

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report

Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

October 2022

Quality information

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Non-Technical Summary

What is Strategic Environmental Assessment?

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been undertaken to inform the Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan. This process is required by the SEA Regulations.

Neighbourhood Plan groups use SEA to assess Neighbourhood Plans against a set of sustainability objectives developed in consultation with interested parties. The purpose of the assessment is to help avoid adverse environmental and socio-economic effects through the Neighbourhood Plan and identify opportunities to improve the environmental quality of the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan and the quality of life of residents.

What is the Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan?

The Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan (hereafter referred to as the “CB&HNP”) has been prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

Purpose of this Environmental Report

This Environmental Report, which accompanies the Regulation 14 version of the CB&HNP, is the latest document to be produced as part of the SEA process. The first document was the SEA Scoping Report (January 2022), which includes information about the CB&HNP area’s environment and community.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- Identify, describe, and evaluate the likely significant effects of the CB&HNP and alternatives.
- Provide an opportunity for consultees to offer views on any aspect of the SEA process which has been carried out to date.

The Environmental Report contains:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the CB&HNP and its relationship with other relevant policies, plans and programmes.
- Relevant aspects of the current and future state of the environment and key sustainability issues for the area.
- The SEA Framework of objectives against which the CB&HNP has been assessed.
- The appraisal of alternative approaches for the CB&HNP.
- The likely significant effects of the CB&HNP.
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects as a result of the CB&HNP.
- The next steps for the CB&HNP and accompanying SEA process.

Assessment of reasonable alternatives for the CB&HNP

Consideration of site options

With a view to allocating sites within the CB&HNP to contribute towards local housing targets, the CB&HNP Steering Group were keen to consider where development should be delivered within the neighbourhood area. Specifically, the CB&HNP supports an approach which seeks to deliver sustainable development which is sensitive to the environmental constraints within the neighbourhood area, and which is intended to meet specific housing requirements or other community objectives.

Regarding housing numbers, the baseline indicative housing requirement for the plan period is identified as 25 dwellings, minus the completions and commitments up to 1st April 2019 (which is six dwellings). This leaves a residual housing target of 19 dwellings for the neighbourhood area, to be found through the CB&HNP.

In light of the above, the CB&HNP Steering Group (with support from an independent planning consultancy) has undertaken assessments of the various sites in the neighbourhood area in terms of their suitability, availability, and achievability for the purposes of a potential Neighbourhood Plan allocation. A total of nine sites were considered through the site options assessment (SOA) process, identified as follows:

- Sites which came forward through a local 'call for sites' process which invited landowners to submit any parcels of land which they would be happy to release for new housing.
- Sites within the neighbourhood area which had already been identified by Wiltshire Council through their Local Plan evidence base, including from the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)¹.
- A review of recent planning applications which had been submitted within the neighbourhood area.

Sites were subsequently categorised on the basis of suitability, availability, and achievability, and an indication as to whether they would be favoured by the local community was gained through consultation with the community. Further details can be found in the Site Assessment Report.²

Assessment of shortlisted sites through the SEA

The results of the SOA process concluded that two sites were 'suitable' and three sites were 'potentially suitable' to take forward as Neighbourhood Plan allocations.

Since the completion of the SOA, an additional site (Churchill Place) has been put forward for development. A recent application for six dwellings was withdrawn in July 2022 (see reference [20/10975/FUL](#)). Reasons for the application withdrawal are not stated within the decision notice. In light of the developer interest at this location, the

¹ Wiltshire Council (2017): [Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment](#)

² The site assessment report (prepared by AECOM in June 2020) contributes to the evidence base for the emerging CB&HNP and accompanies the CB&HNP at Regulation 14 consultation.

site has been considered through the SEA process for completeness as it is considered to be available for development.

These six sites are listed in **Table NTS1** below and shown in the figure within **Chapter 4** of the Environmental Report.

Table NTS1: Potential site options considered through the SEA

SEA ID	Name of site, address	Size (Ha) ³
Site 1	Kenora Paddock	0.52
Site 2	East of Shutts Lane	0.45
Site 3	The Bundy Field (off Thorne Close)	2.63
Site 4	The Old Vicarage	0.35
Site 5	Rear of Avalon	1.11
Site 6	Churchill Place	0.16

To support the consideration of the suitability of the shortlisted sites for a potential allocation of a type appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan, the SEA process has appraised the key constraints and opportunities present at each of the relevant sites (see **Table 4.2** to **Table 4.7** within the main body of the Environmental Report). A summary of the findings is presented below in **Table NTS2**.

Table NTS2: Summary of SEA site assessment findings

Site	Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Climate Change	Landscape	Historic Environment	Land, Soil and Water Resources	Community Wellbeing	Transport
1	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Blue	Blue
2	Blue	Yellow	Red	Red	Blue	Green	Yellow
3	Blue	Blue	Red	Red	Blue	Green	Yellow
4	Blue	Yellow	Blue	Red	Green	Green	Yellow
5	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
6	Yellow	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Green	Yellow

Preferred approach in the CB&HNP in light of the appraisal findings

The CB&HNP seeks to contribute to local housing needs in the neighbourhood area through a combination of allocations, specifically:

- Site 4 ‘The Old Vicarage’ for four dwellings (see Policy AS1)
- Site 1 ‘Kenora Paddock’ for six dwellings (see Policy AS2)
- Site 5 ‘Rear of Avalon (eastern half of the site)’ for six dwellings (see Policy AS3).

The choice of site allocations has been informed by the findings of the site assessment undertaken for the CB&HNP, consultation events, and the SEA findings. The site-specific policies within the CB&HNP for the proposed site allocations (see Policies AS1 – AS3) contain further detail with respect to design and mitigation

³ Represents total site size and not necessarily total developable area and is taken from the initial site assessment report. As Site 6 came forward following the completion of the initial site assessment report, the size of Site 6 has been taken from the recent planning application for residential development at this location (reference 20/10975/FUL).

considerations which aim to address any potential constraints to development. These aspects are further discussed within the plan appraisal section of the Environmental Report (see **Chapter 5** within the main body of the report).

The CB&HNP also states:

“Based on an analysis of these various factors, together with the views and advice of Wiltshire Council and the CC AONB; three sites will be taken forward as provisionally allocated sites. It should be noted that these decisions on site allocations are conditional at this stage and may be subject to change following the Regulation 14 Consultation or independent assessment which affects the suitability of the three provisionally allocated sites.

“The Old Vicarage will be taken forward as a provisionally allocated site into the draft Neighbourhood Plan. It received strong support in the Community Survey (83% Yes or Maybe). It was also considered to be particularly suitable for retirement/downsizing properties, due to its proximity and easy pedestrian access to Coombe Bissett village centre and its amenities.

“Kenora Paddock received strong support in the Community Survey (75% Yes or Maybe). The assessments found the site to be potentially suitable providing access constraints and visual sensitivity to neighbours was addressed through suitable planning.

“Rear of Avalon (eastern side) also received strong support in the Community Survey (71% Yes or Maybe). Although within the CC AONB, the site is adjacent to the settlement boundary and partially brownfield. Any potential landscape impacts can be sensitively mitigated through appropriate development. It should also be noted that the greenfield western part of the site will not be developed and that this should promote an uplift in biodiversity through appropriate measures.”

It is recognised that the total number of new dwellings proposed through these allocations is 16 dwellings, slightly short of the residual target of 19 dwellings proposed through Wiltshire Council’s Local Plan Review. In the context of the above, the CB&HNP (through Policy ASD1) supports limited windfall development on infill sites to contribute to local needs, and the community is committed to working with local landowners to identify further potential sites for new housing to meet local needs during the plan period.

Assessment of the Regulation 14 version of the CB&HNP

The Regulation 14 version of the CB&HNP presents 19 planning policies for guiding development in the neighbourhood area. These were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering. Earlier draft versions of the policies have been revisited and updated in light of the responses which were received through community consultation, and through recommendations and suggestions proposed through the SEA process to date.

Chapter 5 within the main body of the Environmental Report presents the findings of the appraisal of the Regulation 14 version of the CB&HNP. Utilising the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during the earlier scoping stage of the SEA, the SEA process has assessed the policies put forward

through the Regulation 14 version of the CB&HNP. The Environmental Report has presented the findings of the assessment under the following SEA Themes:

- Biodiversity and Geodiversity.
- Climate Change.
- Landscape
- Historic Environment.
- Land, Soil, and Water Resources.
- Community Wellbeing; and
- Transportation.

In the context of the above, the assessment has concluded that the Regulation 14 version of the CB&HNP is likely to have positive effects in relation to the 'Community Wellbeing' SEA theme. This principally links to the CB&HNP's support for high-quality development proposals in accessible locations which deliver suitable and appropriate housing for the local community (via a range of types and tenures). The CB&HNP also seeks to safeguard and improve the availability of services, facilities and amenities, and support opportunities for local employment. These policy provisions will support social inclusion, and community and economic vitality. The CB&HNP is also likely to facilitate improvements to the public realm (including through green infrastructure enhancements) and encourage healthy outdoor recreation and relaxation. These policy provisions will support the quality of life of residents.

The CB&HNP is also likely to have positive effects in relation to the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' SEA theme by encouraging proposals to ensure development is sensitive to the surrounding natural environment and local character, taking into consideration ways in which the environment and biodiversity can be enhanced, and development can avoid impacts. This includes conserving natural features such as hedgerows, trees, woodlands, and watercourses, giving the highest priority to conservation and enhancement of the environment, contributing to the local ecology with measures to deliver biodiversity net gains, and protecting designated green spaces. However, the conclusions of the HRA Screening process state that the CB&HNP has "*the potential to lead to likely significant effects on one European site and its qualifying features in-combination with other plans and projects*". This is due to the site allocation policies and wider CB&HNP policies that promote residential and tourism development in the plan area. In this respect, it is anticipated that the Neighbourhood Plan will consider and apply any recommendations which are put forward within the HRA Appropriate Assessment stage, which is being completed alongside the Regulation 14 consultation. These recommendations are expected to be included within the updated version of the CB&HNP, prior to submission.

Regarding the 'Climate Change' SEA theme, the CB&HNP will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions due to an increase in the built footprint. However, the plan has the potential to lead to positive effects through supporting proposals that promote the inclusion of low carbon technologies and the use of local and traditional building materials, encourage sustainable and active travel, and proactively responding to the potential impacts of climate change through the implementation of appropriate drainage solutions.

The CB&HNP will also bring positive effects in relation to the 'Landscape' and 'Historic Environment' SEA themes. These benefits largely relate to the CB&HNP's emphasis on protecting and enhancing the relationship between the CB&HNP area and the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB, delivering high-quality design which respects and embraces the natural and built environment, protecting important landscape and heritage features, and facilitating improvements to the quality of the public realm.

While the proposed site allocations are sensitive from a landscape and heritage perspective, it is considered that the CB&HNP policies provide a detailed overview of the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures which positively address the sensitivities. Given the Design Code accompanying the CB&HNP also sets out a comprehensive range of provisions relating to the natural and built environment, this will help provide an appropriate basis for any development proposals which may come forward during the plan period.

In terms of the 'Land, Soil and Water Resources' SEA theme, the CB&HNP includes site allocations on brownfield or partially brownfield land. However, it is possible that development could result in the permanent loss of productive agricultural land, especially under policy AS2 (Kenora Paddock). However, the scale of the development to come forward is not likely to result in the loss of any significant areas of BMV land. The development management policies of the plan protect seek to protect the neighbourhood area from inappropriate development and outline policies that will help support the capacity of the landscape to regulate soil and water quality.

In relation to the 'Transportation' SEA theme, the CB&HNP outlines several policies that will help to improve the sustainable transport network, encourage active travel, and improve road safety. However, it is recognised the sustainable transport options within the neighbourhood area are relatively limited due to the rural nature of the area, and private vehicle use will likely continue to allow for access to a greater number of services and amenities within neighbouring communities.

Next steps

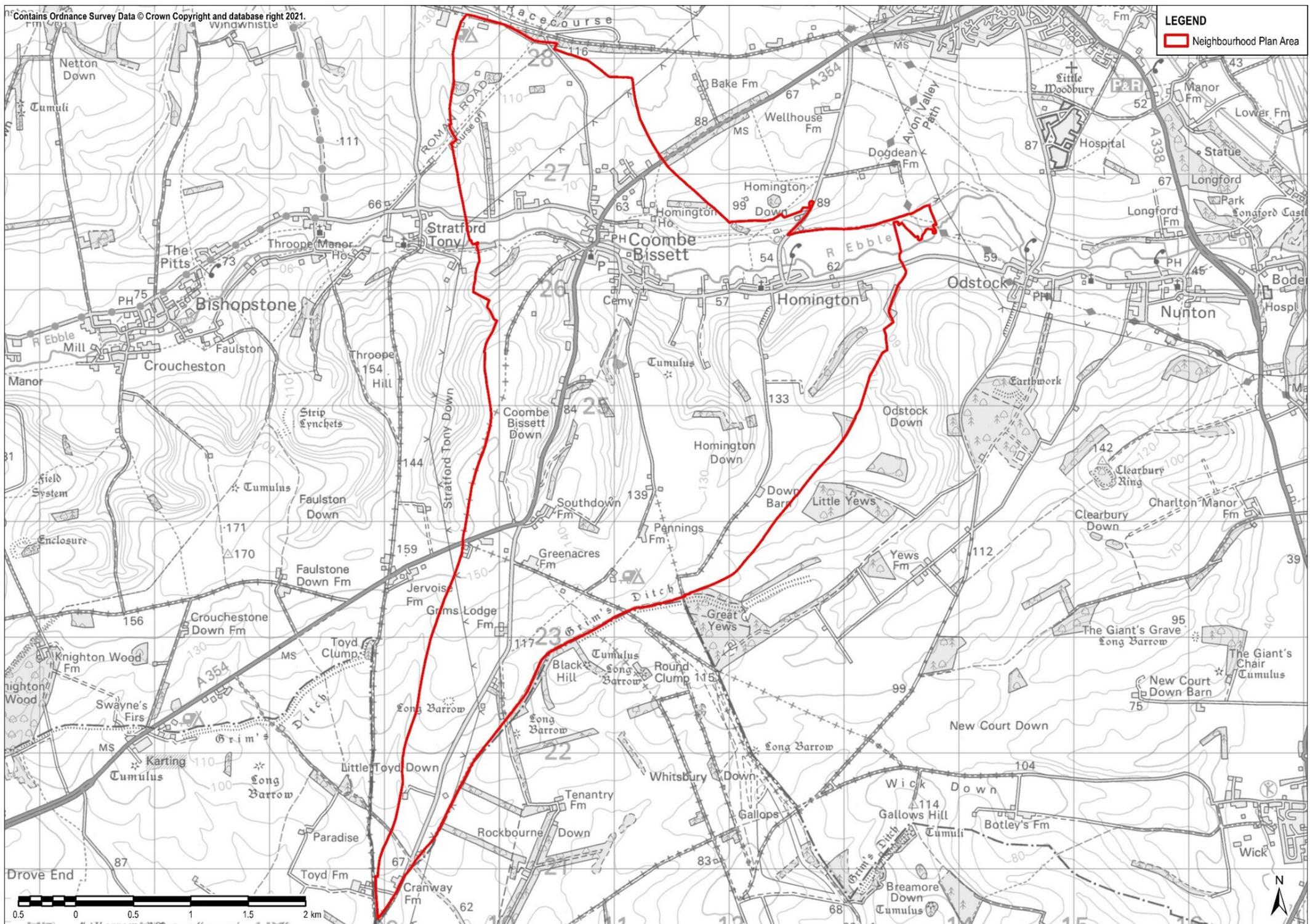
This Environmental Report accompanies the CB&HNP for Regulation 14 consultation.

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

At Independent Examination, the CB&HNP will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with local planning policy.

If the Independent Examination is favourable, the CB&HNP will be subject to a referendum, organised by Wiltshire Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the CB&HNP, then it will be 'made'. Once made, the CB&HNP will become part of the Development Plan for the parish.

LEGEND
[Red outline] Neighbourhood Plan Area



1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan (CB&HNP).
- 1.2 The CB&HNP is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the current Wiltshire Core Strategy and the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review.
- 1.3 It is currently anticipated that the Neighbourhood Plan will be submitted to Wiltshire Council in 2023. Key information relating to the CB&HNP is presented in **Table 1.1** below.

Table 1.1 Key facts relating to the CB&HNP

Name of Responsible Authority	Coombe Bissett and Homington Parish Council
Title of Plan	Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan
Subject	Neighbourhood planning
Purpose	The CB&HNP is being prepared as a Neighbourhood Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The plan will be in general conformity with the Wiltshire Core Strategy and emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review.
Timescale	To 2036
Area covered by the plan	The neighbourhood area covers the parish of Coombe Bissett and Homington, in Wiltshire (shown in the figure above)
Summary of content	The CB&HNP will set out a vision, strategy, and range of policies for the neighbourhood area
Plan contact point	Stephen Gledhill, Neighbourhood Group Coordinator Email: stephengledhill006@btinternet.com

SEA Screening for the CB&HNP

- 1.4 The CB&HNP has been screened in by Wiltshire Council as requiring a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
- 1.5 A Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA where it is likely to have significant environmental effects. In this respect, the CB&HNP has been screened in as requiring an SEA process for the following reasons:
 - It is considered that significant environmental effects are likely from the proposed allocations within the pre-Regulation 14 draft version of the CB&HNP, particularly with respect to heritage assets and their settings.
 - Wiltshire Council's ecology team have confirmed that, having been screened under the Habitats Regulations, an appropriate assessment (AA) will be required at the next consultation stage due to the potential likely significant effects (LSE) on the River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) associated with the plan's proposals.
- 1.6 This screening decision was sent to Natural England, Historic England, and the Environment Agency, requesting comments within a 5-week period between 17th August and 21st September 2021. Comments were received from all three bodies, who agreed with the decision that an SEA is required for this Plan.
- 1.7 In light of this screening outcome, an SEA process is being undertaken to meet the specific requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations).

SEA explained

- 1.8 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the potential impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key environmental issues.
- 1.9 The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative impacts. Through this approach, the SEA for the CB&HNP seeks to maximise the emerging plan's contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.10 Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations are that:
 - i. When deciding on 'the scope and level of detail of the information' which must be included in the Environmental Report there is a consultation with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues.
 - ii. A report (the 'Environmental Report') is published for consultation alongside the Draft Plan (i.e., the draft CB&HNP) that presents outcomes from the environmental assessment (i.e., discusses 'likely significant effects' that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives.

Structure of this SEA Environmental Report

1.11 This document is the SEA Environmental Report for the CB&HNP and hence needs to answer all four of the questions listed below with a view to providing the information required by the SEA Regulations. Each of the four questions is answered in turn within this report, as follows:

Table 1.2 Questions that must be answered by the SEA Environmental Report to meet the regulatory⁴ requirements

Environmental Report question	In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include... ⁵
What's the scope of the SEA?	<p>What is the plan seeking to achieve?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan.
	<p>What is the sustainability 'context'?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship with other relevant plans and programmes. The relevant environmental protection objectives established at international or national level. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.
	<p>What is the sustainability 'baseline'?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.
	<p>What are the key issues and objectives?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e., provide a 'framework' for) assessment.
What has plan-making/SEA involved up to this point?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with. The likely significant effects associated with alternatives. Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives appraisal/a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the current version of the plan.
What are the assessment findings at this stage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The likely significant effects associated with the Regulation 14 version of the plan. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the Regulation 14 version of the plan.
What happens next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The next steps for the plan making / SEA process.

⁴ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

⁵ NB this column does not quote directly from Schedule II of the Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation.

2. Local Plan context and vision for the Neighbourhood Plan

Local Plan context for the CB&HNP

- 2.1 The CB&HNP is being prepared in the context of the Wiltshire Core Strategy⁶, adopted in January 2015. Due regard is also given to the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review⁷. Regulation 18 consultation on the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review was undertaken between January and March 2021, including proposals for the scale and distribution of housing and employment growth across Wiltshire and the role of the Local Plan in helping Wiltshire adapt and mitigate for climate change. The Local Development Scheme anticipates that the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan will be adopted in winter 2023.
- 2.2 In the context of the neighbourhood area, the 'Empowering Rural Communities' chapter of the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review provides the indicative housing requirements for the 'Larger Villages' within the settlement hierarchy. Coombe Bissett is identified as one of the 'Larger Villages'. In this respect, the baseline indicative housing requirement for the plan period is identified as 25 dwellings, minus the completions and commitments up to 1st April 2019 (which is six dwellings). This leaves a residual housing target of 19 dwellings for the neighbourhood area, to be found through the CB&HNP.
- 2.3 The neighbourhood area is predominantly within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Therefore, the indicative housing requirement outlined in the Wiltshire Local Plan Review must be viewed in light of policies for conserving and enhancing the AONB, as well as restrictive policies relating to housing. In this respect, the CB&HNP seeks to deliver sustainable development, which is sensitive to the setting of the AONB, and which is intended to meet specific housing requirements.
- 2.4 Neighbourhood plans will form part of the development plan for Wiltshire, alongside, but not as a replacement for the Local Plan. Neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with the Local Plan and can develop policies and proposals to address local place-based issues. In this way it is intended for the Local Plan to provide a clear overall strategic direction for development in Wiltshire, whilst enabling finer detail to be determined through the neighbourhood planning process where appropriate.

⁶ Wiltshire Council (2015): [Wiltshire Core Strategy](#)

⁷ Wiltshire Council (2022): [Local Plan Review](#)

Vision, aims, and objectives for the Coombe Bissett Neighbourhood Plan

2.5 The vision for Coombe Bissett and Homington is as follows:



By 2036, the Coombe Bissett Neighbourhood Plan (CB&HNP) will have helped provide a thriving and supportive community for its inhabitants and protected our rural landscapes.

Some young families will have moved to the area through the provision of a wider range of suitable accommodation. The requirements of older people will also have been catered for through the siting of accommodation appropriate to their needs.

More people, both residents and visitors, are able to walk around and between the villages through the provision of improved pedestrian road safety and footpaths; thereby experiencing the well-being benefits from increased use of accessible rights of way in the countryside and the CC AONB.

The local community has become stronger through the continued provision of community amenities and facilities and the Village Stores and the Fox and Goose thrive as community hubs.

Flood risk will be appropriately mitigated so that flood damage in the Parish is alleviated. Development on allocated sites and limited windfall development will consider and address potential flood risk from all sources both on-site and on surrounding buildings and the wider environment and encourage the introduction of effective and sustainable water management.

Views of Coombe Bissett Nature Reserve and Homington Down and other important historic and iconic vistas are protected through the sensitive siting of development that respects the area's rural and historic character. Local heritage features are conserved and valued as important assets that have shaped our community and the design of new buildings reflect our Parish's historic character.

Vision Statement for the CB&HNP



3. What is the scope of the SEA?

Summary of SEA Scoping

- 3.1 The SEA Regulations require that: *“When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”*. In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, the Environment Agency, and Historic England.⁸ These authorities were consulted on the scope of the CB&HNP SEA for a period of five weeks, between 12th January and 16th February 2022.
- 3.2 The purpose of scoping was to outline the ‘scope’ of the SEA through setting out:
- A context review of the key environmental and sustainability objectives of national, regional, and local plans and strategies relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan.
 - Baseline data against which the Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed.
 - The key sustainability issues for the Neighbourhood Plan.
 - An ‘SEA Framework’ of objectives against which the Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed.
- 3.3 Responses received on the Scoping Report, and how they were addressed, have been summarised below.

Table 3.1 Consultation responses received on the SEA Scoping Report

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
Historic England <i>Historic Places Adviser (email response received on 15th February 2022)</i>	
We have no comments on the Report other than to confirm our pleasure at the inclusion of reference to our guidance on Conservation Areas, SEAs, Site Allocations, and Setting respectively. To this we would recommend adding our general guidance on Neighbourhood Plans, as per our advice on the SEA Screening exercise (see attached). The use of all this guidance is likely to be particularly desirable given the scope and intended policy content of the Plan.	Reference to Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment Advice Note 11 has been made in Appendix A, Chapter A.5 Historic Environment. The advice has been a useful reference point during the subsequent stages of the SEA.
Environment Agency <i>Planning Advisor (email response received on 23rd February 2022)</i>	
Based on our review of the draft scoping report, we agree with the inclusion of the flood risk and biodiversity objectives which covers the key constraints within our remit.	Comment noted.

⁸ In-line with Article 6(3).of the SEA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected because *‘by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities,[they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programme’*.

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<p>The Neighbourhood Plan contains areas of flood zone 2 and 3 within the neighbourhood area, specifically associated with the River Ebble. The Local Authority's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Management Plans forms the evidence base to determine the level of flood risk in this area. We expect any proposed development or allocations to be steered towards areas with the lowest risk of flooding, taking all sources into account. Any proposals within flood zones 2 and or 3 will need to pass the Sequential Test.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p>For your information, together with Natural England, English Heritage and Forestry Commission we have published joint guidance on neighbourhood planning, which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. This is available here</p>	<p>Comment noted. The guidance has been a useful reference point during the subsequent stages of the SEA.</p>
<p>Natural England <i>Conservation and Planning Lead Advisor (email response received on 19th January 2022)</i></p>	
<p>A robust assessment of environmental impacts and opportunities based on relevant and up to date environmental information should be undertaken prior to a decision on whether to grant planning permission. Annex A to this letter provides Natural England's advice on the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed development.</p>	<p>Consultation response focused on EIA rather than SEA. Nonetheless, the guidance in Annex A has been a useful reference point during the subsequent stages of the SEA. Detailed appraisal findings are presented in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 of this Environmental Report</p>
<p>Cranborne Chase AONB <i>Principal Landscape and Planning Officer (email response received on 15th February 2022)</i></p>	
<p>With the exception of a small area on the northern edge, the whole of the neighbourhood area falls within this AONB. The planning policy context on page 2 should, therefore, include the important information that the neighbourhood area is predominantly within this nationally important AONB. The potential housing numbers arising from the Wiltshire Local Plan Review does, therefore, have to be viewed in the light of policies in that plan for conserving and enhancing the AONB and the restricted policies relating to housing as well as the NPPF176 and PPG041.</p>	<p>Paragraph updated under Chapter 2, Local Plan context and vision for the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<p>The themes outlined in paragraph 1.16 do not appear to take account of the status of this AONB as an International Dark Sky Reserve and the need to reduce light pollution. Such pollution can, of course, come from light spill from buildings, particularly floor to ceiling glazing, as well as non-compliant external lighting. As you may know, light pollution can have negative impacts on human health as well as wildlife.</p>	<p>These themes were selected to incorporate the 'SEA topics' suggested by Annex I (f) of the SEA Directive. Mention of light pollution has been made within the landscape SEA theme, as it falls under this theme.</p>
<p>I note that Chapter 2, focussing on air quality, tends to take a very broad view across the whole of Wiltshire. It does not, however, take cognisance of the fact that this AONB generally has clean air and, therefore, has good lichen populations both in terms of numbers and diversity. As is comparatively well known, relatively low levels of atmospheric pollution can cause significant diminutions of lichen species and populations. These appear to be significant factors that ought to be included when considering the likely, and potential, increases in air pollution.</p>	<p>A broad view across the whole of Wiltshire has been taken as air quality is generally a more widespread issue, and the residual housing requirement for Coombe Bissett and Homington of 19 dwellings is considered less likely to have a significant impact on air quality, even at the local level.</p> <p>Opportunities to encourage a modal shift from private transport (to sustainable travel and active travel options) have been explored within the Neighbourhood Plan – with further detail provided in the 'Transportation' and 'Climate Change' appraisal sections in Chapter 5 of this Environmental Report.</p>
<p>The reference to coastal grazing marsh in paragraph 3.14 seems a little strange, and one might have anticipated that bats might figure more significantly.</p>	<p>This Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitat is present in the neighbourhood area according to the national dataset.</p> <p>HRA appropriate assessment is scheduled to be completed by Wiltshire Council during the Regulation 14 consultation on the Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan. In this respect, it is anticipated that the findings of the appropriate assessment (which may include mitigation suggestions to address any potential impacts to protected sites and species) will be considered by plan makers during updates to the Neighbourhood Plan (prior to submission).</p>

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<p>The plan at the end of the biodiversity chapter indicates significant areas, with a light green colour, as 'lowland meadows'. These appear to be relatively steep slopes on valley sides within the chalk landscape. Lowland meadow may not, therefore, be the right terminology. I would also observe that the areas shown in blue, beside the river, as 'coastal and flood plain grazing marsh' are certainly not coastal and have the appearance of meadows rather than marshes.</p>	<p>This is the correct terminology as defined by the BAP priority habitats national dataset. The term 'coastal and flood plain grazing march' is a catch-all term and in this context, it can be assumed that the habitat here is 'flood plain grazing marsh' as it is not by the coast.</p>
<p>Whilst the first bullet point of paragraph 5.2 of the chapter on Landscape summarises a number of criteria relating to the protected landscapes, it does not mention that the NPPF is clear that protection of those landscapes should be related to the level of their designation. As AONBs, along with National Parks, are the highest level of national designation the Neighbourhood Plan needs to demonstrate how it both conserves and enhances natural beauty. In terms of a Landscape Character Assessment, table 5.1, I would suggest that the Salisbury District Landscape Character Assessment 2009 provides a finer grain of analysis more suited to the Neighbourhood Plan than the Wiltshire scale assessment of 2005. The Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley Landscape Character Assessment 2018 includes the western half of the NP area, and it would not be unreasonable to extrapolate eastwards for the Homington area.</p>	<p>Additional bullet point on the NPPF and the level of designation of protected landscapes added to Appendix A, Chapter A.4 Landscape.</p> <p>The recommended assessments have been useful sources of evidence during the subsequent stages of the SEA process. Landscape impacts associated with the Neighbourhood Plan's policies and proposals (including the proposed site allocations) are presented in the appraisal findings in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 of this Environmental Report.</p>
<p>Paragraph 5.3 could be taken out of context and give a totally misleading view of the priorities for this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. That needs to be corrected. The AONB Partnership Plan has 30 policies relating to planning and transportation, plus policies relating to landscape, wildlife, dark night skies and sustaining rural communities.</p>	<p>Paragraph amended in Appendix A, Chapter A.4 Landscape.</p> <p>The Partnership Plan has been a useful source of reference throughout the SEA process.</p>
<p>In relation to paragraph 5.4 the dark skies are also important for maintaining the circadian rhythms of wildlife and people in general and for avoiding the more bizarre aspects of light pollution with daytime birds singing in the middle of the night.</p>	<p>Paragraph amended in Appendix A, Chapter A.4 Landscape.</p>

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<p>Whilst I agree that landscape and village character play an important part in understanding relationships between people and place, a finer grain landscape assessment is needed than the County level assessment of 2005. The reference to wooded downland seems scarcely relevant as there is little woodland within the neighbourhood area. The Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley Landscape Character Assessment 2018 covering western parts of the NP area as well as the countryside immediately to the west of the village seems more likely to provide relevant information than the coarser scale County level assessment. The second bullet point of paragraph 5.17 does, therefore, need to be reconsidered.</p>	<p>The recommended assessments have been useful sources of evidence during the subsequent stages of the SEA process. Landscape impacts associated with the Neighbourhood Plan's policies and proposals (including the proposed site allocations) are presented in the appraisal findings in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 of this Environmental Report.</p>
<p>Chapter 8, Community Wellbeing, seems to overlook the existence of public Rights of Way, and the importance of ensuring that they are accessible and linked up, to sustaining community wellbeing. The chapter also seems to forget that the high-quality AONB landscape contributes to community wellbeing and that may also be an attractor for people with resources, contributing to the relatively unusually high proportion of older people.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Transportation impacts associated with the Neighbourhood Plan's policies and proposals (including with respect to the proposed site allocations, traffic issues, and possibilities for encouraging active and sustainable travel) are presented in the appraisal findings in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 of this Environmental Report.</p>
<p>Chapter 9, Transportation, indicates that most traffic on the A354 is simply going through the area and that the traffic on the C12 through Homington has a high proportion of journeys to and from Salisbury Hospital. It could also have indicated that the road westward is the main access to the Chalke Valley and its villages. Coombe Bissett is, therefore, very much a crossroads village with a high proportion of the traffic having nothing to do with the village, merely passing through it. How the Neighbourhood Plan improves the quality of life of inhabitants when it seems more than likely that this traffic will continue to increase seems to be a major issue. In that context, it seems that the questions related to transportation should be much more closely focussed on the neighbourhood area rather than broader matters relating to the combined Wiltshire and Swindon areas.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Transportation impacts associated with the Neighbourhood Plan's policies and proposals (including with respect to the proposed site allocations, traffic issues, and possibilities for encouraging active and sustainable travel) are presented in the appraisal findings in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 of this Environmental Report.</p>
<p>3.4 Baseline information (including the context review and baseline data) is presented in Appendix A. The key sustainability issues and SEA Framework are presented below.</p>	

Key Sustainability Issues

Air Quality

- The main pollutant of concern in the neighbourhood area is nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) which is largely linked to emissions from vehicles, particularly in areas with issues related to traffic volume, road layout and topography. The effects of the CB&HNP in relation to traffic and congestion will be explored further under the 'Transportation' SEA theme.
- The CB&HNP presents opportunities to improve accessibility and support more local and sustainable journeys / connections. These opportunities will be explored further within the 'Community Wellbeing' and 'Transportation' SEA themes.
- Therefore, in the absence of any specific air quality issues (i.e., AQMAs or areas known to exceed national objectives for air quality), **the Air Quality theme has been scoped out for the purposes of the SEA process.**

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- Designated sites within or near the neighbourhood area that could be impacted by development include the New Forest SPA and SAC, the River Avon SAC, and Homington and Coombe Bissett Downs SSSI. The zone of influence (ZOI) for the New Forest SPA and SAC is expected to increase to potentially include the neighbourhood area.
- A HRA Appropriate Assessment of the CB&HNP will be required at the next consultation stage, due to the potential for Likely Significant Effects on the River Avon SAC.
- A significant proportion of the neighbourhood area is adjacent to or within Homington and Coombe Bissett Downs SSSI, a 70.6-hectare chalk downland valley that is home to many species.
- There are a variety of BAP priority habitats located within or within proximity to the neighbourhood area, primarily areas of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, deciduous woodland, good quality semi-improved grassland, lowland calcareous grassland, and lowland meadows.

Climate Change

- Wiltshire Council declared a climate emergency in February 2019 and since then the council has sought to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030.
- Source data from the Department of Energy and Climate Change suggests that Wiltshire has recorded broadly higher per capita emissions than the South West of England since 2005.
- Wiltshire has seen a 42.1% reduction in total emissions per capita since 2005, higher than the totals for South West England (38%) and England (40%) figures.
- The transport sector continues to be a key challenge in terms of reducing emissions. The CB&HNP provides opportunities to guide development towards the most accessible locations in the area and require local

infrastructure (including walking and cycling infrastructure) improvements where appropriate.

- The CB&HNP should seek to maximise opportunities to support actions in tackling climate change. This may include through encouraging sustainable transport technologies, such as the use of electric vehicles, and using sustainable drainage systems.
- Fluvial flood risk in the neighbourhood area is linked to the River Ebble and Coombe Bissett and Homington are classed as medium risk for flooding from rivers and the sea.
- Surface water flood risk in the neighbourhood area is largely concentrated near the River Ebble and Coombe Bissett and Homington are classed as high risk for surface water flooding. Areas of particular concern in Coombe Bissett include the A354 and Homington Road. In Homington, areas of concern include Homington Road, Lower Road and Barber's Lane.
- Wiltshire Council Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment notes an increased groundwater risk around Salisbury and surrounding villages.

Landscape

- Approximately 90% of the neighbourhood area falls within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB, and the relationship between the settlements and the open countryside is an important part of its character and special qualities.
- The neighbourhood area falls within the C2 – Martin Down to Coombe Bissett Down Open Chalk Downland Local Landscape Character Area (LLCA), which shares a strong relationship and connection with the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB.
- Wiltshire Council have designated Tree Preservation Orders in the interest of their amenity value, including two within the neighbourhood area.
- New development has the potential to lead to incremental change in landscape and villagescape character, and visual amenity.

Historic Environment

- The neighbourhood area contains a wealth of designated heritage assets, including nearby World Heritage Site Stonehenge and Avebury, one Grade I listed building, 35 Grade II listed buildings, one Grade II* listed building, as well as five scheduled monuments.
- There are two conservation areas within the neighbourhood area, which cover significant sections of the existing settlements of Coombe Bissett and Homington. It is anticipated that new development areas to be brought forward through the Neighbourhood Plan will be located within (or within proximity to) these two settlements. In this respect, potential impacts to the conservation areas (and their settings) are likely and may require appropriate mitigation measures to address concerns.
- The CB&HNP Steering Group has identified several locally valued heritage assets which provide local historic significance to the neighbourhood area

and Wiltshire. These sensitivities should therefore be appropriately considered in future growth strategies.

- According to the Heritage at Risk Register 2021, for South West England, there is only one heritage asset at risk within the neighbourhood area and this is Little Toyd Down, 650 metres south west of Grims Lodge Farm.
- The Wiltshire and Swindon HER highlights several non-designated heritage assets which provide local historic significance to the neighbourhood area. These sensitivities should therefore be appropriately addressed during the consideration of future growth options for the neighbourhood area.
- It will be important to ensure that future development avoids/minimises impacts upon the historic environment and maximises opportunities to improve the public realm and green infrastructure, to the indirect benefit of heritage settings.

Land, Soil and Water Resources

- The neighbourhood area has the potential to be underlain by BMV land.
- Water resources located in the neighbourhood area include the River Ebble (a tributary of the River Avon), isolated ponds, and drainage ditches alongside field margins.
- The potential impact pathways associated with the CB&HNP proposals and the River Avon SAC are being considered through a HRA process (as discussed within the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' section, above). It is anticipated that the suggestions and recommendations put forward through the HRA process will inform policy development.
- The entire neighbourhood area covers the South Wessex Groundwater NVZ, but there are no SPZs within the area.
- Plan making should consider how local decisions affect water supply, such as water accessibility issues, and ensure that appropriate drainage infrastructure is in place to accommodate new development areas.
- The Salisbury Avon Mineral Safeguarding Area is just below the southern boundary of the neighbourhood area. Consultation with Wiltshire Council may be required to determine whether there are likely to be any significant impacts to mineral resources within the CB&HNP associated with new development proposals.

Community Wellbeing

- The services, facilities, and amenities within the neighbourhood area supports community vitality and the quality of life of residents, with the availability of community assets essential for continued growth within the area.
- As the requirements of the working population continue to change, particularly in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, there is likely to be a requirement for adaptable dwellings which can accommodate more flexible working practices.

- Housing affordability and the availability of appropriate dwellings for residents are key concerns, with a community preference for 2 to 3 bed dwellings (as informed by local housing studies).
- Based on the 2019 data, the Wiltshire 057A LSOA is amongst the 50% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country for IMD. However, it is amongst the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods for 'Barriers to Housing and Services Domain' and amongst the 30% most deprived neighbourhoods for 'Living Environment Deprivation Domain'. However, the local community have indicated that the quality of the local environment in the neighbourhood area is generally good.
- The percentage of residents within the 65+ age category within the parish is high than the average observed for Wiltshire.
- The parish has observed a small population decrease between 2011-2020.

Transportation

- There are no train stations within the neighbourhood area.
- Bus services are relatively limited in terms of their numbers and the frequency of journeys. In this respect, initiative to improve bus services within the neighbourhood area (and to key public transport connections in neighbouring locations) are encouraged.
- Through traffic is a key issue within the neighbourhood area and will likely be an ongoing issue due to its origin. The CB&HNP should therefore address how the quality of life of residents can be improved despite this issue.
- The recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to change travel patterns in the short, medium and (potentially) longer term.
- There is a need to promote an effective pedestrian, cycling and movement strategy for the neighbourhood area.
- Periods of traffic congestion, especially during school drop-off and collection, are a concern due to safety issues with crossing the main road, which are a result of the lack of a dedicated school drop-off area and a fragmented footpath network.

SEA Framework

- 3.5 The SEA framework provides a way in which environmental effects can be defined and subsequently analysed based on standard 'tests'. Each proposal within the Regulation 14 version of the CB&HNP will be assessed consistently using the framework, shown in **Table 3.2** overleaf.

Table 3.2 SEA framework of objectives and assessment questions

SEA Objective	Assessment questions to consider for the allocations / proposals within the CB&HNP
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	
Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity	<p>Will the option / proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the integrity of the designated sites for biodiversity and geodiversity located within and within proximity to the neighbourhood area? • Protect and enhance priority habitats and species? • Achieve biodiversity and environmental net gains and support the delivery of ecosystem services and multifunctional green infrastructure networks? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?
Climate Change	
Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the neighbourhood area	<p>Will the option / proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of journeys made? • Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling and public transport? • Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources? • Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources? • Support proposals for EV charging infrastructure?
Support the resilience of the neighbourhood area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding	<p>Will the option / proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 neighbourhood area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change? • Sustainably manage water runoff and drainage? • Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development in the neighbourhood area? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?

SEA Objective	Assessment questions to consider for the allocations / proposals within the CB&HNP
Landscape	
To protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape and villagescape.	<p>Will the option / proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to protect and enhance the integrity of the Cranborne Chase AONB? • Protect and/ or enhance local landscape and villagescape character, key sensitivities, and quality of place? • Conserve and enhance local identity, diversity, and settlement character? • Protect visual amenity and locally important views in the Plan area? • Retain and enhance landscape and villagescape features that contribute to the rural setting of the Plan area?
Historic Environment	
Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area	<p>Will the option / proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance buildings, structures, and areas of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings? • Protect the integrity and the historic setting of key finds of heritage interest as listed in the Wiltshire and Swindon HER? • Support the undertaking of early archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the neighbourhood area?
Land, Soil, and Water Resources	
Ensure the efficient and effective use of land	<p>Will the option / proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid the loss of high-quality agricultural land resources? • Promote any opportunities for the use of previously developed land, or vacant/ underutilised land? • Protect the integrity of mineral resources?
Promote and enhance water quality and use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner	<p>Will the option / proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid impacts on water quality? • Support improvements to water quality? • Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside development? • Protect waterbodies from pollution? • Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/ or water recycling?

SEA Objective	Assessment questions to consider for the allocations / proposals within the CB&HNP
Community Wellbeing	
<p>Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities</p>	<p>Will the option / proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing? • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes? • Meet the needs of all sectors of the community? • Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's needs, particularly the needs of an ageing population? • Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including 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? • Minimise fuel poverty? • Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing residents?
Transportation	
<p>Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel</p>	<p>Will the option / proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the key objectives within the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Transport Plan to encourage more sustainable transport? • Encourage modal shift to more sustainable forms of travel and enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements? • Promote improved local connectivity and pedestrian and cyclist movement? • Facilitate working from home and remote working? • Improve road safety? • Reduce the impact on residents and the built environment from the road network?

4. What has plan making / SEA involved up to this point?

Introduction

- 4.1 In accordance with the SEA Regulations the Environmental Report must include...
- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with; and
 - The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives / an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of alternatives appraised.
- 4.2 The 'narrative' of plan-making / SEA up to this point is told within this part of the Environmental Report. Specifically, the following sections describe how the SEA process to date has informed the consideration of different approaches for key elements of the CB&HNP.

Overview of plan making / SEA work undertaken since 2018

- 4.3 Significant public consultation has been carried out to date to support the emerging CB&HNP. This has gathered local views and opinions, with a view to engaging local people throughout the Neighbourhood Plan's development process. This has included (but is not limited to) the following key events, community surveys, and evidence base studies which have informed the development of the CB&HNP.
- An initial neighbourhood plan public meeting and questionnaire in 2018 to discuss the neighbourhood planning process and how to proceed. Subsequently, regular neighbourhood planning meetings have been held, with agendas and minutes published on the [Neighbourhood Plan website](#).
 - Community survey in July 2020 focused on understanding housing needs and key issues within the neighbourhood area, to inform the preparation of the draft Plan.
 - Technical studies including a housing needs review (May 2018), site options and assessment process (June 2019 - June 2020), design codes report (October 2019), and a habitats regulations assessment (HRA) on the pre-Regulation 14 Plan (2021).

Potential site options considered through the SEA

Initial shortlisting of sites

- 4.4 With a view to allocating sites within the CB&HNP to contribute towards local housing targets, the CB&HNP Steering Group were keen to consider where development should be delivered within the neighbourhood area. Specifically, the CB&HNP supports an approach which seeks to deliver sustainable development which is sensitive to the environmental constraints within the

neighbourhood area, and which is intended to meet specific housing requirements or other community objectives.

- 4.5 Regarding housing numbers, the baseline indicative housing requirement for the plan period is identified as 25 dwellings, minus the completions and commitments up to 1st April 2019 (which is six dwellings). This leaves a residual housing target of 19 dwellings for the neighbourhood area, to be found through the CB&HNP.
- 4.6 In light of the above, the CB&HNP Steering Group (with support from an independent planning consultancy) has undertaken assessments of the various sites in the neighbourhood area in terms of their suitability, availability, and achievability for the purposes of a potential Neighbourhood Plan allocation. A total of nine sites were considered through the site options assessment (SOA) process, identified as follows:
- Sites which came forward through a local 'call for sites' process which invited landowners to submit any parcels of land which they would be happy to release for new housing.
 - Sites within the neighbourhood area which had already been identified by Wiltshire Council through their Local Plan evidence base, including from the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)⁹.
 - A review of recent planning applications which had been submitted within the neighbourhood area.
- 4.7 Sites were subsequently categorised on the basis of suitability, availability, and achievability, and an indication as to whether they would be favoured by the local community was gained through consultation with the community. Further details can be found in the Site Assessment Report accompanying the CB&HNP at Regulation 14 consultation¹⁰.

Assessment of shortlisted sites through the SEA process

- 4.8 The results of the SOA process concluded that two sites were 'suitable' and three sites were 'potentially suitable' to take forward as Neighbourhood Plan allocations.
- 4.9 Since the completion of the SOA, an additional site (Churchill Place) has been put forward for development. A recent application for six dwellings was withdrawn in July 2022 (see reference [20/10975/FUL](#)). Reasons for the application withdrawal are not stated within the decision notice. In light of the developer interest at this location, the site has been considered through the SEA process for completeness as it is considered to be available for development. The sites are listed in **Table 4.1** below.

⁹ Wiltshire Council (2017): [Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment](#)

¹⁰ The site assessment report (prepared by AECOM in June 2020) contributes to the evidence base for the emerging CB&HNP and accompanies the CB&HNP at Regulation 14 consultation.

Table 4.1 Sites taken forward for further consideration through the SEA process

Site ID	Name of site, address	Size (Ha) ¹¹
1	Kenora Paddock	0.52
2	East of Shutts Lane	0.45
3	The Bundy Field (off Thorne Close)	2.63
4	The Old Vicarage	0.35
5	Rear of Avalon	1.11
6	Churchill Place	0.16

- 4.10 To support the consideration of the suitability of the shortlisted sites for a potential allocation of a type appropriate for the CB&HNP, the SEA process has appraised the key constraints and opportunities present at each of the six sites.
- 4.11 In this context, the sites have been considered in relation to the SEA framework of objectives and decision-making questions developed during SEA scoping. This SEA site assessment was undertaken separately to the initial SOA undertaken on behalf of the CB&HNP Steering Group.
- 4.12 The locations of the six sites considered through the SEA site assessment process are presented in the figure below. **Tables 4.2 to 4.7** which follow present the findings of the assessment and provide an indication of each site's sustainability performance in relation to the seven SEA themes developed during scoping. **Table 4.8** then provides a summary of these findings.
- 4.13 Sources of information to support the appraisal has included (amongst others): Ordnance Survey maps; MAGIC Interactive Map¹²; the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Maps for England¹³; Google Earth¹⁴; interactive maps and documents available to access on Wiltshire Council's webpages; national and local planning policy documents; and baseline studies available to access on the CB&HNP webpages.

¹¹ Represents total site size and not necessarily total developable area.

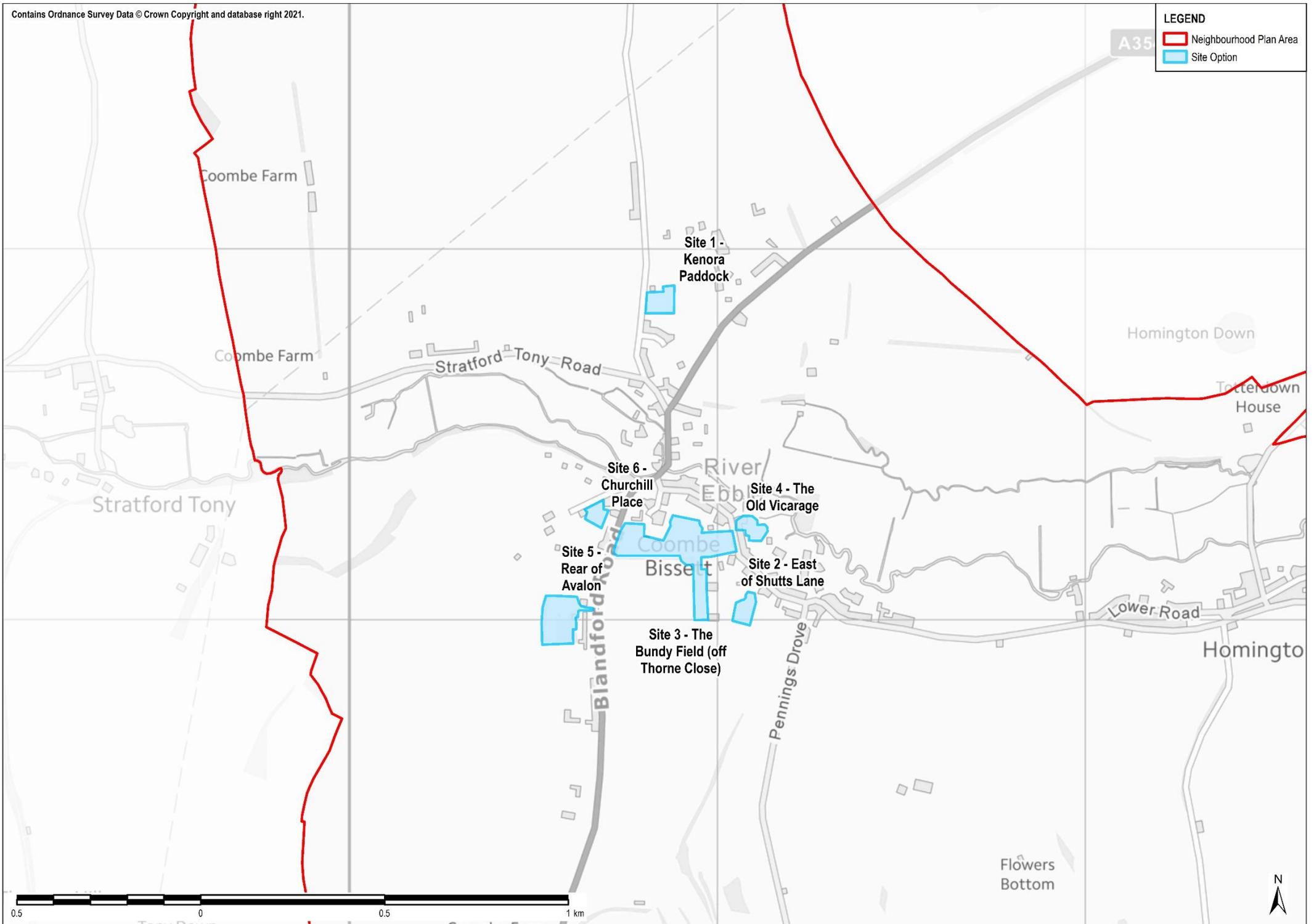
¹² MAGIC (2022): [Interactive Map](#)

¹³ Environment Agency (2022): [Flood Map for Planning](#)

¹⁴ Google (2021): [Google Earth](#)

LEGEND

- Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Site Option



SEA site assessment findings

Table 4.2 Site assessment, Site 1

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 1: Kenora Paddock
	
	<p>An allocation at this site is unlikely to adversely impact any internationally or nationally designated sites for biodiversity. The site does not overlap with a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for the types of development potentially to be taken forward through the CB&HNP (i.e., residential, or rural residential). There are no Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats within the site, however the site is an area of greenfield land (with trees and hedgerows along its boundaries) located within a Network Expansion Zone. This is <i>“land beyond the Network Enhancement Zones with potential for expanding, linking / joining networks across the landscape”</i>¹⁵.</p>
Climate Change	<p>Development of this site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of Coombe Bissett village and an intensification of uses at this location. As the village itself has limited services and facilities, it is likely that residents will travel further afield to access certain amenities, particularly to Salisbury which has a greater variety of services and facilities. In this respect, development at this site will likely cause an increase in the number of residents travelling to Salisbury via private vehicle, increasing greenhouse gas emissions. However, climate change is a global issue, and the scale of development at Coombe Bissett will not have a significant impact on global emissions. With reference to flood risk issues, this site falls within Flood Zone 1, with a very low risk of fluvial flooding. The site also has a very low risk of surface water flooding.</p>

¹⁵ Natural England (2020): [National Habitat Network Maps](#)

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 1: Kenora Paddock	
Landscape	<p>The land directly to the west of the site is within the boundary of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs (CCWWD) Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). However, the northern, eastern, and western site boundaries are lined with hedgerows and trees, which provide visual screening from the AONB. The site gently slopes to the south and is adjacent to the existing settlement boundary to the south; it is likely that the site would relate well to the properties located directly to the south at Drove Close. There are direct views into the site from a property located adjacent to the north western boundary of the site, as well as from the residential gardens attached to the properties at Drove Close to the south.</p>	
Historic Environment	<p>The site does not contain and is not within the setting of any nationally designated listed buildings or scheduled monuments, nor is the site within the boundary of the Coombe Bissett Conservation Area. Moreover, no features listed on the local HER are located within or within proximity of the site.</p>	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>A recent 'Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Assessment' has not been undertaken for this location. However, the ALC assessment undertaken by Natural England in 2010 for South West England classified agricultural land on this site as 'Very Good'¹⁶. The more recent 'Predictive Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land Assessment' for South West England indicates that the site has a high likelihood (>60%) of being underlain by BMV land¹⁷. In this respect, development of this site is likely to lead to the loss of productive agricultural land. In terms of the water environment, no watercourses pass through the site. The site does not fall within a Source Protection Zone (SPZ) or Drinking Water Safeguard Zone, but it does fall within the South Wessex Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ).</p>	
Community Wellbeing	<p>The site is located north of the village centre and is approximately 650 metres away from Coombe Bissett Stores and Post Office, which is a walkable distance for most people. In this respect, the site is within proximity to the settlement within the neighbourhood area which has the greatest offer of services and facilities. The site is slightly further away from Coombe Bissett C of E School, as well as Coombe Bissett Village Hall (home to recreation ground and playground), which is approximately 1 kilometre away. It is likely that some residents will drive to access these facilities.</p>	
Transportation	<p>The site is located within walking distance to the village centre, and therefore development at this location is less likely to increase reliance on private cars to undertake day-to-day activities within the village. However, as the village itself has limited services and facilities (although it is acknowledged that the settlement is the most well served settlement in the neighbourhood area with respect to services and facilities), it is likely that residents will travel further afield, particularly to Salisbury which has a great variety of services and facilities, including a train station. The site is accessible from the existing road network, however the turning from Drove Lane is relatively narrow and steep, and adjacent to a semi-mature tree. With reference to local public transport networks, the site is located approximately 400 metres from the closest bus stop, the Fox and Goose on the A354, which is operated by Damory and links Coombe Bissett to Salisbury, Blandford, and Shaftesbury.</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effect

¹⁶ Natural England (2010): [Agricultural Land Classification Map South West Region \(ALC006\)](#)

¹⁷ Natural England (2017): [Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile \(BMV\) Agricultural Land - Strategic Scale Map South West Region \(ALC018\)](#)

Table 4.3 Site assessment, Site 2

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 2: East of Shutts Lane
	
	<p>An allocation at this site is unlikely to adversely impact any internationally or nationally designated sites for biodiversity. The site does not overlap with a SSSI IRZ for the types of development potentially to be taken forward through the CB&HNP (i.e., residential, or rural residential). There are no BAP priority habitats within the site, however the site is an area of greenfield land (with trees and hedgerows along its boundaries) located within Network Enhancement Zone 1. This is <i>“land connecting existing patches of primary and associated habitats which is likely to be suitable for creation of the primary habitat”</i>.</p>
<p>Climate Change</p>	<p>Development of this site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of Coombe Bissett village and an intensification of uses at this location. As the village itself has limited services and facilities, it is likely that residents will travel further afield to access certain amenities, particularly to Salisbury which has a greater variety of services and facilities. In this respect, development at this site will likely cause an increase in the number of residents travelling to Salisbury via private vehicle, increasing greenhouse gas emissions. However, climate change is a global issue, and the scale of development at Coombe Bissett will not have a significant impact on global emissions. With reference to flood risk issues, this site falls within Flood Zone 1, with a very low risk of fluvial flooding. The site also has a very low risk of surface water flooding.</p>

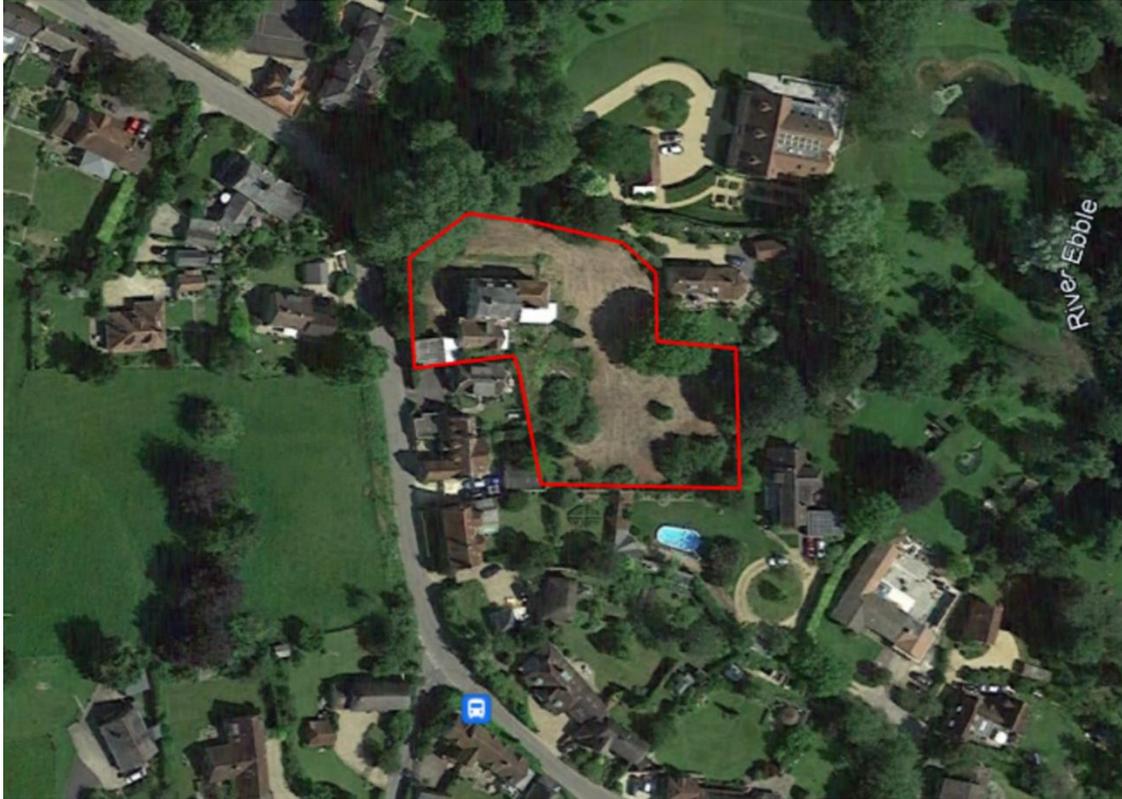
SEA theme	Commentary, Site 2: East of Shutts Lane	
Landscape	The site is within the boundary of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs (CCWWD) AONB, and therefore landscape and visual considerations are a notable constraint to development. Although the site benefits from partial screening by trees and hedgerows, it has a prominent position within the parish given its elevated position. Therefore, development at this site has the potential to impact the character of the village. The site slopes down to the north and is adjacent to the existing settlement boundary to the north and west, and there are some long views to the north and north west.	
Historic Environment	The site does not contain any nationally designated listed buildings or scheduled monuments. However, the land directly to the north east of the site is within the boundary of the Coombe Bissett Conservation Area. Due to the aspect and elevation of the site, there are views across the site towards the village and conservation area. The site is also potentially visible from some locations within the conservation area. A feature listed on the local HER, monument 'undated ditch, Footes House', is located within the site.	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	A recent 'ALC Assessment' has not been undertaken for this location. However, the ALC assessment undertaken by Natural England in 2010 for South West England classified agricultural land on this site as 'Good to Moderate'. The more recent 'BMV Land Assessment' for South West England indicates that the site has a moderate likelihood (20 to 60%) of being underlain by BMV land. In this respect, development of this site has the potential to lead to the loss of productive agricultural land. In terms of the water environment, no watercourses pass through the site. The site does not fall within a SPZ or Drinking Water Safeguard Zone, but it does fall within the South Wessex NVZ.	
Community Wellbeing	The site is located south east of the village centre and is approximately 400 metres away from Coombe Bissett Stores and Post Office, which is a walkable distance for most people. The site is adjacent to Coombe Bissett C of E School, as well as Coombe Bissett Village Hall (home to recreation ground and playground), which are located to the west of the site.	
Transportation	The site is located within walking distance to the village centre, and therefore development at this location is less likely to increase reliance on private cars to undertake day-to-day activities within the village. However, as the village itself has limited services and facilities, it is likely that residents will travel further afield, particularly to Salisbury which has a great variety of services and facilities, including a train station. Access into the south western corner of the site is possible via a narrow single lane track, which extends from Gypsy Lane. There is also potential to establish access into the western section of the site via Shutts Lane, but this is likely to require the removal of trees and vegetation located along the western site boundary. With reference to local public transport networks, the site is located approximately 600 metres from the closest bus stop, the Fox and Goose on the A354. In terms of the Public Right of Way (PRoW) network, the site is adjacent to public byway CBIS8 to the west, which connects to public bridleways CBIS8 and CBIS9 to the south.	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effect

Table 4.4. Site assessment, Site 3

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 3: The Bundy Field (off Thorne Close)
	
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>An allocation at this site is unlikely to adversely impact any internationally or nationally designated sites for biodiversity. The site does not overlap with a SSSI IRZ for the types of development potentially to be taken forward through the CB&HNP (i.e., residential, or rural residential). There are no BAP priority habitats within the site, however the site is a large area of greenfield land (with trees and hedgerows along and within its boundaries) located within a Network Expansion Zone. This is “<i>land beyond the Network Enhancement Zones with potential for expanding, linking / joining networks across the landscape</i>”.</p>
Climate Change	<p>Development of this site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of Coombe Bissett village and an intensification of uses at this location. As the village itself has limited services and facilities, it is likely that residents will travel further afield to access certain amenities, particularly to Salisbury which has a greater variety of services and facilities. In this respect, development at this site will likely cause an increase in the number of residents travelling to Salisbury via private vehicle, increasing greenhouse gas emissions. However, climate change is a global issue, and the scale of development at Coombe Bissett will not have a significant impact on global emissions. With reference to flood risk issues, this site falls within Flood Zone 1, with a very flow risk of fluvial flooding. Most of the site also has a very low risk of surface water flooding, however there is an area of land in the northern extent of the site (south of Church Farm) that has a low to medium risk of surface water flooding.</p>

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 3: The Bundy Field (off Thorne Close)	
Landscape	<p>The site is within the boundary of the CCWWD AONB, although the northern boundary of the site is adjacent to the existing settlement boundary. Nevertheless, development of the whole site would significantly change the character of the settlement and constitute major development within the boundaries of the AONB. The eastern section of the site slopes to the north, whereas the western section of the site is predominantly flat. There are direct views into the site from properties located adjacent to the northern, western, and south eastern site boundaries. Longer views from the site are limited due to its flat topography within the setting of the village, and from visual screening provided by trees and hedgerows along the site boundaries.</p>	
Historic Environment	<p>Although there are no nationally designated listed buildings or scheduled monuments within the site itself, the Grade II listed building 'Church Farmhouse' is located directly to the north. Moreover, the Grade I listed building 'Church of St Michael' is partially visible from some areas of the site. The north eastern extent of the site is within the boundary of the Coombe Bissett Conservation Area. A feature listed on the local HER, monument 'Coombe Bissett' (village with medieval origins), covers the northern extent of the site.</p>	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>A recent 'ALC Assessment' has not been undertaken for this location. However, the ALC assessment undertaken by Natural England in 2010 for South West England classified agricultural land on this site as 'Good to Moderate'. The more recent 'BMV Land Assessment' for South West England indicates that the site has a moderate likelihood (20 to 60%) of being underlain by BMV land. In this respect, development of this site has the potential to lead to the loss of productive agricultural land. In terms of the water environment, no watercourses pass through the site. The site does not fall within a SPZ or Drinking Water Safeguard Zone, but it does fall within the South Wessex NVZ.</p>	
Community Wellbeing	<p>The site is located directly to the south of the village centre and is approximately 300 metres away from Coombe Bissett Stores and Post Office, which is a walkable distance for most people. The site is adjacent to Coombe Bissett C of E School, as well as Coombe Bissett Village Hall (home to recreation ground and playground), which are located to the east of the site.</p>	
Transportation	<p>The site is located within walking distance to the village centre, and therefore development at this location is less likely to increase reliance on private cars to undertake day-to-day activities within the village. However, as the village itself has limited services and facilities, it is likely that residents will travel further afield, particularly to Salisbury which has a great variety of services and facilities, including a train station. The western section of the site benefits from access via a track extending from Thorne Close. Although the site is sensitive to noise pollution from the A354, the hedgerow located along the western site boundary provides a natural sound barrier. With reference to local public transport networks, the site is located approximately 400 metres from the closest bus stop, the Fox and Goose on the A354.</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effect

Table 4.5, Site assessment, Site 4

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 4: The Old Vicarage
	
<p>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</p>	<p>An allocation at this site is unlikely to adversely impact any internationally or nationally designated sites for biodiversity. The site does not overlap with a SSSI IRZ for the types of development potentially to be taken forward through the CB&HNP (i.e., residential, or rural residential). There are no BAP priority habitats within the site, however the site is within a Network Expansion Zone. This is <i>“land beyond the Network Enhancement Zones with potential for expanding, linking / joining networks across the landscape”</i>. Moreover, there are two mature trees at the site entrance and several trees located directly to the north and east of the site which contribute to the local ecological network. According to the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment undertaken for this site¹⁸, the site has potential for breeding birds, commuting, and foraging bats, reptiles, and provides suitable habitat for hedgehogs as well as suitable foraging and feeding habitat for badgers.</p>
<p>Climate Change</p>	<p>Development of this site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of Coombe Bissett village and an intensification of uses at this location. As the village itself has limited services and facilities, it is likely that residents will travel further afield to access certain amenities, particularly to Salisbury which has a greater variety of services and facilities. In this respect, development at this site will likely cause an increase in the number of residents travelling to Salisbury via private vehicle, increasing greenhouse gas emissions. However, climate change is a global issue, and the scale of development at Coombe Bissett will not have a significant impact on global emissions. With reference to flood risk issues, this site falls within Flood Zone 1, with a very low risk of fluvial flooding. The site also has a very low risk of surface water flooding.</p>

¹⁸ Kingfisher Ecology Ltd (2022): [Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment of The Old Vicarage](#)

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 4: The Old Vicarage	
Landscape	The site is within the boundary of the CCWWD AONB, and therefore landscape and visual considerations are a notable constraint to development. However, the site benefits from visual screening by trees and hedgerows along its boundaries and is nestled within the village centre. The site is flat, within the existing settlement boundary, but there are short views into the site from neighbouring properties. Currently, the site is occupied by a former vicarage and associated grounds. An allocation at this site presents an opportunity to reuse previously developed and underutilised land on a site which benefits from a central location within the village.	
Historic Environment	Although there are no nationally designated listed buildings or scheduled monuments within the site itself, the Grade II listed building 'Brookside' is located directly to the north west of the site. Moreover, the whole of the site is within the boundary of the Coombe Bissett Conservation Area. No features listed on the local HER are located within the site, however the north western boundary of the site is adjacent to monument 'Coombe Bissett' (village with medieval origins), and the north eastern boundary of the site is adjacent to monument 'water meadow, east of Coombe Bissett'. Also listed on the HER, building 'The Croft (Palmers Farm)' is located just south of the site.	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	The site is an area of brownfield land. In this respect, new development at this location supports the most efficient use of land within the neighbourhood area. In terms of the water environment, no watercourses pass through the site, however the River Ebble flows just north of the site. The site does not fall within a SPZ or Drinking Water Safeguard Zone, but it does fall within the South Wessex NVZ.	
Community Wellbeing	The site is located directly to the east of the village centre and is approximately 200 metres away from Coombe Bissett Stores and Post Office, which is a walkable distance for most people. The site is located approximately 300 metres away from Coombe Bissett C of E School, as well as Coombe Bissett Village Hall (home to recreation ground and playground).	
Transportation	The site is located within walking distance to the village centre, and therefore development at this location is less likely to increase reliance on private cars to undertake day-to-day activities within the village. However, as the village itself has limited services and facilities, it is likely that residents will travel further afield, particularly to Salisbury which has a great variety of services and facilities, including a train station. The site is adjacent to Homington Road, which provides suitable access. With reference to local public transport networks, the site is located approximately 400 metres from the closest bus stop, the Fox and Goose on the A354. The site is also well connected to the local PRoW network.	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effect

Table 4.6 Site assessment, Site 5

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 5: Rear of Avalon
	
<p>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</p>	<p>An allocation at this site is unlikely to adversely impact any internationally or nationally designated sites for biodiversity. The site does not overlap with a SSSI IRZ for the types of development potentially to be taken forward through the CB&HNP (i.e., residential, or rural residential). There are no BAP priority habitats within the site, however there are trees and hedgerows along and within its boundaries. The northern half of the site is within a Network Expansion Zone. This is <i>“land beyond the Network Enhancement Zones with potential for expanding, linking / joining networks across the landscape”</i>. The southern half of the site is within Network Enhancement Zone 1. This is <i>“land connecting existing patches of primary and associated habitats which is likely to be suitable for creation of the primary habitat”</i>.</p>
<p>Climate Change</p>	<p>Development of this site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of Coombe Bissett village and an intensification of uses at this location. As the village itself has limited services and facilities, it is likely that residents will travel further afield to access certain amenities, particularly to Salisbury which has a greater variety of services and facilities. In this respect, development at this site will likely cause an increase in the number of residents travelling to Salisbury via private vehicle, increasing greenhouse gas emissions. However, climate change is a global issue, and the scale of development at Coombe Bissett will not have a significant impact on global emissions. With reference to flood risk issues, this site falls within Flood Zone 1, with a very low risk of fluvial flooding. Most of the site also has a very low risk of surface water flooding, however the entrance to the site is within an area at high risk of surface water flooding.</p>

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 5: Rear of Avalon	
Landscape	<p>The site is within the boundary of the CCWWD AONB, and therefore landscape and visual considerations are a notable constraint to development. The western half of the site has a more prominent setting in the landscape due to its elevation and sloping topography. Comparatively, the eastern half of the site is flat, relatively screened from view, and is adjacent to the existing settlement boundary. There are short views into the site from neighbouring properties located adjacent to the eastern site boundary. Longer views across the AONB are likely from the western section of the site due to its elevation. The site contains a mixture of brownfield and greenfield land. The eastern half of the site is occupied by outbuildings, as well as areas of hardstanding. Comparatively, the western half of the site contains shrubland and trees.</p>	
Historic Environment	<p>The site does not contain and is not within the setting of any nationally designated listed buildings or scheduled monuments, nor is the site within the boundary of the Coombe Bissett Conservation Area. However, monument 'banks, south of Coombe Bissett' as shown on the HER, is located on the site.</p>	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>A recent 'ALC Assessment' has not been undertaken for this location. However, the ALC assessment undertaken by Natural England in 2010 for South West England classified agricultural land on this site as 'Good to Moderate'. The more recent 'BMV Land Assessment' for South West England indicates that the site has a moderate likelihood (20 to 60%) of being underlain by BMV land. However, as this site is currently not used for farming, and the eastern half of the site is brownfield land, development of this site will not lead to the loss of productive agricultural land. Development in the eastern half of the site would support the most efficient use of previously developed land in the neighbourhood area. Nevertheless, due to the current and former land uses at this site, it has the potential to contain areas of ground contamination. In terms of the water environment, no watercourses pass through the site. The site does not fall within a SPZ or Drinking Water Safeguard Zone, but it does fall within the South Wessex NVZ.</p>	
Community Wellbeing	<p>The site is located directly to the south west of the village centre and is approximately 650 metres away from Coombe Bissett Stores and Post Office, which is a walkable distance for most people. The site is located approximately 1 kilometre away from Coombe Bissett C of E School, as well as Coombe Bissett Village Hall (home to recreation ground and playground). It is likely that some residents will drive to access these facilities. The small-scale employment use on the site could potentially provide some employment opportunities for residents, which is a benefit to the local economy. In this respect, an allocation at this site has the potential to result in the loss of existing employment, although it is unlikely to be significant.</p>	
Transportation	<p>The site is located within walking distance to the village centre, and therefore development at this location is less likely to increase reliance on private cars to undertake day-to-day activities within the village. However, as the village itself has limited services and facilities, it is likely that residents will travel further afield, particularly to Salisbury which has a great variety of services and facilities, including a train station. Access into the north eastern section of the site is possible via the existing road network. However, there are potential safety issues from the turning onto Blandford Road associated with poor visibility and the frequency and speed of passing vehicles. With reference to local public transport networks, the site is located approximately 650 metres from the closest bus stop, the Fox and Goose on the A354.</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effect

Table 4.7 Site assessment, Site 6

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 6: Churchill Place
	
<p>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</p>	<p>An allocation at this site is unlikely to adversely impact any internationally or nationally designated sites for biodiversity. The site does not overlap with a SSSI IRZ for the types of development potentially to be taken forward through the CB&HNP (i.e., residential, or rural residential). There are BAP priority habitats within the site, however the site is an area of greenfield land (with shrubs and hedgerows within and along its boundaries) which falls in a Network Expansion Zone. This is “<i>land beyond the Network Enhancement Zones with potential for expanding, linking / joining networks across the landscape</i>”.</p>
<p>Climate Change</p>	<p>Development of this site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of Coombe Bissett village and an intensification of uses at this location. As the village itself has limited services and facilities, it is likely that residents will travel further afield to access certain amenities, particularly to Salisbury which has a greater variety of services and facilities. In this respect, development at this site will likely cause an increase in the number of residents travelling to Salisbury via private vehicle, increasing greenhouse gas emissions. However, climate change is a global issue, and the scale of development at Coombe Bissett will not have a significant impact on global emissions. With reference to flood risk issues, this site falls within Flood Zone 1, with a very low risk of fluvial flooding. The site also has a very low risk of surface water flooding. However, the land surrounding the site (i.e., the top of Old Blandford Road, leading into Coombe Bissett village centre) is prone to surface water flooding during heavy rainfall events. In this respect, an increase in hardstanding on the site (which is currently an area of greenfield land), has the potential to increase surface water flooding in this location, and more widely within the village centre.</p>

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 6: Churchill Place	
Landscape	<p>The site is within the boundary of the CCWWD AONB, and therefore landscape and visual considerations are a notable constraint to development. The site is within the existing settlement boundary and is bordered by properties on all sides, apart from the north western boundary which is bordered by Old Blandford Road. However, partially due to its historic use as a chalk quarry, the site has an uneven topography, and slopes steeply to the south east towards Blandford Road. In this respect, development at this site could impose upon the properties along the eastern boundary of the site and further afield. Moreover, the property adjacent to the western boundary of the site overlooks the site due to its elevation. Nevertheless, there are some trees around the boundary of the site, which will provide a degree of screening.</p>	
Historic Environment	<p>The site does not contain and is not within the setting of any nationally designated listed buildings or scheduled monuments, nor is the site within the boundary of the Coombe Bissett Conservation Area. However, a feature listed on the local HER, monument 'Coombe Bissett' (village with medieval origins), is located within the site.</p>	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>A recent 'ALC Assessment' has not been undertaken for this location. However, the ALC assessment undertaken by Natural England in 2010 for South West England classified agricultural land on this site as 'Good to Moderate'. The more recent 'BMV Land Assessment' for South West England indicates that the site has a moderate likelihood (20 to 60%) of being underlain by BMV land. The site was historically used as a chalk quarry and then a council storage depot, and therefore development at this site is not likely to result in the loss of productive agricultural land. In terms of the water environment, no watercourses pass through the site. The site does not fall within a SPZ or Drinking Water Safeguard Zone, but it does fall within the South Wessex NVZ.</p>	
Community Wellbeing	<p>The site is located directly to the east of the village centre and is approximately 300 metres away from Coombe Bissett Stores and Post Office, which is a walkable distance for most people. The site is located approximately 700 metres away from Coombe Bissett C of E School, as well as Coombe Bissett Village Hall (home to recreation ground and playground).</p>	
Transportation	<p>The site is located within walking distance to the village centre, and therefore development at this location is less likely to increase reliance on private cars to undertake day-to-day activities within the village. However, as the village itself has limited services and facilities, it is likely that residents will travel further afield, particularly to Salisbury which has a great variety of services and facilities, including a train station. With reference to local public transport networks, the site is located approximately 300 metres from the closest bus stop, the Fox and Goose on the A354.</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effect

Summary of SEA site assessment findings

Table 4.8 Site assessment findings

Site	Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Climate Change	Landscape	Historic Environment	Land, Soil and Water Resources	Community Wellbeing	Transport
1	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Blue	Blue
2	Blue	Yellow	Red	Red	Blue	Green	Yellow
3	Blue	Blue	Red	Red	Blue	Green	Yellow
4	Blue	Yellow	Blue	Red	Green	Green	Yellow
5	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
6	Yellow	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Green	Yellow

Current approach in the CB&HNP and the development of policies

Choice of sites taken forward for the purposes of the CB&HNP

4.14 The CB&HNP seeks to contribute to local housing needs in the neighbourhood area through a combination of allocations, specifically:

- Site 4 ‘The Old Vicarage’ for four dwellings (see Policy AS1)
- Site 1 ‘Kenora Paddock’ for six dwellings (see Policy AS2)
- Site 5 ‘Rear of Avalon (eastern half of the site)’ for six dwellings (see Policy AS3).

4.15 The choice of site allocations has been informed by the findings of the site assessment undertaken for the CB&HNP, consultation events, and the SEA findings. The site-specific policies within the CB&HNP for the proposed site allocations (see Policies AS1 – AS3) contain further detail with respect to design and mitigation considerations which aim to address any potential constraints to development. These aspects are further discussed within the plan appraisal section of the Environmental Report (see **Chapter 5**, below).

4.16 The CB&HNP also states:

“Based on an analysis of these various factors, together with the views and advice of Wiltshire Council and the CC AONB; three sites will be taken forward as provisionally allocated sites. It should be noted that these decisions on site allocations are conditional at this stage and may be subject to change following the Regulation 14 Consultation or independent assessment which affects the suitability of the three provisionally allocated sites.

“The Old Vicarage will be taken forward as a provisionally allocated site into the draft Neighbourhood Plan. It received strong support in the Community Survey (83% Yes or Maybe). It was also considered to be particularly suitable for retirement/downsizing properties, due to its proximity and easy pedestrian access to Coombe Bissett village centre and its amenities.

“Kenora Paddock received strong support in the Community Survey (75% Yes or Maybe). The assessments found the site to be potentially suitable providing

access constraints and visual sensitivity to neighbours was addressed through suitable planning.

“Rear of Avalon (eastern side) also received strong support in the Community Survey (71% Yes or Maybe). Although within the CC AONB, the site is adjacent to the settlement boundary and partially brownfield. Any potential landscape impacts can be sensitively mitigated through appropriate development. It should also be noted that the greenfield western part of the site will not be developed and that this should promote an uplift in biodiversity through appropriate measures.”

4.17 It is recognised that the total number of new dwellings proposed through these allocations is 16 dwellings, slightly short of the residual target of 19 dwellings proposed through Wiltshire Council’s Local Plan Review. In the context of the above, the CB&HNP (through Policy ASD1) supports limited windfall development on infill sites to contribute to local needs and the community is committed to working with local landowners to identify further potential sites for new housing to meet local needs during the plan period.

Neighbourhood plan policies

4.18 To support the implementation of the vision statement for the Neighbourhood Plan, the Regulation 14 version of the CB&HNP puts forward 19 policies to guide new development within the neighbourhood area.

4.19 Policies were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering and are listed below in **Table 4.9**.

Table 4.9 CB&HNP policies

Reference	Policy Name
Housing	
Policy H1	Promoting a more balanced housing stock
Appropriate siting of development	
Policy ASD1	Promoting limited development on allocated and windfall (infill) sites
Policy ASD2	Maintaining a settlement gap between Coombe Bissett and Homington
Policy AS1	The Old Vicarage
Policy AS2	Kenora Paddock
Policy AS3	Rear of Avalon (Eastern half)
Employment	
Policy EM1	Working from Home
Policy EM2	Business in the Countryside
Environment, Design and Heritage	
Policy EDH1	Design
Policy EDH2	Views and Landscape Character
Policy EDH3	The Environment and Biodiversity
Policy EDH4	Energy and lighting

Reference	Policy Name
Policy EDH5	Local Heritage Assets
Flooding and Drainage Management	
Policy FDM1	Flooding and Drainage Management
Sustainable Transport and Road Safety	
Policy STRF1	Road Safety
Policy STRF2	Enabling a 'Walkable Village'
Policy STRF3	Sustainable Transport
Leisure, Wellbeing and Community Facilities	
Policy LWCF1	Local Green Spaces
Policy LWCF2	Community facilities

5. What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?

Introduction

5.1 The aim of this chapter is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the Regulation 14 version of the CB&HNP. This chapter presents:

- An appraisal of the current version (i.e., the Regulation 14 version) of the CB&HNP under the seven SEA theme headings.
- The overall conclusions at this current stage.

Appraisal of earlier versions of Neighbourhood Plan policies

5.2 Prior to the finalisation of the Regulation 14 version of the CB&HNP, the SEA team undertook an appraisal of earlier versions of CB&HNP policies. At that stage, the following recommendations were made to plan makers for further improving the sustainability performance of the CB&HNP.

- Consideration of the SEA scoping responses and enhancing policies with any recommendations or suggestions from the consultees.
- Consideration of the recommendations within the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) on the Pre-Regulation 14 Draft Plan as prepared by Wiltshire Council. Specifically, those within Table 1 of the report which are listed against the policies which have been screened in through the HRA for appropriate assessment (which, as stated in paragraph 5.2 of the report, is to be completed at Regulation 14 consultation by Wiltshire Council).
- Consideration of the findings of the Site Options and Assessment (SOA) report as prepared by AECOM, reflecting upon the potential constraints to development as highlighted in Table ES1 and how these could be addressed through policy provisions.
- Encouraging initiatives which support retrofits to existing buildings wherever practicable (see Historic England's guidance for retrofitting historic buildings, accessible [here](#)). This could potentially be included within Policy EDH4 'Energy and Lighting' alongside the range of measures which have already been included with regards to delivering energy efficiency through design, or within Policy EM2 'Business in the Countryside' alongside the measures which are currently included.
- With reference to the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets (including views into and out of these features), development proposals could be encouraged to complete a proportionate heritage impact assessment at the planning application stage to help to understand the significance of the heritage features and the potential impacts of new development areas. This will ensure that appropriate mitigation is provided to assuage any concerns by Historic England.

- For any areas of land which have been identified for their archaeological importance, new development proposals could undertake archaeological evaluations prior to construction, with any findings appropriately reported and documented on the local historic environment record in line with best practice guidance.
- Potential to include a statement within a relevant policy which encourages proposals to source construction materials locally and use recyclable materials wherever possible. Whilst this is difficult to enforce, it will demonstrate a positive and proactive response to the climate emergency by supporting proposals which seek to reduce embedded carbon and work towards delivering carbon neutrality through design.
- Potential to enhance Policy EDH4 'Energy and Lighting' with additional wording with regards to protecting the Parish's dark night skies through limiting light pollution from new development. For example, *"Development proposals in Coombe Bissett and Homington Parish should seek to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light sources. There will be a presumption against street lighting of new developments or any other lighting that affects the dark night skies of the Parish."* This is with a view to supporting the rural character of the Parish, enhancing tranquillity, supporting health and wellbeing, facilitating energy efficiency, and limiting impacts on wildlife. Additionally, perhaps Policy EDH4 could also refer to the documents indicated in the SEA scoping response from the Cranborne Chase AONB Team (see Paragraph 12).
- With regards to the sensitivity of lichen communities to air pollution (as raised by the Cranborne Chase AONB Team), new development areas could be encouraged to incorporate any appropriate mitigation measures as listed within local air quality action plans and the Wiltshire Air Quality Strategy (2019-2024). However, in the absence of any significant air quality issues within the Parish, the current policy provisions which focus on protecting trees and open spaces (i.e., natural sequesters and pollution buffers in the landscape) have indirect positive impacts to local air quality.
- Enhancing Policy FDM1 'Flooding and Drainage Management' to state that all proposals should "ensure that appropriate drainage infrastructure is provided to serve new development areas, to not overbear the existing network or add to difficulties with local water supplies, sewerage and sewage treatment and waste disposal."

Approach to this appraisal

- 5.3 The appraisal of the Regulation 14 version of the CB&HNP is presented below and is structured under the seven SEA themes.
- 5.4 For each SEA theme, 'significant effects' of the Regulation 14 version of the CB&HNP on the baseline are predicted and evaluated. Account is taken of the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of effects as far as possible. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment, as appropriate.
- 5.5 Every effort is made to identify / evaluate effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high-level nature of the CB&HNP. The ability

to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline and the nature of future planning applications. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects to ensure all assumptions are explained. In many instances it is not possible to predict significant effects, but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) in more general terms.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 5.6 To ensure the European Directives were operable in the UK after the end of the EU transition period, changes were made by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. In this respect, Special Protection Areas (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 territory¹⁹. The network comprises the designated sites already designated under the Nature Directives (i.e. 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC), along with any additional sites which are designated under the 2019 Regulations. The national site network continues to operate in parallel with other designations and contributes towards the UK's international commitments for protected areas.
- 5.7 In the context of the above, the HRA Screening completed for the pre-Regulation 14 draft CB&HNP²⁰ concluded that the plan has *“the potential to lead to likely significant effects on one European site and its qualifying features in-combination with other plans and projects”*. This is due to the site allocation Policies AS1 (The Old Vicarage), AS2 (Kenora Paddock) and AS3 (Rear of Avalon (Eastern Half)) and wider CB&HNP policies that promote residential and tourism development in the plan area – ASD1 (Promoting limited development on allocated and windfall (infill) sites), EM1 (Working from Home) and EM2 (Business in the Countryside). The HRA Screening also outlines concerns about development in proximity to the River Ebble, which flows eastwards of the neighbourhood area and into the River Avon. In this respect, Policy FDM1 (Flooding the Drainage Movement) indicates all development proposals will need to consider how design and construction may affect the River Ebble through run-off and drainage and proposals must not result in temporary or permanent adverse effects on the watercourses in the neighbourhood area.
- 5.8 Since the completion of the HRA Screening for the pre-Regulation 14 draft plan, Natural England²¹ has recently notified more local authorities that certain developments in some water catchment areas around internationally important wildlife sites cannot go ahead unless they are nutrient neutral, which extends to the River Avon SAC. In this respect, the HRA will likely need to be revisited in due course once the guidance on the calculation methodology is issued by Natural England via Wiltshire Council. HRA Appropriate Assessment (AA) is scheduled to be completed by Wiltshire Council during the Regulation 14 consultation on the CB&HNP. In this respect, it is anticipated that the findings of the AA (which may include mitigation suggestions to address any potential impacts to European designated sites from the plan proposals) will be

¹⁹ DEFRA (2021): [Policy Paper: Changes to the Habitats Regulations 2017](#)

²⁰ Wiltshire Council (2021) 'HRA of Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan, Pre-Regulation 14 Draft', contributing to the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan.

²¹ GOV.UK (March 2022): [Nutrient pollution: reducing the impact on protected sites \(Policy Paper\)](#)

considered by plan makers during updates to the Neighbourhood Plan (prior to submission).

- 5.9 With respect to nationally designated sites for biodiversity, the proposed site allocations within Policies AS1-AS3 do not overlap with SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) for the types and scales of development that are likely to be brought forward during the plan period. As such, the site allocations under policies AS1-AS3 are unlikely to impact nationally designated biodiversity sites.
- 5.10 In terms of habitat types, none of the site allocations under Policies AS1-AS3 have Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats on site, however the wider neighbourhood area has areas of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, deciduous woodland, good quality semi-improved grassland, lowland calcareous grassland, and lowland meadows. The three allocated sites are all within a Network Expansion Zone, which means they have the potential to expand, link and join networks across the landscape. Additionally, the southern half of the site allocated under Policy AS3 (Rear of Avalon (Eastern Half)) is within Network Enhancement Zone 1, which is likely to be suitable for the creation of primary habitat. Moreover, the site allocation under Policy AS1 (The Old Vicarage) has multiple trees onsite, including two mature trees at the entrance, that contribute to the local biodiversity. To address these sensitivities, Policy AS1 (The Old Vicarage) indicates that a landscaping scheme should be implemented to provide an improvement in biodiversity, which includes the retention of important trees and hedgerows and the additional planting of trees and hedgerows to enhance the biodiversity value of the site. Policies AS2 (Kenora Paddock) and AS3 (Rear of Avalon (Eastern Half)) also incorporate landscaping to improve biodiversity value on the allocated sites, with Policy AS2 (Kenora Paddock) stating that proposals should retain important trees and hedgerows and plant additional trees and hedgerows.
- 5.11 More broadly with regards to addressing ecological sensitivities within the neighbourhood area, Policies EDH1 (Design), EDH2 (Views and Landscape Character), EDH3 (The Environment and Biodiversity) and EDH4 (Energy and lighting) work to ensure development is sensitive to the surrounding natural environment and local character, taking into consideration ways in which the environment and biodiversity can be enhanced, and development can avoid impacts on the countryside. Protecting the natural environment through these policies will help safeguard habitats and natural features which contribute to local ecological networks and connections to designated sites for biodiversity within proximity to the neighbourhood area.
- 5.12 Published in July 2021, paragraph 174 (d) within the revised NPPF²² indicates that planning policies and decisions should work to improve the natural and local environment by *'minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks'*. In addition to this, the 25 Year Environment Plan²³ and the Environment Act²⁴ also focus on the net gain principle and have policies and goals in place to achieve this. In this respect, Policy EDH3 (The Environment and Biodiversity) indicates that development will be supported where it contributes net gains in biodiversity. It

²² DLUHC (2021): [Revised National Planning Policy Framework](#)

²³ DEFRA (2018): [A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment](#)

²⁴ GOV.UK (2021): [Environment Act](#)

is anticipated that the provisions of this policy (in its current form) are likely to enhance the natural environment of the neighbourhood area.

- 5.13 Further supporting ecological networks within the neighbourhood area, Policies EDH2 (Views and Landscape Character), EDH3 (The Environment and Biodiversity) and LWCF1 (Local Green Spaces) also safeguard and enhance biodiversity in the neighbourhood area. This will be achieved through conserving landscape features such as hedgerows, trees, woodlands, and watercourses, giving the highest priority to conservation and enhancement of the environment (which includes the features of the Cranborne Chase and Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), contributing to the local ecology with measures to support a biodiversity net gain, extending and maintaining tree cover, and protecting designated green spaces.
- 5.14 Overall, Neighbourhood Plan policies should help ensure that ecological sensitivities are appropriately considered during the planning, construction, and operational phases for new development proposals which come forward during the plan period, whilst also delivering net gains.

Climate Change

- 5.15 Any development in the neighbourhood area will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of the neighbourhood area. Therefore, the extent to which the CB&HNP has the potential to support climate change mitigation efforts is linked to encouraging development at locations in closer proximity to the existing services and facilities in the area. Coombe Bissett has a greater variety of services and facilities than Homington in this respect, and all the proposed site allocations (AS1 - The Old Vicarage; AS2 - Kenora Paddock; and AS3 - Rear of Avalon (Eastern Half)) are within walking distance of Coombe Bissett village centre. This demonstrates the site allocations have the potential to limit the need to travel outside of the neighbourhood area for some day-to-day activities, as there is more readily achievable access to local facilities and activities. This in turn would reduce associated greenhouse gas emissions. However, to access a greater variety of services, including supermarkets, travelling outside of the neighbourhood area to neighbouring settlements such as Salisbury is likely to continue, increasing greenhouse gas emissions associated with travelling.
- 5.16 Further contributing to climate change mitigation efforts, Policies STRF2 (Enabling a 'Walkable Village') and STRF3 (Sustainable Transport) seek to further mitigate the effects of greenhouse gas emissions on climate change by introducing measures to reduce emissions associated with transport. This includes encouraging active transportation methods, such as walking and cycling, by integrating pathways and footpaths into development and resisting the loss of existing footpaths, bridleways, and byways, and including infrastructure to support sustainable transport, such as cycle racks and charging points for electric vehicles (EVs).
- 5.17 In addition to policies mitigating the effects of transport emissions, Policy EDH1 (Design) seeks to mitigate the effects of climate change in the design stage – outlining that local and traditional building materials should be used in development, which includes the recycling and reuse of local materials. In addition, Policy EDH4 (Energy and Lighting) sets out to ensure new

development supports a low carbon future by ensuring development aims to have a minimal environmental impact in terms of natural resources used. Schemes like rain harvesting, greywater recycling and renewable energy systems will be encouraged in both old and new development. This will encourage the most efficient use of energy within buildings. Furthermore, Policy EDH5 (Local Heritage Assets) stipulates the retrofitting of heritage assets is welcome where the guidance from Historic England is followed. This will likely have indirect positive effects to the energy efficiency of existing buildings within the neighbourhood area.

5.18 With reference to adapting to the effects of climate change, an overview of the flood risk considerations for the proposed site allocations through AS1-AS3 is provided below:

- The Old Vicarage (AS1): this site is within Flood Zone 1 and is at low risk of fluvial flooding and surface water flooding. Although the site is not particularly sensitive from a flood risk perspective, Policy AS1 indicates that development proposals should incorporate an extensive water drainage and spring occurrence assessment and the effect of the development on them and on neighbouring houses. Development should also deploy appropriate mitigation measures, including sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) and suitable permeable materials.
- Kenora Paddock (AS2): this site is within Flood Zone 1 and is at low risk of fluvial flooding and surface water flooding. Policy AS2 does not identify any additional work, research and mitigation measures that development proposals should undertake and deploy with regards to flooding on this site. However, as the site is wholly within Flood Zone 1, it is not anticipated that fluvial flood risk issues present a constraint to development at this location.
- Rear of Avalon (Eastern Half) (AS3): this site is within Flood Zone 1 and is at low risk of fluvial flooding and surface water flooding, with the entrance to the site at low to high risk of surface water flooding. Additionally, neighbouring properties to the east are within an area of high surface water flood risk. To address these concerns, Policy AS3 indicates that development proposals should incorporate an extensive water drainage and spring occurrence assessment and the effect of the development on them and on neighbouring houses. Development should also deploy appropriate mitigation measures, including sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) and suitable permeable materials.

5.19 With further reference to adapting to the effects of climate change, Policy FDM1 (Flooding, Drainage and Water Management) sets out to ensure that development requiring planning permission considers and addresses potential flood risk. Development within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and in known spring areas will only be permitted where anti-flooding measures are incorporated in development and mitigates against any potential negative impacts on the water quality of the River Ebble. Additionally, the protection of open spaces and habitats within the neighbourhood area through the provisions of Policy LWCF1 (Local Green Spaces) and Policy EDH3 (The Environment and Biodiversity) will safeguard natural carbon sequesters located within the landscape (i.e. trees and hedgerows). These policy provisions will positively respond to the potential effects of climate change (particularly from extreme weather events) through

providing summer shading and shelter and reducing surface water run-off issues. It is also anticipated that the provisions of the NPPF and Local Plan policy will help to guide development away from the areas at highest risk of flooding.

Landscape

- 5.20 The CB&HNP includes policies to protect the integrity of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB. This includes Policies ASD1 (Promoting limited development on allocated and windfall (infill) sites) and EDH1 (Design), which states the character of the landscape should not be adversely affected, should experience net enhancement, and the recommendations outlined in publications by the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB should be met. Additionally, Policies EDH2 (Views and Landscape Character) and EDH3 (The Environment and Biodiversity) demonstrate development will be supported where it conserves the key characteristics of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB, including amenity value, visual quality, natural beauty and the wildlife and cultural heritage of the designation. Policy EDH4 (Energy and Lighting) seeks to conserve the status of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB dark skies reserve by ensuring an appropriate lighting scheme is included within development proposals. Policy STRF1 (Road Safety) ensures the rural character of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB is safeguarded, and Policy LWCF2 (Community facilities) indicates infrastructure should be sensitive to the designation by identifying and addressing potential adverse impacts.
- 5.21 The proposed site allocations through policies AS1-AS3 are all within the boundaries of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB, which (as discussed above) is recognised as a key constraint to development. In this context, an overview of the landscape and villagescape considerations for each proposed site allocation (and how these have been mitigated through policy provisions) is provided below:
- The Old Vicarage (AS1): although this site is within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB, there is screening along its boundaries which will help mitigate against the visual impact of development on this designation. Additionally, the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Team has indicated that development will have a limited visual impact at this location. As the site is located within the existing settlement and on a brownfield site, development is less likely to result in the loss of land better suited for other purposes, such as agriculture. The policy provisions for this site (AS1) stipulate that it is allocated for a maximum of four dwellings, and development should include a landscaping scheme to protect the residential amenities of existing residents, improve biodiversity and minimise noise impacts. This includes retaining important trees and hedgerows and planting additional trees and hedgerows on the boundaries, further enhancing the screening to and from neighbouring properties. Additionally, the design of the development should be complimentary to the visual character of the Coombe Bissett Conservation Area, which is also an important contributor to the setting and character of the site (and village).
 - Kenora Paddock (AS2): although this site is within the Cranborne Chase and Wiltshire Downs AONB, there is screening along its northern, eastern,

and western site boundaries which will help mitigate against the visual impact of development on this designation. Additionally, feedback from the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Team has also indicated that the existing buildings provide screening at this site and any landscape impacts could potentially be mitigated. The site is located adjacent to the existing settlement boundary and there are direct views into the site from nearby properties to the north-west and the south. Additionally, development at this site would result in the loss of greenfield land, despite the small size of the site. The policy provisions for this site (AS2) indicate that it is allocated for a maximum of six dwellings; development should include a landscaping scheme to protect the residential amenities of existing residents, improve biodiversity and minimise noise impacts. This includes retaining important trees and hedgerows and planting additional trees and hedgerows on the boundaries, which will provide screening to and from neighbouring properties.

- Rear of Avalon (Eastern Half) (AS3): this site is within the Cranborne Chase and Wiltshire Downs AONB and is more prominent in the landscape due to its higher elevation and sloping topography in the western part. However, the eastern part is flat and relatively screened from view and is located adjacent to the existing settlement boundary. The site can be seen from neighbouring properties to the east, and it is likely the western half of the site can be seen from other locations in the Cranborne Chase and Wiltshire Downs AONB due to its elevation. It is likely that this site falls within the visual threshold of vista 2 which is identified as an important view within the CB&HNP. As the site is adjacent to the existing built-up areas and is only proposed for six dwellings, the character of any views into the village from surrounding areas are unlikely to be significantly impacted as a result from new development at this location. The eastern half of the site (where development is proposed) is brownfield land, so development would not result in the loss of land better suited for other purposes. Additionally, the brownfield sections are redundant and underutilised, so new development at this location has the potential to improve the character and amenity of the site. The policy provisions for this site (AS3) indicate that development should include a landscaping scheme to protect the residential amenities of existing residents, improve biodiversity and minimise noise impacts.

5.22 Landscape and villagescape sensitivities are further reflected by CB&HNP policies and proposals which focus on protecting and enhancing landscape and villagescape character. Policy ASD1 (Promoting limited development on allocated and windfall (infill) sites) supports development where it does not lead to the increased coalescence between other surrounding settlements. This is further emphasised in Policy ASD2 (Maintaining a settlement gap between Coombe Bissett and Homington) which indicates development that could detract from the open character and settlement gap between Coombe Bissett and Homington should not be permitted. Policy EDH1 (Design) indicates development should not exceed two storeys in order to maintain the rural character of the landscape. Policy EDH2 (Views and Landscape Character) outlines the need for development to be in line with the existing settlement patterns, maintaining the status of the settlements in the landscape and actively working to conserve landscape features. Policy EDH3 (The Environment and Biodiversity) outlines development should include measures to conserve,

restore and/or enhance the landscape, and Policy LWCF1 (Local Green Spaces) seeks to conserve and enhance identified local green spaces. Alongside the Design Code²⁵ (see Policy EDH1: Design), which contributes to the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan and accompanies the plan at Regulation 14 consultation, these policies will help to facilitate opportunities for high quality design and layout to the benefit of landscape and village character.

Historic Environment

5.23 The neighbourhood area has a rich historic environment, including one Grade I listed building, 35 Grade II listed buildings, one Grade II* listed building, five scheduled monuments, two conservation areas, and locally important buildings and structures as recorded on the local historic environment record (HER). With regards to the proposed site allocations within Policies AS1-AS3, the key heritage constraints and considerations for development proposals are identified as follows:

- The Old Vicarage (AS1): there are no designated historic environment assets on the site itself, however the Grade II listed building 'Brookside' is located directly north-west. Additionally, the whole site is within the Coombe Bissett Conservation Area. Three local HER entries are within proximity to the site, including the Coombe Bissett 'monument' to the north-west, the 'water meadow' to the north-east and 'The Croft' to the south. The policy provision for this site indicates development should incorporate mitigation measures on local historic assets and must be subject to a detailed heritage assessment. It is anticipated that the detailed heritage assessment will provide further input into the potential heritage value of the site, ensuring that proposals appropriately reflect these sensitivities within the design of the scheme.
- Kenora Paddock (AS2): there are no designated historic environment assets on or within proximity to the site, nor are there any local HER entries. Additionally, the site is not within the Coombe Bissett Conservation Area. As such, historic environment considerations are not considered to be a constraint to development at this location.
- Rear of Avalon (Eastern Half) (AS3): there are no designated historic environment assets on or within proximity to the site. The site does have a local HER entry within its boundary – the 'banks, south of Coombe Bissett'. The site is not within the Coombe Bissett Conservation Area. Due to the location of development on existing underutilised areas of brownfield land within the site boundary, it is anticipated that regenerating these areas has the potential to contribute to the setting of the village indirectly and positively. Historic environment considerations are not considered to be a significant constraint to development at this location.

5.24 New development within the neighbourhood area shall also be expected to be taken forward in conjunction with the provisions of the Design Code prepared to support the CB&HNP (see policy EDH1: Design). Given this document sets out a comprehensive range of provisions relating to the built environment, this will help provide an appropriate basis for the conservation and enhancement of the

²⁵ AECOM (2019) [Coombe Bissett and Homington Design Guide - FINAL](#)

historic environment surrounding any new developments which may be brought forward during the plan period.

- 5.25 Historic environment sensitivities are further reflected by CB&HNP policies and proposals. Policy EDH5 (Local Heritage Assets) seeks to ensure that local heritage assets are conserved and enhanced. For example, development proposals within the conservation areas or those that are likely to impact on local heritage should have a heritage assessment undertaken to fully understand the potential impact that could be experienced. Additionally, retrofitting of heritage assets is welcome where the guidance from Historic England is followed, and areas of land that have been identified for their archaeological importance should have archaeological evaluations undertaken before construction, with findings appropriately reported and documented.
- 5.26 More broadly, delivering net gains in biodiversity and facilitating green infrastructure enhancements can have beneficial impacts on the historic environment through enhancing the setting of assets. Key policies include EDH1 (Design), EDH2 (Views and Landscape Character), EDH3 (The Environment and Biodiversity) and LWCF1 (Local Green Spaces), which work to ensure development is sensitive to the surrounding natural environment and local character, taking into consideration ways in which the environment and biodiversity can be enhanced, and development can avoid impacts on the landscape. These policies also encourage the conservation of landscape features, which will enhance the setting of historic environment assets in the neighbourhood area.

Land, Soil and Water Resources

- 5.27 Although a detailed agricultural land classification assessment has not been undertaken for the neighbourhood area, it is noted in the predictive land quality assessment that the undeveloped sections in the area have a moderate (20-60%) and high (>60%) likelihood of containing best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land. This would indicate that the proposed site allocations within the Regulation 14 version of the CB&HNP have the potential to result in the permanent loss of areas of productive agricultural land. However, the site allocations under policies AS1 (The Old Vicarage) and AS3 (Rear of Avalon (Eastern Half)) are partially or wholly brownfield land and therefore will not lead to the loss of productive agricultural land and promote the most efficient use of land at these locations. Therefore, only the site allocation under Policy AS2 (Kenora Paddock) has the potential to lead to the loss of productive agricultural land, which cannot be mitigated. However, Policy ASD1 (Promoting limited development on allocated and windfall (infill) sites) sets out the intention of conserve and enhance agricultural land of Grade 3 and above, and mitigation measures should be taken to provide a net enhancement for developed land of lower agricultural grade.
- 5.28 It is noted that the site allocation under policy AS3 (Rear of Avalon (Eastern Half)) is likely to contain areas of ground contamination due to the current and former land uses at this site. In acknowledgement of this contamination, the policy for this site indicates an assessment of potential contamination and remedial measures should be undertaken before development begins. It is important to note that all the proposed site allocations through Policies AS1-AS3 are all within or adjacent to the settlement boundary, which will help to

safeguard the open countryside from inappropriate development and protect natural features in the rural parts of the neighbourhood area.

- 5.29 The CB&HNP also seeks to protect the open countryside from inappropriate development. Key policies include policy EDH1 (Design), EDH2 (Views and Landscape Character), EDH3 (The Environment and Biodiversity) and LWCF1 (Local Green Spaces), which seek to ensure development is considerate of local character, environment and key characteristics like views and vistas and green spaces. While these policies do not specifically seek to address land, soil and water resources, the policies will indirectly help promote and protect these resources, which will help support the capacity of the landscape and the neighbourhood area to regulate soil and water quality.
- 5.30 With further regards to water quality, none of the site allocations under policies AS1-AS3 have a watercourse passing through them, although the River Ebble flows to the north of site allocation under Policy AS1 (The Old Vicarage). None of the sites under Policies AS1-AS3 are within a SPZ but they are all within the South Wessex NVZ. The site allocations under Policies AS1 and AS3 indicate development will be permitted where there has been an assessment of water drainage and its possible effect on surrounding properties and appropriate mitigation measures have been considered, including SuDS. Policy FDM1 (Flooding, Drainage and Water Management) ensures that development requiring planning permission considers and addresses any potential flood risk from all sources on site as well as for surrounding buildings and the surrounding environment. This policy in conjunction with site specific policies AS1 and AS3 demonstrates that impacts on water quality should be appropriately mitigated.
- 5.31 Regarding mineral resources, the neighbourhood area does not overlap with a mineral safeguarding designation or any mineral policies under the Wiltshire and Swindon's Mineral Strategy. Neither are there any significant minerals or waste sites operating within the area. As such, it is not considered likely that the proposed site allocations would result in the sterilisation of mineral resources.

Community Wellbeing

- 5.32 With reference to new housing, the CB&HNP is seeking to provide a thriving and supportive community and to protect the rural landscapes surrounding the area. The plan allocates three sites for housing development under policies AS1-AS3. The choice of site allocations has been informed by the findings of the site assessments undertaken for the CB&HNP, consultation events, and the SEA findings. This is further discussed within **Chapter 4** of the Environmental Report, presented above.
- 5.33 As the site allocations are within proximity to the Coombe Bissett village centre, the neighbourhood plan will facilitate new development in locations of the neighbourhood area that will have the best access to a greater variety of services and facilities. Whilst the site allocations under Policy AS2 (Kenora Paddock) and AS3 (Rear of Avalon (Eastern Half)) are located slightly further from the village centre than the site allocation under Policy AS1 (The Old Vicarage), the site-specific policies encourage proposals to improve pedestrian access to the village centre from the sites. This has the potential to encourage

active travel and connectivity – which has a positive impact on community wellbeing by improving physical health by providing opportunities to walk and cycle, and mental wellbeing by increasing access to services that promote social interaction.

- 5.34 It is recognised that the total number of new dwellings proposed through these allocations is 16 dwellings, slightly short of the residual target of 19 dwellings proposed through Wiltshire Council's Local Plan Review. In the context of the above, the CB&HNP (through Policy ASD1) supports limited windfall development on infill sites to contribute to local needs and are committed to working with local landowners to identify further potential sites for new housing to meet local needs during the plan period.
- 5.35 Further supporting quality of life and social inclusion, the housing policies of the CB&HNP set out provisions to address the key issues associated with housing in the area. This includes (but is not limited to): ensuring houses meet the needs of young families or older people looking to downsize and addressing the shortfall of affordable housing. A key policy in this regard is H1 (Promoting a More Balanced Housing Stock), which outlines that development proposals should detail how they have addressed the needs of older people, the needs of families and younger people, the provision of affordable housing, and the needs and infrastructure requirements of those wishing to build their own houses. These provisions will lead to positive impacts with respect to the Community Wellbeing SEA theme through encouraging and facilitating new development which meets specific local needs.
- 5.36 A key part of the vision of the CB&HNP is to provide a thriving and supportive community that caters for all demographics, residents, and visitors alike. Key policies in this respect include Policy STRF1: Road Safety; STRF2: Enabling a 'Walkable Village'; and STRF3: Sustainable Transport which provide for increased and improved pedestrian access within and around the neighbourhood area to enable safe and accessible walking routes that provide access to amenities. The leisure, well-being, and community facilities policies (LWCF1: Local Green Spaces; and LWCF2: Community facilities) outline designated local green spaces and ensure their safety (thus safeguarding their community wellbeing value), as well as outlining how new or upgraded community facilities should promote natural features within development and provide spaces for interaction. These policies will lead to positive impacts in terms of community wellbeing, by supporting the protection and enhancement of local green spaces and existing community facilities, which allows for social interaction within the community. Supporting active and sustainable transportation to access these amenities will also enhance community wellbeing by encouraging walking and cycling or public transportation with other members of the community.
- 5.37 The CB&HNP also seeks to support the local economy. This is demonstrated through Policies EM1 (Working from Home) and EM2 (Business in the Countryside). These policies work to ensure the infrastructure is in place to support working from home (including full-fibre broadband connection in new homes) and development supports small-scale businesses that enhance the community experience, such as cafes or rural businesses and tourist and visitor facilities. The provision of appropriate broadband infrastructure is particularly important given the changing working practices which have been observed

during the pandemic. This supports more flexible and hybrid working practices which are more likely to continue moving forward.

5.38 The CB&HNP policies also have a strong emphasis on delivering public realm improvements, including green infrastructure provision. Green infrastructure provides space for recreation and relaxation, and access to nature has been evidenced to improve people's health and wellbeing, through encouraging healthy outdoor recreation and relaxation²⁶. Key policies in this respect include policies LWCF1 (Local Green Spaces), STRF2 (Enabling a 'Walkable Village'), EDH3 (The Environment and Biodiversity) and EDH2 (Views and Landscape Character), which all emphasise the importance of the natural environment for health and wellbeing. These policies will support physical and mental health and wellbeing of the local community.

Transportation

5.39 The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced the way people travel in the UK. During the lockdowns, there was a shift away from sustainable transportation methods like buses and trains to active travel methods like walking and cycling. According to the National Travel Attitudes Study, 94% of respondents indicated it was likely they would continue to rely on active travel methods, like walking and cycling, following the termination of travel restrictions²⁷. As such, the baseline for future travel is likely to be different for each individual in the UK due to changing behaviours and opinions.

5.40 With regards to the local transport network, the CB&HNP is not connected to the rail network. Bus services pass through the neighbourhood area and provide connections to neighbouring settlements including Salisbury, Blandford, and Shaftesbury – although services are infrequent. It is therefore likely that residents will continue to rely on private vehicles to undertake day-to-day activities within the neighbourhood area. The A354 passes through the centre of Coombe Bissett, and the C12 passes through Coombe Bissett and Homington. Both routes carry considerable traffic. It is likely that issues associated with congestion will experience growth due to the increased number of vehicles on the road as a result of development. The CB&HNP indicates that congestion and unsafe roads (narrow and/or lacking pavements) have decreased the number of residents walking or cycling throughout the neighbourhood area. Additionally, there are specific road safety issues related to the school in Coombe Bissett – there is no designated drop off and collection point for students and parents and as such Shutts Lane gets congested with cars stopping along the byway to get children to school.

5.41 Nonetheless, in light of the issues presented above, all sites allocated under Policies AS1-AS3 are located within walking distance to Coombe Bissett village centre. In this regard, development at these locations is less likely to increase reliance on private vehicles to engage in local activities or access the village services and facilities. The Old Vicarage site allocation under Policy AS1 indicates development proposals will be accepted provided they allow pedestrian access to the Coombe Bissett centre via pavements, meet the requirements of Wiltshire Council Highways to ensure safe access, and provide a contribution towards road safety measures from Shutts Lane to the

²⁶ Natural England (2021): [Green Infrastructure Network Framework](#)

²⁷ Department for Transport (2020): [National Travel Attitudes Study: Wave 4 \(Provisional\)](#)

Homington Road opposite Water Lane. The site allocation policies for Kenora Paddock (AS2) and Rear of Avalon (Eastern Half) (AS3) indicate development proposals will be approved where the requirements of Wiltshire Council Highways are met to ensure safe access, and development gain from the site should fund road safety to enable safe active transportation options to the centre of Coombe Bissett. These policies are likely to have positive impacts in relation to the Transportation SEA theme as they encourage active travel between the sites and the village centre, which is the location in the neighbourhood area which has the greatest provision of services and facilities.

- 5.42 In addition to the site-specific policies, the CB&HNP includes policies that will encourage sustainable transport links and improve road safety. Policy STRF1 (Road Safety) encourages road safety in the parish, Policy STRF2 (Enabling a 'Walkable Village') encourages active transportation and the use of the footpath and pavement network, and Policy STRF2 (Sustainable Transport) encourages the use of sustainable transport, including the provision of charging points for electric vehicles, including mobility scooters. The provisions of these policies are likely to encourage a modal shift from the use of private vehicles to sustainable methods of travel. While it is accepted that the neighbourhood area is relatively poorly served by public transport options and services and facilities, these policies seek to address some of the transport challenges within the community.

Conclusions at this current stage

- 5.43 In the context of the above, the assessment has concluded that the Regulation 14 version of the CB&HNP is likely to have positive effects in relation to the 'Community Wellbeing' SEA theme. This principally links to the CB&HNP's support for high-quality development proposals in accessible locations which deliver suitable and appropriate housing for the local community (via a range of types and tenures). The CB&HNP also seeks to safeguard and improve the availability of services, facilities and amenities, and support opportunities for local employment. These policy provisions will support social inclusion, and community and economic vitality. The CB&HNP is also likely to facilitate improvements to the public realm (including through green infrastructure enhancements) and encourage healthy outdoor recreation and relaxation. These policy provisions will support the quality of life of residents.
- 5.44 The CB&HNP is also likely to have positive effects in relation to the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' SEA theme by encouraging proposals to ensure development is sensitive to the surrounding natural environment and local character, taking into consideration ways in which the environment and biodiversity can be enhanced, and development can avoid impacts. This includes conserving natural features such as hedgerows, trees, woodlands, and watercourses, giving the highest priority to conservation and enhancement of the environment, contributing to the local ecology with measures to deliver biodiversity net gains, and protecting designated green spaces. However, the conclusions of the HRA screening process state that the CB&HNP has "*the potential to lead to likely significant effects on one European site and its qualifying features in-combination with other plans and projects*". This is due to the site allocation policies and wider CB&HNP policies that promote residential and tourism development in the plan area. In this respect, it is anticipated that the Neighbourhood Plan will consider and apply any recommendations which are

put forward within the HRA Appropriate Assessment stage, which is being completed alongside the Regulation 14 consultation. These recommendations are expected to be included within the updated version of the CB&HNP, prior to submission.

- 5.45 Regarding the 'Climate Change' SEA theme, the CB&HNP will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions due to an increase in the built footprint. However, the plan has the potential to lead to positive effects through supporting proposals that promote the inclusion of low carbon technologies and the use of local and traditional building materials, encourage sustainable and active travel, and proactively responding to the potential impacts of climate change through the implementation of appropriate drainage solutions.
- 5.46 The CB&HNP will also bring positive effects in relation to the 'Landscape' and 'Historic Environment' SEA themes. These benefits largely relate to the CB&HNP's emphasis on protecting and enhancing the relationship between the CB&HNP area and the AONB, delivering high-quality design which respects and embraces the natural and built environment, protecting important landscape and heritage features, and facilitating improvements to the quality of the public realm.
- 5.47 While the proposed site allocations are sensitive from a landscape and heritage perspective, it is considered that the CB&HNP policies provide a detailed overview of the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures which positively address the sensitivities. Given the Design Code accompanying the CB&HNP also sets out a comprehensive range of provisions relating to the natural and built environment, this will help provide an appropriate basis for any development proposals which may come forward during the plan period.
- 5.48 In terms of the 'Land, Soil and Water Resources' SEA theme, the CB&HNP includes site allocations on brownfield or partially brownfield land. However, it is possible that development could result in the permanent loss of productive agricultural land, especially under policy AS2 (Kenora Paddock). However, the scale of the development to come forward is not likely to result in the loss of any significant areas of BMV land. The development management policies of the plan protect seek to protect the neighbourhood area from inappropriate development and outline policies that will help support the capacity of the landscape to regulate soil and water quality.
- 5.49 In relation to the 'Transportation' SEA theme, the CB&HNP outlines several policies that will help to improve the sustainable transport network, encourage active travel, and improve road safety. However, it is recognised the sustainable transport options within the neighbourhood area are relatively limited due to the rural nature of the area, and private vehicle use will likely continue to allow for access to a greater number of services and amenities within neighbouring communities.

6. What are the next steps?

- 6.1 This Environmental Report accompanies the CB&HNP for Regulation 14 consultation.
- 6.2 Following consultation, any representations made will be considered by the CB&HNP Steering Group, and the CB&HNP and Environmental Report will be updated as necessary. The updated Environmental Report will then accompany the CB&HNP for submission to the Local Planning Authority, Wiltshire Council, for subsequent Independent Examination.
- 6.3 At Independent Examination, the CB&HNP will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with local planning policy.
- 6.4 If the Independent Examination is favourable, the CB&HNP will be subject to a referendum, organised by Wiltshire Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the CB&HNP, then it will be 'made'. Once made, the CB&HNP will become part of the Development Plan for the parish.

Appendix A Context Review and Baseline

A.1 Air Quality

Policy Context

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The CB&HNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which predominantly seeks early planning to reduce/mitigate air quality impacts in development and to take advantage of opportunities to improve air quality. Measures to improve air quality include traffic and travel management and green infrastructure provision. Strategic development is expected to be focused on locations that have or will be provided with high levels of accessibility; supporting both a reduced need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. Smaller-scale development should consider the potential for cumulative effects in relation to air quality.
- The CB&HNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and respond to the main issues highlighted in the Wiltshire Local Plan Review.
- Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are declared in areas which exceed national objectives for levels of particulates, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, butadiene, carbon monoxide, lead and/or nitrogen oxides.
- To improve air quality across the UK, national strategies have in the last few decades focused on regulatory frameworks, investment by industry in cleaner processes and a shift in the fuel mix towards cleaner forms of energy (largely at point sources). Whilst there are dedicated strategies to reducing roadside emissions (as a significant source of nitrogen dioxide emissions), recent objectives outlined in the Clean Air Strategy seek to recognise wider sources (including smaller contributors and diffuse sources) that contribute to poor air quality.

The Air Quality Action Plan for Wiltshire sets out “the strategic and locally generated actions that will be implemented to improve air quality and work towards meeting the air quality objectives.” This plan builds off the Air Quality Strategy for Wiltshire (2019-2024) and identifies 17 strategic actions that will help to achieve the goal of reducing levels of nitrogen dioxide and fine particulate matter in Wiltshire. A sample of those strategic actions include:

- Establish community air quality action plan groups under the Area Boards.
- Provide air quality data and information to Area Boards to assist with the production of Community Air Quality Action Plans and Community Neighbourhood Plans.
- Integrate air quality into wider policies and strategies within the council and the adoption of Core Policy 55 in the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

- Integrate green infrastructure considerations into Wiltshire Council policy and strategy and to adopt the Wiltshire Council Green Infrastructure Strategy to support Core Policy 52 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.
- Integrate wider climate change policies that share common goals on carbon and nitrogen dioxide reduction into Wiltshire strategies and policies.
- Develop in conjunction with Public Health Wiltshire a text alert system which will be targeted at people with respiratory health issues.

The Air Quality Strategy for Wiltshire (2019-2024) seeks to “maintain progress with the improvement of air quality across all communities in Wiltshire and reflects the national Clean Air Strategy 2019 issued by Defra in January 2019”.

At the local level, the following policies within the Wiltshire Core Strategy directly relate to the Air Quality theme:

- Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure.
- Core Policy 55: Air Quality.
- Core Policy 60: Sustainable Transport.

Due regard is also given to the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review, with several consultation questions relevant to the Air Quality theme:

- Promoting sustainable transport, active travel and improving air quality

Current Baseline

In line with the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) as set out in Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995), Councils are required to assess Air Quality standards within the region on an annual basis. There are currently eight AQMAs in Wiltshire and the primary source of pollutants in these AQMAs is produced by vehicle emissions. These eight AQMAs are in Bradford on Avon, Calne, Devizes, Marlborough, Westbury and three in Salisbury (city centre, London Road and Wilton Road).

There are no AQMAs directly within the neighbourhood area, however given the proximity of the neighbourhood area to the AQMAs within Salisbury, new development areas within Coombe Bissett and Homington have the potential to indirectly impact on these AQMAs. This is primarily linked to potential increases in the levels of traffic between the neighbourhood area and Salisbury, particularly for residents who may wish to access services and facilities in Salisbury, or perhaps are commuting for employment opportunities.

In Wiltshire, nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and fine particulate matter (PM₁₀) from vehicle emissions are of particular concern, and air quality hotspots can arise in areas where traffic volume, road layout and topography combined contribute to a high concentration of pollutants. Nevertheless, the latest available Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) outlines that air quality in Wiltshire is predominantly very good with most of the county having clean unpolluted air.

Although unexpected, the restrictions that have arisen from the Covid-19 pandemic have had a positive impact on the county and resulted in a decrease in both NO₂ and PM₁₀ average mean levels at all eight AQMAs. Only three exceedances of the 24 hour mean for PM₁₀ were reported, all in Devizes.

Future Baseline

Future growth in the neighbourhood area will ultimately affect the levels of traffic and congestion experienced, and in the absence of suitable planning and mitigation this could lead to a deterioration in air quality. However, it is unlikely that this will be significant given the moderate housing needs of the neighbourhood area.

Nevertheless, suitable mitigation measures should be incorporated into the design of new development areas to maintain air quality.

Positive planning could also be beneficial for air quality through opportunities to improve accessibility, particularly in terms of active travel and encouraging more local walkable journeys and sustainable connections.

A.2 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy Context

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The CB&HNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which highlights that opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity. This includes using a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure at the wider catchment or landscape scale.
- Support is given through the Framework to establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures. Trees notably make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, and that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards).
- Over the past decade, policy documents (e.g., The Natural Environment White Paper and Biodiversity 2020) has demonstrated a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity, to a wider landscape approach to enhancing biodiversity, as part of the overall aims to halt biodiversity loss. The 25 Year Environment Plan places emphasis on improvements to the natural environment; identifying the need to “replenish depleted soil, plant trees, support wetlands and peatlands, rid seas and rivers of rubbish, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, cleanse the air of pollutants, develop cleaner, sustainable energy and protect threatened species and habitats.” Working at a landscape scale transformation is expected to connect habitats into larger corridors for wildlife.
- The Environment Act 2021 sets parameters for biodiversity gain as a condition of planning permission, as well as biodiversity gain site registers and biodiversity credits. The Act identifies a general duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity, including through biodiversity reports and local nature recovery strategies. Local nature recovery strategies will identify biodiversity priorities for the strategy area as well as a local habitat map. Habitat maps are expected to include recovery and enhancement areas which are or could become of importance for biodiversity.
- Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan sets out the following priorities for the county:

- To prioritise action required to conserve Wiltshire’s biodiversity.
 - To provide baseline information on our current knowledge.
 - To coordinate and focus action for biodiversity by creating a cohesive local partnership.
 - To raise awareness among all sectors in Wiltshire – conservation, public, private, local communities.
 - To provide a framework for monitoring.
 - To identify current issues and set out targets to work towards.
- At the local level, the following policies within the Wiltshire Core Strategy directly relate to the Biodiversity and Geodiversity theme:
 - Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity.
 - Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure.
 - Core Policy 69: Protection of the River Avon SAC.
 - Due regard is also given to the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review, with several consultation questions relevant to the Biodiversity and Geodiversity theme:
 - Enhancing blue/green infrastructure and biodiversity

Current Baseline

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

To ensure the European Directives were operable in the UK after the end of the EU transition period, changes were made by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. In this respect, SPAs and 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 territory²⁸. The network comprises sites already designated under the Nature Directives (i.e., 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC), along with any additional sites which are designated under the 2019 regulations. The national site network continues to operate in parallel with other designations and contributes towards the UK’s international commitments for protected areas.

The following SPAs and SACs were considered in the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening exercise for the CB&HNP: New Forest SPA and SAC, Salisbury Plain SPA and SAC, Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC, River Avon SAC, Great Yews SAC, and Prescombe Down SAC.

The New Forest SPA and SAC has a Zone of Influence (ZOI) around it, where additional housing growth would trigger Likely Significant Effect (LSE) on the SPA from recreation, resulting in a need for mitigation. According to the HRA²⁹ conducted under the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the current ZOI comprises the 8-kilometre radius around the New Forest SPA within which most day visitors to the SPA/SAC originate. The neighbourhood area lies almost entirely outside of the ZOI, except for a small section along the eastern boundary. This small section covers an area approximately 632m in length by 68m in width at its widest point. The draft CB&HNP

²⁸ DEFRA (2021): [Policy Paper: Changes to the Habitats Regulations 2017](#)

²⁹ Wiltshire Council (2013): [Wiltshire Core Strategy: Assessment under the Habitats Regulations](#)

does not allocate or promote any sites for development within the small section. However, local authorities around the New Forest SPA and SAC are currently considering the implications of recent visitor surveys and it is expected the ZOI will increase to potentially include the neighbourhood area.

The River Avon SAC does not flow through the neighbourhood area and is approximately 2.4-kilometres from the area at its closest point. Moreover, the draft CB&HNP does not allocate or promote any major housing or tourism sites, hence development in the neighbourhood area should not result in significant additional recreational pressure on the River Avon SAC. Despite this, Wiltshire Council's ecologist has confirmed that, having been screened under the Habitats Regulations, an Appropriate Assessment (AA) will be required at the Regulation 14 stage, due to the potential for LSEs on the River Avon SAC. The AA will be undertaken separately to the SEA process and will be completed by Wiltshire Council.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are protected by law to conserve their wildlife or geology. Natural England is a statutory consultee on development proposals that might impact on SSSIs.

A significant proportion of the neighbourhood area is within or adjacent to Homington and Coombe Bissett Downs SSSI, a 70.6-hectare chalk downland valley containing rare flora and fauna which contributes to the setting of the village, with many residents and visitors enjoying its special qualities.

Chalk downlands are a species-rich grassland habitat which has undergone a huge decline over the last century³⁰. Now small and isolated fragments, they have little chance of surviving unless they are linked to other sites. At Homington and Coombe Bissett Downs SSSI, several former arable fields are being restored back to downland for the benefit of a range of species of conservation concern. This work sets out to reconnect the mosaic of chalk grassland for the survival of Wiltshire's wildlife and the enjoyment of everyone.

Several species can be found in Homington and Coombe Bissett Downs SSSI, including yellowhammer, skylark, whitethroat and kestrels in spring and linnet, mistle thrush and red kite in winter. During the spring-autumn period, cowslip, birds-foot trefoil, harebell, dropwort, horseshoe vetch, knapweed, lady's bedstraw, devil's-bit scabious, pyramidal and common spotted orchids, and the burnt orchid, can be found in the downland. The flora supports a rich variety of invertebrates, including Adonis blue, small blue and dingy skipper butterflies.

Based on the most recently completed condition assessments, the condition of Homington and Coombe Bissett Downs SSSI is as follows:

- Favourable - 63.62%
- Unfavourable – Recovering: 33.74%
- Unfavourable – Declining: 2.64%

In the wider context, the following SSSIs are located within a 5-kilometre radius of the neighbourhood area:

³⁰ Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (2021): [Coombe Bissett Down](#)

- Great Yews SSSI
- Stratford Toney Down SSSI
- Throope Down SSSI
- Knighton Downs and Wood SSSI
- Odstock Down SSSI
- Clearbury Down SSSI
- West Harnham Chalk Pit SSSI
- East Harnham Meadows SSSI
- Britford Water Meadows SSSI
- River Avon System SSSI
- Chickengroove Bottom SSSI
- Martin and Tidpit Downs SSSI
- Toyd Down and Quarry SSSI

SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) are a GIS tool/dataset which maps zones around each SSSI according to the sensitivities of the features for which it is notified. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location, including residential, rural-residential, and rural non-residential. Natural England is a statutory consultee on development proposals that might impact on SSSIs. In this respect, the neighbourhood area does not overlap with any SSSI IRZs for the types and scales of development which is likely to be brought forward during the plan period.

Priority Habitats and Species

There are a variety of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats located within or within proximity to the CB&HNP, including coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, deciduous woodland, good quality semi-improved grassland, lowland calcareous grassland, and lowland meadows.

The Wiltshire and Swindon Biodiversity Records Centre contains records of protected or notable species within the neighbourhood area³¹. This includes records of several species of birds, mammals, bats, insects, grasses, trees, amphibians, and reptiles; many of which are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. In this respect, the BAP Priority Habitats and ecological designations within and surrounding the neighbourhood area are likely to support populations of protected species.

The figures at the end of Chapter 3 shows the location of the designated sites and BAP Priority Habitats within and within proximity to the neighbourhood area.

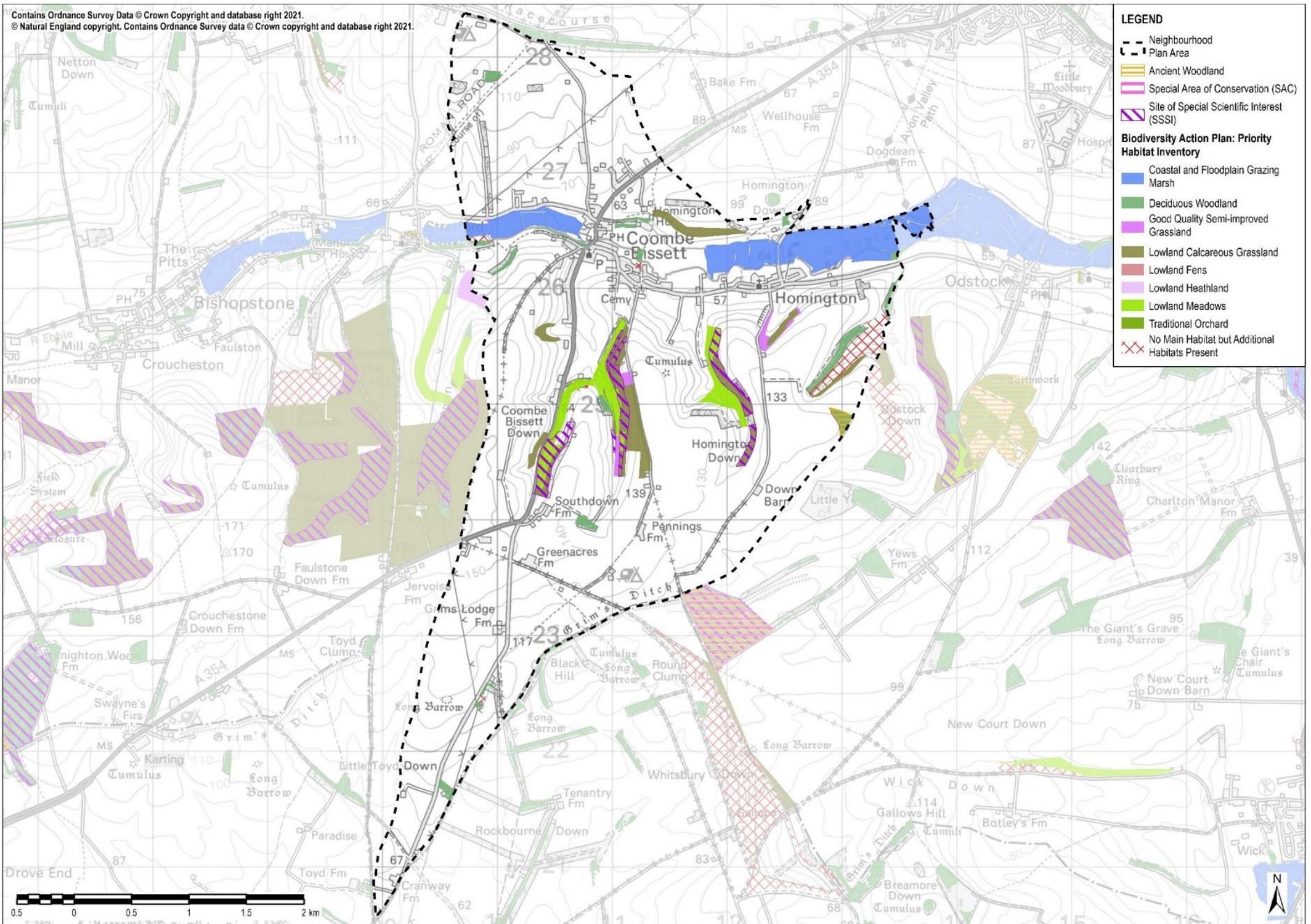
Future Baseline

Habitats and species will potentially face increasing pressures from future development within the neighbourhood area, with the potential for negative impacts

³¹ Wiltshire and Swindon Biodiversity Records Centre (2022): [Data Searches](#)

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 changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition of habitats.

The CB&HNP presents an opportunity to maximise benefits for biodiversity by including consideration of important habitats, species, and designated sites at an early stage of planning for future growth. 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 new development to ensure that opportunities to improve green infrastructure and ecological corridors are maximised within the neighbourhood area.



LEGEND

- Neighbourhood
- Plan Area
- Ancient Woodland
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Biodiversity Action Plan: Priority Habitat Inventory

- Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Deciduous Woodland
- Good Quality Semi-improved Grassland
- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Lowland Fens
- Lowland Heathland
- Lowland Meadows
- Traditional Orchard
- No Main Habitat but Additional Habitats Present

A.3 Climate Change

Policy Context

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The CB&HNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which requires proactive planning 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, and support the move to a low carbon economy. The NPPF recognises the potential for planning to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and deliver long-term resilience, including through reuse, regeneration, and conversion.
- The Clean Growth Strategy, Clean Air Strategy and the 25-year Environment Plan are a suite of documents which seek to progress the government's commitment under the UK Climate Change Act to becoming net zero by 2050. The documents set out detailed proposals on how the government will tackle all sources of air pollution, whilst maintaining an affordable energy supply and increasing economic growth. This parallels with the 25-year Environment Plan, which further 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. The documents also interlink with the government's commitment to decarbonising transport, a recognised challenge that needs more work in a timely manner if government are to achieve net zero targets. Furthermore, the decarbonisation plan recognises the twinned need to undertake action to adapt the transport sector and increase resilience to climate change risks; and this challenge is more directly addressed through the UK's National Adaptation Programme.
- Wiltshire Council declared a climate emergency in February 2019 and since then the council has sought to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030. A Climate Emergency Task Group was set up to gather evidence and come up with recommendations on achieving net zero. An update on the current situation in July 2021³² reinstated the priorities of the Wiltshire Council Business Plan 2017-2027 of:
 - Growing the economy.
 - Strong communities.
 - Protecting the vulnerable.
 - Working with partners.
- Additionally, the plan will be evidence and data led and a baseline assessment will be undertaken to assist in identifying needs and determining priorities. It is proposed that the plan will include a community led approach which engages, empowers, enables, and communicates with Wiltshire communities and businesses.
- The Wiltshire Council Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) forms part of a comprehensive and robust evidence base for the Local Plan which will set out a vision and framework for development in Wiltshire up to 2036 and used

³² Wiltshire Council (2021) [Update on the Council's response to the climate emergency](#)

to guide the sequential test and decisions on the location of future development. The SFRA will also be used to assess planning applications, and flood risk mapping information will be made available for developers for carrying out flood risk assessments.

- The Wiltshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy has an overarching vision of ‘working together to manage local flood risk in Wiltshire.’ Several strategic measures are identified to address the following five objectives:
 - Improve knowledge regarding flood risk.
 - Improve protection from flooding.
 - Improve resilience to flooding.
 - Improve the environment.
 - Improve communications and flooding issues.
- At the local level, the following policies within the Wiltshire Core Strategy directly relate to the Climate Change theme:
 - Core Policy 41: Sustainable construction and Low Carbon Energy.
 - Core Policy 42: Standalone Renewable Energy Installations.
 - Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure.
 - Core Policy 60: Sustainable Transport.
 - Core Policy 67: Flood Risk.
 - Core Policy 68: Water Resources.
- Due regard is also given to the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review, with several consultation questions relevant to the Climate Change theme:
 - Tackling flood risk and promoting sustainable water management
 - Delivering sustainable design and construction methods in the built environment

Current Baseline

Contribution to Climate Change

In June 2019 the government committed to reaching ‘net zero’ carbon emissions by 2050. CO₂ emissions from the built environment are monitored and recorded at Local Authority level.

Figure A3.1 indicates that CO₂ emissions per capita (t) in Wiltshire have been consistently higher than the South West during the period 2005 to 2019. Although between 2005 and 2009, CO₂ emissions per capita (t) in Wiltshire were significantly higher than England, from 2009 onwards emissions in Wiltshire have been relatively consistent with England. The rate of decline in emissions between 2005 and 2019 has been higher in Wiltshire compared to both the South West and England.

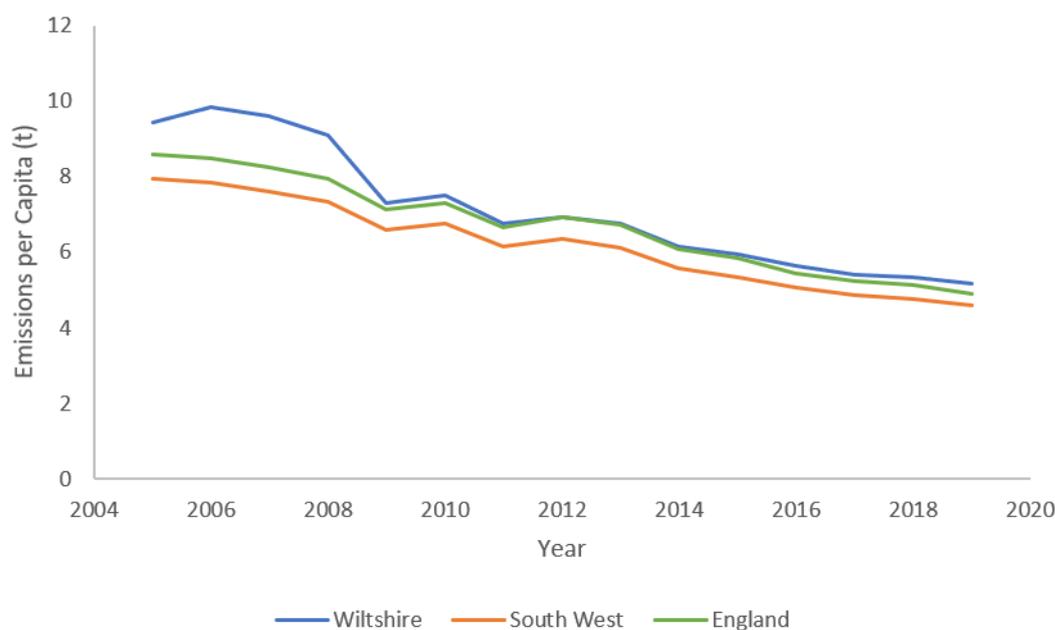


Figure A3.1: CO₂ emissions per capita during the period 2005 to 2019³³

Road transport is the largest emitter of GHG emissions, with cars contributing 55% of UK domestic transport emissions (68 Metric tonnes CO₂ equivalent (MtCO₂e)) in 2018. Wiltshire has a high dependency on private vehicles, with a large proportion of the population commuting by car.

The 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 and therefore aside from HGVs, all vehicles could be ultra-low emission (powered either by hydrogen or electricity) by 2030.

Wiltshire Council have expressed that they are continuously exploring ways to reduce transport emissions, recognising that this is a crucial part of the Council's commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030. Key initiatives in this respect include:

- Electric vehicles.
- Piloting new technologies.
- Encouraging more sustainable travel.

'Connecting Wiltshire' lists the location of fast and rapid charging locations across the county. These charge points are part of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund project, which will eventually link a network of charging points across Wiltshire and will feed into the national network.

There are no fast or rapid charging locations within the neighbourhood area, however there are three fast charging locations in nearby Salisbury located at Britford Park & Ride, Petersfinger Park & Ride and Five Rivers Leisure Centre, Hulse Road. Britford Park & Ride is closest to the neighbourhood area.

³³ UK Gov (2021): [UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics](#)

Effects of Climate Change

Research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released in 2018 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP18)³⁴ team. UKCP18 gives climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on simulations from climate models. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and level of confidence in each prediction.

As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change (under medium emissions scenarios 50th percentile and RCP6) for the South West during the period 2020-2039 compared to the period 1981-2000 are likely to be as follows:

- A central estimate of increase in annual mean temperatures of between 0°C and 1°C.
- A central estimate of change in mean precipitation of 0 to +10% in winter and 0 to -10% in summer.

During the period 2040-2059 this is estimated further as:

- A central estimate of increase in annual mean temperatures of between 1°C and 2°C; and
- A central estimate of change in annual mean precipitation of 0 to +20% in winter and -10% to -20% in summer.

Due to these changes, a range of risks may exist for the neighbourhood area, including:

- Increased incidence of heat related illnesses and deaths during summer.
- Increased incidence of illnesses and deaths related to exposure to sunlight (e.g., skin cancer, cataracts).
- Increased risk of injuries and deaths due to the number of storm events.
- Effects on water resources from climate change.
- Adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain.
- Increased risk of flooding, including vulnerability to 1:100-year floods.
- A need to upgrade flood defences.
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding.
- Loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution.
- Spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution.
- Increased drought and flood related problems.
- Risk of road surfaces melting more frequently due to increased temperature.
- Flooding of roads.

³⁴ Met Office (2018): [UK Climate Projections](#) Data released 26th November 2018

Flood Risk

The entire neighbourhood area lies within the catchment of the River Avon SAC. The River Ebble that passes through the neighbourhood area joins the River Avon at Bondenham near Nunton, just east of Homington.

As shown in **Figure A3.2**, fluvial flood risk in the neighbourhood area is linked to the River Ebble. Coombe Bissett and Homington are classed as medium risk for flooding from the river. The middle section of the Coombe Bissett settlement boundary is within a Flood Zone 3 area, and local experiences indicate that there have been several severe instances of flooding, resulting in the A354 becoming impassable. Fluvial flooding does not consider the impact of chalk springs, which is linked to the area's geology, and which exacerbate and lead to unpredictable instances of flooding in the neighbourhood area during periods of high groundwater levels. Given that there are significant areas within Coombe Bissett and Homington that have a medium to high fluvial flood risk potential, it will be important for the Neighbourhood Plan to encourage the use of appropriate adaptation measures through the design of new development.

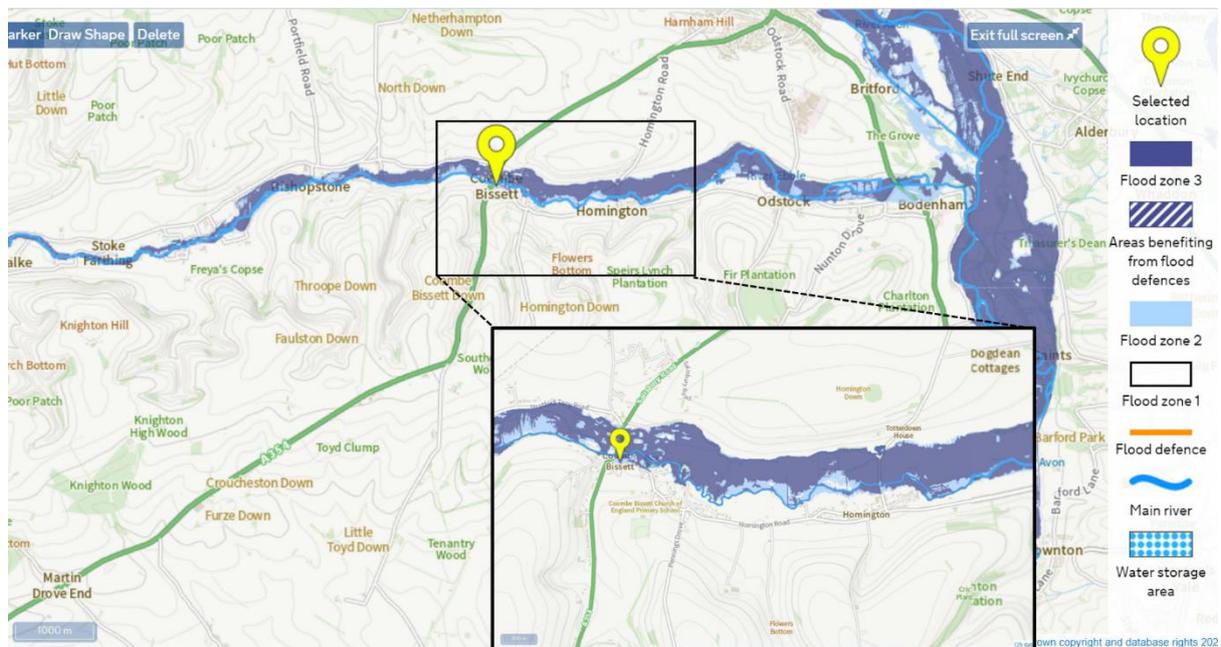


Figure A3.2: Fluvial flood risk in the neighbourhood area³⁵

As shown in **Figure A3.3** overleaf, surface water flooding in the neighbourhood area is largely concentrated near the River Ebble. Coombe Bissett and Homington are classed as high risk for surface water flooding. Areas of particular concern in Coombe Bissett include the A354 and Homington Road, including several residential properties to the south of the village off the A354. In Homington, areas of concern include Homington Road, Lower Road and Barber's Lane. Notably, rainwater running down the hills to the south of the River Ebble often makes its way through houses and along Homington Road. The chalk springs in the area can greatly exacerbate flooding in times of continued high rainfall.

³⁵ GOV UK (2020): [Flood Map for Planning](#)

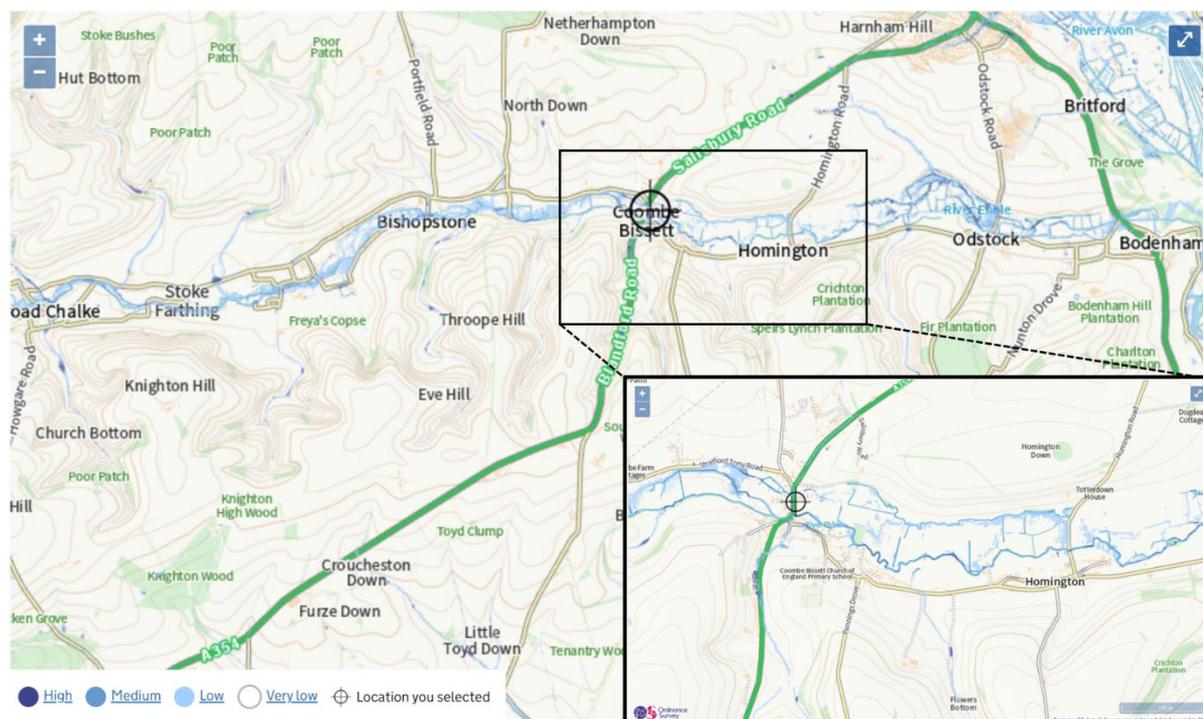


Figure A3.3: Surface water flood risk in the neighbourhood area³⁶

Wiltshire Council Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment notes an increased groundwater risk around Salisbury and surrounding villages due to the underlying chalk geology and thus after prolonged periods of wet weather, the ground in the area may become saturated and result in flooding that could last for several weeks.

Future Baseline

Climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events in the neighbourhood area. This is likely to increase the risks associated with climate change, with an increased need for resilience and adaptation. Specifically, new development areas have the potential to increase flood risk through factors such as changing surface and ground water flows, overloading existing inputs to the drainage and wastewater networks or increasing the number of residents exposed to areas of existing flood risk.

In terms of climate change contribution, per capita GHG emissions generated in the neighbourhood area may continue to decrease with wider adoption of energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies, including electric cars. However, increases in the built footprint of the neighbourhood area would contribute to increases in the absolute levels of GHG emissions.

³⁶ GOV.UK (2021): [Long term flood risk map for England](#)

A.4 Landscape

Policy Context

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The CB&HNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF which gives great weight to conserving and enhancing protected landscapes, as well as landscape character and scenic beauty. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.
- The NPPF highlights that the level of protection of protected landscapes should be consistent with the level of their national designation. In this respect, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and National Parks, which have the highest level of national designation, will require the greatest level of protection.
- The NPPF recognises the role of green infrastructure in landscape settings, as well as the importance of designated biodiversity sites, habitats, woodland, historic features, agricultural land, and cultural landscapes. The positive contribution that land remediation can make in terms of addressing despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land is also recognised.
- The 25-year Environment Plan and National Design Guide complement each other with their aims for a cleaner, greener country which puts the environment first and celebrates the variety of natural landscapes and habitats. Design is focused on beautiful, enduring, and successful places, which respond to local character and provide a network of high quality green open spaces.
- At the local level, the following policies within the Wiltshire Core Strategy directly relate to the Landscape theme:
 - Core Policy 22: Salisbury Skyline.
 - Core Policy 51: Landscape.
 - Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping.
 - Core Policy 58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment.
- Due regard is also given to the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review, with several consultation questions relevant to the Landscape theme:
 - Enhancing blue/green infrastructure and biodiversity.

Current Baseline

Nationally protected landscapes

Approximately 90% of the CB&HNP falls within the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Cranborne Chase Partnership Plan 2019-2024 sets out the policies of the partner local authorities for the AONB, including Wiltshire Council. There are 30 policies that cover planning, transportation, landscape, wildlife, dark skies, and sustaining rural communities.

In October 2019, the Cranborne Chase AONB was designated an International Dark Sky Reserve. There are minimal streetlights in Coombe Bissett and none in

Homington, with residents indicating that they do not wish this to change. Dark skies are particularly important for nocturnal wildlife, but they are also important for maintaining the circadian rhythms of diurnal wildlife as well as people.

Local landscape and villagescape character

Landscape and villagescape character play an important part in understanding the relationship between people and place, identifying recognisable and distinct patterns in the landscape which make one area different from another. Landscape and villagescape character can assist in the assessment of the likely significance of effects of change resulting from development and the value of landscape, both in visual and amenity terms. Assessments often provide indications of the overall landscape sensitivity and landscape capacities for key areas.

The Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley Landscape Character Assessment (2018) identifies several Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCA). According to the assessment, the neighbourhood area is with the C2 – Martin Down to Coombe Bissett Down Open Chalk Downland LLCA. The key characteristics of this LLCA are as follows:

- An elevated and exposed, large-scale, chalk landform of broad rolling hills with dry river valleys.
- Low density scattered settlement of farmsteads and the occasional downland village.
- An intensive agricultural landscape dominated by arable production and large fields.
- Large, open skies and panoramic views over adjacent landscapes and towards the Dorset coast.
- High quality habitats of unimproved calcareous grassland (e.g., Martin Down National Nature Reserve).
- A number of footpaths cross the area, with one following the route of Ackling Dyke Roman road.
- The LLCA is crossed by the main A354 between Salisbury and Blandford Forum, increasing access, but reducing on tranquillity.
- A high density of upstanding and known buried archaeological remains including prehistoric sites and a Roman road.

Tree preservation orders

Implemented by local planning authorities, Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are designated to protect specific trees, groups of trees or woodlands in the interests of their amenity value. When considering amenity, the local planning authority will likely take into consideration the following criteria³⁷:

- Visibility: the extent to which the trees or woodlands can be seen by the public.
- Individual, collective, and wider impact: considering the importance of the trees or woodlands in relation to their cultural or historic value, contribution to and

³⁷ GOV.UK (2014): [Tree Preservation Orders](#)

relationship with the landscape and/or their contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.

In this context, Wiltshire Council have designated TPOs in the interest of their amenity value, including within the neighbourhood area. There is one TPO north of Coombe Bissett, in Homington Down, and another in the centre of Homington³⁸.

Visual amenity

It is useful to note that the views across the neighbourhood area are also an important consideration in the planning process as the scale, height and mass of development can ultimately impact important views if they are not considered and assessed through the process. Changes, such as development and landscape change, can see these views degraded overtime.

A Design Guide was commissioned by the Steering Group which sets out the overall important and unique characteristics of the neighbourhood area. It was approved by the Parish Council in November 2019 as a supplementary document to inform specific policies on design and local character which all new development must adhere to if the CB&HNP is adopted.

A number of key considerations and strategic issues emerged following public consultation, and these informed the preparation of the Design Guide. In summary, it was found that new development should: Be in keeping with nearby buildings, old and new; Use local materials; Blend with the surrounding landscape; Include features to reduce energy running costs and emissions; Provide outdoor space.

The Design Guide will be a useful source of reference during the subsequent stages of the SEA process.

Future Baseline

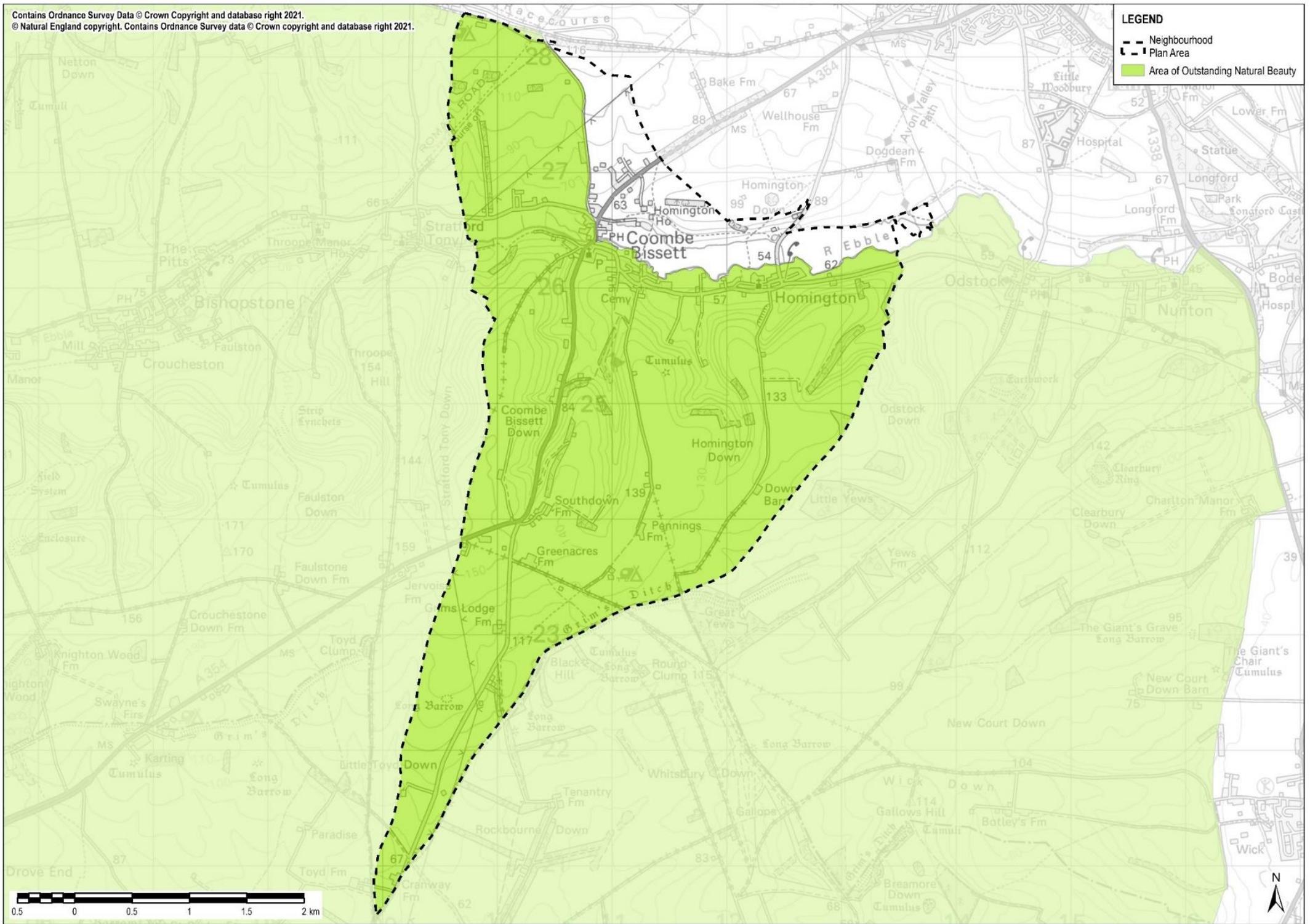
New development has the potential to lead to incremental changes in landscape and villagescape character and quality in and around the neighbourhood area. In the absence of the CB&HNP more speculative development may come forward within the open countryside or countryside setting, which could place increased pressure on the rural environments within the neighbourhood area. This may negatively impact upon the landscape and villagescape features which contribute to the distinctive character, in particular the unique qualities of the Cranborne Chase AONB (as identified within the most recently prepared Partnership Plan for this nationally protected landscape).

However, locally distinctive landscape and villagescape features, characteristics and special qualities can be protected, managed, and enhanced through the CB&HNP. New development that is appropriately designed and landscape-led has the potential to support the area's inherent landscape character and quality. This may, for example, include regeneration and brownfield development that improves the village setting (although this is dependent on the availability of such land within the neighbourhood area), delivering green infrastructure improvements and/or new recreational opportunities and enhanced framing of key views.

³⁸ GOV.UK (2015): [Wiltshire Council - Tree Preservation Orders](#)

LEGEND

- Neighbourhood
- - - Plan Area
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



A.5 Historic Environment

Policy Context

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The key high-level 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.
 - Significant places should be managed to sustain their values.
 - Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent, and consistent.
 - Documenting and learning from decisions is essential.
- The significance of places is the key element which underpins the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Significance is a collective term for the sum of all the heritage values attached to a place, be it a building, an archaeological site, or a larger historic area such as a whole village or landscape.
- The CB&HNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which ultimately seeks to conserve and enhance historic environment assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. The NPPF seeks planning policies and decisions which are sympathetic to local character and history without preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation of 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.
- As set out in the NPPF, it should be ensured that the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects 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, for example, with heritage considerations, and they can set out specific ways to maintain local character.
- Planning Practice Guidance expands on the NPPF recognising the proactive rather than passive nature of conservation.
- The role of the historic environment, as part of healthy and thriving ecosystems, landscapes, and cultural values, including settlement identity, is reiterated through the key messages of the 25 Year Environment Plan and National Design Guide.
- Historic England's Advice Notes provide further guidance in relation to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Of relevance for the CB&HNP is the emphasis on the importance of:

- Understanding the different types of special architectural and historic interest which underpin designations, as well as how settings and/or views contribute to the significance of heritage assets.
 - Recognising the value of implementing controls through neighbourhood plans, conservation area appraisals and management plans.
 - Appropriate evidence gathering, including clearly identifying those issues that threaten an area or assets character or appearance and that merit the introduction of management measures.
- More specifically, Historic England’s Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment Advice Note 11 helps neighbourhood planning groups, local planning authorities and other stakeholders explore the role of historic places and local history in preparing a neighbourhood plan.
 - The CB&HNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and respond to the main issues highlighted in the Wiltshire Local Plan Review.
 - In addition to conserving the historic environment, the CB&HNP should seek to identify opportunities to enhance the fabric and setting of the historic environment. It should also seek to rejuvenate features and areas which are at risk of neglect and decay.
 - At the local level, the following policies within the Wiltshire Core Strategy directly relate to the Historic Environment theme:
 - Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping.
 - Core Policy 58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment.
 - Due regard is also given to the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review, with several consultation questions relevant to the Historic Environment theme:
 - Delivering sustainable design and construction methods in the built environment.

Current Baseline

Designated heritage assets and areas

The neighbourhood area has a rich historic environment, recognised through several designated heritage assets. This includes one Grade I listed building, 35 Grade II listed buildings, one Grade II* listed building, five scheduled monuments, two conservation areas, and locally important buildings and structures. Further detail on these assets is provided below.

Listed buildings

Listed buildings are nationally designated buildings which are protected through the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990³⁹.

According to the National Heritage List for England, the neighbourhood area contains one Grade I listed building, 33 Grade II listed buildings, and one Grade II*

³⁹ UK Public General Acts (1990): [Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act](#)

listed building. The 35 listed buildings in the neighbourhood area can be found in the following locations:

- Coombe Bissett: one Grade I and 21 Grade II.
- Homington: ten Grade II and one Grade II*.
- Little Toyd Farm: two Grade II.

It is worth noting that Little Toyd Farm is located within the southern extent of the neighbourhood area, away from the existing settlements within the parish, and as such, new development areas are less likely to be located here.

The Grade I listed building, Church of St Michael in Coombe Bissett, is an Anglican parish church dating back to the 12th Century with a chancel built in the 13th Century. The tower was built in the 14th Century, and the nave and north transept built in the 15th Century⁴⁰.

The Grade II* listed building, Church of St Mary the Virgin in Homington, is an Anglican parish church dating back to the 14th Century with a tower built in the early 17th Century⁴¹. The Church of St Mary the Virgin is the ancient heart of the village and greatly contributes to local character and sense of place.

Scheduled Monuments

The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) allows the investigation, presentation and recording of matters of archaeological or historical interest and makes provision for the regulation of operations or activities which may affect ancient monuments and archaeological areas. Scheduled Monuments are nationally designated sites which are protected under the Act.

There are five scheduled monuments in the neighbourhood area, which are as follows:

- Bowl barrow, 430m north west of Northdown Barn.
- Packhorse bridge in Coombe Bissett.
- Bowl barrow on Homington Down, 725m south of Tottens Farm.
- Long barrow on Little Toyd Down, 760m south west of Grims Lodge Farm.
- Bowl barrow on Little Toyd Down, 650m south west of Grims Lodge Farm.

Bowl barrows are funerary monuments dating from the Late Neolithic period to the Late Bronze Age, with most examples belonging to the period 2400-1500 BC⁴². They were constructed as earthen or rubble mounds, sometimes ditched, which covered single or multiple burials. Often occupying prominent locations, they are a major historic element in the modern landscape and their considerable variation of form and longevity as a monument type provide important information on the diversity of beliefs and social organisations amongst early prehistoric communities.

The bowl barrow 400m north west of Northdown Barn is, despite erosion caused by cultivation, a comparatively well-preserved example of its class. Part excavation has shown the barrow will contain archaeological remains providing information about

⁴⁰ Historic England (2022): [Church of St Michael](#)

⁴¹ Historic England (2022): [Church of St Mary the Virgin](#)

⁴² Historic England (2022): [Bowl barrow 430m north west of Northdown Barn](#)

Bronze Age and possibly Saxon beliefs, economy, and environment. The other two bowl barrows in the neighbourhood area are also described as well-preserved examples.

Long barrows were constructed as earthen or drystone mounds with flanking ditches and acted as funerary monuments during the Early and Middle Neolithic periods (3400-2400 BC)⁴³. They represent the burial places of Britain's early farming communities and are amongst the oldest field monuments surviving visibly in the present landscape.

The long barrow on Little Toyd Down, 760m south west of Grims Lodge Farm, is a well-preserved example of its class. Despite the infilling of the quarry ditches, the barrow exhibits a largely original profile and will include archaeological remains containing information about Neolithic beliefs, economy, and environment.

Conservation areas

Conservation areas are designated because of their special architectural and historic interest. Conservation area appraisals are a tool to demonstrate the area's special interest, explaining the reasons for designation and providing a greater understanding and articulation of its character - mentioned within the 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' advice note by Historic England⁴⁴.

There are two conservation areas within the neighbourhood area: Coombe Bissett Conservation Area and Homington Conservation Area. Unlike many other conservation areas within Wiltshire, conservation area appraisals or management plans have not been prepared for either the Coombe Bissett Conservation Area or the Homington Conservation Area.

The two conservation areas within the neighbourhood area cover significant sections of the existing settlements of Coombe Bissett and Homington. It is anticipated that new development areas to be brought forward through the Neighbourhood Plan will be located within (or within proximity to) these two settlements. In this respect, potential impacts to the conservation areas (and their settings) are likely and may require appropriate mitigation measures to address concerns

In the absence of any conservation area appraisals or management plans for either the Coombe Bissett Conservation Area or the Homington Conservation Area, it is currently not possible to provide an overview of the special characteristics and qualities of these areas or provide an indication of any potential challenges or priority actions for future management. This represents a gap in the existing baseline information.

Registered parks and gardens

Historic England's 'Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England', established in 1983, currently identifies over 1,600 sites assessed to be of significance.

There are no registered parks and gardens located within the neighbourhood area. However, Wilton Registered Park and Garden is located to the north west of the neighbourhood area. Wilton contains an extensive and complex garden and park that has remained in the ownership of the Herbert family (the earls of Pembroke)

⁴³ Historic England (2022): [Long barrow on Little Toyd Down, 760m south west of Grims Lodge Farm](#)

⁴⁴ Historic England (2016): [Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management Advice Note 1](#)

since the mid-16th Century⁴⁵. Over the past 300 years the owners have continued to develop the designed landscape at Wilton. Whilst continuing to be a private home, Wilton has also become a popular visitor attraction.

Locally important heritage features

It should be noted that not all the area's historic environment features are subject to statutory designations, and non-designated features comprise a large part of what people have contact with as part of daily life – whether at home, work, or leisure. Although not designated, many buildings and areas are of historic interest and are important by local communities. For example, open spaces and key distinctive buildings are likely to have a local historic value.

Working with the community, the CB&HNP Steering Group has identified several locally valued heritage assets:

- The 'Plague' Stone, south of the Packhorse Bridge in Coombe Bissett.
- Old Mile Stone, on the A354 north of the Packhorse Bridge in Coombe Bissett.
- A354 Bridge, road bridge over the River Ebble in Coombe Bissett.
- Water Meadows, found in three locations: south of the Stratford Tony Road in Coombe Bissett, east of Homington Road in Homington, and west of Homington Road in Homington.
- St Michael and All Angels Church Yard, Coombe Bissett.
- St Mary's Church Yard and adjoining Glebe Field, Homington.
- Cob and Flint Boundary Walls, throughout both Coombe Bissett and Homington.
- Commonwealth War Graves Commission Grave, St Mary's Church Yard Homington.
- The War Memorial, St Michael and All Angels Church Yard Coombe Bissett.
- The Tozer Monument, in the field south of Homington.

Coombe Bissett and Homington is classed as an ancient parish within the Cranborne Chase AONB. There are distinctive features that connect the Parish to its past, such as the Packhorse Bridge in Coombe Bissett, and tracks and droves along the river and over the surrounding downs. There are also distinctive features relating to past management of the floodplain, including the water meadows.

The Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record (HER) identifies the important distinctive structures or features that positively contribute to the local distinctiveness and sense of place. A quick search of the HER (accessed via the Heritage Gateway⁴⁶) produces over 161 records within Coombe Bissett and Homington.

During the subsequent stages of the SEA process (where appropriate, and subject to the availability of such information), the Wiltshire and Swindon HER will be reviewed in greater detail to determine the potential impacts to non-designated heritage features resulting from the provisions within the CB&HNP. Key sources of information will include Wiltshire Council's interactive map, accessible here.

⁴⁵ Historic England (2022): [Wilton](#)

⁴⁶ Heritage Gateway (2022): [Advanced Search](#)

Heritage at risk

Since 2008, Historic England has released an annual Heritage at Risk Register. The Heritage at Risk Register highlights the Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings, scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens, registered battlefields, wreck sites and conservation areas deemed to be 'at risk'. With reference to the neighbourhood area, the Scheduled Monument bowl barrow on Little Toyd Down, 650 metres south west of Grims Lodge Farm in Coombe Bissett is currently on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register 2021⁴⁷ due to having extensive significant problems.

It is important to recognise that the 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 the neighbourhood area are at risk.

Encouraging and facilitating improvements to the condition of heritage assets within the Plan area (wherever practicable) is recognised as an opportunity for the CB&HNP.

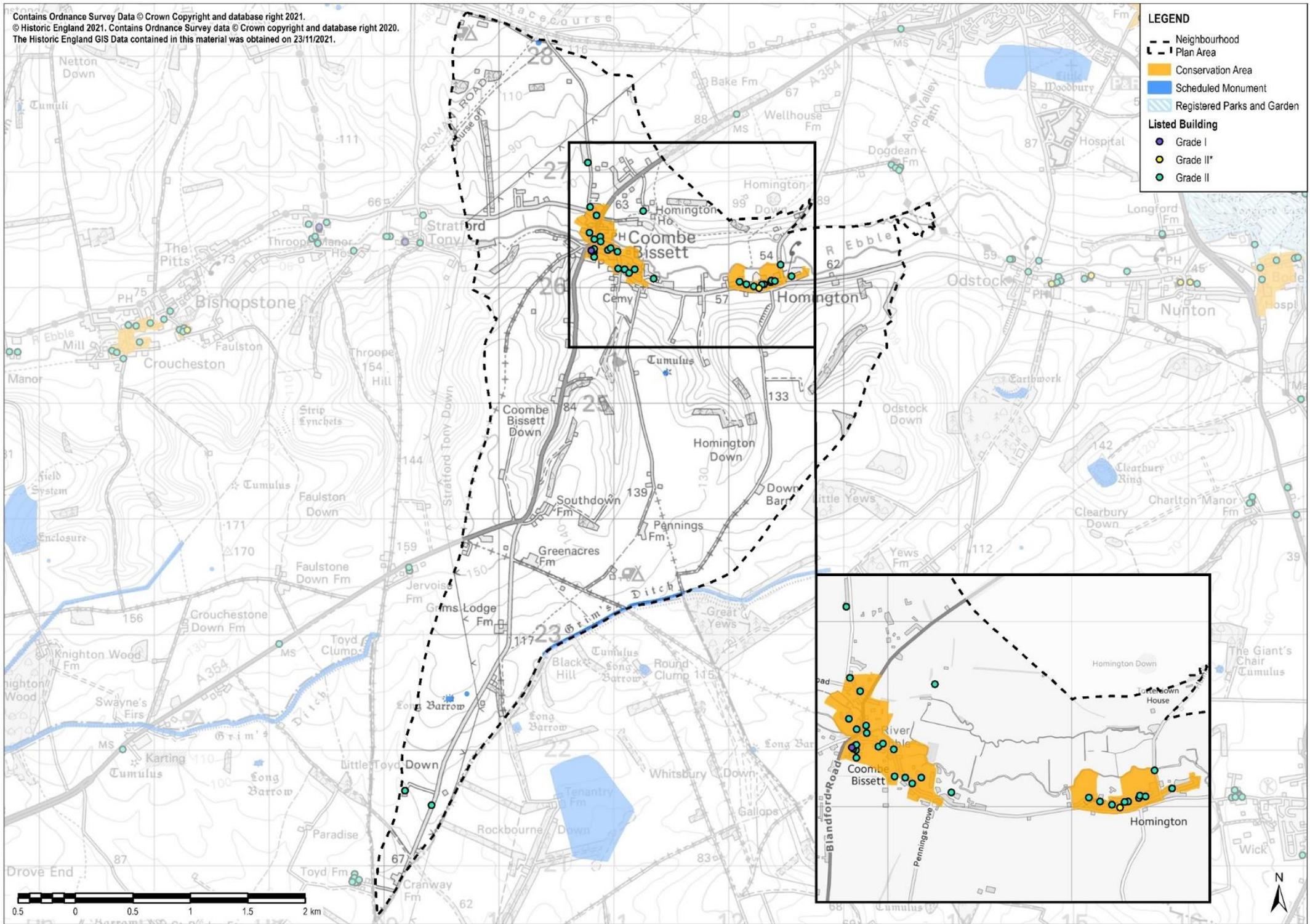
Future Baseline

New development areas in the neighbourhood area have the potential to impact on the fabric and setting of heritage assets; for example, through inappropriate design and layout, and increasing the impacts of traffic within conservation areas. It should be noted, however, that existing historic environment designations offer a degree of protection to heritage assets and their settings.

Alongside, new development need not be harmful to the significance of a heritage asset, and in the context of the neighbourhood area there may be opportunity for new development to enhance the historic setting of the settlements within the area, support historic landscape character and better reveal assets' heritage significance.

⁴⁷ Historic England (2021): [Heritage at Risk 2021 Register](#)

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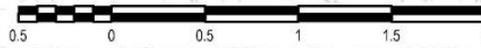


LEGEND

- Neighbourhood
- Plan Area
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monument
- Registered Parks and Garden

Listed Building

- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II



A.6 Land, Soil and Water Resource

Policy Context

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The CB&HNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks to protect high quality soil resources, and improve the water environment; recognising the wider benefits of natural capital and derived from ecosystem services. Furthermore, the NPPF recognises the need to take account of the long-term implications of climate change and 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 presents a focus for environmental improvement in the next couple decades, with aims to achieve clean air, clean and plentiful water, and reduced risk from environmental hazards. This includes measures to improve soil quality, restore and protect peatlands, use water more sustainably, reduce pollution, maximise resource efficiency and minimise environmental impacts. This leads on from and supports the soil strategy for England (Safeguarding our soils) which seeks to ensure that all England's soils will be managed sustainably, and degradation threats tackled successfully by 2030, as well as the national water strategies which seek to secure sustainable and resilient water resources and improve the quality of waterbodies, and the national waste plan which seeks to identify measures being taken to move towards a zero-waste economy.
- The CB&HNP will be required to be in general conformity with the Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Core Strategy 2016-2026 which takes the overall approach to “manage the availability, extraction and use of primary, secondary and recycled mineral resources whilst seeking to protect the interests of local communities and the wider environment through a series of strategic policies.”
- The CB&HNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Core Strategy 2016-2026 which “sets out the strategic planning policy framework for waste management over the next 20 years”.
- At the local level, the following policies within the Wiltshire Core Strategy directly relate to the Land, Soil and Water Resources theme:
 - Core Policy 56: Contaminated Land.
 - Core Policy 68: Water Resources.
 - Core Policy 69: Protection of the River Avon SAC.
- Due regard is also given to the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review, with several consultation questions relevant to the Land, Soil, and Water Resources theme:
 - Tackling flood risk and promoting sustainable water management.
 - Enhancing blue/green infrastructure and biodiversity.

Current Baseline

Soil resources

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.

As shown in **Figure A6.1** below, the neighbourhood area is predominantly underlain by Grade 3 (Good to Moderate) agricultural land with some Grade 2 (Very Good) in the village of Coombe Bissett⁴⁸. In the absence of a detailed assessment at this location, it is currently not possible to determine whether the Grade 3 agricultural land in the neighbourhood area is Grade 3a (i.e., BMV land) or Grade 3b quality (poorer quality).

Also shown in **Figure A6.1** are the results of the predictive BMV land assessment for South West England⁴⁹ provided by Natural England. The results indicate that most of the undeveloped areas of land in the neighbourhood area have a Moderate (20-60% area BMV) to High (>60% area BMV) likelihood of being underlain by BMV agricultural land.

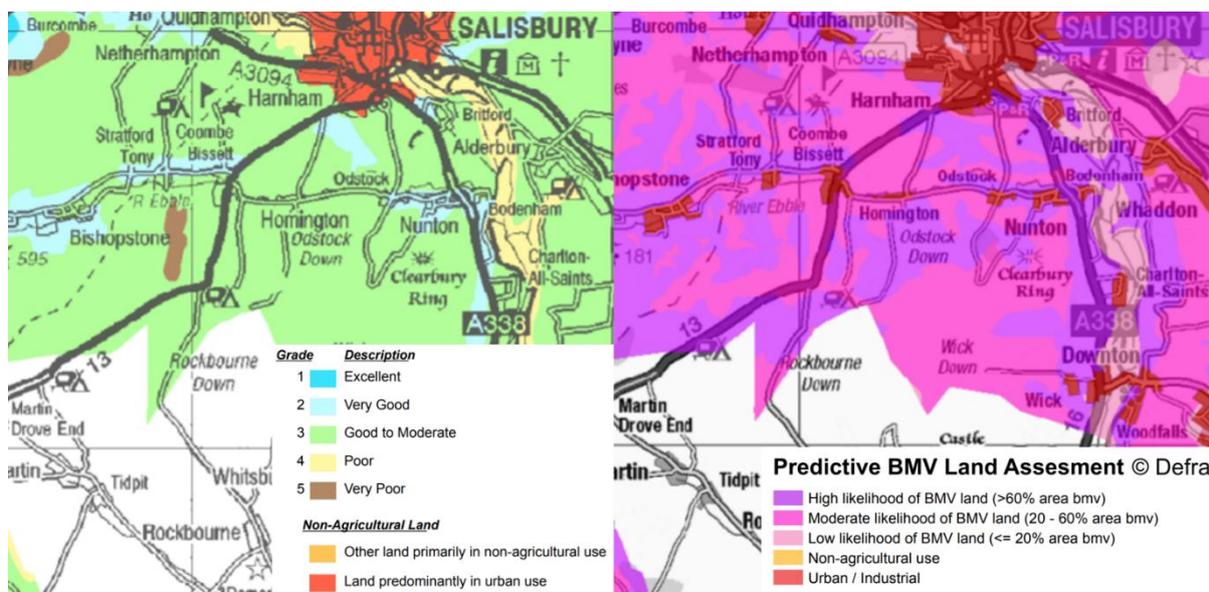


Figure A6.1: ALC and Likelihood of BMV in the neighbourhood area

Water resources and quality

The neighbourhood area is located within the South West River Basin District, more specifically in the Avon Hampshire Management Catchment. The River Ebble is partially located in the neighbourhood area, flowing through the villages of Coombe Bissett and Homington.

As shown on the Environment Agency’s Catchment Data Explorer⁵⁰, the most recently completed water quality assessments undertaken in 2019 classifies the River Ebble as having a ‘good ecological status’, however it received a ‘fail’ for its

⁴⁸ Natural England (2011): [ALC - South West](#)

⁴⁹ Natural England (2017): [Likelihood of BMV Land - South West Region](#)

⁵⁰ Environment Agency (2021): [Catchment Data Explorer - Ebble Water Body](#)

chemical status due to unacceptable levels of mercury and its compounds and polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDE).

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 supply⁵¹. No SPZs fall within the neighbourhood area.

Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs)⁵² denote areas at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution and the neighbourhood area falls within the South Wessex Groundwater NVZ. NVZs identify rules in relation to the use of fertilisers and manures as well as a requirement to prevent water pollution from farm areas.

As the entire neighbourhood area lies within the catchment of the River Avon SAC, any proposals for development within the area will need to demonstrate phosphate neutrality and demonstrate that it will not prevent the SAC conservation objectives from being met within timescales identified in the River Avon Nutrient Management Plan (NMP). Wiltshire Council is working with the Environment Agency and Natural England to ensure appropriate mitigation is in place for future development.

The potential impact pathways associated with the CB&HNP proposals and the River Avon SAC are being considered through a HRA process (as discussed within the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity chapter, above). This is being undertaken separately to the SEA process, by Wiltshire Council. It is anticipated that the suggestions and recommendations put forward through the HRA process will inform policy development.

Mineral resources

With regards to minerals resources, there are no Mineral Safeguarding Areas within the neighbourhood area (based on the scale and detail as shown on the Policies Map within Wiltshire and Swindon's Minerals Strategy). However, the Salisbury Avon Mineral Safeguarding Area is just below the southern boundary of the neighbourhood area.

Consultation with Wiltshire Council may be required to determine whether there are likely to be any significant impacts to mineral resources within the CB&HNP associated with new development proposals.

It is important to note that there are no significant minerals or waste sites operating in the neighbourhood area.

Future Baseline

Future development has the potential to affect water resources and quality through increased consumption, diffuse pollution, waste-water discharges, water run-off, and modification. However, water companies are likely to maintain adequate water supply and wastewater management over the plan period, and the requirements of the Water Framework Directive are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality within the neighbourhood area and wider area. It will be important for new development to avoid impacts on water quality and to contribute to reducing consumption and improving efficiency.

⁵¹ GOV.UK (2017): [Groundwater Protection](#)

⁵² GOV.UK (2021): [Nitrate Vulnerable Zones](#)

Given the presence of BMV land within parts of the neighbourhood area, new development areas have the potential to result in the permanent loss of productive agricultural land. In this respect, the CB&HNP should seek to retain greenfield land and make best use of brownfield sites for development. It is important to note that this is dependent on the availability of such sites.

It is unlikely that the small-scale development likely to come through the CB&HNP will have a significant impact on the wider area's NVZ designation given the strategic scale of the overall NVZs. Additionally, a large source of detriment to NVZ comes from agricultural use, which is not anticipated to be brought forward through the CB&HNP.

A.7 Community Wellbeing

Policy Context

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The CB&HNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which overall seeks to retain and enhance access to community services and facilities, including health facilities, educational facilities, and open space. The NPPF recognises the benefits of a range of local provisions supporting community needs, including in rural areas. The framework seeks to protect settlement and community identities. Furthermore, the NPPF recognises the benefits of creating cohesive communities, in safe environments where crime and the fear of crime do not undermine the quality of life of residents.
- 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 which contribute to the health and wellbeing of communities. The health benefits of access to nature, green spaces and green infrastructure are further reiterated through the 25-year Environment Plan.
- The 2020 Health Equity in England Report identifies that the health gap between less and more deprived areas has grown in the last decade, where more people can expect to spend more of their lives in poor health, and where improvements to life expectancy have stalled, or even declined.
- 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. The Guidance outlines 12 'planning-for-sport' principles.
- At the local level, the following policies within the Wiltshire Core Strategy directly relate to the Community Wellbeing theme:
 - Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy.
 - Core Policy 3: Infrastructure Requirements.
 - Core Policy 34: Additional Employment Land.
 - Core Policy 35: Existing Employment Land.
 - Core Policy 36: Economic Regeneration.
 - Core Policy 38: Retail and Leisure.
 - Core Policy 39: Tourism Development.

- Core Policy 43: Providing Affordable Homes.
 - Core Policy 44: Rural Exception Sites.
 - Core Policy 45: Meeting Wiltshire’s Housing Needs.
 - Core Policy 46: Meeting the Needs of Wiltshire’s Vulnerable and Older People.
 - Core Policy 47: Meeting the Needs of Gypsies and Travellers.
 - Core Policy 48: Supporting Rural Life.
 - Core Policy 49: Protection of Rural Services and Community Facilities.
 - Core Policy 51: Landscape.
 - Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure.
 - Core Policy 55: Air Quality.
 - Core Policy 60: Sustainable Transport.
 - Core Policy 66: Strategic Transport Network.
 - Core Policy 68: Water Resources.
- Due regard is also given to the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review, with several consultation questions relevant to the Community Wellbeing theme:
 - Enhancing blue/green infrastructure and biodiversity
 - Promoting sustainable transport, active travel and improving air quality
 - Wiltshire’s Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy is a shared strategy which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the local population, reduce inequalities, and promote the integration of services. The strategy has been developed based upon the evidence of need identified within The Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which provides a summary of the current and future health and wellbeing needs of the people in Wiltshire.

Current Baseline

Population and age structure

The population of the neighbourhood area stood at 675 at the time of the 2011 census⁵³. As a rural parish, there is a low density of residents at 0.5 persons per hectare. According to 2020 population estimates, the population of the parish has decreased to 663, which represents a modest decrease of -0.19%.

The gender breakdown for the neighbourhood area stands at 49.3% female and 50.7% male, marking a relatively even gender balance.

Only 11.5% of the population in the neighbourhood area is aged 0 to 17 years, while the 18 to 64 age group makes up most of the population at 52.3%. The 65+ age group makes up a significant 36.2% of the population, which is higher than the figure for Wiltshire (21.9% in the 65+ age group)⁵⁴.

⁵³ City Population (2022): [Coombe Bissett](#)

⁵⁴ City Population (2022): [Wiltshire](#)

Office of National Statistics (ONS) figures⁵⁵ suggest that there will be an additional 7.5 million people aged 65+ in the UK in 50 years' time.

Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation according to their respective weights, as described below. The seven deprivation domains are as follows:

- **Income:** The proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income, including those individuals that are out-of-work and those that are in work but who have low earnings (satisfying the respective means tests).
- **Employment:** The proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those individuals who would like to work but are unable to do so due to unemployment, sickness or disability, or caring responsibilities.
- **Education, Skills and Training:** The lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- **Health Deprivation and Disability:** The risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. Morbidity, disability, and premature mortality are also considered, excluding the aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- **Crime:** The risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
- **Barriers to Housing and Services:** The physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services, with indicators categorised in two sub-domains.
 - 'Geographical Barriers': relating to the physical proximity of local services
 - 'Wider Barriers': relating to access to housing, such as affordability.
- **Living Environment:** The quality of the local environment, with indicators falling categorised in two sub-domains.
 - 'Indoors Living Environment' measures the quality of housing.
 - 'Outdoors Living Environment' measures air quality and road traffic accidents.
- Two supplementary indices (subsets of the Income deprivation domains), are also included:
 - **Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index:** The proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families.
 - **Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index:** The proportion of all those aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation.

Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)⁵⁶ are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardized geographies designed to be as consistent in population as possible,

⁵⁵ ONS (2021): [Overview of the UK population: January 2021](#)

⁵⁶ DCLG (2019): [Indices of Deprivation Explorer](#)

with each LSOA containing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. LSOAs are ranked out of the 32,844 in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived.

Ranks are normalized into deciles, with a value of 1 reflecting the top 10% most deprived LSOAs in England and Wales.

The neighbourhood area is within the Wiltshire 057A LSOA, which in 2019 ranked 18,878 out of the 32,844 LSOAs in England for the IMD. This is amongst the 40% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country for this category.

Conversely, for the 'Barriers to Housing and Services Domain', this LSOA ranked 1,579 out of 32,844 LSOAs in England. This is amongst the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country for this category and shows that the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services is poor in the neighbourhood area.

Similarly, for the 'Living Environment Deprivation Domain', this LSOA ranked 8,706 out of 32,844 LSOAs in England. This is amongst the 30% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country for this category and shows that the quality of the local environment in the neighbourhood area is not particularly high. However, it is important to note that Wiltshire 057A extends beyond the neighbourhood area, and as such, represents a wider area. The local community have indicated that the quality of the local environment in the neighbourhood area is generally good.

Wiltshire 057A is one of 285 LSOAs in the Wiltshire local authority district. Using the IMD rank of average summary measure, this local authority ranked 231 in 2019, out of 317 local authorities.

Housing tenure

The following information has been taken from the draft CB&HNP.

- Most respondents to the Parish Plan Survey and Community Questionnaire were owner occupants (i.e., private ownership with/without a mortgage).
- Most dwellings are detached, with few flats or terraced properties, and there is a significant proportion of larger properties in the Parish (i.e., 4 bed+ detached) compared to both the Wiltshire and national averages.
- The Wiltshire Council Housing Needs Survey revealed that 89% of respondents were in support of some new housing in Coombe Bissett.
- There was also a modest demand for affordable housing and self-builders.
- Provision of space to enable working from home should also be encouraged to support an existing trend towards homeworking, which could be further accelerated by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The local community has expressed a desire for 2 and 3 bed dwellings, as the neighbourhood area already has a significant proportion of larger properties (4 bed+).

Community assets and infrastructure

The availability of services, facilities, and amenities within the neighbourhood area varies dependent on location. Generally, the villages of Coombe Bissett and Homington are the best served. An overview of the service, facilities, and amenities within each settlement is provided below:

- Coombe Bissett: The Fox and Goose (public house), The Old Dairy (bed & breakfast), Coombe Bissett Stores and Post Office, Coombe Bissett Village Hall, St Michael and All Angels (church), Coombe Bissett C of E School, Coombe Bissett and Homington Cricket Club, Coombe Bissett Tennis Club, Coombe Bissett Playground, Coombe Bissett Down Car Park, Coombe Bissett Blooms (florist), Martin Cross Motors (vehicle repair), and bus stops (service to Salisbury, Shaftesbury and Blandford).
- Homington: St Mary the Virgin (Church) and bus stops (service to Salisbury, Shaftesbury, and Blandford).

A greater variety of services, facilities and amenities is available within the neighbouring city of Salisbury and towns of Shaftesbury and Blandford.

Green infrastructure networks

Access to the nation's gardens, parks, woodlands, and rivers have played a huge part in helping people through the pandemic. Almost nine in ten adults surveyed in England reported that being in nature makes them very happy and nearly three quarters of adults were concerned about biodiversity loss in England⁵⁷. The research also revealed the importance of local parks and green spaces to the nation's mental and physical wellbeing.

Green spaces within Coombe Bissett include:

- The Donkey Field
- Cricket Field
- The Cemetery
- Tennis Courts
- A354 Green Space (Hopkins Way)

Green spaces within Homington include:

- The Triangle
- The Spinney

Notably, the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB contributes to the local green infrastructure network, contributing positively to community wellbeing. This may also be an attractor for people with resources, contributing to the relatively unusually high proportion of older people in the neighbourhood area.

Future Baseline

As the population of the neighbourhood area continues to age, this could potentially negatively impact upon the future vitality of the local community in certain parts of the area, whilst also placing additional pressures to existing services and facilities.

The suitability (e.g., size and design) and affordability of housing for local requirements depends on the implementation of appropriate housing policies throughout the CB&HNP. Unplanned development may have wider implications in terms of transport and access to infrastructure, or the natural environment.

⁵⁷ Natural England (2020): [People and Nature Survey](#)

The importance of local services and facilities, and access to open green spaces and recreational areas has been further highlighted through the ongoing pandemic. These factors are more likely to be appropriately considered and addressed through planned development rather than unplanned development.

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.

A.8 Transportation

Policy Context

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The CB&HNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks the consideration of transport issues from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals to address any known issues and maximise opportunities to increase accessibility, particularly by walking, cycling and public transport. Larger developments are expected to be delivered in areas which are or can be made sustainable by limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. However, it is recognised that sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural environments.
- National transport strategies set out investment priorities which ultimately all seek to improve the connectivity, effectiveness and reliability of transport networks, whilst reducing impacts on the natural environment (including through decarbonisation). Furthermore, they place great emphasis on making cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journeys. This includes investment in new and upgraded infrastructure, changing perceptions, and increasing safety.
- The Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 has a long-term vision “to develop a transport system which helps support economic growth across Wiltshire’s communities, giving choice and opportunity for people to safely access essential services. Transport solutions will be sensitive to the built and natural environment, with an emphasis on the need to reduce carbon emissions.” The plan identifies the following five challenges in delivering a sustainable transport system for the area:
 - A largely rural county with many historic towns and villages.
 - Relatively high car ownership levels and small, isolated pockets of access deprivation.
 - The changing climate and the prospect of ‘peak oil’.
 - Significantly lower funding for transport.
 - Increasingly elderly population.

To address these challenges, the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan sets out several strategic objects to help achieve the following five goals:

- Support economic growth.
- Reduce carbon emissions.

- Contribute to better safety, security, and health.
- Promote equality of opportunity.
- Improve quality of life and a healthy natural environment.

At the local level, the following policies within the Wiltshire Core Strategy directly relate to the Transportation theme:

- Core Policy 60: Sustainable Transport.
- Core Policy 61: Transport and Development.
- Core Policy 62: Development Impacts on the Transport Network.
- Core Policy 63: Transport Strategies.
- Core Policy 66: Strategic Transport Network.

Due regard is also given to the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review, with several consultation questions relevant to the Transportation theme:

- Promoting sustainable transport, active travel and improving air quality.

Current Baseline

Rail network

There are no train stations within the neighbourhood area, and the closest available station is in the neighbouring city of Salisbury. This station is run by South Western Railway and serviced by Great Western Railway (GWR). The station offers connections to Andover, Basingstoke, Woking, London, Bristol, Cardiff, Southampton, Portsmouth, Yeovil and Exeter among a range of other local destinations⁵⁸.

Bus network

There is an infrequent bus service from Coombe Bissett and Homington to and from Salisbury, Shaftesbury, and Blandford. Route 20 runs between Salisbury and Blandford, with a stop at Coombe Bissett, and Route 29 runs between Salisbury and Shaftesbury, with stops at Coombe Bissett and Homington. From the Salisbury City Centre bus stop, there are connecting bus services to Salisbury train station. For those able to walk, the train station is 0.8 kilometres away from Salisbury City Centre bus stop, or approximately a 10-minute walk.

Wiltshire Council offers free bus passes to qualifying older or disabled people that live in the county. Residents who qualify for the pass apply online and receive bus passes or taxi vouchers.

Given the relative infrequency of bus services between Coombe Bissett and Homington and Salisbury, residents are likely to continue to rely on private vehicles to undertake day-to-day activities (including to access services, facilities, or employment opportunities). In this respect, initiative to improve bus services within the neighbourhood area (and to key public transport connections in neighbouring locations) are encouraged.

⁵⁸ South Western Railway (2022) [Salisbury Station](#)

Road network and congestion

The A354, which is the primary route between Salisbury, Blandford, and Dorchester, passes through the centre of Coombe Bissett. In addition to local traffic, it carries considerable through traffic including Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs).

The C12, which is the Ebble Valley road, passes through both Coombe Bissett and Homington. In addition to local traffic, it is also the main route for vehicles (both staff and patients) travelling to Salisbury District Hospital from the southwest of Wiltshire and East Dorset. This road also provides the main access to the Chalke Valley and its villages. In this respect, Coombe Bissett is a crossroads village with a high proportion of through traffic that residents do not contribute to.

The overall effect of the community's reliance on cars, together with the high level of through traffic and limited public transport has led to congested roads, with fewer people walking or cycling. In addition, many of the local roads in both Coombe Bissett and Homington are narrow and do not have pavements. As a result, the roads feel unsafe for both pedestrians and cyclists. This problem is compounded by the limitations of the current network of footpaths. In several places, they do not allow residents to safely walk to and from the services available in the centre of Coombe Bissett village.

There are specific road safety issues related to the village's school, located in Shutts Lane, a short and steep byway which leads south from Homington Road in the centre of Coombe Bissett. Many pupils live outside the Parish and are taken to school by car. There is no dedicated school drop-off area, and this directly leads to road safety problems both in Shutts Lane and on the narrower parts of Homington Road.

Public rights of way network (PRoW)

Department of Transport figures published in October 2020 show that between May and July 2020, 39% of people reported walking more and 38% reported cycling more than before the outbreak of the pandemic.

The neighbourhood area is relatively well served by a network of footpaths and cycle paths which contribute to the wider PRoW network. This includes footpaths connecting Coombe Bissett and Homington and a bridleway along Gypsy Lane south of Coombe Bissett. There are also several footpaths and bridleways in the south of the neighbourhood area around Greenacres Farm.

Within the villages, walking can be challenging at some locations because of transport infrastructure. In some parts, footways can be narrow (with poor sight lines at turning points), incomplete, or absent. There are also no safe footpath or pavement routes to the School through the village of Coombe Bissett.

Future Baseline

Given the rural nature of the neighbourhood area and relative lack of sustainable transport options, in the absence of strategic transport interventions, growth in the area will likely increase the reliance on the private vehicle for travel. Therefore, new development has the potential to increase traffic and cause congestion within the neighbourhood area, principally at junctions on key routes. This is likely to continue to be more pronounced during peak times (i.e., rush hours and holiday seasons).

There might be opportunities to improve public transport networks within the neighbourhood area to facilitate more sustainable modes of transport whilst alleviating pressures on main road networks. Similarly, the provision of infrastructure to promote at home (i.e., remote) working is likely to positively contribute towards these aims.

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.

