchurch. It forms the southern edge of a much larger, arable field and although there is no public access on to the site, there is a PRoW running alongside the western boundary. The site is mainly flat but falls away to the north, into a wooded valley. The southern boundary is formed by the rear boundaries of housing, to the east is a cemetery, to the west and north is open countryside. The site is unlit and relatively undisturbed by traffic noise.

Extent of east part of SSC0049 with photo viewpoints.
Photograph 1: view eastwards over site

Photograph 2: listed church visible in south-west corner

Photograph 3: entrance to PRoW that runs along western boundary of site

Photograph 4: the landscape forms a strong, continuous edge to settlement
### AONB Site Assessment Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Assessment/Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2.   | **Visual Sensitivity – Medium**  
- Site visible on skyline from PRoW in valley landscape to north-west  
- Adjacent PRoW to the west offers glimpsed close views  
- View into site from adjacent cemetery to east  
- Views from wider landscape to east, south and west limited by housing, landform and woodland  
- Panoramic views out of the site over valley landscape to north and west |
| 3.   | **Landscape Sensitivity – Medium**  
- Fields and hedgerows form part of historic field pattern evident from 1870’s  
- Plateau landscape rolling away down valley side to the north  
- Within 25m conservation area buffer  
- Listed church visible from site in south-east corner  
- Influenced by rear boundaries of housing to south |
| 4.   | **Landscape Character Sensitivity** - Medium (2+3) |
| 5.   | **Wider Landscape Sensitivity** - Medium/High  
- Existing strong, continuous edge to settlement  
- Shared physical characteristics with landscape to north and west (open, hedged fields, rolling landform)  
- Strong visual connection with wider landscape to the north  
- Direct connections into PRoW network connecting to settlement and wider countryside |
| 6.   | **Overall Landscape Sensitivity** - Medium/High (4+5) |
| 7.   | **Landscape Value** - Medium / High  
- Site is in AONB |
| 8.   | **Landscape Capacity**: LOW (6+7) |

**Potential impacts of housing:**

| Potential impact on key landscape characteristics:  
- Reduction of characteristic landscape feature  
- Encroachment into strong landscape edge to settlement |
| Potential impact on visual characteristics:  
- Impact on views from the valley landscape to the north  
- Impact on close views from PRoW to west and cemetery to east |
| Potential impact on the AONB  
- Loss of a characteristic field in AONB |
Summary:

5.14 The assessment found the site to have **LOW** capacity for development which means that it could not accommodate areas of new development without a significant and adverse impact on the landscape character.

5.15 The site has strong physical and visual links to the wider landscape and these outweigh any minor impacts from the adjacent urban settlement. It is part of the landscape which currently forms a strong, continuous edge to the settlement. The plateau location on the edge of a steep valley gives the site a distinctive character with inspiring views over the characteristic rolling valley and woodlands to the north and west. It is strongly connected into the PRoW network giving access into the countryside. It is influenced by the housing to the south and also the listed church visible in the south-east corner. **In landscape terms this site is not recommended for development and so no guidelines are provided.**
SSC0034 - Wood Farm, Stokenchurch

5.16 The site is generally flat, located on the plateau at the north-western side of Stokenchurch settlement. It is a farm complex containing a modern farmhouse on the western third of the site and three modern agricultural barns which cover the majority of the eastern side of the site. Wood Farm has been in this location for at least 140 years with a farmhouse and associated buildings visible on historic maps from 1881.

5.17 The site has frontage to the main A40 Oxford Road and directly abuts the existing built up area, adjoining the existing offices at Stokenchurch House to the east and opposite the medical centre across the road to the south. There is a strong hedgerow along the frontage and this continues along the western boundary and part of the northern boundary, enclosing the farm house garden. Although in the location of the historic field boundary the original front boundary hedgerow has been replaced with a row of evergreen trees. The agricultural barns have encroached beyond the historic field boundary to the north and east. There is some light pollution from the buildings on site as well as light spill from nearby employment uses and the road. The road noise from the adjacent A40 and from the nearby M40 is an intrusive element.

Extent SSC0034 with photo viewpoints.
Photograph 1: existing agricultural buildings barely visible from A40

Photograph 2: entrance from A40 shows existing buildings set back into site

Photograph 3: out of site towards village edge to east

Photograph 4: out of site towards valley landscape in north

Photograph 5: historic hedgerows around farmhouse

Photograph 6: out of site westwards towards telecommunications tower
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Assessment/Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2.   | Visual Sensitivity – Medium/Low  
     - Agricultural buildings in north edge of site visible on skyline from well used PRoW in valley landscape to north.  
     - Frontage views from along the main A40 Oxford Road although existing buildings set back into site.  
     - Views out of the site towards valley landscape in north and towards Stokenchurch in south and east. |
| 3.   | Landscape Sensitivity – Medium/Low  
     - Some individual trees and hedgerows around farm house are likely remnants of the historic field boundaries visible on historic maps from 1881.  
     - Historic field pattern lost on north and eastern boundaries due to location of agricultural buildings.  
     - Farm complex has strong historic links with surrounding farm land  
     - Historic hedgerows are likely to have higher habitat value  
     - Urban influences including light spill from adjoining offices and nearby medical centre  
     - Road noise from adjacent A40 and nearby M40 |
| 4.   | Landscape Character Sensitivity – Medium/Low |
| 5.   | Wider Landscape Sensitivity – Medium  
     - Strong, historic relationship with wider farmland  
     - Good ecological links with wider landscape via mature hedgerows  
     - Good transport connections with Stokenchurch settlement  
     - No off-road connection with nearby PRoW |
| 6.   | Overall Landscape Sensitivity – Medium/Low |
| 7.   | Landscape Value - Medium/High  
     - Site is in AONB |
| 8.   | Landscape Capacity: Medium |

**Potential impacts of housing:**

Potential impact on key landscape characteristics:  
- Loss of historic links of farm complex with wider farmland  
- Increase of urban character

Potential impact on visual characteristics:  
- Impact on views from the valley landscape to the North  
- Increase of urban built form in views from Oxford Rd

Potential impact on the AONB  
- Loss of characteristic rural land use and historic connection with wider landscape
Summary:

5.18 The assessment has found the site to have MEDIUM capacity for development meaning that it could be able to accommodate areas of new development, providing it has regards to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas. There are landscape constraints and therefore key landscape and visual characteristics must be retained and enhanced.

5.19 Road noise and light spill from nearby urban uses detracts from rural character however site has strong time depth through historic connection with wider farm land through farming land use, and remnants of historic field pattern.

5.20 Sensitivity of views from PRoW in north although good potential to mitigate impact and improve current situation through native hedgerow/tree planting along northern boundary. Although this is not in location of the former historic field boundary, development could reinstate habitat links between existing landscape features and create new, high quality and robust hedgerow boundary.

Landscape guidelines for development

- Restore historic hedgerow boundary along frontage by replacing with native species
- Enhance historic hedgerows along western boundary to reinstate historic field pattern
- Reinstated native hedgerow and trees along northern boundary to create habitat link between tree belt in north-west to wooded copse in north-east and screening of views from PRoW in north.
SSC0035 – Land off Mill Road, Stokenchurch

5.21 The site is a relatively flat, open, arable field which forms part of a larger field located at the south-western end of Stokenchurch settlement, on the south side of the M40. It has no direct public access but can be partly seen from a public footpath on the northern boundary, which provides pedestrian access to the northern part of Stokenchurch via a footbridge over the M40. It is surrounded on three sides by development, including the M40 in the north, and outbuildings associated with one property protrude out into the middle of the site. Housing backs onto the site on the western side along with a salvage yard to the south-west.

5.22 These boundaries are formed by a variety of closed and open fencing, hedges and outbuildings. The eastern site boundary follows the line of an historic field boundary, no longer visible. As there is no physical boundary the site has an open aspect over the rest of the field, with longer views out to the open countryside and ancient woodlands in the south and east. The site is unlit although some light spill from the surrounding development is likely. The noise from the adjacent M40 to the north is intrusive and there is also some noise from the salvage yard to the south.

Extent of site with photograph viewpoints

![Extent of site with photograph viewpoints](image-url)
Photograph 1: View over site from PRoW on footbridge to north

Photograph 2: mixed rear boundaries of residential properties along Mill Lane

Photograph 3: longer views out to open countryside and ancient woodlands

Photograph 4: salvage yard adjacent to the site in the south and east

Photograph 5: view up towards site from Chiltern Way to south

Photograph 6: south-western part of site visible from Chiltern Way near Coopers Court Farm
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Assessment/Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Visual Sensitivity – Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contained to the west, north and south by existing development and M40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open to the east but visually contained in longer views by woodlands and landform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Footpath to the north and PRoW (Chiltern Way) to the south-east offer glimpsed views over part of the site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inaccessible by the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Landscape Sensitivity - Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Characteristic arable field in agricultural landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flat topography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Historic field boundary along eastern edge has been removed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Influenced by views of adjacent development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heavily influenced by M40 noise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Landscape Character Sensitivity - Low (2+3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Wider Landscape Sensitivity - Medium/Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Settlement edge is not strong on eastern side of settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intrusion into landscape on this side by salvage yard and residential outbuildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shared physical characteristics with wider countryside (open, arable fields)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physically separated from main settlement by M40 but adjacent to footbridge over motorway which provides pedestrian links</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Overall Landscape Sensitivity - Low (4+5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Landscape Value - Medium / High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Site is in AONB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Landscape Capacity: MEDIUM/HIGH (6+7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Potential impacts of housing:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential impact on key landscape characteristics:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Reduction of characteristic landscape feature (agricultural field)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Replacement of historic field boundary on eastern side</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential impact on visual characteristics:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Unlikely to impact on views from the wider AONB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some effect on views from PRoW to south-east and north</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential impact on the AONB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Loss of part of a characteristic field in AONB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary:

5.23 The assessment found the site to have MEDIUM/HIGH capacity for development which means it is able to accommodate development, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas.

5.24 The site is heavily influenced by urban fringe uses and has views of the some parts of the adjacent urban settlement being surrounded on three sides by development and there being outbuildings which protrude out into the centre of the site. It is also heavily influenced by noise from the adjacent M40. Overall the landscape on this side of the settlement is intruded upon by existing development and the site forms part of the broken edge of the settlement.

5.25 The site benefits from being relatively visually enclosed in short views by existing development and in longer views by woodlands and topography and has potential for links with the adjacent settlement and also the main settlement on the other side of the M40 via the footbridge.

5.26 The site does share some of the characteristics of the adjacent, wider landscape such as hedgerows, and links between these features should be retained and enhanced.

Landscape guidelines for development:

- Establish native hedgerow and tree planting along eastern boundary to reinstate historic field boundary and provide screening from PRoW in south east.
- Create safe and pleasant pedestrian link to footbridge linking with centre of Stokenchurch
- Investigate use of non-visually intrusive features to reduce noise pollution from M40
- Retain an undeveloped area adjacent to M40 as a buffer to the motorway and for green infrastructure purposes
- Enhance remaining boundaries with mixed native planting to contribute towards creating/reinstating links with nearby hedgerows and ancient woodland
- Provide tree planting through site to provide setting for housing and help diversify habitats
- Use low level lighting strategy to avoid light pollution to the remaining dark landscape
- Carefully consider building heights to ensure no negative impact on wider views as this is a plateau location
SSC0037 – Land adjoining 20-22 Mill Road, Stokenchurch

5.27 The site is located off Mill Road on the south-western side of Stokenchurch on the south of the motorway. It sits to the rear of the housing along Mill Road and protrudes out into the open countryside. It is flat, enclosed by fencing and tall, mixed hedges and has arable fields adjacent to the north, south and east.

5.28 The site’s current use is a salvage yard for building materials and it is mostly surfaced in concrete with the salvaged materials stored in regular piles across most of the site. It is accessed via a fully engineered road between houses off Mill Road. There is a large agricultural barn in the centre of the site and other smaller buildings, containers and lifting machinery. The salvage yard is open to the public.

Extent of site and photograph viewpoints.
### Visual Sensitivity
- Low
- Contained to the west by existing development and to the south and north by hedgerows and fencing
- Gappy hedged boundary allows views towards east.
- Footpath to the north offers glimpsed views towards the site
- Open to the public/customers

### Landscape Sensitivity
- Low
- Concrete surfacing and high coverage of building materials
- Flat topography
- Mixed quality boundary hedges
- Some noise from onsite vehicles and machinery
- Some influence by M40 noise

### Landscape Character Sensitivity
- Low (2+3)
5. Wider Landscape Sensitivity - Low
   - Visually incongruous in landscape
   - The industrial use is incongruous with adjacent housing
   - Separated from main settlement
   - Good access from adjacent settlement

6. Overall Landscape Sensitivity - Low (4+5)

7. Landscape Value - Medium / High
   - Site is in AONB

8. Landscape Capacity: MEDIUM/HIGH (6+7)

Potential impacts of housing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential impact on key landscape characteristics:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunity to enhance hedgerows and link into wider hedgerow network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunity to increase tree cover</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential impact on visual characteristics:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Unlikely to impact on views from the wider AONB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some effect on views from PRoW to east</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential impact on the AONB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Enhancement to landscape structure and ecological links</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increase in evening activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increase in lighting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary:

5.29 The assessment found the site to have MEDIUM/HIGH capacity for development which means it is able to accommodate development, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas.

5.30 The landscape on this side of the settlement is intruded upon by existing development and the site forms part of the broken edge of the settlement.

5.31 The site is incongruous with adjacent land uses, heavily influenced by urban fringe uses and is not an important part of the adjacent wider landscape into which it protrudes.
5.32 It has good access from the adjacent settlement and benefits from being relatively visually enclosed in short views by existing development and in longer views by woodlands and topography.

5.33 Any future development should enhance links with the surrounding landscape by providing landscape and habitat links.

**Landscape guidelines for development:**

- Enhance field boundary and add tree planting along eastern boundary to soften views towards site from wider countryside
- Enhance boundaries with mixed native planting to contribute towards creating/reinstating links with existing hedgerow network and nearby ancient woodland
- Use low level lighting strategy to avoid light pollution to the remaining dark landscape
- Carefully consider building heights to ensure no negative impact on wider views as this is a plateau location
- Provide tree planting through site to provide setting for housing and help diversify habitats
- Create new links with existing footpath network into the settlement and out to the countryside
SSC0038 – Land rear of Wormsley Crescent, Stokenchurch

5.34 The site is a relatively flat, open, arable field which forms part of a larger field located at the south-western end of Stokenchurch settlement, on the south side of the M40. It has no direct public access. The rear gardens of existing housing back onto the site on the western side along with a salvage yard to the north-east.

5.35 These boundaries are formed by a variety of closed and open fencing, hedges and outbuildings. There is no physical boundary on the eastern side and the site has an open aspect over the rest of the field, with longer views out to the open countryside and ancient woodlands in the south-east. There is some noise from the adjacent salvage yard and the M40 to the north is audible.

Extent of SSC0038 and photograph viewpoints
Photograph 1: Historic hedgerow along southern boundary.

Photograph 2: longer views out to open countryside and ancient woodlands.

Photograph 3: view towards site from Chiltern Way in east.

<table>
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<th>Step</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Visual Sensitivity - Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contained to the west, north by existing development and to the south by hedgerows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Open to the east but visually contained in longer views by woodlands and landform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• PRoW (Chiltern Way) to the east offers glimpsed views over part of the site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Landscape Sensitivity - Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Characteristic arable field in agricultural landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Flat topography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No notable features on site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Influenced by views of adjacent development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Some influence by M40 noise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Landscape Character Sensitivity - Low (2+3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Wider Landscape Sensitivity - Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Shared physical characteristics with wider countryside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Good ecological links to wider hedgerow network and woodlands beyond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No nearby connections with adjacent settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall Landscape Sensitivity - Medium/Low (4+5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Landscape Value - Medium / High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Site is in AONB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Landscape Capacity: MEDIUM (6+7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Potential impacts of housing:**

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Loss of part of a characteristic field in AONB</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Summary:**

5.36 The assessment found the site to have MEDIUM capacity for development which means it could be able to accommodate areas of new development in some parts, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas. There are landscape constraints such as the hedgerows and these must be retained and enhanced as they provide good ecological links with the wider hedgerow network.

5.37 The site is partly influenced by urban fringe uses but shares many of the characteristics of the wider landscape such as open agricultural fields and strong hedgerows, with good physical and some visual links to the wider landscape.

5.38 It benefits from being relatively visually enclosed in short views by existing development and in longer views by woodlands and topography but has no existing links with the adjacent settlement or the main centre of Stokenchurch.
Landscape guidelines for development:

- Establish boundary vegetation along eastern boundary, providing visual screening from open countryside and linking into existing hedgerow and woodland network.
- Create green infrastructure link with wider landscape by providing footpath and enhancing hedgerow planting along southern boundary to join up to existing PRoW network and ancient woodland in east.
- Enhance remaining boundaries with mixed native planting to contribute towards creating/reinstating links with wider hedgerow and woodland network.
- Use low level lighting strategy to avoid light pollution to the remaining dark landscape.
- Carefully consider building heights to ensure no negative impact on wider views as this is a plateau location.
- Provide tree planting through site to provide setting for housing and help diversify habitats.
SSC0043 – Land adjacent Stokenchurch Business Park

5.39 The site is located on a plateau at the north-western end of Stokenchurch, adjacent to the Stokenchurch Business Park and on the south side of the M40. It is made up of two fields, one large and one small. The larger one is divided into two horse paddocks by fencing and the smaller one is currently used partly for storage of building materials. The larger field is accessed by a track off Ibstone Road which enters the field in the north-eastern corner. The smaller field is accessed from the public right of way (track) leading out from the western edge of the business park.

5.40 There is no public access onto the site. The fields are flat and are enclosed by tall hedgerows with added wire frames in places. The M40 runs along the northern boundary, the business park to the east and south, and open countryside to the west. The site is unlit but there is likely to be light spill from the M40 which is lit at this point and also possibly from the business buildings to the east. Road noise from the M40 is significant.

Extent of SSC0043 and photograph viewpoints
Photograph 1: view north-east over larger field

Photograph 2: PRoW along southern boundary

Photograph 3: building materials storage has degraded southern parcel of land

Photograph 4: view over open

Photograph 5: adjacent business park countryside to West

Photograph 6: view towards site from PRoW in south-east
## Step 2: Assessment/Justification

### Visual Sensitivity – Low
- Visually contained in longer views by plateau location, hedged boundaries, woodlands and buildings
- Adjacent PRoW to the south offers glimpsed close views through hedgerow into smaller field
- Close views up towards site from south-west available from short stretch of PRoW
- Site inaccessible by the public

### Landscape Sensitivity - Low
- Fields and hedgerows form part of historic field pattern evident from 1870’s
- Somewhat degraded by equestrian use and building material storage
- Flat topography
- Influenced by views of adjacent development and noise from M40

### Landscape Character Sensitivity - Low (2+3)

### Wider Landscape Sensitivity – Low
- Some shared physical characteristics with wider countryside (open, hedged fields)
- Limited visual connection with wider landscape
- Potential for good connections with both countryside to west and business park to east.
- Remote from main settlement

### Overall Landscape Sensitivity - Low (4+5)

### Landscape Value - Medium / High
- Site is in AONB

### Landscape Capacity: MEDIUM/HIGH (6+7)

---

**Potential impacts of development:**

**Potential impact on key landscape characteristics:**
- Reduction of characteristic landscape feature (agricultural field)

**Potential impact on visual characteristics:**
- Impact on views from the wider AONB depends on building heights
- Some effect on close views from PRoW to south and south-west

**Potential impact on the AONB**
- Loss of a characteristic field in AONB
Summary:

5.41 The assessment found the site to have MEDIUM/HIGH capacity for development which means it is able to accommodate development, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas. Some landscape and visual features such as the boundary hedgerows may require protection.

5.42 The plateau location, mature boundary hedgerows and surrounding development on three sides result in it being visually contained from the wider countryside although there are some close views from the nearby PRoWs.

5.43 The site is heavily influenced by the road noise from the motorway and the adjacent business park. Combined with its somewhat degraded character, this results in it not being considered a significant part of the adjacent wider landscape.

5.44 It has potential good connections with the adjacent business park to the east and south and nearby road network but it is remote from the main settlement centre.

Landscape guidelines for development:

- Retain and enhance historic hedgerows which provide links through and out of the site to the wider hedge and woodland network
- Provide 8-10m mixed, native tree belt along western boundary to provide screening from open countryside
- Use low level lighting strategy to avoid light pollution to the remaining dark landscape to the west
- Carefully consider building heights to ensure no negative impact on wider views as this is a plateau location
- Provide non-visually intrusive features to reduce noise pollution from M40
- Incorporate links with existing PRoW network
Conclusions to Stage 3 Specialist Landscape Assessments

5.45 Three areas in Stokenchurch have been identified as having capacity to accommodate development following the specialist landscape assessment (stage 3 of the overall assessment). These are:

- Land to the rear of Stokenchurch Business Park (SSC0043)
- Land to the rear of Mill Road (SSC005, 0035, 0037 and 0038).
- Land at Wood Farm (SSC0034)
5.46 The land to the rear of Mill Road comprises 4 separate parcels. SSC0035 and SSC0037 both have Medium/High capacity to accommodate development with SSC0038 having slightly lower capacity at Medium. (SSC005 has an extant planning permission for 3 dwellings so can be assumed to also have capacity for development.) The lower capacity at SSC0038 is largely due to the ecologically and historically sensitive hedgerows on the southern boundary that reflect the character and link with the wider landscape to the south and east.

5.47 Clearly, if all of the sites were developed this could increase the potential for landscape impacts than if only one or two were developed. However, the level of impact would depend on the scale and form of the proposed development over the sites and the potential for mitigation. As SSC0038 has a heightened overall landscape sensitivity compared to the other two then there is an increased chance of impacts on that site. Taken as a whole, these three sites would have a Medium capacity (reflecting the lower capacity of SSC0038).
Stage 4: Assessment of Major Development Criteria – Stokenchurch

Site: **SSC0043**

**Land to the rear of Stokenchurch Business Park**, proposed for employment uses.

This site was included in the consultation draft Local Plan as Policy RUR23.

1. **What is the local context for this site in terms of:**

   1a. The scale of the allocation in proportion to the existing settlement

      The increase in the overall built up area of Stokenchurch is approximately 2% (2.5HA over 220HA). The increase to the existing business areas in the village is approximately 35% in site area.

   1b. The spatial relationship of the allocation to the existing settlement in the context of settlement form, taking account of the guidance on settlement forms in the Chilterns Building Design Guide

      Stokenchurch is a plateau/ridge village (CBDG pages 19, 20, 59). Development along the ridge/across the plateau is in keeping with the historic settlement form. These sections of the CBDG highlights the need to ensure a soft edge to the adjoining farmland and nearby woods in the detailed design stage. (As per the recent redevelopment of the adjoining Stockwells Yard employment site.)

2. **What potential is there for a serious adverse impact on the AONB in terms of:**

   2a. Landscape impact

      The landscape assessment identified LOW landscape sensitivity and MEDIUM/HIGH capacity for development. The workshop likewise identified some impacts, but nothing significantly adverse.

   2b. The impact on the quiet enjoyment of the AONB

      The workshop noted some impacts on nearby footpaths (as per Stage 3 assessment) but, allowing for mitigation, these were not identified as significant adverse.

   2c. Wildlife/habitat impact

      No particular habitats noted on site. There is a SSSI and SAC nearby. Impacts on these are not likely to be significant but will need to be
assessed at detailed planning stage.

2d Heritage impact

No adverse impacts were identified.

3 Can the proposed allocation be sensibly described as ‘major’ in the normal meaning of the word

The joint workshop majority views was that, no, this could not be sensibly described as major.

Overall Conclusion

The quality of proposed development and associated landscaping can be adequately controlled at detailed planning stage. As such it is not considered that this proposed allocation would result in major development in the AONB. (At the workshop, the Conservation Board noted a minority view that this was still nonetheless major development.)

Site: SSC005, 0035, 0037 & 0038

Land to the rear of Mill Road

Note: This relates to the site proposed in the summer 2016 draft plan as RUR12 for circa 140-185 dwellings.

1 What is the local context for this site in terms of:

1a The scale of the allocation in proportion to the existing settlement

The village of Stokenchurch contains approximately 1650 existing homes. The draft RUR12 allocation would have been approximately 10% of this figure. This is approaching the level of proportional growth that is often taken as indicative of major development.

1b The spatial relationship of the allocation to the existing settlement in the context of settlement form, taking account of the guidance on settlement forms in the Chilterns Building Design Guide

Stokenchurch is a plateau/ridge village (CBDG pages 19, 20, 59). Development along the ridge/across the plateau is in keeping with the historic settlement form. These sections of the CBDG highlights the need to ensure a soft edge to the adjoining farmland and wider landscape in the detailed design stage.

2 What potential is there for a serious adverse impact on the AONB in terms of:

2a Landscape impact
The detailed landscape assessments considered 3 sub areas to the rear of Mill Road. The salvage yard and land to the north of this were assessed as having LOW sensitivity and MEDIUM/HIGH capacity for development. The land south of the salvage yard was identified as having MEDIUM/LOW sensitivity and MEDIUM capacity for development. Overall this indicates an increasing risk of adverse landscape impacts the farther south any allocation extends.

The joint workshop conclusions on the draft plan allocation RUR12 and concluded that although RUR12 was generally well contained and the impacts were limited due to the backdrop of the existing development at Mill Road, there would nonetheless be some adverse impact on views from the Chilterns Way to the east of the site.

2b The impact on the quiet enjoyment of the AONB

As noted above, there would be some adverse impact on the enjoyment of views from the Chilterns Way.

2c Wildlife/habitat impact

No wildlife designations and site is improved grassland (agricultural). Main biodiversity value is likely to be found in the field margins.

2d Heritage impact

No known issues.

3 Can the proposed allocation be sensibly described as ‘major’ in the normal meaning of the word

The joint workshop concluded that this scale of development can only sensibly be described as major.

Overall Conclusion

The 2016 draft allocation RUR12 (140-165 dwellings) would be major development in the AONB.

5.49 The 2016 draft allocation RUR12 (140-165 dwellings) is clearly major. However this group of sites includes a number of distinct parcels and their arrangement presents several alternative options for allocation. Consequently the Council considered whether there was a smaller allocation that would support growth and that would not be likely to result in major development in the AONB. The starting point for this is the group of sites that were considered generally suitable and that were included in the 2016 draft RUR12.
5.50 Mindful of the increasing distance from the village centre and the increasing landscape sensitivity south of the salvage yard the logical alternative to 2016 draft RUR12 would be a site comprised of the salvage yard and the land to the north of this. The urban design capacity study for this site suggests that this would result in circa 100 dwellings (assuming 30 dph and 1.2HA of public open space on site).

5.51 Based on the joint workshop with Natural England and the Chilterns Conservation Board, and noting in particular that part of the site is ‘brownfield’ previously developed land, it is considered that an allocation for this reduced site would not result in major development in the AONB. This report therefore recommends that draft RUR12 should be reduced to this extent.

Site: SSC0034

**Wood Farm** (redevelopment of the farm yard).

*Note: this site was not considered at the joint workshop or the draft Local Plan consultation.*

1 **What is the local context for this site in terms of:**

1a The scale of the allocation in proportion to the existing settlement

The potential allocation could deliver circa 20 homes. This is around 1% growth in the context of Stokenchurch. Scale is clearly not major in this case.

1b The spatial relationship of the allocation to the existing settlement in the context of settlement form, taking account of the guidance on settlement forms in the Chilterns Building Design Guide

Stokenchurch is a plateau/ridge village (CBDG pages 19, 20, 59). Development along the ridge/across the plateau is in keeping with the historic settlement form. These sections of the CBDG highlights the need to ensure a soft edge to the adjoining farmland and wider landscape in the detailed design stage.

2 **What potential is there for a serious adverse impact on the AONB in terms of:**

2a Landscape impact

The landscape assessment shows MEDIUM sensitivity and MEDIUM
capacity for development.

2b The impact on the quiet enjoyment of the AONB

The northern edge of the site is visible from the valley landscape and PRoW beyond the site.

2c Wildlife/habitat impact

Some possibility of bats given the nature of the buildings on site but no intrinsic habitat value.

2d Heritage impact

No known issues.

3 Can the proposed allocation be sensibly described as ‘major’ in the normal meaning of the word

Given the limited impacts and smaller scale of this proposed allocation it would not be sensible to describe this allocation as major.

Overall Conclusion

There is little to no risk that this allocation would result in major development in the AONB

Overall conclusions and recommendations – Stokenchurch

5.52 This assessment has found 3 suitable sites for development around Stokenchurch:

- SSC0034 Wood Farm
- SSC005, 0035 & 0037 South of Mill Road
- SSC0043 Rear of Stokenchurch Business Park

5.53 This report recommends therefore that these sites are allocated in the New Local Plan (subject to the HELAA showing them to be deliverable or developable in the plan period).
6 Lane End Findings

Identification of candidate sites at Lane End

6.1 Lane End is a village with a strong historic core centred on a staggered cross roads and village pond. There is a large post war estate on the northeast side. The village has a number of small industrial areas, several of which have been redeveloped in recent years. The M40 motorway lies a short distance to the North.

6.2 The village lies to the edge of the Metropolitan Green Belt with the main part tightly constrained by the Green Belt. One site at Lane End passed the Green Belt assessment – Land at Sidney House. This assessment focussed its area of search on the south side of the village (excluding the various areas of registered Common Land).
6.3 These areas were sub-divided into a number of parcels for assessment purposes. This includes both developer promoted sites identified through the earlier options consultation and the July 2016 draft plan consultation, and sites identified by council officers.

Lane End (Area of Search) Site Index Plan

OS mapping: © Crown Copyright and database rights 2017 Ordnance Survey 100023306.
6.5 Appendix 1 includes initial suitability assessments for each of the sites considered at this stage. Figure x provides a summary of each site assessment.

Figure: Summary table of Stage 2 (Lane End)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Reference</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Initial Suitability Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SLE0011        | Land to the rear of Old Sun Close | -Within Lane End conservation area  
                 |                                    | -Topographical issues  
                 |                                    | -Poor access  
                 |                                    | -Not recommended for stage 3 assessment |
| SLE0015        | Martins Field, Moor Common | -Forms important gap between Lane End and Moor Common  
                 |                                    | -Relates poorly to Lane End  
                 |                                    | -In use as residential curtilage  
                 |                                    | -Poor access  
                 |                                    | -Not recommended for stage 3 assessment |
| SLE0017        | Land south of Finings Road, Lane End | -Adjoins Ancient Woodland, Conservation Area and Listed Buildings  
                 |                                    | -Northern part of site well related to earlier phases of village development  
                 |                                    | -Southern part more rural and more visually sensitive  
                 |                                    | -Northern part recommended for stage 3 |
| SLE0023        | Land to the rear of Tylers Corner and Hide Away, Ditchfield Common | -Disused allotments  
                 |                                    | -Not allocated as Green Space but in use as semi-natural open space  
                 |                                    | -Access concerns  
                 |                                    | -Not recommended for stage 3 assessment |
| SLE0024        | Land to the rear of Spindleberry, Ditchfield Common | -Located outside of main residential area  
                 |                                    | -Disconnected from built form  
                 |                                    | -Poor access  
                 |                                    | -Not recommended for stage 3 assessment |
| SLE0025        | Land to the rear of Lane End | -In use as golf course and conference centre  
<pre><code>             |                                    | -Redevelopment would result in loss |
</code></pre>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site ID</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SLE0026 | Land off Ellis Way, Lane End                                                 | - Site contains traditional orchard  
- Clear sub-division between orchard and remainder of site  
- Northern section is enclosed and well integrated into existing development  
- Not recommended for stage 3, mainly due to high likelihood of unacceptable ecological impacts |
| SLE0027 | Land between Chalky Field and Marlow Road, Lane End                          | - Contour issues to rear of site  
- Located with close proximity to village centre  
- Potential to integrate into existing residential development  
- Well enclosed from the wider area  
Recommened for stage 3                                                                 |
| SLE0029 | Land off Church Road, Lane End                                              | - Adjoins conservation area  
- Situated above national grid gas pipeline  
- Low/Medium surface water flooding around site  
- Coalescence concerns with Moor Common  
The site as promoted would not be suitable with regards to landscape impact and settlement form and character, including risk of coalescence with the hamlet, Moor Common. The westernmost portion of the site is better related to existing housing and should be considered at Stage 3. |

6.6 Three sites passed the Stage 2 assessment and were considered generally suitable, along with one site from the Green Belt assessment. These are:

- SLE0017 Land south of Finings Road
- SLE0020 Land adjoining Sidney House
- SLE0027 Land between Chalky Fields and Marlow Road
- SLE0029 (West part) Land off Church Road
**Stage 3 - Specialist Landscape Assessments – Lane End**

**Lane End Landscape Overview:**

6.7 Lane End is on the settled plateau but the land is more undulating due to the geology. It was once a linear village spread along the road (B482) with a strong historic core centred on a staggered cross roads and village pond. Past expansion has resulted in modern development dominating land to the north of the road, between the B482 and the M40. To the south of the B482 the settlement has a strong historic character, with much of it being associated with the commons, which are a significant feature.

**South west of the village from Finings Road towards Moor Common:**

6.8 The settlement edge is not clearly defined in this area as it has developed in an unregimented fashion over time, in association with the common land. The locally undulating land and tree cover adds to the special character. There are public footpaths through the area and there is open access over the commons. The strong historic character and impact on public footpaths resulted in only small pockets of land being considered suitable for further consideration.
South east of the village, south of Marlow Road:

6.9 The settlement edge is not clearly defined in this area because of its development through history. The land mostly has a parkland character associated with its original situation as the grounds of the C19 Cowasjee Jehangir Hall (since demolished in the 1960s) and the site’s subsequent use as a boarding school and then as a residential conference centre. Additionally, there are some hidden pockets of land to the rear of the ribbon development along the B482 and some paddocks.

6.10 The parkland character largely remains and includes the managed grounds of the conference centre along with a golf course. The mature tree cover associated with the parkland contributes to it being relatively visually enclosed, as does the woodland on some of the hidden pockets of land. This tree cover makes a significant contribution to the setting of Lane End when viewed from the wider landscape but there is no public access in the area other than by occupants of the management centre.

6.11 Due to the historic features, existing ownership and land use only the small pockets of land identified and the paddocks were considered suitable for further consideration.
Individual Site Landscape Capacity Assessments

SLE0017 (Part) – Land off Finings Road, Lane End

6.12 The site is located at the western end of Lane End settlement and forms part of a larger, rectangular field\textsuperscript{12} which is visible in its present form on maps from 1877. There is no boundary separating the site from the wider field. The site is enclosed to the west by ancient woodland and to the east by existing housing which overlooks it. Some post and rail fencing and boundary vegetation separates the existing housing from the site. To the north is an existing house and the site is set back from the road behind this with an access track leading from the road. There is no public access to the site but the access track gives pedestrian access to the adjacent woodland within which there are many informal tracks. There is a PRoW at the southern end of the wider field. The site is flat except to the southern end where there is a distinctive rise then dip. The site is unlit and generally peaceful.

\textit{Aerial 7: Extent of SLE0017 with photograph viewpoints}

\textsuperscript{12} The site assessment incorrectly comments that the field is not used for agriculture. The field is used for grazing livestock.
Photograph 1: view southwards over the site

Photograph 2: distinctive undulation in southern end of site

Photograph 3: informal layout of adjacent housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Assessment/Justification</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Visual Sensitivity - Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contained to the north and east by existing housing and to the west by ancient woodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Site sits behind existing housing on Finings Rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Open to the south but visually contained to some extent by landform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No longer views towards site from wider countryside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• PRoW to the south offers glimpsed views towards the site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Access track from Finings Road offers short term views from people accessing adjacent woodland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 3.   | Landscape Sensitivity - Medium/High |
|      | • Part of historic field  |
|      | • Distinctive local undulation in south  |
|      | • Adjacent conservation area and listed building  |
|      | • Adjacent ancient woodland  |
|      | • Influenced by views of adjacent, village character housing and listed building  |
|      | • Unlit and peaceful  |

<p>| 4.   | Landscape Character Sensitivity - Medium/Low (2+3) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wider Landscape Sensitivity - Medium/High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Forms setting of conservation area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No clear edge of settlement on this western edge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strongly influenced by adjacent ancient woodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Shared physical characteristics with wider countryside such as open, agricultural fields, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall Landscape Sensitivity - Medium (4+5)</th>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Landscape Value - Medium / High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Site is in AONB</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Landscape Capacity - MEDIUM/LOW (6+7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Potential impacts of housing:**

Potential impact on key landscape characteristics:
- Loss of part of historic field
- Impact on ancient woodland
- Impact on conservation area/listed building

Potential impact on visual characteristics:
- No impact on views from the wider AONB
- Potential effect on views from PRoW to south and housing to east

Potential impact on the AONB
- Loss of part of a characteristic field in AONB

**Summary:**

6.13 The assessment found the site to have MEDIUM/LOW capacity for development which means it may be able to accommodate some development but the likely extent of development will be severely constrained by the need to avoid any adverse impact on the landscape character informed by the ancient woodland, historic field pattern and undulating topography. Any development must have regard to the setting and form of the adjacent conservation area and overall historic character. There are significant landscape constraints and therefore the key landscape and visual characteristics must be retained and enhanced.
6.14 The site has strong physical links to the wider landscape character such as the open, agricultural fields, hedgerows and hedgerow trees and visual links with the adjacent conservation area and listed building.

6.15 The edge of settlement on this side of Lane End is not strongly defined and the site sits behind existing housing that fronts Finings Road.

6.16 The combination of the adjacent woodland and other boundary tree cover, adjacent conservation area and local undulation on the southern end of the site gives it a distinctive and pleasing character.

**Landscape guidelines for development:**

- Provide a 15m buffer to ancient woodland
- Retain and enhance where necessary the hedgerow between the site and the conservation area
- Reflect informal layout of adjacent housing to maintain historic character of this side of the settlement
- Create pedestrian links with existing PRoW in south and west giving access to settlement/amenities in south, the adjacent woodland and the wider countryside
- Establish new mixed native planting along southern boundary to contain development from remaining field
- Conserve and enhance ecological links with adjacent habitats such as hedgerows and woodlands
- Retain distinctive local undulation on southern end of site
- Use low level lighting strategy to avoid light pollution to the remaining dark landscape
SLE0027 – Land between Chalky Fields and Marlow Road.

6.17 The site is located at the eastern end of Lane End settlement and is made up of two fenced paddocks which form part of a larger group of fields. There is a pond in the northern corner. The site boundaries are post and wire fencing, located to divide up the larger field, and have no historic relevance and no associated vegetation. It has no direct public access but there are glimpsed views from Marlow Road to the east and a PRoW on higher ground to the south-east.

6.18 The housing on Chalky Field to the north overlooks the site and there are also some allotments to the north. There is development on the opposite side of Marlow Road and a Thames Water facility surrounded by tall conifer trees protrudes into the site on the eastern boundary. The site is enclosed by existing housing to the north and east and has an open aspect to the open countryside and woodlands to the south and west. There is a shallow valley running north-south through the site. The site is unlit and generally peaceful with some intermittent traffic noise from Marlow Road.

Extent of SLE0027 with photograph viewpoints
Photograph 1: a shallow valley runs north-south through the site

Photograph 2: pond at northern corner

Photograph 3: view from Chalky Fields towards northern boundary of site

Photograph 4: site (located in front of housing in distance) contributes towards rural setting of Lane End when approaching from south-east
Step | Assessment/Justification
--- | ---
2. | Visual Sensitivity – Low
   - Contained to the north and east by existing housing and vegetation
   - Open to the south and west but visually contained in longer views by woodlands and landform
   - PRoW to the south-east potentially offers glimpsed views over part of the site
   - Inaccessible by the public
3. | Landscape Sensitivity - Medium/Low
   - Part of a larger, characteristic arable field in agricultural landscape
   - Localised shallow valley topography
   - Fenced field boundaries have no historic relevance
   - Influenced by views of adjacent development, Thames Water facility and paddock fencing
4. | Landscape Character Sensitivity - Low (2+3)
5. | Wider Landscape Sensitivity – Medium
   - Shared physical characteristics with wider countryside (open, arable fields)
   - Forms part of landscape setting of Lane End when approaching from the south-east
6. | Overall Landscape Sensitivity - Medium/Low (4+5)
7. | Landscape Value - Medium / High
   - Site is in AONB
8. | Landscape Capacity - MEDIUM (6+7)

**Potential impacts of housing:**

Potential impact on key landscape characteristics:
- Reduction of characteristic landscape feature (agricultural field)

Potential impact on visual characteristics:
- Unlikely to impact on views from the wider AONB
- Some effect on views from housing to north and potentially from PRoW to south-east
- Some potential effect on setting of Lane End

Potential impact on the AONB:
- Loss of part of a characteristic field in AONB
Summary:

6.19 The site could be able to accommodate areas of new development in some parts, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement, particularly the setting of Lane End as experienced on approaching from the south-east. It must also have regard for the character and sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas, primarily the surrounding agricultural landscape, and provide new links with these.

6.20 There are landscape and ecological constraints, such as the pond and the boundary hedgerows, and these key characteristics must be retained and enhanced and linked to adjoining features.

6.21 The site is partly influenced by urban uses such as the adjacent housing, housing on the opposite side of Marlow Road and the Thames Water facility that juts out into the site which combine to weaken the settlement boundary at this point. Some development could be accommodated and provide a landscape structure to strengthen the settlement boundary, enhance the setting of Lane End and form stronger habitat links with the surrounding landscape.

Landscape guidelines for development:

- Establish mixed native vegetation along south and west boundaries including trees, to strengthen the settlement edge, provide screening from the south east, and to create a landscape structure which contributes towards creating links with existing hedgerow and woodland network.

- Provide tree planting through site to provide setting for housing and contribute to habitat diversity

- Take account of the adjoining pond in considering new landscape structure and link to other habitats

- Retain roadside vegetation and incorporate into new landscape structure

- Restrict scale of development to avoid requirement for excessive changes to topography

- Use low level lighting strategy to avoid light pollution to the remaining dark landscape
SLE0029 (West Part) – Land off Church Road, Lane End

6.22 The site forms part of a wider field located at the southern end of the Lane End settlement. The site is accessed directly from Church Road via a field gate in a hedgerow. This section of Church Road has a semi-rural character with few road markings, very limited lighting or signage and a footpath on one side only. Some of the site is located behind the existing ribbon development along Church Road but much of it can be seen from the road and allows views over it toward the surrounding countryside. The mature trees in the grounds of a conference centre and a well maintained hedgerow contain the wider field on the northern boundary.

6.23 The rear gardens of residential development back onto the site on the north, west and south sides. The residential boundaries are formed of a variety of closed and open fencing, hedges and small outbuildings. The eastern side of the site has no physical boundary and is open to the wider landscape. The site has an open aspect over the rest of the field, with longer views out to the ancient woodlands in the south and west. The site is fairly flat but a shallow valley runs north-south along the eastern side.

*West part of SLE0029 with photograph viewpoints.*
Photograph 1: View of site from PRoW in south

Photograph 2: shallow valley along eastern side of site

Photograph 3: From field gate looking south towards ancient woodlands

Photograph 4: Residential boundaries backing onto site
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Assessment/Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2    | Visual Sensitivity - Medium/High  
- Partly screened by existing housing but open views over much of site available from Church Road.  
- Visually contained in longer views by woodlands  
- PRoW to the south offers views up to the site |
| 3    | Landscape Sensitivity – Medium  
- Characteristic arable field in agricultural landscape  
- Adjacent to registered commons  
- No notable features on site |
| 4    | Landscape Character Sensitivity: Medium/High |
| 5    | Wider Landscape Sensitivity – Medium  
- Contributes towards separation between Lane End and Moor Common settlements  
- Shared physical characteristics with wider countryside |
| 6    | Overall Landscape Sensitivity: Medium/High |
| 7    | Landscape Value - Medium / High Site is in AONB |
| 8    | Landscape Capacity: LOW |

**Potential impacts of housing**

**Relationship of the site with Lane End and Moor Common:**  
- The site contributes towards the separation of Lane End and Moor Common settlements both physically and in views from Church Road.  
- It is influenced by the residential development on three sides.

**Relationship of the site with the adjacent wider countryside:**  
- It has strong visual links with the countryside to the south-east  
- It shares physical characteristics with the wider countryside such as open, agricultural fields, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

**Potential impact on key landscape characteristics:**  
- Reduction of characteristic landscape feature (agricultural field)

**Potential impact on visual characteristics:**  
- Impact of highways works on character of Church Road  
- Loss of views over wider countryside from Church Road  
- Some impact on views from PRoW to south

**Potential impact on the AONB**  
- Loss of part of a characteristic field in AONB
Summary:

6.24 The assessment found the site to have LOW capacity for development which means it could not accommodate areas of new development without a significant and adverse impact on the landscape character primarily that it forms the setting for Lane End and Moor Common and separates the two settlements.

6.25 Moor Common is a small settlement that has developed in association with the registered commons and has a strong historic character. The site contributes towards the separation between the two settlements and facilitates glimpsed views from the road out over the surrounding countryside. **It is not considered suitable for development because of the separation it creates between Lane End and the sensitive character of Moor Common and no landscape guidelines for development are provided.**
6.27 The landscape capacity of this site was initially assessed as part of the Green Belt assessment. The conclusion was that “The site as a whole could accommodate development without significant harm to the AONB, landscape character and visual amenity. Mitigation measures should include retention of existing mature vegetation for screening and site character; additional planting should reinforce these objectives where appropriate. Redevelopment of Sidney House might also be appropriate and would provide an opportunity for access to this site.” Given the small scale and enclosed nature of the site no additional landscape capacity assessment was considered necessary.
Conclusions to Stage 3 Specialist Landscape Assessments

6.29 Three sites in Lane End have been identified as having capacity to accommodate development following the ‘stage 3’ specialist landscape assessment and the Green Belt assessment. These are:

- SLE0017 (Part) Land south of Finings Road
- SLE0020 Land adjoining Sidney House (Green Belt)
- SLE0027 Land between Chalky Road and Marlow Road
**Stage 4: Assessment of Major Development Criteria – Lane End**

Site: SLE17 (Part)

**Land South of Finings Road**

*Note: This site was included in the consultation draft Local Plan as Policy RUR1.*

1  **What is the local context for this site in terms of:**

1a  The scale of the allocation in proportion to the existing settlement

The proposed allocation (RUR1 – up to 32 dwellings) would represent about a 3% increase to the scale of development at Lane End.

1b  The spatial relationship of the allocation to the existing settlement in the context of settlement form, taking account of the guidance on settlement forms in the Chilterns Building Design Guide

Lane End is a plateau/ridge village (CBDG pages 19, 20, 59). Development along the ridge/ across the plateau is in keeping with the historic settlement form. These sections of the CBDG highlights the need to ensure a soft edge to the adjoining farmland and wider landscape in the detailed design stage.

2  **What potential is there for a serious adverse impact on the AONB in terms of:**

2a  Landscape impact

The landscape assessment identified a MEDIUM/HIGH capacity for development on the northern section of the site. The workshop noted that this was a sensitive landscape but that it was visually contained.

2b  The impact on the quiet enjoyment of the AONB

Minimal impact.

2c  Wildlife/habitat impact

There is a clear potential for an adverse impact on Fining Wood (ancient woodland and local wildlife site) – but the proposed buffer should adequately mitigate for this.

2d  Heritage impact

The site is within the setting of a Listed Building and a Conservation Area. The Character Survey offers general guidance on development form which will be relevant at detailed planning stage. Provided that the policy is informed by the need to preserve these settings, and heritage impact is properly assessed at detailed design and planning stage, a significant adverse impact on heritage is unlikely.
### 3 Can the proposed allocation be sensibly described as major in the normal meaning of the word

A proposal for at most 32 dwellings would not normally be described as major.

### Overall Conclusion

As the assessment has not identified any significant major impacts, and the scale of development appears fairly modest in the context of Lane End as a whole. Development of this scale would not normally be sensibly described as major. As such the proposed allocation would not be likely to result in major development in the AONB. (At the workshop, the Conservation Board noted a minority view that this was still nonetheless major development.)

---

**Site: SLE0027**

**Land between Chalky Fields and Marlow Road**

This site was included in the consultation draft Local Plan as Policy RUR2.

1 **What is the local context for this site in terms of:**

1a The scale of the allocation in proportion to the existing settlement

The proposed allocation (RUR2 – up to 28 dwellings) would represent about a 3% increase to the scale of development at Lane End.

1b The spatial relationship of the allocation to the existing settlement in the context of settlement form, taking account of the guidance on settlement forms in the Chilterns Building Design Guide

Lane End is a plateau/ridge village (CBDG pages 19, 20, 59). Development along across the plateau is in keeping with the historic settlement form. These sections of the CBDG highlights the need to ensure a soft edge to the adjoining farmland and wider landscape in the detailed design stage.

2 **What potential is there for a serious adverse impact on the AONB in terms of:**

2a Landscape impact

The landscape assessment concluded there is a MEDIUM capacity for development. The workshop noted that although the site is relatively open to views (from nearby roads) it was less visually sensitive and landscape impacts were likely to be in the immediate vicinity of the site only.

2b The impact on the quiet enjoyment of the AONB

Minimal impact. Development may be visible in mid-distance views from footpaths on
higher ground to the east – although some of these views will be screened by existing woodland.

2c Wildlife/habitat impact

There is a small pond in the north corner of the site. This will have some biodiversity value and also indicates some possibility of protected species/habitats. The area of site affected does not appear significant.

Widdenton Woods SSSI extends to within about 200m of the site. This is on the far side of the main Marlow Road with some existing housing development inbetween.

There is no particular indication that a significant adverse impact is likely. Impacts on the pond (on the site) and the SSSI (nearby) will need to be properly assessed at detailed planning stage.

2d Heritage impact

No identified impacts other than the general risk of the wrong form of development appearing at odds with the historic village character / setting of the Conservation Area. This is an issue for the detailed planning stage.

3 Can the proposed allocation be sensibly described as major in the normal meaning of the word

No, A proposal for fewer than 30 dwellings would not normally be described as major.

Overall Conclusion

There appear to be no significant adverse impacts or other reasons to identify this allocation as major. (At the workshop, the Conservation Board noted a minority view that this was still nonetheless major development, although no reasons were recorded for this conclusion.)

Site: SLE0020

Land adjoining Sidney House.

This site was included in the consultation draft Local Plan as Policy RUR4.

1 What is the local context for this site in terms of:

1a The scale of the allocation in proportion to the existing settlement

Setting aside the noise and air quality issues the scale of the site (roughly 0.4HA) could hypothetically accommodate in the range of 10 to 20 family dwellings. If this could be achieved this would be 1% to 2% increase in the scale of the village. In practical terms however, whilst the site may assist with the regeneration of Sidney House, it is unlikely to deliver much additional development in itself.
The spatial relationship of the allocation to the existing settlement in the context of settlement form, taking account of the guidance on settlement forms in the Chilterns Building Design Guide

Lane End is a plateau/ridge village (CBDG pages 19, 20, 59). Development along the ridge/across the plateau is in keeping with the historic settlement form. These sections of the CBDG highlights the need to ensure a soft edge to the adjoining farmland and wider landscape in the detailed design stage.

### 2 What potential is there for a serious adverse impact on the AONB in terms of:

#### 2a Landscape impact

This is a small site ‘sandwiched’ between the built-up area and the motorway on the north side of the village. The landscape capacity assessment (contained within the Green Belt assessment) concluded that “The site as a whole could accommodate development without significant harm to the AONB, landscape character and visual amenity.”

#### 2b The impact on the quiet enjoyment of the AONB

The site currently has very little value in term of quiet enjoyment. There is therefore unlikely to be a significant impact.

#### 2c Wildlife/habitat impact

The site is rough grassland only connected to the wider habitat network by the motorway verges. Whilst it will be important to maintain a connected corridor east-west along the motorway verge this can be secured at detailed planning stage.

#### 2d Heritage impact

No identified impacts

#### 3 Can the proposed allocation be sensibly described as ‘major’ in the normal meaning of the word

No. A proposal for fewer than 20 dwellings would not normally be described a major.

**Overall Conclusion**

The allocation of this site is unlikely to result in major development in the AONB
Overall conclusions and recommendations – Lane End

6.30 This assessment (taken together with the Green Belt assessment) has identified 3 suitable sites for development around Stokenchurch:

- SLE0017 (Part) Land south of Finings Road
- SLE0020 Land adjoining Sidney House (Green Belt assessment site)
- SLE0027 Land between Chalky Road and Marlow Road

6.31 This report recommends therefore that these sites are allocated in the New Local Plan (subject to the HELAA showing them to be deliverable or developable in the plan period).
7 Around High Wycombe, Marlow and Princes Risborough

Scope and Method

7.1 The Council’s Green Belt Assessment effectively parallels Stages 1 to 3 of this AONB assessment, but it relies on this AONB assessment for specific AONB issues, including in particular the issue of major development in the AONB.

7.2 The Green Belt Assessment process identified the following sites which were capable of removal from the Green Belt\(^\text{13}\) and which were otherwise suitable (setting aside specific AONB issues):

- SHW0633 Part of Greens Farm, Glynswood, Green Hill, High Wycombe
- SHZ0030 Penn Road, Hazlemere, High Wycombe
- SLE0020 Land East of Sidney House, Lane End\(^\text{14}\)
- SMA0105 Seymour Court Road, Marlow
- SMB0080 Heavens Above, 16 High Heavens Wood, Marlow Bottom
- SNH0019 Land off Clappins Lane, Naphill
- SPR0057 Molins Sports Ground, off Mill Lane, Monks Risborough
- SPR0036 Land to the Rear of Poppy Road (including 108 Wycombe Road), Princes Risborough
- Risborough relief road options around Culverton Farm / Shootacre Lane

7.3 Sites in the Green Belt that did not pass the Part 2 Green Belt Assessment, and have therefore already been identified as unsuitable for allocation in the proposed Local Plan, are not considered further in this report.

7.4 The next step for these sites was therefore to consider Stage 4: Assessment of Major Development Criteria. For sites which were not considered likely to result in Major Development in the AONB, the initial ‘Green Belt’ assessment of the landscape sensitivity and capacity of each of these sites was reviewed and expanded for this report as well.

\(^{13}\) “capable” in this context has the specific meaning given to it in the Green Belt assessment methodology: “On its own, ‘capable’ does not mean that there are ‘exceptional circumstances’ [to amend the Green Belt boundary].”

\(^{14}\) SLE0020 Land East of Sidney House, Lane End is assessed in chapter 6 of this report (Lane End Findings) and is not considered further in this chapter.
Stage 4: Assessment of Major Development Criteria High Wycombe, Marlow and Princes Risborough

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site: SHW0633</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part of Green Farm, <em>Glynswood, Green Hill, High Wycombe</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This site was included in the consultation draft Local Plan as Policy HW10.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1 What is the local context for this site in terms of:

1a The scale of the allocation in proportion to the existing settlement

The scale of the site measured proportionately to High Wycombe is very small (probably less than 0.1%).

1b The spatial relationship of the allocation to the existing settlement in the context of settlement form, taking account of the guidance on settlement forms in the Chilterns Building Design Guide

In the more local contact this is similar to a backland site enclosed behind the main Hughenden Road houses within the fringe of the built up area.

### 2 What potential is there for a serious adverse impact on the AONB in terms of:

2a Landscape impact

The landscape assessment (contained within the Part 2 Green Belt assessment) considered both the general landscape issues and the specific historic landscape related to the site. There are views between the site and historic landscape features, such as the Disraeli Monument for example. The landscape assessment did not identify any significant adverse impacts.

2b The impact on the quiet enjoyment of the AONB

There would be some adverse impact on the enjoyment of the footpath which passes through the site.

2c Wildlife/habitat impact

There are no wildlife designations but the site is unimproved grassland on the urban fringe. Some impact.

2d Heritage impact

There is a nearby historic parkland (Registered park and garden, Conservation Area and setting of a Listed Building) - this issue overlaps with the landscape issue e.g. views back from the Disraeli Monument, and as such there are no significant
### adverse impacts

#### 3 Can the proposed allocation be sensibly described as ‘major’ in the normal meaning of the word

No

#### Overall Conclusion

The proposed allocation is for up to 50 dwellings within the urban fringe of the large town of High Wycombe. There is nothing in the scale of the allocation or the significance of its impacts in its context that this would be likely to result in major development in the AONB. At the workshop the Conservation Board recorded a minority view that this would be major development.

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**Site: SHZ0030**

**Penn Road, Hazlemere, High Wycombe.**

This site was included in the consultation draft Local Plan as Policy HW12.

NB Earlier work for both WDC and Chiltern District Council indicate that this would form part of a larger site crossing the district boundary totalling some 17.5HA. Whilst these would be separate plan allocations they would each nonetheless contribute towards a single development on the ground and in considering whether major development would be likely to result from WDC’s potential allocation it is necessary to consider the cumulative impact with CDC’s potential allocation. The combined WDC/CDC site could yield circa 350 - 500 homes (dependent upon any additional supporting facilities required on site). The joint workshop considered the issue on this basis. The site that lies within WDC area is approximately 8HA suggesting a potential yield of 175 to 250 homes.

#### 1 What is the local context for this site in terms of:

1a The scale of the allocation in proportion to the existing settlement

Hazlemere is part of the High Wycombe urban area. The potential combined yield of 500 homes amounts to less than 1% increase.

1b The spatial relationship of the allocation to the existing settlement in the context of settlement form, taking account of the guidance on settlement forms in the Chilterns Building Design Guide

Development here would be consistent with the overall settlement pattern. Residential development contained by woodland is one of the positive characteristic features of the urban edges of High Wycombe.

#### 2 What potential is there for a serious adverse impact on the AONB in terms of:
2a Landscape impact

The landscape assessment concluded that the landscape impact of a comprehensive development would be limited to the inherent and inescapable change in character and localised visual impacts. No significant adverse impacts were identified.

2b The impact on the quiet enjoyment of the AONB

There is a public right of way running from Hazlemere Road through the site and continuing through the woods. There are other informal paths within the woods. Development would be visible from these paths but the impact is localised.

2c Wildlife/habitat impact

The site comprises a number of paddocks with little intrinsic biodiversity value. The adjoining Ancient Woodland is much higher value, but provided development adheres to Natural England standing advice on buffers, there is no indication at this stage that the allocation would be likely to result in a significant adverse impact.

2d Heritage impact

No known issues

3 Can the proposed allocation be sensibly described as ‘major’ in the normal meaning of the word

WDC site (8HA and 175 – 250 homes)

Joint site (17HA and 350 – 500 homes)

Both of these options would commonly be recognised as clearly major irrespective of context or specific impacts.

Overall Conclusion

The lack of specific adverse impacts does not preclude the identification of a proposal as major development by reason of its sheer scale and there can be little doubt that the scale of development contemplated in this instance would be major development in the AONB (despite being a relatively modest extension to High Wycombe).

7.5 Following on from this the Council considered whether a reduced allocation could be devised (in similar fashion to ‘Land south of Mill Road’ in Stokenchurch). In this case however it has not been possible to identify an
acceptable option. It is therefore recommended that the potential allocation identified in the June 2016 draft Local Plan is not progressed as it would be likely to result in major development in the AONB, and for the reasons stated in section 1 of this report, the Council does not consider that the exceptional circumstances tests in NPPF116 could be satisfied.

Site: SMA0105

**Seymour Court Road, Marlow.**

This site was included in the consultation draft Local Plan as Policy MR6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 What is the local context for this site in terms of:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a The scale of the allocation in proportion to the existing settlement</td>
<td>This proposed allocation is less than 1% increase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b The spatial relationship of the allocation to the existing settlement in the context of settlement form, taking account of the guidance on settlement forms in the Chilterns Building Design Guide</td>
<td>The site falls within the general extent of the wider built-up area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 What potential is there for a serious adverse impact on the AONB in terms of:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2a Landscape impact</td>
<td>There are attractive views across the site to the wider landscape but the impact on such views would be localised due to the small scale of the proposed allocation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b The impact on the quiet enjoyment of the AONB.</td>
<td>As with the landscape impacts, these would be localised and small scale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c Wildlife/habitat impact</td>
<td>No known issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2d Heritage impact</td>
<td>Within the wider setting of The Old Workhouse (Grade II Listed) but no obvious impacts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 Can the proposed allocation be sensibly described as ‘major’ in the normal meaning of the word</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
</table>
Overall Conclusion

This allocation would not be likely to result in major development in the AONB. This assessment was agreed at the joint workshop.

Site: SMB0080

Heavens Above, 16 High Heavens Wood, Marlow Bottom.

Note: This site was promoted (?) as part of the June 2016 consultation stage.

1 What is the local context for this site in terms of:

1a The scale of the allocation in proportion to the existing settlement

The allocation would represent an increase of approximately 1% to the village.

1b The spatial relationship of the allocation to the existing settlement in the context of settlement form, taking account of the guidance on settlement forms in the Chilterns Building Design Guide

Marlow Bottom is a fairly atypical settlement in the AONB being a post-WWII development of a dry valley. The CBDG does not comment in particular but a short history of the development of the village is available as part of a BBC local history project. http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/domesday/dblock/GB-484000-186000/page/15 The proposed allocation is in keeping with atypical form of the village.

2 What potential is there for a serious adverse impact on the AONB in terms of:

2a Landscape impact

Heavens Above is a single property with a large lawned garden set within a wooded dry valley. There is a bridleway which continues north from Marlow Bottom Road but views to the site are screened both by woodland and by the shoulder of the hill. Development here would be largely imperceptible beyond the site itself.

2b The impact on the quiet enjoyment of the AONB

No identified impacts

2c Wildlife/habitat impact

No identified impacts

2d Heritage impact
No identified impacts

3 Can the proposed allocation be sensibly described as major in the normal meaning of the word

No

Overall Conclusion

The Council does not consider that the allocation would result in major development.

Site: SNH0019

Land off Clappins Lane, Naphill.

This site was included in the consultation draft Local Plan as Policy RUR11.

1 What is the local context for this site in terms of:

1a The scale of the allocation in proportion to the existing settlement

The proposed allocation would amount to approximately a 5% increase to the village (in terms of dwelling numbers).

1b The spatial relationship of the allocation to the existing settlement in the context of settlement form, taking account of the guidance on settlement forms in the Chilterns Building Design Guide

Naphill and Walters Ash have each been developed around a core plateau/ridge village (CBDG pages 19, 20, 59). Development along the ridge/across the plateau is in keeping with the historic settlement form. The site fall within the general extent of the built up area. These sections of the CBDG also highlight the need to ensure a soft edge to the adjoining farmland and wider landscape in the detailed design stage.

2 What potential is there for a serious adverse impact on the AONB in terms of:

2a Landscape impact

The landscape assessment concludes that, due in large part to the fact that the site is surrounded by existing residential areas on three sides, there is capacity to develop the site without significant adverse impacts on the landscape. There is some
possibility that the prominent oak tree at the entrance to the site would face pressure for felling to achieve footway access to the site, but given the quiet nature of the lane beyond this point this may not be necessary. Should it prove necessary to fell this tree then further assessment would be required.

2b The impact on the quiet enjoyment of the AONB

There are no identified adverse impacts.

2c Wildlife/habitat impact

There are no known on site issues. The site is within 500m of a SSSI and further assessment would be required at detailed stage.

2d Heritage impact

No known issues

3 Can the proposed allocation be sensibly described as ‘major’ in the normal meaning of the word

No.

Overall Conclusion

This allocation would not be likely to result in major development in the AONB. This assessment was agreed at the joint workshop.

7.6 The next site to be considered is Molins Sports Ground in Monks Risborough. A recent called-in planning appeal was dismissed at this site for ‘up to 131 dwellings’- APP/K0425/W/16/3149747. The scheme was agreed by all parties to be ‘major development in the AONB’ (IR212)

7.7 It should be noted however that in dismissing the appeal the Secretary of State agreed with “the Inspector’s conclusion that the evidence has failed to demonstrate that a development of 131 dwellings would be capable of providing an acceptable design solution or layout in keeping with its surroundings or in accordance with The Chilterns Building Design Guide (IR196). The appeal proposal would thus conflict with saved policy H8 in the LP and policy CS 19 in the CS, and it would also fail to accord with the design objectives of the Framework (IR196).” (Paragraph 23)

7.8 Mindful of the appeal decision it is considered that the quantum of development that would be likely to result if this site was allocated could perhaps be in the order of 100 to 120 dwellings (subject to mix and detailed design etc). The following assessment is on that basis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th><strong>What is the local context for this site in terms of:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a</td>
<td>The scale of the allocation in proportion to the existing settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking Monks Risborough with Princes Risborough the existing settlement contains circa 3500 dwellings (approximately 300 in Monks Risborough itself). 100 to 120 dwellings would amount to approximately a 5% increase (in terms of dwelling numbers) of the combined built up-area or 40% increase to Monks Risborough.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1b | The spatial relationship of the allocation to the existing settlement in the context of settlement form, taking account of the guidance on settlement forms in the Chilterns Building Design Guide |
| The site lies at the rural edge of Monks Risborough, with development and open areas interspersed. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2</th>
<th><strong>What potential is there for a serious adverse impact on the AONB in terms of:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
<td>Landscape impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of the site would have some adverse impact on the AONB landscape, as was recognised by the Inspector in the recent appeal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 2b | The impact on the quiet enjoyment of the AONB |
| There are no identified adverse impacts. |

| 2c | Wildlife/habitat impact |
| There are no known on site issues. |

| 2d | Heritage impact |
| The site falls within the wider setting of both Askett and Monks Risborough Conservation Areas but its development is not considered likely to result in significant adverse impacts. (This concurs with the views of the Inspector at paragraph 179.) |

| 3 | **Can the proposed allocation be sensibly described as ‘major’ in the normal meaning of the word** |
| Yes. 100 to 120 dwellings would normally be described as major. |

| **Overall Conclusion** |
| Allocation of this site would be likely to result in major development in the AONB. |
Site: **Land to the rear of Poppy Road (including 108 Wycombe Road), Princes Risborough (SPR0036 and SPR0082)**

Note: This is a site which is approx. 1HA within the AONB and 2.8 HA in the setting of the AONB.

### 2 What is the local context for this site in terms of:

**2a The scale of the allocation in proportion to the existing settlement**

Whilst the New Local Plan/ proposes a strategic extension of the town, this is the only site identified in the AONB. Based on the Part 2 Green Belt site assessment work (and taking account of flood and other constraints including the rare Chalk Stream habitat) there is around 0.3HA of developable area within the AONB itself. This would amount to around 10 to 12 dwellings which equates to around 0.3% addition to the town.

**2b The spatial relationship of the allocation to the existing settlement in the context of settlement form, taking account of the guidance on settlement forms in the Chilterns Building Design Guide**

Princes Risborough is a small town developed at the foot of the escarpment immediately adjoining the AONB. This site is fairly level and largely enclosed by the existing built up area.

### 1 What potential is there for a serious adverse impact on the AONB in terms of:

**1a Landscape impact**

The landscape assessment concluded that the overall site has a MEDIUM capacity for development. The potential allocation of the site was identified as “unlikely to have a significant adverse impact upon the character or visual amenity of the wider AONB, though significant change is likely within the site itself”.

**1b The impact on the quiet enjoyment of the AONB**

No specific impacts identified

**1c Wildlife/habitat impact**

The site abuts a Priority Habitat Area (the Chalk Stream). Adverse impacts should be avoided by a suitable buffer and development of this site could present an
opportunity to secure greater protection for the stream (through planning conditions /S106)

1d Heritage impact

No specific impacts identified

3 Can the proposed allocation be sensibly described as ‘major’ in the normal meaning of the word

No

Overall Conclusion

Taking account of the small scale of development within the AONB itself and the limited scope of likely impacts this is not considered to be major development in the AONB.

Site: **Risborough relief road options around Culverton Farm / Shootacre Lane**

Note:

The 2016 consultation draft Princes Risborough Town Plan included a proposal to upgrade Picts Lane/ Shootacre Lane as part of an alternative route to the A4010 through the town (to connect with new roads planned as part of the expansion area to the west of the town). In response to public comments the Council has been exploring alternative options for a new road from Picts Lane back to the A4010 to the south of the town, in addition to the upgrading of Shootacre Lane. All of these options involve development in the AONB.

1 What is the local context for this site in terms of:

1a The scale of the allocation in proportion to the existing settlement

The ongoing options appraisal work suggests a road length of circa 700 metres and a land take of circa 15,000m$^2$ (1.5HA). The town as a whole currently occupies approximately 180HA. In quantitative terms this would be equivalent to less than 1% increase in the built-up area.

1b The spatial relationship of the allocation to the existing settlement in the context of settlement form, taking account of the guidance on settlement forms in the Chilterns Building Design Guide

Not relevant in this case.

1 What potential is there for a serious adverse impact on the AONB in terms of:
1a Landscape impact

Both main options would require care at the detailed stage to avoid inappropriate lighting or materials etc. as per the Conservation Board guidance. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that these are matters that would be resolved at the detailed stage.

In broad terms the landscape assessment of upgrading the existing network would be limited to the immediate margins of the existing road, involving the loss of hedgerows etc., although much of this could be mitigated in the long term there would be significant short term impacts.

A new road would have a more obvious visual impact in the wider landscape. The road could be visible from the Ridgeway and Icknield Way trails and this impact would need further assessment.

1b The impact on the quiet enjoyment of the AONB

Both main options have the potential for some adverse impact. Upgrading Shootacre lane would have some impact on the enjoyment of Shootacre Lane as a walking/cycling route through the AONB. As noted above, a new road would have an impact on views from The Ridgeway and Icknield Way.

1c Wildlife/habitat impact

There is a rare chalk headstream running between the town and the search area. There are two rare butterfly populations (Duke of Burgundy) in the vicinity.

The new road would have the greater risk of impact on the chalk stream whilst upgrading Shootacre Lane would have the greater risk of adverse impacts on the Duke of Burgundy butterfly habitat.

1d Heritage impact

No identified issues

3 Can the proposed allocation be sensibly described as ‘major’ in the normal meaning of the word

The workshop group agreed that no, these proposals could not obviously be described as major.

Overall Conclusion

On the basis of the information so far considered it is unlikely that either option would amount to major development in the AONB, although given the lack of any clear precedent for judging the major classification of a road project in the AONB, this question should be revisited at detailed design and planning stage.

This assessment has also identified several factors that should be considered in the process of appraising the options and details for the relief road:
Landscape impact including views from the Icknield Way and Ridgeway Trails.

Impact on the rare Chalk Stream

Impact on the butterfly habitats

Detailed design approach. Refer to Environmental Guidelines for the Management of Highways in the Chilterns available at:

Stage 3+ Specialist Landscape Capacity Assessments – Green Belt sites

7.9 As noted in paragraphs 7.1 to 7.4, the Green Belt Assessment included a specialist assessment of the landscape sensitivity and development capacity of the sites considered in this chapter. Having considered Stage 4: Assessment of Major Development Criteria, the initial ‘Green Belt’ assessment of the landscape sensitivity and capacity of each of these sites was reviewed and expanded for this report as well (for sites which were not considered likely to result in Major Development in the AONB). One exception to this is the Princes Risborough Relief Road which is assessed elsewhere. The remainder of this report relates to:

- SHW0633 Part of Greens Farm, Glynswood, Green Hill, High Wycombe
- SMA0105 Seymour Court Road, Marlow
- SMB0080 Heavens Above, 16 High Heavens Wood, Marlow Bottom
- SNH0019 Land off Clappins Lane, Naphill
- SPR0036 Land to the Rear of Poppy Road (including 108 Wycombe Road), Princes Risborough
SHW0633 Part of Greens Farm, Glynswood, Green Hill, High Wycombe

7.11 The site lies at southern edge of Hughenden Chalk River Valley (LCA 13.3) and comprises rough grassland/scrub with the occasional garden extension (see Photographs 1, 2 below). Remnant hedgerows follow the footpath that runs north-south along the eastern boundary of the site, while young trees are beginning to form a ‘woodland’ boundary to the north. The site slopes gently westwards. Housing backs onto the site along the southern and western boundaries, which has a strong urbanising influence. There are long-distance views towards the site from higher ground to the west and northwest at/near Hughenden Park (see Photograph 3 below). Sensitive visual receptors are likely to be adjacent residents, adjacent public footpath users and possibly visitors to Hughenden Park nearby.

7.12 The site is low-lying and well contained with a strong urban influence from the adjacent housing, resulting in capacity for residential development without significant adverse impacts upon wider visual amenity – a landscape and visual impact assessment would need to assess any proposed development.
Photograph 1: The western half of the site with adjacent housing at Glynswood and Hughenden Road and high ground beyond to the west.

Photograph 2: The western half of the site with views to/from adjacent housing at Hughenden Road and high ground beyond to the northwest (see Photograph 3).
Photograph 3: View from the Disraeli memorial, Tinker’s Hill, High Wycombe, northwest of the site. The site lies immediately below the arrow.
### Step 2: Assessment/Justification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Assessment/Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td><strong>Visual Sensitivity - Medium</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Long-distance views largely confined to high ground to the west/northwest, contained elsewhere by nearby topography, trees and settlement;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Open views from neighbouring residential properties;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Open views from the neighbouring public right-of-way (footpath) at the site’s eastern boundary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td><strong>Landscape Sensitivity - Low</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cut off from Hughenden Manor Estate and no longer in agricultural use, it is distinct from neighbouring fields, partially in domestic use;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strong urbanising influence of neighbouring residential properties overlooking and utilising the site;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Proximity to existing urban area and established boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td><strong>Landscape Character Sensitivity - Low (2+3)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td><strong>Wider Landscape Sensitivity - Medium/High</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hughenden Chalk River Valley (LCA 13.3) has strong, intact landscape character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Existing settlement edge is strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td><strong>Overall Landscape Sensitivity - Medium (4+5)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td><strong>Landscape Value - High</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Site is in AONB, adjoins Hughenden Manor Estate, close to Hughenden Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td><strong>Landscape Capacity: MEDIUM (6+7)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 7.13 The assessment finds the site to have MEDIUM capacity for development, which means it is able to accommodate development, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas.

*Potential impacts of housing*

#### Potential impact on key landscape characteristics:
- Enclosure to one side of existing public right-of-way (PRoW) adjoining site
- Extension of urban edge to adjoin Hughenden Manor Estate
- Loss of existing ‘field’, though not in agricultural use

#### Potential impact on visual characteristics:
- Reduced views westwards from adjoining PRoW
- Significant change to existing rural outlook from neighbouring private residences
- Slight / imperceptible change to views from Hughenden Park

#### Potential impact on the AONB
- Unlikely to feature significantly in views from the wider AONB
- Minor extension of the urban area into an isolated field at the edge of the AONB
Landscape guidelines for development:

- Establish/reinstate native hedgerow and trees along PRoW at eastern site boundary to screen adjacent development and maintain sense of a rural green corridor;

- Incorporate landscaped boundaries with existing housing and with the adjoining Hughenden Manor Estate;

- Provide tree planting through site to provide setting for housing and help diversify habitats;

- Use low level lighting strategy to avoid light pollution to the remaining dark landscape;

- Carefully consider building heights to ensure no negative impact on wider views.

- Use building styles and materials that complement existing housing and allow new development to recede into the landscape where seen from the adjoining AONB and Hughenden Manor Estate.
SMA0105 Seymour Court Road, Marlow

7.14 This site comprises a single pasture field that slopes to the southwest, previously occupied by a stable. It is surrounded on three sides by mature hedgerows and trees that provide containment and a significant measure of visual screening. There are relatively open views into the site from Seymour Court Road and from neighbouring properties to the south, while glimpsed and partial views occur between the site and some of the higher ground to the north and west. While the latter represent views to/from the wider Chilterns AONB, existing mature trees and hedgerows provide strong visual containment of the site, or serve as a backdrop to the site, while its immediate suburban context suggest residential development could be accommodated here without significant change or adverse impact upon the landscape character or visual amenity of the AONB. The amenity of the public footpath GMA/44/1 is an important consideration, especially where it passes through the site, where development should accommodate the footpath as part of a green corridor parallel to the road.

Source: Bing Maps
Photograph 1: View southwest across the site from Pincroft at its junction with Seymour Court Road. Development on the site is likely to be visible beyond the road.

Photograph 2: View west across the site at its entrance from Seymour Court Road. Development of the site will be visible from here.
Photograph 3: View south towards the site from the public right-of-way (footpath) with glimpses of Marlow beyond. New development will be well screened with glimpses of rooftops likely.

Photograph 4: View east towards the site from the public right-of-way. New development will be well screened with glimpses of rooftops likely against a backdrop of trees.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Assessment/Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Visual Sensitivity – Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There are partial views into the site occur from Seymour Court Road adjoining the site, and from the neighbouring property to the south.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There are partial views into the site from the public footpath GMA/44/1 beyond the site’s north-eastern boundary, views which incorporate parts of Marlow beyond the site; this footpath also passes through the site, from where there will be open views of any development;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There are glimpsed partial views into the site from public footpath GMA/45/1 approximately 400m to the west, which incorporates neighbouring/nearby housing and a ‘wooded’ backdrop as context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Landscape Sensitivity – Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mature vegetated boundaries and (former) pastoral use provide continuity of character with the wider countryside; however, land parcel is very small.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Neighbouring residential properties and evidence of previous development (paving/concrete, evergreen trees) weaken its relationship with countryside;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Landscape Character Sensitivity – Low (2+3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Wider Landscape Sensitivity - Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Thames Valley Slope (LCA 21.1) has a moderately strong and intact landscape character, where distinctive rural qualities are counterbalanced with the human influences of settlement and transport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Overall Landscape Sensitivity – Low/Medium (4+5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Landscape Value - High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Site is in AONB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Landscape Capacity: MEDIUM (6+7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.15 The assessment finds the site to have MEDIUM capacity for development, which means it is able to accommodate development, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas.

**Potential impacts of housing**

Potential impact on key landscape characteristics:
- A minor extension of the existing urban edge along Seymour Court Road
- Potential loss of mature trees at the site margins, depending on condition and proximity to new development.

Potential impact on visual characteristics:
- Slight intensification/extension of the urban edge in glimpsed views eastwards from public right-of-way GMA/45/1 and southwards from GMA/44/1
- Slight extension to the urban edge of Seymour Court Road.
- Significant change to outlook from a short portion of public right-of-way GMA/44/1 within the site itself, though the site is already perceived as a transition from open
countryside to suburban area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential impact on the AONB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Unlikely to have an adverse impact upon the character or visual amenity of the wider AONB;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Minor extension of the urban area into a small isolated field at the edge of the AONB will have a medium impact upon the field itself.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Landscape guidelines for development:**

- Gap-up native hedgerow/trees along the northern and western site boundaries to reinforce screening of the site;
- Provide a green corridor or ‘green street’ as context for the public right-of-way passing through the site;
- Building heights should reflect adjoining residential properties and avoid/minimise adverse visual impacts on wider views;
- Use building styles, materials and layouts that complement existing housing, provide a relatively complex roofscape and allow new development to recede into the landscape where seen from the adjoining AONB;
- Use low level lighting strategy to minimise visual impacts upon the night-time landscape.
7.16 Marlow Bottom, as its name suggests, occupies a valley bottom while woodland and green open space occupies the valley sides above; this is particularly true of the western/southern valley side where the existing urban area of Marlow Bottom has a distinct ‘edge’ running along the bottom of the valley. The site being considered appears to lie beyond this ‘edge’ on plan but also occupies a valley floor position, which is consistent with the adjoining urban area. The site is substantially wooded on three sides and is visually enclosed except from the east, though no clear public views were found during the site visit. The site currently contributes to undeveloped western margins of Marlow Bottom, comprising a field/garden area.

7.17 The valley-bottom position supports the principle of development, which would be consistent with the landscape character of Marlow Bottom. The high degree of visual enclosure and lack of significant public vantage points also lend scope for development without the likelihood of significant visual impacts arising. However, with substantial woodland adjoining the site edges, the site grass margins are likely to provide benefits to biodiversity and may merit protection.

7.18 Development of the site (assuming two-storey housing) is likely to have only a low impact upon landscape character and visual amenity. Development patterns should be consistent with that already established on High Heavens Wood 15 metres wide, particularly with regard to maintaining a minimum 15 metre separation between buildings and the site boundary, in order to maintain a green woodland buffer. Development capacity is moderate to high.
Photograph 1: Views into the site from High Heavens Wood are partially screened by fencing/gates and vegetation.

Photograph 2: The site is enclosed by trees on three sides but has an open boundary with the adjacent built-up area to the east. A single house currently occupies the site. Views from other parts of Marlow Bottom and the countryside beyond are heavily constrained by topography and woodland.
Photograph 3: The site is enclosed by trees on three sides but has an open boundary with the adjacent built-up area to the east. Views from other parts of Marlow Bottom and the adjacent countryside are heavily constrained by topography and woodland.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Assessment/Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Visual Sensitivity – Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Views towards the site are heavily constrained by topography and surrounding woodland;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The low-lying position in the valley bottom surrounded by woodland on the valley sides provides strong visual containment;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Landscape Sensitivity – Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The site does not contain any significant landscape features, nor would the site’s development result in the loss of landscape features.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mature vegetated boundaries and a pastoral character provide continuity of character with the wider countryside; however, the land parcel is also very self-contained by the surrounding woodland, while its use as a garden and its open aspect towards Marlow Bottom lends it an urbanising influence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Landscape Character Sensitivity – Low (2+3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Wider Landscape Sensitivity - Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Great Marlow Rolling Farmland (LCA 18.1) has a moderately strong and intact landscape character, where distinctive rural qualities are counterbalanced with the human influences of transport and the nearby Wycombe Air Park.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Overall Landscape Sensitivity – Low/Medium (4+5)

7. Landscape Value - High
   • Site is in AONB

8. Landscape Capacity: MEDIUM (6+7)

7.19 The assessment finds the site to have MEDIUM capacity for development, which means it is able to accommodate development, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas.

*Potential impacts of housing*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential impact on key landscape characteristics:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A minor extension of the existing urban edge within the valley bottom;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No loss of landscape features</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential impact on visual characteristics:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Minor extension of the existing urban area perceived only locally – from High Heavens Wood and residential area across the valley to the east;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No views of the site from the wider settlement or surrounding countryside.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential impact on the AONB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Unlikely to have an adverse impact upon the character or visual amenity of the wider AONB;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Minor extension of the urban area within the valley bottom will not have a significant impact upon the character of the valley or the AONB.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Landscape guidelines for development:*

- Maintain sufficient buffer between existing woodland and new buildings to avoid adverse impacts upon the woodland edge (loss of trees);
- Building heights should reflect adjoining residential properties and avoid/minimise adverse visual impacts on wider views;
- Use building styles, materials and layouts that complement existing housing, provide a relatively complex roofscape and allow new development to recede into the landscape where seen from the adjoining AONB;
- Use low level lighting strategy to minimise visual impacts upon the night-time landscape.
SNH0019 Land off Clappins Lane, Naphill

7.20 This site comprises a single field surrounded by housing on three sides and open agricultural land (pasture) on the fourth. The site supports mature vegetation on all sides, though filtered views into the site occur from most directions, mainly from the rear of adjoining dwellings. The site slopes eastwards and affords filtered long-distance views between the site and the opposite side of the valley. The site lies within the Chilterns AONB and reflects the pastoral character of the local area, but is strongly urbanised by the neighbouring residential areas. The north-eastern field boundary marks a line that is continuous with the established edge to built development on both sides of the site, where the existing trees/hedgerow could be supplemented with additional planting to form a natural limit to development in this location.

7.21 The enclosure of the site with housing and vegetation, its urban context and the limited visibility into the site from other parts of the AONB suggest capacity for development within this site without likely significant harm to local landscape character, visual amenity or the AONB’s special qualities.

Source: Bing Maps
Photograph 1: View along the site's south-western boundary to adjacent housing at Allen Drive.

Photograph 2: View across the site to its north-western boundary and adjacent housing at Woodcock Avenue.
Photograph 3: View to the site’s north-eastern boundary with filtered views across the AONB to the north.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Assessment/Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Visual Sensitivity – Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Views beyond the site are largely confined to/from the northeast and are substantially contained elsewhere by trees and buildings;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- There are open views into the site from neighbouring residential properties but mainly from upper floors;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- There are partial views into the site from the nearby public footpath beyond the site’s north-eastern boundary;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Most views of the site incorporate the existing settlement as context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Landscape Sensitivity – Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Mature vegetated boundaries and pastoral agricultural use provide continuity of character with the wider countryside;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- However, predominantly 20th-century residential development to three sides of the site weakens its relationship with countryside;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Neighbouring residential properties overlook the site and have a strong urbanising influence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Landscape Character Sensitivity – Low (2+3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Wider Landscape Sensitivity - Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Walters Ash &amp; Naphill Settled Plateau (LCA 16.2) has a moderately strong and intact landscape character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The strong linear forms of relatively modern settlement on the plateaux are a strong urbanising influence on local character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Overall Landscape Sensitivity – Low/Medium (4+5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Landscape Value - High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Site is in AONB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Landscape Capacity: MEDIUM (6+7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.22 The assessment finds the site to have MEDIUM capacity for development, which means it is able to accommodate development, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas.

Potential impacts of housing

Potential impact on key landscape characteristics:
- Consolidation of the prevailing urban edge by infilling a gap
- Potential loss of mature trees at the existing edge of residential area

Potential impact on visual characteristics:
- Increased urbanisation of view westwards from nearby PRoW
- Significant change to existing rural outlook from neighbouring private residences
- Slight intensification of urban edge to views from the wider countryside
Potential impact on the AONB
- Unlikely to feature significantly in views from the wider AONB
- Minor extension of the urban area into a largely isolated field at the edge of the AONB

Landscape guidelines for development:

- Establish/reinstate native hedgerow/trees along the north-eastern site boundary to screen development area;
- Provide tree planting through site to provide setting for housing and help diversify habitats;
- Carefully consider building heights to reflect adjoining residential areas and avoid/minimise adverse visual impacts on wider views.
- Use building styles, materials and layouts that complement existing housing, provide a relatively complex roofscape and allow new development to recede into the landscape where seen from the adjoining AONB.
- Use low level lighting strategy to minimise visual impacts upon the night-time landscape;
SPR0036 Land to the Rear of Poppy Road (including 108 Wycombe Road), Princes Risborough

7.23 The site occupies a discrete part of the landscape at the edge of Princes Risborough. The rough grassland, scrub and trees of SPR0036 form a landscape that is not typical of the adjacent wider countryside, which is mostly arable farmland, nor is it characteristic of the adjoining urban area; it lies at the edge of (but outside) the Chilterns AONB. Meanwhile SPR0082 comprises a large detached house in an extensive private garden that has more in common with the neighbouring residential area; it lies within the AONB. A significant belt of trees along the stream corridor screen views into the site from the southwest, while trees within nearby gardens also provide screening. Properties along Poppy Road and Almond way, including garden vegetation, screen views into the site from other directions. There are long-distance views of the site from elevated ground within the Chilterns AONB to the south and east, while views from the nearby Ridgeway National Trail are largely screened by intervening vegetation and buildings. This and several other designated walking trails pass nearby to the south of the site.

7.24 Existing vegetation lends a ‘wooded’ appearance to the site in views from the outside, the principal elements of which should be retained for their landscape value, to screen potential development from the adjacent countryside and perhaps also as wildlife habitat. The stream corridor is also a significant landscape feature, though not particularly visible in public views, and may also be a valuable wildlife resource.

7.25 Retention of mature trees and other vegetation at the site margin should not preclude sensitive development within parts of the site. Given the site’s position adjacent to / enclosed by existing residential areas within the wider urban context of Princes Risborough, and the retention of perimeter screening, development of this site is not expected to have any significant adverse impacts upon local landscape character, nor is it expected to have any significant impacts upon visual amenity within the local area or the wider Chilterns AONB.
Photograph 1: Entrance to 108 Wycombe Road
Photograph 2: View towards the site from public right-of-way PRR/3/1 (east of site), where intervening trees screen the site from view.

Photograph 3: View towards the site from public right-of-way PRR/3A/1 (east of site), where intervening buildings and trees largely screen the site from view. rooftops of new residential development on the site may be visible from here.
Photograph 4: View from Picts Lane along the site’s south-western boundary where mature hedgerow/trees screen the site from view.

Photograph 5: View from Shootacre Lane where perimeter hedgerow/trees screen the site from view. The proposed Relief Road will be visible in this view along with the site access, therefore a glimpse of proposed housing may also be visible.
### Assessment/Justification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Assessment/Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Visual Sensitivity – Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There are glimpses of the site margins from neighbouring roads and of treetops within the site from elevated positions to the east and south. The site is well-screened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Landscape Sensitivity – Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mature vegetated boundaries provide continuity of character with the wider countryside but also serve as a strong boundary-buffer between the site and the surrounding open countryside;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Neighbouring residential properties establish a suburban context to the site and weaken its relationship with countryside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Landscape Character Sensitivity – Low (2+3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Wider Landscape Sensitivity - Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Risborough Chalk Foothills (LCA 10.6) has a moderately strong and intact landscape character, where distinctive rural qualities are counterbalanced with the human influences of settlement and transport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Overall Landscape Sensitivity – Low/Medium (4+5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Landscape Value – Medium/High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Site is partially in the AONB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Glimpsed views of the site from the adjoining AONB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Landscape Capacity: MEDIUM (6+7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 7.26 The assessment finds the site to have MEDIUM capacity for development, which means it is able to accommodate development, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas.

*Potential impacts of housing:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential impact on key landscape characteristics:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Development would constitute a modest extension of the existing urban edge within an area that has a strong boundary-buffer with adjacent countryside, resulting in no significant adverse impact upon landscape character</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential impact on visual characteristics:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Slight intensification/extension of the urban edge in occasional glimpsed views of rooftops from the nearby road/footpath network;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Slight intensification/extension of the urban edge in distant views of rooftops from the chalk escarpment to the east/south;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Perimeter vegetation will remain intact and continue to provide strong screening.

**Potential impact on the AONB**
- Unlikely to have a significant adverse impact upon the character or visual amenity of the wider AONB, though significant change is likely within the site itself (SPR0082);

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**Landscape guidelines for development:**

- Gap-up native hedgerow/trees along the site boundaries to reinforce screening of the site;
- Building heights should reflect adjoining residential properties and avoid/minimise adverse visual impacts on wider views;
- Use building styles, materials and layouts that complement existing housing, provide a relatively complex roofscape and allow new development to recede into the landscape where seen from the adjoining AONB;
- Use low level lighting strategy to minimise visual impacts upon the night-time landscape.
Conclusions and Recommendations (Green Belt Sites)

7.27 On the basis of the above it is concluded that the following sites would be acceptable with regards to the AONB, and that subject to the HELAA assessment, and (where appropriate) the Green Belt Assessment of exceptional circumstances, these sites should be allocated in the New Local Plan:

- SHW0633 Part of Greens Farm, Glynswood, Green Hill, High Wycombe
- SLE0020 Land East of Sidney House, Lane End
- SMA0105 Seymour Court Road, Marlow
- SMB0080 Heavens Above, 16 High Heavens Wood, Marlow Bottom
- SNH0019 Land off Clappins Lane, Naphill
- SPR0036 Land to the Rear of Poppy Road (including 108 Wycombe Road), Princes Risborough
- Risborough relief road (NB This proposal is not within the Green Belt)
8 Overall Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 This assessment was been undertaken in the context of preparing a new Local Plan for the District, where work on assessing the Objectively Assessed Needs for housing and economic development, and sites to meet these needs, had identified an insufficient supply of sites to meet the full OAN. It gives great weight to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the Chilterns AONB, adopting a landscape capacity approach to identifying opportunities for growth in the most sustainable locations within the AONB. The scope for major development in the AONB has been discounted as contrary to the NPPF in our local circumstances, and in the context of the HMA as a whole. The following sites are recommended for allocation in the New Local Plan (subject to the HELAA showing them to be deliverable or developable in the plan period).

- SSC0034 Wood Farm
- SSC005, 0035 & 0037 South of Mill Road
- SSC0043 Rear of Stokenchurch Business Park
- SLE0017 (Part) Land south of Finings Road
- SLE0020 Land adjoining Sidney House (Green Belt assessment site)
- SLE0027 Land between Chalky Road and Marlow Road
- SHW0633 Part of Greens Farm, Glynswood, Green Hill, High Wycombe
- SLE0020 Land East of Sidney House, Lane End
- SMA0105 Seymour Court Road, Marlow
- SMB0080 Heavens Above, 16 High Heavens Wood, Marlow Bottom
- SNH0019 Land off Clappins Lane, Naphill
- SPR0036 Land to the Rear of Poppy Road (including 108 Wycombe Road), Princes Risborough