

Date: 05 December 2017
Our ref: 228468



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Stroud District Council

BY EMAIL ONLY

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Planning consultation: Stroud Local Plan Issues and Options Paper, October 2017

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 24 October 2017, which was received by Natural England on 24 October 2017.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

THE CONSERVATION OF HABITATS AND SPECIES REGULATIONS 2017 (HABITATS REGULATIONS 2017)

WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981 (AS AMENDED)

Natural England welcomes the opportunity to comment at the early stages of the Stroud Local Plan Issues and Options. We welcome the thorough approach taken to considering the key issues and needs within the district. We have reviewed the Issues and Options consultation and provide comments that are most relevant to our interest in the Natural Environment.

Vision and future growth strategy

Natural England notes that the Local Plan review does not contain within it any proposals for site allocations. Natural England would advise that when considering future allocations at a later stage, opportunities for enhancing the natural environment be provided. We would also advise that a strategic approach be taken to the protection of designated sites. There are a number of environmental constraints within the Stroud District, which should be considered when considering future development.

Sites of Least Environmental Value

In accordance with the NPPF, the plan's development strategy should seek to avoid areas of high environmental value. Natural England expects sufficient evidence to be provided, through the SA and HRA, to justify the site selection process and to ensure sites of least environmental value are selected, e.g. land allocations should avoid designated sites and landscapes and should consider the direct and indirect effects of development on land within the setting of designated landscapes.

Designated sites

The Local Plan should set criteria based policies to ensure the protection of designated biodiversity

and geological sites. Such policies should clearly distinguish between international, national and local sites¹. Natural England advises that all relevant Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), European sites (Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protect Areas) and Ramsar sites² should be included on the proposals map for the area so they can be clearly identified in the context of proposed development allocations and policies for development. Designated sites should be protected and, where possible, enhanced.

The Local Plan should be screened under Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 at an early stage so that outcomes of the assessment can inform key decision making on strategic options and development sites. It may be necessary to outline avoidance and/or mitigation measures at the plan level, including a clear direction for project level HRA work to ensure no adverse effect on the integrity of internationally designated sites. It may also be necessary for plans to provide policies for strategic or cross boundary approaches, particularly in areas where designated sites cover more than one Local Planning Authority boundary. Both the Severn Estuary SAC, SPA, Ramsar site and the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC provide examples of designated sites where such cross border working is likely to be needed. We will continue to work with the Council and neighbouring LPAs to ensure adequate evidence base information is gathered and interpreted to inform this process.

The Local Authority must have assurances that there are practicable and viable solutions to avoid such effects or, where such effects exist and cannot be avoided or adequately mitigated, that the subsequent tests under the Regulations are met.

Natural England would welcome early discussion on the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the plan and can offer further advice as policy options are progressed.

Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure refers to the living network of green spaces, water and other environmental features in both urban and rural areas. It is often used in an urban context to provide multiple benefits including space for recreation, access to nature, flood storage and urban cooling to support climate change mitigation, food production, wildlife habitats and health & well-being improvements provided by trees, rights of way, parks, gardens, road verges, allotments, cemeteries, woodlands, rivers and wetlands.

Green infrastructure is also relevant in a rural context, where it might additionally refer to the use of farmland, woodland, wetlands or other natural features to provide services such as flood protection, carbon storage or water purification.

A strategic approach for green infrastructure networks should support a similar approach for ecological networks, as outlined above. Evidence of a strategic approach can be underpinned by Green Infrastructure Strategy. We encourage the provision of green infrastructure to be included within a specific policy in the Local Plan or alternatively integrated into relevant other policies, for example biodiversity, green space, flood risk, climate change, reflecting the multifunctional benefits of green infrastructure. The strategic approach for green infrastructure, should also include giving appropriate consideration to SUDS.

Green Infrastructure should form the basis of any future development. Natural England advises that any approved scheme should incorporate well designed green infrastructure (GI) to ensure that the development is better able to be accommodated within its landscape setting. Multi-functional green infrastructure is also important to underpin the overall sustainability of the development by performing a range of functions including flood risk management, the provision of accessible green space, climate change adaptation and supporting biodiversity. Natural England would very much

¹ International sites include: Special Protection Areas (SPAs); Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar sites¹. National sites include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs) Local sites include wildlife Sites or geological sites (a variety of terms are in use for local sites).

² The following wildlife sites should also be given the same protection as European sites: potential SPAs, possible SACs, listed or proposed Ramsar sites and sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on European sites

welcome a conversation about how green infrastructure could be incorporated into the Plan.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

The Plan should set out a strategic approach, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity. There should be consideration of geodiversity conservation in terms of any geological sites and features in the wider environment.

A strategic approach for networks of biodiversity should support a similar approach for green infrastructure (outlined below). New development should incorporate opportunities to enhance biodiversity, wherever possible. NPPF paras 9 and 109 set out the expectation that sustainable development will realise net gain as part of development proposals wherever possible. A number of local planning authorities in England have incorporated suitable 'net gain' policy wording into their local plans, several of these being in the West Midlands. We attach a summary paper covering biodiversity compensation and net gain for your reference.

Landscape

Natural England expects the Plan to include strategic policies to protect and enhance valued landscapes, as well criteria based policies to guide development, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF),

The plan area includes an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty . We advise the LPA to take into account the relevant Management Plan for the AONB and seek the views of the Cotswolds AONB Partnership. Development proposals brought forward through the plan should avoid significant impacts on protected landscapes, including those outside the plan's area and early consideration should be given to the major development tests set out in paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Plan should give consideration to the impact of new development on the protected landscape and consideration should be given to the nature and character of the AONB.

In terms of the district as a whole we encourage the Council to refer to relevant National Character Areas (NCA)³. 'Headline messages' within these profiles are distilled in the form of 'Statements of Environmental Opportunity'. This NCA profile information can valuably inform you :

- Assessment of opportunities to enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the area
- Consideration of any landscape sensitivities

Soils

The Local Plan should give appropriate weight to the roles performed by the area's soils. These should be valued as a finite multi-functional resource which underpins our wellbeing and prosperity. Decisions about development should take full account of the impact on soils, their intrinsic character and the sustainability of the many ecosystem services they deliver.

The plan should safeguard the long term capability of best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a in the Agricultural Land Classification) as a resource for the future in line with National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 112 to safeguard 'best and most versatile' agricultural land.

Air pollution

The Local Plan should address the potential issue of air quality. All relevant transport assessments should be undertaken, to assess the impacts of air quality on the natural environment and any designated sites in question. In particular, consideration should be given to any designated sites

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles#ncas-in-south-west-england>.

within 200m of a main road.

We would expect the plan to address the impacts of air quality on the natural environment. In particular, it should address the traffic impacts associated with new development, particularly where this impacts on European sites and SSSIs. The environmental assessment of the plan (SA and HRA) should also consider any detrimental impacts on the natural environment, and suggest appropriate avoidance or mitigation measures where applicable.

Natural England advises that one of the main issues which should be considered in the plan and the SA/HRA are proposals which are likely to generate additional nitrogen emissions as a result of increased traffic generation, which can be damaging to the natural environment.

The effects on local roads in the vicinity of any proposed development on nearby designated nature conservation sites (including increased traffic, construction of new roads, and upgrading of existing roads), and the impacts on vulnerable sites from air quality effects on the wider road network in the area (a greater distance away from the development) can be assessed using traffic projections and the 200m distance criterion followed by local Air Quality modelling where required. We consider that the designated sites at risk from *local impacts* are those within 200m of a road with increased traffic⁴, which feature habitats that are vulnerable to nitrogen deposition/acidification. [APIS](#) provides a searchable database and **information on pollutants and their impacts on habitats and species**.

Water Quality and Resources and Flood Risk Management

Natural England expects the Plan to consider the strategic impacts on water quality and resources as outlined in paragraph 156 of the NPPF. We would also expect the plan to address flood risk management in line with the paragraphs 100-104 of the NPPF.

The Local Plan should be based on an up to date evidence base on the water environment and as such the relevant River Basin Management Plans should inform the development proposed in the Local Plan. These Plans (available [here](#)) implement the EU Water Framework Directive and outline the main issues for the water environment and the actions needed to tackle them. Local Planning Authorities must in exercising their functions, have regard to these plans.

The Local Plan should contain policies which protect habitats from water related impacts and where appropriate seek enhancement. Priority for enhancements should be focussed on N2K sites, SSSIs and local sites which contribute to a wider ecological network.

Plans should positively contribute to reducing flood risk by working with natural processes and where possible use Green Infrastructure policies and the provision of SUDs to achieve this.

Recreational pressure

Natural England understands that the Severn Estuary Visitor Survey 2016 has been completed with regards to recreational pressure on the Severn Estuary. The visitor survey should be used to inform any potential future development, for example when undertaking a Habitats Regulations Assessment. The visitor surveys highlight the increased recreational pressure on the notified features of the Severn Estuary, where proposals are situated within a 7.7km zone of influence. Consideration should also be given to the in-combination effects of residential development, when taking account of the conclusions of the visitor survey.

For existing projects dealing with recreation pressure, such as that at Rodborough Common SAC we encourage the Council to review monitoring arrangements in order to ensure a 'feedback loop' exists. This will inform your understanding of the effectiveness of current mitigation measures and evidence any need for changes.

⁴ The ecological effects of diffuse air pollution (2004) English Nature Research Report 580
Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Volume 11, Section 3 Part 1 (2007), Highways Agency

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
West Midlands Area Planning

BIODIVERSITY COMPENSATION – LOCAL AUTHORITY PLANNING FRAMEWORK ADOPTION

EB have been collating local policy wording adopted in approved Local Plans and Core Strategies, and proposed in draft plans, where biodiversity accounting, offsetting and/or compensation is referenced together with requirements for No Net Loss to biodiversity, examples as below:

Lichfield District Council; Staffordshire

Local Plan adopted February 2015:

The following is extracted from “Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy 2008 – 2029” adopted 17 February 2015:

“Policy NR3: Biodiversity, Protected Species & their Habitats

Development will only be permitted where it:

- Protects, enhances, restores and implements appropriate conservation management of the biodiversity and/or geodiversity value of the land and buildings;*
- Minimises fragmentation and maximise opportunities for restoration, enhancements and connection of natural habitats (including links to habitats outside Lichfield District); and*
- Incorporates beneficial biodiversity and/or geodiversity conservation features, including features that will help wildlife to adapt to climate change where appropriate*
- **Delivers a net gain for biodiversity and /or geodiversity in the district.***

Proposals should particularly seek to contribute towards the United Kingdom Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) priority habitats and species in Lichfield District, and any additional Staffordshire or National Forest Biodiversity Action Plan species...”

A Biodiversity and Development Supplementary Planning Document supports this policy, April 2014.

The following is extracted from the “Biodiversity and Planning SPD; Stage A4 Compensation and Biodiversity Offsetting”:



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“6.28. Compensation shall be considered as the last resort, with preference always given to protection in entirety followed by appropriate mitigation...”

6.32. Before compensation or biodiversity offsetting can occur the value of the habitat to be lost must be calculated...

6.34. Compensation and biodiversity offsetting schemes must produce habitats of greater biodiversity value than of what is being lost through the development. LDC considers the minimum increased amount or ‘replacement percentage’ to be set at 25% above the biodiversity unit value of the habitats lost.”

Vale of White Horse District Council; Oxfordshire

Local Plan adopted December 2016.

The following draft policies have been extracted from “Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies, adopted 14th of December 2016”;

“Core Policy 46: Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity

Development that will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity in the district will be permitted. Opportunities for biodiversity gain, including the connection of sites, large-scale habitat restoration, enhancement and habitat re-creation will be actively sought, with a primary focus on delivery in the Conservation Target Areas. ***A net loss of biodiversity will be avoided.***

...Development likely to result in the loss, deterioration or harm to habitats or species of importance to biodiversity or of importance for geological conservation interests, either directly or indirectly, will not be permitted unless:

...

iii. measures can be provided (and secured through planning conditions or legal agreements), that would avoid, mitigate against or, as a last resort, compensate for the adverse effects likely to result from development.

*...It is recognised that habitats/ areas not considered above (i.e. Nationally or Locally designated and not priority habitats) can still have a significant biodiversity value within their local context, particularly where they are situated within a Conservation Target Area and/or they have good potential to be restored to priority habitat status or form/have good potential to form links between priority habitats or act as corridors for priority species. These habitats will be given due weight in the consideration of planning applications. **If significant harm to these sites cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts) it will be expected that mitigation will be provided to avoid a net loss in biodiversity or, as a last resort, compensation will be required to offset the impacts and achieve a net gain in biodiversity.***



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The Local Plan includes this supporting information on biodiversity:

“6.122. Opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments will be encouraged. The Vale was the first Council in the UK to use biodiversity offsetting to provide compensation for the impacts of development. Biodiversity offsetting is a mechanism used to secure compensation for the impacts of development for the creation or restoration of important habitats elsewhere. Offsetting is used to ensure that development schemes do not result in a net loss in biodiversity particularly where it is not possible to avoid or mitigate the impacts of a development proposal on-site. Biodiversity offsetting will be considered as a means of compensating for loss of biodiversity through Core Policy 46, but only where avoidance and on-site mitigation have been discounted as options.”

South Lanarkshire Council; Scotland

South Lanarkshire Council Local Development Plan - adopted on 29 June 2015.

The following has been extracted from

“Policy 4 Development management and placemaking

All development proposals will require to take account of and be integrated with the local context and built form. Development proposals should have no significant adverse impacts

*on the local community and where appropriate, **should include measures to enhance the environment** as well as address the six qualities of placemaking (Appendix 1 of DMPDSG)...*

When assessing development proposals, the council will ensure that:

*II. **There is no significant adverse impact on** landscape character, built heritage, **habitats** or species including Natura 2000 sites, **biodiversity** and Protected Species...*

The following has been extracted from the “South Lanarkshire LDP Supplementary Guidance 9: Natural and Historic Environment”

“Policy NHE20 Biodiversity

In order to further the conservation of biodiversity:

*I. Development proposals should demonstrate that they have **no significant adverse impacts on biodiversity**, including cumulative impacts.*



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II. Applications which impact upon a biodiversity asset shall be accompanied by appropriate ecological surveys to enable a site-specific decision to be reached by the Planning Authority.

III. Development proposals likely to lead to significant loss of biodiversity will only be supported if adequate mitigation and offsetting measures are agreed with the council.

IV. Development proposals should consider opportunities to contribute positively to biodiversity conservation and enhancement, proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal.”

The supporting text includes the following under Biodiversity Assessments and Surveys:

“6.15 The Habitat Impact Calculator enables an assessment of the current ecological importance of a site to be assessed. It also allows proposals for habitat alteration/improvement to be assessed to determine whether proposals are likely to have a negative or positive impact upon the site...

6.19 Biodiversity offsets are conservation activities designed to deliver biodiversity benefits in compensation for losses, in a measurable way. It is also referred to as ‘habitat banking’ or ‘conservation credits’. It can allow for off-site environmental improvements to be funded by a developer as a condition of approval for a development that will have negative impacts on biodiversity elsewhere, offering potential benefits for biodiversity and creates a clearer framework for developers to compensate for unavoidable damage. However offsetting is not considered best practice and should only be considered as a last resort, under the mitigation hierarchy.”

Ribble Valley Borough Council; Lancashire

Local Development Plan adopted December 2014:

A Local Plan for Ribble Valley, “Core Strategy 2008-2028” was formally adopted on 16 December 2014:

“Key Statement EN4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

The Council will seek wherever possible to conserve and enhance the area’s biodiversity and geodiversity and to avoid the fragmentation and isolation of natural habitats and help develop green corridors. Where appropriate, cross-Local Authority boundary working will continue to take place to achieve this.

Negative impacts on biodiversity through development proposals should be avoided. Development proposals that adversely affect a site of recognised environmental or ecological importance will only be permitted where a developer can demonstrate that the negative effects of a proposed development can be mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated for. It will be



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the developer's responsibility to identify and agree an acceptable scheme, accompanied by appropriate survey information, before an application is determined. There should, as a principle be a net enhancement of biodiversity.

... For those sites that are not statutorily designated and compensation could be managed through a mechanism such as biodiversity off-setting via conservation credits."

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council; Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull

Local Plan adopted December 2013:

The following is extracted from Solihull Local Plan Shaping a Sustainable Future December 2013:

"Policy P10 Natural Environment

*... Where development is likely to have significant harmful effects on the natural environment, as a result of the development itself, or the cumulative impact of developments, developers must demonstrate that all possible alternatives that would result in less harm have been considered. **Where development is permitted, appropriate mitigation of the impacts and compensation where relevant will be required to deliver a net gain in biodiversity, habitat creation, landscape character and local distinctiveness. Enhancements should be undertaken either on the site, or in its vicinity, but where it is demonstrated that this is not possible, offsetting** in alternative strategic locations within the biodiversity or green infrastructure network, to deliver biodiversity or other objectives may be considered. Where appropriate, developers should demonstrate compliance with this policy through an ecological statement or by relevant information in the West Midlands Sustainability Checklist."*

North Warwickshire Borough Council; Warwickshire

Local Plan adopted October 2014:

The following is extracted from "Core Strategy Forming part of the Local Plan for North Warwickshire Adopted October 2014":

"NW15 Nature Conservation

... Development that damages habitats and features of importance for nature conservation will only be permitted where there are no reasonable alternatives to the development taking place in that location. Where appropriate, developments will be required to help enhance these features and/or secure their beneficial management. Development will be resisted where it leads to the loss of irreplaceable habitats and features, such as ancient woodland or veteran



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trees unless it can be demonstrated there are overriding reasons and benefits that outweigh the loss.

Development should help ensure that there is a net gain of biodiversity and geological interest by avoiding adverse impacts first then providing appropriate mitigation measures and finally seeking positive enhancements wherever possible. Where this cannot be achieved, and where the development is justified in terms of the above criteria, the Local authority will seek compensation and will consider the use of biodiversity offsetting as a means to prevent biodiversity loss. In doing so, offsets will be sought towards enhancements of the wider ecological network in the Borough or sub-region in line with local, regional and national priorities for nature conservation.

South Oxfordshire District Council; Oxfordshire

Local Plan 2031 draft February 2015

The following is extracted from “South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011, Adopted January 2006 - Strike-through version on adoption of South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, December 2012”:

“Policy C6

In considering proposals for development, the maintenance and enhancement of the biodiversity resource of the district will be sought. Full account of the effects of development on wildlife will be taken. Where there is any significant loss in biodiversity as part of a proposed development, the creation and maintenance of new landscape features, habitats, habitat links and wildlife corridors of appropriate scale and kind will be required to ensure there is no net loss in biodiversity resources.”

Warwick District Council; Warwickshire

Local Plan draft January 2016:

The following draft policies have been extracted from “Local Plan 2011-2029 Publication Draft” (examination hearings were formally closed by the Inspector on 15 December 2016 and the Inspector has stated that main modifications are required to make the plan sound which will be subject to full public consultation and Sustainability Appraisal over the coming months).

“NE3 Biodiversity

New development will be permitted provided that it protects, enhances and/or restores habitat biodiversity. Development proposals will be expected to ensure that they:



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- a) lead to **no net loss of biodiversity**, where appropriate, by means of an approved ecological assessment of existing site features and development impacts;
- b) protect or enhance biodiversity assets and secure their long-term management and maintenance, and;
- c) avoid negative impacts on existing biodiversity.

*Where this is not possible, mitigation measures must be identified. **If mitigation measures are not possible on site, then compensatory measures involving biodiversity offsetting will be required.***

Stratford-on-Avon District Council; Warwickshire

Adopted Core Strategy 2011 to 2031

The following policies have been extracted from the adopted Core Strategy which was adopted with Main Modifications on 11 July 2016:

“Policy CS.6 Natural Environment

... Proposals will be expected to secure a net gain in biodiversity by:

*... Where a development will have a negative impact on a biodiversity asset, mitigation will be sought in line with the mitigation hierarchy. Impacts should be avoided and, if this is not possible, mitigated. **Where there would be a residual impact on a habitat or species and mitigation cannot be provided on site in an effective manner, developers will be required to offset the loss by contributing to appropriate biodiversity projects elsewhere in the area.** Where an impact cannot be fully mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission will be refused.”*

Nuneaton and Bedworth District Council; Warwickshire

Borough Plan draft 2015

The following is extracted from “Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council Borough Plan: Publication (2017)”.

“Policy NE3 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

... Biodiversity Offsetting

*Biodiversity offsetting will be required as a last resort once all available options in the mitigation hierarchy have been explored. **Developers must use Warwickshire County Council’s Biodiversity Offsetting Metrics to quantify the impact and to calculate an appropriate level of compensation to replace the lost habitat.** If the habitat loss cannot be replaced on site, the replacement habitat should be provided in the Borough in the following order:*



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- *A biodiversity strategic location.*
- *A location adjoining and/or linking a biodiversity strategic location.*
- *A location that does not contribute to the offsetting strategy.”*

The Borough Plan includes the following supporting information on biodiversity offsetting:

“Biodiversity Offsetting

11.33 Where the potential to avoid, minimise and restore has been fully considered and is unavoidable, biodiversity offsetting will need to be applied prior to receiving planning permission. A Biodiversity Offsetting Metrics has been prepared by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to calculate the value of biodiversity in monetary terms. Warwickshire County Council have modified the DEFRA metrics to take account of local considerations and provide advice to developers in making their calculations. Applying the Metrics ensures that the losses resulting from development and the gains achieved through biodiversity offsetting are measured in the same way.”

Marsh Gibbon Neighbourhood Area; Aylesbury Vale; Buckinghamshire

Neighbourhood Plan adopted March 2015

“Policy MG 19: Enhancing, Protecting and Provision of new Natural Environment Habitats, Trees and Hedgerows.

... Proposals will be supported that can demonstrate net gain in biodiversity in accordance with the DEFRA Biodiversity Impact Calculator.”

The policy was endorsed and refined on recommendation of the Examiner as follows;

‘Recommended modification 8: Policy MG21 should be re-titled Enhancing, Protecting and Provision of new Natural Environment Habitats, Trees and Hedgerows; and insert “in accordance with current BS5837 national best practice” after quality; and insert “Proposals will be supported that can demonstrate net gain in biodiversity in accordance with the Defra Biodiversity Impact Calculator” as a final sentence’

Wing Neighbourhood Area; Aylesbury Vale; Buckinghamshire

Neighbourhood Plan adopted March 2015

“Policy CGS1: Respecting the Environment

New development in the Parish will be required to:

‘... Protect and where possible, enhance wildlife value, on the site, surrounding sites and wildlife corridors. The use of the DEFRA and Natural England endorsed



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Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculator (as updated) will be required to quantify ecological impact and outcome. Only neutral or positive scores will be approved."

The policy was endorsed and refined on recommendation of the Examiner as follows;

'Policy CGS1 Respecting the Environment - This complies with sustainability objectives and meets the basic conditions. Aylesbury Vale District Council has suggested alterations to clarify and make easier enforcement of this policy, and I therefore suggest the following text be added to bullet point 1'

"The use of the DEFRA and NE endorsed Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculator (as updated) will be required to quantify ecological impact and outcome. Only neutral or positive scores will be approved (include reference to the metric to be used as a footnote)

Haddenham Neighbourhood Area; Aylesbury Vale; Buckinghamshire

Neighbourhood Plan adopted September 2015

"Policy SRL3: Enhancing, Protecting and Providing new Natural Environment Habitats, Trees and Hedgerows

... Landscaping proposals should include native species and habitats that respect the distinctive local landscape character and should seek to demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity in accordance with the Defra Biodiversity Impact Calculator..."

The Neighbourhood Plan includes the following supporting information on biodiversity offsetting:

"10.5.1 Development will be expected to result in a net gain to biodiversity, as set out in the National Planning and Policy Framework. This will be calculated by applying the DEFRA and Natural England endorsed Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculator. Development proposals must be supported by appropriate ecological assessment using nationally accepted standards i.e. BS42020."

