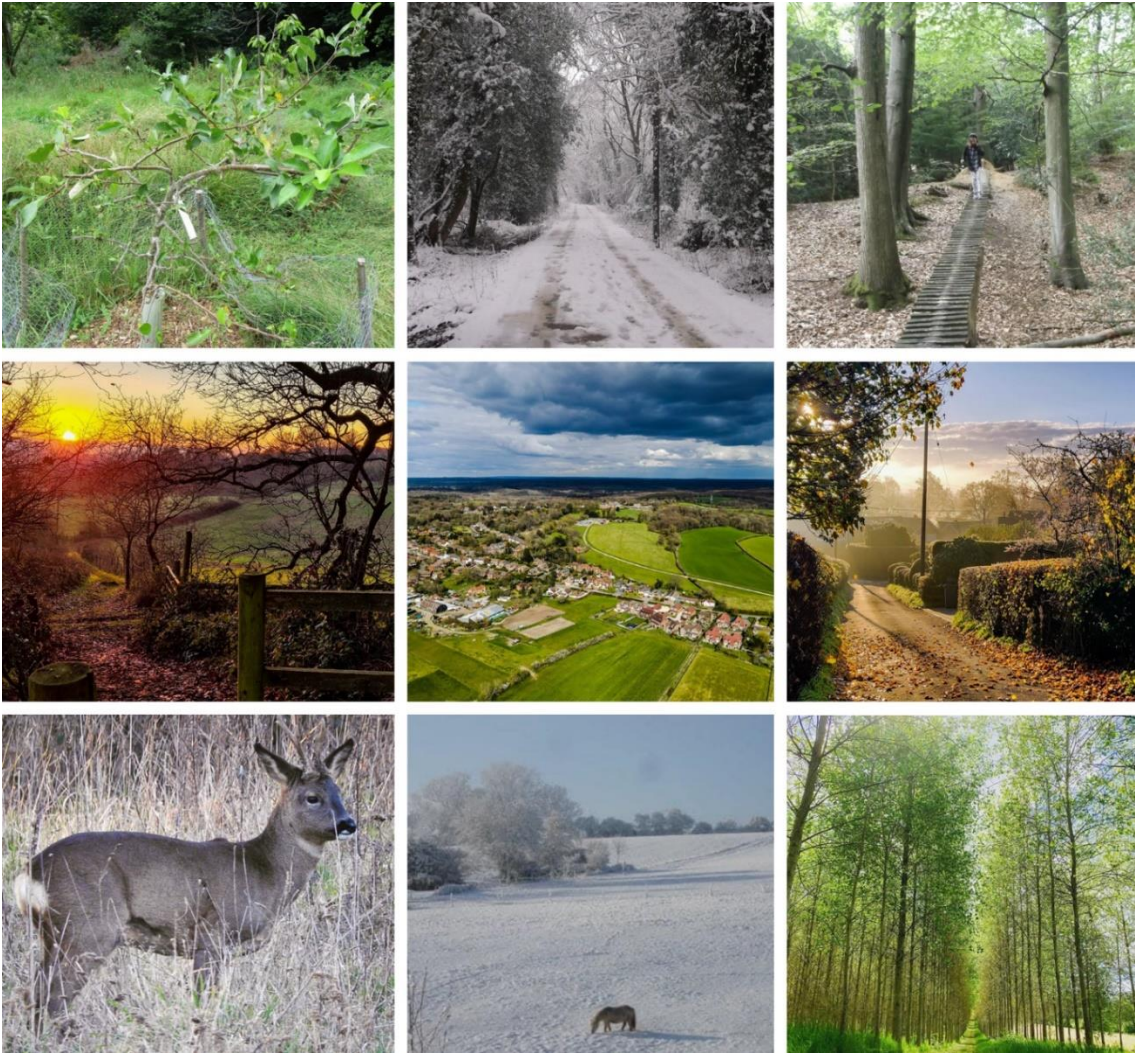


# Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan

## 2021 to 2039



### Basic Conditions Statement

June 2023

**Contents**

- 1. Introduction..... 3**
- 2. Basic condition (i) - conformity with national planning policy ..... 6**
- 3. Basic condition (iv) - contribution to sustainable development..... 15**
- 4. Basic condition (v) - general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan  
..... 18**
- 5. Basic Condition (vi) - conformity with EU obligations ..... 23**
- 6. Basic condition (vii) - conformity with the prescribed conditions ..... 23**
- 7. Conclusion ..... 24**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Basic Conditions Statement has been produced to accompany the Cold Ash Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan (CAPNDP).
- 1.2. The relevant legal framework for the preparation and making of neighbourhood plans is supported by the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 and found in the:
  - Town and Country Planning Act 1990: ss. 61F, 61I, 61M-P and Schedule 4B
  - Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004: ss 38A-C
  - Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (2012 No.637) (as amended)
- 1.3. Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 requires a neighbourhood plan to meet five basic conditions before it can proceed to a referendum. These are:
  - i. Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan;
  - ii. The making of the neighbourhood development plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
  - iii. The making of the neighbourhood development plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);
  - iv. The making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, (retained) EU obligations; and
  - v. Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the neighbourhood plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the neighbourhood plan. The prescribed condition is that the 'making' of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) or a European offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 2007) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).
- 1.4. Note that there are two further basic conditions which are relevant only to the making of a Neighbourhood Development Order and are therefore not considered in this document.
- 1.5. This document sets out how the CAPNDP meets the Basic Conditions.

## **Supporting documents and evidence**

- 1.6. The Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan, with its policies, is supported by a Consultation Statement, this Basic Conditions Statement and an extensive evidence base. It has also been subject to a Screening, organised by West Berkshire Council (WBC), to ascertain whether or not it requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment and/or a Habitat Regulations Assessment, and the Determination Statement is included as part of the accompanying documentation.
- 1.7. Alongside the planning policies, the CAPNDP contains both infrastructure priorities and a series of projects which fall outside planning policy. These are intended to contribute towards the achievement of the Plan's vision and form the basis of the principles for the use of any developer funding and other monies arising from other planning obligations. They complement the Neighbourhood Plan document but are not a formal part of the Development Plan.

## **Key statements**

- 1.8. Cold Ash Parish Council, as the qualifying body, has prepared the Neighbourhood Plan which has the same boundary as the parish area of Cold Ash, as shown in Figure 1. The Neighbourhood Area was designated by WBC on 19 March 2018.
- 1.9. The CAPNDP sets out planning policies that relate to the development and use of land within only the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Area.
- 1.10. The CAPNDP refers only to the administrative boundary of Cold Ash. There are no other adopted Neighbourhood Plans that cover all or part of the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Area.
- 1.11. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has prepared the CAPNDP to establish a vision for the future of the parish and a series of objectives to deliver this. It has engaged with the community to set out how the vision will be realised through planning and controlling land use and development change over the plan period 2021 to 2039.
- 1.12. The Plan does not contain any policies which relate to excluded development as defined by section 61K of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.



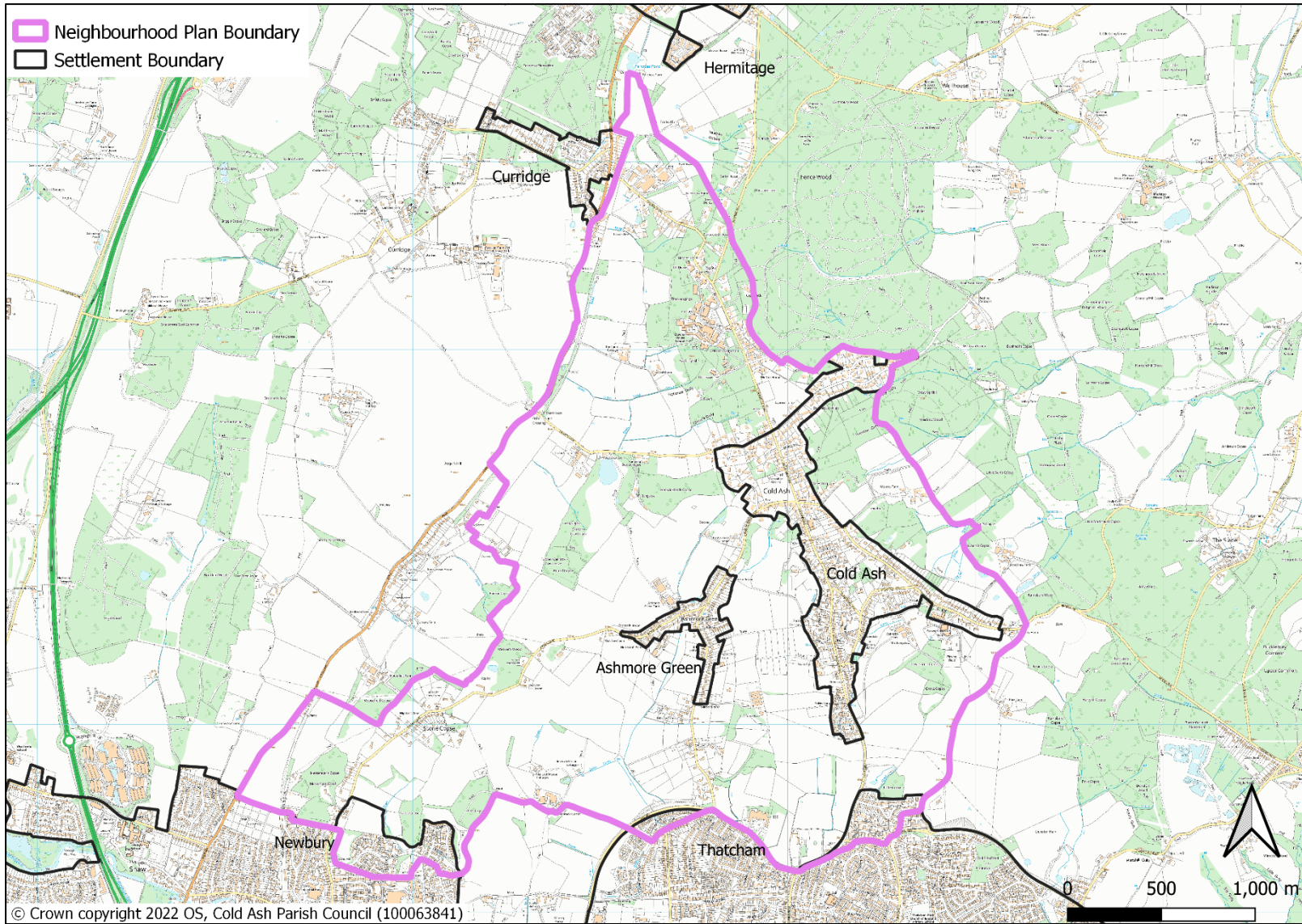


Figure 1: Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan designated area

## **2. Basic condition (i) - conformity with national planning policy**

- 2.1. To meet this condition, it is necessary to demonstrate that the CANP has regard to national planning policies and the advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State. National policy and guidance is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') and the Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG').
- 2.2. It should be noted that the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the NPPF, most recently revised in July 2021.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

- 2.3. The NPPF has 13 key objectives which are:
- Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
  - Building a strong, competitive economy
  - Ensuring the vitality of town centres
  - Promoting healthy and safe communities
  - Promoting sustainable transport
  - Supporting high quality communications
  - Making effective use of land
  - Achieving well-designed places
  - Protecting Green Belt land
  - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
  - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
  - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
  - Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals
- 2.4. This basic conditions statement explains how the CAPNDP policies contribute to meeting these objectives, where relevant, and also notes the specific national policies that the Plan is intended to support and supplement.
- 2.5. The CAPNDP has six objectives, which are shown in Table 1 alongside the corresponding NPPF objective or objectives that each one seeks to address.
- 2.6. Table 2 then provides further detail by detailing each of the 16 policies of the CAPNDP and which specific paragraphs of the NPPF it has had regard to along with a commentary.

**Table 1: Assessment of the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan objectives against NPPF goals**

CAPNDP objective	Relevant NPPF goal
<p><b>Objective 1:</b> To support sustainable, high quality, energy efficient and carbon neutral development that is in keeping with and seeks to preserve the heritage and character of the village in terms of design and scale. Development should meet an identified need and be directed to the most sustainable locations within the defined settlement boundaries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting healthy and safe communities</li> <li>• Making effective use of land</li> <li>• Achieving well-designed places</li> <li>• Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change</li> <li>• Conserving and enhancing the natural environment</li> <li>• Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change</li> <li>• Conserving and enhancing the natural environment</li> <li>• Delivering a sufficient supply of homes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective 2:</b> To protect the rural character and green spaces in and around the villages and other settlements, conserving and enhancing the attractiveness of the landscape, including its contribution to the North Wessex AONB, enabling access to the countryside, encouraging biodiversity, supporting the aims of the Local Nature Recovery Network Strategy for Berkshire and maintaining the Parish’s distinct boundaries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserving and enhancing the natural environment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective 3:</b> To reduce the reliance on cars by improving opportunities for walking, cycling, equestrian and public transport both within the Parish and to other nearby villages, towns, and services, which will help to improve people’s physical and mental health and wellbeing as well as and road safety for all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting sustainable transport</li> <li>• Promoting healthy and safe communities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective 4:</b> To maintain and enhance the existing ‘village’ atmosphere, ensuring the Parish remains a safe and friendly place to live, work and visit with a strong sense of community and a range of community facilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting healthy and safe communities</li> <li>• Achieving well-designed places</li> <li>• Ensuring the vitality of town centres</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective 5:</b> To support measures that will help to mitigate climate change that will improve air and water quality, tackle plastic pollution and restore habitats to allow plants and wildlife to thrive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change</li> <li>• Conserving and enhancing the natural environment</li> </ul>

<p><b>Objective 6:</b> To encourage a thriving rural economy by supporting existing businesses operating in the parish and providing opportunities for new ones where this can be achieved sustainably.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Building a strong, competitive economy</li><li>• Ensuring the vitality of town centres</li></ul>
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**Table 2: Assessment of how each policy in the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan conforms to the NPPF**

Policy Title and Reference	NPPF Reference (paragraph)	Commentary
POLICY CAP1: LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT	11, 29, 60, 79, 80, 119, 120, 121, 124, 130, 174, 176, 190, 197	<p>A core principle of national policy is the need for the planning system to contribute to sustainable development. The NPPF states that plans should support strategic development needs as set out in the adopted Local Plan and actively manage patterns of growth.</p> <p>Policy CAP1 supports the development strategy set out in the adopted Core Strategy, while also synchronising with that of the Local Plan Review (LPR), which is at an advanced stage. The LPR does not identify a housing figure to be delivered through the Neighbourhood Plan, and it is considered that housing supply – to address both local and strategic housing needs - is being addressed adequately at the strategic level. The CAPNDP is a non-allocating neighbourhood plan and this position has been agreed with WBC. That is not to say that suitable sites may not become available in the future. An early review of the CAPNDP, therefore, will be undertaken to consider the policies of the LPR, once adopted, and the implications of these. This will provide greater clarity about the amount of growth that Cold Ash may be expected to accommodate over the new plan period.</p> <p>The policy seeks to ensure that any development within (including within the setting of) the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is carefully planned, to take account of this special landscape. Finally, the policy seeks to minimise coalescence between the individual settlements within the Parish and those nearby, notably Thatcham and Newbury. This will help to retain the distinctive character of the villages and retain the green gaps separating them.</p> <p>This will contribute to sustainable development by ensuring that development takes place in the most appropriate places.</p>

<p>POLICY CAP2: LOCAL CHARACTER AND HERITAGE</p>	<p>126 to 134, 189, 190, 199 to 205</p>	<p>National policy encourages neighbourhood plans to develop policies that achieve well-designed places that reflect local aspirations and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area’s defining characteristics. Policy CAP2 contributes to this aim by ensuring that development in the neighbourhood area is designed to respect the prevailing character of the parish – to inform this, three Character Zones have been identified, informed by the built and natural landscape. Each is described and development proposals are encouraged to take their cue from the descriptions.</p> <p>The policy also maps, at the local level, the heritage assets – both above and below ground – in the parish, which should be considered carefully in the context of development and its potential impact.</p>
<p>POLICY CAP3: DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT</p>	<p>104, 108, 120, 126 to 136, 152</p>	<p>Good quality design is an integral aim within the NPPF. Communities, through neighbourhood plans, are encouraged to provide clarity about design expectations at an early stage. This policy seeks to do that and is underpinned by a series of design characteristics local to the area. These have drawn from the National Design Guide and also make reference to strategic guidance including the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan. The policy will help to ensure that developments function well in the area over the long term, are visually attractive, are sympathetic to local character, establish a sense of place and create safe, inclusive and accessible places.</p>
<p>POLICY CAP4: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN</p>	<p>130, 152 to 155</p>	<p>The policy supports the national objective of designing development to mitigate climate change, a government priority. Notwithstanding the fact that energy efficiency matters are largely controlled by the Building Regulations, the policy identifies a series of design features which would be supported where they are incorporated into development. In particular it supports features aimed at reducing carbon emissions, energy consumption and energy loss that should be incorporated into both new development and to retrofit sensitively historic buildings.</p>

<p>POLICY CAP5: MINIMISING THE RISK OF FLOODING</p>	<p>159 to 169</p>	<p>The NPPF requires policies to make sufficient provision for infrastructure including for water supply, wastewater and flood risk. Flooding is a problem in Cold Ash and the policy seeks to ensure that new development will not exacerbate this and supports solutions that not only mitigate the new development but that will assist in improving the overall system.</p>
<p>POLICY CAP6: BIODIVERSITY AND THE NETWORK OF GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE</p>	<p>174, 175, 176, 179, 180</p>	<p>This policy supports the national objective of ensuring that development contributes to and enhances the natural environment and biodiversity. It maps out, at the neighbourhood level, components of wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation through protecting designated and non-designated landscape assets.</p> <p>It recognises the importance of trees and the variety of roles they play, seeking to safeguard them against loss and planting of new ones.</p> <p>In line with the Environment Act, the policy requires developments to deliver a biodiversity net gain of at least 10%. Where this cannot be achieved on-site, the locally mapped network of green infrastructure offers locations, including biodiversity opportunity areas, where units can most effectively make a positive contribution to local habitats and landscapes.</p>
<p>POLICY CAP7: MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT</p>	<p>170 to 182</p>	<p>The policy supports the national aims of policies to improve biodiversity. In particular, it identifies, at a local level, the significant landscape features, such as trees, verges, waterways, ponds and hedgerows – that are particularly important within the Cold Ash context. These features should be retained and, where possible enhanced. The policy also provides guidance to applicants on how they can best incorporate open space within development as well as wildlife-friendly features.</p>

<p>POLICY CAP8: ICONIC VIEWS</p>	<p>126, 127, 130</p>	<p>The NPPF states that neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of their area and explaining how these should be reflected in development, both through their own plans and by engaging in the production of design policy, guidance and codes by local planning authorities and developers.</p> <p>This policy identifies views and viewpoints that are considered to be locally distinctive – either because they encompass a local landmark or notable landscape. The policy seeks to ensure that any development that takes place within the view ‘arcs’ limits its impact on the view itself and, where possible, enhances it.</p>
<p>POLICY CAP9: LOCAL GREEN SPACES</p>	<p>101-103, 137-151</p>	<p>The NPPF enables communities to designate spaces that are demonstrably special to them as Local Green Spaces. The policy identifies six such spaces in Cold Ash parish and provides the justification as to how they meet the NPPF criteria.</p>
<p>POLICY CAP10: DARK SKIES</p>	<p>185</p>	<p>The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development.</p> <p>One aspect of this is to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation. Cold Ash parish benefits from dark skies, which contribute positively to health, local wildlife and enjoyment of the area. The policy seeks to safeguard this important natural resource.</p>
<p>POLICY CAP11: ENCOURAGING SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT</p>	<p>92, 104 to 106,</p>	<p>Policy CAP11 supports the NPPF objective of encouraging sustainable modes of transport by mapping the movement routes within the neighbourhood area that enable people to access local facilities most easily and directly by foot or by bike, rather than relying on less sustainable modes of transport. The policy seeks to ensure that all development links up to the movement route network and that the routes are protected, maintained and, where</p>

		feasible, enhanced, to encourage greater and safer usage.
POLICY CAP12: SUNKEN LANES	126, 127, 174, 175, 179, 189, 190	<p>The policy seeks to identify and protect the network of historic sunken lanes, which provide a valuable movement network through the parish, particularly for horse riders, as well as contributing to the rural character of the area and providing an important network of wildlife corridors.</p> <p>This contributes to national aims of ensuring good design and identifying and protecting the special qualities at the local level. Sunken lanes also provide a valuable resource as wildlife corridors as part of the green and blue infrastructure network.</p>
POLICY CAP13: PUBLIC CAR PARKING	92, 104 to 106	<p>Whilst the CAPNDP seeks to encourage sustainable modes of transport through Policy CAP11, continued car usage is inevitable in a largely rural parish such as Cold Ash. Policy CAP13 seeks to address concerns related to public car parking, which has been highlighted as a problem, particularly within the village centre and near to key facilities such as the school. The policy supports the retention of existing public car parking spaces and, in accordance with the NPPF's call for convenient, safe and secure car parking, supports new provision; as part of this, notably, the policy supports the provision of electric car and bicycle charging points, to encourage a shift towards less polluting vehicles.</p>
POLICY CAP14: IMPORTANT COMMUNITY FACILITIES	86, 92, 93	<p>This policy identifies the community facilities particularly valued by the community and seeks to protect them from loss or change of use, where possible. It supports proposals to enhance these facilities. This will help to maintain the viability of the village as a local service provider as well as supporting healthy, active, inclusive and safe communities, which offer social, recreational and cultural facilities.</p>

<p>POLICY CAP15: Supporting commercial businesses and expansions</p>	<p>81, 82, 84, 85, 86</p>	<p>The policy supports the ongoing provision of employment opportunities locally. This will help to enable a viable community with opportunities for employment within the parish, in turn reducing the need to out-commute. This is particularly important in terms of supporting the economy in rural areas.</p>
<p>POLICY CAP16: SUPPORTING SMES, FLEXIBLE START-UPS, AND HOMEWORKING</p>	<p>81, 82, 84</p>	<p>The NPPF underlines the importance of sustainable economic growth. Policy CAP16 applies this to the neighbourhood level, providing support for development that will provide additional employment opportunities within the parish, taking advantage of new ways of working. In doing so, the policy supports the national objectives of creating healthy, inclusive, safe places that allow for new and flexible working practices.</p>



### 3. Basic condition (iv) - contribution to sustainable development

- 3.1. The NPPF states in paragraph 7 that *‘the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.’*
- 3.2. For the CAPNDP, sustainable development has provided the fundamental basis of each of its policies. The National Planning Practice Guidance advises that *‘sufficient and proportionate evidence should be presented on how the draft neighbourhood plan ... guides development to sustainable solutions’<sup>1</sup>.*
- 3.3. Table 3 below summarises how the objectives and policies in the CAPNDP contribute towards economic, social and environmental sustainable development, as defined in the NPPF. Many of the objectives of the CAPNDP overlap the three strands of sustainability, so for the purposes of this document, the most relevant strand has been taken to illustrate conformity.

**Table 3: Assessment of the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan objectives and policies against sustainable development**

<b>Deliver economic sustainability</b>
<b>NPPF definition – ‘to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.’</b>
<p><b>NP Objectives:</b></p> <p><b>Objective 6:</b> To encourage a thriving rural economy by supporting existing businesses operating in the parish and providing opportunities for new ones where this can be achieved sustainably.</p>
<p><b>NP Policies:</b></p> <p>CAP15: Supporting commercial businesses and expansions</p> <p>CAP16: Supporting SMEs, flexible start-ups and homeworking</p>
<p><b>Commentary:</b></p> <p>The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan collectively seek to support the environment required for a vibrant and viable economy, recognising the role of the village centre as the focal point for the community, providing a range of retail, social and other amenities.</p> <p>Opportunities for providing flexible working space and enabling homeworking are supported, which will support local innovation and, in turn, additional employment opportunities within the parish itself.</p> <p>The provision of additional car parking at the village hall will provide access and greater footfall to facilities.</p> <p>In these ways, the Plan seeks to contribute to building a sustainable economy.</p>
<b>Deliver social sustainability</b>
<b>NPPF definition – ‘to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient</b>

<sup>1</sup> Planning Practice Guidance, Paragraph: 072 Reference ID: 41-072-20140306

<p><b><i>number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being.’</i></b></p>
<p><b>NP Objectives:</b></p> <p><b>Objective 1:</b> To support sustainable, high quality, energy efficient and carbon neutral development that is in keeping with and seeks to preserve the heritage and character of the village in terms of design and scale. Development should meet an identified need and be directed to the most sustainable locations within the defined settlement boundaries.</p> <p><b>Objective 4:</b> To maintain and enhance the existing ‘village’ atmosphere, ensuring the Parish remains a safe and friendly place to live, work and visit with a strong sense of community and a range of community facilities.</p>
<p><b>NP Policies:</b></p> <p>CAP1: Location of development CAP3: Design of development CAP14: Important community facilities</p>
<p><b>Commentary:</b></p> <p>The NPPF underlines the importance of supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high-quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being.</p> <p>The CAPNDP has been developed as a result of extensive local engagement to understand local priorities to contribute to this national objective. The plan does not seek to allocate homes at this time (as it is considered and agreed with WBC that need across the strategic area is being adequately addressed through strategic sites and windfall). The Plan therefore focusses on ensuring that new homes are located into the most sustainable locations, which reinforce the identity and character of the parish and its settlements and in protecting the special features of the AONB and its setting.</p> <p>The Plan includes a range of policies to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs. These are based on community engagement and each policy provides locally specific detail on what is required and how this can be supported through planning.</p> <p>In these ways, the Plan aims to support a strong, vibrant and healthy community.</p>
<p><b>Deliver environmental sustainability</b></p>
<p><b><i>NPPF definition – ‘to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy,’</i></b></p>
<p><b>NP Objectives:</b></p> <p><b>Objective 2:</b> To protect the rural character and green spaces in and around the villages and other settlements, conserving and enhancing the attractiveness of the landscape, including its contribution to the North Wessex AONB, enabling access to the countryside, encouraging biodiversity, supporting the aims of the Local Nature Recovery Network Strategy for Berkshire and maintaining the Parish’s distinct boundaries.</p>

**Objective 3:** To reduce the reliance on cars by improving opportunities for walking, cycling, equestrian and public transport both within the Parish and to other nearby villages, towns, and services, which will help to improve people’s physical and mental health and wellbeing as well as and road safety for all.

**Objective 5:** To support measures that will help to mitigate climate change that will improve air and water quality, tackle plastic pollution and restore habitats to allow plants and wildlife to thrive.

**NP Policies:**

CAP2: Local character and heritage

CAP4: Sustainable design

CAP5: Minimising the risk of flooding

CAP6: Biodiversity and the network of green and blue infrastructure

CAP7: Managing the environmental impact of development

CAP8: Iconic views

CAP9: Local Green Spaces

CAP10: Dark skies

CAP11: Sustainable movement

CAP12: Sunken lanes

CAP13: Public car parking

**Commentary:**

Protecting the natural and built environment of the parish is an extremely important part of the CAPNDP and conforms to the national aims set out in the NPPF.

Locally specific design guidance has been developed and forms an integral part of the plan’s policies. This sets out expectations in terms of local character, design, biodiversity and environmental considerations. Locally important heritage assets are mapped as have natural features and habitats, so that they can be safeguarded and, where possible, enhanced. This includes the designation of Local Green Spaces, the identification of important local views and viewpoints and the importance of the dark skies that much of Cold Ash Parish enjoys.

The Plan emphasises the need to promote non-car modes of transport in order to reduce traffic congestion and travel by the private car to reduce carbon emissions.

In these ways, the Plan seeks to contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment of the neighbourhood area.

- 3.4. As demonstrated in Table 3, the strategic objectives of the Plan are considered to comprise a balance of social, economic, and environmental goals. The policies in the Plan demonstrably contribute to sustainable development.

## 4 Basic condition (v) - general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan

4.1. The current development plan for West Berkshire consists of:

- [Core Strategy Development Document 2006 to 2026](#) (adopted 2012)
- [Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document](#) (adopted May 2017)
- [Saved policies from the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 to 2006](#) – as amended in July 2012 and May 2017
- [South East Plan Natural Resource Management Policy 6](#) - relating to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
- [West Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2022-2037](#) (adopted 1 December 2022)

4.2. The policies of the CAPNDP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Core Strategy, Housing Site DPD and the saved policies of the Local Plan (1991 to 2006). A Local Plan Review (LPR) for the Borough is currently being developed. The emerging policies within it have been carefully considered to ensure that the neighbourhood plan is in synchronicity with these. A commentary of how the CDNDP policies confirm to both adopted and LPR policies is set out in Table 4.

4.3. Where a strategic policy is not identified in Table 4, it is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan does not contain any policies that directly relate to it.

4.4. It is confirmed that there are no policies in the strategic documents relating to minerals and waste that are of relevance to the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.5. To note, policies starting with "CS" in the table below are considered to be the core strategic policies of the adopted Core Strategy. Policies starting with "SP" are considered to be the core strategic policies of the Local Plan Review.

**Table 4: Relevant strategic policies**

Policy Title and Reference	Adopted policy	LPR	Commentary
POLICY CAP1: LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT	Adopted Core Strategy: ADP Policy 1 and 5, CS1  Housing Site Allocations DPD: C1	SP1, SP2, SP3, DM1	<p>The strategic planning policies set out the development strategic and level of growth to be accommodated across the Borough, defining the settlement boundary for the villages in the parish.</p> <p>The LPR strategic allocations, combined with windfall allowance, are anticipated to deliver the level of growth required at the local level to meet local housing need, while contributing to the strategic need.</p> <p>Policy CAP1 provides a spatial strategy for the parish, aligning to the strategic policies in terms of directing development to the most sustainable locations within the settlement boundaries. This will also help to protect the special landscape of the North Wessex Downs AONB and its setting. The policy adds additional local detail, for instance by seeking to restrict sprawl and coalescence between Cold Ash, Ashmore Green and other settlements to the south, notably Thatcham, by way of identifying green gaps.</p>
POLICY CAP2: LOCAL CHARACTER AND HERITAGE	Adopted Core Strategy: CS19	SP7, SP8, SP9	<p>The policy adds additional local detail to the strategic policies, which seek to ensure that development conserves and enhances the diversity and local distinctiveness of the landscape character of the District, and the natural, cultural, and functional components of its character as a whole. It does this by three local Character Zones and describing the features that contribute to them and how proposals should seek to reinforce them. The policy also maps out local heritage assets at a local level to ensure that impacts on these can be fully assessed.</p>

POLICY CAP3: DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT	Adopted Core Strategy: CS14	SP7	The policy adds additional local detail to the strategic policies by setting out, within the Cold Ash context, how design can be used to achieve the strategic objectives of demonstrating high quality and sustainable design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area, and makes a positive contribution to the quality of life in West Berkshire.
POLICY CAP4: SUSTIANABLE DESIGN	Adopted Core Strategy: CS14, CS15	SP5, SP7	The policy sets out detail at a neighbourhood level about how development proposals can contribute to mitigating climate change. Sustainable design policy has evolved greatly since the publication of the adopted Core Strategy and, in the absence of a more recently adopted Local Plan, this policy seeks to align itself to the national objectives.
POLICY CAP5: MINIMISING THE RISK OF FLOODING	Adopted Core Strategy: CS16	SP6	Flooding is a particular problem in the parish, exacerbated by the antiquated sewerage system and natural topography of the area. The policy sees to emphasise this and the importance of ensuring that new development provides adequate drainage that does not worsen the situation.
POLICY CAP6: BIODIVERSITY AND THE NETWORK OF GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE	Adopted Core Strategy: CS17, CS18	SP10, SP11	The policy addresses the green and blue infrastructure assets of the Plan area, including their importance in combatting pressure on wildlife, habitats, biodiversity and geodiversity and in offsetting the effects of air pollution. The policy conforms to strategic policies, which seek to safeguard and enhance biodiversity and landscapes across the borough. It provides additional local detail by mapping out, at the local level, the network of green and blue infrastructure. It requires a net gain in biodiversity and the local map identifies areas where this can most helpfully be delivered, should the net gain not be possible wholly on-site.
POLICY CAP7: MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT	Adopted Core Strategy: CS14, CS17	SP10, SP11	The policy adds additional local detail to strategic policies by identifying the specific features of the landscape (both designated and non-designated) that should be safeguarded. These might also provide inspiration for development proposals seeking to integrate natural features within their schemes.



POLICY CAP8: ICONIC VIEWS	Adopted Core Strategy: ADP5, CS19:	SP7, SP8, SP9	Strategic policy recognises the contribution that views can make to the character of an area, helping to create a 'sense of place' and identity for local people. The policy adds additional local detail by identifying a series of view corridors and views that are considered to be particularly significant in the parish – because they take in a landscape feature or historic asset – that epitomises the character and place of the parish.
POLICY CAP9: LOCAL GREEN SPACES	Adopted Core Strategy: CS18	SP10, SP11	The policy identifies six Local Green Spaces that are demonstrably special to the community and evidences this in the context of the criteria set out in the NPPF. This adds additional local detail to strategic policies by setting out the areas of green infrastructure that should be protected as local green space.
POLICY CAP10: DARK SKIES	Adopted Core Strategy: CS19	SP8	Strategic policy sets out that proposals should have regard to the natural, cultural, and perceptual components of the character of the landscape. The areas of dark sky within Cold Ash contribute to this and are important not only for wildlife but also for the mental health and wellbeing of local people. The policy has been developed with support from the AONB Unit.
POLICY CAP11: SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT	Adopted Core Strategy: CS13	SP23	The policy supports the strategic aim of encouraging, as far as possible, sustainable transport modes. It adds additional local detail by mapping the movement routes within the parish that offer the most direct and quickest routes between key facilities and residential areas. Opportunities for greater linkages and improvements are described where this would further assist active travel.
POLICY CAP12: SUNKEN LANES	Adopted Core Strategy: CS19	SP8, SP9, SP10	The sunken lanes found in the parish contribute significantly to local character and also local biodiversity, acting as natural wildlife corridors. The policy maps them at the local level so that development proposals can take them fully into account and ensure that they are safeguarded against impacts that would negatively impact their character and function.

<p>POLICY CAP13: PUBLIC CAR PARKING</p>	<p>Adopted Core Strategy: CS13</p>	<p>SP23</p>	<p>Notwithstanding the overarching aim of encouraging sustainable modes of transport, particularly for journeys within the parish, car dependency remains higher than average across the wider area. The policy supports the ongoing provision of car parking, including specific support for additional space to serve the village centre facilities, Hermitage Road Recreation Ground and the schools. This aligns with strategic policy. In parallel, however, it seeks electric charging points and cycle storage to support a shift toward less polluting forms of transport..</p>
<p>POLICY CAP14: IMPORTANT COMMUNITY FACILITIES</p>	<p>Saved Local Plan Policy: RL2, SHOP5 Adopted Core Strategy: ADP2</p>	<p>SP24, DM39</p>	<p>The policy adds additional local detail to the strategic policies, which support the provision and safeguarding of community recreational facilities. In particular, it sets out specific projects that are desired locally, as informed by local engagement.</p>
<p>POLICY CAP15: SUPPORTING COMMERCIAL BUSINESSES, EXISTING AND EXPANSIONS</p>	<p>Adopted Core Strategy: CS9</p>	<p>SP20</p>	<p>Strategic policy provides broad protection of existing employment sites. Policy CAP15 adds additional local detail by setting out the specific locations within the parish that are considered to be important to safeguard as employment sites and which could offer modest expansion.</p>
<p>POLICY CAP16: SUPPORTING SMES, FLEXIBLE START-UPS AND HOMEWORKING</p>	<p>Adopted Core Strategy: CS9</p>	<p>SP20</p>	<p>Policy CAP16 of the CAPNDP supports proposals that will help to deliver a flexible working environment, in line with evolving ways of working. This will help to contribute to a more sustainable economy, offering additional employment opportunities within the parish.</p>

## 5 Basic Condition (vi) - conformity with EU obligations

- 5.1 The Plan, and the process under which it was made, conforms to the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (EU 2001/42/EC) and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations).
- 5.2 In accordance with Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations 2004, West Berkshire Council, as the responsible authority, determined in November 2022 that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is not required as the Neighbourhood Plan's policies are unlikely to have significant environmental effects, either individually or collectively.
- 5.3 The [Screening Report](#) and [Decision Notice](#) are available to view on the WBC website.

## 6 Basic condition (vii) - conformity with the prescribed conditions

- 6.1 Under Directive 92/43/EEC, also known as the Habitats Directive Directive 92/43/EEC 'on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora': <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:31992L0043>), it must be ascertained whether the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
- 6.2 Assessments under the regulations are known as Habitats Regulation Assessments ("HRA"). An appropriate assessment ("AA") is required only if the Plan is likely to have significant effects on a European protected species or site. To ascertain whether or not it is necessary to undertake an assessment, a screening process is followed.
- 6.3 WBC, as the responsible authority, determined in November 2022 that the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant impact on European sites and therefore does not require a full HRA to be undertaken.
- 6.4 The [Screening Report](#) and [Decision Notice](#) are available to view on the WBC website.
- 6.5 In addition to conforming to its EU obligations, the Plan does not breach and is not otherwise incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights.

## **7 Conclusion**

7.1. The relevant basic conditions as set out in Schedule 4B to the TCPA 1990 are considered to be met by the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan and all the policies therein. It is therefore respectfully suggested to the Examiner that the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Plan complies with Paragraph 8(1) (a) of Schedule 4B of the Act.