

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report

February 2020

Quality information

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Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorised	Name	Position
V1	04/12/19	Report for QB review	05/12/19	Mark Fessey	Associate Director
V2	27/01/20	Report for Locality review	27/01/20	Mark Fessey	Associate Director
V3	11/02/20	Final for issue	11/02/20	Cheryl Beattie	Senior Environmental Planner

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1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM is commissioned to lead on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan (WNP). The WNP is being prepared by Winkfield Parish Council in the context of the saved policies of the Bracknell Forest Local Plan (2002), Bracknell Forest Core Strategy (2008) and the Site Allocations Local Plan (2013). The WNP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies within these plans, which together comprise the Development Plan. The WNP is also being prepared mindful of the emerging Bracknell Forest Comprehensive Local Plan (CLP). Once the WNP has been 'made' (following a successful referendum) it will form part of the Bracknell Forest development framework, at which time it will have material weight in the determination of planning applications, i.e. applications relating to changes in land use.
- 1.2 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 WNP is a legal requirement.¹

SEA explained

- 1.3 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 SEA. 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.
- 1.4 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**?

This Environmental Report

- 1.5 This report is the Environmental Report for the WNP. It is published alongside the draft – 'pre-submission' – plan, under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012). This report essentially answers **questions 1, 2 and 3** in turn, in order to provide the required information.³ 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 WNP was subject to screening in 2017, 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.

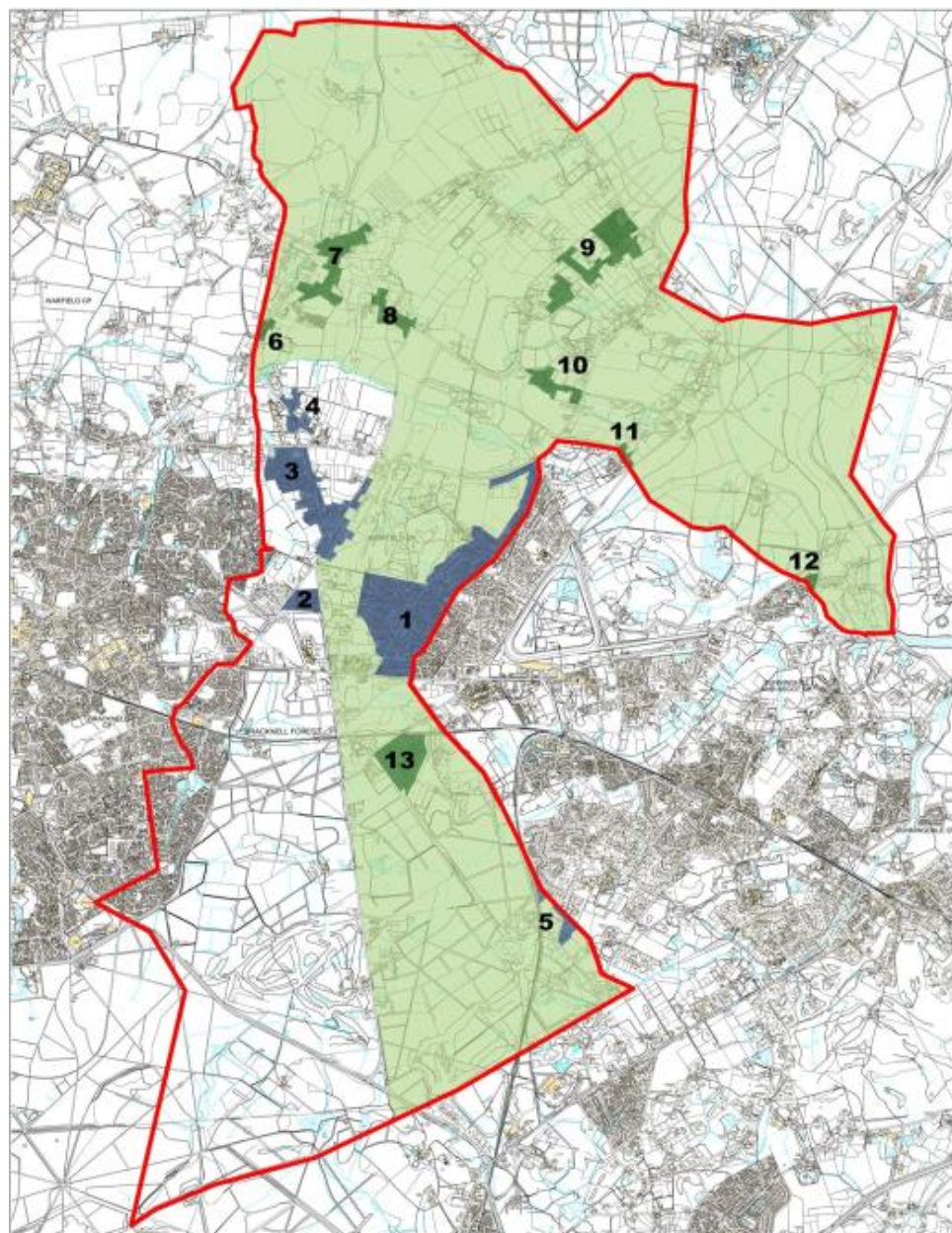
³ See **Appendix I** for further explanation of the regulatory basis for answering certain questions within the Environmental Report, and a 'checklist' explaining more precisely the regulatory basis for presenting certain information.

2. What is the plan seeking to achieve?

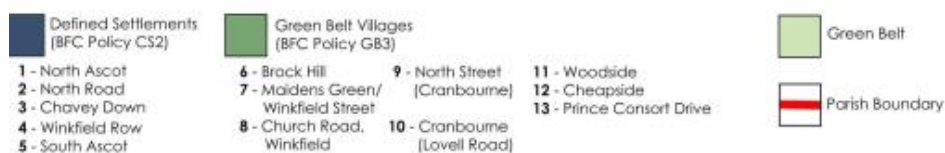
Introduction

- 2.1 With a view to introducing the aims and objectives of the WNP, this section gives consideration to the strategic planning policy context provided by the current Bracknell Forest Local Plan, and the emerging Comprehensive Local Plan, in turn. It then presents the WNP vision and objectives. **Figure 2.1** shows the area covered by WNP.

Figure 2.1: The Neighbourhood area



Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan - Settlement Boundaries
November 2017



The current Bracknell Forest Local Plan

2.2 While the strategic policies of the Development Plan have not been defined by BFC for neighbourhood planning purposes, the following list indicates a number of relevant policies for the neighbourhood area -

- EN1: Protecting Trees and Hedgerow Cover
- EN2: Supplementing Tree and Hedgerow Cover
- EN3: Nature Conservation
- EN4: Local Nature Reserves
- EN7: Other important archaeological remains
- EN10: Areas of local landscape importance
- EN20: Design consideration in new development
- GB1: Building in the Green Belt
- GB5: Syngenta
- R7: Countryside Recreation
- CS1: Sustainable Development Principles
- CS2: Locational Principles
- CS6: Limiting the Impact of Development
- CS7: Design
- CS8: Recreation and Culture
- CS9: Development on Land Outside Settlements
- CS23: Transport
- CS24: Transport and New Development

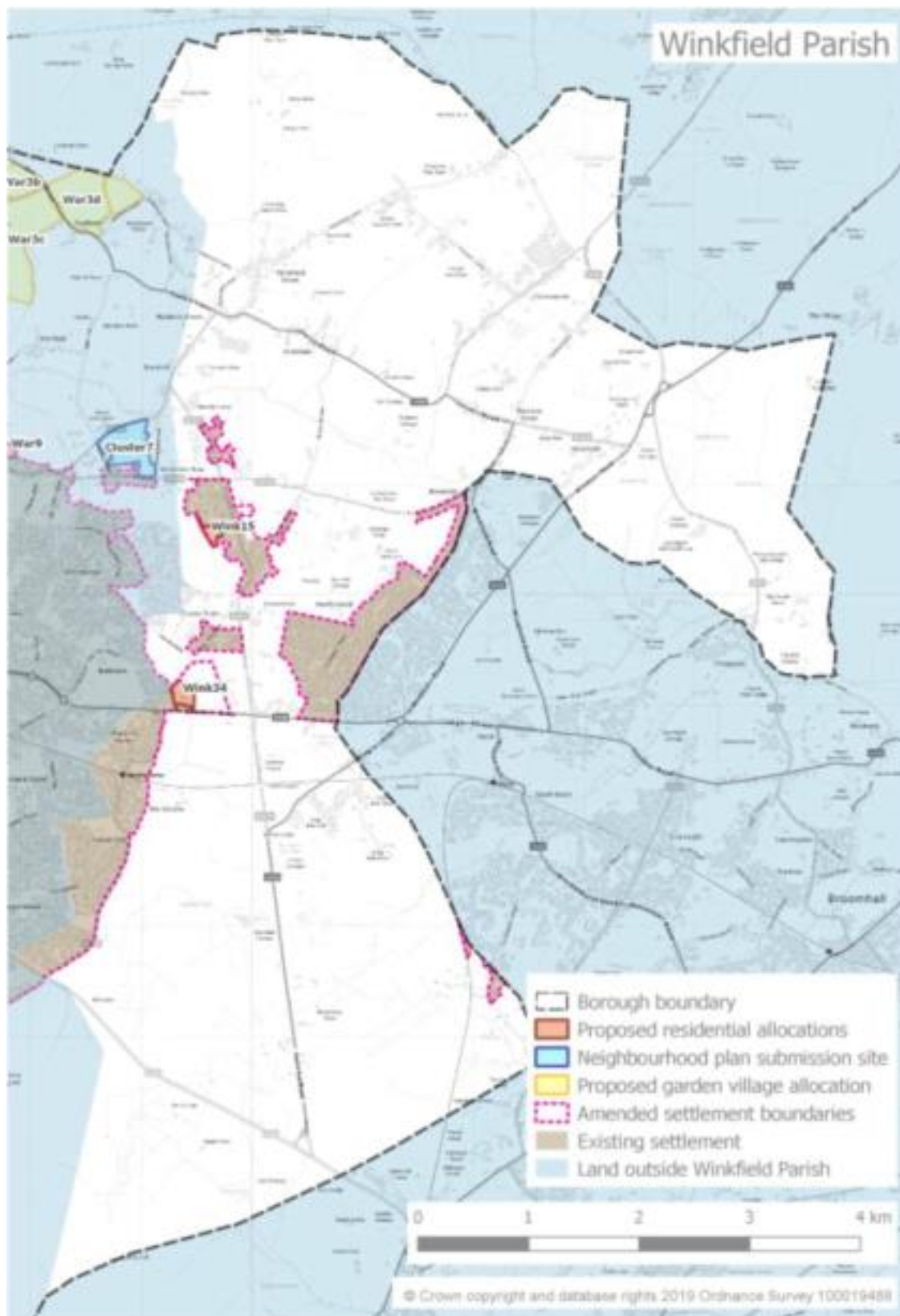
2.3 This list is not exhaustive and is not confined to strategic policies, but it does reflect the comprehensive, if somewhat dated in some cases, policy coverage of the Development Plan. The weight that the Neighbourhood Plan attaches to each policy may vary depending on the extent to which the policy is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The emerging Comprehensive Local Plan

2.4 The Comprehensive Local Plan will replace the Development Plan in the near future. A 'Revised Growth Strategy' was consulted upon between October and December 2019, and notably proposed two allocations for Winkfield Parish - see **Figure 2.2**.

2.5 The Parish Council have in consultation with BFC, sought to influence the strategic context for growth during the preparation of the Local Plan. While the local community is supportive of growth it wishes to see such growth at small sites distributed across the parish and the Parish Council will continue to respond to Local Plan consultations with regards to this matter. In the case of some policies it will be essential that the Neighbourhood Plan and new Local Plan are mutually supporting, and its reasoning and evidence has been taken into consideration in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Figure 2.2: Proposed allocations within Winkfield Parish in the emerging Comprehensive Local Plan



WNP vision and objectives

2.6 The vision for Winkfield Parish in 2036 is -

“Winkfield has retained its villages and hamlets separated by countryside gaps and the essential character of the Green Belt has been preserved. Development has been well-designed and contributes positively to the visual character of the local surrounding’s heritage. Community facilities and services have survived and flourished. The special environmental assets of the Parish have been preserved and the community has benefitted from access and enjoyment of the countryside.”

2.7 To achieve this vision a number of key objectives have been identified as follows -

- To promote high quality design and ensure the design of new development contributes positively to the visual heritage and landscape character of the local surroundings
- To safeguard the integrity of the gaps between settlements
- To meet the housing needs of the parish by supporting a mix of housing types and tenures to ensure development works for everyone and is in locations with good access to services
- To secure the long-term future of community, cultural, educational and recreational facilities
- To encourage new local employment and retail opportunities within settlements
- To maintain and enhance the quality and abundance of environmental assets and ensure no significant effects on the Thames Basin Heath SPA
- To increase the number of local journeys undertaken on foot, cycle or by public transport
- To reduce the harmful impact of road traffic on the parish
- To avoid increasing and where possible resolve existing flooding, sewerage and drainage problems

2.8 Early consultation and ongoing engagement with the local community has established that safeguarding gaps between settlements is a key issue for the WNP. Most residents – 88% agree, including 71% agreeing strongly - would support the establishment of a local gap so that Bracknell and Ascot remain separated by a green strip of land stretching from Winkfield Row to Martin’s Heron. More generally, feedback has shown strong support for retaining the separation between villages, and protecting the semi-rural character of the area.

2.9 Meeting housing needs is another key issue that has been given very close consideration throughout preparation of the WNP. An early aim of the WNP was to allocate a package of small sites in order to meet specific local needs for housing and small-scale employment. This led to 23 small site options being identified and presented to the public (through a public exhibition) in late 2017. However, the motivation for allocating land for development through the WNP reduced significantly following publication of the Draft CLP in early 2018.

2.10 Regardless of whether the WNP allocates sites, there is the potential for the WNP to influence development in the Parish. Specifically, there is the potential to set policy to -

- guide the development of the sites allocated through the CLP; and
- inform decisions on whether or not to permit windfall sites (i.e. non-allocated sites) and again guide the nature of development that comes forward on such sites.

What is the WNP not seeking to achieve?

- 2.11 It is important to emphasise that neighbourhood plan-making is a relatively strategic undertaking, in that consideration of some detailed issues naturally fall outside its scope, in the knowledge that such issues can be sufficiently addressed through subsequent planning applications. The strategic nature of the plan is reflected in the scope of the SEA.

3. What is the scope of the SEA?

Introduction

- 3.1 The aim here is to introduce the reader to the scope of the SEA, i.e. the sustainability issues/objectives that should be a focus of (and provide a methodological framework for) SEA. Further information on the scope of the SEA is presented in **Appendix II**.

Consultation

- 3.2 The SEA Regulations require that “when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”. In England, the consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England.⁴ As such, these authorities were consulted in late 2017.⁵

The SEA framework

- 3.3 Table 3.1 presents the list of topics and objectives that form the core of the SEA framework.

Table 3.1: The SEA framework

SEA topic	SEA objective
Air quality	Prevent, reduce and/or mitigate against all sources of environmental pollution in order to continually improve air quality in the Winkfield Neighbourhood Area
Biodiversity	Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features
Climate change	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the Neighbourhood Area
	Support the resilience of the Neighbourhood Area to the potential effects of climate change, including all types of flooding
Economy	Create opportunities for local residents to find or grow employment locally
Landscape and historic environment	Protect, maintain and enhance the cultural heritage resource, including the historic environment and archaeological assets located within the setting of the Neighbourhood Area
	Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape and townscapes
Land, soil and water 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

⁴ In line with Article 6(3) of the SEA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected ‘by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programmes’.

⁵ The SEA Scoping Report is available on the Neighbourhood Plan website

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 of residents within the Neighbourhood Area

Transport

Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel

Part 1: What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?

4. Introduction (to Part 1)

- 4.1 The aim here is to explain how work was undertaken to develop and assess **reasonable alternatives** in autumn 2018, ahead of finalising the Pre-submission Plan.
- 4.2 By way of context, the SEA Regulations require that reasonable alternatives are assessed in time to inform preparation of the draft plan, and then that assessment findings are published in the Environmental Report for consultation alongside the draft plan, with a view to enabling informed and effective consultation.

Structure of this part of the report

- 4.3 This part of the report is structured as follows -
- Chapter 5** - explains the process of **establishing** reasonable alternatives;
 - Chapter 6** - presents the outcomes of **assessing** reasonable alternatives; and
 - Chapter 7** - explains reasons for **establishing** the preferred option, in light of the assessment.

Who's responsibility?

- 4.4 It is important to be clear that -
- **Establishing reasonable alternatives** - is ultimately the responsibility of the plan-maker, however it is naturally the case that AECOM is well placed to advise.
 - **Assessing the reasonable alternatives** - is the responsibility of the SEA consultant, namely AECOM.
 - **Establishing the preferred option** - is the responsibility of the plan-maker.

5. Establishing the reasonable alternatives

Introduction

5.1 Establishing the reasonable alternatives involved answering two questions -

- Alternatives in relation to what?
- What are the reasonable alternatives?

5.2 Each of these two questions is addressed in turn below.

Alternatives in relation to what?

5.3 The regulatory requirement is to examine reasonable alternatives taking into account the “objectives and geographical scope of the plan”.

5.4 The objectives of the plan have already been discussed previously (Section 2), with the conclusion reached that there are certain key objectives, and in turn certain key policy issues/areas to be addressed through the plan, namely -

- Local gaps
- Allocation of land for development and potential site options

5.5 Each of these policy issues is discussed in turn below, before a final section draws a conclusion in respect of the question: *Alternatives in relation to what?*

Local gaps

5.6 As identified previously, early consultation and ongoing engagement with the local community has established that safeguarding gaps between settlements is a key issue for the WNP.

5.7 The Bracknell Forest Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) identifies that previous evidence has highlighted the area between Bracknell and North Ascot as providing physical separation between the settlements, and visual separation is enhanced by the amount of woodland cover. Bracknell and Ascot have very distinct and separate identities, and the area most under threat of coalescence is North Ascot (as the area closest to Bracknell). However, North Ascot is separated from Bracknell by the Green Belt. The proposed Local Gap would extend this area to the west to include land outside of the Green Belt located between the two settlements. This will also serve smaller settlements in this area - Chavey Down, Winkfield Row and Hayley Green – in maintaining their separate identities.

5.8 The LCA has identified key valued features and characteristics within this area, including; the continuous and extensive network of woodland, areas of natural and undeveloped character which provide physical and visual separation, ponds, pastoral fields, views across clearings, former rides, public access, historic features, enclosed character, framed views and recreational areas. Given these values; the report recommends that this area should continue to form a gap/separation function and could be given an extra layer of protection by drawing a boundary which is linked to a policy specific to settlement separation and settlement identity.

5.9 The evidence provided through the LCA has thus led to the identification of the preferred area to designate a Local Gap, and any alternative option will not be supported by evidence and is less likely to achieve the aims and objectives of the WNP. As such, no reasonable alternative options for the location of Local Gaps can be identified at this stage.

Allocation of land for development

- 5.10 Meeting housing needs is another key issue that has been given very close consideration throughout preparation of the WNP. An early aim of the WNP was to allocate a package of small sites in order to meet specific local needs for housing and small scale employment, and 23 small site options were identified and presented to the public (through a public exhibition) in late 2017.
- 5.11 Since the time, the emerging CLP has identified a number of potential site allocations within the Neighbourhood area, which were released for consultation in early 2018 and revised at the end of 2019. As such, the motivation for allocating land for development through the WNP has reduced significantly. Whilst the Parish Council has identified a preference for small sites there is the potential that larger sites will be identified through the Local Plan.
- 5.12 The Parish Council responded to the Draft Plan consultation and raised concerns about the proposed allocations and their impact on the parish. While the local community is supportive of growth it wishes to see such growth in a number of small sites distributed across the parish and the Parish Council will continue to respond to Local Plan consultations with regards to this matter.
- 5.13 At this stage, the Parish Council are faced with two alternative options in the approach to allocating land within the WNP; to allocate preferred small sites to deliver new development, or to not allocate sites and instead continue to respond to and influence site allocations emerging through the Local Plan. These two options are taken forward for SEA as reasonable alternative options for growth in the Neighbourhood area.

Conclusion

- 5.14 As demonstrated above, a key issue therefore is in distinguishing the scope of influence for the WNP and how this relates to the objectives of the emerging CLP. Whilst the WNP does seek growth, it is to be determined whether this growth will be directed through the WNP or the emerging CLP.

What are the reasonable alternatives?

- 5.15 As identified previously, 23 sites were presented to the public in late 2017, which comprised sites identified through the Local Plan, or submitted following a 'call for sites' in 2016/17. The emerging Local Plan will continue to explore the potential of the sites identified through its development and as such it is not considered necessary to duplicate this work here.
- 5.16 The 8 sites that were submitted for consideration through the 'call for sites' – identified in **Table 5.1** below - were subject to sites assessment to identify capacities for development. Stage 1 assessment discounted two of the sites, recommended consultation with Bracknell Forest Council (BFC) prior to any further assessment of 4 of the sites and recommended that one site – Land South of Claverton, Long Hill Rd – be put forward for Stage 2 capacity assessment.
- 5.17 As such at this stage of the process, only one site option is considered to have the capacity for development. The sites that require further consultation with BFC includes sites located within the Green Belt and sites potentially conflicting with a Conservation Area. As such, these sites have also been discounted at this stage as largely a consideration for the Local Plan rather than the WNP.

Table 5.1: Site options considered within the Sites Assessment for the WNP

Site Name	Call for sites / SHELAA ref	% suitability for housing	First sieve reason for inclusion / rejection
The Nook, Cocks Lane, Warfield RG42 6JE	WNP1	7	Remote from settlement and in Green Belt. Non-strategic policy compliant and inconsistent with spatial strategy.
Moat Farm, Winkfield Lane, Winkfield SL4 4SR	WNP3	12	In green belt. Discuss development potential with BFC and exceptional circumstances.
Land at Maidens Green / Bracknell Rd, Maidens Green, Winkfield	WNP8 / Wink1	11	In Green Belt but on edge of settlement. Discuss development potential with BFC and exceptional circumstances.
Stirrups Country House, RG42 6LD	WNP4	9	Remote from settlement and in Green Belt. Non-strategic policy compliant and inconsistent with spatial strategy.
Land adjacent to Oaktree Nursery, Bracknell RG42 6LD	WNP6	8	If no conflict with CA discuss development potential (with site WNP7 below) with BFC and whether exceptional circumstances? Unlikely to be acceptable in terms of GB1 however.
Land adjacent to Oaktree Nursery, RG42 6LD	WNP7	7	If no conflict with CA discuss development potential with site WNP6 above with BFC – exceptional circumstances?
Keepers Cottage, Forest Rd, SL5 8QU	WNP5	6	Adjacent proposed Winkfield Row Draft Plan Allocation LP6 and within Green Belt. No exceptional circumstances
Land South of Claverton, Long Hill Rd, Ascot SL5 8RE	WNP2	12	This site is part of a larger site already put forward (Wink19) but excludes the Woodland area. Recommend taking forward for Stage 2 capacity assessment – housing or employment

5.18 The reasonable alternative options have therefore been established as follows:

- **Option 1:** No allocations within the WNP – instead the Parish Council will work closely with the BFC to influence the direction and level of growth within the Neighbourhood area
- **Option 2:** Allocate sites for development within the WNP – this will involve allocating the one site that has been identified for its potential capacity for development – Land South of Claverton, Long Hill Rd.

6. Appraising reasonable alternatives

Introduction

6.1 The aim of this chapter is to present assessment findings in relation to the growth scenarios introduced above.

Alternatives assessment findings

6.2 **Table 6.1** presents summary assessment findings in relation to the two growth scenarios, with more detailed assessment findings presented within **Appendix III**. With regards to methodology - 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** – no colour is used if no significant effect is considered likely) 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).

Table 6.1: Summary alternative assessment findings

Objectives	Option 1:	Option 2:
Air Quality	1	2
Biodiversity	1	2
Climate Change	1	2
Economy	=	=
Landscape and Historic Environment	1	2
Land, Soil and Water Resources	1	2
Population and Communities	2	1
Health and Wellbeing	2	1
Transportation	1	2

Assessment conclusion

Overall, the assessment has largely identified Option 1 as performing better against a wider range of SEA Objectives; predominantly due to the omission of any development thus removing the potential for both positive and negative effects.

The development site proposed under Option 2 would deliver new homes to contribute to meeting local residents needs with the potential for long term positive effects. The site is considered to be in a relatively accessible location with ample recreational opportunities; benefitting communities and resident health and wellbeing in the long term.

The development site proposed under Option 2 has also been identified for its potential for long term negative effects on a range of SEA themes:

- **Biodiversity:** of greatest significance is the potential for negative effects on biodiversity through direct land take within a Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat. Development is considered to have the potential for long term negative effects on the remaining habitat through air, noise and light pollution and disturbance. The woodland habitat forms part of a network of habitats in the area that connect with the Englmere Pond SSSI and LNR and as such the site is considered to have the potential for indirect negative effects on a nationally designated site. The development site falls within the associated SSSI Impact Risk Zone where any residential development with a total net gain in residential units will require further consultation with Natural England.
- **Air Quality, Transportation and Climate Change:** the additional development is considered to have the potential for negative effects on the local highways network, and the site is in relatively close proximity to a designated AQMA. However, given the scale of development at the site, and its relatively good accessibility to a train station these effects are likely to be minor.
- **Landscape:** development at the site would result in the loss of woodland. Woodland in this area is identified within the Landscape Character Assessment as contributing to the visual separation of Bracknell and North Ascot. As such the loss of these trees is considered to negatively affect the landscape in this area.
- **Efficient land use:** the loss of greenfield land is considered to lead to minor long-term negative effects on land resources.

It is however important to note that whilst Option 1 is identified as performing better against a greater number of SEA themes, the option is dependent upon the Local Plan to deliver development that will positively affect communities, the natural and built environment and the economy, and as such, by pursuing this option, there is less certainty and less local influence.

7. Developing the preferred approach

- 7.1 This section presents the Parish Council's reasons for developing the preferred approach in light of alternatives assessment. The Parish Council has stated -

"The WNP recognises the need to successfully absorb a modest amount of additional housing and employment provision. Ideally, they wish to see this provided on previously developed land. However, 75%+ of the Winkfield Neighbourhood Area is covered by Green Belt and much of the remaining land is subject to strategic gap policy, within open countryside (away from settlements) or covered by woodland. National Policy continues to afford strong Green Belt protection and the Draft Local Plan confirms that no areas in Winkfield have been identified for removal from the Green Belt. As such, the NP is not able to allocate land for development in the Green Belt unless in exceptional circumstances.

After extensive community engagement by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) it has been firmly established that there is a strong preference for consideration of small-scale housing rather than one or two large sites as they are easier to integrate and are less likely to damage the existing character of the various settlements or put pressure on the existing road infrastructure.

Subject to no conflict with the detailed design guidance of this document, WNP wishes to be permissive of non-strategic small development sites (<0.5 hectare) which are brownfield or within or adjacent to the boundaries of settlements. Such development should be sustainable and secure a wider range of types and tenures of new homes to serve local needs.

Disappointingly, despite a 'Call for Small Sites' in 2017 and further analysis of smaller sites identified by Bracknell Forest Council in their own studies, the NPSG has been unable to recommend, thus far, any sites to be taken forward for detailed assessment. Most of the sites proposed are within the Green Belt whilst the residue is considered too remote from settlements, not sustainable or prejudicing strategic gap policy."

Part 2: What are the SEA findings at this stage?

8. Introduction to Part 2

8.1 This part of the report presents an assessment of the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

Methodology

- 8.2 The assessment identifies and evaluates 'likely significant effects' on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability objectives identified through scoping (see Table 3.1) as a methodological framework.
- 8.3 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.
- 8.4 Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking account of the criteria presented within Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. 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 WNP 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.

9. Assessment of the plan

Introduction

9.1 The draft Neighbourhood Plan contains 14 policies, listed below:

Policy theme	Policy
	W1. A spatial plan for the Parish
Design and Character	W2. Promoting high quality design in the Parish
	W3. Promoting high quality design in the character areas
Housing	W4. Housing type, size and choice
	W5. Rural Exception Sites and Entry-Level Exception Housing
	W6. Promoting Dark Skies
Community	W7. Community facilities
	W8. Education provision
Business/Employment	W9. Employment and Retail
Green Infrastructure	W10. Biodiversity and wildlife corridors
	W11. Local Gaps
Promoting Sustainable Transport	W12. Pedestrian/cycle network
	W13. Martins Heron Station
	W14. Parking, garaging and ancillary buildings

9.2 The assessment is presented below under nine topic headings, one for each of the SEA objectives identified through the scoping exercise as discussed in Chapter 3.

Air quality

Commentary

- 9.3 The air quality SA objective seeks the improvement of air quality through preventing, reducing or mitigating pollution sources. The SEA scoping report does not identify any significant existing air quality issues within the Parish so there are few baseline problems to improve upon, though of course any improvement in air quality represents a positive step. There are limited direct references within the plan to achieving this objective but indirect effects on air quality can be inferred from a number of policies.
- 9.4 Policy W1 establishes a spatial plan for the Parish which is strongly supportive of maintaining the *'the unique character of the Parish and the local distinctiveness of individual settlements and villages'* and the preservation of the *'multi-functional role of our green network'* in the Parish. There is no specific air quality focus to this spatial approach but it is reasonable to infer that preservation of natural environment, particularly when so much is forested in the Parish, will contribute to the ongoing mitigation of pollution sources such as car emissions.
- 9.5 Similarly, policies W10 and W11 focus on the preservation and strengthening of biodiversity corridors and strategic local gaps, all of which are approaches which can be expected to preserve existing established open and planted areas to the exclusion of pollution emitting uses. This is considered to align well with the SEA objective to mitigate pollution though it is passive in terms of impact on air quality and is unlikely to actively reduce existing sources of pollution.

- 9.6 Policy W12 requires that all new developments provide direct access to the existing network of cycle/ pedestrian routes including improving or extending the network where possible. It is considered that this approach is positively geared towards encouraging sustainable transport choices and that this in turn will help minimise and mitigate the likely extra car journeys resulting from new development.
- 9.7 Similarly, policy W13 also seeks to encourage sustainable transport use by offering in-principle support for train station improvements at Martins Heron including extended and more secure cycle storage and the extension of existing bus routes to serve the station. However, improvements are not linked to any particular development scheme and the policy provides in-principle support only. Improvements to cycle storage and bus access may enable some users to take sustainable transport rather than private vehicle though the effect on overall air quality from this would be difficult to measure and unlikely to be significant.

Conclusion

- 9.8 It is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a **neutral effect** on the air quality SEA objective.

Biodiversity

Commentary

- 9.9 The biodiversity SA objective focusses on the protection and enhancement of all biodiversity and geological features in the Parish. There is a clear awareness throughout the Neighbourhood Plan of the importance of avoiding harm to Winkfield's natural environment and the significance of Winkfield's natural spaces to many facets of the Parish. Consequently, whilst policy W10 most directly addresses biodiversity there are a number of other policies with biodiversity implications.
- 9.10 Policy W10 is clear that new development should '*maintain and enhance existing on-site biodiversity assets, delivering a biodiversity gain for the Parish*'. The inclusion of net gain is significant as it closely aligns the Neighbourhood Plan with the SEA objective to go beyond simply protecting assets from harm. W10 provides good detail on the specific kinds of measures which will help achieve this aim, including '*wildlife corridors*' between habitats and '*green space, landscape buffers and water bodies*' which align with the aims of the Winkfield Green Infrastructure Report. The supporting text of W10 identifies specific wildlife corridors for protection via LWS designation.
- 9.11 Policy W2 feeds into this objective by outlining design principles for new development, including the need to '*safeguard and enhance biodiversity*' through the development process. Policy W6 further protects dark skies which will limit light pollution impacts on nature conservation providing further protection benefits for biodiversity.
- 9.12 Although Green Belt and Local Gaps are land use rather than ecological designations their preservation of areas of openness is likely to have implications for habitats and wildlife corridors within those undeveloped spaces. Policy W11 defines four specific Local Gaps and although this is primarily to prevent settlement coalescence the supporting text of the policy notes that these spaces may offer '*important nature conservation value*'. The supporting text further identifies ecological features, such as woodland, ponds and hedgerows that support both biodiversity and landscape values.

Conclusion

- 9.13 It is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a **positive effect** on the biodiversity SEA objective.

Climate change

Commentary

- 9.14 The climate change SEA objective has the dual focus of reducing the contribution of the Neighbourhood Area to climate change and supporting resilience to the potential effects of climate change, particularly flooding. Policy W2 goes some way to supporting this objective as it clearly establishes that new development schemes must be able to demonstrate that they “*will not increase the risk of fluvial, foul or surface water flooding*”. This policy will potentially help support reliance to the effects of climate change but does not require new development to help reduce the contribution of the Parish. However, it is noted that the SEA scoping report did not identify extensive high fluvial or surface water flood risk within the Parish and the baseline for flood risk appears relatively low. It is considered that higher-tier policies in the Development Plan, such as Policy CS10 (Sustainable Resources) in the adopted Core Strategy, will continue to require best practice in construction including the use of SUDS and effective management of water and that in this context policy W2 of the Neighbourhood Plan is reasonable.
- 9.15 Policy W2 also includes a requirement for a new development proposal to ‘*demonstrate that it has had regard to solar orientation*’. This is considered an appropriate measure to help future-proof new schemes by facilitating the future installation of domestic solar panels. As solar panels become more affordable over time, they will present domestic households with the opportunity to source more of their electricity from sustainable sources and a policy position which encourages this is considered positive.
- 9.16 Policy W2 clearly requires that new development minimise or mitigate impacts on “the provision of infrastructure for waste management, water supply and wastewater” ensuring local policy support for the timely provision of new infrastructure to adequately support new development in the Parish. Enhancing the drainage capacity in the Parish could help mitigate the effects of climate change.
- 9.17 Other policies are likely to have an effect on the climate change objective. For example, there are clear synergies between sustainable transport and climate change as encouraging more people to use public transport or walk/cycle will reduce the number of private car users and, by extension, emissions. As noted under the air quality topic heading, Policy W12 is considered likely to remove some potential additional users from the road network by ensuring new development is well connected to new and existing walking and cycling infrastructure, encouraging sustainable transport choices. The supporting text of W12 identifies opportunities for enhancing the existing cycle network which new development could have the potential to contribute to delivering slower increases in future emissions.
- 9.18 Additionally, the Green Infrastructure policies, W10 and W11, are both considered likely to contribute to mitigating the contribution of the Parish to climate change by preserving areas of open and green space. This will continue to play a role in soaking up harmful emissions whilst also ensuring the overall development footprint in the Parish remains sustainable.

Conclusion

- 9.19 It is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a **positive effect** on the climate change SEA objective.

Economy

Commentary

- 9.20 The economy SEA objective looks for the creation of opportunities for new or enhanced local employment. The Neighbourhood Plan notes that currently ‘*there is no obvious demand*’ for new

employment though it is positive about creating conditions within which future opportunities might come forward.

- 9.21 In this context policy W9 is positive and flexible, offering in-principle support for '*B1, B2 and B8 uses and flexible start-up accommodation*' (where this does not harm A1 uses) as well as '*proposals to enable working from home*' where such proposals require planning permission, and much needed "*local retail facilities*". It is considered that these measures could help preserve a degree of rural vitality, both by protecting local retail from conversion and also by supporting increased levels of working from home. Both could help lessen the dormitory effect of significant out-commuting to nearby service centres.
- 9.22 Policy W9 also provides in-principle support for proposals, which lead to an increase in jobs through providing higher density employment on existing sites. It is considered that this position reflects the SEA objective to seek 'enhancement' of local employment opportunities in a manner which is proportionate given the significant Green Belt constraints within the Parish. In practice there are unlikely to be many employment sites with potential for significant densification, though major employers such as Tesco at Martins Heron may welcome this in-principle support for growth on existing sites.
- 9.23 In practice Winkfield parish will continue to service nearby employment centres and is unlikely to become a source of significant new employment as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan. It is considered that the Plan is appropriately positively geared to proportionate opportunities for creating new employment though is unlikely to significantly impact employment provision within the Parish.

Conclusion

- 9.24 It is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a **neutral effect** on the employment SEA objective.

Landscape and historic environment

Commentary

- 9.25 The landscape and historic environment SA objective has the dual focus of protecting and enhancing historic assets and protecting and enhancing landscape character and quality. Winkfield's location at the urban fringe of Bracknell and within the strategic gap between Bracknell and Ascot gives the Parish's attractive landscape a functional strategic purpose in addition to contributing to a local character. With a diverse range of environmental and historic assets across the Parish there are number of policies relevant to this objective.

Landscape

- 9.26 The significance of the landscape of the Parish to its overall character is signalled in policy W1, which notes that growth should "*respect the unique character of the Parish and the local distinctiveness of individual settlements and villages*". Policy W1 also notes that the contribution of the Green Belt is significant to the area's character and limits development within the Green Belt to small-scale infill opportunities. Whilst Green Belt is not a landscape designation it is considered that the openness which the Green Belt protects makes a key contribution to the character and setting of Winkfield. Policy W2 resists development within identified Strategic and Local Gaps which could contribute to coalescence (including cumulatively) and affect settlement identity, and restricts development in the countryside to appropriate uses (in line with the NPPF) where proposals can "*demonstrably protect and enhance the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and quality of the Landscape Character Area within which they are situated*". This includes measures such as appropriate density and layout in scheme design, which can help new development reflect and even enhance landscape characteristics from both the existing built and natural environments. The provisions of Policy W6 further seek to limit light pollution and protect dark skies as a landscape feature, identifying key sensitive locations where

development will need to consider the impacts of lighting proposals. The policy is considered for its supportive role in identifying the special landscape qualities of areas in the Parish and positive effects in this respect.

- 9.27 Local green gaps are identified and designated by policy W11 to ensure four specific areas of openness between settlements are maintained. As with the strategic openness provided by the Green Belt, local gaps are not primarily landscape designations in the sense that they do not protect areas of particular landscape quality. However, policy W11 notes that the gaps help protect the Parish's open character and the supporting text of W11 supplements this by observing that by preserving settlement gaps landscape plays an important role in defining the character of the area. Local gaps are afforded further protection by policy W1, which establishes the significance of local gaps to the overall spatial strategy of the Parish, and in policy W2 (viii) which clearly identifies that schemes will not be supported in principle if they '*compromise the integrity of a local gap*'. It is considered that this position appropriately reflects the landscape context of the Parish both in functional and character terms.
- 9.28 The Bracknell Forest Landscape Character Assessment (2015) provides a high-level assessment of the different landscape character areas within the District and this has fed into Policy W3, where design principles for each of the 15 identified character areas are provided. The principles will ensure that high-quality design reflecting the wishes of the community is delivered in development and maximise the potential for positive effects in this respect.

Heritage

- 9.29 Policy W2 sets out high level design criteria for the Parish in general with paragraph (iii) establishing heritage as a key focus. Significantly, the policy identifies that it is equally important to 'sustain and enhance' both the heritage asset itself and the setting of the asset. This is considered to be appropriate in the context of the SEA objective.
- 9.30 Policy W3 sets out specific detailed design principles for each of the fifteen character areas in the Parish with a view to protecting and enhancing the existing distinctive built character of each one and this is considered to align well with the SEA objective. The policy seeks to achieve a balance between providing detailed guidance whilst allowing for innovative responses. The policy links Conservation Area guidance (such as Conservation Area Appraisals) to the relevant character area to ensure that due consideration to this type of historic environment evidence is given in development proposals and highlights key significant assets within each (such as Winkfield Manor in North Ascot North).
- 9.31 Alongside the provisions of the NPPF and Local Plan, no negative effects are anticipated in relation to the historic environment.

Conclusion

- 9.32 It is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have an overall **positive effect** on the landscape and historic environment SEA objective.

Land, soil and water resources

Commentary

- 9.33 The land, soil and water resources SA objective requires the efficient and sustainable use of natural resources. This is potentially a broad objective though the focus on the efficient use of resources is key, particularly in terms of making the best use of previously developed land and avoiding harm to the best and most versatile agricultural land. This is underpinned by the principle that by achieving as much development as possible within existing built areas the impact on undeveloped land will be minimised. This in turn encourages the best use of space within built areas and helps avoid areas of the built environment falling into long term disuse at the expense of undeveloped land.

- 9.34 The Parish has areas of openness though much of this is not in agricultural use, particularly in the south of the Parish where a dense area of Bracknell Forest predominates. The central belt of the Parish includes the built areas of North Ascot and eastern Martins Heron but as the Parish opens out to the north there is an increasing amount of agricultural use. However, the SEA scoping report identifies only limited areas of the highest quality 'best and most versatile' land to the north of the Parish. As there are no allocations proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan it is considered unlikely that the plan will negatively impact the areas in productive agricultural use, particularly as these areas largely fall within the Metropolitan Green Belt and are therefore afforded significant protection from development.
- 9.35 Although the settlements within the Parish are relatively small in size there could still be potential for development opportunities on previously developed land though it is acknowledged that there are unlikely to be significant redevelopment opportunities in most small communities. The spatial plan for the Parish set out in policy W1 is clear that infill development in the Green Belt villages and other settlements will be supported in principle. The supporting text for policy W1 notes that such infill development is '*preferred to large scale development*' in principle and this is considered appropriately aligned with the SEA objective, particularly in the context of the land use constraints in the Parish.
- 9.36 In terms of water resources, Policy W2 seeks to ensure that "the impacts of new development on the provision of infrastructure for waste management, water supply and wastewater can be accommodated or mitigated" Whilst there is unlikely to be sufficient growth to necessitate infrastructure upgrades either through the Neighbourhood Plan or from windfall, it is considered that Policy W2 could play a role in ensuring development from the anticipated emerging local plan allocations delivers upgrades as necessary.

Conclusion

- 9.37 It is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a **positive effect** on the land, soil and water resources SEA objective.

Population and community

Commentary

- 9.38 The population and community SEA objective is wide ranging, encompassing access to community facilities for a range of groups, promoting inclusive communities and delivering high quality and affordable homes with a mix of types and tenures. As the Neighbourhood Plan is not seeking to allocate sites there may be a limit of the extent it can directly influence design, type and tenure details of the local plan allocations though it is certainly possible for Neighbourhood Plan policies to add detail to Local Plan allocations where this does not result in a conflict. Despite the absence of site allocations the Neighbourhood Plan establishes clear in-principle support for affordable housing provision via exception sites, as set out in policy W5. No specific sites are proposed though the policy states that exception sites could be "*adjacent to rural settlements to meet a local housing need*". It is considered that exception sites could be an effective way of contributing to meeting affordable housing need in the context of Green Belt and local gap constraint and that this could be an important supply of affordable homes.
- 9.39 Sustainable provision of market housing is also a critical element in meeting the current and future needs of a community. Policy W4 sets expected parameters for the type, size and choice of housing, which comes forward through new development in the Parish. The policy draws upon the 2016 Berkshire SHMA for evidence to support the proposed housing mix. It is considered that policy W4 seeks to achieve an ambitious mix of types and tenures for a Neighbourhood Area including:
- a preference for '*1, 2 and 3 bed homes*';
 - '*affordable homes including Starter Homes*';

- *'homes specifically developed for private rent'*;
 - *'serviced plots made available individually for purchase by self-builders'*; and
 - *'sheltered, extra care, and registered care provider provision'*.
- 9.40 It is considered that in principle this suite of housing types draws from a wide range of potential solutions for addressing housing need including the specific needs of different groups within the community, particularly first-time buyers and older residents looking to release larger homes to the market by downsizing. In this respect the Neighbourhood Plan is considered to be well aligned with the population and community SEA objective.
- 9.41 Similarly, in terms of securing new community facilities and infrastructure through planning gain mechanisms such as CIL and Section 106 the Neighbourhood Plan's lack of allocations may limit in the extent of its influence. Nevertheless, policy W7 clearly establishes measures to protect access to existing community facilities by defining thirteen specific assets within the Parish and setting out that *'proposals that will result in the loss of a community facility will be resisted'*. These facilities include community centres, village halls and the Winkfield Club. These kinds of facilities can support the distinctive identities of separate communities, providing important civic spaces for activities and events which strengthen cohesive village life. The policy also establishes in-principle support for proposals which *'sustain or extend the viable use of existing community facilities and the development of new facilities'*. It is considered that this represents a comprehensive position on protecting and enhancing access to key community facilities.
- 9.42 Although no growth is allocated the Neighbourhood Plan recognises that there is existing pressure on school capacity and future growth in the Parish from allocations in the emerging Bracknell Forest Local Plan could potentially exacerbate this. Therefore, it is considered appropriate that despite not allocating for housing the Neighbourhood Plan supports enhanced or expanded education provision to accommodate future population growth. This is provided via in-principle support in Policy W8 for proposals, which *'create or enhance state education facilities in the Parish'*. The policy is ambitious, setting out support for *'the creation of Secondary School provision in the parish'* in addition to expansion of existing primary capacity. It is considered this aligns with the SEA objective for catering for existing and future needs.
- 9.43 Taken together with Policy W12 (which requires new development to *'ensure safe access to existing cycle and pedestrian routes'* and *'improve or extend the footpath and cycle path network'*) it is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan takes a proportionate and appropriate policy position on ensuring access to local services and facilities.

Conclusion

- 9.44 It is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a **positive effect** on the population and community SEA objective.

Health and wellbeing

Commentary

- 9.45 The health and wellbeing SEA objective is, simply, for development to improve residents' health and wellbeing outcomes. Health and wellbeing are influenced by a wide range of factors which will vary by local context, some of which are realistically beyond the scope of the Neighbourhood Planning process. However, in terms of factors such as maintaining an attractive living environment, encouraging and enabling modal shift to cycling and walking and providing or enhancing access to recreation facilities there are a range of potential opportunities to facilitate positive outcomes through the planning process.
- 9.46 There can often be synergies between health and wellbeing and sustainable transport as increasing rates of walking and cycling among residents could translate into improved health outcomes over time. It will be important for new development to position walking and cycling as attractive and viable options for residents to move within the Parish and to reach local services.

Therefore, as discussed further under the transport topic heading below, Policy W12's commitment to increasing access to existing networks and extending or enhancing networks where possible is considered to be well aligned with the SEA health and wellbeing objective to improve outcomes.

- 9.47 Similarly, the role of community facilities such as village halls and other civic spaces can be of great importance to the wellbeing of residents. As discussed under the population and community topic heading above, community facilities can be spaces for interactions between different individuals and groups within the community, providing a social stimulus and focus point for less mobile residents and anchoring a community to a central hub. Policy W7 requires all new development to '*sustain or extend*' existing facilities, including provision of outdoor space and a new doctor's surgery and a new dentist facility.
- 9.48 Maintaining openness could also contribute to wellbeing by maintaining the Parish's connection with the wider countryside and its attractive rural/urban fringe character. Policy W10 is therefore considered to make an indirect contribution to wellbeing through the preservation and enhancements of natural biodiversity supporting habitats in the Parish. The supporting text of policy W10 notes that there are '*quality of life benefits*' of multifunctional green space. Therefore although W10 has a primary focus on biodiversity it is likely to also deliver benefits for recreation as well. Policy W11's commitment to openness via the designation of green gaps is considered to support this broader contribution to wellbeing as well though the safeguarding of the attractive setting and character of Winkfield.

Conclusion

- 9.49 It is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a **positive effect** on the health and wellbeing SEA objective.

Transportation

Commentary

- 9.50 The transportation SEA objective has the twin focus of promoting sustainable transport use and reducing the overall need to travel. As sustainable transport includes both public transport and walking and cycling there are a range of interventions possible through new development. For example, it may be possible through the CIL or Section 106 mechanisms to secure provision of new cycle or pedestrian infrastructure linking the development to the existing network and to local services. Alternatively, there could be potential for new development to fund new public transport routes or extend existing ones.
- 9.51 The Neighbourhood Plan principally addresses sustainable transport provision through policy W12 where a framework for walking and cycling provision is set out. The Neighbourhood Policies Map identifies the existing pedestrian and cycle network within the Parish and policy W12 goes on to require all proposals that lie within the '*broad location of the Network*' to ensure connectivity with the network. The policy goes one step further, requiring that wherever possible development should '*take opportunities to improve and extend the footpath and cycle network to provide better connectivity throughout the Parish and its immediate areas*'. The supporting text of policy W12 catalogues a number of traffic, parking and road safety issues in the Parish though it is not clear how the policy itself will directly address these other than by providing greater '*continuity*' in the pedestrian and cycle network to position walking and cycling as more viable alternatives to conventional transport.
- 9.52 Policy W13 relates specifically to potential improvements to Martins Herons Station which will '*encourage access to and from the station for pedestrians and cyclists*' such as increasing the availability of cycle racks and extension of existing bus routes to serve the station. Although this will not affect the frequency of train services themselves it could help encourage journeys outside the parish to be taken by train rather than car by creating a more coherent sustainable transport network for the Parish.

- 9.53 The Plan recognises that there is poor bus route coverage within the parish but aside from services to Martins Heron station does not include policies to address this. However, as public transport provision is not generally within the competence of Parish Councils this is considered proportionate on balance.
- 9.54 The second focus of the SEA transportation objective is to reduce the need to travel overall. By virtue of Winkfield's location between major service and employment centres, and on the mainline to London, the Parish has high levels of out-commuting and few significant employers. In this context it will be challenging to reduce the need to travel, although an emphasis on providing for home-working will lend minor support in this respect.

Conclusion

- 9.55 It is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a **neutral effect** on the transportation SA objective.

Conclusions at this current stage

- 9.56 The appraisal finds that the Neighbourhood Plan performs well in relation to many of the objectives, with positive effects anticipated in relation to the biodiversity, climate change, landscape and historic environment, population and community and health and wellbeing SEA objectives. Neutral effects are anticipated in relation to the air quality, economy and transport SEA objectives. There are no significant negative effects anticipated in relation to the any of the SEA objectives.
- 9.57 The SEA Regulations indicate that consideration should be given to cumulative effects of plans and programmes in combination with other plans and programmes. The Neighbourhood Plan is prepared in the context of the adopted Bracknell Forest Core Strategy and the emerging Bracknell Forest Local Plan. The emerging Draft Local Plan has identified potential development opportunities within the Parish with a significant potential housing capacity. As discussed earlier in this report, this has informed the Parish Council's view that it is appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan not to seek further allocations.
- 9.58 Although the Neighbourhood Plan does not propose any allocations it is likely that the policies within it will help inform the final details of schemes which come forward on the sites proposed for allocation in the Draft Local Plan. It is considered that this will be most evident in terms of the cumulative effect on the population and community and transport SEA objectives. This is because the Neighbourhood Plan sets out a policy position, which requires new development to deliver enhanced access to existing facilities or to provide new facilities where appropriate.
- 9.59 It is considered that when considered cumulatively alongside the adopted development plan the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan will have a positive effect on the population and community and transport SEA objectives and a neutral effect on all other SEA objectives. There are no anticipated significant negative cumulative effects.

Part 3: What are the next steps?

10. Introduction to Part 3

10.1 This part of the report explains next steps that will be taken as part of plan-making and SEA.

Plan finalisation

10.2 This Environmental Report accompanies the Pre-Submission version of the Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan for consultation.

10.3 Following consultation, any representations made will be considered by the Parish Council, when finalising the plan for submission.

10.4 The 'Submission' version of the plan will then be submitted to Bracknell Forest District Council (alongside an Updated Environmental Report, if necessary). The plan and supporting evidence will then be published for a further consultation (Regulation-16), and then subjected to Independent Examination.

10.5 At Independent Examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the adopted Bracknell Forest Development Plan.

10.6 If the subsequent Independent Examination is favourable, the Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to a referendum, organised by Bracknell Forest District Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once made, the Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Development framework.

Monitoring

10.7 The SEA regulations require 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring' to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of the WNP to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.

10.8 It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the Neighbourhood Plan will be undertaken on an annual basis by Bracknell Forest District Council as part of the process of preparing its Authority Monitoring Report (AMR).

Appendix I: Regulatory requirements

As discussed in Chapter 1 previously, 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

<u>Schedule 2</u>	<u>Interpretation of Schedule 2</u>		
<i>The report must include...</i>	<i>The report must include...</i>		
(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>	
(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>	i.e. answer - <i>What's the scope of the SA?</i>
(c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level		
(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'	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'baseline'?</i>	
(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]	

Appendix II – The SEA Scope

Introduction

Whilst Chapter 3 presents a summary of the SEA scope, in the form of the SEA framework, this appendix presents more detailed information in terms of the key issues.

Air Quality

- Although there are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) within the Neighbourhood Plan area, the 'Area 1 – Bagshot Road A322 Horse and Groom Roundabout Downshire Way AQMA' is located directly adjacent to the western boundary, designated for monitored breaches in the annual-mean NO₂ National Air Quality Objective of 40µg/m³.
- Future development within the Neighbourhood Area has the potential to increase traffic along key routes, particularly the A322/329 corridor into Bracknell, which is located within the AQMA.
- Based on the 2016 Air Quality Annual Status Report for Bracknell Forest, all diffusion tubes within the Area 1 AQMA recorded a decrease in the annual mean NO₂ concentrations in 2015, compared with 2014. Nevertheless, four diffusion tube sites within the AQMA continue to exceed the annual air quality objective.
- Successful implementation of the borough-wide sustainable transport policies within the 2014 Air Quality Action Plan and the current Local Transport Plan have the potential to continually improve air quality within the Neighbourhood Area.

Biodiversity

- There are two European designated sites located partly within the boundary of the Neighbourhood Area, including the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) and the Windsor Forest and Great Park Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- There are five Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located wholly or partly within the boundary of the Neighbourhood Area, including the Broadmoor to Bagshot Woods and Heaths SSSI, Chawridge Bourne SSSI, Englemere Pond SSSI, Swinley Park and Brick Pits SSSI and Windsor Forest and Great Park SSSI.
- The whole of the Neighbourhood Area is within an Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for one or more of the SSSIs located within the boundary.
- A variety of species and habitats located in the annexes of the European Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and European Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) are recognised as the qualifying features for the European and nationally designated sites which are partly located within the Neighbourhood Area.
- In addition to their national designation as a SSSI, Broadmoor to Bagshot Woods and Heaths, along with Chawridge Bourne are both recognised as Local Wildlife Sites. Additionally, Englemere Pond is also recognised as a Local Nature Reserve.
- There is a diverse network of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats located within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary, many of which are located within the European and nationally designated sites.

Climate change

- The main risks from fluvial flooding and surface water drainage flooding are within the north-western and south-western parts of the Neighbourhood Area, on land adjacent to 'The Cut' river and one of its tributaries 'Blackmoor Stream'.
- Based on the most recent Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and also highlighted within the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS), Bracknell Forest borough is assessed as being

at low risk from flooding events. Where flooding has been experienced in the past, it has been of short duration in relation to intense rainfall.

- Surface Water drainage and sewer flooding is also a risk for some parts of the Neighbourhood Plan area, with sections of medium-high risk in the north western and south western sections.
- Bracknell Forest has recorded consistently lower greenhouse gas (GhG) emissions total per capita in comparison to the regional and national averages.

Employment

- Bracknell will continue to be a major employment centre, with relatively limited demand for employment land in Winkfield Parish, including on the basis of relatively poor connectivity to the trunk road network.
- However, there may be demand for small scale employment premises, and there are other strategic reasons for supporting increased small scale employment uses locally.
- The evidence of employment land requirements provided by the Central Berkshire Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) is likely to be of limited relevance to the Neighbourhood Plan; however, the demand/requirement for new industrial land in Bracknell Forest is noted.

Landscape and historic environment

- The south of the Neighbourhood area mainly comprises a Forested Sands LCT, whilst the majority of the north mainly comprises a notably different Clay Farmland LCT. The centre of the Neighbourhood area comprises a Settled Wooded Sands LTC, with part recommended for protection on landscape grounds, as it comprises a 'strategic landscape gap'.
- Approximately 70% of the Neighbourhood Area is covered by the Green Belt, contributing to the character of the landscape by preventing urban sprawl and keeping land open.
- The Neighbourhood Area has a rich historic environment, including eighty-seven nationally designated listed buildings, three scheduled monuments, three historic parks and gardens located wholly or partly within the boundary, and two conservation areas. All of these heritage assets are sensitive to change.
- Although none of the heritage assets contained in the 2016 Heritage at Risk Register for the South East of England are at risk, it is important to note that the register does not include information about the grade II listed buildings outside of London.

Land, soil and water resources

- The Neighbourhood Area does not have a history of heavy industrial land use, however there has been one significant pollution incident recorded by the Environment Agency in 2002;
- A detailed Agricultural Land Classification assessment has been undertaken within the Neighbourhood Area, highlighting areas of Grade 3a and 3b agricultural land in three locations: near to Winkfield Row; directly to the west of Chavey Down Pond and surrounding Foliejon Park.
- The northern section of the Neighbourhood Area is located within the 'Total Catchment (Zone 3)' Groundwater Source Protection Zone (SPZ). Additionally, the entirety of the Neighbourhood Area is located within a Surface Water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ).
- The main watercourse flowing through the northern section of the Neighbourhood Area is 'The Cut' river, with one of its tributaries, 'Blackmoor Stream' located along the eastern boundary and passing through North Ascot. There is also a number of smaller waterbodies present.

Population and community

- Overall, fewer residents within the Neighbourhood Area are within the older age categories (45-59 and 60+) in comparison to the regional and national trends; however, the northern part of the area has a distinctly older age profile than the central/southern part.
- There are eleven Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) located wholly or partly within the Neighbourhood Area, all of which are located in the top 50% least deprived deciles for the 'Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)' domain.
- Based on the 2015 IMD data, the Neighbourhood Area has significant barriers to housing and services.
- The WNP falls primarily within the North Bracknell School Planning Area, where there is forecast to be an acute shortfall in primary school places.

Health and Wellbeing

- The majority of residents within the Neighbourhood Area consider themselves to have 'very good health' or 'good health', broadly aligning to the totals for Bracknell Forest, but greater than totals observed for the South East of England, and England.
- Residents within the Neighbourhood Area have access to a number of open spaces, including Windsor Great Park and Foliejon Park in the northern part of the parish and Swinley Park in the southern part of the parish.
- The five key priority issues identified in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) are as follows: falls prevention, smoking, mental health in the community, immunisation and screening, and self-care.
- Future increases in the built-up parts of the Neighbourhood Area have the potential to increase traffic along key routes, including the A322/A329 corridor, and to the south of Martins Heron along 'New Forest Ride'. This has the potential to impact both air quality and the health and wellbeing of residents.

Transportation

- The Neighbourhood Area is served by the Martins Heron railway station, with regular services to Reading and London Waterloo. However, there are currently no public bus routes connecting residents to the station, with accessibility only achievable via a personal vehicle.
- As of July 2017, the principal bus routes through the Neighbourhood Area are the 162 and 162A, connecting residents to Bracknell Town Centre. Services are relatively infrequent, with roughly one per hour.
- There is a network of 'A' and 'B' roads passing through the Neighbourhood Area, connecting residents to neighbouring towns and villages.
- The main congestion points within the Neighbourhood Area are along the A329/A322 corridor and 'New Forest Ride'
- Residents have access to the 'Three Castles Path', a 96.5 km route from Windsor to Winchester. The route navigates in a north-easterly direction through the Neighbourhood Area, passing through Swinley Park and on to Ascot.
- Over 90% of residents within the Neighbourhood Area have access to a car or van, due in part due to the affluence area, and also due to car reliance linked to the poor public transport links currently in place – with limited bus services and no current service taking residents to Martins Heron train station.

Appendix III: Alternatives assessment

This appendix presents the detailed findings of the assessment of reasonable alternatives. This assessment has informed the development of the preferred option and links to Section 6 of the main report.

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** – no colour is used if no significant effect is considered likely) and also rank the alternatives in order of performance. Also '=' is used to denote instances where the alternatives perform on a par with each other (i.e. it is not possible to differentiate between them).

Table AIV-1: Summary alternative assessment findings

SEA Theme	Option 1: No allocated sites	Option 2: Allocate the Land South of Claverton, Long Hill Rd for 6 dwellings.
Air Quality	1	2
<p>Option 1, by not allocating for any new development may contribute to maintaining and/or improving air quality within the Neighbourhood area, and will support the objectives of the AQMA adjacent to the western boundary of the Plan area and covering a section of the A322. The site proposed under Option 2 is connected to the A322 by the A329/Broad Lane and has such has the potential to impact upon the designated AQMA; however given the scale of development proposed at the site, it is unlikely that development would lead to any significant negative effects. However; given the location of development in close proximity to an area which is identified for exceeding limits to pollutants, the option is considered to be less preferable in this respect.</p> <p>Whilst no development is proposed under Option 1, and limited development is proposed through Option 2, the area is still likely to be subject to a level of development guided by the Local Plan. As such, the WNP provides the opportunity to shape and influence the types and location of development to minimise the potential for negative effects arising. Whilst the Local Plan will inevitably seek to minimise impacts, the WNP can still support improved air quality in the Neighbourhood area through policy provisions which seek to minimise emissions and require mitigation for development that may affect traffic (and thus air quality) on the A322.</p>		
Biodiversity	1	2
<p>Given that no development is proposed under Option 1, it is not considered likely to lead to any significant positive or negative effects for biodiversity. The site proposed under Option 1 is a Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat that extends east to the B3017 (Priory Road); and as such development is likely to result in the loss of Priority Habitat, and will sever existing ecological connectivity to some degree, with the potential for long term minor negative effects. Any compensatory / replacement habitat is likely to be provided elsewhere off-site. The remaining habitat will also be subject to prolonged negative effects in terms of noise, air and light pollution and recreational pressures. The habitat currently provides ecological connectivity in the form of a woodland network that connects to the Englemere Pond SSSI and LNR; development therefore also has the potential to indirectly affect a nationally designated site. The proposed site for development is located within the associated SSSI Impact Risk Zone where any residential development with a total net gain in residential units will require further consultation with Natural England.</p> <p>Given the constraints outlined above, Option 2 is considered to be the less preferable option.</p>		
Climate Change	1	2
<p>As option 1 will not lead to any development it is not considered likely to lead to any significant positive or negative effects on climate change.</p> <p>Option 2 on the other hand, will lead to development and may increase traffic / pressure on the local highways network to some degree; however, given the scale of development this is not considered likely to lead to any significant negative effects. The development site proposed under Option 2 is located around 1.25km from Martins Heron train station, and the closest bus services are located in the south along the A329. Public transport options are therefore in relative close proximity and can contribute towards a modal shift. The site is not within an area identified as at risk from fluvial flooding or surface water flooding.</p> <p>Given the potential however for minor added pressures to the highways network in Option 2; Option 1 is considered to perform better in terms of this SEA theme.</p>		
Economy	=	=

Option 1: No allocated sites**Option 2: Allocate the Land
South of Claverton, Long Hill
Rd for 6 dwellings.****SEA Theme**

Neither options seeks to deliver new employment land, and neither option will lead to the loss of any existing employment land. As such, neither option is considered likely to affect this SEA theme.

Landscape and Historic Environment	1	2
<p>As Option 1 will not lead to any development it is not considered likely to lead to any significant positive or negative effects on the landscape and historic environment in the Neighbourhood area.</p> <p>The development site proposed under Option 2 does not contain and is not located in close proximity to any designated heritage assets, and is also not likely to affect the setting of any designated heritage assets. Development at the site however is likely to result in the loss of woodland, which is identified within the Landscape Character Assessment as contributing to the visual separation between Bracknell Forest and North Ascot. Development at the site is therefore considered to have the potential for minor long term negative effects on the landscape. Development at this site may contribute towards coalescence, but it is appreciated that given the scale of development, the potential effects are likely to be minor.</p> <p>Given the constraints associated with the development site proposed under Option 2, Option 1 is considered to perform better in terms of this SEA theme.</p>		
Land, Soil and Water Resources	1	2
<p>As Option 1 will not lead to any development it is not considered likely to lead to any significant positive or negative effects for this SEA theme.</p> <p>The development site proposed under Option 2 is greenfield land (the site is woodland and is not identified as containing best and most versatile agricultural land) and therefore development has the potential for minor permanent negative effects on efficient land use (in terms of land take).</p> <p>Given these findings Option 1 is considered to perform better against this SEA theme.</p>		
Population and Communities	2	1
<p>As Option 1 will not lead to any development it is not considered likely to lead to any significant positive or negative effects for this SEA theme. Option 2 on the other hand seeks to provide new housing to support identified local needs with the potential for long term positive effects for communities. The development site proposed under Option 2 is located in close proximity to a school (Heathfield School) and park (Longhill Park) with good accessibility in this respect. The site is located in the space between Bracknell and North Ascot, which both provide potential residents with good access to a range of services and facilities. By providing new housing in a relatively accessible location, Option 2 is considered to perform better than Option 1 against this SEA theme.</p>		
Health and Wellbeing	2	1
<p>As Option 1 will not lead to any development, it is not considered likely to lead to any significant positive or negative effect for this SEA theme.</p> <p>The development site proposed under Option 2 however has excellent accessibility to recreational opportunities, including woodland areas and Longhill Park (which includes a skate park) and development will support healthy and active lifestyles in this respect with the potential for minor long term positive effects. New residents are likely to look to Bracknell for health services and facilities, which could potentially support the viability of these services or facilities, or increase pressure on these services and facilities dependent upon their current capacity. As such, the effects in this respect are uncertain at this stage.</p> <p>As Option 2 is likely to provide health and wellbeing benefits for residents, it is considered to perform better overall against this SEA theme than Option 1 – which will depend upon the Local Plan to guide and locate development that will positively affect the health and wellbeing of residents.</p>		
Transport	1	2
<p>As Option 1 will not lead to any development it is not considered likely to lead to any significant positive or negative effects for this SEA theme.</p> <p>The development site proposed under Option 2 is located around 1.25km from Martins Heron train station, and the closest bus services are located in the south along the A329 (around 600m away). Development is therefore considered to be relatively accessible to public transport means, and may support a modal shift. It is recognised however that there is also the potential that development will lead to increased pressure on the highways network in this area; however given the scale of development proposed at the site this is not considered to be significant – very minor negative effects are considered likely.</p> <p>Given that Option 2 has the potential for minor negative effects; Option 1 is considered to perform better against this SEA theme. However; whilst Option 1 will not lead to any significant effects, it will depend upon the Local Plan to guide and locate development in accessible areas that reduce the need to travel and increase the use of sustainable modes of transport. As such there is less certainty that Option 1 will lead to positive effects. This</p>		

Option 1: No allocated sites**Option 2: Allocate the Land
South of Claverton, Long Hill
Rd for 6 dwellings.****SEA Theme**

needs to be weighed up against the potential for Option 2 to deliver benefits in terms of accessibility, but also potential minor negative effects in terms of pressure on the highways network.

Overall conclusions:

Overall, Option 1 is considered to perform better against the SEA themes of air quality, biodiversity, climate change, landscape and historic environment, land, soil and water resources, and transport – largely through its avoidance of potential negative effects.

Option 2 is considered to have the potential for negative effects most significantly on biodiversity, but also minor negative effects in terms of air quality, climate change, landscape, efficient land use and transport. Option 2 is also considered likely to positively affect communities and resident health and wellbeing through the delivery of new housing in a relatively accessible location.

Overall it is considered that whilst Option 1 is identified as performing better against a greater number of SEA themes, the option is dependent upon the Local Plan to deliver development that will positively affect communities, the natural and built environment and the economy, and as such there is less certainty and less local influence. These factors need to be considered alongside the option to influence development through its delivery.

