

Ashington Neighbourhood Plan

**Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report
Incorporating Strategic Environmental
Assessment**

**Draft Scoping Report for consultation with
statutory bodies**

January 2018

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report incorporates the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the emerging Ashington Neighbourhood Plan. It is for consultation with the relevant statutory authorities and other interested stakeholders.
- 1.2 Sustainable development is about ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come. It is about considering the long-term environmental, social and economic issues and impacts in an integrated and balanced way. The UK Government has set five guiding principles to achieve the sustainable development purpose. These principles form the basis for policy in the UK and are as follows:
 - Living within environmental limits
 - Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
 - Building a strong, stable and sustainable economy
 - Promoting good governance
 - Using sound science responsibly
- 1.3 One of the means by which sustainable development can be achieved is through the land-use planning process.
- 1.4 The Plan can help to achieve sustainable development as it aims to ensure that development meets the needs of people living and working in the Ashington Neighbourhood Area, while at the same time helping to ensure that adverse environmental impacts are minimised. It is for this reason that a Sustainability Appraisal has been undertaken.
- 1.5 SEA is a requirement of the EC Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the impacts of certain plans and programmes on the environment. It is implemented in England through the 'Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004'. It aims to ensure that the environmental consequences of a proposed policy, plan or programme are assessed, and improvements and mitigation measures are incorporated into the plan at the earliest stage of decision making.
- 1.6 The objective of the 'SEA Directive' is:

'To provide for a high level of protection to the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of the plans...with a view to promoting sustainable development' (Article 1, Appendix 1)
- 1.7 The requirement for an SEA emerges from Schedule 10, paragraph 8(2)(f) of the Localism Act which states that a draft Neighbourhood Development Order (or Plan) "meets the basic conditions if the making of the order does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations". In this case, the relevant EU obligations are represented by the SEA Directive.
- 1.8 This SEA is in accordance with Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations.

The Scoping Report

- 1.9 The Scoping Report has been developed in accordance with government guidance for undertaking SEA in compliance with the SEA Directive.
- 1.10 According to the guidance, the complete process has five stages resulting in the Environmental Report, which should be implemented in turn. Each stage comprises a number of subsidiary tasks, some of which should be implemented alongside each other and lead to the development of a specific output. The Scoping Report is the first stage of the SEA of the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan associated with it. Stage A explains the process used in this Scoping Report and is presented below in Table 1.1. While the table may infer a sequential process, in practice, stages A1 to A4 inform each other, e.g. one has to have an understanding of the environmental issues (A3) to assess the relevant plans, programmes (A1) and requirements for baseline data collection (A2).
- 1.11 Consultation on the scope of the SEA is required under the SEA Directive and the Scoping Report guidance detailed above. It is a requirement that the Scoping Report is sent to three statutory Consultation Bodies with environmental responsibilities, as listed:
 - The Environment Agency
 - Historic England
 - Natural England
- 1.12 The consultation duly undertaken with these bodies will seek to:
 - ensure the methodology for the proposed SEA/SA is comprehensive to support the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan;
 - provide an opinion on the suitability of the SEA/SA objectives;
 - advise on the key sustainability issues as far as they relate to SEA/SA; and
 - provide advice to ensure the baseline data is appropriate and sufficient.

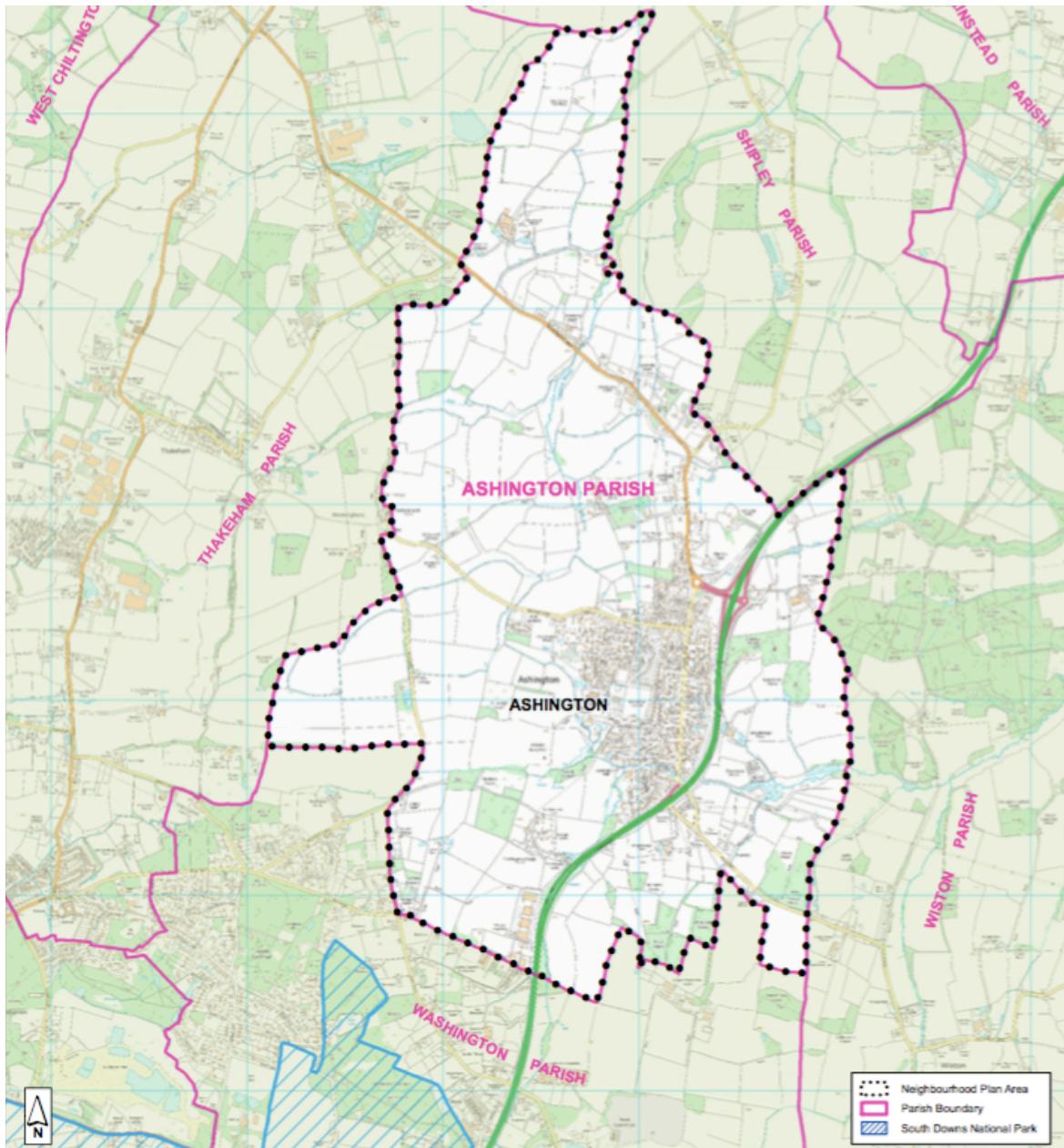
Table 1.1: Work Requirements for the Scoping Report

Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope			
Sub-Stage	Tasks	Key Outputs	
A1	Identify links to other relevant plans, programmes and sustainability objectives	Defines how the plan is affected by outside factors and suggests ideas for how any constraints can be addressed	Assessment of requirements of SEA/ Collection and evaluation of key datasets
A2	Collect baseline/ environmental data	Provision of an evidence base for sustainability issues, effects prediction and monitoring	
A3	Identify sustainability issues/problems	Used to focus the SEA and streamline the subsequent phases, including baseline information analysis, setting of the SEA Framework, prediction of effects and monitoring	Assessment of requirements of SEA
A4	Developing the SEA framework	A process to enable the sustainability of plan to be appraised	SEA/SA framework consisting of Sustainability Objectives (Table 5.1) based upon National, Regional and Local issues.
A5	Consulting on the scope of the SEA	Carried out with statutory bodies and other relevant organisations with social, environmental or economic responsibilities to ensure the appraisal covers the key sustainability issues	Revisions to Sustainability framework

Ashington Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.13 The Ashington Neighbourhood Plan area is shown in Figure 1.1 and is contiguous with the parish boundary.

Figure 1.1: Ashington Neighbourhood Plan designated area



- 1.14 The Ashington Neighbourhood Plan is being developed through working and engaging with the local community. A Vision and Objectives document was put together in September 2017 to focus on addressing the needs of the community in the built up area. In order to deliver its objectives, they have been sorted under particular themes:

Transport

- Reduce reliance on private car by enhancing sustainable transport options including public transport, green linkages and safe crossings
- Improved accommodation of private cars, through better parking provision in retail, community and housing areas

Environment

- Conserve and enhance the village's heritage assets. To acknowledge and increase their profile
- Protect the green and rural nature of the Parish and its links to the countryside environment.
- Ensure that all new development is designed to protect and enhance the landscape, reduce or minimise flood risk, promote biodiversity and positively enhance the Parish wherever opportunities exist e.g. noise pollution from A24 and flooding at Mill Lane

Economy

- Develop new local services (including retail, business, education, medical and tourism) and enhance opportunities to support existing services. Create a village centre and consider land and business space for local needs.

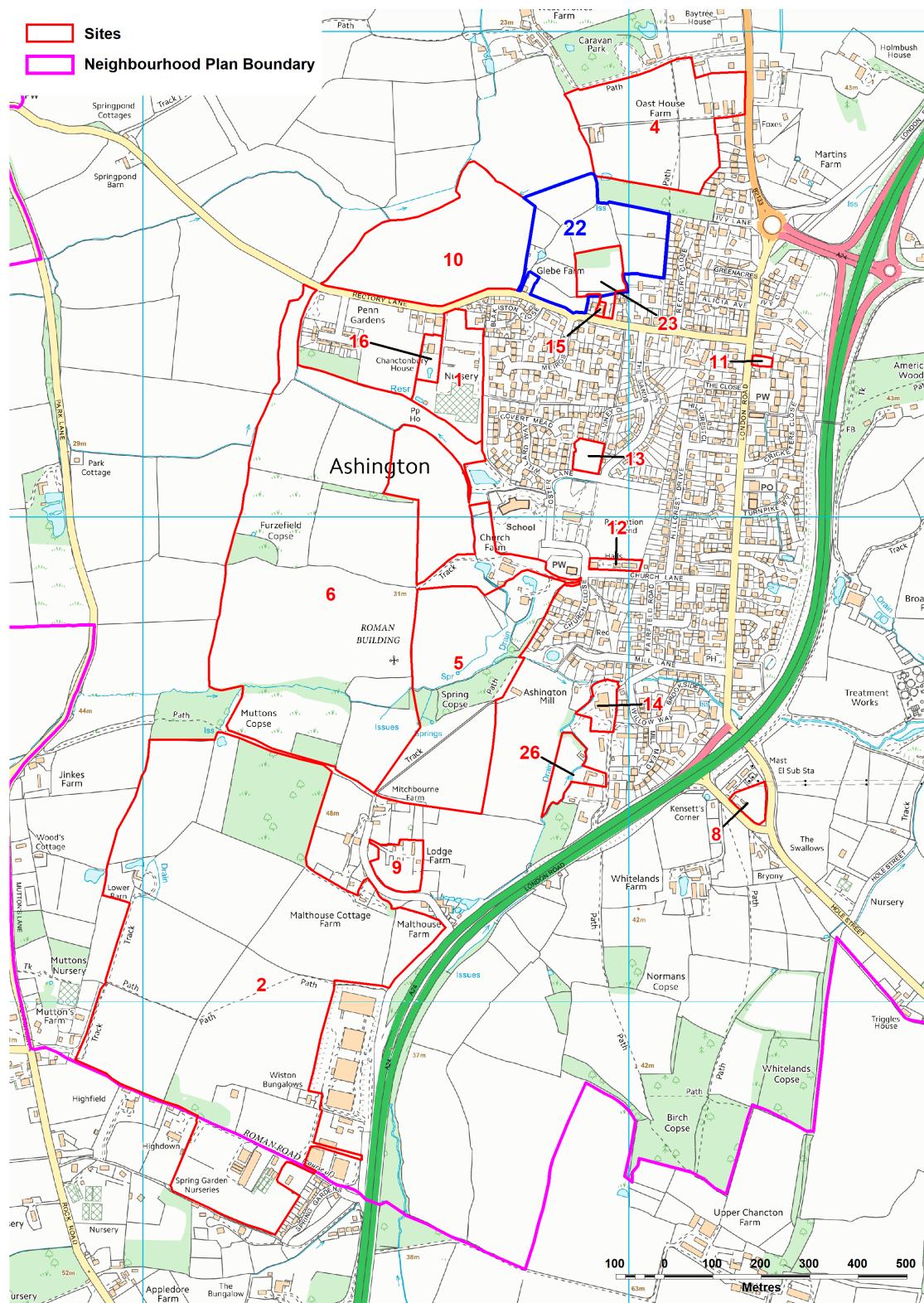
Community

- Protect, improve and/or replace existing community facilities and provide additional facilities that meet identified local need or that are required as a consequence of future development e.g. Youth Club, sport provision, Scout Hall, play area, schools

Planning

- Contribute to the HDPF (Horsham District Planning Framework) requirement for new homes by providing housing that meets the current and future needs of the Parish, maximising opportunities for development of sustainable sites e.g. more starter homes and more care homes
 - Recognise the hierarchical relationship between Ashington, its surrounding settlements and the South Downs National Park (SDNP).
- 1.15 In addition, the development of the Plan has involved a Call for Sites. This resulted in 26 sites being submitted within the Neighbourhood Area. A number of sites were not taken forward for assessment:
- 5 sites were clearly isolated from the built-up area boundary so were considered to represent unsustainable development.
 - 2 sites did not respond to further requests for information.
 - 2 sites subsequently were granted planning permission for development.
- 1.16 This resulted in 17 sites being taken forward for more detailed assessment, as shown in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2: Sites taken forward for detailed assessment



2 RELEVANT PLANS, PROGRAMMES AND SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES (STAGE A1)

- 2.1 This section provides a summary review of the policy context relevant for the Neighbourhood Plan. Starting at the international level and working down in scale this covers the key policies that the Neighbourhood Plan should adhere to or consider. While it is common sense to ensure the Plan and SEA/SA reviews these requirements, it is also a requirement of the SEA Directive which states that the Environmental Report should include:

"an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes"

"the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation"

[Annex 1(a) and (e) of the SEA Directive]

- 2.2 Within this context it is stated in the NPPF that work for Neighbourhood Planning is proportionate with the scale and ambitions of the plan. We have therefore considered a range of relevant polices and plans for this assessment considering international, national, regional (East of England), and local (County and District) plans and policies.

International context

Key objectives	Key targets/indicators	Key implications for NP and SEA
EU Habitats and Conservation of Wild Birds Directives (92/43/EEC and 79/409/EEC)		
To conserve fauna and flora and natural habitats of EU importance by the establishment of a network of protected areas throughout the European Community. This was designed to maintain both the distribution and abundance of threatened species and habitats.	Identifies endangered habitats and species requiring protection and need for re-establishment of denuded biotopes. Protected areas should be created, maintained and managed.	Plans should take account relevant SPA and SAC sites. If negative impacts are anticipated appropriate assessments should be undertaken. Above protecting the integrity and interest of European sites, the NP should consider objectives to protect and if possible, enhance biodiversity.
EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)		
To expand the scope of water protection to all waters, surface waters and groundwater. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve 'good status' for all waters by 2015. • Water management should be 	Prevent deterioration in the status of aquatic ecosystems, provide protection and improve ecological condition:	Plan should consider any significant hydrological / hydrogeological factors and ensure integration with existing catchment

Key objectives	Key targets/indicators	Key implications for NP and SEA
<p>based on river basins and a 'combined approach' of emission limit values and quality standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water management should include the closer involvement of community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achieve at least good status for all water bodies by 2015 (or later subject to specific criteria). • meet the requirements of WFD protected areas • promote sustainable use of water • conserve habitats and species that depend directly on water • progressively reduce or phase out pollutants that pose significant threats to the aquatic environment / groundwater • help mitigate the impacts of floods and droughts. 	<p>management plans. Plan should consider including objectives to protect and enhance water resources, quality and ecological function.</p>
EU Directive on Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (2008/50/EC)		
Establishes limit values and alert thresholds for concentrations of key pollutants in ambient air including sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide (NO_2)/oxides of nitrogen and particulate matter ($\text{PM}_{2.5}$ and PM_{10}). Maintain ambient air quality in areas where it is good and improve it in others.	Establishes limit values and alert thresholds for concentrations of key pollutants in ambient air including sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide (NO_2)/oxides of nitrogen and particulate matter ($\text{PM}_{2.5}$ and PM_{10}). Maintain ambient air quality in areas where it is good and improve it in others.	Establishes limit values and alert thresholds for concentrations of key pollutants in ambient air including sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide (NO_2)/oxides of nitrogen and particulate matter ($\text{PM}_{2.5}$ and PM_{10}). Maintain ambient air quality in areas where it is good and improve it in others.
EU Waste Directive (2008/98/EC)		
Sets the basic concepts and definitions related to waste management, such as definitions of waste, recycling, recovery. It explains when waste ceases to be waste and becomes a secondary raw material (so called end-of-waste criteria), and how to distinguish between waste and by-products.	Sets the basic concepts and definitions related to waste management, such as definitions of waste, recycling, recovery. It explains when waste ceases to be waste and becomes a secondary raw material (so called end-of-waste criteria), and how to distinguish between waste and by-products.	Sets the basic concepts and definitions related to waste management, such as definitions of waste, recycling, recovery. It explains when waste ceases to be waste and becomes a secondary raw material (so called end-of-waste criteria), and how to distinguish between waste and by-products.

Key objectives	Key targets/indicators	Key implications for NP and SEA
EU Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution		
Establishes interim objectives for air pollution in the EU and proposes appropriate measures for achieving them. It recommends that current legislation be modernised, be better focused on the most serious pollutants and that more is done to integrate environmental concerns into other policies and programmes.	Establishes interim objectives for air pollution in the EU and proposes appropriate measures for achieving them. It recommends that current legislation be modernised, be better focused on the most serious pollutants and that more is done to integrate environmental concerns into other policies and programmes.	Establishes interim objectives for air pollution in the EU and proposes appropriate measures for achieving them. It recommends that current legislation be modernised, be better focused on the most serious pollutants and that more is done to integrate environmental concerns into other policies and programmes.
Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, European Commission 2010		
The European strategy for achieving growth up to 2020 focuses on: - smart growth, through the development of knowledge and innovation; - sustainable growth, based on a greener, more resource efficient economy; and - inclusive growth, aimed at strengthening employment, and social and territorial cohesion.	The European strategy for achieving growth up to 2020 focuses on: - smart growth, through the development of knowledge and innovation; - sustainable growth, based on a greener, more resource efficient economy; and - inclusive growth, aimed at strengthening employment, and social and territorial cohesion.	The European strategy for achieving growth up to 2020 focuses on: - smart growth, through the development of knowledge and innovation; - sustainable growth, based on a greener, more resource efficient economy; and - inclusive growth, aimed at strengthening employment, and social and territorial cohesion.

National and regional context

- 2.3 In this section we summarise the most relevant regional and local plans and policies making the assumption that these include the relevant international and national sustainability objectives.
- 2.4 The Planning system is undergoing a period of change following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012.
- 2.5 This has heralded significant changes including to the planning system and provides a greater emphasis on localism. European Regulations still apply as does much of the legacy planning guidance – until it is revised for the NPPF.
- 2.6 The NPPF stresses the importance of sustainability running as a ‘golden thread’ throughout plans and policies.

Key objectives	Key targets/indicators	Key implications for NP and SEA
National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)		
<p>Planning should drive and support sustainable economic development. It should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • secure high quality design and good standard of amenity • take account of the different roles of areas, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside • support transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking account of flood risk and encourage the reuse of existing resources and encouraging the use of renewable resources. • contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. • encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed. • conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. • focus significant development in locations which are, or can be made sustainable. <p>Paragraph 17: "...planning should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations."</p> <p>Paragraph 132: "When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled</p>	<p>Supports local and national targets with regard to biodiversity and geodiversity.</p>	<p>Plan should contribute to the objective of achieving sustainable development (social, economic and environmental). SA Objectives should reflect the core planning principles and policies set out in the NPPF.</p> <p>The Plan should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contribute to minimising impacts and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible • contribute to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity – including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures. <p>Plan should contribute to the conservation, and where appropriate, enhancement of the historic environment.</p> <p>The Plan should ensure that development does not have a detrimental impact on any heritage assets and should seek to ensure that development actively conserves the asset.</p>

Key objectives	Key targets/indicators	Key implications for NP and SEA
monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.		
1990 Town and Country Planning Act		
Section 66: Requires special regard for the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings.		The NP must ensure that the listed buildings and their settings are not affected by proposed development.
Section 72: Special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.		The NP should consider policies to preserve and enhance the character of conservation areas.
The Waste (England & Wales) Regulations 2011		
To encourage/ensure waste arises/is dealt with further up the waste hierarchy. Divert waste disposal away from landfill.	Target of 50% of household waste to be recycled.	Plan must have regard to the amended waste hierarchy. Policies and objectives should where possible encourage waste to be re-used, recycled or have value / energy recovery. If possible the Plan should discourage landfilling of waste.
UK Climate Change Act 2008		
The Act introduced a statutory target for reducing carbon emissions.	Target of reducing carbon emissions by 80 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050, with an interim target of 34% by 2020.	Planning can make a contribution to mitigating and adapting to climate change by influencing the location, scale and character of development. The plan should include policies / objectives that contribute towards achieving lower carbon emissions and greater resilience to the impacts of climate change.
Flood and Water Management Act 2010		
Improve the management of flood risk for people, homes and businesses. To protect water supplies.	Local Authorities to prepare flood risk assessments, flood maps and plans. EA to prepare Local flood risk management strategies.	Plan should take account of flooding and water management issues and strategies and consider the inclusion of policies / objectives to reduce flood risks and other impacts on the water

Key objectives	Key targets/indicators	Key implications for NP and SEA
		environment.
Carbon Plan: Delivering our low carbon future 2011		
Government-wide plan for action on climate change at domestic and international levels.	<p>Includes a range of sector-based plans and targets for low carbon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building • transport • industry • electricity • agriculture, land use, forestry and waste 	The Plan should include policies / objectives that contribute towards achieving lower carbon emissions.
Mainstreaming sustainable development 2011		
This refreshed vision builds upon the principles that underpinned the UK's 2005 SD strategy, recognising the needs of the economy, society and the natural environment, alongside the use of good governance and sound science.	Promises a new set of indicators from DEFRA that link initiatives and include wellbeing.	Plan should take account of climate change and promote sustainability through sustainable, low carbon and green economic growth.
Air Pollution: Action in a Changing Climate, Defra 2010		
Seeks to reduce air pollution by focusing on the synergies between air quality and climate change.	Seeks to reduce air pollution by focusing on the synergies between air quality and climate change.	Seeks to reduce air pollution by focusing on the synergies between air quality and climate change.
Door to Door: A strategy for improving sustainable transport, DfT 2013		
The strategy considers what is necessary to ensure that people can be confident in choosing sustainable transport.	The strategy considers what is necessary to ensure that people can be confident in choosing sustainable transport.	The strategy considers what is necessary to ensure that people can be confident in choosing sustainable transport.

County/local context

Key objectives	Key targets/indicators	Key implications for Neighbourhood Plan and Sustainability Appraisal
West Sussex Transport Plan 2011-2026		
To improve quality of life for the people of West Sussex via four key strategies to maintain, manage and invest in transport: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• promoting economic growth• tackling climate change• providing access to services, employment & housing• improving safety, security & health	Indicators include: congestion, mode of travel to work and school, cycling trips, accessibility, road traffic accidents, road and footway maintenance, street lighting, highway structures, road flooding, air quality and transport emissions.	The Plan should consider policies / objectives which contribute to transport sustainability. This should go beyond reducing carbon emissions to include economic growth, safety, pollution, traffic reduction and access to services.
West Sussex Waste Local Plan 2014		
To facilitate a continuing decline in the reliance on disposal to land and the aspiration is that there will be 'zero waste to landfill' by 2031.	To only make provision for a declining amount of landfill over the plan period with 'zero waste to landfill' by 2031.	The Plan should consider how, within the context of a growing population in Horsted Keynes, waste generation can be minimised and it can be ensured that Horsted Keynes contributes towards the target of zero waste to landfill.
West Sussex County Council - Building A Sustainable Future: A strategy for delivering the corporate priority 2012		
This Strategy focuses on four key priority areas that address the main challenges facing West Sussex County Council. The four priorities for action are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reduce carbon emissions• adapt to a changing climate• use resources efficiently and effectively• make sustainability business as usual.	The Strategy contains information about why these areas are a challenge to the County and sets out actions and 'clear and challenging targets against each priority'.	Plan should consider including objectives / policies to support reductions in carbon emissions, and consider adaptation to a changing climate and the efficient use of resources.
Sustainable Community Strategy for West Sussex 2008 - 2020		
Cross cutting strategy aiming to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• relieve the pressures on the road network• explore opportunities for renewable energy• integrate water resource requirements in new development• reduce carbon footprint• improve waste management to reduce waste generation and increase recycling.	No specific targets.	The Plan should consider including policies / objectives that help meet the key objectives.

Key objectives	Key targets/indicators	Key implications for Neighbourhood Plan and Sustainability Appraisal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make best use of innovation and new technology to reduce harmful emissions improve access for all to the natural and historic environment and a range of sporting, leisure, cultural and arts activities. 		
Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan		
<p>Maintain and, where practicable, enhance the wildlife and habitats that provide the natural character and diversity of Sussex</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify priority habitats and species in Sussex Set realistic and ambitious targets and timescales for priority habitats and species and to monitor progress towards them Raise public awareness and encourage involvement in biodiversity action. 	<p>Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre inventory statistics for species and habitats e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rare Species Inventory Biodiversity Action Plan Species Inventory Pond Inventory. 	Plan should include consider including policies / objectives to: enhance (where possible) the wildlife and habitats that give rise to West Sussex's natural character and diversity.
West Sussex Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2010		
<p>The main objective of the SFRA is to provide flood information so that an evidence and risk based sequential approach can be made when making planning decisions in line with the NPPF. It also aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> cover a wide spatial area and look at flood risk today and in the future support sustainability appraisals of the local development frameworks identify further investigations that may be required to assess specific development proposals. 	<p>The assessment investigates flood risk issues for specific sites and makes recommendations.</p>	The Plan should take into account the SFRA's sequential testing guidance and should consider inclusion of objectives related to flood risk.
A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape - West Sussex County Council 2005		
<p>1: ensure high quality new development which contributes to and reinforces landscape character</p> <p>2: conserve and enhance historic landscape character</p> <p>3: ensure the maintenance and renewal of the agricultural landscape</p> <p>4: conserve and enhance semi-natural habitats including securing the future of woodlands, hedgerows and trees as distinctive landscape features</p> <p>5: promote and celebrate the value and variety of the West Sussex landscape.</p>		Plan should be consistent with supporting the objectives in the strategy.

Key objectives	Key targets/indicators	Key implications for Neighbourhood Plan and Sustainability Appraisal
Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation – West Sussex County Council and others, 2010		
To identify areas or units of land based on their key historic landscape attributes.		The Plan should ensure that areas of historic landscape character are preserved and enhanced.
Using Less, Living Better - West Sussex Environment and Climate Change Board, 2012		
Helping to reduce emissions by at least 50% by 2025.	None	The Plan should seek to reflect, where possible, the actions proposed and the outcomes that are envisaged.
Horsham District Planning Framework 2015 - adopted		
Multiple objectives under the following themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economic prosperity• High quality of life• Opportunities for all• Valued natural and historic environment• A green sustainable place	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economic Development• Housing• Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation• Natural and Built Environment• Climate Change• Infrastructure and Transport	The Plan should contribute towards the delivery of the social, economic and environmental needs of the district and be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the HPDF.
Horsham District Landscape Capacity Assessment, 2014		
Ensure that decisions about the location and scale of new development as far as possible takes into consideration the relative ability of the new varied landscape around and between settlements (excluding South Downs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide transparent, consistent and objective assessment of landscape capacity of land around settlements• Identify areas where new development could be accommodated	The Plan should ensure the character of the landscape is preserved and enhanced within the District.

3 BASELINE DATA AND KEY SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES (STAGES A2 & A3)

- 3.1 The SEA Regulations require that certain environmental topics are included within the environmental baseline collected to inform the SEA. The topics required by the SEA Regulations are shown in Table 3.1.
- 3.2 The SEA Scoping Report summarises the current state of the environment and also identifies key trends and pressures for the future. The information is categorised under topics, although it must be recognised that many of the topics are interlinked.

Table 3.1: Topics and their relevance to the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan

Topic	Relevance to the Ashington NP
Nature conservation	Potential for new site allocations to impact on the habitats of species within areas of nature conservation value
Landscape	Potential for new site allocations to impact the landscape
Air and Climate	Potential for new site allocations to create pollution through additional congestion.
Water	Risk of flooding impacts on where people live and can impact on the economic prosperity of an area. The way in which water is drained off of land, including road and other hard surfaces, can be important to the level of flood risk experienced in an area.
Soils	Potential for site allocations and development to impact on best agricultural soils or important geological sites.
Heritage	Historic environment features can be vulnerable to damage and other impacts from neglect, decay or development pressures.
Human characteristics	Potential for the plan to impact on human health, particularly positively through improvements to walking, cycling routes, etc
Roads and transport	Development could impact on congestion on the road network and create pedestrian safety problems, particularly at key junctions in Ashington village centre
Infrastructure	Development could have an impact on the infrastructure necessary to keep society running smoothly
Economic characteristics	Development could impact on the ability of communities to function effectively (in their interaction with services) and on the economic prosperity of an area.

- 3.3. The information has been compiled from a wide range of information sources. Firstly information has been provided by Horsham District Council and other statutory bodies, including the Environment Agency. As part of the widespread consultation work to support the plan this has included feedback from a range of consultees. There are a number of key reports relevant to the environment of the area and some of their key findings have been summarised here – they are referenced through the text, as are various data sources used to provide maps and statistics. This section presents topics relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan and while it seeks to be comprehensive only the key issues are included to keep the document manageable.

Nature conservation and biodiversity

- 3.4. The largest concentration of ancient woodland is in the south-east of the Plan area. There are also a number of areas outside the Plan area boundary. There is one small area of ancient woodland in or close to the village (and the potential development sites) but the majority is more distant from the village and on the other side of the A24 trunk road.
- 3.5. There are two Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI), both away from the village and on the other side of the A24. These SNCI are also classified as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).
- 3.6. There are some large areas with blanket Tree Preservation Orders and most are located in the centre of the settlement. The largest area covered by a blanket TPO is around site 13, an open area of green space very close to Ashington community centre and Ashington Church of England (primary) School. However, a blanket TPO cover does not necessarily mean that the whole site is covered by trees; the large area in the village is predominantly open space.
- 3.7. All of the above features are shown in Figure 3.1, with more detail of the built up area of Ashington village in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.1: Key environmental features – parish

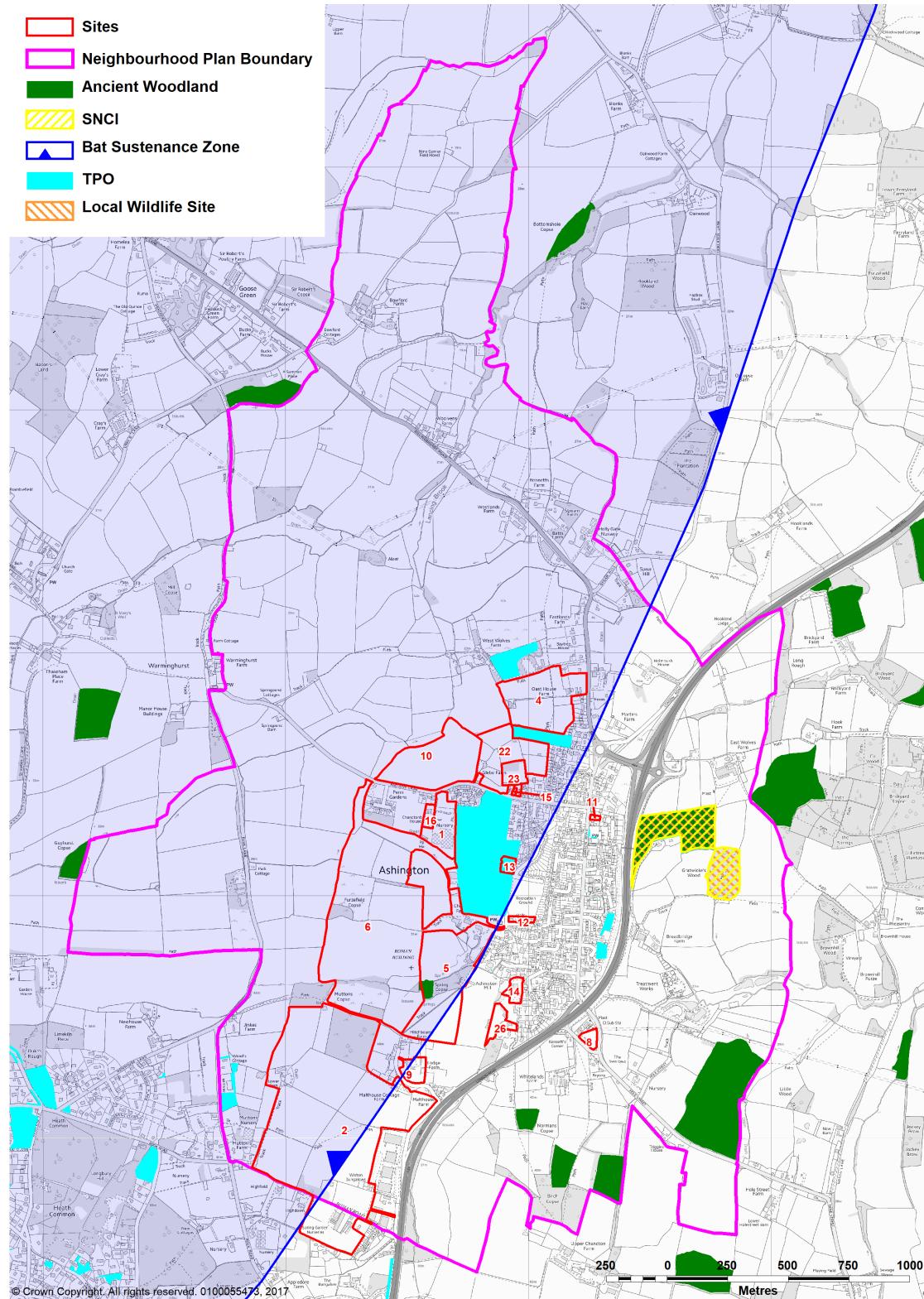
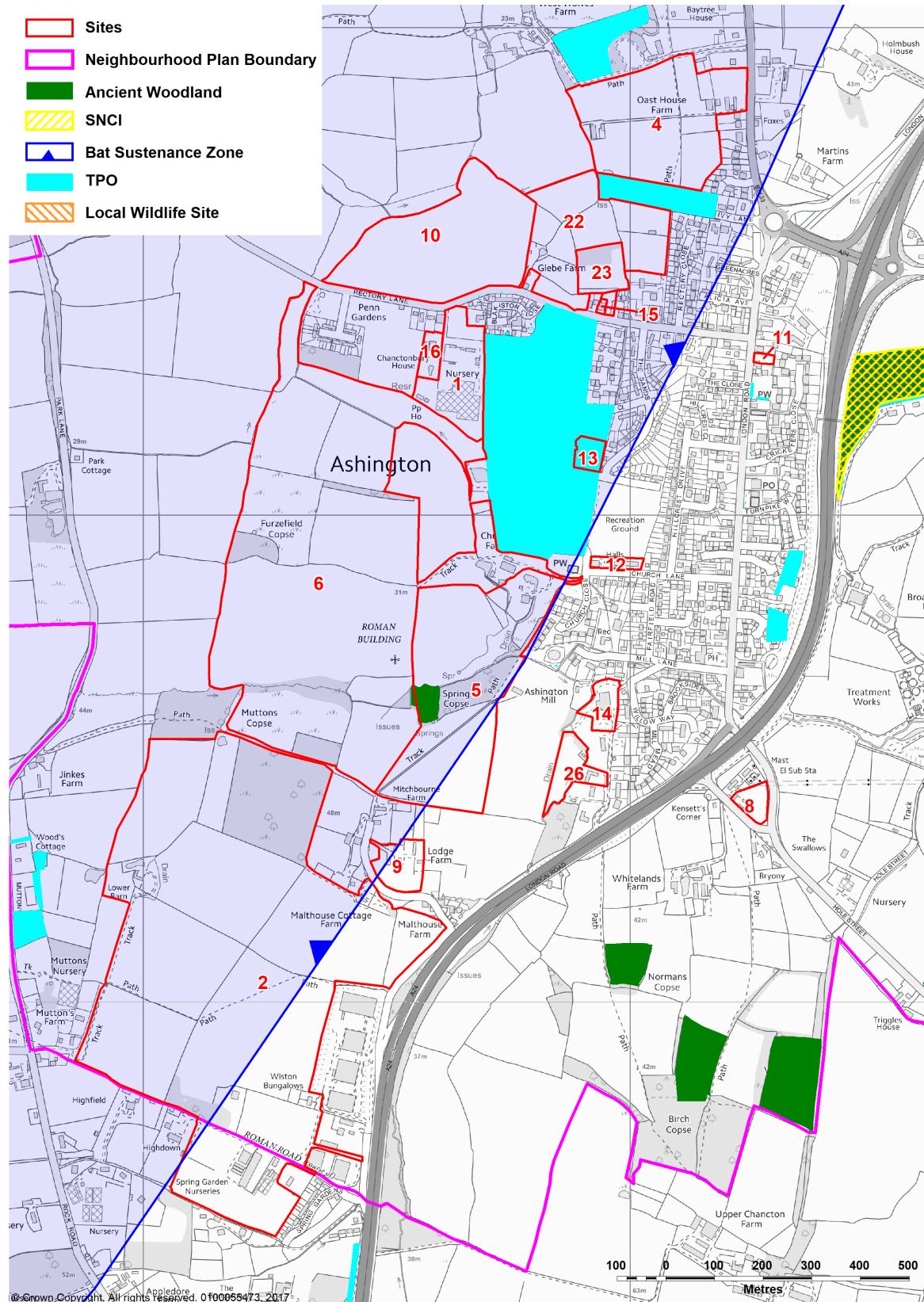


Figure 3.2: Key environmental features - Ashington centre



- 3.8. A bat sustenance zone is located in the western part of the parish, which refers to the area surrounding the communal bat roost within which development can be assumed to affect the commuting and foraging habitat of bats using the roost. All species and their roosts are protected by UK and European law, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1961 (WCA) and in the UK and the Habitats Directive in the EU. There are 18 species of bat in the UK, all of which have been recorded in Sussex.
- 3.9. Information from the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (2016) shows sightings of the following since 2006:
 - 8 protected species
 - 12 European protected species
 - 45 rare species (not including bats, birds or otters)
 - 10 bats
 - 109 birds
 - 25 BAP (Biodiversity Action Plan) species (not including bats or birds)
 - 11 invasive alien species
- 3.10. The list below shows the protected species names in more detail. These are in no particular order and include:
 - Mole Cricket
 - Great Crested Newt
 - Slow-worm
 - Common Lizard
 - Grass Snake
 - Adder
 - European Water Vole
 - Hazel Dormouse

Landscape

- 3.11. Ashington is a predominantly rural area, characterised by gently undulating wooded farmland with fields separated by hedgerows. The parish has a land area of 805 hectares (Office for National Statistics, 2011). The A24 dual carriageway runs through the middle of the parish from north to south. A suburban character is seen to the west of the A24, comprising mainly residential properties.
- 3.12. According to the Horsham District Landscape Capacity Assessment (Horsham District Council, April 2014, page 95), the landscape around the village lies within the Low Weald National Character Area, and falls within Horsham District Landscape Character area G1: Ashurst and Wiston Wooded Farmlands. Overall, development would be likely to be visually prominent as a result of the relatively open character of the area and because of the visual prominence of ridgelines and rising ground. There is a risk that development around the edge of the settlement would create the impression of incursion into open

countryside, as this area has high visual sensitivity and low capacity to absorb small-scale housing developments.

Air and Climate

- 3.13. There are no air quality management areas (AQMAs) in the parish of Ashington. The nearest AQMA is in the village of Storrington, around 4 miles away which was designated on the basis of nitrogen dioxide exceedances at relevant receptor locations through the centre of the village. Nitrogen dioxide results are the most significant in AQMA in the UK, which result from emissions in road transport and can irritate lung airways to those who are sensitive to air pollutants.

Water

- 3.14. Ashington is within the flood catchment of the River Adur and many of its streams run through the parish. The main streams are shown in Figure 3.3, which are within Flood Zone 2 or 3. However, only two of the potential development sites have all or part of their area within these zones.
- 3.15. Figure 3.4 shows the areas prone to surface water flooding and the chance of this happening once every 30 years, every 100 years or every 1000 years. This shows that significant areas across the parish are susceptible to surface water flooding. Close to Ashington village, areas to the north and west of the built up area are particularly at risk.

Figure 3.3: Flood Risk Areas

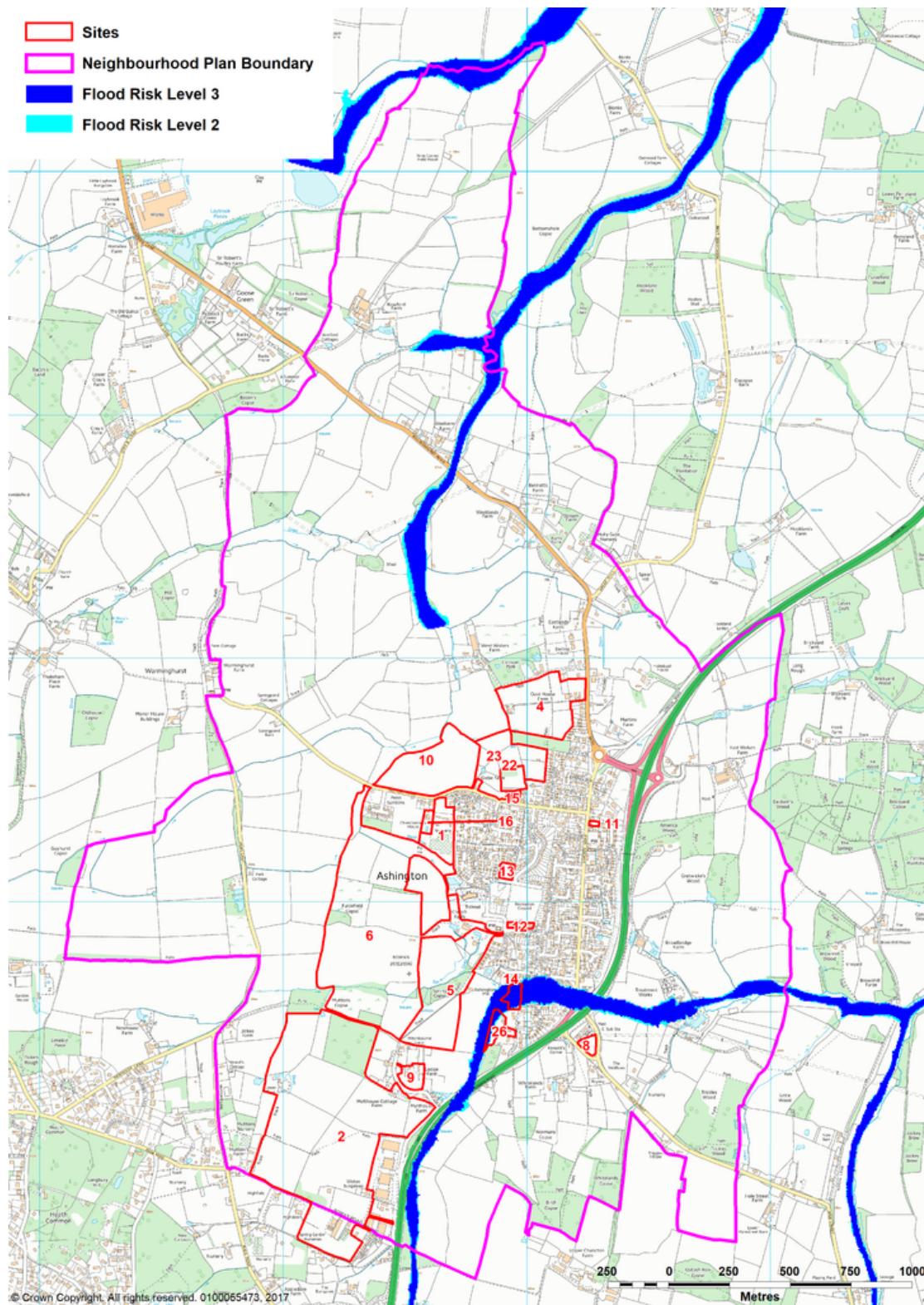
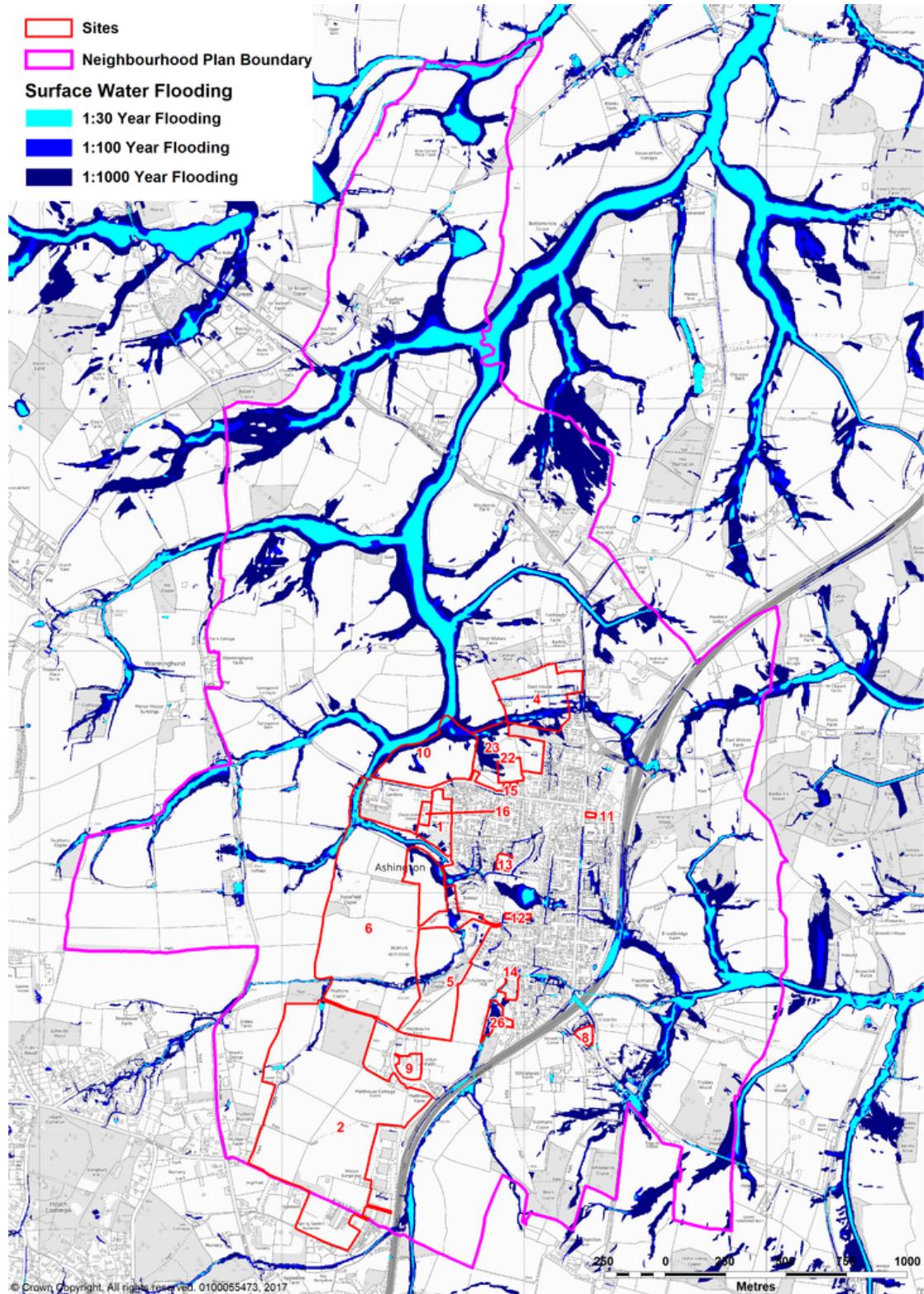


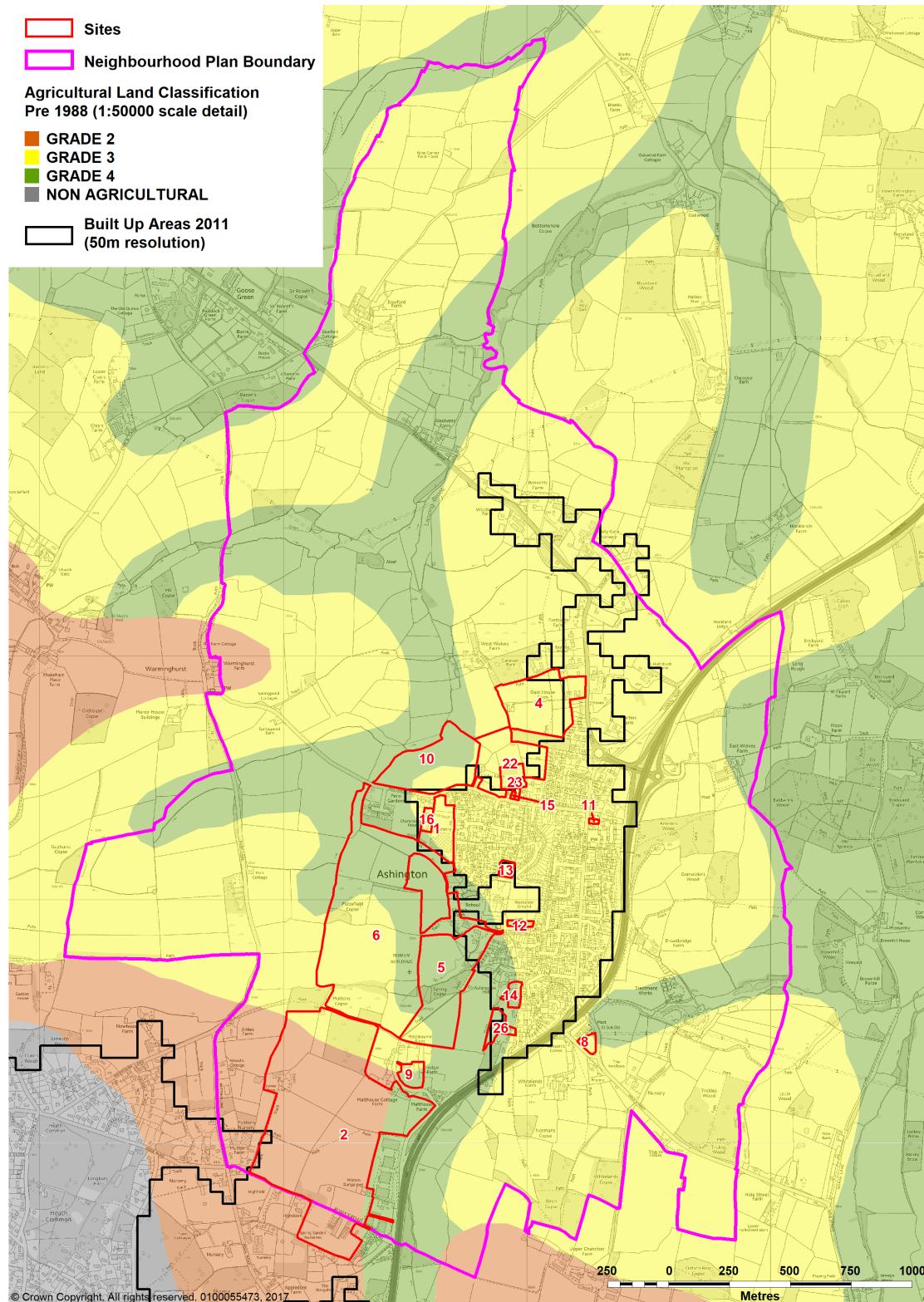
Figure 3.4: Surface Water Flooding areas



Soil and Geology

- 3.16. Information from the National Soils Map (National Soil Resources Institute, 2001, Cranfield University, <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes>) highlights that the majority of Ashington is formed of loamy and clayey soils. These are slowly permeable, seasonally wet and slightly acid but base-rich with impeded drainage. 20% of England is covered with this type of soil and so is relatively common.
- 3.17. Towards the south west of Ashington, soils are freely draining slightly acid loamy soils. Fertility is lower here and grasslands are more common than woodlands.
- 3.18. The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) provides a method for assessing the quality of farmland to enable informed choices to be made about its future use within the planning system. Published by Natural England, the ALC provides a classification in 5 grades using a number of criteria including climate (temperature, rainfall, aspect, exposure, frost risk), site (gradient, micro-relief, flood risk) and soil (depth, structure, texture, chemicals, stoniness). The scale ranges from 1 (high quality) to 5 – poorest.
- 3.19. The NPPF (paragraph 112) states that relevant planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of higher quality. The ALC for Ashington is shown in Figure 3.5 below.
- 3.20. This shows that the majority of agricultural land in the parish is Grade 3 and 4 (good to moderate), with a small area in the south and west Grade 2 (very good). The Grade 3 is divided into Grades 3a and 4b, with Grade 3a being 'best and most versatile' agricultural land. However, data is not available to identify the split of Grade 3 land.
- 3.21. It should be noted that land within the built-up area as identified is not considered to represent agricultural land.

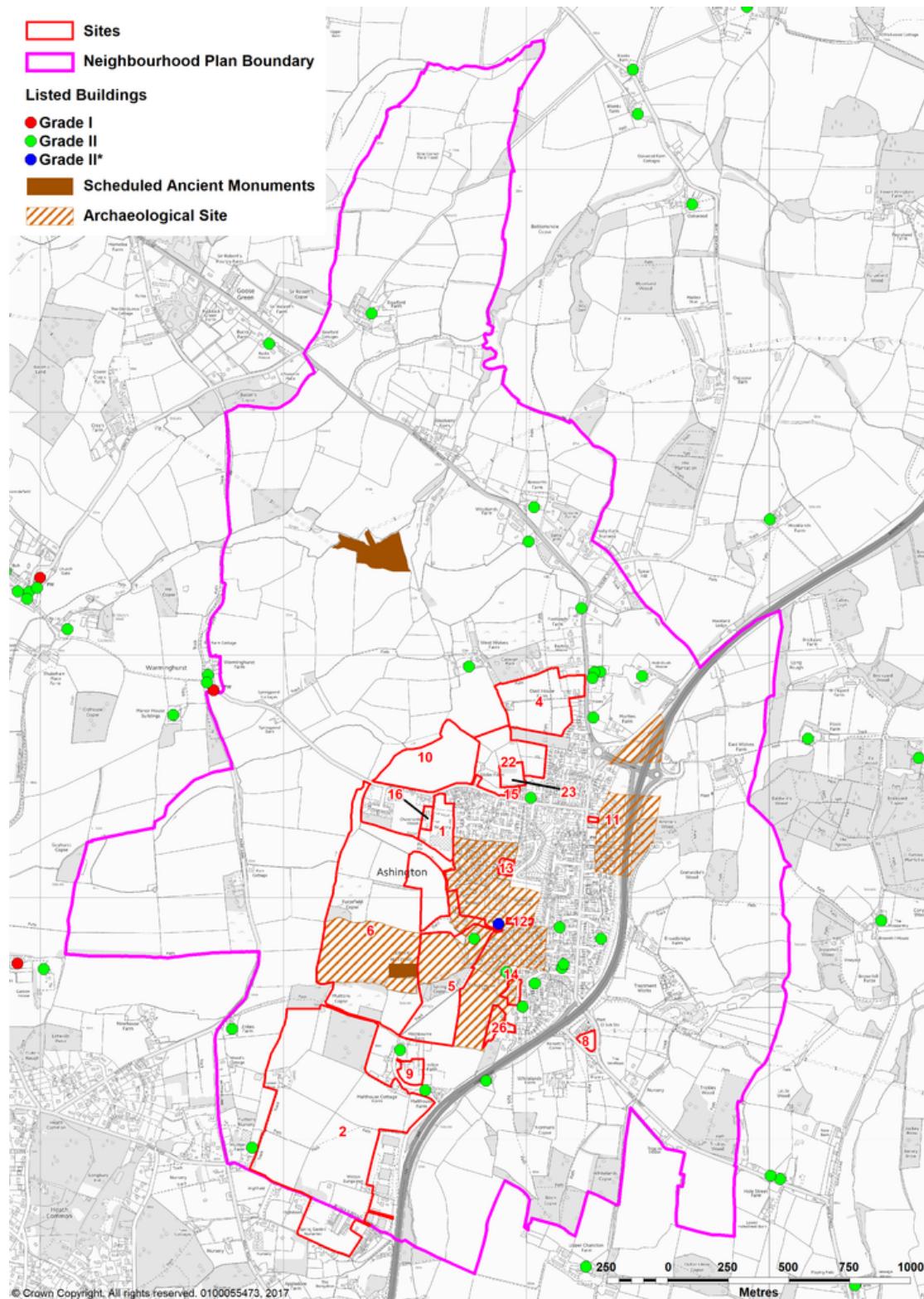
Figure 3.5: Map of Agricultural Land Classification



Heritage

- 3.22. There are a number of heritage features in the Plan area, as shown in Figure 3.6. There are two Scheduled Monuments in the parish. This defines and selects a carefully chosen sample of nationally important archaeological sites.
- 3.23. The first is the Roman building that is 200 yards north west of Spring Copse. Despite some partial disturbance from cultivation in the past, the building survives well as below-ground archaeological remains (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1005826>).
- 3.24. The second scheduled monument is a moated site and associated earthworks north west of West Wolves Farm, in the north part of Ashington. This exhibits a range of associated features including the pond bays and ridge and furrow cultivation often found in medieval monuments where domestic aristocratic or religious buildings would have stood.
- 3.25. The Plan area contains 24 Grade II listed buildings. The Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul is Grade II* listed and forms a central point of the village. There is one Grade I listed building, located to the far west of the majority of potential development sites and the built up area. This is shown in Figure 3.6.

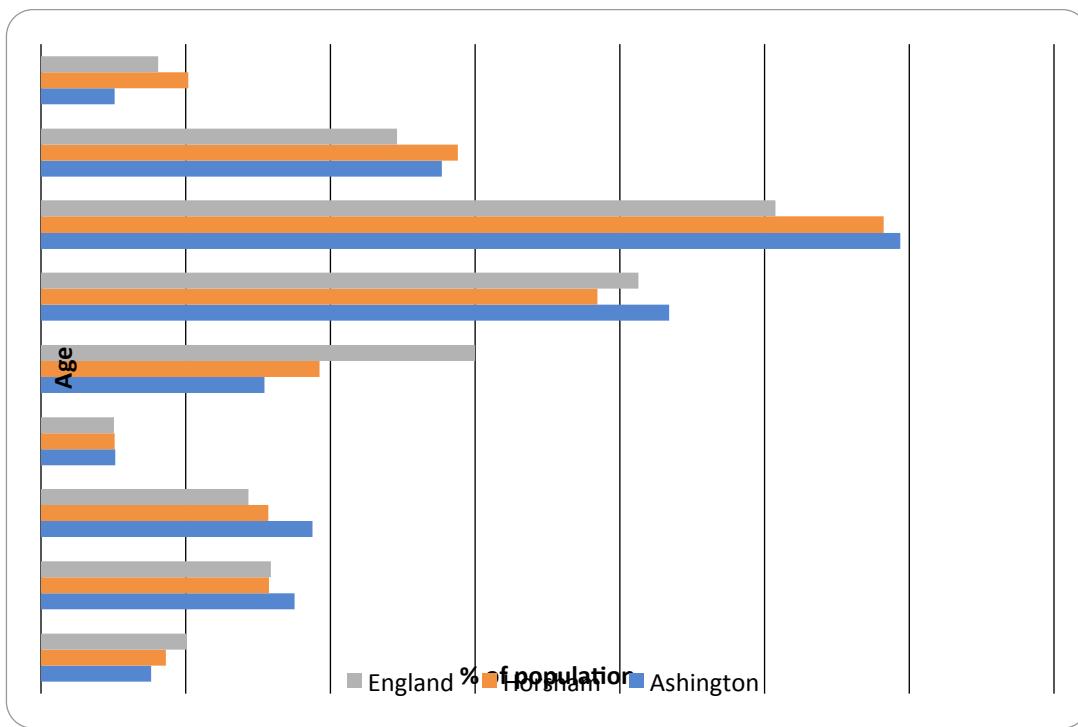
Figure 3.6: Listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments



Social and economic indicators

- 3.26. The 2011 Census recorded that the population of Ashington parish as 2,526 persons, living in 1,010 household spaces. In 2016, the population estimate (source: Office for National Statistics) was 2,654, and so has grown by 128 persons or 5%. This number could reflect the number of new houses built over the period.
- 3.27. The average age of residents was 40.5 years. Figure 3.7 shows the modal group being between 45-64 years, signifying a movement towards an ageing population.

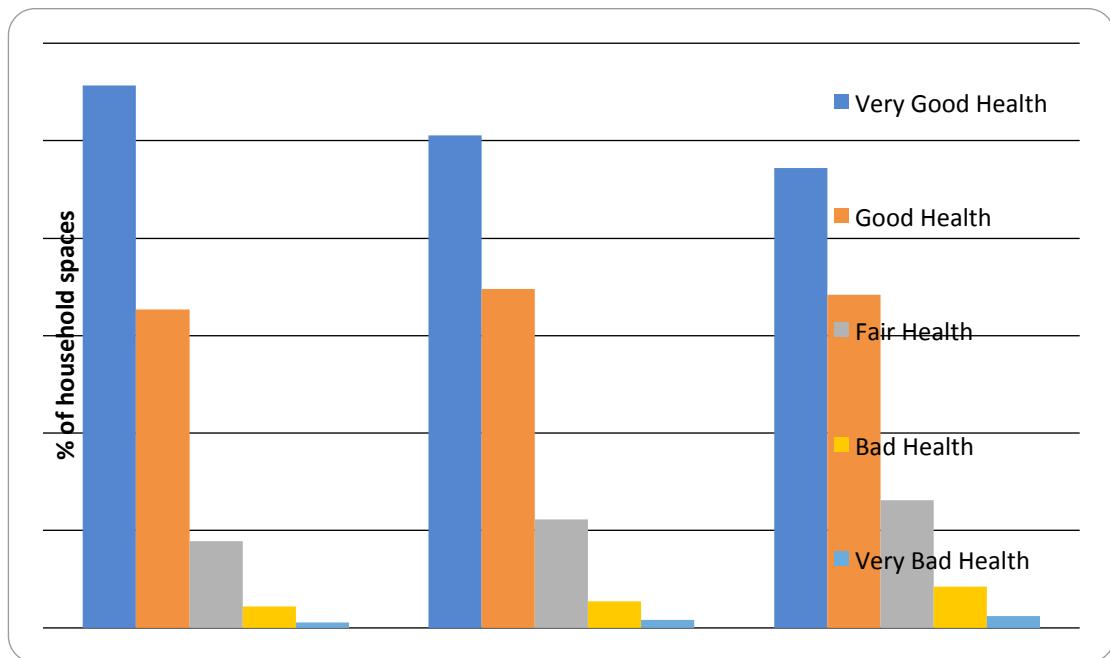
Figure 3.7 Population by age



Source: 2011 Census

- 3.28. Housing in Ashington is dominated by detached housing, representing 53% of the housing stock. This is much higher than in Horsham and England, at 39% and 22% respectively. The proportion of semi-detached housing is nearly equal in Ashington to that of Horsham and England.
- 3.29. A barrier for access to housing is housing prices. The average value of a property in Ashington stood at £472,349 in December 2017. These high prices reflect the value of the majority of detached homes sold. This is a fall of 0.59% over a 12-month period (<https://www.zoopla.co.uk/house-prices/west-sussex/ashington/>).
- 3.30. 56% of Ashington's population are in very good health, compared with 51% and 47% in Horsham district and England respectively. Only 3% of people in Ashington are in bad or very bad health, slightly below that in Horsham (4%) and England (5%). This is illustrated in Figure 3.8.

Figure 3.8: General Health



Source: 2011 Census

Roads and transport

- 3.31. The main road for access into the village is from the A24 carriageway. There are two points of access, one in the north and one in the south. The A24 carries significant volumes of traffic which does create noticeably increased levels of noise on the eastern edges of the village.
- 3.32. The roads in the centre of the village reflect its history and a significant number are very small and therefore inappropriate for carrying anything other than a low level of local traffic. Rectory Lane and London Road are particularly busy roads.
- 3.33. There is no train station in Ashington. There is one bus service, the number 23, which connects Crawley, Horsham, Ashington and Worthing and provides hourly services from Monday to Saturday and a service every two hours on Sundays.

Infrastructure

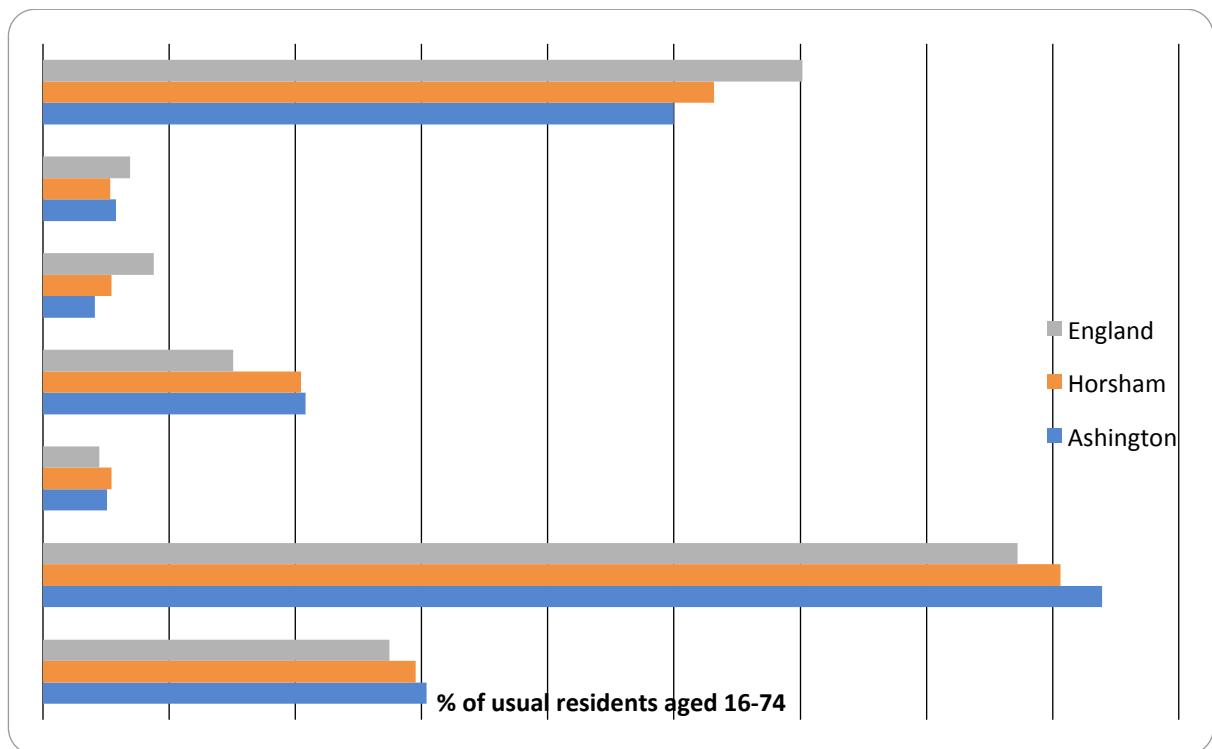
- 3.34. Ashington has the following community infrastructure assets focused within Ashington village:
 - A primary school
 - A pre-school
 - A village community centre
 - A church
 - Various recreational spaces used for formal and informal recreation, including play areas
 - One pub, one restaurant and one take-away

- A range of shops
 - A village club
- 3.35. There is no medical surgery in Ashington parish, so residents are mainly registered with one of the nearest surgeries in either Steyning, Storrington or Pulborough. Dentists and opticians are also only available outside the parish.

Economic characteristics

- 3.36. The proportion of Ashington's population at working age (16 to 74) in full-time employment is high, at 42%, compared with 39% in Horsham and 29% across England. Of this age group, 75% are economically active.
- 3.37. Economic inactivity levels are lower than the district and national figures. The unemployed population in Ashington is 2%, compared with 3% in Horsham and 4% across England. Figure 3.9 shows this information from the 2011 Census.

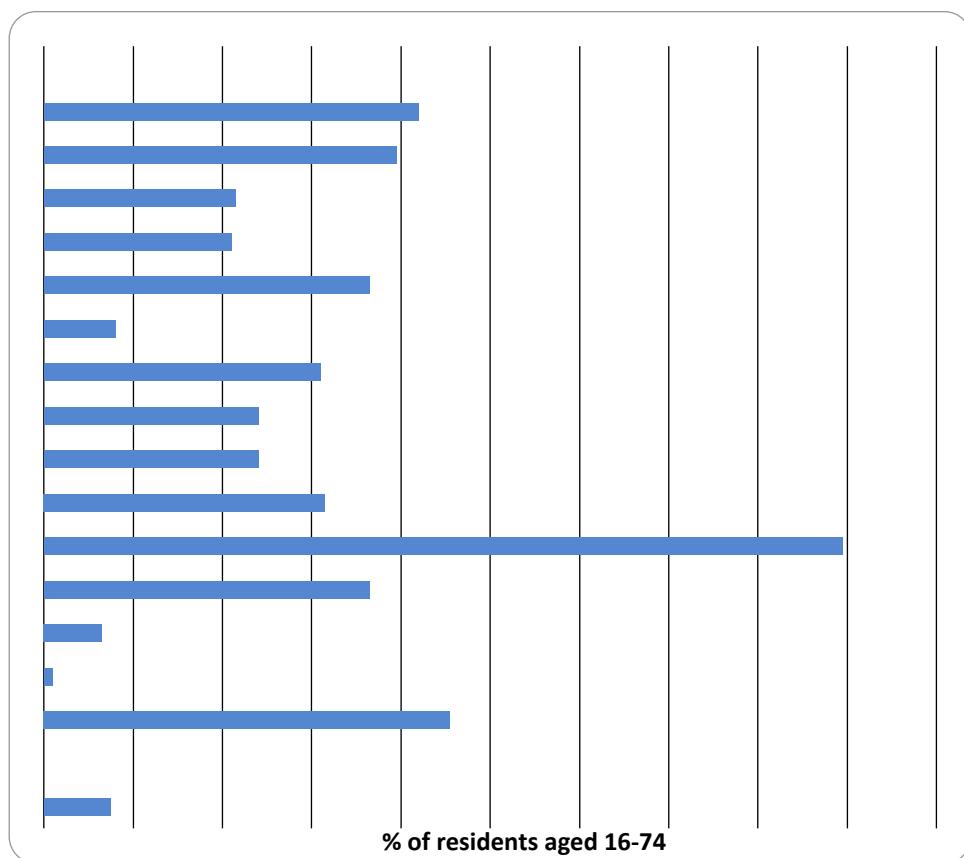
Figure 3.9: Economic activity



Source: 2011 Census

- 3.38. Ashington has the highest proportion, 18%, of residents in the wholesale and retail trade including motor repair. Manufacturing has the second highest percentage with 9% working in this industry. This is shown in Figure 3.10 below.

Figure 3.10: Type of industry of Ashington working population



Source: 2011 Census

4 KEY SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

4.1 Table 4.1 has been informed by the issues identified in the Neighbourhood Plan engagement events and consultation, and baseline information collected in Section 3.

Table 4.1: SWOT analysis of issues facing Ashington parish

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of community feeling, clubs and organisations • Existing commercial centres – shops, food outlets plus business centres • Surrounding countryside and agriculture • Petrol station and associated services • Utilities, fast broadband some mobile coverage • Community Centre and play facilities e.g. skatepark, court, play areas • Primary School • Church • Broad spread of house types and sizes • Access to mainline rail networks and road links • Views into and out of the village • Pre-school provision – two playgroups, one nursery • Access to countryside • Heritage – many Listed and historic buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerability of village – what will happen if it grows too big • Shortage of lower cost housing/downsizing opportunities • Shortage of playing fields • Flooding problems - particularly at Mill Lane • Parking issues • Lack of Village focal point/centre • Ageing population • Low number of younger adults • Lack of provision for young people • Speeding traffic • Noise from A24 • Lack of local employment opportunities • Street car parking • Size of sewers • Limited retail opportunities • Patchy mobile reception • No medical facilities • Some old community buildings • Reliant on private cars – limited transport options (public and sustainable) • No homes for elderly – care, sheltered
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve recreational pursuits – multi-sports court, green gym • Improve community buildings – youth club, sports pavilion, scout hall • Improve public transport and roadways • Improve parking/cycle and bridleways • Develop new businesses – retail and employment • Develop brownfield sites • Retain green corridors • Tourism • Mobile coverage • Protect locally historic buildings • Prepare for increased future need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable to large scale developments • Infrastructure not keeping pace with housing • Infill of green spaces and loss of agricultural land • Loss of village atmosphere • Lack of parking • Loss of trees, hedgerow • Increase in noise and pollution • Further cuts to public transport • Loss of community facilities to private sector • Loss of business/retail sites to residential use • Unadopted roads – poor future maintenance

Key issues

- 4.2 There are a number of sustainability issues and challenges facing the parish. While Ashington parish offers a high quality environment to residents and local businesses, the Neighbourhood Plan will need to manage and seek to resolve a series of issues over its lifetime if the parish is to continue to be successful while respecting its outstanding landscape setting.
- 4.3 In the absence of a Neighbourhood Plan (and as a consequence a lack of vision and strategy for Ashington), there will be fewer opportunities to address the issues and challenges facing the parish, as well as contributing to a reduction in the potential benefit to the community.

Table 4.2: Challenges and impacts of not having a neighbourhood plan

Challenges facing Ashington Parish	Effect of not having a neighbourhood plan
Problems with transport such as lack of sustainable options, safety/safe crossings and limited parking infrastructure	Increased reliance on private car, leading to isolation of those unable to afford a car. Increased emissions and traffic on the roads, leading to a congested and unsafe environment.
Poor quality of existing community infrastructure such as Youth Club, sports provision, Scout Hall and play areas (and no healthcare provision)	Residents will visit neighbouring centres for these facilities and will have more incentives to move to other areas to meet their needs. This will further increase dependence on cars to get to these areas.
No provision to allow local businesses and the economy in the centre	Could see decline of employment base locally, which could lead to derelict and under-used business sites (already seen at Chanctonbury Nurseries and Ashington Mill). Few employment opportunities for residents meaning they have to travel further afield to access jobs.
Lack of a village centre. Retail units are scattered with poor parking	Issues of parking and lack of accessibility to village centre discourage people to go there.
Loss of countryside, green space, natural features and recreation space to new development	Could result in unnecessary loss of agricultural land due to unplanned development coming forward through speculative applications. Could also result in detrimental impacts on the landscape and loss of important recreational space.
Flooding issues particularly at Mill Lane	Development could be brought forward which creates significant problems for users when areas adjacent to Mill Lane are flooded.
The preservation of important heritage assets	Could result in unnecessary impacts on important heritage assets due to unplanned development coming forward through speculative applications
Lack of affordable home provision for young people and elderly	No suitable sites for housing for local people would be delivered. The village would not adequately support the ageing population and their needs.
Risks of high level of development due to large amounts of land being available	Lack of control of development. Housing numbers should match identified needs to be delivered in Ashington in identified suitable locations.

5 SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL FRAMEWORK (STAGE A4)

- 5.1 In order to undertake the Sustainability Appraisal process for the Neighbourhood Plan, it is necessary to identify sustainability objectives and indicators to enable an assessment to be made of the emerging options and allow for recommendations and mitigation measures to be proposed. The sustainability objectives have emerged through the following considerations:
- through the review of documents listed in Section 2
 - as identified in the baseline section (Section 3)
 - to help address sustainability issues known locally
 - to help address the ‘weaknesses’ and mitigate the ‘threats’ outlined in the SWOT analysis (Section 4)
- 5.2 The proposed sustainability objectives and indicators (Sustainability Framework) for the Sustainability Appraisal of the Neighbourhood Plan are as shown in Table 5.1 below:

Table 5.1: Sustainability objectives and criteria for the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan

Sustainability theme	Objectives	Criteria
1/Env	To preserve and enhance the natural beauty of Ashington in terms of its geology, landform, soils, biodiversity, water systems and climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change in area of ancient woodland/SNCI sites within the parish. - Change in area of County Wildlife Sites within the parish - Change in area of ancient woodland in parish - Change in area of priority habitats within the parish (data from Sussex Biological Records Office) - Change in area/grade of agricultural land classification (ALC) land lost. - Number of developments in ‘highly vulnerable’ or ‘more vulnerable’ flood risk areas.
2/Env	To protect the landscape setting of Ashington village through use of land with a low landscape impact and by focusing development on previously developed land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of planning applications granted in areas with low landscape capacity. - Development on previously developed land.
3/Soc	To ensure that housing addresses the needs of the existing community of Ashington before addressing wider needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mix of housing built by dwelling size. - Number of people with a local connection on the Housing Register that are newly housed.

Sustainability theme	Objectives	Criteria
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of affordable homes completed.
4/Econ	To maximise the potential of existing employment/employers and support the need for new employment opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of existing businesses retained. - Number of new businesses in the parish. - Number of local start-ups. - Number of new jobs likely to be created. - Number of businesses and dwellings (for home workers) with access to superfast broadband. - Quality of mobile phone service and coverage.
5/Env	To protect the identity and local distinctiveness of Ashington by conserving and enhancing the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of listed buildings demolished or redeveloped. - Number of trees with TPOs removed.
6/Soc	To ensure that the community has a high quality and healthy lifestyle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Census figures on change in long term illness and general health. - Number/area of green spaces within walking distance of homes. - Levels of use of formal green spaces within the parish. - Number of formal recreation facilities within walking distance of homes. - Number of homes experiencing unacceptable levels of noise.
7/Soc	To ensure the provision of a range of community facilities that provide for the needs of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of community facilities within the parish.
8/Soc	To improve safe and sustainable movement around the parish and to the village centre by a range of modes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Levels of traffic at key junctions in the village. - Number and distance of new footpaths/cyclepaths. - Speed data from police. - Accident data from police. - Number of safe crossing points serving the key village services. - Number of safe crossing points of A24.

6 ASSESSMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY OF PLAN POLICIES AND SITE OPTIONS

- 6.1 The sustainability appraisal objectives shown in Table 5.1 will be used to assess the sustainability of the plan policy options and of the site options. In respect of the sites, this appraisal will be undertaken on all of the sites submitted and the information presented to the community as part of the ongoing engagement process in order to understand which sites are the most sustainable and are best able to deliver against the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.2 For each sustainability objective, the assessment will give a score in respect of the relevant criterion. The score will be made on the following scale:
 - Significant impact likely, e.g. directly affects Listed Building, within Conservation Area, >1km from key services
 - Potential impact, e.g. adjacent to Listed Building, adjacent to Conservation Area, between 500m and 1,000m away from key services
 - Minimal impact likely, e.g. up to 500m away from key services
 - No issue/neutral impact
 - Not relevant
- 6.3 A commentary will also be provided for each criterion on each site in order to provide more context to the 'five-point' assessment.
- 6.4 The same assessment will be used to address the plan policies against alternatives.
- 6.5 Table 6.1 below relates the sustainability objectives back to the key concerns and valued aspects of the parish that were raised by the community. These were identified by the community through the engagement process on the neighbourhood plan and informed the SWOT analysis in Section 4.

Table 6.1: Comparison of sustainability objectives with valued aspects and concerns raised by the community of Ashington

	1/Env – Countryside & Biodiversity	2/Env – Landscape/Views	3/Soc - Housing	4/Econ - Commercial	5/Env - Heritage	6/Soc - Health	7/Soc - Community	8/Soc – Transport & Movement
VALUED ASPECTS								
Countryside and landscape	√	√						
Heritage of village					√			
Range of community facilities						√	√	
Shops and services				√				
CONCERNS								
Traffic speed/volume								√
Public transport								√
Cycling/walking						√		√
Vulnerability of services				√				
Lack of affordable housing			√					
Housing mix not suitable for local needs			√					
Loss of rural character	√	√						
Local employment opportunities				√				

7 NEXT STEPS

- 7.1 This Scoping Report will be subject to consultation for a 5-week period. Following the close of consultation, all comments will be considered and will help influence the draft SEA/SA Report.
- 7.2 As the Neighbourhood Plan is developed, the strategy, policies and site options will be tested against these sustainability objectives, to identify appropriate policies for inclusion in the Plan. All realistic policy options will be appraised against the Sustainability Framework set out in Section 5 of this report, in order to ensure that the policies chosen for the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan are the most sustainable, given all realistic alternatives.