

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

Environmental Report

April 2021

## Quality information

<b>Prepared by</b>	<b>Checked by</b>	<b>Verified by</b>	<b>Approved by</b>
Cheryl Beattie Senior Environmental Planner	Alastair Peattie Associate Director	Nick Chisholm-Batten Associate Director	Nick Chisholm-Batten Associate Director
Rosie Cox Environmental Planner	Nick Chisholm-Batten Associate Director		

## Revision History

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### Prepared for:

Mursley Parish Council

### Prepared by:

AECOM Limited  
3rd Floor, Portwall Place  
Portwall Lane  
Bristol BS1 6NA  
United Kingdom

T: +44 117 901 7000  
aecom.com

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## Table of Contents

Non-Technical Summary .....	i
1. Introduction.....	1
2. What is the plan seeking to achieve? .....	2
3. What is the scope of the SEA?.....	5
Part 1: What has plan-making/ SEA involved up to this point	
4. Introduction (to Part 1).....	9
5. Establishing the reasonable alternatives .....	10
6. Assessing the reasonable alternatives.....	12
7. Developing the preferred approach.....	15
Part 2: What are the SEA findings at this stage?	
8. Introduction (to Part 2).....	17
9. Appraisal of the 'pre-submission' version MNP .....	18
10. Conclusions and recommendations .....	23
Part 3: What are the next steps?	
11. Next steps (Part 3) .....	25
Appendices.....	26
Appendix I: Regulatory requirements .....	27
Appendix II: The scope of the SEA .....	32
Appendix III: Assessment of site options.....	74

# Non-Technical Summary

## Introduction

AECOM is commissioned to lead on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Mursley Neighbourhood Plan (MNP).

SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative effects and maximising positive effects. SEA of the MNP is a legal requirement.<sup>1</sup>

The MNP is being prepared by the Parish Council in the context of the adopted Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan and the emerging Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP).

Once 'made' the MNP will have material weight when deciding on planning applications in the Plan area, alongside the Aylesbury Vale Development Framework.

The SEA Environmental Report, including this NTS, is published alongside the 'pre-submission' version of the plan, under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended).

## Structure of the Environmental Report/ this NTS

SEA reporting essentially involves answering the following questions in turn:

### 1) What has plan-making / SEA involved **up to this point**?

- including in relation to 'reasonable alternatives'.

### 2) What are the SEA findings **at this stage**?

- i.e. in relation to the draft plan.

### 3) What happens **next**?

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

## What is the Plan seeking to achieve?

The MNP has a clear vision, "*To conserve and enhance the long-established integrity and identity of the Parish of Mursley within its rural setting and its specific historic and architectural character, whilst managing change and embracing appropriate local development which meets the social, economic and environmental needs of the Parish*".

To achieve this vision, the following plan objectives have been established:

- Conserving the historic character of the village and its 'sense of place'.
- Preserving the essential landscape setting of the village.
- 'Stitching in' new development within the village boundary and in suitable location(s) on its edge.
- Providing home types and tenures that meet local needs.
- Preserving and improving local biodiversity.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended) requires that each Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to the Local Authority alongside either: A) an environmental report; or, B) a statement of reasons why SEA is not required, prepared following a 'screening' process completed in accordance with Regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations ('the SEA Regulations'). The RNP was subject to formal screening in 2020.

- Increasing public access to green spaces and the countryside throughout the Parish.
- Preserving and enhancing Community facilities.

## What is the scope of the SEA?

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

SEA theme	SEA objective
Biodiversity	Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geodiversity and support improved ecological connections in the Plan area.
Climate change	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the Neighbourhood Plan Area
	Support the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan Area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and villagescapes
Historic environment	Protect, maintain and enhance the cultural heritage resource within the Neighbourhood Plan Area, including the historic environment and archaeological assets
Land, soil and water resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land
	Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner
Population and community	Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve access to local, high-quality community services and facilities
	Reduce deprivation and promote a more inclusive and self-contained community.
	Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures
Health and wellbeing	Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan Area.
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.

## Plan-making/ SEA up to this point

An important element of the required SEA process involves assessing 'reasonable alternatives' in time to inform development of the draft proposals, and then publishing information on reasonable alternatives for consultation alongside the draft proposals. As such, Part 1 of the Environmental Report describes how the SEA process to date has informed the preferred development strategy for the MNP and potential locations for development.

Specifically, Part 1 of the report –

- 1) explains the process of establishing the reasonable alternatives;
- 2) presents the outcomes of assessing the reasonable alternatives; and
- 3) explains reasons for establishing the preferred option, in light of the assessment.

## Establishing the reasonable alternatives

The Environmental Report (Chapter 5) explains how reasonable alternatives were established subsequent to process of considering the strategic policy context ('top down' factors) and the site options in contention for allocation ('bottom-up' factors). This work identifies ten site options in contention for allocation in the MNP. These options are:

1. Rear of 26 Main Street
2. E of Whaddon Road
- 3a. Rear of Station Road E
- 3b. Rear of Station Road W
4. NW of Playing Field
6. Rear of Green Man PH
7. E of Main Street
8. Rear of 30 Main Street
11. N of Swanbourne Road (Diocese)
12. N of Cooks Lane

## Assessing the reasonable alternatives

The summary findings for the assessment of the four options is presented overleaf, with detailed findings presented in **Appendix III** of the Environmental Report.

Table NTS.1 Summary findings of the SEA of alternative locations for housing development in the Plan area

		1. Rear of 26 main Street*	2. E of Whaddon Road	3a. Rear of Station Road E	3b. Rear of Station Road W	4. NW of Playing Field	6. Rear of Green Man PH*	7. E of Main Street	8. Rear of 30 Main Street	11. N of Swanbourne Road (Diocese)	12. N of Cooks Lane
<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>Likely effect</b>	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive
<b>Climate change</b>	<b>Likely effect</b>	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
<b>Landscape</b>	<b>Likely effect</b>	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative
<b>Historic environment</b>	<b>Likely effect</b>	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Neutral	Neutral	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative
<b>Land, soil and water resources</b>	<b>Likely effect</b>	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative
<b>Population and community</b>	<b>Likely effect</b>	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive
<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	<b>Likely effect</b>	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Minor – positive	Neutral	Minor – positive	Neutral	Minor – positive	Minor – positive
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Likely effect</b>	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative

**Overall conclusions:**

Overall, the sites are considered to perform on par in relation to the SEA themes of biodiversity, climate change, landscape, land, soil and water resources, population and community and transportation.

Sites 4, 7, 11 and 12 perform better in comparison to the rest of the sites in relation to the SEA theme of health and wellbeing, by providing opportunities to connect development with the existing local footpath network and provide countryside access. This is based on the assumption that PRowS will be retained and suitable links provided.

1. Rear of 26 main Street*	2. E of Whaddon Road	3a. Rear of Station Road E	3b. Rear of Station Road W	4. NW of Playing Field	6. Rear of Green Man PH*	7. E of Main Street	8. Rear of 30 Main Street	11. N of Swanbourne Road (Diocese)	12. N of Cooks Lane
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Given the extent of high surface water flood risk across site 2, it is noted as potentially requiring more extensive mitigation. The extent of tree coverage at sites 1 and 8 also mean development is likely to result in some losses, and minor long-term negative effects for the landscape.

In relation to the historic environment, whilst neutral effects are considered achievable at both Sites 4 and 3b, it is recommended that Buckinghamshire Council and Historic England advice is sought in relation to development surrounding the Mursley Conservation Area, and development within an Archaeological Notification Area.

The potential for cumulative negative effects is also recognised in relation to the SEA themes of landscape, historic environment, land, soil and water resources, and transportation given the need for enabling development at site 8 to deliver access to site 1 and at both sites 8 and 1 to enable access to site 6. This has the potential to lead to a slightly higher overall level of growth (with implications for the traffic generation and greenfield loss) and cumulative tree losses and effects on designated heritage assets and their settings – including views into and out of the Conservation Area in the east of the settlement area.



## Developing the preferred approach

The Parish Council have provided the following detailed reasons for developing the preferred approach in light of the alternatives assessment:

The Parish Council identified 10 possible sites for development that satisfied the criteria detailed in 5.7 of the SEA. The results of the SEA suggested that, whilst there were minor negative and minor positive effects relating to different sites, no site offered overwhelming negative or positive effects sufficient to persuade the Council to either adopt or reject any of the 10 sites offered.

The Council had already decided that its preferred approach to determining which, if any, of the sites offered, should be adopted should be decided by a combination of the community's views and the outcome of the SEA. The Community had already provided general, non-site specific, preferences by way of a general questionnaire, earlier in the process. A second consultation was therefore undertaken by way of a public meetings and giving the community an opportunity to vote on their specific site preferences.

With the benefit of the outcome of all of the above the Council gave more detailed consideration to those sites that were preferred by the community to establish if there might be any reasons not to select those sites over any of the others. The two sites preferred by the community through the consultation outlined above are Site 3b (Rear of Station Road West) and Site 12 (North of Cooks Lane).

The negative aspects of the top two preferred sites, having regard to preferences expressed by the community in the original questionnaire, are that both are greenfield sites, one uses backland and the other, whilst essentially a linear development in the terms of the questionnaire, could be seen as incorporating some backland.

The positive aspects of the top two preferred sites having regard to preferences expressed by the community in the original questionnaire, were that both offered the right sort of housing mix and both offered significant additional benefit by way of green spaces.

The Council concluded that it was preferable to follow the community's expressed preference for the sites selected, any other site selected would attract more risk of the Plan ultimately failing at referendum stage.

## Assessment findings at this stage

### Conclusions

Overall, the addition of up to 30 new homes delivered alongside the protection and enhancement of community provisions is considered likely to lead to significant positive effects in relation to the SEA theme of population and communities.

Potential minor negative effects have been identified in relation to the SEA themes of landscape, historic environment, and land, soil and water resources. This is largely reflective of the greenfield land growth strategy (which ultimately reflects a lack of available brownfield alternatives). It is however noted that in relation to the historic environment, further consultation should be sought with Historic England to inform the extent and significance of potential effects on archaeological assets in development at the allocated site 'Land at Cooks Lane'. It is also recognised that wastewater infrastructure capacity should be confirmed prior to development at this site and the allocated reserve site 'Land off Station Road'.

Minor negative effects are also considered likely in relation to the SEA theme of transportation, given it is anticipated that existing trends of high reliance on the private vehicle will continue in the absence of strategic sustainable transport interventions.

Minor positive effects are anticipated overall in relation to the SEA themes of biodiversity, climate change, and health and wellbeing. This is largely reflective of the additional housing targeted at meeting identified local housing needs (including affordable housing) and the identification of, and support for an improved green infrastructure network in the Plan area which is inclusive of active travel routes. Further positive effects can also be anticipated in relation to climate change, through the draft Plan's support for alternative and higher Passivhaus Standards which contribute to achieving zero/ low emission development and the Plan's focus on developing a high-quality green infrastructure network in Mursley.

### Recommendations

The proposed development site 'Land at Cooks Lane' is likely to affect adjacent archaeological assets (including the historic ridge and furrow example) and **negative effects** are anticipated in this respect. It is **recommended** that further consultation with Historic England is sought to inform the potential significance of effects and agree appropriate mitigation strategies where necessary.

### Next steps

#### Plan finalisation

Following consultation on the 'pre-submission' version of the plan and accompanying SEA Environmental Report, the Steering Group will finalise the plan, taking into account consultation responses and assessment findings, and then submit a final draft 'submission' version of the Plan to Aylesbury Vale District Council.

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

Assuming that the examination leads to a favourable outcome, the MNP will then be subject to a referendum, organised by Aylesbury Vale District Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once 'made', the MNP will become part of the Development Plan for Aylesbury Vale District, covering the defined Neighbourhood Plan Area.

## Monitoring

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

It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the Neighbourhood Plan will be undertaken by Aylesbury Vale District Council as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The SEA has not identified any potential for significant negative effects that would require closer review or monitoring.

# 1. Introduction

## Background

- 1.1 AECOM is commissioned to lead on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Mursley Neighbourhood Plan (MNP).
- 1.2 The Plan is being prepared by Mursley Parish Council, in the context of the adopted Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan and the emerging Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP). Once 'made' it will have material weight when deciding on planning applications, alongside the Local Plan.
- 1.3 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative effects and maximising positive effects. SEA of the MNP is a legal requirement.<sup>2</sup>

## SEA explained

- 1.4 It is a requirement that SEA is undertaken in-line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which transposed into national law EU Directive 2001/42/EC on SEA.
- 1.5 In-line with the Regulations, a report (known as the Environmental Report) must be published for consultation alongside the draft plan that "identifies, describes and evaluates" the likely significant effects of implementing "the plan, and reasonable alternatives".<sup>3</sup> The report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.
- 1.6 More specifically, the Report must answer the following three questions:
  - 1) What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?
    - including in relation to 'reasonable alternatives'.
  - 2) What are the SEA findings at this stage?
    - i.e. in relation to the draft plan.
  - 3) What happens next?

## This Environmental Report

- 1.7 This report is the Environmental Report for the Draft Mursley Neighbourhood Plan. It is published alongside the 'pre-submission' version of the plan, under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended).
- 1.8 This report essentially answers questions 1, 2 and 3 in turn, to provide the required information.<sup>4</sup> Each question is answered within a discrete 'part' of the report.
- 1.9 However, before answering Q1, two initial questions are answered to further set the scene; what is the plan seeking to achieve? And what is the scope of the SEA?

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<sup>2</sup> Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended) requires that each Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to the Local Authority alongside either: A) an environmental report; or, B) a statement of reasons why SEA is not required, prepared following a 'screening' process completed in accordance with Regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations ('the SEA Regulations'). The Mursley Neighbourhood Plan was subject to screening in 2019, at which time it was determined that SEA is required.

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

<sup>4</sup> See **Appendix I** for further explanation of the regulatory basis for answering certain questions within the Environmental Report, and a 'checklist' explaining more precisely the regulatory basis for presenting certain information.

## 2. What is the plan seeking to achieve?

### Introduction

- 2.1 This section considers the context provided by Aylesbury Vale District Council's Local Plan before setting out the established Neighbourhood Plan vision and objectives. **Figure 2.1** (at the end of this chapter) identifies the area covered by the MNP.

### Relationship with the Local Plan for Aylesbury Vale

- 2.2 The MNP is being prepared in the context of the Adopted Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (AVDLP) and the emerging Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP). The VALP is in a late stage of plan-making having been through Examination in Public and with consultation on main modifications having recently closed (17<sup>th</sup> December 2019). The modifications seek to ensure that the Plan meets the tests of soundness and subsequently becomes adopted (replacing the AVDLP). In this respect significant weight is given to the emerging VALP as the most up-to-date and appropriate strategic context for the MNP.
- 2.3 Additionally, it should be noted that as of 1 April 2020, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, Chiltern District Council, South Bucks District Council and Wycombe District Council were replaced by a single, new Buckinghamshire Council<sup>5</sup>.
- 2.4 The VALP sets out a strategic framework for how future development across Aylesbury Vale will be planned and delivered between 2013 and 2033. It meets the need for 28,600 new homes in the Vale by 2033, half of which are either already built or have planning permission.
- 2.5 Neighbourhood plans will form part of the development plan for Aylesbury Vale, alongside, but not as a replacement for the Local Plan. Neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of 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 Aylesbury Vale, whilst enabling finer detail to be determined through the neighbourhood planning process where appropriate.
- 2.6 In the context of the Neighbourhood Plan area, the VALP identifies Mursley as a 'smaller village' in the settlement hierarchy, just above 'other settlements'. 'Smaller villages' are deemed "*less sustainable villages which have relatively poor access to services and facilities*". Small-scale development is anticipated within 'smaller villages' to maintain communities and avoid unreasonable harm. It is anticipated that small-scale sites will emerge through Neighbourhood Plans or by individual 'windfall' planning applications. No site allocations are made within the VALP at 'smaller villages'. The VALP also identifies that a total of 7 additional dwellings have been built within Mursley Parish since 2013.
- 2.7 In line with the strategic context of the VALP, the MNP is seeking to identify and allocate appropriate small-scale development sites.

### Vision and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.8 The vision of the Mursley Neighbourhood Plan, which was developed during earlier stages of plan development, is as follows:

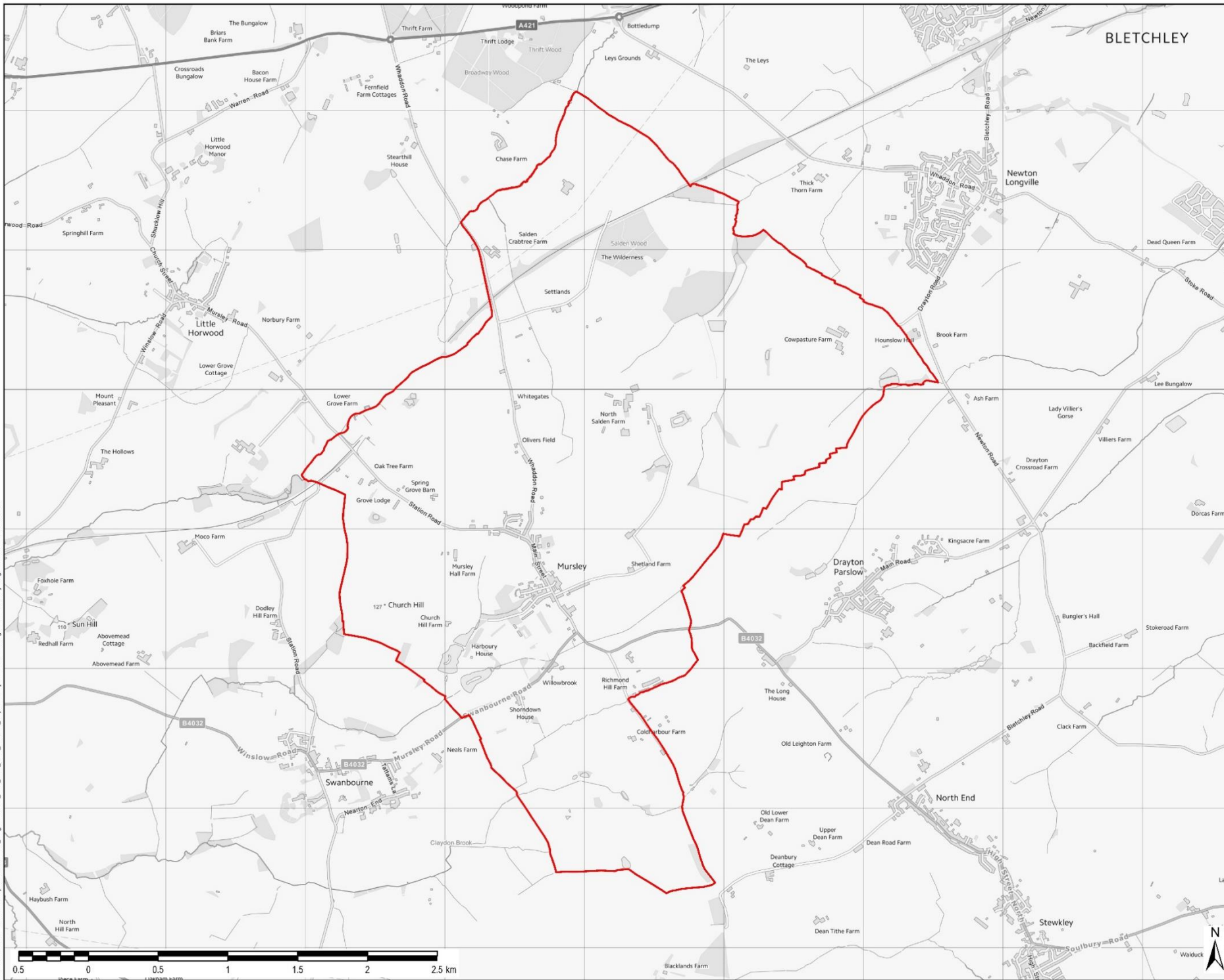
*"To conserve and enhance the long-established integrity and identity of the Parish of Mursley within its rural setting and its specific historic and architectural character, whilst managing change and embracing appropriate local development which meets the social, economic and environmental needs of the Parish".*

- 2.9 To achieve this vision, the following plan objectives have been established:

<sup>5</sup> Aylesbury Vale District Council (2020): 'New Buckinghamshire Council – April 2020' [online] available at: <https://www.aylesburyvalecdc.gov.uk/new-buckinghamshire-council-april-2020> [accessed 26/02/20].

- Conserving the historic character of the village and its 'sense of place'.
- Preserving the essential landscape setting of the village.
- 'Stitching in' new development within the village boundary and in suitable location(s) on its edge.
- Providing home types and tenures that meet local needs.
- Preserving and improving local biodiversity.
- Increasing public access to green spaces and the countryside throughout the Parish.
- Preserving and enhancing Community facilities.

File Name: I:\504 - Information Systems\60571087\_Neighbourhood\_Plan\_CDR\_2018\_202202\_Maps\Mursley Parish Council\Figure 1.1 - Mursley Neighbourhood Plan Area.mxd



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**LEGEND**

Mursley Neighbourhood Plan Area

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Purpose of Issue **DRAFT**

Client  
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Project Title  
**SEA FOR THE MURSFLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Drawing Title  
**MURSFLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA**

Drawn CN	Checked JW	Approved CB	Date 30/01/2020
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AECOM  
Scottish Office  
Ranger Lane, Basingstoke  
Hampshire, RG24 0PP  
WINDSOR HOUSE, 15000  
TAN CHEUNG STREET  
SHEWAN TOMES & CO  
www.aecom.com



## 3. What is the scope of the SEA?

### Introduction

- 3.1 The aim here is to introduce the reader to the scope of the SEA, i.e. the sustainability issues/objectives that should be a focus of (and provide a methodological framework for) SEA. 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; and
  - An ‘SEA Framework’ of objectives against which the Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed.
- 3.2 Further information on the scope of the SEA is presented in **Appendix II**.

### Consultation

- 3.3 The SEA Regulations require that “*when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies*”. In England, the consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England.<sup>6</sup> As such, these authorities were consulted in 2020. Consultation responses can be found in **Appendix II**.

### The SEA framework

- 3.4 The SEA scope is summarised in a list of topics, objectives, issues and questions, known as the SEA framework. **Table 3.1** presents a summary.

**Table 3.1: SEA framework for the MNP (as broadly agreed in 2020)**

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment Questions (will the option/ proposal help to...)
Biodiversity	Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geodiversity and support improved ecological connections in the Plan area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance mobile species that are important to the integrity of designated biodiversity sites?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance priority habitats and species, such as ancient woodland?</li> <li>• Achieve a net gain in biodiversity?</li> <li>• Support enhancements to multifunctional green infrastructure networks?</li> <li>• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?</li> </ul>
Climate change	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the Neighbourhood Plan Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of journeys made?</li> <li>• Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling and public transport?</li> <li>• Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria?</li> </ul>
	Support the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan Area to the potential effects of climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid development in areas at risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change?</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> These consultation bodies were selected “*by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programmes*” (SEA Directive, Article 6(3)).



<b>SEA theme</b>	<b>SEA objective</b>	<b>Assessment Questions (will the option/ proposal help to...)</b>
	change, including flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that inappropriate development does not take place in areas at higher risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change?</li> <li>• Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the plan area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change?</li> <li>• Sustainably manage water runoff, reducing surface water runoff (either within the plan area or downstream)?</li> <li>• Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development in the Plan area?</li> <li>• Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?</li> </ul>
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and villagescapes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the character of the landscape character areas covering the Plan area?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance local diversity and character?</li> <li>• Conserve the capacity for landscape features to accommodate new development through considerate planning?</li> <li>• Protect locally important viewpoints contributing to the sense of place and visual amenity of the Plan area?</li> </ul>
Historic environment	Protect, maintain and enhance the cultural heritage resource within the Neighbourhood Plan Area, including the historic environment and archaeological assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their setting?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of locally important features and their settings?</li> <li>• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the environment?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance archaeological remains, including historic landscapes?</li> <li>• Support the undertaking of archaeological investigations?</li> <li>• Where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies to support the conservation of archaeological assets, including non-designated assets, informed by appropriate investigation?</li> </ul>
Land, soil and water resources	<p>Ensure the efficient and effective use of land.</p> <hr/> <p>Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the use of previously developed land?</li> <li>• Minimise the loss of high-quality agricultural land?</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriately phase development to minimise impacts on water resources and the wastewater network?</li> <li>• Promote high levels of water efficiency in new development?</li> <li>• Support improvements to water quality?</li> </ul>
Population and community	Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of	

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment Questions (will the option/ proposal help to...)
	<p>different groups in the community, and improve access to local, high-quality community services and facilities.</p> <hr/> <p>Reduce deprivation and promote a more inclusive and self-contained community.</p> <hr/> <p>Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage and promote social cohesion and encourage active involvement of local people in community activities?</li> <li>• Minimise fuel poverty?</li> <li>• Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing residents?</li> <li>• Improve the availability and accessibility of basic amenities?</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the provision of a range of housing types, tenures and sizes?</li> <li>• Support enhancements to the current housing stock?</li> <li>• Meet the needs of all sectors of the community?</li> <li>• Provide quality and flexible homes that meet people's needs?</li> <li>• Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction?</li> <li>• Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities.</li> </ul>
Health and wellbeing	<p>Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan Area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups?</li> <li>• Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure, such as open greenspaces, in accordance with Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards?</li> <li>• Promote the use of healthier modes of travel?</li> <li>• Improve access to the countryside around Mursley for recreational use?</li> <li>• Avoiding any negative impacts to the quality and extent of existing public open space, allotments and recreational assets, such as formal or informal footpaths, as well as proposed Local Green Space?</li> <li>• Promote accessibility to local health services?</li> </ul>
Transportation	<p>Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the key objectives within the Buckinghamshire LTP 4 and Aylesbury Transport Strategy, to encourage more sustainable transport?</li> <li>• Enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements?</li> <li>• Reduce the need to travel through sustainable patterns of land use and development?</li> <li>• Facilitate home and remote working?</li> <li>• Improve road safety?</li> <li>• Reduce the impact on residents from the road network?</li> <li>• Improve pedestrian access to local footpath networks?</li> <li>• Reduce the need to travel through sustainable patterns of land use and development?</li> <li>• Reduce and manage traffic flow in and out of Mursley Village?</li> </ul>

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

## 4. Introduction (to Part 1)

- 4.1 The 'narrative' of plan-making/ SEA up to this point is told within this 'part' of the Environmental Report.
- 4.2 A key element of the SEA process is the appraisal of 'reasonable alternatives' for the MNP. The SEA Regulations<sup>7</sup> are not prescriptive as to what constitutes a reasonable alternative, stating only that the Environmental Report should present an appraisal of the "*plan and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan*".
- 4.3 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 the alternatives appraised.
- 4.4 The following sections therefore describe how the SEA process to date has informed the preferred development strategy for the MNP and potential locations for development. Specifically, this chapter explains how the Neighbourhood Plan's development strategy has been shaped through considering alternative approaches for the location of housing in the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

### Structure of this part of the report

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

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<sup>7</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

## 5. Establishing the reasonable alternatives

### Introduction

- 5.1 Plan-making for the MNP has been underway since 2017 when the Steering Group and Neighbourhood Plan Area was established. Consultation has incorporated informal and formal exercises, including surveys, news releases, exhibitions, public sessions and online updates. Consultation has sought to inform local people and to ensure that local businesses, organisations and residents had the opportunity to contribute to the making of the plan from the outset.
- 5.2 This section of the Environmental Report seeks to set out the key steps taken to inform the development of growth scenarios. The aim is to present “*an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with*”.<sup>8</sup>
- 5.3 Specifically, there is a need to 1) explain strategic issues/ objectives with a bearing on the establishment of a growth scenario; 2) discuss work completed to examine site options (i.e. sites potentially in contention for allocation); and then 3) explain how the ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’ understanding generated was married together to arrive at growth scenarios.

### Housing numbers to deliver through the MNP

- 5.4 The emerging Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) identifies Mursley as a ‘smaller village’ where small-scale development is anticipated to maintain communities and avoid unreasonable harm. It is anticipated that small-scale sites will emerge through Neighbourhood Plans or by individual ‘windfall’ planning applications. No site allocations are made within the VALP at ‘smaller villages’. The VALP also identifies that a total of 7 additional dwellings have been built within Mursley Parish since 2013.
- 5.5 The Parish Council is aware that the emerging VALP requires no further housing site allocations to be made in Mursley to 2033. However, it is also recognised that the new Buckinghamshire Council are likely to progress work on a new Local Plan for the County which will replace the VALP. The Parish Council is therefore considering appropriate small-scale development sites consistent with its status as a ‘small village’ in the settlement hierarchy, with a view to providing certainty for the community as to the location, scale and type of development to be taken forward in the Parish during the Plan period.

### Reasonable alternatives for site allocations

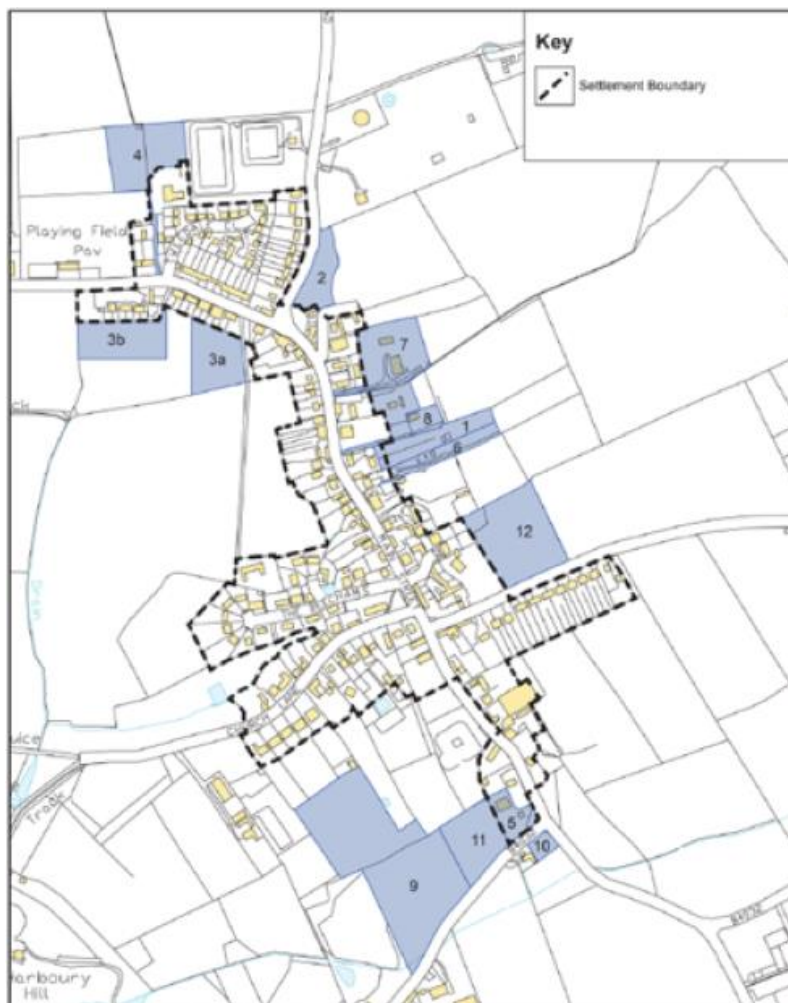
- 5.6 To support the development of a spatial strategy to deliver additional small-scale housing development, the Parish Council has considered alternative locations for housing development in the Plan area.
- 5.7 To support this process, work to identify sites has considered:
  - The results of a local ‘call for sites’ exercise;
  - AVDC’s Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) 2017<sup>9</sup>;
  - The spatial strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan;
  - A condition whereby the sites should be within or adjacent to the settlement boundary; and
  - Additional criteria relating to availability.

<sup>8</sup> Schedule 2(8) of the SEA Regulations.

<sup>9</sup> Aylesbury Vale District Council (2017) Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment [online] available at: <https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/housing-economic-land-availability-assessment-helaa>

- 5.8 Following this process, ten sites underwent a site assessment.
- 5.9 To support the consideration of the suitability of these ten sites for potential allocation in the MNP, the SEA process has undertaken a comparative appraisal of the key environmental constraints present at each of the sites and the potential effects that may arise as a result of housing development at these locations. In this context the sites have been considered in relation to the SEA framework of objectives and decision-aiding questions (see **Table 3.1**) developed during SEA scoping (see **Chapter 3**).
- 5.10 The locations of the ten sites assessed through the SEA process are presented in **Figure 5.1** below.

**Figure 5.1: Reasonable alternatives for site allocations**



## 6. Assessing the reasonable alternatives

### Introduction

- 6.1 As identified in the previous chapter, ten sites were subject to SEA to support the Parish Council in considering alternative locations for housing development in the Plan area.
- 6.2 The detailed assessment of these ten sites is provided in **Appendix III**, and summary findings are presented in this section of the report.

### Summary findings

- 6.3 **Table 6.1** below presents the summary findings of the SEA of alternative locations for housing development in the Plan area.

**Table 6.1: Summary findings of the SEA of alternative locations for housing development in the Plan area**

		1. Rear of 26 main Street*	2. E of Whaddon Road	3a. Rear of Station Road E	3b. Rear of Station Road W	4. NW of Playing Field	6. Rear of Green Man PH*	7. E of Main Street	8. Rear of 30 Main Street	11. N of Swanbourne Road (Diocese)	12. N of Cooks Lane
<b>Biodiversity</b>	Likely effect	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive
<b>Climate change</b>	Likely effect	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
<b>Landscape</b>	Likely effect	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative
<b>Historic environment</b>	Likely effect	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Neutral	Neutral	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative
<b>Land, soil and water resources</b>	Likely effect	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative
<b>Population and community</b>	Likely effect	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive
<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	Likely effect	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Minor – positive	Neutral	Minor – positive	Neutral	Minor – positive	Minor – positive
<b>Transportation</b>	Likely effect	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative

**Overall conclusions:**

Overall, the sites are considered to perform on par in relation to the SEA themes of biodiversity, climate change, landscape, land, soil and water resources, population and community and transportation.

Sites 4, 7, 11 and 12 perform better in comparison to the rest of the sites in relation to the SEA theme of health and wellbeing, by providing opportunities to connect development with the existing local footpath network and provide countryside access. This is based on the assumption that PRowS will be retained and suitable links provided.

Given the extent of high surface water flood risk across site 2, it is noted potentially for more extensive mitigation requirements. The extent of tree coverage at sites 1 and 8 also mean development is likely to result in some losses, and minor long-term negative effects for the landscape.



<b>1. Rear of 26 main Street*</b>	<b>2. E of Whaddon Road</b>	<b>3a. Rear of Station Road E</b>	<b>3b. Rear of Station Road W</b>	<b>4. NW of Playing Field</b>	<b>6. Rear of Green Man PH*</b>	<b>7. E of Main Street</b>	<b>8. Rear of 30 Main Street</b>	<b>11. N of Swanbourne Road (Diocese)</b>	<b>12. N of Cooks Lane</b>
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In relation to the historic environment, whilst neutral effects are considered achievable at both Sites 4 and 3b, it is recommended that Buckinghamshire Council and Historic England advice is sought in relation to development surrounding the Mursley Conservation Area, and development within an Archaeological Notification Area.

The potential for cumulative negative effects is also recognised in relation to the SEA themes of landscape, historic environment, land, soil and water resources, and transportation given the need for enabling development at site 8 to deliver access to site 1 and at both sites 8 and 1 to enable access to site 6. This has the potential to lead to a slightly higher overall level of growth (with implications for the traffic generation and greenfield loss) and cumulative tree losses and effects on designated heritage assets and their settings – including views into and out of the Conservation Area in the east of the settlement area.

## 7. Developing the preferred approach

- 7.1 This section presents the Parish Council's reasons for developing the preferred approach in light of the alternatives assessment.
- 7.2 The Parish Council identified 10 possible sites for development that satisfied the criteria detailed in 5.7 of the SEA. The results of the SEA suggested that, whilst there were minor negative and minor positive effects relating to different sites, no site offered overwhelming negative or positive effects sufficient to persuade the Council to either adopt or reject any of the 10 sites offered.
- 7.3 The Council had already decided that its preferred approach to determining which, if any, of the sites offered, should be adopted should be decided by a combination of the community's views and the outcome of the SEA. The Community had already provided general, non-site specific, preferences by way of a general questionnaire, earlier in the process. A second consultation was therefore undertaken by way of a public meetings and giving the community an opportunity to vote on their specific site preferences.
- 7.4 With the benefit of the outcome of all of the above the Council gave more detailed consideration to those sites that were preferred by the community to establish if there might be any reasons not to select those sites over any of the others. The two sites preferred by the community through the consultation outlined above are Site 3b (Rear of Station Road West) and Site 12 (North of Cooks Lane).
- 7.5 The negative aspects of the top two preferred sites, having regard to preferences expressed by the community in the original questionnaire, are that both are greenfield sites, one uses backland and the other, whilst essentially a linear development in the terms of the questionnaire, could be seen as incorporating some backland.
- 7.6 The positive aspects of the top two preferred sites having regard to preferences expressed by the community in the original questionnaire, were that both offered the right sort of housing mix and both offered significant additional benefit by way of green spaces.
- 7.7 The Council concluded that it was preferable to follow the community's expressed preference for the sites selected, any other site selected would attract more risk of the Plan ultimately failing at referendum stage.

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

## 8. Introduction (to Part 2)

### Introduction

- 8.1 The aim of this chapter is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the current 'pre-submission' version of the MNP. This chapter presents:
- An appraisal of the current version of the MNP under the eight SEA theme headings; and
  - The overall conclusions at this current stage and recommendations for the next stage of plan-making.

### Appraisal method

- 8.2 The appraisal is structured under the eight SEA themes taken forward for the purposes of the SEA and that are linked to the SEA objectives, see **Table 3.1**.
- 8.3 For each theme 'significant effects' of the current version of the plan 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.
- 8.4 Every effort is made to identify/ evaluate effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high-level nature of the plan. 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 and 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.

### MNP policies

- 8.5 To support the implementation of the vision for the MNP, discussed in Chapter 2, the current version of the plan puts forward 9 policies to guide development in the Neighbourhood Plan area. The policies, which were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering, are set out in **Table 8.1** below.

**Table 8.1: MNP ('pre-submission' version) policies**

Policy reference	Policy name
MUR1	Mursley Village Boundary
MUR2	Housing Site Allocations
MUR3	Housing Mix
MUR4	Design Strategy
MUR5	Local Heritage Assets
MUR6	Local Green Spaces
MUR7	Green Infrastructure Network
MUR8	Community Facilities
MUR9	Climate Change Mitigation: New Buildings

## 9. Appraisal of the ‘pre-submission’ version MNP

### Biodiversity

- 9.1 The Neighbourhood Plan area has limited sensitivity in biodiversity terms. With regards to the proposed allocation site ‘Land at Cooks Lane’ (under Policy MUR2) there are no designated biodiversity features or priority habitats on or adjacent to the site and no significant effects are anticipated in development. The site contains some trees and hedgerow and falls within a wider Priority Habitat ‘Network Enhancement Zone 1’ extending throughout Mursley but predominantly lying east of Main Street. It is recognised that development could support the wider aims for an enhanced habitat network in this area with opportunities for minor long-term positive effects in this respect.
- 9.2 The habitat ‘Network Enhancement Zone’ does not extend to include the proposed reserve site for development beyond 2033, ‘Rear of Station Road West’ (under Policy MUR2). Again, with no designated features or priority habitats within or adjacent to the site, no significant effects in relation to biodiversity are anticipated in development at this site. However, trees and hedgerow exist on site which should be retained in development where possible.
- 9.3 The draft MNP provides Policy MUR7 (Green Infrastructure Network) which is likely to support the potential for minor long-term positive effects. This is given the emphasis on development *“improving the connectivity and maintenance of the network”* which includes *“a variety of open spaces, woodlands, trees, historic field systems, water bodies, hedgerows, green lanes, footpaths, bridleways and cycle ways, features being created by farmers to support wildlife and areas acquired by the East-West Rail Alliance to compensate for the loss of wildlife habitat along the rail line – all additional assets of biodiversity value that provide corridors through the Parish for wildlife.”*
- 9.4 Considering the above, alongside the policy provisions of the NPPF and the emerging VALP (and particularly the emerging national policy provisions with regards to biodiversity net gain in development), **minor long-term positive effects** are anticipated in relation to biodiversity overall.

### Climate change (mitigation and adaptation)

- 9.5 With regards to climate change adaptation, neither the proposed allocation site ‘Land at Cooks Lane’ or the proposed reserve site for development beyond 2033 ‘Land off Station Road’ (under Policy MUR2) are located in an area of medium or high fluvial flood risk. Therefore, no significant effects are anticipated in development at the sites in this regard.
- 9.6 Whilst neither site is immediately constrained by areas of surface water flood risk on site, the sites both lie adjacent to areas of low surface flood risk, including along Cooks Lane. In addition, an area of high risk connected with drains is present further to the south of the Station Road site. On this basis, development should consider future flood risk and seek to ensure flood resilience in design, for example through appropriate use of sustainable drainage systems. The policy provisions of emerging VALP Policy I4 relating to flood risk and sustainable drainage systems are likely to ensure that due consideration is given to future flood risk prior to development.
- 9.7 With regards to climate change mitigation, whilst residents in Mursley are likely to continue to travel to higher order settlements for many services, facilities and employment opportunities, the scale of growth proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan is not considered likely to significantly exceed the strategic directions of the Local Plan. As such, the Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to lead to significant increases in greenhouse gas emissions than would be seen otherwise.

- 9.8 The draft MNP specifically proposes Policy MUR9 which seeks to promote a Passivhaus standard as an alternative to BREEAM Assessment and financial contributions to renewable energy or other climate mitigation measures that may be required as part of Government's proposed Future Homes Standard. The Passivhaus Standard is recognised in the MNP for its potential to exceed the national standard in its 'fabric first' approach, which will be supported by the community. In this respect, the policy is likely to lead to additional and direct support in achieving zero/ low carbon development in the Plan area; as such minor long-term positive effects can be anticipated.
- 9.9 It is also considered that minor long-term positive effects are supported through the provisions of proposed Policy MUR7, which identifies and seeks to enhance an extensive green infrastructure network in the Plan area, incorporating natural features alongside footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths. This will support climate change mitigation through encouraging the use of active travel modes and through helping to safeguard and enhance natural carbon sequesters located within the landscape (e.g. trees and hedgerows). It will also help Mursley to positively respond to the potential effects of climate change, including an increased occurrence of extreme weather events. This includes through helping to manage surface water run-off and providing summer shading.
- 9.10 Considering the above, overall **minor long-term positive effects** in relation to climate change are considered likely.

## Landscape

- 9.11 The landscape surrounding Mursley is not a designated or protected landscape, but it is rural in nature and largely in agricultural use. Landscape features at the proposed allocation and reserve sites under Policy MUR2 include trees and hedgerows, and both sites comprise greenfield land at the settlement edge. In this respect Policy MUR7 identifies trees and hedgerows as key components of the green infrastructure network in the Plan area where development is expected to "*contribute to improving the connectivity and maintenance of the Network.*"
- 9.12 The draft MNP further proposes Policy MUR1 which defines a 'Mursley Village Boundary' and seeks to protect the surrounding countryside by limiting development here to appropriate countryside uses or rural exception schemes. Minor long-term positive effects can be anticipated as a result.
- 9.13 Further support is also provided for the historic landscape, including historic ridge and furrow field systems as part of the green infrastructure network (protected through proposed Policy MUR7) and landscape features which contribute to the character of the settlement identified under proposed Policy MUR4. Policy MUR4 identifies and protects features such as hedgerows and trees at entrances to the village, tree belts, long distance and panoramic views, open/ green spaces, and building vernacular. The policy provisions are considered likely to support long-term positive effects in relation to landscape.
- 9.14 Considering the above, overall **minor long-term negative effects** are considered inevitable as a result of the loss of greenfield land at the settlement edge. It is however recognised that the wider policy provisions of the draft MNP are likely to provide long-term support for landscape character and key landscape features as well as the wider countryside setting.

## Historic environment

- 9.15 Mursley is a historic village, containing Listed Buildings and a designated Conservation Area which are sensitive to the effects of development and growth. In relation to the proposed development sites in the draft MNP, the allocated site 'Land at Cooks Lane' (under Policy MUR2) does not contain or lie in the setting of any designated heritage assets, however; it does lie entirely within an Archaeological Notification Area and is a short distance and potentially visible from Mursley Conservation Area along Main Street. The adjacent site is also noted to contain a historic 'ridge and furrow' example; identified as an archaeological asset which may be disturbed (with a potential for partial loss) in development at the allocation site. On this

basis, it is recognised that further consultation with Historic England should be sought to inform the significance of the potential negative effects arising in the allocation of this site.

- 9.16 The proposed reserve site 'Land off Station Road' (under Policy MUR2) for development post 2033 also does not contain or lie adjacent to any designated heritage assets, however; it again lies a short distance and is potentially visible from the northern extent of the Mursley Conservation Area along Station Road.
- 9.17 Potential impacts on the integrity of the Conservation Area will be limited by the draft MNP's focus on conserving and enhancing the conservation area. In this respect Policy MUR4 provides protection for key characteristics of the Conservation Area, and the wider village (recognising that this forms part of the setting of the Conservation Area). The Policy identifies in relation to the Conservation Area that development must "*sustain and enhance its special character and appearance*" the key characteristics of which are listed in detail, including; entrances to the village, key views, open spaces, building layout, and building vernacular. Policy MUR5 also identifies 'Buildings of Local Interest' (which are non-designated but contribute to the heritage setting) and seeks to protect them in future development.
- 9.18 Overall, the draft MNP provides additional policy protections which are considered likely to support the conservation and enhancement of local (including non-designated) heritage assets and their settings. However, the proposed development site 'Land at Cooks Lane' is likely to affect adjacent archaeological assets (including the historic ridge and furrow example) and **negative effects** are anticipated in this respect. It is **recommended** that further consultation with Historic England is sought to inform the potential significance of effects and agree appropriate mitigation strategies where applicable. On this basis, **uncertainty** exists at this stage of assessment in relation to the residual effects of the proposed development.

## Land, soil and water resources

- 9.19 Development at the proposed allocation site and the proposed reserve site under Policy MUR2 will result in the loss of greenfield land and minor long-term negative effects are considered likely in relation to land and soil resources as a result. However, it is recognised that this reflects of a lack of alternative brownfield options available in the village rather than inefficient land use.
- 9.20 The precise soil quality is unknown at this stage. Indicative data suggests that high-quality agricultural land exists north west of the plan area, relatively close to the proposed reserve site. Potential effects on agricultural land resources are therefore uncertain at this stage, and further site-level investigation would be required to inform any further assessment of potential effects.
- 9.21 The draft MNP does propose Policy MUR1, which, by defining a village boundary and restricting development outside of this, provides indirect support for the long-term retention of the surrounding countryside and agricultural land resources here.
- 9.22 No significant effects are considered likely at this stage in relation to water resources or water quality. Whilst the allocations of the draft MNP exceed that planned for in the emerging VALP, this is only a minor increase of around 30 homes, which water companies are likely to be able to accommodate. However, it is recognised that wastewater infrastructure capacity constraints are a key concern for the wider District and appropriate phasing may be required which ensures any necessary infrastructure capacity upgrades have been completed prior to development at the proposed allocation sites.
- 9.23 Overall, **minor long-term negative effects** are considered an inevitable consequence of growth and the loss of greenfield land in the village. The effects in relation to agricultural land resources are **uncertain** until site-level assessments can determine precise soil quality at the site, and, if applicable, appropriate phasing should also be considered in development to ensure the necessary wastewater infrastructure capacity.

## Population and community

- 9.24 Whilst the strategically assessed housing need for the District has been met through other allocations and commitments as outlined by the emerging VALP, the draft MNP proposes additional future development sites targeted at meeting local needs for more homes and open space. Long-term positive effects for communities are considered likely as a result.
- 9.25 The proposed allocation site 'Land at Cooks Lane' (Policy MUR2) seeks to deliver 20 new dwellings in total over the plan period. A proportion of this will be affordable housing, and proposed Policy MUR3 seeks to ensure this development targets the need for more 2- to 3-bed homes "to address the present imbalance in the village housing stock".
- 9.26 A further reserve site for development post 2033 is also proposed under Policy MUR2 which will support an additional 10 dwellings and provide residents with greater certainty with regards to future growth in the village.
- 9.27 Proposed Policy MUR1 defines a settlement boundary within which housing development will be predominantly located; supporting social cohesion and accessible development in terms of local connections. Support is provided through the policy for appropriate uses in the surrounding countryside which enhance the rural economy or deliver affordable housing/ community right to build schemes. Minor long-term positive effects for communities are considered likely in this respect.
- 9.28 The village contains many locally valued service and facility provisions, the retention of which is protected through proposed Policy MUR8. The Policy outlines the community aspirations for new green spaces at the development site to support the growing population, which is further supported by proposed Policy MUR7 in its identification of a green infrastructure network, inclusive of active travel routes, which development is expected to "contribute to improving the connectivity and maintenance of". As a result, improvements to local footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths, as well as open spaces and natural features are anticipated, along with minor long-term positive effects in this respect.
- 9.29 Proposed Policy MUR4 further identifies characteristics that contribute to the special character and appearance of the village, providing additional support for inclusive development and cohesive communities. Minor long-term positive effects for communities can also be anticipated in this respect.
- 9.30 Considering the addition of up to 30 new homes delivered alongside the protection and enhancement of community provisions, **significant long-term positive effects** are considered likely overall in relation to the population and communities SEA theme.

## Health and wellbeing

- 9.31 Compared with the District, a higher proportion of Mursley residents report good or very good health, and the Plan area is noted for relatively low levels of deprivation. Despite this, there are no healthcare facilities directly within the village, and residents look to neighbouring settlements for such provisions. Whilst the village contains multiple recreational facilities, it is noted that green infrastructure networks and open/ green spaces supporting the community are deficient in a number of respects.
- 9.32 The growth proposed through the draft MNP is unlikely to lead to any significant improvements to healthcare access, however, proposed Policy MUR6 identifies and designates the Village Green as Local Green Space, and proposed Policy MUR8 identifies the community aspirations for new open space where possible at the development sites. Further to this, proposed Policy MUR7 seeks to identify and protect a local green infrastructure network comprised of open spaces, natural features including waterbodies, and active travel routes (footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths). Under Policy MUR7 development will be expected to "contribute to improving the connectivity and maintenance of the Network" and as a result, minor long-term positive effects can be anticipated in relation to health and wellbeing.



9.33 Whilst growth in the settlement may place increased pressure on healthcare facilities in neighbouring settlements, only small-scale growth is proposed, and no significant negative effects are considered likely in respect of healthcare access. The draft Plan's support for development that enhances access to and the quality of green spaces and green infrastructure networks, and local active travel routes is considered likely to lead to residual **minor long-term positive effects** overall.

## Transportation

- 9.34 There is limited sustainable transport infrastructure within the village, and in the absence of strategic transport interventions, the existing trends of high reliance on the private vehicle are likely to continue in Mursley. Growth in the village will lead to inevitable increases in vehicle use in the Plan area and potentially affect congestion on local roads. However, the small-scale growth proposed in the draft MNP is not considered likely to lead to any significant negative effects in this respect. **Residual minor long-term negative effects** are considered likely.
- 9.35 Alleviating the potential effects of new development, the draft MNP recognises the role of active travel routes (footpaths, bridleways and cycle ways) as part of Mursley's green infrastructure network which, through proposed Policy MUR7, development is expected to "*contribute to improving the connectivity and maintenance of*".

## 10. Conclusions and recommendations

- 10.1 Overall, the addition of up to 30 new homes delivered alongside the protection and enhancement of community provisions is considered likely to lead to significant positive effects in relation to the SEA theme of population and communities.
- 10.2 Potential minor negative effects have been identified in relation to the SEA themes of landscape, historic environment, and land, soil and water resources. This is largely reflective of the greenfield land growth strategy (which ultimately reflects a lack of available brownfield alternatives). It is however noted that in relation to the historic environment, further consultation should be sought with Historic England to inform the extent and significance of potential effects on archaeological assets in development at the allocated site 'Land at Cooks Lane'. It is also recognised that wastewater infrastructure capacity should be confirmed prior to development at this site and the allocated reserve site 'Land off Station Road'.
- 10.3 Minor negative effects are also considered likely in relation to the SEA theme of transportation, given it is anticipated that existing trends of high reliance on the private vehicle will continue in the absence of strategic sustainable transport interventions.
- 10.4 Minor positive effects are anticipated overall in relation to the SEA themes of biodiversity, climate change, and health and wellbeing. This is largely reflective of the additional housing targeted at meeting identified local housing needs (including affordable housing) and the identification of, and support for an improved green infrastructure network in the Plan area which is inclusive of active travel routes. Further positive effects can also be anticipated in relation to climate change, through the draft Plan's support for alternative and higher Passivhaus Standards which contribute to achieving zero/ low emission development and the Plan's focus on developing a high-quality green infrastructure network in Mursley.

### Recommendations

- 10.5 The proposed development site 'Land at Cooks Lane' is likely to affect adjacent archaeological assets (including the historic ridge and furrow example) and **negative effects** are anticipated in this respect. It is **recommended** that further consultation with Historic England is sought to inform the potential significance of effects and agree appropriate mitigation strategies where necessary.

## **Part 3: What are the next steps?**

## 11. Next steps (Part 3)

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

### Plan finalisation

- 11.2 Following consultation on the 'pre-submission' version of the plan and accompanying SEA Environmental Report, the Steering Group will finalise the plan, taking into account consultation responses and assessment findings, and then submit a final draft 'submission' version of the Plan to Aylesbury Vale District Council.
- 11.3 Following submission, the plan and supporting evidence will be published for further consultation, and then subjected to Independent Examination. At Independent Examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the Local Plan.
- 11.4 Assuming that the examination leads to a favourable outcome, the MNP will then be subject to a referendum, organised by Aylesbury Vale District Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once 'made', the MNP will become part of the Development Plan for Aylesbury Vale District, covering the defined Neighbourhood Plan Area.

### Monitoring

- 11.5 The SEA regulations require 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring' to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of the Neighbourhood Plan to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.
- 11.6 It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the Neighbourhood Plan will be undertaken by Aylesbury Vale District Council as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The SEA has not identified any potential for significant negative effects that would require closer review or monitoring.

# Appendices

# Appendix I: Regulatory requirements

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

**Table AI.1: Questions answered by this Environmental Report, in-line with an interpretation of regulatory requirements**

		Questions answered	As per regulations... the Environmental Report must include...
Introduction	What's the plan seeking to achieve?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes</li> </ul>
	What's the SEA scope?	What's the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level</li> <li>Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance</li> </ul>
		What's the sustainability 'baseline'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan</li> <li>The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected</li> <li>Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance</li> </ul>
		What are the key issues and objectives that should be a focus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e. provide a 'framework' for) assessment</li> </ul>

	Questions answered	As per regulations... the Environmental Report must include...
<b>Part 1</b>	What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (and thus an explanation of the 'reasonableness' of the approach)</li> <li>• The likely significant effects associated with alternatives</li> <li>• Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives assessment / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan</li> </ul>
<b>Part 2</b>	What are the SEA findings at this current stage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan</li> <li>• The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan</li> </ul>
<b>Part 3</b>	What happens next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A description of the monitoring measures envisaged</li> </ul>

**Table AI.2: Questions answered by this Environmental Report, in-line with regulatory requirements**

<u>Schedule 2</u>	<u>Interpretation of Schedule 2</u>	
<i>The report must include...</i>	<i>The report must include...</i>	
(a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	i.e. answer - <i>What's the plan seeking to achieve?</i>
(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan	Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'context'?</i>
(c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level	
(d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;	The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan'	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'baseline'?</i>
(e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	
(f) the likely significant effects on the environment including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;	Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance	i.e. answer - <i>What are the key issues &amp; objectives?</i>
(g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan;	Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of appraisal	
(h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information	An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (i.e. an explanation of the 'reasonableness of the approach)	i.e. answer - <i>What has Plan-making / SA involved up to this point?</i> [Part 1 of the Report]
(i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring.	The likely significant effects associated with alternatives, including on issues such as... ... and an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of the alternatives considered / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan.	
	The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan	i.e. answer - <i>What are the assessment findings at this current stage?</i> [Part 2 of the Report]
	The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan	
	A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring	i.e. answer - <i>What happens next?</i> [Part 3 of the Report]



**Table AI.3: 'Checklist' of how (throughout the SA process) and where (within this report) regulatory requirements have been, are and will be met.**

Regulatory requirement	Discussion of how requirement is met
<b>Schedule 2 of the regulations lists the information to be provided within the SA Report</b>	
1. An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Chapter 2 ('What is the plan seeking to achieve') presents this information.
2. The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	These matters have been considered in detail through scoping work, which has involved dedicated consultation on a Scoping Report. The 'SEA framework' – the outcome of scoping – is presented within Chapter 3 ('What is the scope of the SEA?'). More detailed messages, established through a context and baseline review are also presented in Appendix II of this Environmental Report.
3. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	
4. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.;	
5. The environmental protection, objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	The SA framework is presented within Chapter 3 ('What is the scope of the SEA'). Also, Appendix II presents key messages from the context review. With regards to explaining " <i>how...considerations have been taken into account</i> ", Chapter 7 explains the Steering Group's 'reasons for supporting the preferred approach', i.e. explains how/ why the preferred approach is justified in light of alternatives appraisal.
6. The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects);	Chapter 6 presents alternatives appraisal findings (in relation to housing growth, which is a 'stand-out' plan policy area). Chapters 9 presents an appraisal of the draft plan. With regards to assessment methodology, Chapter 8 explains the role of the SEA framework/scope, and the need to consider the potential for various effect characteristics/ dimensions, e.g. timescale.
7. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	The assessment highlights certain tensions between competing objectives, which might potentially be actioned by the Examiner, when finalising the plan. Also, specific recommendations are made in Chapter 10.
8. An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Chapters 4 and 5 deal with 'Reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with', in that there is an explanation of the reasons for focusing on particular issues and options.  Also, Chapter 7 explains the Parish Council's 'reasons for selecting the preferred option' (in-light of alternatives assessment).
9. Description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Art. 10;	Chapter 11 presents measures envisaged concerning monitoring.
10. A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	The NTS is provided at the beginning of this Environmental Report.

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

authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express

At the current time, this Environmental Report is published alongside the 'submission' version of the

**Regulatory requirement****Discussion of how requirement is met**

their opinion on the Draft Plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1, 6.2)

Ash Neighbourhood Plan, with a view to informing Regulation 16 consultation.

**The SA Report must be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.**

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

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

## Appendix II: The scope of the SEA

This appendix presents the outcomes of scoping consultation and provides an updated summary of the baseline and context review.

A Scoping Report (February 2020) was shared with the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England, as well as Buckinghamshire Council for formal consultation over the period 27<sup>th</sup> February to 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020. The responses received are presented in **Table AII.1** below.

**Table AII.4: SEA scoping consultation responses**

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed in the SEA
<b>Natural England</b> <b>Eleanor Sweet-Escott, Lead Adviser, Sustainable Development, Thames Solent Team</b>	
Planning Consultation: Mursley Neighbourhood Development Plan - SEA Scoping Report	Noted, many thanks. No updates to scoping information required.
Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 27 February 2020.	
Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.	
Natural England is a statutory consultee in neighbourhood planning and must be consulted on draft neighbourhood development plans by the Parish/Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forums where our interests would be affected by the proposals made.	
In our review of the Mursley Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) scoping report we are satisfied with the scope and contents of the proposed SEA.	
<b>Environment Agency</b> <b>Michelle Kidd, Planning Advisor, Area Sustainable Places Team</b>	
<i>Mursley NDP SEA Scoping Report</i>	Noted, many thanks.
Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on the scoping report for the Mursley Neighbourhood Plan. We are a statutory consultee in the SEA process and aim to reduce flood risk and protect and enhance the water environment. Based on our review of the draft scoping report, we think the following environmental issues should be included to ensure the neighbourhood plan adequately assesses any environmental impact:	
<i>Fluvial Flood risk</i>	Preferred options for site allocations have not been identified at the scoping stage. The 'climate change' section has presented flood risk information relevant to the whole of the Plan area.
The Neighbourhood Plan proposes site allocations but it's not clear whether areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3. However there is only a small area of the Mursley neighbourhood site area within Flood Zones 2 and 3.	
The Local Authorities Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Management Plans is the evidence base which will need to be consulted to determine the level of flood risk in this area. We expect the Sustainability Appraisal to	The 'climate change' section has presented flood risk information, and a key issue and SEA objective was drafted under this SEA theme to

## Consultation response

## How the response was considered and addressed in the SEA

include flood risk in the baseline information, as a sustainability issue and as an objective.

ensure appropriate assessment of flood risk in the subsequent SEA.

### *Watercourses*

There are no main rivers in the Mursley neighbourhood plan area but there are some ordinary watercourses.

Developments within or adjacent to these watercourses should not cause further deterioration and should seek to improve the water quality based on the recommendations of the Thames River Basin Management Plan. An assessment of the potential impacts of the neighbourhood plan on these watercourses under WFD should be included within the SEA/SA appraisal.

The 'land, soil and water resources' section has presented information relating to ordinary watercourses and water quality, and a key issue and SEA objective was drafted under this SEA theme to ensure appropriate assessment of water quality impacts in the subsequent SEA.

### *Further information*

Joint Guidance:

For your information we have published joint advice with Natural England, English Heritage and the Forestry Commission on neighbourhood planning which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans.

This is available at:

[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://cdn.environmentagency.gov.uk/LIT\\_6524\\_7da381.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://cdn.environmentagency.gov.uk/LIT_6524_7da381.pdf)

Noted, many thanks.

### *Final Comments*

Once again, thank you for contacting us. Our comments are based on our available records and the information as submitted to us.

Many thanks.

## Historic England

### **Robert Lloyd-Sweet, Historic Places Adviser, South East England**

Thank you for consulting Historic England on the draft scoping report for the Mursley Neighbourhood Plan. Our comments are restricted to those parts of the report that fall within our areas of interest.

Noted, many thanks.

At Paragraph 6.5 could you please ensure the reference Historic England Advice Note 1 is updated to the most recent edition of the advice Note, which was published in February 2019. I would be grateful if Aecom's standard Scoping report template were updated to reflect this. I would also suggest adding a bullet point below those at 6.5 to state that the advice note recommends "clearly identifying those issues that threaten the area's character or appearance and that merit the introduction of management measures"

The advice note information has been updated and communicated (see updated context review in this appendix). The additional suggested wording has also been added. Many thanks.

At 6.15 it would be helpful to state that the Archaeological Notification Area is an area with potential for non-designated heritage assets within the meaning of the National Planning Policy Framework and that site allocations should be considered with regard for the need to avoid or minimise conflict between the conservation of those potential heritage assets and any aspects of those proposals.

Noted, many thanks. This has been clarified in the appropriate paragraph (see updated baseline information in this appendix).

At 6.16 it would be helpful to state that Conservation Areas are designated under, and gain statutory protection from, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. As such any proposals considered during the preparation of

Noted, many thanks. This has been clarified in the appropriate paragraph (see updated baseline information in this appendix).

## Consultation response

## How the response was considered and addressed in the SEA

the plan should give 'great weight' to the conservation of the area.

At 6.17 We recommend that the final sentence of this paragraph is amended to state that "These assets will be considered in a manner appropriate to their significance when considering the impacts of any proposals in the development of the plan, including the effects of any reasonable alternatives." I would consider the present statement to suggest that the impact of proposals on these assets will not be given adequate consideration in the preparation of the environmental report.

Noted, with thanks. This was not the intention and has been clarified in the appropriate paragraph (see updated baseline information in this appendix).

At 6.18 I would suggest that new development could also have negative impacts on heritage assets through the loss of the physical fabric of assets, loss of the ability to appreciate or enjoy their significance, as well as through potential loss of the contribution to their significance made by their settings. I would suggest the present paragraph needs to be updated to make this clear.

Noted, with thanks. This has been clarified in the appropriate paragraph (see updated future baseline information in this appendix).

At 6.19 - has the scoping report or baseline demonstrated that there are any heritage assets in need of enhancement through regeneration or that there are assets with poor settings that require enhancement? If not, I feel that the current statement presents a false certainty that there is such potential for benefit to the historic environment through development and should, as such, be omitted.

Noted with thanks and agreed, this paragraph has been amended to reflect a minor potential for wider 'villagescape' improvements that indirectly support settings and accessibility.

At 6.21 Given the relatively shallow depth of development and linear form of the conservation area with surrounding undeveloped landscape there is potential that the rural setting of the conservation area makes a strong contribution to its character or appearance. We recommend consulting with the District Council's conservation officer and the Neighbourhood Plan steering group to determine whether this is the case and whether this is an issue that will need to be considered when assessing the potential effects of the plan proposals and reasonable alternatives.

Noted, with thanks. The SEA will seek to ensure that the rural setting of the conservation area is considered in the assessment and advise as necessary when further consultation is considered appropriate.

With regard to the SEA Assessment questions for the historic environment, we suggest separating the consideration of whether archaeological investigation will be undertaken and the use of mitigation into separate questions or making clear that mitigation will need to be informed by appropriate investigation to ensure it is necessary, appropriate and sufficient.

Noted, with thanks. The assessment questions have been updated accordingly (please see updated SEA framework in Chapter 3).

We hope these comments are of assistance but would be pleased to answer any queries relating to them.

The comments are welcomed and considered to assist in a delivering a robust assessment. Many thanks.

### Buckinghamshire Council

#### Michael Nartey, Policy Planner, Planning and Environment

In general, the draft SEA scoping report is aligned with regulations and national and local policies including PPG, VALP, Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004.

Noted, many thanks.

#### *Section 2 – Air Quality; Pages 5-7*

The scale of development proposed in Mursley Parish is small or minor so its impacts on air quality of the residential

Noted, many thanks. The updated air quality information has sought to address these points.

## Consultation response

## How the response was considered and addressed in the SEA

amenities will be negligible. Though this was mentioned in the report, it should be elaborated. Further, the issue of traffic and congestion raised in the scoping report has been effectively addressed in the VALP. So cross referencing needs to be made to VALP policy NE5 (air quality & contaminated land).

### *Section 3 – Biodiversity; Pages 8-12*

*(comments are specific to the draft emerging MNP):*

Though biodiversity issues are covered in the VALP, it is necessary for the MNP to set out specific policy to presents opportunity to maximise biodiversity enhancement in new development at the local level. This will be in line with the scoping report. MNP should provide an enabling environment to support the delivery of biodiversity and to fulfil the provision sets out in Policy NE1 of the VALP. Section c. requires a net gain in biodiversity on minor and major developments will be sought by protecting, managing, enhancing and extending existing biodiversity resources, and by creating new biodiversity resources.

Noted, many thanks. The comments have been bought to the attention of the Parish Council for further consideration.

### *General comments:*

The Scoping report para.1.15 under key environmental themes should capture broad draft policy areas of the Emerging Mursley Neighbourhood Plan. This should include open space and green infrastructure. Though this is slightly highlighted under the health and wellbeing section of the report, it should be a stand-alone environmental theme.

The policy themes have not been fully established at this scoping stage, however the scoping information has sought to ensure that open space is appropriately considered in the subsequent SEA under the 'health and wellbeing' SEA theme, whilst consideration of green infrastructure has wider considerations across the themes of 'health and wellbeing', 'climate change' and 'biodiversity'.

The baseline information should be extended to include housing, open space and green infrastructure to align with the thematic policy areas covered under the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

Baseline information in relation to housing has been provided under the 'population and communities' SEA theme. Please also see previous response above which identifies how open space and green infrastructure will be considered through the SEA. Many thanks.

Provide a summary table for the plan, programme or policies. This should be set out in appendix 2 of the scoping report.

Noted, with thanks. These details are not available at this scoping stage.

Para.1.12 (ii) you mentioned Coggeshall Neighbourhood Plan. Maybe is an error. Coggeshall is part of Braintree District in Essex. Do you mean Mursley Neighbourhood Plan?

Noted with thanks. This is an error and has been rectified.

## Updated baseline and context review

### Air Quality

#### Policy context

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>10</sup> (NPPF) include:

- *'Planning policies and decisions should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants, considering the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones, and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas. Opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified, such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement. So far as possible, these opportunities should be considered at the plan-making stage, to ensure a strategic approach and limit the need for issues to be reconsidered when determining individual applications. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones is consistent with the local air quality action plan.'*
- *'Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health.'*
- *'New and existing developments should be prevented from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of air pollution.'*

The Clean Air Strategy 2019<sup>11</sup> identifies how government will tackle all sources of air pollution and is aimed at complementing the Industrial Strategy, Clean Growth Strategy and 25 Year Environment Plan. The strategy proposes new goals to cut public exposure to particulate matter pollution and sets out the comprehensive action that is required from across all parts of government and society to meet these goals. The proposed measures include new legislation and new local powers to take action in areas with an air pollution problem, including through the creation of 'Clean Air Zones'.

Published in January 2018 by the UK Government, 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment'<sup>12</sup> sets out policies and goals to help the natural world regain and retain good health. In this context, Goal 1 'Clean Air' and the policies contained within 'Chapter 4: Increasing resource efficiency and reducing pollution and waste' within the 25-year plan directly relate to the air quality theme.

Local Planning Authorities are required to publish annual Air Quality Annual Status Reports (ASRs) to discharge their monitoring obligations under Part IV of the Environment Act (1995). Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 and Part II of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 requires local authorities in the UK to review air quality in their area and designate Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) if improvements are necessary. Where an AQMA is designated an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) must then be put in place. Monitoring is undertaken to assess levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene and particulates.

In this context, Aylesbury Vale District Council published its most recent ASR in 2017.<sup>13</sup>

The following policies of the VALP directly relate to the air quality theme:

- NE5: Pollution, air quality and contaminated land.
- Transport policies T1 to T8

<sup>10</sup> MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/779764/NPPF\\_Feb\\_2019\\_web.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_web.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> DEFRA et al. (2019) Clean Air Strategy 2019 [online] available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-air-strategy-2019>

<sup>12</sup> HM GOV (2018): 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf) [accessed 02/01/20]

<sup>13</sup> Aylesbury Vale District Council (2017) 2017 Air Quality Annual Status Report [online] available at: [https://www.aylesburyvale.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page\\_downloads/ASR%20-%202017%20-%20Final%20Copy.pdf](https://www.aylesburyvale.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/ASR%20-%202017%20-%20Final%20Copy.pdf)

- S5: Infrastructure
- H6c: Accessibility

### Baseline summary

As of January 2020, Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) have declared three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within the District, where exceedances of NO<sub>2</sub> have been recorded. These are located outside of the MNP area at Tring Road, Friarage Road and Oxford Road.

The Aylesbury Air Quality Action Plan<sup>14</sup> has adopted a ‘whole town’ approach, creating one overarching Action Plan covering the whole of Aylesbury town. The Plan identifies town-wide measures for improving air quality as well as specific measures related to the individual AQMAs.

Mursley lies north of Aylesbury (roughly 17km from the closest AQMA in the town), and whilst residents may rely on the service provisions of this main settlement area in the District to some degree (with the potential for increased traffic and congestion to exacerbate NO<sub>2</sub> levels in Aylesbury), the role of Bletchley and its service offer is also likely to draw residents north of the Plan area and outside of the District towards Milton Keynes given the closer distance of these major settlement areas and ease of access via the A421. Therefore, development may also result in cross-boundary effects, affecting air quality within the neighbouring district of Milton Keynes. Milton Keynes contains one AQMA at Olney, however, emissions at this location have not exceeded objectives in the last three years, and if this trend continues for two more years the AQMA designation will be revoked. Of note, Milton Keynes has the largest electric vehicle charging point network in the country, capitalising on this future means of transport in the ‘Go Ultra Low City’ programme.<sup>15</sup>

### Future baseline

Future development within the parish has the potential for adverse effects on air quality through increasing traffic flows and associated levels of pollutants such as NO<sub>2</sub> both within the District and outside of it.

In the absence of the MNP, small-scale ‘windfall’ development is unlikely to lead to significant emissions over and above the baseline. As the MNP is seeking to allocate development sites, this may increase the potential for effects on the baseline, however; it is noted that the MNP is seeking to deliver small-scale development opportunities only and impacts on residential amenity are considered likely to be negligible. Also, this development will be delivered in the context of the aims, objectives and policy directions of both the AVDLP/ VALP and the Local Transport Strategy (discussed in Chapter 10).

It is recognised that the MNP itself provides an opportunity to support public realm enhancements and improved movement of pedestrians/ cyclists through the Plan area to maximise the potential for active travel and support reduced per capita emissions.

### Key issues

Considering the baseline and context review above, the following key issue emerges:

- There are no AQMAs within or close to the Plan area, and only small-scale development is anticipated over the Plan period. However, future residents are likely to continue trends in travelling outside of the Plan area to access a wider range of goods and services. This is most likely to affect congestion and air quality within Bletchley/ Milton Keynes in the north east of the Plan area, and Aylesbury town to a lesser degree. However, it is recognised that the effects of the overall level of growth across the District has been assessed at the District level, and VALP Policy NE5 seeks to address any impacts in this respect.

In light of the absence of any significant air quality issues within the Neighbourhood Plan area, air quality is **scoped out** for the purposes of the SEA process.

<sup>14</sup> Aylesbury Vale District Council (2010). ‘Aylesbury Air Quality Action Plan’ [online] available at: [https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page\\_downloads/Aylesbury-Air-Quality-Action-Plan-2010.pdf](https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/Aylesbury-Air-Quality-Action-Plan-2010.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/40-million-to-drive-green-car-revolution-across-uk-cities>



## Biodiversity

### Policy context

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF is an environmental objective to ‘*contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment’ including by ‘helping to improve biodiversity.’*
- ‘*Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value [...], take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.’*
- ‘*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with the statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); and minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.’*
- ‘*To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:*
  - a. *Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and*
  - b. *Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity’.*
  - c. *Take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, considering the long-term implications for biodiversity*

The 25 Year Environment Plan<sup>16</sup> sets out the Government’s environmental plan of action over the next quarter century, in the context of Brexit. The Plan sets out a strategy for managing and enhancing the natural environment, embedding ‘net gain’ principles as key to environmental considerations. It also sets out how the Government will address the effects of climate change. These aims are supported by a range of policies which are focused on the following six key areas:

- Using and managing land sustainably;
- Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes;
- Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing;
- Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste;
- Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans; and
- Protecting and improving the global environment.

In this context, Goal 3 ‘Thriving plants and wildlife’ and the policies contained within Chapter 2 ‘Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes’ and Chapter 5 ‘Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans’ directly relate to biodiversity and geodiversity.

<sup>16</sup> HM GOV (2018): ‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’ [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf)

The Biodiversity 2020 Strategy<sup>17</sup> (2011) presents a strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services which builds on the Natural Environment White Paper<sup>18</sup> and sets out the “*strategic direction for biodiversity for the next decade*”. The strategy aims to halt biodiversity loss and improve ecological networks and ecosystems for all people.

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan<sup>19</sup> (BAP) identifies priority species and habitats requiring conservation action. Although the UK BAP has been superseded, BAP priority species and habitats have been used to draw up statutory lists of priority species and habitats in England.

The Aylesbury Vale Green Infrastructure Strategy<sup>20</sup> sets out the principles for the management and creation of accessible green infrastructure in the District highlighting a number of flagship projects which aim to benefit wildlife, increase accessibility and protect and enhance historic landscapes.

The following policies of the VALP directly relate to the biodiversity theme:

- NE1: Biodiversity and geodiversity
- NE2: Rivers and stream corridors
- NE8: Trees, hedgerows and woodland
- I1: Green infrastructure

### Baseline summary

The 2015 Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes<sup>21</sup> aims to “*restore and connect habitats across the whole county*” making wildlife populations “*more resilient and allowing wildlife to adapt to climate change and other pressures*”. The BAP includes a Generic Action Plan for Buckinghamshire, fourteen Habitat Action Plans, one Habitat Informative Note, a summary of Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) and Natural Environment Partnerships (NEPs) all of which contain objectives, targets and actions for the whole of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes region.

The SEA screening opinion undertaken by AVDC identifies that there are 44 recorded sightings of notable species within the Neighbourhood Plan area of international significance. These are all protected species under Schedule IV or V of the EU Habitats Directive 1992. The following are listed in the SEA screening report:

- 1 common frog
- 4 Great Crested Newts
- 5 bat species
- 1 Whiskered bat
- 3 Natterer's Bat
- 4 Nocturle Bats
- 8 Common Pipistrelles
- 3 Soprano Pipistrelles
- 2 Pipistrelle Species
- 13 Brown Long Eared Bats

<sup>17</sup> Defra (2011) Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services [online] available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services>

<sup>18</sup> Defra (2012) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (Natural Environment White Paper) [online] available at:

<http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> JNCC (2007) UK BAP priority species [online] <http://archive.jncc.gov.uk/page-5717>

<sup>20</sup> Aylesbury Vale District Council et al. (2011) Aylesbury Vale Green Infrastructure Strategy 2011-2026 [online] available at:

[https://www.aylesburyvalecd.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page\\_downloads/Green-Infrastructure-Brochure-Web.pdf](https://www.aylesburyvalecd.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/Green-Infrastructure-Brochure-Web.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Aylesbury District Council (2015): 'Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Biodiversity Action Plan' [online] available at:

[https://www.aylesburyvalecd.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page\\_downloads/CD.SLB\\_004%20Bucks%20and%20Milton%20Keynes%20Biodiversity%20Action%20Plan%20Forward%20to%202020%20%28BMKNEP%20Jan%202015%29.pdf](https://www.aylesburyvalecd.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/CD.SLB_004%20Bucks%20and%20Milton%20Keynes%20Biodiversity%20Action%20Plan%20Forward%20to%202020%20%28BMKNEP%20Jan%202015%29.pdf)

However, it is noted that designated habitats supporting these species are limited within the Plan area. There are no internationally or nationally designated sites within the Plan area and the closest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is Poker's Pond Meadow SSSI, situated approximately 6km from the site. The closest Natura 2000 (international) site is located over 20km away (Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation).

There are a number of local wildlife sites identified in Buckinghamshire and Aylesbury Vale, including the following within the MNP area:

- Salden Wood
- Salden Cutting
- Stewkley Lane/Cross Bucks Way

Additionally, Whaddon Chase Biodiversity Opportunity area (BOA) extends into the northern part of the Neighbourhood Plan area. Rare butterflies and wildflowers have also been identified locally and the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre identify four Biological Notification Sites within the Plan area<sup>22</sup>.

Known Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats within the Plan area include deciduous and Ancient and Semi-ancient woodland (particularly at Salden Wood), and good-quality semi-improved grassland as depicted in **Figure All.1**.

Another notable area with local biodiversity value is the Church Hill fishery at Swanbourne Road, which is a natural reserve, home to a diverse array of local flora and fauna, such as wild fowl, Rainbow and Brown Trout.

### **Future baseline**

Habitats and species have the potential to be adversely affected from future development within the Plan area, including negative impacts on the wider ecological network, as a result of increased disturbance, noise, light and air pollution. Potential impacts on the Priority Habitats mentioned above should be considered, such as changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition of habitats, exacerbated by climate change.

The MNP presents an opportunity to maximise benefits for biodiversity by including consideration of important habitats and species 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 priority habitats but maintain and improve the connections between them. It will be crucial to effectively coordinate the delivery of housing, employment and infrastructure to ensure that opportunities to improve green infrastructure and ecological corridors are maximised, within the Plan area and beyond.

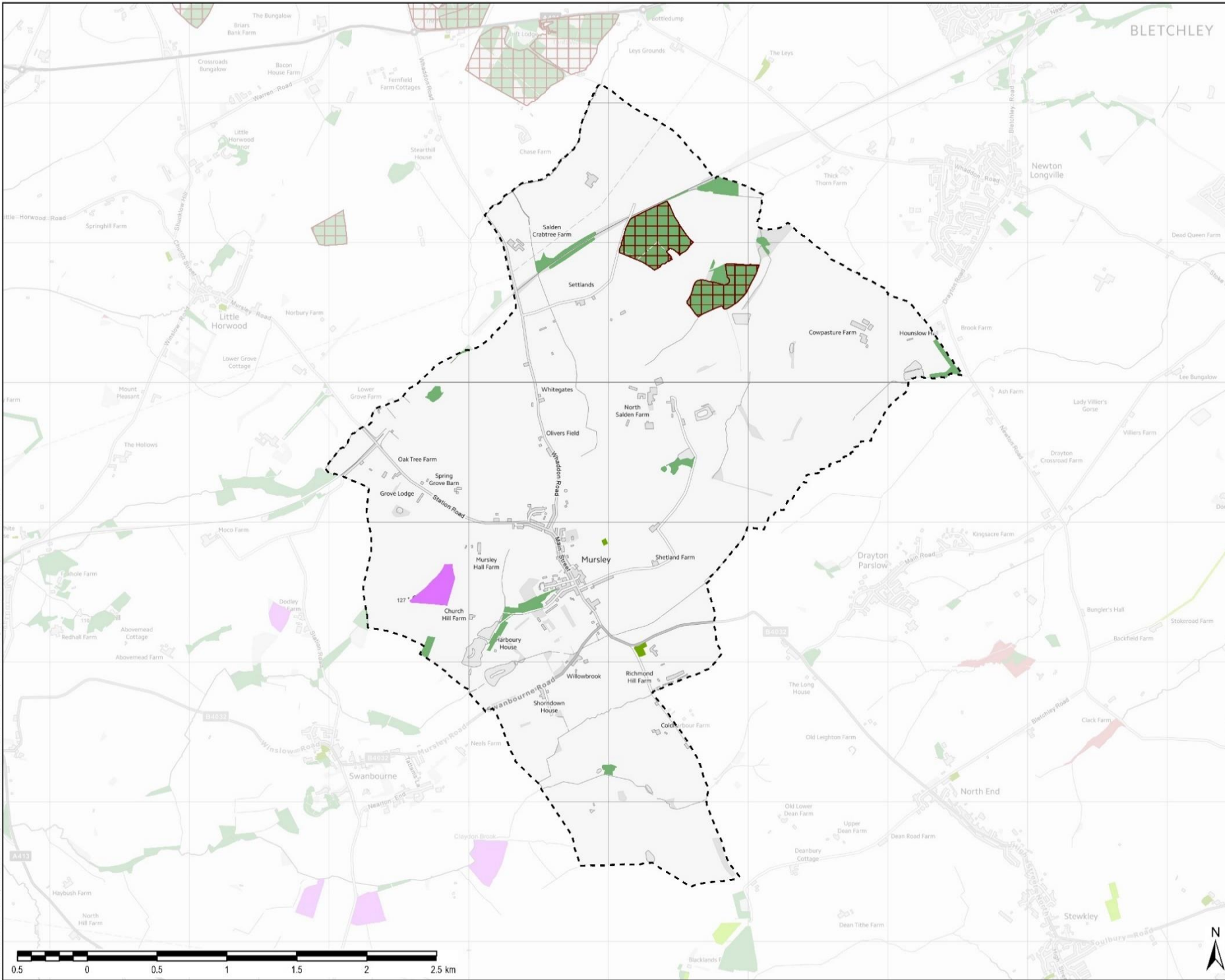
### **Key issues**

Considering the baseline and context review above, the following key issues emerge:

- Designated habitats within the Plan area are limited to Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats (deciduous woodland, ancient woodland, and good-quality semi-improved grassland) and Saldon Wood and Middle Saldon Wood represent key examples of these.
- The MNP presents the opportunity to maximise biodiversity enhancements in new development at the local level.

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<sup>22</sup> Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records (2018) 'Mursley biodiversity map 2018' [online] available at: <https://nfmursley.wordpress.com/documents/>



BLETCHLEY

THIS DRAWING IS TO BE USED ONLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ISSUE THAT IT WAS ISSUED FOR AND IS SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT

**LEGEND**

- - - Mursley Neighbourhood
- - - Plan Area
- Ancient Woodland

**Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats**

- Deciduous Woodland
- Good Quality Semi-improved Grassland
- Lowland Fens
- Lowland Meadows
- Traditional Orchard

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Purpose of Issue **DRAFT**

Client **MURSLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

Project Title **SEA FOR THE MURSLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Drawing Title **BIODIVERSITY DESIGNATIONS AND HABITATS**

Drawn CN	Checked JW	Approved CB	Date 30/01/2020
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AECOM  
 5 Scot Heron  
 Manor Park, Bletchley  
 Leighton, MK44 3PP  
 INFORMATION@AECOM.CO.UK  
 Tel: 01295 183901  
 www.aecom.co.uk

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Figure AII.1 01

## Climate change

### Policy context

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF is an environmental objective to ‘*contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment*’ including by ‘*mitigating and adapting to climate change*’ and ‘*moving to a low carbon economy.*’ ‘*The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.*’
- ‘*Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, considering the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.*’
- ‘*Local planning authorities should support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside areas identified in local plans or other strategic policies that are being taken forward through neighbourhood planning.*’
- ‘*Direct development away from areas at highest risk of flooding (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary, it should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.*’

The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment is published on a 5-yearly cycle in accordance with the requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008. It required the Government to compile an assessment of the risks for the UK arising from climate change and then to develop an adaptation programme to address those risks and deliver resilience to climate change on the ground. For both the 2012 and the 2017 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, the Adaptation Sub-Committee commissioned an evidence report aiming to understand the current and future climate risks and opportunities. The evidence report contains six priority risk areas requiring additional action in the next five years, see below<sup>23</sup>:

- Flooding and coastal change risks to communities, businesses and infrastructure;
- Risks to health, well-being and productivity from high temperatures;
- Risk of shortages in the public water supply, and for agriculture, energy generation and industry;
- Risks to natural capital, including terrestrial, coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems, soils and biodiversity;
- Risks to domestic and international food production and trade; and
- New and emerging pests and diseases, and invasive non-native species, affecting people, plants and animals.

The UK Climate Change Act<sup>24</sup> was passed in 2008 and established a framework to develop an economically credible emissions reduction path. It also highlighted the role it would take in contributing to collective action to tackle climate change under the Kyoto Protocol, and more recently as part of the UN-led Paris Agreement.

The Climate Change Act includes the following:

<sup>23</sup> GOV UK (2017): ‘UK Climate Change Risk Assessment Report January 2017’ [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-climate-change-risk-assessment-2017>

<sup>24</sup> GOV. UK (2008): ‘Climate Change Act 2008’ [online] available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents>

- 2050 Target. The Act commits the UK to reducing emissions by at least 80% in 2050 from 1990 levels.
- Carbon Budgets. The Act requires the Government to set legally binding 'carbon budgets'. A carbon budget is a cap on the amount of greenhouse gases emitted in the UK over a five-year period. The carbon budgets are designed to reflect the cost-effective path to achieving the UK's long-term objectives. The first five carbon budgets have been put into legislation and run up to 2032.
- The Committee on Climate Change was set up to advise the Government on emissions targets and report to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- The National Adaptation Programme requires the Government to assess the risks to the UK from climate change, prepare a strategy to address them, and encourage key organisations to do the same. For more detail, visit the UK adaptation policy (page 25).

The Clean Air Strategy<sup>26</sup> released in 2019 sets out the Government plans for dealing with all sources of air pollution. The strategy sets out proposals in detail and indicates how devolved administrations intend to make their share of emissions reductions, and complements the Industrial Strategy, Clean Growth Strategy and 25 Year Environment Plan.

The Flood and Water Management Act<sup>27</sup> highlights that alternatives to traditional engineering approaches to flood risk management include:

- Incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings, and retro-fitting properties at risk (including historic buildings);
- Utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding, for example through the management of land to reduce runoff and through harnessing the ability of wetlands to store water;
- Identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere;
- Planning to roll back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion; and
- Creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)<sup>28</sup>.

Further guidance is provided in the document 'Planning for SuDS'.<sup>29</sup> This report calls for greater recognition of the multiple benefits that water management can present. It suggests that successful SuDS are capable of 'contributing to local quality of life and green infrastructure'.

At the local level, the Buckinghamshire Energy Strategy<sup>30</sup> (updated in 2017), is the first annual update of the Action Plan and comes after a year which has seen significant amounts of change in the policy landscape. The updated plan preserves the existing Energy Strategy for Buckinghamshire in relation to the development of energy resources in the region whilst updating key areas of the strategy such as the development of a community energy sector in the county. The four key areas addressed in the updated version of the Energy Strategy are:

- **Generation** – increasing the amount of energy generated in Buckinghamshire, including through community projects, and supporting this through engagement in planning policy consultations.

<sup>25</sup> Committee on Climate Change (2017): 'UK Adaptation Policy' [online] available at: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/tackling-climate-change/preparing-for-climate-change/uk-adaptation-policy/>

<sup>26</sup> HM Gov (2019) Clean Air Strategy 2019 [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/770715/clean-air-strategy-2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/770715/clean-air-strategy-2019.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> Flood and Water Management Act (2010) [online] available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

<sup>28</sup> N. B. The provision of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 came into force on the 1st of October 2012 and makes it mandatory for any development in England or Wales to incorporate SuDs.

<sup>29</sup> CIRIA (2010) 'Planning for SuDs – making it happen' [online] available at: [https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/C687%20Planning%20for%20suds.pdf\\_0.pdf](https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/C687%20Planning%20for%20suds.pdf_0.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Buckinghamshire County Council (2017): 'Action Plan One: 2015-2020 Buckinghamshire Energy Strategy' [online] available at: <https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/4511581/action-plan-one-feb-17-update.pdf>

- **Efficiency** – improving energy efficiency levels across the county, particularly by addressing buildings in four sectors – residential, public sector, business and community owned.
- **Community** – creating a thriving network of community groups with the capacity, scale and influence to deliver significant benefits from energy generation schemes.
- **Local Economy** – increasing the demand for energy related goods and services, with local businesses able to meet the demand.

The Flood Risk Assessment for Aylesbury District Council<sup>31</sup> provides a comprehensive analysis of flooding from all sources (fluvial, surface water, groundwater, sewer and reservoir flood risk), the implications of this risk, and where the assessment should identify the functional floodplain areas within the district. Additionally, Aylesbury Vale District Council's Water Cycle Study<sup>32</sup> (WCS) assesses key issues relating to future development within the district and impact on water supply, wastewater collection and treatment.

The following policies in the VALP directly relate to the climate change theme:

- S1: Sustainable development for Aylesbury Vale.
- Transport policies T1 to T8
- NE5: Pollution, air quality and contaminated land
- C3: Renewable energy
- I4: Flooding

### Baseline summary

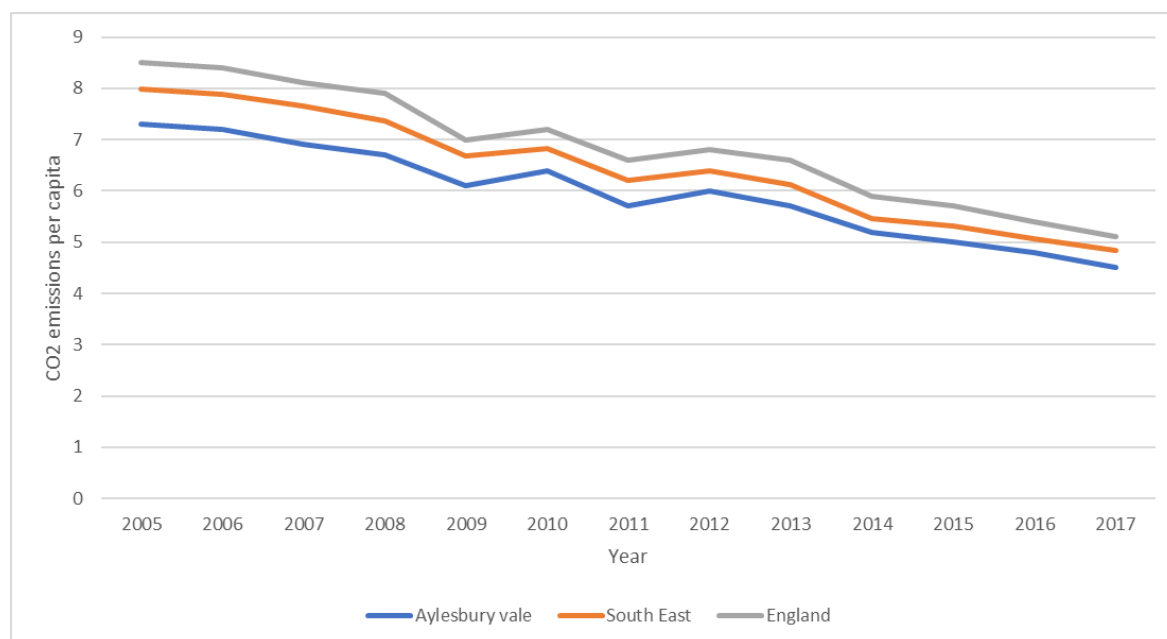
In terms of climate change mitigation, source data from the Department of Energy and Climate Change suggests that Aylesbury Vale has broadly lower per capita emissions than the South East of England since 2005<sup>33</sup>. **Figure All.2** indicates that trends in the rate of emissions reduction for Aylesbury Vale is in line with reductions for the South East region and England. Aylesbury Vale has seen a 38.4% in total emissions per capita since 2005, in line with regional figures (38%), but slightly lower than national figures (40%).

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<sup>31</sup> AVDC (2017) Aylesbury Value Strategic Flood Risk Assessment [online] available at: <https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/aylesbury-vale-strategic-flood-risk-assessment-2017>

<sup>32</sup> AVDC (2017) Water Cycle Study 2017 [online] available at: <https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/water-cycle-study-2017>

<sup>33</sup> Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2019) UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005 to 2017 [online], available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2017>

**Figure All.2: Carbon Dioxide Emissions (2005- 2017)**

The data identifies that the transport sector is biggest contributor to emissions, followed by the domestic and then industry and commercial sectors. Of note, road transport along A-roads and minor roads create the most emissions within the transport sector, and domestic gas use is identified as the biggest contributor within the domestic sector.

Aylesbury Vale has, in partnership with Buckinghamshire County Council, developed a countywide energy strategy<sup>34</sup>. With regards to renewable energy generation, the Energy from Waste facility at Greatmoor produces 1/3 of all renewable electricity for the county, bringing Buckinghamshire in line with national renewable energy targets, closely followed by landfill gas generation. Aylesbury Vale remains above the national average in terms of domestic solar PV installations<sup>35</sup>. Solar PV (<30kWp) and solar thermal have also been installed on Council owned estate and ideally, this would increase over the coming years. Ofgem publish information regarding installations of renewable schemes, via data on systems registered for the feed-in tariff for Aylesbury Vale (see **Table All.1** below). Most of the schemes were domestic (total installed capacity of 262.33kW), followed by small number of commercial/industrial schemes, and one community scheme.

**Table All.5: Applications for renewable energy schemes (2013)<sup>36</sup>**

Installation type	Planning consents in Aylesbury Vale District
Solar photovoltaic panels	15 applications approved (including 200 solar PV panels)
Solar thermal panels	2 applications approved
Wind turbine	0 applications approved
Electricity and heat generation from composting and anaerobic digestion facility	1 planning permission by Buckinghamshire County Council for an energy from waste facility at Greatmoor Farm, Woodham
Air source heat pump	2 applications approved
Ground source heat pump	1 application approved

<sup>34</sup> Buckinghamshire Council: 'Buckinghamshire Local Energy Strategy' available from: <https://democracy.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=4516>

<sup>35</sup> AVDC (2013) Sustainability Appraisal Monitoring Factsheet [online] available at: [https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page\\_downloads/SA-Factsheet-Dec-2013.pdf](https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/SA-Factsheet-Dec-2013.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

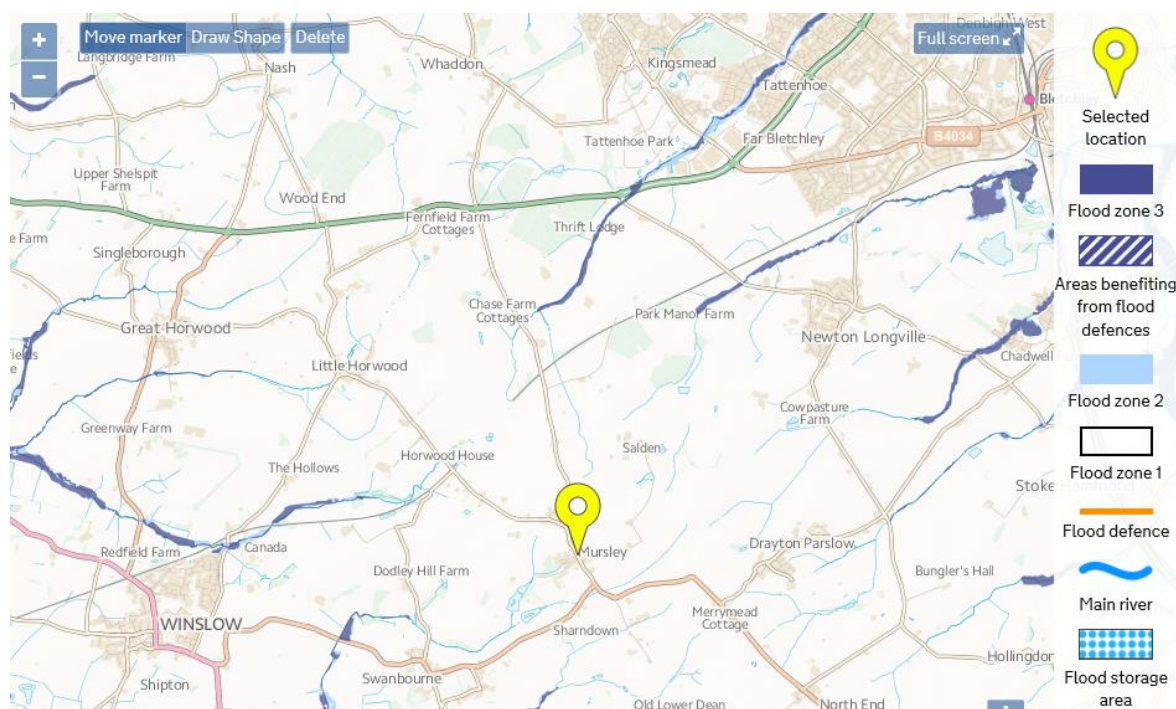


In 2019, Aylesbury Vale District Council declared a climate emergency<sup>37</sup>, agreeing to set the District on a carbon reduction pathway towards making it carbon neutral, and committing to ask the future Buckinghamshire unitary authority to become carbon neutral by 2030.

In terms of climate change adaptation, the areas at highest risk of fluvial flooding in the Plan area are those immediately adjacent to the numerous tributaries distributed across the Plan area, see **Figure All.3**. The areas surrounding these streams are in the low-risk category (Flood Zone 2), indicating that the annual risk of flooding is less than 0.1%, and flood defences in this area are strong.

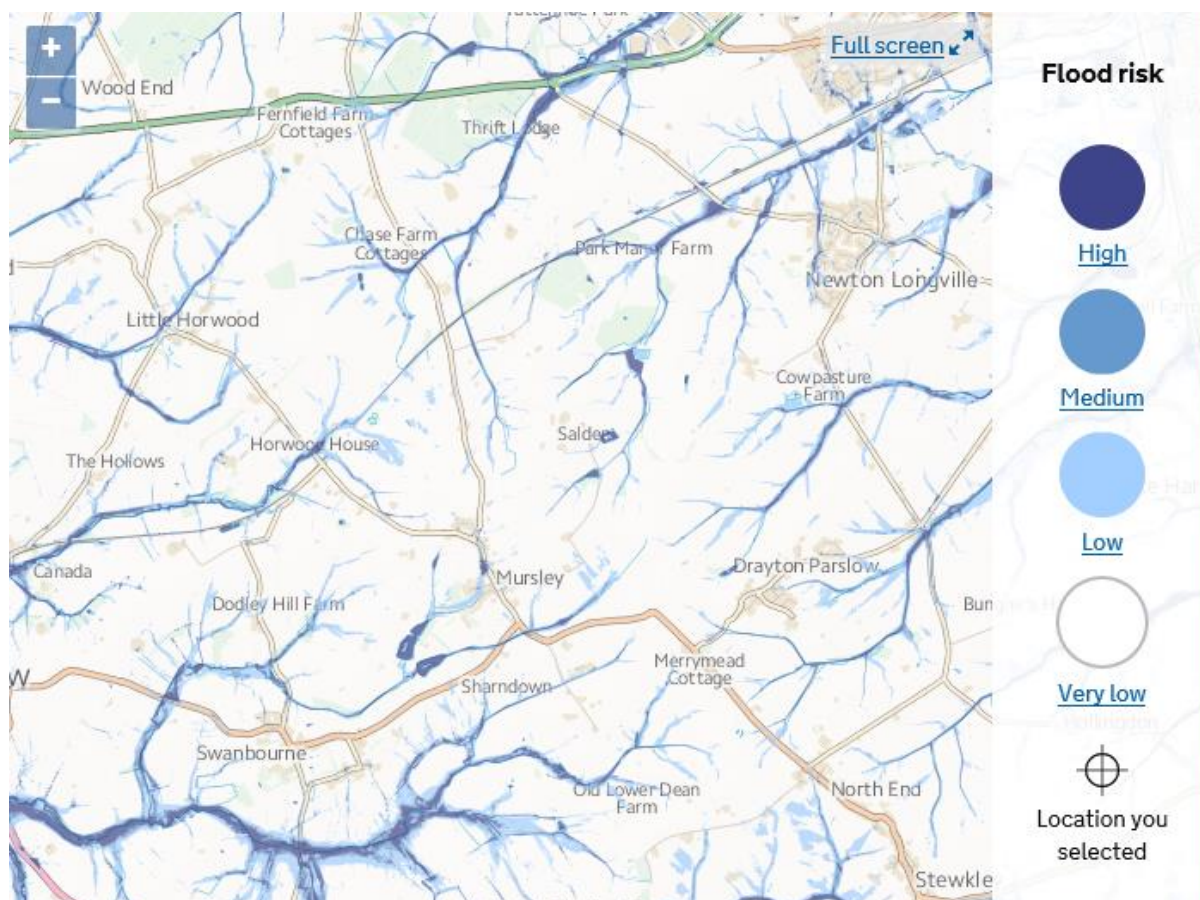
Surface water flooding is a more widespread risk across the Plan area as **Figure All.4** depicts. Medium-to-high risk areas associated with areas surrounding the network of the River Ouse, and the small-to-medium sized fisheries in the south west of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

**Figure All.3: Fluvial Flood Risk within the Neighbourhood Plan area<sup>38</sup>**



<sup>37</sup> <https://democracy.aylesburyvaldc.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=4516>

<sup>38</sup> GOV UK (2019): 'Flood Map for Planning' [online] available at: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

**Figure All.4: Surface Water Flood Risk within the Neighbourhood Plan area<sup>39</sup>**

### Future baseline

Per capita emissions in the Plan area are likely to decline over time in line with the trend evident at district, regional and national scale as energy efficiency measures, renewable energy take-up and new technologies, such as electric vehicles, become more widely adopted. The declaration of a climate emergency in Aylesbury Vale will likely see greater focus on the role that plan-making can play in tackling harmful emissions. However, increases in the built footprint of the Plan area would contribute to increases in the absolute levels of greenhouse gas emissions but this is recognised as a global not local issue.

New development has 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. Further, climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events such as enhanced precipitation, which can increase surface water runoff. This may put residents, property and development at a high risk of flood exposure.

<sup>39</sup> GOV UK (2017): 'Long term flood risk assessment for locations in England', [online] available at: <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk/>

## Key issues

Considering the baseline and context review, the following key issues emerge:

- Per capita emissions within Aylesbury Vale are lower than the regional and national totals. However, the percentage reduction of emissions within Aylesbury Vale between 2005 and 2017 was lower than national reductions, though in line with regional reductions.
- Following the declaration of a Climate Emergency, Aylesbury Vale Council should seek to increase the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan Area to the effects of climate change by supporting and equipping local authorities with the means to lower residents' exposure to flood risk.
- Fluvial flood risk is largely limited to land adjacent to tributaries, however, surface water flood risk is more widespread throughout the Plan area. It will be important for new development to ensure that flood risk is not increased on or off site.

## Landscape

### Policy context

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- *'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty [...]. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited.'*
- *'Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy making provision for 'conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure.'*
- *'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments 'are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation of change (such as increased densities).'*
- *'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*
  - *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils*
  - *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; and*
  - *remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.'*

National Character Area (NCA) Profiles are published by Natural England and divide England in 159 distinct natural areas based on their landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, historic, cultural and economic characteristics.<sup>40</sup> NCAs follow natural features in the landscape and are not aligned with administrative boundaries. NCA profiles describe the features which shape each of these landscapes, providing a broad context to its character.

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan<sup>41</sup> states the intention to work with relevant authorities to deliver environmental enhancements within all 159 NCAs across England. Along with the policies contained within Chapter 2 'Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes', Goal 6

<sup>40</sup> Natural England (2012) 'National Character Area profiles' [online] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

<sup>41</sup> HM GOV (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf)

'Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment' of the Government's "A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment" directly relates to the Landscape.

Policies NE3 (The Chilterns AONB and setting), NE4 (Landscape character and locally important landscape), and S7 (Previously developed land) in the VALP directly relate to the landscape theme.

### Baseline summary

An area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) is land protected by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act). It protects the land to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. The Chilterns AONB is located 19km east of the Mursley Parish border with limited sightlines.

The Neighbourhood Plan Area lies within the National Character Area (NCA): 88 Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands (NE555). The Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire NCA is characterised by an underlying geology of Jurassic and Cretaceous clays, overlain by more recent Quaternary glacial deposits of chalky boulder clay (till) and sand, and gravel river terrace deposits within the river valleys. Other key characteristics of the NCA include:

- Gently undulating, lowland plateau divided by shallow river valleys that gradually widen as they approach The Fens NCA in the east.
- Variable, scattered woodland cover comprising smaller plantations, secondary woodland, pollarded willows and poplar along river valleys, and clusters of ancient woodland, particularly on higher ground to the northwest.
- Predominantly open, arable landscape of planned and regular fields bounded by open ditches and trimmed, often species-poor hedgerows which contrast with those fields that are irregular and piecemeal.
- Settlements cluster around major road and rail corridors, with smaller towns, villages and linear settlements widely dispersed throughout, giving a more rural feel. Diversity of building materials including brick, render, thatch and stone.

At the local level, the Aylesbury Vale District Council & Buckinghamshire County Council Landscape Assessment<sup>42</sup> describes the variations in character between different types of areas and landscapes in the County. The landscape of the Plan area is identified in the Aylesbury Vale District Council & Buckinghamshire County Council Landscape Assessment (LCA) as located within 'LCT 04, Undulating Clay Plateau'. This landscape hosts the following characteristics:

- Views contained by rolling landform
- Strong clipped hedges
- Vernacular buildings in villages
- Tranquil settled, agricultural landscape
- Mixed land use or arable, pasture and woodland

The parish of Mursley consists of 2974 acres, of which 513 acres are arable land, 2102 permanent grass, and 88 woods and plantations. The land is undulating and of an average height of nearly 450 ft., the point of greatest elevation, which is found about the centre of the parish, being 500 ft above sea level, giving a broad panorama to the surrounding district. A small stream rises in the north of Mursley and runs in a north-easterly direction into the neighbouring parish. The soil is loam with some gravel and clay, the subsoil clay and gravel. The village, lying nearly in the middle of the parish, is built on either side of a road running from north to south through Mursley and connecting the town of Leighton Buzzard, whilst countryside around Mursley is a zone of rich agricultural land. Most areas are now regulated as conservation areas, which provide extra protection to the character of the village by using strict criteria for each development in it.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Aylesbury Vale District Council & Buckinghamshire County Council (2008): 'Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment' [online] available at:

[https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page\\_downloads/Aylesbury%20Vale%20Landscape%20Character%20Assessment-Report-Final-May-2008.pdf](https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/Aylesbury%20Vale%20Landscape%20Character%20Assessment-Report-Final-May-2008.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> Mursley Parish Council (2019): 'The Beginning And Development Of Mursley Village' [online] available at: <http://www.mursley.net/>

## Future baseline

New development has the potential to lead to incremental but small changes in landscape and villagescape character and quality in and around the Plan area. This includes from the loss of landscape features and areas with an important visual amenity value.

The MNP can influence design in this respect, to ensure that future development responds positively to the landscape/ village setting and identity.

## Key issues

Considering the baseline and context review, the following key issues emerge:

- The Plan area has a distinctive, elevated countryside character with a separate and distinct identity as a village, and new development has the potential to incrementally change the setting of the village and affect village identity.

## Historic environment

### Policy context

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Heritage assets should be recognised as an *'irreplaceable resource'* that should be conserved in a *'manner appropriate to their significance'*, taking account of *'the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits' of conservation*, whilst also recognising the positive contribution new development can make to local character and distinctiveness.
- Plans should set out a 'positive strategy' for the 'conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment', including those heritage assets that are most at risk.
- *'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss of less than substantial harm to its significance.'*

The policies contained within Chapter 2 'Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes' and Goal 6 'Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment' of the Government's 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' directly relates to the historic environment theme.

The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England<sup>44</sup> sets out its vision for the historic environment. It calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in an intelligent manner in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life.

Historic England is the statutory body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England's spectacular historic environment. Guidance and advice notes provide essential information for local planning authorities, neighbourhood groups, developers, consultants, landowners and other interested parties on historic environment considerations, and are regularly reviewed and updated in light of legislative changes. The following guidance and advice notes are particularly relevant and should be read in conjunction with the others.

Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1 (February 2019)<sup>45</sup> outlines ways to manage change that conserves and enhances historic areas in order to positively contribute to sustainable development and provides information on the relationship with local and neighbourhood plans and policies. Principally, the advice note emphasises the importance of:

<sup>44</sup> HM Government (2010): 'The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England' [online] available from: [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference\\_library/publications/6763.aspx](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/6763.aspx)

<sup>45</sup> Historic England (2019): 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Advice Note 1' [online] available from: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/>

- Understanding the different types of special architectural and historic interest which underpin the designations; and
- Recognising the value of implementing controls through the appraisal and/or management plan which positively contribute to the significance and value of Conservation Areas.
- Clearly identifying those issues that threaten the area's character or appearance and that merit the introduction of management measures.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA): Historic England Advice Note 8 (December 2016)<sup>46</sup> provides support to all stakeholders involved in assessing the effects of certain plans and programmes on the historic environment. It offers advice on heritage considerations during each stage of the SA/SEA process and helps to establish the basis for robust and comprehensive assessments.

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) (December 2017)<sup>47</sup> provides general advice on understanding setting, and how it may contribute to the significance of heritage assets and allow that significance to be appreciated, as well as advice on how views can contribute to setting. Specifically, Part 2 of the advice note outlines a five stepped approach to conducting a broad assessment of setting:

- Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
- Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings contribute to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated;
- Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it;
- Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and
- Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic England Advice Note 11 (October 2018)<sup>48</sup> outlines the importance of considering the historic environment whilst preparing the plan (section 1), which culminates in a checklist of relevant issues to consider, followed by an overview of what this means in terms of evidence gathering (section 2). Sections 3 to 5 of the advice note focus on how to translate evidence into policy, understand the SEA process and Historic England's role in neighbourhood planning.

The following policies of the VALP directly relate to the Historic Environment theme:

- E7: Tourism development.
- BE1: Heritage assets.

### Baseline summary

A Conservation Area Summary<sup>49</sup> identifies that at around the 20th century, Mursley consisted of one long, broad street. Much of the area is now designated as a conservation area, which limits development to individual infill or replacement builds. The village is primarily linear in form, extending north/south along the B4032 Main Street. Development which extends off the Main Street, along Swanbourne Road, Church Lane, Cooks Lane, The Beechams or Station Road tends to be relatively short in depth and, for the most part, featuring twentieth Century dwelling houses.

Mursley is an ancient, formerly manorial, settlement which was recorded in the Norman Domesday Book as 'Murselei' and owned by one Walter Giffard. Later, in the thirteenth and fourteenth Centuries, the village, which lay on the main droving routes, was granted a licence to hold a market. In the late

<sup>46</sup> Historic England (2016): 'SA and SEA: Advice Note 8' [online] available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/>

<sup>47</sup> Historic England (2017): 'Setting of Heritage Assets: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition' [online] available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/>

<sup>48</sup> Historic England (2018): 'Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment' [online] available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/neighbourhood-planning-and-the-historic-environment/>

<sup>49</sup> AVDC (2008) Mursley Conservation Area [online] available at: [https://www.aylesburyvaldc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page\\_downloads/Mursley-CA.pdf](https://www.aylesburyvaldc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/Mursley-CA.pdf)

sixteenth and early seventeenth Century, the village was owned by Queen Elizabeth I's Chancellor Sir John Fortesque, who built a magnificent house at Salden, one mile northeast of Mursley. The remains of that house were used extensively in the construction of the Grade II\* Listed Salden House Farmhouse, and also in a number of the other houses in Mursley.

Within Mursley village there are a significant number of period buildings, chief of which is the Grade II\* Listed Church of St. Mary at the junction of Main Street and Church Lane. This fourteenth/fifteenth Century stone church with brick frontage wall dominates the centre of the village. Elsewhere in the village there are a further eleven properties all Listed Grade II. Most are timber framed and six of them have thatched roofs, whilst the remainder, with the exception of the steeply pitched slate roof of Cedars Farmhouse, have clay tiled roofs. A characteristic feature of the village is the predominant use of brickwork in the construction of the buildings and walls around the southern end of Main Street and along the initial parts of Church Lane and Cooks Lane. These walls, together with the hedgerows and buildings which abut the roadside, afford a very tight sense of enclosure along Main Street.

There are 2 Grade II\* listed building within the neighbourhood plan area (Church of St Mary and Salden House Farmhouse) and 13 Grade II listed buildings:

- Old Timbers
- 71, The Main Street
- 33, The Main Street
- Cedars Farmhouse
- Wall to the South of Number 12
- 28, Main Street
- 30, Main Street
- Church of St Mary
- Spring Cottage
- 23, Main Street
- Manor Farmhouse and Barn attached to North
- Candlewyck Cottage
- Mursley War Memorial
- North Salden Farmhouse

All Grade II and II\* listed buildings are protected through the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990.

Scheduled monuments are nationally important archaeological sites which are protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas act of 1979. There is one scheduled monument within the neighbourhood plan area: The Moated site 80m west of Cedars Farm. Moated sites form a significant class of medieval monument and are important for the understanding of the distribution of wealth and status in the countryside. The moated site 80m west of Cedars Farm survives well. It is largely undisturbed and will retain buried evidence for structures and other features relating to the period of occupation. The monument is shown in **Figure AII.5**. Much of the main settlement is also a designated Archaeological Notification Area – demonstrating the potential for highly valued archaeological finds in this area, including a potential for non-designated heritage assets.

Conservation Areas are designated under, and gain statutory protection from, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and as such development should give 'great weight' to the conservation of the area. Conservation areas are designated sites which are protected by the local planning authority due to their special architectural or historic interest. The Mursley Conservation Area (depicted in **Figure AII.5**) was first designated in 1991 and encompasses much of

the historic centre of the village, following the main street which runs from Cedars Farm to Station Road. The area follows the natural line of the settlement with fairly modern development along Station Road. No Conservation Area Appraisal has been identified as available to inform the baseline in this respect.

The Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record indicates that there are 98 designated and non-designated historic assets located throughout the Neighbourhood Plan area. These cover a wide historic timeframe, from the location of Roman pottery finds to the remains of Victorian-era agricultural structures. These assets should be considered in a manner appropriate to their significance when considering the impacts of development proposals.

### **Future baseline**

New development within the Plan area has the potential to impact heritage assets and their settings through inappropriate design and layout, loss of the physical fabric of assets, loss of the ability to appreciate or enjoy their significance, as well as through potential loss of the contribution to their significance made by their settings. The Plan area has a wide range of built heritage, and the range of historic contexts presents potential for a variety of negative effects from inappropriate development.

New development may also present some opportunities for enhancing the quality of the wider 'villagescape' and thus historic environment settings, including through innovative design. Development can also offer opportunities to improve access to or better reveal the significance of a heritage asset.

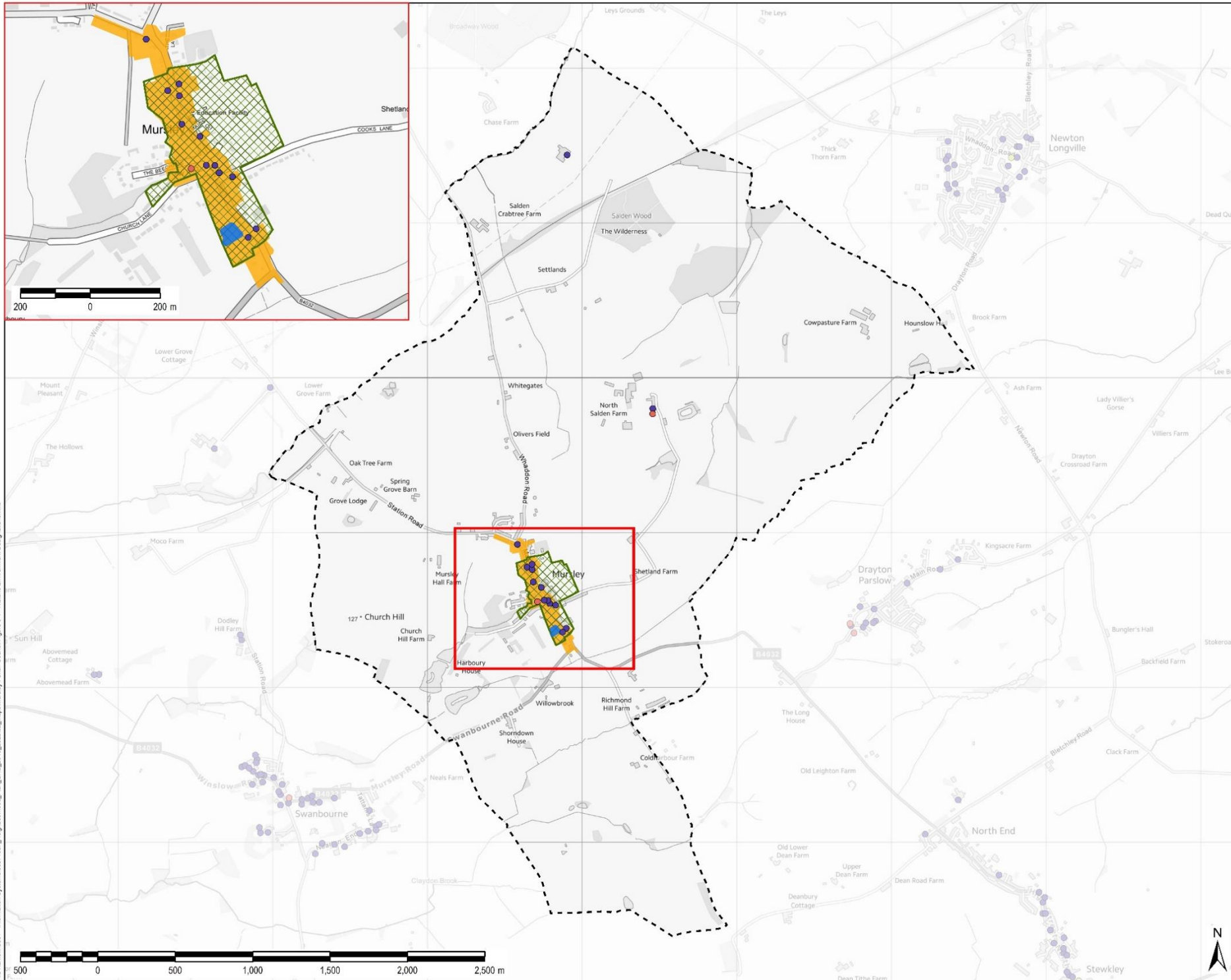
Whilst existing historic environment designations and the policies of the NPPF and VALP will continue to offer a degree of protection to heritage assets and their settings, non-designated or locally designated assets can be provided greater protection through the MNP.

### **Key issues**

Considering the baseline and context review the following key issues emerge:

- The settlement largely forms a Conservation Area containing numerous Listed Buildings and a Scheduled Monument. Designated, and non-designated assets, and their settings can be impacted upon by new development in the Plan area.
- Much of the main settlement area is also an Archaeological Notification Area, where there is the potential for significant archaeological finds. Development proposals should be considered with regard to the need to avoid or minimise conflict between the conservation of potential non-designated heritage assets and any aspects of the proposal.
- The village architecture takes a number of forms and isn't dominated by one main style. However, there are some characteristic historic features that are abundant in the village, such as the predominant use of brickwork in the construction of the buildings and walls around the southern end of Main Street and along the initial parts of Church Lane and Cooks Lane.





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**LEGEND**

- Mursley Neighbourhood
- Plan Area
- Conservation Area
- Record of Scheduled Monument
- Archaeological Notification Area

**Listed Building**

- Grade I
- Grade II\*
- Grade II

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Purpose of Issue: **DRAFT**

Client: **MURSFLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

Project Title: **SEA FOR THE MURSFLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Drawing Title: **HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT DESIGNATIONS**

Drawn CN	Checked JW	Approved CB	Date 30/01/2020
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 8th Floor  
 Arden Link, Raynesway  
 Hemel Hempstead, HX1 2LN  
 Herts, UK  
 Tel: 01494 470000  
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Figure AII.5

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File Name: I:\5004 - Information Systems\60571087\_Neighbourhood\_Plan\_CFB\_2019\_2022\02\_Maps\Mursley Fields\Mursley Fields Figure 6-1 - Historic Environment Designations and

## Land, soil and water resources

### Policy context

The EU's Soil Thematic Strategy<sup>50</sup> presents a strategy for protecting soil resources in Europe. The main aim of the strategy is to minimise soil degradation and limit associated detrimental effects linked to water quality and quantity, human health, climate change, biodiversity, and food safety.

Adopted in October 2000, the purpose of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) is to establish a framework for the protection of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater, driving a catchment-based approach to water management. In England and Wales there are 100 water catchments and it is Defra's intention is to establish a 'framework for integrated catchment management' across England. The Environment Agency is establishing 'Significant Water Management Issues' and recently presented second River Basin Management Plans to ministers. The plans seek to deliver the objectives of the WFD namely:

- Enhance the status and prevent the further deterioration of aquatic ecosystems and associated wetlands which depend on aquatic ecosystems;
- Promote the sustainable use of water;
- Reduce the pollution of water, especially by 'priority' and 'priority hazardous' substances;
- Ensure the progressive reduction of groundwater pollution; and
- Contribute to achieving 'good' water quality status for as many waterbodies as possible by 2027.

Key messages from the NPPF include:

- *'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*
- *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils; and*
- *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.'*
- *Prevent new or existing development from being 'adversely affected' by the presence of 'unacceptable levels' of soil pollution or land instability and be willing to remediate and mitigate 'despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate'.*
- *'Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land.'*
- *'Encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains.'*
- *Planning policies and decisions should 'give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs', and 'promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings.'*
- Taking a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, considering the long-term implications for water supply.

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<sup>50</sup> European Commission (2006): 'Soil Thematic Policy' [online] available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/three\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/three_en.htm)

- Prevent new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of water pollution.

The government has produced a separate plan that specifically deals with planning policy in relation to waste management<sup>51</sup>; this should be read in conjunction with the NPPF.

Along with the policies contained within Chapter 1 'Using and managing land sustainably' and Chapter 4 'Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste', Goal 2 'Clean and plentiful water', Goal 5 'Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently' and Goal 8 'Minimising waste' of the Government's 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' directly relates to the Land, Soil and Water Resources theme.

Other key documents at the national level include 'Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England'<sup>52</sup>, which sets out a vision for soil use in England, and the 'Water White Paper'<sup>53</sup>, which sets out the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector. It states the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources. In terms of waste management, the Government Review of Waste Policy in England<sup>54</sup> recognises that environmental benefits and economic growth can be the result of a more sustainable approach to the use of materials.

In terms of land preservation, the NPPF sets out core land planning principles that should underpin both plan-making and decision taking. These include the preservation and maintenance of green belts, which have several purposes:

- *to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas*
- *to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another*
- *to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment*
- *to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- *to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land'*

The following policies of the VALP directly relate to the Land, soil and water resources theme:

- NE5: Pollution, air quality and contaminated land.
- I5: Water resources and wastewater infrastructure

### Baseline summary

The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (plus 'non-agricultural' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the 'best and most versatile' (BMV) land. In terms of the location of the best and most versatile agricultural land, no detailed classification specifying the subset of Grade 3a or 3b of the Plan area has been undertaken to date.

The Provisional Agricultural Land Quality dataset<sup>55</sup> shows that the Plan area contains predominantly Grade 3 land with areas of Grade 4 land. However, without the subset grading (3a or 3b), it is not possible to tell at this stage whether the Grade 3 agricultural land is considered to be 'best and most versatile'. It is also important to note that the national dataset is of very low resolution and may not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of the agricultural land quality within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

<sup>51</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government (2014): 'National Planning Policy for Waste' available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-for-waste>

<sup>52</sup> Defra (2009): 'Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England' [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-our-soils-a-strategy-for-england>

<sup>53</sup> Defra (2011): 'Water for life (The Water White Paper)' [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-for-life>

<sup>54</sup> Defra (2011): 'Government Review of Waste Policy in England' [online] available from: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13540-waste-policy-review110614.pdf>

<sup>55</sup> Natural England (2018): 'Agricultural Land Classification map London and the South East (ALC007)' [online] available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/141047>

The Predicative Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile Land map<sup>56</sup> for the South Eastern Region identifies the central area in the settlement as having a 'moderate' likelihood of best and most versatile agricultural land, whilst some smaller areas are designated as 'urban/industrial', and the southernmost plan area is designated as having a 'low' likelihood of best and most versatile agricultural land.

The most recent Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan<sup>57</sup> (adopted 2019) indicates several key sites for mineral extraction up until the period of 2036. None of these sites lie within the or in close proximity to the Neighbourhood Plan area.

There are no major watercourses within the Neighbourhood Plan Area, though a number of minor tributaries from the Claydon Brook are present across the general agricultural area. The largest water bodies in the area are three medium-sized fisheries situated in the south west of the plan area adjacent to Church Hill farm: The Church Hill fisheries. The fisheries are characterised by three purpose-dug trout lakes of 2.5, 5 and 7.5 acres set in pasture land, which harbour Rainbow and Brown Trout, and a variety of natural flies including mayflies, Damsels and Shrimp<sup>58</sup>.

The EU Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) requires Member States to identify areas where groundwater has nitrate concentrations of more than 50 mg/l nitrate or is thought to be at risk of nitrate contamination. These areas are designated as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) and, as such, are recognised as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. Member States are required to establish Action Programmes in order to reduce and prevent further nitrate contamination. In this regard, the entire Plan area is currently designated as an NVZ however the uses proposed through the MNP are unlikely to affect this.

Mursley is located with the Anglian River Basin District, with the Neighbourhood Plan area falling under the Ouse Upper and Bedford Management Catchment, and the Great Ouse Upper Management Catchment. There are 26 water bodies located within the Great Ouse Upper Management Catchment Area, all of which have good chemical status. 24 of the water bodies have 'moderate' ecological status, one has 'good' ecological status and one is identified as of 'poor' ecological status. The reasons for not achieving good status predominantly relate to agricultural and rural land management but also the water industry in many cases as well.

Phase I of the Water Cycle Study conducted by Aylesbury Vale District Council<sup>59</sup> indicates that there are some significant areas where further investigation and planning will be required in order to ensure that the planned scale and location of the proposed development within the Aylesbury Vale District and be managed in terms of water supply and wastewater services, particularly in the backdrop of climatic changes in the coming years.

Anglian Water manage water supplies in the north of Aylesbury Vale who outline both consumption efficiency measures and supply improvement measures to maintain water supply in the future. The main concerns in relation to water supply relates to wastewater treatment. Anglian Water require significant infrastructure and/or treatment upgrades at many of the existing facilities to serve the proposed growth. There are also major constraints to surface water infrastructure that would require upgrade. In this respect, development in the Plan area should ensure sufficient wastewater capacity prior to development and may need to consider appropriate phasing of works to coincide with planned upgrades.

<sup>56</sup> Natural England (2017): 'Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land - Strategic scale map London and the South East (ALC019)' [online] available at:

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6056482614804480?category=5208993007403008>

<sup>57</sup> Buckinghamshire County Council (2016): 'Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan' [online] available at:

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/4514370/buckinghamshire-minerals-and-waste-local-plan-2016-2036.pdf>

<sup>58</sup> Go Fish (2020): 'Church Hill Fishery' [online] available from: [https://www.go-fish.co.uk/venue\\_18219\\_fishing-church-hill-fishery.htm](https://www.go-fish.co.uk/venue_18219_fishing-church-hill-fishery.htm)

<sup>59</sup> Aylesbury Vale Council (2017): 'Water Cycle Study: Phase I' [online] available from:

[https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page\\_downloads/Aylesbury%20Vale%20Water%20Cycle%20Study%20Phase%20I%20Final%20v2.0.pdf](https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/Aylesbury%20Vale%20Water%20Cycle%20Study%20Phase%20I%20Final%20v2.0.pdf)

## Future baseline

In the absence of a detailed Agricultural Land Classification assessment for Mursley, it remains uncertain whether new development in the Neighbourhood Plan Area will lead to losses of higher quality (best and most versatile) agricultural land.

Future development has the potential to affect water quality through diffuse pollution, waste water discharges, water runoff, 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 Plan Area and wider area. Development may need to consider appropriate phasing however in line with any planned wastewater treatment capacity upgrades.

## Key issues

Considering the baseline and context review the following key issues emerge:

- There is a lack of evidence to ascertain agricultural land quality for the whole of the Plan area. National provisional quality datasets indicate that most of land within the Plan area is Grade 3, with some smaller sections designated as Grade 4, and as part of a precautionary approach it is noted that there is the potential for loss of 'best and most versatile' agricultural land.
- Wastewater treatment capacity is limited across many of the sites supporting the Anglian Water network. This may have implications for the phasing of development, which should be aligned with any planned infrastructure upgrades to accommodate new development.

## Population and community

### Policy context

Key messages from the NPPF include:

- One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF is a social objective to; *'support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural wellbeing.'*
- To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of housing, strategic policies *'should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be considered in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for.'*
- The size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required and expect it to be met on-site where possible.
- Recognise the important contribution of small and medium sized development sites in meeting housing needs. Local Plans should identify land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare, and neighbourhood planning groups should also consider the opportunities for allocating small and medium-sized sites.
- In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. Authorities should consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs.
- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

- Ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Places should contain clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high-quality public spaces, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
- Ensuring that there is a *'sufficient choice of school places'* and taking a *'proactive, positive and collaborative approach'* to bringing forward *'development that will widen choice in education'*.

The 'Ready for Ageing?' report, published by the Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change<sup>60</sup> warns that society is underprepared for an ageing population. The report states that *'longer lives can be a great benefit, but there has been a collective failure to address the implications and without urgent action this great boon could turn into a series of miserable crises'*. The report recognises that the supply of specialist housing for the older generation is insufficient for the demand. There is a need for central and local Government, housing associations, and house builders to ensure that these housing needs are better addressed, giving as much priority to promoting an adequate market of social housing for the older generation as is given to the younger generation.

The following policies of the VALP directly relate to the Population and Community theme:

- S3: Settlement hierarchy and cohesive development
- S5: Infrastructure
- D6: Provision of employment land
- H1: Affordable housing
- H2 Rural exception sites
- E1: Protection of key employment sites and enterprise zones
- E2: Other employment sites
- E7: Tourism development
- D11: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites
- I3: Community facilities, infrastructure, and assets of community value

### Baseline summary

**Table AII.2** shows the population of Mursley increased by 1.01% between 2001 and 2011, with an observed population change far lower than that of the South East region and the National average, but not for Aylesbury Vale as a whole. Approximately 0.3% of the population of Aylesbury Vale reside in Mursley.

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<sup>60</sup> Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change (2013): 'Ready for Ageing?' [online] available at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/public-services-committee/report-ready-for-ageing/>

**Table All.2: Population growth 2001-2011**<sup>61</sup>

Date	Mursley	Aylesbury Vale	South East of England	England
2001	601	165748	4,928,434	49,138,831
2011	611	174137	5,288,935	53,012,456
Population Change 2001-2011	1.01%	1.05%	1.07%	7.9%

**Table All.3** identifies that generally, there is a higher proportion of residents over the age of 45 (53.3%) in comparison to the rest of Aylesbury Vale, the South East region, and England as a whole. Conversely, there is a far lower proportion of residents between the age of 16 and 24 (6.87%), which is below the borough, regional and national averages.

In comparison to the national average, the working population (25-44) is much lower (21.11%) than the average for Aylesbury Vale, the South East region and England as a whole. Conversely, the retired population is higher (25.7%) than these corresponding regional and national averages.

**Table All.3: Age Structure 2011**<sup>62</sup>

Age group	Mursley	Aylesbury Vale	South East of England	England
0-15	18.99%	20.43%	19.02%	18.90%
16-24	6.87%	9.90%	11.22%	11.90%
25-44	21.11%	27.01%	26.51%	27.50%
45-59	27.33%	21.55%	19.88%	19.40%
60+	25.70%	21.12%	23.36%	22.30%
Total Population	611	174137	8634750	53,012,456

Census statistics measure deprivation across four 'dimensions' of deprivation, summarised below:

- **Employment:** Any person in the household (not a full-time student) that is either unemployed or long-term sick.

<sup>61</sup> ONS (2011): Census 2001 and Census 2011: AECOM calculations

<sup>62</sup> ONS (2011): Census 2011: Population Density 2011.

- **Education:** No person in the household has at least a level 2 qualification and no person aged 16-18 is a full-time student.
- **Health and Disability:** Any person in the household that has generally 'bad' or 'very bad' health or has a long-term health problem.
- **Housing:** The household accommodation is either overcrowded (with an occupancy rating of -1 or less), in a shared dwelling or has no central heating.

With reference to **Table All.4**, there is a larger proportion of houses that are deprived in no dimensions (57.61%) in comparison to Aylesbury Vale (52.64%), the South East region (47.7%) and England as a whole (42.5%).

42.38% of households within the Plan area are deprived in at least one dimension. Of these, most are deprived in one dimension (30.45%), and none are deprived in more than 3 dimensions. This is similar to borough-level, regional and national trends.

**Table All.4: Relative household deprivation dimensions**

	Mursley	Aylesbury Vale	South East England	England
Deprived in no dimensions	57.61%	52.64%	47.7%	42.5%
Deprived in 1 dimension	30.45%	30.51%	33.23%	32.7%
Deprived in 2 dimensions	11.11%	13.86%	16.02%	19.1%
Deprived in 3 dimensions	0.82%	2.70%	3.65%	5.1%
Deprived in 4 dimensions	0%	0.28%	0.33%	0.5%
<b>Total deprived</b>	<b>42.38%</b>	<b>47.35%</b>	<b>53.23%</b>	<b>57.4%</b>

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (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:

1. **Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index:** The proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families.
2. **Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index:** The proportion of all those aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation.

Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)<sup>56</sup> 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, with each LSOA containing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. In relation to the IMD 2015, 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 Plan area falls within the Aylesbury Vale 003D LSOA, which is amongst the 10% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country.

Indices of Deprivation for the Aylesbury Vale 003D LSOA in the Neighbourhood Plan area:

- **Overall IMD** – 20% least deprived
- **Income Deprivation** – 10% least deprived
- **Employment Deprivation** – 30% least deprived
- **Education, Skills and Training** – 20% least deprived
- **Health Deprivation and Disability** – 20% least deprived
- **Crime** – 40% least deprived
- **Barriers to Housing and Services** – 30% least deprived
- **Living Environment Deprivation** – 10% least deprived
- **Income Deprivation Affecting Children** – 30% least deprived
- **Income Deprivation Affecting Older People** – 20% least deprived

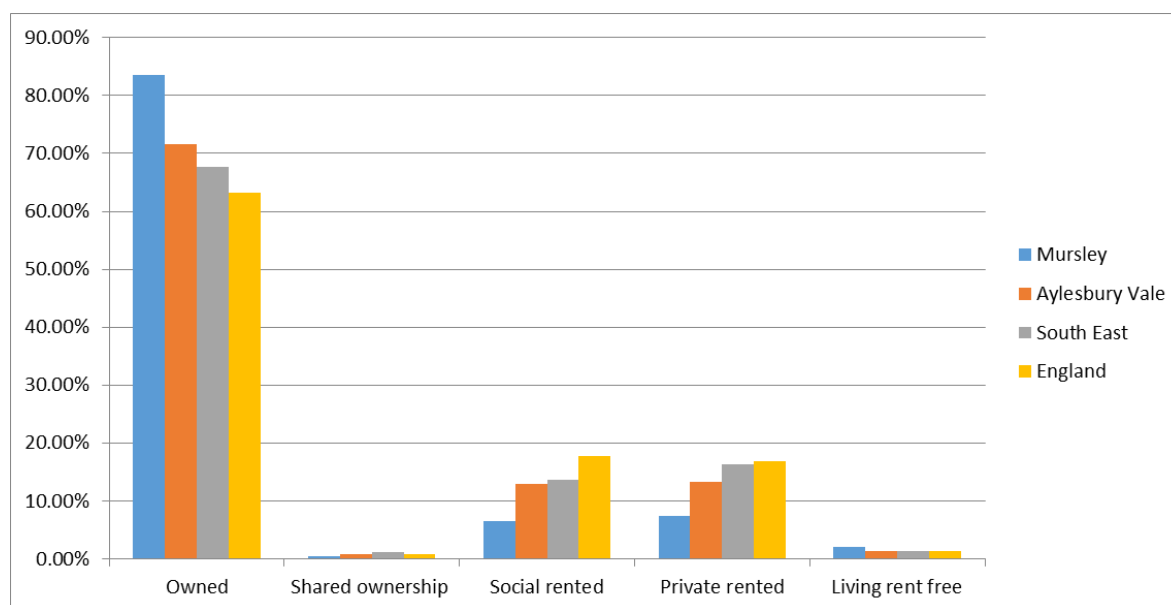
The village of Mursley hosts a range of local amenities and services. In the village centre there is a local pub (The Green Man), village hall, , football ground (Mursley United FC), and the 5 parishes Anglican church. Additionally, the football provides recreational space for a host of sporting activities including separate cricket green and club, Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) , playground and Sports Pavillon. Further beyond the village in the wider Neighbourhood Plan area are the Salden Woods, which provide recreational green space for local residents and visitors alike.

In terms of access to education, Mursley Church of England primary school, serves approximately 45 pupils from the age of four through to seven. It is part of a triumvirate of Schools (including 2 schools in Swanbourne and Drayton Parslow) that provides Primary Education from 4+ up to the age of 11+. Private Primary Education is available in the neighbouring Village of Swanbourne or further afield in

Buckingham and Milton Keynes. The nearest post-7 primary schools and 11+ secondary schools are located in Milton Keynes, approximately 6km from Mursley. However, it should be noted that, given Mursley's position within the Buckinghamshire catchment area for Grammar schools, a large proportion of young residents attend Grammar schools in Buckingham, Aylesbury and Wing. Bus links to these schools provide suitable access to education for the residents of Mursley.

**Figure All.6** depicts tenure by household comparisons. Within the Plan area, 83.5% of residents either own their home outright or with a mortgage, which is greater than the averages for the district (71.6%), south east (67.6%) and England as a whole (63.3%). Conversely, there are less residents in socially rented accommodation (6.58%) in comparison for averages for the district (12.34%), south east (13.71%) and England as a whole (17.7%). This trend is replicated for privately rented housing, with a comparatively lower proportion of renting in private accommodation (7.41%) in comparison to averages for Aylesbury Vale, the south east and England as a whole.

**Figure All.6: Tenure by Household**



Regarding employment within the Neighbourhood Plan area, the following four categories describe the majority of residents' occupational statuses as depicted in **Figure All.7**:

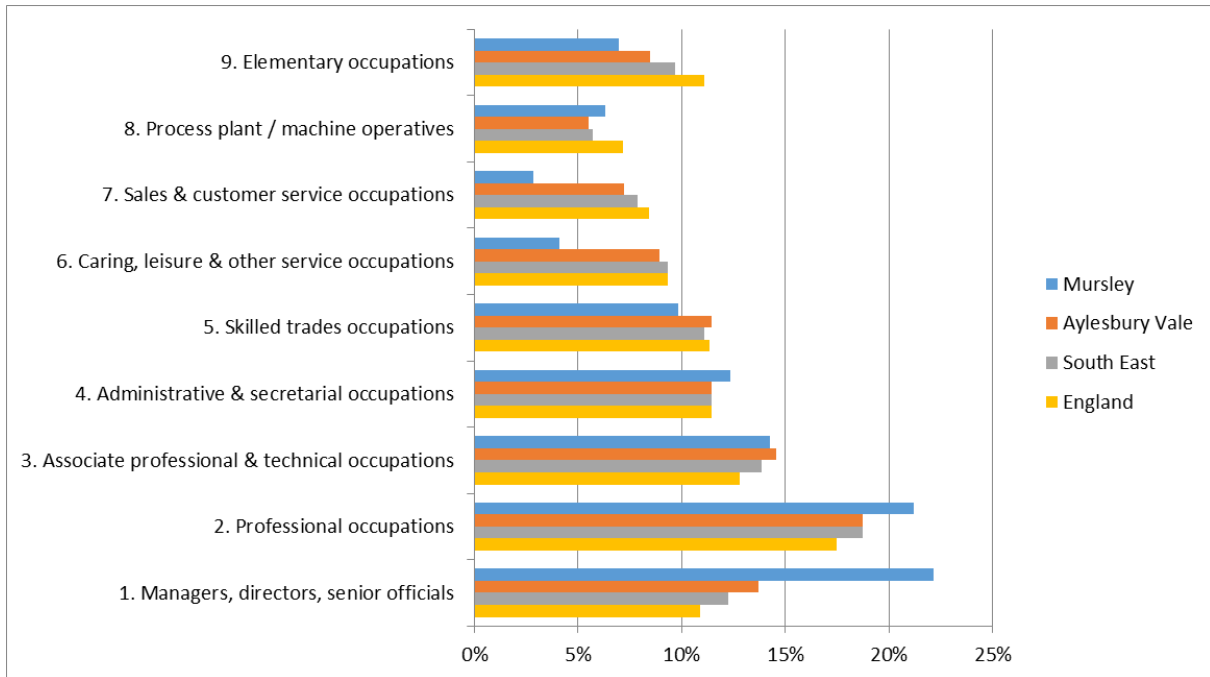
- Managers, directors and senior officials (22.2%)
- Professional occupations (21.2%)
- Associate professional and technical occupations (14.2%)
- Administrative & secretarial occupations (12.3%)

The total proportion of residents employed as either managers, directors, senior officials, professionals and administrative and secretarial occupations (55.7%) is higher for Mursley than for the district (43.9%), region (44.8%) and England as a whole (39.8%).

In comparison, the proportion of residents in associate professional & technical occupations (14.2%) is in line with figures for the wider district (14.5%), region (13.8%) and England as a whole (12.7%).

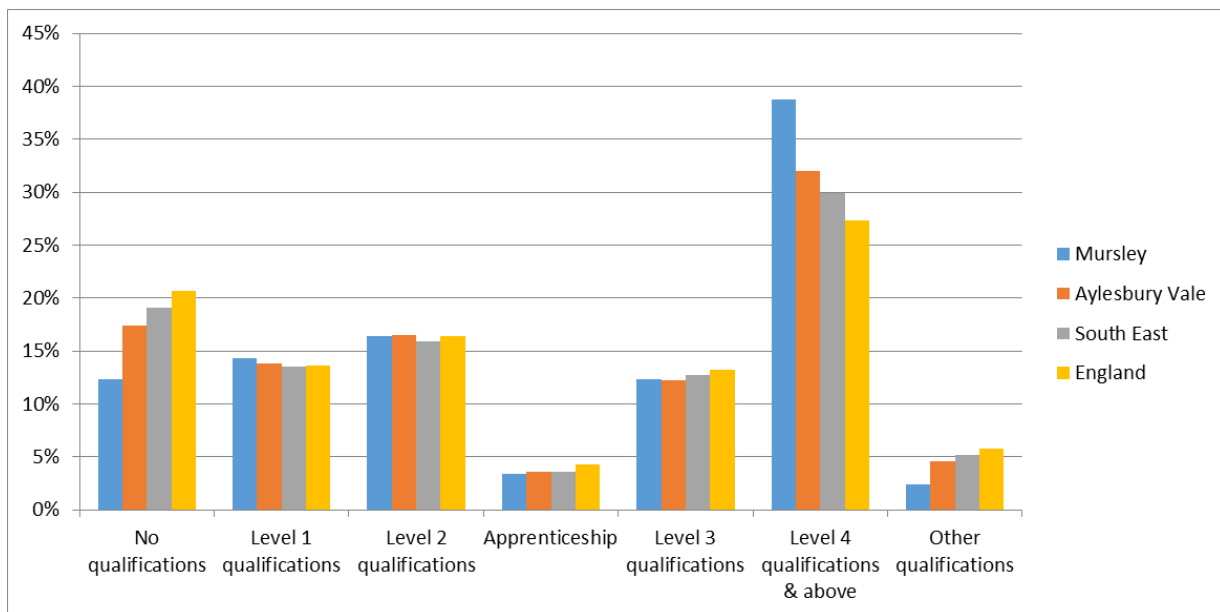
The proportion of residents who are economically inactive is lower in Mursley (72.5%) than for the wider district (75.2%), but higher than regional and national figures (72.1% and 69.9% respectively).

**Figure All.7: Occupation of usual residents aged 16-74 in employment**



38.79% of Mursley residents have at least a level 4 qualification and above, which is higher than the district (31.96%), region (29.94%) and nation as a whole (27.38%). In comparison, the proportion of residents with no qualifications (12.32%) is lower than statistics for Aylesbury Vale (17.36%), the South East (19.08%) and England as a whole (12.7%) – as depicted in **Figure All.8**. However, figures for the proportion of residents with Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and Apprenticeship qualifications are similar to district, regional and national averages.

**Figure All.8: Education Level**



## Future baseline

As the population of the Plan area continues to increase and age, this could potentially negatively impact upon the future vitality of the local community and economy of certain parts of the Plan area, whilst also placing additional pressures on existing services and facilities; especially considering the limited existing offer.

The suitability (e.g. size and design) and affordability of housing for local requirements depends on the implementation of appropriate housing policies through the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan. Unplanned development may have wider implications in terms of transport and access to infrastructure, or the natural environment.

## Key issues

Considering the baseline and context review, the following key issues emerge:

- The population of the neighbourhood plan area has increased at a slower rate between 2001 and 2011 than average figures for Aylesbury Vale, the South East of England and the nation as a whole.
- Generally, there is a higher proportion of residents over the age of 45 in comparison to average figures for Aylesbury Vale, the South East of England and England as a whole. There is a lower proportion of residents between the ages of 16 and 25 in comparison to Aylesbury Vale, South Eastern and National figures.
- There are comparatively low levels of household deprivation within the Mursley area in comparison to Aylesbury Vale, the South East region and England as a whole.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area falls within the Aylesbury Vale 003D LSOA, which is within the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area is not significantly deprived in any of the seven Indices of Deprivation (IoDs).
- A large proportion of residents own their home outright, in comparison to the local authority, regional and national averages.
- The Neighbourhood Plan has a highly qualified population in comparison to district wide, regional and national figures. Most residents have at least a level 4 qualification or above.

## Health and wellbeing

### Policy context

Key messages from the NPPF include:

- One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF is a social objective to; *'support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural wellbeing.'*
- *'Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and wellbeing needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.'*
- Policies and decisions should consider and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.
- Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and wellbeing of communities. Development should avoid building on existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields.

- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

In relation to other key national messages regarding health, 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives'<sup>63</sup> ('The Marmot Review') investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them. Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that there is: "*overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities*".

The increasing role that local level authorities are expected to play in providing health outcomes is demonstrated by recent government legislation. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 transferred responsibility for public health from the NHS to local government, giving local authorities a duty to improve the health of the people who live in their areas. This will require a more holistic approach to health across all local government functions.

The Buckinghamshire County Council Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) provides a summary of the current and future health and wellbeing needs of the people in the Buckinghamshire area.

The following policies in the VALP directly relate to the Health and Wellbeing theme:

- I1: Green Infrastructure
- I3 Community Facilities, Infrastructure, and Assets of Community Value
- D11: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites.
- S1: Sustainable development for Aylesbury Vale
- NE5: Pollution, air quality and contaminated land.
- Transport policies T1 to T8
- S5: Infrastructure
- BE3: Protection of the Amenity of Residents
- H6c: Accessibility

### Baseline summary

The Buckinghamshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)<sup>64</sup> has been refreshed for 2016 to 2020. The 2016-2020 JSNA comprises a number of different chapters, covering key challenges for the improvement and maintenance of the health of residents in the Greater Buckinghamshire area. These key challenges include:

- Marked inequalities in health and well-being between different groups and geographic areas in Buckinghamshire. For some conditions inequalities in health appear to be increasing. Some areas in the county are becoming more relatively deprived and this will worsen the health and wellbeing of the population.
- An ageing population, with ongoing growth in the numbers of older people needing support and a resulting increase in the complexity of health and social care needs.
- Longer term uncertainties about future population size and profile, particularly in terms of children and young people, which creates difficulties in planning.
- Large numbers of people with long term conditions such as cardiovascular disease (which accounts for the largest amount of deaths in the Buckinghamshire region), diabetes, depression,

<sup>63</sup> The Marmot Review (2011): 'The Marmot Review: Implications for Spatial Planning' [online] available at: <http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/the-marmot-review-implications-for-spatial-planning>

<sup>64</sup> Buckinghamshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2016) [online] available at: <http://www.healthandwellbeingbucks.org/what-is-the-jsna>

cancer and dementia with further increases predicted due to the ageing of the population and adverse trends in risk factors, such as obesity.

- Increased longevity and numbers of individuals with physical and learning disabilities with complex health and social care needs.

The Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2009) assessed Green Infrastructure (GI) provision for settlements within the County.<sup>65</sup> The strategy established that, in comparison to other areas within the County (Chilterns, South Bucks and the Thames Valley), much of Aylesbury Vale is deficient in the provision of Green Infrastructure, including access to open spaces for leisure and/or recreational use. The Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) is a national benchmark acceptable access of communities to different green spaces close to where they live (see **Table AII.5**). The assessment suggests that, despite having the largest number of dwellings, Aylesbury Vale contains the highest percentage of households not meeting any ANGSt requirements (69%) in comparison to Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe (0%, 0% and 2% respectively). Importantly, Mursley itself is notably limited in the number of greenspaces available to residents.

**Table AII.5 Percentage of households meeting ANGSt requirements in Buckinghamshire**

District Area	Aylesbury Vale	Chiltern	South Bucks.	Wycombe
<b>No. of dwellings</b>	68,248	37,514	26,727	66,689
<b>Within 300m of a 2ha+ site</b>	7	16	24	28
<b>Within 2km of 20ha+ site</b>	16	59	86	89
<b>Within 5km of a 100 ha + site</b>	27	70	100	96
<b>Within 10 km of a 500 ha + site</b>	15	33	46	0
<b>Meeting all ANGSt requirements</b>	1	2	7	0
<b>Meeting no ANGSt requirements</b>	69	0	0	2
<b>Served only by linear greenspaces</b>	32	0	0	1

The health facilities present within the Neighbourhood Plan area are discussed within the Population and Community theme above (Chapter 8).

As highlighted in **Figure AII.9**, a total of 87.2% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area deem themselves to be in either 'good' or 'very good' health. This figure is in line with statistics for Aylesbury Vale (85.6%), and higher than those for the South East (83.7%) and England as a whole (81.4%). The opposite trend is seen for those who identify as having 'bad' or 'very bad' health (2.95%), which is lower than district (3.46%), regional (4.34%) and national figures (5.4%).

<sup>65</sup> Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2009) [online] available at: [https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page\\_downloads/CD-ENV-010-Buckinghamshire-Green-Infrastructure-Strategy-Bucks-CC-April-2009-.pdf](https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/CD-ENV-010-Buckinghamshire-Green-Infrastructure-Strategy-Bucks-CC-April-2009-.pdf)

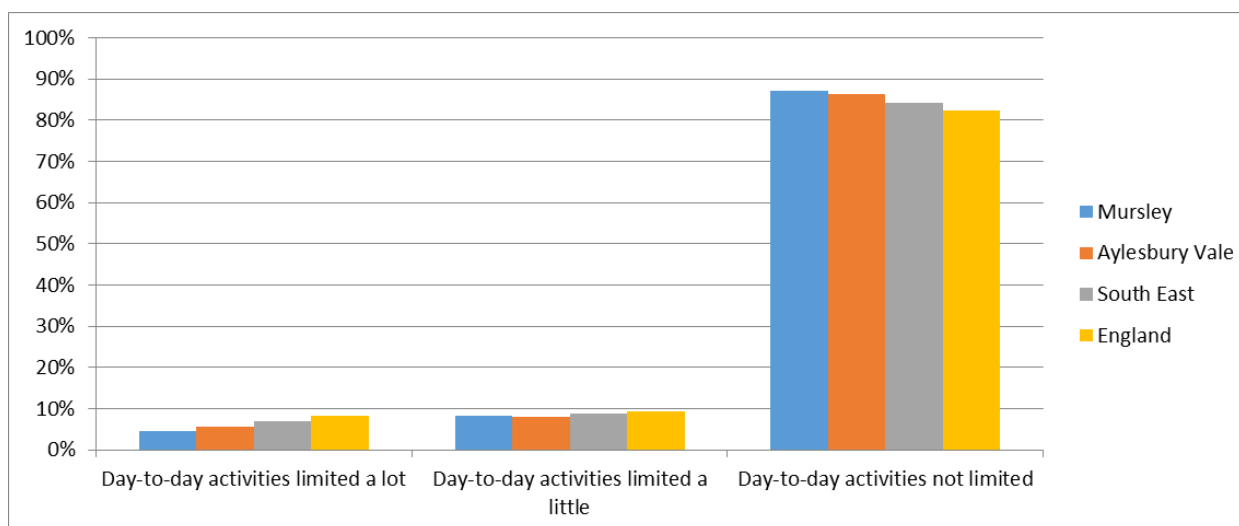
**Figure All.9: General Health**



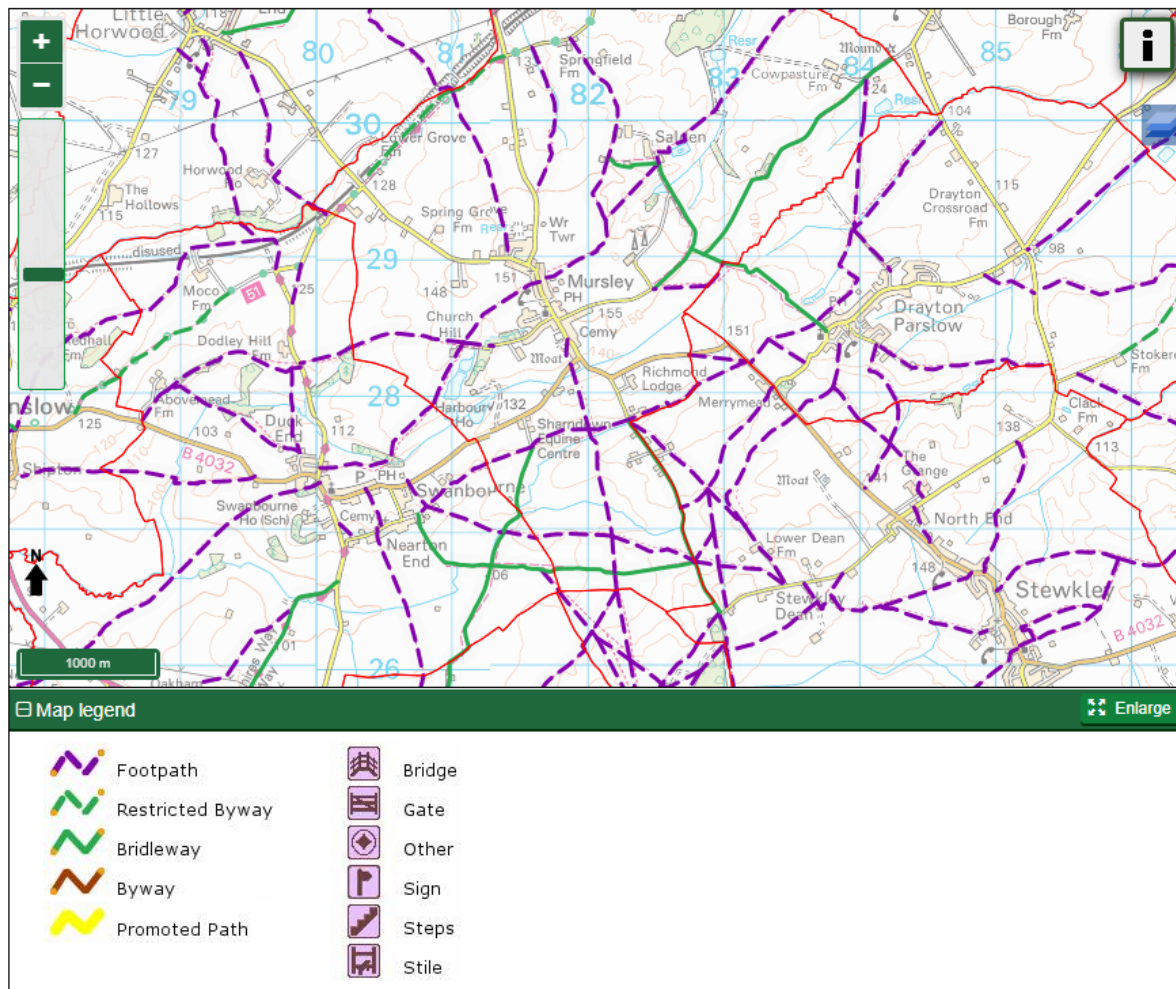
As shown in **Figure All.10**, disabled residents in Mursley report that their day to day activities are less restricted in comparison to the district, region and England as a whole. 4.58% of residents note that their day to day activities are limited a lot, compared to the national average of 8.3%. Further, 87.1% of residents indicate that their day-to-day activities aren't limited at all, in comparison to national figures.

Although Mursley enjoys good general health, the wider area suffers from high levels of cardiovascular disease, and there are no known medical facilities within the village, which is problematic for the ageing population. The closest medical facility (Norden House Surgery) for residents is located in the neighbouring town of Winslow, approximately 4km from the town centre.

**Figure All.10: Disability restrictions**



A network of public footpaths surrounds Mursley (see **Figure All.11**). However, only a limited number of circuits exist within close proximity of the village to provide good countryside access.

Figure All.11: Public right of way map<sup>66</sup>

In general, Mursley contains low access to green spaces for recreational use.

### Future baseline

Health and wellbeing within the Neighbourhood Plan area is generally very good, with a higher percentage of residents reporting 'good' or 'very good' health compared to regional and national trends, and a low percentage of residents reporting that their activities are limited in some way by their health. An ageing population within the Neighbourhood Plan area might place future pressures on health services in the area. Similarly, limited community services, such as the lack of a local general practice, have the potential to lead to effects on health and wellbeing over the long term.

The MNP can support health and wellbeing through promoting high levels of accessibility and active travel opportunities.

An increased demand for Green infrastructure provisions from development growth has the potential to increase the established deficit of open spaces for leisure and recreational use, and impact on the general health and wellbeing of residents.

<sup>66</sup> Buckinghamshire CC (2020) Public rights of way map [online] available at: <https://pro.w.buckscc.gov.uk/standardmap.aspx>



## Key issues

Considering the baseline and context review the following key issues emerge:

- A higher percentage of residents in the Plan area consider themselves as having ‘very good health’ or ‘good health’, compared to local authority, regional and national averages.
- The proportion of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area who report that their activities are limited ‘a lot’ is lower than the totals the South East of England and the whole of England.
- There are limited Green Infrastructure networks within the Mursley Neighbourhood Plan area.

## Transportation

### Policy context

European and UK transport policies and plans place emphasis on the modernisation and sustainability of the transport network. Specific objectives include reducing pollution and road congestion through improvements to public transport, walking and cycling networks and reducing the need to travel. National policy also focuses on the need for the transport network to support sustainable economic growth.

Key messages from the NPPF include:

- *‘Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:*
  - i. *The potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed*
  - ii. *Opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised*
  - iii. *Opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued*
  - iv. *The environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and considered*
  - v. *Patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places.’*
- *‘Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be considered in both plan-making and decision-making.’*

Each Local Transport Authority in England and Wales has a statutory duty to produce and adopt a Local Transport Plan through the Local Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008. In this regard, Buckinghamshire County Council Local Transport Plan (LTP) 4 (2016 - 2036) sets out the County’s high-level approach to transport in Buckinghamshire. The LTP4 sets out 19 policies which underpin the Council’s vision to make Buckinghamshire great place to live and work. The Plan covers all types of transport and looks ahead to 2036.

Additional documents have been developed to support the LTP4, including the Aylesbury Transport Strategy (2017).<sup>67</sup> The Aylesbury Transport Strategy sets out the improvements needed to support proposed growth in the town between 2016 – 2033. The town has also been recently awarded Government backing as a Garden Town and will be a focus for:

- 15,000 new market and affordable housing
- new investment in economic activity and regeneration

<sup>67</sup> AECOM (2017) Aylesbury Transport Strategy [online] available at: <https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/4513728/aylesbury-transport-strategy-final-jan-17.pdf>

- new retail and employment development

The Strategy also addresses current issues on the transport network. It forms a key transport policy document for both BCC and Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC).

The following policies of the VALP directly relate to the Transportation theme:

- Transport policies T1 to T8
- S5: Infrastructure
- H6c: Accessibility

### Baseline summary

There are no train stations located within the parish, the closest station is Bletchley railway station, located approximately 6km from the Mursley. Bletchley is well connected with major centres; notably at peak time there are four services an hour to London Euston (journey time of 56 minutes). Other regular services connect Bletchley with Milton Keynes and Bedford. A notable proportion of residents will travel to Leighton Buzzard due to greater accessibility from the station to key employment centres and recreational hubs within the district.

There is only one infrequent bus service and the Winslow Community Bus for residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area running services between Winslow and Milton Keynes, these services are infrequent (limited to Tuesdays and Thursdays).

A small network of roads run through Mursley. These are:

- Whaddon Road;
- Station Road;
- B4032; and
- Swanbourne Road.

The intersection of the B4032 and Swanbourne Road forms the main road running through the village centre and provides northbound access to the A421 within 4km (an approximately 8 minute drive), the main connecting road to the larger town of Milton Keynes. The northwardly intersection of Whaddon and Station Road provides important access to the A421. However, both intersections suffer from moderate traffic flow as equally viable routes into and out of the village, particularly during common commuting hours (mornings and evenings). Congestion along the Main Street is also common and high during peak hours/ school drop-off and pick-up times.

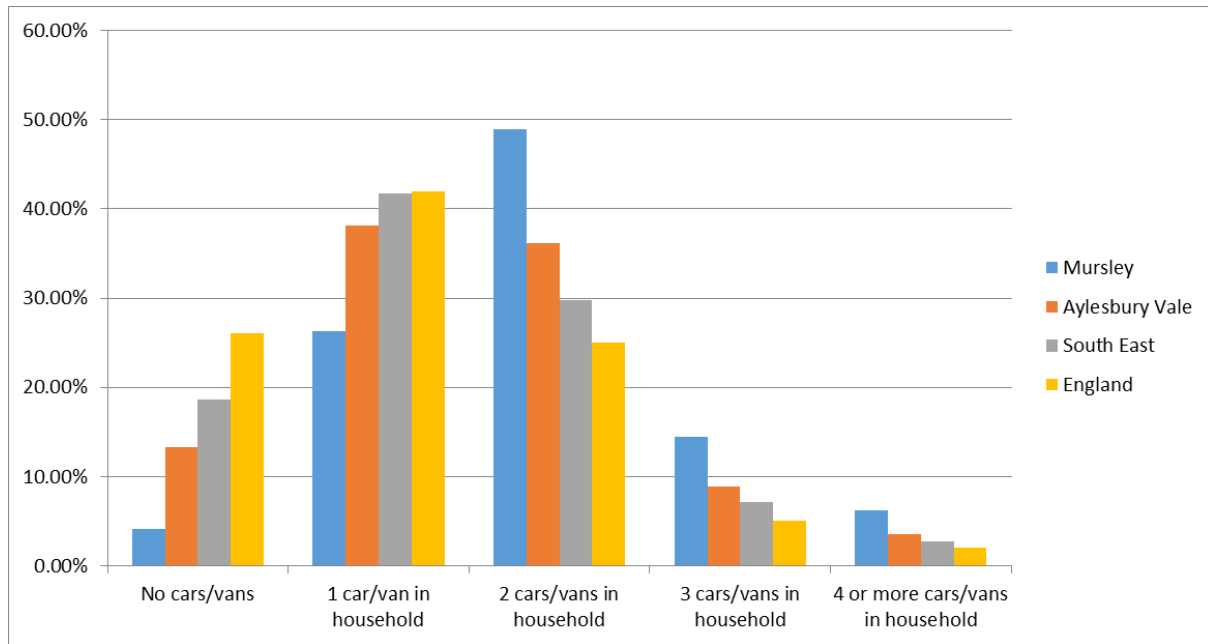
Countywide Local Plan Modelling for Buckinghamshire County Council conducted in 2017<sup>68</sup> assessed the transport impact of revised local plan proposals for districts within Buckinghamshire, including the District Councils of Aylesbury Vale. Key findings indicated slight travel time increases from development within the wider area, particularly along Whaddon Road.

Mursley hosts an extensive network of footpaths, connecting with neighbouring villages (Swanbourne to the west and Drayton Parslow to the east) via Midshires Way and Cross Bucks Way. There are no dedicated trail and cycle networks in the Mursley area.

Based on the 2011 census data, **Figure All.12** shows most residents in Mursley own at least one car/van or more (95.9%). This figure is greater than the comparative figures for Aylesbury Vale (86.7%), the South East (81.42%) and England as a whole (74%). Further, figures for the ownership of 2 or more cars/vans (69.6%) is considerably larger than figures for the district (48.6%), region (39.7%) and nation as a whole (32%).

<sup>68</sup> Countywide Local Plan Modelling (2017) [online] available from: [https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page\\_downloads/Countywide%20Local%20Plan%20Modelling%20Support%20Phase%203%20Final%20160817\\_1.pdf](https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/Countywide%20Local%20Plan%20Modelling%20Support%20Phase%203%20Final%20160817_1.pdf)

**Figure All.12: Car and Van ownership**

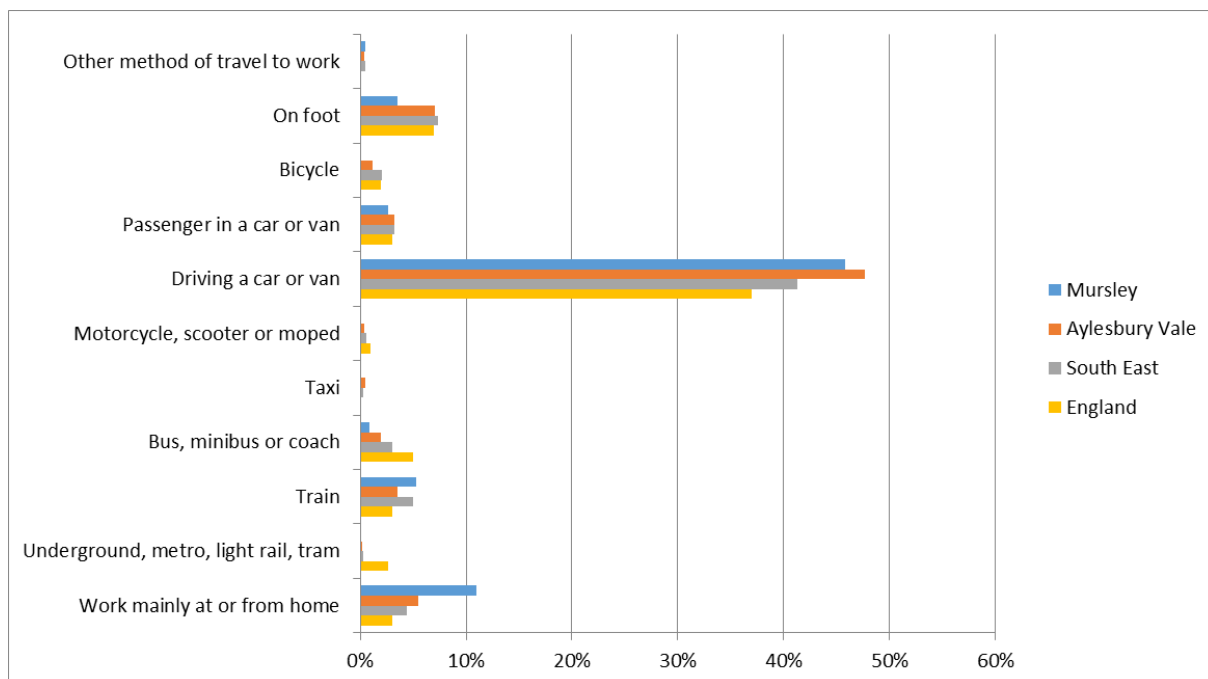


Based on 2011 census data, **Figure All.13** shows the most common method of travel to work in the Neighbourhood Plan area is by driving a car or van (45.8%). This difference is in line with statistics for Aylesbury Vale (47.7%), but greater than those for the South East region (41.3%) and England as a whole (37%).

In comparison, travel by bus and/or foot is far less common in Mursley than at the district, regional and national levels.

A larger proportion of residents work from home in the Neighbourhood Plan area (11%) in comparison to figures for Aylesbury Vale (5.5%), the South East region (4.5%) and England as a whole (3%).

**Figure All.13: Method of Travel to Work**



### **Future baseline**

New development has the potential to increase traffic on the local road network and lead to additional congestion issues within the village. Additionally, public transport use is likely to remain low compared with private car use given the lack of public transport options; notably in the absence of a train station.

Negative effects of new development on the transport network are likely to be mitigated in part by the BCC LTP4 and AVDC Local Transport Strategy. Nonetheless there will be a continuing need for development to be situated in accessible locations.

### **Key issues**

Considering the baseline and context review the following key issues emerge:

- The nearest railway station to the Neighbourhood Plan area is Bletchley, located approximately 6km away. There are no national trails or cycle paths that run through the Neighbourhood Plan area and limited bus service. Options for sustainable transport access are therefore limited.
- There is a high level of car ownership and a strong reliance on private vehicles within the Neighbourhood Plan area. In the absence of significant transport infrastructure improvements, these trends are likely to continue in the growth of the Plan area.

# Appendix III: Assessment of site options

This appendix presents the detailed assessment of the site options in contention for allocation in the MNP, as established in Chapter 5.

## Methodology

For each of the options, the assessment examines likely significant effects on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability objectives identified through scoping (see **Table 3.1**) as a methodological framework. **Green** is used to indicate significant positive effects, whilst **red** is used to indicate significant negative effects. Minor effects are also identified with **light green** indicating minor positive effects and **amber** indicating minor negative effects.

Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high-level nature of the options under consideration. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline (now and in the future under a 'no plan' scenario). In light of this, there is a need to make considerable assumptions regarding how options will be implemented 'on the ground' and what the effect on particular receptors would be. Where there is a need to rely on assumptions in order to reach a conclusion on a 'significant effect' this is made explicit in the appraisal text.

Where it is not possible to predict likely significant effects on the basis of reasonable assumptions, efforts are made to comment on the relative merits of the alternatives in more general terms. This is helpful, as it enables a distinction to be made between the alternatives even where it is not possible to distinguish between them in terms of 'significant effects'.

Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking into account the criteria presented within Regulations.<sup>69</sup> So, for example, account is taken of the duration, frequency and reversibility of effects.

## Assessment findings

**Table AII-1** below presents the findings for the SEA of the site options for the delivery of housing need within the MNP area.

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<sup>69</sup> Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Table AII.6: SEA of site options for the MNP.

		1. Rear of 26 main Street*	2. E of Whaddon Road	3a. Rear of Station Road E	3b. Rear of Station Road W	4. NW of Playing Field	6. Rear of Green Man PH*	7. E of Main Street	8. Rear of 30 Main Street	11. N of Swanbourne Road (Diocese)	12. N of Cooks Lane
<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>Likely effect</b>	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive

*Commentary:*

None of the site options are known to contain or lie adjacent to any designated biodiversity areas or Priority Habitats. No significant effects are anticipated in this respect, and it is difficult to differentiate the options accordingly. However, the opportunity to enhance habitats and ecological connectivity at all sites through biodiversity net gain is recognised with a potential for minor long-term positive effects.

		1. Rear of 26 main Street*	2. E of Whaddon Road	3a. Rear of Station Road E	3b. Rear of Station Road W	4. NW of Playing Field	6. Rear of Green Man PH*	7. E of Main Street	8. Rear of 30 Main Street	11. N of Swanbourne Road (Diocese)	12. N of Cooks Lane
<b>Climate change</b>	<b>Likely effect</b>	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral

*Commentary:*

None of the sites are located within an area of high fluvial flood risk, and no significant effects are considered likely at any of the options in this respect.

Surface water flood risk is prevalent across the settlement, with all sites, except sites 8 and 12, containing or bordering areas at low risk. High risk areas are located within and adjacent to Site 2 where effective mitigation would be required to minimise risks in future development and ensure that risk is not increased or displaced off-site. Whilst on-site mitigation measures (such as Sustainable Drainage Systems) are likely to ensure that development at any of the sites would avoid negative effects arising in relation to climate change adaptation, Site 2 is noted potentially for more extensive mitigation requirements. Overall, neutral effects are anticipated.

All options are considered for their potential to deliver sustainable design and construction methods, and ultimately this is affected by policy and requirements wider than the scope of the MNP, including Building Regulations and national policy. The options are thus not differentiated in this respect.

The level of development proposed through the MNP is not considered likely to lead to significant negative effects in terms of road congestion with associated effects on air quality, neither is it anticipated to deliver any significant positive effects in terms of strategic transport infrastructure improvements and enhanced access. None of the options are therefore differentiated in respect of these potential effects in relation to climate change mitigation. However, the potential for cumulative negative effects is noted at sites 1 and 6, given the reliance on site 8 (and site 1 in development at site 6) to enable access to the sites. The combination of sites could essentially lead to a slightly higher growth level overall, and minor negative effects of slightly increased significance given the cumulative effects of growth on local roads, growth in traffic and greenhouse gas emissions.

		1. Rear of 26 main Street*	2. E of Whaddon Road	3a. Rear of Station Road E	3b. Rear of Station Road W	4. NW of Playing Field	6. Rear of Green Man PH*	7. E of Main Street	8. Rear of 30 Main Street	11. N of Swanbourne Road (Diocese)	12. N of Cooks Lane
<b>Landscape</b>	<b>Likely effect</b>	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative

**Commentary:**

None of the options lie within a designated landscape; however, development at all the sites will result in the loss of greenfield land at the settlement edge and are thus considered likely to lead to minor long-term negative effects overall. All the sites, except sites 2, 3a and 3b, also contain trees and hedgerow which are features contributing to landscape character. This is largely limited to the boundaries of sites 6 and 12, and the corner of Site 4; where it is anticipated that losses could be minimised. However, sites 1, 7 and 8 contain significant tree coverage and as a result tree loss is considered likely in development; thus, negative effects are likely to be slightly more pronounced at these sites. It is also noted that site 1 is dependent upon site 8 to enable access, and as such the potential cumulative loss of tree coverage across the two sites is likely to lead to minor negative effects of slightly more significance. Tree losses should be minimised where possible.

		1. Rear of 26 main Street*	2. E of Whaddon Road	3a. Rear of Station Road E	3b. Rear of Station Road W	4. NW of Playing Field	6. Rear of Green Man PH*	7. E of Main Street	8. Rear of 30 Main Street	11. N of Swanbourne Road (Diocese)	12. N of Cooks Lane
<b>Historic environment</b>	<b>Likely effect</b>	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Neutral	Neutral	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative

**Commentary:**

Mursley has a rich historic environment, and the site options are each considered in turn for their potential effects;

- Site 1; lies within an Archaeological Notification Area, adjacent to the Conservation Area encompassing Main Street and adjacent to the Grade II listed house; 28 Main Street. Development at the site is likely to affect the setting of designated assets to some degree and may affect views into/ out of the Conservation Area. Ancillary buildings between the site and designated asset, along with existing mature trees and hedgerow may provide some existing screening, however it is uncertain whether the extent and coverage of the trees would be retained in development. Appropriate archaeological investigation would also be required prior to development. A potential for minor long-term negative effects is identified at this stage, until a detailed mitigation strategy can be agreed with Historic England. It is also noted that site 1 is dependent upon the development of site 8 to enable access, and as such there is the potential for cumulative negative effects in relation to archaeology, and impacts upon the designated Conservation Area, particularly views into and out of the designated area in the east of the settlement.
- Site 2; lies adjacent to the Conservation in the north of Main Street. The HER also suggests that the site is a good example of ridge and furrow. Development will extend the residential area east of Whaddon Road and is likely to affect views into/ out of the Conservation Area and non-designated

		1. Rear of 26 main Street*	2. E of Whaddon Road	3a. Rear of Station Road E	3b. Rear of Station Road W	4. NW of Playing Field	6. Rear of Green Man PH*	7. E of Main Street	8. Rear of 30 Main Street	11. N of Swanbourne Road (Diocese)	12. N of Cooks Lane
Historic environment	Likely effect	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Neutral	Neutral	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative
<p>assets. A loss of greenfield land surrounding the Conservation Area is also likely to negatively affect the setting of the Conservation Area to a minor degree. The potential for minor long-term negative effects is identified at this stage, until a detailed mitigation strategy can be agreed with Historic England.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site 3a; lies adjacent to the Conservation Area and nearby to the Grade II listed 71, Main Street. Development at the site is likely to affect the setting of designated assets to some degree and may affect views into/ out of the Conservation Area. It is noted that development at the site is likely to require a new widened access onto Main Street, which again has potential to affect the designated heritage setting. A loss of greenfield land surrounding the Conservation Area may also negatively affect the setting of the Conservation Area to a minor degree. The potential for minor long-term negative effects is identified at this stage, until a detailed mitigation strategy can be agreed with Historic England.</li> <li>• Site 3b; does not contain or lie immediately adjacent to any designated heritage assets. However, it does lie nearby to the Conservation Area and development has the potential to affect its setting, particularly in terms of views into/ out of the Conservation Area. Design mitigation is considered likely to reduce the significance of any effects in development at this site, which unlike Option 3a above, retains the open land immediately adjacent to the Conservation Area. Neutral effects are considered achievable at the site at this stage.</li> <li>• Site 4; does not contain or lie adjacent to any designated assets. It is separated from the Conservation Area by the nature of the development at Tweedale Close and lies outside of the Archaeological Notification Area. As such, neutral effects are anticipated in development.</li> <li>• Site 6; lies within an Archaeological Notification Area, adjacent to the Conservation Area encompassing Main Street and in the proximity of listed buildings along Main Street (namely 28 Main Street as the closest). Development at the site is likely to affect the setting of designated assets to some degree and may affect views into/ out of the Conservation Area. Appropriate archaeological investigation would also be required prior to development. A potential for minor long-term negative effects is identified at this stage, until a detailed mitigation strategy can be agreed with Historic England. It is also noted that site 6 is dependent upon the development of both sites 1 and 8 to enable access, and as such there is the potential for cumulative negative effects in relation to archaeology, and impacts upon the designated Conservation Area, particularly views into and out of the designated area in the east of the settlement.</li> <li>• Site 7; lies partially within an Archaeological Notification Area, adjacent to the Conservation Area encompassing Main Street and in the proximity of listed buildings along Main Street. Development at the site is likely to affect the setting of designated assets to some degree and may affect views into/ out of the Conservation Area (though it is recognised that existing tree coverage makes this less likely at this site). It is also noted that development at the site is likely to require widened access onto Main Street, which again has the potential to affect the designated heritage setting. Appropriate archaeological investigation would also be required prior to development. The extent of existing mature trees on site is likely to contribute to the setting of the Conservation Area and a potential for minor long-term negative effects in development is identified at this stage, until a detailed mitigation strategy can be agreed with Historic England.</li> </ul>											



		1. Rear of 26 main Street*	2. E of Whaddon Road	3a. Rear of Station Road E	3b. Rear of Station Road W	4. NW of Playing Field	6. Rear of Green Man PH*	7. E of Main Street	8. Rear of 30 Main Street	11. N of Swanbourne Road (Diocese)	12. N of Cooks Lane	
Historic environment	Likely effect	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Neutral	Neutral	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site 8; lies within an Archaeological Notification Area, adjacent to the Conservation Area encompassing Main Street and in close proximity to both 28 and 30 Main Street, both of which are Grade II listed. Development at the site is likely to affect the setting of designated assets to some degree and may affect views into/ out of the Conservation Area. Ancillary buildings between the site and designated asset, along with existing mature trees and hedgerow may provide some existing screening; however, it is uncertain whether the extent and coverage of the trees would be retained in development. It is also noted that development at the site is likely to require widened access onto Main Street, which again has the potential to affect the designated heritage setting. Appropriate archaeological investigation would also be required prior to development. A potential for minor long-term negative effects is identified at this stage, until a detailed mitigation strategy can be agreed with Historic England.</li> <li>Site 11; Mursley Conservation Area and an Archaeological Notification Area lie adjacent to the site in the north. This area to the north of the site also contains the Moated site 80m west of Cedars Farm Scheduled Monument. The moated site enclosing a dry island is representative of the medieval period and is considered important for the understanding of the distribution of wealth and status in the countryside. It survives well, largely undisturbed and is considered likely to retain buried evidence for the structure and other features relating to the period of occupation. The buried silts in the base of the moat are considered likely to contain both artefacts relating to the period of occupation and environmental evidence for the appearance of the landscape in which the monument was set. The site also lies nearby the Grade II listed Spring Cottage. Development at the site will also result in the loss of open (undeveloped) land adjoining the Conservation Area and is likely to affect existing views into/ out of the Conservation Area. Development has high potential to disturb the setting of designated assets, and further advice from Historic England should be sought prior to any progression of the site. A potential for minor negative effects is considered at this stage, until mitigation measures can be identified and agreed in consultation with Historic England.</li> <li>Site 12; does not contain or lie immediately adjacent to any designated heritage assets. However, it does lie entirely within an Archaeological Notification Area, adjacent to a ridge and furrow example, and the site is only a short distance and visible from the Conservation Area (southwest on Cook Lane). Appropriate archaeological investigation would be required prior to any development at the site, and an appropriate mitigation strategy should be agreed with Historic England. A potential for minor long-term negative effects is identified at this stage, until an appropriate mitigation strategy can be demonstrated and agreed.</li> </ul>										

By nature of being the least constrained, site 4 is considered to better overall against this SEA objective, followed by site 3b which, by retaining open land between the development site and the Conservation Area is likely to reduce the extent of any negative effects. Sites 2, 3a and 12 would result in the loss of open land surrounding the Conservation Area, which is likely to affect its setting to some degree, and site 12 has the added constraint of lying wholly within an Archaeological Notification Area. The rest of the options all lie adjacent to the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings, and partially within or adjacent to the Archaeological Notification Area, where development potential should be consulted on with Historic England. Site 11 also lies in the setting of a Scheduled Monument. The potential for cumulative negative effects is also noted at sites 1 and 6, given the reliance on site 8 (and site 1 in development at site 6) to enable access to the sites, extending the level of development in the east of the settlement and potentially affecting archaeology and views into/ out of the Conservation Area to a greater degree.

		1. Rear of 26 main Street*	2. E of Whaddon Road	3a. Rear of Station Road E	3b. Rear of Station Road W	4. NW of Playing Field	6. Rear of Green Man PH*	7. E of Main Street	8. Rear of 30 Main Street	11. N of Swanbourne Road (Diocese)	12. N of Cooks Lane
<b>Land, soil and water resources</b>	<b>Likely effect</b>	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative

**Commentary:**

All sites will result in greenfield loss and minor long-term negative effects in this respect, though it is recognised that this is largely a reflection of the lack of available brownfield sites in the Plan area. Detailed land-quality assessment has not been undertaken at the sites, however, indicative datasets by DEFRA<sup>70</sup> suggest the presence of best and most versatile agricultural land just north of the settlement area, surrounding site 4 and nearby to sites 3a and 3b. By natural extension it is assumed that there is a risk of loss of high-quality agricultural land at these sites and the potential for minor long-term negative effects is slightly more pronounced when compared to the other greenfield sites.

None of the site lie in the vicinity of waterbodies, and no significant effects in relation to water resources and water quality are anticipated at this stage. It is also difficult to differentiate the sites in this respect.

The potential for cumulative negative effects is also recognised at sites 1 and 6, given the reliance on site 8 (and site 1 in development at site 6) to enable access to the sites. The combination of sites could essentially lead to a slightly higher growth level overall, and thus minor negative effects of slightly increased significance given the cumulative loss of greenfield land.

		1. Rear of 26 main Street*	2. E of Whaddon Road	3a. Rear of Station Road E	3b. Rear of Station Road W	4. NW of Playing Field	6. Rear of Green Man PH*	7. E of Main Street	8. Rear of 30 Main Street	11. N of Swanbourne Road (Diocese)	12. N of Cooks Lane
<b>Population and community</b>	<b>Likely effect</b>	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive

**Commentary:**

Each of the sites can deliver new homes of a mix of types to support local housing needs and deliver positive effects in this respect. Economies of scale inevitably bring greater potential for community benefits; however, none of the sites are considered to be of a scale to bring about any significant effects in that respect. Each site is located within or adjacent to the settlement edge to maximise integration and access to the existing village centre. Whilst sites 4 and 11 are slightly further from the centre of the village, they are still contiguous with the settlement form. All sites are likely to bring about minor positive effects for communities and are not readily differentiated at this stage in relation to this SEA theme.

<sup>70</sup> DEFRA Magic Map [online] available at: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

		1. Rear of 26 main Street*	2. E of Whaddon Road	3a. Rear of Station Road E	3b. Rear of Station Road W	4. NW of Playing Field	6. Rear of Green Man PH*	7. E of Main Street	8. Rear of 30 Main Street	11. N of Swanbourne Road (Diocese)	12. N of Cooks Lane
<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	<b>Likely effect</b>	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Minor – positive	Neutral	Minor – positive	Neutral	Minor – positive	Minor – positive

*Commentary:*

Development at any of the options would not result in the loss of any existing health facilities or designated open/ recreational space. Given a noted limited number of greenspaces available to residents, it is recognised that development at the options could deliver new accessible community spaces and long-term positive effects for health and wellbeing. However, the restrictive linear form of Site 6 is considered less likely to deliver such benefits when compared to the other options.

As noted previously, each site is located within or adjacent to the settlement edge, maximising integration and access to the existing village centre and the potential to support active travel opportunities. Public Right of Way (PRoW) footpaths cross both Site 4 and Site 7 and run adjacent to Site 11 and in close proximity of site 12 via Cooks Lane/ Church Lane. These provide residents with good access to the surrounding countryside and the associated health benefits, with the potential for minor long-term positive effects at these sites (assuming they are retained on site where applicable).

		1. Rear of 26 main Street*	2. E of Whaddon Road	3a. Rear of Station Road E	3b. Rear of Station Road W	4. NW of Playing Field	6. Rear of Green Man PH*	7. E of Main Street	8. Rear of 30 Main Street	11. N of Swanbourne Road (Diocese)	12. N of Cooks Lane
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Likely effect</b>	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative

*Commentary:*

The settlement has limited sustainable transport infrastructure provisions to support development at any of the sites, and development at any of the options is considered likely to continue trends which favour the private vehicle as the mode of choice. Minor long-term negative effects are anticipated in this respect, and it is recommended that further investigation identifies whether mitigation is required in future development to manage traffic flows in and out of Mursley.

However, each site is located within or adjacent to the settlement edge, maximising integration and access to the existing village centre and the potential to support active travel opportunities. Public Right of Way (PRoW) footpaths cross both Site 4 and Site 7 which should be retained in development to avoid negative effects arising. Development at these sites, as well as site 11 which runs adjacent to a PRoW, provide opportunities to enhance pedestrian access to the local footpath network and deliver positive effects.

In the absence of site-specific assessment, it is assumed at this stage that satisfactory access to each site is achievable in principle, and the sites are not differentiated in this respect.

	1. Rear of 26 main Street*	2. E of Whaddon Road	3a. Rear of Station Road E	3b. Rear of Station Road W	4. NW of Playing Field	6. Rear of Green Man PH*	7. E of Main Street	8. Rear of 30 Main Street	11. N of Swanbourne Road (Diocese)	12. N of Cooks Lane
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The potential for cumulative negative effects is also recognised at sites 1 and 6, given the reliance on site 8 (and site 1 in development at site 6) to enable access to the sites. The combination of sites could essentially lead to a slightly higher growth level overall, and minor negative effects of slightly increased significance given the cumulative effects of growth on local roads, growth in traffic and greenhouse gas emissions.

## Conclusions

		1. Rear of 26 main Street*	2. E of Whaddon Road	3a. Rear of Station Road E	3b. Rear of Station Road W	4. NW of Playing Field	6. Rear of Green Man PH*	7. E of Main Street	8. Rear of 30 Main Street	11. N of Swanbourne Road (Diocese)	12. N of Cooks Lane
<b>Biodiversity</b>	Likely effect	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive	Minor - positive
<b>Climate change</b>	Likely effect	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
<b>Landscape</b>	Likely effect	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative
<b>Historic environment</b>	Likely effect	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Neutral	Neutral	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative
<b>Land, soil and water resources</b>	Likely effect	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative
<b>Population and community</b>	Likely effect	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive	Minor – positive
<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	Likely effect	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Minor – positive	Neutral	Minor – positive	Neutral	Minor – positive	Minor – positive
<b>Transportation</b>	Likely effect	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative	Minor – negative

**Overall conclusions:**

Overall, the sites are considered to perform on par in relation to the SEA themes of biodiversity, climate change, landscape, land, soil and water resources, population and community and transportation.

Sites 4, 7, 11 and 12 perform better in comparison to the rest of the sites in relation to the SEA theme of health and wellbeing, by providing opportunities to connect development with the existing local footpath network and provide countryside access, based on the assumption that PRowWs will be retained and suitable links provided.

Given the extent of high surface water flood risk across site 2, it is noted potentially for more extensive mitigation requirements. The extent of tree coverage at sites 1 and 8 also mean development is likely to result in some losses, and minor long-term negative effects for the landscape.

In relation to the historic environment, whilst neutral effects are considered achievable at both Sites 4 and 3b, it is recommended that Buckinghamshire Council and Historic England advice is sought in relation to development surrounding the Mursley Conservation Area, and development within an Archaeological Notification Area.

The potential for cumulative negative effects is also recognised in relation to the SEA themes of landscape, historic environment, land, soil and water resources, and transportation given the need for enabling development at site 8 to deliver access to site 1 and at both sites 8 and 1 to enable access to site 6. This has the potential to lead to a slightly higher overall level of growth (with implications for the traffic generation and greenfield loss) and cumulative tree losses and effects on designated heritage assets and their settings – including views into and out of the Conservation Area in the east of the settlement area.

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