

Landscape Character Appraisal to inform the Lambourn Neighbourhood Development Plan

November 2020



LEPUS CONSULTING
LANDSCAPE, ECOLOGY, PLANNING & URBAN SUSTAINABILITY



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Front cover photo: Horse paddocks off Greenways,, Lambourn by Neil Davidson

Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Appointment and scope of work	1
1.2	Purpose of this report	1
1.3	Aim of the Neighbourhood Development Plan	1
1.4	Geographic context of Lambourn	1
2	Landscape classifications	3
2.1	Landscape Character Assessment hierarchy	3
2.2	National Character Areas	3
2.3	West Berkshire landscape context	3
2.4	Lambourn Open Downland LoCA	4
2.5	Wooded Downland LoCA	4
2.6	Lambourn Upper Valley Floor LoCA	4
2.7	North Wessex Downs AONB LCA	5
3	Landscape planning policy context	6
3.1	National Planning Policy Framework	6
3.2	Planning Practice Guidance	6
3.3	West Berkshire Planning Policy	7
3.4	North Wessex Downs AONB	9
3.5	25 Year Environment Plan	10
4	Methodology	12
4.1	Overview	12
4.2	Define purpose and scope of the project	12
4.3	Desk study	12
4.4	Field study	12
4.5	Classification and description of landscape character areas	13
4.6	Landscape Appraisal	13
4.7	Definitions	14
4.8	Limitations	15
5	Landscape evolution	17
5.1	Geology and landform	17
5.2	Topography	17
5.3	Soil	17
5.4	Hydrology	19
5.5	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	19
5.6	The River Lambourn	19
5.7	Priority Habitats	20
5.8	Sites of Special Scientific Interest	20
5.9	Ancient Woodland	20
5.10	Local Wildlife Sites	21
5.11	Cultural heritage	21
5.12	Literary landscapes	23
5.13	PRoWs and National Trails	23
5.14	Membury Airfield	23
5.15	Horse Racing	23
5.16	Green Infrastructure	24
6	Landscape Character Areas	28
6.1	Identification of Landscape Character Areas	28
6.2	Landscape Character Areas	29
6.3	Scale	29
7	Open Chalk Downland (LCA 1)	31
7.1	Location and boundaries	31
7.2	LCA1 characteristics, distinctiveness and features	31
7.3	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness of LC1	33
8	Wooded Downland (LCA 2)	35
8.1	Location and boundaries	35
8.2	LCA2 characteristics, distinctiveness and features	35

8.3	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness of LCA2.....	36
9	Membury Airfield (LCA 3)	38
9.1	Location and boundaries.....	38
9.2	LCA3 characteristics, distinctiveness and features	38
9.3	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness of LCA3.....	39
10	Ermin Street (LCA 4)	41
10.1	Location and boundaries	41
10.2	LCA4 characteristics, distinctiveness and features.....	41
10.3	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness of LCA4.....	42
11	Lynch Wood (LCA 5).....	43
11.1	Location and boundaries	43
11.2	LCA5 characteristics, distinctiveness and features	44
11.3	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness of LC5.....	44
12	Lower Lambourn Valley Floor (LCA 6)	46
12.1	Location and boundaries	46
12.2	LCA6 characteristics, distinctiveness and features.....	46
12.3	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness of LCA6.....	47
13	Upper Lambourn (LCA 7)	49
13.1	Location and boundaries	49
13.2	LCA7 characteristics, distinctiveness and features	49
13.3	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness of LCA7.....	50
14	Edge of Settlement at Lambourn	51
14.1	Plan making considerations	51
14.2	Long distance views	51

Figures

Figure 1.1: Location of Lambourn Civil Parish in the context of West Berkshire and the North Wessex Downs AONB	2
Figure 4.1: Landscape Character Assessment - the process	16
Figure 5.1: Topography of Lambourn Neighbourhood Development Plan area (source: Natural England)	18
Figure 5.2: Biodiversity sites in and around Lambourn Neighbourhood Development Plan area	22
Figure 5.3: Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments in and around Lambourn Neighbourhood Development Plan area (source: Historic England)	25
Figure 5.4: Conservation areas within Lambourn Neighbourhood Development Plan area (source: West Berkshire Council)	26
Figure 5.5: Membury Airfield 1941	27
Figure 6.1: What is Landscape?	28

Abbreviations

ALC	Agricultural Land Classification
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BOAT	Byway Open to All Traffic
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DPD	Development Plan Document
GI	Green Infrastructure
LCA	Landscape Character Area
LCT	Landscape Character Type
LoCA	Local Character Area
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
MSA	Motorway Service Area
NCA	National Character Area
NDP	Neighbourhood Development Plan
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PRoW	Public Right of Way
SM	Scheduled Monument
SSSI	Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Foreword & acknowledgements

This document was commissioned by Lambourn Parish Council during March 2020 to support the Lambourn Neighbourhood Plan.

It has been assisted by valuable discussions with and contributions from the following :

- Lambourn Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
- Jeremy Flawn of Bluestone Planning
- West Berkshire District Council

Neil Davidson CEnv CIEEM CMLI
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Executive Summary

- E1 Lepus Consulting has been commissioned by Lambourn Neighbourhood Plan (NDP) Steering Group to undertake a Landscape Character Appraisal of Lambourn Parish to help inform the Lambourn Neighbourhood Plan.
- E2 The Landscape Character Appraisal includes a Landscape Character Assessment of the entire parish. Landscape Character Assessment documents identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinctive by mapping and describing character types and areas. They also show how the landscape is perceived, experienced and valued by people.
- E3 The approach to landscape characterisation has followed established guidance such as Natural England's 'Approach to Landscape Characterisation'. Besides the various baseline information relation to natural, cultural and social matters, the Landscape Character Assessment has drawn on the recent West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (2019).
- E4 Seven local landscape character areas have been identified. Each has a description of natural, cultural, social, perceptual and aesthetic qualities. The report also includes recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness.
- E5 The report also includes an evaluation of long distance views to inform Landscape Character Appraisal at a number of locations from the north west, north east, south west and north east perspectives of the town. These include a strategic evaluation of landscape and visual sensitivity, landscape qualities and also include recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness.

Upper Lambourne by John Betjeman (1961)

Up the ash tree climbs the ivy,
Up the ivy climbs the sun,
With a twenty-thousand pattering,
Has a valley breeze begun,
Feathery ash, neglected elder,
Shift the shade and make it run -

Shift the shade toward the nettles,
And the nettles set it free,
To streak the stained Carrara headstone,
Where, in nineteen-twenty-three,
He who trained a hundred winners,
Paid the Final Entrance Fee.

Leathery limbs of Upper Lambourne,
Leathery skin from sun and wind,
Leathery breeches, spreading stables,
Shining saddles left behind -
To the down the string of horses
Moving out of sight and mind.

Feathery ash in leathery Lambourne
Waves above the sarsen stone,
And Edwardian plantations
So coniferously moan
As to make the swelling downland,
Far surrounding, seem their own.

1 Introduction

1.1 Appointment and scope of work

1.1.1 Lepus Consulting Ltd has been appointed by Lambourn Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Steering Group to undertake a Landscape Character Appraisal of the parish of Lambourn. The Landscape Character Appraisal will be used *inter alia* to provide evidence to support development management policies in the emerging NDP. It will also be used to raise awareness and appreciation of the different landscapes that can be found in the parish, their distinctive features and sensitivity to change.

1.1.2 Lepus Consulting is an environmental assessment practice specialising in landscape and ecological impact assessment. This report has been prepared by Neil Davidson (BSc, MSc, CEnv, CIEEM, CMLI), with support from Catherine Wright (BSc, MSc) and Ellen Satchwell (BSc, MSc).

1.2 Purpose of this report

1.2.1 This report presents a Landscape Character Appraisal of Lambourn Parish. It characterises areas with common landscape features across the parish such that they may be categorised or grouped into a common landscape area known as a Landscape Character Area (LCA). Distinguishing features are used to recognise heterogeneity and help define the boundary of an LCA.

1.2.2 The Landscape Character Appraisal will be used by Lambourn NDP Steering Group to help evidence landscape and character policies created in the emerging NDP to help conserve the unique character of Lambourn.

1.3 Aim of the Neighbourhood Development Plan

1.3.1 The outputs of this study are proportional to the aims of the NDP as well as providing a useful reference guide for the NDP area. This work is important for the following reasons:

- To identify, conserve and manage the landscape qualities of Lambourn;
- To inform the development of the NDP and provide evidence for landscape and character policies;
- To identify the special qualities of the area to help ensure that new development proposals are of an appropriate design and complement the existing local character;
- To be used by developers and their architects to help them understand the local character; and
- To be used by development control officers when making decisions affecting planning applications.

1.4 Geographic context of Lambourn

1.4.1 The NDP area comprises the administrative boundary of Lambourn Civil Parish. The parish covers approximately 6,044 hectares. The parish is a predominantly rural landscape with the majority of the population living within the village of Lambourn.

1.4.2 The NDP area is near-equidistant between Newbury and Swindon, nestled amongst rolling chalk hills in the administrative district of West Berkshire. The parish comprises a high-quality rural environment, with Lambourn representing the largest settlement and also being defined as a rural service centre in the Adopted Core Strategy (2012). The small villages of Upper Lambourn and Eastbury lie to the north and south east of Lambourn respectively. The entire parish is located within the nationally important protected landscape of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). A map showing the context of Lambourn in the context of West Berkshire and the AONB is presented in **Figure 1.1**.

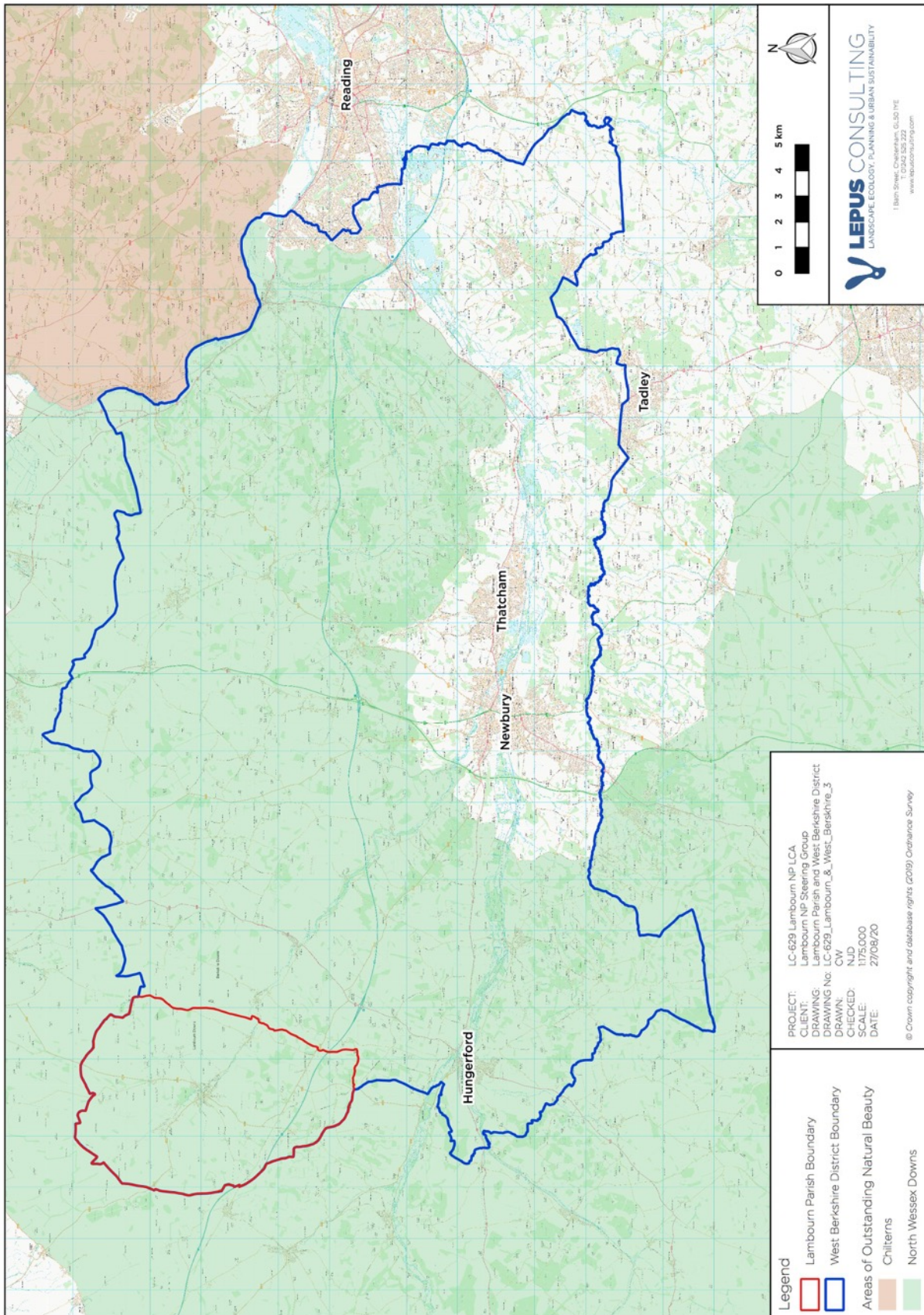


Figure 1.1: Location of Lambourn Civil Parish in the context of West Berkshire and the North Wessex Downs AONB

2 Landscape classifications

2.1 Landscape Character Assessment hierarchy

- 2.1.1 Preparation of Landscape Character Assessment at different scales is an important consideration when preparing development plans or making planning decisions. The Landscape Character Assessment exercise, and how it is approached, is dependent upon the scale and level of detail required as this will influence the level in the national-local hierarchy at which it is being carried out.
- 2.1.2 The vertical hierarchy of landscape character assessments includes the nationwide National Character Areas, county level landscape character assessments (if they exist), protected landscape character assessments such as those prepared for national parks and AONBs, and then at the district level where landscape character assessments are often prepared to help inform local plans.
- 2.1.3 Neighbourhood plans sit at a level ‘underneath’ the district. It is important that the process of landscape character assessment helps to ensure consistency of description across boundaries whilst facilitating vertical integration of policy at the same time. The level of detail and cartographic granularity increases as the size of the study area decreases.
- 2.1.4 The following sections discuss the vertical hierarchy above Lambourn Parish, from the top down: National Character Areas, the North Downs AONB landscape character assessment and the district level character areas.

2.2 National Character Areas

- 2.2.1 At a national level, Landscape Character Assessment has been defined by the assessment work of Natural England, which has divided England into areas of similar strategic landscape types called National Character Areas (NCAs)¹.
- 2.2.2 The Lambourn NDP area is located entirely within the Berkshire and Marlborough Downs NCA (No. 116)². Further information on the Berkshire and Marlborough Downs NCA is available from Natural England.

2.3 West Berkshire landscape context

- 2.3.1 The West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment was published in 2019³ and forms the evidence base for the implementation of the West Berkshire Local Plan 2026, and for the review of the West Berkshire Local Plan to 2036. This study identifies ten strategic Landscape Character Types (LCTs), which are further sub-divided into Local Character Areas (LoCA).
- 2.3.2 Information regarding location and boundaries is provided for each LoCA, as well as key characteristics, key positive landscape attributes, forces for change/ sensitivities/ pressures, landscape strategy, land management and built development.
- 2.3.3 The NDP area is coincident with three LoCAs which have been identified in the West Berkshire LCA as follows:
- Lambourn Open Downland LoCA, referred to using code reference OD1 in the West Berkshire LCA;
 - Shefford Wooded Downland LoCA, referred to using code reference WD1 in the West Berkshire LCA; and

¹ Natural England (2014) National Character Area profiles: data for local decision making. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making> [Date Accessed: 20/04/20]

² Natural England (2015) NCA Berkshire and Marlborough Downs. Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4822422297509888> [Date Accessed: 25/03/20]

³ LUC (2019) West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment. Available at: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=47980&p=0> [Date Accessed: 25/03/20]

- Upper Valley Floor LoCA, referred to using code reference UV1 in the West Berkshire LCA.

2.4 Lambourn Open Downland LoCA

2.4.1 The northern part of the NDP area is coincident with the Lambourn Open Downland LoCA, which itself is classified as being part of the Open Downland LCT. The LCA report states that *“The northern part of the Lambourn Valley is steeply undulating with dramatically rolling hills, comprised mainly of large-scale arable agriculture. Fragmented chalk grasslands and occasional wooded areas are also present. The landscape is open, exposed and remote. Settlement is sparse, with the hamlet of Fawley on higher ground and the two villages of Lambourn and Upper Lambourn in their well-contained valley setting. Horse racing is a prominent industry here; and the area has numerous associated stud farms, stables and gallops. There are clear cultural and historical connections to the area’s deeper past, including prehistoric barrows which form prominent landscape features”*.

2.4.2 The main detractors of Lambourn Open Downland LoCA are as follows:

- Loss and fragmentation of chalk grassland;
- Increased occurrence of small block mixed woodland plantation tree cover;
- Change in farming practices;
- Change in horse racing industry;
- Development pressures; and
- Management of footpaths, bridleways and byways.

2.5 Wooded Downland LoCA

2.5.1 The southern part of the NDP area is coincident with the Shefford Wooded Downland LoCA, which itself is classified as being part of the Wooded Downland LCT. The LoCA is summarised as *“A rolling chalk landscape that is characteristically well-wooded between mixed arable and pasture land use. On the steeper slopes there are also areas of calcareous chalk grassland. The area is predominantly rural, with small settlements, such as Shefford Woodlands and Woodlands St Mary, tending to follow the route of the old Roman road. The M4 motorway bisects the landscape. Views are varied; in some areas woodland creates a sense of enclosure, while other areas are more open and expansive”*.

2.5.2 The main detractors of Shefford Wooded Downland LoCA are as follows:

- Over intensification of arable farming practices;
- Lack of appropriate woodland management in some areas;
- Noise and visual pollution created by the M4;
- Ongoing pressure for development;
- Increased traffic near Membury motorway service area as well as on the rural lane road network; and
- Localised modern intrusions on the landscape.

2.6 Lambourn Upper Valley Floor LoCA

2.6.1 A long, narrow strip of land associated with the River Lambourn is coincident with the Lambourn Upper Valley Floor LoCA, which itself is classified as being part of the Upper Valley Floor LCT. The report states that *“The Lambourn Upper Valley Floor character area is a narrow chalk valley which follows the River Lambourn as it flows eastwards from Lambourn to Newbury. There is a large amount of equestrian influence particularly in the northern part of the area with many of the fields now serving as pony paddocks, although fields of pasture also remain. A mosaic of wetland habitats occur along the valley corridor, including a number of designated sites. Settlements are small and well-defined in a linear pattern, with red brick being the most common building material. The valley landform creates a sense of enclosure”*.

2.6.2 The main detractors of Lambourn Upper Valley Floor LoCA are as follows:

- Decline in traditional pasture management;
- The M4 motorway;

-
- Continued pressure for development leading to the degradation and suburbanisation of the distinct rural character;
 - Loss of historic boundaries and patterns; and
 - Nutrient enrichment of the river from agricultural run-off.

2.7 North Wessex Downs AONB LCA

2.7.1 The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) LCA was conducted in 2002⁴. This study has been effectively updated by the latest West Berkshire LCA.

⁴ LUC (2002) North Wessex Downs AONB LCA. Available at:
<https://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=36254&p=0> [Date Accessed: 26/03/20]

3 Landscape planning policy context

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework

3.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in 2019⁵ provides guidance for local planning authorities when preparing local plans and making decisions about planning applications. The environmental role of the NPPF is *“to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy”*.

3.1.2 In relation to landscape character assessment, in general, the following paragraphs of NPPF 2019 are of relevance.

3.1.3 Paragraph 170 states: *“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)”*.

3.1.4 Paragraph 172 states: *“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues ... The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. Planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest”*.

3.2 Planning Practice Guidance

3.2.1 Planning Practice Guidance on landscape character can be found in ‘Chapter 8’ of the PPG which deals with the Natural Environment. It states that *‘The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally-designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.*

3.2.2 *Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals for development affecting these areas will be assessed. Plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary. The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully.*

3.2.3 *Where appropriate, landscape character assessments can be prepared to complement Natural England’s National Character Area profiles. Natural England provides guidance on undertaking these assessments.*

3.2.4 *To help assess the type and scale of development that might be able to be accommodated without compromising landscape character, a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment can be completed. To demonstrate the likely effects of a proposed development on the landscape, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment can be used’.*⁶

⁵ MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework. Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> [Date Accessed: 04/05/20]

⁶ For more information see Paragraph: 036 Reference ID: 8-036-20190721 and Paragraph: 037 Reference ID: 8-037-20190721

3.2.5 The PPG also makes special reference to dealing with development within the setting of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as follows: *'Land within the setting of {an AONB} often makes an important contribution to maintaining their natural beauty, and where poorly located or designed development can do significant harm. This is especially the case where long views from or to the designated landscape are identified as important, or where the landscape character of land within and adjoining the designated area is complementary. Development within the settings of these areas will therefore need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account'*.

3.3 West Berkshire Planning Policy

3.3.1 West Berkshire's Local Plan consists of several documents. The principle components which affect the Lambourn NDP are listed below:

- Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) 2006 – 2026⁷;
- Housing Sites Allocations DPD⁸;
- West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 – 2006 (saved policies)⁹;

3.3.2 The Core Strategy 2006 - 2026 sets out a long-term vision for West Berkshire to 2026 and translates this into spatial terms, setting out proposals for where development will go, and how this development will be built. The Core Strategy aims to make the different settlements within West Berkshire even more attractive places within which to live, work and enjoy leisure time. The Core Strategy provides an overall framework for the more detailed policies and site-specific proposals to be contained in other documents of the Local Plan i.e. the Housing Sites DPD and neighbourhood development plans.

3.3.3 The importance of protecting and enhancing landscape character permeates the Adopted Core Strategy; a number of policies are of particular relevance to this study:

Table 3.1: Relevant planning policies for landscape character

Policy reference	Title	Relevance to the LCA
Adopted Core Strategy 2006 - 2026		
Area Delivery Plan Policy 5	North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	<p>The North Wessex Downs AONB will have appropriate and sustainable growth that conserves and enhances its special landscape qualities ... whilst adhering to the landscape priority of the policy</p> <p>The conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape will be the paramount consideration in assessing these sites.</p> <p>Recognising the area as a national landscape designation, development will conserve and enhance the local distinctiveness, sense of place and setting of the AONB whilst preserving the strong sense of remoteness, tranquillity and dark night skies, particularly on the open downland. Development will respond positively to the local context, and respect identified landscape features and components of natural beauty.</p>

⁷ West Berkshire Council (2012) Core Strategy Development Plan Document. Available at: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/corestrategy> [Date Accessed: 26/03/20]

⁸ West Berkshire Council (2017) Housing Site Allocations DPD (2006- 2026). Available at: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=43955&p=0> [Date Accessed: 01/05/20]

⁹ The West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007). Available at: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/article/28783> [Date Accessed: 01/05/20]

CS 14	Design Principles	<p>New development must demonstrate high quality and sustainable design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area, and makes a positive contribution to the quality of life in West Berkshire.</p> <p>Development proposals will be expected to make efficient use of land whilst respecting the density, character, landscape and biodiversity of the surrounding area.</p> <p>:</p>
CS 17	Biodiversity and geodiversity	<p>Development which may harm, either directly or indirectly, the integrity or continuity of landscape features of major importance for wild flora and fauna will only be permitted if there are no reasonable alternatives and there are clear demonstrable social or economic benefits of regional or national importance</p> <p>Opportunities will be taken to create links between natural habitats and, in particular, strategic opportunities for biodiversity improvement will be actively pursued within the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas identified on the Proposals Map in accordance with the Berkshire Biodiversity Action Plan.</p>
CS 18	Green Infrastructure	<p>The District's green infrastructure will be protected and enhanced. The Council will work with partners, including Parish Councils and the community to address the District's green infrastructure needs and deficiencies.</p>
CS 19	Historic Environment and Landscape Character	<p>In order to ensure that the diversity and local distinctiveness of the landscape character of the District is conserved and enhanced, the natural, cultural, and functional components of its character will be considered as a whole.</p>
Housing Site Allocations DPD (2006-2026)		
Policy HSA 19	Land adjoining Lynch Lane, Lambourn (site reference LAM005)	<p>The site has a developable area of approximately 4.5 hectares for 60 dwellings, to be delivered at a low density in keeping with the surrounding area.</p>
Policy HSA 20	Land at Newbury Road, Lambourn (site reference LAM015)	<p>The site has a developable area of approximately 0.8 hectares for approximately 5 individually designed dwellings to be delivered at a low density in keeping with the surrounding area.</p>
C 1	Location of New Housing in the Countryside	<p>There will be a presumption against new residential development outside of the settlement boundaries. Exceptions to this are limited to rural exception housing schemes, conversion of redundant buildings, housing to accommodate rural workers, extension to or replacement of existing residential units and limited infill in settlements in the countryside with no defined settlement boundary.</p>
C 2	Rural Housing Exception Policy	<p>Within the AONB and its setting, the overriding consideration will be the impact arising from the new development on its setting and special qualities and natural beauty of the landscape.</p>

C 3	Design of Housing in the Countryside	The design of new housing, including rural exception housing sites, conversions, extensions and replacement dwellings, must have regard to the impact individually and collectively on the landscape character of the area and its sensitivity to change.
C 4	Conversion of Existing Redundant Buildings in the Countryside to Residential Use	The conversion of existing redundant buildings to residential use will be permitted providing that it has no adverse impact on / does not affect rural character.
C 5	Housing related to Rural Workers	The development has no adverse impact on the rural character and heritage assets of the area and its setting within the wider landscape. Where it affects the AONB the impact on its special qualities and natural beauty of the landscape will be the overriding consideration.
C 6	Extension of Existing Dwellings within the Countryside	There is a presumption in favour of proposals for the extension of existing permanent dwellings. An extension or alteration will be permitted providing that it has no adverse impact on: the setting, the space occupied within the plot boundary, on local rural character, the historic interest of the building and its setting within the wider landscape.
C 7	Replacement of existing dwellings	There is a presumption in favour of the replacement of an existing dwelling of permanent construction. A replacement dwelling will be permitted providing that the replacement dwelling is proportionate in size and scale to the existing dwelling, uses appropriate materials and does not have an adverse impact on the character and local distinctiveness of the rural area.
C 8	Extension of Residential Curtilages	Extensions to existing residential curtilages will only be permitted where it can be shown that there is no adverse impact on the character and local distinctiveness of the rural area.

3.4 North Wessex Downs AONB

3.4.1 The parish of Lambourn lies wholly within the North Wessex Downs AONB, which stretches from the west in Wiltshire, through Swindon, Oxfordshire and West Berkshire, to the eastern most section where it abuts the Chilterns AONB along the River Thames. The North Wessex Downs AONB covers approximately 1,730km² of rolling chalk-dominated countryside, encompassing several settlements including the market towns of Hungerford and Marlborough, and 173 parishes¹⁰.

¹⁰ North Wessex Downs AONB (2019) North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2019-2024. Available at: <http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/publications-resources/aonb-management-plan.html> [Date Accessed: 04/05/20]

- 3.4.2 The AONB is surrounded by several large urban areas including Reading, Swindon, Basingstoke and Newbury, meaning that it is within a convenient travel distance for a large number of visitors. The M4 and A34 also pass through the AONB.
- 3.4.3 The North Wessex Downs AONB was designated in 1972 under the National Parks and Access to Countryside Act 1949¹¹.
- 3.4.4 The AONB represents an area with an ancient history of human settlement and land use. It contains a vast number of important cultural heritage assets and features of archaeological interest, including medieval and post-medieval settlements. This includes Neolithic and Bronze Age sites such as Avebury Henge which is the largest megalithic stone circle in the world¹². There are 479 Scheduled Monuments, 15 Registered Parks and Gardens, one Registered Battlefield and over 4,000 Listed Buildings within the AONB.
- 3.4.5 Within Lambourn Parish itself, historic features of note include the Bronze Age barrow cemeteries such as Lambourn Seven Barrows in the north, as well as many Listed Buildings particularly within the settlements of Upper Lambourn, Lambourn and Eastbury.
- 3.4.6 The area also has a long history of farming and especially livestock, with the name Lambourn being derived from the tradition of grazing with sheep. Today, the AONB is still dominated by agricultural land use including farmsteads, pasture and arable land, amongst the river valleys, woodland and high chalk plains.
- 3.4.7 The landscape encompasses a range of important habitats for nature conservation including the chalk grasslands, broadleaved woodlands, chalk rivers and streams, wetlands and arable farmland. The AONB contains 9% of the UK's remaining chalk grassland, a rare habitat which disappeared in large quantities through the industrialisation of agriculture. Chalk grassland is unique and supports a large number of nationally and internationally important plant and animal species, especially invertebrates such as the Chalkhill Blue, Duke of Burgundy and Grizzled Skipper butterflies.
- 3.4.8 The AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024¹³ seeks to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and special qualities of the landscape. The inherent value and importance of the North Wessex Downs includes the natural environment, geology, ecology and archaeology, as well as the relationship of the landscape with people over time.
- 3.4.9 Key issues identified with regard to the landscape include, but are not limited to, the need to conserve and enhance the remote and secluded character of the settlements in the area, appropriate management of woodlands and the protection and restoration of nationally significant habitats which include chalk grassland, streams and wetlands. In line with the NPPF, the biological and cultural significance of the AONB landscape should be preserved for future generations.

3.5 25 Year Environment Plan

- 3.5.1 The document: 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' was published in January 2018 by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)¹⁴. A description of this plan is as follows:

¹¹ National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/12-13-14/97> [Date Accessed: 04/05/20]

¹² English Heritage (no date) Avebury. Available at: <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/avebury/> [Date Accessed: 05/04/20]

¹³ North Wessex Downs AONB (2019) North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2019-2024. Available at: <http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/publications-resources/aonb-management-plan.html> [Date Accessed: 04/05/20]

¹⁴ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2018) 25 Year Environment Plan. Accessed on 26/02/18. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan> [Date Accessed: 20/04/20]

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- 3.5.2 *“This 25 Year Environment Plan sets out government action to help the natural world regain and retain good health. It aims to deliver cleaner air and water in our cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats. It calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first”.*
- 3.5.3 The plan identifies six key areas around which action will be focused. This includes the policy ‘recovering nature, and enhancing the beauty of landscapes’. An action identified within this policy relevant to this LCA is as follows: *“Identifying opportunities for environmental enhancement in all of England’s 159 National Character Areas and monitoring indicators of our landscape’s character and quality to improve landscapes for people, places and nature”¹⁵.*
- 3.5.4 The 25 Year Environment Plan recognises that *“our landscapes – our hills, valleys and plains – were created by age-old geological processes but the way our rural and urban environment looks now owes as much to the work of people as nature. Down the centuries, we have shaped and adapted our rural and urban landscape to suit our purpose, not always aware of the lasting effects of our actions – for good or ill – on the appearance and health of the environment”.*

¹⁵ Ibid.

4 Methodology

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 The methodology for this study area has been derived from aspects of:

- Guidelines for Visual and Landscape Impact Assessment 3 (2013)¹⁶;
- Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment¹⁷; and
- Natural England (2019) An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment¹⁸.

4.1.2 It can be summarised as having four steps:

- Define purpose and scope of the project;
- Desk study;
- Field study; and
- Classification and description of landscape character types and areas.

4.2 Define purpose and scope of the project

4.2.1 Lambourn NDP Steering Group requested a Landscape Character Assessment to be undertaken. Lepus held two meetings with the Lambourn NDP Steering Group at the start of the project to confirm the precise aims and objectives of the project including the scope of each task.

4.3 Desk study

4.3.1 The desktop study stage consists of an information gathering exercise to prepare a baseline review of natural, cultural and social aspects of the NDP area. This largely relied on information from the following sources:

- West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (2019);
- West Berkshire Core Strategy DPD; and
- North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024.

4.4 Field study

4.4.1 As stated in 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment'¹⁹: *“the field study is an essential part of the Landscape Character Assessment process. It presents the opportunity to observe and understand how all the factors identified as part of the desk study interact and are perceived and experienced, to give us landscapes of distinct character. It also enables the identification of other factors that are not evident from the desk study and the chance to record aesthetic and perceptual aspects”*.

4.4.2 The guidance goes on to explain why landscape character assessment can be used to inform land use planning and specifically local plans. Landscape is typically appreciated under umbrella headings of (i) Natural, (ii) Cultural and Social, and (iii) Perceptual and Aesthetic factors.

¹⁶ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition) Abingdon: Routledge

¹⁷ Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscape-character-assessments-identify-and-describe-landscape-types>

¹⁸ Natural England (2019) An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment. – to inform spatial planning and land management. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/817928/landscap-e-sensitivity-assessment-2019.pdf

¹⁹ Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment.

4.4.3 **Figure 4.1** provides a summary of the stages and detail for each stage of the landscape character assessment.

4.5 Classification and description of landscape character areas

4.5.1 The fourth stage of the landscape character assessment guidance from Natural England states that this part of the process deals with the final classification and description of landscape types and character areas, and explains:

- the difference between landscape types and landscape character areas, and their use;
- classification at different scales;
- involvement of people;
- boundary confirmation;
- naming landscape character types and areas;
- describing landscape character; and
- mapping landscape character types and/or areas.

4.5.2 Overall, the landscape classification has been informed by the three previous steps which were used to divide the landscape into areas of distinct, recognisable and consistent character. This provided information on the extent and distribution of different landscape character areas at a local scale.

4.5.3 Landscape classification can be prepared at a variety of scales depending on the purpose and scope of the project. The scale of the area to be assessed determines the likely level at which the differences between homogeneous and distinctive factors are separated to identify character areas. The three previous stages of assessment have provided a spatially referenced framework on which landscape character descriptions, and follow on judgements about future policy development, design strategies, or land management may be based.

4.5.4 Seven LCAs have been identified. The following information has been assembled for each LCA:

- Landscape Character Area name;
- A map of the LCA;
- A description of the key landscape characteristics in terms of natural, cultural and social features, as well as key aesthetic and perceptual qualities;
- Information about landscape character sensitivity;
- Information about visual sensitivity;
- Information about landscape value; and
- Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness as well as conserve visual integrity.

4.6 Landscape Appraisal

4.6.1 The Landscape Institute²⁰ recognises that the purpose of a landscape assessment is to assess the effects of change; typically driven by development proposals. The form of the assessment to be undertaken will depend on the scale and type of the intervention and in the case of development, the associated form that the planning application may take. Unless there are specific regulatory requirements, the principle of proportionality should apply. The terms assessment and appraisal are interchangeable; assessment tending to be used alongside Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and appraisal tending to apply to smaller scale planning applications.

4.6.2 Landscape assessment or appraisal involves an evaluation of landscape character sensitivity and visual sensitivity, as well as landscape value, which together may inform evaluations of overall impact as well as evaluation of capacity. Landscape assessment/appraisal is therefore typically associated with land parcels that are being evaluated with a particular development proposal in mind.

²⁰ 'Landscape assessment or appraisal?' Technical Note from the Landscape Institute 8 March 2018. <https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/technical-resource/landscape-assessment-or-appraisal/> (visited 15/07/20)

4.6.3 Whilst the brief (see **Appendix A**) refers to Landscape Character Appraisal to support the Neighbourhood Development Plan, there has been no such evaluation of any particular land parcels for which allocations are being proposed either in the Local Plan or the NDP.

4.6.4 Instead, in **Chapter 14**, this report has included an evaluation of landscape character sensitivity, visual sensitivity and landscape quality (value) at four locations around the edge of Lambourn each overlooking the village from a distance. The following information has been presented alongside each viewpoint:

- Landscape character, distinctiveness and key features;
- Information about character sensitivity and visual sensitivity;
- Information about landscape qualities; and
- Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness.

4.7 Definitions

4.7.1 The following definitions have been reproduced from Natural England's Landscape Character Assessment Guidance (2013) and are used throughout this report:

<p>Landscape Character Areas* These are single unique areas which are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type. Each will have its own individual character and identity, even though it shares the same generic characteristics with other areas of the same type.</p>
<p>Landscape Character Assessment This is the process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features (characteristics) that make landscapes distinctive. This process results in the production of a Landscape Character Assessment.</p>
<p>Landscape Character Types* These are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but wherever they occur they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, historical land use, and settlement pattern.</p>
<p>Landscape Quality (or condition) ** is based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape, and about its intactness, from visual, functional, and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which make up the character in any one place.</p>
<p>Landscape Value** The relative value or importance attached to a landscape (often as a basis for designation or recognition), which expresses national or local consensus, because of its quality, special qualities including perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness, cultural associations or other conservation issues.</p>
<p>Sensitivity *** A term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor.</p>
<p>Susceptibility *** The ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences.</p>
<p>Sources: * The Countryside Commission and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland (CAX 84), the Countryside Commission and Scottish Natural Heritage, April 2002. ** The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2002), Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Second Edition, London: Spon Press. *** Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013), Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition, London: Routledge.</p>

4.8 Limitations

- 4.8.1 The preparation of this report has used a combination of field work and desktop assessment. The field work has been undertaken during the summer time (June). It should be noted that a winter landscape assessment may reveal a different looking landscape as all deciduous vegetation takes on a different form.
- 4.8.2 The Landscape Character Appraisal is an evaluation of landscape at the Parish scale. It is not a sensitivity analysis nor is it a landscape capacity study. Nor is it a landscape and visual impact assessment. Guidance to each of these assessment processes are available from Natural England and the Landscape Institute.
- 4.8.3 There has been no attempt to evaluate the built form that can be found in Lambourn, Upper Lambourn and Eastbury. If required, this would form part of a townscape assessment.

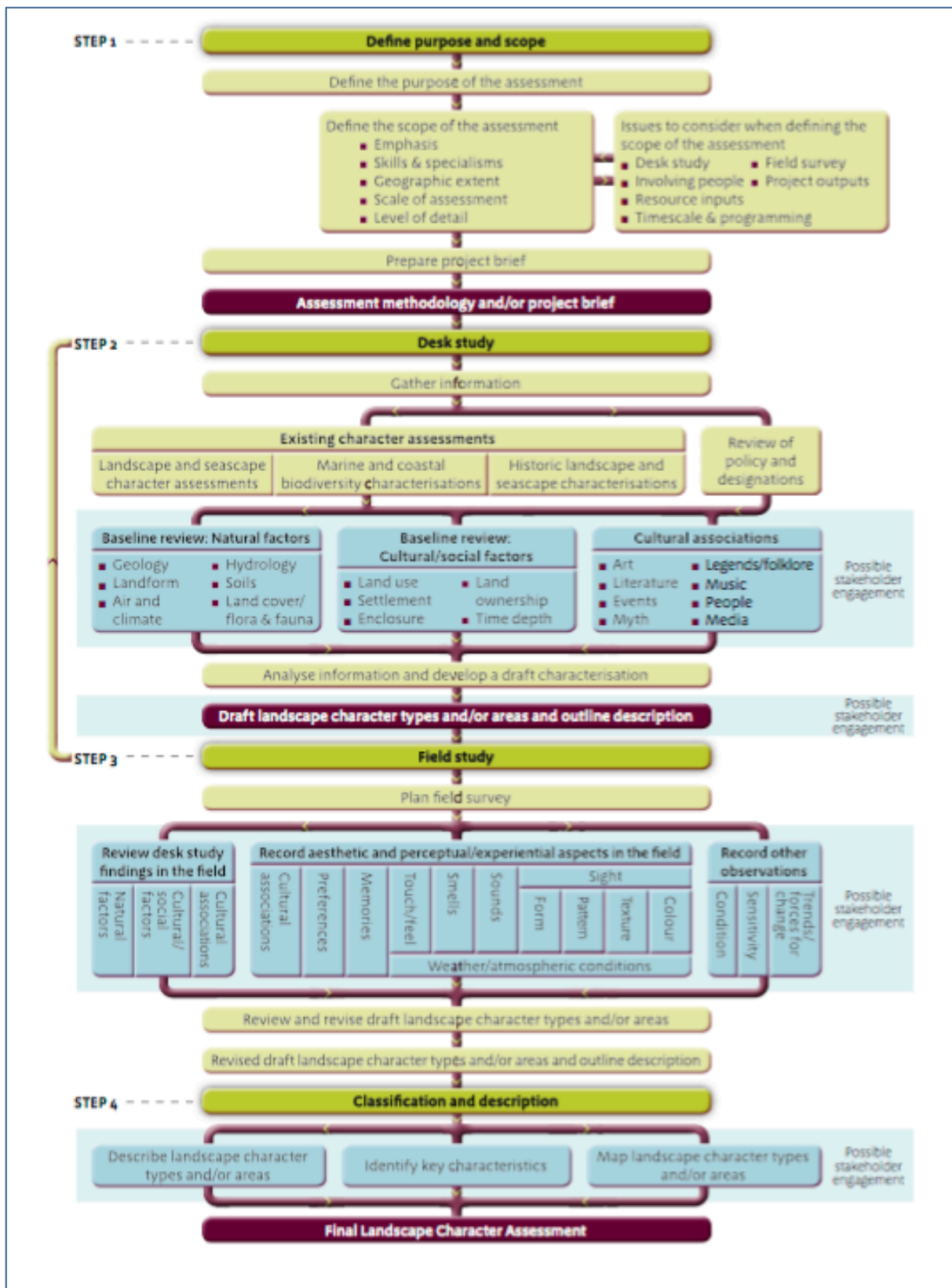


Figure 4.1: Landscape Character Assessment - the process

5 Landscape evolution

5.1 Geology and landform

5.1.1 The basic structure of a landscape is influenced by the underlying geology and topography of the area. The British Geological Survey²¹ provides greater grain of detail in regard to geology across the Neighbourhood Area. Lambourn Parish contains the following types of bedrock:

- New Pit Chalk Formation – Chalk;
- Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation – Chalk;
- Seaford Chalk Formation – Chalk; and
- Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation - Chalk.

5.1.2 Fluvial activity from the Quaternary period has resulted in clay, silt and sand superficial deposits forming a floodplain within the valley of the River Lambourn.

5.2 Topography

5.2.1 The topography of Lambourn is elevated with lower lying ground (120-145m AOD) surrounding the River Lambourn in the centre and south east of the NDP area (see **Figure 5.1**). Lambourn is surrounded by gently rising downland which forms elevated plateaus at all points of the compass. To the west is Bailey Hill (237m); to the north is Crog Hill (176m), to the east is Ewe Hill (215m); and to the south is Cleeve Hill (200m).

5.3 Soil

5.3.1 There are two Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) types within Lambourn Parish: ALC 2 and 3, making the area fertile and productive for arable crops. The higher chalk downs are typically situated on ALC Grade 3 land where they lack the ability to retain water due to the permeable chalk meaning that grazing is the prevalent land use. The lower lying alluvial soils corresponding with the floodplain and river valley are generally more fertile.

5.3.2 There are four different soil types across Lambourn Parish: shallow lime-rich soils over chalk or limestone; freely draining lime-rich loamy soils; slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage; and freely draining slightly acid loamy soils²².

²¹ British Geological Survey (2020) Geology of Britain viewer. Available at <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?pub=WHCK> [Date Accessed: 23/04/20]

²² Cranfield Soil and Agrifood Institute (no date) Soilscales map. Available at: <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscales/index.cfm> [Date Accessed: 23/04/20]

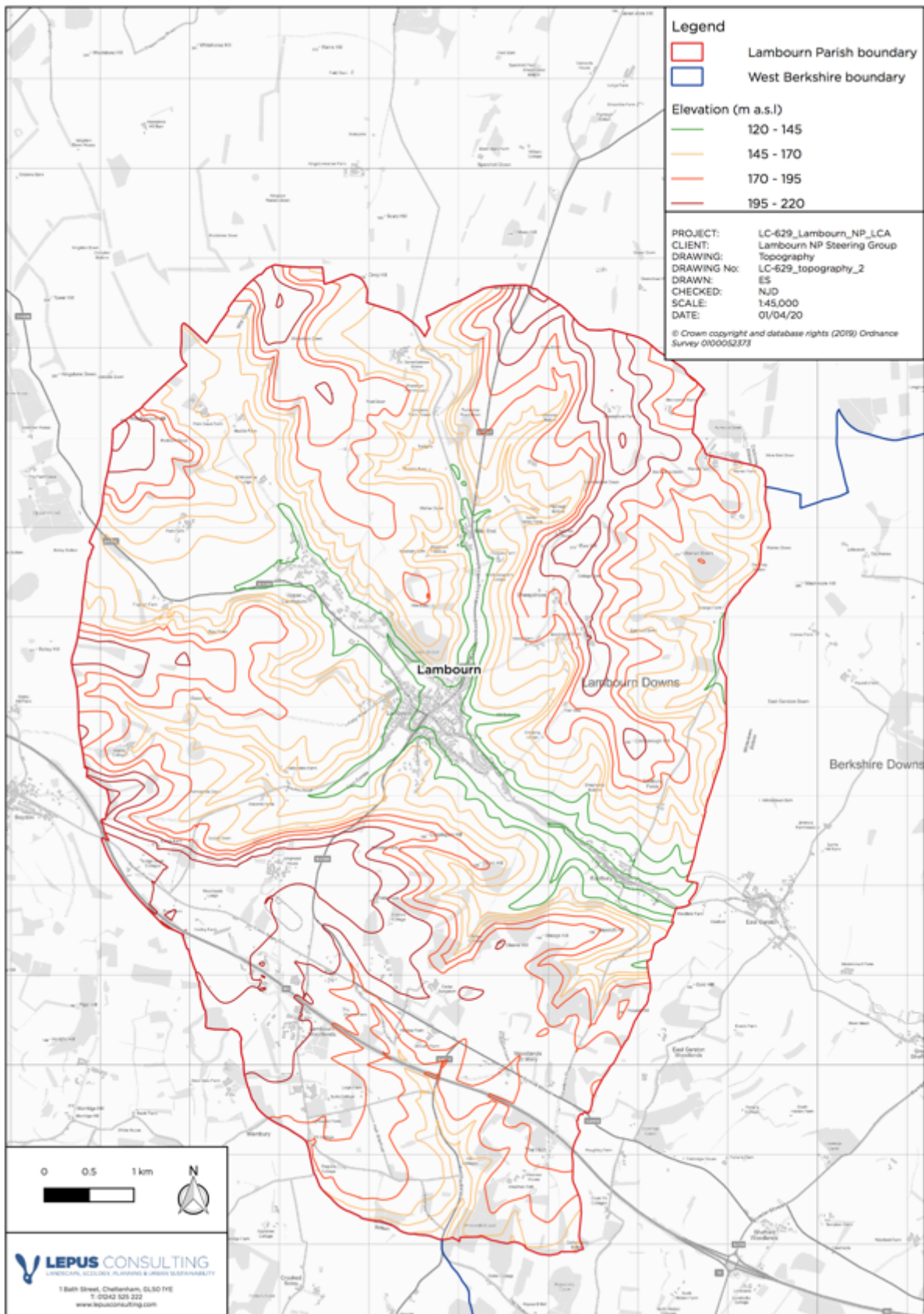


Figure 5.1: Topography of Lambourn Neighbourhood Development Plan area (source: Natural England)

5.4 Hydrology

- 5.4.1 The NDP area is located within the Thames River Basin District²³ and Kennet and Trib Management Catchment²⁴.
- 5.4.2 The River Lambourn and its associated floodplain have created a low-lying channel of land that travels southeast away from Lambourn village centre, through the Plan area, eventually reaching the River Thames. In terms of water quality, the Water Framework Directive (WFD) classifies this watercourse as 'moderate'²⁵.

5.5 Biodiversity, flora and fauna

- 5.5.1 The parish of Lambourn contains a number of locally, nationally and internationally important sites for biodiversity, as well as numerous undesignated assets supporting an array of flora and fauna. The landscape within the parish is predominantly agricultural, with a widely dispersed and small scale settlement pattern outside of the villages. Patches of beech woodland, hedgerows, grassland and field boundaries offer a range of habitat types and connectivity between designated biodiversity assets.

5.6 The River Lambourn

- 5.6.1 The River Lambourn rises in the centre of Lambourn Parish between Lambourn and Upper Lambourn and flows in a south easterly direction through the village of Lambourn and on through chalk valleys until leaving the parish adjacent to Eastbury. The River Lambourn is a chalk stream, with a seasonally dry winterbourne section, only flowing for approximately six months annually when the water table rises through the underlying chalk geology²⁶.
- 5.6.2 The River Lambourn is an internationally protected Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The SAC has been designated for its natural features and botanical assemblage which grows there as well as the presence of the bullhead (*Cottus gobio*) fish²⁷. The protected brook lamprey (*Lampeta planeri*) is also found in the river. The river also forms part of the Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SAC to the south east of the parish boundary.
- 5.6.3 Chalk streams are a distinctive and important habitat. England has 85% of the world's chalk streams²⁸. Chalk streams are characterised by pure, clear water rising from underground chalk aquifers and flowing across fine gravel beds, providing vital habitat for a diverse range of flora and fauna.
- 5.6.4 The Lambourn is a chalk stream discharging into the middle reaches of the Thames system, an example of sub-type 1 of the Annex I habitat 'Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculon fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation'²⁹. It is one of the least-modified rivers of this type, with a characteristic flora dominated by pond water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus peltatus*).

²³ DEFRA (2016) Thames river basin district river basin management plan. Accessed on 05/01/18. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/thames-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan>

²⁴ Environment Agency (2020) Catchment Data Explorer Kennet and Trib Management Catchment. Available at: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/ManagementCatchment/3044> [Date Accessed: 01/04/20]

²⁵ Environment Agency (2016) Lambourn (Source to Newbury) Overview. Available at: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB106039023220> [Date Accessed: 01/04/20]

²⁶ Lambourn – England (no date) The River Lambourn. Available at: <https://lambourn.org/the-river-lambourn/> [Date Accessed: 01/05/20]

²⁷ JNCC (2015) River Lambourn. Available at: <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030257.pdf> [Date Accessed: 01/05/20]

²⁸ Martin Salter & Stuart Singleton-White on behalf of the Rivers Trust and Partners (July, 2019) Chalk Streams in Crisis; A call for drought action now. https://www.riverstrust.org/media/2019/06/Chalk-streams-dossier_June-2019_FINAL_FINAL-1.pdf [Date Accessed: 05/05/20]

²⁹ JNCC (no date) Habitat 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculon fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation. Available at: <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/habitat/H3260/> [Date Accessed: 04/05/20]

5.6.5 Natural England has prepared a Site Improvement Plan (SIP)³⁰ for the River Lambourn SAC. There are ten issues identified within the SIP, including: siltation; water pollution; invasive species; hydrological changes; inland flood-defence works; and inappropriate cutting/ mowing.

5.7 Priority Habitats

5.7.1 There are a number of priority habitats throughout the parish. The underlying chalk geology in the area gives rise to important lowland calcareous grassland habitat, with large sections to the north east of the parish and to the south west of Lambourn village. There are also sections of good quality semi-improved grassland and deciduous woodland priority habitats, particularly in the south.

5.7.2 Lowland calcareous grassland is of particular importance due to its rich flora and fauna, supporting rare flowers and invertebrate species, some of which are endemic to this habitat. Notable examples include the Adonis blue butterfly (*Polyommatus bellargus*) and silver-spotted skipper (*Hesperia comma*)³¹. Although it was once a widespread habitat, a combination of factors including overgrazing, scrub encroachment and changes in agricultural land practices have led to widespread loss and fragmentation of this habitat and consequently the species assemblage it supports.

5.8 Sites of Special Scientific Interest

5.8.1 There are eight Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs) located within Lambourn Parish (**Figure 5.2**), these are as follows:

- Parkfarm Down SSSI;
- Seven Barrows SSSI;
- Croker's Hole SSSI;
- Fognam Chalk Quarry SSSI;
- White Shute SSSI;
- Cleeve Hill SSSI;
- Westfield Farm Chalk Bank; and
- River Lambourn SSSI.

5.8.2 These SSSIs are designated for various important biological and geological features, including botanically rich chalk grassland, sarsen stones and chalk rock. Many of these SSSIs form important strongholds of this habitat type, for example, Croker's Hole SSSI is one of the most floristically diverse chalkland areas in the Berkshire area³².

5.9 Ancient Woodland

5.9.1 There are 22 stands of ancient woodland located within the Plan area, all of which are located to the south of the parish (see **Figure 5.2**), the largest of which being Great Park Wood, Whitehill Wood and Cleeve Wood/Lords Wood. The majority are ancient and semi-natural woodland, with other woods to a lesser extent being formed of ancient replanted woodland. There are also a number of stands of woodland towards the north of the plan area which are not classified as ancient. Woodland is a distinctive feature of the southern landscape at the parish scale.

³⁰ Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan River Lambourn and Kennet-Lambourn Floodplain. Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4738329056641024> [Date Accessed: 21/04/20]

³¹ The Wildlife Trusts. Lowland calcareous grassland. Available at: <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/habitats/grassland/lowland-calcareous-grassland> [Date Accessed: 01/05/20]

³² Natural England (1991) Croker's Hole SSSI. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1006010&SiteName=&countyCode=44&responsiblePerson=> [Date Accessed: 01/05/20]

5.10 Local Wildlife Sites

5.10.1 Within Lambourn Parish there are 30 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS; see **Figure 5.2**). These areas are non-statutory designations that are recognised for their representations of biodiversity at the local or sub-regional scale. They reflect either rarity, distinctiveness, diversity, naturalness, typicalness, fragility or may have strong intrinsic appeal.

5.10.2 In Lambourn, these LWS comprise areas of woodland, scrub or grassland. The majority of these LWS coincide with the stands of ancient woodland and are primarily located to the south of the parish. A lesser extent of Lambourn's LWS are designated for their grassland habitats, including Coppington Down LWS and Giant's Steps LWS which coincide with lowland calcareous grassland priority habitat.

5.11 Cultural heritage

5.11.1 The first mention of Lambourn in historical records is from around 900 A.D. Numerous ancient barrows can be found within the parish and archaeological finds of Roman pottery in close proximity indicate evidence of earlier settlement in the area. There is evidence of Norman settlements from the 12th Century, in particular, the nave of St Michael and All Angels Church. This Grade I Listed Building is located within the centre of Lambourn village. Elsewhere within Lambourn Parish, there are ten Grade II* Listed Buildings and 126 Grade II Listed Buildings (see **Figure 5.3**). In addition, there are 22 Scheduled Monuments (SMs) located within the parish. These include 'Bockhampton deserted medieval village' SM located to the south east of Lambourn village and 'Maddle Farm Roman Settlement' SM located to the north west of the parish.

5.11.2 Market Cross in Market Square is another notable landmark within the village. It is estimated to have been built in the mid 15th Century around the time markets and fairs were granted in the village. The almshouses nearby to Market Square were founded by John Estbury in 1501 and were re-built by Henry Hippisley in 1852³³.

5.11.3 There are three Conservation Areas located within Lambourn Parish: Lambourn, Upper Lambourn and Eastbury (see **Figure 5.4**).

5.11.4 Upper Lambourn is a hamlet situated to the north west of Lambourn village. To the north of the settlement lies one of Berkshire's three 'Hangman's Stones'³⁴, Eastbury is situated to the south east of Lambourn village along the River Lambourn. The settlement contains many medieval thatched barns and cottages. The Church of St James, a Grade II Listed Building, is located to the west of the settlement, and was built in 1851.

5.11.5 Ancient linear boundaries such as Grim's Ditch are substantial earthwork features comprising single or multiple ditches and banks which may extend over distances varying between less than 1km to over 10km. They survive as earthworks or as linear features visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs or as a combination of both. The evidence of excavation and study of associated monuments demonstrate that their construction spans at least a millennium from the Middle Bronze Age, although they may have been re-used later. The scale of many linear boundaries has been taken to indicate that they were constructed by large social groups and were used to mark important boundaries in the landscape; their impressive scale displaying the corporate prestige of their builders. They would have been powerful symbols, often with religious associations, used to define and order the territorial holdings of those groups who constructed them. Linear earthworks are of considerable importance for the analysis of settlement and land use from the Bronze Age onwards; all well preserved examples will normally merit statutory protection.

³³ Royal Berkshire History (2004) Lambourn, Valley of the Racehorse. Available at: <http://www.berkshirehistory.com/villages/lambourn.html> [04/05/20]

³⁴ The Megalithic Portal (2005) Hangman's Stone – Upper Lambourn. Available at: <https://www.megalithic.co.uk/article.php?sid=12415> [Date Accessed: 04/05/20]

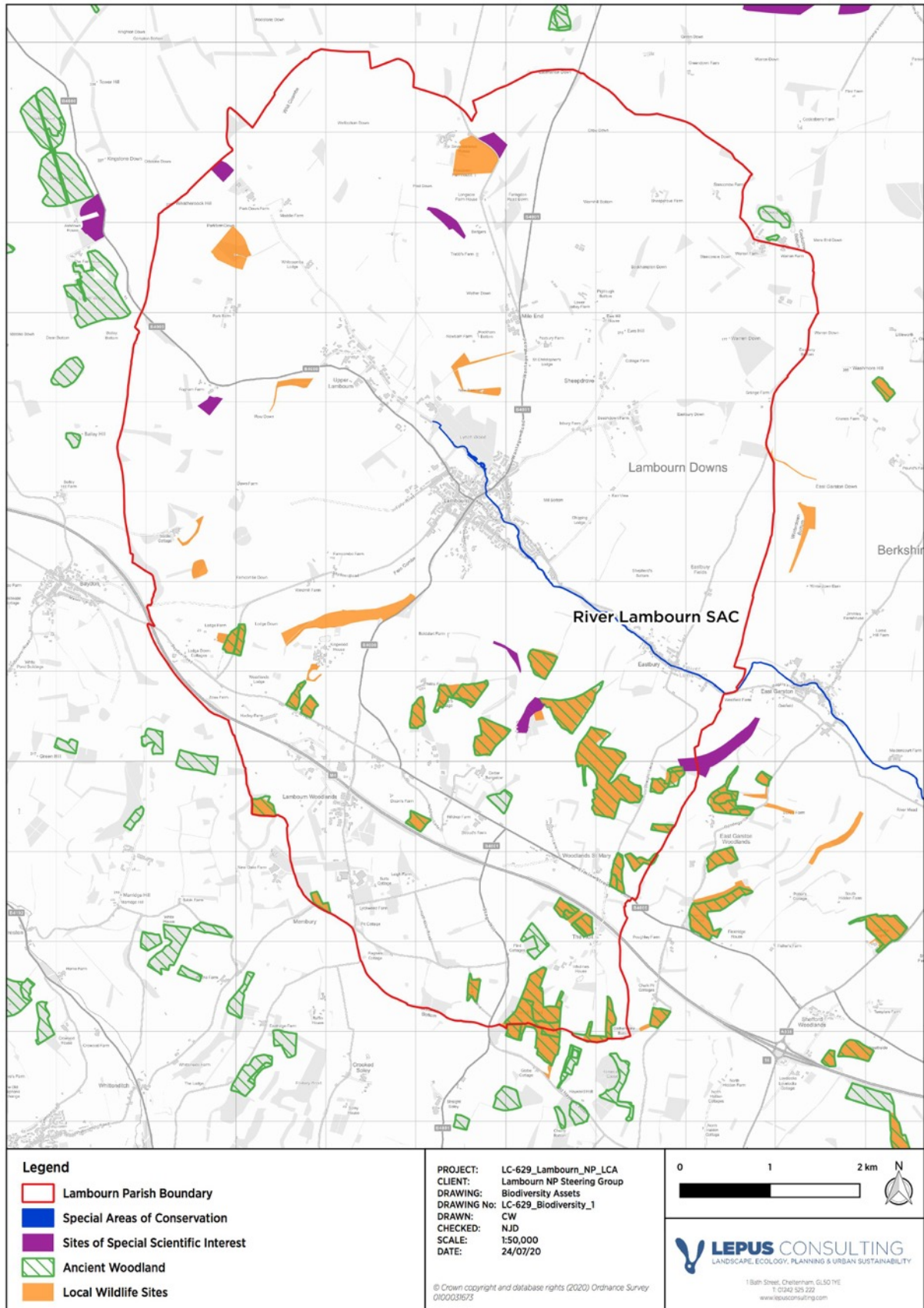


Figure 5.2: Biodiversity sites in and around Lambourn Neighbourhood Development Plan area

5.12 Literary landscapes

5.12.1 The landscape in which the Parish sits is known to have inspired literature including Thomas Hardy's 'Jude the Obscure'. The idyllic Berkshire Downs is home to the cottage which is thought to have been the setting of the central character's home, situated in Fawley, which is located approximately 2km to the east of Lambourn Parish³⁵. John Betjeman's poem 'Upper Lambourne' is an elegy that captures and describes elements of Lambourn's landscape as he refers to the landscape as 'leathery' and considers that the chalk hills that surround the village are swollen and far-surrounding; he includes references to ash woodland as well, which is an emerging management issue for the neighbourhood plan area due to ash die back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*), a serious disease that is killing ash trees across Europe.

5.13 PRoWs and National Trails

5.13.1 The Ridgeway National Trail is located approximately 1.5km north of Lambourn Parish and runs east to west through the North Wessex Downs AONB. The Trail starts in the World Heritage Site of Avebury and travels approximately 87 miles north east. The path follows the route over high ground used by travellers, herdsman and soldiers from prehistoric times. Views from the trail include rolling chalk downland and archaeological monuments.

5.13.2 Another Long Distance Path crosses the parish. Running along an approximate north-south axis is the Lambourn Valley Way. The 35km Lambourn Valley Way runs from the Berkshire Downs near the Uffington White Horse to Newbury along the valley of the River Lambourn connecting the Ridgeway with the Kennet valley. The route passes through the villages of Lambourn, East Garston, Great Shefford and Boxford. It finally reaches the River Thames via the Kennet and Avon Canal towpath.

5.13.3 There are numerous public rights of way (PRoW), bridleways and byways that cross the parish, connecting Lambourn village to Upper Lambourn, Eastbury and the surrounding countryside. The Lambourn website suggests two circular walks around Lambourn³⁶.

5.14 Membury Airfield

5.14.1 Membury Airfield is located between Newbury and Swindon along the M4, within the south west of Lambourn Parish. The airfield was built in 1941 and used by the Royal Air Force and U.S. Air Force up until 1947 for training during World War II.

5.14.2 The airfield is now privately owned, and the surrounding area is predominantly industrial and employment use. Solar panels have been set up across much of the former airfield. **Figure 5.5** illustrates a map of Membury Airfield as it would have looked when it was constructed in 1941.

5.15 Horse Racing

5.15.1 The breeding and training of racehorses has long been a fundamental part of the character of Lambourn and the surrounding villages. The rich history of breeding and training within the parish has led to the Lambourn Valley being referred to as 'The Valley of the Racehorse'.

³⁵ Royal Berkshire History (2004) Fawley. Available at: <http://www.berkshirehistory.com/villages/fawley.html> [Date Accessed: 04/05/20]

³⁶ Lambourn - England (no date) Walking in the area. Available at: <https://lambourn.org/walking-in-the-area/> [Date Accessed: 01/05/20]

5.15.2 The first race meeting in Lambourn was held on the occasion of Easter 1690, on a course above Fognam Farm³⁷. Lambourn's connection to racing continued to flourish when William Craven III (a racehorse owner and breeder) started to hold Lambourn racehorse meetings at his property near Ashdown House. His brother, Fulwar Craven, became one of the founding members of The Jockey Club. The Craven family has since had a strong influence on equestrian activities in Lambourn, with William Craven 2nd Earl winning the Grand National with his horse Charity in 1841. In 1865, he revived the Lambourn Racehorse Meeting at Weathercock Hill Gallops near Ashdown. It wasn't until 1891, when Lambourn Valley Railway was built that Lambourn's racing grew. The railway allowed for horses to be transported around the country.

5.15.3 Today, some 1,500 horses are stabled within Lambourn Parish, making use of the varied turf and all-weather gallops located within Lambourn.

5.16 Green Infrastructure

5.16.1 Natural England defines Green Infrastructure (GI) as: *"a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering those ecological services and quality of life benefits required by the communities it serves and needed to underpin sustainability. Its design and management should also respect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area with regard to habitats and landscape types."*

5.16.2 *"Green Infrastructure includes established green spaces and new sites and should thread through and surround the built environment and connect the urban area to its wider rural hinterland. Consequently it needs to be delivered at all spatial scales from sub-regional to local neighbourhood levels, accommodating both accessible natural green spaces within local communities and often much larger sites in the urban fringe and wider countryside"*³⁸.

5.16.3 The NPPF paragraph 20d³⁹ states *"strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development and make sufficient provision for conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation"*.

5.16.4 As stated in the Natural England guidance, GI includes the following:

- Parks and Gardens – urban parks, country and regional Parks and formal gardens;
- Amenity Greenspace – informal recreation spaces, housing greenspace, domestic gardens, village green, urban commons and green roofs;
- Natural and semi-natural urban greenspace – woodland and scrub, grassland, heath or moor, wetlands and open and running water;
- Green corridors – rivers and canals including their banks, road and rail corridors, cycle routes and PRoWs; and
- Other – allotments, community gardens, city farms, cemeteries and churchyards.

5.16.5 The NDP area contains valuable GI assets including playing fields and allotments, the River Lambourn as well as stands of ancient woodland (**Figure 5.2**).

³⁷ Racecourses: Here Today and Gone Tomorrow. Vol. 2: England South of Hatfield, by John Slusar. ISBN 978-0-9957632-1-0

³⁸ Natural England (2009) Natural England's Green Infrastructure Guidance (NE176). Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35033> [Date Accessed: 27/03/20]

³⁹ National Planning Policy Framework (2019) Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf [Date Accessed: 27/03/20]

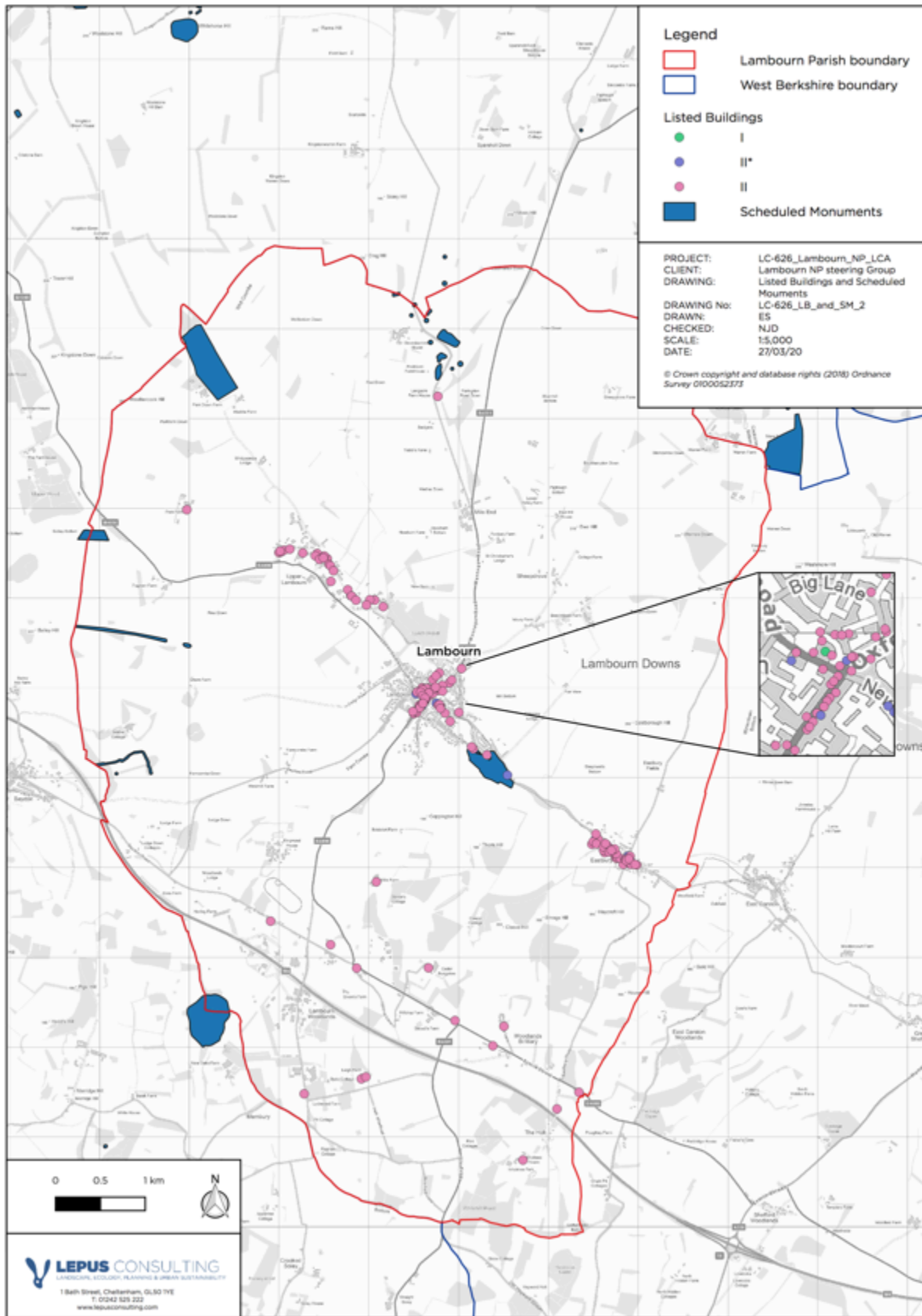


Figure 5.3: Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments in and around Lambourn Neighbourhood Development Plan area (source: Historic England)

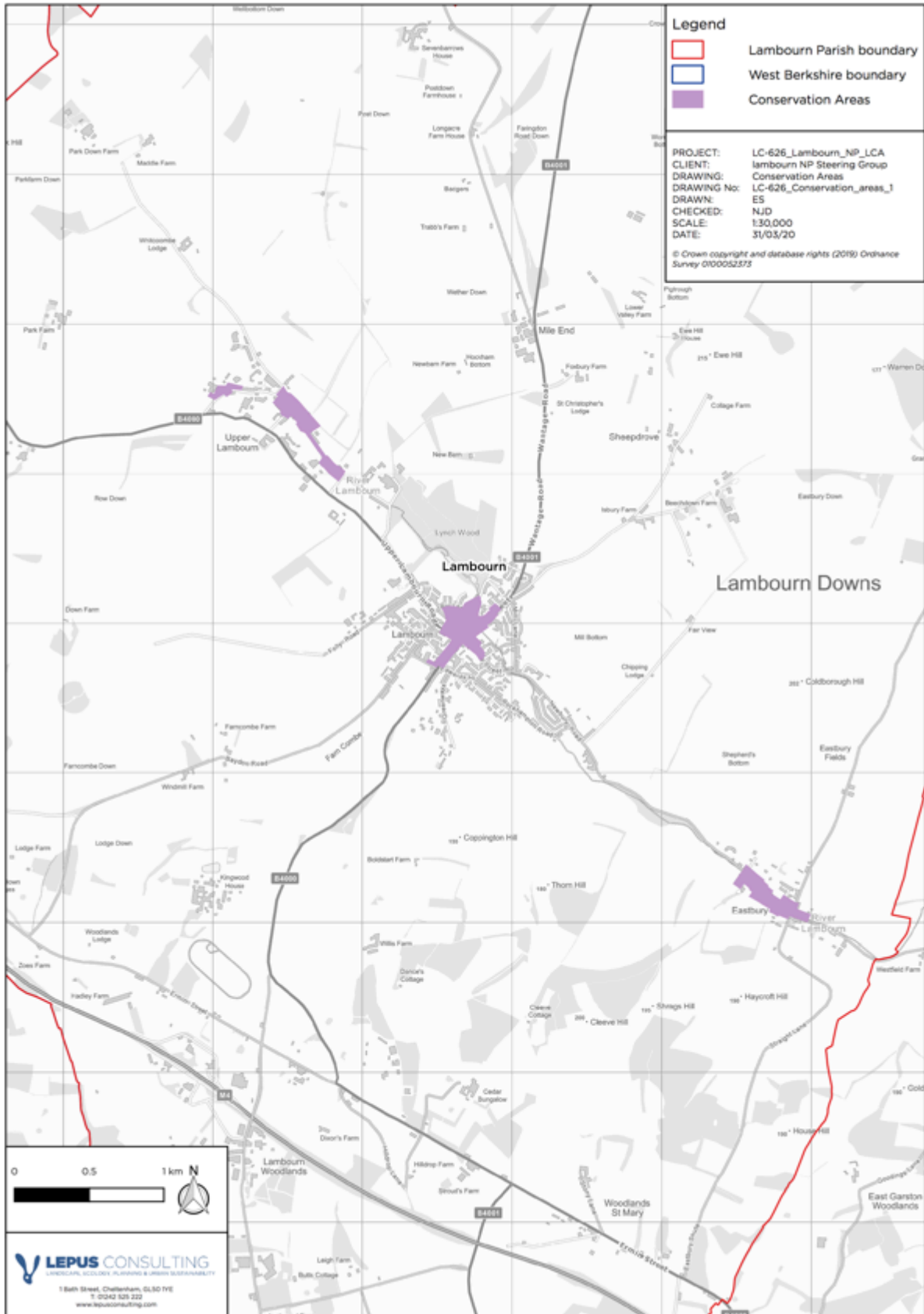
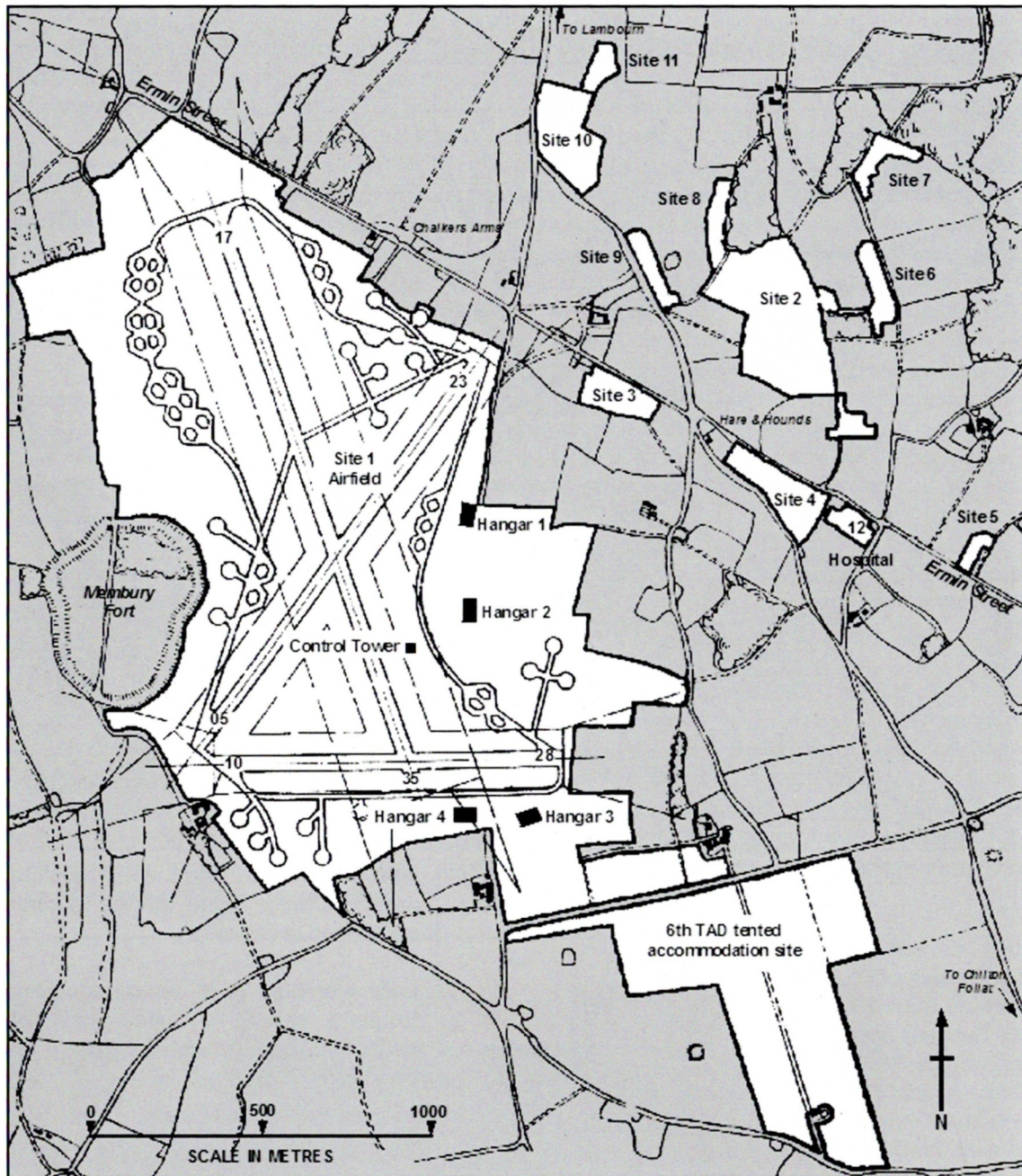


Figure 5.4: Conservation areas within Lambourn Neighbourhood Development Plan area (source: West Berkshire Council)



MEMBURY - plan of airfield and dispersed sites

The white area of the map shows land owned by the Air Ministry and highlights the dispersed nature of the site. It was hoped that by scattering the domestic sites away from the flying field fewer casualties would arise in the event of an enemy air raid.

The numbers at the end of each runway correspond with its compass bearing divided by 10. Thus runway 28 represents a heading of 280 degrees from north.

Figure 5.5: Membury Airfield 1941⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Roger Day (2011) Membury at War: A Wartime History of Membury Airfield, Berkshire.

6 Landscape Character Areas

6.1 Identification of Landscape Character Areas

6.1.1 The methodology for identifying LCAs is presented in **Chapter 4**. Natural England's guidance, 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' (2014), explains why landscape character assessment can be used to inform land use planning and specifically local plans. **Figure 6.1** illustrates the various components that together make a landscape. These are under umbrella headings of (i) Natural, (ii) Cultural and Social, and (iii) Perceptual and Aesthetic factors.



Figure 6.1: What is Landscape?

6.1.2 Natural England's guidance (2014) includes defining some of the attributes that are associated with the definition of landscape character areas. These have been reproduced in **Box 6.1**.

Box 6.1: Landscape landscape character areas

Landscape character areas:

- are the unique individual geographical areas in which landscape types occur;
- share generic characteristics with other areas of the same type, but have their own particular identity;
- can often be more readily recognised and identified by non-specialists – sense of place is often important to local people and visitors for example;
- may often be more prevalent than landscape character types, because some types will occur in more than one area;
- can be identified at each level in the hierarchy of assessment;
- can provide a good spatially referenced framework from where patterns of local distinctiveness, and factors influencing sense of place, can be drawn; and
- can be used to develop tailored policies and strategies, that reflect the characteristics that make a given landscape different or special.

6.2 Landscape Character Areas

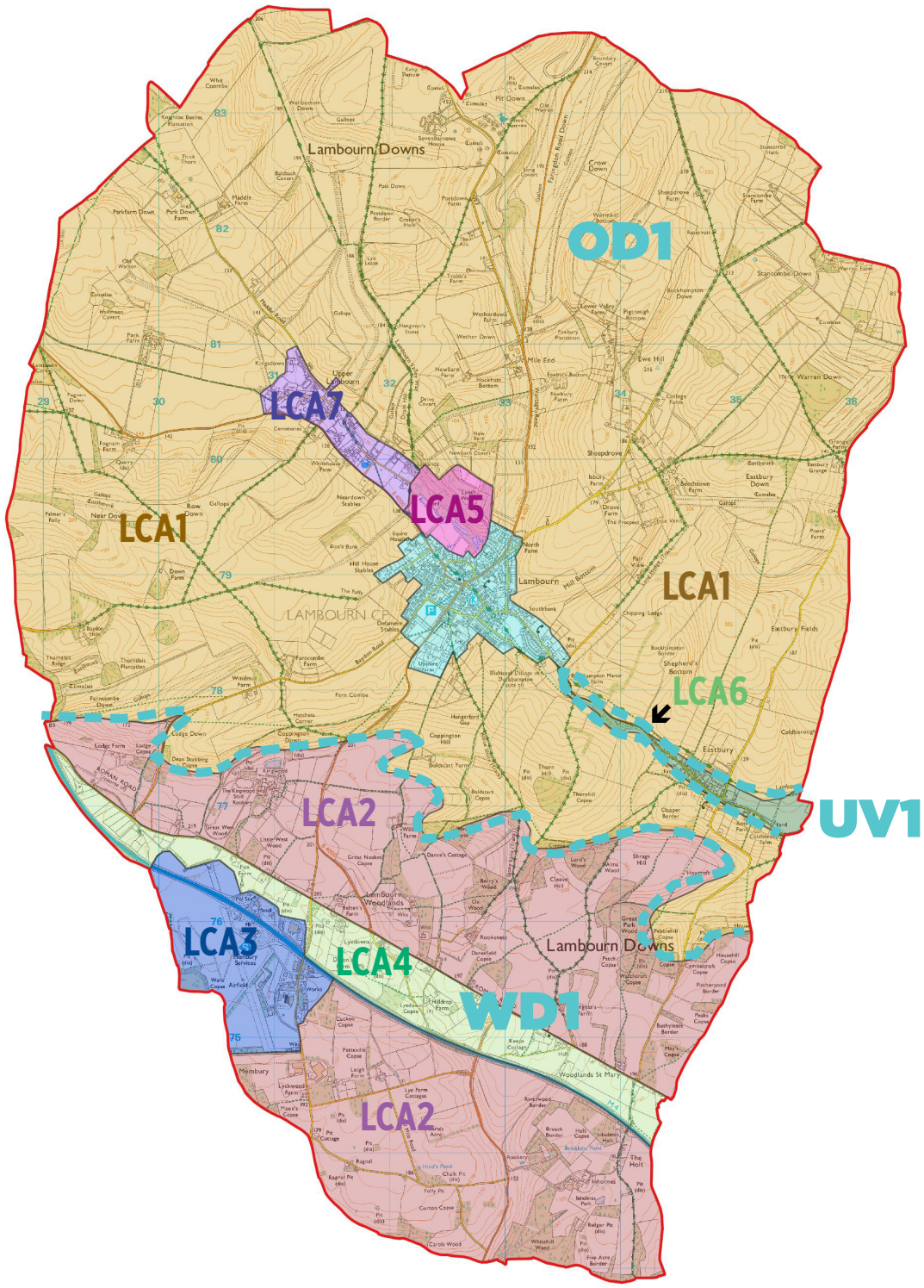
6.2.1 Following a baseline study and site visits to analyse landscape character within the NDP area, the following 7 LCAs have been identified. These are presented in **Figure 6.2** and are listed below:

- LCA 1 – Open Chalk Downland;
- LCA 2 – Wooded Downland;
- LCA 3 – Membury Airfield & Woodland Fringe;
- LCA 4 – Ermin Street;
- LCA 5 - Lynch Wood; and
- LCA 6 – Lower Lambourn Valley Floor
- LCA 7 – Upper Lambourn.

6.3 Scale

6.3.1 Landscape classification can be prepared at a variety of scales depending on the purpose and scope of the project. The scale of the area to be assessed determines the likely level at which the differences between homogeneous and distinctive factors are separated to identify character areas.

6.3.2 The process of characterisation divides landscapes into areas of distinct, recognisable, and consistent character, and groups areas of similar character together. The characterisation provides the spatially referenced framework on which landscape character descriptions, and follow on judgements about future policy development, design strategies, or land management may be based.

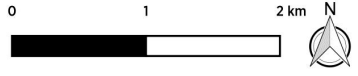


Legend

- Lambourn Parish Boundary
- West Berkshire Local Character Areas in the 2019 LCA
- OD1 Lambourn Open Downland
- WDI1 Shefford Wooded Downland
- UV1 Lambourn Upper Valley Floor
- Lambourn LCA**
- 1 Open Chalk Downland
- 2 Wooded Downland
- 3 Membury Airfield
- 4 Ermin Street
- 5 Lynch Wood
- 6 Lower Lambourn Valley Floor
- 7 Upper Lambourn
- Urban

PROJECT: LC-629 Lambourn_NP_LCA
CLIENT: Lambourn NP Steering Group
DRAWING: Lambourn and West Berkshire Landscape Character Areas LC-629_Lambourn_&_West_Berks_LCA_5
DRAWING No.: CW
DRAWN: NJD
CHECKED: NJD
SCALE: 1:50,000
DATE: 28/08/20

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 Ordnance Survey 0100031673

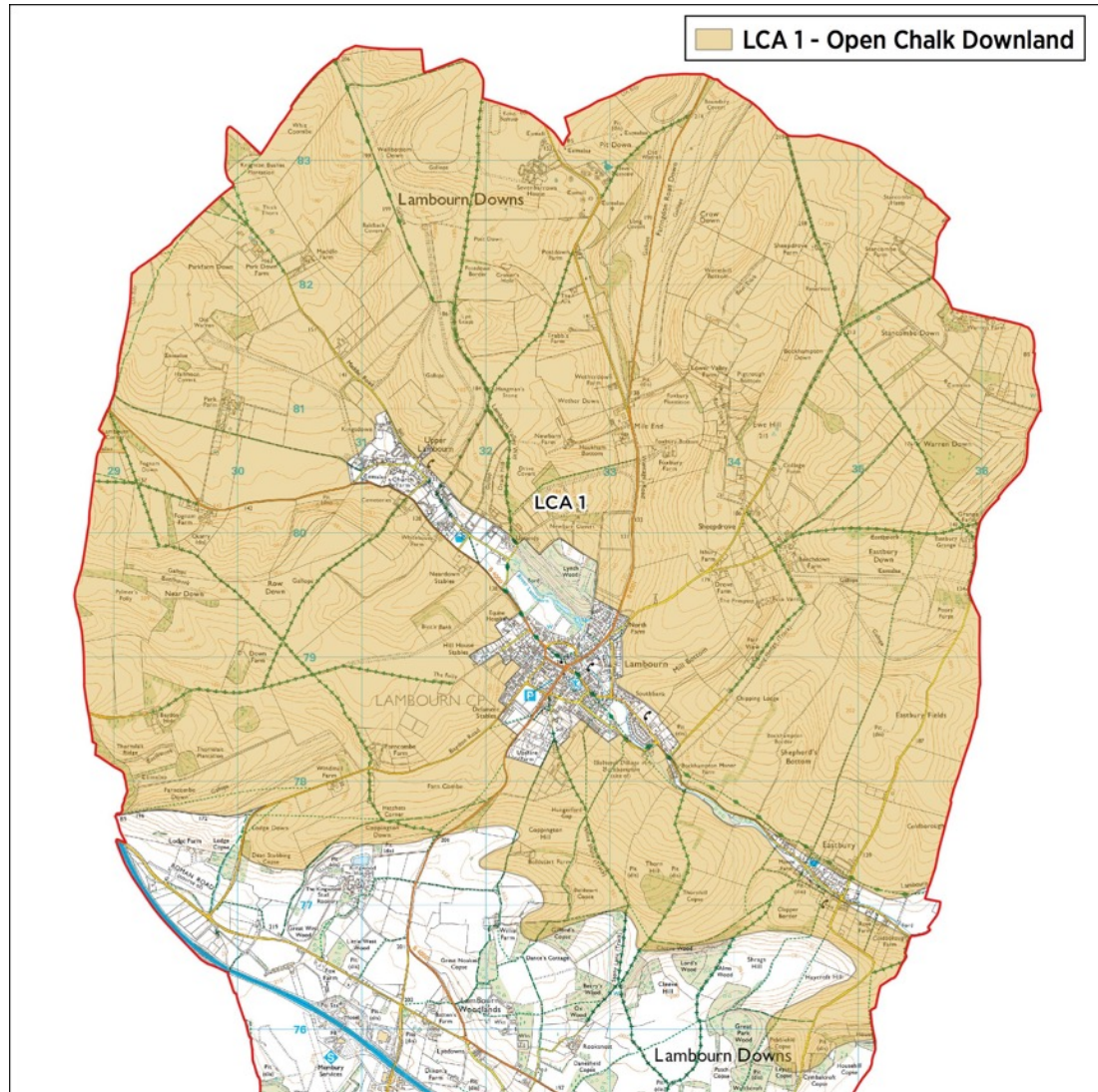



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7 Open Chalk Downland (LCA 1)

7.1 Location and boundaries

7.1.1 The Open Chalk Downland is the largest LCA in the study area. It encapsulates the northern part of the parish, running from Coppington Down up and around the north of the parish, through Sevenbarrows and onwards in a clockwise direction to Eastbury.



7.2 LCA1 characteristics, distinctiveness and features

7.2.1 Natural

- Large scale gently rolling landform created by the underlying chalk geology with an exposed and open character that best captures the upland qualities of the North Wessex Downs AONB; at 215m AOD, Ewe Hill is one of the highest points in the LCA. Topography of gently undulating downs and dry valleys; slopes falling in an eastward direction towards the Lambourn river valley, dropping to 140m AOD.
- Lack of enclosure elements, emphasising distinctive landscape openness and big skies.

- Farmed landscape of predominantly large arable fields and occasional pasture sometimes recorded as chalk grassland priority habitat⁴¹.
- Small and infrequent woodland contribution, typically linear where present, sometimes along ridgelines. This includes deciduous woodland priority habitat at for example Foxbury Plantation and Long Covert.
- The occasional woodland that can be found here is priority habitat.
- Semi-improved chalk grassland is distributed throughout the area such as at Severn Barrows Nature Reserve.
- Seven Barrows SSSI is of significant biodiversity importance. Notable unimproved lowland chalk grassland exists at Croker's Hole SSSI, located to the north west of the Lambourn Downs LCA. The SSSI is an area of botanically rich chalk grassland. Parkfarm Down SSSI is located to the north west of the LCA and designated for improved grassland habitat. Fognam Chalk Quarry SSSI is located to the west of the LCA and is designated for its geological interest. White Shute SSSI is also present in this LCA.
- Field boundaries provide important wildlife corridors the likes of which tend to have woodland characteristics in contrast to the grassland habitat of the chalk. This is an open landscape with limited patches of scrub that might otherwise form a stronger ecological network.
- The dominant ridge which forms the backbone of this LCA shapes the topography of the area and creates an elongated undulating vista of grassland leading off into the far distance when looking north from Hangman's Stone.

7.2.2 Cultural/Social

- Strong cultural heritage associations are present with a number of ancient Bronze Age burial mounds in the form of barrows near Pit Down such as Seven Barrows. More recent rural industrial heritage are the chalk pits dotted in and around Pit Down.
- Strong cultural heritage associations with ancient landscape archaeological features of East Ditch likely to be a defensive Iron Age structure or boundary marker like Grim's Ditch⁴². From more recent times, a Hangman's Stone can be found on the plateau which lies north east of Upper Lambourn.
- Farms and their access tracks, the main built form in the LCA, are scattered at very low density throughout the LCA, often enclosed with property planting to help reduce visual impact. Overall the farms do not make a significant visual contribution.
- Access throughout the Open Chalk Downland LCA is radial in nature with most access routes leading in or out of Lambourn. The density of public footpaths is relatively low. Byways Open to All Traffic (BOAT) and bridleways are present which play an important role in providing a network of safe routes for horse riders. The Lambourn Valley Way runs north south through the LCA.
- Hedgerows with trees represent field boundaries; occasional post and rail fencing.
- Occasional conspicuous white plastic boundary fencing in use at training locations eg Faringdon Road Down Gallops.
- Ancient trackways indicate that this is an ancient landscape with frequent evidence of Neolithic and Iron Age landscape features such as the Long Barrow SU321833 (Neolithic period; 4200 – 2500 BC) located on the slopes of Crog Hill and Round Barrows SU328828 (Bronze Age 2500BC – 800BC). The ancient ditch marked as East Ditch (SU 339810) is believed to be Iron Age (800BC – 55BC).
- Gallops at Crow Down appear are carefully melded into the landscape to minimise visual impacts. The White Visibility Barriers are conspicuous but do not detract significantly from the landscape character.
- Long distance, inspiring and attractive panoramic views are possible from a number of different high points in the LCA, such as Ewe Hill and Crow Down, although there is no public access to these locations.
- Scheduled Monuments are scattered across this LCA, the largest being 'Maddle Farm Roman settlement' located to the north west of the LCA.

⁴¹ Priority Habitat Inventory (Natural England, 2019).

⁴² Historic England: Grim's Ditch. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1002044>
[Date Accessed: 04/04/20]

- Built form is associated with farming and equestrian activities. The large public gallops, known as Mandown Gallops, owned by the Jockey Club Estates, are located to the north of Upper Lambourn; these gallops serve over 50% of the racehorses trained in the locality. There are several other, private, gallops located across the LCA.
- The B4000 is located to the centre of the LCA and Baydon Road runs along the south of the LCA providing access into Lambourn. Road access to the majority of the LCA is limited to smaller roads and tracks. There are several public footpaths, bridleways and byways which may improve access to some areas of the LCA via walking, cycling or horseback.

7.2.3 Perceptual

- Strong sense of openness defined by big skies and wide open vistas create sensation of outdoor space and freedom.
- Quiet and peaceful landscape with little movement in it, reinforcing the sense of high landscape quality dominated by open vistas, gentle colours and big skies.
- Rolling upland part of the parish with distinctive long vistas and rolling countryside that exudes intrinsic sweeping visual appeal out and across the valley floor of Shepherd's Bottom, onwards and over to the village of Eastbury and the River Lambourn.
- A lone undulating footpath runs from Eastbury to Eastbury Down, offering good views from the highest point at some 202m AOD.

7.3 Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness of LCI

- This LCA would not support many development types without leading to significant change. Openness is the key quality of this LCA. Avoid adding any features of a tall or visually intrusive nature.
- Avoid locating any development along ridgelines which break the skyline as viewed from Lambourn (e.g. Beechdown Farm – see Viewpoint 1 in **Chapter 14**).
- Recognise and raise awareness of the 'Bockhampton Deserted Medieval Village' SM.
- The assemblage of biodiversity features should be optimised at this location. The chalk grassland should be grazed to optimize floristic diversity and support calcareous faunal communities, especially birds and invertebrates. Management of sub-optimal habitat associations, which are often fragmented amongst the wide open pasture include woodland and hedgerows; these are likely to provide cover for game but should ideally be optimised for biodiversity through positive appropriate management techniques including coppicing in the woods and laying hedgerows. Arable fields should include wide headlands to provide cover for small mammals; prey for owls; floristic diversity and resilience to climate change.
- Built form is very limited, adding to the strong sense of naturalness. The Gallops at Crow Down appear to be carefully melded into the landscape to minimise more obvious impacts. The present scale and layout are a good fit for the downland landscape. It is not clear how much the landscape would change if this was to be expanded.
- Increased access on foot and horseback would benefit the way in which this landscape could be appreciated by more people.
- Carefully plan any changes to the edge of settlement at Lambourn to ensure any new development is faithful to a local design code for the village.



View looking north across Coppington Down in LCA1 showing the open landscape and big skies (SU 316775)



White fence posts associated with Sevenbarrows Estate



Young hawthorn hedgerow, large arable field, distant trees



Hidden from view: 'horsiculture' at Eastbury

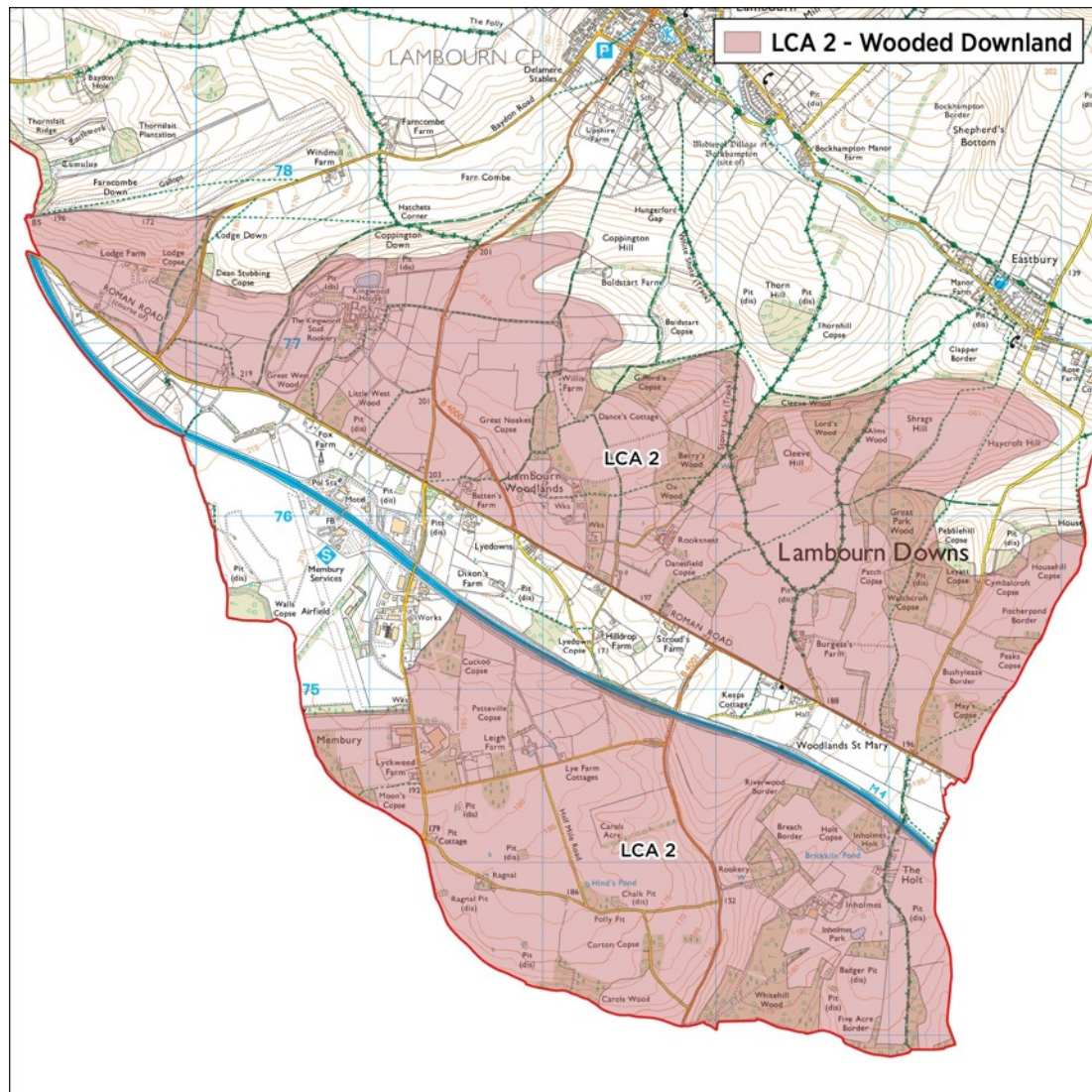


Young barley in a large arable field, distinctive openness

8 Wooded Downland (LCA 2)

8.1 Location and boundaries

8.1.1 The Wooded Downland LCA is located to the south of the parish, either side of the Ermin Street LCA. Boundaries include the M4 motorway, Ermin Street, the parish boundary and the approximate plateaux of the southern Lambourn Downs. The area comprises arable fields and multiple stands of woodland that very likely previously formed a much bigger area of continuous woodland.



8.2 LCA2 characteristics, distinctiveness and features

8.2.1 Key characteristics include:

8.2.2 Natural

- High plateau characterised by shallow undulating landform of arable fields, pasture and woodland; a relatively complex arrangement of land use types contrasting with LCA 1. Some woodland is ancient and assarted with distinctive curvilinear edges. Woodland hangars eg Cleeve Wood are present.
- Good mosaic of visually appealing habitats that together with the varying topography emphasises the high quality rural landscape character of this LCA. The mosaic of habitats includes deciduous woodland, hedgerows, veteran trees, lowland calcareous grassland and

good quality semi-improved grassland. This is reflected by the high number of nature conservation designations associated with chalk downland such as Cleeve Hill SSSI and Westfield Farm Chalk Bank SSSI. Several LWSs are also located within the LCA including Cleeve Lords and Alms Woods, and Cymbalcroft/Househill Copse.

- The hedgerows are important visually and ecologically. The curving nature of some hedgerows indicates they may be of older provenance than some of the enclosure hedgerows that are to be found to the west of Kingwood House.

8.2.3 Cultural/Social

- As with other LCAs, chalk pits indicating links with the past industries on the chalk.
- Small clusters of residential development and farmsteads are scattered within the LCA, including Grade II Listed Buildings. Built form is mostly limited to farmsteads and estate houses.
- Gallops and other equestrian infrastructure are situated to the west of the LCA, including The Kingwood Stud which is surrounded by pastoral fields of a distinctively smaller size and limited sylvan character.
- White Shute and Stony Lane are likely to be prehistoric sheep transport and farming routes connecting the downs with Lambourn and the Roman Road.
- Cultural heritage is present in the form of the various chalk or flint pits. Whilst being frequent in the southern part of the LCA, these are small features that have had a restricted impact on the landscape in themselves however almost all are now wooded, providing important landscape features.
- Quiet and shady country lanes frequently cross the area.
- A number of public footpaths, bridleways and byways cross the LCA, providing good opportunities for open air recreation on foot or horseback.

8.2.4 Perceptual

- Calm and peaceful in locations that are sheltered from M4 background noise.
- Intermittent aircraft noise at locations in the south.
- The woodland form, tall, shady and enveloping, creates an increased sense of enclosure and intimacy in this LCA.

8.3 Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness of LCA2

- Ensure that the SSSIs within the LCA remain in 'favourable' condition, and that grassland habitats are conserved and enhanced.
- Conserve and enhance the biodiversity value of the area through protection of the SSSI, LWS and priority habitats within this LCA and seek opportunities for maintaining/ enhancing connectivity between these sites/ habitats.
- Protect the rural setting and secluded nature of settlements and farmsteads.
- The settlement pattern throughout the LCA is dispersed and very low density; its character is enclosed and in harmony with the landscape.



Woodland meets downland; estate at Eastbury with distinctive architecture. Views over to open landscapes of LCA 1



Broadleaved woodlands enclose farmland



Shaded lanes



Distinctive flint and brick vernacular at Lyckweed Farm

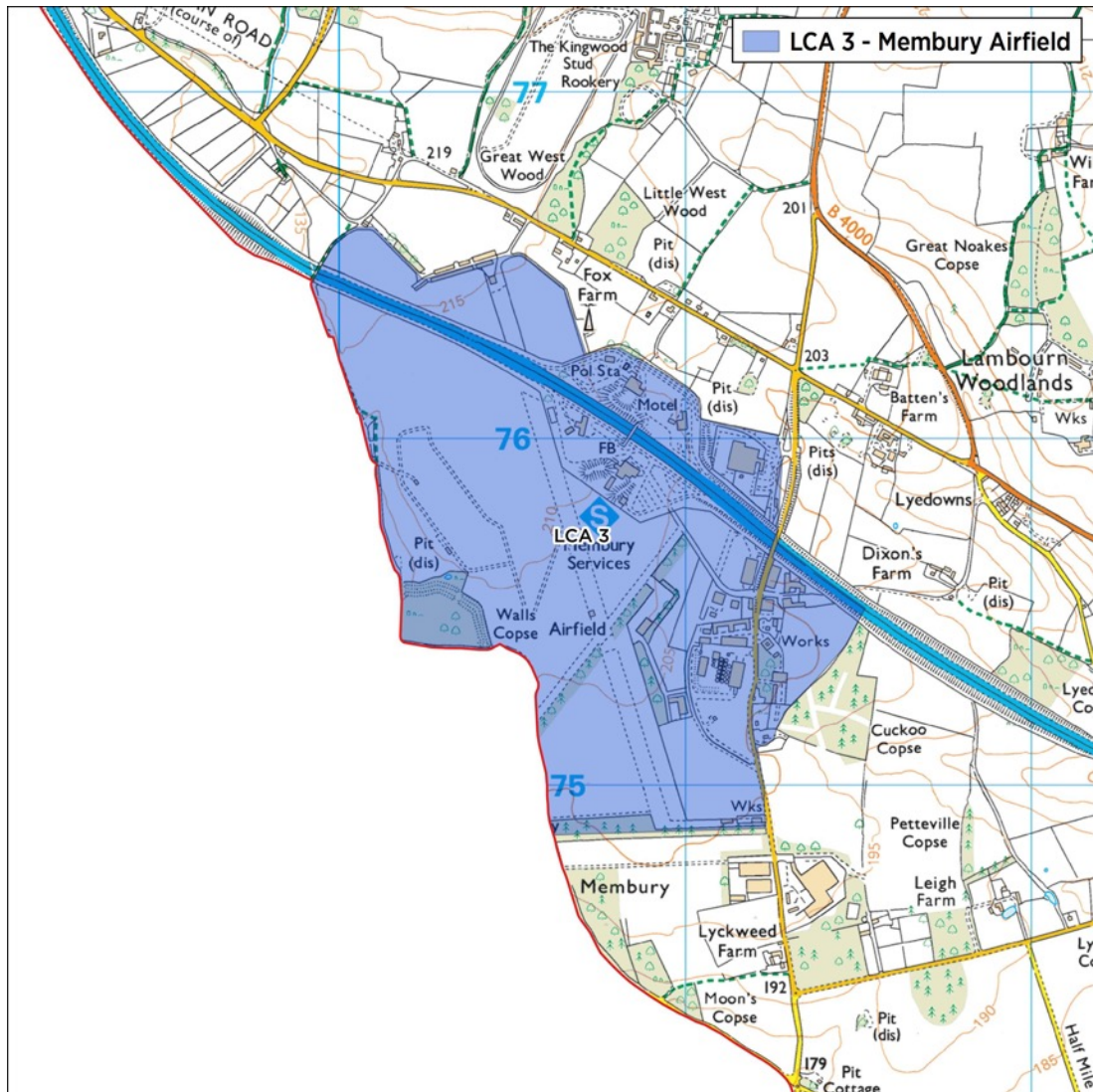


Enclosing effect of woodland and hedgerows with trees

9 Membury Airfield (LCA 3)

9.1 Location and boundaries

9.1.1 Membury Airfield LCA comprises the former Royal Air Force airfield and Aerial Business Park to the east and medium-sized solar panel farms to the west. The M4 to the north, Ramsbury Road to the east and the parish boundary to the west and south define the area.



9.2 LCA3 characteristics, distinctiveness and features

9.2.1 Key characteristics include:

9.2.2 Natural

- Striking landscape juxtaposition of former airfield (now a solar farm), employment land and wooded ancient Iron Age hillfort creates a disrupted atypical landscape aesthetic in contrast to any other part of the parish.
- There is no other public access to the LCA consequently there are not many viewpoints into or across the wider LCA.
- Located to the south west of the LCA is 'Walls Copse', a stand of ancient semi-natural woodland which is also an LWS.

- Clusters and lines of trees and hedgerow are present to the west of the LCA, primarily located to the edge of the former airfield.
- A public footpath follows the western boundary of the LCA. This is the only footpath located within the area.

9.2.3 Cultural/Social

- Unusually, and disappointingly from an archaeological perspective, Walls Copse is located on 'Membury Camp' Scheduled Monument⁴³, an Iron Age hill fort. It is highly likely that the roots of the trees will disturb archaeological remains where they grow.
- The employment site is a dominant feature of the LCA. There are a number of different building types and industrial features that are necessary for operations. Some elements contrast sharply with the surrounding agricultural landscape of trees, fields and hedgerows.

9.2.4 Perceptual

- Noisy M4 and industrial complex to the east of the LCA are additional disruptive factors.
- Plateau area with solar panels is not readily visible from the main access point through the LCA, the road that runs north to south along the eastern edge of the LCA.

9.3 Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness of LCA3

- The complex of industrial buildings at this location is partially enclosed by hedgerows and trees whilst other parts are more conspicuous. Additional landscaping would help reduce visual impacts where they exist.
- Some of the landscaping has used non-natives to create visual enclosure. Whilst effective, it does not look as appealing as native species and is less beneficial in terms of biodiversity.
- The scale and planning of development at this location needs much careful consideration of any further growth to help avoid further change in character.
- The tower at Trinity Grain is c.60 metres tall⁴⁴ and is incongruent with the landscape. Tall structures should be avoided and not exceed neighbouring tree height where possible.
- HGVs introduce noise and dust which can lead to synergistic adverse effects on character. These matters and the resolution of impacts is a planning control matter. However, any proposals to increase and expand development at this location should be mindful of such in-combination effects as well as the direct effect of encroachment.
- It might be useful to prepare a design guide for LCA3 that would help provide guidance on what is appropriate and elements which should be avoided in order to maintain a proportionate level of development which avoids detracting further from landscape character.

⁴³ Historic England (2020) Membury Camp. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1002994> [Date Accessed: 06/04/20]

⁴⁴ Lambourn Parish Council LCA steering group.



Large scale grain storage at Trinity Grain illustrating strong presence of height and massing; 24 silos and associated infrastructure



Logistics operations can influence tranquillity



Mixed woodland boundary between LCA2 and LCA3



Industrial hotchpotch at Membury Airfield

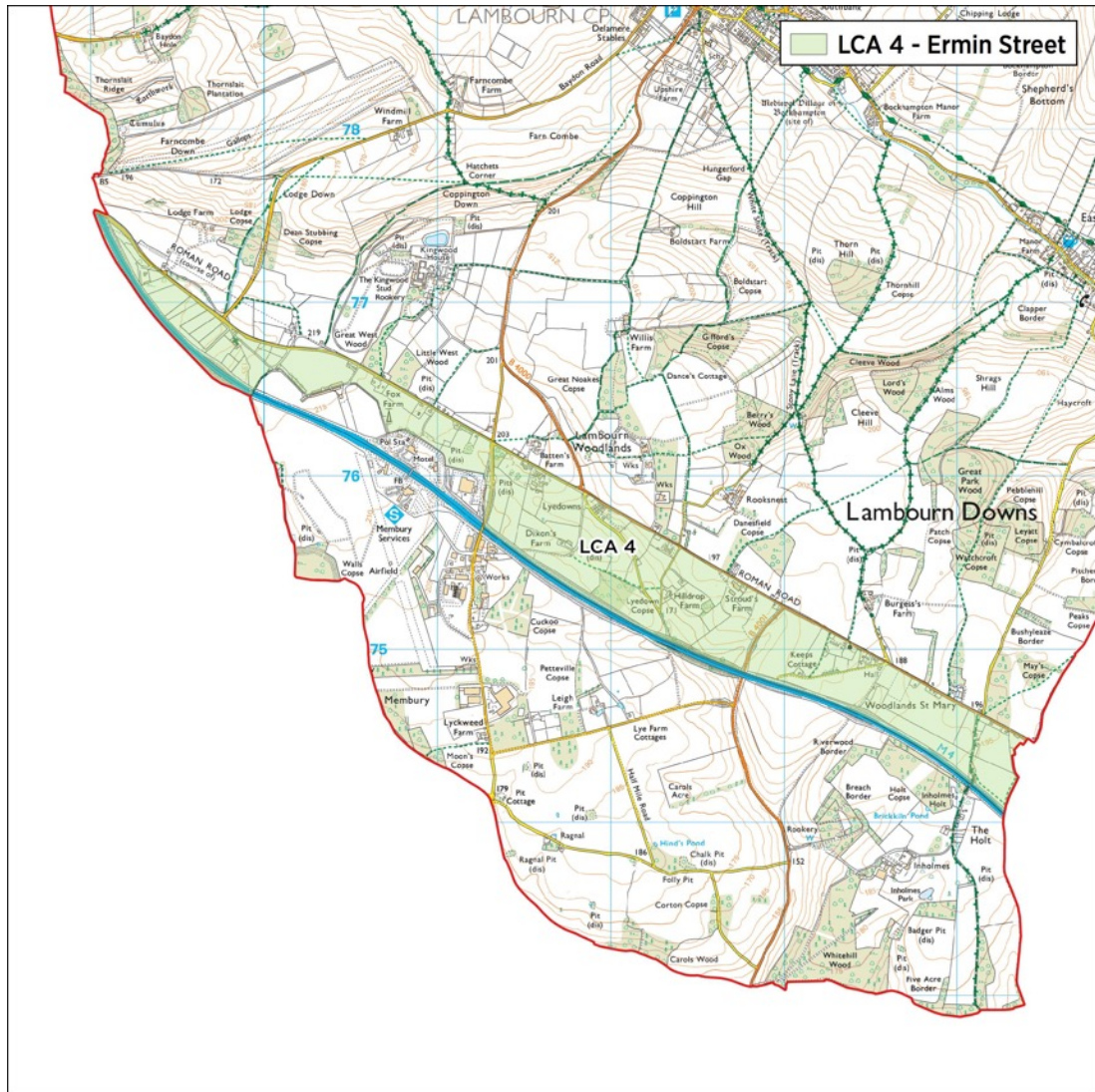


M4 motorway, Membury Services and telecomms mast

10 Ermin Street (LCA 4)

10.1 Location and boundaries

10.1.1 Ermin Street LCA is subtly different from the landscapes that lie to the north and south. It is strongly influenced by the noisy M4 and frequent traffic is similarly a feature of Ermin Street. There is a higher proportion of built form relative to the other LCAs and as such it represents a slightly more disturbed landscape than the very tranquil areas elsewhere in the study area.



10.2 LCA4 characteristics, distinctiveness and features

10.2.1 Key characteristics include:

10.2.2 Natural

- The LCA is well wooded in parts however the mix of species is varied and the pattern of woodland, roads, houses and fields is subtly different to other parts of the parish.
- Hedgerows are an important habitat alongside the infrequent woodland and permanent pasture habitats

10.2.3 Cultural/Social

- Enclosed by two busy and noisy roads which mark out this LCA from all of the others.
- Development is peppered at low density along the corridor and there are perceptible levels of landscape disintegration when compared with the landscape qualities elsewhere in the parish.
- This LCA has the highest number of Grade II listed buildings outside of the main settlements of Lambourn, Upper Lambourn and Eastbury. They are evenly distributed throughout the LCA.
- A number of public footpaths are located in the LVA which connect with the north of the LCA; over the busy Ermin Street.
- Several farms are located within the LCA at higher frequency than any other LCA.
- Several roads cross the LCA bringing more traffic to the area.
- St Mary's Church at Woodlands St Mary is tucked away behind trees alongside the B4000.

10.2.4 Perceptual

- Subtly different to neighbouring LCAs, LCA4 is a long and narrow stretch of land with a western end that is busier than the east.
- The roads are noisy and counter an otherwise peaceful location.
- Membury services and the telecoms mast are other visual detractors along this corridor.

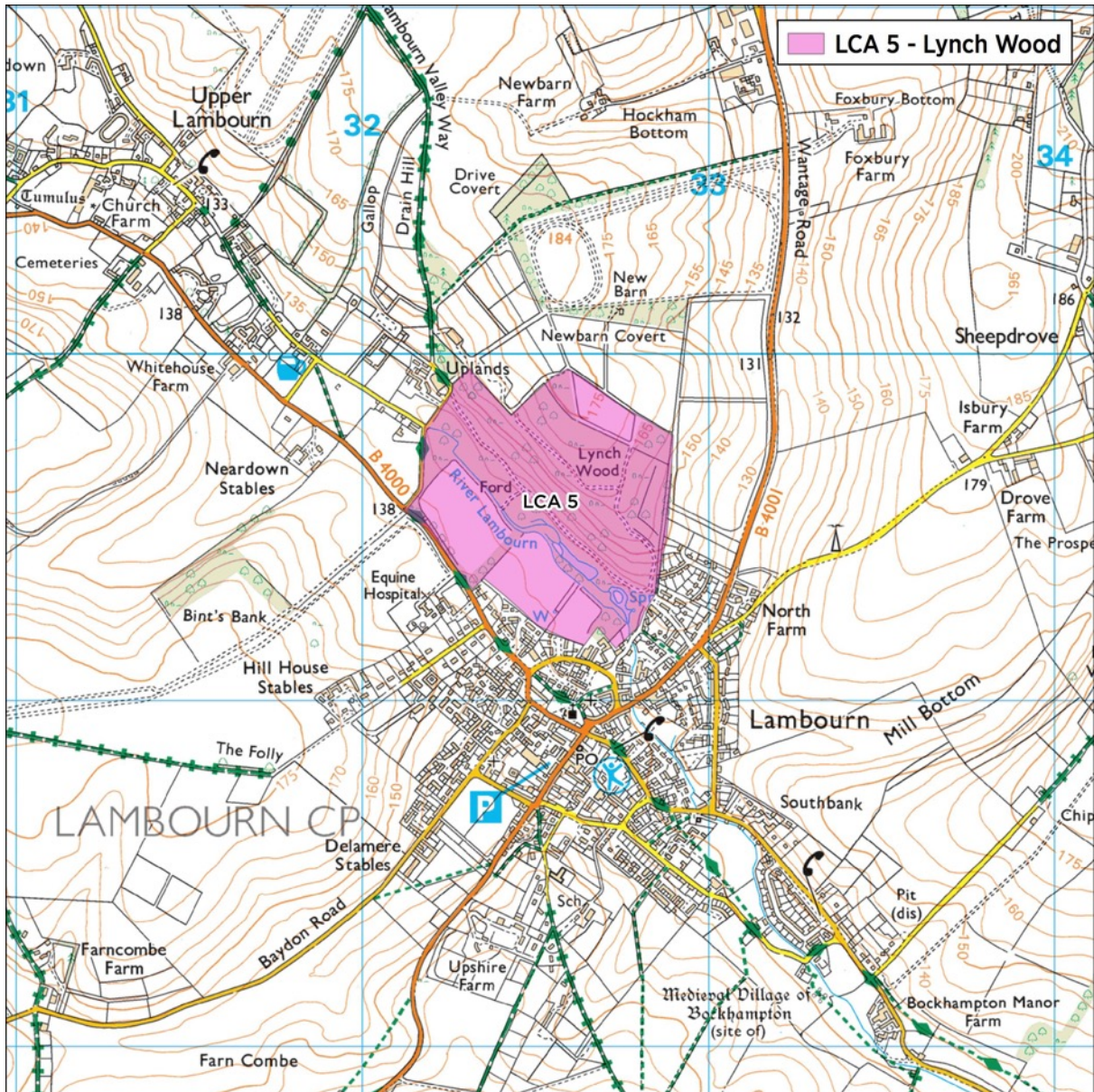
10.3 Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness of LCA4

- Improve quantity of woodland cover to help reduce noise and visual impacts from the transport corridors.
- Can potentially contain and hold more development than other parts of the NDP as landscape impacts would be likely to be less sensitive than elsewhere.
- Optimise biodiversity in the woodlands and wider habitat mosaic of grasslands and hedgerows.
- Safe crossing points need to be considered for horse riders and walkers alike. A number of bridleways and footpaths terminate at Ermin Street. Improved connectivity should be an aspiration for the LCA (as elsewhere in the parish).
- Recognise and where appropriate enhance the character and setting of the various Grade II listed buildings that are distributed evenly throughout the LCA.

11 Lynch Wood (LCA 5)

11.1 Location and boundaries

11.1.1 Lynch Wood LCA is located to the north of Lambourn and mainly comprises woodland. The LCA is defined by the urban edge of Lambourn to the south and Upper Lambourn to the north west.



11.2 LCA5 characteristics, distinctiveness and features

11.2.1 Key characteristics include:

11.2.2 Natural

- Lynch Wood LCA comprises over 50% woodland, located in the north, and small and medium sized pastoral fields bordered with hedgerows in the south. Limited arable field contribution marks this LCA out from other LCAs.
- The topography is visually distinctive creating visual appeal through the mix of habitats and land use present.
- Strong sense of enclosure due to the smaller fields, woodlands and mature hedgerows than some of the surrounding open LCAs.
- Lynch Wood is a substantial deciduous woodland priority habitat area that covers more than half of Lynch Wood LCA making the LCA especially important for biodiversity.
- Low-lying and compact feel is created by low level topography associated with valley bottom locations.
- River Lambourn SAC and SSSI is located to the south of the LCA. The SAC is designated for its chalk stream attributes, with a seasonally wet/dry winterbourne section at this location.
- Two LWSs located to the north east of the LCA; 'Drive and Furze Coverts' LWS and 'New Barn Covert' LWS. These sites are designated for their woodland habitat.
- The LCA separates Upper Lambourn and Lambourn. To avoid coalescence issues, development should be resisted in the LCA.
- Access to the majority of the Lynch Wood LCA is limited to smaller roads and tracks; a public footpath and byway are located to the north of the LCA.

11.2.3 Cultural/Social

- The fields are bounded by modern residences to the west and south of the LCA. Low density bungalows are the main built form at the Park, helping reduce visual impact of the buildings massing and retain connected views between the LCA and the tower of St Michael's and All Angels' Church in the heart of Lambourn.
- Part of the LCA is a housing allocation in the Housing Site Allocations DPD; policy reference HSA19: Land adjoining Lynch Lane, Lambourn (site reference LAM005). The policy has been informed by the 2011 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment which remains chiefly unchanged with the findings and recommendations having been embedded in the policy.
- It is important that the Lynch Wood LCA's landscape qualities of woodland, trees, the rural setting to the woodland provided by the fields, and tranquillity are embraced by any development proposals at this location.
- The fields are used for de facto informal open air recreation.

11.2.4 Perceptual

- Tranquil and peaceful with low levels of disturbance.
- Strong sense of the woodland's presence: naturalness reflected in the form of bird song and bird activity.
- The sheer physical mass of the rising woodland helps define the character of the LCA at this location.

11.3 Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness of LC5

- Lynch Wood should continue to be managed on a sustainable basis, maximising biodiversity and visual appeal.
- The woodland management needs to plan for the effects of climate change.
- Broad leaved species are a key characteristic of the woodland and should continue to prevail.
- The housing allocation for some 60 dwellings (Housing Site Allocations DPD Policy) at Lynch Lane needs to be carefully scaled and designed to complement the villages existing

built form and embrace sylvan qualities whilst maintaining strong visual links with the church.

- The existing built form includes low density housing often comprising bungalows. Any new development should carefully consider the strong riverine valley features with the hanging woodland that make this location so distinctive.
- The 2015 Landscape Capacity Study⁴⁵ of the land near Lynch Wood concluded that *New development should be severely restricted to conserve character of existing settlements - large-scale developments are not appropriate in this narrow river valley.*

⁴⁵ Landscape Capacity Assessment of Potential Housing Sites within and adjacent to the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, West Berkshire: REPORT: LAMBOURN ADDITIONAL SITES (August 2015)

- The River Lambourn is designated as a SAC and a SSSI. Creating international and national protection for the riverine habitats. The River Lambourn is a chalk stream, with a seasonally dry winterbourne section. The river supports a characteristic range of aquatic plant communities. The SSSI is in 'unfavourable – recovering'⁴⁶ condition. This is due to nutrient enrichment which is known to affect the sensitive chemical and biological qualities of the river water.
- A number of springs rise in the LCA which can cause localised flooding, particularly in winter (February).

12.2.3 Cultural/Social

- There are many listed buildings in Eastbury as well as a conservation area.
- Lambourn Valley Way long distance footpath runs through the river valley.
- Strong time depth associated with several of the buildings in Eastbury which represent a number of different eras. Several thatched cottages, white render, red brick and flint building materials all add to the special qualities of the hamlet.

12.2.4 Perceptual

- Bucolic atmosphere characterises the landscape as the young, small river makes its way inconspicuously across the LCA.
- Views out of the LCA lead up and across attractive downland and arable fields to the ridgelines associated with Cleeve Hill and Eastbury Downs.

12.3 Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness of LCA6

- Much scope to improve and enhance the water quality of the River Lambourn. In a catchment dominated by arable fields the potential for nitrates, potassium and phosphates to enter the water course is high. Opportunities to shield the river with appropriate land use that can help filter agricultural run-off will help improve water quality.
- This LCA can only support very local level, appropriately designed development types without leading to significant change.
- Understand the requirements of the river in a changing climate and avoid planting trees that may interfere with the water course; altering the delicate hydrological and biological balance of this chalk river.
- Celebrate and recognise the river. At points it is almost entirely lost amongst the houses and buildings that live the river; let the river breathe and give it space.

⁴⁶ Natural England (2019) Designated Sites View: River Lambourn SSSI. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S2000155&SiteName=lambourn&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=> [Date Accessed: 08/04/20]



Encased in a corridor of nettles and development which is never far away from the river as it flows past a barn



People and the river



Floodplain with a flood alleviation scheme warning



The hidden River Lambourn

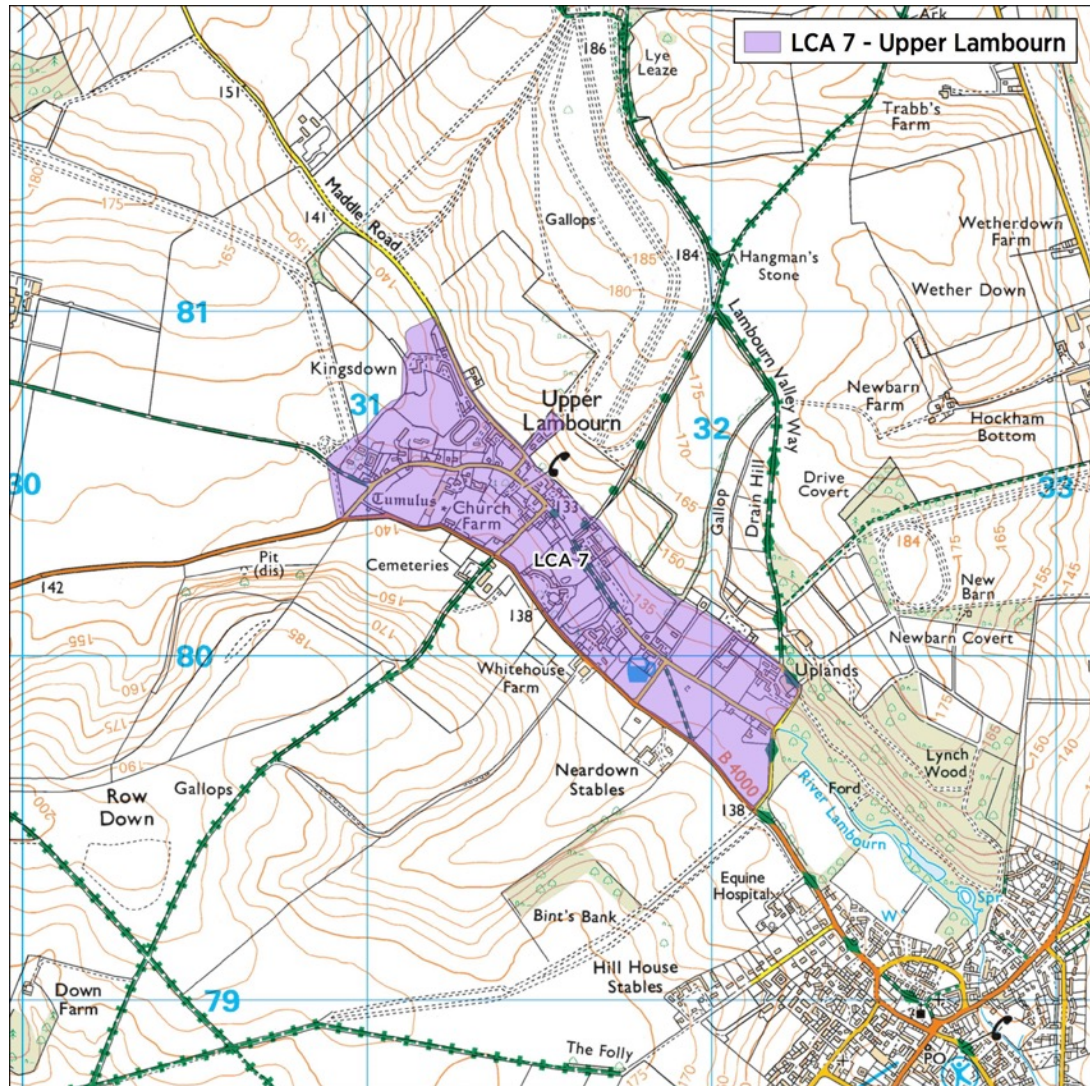


Crystal clear waters running over the chalk river bed

13 Upper Lambourn (LCA 7)

13.1 Location and boundaries

13.1.1 Upper Lambourn LCA is located to the north west of Lambourn. It comprises a low density ribbon development of built form comprising mostly of large plots of land which are either paddocks, gardens or small scale farmland. Trees and hedgerows play an important contribution to a strong sense of countryside within which the buildings are located.



13.2 LCA7 characteristics, distinctiveness and features

13.2.1 Key characteristics include:

13.2.2 Natural

- The topography of the LCA is low-lying as it is located within the Lambourn river valley.
- Land cover of the area comprises of the settlements of Upper Lambourn and horse racing associated industry as well as smaller fields bordered with hedgerows.
- There are no SSSIs, LWS or stands of ancient woodland located within this LCA. There are several small fields, hedgerows and lines of trees associated with development within Upper Lambourn. It lies immediately above the River Lambourn SSSI but still influences the river and the winterbourne probably rises in this LCA.

13.2.3 Cultural/Social

- There are several public footpaths and byways which connect Upper Lambourn to the surrounding countryside.
- Upper Lambourn Conservation Area is situated within the LCA, and is split into two areas, one located to the north of High Street, and one stretching the length of the Fulke Walwyn Way.
- There are 24 Grade II Listed Buildings within the LCA which are primarily located along the high street of the settlement. The majority of the LCA is located on Grade 2 ALC land.
- Horse training, stud and gallops is a core activity that takes place in the hamlet. This is reflected in the built vernacular which is generally sensitively designed and blends in well amongst the other buildings which are mostly residential or agricultural.
- Development is low density.

13.2.4 Perceptual

- Quiet and tranquil, frequented by horses being gently walked or ridden slowly through the hamlet.
- Long distance and attractive views to all parts of the surrounding downland.

13.3 Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness of LCA7

- The distinctive qualities of Upper Lambourn rely on the sensitive design and appropriate land uses at scales that support the hamlet's vernacular qualities.
- Occasional large modern barn structures detract from the overall landscape quality and should be resisted unless carefully designed to minimise visual impacts.
- Maintain, large clear gaps between built form.
- Allow gaps through development to the vista behind.
- Condense development at the settlement scale, retaining low density of plots, not only in the valley floor but also to the roadside edge engaging with the existing stone, flint and timber built form found throughout Upper Lambourn.
- Discourage the use of tree belts as screens, more selective planting with native species is preferred.
- Maintain relationship with surrounding/existing built form.
- Consideration to the openness of existing and surrounding built form.

14 Edge of Settlement at Lambourn

14.1 Plan making considerations

14.1.1 The LCA has provided a framework within which to make considerations about planning applications and land management. Each of the LCA recommendations provide strategic information about the suitability of each LCA for development and similarly management to conserve and enhance distinctive features.

14.1.2 To help inform the NDP from a settlement perspective, this chapter has been included in the Landscape Character Appraisal to consider finer grain landscape matters at the settlement scale.

14.2 Long distance views


14.2.1 A number of long distance views have been selected to provide perspective about the setting of Lambourn. Four long distance panoramas approximately relating to north east, north west, south east and south west have been included to explore landscape character and qualities in the context of Lambourn and the surrounding landscapes.

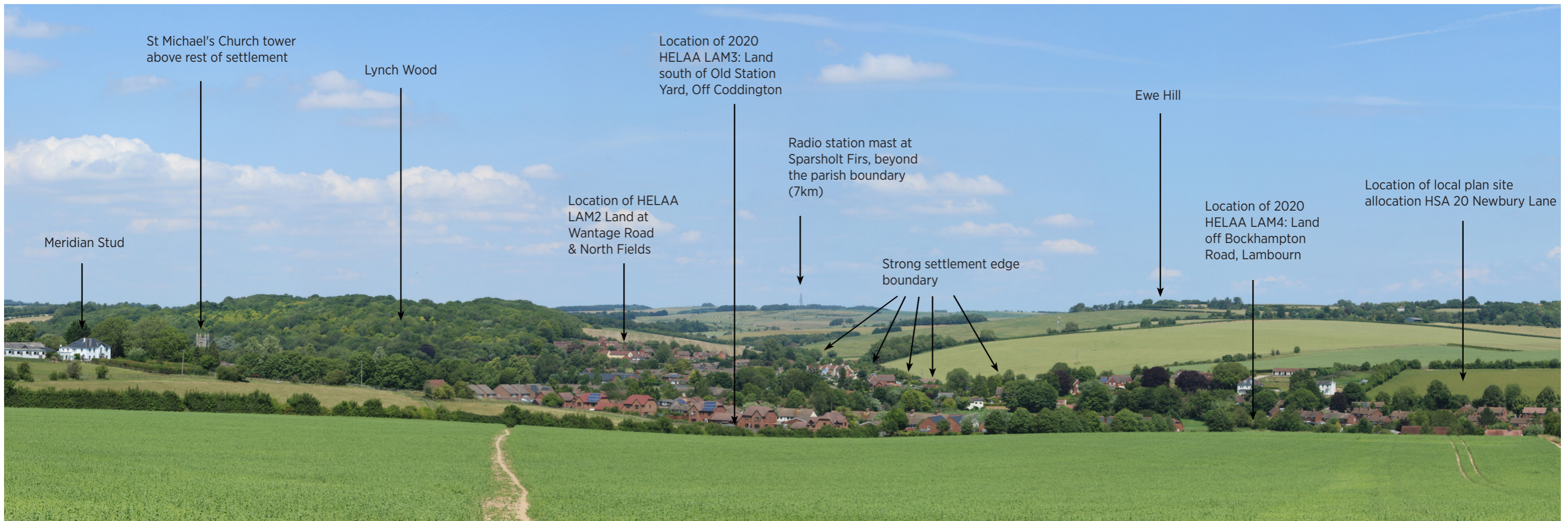
14.2.2 As per the methodology in **section 4.6**, each viewpoint provides the following information:

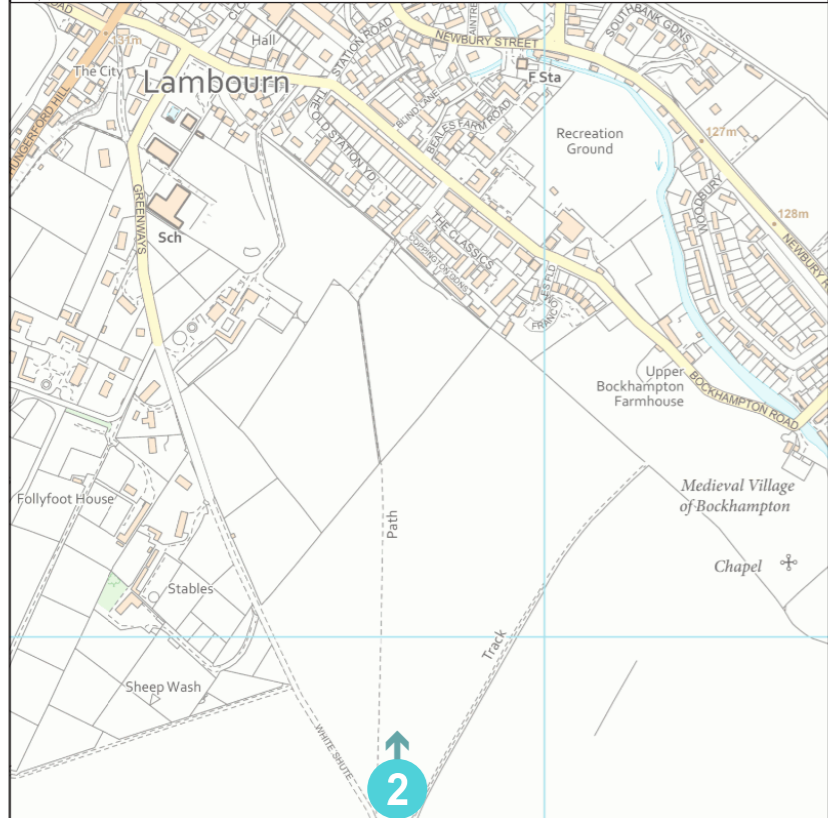
- Landscape character, distinctiveness and key features;
- Information about character sensitivity and visual sensitivity;
- Information about landscape qualities; and
- Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness.

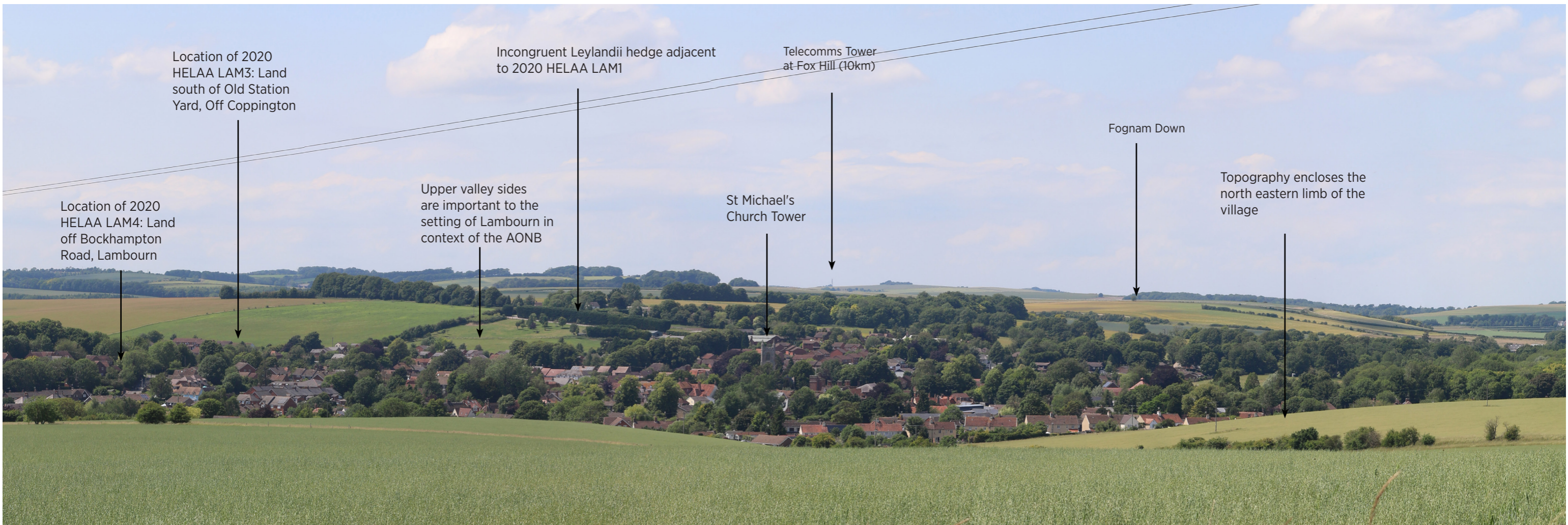
14.2.3 The following drawings include a panoramic perspective of the village from an elevated perspective from the north west, south west, south east and north east.

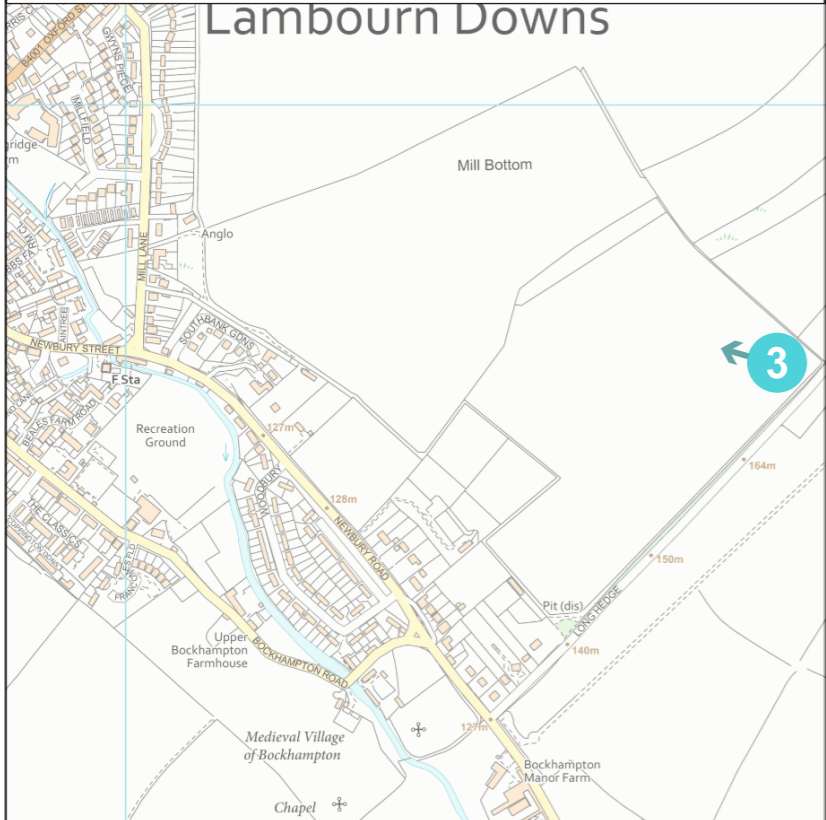


Long Range Viewpoint 1 Edge of Settlement from the North West (To be printed at A3; not to scale)	Landscape Character, Distinctiveness and Key Features <small>(natural, cultural and social features, as well as key aesthetic and perceptual qualities)</small>	Landscape Character Sensitivity and Visual Sensitivity	Landscape Qualities	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness
<p>This photograph has been taken with a 50mm lens from Folly Road (SU 31816 78824) looking across fields above the village of Lambourn (175m AOD).</p> 	<p>This view captures views across LCA1 Open Chalk Downland. It shows how the surrounding downland rolls down to the well defined settlement boundary on the western edge of Lambourn.</p> <p>Medium sized and small arable and pastoral fields surround the settlement and hedgerows make an important visual contribution to the landscape character. The two large fields in the foreground dominate the long distance views due to a missing hedgerow. Collective hedgerow trees create strong linear features, such as that at Long Hedge, which follow the flow of the chalk geology and give form to the landscape.</p> <p>Tree tops blend with roof tops and conceal significant parts of the town helping to provide a panorama of trees and rooftops all of which sits comfortably within a wider landscape that together forms a strong and distinctive unit.</p> <p>Lambourn is a Conservation Area and the crowning feature visually from this location is the tower of St Michael's church.</p> <p>Built form is strategically consistent; there are occasional distinctions to be drawn; e.g. roof tiles vary. Most houses are brick with some being white render. From this viewpoint they form consistent massing.</p>	<p>Trees conceal significant parts of the town helping to provide a panorama of trees and roof tops all of which sits comfortably within a wider landscape that together forms a strong and distinctive panorama, recognised by its designation as a nationally important landscape.</p> <p>Low lying built form which is a spatially consistent nucleated and integrated form that sits within the downs rather than imposing itself in a negative way.</p> <p>Built form is strategically consistent; there are occasional distinctions to be drawn; e.g. roof tiles vary. Most houses are brick whilst some are rendered white and others are stone.</p>	<p>Landscape is part of the nationally important landscape, the North Wessex Downs AONB.</p> <p>Most of the settlement is a Conservation Area.</p> <p>Strong landscape harmony.</p> <p>Unbroken long range views across attractive and tranquil rolling downland making the panorama visually distinctive and high quality.</p>	<p>The network of trees throughout the village should be managed and conserved to maintain current visual quality and any new development should ensure it contributes to these sylvan qualities.</p> <p>The view of the church tower is very distinctive, seen clearly above the horizontal line of roof tops. The view should be conserved and not 'consumed' by new development behind the church tower.</p> <p>Any new development at the edge of settlement should give careful consideration to how change would maintain the distinctive landscape integrity and visual splendour that can be experienced from this viewpoint.</p> <p>Development at land allocation HSA20 on Newbury Road should be designed to consider this viewpoint and the existing western boundary of the village. Landscaping proposals for the site should ensure nature broadleaved trees form the upper part of the allocation as per planning policy HSA20 of the local plan.</p>



Long Range Viewpoint 2 Edge of Settlement from the South West (To be printed at A3; not to scale)	Landscape Character, Distinctiveness and Key Features <small>(natural, cultural and social features, as well as key aesthetic and perceptual qualities)</small>	Landscape Character Sensitivity and Visual Sensitivity	Landscape Qualities	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness
<p>This photograph has been taken with a 50mm lens from a public footpath at Hungerford Gap (SU 32807 77813) looking due north over the village of Lambourn (166m AOD).</p> 	<p>Key features include the natural basin shaped by the River Lambourn which is crowned by the strong visual presence of Lynch Wood. This view captures how the village of Lambourn lies comfortably in the valley bottom and consequently forms a strong visual relationship with the surrounding topography which rolls and rises up to hill tops that emulate waves of consistently high quality landscape.</p> <p>Medium sized and small arable and pastoral fields surround the settlement and intact hedgerows make an important visual contribution to the landscape character.</p> <p>The large field in the foreground is characteristic of the larger arable fields that are found in LCA1.</p> <p>Lynch Wood is a powerful presence in the landscape and is a key feature as is St Michael's church tower.</p> <p>Trees make a significant contribution to achieving landscape harmony between the settlement and surrounding countryside.</p> <p>The Medieval Village of Bockhampton is no longer present but is an indication, amongst many other features such as the ancient drover's track which runs along Greenways road, of the significant time depth that exists in this protected landscape.</p>	<p>Lambourn lies within a relatively well concealed natural basin, the lip of which is evident in the foreground of this viewpoint. Housing built below this level sits in the bowl and remains generally congruent with the village massing and reasonably maintains visual integrity.</p> <p>The newly built houses in the foreground contrast with the softer edges of the settlement which sit amongst trees and other mature vegetation.</p> <p>The open fields between Meridian Stud and new homes under Lynch Wood are important to the setting and form of the village.</p> <p>Long distance attractive views stretch across the town and parish up to the distant Crow Down and Ewe Hill.</p>	<p>Landscape is part of the nationally important landscape, the North Wessex Downs AONB.</p> <p>Most of the settlement is a Conservation Area.</p> <p>Generally good landscape harmony, excepting the immediate foreground.</p> <p>Unbroken long range views from this elevated position across attractive and tranquil rolling downland making the panorama visually distinctive and high quality.</p> <p>The south side of the village has a range of public rights of way including footpaths, bridleways and BOATS.</p>	<p>The western edge of the settlement is weaker than the east; housing is beginning to reach the outer limits of what would be acceptable without significantly changing the relationship with the wider countryside.</p> <p>Development above the natural topographic enclosure of the village would be detrimental to the overall setting and views at this location.</p> <p>Development at land allocation HSA20 on Newbury Road should be designed to consider this viewpoint and the existing western boundary of the village. Landscaping proposals for the site should ensure nature broadleaved trees form the upper part of the allocation as per planning policy HSA20 of the local plan.</p> <p>HELAA sites LAM2 and LAM4 appear to be relatively concealed from this viewpoint.</p>



Long Range Viewpoint 3 Edge of Settlement from the South East (To be printed at A3; not to scale)	Landscape Character, Distinctiveness and Key Features <small>(natural, cultural and social features, as well as key aesthetic and perceptual qualities)</small>	Landscape Character Sensitivity and Visual Sensitivity	Landscape Qualities	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness
<p>This photograph has been taken with a 50mm lens from Long Hedge (SU 33892 78648) looking across fields above the village of Lambourn (175m AOD).</p> 	<p>The landscape character is harmonious and tranquil. It shows how the village setting in the valley bottom fits well with the rolling fields that rise up gently and enfold the village.</p> <p>Arable fields predominate with smaller parcels of pasture around the edge of settlement which is usually associated with horse grazing.</p> <p>Street and garden trees, hedgerows and woodlands each contribute sylvan qualities to the landscape and provide a contrast to the fields.</p> <p>St Michael's church tower is less conspicuous than other long range viewpoints but remains prominent.</p> <p>Built form is strategically consistent; there are occasional distinctions to be drawn; e.g. roof tiles vary but not significantly. Most houses are brick with some being white render. From this viewpoint they form consistent massing.</p>	<p>The village clearly sits on the lower slopes of the rising downs when viewed from this location. The dry valleys around the north of the village converge under Lynch Wood where the River Lambourn rises. Development has been carefully located to reduce prominence and retains intactness of built form at a scale that integrates well with the wider AONB.</p> <p>Built form is strategically consistent; there are occasional distinctions to be drawn; e.g. roof tiles vary. Overall, the colour the village is composed of dark red and brown roof tiles set amongst the green of the street trees.</p>	<p>Landscape is part of the nationally important landscape, the North Wessex Downs AONB.</p> <p>Most of the settlement is a Conservation Area.</p> <p>Strong landscape harmony.</p> <p>Unbroken long range views across attractive and tranquil rolling downland making the panorama visually distinctive and high quality.</p>	<p>The network of trees throughout the village should be managed and conserved to maintain current visual quality and new development should ensure it contributes to these sylvan qualities.</p> <p>The Leylandii hedge near Folly Lane is conspicuous and incongruent; development at this location is likely to require careful assessment as it is located above the village.</p> <p>Any new development at the edge of settlement should give careful consideration to how change would maintain the distinctive landscape integrity and visual splendour that can be experienced from this viewpoint.</p> <p>HELAA sites LAM3 and LAM4 appear to be relatively concealed from this viewpoint.</p>



Long Range Viewpoint 4 Edge of Settlement from the North East (To be printed at A3; not to scale)	Landscape Character, Distinctiveness and Key Features <small>(natural, cultural and social features, as well as key aesthetic and perceptual qualities)</small>	Landscape Character Sensitivity and Visual Sensitivity	Landscape Qualities	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness
<p>This photograph has been taken with a 50mm lens from Sheep Drove Road (SU 33366 79433) looking across fields above the north of Lambourn (158m AOD).</p>	<p>The landscape character is showing signs of emerging housing dominance in the foreground whilst the wider area is still intact and remains high quality due to the presence of trees, embedding of houses within the valley of the downs and sitting well below the distant skylines of the surrounding downs.</p> <p>The field in the foreground is a semi-improved pasture which has biodiversity benefits as well as aesthetic visual appeal.</p> <p>Street and garden trees, hedgerows and Lynch Wood each contribute sylvan qualities to the landscape and provide a composition of features which has string visual appeal.</p> <p>Intact bushy hedgerows provide important framing qualities in the landscape adding integrity to this nationally important landscape.</p> <p>The telecomms mast is a visual detractor.</p> <p>There is a lack of accessible walking or riding opportunities in and around this viewpoint.</p>	<p>Lynch wood helps frame the development which has crept up the hillside at this location.</p> <p>Built form is predominant in the foreground because it has been built on a steep slope making it more conspicuous.</p>	<p>Landscape is part of the nationally important landscape, the North Wessex Downs AONB.</p> <p>Strong landscape harmony.</p> <p>Unbroken long range views across attractive and tranquil rolling downland making the panorama visually distinctive and high quality.</p>	<p>Development of LAM2 needs careful planning and assessment if it is to proceed. The existing houses are prominent from this viewpoint and create a potential tension with the landscape quality of the surrounding land. Additional tree planting will help embed the housing.</p> <p>Development at LAM2 should carefully consider topography and keeping away from the edges of Lynch Wood.</p> <p>The leylandii hedge near Folly Road is conspicuous and incongruent; development at this location is likely to require careful assessment.</p> <p>Consider the introduction of outdoor recreational opportunities for access to the countryside at this location.</p>

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15 Appendix A: The Brief

Lambourn Neighbourhood Plan: Invitation to Quote for Landscape Character Appraisal (LCA) to Support Neighbourhood Plan

Background

The Lambourn Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is in the early stages of development. The Area application was submitted in 2018 and the NP Area designated in December 2018 (see link to designation and plan area map here: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=46528&p=0>).

It is possible that the NP may or may not allocate a site or sites for housing development / employment development but this is yet to be confirmed. A Housing Needs Assessment has recently been commissioned and its findings are currently being discussed internally with the NP Steering Group at the time of writing. Where the evidence supports such an approach, it may set out a figure for future minimum housing provision in the NP area.

Initial contact has been made with West Berkshire Council and the AONB Board to determine what their preferred approach for the LCA might be. At the time of writing only an initial response has been received from West Berks Council. They advise that:

- They have recently published a Landscape Character Assessment (see: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=47980&p=0>) which covers the whole of the district
- As part of the more detailed site selection work that both West Berkshire and the neighbourhood planning groups will need to undertake (should they be allocating sites), landscape sensitivity assessment will be required to establish how resilient a landscape might be to change.
- There are some pre-existing landscape sensitivity assessments produced as part of the preparation of the Core Strategy and Housing Site Allocations Plan. They can be found on the West Berks website: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/lca>.
- Paula Amorelli will be leading on landscape and she is the person to contact to discuss landscape character / sensitivity assessments

Your attention is drawn to the particular landscape and visual issues associated with the Membury / Lambourn Woodlands Protected Employment Areas and the extensive development associated with the racehorse industry / allied activities and their impact on landscape character / visual impacts. These will be important elements of the analysis of the character of the NP area.

Requirement

Your organisation is therefore invited to provide a quotation for the following:

- 1) Preparing and agreeing with the NP Steering Group and AONB Board / West Berks Council officers a suitable methodology for assessing the landscape character / visual aspects of the landscape
- 2) Carrying out a baseline assessment that establishes the landscape and visual character and qualities of the NP area, identifying key areas of constraint which can be used to guide locations for future development
- 3) Where required, carry out a comparative assessment of all potential allocation sites within the NP area (using the previously agreed assessment criteria) following best practice and guidance contained in the Planning Practice Guidance resource, Landscape Institute guidance and other sources. **N.B. This remains an option at the time of writing and may not be required. Numbers of potential sites are unknown at the time of writing.**
- 4) The output of stage 1 is to be an agreed methodology (electronic format). The output of stages 2 and (where required) 3 is to be an initial draft assessment report at each stage (electronic format), followed by a final version of each report incorporating client comments, in electronic and paper format.

Some background information about the Neighbourhood Plan may be found at this link:

<https://lambourn.org/lambourn-neighbourhood-development-plan/>

Timescales

The Parish Council is keen for this work to commence immediately upon appointment. The intention is to appoint the preferred consultant in the last week of March 2020. Please indicate in your response your ability to adhere to the proposed start date.

Format of Quotation

To ensure consistency please could you provide the following with your quotation:

1. Details of your organisation's experience in undertaking landscape character appraisals to support planning policy documents, and details of the personnel that would be working on the project.
2. A breakdown of your quotation as follows:
 - a. The fee for each stage of the process, itemised separately in logical order, including initial client / client's representative discussions and briefing meeting, the various reporting stages (allowing for statutory consultee and client consultation on each draft document at each stage where appropriate, and the subsequent incorporation of any amendments flowing from that consultation), and including any post-submission input that may be required (eg at examination / post referendum monitoring etc). Please ensure you allow for regular updates and liaison with the client's representative and Steering Group during the process (primarily email / telephone).
 - b. The cost of any further amendments to the various output documents (please state hourly rates etc) should they be required

- c. The cost of attending meetings where required (again hourly / day rates please)
- d. Details of disbursements including printing costs per copy if paper versions of reports are required, and VAT
3. Availability and timescales for delivery; ability to start immediately
4. Confirmation of absence of conflicts of interest
5. Any additional matters you wish to draw to the client's attention at this stage
6. Details of your professional indemnity / public liability and employer's liability insurance

Please can you address the quotation to the Lambourn Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, c/o Bluestone Planning by **5pm on the 19th March 2020**.

Please return your quotation via email to: jeremy@bluestoneplanning.co.uk

If you have any questions in the interim, please feel free to contact Jeremy Flawn of Bluestone Planning on 07725 601457.

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Ecological Services

Green Infrastructure

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Landscape Character Assessment

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Sustainability Appraisal



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