

**Hermitage  
Neighbourhood Plan  
2022-2039  
Consultation Statement**

**February 2023**

## CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>CONSULTATION PROCESS.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>KEY RESPONSES FROM CONSULTATION .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>REGULATION 14 PRE-SUBMISSION CONSULTATION .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>EU OBLIGATIONS.....</b>	<b>15</b>

## Appendices

Appendix A Letter to owners of proposed Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Appendix B Regulation 14 representations and responses

Appendix C January-August 2020 Conversations – example of a response

Appendix D October 2020 event – sample display boards

Appendix E June 2022 event flyer

Appendix F June 2022 event – collated feedback

Appendix G Pathfinder articles – examples

# 1 CONSULTATION PROCESS

## Introduction

- 1.1 This Consultation Statement has been prepared to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 in respect of the Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan (HNP).
- 1.2 The legal basis of this Consultation Statement is provided by Section 15(2) of Part 5 of the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (as amended), which requires that a consultation statement should:
  - contain details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
  - explain how they were consulted;
  - summarise the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and
  - describe how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.
- 1.3 The policies contained in the Neighbourhood Plan are as a result of considerable interaction and consultation with the community and businesses within the parish. Work over a period of four years has involved Steering Group members carrying out individual research with a variety of stakeholders, commissioning surveys, conducting presentations, manning display stands at public meetings and hosting public events.

## Organisational structure of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.4 Hermitage Parish Council (HPC) delegated the work of producing the Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) to a Steering Group comprising a cross-section of volunteer residents and parish councillors. Terms of Reference were agreed with HPC. The Steering Group met monthly and throughout the period provided verbal updates to HPC. The Steering Group changed somewhat over the period of time it took to complete the HNP. Originally comprising 5 residents and 4 councillors its size reduced in the early phases and for most of its 4 years of existence comprised either 3 or 4 residents and 1 or 2 councillors. At various points over the early part of this period, 1 or 2 other residents volunteered to replace departing members but the Steering Group consistently comprised just a handful of volunteers. The Steering Group has met at monthly intervals and continued to meet electronically via Zoom during the 2020 Covid restrictions. Minutes of each meeting have been shared monthly with HPC and updates published both on the HPC website and in the local Pathfinder print magazine. Each member of the Steering Group has taken responsibility for one or more strands of emerging themes taken forward in the HNP. Resources were always tight despite several recruitment drives, and so external technical support was sought from the national support body 'Locality' and an external planning consultant.

**Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan timeline**

Date	Action	Notes
19 April 2018	HPC announces its intention, at the Annual Parish Assembly, to develop a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)	
10 January 2019	Initial meeting of Hermitage NP Steering Group (5 residents and 4 councillors). Terms of Reference given	
18 April 2019	NP Presentation and information stand at Annual Parish Assembly Email address set up Annual Parish Assembly flier including info on NDP sent to all households	
26 April 2019	NDP Area designation granted	
30 May 2019	Initial meeting with West Berkshire Planning Dept	
June 2019	NDP landing page on HPC website set up	
6 August 2019	Communications strategy reviewed	
Oct 2019	Budget prepared	
May 2019 – Aug 2022	Developer consultations	
Jan 2020	WBDC HELAA published	This informed where potential development sites were likely to be allocated
March 2020	NP publicity delivered to each household for open event 17 March (which had to be cancelled due to Covid restrictions)	
Dec 2019 – Aug 2020	Series of conversations posted at monthly intervals on Hermitage Village Facebook and hard copies posted on HPC noticeboards throughout Hermitage to promote community engagement.	Feedback identified 5 emerging key themes – Housing need Housing design Highways Environment Green spaces
Sept 2020	October Open Event flyers - delivered to each household; posters throughout village; Hermitage Village Facebook alerts posted with links to HPC and NDP websites	
Sep-Oct 2020	Series of 5 'Shock and Awe' statements posted at weekly intervals on Hermitage Village Facebook in run-up to Open Day to elicit comment and increase awareness of the event.	Feedback from this informed development of NDP
10 Oct 2020	Open Day held at Hermitage Primary School; Displays, Maps and Questionnaires. Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To educate attendees about the NDP</li> <li>To prepare people for Housing Needs Survey</li> <li>To gather views on future development</li> </ul>	Feedback used to confirm emerging themes
October 2020	Open event feedback published on website, Hermitage Village Facebook and Pathfinder magazine	
11 Dec 2020 – 4 Feb 2021	WBDC HELAA consultation	
Feb 2021	Arc4 commissioned to conduct Housing Needs Survey - delivered to each household in Hermitage parish	
29 April 2021	Presentation to Annual Parish Assembly. Information display stand included HELAA map, draft Vision Statement and request for SG members	Feedback from this informed development of vision and objectives
May 2021	Communications strategy drafted	
June 2021	Draft vision finalised	
June 2021	Arc 4 Housing Need Assessment final report received. Summary of findings published on website	

Date	Action	Notes
12 July 2021	AECOM site assessment report received which endorses WBDC conclusions	
24 July 2021	Small NDP display at Hermitage Village Hall, for opening of newly completed small hall by MP Laura Farris	
August 2021	SG attends AECOM webinar on affordable housing	
25 Jan 2022	Virtual meeting with WBC Highways to discuss residents' traffic concerns	
Jan 2022 – Oct 2022	Meeting, site visit and ensuing discussions with West Berkshire Heritage Forum	Feedback and advice used to inform list of Non-Designated Heritage Assets
15 Feb 2022	Limited capacity and technical expertise leads SG to relinquish responsibility for site allocation in NDP.	
21 Feb 2022	WBDC confirms they will assume site allocation for Hermitage will be undertaken within the Local Plan review	
27 April 2022	Presentation to Annual Parish Assembly	
April 2022	Initial skeleton Draft NDP produced	
May/June 2022	NDP rework in light of emerging evidence from Design Code	
June 2022	Notices delivered to each NDHA property identified for potential listing	Used to inform inclusion on final NDHA list (see Appendix A)
25 June 2022	Public Exhibition at Hermitage Primary School of initial draft. Skeleton Plan and draft Design Code. Flyer delivered to all households in Hermitage. Posters sited throughout parish. Alerts issued on Hermitage Facebook and in Pathfinder magazine.	
	Public exhibition collated feedback	Only positive comments received. Feedback informed NDP
Aug/Sept 2022	Draft NDP rework in light of event feedback	
September 2022	Final Design Codes report received from AECOM	
Sept /Oct 2022	Final draft NDP approved by HPC for Reg 14 consultation	
October 2022	SG requests screening for SEA/HRA from WBDC	
29 Nov 2022	WBDC decision received that no SEA/HRA is required	
22 Oct 2022	Reg 14 public consultation notifications sent All statutory bodies emailed. Local stakeholders emailed.	
25 Oct – 5 Dec 2022	Reg 14 public consultation period	
Dec 2022 - early 2023	Review of Reg 14 representations and engagement with WBDC on certain matters raised	

1.5 Alongside the above events the following communications were included throughout the process:

- A dedicated Neighbourhood Plan landing page was created on the Hermitage Parish Council website (<https://hermitage.org.uk/neighbourhood-development-plan/>) to which regular reports and updates were posted. Updates were also published in the local Pathfinder magazine which is delivered each month to around half the households in Hermitage as well as to the neighbouring village of Curridge.
- A dedicated NDP email address was created for residents to communicate with Steering Group and publicised as above

- Links to the website updates were posted regularly on Hermitage Village Facebook site.
  - Posters were displayed on Hermitage Parish Noticeboards throughout the village.
  - Each Public Open event was advertised with flyers hand-delivered to each household in the parish; posters on Parish Noticeboards and at other prominent locations throughout the village; repeated announcements on Hermitage Facebook.
  - At each Annual Parish Assembly (to which all residents and local group representatives are invited) a verbal presentation was made and an information stand set up with handouts and questionnaires.
- 1.6 Minutes of each Steering Group meeting were provided to the Parish Council and a verbal update given by the PC member at their monthly meetings.

### **Public events and other consultation activities**

- 1.7 The following is a summary of the public consultation events and how they were advertised:

**18 April 2019 – Annual Parish Assembly:** Flyers including a brief introduction to the NDP were sent to each household. Handouts were placed on each seat at the assembly asking for volunteers and questions about what residents want for Hermitage and an information stand were available at the event. An illustrated presentation was given to attendees.

**January – August 2020 – Conversations:** A series of 5 conversations was posted on the Hermitage Community Facebook Group with the aim of building community engagement and eliciting views. Hard copies and response boxes were placed at pubs, Post Office and Holy Trinity Church. Topics covered were:

- January - Current and future developments for Hermitage
- February - Old Farmhouse development; active travel routes; traffic
- March/April - West Berkshire proposed site allocations (HELAA)
- July – What do you like about Hermitage?
- August – What do you dislike about Hermitage?

Responses to these conversations was used to inform further development of the NDP.

**17 March 2020 - First Public Event:** This was publicised with flyers delivered to each household and posters throughout the village. Unfortunately, this event had to be postponed to the Autumn because of Covid.

**10 October 2020 – Public Event:** Publicity consisting of flyers delivered to each household and posters throughout the village was supplemented with a series of ‘conversations’ published in Pathfinder magazine, on NDP website and on Hermitage Facebook weekly, during the run-up to the event.

Purpose of event - to educate about the NDP, inform on upcoming Housing Needs survey and to gather views. A series of display boards on emerging key themes of Housing Needs, Infrastructure, Green Spaces, Environment. Display map of potential development sites. Questions asked to elicit opinions on how Hermitage should develop – housing needs; green spaces; infrastructure needs. Members of Steering Group were present throughout the day to talk to visitors and answer their questions. Visitors were invited to

write their ideas and comments on post-it notes to say what they valued in Hermitage and in response to questions posed. Around 60 people attended and left 162 comments.

**February 2021 - Housing Needs Survey:** The questionnaire was delivered to each household with a reply-paid envelope. Residents were given approximately 6 weeks to respond. Of 799 surveys delivered, 277 responses were received.

**June 2021 – Housing Needs Survey summary:** This was posted on NDP website. Reminders posted on Hermitage Village Facebook provided a direct weblink and invited comments.

**24 July 2021 – Official opening of Village Hall by Laura Farris MP:** Display stand.

**27 April 2022 – Annual Parish Assembly:** Publicised with flyers delivered to each household. Verbal NDP report given to attendees. Information display stand with handouts, questionnaires on Heritage and Green Spaces present at the event.

**25 June 2022 – Public Event at Hermitage Primary School:** Publicised with flyers delivered to each household and posters sited extensively throughout the village; Weekly alerts posted on Hermitage Community Facebook.

Purpose of event – to present first draft of NDP and emerging Design Code; gather views on Green Spaces and Heritage assets prior to finalising draft NDP for formal Reg 14 consultation. Display boards were set up with maps of development sites, potential extensions to the Active Travel Route, details of local green spaces and potential non-designated heritage assets. Copies of the latest draft NDP and the draft Design Code were available to view. SG members were on hand to elicit further views and to answer visitor questions.

- 1.8 Appendices C to G provide a summary of the material used to engage with the community and some of the outputs.

### **Stakeholder consultations**

- 1.9 Throughout the process, HNP SG worked closely with West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) Planning Department. Other consultees that the SG engaged with included:
- West Berkshire District Council Highways Department
  - Local District Councillors
  - Local landowners – Baker Estate, Eling Estate
  - West Berkshire Countryside Society
  - Hermitage Primary School
  - Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)
  - SPOKES (a local cycling action group with connections with WBDC)
  - West Berkshire Heritage Forum

### **Engaging with hard-to-reach groups**

- 1.10 Throughout the process the HNP Steering Group has been aware of the potential for engagement to fail to reach certain groups. The Steering Group reviewed all feedback received from the main sources of engagement as well as individual emails submitted to see whether there was any under-representation from particular sections of the community. By locating Open Events at the local primary school (frequented by young working families) as well as manning display stands at the Annual Parish Assemblies

(more commonly attended by older community members) and using a variety of traditional as well as electronic communications (i.e. the Pathfinder magazine, HPC website and the village Facebook page), it was felt that community engagement covered a good cross-section of the community.



## 2 KEY RESPONSES FROM CONSULTATION

- 2.1 The range of consultation events were based on the evidence gathered up to that point and the need to gather further evidence to inform the plan. Below is a summary of the content of the consultation events and how the output from these events informed the next stages of the plan:

### **Annual Parish Assembly - 18 April 2019**

- **Aim** – To promote awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan and recruit volunteers.
- **Outcome** – Short list of volunteers.
- **Next Steps** – Volunteers invited to join Steering Group.

### **Conversations - Jan-Aug 2020**

Key responses indicated 4 emerging themes –

- **Housing** – Resistance to additional housing, in particular housing unsuited to local needs.
- **Infrastructure** – Concerns around impact of future development on traffic, drainage, schools and GP surgery.
- **Green Spaces** – Importance of retaining existing woodland, open green spaces and unrestricted views to AONB.
- **Environment/sustainability** – Need for any future housing development to be less crowded and built in sympathy with surrounding rural environment; importance of sustainable design, unrestricted road widths and adequate off-road parking to prevent congestion experienced on more recent development at Forest Edge.

### **Open Event - 10 October 2020**

- **Aim** - To educate, inform on upcoming Housing Needs survey and to gather evidence to inform development of NDP.
- **Outcome** - Feedback was collated under the 4 theme headings (listed above) plus comments on WBDC's recently published Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).

The key issues identified are summarised below –

#### ***Housing***

Some opposition to further development.

Need for range of affordable homes suitable for both young and old who wish to remain in Hermitage.

Housing design to be eco-friendly and sustainable, in keeping with surrounding environment and not higher than 3 storeys.

#### ***Infrastructure***

Widespread concern about impact on infrastructure and services.

#### ***Transport***

Lack of off-road parking on newer development and on B4009 at Post Office and school.

Inadequate bus service increases car dependency.

Safety concerns re B4009 congestion and increased HGV usage.

***Green spaces, footpaths, cycle and bridleways***

The Active Travel Route should be extended to Newbury and other options explored for walkers, cyclists and runners.

Preservation of existing woodland from development.

Provision of a community orchard and allotments.

Desire for new homes to have enough space for gardens front and back.

***HELAA***

Improved and widespread simpler communication from WBDC about planning matters.

Risk of loss of green spaces from more development.

Need for affordable homes for locals.

Inadequacy of infrastructure to cope with more development.

- **Next Steps** – Key topics identified for further investigation included commissioning of a Design Codes report, meetings with WBDC Traffic Department, SPOKES and BBOWT to gather additional evidence inform development of NDP.

**Housing Needs Survey – January - February 2021**

- **Aim** - To identify housing needs for Hermitage.
- **Outcome** – Need identified for affordable home ownership rather than rental, in particular for 2-3 bed dwellings for young and growing families as well as bungalows for older residents.
- **Next Steps** – A summary of the findings was posted on the NDP website and links to it were publicised on the Hermitage Facebook page and in the Pathfinder magazine. Data from the survey was used to inform development of NDP and discussions with landowners about their development intentions and any proposals. The Housing Needs Survey also contributed to the development of the Design Codes.

**Open Event - 25 June 2022**

- **Aim** – To elicit views on the first draft of the NDP and to get responses to questions on Green Spaces and Heritage Assets. Feedback from the October 2020 event indicated that proximity and public accessibility to the extensive woodlands adjacent to Hermitage were highly valued and should be preserved. That event also highlighted a keen desire to ensure any future development was sustainable and ecologically sound. This open event sought to explore this in more detail and test emerging policy proposals. Views were also sought on the first draft of the Design Codes.
- **Outcome** – Feedback indicated general satisfaction with draft Plan and stressed the importance of retaining all proposed Local Green Spaces. Pursuit of Active Travel routes and retention of heritage assets were supported.
- **Next Steps** - Additional evidence gathering and plan reworking prior to commencement of Reg 14 consultation.

### 3 REGULATION 14 PRE-SUBMISSION CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group finalised the Draft Neighbourhood Plan in October 2022. The Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Consultation ran for a 6-week period from Monday 24 October to Monday 5 December 2022. To announce and promote awareness of the consultation with the local community:
- a flyer was hand-delivered to every household in the parish;
  - posters were displayed throughout the village; and
  - announcements were made on the Hermitage Village Facebook and in the Pathfinder magazine.
- 3.2 Paper copies were made available for viewing at three locations throughout the village –
- The Adelaide Room at Holy Trinity Church,
  - The Fox Inn and
  - The White Horse.
- 3.3 The plan could be viewed online at <https://hermitage.org.uk/NDP14>.
- 3.4 Representations could be made either by email or post to:
- Email: [HermitagePC@outlook.com](mailto:HermitagePC@outlook.com)
  - Post: Clerk to Hermitage Parish Council, Farm Gate, High Street, Chieveley RG20 8TA

#### **Distribution to statutory and non-statutory consultees**

- 3.5 In accordance with requirements of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, relevant statutory consultees were notified by email. In addition, a range of parties that the Steering Group considered were likely to have an interest in the plan were also written to. All parties were advised to download a copy of the plan, but were advised that hard copies could be issued on request.
- 3.6 The full list of statutory that were written to was as follows:
- Atomic Weapons Establishment
  - Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council
  - Berks Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust
  - Berkshire Local Nature Partnership
  - Bracknell Forest Borough Council
  - Cadent Gas Ltd
  - CPRE Berkshire
  - Energy Networks Association
  - Environment Agency
  - Footpath Secretary Mid Berks Ramblers
  - Forestry Commission
  - Friends, Families and Travellers
  - Gypsy Council
  - Hampshire County Council
  - Historic England
  - Homes England

Marine Management Organisation  
Mid & West Berks Local Access Forum  
Mobile UK  
National Grid  
National Highways (formerly Highways England)  
National Housing Federation  
Natural England  
Network Rail Infrastructure Limited  
NHS England South East  
NHS Newbury & District Clinical Commissioning Group  
North & West Reading Clinical Commissioning Group  
Office for Nuclear Regulation  
Openreach  
Oxfordshire County Council  
Parish and Town Councils adjoining West Berkshire  
Parish and Town Councils in West Berkshire  
Planning Adviser North Wessex Downs AONB  
Police and Crime Commissioner  
Reading Borough Council  
Scottish & Southern Energy Power Distribution  
South Oxfordshire District Council  
Sport England  
Test Valley District Council  
Thames Valley Berkshire LEP  
Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Thames Water  
The National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups  
Vale of White Horse District Council  
West Berkshire Green Exchange  
West Berkshire Heritage Forum  
Wiltshire Council  
Wokingham Borough Council

- 3.7 West Berkshire District Council advised that all parish councils and parish meetings in the district should be written to about the Regulation 14 consultation. The list is as follows:

Ardington and Lockhinge Parish Council  
Ashbury Parish Council  
Ashford Hill with Headley Parish Council  
Aston Tirrold Parish Council  
Aston Upthorpe Parish Council  
Baughurst Parish Council  
Baydon Parish Council  
Blewbury Parish Council  
Burghclere Parish Council  
Buttermere Parish Council  
Childrey Parish Council  
Chilton Foliat Parish Council

Chilton Parish Council  
Cholsey Parish Council  
Compton Beauchamp Parish Council  
East Hendred Parish Council  
East Woodhay Parish Council  
Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Parish Council  
Faccombe Parish Meeting  
Froxfield Parish Council  
Goring Parish Council  
Ham Parish Council  
Heckfield Parish Council  
Highclere Parish Council  
Kingston Lisle Parish Council  
Letcome Bassett Parish Council  
Linkenholt Parish Meeting  
Mapledurham Parish Council  
Mortimer West End Parish Council  
Moulsford Parish Council  
Newtown Parish Council  
Pamber Parish Council  
Ramsbury & Axford Parish Council  
Shalbourne Parish Council  
Shinfield Parish Council  
South Stoke Parish Council  
Sparsholt Parish Council  
Stratfield Saye Parish Council  
Swallowfield Parish Council  
Tadley Town Council  
Uffington Parish Council  
Upton Parish Council  
Wantage Town Council  
West Hendred Parish Council  
Whitchurch-On-Thames Parish Council  
Woolstone Parish Meeting  
Aldermaston Parish Council  
Aldworth Parish Council  
Ashampstead Parish Council  
Basildon Parish Council  
Beech Hill Parish Council  
Beedon Parish Council  
Beenham Parish Council  
Boxford Parish Council  
Bradfield Parish Council  
Brightwalton Parish Council  
Brimpton Parish Council  
Bucklebury Parish Council  
Burghfield Parish Council  
Catmore Parish Meeting  
Chaddleworth Parish Council

Chieveley Parish Council  
Cold Ash Parish Council  
Combe Parish Meeting  
Compton Parish Council  
East Garston Parish Council  
East Ilsley Parish Council  
Enborne Parish Council  
Englefield Parish Council  
Farnborough Parish Meeting  
Fawley Parish Meeting  
Frilsham Parish Council  
Great Shefford Parish Council  
Greenham Parish Council  
Hampstead Norreys Parish Council  
Hamstead Marshall Parish Council  
Holybrook Parish Council  
Hungerford Town Council  
Inkpen Parish Council  
Kintbury Parish Council  
Lambourn Parish Council  
Leckhampstead Parish Council  
Midgham Parish Council  
Newbury Town Council  
Padworth Parish Council  
Pangbourne Parish Council  
Peasemore Parish Council  
Purley on Thames Parish Council  
Shaw-cum-Donnington Parish Council  
Speen Parish Council  
Stanford Dingley Parish Council  
Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council  
Streatley Parish Council  
Sulhamstead Parish Council  
Thatcham Town Council Parish Council  
Theale Parish Council  
Tidmarsh with Sulham Parish Council  
Tilehurst Parish Council  
Ufton Nervet Parish Council  
Wasing Parish Meeting  
Welford Parish Council  
West Ilsley Parish Council  
West Woodhay Parish Meeting  
Winterbourne Parish Meeting  
Wokefield Parish Council  
Woolhampton Parish Council  
Yattendon Parish Council

3.8 The following non-statutory consultees were written to:

**Organisations**

Holy Trinity Church

Hermitage Cubs

Hermitage Brownies

Hermitage Rainbows

Hermitage pre-school playgroup

Hermitage Primary School

Hermitage Horticultural Society

Hermitage Village Hall

Hermitage Village Hall users eg Yoga, Ballet, Dance, Circuit classes

**Landowners**

Eling Estate (Eling Trust)

West Berkshire Youth

Baker Estate

Barlow family

Hermitage Farms

**Businesses**

The White Horse pub

The Fox pub

Hermitage garage & Car sales

Hermitage Post Office & stores

Yarnfest

Downland surgery

West Berkshire Countryside Society

Hermitage Co-op

Spokes

**Responses**

3.9 In total there were 14 representations. One representation (from Natural England) was received after the deadline but was taken into consideration.

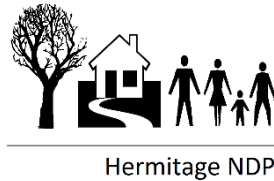
3.10 The representations and the responses are shown in Appendix B.

## **4 EU OBLIGATIONS**

- 4.1 In September 2022, Hermitage Parish Council formally requested that West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) carry out a screening opinion on the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).
- 4.2 In October 2022 WBDC prepared the draft reports which concluded that, in its opinion, the draft Neighbourhood Plan was not likely to have significant effects on the environment or on protected habitats. It then issued these draft reports to the statutory bodies - the SEA to the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England and the HRA to Natural England. All of the above bodies agreed with WBDC's opinion. The draft reports were then finalised and the screening decisions issued in November 2022.



## Appendix A Letter to owners of proposed Non-Designated Heritage Assets



10 June 2022

### Are you living in one of Hermitage's valued Heritage Assets?

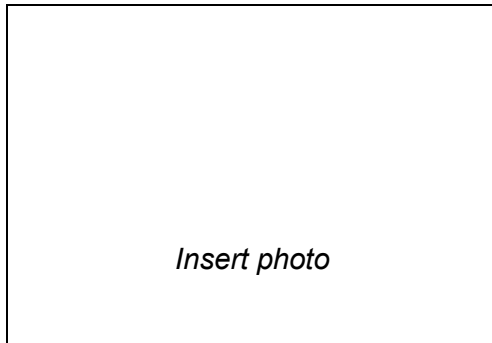
People have told us (the Neighbourhood Development Plan steering group) that they love the way Hermitage looks and feels – especially the older houses along the main road and scattered throughout our village that make up its unique character. Some of these buildings are already listed by West Berkshire Council on their Historic Environment Record (HER) as being of significant interest but we believe there are more, not yet formally identified, that have historic, architectural or artistic interest for the people of Hermitage.

We're thinking of including some of these older buildings in the Hermitage NDP as "Non-Designated Heritage Assets". This status would give their heritage features a greater degree of protection from inappropriate future development. Local Planning Authorities would have to take into consideration the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset when determining planning applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets.

This doesn't give buildings the same protected status as nationally listed properties (although Hermitage does have a couple of Grade II nationally listed buildings!). Nor does it stop you making changes to your property if, for example, you want to add solar panels, change the windows or add a conservatory. It simply seeks to ensure that such high-quality properties are not easily demolished by potential developers, unsympathetically altered or lose their setting.

We think (*insert asset name*) fits the definition of a Local Heritage Asset and we'd like to include it in our list of "Non-Designated Heritage Assets" within the Hermitage NDP.

We'd love to hear what you think about this. Also, if there's any further information you may have which would provide additional evidence of the history or other significance of your property, please let us know. Here's what we've gathered so far:



*Property address and brief description of entry.*

You can email us at: [Hermitagendp@gmail.com](mailto:Hermitagendp@gmail.com) (please put Heritage as the subject heading) or come along on 25 June, between 10am and 4 pm, to our Open Day at Hermitage Primary School where you can find out more and look through the first, informal draft of the Hermitage NDP.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Rosie Healy  
NDP Steering Group

## Appendix B Regulation 14 representations and responses

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
P 13 3.3	(2) British Horse Society	<p><b>Specific suggestions for inclusion:</b> These suggestions will bring the Plan into line with the west Berkshire Council Active Travel Plan.</p> <p><b>Para 3.3</b> Please add horse riders to <i>'improve access to the countryside for walkers and cyclists'</i> to read <i>'improve access to the countryside for walkers, cyclists and horse riders'</i>.</p>	Agreed	Amend para 3.3
P45 8.1	(2) British Horse Society	<p><b>Section 8 Movement.</b> <b>Policy HER9:</b> Please add horse riding to the title to read <i>'Access for walking, cycling and horse riding'</i>.</p> <p><b>Para 8.1:</b> - Please insert 'horse riders' to <i>'Hermitage is surrounded by wonderful and accessible countryside available to walkers, cyclists and horse riders'</i>. - We ask that correct terminology is used when describing the public rights of way network. Footpaths are just one category of public right of way and one which horse riders (and cyclists) cannot legally use. Please replace <i>'Details of various footpaths'</i> by <i>'Details of various public rights of way'</i>. We note that the referenced leaflet is inaccurately named but nothing can be done here about that.</p>	Agreed	Amend HER9 and para 8.1
P47 8.4	(2) British Horse Society	<p>Please include the British Horse Society in the list of consultees involved in future extensions of the Eling Way. We were consultees in the Eling Way and are in contact with the project manager for the extensions.</p> <p>Please feel free to contact me (<i>name redacted</i>) as the local representative of the British Horse Society for any clarification and further information, for example, of horse kept in the area, road accident statistics involving horses etc.</p>	Agreed	Amend para 8.1
P8 2.21	(4) Resident	<p>Hermitage village hall is a busy hall with a variety of clubs and societies who meet weekly, your comments seem to suggest it is just fitness groups and Hort Soc. that meet there. This is not the case ...the hall is in regular use 7 days a week by many clubs.</p>	Agreed	Amend para 2.21

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
P18 table - code 14	(4) Resident	The correct word is “prioritise” I think this may be a spelling error.	Agreed	Amend table on p18
P22 6.5	(4) Resident	Whilst we all appreciate the trees and the contribution they make to our green spaces and overall village surrounds ...it must be noted that not all trees serve a purpose and some are poorly positioned on private properties and have been poorly positioned - these could even be classed as a nuisance in some areas. Lack of knowledge and tree management causes issues for some residents and we are powerless to get a solution especially when the tree has a TPO on it. It would be helpful if the parish council were to assist in such situations to help residents in the village.	Noted. This will be passed to the Parish Council as a separate action	
P12 3.2	(6) Resident	I agree it would be good if traffic were “less of a threat” but please bear in mind we should recognise the need for personal road transport, especially for the elderly and for those who need to travel in our fairly rural area merely to reach essential facilities such as doctors, dentists, and many types of retail premises they can’t get to otherwise. This is a theme that occurs elsewhere in the Plan and I am especially concerned that the case for cycling is at risk of being overstated - which carries a potential implication for disenfranchising those who need their motor vehicles, not least the elderly mentioned above. As is clear from the Plan and the HNS the fraction of older people in the village is and will continue to grow, so we need to recognise their needs, which are likely to increase into the future.	The needs of older people are recognised through other aspects of the plan, e.g. housing needs. Whilst the plan’s coverage of movement issues does focus on walking and cycling, this is because these are matters where it has the greatest prospect of success. However, the proportion of trips made on foot and by bicycle in particular is very small and is not likely to have any detrimental impact on car users. Indeed, Policy HER9 focuses on routes which are away from car traffic.	
P12 3.1	(6) Resident	Despite what’s said later about traffic issues not being the business of the NDP, I believe it’s worth including mention of traffic volumes, speeding and traffic management issues, and the sometime poor road engineering that are factors in what needs to be addressed in the village. It might not be for the NDP to suggest policies or practices to deal with those issues, but they are part of the holistic whole in village	Noted, although traffic volume is a function of the number of people that use their cars. The plan is seeking to improve alternatives to the car which will help to reduce traffic volumes.	Add a non-policy action related to speeding into Table 9.1.

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		life and are I feel worthy of mention. Failure to do so might suggest there are no such problems.	The NDP cannot have a core objective which relates to matters it cannot address, e.g. traffic.	
P12 3.2	(6) Resident	I would avoid committing Hermitage to being a “beacon of excellence”. Such sentiments are likely to be more expensive and time consuming than quicker and more feasible solutions. Also, I’m not aware that such an aspiration appears elsewhere in the Plan, so it seems out of keeping to highlight this particular policy aspect. I suggest deleting the phrase.	The vision does not commit Hermitage to any particular course of action. It is an aspirational commentary on how Hermitage can, over the plan period, achieve its objectives for the benefit of the community. It is from this vision that the objectives and then the policies are derived.	
P12 3.3	(6) Resident	The penultimate objective should, I believe, include making access to the countryside for leisure easier for motorists as well as cyclists, otherwise those who are less mobile on foot or cycle are again being disadvantaged. As an example, car parking in the various locations around Hermitage which give access to footpaths is often very limited if it exists at all. For example, the parking area at the top of the Marlston Road hill coming east out of Hermitage under the old railway bridge is a postage stamp compared with the one on The Common on Slanting Hill near the Cold Ash end which is usefully sized for those taking to the woods at that point.	We disagree. At the heart of national planning policy is the requirement for development and change to be sustainable. Increasing access into the countryside by the private car we consider to be contrary to this principle.	
P13 3.4, 3.5	(6) Resident	It is said that it isn’t appropriate for the NDP to simply duplicate existing national or regional & policies. However, that could mean reliance being placed on a policy at the time of NDP publication which is later changed – something over which the HPC has no control. Even if a higher level policy isn’t to be duplicated it seems sensible to summarise those elements of that policy on which the NDP is based. At the very least it must be made clear which versions of higher level policies are being relied on in publishing this NDP so that any future interrogation can resolve potential disparities. As it seems unlikely that NDP will take precedence over higher level policies, any discord will inevitably mean the original desire expressed in the NDP will be	The supporting documents that have been submitted to West Berkshire District Council include the Basic Conditions Statement which addresses these matters. It is also summarised in Section 1 of the Plan.	

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		overturned unless that fact is recognised early enough to enable HPC to affect the outcome of the higher policy.		
P18 DC03.14	(6) Resident	Again, I dislike the intention to prioritise walking and cycling as it seems to disadvantage those who find difficulty walking or cycling – the increasing fraction of the population of the village, in fact. Could the Plan instead promote walking and cycling without suggesting that those activities necessarily displace vehicular journeys? Alternatively, walking and cycling should be safeguarded or must be accommodated.	Agreed	Amend Policy HER9.
P45 Policy HER9	(6) Resident	This policy is to be welcomed and is well worded.	Noted	
P21 Policy HER4 B (d)	(6) Resident	In the final sentence the focus on climate change is not helpful as it suggests other reasons for increasing risk of flooding. I therefore suggest instead "... flood risk that may occur due to climate change or other factors."	Agreed	Amend Policy HER4
P22 6.6	(6) Resident	If there is a standardised and agreed method of measuring any increase in biodiversity, it should be referenced in some way for the benefit of readers and future debaters about what HPC might have meant when it drafted this NDP. If there isn't one, the aspiration needs some embellishment to be at all meaningful.	Whilst there are methods of measuring biodiversity net gain, these are in their relative infancy and are being improved, amended or superseded regularly. It would therefore not be appropriate to specifically identify one method. It should be noted that this is not an aspiration, it is part of an Act of Parliament.	
P7 2.11 &2.15	(6) Resident	The following are points of wording or grammar which HPC might feel merit correction: 2.11 Lipscomb Close is not really to the west of the Marlston Road but to the south west. 2.15 In the 2nd line: "data" is a Latin plural, so "data ... relate ..."	Agreed	Amend paras 2.11 and 2.15
P17 5.2	(6) Resident	I'm not sure the sense of the first sentence is obvious. If it means "In order to provide ... must consider <i>in order to</i> assemble high quality	Agreed	Amend para 5.2

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		schemes ..." then it's too tortuous. Starting instead with "The Hermitage Design guidelines and Codes report was commissioned in order to ..." would help, but it's the objective which then follows that I don't find to be brimming with clarity.		
P26 HER7 B	(6) Resident	Should read "Proposals for ... will be permitted only in ..."	Agreed	Amend Policy HER7
P28 6.15	(6) Resident	Should read "This space ... practise bike riding ..."	Agreed	Amend para 6.15
	(8) Thames Water	<p>Thames Water therefore recommends that developers engage with them at the earliest opportunity (in line with paragraph 26 of the revised NPPF) to establish the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The developments demand for water supply infrastructure;</li> <li>• The developments demand for Sewage/Wastewater Treatment and network infrastructure both on and off site and can it be met; and</li> <li>• The surface water drainage requirements and flood risk of the development both on and off site and can it be met.</li> </ul> <p>Thames Water offer a free Pre-Planning service which confirms if capacity exists to serve the development or if upgrades are required for potable water, waste water and surface water requirements. Details on Thames Water's free pre planning service are available at: <a href="https://www.thameswater.co.uk/developers/larger-scale-developments/planning-your-development/water-and-wastewater-capacity">https://www.thameswater.co.uk/developers/larger-scale-developments/planning-your-development/water-and-wastewater-capacity</a></p> <p>In light of the above comments and Government guidance, the Neighbourhood Plan should include a specific reference to the key issue of the provision of wastewater/sewerage and water supply infrastructure to service development proposed in a policy. This is necessary because it will not be possible to identify all of the water/sewerage infrastructure required over the plan period due to the way water companies are regulated and plan in 5 year periods (Asset Management Plans or AMPs). We recommend that the Neighbourhood Plan include the following policy/supporting text:</p>	<p>Noted. Whilst such explanations of process are important, it is unclear how this relates directly to this Neighbourhood Plan, its objectives or specifically any of its policies. The importance of early engagement by developers with utility providers is as important as the early and positive engagement of utility providers with the local planning authority in order to ensure effective planning of infrastructure capacity. It is unclear how adding an out-of-context statement into this NDP will assist it to achieve its objectives.</p>	

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		<p><i>“Where appropriate, planning permission for developments which result in the need for off-site upgrades, will be subject to conditions to ensure the occupation is aligned with the delivery of necessary infrastructure upgrades.”</i></p> <p><i>“The Local Planning Authority will seek to ensure that there is adequate water and wastewater infrastructure to serve all new developments. Developers are encouraged to contact the water/waste water company as early as possible to discuss their development proposals and intended delivery programme to assist with identifying any potential water and wastewater network reinforcement requirements. Where there is a capacity constraint the Local Planning Authority will, where appropriate, apply phasing conditions to any approval to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of the relevant phase of development.”</i></p>		
P21 Policy HER4	(8) Thames Water	<p><b>Water Efficiency/Sustainable Design</b></p> <p>We support part A of the policy in principle where it relates to water efficiency, but consider that this needs to be strengthened. The Environment Agency has designated the Thames Water region to be “seriously water stressed” which reflects the extent to which available water resources are used. Future pressures on water resources will continue to increase and key factors are population growth and climate change.</p> <p><b>Water conservation and climate change</b> is a vitally important issue to the water industry. Not only is it expected to have an impact on the availability of raw water for treatment but also the demand from customers for potable (drinking) water. Therefore, Thames Water support the mains water consumption target of 110 litres per head per day (105 litres per head per day plus an allowance of 5 litres per head per day for gardens) as set out in the NPPG (Paragraph: 014 Reference ID: 56-014-20150327) and support the inclusion of this requirement in the Policy.</p>	Agreed, although it is not considered necessary to amend the title as water efficiency is a part of sustainable design.	Amend Policy HER4



Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		<p>Thames Water promote water efficiency and have a number of water efficiency campaigns which aim to encourage their customers to save water at local levels. Further details are available on the our website via the following link:  <a href="https://www.thameswater.co.uk/Be-water-smart">https://www.thameswater.co.uk/Be-water-smart</a></p> <p>It is our understanding that the water efficiency standards of 105 litres per person per day is only applied through the building regulations where there is a planning condition requiring this standard (as set out at paragraph 2.8 of Part G2 of the Building Regulations). As the Thames Water area is defined as water stressed it is considered that such a condition should be attached as standard to all planning approvals for new residential development in order to help ensure that the standard is effectively delivered through the building regulations. Within Part G of Building Regulations, the 110 litres/person/day level can be achieved through either the 'Calculation Method' or the 'Fittings Approach' (Table 2.2). The Fittings Approach provides clear flow-rate and volume performance metrics for each water using device / fitting in new dwellings. Thames Water considers the Fittings Approach, as outlined in Table 2.2 of Part G, increases the confidence that water efficient devices will be installed in the new dwelling. Insight from our smart water metering programme shows that household built to the 110 litres/person/day level using the Calculation Method, did not achieve the intended water performance levels.</p> <p>Proposed policy text:  <b><i>“Development must be designed to be water efficient and reduce water consumption. Refurbishments and other non-domestic development will be expected to meet BREEAM water-efficiency credits. Residential development must not exceed a maximum water use of 105 litres per head per day (excluding the allowance of up to 5 litres for external water consumption) using the ‘Fittings Approach’ in Table 2.2 of Part G of Building Regulations. Planning conditions will be applied to new residential</i></b></p>		

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		<i>development to ensure that the water efficiency standards are met.”</i>		
P21 Policy HER4	(8) Thames Water	<p><b>POLICY HER4</b> <b>Comments in Relation to Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage Systems</b></p> <p>We support part B of the policy in principle where it relates to SuDS, but consider that this needs to be strengthened.</p> <p>The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) states that a sequential approach should be used by local planning authorities in areas known to be at risk from forms of flooding other than from river and sea, which includes "Flooding from Sewers".</p> <p>Flood risk sustainability objectives and policies should also make reference to 'sewer flooding' and an acceptance that flooding can occur away from the flood plain as a result of development where off site sewerage infrastructure and capacity is not in place ahead of development.</p> <p>With regard to <b>surface water drainage</b> it is the responsibility of the developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, watercourses or surface water sewer. It is important to reduce the quantity of surface water entering the sewerage system in order to maximise the capacity for foul sewage to reduce the risk of sewer flooding.</p> <p>Limiting the opportunity for surface water entering the foul and combined sewer networks is of critical importance to Thames Water. Thames Water have advocated an approach to SuDS that limits as far as possible the volume of and rate at which surface water enters the public sewer system. By doing this, SuDS have the potential to play an important role in helping to ensure the sewerage network has the capacity to cater for population growth and the effects of climate change.</p> <p>SuDS not only help to mitigate flooding, they can also help to: improve water quality; provide opportunities for water efficiency; provide</p>	Agreed but this text is considered to be more appropriate as supporting text rather than policy.	Amend Section 6

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		<p>enhanced landscape and visual features; support wildlife; and provide amenity and recreational benefits.</p> <p><b>HER4(d)</b> With regard to surface water drainage, Thames Water request that the following paragraph should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan <b><i>“It is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for surface water drainage to ground, water courses or surface water sewer. It must not be allowed to drain to the foul sewer, as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding.”</i></b></p> <p><b>Site Allocations</b></p> <p>There are no new allocations in the draft Neighbourhood Plan and the level of information does not enable Thames Water to make an assessment of the impact the proposed development will have on the waste water/sewerage network infrastructure and sewage treatment works. To enable us to provide more specific comments we require details of the type and scale of development together with the anticipated phasing.</p> <p>There are 2 allocations, but it is understood that these already have planning approval.</p> <p>We recommend Developers contact Thames Water to discuss their development proposals by using our pre app service via the following link: <a href="https://www.thameswater.co.uk/developers/larger-scale-developments/planning-your-development/water-and-wastewater-capacity">https://www.thameswater.co.uk/developers/larger-scale-developments/planning-your-development/water-and-wastewater-capacity</a></p> <p>It should be noted that in the event of an upgrade to our sewerage network assets being required, up to three years lead in time is usual to enable for the planning and delivery of the upgrade. As a developer has the automatic right to connect to our sewer network under the Water Industry Act we may also request a drainage planning condition if a network upgrade is required to ensure the infrastructure is in place ahead of occupation of the development. This will avoid adverse environmental impacts such as sewer flooding and / or water pollution.</p> <p>We recommend developers attach the information we provide to their planning applications so that the Council and the wider public are</p>		

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		assured wastewater and water supply matters for the development are being addressed.		
P3 1.1	(9) Resident	The Plan contains a vision for the future of Hermitage and sets out clear planning policies to realise this vision. I have to say that nothing I have read fills me with any optimism, especially given that we are already braced to suffer the consequences of the developments at Charlotte Close, the Old Farmhouse, the White Horse, and Crown Butchers, which already amounts to over forty additional dwellings. Ironically, these developments are mostly in the same area that the report itself states are already affected by the poor design of the Co-op creating congestion which impacts adversely on traffic flows at an already busy section of the B4009 close to the Priors Court roundabout. It is not difficult to predict the effect of a further forty houses!	Noted. The housing requirements are set by West Berkshire District Council through its Local Plan, not the NDP. The NDP is seeking to use policy to ensure that this growth is delivered in a manner which minimises the impact and addresses matters such as local housing need.	
P13 3.3	(9) Resident	The plan states one of its objectives is to ensure that new housing addresses the needs of Hermitage community. Surely, the main need of the Hermitage community is to say enough is enough, and no more houses are needed, incidentally a view once given by the chairman of West Berks Planning Committee at an Annual Parish Assembly, who agreed that Hermitage had suffered enough!	See above. The NDP cannot say no to the level of growth set by WBDC.	
P14 (General) Housing needs	(9) Resident	Interestingly, having stated that the requirement for a range of housing was identified by the Hermitage Housing Needs Survey, most attention is given to provision of the 3-bed properties which are popular with families. This conveniently forgets the fact that the survey also stated there was an emphasis on bungalows for older people, presumably because no developer would build a bungalow on any plot where a more lucrative possibility exists.	Whilst it is recognised that bungalows were a specifically identified need, what that actually says is that there is a demand for housing that is suitable for the needs of older people. Whilst bungalows are popular, over time they often get developed into multi-storey family homes so are lost. The NDP needs to be make clearer that there is the need for this type of housing.	Amend para 4.3.
P7 2.16	(9) Resident	To use data from the 2011 census to compare the housing stock across West Berkshire to that in Hermitage seems to me to be a	The analysis compares Hermitage parish with West Berkshire district	

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		pointless exercise. Obviously, the housing stock in any village dictates to a large extent the demographic of the village and will not be the same as that in a town. To connect this in any way to the future housing needs of the village seems somewhat bizarre, or is this the same sort of reasoning that appears to decide that Newbury always requires thousands more flats.	which is the next largest geography that the Census data is collated at. This section provides a snapshot of what housing was in the parish in 2011. It is not solely or directly used to justify housing requirements.	
	(1) Resident	<p>I have read and considered the approved plan sent out for public consultation and fully support the adoption decision of the Parish Council and its submission, as drafted, to WBC in due course.</p> <p>In my view it provides a comprehensive blueprint to inform any future development proposals affecting Hermitage. It clearly identifies and sets out the many issues and challenges that we as a community will want future decision makers to take into account when making decisions which directly impact on our Community.</p>	Noted	
	(5) Resident	<p>Have finally read and (hopefully!!) absorbed the plan but before I go further, I would like to thank the NDP team for all the work they have put into it. I do hope they all had at least one glass of wine to celebrate - I very much appreciate all the hard work they have put into the plan.</p> <p>I believe the plan covers just about all my thoughts and concerns for the future of the village. In case I did miss one particular part which I think would be detrimental is whether there are any future plans for the land next to the school to be developed into another estate. I sincerely hope that will not happen for some of my reasons below.</p> <p>Any further developments would only increase the amount of traffic going through the village to either Newbury, Hampstead Norreys, Marlston or Cold Ash. The traffic now includes the large lorries from and to the AMP site going towards Hampstead Norreys. I know the Council is working on the speeding though all parts of the village but things don't seem to be improving.</p>	Noted. Neither the NDP or the emerging West Berks Local Plan allocate any land next to the school for development.	

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		<p>My other concerns with further development are the impact on Thames Water and whether they could cope, those of us using BT for internet access and probably most importantly the impact on the doctor's surgery particularly since they cover such a wide range of villages.</p> <p>My thanks again for all the effort put in by everyone - as I say it is much appreciated.</p>		
	(7) National Grid	<p>Extract from standard response letter: <b>Proposed development sites crossed or in close proximity to National Grid assets:</b> An assessment has been carried out with respect to National Grid's electricity and gas transmission assets which include high voltage electricity assets and high-pressure gas pipelines. National Grid has identified that it has no record of such assets within the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p>	Noted	
	(10) Resident	<p>Thank you for the work on the NDP, I have very few comments but wonder where the baseline capacity of all services (gas, water, drainage, schools, GPs as well as internet and 'phone) is covered and how much the capacity will be challenged by planned and future new developments.</p> <p>I'm concerned that the flats and houses around the Co-op haven't yet been occupied and that most of the building work planned has not commenced even tho' planning permission was given some years ago – are actions required to ensure progress on building / completion and hand over for social housing happens within agreed timescales?</p>	<p>This is addressed through the emerging West Berkshire Local Plan and its supporting assessment of infrastructure needs to support growth. This has established that there is sufficient capacity for the sites allocated in that plan.</p> <p>It is not within the gift of an NDP to require developers to build out schemes that have planning permission or have been started.</p>	
	(11) Historic England	<p>Thank you for inviting Historic England to comment on the above neighbourhood plan. On the basis of the information currently available, we do not wish to offer any detailed comments at this stage. We would refer you to our general advice on successfully incorporating historic environment considerations into your neighbourhood plan, which can be found here:</p>	Noted	

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		<p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/plan-making/improve-yourneighbourhood/">https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/plan-making/improve-yourneighbourhood/</a>.</p> <p>For further specific advice regarding the historic environment and how to integrate it into your neighbourhood plan, we recommend that you consult your local planning authority conservation officer.</p> <p>We may wish to make specific comments on proposals later in the planning process.</p>		
	(12) Resident	<p>I have just gone through the NDP for Hermitage and would like to convey my support to its compilation and completion.</p> <p>I wish to endorse the policies put forward to protect and conserve the environmental integrity of the Parish and help future proof against climate change. Sustainability, in both the short and long term, in all its guises, must take precedence over growth.</p> <p>I particularly the promotion of wildlife and the desire to create more opportunities for it to be maintained and indeed be encouraged further in line with national guidance.</p> <p>I also like that the provision of more bungalows has been recognised to support the retention of the elderly and less able to remain in the village.</p> <p>I would like to thank all the volunteers who have spent much time and effort into putting the document together. Please continue to keep me informed of any future amendments or formal adoption decisions.</p>	Noted	
Front Cover	(3) West Berkshire District Council	<p><u>Comments from the Planning Policy Team:</u> The front cover is clear and it sets a positive first impression of the document.</p>	Noted	
Contents Page	(3) West Berkshire District Council	<p><u>Comments from the Planning Policy Team:</u> The contents page is clear however the policies could be listed in the contents page in the same way the subsections have been presented therefore making it easier to navigate the policies in the document.</p>	Agreed	Add list of policies to contents page

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
Purpose of the Plan	(3) West Berkshire District Council	<p><u>Comments from the Planning Policy Team:</u> Clarification regarding paragraph 1.3: the plan is to be read as a whole. Policies should not be duplicated. This is however made clear later in the document in paragraph 3.4.</p> <p>What is meant by “actions” in paragraph 1.4? Are the actions not listed in the Non-Policy Actions in Table 9.1 at the end of the document? Make reference to this section if this is what you are referring to or be clear on what is meant by the terminology.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Agreed</p>	Amend para 1.4
Policy Context	(3) West Berkshire District Council	<p><u>Comments from the Planning Policy Team:</u> For information purposes, the Council is formally referred to as West Berkshire District Council therefore the abbreviation “WBDC” is appropriate.</p> <p>Suggested amendment for consistency: to refer to the “Neighbourhood Plan area” as the designated “Neighbourhood Area” in Paragraph 1.8, as stated previously in paragraph 1.6.</p> <p>See comments on mapping at the end of this document. Regarding paragraph 1.12, a revised timetable for the Local Plan Review (LPR), also known as the Local Development Scheme (LDS), was published at the end of October: <a href="https://www.westberks.gov.uk/lids">https://www.westberks.gov.uk/lids</a>. The proposed submission version of the LPR was considered recently at a meeting of Council on 1 December 2022, and Members agreed that the plan can go out to consultation. As such the consultation will commence before the 6<sup>th</sup> January 2023 for a 6 week period. WBDC hope to submit the plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination in March 2023. Assuming the examination goes okay, WBDC anticipate adoption of the LPR in September 2024. Please see: <a href="https://www.westberks.gov.uk/local-plan-review">https://www.westberks.gov.uk/local-plan-review</a>.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p>	<p>Various amendments</p> <p>Various amendments</p> <p>Amend para 1.12</p>



Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
Monitoring the Plan	(3) West Berkshire District Council	<p><u>Comments from the Planning Policy Team:</u> Suggested amendment to wording in paragraph 1.13: Hermitage Parish Council as the <a href="#">qualifying body</a>.</p> <p>Suggested clarification (amend accordingly): “<i>The HPC Steering Group is a sub-group of Hermitage Parish Council. As per the Terms of Reference, the Parish Council, as the qualifying body, will be responsible for maintaining...</i>”</p> <p>Regarding the above comment, do you have a Terms of Reference in place which states the role and responsibilities of the HPC SG and the Parish Council?</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>It is not within the ToR of the Steering Group that it monitors the plan. At this stage it is most appropriate that this responsibility rests with the Parish Council.</p>	Amend para 1.13
History of Hermitage	(3) West Berkshire District Council	<p><u>Comments from the Archaeology Team:</u> The history of the area could go back a bit further than the 13<sup>th</sup> century in that the <b>Iron Age</b> hillfort called Grimsbury Castle is an important monument on high ground overlooking two valleys, more or less in the middle of the current parish. It does get mentioned in a few other places in the NDP but the fact that it’s covered with trees probably means it’s well preserved earthworks aren’t easily understood (and have been vulnerable to some damage from recreational use e.g. mountain bikes). Its origins are older than 100BC as Early Iron Age pottery was found in the limited excavations there – so it was probably built between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. There are springs in the interior but there hasn’t yet been evidence found of buildings, so we don’t know how much of a settlement was there. However there is certainly a strong local <b>Roman</b> presence with villas found in the 19<sup>th</sup> century at both Wellhouse and Birch Farm as well as other features in Box Wood. One of the notable features of the parish is how wooded it is, and there is certainly scope for more archaeological investigation, both through development and community/academic work. For example, the two earthwork enclosures on Oare Common might be Iron Age or medieval but have received very little attention.</p>	Agreed	Amend para 2.2
Hermitage today	(3) West Berkshire District Council	<u>Comments from the Planning Policy Team:</u>		

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		Note regarding the statement in paragraph 2.15, the 2021 Census is now available: <a href="https://census.gov.uk">https://census.gov.uk</a> .	Noted although as at early-Jan2023, there is only limited data available at Output Area level which can be aggregated up to the parish level	
Challenges for Hermitage	(3) West Berkshire District Council	No comments.	Noted	
Vision for Hermitage	(3) West Berkshire District Council	No comments.	Noted	
Neighbourhood Plan Objectives	(3) West Berkshire District Council	<u>Comments from the Planning Policy Team:</u> General comment: Do a consistency check against the objectives and policies in the NDP – are they clearly aligned?	Agreed. Certain objectives do need to be adjusted	Various amendments
Matters not covered by NP policies	(3) West Berkshire District Council	<u>Comments from the Planning Policy Team:</u> Paragraphs 3.4 to 3.6: give clarity as to why some matters are not covered by a NP. Note: paragraph 30 in the NPPF states, “ <i>Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently</i> ”.	Agreed	Amend para 3.4
<i>Policy HER1: Addressing Hermitage’s Housing Needs</i>	(3) West Berkshire District Council	<u>No comments received from the Housing Team.</u>  <u>Comments from the Planning Policy Team:</u> In addition to the Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2016, Policy HER1 should also consider the updated Icen Local Housing Need (LHN) assessments 2020 and July 2022, particularly as relating to housing type and mix. Additionally the Government has a new policy on First Homes. It requires the first 25%	Agreed	Various amendments to Policy HER4 and supporting text in Section 4.





Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
Sustain- able design	(3) West Berkshire District Council	<p>Comments from the Environment Delivery Team: Suggested amendments to Para 6.2: <i>"In terms of the UK's <a href="#">change to housing</a> stock <del>of housing</del>, this means that new homes will have to be designed to minimise energy use <a href="#">by adopting a fabric first approach and following the Energy Hierarchy to develop net zero carbon design and create very low net carbon emissions through their design</a>. This will include minimising heating and heat loss through effective insulation, <del>having low water demand, and being fitted with or directly connected to renewable energy systems</del> (Move/amend this sentence: <a href="#">"installation or connection to a renewable energy systems, reducing water demand"</a>). In this context, the orientation of buildings can be important in order to make best use of available sunlight"</i>.</p>	Agreed	Amend para 6.2
		<p>Suggested amendments to Para 6.3: <i>"With <del>the UK</del> <del>Britain</del> no longer part of the European Union, the EU's Energy Performance of Buildings Directive - which required all new buildings to be nearly zero-energy by the end of 2020 - will not apply. <del>The UK's equivalent—the Code for Sustainable Homes—was withdrawn by the Government in 2015 and this has been replaced by new national technical standards, which include optional Building Regulations standards regarding water and access as well as a new national space standard (this is in addition to the existing mandatory Building Regulations)"</del>.</i></p> <p>At a national and local level, net zero carbon target within developments are being addressed through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Building Regulations, the Future Homes Standard and the West Berkshire Local Plan.</p>	Agreed	Amend para 6.3
<i>Policy HER4: Low Energy</i>	(3) West Berkshire District Council	<p>Comments from the Planning Policy Team: In respect of criteria d of policy HER4 (Low Energy and Energy Efficient design):</p>		



Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		<p><u>Comments from the Drainage and Flood Risk Team:</u> The only element of flood risk and drainage in this section: d) all development shall minimise surface water runoff to prevent off-site flooding through the design of a suitable sustainable drainage system (SuDS), and where possible incorporate mitigation and resilience measures for any increases in flood risk that may occur due to climate change. This is a non-specific requirement and is therefore not worth including without reference to specific means of restricting discharge or to different types of flood risk. SuDS should be plural here.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When discussing discharge rates the following applies: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. All developments should attempt to restrict runoff to the 1 in 1 year greenfield discharge rate up to the 1 in 100 year event plus climate change.</li> <li>b. Failing the above, the applicant should review whether long term storage can be provided. In this instance the greenfield discharge rate would still be used, but the rate would match the return period of the design storm up to the 1 in 100 year event plus climate change.</li> <li>c. On brownfield sites only where there is no space for storage, if the above measures cannot be implemented then a 50% betterment on the 1 in 1 year existing discharge rate might be considered acceptable depending on the circumstances.</li> <li>d. Further guidance here: <a href="https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/531222/Sustainable_Drainage_Systems_-_Non-statutory_technical_standards_for_sustainable_drainage_systems.pdf">Sustainable Drainage Systems: Non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a> and here: <a href="https://www.susdrain.org/files/resources/other-guidance/lasoo_non_statutory_suds_technical_standards_guidance_2016.pdf">https://www.susdrain.org/files/resources/other-guidance/lasoo_non_statutory_suds_technical_standards_guidance_2016 .pdf</a></li> </ol> </li> <li>2. With respect to flooding due to climate change, where a property is subject to flood risk:</li> </ol>	<p>It is considered excessive for a planning policy to contain this level of detail. Whilst it is appropriate to point to best practice and national standards, these could change and therefore the policy should be able, as far as is reasonably possible, to endure.</p>	<p>Amend Policy HER4 to make reference to best practice and national standards.</p>

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

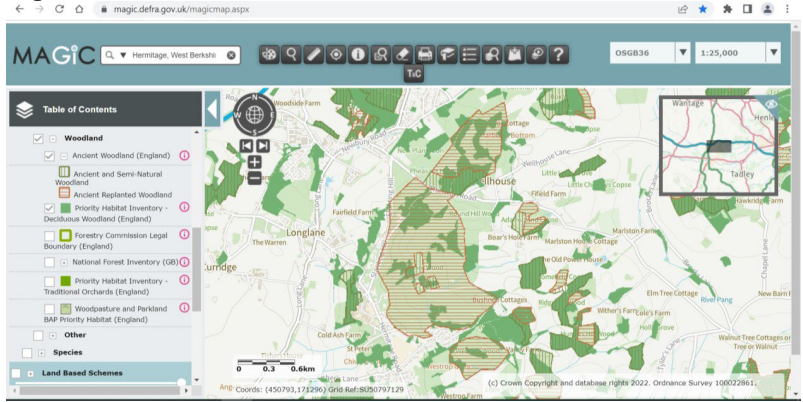
Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		<p>a. Typically a flood risk assessment will be required to demonstrate that the development is safe over its lifetime, that it does not increase flood risk and that safe access/egress can be provided on site. Further guidance here: <a href="#">Flood risk assessments if you're applying for planning permission - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a> and <a href="#">Preparing a flood risk assessment: standing advice - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>b. Where the above is not possible applications will be refused.</p> <p>3. In terms of implementing SUDS, it's important to note that they shouldn't be an afterthought. SuDS should be designed during the concept phase even for small scale developments and worked into the landscape.</p> <p>a. West Berkshire SPD has further advice: <a href="#">Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - West Berkshire Council</a></p> <p>b. The SuDS Manual from CIRIA pretty much covers every elements of SuDS design: <a href="#">SuDS Manual (susdrain.org)</a></p> <p>c. The SuDS construction guidelines from CIRIA also has useful information: <a href="#">Item Detail (ciria.org)</a></p> <p><u>Comments from the Environment Delivery Team:</u> The updated energy and carbon policy within the LPR and supporting SPD (which is to be drafted) will cover specific detail on achieving net zero carbon within developments.</p>	Noted	
Wildlife-friendly design	(3) West Berkshire District Council	<p><u>Comments from the Ecology Team:</u> <b>Legally Protected Sites</b> There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) within the Parish of Hermitage and no Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) or Special Protection Areas (SPA's) designated under the Conservation of</p>	All points noted	



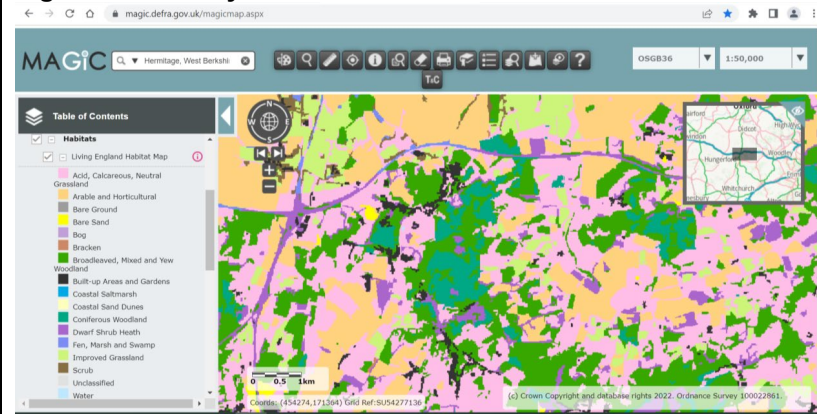
Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		<p>Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017 (as amended) or any Ramsar Sites (wetland sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention). There are no National Nature Reserves or Local Natures Reserves designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949 within the Parish.</p> <p>However, part of the western Parish lies within the Nutrient Impact Zone (NIZ) of the River Lambourn SAC and within which all new residential development and certain types of other development that may lead to an increase in phosphorous loads, are subject to the requirement to demonstrate nutrient neutrality as advised by Natural England.</p> <p>WBDC as a competent authority under the Habitats Regulations is required to consider whether plans or projects within the NIZ are likely to have a significant effect on the River Lambourn SAC and if so, to undertake an Appropriate Assessment of any such plans or projects. This includes plans or projects which would normally be considered as permitted development under the General Permitted Development Order.</p> <p>Most of the Parish lies within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ). It is also within a water Source Protection Zone although this is a non-statutory designation.</p> <p><b>Priority Habitats</b> The main habitats that occupy a significant proportion of the land surface of the Parish are broadleaved mixed and yew woodland and coniferous woodland (please see Figure 1 below). Much of this is plantation woodland on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) with significant remnants of ancient woodland in the north west (near Oare) and centrally (near Wellhouse) see Figure 2. The Priority Habitat Lowland</p>		

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
 Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		<p>Deciduous Woodland is widespread both within and outside of these ancient woodland sites. There are no other Priority Habitats within the Parish.</p> <p><b>Figure 1 - Broad Habitats within the Parish</b></p>  <p>The screenshot shows a web-based map interface with a search bar containing 'Hermitage, West Berkshire'. The map displays a detailed view of the parish area with various habitat overlays. A legend on the left side of the map is titled 'Table of Contents' and includes the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Woodland       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ancient Woodland (England)</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ancient Replanted Woodland</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland (England)</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forestry Commission Legal Boundary (England)</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National Forest Inventory (GB)</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Priority Habitat Inventory - Traditional Orchards (England)</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Woodpasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat (England)</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Species</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Land Based Schemes</li> </ul> <p>The map shows several large green areas representing woodlands, with some areas highlighted in orange and red, indicating priority habitats. Labels on the map include 'Longlane', 'Wantage', 'Tadley', and 'Hemphill'. A scale bar at the bottom indicates 0.3 and 0.6km. The map is credited to Ordnance Survey 100022861.</p>		

**Figure 2 – Priority Habitats within the Parish**



Under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006, all public bodies (Including Parish Councils) have a duty to conserve biodiversity. This duty includes "... in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat". Section 41 sets out the lists of priority habitats and priority species to which this duty especially applies.

There are a number of Local Wildlife Sites within the Parish including land at Furze Hill which is owned and managed by the Parish Council and which is a Lowland Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat.

#### **Legally Protected Species**

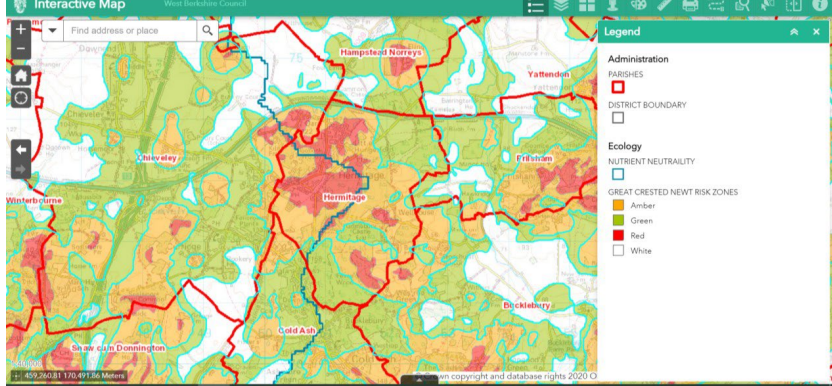
There are a number of records confirming the presence of legally protected species within the Parish. These species are fully protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) and under Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017 (as amended).

There are records of three approved applications for licences to affect protected mammal species within the Parish. These are as follows:

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment																		
		<p><b>Hazel Dormouse –</b> Case reference of granted application 2019-39430-EPS-MIT Licence Start Date 29/03/2019 Licence End Date 31/12/2022</p> <p><b>Bats –</b> Case reference of granted application 2016-24643-EPS-MIT Species on the licence Brown long-eared (BLE), common pipistrelle (C-PIP) and soprano pipistrelle (S-PIP) Licence Start Date 03/08/2016 Licence End Date 02/08/2026 Case reference of granted application 2014-4812-EPS-MIT Species on the licence brown long-eared (BLE) and common pipistrelle (C-PIP) Licence Start Date 24/03/2015 Licence End Date 31/03/2020 There is also survey data records for two waterbodies within the Parish that have confirmed great crested newt populations: <b>Great crested newt –</b></p> <table style="margin-left: 20px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Survey Date</th> <th style="text-align: left;">OS Grid Ref</th> <th style="text-align: left;">GCN Present?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>21/04/2016</td> <td>SU504729</td> <td>Y</td> </tr> <tr> <td>03/05/2016</td> <td>SU504729</td> <td>Y</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16/05/2016</td> <td>SU504729</td> <td>Y</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11/05/2016</td> <td>SU505729</td> <td>Y</td> </tr> <tr> <td>07/06/2016</td> <td>SU505729</td> <td>Y</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Some 25% of the Parish is assessed as being within the highest Red Risk Zone for GCN, 50% within the Amber Risk Zone and 25% within the lowest Green Risk Zone (please see Figure 3).</p> <p><b>Figure 3 – GCN Risk Zones within the Parish</b></p>	Survey Date	OS Grid Ref	GCN Present?	21/04/2016	SU504729	Y	03/05/2016	SU504729	Y	16/05/2016	SU504729	Y	11/05/2016	SU505729	Y	07/06/2016	SU505729	Y		
Survey Date	OS Grid Ref	GCN Present?																				
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07/06/2016	SU505729	Y																				

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		 <p>Therefore, whilst there are no legally protected biodiversity sites within the Parish, large areas of the Parish are covered by priority habitats and support legally protected species. These all place constraints on new development. Development proposals that may result in the killing or injury or disturbance of such species or which may result in the loss of breeding sites and resting places or other supporting habitat, will need to be subject to careful assessment and may require licences from Natural England under Regulation 55 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017 (as amended).</p>		
<p><i>Policy HER5: Wildlife-Friendly Development</i></p>	<p>(3) West Berkshire District Council</p>	<p>Comments from the Ecology Team: We would suggest that this policy should be titled <a href="#">Development and Biodiversity</a> and have as its key objective conserving, restoring, and enhancing biodiversity in line with the strengthened duty to conserve biodiversity in the new Environment Act, 2021: <i>The Environment Act passed into legislation in November 2021. It will require significant additional protections for the natural environment including, air, water and soil quality and biodiversity. The mandatory requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is intended to come into force in November 2023 from which time all planning applications for new development</i></p>	<p>Agreed that the NDP objective should be amended to reflect the need to conserve restore and enhance. However, it is unnecessary to amend the title of the section – all sections and policy of a land use plan relate to development.</p>	<p>Amend objective</p>

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		<p><i>will need to demonstrate a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity. The Act also requires the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies for all English Counties to be prepared by County Councils and Unitary Authorities.</i></p> <p>Reference should be made to the relevant current Local Plan Policies for West Berkshire including Policies CS17 and CS18 of the Core Strategy: <a href="https://www.westberks.gov.uk/media/36371/Core-Strategy-CS17-Biodiversity-and-Geodiversity/pdf/Core_Strategy_-_Biodiversity_and_Geodiversity.pdf?m=637408701786400000">https://www.westberks.gov.uk/media/36371/Core-Strategy-CS17-Biodiversity-and-Geodiversity/pdf/Core_Strategy_-_Biodiversity_and_Geodiversity.pdf?m=637408701786400000</a>.</p> <p><a href="https://www.westberks.gov.uk/media/36372/Core-Strategy-CS18-Green-Infrastructure/pdf/Core_Strategy_-_CS18_-_Green_Infrastructure.pdf?m=637408701874570000">https://www.westberks.gov.uk/media/36372/Core-Strategy-CS18-Green-Infrastructure/pdf/Core_Strategy_-_CS18_-_Green_Infrastructure.pdf?m=637408701874570000</a>.</p> <p>It should be noted that the mandatory requirement for BNG does not come into effect until November 2023.</p> <p>Examples of good practice could be referenced for example using Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to create new ponds and wetland habitats both to improve water quality and provide new wildlife habitats. In this context we would advise moving the reference to SuDS from HER4 B(d) to HER 5 where it seems more relevant.</p> <p>HER5 should also reference the opportunities for helping to deliver carbon neutrality and incorporating climate change resilience e.g. by planting trees.</p> <p>Good practice guidance could be referenced e.g. <a href="https://www.nhbcfoundation.org/publication/biodiversity-in-new-housing-developments-creating-wildlife-friendly-communities/">https://www.nhbcfoundation.org/publication/biodiversity-in-new-housing-developments-creating-wildlife-friendly-communities/</a> and</p>	<p>Insofar as all parts of the development plan should be read together, it is not considered necessary to make reference to the Core Strategy policies.</p> <p>Noted. Given the passage of the plan as at January 2023, it is unlikely that it will be made (having passed Examination) until Autumn 2023.</p> <p>Given other comments made by WBC, it is considered appropriate to retain reference to SuDS in Policy HER4.</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p>	<p>Amend Policy HER5.</p> <p>Amend supporting text to Policy HER5</p>

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		<p><a href="https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/homes_for_people_and_wildlife_lr_spreads.pdf">https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/homes_for_people_and_wildlife_lr_spreads.pdf</a>.</p> <p>The policy should also acknowledge the location of the Parish within the North Wessex Downs AONB, which in connection with the large extent of woodland and local bat records means that light pollution should be minimised so as to avoid disturbance to foraging and commuting bats and to maintain dark skies. More detailed information can be found at: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/light-pollution">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/light-pollution</a>.</p>	Agreed	Amend Policy HER5 and supporting text
<p><i>Policy HER6: Irreplaceable Habitats and Local Wildlife-Rich Habitats</i></p>	(3) West Berkshire District Council	<p>Comments from the Ecology Team: We would suggest this policy should be incorporated into HER5 as there are significant overlaps between the two policies.</p> <p>Reference should be made to the need for all planning applications for new development to be accompanied by appropriate ecological surveys and measures that seek to protect the most important biodiversity features such as those shown in Figure 6.1. Guidance on the appropriate types of ecological surveys and reports and the content and standards for such reports can be found at: <a href="https://cieem.net/resource/guidelines-for-ecological-report-writing/">https://cieem.net/resource/guidelines-for-ecological-report-writing/</a>.</p> <p>The policy must also reference the Natural England advice on the requirement for new development within the catchment of the River Lambourn SAC to be nutrient neutral. Figure 4 below shows the extent of the Parish that is within the catchment and where the nutrient neutrality requirement applies.</p>	<p>Whilst it is recognised that there is a close relationship between the 2 policies, amalgamation would result in an excessively long policy. There is no specific reason why having 2 policies is less effective.</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>The point is noted. However, it not considered that the Neighbourhood Plan must reference this. The plan does not seek to allocate sites for development. As such, the plan as a whole is not considered likely to have a significant impact on water quality. The HRA screening of the</p>	Amend Policy HER6

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		<p><u>Comments from the Archaeology Team:</u> Section 6 Sustainable Design and Environment and Policy HER6 could also be beneficial for the historic environment, planted and managed flora being part of the definition of this. There is a big overlap between Local Wildlife Sites and areas of high sensitivity assessed through Historic Landscape Characterisation. Retaining habitats for wildlife may also prevent damage or destruction to underlying archaeological sites. This could also be the case for the Local Green Spaces, although I cannot find much historic background to the ones identified in Policy HER7, most being of 20<sup>th</sup> century or later date.</p>	<p>Neighbourhood Plan considered that an Appropriate Assessment was not necessary and that no specific policy wording be added to address this issue. This was informed by consultation with Natural England which concurred with this view.</p> <p>Noted</p>	





Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
<p>Policy HER7: Local Green Spaces</p>	<p>(3) West Berkshire District Council</p>	<p><u>Comments from the Planning Policy Team:</u> A neighbourhood plan's capacity to designate land as Local Green Space (LGS) provides the highest level of protection to green space. There are strict criteria set out in paragraphs 101 and 102 of the NPPF, which effectively allows communities to identify and protect valued green areas. One of the criteria is that the green space must be demonstrably special to a local community and hold a particular significance. It gives examples of such significance e.g. for its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or the richness of its wildlife. <a href="#">The WBC Landscape Character Assessment</a> could be used to inform matters such as tranquillity. Regard should be given to the <a href="#">NPPG on Local Green Space</a>, in particular the NPPG states that <i>'the qualifying body (in the case of neighbourhood plan making) should contact landowners at an early stage about proposals to designate any part of their land as Local Green Space'</i>. It is noted in paragraph 2.31, the NDP states that the LGS is owned by HPC however for information purposes the owners should be contacted if any LGS falls in private ownership. The HPC Steering Group will need to be able to show the Examiner that this has been done and should be evidenced. The Group may find that they want to expand some of the evidence in the appendices to clearly show that the proposed LGS meets the NPPF criteria. It may be useful to look at some made NDP's to see what type of information was included.</p> <p>4.3 Locality guidance suggests using a LGS assessment tool which should provide the name of the space, the address, and the grid reference. See page 19:</p> <p>4.4 <a href="https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/making-local-green-space-designations-neighbourhood-plan/">https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/making-local-green-space-designations-neighbourhood-plan/</a>.</p>	<p>A Green Spaces Audit was prepared which addresses these criteria. This Audit was included as part of the evidence base consulted on at Reg 14.</p> <p>All proposed LGSs are owned by Hermitage Parish Council.</p>	

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		<p>4.5 Also see page 21 for policy themes and guidance on what a policy specific to LGS could include.</p> <p>4.6 Which objective(s) in the draft NDP does HER7 meet? See Box 1 on page 6 of the Locality guidance on top tips for writing planning policies:</p> <p><a href="https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/How-to-write-planning-policies-for-your-Neighbourhood-Plan-2021.10.08.pdf">https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/How-to-write-planning-policies-for-your-Neighbourhood-Plan-2021.10.08.pdf</a></p> <p>Policy HER7 is explicit in designating LGS. The policy text provides a list of the sites (locations) being designated, supplemented by a map(s) of the LGS. This is done as a LGS location plan which identifies the following areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Dines Way Green</i></li> <li>2. <i>Hermitage Green Play Area</i></li> <li>3. <i>Lipscomb Close Green</i></li> <li>4. <i>Pinewood Playground</i></li> <li>5. <i>Furze Hill Recreation Ground</i></li> <li>6. <i>Furze Hill Local Wildlife Site</i></li> </ol>		
Heritage	(3) West Berkshire District Council	<p><u>Comments from the Archaeology Team:</u> This document is impressive, it's really well-thought out, and clear. The NDP has actually woven heritage through several sections, as the character of the parish's historic environment is clearly important to the community. Should section 7 be named <a href="#">Historic Environment</a> to better tie in with NPPF?</p> <p>Might it still be useful for the nationally designated heritage assets to be put into a table here, if only to show how few there are!? I.e. there is only one Scheduled Monument and seven Listed Buildings (six of which are clustered at Wellhouse Farm, though rather poorly identified in the original listing e.g. the Dairy was more likely a Stable and their</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>It is not considered necessary to show these. The policy relates to non-designated heritage assets and therefore it avoids confusion if mapping only relates to these.</p>	<p>Amend title of Section 7</p>

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		<p>dating has been more clearly unpicked in survey work when they were converted). There are no Registered Battlefields or Parks and Gardens (and little likelihood of these being added) but also no Conservation Areas.</p>		
<p><i>Policy HER8: Non-Designated Heritage Assets</i></p>	<p>(3) West Berkshire District Council</p>	<p><u>Comments from the Conservation Team:</u> In the section listing the non-designated heritage assets it would be useful if reference were made to how they meet the local listing criteria set out in the Local Listing Process <a href="https://www.westberks.gov.uk/article/41022/Local-List-of-Heritage-Assets">https://www.westberks.gov.uk/article/41022/Local-List-of-Heritage-Assets</a>.</p> <p>There are no further comments to make on Policy HER8 which appears to align with the NPPF.</p> <p><u>Comments from the Archaeology Team:</u> The group have done excellent work looking at buildings of heritage interest, presented as a list in Policy HER8. It might be helpful if the criteria for our local list was applied to these, as I presume this would strengthen the policy? Some have interesting links to the former brick making industry, eg Pinewood Cottage, and Long Barn (which we didn't know about). I have no objection to the ones identified being included as NDHAs (possibly not the metal road sign?), but do feel that there are some notable omissions:</p> <p>Within the village, The Old Vicarage is an early 19<sup>th</sup> century building noted by Betjeman in the 1940s as "the pretty little vicarage in a late Georgian Perpendicular style". It appears to be contemporary with the church. I thought the carved lychgate of the church was of note when I walked round the village. Both The Old Vicarage and nearby Crossways House in Marlston Road were mentioned in the Hermitage VDS.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Additional NDHAs were considered but it was not felt they met the criteria.</p>	<p>Expand descriptions in Section 7.</p>

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		<p>Another very attractive building probably of similar age is the folly or lodge called Grimsbury Castle Tower. This does not lie within a scheduled area of the hillfort. The former pub called the Fox and Hounds Cottages and the Forester's Cottage at Wellhouse might be considered, as well as perhaps some other farm buildings eg at Boars Hole Farm which was developed as a model farm. We'd be happy to provide more information from the HER to justify these suggestions. A brief mention is made in 7.1 of the Historic Environment Character Area (HECA) that Hermitage falls in – this is one of the projects that Archaeology has undertaken in the past <a href="https://www.westberks.gov.uk/historicenvironmentprojects">https://www.westberks.gov.uk/historicenvironmentprojects</a>. It can be used to better understand the evolution of the district but also be more specific about actions. Within this larger HECA are 3 Historic Environment Character Zones (See our online map <a href="https://gis2.westberks.gov.uk/webapps/OnlineMap/?vln=HISTORIC%20ENVIRONMENT%20CHARACTER%20ZONES&amp;x=451534&amp;y=172813&amp;scale=8">https://gis2.westberks.gov.uk/webapps/OnlineMap/?vln=HISTORIC%20ENVIRONMENT%20CHARACTER%20ZONES&amp;x=451534&amp;y=172813&amp;scale=8</a>) with bullet points for Conservation Issues and Research Priorities.</p> <p>These might be of interest to add in under Section 9 if not in policies, e.g. for HECZ <a href="https://www.westberks.gov.uk">PPC Plantation Parliamentary Commons (westberks.gov.uk)</a>, issues include: Management of woodlands, conservation of surviving ancient woodlands and replacement of plantations with more mixed tree coverage.</p> <p><a href="https://www.westberks.gov.uk">CHCAS Curridge Hermitage ColdAsh (westberks.gov.uk)</a>: Historic building stock is poorly understood and little protection is currently afforded to this resource.</p> <p>What are the earthwork features on Oare Common? What period do they represent and what type of site is present here?</p> <p><a href="https://www.westberks.gov.uk">PASS Plantation Assarts (westberks.gov.uk)</a>: Use of Grimsbury Castle by cyclists and off-road motorcycles.</p> <p><u>Comments from the Planning Policy Team:</u></p>		





Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		<p><b>Map must be of an appropriate scale</b></p> <p>The base map should be of an appropriate scale relative to what the map is showing. As a general rule, for most villages when showing the whole parish a scale of 1:25,000 is likely to work best however this will vary depending on the size of the Parish. However when showing more detailed maps of the village a lower scale might be appropriate for example 1:8000. Ideally you should be able to see individual plots and boundaries clearly.</p> <p>This scale should also be clearly labelled and the Map must include a key / legend.</p>	<p>identify locations and content more clearly.</p> <p>Noted. The maps are of an appropriate scale.</p>	
Para 3.3, HER3	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	We welcome the bullet in paragraph “preserve the views to and from Hermitage village which help to make it special”. However, Policy HER3 and paragraphs 5.4 to 5.7 only address views from the village to the countryside. We suggest that consideration is given to including ‘valued views’ towards Hermitage and within the countryside in the Neighbourhood Plan – including views from public rights of way and open spaces.	This is acknowledged however no evidence came forward detailing which of these views should be preserved. It is accepted therefore that the objective should be drafted more precisely.	Amend wording of objective relating to views.
Section 6 and HER7	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	We strongly support policy HER7 on Local Green Spaces and the supporting paragraphs.	Noted	
Section 8 and Policy HER9	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	We strongly support policy HER9 (currently titled Access for Walking and Cycling) and its objectives A, B & C, which reflect the Forum’s objectives. We particularly welcome the references in HER9A to provision of bridleways and to the need to improve the safety of rural roads and lanes. The title of HER9 might therefore be modified to “Access for Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding”.	Agreed	Amend HER9 title
Policy HER9A	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	We warmly welcome the objective in this policy to promote access to the countryside through enhancement where possible of the PROW network. An important barrier (literally!) to access to the countryside is	This is acknowledged however it is not considered appropriate to include this level of detail in policy, not least	Add supporting text in Section 8.



Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
		stiles and gates. We therefore recommend that all new gates should comply with British Standard 5709 'Gaps, gates and stiles – specification', and existing structures should be replaced where possible with ones that comply with this standard.	when this may not require planning permission. It is considered appropriate however for inclusion in the supporting text.	
Paragraph 8.1	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	The word 'footpaths' is used when what is meant is all public rights of way - as currently shown in fig 8.1 and the referenced leaflet (the name of the link is also inaccurate but that cannot be changed). Thus we suggest 'Details of various footpaths...' is replaced by 'Details of public rights of way.....'	Agreed	Amend para 8.1.
Paragraph 8.1	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	The leaflet of Hermitage Footpaths, Bridleways and Byways shows a number of Permissive Paths – one around Furze Hill and several within States Hill and Fence Woods. While it might be editorially difficult to add these to Figure 8.1, we suggest that these could be described in an additional paragraph.	Agreed, although it is easiest to simply point this out.	Amend para 8.1.
Fig 8.1	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	The public rights of way network in Hermitage Parish includes byways which are legally open to equestrians and public motor vehicles. Hence the title to fig 8.1 is inaccurate. We suggest a title of 'Public rights of way in Hermitage parish'.	Agreed	Amend title of Fig 8.1.
Paragraph 8.1	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	For the same reason we suggest adding horse riders to the first sentence of this paragraph: 'Hermitage is surrounded by wonderful and accessible countryside available to walkers, cyclists and horse riders.'	Agreed	Amend para 8.1.
Section 8.4	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	As the Eling Way is used by walkers and equestrians as well as cyclists, we would welcome the opportunity for the Forum to be involved in the ongoing discussions on the extension of the route.	Noted	
Section 8	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	As mentioned above, circular routes are particularly valued by users. The permissive path around Furze Hill completes a number of possible circular walking routes using the Eling Wayiii. It would be helpful if this could be shown on Ordnance Survey maps.	It is not considered appropriate to show such permissive paths that may not be accurately mapped. Reference to the leaflet is considered sufficient.	
Section 8	Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum	Access land: Oare Common is designated as Access Land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (shown on figure 8.1 by the light brown border). This means that people are not limited to the public footpaths across it. You might wish to mention this in the Plan.	Agreed	Amend para 8.1.

Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan  
Consultation Statement

**Comments received after the end of the consultation period**

Page/ Para. No	Respondent (Number)	Comment	Response by Hermitage NDP	NDP amendment
	(13) Natural England	<p><u>Water Quality/Nutrient Neutrality Advice</u> Natural England issued guidance earlier this year regarding the impacts of increased nutrient loads on certain designated sites. West Berkshire Council is one of the Local Planning Authorities affected by this new guidance and we would therefore ask you to please refer to our letter and accompanying documents sent to the LPA on the 16th March 2022 for further information on this matter.</p> <p>In light of this guidance, the neighbourhood plan should seek to preserve water quality on the River Lambourn Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and ensure that development discharging within the Lambourn catchment will not increase the phosphorus loading on the SAC from wastewater and surface run off.</p> <p>Any net increase in overnight accommodation will need to ensure the nutrient impact is considered and addressed where appropriate. This includes developments that propose to connect to the mains or off grid treatment works, such as package treatment plants (PTPs), or composting toilets.</p> <p>Whilst the current nutrient neutrality tools that have been developed are only relevant to development which would result in a net increase in population served by a wastewater system, the Habitats Regulations apply to all plans or projects, and therefore Natural England may additionally advise on other potential nutrient generating applications such as industry or agriculture. Nutrient neutrality could be a solution for these types of developments as well, however this would need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Calculators for wholesale assessment of this type of development are not currently available however we acknowledge individual authorities may be in the process of developing their own approaches to assessing certain applications.</p>	<p>The point is noted. The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate sites for development. As such, the plan as a whole is not considered likely to have a significant impact on water quality. The HRA screening of the Neighbourhood Plan considered that an Appropriate Assessment was not necessary. This was informed by consultation with Natural England which concurred with this view.</p>	

## **Appendix C            January-August 2020 Conversations – example of a response**

### **Conversation #3**

#### **March/April – 2020 email responses (redacted)**

##### **1 April 2020**

These two sites should not be developed as Hermitage is in danger of being over developed for its size, facilities and infrastructure.

In particular, HER5 should definitely not go ahead being adjacent to the school and will also add even more traffic to what is an over used B road. Since Forest Edge was built the traffic has increased enormously and enough is enough.

## Appendix D      October 2020 event – sample display boards

### Neighbourhood Development Plan Open Day

#### Welcome.....

Thankyou for coming along and supporting this event. Our aims today are two fold:

1. Get your thoughts on what needs to be part of a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for Hermitage
2. Share with you what we have accomplished and why a NDP is so important for Hermitage

#### How will today work?

We have prepared a number of display boards showing various topics that may form part of a NDP.

Please look at each board and use Post-it stickers to add your comments, thoughts and feedback. Just stick the Post-it anywhere on the board.

Do not hold back—share anything and everything that comes to mind as you consider each topic

#### COVID Guidelines

- Please wear a face mask while inside the building
- Please keep to the One-way system
- Please use Hand Sanitiser before entering the building
- If you have or suspect you have any symptoms, or have been in contact with anyone with symptoms of COVID, please do not enter today. Contact us at [hermitagendp@gmail.com](mailto:hermitagendp@gmail.com) and we can share electronic copies of the boards



## Green Spaces

### A few questions to help you get a feel for the topic

but don't feel these are the only topics—leave us comments on anything that comes to mind.

Did you know these are all designated green spaces:

- Furze Hill RG18 9WL (formerly clay and sandpits for M4 construction and Pinewood Brickworks)
- Pinewood Park - RG18 9RP (Near the Scout Hut on site of former Pinewood Halt Station)
- Dines Way Green
- Lipscombe Close Green
- Hermitage Green play area
- Burial Ground on Marlston Road

Are there other Green Spaces you would want to be designated?

Habitats / Bio-diversity

Hermitage is surrounded by woodland and countryside. Are there any specific habitats or areas of bio-diversity our NDP should aim to protect?

Areas you particularly like?

Let us know where these are and why you like them

## Appendix E      June 2022 event flyer



Hermitage NDP

### **HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF OUR VILLAGE**

The future development of Hermitage will be strongly influenced by a Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). This can only be created with input and feedback from our community.

The NDP Team need to actively consult with village residents so your views and visions can be considered when creating the NDP for submission to the West Berkshire Council. Once adopted, the NDP will carry legal weight, affecting future planning decisions.

### **YOUR VIEWS ARE IMPORTANT!**

Please make time to visit our **open day workshop** and give us your thoughts. We need feedback on topics such as:

- what future housing will look like;
- where it will be;
- which green spaces need protecting;
- what the future needs of the village are;
- which historic buildings need protecting;

Please give us your thoughts and ideas on the day or via email @  
hermitagendp@gmail.com

**SATURDAY 25<sup>th</sup> JUNE at HERMITAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL.**

**Doors open between 10.00am and 4.00pm**

## Appendix F      June 2022 event – collated feedback

### Feedback from 35 Attendees

#### Overall

Excellent work with Neighbourhood Plan. Thank you for the hard work you are doing.

Good stuff in the draft design code. Look forward to seeing it in Public Consultation of NDP - AWB

#### Draft NDP document

Para 6.6 – wording here could be strengthened to encourage all development to achieve a minimum 10% net gain and to encourage more than 10%

Could measures to protect, create and enhance priority habitat and habitats for protected and notable species be encouraged in the Plan?

#### Green Spaces – 19 comments

- Greater protection of trees and hedgerows
- All green spaces are important for reasons listed and for biodiversity. If managed properly also good for health
- Love this – green space should be left
- Green spaces very important! Please keep for villagers to enjoy
- Green areas to be protected. Love this green space too
- All the green spaces are very important. Although we have woods around open areas essential for us too
- Green spaces and recreation areas to be protected
- Protect the green spaces
- Please keep all the green spaces; they are needed in Hermitage

**Trees** (*backdrop*) visible from Hampstead Norreys Road keep the rural view /feel

**Fences** – A few properties seem to be ‘fencing’ - not in keeping with open space gardens – creates encroachment.

**Recreation ground** is a wonderful community space and ever more important when it comes to staying healthy

**Green spaces** and **HER4**: Pond and scrub area in rear of Old Farmhouse on Newbury Road, rear of Lipscombe Clos needs to be preserved along its margins. It hosts moorhens and Great Crested Newts and should be protected from the impending development on ‘Bakers Field’ – RW Bird

### **Pinewood Playground – we love our park!**

Please do protect our parks especially **Pinewood**. Children love coming here after school and weekends to play

### **Pinewood Crescent**

- This is an eyesore.
- Agreed
- Native trees sound good
- There is a great opportunity to enhance biodiversity in this area through native tree/shrub planting. Conifers are low value to native wildlife!

### **Getting around – 11 responses (2 comments, 9 questionnaire respondents)**

- Could road between Slanting Hill and Marlston Road, past Grimsbury Castle, very peaceful, used by walkers & cyclists & occasional horse riders be made into a “Quiet Lane”? Short cut for Brockhurst parents!
- As above, Wellhouse Lane could be a “Quiet Lane”
- Would be good to have cycle path from Eling Way to the Bothampstead Road. Presently have to go along B4009 from Hermitage
- Love the walk from Hermitage to Hampstead Norreys but worried if you make a walk to Newbury or Shaw it will create too much traffic and make Hermitage too busy
- Any options to create similar paths should be explored. Safe green routes would prove to be an asset. If (bus) services ran later in the evening I would be less inclined *to drive my car?* to/from Newbury
- Cycle route to Curridge & Newbury would be great. Cycling up the B4009 in the village is dangerous because of cars parking at the village shop and also cars turning into Co-op. Need a safer option
- I support proposal for footpath/cycle way from Hermitage to Shaw
- We love the new path – more of these please – to Newbury? – to Yattendon? – walking + cycling + buggy friendly
- With all the traffic on the roads we need to explore other options ie walking, running, cycling, to other local areas for these reasons: Lower traffic rate; Health & fitness; CO2 emissions
- I fully support a cycle route to Newbury first - then to Compton secondly. I would like to see much better paths through the woods

### **Responses to Questions on leaflet:**

- **Do we need more routes like this?**
  - Yes x 3
- **Where should they go?**
  - Other villages
  - in all directions to connect to Newbury and neighbouring villages



- **Would you walk/cycle more if new off-road paths were created?**
  - Yes x 3
- **Do you know where all accessible footpaths are?**
  - No, a map/online site would be fab
  - Yes x2
- **Are bus services adequate?**
  - Can't use them – timings/children
  - No x 2
- **Do we need more cycle racks?**
  - Yes x2
  - Do we have any at all?

## Development & Design - 17 comments

### Development

- Limit infill development; no new houses in old gardens
- Don't build on field near M4 – who would want to leave near such noise/fumes?
- **Forest Edge** – Way too cramped!! Unreasonable planning based on Utopian vision of a society with fewer cars – daft
- **HER4**
  - The developments behind the White Horse and Hermitage Farm are not well connected and HER4 will be another application considered separately. The whole area should have been considered as one. Biodiversity in particular has not been considered well between all sites. The NDP should consider measures to prevent this piecemeal development in future.
  - If developed for housing, concerned re impact of access via B4009 +/- Marlston Road. Suggest alternative use – allotments; recreation area – tennis courts, football pitch etc etc

### Design

- I think they should allow for more bungalows to be built in village for older people who want to move to 1 level property. This will save *folk?* having to go into homes.
- No flats to be built in village – will spoil the whole look of village and take away character
- Any new buildings please build in character with village
- If we have to accept more buildings please build bungalows

- No buildings more than 2 storeys high. No flats to be built in village otherwise it will become like a town.
- Please do not change the character of Hermitage. We must keep villages different from towns.
- No street lighting on High Street
- Noise pollution from M4 throughout Hermitage is very high. A sound reduction type fence along M4 that borders village would make a difference to all.
- Good insulation for new houses
- New buildings to give due regard to car use, parking and emergency vehicle access. Sufficient parking to allow for two vehicles per property
- High boundary wood fence – Deacons Lane – allowed? If all hedges replaced like that it would be awful
- Has consideration been given to increased school places + availability at Doctor's surgery with all the proposed new homes? Any chance of a doctor's surgery in Hermitage? What will happen when Downland Practice reaches capacity? Needs for good infrastructure!!!

## Heritage – 9 comments

- Please protect – adds character to the village and of historical interest
- Once lost can never be replaced. Please keep as many as possible
- If these properties were to disappear so would village status in the future. Please protect
- Protect them all
- Keep external, front facing faces but allow for internal reconfiguration and extensions not visible to public or changing the look
- Aim to preserve existing properties as far as possible, with due regard to safety etc
- Please protect but allow sympathetic extensions or enhancements
- Protect always!
- Could you suggest an annual tour of Hermitage Historic sights to drum up support and show value to the community? Or links via the School too?

## Email Feedback

### Housing & Design:

Architects should sign a declaration that housing they have designed is fit for human consumption so as then to be responsible for inevitable consequences of dire design on the social health and welfare of it's inhabitants.

APALLING lack of car spaces and spacing balance and allocation ratio of greenery to car; both can be attained with superior house design - chimney pot scheme Salford\*; carports raised allow freed up roads for guests both in flats and terrace design.

SPEED LIMITS TO 10MPH in a built up area.

The effect of insensitive builds; built up areas overwhelmingly decide best options to build high rise flats as opposed to well designed terraced. These flats create a feeling of overwhelm and a vacuum; only far wider expanses of road and space warrants such height.

Essential atrium of play outside houses without a road/danger aspect - ie. Not like whoever designed station road hermitage estate - fantastic idea to have play for young children around an encircled large square of houses... but NOT great how they put a road right round the play area.

A community hub in the parish hall building.

### **Green Spaces:**

Community allotment; and enough car spaces so there's no arguing that green space is dog area or potential offroad car parking. A lot of people don't have a car or petrol makes driving expensive and we need more soil enriched to grow things.

Large football field area surround and play areas to have allotment areas. Stipulation that if housing has to have 20% social housing 10% has to be area to grow food.

More fenced in accessible areas to nature more green space access close within living area; the pinewood forest edge play area too remote or rather..too big and it's where our children growing up could say they were going to play and where the druggies would be...out of sight of parents. A lot more little green areas to grow wildflowers orchards etcetera.

### **Future needs of the village**

- Community hub
- High street bookshop/hairdresser
- A reliable busy bus service

### **Heritage:**

- If there are any they should be highlighted.
- Pinewood crescent should have a plaque saying the bricks made at the old cementation site on which the estate is built on built a lot of Newbury.

### **Movement:**

Make the old train station route to thatcham a more cleared out walking route.

We moved to Hermitage in 1986 and have always loved it. It was so different then, I fact it was delightful. Now with all the big houses it seems to be out of most people's grasp. It would be better if some attempt was to keep it as a village but that is fast disappearing. Does there have to be any more building ? There was a time when

neighbours were always there to help if needed and they did during Covid but that is disappearing too. . Please bring back the old Hermitage !!

## Appendix G Pathfinder articles – examples

### February 2021

Dear Pathfinder readers,

Happy New Year! I know by the time you read this, it will be February (already!), but this is the first update I have written in 2021, so Happy New Year to you all. I saw a number of birthday cards describing 2020 as “the year our Bins went out more than we did” – I hope 2021 proves to be different....

Since my last letter a number of exciting things have happened. Hermitage NDP has been awarded a grant by the Locality trust – allowing us to move forward with the next few things on our plan. The biggest is to enable us to commission a Housing Needs Study for Hermitage. Through 2020 you were very generous with your feedback and two topics stood out:

- Traffic – too much, too fast through our village with huge concerns for the safety of motorists, cyclists and pedestrians
- Housing – “we have enough” seems to be the consistent theme

West Berkshire recently published it’s draft Planning Review for 2026 to 2037. If you are interested in the document itself, a link to it is available on our Web Page on [hermitage.org.uk](http://hermitage.org.uk) : Just select the “Neighbourhood Development Plan” drop down option, then “New Houses for Hermitage” menu option. Very brief summary: Hermitage will likely see an additional 20 homes being built.

While further development of Hermitage may be inevitable, we in the NDP Steering Group believe the right way to determine whether this is really needed, is to ask a completely independent consultant to undertake a Housing Needs Study on our behalf. The Study will poll all villagers with a survey to complete. From your responses to that, the consultants will advise whether Hermitage needs further homes and, if so, what type, amount etc. The point is – future development would be based on need for our Village (and hence benefit us), rather than just be what a developer decides they wish to build. We hope the survey will be launched mid February 2021. Please, please complete and return it when it drops through your door – this is probably the single most important thing we will organise this year.

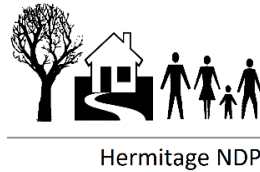
As we walk into 2021, the rollout of vaccinations brings a hope for a year that is not completely dominated by COVID. I have to say a second Lockdown is hardly what I would wish for, but the drop in traffic volume and the peace and quiet that brings continues to be quite a pleasant benefit.....

Stay safe and well all you lovely people, but don’t forget to get out and enjoy the gorgeous countryside that immediately surrounds our wonderful Village.

Andy Bunyan  
Chairman, Hermitage NDP Steering Committee

**November 2021**

### **Build Back Better? - 100 more houses to be built in Hermitage**



Despite being in the South Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Hermitage could be in for almost 100 more houses\* in the next few years.

An AONB is a nationally protected green space but our green space at the south of the village - a vast meadow, home to wildlife and feeding ground for deer could be lost forever, buried in bricks and mortar.

The Government tells us we need more houses. Our own housing survey of residents, carried out in February, agrees - Hermitage needs more housing for young and growing families as well as for older residents to downsize to.

We can't stop development but we can influence what developers plan to build, how it will look and what benefits it will bring to the village. Creating a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for our village is the only way for the people of Hermitage to have their say on the village of the future, what it will be for our children and grandchildren.

We are determined to continue with the struggle to keep Hermitage a healthy and harmonious place to call home. We've been working throughout the pandemic, gathering evidence to create an NDP that reflects what residents have told us they want. It's a big task but we're now getting support from professionals and aim to have a draft plan ready next Spring which everyone will be able to comment on.

We don't have the skills to do wizzy stuff but we do have a space on Hermitage Village website (<https://hermitage.org.uk/neighbourhood-development-plan/>) where you can find out more. You can also contact us by email on <mailto:Hermitagendp@gmail.com>

We'll keep you posted through the website, Facebook, The Pathfinder and village notice boards.

\*Land east of Station Road (extending towards Lipscombe Close and south towards the old railway line) identified as HER004 in West Berkshire's Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) published December 2020 – potential for up to 60 units (<https://info.westberks.gov.uk/helaa> Click on Appendix 4, Excel tab "Stage 2a", scroll down to line 136)

\*Land and buildings at The Old Farmhouse, Newbury Road (ref 21/00783/COND3) – 21 units approved 26 May 2021

\*Land at rear of Charlotte Close (ref 20/00912/FULEXT) – 16 units approved 8 October 2021

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