



**The West Berkshire  
Historic Environment Action Plan**  
West Berkshire Heritage Forum - 2011

## **West Berkshire Heritage Forum**

A partnership established to recognise, promote and protect the heritage of West Berkshire

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Front cover: *Listed gate piers and church within the registered park at Hamstead Marshall*

Back Cover: *The old score board at the former baseball diamond at Greenham Common.*

# The West Berkshire Historic Environment Action Plan

## Contents

Summary	4
1. Introduction	5
1.1 Overview	5
1.2 Vision and Aims	6
1.3 The HEAP Steering Group	7
2. Background and Data Sources	8
2.1 West Berkshire	8
2.2 The Historic Environment of West Berkshire	10
2.3 The Historic Environment Resource	18
3. West Berkshire Historic Environment – A Statement of Significance	21
3.1 Background to the Statement of Significance	21
3.2 Significant Components and Themes of the Historic Environment in West Berkshire	21
4. Establishing Priorities	25
4.1 Introduction	25
4.2 Issues	25
4.3 Opportunities	28
5. Action Plan	30
5.1 Introduction to the Action Plan	30
5.2 The Action Plan	30
5.3 Delivery and monitoring	36
Bibliography	42
Appendix 1 - Glossary	43
Appendix 2 - Links to other organisations	44

# The West Berkshire Historic Environment Action Plan

## Summary

The West Berkshire Historic Environment Action Plan is an attempt to define the character and significance of the historic environment of the modern administrative district and to provide a strategic overview of the actions required to ensure its long term conservation. It provides a vision for all involved with the historic environment - amateur enthusiast, professional, local community and beyond - that promotes greater partnership-working and a more holistic approach to our understanding of the resource and its management.

The West Berkshire HEAP has been written to try to promote greater awareness of the historic environment, the pressures that it faces, the opportunities that it provides and the actions that are required to ensure that the resource is conserved for future generations to enjoy. Above all it aims to highlight how a shared ownership of the resource and the actions, across not just the historic environment sector but by the wider community and other groups and areas of interest, can provide a more focussed set of activities that deliver long term benefits.

It is hoped that the actions defined in the plan are specific enough to allow their objectives to be understood, but broad enough to allow them to be interpreted by different groups and communities. It is not the intention to provide a prescriptive list of activities that restricts innovation, personal interests or more locally defined issues and opportunities. The plan is designed to provide a steer for groups (with both local and with broader remits), individuals, local communities and those with professional interests and duties, who in the preparation of their own projects or strategies will be able to consider how they can contribute to the broader picture.

The West Berkshire Heritage Forum<sup>1</sup> has published the HEAP, which was prepared and written in 2009-10 by a subgroup of interested individuals and representatives of various groups. The plan has a 5 year timeframe, but will be reviewed annually to allow progress against the defined actions to be reported.

<sup>1</sup> The west Berkshire heritage Forum was formed in 2009 'A partnership established to recognise, promote and protect the heritage of West Berkshire'.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

West Berkshire has a rich and varied historic environment resource, which survives as physical reminders of the human processes and events that have created the world we see around us. It can be seen in the everyday and in the extraordinary, in the towns and villages and in the countryside, in ancient remains and modern buildings. Conserving the best of the historic environment has long been an important objective of society, whether at a national, regional or local level. Much has been achieved, through national designation (listing, scheduling, etc), through local government initiatives (conservation areas, local lists, etc) and through the efforts of local communities and interest groups (town trails, village design statements, local research projects, etc). But there continues to be pressure on the historic environment, through the demands of development, changes in agricultural practice, natural processes, neglect or more recently adapting to the effects of climate change.

Those with an interest in the conservation of the historic environment have to find new ways of adapting to change, of directing the limited resources available to them and of influencing those that have the power to inform the shape of the world we leave to future generations. The West Berkshire Historic Environment Action Plan (HEAP) is an attempt to highlight what is special and important about the local historic environment, to examine what the key challenges are, to explore what opportunities might exist in the coming years and to establish what the priorities for action should be. The final part of the HEAP will set out how all those with an interest in the historic environment can contribute to its conservation.

The West Berkshire HEAP recognises above all that successful conservation of the historic environment resource can only be achieved through partnership and co-operation. So whilst this document has been prepared under the umbrella of the West Berkshire Heritage Forum and with the guidance of a steering group comprised of representatives from a number of local interest groups, its implementation should be the responsibility of a wide range

of organisations and individuals, both within the historic environment sector and beyond. The need for a partnership approach to the management of the historic environment and historic landscape is fundamental to the successful delivery of the action plan. The West Berkshire Heritage Forum will play a key role in overseeing the delivery of the action plan and in reviewing the HEAP.

HEAPs are not a new initiative, being first developed in Cornwall in 2003. Although used to inform a specific issue (to contribute to the debate over grazing levels on Bodmin Moor), this first plan did establish the principles behind the approach (Clark et al 2004). A broader HEAP has been published for the Isle of Wight ([www.iwight.com/living\\_here/archaeology/heap.asp](http://www.iwight.com/living_here/archaeology/heap.asp)) and a HEAP has recently been published for the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty ([www.historiclandscape.co.uk/about\\_news.html](http://www.historiclandscape.co.uk/about_news.html)).

A particularly important aspect of the HEAPs developed so far are that they are built on the data collected through characterisation projects like Historic Landscape Character analysis. West Berkshire is fortunate in having a completed HLC, a characterisation study for Newbury and the Historic Environment Character Zoning (HECZ) project. The data from these projects alongside other important datasets, in particular the Historic Environment Record (HER), provide the information bedrock that informs the West Berkshire HEAP.

## 1.2 Vision and Aims

In order to avoid confusion and contradiction it is necessary from the outset to state quite clearly what the vision and aims of the West Berkshire HEAP initiative are. Whilst these have been established following discussion and consultation they are not fixed and will be re-examined by the West Berkshire Heritage Forum at least every 5 years to ensure they remain current and relevant.

### Vision

The West Berkshire Historic Environment Action Plan (HEAP) recognises:

- that the historic environment includes man-made landscapes, the built environment and archaeological remains or features;
- that all aspects of West Berkshire's environment, rural and urban, are 'historic';
- that the historic processes enshrined within the district's environment are what gives the area its local distinctiveness and special character;
- that the historic environment belongs to the whole community, residents and visitors alike, and has great social value in the way it contributes to sense of place and through that to individual, communal and regional identity.
- that some features of the historic environment are of such significance that their conservation<sup>2</sup> should be an overriding concern;
- that change is inevitable and frequently necessary;
- that in delivering change working with the historic environment can provide more sustainable and long term solutions for communities;
- that there are real economic benefits to be gained from the conservation of the historic environment;
- that it is necessary to take a more strategic and holistic approach to managing the historic environment in the district.

### Aims

The West Berkshire HEAP will:

- promote the sustainable management of the historic environment;
- promote local community participation in the management of the historic environment resource.
- promote greater awareness of the historic environment amongst decision makers;
- provide a strategic overview of the historic environment resource in the district;
- identify the key issues and opportunities facing the historic environment in the district;
- identify the key priorities for action to improve the management of the historic environment;
- produce a targeted action plan;
- promote a multi-agency approach to the management of the historic environment;
- promote public understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment;

<sup>2</sup> Conservation – 'The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and where appropriate enhances its significance' (PPS5 – 2010)

## 1.3 The HEAP Steering Group

The West Berkshire HEAP has been developed under the umbrella of the West Berkshire Heritage Forum which was established in 2009. Whilst it was agreed that the West Berkshire Council archaeology team would play a lead role in the development of the HEAP it was also agreed that the formation of a steering group to provide advice and guidance through its development would be extremely advantageous. A call for volunteers to sit on the steering group proved very successful and the steering group was established with representatives from:

- English Heritage
- The Battlefields Trust
- Berkshire Archaeological Society
- Berkshire Archaeological Research Group
- Berkshire Industrial Archaeology Group
- Berkshire Geo Conservation
- Berkshire Gardens Trust
- Thatcham Town Council
- Theale Parish Council
- Bucklebury Local History Society
- Thatcham Historical Society
- Newbury Society
- Pangbourne Heritage Group
- West Berkshire Council Conservation & Design team
- West Berkshire Council Archaeology team.

The steering group has met at regular intervals during the drafting of the West Berkshire HEAP and has also interacted through email discussion. The broad range of experience, expertise and opinion offered by the steering group has proved very valuable through this process.

## 2. Background and Data Sources

### 2.1 West Berkshire

#### 2.1.1 The District

West Berkshire lies at the heart of central southern England. It is a relatively affluent part of the country with a population of around 150,000. It covers an area of approximately 704 square kilometres, primarily made up of the 'Berkshire Downs' in the north and the lower reaches of the Kennet Valley in the south. The centre of the district is marked by the convergence of two major road routes, the east-west M4 motorway (running parallel to its predecessor the A4 Bath Road) and the north-south A34 trunk road. The Great Western Railway also runs through the north east of the district on its way to Bristol and the Midlands, with one branch line through Newbury on to the West Country and a second going south through Mortimer to Basingstoke.

The district is administered by a unitary authority that was established in 1998 following the abolition of Berkshire County Council. It covers approximately 50% of the post 1974 county, the remaining half now being divided into a further five unitary authorities. A significant area of southern Oxfordshire was historically part of the County of Berkshire up until 1974. The main centres of population in West Berkshire are the Newbury/Thatcham area with approximately 48,000 people and the western fringes of Reading (Tilehurst and Calcot) with approximately 26,000 people. The rest of the district is chiefly comprised of small villages and hamlets, although on the western edge of the district is the market town of Hungerford with a population of just over 5,000. There are 63 parishes.

The area has higher than average earnings, lower than average unemployment and higher than average educational achievement. Being situated within the M4 corridor, the area has attracted many new hi-tech industries. However despite significant growth in recent years the area remains predominantly rural. The horse racing industry continues to be one of the dominant features of the area around Lambourn.

Around 74% of the district falls into the North

Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which also includes a large swathe of north eastern Wiltshire, and smaller parts of north western Hampshire and southern Oxfordshire. The AONB is managed through a partnership arrangement with all the authorities covered by the designated area. Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 the Local Authorities have a duty under section 85 to 'conserve and enhance' the AONB. The agreed management plan includes policies that seek the conservation and management of the historic environment resource.

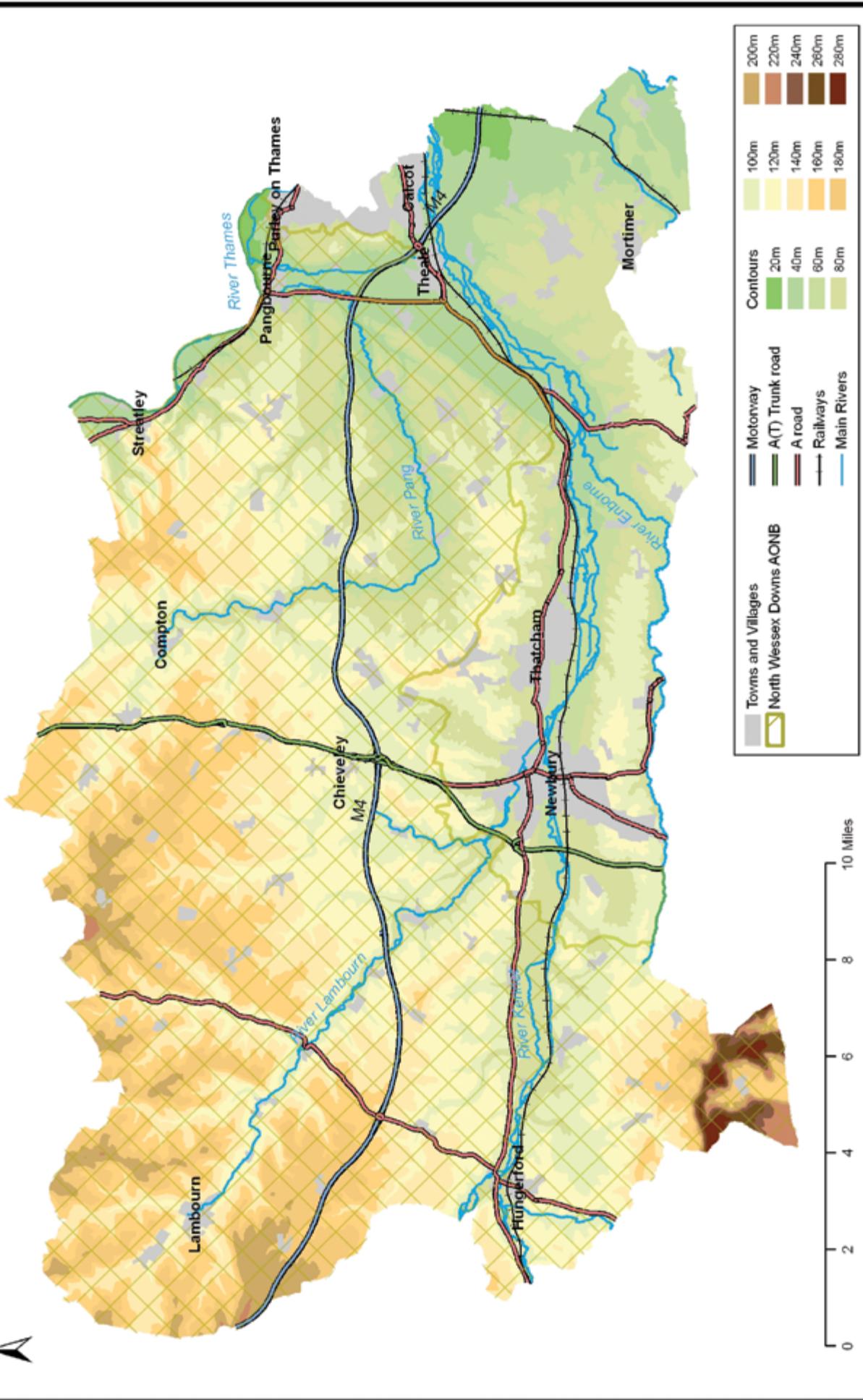
#### 2.1.2 The Landscape

As can be seen in its designation as an AONB, much of West Berkshire is highly regarded for its landscape value. Chalk dominates the northern part of the district in the area traditionally known as the Berkshire Downs. However, significant areas of clay with flint and large woodlands give large parts a distinctive character different from other chalk downland areas in southern England. The chalk dips slowly to the south, from the steep scarp overlooking the Vale of the White Horse, running under an area of plateau gravels that overlook the Kennet Valley. The poor soils of the plateau gravels are now dominated by forestry plantations, some semi-ancient woodlands and commons, most notable at Bucklebury and Snelmore.

The Kennet Valley crosses the district from west to east. Its shallow valley sides and flat base gradually broaden to the east. It has provided an ideal environment for travel routes, settlement, and more recently significant gravel extraction. The southern side of the valley is also dominated by plateau gravels and has a similar character to that on its northern flank. In the south west corner of the district in the parishes of Inkpen and Combe a small area of the Hampshire Downs is present. This includes at Walbury Hill the highest point on the chalk in southern England.

The Thames is the largest river in the district. It forms the north eastern border of West Berkshire where it flows through the Goring Gap. At this point the river valley is relatively narrow as it cuts through the chalk. The Kennet is probably the most important river in the district in terms of its landscape and social impact. The River Lambourn is a significant chalk river that flows from Lambourn in a south easterly direction

# West Berkshire's main geographical features



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before joining the Kennet just east of Newbury. The Pang is another chalk river that rises near Compton and flows south until Bucklebury where it turns to the north east before joining the Thames at Pangbourne. The River Enborne is a relatively minor watercourse that forms the boundary between West Berkshire and Hampshire south of Newbury before turning to run in a north easterly direction to join the Kennet near Woolhampton.

### 2.1.3 Landscape Character

A number of landscape character assessments have been carried out which cover the district. Natural England have published National Character Areas (NCAs) based on a broad assessment of landscape character ([www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/landscape/englands/character/areas/default.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/landscape/englands/character/areas/default.aspx)). West Berkshire falls into five NCAs: Berkshire and Marlborough Downs (Character Area 116), Thames Basin Heaths (Character Area 129), Thames Valley (Character Area 115), Chilterns (Character Area 110) and Hampshire Downs (Character Area 130).

Local studies have studied the district in more detail and broken the district down into smaller character areas. The main local landscape character assessments undertaken are:

- Newbury District Landscape Assessment (1993) ([www.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=7393&p=0](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=7393&p=0))
- The North Wessex Downs Landscape assessment (2002) ([www.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=6701&p=0](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=6701&p=0))
- Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (2003) ([www.berks-jspu.gov.uk/content/main.asp?pid=22](http://www.berks-jspu.gov.uk/content/main.asp?pid=22))

These studies provide a very useful mechanism for understanding the varying character of the landscapes of the district. However, although these studies include statements about the historic environment, these assessments take into account a wide range of issues (natural, cultural, historical, visual, etc) to come up with a categorisation. Historic Landscape Character assessment (see below) was developed to provide more detailed and more accurate analysis of the way in which historic processes have influenced and shaped our landscapes.

## 2.2 The Historic Environment of West Berkshire

It is not the intention of this document to provide detailed assessment of the historic environment in the district. More detailed summaries of the historic environment are contained within each of the individual Historic Environment Character Area and Historic Environment Character Zone reports (see below). However, it is hoped that the following summary provides an insight into the nature and complexity of the resource and provides the background for the Statement of Significance that follows.

### 2.2.1 Sources of information

There is a wide range of data sources about the historic environment. The organisations and institutions described below are the main resources for West Berkshire and the development of the HEAP, but this is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

- **The West Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER)** ([www.westberks.gov.uk/HER](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/HER))
  - The HER is the primary index about the physical remains of past human activity in West Berkshire. It is a register of all known archaeological and historical sites in the district. It also includes information on fieldwork and excavations, found objects and documentary sources. The record is growing all the time as new sites and objects are discovered and archaeological work is undertaken.

Much of this information is stored in a database linked to a computerised map. HER resources also include books, articles and unpublished reports, aerial photographs, and historic and modern maps. Data from West Berkshire's Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) can be accessed through the HER, showing the district's land-use history and evolution. The record covers a very wide variety of monuments, findspots, buildings and landscapes. The HER encompasses sites dating from the earliest prehistoric settlement of the area up to structures constructed as recently as the late 20th century. It contains details of all West Berkshire's nationally

designated sites (Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens and Battlefields) as well as structures and buildings of local interest.

- **The National Monument Record (NMR)**

– The NMR is based in Swindon and is the public archive of English Heritage. It is one of the largest publicly accessible archives in the UK and the biggest dedicated to the historic environment. In the archive there are over 10 million items including photographs, documents, plans and reports relating to the historic environment of England. It includes over 4 million aerial photographs, including many taken from 1945 onwards by the RAF and Ordnance Survey.

The English Heritage Library is based at the NMR and holds over 60,000 book titles. It includes extensive collections on archaeology and architecture, together with smaller sections on related topics such as maritime studies, industrial archaeology, archive preservation and management, aerial photography and place-names studies.

- **Berkshire Record Office (BRO)** –

The BRO is based in Reading and was established in 1948 to locate and preserve records relating to the county of Berkshire and its people, and to make them available for research to anyone who is interested in the county's past. The BRO holds thousands of documents relating to Berkshire old and new. They date from the 12th century to the present day and include:

- o Records of local government
- o Records of the Archdeaconry of Berkshire including church court records and wills
- o Records of Anglican and nonconformist churches: including registers of baptisms, marriages and burials
- o School records including log books and admissions registers
- o Private records including manorial and estate records, family papers, and the records of businesses and societies

- o Maps and plans including, tithe, enclosure, estate, Ordnance Survey and other printed maps
- o Printed sources including trade directories, electoral registers and an extensive library of books and pamphlets
- o Copies of some national sources including indexes of births, marriages and deaths for England and Wales, and census returns (Berkshire only).

- **West Berkshire Museum<sup>3</sup>**

([www.westberkshireremuseum.org.uk](http://www.westberkshireremuseum.org.uk)) –

The West Berkshire Museum in Newbury provides a focal point for access to the many thousands of artefacts, objects, maps, documents and publications that help tell the story of the district's past and create a sense of place. It remains the primary depository for archaeological archives resulting from fieldwork undertaken across the district (although some historic archives are housed at Reading Museum). It also contains a wealth of historic material including:

- o Social and local history items that demonstrate human activity within the historic environment (eg coins, clocks, costume, textiles, decorative art, ephemera)
- o Photographs and fine art collections that provide images of the historic environment)
- o Geological and natural science specimens that help illustrate the natural environment context

- **Museum of English Rural Life (MERL)**

([www.reading.ac.uk/merl](http://www.reading.ac.uk/merl)) – The Museum of English Rural Life in Reading houses the most comprehensive national collection of objects, books and archives relating to the history of food, farming and the countryside. This includes reference material relating to Berkshire estates, managed farmlands and designed landscapes.

- **Other national and local archives of note include The National Archives at Kew ([www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)), the British Library ([www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk)), St George's Chapel Archives & Chapter**

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that owing to a redevelopment programme the Museum is closed to the public and access to its resources will be severely restricted until 2014.

Library at Windsor Castle ([www.stgeorges-windsor.org/archives.html](http://www.stgeorges-windsor.org/archives.html)) and the Westminster Abbey archive.

- **Heritage Gateway**

([www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway)) – Heritage Gateway is a collaborative venture led by English Heritage to provide a portal to England's local and national historic environment records, enabling cross-searching of datasets. Current national datasets include:

- o Listed Buildings Online – the List of buildings of architectural or historic interest online;
- o Images of England – contemporary colour photographs of England's Listed Buildings;
- o PastScape – information about England's archaeological and architectural heritage;
- o ViewFinder – historic photographs of England;
- o NMR Excavation Index – a guide to the archaeological excavations and interventions carried out in England;
- o Parks & Gardens UK - information on historic parks, gardens and designed landscapes.

An increasing number of local authority HERs are being made accessible through Heritage Gateway and the West Berkshire HER will shortly be available online through this route.

- **Heritage at Risk**

([www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.19074](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.19074)) -

The first national Buildings at Risk Register appeared in 1998. Compiled and published by English Heritage, this annual survey aimed to highlight the poor state of many of England's finest buildings. Initially the register only contained buildings that were listed Grade I or II\*. In 2008 the register was expanded to include Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and structural Scheduled Monuments and was renamed the Heritage at Risk Register. In 2009

the Register was further expanded to include all Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas. In future it is planned to include Grade II buildings on the At Risk Register.

In West Berkshire the 2010 Register included:

- o the Grade II\* listed chapel of St Leonard at Brimpton;
- o a series of Grade I listed gate piers associated with the former mansion at Hamstead Marshall;
- o 7 Scheduled Monuments, including Combe Gibbet long barrow, Sheep Down long barrow, a number of round barrows and an Iron Age hillfort at Membury;
- o 3 Registered Parks and Gardens – Aldermaston Court, Sandford Park and Shaw House;
- o The Registered Battlefield of the First Battle of Newbury.

- **Heritage Counts**

([www.english-heritage.org.uk/hc](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/hc))

– In 2002 English Heritage published the first 'State of the Historic Environment' report (from 2003 this became known as 'Heritage Counts'). Heritage Counts is an annual survey of the state of England's historic environment. It looks at the key changes across the sector for the year. This ranges from exploring the funding available to care for the historic environment, to the number of historic assets, through to participation and volunteering in the sector. A number of indicators have been developed that show trends within the sector, e.g. the number of designated assets, the number of listed building consent applications, the numbers employed in the sector and the number of visitors to heritage sites. These figures now give a solid base for showing how the historic environment sector has changed over a number of years. Each year the report has also focused on a specific aspect of the historic environment and its contribution to broader agendas. The 2009 report included an assessment of how the historic environment contributes to people's sense of place.

## 2.2.2 Previous Work/Projects

Several major projects have been undertaken in West Berkshire that have helped us to understand the nature and character of different elements of the historic environment. It is of value to understand these projects and the areas they have focussed on as this helps us understand why some areas or topics are better understood than others. It might also help ensure that future research activities are well focussed and do not repeat previous/existing programmes. The following list is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all investigations undertaken in the district, but should cover all the major programmes. It starts in the latter half of the 20th century as there was little systematic work before this time:

- **The Listing programme** – this was begun in the 1950s but most entries on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest were edited or added following a review in the 1970s. See below.
- **Kennet Valley Survey (Lobb and Rose 1996)** – Between 1976 and 1992 a major programme of fieldwalking, and woodland survey was undertaken in the middle/lower Kennet Valley.
- **Berkshire Downs Survey (Richards 1978)** – A survey of the prehistoric remains on the Berkshire Downs, involving fieldwalking, survey and limited excavation.
- **The Historic Towns of Berkshire (Astill 1978)** – A major survey using previous archaeological investigations and historical sources to plot the archaeological interest of all the historic towns in post 1974 Berkshire.
- **The Maddie Farm Survey (Gaffney and Tingle 1989)** – A survey centred on the Roman villa site at Maddie Farm involving survey, fieldwalking and small scale excavation.
- **Royal Commission Farmstead Survey (Barnwell & Giles 1999)** – The Royal Commission for Historic Monuments (England) undertook a survey of farmsteads in five parts of England, one of which was a block of parishes in West Berkshire.
- **National Mapping Programme (NMP)** – English Heritage has undertaken a series of projects plotting all the archaeological features visible on aerial photographs within their collection. Parts of West Berkshire have been included in three NMP projects, the Berkshire NMP (a pilot from 1993-96), the Thames Valley (1992-99) and the Lambourn Downs (1999-2000).  
[www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/research/landscapes-and-areas/national-mapping-programme](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/research/landscapes-and-areas/national-mapping-programme)
- **Defence of Britain project** – Sponsored by the Council for British Archaeology and English Heritage, this project running between 1995 and 2001 sought to record the 20th century militarised landscape of the United Kingdom.  
[www.britarch.ac.uk/cba/projects/dob](http://www.britarch.ac.uk/cba/projects/dob)
- **Historic Landscape Characterisation** – Undertaken between 2004-07 by West Berkshire Archaeology Service in partnership with the North Wessex Downs AONB, this major survey mapped current and historic land use of all the landscape in some detail.  
[www.westberks.gov.uk/HLC](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/HLC)
- **Newbury Historic Character Study (Oxford Archaeology & West Berkshire Archaeology Service 2006)** – A survey of the historic character of the district's main town, highlighting issues and priorities. [www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8804](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8804)
- **Historic Environment Character Zoning** – A project undertaken by West Berkshire Archaeology Service in 2006-07 to explore the distribution of known archaeological, built environment and landscape features utilising the results of the Historic Landscape Character mapping. Documents outlining the main features of each Historic Environment Character Area and the nested Zones

can be accessed through the West Berkshire Council online map.

[ww2.westberks.gov.uk/](http://ww2.westberks.gov.uk/)

[InternetMapping/Map.aspx](http://InternetMapping/Map.aspx) and  
[www.westberks.gov.uk/HECZ](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/HECZ)

- **Peasemore Project** – An exemplary multi-disciplinary survey of a single parish on the Berkshire Downs with the work undertaken by the Berkshire Archaeology Research Group and the local community. [www.barg-online.org/Peasemore.html](http://www.barg-online.org/Peasemore.html)
- **Pevsner’s Buildings of England survey** – The Berkshire volume of this classic architectural series was completed by Nikolaus Pevsner in 1966, and revised by Tyack and Bradley in 2010.

Rescue archaeology has also added greatly to our understanding of the resource in the district. From the 1960s to the 1980s much of this was focussed on sites of gravel extraction in the Kennet Valley where major investigations were undertaken at sites like Aldermaston Wharf, Moore’s Farm and Knight’s Farm. However since 1990 and the introduction of PPG16, the scope and range of archaeological works undertaken in advance of development have increased greatly, alongside the increasing professionalisation of the discipline.

There has been little university based research activity within the district in recent years.

## 2.2.3 Designated Historic Environment Assets

Components of the historic environment can have their significance recognised through a range of formal designation procedures, each of which is underpinned by differing degrees of protection and statutory support. Current designations can be divided into three broad groups, International/European, National and Local.

Unlike the position of the natural environment, there are very few International/European treaties that cover the historic environment and none that carries the legally binding power of the EU Directives that now commonly guide environmental legislation and practice. However, there are a small number of Treaties that are worthy of consideration.

The long awaited Heritage Protection Review had as one of its central aims the desire to ‘tidy up’ the range of national and local designations and produce a single register of ‘Heritage Assets’. At the current time the legislation required to bring this about appears to have stalled and the existing arrangements remain in force.

## International Designations

### World Heritage Sites

The UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972) allows for cultural and natural site of ‘outstanding universal value’ to be inscribed as World Heritage Sites. The United Kingdom became a party to the convention in 1984 and at the current time 28 sites in the Country and certain dependencies have been ‘inscribed’ on to the list. No sites in West Berkshire are within any current World Heritage Site: however, the Great Western Railway from Paddington to Bristol was for many years on the UK tentative list for sites that will be considered for inclusion. However, it has recently been decided not to include this site for potential nomination.

## European Conventions

The Council of Europe is not part of the structures of the European Union and the conventions produced by this body are not directly incorporated into domestic law. The Council of Europe was established to promote legal standards, human rights, democratic development, the rule of law and cultural co-operation across its membership, which currently stands at 47 states. The principle that cultural heritage was worthy of protection was established in the Paris Convention of 1954. Further conventions have been developed through a Cultural Heritage Committee that seeks to promote responsible management of the European heritage. The main ones of relevance are:

### The Grenada Convention 1985

The ‘European Charter of the Architectural Heritage’ was ratified by the UK government in 1987. It seeks to ensure that member states have mechanisms that identify the most significant heritage structures and that they take statutory measures to ensure that these are protected.

### The Valletta Convention 1992

The 'Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological heritage of Europe' was ratified by the UK government in 2000. This convention seeks to 'protect the archaeological heritage as a source of the European collective memory and as an instrument for historical and scientific study.' Like the Grenada Convention it requires parties to institute a legal process for the identification of the archaeological heritage, mechanisms to designate protected monuments and areas and the control of archaeological activities.

### The Florence Convention 2000

The 'European Landscape Convention' (ELC) was ratified by the UK government in 2007. The ELC sees landscape as 'An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.' This definition makes it clear that landscapes are very much a component of the historic environment. The aims of the Convention are to promote European landscape protection, management and planning, and to organise European co-operation on landscape issues.

The UK government has consistently taken the view that no new statutory measures are necessary in order to comply with the provisions of these conventions and that existing legislation provides the protection necessary for compliance.

## National Designations

**Scheduled Monuments** – Although most recently defined under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, scheduled monuments have existed as a statutory measure for over 125 years. This legislation provides a strict set of rules which guide the management of archaeological monuments that are deemed to be of national importance. It remains the case that the express consent of the Secretary of State is required before a range of 'works' can be undertaken on a scheduled monument. There are currently 93 scheduled monuments in West Berkshire which include:

- o The Neolithic earthen long barrow at Combe Gibbet;
- o The Bronze Age barrow cemetery at Lambourn Seven Barrows;

- o The Iron Age hillforts at Walbury, Membury, Grimsbury and Perborough;
- o The Roman settlement at Maddle Farm and Roman Villa at Eling;
- o The medieval motte and bailey castles at Hamstead Marshall;
- o The deserted medieval villages at Bockhampton and Whatcombe;
- o The medieval chapel at Brimpton
- o The later medieval castle and associated Civil War defences at Donnington;
- o The turf sided Monkey Marsh canal lock at Thatcham;
- o The Cruise Missile storage and maintenance facility at Greenham Common.



*One of the missile shelters at GAMA, Greenham Common*

Scheduling remains a discretionary power that applies to monuments as defined in the 1979 Act. Therefore there are nationally important archaeological monuments that remain unscheduled either because it has been deliberately decided not to schedule them, or they fall outside of the definition of an ancient monument contained in the legislation, or their full significance is not clear.

**Listed Buildings** – The principle of protecting certain historic buildings from damage through change and alteration was first properly established in the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947. This Act led to the development of the first 'List' of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. However it was the 1968 Town and Country Planning Act that introduced the system that largely remains in place today. The 'List' is now maintained by English Heritage. Buildings can be listed as Grade I ('those of

exceptional interest', approx. 2% of the total), Grade II\* (defined as 'particularly important', approx. 5% of the total), or Grade II (of 'special interest', approx. 93% of the total). In West Berkshire there are approximately 1,900 listed buildings, 42 of which are Grade I including:

- o The church of St Mark and St Luke, Avington;
- o Donnington Castle;
- o The Old Bluecoat School, Thatcham;
- o Ufton Court, Ufton Nervet;
- o The Church of St Laurence, Tidmarsh;
- o Shaw House;
- o Basildon House;
- o The Cloth Hall, Newbury.



*St Mark and St Luke, Avington: a fine small Norman church,*

106 of the listed buildings in the district are Grade II\* including:

- o Calcot Court, Tilehurst;
- o Jack of Newbury's House, Newbury;
- o The church of St Lawrence, Hungerford
- o Devitt House, Pangbourne College;
- o The Corn Stores, Newbury;
- o Aldermaston Court;
- o Woolley Park, Chaddleworth;
- o Douai Abbey Church, Woolhampton;
- o Mortimer Railway Station and the Waiting Room.

The remaining Grade II buildings include a wide range of building types and ages from the 15th to the 20th centuries including cottages and houses, a number of higher status dwellings, churches and chapels, barns and farm buildings

(especially those predating the 19th century), railway bridges, canal structures, roadside milestones and Second World War pillboxes.

Unlike scheduling, listing is not discretionary, so if a structure meets the published criteria it should be included on the list. However, the true age, history or architectural interest in a building can be hidden or obscured by later work, or the building may lie in an inaccessible location, therefore not all structures of listable quality have actually been designated.

**Registered Parks and Gardens** – Under the National Heritage Act 1983 English Heritage has the power to maintain a register of parks and gardens of historic interest. Although there are no statutory controls imposed by this designation, it has been used as a material consideration in the planning process and is specifically mentioned as such in Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for Historic Environment (PPS5). Like Listed Buildings, the parks and gardens on the Register are divided into different categories (Grade I, II\* and II). There are 13 Registered Parks and Gardens that lie within West Berkshire:



*Englefield House: A Grade I listed house and Grade II registered Park and Garden.*

- o Grade II\* - Folly Farm at Sulhamstead, Inkpen House and Purley Hall;
- o Grade II - Aldermaston Court, Basildon Park, Benham Park, Donnington Grove, Englefield House, Hamstead Marshall Park, Sandford Priory, Shaw House, Wasing Place and Littlecote House (a small part of).

As the register has no formal statutory position, little work has been done to extend the list and

there remains a number of important parks and gardens in the district that may be worthy of inclusion. An initiative by the Berkshire Gardens Trust to create a new gazetteer of parks and gardens in the county may act as a catalyst for the addition of new sites to the current register.

**Battlefields** – As with Parks and Gardens, there is no statutory basis for the Register of Historic Battlefields published and maintained by English Heritage, but it is a material consideration specifically referred to in PPS5. The register was first published in 1995 following extensive research on proposed sites. Sites were only included that were both important and sufficiently well documented to allow their location to be established; the total is currently 43. In West Berkshire the First Battle of Newbury, located to the south west of the town centre on land that now lies between the Newbury bypass and the suburbs flanking Wash Common, is included on the register. The Second Battle of Newbury, which took place on a broad area north of the town between Shaw, Donnington and Speen, is not registered, but is one of several English battlefields to feature in an appendix to the register.



*The site of the first battle of Newbury fought in 1643. Donnington Castle in the background was the site of a major Civil War siege and the focal point of the second Battle of Newbury in 1644.*

## Local Designations

**Conservation Areas** – The idea for Conservation Areas was introduced into UK law by the Civic Amenities Act 1967 and the principles were further clarified and strengthened in the Local Government Act 1972 and the Town and Country Amenities Act 1974. Conservation Areas are defined by law as ‘an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve

or enhance’. It is the responsibility of the local planning authority to determine which areas are going to be designated.

In West Berkshire there are currently 53 Conservation Areas. These include the historic cores of many of the district’s rural villages; the main town centre areas of Newbury and Hungerford; parts of the Kennet and Avon canal; examples of planned urban extensions at Donnington Square and Shaw Crescent; and designed parkland at Benham Park (a full list can be seen at [www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3236](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3236)).



*Donnington Square in Newbury. This fine planned 19<sup>th</sup> century development is protected as a Conservation Area.*

**Local Lists** – Recognising that there are many structures that are of local interest, but which do not meet the criteria for formal listing, local planning authorities can compile a list of locally important heritage assets (buildings, archaeological sites and monuments, designed landscapes, battlefields, sites of artistic significance) . Policies contained within the local Development Framework can set out how these buildings are to be treated. The English Heritage ‘Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide’ (2010) published in support of PPS5 suggests that local authorities should ‘consider compiling a ‘local list’ of heritage assets in partnership with the local community.....’. More detailed guidance on the production of Local Lists is currently being drafted by English Heritage - [www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/listing/local/local-designations/local-list](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/listing/local/local-designations/local-list).

At the current time West Berkshire does not maintain a list of locally important heritage assets, although several buildings have been identified in draft Conservation Area Appraisals for Streatley and Peasemore.

## 2.3 The Historic Environment Resource

West Berkshire contains a rich and varied historic environment resource. This provides invaluable information about human endeavour in the area over many millennia. A detailed narrative of human activity in the area is not required in the HEAP, but it is useful to summarise what some of the main components of that resource are. The following looks at the resource in broad chronological terms, but also tries to break it down by different areas of activity or interest. This is particularly important for more recent periods of history when far more detail and complexity become apparent.

### Early Signs (700,000 – 10,001 BC)

There is only limited evidence for Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age) activity in West Berkshire. This largely comes from finds of flint and stone axes from a number of quarry sites in the district. Most of these finds are from secondary deposits, and no in situ evidence of activity from this period has so far been discovered.

### Beginnings (10,000 – 4001 BC)

Following the end of the last Ice Age around 10,000 years ago, groups of hunter-gatherers moved into southern England. The Kennet Valley has proven to be a very rich area for activity from this period. A number of sites have shown that communities from the very late Palaeolithic right through the Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) were exploiting resources in this area.

### A More Permanent Presence (4000 – 2351 BC)

The Neolithic (New Stone Age) brought with it a more settled lifestyle and the first 'monuments' to be constructed in the landscape. West Berkshire has evidence of this process with three long barrows (Combe Gibbet, Sheep Down in East Ilsley and Lambourn) and two possible cursus monuments (Kintbury and Burghfield).

The larger complexes of ceremonial monuments found on the chalk of central southern England do not appear to be present here, although a major circular feature partially excavated in advance of gravel extraction at Beenham and another smaller ring ditch nearby at Englefield were dated to the later Neolithic. Settlement activity has been hard to locate, but a number of significant flint scatters indicate that the human population was active in the area.

### A Growing Complexity (2350 – 801 BC)

The Bronze Age brought with it a more complex social structure and the emergence of a more organised landscape. In West Berkshire this can be seen in the construction of major linear boundary features on the chalk downs and the development of more permanent and substantial settlements. The most prominent features are the numerous burial mounds (round barrows) that dot the landscape, with notable groups at Lambourn, Wash Common, Brimpton and Mortimer. Important Bronze Age settlement complexes have been discovered on the gravel terraces of the Kennet, with notable examples at Aldermaston Wharf, Knights Farm and Field Farm. At Anslow's Cottages, Burghfield important evidence of riverside activity has been recorded. The discovery of iron working residues at a Bronze Age settlement of about 1000BC at Harts Hill Copse is very significant.

### The End of Prehistory (800BC – AD42)

The Iron Age sees the culmination of prehistoric society in Britain. The archaeological evidence of hillforts (such as Walbury and Grimsbury), larger more complex settlements, major territorial boundary features, and the growth of more intricate trading systems as seen in the range of artefacts found, suggests that society was becoming more organised and more tribal in its nature. It is likely that many of the extensive ancient field systems that once covered the Berkshire Downs and now only survive as fragments (such as at Streatley Warren) have their origins in this period.

## The Roman Interlude (AD43 – AD409)

The coming of Roman governance to Britain brought with it new ideas and social structures. Although there are no major Roman towns in West Berkshire, the closest being just outside the boundaries of the district at Silchester, all the other facets of the Roman landscape are present. A major Roman road (Ermin Street) runs across the area from Silchester in a north westerly direction towards Cirencester; a significant roadside settlement is known to have developed at Thatcham (debatably the site of Spinae, a place specifically referred to in Roman documents); Roman villas were constructed at several sites such as Maddal Farm, Basildon and Eling; and a religious complex appears to have developed near Hermitage.

## A New Beginning (AD410 – AD800)

The end of Roman rule in the early 5th century probably did not bring about the immediate collapse of society that is traditionally envisaged. However, the archaeological record does suggest that major changes did slowly occur, with the abandonment of existing settlements and the introduction of new practices. It is likely that new settlers (probably from Western Germany) moved into the district along the Kennet and Lambourn Valleys. Evidence of these newcomers has been found at Ufton Bridge, Hungerford, East Shefford and more recently at Lambourn.

## Part of Wessex (AD801 – AD1065)

The middle Saxon period saw the growth of the Kingdom of Wessex, which would eventually come to dominate England. West Berkshire is known to have been part of this kingdom and Lambourn appears to have been a royal residence of some description. Other places that appear to be of some significance at this time include Kintbury and Thatcham. This period also sees the establishment of many of the smaller rural settlements that would go on to form the villages that survive in the modern landscape.

## A Period of Change (AD1066 – AD 1539)

The later medieval period saw great changes, especially in West Berkshire. The emergence of new towns like Newbury and Hungerford upset the old order with many prominent places becoming less significant. Villages also altered with changing manorial ownership and new agricultural practices. Although open common fields were present around many of the district's settlements, little evidence of this 'ridge and furrow' has survived later landscape modifications. New significant pottery and tile industries flourished in the Newbury and Ashampstead Common areas. There were no major monastic houses in the district, although some minor establishments were created at Poughley, near Welford and Sandford south of Newbury, as well as several hospitals elsewhere. There were also no major castles although the complex of two motte and bailey structures at Hamstead Marshall and the 14th century stone castle at Donnington show some attempt at military control and the display of power. The landscape of West Berkshire did not remain static through this period with significant changes arising from the growth of the cloth industry in towns like Newbury which demanded greater wool production and more land, especially on the downs, to be turned over to pasture. Elsewhere, in the south west of the district, fields were created from woodland and heath (assarting) and the small, irregular enclosure pattern evident today has its origins in this period. There are a number of buildings surviving from the end of the medieval period and tree ring dating is providing further evidence of the early origins of many buildings in our towns and villages.

## Conflict and Industry (AD1540 – AD1800)

The pattern and form of most of the district's settlements had been established by this time and although they were developed with new buildings and structures, most tended to conform to the existing scale and layout. The cloth industry remained very important in the area through the Tudor period and for a short period was of national importance, but then entered into a period of slow, but irreversible,

decline. National events impacted on the district in the Civil War with two major battles and significant sieges around Newbury. The growth of the use of brick was originally seen in high status buildings with small scale local brickworks utilising the natural clays that exist in parts of the district. The creation of the Turnpike road from London to Bath (now the A4) led to new trades to service travellers, especially in the major towns like Newbury, where several coaching inns survive. A further boost to trade came with the opening of the Kennet Navigation between Reading and Newbury in 1723. The increasing affluence of a small minority led to the development of country estates with large houses and landscaped gardens. The nationally renowned landscape gardener Lancelot Brown is known to have worked at Benham Park and Sandford.

### New Industries and Trade (AD1801 – AD1938)

Industry and trade in the district grew following the opening up of the Kennet and Avon Canal to the west in 1810. Faster transport links came with the Great Western Railway between London and Bristol opening in 1841, and the branch line to Newbury in 1847. Further lines connecting Newbury to Southampton, Didcot and Lambourn followed. Industries were centred on Newbury as the main centre of population and communication hub in the district. Engineering and brewing were especially important in the town, although iron works also existed at Compton and breweries in West Ilsley and other smaller towns. Brick and tile works were established on a more industrial scale at Kintbury, Hermitage and Bradfield. Farming was also changing to take advantage of industrial innovation with steam ploughing opening up large areas for arable cultivation. In line with continuing Parliamentary Enclosure, new farms were established in locations away from traditional villages and many farms saw major changes with new buildings and altered layouts. Many of the district's medieval churches suffered the effects of major programmes of rebuilding and renovation. New civic buildings (schools, town halls, police stations, etc) appeared across the district and the road network became more formally established, especially as the motor vehicle became the dominant transport method.

### International Prominence (AD1939 – AD2000)

The modern era has impacted on West Berkshire and left a clear imprint on the historic environment. The numerous pillboxes that line the Kennet and Avon canal and through the Sulham Valley are the remnants of a major defensive feature and a number of airfields were constructed across the district in World War II. Several of these airfields went on to play an important role in the Cold War. Greenham Common became the focal point of the anti-nuclear campaign following the decision to base cruise missiles there in the 1980s. Aldermaston has been at the core of the development and construction of Britain's nuclear arsenal since the early 1950s. RAF Welford remains a major store of ammunition for US forces based in Europe. From the early 20th century the horse race training industry has become a key feature of the downs, especially in the Lambourn area. Most of the towns in the district have expanded greatly since the Second World War, but this is especially noticeable in Newbury, Thatcham and the area west of Reading, where major housing, industrial and retail complexes continue to be built. The construction of the M4 motorway has led to greater economic activity and the growth of new Hi-tech industries, the most prominent of which is Vodafone. Farming in the 20th century changed beyond all recognition with new equipment, technologies and government policies leading to a huge expansion of arable land and substantial changes in field patterns with increasingly large field units. Further trends at the end of the millennium towards agricultural diversification have already had an effect on the district's landscape.

# 3. West Berkshire Historic Environment – A Statement of Significance

## 3.1 Background to the Statement of Significance

In the heritage sector statements of significance are now a widely accepted mechanism for highlighting what the key components of a site, feature, monument, building or landscape are. The statement of significance allows priorities for action to be established. Most statements of significance are written in the context of an individual site or building, but although they have occasionally been used for larger landscapes, such as World Heritage Sites, few have covered areas where geographic extent, topographical variety and the layering of historical processes are as complex as an area like West Berkshire.

What is important to understand is that the statement of significance is an attempt to identify those components of the historic environment in West Berkshire that are of significance to contemporary society. It relies on a broad understanding and a multi disciplinary approach as well as liaison and consultation with communities and individuals. The views and opinions of local communities are valued and make real contribution to our understanding of significance.

Any statement of significance is a subjective assessment of what is considered to be important today. It is based on a current understanding of the resource and current views of what constitutes significance. New information, discoveries, research or understanding will change our perception of what is important or significant and this will necessitate a regular review and update of this statement of significance.

Traditionally significance is split into four main categories: local, regional, national or international. In a plan that covers an area the size of West Berkshire it would be impossible, and unnecessary, to list the significance of every individual site, building or landscape. To

some extent this is already achieved through the designation process where scheduled monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens and registered battlefields are deemed to be of national importance. English Heritage has set out an alternative approach in Conservation Principles, assigning significance using four 'heritage values': evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal (English Heritage 2008). There remain some issues in applying this approach and so it has not been used directly here, but it could prove useful in future for a more detailed analysis. The statement of significance that follows is therefore built around broader themes and understanding.

The issue of potential also need to be mentioned here. Much of the historic environment resource remains locked away, either as buried remains beneath the ground, as undiscovered components of standing structures or as archaeological material in museum stores that has not been the subject of detailed investigation using modern techniques. In defining the significance of the resource in West Berkshire it is necessary to reflect on its potential importance and the contribution that it might make in the future to our understanding of human development.

## 3.2 Significant Components and Themes of the Historic Environment in West Berkshire

### Post Glacial Communities

A number of excavations has demonstrated the high number of sites of the very late Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods in the Kennet



*These flint tools are typical of those left behind by early post glacial communities in the Kennet Valley.*

Valley. The number of sites, their broad date range and the evidence they have produced for the way in which hunter gatherer communities were utilising the landscape make this area one of the most important in Britain for the study of this period. The nature of the known sites suggests that more evidence of the period remains to be discovered and the potential of the resource is of the highest order.

### The Ridgeway

The origins and use of the Ridgeway long distance path remain an area of debate, with conflicting evidence about its true date. However, the number of significant Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age sites along the Ridgeway point to a landscape of some importance throughout the Prehistoric period. The Ridgeway is clearly a major feature that has attracted much attention. Its origins and function in the Prehistoric period is worthy of further investigation and thought, and it remains an important component of the historic environment in West Berkshire.

### Early Iron Working

The discovery in 2002 of iron working residues on a site dated to c 1000BC at Hartshill Copse, near Thatcham, was a major revelation. The presence of the oldest iron working in northern

Europe on a hill overlooking the Kennet Valley clearly has far more than local importance. Tantalising evidence of iron working from nearby Early Iron Age sites suggest that this area may be extremely important in the development of iron technologies.

### Early Towns

Lambourn, Kintbury and Thatcham were clearly all major centres during the later part of the Saxon era. Despite this we have little archaeological evidence to help us characterise them any further. Following the Norman Conquest West Berkshire experienced a boom in urban development, but unlike many places the most successful towns, Newbury and Hungerford, were new planned settlements. The processes and competing demands of these developments define the character of the district up to the modern day.



*Reconstruction of the Late Bronze Age iron working site at Harts Hill, Thatcham*



*An early (17th/18th century) brick Kiln found at Raghill Quarry, Aldermaston*

### Pottery and Brick manufacturing

One of the key features of West Berkshire has been the long exploitation of the natural clay deposits that occur in the area. In the medieval period this resulted in the growth of a major pottery industry, with kilns producing Newbury Ware, probably in the area west of the town. Other kilns operated at Ashampstead Common. This resource was further exploited in the post medieval period with the growth of brick manufacture, initially on a small scale, but later with major brickworks at Kintbury, Hermitage and Bradfield, on a more industrial scale. The availability of brick has left its imprint on the towns and villages of the district, with many early brick built houses still present.

## The Cloth industry

In the later part of the medieval period and the early post medieval period the cloth industry in southern England grew to be one of the dominant economic drivers. This was experienced in West Berkshire, with Newbury, of national importance during the 1530s to 1550s, being the centre of production and trade, and a number of clothiers growing in wealth and social stature on the back of the industry.

## The Civil War

Occupying an important strategic position close to the Royalist Headquarters at Oxford, Newbury was the scene of two major set piece battles and a major siege (at Donnington Castle). The battlefields are recognised as of national importance and the sites represent significant moments in the Civil War that would have implications for the resolution of the conflict.

## Enclosure

The decline in the cloth industry and the subsequent reduction in demand for wool led to significant changes in the landscape with great enclosure of open land and the growth of arable cultivation. Much of the chalk downland was slowly lost to the plough with only small pockets surviving into the 20th century. This process of change can be seen in the layout of fields, the form and layout of farmsteads and even in the form of villages.

## The Kennet and Avon Canal

Growing industrialisation and the expansion of market opportunities in London led to increased need for good communication and transport links. The construction in 1723 of the Kennet Navigation connecting Newbury to Reading, and therefore to London, was a major achievement. The extension of the canal to Bath, and thence to Bristol, further expanded opportunities. Thanks to the work of canal preservationists, the canal and many of its structures survive. These include many early features that are rare or unique, including the Corn Stores in Newbury, the only building of its type known in the country.

## The Great Western Railway

The coming of the railway might have led to the decline of the canal network, but in itself was a major achievement. Of especial importance in West Berkshire is a short section of Brunel's Great Western Railway, running through Purley,



*The Great Western Railway at Purley-on-Thames.*

Pangbourne and Basildon. This is regarded as the most complete early railway in the world and it is included on the United Kingdom's tentative list of World Heritage Site nominations.

## Parks and Gardens

In the 18th and 19th centuries a number of important parks and gardens were developed in West Berkshire, with a particular emphasis on the southern part of the district near the Bath Road through the Kennet Valley. The renowned landscape gardeners Lancelot Brown, Charles Bridgeman and Gertrude Jekyll are known to have worked at several sites in the district. Although some parks and gardens have been lost and others eroded, the number found in the area still has an impact on the character and appearance of the landscape.

## Defence of Britain Stop Line

Through 1939 and 1940 Britain was actively developing strategies designed to halt or slow the advance of an invading German army. One of the major features constructed as part of this



*A pill box on the Kennet and Avon Canal, part of the 1940 GHQ stop line anti-invasion defences.*

strategy was a stop line focussed on the Kennet and Avon Canal and River Thames across southern England. This line included many pill boxes, anti-tank ditches, concrete 'dragon's teeth' and other features designed to impede any advancing army. Many of these features are still visible today, particularly the concrete pill boxes.

### ROF Burghfield

Before the Second World War the government decided to construct a small number of purpose-built ordnance factories where explosives could be manufactured away from the centres of population and traditional industrial areas, which it was thought would be targeted for aerial bombing. One of these Royal Ordnance Factories was built at Burghfield. Until recently much of the WWII fabric survived at the site. However, its use since the war as the centre for the arming of Britain's nuclear deterrent, itself of major importance, led to some changes and more recent upgrading of facilities has removed much of the earlier fabric.

### Cold War and Nuclear Technologies

From the 1950s to the present West Berkshire has been a critical location in the Cold War and the provision of Britain's nuclear deterrent. Former airbases at Aldermaston, Greenham Common and Welford (as well as ROF Burghfield mentioned above) have been used for various purposes as part of the ongoing military activities of Britain and the United States of America. Aldermaston was particularly important in the development of nuclear technologies with broad applications. These sites have also become the focus of peace protests and the anti-nuclear movement.

## 4. Establishing Priorities

### 4.1 Introduction

One of the key aims of the West Berkshire HEAP is to establish an agreed set of priorities for action. To do this it is necessary to first understand the 'issues and opportunities' that exist for the historic environment at the current time. It would be easy to be pessimistic about what the future holds for the historic environment, to run off a seemingly endless list of threats and a record of damage, neglect and destruction. However, we should remain realistic and recognise that there have been many positive outcomes in recent years on which to build in the future.

In identifying the issues facing the historic environment we have available to us a range of data sources. Surveys at a national and local level that have fed into Heritage Counts and the Heritage at Risk Register (see above) provide much important detail and place the local scene in a national context. Information is also available via planning statistics (number of listed building consent applications, number of archaeological sites impacted by development, etc) and through data collected as part of schemes like the Environmental Stewardship Scheme sponsored by Natural England (number of scheduled monuments managed under the scheme, area of historic landscape improved, etc). The Historic Landscape Characterisation project provided a district wide account of current land-use. The HLC data was utilised in the Historic Environment Character Zoning (HECZ) project to identify the recent trends in landscape evolution and the impact of these on the historic environment. The HECZ project was able to identify a range of issues facing the historic environment for each of the 91 'zones'. Additionally there is an element of more subjective local knowledge and experience from those involved in the historic environment professionally and members of the community who undertake informal monitoring within their own vicinity or area of interest.

The following is not intended to be an exhaustive list. It also does not necessarily pick up on some of the 'local' issues that might exist in specific places. It is an attempt to highlight the key issues and opportunities that exist for the historic environment within the district.

## 4.2 Issues

### 4.2.1 Development

#### Major Development Activity

West Berkshire lies at the heart of central southern England and within the strategically important M4 corridor. Its relative economic prosperity, high quality environment and good communication links have provided a stimulus for significant development pressure in the District over recent years. The Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy identifies that over the next 20 years most new development will take place in Newbury, Thatcham and in the settlements in the east of the District close to Reading.



*The Park Way development in the centre of Newbury. Major developments of this type will frequently require archaeological investigation as part of the process.*

#### Small Scale Development Pressure

Although the current policy is for major development activity to be focussed in and around the major towns, small scale development activity will inevitably continue across the district. Often these small scale incremental changes can in the medium to long term lead to significant impacts on the historic environment.

#### Infilling Between Historic Nuclei

The HLC project helped identify in broad terms the settlement types found in the district. In parts of West Berkshire dispersed settlement is the historically dominant type, and in places this is threatened by an increasing trend to fill in the gaps with housing, changing the settlements to a more nucleated pattern.

## Potential Impact of Gravel/Minerals Extraction

The Kennet Valley, especially the section between Newbury and Reading, contains major valley gravel resources. Additionally, other parts of the district contain sand and gravel deposits that are significant enough to warrant extraction. It is necessary to ensure that where extraction of minerals is proposed the impacts on the historic environment are fully considered.



*Gravel extraction in the Kennet Valley. The density and range of historic sites in the valley make ensuring an appropriate response to these activities a priority.*

## 4.2.2 Historic Settlements and Buildings

### Assessment of Built Form and Character

Whilst HLC analysis has produced some information about settlement form and character, it is clear that more work is needed on this. Understanding the historic settlements of the district and their built form is fundamental to ensure that future development is undertaken sympathetically.

### Conservation Area Appraisals

The district has 53 Conservation Areas, but at the current time only 2 Conservation Area appraisals have been adopted (Streatley and Peasemore). Without these, the management and planning for Conservation Areas in the district is significantly restricted. The potential to designate other areas of the historic environment as Conservation Areas also requires careful assessment.

## Condition and management of historic buildings

The management and upkeep of historic buildings is an issue across the country. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there are a number of listed and unlisted buildings of historic interest in West Berkshire that stand in poor condition. However, the small number of structures on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk register might suggest that the district actually has a good record on the management of historic buildings. A more detailed assessment of the situation, including benchmarking with other areas, would be of value.

### Knowledge of Historic Building Stock

The HECZ project did highlight the lack of understanding of historic buildings in the district, both listed and unlisted buildings. Whilst this is slowly being addressed through recording work related to development activity, more general survey and assessment is required. This may also lead to action being taken over the allied issue of the condition and management of these historic buildings.

### Local Lists

As mentioned above, West Berkshire currently has no list of locally important buildings such as has existed in some local authorities (but see also Opportunities below).

## 4.2.3 Agriculture, Forestry and Land Management

### Modern Agricultural Practices

The HLC project clearly showed that much of the landscape of West Berkshire was significantly altered for 20th century arable agriculture, and these changes have resulted in major impacts on the archaeological environment, especially some of our more ancient sites and remains. Agricultural intensification continues to be a threat to sites of archaeological interest and historic landscape patterns.

### Land Management Pressures

Whilst the dynamic nature of the agricultural industry and its impacts on the landscape are recognised it is also clear that technology, changing economic factors and the climate change agenda are resulting in further changes such as the planting of energy crops. Whilst it is

difficult to see exactly how these might impact on the historic environment, or indeed whether that impact will be negative, this is an area for legitimate concern.

### Ancient Woodland Management

Despite the dominance of arable cultivation in the district there are large tracts of woodland, much of it falling within the definition of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland. Woodland audits have shown that many of these woods contain important archaeological remains. It is also widely acknowledged that some of these woods have not been managed appropriately in recent years.

### New Tree Planting

New tree planting can impact upon archaeological sites and the character of the historic landscape. Although it is unlikely that large scale planting will be seen in the district, where it does take place, understanding the impact on the historic environment is necessary.

### Management of Water Meadow Systems

Water meadows were formerly widespread in the valleys of the district but now only survive as earthworks in a few locations, and no system is actively managed. They are threatened by gravel extraction, agriculture, forestry and development, but are under-appreciated for their historic and other wildlife or resource value.

### Management of Commons

West Berkshire is fortunate in having some unique areas of common land, ranging from Hungerford Port Down Common and Bucklebury Common to the restored landscape of the former USAF airfield at Greenham and Crookham Commons. Not all are managed effectively or appropriately; forestry, development and neglect threaten these landscapes.

### Management of Earthwork Features

The degradations of modern agriculture have ensured that large tracts of earthwork features such as prehistoric lynchets, medieval ridge and furrow and other ancient linear boundaries do not survive in West Berkshire. However, small pockets of earthwork features do survive, in particular within woodlands, and these need to be managed appropriately to ensure their survival.



*Rabbit damage to the Bronze Age barrow cemetery at Lambourn 7 Barrows.*

### Management of Historic Boundaries

As with earthwork features above, many historic boundaries (hedgerows, tree lines, earth banks and ditches) have been lost to 20th century agriculture and development. The extent and significance of surviving elements need further analysis.

## 4.2.4 Specific Historic Environment Assets

### Conservation of Designed Parklands

West Berkshire has a high number of designed parklands, including those on the English Heritage register but also many that are not. However, it is clear that a number of these are at threat from development, neglect or inappropriate management.

### Management of the Kennet and Avon Canal

The Kennet and Avon canal is one of the most prominent and distinctive features of the historic environment in West Berkshire. The section through the district contains some particular important features of early canal development in Britain. It is however a working waterway and an important tourism attraction and economic driver. It needs constant repair and maintenance to keep it open, but this should not be at the expense of its historic fabric and character.

### Conservation of Surviving Elements of Military Remains

West Berkshire contains some unique elements of 20th century military history that need conservation. These include: Second World War

defensive stop line features along the Kennet and Avon Canal and in the Sulham Gap; Second World War airfields; Cold War sites, especially the Cruise Missile facilities at Greenham Common; and the facilities for the manufacture of Britain's nuclear deterrent at Aldermaston and Burghfield.

## Understanding the Nature and Extent of the Archaeological Resource

The HECZ project through its detailed analysis of the archaeological record has shown that there are significant areas of the district where there is a lack of information. It is unclear whether the absence of known features is a true reflection of past human activity, or results from the paucity of fieldwork. Further investigation and survey work should target these areas.

## 4.3 Opportunities

### 4.3.1 Community Engagement

#### Parish Planning

West Berkshire now has a national reputation for the scope and quality of its engagement with the Parish Planning process. The large majority of parish communities have a published plan, and many are currently working on updates. The process of producing a parish plan presents real opportunities to engage with local communities about how the historic environment informs and characterises their area.

#### Village Design Statements

These are often produced on the back of a parish plan. A VDS is much stronger where it takes appropriate account of the historic processes that have shaped a settlement or area, and contains appropriate policy and guidance on how new development can minimise impact on the historic character.

#### The Voluntary Sector

West Berkshire is extremely fortunate in having an enthusiastic and active voluntary sector in the historic environment field. The numerous societies, local history groups and individuals comprise a significant resource of expertise and experience. Whether it is through undertaking new research (such as on the Peasemore Project), supporting the work of the museum or lobbying on behalf of the historic environment in planning, the voluntary sector can make a real difference.

**Other Community Groups** – It is important to remember that there is a wide range of community and voluntary groups operating outside the historic environment sphere. These groups are also potential partners and can make a real contribution to heritage projects.

## 4.3.2 Heritage Protection Reform

### Heritage Protection Reform Bill

Although the Bill that was to enact the legislative changes in the sector has been delayed, the principles within it have met with broad support from within the heritage sector and beyond. Many of the changes envisaged are being taken forward where possible. The eventual outcomes promote a more holistic view of the historic environment, promote greater local participation in the process (in terms of nominating heritage assets for designation and in determining heritage asset consent applications), and will provide more transparency in the system and promote greater consistency.

### Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5)

As part of the heritage reform process, Planning Policy Statement 5 Planning for the Historic Environment and its accompanying 'Planning Practice Guide' have recently been published, replacing Planning Policy Guidance notes 15 and 16. (For more information, see [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps5](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps5)). Amongst other things this policy promotes:-

- the full and proper protection of heritage assets;
- stresses that undesignated heritage assets can be extremely important to local communities;
- the creation of local lists;
- the proper understanding of the historic environment as a significant component of the regional and local planning policy;
- that local planning authorities should maintain or have access to an Historic Environment Record and expert advice on the historic environment;
- the need for applicants to provide full and detailed information about the impact of their proposals.

### 4.3.3 Local Planning Policy

#### Local Development Framework (LDF)

The process of developing the range of policy documents that will comprise the LDF has provided real opportunities for the historic environment sector to engage with and inform the development of the policy position. The Core Strategy contains policies that seek to protect the most significant components of the historic environment resource, but also promotes the role of studies like HLC, HECZ and the Newbury Historic Character Study as mechanism for understanding and informing the impacts of new development activity. More information on the Local Development Framework can be found at - [www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3225](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3225).

#### Conservation Area Appraisals

The emerging policy documents make it clear that conservation areas are a core local designation that should be used to manage change. There is also a formal commitment to undertake conservation area appraisals across the district.

#### Local Lists

The PPS5 Planning Practice Guide extols the benefits of creating and maintaining a local list of heritage assets. In West Berkshire the creation of such a list has been enshrined as a commitment in the 'Proposed Submission Core Strategy', and English Heritage guidance is currently in draft form (see above).

### 4.3.4 Landscapes

#### European Landscape Convention (ELC)

The publication of the ELC and its ratification by the UK Government may have been low key, but its potential implications for the historic environment sector should not be underestimated. The clear acknowledgement that landscapes are a cultural phenomenon, and that they are the product of human activities over many thousands of years, places the historic environment at the centre of our understanding and management of landscapes.

#### North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Because approximately 74% of West Berkshire falls within the North Wessex Downs AONB, this designated landscape is protected and its management is designed to enhance its special character. The 2nd Management Plan (2009) recognises that the historic environment plays a central role in defining this character and contains policies that seek to protect and enhance the historic environment. The North Wessex Downs AONB also has the potential to unlock resources for taking forward major research or enhancement projects.

#### The West Berkshire Living Landscape

Situated on land south and east of Thatcham and Newbury, the West Berkshire Living Landscape initiative is a joint venture between the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust and West Berkshire Council. The landscape includes a number of important heritage assets, and the management of the area now recognises the contribution these make to the character of the area. The current management strategy provides real opportunities to engage with local communities and to promote the value of the historic environment in this area.

### 4.3.5 Land Management

#### Agri-Environment Schemes

The promotion and development of agri-environment schemes (Countryside Stewardship followed by Environmental Stewardship) over the last 15 or so years has resulted in significant improvements to the management of many of our most important heritage assets. The protection of the historic environment is one of the five primary objectives of the current schemes.

#### Forestry

The management of the historic environment resource in forestry or within areas of proposed new woodlands continues to be a priority for the Forestry Commission. The unknown scale and condition of the historic environment resource within historic woodlands remains an issue, but recent initiatives to engage with local voluntary groups have been successful in local areas in helping to resolve this.

# 5. Action Plan

## 5.1 Introduction to the Action Plan

The previous sections of this document have given us the background to and the context for the historic environment in the district. We have seen that the resource is varied and extensive, and that it includes many elements that are highly significant both within and beyond the boundaries of the modern administrative area. We have also seen that there are a range of issues facing the resource and its management and that there are very real opportunities to improve its care. However we now need to identify what actions are necessary, appropriate and realistic that will help deliver the sustainable management of the historic environment resource. It is also important to establish what the priorities should be for the coming years. The action plan that follows is an attempt to define what the sector's priorities are and to suggest mechanisms for how those priorities could or should be met.

At the core of preparing this action plan is an important question: how detailed or specific should the action plan be? Current thinking suggests that when setting objectives in action plans they should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time based). Using such an approach has been shown to be extremely useful, but its applicability is most helpful where the objectives relate to a specific project or a relatively small team or organisation. The HEAP is intended to be a broader plan that can be adopted across the district by a wide range of different groups. How each group takes up the objectives outlined is dependent on the resources, skills and experience they have available. Some HEAP objectives could be delivered by individuals or single groups; others can only be achieved through working together. The delivery of the HEAP can only be achieved through agreement and consensus and therefore the plan's objectives cannot be too specific. Therefore, whilst principles behind the SMART approach are a useful guide and should be used to ensure that the objectives identified are not over ambitious, there needs to be a degree of realism about what can be achieved and when.

The action plan that follows is therefore a broad list of objectives that builds on the assessment contained in sections 2, 3 and 4 above; it is an attempt to distil the issues and opportunities identified into a set of broad objectives that will allow the issues to be addressed. Some of the objectives are more specific than others, but no detailed targets are being set at this stage. It is not the intention that the HEAP should dictate what individuals or groups should be doing; this needs to be decided locally. However, it is hoped that all those with an interest in the historic environment will use this plan when setting their own (possibly more detailed) objectives, when considering what contribution they can make, or deciding where they are best positioned to contribute to the conservation of the district's unique and valuable heritage.

## 5.2 The Action Plan

In order to make the action plan usable and readable it is necessary to break down the objectives into different areas of activity or themes. The six themes identified are based around the issues and opportunities detailed above: Understanding and Recording the Historic Environment; Designation of Heritage Assets; Development and the Planning System; Agriculture and Land Management; Promotion and Outreach; and Specific Assets/Issues. This allows a thread to be seen through the document, making it possible to explain what has been included and why certain objectives have been prioritised. Of course many of the objectives can apply to more than one theme and it should be remembered when recording delivery against the plan that individual projects may deliver against multiple objectives.

Objectives have been split into two levels: high level objectives with more generic/broader outcomes, and sitting under these slightly more targeted objectives that would result in more specific outcomes.

As stated above it has been decided that the objectives will not be given specific target dates for delivery. However, it is felt important to set out in the plan the relative importance of each of the objectives. This has been done by the simple mechanism of attaching a High, Medium or Low priority.

- **High (H)** priority objectives are those that

should be achieved in the 5 year plan period;

- **Medium (M)** priority are objectives which it is hoped will be achieved in the plan period;
- and
- **Low (L)** priority objectives are those where some progress during the plan period is thought to be attainable.

No objectives that are considered as over ambitious have been included at this time (where progress during the plan period is highly unlikely).

Possible constraints on delivery are also identified. This should not be taken as an exhaustive list of potential constraints; it is recognised that other issues might exist that could stand in the way of the delivery of any of these objectives. However, it is hoped that by identifying the more obvious constraints at this stage will allow a more realistic approach to the planning of projects and activities.

At this stage an initial assessment has been made of who might be responsible for delivery, ie the lead in taking forward any of the objectives identified and who the delivery partners might be (see Glossary for full names of abbreviated organisations). Again this should not be taken as a definitive list. It is highly possible that some of the delivery leads will not have the time or resources to take forward some of the tasks. Equally it may be that an alternative group wants to take on the delivery of an objective they are not currently assigned to. A flexibility of approach and partnership working is fundamental to the successful delivery of the plan.

## Theme A. Understanding and Recording the Historic Environment

No.	Objective	Priority	Possible constraints on delivery	Responsible for delivery	Delivery partners
<b>A.1</b>	<b>Supporting Community-based Historic Environment projects</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>Resources, absence of local groups in some areas</b>	<b>All in HE sector</b>	<b>WBC, EH</b>
A.1.1	Support sustainable projects that seek to understand the heritage of the district.	H	Resources, numbers of volunteers, relevant consents	Local societies, local community groups	WBC
A.1.2	Promote co-operation between local groups and individuals, share best practice and develop a common agenda for action.	H	Diversity of groups, differing functions of groups	West Berkshire Heritage Forum	WBC
A.1.3	Identify 'shared' projects that groups could contribute to positive outcomes.	M	Identifying projects with broad range of themes	West Berkshire Heritage Forum	WBC
<b>A.2</b>	<b>Promote the benefits of high standards for all archaeological and historic building investigation, recording, analysis and publication.</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>Staff resources for monitoring professional activities, limited control over voluntary work, lack of awareness of standards in the built historic environment</b>	<b>All in HE sector</b>	
A.2.1	Promote and monitor professional standards	H	Resources	WBC	IfA
A.2.2	Seek training opportunities for the voluntary sector	M	Resources	IfA, CBA, WBC, Local societies, local community groups	All in HE sector
<b>A.3</b>	<b>Recognise HER as the primary record for the HE in West Berkshire</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>Current lack of statutory Status, vulnerability to resource cuts</b>	<b>WBC</b>	<b>EH</b>
A.3.1	Increase accessibility of HER, create an on-line presence	H	Costs of web hosting, accuracy of data, sifting of data to remove sensitive material	WBC	EH
A.3.2	Increase awareness of HER as a resource for all.	M	Advertising/outreach programme required, limited staff resources available	WBC	All in HE sector
A.3.3	Improve provision for the built historic environment on the HER	M	Limited staff resources. Possibility of volunteer input.	WBC	All in HE sector
<b>A.4</b>	<b>Promote Characterisation as a mechanism for understanding and conserving the HE.</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Resources, lack of awareness of current characterisation datasets</b>	<b>WBC, EH</b>	
A.4.1	Improve outreach and promotional activities for current characterisation datasets	M	Resources, finding appropriate mechanisms	WBC, EH	
A.4.2	Identify opportunities for future characterisation programmes	L	Resources	WBC, EH	

## Theme B. Designation of Heritage Assets

No.	Objective	Priority	Possible constraints on delivery	Responsible for delivery	Delivery partners
<b>B.1</b>	<b>Ensure current lists of designated assets include all nationally significant features</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Resources, lack of appropriate data</b>	<b>EH</b>	<b>All in HE sector</b>
B.1.1	Compile a list of all assets that are considered to be of national significance	M	Resources, training in selection criteria	Local societies, local community groups, WBC	EH
B.1.2	Undertake a full condition survey of heritage assets in the district	M	Resources, training, access	Local societies, local community groups	WBC
B.1.3	Ensure that designation records are accurate and up to date.	M	Resources, training	EH	All in HE Sector
<b>B.2</b>	<b>Develop a 'local list' of heritage assets</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>Resources, absence of adopted criteria</b>	<b>WBC</b>	<b>All in HE sector</b>
B.2.1	Agree criteria for inclusion on local list with sector	H	Resources, training.	WBC, EH, local Societies	All in HE sector
B.2.2	Promote creation of local list amongst community groups	H	Resources, training	WBC, EH, local societies	All in HE sector

## Theme C. Development and the Planning System

No.	Objective	Priority	Possible constraints on delivery	Responsible for delivery	Delivery partners
<b>C.1</b>	<b>Promote Community engagement with planning and management</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>Patchy coverage of active groups, lack of engagements with some local groups, training, resources</b>	<b>WBC</b>	<b>Local community groups</b>
C.1.1	Utilise community groups in production of Conservation Area Appraisals (CAA).	H	Training, patchy coverage of active groups	WBC, Local Community groups	All in HE sector
C.1.2	Promote the role of Village Design Statements (VDS) as a mechanism for understanding the HE and for retaining the historic character of settlements	M	Training, provision of data, ensuring that broader awareness of HE issues and opportunities	WBC, Local community groups	All in HE sector
C.1.3	Explore potential for joint VDS and CAA works where appropriate	M	Training, availability of local skills/experience, resources	WBC local community groups	All in HE sector
C.1.4	Develop a broader understanding of the historic character of the district's towns and villages to inform planning policy	M	Resources	WBC, EH	All in HE sector
C.1.5	Promote the use of heritage data in parish planning	H	Guidance, training, engagement of local groups	WBC, local community groups	All in HE sector
<b>C.2</b>	<b>Promote the full use of PPS5 in WBC and amongst developers</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>Uncertainty about Heritage Protection Reform Bill, resources, training for professional staff and voluntary groups</b>	<b>WBC, EH</b>	
C.2.1	Ensure heritage significance is fully considered in the development management process	H	Training of Planning Officers, resources for pre-application discussions, engagement of local communities	WBC, EH	All in HE sector
C.2.2	Ensure that appropriate policies and supporting evidence is included in local planning policy documents	H	Staff resources, consultation with local communities, resources for undertaking appropriate research	WBC	All in HE sector
C.2.3	Promote the production of a Supplementary Planning Document on the Historic Environment.	M	Uncertainty about changes to planning system, staff resources	WBC	All in HE sector
C.2.4	Ensure that the most significant elements of the historic environment are protected from inappropriate development.	H	Designation resources, staff resources, lack of information about some elements of the resource	WBC, EH	All in HE sector
C.2.5	Complete the Conservation Area Appraisals for the district.	H	Programme and timetable needs to be published, proper engagement with local communities, staff and financial resources	WBC	Local community groups, EH

## Theme D. Agriculture and Land Management

No.	Objective	Priority	Possible constraints on delivery	Responsible for delivery	Delivery partners
<b>D.1</b>	<b>Recognise and promote Agri-environment schemes as a mechanism for improving the management of the HE</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Lack of awareness, training, lack of appropriate information</b>	<b>WBC, NE</b>	<b>EH, local land-owners, FWAG</b>
D.1.1	Identify sites for possible inclusion within schemes	M	Resources, condition data	WBC, EH	NE, FWAG
D.1.2	Promote opportunities for the conservation of farm buildings under the schemes	M	Resources, condition data, information about historical/architectural significance of assets.	WBC, EH, FWAG	All in HE sector
D.1.3	Work to ensure HE provision is retained in any amendments to scheme priorities	M	European rulings, promotion of value of scheme of HE resource	WBC, EH	NE
<b>D.2</b>	<b>Raise awareness of the value of the HE resource in woodlands</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Resources, data provision, training.</b>	<b>All in HE sector</b>	
D.2.1	Utilise local groups to undertake woodland surveys	M	Training, resources.	Local community groups	WBC, AONB, EH, CBA
D.2.2	Promote sustainable management practices in semi-ancient woodlands or where significant Heritage assets are present.	M	Training, data, publication of guidance	AONB, FC, EH	WBC
<b>D.3</b>	<b>Ensure new tree planting avoids impacts on the HE</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Liaison with Forestry Commission</b>	<b>FC, WBC</b>	<b>EH</b>
D.3.1	Ensure appropriate liaison with FC on proposals for new planting	M	Staff resources, data	WBC, FC	
D.3.2	Broaden scope of impact assessment to include 'setting' and historic landscape issues	M	Staff resources	WBC, FC	
<b>D.4</b>	<b>Work with the North Wessex Downs AONB to conserve the historic character and heritage of the designated landscape</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Training, resources</b>	<b>All in HE sector</b>	
D.4.1	Promote AONB wide projects that seek to conserve the heritage resource	M	Training, engaging with AONB planning and implantation processes	All in HE sector	
D.4.2	Promote a more consistent approach to the conservation of the HE resource across the AONB.	M	Partnership working with neighbouring areas and authorities	AONB	WBC, WC, OCC, HCC, EH,

## Theme E. Promotion and Outreach

No.	Objective	Priority	Possible constraints on delivery	Responsible for delivery	Delivery partners
<b>E.1</b>	<b>Explore mechanisms for promoting the relevance of the Historic Environment for all communities</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>Resources, consistency of engagement</b>	<b>All in HE sector</b>	<b>EH</b>
E.1.1	Seek opportunities to engage a broader audience to participate in projects	H	Resources, local engagement, expertise	Local societies, local community groups, WBC	
E.1.2	Ensure that the results of projects are reported to the widest possible audience	M	Communication tools, resources	Local societies, WBC	
E.1.3	Promote Heritage Open Days, festivals and other local and national schemes for promoting Heritage	H	Patchy coverage of active groups, training, resources	Local societies, local community groups, WBC	All in HE sector
E.1.4	Try to ensure that all projects lead to positive outcomes for the broader community	M	Absence of local engagement, resources,	Local societies, local community groups, WBC	
<b>E.2</b>	<b>Promote the HE in West Berkshire as a Tourism resource</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Resources, facilities/information at some sites, co-ordination of activities</b>	<b>Local societies, WBC, tourism industry</b>	<b>WBC, AONB</b>
E.2.1	Develop Heritage trails in the main historic settlements	M	Resources, expertise at a local level	Local societies, local community groups	WBC, tourism industry
E.2.2	Identify and promote sites, monuments and buildings of interest across the district	M	Resources, identifying best promotional activities/techniques	Local societies, WBC, AONB	Tourism industry
<b>E.3</b>	<b>Improve publication record</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>Resources, developer funding</b>	<b>WBC, BAS, CBA, EH</b>	
E.3.1	Ensure that there is an active vehicle for the publication of heritage based investigations	H	Resources, expertise	BAS	Archaeological contractors
E.3.2	Make unpublished heritage 'grey literature' as freely accessible as possible	M	Signposting OASIS, more online provision, space in WBC offices for researchers	WBC, ADS	Archaeological contractors
E.3.3	Create online access to information and reports	H	Staff resources, training	WBC, ADS, BAS	Archaeological contractors
<b>E.4</b>	<b>Create consistent and accessible archives from all investigation and survey projects</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>Resources, museum redevelopment</b>	<b>WBC</b>	
E.4.1	Support and promote West Berkshire Museum as the primary depository for archaeological archives	H	Volunteer and staff resources, adequacy of facilities, museum redevelopment	WBC	Archaeological Contractors, EH
E.4.2	Improve access to archaeological archives and promote their use in research	M	Volunteer and staff resources, web-based material, museum development	WBC	Archaeological Contractors, EH

## Theme F. Specific Assets/Issues

No.	Objective	Priority	Possible constraints on delivery	Responsible for delivery	Delivery partners
<b>F.1</b>	<b>Promote the protection of historic Parks and Gardens</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Awareness, access, resources</b>	<b>BGT, WBC, EH</b>	<b>Local community groups</b>
F.1.1	Undertake an audit of the districts designed landscapes	M	Training, access to some sites	BGT	
F.1.2	Promote improvements to the management of historic parks and gardens	M	Resources, production of guidance, promotion.	BGT	WBC
<b>F.2</b>	<b>Recognise the Kennet and Avon Canal as a key component of the district's heritage</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Resources, ongoing management as a tourism facility</b>	<b>BW, WBC</b>	<b>BW</b>
F.2.1	Promote the designation of the K&A corridor as a possible conservation area.	L	Resources, consultation with BW and local communities	WBC, BW	
F.2.2	Explore the possibility of developing a heritage partnership agreement	L	Resources	BW	WBC, EH, K & A Canal Trust
F.2.3	Recognise the value of the WWII features along the canal as an important part of the HE resource	L	Conservation issues identified.	BW, WBC, EH	
<b>F.3</b>	<b>Ensure that the district's military heritage is fully recognised and protected as an important heritage asset</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Training, information</b>	<b>special interest groups, WBC, EH</b>	<b>Local community groups, MOD DE</b>
F.3.1	Improve our understanding of the military heritage, its condition and significance	M	Resources, training, data gathering	Special interest groups, local community groups	WBC, EH, CBA
F.3.2	Improve the management of surviving military features	M	Identification of significance, designation.	Special interest groups, local community groups	WBC, EH
<b>F.4</b>	<b>Promote West Berkshire's Commons as important components of the HE</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>Training, outreach programme needed, provision of heritage data.</b>	<b>WBC, EH</b>	<b>BBOWT, local community groups</b>
F.4.1	Support the management of commons for community benefit.	L	Support production of management plans, training	WBC, BBOWT	AONB, local community groups
F.4.2	Ensure that commons are recognised as heritage assets in their own right	L	Outreach programme, collection and provision of heritage data.	WBC, local community groups	

## 5.3 Delivery and monitoring

Adoption of the HEAP is of course only the start of the process. Finding a way to ensure that progress against the plan's objectives is being monitored and that successes and achievements are widely reported is an important part of the delivery mechanism. The following table shows how the higher priority objectives could be met in the coming years.

### West Berkshire HEAP High Priority Objectives – Delivery Strategy

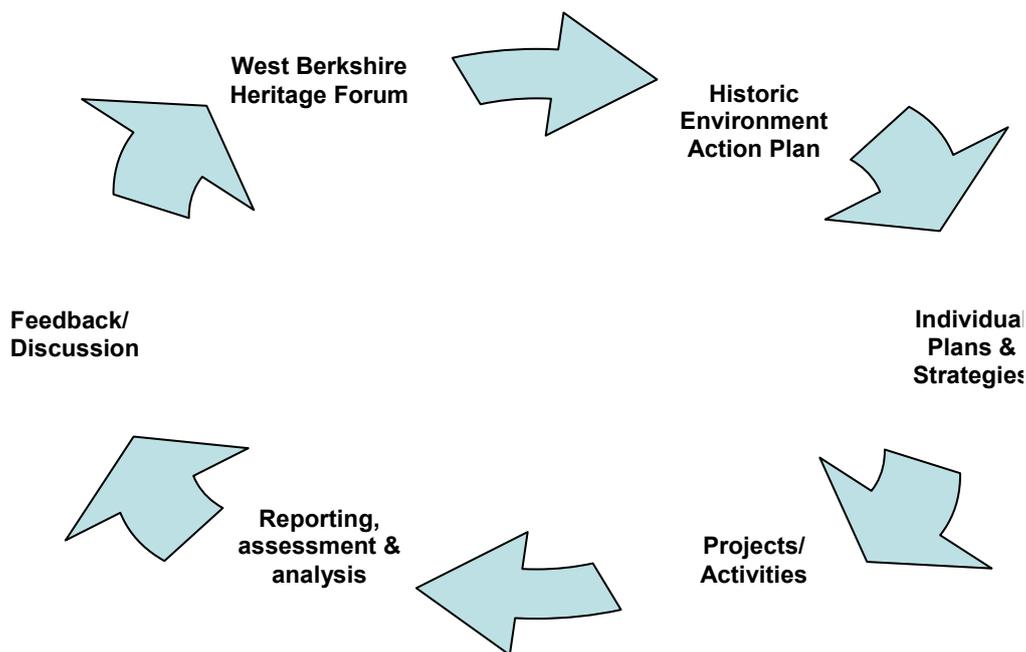
Reference No.	Objective	Delivery Strategy
<b>A.1</b>	<b>Supporting Community-based Historic Environment projects.</b>	This is a fundamental principle of the West Berks Heritage Forum. It is not considered that any extra resources will be required to deliver this objective.
A.1.1	Support sustainable projects that seek to understand the heritage of the district.	Promoting research projects that are sustainable and deliver new insights is fundamental to the successful conservation of the resource. It is recognised that projects can be delivered through a variety of mechanisms. Much new research will continue to be delivered through the planning process, a duty that WBC will continue to perform. However, the voluntary sector has much to offer and the West Berks Heritage Forum will have an important role to play in promoting and supporting activities.
A.1.2	Promote co-operation between local groups and individuals, share best practice and develop a common agenda for action.	A central function of the West Berks Heritage Forum will be to deliver this objective, bringing groups and individuals together to share experiences and to develop joint projects. In the simple act of producing the HEAP part of the objective has been delivered. However the Forum will need to establish itself and gain wider recognition for the role it can perform.
<b>A.2</b>	<b>Promote the benefits of high standards for all archaeological and historic building investigation, recording, analysis and publication.</b>	This should be a fundamental objective of any group or individual establishing or undertaking fieldwork projects. The Forum's role is simply to highlight and promote this objective.
A.2.1	Promote and monitor professional standards.	WBC heritage officers already undertake this task as part of their normal duties. It is not expected that any significant new resources will be required to deliver this objective.
<b>A.3</b>	<b>Recognise HER as the primary record for the HE in West Berkshire.</b>	The delivery of this objective relies upon promotion and raising awareness. The HER has been in existence for over 30 years and has developed into a significant and broad dataset. However, there are still many who fail to understand the potential of this data. As a WBC function the primary responsibility for delivery of this objective falls with the Heritage Service, but other groups and individuals with experience of using the HER can play an important role in promotion.
A.3.1	Increase accessibility of HER, create an on-line presence.	WBC Heritage Service is working towards greater online access for the HER. Whilst some datasets are already available online it is recognised that more could be done to improve the quality and range of the data available.
<b>B.2</b>	<b>Develop a 'local list' of heritage assets.</b>	The broad heritage community has recognised the potential benefits of having a local list in West Berks. EH are in the process of producing guidance on the production of local lists. Locally it is recognised that a partnership between WBC and the heritage community is fundamental to its successful delivery. It is suggested that a Steering Group (which may become the 'selection panel') is established to take this forward.

Reference Objective		Delivery Strategy
Reference No.	Objective	
B.2.1	Agree criteria for inclusion on local list with sector.	A fundamental duty of any Steering Group established would be to agree the selection criteria.
B.2.2	Promote creation of local list amongst community groups.	Whilst some local groups might be in a strong position to begin the process of establishing a local list it is recognised that others will need to support and advice to get going. Whilst WBC heritage officers will be able to provide some support and advice it is hoped that the heritage community will share their skills and experience to those groups or parts of the district that require support.
C.1	Promote Community engagement with planning and management.	PPS5 and the localism agenda make it clear that there is an increasing opportunity for local communities and special interest groups to engage with the development of policy and the decision making process. The initial activity in this area could simply be promoting the role that groups can play and encouraging groups to get involved. In the longer term the Forum could play a central role in the development of a Supplementary Planning Document or the provision of less formal advice and guidance on heritage issues in the planning process.
C.1.1	Utilise community groups in production of Conservation Area Appraisals (CAA).	Responses to the HEAP made it clear that resolving the current lack of activity on the production of CAAs has to be a high priority. It is recognised that WBC has the prime responsibility to ensure that these are produced, but that this process will be slow within current resource constraints. Utilising the skills available with the heritage community is a good mechanism to unlock this situation, with the broader benefits of giving ownership to the community. WBC will need to work in partnership with community groups to ensure that work undertaken meets the required standard, but this should not be a significant restraint on delivery.
C.1.5	Promote the use of heritage data in parish planning.	Parish Planning is a very active area in West Berks. The WBC Heritage Service has been promoting the role of heritage in Parish Plans for some years with mixed success. Whilst this activity will continue there is an opportunity for local heritage groups or interested individuals to engage more fully with this process, to promote the role of heritage in local communities and promoting actions within plans that seek to enhance or preserve the heritage. It is possible that the need for CAAs could be highlighted through the Parish Planning process.
C.2	Promote the full use of PPS5 in WBC and amongst developers.	PPS5 provides a sound basis for dealing with heritage issues in the planning process. WBC heritage officers will continue to promote its implementation. PPS5 does contain more opportunities for local heritage groups to engage with the planning process and this needs further promotion.
C.2.1	Ensure heritage significance is fully considered in the development management process.	Understanding significance is fundamental to the approach set out in PPS5. WBC needs to do more to ensure that developers understand what is required and that they provide that data at an appropriate time in the process. There is a clear link with C.1 here.
C.2.2	Ensure that appropriate policies and supporting evidence is included in local planning policy documents.	Local planning policies are still emerging and the system is changing in response to new approaches at a national level. The heritage community needs to remain vigilant, to ensure that appropriate provision is made in the local policy position and need to be prepared to speak up on behalf of heritage.
C.2.4	Ensure that the most significant elements of the historic environment are protected from inappropriate development.	This is an ongoing task for all interested in the district's heritage, but it is recognised that WBC heritage officers will remain the frontline for assessing heritage impacts and making appropriate responses.
C.2.5	Complete the Conservation Area Appraisals for the district.	(See above C.1.1)

Reference Objective		Delivery Strategy
Reference No.	Objective	
E.1	Explore mechanisms for promoting the relevance of the Historic Environment for all communities.	The Forum has an important role to play in promoting the value and relevance of the historic environment. (See also C.1.5).
E.1.1	Seek opportunities to engage a broader audience to participate in projects.	A current issue in West Berks is that whilst there are many individuals who have an interest in the historic environment the numbers that get engaged with projects, advocacy or issues is comparatively small. In order to deliver the outcomes from the HEAP and to deliver the intended benefits for the resources it will be necessary to get more people engaged.
E.1.3	Promote Heritage Open Days, festivals and other local and national schemes for promoting Heritage.	There are already a number of heritage events held in the district and The Newbury Society's efforts with HOD are particularly noteworthy. These events and activities are an important mechanism for engaging with people and they need to be continued and expanded
E.3	Improve publication record.	Research and fieldwork remains fundamental to improving our understanding or the resource and what it tells us about the world we live in. But without a full and accessible publication the work undertaken is of little or no value. In some circumstances field work without publication has a significant negative impact. It remains the responsibility for all undertaking field work to ensure it is appropriately published. WBC heritage officers continue to have a formal role where works are carried out in relation to development activity.
E.3.1	Ensure that there is an active vehicle for the publication of heritage based investigations.	Traditionally an important route for the production of reports has been provided through the voluntary sector, and a good illustration of how the sector can make a very positive contribution. The Berkshire Archaeological Journal is now active again, but like many of these initiatives is reliant on a small number of individuals. Alternative publication methods, online and a broader range of publication types to reach a wider audience should be explored.
E.3.3	Create online access to information and reports.	The Berkshire Archaeology Society has undertaken excellent work recently to provide online access to its Journal. The HER will also be available online shortly. However, there continues to be scope to improve the range of material available. An audit of current provision would be a good starting point in this area.
E.4	Create consistent and accessible archives from all investigation and survey projects.	As with publication, Archives are an important product of research activity. The main area of responsibility in this area is the West Berkshire Museum and the WBC archaeology service. However, project teams and initiators will also need to consider this in their planning.
E.4.1	Support and promote West Berkshire Museum as the primary depository for archaeological archives.	Although it is recognised that there are current access issues to the resources held in the museum, this will only be a temporary situation during redevelopment. When the museum reopens it will be important to promote the potential of its collections for research purposes. Delivery of this objective lies with WBC, but awareness across the broader heritage community is important.

Whilst the list of High priority actions may look daunting it does only represent around 30% of the actions identified and it should be remembered that many of these are existing activities that are already being delivered to some extent. Gaining better understanding of what activities are already being undertaken will be necessary to ensure that resources are used appropriately.

It is not the role of the HEAP to dictate how individual projects should be specified or the work undertaken, but it is hoped that in developing projects, groups will bear in mind the broad objectives set out above. It is recognised that the objectives have different delivery processes: some can be delivered through a single project, undertaken by a single organisation; others will require a number of smaller projects undertaken by a range of individuals and/or groups. In many cases it would be unrealistic to expect an individual or single group to be able to show that they have delivered a whole objective, but they may have a specific project will make a significant contribution towards its completion. For example whilst it might not be possible for West Berkshire Council to produce Conservation Area Appraisals for the whole district in the short term, individual communities working within agreed guidelines could make a significant contribution towards this objective.



The process (illustrated above) will be cyclical with the delivery and assessment of projects and activities being reviewed and discussed by the West Berkshire Heritage Forum. It is hoped that through the West Berkshire Heritage Forum it will be possible to report on progress towards the stated objectives on a yearly basis. This will help demonstrate that progress is being made and will help provide an indication of where gaps in delivery might exist or where the HEAP has identified the wrong priorities. It will also provide a showcase for individual groups to demonstrate what they have achieved and to share their experiences and knowledge, good and bad! Taking the opportunity to celebrate achievements should not be overlooked.

What the HEAP will provide is a framework that will allow greater co-ordination of effort, better targeting of limited resources and a clearer justification of why some actions are being prioritised over others. It may help support grant applications or help ensure local communities can protect what they regard as the best of their heritage. What it must continue to do is provide a framework for local action to protect and conserve the historic environment.

# Bibliography

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Clark et al	2004	<i>Using Historic Landscape Characterisation</i>	English Heritage & Lancashire County Council
Communities and Local Government	2010	<i>Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment</i>	London: HMSO
Department of the Environment	1990	<i>Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16)</i>	London: HMSO
Department of the Environment	1994	<i>Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG 15)</i>	London: HMSO
English Heritage	2008	<i>Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment</i>	English Heritage
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Fenner, V E P	1994	<i>The Thames Valley Project - A report for the National Mapping Programme</i>	Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England
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Lobb, S J and Rose, P G	1996	<i>Archaeological Survey of the Lower Kennet Valley, Berkshire</i>	Wessex Archaeology Report 9
North Wessex Downs AONB	2009	<i>The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding natural Beauty: Management Plan 2009-2014</i>	
Oxford Archaeology	2006	<i>Newbury Historic Character Study - Assessment Report</i>	Unpublished Client Report
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Small, F	2002	<i>The Lambourn Downs - A Report for the National Mapping Programme</i>	English Heritage
Tyack, G, Bradley, S and Pevsner, N	2010	<i>The Buildings of England (Berkshire)</i>	Yale University Press

# Appendix 1 - Glossary

ADS	Archaeological Data Service
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BAS	Berkshire Archaeological Society
BGT	Berkshire Gardens Trust
BBOWT	Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust
BW	British Waterways
CBA	Council for British Archaeology
EH	English Heritage
FC	Forestry Commission
FWAG	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (the Pang, Kennet & Lambourn Valleys Countryside Project in West Berks)
HCC	Hampshire County Council
HE	Historic Environment
HEAP	Historic Environment Action Plan
HECZ	Historic Environment Character Zoning
HER	Historic Environment Record
HLC	Historic Landscape Characterisation
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
MOD DE	Ministry of Defence, Defence Estates
NCA	National Character Areas
NE	Natural England
NMR	National Monuments Record
OASIS	Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigations
OCC	Oxfordshire County Council
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
WBC	West Berkshire Council
WC	Wiltshire Council

# Appendix 2 - Links to other organisations

*(Accessed November 2010)*

Airfield Research Group

[www.airfieldinformationexchange.org](http://www.airfieldinformationexchange.org)

Archaeological Data Service

<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk>

Berkshire Archaeological Society

[www.berksarch.co.uk/](http://www.berksarch.co.uk/)

Berkshire Gardens Trust

[www.berks-gardens-trust.org.uk](http://www.berks-gardens-trust.org.uk)

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust

[www.bbwt.org.uk](http://www.bbwt.org.uk)

British Waterways

[www.britishwaterways.co.uk](http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk)

Council for British Archaeology

[www.britarch.ac.uk](http://www.britarch.ac.uk)

English Heritage

[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

Forestry Commission

[www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk)

Hampshire County Council

[www.hants.gov.uk](http://www.hants.gov.uk)

Institute for Archaeologists

[www.archaeologists.net](http://www.archaeologists.net)

Ministry of Defence, Defence Estates

[www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/Microsite/DE](http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/Microsite/DE)

Natural England

[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

National Monuments Record

[www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/archives-and-collections/nmr](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/archives-and-collections/nmr)

North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

[www.northwessexdowns.org.uk](http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk)

Online AccesS to the Index of archaeological investigations

[www.oasis.ac.uk](http://www.oasis.ac.uk)

Oxfordshire County Council

[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)

West Berkshire Council

[www.westberks.gov.uk](http://www.westberks.gov.uk)

Wiltshire Council

[www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)



## West Berkshire Heritage Forum

A partnership established to recognise, promote and protect the heritage of West Berkshire

'The West Berkshire Heritage Forum brings together like-minded groups and individuals across the unitary authority.

The Forum's objectives are:

- *To provide information and advice*
- *To give feedback on West Berkshire Council heritage initiatives*
- *To identify heritage of local interest or importance*
- *To generate ideas for projects that create a sense of place and local identity*
- *To act as an information resource*
- *To support and promote heritage events and activities*
- *To share good practice*
- *To act as a facilitator and focal point for communication and cooperation between heritage organisations in West Berkshire.*