

## WEST BERKSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### HERMITAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2039

#### DECISION STATEMENT

**Published pursuant to the Section 38A(9) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)**

#### **1. Summary**

- 1.1. In accordance with the above regulations and following a positive referendum result (363 out of the 399 (91%) who voted were in favour of the plan), West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) made the Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) (with modifications) on 3 April 2024.
- 1.2. The NDP now forms part of the statutory Development Plan for WBDC. Planning applications within Hermitage parish must be considered against the Hermitage NDP as well as the other documents of the WBDC development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### **2. Background**

##### Designation of the Neighbourhood Area

- 2.1. On 26 April 2019, the Council designated the Hermitage Neighbourhood Area for the purpose of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. The plan area covers the parish of Hermitage and lies solely within the West Berkshire Local Planning Authority Area.

##### Submission of the Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan

- 2.2. Hermitage Parish Council, the qualifying body, submitted the draft Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and supporting documents to the Council on 17 February 2023.
- 2.3. Following submission of the NDP, the Council publicised the Plan and supporting documents and invited representations during the consultation period which ran from 21 July to 1 September 2023. At a meeting of Council on 5 October 2023, it was agreed that the Hermitage NDP could proceed to independent examination.

##### Independent examination of the Hermitage NDP

- 2.4. The Council, with the consent of Hermitage Parish Council, appointed an independent examiner, Mr. Andrew Mead MRTPI MIQ, to review the NDP and consider whether it should proceed to referendum.
- 2.5. The examination of the plan took place by way of written representations between October and November.
- 2.6. The Examiner's final report was received on 9 October 2023. The report concluded that subject to one modification, the Hermitage NDP should proceed to referendum.

The Examiner also recommended that the referendum area be based on the Neighbourhood Area that was designated by the Council on 26 April 2019.

#### Post examination

- 2.7. Regulations 17A and 18 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) requires the local planning authority to outline what action to take in response to the recommendations of the examiner following the formal examination.
- 2.8. The examiner's report is not binding, and it is the responsibility of the Council to ultimately decide if the examiner's suggested recommendations and modifications should be followed or not.

### **3. Decision and reasons**

- 3.1. Having considered the recommendations in the Examiner's report and the reasons for them, the Council, with the consent of Hermitage Parish Council, has decided to accept the modification to the submitted Plan under Paragraph 12(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 3.2. The Council is satisfied that, subject to the modification which it considers should be made, as set out in Table 3.1 below, that the Hermitage NDP meets the Basic Conditions set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), is compatible with the Convention rights and complies with the provision made by or under 61E(2), 61J and 61L of the said Act.

**Table 3.1:** Examiner’s proposed modifications to the Hermitage NDP

Policy (NDP page no.)	Examiner’s modifications (insertion <u>underlined</u> , deletion as <del>strikethrough</del> )	Decision and justification	Action taken and revised modification
<p>Criterion C, Policy HER4: Low energy and energy efficient design, including Sustainable Drainage Systems (pp.21-22)</p>	<p>The addition of a final sentence to criterion C of the policy:</p> <p>All development must minimise surface water runoff to prevent surface water flooding through implementation of suitable sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), and where possible incorporate mitigation and resilience measures for any increases in surface water flood risk that may occur due to climate change or other factors [footnote 6]. The design of SuDS should be in accordance with best practice and national standards [footnote 7]. It should also be ensured that they are multi-functional and can deliver additional benefits where possible, including biodiversity, environmental net gains and water quality.</p> <p><u>When new development is bought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaption measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure.</u></p> <p><i>Footnote 6: The WBDC [West Berkshire District Council] Sustainable Drainage Systems Supplementary Planning Document provides guidance (<a href="https://www.westberks.gov.uk/sudsspd">https://www.westberks.gov.uk/sudsspd</a>)</i></p> <p><i>Footnote 7: DEFRA Non-statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems:</i></p>	<p>The Council agree with the Examiner’s recommendation.</p> <p>Policy HER4 requires new development to demonstrate how the consumption of natural resources has been minimised to provide resilience to the effects of climate change, and how it has been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change.</p> <p>Paragraph 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, published September 2023) states that new development should be planned in a way that avoids increased vulnerability to the impacts arising from climate change and helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Green infrastructure is identified in the NPPF as being a way in which the risks can be managed.</p> <p>The Examiner’s modification to include the additional sentence should be accepted to ensure the Basic Condition for plans to have regard to national planning policy and guidance is met.</p>	<p>No further action required. Modification to be taken forward to the final plan.</p>

Policy (NDP page no.)	Examiner's modifications (insertion <u>underlined</u> , deletion as <del>strikethrough</del> )	Decision and justification	Action taken and revised modification
	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-drainage-systems-non-statutory-technical-standards">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-drainage-systems-non-statutory-technical-standards</a>		

- 3.3. Several minor modifications have been identified by the Council which are required to correct typographical and factual errors within the Plan. These modifications, which have been agreed with Hermitage Parish Council, do not affect the nature of the Plan. The minor modifications and the justification for them is set out in Table 3.2 below.

**Table 3.2:** The Council's minor modifications to the Hermitage NDP

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification ( <u>insertion underlined</u> and <del>deletion as strikethrough</del> )	Justification
List of policies	Inclusion of page numbers	<p>Editorial modification to improve readability.</p> <p>The Council, in its representations on the submission NDP, advised that the inclusion of page numbers would assist with navigation.</p> <p>The Examiner's report at paragraph 4.19 commented that the minor inaccuracies and text improvements identified by the Council would not affect the ability of the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions and could be undertaken as minor, non-material changes.</p>
Policy context, paragraph 1.5 (p.2)	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan represents one part of the development plan for the neighbourhood area over the period 2022 to 2039, the other parts being the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2012), the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2017), <del>and the saved policies of the West Berkshire District Local Plan (saved 2007)</del> <u>and the Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2022-2037). The Core Strategy, Housing Site Allocations DPD and the 2007 saved policies collectively make up the District Local Plan.</u></p>	<p>Factual and explanatory modifications to provide greater clarity on the documents that form part of the development plan for West Berkshire.</p> <p>The Council, in its representations on the submission NDP, advised that reference needed to be made to the adopted Minerals and Waste Plan as it is one of the documents that forms part of the development plan.</p> <p>The Council also advised that it needed to be explained that the Core Strategy, Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document, and the Saved Policies of the West Berkshire District Local Plan together form part of the Local Plan. Such a modification would also provide context to paragraph 1.11 which talks about the review of the Local Plan.</p> <p>The Examiner's report at paragraph 4.19 commented that the minor inaccuracies and text improvements identified by the Council would not affect the ability of</p>

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		the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions and could be undertaken as minor, non-material changes.
Policy context, paragraph 1.11 (p.4)	<p>A review of the West Berkshire Local Plan is being undertaken by West Berkshire District Council. This will cover the period to 2039, the same end date as the Neighbourhood Plan. A draft of <del>the</del> <u>The</u> Local Plan Review was <del>consulted on between December 2020 and February 2021</del> <u>submitted for examination in March 2023</u>. Amongst other things, this proposed a minimum housing requirement for Hermitage of 20 dwellings to 2039 (the lifetime of the emerging Local Plan). This is in addition to the two sites allocated in the existing Housing Allocations DPD and to any windfall sites that have come forward recently (including the Co-op site for 8 dwellings, the White Horse pub site for 4 dwellings and the Crown Butchers site for 3 dwellings). This figure will be kept under review until the Local Plan Review has reached a more advanced stage, ie <u>completed</u> independent examination <del>has been completed</del>. <u>As of late-2023, it is expected that the Local Plan Review will be adopted in September 2024. Upon adoption, the current Local Plan will be superseded.</u> In October 2022 West Berkshire District Council published its timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan Review. The Regulation 19 Proposed Submission version of the Plan was consulted on in January and February 2023. The intention is then to submit the plan for independent examination in March 2023, with an adoption date of September 2024.</p>	<p>Factual modification to reflect the current position of the Local Plan Review.</p> <p>The Council, in its representations on the submission NDP, advised that the preparation of the Local Plan Review had progressed since the submission version of the Hermitage NDP was prepared. The text therefore needs to be updated to reflect the progress that had been made and the expected adoption date.</p> <p>The Examiner's report at paragraph 4.19 commented that the minor inaccuracies and text improvements identified by the Council would not affect the ability of the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions and could be undertaken as minor, non-material changes.</p>
Hermitage today, socio-economic profile, paragraph 2.16 (p.6)	<p><del>Whilst there was a</del> <u>The socio-economic profile of Hermitage is derived from the</u> national Census undertaken in 2021, <del>a comprehensive set of data was not available at parish level at the time of drafting.</del> The</p>	Factual modification to take account of updated demographic data.

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	<p><del>data below therefore relate to the 2011 Census. This is dated and therefore needs to be considered in the context of change over the intervening period. However, its purpose is to give a high level understanding of the broad profile of Hermitage parish.</del></p>	<p>The 'Hermitage today' section of the Plan provides background context on the Neighbourhood Area, and it refers to 2011 Census data which was available at the time the submission version of the Plan was prepared. This section of the Plan does not contain any policies.</p>
<p>Hermitage today, socio-economic profile, paragraph 2.17 (pp.6-7)</p>	<p>In 20<u>2</u>1, the population of Hermitage parish was <u>2,078</u> <del>1,943</del> persons, living in <u>766</u> <del>722</del> household spaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>15.1%</u> <del>17.4%</del> of the population is aged <u>65</u> <del>60</del> or over, compared with <u>19.5%</u> <del>21.7%</del> of the population in West Berkshire district.</li> <li>• <u>24.1%</u> <del>25.4%</del> of the population is aged <u>15</u> <del>4</del> or under, compared with <u>19.0%</u> <del>18.9%</del> of the population in West Berkshire.</li> </ul>	<p>The 2021 Census data is now available, and Hermitage Parish Council have suggested this is used to provide a more up-to-date context of the Neighbourhood Area. The Council agree that such a modification would be helpful.</p> <p>The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>
<p>Hermitage today, socio-economic profile, paragraph 2.18 (p.7)</p>	<p>In 20<u>2</u>1, Hermitage parish had <u>766</u> <del>744</del> dwellings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>55.2</u> <del>54.7%</del> of these dwellings were detached, compared with <u>33.18%</u> in West Berkshire;</li> <li>• <u>19.5</u> <del>20.5%</del> of dwellings were semi-detached, compared with <u>32.58%</u> in West Berkshire;</li> <li>• <u>76.8</u> <del>69.8%</del> of properties were owned, which is <del>broadly the same as</del> <u>higher than the figure</u> for West Berkshire (<u>67.5%</u>);</li> <li>• only <u>8.4</u> <del>9.1%</del> were social rented properties, whereas the figure for West Berkshire was <u>14.0</u> <del>13.8%</del>; and</li> <li>• Hermitage has a low proportion of 1-bed properties at <u>43.9%</u> (West Berkshire has <u>9.8%</u>) and a high proportion of properties of at least 4 bedrooms at <u>44</u> <del>46.5%</del> (West Berkshire has <u>29.8%</u>):</li> </ul>	



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Hermitage today, socio-economic profile, paragraph 2.19 (p.6)	79.0 <u>68.4</u> % of the resident population aged <del>between</del> 16 and 74 <u>over</u> was economically active, compared with <del>76.2</del> <u>65.4</u> % of those in West Berkshire.	
Hermitage today, socio-economic profile, paragraph 2.20 (p.7)	A large proportion of the resident population of Hermitage aged 16 <del>to 74</del> <u>and over</u> that were in employment were in highly skilled occupations. <u>44.1</u> % were employed either as managers, directors or senior officials or in professional occupations compared with <u>38.4</u> <del>33.3</del> % in West Berkshire.	
Key features, paragraph 2.21, 1 <sup>st</sup> paragraph (p.7)	Hermitage lies less than 5 miles north-east of Newbury in the heart of the North Wessex Downs <del>Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)</del> <u>National Landscape (previously known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)</u> .	<p>Factual modification to reflect the name change of all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs were renamed as National Landscapes.</p> <p>The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>
Hermitage today, Community facilities, paragraph 2.24 (p.8)	<b>Children's play areas</b> - Hermitage boasts three well-equipped children's play areas spaced throughout the settlement area, with a variety of activity equipment - Furze Hill, Pinewood <u>Playground</u> Park (off Chapel Lane next to the Scout Hut)	<p>Factual modification to provide the correct name of a play area.</p> <p>Hermitage Parish Council have advised that the reference to Pinewood Park is incorrect, and the correct name is Pinewood Playground. The Council consider that an amendment is needed to ensure factual accuracy.</p> <p>The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>

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Hermitage today, Community facilities, paragraph 2.25 (p.8)	<u>Holy Trinity</u> <del>Hermitage Parish Church</del>	<p>Factual modification to provide the correct name of the church.</p> <p>Hermitage Parish Council have advised that the correct name of Hermitage Parish Church is Holy Trinity Church. The Council consider that an amendment is needed to ensure factual accuracy.</p> <p>The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>
Hermitage today, Community facilities, paragraph 2.32 (p.9)	Pinewood Park <u>playground</u>	<p>Factual modification to provide the correct name of a play area.</p> <p>Hermitage Parish Council have advised that Pinewood Park is correctly known as Pinewood Playground. The Council consider that an amendment is needed to ensure factual accuracy.</p> <p>The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>
Community facilities, paragraph 2.34, 1 <sup>st</sup> sentence (p.9)	Located well within the North Downs <del>Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)</del> <u>National Landscape</u> , Hermitage is surrounded...	<p>Factual modification to reflect the name change of all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs were renamed as National Landscapes.</p> <p>The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>
Hermitage today, Local businesses, paragraph 2.43 (p.10)	Hilliers Garden Centre, situated just outside the parish boundary is very popular with residents and nearby locals, providing plants, a wide range of gardening	Factual modification to provide an update on the development progress at Hillier Garden Centre.

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	supplies and services as well as a very popular café and restaurant. <u>In late-2023, c</u> <del>Construction work has already begun</del> to expand the retail area and parking facilities <u>was completed</u> .	<p>The 'Hermitage today' section of the Plan provides background context on the Neighbourhood Area, and included is an overview of local businesses. This section does not contain any policies.</p> <p>The Hillier Garden Centre is a local business, and at the time of the preparation of the submission version of the Plan, expansion works were in progress. Hermitage Parish Council have advised that construction work is now complete, and the text should be updated to provide a more up-to-date context of the Neighbourhood Area. The Council agree that such a modification would be helpful.</p> <p>The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>
Hermitage today, Shopping, paragraph 2.44 (p.10)	Just to the south of Hermitage, but within the parish boundary in the Old Telephone Exchange building at the side of the B4009 is <del>Yarnfest</del> <u>Silver Clay Academy, a jewellers that also offers workshops where people can make their own jewellery.</u> <del>an independent supplier of yarn and associated craft supplies. It also holds informal, friendly community knitting and crochet sessions.</del>	<p>Factual modification to provide an update on the retail offer in the Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>The 'Hermitage today' section of the Plan provides background context on the Neighbourhood Area, and included is an overview of the local retail offer. This section does not contain any policies.</p> <p>Yarnfest is referenced as being one shop located within the Neighbourhood Area. Hermitage Parish Council have advised that Yarnfest has been replaced by the Silver Clay Academy, and the text should be updated to provide a more up-to-date context of the Neighbourhood Area. The Council agree that such a modification would be helpful.</p>

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		The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.
Hermitage today, New development, paragraph 2.50 (p.11)	<p>As at April <del>November</del> 2023<sup>2</sup>, the following developments weare in the planning pipeline (ie. have permission but have yet to be constructed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pasture behind Charlotte Close - 16 dwellings approved October 2021, <u>with the site being prepared for construction to commence</u></li> <li>• Pasture behind the Old Farmhouse - 21 dwellings approved May 2021</li> <li>• Pasture behind the White Horse Pub - 4 dwellings approved January 2021</li> <li>• Land at Crown Butchers, 4 High Street - 3 dwellings approved November 2021, <u>with construction close to completion.</u></li> </ul>	<p>Factual modification to provide an update on the development progress of residential developments within the Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>The 'Hermitage today' section of the Plan provides background context on the Neighbourhood Area, and included is an overview of residential developments in the pipeline. This section does not contain any policies.</p> <p>Hermitage Parish Council have advised that the development progress at two sites has changes since the submission version of the Plan was prepared, and the text should be updated to provide a more up-to-date context of the Neighbourhood Area. The Council agree that such a modification would be helpful.</p> <p>The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>
Vision for Hermitage, paragraph 3.2 (p.12)	<p>The village will provide an environment that supports residents of all ages to live, work and enjoy leisure with access to the surrounding <del>AONB</del> <u>National Landscape</u> to enjoy social activities safely and remain a service village for the wider area.</p> <p>The village will provide an environment that supports residents of all ages to live, work and enjoy leisure with access to the surrounding <del>AONB</del> <u>National Landscape</u> to enjoy social activities safely and remain a service village for the wider area.</p>	<p>Factual modification to reflect the name change of all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs were renamed as National Landscapes.</p> <p>This is a minor, non-material change which would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>
Matters not covered by Neighbourhood Plan	The parish is in the North Wessex Downs Area-of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) <u>National</u>	

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification ( <u>insertion underlined and deletion as strikethrough</u> )	Justification
policies, paragraph 3.5, 2 <sup>nd</sup> sentence (p.13)	<u>Landscape (previously known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)</u> , affording it protection at a national level.	
Policy HER2 (Design), criteria 2, 2 <sup>nd</sup> sentence (p.16)	In particular, development should ensure that densities are reduced on the rural edge of Hermitage village in order to retain the open feel of the village and its relationship with the <del>AONB</del> <u>National Landscape</u> .	
Policy HER2 (Design), criteria 4, 1 <sup>st</sup> sentence (p.16)	Building heights and rooflines should generally be no more than two storeys but all buildings should respect the surrounding countryside and <del>AONB</del> <u>National Landscape</u>	
Views, paragraph 5.4, 2 <sup>nd</sup> sentence (p.19)	Its designation as <u>a AONB National Landscape (previously known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)</u> means that it has a high level of protection provided by the NPPF at national level, complemented by the West Berkshire Local Plan.	
Views, paragraph 5.5, 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> sentences	However, this does not mean that all development is banned in <del>the a</del> <u>AONB National Landscape</u> . Hermitage village is within the <del>AONB</del> <u>North Wessex Downs National Landscape</u> yet strategic planning policy enables this to continue, reflecting its role as an <del>AONB</del> <u>National Landscape</u> village.	
Views, paragraph 5.6, 3 <sup>rd</sup> sentence (p.19)	This has been assisted by the large number of detached residential properties in the village. Whilst the heart of the <u>National Landscape</u> <del>AONB</del> is a short distance away, it is easy when in the middle of the village to lose that connection.	
Policy HER5 (Wildlife Friendly-Development), criterion D, 1 <sup>st</sup> paragraph (p.23)	Development proposals should respect the dark skies that are characteristic of the North Wessex Downs <del>AONB</del> <u>National Landscape</u> .	

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification ( <u>insertion underlined</u> and <del>deletion as strikethrough</del> )	Justification
Wildlife-friendly design, paragraph 6.11, 1 <sup>st</sup> sentence (p.24)	The location of the parish within the North Wessex Downs AONB <u>National Landscape (previously known as National Landscape)</u>	
Policy HER7: Local Green Spaces (p.26)	4. Pinewood <del>P</del> playground	<p>Factual modification to provide the correct name of a play area.</p> <p>Hermitage Parish Council have advised that the reference to Pinewood Park is incorrect, and the correct name is Pinewood Playground. The Council consider that an amendment is needed to ensure factual accuracy.</p> <p>The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>
Historic Environment, paragraph 7.18, 1 <sup>st</sup> sentence (p.40)	<b>Former Police Station</b> , Marlston Road ( <u>now East House and Westham</u> )	<p>Factual modification to provide the correct name of a property.</p> <p>The supporting text to policy HER8 refers to the Former Police Station on Marlston Road. Hermitage Parish Council have advised that this is now known as East House and Westham. The Council consider that an amendment is required to ensure factual accuracy.</p> <p>The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>
Historic Environment, paragraph 7.18, 2 <sup>nd</sup> sentence (p.40)	According to Berkshire Records Office, Hermitage Police Station was <del>built</del> <u>completed on</u> 28 October 1920 at a cost of £3,570.	<p>Factual modification to make clear when Hermitage Police Station was completed.</p> <p>Hermitage Parish Council have advised that Hermitage Police Station was completed, and not built, on 28 October 1920. The Council consider that an amendment is required to ensure factual accuracy.</p>

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		The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.
Historic Environment, paragraph 7.18, final sentence (p.40)	The village constable lived next door. The building has largely survived but was converted in the later 20th century to two semi-detached homes, numbers 6 and 7 Marlstone Road, <del>also called Westam House and East House.</del>	<p>Factual modification to correct a road name.</p> <p>Hermitage Parish Council have advised that the supporting text to policy HER8 includes the incorrect spelling of a road name. The Council consider that an amendment is required to ensure factual accuracy.</p> <p>The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>
Historic Environment, paragraph 7.26 (p.44)	It closed when Simonds Brewery (Reading) was <del>taken over by</del> <u>merged with</u> Courage Barclay.	<p>Factual modification regarding the history of the Simonds Brewery.</p> <p>Hermitage Parish Council have advised that the Simonds Brewery was merged and not taken over by Courage Barclay. The Council agree that an amendment should be made to ensure factual accuracy.</p> <p>The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>
Non-policy actions, table 9.1 (non-land use issues to be addressed), 2 <sup>nd</sup> row (p.51)	<u>Engage with residents to consider the provision of</u> <del>Provide</del> play equipment for Lipscomb Close Green	<p>Explanatory modification to provide greater context to one of the non-policy actions.</p> <p>Some aspects of the NDP vision cannot be delivered through planning policies alone because they are not planning matters. Instead, they will need to be delivered by the Parish Council working with the wider community and other organisations.</p>

NDP chapter / policy / paragraph (page no.)	Council's minor modification ( <u>insertion <b>underlined</b></u> and <u>deletion as <b>strikethrough</b></u> )	Justification
		<p>Hermitage Parish Council have advised that, to reflect joint working with the community, the non-policy action needs to be amended to include reference to residents.</p> <p>The Council agree such a modification would provide greater explanation on how the action will be delivered.</p> <p>The non-policy actions are not required to meet the Basic Conditions. The modification is a minor, non-material change that would not affect the nature of the Plan.</p>



- 3.3. This Decision Statement confirms that the recommendations proposed in the Examiner's report have been considered and accepted, that the Plan has been altered as a result of it, and that it may now be submitted to local referendum.
- 3.4. The Council is in agreement with the Examiner's recommendation that there is no policy or proposal significant enough to have an impact beyond the designated Neighbourhood Area. Any referendum which takes place in due course must be contiguous with the boundary of the designated Neighbourhood Area as illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1: Hermitage Neighbourhood Area



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- 3.3. Paragraph 38A(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Council to make the NDP if more than half of those voting in a referendum have voted in favour of the Plan being used to help to decide planning applications in the area.
- 3.4. A local referendum was held in Hermitage on 2 May 2024 to decide whether the local community was in favour of the Hermitage NDP. From the votes recorded, 363 out of 399 (91%) of those who voted were in favour of the plan. The turnout of electors was 27%.
- 3.5. The Council has assessed and concluded that the plan, including its preparation, does not breach, and would not otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998).
- 3.6. At the Council meeting of 20 February 2024, Members resolved to adopt the NDP should there be a successful 'yes' vote at referendum. This ensured that the successful NDP could be adopted as part of the development plan for WBDC without the need to call a special Council meeting.
- 3.7. In accordance with the Act and Regulations, the Hermitage NDP is 'made' and now forms part of the statutory Development Plan for West Berkshire. Planning applications in the parish of Hermitage must be considered against the Hermitage NDP in addition to the other documents of the development plan – Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) 2006-2016, Housing Site Allocations DPD, West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007), Cold Ash NDP, Compton NDP, Stratfield Mortimer NDP, and the Minerals and Waste Local Plan.