

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Broad Hinton, Winterbourne Bassett & Uffcott Neighbourhood Development Plan

**Environment Report to accompany Regulation 14
consultation on the Neighbourhood Development Plan**

Broad Hinton & Winterbourne Bassett Parish Council

January 2025

Quality information

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Non-Technical Summary | i |
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| 2. What is the BHWBUF NDP seeking to achieve? | 3 |
| 3. What is the scope of the SEA? | 6 |
| Part 1: Assessment of reasonable alternatives | 13 |
| 4. Introduction (to Part 1) | 14 |
| 5. Establishing reasonable alternatives..... | 15 |
| 6. Preferred approach for the Neighbourhood Development Plan..... | 25 |
| Part 2: What are the SEA findings at this stage? | 27 |
| 7. Introduction (to Part 2) | 28 |
| 8. Assessment of the plan..... | 30 |
| 9. Conclusions and recommendations | 35 |
| Part 3: What are the next steps? | 36 |
| 10. Next steps | 37 |
| Appendix A Regulatory requirements | 38 |
| Appendix B Scoping information..... | 43 |

Non-Technical Summary

Introduction

AECOM is commissioned to lead on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Broad Hinton, Winterbourne Bassett & Uffcott Neighbourhood Development Plan (hereafter referred to as “the BHWBUF NDP”).

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 positive effects. SEA of the BHWBUF NDP is a legal requirement.¹

The BHWBUF NDP is being prepared by the Parish Council in the context of the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) and the emerging Local Plan Review (LPR). Once ‘made’, the BHWBUF NDP will have material weight when deciding on planning applications alongside the WCS and LPR.

This report is the Environmental Report for the BHWBUF NDP. It is published alongside the ‘pre-submission’ version of the Plan, under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended).

Structure of the Environmental Report / Non-Technical Summary

SEA reporting essentially involves answering the following questions in turn:

1. Assessment of reasonable alternatives
2. What are the SEA findings at this stage?
 - i.e., in relation to the draft plan.
3. What happens next?

Each of these questions is answered in turn within a discrete ‘part’ of the Environmental Report and summarised within this Non-Technical Summary (NTS). However, firstly there is a need to set the scene further by answering the questions ‘What is the Plan seeking to achieve?’ and ‘What’s the scope of the SEA?’

What is the BHWBUF NDP seeking to achieve?

The BHWBUF NDP has a clear vision, which is summarised as follows:

“Our vision is to conserve the distinct rural character and heritage of the chalk downland villages of Broad Hinton, Winterbourne Bassett and Uffcott, while ensuring a safe and thriving community.

It is the year 2038, the villages have a population of around 1000 people. There are many more younger families helping sustain the school, and playgrounds and community groups to support them. People can downsize in retirement and stay

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 BHWBUF NDP was subject to screening by Wiltshire Council in 2024 and Scoping consultation in October-November 2024 sought the wider opinions of statutory consultees.

within their community. The village hall has become a thriving centre including further community facilities, and still has many clubs and events run by volunteers. There are community hubs across the villages with a community owned cafe, small shop, workspaces, additional parking, and Churches used for worship and community activities. The pubs and restaurant have never been busier with locals and tourists. The heritage and views up to and from the Ridgeway and White Horse are still so inspirational, connections between the villages and beyond have improved and the walks around the many byways, bridleways and footpaths are still enjoyed by all.”

A total of five objectives have been identified to support the delivery of the vision, which are:

1. Sustainable Community

- a. Promote and support the reduction of the carbon footprint of our community
- b. Protect and enhance our community facilities
- c. Promote healthier lifestyles and enhance community wellbeing

2. Local Housing Needs

- a. Support the development of types of housing to meet the needs of young families, single people, and older residents
- b. Identify sites for the development of new housing, and other uses, to meet the needs of local people within our community

3. Local Character and Environment

- a. Protect the locally valued heritage of the community
- b. Protect and enhance the character of the built environment
- c. Protect and enhance the natural environment

4. Local Economy

- a. Support the continued vitality and needs of the local, rural and villages economy
- b. Support home and hybrid working

5. Getting Around

- a. Protect and support better connections between the villages

What is the scope of the SEA?

The scope of the SEA is summarised in a list of topics, objectives, and assessment questions, which, taken together indicate the parameters of the SEA and provide a methodological ‘framework’ for assessment. A summary framework is presented below, and a full framework which includes assessment questions is provided within the main Environmental Report (see **Table 3.2**).

| SEA topic | SEA objective |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Biodiversity and geodiversity | Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity. |
| Climate change and flood risk | Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the neighbourhood area and increase resilience to the potential effects of climate change. |
| Community wellbeing | Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities. |
| Historic environment | Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area. |
| Land, soil and water resources | Ensure the efficient and effective use of land, and protect and enhance water quality, using water resources in a sustainable manner. |
| Landscape | Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape. |
| Transportation | Promote sustainable transport use and active travel opportunities and reduce the need to travel. |

Plan-making / SEA up to this point

An important element of the SEA process involves assessing ‘reasonable alternatives’ in time to inform development of the draft proposals, and then publishing information on reasonable alternatives for consultation alongside the draft proposals.

As such, **Part 1** of the Environmental Report explains how work was undertaken to develop and assess a ‘reasonable’ range of alternative approaches to the allocation of land for housing, including alternative sites.

Specifically, **Part 1** of the report:

1. Presents an assessment of two sites in BHWBUF against the SEA framework.
2. Explains reasons for establishing the preferred option, in light of the assessment.

Site selection

AECOM was commissioned to produce a Site Options and Assessment (SOA) Report for BHWBUF, which was published in August 2023. Of the 25 sites that were assessed through this report, only six were considered potentially appropriate for development (i.e. given an amber rating), on the basis that the identified issues can be resolved or constraints mitigated.

Of the six sites considered potentially appropriate for development, two were eliminated for the purpose of the SEA due to being withdrawn by the landowner.

Of the remaining four sites, only two had capacity to meet the identified housing need for the neighbourhood area. In addition, of the two sites which did not have capacity to meet this need, one was identified as having access issues, and the other was deemed more suitable, by the Steering Group, to be allocated as a Local Green Space through the BHWBUF NDP.

Combined with a preference in the village for the housing need to be met through one site, only two sites were deemed appropriate for assessment through the SEA process.

Site options

Details of the two sites assessed through the SEA process are presented in the table below.

| Site Reference | Site Name | Settlement | Area (ha) | Capacity (number of homes) |
|----------------|----------------------------|--------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| B1 | The Manor House Paddock | Broad Hinton | 0.79 | 50 |
| B2 | Land north of Broad Hinton | Broad Hinton | 2.7 | 148 (54 proposed) |

Appraisal of reasonable alternatives

The table below provides a summary of the results of the site assessment. Full appraisal findings are presented in **Chapter 5** of the main body of the Environmental Report.

| SA topic | | Option 1 (Site B1) | Option 2 (Site B2) |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Biodiversity and geodiversity | Significant effects? | No | No |
| | Rank | =1 | =1 |
| Climate change and flood risk | Significant effects? | No | No |
| | Rank | 2 | 1 |
| Community wellbeing | Significant effects? | Yes – positive | Yes – positive |
| | Rank | 2 | 1 |
| Historic environment | Significant effects? | Uncertain | Uncertain |
| | Rank | =1 | =1 |
| Land, soil and water resources | Significant effects? | No | No |
| | Rank | 1 | 2 |

| SA topic | | Option 1 (Site B1) | Option 2 (Site B2) |
|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Landscape | Significant effects? | No | No |
| | Rank | 1 | 2 |
| Transportation | Significant effects? | No | No |
| | Rank | 2 | 1 |

Development of the preferred approach

The group have provided the following reasoning as to why the preferred site was chosen for allocation through the BHWBUF NDP:

“The HNA makes clear that the calculation of housing need is a starting point for the consideration of strategy in the NDP. It provides an indicative housing need that would help to sustain the current position in population terms – this shows a gradual drift to older and smaller households.

There is an explicit objective in the NDP to foster a sustainable growth in population by encouraging younger households and family households to stay or locate to the area. A more diverse population will support the local school and other local community activities. This means planning for sustainable growth in housing development above the indicated need. This applies to each of the settlements in the neighbourhood area and cannot be satisfied in one location.

Affordability is a key concern. The HNA identifies requirements for 34 affordable homes and 12 specialist homes based on the status quo.

Planned development in Broad Hinton

Housing schemes will deliver affordable housing at around 40% of the total housing provided, subject to site factors. This means that a larger scheme is needed to deliver close to the affordable homes required. In Broad Hinton, Site B2 provides the best opportunity to deliver the housing required at scale close to the centre of Broad Hinton village

The NDP also identifies the need for a range of sport facilities and community facilities in Broad Hinton. There are also local amenity issues arising from car parking at the school and village hall. The larger development at Site B2 provides opportunities to redevelop an existing resource (the Cricket Ground) and provide a new community building located close to the existing village hall and the school in the centre of the village. There is an opportunity to provide dedicated car parking for users of all these facilities, removing a problem from the centre of the village.

This combination of benefits can only be secured on Site B2. In contrast Site B1 is located separately to the settlement and if developed on its own would result in a physically isolated development without a footpath link into the village. Furthermore, site capacity is lower and so this would not deliver the quantum of affordable housing sought and the community benefits possible on Site B2 would be lost.

Planned development in Winterbourne Bassett

There is a strong desire to improve the community resilience in smaller settlements in the neighbourhood area and it is acknowledged this would be at a small scale. This is again based on the key objective of ensuring that villages are able to

accommodate new entrants who can help sustain the community. A small allocation in Winterbourne Bassett contributes to this objective. Planned development proposals for Site W3 in Winterbourne Bassett closely follow Wiltshire Council's approach to exceptions sites."

Assessment findings at this stage

Part 2 of the Environmental Report presents an assessment of the draft version of the BHWBUF NDP. Assessment findings are presented as a series of narratives under the 'SEA framework' topic headings. The following conclusions are reached:

Significant positive effects are predicted under the community wellbeing SEA topic as the draft Plan proposes to deliver 43 new homes, contributing to meeting the identified housing need, including by delivering affordable housing and housing appropriate for older people, as identified in the HNA. The spatial strategy performs particularly well by delivering a multi-use community hub on site, which will greatly benefit the local community by providing improved recreational facilities, shared workspaces, and employment opportunities.

Minor positive effects are predicted under the biodiversity and geodiversity and climate change and flood risk SEA topics. With regard to biodiversity and geodiversity, the site allocation avoids areas of high biodiversity value (i.e. internationally and nationally designated sites for biodiversity and BAP priority habitats), and the policy framework sufficiently addressed biodiversity. With regard to climate change and flood risk, significant effects are not considered likely as the level of development proposed through the draft Plan is small, particularly given the global nature of climate change.

Uncertainty is noted under the historic environment SEA topic in the absence of the detailed design and layout of the site allocation. This is because the design and layout of development, including landscaping and boundary treatment, will have a significant influence on the degree to which nearby listed buildings and their setting are impacted by development.

Minor negative effects are predicted under the land, soil and water resources, landscape, and transportation and movement SEA topics. With regard to land, soil and water resources, it is recognised that the loss of best and most versatile (BMV) / greenfield land is largely unavoidable given development will likely come forward with or without the draft Plan. With regard to landscape, a degree of uncertainty is noted as the impact of development on the local landscape character is largely dependent on the detailed design and layout of development, including landscaping and boundary treatment, which is unknown at this stage. With regard to transportation and movement, it is recognised that the draft Plan performs well by supporting improvements to both active travel infrastructure and public transport, as well as by encouraging working from home.

Overall, the draft BHWBUF NDP performs well given the constraints present across the neighbourhood area. In addition to meeting the identified housing need, the spatial strategy supports the vitality of the village through the delivery of a multi-use community hub, and the policy framework sufficiently identifies and addresses the constraints present by proposing appropriate mitigation measures.

Next steps

This Environmental Report accompanies the BHWWBF NDP for Regulation 14 consultation.

Following consultation, any representations made will be considered by the BHWWBF NDP Steering Group, and the BHWWBF NDP and Environmental Report will be updated as necessary. The updated Environmental Report will then accompany the BHWWBF NDP for submission to the Local Planning Authority, Wiltshire Council, for subsequent Independent Examination.

Following submission, the plan and supporting evidence will be published for further consultation, and then subjected to Independent Examination. At Independent Examination, the BHWWBF NDP will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the Local Plan.

Assuming that the examination leads to a favourable outcome, the BHWWBF NDP will then be subject to a referendum, organised by Wiltshire Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the BHWWBF NDP, then it will be 'made'. Once 'made', the BHWWBF NDP will become part of the Development Plan for Wiltshire Council, covering the defined neighbourhood area.

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM is commissioned to lead on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Broad Hinton, Winterbourne Bassett & Uffcott Neighbourhood Development Plan (hereafter referred to as “the BHWBUF NDP”).
- 1.2 The BHWBUF NDP is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and in the context of the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) and the emerging Local Plan Review (LPR). Once ‘made’, the BHWBUF NDP will have material weight when deciding on planning applications alongside the WCS and LPR.
- 1.3 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative effects and maximising positive effects. SEA of the BHWBUF NDP is a legal requirement.²

SEA explained

- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 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”.³ The report must then be considered, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.
- 1.6 More specifically, the report must answer the following three questions:
 1. Assessment of reasonable alternatives.
 2. What are the SEA findings at this stage?
 - i.e., in relation to the draft plan.
 3. What happens next?

² 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 BHWBUF NDP was subject to screening by Wiltshire Council in 2024 and Scoping consultation in October-November 2024 sought the wider opinions of statutory consultees.

³ Regulation 12(2) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

This Environmental Report

- 1.7 This report is the Environmental Report for the BHWBUF NDP. It is published alongside the 'pre-submission' version of the Plan, under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended).
- 1.8 This report essentially answers questions 1, 2 and 3 above in turn, to provide the required information. Each question is answered within a discrete 'part' of the report.
- 1.9 However, before answering question 1, two initial questions are answered to further set the scene; what is the plan seeking to achieve? And what is the scope of the SEA?

2. What is the BHWBUF NDP seeking to achieve?

Introduction

2.1 This section considers the strategic planning policy context provided by the adopted WCS and emerging LPR, before then presenting the vision and objectives of the BHWBUF NDP. **Figure 2.1** below presents the neighbourhood area.



Figure 2.1 The BHWBUF neighbourhood area

Strategic planning policy context

- 2.2 The adopted planning framework consists of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS), adopted in 2015. As the Local Plan is over five years old, work is now underway to review the WCS. Regulation 19 consultation on the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan (WLP) ran between 27th September and 22nd November 2023. The emerging WLP is due to be adopted in late 2025.
- 2.3 The WCS identifies Broad Hinton as a 'Large Village' in the settlement hierarchy, which is the third largest classification, below 'Local Service Centres'. Winterbourne Bassett is classified as a 'Small Village' and Uffcott is classified as 'Open Countryside'.
- 2.4 The emerging Local Plan identifies Broad Hinton and Winterbourne Bassett as part of the 'Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade Community Area'. The Wiltshire Housing Site Allocation plan does not allocate any sites within Broad Hinton, however a housing need of 46 homes has been identified through a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) completed for the neighbourhood area.

BHWBUF NDP vision and objectives

- 2.5 The BHWBUF NDP has a clear vision, which is summarised as follows:

"Our vision is to conserve the distinct rural character and heritage of the chalk downland villages of Broad Hinton, Winterbourne Bassett and Uffcott, while ensuring a safe and thriving community.

It is the year 2038, the villages have a population of around 1000 people. There are many more younger families helping sustain the school, and playgrounds and community groups to support them. People can downsize in retirement and stay within their community. The village hall has become a thriving centre including further community facilities, and still has many clubs and events run by volunteers. There are community hubs across the villages with a community owned cafe, small shop, workspaces, additional parking, and Churches used for worship and community activities. The pubs and restaurant have never been busier with locals and tourists. The heritage and views up to and from the Ridgeway and White Horse are still so inspirational, connections between the villages and beyond have improved and the walks around the many byways, bridleways and footpaths are still enjoyed by all."

- 2.6 A total of five objectives have been identified to support the delivery of the vision, which are:

1. Sustainable Community

- a. Promote and support the reduction of the carbon footprint of our community
- b. Protect and enhance our community facilities
- c. Promote healthier lifestyles and enhance community wellbeing

2. Local Housing Needs

- a. Support the development of types of housing to meet the needs of young families, single people, and older residents

- b. Identify sites for the development of new housing, and other uses, to meet the needs of local people within our community

3. Local Character and Environment

- a. Protect the locally valued heritage of the community
- b. Protect and enhance the character of the built environment
- c. Protect and enhance the natural environment

4. Local Economy

- a. Support the continued vitality and needs of the local, rural and villages economy
- b. Support home and hybrid working

5. Getting Around

- a. Protect and support better connections between the villages

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 topics and objectives that should be a focus of the assessment of the plan and reasonable alternatives. Further information, including the policy review and baseline information that has supported the development of key sustainability issues and objectives, is presented in **Appendix B**.

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 Hence, these authorities were consulted from 21st October to 25th November 2024. Comments were received from all three consultation bodies; however, Natural England did not have any specific comments for the Scoping Report. Comments from the Environment Agency and Historic England are detailed in **Table 3.1** below.

Table 3.1 Scoping consultation responses

| Consultation body | Consultation response | How the response was considered and addressed |
|--|--|--|
| Environment Agency Planning Advisor, received 25 th November 2025 | Please note that the Lead Local Flood Authority can advise if there are areas at risk from surface water flood risk (including groundwater and sewerage flood risk) in your neighbourhood plan area. The Surface Water Management Plan is the evidence base for this and contains recommendations and actions to reduce the risk of flooding. This may be useful when gathering baseline data and drafting key sustainability issues and objectives on which to appraise the neighbourhood plan. | Comment noted, surface water flood risk has been considered. |
| | We encourage you to seek ways in which your neighbourhood plan can improve the local environment at the earliest stages. Together with Natural England, English Heritage and Forestry Commission we have published joint guidance on neighbourhood planning ⁵ , which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environmental into your plan. | Comment noted and fed back to Steering Group. |

⁴ 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” (SEA Directive, Article 6(3)).

⁵ Locality (no date): [Neighbourhood Planning for the Environment](#)

| Consultation body | Consultation response | How the response was considered and addressed |
|---|--|---|
| Historic England Historic Places Adviser, received 25 th November 2025 | We note from the Scoping Report that the reason for a full SEA was based on the Plan's ambition to allocate sites for housing although the Report doesn't elaborate on what environmental aspects may have been identified as relevant factors in this decision. | Comment noted, relevant section amended. |
| | To this list we would recommend adding our guidance on Site Allocations. While this is titled with reference to Local Plans it is of equal relevance when considering the allocation of development sites within Neighbourhood Plans. | Comment noted, relevant section amended. |

Key sustainability issues

3.3 The key sustainability issues for the neighbourhood area, identified through scoping, are presented below under each SEA topic.

Air quality

- The neighbourhood area is approximately 5.7km southwest of the Kingshill Road, Swindon AQMA, designated due to high NO₂ emissions. As Swindon is the nearest town to the neighbourhood area, it is likely that most residents will access key services and facilities in this town.
- While development in the neighbourhood area could increase travel to neighbouring and larger centres (such as Swindon) for employment, services and facilities, this is unlikely to lead to any significant increase in emissions, both locally and within the wider area.
- Considering the above, within the neighbourhood area there is an absence of any significant air quality issues (i.e., AQMAs) and there are no exceeded or expected exceedances of national air quality objectives. Moreover, the BHWBUF NDP is seeking to deliver a relatively low level of growth. Therefore, **this topic has been scoped out of the SEA.**

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- There are four SSSIs in proximity to the neighbourhood area, of which two are in good condition, two are in unfavourable-recovering. The BHWBUF NDP could help to support the maintenance and enhancement of these designations by focusing development away from them and including green infrastructure provisions.
- Much of the neighbourhood area overlaps with Network Enhancement Zones and Network Expansion Zone. The BHWBUF NDP should make use of the opportunities these areas present to improve and enhance the biodiversity value of the neighbourhood area.

Climate change and flood risk

- The majority of the neighbourhood area is at a low risk of fluvial and surface water flooding; and the areas at greater risk are focused away from the main settlement to the centre. Recognising the varying levels of risk throughout the neighbourhood area, there is a need to consider flood risk through the BHWBUF NDP, for example - managing, and where possible, improving drainage rates. The BHWBUF NDP could encourage the installation of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) to help manage flood risk across the neighbourhood area and mitigate risks in areas at higher risk.
- The BHWBUF NDP is seeking to bring forward an increase in housing development. Whilst this may impact carbon emissions, the level of growth is very low. It will be important for new development to adopt best building practices to limit the emissions linked to construction and use sustainable features and incorporate renewable energy infrastructure where appropriate to reduce the overall carbon footprint of new housing.
- As with much of the country, extreme heat events are likely to occur more frequently in the future. In addition to this, drought is likely to become an increasing issue in summer, whilst surface water / groundwater flooding is likely to increase during winter months. In this respect, climate change resilience should form an integral part of the BHWBUF NDP policy framework.
- CO2 emissions across the different sectors have decreased between 2005 and 2021. However, CO2 emissions associated with transport remain high in Wiltshire, which highlights the importance of accessible development and the delivery of sustainable transport infrastructure, which the BHWBUF NDP can seek to address locally. This can be achieved by strengthening active travel routes and opportunities to increase self-containment, as well as an uptake of electric vehicles, and supporting electric vehicle infrastructure.

Community wellbeing

- The neighbourhood area has a large senior population. The BHWBUF NDP presents an opportunity to ensure that infrastructure within the neighbourhood area is inclusive and accessible for all age groups. For example, by implementing age-friendly design principles in public spaces, such as ensuring accessible pedestrian pathways, benches, and lighting, the plan can enhance the quality of life for older adults while also benefiting residents of all ages.
- Whilst the neighbourhood area offers a range of amenities, residents may need to travel to neighbouring towns like Swindon for a broader range of services. With relation to other SEA topics, the BHWBUF NDP presents an opportunity to protect and enhance transport links to these areas, to ensure residents have access to essential services beyond the immediate neighbourhood.
- With regard to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), the neighbourhood area experiences high levels of deprivation linked to 'barriers to housing and services and living environment', reflecting its broadly rural nature. Development through the BHWBUF NDP can positively contribute to reducing this deprivation by bringing forward new housing to meet the local need and encouraging new community services and facilities to be brought into the neighbourhood area.

Historic environment

- The neighbourhood area contains several designated heritage features that significantly contribute to the historic character of the village, particularly within

and near the Broad Hinton Conservation Area. Therefore, the neighbourhood area is regarded as having a sensitive historic environment that could be affected by development. Consequently, any proposed development close to important heritage assets (both designated and non-designated) must carefully assess the potential impact on the inherent qualities of these assets and their surroundings.

- It is also acknowledged that development under the BHWBUF NDP provides an opportunity to enhance the understanding of, and access to, heritage assets of both local and national significance, which is likely to be a crucial factor in the emerging NDP.
- By promoting greater understanding of and access to local and national designations within and around the neighbourhood area, the BHWBUF NDP offers a chance to establish a growth strategy that safeguards the area's historic character and specific heritage features. Additionally, the BHWBUF NDP can contribute to preserving and enhancing the historic environment by ensuring that new developments are designed and laid out with sensitivity to the historic context of the neighbourhood area.

Land, soil and water resources

- Allocating land for development could influence changes to land, soil and water resources. It will be important for development to be focused away from best and most versatile (BMV) land. It is noted that high quality agricultural land is focused away from the village settlement area, where development is more likely to be focused.
- The BHWBUF NDP should consider the possible effects on the waterbody catchments and water quality. Ensuring that future development does not harm water quality, both on-site and off-site, is vital. This might involve introducing measures to prevent water pollution during all stages of development. Additionally, the BHWBUF NDP should look for opportunities to improve water quality, particularly in terms of its chemical makeup.
- The BHWBUF NDP could also consider supporting additional measures to strengthen the resilience of water supplies. This could involve promoting local water recycling projects and finding ways to increase the efficiency of water usage, especially given the expected rise in population and the subsequent increase in water demand.

Landscape

- Due to the location of the neighbourhood area within the North Wessex Downs NL, the BHWBUF NDP should have regard to its setting, and to the aims and objectives of the North Wessex AONB Management Plan.
- There are a number of TPOs in the neighbourhood area, which are important features of the settlements and likely contribute to a number of views. New development through the BHWBUF NDP should avoid visual impacts to and from these TPOs where possible to maintain the character and quality of built-up areas in Broad Hinton.
- It will be important for the BHWBUF NDP to protect the local landscape and villagescape, including its coherence and characteristics with regard to its Landscape Character Area (LCA). This will bring benefits to other SEA topics, including biodiversity and climate change, by maintaining features which support wildlife and natural processes, such as gardens and groups of trees.

Transport and movement

- Any future development in the neighbourhood area has the potential to increase the number of private vehicles and Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) on local roads, exacerbating existing congestion, parking, and pedestrian/ cyclists safety concerns. The limited access to sustainable transport opportunities is likely to exacerbate this issue, leading to further reliance on the private vehicle for residents.
- Development should seek to connect with and where possible extend the existing PRoW network, thereby maximising pedestrian and cycling opportunities for leisure, working and shopping.

The SEA framework

3.4 The SEA scope is summarised in a list of topics, objectives, and assessment questions, known as the SEA framework. These draw on the key sustainability issues identified through scoping. **Table 3.2** below presents the SEA framework as broadly agreed in October 2024.

Table 3.2 SEA framework

| SEA topic | SEA objective | Assessment questions (will the proposal help to...) |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Biodiversity and geodiversity | Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance nationally and locally designated sites, including supporting habitats and mobile species that are important to the integrity of these sites? • Protect and enhance semi-natural habitats as well as priority habitats and species, including ancient woodland? • Achieve biodiversity and environmental net gains and support the delivery of ecosystem services and multifunctional green infrastructure networks? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity? |
| Climate change and flood risk | Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the neighbourhood area and increase resilience to the potential effects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of journeys made and reduce the need to travel? • Promote the use of more sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling, public transport, and electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure? • Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria? |

| SEA topic | SEA objective | Assessment questions (will the proposal help to...) |
|----------------------|--|--|
| | of climate change. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources, or reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources? • Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the neighbourhood area? • Sustainably manage water run-off, and reduce runoff where possible? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks? |
| Community wellbeing | Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing? • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes? • Meet the needs of all sectors of the community? • Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's needs, particularly the needs of an ageing population? • Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including health infrastructure? • Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities? • Facilitate green infrastructure enhancements, including improved access to open space? • Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing residents? |
| Historic environment | Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings? • Protect the integrity of the historic setting of key monuments of cultural heritage interest as listed in the Wiltshire and Swindon HER? • Protect the integrity of WWII relics in the area? • Support the undertaking of early archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the neighbourhood area? |

| SEA topic | SEA objective | Assessment questions (will the proposal help to...) |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Land, soil and water resources | Ensure the efficient and effective use of land, and protect and enhance water quality, using water resources in a sustainable manner. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of previously developed land wherever possible? • Identify and avoid the development of the BMV land? • Support the minimisation, reuse, and recycling of waste? • Avoid any negative impacts on water quality and support improvements to water quality? • Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside proposed development? • Protect waterbodies from pollution? • Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/or water recycling? • Avoid any negative impacts on mineral and waste infrastructure? |
| Landscape | Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and / or enhance local landscape character and quality of place? • Conserve and enhance local identity, diversity, and settlement character? • Identify and protect locally important viewpoints which contribute to character and sense of place? • Retain and enhance landscape features that contribute to the water setting, or rural setting, including trees and hedgerows? |
| Transportation | Promote sustainable transport use and active travel opportunities and reduce the need to travel. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the objectives within the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan to encourage the use of more sustainable transport modes? • Encourage a shift to more sustainable forms of travel and enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements? • Improve local connectivity and pedestrian and cyclist movement? • Facilitate working from home to reduce the use of private vehicles to access workplaces outside of the neighbourhood area? • Reduce the impact of the transport sector on climate change? • Improve road safety and reduce pollution from vehicles? |

Part 1: Assessment of reasonable alternatives

4. Introduction (to Part 1)

Overview

- 4.1 Whilst work on the BHWBUF NDP has been underway for some time, the aim here is not to provide a comprehensive explanation of all the work carried out to date, but rather to explain work undertaken to develop and appraise reasonable alternatives through the SEA process.
- 4.2 More specifically, this part of the report presents information on the consideration given to reasonable alternative approaches to addressing a particular issue that is of central importance to the BHWBUF NDP, namely the allocation of land for housing, or alternative sites.

Why focus on sites?

- 4.3 The decision was taken to develop and assess reasonable alternatives in relation to the matter of allocating land for housing, given the following considerations:
- BHWBUF NDP objectives, particularly housing objectives to provide sufficient and appropriate high-quality housing to meet local needs.
 - Housing growth is known to be a matter of key interest amongst residents and other stakeholders; and
 - The delivery of new homes is most likely to have a significant effect compared to the other proposals within the BHWBUF NDP. National Planning Practice Guidance is clear that SEA should focus on matters likely to give rise to significant effects.

Structure of this part of the report

- 4.4 This part of the report is structured as follows:
- **Chapter 5 and Chapter 6** – discuss the options appraised as reasonable alternatives, and the findings of the appraisal of these options.
 - **Chapter 7** – explains reasons for selecting the preferred option, considering the appraisal.

5. Establishing reasonable alternatives

Introduction

- 5.1 This chapter describes the options assessed as reasonable alternatives through the SEA process, and assessment findings. The assessment comprises an appraisal of site options and an appraisal of spatial strategy options.

Strategic parameters

- 5.2 As discussed in **Section 2.1**, the BHWBUF NDP is being prepared in the context of the adopted WCS and emerging LPR.
- 5.3 The adopted planning framework consists of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS), adopted in 2015. As the Local Plan is over five years old, work is now underway to review the WCS. Regulation 19 consultation on the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan (WLP) ran between 27th September and 22nd November 2023. The emerging WLP is due to be adopted in late 2025.
- 5.4 The WCS identifies Broad Hinton as a 'Large Village' in the settlement hierarchy, which is the third largest classification, below 'Local Service Centres'. Winterbourne Bassett is classified as a 'Small Village' and Uffcott is classified as 'Open Countryside'.
- 5.5 The emerging Local Plan identifies Broad Hinton and Winterbourne Bassett as part of the 'Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade Community Area'. The Wiltshire Housing Site Allocation plan does not allocate any sites within the neighbourhood area. However, a need for 33.8 affordable homes, and 12 specialist accommodation units for older people, over the plan period has been identified through a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) completed by AECOM in May 2023, on behalf of Broad Hinton & Winterbourne Bassett Parish Council. Hence, the neighbourhood area has a need for 46 homes. Notably, the HNA splits this need 80/20 between Broad Hinton and Winterbourne Bassett respectively. Therefore, Broad Hinton has a need for 37 homes and Winterbourne Bassett has a need for 9 homes.

Appraisal of site options

- 5.6 To further support the development of a spatial strategy to deliver an appropriate number of homes in BHWBUF through the NDP, the Steering Group has considered alternative locations for delivering housing in the neighbourhood area.
- 5.7 AECOM was commissioned to produce a Site Options and Assessment (SOA) Report for BHWBUF, which was published in August 2023. Of the 25 sites that were assessed through this report, only six were considered potentially appropriate for development (i.e. given an amber rating), on the basis that the identified issues can be resolved or constraints mitigated. These six sites are outlined in **Table 5.1** overleaf.
- 5.8 Notably, Site W3 (Bowman's Paddock) was deemed unsuitable for development through the SOA. However, the SOA notes that of the 19 sites deemed unsuitable for development, the northern part of Site W3 (Bowmans

Paddock) may be considered as a potential 'rural exception' site as it fulfils the criteria set out in Core Policy 44 (Rural Exceptions Sites) of the WCS, provided such a proposal has support from the local community.

- 5.9 A Neighbourhood Plan would not normally allocate rural exception sites as these are intended to be exceptions to policy. However, the BHWBUF NDP has identified this site under a rural exception policy. This is to ensure that Winterbourne Bassett delivers its share in addressing the housing need. In addition, Site W3 meets the rural exception site criteria.

Table 5.1 Sites assessed through the SOA Report with an amber rating

| Site reference | Site name | Settlement | Area (ha) | Capacity (number of homes) |
|----------------|----------------------------|--------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| B1 | The Manor House Paddock | Broad Hinton | 0.79 | 50 |
| B2 | Land north of Broad Hinton | Broad Hinton | 2.7 | 148 (54 proposed) |
| B3 | M4 Trade Centre, A4361 | Broad Hinton | 0.31 | 11 |
| B6 | Land at Norborne Farm | Broad Hinton | 2.94 | 20 |
| B8 | Pitchens End green area | Broad Hinton | 0.22 | 2-4 |
| B14 | Land behind The Crown | Broad Hinton | 0.23 | 5 |

- 5.10 Since the SOA was published, the landowner of Site B6 has decided to withdraw the site due to viability concerns. The landowner of Site B14 has also expressed that they have no interest in developing this site. Therefore, these two sites have been eliminated for the purpose of the SEA.

- 5.11 As noted above, the neighbourhood area has a need for 46 homes (33.8 affordable homes and 12 specialist accommodation units for older people), 37 homes of which will need to be delivered in Broad Hinton. Only two of the four available sites listed in **Table 5.1** above can meet this need (B1 and B2). In addition to not having capacity to meet the housing need, access issues were identified when Site B3 was going to be developed in 2015. In addition, the landowner has not responded to the Steering Group's recent correspondence. With regard to Site B8, this site has a very small capacity and the Steering Group have outlined that there is more evidence to support designating this site as a Local Green Space through the BHWBUF NDP. Moreover, there is a preference in the village for the housing need to be met through one site. In light of this, the following reasonable alternatives have been developed:

- **Option 1 – Site B1 (The Manor House Paddock)**, delivering housing only (see **Figure 5.1** overleaf)
- **Option 2 – Site B2 (Land north of Broad Hinton)**, delivering housing, a multi-use community hub, playground facilities, and parking for the school and village hall (see **Figure 5.1** overleaf)



Figure 5.1 Reasonable alternatives for the BHWBUF NDP

Appraisal of reasonable alternatives

5.12 An appraisal of the reasonable alternatives, as set out above, is presented below under each of the SEA topics. **Table 5.2** overleaf provides a summary of the findings.

Methodology

- 5.13 For each of the options, the assessment examines likely significant effects on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability topics and objectives identified through SEA scoping as a methodological framework. Green is used to indicate significant positive effects, whilst red is used to indicate significant negative effects. Where appropriate, uncertainty will also be noted.
- 5.14 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, where there is a need to rely on assumptions in order to reach a conclusion on a 'significant effect' this is made explicit in the appraisal text.
- 5.15 Where it is not possible to predict likely significant effects based on reasonable assumptions, efforts are made to comment on the relative merits of the alternatives in more general terms and to indicate a rank of preference. This is helpful, as it enables a distinction to be made between the alternatives even where it is not possible to distinguish between them in terms of 'significant effects'. Numbers are used to highlight the option or options that are preferred from an SEA perspective with 1 performing the most favourably.
- 5.16 Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted considering the criteria presented within Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the duration, frequency and reversibility of effects.

Summary of findings

Table 5.2 Summary of findings

| SA topic | | Option 1 (Site B1) | Option 2 (Site B2) |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Biodiversity and geodiversity | Significant effects? | No | No |
| | Rank | =1 | =1 |
| Climate change and flood risk | Significant effects? | No | No |
| | Rank | 2 | 1 |
| Community wellbeing | Significant effects? | Yes – positive | Yes – positive |
| | Rank | 2 | 1 |
| Historic environment | Significant effects? | Uncertain | Uncertain |
| | Rank | =1 | =1 |
| Land, soil and water resources | Significant effects? | No | No |
| | Rank | 1 | 2 |
| Landscape | Significant effects? | No | No |
| | Rank | 1 | 2 |
| Transportation | Significant effects? | No | No |
| | Rank | 2 | 1 |

Biodiversity and geodiversity

5.17 There are no internationally or nationally designated sites for biodiversity in proximity (<1km) to either of the options. The nearest nationally designated site for biodiversity – Bincknoll Dip Woods SSSI – is approximately 2.4km northeast of **Option 2** and 2.6km northeast of **Option 1**. Whilst both options fall within an Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for this SSSI, it does not impact the type of development (i.e. residential / rural residential) likely to come forward through either option. In this respect, development under either of the options is unlikely to significantly impact this SSSI.

5.18 With regard to Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats, whilst neither option contains a priority habitat, **Option 2** is approximately 220m south of a small area of deciduous woodland, whilst **Option 1** is approximately 355m south of the same area of deciduous woodland. Given this distance, development under either option is unlikely to disturb this habitat and the species which may inhabit it.

5.19 With regard to the National Habitat Network, both options overlap entirely with a Network Expansion Zone, which is land beyond the Network Enhancement

Zones⁶ with potential for expanding, linking / joining networks across the landscape (i.e. conditions such as soils are potentially suitable for habitat creation for the specific habitat in addition to Enhancement Zone 1).

- 5.20 Both options overlap entirely with Countryside Stewardship (CS) priority areas for Lapwing and Corn Bunting. This means that these species are present in the local area, and therefore development under both options has the potential to disturb these species, particularly during the construction phase.
- 5.21 Overall, neither of the options are considered particularly constrained from a biodiversity and geodiversity standpoint. Nevertheless, it is noted that the loss of greenfield land under both options will likely have some impact on biodiversity locally. However, the requirement for 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG), which came into force in January 2024 under the Environment Act 2021, is likely to mitigate this to some degree. Whilst Option 2 is the larger of the two sites, it is noted that a significant part of this site is a cricket field in sports use, which will be retained. Thus, **no significant effects** are considered likely under either of the options and both options are ranked equally.

Climate change and flood risk

- 5.22 Per capita greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Wiltshire stood at 5.8 tCO₂e in 2022, which is higher than the regional (5.2 tCO₂e) and national (5.1 tCO₂e) average. The highest contributing sector to GHG emissions in Wiltshire during this year was transport, accounting for 37.6% of emissions.
- 5.23 It is assumed that both of the options will lead to an increase in overall GHG emissions within the neighbourhood area due to an increase in the local population. Two of the largest contributors to emissions will likely be the construction and operation of new homes, as well as an uptake in private car usage. Whilst both options are accessible to local services and facilities, these are limited and do not include a food shop, general practice (GP) or secondary school. However, this increase in overall GHG emissions is unlikely to be significant given the scale of development proposed. Notably, strategic-scale interventions, such as decentralised energy schemes, are unlikely at the scale of development proposed through both options.
- 5.24 It is noted that the provision of a new multi-use community hub (which would incorporate a community cafe, shop, workspace, and sports changing rooms) under **Option 2** will support self-containment in the village, which will likely reduce the need to travel (including by private car). In doing so, Option 2 is likely to result in a reduction in per capita GHG emissions locally.
- 5.25 In addition to the aforementioned benefits to climate change mitigation, the retention of the cricket pitch through **Option 2** means that this option will retain a greater area of open space, which will likely help mitigate flood risk on site, thereby also contributing to climate change adaptation.
- 5.26 With regard to fluvial flood risk, neither of the options overlap with, or are in proximity to, any areas of Flood Zone 2/3. Similarly, with regard to surface water flood risk, neither of the options overlap with, or are in proximity to, any areas of low-high surface water flood risk. Nevertheless, the Steering Group have highlighted that at present, **Option 2** experiences surface water flooding

⁶ Land connecting existing patches of primary and associated habitats which is likely to be suitable for creation of the primary habitat. Factors affecting suitability include proximity to primary habitat, land use (urban/rural), soil type, and slope.

in the winter months which prevents sports use on the site. As such, development of this site has the potential to improve existing drainage issues.

- 5.27 Overall, given that climate change is a global issue, and the scale of growth being considered in the neighbourhood area is relatively low, and given that neither option is at risk of fluvial or surface water flooding, **no significant effects** are considered likely under either of the options. **Option 2** is ranked most favourably as the provision of a new multi-use community hub will support self-containment in the village, reducing the need to travel, and retention of the cricket pitch will likely help mitigate flood risk on site.

Community wellbeing

- 5.28 Community infrastructure within the neighbourhood area supports some daily activity. This includes (but is not limited to) a primary school, village hall, a church, a pub, a restaurant, and small businesses. However, there is no food shop, GP or secondary school in the village. In this respect, it is likely that residents will travel out of the neighbourhood area to other settlements, such as Wroughton, to access further community services and facilities, including health facilities, supermarkets, and additional educational facilities.
- 5.29 Both options are well located to community infrastructure; the primary school and village hall are both located in the north of the village, in close proximity to both options. In addition, the nearest bus stop is located outside the village hall. The church and pub, whilst located further away, are both within walking distance (<800m) of both options. Only the restaurant is located beyond walking distance of both options, as it is located at the other end of the village. Overall, both options perform well from an accessibility standpoint. However, it is noted that **Option 2** is well-connected to the existing footpath by the village hall on Yew Tree Lane, whilst Option 1 would only be accessible from Broad Town Road, which currently has no footpath.
- 5.30 With regard to employment opportunities, Broad Hinton has limited opportunities, with the majority of residents who do not work mainly from home likely commuting to Swindon and further afield. However, according to data from the 2021 census, 48% of the working age population of the neighbourhood area work mainly from home, which is higher than the national average (31.5%). However, it is recognised that this figure may have decreased since 2021 as Covid-19 restrictions have since been lifted. Of those that do not work mainly from home, the most prevalent method of travel to the workplace is driving a car or van (41.4%) and the most prevalent distance travelled to work is less than 10km (17.8%).
- 5.31 It is noted that a multi-use community hub is proposed under **Option 2**, which will provide some new employment opportunities through the community café and shop. In this respect, Option 2 performs more favourably.
- 5.32 With regard to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), the neighbourhood area overlaps with the Wiltshire 012E Lower Super Output Area (LSOA), which was amongst the 50% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country in 2019. However, when looking at the 'barriers to housing and services' domain in isolation, this LSOA is amongst the 10% most deprived in the country. This suggests that the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services in the more rural parts of the neighbourhood area is poor. Hence, both options perform positively in this respect, delivering housing to the village.

- 5.33 It is noted that whilst **Option 2** contains a cricket field, the level of development being considered through this option would allow the cricket field to be retained.
- 5.34 Overall, both of the options are considered likely to lead to **significant positive effects** by delivering new homes in Broad Hinton, including affordable housing. This is particularly significant given Broad Hinton overlaps with an LSOA amongst the 10% most deprived in the country with regard to the 'barriers to housing and services' domain of the IMD. **Option 2** is ranked most favourably as it would deliver a multi-use community hub, supporting the vitality of the local community and delivering some new employment opportunities.

Historic environment

- 5.35 The Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site (WHS) is located approximately 900m south of the neighbourhood area. Both options are approximately 5km north of the WHS and are therefore unlikely to directly impact the site. However, growth through either option could increase the number of visitors to the site, contributing to recreational disturbance. Nevertheless, this is likely to be limited in proportion to the total number of visitors to the WHS.
- 5.36 There are 26 listed buildings in the neighbourhood area. **Option 2** is in close proximity (<100m) to a cluster of six grade II listed buildings to the south – three of these buildings are also in close proximity to **Option 1**. Four of these listed buildings – Manor Farmhouse (both options), Barn at Manor Farm (both options), Granary at Manor Farm (**Option 1**), and Broad Hinton Primary School (**Option 2**) – are on the northern side of Broad Town Road, adjacent to one or both of the options. Whilst this part of Broad Hinton has a relatively flat topography, and some of these listed buildings are screened by vegetation, there is still potential for both options to impact the setting of these listed buildings.
- 5.37 There are six scheduled monuments in the neighbourhood area. However, none of these are located in or in proximity to Broad Hinton, and therefore neither of the options are likely to disturb these scheduled monuments. Nevertheless, it is recognised that there may be undiscovered archaeological remains on either site, particularly given the presence of features listed on the HER, as discussed below. Therefore, an archaeological search should be carried out prior to development under either option.
- 5.38 According to Historic England's most recent Heritage at Risk Register (2023), none of the designated heritage assets within the neighbourhood area are at risk. However, this is subject to change and therefore the register should be checked prior to development under either option.
- 5.39 The Broad Hinton Conservation Area covers the southern part of the village. Neither of the options are likely to impact the setting of the conservation area as they are both located in the northern part of the village.
- 5.40 With regard to locally important heritage assets, a detailed search of the Heritage Gateway produces 59 results on the Wiltshire and Swindon HER for Broad Hinton parish. This includes 'undated earthworks, north of the manor' which overlap with **Option 2**. In this respect, if this option were to be developed, an archaeological search should be carried out prior to development.

5.41 Overall, both options have the potential to impact the setting of nearby listed buildings. However, it is recognised that the design and layout of development will have a significant impact on the effects of development on these listed buildings, and therefore **uncertainty** is noted under both options. As both options have the potential to impact the historic environment to a similar degree, they are ranked equally.

Land, soil and water resources

5.42 Both options are either wholly or partially greenfield, and therefore development under either option would lead to the loss of greenfield land. Notably, whilst **Option 2** comprises a mix of greenfield and previously development land, it is predominantly greenfield.

5.43 According to the Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Core Strategy, the neighbourhood area does not overlap with any Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs). Therefore, neither option is likely to impact mineral resources.

5.44 According to Natural England's regional Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) map for the South West, Broad Hinton is underlain by grade 2 ('very good') agricultural land. Notably, grades 1-3a are considered BMV land. Therefore, both options would lead to the loss of BMV land.

5.45 The neighbourhood area falls within the Kennet Operational Catchment. There is one waterbody within this catchment which runs through the neighbourhood area: the Upper Kennet to Marlborough waterbody, which runs through Winterbourne Bassett and Uffcott and had a 'moderate' ecological status when it was last tested in 2022. Neither of the options are in proximity to this waterbody, and therefore development under either option is unlikely to impact the water quality of this waterbody.

5.46 The neighbourhood area overlaps with three Source Protection Zones (SPZs) – two Zone III (total catchment) in the east, and one Zone II (outer protection zone) in the southwest. Neither of the options overlap with these zones.

5.47 Overall, both options are considered likely to lead to **minor negative effects** due to the loss of greenfield / BMV land. Significant effects are not considered likely as the entire village is underlain by grade 2 agricultural land, and therefore development must take place on such land if the neighbourhood area is to deliver its identified housing need. In addition, there are no brownfield sites available for development at present. **Option 1** is ranked more favourably as it will lead to the loss of a smaller area of greenfield / BMV land.

Landscape

5.48 The neighbourhood area wholly overlaps with the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. Therefore, both options have the potential to impact the setting and significance of the National Landscape.

5.49 Both options are connected to the northern settlement boundary of Broad Hinton. However, **Option 2** will result in a larger extension to the existing settlement boundary. In this respect, it performs less favourably.

5.50 Broad Hinton has a relatively flat topography, and both options are relatively free from features which contribute specifically to the special qualities of the National Landscape. In addition, **Option 1** is well screened by vegetation,

whilst **Option 2** incorporates some recreational uses (cricket pitch) and urban features. Nevertheless, both options – particularly **Option 2** – are still likely to impact villagescape character by extending the built footprint of Broad Hinton to the north. This will likely impact views to/from the northern part of the village, including to/from adjacent residential development.

- 5.51 There are several Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) in Broad Hinton. However, neither of the options contain, or lie adjacent to, any trees with TPOs.
- 5.52 Overall, given both options have the potential to impact the setting and significance of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, they both have the potential to lead to **minor negative effects** if appropriate and sensitive design and layout is not integrated within development. Significant effects are not considered likely as the entire neighbourhood area overlaps with the National Landscape, and therefore development must take place in the National Landscape if the neighbourhood area is to deliver its identified housing need. **Option 1** is ranked most favourably as it comprises a smaller site which is more contained within the landscape, with a good degree of screening from vegetation.

Transportation and movement

- 5.53 There are no railway stations within the neighbourhood area. The closest railway station is located in Swindon, which is approximately 7km from the neighbourhood area. Swindon railway station provides regular services to several locations, including (but not limited to) Bristol (Temple Meads and Parkway), London Paddington, Cardiff Central, Swansea, Cheltenham Spa, Reading, and Westbury. Under both options, a number of residents are likely to travel into Swindon – likely by private car – to access the train station.
- 5.54 Broad Hinton is served by two bus services. The 49 service, run by Stagecoach West, runs between Swindon and Trowbridge, stopping in Devizes, half-hourly in each direction, every day. This service stops at two bus stops in Broad Hinton – Broad Hinton Village Hall and The Bell. The 9 service, also ran by Stagecoach West, runs between Swindon and Wroughton on weekdays. However, this service only stops in Broad Hinton (The Bell) once per weekday at 00:07, leaving Swindon at 23:35 and terminating in Devizes at 00:42.
- 5.55 With regard to the strategic road network, there is only one main road in the neighbourhood area. This is the A4361, which runs directly through the centre of the neighbourhood area from the A4, through to Swindon.
- 5.56 In terms of access, **Option 1** has existing vehicular and cycle access via Broad Town Road, whilst **Option 2** has existing vehicular and cycle access via Broad Town Road and Manor Lane. In terms of pedestrian access, Option 2 is well-connected to the existing footpath by the village hall on Yew Tree Lane, whilst Option 1 would only be accessible from Broad Town Road which currently has no footpath.
- 5.57 According to data from the 2021 census, 48% of the working age population of the neighbourhood area work mainly from home, which is higher than the national average (31.5%). Of those that do not work mainly from home, the most prevalent method of travel to the workplace is driving a car or van (41.4%) and the most prevalent distance travelled to work is less than 10km (17.8%).

Hence, development under either option is likely to result in an increase in commuting via car or van, contributing to an increase in traffic.

- 5.58 It is noted that the multi-use community hub proposed under **Option 2** will include shared workspace, which will support working from home, thereby reducing the need to travel.
- 5.59 According to the digital map available on the Wiltshire Council website, there is a somewhat extensive public right of way (PRoW) network (comprised of footpaths, bridleways and byways) linking the neighbourhood area with surrounding villages, such as Broad Town and Winterbourne Bassett. Notably, two footpaths cross **Option 2** – BHIN6 and BHIN9 – which provide links northwards via Yew Tree Lane. If this site were to be developed under this option, these footpaths should be retained.
- 5.60 According to the digital map of the National Cycle Network, on the Sustrans website, the Wiltshire Cycleway passes through Broad Hinton, along Broad Town Road, adjacent to the western boundary of **Option 1** and primary access route to **Option 2**. This is an on-road circular route connecting numerous settlements in Wiltshire, including Malmesbury, Corsham, Bradford-on-Avon, Salisbury, and Marlborough.
- 5.61 It is noted that 40 car parking spaces are proposed under **Option 2** to support the proposed multi-use community hub under this option, as well as the nearby school and village hall. This would help to reduce traffic and congestion around the school and village hall during peak times.
- 5.62 Overall, both of the options are considered likely to lead to **minor negative effects** with regard to transportation. This is because growth through either of the options is likely to increase trips by private car to Wroughton, Swindon, and settlements further afield. Significant effects are not considered likely as the entire neighbourhood area is relatively rural, with limited services and facilities, and development must take place if the neighbourhood area is to deliver its identified housing need. **Option 2** is ranked most favourably as the provision of a multi-use community hub, including shared workspace, will likely reduce the need to travel.

6. Preferred approach for the Neighbourhood Development Plan

- 6.1 The group have provided the following reasoning as to why the preferred site was chosen for allocation through the BHWBUF NDP:

“The HNA makes clear that the calculation of housing need is a starting point for the consideration of strategy in the NDP. It provides an indicative housing need that would help to sustain the current position in population terms – this shows a gradual drift to older and smaller households.

There is an explicit objective in the NDP to foster a sustainable growth in population by encouraging younger households and family households to stay or locate to the area. A more diverse population will support the local school and other local community activities. This means planning for sustainable growth in housing development above the indicated need. This applies to each of the settlements in the neighbourhood area and cannot be satisfied in one location.

Affordability is a key concern. The HNA identifies requirements for 34 affordable homes and 12 specialist homes based on the status quo.

Planned development in Broad Hinton

Housing schemes will deliver affordable housing at around 40% of the total housing provided, subject to site factors. This means that a larger scheme is needed to deliver close to the affordable homes required. In Broad Hinton, Site B2 provides the best opportunity to deliver the housing required at scale close to the centre of Broad Hinton village

The NDP also identifies the need for a range of sport facilities and community facilities in Broad Hinton. There are also local amenity issues arising from car parking at the school and village hall. The larger development at Site B2 provides opportunities to redevelop an existing resource (the Cricket Ground) and provide a new community building located close to the existing village hall and the school in the centre of the village. There is an opportunity to provide dedicated car parking for users of all these facilities, removing a problem from the centre of the village.

This combination of benefits can only be secured on Site B2. In contrast Site B1 is located separately to the settlement and if developed on its own would result in a physically isolated development without a footpath link into the village. Furthermore, site capacity is lower and so this would not deliver the quantum of affordable housing sought and the community benefits possible on Site B2 would be lost.

Planned development in Winterbourne Bassett

There is a strong desire to improve the community resilience in smaller settlements in the neighbourhood area and it is acknowledged this would be at a small scale. This is again based on the key objective of ensuring that villages are able to accommodate new entrants who can help sustain the community. A small allocation in Winterbourne Bassett contributes to this objective. Planned

development proposals for Site W3 in Winterbourne Bassett closely follow Wiltshire Council's approach to exceptions sites.”

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

7. Introduction (to Part 2)

Overview

7.1 The aim of this part of the Environmental Report is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the current Regulation 14 ‘pre-submission’ version of the BHWWBF NDP. This chapter presents:

- An appraisal of the current version of the BHWWBF NDP under the seven SEA topic headings; and
- The overall conclusions at this current stage and recommendations for the next stage of plan-making.

BHWWBF NDP policies

7.2 The 19 policies within the BHWWBF NDP are outlined in **Table 7.1** below.

Table 7.1 BHWWBF NDP policies

| Policy reference | Policy name |
|------------------|---|
| BHWB1 | Local Community Facilities |
| BHWB2 | Requirements for Additional Local Community Facilities |
| BHWB3 | Affordable Housing Tenure |
| BHWB4 | Housing Type and Size |
| BHWB5 | Site Allocation for Residential, Sports and Community Uses, Land North of Broad Hinton |
| BHWB6 | Site Allocation for Residential Development, Land at Bowman's Paddock, Winterbourne Bassett |
| BHWB7 | Broad Hinton Settlement Boundary |
| BHWB8 | Good Design and Development Form |
| BHWB9 | Environmental Performance of Buildings |
| BHWB10 | Lighting Schemes and Light Pollution |
| BHWB11 | Local Heritage Assets |
| BHWB12 | Local Green Space Sites |
| BHWB13 | Improving Biodiversity |
| BHWB14 | Valued Local Views |
| BHWB15 | Support for Local Businesses |
| BHWB16 | Broadband Connectivity |
| BHWB17 | Support for Local Tourism |
| BHWB18 | Walking, Riding and Cycling Improvements |
| BHWB19 | Bus Services |

Methodology

- 7.3 The assessment identifies and evaluates 'likely significant effects' on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability objectives identified through scoping (see **Table 3.2**) as a methodological framework.
- 7.4 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.
- 7.5 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 BHWBUF NDP 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.

8. Assessment of the plan

Introduction

- 8.1 The assessment is presented below under eight topic headings, reflecting the established assessment framework (see **Section 3**). A final section (**Chapter 9**) then presents overall conclusions.

Plan contents, aims and objectives

- 8.2 The policies in the BHWBUF NDP are grouped into the following topics: community infrastructure, assets and services; housing requirements; sites for housing and community facilities; design and development form; local heritage; green and blue infrastructure; local economy; and getting around. The policies are discussed in more detail under the relevant SEA topic below.
- 8.3 The draft BHWBUF NDP's spatial strategy is addressed through policy BHWB5, which allocates 'Land North of Broad Hinton' for 40 homes, a sports field, community building, and community car park. The merits and constraints of this site, alongside how the draft Plan seeks to avoid adverse impacts from development, is explored under each of the seven SEA topics below.
- 8.4 The draft Plan also identifies 'Land at Bowman's Paddock' – through rural exception policy BHWB6 – for 3 homes. A Neighbourhood Plan would not normally allocate rural exception sites as these are intended to be exceptions to policy. However, this site has been identified under a rural exception policy to ensure that Winterbourne Bassett delivers its share in addressing the housing need. In addition, this site meets the rural exception site criteria.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 8.5 'Land North of Broad Hinton' is relatively unconstrained from a biodiversity standpoint and is therefore unlikely to lead to any adverse impacts on biodiversity. Whilst the site overlaps entirely with a Network Expansion Zone⁷, it is noted that the site currently comprises a cricket pitch and fragmented pasture, and as such the site is unlikely to contribute significantly to the habitat network in this location. In addition, policy BHWB13 sets out that new development should fulfil statutory requirements for BNG.
- 8.6 'Land at Bowman's Paddock' – the rural exception site – is also relatively unconstrained from a biodiversity standpoint. However, it is noted that the site is adjacent to an area of deciduous woodland, which is a BAP priority habitat. Whilst the construction phase of development has the potential to lead to some disturbance to this habitat, BNG requirements, as set out in policy BHWB13, could lead to improvements to the habitat network in this location.
- 8.7 In relation to BNG, policy BHWB13 (Improving Biodiversity) sets out a hierarchy, which favours delivering BNG measures within or directly adjacent to development sites. If this is not possible, measures should be delivered on land within the neighbourhood area on the BNG Register. This will contribute to

⁷ Part of the National Habitat Network, specifically land beyond the Network Enhancement Zones with potential for expanding, linking / joining networks across the landscape (i.e. conditions such as soils are potentially suitable for habitat creation for the specific habitat in addition to Enhancement Zone 1).

improving the local ecological network, including the Marlborough Downs Nature Improvement Area, chalk streams, and woodland habitats. As a last option, BNG measures should be delivered on land close to the neighbourhood area on the BNG Register. The spatial strategy performs well in this respect.

- 8.8 Policy BHWB13 also supports proposals to enhance and connect habitats within the neighbourhood area, which will further contribute to improving the local ecological network.
- 8.9 For the reasons outlined above, the draft BHWWBF NDP is considered likely to lead to **minor positive effects** under the biodiversity and geodiversity SEA topic. The site allocation avoids areas of high biodiversity value (i.e. internationally and nationally designated sites for biodiversity and BAP priority habitats), and the policy framework sufficiently addressed biodiversity.

Climate change and flood risk

- 8.10 'Land North of Broad Hinton' does not overlap with, or lie in proximity to, any areas of Flood Zone 2/3 or areas of low-high surface water flood risk. Nevertheless, the Steering Group have highlighted that, at present, the site experiences surface water flooding in the winter months which prevents sports use on the site. In response to this, policy BHWB5 sets out that the sports pitch will need to be accompanied by detailed site drainage proposals. As such, development of this site has the potential to improve existing drainage issues, and the spatial strategy performs well in this respect.
- 8.11 'Land at Bowman's Paddock' – the rural exception site – is also not at risk of either fluvial or surface water flooding.
- 8.12 With regard to climate change mitigation, policy BHWB9 (Environmental Performance of Buildings) sets out that new buildings are expected to achieve high standards of environmental performance. For example, the policy supports the provision of heat pumps, solar panels, community energy schemes, EV charging points, and rainwater harvesting.
- 8.13 For the reasons outlined above, the draft BHWWBF NDP is considered likely to lead to **minor positive effects** under the climate change and flood risk SEA topic. Significant effects are not considered likely as the level of development proposed through the draft Plan is small, particularly given the global nature of climate change.

Community wellbeing

- 8.14 With regard to 'Land North of Broad Hinton', policy BHWB5 sets out that, in addition to 40 homes, the site will deliver a sports field, community building, and community car parking, and the policy performs well in this respect. By delivering new homes and a multi-use community hub, the spatial strategy performs well.
- 8.15 Affordable housing is considered through policy BHWB3 (Affordable Housing Tenure), which sets out that affordable home ownership should comprise 40% of affordable housing provision, with social rent and affordable rent comprising the remaining 60%. Notably, the policy highlights that people with a local connection (as defined in the policy) to the neighbourhood area will be prioritised when it comes to affordable housing.

- 8.16 In terms of housing mix, policy BHWB4 (Housing Type and Size) supports the delivery of 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom homes, including accessible single-storey homes, which meet the specific housing needs of the neighbourhood area as identified in the HNA. This includes young families and households, single people, and older people looking to downsize.
- 8.17 The rural exception site – ‘Land at Bowman’s Paddock’ – will deliver around 3 homes, comprising two 3-bedroom affordable homes and one 2-bedroom affordable home, and it performs well in this respect.
- 8.18 Community facilities are addressed under policies BHWB1 (Local Community Facilities) and BHWB2 (Requirements for Additional Local Community Facilities). The former provides protection to existing community facilities and essential local services, whilst the latter supports the provision of a community shop and café; car parking; a play area; a work hub; and a multi-sports facility. This will support community vitality and promote community cohesion, whilst supporting access to local amenities and opportunities.
- 8.19 Local Green Space is identified and designated under BHWB12, which will ensure that future development does not lead to the loss of such spaces, which are a valued asset to the local community.
- 8.20 With a focus on the local economy and employment, policy BHWB15 (Support for Local Businesses) supports planning applications for small-scale development to support local businesses. In addition, working from home is supported through policy BHWB16 (Broadband Connectivity). Finally, local tourism is supported through policy BHWB17.
- 8.21 In light of the above, the draft BHWBUP NDP is considered likely to lead to **significant positive effects** under the community wellbeing SEA topic.

Historic environment

- 8.22 ‘Land North of Broad Hinton’ is in close proximity (<100m) to a cluster of six grade II listed buildings to the south. Four of these listed buildings – Manor Farmhouse, Barn at Manor Farm, Granary at Manor Farm, and Broad Hinton Primary School – are on the northern side of Broad Town Road, adjacent to the site allocation. Whilst this part of Broad Hinton has a relatively flat topography, and some of these listed buildings are screened by vegetation, there is still potential for this site to impact the setting of these listed buildings.
- 8.23 ‘Land at Bowman’s Paddock’ is not in close proximity (<100m) to any listed buildings or other designated heritage assets. It is also relatively well screened by boundary vegetation to the north, east and west.
- 8.24 In response to the above, policy BHWB8 (Good Design and Development Form) highlights that planning applications should demonstrate how they have considered area character, design guidelines and the development checklist set out in the Broad Hinton, Winterbourne Bassett and Uffcott Design Guidelines and Codes. This includes considerations for the historic environment, such as the local vernacular, building pattern, and building setbacks (Broad Hinton).
- 8.25 Local heritage assets are identified through policy BHWB11, and therefore the draft Plan also provides protection to non-designated assets.

- 8.26 Also of relevance, policy BHWB9 (Environmental Performance of Buildings) outlines that listed buildings should, where possible, achieve high standards of environmental performance whilst protecting their heritage value.
- 8.27 Overall, in the absence of the detailed design and layout of the site allocation, **uncertainty** is noted under the historic environment SEA topic. This is because the design and layout of development, including landscaping and boundary treatment, will have a significant influence on the degree to which nearby listed buildings and their setting are impacted by development.

Land, soil and water resources

- 8.28 'Land North of Broad Hinton' is underlain by grade 2 ('very good') agricultural land, whilst 'Land at Bowman's Paddock' is underlain by grade 3 ('good to moderate') agricultural land. It is not possible to determine whether this is grade 3a ('good') or grade 3b ('moderate') agricultural land. Therefore, development of 'Land North of Broad Hinton' – and potentially 'Land at Bowman's Paddock' – would lead to the loss of BMV land. However, it is noted that the whole of Broad Hinton is underlain by grade 2 agricultural land, whilst Winterbourne Bassett is underlain by a mix of grades 2 and 3. Therefore, development at any site in both settlements could lead to the loss of BMV land.
- 8.29 Whilst both site allocations will lead to the loss of some greenfield land, it is noted that part of 'Land North of Broad Hinton' comprises a cricket pitch in sports use, and this will be retained. It is also noted that development at alternative sites would likely lead to a comparable loss of greenfield land.
- 8.30 In terms of water resources, policy BHWB9 (Environmental Performance of Buildings) supports development proposals which include rainwater harvesting and performs well in this respect.
- 8.31 Considering the above points, the draft BHWBUF NDP is considered likely to lead to **minor negative effects** under the land, soil and water resources SEA topic. However, it is recognised that the loss of BMV / greenfield land is largely unavoidable given development will likely come forward with or without the draft Plan.

Landscape

- 8.32 Both 'Land North of Broad Hinton' and 'Land at Bowman's Paddock' overlap with the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. However, it is recognised that this landscape designation covers the whole neighbourhood area, and therefore development in any location has the potential to impact the setting and significance of this landscape.
- 8.33 'Land North of Broad Hinton' has the potential to impact villagescape character by extending the built footprint of Broad Hinton to the north. This will likely impact views to/from the northern part of the village, including to/from adjacent residential development. In response to this, policy BHWB14 identifies Valued Local Views, which development proposals should seek to conserve and enhance. The draft BHWBUF NDP performs well in this respect.
- 8.34 'Land at Bowman's Paddock' is less likely to impact the character of Winterbourne Bassett as it is a relatively small site and is relatively well screened by boundary vegetation to the north, east and west. In addition,

policy BHWB6 states that hedges and trees are protected; built development is positioned to minimise visual impacts from outside the site; and wider landscape impacts are mitigated.

- 8.35 More broadly, policy BHWB5 highlights that the layout, landscaping and lighting design of 'Land North of Broad Hinton' will be delivered in accordance with the Broad Hinton and Winterbourne Bassett Neighbourhood Plan Design Codes.
- 8.36 In addition to the above, policy BHWB8 (Good Design and Development Form) highlights that planning applications should demonstrate how they have considered area character, design guidelines and the development checklist set out in the Broad Hinton, Winterbourne Bassett and Uffcott Design Guidelines and Codes. This includes landscape considerations, such as village boundaries, street lighting, sense of openness and open views (Winterbourne Bassett), and the enclosed atmosphere (Uffcott).
- 8.37 Light pollution is considered through policy BHWB10 (Lighting Schemes and Light Pollution), which is in place to ensure that development does not adversely impact on settlement character and dark skies.
- 8.38 In light of the above, the draft BHWBUF NDP is considered likely to lead to **minor negative effects** under the landscape SEA topic. However, a degree of uncertainty is noted as the impact of development on the local landscape character is largely dependent on the detailed design and layout of development, including landscaping and boundary treatment, which is unknown at this stage.

Transportation and movement

- 8.39 Policy BHWB5 sets out that 'Land North of Broad Hinton' will deliver 40 car parking spaces to serve the requirements of the multi-use community hub, as well as provide additional car parking for the existing school and village hall. Whilst this would also reduce traffic and congestion around the school and village hall during peak times, it has the potential to support private car use.
- 8.40 'Land North of Broad Hinton' will also include a multi-use community hub with shared workspace, which will support working from home. This has the potential to reduce the need to travel for certain activities, including by private car, and the spatial strategy performs well in this respect.
- 8.41 Walking, riding and cycling improvements are encouraged through policy BHWB18. Pedestrian access for 'Land North of Broad Hinton' will be provided from the village hall on Yew Tree Lane via an improved footpath on an existing public right of way. This is an addition to access via Manor Lane. Cycle access will be provided from both Broad Town Road and Manor Lane. Pedestrian access for the rural exception site – 'Land at Bowman's Paddock' – will be provided from the development to Fox Row / The Mead.
- 8.42 In terms of public transport, policy BHWB19 (Bus Services) sets out that planning applications should demonstrate how opportunities to enhance local bus services have been considered. This is important given the neighbourhood area's existing bus service provision is relatively limited.
- 8.43 Overall, development in the neighbourhood area is likely to increase the number of trips by private car as the village only has a limited number of

amenities, services and facilities. Due to this, the draft BHWBUF NDP is considered likely to lead to **minor negative effects** under the transportation and movement SEA topic. However, it is recognised that the draft Plan performs well by supporting improvements to both active travel infrastructure and public transport, as well as by encouraging working from home.

9. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

- 9.1 **Significant positive effects** are predicted under the community wellbeing SEA topic as the draft Plan proposes to deliver 43 new homes, contributing to meeting the identified housing need, including by delivering affordable housing and housing appropriate for older people, as identified in the HNA. The spatial strategy performs particularly well by delivering a multi-use community hub on site, which will greatly benefit the local community by providing improved recreational facilities, shared workspaces, and employment opportunities.
- 9.2 **Minor positive effects** are predicted under the biodiversity and geodiversity and climate change and flood risk SEA topics. With regard to biodiversity and geodiversity, the site allocation avoids areas of high biodiversity value (i.e. internationally and nationally designated sites for biodiversity and BAP priority habitats), and the policy framework sufficiently addressed biodiversity. With regard to climate change and flood risk, significant effects are not considered likely as the level of development proposed through the draft Plan is small, particularly given the global nature of climate change.
- 9.3 **Uncertainty** is noted under the historic environment SEA topic in the absence of the detailed design and layout of the site allocation. This is because the design and layout of development, including landscaping and boundary treatment, will have a significant influence on the degree to which nearby listed buildings and their setting are impacted by development.
- 9.4 **Minor negative effects** are predicted under the land, soil and water resources, landscape, and transportation and movement SEA topics. With regard to land, soil and water resources, it is recognised that the loss of BMV / greenfield land is largely unavoidable given development will likely come forward with or without the draft Plan. With regard to landscape, a degree of uncertainty is noted as the impact of development on the local landscape character is largely dependent on the detailed design and layout of development, including landscaping and boundary treatment, which is unknown at this stage. With regard to transportation and movement, it is recognised that the draft Plan performs well by supporting improvements to both active travel infrastructure and public transport, as well as by encouraging working from home.
- 9.5 Overall, the draft BHWBUF NDP performs well given the constraints present across the neighbourhood area. In addition to meeting the identified housing need, the spatial strategy supports the vitality of the village through the delivery of a multi-use community hub, and the policy framework sufficiently identifies and addresses the constraints present by proposing appropriate mitigation measures.

Part 3: What are the next steps?

10. Next steps

Overview

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

Plan finalisation

10.2 This Environmental Report accompanies the BHWBUF NDP for Regulation 14 consultation.

10.3 Following consultation, any representations made will be considered by the BHWBUF NDP Steering Group, and the BHWBUF NDP and Environmental Report will be updated as necessary. The updated Environmental Report will then accompany the BHWBUF NDP for submission to the Local Planning Authority, Wiltshire Council, for subsequent Independent Examination.

10.4 Following submission, the plan and supporting evidence will be published for further consultation, and then subjected to Independent Examination. At Independent Examination, the BHWBUF NDP will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the Local Plan.

10.5 Assuming that the examination leads to a favourable outcome, the BHWBUF NDP will then be subject to a referendum, organised by Wiltshire Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the BHWBUF NDP, then it will be 'made'. Once 'made', the BHWBUF NDP will become part of the Development Plan for Wiltshire Council, covering the defined neighbourhood area.

Monitoring

10.6 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 BHWBUF NDP to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.

10.7 It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the BHWBUF NDP will be undertaken by Wiltshire Council as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). No significant negative effects are considered likely in the implementation of the BHWBUF NDP that would warrant more stringent monitoring over and above that already undertaken by Wiltshire Council.

Appendix A Regulatory requirements

As discussed in **Chapter 1**, Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans Regulations 2004 (the Regulations) explains the information that must be contained in the Environmental Report. However, interpretation of Schedule 2 is not straightforward. **Table AA.1** overleaf links the structure of this report to an interpretation of Schedule 2 requirements, whilst **Table AA.2** explains this interpretation. Finally, **Table AA.3** identifies how and where within the Environmental Report the regulatory requirements have / will be met.

Table AA.1 Questions answered by this Environmental Report in-line with an interpretation of regulatory requirements

| Environmental Report question | In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include... ⁸ | |
|---|---|--|
| What's the scope of the SEA? | What is the plan seeking to achieve? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan. |
| | What is the sustainability 'context'? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship with other relevant plans and programmes. The 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 is the sustainability 'baseline'? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 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? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key problems/issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e., provide a 'framework' for) assessment. |
| What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point? | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with. The likely significant effects associated with alternatives. Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives appraisal/a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the current version of the plan. |
| What are the assessment findings at this stage? | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The likely significant effects associated with the Regulation 14 version of the plan. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the Regulation 14 version of the plan. |
| What happens next? | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The next steps for the plan making /SEA process. |

⁸ NB this column does not quote directly from Schedule II of the Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation.

Table AA.2 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 | | |
| (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 | i.e. answer - <i>What are the key issues & objectives?</i> | |
| (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] | |

Table AA.3 ‘Checklist’ of how (throughout the SEA process) and where (within this report) regulatory requirements have been, are and will be met

| Regulatory requirement | Discussion of how requirement is met |
|--|---|
| Schedule 2 of the regulations lists the information to be provided within the SA Report | |
| 1. An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes; | Chapter 2 (‘What is the plan seeking to achieve’) presents this information. |
| 2. The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme; | These matters have been considered in detail through scoping work, which has involved dedicated consultation on a Scoping Report. The ‘SEA framework’ – the outcome of scoping – is presented within Chapter 3 (‘What is the scope of the SEA?’). More detailed messages, established through a context and baseline review are also presented in Appendix B of this Environmental Report. |
| 3. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected; | |
| 4. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.; | |
| 5. The environmental protection, objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been considered during its preparation; | |
| 6. The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long- | <p>The SEA framework is presented within Chapter 3 (‘What is the scope of the SEA’). Also, Appendix B presents key messages from the context review.</p> <p>With regards to explaining “how...considerations have been taken into account”, Chapter 7 explains the Steering Group’s ‘reasons for supporting the preferred approach’, i.e., explains how/ why the preferred approach is justified in light of alternatives appraisal.</p> <p>Chapter 6 presents alternatives appraisal findings (in relation to housing growth, which is a ‘stand-out’ plan policy area).</p> <p>Chapters 9 presents an appraisal of the plan.</p> <p>With regards to assessment methodology, Chapter 8 explains the role of the SEA framework/scope, and the need to consider the potential for</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects); | various effect characteristics/ dimensions, e.g., timescale. |
| 7. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme; | The assessment highlights certain tensions between competing objectives, which might potentially be actioned by the Examiner, when finalising the plan. Also, specific recommendations are made in Chapter 10. |
| 8. 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; | Chapters 4 and 5 deal with 'Reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with', in that there is an explanation of the reasons for focusing on particular issues and options. Also, Chapter 7 explains the Parish Council's 'reasons for selecting the preferred option' (in-light of alternatives assessment). |
| 9. Description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Art. 10; | Chapter 11 presents measures envisaged concerning monitoring. |
| 10. A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings | The NTS is provided at the beginning of this Environmental Report. |

The SA Report must be published alongside the Draft Plan, in accordance with the following regulations

authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the Draft Plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1, 6.2)

At the current time, this Environmental Report is published alongside the 'pre-submission' version of the BHWBUF NDP, with a view to informing Regulation 16 consultation.

The SA must be considered, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.

The environmental report prepared pursuant to Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of any transboundary consultations entered into pursuant to Article 7 shall be considered during the preparation of the plan or programme and before its adoption or submission to the legislative procedure.

Assessment findings presented within this Environmental Report, and consultation responses received, have been fed back to the Steering Group and have informed plan finalisation.

Appendix B Scoping information

This appendix provides a summary of the information that was presented in the Scoping Report. The Scoping Report, which can be accessed on the BHWBUF NDP website, provides the information in full, alongside a number of figures.

Air quality

Key statistics

- There are no AQMAs within the neighbourhood area.
- However, the Kingshill Road, Swindon AQMA is located 5.7km from the neighbourhood area; the Marlborough AQMA is located 6km from the neighbourhood area; and the Calne AQMA is located 9.8km from the neighbourhood area.

Commentary

Wiltshire Council monitor (and are primarily concerned with) nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and fine particulate matter (PM₁₀), linked to traffic volume, road layout and topography. The most recent Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR), published in 2024, indicates that there were no exceedances of the air quality objectives in Broad Hinton and Winterbourne Bassett for both NO₂ and PM₁₀, however the neighbourhood area does not include an air quality monitoring site.

Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are declared in areas which exceed national objectives for levels of particulates, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, butadiene, carbon monoxide, lead and/or nitrogen oxides.

There are no AQMAs within the neighbourhood area, however there are three AQMAs within 10km of the neighbourhood area. The closest is the Kingshill Road, Swindon AQMA, approximately 5.7km to the northeast of the neighbourhood area. Declared in 2018 by Swindon Council for exceedances of NO₂ air quality objectives, the AQMA covers the section of A4289 highway eastwards on Kingshill Road, to its junction with Okus Road.

The second is Marlborough AQMA, located approximately 6km to the southeast of the neighbourhood area. Originally declared in 2011 by Wiltshire Council for exceedances of NO₂ air quality objectives, the AQMA mirrors the Town Council border with the exception of a small area to the south west of the town.

The third is Calne AQMA, located 9.8m southwest of the neighbourhood area. This AQMA was declared by Wiltshire Council in 2013 for exceedances of NO₂ air quality objectives, the AQMA covers most of the main road through Calne, and sections of two adjoining roads.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

Key statistics

- There are four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) located within a 2km buffer proximity to the neighbourhood area. These are Bincknoll Dip Woods SSSI, which is directly adjacent to the northern border of the neighbourhood area, Clout's Wood SSSI which is 700m northwest of the neighbourhood area, Fyfield Down SSSI, 1.5km southwest of the area, and Goldborough Farm Meadows SSSI, located 1.6km northwest of the neighbourhood area.
- According to the most recent condition survey, the Bincknoll Dip Woods SSSI and the Goldborough Farm Meadows SSSI are both in 100% favourable condition, with Clout's Wood SSSI and Fyfield Down SSSI both in 100% unfavourable-recovering condition.
- Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats within the neighbourhood area consist of deciduous woodland.

Commentary

There are no internationally designated sites for biodiversity within or in proximity to the neighbourhood area.

There are four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within a 2km proximity of the neighbourhood area. These are Bincknoll Dip SSSI, Clout's Wood, Fyfield Down and Goldborough Farm Meadows.

The Bincknoll Dip SSSI comprises of a wooded area that is significant for its populations of nationally and internationally rare mosses, as well as a variety of other bryophytes and typical woodland plants. The site features semi-natural ancient woodland on a steep escarpment, supporting diverse flora and fauna, including unique moss species found nowhere else in Britain.

Clout's Wood SSSI, located on the steep scarp of the lower chalk south of Swindon, is a rich example of ash-maple-hazel and invasive English elm woodland with diverse ground flora. The site supports a variety of flora and fauna, including nationally restricted plant species and a diverse bird and invertebrate community.

The Fyfield Down SSSI is recognized for its geomorphological and biological significance, featuring the most notable assemblage of sarsen stones in Britain and significant periglacial features. The site supports a nationally important lichen flora, regarded as one of the finest examples in north-west Europe, thriving on the sarsen stones within semi-natural grassland and scrub. Additionally, the diverse grasslands and small woods contribute to the site's biodiversity, hosting species such as the great-crested newt and various rare lichens.

The Goldborough Farm Meadows SSSI consists of three floristically rich hay meadows, home to many locally scarce plants and diverse wildlife, including a pond that enhances habitat diversity. The meadows, on slightly acidic, poorly drained soils, support a variety of grasses, herbs, and wetland plants, providing a haven for insects, birds, and hares.

BAP Priority Habitat coverage is low, with a few small areas of deciduous woodland across the neighbourhood area. These are mainly concentrated on the outskirts of the area.

In terms of the National Habitat Network, the neighbourhood area is primarily within Network Expansion Zone, which is land with potential to expand, link and join habitat networks across the landscape. These are areas of land that connect existing patches of primary and associated habitats. There are areas in the east and west of the neighbourhood area that are Network Enhancement Zone 1, and some areas in the north of the neighbourhood area are located within Network Enhancement Zone 2. These are areas of land that connect existing patches of primary and associated habitats. The BHWBUF NDP should make use of the opportunities these areas present to improve and enhance the biodiversity value of the neighbourhood area.

Climate change and flood risk

Key statistics

- The biggest contributor to carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in Wiltshire over the past 16 years has been the transport sector. However, it is noted this sector has experienced an overall decrease in emissions between 2005 and 2021.
- Wiltshire produces more CO₂ emissions per capita compared to the regional and national averages. However, it has experienced a greater decrease in emissions between 2005 and 2021.
- Total emissions in Wiltshire have decreased from 5355.5 kilotons (kt) CO₂ in 2005 to 3,225.8 kt CO₂ in 2021 – a 2,129.7 kt CO₂ reduction over 16 years.

Commentary

Fluvial flood risk is only located in the east of the neighbourhood area; a small, concentrated area of Flood Zone 3. This flood risk is associated with the course of the River Kennet. Surface water flood risk is present across the neighbourhood area and is likely linked to drainage into this watercourse. It is also likely linked to the built environment, especially within Broad Hinton itself where infiltration of water into the ground is prevented by built structures. Overall, the risk of surface water flooding appears to be low, with small, isolated areas at higher risk within Broad Hinton.

In line with the UK Government's target of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, Wiltshire Council declared a climate emergency in February 2019. The council's Climate Strategy, adopted in February 2022, details the measures Wiltshire Council will take to reduce carbon emissions, with a focus on areas such as transport, energy, waste management, and land use.

The neighbourhood area is not served by mains gas, and therefore gas consumption in the neighbourhood area is low. However, the majority of households use oil to heat their homes, which is associated with increased CO₂ emissions.

Community wellbeing

Key statistics

- The largest age group within the neighbourhood area is 50-59, at 18.7%. The second largest age group is 60-69 (15.5%), and the third is 70-79 (11.7%). This indicates a large proportion of residents aged 60+.
- Overall, Broad Hinton residents experience a greater level of 'Very Good' health in comparison to the national average. Whilst it experiences lower levels of

‘Good’ and ‘Fair’ health, the neighbourhood area also experiences less ‘Bad’ and ‘Very Bad’ health in comparison to Wiltshire, and regional and national figures. As such, the health of residents is considered to be better in the neighbourhood area.

- The majority of the houses in Broad Hinton are owned, either outright or with a mortgage, loan or through shared ownership.

Commentary

Community infrastructure within the neighbourhood area does support some daily activity. This includes (but is not limited to) a primary school, village hall, two churches (St Peter Ad Vincula Church and St Katherine & St Peter’s Church), two pubs (The Winterbourne and The Crown), a restaurant (La Strada), and small businesses. However, it is likely residents travel out of the neighbourhood area to other settlements, such as Wroughton, to access further community facilities and services, including GPs, supermarkets, and additional educational facilities.

The IMD is an overall relative measure of deprivation and is the combination of several different domains: income; employment; education, skills and training; health deprivation and disability; crime; barriers to housing and services; and living environment. Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)⁹ are designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardised geographies intended to be as consistent as possible, with each LSOA containing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. Deprivation levels are typically examined at the LSOA level. In this respect, the neighbourhood area is within one LSOA – Wiltshire 012E. According to the most recent deprivation data from 2019, the neighbourhood area generally experiences low levels of deprivation – sitting amongst the 50% least deprived neighbourhoods in England. However, the neighbourhood sits within the top 10% most deprived neighbourhoods with regard to the barriers to housing and services domain.

Historic environment

Key statistics

- World Heritage Site Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites (HE List Number: 1000097) is located 900m south of the neighbourhood area.
- There are 26 listed buildings within the neighbourhood area: 2 Grade I, and 30 Grade II. The Grade I structures are the Church of St Peter ad Vincula (HE List Number: 1365589), and the Church of St Katherine and St Peter (HE List Number: 1284298).
- There are six scheduled monuments within the neighbourhood area:
- Sharpridge earthworks (HE List Entry Number: 1004748)
- Bincknoll Camp (HE List Entry Number: 1005685)
- Bowl barrow 300m south-east of Walker’s Plantation (HE List Entry Number: 1013072)
- Richardson medieval settlement (HE List Entry Number: 1019188)

⁹ The Indices of Deprivation Explorer can be accessed [here](#).

- Stone circle (HE List Entry Number: 1005708)
- Winterbourne Bassett mound (HE List Entry Number: 1004749)
- The Broad Hinton Conservation Area covers part of the village, to the south.
- None of the nationally designated heritage assets within the neighbourhood area are on the Heritage at Risk Register 2023.

Commentary

It is noted the neighbourhood area sits within the context of a wider historic landscape, including further listed buildings and scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, and the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site (WHS).

The Stonehenge, Avebury and Associate Sites World Heritage Site is of outstanding historical and cultural value, recognized for its prehistoric monuments and the archaeological landscape that provides insight into Neolithic and Bronze Age life. The Management Plan details the way in which development should be conducted in proximity to the WHS, with a focus on the reduction of negative impacts from roads and traffic in the area, and that any development is consistent with the protection and, where appropriate, enhancement of the monuments and their settings and the wider WHS landscape and its setting.

There is one conservation area in the neighbourhood area, the Broad Hinton Conservation Area. The Broad Hinton Conservation Area Character Appraisal highlights the importance of preserving the village's historic and architectural character, particularly in its southern section. Key considerations for development include maintaining the rural setting, protecting mature trees, and ensuring that new buildings respect the scale, materials, and style of the area's traditional structures. The open spaces between historic buildings are critical to the village's character and must be preserved. Infill or redevelopment projects should be designed to harmonise with the existing landscape, and the use of modern materials or designs should be carefully controlled to avoid disrupting the historic environment.

Land, soil and water resources

Key statistics

- The neighbourhood area falls within the Kennet Operational Catchment.
- The neighbourhood area falls within three Source Protection Zones (SPZs); two Zone III Total Catchments in the east of the neighbourhood area, and one Zone II Outer Protection Zone in the southwest of the neighbourhood area.

Commentary

In the absence of post-1988 data for the remainder of the neighbourhood area, Natural England (2019) indicative data is relied upon. The majority of the neighbourhood area is Grade 2 'Very Good' land. There is a small swathe in the south of the neighbourhood area, as well as adjacent to the borders in the east and west that is Grade 3 'Good to Moderate'. It is not possible to determine whether the Grade 3 land is Grade 3a (better quality) or Grade 3b (poorer quality).

Water is supplied to the neighbourhood area by Thames Water, who are also responsible for sewerage services in this area. Their Water Resources Management

Plan (WRMP) identifies how they expect to balance the demand for water with available supplies over an 80-year plan period. The WRMP indicates that there is adequate supply over this period without a need to develop new sources of water.

The neighbourhood area is located within the Kennet Operational Catchment. There is one waterbody that runs through the neighbourhood area, the Upper Kennet to Marlborough Water Body, which has been in moderate condition since 2015, before which it was in good condition.

Landscape

Key statistics

- The neighbourhood area sits within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (NL).
- There are a number of tree preservation orders (TPOs) within the neighbourhood area – of which most are concentrated in the Broad Hinton settlement.
- The neighbourhood area sits within the Berkshire and Marlborough Downs National Character Area (NCA).

Commentary

The neighbourhood area falls within the North Wessex Downs NL (previously Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)¹⁰). The NL is characterised by expansive chalk downlands in Marlborough, Berkshire, and North Hampshire. Preserving its state with minimal development, the NL encompasses the bright, unspoiled uplands that stretch from the Marlborough Downs to the White Horse Vale in the west. The richly farmed valleys, complement the chalk uplands, creating a harmonious and diverse natural environment. This terrain not only holds ecological significance, preserving downland habitats and ancient woodlands, but also has significant archaeological heritage dating back to 3000 BC.

The neighbourhood area is within National Character Area (NCA) 116: Berkshire and Marlborough Downs. This area features vast arable fields stretch across the sparsely settled, rolling Chalk hills. There are extensive views from the escarpment in particular, punctuated by landmarks including chalk-cut horse figures, beech clumps and ancient monuments. There are a number of historic and heritage features across this landscape, for example there are numerous scheduled monuments. The majority of the area (97%) falls within the North Wessex Downs NL (see above). Farmland habitat supports brown hare, harvest mouse, rare arable plants and farmland birds including stone curlew. Along the escarpment and steep slopes, limited tracts of hanging woodlands and species-rich chalk grassland can be found. Open access downland offers the public the opportunity to see species such as the skylark and Adonis blue butterfly. Key characteristics of the NCA include (but are not limited to):

- Uplifted mass of Chalk dipping south-east into the London Basin and edged by an extensive, complex escarpment.

¹⁰ Since November 2023, all protected landscapes designated as AONBs have been referred to 'National Landscapes'. This change was initiated by the Government to reflect the national importance of these areas, with a view to highlighting their equal place alongside National Parks in helping to achieve wider aims associated with health and wellbeing, sustainable public access, climate change and nature recovery.

- Chalk rivers, wet woodland, reedbed and wet grassland in the major chalk valleys, supported by groundwater.
- Gallops and stables of large horse-racing establishments, with a nucleus in the Lambourn Valley.

At the local level, Wiltshire have prepared a district-wide Landscape Character Assessment, in which, the neighbourhood area falls partially into the Landscape Character Area (LCA) of Avebury Plain. This Character Area is characterised by a topographically uniform plateau, featuring vast arable fields and enclosed pasture lands. It lies between the lower clay vale to the west and north, and the Marlborough Downs scarp to the east. The land is characterized by free-draining chalky soils, favouring large-scale arable farming. The area's historical significance is highlighted by the Neolithic monuments at Avebury, although post-medieval enclosures have reshaped the landscape. Villages are typically small and linear, featuring buildings made from local materials like sarsen stone and brick. Key characteristics of the LCA include (but are not limited to):

- Open Chalk lowland with vast fields and limited trees
- High intervisibility and simple topography
- Enclosed Chalk lowland with hedgerow structures
- Historical significance with Neolithic monuments
- Predominantly arable land with some pasture areas

Transportation and movement

Key statistics

- A greater proportion of people aged 16 years and over in employment in Broad Hinton and Winterbourne Bassett work mainly from home compared to the national averages.
- Of those in the neighbourhood area that do not work mainly from home, the most prevalent method of travel to the workplace is driving a car or van.
- The most common distance travelled to work is less than 10km in Broad Hinton, after those who are working mainly from home.

Commentary

There are no railway stations within the neighbourhood area. The closest railway station is located in Swindon, which is approximately 7km from the neighbourhood area. Swindon Railway Station provides regular services to several locations (including but not exclusive to): Bristol (Temple Meads and Parkway), London Paddington, Cardiff Central, Swansea, Cheltenham Spa, Reading, and Westbury.

Broad Hinton is served by two bus services. The 49 service, ran by Stagecoach West, runs between Swindon and Trowbridge, stopping in Devizes, hourly in each direction, every day. This service stops at two bus stops in Broad Hinton – Broad Hinton Village Hall and The Bell. The 9 service, also ran by Stagecoach West, runs between Swindon and Wroughton on weekdays. However, this service only stops in Broad Hinton (The Bell) once per weekday at 00:07, leaving Swindon at 23:35 and terminating in Devizes at 00:42.

In terms of the strategic road network, there is one main road in the neighbourhood area. This is the A4361, which runs directly through the centre of the neighbourhood area from the A4, through to Swindon.

According to the digital map available on the Wiltshire Council website,¹¹ there is a somewhat extensive PRow network (comprised of footpaths, bridleways and byways) linking the neighbourhood area with surrounding villages, such as Broad Town and Winterbourne Bassett.

¹¹ Wiltshire Council (2021) 'Wiltshire Council Rights of Way Explorer' can be accessed [here](#).

