



Vision for Ickford

Neighbourhood Development Plan

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Ickford Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions Statement

**'Ickford Village will maintain its
special character whilst embracing
the whole community'**

November 2019



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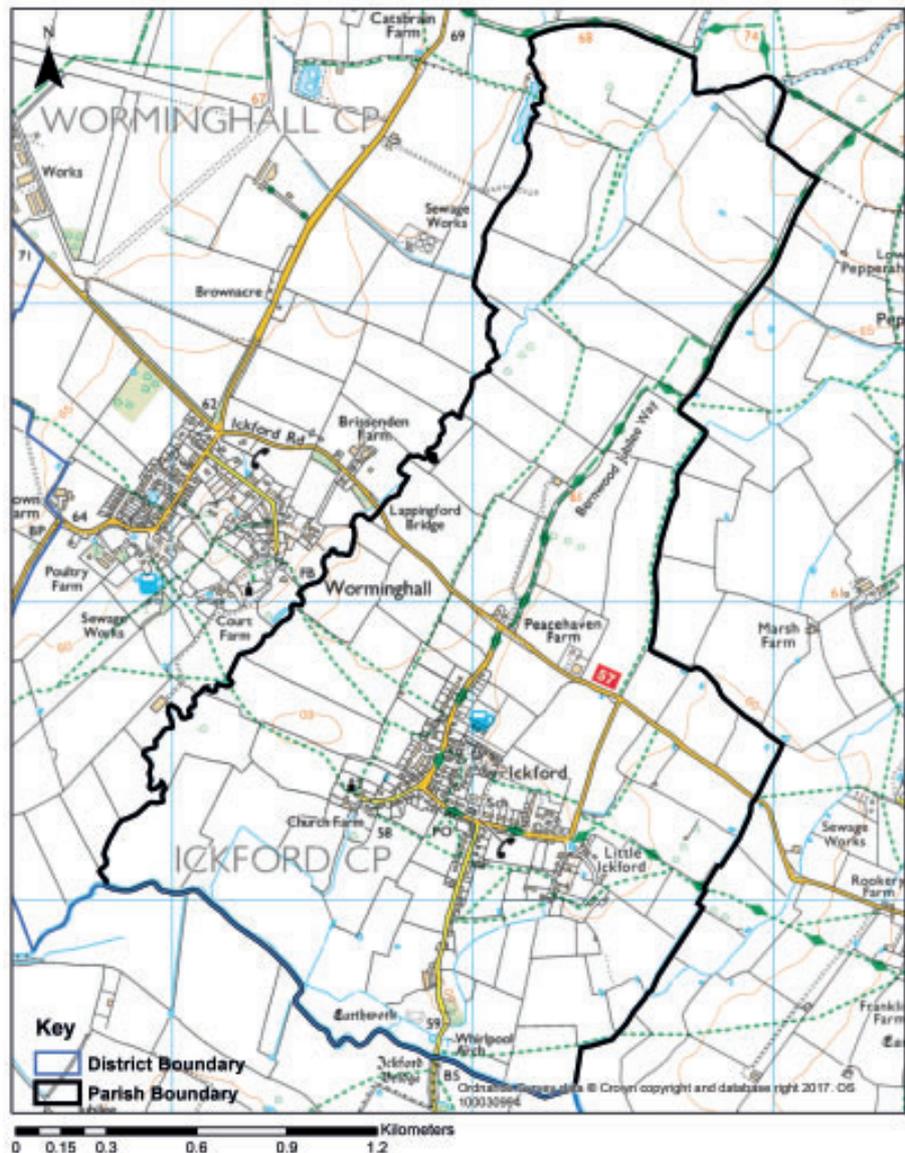
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1. Introduction

1.1. This Statement has been prepared by Ickford Parish Council (IPC) to accompany the Ickford Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2033 (Submission Version November 2019) on submission to Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) under regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended (“the Regulations”).

1.2. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by IPC, a qualifying body, for the Neighbourhood Area covering the whole of the parish of Ickford, as designated by AVDC on 23rd February 2018.

Ickford Parish Boundary Map



1.3. The policies described in the Neighbourhood Plan relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area and do not relate to any other designated Neighbourhood Area. The plan period is from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2033 and it does not contain policies relating to excluded development in accordance with the Regulations. The document also contains a number of non-statutory proposals that relate to local planning matters in Section 13, Implementation, Monitoring and Review which do not form part of the examined 'neighbourhood development plan' but provides a 'wish list' that has emerged during consultation that the Parish Council have considered during the preparation of the document.

1.4. The Statement addresses each of the four 'basic conditions' required of the Regulations and explains how the submitted Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

1.5. The Regulations state that a Neighbourhood Plan will be considered to have met the basic conditions if:

- Having regard to National Policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood development plan
- The making of the neighbourhood development plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development
- The making of the neighbourhood development plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area)
- The making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations

2. Background

2.1. The plan preparation has been led by IPC, through the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. It has comprised three main stages:

- Evidence gathering which has been set out in the Background Evidence Report (final version dated September 2019), a report that summarised background evidence on which the INP is based.
- Draft Neighbourhood Plan April 2019 (Pre-submission version), the draft plan and accompanying background documents were published for 6 weeks in accordance with regulation 14 of the Regulations.
- Submission Neighbourhood Plan (November 2019) which takes into account representations received on the earlier version and has been modified for submission to AVDC; it is accompanied by the Background Evidence Report, Built Heritage Assessment, Basic Conditions Statement and the Consultation Statement.

2.2. IPC has consulted the local community extensively throughout the process including a questionnaire, drop-in days and exhibitions to obtain the fullest view of local community concerns, needs and wants from the Neighbourhood Plan. Relevant stakeholders have also been consulted including developers and landowners. Full details are set out in the Consultation Statement and appendices.

2.3. It has also worked closely with officers of AVDC since the start of the project to collate and examine the evidence base, to design and iterate policy proposals and to define the proper relationship between the NP and the 2004 Aylesbury Vale Local Plan and emerging policy in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP).

2.4. The Plan has not duplicated policies, both saved and emerging which will be used in determining planning applications. This has allowed the Neighbourhood Plan to focus on a small number of locally relevant and important policies.

3. Conformity with National Planning Policy

3.1. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with regard to national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) and the revised Framework of February 2019 and is mindful of the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) in respect of formulating neighbourhood plans.

3.2. There are four NPPF paragraphs that provide general guidance on neighbourhood planning, to which the Neighbourhood Plan has directly responded:

3.3. Presumption in favour of sustainable development:

- Paragraph 12: the development plan is the starting point for decision making and this includes any neighbourhood plan.
- Paragraph 13: neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies.
- Paragraph 14: reminds us of the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to be significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits provided, four criteria apply.

3.4. The Parish Council believe that the neighbourhood plan is planning positively for future development in the parish and supports the delivery of the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan as advised in the above paragraphs of the NPPF. Paragraph 18 and 21 advise that policies to address non-strategic matters and detailed matters should be included within neighbourhood plans, and the Ickford Neighbourhood Plan contains such policies.

3.5. Advice on non-strategic policies and the role of neighbourhood plans is identified in paragraphs 29 and 30. The Ickford Neighbourhood Plan establishes a shared vision for the area and its policies shape, direct and help deliver sustainable development. It has sought to translate objectives into a number of meaningful planning policies to complement other development plan policies for managing development.

3.6. The Neighbourhood Plan strikes a positive balance between the policy constraints of the Parish and the need to support the general requirements of the development plan as set out in section 5 below.

3.7. The Neighbourhood Plan avoids duplicating development plan policies by focusing on site-specific policies that translate the general requirements of the development plan into an Ickford context. Once made, the Neighbourhood Plan should be easily considered alongside the development plan and any other material considerations in determining planning applications.

3.8. Set out below is a brief summary of how each policy conforms to the NPPF. The particular paragraphs referred to in the table are those considered the most relevant to each policy but are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all possible relevant paragraphs.

Table 1: NPPF Conformity

Policy	NPPF paragraph	Commentary
NE1: Landscape Views and Dark Skies	127, 170, 171	Supports the protection of key views, landscape features and dark skies, whilst encouraging appropriate additional landscaping.
NE2: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity	170, 171, 174, 175	Supports improvement and provision of green infrastructure and net gains for biodiversity
NE3: Local Green Space	99, 100, 01, 127,	Designates and seeks to protect the important green spaces in the village green spaces in the village
BEH1: Heritage Assets	184, 185, 189, 190, 192, 193, 194, 195	Seeks to conserve, enhance and promote the historic environment
BEH2: Design in the Conservation Area	184, 185, 192	The policy supports development provided it conserves and enhances the Conservation Area.
BEH3: The Setting of the Conservation Area	184, 185, 197	The policy supports development provided in contributes to the character of the setting of the conservation area
BEH4: Non Designated Heritage Assets	184, 185, 197	Identifies buildings of local note and seeks to protect them in accordance with the balanced judgement
F1: Flooding	155, 157, 163	Expects development to be designed as to not increase flooding.
ND1: Settlement	11, 68, 78, 79a	This policy establishes a settlement boundary for Ickford. It directs development to the built up areas identified in Annex 1 of the plan reflecting the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development outside the boundary is should accord with 79a

Policy	NPPF paragraph	Commentary
ND2: High Quality Design	124, 125, 127, 130	Seeks high quality design respecting the identity of the local context.
ND3: New housing Development	124, 125, 127, 128, 130, 108, 110	Seeks the highest quality of design for housing commitments in the village
ND4: Housing mix and affordability	61	Requires a mix and variety of housing for all new development, including less expensive market homes and affordable housing
TT1: Traffic and Transport	102, 103, 104, 108, 109, 110	Takes account of the need to limit the impact on the road network and off street parking
E1: Economic	80, 83	Encourages economic activity in keeping with the opportunities village setting
CF1: Community Facilities	91, 92, 97	Promotes inclusion and opportunities for community cohesion whilst protecting existing community facilities

4. Contribution to Sustainable Development

4.1. Aylesbury Vale District Council has determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) was not required for the Neighbourhood Plan as it considered the policies were unlikely to have a significant environmental effect, as defined by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The report is dated March 2019.

4.2. The report concluded at paragraph 5.1 “it is not considered that the plan would be likely to give rise to significant environmental effects. On this basis a Sustainability Appraisal to meet the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment is not considered to be needed.” The Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report is attached at Appendix 1.

4.3. However the basic condition of “contributing to the achievement of sustainable development” requires a broader scope of assessment to embrace social and economic as well as environmental objectives. For completeness therefore Table 2 summarises the economic, social and environmental attributes of each policy.

4.4. The vision and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan comprise a balance of social, economic and environmental goals. The social goals are to improve the amenities and of meeting the demand and need for new homes of the local community to allow a younger demographic to develop. Economic goals are limited in such a small village apart from encouraging broadband and local employment but the growth in the number of households in the parish over the plan period will help retain existing facilities. Environmental goals include the protection and enhancement of Ickford’s natural and historic environment.

4.5. However, the goals make clear that there are environmental parameters within which these social and economic goals must be kept by ensuring development is in scale with the rural character of the existing parish.

4.6. The chosen policies therefore translate the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan into viable and effective development management policies which will deliver strong social and environmental impacts, lesser on the economic aspect of sustainable development.

4.7. The sustainability attributes of each policy are summarised in the table below.

Table 2: Sustainability Attributes

Key: * positive – neutral X negative

Policy	Soc	Econ	Env	Commentary
NE1: Landscape Views and Dark Skies	*	–	*	Protection and enhancement of the landscape and retention of dark skies are clearly very positive for the environment and for wellbeing of people.
NE2: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity	*	–	*	In economic terms this is a neutral policy but it is positive in environmental and social terms. It seeks to ensure that important ecological and biodiversity features are retained and enhanced.
NE3: Local Green Space	*	–	*	This policy protects green spaces from being developed and therefore has a positive social and environmental impact.
BEH1: Heritage Assets	*	–	*	All these policies will deliver a very positive impact on the historic environment and enhance the wellbeing of residents through sympathetic design.
BEH2: Design in the Conservation Area	*	–	*	
BEH3: The Setting of the Conservation Area	*	–	*	
BEH4: Non Designated Heritage Assets	*	–	*	
BEH4: Non Designated Heritage Assets	*	–	*	
F1: Flooding	*	*	*	This policy has a positive impact on all three aspects of sustainability. Reduction or at least not worsening the flooding in the village will allow residents to get to work and businesses to carry on functioning.
ND1: Settlement Boundary	*	–	*	New development is directed inside the built up area of the settlement, protecting the countryside and delivering a positive environmental impact. New development will provide a positive social impact.
ND2: High Quality Design	*	–	*	Good design for new development will bring positive benefits to the built environment and enjoyment of the village.

Policy	Soc	Econ	Env	Commentary
ND3: New housing Development	—	*	X	New development brings positive economic benefits in terms of employment during the construction phase and by supporting the village facilities. It does have a negative environmental impact because the sites being developed are currently green field sites.
ND4: Housing mix and affordability	*	—	—	A housing mix which reflects the needs of the village will bring positive social benefits by rebalancing the housing stock towards smaller homes.
TT1: Traffic and Transport	*	—	*	Encouragement of non-vehicular transport and ensuring pedestrian safety will bring environmental and social benefits.
E1: Economic opportunities	*	*	—	Retaining and encouraging local businesses will have positive social and economic effects.
CF1: Community Facilities	*	—	—	The retention and encouragement of community facilities will clearly be positive in terms of well being and social aspects of village life.

5. General Conformity with Strategic Local Policy

5.1. The determination of how the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the emerging development plan has proven to be a challenge during its preparation given that the most up to date version of the Local Plan following examination has only just been published. Whilst the saved policies of the 2004 Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (AVDLP) have been helpful in shaping the Neighbourhood Plan, there is currently no up-to-date Local Plan in respect of providing a firm housing supply position.

5.2. The Vale of Aylesbury Plan (VAP) that was intended by the District Council to provide the strategic planning policy framework to 2031 was withdrawn from its examination in January 2014. The District Council is currently preparing a Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) comprising strategic, development management and site allocation policies but this is not likely to be adopted until 2020. Proposed Modifications following Examination have recently been published for consultation (5th November 2019).

5.3. The Neighbourhood Plan has considered many of the evidence base documents for VALP as set out in the Background Evidence Report (Page 7) including the HELAA v4, the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Landscape Character Assessment reports.

5.4. IPC accepts that the limited level of services in the village and the relatively unsustainable location have given rise to an allocation for 20 dwellings through the VALP (Submission Version) for housing growth contributing towards the overall need for the whole Aylesbury Vale area. This approach has now been overtaken by events which has resulted in 30 dwellings being given planning permission on the allocated site plus another 66 at Appeal at Worminghall Road.

5.5. The 2004 AVDLP could not, of course, have anticipated the existence of the Localism Act almost a decade later and so made no provision for translating generic planning policy into a distinct parish-based plan. The Neighbourhood Plan generally conforms to the relevant saved policies of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (AVDLP) of 2004. The policies starting with GP are all those that are saved which are applicable to the whole district, including Ickford, except GP3 as this was superseded by the NPPF. There is no definition of ‘strategic’ policy available for the AVDLP, so all the relevant saved policies are listed below. All of the policies for Rural Areas (starting with RA) which are not location specific, are applicable. There are a large number of other saved policies, but most of them are not relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan.

Table 3: Conformity with AVDLP Saved Policies

AVDLP Policy	Subject	Neighbourhood Plan Policy	How the Neighbourhood Plan conforms with AVDC Policies
GP2	Affordable Housing	ND3, ND4	Whilst affordable housing is not specifically sought in the policies over and above Local Plan requirements, smaller homes are sought which may be cheaper to purchase. AVDC will determine if affordable units are sought on the site through the planning application process.
GP4	Affordable housing on small sites	ND4	This policy applies to all housing developments.
GP8	Protection of Amenity of Residents	ND2, ND3	Protects amenities of residents against impact new development.
GP17	Retention in use of existing employment sites	E1	Allows rural employment to expand where appropriate.
GP24	Car parking guidelines	TT1	The parking standards do not conflict with the parking standards used by AVDC.
GP32	Retention of shops, public houses and post offices	CF1	Protects and supports facilities.
GP35	Design of new developments	BEH2, ND2, ND3	Protect and enhance built and natural qualities, features, historic environment of the Parish.
GP38	Landscaping of new developments	NE1, ND2, ND3	Provision of landscaping.
GP39	Existing trees and hedgerows	NE1, NE2	Establishes need to retain trees and hedgerows.
GP40	Retention of existing trees and hedgerows	NE1	Establishes need to retain trees and hedgerows.

AVDLP Policy	Subject	Neighbourhood Plan Policy	How the Neighbourhood Plan conforms with AVDC Policies
GP91	Provision of Amenity Areas	ND3	Provision of a play area and open areas is integral to the committed developments. Maintenance arrangements and funding will be sought for new green spaces.
GP93	Safeguarding of community buildings and facilities	CF1	Protects facilities.
GP94	New community facilities	CF1	Encourages provision.
RA2	Coalescence of Settlements	ND1	The policies restrict inappropriate development in the countryside.
RA13	Development within Rural Settlements	ND1	Infill housing is permitted where amenity and local character are respected.
RA29	New or extended Employment Uses in the Countryside	E1	Allows sustainable growth of employment uses where there is no undue impact on the landscape or road network.
RA36	Protection against excessive traffic generation	TT1, E1	Allows small scale employment expansion where there is no undue impact on the landscape or road network.

6. Compatibility with EU Legislation

6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights and complies with the Human Rights Act.

6.2 A formal screening opinion has been issued by AVDC, attached at Appendix 1. No SEA was required. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with EU Directive 2001/42 on strategic environmental assessment (SEA).

6.4 The Neighbourhood Area is not in close proximity to any European designated nature sites so does not require an Appropriate Assessment under the EU Habitats Regulations.

Appendix 1

FINAL SEA Screening by Aylesbury Vale District Council for consultation in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004



Ickford

Neighbourhood Plan

SEA Screening – **FINAL version**

March 2019

Aylesbury Vale District Council

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

For the ICKFORD Neighbourhood Plan

FINAL Version

March 2019

ICKFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

FINAL SEA Screening

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This screening statement considers whether the contents of the Ickford Neighbourhood Plan requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 1.2 The screening process is based upon consideration of standard criteria to determine whether the plan is likely to have “significant environmental effects”. The result of AVDC’s screening process is detailed in this Screening Statement.
- 1.3 The legislative background set out below outlines the regulations that require the need for this screening exercise. Section 4, provides a screening assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the policies in the Ickford Neighbourhood Plan and the need for a full Strategic Environmental Assessment.

2. Legislative Background

- 2.1 The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessments and Sustainability Appraisal legislation is European Directive 2001/42/EC and was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or SEA Regulations. Detailed Guidance of these regulations can be found in the Government publication ‘A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive’¹.
- 2.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 required Local Authorities to produce Sustainability Appraisals (SA) for all local development documents to meet the requirement of the EU Directive on SEA. It is considered best practice to incorporate requirements of the SEA Directive into an SA.
- 2.3 Although a Sustainability Appraisal is not a requirement for a Neighbourhood Plan, part of meeting the ‘Basic Conditions’ which the plan is examined on, is to show how the plan achieves sustainable development. The Sustainability Appraisal process is an established method and a well recognised ‘best practice’ method for doing this. It is therefore advised, where an SEA is identified as a requirement, an SA should be incorporated with SEA, at a level of detail that is appropriate to the content of the Neighbourhood Plan.

¹‘A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive’ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-environmental-assessment-directive-guidance> (ODPM 2005)

3. Criteria for Assessing the Effects of Neighbourhood Development Plans

3.1 Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC are set out below²:

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:

- the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,
- the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy,
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,
- environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme,
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).

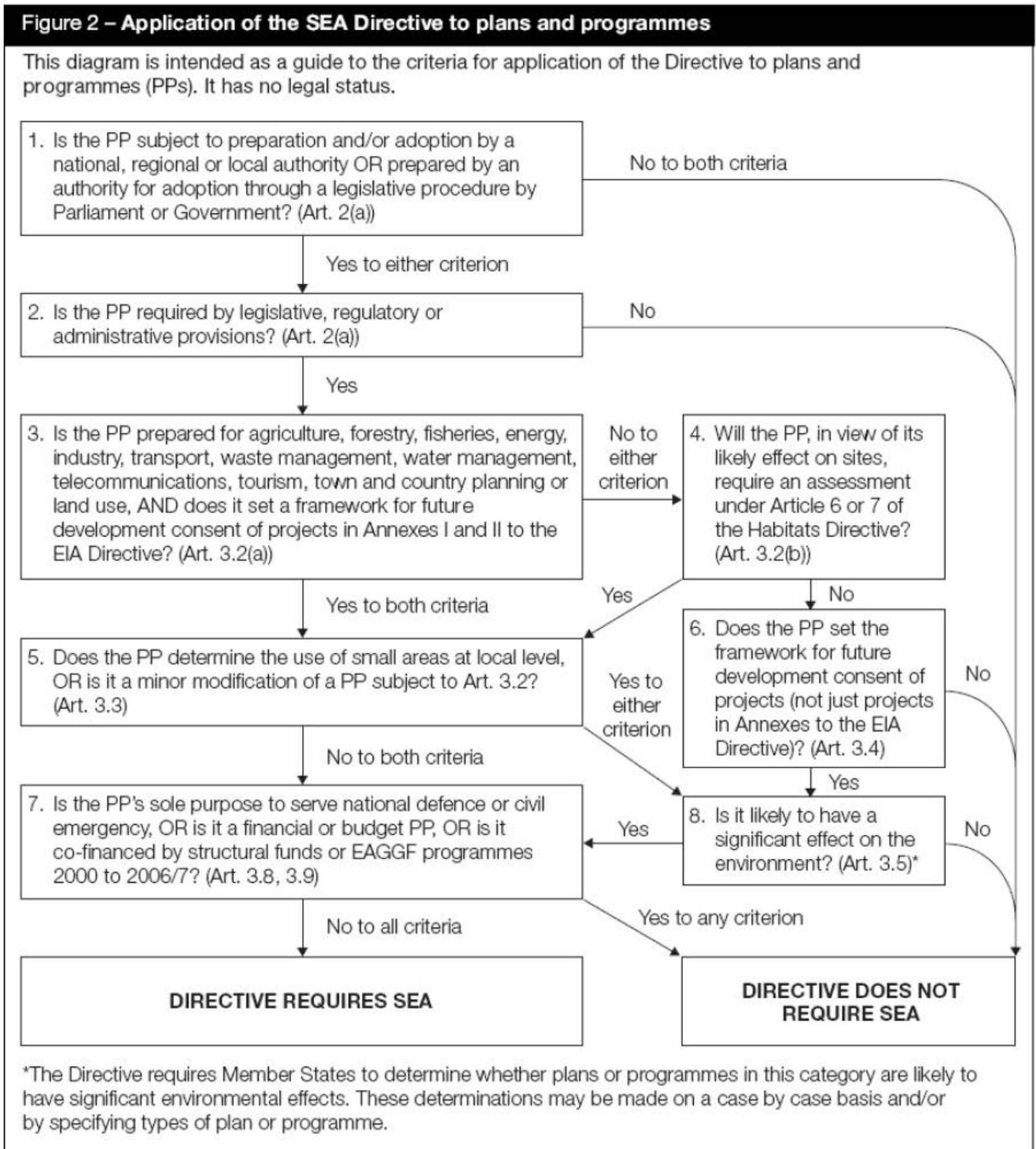
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:

- the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,
- the cumulative nature of the effects,
- the transboundary nature of the effects,
- the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),
- the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),
- the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
 - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,
 - exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,
 - intensive land-use,
 - the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

² Source: Annex II of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC

4. Assessment

4.1 The diagram below illustrates the process for screening a planning document to ascertain whether a full SEA is required.



4.2 The table below shows the assessment of whether or not the Ickford Neighbourhood Development Plan will require a full SEA. The questions below are drawn from the diagram above which sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied. The parish Council has given the District Council an early indication of the scope of the plan and the policy areas they intend to cover. This is what the screening is based on.

Stage	Y/ N	Reason
1. Is the plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Y	The Neighbourhood Development Plan will be adopted by a Local Planning Authority, Aylesbury Vale District Council.
2. Is the plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	N	The Neighbourhood Development Plan is an optional plan produced by Ickford Parish Council.
3. Is the plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))	N	The Neighbourhood Development Plan is prepared for town and country planning purposes, but it does not set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive (Art 3.2(a)).
4. Will the plan, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b))	N	There are no areas of Natura 2000 sites (Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas) in the parish. The nearest such sites are Port Meadow (Oxford Meadows SAC) 21km away to the west and Aston Rowant SAC 14 km away to the south. There have been sightings of <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i> , a <i>Pipistrellus species</i> , a <i>Plecotus Auritus</i> and a <i>Myotis Nattereri</i> all species protected under the Habitats Directive. These were sighted at various locations around the village between 2002-2012. There are Biological Notification Sites within 2km of Ickford village but these are not protected by the Habitats Directive. Therefore there would not be any impact on the Natura 2000 sites. This impact can be subject to re-screening at the Pre Submission, Submission and Referendum stages of the plan.
5. Does the plan determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a plan subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)	Y	The early draft Neighbourhood Plan does not intend to allocate any sites or identify areas of specific quantities new development other than general policies covering the settlement boundary and policies for economic development (small business) replacement or

		limited expansion.
6. Does the plan set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)	Y	The Neighbourhood Plan does intend to set a framework for future development consent of projects, including land allocated for housing.
7. Is the plans sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art 3.8, 3.9)	N	The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is not for any of the projects listed in Art 3.8, 3.9.
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	N	The Neighbourhood Plan is not intending allocating any sites for development and would seek to restrict future housing to small scale areas within the settlement boundary of Ickford subject to general policies of the plan. There is a policy which supports economic development but only replacement of existing small business sites or limited expansion.
1 (a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	N	The Ickford Neighbourhood Plan is intended to set out a spatial vision for the designated Neighbourhood Area and provide objectives and policies to guide sustainable development coming forward. However the plan is not allocating any sites for development.
1 (b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy.	N	The Ickford Neighbourhood Plan, where possible, will respond to rather than influence other plans or programmes. A Neighbourhood Plan can only provide policies for the area it covers while the policies at the District and National level provide a strategic context for the Ickford Neighbourhood Plan to be in general conformity with. None of the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan are anticipated to have a direct impact on other plans in neighbouring areas.
1 (c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	N	Proposals to be set out in the Ickford Neighbourhood Plan will look to balance environmental, social and economic considerations of sustainable development. However the Ickford Neighbourhood Plan early draft recognises that for rural communities such as Ickford, the importance of the surrounding environment is particularly acute. It is considered that the Ickford Neighbourhood Plan early draft in its sensitive and mitigating policies to address constraints may have a positive impact on local environmental assets and places valued by local people in the

		Neighbourhood Area.
1(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan	N	Ickford Neighbourhood Plan is not intended to allocate any land for development and is unlikely to give rise to significant additional car movements. There are no Air Quality Management Areas within or near to the Neighbourhood Area. The early draft suggests there will be a policy securing mitigation from adverse impacts on the road network and pedestrian safety. This would help address environmental problems.
1 (e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection)	N	The Ickford Neighbourhood Plan is to be developed in general conformity with the AVDLP 2004) saved policies, the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy (2012) Plan and national policy. The plan has no relevance to the implementation of community legislation.
2 (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	N	As the Ickford Neighbourhood Plan is not proposing to allocate land for development there is unlikely to be any significant environmental change involved in meeting the needs of people living and working in the parish. Any future development in the parish will be restricted to land in Ickford village contiguous with existing housing or employment sites at existing small business locations. It is highly unlikely these will be significant and have any irreversible damaging environmental impacts associated with the Ickford Neighbourhood Plan.
2 (b) the cumulative nature of the effects	N	It is highly unlikely there will be any negative cumulative effects of the policies, rather it could potentially have moderate positive effects. Any impact will be local in nature.
2 (c) the trans boundary nature of the effects	N	Effects will be local with no expected impacts on neighbouring areas.
2 (d) the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	N	No risks have been identified.
2 (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	N	The Neighbourhood Area covers an area which is 414.7 ha and contains a population is of 680 residents (2011 census). The actual land where new development is expected to be come forward affected by the early draft is the village itself and small businesses which in land take is minimal in comparison to the total Neighbourhood Area.
2 (f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:	N	The Ickford Neighbourhood Development Plan is unlikely to adversely affect the value and

	<p>(i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards (iii) intensive land-use</p>		<p>vulnerability of the area in relation to its natural or cultural heritage.</p> <p>There is an Ickford Conservation Area within Ickford village and Little Ickford designated in 1991 with a significant number of listed buildings clustered within. The neighbourhood plan would be able to provide greater support to enhance the setting of heritage, heritage assets and green spaces.</p> <p>The Ickford Neighbourhood Development Plan early draft includes a policy to improve the quality of design of development within the parish if it is deemed to be needed. Therefore the plan if anything will have a positive impact on the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and the areas heritage assets.</p> <p>There are also expected to be specific policies on the Design in the Conservation Area and its setting, Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity, Local Green Spaces, Buildings of Local Note, Flooding. These policies can help address the value and vulnerability of the area to unsympathetic development.</p>
	<p>2 (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>The Ickford Neighbourhood Development Plan Area is not within an area or landscape of a nationally, internationally or community status.</p> <p>The plan is proposed to have a policy covering Landscape, Views and Dark Skies and development to take account of any adverse impacts.</p>

5.0 Screening Outcome

5.1 The Ickford Neighbourhood Development Plan is not allocating any sites for development and does not identify a housing target or a target for other forms of development. The early draft stage of the plan contains a number of policies to control environmental effects including restricting development to within the existing settlement of Ickford, of a scale, density, height and massing contiguous with existing housing. Furthermore any new housing would have to respect the existing pattern of development and retain and enhance natural features and boundaries including trees, hedgerows and watercourses. The extension or replacement of existing mall businesses in the parish will be supported in principle. When taken together (as is required by law) with relevant policies from the Local Plan policy and national planning policy, it is

not considered that the plan would be likely to give rise to significant environmental effects. On this basis a Sustainability Appraisal to meet the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment **is not considered to be needed.**

Appendix – Statutory Consultation Responses

Consultation held 21.01.19 to 18.02.19 (4 weeks)

1. **Environment Agency – No response**
2. **English Heritage - No response**
3. **Natural England – RESPONSE 15 February see below:**

Date: 15 February 2019
 Our ref: 273426
 Aylesbury Vale District Council
BY EMAIL ONLY

Customer Services
 Hornbeam House
 Crewe Business Park
 Electra Way
 Crewe
 Cheshire
 CW1 6GJ
 T 0300 060 3900

Dear David Broadley,

Planning Consultation: Ickford Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 12 February 2019.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Natural England is a statutory consultee in neighbourhood planning and must be consulted on draft neighbourhood development plans by the Parish/Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forums where our interests would be affected by the proposals made.

In our review of the Ickford Neighbourhood Plan SEA screening we note that;

- there are no designated sites or protected landscapes within the impacts zones of the Neighbourhood Plan area and there are less than 500 additional dwelling sites or 1000 sqm of commercial sites proposed.

As a result we agree with the assessment that the Neighbourhood Plan does not require an SEA. However, we would like to draw your attention to the requirement to conserve biodiversity and provide a net gain in biodiversity through planning policy (Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and section 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework). Please ensure that any development policy in your plan includes wording to ensure “all development results in a biodiversity net gain for the parish”.

The recently produced Neighbourhood Plan for Benson, in South Oxfordshire provides an excellent example. We are of the opinion that the policy wording around the Environment, Green Space and Biodiversity is exemplar. We would recommend you considering this document, when reviewing yours.

Further Recommendations

Natural England would also like to highlight that removal of green space in favour of development may have serious impacts on biodiversity and connected habitat and therefore species ability to adapt to climate change. We recommend that the final local plan include:

Policies around connected Green Infrastructure (GI) within the parish. Elements of GI such as open green space, wild green space, allotments, and green walls and roofs can all be used to create connected habitats suitable for species adaptation to climate change. Green infrastructure also provides multiple benefits for people including recreation, health and well-being, access to nature, opportunities for food growing, and resilience to climate change. **Annex A** provides examples of Green Infrastructure;

- Policies around Biodiversity Net Gain should propose the use of a biodiversity measure for development proposals. Examples of calculation methods are included in Annex A;

Annex A provides information on the natural environment and issues and opportunities for your Neighbourhood planning.

Yours sincerely,

Eleanor Sweet-Escott
Lead Adviser
Sustainable Development
Thames Team

Natural England Response Annex A - Neighbourhood planning and the natural environment: information, issues and opportunities

Natural Environment Information Sources

The Magic¹ website will provide you with much of the nationally held natural environment data for your plan area. The most relevant layers for you to consider are: **Agricultural Land Classification, Ancient Woodland, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Local Nature Reserves, National Parks (England), National Trails, Priority Habitat Inventory, public rights of way (on the Ordnance Survey base map) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (including their impact risk zones)**. Local environmental record centres may hold a range of additional information on the natural environment. A list of local record centres is available here².

1 <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

2 <http://www.nbn-nfbr.org.uk/nfbr.php>

3

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

4 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

5 <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

6 <http://www.landis.org.uk/index.cfm>

7 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

8 <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/>

Priority habitats are those habitats of particular importance for nature conservation, and the list of them can be found here³. Most of these will be mapped either as **Sites of Special Scientific Interest**, on the Magic website or as **Local Wildlife Sites**. Your local planning authority should be able to supply you with the locations of Local Wildlife Sites.

National Character Areas (NCAs) divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each character area is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. NCA profiles contain descriptions of the area and statements of environmental opportunity, which may be useful to inform proposals in your plan. NCA information can be found here⁴.

There may also be a local **landscape character assessment** covering your area. This is a tool to help understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place. It can help to inform, plan and manage change in the area. Your local planning authority should be able to help you access these if you can't find them online.

If your neighbourhood planning area is within or adjacent to a **National Park** or **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** (AONB), the relevant National Park/AONB Management Plan for the area will set out useful information about the protected landscape. You can access the plans on from the relevant National Park Authority or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty website. General mapped information on **soil types** and **Agricultural Land Classification** is available (under 'landscape') on the Magic⁵ website and also from the LandIS website⁶, which contains more information about obtaining soil data.

Natural Environment Issues to Consider

The National Planning Policy Framework⁷ sets out national planning policy on protecting and enhancing the natural environment. Planning Practice Guidance⁸ sets out supporting guidance. Your local planning authority should be able to provide you with further advice on the potential impacts of your plan on the natural environment and the need for any environmental assessments.

Landscape

Paragraph 172 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlights the need to protect and enhance valued landscapes through the planning system. Your plan may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes. You may want to consider identifying distinctive local landscape features or characteristics such as ponds, woodland or dry stone walls and think about how any new development proposals can respect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness.

If you are proposing development within or close to a protected landscape (National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) or other sensitive location, we recommend that you carry out a landscape assessment of the proposal. Landscape assessments can help you to choose the most appropriate sites for development and help to avoid or minimise impacts of development on the landscape through careful siting, design and landscaping.

Wildlife habitats

Some proposals can have adverse impacts on designated wildlife sites or other priority habitats (listed here⁹), such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Ancient woodland¹⁰. If there are likely to be any adverse impacts you'll need to think about how such impacts can be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for.

⁹

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>

¹¹

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals>

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/biodiversity-offsetting#guidance-for-offset-providers-developers-and-local-authorities-in-the-pilot-areas> Note; the 'Guidance for developers' and 'Guidance for offset providers' documents provide a calculation method.

¹⁴ <http://www.environmentbank.com/impact-calculator.php> , and

http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&ved=0ahUKEwj7vcbl0aDQAhVMDcAKHb8IDEUQFggsMAI&url=http%3A%2F%2Fconsult.welhat.gov.uk%2Ffile%2F4184236&usq=AFQjCNFfkbJIJQ_UN0044Qe6rmiLffxckg

Priority and protected species and habitat

You'll also want to consider whether any proposals might affect priority species (listed here¹¹) or protected species. Natural England has produced advice here¹² to help understand the impact of particular developments on protected species. Consideration should also be given to the potential environmental value of brownfield sites, often found in urban areas and former industrial land, further information including links to the open mosaic habitats inventory can be found here.

Ancient woodland and veteran trees-link to standing advice

You should consider any impacts on ancient woodland and veteran trees in line with paragraph 175 of the NPPF. Natural England maintains the Ancient Woodland Inventory which can help identify ancient woodland. Natural England and the Forest Commission have produced standing advice for planning authorities in relation to ancient woodland and veteran trees. It should be taken into account by planning authorities when determining relevant planning applications. Natural England will only provide bespoke advice on ancient woodland/veteran trees where they form part of a SSSI or in exceptional circumstances

Biodiversity net gain

Under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Local Planning Authorities are required to conserve biodiversity. The NPPF section 170 states the requirement for “*minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity*”. Suitable methods for calculating biodiversity net gain can include the Defra biodiversity offsetting metric¹³ and the environment bank biodiversity impact calculator¹⁴. Natural England would expect a policy within the Neighbourhood Plan to include wording to ensure that net biodiversity gain is achieved.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

Soil is a finite resource that fulfils many important functions and services for society. It is a growing medium for food, timber and other crops, a store for carbon and water, a reservoir of biodiversity and a buffer against pollution. If you are proposing development, you should seek to use areas of poorer quality agricultural land in preference to that of a higher quality in line with National Planning Policy Framework para 170. For more information, see our publication Agricultural Land Classification: protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land¹⁵.

¹⁵ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35012>

¹⁶ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/local-green-space-designation/>

Green Infrastructure, Improving Your Natural Environment.

Inclusion of Green Infrastructure (GI) in to development plans can provide multifunctional benefits to the area. These can include opportunities for recreation, health and wellbeing and access to nature as well as providing connected habitats for wildlife.

Your plan or order can offer exciting opportunities to enhance your local environment through inclusion of GI. If you are setting out policies on new development or proposing sites for development, you may wish to consider identifying what environmental features you want to be retained, connected, enhanced or new features you would like to see created as part of any new development.

Examples might include:

- Providing a new footpath with landscaping through the new development to link into existing rights of way or other green spaces.
- Restoring a neglected hedgerow or creating new ones.
- Creating a new pond as an attractive feature on the site.
- Planting trees characteristic to the local area to make a positive contribution to the local landscape.
- Using native plants in landscaping schemes for better nectar and seed sources for bees and birds.
- Incorporating swift boxes or bat boxes into the design of new buildings.
- Considering how lighting can be best managed to encourage wildlife.
- Adding a green roof or walls to new or existing buildings.

You may also want to consider enhancing your local area in other ways, for example by:

- Setting out in your plan how you would like to implement elements of a wider Green Infrastructure Strategy in your community.
- Assessing needs for accessible greenspace and setting out proposals to address any deficiencies or enhance provision.
- Identifying green areas of particular importance for special protection through Local Green Space designation (see Planning Practice Guidance on this¹⁶).
- Managing existing (and new) public spaces to be more wildlife friendly (e.g. by sowing wild flower strips in less used parts of parks, changing hedge cutting timings and frequency).
- Planting additional street trees.
- Identifying any improvements to the existing public right of way network, e.g. cutting back hedges, improving the surface, clearing litter or installing kissing gates) or extending the network to create missing links.
- Restoring neglected environmental features (e.g. coppicing a prominent hedge that is in poor condition or clearing away an eyesore).

Green Roofs

Natural England is supportive of the inclusion of living roofs in all appropriate development. Research indicates that the benefits of green roofs include reducing run-off and thereby the risk of surface water flooding; reducing the requirement for heating and air-conditioning; and providing habitat for wildlife.

We would advise your council that some living roofs, such as sedum matting, can have limited biodiversity value in terms of the range of species that grow on them and habitats they provide. Natural England would encourage you to consider the use of bespoke solutions based on the needs of the wildlife specific to the site and adjacent area. I would refer you to <http://livingroofs.org/> for a range of innovative solutions.

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Neighbourhood Development Plan

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