

# **Pitstone Neighbourhood Plan 2013 – 2033**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment Report**

**Published by Pitstone Parish Council for consultation in accordance  
with EU Directive 2001/42**

**June 2015**

## Non Technical Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of any significant environmental effects resulting from the policies and proposals of the Pre-Submission version of the Pitstone Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with EU Directive 2001/42 on strategic environmental assessment (SEA).

2. The Neighbourhood Plan contains a number of policies for the use and development of land in the Parish of Pitstone in the plan period from 2013 up to 2033. These policies, together with the policies of the development plan - that is the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (AVDLP) - and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), will be used by the District Council in determining planning applications once the Neighbourhood Plan is approved in due course.

3. The Neighbourhood Plan area contains a number of designated heritage and nature features, including a small number of listed buildings in and around Pitstone village. The larger parish has areas designated as Scheduled Monuments, areas of historic land use and an Archaeological Notification Area. The neighbouring parish of Ivinghoe has a Conservation Area (with many listed buildings) that adjoins Pitstone village.

4. The south eastern part of the parish falls within the Green Belt and the Chiltern Beechwoods Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Parts of the countryside between the village and the AONB lie within a designated Area of Attractive Landscape.

5. The planning policy context and the community engagement work undertaken have raised a number of issues for the Neighbourhood Plan to address:

- Where should new housing in Pitstone be located? What type of housing should be developed: type, and tenure? Is the land available now or might it become available later in the plan period?
- What are the shared design characteristics of the settlement that could be included in a policy?
- Should Brookmead School be extended or redeveloped elsewhere?
- Which community facilities would be on the list of those to be protected from a change of use? Should the shop and community facilities be improved to become more viable?
- Should the employment policy protect the use of or promote new business at Pitstone Green Business Park?
- Which spaces meet the criteria for designation as Local Green Spaces?
- Should a policy protect the open farmland south east of Marsworth Road to Pitstone Hill for agricultural use?

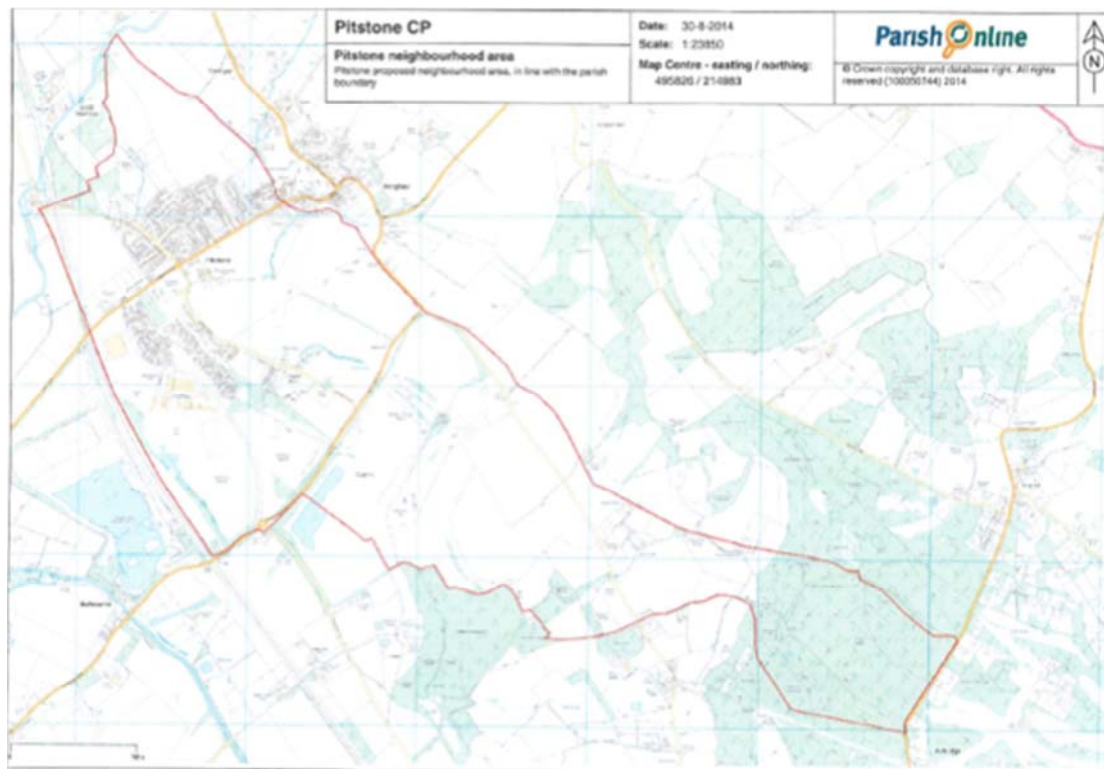
## 1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of any significant environmental effects resulting from the policies and proposals of the Pre-Submission version of the Pitstone Neighbourhood Plan ("the Neighbourhood Plan") in accordance with EU Directive 2001/42 on strategic environmental assessment (SEA). Figure A below shows the designated Neighbourhood Area.

1.2 The Pitstone Neighbourhood Plan (PNP) has been published for pre-submission consultation by Pitstone Parish Council under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. Aylesbury Vale District Council ("the District Council") has issued a screening opinion requiring an SEA of the Neighbourhood Plan under the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004.

1.3 This SEA Report therefore provides an assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan in a way that is proportionate to this task and which recognises the limitations of the available data and means of measuring direct impacts.

1.4 A Scoping Report was consulted upon with statutory consultees in January/February 2015. It contains the baseline information for this report which is appended to this report.



*Plan A: Pitstone Designated Neighbourhood Plan Area*

## 2. Background to Strategic Environmental Assessment

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

- An outline of the contents, the main objectives of the plan, and their relationship with other relevant plans or programmes
- The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan
- The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected
- Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC
- The environmental protection objectives, established at international, community or national level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation
- The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce, and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan
- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of competency encountered in compiling the required information
- A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10

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

2.4 The methodology for the assessment is intended to be proportionate to the task of assessing the modest development proposals of a Neighbourhood Plan in a relatively small parish area. When required by the local authority the SEA usually only focuses on its requirements but in this case the report will extend to cover the wider sustainability attributes of an SA.

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

### **3. An outline of the contents, main objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and relationship with other relevant plans or programmes**

3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan contains a number of policies for the use and development of land in the Parish of Pitstone in the plan period from 2013 up to 2033. These policies, together with the policies of the development plan - that is the adopted Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (AVDLP) - and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), will be used by the District Council in determining planning applications once the Neighbourhood Plan is approved in due course.

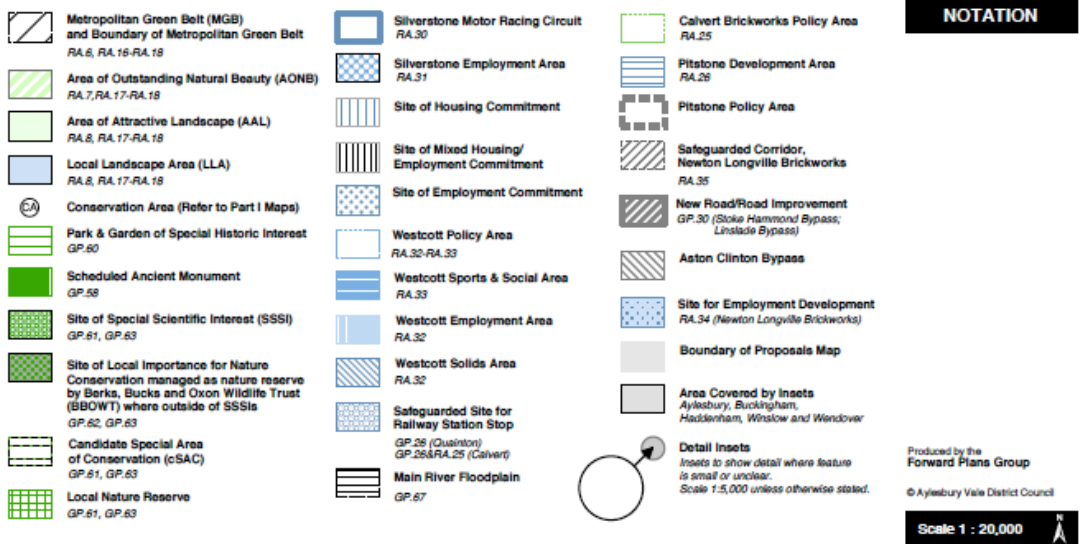
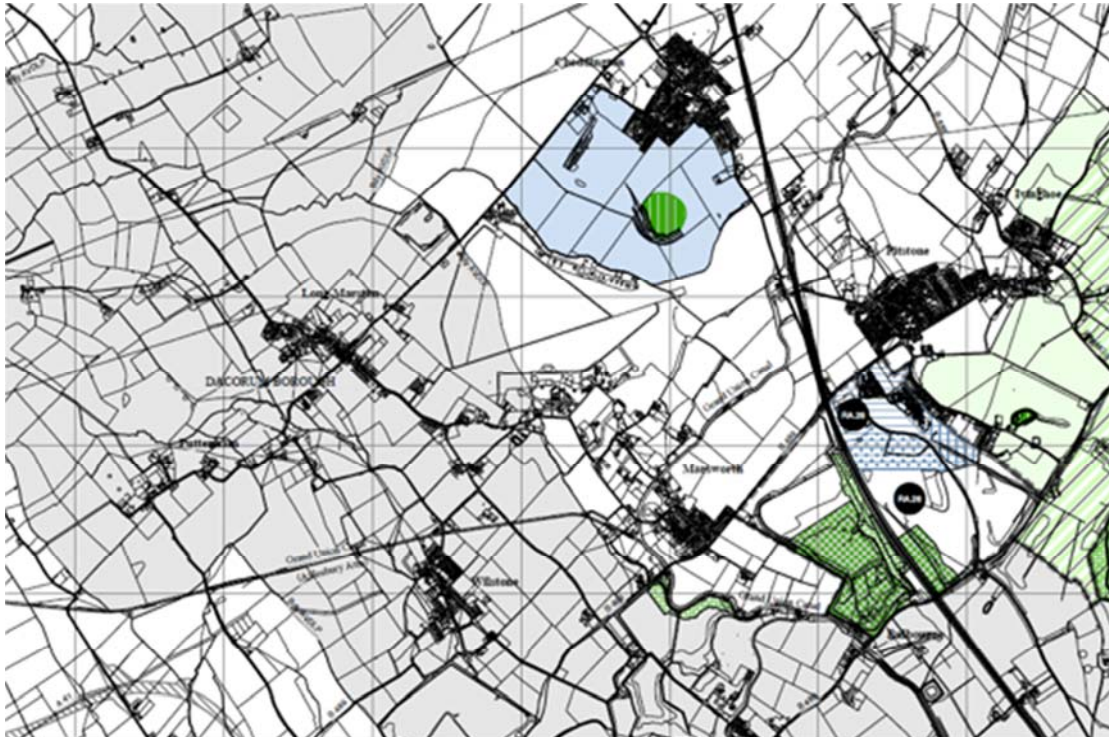
3.2 The AVDLP was adopted in 2004. Some of the AVDLP policies ceased to have effect in 2007 when planning legislation changed. The remaining policies of the AVDLP were therefore 'saved' and it is these policies that currently set out the spatial plan for Aylesbury Vale District Council that the PNP must be in conformity with.

3.3 In addition to the saved policies the PNP will look to the reasoning and evidence base of the (since withdrawn) Vale of Aylesbury Plan of 2013, especially the settlement hierarchy for the district. That evidence base indicated that Pitstone is a 'larger village' and the VAP proposed approximately 50 new homes over the plan period 2011-2031. Although the housing supply strategy of the VALP is likely to change in the light of new objectively assessed demand data, there is currently no indication of how that may affect the previous spatial strategy for distributing new homes across the hierarchy. It is likely that the hierarchy of larger villages will remain much the same but that they will be expected to make a higher collective contribution to meeting the district's housing needs than proposed in the VAP.

3.4 The 2004 AVDLP saved policies set the policy framework for PNP, these being the General Policies (GP) and the Rural Areas (RA) policies of which the most relevant are the following:

- GP.8 Protection of the Amenity of Residents: Protects existing residential amenities from unreasonable harm the impact from a new development may cause.
- GP.17 Existing employment sites: Retains Proposals for changes of use or redevelopment of employment sites.
- GP.35 Design of new development: Sets out the built design principles for new development
- GP.38 Landscape Design: Sets out the landscape design principles for new development

- RA.2 Coalescence of Settlements: Retains the individuality of settlement and prevent coalescence through avoiding development on open land in the countryside that has a negative impact on the rural character and setting of settlements.
- RA.3 Curtilage Extensions: Prevents the encroachment of non-agricultural uses into open countryside in order to avoid adversely affecting the character and appearance of rural areas.
- RA.8 Other Important Landscapes: Identifies Areas of Attractive Landscape (AALs), which demand a high level of protection (The Proposals Map 23 shows the AAL to the west of the village)
- RA.13 Housing within the Built-Up Area of Settlements: Identifies settlements that may be appropriate for small scale development within the built-up area to be in keeping with the surrounding area.
- RA.14 Housing on the edge of the Built-Up Area of Settlements: Identifies settlements that may be appropriate for small scale development on the edge of the built-up area and requires that they be in keeping with the surrounding area.
- RA.26 Pitstone: Supports the redevelopment of the former Cement Works for a mixed employment and residential scheme including local services, facilities and open space.



Plan B: 2004 AVDLP Proposals Maps for Pitstone

3.5 These policies provide part of the framework, within which the general conformity of the PNP with the development plan will be assessed. The PNP should not however repeat what the district plan is saying but add local land use policies.

3.6 The emerging Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) will include the overall strategy for the district, alongside site allocations and development management policies, but this is not expected to be published in draft until later in 2015.

### 3.7 The Vision of the Neighbourhood Plan is:

*The village has grown in terms of its scale but its character and special countryside has been protected. Around 170 new homes have been delivered on sites within the existing settlement boundary of the village – predominantly the final phase of Castlemead off Marsworth Road, at Rushendon Furlong and on Vicarage Road. The new homes are a mix of sizes and styles, which have met a wide range of local needs.*

*The village school(s) continue to be successful, serving the village's children and those of the local area.*

*A 'heart' for the village has been established on the final phase of the Pitstone Development Area site adjoining the Memorial Hall. New and improved sporting facilities support a wide range of activities and events and include a multi use games area and expanded Pavilion Site.*

*The shop and community facilities remain in place and continue to thrive – and are complemented by a pub and/or family restaurant financed by the housing developments.*

*The development of Pitstone Green Business Park has been completed in line with its original development plan and all the open farmland south east of Marsworth Road to Pitstone Hill remains in productive agricultural use.*

*As well as local biodiversity sites having been protected from development, a new or improved ring of green infrastructure – footpaths, cycleways, amenity areas, ecological areas, woodland, ponds and community gardens – have been established around (and through) the village both connecting it to, and delineating it from, the surrounding countryside.*

### 3.8 In pursuit of this Vision, the PNP contains five strategic objectives and specific measures:

#### Housing

- Delineate a settlement boundary that emphasises the retention of village character.
- Support the development of sites (as shown on the Policy Maps) that will realistically accommodate the required housing growth within the plan period of 2013 to 2033.
- In doing so retain the key characteristics of the village whilst, at the same time, ensuring that the necessary infrastructure is provided.
- Ensure that future development is within pedestrian reach of essential facilities and key services.



## Land Assets

- Retain and preserve existing listed buildings.
- Ensure that valuable community assets remain in their current usage and, where appropriate, become the subject of Community Right to Bid Orders.

## Environment

- Establish a 'green girdle' around the settlement to prevent the expansion of the village into open countryside.
- Develop a network of footpaths, cycleways and other means of encouraging the use of sustainable transport both within, and outside, the settlement.

## Education

- Expand the extent of primary school provision in the village so that local children all have the option to attend their local school.
- Similarly increase the number of pre-school places available in the village to local children.
- Establish a nursery within the village.

## Community Facilities

- Support the ongoing provision of adequate healthcare, retail outlets, allotments and other essential facilities and key services in the village.
- Provide for leisure facilities and other resources, focused on the needs and usage of the local community, through the ongoing support and expansion of the Memorial Hall and other community-used buildings.
- Provide inclusive sports facilities, primarily through the further development of the Pavilion Site as a sporting 'hub' for the village, and ensure that provision is fit for purpose and appropriate in terms of design and scale.
- Ensure that footpaths, playground facilities and other open spaces are both correctly sited, and maintained and improved as required.

3.9 The policies are as follows:

- Policy 1: Pitstone Settlement Boundary – establishing the Pitstone Settlement Boundary to distinguish the built up area of the village from the surrounding countryside
- Policy 2: Land at Marsworth Road / Vicarage Road – prioritising land for new homes, drinking establishment, childcare facility and extending the Memorial Hall car park
- Policy 3: Land North of Marsworth Road – safeguarding land for future education use
- Policy 4: Land West of Westfield Road – supports the implementation of consented business development proposals and resists the loss of the land to other uses
- Policy 5: Areas of Special Landscape Value – defining land for protection from harmful development
- Policy 6: Design Principles – encouraging a high quality of design of all development proposals
- Policy 7: Local Green Spaces – safeguarding land from future development
- Policy 8: Community Facilities – protecting important community assets

#### **4. The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan**

4.1 The Neighbourhood Plan area, and its immediate environs, contains a number of designated heritage and nature features, including a number of listed buildings, Scheduled Monuments, historic land uses and areas of Archaeological Notification in and around the village.

4.2 The south eastern part of the parish is within the Green Belt, the Chiltern Beechwood Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with a smaller area of Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status. Closer to the village there is a large Local Wildlife Site, areas of Notable Species and a large area designated as an Area of Attractive Landscape. The scoping information in Appendix A provides more details on these heritage and natural features.

4.3 The Plan contains only modest policies and proposals for development that are consistent in scale and location with the village and with the adopted development plan. Without it, proposals for housing development in the parish would be left to individual planning applications. This would make little difference to controlling the environmental impact of those proposals as they must in any event demonstrate they conform to development plan and NPPF policy.

## **5. Any existing environmental problems that are relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan**

5.1 The planning policy context and the community engagement work undertaken have raised a number of issues for the Neighbourhood Plan to address:

- Where should new housing in Pitstone be located? What type of housing should be developed: type, and tenure? Is the land available now or might it become available later in the plan period?
- What are the shared design characteristics of the settlement that could be included in a policy?
- Should Brookmead School be extended or redeveloped elsewhere?
- Which community facilities would be on the list of those to be protected from a change of use? Should the shop and community facilities be improved to become more viable?
- Should the employment policy protect the use of or promote new business at Pitstone Green Business Park?
- Which spaces meet the criteria for designation as Local Green Spaces?
- Should a policy protect the open farmland south east of Marsworth Road to Pitstone Hill for agricultural use?

5.2 The issues highlight no significant environmental problems that are not also common to villages in rural England. The challenge for the PNP will be in ensuring the status of Pitstone as a viable larger village by discouraging the loss of its local services and by encouraging housing and employment growth without harming its special rural character. Its focus will therefore be on the village only – its policies do not cover the more sensitive countryside areas in the remainder of the parish to its south east.

5.3 The village has seen a number of relatively large planning consents granted since 2011, as well as the major redevelopment of the Cement Works over the last decade. Given the modest scale of growth likely to be planned for in the PNP, and its focus on the established settlement of Pitstone, there will be no likely measureable impacts on any designated nature sites or designated heritage assets outside the parish boundary.

## **6. The environmental protection objectives that are relevant to the PNP and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation**

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

6.2 To assess the sustainability performance of the Neighbourhood Plan, the following assessment framework has been adopted. The proposed framework was consulted upon with statutory consultees as part of the SEA Scoping

Report. The consultees made some helpful comments on the proposed SEA objectives, which have been finalised as follows:

#### Objective 1: Heritage

To preserve and enhance the quality of built environment and heritage of the village

- Will the policies sustain and enhance the significance of designated heritage assets and their settings?
- Will the policies sustain and enhance the significance of non-designated heritage assets?

#### Objective 2: Landscape

To ensure that the natural environment surrounding the village is conserved and enhanced.

- Will the policies avoid development in the Green Belt and AONB?
- Will the policies have regard to the local landscape character and open spaces within the village?

#### Objective 3: Biodiversity

To ensure biodiversity is improved and designated habitats are protected.

- Will the policies deliver a net biodiversity gain?
- Will the policies avoid development in a known site of habitat value?

#### Objective 4: Flood Risk

To ensure development proposals avoid areas of known fluvial flood risk and are able to mitigate groundwater flooding.

- Will the policies avoid land within Flood Zones 2 or 3?
- Will the policies require appropriate mitigation of any likely groundwater flooding?




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

6.4 The assessment has also been used to assist in shaping the alternative spatial plan options for consultation with the local community and in formulating other plan policies.

## 7. Assessing the impact of the Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Objectives

7.1 The five strategic objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are outlined in Section 3. They cover a small number of social, economic and environmental issues in support of realising the Vision. Each of these objectives is assessed against the SEA objectives below.

PREFERRED OBJECTIVES & POLICIES	Heritage	Landscape	Biodiversity	Flood Risk
SEA Objective	1	2	3	4
<b>NP Objectives:</b>				
Housing	Neutral impact	Positive impact	Neutral impact	Neutral impact
Land Assets	Positive impact	Neutral impact	Neutral impact	Neutral impact
Environment	Positive impact	Positive impact	Positive impact	Neutral impact
Education	Neutral impact	Neutral impact	Neutral impact	Neutral impact
Community Facilities	Neutral impact	Neutral impact	Neutral impact	Neutral impact

	<i>Positive impact</i>
	<i>Neutral impact</i>
	<i>Negative impact</i>

*Table A: Assessment of Plan Objectives & SEA Objectives*

7.2 Not surprisingly, there is a strong, positive correlation between the environmental objective of the Plan and the heritage, landscape and biodiversity objectives of the SEA. The Plan is explicit in wishing to plan for growth that avoids harming the rural character of the parish and especially its heritage assets.

7.3 In all other respects, the relationship between the Neighbourhood Plan objectives and the key environmental measures is neutral. Although housing development and proposals to enhance the local economy will inevitably have some degree of environmental impact, the SEA objectives anticipate this and allow for Plan objectives to direct growth to within the village to avoid the most sensitive environments. Given the national planning policy context, it was not a reasonable alternative to seek to avoid growth at all.

## 8. Assessing the impact of the Neighbourhood Plan policies

8.1 The Neighbourhood Plan policies are assessed against the SEA objectives below.

PREFERRED POLICIES	Heritage	Landscape	Biodiversity	Flood Risk
SEA Objective	1	2	3	4
<b>NP Policies</b>				
1: Spatial Plan for the Parish	Positive impact	Positive impact	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures
2: Marsworth Road	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures
3: North of Marsworth Road	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures
4: West of Westfield Road	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures
5: ASLV	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures	Positive impact	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures
6: Design Principles	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures	Positive impact	Positive impact	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures
7: Local Green Spaces	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures	Positive impact	Positive impact	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures
8: Community Facilities	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures	No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures



*Positive impact*

*No or some impact but policy has mitigation measures*

*Negative impact with no proposed mitigation measures*

*Table B: Assessment of Plan Preferred Policies*

8.2 In general terms, the policies have neutral environmental impacts with a small number of positive effects and no negative effects.

8.3 The spatial plan of Policy 1 'Pitstone Settlement Boundary' focuses growth in the village to avoid impacts on the countryside, areas of biodiversity value and areas of flood risk. It is also designed to contain the growth of Pitstone village by allocating development in a single location within the settlement boundary to enable community facilities and services to be delivered by a developer along with the new dwellings. In defining the Settlement Boundary tight to the existing village edge but allowing for targeted growth away from heritage assets, the policy has avoided undermining the historic character of the village. In overall terms therefore the policy has positive environmental effects.

8.4 The support of Policy 2 'Land at Marsworth Road / Vicarage Road' for a mixed use scheme on the remaining part of the 2005 Pitstone Development Area masterplan for the former Cement Works is consistent with the spatial plan of Policy 1. As the site is a green field, the focus has been on ensuring the policies contained the key development principles to successfully mitigate the possibility of negative impacts. The policy is worded to include key

development principles, including providing for an open space and a buffer to the recreation ground together with pedestrian and cycleway access to connect. This policy therefore has an overall neutral environmental effect but its social effects will be very positive in terms of meeting local housing need and providing new village facilities.

8.5 Policy 3 'Land North of Marsworth Road' safeguards land for future education use. The land opens on to countryside to the north and a sports ground to the west but adjoins residential development to its east. The land to the north has no special landscape sensitivity to development – a future planning application for a school will determine the most appropriate siting of buildings on the site and will most likely provide for the play area to adjoin the northern boundary with buildings closer to the main road. It is not within the setting of any heritage assets or has any known biodiversity interest or flood risk. It is especially suited to an education purpose in the longer term given its location to the west of the village and close to the Castlemead housing development. The policy therefore has a neutral environmental effect but considerable potentially positive social effects.

8.6 Policy 4 'Land West of Westfield Road' supports the completion of consented business development proposals on the former Cement Works. In doing so, it seeks to prevent the loss of this land to other uses. The policy is neutral in environmental terms as the use is already established for the land but it has considerable positive economic effects in seeking to retain it for business use.

8.7 Policy 5 'Areas of Special Landscape Value' designates land primarily between the southern edge of the village and the existing Area of Attractive Landscape (designated by saved policy RA8 of the AVDLP) a little further to the south. The policy effectively extends the purpose of RA8 to cover this land to ensure that any future development is for agriculture purposes and will not therefore undermine the combined visual integrity of the open land towards Pitstone Hill and the Chilterns AONB further to the south. The policy will therefore have a positive landscape effect.

8.8 Policy 6 'Design Principles' is intended to complement existing development plan design policy by drawing special attention to the built characteristics of the village when proposals are being made. It also encourages landscape schemes of new developments to make provision for orchard trees, for which the village was once known. And it requires minimum car parking standards to be applied and provision made for broadband service access. In each case, the intention is to raise the standards of development in the village to make it more distinctive. The policy will therefore have positive landscape and heritage effects.

8.9 Policy 7 identifies a number of Local Green Spaces that meet the criteria of the NPPF to be designated for that purpose. The spaces play an important role in defining the character of the village and will therefore have positive landscape and potentially biodiversity effects.

8.10 The community facilities listed in Policy 8 for protection and improvement

are valuable community assets that play a key part in defining the character of Pitstone village. In protecting them from unnecessary loss and in allowing for improvements to ensure they remain viable, the policy requires proposals to be appropriate in design terms. In doing so, the policy will mitigate any negative landscape or heritage effects.

Assessing Reasonable Alternatives

8.11 The assessment is obliged to identify and assess any reasonable alternatives to the proposed policies any to explain why the policy choices were made in this context.

8.12 There is only one alternative option for defining the spatial plan in Policy 1. This is to provide for larger scale housing growth in the village of perhaps 300 – 400 new homes on sites that have not been promoted for development to the north and west of the village. It is doubtful that such an option could be regarded as ‘reasonable’ in the absence of such promotional activity, other than for one site, which is the subject of the safeguarding for educational use in Policy 3. And given the community engagement activities undertaken to inform the Plan, it is also very unlikely that there would be public support for this option. However, to demonstrate the relative environmental merits of the chosen policy, a comparison has been made using the SEA objectives (sere Table C below).

<b>POLICY ALTERNATIVES</b>	<b>Heritage</b>	<b>Landscape</b>	<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>Flood Risk</b>
<b>SEA Objective</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1: Pitstone Settlement Boundary</b>				
Alternative				

*Table C: Assessment of Plan Policy Alternatives (Policy 1)*

8.13 The assessment indicates that the alternative would have negative landscape and biodiversity effects as a result of the loss of large areas of greenfield land around that part of the village. Although not as sensitive to development as the land to the south, the scale of this development would be difficult to mitigate and there are no obvious community benefits that may compensate for those negative effects. The land is not subject to flood risk nor has any clear effects on heritage assets, although if located on north eastern edge of the village it may effect the setting of the Ivinghoe Conservation Area.

8.14 The only reasonable alternative to the remaining policies would be the choice of having no policy on the matter and relying upon the policies of the development plan. As shown in Table D below, in more or less each case, the



'no policy' option has made no material difference, as all the policy areas are covered by the development plan and NPPF. The Plan is merely refining those policy areas to reflect their specific relevance to this Parish. The only exceptions are policies 5 and 7, where it is possible that a reliance on a saved development plan policy may be insufficient to avoid negative landscape effects. However, this will only be marginal.

POLICY ALTERNATIVES	Heritage	Landscape	Biodiversity	Flood Risk
<b>SEA Objective</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>NP Policies</b>				
2: Marsworth Road				
3: North of Marsworth Road				
4: Westfield Road				
5: ASLV				
6: Design Principles				
7: Local Green Spaces				
8: Community Facilities				

Table D: Assessment of Plan Policy Alternatives (Policies 2 - 8)

### Assessment Summary

8.15 The assessment shows that there are no significant negative effects resulting from the policies of the Plan. The policies have been specifically chosen and formulated to adhere to the principles of sustainable development as defined by the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan Strategy and the NPPF.

8.16 The conclusion of the draft assessment of the objectives and policies of the Neighbourhood Plan is very encouraging. There is a close correlation between the plan's objectives and those of the SEA, perhaps as should be expected from a community-driven document. The policies have clearly been selected and drafted to ensure that any potential for negative impacts is avoided through policy selection and effective policy wording. In a small number of cases, the Neighbourhood Plan should deliver positive environmental benefits, as well as other social and economic effects. In no case is there a reasonable policy alternative that assesses as well as the chosen policy.

## **9. A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring**

9.1 The Neighbourhood Plan proposes that the progress in its implementation will be assessed using the measures for each objective as set out in Section 6. The data for some of these measures is collected by the District Council in its

planning monitoring reports. In other cases, the Parish Council will endeavour to collect data on an annual basis to report on the progress of the plan. Should any real or potential negative impacts be identified then the Parish and District Councils will seek to review the relevant policies and their implementation.

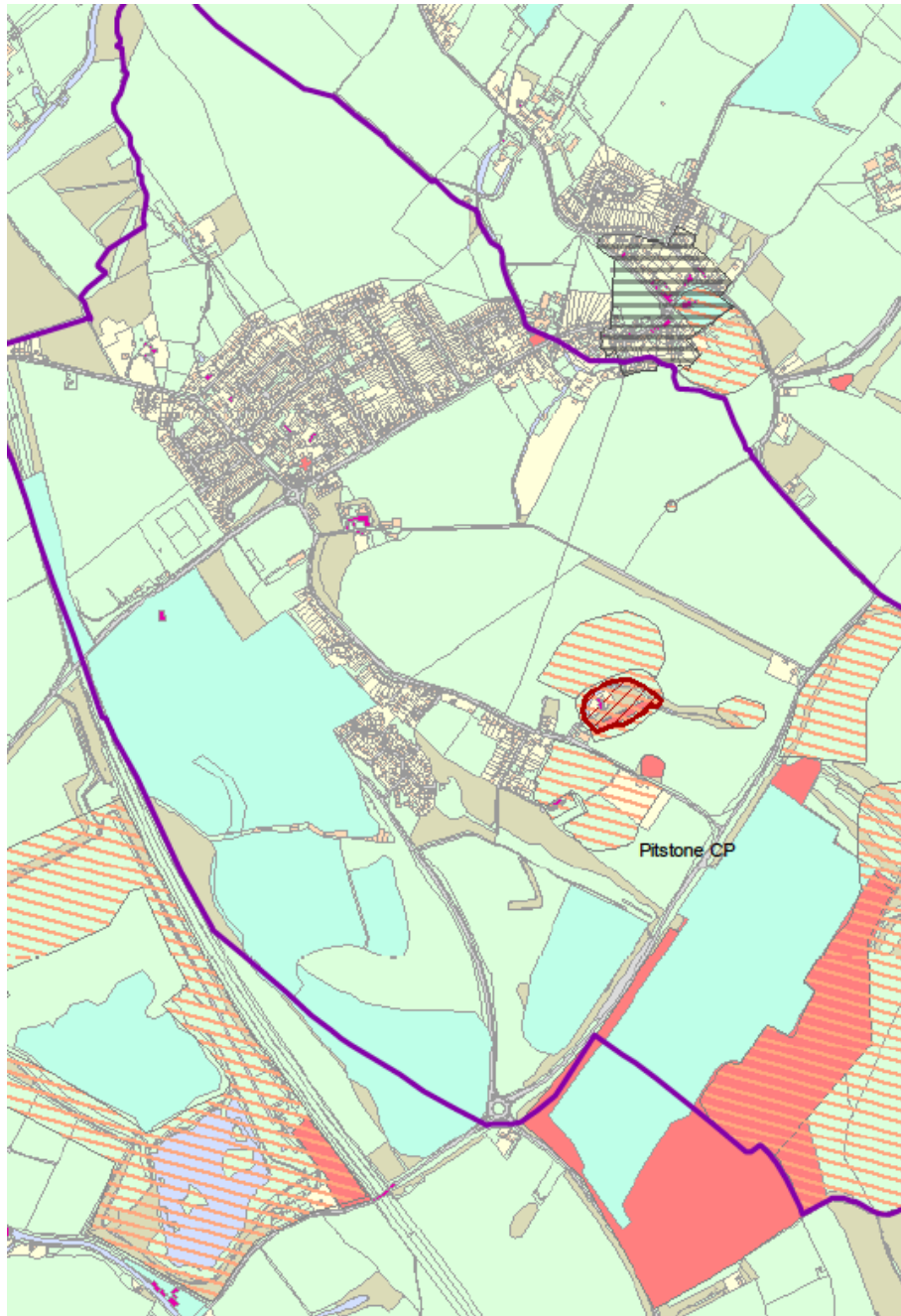
# APPENDIX A

## Pitstone Neighbourhood Plan: Baseline Data

Title	Source	Data	Trends and consequences
<b>Historic Landscape</b>			
<b>Settlement Hierarchy</b>	The reasoning and evidence of AVDC's withdrawn VAP.	The settlement of Pitstone has been identified as a 'larger village' in the VAP and as such has been identified as a village that should provide limited growth, in keeping with its character, take account of community-led planning and to support the provision of services to the wider area. None of the settlements in AVDC have built-up area boundaries.	Due to the rural character of the parish, it is important to keep the settlement's character. The PNP may allocate sites for development within or adjoining the village of Pitstone but only of a smaller scale to maintain the position of the village in the hierarchy.
<b>Listed Buildings &amp; Conservation Areas</b>	Pitstone Fact Pack AVDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are 15 number of listed buildings in Pitstone including St Mary's Church and an historic farm building. Pitstone Windmill is Grade II*.</li> <li>• There are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The larger of the two is located to the east of Pitstone village and the smaller to the very south east of the parish far from the village.</li> <li>• The Ivinghoe Conservation Area lies adjacent to the Pitstone Boundary.</li> <li>• There are large areas of Historic Land Use to the south of the settlement where the cement works were.</li> <li>• There are several Archaeological Notification Areas of across the parish, some are just south of the village.</li> <li>• There are further some areas identified a new potential contaminated land, a couple of these are within the village.</li> </ul>	Pitstone has a number of listed buildings, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, large areas of Historic Land Use and adjoins Ivinghoe Conservation Area and therefore needs to ensure that any new development is sensitive to the character of the areas in which they are located.  (See Plan B)

Biodiversity & Environment			
AONB and Green Belt	Pitstone Fact Pack AVDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chiltern Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)</li> <li>• Metropolitan Green Belt</li> </ul> <p>Both located towards the east of the parish</p>	<p>The PNP should avoid proposing development in the Green Belt, the AONB and its setting, unless an exceptional case can be made. The PNP should take into account these designations and look to be in conformity with the Chilterns AONB Management Plan.</p> <p>(See Plan C)</p>
Nature Conservation	Pitstone Fact Pack AVDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ashridge Commons and Woods and Pitstone Hill Sites of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI) located in part of the centre of the parish in the settlement area.</li> <li>• Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI is part of Chiltern Beechwood Special Area of Conservation (SAC) to the very south east of the parish, some of its area is covered by Ancient Woodland. It features the Beech forests on neutral rich soils, dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone and the Stag Beetle.</li> <li>• Local Wildlife Site is located to the south of the village where Quarry one was once located. The area has important habitats for wildlife through its scrub and grassland.</li> <li>• There are several Notable Species Sites in and around the settlement.</li> <li>• Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) clusters at Westfield and Windsor Road.</li> </ul>	<p>The PNP policies will have to show that there will be no harmful effects on the Chiltern Beechwood SAC or on the SSSI sites, Wildlife Areas and Notable Species Sites. A separate Habitats Regulations Assessment will be undertaken in respect of the SAC.</p> <p>(See Plans C and D)</p>

Flooding			
Surface Water Flooding	Pitstone Fact Pack AVDC	Numerous areas spread out across the parish are susceptible to surface water flooding.	<p>New development in areas particularly susceptible to surface water flooding will need to effectively demonstrate they can mitigate the risk of flooding without having adverse effects on surrounding areas.</p> <p>(See Plan C)</p>



**Key**

- Parishes
- Conservation Areas
- Listed Buildings
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Archaeological Notification Areas
- Historic Land Use
- New Potential Contaminated Land

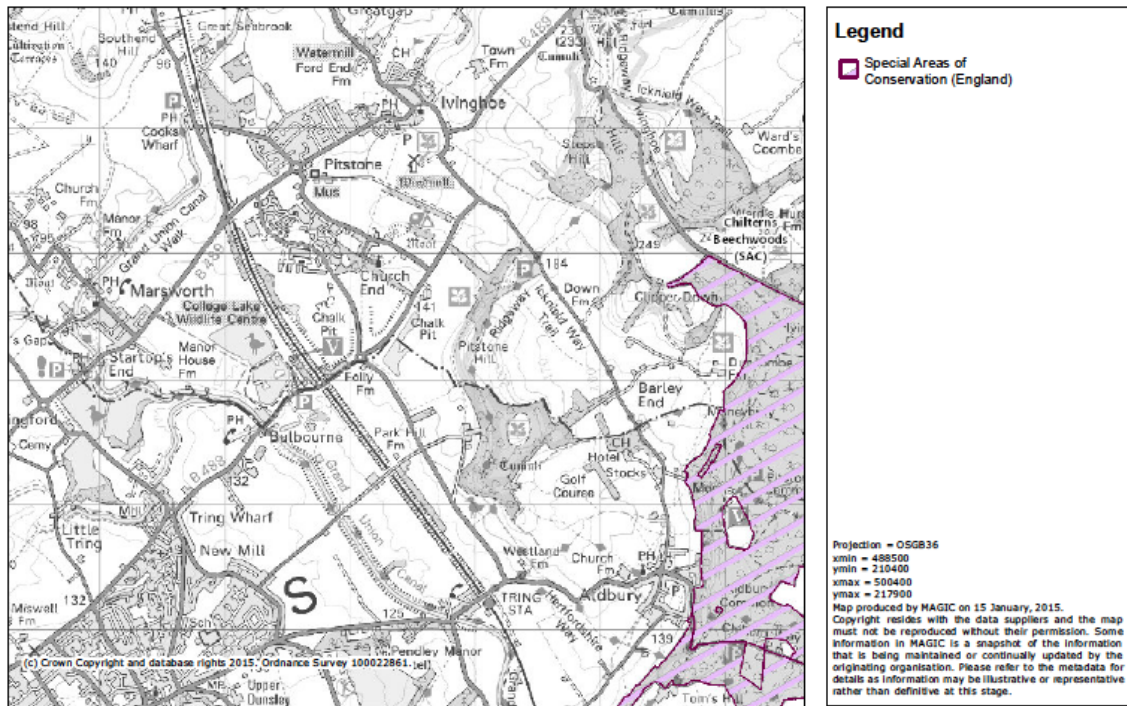
*Plan B: Pitstone – Heritage Assets*



**Key**

- Parishes
- TPO
- Flood Plain
- Areas Suseptible to Surface Water Flooding
- Ancient Woodland
- Special Areas Conservation
- SSSI
- Notable Species
- Local Wildlife Sites
- AONB
- Biological Notification Sites
- Green Belt

*Plan C: Pitstone – Natural Assets*



Plan D: Pitstone – Chiltern Beechwood Special Area of Conservation