



East Hagbourne

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN -
2018 to 2033

Submission Version 17 September 2018

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the East Hagbourne Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report Update

September 2018

REVISION SCHEDULE					
Rev	Date	Details	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
1	Sept 2018	Environmental Report Update submitted alongside the Neighbourhood Plan	Mark Fessey Associate	Alastair Peattie Associate	Steve Smith Technical Director

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AECOM Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited
2 Leman Street, London E1 8FA
Telephone: 020 7061 7000

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INTRODUCTION

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 AECOM is commissioned to lead on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging East Hagbourne Neighbourhood Plan (EHNP).
- 1.1.2 The EHNP is being prepared by a steering committee including parish councillors and community volunteers. The EHNP is being prepared in the context of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan, and aims to supplement the strategic policies of the Local Plan. Once the Plan has been 'made' (following a successful referendum) the EHNP will form part of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan. At this point the EHNP will have material weight in deciding on planning applications, i.e. applications that relate to a change in the use of land.
- 1.1.3 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative effects and maximising the positives. SEA of the EHNP is a legal requirement.¹

2 SEA EXPLAINED

- 2.1.1 It is a requirement that SEA is undertaken in-line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which transposed into national law EU Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
- 2.1.2 In-line with the Regulations, a report (known as **the Environmental Report**) must be published for consultation alongside the draft plan that 'identifies, describes and evaluates' the likely significant effects of implementing 'the plan, and reasonable alternatives'.² The report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.
- 2.1.3 More specifically, the Report must answer the following three questions:
 - 1. What has plan-making / SEA involved **up to this point**?
 - Including in relation to 'reasonable alternatives'.
 - 2. What are the SEA findings **at this stage**?
 - i.e. in relation to the draft plan.
 - 3. What happens **next**?

2.1 This Environmental Report Update³

- 2.1.1 The Environmental Report for the EHNP was published alongside the draft – 'pre-submission' – version of the plan, under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended) in March 2018.
- 2.1.2 This current report is an 'update' to the Environmental Report, prepared for submission (Regulation 15) and publication (Regulation 16) alongside the plan.

Structure of this report

- 2.1.3 This report essentially **answers questions 1, 2 and 3 in turn**, in order to provide the required information. Each question is answered within a discrete 'part' of the report. Before answering Q1, two initial questions are answered in order to further set the scene.

¹ Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended) requires that each Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to the Local Authority alongside either: A) an environmental report; or, B) a statement of reasons why SEA is not required, prepared following a 'screening' process completed in accordance with Regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations ('the SEA Regulations'). The EHNP was subject to screening in 2016, including through consultation, at which time it was determined that SEA is required.

² Regulation 12(2) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

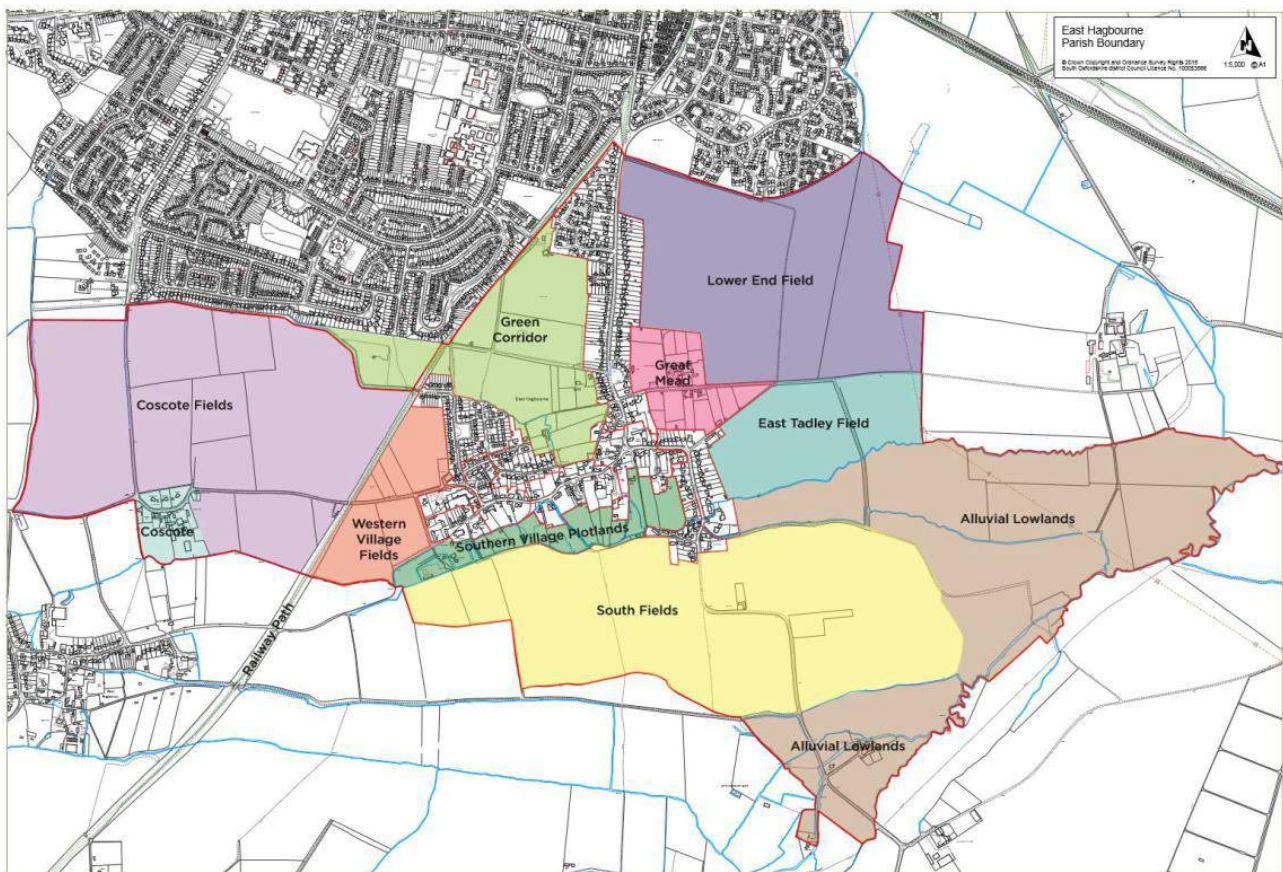
³ See **Appendix I** for further explanation of the regulatory basis for answering certain questions within the Environmental Report, and a 'checklist' explaining more precisely the regulatory basis for presenting certain information.

3 WHAT IS THE PLAN SEEKING TO ACHIEVE?

3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 The area covered by the EHNP is East Hagbourne Parish as it exists following the boundary changes of May 2015 - see **Figure 3.1**. The parish lies to the south of Didcot and comprises the main village, as well as the small hamlet of Coscote to the west, Hagbourne Mill on the road to Blewbury and housing along New Road to the north, including the recent Bishop's Orchard development on Didcot's southern edge. The population is 1,158 (Census 2011).
- 3.1.2 As discussed above, the EHNP is being prepared in the context of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan. The EHNP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan, supplementing these with policies and proposals to address local issues.
- 3.1.3 The Plan seeks to reflect the community's aim of ensuring that East Hagbourne continues to thrive, whilst retaining its unique and distinctive character and providing an outstanding quality of life for current and future generations of residents.

Figure 3.1: The extent of East Hagbourne Parish, also showing the established landscape character areas within the parish,⁴ and the adjacent southern edge of Didcot



⁴ East Hagbourne Village Character Assessment and Landscape Study (2018 update)

3.2 The South Oxfordshire Local Plan

- 3.2.1 South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) is preparing a new Local Plan - the Local Plan 2033 - which is scheduled to be adopted in 2019.⁵ Currently, the planning framework is provided by: the Core Strategy (2012); and the saved policies of the Local Plan 2011 (2006).⁶ Further important context is provided by the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan.⁷
- 3.2.2 The emerging Local Plan provides strong support for neighbourhood planning and seeks to empower local communities to direct development in their areas by supporting the “way of life” of rural communities. The objectives of the emerging Local Plan seek to deliver high quality development, respecting the scale and character of villages such as East Hagbourne.
- 3.2.3 The Core Strategy sets out an overall strategy for the development of South Oxfordshire. Didcot features prominently in the Core Strategy and emerging policies, and though East Hagbourne is designated as a “Smaller Village”, its location adjacent to Didcot is a significant issue for the Neighbourhood Plan. Part of the parish - including New Road, Lower End Field and Coscote Field - is included in the proposed Didcot Garden Town boundary and the whole of the parish is included in the “area of influence” for the Garden Town.
- 3.2.4 There is a strong argument to suggest that the village acts as ‘green lungs’ for the Garden Town, providing a distinctively different environment which benefits both town and village.

3.3 Allocating land for development

- 3.3.1 A central objective of the EHNP is to take a proactive approach to the allocation of land for development, and specifically for housing. The need for a notably proactive approach results from proximity to Didcot, which is designated as a Garden Town (which means that it receives Government funding to support housing growth). This location makes the Parish particularly vulnerable to speculative applications, i.e. applications on sites not allocated through a plan. All of South Oxfordshire District is potentially vulnerable to speculative applications,⁸ but East Hagbourne Parish is particularly vulnerable. By way of evidence -
- in 2017 a scheme for up to 74 houses received planning permission;
 - in 2018 an application for up to 78 houses close to the village was refused by SODC and an application for 135 houses in the north of the parish, close to Didcot, was rejected by SODC and on appeal;
 - an application for up to 84 houses in the east of the parish was refused in September 2018; and
 - an application to build up to 903 houses in the west of the parish is currently being considered by SODC.
- 3.3.2 As such, there is much to be gained - in respect of preventing speculative applications gaining permission - by the EHNP taking a proactive approach to the allocation of land for housing. If the Neighbourhood Plan allocates land for housing, then it will mean a degree of protection against speculative applications. This is on the basis of the Ministerial Letter of 12 December 2016,⁹ and paragraph 14 of the NPPF (2018), which provides for protection against speculative applications where: A) there is a Neighbourhood Plan in place that allocates land for housing; and B) the District is able to demonstrate a *three* year housing land supply.

⁵ See <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/emerging-local-plan>

⁶ See <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan>

⁷ See <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/business/support-business/supporting-our-town-centres/didcot/didcot-garden-town-0>

⁸ In accordance with paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Local Plan’s policies that relate to the supply of housing are deemed out of date where it is the case that there is not a five year housing land supply. In the absence of up-to-date housing policies, the NPPF states that a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ should apply. Whilst latest understanding is that South Oxfordshire does have a five year housing land supply, this has not been the case in the recent past, and there is always a risk of the five year housing land supply status being lost in the future, particularly whilst the Local Plan remains in preparation.

⁹ See <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-12-12/HCWS346/>

3.4 The EHNP objectives

3.4.1 The overarching objective for the EHNP is as follows -

Safeguard the individual character, vitality and community facilities of our historic village and protect its rural environment for the health and wellbeing of town and village residents alike, whilst supporting sustainable development that meets the needs of residents now and in the future.

3.4.2 The following more detailed objectives have also been established -

- Support **sustainable development** that meets the needs of residents now and in the future
- Preserve the independent and rural **character** of our village as Didcot expands
- Conserve and enhance key **views** both into and out from the built areas and within the built areas
- Conserve and enhance the **heritage** of the historic core of the village within and adjoining the Conservation Area together with its Listed Buildings and structures
- Protect the village envelope and surroundings from **light pollution**
- Respond to **housing needs** of residents and provide a proportionate contribution to meet SODC's housing requirements
- Ensure that village **infrastructure** and facilities support village life now and into the future
- Maintain and improve **road safety** for all road users
- Promote **mobility** and maintain or enhance the quality of pavements without creating an urban appearance
- Ensure that new development does not add to the problem of on-street **parking**
- Maintain and enhance **green spaces** for the health and wellbeing of the community
- Maintain and enhance **biodiversity**
- Protect housing from **flooding**

3.5 What is the EHNP not seeking to achieve?

3.5.1 It is important to emphasise that the plan will be relatively high level, in that it will establish policy that will then subsequently be applied as part of the development management process, when determining planning applications. As such, neighbourhood plan-making should be considered a relatively strategic undertaking, i.e. a process that omits consideration of some detailed issues. The strategic nature of the plan is reflected in the scope of the SEA.

4 WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF THE SEA?

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The aim here is to introduce the reader to the scope of the SEA, i.e. the issues / objectives that should be a focus of, and provide a broad methodological framework for, SEA.

N.B. further information on the scope of the SEA is presented in **Appendix II**.

Consultation on the scope

4.1.2 The Regulations require that *“When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the Environmental Report [i.e. the SEA scope], the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”*. In England, the consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England.¹⁰ As such, these authorities were consulted on the SEA scope in 2017.¹¹

4.2 Key issues / objectives

4.2.1 Table 4.1 presents the key topics / issues / objectives that define the SEA scope and provide a methodological ‘framework’ for SEA.

Table 4.1: The SEA framework

Topic	Objectives
Biodiversity	Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features.
Climate change	Reduce the level of contribution to climate change made by activities within the Neighbourhood Plan area
	Support the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding
Landscape and heritage	Protect, maintain and enhance the cultural heritage resource within the Neighbourhood Plan area, including the historic environment and archaeological assets.
	Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and townscapes.
Land and natural resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land.
	Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste.
	Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.
Population and community	Cater for existing and future residents’ needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve access to local, high-quality community services and facilities.
	Reduce deprivation and promote a more inclusive and self-contained community.
	Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures.
Health and wellbeing	Improve the health and wellbeing residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.

¹⁰ In-line with Article 6(3) of the SEA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected because ‘by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programmes.’

¹¹ The SEA Scoping Report is available at: www.easthagbourneplan.net

PART 1: WHAT HAS PLAN-MAKING / SEA INVOLVED UP TO THIS POINT?

5 INTRODUCTION (TO PART 1)

- 5.1.1 The aim here is to explain how work was undertaken to develop and assess **reasonable alternatives** in early 2018, ahead of finalising the Pre-submission Plan for consultation.¹² N.B. this part of the report is *as per* the equivalent part of the SA Report (March 2018). There was not considered to be any need to make any significant updates to this part of the report following the pre-submission consultation.
- 5.1.2 More specifically, this part of the report presents information on the consideration that has been given to reasonable alternative approaches to addressing a particular issue that is of central importance to the plan (see Chapter 3), namely the allocation of land for housing. N.B. henceforth, alternative approaches to the allocation of land for housing are referred to as **alternative housing growth scenarios**.

Structure of this part of the report

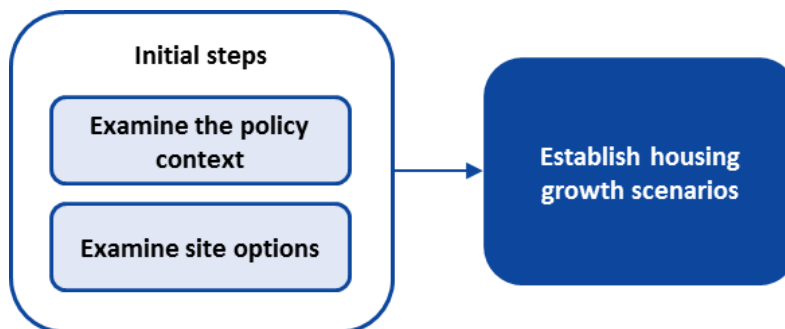
- 5.1.3 This part of the report is structured as follows:
- Chapter 6** - explains the process of **establishing** housing growth scenarios;
- Chapter 7** - presents the outcomes of **assessing** housing growth scenarios;
- Chapter 8** - explains reasons for **establishing** the preferred option, in light of the assessment.

6 ESTABLISHING THE REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 The aim here is to discuss the key steps taken to inform the establishment of reasonable alternatives, i.e. alternative housing growth scenarios. Ultimately, the aim is to present 'reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with', in accordance with the SEA Regulations.¹³
- 6.1.2 Specifically, there is a need to: 1) explain the policy context to the allocation of land for housing; 2) discuss work completed to examine site options (i.e. sites potentially in contention for allocation); and then 3) explain how understanding in relation to (1) and (2) was drawn together to establish housing growth scenarios for assessment.

Figure 6.1: Establishing the reasonable alternatives



¹² There is a requirement for the Environmental Report to present an assessment of 'reasonable alternatives' and 'an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with'. The aim is to inform the consultation, and subsequent plan finalisation.

¹³ Schedule II of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes ('SEA') Regulations 2004

6.2 Policy context

- 6.2.1 The emerging Local Plan (Policy H8) envisages that smaller villages such as East Hagbourne will be expected to deliver 5% to 10% growth over the plan period to 2033. The Parish comprises 500 dwellings, which means a need for up to 50 additional homes.
- 6.2.2 Since the baseline starting date of May 2011 -
- five infill dwellings have already been delivered or are currently being built within the Parish and a further six have planning permission; and
 - outline planning permission was granted at the end of January 2018 for 74 dwellings on land adjoining Hagbourne Village Hall on Main Road (known as 'Greenlight' and identified as Site 5 in the discussion of site options presented below).¹⁴
- 6.2.3 As such, 85 homes have already been delivered or received planning permission, and hence the emerging Local Plan Policy H8 does not give rise to a need to allocate land for housing through the EHNP.
- 6.2.4 However, there is another motivation for allocating land for housing, namely the policy presented at paragraph 14 of the NPPF (2018), as introduced above (Section 3.3). In light of the NPPF para 14, the Parish will have a degree of protection against speculative applications where: A) there is a Neighbourhood Plan in place that allocates land for housing; and B) the District is able to demonstrate a *three* year housing land supply.
- 6.2.5 Additional strategic context is also provided by evidence gathered at the Parish Level, and in particular through the Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey (NPCS). A key message to come out of the NPCS was a desire for small infill developments - and a small amount of growth in total - with a view to supporting local facilities, meeting the housing needs of residents now and into the future and fostering community spirit.
- 6.2.6 Having established this 'top down' understanding, the Parish Council commenced a programme of work to generate an understanding of the sites that might potentially be allocated ('bottom-up' understanding).

6.3 Site options

- 6.3.1 The process of examining site options itself involved several distinct steps, which can be summarised as involving 'initial screening' followed by 'detailed assessment'. These two steps are discussed in turn below.

N.B. the 'Greenlight' site was subjected to assessment prior to it gaining outline planning permission (with all matters reserved) in January 2018. As such, it is discussed further below. However, it is recognised that the principle of development has now been agreed - through the granting of planning permission - and hence its development can be considered an element of the 'baseline', i.e. something that will happen regardless of the EHNP.

Initial screening

- 6.3.2 The first step involved 'screening' all land within the parish, with a view to identifying a short-list of potential site options for further consideration. To facilitate the screening exercise, land within the parish was divided into ten landscape areas (see Figure 4.1, above) and then further subdivided to give a total of 53 land parcels for evaluation.¹⁵

¹⁴ Outline planning permission means that the principle of development has been agreed, with only 'reserved matters' to be considered through a subsequent reserved matters planning application. See https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200126/applications/60/consent_types/4

¹⁵ N.B. as part of the screening exercise account was taken of sites known to be available for development, namely those sites included within the District Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) and additional sites promoted directly to the Parish Council through a 'call for sites'.

6.3.3 Drawing upon an established 'toolkit' (Locality, 2015),¹⁶ and in discussion with SODC, the following screening criteria were developed and applied to the evaluation of the 53 parcels -

- Is the site closely related to, and well integrated with the village?
- Is the site easily accessible to EH services and facilities by both roads & footpaths?
- Does the site flood or could it create flooding /environmental issues?
- Will development impact the Conservation Area or the setting of the AONB?

6.3.4 As a result of the screening exercise, six sites emerged as warranting detailed assessment.

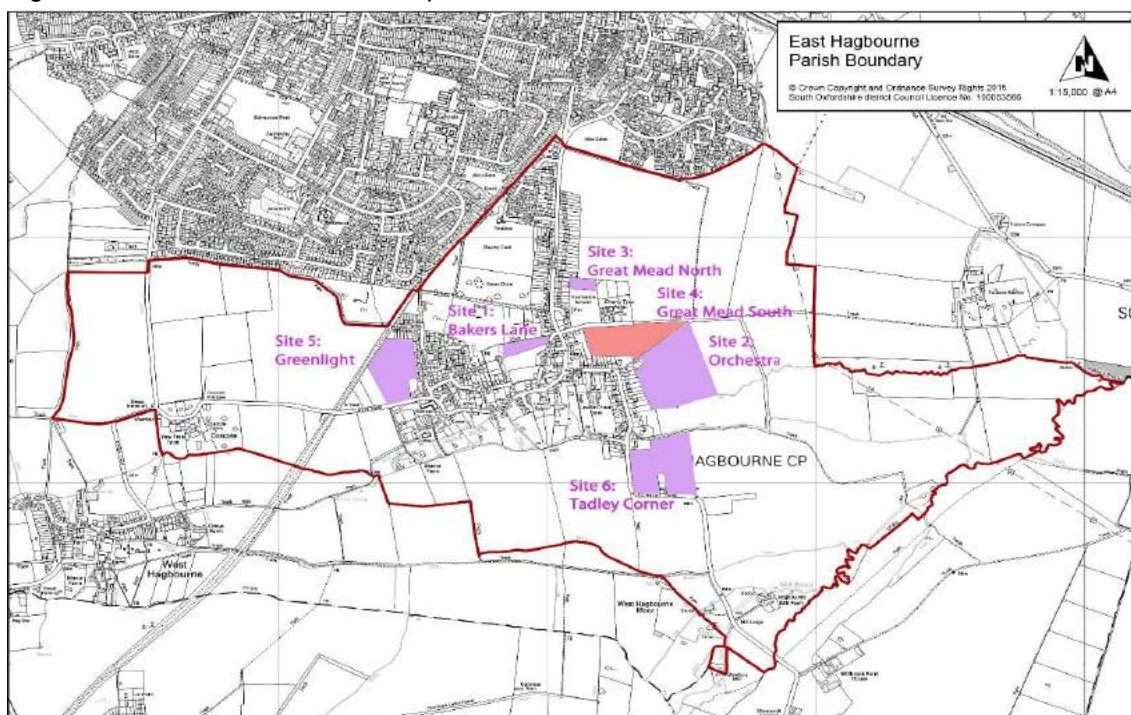
Detailed assessment

6.3.5 The six shortlisted sites - see **Figure 6.1** - were subjected to more systematic, criteria-based assessment. Assessments were primarily carried out based on the intrinsic characteristics of the site, regardless of any planning proposal that may have been made; however, where proposals existed, these were acknowledged through three supplementary criteria.

6.3.6 Ultimately the decision was reached that, in addition to the Greenlight site with outline planning permission, there is one other site that might be considered for allocation. This site is 'Orchestra' (otherwise known as East Tadley Field A, 78 homes).

6.3.7 The four sites not progressed are discussed within **Box 6.1**.

Figure 6.1: The six shortlisted site options



¹⁶ See <https://mycommunity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/NP-Site-Assessment-Toolkit-Final-version.pdf>

Box 6.1: Site options rejected at the 'detailed assessment' stage

As discussed above, a shortlist of six site options was subjected to detailed assessment, with the decision reached that two sites (one being the Orchestra site, which has outline planning permission) have *potential* for an allocation through the EHNP.

This box presents summary information on the four sites not progressed. N.B. the aim here is to present summary information ('outline reasons') only. Further detail is provided within the Site Assessment report, where each of the six shortlisted site options is assessed systematically against a range of criteria.

Bakers Lane, Paddock A

This site comprises the northern-most field of the green wedge that enters into the heart of the village from the north (indeed stretching as far south as Main Road). The site capacity is 19 units, although a more modest scheme might also be envisaged. The site benefits from its relative proximity to the village centre (under 650m); however, it falls within the East Hagbourne Conservation Area. It is somewhat peripheral to the main historic core of the village; however, the Conservation Area Assessment (SODC, 2000) identifies the land as 'important open space' and it is also noted that there are footpaths running along two sides of the site, and one listed building is located c.45m to the south. There is also a concern that traffic generated could lead to conflicts given a nearby garage and shop, and given that Baker Lane is currently a designated footpath. There is also a restrictive covenant, which calls into question the site's availability for development.

Great Mead North B (north of rec ground)

This site is located on the northeastern edge of the village, east of New Road. The site capacity is ten units. It is located behind two houses fronting New Road, and to the north of a recreation ground (north of Great Mead). This is a small site with a degree of containment; however, there would be impacts to the view of open countryside from the recreation ground and Great Mead. Safe access is a primary concern, given current access via a narrow track. It is also somewhat peripheral to the village (930m to the village centre), but in this sense benefits from its location adjacent to the recreation ground. Finally, it is noted that a preferable alternative use might be as a community facility, given the adjacent recreation ground.

Great Mead South

The land to the south of Great Mead (on the northeastern edge of the village) currently comprises a series of paddocks, and so it is possible to envisage a number of potential development sites/configurations. The whole area might deliver up to 100 homes; however, a range of smaller schemes might be envisaged. There is a degree of containment, given mature hedgerows, although this brings with it concerns in respect of impacts to biodiversity. Furthermore, the Conservation Area (along with several listed buildings) is in close proximity, and the East Hagbourne Character Assessment (2018) identifies these paddocks as comprising important open space. Access is also a concern, with Great Mead currently only tarmacked up to a point along its length, and designated as a public bridleway. Furthermore, the junction of Great Mead and New Road is already considered to be a busy junction, with the village garage, a shop and Bakers Lane directly opposite. These paddocks are also somewhat peripheral to the village (800m to the village centre), but in this sense benefit from being located adjacent to the recreation ground.

South Fields C (Tadley Corner, Blewbury Rd)

This site is located at the southeastern extent of the village. Total capacity is 96 units although a smaller scheme might also be envisaged. The site is at the very periphery of the village, and poorly linked to the village centre (to the west). There are relatively direct links to the village centre via footpaths; however, these cannot be considered suitable for all, and the walking route via Blewbury Road / Main Road is quite indirect; plus there is no pavement along Blewbury Road. The site borders Hacca's Brook, which potentially gives rise to the opportunity to deliver increased access to the brook and new strategic greenspace; however, there are some concerns regarding increased surface water flows into the brook leading to increased downstream flood risk. The primary concern relates to landscape impacts, as development would involve extending the village into open countryside in the direction of the AONB, which is less than 1km distant. A sense of development encroaching along the Blewbury Road, towards the AONB, could be experienced by motorists leaving the village, and those utilising the footpath that runs along the village's southern edge.

6.4 The reasonable alternatives

6.4.1 In summary, the outcome of the steps discussed above was that -

- Whilst there is no requirement to allocate land for development (i.e. no requirement in order to comply with emerging Local Plan Policy H8), and local opinion is certainly not in favour of supporting housing growth over-and-above that which is already committed, there is nonetheless a motivation for allocating land in order to proactively support housing growth.
- The two site options that stand-out as performing well, and hence might potentially be allocated through the EHNP are: 1) Greenlight (74 homes; has outline planning permission); and 2) Orchestra (up to 78 homes). Other sites are sequentially less preferable, including the smaller sites discussed above.

With regards to Greenlight, whilst development can now be considered - on the balance of probability - part of the 'baseline' (i.e. something that will happen regardless of the EHNP) there is still the potential to provide proactive support through the EHNP. Specifically, 'allocation' of the site through the EHNP, and the establishment of clear policy, could help to expedite and guarantee the success of the forthcoming reserved matters application.

Also, allocation of the site can be considered a proactive step in the sense that there is a small chance/risk that the site will not be developed, for whatever reason, and hence the existing planning permission will 'lapse'.¹⁷ Were permission to lapse, then an allocation within the EHNP would mean that the site promoters could submit another application.

6.4.2 In light of these considerations, the following two housing growth scenarios were established for assessment -

- 1) Allocate Greenlight only (74 homes) only
- 2) Allocate both Greenlight (74 homes) and Orchestra (up to 78 homes)

7 APPRAISING REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 The aim of this chapter is to present summary assessment findings in relation to the housing growth scenarios introduced above. Detailed assessment findings are presented in **Appendix III**.

7.2 Summary alternatives assessment findings

7.2.1 **Table 7.1** presents summary assessment findings in relation to the two housing growth scenarios. Within each row (i.e. for each of the topics that comprise the SEA framework) the columns to the right hand side seek to both categorise the performance of each option in terms of 'significant effects' (using **red** / **amber** / **green**) and also rank the alternatives in order of performance. Also, '=' is used to denote instances where the alternatives perform on a par (i.e. it not possible to differentiate between them).

N.B. Option 1 (allocate Greenlight only) is close to - but not entirely equivalent to - the baseline, recognising that Greenlight has planning permission. The implication is that it is not possible to identify significant effects in relation to Option 1. This reflects the fact that 'significant effects' are defined, more precisely, as significant effects *on the baseline*.

¹⁷ Anecdotal evidence suggests that perhaps 5 to 10% of planning permissions nationally 'lapse'. Data is not available for SODC.

Table 7.1: Summary alternatives assessment findings

Objectives	Option 1 Greenlight only	Option 2 Greenlight & Orchestra
Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features	=	=
Reduce the level of contribution to climate change	=	=
Support resilience to the potential effects of climate change, inc. flooding	=	=
Protect, maintain and enhance the cultural heritage resource	★1	2
Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and townscapes	★1	2
Ensure the efficient and effective use of land .	★1	2
Promote sustainable waste management solutions	=	=
Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.	=	=
Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community....	=	=
Reduce deprivation and promote a more inclusive and self-contained community .	=	=
Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing , and ensure an appropriate mix....	2	★1
Improve the health and wellbeing residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area.	★1	2

Assessment conclusion

The broad conclusion is that allocation of both sites (Option 2) would lead to a range of concerns over-and-above Option 1, most notably in respect of landscape and loss of best and most versatile (potentially 'grade 1') agricultural land. It is fair to conclude that allocation of both sites (Option 2) is supported in respect of 'housing' objectives; however, this is not a clear cut conclusion, as there is evidence to suggest that local housing needs (i.e. needs arising from the Parish) would be met under Option 1.

N.B. it is important to highlight a degree of uncertainty regarding the conclusion that Option 1 would be preferable in respect of the objectives identified above (heritage, landscape, land etc). This is on the basis that Option 1 could feasibly give rise to a risk of speculative applications receiving permission. This risk would arise under a scenario whereby SODC has a land supply of between three and five years, and a planning inspector tasked with deciding a planning appeal does not accept that allocating the Greenlight site only through the EHNP results in the 'protection' provided by the December 2016 Ministerial Letter (see discussion at para 6.2.4), and para 14 of the NPPF (2018), being engaged. It is the view of SODC and the Parish Council, at the current time, that allocation of Greenlight only (Option 1) should lead to the protection being engaged; however, there is a degree of uncertainty in the absence of known national precedents on this matter.

8 DEVELOPING THE PREFERRED APPROACH

8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 The aim of this Chapter is to present the Parish Council's response to the alternatives assessment / reasons for developing the preferred approach in-light of alternatives assessment.

8.2 The Parish Council's outline reasons

"The Parish Council broadly agrees with the assessment findings presented above, and hence supports Option 1, i.e. the allocation of Greenlight only.

The Parish Council believes that allocation of Greenlight equates to a proactive approach to supporting housing growth through the EHNP, and hence the protection against speculative housing applications - as provided for by the Ministerial Letter of 12 December 2016, and para 14 of the NPPF (2018) - will be engaged.

The Parish Council recognises and accepts that there is a degree of uncertainty regarding whether 'the protection' will be engaged, and hence a degree of risk associated with Option 1, but concludes that the risk is sufficiently small. The risk magnitude is significant, in that speculative applications totalling up to 400 homes are currently being promoted; however, the Parish Council (as advised by SODC) considers the risk likelihood to be low. The overall risk is not sufficient to lead the Parish Council to conclude that Option 2 is preferable, given the issues associated with the Orchestra site and concerns regarding the cumulative effects of growth at both Greenlight and Orchestra (i.e. the effects associated with growth totalling up to 163 homes over the plan period)."

PART 2: WHAT ARE SEA FINDINGS AT THIS CURRENT STAGE?

9 INTRODUCTION (TO PART 2)

- 9.1.1 This part of the report presents an assessment of the ‘submission’ version of the East Hagbourne Neighbourhood Plan.

9.2 Methodology

- 9.2.1 The assessment identifies and evaluates ‘likely significant effects’ on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability objectives identified through scoping (see Table 4.1) as a methodological framework.
- 9.2.2 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the strategic nature of the policies under consideration, and understanding of the baseline (now and in the future under a ‘no plan’ scenario) that is inevitably limited. Given uncertainties there is a need to make assumptions, e.g. in relation to plan implementation and aspects of the baseline that might be impacted. Assumptions are made cautiously, and explained within the text (with the aim of striking a balance between comprehensiveness and conciseness). In many instances, given reasonable assumptions, it is not possible to predict ‘significant effects’, but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) of the draft plan in more general terms.
- 9.2.3 Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking account of the criteria presented within Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations.¹⁸ So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects as far as possible. Cumulative effects are also considered, i.e. the potential for the plan to impact an aspect of the baseline when implemented alongside other plans, programmes and projects. These effect ‘characteristics’ are described within the assessment as appropriate.

10 ASSESSMENT OF THE SUBMISSION PLAN

10.1 Introduction

- 10.1.1 The assessment is presented under thirteen headings - one for each of the key components of the SEA Framework introduced above, within Chapter 4.

10.2 Biodiversity

Protect and enhance all **biodiversity** and geological features

- 10.2.1 **Policy H1** (Housing provision in East Hagbourne) supports allocation of the ‘Greenlight’ site only, which already has outline planning permission (with all matters reserved). It states that other schemes outside of the built-up area of East Hagbourne will only be supported “*if they are necessary or suitable for a countryside location and consistent with the policies of this Plan and the Development Plan for the District.*” This approach is broadly supported in respect of biodiversity, and other environmental objectives. N.B. this point is not made repeatedly below, under other environmental topic headings.
- 10.2.2 **Policy H3** (Housing allocation) allocates the Greenlight site, and establishes site-specific policy broadly. One criterion is: “*Maximise opportunities to enhance biodiversity with particular consideration given to wildlife corridors e.g. all gardens built with interconnections for hedgehogs and connected to surrounding areas.*”

¹⁸ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

- 10.2.3 **Policy E2** (Protect and enhance biodiversity and the natural environment) is also of central importance, recognising that whilst no other major development proposals are anticipated, as all would be contrary to Policy H1, the possibility cannot be ruled-out, as Policy H1 could be deemed out-of-date should there be insufficient land supply District-wide. The policy seeks to build upon national and local policy by referencing particular elements of the local landscape deemed to be of importance to biodiversity, stating that: *“Development should ensure that existing wildlife habitats are not harmed, retaining hedgerows, waterways and scrubland wherever possible.”* The supporting text also highlights the importance of *“existing reserves including Butts Piece, Millennium Wood and the wildflower meadow.”*
- 10.2.4 Also of note is **Policy SD1** (Sustainable development), which states that: *“Development proposals must show how they... Conserve and enhance the landscape to achieve a net biodiversity gain and habitat connectivity, paying special attention to the green and blue infrastructure networks, landscape and biodiversity designations, priority habitats and protected species.”*
- 10.2.5 Finally, there is a need to consider the proposal to designate a network of Local Green Gaps (**Policies VC1a-e**) and Local Green Spaces (**Policy E1**). The designations reflect ‘character’ and ‘community value’ considerations more so than biodiversity; however, it is likely that several of these sites have some biodiversity value, and that all contribute to ecological connectivity (between sites of biodiversity importance) and maintenance of an ecological network to some extent. **Figure 10.1** presents the proposed Local Green Gaps, whilst **Figure 10.2** presents the proposed Local Green Spaces.

Figure 10.1: Local Green Gaps

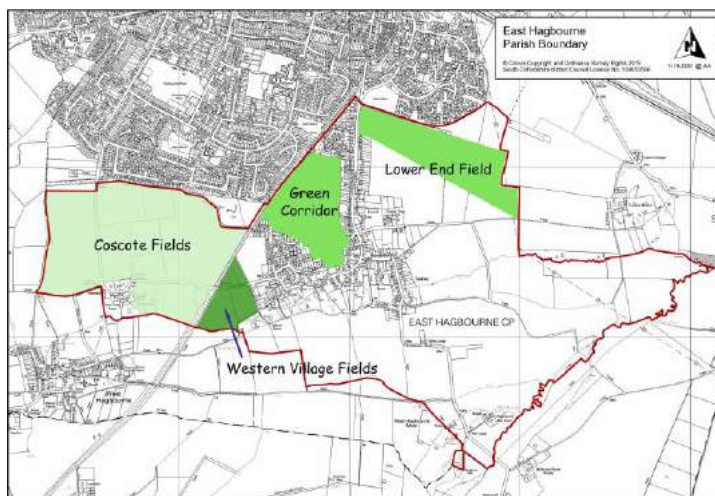
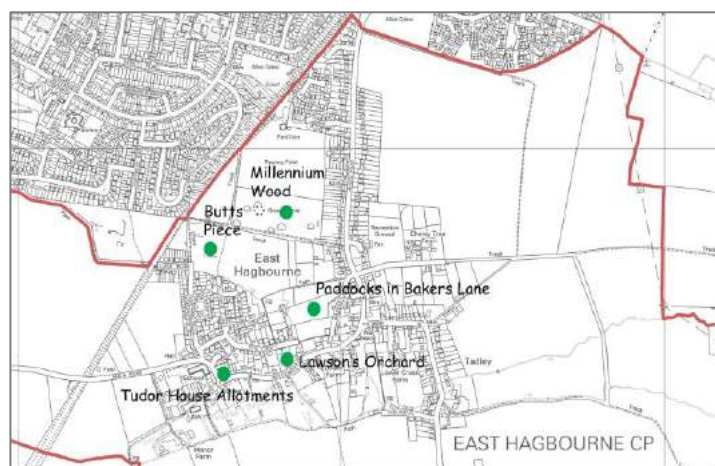


Figure 10.2: Proposed Local Green Spaces



- 10.2.6 In **conclusion**, the plan performs well in terms of 'Biodiversity'; however, it is not possible to conclude the likelihood of 'significant' positive effects, recognising no potential to assume further major development in the plan period, over-and-above the baseline. More might become known regarding spatial biodiversity priorities in the future, through ongoing green infrastructure work completed in support of Didcot Garden Town.

10.3 Climate change

Reduce the level of **contribution to climate change**

- 10.3.1 Of greatest note is **Policy TA2** (Footpaths and pavements), which explains that: *"New development should protect the existing rights of way network and their ambience... Development proposals should also... encourage sustainable means of transport, including measures to provide for and where possible enhance the provision of multi-use pedestrian and cycle routes."* This could help to ensure that the need to minimise per capita CO₂ emissions from transport is fully factored-in as part of decision-making.
- 10.3.2 With regards to the objective of minimising per capita emissions from the built environment, there is a notable requirement proposed as part of **Policy SD1** (Sustainable development), which states: *"Minimize energy use and its overall carbon impact during construction and in occupation and use"*. It is noted that the following statement has been removed since the pre-submission version: *"Energy efficiency over and above national/SODC required levels will be encouraged."*
- 10.3.3 In **conclusion**, the plan may help to minimise per capita emissions from the built environment and from transport; however, effects will be minor, and certainly will not be 'significant', recognising that climate change is a global issue.

10.4 Flooding

Support resilience to the potential effects of climate change, inc. **flooding**

- 10.4.1 Of greatest note is **Policy E4** (Flooding), which explains that proposals for any new development should demonstrate that it will not exacerbate the existing risk of flooding. The policy also states that: *"Where a sustainable drainage scheme is proposed, this should be capable of regular maintenance so that so that its effectiveness can be maintained into the future."*
- 10.4.2 Also of note is **Policy SD1** (Sustainable development), which states that: *"Development proposals must show how they... Do not increase the risk of flooding from either increased runoff or from building within flood risk areas and take account of the predicted impact of climate change during the lifetime of the development."*
- 10.4.3 Flood risk is also referenced as part of **Policy CF1** (Infrastructure - utilities), which states that: *"Planning applications should specifically consider, where relevant, impact upon... Impacts on Hacca's brook that could lead to the brook breaching its banks."*
- 10.4.4 In **conclusion**, the plan performs very well, with flood risk a clear focus of the plan. Policies are proposed that should helpfully supplement the emerging policies of the Local Plan. However, it is not possible to conclude 'significant' positive effects, recognising no potential to assume further major development in the plan period, over-and-above the baseline.

10.5 Heritage

Protect, maintain and enhance the cultural **heritage** resource

- 10.5.1 This topic is a particular focus of proposed thematic policy, most notably through **Policy VC5** (Conserving and Enhancing Heritage Assets) seeking to supplement policies ENV 7, 8 and 9 of the emerging Local Plan with requirements such as -

- “Development should enhance or better reveal the special quality of East Hagbourne as identified in East Hagbourne Village Character Assessment and Landscape Study 2017 (Character Assessment, Appendix 2) ensuring that great weight is given to the conservation of heritage assets.
- Planning applications will be expected to address the interaction between the built environment and the surrounding countryside and the key views and vistas.
- Conserve or enhance historically distinctive features in the built environment and wider landscape as outlined in Table 6 of the Character Assessment.”

10.5.2 **Policies VC1a-e** (Local Green Gaps) and **Policy VC3** (Retaining smaller village character and promoting good design) also have strong positive implications for heritage - see further discussion below, under ‘Landscape’.

10.5.3 Finally, it is noted that **Policy SD1** (Sustainable development), states that: “Development proposals must show how they... Complement the local vernacular and character of the village and its rural setting by use of an appropriate design.”

10.5.4 In **conclusion**, the plan performs very well, with heritage a clear focus of the plan. Policies are proposed that should helpfully supplement the emerging policies of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan. Given the sensitivities that exist (and also the opportunities, recognising Didcot Garden Town objectives), including in respect of the Greenlight site (for which a reserved matters application is forthcoming) it is appropriate to conclude the likelihood of **significant positive effects**.

10.6 Landscape

Protect and enhance the character and quality of **landscapes** and townscape

10.6.1 **Policy H3** (Housing allocation) allocates the Greenlight site, and establishes site-specific policy broadly in accordance with the conditions of the outline planning permission. Key criteria are -

- “The housing layout should seek to minimise the visual impact for the residents of existing adjoining dwellings and to protect privacy.
- Maintaining visibility of the church tower from the Sustrans route.”

10.6.2 The supporting text provides further context, explaining that: “Our conclusion is therefore to allocate Site 5, to provide up to 74 dwellings in line with the outline planning permission and in the expectation that the developer will respond to the needs identified in the policy. In particular, the site layout should be optimised to minimise the visual impact of the development on residents in Lake Road and Harwood Road and of views towards the Church and Conservation Area.”

10.6.3 Landscape is also a particular focus of proposed thematic policy, most notably through Policy VC1 (Local Green Gaps), Policy VC2 (Conserving and Enhancing Important Views) and Policy VC3 (Retaining smaller village character and promoting good design) and Policy VC4 (Assets of Local Distinctiveness).

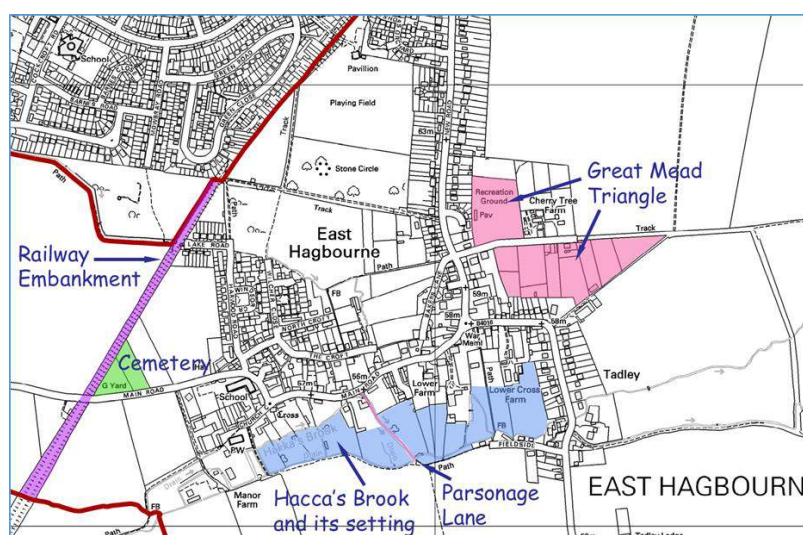
10.6.4 **Policies VC1a-e** (Local Green Gaps) identify four Local Green Gaps (see Figure 10.1, above), with key features of each listed as necessitating due consideration, drawing upon the findings of the East Hagbourne Village Character and Landscape Assessment (2018 update) and the East Hagbourne Green Buffer Assessment (2018). The supporting text explains that: “These Green Buffers are intended to prevent coalescence between Didcot and neighbouring villages, protecting the identity, character and diversity of the area.”

N.B. since the pre-submission consultation one gap (Great Mead) has been left out, others better defined and one more added (Western Village Fields).

- 10.6.5 **Policy VC2** (Conserving and Enhancing Important Views) identifies a number of specified views that should be “protected wherever possible” including views towards the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONBs, and views to/from the Conservation Area. The supporting text adds considerable context, for example explaining that: *“The East Hagbourne Village Character Assessment and Landscape Study (2017) adds a historical dimension, noting that by the 11th century this area had some of the lowest recorded densities of tree cover in England and was characterised by an open farming landscape.”*
- 10.6.6 **Policy VC3** (Retaining smaller village character and promoting good design) explains that development should respect the history of the village and be in the context of, and appropriate to, the Character Areas of the village, as defined in the East Hagbourne Village Character Assessment and Landscape Study (2017). The policy includes a number of criteria, for example specifying that development should: *“Preserve and enhance the quality, integrity and legibility of the designated local Character Areas and avoid their deterioration wherever possible.”* The supporting text adds considerable detail, for example stating: *“It is clear from the NPCS that residents have a very keen interest in the quality of any planned new housing development within the Parish. They wish to see schemes that respect the vernacular of the Character Area in which the housing is proposed and where the design and use of materials blends in with that which immediately surrounds it.”*
- 10.6.7 **Policy VC4** (Assets of Local Distinctiveness) identifies five key assets - see **Figure 10.3** - and states that: *“Development affecting locally distinctive features as identified in the East Hagbourne Village and Landscape Character Assessment 2017 (Appendix 2) or its setting must demonstrate how it will contribute to conserving or enhancing the special quality and distinctive character of the parish.”* For example, the Railway Embankment is proposed for designation on the basis that:

“Since its development as a Sustrans route, the former railway embankment has become a major recreation resource for people from East Hagbourne and the surrounding area, as well as harbouring a wealth of wildlife on its chalky soils. It also affords extensive elevated views over the surrounding countryside as well as an iconic view of the church, manor house, and surrounding barns and oasthouse.”

Figure 10.3: Proposed Assets of Local Distinctiveness



- 10.6.8 In **conclusion**, the plan performs very well, with landscape a clear focus of the plan. Policies are proposed that should helpfully supplement the emerging policies of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan. Given the sensitivities that exist (and also the opportunities, recognising Didcot Garden Town objectives), including in respect of the Greenlight site (for which a reserved matters application is forthcoming) it is appropriate to conclude the likelihood of **significant positive effects**.

10.7 Land

Ensure the efficient and effective use of **land**.

- 10.7.1 No policy is proposed in respect of protecting the highest quality agricultural land, i.e. directing development to lower quality agricultural land wherever possible. This may be appropriate, given emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan Policy DeS8 (Efficient use of resources), which requires -

“... avoiding the development of the best and most versatile agricultural land, unless it is demonstrated to be the most sustainable choice from reasonable alternatives, by first using areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.”

N.B. a previous version of this report, namely the Environmental Report (March 2018) **recommended** that the Parish Council considers the potential for a policy requirement to supplement the emerging Local Plan policy in respect of agricultural land quality, on the basis that the great majority of agricultural land potentially suitable for development surrounding the village is of ‘best and most versatile’ (BMV) quality.

In response, the Parish Council recognises that policy would ideally be in place, but has concluded that there is insufficient evidence available. Were evidence available to show how agricultural land quality varies from field to field, or broader land parcel to land parcel, then a policy that seeks to protect the highest quality land would be very welcomed.

- 10.7.2 In **conclusion**, the effects of the plan are somewhat ‘neutral’.

10.8 Waste

Promote sustainable **waste management** solutions

- 10.8.1 No policy is proposed in respect of waste management. This may be appropriate, given emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan Policy DeS8 (Efficient use of resources), which requires -

“minimising waste and making adequate provision for the recycling, composting and recovery of waste on site.”

- 10.8.2 The Parish Council might consider the potential for a policy requirement to supplement the emerging Local Plan policy, with a view to developing a culture of waste segregation and communal storage / collection; however, it is recognised that this is not seen as a priority.

- 10.8.3 In **conclusion**, the effects of the plan are somewhat ‘neutral’.

10.9 Water

Use and manage **water resources** in a sustainable manner.

- 10.9.1 **Policy E4** (Flooding) seeks to present policy in respect of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) with a view to supplementing emerging Local Plan Policy EP4 (Flood risk), which states - *Development will be expected to incorporate sustainable drainage systems and ensure that runoff rates are attenuated to greenfield run-off rates. Higher rates would need to be justified and the risks quantified. Development should strive to reduce run-off rates for existing developed sites. Sustainable drainage systems should seek to enhance water quality and biodiversity in line with the Water Framework Directive.* Specifically, Policy E4 requires that: *“Where a sustainable drainage scheme is proposed, this should be capable of regular maintenance so that its effectiveness can be maintained into the future.”*

10.9.2 **Policy CF1** (Infrastructure - utilities) requires sufficient infrastructure in support of development, and seeks to ensure that development does not have the effect of overloading or damaging existing infrastructure. The policy specifically references water infrastructure, in the form of sewerage and drainage.

10.9.3 In **conclusion**, the plan may lead to some positive effects; however, it is not possible to conclude 'significant' positive effects, recognising no potential to assume further major development in the plan period, over-and-above the baseline.

10.10 Residents needs

Cater for existing and future **residents' needs** as well as the needs of different groups in the community....

10.10.1 **Policy H3** (Housing allocation) allocates the Greenlight site, and establishes site-specific policy broadly in accordance with the conditions of the outline planning permission. Three key criteria are -

- *"Provide sufficient on-site parking for residents of the new development to minimise on-street parking*
- *Make appropriate provision to enable the extension of the village car park*
- *Provide safe and adequate access to the site with particular attention to the design of the new site entrance to ensure pedestrian safety, especially for children accessing the school and playing field and for pedestrians accessing the cemetery."*

10.10.2 The supporting text provides further context, explaining that: *"Our conclusion is therefore to allocate Site 5, to provide up to 74 dwellings in line with the outline planning permission and in the expectation that the developer will respond to the needs identified in the policy... Parking in this area is already a concern, so adequate parking is needed to meet the needs of the new development and to contribute towards increased public parking to serve the school and village hall. The village car park borders the allocated site, being situated immediately to the south-east corner of the site. It currently has marked spaces for 54 cars. The car park is used primarily by residents and visitors to the village using the church, village hall and school facilities, including parents delivering and collecting children from the school and pre-school."*

10.10.3 In addition, there are numerous relevant and important thematic policies proposed -

- **Policy VC6** (Lighting) states: *"New housing developments should have sufficient street lighting to provide safety, but avoid light pollution. Lighting schemes should be appropriate to the village environment, being safe for night-time walking, but respecting the nature and character of the village location."*
- **Policy CF1** (Infrastructure - utilities) requires sufficient infrastructure in support of development, and seeks to ensure that development does not have the effect of overloading or damaging existing infrastructure. The policy specifically references water infrastructure, in the form of sewerage and drainage.
- **Policy CF2** (Infrastructure - community facilities) states, amongst other things, that: *"Proposals to improve the viability of any key community facility by way of the extension or partial redevelopment of buildings and land will be supported, provided the design of the scheme and the resulting increase in use are appropriate in design terms..."*
- **Policy TA2** (Footpaths and Pavements) states, amongst other things, that: *"development should protect the existing rights of way network and their ambience."*
- **Policy TA3** (Parking) states that: When considering the need for parking, development decisions should ensure that: *"Wherever practicable, parking will be provided off-road [and] be sufficient for the full life of the development and should avoid the increase in on-street parking or use of existing car parks in the future."*

- 10.10.4 In **conclusion**, the plan performs very well, with ‘residents needs’ clearly a main focus of the plan. Policies are proposed that should helpfully supplement the emerging policies of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan. Given the sensitivities that exist, including in respect of the Greenlight site (for which a reserved matters application is forthcoming) it is appropriate to conclude the likelihood of **significant positive effects**.

10.11 Community

Reduce deprivation and promote a more inclusive and self-contained **community**.

- 10.11.1 A raft of the policies discussed above, and below, will lead to positive effects in respect of this objective, including the policies dealing with landscape/character, heritage, community facilities and movement around the village. It is notable that the very first policy statement within the plan document, as part of **Policy SD1** (Sustainable development), is the requirement that development proposals: “*Contribute to the vitality and viability of East Hagbourne Parish.*”
- 10.11.2 In **conclusion**, the plan performs very well, with ‘community’ clearly a main focus of the plan. Policies are proposed that should helpfully supplement the emerging policies of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan. Given the sensitivities that exist (and also the opportunities, recognising Didcot Garden Town objectives), including in respect of the Greenlight site (for which a reserved matters application is forthcoming) it is appropriate to conclude the likelihood of **significant positive effects**.

10.12 Housing

Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable **housing**, and ensure an appropriate mix....

- 10.12.1 **Policy H3** (Housing allocation) allocates the Greenlight site, which currently has outline planning permission, and will be subject to a reserved matters application in due course (within three years). This is a positive step, from a ‘housing’ perspective as allocation of the site - alongside the establishment of development management policy - may help to expedite and guarantee the success of the forthcoming reserved matters application. Also, allocation of the site can be considered a proactive step in the sense that there is a small chance/risk that the site will not be developed, for whatever reason, and hence the existing planning permission will ‘lapse’. Were permission to lapse, then an allocation within the EHNP would mean that the site promoters could submit another application.
- N.B. it is not considered that the criteria listed in Policy H3 will act as a burden to the developer, such that there are delays or otherwise problems bringing forward a successful reserved matters application. However, this possibility is clearly something to be mindful of, from a ‘Housing’ perspective.
- 10.12.2 The other key policy is **Policy H2** (Meeting housing needs), which seeks to ensure that proposals recognise the need for affordable housing, both for rental and home ownership, and reflect the particular needs of first time buyers and older people and those looking to downsize. The supporting text presents considerable supplementary detail regarding the housing needs that exist, drawing up on the Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey (NPCS) and the East Hagbourne Housing Needs Assessment (HNA).
- 10.12.3 In **conclusion**, the plan performs well on the basis that : A) the Greenlight site is allocated, and thereby proactively supported; and B) policy specifies local priorities in respect of housing mix. **Significant positive effects** are predicted, on the assumption that there remains the potential to influence the housing mix at the Greenlight site.

10.13 Health

Improve the **health and wellbeing** residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

- 10.13.1 Health determinants are wide-ranging, and it is likely that the great majority of policies within the EHNP will have positive implications in some respect. Perhaps most notable is **Policy TA1** (Road Safety) which states:
- “New developments must not cause a severe reduction in road safety including that of pedestrians, cyclists and other road users. Planning decisions should take account of local impacts on:*
- *Increasing traffic speeds in the village;*
 - *Ability to share all transport infrastructure between all road users;*
 - *Locations where the existing road system is constrained e.g. Main Road and the Lower Cross junction.”*
- 10.13.2 It is understood that the committed ‘Greenlight’ site benefits from being located on a straight road, but gives rise to some road safety concerns given its location very close to the village primary school and village hall, and also on the basis that parking in this part of the village is already quite constrained (e.g. leading to on-road parking, and in turn road safety concerns). However, other potential development sites (the development of which would not be in accordance with Policy H1, but which nonetheless cannot be ruled-out) give rise to greater concerns, e.g. the Orchestra site which is discussed in Chapter 7 of this report.
- 10.13.3 In **conclusion**, the plan performs very well; however, it is not possible to conclude ‘significant’ positive effects, recognising the wide ranging nature of health determinants (i.e. recognising that many determinants are largely unrelated to planning).

10.14 Transport and travel

Promote sustainable **transport** use and reduce the need to **travel**.

- 10.14.1 Three policies are proposed to deal with ‘Transport and access’, namely -
- **Policy TA1** (Road Safety) which highlights, amongst other things the “Ability to share all transport infrastructure between all road users”.
 - **Policy TA2** (Footpaths and pavements) which explains that: *“New development should protect the existing rights of way network and their ambience... Development proposals should also... encourage sustainable means of transport, including measures to provide for and where possible enhance the provision of multi-use pedestrian and cycle routes.”*
 - **Policy TA3** (Parking) which seeks to build upon established District parking standards, in particular with a view to minimising on-road parking.
- 10.14.2 These policies should help to guide the forthcoming reserved matters application at the Greenlight site.
- N.B. a previous version of this report, namely the SA Report (March 2018) **recommended** that “Policy might be established that seeks to ensure that development of the site addresses... *car parking in the area of the Village Hall and School to minimise congestion at peak times.*” In response, the submission version of the plan now includes a list of site specific criteria for the Greenlight site, two of which relate to parking.
- 10.14.3 In **conclusion**, the plan performs well; however, it is difficult to conclude significant positive effects, recognising no potential to assume further major development in the plan period, over-and-above the baseline.

10.15 Conclusion

- 10.15.1 The assessment highlights the plan as including a particular focus on heritage, landscape and residents needs / community / housing mix. Indeed, the plan is predicted to result in 'significant positive effects' in terms of these issues/objectives.
- 10.15.2 However, this prediction is made with some uncertainty, as there is little certainty regarding the number and nature of development proposals that the EHNP policies will be applied to. It may prove that policies are applied when determining the forthcoming reserved matters application at the Greenlight site (74 homes) and then subsequently applied only for minor infill development applications. Conversely, it could be that there are further 'speculative applications' for significant greenfield extensions in the future, to which policies will be applied.
- 10.15.3 The assessment also highlights the plan as performing well in terms of 'housing' in the sense that the proposal is to allocate the Greenlight site, and thereby proactive support the timely delivery of that site. There is little or no reason to suggest that any policies in the plan, or the policies acting in combination, are in any way contrary to the achievement of housing objectives.

PART 3: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

11 INTRODUCTION (TO PART 3)

- 11.1.1 This Part of the report explains next steps (i.e. steps subsequent to publication of the Submission Plan under **Regulation 16** of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations) that will be taken as part of plan-making / SEA.

12 PLAN FINALISATION

- 12.1.1 **Regulation 17** requires that the Local Authority submits (to the person appointed to carry out the Examination) the Proposed Plan and a copy of any representations which have been made in accordance with Regulation 16.
- 12.1.2 **Regulations 18 and 19** require that, subsequent to the Examination, the Local Authority publishes the Examiner's Report and a Decision Statement. The Decision Statement sets out whether or not the Local Authority is prepared to 'make' (i.e. adopt) the plan. If the Local Authority is prepared to make the plan, then a referendum can be held.
- 12.1.3 **Regulation 20** states what the Local Authority must do when the plan is 'made' (i.e. adopted). The SEA Statement must be published alongside the made Plan, with a view to providing:
- information on the decision, i.e. an explanation of why the final plan approach was decided-upon in light of SEA and consultation; and
 - measures decided concerning monitoring.

13 MONITORING

- 13.1.1 At the current time, there is a need to present 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring'.
- 13.1.2 Section 6.2 of the plan document deals with monitoring, putting in place a mechanism for an annual meeting to discuss plan implementation, and then a formal review of the plan after five years if necessary. This approach is broadly supported.
- 13.1.3 A key matter to monitor / discuss at the annual meetings will be the impacts of the Greenlight site, e.g. in respect of traffic / road safety and perceptions of village landscape and historic character. Should it transpire that impacts are greater than currently envisaged; then there could be a strong basis for setting more stringent policy (to be applied when determining any future applications), with a view to avoiding cumulative impacts to East Hagbourne. There is a need to avoid the gradual erosion of the villages' unique qualities, which are valued by residents, and which can and should contribute to Didcot Garden Town objectives.

APPENDIX I - REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

As discussed in Chapter 2 above, Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans Regulations 2004 explains the information that must be contained in the Environmental Report; however, interpretation of Schedule 2 is not straightforward. Table A links the structure of this report to an interpretation of Schedule 2 requirements, whilst Table B explains this interpretation.

Table A: Questions answered by this Environmental Report, in-line with an interpretation of regulatory requirements

	Questions answered		As per regulations... the Environmental Report must include...
Introduction	What's the plan seeking to achieve?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes
	What's the SEA scope?	What's the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level • Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
		What's the sustainability 'baseline'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan • The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected • Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
		What are the key issues and objectives that should be a focus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e. provide a 'framework' for) assessment
Part 1	What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (and thus an explanation of the 'reasonableness' of the approach) • The likely significant effects associated with alternatives • Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives assessment / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan
Part 2	What are the SEA findings at this current stage?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan • The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan
Part 3	What happens next?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of the monitoring measures envisaged

Table B: Questions answered by this Environmental Report, in-line with regulatory requirements

Schedule 2	Interpretation of Schedule 2		
The report must include...	The report must include...		
(a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	i.e. answer - <i>What's the plan seeking to achieve?</i>	i.e. answer – <i>What's the scope of the SA?</i>
(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan	Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'context'?</i>	
(c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'baseline'?</i>	
(d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;	The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan'		
(e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected		
(f) the likely significant effects on the environment including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;	Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance	i.e. answer - <i>What are the key issues & objectives?</i>	
(g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan;	Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of appraisal		
(h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information	An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (i.e. an explanation of the 'reasonableness of the approach')	i.e. answer - <i>What has Plan-making / SA involved up to this point?</i> [Part 1 of the Report]	
(i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring.	The likely significant effects associated with alternatives, including on issues such as... ... and an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of the alternatives considered / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan.		
	The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan	i.e. answer - <i>What are the assessment findings at this current stage?</i> [Part 2 of the Report]	
	The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan		
	A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring	i.e. answer - <i>What happens next?</i> [Part 3 of the Report]	

Whilst Tables A and B signpost broadly how/where this report meets regulatory requirements, as a supplement, Table C presents a discussion of more precisely how/where regulatory requirements are met.

N.B. it is worth recalling that this report is an update to the Environmental Report, which was published for consultation alongside the pre-submission version of the plan in March 2018.

Table C: 'Checklist' of how and where (within this report) requirements have been, are and will be met.

Regulatory requirement	Discussion of how requirement is met
Schedule 2 of the regulations lists the information to be provided within the Environmental Report	
a) An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Chapter 3 ('What's the plan seeking to achieve') presents this information.
b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	These matters have been considered in detail through dedicated scoping work, which has involved dedicated consultation on a Scoping Report (2017). The 'SEA framework' – the outcome of scoping - is presented within Chapter 4 ('What's the SEA scope?'). Also, more detailed messages - i.e. messages established through context and baseline review - are presented within Appendix II.
c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	
d) Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.;	
e) The environmental protection, objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	<p>The SEA framework is presented within Chapter 4 ('What's the scope of the SEA'). Also, messages from the context review are presented within Appendix II.</p> <p>With regards to explaining "<i>how... considerations have been taken into account</i>", Chapter 8 explains the Parish Council's 'reasons for supporting the preferred approach', i.e. explains how/why the preferred approach is justified in-light of alternatives assessment (and other factors).</p>
f) The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects);	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 7 presents alternatives assessment findings (in relation to housing growth, which is a 'stand-out' plan policy area). Chapters 10 presents an assessment of the Pre-submission Plan. <p>As explained within two separate methodology sections (one dealing with alternatives assessment methodology and the other draft plan assessment methodology), as part of assessment work, consideration has been given to the SEA scope, and the need to consider the potential for various effect characteristics/dimensions.</p>

Regulatory requirement	Discussion of how requirement is met
g) The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	The assessment highlights certain tensions between competing objectives, which might potentially be actioned by the Parish Council, when finalising the plan. Also, a number of specific recommendations are made.
h) An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	<p>Chapters 5 and 6 deal with 'Reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with', in that there is an explanation of the reasons for focusing on particular issues and options.</p> <p>Also, Chapter 8 explains the Council's 'reasons for selecting the preferred option' (in-light of alternatives assessment).</p> <p>Methodology is discussed at various places, ahead of presenting assessment findings, and limitations are also discussed as part of assessment narratives.</p>
i) description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Art. 10;	Chapter 13 presents measures envisaged concerning monitoring.
j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	The NTS is a separate document.
The Environmental Report must be published alongside the draft plan, in-line with the following regulations	
authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1, 6.2)	<p>The Environmental Report was published alongside the Draft Plan, under Regulation 14, in March 2018, in order to ensure informed consultation responses.</p> <p>At the current time, this Environmental Report Update is published alongside the submission version of the plan.</p>
The Report must be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.	
The environmental report prepared pursuant to Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of any transboundary consultations entered into pursuant to Article 7 shall be taken into account during the preparation of the plan or programme and before its adoption or submission to the legislative procedure.	<p>Assessment findings presented within the Environmental Report (March 2018), alongside consultation responses received, informed plan finalisation tasks undertaken by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee.</p> <p>Assessment findings within this report will inform the Examination of the plan.</p>

APPENDIX II - CONTEXT AND BASELINE REVIEW

Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 4 (What's the scope of the SA?) the SA scope is primarily reflected in a list of objectives ('the SA framework'), which was established subsequent to a review of the sustainability 'context'/ 'baseline', analysis of key issues, and consultation. The aim of this appendix is to present a summary key issues emerging from context/baseline review.

Overview

The parish lies to the south of Didcot and comprises the main village, as well as the small hamlet of Coscote to the west, and Hagbourne Mill on the road to Blewbury. The Parish also includes an area of recent residential development on the southern edge of Didcot, known as Bishop's Orchard. East Hagbourne has a population of 1,158 (Census 2011).

Biodiversity

There are no European or nationally protected sites for biodiversity and/or geodiversity located within or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Mowbray Fields Local Nature Reserve is located directly adjacent to the northern boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area. Managed by the Earth Trust, the LNR contains a pond, wetland area and a wildflower meadow supporting a variety of species including five nationally scarce and 41 locally scarce species.

There are three Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats located within or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan area, including patches of deciduous woodland, lowland calcareous grassland and traditional orchard.

Climate change

In relation to greenhouse gas emissions, source data from the Department of Energy and Climate Change suggests that the district of South Oxfordshire has had consistently higher per capita emissions total than that of both the South East of England and England as a whole since 2005. South Oxfordshire has seen a 14.1% reduction in the percentage of total emissions per capita between 2005 and 2012, less than the reductions for the South East (18.2%) and England (17.6%).

A main climate change risk relates to flood risk. The majority of the Neighbourhood Plan area is located within Flood Risk Zone 1, showing that there is a <0.1% chance (1 in 1000) of river flooding in any given year. There are areas of land surrounding Hakka's Brook and its tributaries which are located within Flood Risk Zone 3, and have a >1% chance of being flooded each year. Additionally, there are a number of properties along Blewbury Road, Main Road, Wilcher Close, Lake Road, Harwood Road and Fieldside which are located in Flood Risk Zone 2 and have a 0.1-1% chance of being affected by fluvial flooding in any given year. Figure A shows current fluvial flood risk within the parish.

Figure A: Fluvial flood risk



Surface water drainage and sewer flooding is also a risk for some parts of the Neighbourhood Plan area, with sections of medium-high risk predominantly located around Hacca's Brook and its tributaries. Sections of the road network are the main areas at risk within the village of East Hagbourne, principally along Main Road and Blewbury Road, although road drains along New Road are also liable to blocking.

Flood risk

Flooding and managing the water environment are becoming issues of ever greater concern to planning. Development should not be permitted in areas of flooding risk (NPPF para. 100) and Emerging Policy ENV4 will ensure that development will protect watercourses.

The water courses that pass through the Parish, dominated by Hacca's Brook, The Mill Brook and its tributaries are an important feature defining the character of the Parish. The land is fairly level and so the fall along these streams is gentle. Over many years, the streams have been susceptible to flooding, sometimes putting local houses at risk. Flooding is an underlying national, regional and local problem exacerbated by climate change. Development of land that would add to the incidence of flooding damaging property within and adjacent to the new development would normally be opposed. The water courses are also a positive asset, providing areas for quiet relaxation and harbouring green borders which are valuable for wildlife.

Some areas of East Hagbourne lie in areas designated by the Environment Agency and Flood Zones 2 & 3 as detailed in the Character Assessment. Houses at Main Road around Parsonage Lane and at Tadley have been affected repeatedly in recent years. The length of Hacca's Brook including the southern village plotlands are an important feature in absorbing high water levels and regular maintenance is important to maintain its performance. This work is currently carried out by local volunteers. The northern channel of Hacca's Brook which runs through Butts Piece and Lawson's Orchard under culverts is also susceptible to flooding and can overflow at Main road near Parsonage Lane.

Flood and water management are clearly matters that must be dealt with across a range of Government Departments and within the parish. SUDS (sustainable urban drainage) are likely to be promoted in the future and should be used in addition to traditional measures to provide maximum protection from future flooding events.

Historic Environment

East Hagbourne's history is evident in both its built environment the surrounding landscape. Centred around Main Road is the Conservation Area first designated in 1970 and extended in the year 2000. The Conservation Area contains 47 Listed Buildings and structures including the Grade I Listed medieval church, as well as many important green spaces. The SODC Conservation Area Assessment (2000) identified a number of buildings, trees and views of local merit which complement and provide the environment for those buildings that have statutory listing. Figure B shows the Conservation Area and statutory listed buildings, as well as the North Wessex Downs AONB to the south.

Views into and out from the Conservation Area are of great importance. Protection of views to and from East Hagbourne church, a Grade 1 Listed building, and its setting at the western end of the village, are of paramount importance. There are particularly fine views from the public right of way on the former Didcot to Newbury/Southampton railway line towards St Andrew's Church and its setting.

The East Hagbourne Village Character Assessment and Landscape Study (2017) describes the village's historic setting within an agricultural landscape, its development from the earliest times through to the present. Significant features identified include the rare examples of medieval field pattern, ridge and furrow farming, a stock funnel, ancient farms and barns, orchards, and medieval archaeology.

In consultation meetings/workshops and in the responses to the Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey(NPCS) residents made it quite clear that they felt very strongly that planning should be strictly controlled in the Conservation Area and many people felt that this area should be expanded. The preservation and protection not only of historic buildings but also the environment and setting of these buildings was also strongly supported. Residents valued the high quality and sometimes unusual types of buildings. Many also valued some of the eccentricities of the old village including the twists and turns on Main Road, the non-uniform/sometimes absent pavements, the low level of street lighting and absence of "street furniture" all combining to create the unique charm of the Conservation Area.

The following is a short discussion of East Hagbourne over time -

There is evidence of occupation of the area during the Iron Age and the village was one of the larger centres in this area in Saxon times. East Hagbourne is listed in the Domesday Survey (1086) and this is recorded in a plaque on the wall of the previous Post Office in Main Road. Throughout its history East Hagbourne has been involved in agriculture, and the Domesday record listed 14 farms and two mills in the area.

In the 19th/20th century the village was known for orchards, water cress beds and hops with one remaining hop kiln at Manor farm. Hops can still be found growing in hedgerows. East Hagbourne was known for paper making and it is said that blotting paper was invented here.

The railway line between Didcot and Newbury, built in the late 19th century, came through East Hagbourne and is used today as a cycle and walking trail. Most development up to the 19th century was in the area around Main Road and Fieldside with some down Bakers Lane.

In the middle of the 20th century there was significant ribbon development along New Road and Blewbury Road and substantial areas of social housing were established close to the historic village in the Harwood Road/Wilcher Close area.

The boundary of the Parish has been progressively modified as Didcot has grown, the last change being in 2015 when an area of Millbrook amounting to 300 houses, formerly in East Hagbourne, was transferred to Didcot Parish. The distinction between town and village has thus been reinforced.

Landscape

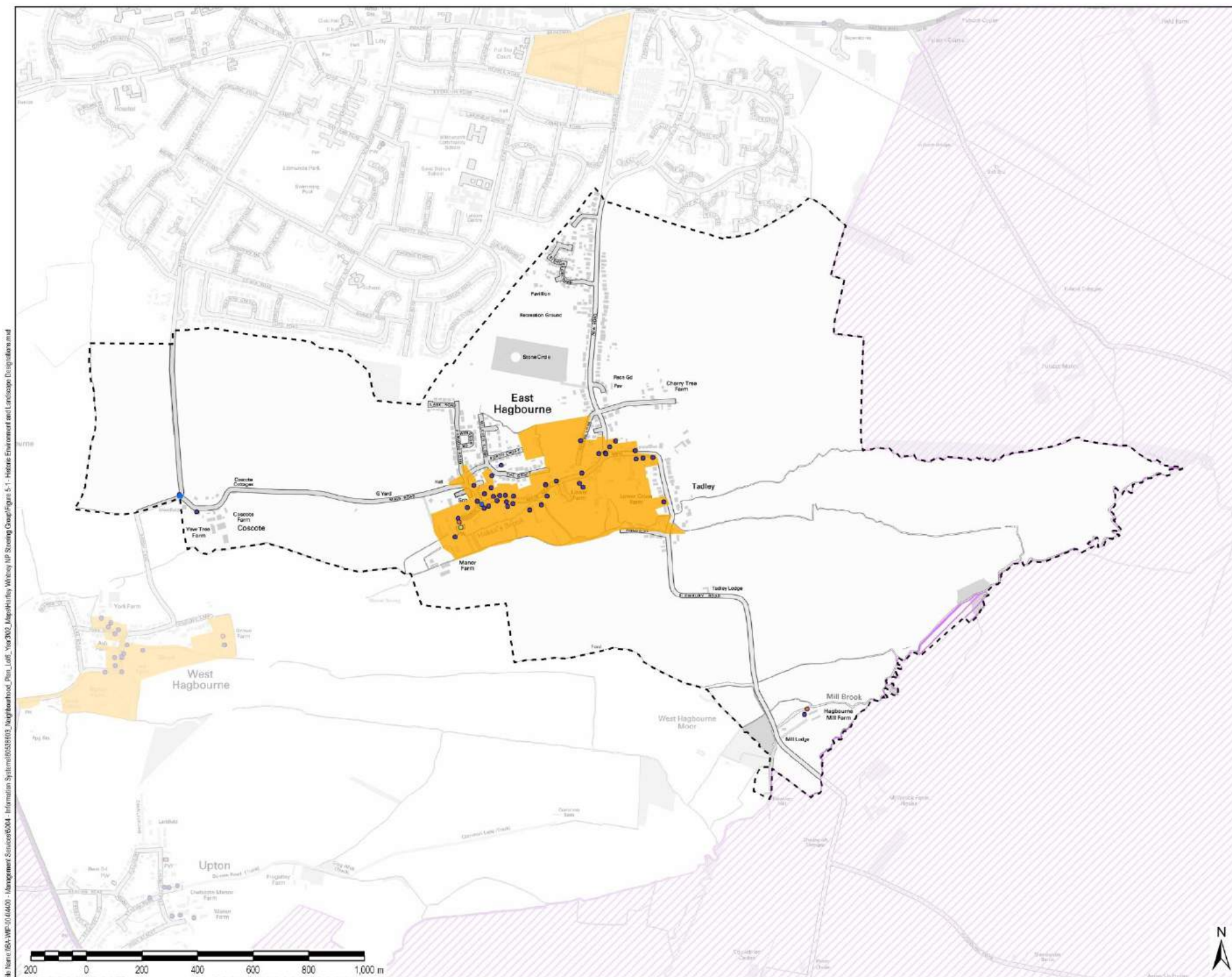
Despite the proximity to Didcot, East Hagbourne has retained a strong rural character. There are extensive views east towards the Chilterns AONB, and south/west to the North Wessex Downs AONB (Blewburton Hill and the Ridgeway). As fields surrounding the village are generally flat and of an open nature such long distance views both in and out of the village are readily obtained and are key to its setting.

Within the village envelope there are paddocks, allotments and areas dedicated to nature. There are several active farms, with the frequent sight of farm vehicles a reminder of this. The very extensive network and mixed variety of footpaths add greatly to the village character, bringing fields and the village closely together, and excellent footpath accessibility from the southern edge of Didcot means that many people from the town are also able to enjoy the high quality environment.

East Hagbourne's built and natural environment is highly valued by local people and visitors, as evidenced in the Community Survey (2017). The loss of farmland which provides the setting to the historic village and some of which has clear evidence of ancient "ridge and furrow" farming is of particular concern to villagers as expressed in the Community Survey. The Character Assessment (2017) was commissioned to record current features of value and to analyse threats to their preservation and enhancement.

The figure below is a reproduction of Figure 5.1 from the SEA Scoping Report (2017). It presents key landscape and heritage constraints affecting East Hagbourne.

File Name: H&A-WP-01-04-001 - Management Services004 - Information Systems\0535912_Neighbourhood_Plan_L06_V04302_Maps\Hagthorpe Wherry NP Steering Group\Figures 5-1 - Historic Environment and Landscape Designations.mxd



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LEGEND

- East Hagbourne Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Record of Scheduled Monument
- Conservation Area
- North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Listed building**
 - Grade I
 - Grade II
 - Grade II*

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Project of Issue: **DRAFT**

Client: **EAST HAGBOURNE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP**

Project Title: **STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE EAST HAGBOURNE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Drawing Title: **HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS**

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Date
ON	JW	NCS	07/12/2017

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Land and natural resources

The low resolution 'provisional' agricultural land quality dataset, which has national coverage, shows the majority of agricultural land in this area to be 'grade 2', with lower quality ('grade 4') agricultural land in the vicinity of water courses. This provides a strong indication that much of the agricultural land surrounding East Hagbourne (and potentially the great majority of land that is not subject to flood risk) is 'best and most versatile' as defined by the NPPF (best and most versatile is defined as land that is grade 1, 2 or 3a).

A much higher resolution dataset exists, known as the 'Post 1988 agricultural land classification', showing agricultural land quality on a field-by-field basis and with a high degree of certainty (as data collection involves soil surveys); however, the coverage of this dataset is very patchy. In the vicinity of East Hagbourne there is a relatively high coverage of available data, with data available for large areas of land to the north of the village. The data shows this land to comprise agricultural land of grade 1, 2 and 3a quality, which provides another strong indication of widespread best and most versatile agricultural land.

Flowing eastwards from the hamlet of Coscote, 'Hakka's Brook' is the principal watercourse passing through the Neighbourhood Plan area. The brook joins 'Mill Brook' in the neighbouring parish of South Moreton, where it eventually joins the River Thames.

The Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) requires Member States to identify areas where groundwater has nitrate concentrations of more than 50 mg/l nitrate or is thought to be at risk of nitrate contamination. Areas associated with such groundwater are designated as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs), and as such, they are recognised as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. Member States are required to establish Action Programmes in order to reduce and prevent further nitrate contamination. NVZs for 2017-2020 started on January 1st 2017, including new areas of NVZs and excluding areas that have been re-designated. The entirety of the Neighbourhood Plan area is located within the 'Mill Brook and Bradfords Brook System, Wallingford' Surface Water NVZ and the 'Berkshire Downs' Groundwater NVZ.

Population and wellbeing

For its size, the village is well provided for in terms of community facilities. It has a well-established successful primary school, pre-school, a village hall, public car park, church, small community run shop with post office, a single pub and a sports field with children's play area and a new Pavilion building. Except for the school which is OCC funded, these facilities are however, considered to be economically vulnerable and/or dependent upon community volunteers.

In the Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey (2016), residents expressed a desire for additional facilities and activities for teenagers, village based medical facilities and a daytime social facility such as a café. The village may need land for future expansion of community facilities such as Hagbourne Village Hall, the village car park or possibly Hagbourne School.

High Speed Broadband is available in the village, but is currently unable to reach the area most remote from the fibre optic box. Manor Farm Lane in particular has poor broadband speed.

Housing

A Housing Needs Assessment was commissioned to provide a more comprehensive understanding based on regional and national data as well as the input from the Community Survey. The conclusions and recommendations of the HNA covered five areas:

Affordable housing

In July 2016, East Hagbourne had 64 affordable homes owned/managed by South Oxfordshire Housing Association and centred on Harwood Rd/Wilcher Crescent/New Road. This represents approximately 12% of the total housing stock. The 2011 Census gives a slightly higher figure of 14.9% social rented, compared with a figure of 9.8% for the whole of South Oxfordshire. In the Community Survey (2016) 22 of the 2014 respondents said they would like to move within East Hagbourne and of these 3 expressed an interest in Housing Association rented accommodation, six in shared ownership.

Owner occupied housing is the dominant tenure in East Hagbourne. Affordability is worsening in South Oxfordshire district and in East Hagbourne. The attractive environment of East Hagbourne means that property prices are likely to continue to enjoy a premium over those in town. The provision of further affordable housing would provide the means for those families starting their first home to live in the village.

Both rental and ownership schemes including share-ownership schemes and 'starter homes' are important to enable people to better their position as they are able. Provision of private rented accommodation provides an additional diversity of opportunity for those wishing to stay or move to the community. The HNA identified a very low level of private rented accommodation in the parish.

Demand and need for smaller dwellings

Between the last two censuses, there were significant increases in the number of households living in large homes, although this was not necessarily correlated with larger families. All of the demographic data analysed points towards a need for smaller homes in the parish. The need for smaller dwellings is two-fold. Those starting on the housing ladder require smaller and economical houses. Their needs will be partly met through affordable housing, but there is also a need for market housing that is achievable by younger families and those not eligible for social housing. There is also a need for smaller houses for those later in life who may wish to downsize and who may be less constrained on cost.

Demographic change

Many people stay in the village for many years and would like to continue living there as they grow older. 'Lifetime suitable homes' give people the ability to stay in their own home as they age. Houses should be designed for adaptability, having regard for such features as door and corridor width. Some provision could also be made in the housing mix for bungalows to cater for those who cannot manage stairs.

There is a local need for 17 additional specialist units over the plan period; however, this need could be met outside the parish. Provision of accommodation providing special care can best be made in larger population centres where economy of scale can be achieved. For those who can still live independently smaller retirement properties in the village could be welcomed.

Transport

The two key routes are: the B4016 connecting to Didcot (approximately 1km to the north, where it joins the A4130) and Blewbury (approximately 3km to the south, where it joins the A417); and Main Road, which extends westwards from the village centre of East Hagbourne to the nearby settlements of Coscote (approximately 750m) and West Hagbourne (approximately 1km).

As Didcot expands, the road network - particularly Main Road and the B4016 (Blewbury Road/New Road) - is experiencing increasing levels of through traffic and the speed and weight of some of the vehicles is considered to be particularly problematic on what are typically narrow rural roads.

East Hagbourne benefits from its proximity to Didcot Parkway Station; however its access to bus services is limited and declining and those remaining are financially vulnerable. The principal route through the Neighbourhood Plan area is the number 94/94A, which connects East Hagbourne with Blewbury to the south and Didcot to the north. As of July 2016, there is roughly one service per hour during weekdays.

National Cycle Network Route 544 extends southwards through the western section of the Neighbourhood Plan area and connects Didcot to Wantage. The route is approximately 19km in length and is predominantly along traffic-free paths. The section of the route which passes through the Neighbourhood Plan area is located along a dismantled railway.

There is a particularly extensive network of footpaths passing through the Neighbourhood Plan area, connecting residents to the surrounding settlements of Didcot (to the north), South Moreton (to the east), Blewbury (to the south) and West Hagbourne (to the west)

Within the village, parking particularly close to village assets such as the school/pub/shop is limited and on street parking can cause local congestion. There is an identified need for more parking in the area of the Village Hall and School

APPENDIX III - REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES

Introduction

As explained within 'Part 1' above, a focus of work has been on the development and assessment of 'reasonable' alternative housing growth scenarios, with a view to informing determination of the preferred strategy. The reasonable alternatives are as follows –

- 1) Allocate Greenlight only (74 homes) only
- 2) Allocate both Greenlight (74 homes) and Orchestra (up to 78 homes)

Assessment methodology

For each of the options, the assessment examines **likely significant effects** on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability objectives identified through scoping (see Table 4.1) as a methodological framework. **Green** is used to indicate significant positive effects, whilst **red** is used to indicate significant negative effects. Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high level nature of the policy approaches under consideration. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline (now and in the future under a 'no plan' scenario). In light of this, there is a need to make considerable assumptions regarding how scenarios will be implemented 'on the ground' and what the effect on particular receptors would be. Where there is a need to rely on assumptions in order to reach a conclusion on a 'significant effect' this is made explicit in the assessment text.¹⁹

Where it is not possible to predict likely significant effects on the basis of reasonable assumptions, efforts are made to comment on the relative merits of the alternatives in more general terms and to indicate a **rank of preference**. This is helpful, as it enables a distinction to be made between the alternatives even where it is not possible to distinguish between them in terms of 'significant effects'.

Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking into account the criteria presented within Regulations.²⁰ So, for example, account is taken of the duration, frequency and reversibility of effects. Cumulative effects are also considered (i.e. where the effects of the plan in combination with the effects of other planned or on-going activity that is outside the control of the East Hagbourne Neighbourhood Plan).

Assessment findings

Assessment findings are presented below within 13 separate tables (each table dealing with a specific sustainability objective) with a final table drawing conclusions.

The assessment methodology is explained above, but to reiterate: For each sustainability topic the performance of each scenario is categorised in terms of 'significant effects (using **red** / **green**) and also ranked in order of preference. Also, ' = ' is used to denote instances of all alternatives performing on a par.

N.B. Option 1 (allocate Greenlight only) is close to - but not the same as - the baseline situation, recognising that the baseline situation is - on the balance of probability - one involving development of the site. The implication is that it is not possible to identify significant effects in relation to Option 1. This reflects the fact that 'significant effects' are defined, more precisely, as significant effects *on the baseline*.

¹⁹ Conclusions reached on significant effects in relation to Option 4 - the Council's preferred option - are supplemented within Chapter 10 of this report, which presents an assessment of the draft plan - i.e. the preferred spatial strategy plus supporting policies.

²⁰ Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features

	Option 1 Greenlight only	Option 2 Both Greenlight and Orchestra
Rank	=	=
Significant effects?	No	
Discussion	<p>Neither site in question can be considered highly sensitive, from a biodiversity perspective, and it is not likely that developing both sites in combination would lead to any notable 'in-combination' effect. ' Orchestra (Option 2) comprises part of an extensive open agricultural field along the southern edge of which runs Hakka's Brook, which is associated with mature riparian habitat and considered to represent an important ecological corridor; however, it is anticipated that any development scheme would involve delivery of new greenspace along the brook. This could potentially lead to an improvement on the baseline situation, including in green infrastructure terms, as this northern arm of the brook is currently not accessible by public right of way.</p> <p>In conclusion, the alternatives are judged to perform broadly on a par, and significant effects are not predicted.</p>	

Reduce the level of contribution to climate change

	Option 1 Greenlight only	Option 2 Both Greenlight and Orchestra
Rank	=	=
Significant effects?	No	
Discussion	<p>Neither site would be of a scale whereby it could be expected that low carbon measures would be delivered over-and-above those required by building regulations. As such, there is no potential to differentiate between the alternatives in respect of the potential to minimise per capita CO2 emissions from the built environment.</p> <p>In respect of per capita emissions from transport, both sites also perform similarly, as there would be broadly equivalent opportunity to walk to village facilities and also walk to a bus stop. Greenlight (Options 1 & 2) benefits from proximity to the long distance cycling route along the dismantled railway; however, it is not clear that this is a significant consideration.</p> <p>In conclusion, the alternatives are judged to perform broadly on a par, and significant effects are not predicted.</p>	


Support resilience to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding

	Option 1 Greenlight only	Option 2 Both Greenlight and Orchestra
Rank	=	=
Significant effects?	No	
Discussion	<p>Orchestra (Option 2) comprises part of an extensive open agricultural field along the southern edge of which runs Hakka's Brook, which is associated with a narrow floodplain; however, it is anticipated that any development scheme would involve delivery of new greenspace along the brook, thereby avoiding built development within the flood risk zone.</p> <p>There are also concerns regarding increased surface water flows into the brook leading to increased downstream flood risk (Tadley); however, there is little certainty. There is often good potential to mitigate/avoid increased surface water flows through sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). Indeed, the current planning application on the site proposes drainage improvements that could potentially lead to an improvement on the baseline situation.</p> <p>In conclusion, the alternatives are judged to perform broadly on a par, and significant effects are not predicted.</p>	


Protect, maintain and enhance the cultural heritage resource

	Option 1 Greenlight only	Option 2 Both Greenlight and Orchestra
Rank	★ 1	2
Significant effects?	No	
Discussion	<p>Greenlight (Options 1 & 2) is located close to the historic core of the village, and there are extensive views across the site from the community 'hub' comprising the village hall and primary school. As such, the site could contribute to the setting of the Conservation Area to some extent. There are also views south/eastwards across the site from the dismantled railway at the site's western extent (which is a popular walking/cycling route) towards the Grade 1 listed church. The view is somewhat distant (c.3-400m) but potentially significant.</p> <p>However, in respect of Greenlight (Options 1 and 2), concerns are allayed on the basis of analysis presented within the recent Committee Report, dealing with planning application P17/S2469/O for 74 homes. In particular, the conclusion is reached that: <i>"Historic views of the church from Main Road would not be impacted upon by the proposed development. At reserved matters stage it will be important to ensure that the materials and details of the proposed dwellings are appropriate to this location. As such the Conservation Officer raises no objection to the application subject to conditions to ensure a sympathetic design and layout."</i></p> <p>With regards to Orchestra (Option 2), concerns are fewer; however, it is important to consider the risk that the access junction with Blewbury Road would be located adjacent to the Conservation Area, and (assuming it would be located on the sharp bend in the road) almost directly opposite one grade II listed building.</p> <p>In conclusion, Greenlight is the more sensitive site, but there are also certain sensitivities associated with Orchestra. As such, Option 2 is the less preferred option. It is not possible to conclude significant negative effects, however.</p>	

Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and townscales

	Option 1 Greenlight only	Option 2 Both Greenlight and Orchestra
Rank		2
Significant effects?	No	Yes
Discussion	<p>Neither site can be described as ‘contained’ within the landscape, reflecting the open nature of the farmland surrounding the village; however, they are associated with differing issues.</p> <p>Greenlight (Options 1 & 2) is highly visible and prominent within the landscape, but benefits from being located on the side of the village away from the AONB. It is also the case that there is a natural boundary to the site, in the form of the dismantled railway line (no a walking/cycling route), such that there is limited risk of further ‘sprawl’, which in turn would give rise to a strong risk of coalescence with Didcot.</p> <p>Orchestra (Option 2) is mostly screened from viewpoints within the existing village envelope by existing housing, although the development would clearly be visible from its access junction with Blewbury Road (where as currently motorists glance farmland and agricultural buildings). However, the site would be very prominent in views south from two public rights of way (a footpath and a bridleway) that extend east from the village. Views to the AONB (Blewburton Hill) would be affected, and it could also be that the scheme is visible from one or more viewpoints within the AONB. It is recognised that there would be much potential to mitigate impacts through sympathetic layout, landscaping and design; however, significant concerns persist nonetheless.</p> <p>In conclusion, Option 2 performs worse, and it is possible to conclude the potential for significant negative effects, given the risk of AONB-related impacts.</p>	

Ensure the efficient and effective use of land.

	Option 1 Greenlight only	Option 2 Both Greenlight and Orchestra
Rank		2
Significant effects?	No	Yes
Discussion	<p>The low resolution nationally available ‘provisional’ agricultural land quality dataset serves to highlight the likelihood of both sites comprising best and most versatile agricultural land. Whilst data has not been uploaded onto the magic.gov.uk website, it is also understood that detailed survey work has been completed as part of the Greenlight site (Options 1 & 2), and found that the site does indeed comprise best and most versatile agricultural land (grade 3a).</p> <p>With regards to Orchestra (Option 2), detailed survey work has not been completed (as far as we are aware); however, it is noted that detailed data is available for the field adjacent to the north, finding the field to comprise best and most versatile land of the highest quality, namely ‘grade 1’ quality.</p> <p>In conclusion, Option 2 performs worse, and it is possible to conclude the potential for significant negative effects, given the risk of grade 1 agricultural land being lost.</p>	

Promote sustainable waste management solutions

	Option 1 Greenlight only	Option 2 Both Greenlight and Orchestra
Rank	=	=
Significant effects?	No	
Discussion	It should be possible to achieve sustainable waste management under all of the housing growth scenarios under consideration.	

Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.

	Option 1 Greenlight only	Option 2 Both Greenlight and Orchestra
Rank	=	=
Significant effects?	No	
Discussion	<p>Orchestra (Option 2) is located adjacent to Hacca's Brook; however, it is difficult to suggest the likelihood of development leading to increased pollution entering the stream, recognising that the 'baseline' situation is one whereby the field in question is used for agricultural purposes, and also recognising the potential to design-in sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) as part of any development scheme. Furthermore, it is anticipated that open space would be retained along the brook, with a view to delivering new accessible greenspace / green infrastructure.</p> <p>In conclusion, the alternatives are judged to perform broadly on a par, and significant effects are not predicted.</p>	

Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve access to community services and facilities.

	Option 1 Greenlight only	Option 2 Both Greenlight and Orchestra
Rank	=	=
Significant effects?	No	
Discussion	<p>In terms of proximity to village facilities, Greenlight (Options 1 & 2) is close to the school, village hall and pub, whilst Orchestra (Option 2) is closer to the village shop, post office and garage and pavilion. As such, both sites are relatively well located, in terms of accessibility to existing community facilities.</p> <p>With regards to Greenlight (Options 1 & 2), a primary concern is that traffic associated with the new housing could worsen existing congestion around the school and village hall. There might be the potential for development to deliver new public car-parking, and hence potentially help to relieve existing issues; however, there is no certainty regarding the potential to deliver such community benefits through the development scheme. Another consideration is that the site would naturally lend itself to development for some form of community use, thereby contributing to the formation of a clear community hub within the village.</p>	

With regards to **Orchestra (Option 2)**, there is understood to be good potential to deliver strategic new greenspace / green infrastructure as part of a development scheme; however, there must be some uncertainty regarding precisely what can and would be achieved, ahead of detailed agreements being reached.

In **conclusion**, it is difficult to conclude that Option 2 is less preferable, and so the alternatives are judged to perform broadly on a par.


Reduce deprivation and promote a more inclusive and self-contained community.

	Option 1 Greenlight only	Option 2 Both Greenlight and Orchestra
Rank	=	=
Significant effects?	No	
Discussion	<p>As discussed above, both sites are relatively well located in respect of proximity to existing community facilities within the village. There is little risk of the new community at either site 'turning its back' on the village and instead associating more closely with Didcot.</p> <p>Another consideration is the in-combination effect of allocating both sites. There would likely be some negative implications associated with such a large expansion of the village, in respect of the objective to maintain the existing strong sense of community and 'feel' of the village. This is an important consideration, albeit one that is obviously difficult to quantify in any way, or even draw conclusions in respect of 'significance'.</p> <p>In conclusion, it is difficult to conclude that Option 2 is less preferable, and so the alternatives are judged to perform broadly on a par.</p>	

Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures.

	Option 1 Greenlight only	Option 2 Both Greenlight and Orchestra
Rank	2	1
Significant effects?	No	Yes
Discussion	<p>There is little to choose between the two site options, with both being of a similar scale, and both equally able to deliver an appropriate housing mix.</p> <p>Allocation of both sites is the preferable option, recognising the housing needs that existing District-wide, and it is possible to conclude significant positive effects; however, Option 1 would also involve significantly exceeding the housing target assigned to the village by the South Oxfordshire Local Plan (as understood from the proposed submission plan, 2017).</p>	

Improve the health and wellbeing residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

	Option 1 Greenlight only	Option 2 Both Greenlight and Orchestra
Rank		2
Significant effects?	No	
Discussion	<p>Road safety is a primary concern at both sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenlight (Options 1 & 2) gives rise to concerns due to its location close to the village primary school, and given the fact that there is also considered to be a problematic level of traffic congestion giving rise to road safety concerns. • Orchestra (Option 2) is potentially even more constrained in respect of road safety, as the access junction with the Blewbury Road would seemingly need to be on a sharp, almost 90 degree bend in the road. <p>Construction traffic is another consideration. In this respect, Greenlight (Options 1 & 2) is preferable, as there will be the potential to access the site without passing through the village.</p> <p>In conclusion, Option 2 performs worse, given concerns in respect of the Orchestra site, and also concerns regarding 'in-combination' effects associated with growth on this scale, i.e. development of both sites. It is difficult to conclude the likelihood of 'significant' effects, however, in the absence of detailed evidence.</p>	

Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.

	Option 1 Greenlight only	Option 2 Both Greenlight and Orchestra
Rank	N/a	
Significant effects?	N/a	
Discussion	<p>Matters relating to access to community facilities by walking/cycling, and also matters relating to traffic congestion / road safety, have already been discussed above. As such, in order to avoid double-counting, this objective is recorded as 'not applicable'.</p>	

Summary alternatives assessment findings

Objectives	Option 1 Greenlight only	Option 2 Greenlight & Orchestra
Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features	=	=
Reduce the level of contribution to climate change	=	=
Support resilience to the potential effects of climate change, inc. flooding	=	=
Protect, maintain and enhance the cultural heritage resource	★1	2
Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and townscapes	★1	2
Ensure the efficient and effective use of land .	★1	2
Promote sustainable waste management solutions	=	=
Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.	=	=
Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community....	=	=
Reduce deprivation and promote a more inclusive and self-contained community .	=	=
Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing , and ensure an appropriate mix....	2	★1
Improve the health and wellbeing residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area.	★1	2

Assessment conclusion

The broad conclusion is that allocation of both sites (Option 2) would lead to a range of concerns over-and-above Option 1, most notably in respect of landscape and loss of best and most versatile (potentially 'grade 1') agricultural land. It is fair to conclude that allocation of both sites (Option 2) is supported in respect of 'housing' objectives; however, this is not a clear cut conclusion, as there is evidence to suggest that local housing needs (i.e. needs arising from the Parish) would be met under Option 1.

N.B. it is important to highlight a degree of uncertainty regarding the conclusion that Option 1 would be preferable in respect of the objectives identified above (heritage, landscape, land etc). This is on the basis that Option 1 could feasibly give rise to a risk of speculative applications receiving permission. This risk would arise under a scenario whereby SODC has a land supply of between three and five years, and a planning inspector tasked with deciding a planning appeal does not accept that allocating the Greenlight site only through the EHNP results in the 'protection' provided by the December 2016 Ministerial Letter (see discussion at para 6.2.4), and para 14 of the NPPF (2018), being engaged. It is the view of SODC and the Parish Council, at the current time, that allocation of Greenlight only (Option 1) should lead to the protection being engaged; however, there is a degree of uncertainty in the absence of known national precedents on this matter.