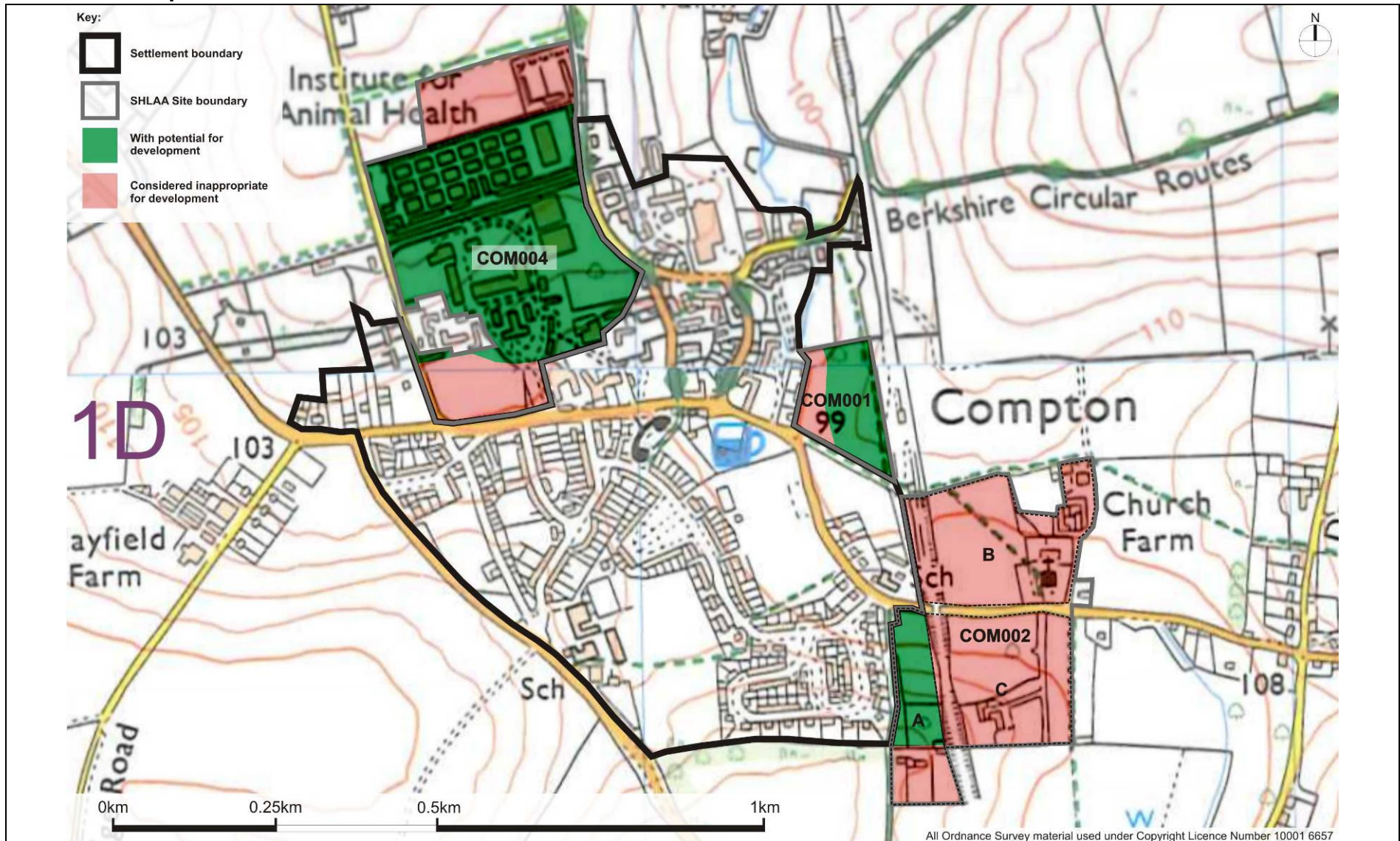


**2.5. Service Village: Compton – COM 001, COM 002A, B and C combined, COM 004**

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Settlement map:



## Assessment of Settlement

<b>Settlement</b> <b>Compton</b>
<b>North Wessex Downs AONB Character areas</b> LCA ID Blewbury Downs open downland
<b>Date of site surveys</b> 16 December 2010
<b>Surveyors</b> BK
<b>Key landscape characteristics</b>
<p><b>AONB LCA ID Blewbury Downs</b> (unless source noted otherwise)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong structural landform of elevated downland with round or flat topped hills</li> <li>• Intersecting dry valleys</li> <li>• Large open landscape of rectilinear fields with little subdivision</li> <li>• Dominated by arable farmland with sparse woodland on the tops</li> <li>• Little enclosure</li> <li>• Racehorse gallops and equestrian centres</li> <li>• Numerous rights of way including the Ridgeway</li> <li>• Sense of remoteness</li> <li>• Some skyline tree belts and sparse hedgerow trees (NDLCA LCT1)</li> <li>• Southern boundary of the village is marked by the extensive tree belts and woodlands (NDLCA LCT1)</li> <li>• Upper winterborne section of the river Pang on the eastern boundary of the village (VDS)</li> <li>• Important area of meadow at Stocks Farm west of the railway line (VDS)</li> <li>• Settlement is surrounded by reorganised fields, formerly parliamentary enclosure of open downland or open fields; site COM 002 and the north of COM 004 are typical site; COM 001 is a mix of 18/19th century development (south of Aldworth Road), pre 18th century irregular fields within former mediaeval settlement (north of Aldworth Road); COM 004 is an industrial farming complex on former parliamentary fields on past downland (HLC)</li> <li>• Historically most land to the north of the Pang was downland grazing, with open fields to the south (HECZ Upper Pang Valley)</li> </ul>

**Key visual characteristics****AONB LCA ID Blewbury Downs** (unless source noted otherwise)

- Long views
- Valleys often concealed from view by the landform (NDLCA LCT1)
- Area is noted visually for its broad sweeping lines and the vastness of the wide horizons
- Views out from the village to the Downs (VDS)

**Key settlement characteristics****AONB LCA ID Blewbury Downs** (unless source noted otherwise)

- More settled than other areas of open downland
- Villages nestle at the heads of dry valleys
- The more major roads and lanes tend to follow the valley bottoms (NDLCA LCT1)
- Nucleated settlement (BLCA E4 Farnborough open downlands)
- Compton has a more modern character with 'business park' like buildings (BLCA E4 Farnborough open downlands)
- East Compton is a cluster of sporadic residential dwellings, originally clustered around the church. This area is visually and physically distanced from the remainder of the village by the railway line (VDS)
- Older housing in small groups lies north of the High Street, much of which is in the Conservation Area (VDS)
- South of High Street the estates are larger post war and modern but do not form a solid mass (VDS)
- The village benefits from private and public open green spaces within the village boundary (VDS)
- Industrial buildings on the eastern boundary are visible on the skyline (VDS)
- Economically diverse village with good community facilities reflected in its buildings and built form (CPP)

### **Summary of the key characteristics of the settlement and landscape constraints on the extent and location of development**

The whole of Compton and its hinterland lie within the AONB landscape character area LCA 1D Blewbury Downs. It is recommended that an overriding objective should be that the village remain small and contained within its dry valley setting and ensure that the wider landscape retains its visual qualities and sense of relative remoteness. The northern side of Compton is noted for its openness and it is very important that no development should be visually intrusive. The existing Institute of Animal Health currently detracts from the character of the village (except where it abuts the High Street) and the special qualities of the AONB, and opportunities should be sought to remedy this. Compton also lies on the transition of open downs to the more wooded hillsides to the south, whereby the existing tree cover in the south of the village is of particular value. Most of the settlement lies on lower flat ground at 100 – 115m AOD, either side of the main route through the village. Any proposed development which would result in the loss of woodland cover, would extend up onto higher ground, or would lead to the loss of views into the open countryside is likely to have a detrimental affect on the special qualities of the AONB and the settlement of Compton.

The village is also noted for its pattern of generous open spaces within the settlement, many of which are linked visually or physically and lead the eye into the surrounding countryside. The village also has a distinctive settlement pattern. The two settlements of Compton and East Compton have distinct characters which should be maintained. The strong rural character of East Compton is a special feature of this area and a valuable contrast to the more modern and economically vibrant main village. The historic core and the pattern of small development plots in Compton require that the scale of any development is important. East Compton would not be able to accommodate any housing in even small estates without significant harm to the AONB. Any proposed development needs to respect these characteristics.

Although Compton has a large site on the edge of the settlement which has long been under some form of development, the development of large and homogeneous estates would detract from the special qualities of this area. Great care will also be needed to minimise the impact on the landscape character of the surrounding AONB, through limitations on the scale of development and generous provision of linked open space, and to mitigate the existing harm to the AONB landscape from intrusive built form as at the Institute of Animal Health and the industrial buildings.

#### **Sources:**

North Wessex Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment 2002;

Additional information from:

- Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2003 (BLCA)
- Newbury District Landscape Character Assessment 1993 (NDLCA)
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)
- Historic Environment Character Zoning (HECZ)
- Compton Parish Plan (CPP)
- Compton Village Design Statement (VDS)

**SITE COM 001****Photographs:**

*View over site looking north-west from east end, near to former railway line*



*View from edge of site north towards paddocks off Wallingford Road*

**Relationship with adjacent settlement**

- Site is visible from the village and lies between the main village spine and the prominent industrial buildings on higher ground
- The open space links into the recreation ground and the allotments to the south and open paddocks to the north
- The western boundary abuts the back gardens of houses, and the southern abuts the access to the industrial units
- The site is identified as one of the important open spaces in the village (VDS)
- Mature trees and pasture lie to the north beyond which lies housing within the settlement boundary

**Relationship with adjacent wider countryside**

- Site separated from wider landscape in the east by trees along former railway line and the industrial buildings
- Site links with small paddocks to the north but these are separated from the wider landscape by housing

**Impact on key landscape characteristics**

- Not significant

**Impact on key visual characteristics**

- Not significant
- Would not affect views out to the Downs

**Impact on key settlement characteristics**

- Loss of open space within the village envelope
- Site nestles within the lower slopes of the village envelope
- A small site in scale with the development pattern north of the High Street in this part of the village
- Good design could mitigate the current adverse impact from the industrial buildings

**Summary of compliance with PPS7 paragraph 21**

- Some development could be accommodated on this site without harm to the special qualities of the AONB subject to the recommendations below

**Recommendations**

- Development on this site should be subject to the following conditions and the protection and enhancement of the following features:
- An open area visually linking the paddocks to the north with the recreation ground to the south
- On site trees
- Hedgerow boundaries
- Views from the public right of way (through careful siting and design)

**SITE COM 002A, B and C combined**

**Photographs:**



*View over the site from Aldworth Road southwards up the hillside to the tree skyline*

*View over site to church from Aldworth Road west of railway bridge*





*View over site up hillside from Aldworth Road west of railway bridge*

**Relationship with adjacent settlement**

- A large site most of which lies east of the tree lined former railway which acts as a strong feature separating the settlement from the wider landscape
- Railway arch and school act as a gateway to the settlement
- Part of site west of the railway line (002A) rises up the Compton valley hillside bounded by housing to the south, set within trees, and to the west with a line of mature trees separating the two
- The part of the site east of the railway line and north of Aldworth Road (002B) includes the Church, Church Farm and Church house which formed the original hamlet of East Compton. These buildings are isolated from the settlement by open fields. The open fields are an important setting to these buildings
- The part of the site east of the railway line and south of Aldworth Road (002C) is an individual large farmhouse set within its own grounds, with a different character to that of the village or the landscape and hamlet of 002B

**Relationship with adjacent wider countryside**

- 002A is separated from the wider landscape by the tree covered railway line and the housing to the west. The existing houses, set within mature trees in the south of the site, act as an important transition from the village core to the wooded hillsides south of the village. These tree groups are a key feature of the village
- 002B is pasture, retaining its per 18th century irregular field pattern in contrast with the open arable fields beyond. However it is very much a part of the wider landscape
- 002C is separated from the wider landscape by perimeter mature trees; and an avenue of trees on the eastern side of the site, which forms a strong boundary feature. However these trees and open pasture complement the open countryside of 002B and act as an important transitional landscape on the edge of the settlement
- With the exception of the southern part of 002A, the sites sit on the lower slopes of the valley, falling inwards towards the village
- All three sites flank the dry upper river Pang valley

**Impact on key landscape characteristics**

- 002A: Southern part of site sits on a prominent ridge and contains important tree cover
- 002B: Any development on this site would have an adverse impact on the valued characteristics of the site and on the wider landscape. It would detract from the setting of the historic core of East Compton and result in sprawl along the Pang valley.
- 002C: Development on this site would harm the Pang valley and detract from the special qualities of 002B

**Impact on key visual characteristics**

- 002A: Tree line on the top of the hill is an important local feature
- 002B: Views out to the edge of the Downs would be lost. Development would detract from the scenic qualities of the eastern approach into Compton and from views of the church from Aldworth Road.
- 002C: Tree line on the top of the hill is an important local feature. Development would detract from the scenic qualities of the eastern approach into Compton

**Impact on key settlement characteristics**

- 002A: Carefully designed development on the open field could reflect the local village character
- 002B: Development in this area would extend the village beyond a significant gateway feature, with a subsequent loss of containment.
- 002C: Development in this area would extend the village beyond a significant gateway feature, with a subsequent loss of containment.

**Summary of compliance with PPS7 paragraph 21**

- Development on this site, with the exception of a small area, would result in significant harm to the natural beauty of the AONB. Some limited development could be accommodated on land west of the railway line in 002A subject to the recommendations below

**Recommendations**

- Development on this site should be subject to the protection and enhancement of the following features:
- Exclusion of redevelopment of existing housing (except perhaps on a like for like basis) at the southern end of 002A
- Mature tree cover to be retained on the boundaries
- Views to tree lined skyline to be provided

**SITE COM 004****Photographs:**

*View to the site from footpath to the north*



*View over open space at the southern end of the site from High Street*

**Relationship with adjacent settlement**

- The site is already developed with several large buildings and tall chimneys which contrast with the village centre and the residential housing areas. However the buildings overlooking the High Street contribute to the distinctive character of Compton
- The site includes the Cricket Ground, one of the many areas of open space valued in the village
- The site extends the village envelope further up the hillside than found anywhere else (to 125m AOD)
- Lines of trees form the western, southern and eastern boundaries of the site with the adjoining settlement
- The site is separated from a row of cottages at Superity Farm to the north by two small fields
- Built form on the site is visually prominent from much of the village

**Relationship with adjacent wider countryside**

- The site at the northern end is set within the open downland
- The northern boundary is defined by a double row of new hedge planting either side of the footpath/bridleway
- The most northerly part of the site is set down into the landform, thus reducing the visual impact on the wider landscape
- The whole site contrasts strongly with the surrounding landscape but is contained
- The site is visible from a number of elevated viewpoints in the surrounding countryside

**Impact on key landscape characteristics**

- Western edge of site sits on the slope of a prominent ridge (the cottages at Superity Farm demonstrate how exposed development on the ridge can be)
- Site relies on peripheral planting to mitigate local impacts
- No loss of downland or other valued landscape features

**Impact on key visual characteristics**

- The existing buildings and chimneys on the site are visually prominent from the surrounding open landscape. This could be mitigated through redevelopment of a lower and more domestic scale and mass and with boundary planting
- Due to the prominence of the site, the design of any development must be sympathetic and not detract from the character of the village

**Impact on key settlement characteristics**

- Wholesale and uniform redevelopment of the site would be out of keeping with the pattern of development in Compton
- The loss of open space and of views to the main attractive building set back from the High Street would effect the character of the village centre
- Development in the most northerly section, albeit set down in to the landscape, would extend the village beyond its natural valley setting
- Existing and additional open space should be maintained and provided as part of any development

**Summary of compliance with PPS7 paragraph 21**

- Aspects of the current building form and extent of the site already result in harm to the natural beauty of the AONB. Redevelopment of this site has the potential to remove development from the most northerly part of the site and to reduce or remove much of the harm to the AONB

**Recommendations**

- Development could be accommodated on the site subject to the following conditions and the protection and enhancement of the following landscape features:
- The open downland character above Compton should be enhanced through the removal of buildings in the most northerly part of the site, restoration of a more natural landform and use as open space/open farmland
- Protect views to Compton from the open downland
- Protect views of the upper valley sides of the site from the village
- A matrix of good sized open spaces to be provided throughout the development, linking physically and visually with the existing provision
- Retention of the existing character facing onto High Street and in particular the area of open space

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## Conclusion

It is concluded that some development can be accommodated adjoining the settlement of Compton within the three potential SHLAA sites examined without incurring material harm to the special qualities and natural beauty of the AONB. It is therefore recommended that COM 001 and COM 004 be retained subject to the landscape requirements in the Recommendations. However it is recommended that COM 002 be deleted, except for a small part west of the railway line within COM 002A. The development of such a large area at COM004 should be undertaken in phases over time to create smaller discrete and distinct areas, avoiding the introduction of a large homogeneous estate design. It is not recommended that all areas are developed concurrently as the scale of development would not be in keeping with a continuing slow sequential development of the village.