

West Berkshire District Council
Burghfield Neighbourhood Development Plan

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

Post Consultation Version

24 November 2022

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Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report of the Burghfield Neighbourhood Development Plan

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document sets out whether or not the contents of the Burghfield Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with European Directive 2001/42/EC¹ and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004².
- 1.2. The purpose of the Burghfield NDP is to provide planning policies to guide development in the designated Burghfield Neighbourhood Area.
- 1.3. SEA is required for all plans which may have a significant effect on the environment. A SEA aims to protect the environment at a high level, and ensures the environment is considered during the preparation and adoption of plans. This promotes sustainable development.
- 1.4. Not all neighbourhood plans will require a SEA to be carried out. To decide if a SEA is required, a screening exercise is used to look at the proposals in a neighbourhood plan, and see if a significant effect is likely.
- 1.5. This document also assesses whether a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) to consider potential impacts on sites of European importance for Nature Conservation is necessary. The HRA screening is set out on page 15.
- 1.6. The legislative background set out below outlines the regulations that require the need for this screening exercise. A screening assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the Burghfield NDP and the need for a full SEA has been undertaken.

2. Legislative background

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

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

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

³ A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (ODPM 2005):

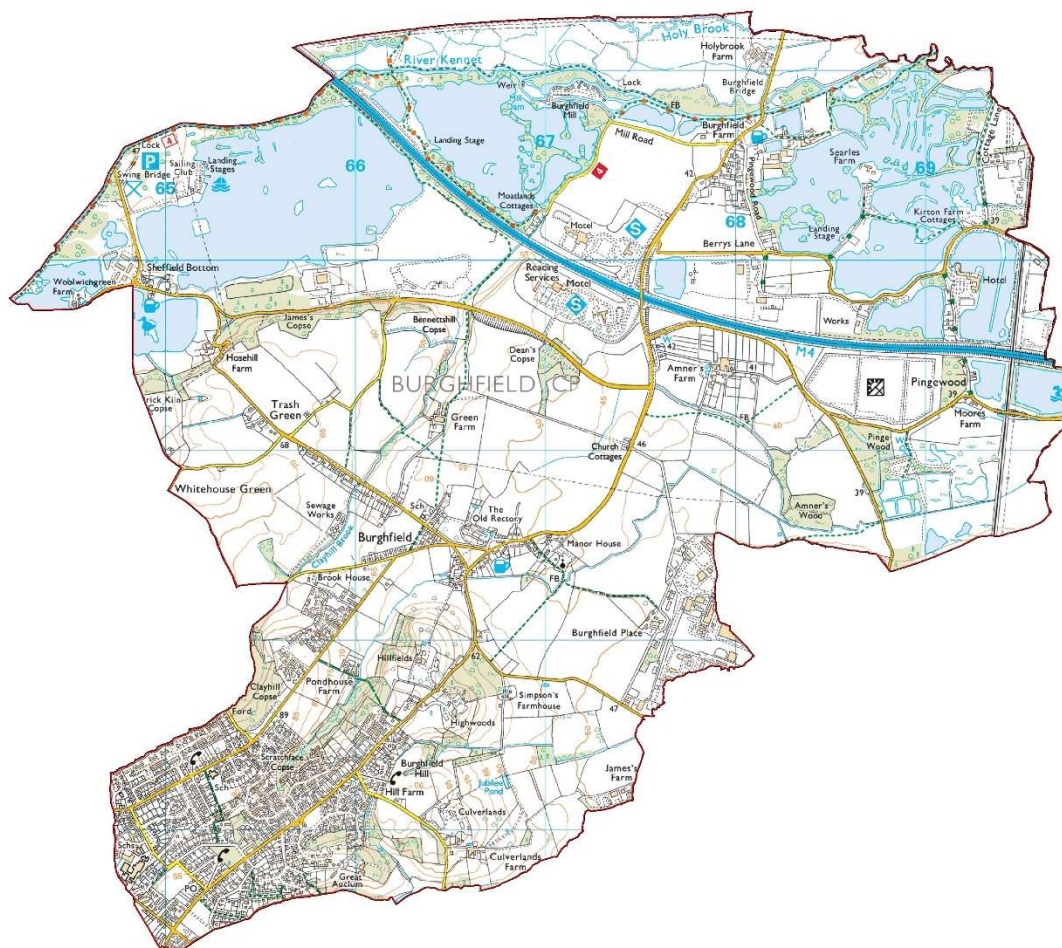
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-environmental-assessment-directive-guidance>

2.4. In accordance with the provisions of the SEA Directive and Regulation 9 (1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, the West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) must determine if a plan requires an environmental assessment. If the Council determines that a SEA is not required, then under Regulation 9 (3) it must produce a statement that sets out the reason for this determination. This screening report is the Council's Regulation 9 (3) statement.

3. The emerging Burghfield NDP

3.1. West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) designated a Neighbourhood Area for the whole of Burghfield Parish in March 2017. The Parish and Plan boundaries are the same and that is shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Burghfield Designated Neighbourhood Area



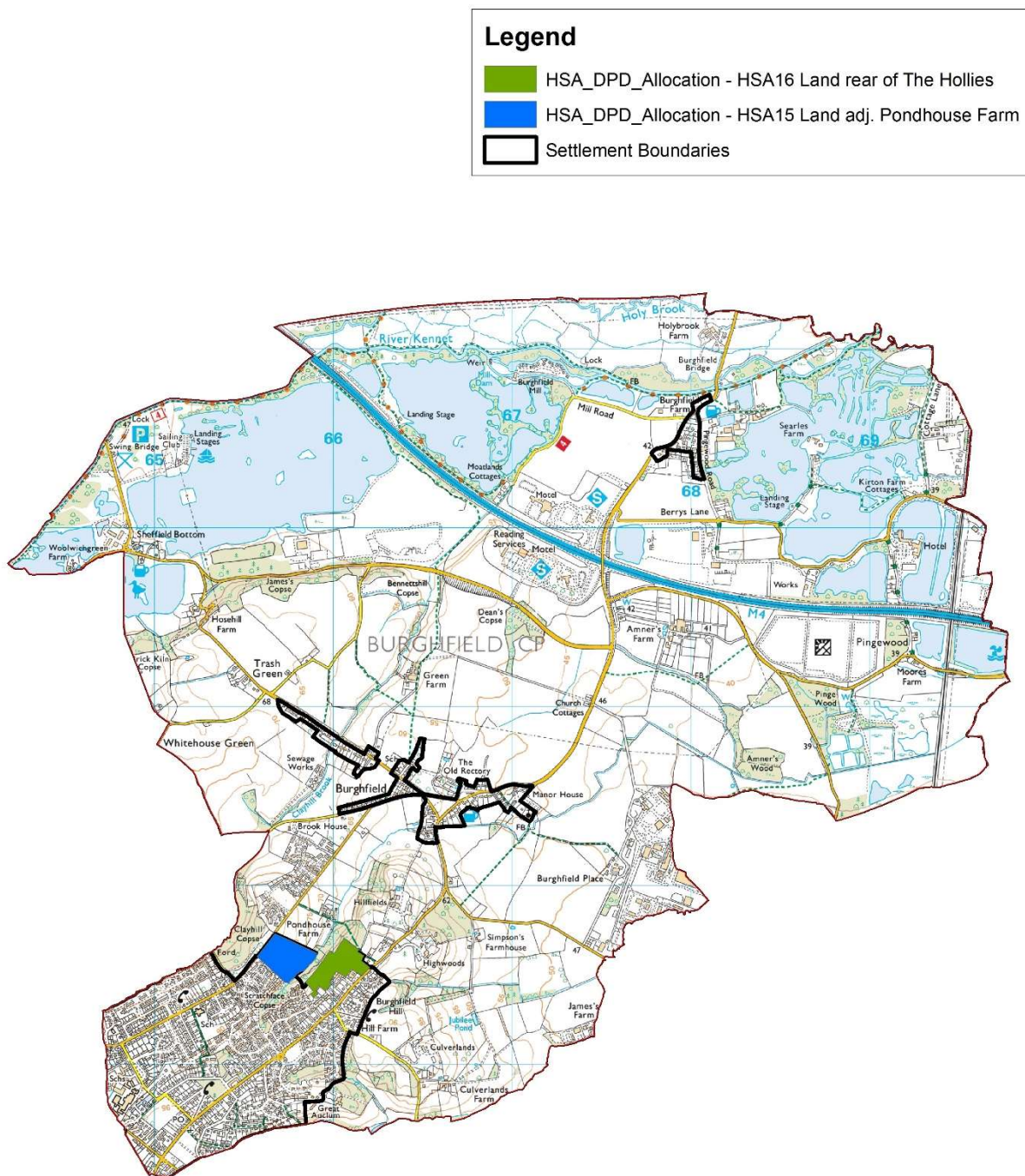
- 3.2. The NDP will sit alongside, and complement the West Berkshire Local Plan which covers the period 2006 to 2026. The Local Plan comprises of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) Development Plan Document⁴ (adopted July 2012), the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (HSA DPD)⁵ (adopted May 2017), and the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-1996 (Saved Policies 2006) as amended in July 2012 and May 2017⁶.
- 3.3. WBDC is currently preparing a review of the Local Plan to cover the period up to 2039, and upon adoption it will replace the documents that form the existing Local Plan. An emerging draft of the Local Plan Review (LPR) was published for a Regulation 18 consultation in December 2020. The publication of the proposed submission (Regulation 19) version of the LPR is proposed for 6 January 2023
- 3.4. In the adopted Core Strategy, the village of Burghfield Common is identified as a Service Centre within the district Settlement Hierarchy meaning that, along with the other Service Centres, it has a range of services and reasonable public transport provision with opportunities to strengthen the role its role in meeting the requirements of surrounding communities. The Parish also includes the smaller village of Burghfield and the hamlet of Burghfield Bridge. Both fall outside of the settlement hierarchy and are 'smaller villages with a settlement boundary' meaning that they are suitable only for limited infill development subject to the character and form of the settlement.
- 3.5. The adopted HSA DPD includes two residential allocations within Burghfield Parish, and both are shown in Figure 3.2 below:
- Land adjoining Pondhouse Farm, Clayhill Road, Burghfield Common (Policy ref: HSA15).
 - Land to the rear of The Hollies Nursing Home, Reading Road and Land opposite 44 Lamden Way, Burghfield Common (Policy ref: HAS16).

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

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

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

Figure 3.2 HSA DPD allocations within Burghfield Parish



The draft emerging LPR which was published for a Regulation 18 consultation in December 2020 proposed to retain the two sites as an allocation i.e. site HSA15 and HSA16; development on these sites has not yet been built out.

- 3.6. As aforementioned, the Burghfield NDP will supplement policies within the West Berkshire Local Plan. The Core Strategy and HSA DPD were both subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and SEA. The SA/SEA for the West Berkshire Core Strategy was produced in order to ensure that sustainability issues were considered throughout the preparation of the Core Strategy. The SA/SEA was an iterative process which identified the likely significant effects of the Core Strategy and the extent to which its implementation would achieve social, environmental and economic objectives.
- 3.7. The SA/SEA was published at key stages of the Core Strategy process and updated as necessary. Each of the stages was assessed against the 11 SA framework objectives and the 29 sub objectives to determine the predicted economic, environmental and social effects of the Core Strategy on the District. At each stage, the findings of the SA/SEA were used to inform the formulation of policies, thereby improving the sustainability of the Core Strategy in the process. The process of the SA/SEA means that the overall spatial strategy and the housing distribution strategy of the Core Strategy have been tested.
- 3.8. The SA/SEA for the HSA DPD considered reasonable alternatives for the scope of the HSA DPD, and for each of the sites and policies included within the DPD. The SA/SEA clearly demonstrates the progression of the preferred strategy from the regulation 18 stage through to the submission stage. The social, economic and environmental dimensions were therefore taken into account throughout the preparation of the DPD to ensure sustainable development.
- 3.9. The vision statement for the draft Burghfield NDP is as follows:

The overall purpose of the Neighbourhood Development Plan is to safeguard the distinctive character and attributes of the Parish, whilst enabling the Parish to provide for the needs of its residents, maintain a healthy rural economy and change in tune with the shared values of the community.

- 3.10. The seven objectives of the draft Burghfield NDP are:
 - **Environment: Protect and preserve environmental assets within Burghfield**
 - Retention of open space: minimise development on greenfield land within the Parish and avoid creeping urbanisation
 - Flood mitigation: plan to minimise the risk of flooding and its impact on local properties
 - **Heritage Conservation**
 - Preserve and protect sites of biodiversity or architectural value within Burghfield, including the extensive area of lakes and wetland habitats in the lower Kennet Valley
 - **Housing: Ensure that Burghfield has a range of housing stock that meets all local needs and is designed and positioned to enhance the “village feel”**

- Range of housing stock: provide homes suitable for people of differing income levels at various stages of their lives, including adequate provision of social and other forms of affordable housing
 - Location: locate new housing development at sites which will result in minimum intrusion into the green space around existing settlements
 - Visual intrusion: select sites for development that will cause minimum visual intrusion into our attractive countryside in cases where building on greenfield land cannot be avoided
 - **Design: ensure high quality design, appropriate to its location, for all new builds.**
 - **Highways and Transport: Maintain a highway network that is safe and meets the needs of all users**
 - Freedom of access: ensure that the highway network facilitates access to all parts of the community
 - Minimise the need for use of the car: extend the system of footpaths and cycle ways
 - **The Local Economy: Employment generation**
 - Provide the facilities required by a thriving local economy without damaging the “village feel”
 - **The Local Community: Facilitate a safe, socially inclusive local community**
 - A vibrant and attractive village centre: support investment in local shops and the provision of meeting places for social contact as well as a public house in Burghfield Common
- 3.11. In order to realise the vision for Burghfield and meet the objectives, the draft Burghfield NDP proposes 31 policies grouped under the following themes:

- **Spatial Strategy/Housing type**
 - Policy H1: New developments – mixed housing types
 - Policy H2: Bungalows
 - Policy H3: New developments - starter homes
 - Policy H5: Affordable Housing
 - Policy C6: Conversion of existing buildings and new buildings
- **Character, Design and Heritage**
 - Policy BC1: Preservation of WWII defence sites
 - Policy BC2: Signs and information about WWII defence sites
 - Policy BC3: Preservation of the Great Auclum Hill Climb and the old well by Bunces Lane
 - Policy GD1: New residential developments and design principles
 - Policy GD5: New development design and sustainability standards
 - Policy GD6: New development design and water resources
 - Policy H4: Bedroom to bathroom ratio
 - Policy H6: Redevelopment of properties - assisted living
 - Policy H8: Self-Build / Custom Build projects
 - Policy SP7: Design Principles
- **Environment and Landscape**

- Policy E1: Habitat restoration and creation
- Policy E2: Protection from development –wildlife and wetland habitats
- Policy E5: Flood risk and minimising the impact on properties
- Policy T17: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)
- Policy T19: Renewable energy
- **Getting around the parish**
 - Policy C4: Links to public transport and accessibility
 - Policy T13: Car free access to Parish amenities and schools. Safe biking with youngsters in mind
 - Policy T14: Network of footpaths and cycleways
 - Policy T16: Public car parking
 - Policy T18: Electric Vehicle Charging points
- **Community and Social**
 - Policy C5: Local Services and Community facilities
 - Policy C7: Provision of a public house in Burghfield Common
- **Commercial**
 - Policy C1: Current facilities and new facilities
 - Policy C3: Sustainable rural tourism and leisure
- **Infrastructure**
 - Policy C2: Developers and telecommunications infrastructure
 - Policy T11: Infrastructure services

3.12. Section 5 below provides a summary of the policies proposed in the draft Burghfield Neighbourhood Plan. It also considers the potential for environmental effects to occur as a result of these policies. It is based on the emerging draft of the NDP as at March 2022.

4. The SEA screening process

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

5. SEA determination and reasons for determination

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

Overview of the plan area

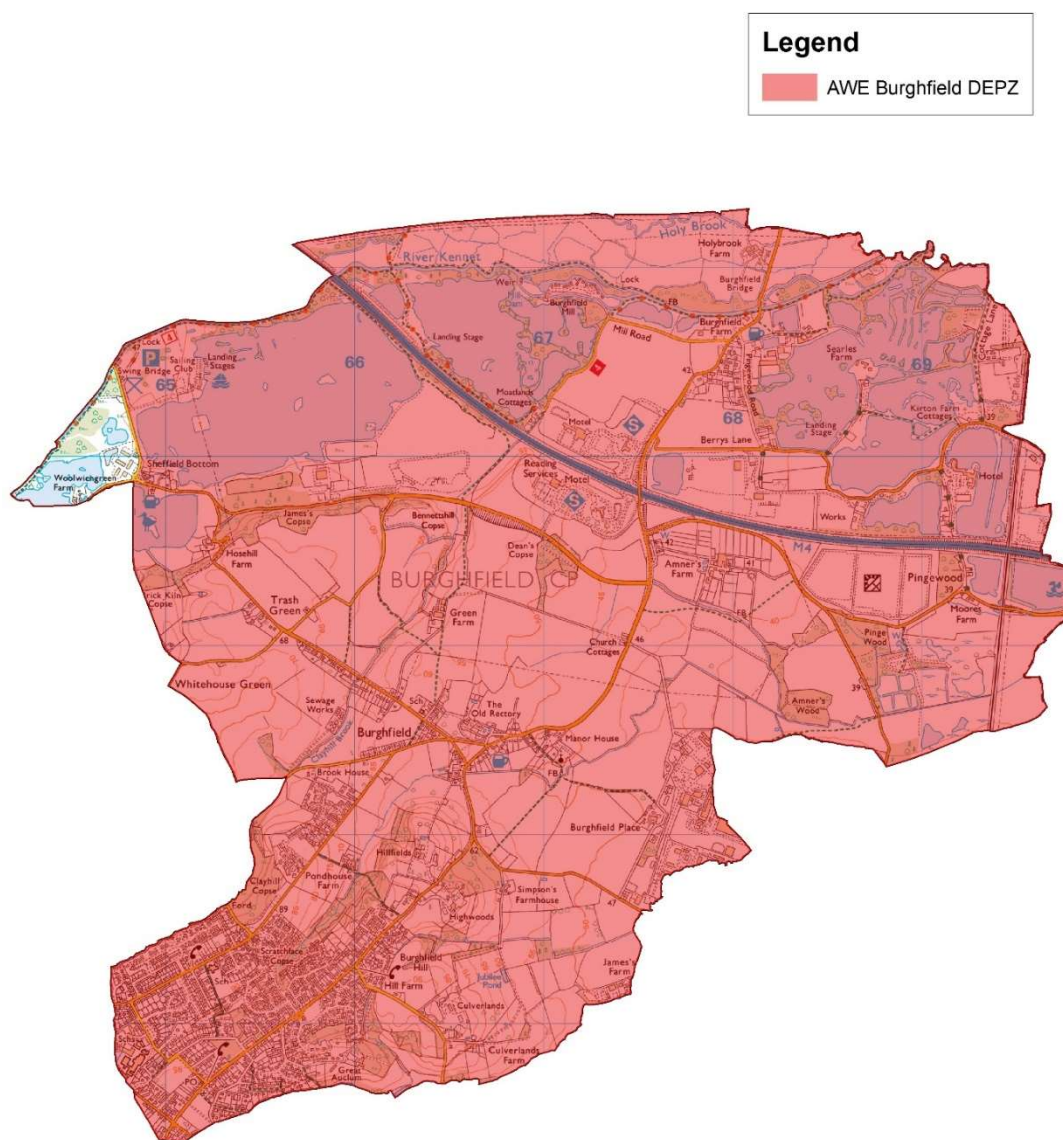
5.2. Burghfield is a largely rural parish that is located in the south eastern part of West Berkshire district. The main settlement within the Parish is the village of Burghfield Common which also partly lies within Sulhamstead Parish. There are two other smaller settlements – Burghfield and Burghfield Bridge.

5.3. There are various constraints to development in Burghfield, with one of the key ones being the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) for the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) at Burghfield (see Figure 5.1). The DEPZ covers the whole of the Parish with the exception of the far north western corner. The DEPZ is an area

where West Berkshire Council must establish adequate emergency response planning arrangements to protect the public. In the interests of public safety, there are restrictions to development within the DEPZ, particularly residential.

There are 10 Grade II Listed Buildings across the Parish, and a Grade II* Listed Building in Burghfield village. In addition, there are several Local Wildlife Sites, and areas of ancient semi-natural woodland and ancient replanted woodland.

Figure 5.1: AWE Burghfield – DEPZ



Screening analysis

Spatial strategy

- 5.4. The designated Neighbourhood Area includes settlement boundaries around Burghfield Common, Burghfield, and Burghfield Bridge. Settlement boundaries are identified within the Local Plan and they identify the main built up area of the settlement within which development is considered acceptable in principle, subject to other policy considerations. While allowing for development, settlement boundaries protect the character of a settlement and prevent unrestricted growth into the countryside.
- 5.5. In light of the DEPZ for AWE Burghfield, the NDP does not include any allocations.

Housing type and mix

- 5.6. There are a number of draft policies in relation to housing type and mix in support of affordable housing, the redevelopment of properties designed for assisted living, and support for Self-Build projects.
- 5.7. No housing allocations are proposed.
- 5.8. It is unlikely that this policy will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area. It is likely that these policies will result in minor improvements in the local area.

Character, design and heritage

- 5.9. Several draft policies aim to protect heritage assets.
- 5.10. There are policies which aim to preserve heritage assets such as the World War II defence sites by the Kennet and Avon Canal for the benefit of future residents.
- 5.11. A draft policy also aims to highlight the significant heritage assets with the use of signs and information boards.
- 5.12. There is a draft policy to preserve what remains of the Great Auclum Hill Climb, or close to the old well by Bunces Lane.
- 5.13. It is unlikely that this policy will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area. It is likely that these policies will result in minor improvements in the local area.

Commercial Economy and employment

- 5.14. No employment allocations are proposed.
- 5.15. There is a draft policy that supports new businesses through change of use of current facilities, subject to a set of criteria that includes economic viability and feasibility to retain the existing or previous retail or commercial use in the property concerned and that there is no reasonable prospect of securing an alternative retail or commercial use.

- 5.16. There is a draft policy which encourages environmentally friendly and sustainable rural tourism, and leisure which respects the countryside and welcomes development.
- 5.17. It is unlikely that these policies will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area.

Infrastructure

- 5.18. There is a draft policy which aims to ensure that utilities infrastructure, for example utilities, broadband, and telecommunications masts, are in place to support any new development
- 5.19. It is unlikely that these policies will result in any adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area.

Getting around the Parish

- 5.20. A number of draft policies are included which seek to ensure that development includes links to public transport and accessibility, a network of footpaths and cycleways, car free access and publically accessible car parking. This includes support for accessible local services and a wide range of community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open spaces, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
- 5.21. It is unlikely that these policies will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area. It is likely that these policies will result in minor improvements in the local area.

Community and social

- 5.22. There is a policy in the draft NDP which seeks to retain or expand existing services, for example local shops, meeting places and sports venues.
- 5.23. A policy in the draft NDP supports the provision of a public house in the Burghfield Common settlement area.
- 5.24. It is unlikely that these policies will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area.

Environment and landscape

- 5.25. There are two policies which seek to protect and preserve the environment. In particular they support habitat restoration and the creation and protection of wildlife rich wetland habitats.
- 5.26. There is a draft policy which seeks to minimise the impact of flood risk with the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in new developments.
- 5.27. There is a draft policy which considers that new residential developments must be designed to meet sustainability standards.
- 5.28. There is a draft policy which includes the use of water resources in the design of new residential developments.

- 5.29. There is a draft policy on renewable energy proposals to benefit the community which includes other measures aimed at carbon reduction provided they do not negatively impact landscape and scenery in and around the Parish.
- 5.30. There is a draft policy which is in favour of new developments including electric car charging points as part of the design.
- 5.31. There is a draft policy which seeks to achieve sustainable, high quality developments that reduce the risk of flooding.
- 5.32. It is unlikely that these policies will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area. It is likely that these policies will result in some improvements to the local environment.
- 5.33. The Council has assessed the Burghfield NDP against the criteria set out within Annex II of European Directive 2001/42/EC and Schedule 1 of the Regulations (as summarised in Table 5.1 below).

Table 5.1: Assessment of likely significant effects (screening)

Criterion (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of Regulations)	West Berkshire District Council's Response
<i>1. Characteristics of plans or programmes, having regard, in particular, to:</i>	
(a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a (a) framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	<p>The NDP, if adopted, will become part of the development plan for the area. It will not set a framework for other plans or policies outside of the Burghfield NDP area (see Figure 3.1 on page 2 above). It will help inform decisions within the parish relating to development up to 2036.</p> <p>It sets out a local policy framework for development proposals. It supports the implementation of policies in the Local Plan which have been subject to SEA and assessed as having no significant effects.</p> <p>Overall there would be no significant effect.</p>
(b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	<p>The NDP does not influence other plans or programmes in the Local Plan; instead it supplements them. The NDP will form part of the Development Plan for the District and will only apply to the designated Neighbourhood Area, the parish of Burghfield. Neighbourhood Plans by their nature are locally driven and focused, providing detailed guidance to local development.</p> <p>Overall there would be no significant effect.</p>
(c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	<p><i>The plan seeks to promote sustainable development that can be considered to be in conformity with the NPPF. This is a 'basic condition'/requirement of the Neighbourhood Plan making process.</i></p>

Criterion (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of Regulations)	West Berkshire District Council's Response
	<p><i>The draft plan includes support for sustainable construction and design, enhancements to biodiversity, linkages to public transport, footpaths and cycle paths, and renewable energy proposals.</i></p> <p>Overall there would be no significant effect, and it is likely that the draft policies proposed will result in minor improvements to the local environment.</p>
(d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	<p>There are several Local Wildlife Sites, in addition to areas of ancient semi-natural woodland and ancient replanted woodland.</p> <p>The draft Burghfield NDP seeks to minimise existing environmental problems in the area. The plan does not propose development that would give rise to environmental problems.</p> <p>The NDP Vision Statement comments that “</p> <p><i>The overall purpose of the Neighbourhood Development Plan is to safeguard the distinctive character and attributes of the Parish, whilst enabling the Parish to provide for the needs of its residents, maintain a healthy rural economy and change in tune with the shared values of the community.</i></p> <p>The policies of the NDP will therefore supplement policies within the adopted Core Strategy and relevant policies within the adopted HSA DPD and saved policies of West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007). The NDP proposes policies on the location of development, character, design, heritage, environment, landscape, transport, employment and infrastructure which would supplement relevant Local Plan policies.</p> <p>Overall there would be no significant effect, and it is likely that the draft policies proposed will result in improvements to the local environment.</p>
(e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of [European] Community legislation on the environment (eg. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection)	<p>Strategies relating to waste disposal or water protection, and other community legislation on the environment, are dealt with in higher tier plans which have already been tested in full. The NDP will not impact on EU legislation on the environment.</p> <p>Overall there would be no significant effect.</p>
<p>2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected [by the plan or programme], having regard, in particular, to:</p>	

Criterion (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of Regulations)	West Berkshire District Council's Response
(a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	<p>The NDP will provide a context and framework to guide future development within the Neighbourhood Area and will supplement adopted planning policy. It will guide development up to 2036.</p> <p>It includes policies that seek to protect and improve the environment, and to minimise the effects of development on its immediate surroundings and ensure development is delivered to high levels of sustainability.</p> <p>No significant effects are envisaged due to the scope and duration of the NDP.</p>
(b) The cumulative nature of the effects	<p>As above.</p> <p>No significant effects are envisaged.</p>
(c) The transboundary* nature of the effects <i>* Transboundary effects are understood to be in other Member States</i>	<p>Effects will be local with limited effects on neighbouring areas. No transboundary effects are expected.</p> <p>The NDP will supplement adopted policy and is not envisaged, in itself, to have a significant effect.</p>
(e) The risks to human health or the environment (eg. due to accidents)	<p>No risks to human health have been identified as a result of the proposed policies in the NDP. Policies relating to environmental nuisance, pollution control and noise pollution are included in higher tier planning documents.</p> <p>Overall there would be no significant effect.</p>
(f) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	<p>The designated Neighbourhood Area is about 17 square kilometres in size, and covers 2.4% of West Berkshire District. At the last census in 2011, the population of Burghfield was 5,923.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plans cover small geographical areas and their policies must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. As such they contain non-strategic development plan policies to address specific local issues. (NPPF paragraph 29).</p> <p>The NDP will provide a context and framework to guide future sustainable development in the area. The majority of effects would be focused within Burghfield Parish.</p> <p>Overall there would be no significant effect.</p>
(g) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:	<p>The built and natural environmental designations within or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Area, along with the proposed NDP policies to protect these are considered below.</p> <p>Burghfield Parish has the following:</p>

Criterion (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of Regulations)	West Berkshire District Council's Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • special natural characteristics or cultural heritage • exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values • intensive land-use <p>And</p> <p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 Grade II Listed Buildings, and a Grade II* Listed Building. • 10 Local Wildlife Sites. There are ten LWSs within the Parish of Burghfield, plus one, Omers Gully, largely in Sulhamstead but extending into Burghfield • 2 Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) extend into the Parish of Burghfield, the Burghfield to Tadley Plateau BOA occupying relatively high ground in the south of the Parish and the Kennett Valley East BOA in the north. • Tree Preservation Orders • Areas of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland and Ancient Replanted Woodland. <p>Within the NDP area there are no known:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSSIs; • World or National Heritage Sites; • Registered Historic Parks and Gardens; • Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites or Local Geological Sites <p>Within the NDP area there are no known:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International conservation designations (or adjacent to it), outside of those listed above; <p>The NDP will protect the above with a vision of <i>“The overall purpose of the Neighbourhood Development Plan is to safeguard the distinctive character and attributes of the Parish, whilst enabling the Parish to provide for the needs of its residents, maintain a healthy rural economy and change in tune with the shared values of the community.”</i></p> <p><i>The draft plan includes support for renewable energy, the optimisation of passive solar gain, thermal efficiency of building materials, energy efficiency measures, on-site energy (renewable sources), reduction of water consumption, measures aimed at carbon reduction, green technology, electric charging points, sustainable design and the generation of renewable energy where appropriate.</i></p> <p>It is not considered that the NDP is likely to have any significant effects on local heritage assets or nature conservation interests and it is likely that the draft policies proposed will result in minor improvements to the local environment. As such, an SEA of the plan is not considered necessary.</p>

- 5.34. Based on these findings, the Council's initial conclusion is that a SEA of the Burghfield NDP is not necessary under the SEA Directive and Regulations because it has been demonstrated that there will not be significant environmental effects as a result of the NDP.

Habitat Regulation Assessment Screening Report

- 6.1. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required to determine if a neighbourhood plan would have a significant impact upon the integrity of nature conservation sites of international importance, ie. Ramsar sites, Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), and Special Protection Areas (SPA). The principal aim of this part of the document is to 'screen' the potential of the Burghfield NDP for its likely effect, either alone or in combination, on these sites.
- 6.2. This is a requirement under EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC⁷, and has been transposed into British law by Regulation 102 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010⁸. The Directive states that any plan or project not connected or necessary to a sites management, but likely to have significant effects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment. An Appropriate Assessment determines the impact that plans and projects would have on internationally important nature conservation sites.
- 6.3. Within West Berkshire there are three SACs (River Lambourn, Kennet and Lambourn floodplain and Kennet Valley Alderwoods), and no Ramsar sites or SPAs. None of these sites fall within the Burghfield Neighbourhood Area.
- 6.4. An Appropriate Assessment of all Core Strategy policies has been undertaken to ensure that either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, the policies do not adversely affect any of the SACs or the buffer area for the Thames Basin Heath SPA.
- 6.5. In addition, a HRA screening was undertaken on the HSA DPD and this concluded that an Appropriate Assessment was not required because the allocations and policies would not result in impacts and effects divergent to those assessed in the Core Strategy. The screening also concluded that there would be no negative effects on nature conservation sites of international importance.
- 6.6. The Neighbourhood Area is not in any close proximity to the SPAs or the Thames Basin Heaths SPA buffer area. The Burghfield NDP is therefore unlikely to have significant effects on nature conservation sites of international importance, and therefore, an Appropriate Assessment for the Burghfield NDP is not required.

⁷ EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1992L0043:20070101:EN:PDF>

⁸ Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/490/pdfs/ukxi_20100490_en.pdf

SEA and HRA findings

- 7.1. Based on the findings in Sections A and B, WBDC's initial conclusion is that a SEA of the Burghfield NDP is not required under the SEA Directive and Regulations because it has been demonstrated that there will be no significant environmental effects as a result of the NDP.
- 7.2. It is also WBDC's initial conclusion that a HRA is not required because there are no internationally designated sites within or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Area.
- 7.3. Nonetheless, a final determination could not be made until the three statutory bodies (Historic England, Environment Agency, and Natural England) commented on this SEA Screening Report. This SEA Screening Report was subject to a five week period that ran from **Wednesday 28 September 2022** to **until 5pm on Wednesday 2 November 2022**. The responses received will then be analysed and this SEA/HRA Screening Report updated as appropriate.
- 7.4. Responses from Historic England and Natural England were received by 2 November 2022. No response was received from the Environment Agency.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 The consultation responses from Historic England and Natural England to the SEA and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report are detailed below and are also included in Appendix 1. No response was received from the Environment Agency:

Table 8.1: Responses from the statutory bodies

Consultation body	Comments	Action
Environment Agency	No response.	No further action necessary
Historic England	<p>The supporting information supplied with the consultation indicates that within the plan area there is a range of designated historic environment assets, but it is unlikely there will be significant effects upon the historic environment as a result of the plan.</p> <p>Historic England hence concurs with the Council's view and considers that a Strategic Environmental Assessment will not be required.</p> <p>Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of the relevant local authorities are closely involved throughout the preparation of the plan and its assessment. They are best placed to advise on; local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the Historic Environment Record (HER), how the allocation, policy or proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.</p> <p>We should like to stress that this opinion is based on the information provided by you with your correspondence below. To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on later stages of the SA/SEA process and, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan/guidance) where we consider that, despite the SA/SEA, these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.</p>	No further action necessary
Natural England	<p>Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening</p> <p>It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils) are concerned, that there are</p>	No further action necessary

Consultation body	Comments	Action
	<p>unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan.</p> <p>We have checked our records and based on the information provided, we can confirm that in our view the proposals contained within the plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England has a statutory duty to protect.</p> <p>We are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies / proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected.</p> <p>Notwithstanding this advice, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all potential environmental assets. As a result the responsible authority should raise environmental issues that we have not identified on local or national biodiversity action plan species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites or local landscape character, with its own ecological and/or landscape advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local landscape and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by this plan, before determining whether an SA/SEA is necessary.</p> <p>Please note that Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond this SEA/SA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek our views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make.</p> <p>Habitats Regulation Screening Natural England agrees with the report's conclusions that the Burghfield Neighbourhood Plan would not be likely to result in a significant effect on any European Site, either alone or in combination and therefore no further assessment work would be required.</p>	

9. Conclusions following consultation with the statutory bodies

- 9.1 On the basis of the screening process detailed in this report, it is the Council's opinion that the NDP is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and as such does not require an SEA under EU Directive 2001/42/EC and The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004), or a Habitats Regulations Assessment under EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.
- 9.2. This determination has been made on 24 November 2022.

Appendix 1 Responses from Historic England and Natural England



Historic England

By email only to: umrah.mahadik1@westberks.gov.uk

Our ref: PL00791379
Your ref: Burghfield NP SEA

Main: 020 7973 3700
e-seast@historicengland.org.uk
louise.dandy@historicengland.org.uk

Date: 24/11/2022

Dear Mr Mahadik

Re: Burghfield NP SEA

Thank you for your email regarding the above consultation. As the Government's adviser on the historic environment Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process. Therefore we welcome this opportunity to review this request. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, "Is it (the neighbourhood plan) likely to have a significant effect on the historic environment?". Our comments are based on the information supplied.

The supporting information supplied with the consultation indicates that within the plan area there is a range of designated historic environment assets, but it is unlikely there will be significant effects upon the historic environment as a result of the plan.

Historic England hence concurs with the Council's view and considers that a Strategic Environmental Assessment will not be required.

Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of the relevant local authorities are closely involved throughout the preparation of the plan and its assessment. They are best placed to advise on; local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the Historic Environment Record (HER), how the allocation, policy or proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.



Historic England, 4th Floor, The Atrium, Cannon Bridge House, 25 Dowgate Hill, London EC4R 2YA
Telephone 020 7973 3700 HistoricEngland.org.uk

Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.

Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.





Historic England

We should like to stress that this opinion is based on the information provided by you with your correspondence below. To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on later stages of the SA/SEA process and, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan/guidance) where we consider that, despite the SA/SEA, these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.

Please do contact me, if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

Louise

Louise Dandy
Historic Places Advisor



Historic England, 4th Floor, The Atrium, Cannon Bridge House, 25 Dowgate Hill, London EC4R 2YA
Telephone 020 7973 3700 HistoricEngland.org.uk

Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.

Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.



Date: 02 November 2022
Our ref: 408276
Your ref: Burghfield Neighbourhood Plan



Ms U Mahadik
West Berkshire Council

Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

BY EMAIL ONLY

planningpolicy@westberks.gov.uk

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Ms Mahadik

Burghfield Neighbourhood Plan – Review SEA & HRA Screening

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 28 September 2022.

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

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment

It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils) are concerned, that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan.

Neighbourhood Plan

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in light of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended), is contained within the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#). The guidance highlights three triggers that may require the production of an SEA, for instance where:

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
- the neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

We have checked our records and based on the information provided, we can confirm that in our view the proposals contained within the plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England has a statutory duty to protect.

We are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies / proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected.

Notwithstanding this advice, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all potential environmental assets. As a result the responsible authority should raise environmental issues that we have not identified on local or national biodiversity action plan species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites or local landscape character, with its own ecological and/or landscape advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local landscape and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by this plan, before determining whether an SA/SEA is necessary.

Please note that Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond this SEA/SA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek our views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening

Natural England agrees with the report's conclusions that the Burghfield Neighbourhood Plan would not be likely to result in a significant effect on any European Site, either alone or in combination and therefore no further assessment work would be required.

For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Sally Wintle
Consultations Team