

West Berkshire District Council

Lambourn Neighbourhood Plan

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

Post-consultation Version

July 2023

Contents

Non-technical summary	1
1. Background to the Lambourn Neighbourhood Plan	2
2. Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening	9
3. Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening	18
4. Consultation	29
5. Conclusions	30
Appendix 1: Consultation response from Historic England	31

LAMBOURN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Strategic Environmental Assessment

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required under UK legislation for all plans which may have a significant effect on the environment.

The purpose of the SEA is to provide a high level of protection for the environment and to integrate considerations of the environment into the preparation and adoption of plans with a view to promoting sustainable development.

The SEA process sets out criteria for assessing the significance of the impact of a plan on the environment. For example, if a plan proposes a housing development it may have an impact on the wildlife of the area or have an impact on the landscape. If a significant effect is possible, the assessment requires the consideration of alternative options and for the evaluation of the potential effects on the environment.

To ascertain if a SEA is required, a screening exercise is undertaken which looks at the proposals and policies in a Neighbourhood Plan to see if a significant effect on the environment is likely. The criteria for making the screening assessment are set out in the relevant legislation.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is a process which looks at the potential impact of proposals within a plan on what are termed as 'Habitats Sites'. In relation to the West Berkshire area, the relevant Habitats Sites are a number of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). There are no Special Protection Areas within the district, however there is one within 5km of the district.

This initial screening stage of the HRA process involves consideration of the reasons for designation, and the conservation objectives of Habitats Sites within a reasonable distance of the Neighbourhood Plan area, and the potential impact of the proposals within a Neighbourhood Plan upon these.

Conclusions

This report details the assessment of the Lambourn Neighbourhood Plan against the need for a SEA and / or HRA Appropriate Assessment to be produced to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan. West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) concludes that:

- A SEA is required to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan; and
- The Neighbourhood Plan needs to be subject to a HRA Appropriate Assessment.

Consultation with the three statutory consultees (Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England) took place between 30 May and 4 July 2023 to determine if they agreed with WBDC's conclusions. Historic England responded to confirm that they agreed. No responses were received from the Environment Agency or Natural England.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE LAMBOURN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- 1.1. West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) designated a Neighbourhood Area for the whole of Lambourn Parish in December 2018. The designation of the Neighbourhood Area is the first formal stage in the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan (NP). The Parish and Plan boundaries are the same and that is shown on Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Lambourn Neighbourhood Area



© Crown copyright and database rights 2023. West Berkshire District Council 0100024151.

a. Overview of the plan area:

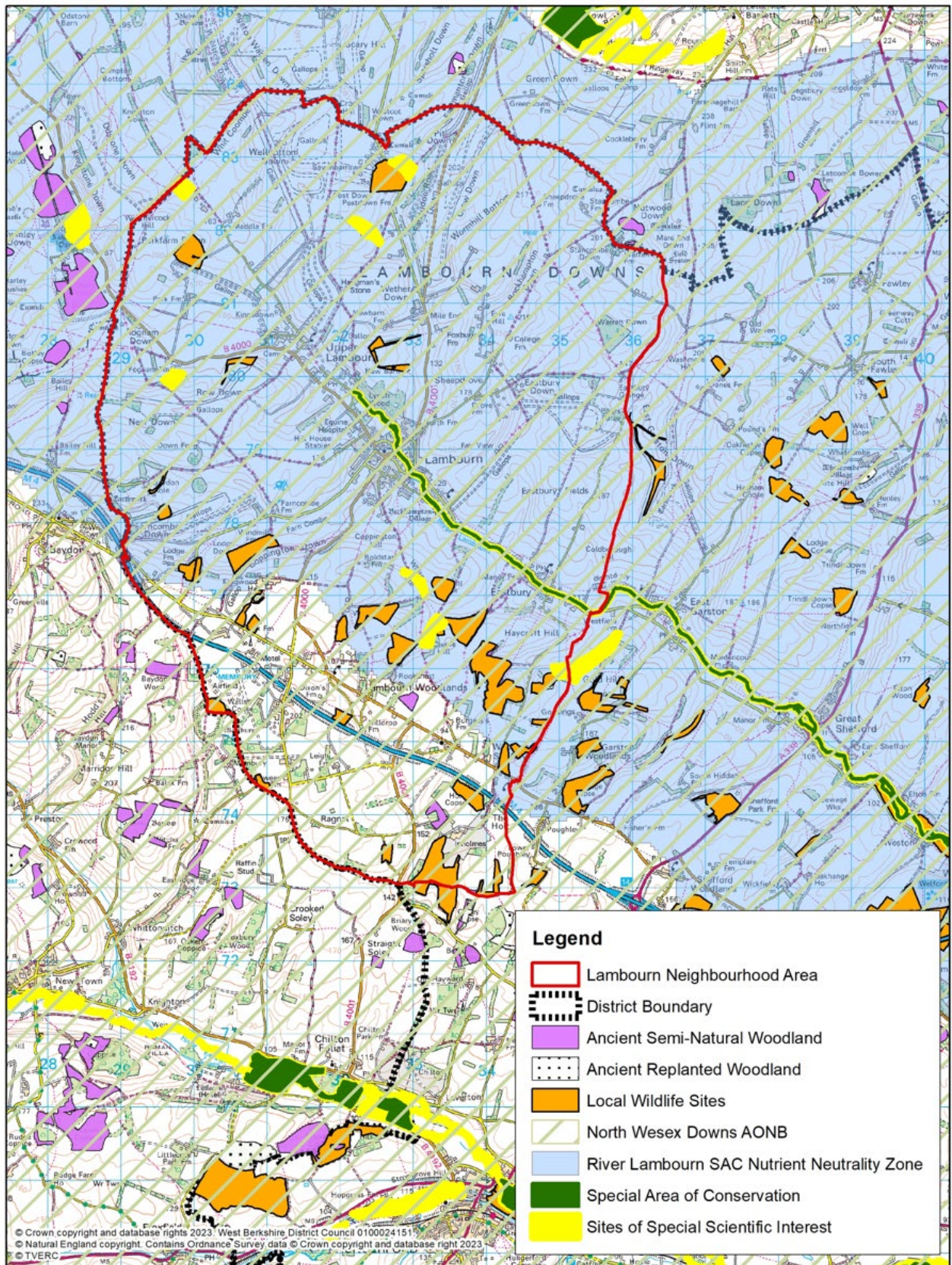
- 1.2. Lambourn is a predominantly rural parish located in the north western part of West Berkshire district. It lies within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a nationally important and legally protected landscape. The main settlement within the parish is the village of Lambourn, however the parish also contains the smaller villages of Eastbury and Upper Lambourn.
- 1.3. Within the adopted West Berkshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD)¹, the village of Lambourn is identified as a Rural Service Centre within the settlement hierarchy meaning that it has a range of services with opportunities to strengthen its role in meeting the requirements of the surrounding community.
- 1.4. There are numerous natural environment and built environment designations within the Neighbourhood Area as set out below and also illustrated in Figures 1.2 and 1.3 below:

Natural environment:

- River Lambourn Special Area of Conservation
 - River Lambourn SAC Nutrient Neutrality Zone
 - 8 Sites of Special Scientific Interest
 - Local Wildlife Sites
 - Ancient Woodland
- 1.5. Outside, but within 10km of the Neighbourhood Area are three SACs – Hackpen Hill, Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain, and Kennet Valley Alderwoods.

¹ West Berkshire Core Strategy DPD: <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/corestrategy>

Figure 1.2: Natural environment designations within Lambourn Neighbourhood Area

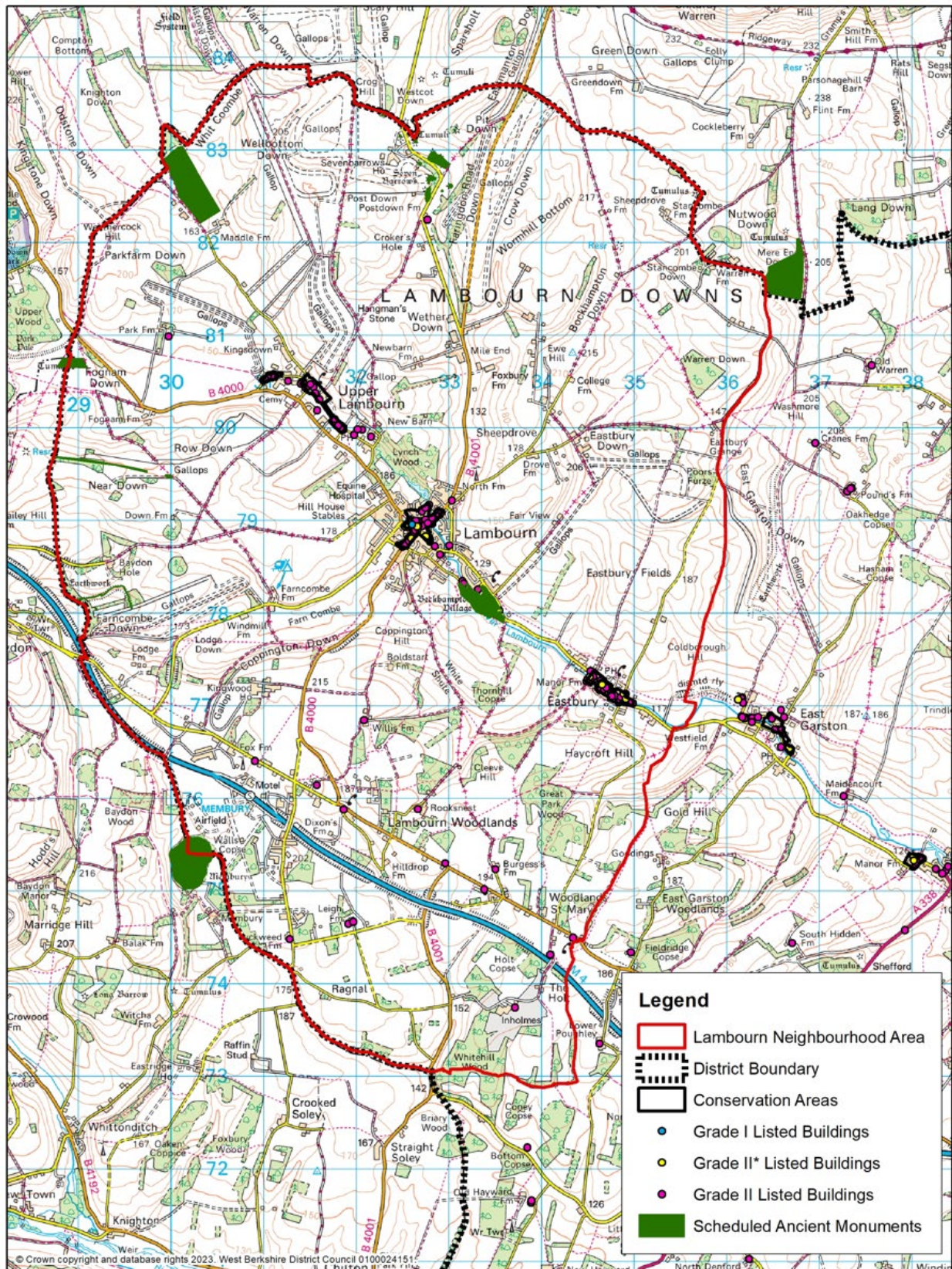


- 1.6. The River Lambourn SAC consists of the River Lambourn waterbody. The Lambourn supports Bullhead (*Cottus gobio*) populations inhabiting chalk streams in central southern England. Good water quality, coarse sediments and extensive beds of submerged plants provide an excellent habitat for the species. The presence of Brook lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*) is also a qualifying feature of the site. Threats to the SAC could result from water abstraction and land drainage, discharges from waste water treatment works, and air pollution.
- 1.7. In March 2022, Natural England designated the hydrological catchment of the River Lambourn as a Nutrient Neutrality Zone (NNZ) due to the unfavourable condition of the watercourse as a result of unnaturally high levels of phosphorous. The advice from Natural England is that certain types of new development, such as residential, will only be allowed within the NNZ if nutrient neutrality can be demonstrated.

Historic Environment

- 8 Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- 3 Conservation Areas
- 1 Grade I Listed Building
- 10 Grade II* Listed Buildings
- 126 Grade II Listed Buildings

Figure 1.3: Historic environment designations within Lambourn Neighbourhood Area



b. Scope of the Lambourn NP

1.8. This screening is based on the ‘Lambourn Neighbourhood Plan Submission Draft to 2044 with Policy Options’ as at February 2023. The draft NP contains eight objectives (the exact wording of which is currently still being developed) related to the following themes:

- Housing
- Employment and the Economy
- Getting about
- The next generation and the increasingly elderly population
- Landscape and heritage
- Leisure, sports and culture
- Well being
- Climate change

1.9. The draft Lambourn NP contains a number of policies which are categorised under the following headings:

- Environment:
 - Policy L1: Landscape Character
 - Policy L2: Development within the AONB / Settlement Gaps / Prevent Coalescence
 - Policy L3: Green and Blue Infrastructure, landscaping and planting
 - Policy L4: Local Green Spaces
 - Policy L5: Important Views
 - Policy L6: River Lambourn
 - Policy L7: Biodiversity
 - Policy L8: Dark Night Skies
- Flooding and Drainage:
 - Policy L9: Flooding and Drainage
- Built Environment:
 - Policy L10: Heritage
 - Policy L11: Design
 - Policy L12: Sustainable Development
- Housing:
 - Policy L13: Infill and Redevelopment
 - Policy L14: Dwelling Extensions
 - Policy L15: Replacement Dwellings
 - Policy L16: Housing Need and Housing Allocations
- Community Facilities:
 - Policy L17: Community
- Local Business and Employment:
 - Policy L18: Economy
 - Policy L19: Horse Racing Industry
- Transport:
 - Policy L20: Accessibility, Road Safety and Sustainable Transport

- Infrastructure:
 - Policy L21: Infrastructure

1.10. The draft NP proposes to include residential site allocation(s). Site assessments have been prepared, and further consultation is to take place with both the community and WBDC before any decision is made on which site(s) are selected for allocation.

c. Relationship with the West Berkshire Local Plan

1.11. The Lambourn NP will sit alongside, and complement the West Berkshire Local Plan, which comprises of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) Development Plan Document² (DPD, adopted July 2012), the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (HSA DPD)³ (adopted May 2017), and the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-1996 (Saved Policies 2006) as amended in July 2012 and May 2017⁴.

1.12. In the adopted Core Strategy DPD, the village of Lambourn is identified as a Rural Service Centre within the district settlement hierarchy meaning that it has a range of services and reasonable public transport provision. There are therefore opportunities to strengthen role in meeting requirements of surrounding communities.

1.13. WBDC are currently preparing new planning policies to plan for development across the District up to 2039. The new planning policies are contained within the West Berkshire Local Plan Review (LPR). The LPR was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination on 31 March 2023. Upon adoption (currently anticipated for September 2024) it will supersede the existing Local Plan.

² West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) Development Plan Document:
<https://info.westberks.gov.uk/corestrategy>.

³ Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2006-2026): <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/hsa>.

⁴ West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007):
<https://info.westberks.gov.uk/article/28783>.

2. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCREENING

a. Introduction

- 2.1. This section of the document sets out whether or not the contents of the Lambourn NP require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with European Directive 2001/42/EC⁵ and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004⁶.
- 2.2. The purpose of the Lambourn NP is to provide planning policies to guide development in the designated Lambourn Neighbourhood Area.
- 2.3. SEA is required for all plans which may have a significant effect on the environment. A SEA aims to protect the environment at a high level, and ensures the environment is considered during the preparation and adoption of plans. This promotes sustainable development.
- 2.4. Not all neighbourhood plans will require a SEA to be carried out. To decide if a SEA is required, a screening exercise is used to look at the proposals in a neighbourhood plan and see if a significant effect is likely.
- 2.5. The legislative background set out below outlines the regulations that require the need for this screening exercise. A screening assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the Lambourn NP and the need for a full SEA has been undertaken.

b. Legislative background

- 2.6. The basis for the SEA is European Directive 2001/42/EC, which was transposed into UK law by Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or SEA Regulations. Detailed Guidance of these regulations can be found in the Government Publication 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (ODPM 2005)⁷.
- 2.7. Following the UK's withdrawal from the EU on 31 January 2020, the Regulations, which previously implemented the requirements of the EU Directive in England, continue to apply as before unless and until new legislation is introduced. Part 5 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill⁸ provides the Secretary of State power to replace the SEA regime with alternative measures. However, the Bill is currently progressing through the House of Lords and any amendments to the environmental assessment process have not yet been agreed. Until any legislative changes are made, the existing Regulations will continue to apply.
- 2.8. Under these requirements, plans that set the framework for future development consent of projects must be subject to an environmental assessment. This is to determine if the plan, in this case the Lambourn NP, will have any significant effects on the environment.

⁵ European Directive 2001/42/EC: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042>

⁶ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/contents/made>

⁷ A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (ODPM 2005): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-environmental-assessment-directive-guidance>

⁸ Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill: <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3155>

- 2.9. There are exceptions to this requirement for plans that determine the use of a small area at local level, and for minor modifications if it has been determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.
- 2.10. In accordance with the provisions of the SEA Directive and Regulation 9 (1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, WBDC must determine if a plan requires an environmental assessment. If the Council determines that a SEA is not required, then under Regulation 9 (3) it must produce a statement that sets out the reason for this determination. This screening report is the Council's Regulation 9 (3) statement.

c. The SEA screening process

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

d. SEA determination and reasons for determination

- 2.12. The Council has assessed the Lambourn NP against the criteria set out within Annex II of European Directive 2001/42/EC and Schedule 1 of the Regulations (as summarised in Table 2.1 below).

Screening analysis

Environment

- 2.13. There are eight policies within the Environment chapter which have been developed in light of the numerous environmental constraints within the Neighbourhood Area. These policies seek to:
- Retain the individual landscape characters of the Neighbourhood Area;
 - Set out Design Codes that will include height specifications;
 - Define settlement patterns;
 - Enhance and create blue and green infrastructure, whilst preventing loss/damage to existing blue and green infrastructure;
 - Designate Local Green Spaces;
 - Preserve important views;
 - Protect and enhance the River Lambourn, with management of the river-based and riverside recreation activities;
 - Conserve and enhance biodiversity, with the provision of at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain; and
 - Minimise light pollution.
- 2.14. It is unlikely that these policies will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area. It is likely that these policies will result in minor improvements to the local environment.

Flooding

- 2.15. The Neighbourhood Area includes areas at risk of surface and groundwater flooding, and to this end the draft NP includes a policy on flooding and drainage. The policy as

currently drafted includes bullet points of potential content which includes requiring new developments to demonstrate that the risk of flooding will not be increased, providing appropriate foul drainage strategies when necessary, and supporting appropriate uses of the River Lambourn. Other potential content of the policy includes requiring the incorporation of sustainable drainage systems into new developments, and the identification of mitigation measures and their maintenance.

- 2.16. It is unlikely that this policy will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area. It is likely that the policy will result in minor improvements to the local environment.

Heritage

- 2.17. There are a number of historic environment designations within the Neighbourhood Area as Figure 1.3 above illustrates. The policy within the draft NP is yet to be finalised, however it is identified that consideration will need to be given to the setting of Listed Buildings and non-designated heritage assets, with protection given to heritage assets from any potential harm.
- 2.18. Within the draft NP it is identified that the three Conservation Areas within the designated neighbourhood Area will have their own policies relating to design codes. It is also identified that the setting of the Bockhampton Ancient Monument should be considered.
- 2.19. It is unlikely that this policy nor the policies proposed will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area. It is likely that the policy will result in minor improvements to the local environment.

Design

- 2.20. The draft NP includes a policy which requires development proposals to demonstrate how the features that define the character of the settlement will be preserved / enhanced.
- 2.21. It is unlikely that this policy will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area. It is likely that the policy will result in minor improvements to the local historic environment.

Sustainable development

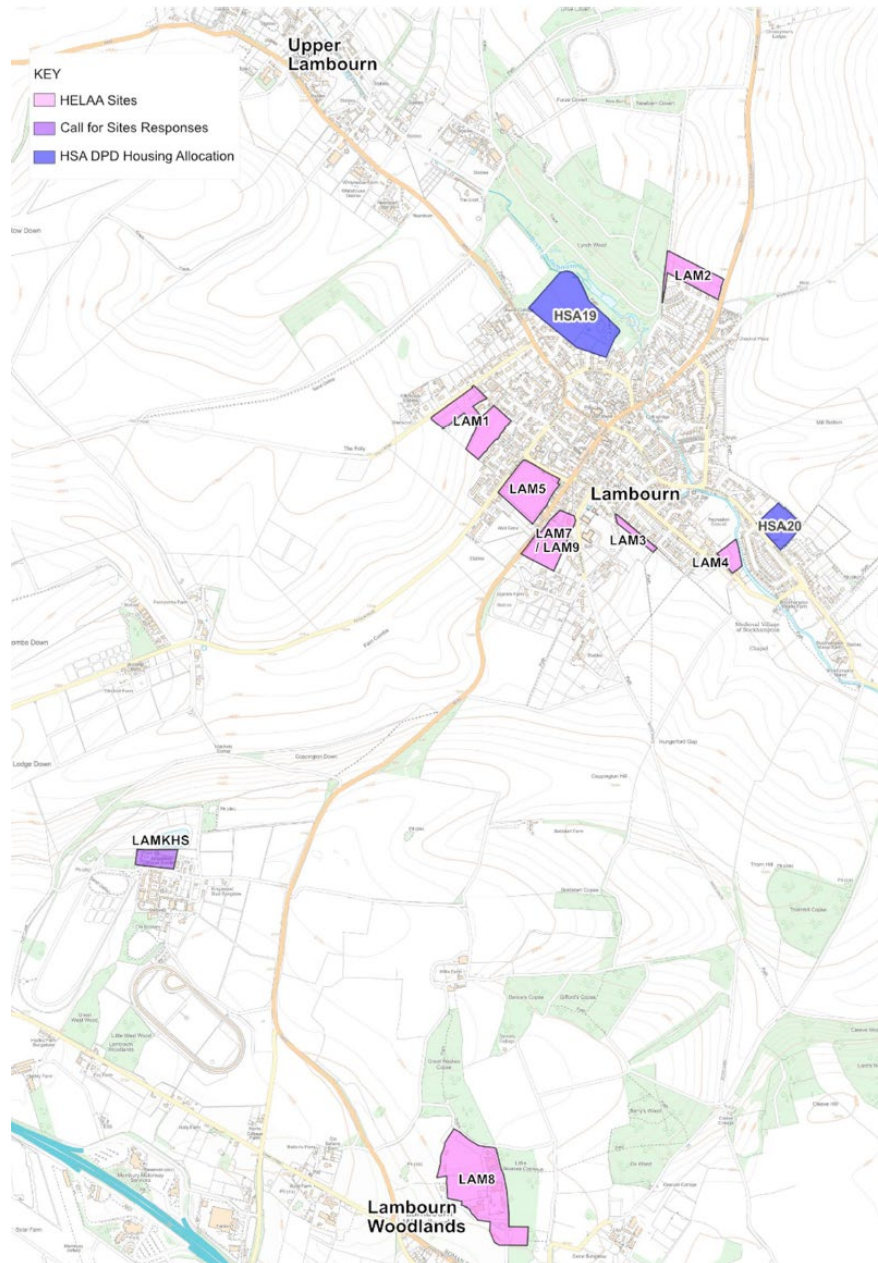
- 2.22. The sustainable development policy within the draft NP aims for development to contribute to the vitality and viability of the parish as a whole.
- 2.23. It is unlikely that this policy will result in any adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area. There is the potential for the policy to result in minor improvements to the environment.

Housing

- 2.24. The NP is seeking to include allocation(s) for housing (with design codes developed for any site(s) that are allocated), however which site(s) will be selected for allocation is still to be determined. WBDC have identified a housing requirement of 25 dwellings for the Neighbourhood Area.

2.25. To date, site assessment work has been prepared for ten sites, and the location of these sites is shown in Figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1: Sites within Lambourn Neighbourhood Area which have been subject to site assessment



Source: Lambourn Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base – Site Assessment (Bluestone Planning, March 2023)

2.26. The allocation of sites will bring forward growth which could lead to adverse environmental effects particularly given the number of natural and historic environment designations within the Neighbourhood Area. Nine of the sites that have been subject to site assessment lie within the River Lambourn SAC Nutrient Neutrality Zone, whilst a further site lies partially within.

- 2.27. The draft NP is also proposing to include a policy which seeks to enable suitable development within settlement boundaries, yet meet local housing needs and the needs of the race horse industry. This policy in itself would not result in additional development and therefore is not expected to result in any adverse environmental effects.

Community facilities

- 2.28. There is a policy in the draft NP which is seeking to protect existing community facilities, or re-provide them at an improved quality.
- 2.29. It is unlikely that this policy will result in any adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area.

Local business and employment

- 2.30. No employment allocations are proposed.
- 2.31. The draft policy on the economy seeks to encourage new appropriate rural industries and community facilities subject to a set of criteria that aims to prevent harm to local heritage and biodiversity, ensure any new development is sustainably located, does not result in significant traffic generation, does not give rise to air quality issues, and takes opportunities to enhance the local landscape.
- 2.32. The Lambourn area is a nationally important centre of activity for the racehorse training industry, and there is therefore a policy which has specific regard to this. The policy aims to support the industry, whilst also protecting against any development that would be incompatible with existing uses.
- 2.33. It is unlikely that these policies will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area.

Transport

- 2.34. Included within the draft NP is a policy that seeks to provide adequate off-road parking in new developments, ensure that new developments include links to existing cycle and pedestrian routes, mitigation against any adverse impacts from increased traffic, and encourage sustainable modes of transport.
- 2.35. It is unlikely that this policy will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area.

Infrastructure

- 2.36. The draft policy on infrastructure includes a series of options which if included seek to support local projects, services and facilities, whilst protecting valued facilities.
- 2.37. It is unlikely that this policy will result in any likely adverse environmental effects, either alone or in combination with other plans in the area.
- 2.38. The Council has assessed the Lambourn against the criteria set out within Annex II of European Directive 2001/42/EC and Schedule 1 of the Regulations (as summarised in Table 2.1 below).

Table 2.1: Assessment of likely significant effects (screening)

Criterion (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of Regulations)	West Berkshire District Council's Response
<i>1. Characteristics of plans or programmes, having regard, in particular, to:</i>	
(a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	<p>The NP, if 'made' (adopted), will become part of the statutory development plan for the district. It will not set a framework for other plans or policies outside of the Lambourn NP area. It will help inform decisions within the parish relating to development up to 2040.</p> <p>It sets out a local policy framework for development proposals and will allocate residential sites for development. It supports the implementation of policies in the Local Plan which have been subject to SEA and assessed as having no significant effects.</p> <p>Overall there would be no significant effect.</p>
(b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	<p>The NP does not influence other plans or programmes in the Local Plan; instead it supplements them. The NP will form part of the statutory development plan for the District and will only apply to the designated Neighbourhood Area, the parish of Lambourn. Neighbourhood Plans by their nature are locally driven and focused, providing detailed guidance to local development.</p> <p>Overall there would be no significant effect.</p>
(c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	<p>The NP contributes to the achievement of sustainable development at the neighbourhood level. A number of policies seek to promote sustainable development that can be considered to be in conformity with the NPPF. This is a 'basic condition'/requirement of the Neighbourhood Plan making process.</p> <p>The draft plan includes support for the protection of the local character of the area, enhancements / creation of blue and green infrastructure, protection of existing blue and green infrastructure, preservation of important views, protection and enhancement of the River Lambourn, protection and enhancements to biodiversity, protection of heritage assets, sustainable construction and design, sustainable drainage, and minimisation of light pollution.</p>

Criterion (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of Regulations)	West Berkshire District Council's Response
	<p>Overall there would be no significant effect, and it is likely that the draft policies proposed will result in minor improvements to the local environment.</p>
(d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	<p>There are numerous environmental designations within the Parish, which include the River Lambourn SAC, the River Lambourn SAC Nutrient Neutrality Zone, SSSIs, Local Wildlife Sites, and areas of ancient woodland. The North Wessex Downs AONB washes over the whole Parish.</p> <p>The impact of additional housing through allocations in the NP has the potential to affect these designations.</p> <p>Overall there is the potential for significant effects.</p>
(e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of [European] Community legislation on the environment (eg. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection)	<p>The NP is relevant to various aspects of Community legislation, such as environmental protection and biodiversity.</p> <p>The NP includes policies relating to the protection and enhancement of the River Lambourn, enhancements / creation of blue and green infrastructure, protection of existing blue and green infrastructure, sustainable construction, and support for small-scale renewable energy schemes.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Area includes the River Lambourn which is designated as a SAC and SSSI. Advice from Natural England in March 2022 identified that the River Lambourn SAC as being in an unfavourable condition due to unnaturally high levels of phosphorus. Natural England has advised that certain types of new development, such as residential, will only be allowed within the hydrological catchment of the River Lambourn if nutrient neutrality can be demonstrated. These catchments are known as Nutrient Neutrality Zones (NNZs), and the NNZ for the River Lambourn SAC covers the majority of the Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>The NP does propose to include site(s) for residential allocation which has the potential to result in additional harmful nutrients in the river water, and having a negative impact upon its condition and surrounding habitat.</p>

Criterion (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of Regulations)	West Berkshire District Council's Response
	Overall there is the potential for significant effects.
<i>2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected [by the plan or programme], having regard, in particular, to:</i>	
(a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	<p>The NP will provide a context and framework to guide future development within the Neighbourhood Area and will supplement adopted planning policy. It will guide development up to 2040.</p> <p>It includes policies that seek to protect and improve the environment, and to minimise the effects of development on its immediate surroundings and ensure development is delivered to high levels of sustainability.</p> <p>The NP proposes to allocate site(s) for development, and without mitigation is likely to result in impacts upon the River Lambourn SAC and North Wessex Downs AONB without mitigation.</p> <p>Without mitigation there is the potential for significant effects.</p>
(b) The cumulative nature of the effects	<p>As above.</p> <p>No significant effects are envisaged.</p>
(c) The transboundary* nature of the effects <i>* Transboundary effects are understood to be in other Member States</i>	<p>Generally, effects will be local with limited effects on neighbouring areas, however the plan is proposing to include residential allocation(s). Whilst the intention is that the allocation(s) will meet local need, the increase in population and the fact that the M4 crosses the southern part of the Neighbourhood Area could result in transboundary effects.</p> <p>Overall there is the potential for a significant effect.</p>
(e) The risks to human health or the environment (eg. due to accidents)	<p>No risks to human health have been identified as a result of the proposed policies in the NP. In fact, the plan is likely to improve human health by supporting the creation of new green infrastructure and including Local Green Space designations.</p> <p>Policies relating to environmental nuisance, pollution control and noise pollution are included in higher tier planning documents.</p>

Criterion (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of Regulations)	West Berkshire District Council's Response
	Overall there would be no significant effect.
<p>(f) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Area is 6,044 hectares in size. At the time of the 2011 Census, the population was 4,219.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plans cover small geographical areas and their policies must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. As such they contain non-strategic development plan policies to address specific local issues. (NPPF paragraph 18).</p> <p>The NP will provide a context and framework to guide future sustainable development in the area. The majority of effects would be focused within Lambourn Parish.</p> <p>Overall there would be no significant effect.</p>
<p>(g) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • special natural characteristics or cultural heritage • exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values • intensive land-use <p>And</p> <p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Area contains the North Wessex Downs AONB, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, and Scheduled Ancient Monuments.</p> <p>Within the Neighbourhood Area is also the River Lambourn SAC as well as several SSSIs and Local Wildlife Sites.</p> <p>The River Lambourn SAC is in an unfavourable condition due to unnaturally high levels of phosphorous being present. Certain types of development, including residential, will only be allowed within the hydrological catchment if nutrient neutrality can be demonstrated. The hydrological catchment includes the majority of Lambourn Parish, including the village of Lambourn.</p> <p>The NP is proposing to include residential allocation(s) which could significantly affect these designations.</p>

2.39. Based on these findings, the Council's initial conclusion is that a **SEA of the Lambourn NP is necessary** under the SEA Directive and Regulations because there is the potential for the residential site allocation(s) to result in significant environmental effects.

3. HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT SCREENING

a. Introduction

- 3.1. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017⁹ requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of development plans (including Neighbourhood Plans).
- 3.2. HRA is a process which determines whether or not a plan or project would adversely affect the integrity of Habitats Sites either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

b. Legislative background

- 3.3. Under the provisions of European Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (the Habitats Directive)¹⁰, transposed into British law by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/579)¹¹ a HRA is required to assess the potential effects of a land-use plan against the conservation objectives of any European sites designated for their importance to nature conservation. The Regulations ensure that the habitat and species protection and standards derived from EU law will continue to apply after Brexit. Where previously sites were referred to as European or Natura 2000, the sites now make up the UK 'national site network'. For the purposes of this screening report the term 'Habitats Sites' is used to represent the network.
- 3.4. Habitats Sites provide valuable ecological infrastructure for the protection of rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats and species of exceptional importance within the UK. These sites consist of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated under the Habitats Directive and, Special Protection Areas (SPA) designated under European Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds (the Birds Directive)¹². Designation of SACs also has regard to the threats of degradation or destruction to which the sites are exposed and to the coherence of the national site network now the UK has exited from the EU. Additionally, the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) at paragraph 181 requires that sites designated under the Ramsar Convention (The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat) are treated likewise for the purpose of considering development proposals that may affect them.

c. Purpose of HRA

- 3.5. The overall purpose of the HRA is to conclude whether or not a proposal or policy, or whole plan, would adversely affect the integrity of the Habitats Site in question either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. This is judged in terms of the implications of the plan for the 'qualifying features' for which the Habitats Site was designated, those being:
 - SACs: Annex I habitat types and Annex II species of the Habitats Directive;

⁹ Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/1012/contents/made>

¹⁰ EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1992L0043:20070101:EN:PDF>

¹¹ The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2019/579/regulation/35/made>

¹²

- SPAs: Annex I birds and regularly occurring migratory species not listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive and;
- Ramsar sites: the reasons for listing the site under the Convention.

- 3.6. This includes screening for potential impacts on Habitats Sites. If there is a probability or a risk that there will be significant effects on site integrity having regard to the site's conservation objectives, then the plan or project must be subject to an Appropriate Assessment of its implications on the site.
- 3.7. Depending on the outcome of HRA, a plan may need to be amended to eliminate or reduce potentially damaging effects on Habitats Sites. If adverse effects on the integrity of the site cannot be ruled out, the plan can only be adopted where there are no alternative solutions that would have a lesser effect and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest sufficient to justify adopting the plan despite its effects on the Habitats Sites.
- 3.8. It should be noted that HRA is based on the precautionary principle meaning that where uncertainty or doubt remains, a likely significant effect should be assumed. This requirement to adhere to the precautionary approach is established by case law and clarified by domestic Government guidance.

d. HRA process

- 3.9. There are four stages to HRA as outlined in Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1: HRA stages

HRA stage	Purpose
1. Screening (this document)	<p>Process which identifies the likely impacts upon a Habitats Site(s), either alone or in combination with other projects or plans and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant. Where there is no significant effect the report concludes at this stage.</p> <p>It is important to note that following the judgement from the Court of Justice in April 2018 for the European Union in the <i>People over Wind, Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta</i> case, Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive should be interpreted as meaning that mitigation measures should be assessed as part of an Appropriate Assessment and should not be taken into account at the screening stage.</p>
2. Appropriate Assessment	<p>Consideration of the impact on the integrity of the site(s), either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Where adverse impacts cannot be avoided by means of alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the plan or project, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts should be provided to include the necessary measures and timescales. If effects remain after all alternatives and mitigation measures have been applied then the next stage applies.</p>
3. Compensatory measures	<p>Assessment of the compensatory measures where, in light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest, it is deemed that the plan should proceed. This is</p>

HRA stage	Purpose
	not a standard part of the process and will only be carried out in exceptional circumstances and is likely to result in onerous requirements.

e. HRA screening

- 3.10. As set out in Section 1 above, the River Lambourn SAC falls within the Neighbourhood Area. The River Lambourn has been designated as a SAC because it is an example of a chalk stream discharging into the middle reaches of the Thames system. It is one of the least modified rivers of its type.
- 3.11. The Lambourn supports Bullhead populations that inhabit chalk streams in central southern England. Good water quality, coarse sediments, and extensive beds of submerged plants provide excellent habitat for the species.
- 3.12. The Brook lamprey is a qualifying species but is not the primary reason for designation. The Brook lamprey requires clean gravel beds for spawning and soft marginal silt or sand for the larvae. It spawns mostly in part of the river where the current is not too strong.
- 3.13. The hydrological catchment of the River Lambourn has been designated as a Nutrient Neutrality Zone (NNZ) due to the unfavourable condition of the watercourse as a result of unnaturally high levels of phosphorous. Certain types of new development, such as residential, will only be allowed within the NNZ if nutrient neutrality can be demonstrated.
- 3.14. Threats to the integrity of the River Lambourn come from water abstraction and land drainage, eutrophication and chemical water pollution, discharges from Waste Water Treatment Works, siltation, air pollution, invasive non-native species, and river engineering.

Identification of potential impacts

- 3.15. There are two main ways that impacts could result from the Lambourn NP, and are associated with:
- Development (construction and use of new homes or employment space); and
 - Increased travel to/from the area associated with new residents, visitors and those working in the district.

i. Physical damage, fragmentation or loss of habitats

- 3.16. Due to many years of urban and agricultural activities, many Habitats Sites are already fragments of habitat that have not been developed upon. Further development may have the effect of causing further fragmentation or damage of habitats and/or severance or blocking of ecological corridors between functionally-linked sites.
- 3.17. Whilst the Lambourn NP is proposing to include residential allocation(s), none of the sites being considered are within the boundary of the SAC. In addition, because any allocations in the NP will fall within Lambourn Parish, there will therefore be no physical damage beyond the boundaries of the Neighbourhood Area.

- 3.18. Loss of habitat from outside the boundaries of a site could also affect the integrity of that site if the habitat is used by the qualifying species from the site (eg. for off-site breeding, foraging or roosting). The River Lambourn SAC has mobile qualifying species amongst its qualifying species, ie. Brook lamprey and bullhead, however both species are limited in their range to the river itself.
- 3.19. The designation of the River Lambourn SAC Nutrient Neutrality Zone in March 2022 clearly shows that water quality in these areas has been impacted by increased phosphate pollution, therefore, any proposals for development in these zones must not increase the levels of phosphate pollution which contributes to eutrophication which leads to the destruction of the protected habitat.
- 3.20. Likely significant effects on the River Lambourn can therefore be screened out in relation to physical damage, fragmentation, or loss of on and off-site habitat.**

ii. Hydrological impacts

- 3.21. An increase in demand for water abstraction and treatment resulting from the growth proposed in the NP could result in changes in the hydrology of the River Lambourn SAC.
- 3.22. The assessment of water related issues are primarily a check that the overall quantum of growth can be accommodated without compromising Habitats sites with sensitive aquatic or wetland environments, which could lead to likely significant effects on the sites qualifying features. The River Lambourn SAC is an aquatic habitat.
- 3.23. The types of development that have the potential to affect water quality / quantity or flow regimes at sensitive Habitats Sites includes:
- residential development that would involve a significant increase in demand for water supply and treatment;
 - infrastructure development that requires significant excavation in proximity to watercourses or groundwater;
 - any development that increases surface drainage from housing estates, runoff from roads, and discharges from commercial and industrial premises; and
 - changes to agriculture practices including Solar Arrays and mineral extraction.
- 3.24. Whilst the threat proposed by an individual development site may be low, a number of sites could have a cumulative impact.
- 3.25. A Water Cycle Study¹³ has been prepared in two phases as part of work on the West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2039 to provide evidence for the supply and treatment of water required to service the development proposed in the plan. The Water Cycle Study also took into account growth that might come forward through NPs. Because the allocations within NPs was unknown at the time of the preparation of the Water Cycle Study, consideration was instead given to sites that had been assessed within the Council's December 2020 Housing and Economic Land

¹³ West Berkshire Water Cycle Study: <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/local-plan-evidence#infrastructure>

Availability Assessment as being ‘potentially developable’ or ‘potentially developable in part’.

3.26. The results from the impact assessment show likely significant deterioration in waterbodies adjacent to SACs. In every case, this deterioration could be prevented by improvements in treatment processes at WwTWs upstream. This includes meeting the tighter Common Standards Monitoring standards specific to the River Lambourn SAC.

3.27. The potential for the NP alone to result in likely significant effects on the River Lambourn SAC site as a result of changes in water hydrology cannot be ruled out, and therefore an Appropriate Assessment is required.

iii. Water quantity

3.28. West Berkshire is within an area of serious water stress. Water stress is a measure of the level of demand for water (from domestic, business and agricultural users) compared to the available freshwater resources, whether surface or groundwater. Water stress causes deterioration of the water environment in both the quality and quantity of water, and consequently restricts the ability of a waterbody to achieve a “Good” status under the favourable condition status for SACs.

3.29. When new development is being planned, it is important to ensure that there are sufficient water resources in the area to cover the increase in demand without risk of shortages in the future or during periods of high demand, and without causing a negative impact on the waterbodies from which water is abstracted.

3.30. The Water Cycle Study (Phase 1) carried out a Resource Availability Assessment and a Water Resource Assessment. The results of the former confirm the limitations on water availability which is managed through the Environment Agency Abstraction Licencing Strategy and is important in terms of how water companies manage supply and demand. Thames Water have prepared a Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP)¹⁴ setting out how they would meet the water needs of population growth across their supply area to 2050. Thames Water have prepared a Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) setting out how they would meet the water needs of population growth across their supply area to 2050.

3.31. The WRMP compares the supply and demand forecasts, including headroom, to determine whether resources are projected to be in surplus or deficit at any point in the planning period. During dry year annual average conditions, there is a small surplus forecast throughout the planning period. However, there is a supply-demand deficit when considering peak week and drought conditions.

3.32. The WRMP was subject to a HRA that specifically considered potential effects on European sites which confirmed that no significant effects on any European sites would arise from its implementation.

3.33. Therefore, the potential for likely significant effects in relation to water quantity can be screened out.

¹⁴ Thames Water, Water Resources Management Plan 2019
<https://www.thameswater.co.uk/aboutus/regulation/water-resources#current>

iv. Water quality

- 3.34. Development will result in increased wastewater production and add pressure to the existing sewerage systems. Run-off, outflow from sewage treatments and overflow from septic tanks can result in increased nutrient loads and contamination of water courses. Thames Water are the Sewerage Undertakers and operate all the Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) for the whole of West Berkshire.
- 3.35. The River Lambourn SAC has six WwTWs all of which have been identified as being in need of upgrade to prevent further degradation of the water quality of this areas.
- 3.36. Increased domestic population can lead to increased wastewater flows arriving at a WwTW. Where there is insufficient headroom at the works to treat these flows, this could lead to failures in flow consents specified in the Environment Agency's Environmental Permits (EP). The EP also consent maximum concentrations of pollutants usually Suspended Solids, Biochemical Oxygen Demand, Ammonia and for some larger works also have permits for Phosphorous.
- 3.37. The designation in March 2022 of the River Lambourn SAC as Nutrient Neutrality Zones means that Appropriate Assessment will be needed in relation to development in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 3.38. As a result of the above the likely significant effects on water quality within the Neighbourhood Area cannot be screened out and Appropriate Assessment is therefore required.**

v. Non-physical disturbance: noise, vibration and light pollution

- 3.39. Noise and vibration effects (eg. during the construction of new housing development) are most likely to disturb bird species and are thus a key consideration with respect to Habitats Sites where birds are the qualifying features, although such effects may also impact upon some mammals and fish species.
- 3.40. The pressures and threats to the qualifying species of brook lamprey and bullhead do not include non-physical disturbance to be a significant factor. Equally, the qualifying habitat (rivers with floating vegetation dominated by water crowfoot), for which the River Lambourn SAC has been designated are not likely to be affected by noise, vibration or light for the same reason.
- 3.41. Therefore, the potential for likely significant effects in relation to noise, vibration and light pollution can be screened out.**

vi. Air pollution

- 3.42. Air pollution is most likely to affect Habitats Sites where plant, soil and water habitats are the qualifying features, but some qualifying animal species may also be affected, either directly or indirectly, by any deterioration in habitat as a result of air pollution.
- 3.43. Road traffic is a significant source of emissions which can be harmful to protected sites. Of particular concern for road traffic is nitrogen oxide. Deposition of nitrogen compounds may lead to both soil and freshwater acidification, and nitrogen oxides can cause eutrophication of soils and water. In addition, the presence of catalytic converters also gives rise to ammonia pollution which leads to soil acidification and toxic damage to flora.

- 3.44. Based on the Standards for Highways Design for Road and Bridges (DMRB) Manual Volume 11, Section 3, Part 133¹⁵, it is assumed that air pollution from roads is unlikely to be significant beyond 200 metres from the road itself. Where increases in traffic volumes are forecast, this 200 metres buffer needs to be applied to the relevant roads in order to make a judgement about the likely geographical extent of air pollution impacts.
- 3.45. Within the Neighbourhood Area, the River Lambourn SAC does not lie within 200m of a strategic road. Furthermore, the Site Improvement Plan for the River Lambourn SAC does not identify air pollution as a threat or pressure.
- 3.46. **Therefore, the potential for likely significant effects in relation to air pollution can be screened out.**

vii. Recreation / urban edge

- 3.47. Recreation activities and human presence more generally can have an adverse impact on the integrity of a Habitats site. Development can create edge effects from housing and domestic activity potentially including disturbance and erosion from cycling, trampling, littering, dog walking, cat predation, fly-tipping, the introduction of non-native invasive species. Where development is likely to result in an increase in the local population, the potential for an increase in visitor numbers and the associated impacts at sensitive international sites need to be considered.
- 3.48. Neither the Site Improvement Plans nor SAC Standard Data Forms for the River Lambourn SAC cite recreation, access or disturbance as pressures or threats to the features of interest.
- 3.49. **Therefore, the potential for likely significant effects in relation to recreation access and disturbance can be screened out.**

viii. Review of other plans and projects which may have an 'in-combination' effects

- 3.50. Regulation 63 of the Amended Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulation 2019) requires an Appropriate Assessment where “a land use plan is likely to have a significant effect on a Habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) and is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site”.
- 3.51. There are a large number of potentially relevant plans and projects which could be considered. This screening report has concentrated on the spatial development plans within the authorities adjacent to West Berkshire as these are the plans most likely to give rise to in-combination effects.
- 3.52. The Neighbourhood Area adjoins the districts of Wiltshire and the Vale of White Horse. It is also close to Swindon district. The HRAs for these local authorities' plans found no significant effects on the integrity of Habitats Sites, either alone or in combination with other adopted plans or projects. Wiltshire and Swindon are reviewing their local plan and are in the process of re-assessing their HRAs.
- 3.53. In respect of NPs being prepared in areas adjacent to Lambourn, a plan is being prepared for Hungerford Parish (this Parish lies within West Berkshire and is to the

¹⁵ Standards for Highways Design for Road and Bridges Manual <https://www.standardsforhighways.co.uk/dmrb/>

south of Lambourn Parish), however it is still at an early stage of preparation with just the Neighbourhood Area being designated to date. Within Wiltshire there are no NPs being prepared in Parishes that adjoin Lambourn. In the Vale of White Horse, the Asbury NP and the Uffington and Baulking NP have been made. Neither of these plans were found to have significant effects on the integrity of Habitats Sites, either alone or in combination with other adopted plans or projects.

3.54. Within West Berkshire, the following adopted plans found no significant effects on the integrity of Habitats Sites, either alone or in combination with other adopted plans or projects:

- Local Transport Plan for West Berkshire 2011-2026;
- West Berkshire Minerals and Waste Plan (adopted December 2022);
- Stratfield Mortimer NP (adopted June 2017); and
- Compton NP (adopted February 2022).

3.55. Guidance from Natural England¹⁶ published in March 2022 and subsequent Ministerial Statements¹⁷ regarding the impacts of increased nutrient loads on certain designated sites (River Lambourn SAC in West Berkshire) indicate that these can be mitigated through nutrient neutrality solution.

Screening of policies within the Lambourn NP

3.56. As identified above, the potential significant effects likely to arise as a result of the River Lambourn SAC is upon the hydrology of the River Lambourn SAC as a result of possible changes in water quality due to increased demand on waste water capacity.

3.57. Table 3.1 below screens each policy within the draft Lambourn NP for likely significant effects on the integrity of the River Lambourn SAC.

¹⁶ <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/river-lambourn-sac-documents>

¹⁷ <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2022-07-20/hcws258>

Table 3.1: Screening of the draft Lambourn NP policies for likely significant effects upon the River Lambourn SAC

Draft policy / option	Significant effect likely?
Policy L1: Landscape Character	This policy relates to the protection to the landscape characters within the Lambourn Neighbourhood Area. It will not lead additional development. No likely significant effect.
Policy L2: Development within the AONB / Settlement Gaps / Prevent Coalescence	This policy seeks to maintain the existing settlement pattern and prevent coalescence. It will control the way additional development takes place. No likely significant effect.
Policy L3: Green and Blue Infrastructure, landscaping and planting	The policy will enhance and create blue and green infrastructure, whilst preventing loss/damage to existing blue and green infrastructure. No likely significant effect.
Policy L4: Local Green Spaces	This policy will designate Local Green Spaces. The purpose of Local Green Space designations is to protect against the development of green areas which are of particular importance to local communities. No likely significant effect.
Policy L5: Important Views	The policy will preserve important views. No likely significant effect.
Policy L6: River Lambourn	The policy will protect and enhance the River Lambourn, with management of the river-based and riverside recreation activities. No likely significant effect.
Policy L7: Biodiversity	The policy will conserve and enhance biodiversity and seek the provision of at least 10% net biodiversity gain. No likely significant effect.
Policy L8: Dark Night Skies	The policy will help to minimise light pollution and will not lead to additional development. No likely significant effect.
Policy L9: Flooding and Drainage	The policy proposes to require new developments to demonstrate that the risk of flooding will not be increased, providing appropriate foul drainage strategies when necessary, and supporting appropriate uses of the River Lambourn. Other potential content of the policy includes requiring the incorporation of sustainable drainage systems into new developments, and the identification of mitigation measures and their maintenance. No likely significant effect.
Policy L10: Heritage	Whilst the wording of the policy is not yet finalised, it is proposed that it will require any new development to protect heritage assets and their setting.

Draft policy / option	Significant effect likely?
	No likely significant effect.
Policy L11: Design	<p>The policy requires development proposals to demonstrate how the features that define the character of the settlement will be preserved / enhanced.</p> <p>No likely significant effect.</p>
Policy L12: Sustainable Development	<p>The policy seeks for development to contribute to the vitality and viability of the Parish.</p> <p>No likely significant effect.</p>
Policy L13: Infill and Redevelopment	<p>Development proposals will be required to demonstrate high quality design and protect the local character of the area. The policy will guide new development, but not in itself create new development.</p> <p>No likely significant effect.</p>
Policy L14: Dwelling Extensions	<p>Development proposals will be required to demonstrate high quality design and protect the local character of the area. The policy will support proposals for extensions that enable residents to stay in their homes and remain independent for longer.</p> <p>The policy will guide new development, but not in itself create new development.</p> <p>No likely significant effect.</p>
Policy L15: Replacement Dwellings	<p>Development proposals will be required to demonstrate high quality design and protect the local character of the area. The policy will guide new development, but not in itself create new development.</p> <p>No likely significant effect.</p>
Policy L16: Housing Need and Housing Allocations	<p>The increased population because of housing allocation(s) could have impacts upon the SAC from the effects on the hydrology of the site, deterioration to air quality, damage to riparian margins, and possible introduction of non-native species.</p> <p>Potential for significant effects.</p>
Policy L17: Community	<p>The policy will protect existing community facilities and allow replacement if of a better quality.</p> <p>No likely significant effect.</p>
Policy L18: Economy	<p>No employment allocations are proposed. The policy aims to encourage new appropriate rural industries and community facilities subject to a set of criteria that aims to prevent harm to local heritage and biodiversity, ensure any new development is sustainably located, does not result in significant traffic generation, does not give rise to air quality issues, and takes opportunities to enhance the local landscape.</p>

Draft policy / option	Significant effect likely?
	<p>The policy has the potential to result in new development through the encouragement of new rural industries, although the scale and location of which are unknown.</p> <p>In general, commercial development can be exempted from nutrient neutrality. This is because it is generally accepted that people tend to work in the same catchment, therefore wastewater is accounted for in new housing. In very exceptional circumstances, very significant commercial developments, nutrient neutrality may be needed.</p> <p>No likely significant effect.</p>
<p>Policy L19: Horse Racing Industry</p>	<p>The policy aims to support the industry through allowing sustainable and appropriate growth, whilst also protecting against any development that would be incompatible with existing uses.</p> <p>The policy has the potential to result in new development, although the scale and location of which are unknown.</p> <p>In general, commercial development can be exempted from nutrient neutrality. This is because it is generally accepted that people tend to work in the same catchment, therefore wastewater is accounted for in new housing. In very exceptional circumstances, very significant commercial developments, nutrient neutrality may be needed.</p> <p>No likely significant effect.</p>
<p>Policy L20: Accessibility, Road Safety and Sustainable Transport</p>	<p>The policy seeks to provide adequate off-road parking in new developments, ensure that new developments include links to existing cycle and pedestrian routes, mitigation against any adverse impacts from increased traffic, and encourage sustainable modes of transport.</p> <p>The policy will not result in new development.</p> <p>No likely significant effect.</p>
<p>Policy L21: Infrastructure</p>	<p>The draft policy on infrastructure includes a series of options which if included, seek to support local projects, services and facilities, whilst protecting valued facilities.</p> <p>The policy will not result in new development.</p> <p>No likely significant effect.</p>

- 3.58. In conclusion, the HRA screening has determined that there are the potential for significant effects on the River Lambourn SAC due to increased pressure on waste water infrastructure as a result of proposals within the Lambourn NP to include residential allocation(s). As a result, an Appropriate Assessment is required to determine what, if any, mitigation measures would be required to ensure there are no negative impacts on the River Lambourn SAC.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1. Based on the findings in Sections 2 and 3 above, WBDC concluded that a SEA of the Lambourn NP is required under the SEA Directive and Regulations. This is because there is the potential for significant environmental effects as a result of the NP.
- 4.2. WBDC also concluded that a HRA Appropriate Assessment is required because there is the potential for significant effects on the River Lambourn SAC.
- 4.3. Nonetheless, a final determination can only be made following a five-week consultation with the three statutory bodies (Historic England, Environment Agency, and Natural England).
- 4.4. The three statutory bodies were consulted between Tuesday 30 May 2023 and 5pm on Tuesday 4 July 2023. Historic England responded to confirm that they agreed with WBDC's conclusion, and their response is included in Appendix 1.
- 4.5. No responses were received from either the Environment Agency or Natural England, despite reminder emails being sent.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1. This screening report contains the assessment as to whether the Lambourn NP should be subject to the requirement for a SEA as required by the European Directive 2001/42/EC and Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. It also determines if the Lambourn NP should be subject to Appropriate Assessment as required by the Habitats Regulations 2017.
- 5.2. It is concluded that a **SEA of the Lambourn NP is necessary** because there is the potential for the residential site allocation(s) to result in significant environmental effects.
- 5.3. It is also concluded that there is the potential for significant effects on the River Lambourn SAC due to increased pressure on waste water infrastructure as a result of proposals within the Lambourn NP to include residential allocation(s). As a result, an **Appropriate Assessment is required** to determine what, if any, mitigation measures would be required to ensure there are no negative impacts on the River Lambourn SAC.
- 5.4. This determination has been made on 10 July 2023.

Appendix 1: Consultation response from Historic England



Historic England

Laila Bassett
Principal Planning Officer
West Berkshire Council

Our ref: PL00793281

[REDACTED]
by email only

28 June 2023

Dear Laila

Lambourn Neighbourhood Development Plan: Screening Report for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Thank you for consulting Historic England about the above screening report.

We concur with the conclusions of the screening report that, with regard to our area of interest, there is potential for significant environmental effects as a result of the Lambourn neighbourhood plan and so SEA is required.

Historic England strongly advises that the Council's conservation team and its archaeological advisors are closely involved throughout the preparation of the SEA. They are best placed to advise on: local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the HER; how the policy or proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets. Historic England has produced an advice note for all involved in undertaking SEA exercises, available for download on our [website](#).

This opinion is based on the information provided by you in the document dated May 2023 and, for the avoidance of doubt, does not affect our obligation to advise you on, and potentially object to any specific development proposal which may subsequently arise from this or later versions of the plan which is the subject to consultation, and which may, despite the SEA, have adverse effects on the environment.



Historic England, Cannon Bridge House, 25 Dowgate Hill, London EC4R 2YA
Telephone 0370 333 0607 HistoricEngland.org.uk

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

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



If you have any queries about any of the matters raised above or would like to discuss anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Guy Robinson, BSc, MRTPI
Historic Environment Planning Adviser
Development Advice – London and the South East Region



Historic England, Cannon Bridge House, 25 Dowgate Hill, London EC4R 2YA
Telephone 0370 333 0607 HistoricEngland.org.uk

Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.
Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.

