

LONG CRENDON PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2013 -2023

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FINAL REPORT



Published by Long Crendon Parish Council under EU Directive 2001/42 on Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004 to accompany the publication of the Submission version of the Long Crendon Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

FEBRUARY 2017

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of any significant environmental effects resulting from the policies and proposals of the Submission version of the Long Crendon Parish Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan contains a number of policies for the use and development of land in the Parish of Long Crendon in the ten year plan period from April 2013 to March 2023. These policies, together with the policies of the development plan - that is presently the saved policies of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (AVDLP) - and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), will be used by the District Council in determining planning applications once the Neighbourhood Plan is approved in due course.

2. The draft Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) was published for consultation in July 2016. The District Council hopes to be able to submit the VALP for examination in summer 2017 and then to adopt it before the end of 2017. The VALP will set the spatial and growth strategy for the District over the plan period 2013 to 2033 and will contain development management policies to replace those saved from the AVDLP.

3. In pursuit of its vision, the Neighbourhood Plan proposes the following objectives:

- Meet local housing needs, particularly by providing more, smaller houses for those wanting to stay in the village, and for young, first time buyers
- Provide affordable homes for local people and encourage self- build initiatives
- Minimize the effects of development on the historic character of the village
- Protect the special landscapes that surround the village opening new views where possible
- Ensure that all major development includes the planting of hedgerows, trees and the provision of open grassed areas
- Encourage the use of local shops and services and protect them from unnecessary loss to other uses
- Support rural economic development providing more local people with the opportunity to work in the Parish
- Encourage and support all sporting activities for village residents.
- Contain and control traffic flow with commuter traffic confined to the main arterial roads
- Encourage walking and cycling in the village to access the village shops and services by the creation of footpaths, cycleways and improved existing walkways.

4. The plan contains 14 policies, ranging from allocating sites for development through to those that refine District-wide development management issues to suit this specific Parish. The Parish Council has prepared separate studies on site assessments, housing needs and landscape/green space to inform its choices of policies. These reports are published in the evidence base of the Neighbourhood Plan.

5. The Parish of Long Crendon is located in the south-western corner of the Vale of Aylesbury. The village sits on the edge of the Chiltern Ridge overlooking Thame Valley to the southeast. It is laid out along the principle roads of the High Street, Bicester Road, Thame Road, Chearsley Road and Frogmore Lane.

6. The village is one of the most significant in heritage terms in the whole of Aylesbury Vale. There are more than 100 listed buildings clustered around the oldest village streets and two Conservation Areas that cover just over half of the village, specifically Bicester Road and the High Street.

7. The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared at a time of uncertainty over the outcome of an important planning decision and imminent other proposals. There have been three planning applications for major housing development schemes submitted to the District Council since mid-2015, two of which have very recently been approved for a combined 60 homes and one has been refused and appealed. In addition, a developer has begun the pre-application process for promoting land south of the village for a major scheme of 150 homes.

8. In deciding to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan with a ten-year plan period to March 2023 (matching the start date of the emerging Local Plan of April 2013), the Parish Council has adopted a sensible approach to enable it to monitor the outcome of these, and any other decisions, that are made prior to the making of the Plan.

9. As such, the main environmental issue is managing the growth of the village without harming its special historic character and the sensitivity of its surrounding landscape, much of which is designated and appreciated as an Area of Attractive Landscape. In addition, the B4011 will become increasingly busier, though there is nothing the Neighbourhood Plan itself can do about this, other than to devise a spatial strategy that seeks not to make matters any worse, if possible.

10. To assess the sustainability performance of the Neighbourhood Plan, the following assessment framework has been adopted. The proposed framework was consulted upon with the statutory consultees as part of the SEA Scoping Report. The consultees made no comments on the selection of the proposed SEA objectives, which are as follows:

- To respect the special quality of built environment and heritage of the village
- To maintain the identity and setting of the village in the landscape.
- To protect designated habitats.
- To manage the effects of traffic on the lives of local people and on the special heritage of the village

11. Not surprisingly, there is a generally strong, positive correlation between the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and the SEA objectives. The local community is seeking to plan for growth that avoids harming the special historic, rural character of the village, a goal that matches the SEA framework well. There is the potential for a number of positive effects arising from the objective of minimising the effects of growing the village on heritage and the landscape. The traffic objective likewise is aimed at minimising its effects on these special but vulnerable features of the

village.

12. In general terms, the policies have neutral environmental impacts with a small number of positive effects and the potential for a small number of negative effects. In terms of positive effects, many of the policies are designed to protect the historic character of the village. The design policies (LC9 and LC10) address the Conservation Area and its setting in terms of setting the key principles for development. Policy LC11 complements existing national and district policy in seeking to acknowledge the contribution made to the character of the village by other non-listed buildings. The Key Views, Local Green Spaces and Green Infrastructure policies are all intended to protect from harmful development the setting of the village in certain key locations, which will also have positive heritage effects.

13. Those same policies, and the design policy, will more directly have positive landscape effects as they seek to prevent development that is out of scale with the character of the setting to the village. Importantly, however, these policies apply to only a relatively small proportion of the edges to the village, allowing the allocation policies to make provision for new homes.

14. The assessment is obliged to identify and assess any reasonable alternatives to the proposed policies. This has been done in two ways. In respect of the policies allocating land for development – policies LC2 and LC3 – five alternative sites have been assessed, derived from the analysis contained in the Site Assessments Report. In respect of the other policies, the alternative approach is the ‘Policy Off’ position, whereby the assumption is that there is no policy on that matter. In practice, this would mean that planning applications would be determined in accordance with other parts of the development plan and in line with national planning policy.

15. In overall terms, therefore, the sustainability effects of the Neighbourhood Plan are generally assessed as neutral but are occasionally positive. A combination of the proposed mitigation measures of the policies and the use of other development plan policies to determine planning applications will effectively avoid any negative impacts. Although the contrasts are not that significant in many cases, only in respect of the reasonable alternatives are there some clearer negative effects and, in no case, does the assessment indicate that an alternative would deliver a more sustainable outcome. Further, the scale and location of specific development policies are such that there should be no cumulative effects on the objectives or the policies contained in the adjoining neighbourhood plans.

16. The Parish Council will monitor the progress of the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan using the measures identified in Table A. The data for some of these measures is collected by the District Council in its planning monitoring reports. In other cases, the Parish Council will endeavour to collect data on an annual basis to report on the progress of the plan. The Parish Council has committed to review the Neighbourhood Plan to roll it forward from April 2023 onwards and it will be informed by this monitoring activity in considering if and how to update the policies.

1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of any significant environmental effects resulting from the policies and proposals of the Submission version of the Long Crendon Parish Neighbourhood Plan, in accordance with EU Directive 2001/42 on strategic environmental assessment (SEA). Plan A below shows the Neighbourhood Area, which was designated by the local planning authority, Aylesbury Vale District Council ("the District Council"), on 7 October 2015.

1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan has been published for submission by Long Crendon Parish Council ("the Parish Council") under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. The District Council published its screening opinion in September 2015, which required an SEA of the Neighbourhood Plan under the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004 (see the relevant extract in Appendix A). The Parish Council then prepared a Scoping Report which was then consulted upon with the statutory consultees. It consulted on a Draft SEA report alongside the Pre Submission Neighbourhood Plan in October 2016 – January 2017.



Plan A: Designated Long Crendon Parish Neighbourhood Area

2 Background to Strategic Environmental Assessment

2.1 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) involves the evaluation of the environmental impacts of the plan. The requirement for an SEA is set out in the European Directive 2001/42/EC adopted into UK law as the “Environmental Assessment of Plans or Programmes Regulations 2004” as follows:

- An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan, and relationship with other relevant plans or programmes
- The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan
- The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected
- Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, 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 environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national 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 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
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce, and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan
- 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 competency encountered in compiling the required information's
- A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring

2.2 Since 2004, the requirement for SEA of relevant plans and programmes has been aligned with the similar process of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in the UK. During the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Government confirmed that an SA is not required of a Neighbourhood Plan but that SEA may still be necessary in circumstances where policies may have a significant environmental effect.

2.3 The methodology for the assessment is intended to be proportionate to the task of assessing the modest development proposals of a Neighbourhood Plan in a relatively small rural area. A summary of the process, as derived from the 2004 guidance is contained in Figure 1 below.

The SEA Process	
Scoping	<p>STAGE A: This stage sets the context of the assessment by identifying the baseline data and establishing the scope of the assessment.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identification of relevant plans, policies and programmes. Any existing requirements that need to be taken into account or incorporated into the plan are identified. 2. Review of baseline information. Data about environmental, social and economic issues is collected, together with an indication as to how this may change in the future without the plan or programme under preparation. 3. Identification of Environmental Issues. The review of plans and policies, together with the baseline information are used to identify the key sustainability issues which could impact the plan. 4. Development of the SEA Framework. The assessment criteria used to assess the impact of the plan or programme. 5. Identification of initial plan options. Taking into account best practice initial identification of options and reasonable alternatives undertaken. 6. Consultation. On the scope and alternatives for assessment it is necessary to consult statutory consultees, that is Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency.
Assessment	<p>STAGE B: This stage involves the assessment of the any likely significant effects of the plan policies (and any reasonable alternatives) on the key sustainability issues identified.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finalisation of the Plan options and alternatives for testing 2. Testing the Plan Objectives against the SEA Framework. The Plan Objectives are tested to ensure compliance sustainability principles 3. Evaluation of plan options and alternatives. The SEA Framework is used to assess various plan options by identifying the potential sustainability effects of the plan and assist in the refinement of the policies. 4. Predicting and evaluating the effects of the plan. To predict the significant effects of the plan and assist in the refinement of the policies. 5. Consideration of ways to mitigate adverse effects and maximise beneficial effects. To ensure that all potential mitigation measures and measures for maximising beneficial effects that are identified. 6. Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the Plan: To detail the means by which the sustainability performance of the plan can be assessed and monitored. <p>This is assessment is used to feed into the development of a plan or programme to help ensure the most sustainable option is selected. The SEA framework is also used to access the sustainability implications of the draft policies and the results used to inform policy development.</p>
Reporting	<p>STAGE C: Preparation of the SEA Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The findings of the assessment together with how it has influenced the development of the plan are identified and set out in a draft environmental report together with the recommendations on how to prevent, reduce, or offset any significant negative impacts arising from the plan. <p>STAGE D: Consultation – seek representations from consultation bodies and the general public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is an ongoing process. Consultation of the draft SEA Report is undertaken into account and used to influence further iterations of the sustainability appraisal process.

Adoption and Monitoring	STAGE E: Monitoring Following adoption of the Plan, the significant effects of implementing the plan are measured and any adverse effects are responded to. The results are fed into the future plans and sustainability appraisals.
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Figure 1: SEA Process

2.4 The methodology for the assessment is intended to be proportionate to the task of assessing the modest development proposals of a Neighbourhood Plan in a relatively small parish area.

2.5 The report responds to each of the SEA requirements in turn, beginning with a short description of the Neighbourhood Plan, identifying the key environmental features of the parish and then assessing the impact of the strategic objectives and policies of the Neighbourhood Plan on those features, using a number of SEA objectives and measures.

3. Neighbourhood Plan Objectives & Other Programmes

3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan contains a number of policies for the use and development of land in the Parish of Long Crendon in the ten year plan period from April 2013 to March 2023. These policies, together with the policies of the development plan - that is presently the saved policies of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (AVDLP) - and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), will be used by the District Council in determining planning applications once the Neighbourhood Plan is approved in due course.

The Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan

3.2 The AVDLP was adopted in January 2004 with a duration to 2011. Some of the policies have ceased to have effect since then, including its housing supply policies. The remaining saved policies provide a general development management framework, with which the Neighbourhood Plan should be in general conformity.

3.3 Of these, the most relevant to this Parish are:

- Policy GP2 – Affordable housing
- Policy GP.8 – Protection of the amenity of residents: Protects existing residential amenities from unrecognisable harm from impact a new development may cause.
- Policy GP.32 – Retention of community assets: Protection of shops, public houses and post offices – resisting proposals that will lead to the loss of valued community assets.
- Policy GP.35 – Design of new development: Sets out the built design principles for new development
- Policy GP.53 – New development in and adjacent to the Conservation Area: In Conservation Areas the council will seek to preserve or enhance the special characteristics that led to the designation of the area.
- Policy RA8 – Areas of Attractive Landscape (part of the Parish and all of the village lie within such an Area)

The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP)

3.4 The draft VALP was published for consultation in July 2016. The District Council hopes to be able to submit the VALP for examination in summer 2017 and then to adopt it before the end of 2017. The VALP will set the spatial and growth strategy for the District over the plan period 2013 to 2033 and will contain development management policies to replace those saved from the AVDLP.

3.5 The most relevant strategic policies of the VALP are:

- S3 Settlement Hierarchy & Cohesive Development – which identifies Long Crendon village as a 'larger village' in the hierarchy
- S8 Previously Developed Land – encouraging the effective use of brownfield land
- S9 Securing Development through Neighbourhood Planning – establishing the core relationship between the VALP and neighbourhood plans

- D5 Housing Development at Larger Villages – proposing a 22% increase in the housing stock of the village over the plan period, resulting in a need for 231 homes to be planned in the period to 2033, once commitments and completions since April 2013 have been taken into account
- D10 Village Centres – promoting new village centre uses
- H1 Affordable Housing – requiring all housing schemes of 11 or more homes to deliver at least 31% affordable homes on site
- H5 Self/Custom Build Housing – requiring larger housing schemes to make provision for serviced plots for self-builders
- H6 Housing Mix – setting out the principles to meet housing needs to 2033 by type and tenure
- BE1 Heritage Assets – restating national policy on sustaining and enhancing heritage assets
- BE2 Design – establishing some generic design principles for new development
- NE2 Biodiversity – managing development schemes to avoid harm to biodiversity value
- NE3 Landscape Character – requiring proposals to have full regard to landscape character and especially designated landscapes, including the Brill to Winchendon Hills Area of Attractive Landscape, within which most of the Parish lies
- I3 Community Facilities – protecting existing valued facilities from unnecessary loss

3.6 It is expected that further clarity will be given in the published pre-submission version of the VALP shortly. There are a number of important policy issues that have generated considerable concern – not least the rationale for distributing housing growth across the rural areas of the District – that may become clearer at that point. If so, then the final submission documents of the Neighbourhood Plan will take those matters into account as necessary.

3.7 Although it is intended that the Neighbourhood Plan will be examined before the adoption of the VALP, and therefore it must have regard to its general conformity with the saved policies of the AVDLP, it will consider the evidence and reasoning of the VALP.

The Neighbourhood Plan

3.8 The Vision of the Parish in 2023 is:

“The village has grown but the required growth has preserved the special character and heritage of the village, the surrounding countryside and important views from and into the village.

New homes have helped sustain valued community facilities – village shops, churches, the garage, the Village Centre and library. New investment has secured the expansion of the school and surgery.

There is a wider range of housing types enabling younger people to find homes and older households to downsize. There are now more affordable homes in the village and self-build plots.

Traffic in the village is better managed as a result of traffic calming measures. There are improved walking and cycling connections between the Village, Thame, and Haddenham Station.

The development of the parish has not only avoided any harm to its biodiversity but has helped create new ecological value with significant areas of Local Green Space.

The Village remains ostensibly a hilltop village with areas of designated beauty preserved for future generations".

3.9 In pursuit of this Vision, the Neighbourhood Plan contains four strategic objectives:

Housing to:

- Meet local housing needs, particularly by providing more, smaller houses for those wanting to stay in the village, and for young, first time buyers
- Provide affordable homes for local people and encourage self- build initiatives

Environment to:

- Minimize the effects of development on the historic character of the village
- Protect the special landscapes that surround the village opening new views where possible
- Ensure that all major development includes the planting of hedgerows, trees and the provision of open grassed areas

Local Services to:

- Encourage the use of local shops and services and protect them from unnecessary loss to other uses
- Support rural economic development providing more local people with the opportunity to work in the Parish
- Encourage and support all sporting activities for village residents.

Transport to:

- Contain and control traffic flow with commuter traffic confined to the main arterial roads
- Encourage walking and cycling in the village to access the village shops and services by the creation of footpaths, cycleways and improved existing walkways.

3.10 The plan contains 14 policies, ranging from allocating sites for development through to those that refine District-wide development management issues to suit this specific Parish. The Parish Council has prepared separate studies on site assessments, housing needs and landscape/green space to inform its choices of policies. These reports are published in the evidence base of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4. Environmental Characteristics

4.1 The baseline environmental evidence for the Neighbourhood Plan is contained in the Scoping Report, which is included as Appendix A to this report.

4.2 The Parish of Long Crendon is located in the south-western corner of the Vale of Aylesbury. The village sits on the edge of the Chiltern Ridge overlooking Thame Valley to the southeast. It is laid out along the principle roads of the High Street, Bicester Road, Thame Road, Chearsley Road and Frogmore Lane.

4.3 The village is one of the most significant in heritage terms in the whole of Aylesbury Vale. There are more than 100 listed buildings clustered around the oldest village streets and two Conservation Areas that cover just over half of the village, specifically Bicester Road and the High Street. Furthermore, the Historic Environment Record indicates that much of the village, its edges and the surrounding countryside is of known or likely archaeological interest.

4.4 Key to the character of the village is its elevated position within the surrounding landscape – part of the 'Brill – Winchendon Hills Area of Attractive Landscape' - and in particular the tower of St. Mary's Church, which can be seen from some distance outside the village. Within the village extensive views of the surrounding countryside are gained from the south-western, eastern and north eastern edges of the village. These views reinforce the rural setting of the village and contrast with the insular and often truncated views gained along the principal roads within the heart of the village.

4.5 The B4011 Thame to Bicester road passes through the village centre. It is a busy road that connects two of the larger towns in this area and, although not a major road, is popular with commuters and others avoiding congestion elsewhere on the road network. Congestion in the village is therefore common, especially at peak morning and evening hours, when commuting and school run traffic from the village combines with traffic from outside the Parish.

5. Local Environmental Issues

5.1 The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared at a time of uncertainty over the final outcome of an important planning decision and imminent other proposals. There have been three planning applications for major housing development schemes submitted to the District Council since mid-2015, two of which have very recently been approved (off Wainwrights and off Cheersley Road) for a combined 61 homes and one (at Chilton Road for 75 homes) has been refused and appealed. In addition, a developer has begun the pre-application process for promoting land south of the village at Drakes Drive for a major scheme of 150 homes.

5.2 If the Chilton Road scheme is approved, the total number of new homes consented in the village since 2013 would exceed the supply of new homes in the village that will be required in the adopted Local Plan in due course.

5.3 In deciding to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan with a ten-year plan period to March 2023 (matching the start date of the emerging Local Plan of April 2013), the Parish Council has adopted a sensible approach to enable it to monitor the outcome of these, and any other decisions, that are made prior to the making of the Plan.

5.4 As such, the main environmental issue is managing the growth of the village without harming its special historic character and the sensitivity of its surrounding landscape, much of which is designated and appreciated as an Area of Attractive Landscape. In addition, the B4011 will become increasingly busier, though there is nothing the Neighbourhood Plan itself can do about this, other than to devise a spatial strategy that seeks not to make matters any worse, if possible.

5.5 Given the modest scale of growth planned for in the Neighbourhood Plan, compared to the established size of the village, and its focus on the village, there will be no likely measureable impacts on any designated nature sites, heritage assets or other environmental features outside the Parish boundary. The nearby towns of Haddenham and Thame have neighbourhood plans and are in the process of reviewing them. As larger settlements, the scale of development they will be planning for, along with the proposals of their respective Local Plans, will be much greater than at Long Crendon, and it will therefore be for those plans to consider cumulative effects.

5.6 Without a Neighbourhood Plan, proposals for housing development in the Parish would be left to individual planning applications, as has been the case in recent years with the strategic policy vacuum of the time taken to update the Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan will make a difference in shaping developments over the next seven years and in managing their environmental impacts, especially in the period until the new Local Plan is adopted.

6. Environmental Objectives

6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to address key planning issues in the Neighbourhood Plan area. As the Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with national and local strategic policies, it does not therefore seek to repeat them.

6.2 To assess the sustainability performance of the Neighbourhood Plan, the following assessment framework has been adopted. The proposed framework was consulted upon with the statutory consultees as part of the SEA Scoping Report. The consultees made no comments on the selection of the proposed SEA objectives, which are as follows:

Objective 1: Heritage

To respect the special quality of built environment and heritage of the village

- 1A Do the policies sustain and enhance the significance of designated heritage assets and their settings, i.e. Listed Buildings, the Conservation Area and archaeological sites?
- 1B Do the policies sustain and enhance the significance of non-designated heritage assets?

Objective 2: Landscape Character

To maintain the identity and setting of the village in the landscape.

- 2A Do the policies have regard to the local landscape character, the village setting, the local topography and views to and from the village to the countryside?

Objective 3: Biodiversity

To protect designated habitats.

- 3A Do the policies avoid development affecting areas of notable species?

Objective 4: Traffic

To manage the effects of traffic on the lives of local people and on the special heritage of the village

- 4A Do the policies reduce the need for car trips through the village to local services?
- 4B Do the policies seek to reduce the negative effects of traffic of the rural/village land character?

6.3 This tight framework of SEA objectives has enabled the selection of policies, and their reasonable alternatives, to be compared and contrasted by focusing on the issues that are driving the Neighbourhood Plan. There are many more SEA objectives assessed at the District scale that are not distinguishing features of this Parish, notably flood risk and air quality.

6.4 In most cases, it is acknowledged the data is not collected or reported at a parish scale of development proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan is too small in comparison with the scale of existing development in the Parish, making the identification of cause-and-effect relationships between inputs and outputs very uncertain. However, it seeks to identify the relative attributes of the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan to inform the reader.

7. Assessment of Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Objectives

7.1 The strategic objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are outlined in the plan are outlined in section 3 of this report. They cover a range of economic, social and environmental issues in support of realising the visions of the communities of the Parish. Each of these objectives is assessed against the SEA objectives in Table B below ('+' denotes a positive effect; '0' a neutral effect; and '-' a negative effect).

Neighbourhood Plan Objectives	SEA Objectives			
	Heritage	Landscape	Biodiversity	Traffic
Housing	0/-	0/-	0/-	0/-
Environment	+	+	+	0
Local Services	+ / 0 / -	0 / -	0 / -	+ / 0 / -
Transport	+	0	+	+

Table A: Assessment of Plan Objectives

7.2 Not surprisingly, there is a generally strong, positive correlation between the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and the SEA objectives. The local community is seeking to plan for growth that avoids harming the special historic, rural character of the village, a goal that matches the SEA framework well.

7.3 There is the potential for a number of positive effects arising from the objective of minimising the effects of growing the village on heritage and the landscape. The traffic objective likewise is aimed at minimising its effects on these special but vulnerable features of the village.

7.4 However, there is the potential for negative effects if development proposals for housing and employment are poorly located. These effects may cause harm to heritage assets, the landscape and biodiversity features if they are not given sufficient weight in selecting sites for development. Or development of the wrong type and size in the wrong location could add to traffic congestion on the local roads.

8. Assessment of Neighbourhood Plan Policies

8.1 There are 14 policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. The SEA process has enabled each to be tested as they have been formulated from initial ideas to proper policy. This has led some to be deleted and others to be refined to ensure they will have no significant environmental effects. Each of these policies is assessed against the SEA objectives in Table B below ('+' denotes a positive effect; '0' a neutral effect; and '-' a negative effect).

Neighbourhood Plan Policies	SEA Objectives			
	Heritage	Landscape	Biodiversity	Traffic
LC1 Settlement Boundary	0/-	+	0/-	+
LC2 Westfield Road	0	0	0	0/-
LC3 Sandy Lane	0	0/-	0	+ / 0
LC4 Housing for Older People	0	0	0	0
LC5 Key Employment Sites	0	0/-	0	0/-
LC6 Village Square	0	0	0	+ / 0
LC7 Primary School	0	0/-	0	+ / 0
LC8 Community Facilities	0	0	0	+ / 0
LC9 Design Principles	+	+	0	0
LC10 Conservation Areas	+	0	0	0
LC11 Buildings of Note	+	0	0	0
LC12 Key Views	+	+	0	0
LC13 Local Green Spaces	+	+	0	0
LC14 Green Infrastructure	0	+	+	0

Table B: Assessment of Policies

8.2 In general terms, the policies have neutral environmental impacts with a small number of positive effects and the potential for a small number of negative effects. In terms of positive effects, many of the policies are designed to protect the historic character of the village. The design policies (LC9 and LC10) address the Conservation Area and its setting in terms of setting the key principles for development. Policy LC11 complements existing national and district policy in seeking to acknowledge the contribution made to the character of the village by

other non-listed buildings. The Key Views, Local Green Spaces and Green Infrastructure policies are all intended to protect from harmful development the setting of the village in certain key locations, which will also have positive heritage effects.

8.3 Those same policies, and the design policy, will more directly have positive landscape effects as they seek to prevent development that is out of scale with the character of the setting to the village. Importantly, however, these policies apply to only a relatively small proportion of the edges to the village, allowing the allocation policies to make provision for new homes.

8.4 In that sense, some negative landscape effects are inevitable, given the character and topography of the village and its setting. But, the two Sandy Lane sites (Policy LC3) are effectively small infill opportunities, given the existing buildings along the western side of the lane. The present gaps are not considered important in protecting the character of the village in the landscape and are therefore capable of providing for a small number of homes. The policy requires attention to be paid to the location of the sites in the wider setting of the Conservation Areas and to provide landscape schemes that manage the edge of the sites to the countryside. Though there may therefore be a minor, negative residual negative landscape effect of this policy, it is not considered there is any negative heritage effect. It is noted that the draft proposal of the Pre Submission Plan for reserving land for housing on the eastern side of Sandy Lane has been deleted from the submission version.

8.5 The two Westfield Road sites (Policy LC2) are small enough and are located within the observed built up area to avoid the appearance of extending development into the countryside. The policies allowing for only modest sized housing schemes and requiring scheme layouts and landscape schemes to mitigate the effects of development, especially on the appearance of the sites at this northern entrance to the Conservation Area. Although part of its setting, the open character of each site is not considered significant to the appreciation of the Conservation Area, nor are they sufficiently proximate to the nearby listed buildings to harm their settings, and so it is not considered that there will be any negative heritage effects. However, the policy requires special attention to be paid to these matters in a planning application.

8.6 Policies LC5 (Employment) and LC7 (Primary School) also have the potential for negative effects in allowing for an intensification of their respective education and employment uses in sensitive locations. However, in both cases, the policies confine development to within the main cluster of buildings or only allow for a relatively minor extension.

8.7 A number of policies have the potential to realise positive traffic effects. By focusing development within the new Settlement Boundary (LC1), the spatial strategy will reduce the risk of higher numbers of car trips than may otherwise be necessary. The Sandy Lane sites are close enough to the Village Square to encourage walking trips to the local services, including public transport. There is no pavement on Sandy Lane or Frogmore Lane for the most part, but the lanes are rural in character with a number of homes already located along them. This has not

discouraged residents using the lanes for walking trips into and out of the village and these small schemes will make no effective difference. The Westfield Road sites are further away, again with the absence of a pavement for the short distance to the main road, but the schemes are very small in comparison to the established built up area.

8.8 Policies LC6 (Village Square), LC7 (Primary School) and LC8 (Community Facilities) also have the potential for positive traffic effects, as they encourage the retention of valued community and commercial services in the village and thus reduce the need for residents to travel outside the village to meet those needs. That said, the services are limited, so these effects should not be over-stated.

8.9 Finally, the definition of a formal Settlement Boundary in Policy LC1, aside from bringing greater clarity and certainty for applicants and the local planning authority alike, should lead to a positive landscape effect in reducing the risk of unplanned and inappropriate development in the countryside. However, there is also the potential for negative effects, in encouraging infill development within the Boundary that may harm heritage or biodiversity assets. This ought not to be the case, given the intent of the design policies of the Plan and the District requirement that all development proposals should have regard to their effects on local biodiversity.

9. Assessment of Reasonable Policy Alternatives

9.1 The assessment is obliged to identify and assess any reasonable alternatives to the proposed policies. This has been done in two ways. In respect of the policies allocating land for development – policies LC2 and LC3 – five alternative sites have been assessed, derived from the analysis contained in the Site Assessments Report.

9.2 Four of these sites are included in the Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) of May 2016 and adjoin the existing built up area of the village. They were therefore feasible as other locations to include within the Settlement Boundary of Policy LC1. All the other HELAA sites (and one other, land off Drakes Drive, that was not in the HELAA of 2016, but have come forward for consideration during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan) lie beyond the built up area and were not therefore considered suitable as a matter of principle in the Draft SEA report.

9.3 However, for completeness, the Drakes Drive option has been assessed in this report as, although it does not adjoin the settlement boundary, the representations made on the Pre Submission Plan indicate that some local residents do not see this as a major obstacle and prefer the location to those preferred by the Plan.

Alternative Allocation Sites (with HELAA Site Ref.)	SEA Objectives			
	Heritage	Landscape	Biodiversity	Traffic
Chilton Road North (015)	0	-	0	-
Chilton Road South (002)	0	-	0	-
Chearsley Road (008)	0/-	0/-	0	0
Sandy Lane (009)	0/-	0/-	0	0
Drakes Drive (N/A)	0	-	0	+/-0

Table C: Assessment of Reasonable Alternatives

9.4 As observed in the Site Assessments Report (and in the HELAA report), each of the alternative sites is likely to have one or more negative effects. In some cases, these effects are minor (Sandy Lane and Chearsley Road) as the size of the sites is quite small for development to have a more significant effect. In other cases, the landscape, heritage and/or traffic effects are likely to be more obvious, although even here, this must be seen in the context of sites that are not very large and this should not be over-stated.

9.5 The two Chilton Road sites are relatively large and remote from the village on its north-western edge, and appear exposed within the Area of Attractive Landscape. Because of their scale, their remoteness on the slopes above and around that edge of the village also makes them more obvious and therefore exposed in the

landscape. Although it appears from the Chilton Road North application that it may be possible to accommodate additional traffic to meet the minimum requirements of the highway authority, the local road is not especially well suited in its specification to handle large increases in traffic movements, especially when commuting trips coincide with the school run trips to the nearby school. The sites lie just within a reasonable walking distance to the Village Square.

9.6 It is noted that there has been a considerable volume of objections to the current planning application on the Chilton Road North site, which has been refused and appealed. Given this background, it is very doubtful that an allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan would be supported by the local community, to the extent it would risk failure at the referendum in due course. In which case, and based on the Judicial Review rulings in relation to the Tattenhall and St. Ives neighbourhood plans, this may not be defined as a 'reasonable alternative' in the context of the SEA Directive or Regulations. However, for completeness it is considered appropriate to include it in the assessment, and to note that this alternative performs no better in environmental terms than the preferred site options, and is arguably worse in its landscape effects.

9.7 The Drakes Drive option is one that has been informed by early work on the Neighbourhood Plan and by the pre-application discussions and consultations held by the land promoter in 2015 and 2016. The proposal comprises approximately 150 homes and land for sports pitches and public open space, with a new access on to Thame Road. Given this new access south-east of the village, the proposal is likely to have a positive effect on managing traffic on to the B4011 without adding to congestion problems in the village (assuming most commuting car trips will be towards Thame). That said, the scheme is very much larger than the total number of homes being planned for in the village, and may not be necessary to meet the defined needs of the District in this village in due course. There is the potential for some negative effects in respect of the impact of development of this scale on the setting of the Conservation Area above the majority of the site in views from Thame Road. And it is difficult to see how development may avoid harm to the Area of Attractive Landscape.

9.8 In environmental terms, this option performs no better than the preferred option, and in landscape terms is arguably worse, with no current need for the Plan to make provision for that scale of development in the period to 2023. However, there are some potential social benefits that the scheme may deliver and, although not within the scope of the SEA, these are acknowledged. Had these benefits been as significant as the promoters suggest, the Parish Council would no doubt have given them greater weight in defining its preferred spatial strategy and plan period. As it is, given the chosen plan period and the presence of a less impactful spatial strategy for managing growth to 2023, the Drakes Drive option is considered unnecessary for this Neighbourhood Plan, but may be revisited in the first review for the period 2023+.

9.9 In respect of the other policies, the alternative approach is the 'Policy Off' position, whereby the assumption is that there is no policy on that matter. In practice, this would mean that planning applications would be determined in accordance with other parts of the development plan and in line with national planning policy.

9.10 In no case is this alternative position likely to lead to a positive effect. In almost all cases, the assessment is neutral, as the assumption would be that proposals will be capable of being judged using the local and national policy framework. In some cases, there may be a missed opportunity for the type of development encouraged by the Neighbourhood Plan that might not come forward, e.g. homes for older people in Policy LC4.

9.11 However, the Settlement Boundary mechanism of Policy LC1 does define the built up area of the village on the Policies Map, a decision that would otherwise be left to applicants to demonstrate. This may prevent harmful development on the margins of the village where the potential for heritage and landscape effects is greater.

9.12 Similarly, policies LC5 and LC7 are marginally more permissive of development to support local jobs and school places than might otherwise be the case, given their locations. Without them, it may be more difficult to promote this type of development for those outcomes using other development plan policies.

10. Summary of the Assessment

10.1 In overall terms, therefore, the sustainability effects of the Neighbourhood Plan are generally assessed as neutral but are occasionally positive. A combination of the proposed mitigation measures of the policies and the use of other development plan policies to determine planning applications will effectively avoid any negative impacts. Although the contrasts are not that significant in many cases, only in respect of the reasonable alternatives are there some clearer negative effects and, in no case, does the assessment indicate that an alternative would deliver a more sustainable outcome.

10.2 Further, the scale and location of specific development policies are such that there should be no cumulative effects on the objectives or the policies contained in the adjoining neighbourhood plans.

11. Monitoring

11.1 The Parish Council will monitor the progress of the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan using the measures identified in Table A. The data for some of these measures is collected by the District Council in its planning monitoring reports. In other cases, the Parish Council will endeavour to collect data on an annual basis to report on the progress of the plan. The Parish Council has committed to review the Neighbourhood Plan to roll it forward from April 2023 onwards and it will be informed by this monitoring activity in considering if and how to update the policies.

APPENDIX A

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT: SCREENING OPINION EXTRACT

The following are extracts from the Screening Opinion published by Aylesbury Vale District Council in September 2015 in relation to the Long Crendon Parish Neighbourhood Plan. They comprise the detailed assessment in Section 4 of the report and the conclusion of Section 5. The full report has been published on the District Council and Parish Council websites.

Stage	Y/ N	Reason
1. Is the plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Y	The Neighbourhood Plan will be adopted by a Local Planning Authority, Aylesbury Vale District Council.
2. Is the plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	N	The Neighbourhood Plan is an optional plan produced by Long Crendon Parish Council.
3. Is the plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))	N	The Neighbourhood Plan is prepared for town and country planning purposes, but it does not set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive (Art 3.2(a)).
4. Will the plan, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b))	N	A district wide HRA Screening for the Aylesbury Vale was prepared to assess the former Vale of Aylesbury plan (approximately 50 at Long Crendon). As the levels of development in the Long Crendon Neighbourhood Development Plan are broadly similar (likely to be around 100-150 new homes), and are not in the vicinity of sites of Special Areas of Conservation it is unlikely a further HRA Screening Assessment is needed. A new Assessment for the levels of growth and locations in the forthcoming Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan will consider the effects of development needed across the district including Long Crendon parish.
5. Does the plan determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a plan subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)	Y	The Neighbourhood Plan is proposing to make allocations to accommodate potentially around 100-150 dwellings. It is possible areas of land might be allocated for commercial use and Local Green Space designations could be identified. Local Green Space designation would not change the current use of the land.
6. Does the plan set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)	Y	The Neighbourhood Plan will set a framework for future development consents of projects, including land allocated for housing and employment.
7. Is the plans sole purpose to serve the	N	The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is

national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art 3.8, 3.9)			not for any of the projects listed in Art 3.8, 3.9.
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)		Y	The Neighbourhood Plan has the potential to have a significant effect on the environment as the policies will determine the future use of land and will guide development in the area.
	1 (a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	Y	The Long Crendon Neighbourhood Plan will set out a spatial vision for the designated Neighbourhood Area and provide a framework for proposals for development such as housing, community facilities employment and the protection of valued open space.
	1 (b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy.	N	The LCNP, where possible, will respond to rather than influence other plans or programmes. A Neighbourhood Plan can only provide policies for the area it covers while the policies at the District and National level provide a strategic context for the LCNP to be in general conformity with. None of the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan are likely to have a direct impact on other plans in neighbouring areas.
	1 (c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	N	Proposals set out in the LCNP are planned to balance environmental, social and economic considerations of sustainable development. However the LCNP recognises that for rural communities such as Long Crendon, the importance of the surrounding environment is particularly acute. It is considered that the LCNP will have a positive impact on local environmental assets and places valued by local people in the Neighbourhood Area.
	1(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan	N	Long Crendon Neighbourhood Plan will allocate housing and potentially employment sites. The housing allocations could be for potentially around 100-150 dwellings spread over the plan period and on more than one site. It is likely these will have to be built on greenfield land. The impact on traffic flow from the proposed developments is not expected to be a concern given that the overall levels of residential growth proposed are unlikely to give rise to significant additional car movements. Employment provision could potentially create more of an impact on

		<p>highways and air quality but if employment provision is allocated in Long Crendon it is likely to be too smaller scale to be of particular concern.</p> <p>The Long Crendon Neighbourhood Plan could potentially look to address transport problems through policies in the plan which would have a positive impact on the environment.</p> <p>There are no Air Quality Management Areas within or near to the Neighbourhood Area.</p>
1 (e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection)	N	The LCNP is being produced to be in general conformity with the AVDLP and national policy. The plan has no relevance to the implementation of community legislation.
2 (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	N	It is highly unlikely there will be any irreversible damaging environmental impacts associated with the LCNP, it is intended to have a positive effect on sustainability.
2 (b) the cumulative nature of the effects	N	It is highly unlikely there will be any negative cumulative effects of the policies, rather it is likely it will have moderate positive effects. Any impact will be local in nature.
2 (c) the trans boundary nature of the effects	N	Effects will be local with no expected impacts on neighbouring areas.
2 (d) the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	N	No risks have been identified.
2 (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	N	The Neighbourhood Area covers an area which is 1,351 ha and contains a population is of 2,451 residents (2011 census).
2 (f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards (iii) intensive land-use	N	<p>The LCNP is unlikely to adversely affect the value and vulnerability of the area in relation to its natural or cultural heritage. If anything is will provide greater support to enhance the setting of heritage, heritage assets and green spaces.</p> <p>The Long Crendon Neighbourhood Plan potentially could include policies to improve the design of development within the village if it is deemed to be needed. Therefore the plan if anything will have a positive impact on the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and the areas heritage assets.</p> <p>There could also be specific policies to look</p>

			to enhance recreation areas, green corridors and protect trees and hedgerows which will have a positive effect environmentally and help protect the rural character of Long Crendon.
	2 (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status	N	There are no such designations within the Neighbourhood area or close enough to be impacted.

5.0 Screening Outcome for Neighbourhood Plans with Allocations

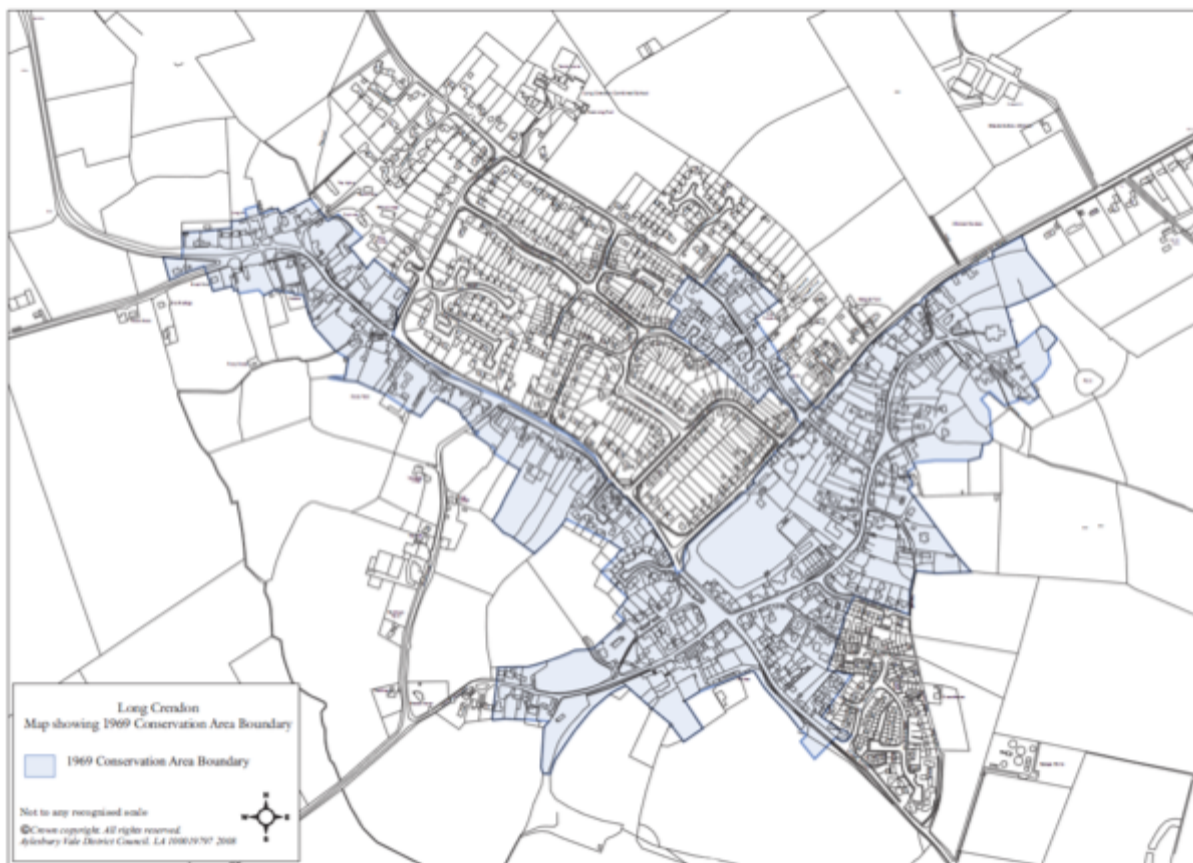
- 5.1 Having reviewed the criteria Aylesbury Vale District Council concludes that the Long Crendon Neighbourhood Plan has some potential to have significant environmental effects beyond those expected by 'strategic' district-wide policies of the Local Plan, although the magnitude and location of these effects is difficult to ascertain at this stage of the plan making process. Therefore the best course of action is to produce a Strategic Environmental Assessment, particularly as this is a process that needs to be started in the early stages of the plan making process and cannot be retrofitted at a later stage. Although not a requirement, we would recommend this incorporates a Sustainability Appraisal to consider more widely the balance of sustainability and to help ensure the plan meets the basic conditions.

APPENDIX B

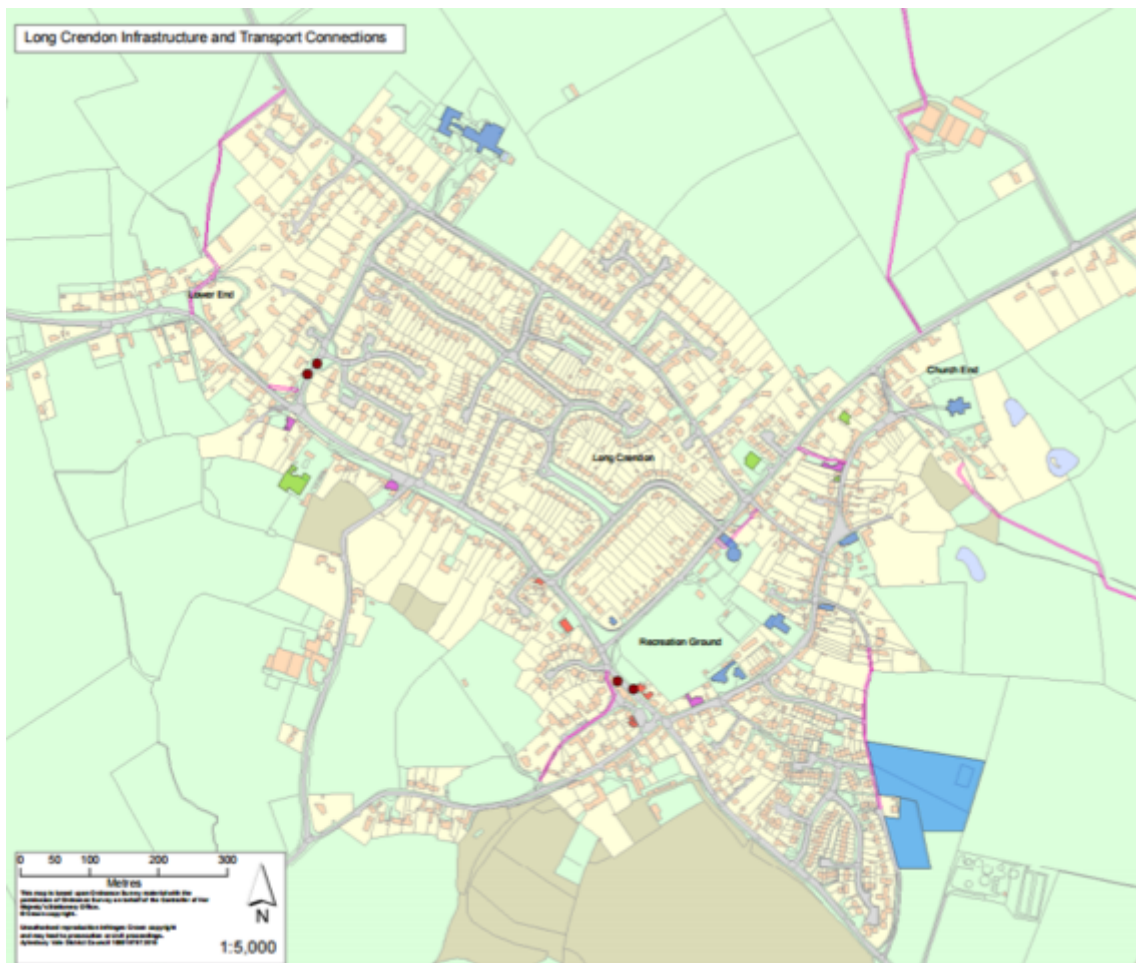
Baseline Evidence (extract from Scoping Report, August 2015)

Title	Source	Data	Trends and consequences
Historic Landscape			
Settlement Hierarchy	The reasoning and evidence of AVDC's withdrawn VAP.	The settlement of Long Crendon has been identified as a ' larger village ' in the VAP and as such has been identified as a village that should provide limited growth, in keeping with its character, take account of community-led planning and to support the provision of services to the wider area. None of the settlements in AVDC have built-up area boundaries.	Due to the rural character of the parish, it is important to keep the settlement's character. The CLNP may allocate sites for development within or adjoining the village of Long Crendon but only of a smaller scale to maintain the position of the village in the hierarchy.
Historic Constraints	Long Crendon Fact Pack AVDC and British Listed Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are 117 number of Listed Buildings in Long Crendon including St Mary's Church and the well-known Courthouse on the High street, Grade II*. The Long Crendon Conservation Area covers a large v-shaped part of the west south and east of the village. There are some areas of Historic Land Use to the south of the settlement and one small site of Potential Contaminated Land on the eastern edge of the village. There are a number of Archaeological Notification Areas mainly around the village and Notley Abbey to the east where there is also a Schedule of Ancient Monument There are no Registered Parks and Gardens across the parish 	Long Crendon has a number of listed buildings, a Conservation Area, areas of Historic Land Use, a Potential Contaminated Land area, an Archaeological Notification Area and the a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The LCNP area therefore needs to ensure that any new development is sensitive to the character of the areas in which they are located.

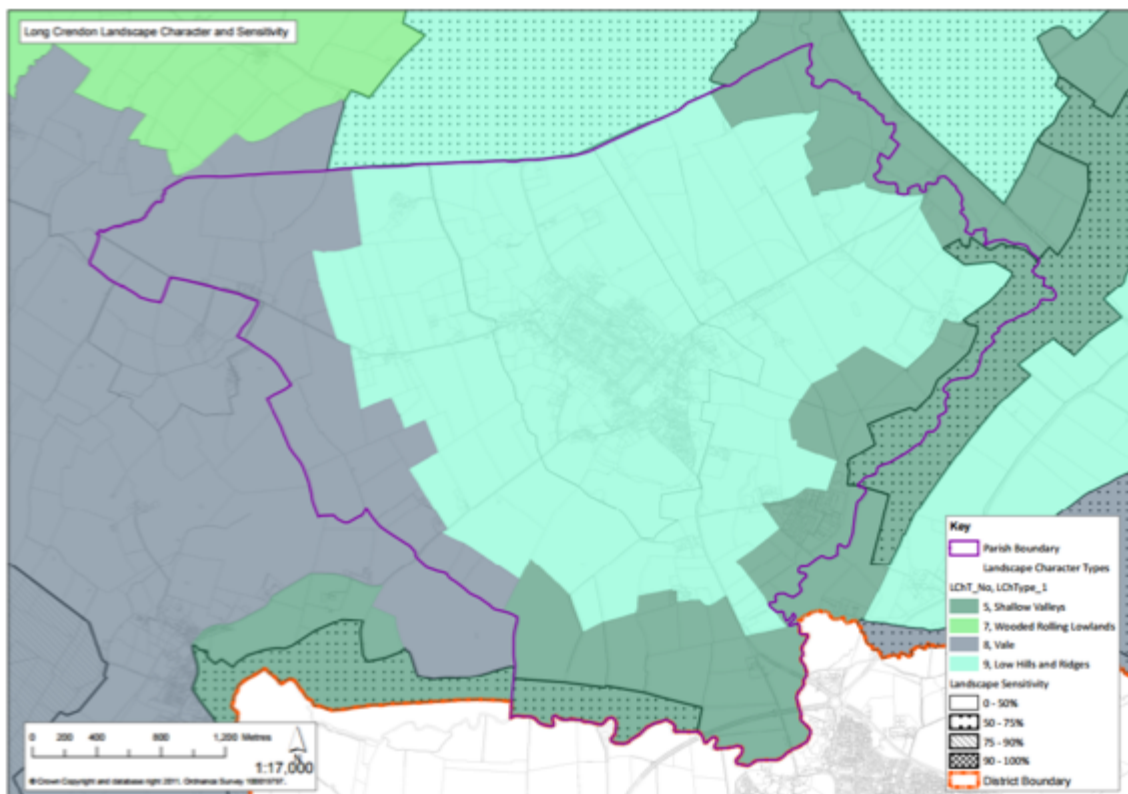
Biodiversity & Environment			
Nature Conservation	Long Crendon Fact Pack AVDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a large number of Notable Species Sites in and around the settlement. • There are a number of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) that are located within the village. • There are areas of Biological Notification Sites mainly close to the parish boundary with the exception of one smaller site to the east of the village by Church End. • There are no European designated Sites such as SAC, SPA or Ramsar in the parish. • There are no SSSI, SINCC sites, Ancient Woodland nor are there any Local Wildlife Sites in the parish 	<p>The CLNP policies will have to show that there will be no harmful effects on Notable Species and Biological Notification Sites.</p> <p>(See Plan D)</p>
Flooding			
Surface Water Flooding and Floodplains	Long Crendon Fact Pack AVDC	<p>Numerous areas spread out across the parish are susceptible to surface water flooding. Most areas are outside the village's built-up area, however there are smaller areas of surface water flooding within the village.</p> <p>The Floodplain follows the parish boundary to the east and south and a small area to the west, but is however far away from the village and most residential areas.</p>	<p>New development in areas particularly susceptible to surface water flooding will need to effectively demonstrate they can mitigate the risk of flooding without having adverse effects on surrounding areas.</p> <p>(See Plan D)</p>



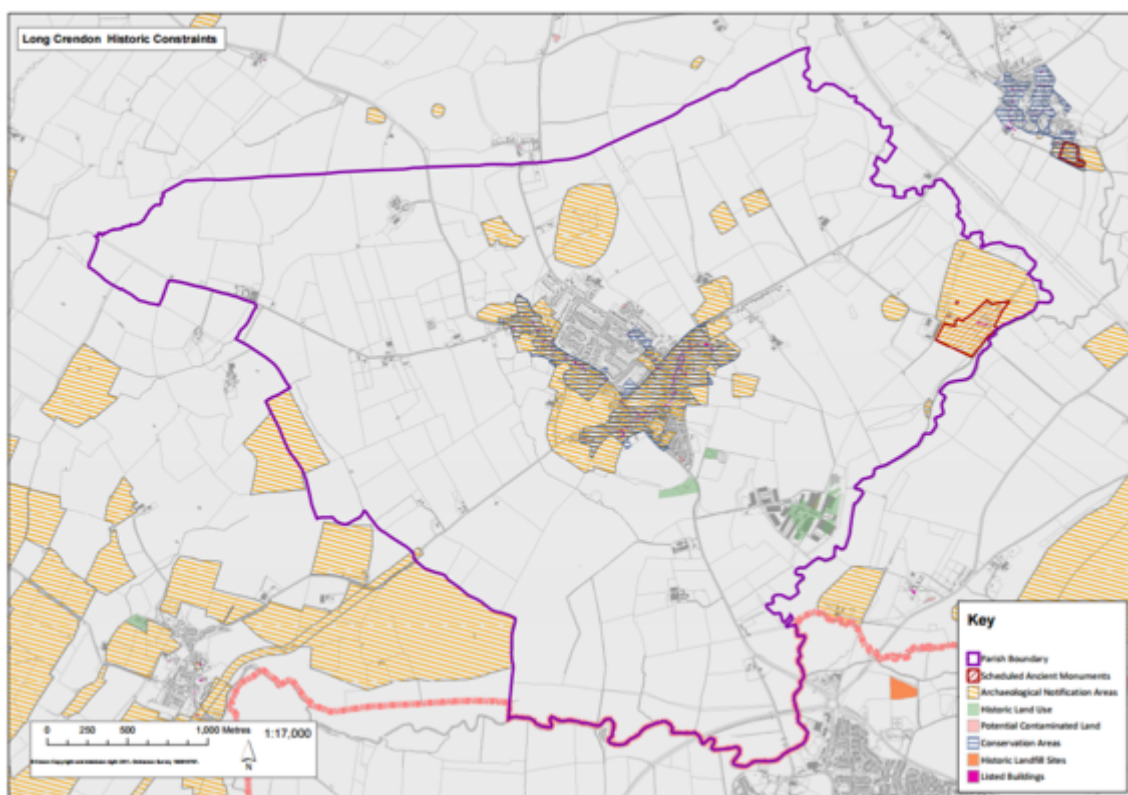
Plan B: Long Crendon Conservation Area



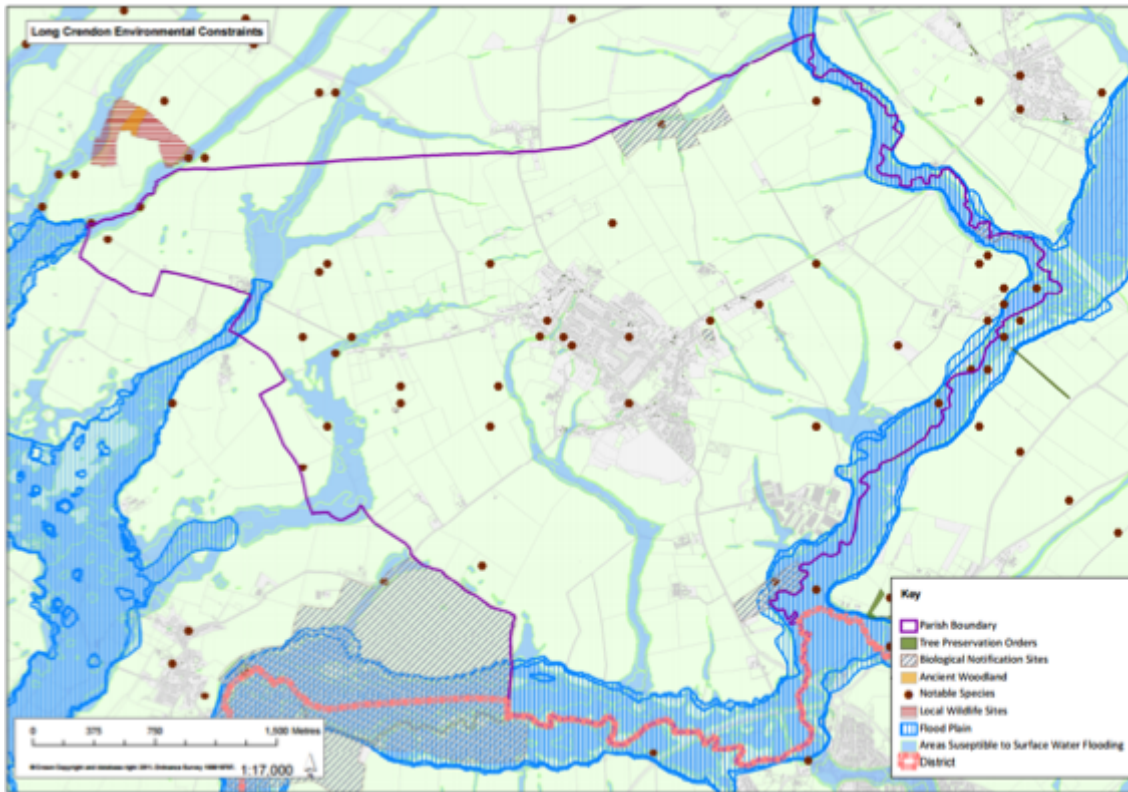
Plan C: Long Crendon – Infrastructure and Transport Connections



Plan D: Long Crendon Landscape Character and Sensitivity



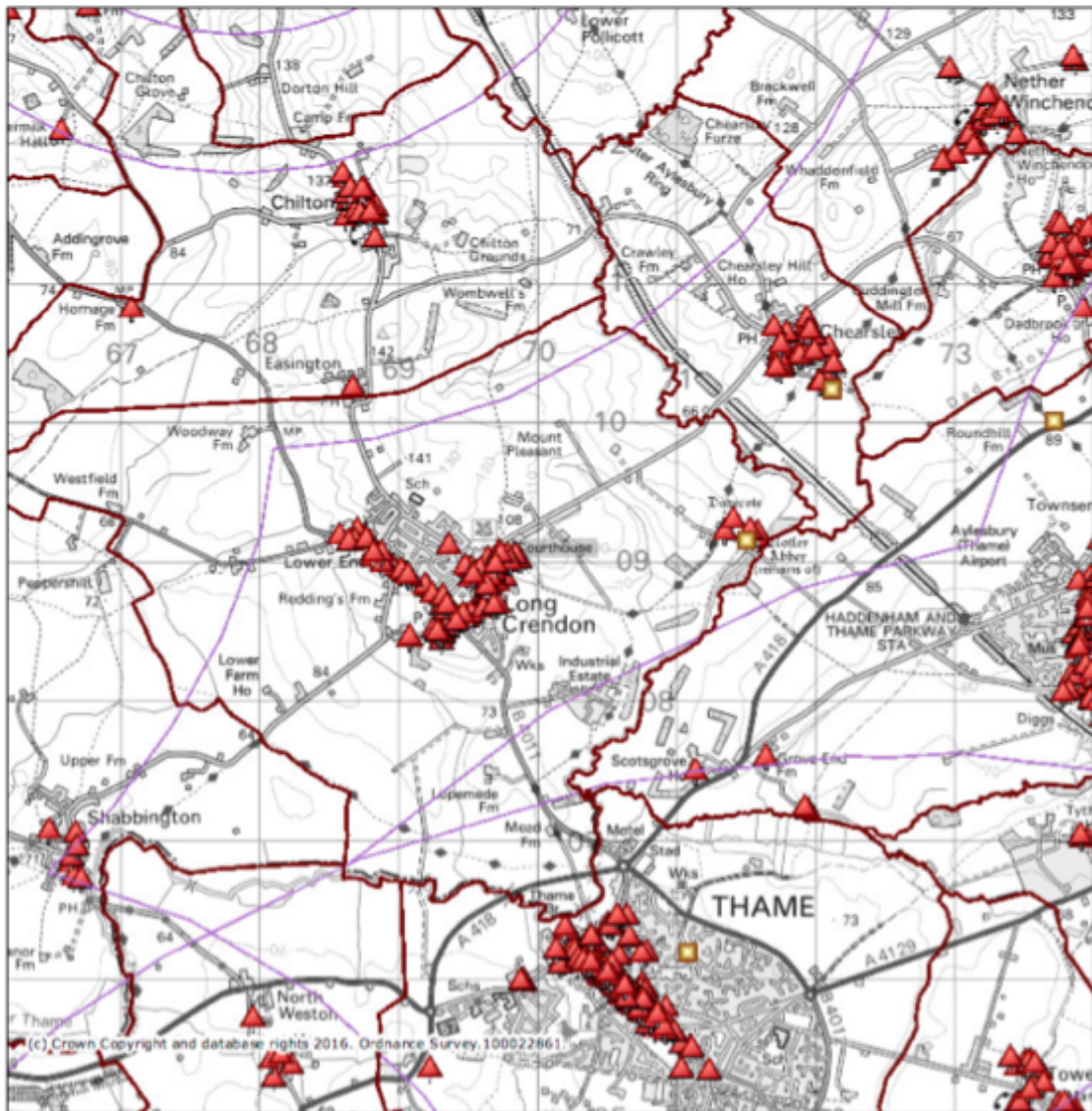
Plan E: Long Crendon Historic Constraints



Plan F: Long Crendon Environmental Constraint



Plan G: Long Crendon Parish Conservation Areas



Plan H: Magic Map showing designations of Long Crendon Parish Neighbourhood Area