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## Strategic Sites

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### 1. Introduction

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- 1.1 [This SA Policy Paper has been extensively revised in response to the finding by the Inspector that it did not previously sufficiently explain the reasons for the selection of the Sandleford site from the alternative options at Newbury/ Thatcham put forward in Options for the Future, nor for the selection of the broad locational approach in the Eastern Urban Area from the six options previously put forward. The paper therefore provides a fuller account of both the assessments undertaken and of the decision-making process which led to the proposed allocation of a strategic site at Sandleford and a broad location in the east of the District. It presents this in chronological order, describing the reasons for the choices made at each stage of the plan's preparation. It should be read in conjunction with other SA policy papers, particularly the papers on Spatial Strategy, Housing Distribution and Delivering New Homes.](#)
- 1.2 [In the light of concerns expressed, a revised SA of the alternative approaches at the Options for the Future stage has been carried out to incorporate results of technical studies and consultation responses, including those received since publication. An objective re-appraisal has been carried out to assess the alternatives against the SA sub-objectives, in the light of information now available. This assessment will inform decisions by Council Members on the preferred approach to strategic site selection and provide consultees with additional reasoning to inform their comments on the soundness of the Core Strategy policies.](#)
- 1.3 The scale and distribution of new homes to be provided in West Berkshire in the period up to 2026 are amongst the most significant issues that the Core Strategy needs to address in order to deliver the spatial vision. A well-integrated mix of housing of different types and tenures in the right places will contribute to the creation of mixed and inclusive sustainable communities.
- 1.4 A significant portion of the additional housing will be built on strategic urban extensions identified in the Core Strategy. This approach conforms with the revised national approach to preparation of core strategies and is supported by the evidence and consultation undertaken [in the early preparation stages of the Core Strategy which supported an urban focus and development on a combination of brownfield land, strategic urban extensions and smaller urban extensions. Following the withdrawal of the West Berkshire Planning Strategy in 2006, the Council was keen to give a firm steer about the long term direction of growth in the District and this was a principle underpinning the preparation of the Core Strategy. The Government Office for the South East's response to the publication version of the Planning Strategy raised 'a fundamental objection' regarding the lack of contingency or flexibility to deal with changing circumstances such as higher housing numbers. The Full Council meeting of 14 December 2006 resolved to endorse the submission of a new Project Plan that reflected the implications of a more specific and detailed Planning Strategy.](#)
- 1.5 The revised PPS12: Local Spatial Planning states that core strategies may allocate strategic sites for development. These should be those sites considered central to the achievement of the strategy. Potential strategic extensions were identified following the consultation in late 2007/early 2008 when developers, landowners and agents were asked to submit any sites that they wished to be assessed for development in the Local Development Framework. These sites have been assessed on a consistent basis through the sustainability appraisal, initially using the site selection framework, through analysis of the technical evidence base, and ongoing dialogue and consultation with stakeholders. Further information on the assessment of the potential strategic sites can be found in the Site Selection Framework SA Policy Paper, the Spatial Strategy and Housing Topic Paper, the Combined Strategic Housing Sites Appraisal Document and the Combined Strategic Housing Sites Appraisal Document Phase 2.

## 2. Broad Locational Policy Options

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- 2.1 The West Berkshire Core Strategy ~~will need~~s to consider options for allocation of strategic sites related to the main urban areas which will deliver the vision of the Core Strategy.
- 2.2 [Taking forward this urban focus](#), three broad locational options were initially considered for appraisal:

### **Option 1 – Newbury/Thatcham focus**

This option would concentrate the strategic sites in the Newbury/Thatcham area where a number of sites have been put forward for consideration by developers and landowners. Throughout the preparation of the Core Strategy the approach has been that the primary focus for development will be on the Newbury/Thatcham area.

### **Option 2 –Newbury/Thatcham and Eastern Focus**

[This option would include a potential strategic allocation in the east of the District to support the growth of Reading](#). This option is compatible with regional guidance which identifies Reading as a regional hub and Newbury as a sub-regional hub. The South East Plan states that sustainable greenfield allocations should be mainly focussed on the periphery of those hubs where other constraints do not prevent this.

### **Option 3 – Newbury/Thatcham and Western Focus**

This option would involve allocation of a strategic site at Hungerford. This would, however, not be consistent with the focus for development on regional and sub-regional hubs in the regional strategy, and with policies for conservation and enhancement of natural beauty in the AONB.

## 3. Sustainability Appraisal of the Broad Locational Policy Options

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- 3.1 The assessment table for these three options can be found in Appendix 1. Of the three options considered above, Option 2 was assessed as the most sustainable overall, although many of the criteria in the assessment had neutral effects.
- 3.2 For social sustainability, Option 2 was the most sustainable as it would deliver housing over a wider area, meeting more of the District's housing needs rather than having the major sites all located within the Newbury/Thatcham area.
- 3.3 For environmental sustainability, Option 3 was the least sustainable due to the AONB designation and the potential impact on the historic market town of Hungerford.
- 3.4 Looking at economic sustainability, Option 2 is the most sustainable, because the distribution of development would support a wider economic base, supporting business and employment in the Greater Reading area as well as in Newbury/Thatcham.
- 3.5 In conclusion, Option 3 was ruled out on sustainability grounds, on lack of conformity with regional guidance in the South East Plan and on conflict with both proposals to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and on the preferred settlement hierarchy approach. [Option 1 would not meet the needs of the whole district and there could potentially be delivery and infrastructure problems. It would not support the development needs of the east of the District](#). Option 2 was assessed as the most sustainable and the option which was in greater conformity with the policies within the South East Plan. It was therefore progressed as the preferred broad locational option.

## 4. Options for strategic sites

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### Overview

4.1 As part of the early stages of preparation of the Core Strategy, the Council consulted on “Options for Delivering Homes” in November 2007 (See SA policy paper “Delivering Homes – Options for Delivering Homes”) and sought views on options for focusing development within existing settlements, strategic urban extensions and smaller urban extensions. On 15th February 2008 the Council held a consultation event on Options for Delivering Homes with key stakeholders including members of the West Berkshire Partnership, Town and Parish Councillors, and representatives from the development industry. At this point a list of 14 potential strategic housing sites which had been promoted to the Council by that date were introduced for discussion.

1. Land north of Bowling Green Road, Thatcham
2. Greenham
3. Silchester Road, Tadley
4. Kennet Valley Park
5. Newbury Racecourse
6. North Newbury
7. Pincent's Hill, Tilehurst
8. Newbury Battlefield
9. Siege Cross, Thatcham
10. Enborne, Wash Water
11. Newbury/Thatcham Gap
12. Salisbury Road, Hungerford
13. Sandleford Park
14. Denison Barracks, Hermitage

At the workshop the advantages and disadvantages of each site was discussed in groups and a summary of the comments made on the sites can be found in Appendix 2 of this paper and also in Appendix 1 of the Combined Strategic Housing Sites Appraisal Document (April 2009).

4.2 The South East Plan sets out that sustainable Greenfield allocations should be mainly focused on the periphery of those hubs where other constraints do not prevent this – including Reading and Newbury. These urban extensions must minimise incursions into Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or other areas protected by policies of regional or national and international importance.

4.3 A site at Whitehart Meadow in Theale was added to the list of 14 post the February 2008 event due to a need to continue to explore a range of options for the eastern part of the District.

4.4 Following the consultation event the 15 potential strategic sites were examined against national and regional guidance. As a result four sites were eliminated at this stage from the process as they did not conform to the location guidance set out in policy WCBV1 of the (then) emerging South East Plan or to the preferred broad locational policy of focusing on Newbury/Thatcham and the Eastern Area. The sites may be appropriate for a smaller amount of development and this will be assessed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD. The sites eliminated at this stage were:

- Silchester Road, Tadley
- Enborne, Wash Water
- Salisbury Road, Hungerford
- Denison Barracks, Hermitage

- 4.5 [The remaining 11 sites were assessed on a consistent basis using the site selection framework \(see the Site Selection Framework SA Policy Paper\). At this stage, the sustainability appraisal was based on the red line boundary of the sites being promoted, with the midpoint of the site used to form the basis of the assessment, with an assumption that the site would be developed around this point. All of the sites, to be statistically valid, had to be considered on an equal basis, so that there was an established baseline of information. The outcome of this was a strategic level overview which provided a broad comparison of the sites together with the identification of the key issues associated with the development of them. These 11 sites were also considered within the Combined Strategic Housing Sites Appraisal Document, which took the site selection framework assessment, and considered this alongside the strategic vision and objectives of the Core Strategy and other relevant plans and strategies, the outcome of technical studies available at this time \(such as the Transport Assessments, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, and Landscape Sensitivity Study\) and discussions with Infrastructure Providers to provide recommendations for sites to be taken forward, or not, in the consideration of potential strategic sites. A summary of the site assessments and recommendations is contained in Appendix 3](#)
- 4.6 [As set out above in paragraph 4.2, policy WCBV1 of the South East Plan stated that strategic sites should be located at the periphery of Newbury and Greater Reading. For the purposes of site selection at this stage, officers did not consider that the Newbury area included Thatcham as despite the close inter-relationship between the two areas, the South East Plan did not make an explicit reference to Thatcham, but instead referred to Newbury as a second tier sub-regional hub. The two sites at Thatcham were therefore eliminated from the process, these were:](#)
- [Land north of Bowling Green Road, Thatcham](#)
  - [Siege Cross, Thatcham](#)
- 4.7 [The rationale behind the scoring of each of the 9 remaining sites was discussed with Council Members at the Planning Task Group meeting on 27 March 2009 and the relative merits of the sites explained \(CD/09/48\). The Combined Strategic Housing Sites Appraisal Document Phase 1, Combined Topic Papers and the Combined Sustainability Appraisal Policy Papers were supporting background documents to the papers of the March meeting and Members were referred to these papers within the covering report \(para 3.5\). Following this meeting a further meeting of the Planning Task Group was held on 9 April 2009 at which the Members considered all 11 sites, including the two previously assessed sites at Thatcham, set out in an updated version of the Combined Strategic Housing Sites Appraisal Document Phase 1. The other background papers for the meeting on 9 April were the Sustainability Appraisal Site Selection Framework and the Policy Papers, the Combined Topic Papers, a Transport Assessment Results Table and a paper on the role of Newbury/Thatcham. Further details of the meeting and how decisions were made at them are set out below.](#)
- 4.8 [The site selection framework assessment of the 11 sites and the summaries of the site assessments can be found in Appendices 3 and 4 of the Site Selection Framework SA Policy Paper. The final summary of the site appraisals taking all of the above in to account including the decisions made by Members in March and April 2009 can be found in Appendix 3 of this SA Policy Paper and are also contained within the Combined Strategic Housing Sites Appraisal document phase 1 \(April 2009\). This sets out the explanation as to why sites were taken forward to the next step in the preparation of the Core Strategy and subsequently why alternative sites were rejected.](#)

## 5. Options for the Newbury/Thatcham Area

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- 5.1 [In section 1 of this paper the broad locational option of Newbury/Thatcham and Eastern focus was assessed as being the most sustainable option for the focus of development.](#)
- 5.2 [Throughout the preparation of the Core Strategy the vision has always been to build upon the existing settlement pattern and to focus most development on the urban areas which have the infrastructure and facilities to support sustainable growth. As set out in section 1 above, the Newbury/Thatcham area and the East of the District were assessed as the best broad locational option and are in the top tier of the settlement hierarchy. \(see Settlement Hierarchy – ‘Spatial Strategy’ SA policy paper\), Newbury is the largest centre with a wide range of services and facilities, employment opportunities and is also the administrative focus of the area. It is here that there is the most potential for strategic urban extensions. The east of the area adjacent to Reading has more limited development opportunities with floodplain to the south of Reading and the AONB adjoining the built up area to the west.](#)
- 5.3 A number of potential strategic sites in the Newbury/Thatcham area were brought forward for consideration. The site at Newbury Racecourse met a number of the [Core Strategy’s objectives](#), being located close to the town centre, partly on brownfield land, accessible to facilities by public transport ([bus and train](#)), cycling and walking, [and partly within the settlement boundary](#). The site scored highly in the [site selection framework as set out in Appendix 3](#). [Newbury Racecourse is located well in terms of employment opportunities on site and accessible to employment off site, such as in the town centre and Hambridge Road/Lane Industrial Estate. Development here would support the development of the Racecourse as a major tourist attraction and employer thereby further supporting the local and rural economies. At this point in the decision making process there was planning permission for a new access road bridge \(06/02076/FUL\) over the railway line to serve the Racecourse and consideration was being given to the redevelopment of the site for mixed use and up to 1,500 dwellings \(09/00971/OUTMAJ, minor changes to 08/02201/OUTMAJ\). The site represented a degree of certainty of deliverability early on in the plan period and taking the above into account was therefore included in all options as the preferred strategic site.](#)
- 5.4 The work on the housing requirements and distribution has indicated that, in addition to the Newbury Racecourse site and a strategic site or broad location in the east of the district, a further identification of a broad location for longer term growth, may be required. Allocation of a broad location as a reserve site would introduce some flexibility into the plan and provide some degree of certainty over the [long term future direction of development up to the end of the Core Strategy period and also beyond this date, in recognition of the need to plan long term, and to fulfil the emerging long term vision.](#)
- 5.5 ~~The potential strategic sites in the Newbury/Thatcham area were all assessed using the comprehensive evidence base. The Combined Strategic Sites Appraisal Documents set out the process and a summary of the assessment for each site. As a result of this assessment, the sites at land north of Bowling Green Road, Greenham, Newbury Battlefield and the Newbury/Thatcham Gap were excluded from consideration as a broad location for future growth.~~

### [Decision Making Process](#)

- 5.6 [Discussions were held with Council Members at meetings of the Planning Task Group during March and April 2009 regarding the options for allocating one of the remaining sites as a reserve site.](#)

- 5.7 At this stage, Sandleford Park was considered by officers to be the most appropriate strategic site to fulfil the Council's long term vision and to deliver the objectives and policies of the Core Strategy up to 2026 and beyond. Whilst Sandleford Park had scored poorly in the initial Site Selection Framework, officers felt that potential mitigation would improve the sustainability assessment. The site had been assessed by officers using the red line boundary for purposes of consistency with the other sites – as set out at paragraph 4.5 above. However, this was giving a misleading outcome. The officer recommendation was that development of the whole site was neither appropriate nor needed to meet the housing requirements and the preferred location of development within the site would be that part closest to existing services and neighbouring residential uses and in the less environmentally sensitive areas, generally to the north and west of the site.
- 5.8 Information submitted by the site promoter which showed how they intended to develop the site accorded with the officer view. This indicated that the proposed development would alleviate a number of the concerns which led to low scores within the site selection framework – for example, the location of development on the site would considerably lessen the landscape impact and the impact on the historic parkland. However, it was not felt appropriate to re-visit the site selection framework at this stage as it would not have been possible to carry out the analysis of all sites on a consistent basis – as there were vastly different levels of information available for the various promoted sites. However, the information sent in was clearly part of the evidence base and was used as such in the officer assessment of the sites.
- 5.9 In terms of the Newbury/Thatcham area, officers at this stage were therefore recommending that the Sandleford Park site be included within the preferred options draft of the Core Strategy as a reserve site alongside the preferred site of Newbury Racecourse. The background papers to the 27 March 2009 meeting which form part of the Core Document CD09/48A attach the initial officer version of Combined Strategic Housing Sites Appraisal Phase 1. This did not include the full assessment of either of the Thatcham sites, as at this stage the officer judgement was that they did not accord with the South East Plan policy WCBV1 which officers had assessed to relate solely to Newbury, not Newbury/Thatcham (see also paragraph 4.6 above). This meant that they were not considered potential locations for strategic allocations at this stage. However, the full assessment process had been carried out for both of the Thatcham sites as detailed in the Combined Strategic Sites Appraisal Document and summarised in Appendix 3.
- 5.10 The minutes of the Planning Task Group meeting on 27 March 2009 state that the Sandleford site has been identified as a reserve site and that "Members queried why Thatcham was not included as a potential area for a strategic site" and that "Members requested that Officers revisit the option of including Thatcham as a possible location for a strategic site". Members felt that a Newbury/Thatcham approach was appropriate to explore further given the geographical closeness and functional relationship between the 2 settlements. The conclusion of the meeting was that "Members felt that it would be useful to discuss strategic site prioritisation at the next meeting and requested that Thatcham be included in the list of strategic sites."
- 5.11 Following this, a further meeting of the Planning Task Group was held on 9 April 2009 at which Members had all of the papers from the 27 March meeting plus full assessments of the 2 Thatcham strategic sites from the Combined Strategic Sites Appraisal document and a 'matters arising' paper which assessed the future role of Thatcham and set out as an officer conclusion "...it is proposed that the Options for the Future consultation will ask the question where should a reserve site or sites be located to meet the future expansion of the Newbury / Thatcham – South Newbury, East Thatcham or both?"
- 5.12 The meeting of 9 April focused on the issue of strategic sites, taking into account the matters arising paper and the site assessments of the strategic sites in Thatcham. The minutes of this meeting set out that "...the scoring of each site was discussed and

listed and their merits or otherwise explained.”. At this stage, whilst only Sandelford had initially been shortlisted, full assessments of all of the sites had been carried out and officers knew enough about each of the strategic sites to discuss their potential with Members. The minutes show an account of the Member discussion with officers about the sites and a conclusion that: “It was suggested not to have another strategic site but a choice of 3 reserve sites to go to consultation on.....it would mean that only 1 site would be chosen but 3 would be consulted on.....officers recommended having three reserve sites as options. 3 sites – Sandelford Park; Siege Cross and North Newbury.”

- 5.13 This was in response to Members wanting to consult on more than one site to gauge public opinion as part of the decision making process, and to look more widely at the Newbury spatial area to consider the potential of strategic sites in Thatcham. Siege Cross had the greatest potential in the Thatcham area due to its scale meaning that it could contribute towards the long term housing numbers required from a strategic site. The North Newbury as a whole was also of the scale required, and was relatively accessible to Newbury Town Centre. This short listing of sites was based on the site assessments in the Combined Strategic Sites Appraisal Document which summarised the evidence available at that date.
- 5.14 This therefore informed the decision to test these 3 potential strategic sites in the Newbury/Thatcham area further through the sustainability appraisal. These three sites were then considered as potential additional sites for development to start towards the end of the plan period and to continue beyond 2026 and were therefore tested through the SA, together with Newbury Racecourse as the preferred option.
- 5.15 Council Members agreed that one ‘reserve’ site would need to deliver up to 2,000 dwellings to give a firm steer about the future direction of growth in the Newbury/Thatcham area giving long term certainty for developers, investors and the community. Each of the three shortlisted reserve sites had the capacity to deliver up to 2,000 dwellings.
- 5.16 The proposed policy approach seeks to provide an element of flexibility and contingency for the planned housing provision. One reserve site up to 2,000 dwellings has greater potential to provide this flexibility than additional but smaller scale strategic sites as it minimises the risk to delivery and phasing posed by infrastructure requirements of different strategic sites. Allocating one site in its entirety through the Core Strategy would ensure the holistic and effective planning of an urban extension and enable the provision of comprehensive long term infrastructure to help shape a sustainable community. Flexibility is also provided by planning for reserve sites later in the plan period when there is less certainty about housing delivery. Allocation of smaller sites through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD would provide additional flexibility and help meet the housing requirements of the District as a whole.
- 5.17 The following table provides a summary reference as to which sites in the Newbury/Thatcham area were rejected at this stage and which were recommended for considering further through the preferred options version of the Core Strategy following the meetings which took place with Members during March and April 2009.

**Table 1. Summary of Strategic Sites Assessment (based on Appendix 3)**

<b>Site</b>	<b>Site Assessment recommends reject or take forward</b>
Site 1: North Thatcham	Reject
Site 2: Greenham	Reject
Site 4: East Newbury (Racecourse)	Take forward
Site 5: North Newbury (Vodafone)	Take forward
Site 7: West Newbury (Battlefield)	Reject
Site 8: North East Thatcham (Siege Cross)	Take forward

Site 9: Newbury Thatcham (Gap)	Reject
Site 10: South Newbury (Sandleford Park)	Take forward

- 5.18 [The three shortlisted reserve sites \(North Newbury, Sandleford Park and Siege Cross\) in combination with the preferred site of Newbury Racecourse](#) options were [each](#) considered in the sustainability appraisal. [This tested each option as a whole, and assessed the broad effects on each SA sub-objective.](#)

**Option 1- Newbury Racecourse and Sandleford**

This option identifies a broad location to the south of Newbury as a broad location for future expansion of the town [in combination with Newbury Racecourse.](#)

**Option 2 – Newbury Racecourse and Siege Cross**

This option identifies the area to the north east of Thatcham as a location for future growth [in combination with Newbury Racecourse.](#)

**Option 3 – Newbury Racecourse and North Newbury**

This option identifies the area to the north of Newbury, north of Love Lane as a location for future growth [in combination with Newbury Racecourse.](#)

## **6. Sustainability Appraisal of the Newbury/Thatcham Policy Options**

- 6.1 The assessment table for the Newbury/Thatcham options can be found in Appendix 4. The sustainability appraisal demonstrated little difference between the options. On the social sustainability criteria, Option 2 scored slightly less than the other options because Siege Cross is located further from the higher order social and cultural facilities in Newbury.
- 6.2 For the environmental sustainability criteria there was little difference between the options. At Sandleford the impact on the landscape is a significant consideration. The North Newbury site is located on higher grade agricultural land than the other potential reserve sites, and both the Siege Cross and North Newbury Options had negative scores due to the flood risk as Critical Drainage Areas have been identified nearby.
- 6.3 The sustainability appraisal was unable to differentiate between the options on economic sustainability criteria.
- 6.4 The sustainability appraisal did not indicate an obviously more sustainable option to aid decision making. [Each of the 3 reserve sites were considered, in theory, acceptable at this stage subject to ongoing consultation, the assessment of further information submitted by the site promoters and the outcome of any additional technical evidence.](#) It was therefore considered appropriate that further consultation on these options for a reserve site in the Newbury/Thatcham area be carried out as part of the consultation “Options for the Future”. [Whilst this consultation was not a compulsory part of the Core Strategy process, it was considered to be an important mechanism to test public opinion.](#)

## **7. Options for the Eastern Urban Area**

- 7.1 [The broad locational assessment had identified the Eastern Area as a location for new housing and associated development prior to the options consultation. At that time the then emerging South East Plan identified Greater Reading as a regional hub and focus for growth. The settlement hierarchy has identified the Eastern Urban Area as an urban area with a wide range of services although the settlements are bounded by the key environmental assets of the AONB and River Kennet.](#)



- 7.2 The options for development in the east of the district are ~~more~~ limited. The North Wessex Downs AONB and floodplain are significant constraints in this part of the District adjacent to Reading. Potential strategic sites have been identified at [Theale](#), Pincent's Hill and at Kennet Valley Park. The latter was not included in the Proposed Changes to the South East Plan despite being recommended in the Panel Report on the Examination in Public. Kennet Valley Park's location, largely within the functional floodplain, and its high landscape and ecological value have led to the Council's decision that the site should not be recommended for inclusion as a strategic site in the Core Strategy. [A site of this scale was not the favoured approach for the District's housing delivery – 'Options for Delivering Homes' consultation in November 2007 to January 2008 showed that a combination of strategic urban extensions and smaller sites were the favoured options for accommodating housing growth.](#)
- 7.3 [The following table provides a summary reference as to which sites were rejected at this stage and which were recommended for considering further through the preferred options version of the Core Strategy following the meetings which took place with Members during March and April 2009.](#)

**Table 2. Summary of Strategic Sites Assessment – Eastern Area (based on Appx 3)**

Site	Site Assessment recommends reject or take forward
Site 3: South Reading (KVP)	Reject
Site 6: Tilehurst (Pincent's Hill)	Take forward
Site 11: Theale	Take forward

- 7.4 [Using the outcomes of the strategic site appraisals summarised in the table above, a strategic site could potentially be delivered at Pincent's Hill, adjacent to the Eastern Urban Area or at nearby Theale. \[The Combined Strategic Housing Sites phase 1 and sections 4 and 5 of this paper summarise the early assessment work for the remaining two sites \\(Pincent's Hill and Whitehart Meadow\\) which identified technical and broad policy issues affecting the development of the sites meaning that neither was an obvious choice to take forward. A strategic urban extension to Theale could potentially have considerable impacts on infrastructure, particularly in light of the existing permission for an urban extension of 350 homes to the west of the village. Pincent's Hill is adjacent to the AONB and development would require significant green infrastructure. Traffic and access were also felt to be an important issue.\]\(#\)](#)
- 7.5 ~~Concerns have been raised over the potential impact on infrastructure and on the environment in this part of the district adjacent to the AONB.~~ [A Core Strategy does not have to include strategic sites and an alternative approach was to focus additional development on the identified rural service centres in the east of the District which would provide the necessary mechanism to deliver housing in the east, supporting the growth of Reading and the needs of this part of the District.](#)
- 7.6 [The options for the East of the District were discussed at the meeting of Planning Task Group on 27 March 2009 where Members agreed to consult on a range of options for the East. This was further discussed and agreed at the meeting of Planning Task Group held on 9 April 2009.](#)
- 7.7 Four options were considered in the sustainability appraisal:

**Option 1 – Strategic site at Pincent's Hill**

This option identifies the Pincent's Hill site as a strategic allocation for approximately 750 new homes.

**Option 2 – Strategic site at Theale**

This option identifies a site to the east of Theale as a strategic allocation for approximately 450 homes

### **Option 3- Allocations at Pincents Hill and at Theale**

This option looks at allocating smaller sites at both Pincents Hill and Theale to accommodate 750 – 1,000 new homes

### **Option 4– Smaller developments at settlements throughout the eastern part of the district (the “Basket of Smaller Sites”)**

This option would involve a number of smaller developments in or adjacent to the settlements in the Eastern Urban Area and some or all of the service centres in the east of the district identified in the district settlement hierarchy : Burghfield Common, Calcot, Mortimer, Pangbourne, Purley on Thames, Theale and Tilehurst.

## **8. Sustainability Appraisal of the Eastern Area Policy Options**

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- 8.1 The assessment table for these four options can be found in Appendix 5. The sustainability appraisal showed Option 4 as the least sustainable option and did not differentiate significantly between options 1, 2 and 3.
- 8.2 The options could not be differentiated on social sustainability. Option 4 scored positively in that it could help to meet the demand for affordable housing in a number of the settlements in the east rather than concentrating development. On the other hand this option of a number of smaller sites was less likely to be able to deliver facilities and infrastructure [in comparison to the relative ease of delivery in larger sites which enable the provision of long term infrastructure.](#)
- 8.3 For the environmental criteria, Options 1, 2 and 3 scored higher. The site at Theale would potentially have less impact on the landscape than the site at Pincents Hill, but could impact on the built and historic environment. The smaller sites in Option 4 would have less potential to achieve high sustainable design and construction techniques [due to economies of scale on larger sites](#) and fewer opportunities to improve public transport services [as this is relatively easier to deliver on larger sites.](#) Some of the potential locations are less well served by public transport [and this would influence the level of housing possible on the sites under this option.](#) Option 1 had a negative score due to the proximity of the AONB whereas the landscape impact of the “basket of sites” option could not really be assessed at this stage [as it depends on the actual location of the smaller sites. It could however be considered that smaller sites spread across the area would enable less sensitive sites to be chosen, whether inside or outside the current settlement boundaries, and this would be fully investigated when sites are considered in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.](#)
- 8.4 Options 1, 2 and 3 also scored higher on economic sustainability grounds. The smaller sites which would be allocated in Option 4 would be less accessible to existing education and employment services, [particularly those in service centres](#) and with reduced potential to provide these services [due to the scale of the development sites.](#)
- 8.5 Options 1 to 3 were the most sustainable options but it was felt appropriate to consult further on the development options for the east of the district [as some of the reasons for the SA outcomes were related to the benefits that strategic scale sites could provide and that Options 1 to 3 are site specific whereas Option 4 is a basket of non-specific sites making it harder to ascertain significant sustainability impacts. Larger sites have a greater ability financially and logistically to provide services, facilities and infrastructure on site, nearby or contribute to what exists, in addition to providing employment opportunities on site.](#) The potential options for developing a number of smaller sites are presented as two separate options ([Options 4 and 5](#)) in the consultation exercise. [Option 4 excludes the Rural Service Centres of Burghfield Common and Mortimer as they are less well related to the Eastern Urban Area and](#)

considered the more remote settlements. By separating out in to two “basket of smaller sites” options, consultation responses should be able to assist in establishing community opinion on concentrating development in the settlements that are functionally well-related to Reading or if a more general spread across the area is more appropriate, or neither.

## 9. Preferred Policy Approach at Options for the Future

- 9.1 The preferred option at this stage was ~~is~~ to focus the strategic sites/ broad locations on both the Newbury/Thatcham area and the Eastern Urban Area, with consultation on the location of sites in the East and on the location of a reserve site for the future long term growth of the Newbury/Thatcham area.

The preferred policy approach was ~~is~~ as follows:

### CS9: Strategic Sites

#### *Focus on the Newbury/Thatcham Urban Area and the Eastern Urban Area*

##### *Newbury/Thatcham Urban Area*

- *Allocation of a strategic urban extension at Newbury Racecourse to the east of Newbury for approximately 1450 homes.*
- *Consulting on options for the identification of a broad location for future expansion of Newbury/Thatcham for up to 2,000 homes at either Sandford, North Newbury or Siege Cross. This would be seen as a reserve site, potentially to be started later in the plan period, and introducing an element of flexibility into the planned provision*

##### *Eastern Urban Area*

*Consultation on the options for delivering approximately 750-1000 new homes in the Eastern Urban Area. Options comprise:*

##### *Option 1*

- *Allocation of land at Pincents Hill, adjacent to Tilehurst and within the Eastern Urban Area*

##### *Option 2*

- *Allocation of land at Theale*

##### *Option 3*

- *Allocation of smaller developments at both Pincents Hill and Theale*

##### *Option 4*

- *A number of smaller developments to be located in the settlements of the Eastern Urban Area and adjacent service centres: Calcot, Pangbourne, Purley on Thames, Theale and Tilehurst.*

##### *Option 5*

- *A number of smaller developments throughout the Eastern urban area to include all service centres in the east: Burghfield Common, Calcot, Mortimer, Pangbourne, Purley on Thames, Theale and Tilehurst.*

The majority of new development will take place in and around the urban areas of the district. A significant portion of the additional housing will be built on strategic urban extensions, which will be developed as sustainable mixed communities, developed with the infrastructure and facilities to support the population growth and the vision.

## Mitigation

- 9.2 In the context of Sustainability Appraisal, mitigation refers to any approach which is aimed at avoiding, preventing, reducing or compensating for significant adverse impacts on the sustainability objectives. In addition, the concept of mitigation covers broader issues such as the enhancement of positive effects where relevant. No mitigation has been identified for this proposed policy approach. The policy approach offers a range of options for consultation. [Mitigation measures were, however, evaluated after the preferred options consultation, as part of the iterative process in moving towards a proposed submission draft of the Core Strategy.](#)

## 10. Preferred Options Conclusion

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### Preferred Options consultation

- 10.1 [Consultation on the preferred policy approach 'Options for the Future' and the accompanying SA/SEA took place between 22 May 2009 and 3 July 2009. This was a wide ranging consultation to try and engage as many people as possible. In response to the consultation there were 206 responses to the options for the Eastern Area set out in policy CS9. The responses strongly favoured the option of smaller allocations in the east of the District rather than allocation of a strategic site. Option 5 was the most popular option. There were strong objections to both the Pincents Hill site and the Theale site on grounds of transport and environmental impact, including impact on the AONB. Impact on services including schools and doctors' surgeries in the area, which were perceived to already be operating at or above capacity, was also a common feature of the responses.](#)
- 10.2 [Reading Borough Council raised concern that developing Pincents Hill would exacerbate existing issues with regard to transport, education and other infrastructure.](#)
- 10.3 [The Highways Agency \(a key statutory consultee\) stated that "Development in the Eastern Urban Area could have a significant impact on the M4, particularly at M4 Junction 12" and went on to state that they were "...particularly concerned about the proximity of the sites at Theale \(East\) and Pincents Hill to the Strategic Road Network".](#)
- 10.4 [Thames Valley Police raised concern over the proximity of Whitehart Meadow to the motorway network, on the basis that this could make it more susceptible to crime. National Grid responded to the consultation in reference to Whitehart Meadow by stating that their preference is that buildings are not built directly underneath its overhead lines, both for the purposes of amenity and for access to the maintenance of equipment.](#)
- 10.5 [Though a significant number of respondents favoured spreading development throughout the Rural Service Centres including Burghfield and Mortimer \(option 5\), this approach would not be consistent with the concept of the settlement hierarchy, whereby development and services are concentrated at the more sustainable locations. In order to support the development of the Reading regional hub the response recommended to Members on the basis of the consultation responses was that the Council should therefore identify the quantum of development to be delivered in this area and allocate sites in the Sites Allocation and Delivery DPD in the eastern urban area and in the Rural Service Centres with good accessibility to Reading \(i.e. Pangbourne and Theale\), therefore taking option 4 forward.](#)
- 10.6 [In response to the Newbury/Thatcham options set out in policy CS9, the number of consultation responses was limited with only 54 responses. The responses were inconclusive on the preferred approach to a strategic site or broad location in addition](#)

to the Racecourse site, however, responses from site promoters were received with some further information about the 3 reserve strategic sites.

- 10.7 On the issue of allocating broad locations for future development in the Newbury/Thatcham area the outcome of the consultation was that there was no site which was conclusively preferred. However, there was some useful information in the responses to take into account when moving forward, including comments from the Council's Education Department which ranked the sites in preference of Sandleford, North Newbury and then Siege Cross with the following key points summarised in terms of future school provision:

**Sandleford:** A very strong preference. No capacity at the primary school so a new primary school would be required. Secondary provision would be the easiest to manage here out of the 3 reserve sites, the school could be expanded to a decent enough size to deal with the impact of the development.

**North Newbury:** the secondary school is struggling to support the children currently from the catchment area so it certainly could not absorb children generated from 2000 new dwellings.

**Siege Cross:** No development at all wanted here and certainly not one comprising 2000 dwellings.

- 10.8 The response from the Highways Agency raised particular concerns about development at North Newbury, due to the site's easy access to the Strategic Road Network and with Junction 13 of the M4 and the A34 currently operating near capacity. Additional concerns were raised regarding the potential for development of the North Newbury site to cause flooding issues. In particular a response on behalf of Vodafone refers to an extreme flooding event in July 2007 which resulted in the Vodafone campus being flooded at a resultant cost of £12 million. During 2008 there were also several occasions when off-site overland flows from the catchment to the north threatened the buildings within the Vodafone campus.
- 10.9 With regard to Siege Cross, a number of concerns were raised about the impact of development on facilities, services and infrastructure, which were largely perceived as at capacity. In terms of Sandleford Park, the majority of negative comments were about the loss of countryside, with a number of respondents referring to the site's rejection through the local plan inquiry in 1998. In response to this particular point, officers and Members were aware that the site being promoted for development is significantly different and the Inspector's previous concerns have been addressed from the outset by the site promoters. Additionally, the context of the site has changed and the area has become increasingly urbanised since the previous decision was taken through the Local Plan Inquiry.
- 10.10 The identification of a broad location/reserve site for future expansion at Newbury/Thatcham raised concerns that it could create uncertainty about the future location of development, something which the Council wanted to avoid.
- 10.11 In response to site specific concerns, the outcome of the consultation raised comments which would be taken into account in developing the proposals for strategic site allocations, with the policies setting set out the level of development, the phasing, infrastructure and mitigation measures and along with any complementary land uses which will be expected to accompany the development.
- 10.12 A summary of the consultation responses is set out in the Statement of Consultation (Regulation 27 (Reg30 (1) (d)) CD07/13

## 11 Proposed Submission Policy

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### Proposed approach to the Newbury/Thatcham area

#### Approach to Thatcham

- 11.1 At the Options for the Future stage, Newbury and Thatcham were still being treated as one area due to their geographical closeness and functional relationship. The spatial approach to this part of the District was evaluated further following the consultation and through discussions with Councillors at Planning Task Group.
- 11.2 The South East Plan refers to the sub-regional hub of the Newbury area as a focus for development and transport infrastructure, rather than the wider Newbury/Thatcham area. Policy WCBV1 from the South East Plan states that “Sustainable Greenfield allocations should be mainly focused on the periphery of those hubs where other constraints do not prevent this – Basingstoke, Reading, Bracknell and Newbury – but smaller allocations may be brought forward at other settlements, subject to their meeting the same sustainability considerations. These urban extensions should minimise incursions into Green Belt or areas protected as AONBs or by other policies of regional, national and international importance”. Newbury is the largest urban area in the District and an urban focus approach to development was agreed at an early stage of the Core Strategy process.
- 11.3 Newbury and Thatcham are separated by countryside and the Core Strategy aims to retain the physical separation and maintain the distinctiveness of both towns which have differing form and character. The emerging policy CS15 (policy CS20 at publication stage) sets out the need to retain the ‘individual identity of separate settlements’ and this is a continuation of policy CS17 of Options for the Future which sought the ‘retention of the individual identity of separate settlements’. Retaining the individual identity of settlements has been an objective of the Core Strategy since the Options for the Future stage which meant that combining Newbury and Thatcham was not consistent with this underlying objective of the Core Strategy. This adds weight in keeping Thatcham separate to Newbury as does the Council Plan’s treatment of Thatcham as a separate settlement.
- 11.4 When assessing both areas, Newbury has a wide range of services and facilities and is the administrative centre of the district, whereas Thatcham has more limited services and facilities, the town centre is in need of regeneration and there are capacity issues with the schools. The capacity of the schools in Thatcham was a particular issue identified through consultation with the Council’s education department. Thatcham has experienced high levels of growth in recent years and concern over the impact of this was expressed through the consultation on Options for the Future (CD07/06) and the Thatcham Vision (CD10/23).
- 11.5 Taking into account all of the evidence in assessing the future spatial approach to Thatcham, a more modest level of growth focusing on regeneration and renewal is preferable to considering Thatcham as part of Newbury. This would help services and facilities to accommodate the recent growth and to become a more self-contained market town rather than being very dependent on the services of Newbury. The outcome of consultation was discussed with Members as part of the ongoing development of the Core Strategy at Planning Task Group meetings held in July and August 2009.
- 11.6 The emerging vision at this stage for the Thatcham area was that “development in Thatcham will focus on regeneration of the town centre and improvement of leisure and community facilities. Less than 10% of new housing growth planned for the District will be located in Thatcham” which is due to the lack of facilities and services and high levels of recent development. The separate identities of Newbury and Thatcham was taken forward in the spatial approach to the Core Strategy following advice from GOSE.

- 11.7 There is therefore an ‘in-principal’ policy reason for not taking forward the site at Siege Cross as following further assessments and consultation, a strategic site at Thatcham is not considered an appropriate location for a sustainable urban extension. The Area Delivery Plan Policy for Thatcham (ADP3) sets out the vision and delivery plan for the future of Thatcham, including regeneration of the town centre and additional development to be allocated through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.

### **Strategic Site Selection - Newbury**

- 11.8 Following the decision on Siege Cross outlined above, the selection of a strategic site became a choice between North Newbury and Sandford, The appraisal of these two sites took into consideration the original site selection framework, the sustainability appraisal carried out at the Options stage, the consultation responses, technical evidence base and assessment against the vision and objectives of the Core Strategy. Officers’ professional judgement and local knowledge has also informed the decision-making process.
- 11.9 Any development of a strategic size will require significant mitigation in terms of highways and landscape, as well as an assessment of the necessary infrastructure to deliver the scheme successfully in combination with other proposed development.
- 11.10 The site selection framework and the sustainability appraisal at options stage were based on the site areas promoted, the “red line boundary” of each site, without consideration of mitigation. However, it is important to note that the site selection process also needs to consider the potential layout of development within the site and potential mitigation. Given the nature of any development site of a strategic size, it will require significant mitigation in terms of, for example, highways and landscape, as well as an assessment of the infrastructure requirements to deliver the scheme successfully in-combination with other proposed development. These factors are covered in section 2 of the Combined Strategic Sites Appraisal Document Phase 2, which was intended to provide a comprehensive analysis of the reasoning and decision-making on strategic site selection.

### **Building on the Initial Site Selection Framework SA**

- 11.11 The function of the initial site selection framework was not to determine which site should be selected but to highlight the sustainability aspects of each site. The scoring was based in large part on measurable indicators and was a somewhat mechanistic process. A small differential, for example in distance to a facility was then compounded in the way the scores were weighted. In comparing North Newbury with Sandford the following sub-objectives accounted for the differences in scoring:
- 11.12 Sub-objectives where North Newbury scored higher with scoring differential in brackets:
- 3b – to improve access to the countryside, parks and open spaces (8)
  - 3c - to support the development of access to IT facilities including broadband, particularly in rural areas (1)
  - 4a – to reduce the need for people to travel, especially by car (9)
  - 6c - to protect, conserve and enhance the built, cultural and historic environment (6)
  - 9d – to reduce the consumption of minerals and promote reuse of secondary materials (2)
- 11.13 Sub-objectives where Sandford scored higher with scoring differential in brackets:
- 3a - To improve access to education, employment and services (2)

- [4c - to increase opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport and ensure the necessary infrastructure is available \(4\)](#)
  - [6b - To conserve and enhance the character of the landscape \(2\)](#)
  - [7c - to maintain and improve soil quality \(2\)](#)
- 11.14 [The Council's view was that, although limited, this initial analysis provided a useful starting point for the further consideration and evaluation of the sites, and to identify potential mitigation. Further SA at Options stage was therefore carried out using a less mechanistic approach, assessing the degree of effect on each sub-objective and presented in Appendix 4.](#)
- 11.15 [This assessment, although not conclusive on which site was the more sustainable with the Newbury Racecourse site, clearly showed that Sandleford did not score more poorly than North Newbury or Siege Cross. Further analysis was carried out for the Combined Sites Phase 2 document which pulled together the evidence base and assessments for the potential sites. The officer recommendation remained to allocate Sandleford. With residential development in the north of the site adjacent to housing and facilities, including schools, Newbury College, retail park, local shopping centre, doctor's surgery, pharmacy and waste recycling centre, the proposed development would overcome some of the issues identified in the SA work regarding reducing the need to travel. The proposed open space to the south would enable access to this area of countryside and help to maintain the setting of the landscape and heritage assets. The Sandleford site would provide an opportunity to create a comprehensive development with associated local facilities, including a primary school. The conclusion reached was that Sandleford had more potential to build on the existing community infrastructure and to create a sustainable urban extension with new facilities, including a primary school. The North Newbury site, by comparison, is more remote from local facilities and is bisected by the A339 which could constrain the potential to develop an integrated sustainable community. The extent of development could compromise the setting of Donnington village.](#)

#### **'Reserve' site approach in Newbury/Thatcham**

- 11.16 [The 'Options for the Future' consultation asked for views on the 'reserve' site approach to future development in Newbury/Thatcham. The consultation raised some concerns about the 'reserve' site approach as this term was causing some confusion about what was actually meant, and what status a 'reserve' site would have in the Core Strategy. This was subsequently discussed by the Planning Task Group and a decision was made to clarify the position. The minutes of the Planning Task Group 30<sup>th</sup> October 2009 \(CD 09/48\) state that the concept of "reserve sites" was very unpopular due to reasons of uncertainty and that Sandleford Park should be clearly identified as a firm long term strategic allocation to add certainty for the public, developers and the delivery of infrastructure for the future direction of growth for the Newbury area up to and beyond 2026. The site would also have the potential to come forward within the Core Strategy period if other sites did not deliver as expected. The site could begin delivering development later on in the plan period \(from 2016 onwards\) but with capacity to continue, either after 2026 to provide long term flexibility, or before if land supply monitoring showed that it was necessary, or if the housing requirement increased. This was subject to discussion by members at Planning Task Group which resulted in the minutes of October 2009 stating in a summary of the discussion that "members were supportive of the inclusion of Sandleford as a strategic site to provide certainty for the community".](#)

#### **Reserve site reduced from 1,500 to 1,000 units by 2026**

- 11.17 [As set out in section 5, above, at the stage of the Options for the Future consultation in May 2009, a reserve site for 'up to' 2,000 dwellings was proposed in policy CS9. It was originally proposed that 1,500 dwellings be phased for delivery on the site by](#)



2026 in order to meet a housing target of 11,000 net dwellings by the end of the plan period., The 11,000 target consisted of the 10,500 set out within the South East Plan and the 'shortfall' of 500 from the previous Structure Plan period.

- 11.18 In October 2009, the Government Office for the South East confirmed (CD/07/28) that the shortfall of 500 units had already been taken into account within the South East Plan baseline figure of 10,500. Subsequently it was proposed at the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2009 meeting of the Planning Task Group that the overall housing number in the Core Strategy be confirmed as 10,500 in order to conform with the South East Plan. It was agreed by the Planning Task Group that the phasing of the strategic site at Sandleford should be amended to deliver 1,000 units by 2026 but that the overall scale of development should remain the same. This was in order that masterplanning work should reflect the full capacity of the site in order to maximise the long term benefits of the site and to ensure the delivery of the full extent of the critical infrastructure. This would also enable the development of a sustainable community and confirm the long term direction of growth at Newbury.

### **Proposed approach to the Eastern Area**

- 11.19 As set out above in para 8.5, five options for accommodating development in the East of the District were tested in the 'Options for the Future' consultation and taking into account the following summary, option 4 was selected as the most appropriate approach for accommodating development in the Eastern Area.
- 11.20 A possible strategic site at **Pincents Hill** generated a large number of objections prior to and during the 'Options for the Future' consultation, highlighting a considerable level of concern in the local area. Consultation is an important part of the evidence base and responses were taken in to account along with the technical evidence base and policy issues as part of the decision making process. An outline planning application for 750 dwellings was submitted to the Council in July 2009 which resulted in further technical information about the site being considered through the development control process. The application also generated a high degree of public awareness for the proposal. Through the consultation on Options for the Future, it became apparent that Pincents Hill is a valued area of open space. Maintaining the separate identity of the different parts of the District has remained an objective throughout the preparation of the Core Strategy and is included in the Area Delivery Plan policies and Policy CS20: Historic Environment and Landscape Character.
- 11.21 In addition, part of the site is within the AONB and the western edge is adjacent to the AONB. The Landscape Sensitivity Study (LSS) (CD09/38) identified the main issues as its visual impact and loss of panoramic views. The LSS concluded that extensive development here would visually and physically merge Tilehurst with Calcot, leading to the recommendation that some development would be acceptable but would need to have a buffer to the AONB, maintain landscaped links and better integrate the urban form into the landscape.
- 11.22 The Council's landscape consultant advised on the planning application that the proposed development would have a direct adverse impact on landscape and visual impact of the part of the AONB and on the setting of the AONB. The Phase 2 Transport Assessment (CD09/25) and the planning application highlighted a number of transport challenges for the area including capacity issues along the A4 and at specific junctions, needing a high level of public transport mode share, a high take up of travel plan measures, capacity issues at M4 Junction 12, and landownership and funding issues relating to the identified improvements.
- 11.23 The evidence therefore showed that a strategic site at Pincents Hill would pose considerable infrastructure issues and would have an adverse impact in landscape terms on the AONB and its wider setting. It would conflict with the theme of the Core Strategy to retain the individual identities of separate settlements. There was

widespread local opposition, and this forms an important part of the evidence base. As a result the option for a strategic site at Pincents Hill was rejected.

- 11.24 **Whitehart Meadow in Theale** was promoted for approximately 450 units. Development of this scale would have a considerable impact on Theale and would negatively impact upon the role and function of Theale, identified as a Rural Service Centre in the District settlement hierarchy. The area currently separates Reading and Theale, and as set out above maintaining the identity of individual settlements has been an objective of the Core Strategy throughout its preparation. The 'Options for the Future' consultation generated multiple objections against the site including concern over the in-combination impact of the development with the committed but unbuilt development of 350 units at Theale Lakeside. Infrastructure, including services and facilities will need time to adjust to the increase in households and population from Lakeside which has already resulted in the need to expand the sixth form and primary school. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan concludes that any further housing development in Theale would require significant capital investment and extensive remodelling or even re-build of the schools. The conclusion was therefore reached that Theale is not regarded as a suitable location for further strategic scale development within the Core Strategy period.
- 11.25 The **overall conclusion** reached was that allocating a strategic site in the east of the District would be likely to result in a number of negative impacts, including infrastructure issues and the coalescence of the separate identity of individual settlements. There is no necessity to allocate a strategic site in this area in terms of delivering the Core Strategy. Options 1 and 2 from the 'Options for the Future' proved very unpopular through the public consultation, which forms part of the evidence base. The Council recognises and appreciates the strength of feeling in the east of the District and the concern of the infrastructure implications of a strategic site allocation and of the development in the Rural Service Centres. The reasons behind rejecting the allocation of a strategic site have been set out above, along with earlier sections in this paper, with more detail in the Combined Strategic Housing Sites Documents phases 1 and 2 and the technical evidence base. The option of allocating a strategic site in the East also raised objections from the Highways Agency on the basis of the proximity of the strategic development to the Strategic Road Network, and from Reading Borough Council who raised concerns about the potential impact of a strategic site on infrastructure and communities in Reading.
- 11.26 The option of allocating a broad location for development (Options 4 and 5) was consulted upon in the 'Options for the Future'. This identified an area of search within which to allocate non-strategic sites through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD. Option 5 included the Rural Service Centres of Burghfield Common and Mortimer. Following the consultation, the District was divided into four spatial areas for the purpose of taking forward Area Delivery Plan policies for geographical areas. These two settlements were included within the East Kennet Valley as they relate more to the rural south-east of the District and the more dispersed pattern of development. They are also less well related to Reading with poor transport connections. It was therefore not considered appropriate to take forward option 5 but to proceed within Option 4.
- 11.27 It was noted by Members at the October 2009 meeting of Planning Task Group that the area of search would therefore include the Rural Service Centres of Pangbourne and Theale with the settlements of the Eastern Urban Area. This gives an opportunity to respond to issues of local housing need in the area which in terms of functionality is closely related to the Greater Reading area and would support the development of the Reading regional hub. Growth here would be supported by this approach without causing significant infrastructure impacts. By enabling smaller sites in this area, the scale of any proposed developments will respond positively to local character issues, and ensure that the separate identities of each of the settlements are maintained. This approach will build on existing settlement patterns whilst focusing on the more sustainable urban areas. Infrastructure requirements would be investigated through

[the Infrastructure Delivery Plan to support the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD and will ensure effective coordination and delivery in the eastern area as a whole. Up to 1500 dwellings are expected to be developed within the broad location to 2026.](#)

[\(See Spatial Strategy SA Policy Paper for the Area Delivery Plan Policies.\)](#)

- 11.28 Following the consultation on the preferred options the broad locational approach is largely unchanged with identification of a broad location in the east of the district and two strategic sites in the Newbury/Thatcham area. The Newbury/Thatcham and Eastern focus remains. The amendments [were](#) ~~are~~ considered to not have significant effects (environment, social or economic) which would warrant further SA being undertaken on the broad locational policy options. This is in line with the Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive<sup>1</sup> and Article 3(3) of Directive 2001/42/EC<sup>2</sup>.
- 11.29 In the Newbury/Thatcham area and in the Eastern Area the “Options for the Future” consulted on a number of options, previously assessed in the SA. Though decisions have been taken on which sites or broad locations should be proposed in the draft submission core strategy this [was not felt to](#) ~~does not~~ warrant further SA work being undertaken.
- 11.30 [The proposed submission policy is to deliver two strategic sites together with appropriate infrastructure, at Newbury Racecourse \(CS3\) and at Sandleford \(CS4\), and identification of a broad location for development in the east of the District. The Planning Task Group recommended this approach to Full Council which met in January 2010 and unanimously approved the Core Strategy for publication and subsequent submission to the Secretary of State.](#)

### **Proposed Submission Policy**

- 11.31 The following policies for the two proposed strategic sites are included in the proposed submission Core Strategy:

#### **Policy CS3: Newbury Racecourse Strategic Site Allocation**

Within the area identified at Newbury Racecourse, a sustainable and high quality mixed use development will be delivered including:

- Phased delivery of up to 1,450 homes, of which at least 35% will be affordable;
- Appropriate retail facilities;
- Social and physical infrastructure;
- Measures to mitigate the impact of development on the local road network;
- Measures to improve accessibility by non-car transport modes, including provision of cycle and pedestrian routes to both the Racecourse and Newbury stations and to Newbury and Thatcham town centres;
- Appropriate green infrastructure;
- Generation of on-site renewable energy.

<sup>1</sup> A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. ODP. September 2005.

<sup>2</sup> The SEA Directive. Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.

**Policy CS4: Sandleford Strategic Site Allocation**

Within the area identified at Sandleford Park, a sustainable and high quality mixed use development will be delivered including:

- Phased delivery of up to 2,000 dwellings, of which at least 40% will be affordable and with an emphasis on family housing. Approximately half the housing is anticipated to be delivered by 2026;
- Appropriate retail facilities;
- Social and physical infrastructure (including provision for a new primary school and extension of Park House School);
- Measures to mitigate the impact of development on the local road network;
- Measures to improve accessibility by non-car transport modes particularly to Newbury town centre and along the A339 route to Basingstoke;
- A network of green infrastructure which will conserve the areas of ancient woodland and respect the landscape significance of the site on the A339 approach road into Newbury;
- Generation of on-site renewable energy.

11.32 The broad location in the Eastern Area is covered in Policy SP4 of the proposed submission document and is shown in the Key Diagram. The SA of the area or spatial policies is covered separately in the SA policy paper titled “Spatial Strategy”.

### **Consultation responses to the Proposed Submission Core Strategy**

11.33 [The Council consulted on the Proposed Submission Core Strategy from 26<sup>th</sup> February to 9<sup>th</sup> April 2010 before submission to the Secretary of State in July 2010.](#)

11.34 [Most of the comments on the proposed allocation of Sandleford were objections on similar grounds to those at the Options stage, principally focusing on the landscape and transport implications, particularly the traffic impact on Monks Lane and on the A339, and the impact on local infrastructure. The CPRE submitted a petition, a number of e-mails and a list of 45 residents of Garden Close Lane registering objections to the soundness of the inclusion of Sandleford Park. These objections related to the impact on the road system and consequent increase in air pollution, to the impact on existing healthcare facilities, schools, social services and police, to the environmental impact of development on greenfield land and to the lack of employment opportunities in the area. They fear that development in this location on this scale will fundamentally alter the character of the town in a way that would not be acceptable to a large percentage of residents. These issues are addressed within the evidence base, particularly the Transport Assessments and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.](#)

11.35 [On the transport side comments were also received from Hampshire County Council, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, and the Highways Agency. These concerns were addressed in the Transport Assessment Phase 4, which modelled the combined effect of development at Newbury Racecourse and at Sandleford. The HA were satisfied that inclusion of relevant mitigation measures, as set out in the transport evidence base will mitigate the impact sufficiently at Junction 13 and also note the proposals for the optimisation of traffic signals along the A34 corridor.](#)

11.36 [A number of comments related to the lack of consultation with the parish council and with local residents and the fact that both Sandleford and Newbury Racecourse strategic sites lie within the same parish to the south of Newbury, therefore too heavily focused on south and south-east Newbury with consequent issues relating to traffic congestion and infrastructure provision. The parish council boundaries have](#)

not been a factor in assessing sites as decisions have been made in the context of the wider issues relating to the Newbury spatial area. Consultation has been front-loaded, with parish councils fully informed at each stage (as set out in Statements of Consultation CD07/13 and CD07/14). Greenham Parish Council, now objecting to the allocation of Sandlesford (Greenham Parish includes both Newbury Racecourse and Sandlesford) made no comments at the Options stage on the reserve strategic site selection. Newbury Town Council supported the Proposed Submission Core Strategy, stating that there is much to commend it and, provided it is effectively and robustly implemented, then it will deliver what is good for Newbury Parish.

- 11.37 In response to the consultation and to provide further clarification, a number of minor changes were proposed to policies CS3 and CS4. Minor changes were embedded in to the Core Strategy by the Inspector at the Pre-Hearing Meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010. Those that the Inspector considered as major changes would be subject to consultation and further SA (September 2011) as set out below.
- 11.38 Comments received on the proposed submission policy for the Eastern Area largely related to a few key areas. A number of respondents felt that the Council was understating the role of Reading and should provide more housing to meet the needs of Greater Reading, with some suggesting that one of the 2 strategic sites in the area should become an allocation. Others raised concern about the hatched area shown on the diagram for the East, particularly as this extended into the area of the nationally protected North Wessex Downs AONB. These comments led to some changes (largely minor) to the proposed spatial policy for the East.

## **12. Sustainability Appraisal of the Proposed Focused Changes**

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- 12.1 These changes were prepared either in response to comments received at the Proposed Submission stage or to provide clarification on a particular matter. The changes proposed to policies CS3 and CS4 are discussed below.
- 12.2 The potential sustainability implications of each of the Proposed Focused Changes (PFCs) to the Core Strategy Submission document have been assessed. PFC9 relates to changes to Policy CS3 (PFC9), Newbury Racecourse Strategic Site Allocation, PFC10 relates to Policy CS4, Sandlesford Strategic Site Allocation and PFCs 11 and 12 to paragraph 5.9, the explanatory text for Policy CS4.
- 12.3 The changes relating to Policy CS3 (PFC10), the Newbury Racecourse Strategic Site Allocation, reflect the planning permission granted in April 2010 for the site, and broaden the road network bullet point to be strategic as well as local. The changes update the Policy in light of the planning consent and do not represent or introduce significant change to the previous SA findings.
- 12.4 The changes proposed for Policy CS4, Sandlesford Strategic Site Allocation, relate to biodiversity. The changes are proposed for clarification purposes to comply with and reflect Policy CS18; biodiversity enhancements for the site allocation should be delivered in line with Policy CS18. The site is within the Greenham and Crookham Plateau Biodiversity Opportunity Area and will need to address the increased recreational pressure on the nearby Greenham and Crookham Common SSSI. The changes do not represent or introduce significant change to the previous SA findings.
- 12.5 The PFC11 changes proposed relate to the explanatory text to Policy CS4 and support the proposed change to Policy CS4 in the form of PFC10 above. The changes do not represent or introduce significant changes to previous SA findings.
- 12.6 The PFC12 changes proposed relate to the explanatory text to Policy CS4 and propose a new additional paragraph after paragraph 5.9. The changes outline the infrastructure requirements for the site as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan

(IDP) which supports the Core Strategy. The Delivery and Monitoring box for the Policy explains that an “SPD or masterplan will be prepared for the site in order to demonstrate how the housing and associated infrastructure will be delivered and provide the context for more detailed design” and that the “infrastructure requirements and phasing will be set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan”. The IDP covers the plan period 2010 to 2026, although its content will be annually monitored and periodically reviewed. It explains the approach the Council has taken to identifying the infrastructure as being needed to support the delivery of the Core Strategy, its importance to the Core Strategy, how it will be delivered, and an assessment of the potential risks associated with doing so. The changes to the explanatory text to the Policy highlights information that supports the Core Strategy and the changes do not represent or introduce significant changes to previous SA findings.

### **13. Proposed Focused Changes Conclusion**

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- 13.1 The schedule of Proposed Focused Changes to the Core Strategy Submission Document was published for a 6 week period of consultation from 3rd September to 15th October 2010. An analysis of the responses showed that they did not introduce or represent changes to previous SA findings.

### **14. Consultation responses to the Proposed Focused Changes**

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- 14.1 No potentially significant adverse affects have been identified as a result of the Proposed Focused Changes. This demonstrates that the appraisal outcomes presented in the July 2010 SA Report submitted with the West Berkshire Core Strategy, and the mitigation measures and recommendations proposed in the document, still apply.
- 14.2 Comments received on PFC9 relate to the change in the number of houses, the affordable housing provision and infrastructure requirements. The PFC was made in response to the planning approval for the Racecourse development which was determined by reference to the policies of the adopted West Berkshire District Local Plan. The original policy CS3 would not have been deliverable given the subsequent planning approval. Should the current permission not be implemented then any subsequent planning application would need to conform to the policies in the adopted DPD.
- 14.3 One comment was received on PFC10 which supported the change which addresses previous concerns regarding recreational pressure on the nearby SSSI and strategic biodiversity enhancements.
- 14.4 PFC11 relates to the explanatory text behind PFC10. Comments received welcomed the changes with one comment calling for an assessment of the wildlife present and a full and proper understanding of all potential uses of the green infrastructure. No further changes to the PFC were recommended by the Council as it addresses the implications of development close to the Common and the additional recreational pressure that it could suffer unless properly mitigated.
- 14.5 PFC12 outlines the infrastructure requirements for the site as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which supports the Core Strategy. Comments on the whole support this additional text whilst there remained some concern for implications in the short to medium terms for education resources and additional traffic combined with the Racecourse development and nearby Retail Park. Phase 4 of the Transport Assessment looked at the impact of the Racecourse and Sandleford developments on the transport infrastructure, including A339 junctions.
- 14.6 Analysis of the consultation responses resulted in no further changes being proposed to policies CS3 and CS4, their supporting text and the SA of the policies.

## **15. Sustainability Appraisal of the Examination Proposed Focused Changes**

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- 15.1 The Core Strategy Examination was suspended at the end of the hearing on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2010 to give the Council time to carry out extra work. The Inspector issued two notes (note 1 dated 8<sup>th</sup> November 2010, note 2 dated 15<sup>th</sup> November 2010) setting out what extra work was needed and this has led to changes to the Core Strategy.
- 15.2 The potential sustainability implications of each of the Examination Proposed Focused Changes (EPFCs) to the Core Strategy Submission document have been assessed. EPFC19 relates to Policy CS3 and its supporting text and EPFC20 and EPFC32 relate to Policy CS4 and its supporting text.
- 15.3 The changes proposed to Policy CS3 relate to a new paragraph being added to the explanatory text. These changes reflect that the planning permission granted in April 2010 for the site was determined in accordance with the planning policies in place at that time and that any new application would be determined in accordance with the Core Strategy policies, such as the affordable housing requirements in policy CS7. This makes clear the intended consequence of Proposed Focused Change 9 (Sept/Oct 2010). Any new application would also represent an opportunity to achieve high standards of sustainable construction. These standards are set out within Policy CS16, although the Inspector is suggesting these are removed from that policy, therefore policy CS3 explanatory text sets out the relevant sustainable construction requirements for this strategic site.
- 15.4 The changes represent small changes to the previous SA findings in relation to SA Objective 'To provide sufficient good quality housing to meet local need', 'To reduce consumption of natural resources and manage their use efficiently', and 'To reduce emissions contributing to climate change and ensure adaptation measures are in place to respond to climate change'. The revised extract from the SA table can be found in Appendix 6. The assessment of effect has changed for SA Objective 'To reduce consumption of natural resources and manage their use efficiently', for the other SA Objectives listed above the comments on the assessment has been updated to reflect the proposed explanatory text. The SA supports the approach presented by the explanatory text.
- 15.5 Policy CS4 – Sandleford Strategic Site Allocation and its supporting text have been amended to provide greater detail and guidance on the proposed allocation. The changes alter significantly the findings of the SA which was carried out to compare strategic sites and a new SA table can be found in Appendix 7. The revised policy and explanatory text continue to have predominantly neutral sustainability effects, but overall the revised policy has more positive sustainability effects in comparison to the original policy. This is because the revised policy provides more details as to how the site will be delivered, taking account of site constraints.
- 15.6 The revised policy details how sustainable transport will connect the site to Newbury town centre which has positive effects on the objective 'to achieve and promote high level provision and use of sustainable transport modes where possible'. Focusing development on the north and west of the site will help 'to improve the efficiency of land use'. The policy states that the development will be constructed to the highest environmental standards which positively affect the objectives 'to promote the adoption of sustainable design and construction practices in housing' and 'to reduce consumption of natural resources and manage their use efficiently'. Also it provides details of facilities that will be delivered on site such as a Primary School and local centre, as well as substantial green infrastructure. All of this will contribute towards 'improving health and well being and reducing inequalities', and 'Ensuring that the

natural, built and historic environment is conserved and enhanced'. The SA findings support the proposed changes to the policy and explanatory text.

## **16. Examination Proposed Focused Changes Conclusion**

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- 16.1 No potentially significant adverse affects have been identified as a result of the Examination Proposed Focused Changes. This demonstrates that the appraisal outcomes presented in the July 2010 SA Report submitted with the West Berkshire Core Strategy, and the mitigation measures and recommendations proposed in the document, still apply.

## **17. Consultation responses to the Examination Proposed Focused Changes**

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- 17.1 The schedule of Examination Proposed Focused Changes to the Core Strategy Submission Document was published for a 6 week period of consultation from 4<sup>th</sup> February to 18<sup>th</sup> March 2011. An analysis of the responses showed that they did not introduce or represent changes to previous SA findings.
- 17.2 One respondent commented on the SA report itself, saying they felt it was inappropriate the Sandleford site had been judged in isolation and without comparison to other sites, stating that if competing sites had the opportunity to be assessed again in relation to policy which provided more environmental detail and consideration of site constraints, that they would also score higher.
- 17.3 The response relates to the process of selecting the strategic sites and their assessment during that process, however, rather than the consultation on the appraisal of the wording of policy CS4. The Inspector requested in his Post Hearing Note 2 changes to policy CS4 to reflect the issues discussed at the hearing session including, but not exclusively, highway mitigation measures listed in the IDP and clarity as to where built development should and should not occur. The SA therefore assessed the significant impacts of the proposed word changes to the policy as a result and is not a reassessment of the site selection framework. The appraisal therefore reflects the changes to the policy wording in terms of environmental, social and economic effects.
- 17.4 In comparison to the original policy, the revised policy CS4 has more positive sustainability effects and the SA findings support the proposed changes.
- 17.5 EPFC19 relates to requirements any new application at the Racecourse would need to achieve. Two comments support this approach whilst one comment calls for the EPFC to be deleted as the requirements go beyond Building Regulations and would have significant impact on construction costs. The requirements for Code for Sustainable Homes was introduced into the policy in light of the discussion and Inspector Proposed Changes which sought to remove the district-wide requirement, therefore no further change is proposed.
- 17.6 EPFC20 provided greater detail and guidance on the proposed allocation. A number of representations were received on this change both in support and objecting on issues such as the selection of Sandleford Park, landscape impact and infrastructure requirements. The justification for the selection of the site against alternatives was set out in the Combined Strategic Housing Sites Papers phases 1 and 2 and the SA, and the viability and deliverability of the site were discussed at the Examination Hearings. The requirements for aspects on site such as affordable housing and densities accord with other plan policies, and the location of development to the north and west of the site was the Council's preferred option to limit impacts on the landscape. The Sandleford Concept Plan generated some queries and it was proposed in light of the consultation responses to make it clear that this is indicative and that the site would



be subject to detailed masterplanning and developed through consultation. As such, masterplanning will ensure that design quality and sustainable transport solutions are carefully considered. No further changes to the policy and supporting text were proposed in light of the consultation responses on EPFC20.

- 17.7 EPFC32 inserted the Sandleford Concept Plan which generated three responses. Two raised concerns with the level of detail on the plan resulting in the proposal that a caveat be added to state that the concept plan is indicative only and subject to more detailed masterplanning (see FPMC160).

## **18. SA/SEA Re-assessment following June 2011 Examination Hearings**

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- 18.1 The Council has carried out an objective re-assessment of the sustainability of the alternative strategic sites that were put forward in the Options for the Future consultation. This has taken account of information and consultation representations submitted since the earlier SA was prepared and has been carried out to evaluate whether the recommended approach remains appropriate, based on a sound analysis of the evidence.
- 18.2 In re-assessing the SA for the approach to strategic site selection in Newbury/Thatcham, the Council has looked again at the three options put forward. The previous SA concluded that the Siege Cross site with Newbury Racecourse was the least sustainable option in terms of access to facilities. The reasons for rejection of Siege Cross are covered in Section 11 and no additional evidence emerged to justify re-evaluating the principle of allocating the second strategic site as an urban extension to Newbury. The re-assessment has therefore focused on a re-appraisal of the two options of Sandleford and North Newbury against each SA sub-objective, taking account of the technical evidence base and representations submitted. Appendix 8 summarises this re-evaluation.
- 18.3 The sustainability appraisal of the two sites at North Newbury and Sandleford Park has been revised to review whether the current strategy for the Core Strategy in terms of site allocation is still appropriate and to enable Council Members to make a fully informed decision on the issue of strategic site selection.
- 18.4 The revised SA is set out in Appendix 8. It takes the previous SA (see Appendix 4) as a starting point and re-appraises where appropriate, taking account of consultation and technical evidence, including work carried out to develop the planning concepts for the sites.
- 18.5 There are a number of issues which are critical to the assessment of alternative sites and the revised SA has taken an objective approach in re-appraising these. The assessment has considered the SA sub-objectives under the categories of environmental, social and economic criteria, colour-coded in the table in Appendix 8 and summarised below.
- 18.6 For the social sustainability criteria the analysis showed very little difference between the 2 options. There was no change to the SA scores.
- 18.7 For the environmental sustainability criteria, the re-assessment resulted in more differentiation between the options as follows:
- **Sub-objective: To improve access to the countryside, parks and open spaces:** Development of both sites would provide links to open countryside, and both are within easy reach of existing areas of significant open space, but the Sandleford site is of a sufficient size to provide a Country Park or area of open space on site. The original site selection framework scoring was heavily in favour

of North Newbury because of the loss of countryside used for access at Sandleford. There is an existing footpath on the Sandleford site but no additional public access and the footpath will be retained as an important pedestrian link and will provide access to the open space in the south of the site. Comments received in response to the Options for the Future consultation from the West Berkshire Ramblers felt that access into the adjacent countryside would be poor from the North Newbury site and it would be difficult to create worthwhile footpath links. Sandleford would have the potential to open up new circular walks to the south of Newbury.

- **Sub-objective: To reduce the need for people to travel, especially by car.** Measures would need to be incorporated to encourage use of alternative means of transport to the car. The transport impacts have been considered in the Transport Assessments. Significant increases in congestion are anticipated across the whole network as a result of overall background traffic growth and potential mitigation measures are set out. The Highways Agency was particularly concerned at the Options stage about development at North Newbury as this site offers easy access to the Strategic Road Network. The high differential in scores in the original site selection framework resulted from the Sandleford site being identified as more than 20 minutes from any centre. With development in the north and west of the site the residential areas here would be within relatively easy access of facilities.
- **Sub-objective: To increase opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport and ensure the necessary infrastructure is available.** Strategic sites will need to provide opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport and mitigate any impacts. Both sites are considered to be within walking and cycling distance of the town centre. From the North Newbury site there is not a direct walking and cycling link between the site and the town centre and from South Newbury the gradient may affect cycling usage. Cycle links are already established along Monks Lane. The Sandleford site is closer to the train station. The original site selection framework favoured Sandleford on this sub-objective because of the existing bus services and cycle link.
- **Sub-objective: To conserve and enhance the character of the landscape.** The majority of representations objecting to Sandleford have been on landscape grounds and the SA at Options scored Sandleford lower on this sub-objective (the initial site selection framework had scored it higher than North Newbury). A number of respondents referred to the previous Inspector's decision on the Local Plan which resulted in the site not being carried forward at that time. The current proposals for the site are, however, very different from those proposed in the 1996 Draft Local Plan, with development now proposed in the least environmentally sensitive areas close to existing development and with the open aspect in the south of the site retained. The proposed formation of public open space in the southern part of the site would protect the sensitive landscape area in perpetuity, protecting views and vistas to and from the former Sandleford Priory and views when approaching Newbury along the A339. The Council's landscape consultant carried out additional landscape sensitivity analysis work for the Examination hearing session in November 2010 and concluded that 'in principle, most of the proposed extent of development.....is not in conflict with the findings of the Landscape Sensitivity Study or those in the Strategic Site Review.' "The North Newbury site has landscape implications with the potential impact on the setting to Donnington village and on the northern gateway to Newbury on the A339.
- **Sub-objective: To protect, conserve and enhance the built, cultural and historic landscape.** Sandleford had previously scored more poorly than North Newbury on this sub-objective because of the potential impact on Sandleford Priory (both as a listed building and Historic Park and Garden). However, with development proposed in the north and west of the site, these heritage assets would be respected and protected from development in perpetuity. For the North Newbury site the proposal to develop up to Donnington village raises issues regarding the setting of Donnington village and Castle and consultation has highlighted the potential impact on the Second Newbury battlefield.

- **Sub-objective: To sustainably manage flood risk to people, property and the environment.** The North Newbury site continues to score more poorly on this sub-objective because of the risk from surface water run-off, which was an issue raised in consultation responses to the Options for the Future consultation, in particular on behalf of Vodafone. Robust mitigation measures would need to be put in place.
- 18.8 In summary, on the environmental objectives further SA identifies Sandleford as the more sustainable option, largely due to the proposal to develop to the north and west of the site, mitigating the potential impact on the landscape and on the setting of Sandleford Priory and providing residential development close to existing facilities. Concerns remain with the North Newbury site regarding the setting of Donnington village and the landscape impact on the gateway to Newbury on the A339, together with potential flooding issues.
- 18.9 For the economic sustainability criteria, the re-assessment resulted in limited differentiation between the options as follows:
- **Sub-objective: To improve access to education, employment and services.** Comments from the Education Service indicated a strong preference for the Sandleford site, where there is scope for provision of a new primary school and extension to Park House School. In contrast opportunities at North Newbury are more limited – information from the agents promoting the site indicate an extension to Shaw-cum-Donnington School Primary School, but this site is very constrained, as is Trinity School. Both sites are within reach of employment opportunities in the town centre and employment areas. Both are also close to local employment opportunities. The Sandleford site has easy access to local retail facilities. The division of the North Newbury site by the A339 is seen as an obstacle to the creation of an integrated community with services to provide for that new community.
  - Other economic sub-objectives did not differentiate between the 2 options. Both sites would help to support key business sectors and assist in increasing the viability and vitality of Newbury town centre.
- 18.10 For the economic sub-objectives, Sandleford is favoured as the more sustainable option, due to the proximity of local services and facilities and the scope to address educational provision.
- 18.11 The revised SA therefore identifies Sandleford, together with Newbury Racecourse as the more sustainable option for strategic site allocation. The re-appraisal has taken account of representations made at the Options for the Future stage and in response to later consultation on the Publication Core Strategy and on focused changes.
- 18.12 Since publication there has been a petition to stop development at Sandleford, but this has not been related to any soundness issues in the Core Strategy. The main argument put forward is that development should take place first on previously developed land (PDL) and that the allocation at Sandleford could be accommodated on PDL sites at Compton and Hermitage, within the AONB, and on employment sites within Newbury. This argument overlooks the sustainability appraisal and previous consultation, which has identified the preferred approach of a combination of PDL, small sites and strategic sites, the technical evidence base, which includes an assessment of the potential housing sites within the District and analysis of employment requirements over the plan period, and the sustainability impacts of additional development adjacent to service villages in the AONB.
- 18.13 In reviewing the SA for the Eastern Area, it was not considered necessary to reassess the SA scoring. Though the options of allocating a strategic sized site had been assessed as the more sustainable general approach, the consultation had highlighted the difficulties of strategic site allocation in the east of the District, where

there are a number of constraints. Paragraph 11.24 outlines why Theale was not regarded as a suitable location for further strategic scale development. The potential site at Pincents Hill was considered to have significant adverse landscape and visual impact on the AONB.

- 18.14 The outline planning application for Pincents Hill was refused on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2010 on grounds including the impact of the proposed development on the character of the gap, the adverse landscape and visual impact on the AONB and the cumulative adverse impact on road safety and the local transport infrastructure.
- 18.15 It was subsequently dismissed at appeal on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2011 and by the Secretary of State on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2011. The Inspector's decision notice, whilst not in agreement with all of the Council's reasons for refusal, did support the assertion that the development of Pincents Hill would harm the character of the area and the visual setting of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) over a significant area of viewpoints. The Secretary of State concurred with the Inspectors findings.
- 18.16 The overall conclusion on the approach to the east of the District was that a broad location for development was the most appropriate solution. This approach has been reinforced by the Secretary of State's decision on the Pincents Hill application and by the strength of feeling in this part of the District expressed through the Core Strategy consultation and through the opposition to the Pincents Hill proposal
- 18.17 In summary, the re-assessment of the SA/SEA has concluded that a broad location in the east of the District and strategic allocations at Newbury Racecourse and at Sandleford are the most appropriate choices. This revised SA paper will need to be considered by Task Group Members and a decision made on the recommendation to be put forward to Full Council regarding the allocation of strategic sites so that fully informed consultation can take place in the autumn of 2011.

## Appendix 1. Sustainability Appraisal of the Policy Options

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### Key to SA Sub-Objectives:

**SOCIAL**

**ENVIRONMENTAL**

**ECONOMIC**

### Key to assessment of effects:

++	Very positive effect
+	Positive effect
○	Neutral / No effect / Unknown effect
+/-	Some positive, some negative effects
-	Negative effect
--	Very negative effect

## SA Table - Broad Locational Policy Options

Strategic Sites - Broad Locational Policy Options							
SA Objective	SA Sub-Objective	Option 1 – Newbury/Thatcham Focus		Option 2 – Newbury/Thatcham and Eastern focus		Option 3 – Newbury/Thatcham and Western Focus	
		Score	Comment	Score	Comment	Score	Comment
To provide sufficient good quality housing to meet local need	To meet the demand for affordable housing both in quantity and type available	+	Housing focussed in one area- not meeting overall needs of district	++	Delivers housing across wider area- not dependant on one market	+	Delivers housing across wider area but Hungerford will not have as high level of housing need as the urban areas of the District.
	To promote the adoption of sustainable design and construction practices in housing	++	Scale would facilitate implementation of sustainable schemes	++	Scale would facilitate implementation of sustainable schemes	++	Scale would facilitate implementation of sustainable schemes
To improve health and well being and reduce inequalities	To support healthy active lifestyles	0	Dependant on design	0	Dependant on design	0	Dependant on design
	To reduce levels and fear of crime and anti social behaviour	0	Dependant on design	0	Dependant on design	0	Dependant on design
	To improve access to the countryside, parks, open space, formal play facilities and libraries	0	The scale of development would be able to provide facilities and promote accessibility to existing facilities	0	The scale of development would be able to provide facilities and promote accessibility to existing facilities	0	The scale of development would be able to provide facilities and promote accessibility to existing facilities
To improve and safeguard accessibility	To improve access to education, employment and services	0	Good range of facilities in Newbury/Thatcham	0	Eastern site closer to main employment area in Reading and potentially better balance of employment and housing.	-	Though Hungerford has a good range of facilities, access to services is more limited than in the urban areas.
	To improve access to the countryside, parks and open space	0	Neutral effect	0	Neutral effect	0	Neutral effect
	To support the development of access to IT facilities including broadband	0	Neutral effect	0	Neutral effect	0	Neutral effect

	particularly in rural locations						
To achieve and promote high level provision and use of sustainable transport modes where possible	To reduce the need to travel, especially by car	○		○	Distribution of strategic sites in more than one area may assist in reducing travel needs	-	Larger scale development in Hungerford may attract commuters with higher travel needs
	To reduce accidents and improve safety	○	Dependant on design	○	Dependant on design	○	Dependant on design
	To increase opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport and ensure the necessary infrastructure is available	○	Strategic sites will provide opportunities and mitigate impacts	○	Strategic sites will provide opportunities and mitigate impacts	○	Strategic sites will provide opportunities and mitigate impacts
Contribute to good governance	To improve opportunities for participation in local action and decision making	○	Neutral impact	○	Neutral impact	○	Neutral impact
Ensure that the natural, built and historic environment is conserved and enhanced	To conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity of West Berkshire	○	Neutral impact	○	Neutral impact	○	Neutral impact
	To conserve and enhance the character of the landscape	-	Sandleford is a sensitive landscape area	--	Pincents Hill is adjacent to AONB, which is national landscape designation	--	Hungerford is within the AONB, which is national landscape designation
	To protect, conserve and enhance the built, cultural and historic environment	-	Impact on Newbury as a historic market town	○	Less impact on historic landscape	-	Impact on Hungerford as a historic market town
To protect and improve air, water and soil quality, and minimise noise levels throughout	To reduce air pollution	○		○	Spreads impact	○	Spreads impact
	To reduce noise levels in main	○	Not relevant	○	Not relevant	○	Not relevant

West Berkshire	settlements						
	To maintain and improve soil quality	○	Neutral impact	○	Neutral impact	○	Neutral impact
	To maintain and improve water quality	○	Impact of concentrating more development in Newbury area	○	Spreads impact	○	Spreads impact
To improve the efficiency of land use	To maximise the use of previously developed land and buildings where appropriate	○	Strategic sites mainly greenfield	○	Strategic sites greenfield	○	Strategic sites greenfield
To reduce consumption of natural resources and manage their use efficiently	To reduce energy use and promote the development and use of sustainable/ renewable energy technologies	○	Dependant on design. Strategic sites of scale to implement sustainable development technologies	○	Dependant on design. Strategic sites of scale to implement sustainable development technologies	○	Dependant on design. Strategic sites of scale to implement sustainable development technologies
	To reduce waste generation and disposal in line with the waste hierarchy and reuse of materials	○		○			
	To reduce water consumption and promote reuse	○		○			
	To reduce the consumption of minerals and promote reuse of secondary materials	○		○			
To reduce emissions contributing to climate change and ensure adaptation measures are in place to respond to climate change	To reduce West Berkshire's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions	○	Dependant on design. Strategic sites of scale to implement sustainable development technologies	○	Dependant on design. Strategic sites of scale to implement sustainable development technologies	○	Dependant on design. Strategic sites of scale to implement sustainable development technologies
	To sustainably manage flood risk to people, property and	○	Not in flood plain zones 2 or 3	○	Not in flood plain zones 2 or 3	○	Not in flood plain zones 2 or 3



	the environment						
To maintain a strong, diverse and sustainable economic base	To provide a range of high quality employment opportunities	○	Sites unlikely to provide significant employment provision	○	Sites unlikely to provide significant employment provision	○	Sites unlikely to provide significant employment provision
	To promote and support key business sectors and utilise employment land effectively and efficiently	+/-	Housing will support business and employment in Newbury but not the whole district	+	Spreads development and supports wider economic base	+/-	Spreads development and supports wider economic base. Would not support the eastern part of the district.
	To increase the viability and vitality of commercial centres	+/-	Will help support Newbury as commercial centre	+	Will help support both Newbury and Reading commercial centres	+	Will help support both Newbury and Hungerford commercial centres
<b>Summary of Effects</b>		<b>Effect:</b> Predominantly Neutral <b>Likelihood:</b> High <b>Scale:</b> Newbury / Thatcham <b>Duration:</b> Permanent <b>Timing:</b> Short to long term		<b>Effect:</b> Predominantly Neutral <b>Likelihood:</b> High <b>Scale:</b> Newbury / Thatcham and Eastern <b>Duration:</b> Permanent <b>Timing:</b> Short to long term		<b>Effect:</b> Predominantly Neutral <b>Likelihood:</b> High <b>Scale:</b> Newbury / Thatcham and Western <b>Duration:</b> Permanent <b>Timing:</b> Short to long term	

## Appendix 2. Summary of comments received at the community consultation on the options for delivering homes - Feb 2008

### Site 1: Land north of Bowling Green Road, Thatcham

<u>Advantages of this site</u>	<u>Disadvantages of this site</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Building into existing community with services and facilities</u></li> <li>• <u>Could sustain small infill “rounding-off” of settlement</u></li> <li>• <u>Visually well contained</u></li> <li>• <u>Partially previously developed land?</u></li> <li>• <u>Would avoid the need to develop on more environmentally sensitive areas to the south of Thatcham.</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Impact on the gap between settlements</u></li> <li>• <u>Commuter area</u></li> <li>• <u>Flood risk</u></li> <li>• <u>Poor accessibility to train station</u></li> <li>• <u>Topographical constraints to development</u></li> <li>• <u>Public footpaths running through site</u></li> </ul>

The proposed development of this area has been subject to a joint public meeting between Cold Ash parish Council and Thatcham Town Council attended by Officers. The main concerns raised at the meeting related mainly to traffic generation, congestion, flooding and “urbanisation of Cold Ash with the removal of a gap between the two settlements.

### Site 2: Greenham

<u>Advantages of this site</u>	<u>Disadvantages of this site</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Well placed for services in Newbury, including employment</u></li> <li>• <u>Close to bus route</u></li> <li>• <u>Sustainable site</u></li> <li>• <u>Fewer landscape issues</u></li> <li>• <u>“Scrubby” land</u></li> <li>• <u>Chance to link Greenham Common and Newbury</u></li> <li>• <u>Does the gap really have a viable function?</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Visual impact – high setting, ancient woodland, countryside</u></li> <li>• <u>Landfill issues/Contaminated land may impact on deliverability</u></li> <li>• <u>Covenant?</u></li> <li>• <u>SSSI</u></li> <li>• <u>Would lead to the merging of Newbury and Greenham</u></li> <li>• <u>There are already traffic issues in this area.</u></li> </ul>

### Site 3: Silchester Road, Tadley

<u>Advantages of this site</u>	<u>Disadvantages of this site</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Proximity to major employment site (AWE)</u></li> <li>• <u>Good access to services and facilities in Tadley</u></li> <li>• <u>No environmental constraints</u></li> <li>• <u>Could help support and improve infrastructure</u></li> <li>• <u>AWE is expanding – could help support demand for housing</u></li> <li>• <u>Site is well related to existing settlement</u></li> <li>• <u>Site is visually well contained.</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Capacity of sewage system</u></li> <li>• <u>Health and safety implications of locating more homes close to AWE</u></li> <li>• <u>Lack of infrastructure in Tadley</u></li> <li>• <u>Cross border work/issues</u></li> <li>• <u>Is the development big enough to support provision of infrastructure?</u></li> <li>• <u>Lack of transport links</u></li> <li>• <u>No train station</u></li> <li>• <u>Will this meet housing needs of Hampshire rather than West Berkshire</u></li> <li>• <u>The links to Newbury and Thatcham are poor.</u></li> </ul>

**Site 4: Kennet Valley Park**

<b><u>Advantages of this site</u></b>	<b><u>Disadvantages of this site</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Scale of development will bring about improved services</u></li> <li>• <u>Proximity to public transport links (bus and rail) with potential for a station</u></li> <li>• <u>Proximity to M4</u></li> <li>• <u>Proximity to Reading and facilities</u></li> <li>• <u>Access to employment opportunities</u></li> <li>• <u>The development would relieve pressure on the rest of the district if West Berkshire still had to plan 18000 units</u></li> <li>• <u>Would provide a lot of housing</u></li> <li>• <u>Houses could be built on stilts to overcome flooding issues</u></li> <li>• <u>Futuristic development</u></li> <li>• <u>Site will be high profile so will be high quality</u></li> <li>• <u>Land is poor quality as it has been used for extraction so is no longer suitable for agriculture</u></li> <li>• <u>May be suitable for a smaller urban extension than 7500</u></li> <li>• <u>Flat site – good visually</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Site is on a floodplain and at risk of flooding</u></li> <li>• <u>Cost of pumping</u></li> <li>• <u>Protection would be needed for Reading due to the infill of lakes</u></li> <li>• <u>Environmental issues</u></li> <li>• <u>Impact on Bird habitats</u></li> <li>• <u>Impact on nature reserve area</u></li> <li>• <u>Need support from Environment Agency</u></li> <li>• <u>New units may not be able to get home insurance cover</u></li> <li>• <u>Delivery issues – timing</u></li> <li>• <u>Planning issues – large site, long term</u></li> <li>• <u>Viability</u></li> <li>• <u>If the site is not developed, does West Berkshire have to put 7500 units elsewhere</u></li> <li>• <u>Infrastructure should be developed before the houses</u></li> <li>• <u>Impact on M4 which is already congested between junction 11 and 12 – should an extra junction be provided?</u></li> <li>• <u>Proximity to nuclear installations at AWE Burghfield - is it safe?</u></li> <li>• <u>Social stresses as there will be a lack of established community infrastructure</u></li> <li>• <u>Site encourages commuting</u></li> <li>• <u>Would ruin a beautiful area</u></li> <li>• <u>Noise impact of M4</u></li> <li>• <u>Site does not relate well to Reading</u></li> <li>• <u>Physical barriers of M4 and rail lines limit opportunities for integrating site into established urban area</u></li> </ul>

There have also been a number of public meetings to discuss development on the site.

**Site 5: Newbury Racecourse**

<b><u>Advantages of the site</u></b>	<b><u>Disadvantages of the site</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Builds onto existing service and transport links</u></li> <li>• <u>Good location for key workers to access local employment</u></li> <li>• <u>Previously developed land</u></li> <li>• <u>New bridge being implemented linking the site to the Hambridge Road</u></li> <li>• <u>Sustainable location</u></li> <li>• <u>Close to railway station with easy access to London</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Local roads are already congested (Hambridge Road, Greenham Bear Lane roundabout)</u></li> <li>• <u>Poor access to local schools</u></li> <li>• <u>Lack of capacity at local schools</u></li> <li>• <u>Could be an ideal employment site so using it for housing would present a lost opportunity</u></li> <li>• <u>Flood zone at eastern end of site</u></li> <li>• <u>Impact on existing industrial premises</u></li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Close to employment sites encouraging walking to work</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Good links to town centre</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Infrastructure improvements will provide additional benefits</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Cycling / walking / public transport opportunities</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Potential footbridge would link the site well to the centre of Newbury for pedestrians</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Not visually detrimental</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Opportunity to improve visual appearance of area</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Potential to enhance the Racecourse and protect it through partner funding</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Not in floodplain</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Potential site for park and ride</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Part of the site is outside of the settlement boundary</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Difficult to integrate with town because railway line acts as physical barrier</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Security issues associated with golf course</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Already a busy area of Newbury</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Urbanisation of Racecourse and golf course area – loss of visual amenity</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Limited sewage capacity</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Vehicular accessibility for residents and visitors on race days would be very difficult due to congestion</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Noise impacts and vibration from railway line</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Potentially poor amenity</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Questions over the deliverability of the bridge over the railway</a></li> </ul>
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### **[Site 6: North Newbury](#)**

<b><a href="#">Advantages of the site</a></b>	<b><a href="#">Disadvantages of the site</a></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Big site – can accommodate growth</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Good access onto main route to Newbury town centre by car and to the M4</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Schools nearby</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Could be a mixed use development with economic benefits</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Access to A34 and M4 without impacting on the town centre</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Vodafone already there in the sensitive area thus reducing the impact</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Site may positively reduce the impact of travel to Vodafone</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Currently not a particularly attractive site</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Could utilise Vodafone bus service</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Good local infrastructure</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Opportunity for park and ride</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Eastern side of A339 preferable to west</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Relatively poor access to shops and local facilities</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Loss of a greenfield site</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Isolated</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Would promote car dependency</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Limited links to town centre</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Lost opportunity for industry and commerce</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Limited capacity on A339</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Vodafone is the only reason this site is being considered</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Flooding in July 2007 due to surface run off – increased urbanisation would exacerbate this problem</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Environmental degradation</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Precedent of urbanisation creeping north</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Sewage capacity issues</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Heritage issues – impact on Donnington Castle</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Topography issues – any construction would be prominent to those entering the town from the north</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Long way from train station</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Impact on Donnington village</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">This site is a gateway to Newbury and should not be spoiled by housing</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The eastern and western sides of the site could never integrate because the A339 is a physical barrier</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Impact on landscape</a></li> </ul>

**Site 7: Pincents Hill, Tilehurst**

<b><u>Advantages of the site</u></b>	<b><u>Disadvantages of the site</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>The site appears to be a natural extension to the urban area.</u></li> <li>• <u>The site is sustainable in terms of transport links – e.g. good bus routes and links into Reading town centre.</u></li> <li>• <u>Close to retail (Savacentre) and employment.</u></li> <li>• <u>Any development could help relieve the pressure on the M4 junction 12 roundabout during peak times through developer contributions.</u></li> <li>• <u>Could act more as an extension to Reading.</u></li> <li>• <u>Location is good but currently the site would face transport issues, which would need to be resolved.</u></li> <li>• <u>Would provide a degree of infilling.</u></li> <li>• <u>If part of a larger scheme then development on site would be beneficial</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>The site would require additional infrastructure to that already in place at present.</u></li> <li>• <u>Site is close to/on edge of AONB.</u></li> <li>• <u>Road infrastructure at Junction 12 and A4 already face capacity pressures.</u></li> <li>• <u>Steep ground levels and topography of site needs to be considered.</u></li> <li>• <u>Visually exposed site.</u></li> <li>• <u>No rail links close by – nearest rail station is at Theale.</u></li> <li>• <u>Poor access to the site at present.</u></li> <li>• <u>The site is unrelated to the settlement boundary of the town.</u></li> </ul>

The Council has received a large number of objections to the proposal following the public consultation carried out by the potential developers and two additional public meetings attended by officers. These objections are largely in the form of a standard letter which was circulated by the local MP. The issues relate mainly to traffic generation, congestion and access issues, and the effect on wildlife.

**Site 8: Newbury Battlefield**

<b><u>Advantages of the site</u></b>	<b><u>Disadvantages of the site</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Site has been previously identified as a potentially suitable site by the Inspector at the inquiry into the last Local Plan.</u></li> <li>• <u>Site is sustainable and has a good relationship with the town centre.</u></li> <li>• <u>Development on site seems like a natural progression to the urban area of Newbury.</u></li> <li>• <u>The site has a lack of identity, and therefore any development proposals could include a tourist centre or cultural/historical centre.</u></li> <li>• <u>It is possible to develop some but not the entire site, thus maintaining the areas history.</u></li> <li>• <u>Good cycle links with Newbury.</u></li> <li>• <u>Some development has already occurred on the battlefield site.</u></li> <li>• <u>Site is big enough to contribute to resolving infrastructure pressures – e.g. access and public transport.</u></li> <li>• <u>Not on a floodplain.</u></li> <li>• <u>If the whole site was developed it could</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>The site is a Battlefield site and therefore raises moral issues over the possible loss of identity of a significant historic site, representing a large piece of English history.</u></li> <li>• <u>Accessibility to A34 junction and the effect this will have Newbury town centre. Also transport/access issues into the town and poor public transport networks.</u></li> <li>• <u>Sutton Estate control over the management of the land may want to be maintained.</u></li> <li>• <u>Currently a greenfield site.</u></li> <li>• <u>Intrusion into the countryside.</u></li> <li>• <u>Noise impact from the A34 on potential residents.</u></li> <li>• <u>Heritage concerns.</u></li> <li>• <u>Very exposed landscape.</u></li> <li>• <u>Ecological issues?</u></li> </ul>

<p><u>open up the opportunity for a new north/south route round Newbury.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Close to town centre facilities.</u></li> <li>• <u>Site would be contained, with the location of the A34 by-pass to the left.</u></li> <li>• <u>The site has the potential to be a significant housing site.</u></li> </ul>	
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### **Site 9: Siege Cross, Thatcham**

<b><u>Advantages of this site</u></b>	<b><u>Disadvantages of this site</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Site appears to be sustainable.</u></li> <li>• <u>It was suggested to build housing on current school sites (PDL) and then relocate the school facilities (with playing fields) to the identified greenfield site at north east Thatcham.</u></li> <li>• <u>Close to Thatcham town centre, via walking.</u></li> <li>• <u>Location is good as situated along A4 with key employment site opposite.</u></li> <li>• <u>Development on this site has the potential to provide additional community facilities and services through developer contributions.</u></li> <li>• <u>Site holds no flooding issues.</u></li> <li>• <u>Good bus, rail and road links to/from the site.</u></li> <li>• <u>Good access to open space, countryside and leisure facilities at Dunstan Park.</u></li> <li>• <u>Good access to Reading.</u></li> <li>• <u>Site is not in a gap or AONB.</u></li> <li>• <u>Does not have any identified ecological issues.</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>The site has the potential to continue sprawling in a westerly direction – where do we draw the line?</u></li> <li>• <u>The site is very much car dependent.</u></li> <li>• <u>Schools in the local area are at full capacity.</u></li> <li>• <u>Site is currently agricultural land.</u></li> <li>• <u>The topography of the site means the land rises very steeply, therefore potential landscape issues.</u></li> <li>• <u>Need to ensure a gap is maintained between Thatcham and Bucklebury/Cold Ash – need to maintain their village identity.</u></li> <li>• <u>Site is prone to hillside flooding.</u></li> <li>• <u>Services and infrastructure at Thatcham are poor.</u></li> <li>• <u>Housing development would encourage commuting.</u></li> </ul>

### **Site 10: Enborne, Wash Water**

<b><u>Advantages of this site</u></b>	<b><u>Disadvantages of this site</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Good access to the A34</u></li> <li>• <u>Good accessibility into Newbury and the south</u></li> <li>• <u>Good schools</u></li> <li>• <u>Limited development favoured either side of Andover Road</u></li> <li>• <u>Should Wash Water be separate?</u></li> <li>• <u>Natural extension of town</u></li> <li>• <u>Potential for land owners of sites 10 and 13 to work together</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Not close to Newbury town centre – the most remote of all the options considered around Newbury</u></li> <li>• <u>More dormitory</u></li> <li>• <u>Not strategic</u></li> <li>• <u>Sensitive landscape area – topography may result in intrusive development</u></li> <li>• <u>Would rather see development at site 13 – South Newbury</u></li> <li>• <u>Land owned by local trust</u></li> <li>• <u>Not sustainable – journey to shops</u></li> <li>• <u>Less sustainable than site 13</u></li> <li>• <u>No additional facilities provided</u></li> <li>• <u>Would set a precedent to build up to the A34</u></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Potential noise issues adjacent to the A34</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Not enough business for a south side Park and Ride</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Merging settlements</a></li> </ul>
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### **Site 11: Newbury/Thatcham Gap**

<b><u>Advantages of this site</u></b>	<b><u>Disadvantages of this site</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Good place to build – close to facilities of both Newbury and Thatcham</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Would prevent development elsewhere</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Gap does not overtly demonstrate distinction between the two towns</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Already got good transport links</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Sustainable</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Gap doesn't matter – the perception is that there is no gap</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Could create footpaths north/south</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Important gap</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Would loose the separate identities of Thatcham and Newbury</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Too far from both Newbury and Thatcham town centres</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Thatcham has already had lots of development</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">People like to feel that they live in the country</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">A4 corridor is full</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Landscape and environmental constraints – visual impact</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Provides important amenity space for Thatcham</a></li> </ul>

[This proposal has been subject to a joint public meeting between Thatcham Town Council and Cold Ash parish Council at which over 250 members of the public attended. Officers gave a factual presentation on the Local Development Framework and site selection process.](#)

### **Site 12: Salisbury Road, Hungerford**

<b><u>Advantages of this site</u></b>	<b><u>Disadvantages of this site</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Infrastructure provision</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Town centre facilities are good</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Could make town more viable and vibrant</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Need a level of housing to maintain services</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Hungerford needs further development</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Access to railway station in Hungerford</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Within walking distance of town centre</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Location is acceptable in terms of marshland etc.</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Spreads choice among West Berkshire</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Softer edge to Hungerford</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">AONB and countryside</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rising land, visually exposed</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Pressure on primary school</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Is there sufficient employment to support the development – employment/housing balance?</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Public transport.</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Increase traffic and congestion, particularly in the centre.</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Impact on infrastructure.</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Affordable housing issue for local people.</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Small market town. Concern that development may result in the loss of some of the character of the area should new development be too big.</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Disproportionate for current town size, smaller sites preferred rather than one big site.</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Town not a major settlement.</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">High percentage of growth, in one area.</a></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Would prefer the development to be between the A4 and the M4.</u></li> <li>• <u>There are better sites around Hungerford.</u></li> <li>• <u>Does not meet the Town Plan criteria.</u></li> <li>• <u>Residents have expressed concern for further development.</u></li> </ul>
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### **Site 13: Sandleford Park**

<b><u>Advantages of this site</u></b>	<b><u>Disadvantages of this site</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Adjoins existing development and existing services and facilities.</u></li> <li>• <u>Size – strategic opportunity to integrate and provide facilities, services and infrastructure.</u></li> <li>• <u>Potential community benefits from the site.</u></li> <li>• <u>Possible low density/few houses located at the top of the site, not all up the hill.</u></li> <li>• <u>College already looks isolated.</u></li> <li>• <u>College and Rugby Club already there.</u></li> <li>• <u>Could take site onto Andover Road.</u></li> <li>• <u>Good access to the station.</u></li> <li>• <u>Sustainable.</u></li> <li>• <u>Can make public transport more sustainable.</u></li> <li>• <u>Employment.</u></li> <li>• <u>Opportunity for renewables - large scale combined heat and energy biomass.</u></li> <li>• <u>Not in the AONB.</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Transport infrastructure concerns. Route into Newbury is already busy, especially with Basingstoke developments and the Amenity site.</u></li> <li>• <u>Close to waste transfer site - amenity issues.</u></li> <li>• <u>Parts of the area are of high landscape value and ancient woodland.</u></li> <li>• <u>Historic environment. Relationship of ancient woodland with Sandleford Priory.</u></li> <li>• <u>Loss of views – Sandleford Priory, Capability Brown.</u></li> <li>• <u>Topography – rising land.</u></li> <li>• <u>Requires new access onto the A339.</u></li> <li>• <u>Concern with capacity of A339</u></li> <li>• <u>Cycle opportunities are poor.</u></li> <li>• <u>Goes quite far south.</u></li> <li>• <u>Potential loss of existing outdoor recreational opportunities.</u></li> </ul>

### **Site 14: Denison Barracks, Hermitage**

<b><u>Advantages of this site</u></b>	<b><u>Disadvantages of this site</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Brownfield site</u></li> <li>• <u>Good access to M4 / A34 and local road network</u></li> <li>• <u>A mixed use development could provide other services to the village community (shops, school, surgery)</u></li> <li>• <u>Site is available and deliverable</u></li> <li>• <u>More housing could strengthen the use of existing facilities</u></li> <li>• <u>Site is in single ownership which is more conducive to delivery than multiple owners</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Loss of military use – the associated facilities use by local community may be lost</u></li> <li>• <u>Increase need for travel</u></li> <li>• <u>Poor accessibility</u></li> <li>• <u>Isolation from services in towns, especially if no access to car</u></li> <li>• <u>Poor access to A34 from the south</u></li> <li>• <u>Noise impacts of M4</u></li> <li>• <u>No employment nearby</u></li> <li>• <u>Lack of infrastructure</u></li> <li>• <u>There would be increased pressure on village facilities</u></li> <li>• <u>Inadequate public transport – decent bus services would be required</u></li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Bus services would not be viable and would need financial support</u></li><li>• <u>Unsustainable location</u></li><li>• <u>Just because its surplus previously development land, does not mean it is suitable for housing</u></li><li>• <u>If site is allocated for housing, it should be for less than 500 units.</u></li><li>• <u>Site would be better used as a distribution centre than housing as it has good access to trunk roads</u></li><li>• <u>Site would be better in industrial use to provide employment for Hermitage</u></li><li>• <u>Site should be returned to the countryside</u></li><li>• <u>Deliverability</u></li></ul>
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## Appendix 3. Strategic site appraisals

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These site appraisals take key points from the Site Selection Framework assessments (See Site Selection Framework SA Policy Paper Appendix 3 and 4) and the Combined Strategic Housing Sites Appraisal Document phase 1 (April 2009) to set out the reasons for rejecting and the reasons for keeping sites in the consideration of strategic sites taken forward in the Options for the Future consultation (the Preferred Options stage). Further detail for each site can therefore be found in the Site Selection Framework SA Policy Paper and the Combined Strategic Housing Sites Appraisal Document phase 1 which accompanies the Core Strategy.

The purpose of this appendix is to set out why sites, assessed within the Site Selection Framework, were taken forward within the Options for the Future and therefore set out why alternative sites were rejected.

### **Site 1: North Thatcham**

#### Summary:

Site selection framework: score -5, rank 7

Overall: reject for consideration at preferred options stage

The site lies to the north-east of Thatcham, to the north of Bowling Green Road and is 21 hectares in size. Situated outside the settlement boundary, it adjoins agricultural and forestry land and is designated as a local gap. This is one of a number of potential sites around the Thatcham area with similar generic issues affecting the wider area, regarding water treatment, education capacity and the possible necessity to upgrade Newbury Fire Station.

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>The emerging South East Plan states that sustainable urban extension may be promoted on the periphery of the regional and sub-regional hubs, and smaller allocations may be brought forward at other settlements. Due to the close spatial relationship between Newbury and Thatcham, developing at this location could be seen as in accordance with emerging regional policy.</u>
<u>Site Selection Framework</u>	<u>Development located at this site would have positive impacts through improved access to formal play facilities and libraries as the site is within 20 minutes walk of at least two facilities. The site is within 400 metres of open space or would provide new open space, is of a size that could contribute to the supply of affordable housing, and is within 100 metres of a designated cycle route. There are a number of negative aspects which included that the site is on significant land between settlements and that it could have a negative impact on historic landscape character. In the assessment the site was identified as partly within a Critical Drainage area. Land to the south, south east and south west of the site are identified as Critical Drainage Areas. Due to this proximity and the potential risk of surface water flooding to the site and surrounding areas this significant risk was recognised in the assessment as a potential issue in the Site Selection Framework. The site scores poorly in the Site Selection Framework (-5).</u>

<a href="#">Landscape</a>	<a href="#">The Landscape Sensitivity Study recommends against extending Thatcham on to more prominent higher ground, however subject to retaining vegetation and the setting of the historic farmhouses, the lower fields in the south east part of the site may be suitable for development.</a>
<a href="#">Flooding</a>	<a href="#">The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA level 1, May 2008) identifies land to the south, south east and south west of the site as Critical Drainage Areas. A level 2 SFRA (January 2009) suggests that, without mitigation, the land is likely to be both susceptible to flooding and increase the flooding from surface water runoff, groundwater and local drainage systems. Development of this area could also increase the risk of sewer and fluvial flooding elsewhere.</a>
<a href="#">Transport</a>	<a href="#">The site would benefit from good accessibility to a variety of local services, though there is a lack of a regular bus service running nearby, and local traffic flows would significantly increase. Overall the site ranks mid to top in the Transport Assessment.</a>
<a href="#">Education</a>	<a href="#">There is a lack of capacity in some of the local schools and if brought forward, further discussion with the education authority would be necessary at the early stages.</a>
<a href="#">Culture &amp; Leisure</a>	<a href="#">Regency Hotel with conference facilities and leisure club. Urban cycle route. Pedestrian right of way across site. Library nearby. Historic Farmstead on site.</a>
<a href="#">Utilities</a>	<a href="#">Discussions with infrastructure providers have highlighted an issue with sewage treatment capacity in the Newbury/Thatcham area and this could require phasing of development to accommodate infrastructure upgrades.</a>
<a href="#">Minerals and Waste</a>	<a href="#">No constraints identified.</a>
<a href="#">Ecology</a>	<a href="#">No ecology constraints have been identified although a Wildlife Heritage Site lies just to the north west.</a>

[The site scores poorly in the Site Selection Framework and development is likely to be both susceptible to flooding and increase the flooding from surface water runoff and local drainage systems elsewhere. Taking the above in to account \(which includes the site selection framework assessment, technical evidence, and discussions with infrastructure providers\), \*\*this site is not recommended\*\* for inclusion as a strategic site in the core strategy.](#)

## Site 2: Greenham

### Summary:

Site selection framework: score 4, rank (joint) 3

Overall: reject for consideration at preferred options stage

This site of approximately 27 hectares lies to the south of Newbury in the local gap between Newbury and the village of Greenham. Most of the site is grassland apart from a pocket of woodland to the east.

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>This location complies with the South East Plan which identifies Newbury as a sub-regional hub and with the vision and settlement hierarchy in the Core Strategy which has Newbury as the main focus for development. The site supports the Core Strategy vision of focussing development in the urban area. However the overriding concern is that development of such a scale on this site would result in the merging of Newbury and Greenham which would cause the loss of the separate identity of both settlements. This would not support the overall vision of the Core Strategy.</u>
<u>Site Selection Framework</u>	<u>Development located at this site would help to support healthy, active lifestyles and would assist in improving access to formal play facilities and libraries through its location within 20 minutes walk of at least two facilities. The site is also within 400 metres of open space or could potentially provide new open space, which would aid in the improvement of access to the countryside and open space. As the site is also within 100 metres of a designated cycle route there would be opportunities to increase walking, cycling and use of public transport and ensure the necessary infrastructure is available. There are a number of negative aspects which include that the site is on significant land separating Newbury and Greenham. It also contains a Wildlife Heritage Site, and could have a negative impact on biodiversity as well as a negative impact on historic landscape character which has low or low-moderate capacity to accept change. The site scores well in the Site Selection Framework (4).</u>
<u>Landscape</u>	<u>The Landscape Sensitivity Study shows that a strategic site in this location could have damaging landscape impacts due to the landscape and visual prominence in the area, and its important function as a gap between settlements, but there could potentially be scope for a smaller development in the area to the west of Greenham Road.</u>
<u>Flooding</u>	<u>The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA level 1, May 2008) suggests that there are no known flooding issues with the site or the immediate area.</u>
<u>Transport</u>	<u>The site has good accessibility to services and facilities and is well served by cycle routes. Whilst public transport provision is lacking at the site for good access to Newbury town centre there are bus services that run nearby. The site scores poorly in the Transport Assessment (TA) for its impact on the road network however its relative accessibility allows the site to rank mid table in the TA.</u>

<a href="#">Education</a>	<a href="#">There may be some issues with capacity of nearby schools and if brought forward, further discussion with the education authority would be necessary at the early stages.</a>
<a href="#">Culture &amp; Leisure</a>	<a href="#">Woodland Wildlife Heritage Site within the site. Private leisure centre adjacent. Informal recreation opportunities at Greenham Common nearby. Cycle route links to Newbury.</a>
<a href="#">Utilities</a>	<a href="#">Discussions with infrastructure providers have highlighted an issue with sewage treatment capacity in the Newbury/Thatcham area and this could require phasing of development to accommodate infrastructure upgrades.</a>
<a href="#">Minerals and Waste</a>	<a href="#">If taken forward, further investigation in to minerals and waste across the site would be needed.</a>
<a href="#">Ecology</a>	<a href="#">There are significant ecological issues on the site with Great Crested Newts and numerous species of bats.</a>

[Although the site scores well in the Site Selection Framework the overriding concern is that the site would merge Newbury and Greenham causing the loss of the separate identity of both settlements. The site is also very sensitive in ecological terms. Taking the above in to account \(which includes the site selection framework assessment, technical evidence, and discussions with infrastructure providers\), \*\*the site is not recommended\*\* for inclusion as a strategic site in the Core Strategy.](#)

### **[Site 3: Kennet Valley Park](#)**

#### [Summary:](#)

[Site selection framework: score -16, rank \(joint\) 10](#)

[Overall: reject for consideration at preferred options stage](#)

[This large site is the area of land between the M4 and the southern urban edge of Reading. The area is dominated by gravel pits \(active and restored\), meadowland and land liable to flood.](#)

<a href="#">Objectives</a>	<a href="#">Development on this site would not conform to the Housing policies of the South East Plan, despite the identification of Reading as a regional hub. The site was specifically excluded from the Secretary of State's proposed changes to the South east Plan, and its inclusion within the Core Strategy would therefore not accord with (then) emerging regional policy.</a>
<a href="#">Site Selection</a>	<a href="#">Given the size of the site the Site Selection Framework showed positive aspects including the contribution to the supply of</a>

<u>Framework</u>	<u>affordable housing, ability to provide a new local centre, employment on the site and provision of new primary and secondary schools which would assist in improving and safeguarding accessibility. The site would have some positive sustainability impacts in relation to improving access to formal play facilities and libraries. The negative aspects are considerable and include the loss of countryside currently used for informal access and recreation and the fact that part of the site is a Wildlife Heritage Site. The site contains a number of World War Two pillboxes, is on a potential mineral reserve of significant size and is also within the functional floodplain (Flood Zone 3b). Developing the site would also have a significant impact on transportation infrastructure. The site ranks joint bottom in the Site Selection Framework with a score of -16.</u>
<u>Landscape</u>	<u>The current landscape is of significant landscape, biodiversity and recreational value and is a potentially much greater landscape, biodiversity and recreational resource to serve the existing Reading and Theale communities. Almost the whole site is within the floodplain and measures to provide a substitute flood accommodation area would have a considerable negative impact on the surrounding landscapes and topography of the area. The Landscape Sensitivity Study recommends that none of the area north of the River Kennet should be considered for development. Only that part of the site to the south, outside of the wetland landscapes has any potential. Development on this site would have a high landscape impact.</u>
<u>Flooding</u>	<u>The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA – level 1) indicates that the area consists predominantly Flood Zone 3b (functional floodplain) with the majority of the remainder being Flood Zone 2 and 3a. Therefore the site has significant flooding issues.</u>
<u>Transport</u>	<u>The site lacks local facilities though it is accessible to Theale and Reading town centres, with a national cycle route nearby and good bus service provision. There is potential to improve public transport and to provide a range of new services in order to improve accessibility. The scale of the site will have a very significant impact on the road network due to the sheer volume of new traffic. Overall this site ranks third from the bottom in the Transport Assessment and due to its scale would have the worst impact on the road network of all the potential sites.</u>
<u>Education</u>	<u>The Education Authority has advised that development on the site would be treated as a stand alone proposal and new schools, both secondary and primary, would need to be provided.</u>
<u>Culture &amp; Leisure</u>	<u>A large site which encompasses a number of recreational facilities. Large number of WWII pillboxes on the site. Reading town centre offers additional facilities nearby.</u>
<u>Utilities</u>	<u>Discussions with utility providers have shown that due to the scale of the site it would be treated as a stand alone proposal and considerable provision in new infrastructure would be needed.</u>
<u>Minerals and Waste</u>	<u>Further investigation as to minerals and waste would be necessary as parts of the site have already been extracted and infilled leaving potentially contaminated land, and there is potential for further extraction and infilling.</u>

<u>Ecology</u>	<u>The site is covered by the Lower Kennet Valley management plan (2003) which identified the key ecological features as being several IUCN Vulnerable species and numerous locally notable species.</u>
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The flooding, impact on biodiversity, landscape sensitivity and transport are all very significant issues that would require significant mitigation measures to overcome. Taking the above in to account (which includes the site selection framework assessment, technical evidence, and discussions with infrastructure providers), **the site is not recommended** for inclusion as a strategic site in the Core Strategy.

#### **Site 4: Newbury Racecourse**

##### Summary:

Site selection framework: score 9, rank (joint) 1

Overall: take forward for further consideration

The site is located approximately 1km to the south east of Newbury town centre and forms a green wedge to the east of the town.

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Development at this location would comply with the policies of the South East Plan which identifies Newbury as a sub-regional hub. It would also comply with the overall strategic vision for the Core Strategy and settlement hierarchy which sees Newbury as the main focus for development.</u>
<u>Site Selection Framework</u>	<u>Development located at this site would have positive impacts through improved access to formal play facilities and libraries. The site is accessible to a number of facilities either by bus or by walking, is close to the town centre and Newbury train station and is served by the Racecourse train station. The size of the site means it could contribute to the supply of affordable housing and there would be provision of employment on site. In terms of the negative sustainability aspects, the development of the site will result in the loss of open space and/or countryside currently used for informal access and recreation, and there is a SSSI/SAC nearby. The site scores very well in the Site Selection Framework (9).</u>
<u>Landscape</u>	<u>The Landscape Sensitivity Study concludes that it would not have a significant adverse impact on the landscape qualities of the area. Despite its low landscape, ecological, built form and historic interest this area is of importance both culturally and because of the visibility of the open land to the eastern edge of Newbury. Development could be located in the least visible part of the site.</u>
<u>Flooding</u>	<u>The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA – level 1) indicates that there are no known issues relating to flooding on this site or in the immediate area.</u>

<u>Transport</u>	<u>The site has extremely good accessibility to a range of essential services and is well served by public transport having the Racecourse train station on site and nearby to the Newbury mainline station. There is potential to improve the local bus services and there are good opportunities for cycling with cycle routes nearby. The Transport Assessment shows that the site would potentially cause congestion at key junctions across Newbury. The site is well placed in terms of accessibility and promoting travel by public transport, cycling and walking, however it is likely to cause congestion and delays in Newbury.</u>
<u>Education</u>	<u>In terms of capacity of schools, it is likely that formulaic contributions will be sufficient to mitigate any impact from the development.</u>
<u>Culture &amp; Leisure</u>	<u>Adjacent to Newbury Racecourse. Close proximity to Newbury town centre. Private health and fitness club, and private golf club on site.</u>
<u>Utilities</u>	<u>Discussions with infrastructure providers have highlighted an issue with sewage treatment capacity in the Newbury/Thatcham area and this could necessitate an impact study or phasing conditions.</u>
<u>Minerals and Waste</u>	<u>The prospect of mineral deposit extraction prior to development may need to be investigated.</u>
<u>Ecology</u>	<u>To the east of the site is a local nature reserve which contains a SSSI and SAC. A Wildlife Heritage Site lies to the south of the site.</u>

The site is located well for access to facilities and employment, and is relatively close to the town centre and adjacent train station. Development of the site would represent an efficient use of land and would support the development of the Racecourse as a major tourist attraction and employer, which would in turn support the economy of the town as a whole. Traffic could however cause congestion on local roads. Taking the above in to account (which includes the site selection framework assessment, technical evidence, and discussions with infrastructure providers), **the site is recommended** for further consideration for inclusion as a strategic site in the Core Strategy.

### Site 5: North Newbury

#### Summary:

Site selection framework: score 0, rank 5

Overall: take forward for further consideration

The area being considered for development is located to the north of Newbury, covers an area of approximately 70 hectares and comprises of wooded areas along with agricultural land.



<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Development on the site would comply with the policies of the South East Plan which identifies Newbury as a sub-regional hub. It would comply with the overall strategic vision for the Core Strategy and settlement hierarchy which sees the Newbury/Thatcham urban area and the Eastern urban area as the main focus for development.</u>
<u>Site Selection Framework</u>	<u>In the Site Selection Framework the size of the site means that it could contribute to the supply of affordable housing. The site is accessible to the town centre and to open space. The appraisal showed a number of negative aspects including the fact that the site is adjacent to a Wildlife Heritage Site, is on high grade agricultural land and could have a negative impact on the character of the landscape which has a medium sensitivity. This would compromise the ability to meet the sustainability objective of ensuring that the natural, built and historic environment is conserved and enhanced, and protecting and improve air, water and soil quality. The site ranked mid-table in the Site Selection Framework with a score of 0.</u>
<u>Landscape</u>	<u>The Landscape Sensitivity Study concluded that development in the area to the west of Shaw Farm Road could be acceptable. The openness of the site is important in helping to maintain the character of Donnington village as separate from Newbury. Development to the east of Highwood Farm would encroach onto the prominent wooded ridge and is not recommended. The woodlands to the north of the site are local landmarks enclosing Newbury. In summary, a site of this scale would have a considerable landscape impact.</u>
<u>Flooding</u>	<u>The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA – level 1) identifies the area as an area of groundwater emergence. A level 2 SFRA for the site (January 2009) suggests that without mitigation, development on the site would likely be susceptible to flooding and increase the flooding from surface water runoff, groundwater and local drainage systems. Development could also increase the risk of sewer and fluvial flooding elsewhere. Therefore the site has significant flooding issues which would require further consideration.</u>
<u>Transport</u>	<u>The site has good accessibility to Newbury town centre and a range of facilities. The Transport Assessment shows that there would be localised delays, increased congestion and some traffic re-routing and there would be no significant impact on the network.</u>
<u>Education</u>	<u>Discussion with the education authority concludes that there may be some issues with capacity of schools and further discussions would need to take place at an early stage to ensure that appropriate educational provision could be made to accommodate the development.</u>
<u>Culture &amp; Leisure</u>	<u>Two woodland Wildlife Heritage Sites to the north. Pedestrian right of way to the west and bridleway to the east of the site.</u>
<u>Utilities</u>	<u>Discussions with infrastructure providers have highlighted an issue with sewage treatment capacity in the Newbury/Thatcham area and this could necessitate an impact study or phasing agreements.</u>

<u>Minerals and Waste</u>	<u>No constraints have been identified.</u>
<u>Ecology</u>	<u>No constraints have been identified although two Wildlife Heritage Sites lie to the north of the site.</u>

Although the site scores well in the Site Selection Framework and support the Core Strategy vision, there are a number of concerns about the susceptibility of the area to flooding, the capacity of the local services and infrastructure to support such a large scale development and the potential loss of very good agricultural land. Further consideration would need to be given to the potential impacts on maintaining the identity and integrity of Donnington village and other landscape impacts. Taking the above in to account (which includes the site selection framework assessment, technical evidence, and discussions with infrastructure providers), **the site is recommended** for further consideration for inclusion as a strategic site in the Core Strategy.

### Site 6: Pincents Hill, Tilehurst

#### Summary:

Site selection framework: score 4, rank (joint) 3

Overall: take forward for further consideration

The area being considered is adjacent to Tilehurst and the Sainsbury's retail park in Calcot. It is approximately 20 hectares in size containing a former golf course. The site is close to junction 12 of the M4 and the A4 lies to the south.

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Development on this site would conform with the policies of the South East Plan, which identifies Reading as a regional hub and consequently a main focus for transport investment and development. West Berkshire is expected to support the growth of greater Reading through development in the Eastern urban area. Development close to the built up area of Reading would meet the objective of the Core Strategy to shape patterns of development which secure good access to employment and services and encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport while reducing the need to travel by car.</u>
<u>Site Selection Framework</u>	<u>In the Site Selection Framework the size of the site means that it could contribute to the supply of affordable housing. The site is within walking distance of a local centre and is not subject to flooding. In terms of negative impacts, the site will result in the loss of open space and countryside currently used for informal access and recreation. The site adjoins a settlement, on significant land between settlements and is adjacent to the AONB, which is a landscape of national importance. Additionally the site is on grade 2 agricultural land, which is classified as very good, and is on a potential mineral reserve of significant size. The site scores well in the Site Selection Framework (4).</u>
<u>Landscape</u>	<u>The Landscape Sensitivity Study concludes that some development could be acceptable provided it is well designed with</u>

	<u>substantial green infrastructure, providing links to the open countryside and a buffer to the AONB. Development would need to enhance the urban form which is currently fragmented in this area. The cumulative effects of any possible development of other strategic sites in the area would need to be considered if the separate identity of Reading and Theale are to be retained in a meaningful way.</u>
<u>Flooding</u>	<u>The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA – level 1) indicates that there are no known issues relating to flooding on this site or in the immediate area.</u>
<u>Transport</u>	<u>The site is on the outskirts of Reading giving it good accessibility to the centres of Theale and Reading, and is close to a wide range of local facilities. Nearby bus services to Reading are frequent and Theale train station can be accessed by a footbridge over the motorway. The Transport Assessment shows that congestion on local roads and junctions would need to be resolved.</u>
<u>Education</u>	<u>There is a lack of capacity in some of the local schools and so if the site were to be brought forward, further discussions would need to take place at an early stage with the education authority to ensure that a solution could be implemented.</u>
<u>Culture &amp; Leisure</u>	<u>Calcot Recreation Centre within the site. Pedestrian right of way through the site. Urban Cycle Route to the south. Archaeological point which could be WWII allotment boundaries. Reading town centre is within 3 miles of the site with further facilities on offer.</u>
<u>Utilities</u>	<u>Discussions with utility providers have shown no major constraints at this stage however Thames Water may require an impact study.</u>
<u>Minerals and Waste</u>	<u>Marginal mineral deposits exist on site and extraction prior to development may need to be investigated.</u>
<u>Ecology</u>	<u>The site is adjacent to the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a Wildlife Heritage Site.</u>

The site is accessible to facilities in Reading and close to retail facilities. The area would need to be designed with significant green infrastructure providing links to the open countryside and a buffer to the AONB. Traffic and access is also an issue for the site. Taking the above in to account (which includes the site selection framework assessment, technical evidence, and discussions with infrastructure providers), **the site is recommended** for further consideration for inclusion as a strategic site in the Core Strategy.

### Site 7: Newbury Battlefield

Summary:

Site selection framework: score -7, rank (joint) 8

Overall: reject for consideration at preferred options stage

The site being considered lies to the west of Newbury and covers an area of nearly 34 hectares. The Enborne Road cuts through the northern half of the site, providing the main access route to and from the location. The site forms part of the Newbury I Battlefield (1643). Registered by English Heritage in 1995, and recognised as the site of a pivotal battle in the English Civil War, it is recognised as a Battlefield at Risk.

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Development in this location would comply with the policies of the South East Plan which identifies Newbury as a sub-regional hub and would go some way in helping to meet the Overall Strategic Vision of the Core Strategy which outlines that Newbury will be the main focus for sustainable residential developments.</u>
<u>Site Selection Framework</u>	<u>In the Site Selection Framework the main benefit of this site is its location in relation to Newbury town centre giving it a high score in this regard. The site is within 10-20mins walk of the Newbury town centre, is nearby to a designated cycle route and is large enough to be able to provide a new local centre. The size of the site means it could contribute to the supply of affordable housing, it has potential for a new facility or facilities and could potentially provide some employment on site. In terms of negative aspects, the site would result in the loss of countryside currently used for access and informal recreation, the site is within 500m of the River Kennet SSSI and could have a negative impact on the character of the landscape which has medium-high or high sensitivity. The site could involve loss of historic environment features designated as having national historic interest and lies on a potential mineral reserve of significant size. The site ranked in the bottom half of the Site Selection Framework table with a score of -7.</u>
<u>Landscape</u>	<u>The Landscape Sensitivity Study recommends that due to the exposed character and strong connectivity with the surrounding landscape that none of the site would be appropriate for development. Despite its proximity to the A34, the underlying character of this site is of an exposed area with a good level of visual connectivity with the wider landscape. There are strong landscape grounds for excluding the site.</u>
<u>Flooding</u>	<u>The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA – level1) indicates that there are no known issues relating to flooding on this site however it is shown as being within an area of groundwater emergence and as such a more detailed study would be required should the site be considered further.</u>
<u>Transport</u>	<u>Many local facilities are accessible from the site and it is within 2km of Newbury train station. The site is not currently well served by bus so the good levels of accessibility are largely due to the proximity of such facilities. Newbury town centre is accessible from part of the site but most of the site would not afford good access to the town centre by walking or public transport. There is however good cycling provision nearby. The transport assessment shows the site would cause congestion in the town centre, increased journey times on local roads and local re-assignment of traffic as drivers seek to avoid the congested town centre. Overall the transport modelling has shown that development of this site would result in some of the most negative impacts on the road network</u>

	<a href="#">of all the sites being considered.</a>
<a href="#">Education</a>	<a href="#">There is a lack of capacity in local schools, with limited scope to expand. If the site were to be brought forward then discussions with the education authority would need to take place at an early stage to ensure that a solution could be implemented.</a>
<a href="#">Culture &amp; Leisure</a>	<a href="#">Archaeological site of Newbury Battlefield. Close proximity to Newbury town centre cultural and leisure facilities.</a>
<a href="#">Utilities</a>	<a href="#">Discussions with infrastructure providers have highlighted an issue with sewage treatment capacity in the Newbury/Thatcham area and this could necessitate an impact study or phasing agreements.</a>
<a href="#">Minerals and Waste</a>	<a href="#">Mineral deposits exist on site however due to the archaeological constraints as well as access and haulage route issues, it is unlikely that extraction would be permissible.</a>
<a href="#">Ecology</a>	<a href="#">The north of the site lies within a Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Action Area of wet woodland.</a>

[The site benefits from its proximity to the town centre, giving it a high score in the Site Selection Framework, however transport modelling shows significant negative impacts on the road network. Development here would severely impact upon the historic character of the landscape and see the loss of an important piece of history. The site is inappropriate in landscape terms and there are concerns with capacity of the local infrastructure. Taking the above in to account \(which includes the site selection framework assessment, technical evidence, and discussions with infrastructure providers\), \*\*the site is not recommended\*\* for inclusion as a strategic site in the Core Strategy.](#)

### **[Site 8: Siege Cross, Thatcham](#)**

#### [Summary:](#)

[Site selection framework: score -2, rank 6](#)

[Overall: take forward for further consideration](#)

[The site is located to the north-east of the urban area of Thatcham on land to the north of the A4. A historic farmstead is incorporated within the site along with a Wildlife Heritage Site and the North Wessex Downs AONB lies adjacent to the north.](#)

<a href="#">Objectives</a>	<a href="#">The emerging South East Plan states that sustainable urban extension may be promoted on the periphery of the regional and sub-regional hubs, and smaller allocations may be brought forward at other settlements. Due to the close spatial relationship between Newbury and Thatcham, developing at this location could be seen as in accordance with emerging regional policy.</a>
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<a href="#">Site Selection Framework</a>	<a href="#">In the Site Selection Framework the site is accessible to open space and close to a designated cycle route. The size of the site means it could contribute to the supply of affordable housing. The appraisal also showed a number of negative aspects which included that the site is on significant land between settlements and that it could have a negative impact on historic landscape character. Additionally, the site is on a potential mineral reserve and is also of ecological significance as a Wildlife Heritage Site. The site ranked mid-table in the Site Selection Framework with a score of -2.</a>
<a href="#">Landscape</a>	<a href="#">The Landscape Sensitivity Study concludes that the scale of the proposed development would have a major adverse landscape impact but there may be some scope for limited urban expansion on the lower part of the site. A limited expansion would require a very strong landscape edge and key features of interest would need to be retained.</a>
<a href="#">Flooding</a>	<a href="#">The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA – level 1) identifies land to the south of the A4 as a Critical Drainage Area. Thatcham Town council produced a separate report ‘Flooding in Thatcham’ (October 2008) which details the effects of the July 2007 flooding event on the Thatcham area. A level 2 SFRA (January 2009) suggests that, without mitigation, the land is likely to be both susceptible to flooding and increase the flooding from surface water runoff (high risk), groundwater and local drainage systems. Development of this area could also increase the risk of sewer and fluvial flooding elsewhere.</a>
<a href="#">Transport</a>	<a href="#">The site has good accessibility to nearby Thatcham and Newbury town centres by public transport or walking. The site is adjacent to a major employment area and is near to a range of amenities including a local centre. Thatcham train station is within 1km, bus provision is good and the site is well related to national and local cycle route networks. Transport modelling shows that traffic would cause delays on the A4 Bath Road as the route is shown to be operating at capacity. The effect of this would be reassignment of traffic onto local roads and additional traffic on the estate distributor roads. Overall this site ranks in the upper mid part of the table in the Transport Assessment.</a>
<a href="#">Education</a>	<a href="#">There is a lack of capacity in some of the local schools, particularly the secondary school. If the site were to be brought forward then discussions with the education authority would need to take place at an early stage to ensure that a solution could be implemented.</a>
<a href="#">Culture &amp; Leisure</a>	<a href="#">Wildlife Heritage Site, pedestrian right of way and historic farmstead within the site. AONB lies to the north of the site. Urban Cycle Route to the west.</a>
<a href="#">Utilities</a>	<a href="#">Discussions with infrastructure providers have highlighted an issue with sewage treatment capacity in the Newbury/Thatcham area which could require some infrastructure upgrades and this could potentially require discussions over the phasing of development.</a>
<a href="#">Minerals and Waste</a>	<a href="#">Some parts of the site have mineral deposits and the prospect of extraction prior to any development would need to be investigated.</a>

<u>Ecology</u>	<u>The site contains several Wildlife Heritage Sites and has recordings for several species of bats and a red listed bird species. A more detailed assessment would need to be made prior to any development.</u>
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The site is located adjacent to the A4 and close to the town centre and employment areas. School provision is a major issue for further development of any scale in Thatcham and there are concerns with the risk of flooding from the site. Taking the above in to account (which includes the site selection framework assessment, technical evidence, and discussions with infrastructure providers), **the site is recommended** for further consideration for inclusion as a strategic site in the Core Strategy.

### **Site 9: Newbury Thatcham Gap**

#### Summary:

Site selection framework: score -7, rank (joint) 8

Overall: reject for consideration at preferred options stage

The site is approximately 32 hectares in size and is located between Newbury and Thatcham, north of the A4. Currently the north eastern part of the site is designated as important open space, and the remainder designated as a settlement gap. There is a Wildlife Heritage Site to the west of the site.

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>The site would comply with the policies of the South East Plan which identifies Newbury as a sub regional hub. It would also comply with the overall strategic vision of the Core Strategy and the settlement hierarchy, which sees Newbury as the main focus for development. A range of services and facilities are accessible from the site by sustainable modes of travel, which would meet an objective of the Core Strategy and the accessible and greener themes in the Sustainable Community Strategy. Development in the gap could be contrary to the Core Strategy objective to conserve the distinctive character of the built and natural environment because it would result in the merging of Newbury and Thatcham. Thatcham Vision seeks to protect the gap and this was supported by 87% of respondents to the Thatcham Vision consultation questionnaire.</u>
<u>Site Selection Framework</u>	<u>In the Site Selection Framework the size of the site means it could contribute to the supply of affordable housing. The appraisal indicates that development of the site would help to support healthy, active lifestyles and would assist in improving access to facilities and libraries through its location within 20 minutes walk of at least two facilities. The site is also accessible to open space and close to a designated cycle route. The site is more than 20mins walk from any centre (local or town) and is also on significant land between Newbury and Thatcham. Some of the site is within a Critical Drainage Area. The site ranked towards the bottom of the table in the Site Selection Framework in joint eighth place with a score of -7</u>
<u>Landscape</u>	<u>The Landscape Sensitivity Study recommends that only the part of the site within the current settlement boundary of Thatcham</u>

	<u>should be considered as a potential strategic housing site due to the importance of the rest of the site in maintaining the separation and the individual identities of Newbury and Thatcham. Both urban edges are highly visible and the area is very open and exposed. A strategic site in this location would have a high landscape impact.</u>
<u>Flooding</u>	<u>The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA – level1) indicates that parts of the site are within Critical Drainage Areas. As a result, the land could be susceptible to flooding (surface water) and increase the flooding from surface water runoff and local drainage systems elsewhere, which would require further investigation. Thatcham Town council produced a separate report ‘Flooding in Thatcham’ (October 2008) which details the effects of the July 2007 flooding event on the Thatcham area.</u>
<u>Transport</u>	<u>The site has the best accessibility to a range of services and facilities of all the sites. It is well served by the cycle route and bus networks and is around 2km from Newbury train station. The Transport Assessment suggests that the site would have an insignificant impact on the network however some traffic re-assignment to local roads would take place. Overall the site ranks joint first in the Transport Assessment because of its excellent location in relation to public transport and local facilities, and its minimal impact on the road network.</u>
<u>Education</u>	<u>There is a lack of capacity in some of the local schools. If the site were to be brought forward then discussions with the education authority would need to take place at an early stage to ensure that a solution could be implemented.</u>
<u>Culture &amp; Leisure</u>	<u>Pedestrian right of way through the site. Urban Cycle Route to the east and south. Areas of important open space border the site. Wildlife Heritage Site to the west of the site.</u>
<u>Utilities</u>	<u>Discussions with infrastructure providers have highlighted an issue with sewage treatment capacity in the Newbury/Thatcham area which could require some infrastructure upgrades and this could potentially require discussions over the phasing of development.</u>
<u>Minerals and Waste</u>	<u>Part of the site is underlain with mineral deposits however due to its proximity to residential development it is unlikely that extraction would be permissible. The extraction of minerals prior to any development would need to be investigated.</u>
<u>Ecology</u>	<u>No constraints identified.</u>

The overriding concern is that developing this site would result in the loss of the physical and visual separation between Newbury and Thatcham which would threaten the separate identities of these towns. The site scores highly both in terms of transport and sustainability, although it is not prone to flooding, it may suffer from surface water flooding. Taking the above in to account (which includes the site selection framework assessment, technical evidence, and discussions with infrastructure providers), **the site is not recommended** for inclusion as a strategic site in the Core Strategy.



## Site 10: Sandleford Park

### Summary:

Site selection framework: score -16, rank (joint) 10

Overall: take forward for further consideration

The site is located to the south of Newbury, is approximately 140 hectares in size and comprises predominantly agricultural land interspersed by ancient woodland.

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Development located here would comply with the policies in the South east Plan which identifies Newbury as a sub-regional hub and consequently one of the main focuses for transport and development. It would also comply with the overall strategic vision and settlement hierarchy of the Core Strategy, which sees Newbury as the main focus for development. It has the potential to meet a number of the Core Strategy objectives however the high quality of the character of the environment means there is some concern in meeting the objective that seeks to conserve and enhance the built and natural environments.</u>
<u>Site Selection Framework</u>	<u>In the Site Selection Framework development located at this site would have positive impacts through improved access to formal play facilities and libraries as the site is within 20 minutes walk of facilities. Given the size of the site it could contribute to the supply of affordable housing and provide a new local centre. The site has bus stops and a designated cycle route nearby. Negative aspects include the loss of countryside which is currently used for informal access and recreation, there is a pedestrian right of way running through it. The sustainability score is more negative than positive however as woodland areas are Wildlife Heritage Sites, and developing the site could involve the loss of historic environment features relating to the Sandleford Priory Historic Park. Therefore the site is sensitive from a historic landscape perspective and would require more detailed survey work together with the inclusion of significant green infrastructure. Additionally the site is on a potential mineral reserve. The site ranked joint bottom of the table in the Site Selection Framework with a score of -16. The low score was largely attributed to the sheer size of the site when the mid-point was used for assessment and the historic features, WHS and landscape character for the whole site.</u>
<u>Landscape</u>	<u>The landscape sensitivity study recommends that no further large scale developments should be located in this area although it concluded that some smaller scale development might be able to be accommodated where closely related to the settlement edge. Mitigation would be required to overcome the landscape issues identified.</u>
<u>Flooding</u>	<u>The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA – level1) indicates that there are no known issues relating to flooding on the site or in the immediate area.</u>
<u>Transport</u>	<u>The site is accessible to a variety of services by public transport and walking as the site is close to the Newbury Retail Park and a</u>

	<u>local centre however it is some distance from the town centre and is not particularly well served by public transport. As the site covers such a large area, the impacts of only developing the northern most part of the site was modelled in the Transport Assessment in addition to the whole site. This demonstrated greater levels of accessibility from the northern part of the site than the whole of the site as it is closer to the town centre and adjoins the existing built up area. Developing only the northern part of the site would cause less congestion and less re-routing on major roads than developing the whole site although there would still be some congestion at key junctions and some re-routing on local roads.</u>
<u>Education</u>	<u>There is a lack of capacity in local schools, with limited scope to expand. If the site were to be brought forward then discussions with the education authority would need to take place at an early stage to ensure that a solution could be implemented.</u>
<u>Culture &amp; Leisure</u>	<u>Pedestrian right of way through the site. Urban Cycle Route along northern boundary. Part of the First Battle of Newbury archaeological area is to the western edge of the site. Newbury Rugby Football Club, including private health and fitness club and conference facilities to the north. Park House School, and playing fields, and Newbury College adjacent to the site. Also adjacent is Sandleford Priory, part of the English Heritage registered Sandleford Priory Historic Park.</u>
<u>Utilities</u>	<u>Discussions with infrastructure providers have highlighted an issue with sewage treatment capacity in the Newbury/Thatcham area and this could necessitate an impact study or phasing agreements.</u>
<u>Minerals and Waste</u>	<u>Mineral deposits exist on part of the site however due to its proximity to residential properties and access and haulage issues, it is unlikely that extraction would be permissible.</u>
<u>Ecology</u>	<u>The site contains blocks of ancient woodland which have been designated as Wildlife Heritage Sites, and several species of bat have been recorded in the area.</u>

The South East Plan identifies Newbury as a sub-regional hub and consequently one of the main focuses for transport and development. Although it does not score particularly highly in the Site Selection Framework, the site is accessible to facilities and services in Newbury and is also close to other retail facilities. The potentially negative environmental effects of the development are of concern and would need to be resolved and designed with significant green infrastructure. Transport issues would also need to be resolved. Taking the above in to account (which includes the site selection framework assessment, technical evidence, and discussions with infrastructure providers), **the site is recommended** for further consideration for inclusion as a strategic site in the Core Strategy.

## Site 11: Theale

### Summary:

Site selection framework: score 9, rank (joint) 1

Overall: take forward for further consideration

The site is located to the east of Theale and is an amalgamation of sites making up approximately 14 hectares in size. The area consists of scrubland and a former sewage works in an area currently designated as a local gap between Theale and Calcot.

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Theale has been identified in the Core Strategy settlement hierarchy as a Rural Service Centre however in light of the need to explore further options for development in the eastern part of the district it is considered appropriate to carry out an assessment of this proposal.</u>
<u>Site Selection Framework</u>	<u>In the Site Selection Framework the size of the site means it could contribute to the supply of affordable housing. The site is close to facilities and a local centre, the train station and a designated cycle route. Key negative impacts of the site relate to the access to education and the location of the site on significant land between settlements. The existing schools in Theale are at capacity and there is limited room to expand the schools to accommodate large numbers of additional students. The site is also on a potential mineral reserve of significant size, is on Grade 3 agricultural land and has the potential for contamination due to an old sewerage works. The site scored joint top of the table in the Site Selection Framework with a score of 9.</u>
<u>Landscape</u>	<u>The landscape sensitivity study recommends that only a very small section of the site should be considered for possible development. Although part of the landscape sensitivity of the area is low, it is essential to maintaining the remaining physical and visual gap between Theale and Calcot. It is important that the cumulative effects of any possible development of other strategic sites in this area are also considered if the separate identity of the two settlements is to be retained in any meaningful way.</u>
<u>Flooding</u>	<u>The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA – level 1) indicates that a large area of the site is located within Flood Zone 2.</u>
<u>Transport</u>	<u>The centre of Theale can easily be accessed from the site and offers many local facilities. Public transport is good in Theale with a train station nearby and regular buses to Reading. Additionally the site is on the cycle route network. This site ranks joint first in the Transport Assessment because it offers good accessibility owing to its proximity to Theale town centre and Theale station, and it is well connected to the road network being adjacent to the A4 and Junction 12 of the M4.</u>
<u>Education</u>	<u>There is a lack of capacity in the schools in the Theale area, with limited scope to expand. If the site were to be brought forward then discussions with the education authority would need to take place at an early stage to ensure that a solution could be implemented.</u>

<a href="#">Culture &amp; Leisure</a>	<a href="#">Close to Reading town centre and Theale railway station, giving access to wide range of cultural and leisure facilities. Pedestrian right of way and Urban Cycle Route go through the site. Three areas of important open space and a golf centre are nearby.</a>
<a href="#">Utilities</a>	<a href="#">Fire service provision would have to be reassessed in this area if the proposed relocation of Dee Road Fire Station goes ahead. There are not understood to be any sewage treatment issues for the area.</a>
<a href="#">Minerals and Waste</a>	<a href="#">There are potentially marginal mineral deposits on the site and extraction would need to be investigated prior to development.</a>
<a href="#">Ecology</a>	<a href="#">No constraints identified.</a>

[A strategic urban extension to Theale could potentially have considerable impacts on its infrastructure. Although it is closely linked to Reading by transport routes and is a location for considerable office, industrial and distribution uses, the current level of services and facilities reflect the limited size of the population and their capacity for enhancement is limited. Taking the above in to account \(which includes the site selection framework assessment, technical evidence, and discussions with infrastructure providers\), \*\*the site is recommended\*\* for further consideration for inclusion as one of the range of options to be explored for the Eastern Urban area in the Core Strategy.](#)

### **[Summary:](#)**

<b>Site</b>	<b>SA recommends reject or take forward</b>
Site 1: North Thatcham	Reject
Site 2: Greenham	Reject
Site 3: South Reading (KVP)	Reject
Site 4: East Newbury (Racecourse)	Take forward
Site 5: North Newbury (Vodafone)	Take forward
Site 6: Tilehurst (Pincents Hill)	Take forward
Site 7: West Newbury (Battlefield)	Reject
Site 8: North East Thatcham (Siege Cross)	Take forward
Site 9: Newbury Thatcham (Gap)	Reject
Site 10: South Newbury (Sandleford Park)	Take forward
Site 11: Theale	Take forward

**Appendix 4. SA Table - Newbury/Thatcham Area Options**

Newbury/Thatcham Area Options							
SA Objective	SA Sub-Objective	Option 1 – Sandford & Racecourse		Option 2 – Siege Cross & Racecourse		Option 3 – North Newbury & Racecourse	
		Score	Comment	Score	Comment	Score	Comment
To provide sufficient good quality housing to meet local need	To meet the demand for affordable housing both in quantity and type available	+	Housing would be focused in the Newbury area.	+	Would help to deliver for the needs of the Newbury and Thatcham areas.	+	Housing would be focused in the Newbury area.
	To promote the adoption of sustainable design and construction practices in housing	++	Sites would be of a scale where they are able to implement sustainable schemes.	++	Sites would be of a scale where they are able to implement sustainable schemes.	++	Sites would be of a scale where they are able to implement sustainable schemes.
To improve health and well being and reduce inequalities	To support healthy active lifestyles	0	Dependant on design.	0	Dependant on design.	0	Dependant on design.
	To reduce levels and fear of crime and anti social behaviour	0	Dependant on design.	0	Dependant on design.	0	Dependant on design.
	To improve access to the countryside, parks, open space, formal play facilities and libraries	+	Scale of development would be able to provide facilities and promote accessibility to existing facilities.	0	Scale of development would be able to provide facilities. Siege Cross is located further from the higher order facilities, e.g. library, Newbury Corn Exchange, Cinema.	+	Scale of development would be able to provide facilities and promote accessibility to existing facilities.
To improve and safeguard accessibility	To improve access to education, employment and services	-	Capacity issues with schools for the Sandford area, particularly for secondary as both sites are in its catchment.	-	Capacity issues with schools for Thatcham. Greater range or employment in Newbury.	-	Capacity issues with schools for North Newbury area.
	To improve access to the countryside, parks and open space	0	Dependant on design of sites.	0	Dependant on design of site.	0	Dependant on design of site.
	To support the development of access to IT facilities	0	No impact at this strategic level.	0	No impact at this strategic level.	0	No impact at this strategic level.

	including broadband particularly in rural locations						
To achieve and promote high level provision and use of sustainable transport modes where possible	To reduce the need to travel, especially by car	○	Sites would need to encourage use of alternative means of transport. Sites are in close proximity to services and infrastructure of Newbury. Distribution of strategic sites in more than one area may assist in reducing travel needs.	○	Sites would need to encourage use of alternative means of transport. Sites are in relative close proximity to services and infrastructure of Newbury and Thatcham. There are less facilities in Thatcham which could result in some travel to Newbury and beyond.	○	Sites would need to encourage use of alternative means of transport. Sites are in close proximity to services and infrastructure of Newbury. Distribution of strategic sites in more than one area may assist in reducing travel needs.
	To reduce accidents and improve safety	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.
	To increase opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport and ensure the necessary infrastructure is available	○	Strategic sites will need to provide opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport and mitigate any impacts. Sandleford site is more than 20mins walk to a local centre.	○	Strategic sites will need to provide opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport and mitigate any impacts. Siege Cross is more than 20 mins walk to a local centre.	○	Strategic sites will need to provide opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport and mitigate any impacts. North Newbury site is within 10-20 mins walk of the town centre.
Contribute to good governance	To improve opportunities for participation in local action and decision making	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.
Ensure that the natural, built and historic environment is conserved and enhanced	To conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity of West Berkshire	○	Both sites are nearby to SSSI sites and there is a Wildlife Heritage Site on the Sandleford site. The provision of green spaces would be a design consideration.	○	SSSI sites nearby to the Racecourse site and a Wildlife Heritage Site to Siege Cross. The provision of green spaces would be a design consideration.	○	Both sites are nearby to SSSI sites. The provision of green spaces would be a design consideration.
	To conserve and enhance the character of the landscape	--	Sandleford is a medium-high sensitive landscape area.	-	Siege Cross could have a negative impact on the medium sensitivity landscape.	-	North Newbury site has a landscape of medium sensitivity and is on significant land between Newbury and Donnington.

	To protect, conserve and enhance the built, cultural and historic environment	-	Sandleford site could have a negative impact on Sandleford Priory.	-	Siege Cross site could have a negative impact on the landscape character which has a low or low-moderate capacity to accept change.	○	No significant impact.
To protect and improve air, water and soil quality, and minimise noise levels throughout West Berkshire	To reduce air pollution	○	Any site in the Newbury area could influence the amount of traffic using the busy roads and intersections in Newbury where air quality is a concern.	○	Any site in the Newbury area could influence the amount of traffic using the busy roads and intersections in Newbury where air quality is a concern.	○	Any site in the Newbury area could influence the amount of traffic using the busy roads and intersections in Newbury where air quality is a concern.
	To reduce noise levels in main settlements	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.
	To maintain and improve soil quality	-	Sandleford site is Grade 3 agricultural land. The Racecourse site is not designated as agricultural land.	-	Siege Cross site is Grade 3 and 3a agricultural land. The Racecourse site is not designated as agricultural land.	--	North Newbury site is Grade 2 agricultural land. The Racecourse site is not designated as agricultural land.
	To maintain and improve water quality	○	No significant impact. All sites would be of a scale where they are able to implement sustainable schemes.	○	No significant impact. All sites would be of a scale where they are able to implement sustainable schemes.	○	No significant impact. All sites would be of a scale where they are able to implement sustainable schemes.
To improve the efficiency of land use	To maximise the use of previously developed land and buildings where appropriate	○	Sandleford is a greenfield site.	○	Siege Cross is a greenfield site.	○	North Newbury is a greenfield site.
To reduce consumption of natural resources and manage their use efficiently	To reduce energy use and promote the development and use of sustainable/ renewable energy technologies	○	Dependant on design. Sites are of a size where they are able to implement sustainable schemes and renewable energy technologies.	○	Dependant on design. Sites are of a size where they are able to implement sustainable schemes and renewable energy technologies.	○	Dependant on design. Sites are of a size where they are able to implement sustainable schemes and renewable energy technologies.
	To reduce waste generation and disposal in line with the waste hierarchy	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.

	and reuse of materials						
	To reduce water consumption and promote reuse	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.
	To reduce the consumption of minerals and promote reuse of secondary materials	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.
To reduce emissions contributing to climate change and ensure adaptation measures are in place to respond to climate change	To reduce West Berkshire's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions	○	Sites would need to encourage sustainable modes of transport and implement sustainable design and construction.	○	Sites would need to encourage sustainable modes of transport and implement sustainable design and construction.	○	Sites would need to encourage sustainable modes of transport and implement sustainable design and construction.
	To sustainably manage flood risk to people, property and the environment	○	Both sites are within Flood Zone 1. Flood risk is a material consideration.	-	Both sites are within Flood Zone 1. Critical Drainage Areas have been identified in parts of Thatcham. The Siege Cross site could be at risk, and increase risk elsewhere, from surface water flooding without appropriate mitigation. Flood risk is a material consideration.	-	Both sites are within Flood Zone 1. The North Newbury site is partially within a groundwater emergence zone, and Critical Drainage Areas are located nearby. The site could be at risk, and increase risk elsewhere, from surface and ground water flooding without appropriate mitigation. Flood risk is a material consideration.
To maintain a strong, diverse and sustainable economic base	To provide a range of high quality employment opportunities	○	Not considered relevant at this stage.	○	Not considered relevant at this stage.	○	Not considered relevant at this stage.
	To promote and support key business sectors and utilise employment land effectively and efficiently	○	Development would support business and employment in the Newbury area.	○	Development would support business and employment in both the Newbury and Thatcham areas.	○	Development would support business and employment in the Newbury area.
	To increase the viability and vitality of	+	Would help to support Newbury as a commercial	+	Would help to support both Newbury and Thatcham	+	Would help support Newbury as a commercial centre.



	commercial centres		centre.		commercial centres.		
<b>Summary of Effects</b>		<b>Effect:</b> Predominantly neutral <b>Likelihood:</b> High <b>Scale:</b> Newbury <b>Duration:</b> Permanent <b>Timing:</b> Short to long term		<b>Effect:</b> Predominantly neutral <b>Likelihood:</b> High <b>Scale:</b> Newbury / Thatcham <b>Duration:</b> Permanent <b>Timing:</b> Short to long term		<b>Effect:</b> Predominantly neutral <b>Likelihood:</b> High <b>Scale:</b> Newbury <b>Duration:</b> Permanent <b>Timing:</b> Short to long term	

## Appendix 5. SA Table – Eastern Urban Area Options

Eastern Options Policy Options									
SA Objective	SA Sub-Objective	Option 1 - Pincents Hill		Option 2 - Theale		Option 3 – Pincents + Theale		Option 4 – Basket of smaller sites	
		Score	Comment	Score	Comment	Score	Comment	Score	Comment
To provide sufficient good quality housing to meet local need	To meet the demand for affordable housing both in quantity and type available	+	Strategic site of scale to deliver affordable housing to meet local need	+	Strategic site of scale to deliver affordable housing to meet local need	+	Strategic site of scale to deliver affordable housing to meet local need	+++	More responsive to demand if development distributed through several communities
	To promote the adoption of sustainable design and construction practices in housing	+++	More potential to achieve sustainable design technology in larger developments	+++	More potential to achieve sustainable design technology in larger developments	+++	More potential to achieve sustainable design technology in larger developments	+	Smaller sites will have less potential to achieve sustainable design technology
To improve health and well being and reduce inequalities	To support healthy active lifestyles	○	Dependant on design	○	Dependant on design	○	Dependant on design	○	Dependant on design
	To reduce levels and fear of crime and anti social behaviour	○	Dependant on design	○	Dependant on design	○	Dependant on design	○	Dependant on design
	To improve access to the countryside, parks, open space, formal play facilities and libraries	○	Scale of development would enable provision of facilities and promote accessibility to existing facilities	○	Scale of development would enable provision of facilities and promote accessibility to existing facilities	○	Scale of development would enable provision of facilities and promote accessibility to existing facilities	-	Less opportunities to provide facilities in smaller sites
To improve and safeguard accessibility	To improve access to education, employment	○	Larger sites would be more accessible to existing facilities and have more	○	Larger sites would be more accessible to existing facilities and have more	○	Larger sites would be more accessible to existing facilities and have more	-	Some sites would be less accessible to existing facilities and with reduced potential

	and services		potential to provide services		potential to provide services		potential to provide services		to provide services.
	To improve access to the countryside, parks and open space	+/-	Would involve building on greenfield land but would provide open space network with access to countryside	+/-	Would involve building on greenfield land but would provide open space network with access to countryside	+/-	Would involve building on greenfield land but would provide open space network with access to countryside	+/-	Would spread the impact on the countryside and offer access to more areas of countryside but would be less potential for provision of open space
	To support the development of access to IT facilities including broadband particularly in rural locations	0	Neutral effect	0	Neutral effect	0	Neutral effect	0	Neutral effect
To achieve and promote high level provision and use of sustainable transport modes where possible	To reduce the need to travel, especially by car	+	Large site could provide bus service	+	Theale has train station	+	Theale has train station	-	Less opportunities to improve public transport services
	To reduce accidents and improve safety	0	Dependant on design	0	Dependant on design	0	Dependant on design	0	Dependant on design
	To increase opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport and ensure the necessary infrastructure is available	+	Infrastructure would be incorporated	+	Proximity to train station. Infrastructure would be incorporated	+/0	Proximity to train station. Opportunities for infrastructure provision less for medium sites	-	Opportunities for infrastructure provision less in smaller sites and some locations less well served by public transport
Contribute to good governance	To improve opportunities for participation in local action and decision making	0	Neutral impact	0	Neutral impact	0	Neutral impact	0	Neutral impact

Ensure that the natural, built and historic environment is conserved and enhanced	To conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity of West Berkshire	○	Adjacent to AONB and Wildlife Heritage site	○	No major constraints identified on Theale site	○	No major constraints identified on Theale site	○	Depends on sites
	To conserve and enhance the character of the landscape	-	Proximity to AONB	○	Less impact on landscape quality	-/○	Impact on landscape quality less in Theale	?	Depends on sites
	To protect, conserve and enhance the built, cultural and historic environment	○	Neutral impact	-	Potential impact on Theale village centre	○	Potential impact on Theale	○	Depends on sites
To protect and improve air, water and soil quality, and minimise noise levels throughout West Berkshire	To reduce air pollution	○	Any site in the east of the District has potential to impact on use of road network and hence air quality	○	Any site in the east of the District has potential to impact on use of road network and hence air quality	○	Any site in the east of the District has potential to impact on use of road network and hence air quality	○	Any site in the east of the District has potential to impact on use of road network and hence air quality
	To reduce noise levels in main settlements	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level
	To maintain and improve soil quality	○	The site is on grade 2 agricultural land	○	Theale site is on grade 3 agricultural land	○	Theale site is on grade 3 agricultural land	○	Dependant on sites
	To maintain and improve water quality	○	No significant impact. Schemes would be of a scale where able to implement sustainable schemes	○	No significant impact. Schemes would be of a scale where able to implement sustainable schemes	○	No significant impact. Schemes would be of a scale where able to implement sustainable schemes	○	No significant impact. Schemes would be of a scale where able to implement sustainable schemes
To improve the efficiency of land use	To maximise the use of previously developed land	-	Greenfield site	-/+	Theale site is partly greenfield, partly PDL	-/+	Theale site is partly greenfield, partly PDL	○	Potential for some sites on PDL – depends on locations

	and buildings where appropriate								
To reduce consumption of natural resources and manage their use efficiently	To reduce energy use and promote the development and use of sustainable/renewable energy technologies	○	Dependant on design. Sites are of a size where they are able to implement sustainable schemes and renewable energy technologies	○	Dependant on design. Sites are of a size where they are able to implement sustainable schemes and renewable energy technologies	○	Dependant on design. Sites are of a size where they are able to implement sustainable schemes and renewable energy technologies	○	Dependant on design. Sites are of a size where they are able to implement sustainable schemes and renewable energy technologies
	To reduce waste generation and disposal in line with the waste hierarchy and reuse of materials	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level
	To reduce water consumption and promote reuse	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level
	To reduce the consumption of minerals and promote reuse of secondary materials	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level
To reduce emissions contributing to climate change and ensure adaptation measures are in place to respond to climate	To reduce West Berkshire's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions	○	Sites would need to encourage sustainable modes of transport and implement sustainable design and construction.	○	Sites would need to encourage sustainable modes of transport and implement sustainable design and construction.	○	Sites would need to encourage sustainable modes of transport and implement sustainable design and construction	○	Sites would need to encourage sustainable modes of transport and implement sustainable design and construction
	To sustainably manage flood	○	Pincents Hill site is not within Flood	○	Part could be in flood zone 2 but	○	Part could be in flood zone 2 but	○	Would be assessed in evaluation of sites

change	risk to people, property and the environment		Zones 2 or 3		potential to mitigate		potential to mitigate		
To maintain a strong, diverse and sustainable economic base	To provide a range of high quality employment opportunities	+	Potential for some provision	+	Potential for some provision	+	Potential for some provision	0	Limited potential for employment provision
	To promote and support key business sectors and utilise employment land effectively and efficiently	+	Proximity to employment opportunities	+	Proximity to employment opportunities	+	Proximity to employment opportunities	0	Some sites would be likely to be less accessible to employment opportunities
	To increase the viability and vitality of commercial centres	+	Developments would support commercial centres of Reading and Theale	+	Developments would support commercial centres of Reading and Theale	+	Developments would support commercial centres of Reading and Theale	0	Unlikely to support commercial centres of Reading and Theale to same extent, but impact dependant on sites.
<b>Summary of Effects</b>		<b>Effect:</b> Predominantly positive <b>Likelihood:</b> High <b>Scale:</b> Eastern Area <b>Duration:</b> Permanent <b>Timing:</b> Short to long term		<b>Effect:</b> Predominantly positive <b>Likelihood:</b> High <b>Scale:</b> Eastern Area <b>Duration:</b> Permanent <b>Timing:</b> Short to long term		<b>Effect:</b> Predominantly positive <b>Likelihood:</b> High <b>Scale:</b> Eastern Area <b>Duration:</b> Permanent <b>Timing:</b> Short to long term		<b>Effect:</b> Predominantly neutral <b>Likelihood:</b> High <b>Scale:</b> Eastern Area <b>Duration:</b> Permanent <b>Timing:</b> Short to long term	

## Appendix 6: Appraisal of Policy CS3

Newbury/Thatcham Area Options – Strategic Sites Policy Options					
SA Objective	SA Sub-Objective	Option 1 – Sandford & Racecourse		Policy CS3 Newbury Racecourse Strategic Site Allocation – new explanatory text. Post November 2010 Hearing changes	
		Score	Comment	Score	Comment
To provide sufficient good quality housing to meet local need	To meet the demand for affordable housing both in quantity and type available	+	Housing would be focused in the Newbury area.	+	Housing would be focused in the Newbury area. Any new application for the strategic site would be determined in accordance with Policy CS7 Affordable Housing.
	To promote the adoption of sustainable design and construction practices in housing	++	Sites would be of a scale where they are able to implement sustainable schemes.	++	Site is of a scale where it is able to implement sustainable schemes. The explanatory text sets out the standards which would be sought for sustainable construction should a new application for the strategic site be submitted.
To reduce consumption of natural resources and manage their use efficiently	To reduce energy use and promote the development and use of sustainable/ renewable energy technologies	0	Dependant on design. Sites are of a size where they are able to implement sustainable schemes and renewable energy technologies.	++	Dependent on design. A new application for the site would represent a site specific opportunity for high standards of building sustainability. Explanatory text sets out the minimum standards of construction.
To reduce emissions contributing to climate change and ensure adaptation measures are in place to respond to climate change	To reduce West Berkshire's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions	0	Sites would need to encourage sustainable modes of transport and implement sustainable design and construction.	0	The site would need to encourage sustainable modes of transport and achieve high standards of sustainable construction.
<b>Summary of Effects</b>		<b>Effect:</b> Predominantly neutral <b>Likelihood:</b> High <b>Scale:</b> Newbury <b>Duration:</b> Permanent <b>Timing:</b> Short to long term		<b>Effect:</b> Predominantly positive <b>Likelihood:</b> High <b>Scale:</b> Newbury <b>Duration:</b> Permanent <b>Timing:</b> Short to long term	

## Appendix 7: Appraisal of Policy CS4

CS4 Sandleford Strategic Site Allocation Policy Options					
SA Objective	SA Sub-Objective	Strategic Sites Policy Paper Option 1 – Sandleford & Racecourse		Policy CS4 Sandleford Strategic Site Allocation. Post November 2010 hearings. Consultation Feb 2011. (More detail added about the proposed development)	
		Score	Comment	Score	Comment
To provide sufficient good quality housing to meet local need	To meet the demand for affordable housing both in quantity and type available	+	Housing would be focused in the Newbury area.	++	Policy states 40% of the 2000 dwellings proposed at Sandleford will be affordable.
	To promote the adoption of sustainable design and construction practices in housing	++	Sites would be of a scale where they are able to implement sustainable schemes.	++	Policy states that all residential development must meet Code for Sustainable Homes Level 6 and all non residential development must meet BREEAM excellent construction standards.
To improve health and well being and reduce inequalities	To support healthy active lifestyles	0	Dependant on design.	++	Policy details a network of green infrastructure to be provided on site. New facilities will be located on site to enable people to walk to them. A sustainable transport link from Warren Road will link the site with the town centre supporting healthy and active lifestyles.
	To reduce levels and fear of crime and anti social behaviour	0	Dependant on design.	0	Dependant on design.
	To improve access to the countryside, parks, open space, formal play facilities and libraries	+	Scale of development would be able to provide facilities and promote accessibility to existing facilities.	++	A network of green infrastructure will be provided on site. Accessibility to existing facilities will also be enhanced.
To improve and safeguard accessibility	To improve access to education, employment and services	-	Capacity issues with schools for the Sandleford area, particularly for secondary as both sites are in its catchment.	++	.A new Primary school will be provided on site and adjacent Park House School will be extended. The site is adjacent to Newbury College. Access to employment in Newbury and Basingstoke will be improved through enhanced



	To improve access to the countryside, parks and open space	0	Dependant on design of sites.	++	bus services. A network of green infrastructure will be provided on site.
	To support the development of access to IT facilities including broadband particularly in rural locations	0	No impact at this strategic level.	0	No significant impact.
To achieve and promote high level provision and use of sustainable transport modes where possible	To reduce the need to travel, especially by car	0	Sites would need to encourage use of alternative means of transport. Sites are in close proximity to services and infrastructure of Newbury. Distribution of strategic sites in more than one area may assist in reducing travel needs.	+	Improved bus access and provision of on site facilities such as a local centre and a school will reduce the need to travel by car.
	To reduce accidents and improve safety	0	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	0	No significant impact.
	To increase opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport and ensure the necessary infrastructure is available	0	Strategic sites will need to provide opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport and mitigate any impacts. Sandleford site is more than 20mins walk to a local centre.	+	Improved bus, pedestrian and cycle access to Newbury town centre through Warren Road will increase opportunities for sustainable travel. Provision of on site facilities such as a local centre and a school will increase opportunities for walking and cycling.
Contribute to good governance	To improve opportunities for participation in local action and decision making	0	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	0	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.
Ensure that the natural, built and historic environment is conserved and enhanced	To conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity of West Berkshire	0	Both sites are nearby to SSSI sites and there is a Wildlife Heritage Site on the Sandleford site. The provision of green spaces would be a design consideration.	+	Ancient woodland will be conserved and buffers provided. Strategic biodiversity enhancement will be secured.
	To conserve and enhance the character of the	--	Sandleford is a medium-high sensitive landscape area.	0	Sandleford in its entirety is a medium-high sensitive landscape area but development will be limited to the north and west of the site in order

	landscape To protect, conserve and enhance the built, cultural and historic environment	-	Sandleford site could have a negative impact on Sandleford Priory.	○	to be accommodated within the landscape. Site is adjacent to Sandleford Priory but development will be limited to the north and west of the site with a country park/public open space in the south of the site to protect views and vistas.
To protect and improve air, water and soil quality, and minimise noise levels throughout West Berkshire	To reduce air pollution	○	Any site in the Newbury area could influence the amount of traffic using the busy roads and intersections in Newbury where air quality is a concern.	○/-	Sandleford is near to an Air Quality Management Area and increased traffic flows could increase air pollution.
	To reduce noise levels in main settlements	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	○	No significant impact.
	To maintain and improve soil quality	-	Sandleford site is Grade 3 agricultural land. The Racecourse site is not designated as agricultural land.	-	Sandleford site is Grade 3 agricultural land.
	To maintain and improve water quality	○	No significant impact. All sites would be of a scale where they are able to implement sustainable schemes.	○	No significant impact. Site is of a scale where it can implement sustainable schemes.
To improve the efficiency of land use	To maximise the use of previously developed land and buildings where appropriate	○	Sandleford is a greenfield site.	○	Sandleford is a greenfield site.
To reduce consumption of natural resources and manage their use efficiently	To reduce energy use and promote the development and use of sustainable/ renewable energy technologies	○	Dependant on design. Sites are of a size where they are able to implement sustainable schemes and renewable energy technologies.	++	Construction of Code for Sustainable Homes Level 6 and BREEAM Excellent will reduce energy use. Policy also states generation of on-site renewables.
	To reduce waste generation and disposal in line with the waste hierarchy and reuse of materials	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.
	To reduce water consumption and promote reuse	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	+	Code for Sustainable Homes Level 6 will be required and this includes water efficiency measures.

	To reduce the consumption of minerals and promote reuse of secondary materials	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.
To reduce emissions contributing to climate change and ensure adaptation measures are in place to respond to climate change	To reduce West Berkshire's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions	○	Sites would need to encourage sustainable modes of transport and implement sustainable design and construction.	○	Policy encourages sustainable modes of transport and requires sustainable design and construction.
	To sustainably manage flood risk to people, property and the environment	○	Both sites are within Flood Zone 1. Flood risk is a material consideration.	○	Part of site is within Flood Zone 1. Flood risk is a material consideration.
To maintain a strong, diverse and sustainable economic base	To provide a range of high quality employment opportunities	○	Not considered relevant at this stage.	○	Small scale business employment will be provided on site.
	To promote and support key business sectors and utilise employment land effectively and efficiently	○	Development would support business and employment in the Newbury area.	○	Development would support business and employment in the Newbury area.
	To increase the viability and vitality of commercial centres	+	Would help to support Newbury as a commercial centre.	+	Would help to support Newbury as a commercial centre.
<b>Summary of Effects</b>		<b>Effect:</b> Predominantly neutral <b>Likelihood:</b> High <b>Scale:</b> Newbury <b>Duration:</b> Permanent <b>Timing:</b> Short to long term		<b>Effect:</b> Predominantly positive <b>Likelihood:</b> High <b>Scale:</b> Newbury <b>Duration:</b> Permanent <b>Timing:</b> Short to long term	

**SOCIAL**

**ENVIRONMENTAL**

**ECONOMIC**

## Appendix 8. Re-assessment of Newbury Options

This table shows the assessment of the Sandleford and Racecourse, and the North Newbury and Racecourse options (in white) as they appear in Appendix 4 at Options stage. The options have been re-assessed and so any update to scores and/or comments are shown in green boxes. Where a score has been updated a summary of the detailed comment is also given.

SA Objective	SA Sub- Objective	Sandleford & Racecourse		North Newbury & Racecourse	
		SA Score	Comment	SA Score	Comment
To provide sufficient good quality housing to meet local need	To meet the demand for affordable housing both in quantity and type available	+	Housing would be focused in the Newbury area.	+	Housing would be focused in the Newbury area.
		Greenfield site should enable provision of affordable housing at the higher levels proposed in the CS affordable housing policy. Would help meet the local demand for housing in the Newbury/Thatcham area.		Greenfield site should enable provision of affordable housing at the higher levels proposed in the CS affordable housing policy. Would help meet the local demand for housing in the Newbury/Thatcham area.	
	To promote the adoption of sustainable design and construction practices in housing	++	Sites would be of a scale where they are able to implement sustainable schemes.	++	Sites would be of a scale where they are able to implement sustainable schemes.
To improve health and well being and reduce inequalities	To support healthy active lifestyles	0	Dependant on design.	0	Dependant on design.
	To reduce levels and fear of crime and anti social behaviour	0	Dependant on design.	0	Dependant on design.
	To improve access to the countryside, parks, open space, formal play facilities and libraries	+	Scale of development would be able to provide facilities and promote accessibility to existing facilities.	+	Scale of development would be able to provide facilities and promote accessibility to existing facilities.
		Easy access to the library and other facilities in Newbury town centre. Access to open space covered in sub-objective below		Easy access to the library and other facilities in Newbury town centre. Access to open space covered in sub-objective below	
To improve and safeguard accessibility	To improve access to education, employment and services	-	Capacity issues with schools for the Sandleford area, particularly for secondary as both sites are in its catchment.	-	Capacity issues with schools for North Newbury area.
		<b>Scoring Re-</b>	Opportunity to extend Park House	<b>Scoring Re-</b>	Schools at capacity and potential

		<b>assessment</b>  <b>+</b>	School and create new primary school. Adjacent to further and adult education facility at Newbury College. Close to retail and local facilities	<b>assessment</b>  <b>-</b>	delivery of new or extended schools uncertain. Fewer local facilities close by than at Sandleford.. Connectivity and access issues as result of split site with development on both sides of A339
		<p>The Education Service comments at the Options for the Future stage indicated a very strong preference for the Sandleford site where a new primary school would be required and where there was scope to extend Park House School. (CD09/46) An extended Park House plus the new school at St Bartholomew's could provide secondary education for students from both the Newbury Racecourse and Sandleford sites. Newbury College is located immediately adjacent to the Sandleford site within easy walking distance of the whole site.</p> <p>Employment opportunities within easy walking distance include Newbury College and Park House School, the Newbury Retail Park, a Tesco superstore and a number of car showrooms.</p> <p>Within easy reach of facilities and employment opportunities within the town centre and employment areas to the east of Newbury.</p> <p>There are retail facilities close to the Sandleford site at the nearby Newbury Retail Park and local shops, including supermarket and pubs at the local centre at Monument Close, Wash Common, both within easy walking distance. Newbury College provides some recreational and adult education courses.</p> <p>The Sandleford site has potential for integration with the established adjacent communities.</p>		<p>Submissions from the Fairhurst Estate (FE) following publication of the proposed submission core strategy indicate that enhanced education facilities could be provided by use of land immediately adjoining existing schools (Shaw -cum Donnington Primary and Trinity School of Performing Arts). It is hard to see how the primary school site could be extended as it is a very constrained site and the Education Service has commented that a new school would be required. (CD09/46). Trinity School is operating at capacity and there seems limited scope to extend to the north of Love Lane.</p> <p>The North Newbury site is adjacent to the Vodafone HQ which is a major employer in the area and close to Trinity School.</p> <p>Within easy reach of facilities and employment opportunities within the town centre and employment areas to the east of Newbury</p> <p>There are few local facilities close to the North Newbury site although there are a number of local shops and pubs within easy reach.</p> <p>Significant issues regarding connectivity and permeability of the site as divided by the A339. This would be an obstacle to the creation of an integrated community.</p>	
	<b>O</b>	Dependant on design of sites.	<b>O</b>	Dependant on design of site.	
<b>To improve access to the countryside, parks and open space</b>	<b>Scoring Re-</b>	Opportunity for creation of Country	<b>Scoring Re-</b>	Would provide links to adjacent	

		<b>assessment</b> <b>+</b>	Park in south of site and close to Greenham Common	<b>assessment</b> <b>0</b>	countryside but limited opportunity for creation of significant open space on site.
		<p>Development of site could improve access to adjacent countryside. Open space, including formal play facilities, could be provided on site. Currently there is a footpath running east/west from Warren Road. which would be retained as an important link through the site.</p> <p>The Sandleford site, because of its size and topography, has the potential to create a Country Park or area of public open space on site, providing access to an area which was formally landscaped as part of the Sandleford Priory Estate. This will respect the site as a “gateway” to Newbury, with the retention of the attractive open landscape to the south of the site. Sandleford is also close to Greenham Common and to The Chase (National Trust land), both significant areas of open space used for walking and cycling.</p>		<p>Development of site could improve access to adjacent countryside. Open space, including formal play facilities, could be provided on site.</p> <p>The North Newbury site does not provide the opportunity for a significant area of open space on site, but it is relatively close to Snelsmore Common and could provide links to the adjacent Brickkiln Wood .</p>	
	To support the development of access to IT facilities including broadband particularly in rural locations	<b>0</b>	No impact at this strategic level.	<b>0</b>	No impact at this strategic level.
To achieve and promote high level provision and use of sustainable transport modes where possible	To reduce the need to travel, especially by car	<b>0</b>	Sites would need to encourage use of alternative means of transport. Sites are in close proximity to services and infrastructure of Newbury. Distribution of strategic sites in more than one area may assist in reducing travel needs.	<b>0</b>	Sites would need to encourage use of alternative means of transport. Sites are in close proximity to services and infrastructure of Newbury. Distribution of strategic sites in more than one area may assist in reducing travel needs.
		The transport impacts of the alternative sites have been considered in the Transport Assessment (TA) phase 2 (CD09/26). Significant increases in congestion are anticipated across the whole network as a result of overall background traffic growth and potential mitigation measures are set out. Similar impacts on the local road network are anticipated from development of Sandleford or North		The transport impacts of the alternative sites have been considered in the Transport Assessment (TA) phase 2 (CD09/26). Significant increases in congestion are anticipated across the whole network as a result of overall background traffic growth and potential mitigation measures are set out. Similar impacts on the local road network are anticipated from development of Sandleford or North	

		<p>Newbury.</p> <p>Highways Agency representations at Proposed Submission stage expressed concern that mitigation would be essential on the link between North Newbury and the M4 and between M4 Junctions 12 and 13d</p> <p>The Sandford site attracted poorer sustainability scores in the Selection Framework partly as a result of distance from town and local centres. This was based on distance of the centre point of the whole site from facilities. However, the development intention is to link development to existing communities and facilities in the north and west of the site and to retain open space on the slopes in the south of the site, conserving the area of highest landscape value. The northern part of the site is within walking and cycling distance of the town centre and close to local retail and other facilities.</p>	<p>Newbury. North Newbury is likely to have slightly less impact on the strategic network.</p> <p>The Highways Agency was particularly concerned at the Options stage about development at North Newbury as this site offers easy access to the Strategic Road Network (SRN). Their representations at Proposed Submission stage expressed concern that mitigation would be essential on the link between North Newbury and the M4 and between M4 Junctions 12 and 13d</p>		
	To reduce accidents and improve safety	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.
	To increase opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport and ensure the necessary infrastructure is available	○	<p>Strategic sites will need to provide opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport and mitigate any impacts.</p> <p>Sandford site is more than 20mins walk to a local centre.</p>	○	<p>Strategic sites will need to provide opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport and mitigate any impacts.</p> <p>North Newbury site is within 10-20 mins walk of the town centre.</p>
			<p>Pedestrian and cycle links will be incorporated into any development and public transport provision enhanced. Measures are set out in the TA .</p> <p>The northern part of the site is within walking and cycling distance of the town centre and very close to local retail and other facilities. There is an existing cycle link alongside Monks Lane. There are already established bus routes in the area which can be expanded to serve any new large scale development.</p> <p>Approximate walking distance from Newbury College to Parkway is 2400 metres, to the Northcroft Street Bridge</p>		<p>Pedestrian and cycle links will be incorporated into any development and public transport provision enhanced. Measures are set out in the TA.</p> <p>The North Newbury site is within walking and cycling distance of the town centre. Approximate walking distance from the north of the Vodafone site to Parkway is 2,200 metres and to the Northcroft Street Bridge 2500 metres and to Newbury railway station 2,600 metres..</p>

		2,200 metres and to Newbury railway station 1,800 metres			
Contribute to good governance	To improve opportunities for participation in local action and decision making	O	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	O	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.
Ensure that the natural, built and historic environment is conserved and enhanced	To conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity of West Berkshire	O	Both sites are nearby to SSSI sites and there is a Wildlife Heritage Site on the Sandleford site. The provision of green spaces would be a design consideration.	O	Both sites are nearby to SSSI sites. The provision of green spaces would be a design consideration.
			The planning of the site would incorporate proposals for a network of green infrastructure which would mitigate the increased recreational pressure on nearby sensitive wildlife sites and secure biodiversity enhancements.		Any development on the site would need to incorporate proposals for green infrastructure to mitigate the increased recreational pressure on nearby sensitive wildlife sites and secure biodiversity enhancements.
	To conserve and enhance the character of the landscape	--	Sandleford is a medium-high sensitive landscape area.	-	North Newbury site has a landscape of medium sensitivity and is on significant land between Newbury and Donnington.
		<b>Scoring Re-assessment</b>	Landscape impact mitigated by directing development to northern and western part of site and provision and enhancement of open space in area of highest landscape value to the south of site.	<b>Scoring Re-assessment</b>	Impact on gateway to Newbury from north on A339 and on landscape setting of Donnington village.
			Most representations objecting to Sandleford were related to landscape issues, including the previous Local Plan Inspector's decision that the development then proposed would have a significant landscape impact. The CPRE, the North Newbury agents and a number of local residents have argued that development here would not be acceptable on landscape grounds. The Council's Landscape Consultant has confirmed that in principle, most of the proposed extent of development as shown on the indicative Master Plan is not in conflict with the findings of the Landscape Sensitivity Study or those in the Strategic Site Review. There is still potential for refinement		The Fairhurst Estate submitted a Landscape and Visual Appraisal in response to the Options for the Future consultation (available to view on the LDF Consultation Portal). This was broadly in line with the conclusions of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment. It identifies the area as of moderate sensitivity where development would certainly have considerable landscape impact. The most north western part of the site is identified as the most sensitive in landscape terms. It concludes that the potential for conserving the relatively small number of structural landscape elements within the site is good and this, in combination with protecting and reinforcing existing



		<p>and landscape impacts will be paramount in drawing up more detailed proposals.</p> <p>The current proposals are very different from those in the Draft Local Plan which proposed development further south in the site. It is the intention that the majority of the site will be given over to open space with development only in the northern and western parts of the site, close to existing residential and other uses, which are the least sensitive areas in terms of landscape. The proposal for a country park in the southern part of the site will protect this sensitive landscape and the views and vistas from St Gabriel's School, the former Sandlesford Priory, and from the approach to Newbury on the A339.</p>		<p>boundaries in conjunction with other mitigation and enhancement measures, should enable the development to be integrated and assimilated into the wider landscape context and respect historic landscape pattern.</p> <p>The CPRE see this as a more acceptable site than Sandlesford on landscape grounds. Other comments from consultation relating to landscape have stressed the impact on the gateway to Newbury from the north and the impact on Donnington village, with the loss of the gap between the settlements of Donnington and Newbury.</p> <p>The Council's landscape sensitivity work concludes that development could be acceptable provided that the integrity of Donnington village can be maintained and that the character of Shaw Farm Road can be protected. The indicative masterplan prepared on behalf of the Fairhurst Estate and submitted to the Council in March 2011 shows residential development right up to the edge of Donnington village, including the area to the east of the Donnington Valley Hotel. The impact on the settlement form, pattern and character is therefore an important consideration.</p>	
To protect, conserve and enhance the built, cultural and historic environment		-	Sandlesford site could have a negative impact on Sandlesford Priory.	○	No significant impact.
		<b>Scoring Re-assessment</b> ○	Proposed development in north of the site would not impact directly on Sandlesford Priory	-	Potential impact on Donnington Castle, the setting of Donnington Village and the site of the Second Newbury Battlefield.
		Sandlesford Priory (St Gabriel's School) is a Grade 1 listed building and the grounds, including the walled garden to the east are a Registered Park and Garden. The retention of the open landscape to the south and east of the site and provision of a country park will ensure that development respects these heritage assets. The walled garden to the south of the recycling centre is in a degraded state and would not be negatively affected by development of the site. English Heritage have welcomed the focused change to the	Buildings of historic importance in close proximity to the site include Shaw House, a Grade 1 listed building, and Donnington Castle. Development would need to be careful not to compromise the setting of these. The nearby registered historic parks and gardens of Shaw House and Donnington Priory would be unlikely to be affected. The Battlefields Trust have made representations at the Options stage expressing concern as development of the North Newbury site potentially impacts on the last		

		policy to make clear that development should be limited to the north and west of the strategic site allocation		remaining undeveloped parts of the Second Newbury (1644) battlefield. They state that any development should avoid the area between Stoney Lane and the A339 (this includes all the site to the east of the A339) as this area saw the formation of the parliamentary left and attack on the royalists defending Shaw House and the hedgerows to the north-east.	
To protect and improve air, water and soil quality, and minimise noise levels throughout West Berkshire	To reduce air pollution	○	Any site in the Newbury area could influence the amount of traffic using the busy roads and intersections in Newbury where air quality is a concern.	○	Any site in the Newbury area could influence the amount of traffic using the busy roads and intersections in Newbury where air quality is a concern.
	To reduce noise levels in main settlements	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.
	To maintain and improve soil quality	-	Sandleford site is Grade 3 agricultural land. The Racecourse site is not designated as agricultural land.	--	North Newbury site is Grade 2 agricultural land. The Racecourse site is not designated as agricultural land.
				The Fairhurst Estate submitted a consultant's report on Agricultural Land Classification in response to the Options consultation. This shows the site to be a mixture of mainly Grade 2 and Grade 3a agricultural land (73% of the site area)	
	To maintain and improve water quality	○	No significant impact. All sites would be of a scale where they are able to implement sustainable schemes.	○	No significant impact. All sites would be of a scale where they are able to implement sustainable schemes.
To improve the efficiency of land use	To maximise the use of previously developed land and buildings where appropriate	○	Sandleford is a greenfield site.	○	North Newbury is a greenfield site.
To reduce consumption of natural resources and manage their use efficiently	To reduce energy use and promote the development and use of sustainable/ renewable energy technologies	○	Dependant on design. Sites are of a size where they are able to implement sustainable schemes and renewable energy technologies.	○	Dependant on design. Sites are of a size where they are able to implement sustainable schemes and renewable energy technologies.
	To reduce waste generation and disposal	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.

	in line with the waste hierarchy and reuse of materials				
	To reduce water consumption and promote reuse	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.
	To reduce the consumption of minerals and promote reuse of secondary materials	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.	○	Not considered relevant at the strategic level.
To reduce emissions contributing to climate change and ensure adaptation measures are in place to respond to climate change	To reduce West Berkshire's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions	○	Sites would need to encourage sustainable modes of transport and implement sustainable design and construction.	○	Sites would need to encourage sustainable modes of transport and implement sustainable design and construction.
	To sustainably manage flood risk to people, property and the environment	○	Both sites are within Flood Zone 1. Flood risk is a material consideration.	-	Both sites are within Flood Zone 1. The North Newbury site is partially within a groundwater emergence zone, and Critical Drainage Areas are located nearby. The site could be at risk, and increase risk elsewhere, from surface and ground water flooding without appropriate mitigation. Flood risk is a material consideration.
					The West Berkshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SAFRA level 2 CD09/23) concludes that areas within the North Newbury site are likely to be at high risk from surface run-off. The SFRA level 2 also suggests that development is likely to be both susceptible to flooding and increase the flooding from surface water run-off, groundwater and local drainage systems. Development of this area could also increase the risk of sewer and fluvial flooding elsewhere. The risk of localised flooding during heavy rainfall events was highlighted during July 2007 when intense rainfall caused significant surface flooding to the Vodafone HQ. Vodafone have made representations regarding flood risk – their concern is that proper regard is made to flooding risk and robust mitigation measures put in place if the Council were to direct development to North Newbury. Vodafone

				estimate the cost of repair and site upheaval following the 20 <sup>th</sup> July 2007 event at approximately £12 million.	
To maintain a strong, diverse and sustainable economic base	To provide a range of high quality employment opportunities	○	Not considered relevant at this stage.	○	Not considered relevant at this stage.
	To promote and support key business sectors and utilise employment land effectively and efficiently	○	Development would support business and employment in the Newbury area.	○	Development would support business and employment in the Newbury area.
	To increase the viability and vitality of commercial centres	+	Would help to support Newbury as a commercial centre.	+	Would help support Newbury as a commercial centre.
<b>Summary of Effects</b>		<b>Effect:</b> Predominantly neutral <b>Likelihood:</b> High <b>Scale:</b> Newbury <b>Duration:</b> Permanent <b>Timing:</b> Short to long term		<b>Effect:</b> Predominantly neutral <b>Likelihood:</b> High <b>Scale:</b> Newbury <b>Duration:</b> Permanent <b>Timing:</b> Short to long term	

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