

# Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan

**Scoping Report**

June 2022

## Quality information

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## Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Name	Position
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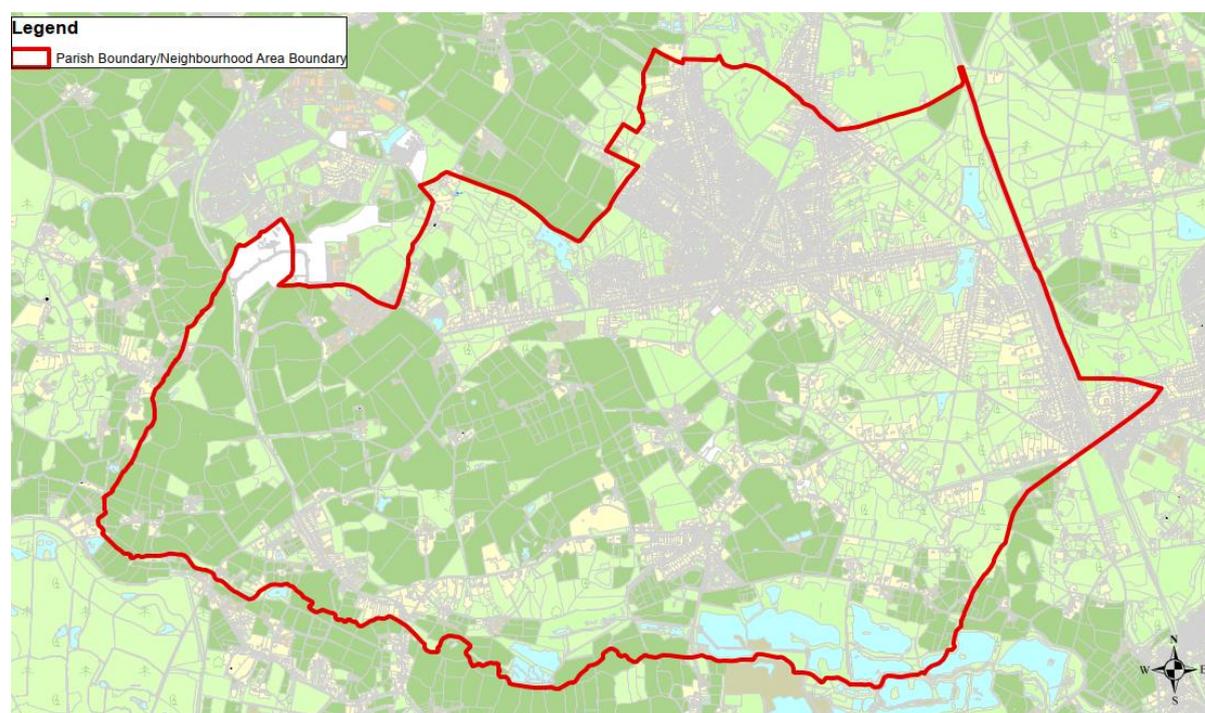
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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan (FNP).
- 1.2 The FNP is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, and in the context of the local development framework of Wokingham Borough Council (WBC).
- 1.3 The FNP area boundary aligns with Finchampstead Parish (FP) and was designated in 2019 (depicted in Figure 1-1).

**Figure 1-1: Finchampstead neighbourhood area<sup>1</sup>**



- 1.4 The main settlement within FP is Finchampstead Village, which itself is split in two halves by the 'Devil's Highway', a Roman Road that runs the central breadth of the Parish. Development patterns within the neighbourhood area to date have not been consistent across Finchampstead Village, with the northern area being developed to a greater degree when compared to the southern area. Therefore, within this report, distinctions may be made between the different parts of Finchampstead Village. Where this is needed, the terms 'northern Finchampstead Village' and 'southern Finchampstead Village' will be used, referring to the areas of the village north or south of the 'Devil's Highway'.

## Local Plan context

- 1.5 Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC) Local Plan is divided up into a collection of individual documents, including:

<sup>1</sup> Wokingham Borough Council (no date) 'Designated Neighbourhood Areas map', available [here](#).

- The Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2010) (CSDP)<sup>2</sup> – this outlines the overarching strategic development plan and policies for the district in the period to 2026.
  - The Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014) (MDD)<sup>3</sup> – this document provides further detail to policies outlined in the CSDP, including specific site allocations and details of four Strategic Development Locations.
  - Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) – a series of SPD documents have been produced to provide additional information to support policies within the CDSP.
  - Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (in consultations) (JMWP)<sup>4</sup> – the latest round of consultations for the JMWP closed in April 2022. The aim of the document, once adopted, will guide minerals and waste decision-making in Wokingham Borough Council, Bracknell Forest Council, Reading Borough Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
- 1.6 An emerging Local Plan Update<sup>5</sup> is expected to be adopted by the end of 2023 and relevant for the period up to 2038. The Local Plan Updated sets out a housing requirement of 190 homes for the neighbourhood area, which is met through the following site allocations as outlined in the Plan:
- Jovike, Lower Wokingham Road – 15 homes
  - Tintagel Farm, Sandhurst Road – 5 homes
  - Land to the rear of 166 Nine Mile Ride – 4 homes
  - 31-33 Barkham Ride – 66 homes
  - Greenacres Farm, Nine Mile Ride – 100 homes
- 1.7 An urban extension for 270 homes is proposed to the northwest of Finchampstead at Rooks Nest Farm and 24 Barkham Ride, which is adjacent to the main urban area and the neighbourhood area boundary.
- 1.8 CSDP Core Policy 9 (Scale and location of development proposals) identifies Finchampstead Ward as a 'limited development location' - the third level of the settlement hierarchy. Finchampstead North Ward is defined as a 'modest development location' - the second level of priority on the settlement hierarchy. Development within Finchampstead Parish, therefore, will likely be focussed in the Finchampstead North Ward area.
- 1.9 CSDP Core Policy 18 (Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location) identifies that a strategic development location is allocated at Arborfield Garrison. Plans include the delivery of 3,500 dwellings, retail facilities, and social/physical infrastructure.
- 1.10 MDD Policy SAL02 (Allocated housing development sites) provides an indicative figure of 115 dwellings to be delivered across all 'modest

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<sup>2</sup> Wokingham Borough Council (2010): 'Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

<sup>3</sup> Wokingham Borough Council (2014): 'Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

<sup>4</sup> Wokingham Borough Council (no date): 'Joint Central and Eastern Berkshire Minerals and Waste Plan', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

<sup>5</sup> Wokingham Borough Council (no date): 'Local Plan Update', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

development locations' (including Finchampstead North) between 2006-2026. Land in 'limited development locations' has not been set an indicative housing delivery target.

- 1.11 MDD Policy SAL03 (Allocated reserve housing sites) specifies one allocated reserve site in Finchampstead Parish, in Finchampstead North Ward for around 40 dwellings. These are areas that cannot be built on before 1 April 2026.
- 1.12 CSDP Core Policy 15 (Employment Development) specifies one 'employment area' in Finchampstead Parish, at Hogwood Farm. These areas are targeted for development for business, industry or warehouse purposes. MDD Policy SAL07 adds further detail, specifying that the area has been allocated 30,800 sq m for B Class uses.

## SEA explained

- 1.13 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the potential impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key environmental issues. The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative impacts and maximising the potential for positive effects. Through this approach, the SEA for the FNP seeks to maximise the emerging plan's contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.14 SEA is undertaken to meet the specific requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations).
- 1.15 The FNP has been screened in by Wokingham Borough Council as requiring Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) which triggers a legal requirement to also undertake SEA.
- 1.16 The next stage of SEA (this report) seeks to establish a suggested scope for the SEA. A key procedural requirement of the SEA Regulations is to present this scope for the SEA, so that the designated authorities (Historic England, Natural England, and the Environment Agency) can provide timely comment.

## SEA scoping explained

- 1.17 Developing the draft scope for the SEA as presented in this report has involved the following steps:
  - Exploring the policy context for the FNP and SEA to summarise the key messages arising.
  - Establishing the baseline for the SEA (i.e., the current and future situation in the area in the absence of the Neighbourhood Plan) to help identify the plan's likely significant effects.
  - Identifying particular problems or opportunities ('issues') that should be a focus of the SEA; and
  - Considering this information, developing a SEA framework comprising SEA objectives and assessment questions, which can then be used as a guiding framework for the subsequent assessment.
- 1.18 The scope is explored and presented under eight key environmental themes as follows:

Air quality	Historic environment
Biodiversity	Land, soil, and water resources
Climate change and flood risk	Landscape
Community wellbeing	Transport

1.19 The selected environmental themes incorporate the ‘SEA topics’ suggested by Annex I (f) of the SEA Directive.<sup>6</sup> These were refined to reflect a broad understanding of the anticipated scope of plan effects. The discussion of the scoping information for each theme is presented in Chapters 2 to 9, and the proposed SEA framework is brought together as a whole in Chapter 10. Each proposal within the emerging FNP will be assessed consistently using this framework.

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<sup>6</sup> The SEA Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC) is 'of a procedural nature' (para 9 of the Directive preamble) and does not set out to prescribe particular issues that should and should not be a focus, beyond requiring a focus 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'

## 2. Air Quality

### Overview

2.1 This chapter presents the policy context and baseline summary in relation to the SEA topic of air quality. The topic focuses on air pollution sources, air quality hotspots, and air quality management within and surrounding the neighbourhood area. This information is used to identify key issues (both constraints and opportunities) before proposing a relevant SEA objective and supporting assessment questions.

### Policy context

2.2 Table 2-1 below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

**Table 2-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to air quality**

Document title	Year of publication
<a href="#">Environment Act</a>	2021
<a href="#">National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</a>	2021
<a href="#">The Clean Air Strategy</a>	2019
<a href="#">A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</a>	2018
<a href="#">UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations</a>	2017
<a href="#">Environment Act</a>	1995
<a href="#">Wokingham Borough Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CSDP)</a>	2010
<a href="#">Wokingham Borough Council 2021 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)</a>	2021
<a href="#">Wokingham Borough Council Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) (2011 – 2026)</a>	2011
<a href="#">Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD)</a>	2014
<a href="#">Wokingham Borough Council Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP)</a>	2018
<a href="#">Local Plan Update</a>	Emerging Local Plan

2.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The FNP will need to consider the principles outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which seek to reduce or mitigate air quality impacts during development whilst simultaneously taking advantage of opportunities to improve air quality. Measures include, but are not limited to; sustainable transport solutions, limiting the need to travel, compliance with pollutant limits or objectives, and the enhancement of green infrastructure. Smaller-scale development should consider the potential for cumulative effects in relation to air quality. The NPPF also states that planning policies should contribute towards compliance with pollutant limit levels or national objectives; acknowledging air quality management areas, clean air zones and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local

areas. Moreover, the NPPF indicates new and existing developments should be prevented from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of air pollution.

- The Clean Air Strategy outlines how the government will tackle all sources of air pollution. The strategy proposes goals to cut public exposure to particulate matter pollution and outlines required action to meet these goals. Furthermore, it seeks to recognise wider sources that cause poor air quality, such as diffuse sources and smaller contributors. The proposed measures include new legislation and local powers to act in areas with air pollution issues.
- The 25 Year Environment Plan establishes how the government will expand net gain approaches to include air quality improvements, such as planting more trees in urban areas and changing fuel supplies. In particular, 'Goal 1 Clean air' and the policies contained within 'Chapter 4: Increasing resource efficiency and reducing pollution and waste' directly relate to the air quality SEA theme.
- The UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) is focused on lowering NO<sub>2</sub> emissions to statutory limits as quickly as possible. The plan acknowledges that an improvement in air quality and a reduction in emissions is important and aims to position the UK at the forefront of vehicle innovation by making motoring cleaner.
- Local authorities are required to monitor air quality across the district, report regularly to Defra and act where nationally set levels and limits of pollutants are likely to be exceeded under Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995). Monitoring is undertaken to assess levels of NO<sub>2</sub>, sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), ozone, benzene, and particulates. Where exceedances exist, areas are declared as air quality management areas (AQMAs) and local authorities are required to produce an air quality action plan (AQAP) to improve air quality in the area. Under Schedule 11 in the Environment Act (2021), a local authority must identify any parts of its area in which it appears air quality standards or objectives are not likely to be achieved within the relevant period. Additionally, local authorities must also identify relevant sources of emissions that are considered partly or wholly responsible for failing to achieve air quality standards or objectives in the area.
- The AQAP outlines actions that WBC will deliver between 2017-2026 to reduce concentrations of air pollutants and exposure to air pollution.
- The ASR provides an overview of air quality in the district during 2020. It fulfils the requirements of the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) as set out in Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995).
- The LTP3 outlines the Borough's integrated transport strategy for the period of 2011-2026. The FNP will need to give particular consideration to Policy HW10 (Air Quality), which outlines the Borough's commitment to limit emissions from road traffic and reduce background concentrations of NO<sub>2</sub>.
- The FNP will also need to consider the relevant policies outlined in the CSDP relevant to air quality, including, but not limited to, CP6 Managing Travel Demand and CP10 Improvements to the Strategic Transport Network.

- The MDD provides further detail on the policies in the CSDP; consequently, the FNP will also need to consider policies outlined in the MDD, including, but not limited to CC06 Parking and CC08 Safeguarding alignments of the Strategic Transport Network & Road Infrastructure.

## Baseline information

- 2.4 According to the ASR, there are three AQMAs within Wokingham Borough, however, none of these are within Finchampstead Parish. The report states that all sites outside of the Borough's three AQMAs recorded NO<sub>2</sub> levels under the national air quality objective of 40µg/m<sup>3</sup> for annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> emissions – although, none of these monitoring sites are within FP.
- 2.5 The closest AQMA to FP is located in Wokingham town centre along Denmark Street, approximately 2km north-east of the Parish.

## Future baseline

- 2.6 Future development in the neighbourhood area particularly at Arborfield Garrison, has the potential to increase traffic, congestion, and their associated emissions; in the absence of suitable planning and mitigation this could lead to a deterioration in air quality. Therefore, mitigation measures should be incorporated into the design of new development areas to maintain air quality.
- 2.7 It is considered that the present shift towards the use of sustainable transportation, including active travel modes and electric vehicle use, has the potential to support long term air quality improvements. Furthermore, as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a shift towards employees working from home, which also contributes to emissions reduction. Planning for these factors during development will likely have a positive impact on air quality.

## Key issues

- 2.8 Considering the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues are identified in relation to air quality:
- According to the ASR, there are no AQMAs in Finchampstead Parish. With this being the case, it is unlikely that development will have a significant impact on air quality.
  - Designated biodiversity and geodiversity sites within and in proximity to FP are potentially sensitive to air pollution issues. The effects of the neighbourhood plan in relation to these concerns will be explored in the 'Biodiversity' SEA theme in chapter 3.
  - The FNP could present opportunities to improve accessibility and support more local and sustainable journeys/connections. These opportunities will be explored in the 'Community wellbeing' and 'Transportation' SEA themes in chapter 5 and chapter 9 respectively.
  - The effects of traffic and congestion will be explored in the 'Transportation' SEA theme in chapter 9.

**2.9 Due to the absence of any significant air quality issues within the neighbourhood area the air quality theme has been scoped out for the purposes of the SEA process.**

## 3. Biodiversity

### Overview

3.1 This chapter presents the policy context and baseline summary in relation to the SEA topic of biodiversity. The topic focuses on nature conservation designations, geological sites, and habitats and species in the neighbourhood area. This information is used to identify key issues (both constraints and opportunities) before proposing a relevant SEA objective and supporting assessment questions.

### Policy context

**Table 3-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to biodiversity**

Document title	Year of publication
<a href="#">Environment Act 2021</a>	2021
<a href="#">National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</a>	2021
<a href="#">A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</a>	2018
<a href="#">UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework</a>	2012
<a href="#">The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (Natural Environment White Paper)</a>	2011
<a href="#">Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services</a>	2011
<a href="#">Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act</a>	2006
<a href="#">UK Biodiversity Action Plan</a>	1994
<a href="#">Wokingham Borough Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CSDP)</a>	2010
<a href="#">Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD)</a>	2014
<a href="#">Local Plan Update</a>	Emerging Local Plan

3.2 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The Environment Act makes provision for biodiversity gain to be a condition of planning permission in England, in addition to creating biodiversity gain site registers and biodiversity credits. It recognises there is a duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity and encourages the identification of suitable areas through biodiversity reports and local nature recovery strategies. Furthermore, habitat maps are expected to include recovery and enhancement areas which are currently, or could become, important for biodiversity.
- The FNP will need to consider the principles set out in the NPPF, which indicate that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance soils and sites of biodiversity and/or geological value. Plans should also identify, map, and safeguard components of wider ecological networks, promote positive action for priority habitats and species, and pursue opportunities to secure biodiversity net gains. The NPPF also states that if

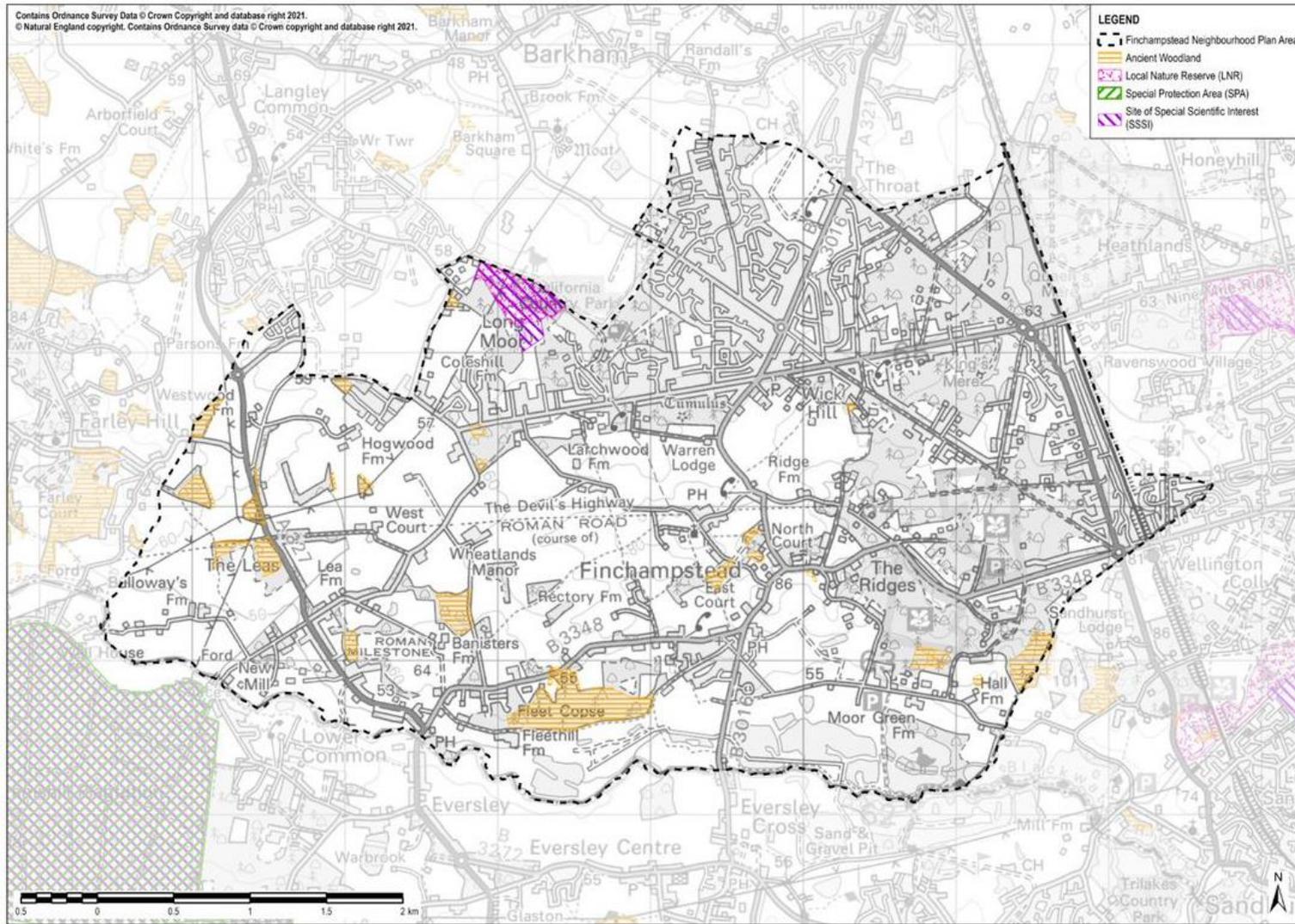
development causes substantial harm and cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or compensated, then planning permission should be refused.

- The NPPF also supports the establishment and enhancement of habitat networks and green infrastructure to allow for more resilience to current and future pressures for biodiversity.
- The 25 Year Environment Plan places importance on improvements to the natural environment, such as achieving clean air and water, reducing environmental hazard risk, and encouraging sustainable resource use. This will be accomplished through a variety of actions including implementing sustainable land management, engaging in nature recovery, and connecting people to the environment.
- The UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework aims to ensure that biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored, and wisely used, and ecosystem services are maintained. This helps to sustain a healthy planet that delivers essential benefits for everyone.
- The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) sets out the importance of a healthy, functioning natural environment to sustaining economic growth, prospering communities, and personal wellbeing. It adopts a landscape approach to protect and enhance biodiversity and aims to create a green economy, whereby the economic growth and the health of natural resources sustain each other.
- Reflecting the commitments within the NEWP, Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services aims to stop overall biodiversity loss, support healthy and well-functioning ecosystems, and establish coherent ecological networks.
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act details nature protection in the UK, which includes wildlife, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), and National Parks. It extends the UK Government's duty to biodiversity and establishes the role of Natural England, which is responsible for safeguarding England's natural environment, making sure it is protected and improved whilst ensuring people enjoy, understand, and access it.
- The FNP will also need to consider the relevant policies outlined in the CSDP relevant to biodiversity, including, but not limited to, CP7 Biodiversity and CP8 Thames Basin Heaths SPA.
- The MDD provides further detail on the policies in the CSDP; consequently, the FNP will also need to consider policies outlined in the MDD, including, but not limited to TB23 Biodiversity and Development.

## Baseline summary

- 3.3 Figure 3-1 indicates the location of biodiversity designations within and in proximity to the neighbourhood area.

Figure 3-1: Biodiversity designations within and in proximity to the neighbourhood area



## Ramsar sites, Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation

- 3.4 The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (known as the Ramsar Convention) is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and appropriate use of wetlands and their resources<sup>7</sup>. The convention was adopted in 1971 and came into force in 1975. In the UK, the initial emphasis was on selecting sites of importance to waterbirds.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, many Ramsar sites were also designated as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the European Birds Directive (79/409/EEC).<sup>9</sup>
- 3.5 To ensure European Directives were operable in the UK after the EU transition period, changes were made through the implementation of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.<sup>10</sup> In doing so, SPAs and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in the UK no longer form part of the EU Natura 2000 ecological network. Instead, the 2019 Regulations propose the creation of a national site network within the UK,<sup>11</sup> comprising of sites already designated under the Nature Directives (i.e., 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC) and any additional sites designated under the 2019 Regulations. The national site network operates in parallel with other designations and contributes towards the UK's international commitments for protected areas.
- 3.6 In relation to the FNP, there are no internationally designated sites within the parish boundary. However, particular concern has been raised regarding the Thames Basin Heaths SPA site approximately 125m south of the Parish's boundary. These concerns will be assessed and addressed through the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) process, the results of which will inform the SEA process and policy development.
- 3.7 No other internationally designated sites are located within 3km of the neighbourhood area.

## Sites of Special Scientific Interest

- 3.8 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are protected to conserve their wildlife and/or geology values. Within and in proximity to FP there are multiple SSSIs, three of which intersect or lie within 1km of the parish:
- Bramshill
  - Heath Lake
  - Longmoor Bog
- 3.9 Natural England's objective is to achieve 'favourable condition' status for all SSSIs, meaning the habitats and features are in a healthy state and are being conserved by appropriate management. In this respect, of the three SSSIs identified above, one is found to be entirely in a 'favourable condition' status (rounded).<sup>12</sup> That is Bramshill (which overlaps with Thames Basin Heaths SPA), a 672 ha site recorded for its series of shallow acid ponds and mire. Bramshill

<sup>7</sup> Ramsar Convention (2014) 'Introducing the Convention on Wetlands' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>8</sup> JNCC (2019) 'Ramsar Convention' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>9</sup> EU (1979) 'The European Birds Directive (79/209/EEC)' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>10</sup> UK Government (2019) 'The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>11</sup> Defra (2021) 'Policy Paper: Changes to the Habitats Regulations 2017' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>12</sup> Natural England – [Designated sites view](#)

is recorded as 99.94% favourable condition, and 0.06% 'unfavourable – no change'.

- 3.10 Heath Lake, a 6ha site designated for its spring-fed lake and relict heathland, is the worst performing SSSI within the neighbourhood area, with 100% of the area recorded as 'unfavourable-no change'.
- 3.11 Longmoor Bog, a 12 ha site designated for its base-poor valley mire, has also been recorded as unfavourable overall, however, 84% is classed as 'unfavourable-recovering' and only 16% is 'unfavourable-no change'.
- 3.12 No management views for the three SSSI sites were available at the time of searching.
- 3.13 SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) are a GIS tool/dataset that map zones around each SSSI according to their sensitivities. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location, and thresholds which indicate a need to consult Natural England in development. In this respect, any residential developments with a net gain of residential units throughout FP would likely require consultation with Natural England.

## Ancient woodland

- 3.14 Ancient woodland takes hundreds of years to establish. It is considered important for its wildlife (often including rare and threatened species), and soils, amongst other values. Ancient woodland includes land that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD<sup>13</sup>. This means the following is included under its designation:
- Ancient semi-natural woodland mainly made up of trees and shrubs native to the site, usually arising from natural regeneration.
  - Plantations on ancient woodland sites - replanted with conifer and broadleaved trees that retain ancient woodland features, such as undisturbed soil, ground flora and fungi.
- 3.15 There are pockets of ancient and semi-natural woodland scattered throughout neighbourhood area but mostly found in the south and east of the neighbourhood area. The largest of these is Fleet Copse, a 19ha site of ancient and semi-natural woodland.

## Priority habitats and species

- 3.16 Figure 3-2 indicates the location of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats within and in proximity to the neighbourhood area.

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<sup>13</sup> UK Government (2020): 'Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions', [online] available to access via [this link](#)



3.17 The Wokingham Biodiversity Action Plan (2012 to 2014) outlines five Habitat Action Plans (HAPs), covering:

- Communities, Towns and Villages HAP
- Woodland HAP
- Grassland and Hedgerow HAP
- Wetland HAP
- Heathland HAP

3.18 The Wokingham Biodiversity Action Plan (2012 to 2014) also specifies seven Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA), two of which are in FP:

- '6 – Blackwater Valley', heathland habitat covering a large area on the southern side of FP.
- '7 – Thames Basin Heaths', a wet woodland (riverine) and grassland habitat covering a large area on the eastern side of FP.

3.19 Finchampstead village is mentioned in the Communities, Towns and Villages HAP, which acknowledges the need for links between biodiversity areas in villages and towns and the surrounding countryside in the face of increasing spatial development at villages encroaching into wildlife habitats.

3.20 As shown in Figure 3-3 overleaf, most of FP is covered by a designation in the national habitat network, with the only exception being a small area by King's Mere, in the east. The central and southern regions of the Parish have areas designated for Restorable Habitat, Network Enhancement Zone 1, and Network Expansion Zone surrounding small pockets of lowland meadows, purple moor grass and rush pastures, and traditional orchard. The central northern area of the Parish has lowland heath habitat and parkland surrounded by a Fragmentation Action Zone and Network Enhancement Zone 1. The remaining area within the Parish is mostly covered by Network Enhancement Zone 2, with ancient woodland and parkland spread evenly throughout.

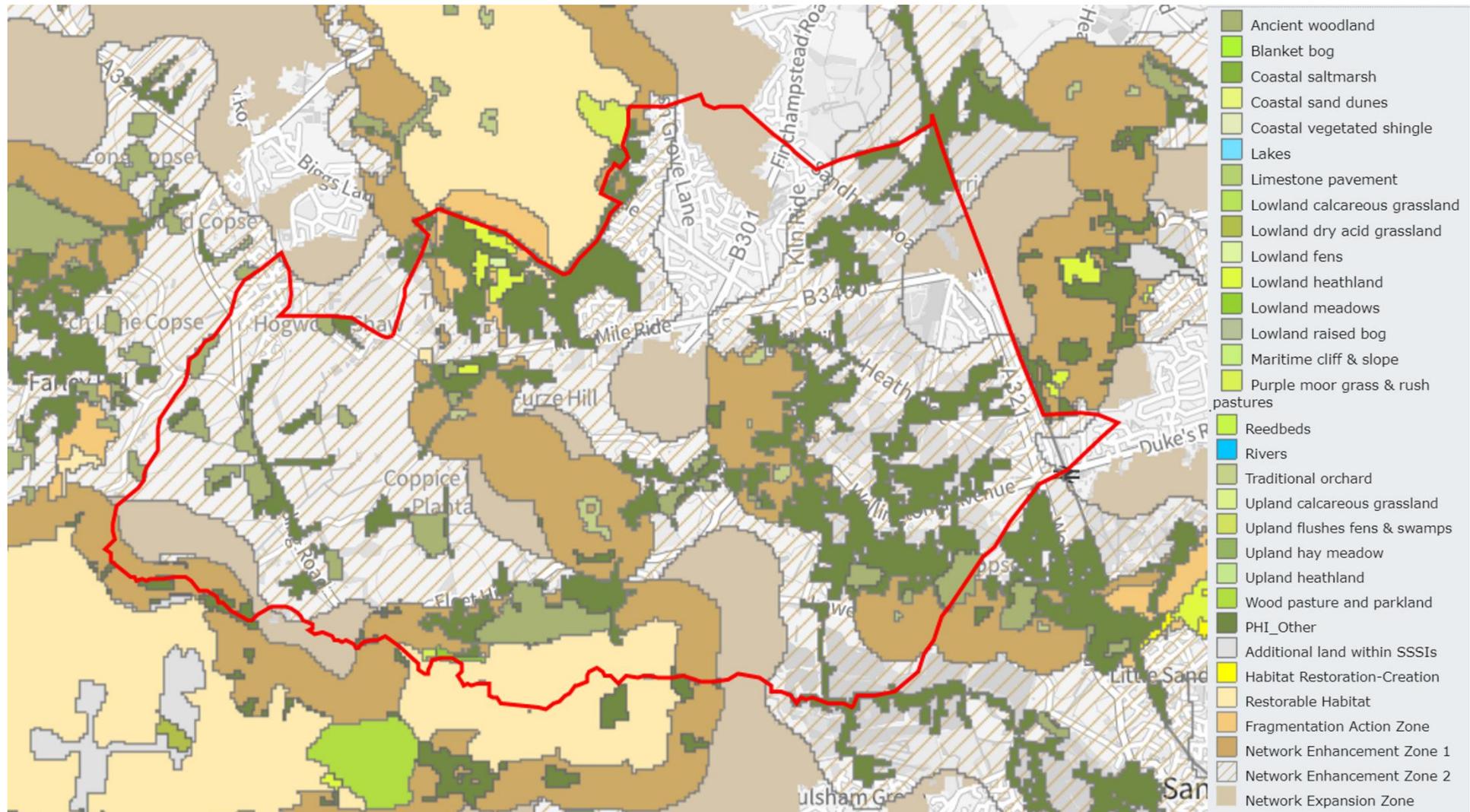
3.21 The Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre<sup>14</sup> will contain archives of protected and/or notable species within Berkshire and Oxfordshire, including those species protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981<sup>15</sup> and under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. It is likely the BAP Priority Habitats and ecological designations within and surrounding the FNP area are likely to support populations of protected species.

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<sup>14</sup> The Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre website can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>15</sup> UK Government (1981) 'The Wildlife and Countryside Act' can be accessed [here](#).

**Figure 3-3: National Habitat Network All Habitats Combined in the neighbourhood area<sup>16</sup>**



<sup>16</sup> Defra (no date): 'Magic', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

## Future baseline

- 3.22 Habitats and species will potentially face increasing pressures from future development within the neighbourhood area, with the potential for negative impacts on the wider ecological network. This may include a loss of habitats and impacts on biodiversity networks, which may be exacerbated by the effects of climate change. This has the potential to lead to variations in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition and character of habitats.
- 3.23 The FNP presents an opportunity to maximise benefits for biodiversity by considering important habitats, species, and designated sites at an early stage of planning. To maintain and improve the condition of biodiversity in the future, it will be important to not only protect and enhance important habitats but the connections between them. It will be crucial to effectively coordinate the delivery of housing, employment, and infrastructure to ensure that opportunities to improve green infrastructure and ecological corridors are maximised both within the FNP area and in the surrounding areas.

## Key issues

- 3.24 Considering the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues are identified in relation to biodiversity:
- A supporting HRA will be undertaken to understand the potential effects arising at internationally designated biodiversity sites and any mitigation that may be required to avoid significant effects. The HRA will inform both plan-making and the SEA.
  - There is a network of protected and non-protected habitats within and surrounding the neighbourhood area, including SSSIs, ancient woodland, and priority habitats. Planning for development should seek to avoid direct impacts for habitats, such as habitat loss or fragmentation. Alternatively, much of the landscape surrounding the settlement is recognised for its potential to support primary habitats through habitat re-creation, new habitats, and enhanced green infrastructure, and planning for development can seek to maximise opportunities arising in this respect.
  - Housing developments with a net gain of residential units across FP may be required to consult with Natural England regarding impacts arising for nearby SSSIs.

## Proposed SEA objective

3.25 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective:

SEA topic	SEA objective
Biodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.

3.26 Supporting assessment questions include (will the option/proposal...):

- Avoid or, if not possible, minimise impacts on biodiversity, including nationally designated sites, and provide net gains where possible?
- Support the integrity of the designated sites for biodiversity and geodiversity located within proximity to the neighbourhood area?
- Protect and enhance priority habitats, semi-natural habitats, species, and the ecological network connecting them?
- Support the national habitat network, particularly Network Enhancement Zone 1 and identified restorable habitat?
- Achieve biodiversity net gains and support the delivery of ecosystem services and multifunctional green infrastructure services?
- Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?
- Support and promote access to and interpretation and understanding of biodiversity

## 4. Climate Change and Flood Risk

### Overview

4.1 This chapter presents the policy context and baseline summary in relation to the SEA topics of climate change and flood risk. The topic focuses on contributions to climate change, the effects of climate change, climate change adaptation, and flood risk in the neighbourhood area. This information is used to identify key issues (both constraints and opportunities) before proposing a relevant SEA objectives and supporting assessment questions.

### Policy context

4.2 Table 4-1 below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

**Table 4-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to climate change**

Document title	Year of publication
<a href="#">National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</a>	2021
<a href="#">Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener</a>	2021
<a href="#">National Infrastructure Assessment</a>	2021
<a href="#">The UK Sixth Carbon Budget</a>	2020
<a href="#">The Clean Air Strategy 2019</a>	2019
<a href="#">The National Adaptation Programme and the Third Strategy for Climate Adaptation Reporting</a>	2018
<a href="#">A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</a>	2018
<a href="#">The Clean Growth Strategy</a>	2017
<a href="#">UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017</a>	2017
<a href="#">Flood and Water Management Act 2010</a>	2010
<a href="#">Climate Change Act 2008</a>	2008
<a href="#">Wokingham Borough Council Climate Emergency Action Plan</a>	2019
<a href="#">Wokingham Borough Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CSDP)</a>	2010
<a href="#">Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD)</a>	2014
<a href="#">Local Plan Update</a>	Emerging Local Plan

4.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The FNP will need to consider the principles set out in the NPPF, including adopting a proactive planning approach to both mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies are expected to improve the resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, avoid inappropriate development in the flood plain zone, and support the move to a low carbon economy. The NPPF recognises the potential for planning

to shape places to better contribute to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and deliver long-term resilience.

- The Clean Growth Strategy, Clean Air Strategy and the Net Zero Strategy are a collection of documents seeking to progress the government's commitment to becoming net zero by 2050 under the UK Climate Change Act 2008. The documents outline how the government will tackle air pollution sources whilst maintaining an affordable energy supply and increasing economic growth. This parallels with the 25 Year Environment Plan, which seeks to manage land resources sustainably, recover and reinstate nature, protect soils and habitats, increase resource efficiency, improve water quality, and connect people with the environment. Of note in the 25 Year Environment Plan are the following: 'Chapter 1: Using and managing land sustainably', 'Chapter 6: Protecting and improving the global environment', 'Goal 4: A reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought' and 'Goal 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change'.
- The National Infrastructure Assessment is published every five years and analyses the UK's long-term economic infrastructure needs to create a strategic vision and recommendations. The baseline report states that climate change will increase pressures on all sectors, including economic infrastructure.
- The National Adaptation Programme outlines the government's response to the second Climate Change Risk Assessment, demonstrating the actions the government is currently taking and actions it will be taking in the future. It outlines risks that fit within the priority areas identified by the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017:
  - Flooding and coastal change risks to communities, businesses, and infrastructure.
  - Risks to health, well-being, and productivity from high temperatures.
  - Risk of shortages in the public water supply, and for agriculture, energy generation, and industry.
  - Risks to natural capital, including terrestrial, coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems, soils, and biodiversity.
  - Risks to domestic and international food production and trade; and
  - New and emerging pests and diseases, and invasive non-native species, affecting people, plants, and animals.
- The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 provides for better and more comprehensive management of flood risk for people, homes, and businesses, in addition to aiding in safeguarding community groups from unaffordable rises in surface water drainage charges and protecting consumer water supplies. It also highlights alternatives to traditional engineering to flood risk management.
- The UK Climate Change Act 2008 establishes a framework to develop an economically viable emissions reduction path. The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order of 2019 put in place the legally binding target

of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. The Climate Change Act includes the following:

- The UK Government must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by a minimum of 100% of 1990 levels by 2050.
  - The document requires the government to produce legally binding carbon budgets – a cap on the amount of greenhouse gases emitted in the UK over a five-year period.
  - The Act requires the government to assess and prepare for the risks and opportunities linked to climate change for the UK.
- The Sixth Carbon Budget is the legal limit of UK net greenhouse gas emissions and requires the country to reduce emissions by 78% by 2035 relative to 1990 levels. This puts the country on track to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 at the latest.
  - Wokingham Borough Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019,<sup>17</sup> and was subsequently proceeded by the Council's [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#). This document outlines the challenges and opportunities that the Council face whilst aiming to achieve the goal to become net zero by 2030.
  - The local authority has resolved to work with stakeholder groups to help tackle the climate crisis, including government energy efficiency scheme 'Help to Heat' under the Energy Company Obligation (ECO). This is in addition to Local Government Association (LGA) initiative 'Climate Local', as well as several local energy saving initiatives such as 'My Journey Wokingham' and the installation of rapid car chargers at Park and Ride sites.
  - The FNP will also need to consider the relevant policies outlined in the CSDP relevant to biodiversity, including, but not limited to, CP1 Sustainable Development and CP3 General Principles for development.
  - The MDD provides further detail on the policies in the CSDP; consequently, the FNP will also need to consider policies outlined in the MDD, including, but not limited to CC09 Development and Flood Risk and CC10 Sustainable Drainage.
  - Finally, at the neighbourhood level, FNP will need to consider the relevant priorities outlined in the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2024, including, but not limited to, ES1 Environmental standards for residential development and GA2 Reduction in car usage with safe personal mobility options.

## Baseline information

4.3 The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order of 2019 requires carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from the built environment to be monitored and recorded at the local authority level. The CO<sub>2</sub> emissions shown

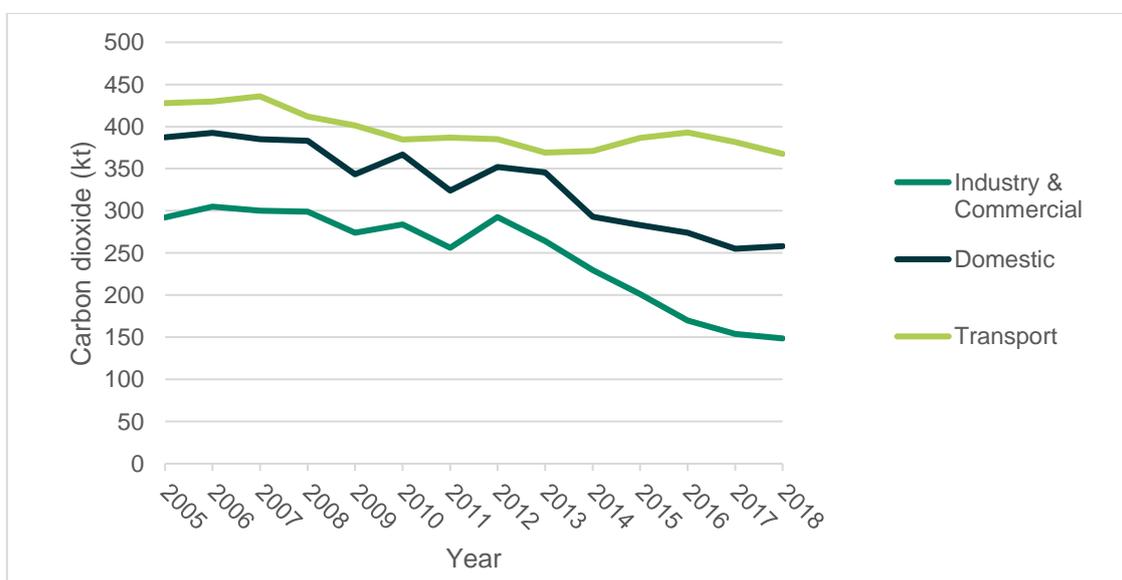
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<sup>17</sup> Wokingham Borough Council (no date), 'Climate Emergency'. Accessed [here](#).

in Figure 4-1 and Figure 4-2 are derived from data supplied by the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy.<sup>18</sup>

- 4.4 Figure 4-1 demonstrates that the largest contributing sector with regards to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Wokingham in every year throughout the observed period was the transport industry. The next highest contributor was the Domestic sector, followed by the Industry & Commercial sector.
- 4.5 Since 2012 there has been a notable drop in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the Domestic and Industry & Commercial sector, with both recording annual reductions in emissions up to 2018 (except for Domestic in 2018, which recorded a slight rise). Transport followed a different trajectory, increasing its emissions between 2012 and 2016, then dropping down in 2018 to similar levels amounts it emitted in 2012.
- 4.6 The introduction and uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) will contribute positively towards the reduction of road transport related emissions. In line with assumptions made by the Department for Transport's 'Road to Zero' report (2018), it is assumed that ULEV uptake will increase rapidly in the coming decade. Therefore, all vehicles could be ultra-low emission (powered either by hydrogen or electricity) by 2030, thus the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the transport sector have the potential to decrease. However, this is dependent on the uptake of electric vehicles, which is linked to their affordability and the availability / rollout of appropriate infrastructure.

**Figure 4-1: CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in kilotons per year for each sector in Wokingham (2005-2018)**

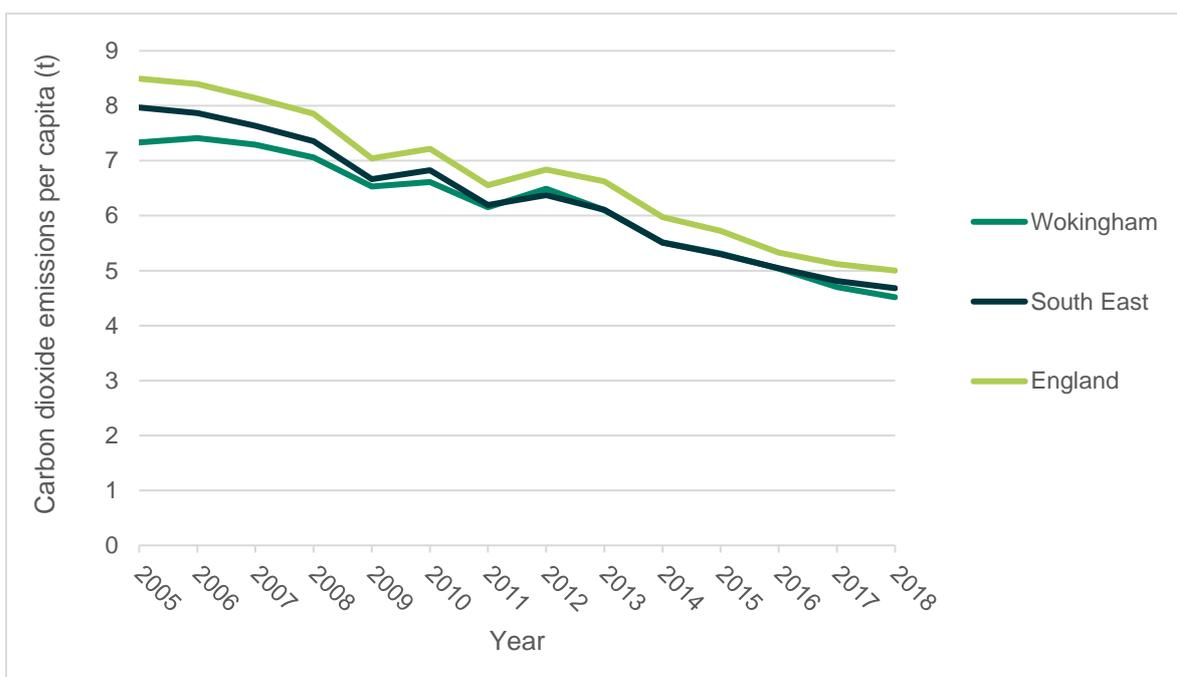


- 4.7 Figure 4-2 shows that between 2009-2018 Wokingham and South East recorded near identical levels of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita. Prior to this, between 2005-2009, South East had slightly higher emissions per capita, but reduced its levels to match Wokingham by 2009.

<sup>18</sup> Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2020) 'UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005-2008' can be accessed [here](#). The data tables used to generate Figures 4.1 and 4.2 can be downloaded from this page.

- 4.8 When compared to England's data, Figure 4-2 reveals that the emissions per capita for Wokingham and South East were slightly lower in every year over the observed period.
- 4.9 Whilst there have been fluctuations between the years observed in Figure 4-2, the overall trend presented is that emissions in all three observed geographies declined between 2005 and 2018.

**Figure 4-2: CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita (in tons) for Wokingham, South East, and England (2005-2018)**



## Potential effects of climate change

- 4.10 The UK Climate Projections (UKCP18) programme is a climate analysis tool that provides the most up-to-date assessment on potential future climatic changes in the UK based on climate model simulations.<sup>19</sup> Projections can be downscaled to a regional level across the UK, allowing for specific evaluations of a selected area.
- 4.11 The UKCP18 projections conclude the effects of climate change for the South East, under the medium emissions scenario (RCP4.5), are likely to be as follows (as compared to 1981-2000):
- 2020-2039:
    - An average 0-1°C increase in annual mean temperature.
    - An average 0-10% increase in mean winter precipitation.
    - An average 0-10% decrease in mean summer precipitation.
  - 2049-2059:
    - An average 1-2 °C increase in annual mean temperature.
    - An average 0-20% increase in mean winter precipitation.

<sup>19</sup> Met Office (no date) 'UK Climate Projections (UKCP)' can be accessed [here](#).

- An average 0-20% decrease in mean summer precipitation.

4.12 If these changes occur, FP may face a range of risks, including:

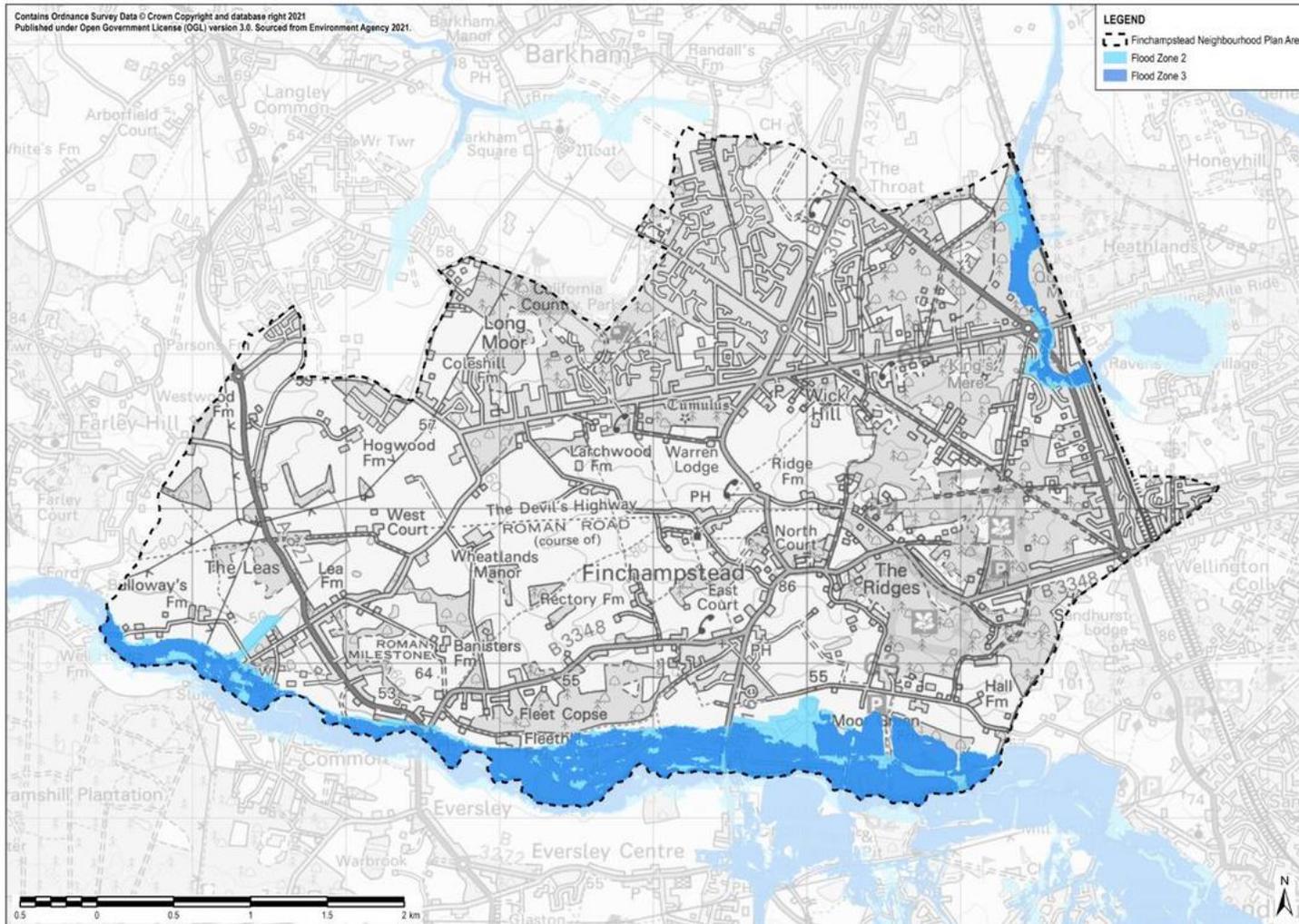
- Increases in cases of heat related illnesses and deaths during the summer period as well as illnesses and deaths related to exposure to sunlight.
- An increase in the risk of injuries and deaths caused by storm events, due to both the increase in quantity and magnitude.
- Changes to water resources, in terms of quality and quantity.
- An increased risk of flooding, including changes in vulnerability to 1 in 100-year floods, and a need to upgrade flood defences.
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding.
- Loss of species that are at the edge of their distribution, particularly their southern edge, and a spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution.
- Increased drought events, both in quantity and magnitude.
- Heat related impacts to local infrastructure, e.g. road surfaces melting.

### **Flood risk**

4.13 Figure 4-3 demonstrates that most of FP is within Flood Risk Zone 1. However, there are two main areas within the Parish that have been identified as Flood Risk Zones 2 or 3 – these are:

- A small area near with King's Mere and Queen's Mere lakes, in the north-eastern side of FP (Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3).
- A large area along FP's southern boundary, associated with River Blackwater and its tributaries and lakes (Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3).

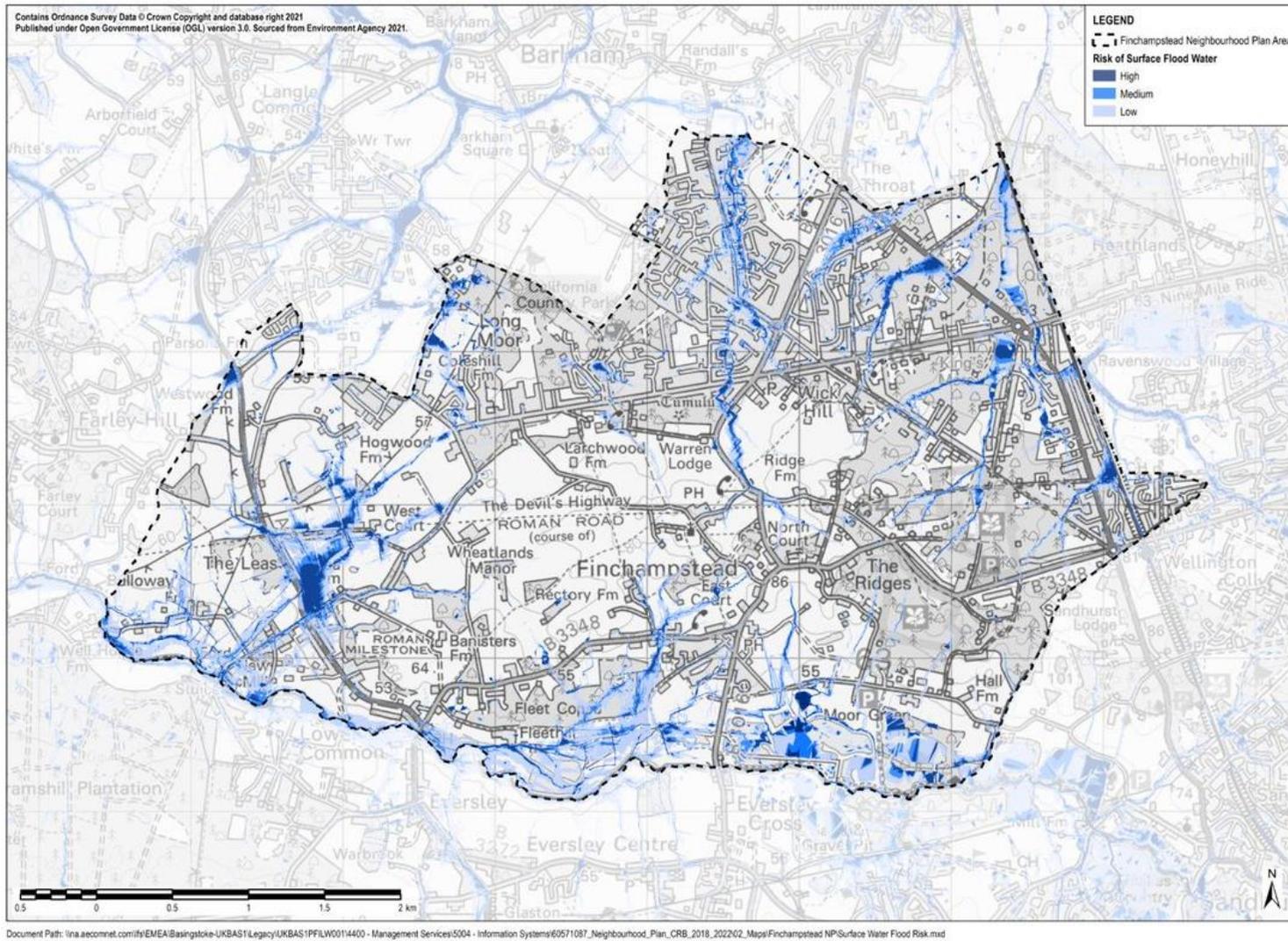
Figure 4-3: Fluvial flood risk in the neighbourhood area



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4.14 Figure 4- indicates that the same areas within FP are at medium or high risk of surface water flooding as fluvial flooding. There are additional areas categorised as medium or high risk within FP, including the area where Park Lane and the A327 adjoin, Hogwood Industrial Estate, Nashgrove Lane, Gorse Ride North, Gorse Ride South and part of the B3016.

Figure 4-4: Surface water flood risk in the neighbourhood area



4.15 According to the WBC Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (2011)<sup>20</sup> (see Figure 4-4 in the report), FP has a history of flooding events – the majority of which have been due to surface runoff. Flooding in FP has historically occurred in the northern and southern edges of FP (both areas where there is the highest spatial development), leaving the central belt of the Parish relatively unaffected by historical flooding events flooding.

### Future baseline

- 4.16 Climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events in the neighbourhood area. In turn it is likely FP will experience an amplified level of risk associated with climate change and a subsequent increase in need for resilience and adaptation measures.
- 4.17 New development has the potential to increase flood risk through changing surface and ground water flows, overloading existing inputs to the drainage and wastewater networks, and/ or increasing the number of residents exposed to areas of existing flood risk.
- 4.18 Greenhouse gas emissions generated in FP may continue to decrease with the wider adoption of energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production, and new technologies. However, increases in the built footprint of the FNP area would contribute to increases in the absolute levels of greenhouse gas emissions, and these increases are considered likely with or without the FNP.

### Key issues

- 4.19 Considering the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues are identified in relation to climate change and flood risk:
- Whilst there are areas of high and medium fluvial flood risk, these predominantly follow the course of the River Blackwater and can be largely avoided through development of an appropriate spatial strategy.
  - However, surface water flood risk is also prevalent through the neighbourhood area, especially in the areas of FP with the most spatial development. It is expected that surface water flood risk concerns could be addressed through the inclusion of appropriate drainage through the design of new development areas. However, the FNP should encourage strategies which seek to tackle the impacts of the climate crisis.
  - Opportunities to influence per capita emissions could be sought the FNP process, particularly by planning for integrated and connected development, which reduces the need to travel and supports opportunities to travel by more sustainable modes.
  - Opportunities to enhance the resilience of both FP and its residents, to the effects of climate change should be sought. This can include adaptation strategies, green infrastructure enhancement, flood betterment measures, infrastructure development, and increased renewable energy sources.

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<sup>20</sup> Wokingham Borough Council (2011) 'Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment' available [here](#). See Figure 5-1 [here](#).

## Proposed SEA objective

4.20 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective:

SEA topic	SEA objective
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, including flooding.

4.21 Supporting assessment questions include (will the option/proposal...):

- 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 EV infrastructure?
- Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria?
- Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources, or reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?
- Ensure that inappropriate development does not take place in areas at higher risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change?
- Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the plan area?
- Sustainably manage water run-off, reducing runoff where possible?
- Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?

# 5. Community Wellbeing

## Overview

5.1 This chapter presents the policy context and baseline summary in relation to the SEA topics of population, communities, and health and wellbeing, collectively termed 'community wellbeing'. The topic focuses on population and age structure, deprivation levels, housing mix and affordability, community assets and infrastructure, and influences on health and wellbeing for residents in the neighbourhood area. This information is used to identify key issues (both constraints and opportunities) before proposing a relevant SEA objective and supporting assessment questions.

## Policy context

5.2 Table 5-1 below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

**Table 5-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to community wellbeing**

Document title	Year of publication
<a href="#">National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</a>	2021
<a href="#">Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On</a>	2020
<a href="#">Healthy and Safe Communities Planning practice guidance</a>	2019
<a href="#">Planning for Sport Guidance</a>	2019
<a href="#">A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</a>	2018
<a href="#">Wokingham Borough Community Vision</a>	2020
<a href="#">Wokingham Borough Council Housing Strategy</a>	2020
<a href="#">Wokingham Borough Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2020-2024)</a>	2019
<a href="#">Wokingham Community Safety Strategy (2021-2024)</a>	2021
<a href="#">Wokingham Borough Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CSDP)</a>	2010
<a href="#">Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD)</a>	2014
<a href="#">Local Plan Update</a>	Emerging Local Plan

5.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The FNP will need to consider the principles outlined in the NPPF, which seek to retain and enhance access to community services and facilities. The NPPF recognises the benefits of having a range of local provision to support community needs. In addition, the NPPF recognises the benefits of creating cohesive communities in safe environments where the fear of crime (and crime itself) does not undermine residents quality of life.
- The NPPF recognises the role of development plans in helping to deliver access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical

activity, therefore contributing to the health and wellbeing of communities. The health benefits of access to nature, green spaces and green infrastructure are further reiterated in the 25 Year Environment Plan. Additional guidance is available through the Healthy and Safe Communities Planning practice guidance.

- The 2020 Health Equity in England Report identifies a health gap between less and more deprived areas, which has grown in the last decade. This means an increased amount of people can expect to spend more of their lives in poor health with a stalled, or even declining, life expectancy.
- The Planning for Sport Guidance seeks to help the planning system provide formal and informal opportunities for everyone to take part in sport and be physically active, setting out twelve principles.
- WBC Vision is the primary strategy for community improvement for the period of 2020 to 2024, outlining the principles that will guide development within the communities of Wokingham Borough. The document also provides specific example of community improvement projects and financial commitments made towards them.
- WBC Housing Strategy accompanies the Community Vision document. It sets out the strategic direction for housing activity in the county, focusing on housing need, supply, and the adopted approach to quality and management of existing and new housing stock.
- WBC Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy outlines how the Council will tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough and support residents in housing crisis.
- WBC Community Safety Strategy outlines the Council's strategy to deal with issues of crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse in the Wokingham Borough.
- The FNP will also need to consider the relevant policies outlined in the CSDP relevant to community wellbeing, including, but not limited to, CP2 Inclusive Communities and CP5 Housing mix, density and affordability.
- The MDD provides further detail on the policies in the CSDP; consequently, the FNP will also need to consider policies outlined in the MDD, including, but not limited to TB05 Housing Mix and TB08 Open Space, sport and recreational facilities for residential development.
- Finally, at the neighbourhood level, FNP will need to consider the relevant priorities outlined in the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2024, including, but not limited to AHD5 Affordable housing and GA1 Improve environment and health from traffic pollution.

## Baseline Information

### Population and age structure

- 5.4 According to the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) website nomis,<sup>21</sup> FP recorded a total of 11,990 residents in the 2011 Census. According to ONS' mid-2020 population estimates, this figure was expected to have increased by to 12,363 by 2020.<sup>22</sup>
- 5.5 In 2020 it was estimated that approximately 23.2% of the population of the FNP area was between the ages of 0-17, with 56.1% between the working ages of 18-64, and 20.8% within the over 65 age band.

### Index of Multiple Deprivation

- 5.6 The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation and is the combination of seven different domains as described below. The seven deprivation domains are as follows:
- Income: the proportion of the population experiencing a deprivation relating to low income. There are a further two subsets of this measure:
    - Income deprivation affecting children: the proportion of children aged 0-15 living in income deprived families.
    - Income deprivation affecting older people: the proportion of all adults aged 60 and above that experience income deprivation.
  - Employment: the proportion of the working-age population involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those who want to work but cannot.
  - Education, skills, and training: the lack of attainment and skills in the population.
  - Health deprivation and disability: this risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health.
  - Crime: the risk of personal and material victimisation at the local level.
  - Barriers to housing and services: the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services, split into 'geographical barriers' linked to the physical proximity and 'wider barriers' linked to access to housing.
  - Living environment: the quality of the local environment, categorised into 'indoors living environment' to measure the quality of housing and 'outdoors living environment' to measure indicators like air quality and road traffic accidents.
- 5.7 Lower super output areas (LSOAs)<sup>23</sup> are designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardized geographies intended to be as consistent as possible, with each LSOA containing

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<sup>21</sup> Nomis (no date) UK Census data for Finchampstead Parish can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>22</sup> Nomis (no date) 'Population estimates for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: mid-2020' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>23</sup> The Indices of Deprivation Explorer can be accessed [here](#).

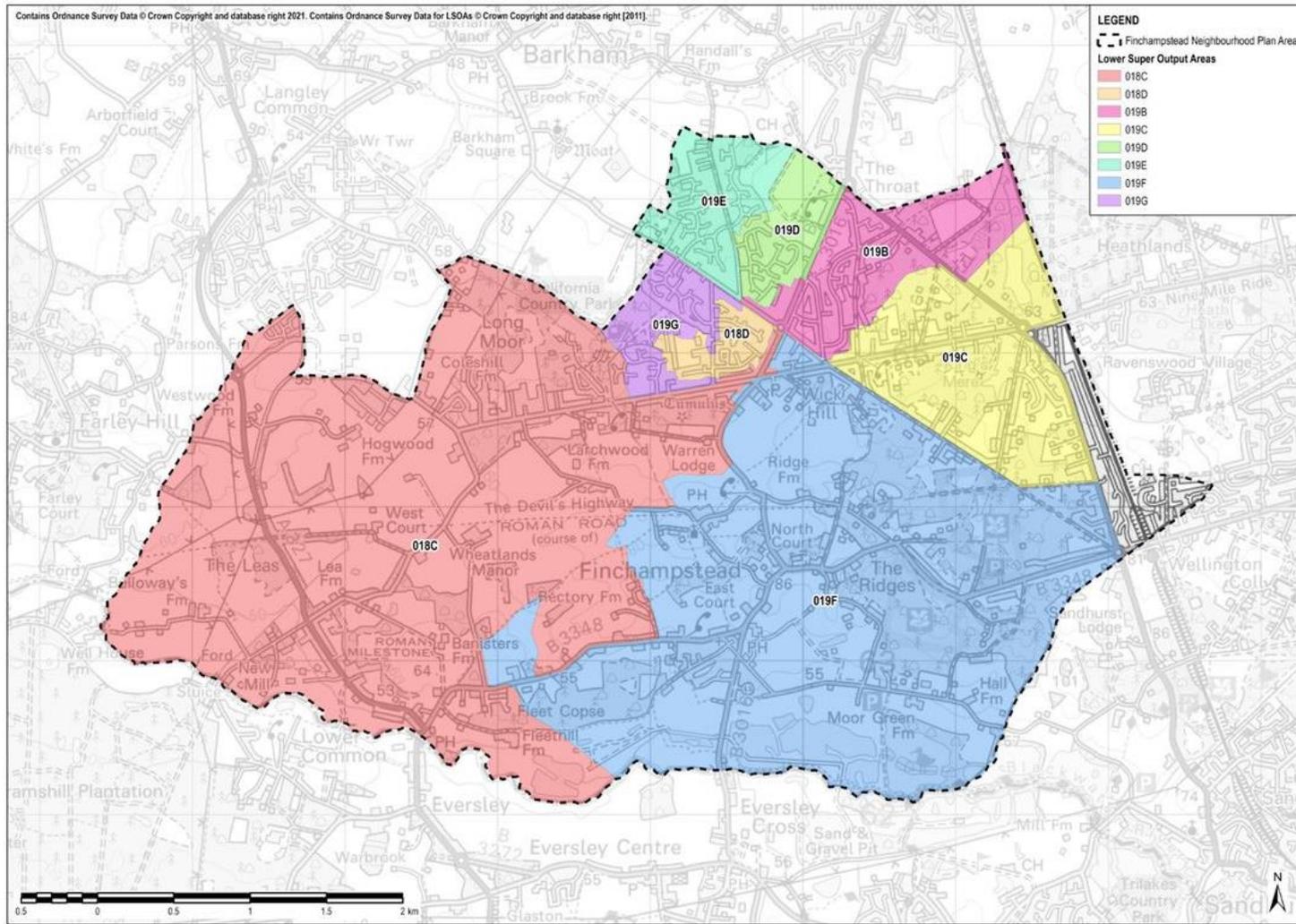
approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. In relation to the IMD 2019, LSOAs are ranked out of the 32,844 in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived.

- 5.8 In this respect, the FNP area is within eight LSOAs: Wokingham 018C, 018D, 019B, 019C, 019D, 019E, 019F, and 019G. These LSOAs fall in the Wokingham local authority district, which was ranked 316 most deprived out of 317 local authorities in 2019. Table 5-2 indicates which LSOAs in FP have IMD indicators in the top 50% most deprived (or higher).

**Table 5-2: LSOAs in Finchampstead Parish have IMD indicators in the top 50% most deprived (or higher)**

<b>IMD Indicator</b>	<b>LSOA in 50% most deprived (or higher)</b>
Income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wokingham 018D. Rank 8,982 of 32,844 LSOAs (30% most deprived)</li> </ul>
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wokingham 018D. Rank 7,947 of 32,844 LSOAs (30% most deprived)</li> </ul>
Education, skills, and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wokingham 018D. Rank 7,802 of 32,844 LSOAs (30% most deprived)</li> </ul>
Health deprivation and disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wokingham 018D. Rank 19,673 of 32,844 LSOAs (50% most deprived)</li> </ul>
Crime	-
Barriers to housing and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wokingham 018C. Rank 4,714 of 32,844 LSOAs (20% most deprived)</li> <li>Wokingham 019G. Rank 13,990 of 32,844 LSOAs (50% most deprived)</li> <li>Wokingham 019E. Rank 5,418 of 32,844 LSOAs (20% most deprived)</li> <li>Wokingham 019D. Rank 12,370 of 32,844 LSOAs (40% most deprived)</li> <li>Wokingham 019B. Rank 10,876 of 32,844 LSOAs (40% most deprived)</li> <li>Wokingham 019C. Rank 8,096 of 32,844 LSOAs (30% most deprived)</li> </ul>
Living environment	-

**Figure 5-1: LSOAs in Finchampstead Parish**



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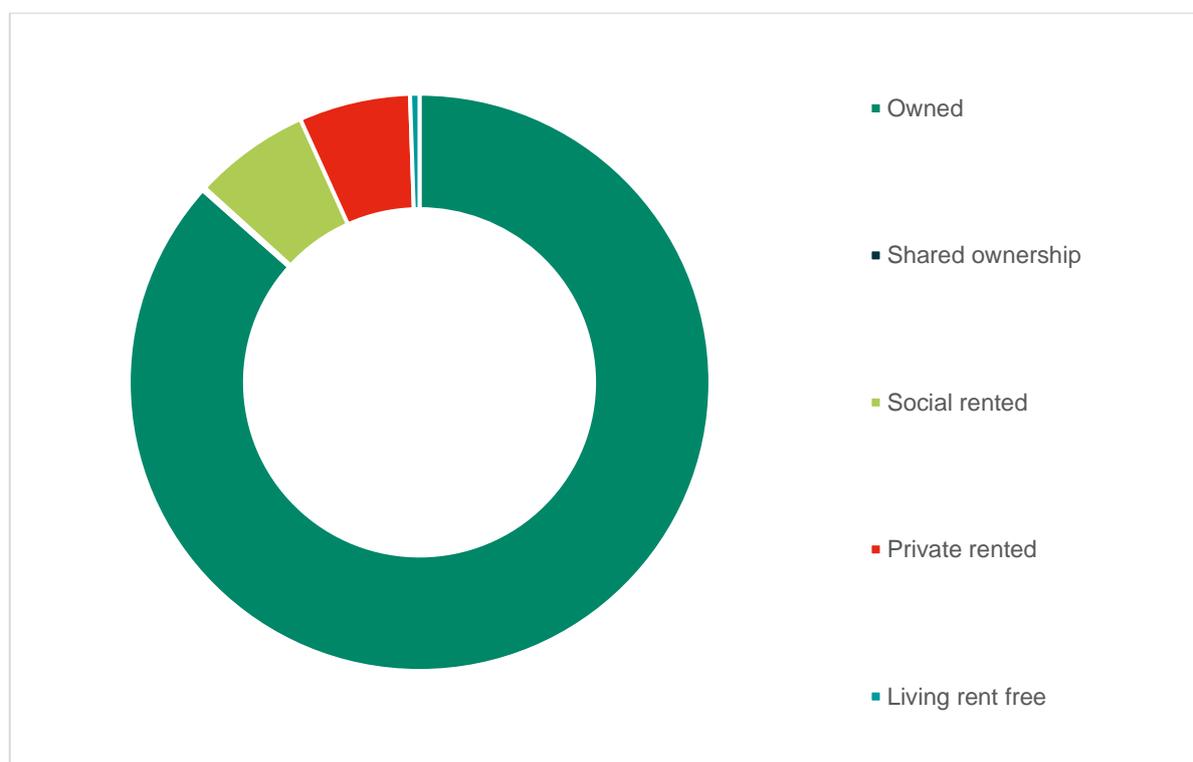
5.9 Overall Table 5-2 shows that most of the area within FP falls within the 50% least deprived (or lower) LSOAs in the country for most IMD indicators; however, it still highlights two key areas of concern within the Parish:

- LSOA Wokingham 018D - uniquely for FP - features in the 50% most (or higher) deprived LSOAs in the first four indicators listed on the table.
- 'Barriers to housing and services' is the only Parish-wide issue amongst the IMD indicators, with six of the eight LSOAs falling in the 50% most deprived.

## Housing tenure

5.10 Figure 5-2 presents the housing tenure mix in FP. According to 2011 Census data, 87% of FP's population own their house - of this, 41% own their house outright and 46% own their house with a mortgage or loan. Turning to renting tenures, 7% of the population rent socially and 6% rent privately. A further 1% of the population live rent free. Shared ownership, the middle ground between renting and ownership tenures, account for 1% of the population.

**Figure 5-2: Tenure by household composition in 2011**



## Community assets and infrastructure

5.11 An overview of the services and facilities within FP is provided below:<sup>24, 25</sup>

- One allotment site, located off Longwater Road. It is expected that at least two new sites will be created on the Arborfield development.
- California Country Park (CCP) – a country park with a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR). CCP also has a

<sup>24</sup> Finchampstead Parish Council (no date) Amenities can be accessed in the 'Local Info' tab [here](#).

<sup>25</sup> The examination of the services, facilities and amenities was conducted via a high-level Google maps search.

café, play area, and paddling pool. There are also holiday chalets available to rent at CCP.

- Finchampstead Ridges – a local green area for walking. The site is owned by the National Trust.
- Seven play areas, including one in CCP. Most of these are in northern Finchampstead Village.
- Finchampstead Sports Club – offering football and cricket facilities.
- Four community halls – California Ratepayers Hall/ FBC Centre/ Memorial Hall/ St James Church Centre.
- Health services, including Finchampstead Practice and Nine Mile Ride Dental Practice.
- One supermarket (Co-op) and one convenience store (One Stop).
- Small businesses including independent shops.
- Several nurseries and primary schools.
- Heritage Family Naturalist Club.
- Churches.
- Pubs, restaurants, and cafes.

## Green infrastructure networks

5.12 Access to gardens, parks, woodlands, and rivers have played a huge part in helping people through the pandemic. Almost nine in ten adults surveyed by Natural England reported that being in nature makes them feel happy and nearly three quarters of adults were concerned about biodiversity loss in England.<sup>26</sup>

5.13 Within FP, green spaces include:

- Allotments.
- California Country Park.
- Finchampstead Ridges.

## Future baseline

5.14 As the population of FP increases and ages, there is likely to be increasing pressure on services. Although the Parish is well equipped with healthcare infrastructure and community amenities, this highlights the need to support the retention of these existing services in the area. This includes open green space, which has been increasingly used and valued through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. These factors are more likely to be appropriately considered and addressed through planned development rather than unplanned development.

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<sup>26</sup> Natural England (2020) People and Nature survey can be accessed [here](#).

- 5.15 The suitability and affordability of housing for local requirements depends on the implementation of appropriate housing policies throughout FP. Unplanned development may have wider implications in terms of transport and access to infrastructure, or the natural environment.
- 5.16 The COVID-19 pandemic has also changed the way people work and shop. For many people, working from home is likely to continue to form part of a more flexible approach. The effects of increased levels of home working are further discussed under the 'transportation' SEA theme in Chapter 9.

## Key issues

- 5.17 Considering the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues are identified in relation to community wellbeing:
- The population is steadily increasing, and there is a need to identify a land supply for future housing growth as part of planned and coordinated development. Planning policies can also support development that delivers a range of housing types, tenures, and sizes, to meet the varying needs of residents.
  - Building on the previous point, the 2019 IMD indicates that there are strong barriers to housing experienced in most of the Parish. Therefore, the FNP should seek to reduce the barriers to housing, for example, through Affordable Housing policies.
  - The IMD also highlights one particular area in the Parish, Wokingham 018D, that can be seen as a pocket of deprivation towards the indicators of: income; employment; education, skills, and training; and health deprivation and disability. As such, the FNP should give particular attention to Wokingham 018D as a focus area for support from community wellbeing policies.
  - As the requirements of the working population continue to change, there is likely to be a greater need for adaptable dwellings that can accommodate flexible working practices which might include co-working facilities or hubs.

## Proposed SEA objective

5.18 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective:

SEA topic	SEA objective
Community wellbeing	Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, reducing deprivation, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities.

5.19 Supporting assessment questions include (will the option/proposal...):

- Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality and 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?
- Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people?
- Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities?
- Facilitate green infrastructure enhancements?
- Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction?
- Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing residents?

## 6. Historic environment

### Overview

6.1 This chapter presents the policy context and baseline summary in relation to the SEA topic of historic environment. The topic focuses on designated and non-designated assets, the setting, special qualities, and significance of heritage assets, locally important heritage features, and the historic character of the neighbourhood area. This information is used to identify key issues (both constraints and opportunities) before proposing a relevant SEA objective and supporting assessment questions.

### Policy context

6.2 Table 6-1 below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

**Table 6-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to the historic environment**

Document title	Year of publication
<a href="#">National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</a>	2021
<a href="#">The National Design Guide</a>	2019
<a href="#">National Model Design Code</a>	2021
<a href="#">Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal Designation and Management</a>	2019
<a href="#">Historic England Advice Note 3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans</a>	2015
<a href="#">Historic England Advice Note 8: Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)</a>	2016
<a href="#">Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning: The Setting of Heritage Assets</a>	2017
<a href="#">Historic England Heritage and Climate Change</a>	2022
<a href="#">A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</a>	2018
<a href="#">Wokingham Borough Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CSDP)</a>	2010
<a href="#">Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD)</a>	2014
<a href="#">Local Plan Update</a>	Emerging Local Plan

6.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The key principles for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment are as follows:
  - The historic environment is a shared resource.
  - Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment.

- Understanding the significance of places is vital.
- Important places should be managed to sustain their values.
- Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent, and consistent; and
- Documenting and learning from decisions is essential.<sup>27</sup>
- The significance of a place is the crucial element that supports the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Significance is the collective term for the sum of all the heritage values attached to a place, no matter what form the place takes. This means a singular building, an archaeological site, or a larger historic area, such as a whole village or landscape, can be important.
- The FNP will need to consider the principles set out in the NPPF, which seek to conserve and enhance historic environment assets in a way that compliments and works with their significance. The NPPF pursues planning policies and decisions that are understanding to local character and history without preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation and change. The NPPF supports the use of area-based character assessments, design guides and codes, and masterplans to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places.
- The NPPF indicates proposed plans should ensure the design of streets, parking areas and other transport elements reflect current national guidance including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. Design codes can set out a necessary level of detail in sensitive locations. In the case of the historic environment, they can indicate specific ways to maintain local character.
- The 25 Year Environment Plan and the National Design Guide recognise and reiterate the role of the historic environment in supporting healthy and thriving ecosystems, landscapes, and cultural values. Of note in the 25 Year Environment Plan is 'Goal 6: Enhanced beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment'.
- Historic England's Advice Notes provide further guidance on the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Of relevance for the FNP is the emphasis on the importance of:
  - Understanding the different types of special architectural and historic interest that underpin designations and the consideration of how settings and/ or views contribute to the significance of heritage assets.
  - Recognising the value of implementing controls through neighbourhood development plans, conservation area appraisals and management plans; and
  - Appropriate evidence gathering, including the clear identification of any issues that threaten an area, asset character, or appearance that merit the introduction of management measures.
- Historic England have recently published a Heritage and Climate Change strategy in response to the climate crisis. The strategy sets out a vision and

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<sup>27</sup> Historic England (2008) 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment' can be accessed [here](#).

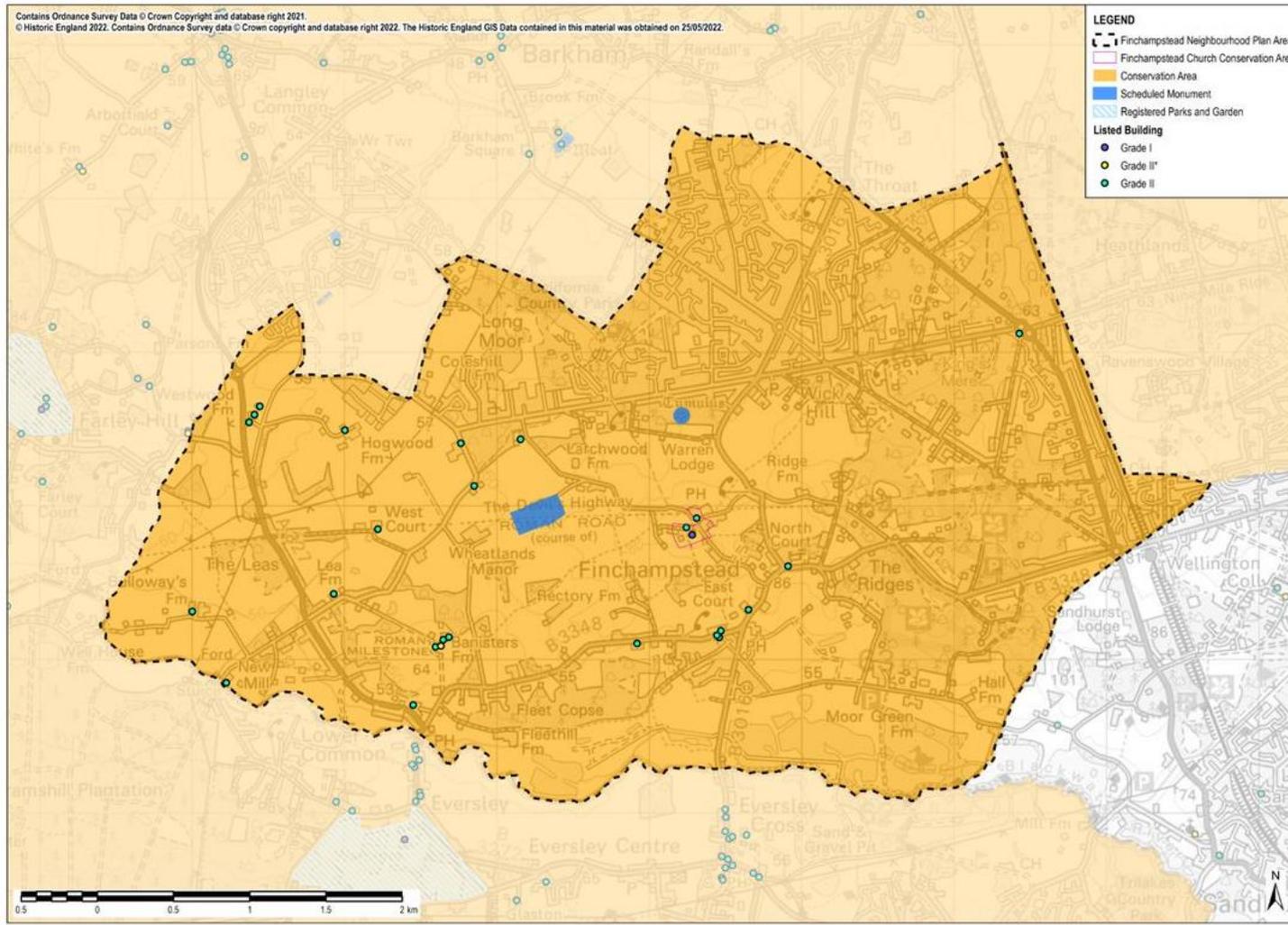
aims under the themes mitigation (achieving net zero), managing risks (understanding the threats of climate change) and adaptation (preparing for a changing climate), as well as how these will be achieved through actions.

- The FNP will also need to consider the relevant policies outlined in the CSDP relevant to historic environment, including, but not limited to, CP1 Sustainable development and CP3 General Principles for development.
- The MDD provides further detail on the policies in the CSDP; consequently, the FNP will also need to consider policies outlined in the MDD, including, but not limited to TB24 Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas) and TB25 Archaeology.
- Finally, at the neighbourhood level, FNP will need to consider the relevant priorities outlined in the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2024, including, but not limited to, IRS3 Protection and enhancement of the historic character of the area and IRS4 Implement strategy to preserve the identity of Finchampstead parish through informal green spaces.

## Baseline summary

- 6.4 Figure 6.1 indicates the position of heritage assets within and in proximity to the neighbourhood area.

**Figure 6.1 Designated heritage assets within and in proximity to the neighbourhood plan area**



## Listed buildings

- 6.5 Listed buildings are nationally designated buildings that are protected through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.<sup>28</sup> According to the National Heritage List for England provided by Historic England,<sup>29</sup> there are 26 listed buildings in the FNP area: one Grade I, one Grade II\*, and 24 Grade II.
- 6.6 The singular Grade I listed building is the Church of St James (Historic England number: 1118084). Dating from the C12 (with alterations and extensions in C14, C15, C16, C18, C19 and early C20), the building was designated in 1967 and comprises of an apsidal chancel, nave, chapel, porch and a tower.<sup>30</sup>

## Scheduled monuments

- 6.7 The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)<sup>31</sup> allows for the investigation, presentation, and recording of matters of archaeological or historical interest, making provision for the regulation of operations or activities that could affect ancient monuments and archaeological areas. Scheduled monuments are nationally designated sites which are protected under this legislation. According to the National Heritage List for England, there are two scheduled monuments in FP:
- 'Roman buildings E of Wheatlands Manor', located approximately 300m west of White Horse Lane (Historic England number: 1006968).<sup>32</sup>
  - 'Bell barrow 160m north-west of Warren Lodge', located behind houses on the south side of Nine Mile Ride (Historic England number: 1013244).<sup>33</sup>

## Conservation areas

- 6.8 Conservation areas are designated due to their special architectural and historic interest.<sup>34</sup> Conservation area appraisals are a tool to demonstrate an area's special interest, detailing the reasons for the designation and providing a greater understanding and articulation of the area's character. Ideally, appraisals should be regularly reviewed as part of the management of the conservation area and can form a management plan.
- 6.9 The Finchampstead Church Conservation Area was designated in 1993. The special interest that justifies the designation of this conservation area includes: St James Church, the mound on which the Church sits (thought to be medieval or Roman), and the 'Devils Highway' (a Roman Road).<sup>35</sup> In the absence of a conservation area appraisal / management plan, it is currently not possible to determine the special character and management priorities for this area, which represents a gap in the existing baseline data.

<sup>28</sup> UK Government (1990) 'Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>29</sup> Historic England (no date) 'National Heritage List for England – Search the List – Advanced Search' can be accessed [here](#). Select which heritage categories you'd like to view and enter the parish name into the Parish (Civil/Non-Civil) search bar and press the search button at the bottom of the page.

<sup>30</sup> Historic England (no date) 'Official List Entry – CHURCH OF ST JAMES' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>31</sup> UK Government (1979) 'Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>32</sup> Historic England (no date) 'Roman buildings E of Wheatlands Manor' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>33</sup> Historic England (no date) 'Bell barrow 160m north-west of Warren Lodge' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>34</sup> Historic England (2017) 'Conservation Areas' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>35</sup> Finchampstead Parish Council (no date) 'Conservation Area' can be accessed [here](#).

## Locally important heritage features

- 6.10 It is noted that not all of neighbourhood area's historic environment features are subject to statutory designations and non-designated features contribute a large part of what people come into contact with on a day to day basis. Although not designated, many buildings and areas are of historic interest and are important to local communities.
- 6.11 Wokingham Borough Council provide a List of Buildings of Traditional Local Character<sup>36</sup>. The list includes one building in Finchampstead Parish: 'Poor Ridge Cottage', located on Dell Road (Postcode: RG40 3SL).
- 6.12 The Berkshire Archaeology Historic Environment Record (HER) identifies important and distinctive structures or features that positively contribute to the local sense of place and distinctiveness of the county. Following a high-level review of the HER via the Heritage Gateway,<sup>37</sup> it is concluded that there are 113 local records within FP covering a range of built and archaeological assets spanning a range of periods, including more recent world-war two features.

## Heritage at risk

- 6.13 Since 2008, Historic England has produced an annual Heritage at Risk Register, which highlights historic environment assets that are seen to be 'at risk'. According to the 2021 Heritage at Risk Register for the London and South East,<sup>38</sup> there are no heritage assets within FP that are considered to be at risk.
- 6.14 However, it is important to recognise that Heritage at Risk registers for areas outside of London do not contain information about the status of Grade II listed buildings. As such, it is currently not possible to determine whether any of the Grade II listed buildings within FP are at risk.
- 6.15 Encouraging and facilitating improvements to the condition of heritage assets within FP is recognised as an opportunity for the FNP.

## Future baseline

- 6.16 New development in FP has the potential to impact on the fabric and setting of heritage assets, for example, through inappropriate design and layout. It should be noted, however, that existing historic environment designations offer a degree of protection to heritage assets and their settings. Additionally, the planning system has in place tools to offer a degree of protection to heritage assets and their settings, reducing the potential impacts of development to some degree.
- 6.17 It is recognised that planning for development could provide opportunities for positive effects for the historic environment. This may include the production of a Conservation Area Appraisal for FP, public realm and access improvements, or opportunities to better reveal the significance of an asset or increase enjoyment of the historic environment.

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<sup>36</sup> Wokingham Borough Council (2017) 'List of Buildings of Traditional Local Character' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>37</sup> Heritage Gateway (2021) 'More Detailed Search' can be accessed [here](#). Open the link, change the tab from 'map' to 'admin location' and type Finchampstead into the administrative location search bar and press the search button at the bottom of the page.

<sup>38</sup> Historic England (2021) 'Heritage at Risk Register: London & South East' can be accessed [here](#).

## Key issues

6.18 Considering the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues are identified in relation to historic environment:

- With a wealth of both designated and non-designated heritage assets within and surrounding FP (especially in the western half of the Parish), development of the FNP provides an opportunity to deliver a spatial strategy that avoids or minimises impacts for the historic environment.
- Development of the FNP provides an opportunity to develop the existing evidence base in relation to the historic environment.
- During the subsequent stages of the SEA process, the Berkshire Archaeology HER will need to be reviewed in greater detail to determine the potential impacts of the FNP on non-designated features.

## Proposed SEA objective

6.19 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective:

SEA topic	SEA objective
Historic environment	Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.

6.20 Supporting assessment questions include (will the option/proposal...):

- Conserve and/ or enhance the significance of buildings and structures of architectural and/or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their setting?
- Restore and/ or conserve the identified heritage asset 'at risk'? And/ or identify whether any Grade II listed buildings within FP are deemed at risk, and address this appropriately?
- Conserve and enhance the special interest, character, and appearance of the Finchampstead Church Conservation Area and its setting?
- Conserve and enhance local diversity and character, archaeology, and historic landscapes?
- Support access to and the interpretation and understanding of the historic environment?
- Support the undertaking of archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies?

# 7. Land, soil, and water resources

## Overview

7.1 This chapter presents the policy context and baseline summary in relation to the SEA topics of land, soil, and water resources. The topic focuses on quality of agricultural land, extent of mineral resources, and water resources and water quality. This information is used to identify key issues (both constraints and opportunities) before proposing relevant SEA objectives and supporting assessment questions.

## Policy context

7.2 Table 7-1 below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

**Table 7-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to the historic environment**

Document title	Year of publication
<a href="#">National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</a>	2021
<a href="#">A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</a>	2018
<a href="#">Waste Management Plan for England</a>	2013
<a href="#">Future Water: The Government's water strategy for England</a>	2011
<a href="#">Water for Life</a>	2011
<a href="#">Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England</a>	2009
<a href="#">Thames Water – Water Resource Management Plan</a>	2019
<a href="#">South East Water – Water Resource Management Plan</a>	2019
<a href="#">Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire</a>	2001
<a href="#">Joint Central and Eastern Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan</a>	In development – expected 2022/2023
<a href="#">Wokingham Borough Council Waste Strategy</a>	In development – expected 2023
<a href="#">Wokingham Borough Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CSDP)</a>	2010
<a href="#">Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD)</a>	2014
<a href="#">Local Plan Update</a>	Emerging Local Plan

7.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summaries below:

- The FNP will need to consider the principles outlined in the NPPF which pursue the protection of high-quality soil resources and the improvement of the water environment. It recognises the wider benefits of natural capital and the need to consider the long-term implications of climate change and ways in which to build resilience in this respect. The NPPF encourages efficient land use, utilising brownfield land opportunities and land

remediation schemes where appropriate and delivering environmental gains.

- The 25 Year Environment Plan discusses measures to improve soil quality, restore and protect peatlands, use water more sustainably, reduce pollution, maximise resource efficiency and minimise environmental impacts. Of note is 'Chapter 1: Using and managing land sustainably', 'Chapter 4: Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste', 'Goal 2: Clean and plentiful water', 'Goal 5: Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently' and 'Goal 8: Minimising waste'.
- Future Water: The Government's water strategy for England sets out how the water sector will look by 2030 for both people and wildlife. The vision also includes valuing and protecting water resources and delivering water to customers in a fair, affordable, and cost-reflective manner. Water for Life highlights the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector. It details the measures that will be deployed to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources.
- The Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England policy paper seeks to ensure that all soils in England will be managed sustainably and degradation threats minimised successfully by 2030. This policy paper also seeks to secure sustainable and resilient water resources in addition to the improvement in waterbody quality. The Waste Management Plan for England identifies measures being taken to move towards a zero-waste economy, which includes national waste plan which seeks to identify measures being taken to move towards a circular economy in which resources are kept in use for longer. To do this, there needs to be a maximisation in the value of resources used and a minimisation in the waste created.
- FP has two different water suppliers: Bristol Water for water services and Wessex Water for sewerage services. Both companies have produced a Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP), outlining the issues their services face, like climate change and supply problems, and outline what measures will be taken to overcome these.
- There is currently no active minerals and waste plan for Wokingham Borough. The most recent plan to cover these topics was the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire (2001), which set out the local planning authorities' broad strategy for mineral working and related development for the period of 2001 – 2006. A new minerals and waste plan, the Joint Central and Eastern Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, is currently being produced. At the time of writing, the Plan has recently undergone consultation on the Main Modifications, and is now awaiting a review from the Inspectors.
- The FNP will also need to consider the relevant policies outlined in the CSDP relevant to historic environment, including, but not limited to, CP1 Sustainable development.
- The MDD provides further detail on the policies in the CSDP; consequently, the FNP will also need to consider policies outlined in the MDD, including, but not limited to CC04 Sustainable Design and Construction.

- Finally, at the neighbourhood level, FNP will need to consider the relevant priorities outlined in the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2024, including, but not limited to, ES1 Environmental standards for residential development.

## Baseline summary

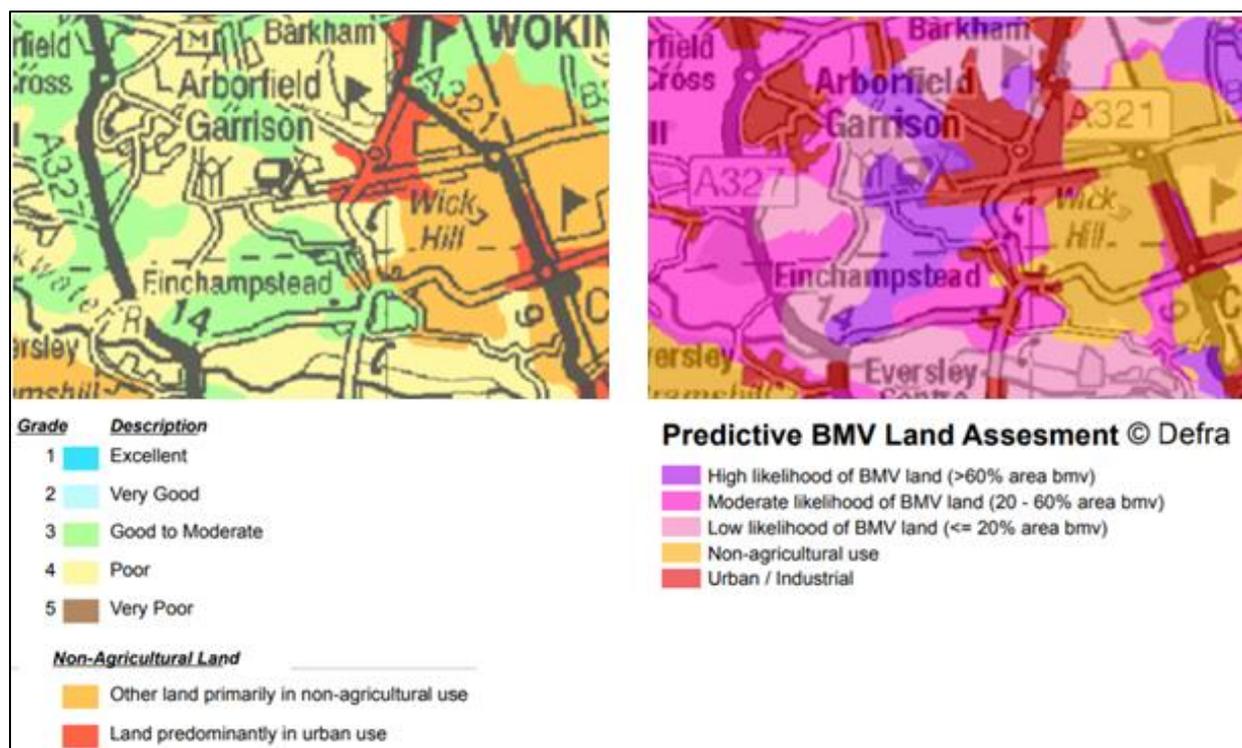
### Soil resources

- 7.4 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (plus 'non-agricultural land' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the 'best and most versatile' (BMV) land and Grades 3b to 5 of poorer quality. In this context, there is a need to avoid loss of higher quality BMV agricultural land.
- 7.5 As shown in the left-hand image in Figure 7-1, FP can be split in two, with regards to the ALC. On one hand, the western half of FP is mostly underlain by a mixture of 'Good to Moderate' and 'Poor' agricultural land. On the other hand, the eastern half of FP is mostly underlain by the two 'Non-Agricultural Land' classifications.<sup>39</sup>
- 7.6 It should be noted that in the absence of a detailed assessment, it is not possible to determine whether the Grade 3 land is Grade 3a (best and most versatile land) or Grade 3b (not best and most versatile land).
- 7.7 Figure 7-1 also presents the results of Natural England's 'Predictive Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land Assessment' for the South East region in the right-hand image.<sup>40</sup> It shows that FP includes a mix of areas with low, moderate, and high likelihood of BMV land, in addition to the urban/industrial areas.

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<sup>39</sup> Natural England (2010) 'Agricultural Land Classification Map London and the South East'. Available [here](#).

<sup>40</sup> Natural England (2017) 'Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land – Strategic scale map London and the South East' can be accessed [here](#).

**Figure 7-1: ALC and likelihood of BMV within the neighbourhood area**

## Mineral resources

7.8 Mineral resources are defined as natural concentrations of minerals or bodies of rock that have the potential to be of economic interest in the present or the future due to their inherent properties. As minerals are a non-renewable resource, minerals safeguarding is deployed as the process through which it is ensured that non-minerals development does not needlessly prevent the future extraction of mineral resources<sup>41</sup>.

7.9 According to the proposed Policies Map (June 2020)<sup>42</sup> within the upcoming Minerals and Waste Plan, proposed the following policies within FP:

- Two Preferred Waste Areas – both found in northern Finchampstead Village.
- Several designations of ‘Area of Search for a Sand and Gravel’ and ‘Sand and Gravel Safeguarded Resource’ – the whole of the Parish’s southern boundary is under these two designations, as well as two other locations close to southern Finchampstead Village.

## Water quality

7.10 FP is located within the Thames River Basin District. This is within the Loddon and Trib management catchment, and the Loddon operational catchment.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> UK Government (2014) Minerals guidance can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>42</sup> Hampshire County Council (no date) ‘SD02 - Policies Map - Hampshire Services’ can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>43</sup> Environment Agency (2022) ‘Loddon Operational Catchment’ can be accessed [here](#).

7.11 The River Blackwater is the main waterbody in the FP, with its course aligning with the Parish's southern border.<sup>44</sup> A small section of Barkham Brook also runs through the Parish.<sup>45</sup>

7.12 Both water bodies were awarded a moderate ecological classification in 2019 but failed the chemical classification for the same year due to the presence of priority hazardous substances:

- Perfluorooctane sulphonate (PFOS), Benzo(g-h-i)perylene, and Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDE) in River Blackwater. The source and activities contributing to the release of excess levels of PFOS and Benzo(g-h-i)perylene is currently pending investigation. The source and activities contributing to the release of excess levels of PBDE is currently awaiting classification, and no specific sector is known to be responsible.
- PBDE in Barkham Brook. The source and activities contributing to the release of excess levels of PBDE is currently awaiting classification, and no specific sector is known to be responsible.

7.13 Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) represent areas at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution, identifying rules in relation to the use of fertilisers and manures as well as the requirement to prevent water pollution from farming areas.<sup>46</sup> According to the interactive map<sup>47</sup> FP is within the Barkham Brook NVZ and Emm Brook NVZ.

7.14 Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) have been defined by the Environment Agency in England and Wales to protect groundwater sources such as wells, boreholes, and springs that are used for public drinking water supply.<sup>48</sup> FP is not covered by an SPZ.

## Future baseline

7.15 New development in FP has the potential to impact areas of BMV agricultural land. In this context there could potentially be opportunities to avoid developing Grade 3a agricultural land by directing development toward areas of Grade 3b or 4 land where this is available.

7.16 Future development has the potential to affect water quality and availability through increased consumption and pollution, wastewater discharges, water runoff and modification. Thames Water and South East Water are likely to maintain adequate water services over the FNP period; therefore, it will be important for new development to avoid negative impacts on water quality, and instead contribute to reducing consumption and improving efficiency.

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<sup>44</sup> Environment Agency (2022) 'Blackwater (Hawley to Whitewater confluence at Bramshill) Water Body' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>45</sup> Environment Agency (2022) 'Barkham Brook Water Body' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>46</sup> UK Government (2018) Nitrate vulnerable zones can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>47</sup> UK Government (2021) Nitrate vulnerable zone designations and appeals 2021 to 2024 can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>48</sup> UK Government (2017) 'Groundwater Protection' can be accessed [here](#).

## Key issues

7.17 Considering the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues are identified in relation to land, soil, and water resources:

- The provisional ALC data indicates that FP is underlain with significant areas of Grade 3 agricultural land. However, the data does not differentiate between Grade 3a and Grade 3b land. As a finite resource, Grade 3a (best and most versatile) should be protected where possible. Opportunities to investigate and identify more precise ALC data should be sought where possible.
- Development should avoid impacts to water quality for both watercourses that run through the neighbourhood area, in addition to the two NVZs that cover large areas of the Parish.
- The FNP should seek an appropriate spatial strategy which avoids conflict with the proposed Sand and Gravel Safeguarded Resource designations within the southern part of the Parish.

## Proposed SEA objective

7.18 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objectives:

SEA topic	SEA objective
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.

7.19 Supporting assessment questions include (will the option/proposal...):

- Promote the use of previously developed land?
- Identify and avoid the development of the best and most versatile agricultural 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?
- Protect NVZs in the neighbourhood area?

## 8. Landscape

### Overview

8.1 This chapter presents the policy context and baseline summary in relation to the SEA topic of landscape. The topic focuses on nationally protected landscapes, landscape character and quality, and visual amenity in the neighbourhood area. This information is used to identify key issues (both constraints and opportunities) before proposing a relevant SEA objective and supporting assessment questions.

### Policy context

8.2 Table 8-1 below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

**Table 8-1: Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to the landscape**

Document title	Year of publication
<a href="#">National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</a>	2021
<a href="#">National Model Design Code</a>	2021
<a href="#">The National Design Guide</a>	2019
<a href="#">A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</a>	2018
<a href="#">Wokingham Borough Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CSDP)</a>	2010
<a href="#">Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD)</a>	2014
<a href="#">Local Plan Update</a>	Emerging Local Plan

8.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The FNP should consider the principles outlined in the NPPF, which gives great weight to conserving and enhancing protected landscapes, landscape character, and scenic beauty. The scale and extent of development within these areas should be limited and development within their setting should be mindfully located and designed to avoid/minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.
- The NPPF also recognises the role of green infrastructure in landscape settings, as well as the positive contribution that land remediation can have on despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated, and unstable land.
- The 25 Year Environment Plan and National Design Guide outline the same aims as one another, focusing on creating a cleaner, greener country that puts the environment first and celebrates the variety of natural landscapes and habitats present in the UK. Design is focused on creating beautiful, enduring, and successful places, which respond to local character and provide a network of high quality and green open spaces. Of note is 'Chapter 2: Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes' and 'Goal 6: Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment'.

- The National Model Design Code states that all design codes should include a landscape and open space strategy that incorporates the existing natural features and new structural elements. It recognises that landscapes can be major drivers in the design process.
- The FNP will also need to consider the relevant policies outlined in the CSDP relevant to landscape, including, but not limited to, CP3 General Principles for development.
- The MDD provides further detail on the policies in the CSDP; consequently, the FNP will also need to consider policies outlined in the MDD, including, but not limited to, TB21 Landscape Character and TB22 Sites of Urban Landscape Value.
- Finally, at the neighbourhood level, FNP will need to consider the relevant priorities outlined in the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2024, including, but not limited to, IRS2 Protection of Outstanding views and D2 Preserving the rural culture of the parish.

## Baseline summary

### Nationally protected landscapes

- 8.4 There is no National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or Green Belt within the neighbourhood area. However, the Metropolitan Green Belt surrounding London is approximately 8 kilometres east of Finchampstead, and in this respect, requirements for development within the wider area may be concentrated in the land immediately outside the Metropolitan Green Belt, which may include the neighbourhood area.

### National character areas

- 8.5 National Character Areas (NCAs) are areas that share similar landscape characteristics, and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries. This makes them valuable in creating decision-making frameworks for the natural environment.
- 8.6 The total area of FP is located within the Thames Basin Heaths (129) NCA.
- 8.7 Thames Basin Heaths NCA stretches westwards from Weybridge in Surrey to the countryside around Newbury in Berkshire. The London Metropolitan Greenbelt incorporates countryside around Chobham and the rivers Wey and Mole. West of the greenbelt, 20th-century development has given rise to large conurbations including Camberley and the 'new town' of Bracknell. Further from London, in the west, the settlement pattern is a mix of dispersed hamlets, farmsteads and houses interspersed with villages, many of medieval origin. Vestiges of the historic royal hunting forests of Bagshot, Eversley, Pamber and Windsor comprise parkland, ancient woodland, and small to medium-sized fields of semi-natural grassland. Features include ancient hedgerows and veteran trees, and there are parklands at The Vyne and Highclere Castle<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup> Natural England (2014) 'NCA Profile:129 Thames Basin Heaths (NE530)' can be accessed [here](#).

## Local landscape and townscape character

- 8.8 Landscape and townscape character play an important role in understanding the relationship between people and place and identifying recognisable and distinct patterns in the landscape which make one area different from another. Landscape and townscape character assessments can both help identify the value of landscapes and townscapes, in terms of visual and amenity value.
- 8.9 According to the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment 2019, FP lies within character areas J2 (Arborfield and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay), M1 (Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands), M2 (Finchampstead Ridges Forested and Settled Sands), and N2 (Finchampstead Pastoral Sandy Lowland)<sup>50</sup>.

**Table 8-2: Characteristics of the four Local Character Areas covering Finchampstead Parish<sup>51</sup>**

<b>J2 (Arborfield and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay)</b>	<b>M1 (Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands)</b>	<b>M2 (Finchampstead Ridges Forested and Settled Sands)</b>	<b>N2 (Finchampstead Pastoral Sandy Lowland)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large area of rural farmland interspersed with a fairly dense network of mixed traditional and modern settlements.</li> <li>• Predominantly flat to gently shelving landform over a simple Clay geology with localised areas of sandy and terrace deposits.</li> <li>• Arable farming predominates with pasture on slightly high ground and paddocks near settlement.</li> <li>• Large geometric fields with remnants of irregular early in closure and Parliamentary fields on former commons.</li> <li>• Declining hedgerow structure showing gaps in many places</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An elevated landscape comprising a shelving plateau, underlain by acidic sands strongly influencing land cover and ecological character.</li> <li>• A landscape dominated by interconnected forestry and woodland.</li> <li>• Large areas for public recreation space including California Country Park, Forestry Commission land and golf courses.</li> <li>• A predominant absence of farmland.</li> <li>• A strong sense of enclosure and disorientation afforded by the often continuous swathes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An elevated landscape comprising a distinctive undulating ridgeline, underlain by acidic sands influencing both land cover and ecology.</li> <li>• Elevated topography allows extensive views into Surrey and Hampshire.</li> <li>• Large areas of mixed forest and deciduous forest and important heathland, much owned by the National Trust, giving a natural setting and of habitat value.</li> <li>• A landscape of high public accessibility and recreational use.</li> <li>• There is a predominant absence of farmland within the landscape.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gently to steeply undulating landform culminating in a prominent ridgeline to the north with views to the surrounding lowlands.</li> <li>• Poor soil as a result of underlying sandy formations including Bagshot Beds, Camberley Sand Formation and Windlesham Formation with areas of London Clay resulting in a predominantly pastoral landscape.</li> <li>• Mixed pastoral landscape of open small and medium sized fields divided by post and wire or timber fences with grazing sheep, horses and cattle, following a variety of enclosure patterns.</li> </ul>

<sup>50</sup> Wokingham Borough Council (2019) 'Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment'. Part 1 can be accessed [here](#). Part 2 can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>51</sup> Wokingham Borough Council (2019) 'Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment'. Part 1 can be accessed [here](#). Part 2 can be accessed [here](#).

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>or replaced by fences.</li> <li>• Hedgerow trees in field boundaries and particularly along roads, shelterbelts and small farm woods are an important element in maintaining rural character.</li> <li>• Presence of subtle wooded shallow 'valleys' around the Barkham Brook known as 'the Coombes' extending to character area L1.</li> <li>• Small ponds and moated sites.</li> <li>• Older scattered settlement of farms, hamlets and small nucleated villages including Barkham and Arborfield Cross with traditional character and use of vernacular materials including timber framing and clay tiles.</li> <li>• Modern development varies widely with no consistent style or form, including southern edge of Wokingham and industrial estate.</li> <li>• Arborfield Garrison and Barracks with distinctive institutional military buildings within security fencing and housing estates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>of large coniferous woodland mass.</li> <li>• Underlying, heathland character often typifying areas of woodland clearing such as at California Park.</li> <li>• A landscape of good public accessibility.</li> <li>• Long straight roads i.e. Nine Mile Ride projecting strong linear character to the landscape. Linear rides and private roads are also a feature.</li> <li>• Strong settlement character – with residential properties of post war and modern suburban character in a variety of styles, largely aligning the long linear rides.</li> <li>• Rich wildlife habitats associated with the acidic soils including numerous large lakes and bogs – containing notable and regionally restricted species.</li> <li>• A landscape offering a sense of remoteness and solitude.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strong linear character evoked by the presence of long straight roads (including the dramatic Wellingtonia Avenue) originating from former forest rides.</li> <li>• Long distance southerly views to the Blackwater Valley (A3) and into Surrey can be gained from the ridgeline.</li> <li>• Presence of wetlands of acidic character and of ecological significance.</li> <li>• Low-density detached houses enclosed and screened within large gardens containing retained woodland.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrubby and overgrown shelterbelts, roadside belts, small farm woods and scattered remnant hedgerow trees enhancing the wooded context created by adjoining Forested and Settled Sands.</li> <li>• Quiet rural landscape with an unobtrusive network of rural roads bordered by grassy banks with bracken, furze and ash avenues.</li> <li>• Drainage ditches and small brooks and drainage channels.</li> <li>• Dispersed settlement pattern excepting the nucleated edge-of-river floodplain village settlement of Finchampstead and small clusters of buildings with characteristic vernacular influences including brick, timber frame and thatch.</li> <li>• Farmsteads and manors located on elevated areas and following the route of the Devil's Highway former Roman Road creating an illusion of parkland.</li> <li>• Barrows and former Roman villa complex (SAM).</li> <li>• Dense network of public footpaths and bridleways.</li> </ul>
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## Tree preservation orders

8.10 A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) gives legal protection to high value trees or woodland. Once a TPO is in force, it becomes an offence to work on or cut down the tree without permission. Furthermore, all trees in conservation areas

are protected from unnecessary felling or lopping. WBC requires six weeks in advance of any such work through the standard planning application process due to the presence of the Finchampstead Church Conservation Area.

- 8.11 Failure to apply and to cause unlawful works to TPOs and trees in conservation areas is an offence and can result in fines of up to £20,000.<sup>52</sup>
- 8.12 FP has many TPOs within its boundaries. Higher concentrations of TPOs can be found close to Lower Wokingham Road, Nine Mile Ride, and A327 – covering the norther, eastern, and western edges of the neighbourhood area. There are relatively fewer TPOs in the central and southern area of the parish. These can all be viewed via the WBC Protected Tree Map<sup>53</sup>.

## Visual amenity

- 8.13 It is useful to note that views of and across FP are also an important factor to consider in the planning process, as the scale, height, and mass of development can ultimately impact on important views without appropriate assessment. Changes like development and landscape change can see these important views and vistas degraded overtime.

## Future baseline

- 8.14 New development has the potential to lead to small, incremental, but cumulative changes in landscape and townscape character and quality within the FNP area. This includes the loss or damage of features and areas with an important visual amenity value. The FNP will help guide development so that it does not negatively impact upon the landscape and townscape features which contribute to the distinctive character of the area.
- 8.15 It should be noted that the planning system has tools in place to offer a degree of protection to the landscape; therefore, new development will not necessarily result in harm. Furthermore, locally distinctive landscape and townscape features, characteristics and special qualities can be protected, managed, and enhanced through appropriate planning policies and the neighbourhood plan. It is further recognised that new development that is appropriately designed and landscape led could support the area's intrinsic landscape character and quality. This could include regeneration that improves the village setting, delivering green infrastructure improvements and/ or new recreational opportunities and the identification and/ or enhanced framing of key views.

## Key issues

- 8.16 Considering the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues are identified in relation to landscape:
- There are a range of landscape features present within FP which contribute to the character and quality of the landscape. These features should be protected and enhanced where possible through the plan process, including the identification of an appropriate, low-impact spatial strategy.

<sup>52</sup> Wokingham Borough Council (no date) 'Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>53</sup> Wokingham Borough Council (no date) 'Protected Tree Map' can be accessed [here](#).

## Proposed SEA objective

8.17 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective:

SEA topic	SEA objective
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape and townscape.

8.18 Supporting assessment questions include (will the option/proposal...):

- Protect and enhance the local landscape and townscape character, key sensitivities and features, and quality of place?
- Conserve and enhance local identity, diversity, and settlement character?
- Protect visual amenity and locally important views in the FNP area?
- Support the integrity of the landscape in FP in accordance with the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment?

# 9. Transportation

## Overview

9.1 This chapter presents the policy context and baseline summary in relation to the SEA topic of transport. The topic focuses on transport infrastructure, transport use, traffic flows and congestion, accessibility, and active travel opportunities within and surrounding the neighbourhood area. This information is used to identify key issues (both constraints and opportunities) before proposing a relevant SEA objective and supporting assessment questions.

## Policy context

9.2 Table 9-1 below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

**Table 9-1: Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to transportation and movement**

Document title	Year of publication
<a href="#">National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</a>	2021
<a href="#">Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain</a>	2021
<a href="#">Transport Investment Strategy</a>	2017
<a href="#">Wokingham Borough Council Local Transport Plan</a>	2011
<a href="#">Wokingham Borough Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CSDP)</a>	2010
<a href="#">Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD)</a>	2014
<a href="#">Local Plan Update</a>	Emerging Local Plan

9.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The FNP will need to consider the principles outlined in the NPPF, which influence plans and development proposals to ensure they consider transport issues from the earliest stages, address any known issues, and maximise opportunities to increase accessibility to sustainable transport. Larger developments are expected to limit the need to travel and offer a genuine choice of transport modes. However, it is recognised that sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural environments.
- Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain sets out how the UK government will deliver emission reductions and associated benefits in the country; presenting the path to net-zero transport in the UK and the commitments and actions necessary to make progress on this path.
- The Transport Investment Strategy sets out investment priorities to improve the connectivity, effectiveness and reliability of transport network whilst simultaneously reducing impacts on the natural environment. Furthermore, the document places great emphasis on making cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of longer journeys.

- Wokingham Borough Council Local Transport Plan 3 sets out the borough's transport policy up to 2026, outlining how the borough council will help communities to be more active and travel in a healthy, sustainable way. This document is currently being revised, with the fourth version currently in consultation stages.
- The FNP will also need to consider the relevant policies outlined in the CSDP relevant to transport, including, but not limited to, CP1 Sustainable development and CP6 Managing Travel Demand.
- The MDD provides further detail on the policies in the CSDP; consequently, the FNP will also need to consider policies outlined in the MDD, including, but not limited to, CC08 Safeguarding alignments of the Strategic Transport Network & Road Infrastructure and TB16 Development for Town Centre Uses.
- Finally, at the neighbourhood level, FNP will need to consider the relevant priorities outlined in the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2024, including, but not limited to, ES1 Environmental standards for residential development and GA2 Reduction in car usage with safe personal mobility options.

## Baseline summary

### Rail network

- 9.4 There are no railway stations within the neighbourhood area. Crowthorne Station can be found adjacent to FP's eastern boundary; although, for residents of the Parish, this is only accessible by private transport. The closest train station accessible by public transport is Wokingham Station, a 15–20-minute bus ride from Finchampstead.<sup>54</sup>
- 9.5 Crowthorne Station is approximately 3km east from northern Finchampstead Village. Facilities are limited to a ticket office, car park (42 spaces), ticket machines, and bicycle parking (24 spaces). The station is managed by Great Western Railway (GWR) and offers services on the North Downs Line to Reading (to the north) and to Gatwick Airport (to the south).<sup>55</sup>
- 9.6 Wokingham Station is approximately 4km north of northern Finchampstead Village. This station has a greater number of facilities compared to Crowthorne Station, having the all of the former's facilities in addition to step-free access and toilets. The station is managed by South Western Railway (SWR) and offers services on the SWR Waterloo to Reading Line and the GWR North Downs Line.

### Bus network

- 9.7 FP is served by the following buses:
- Stagecoach Bus Service 406 – running from Farnborough through Blackwater, Yateley, and Eversley towards Finchampstead.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Google Maps (2022) 'Finchampstead' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>55</sup> GWR (2022) 'Crowthorne' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>56</sup> Stagecoach Buses (2022) '406 Bus Route & Timetable: Farnborough - California Crossroads' can be accessed [here](#).

- Reading Buses Service 3 Leopard – running from Wokingham through Finchampstead North, Arborfield, and Shinfield towards Reading.<sup>57</sup>
- Thames Valley Buses Services 125, 125A, and 125B – running from Wokingham through Finchampstead, Crowthorne, and Sandhurst, towards Blackwater.<sup>58</sup>

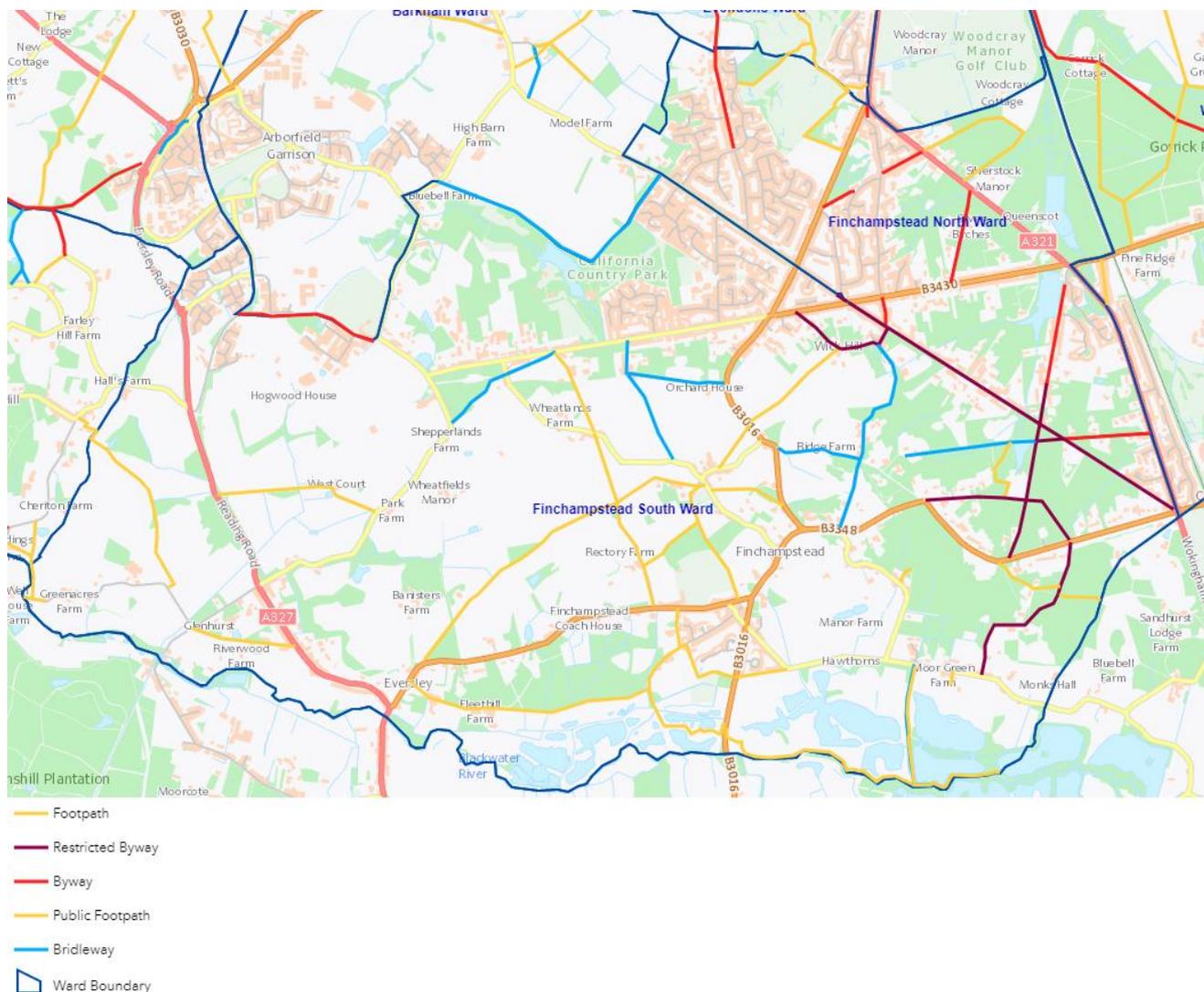
## Road network

9.8 The main roads servicing FP are the A321, A327, B3016, B3348, and the B3430.

## Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

9.9 There is an extensive network of PRoWs throughout FP, made up of footpaths, restricted byways, byways, and bridleways.

**Figure 9-1: Map of Public Rights of Way in Finchampstead Parish<sup>59</sup>**



<sup>57</sup> Reading Buses (2022) '3' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>58</sup> Thames Valley Buses (2022) '125, 125A, 125B' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>59</sup> Wokingham Borough Council (no date) 'MyNearest' can be accessed [here](#).

## Future baseline

- 9.10 Public transport use has the potential to remain low compared with private car use. This may be due to the absence of a train station within the neighbourhood area. However, it is noted that there are multiple bus services that travel through the parish, which could be utilised to travel locally. There may be opportunities to improve public transport networks within the FNP in line with the Wokingham's Local Plan and this would encourage an increased use in sustainable modes of transport – especially, for example, a bus service connecting Finchampstead to Crowthorne Station.
- 9.11 As discussed in previous chapters, considering the pandemic, and changing working habits, the provision of infrastructure to facilitate working from home is likely to positively contribute towards transport management.
- 9.12 Whilst negative effects of new development on the transport network are likely to be mitigated in part by new infrastructure, there will be a continuing need for development to be situated in accessible locations.

## Key issues

- 9.13 Considering the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues are identified in relation to transportation and movement:
- There are no train stations within the neighbourhood area; the nearest stations being Crowthorne and Wokingham. As such, public transport in the Parish is limited to several bus services. These services are regular and provide access to a variety of destinations in the local area, including Wokingham and Reading, and new development should aim to connect well with these services.
  - There are numerous PRoWs in the neighbourhood area. Development should seek to connect with and where possible extend PRoW and maximise opportunities for active travel.
  - The recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to change travel patterns in the short, medium, and longer term. Development should seek to enhance local connections in response to changing local demands.

## Proposed SEA objective

9.14 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective:

SEA topic	SEA objective
Transportation and movement	Promote sustainable transport use and active travel opportunities and reduce the need to travel.

9.15 Supporting assessment questions include (will the option/proposal...):

- Support the objectives within the Local Transport Plan to encourage more sustainable transport?
- 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?
- Increase and improve accessibility and support local connectivity and movement?
- Reduce the impact of the transport sector on climate change?
- Improve road safety?
- Reduce the impact on residents from the road network?

# 10. The proposed SEA framework

10.1 The proposed SEA objectives, established through the identification of key issues and environmental objectives as part of the scoping exercise, are brought together to create one framework, the SEA framework, and presented in Table 10.1.

**Table 10-1: Proposed SEA framework**

SEA topic	SEA objective
Biodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.
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, including flooding.
Community wellbeing	Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, reducing deprivation, 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 and townscape.
Transportation and movement	Promote sustainable transport use and active travel opportunities and reduce the need to travel.

10.2 The SEA framework provides a methodology and consistent approach for the appraisal of the emerging FNP. The proposed SEA framework will be used to appraise the options and proposals emerging for the draft plan, and findings will be fed back to Finchampstead Parish Council to inform plan development.

# 11. Next steps

## Subsequent stages for the SEA process

11.1 The next stage will involve exploring reasonable alternatives for the FNP. The findings of this work will be fed back to the Parish Council so that they might be taken into consideration when finalising the NP. The draft of the NP will then be subject to appraisal, and the Environmental Report will be prepared for consultation alongside the FNP.

## Consultation on the Scoping Report

11.2 Public involvement through consultation is a key element of the SEA process. At this scoping stage, the SEA Regulations require consultation with statutory consultation bodies but not full consultation with the public.

11.3 The statutory consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England. This Scoping Report has been released to these three statutory consultees.

11.4 Consultees are invited to comment on the content of this Scoping Report, particularly the evidence base for the SEA, the identified key issues, and the proposed SEA framework.

11.5 The consultation period runs from **XXXX to XXXX**. Comments on the Scoping Report should be sent to:

Antonio Vinti, AECOM

Email address: [Antonio.vinti@aecom.com](mailto:Antonio.vinti@aecom.com)

11.6 All comments received on the Scoping Report will be reviewed and will influence the development of the SEA where appropriate.

