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<td>AMR</td>
<td>Annual Monitoring Report (Wiltshire Council)</td>
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<td>CIL</td>
<td>Community Infrastructure Levy</td>
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<td>DCLG</td>
<td>Department for Communities and Local Government</td>
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<td>DPD</td>
<td>Development Plan Document (refers to what has since become known as Housing Site Allocations Plan or HSAP)</td>
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<td>Hilperton Gap or ‘The Gap’</td>
<td>Open space to the west of Hilperton, between Hilperton and Trowbridge</td>
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<td>HNS</td>
<td>Housing Needs Survey</td>
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<td>Housing Site Allocations Plan</td>
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<td>LDF</td>
<td>Local Development Framework</td>
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<td>LPA</td>
<td>Local Planning Authority (Wiltshire Council)</td>
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<td>NDP</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualifying Body</td>
<td>Body authorized by law to create a Neighbourhood Plan. Normally the Parish Council.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Sustainability Appraisal – Appraisal of the impacts of a plan to include socio-economic and environmental factors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEA</td>
<td>Strategic Environmental Assessment: European Directive. Plans be assessed for environmental effects.</td>
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<td>SuDS</td>
<td>Sustainable Drainage Scheme</td>
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Hilperton NDP Scoping Report

1.0 Introduction

1.0 This Scoping Report was prepared early in the plan preparation process to identify the issues facing Hilperton and also to consider ways in which these might be resolved. The Scoping Report is therefore a collection of the factual evidence gathered to understand the plan area and provide a context for the plan-makers. It summarises the research done to establish the baseline conditions in Hilperton, and should be read alongside the main plan document where more information is required than the topic summaries given there.

1.1 However, this Scoping Report goes further than simply gathering information. Later sections of this document take the research and from this consider what the policy response might be. Policies suggested by this means were assessed for suitability in the actual NDP document alongside those suggested through community engagement (recorded in the CS or Consultation Statement) The Scoping Report and Consultation Statement therefore sit alongside each other as the two strands of evidence used in creating policy, establishing a clear link between the plan context (whether objective research of community wishes) and plan policies. Creation of policy is therefore transparent.

1.2 The Scoping Report was created by a Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group working with a qualified consultant. In gathering the data for the Scoping Report, the topic headings chosen were those used by Wiltshire Council in the development of their Core Strategy 2012-2026. These topic areas are:

- Biodiversity
- Land and soil resources
- Water resources and flood risk
- Air quality and environmental pollution
- Climate change
- Historic environment.
- Landscapes
- Population and housing
- Community wellbeing and health
- Education
- Service centre provision
- Transport
- Economy and enterprise.

These were felt to be comprehensive and would also more easily allow comparison and data sharing between the WCS and NDP.
2.0 Development of the Evidence Base

2.0 Alongside early community engagement (see Consultation Statement for details) the Steering Group and parish volunteers worked with the consultant to put together a credible evidence base. This was intended to have a number of functions including:

- Establishing a clear understanding of the baseline regarding key issues
- Establishing objectively issues and problems that a plan could tackle
- Starting to formulate plan Objectives, Vision and Policy
- Building up a credible evidence base demonstrating that policy flows from a good understanding of local circumstances.

2.1 Using the Wiltshire Core Strategy topic headings, topics were allocated to individual volunteers and the work coordinated by the Steering Group chairman. Internet and documentary research therefore complimented the evidence obtained from community engagement. Since the evidence base of a neighbourhood plan needs to be ‘proportionate’, full use was made of the Wiltshire Council Core Strategy evidence base on the basis that there was little point in duplicating effort. On the other hand, efforts were made to obtain additional and more specifically local information.

2.2 Screening carried out in February 2017 by the LPA determined that an SEA was not required (See Appendix 6). The boundary of the Parish (and hence of the plan area) changed during the plan process due to an unrelated local government boundary review. Although screening was carried out on plan based on the pre-review parish boundary, this is still applicable to the later revised boundary since this the area has shrunk and not grown. No designated European sites or sensitive areas (conservation areas, AONB’s etc.) have been removed or added to the plan area and no new issues present as a result. There are no policy changes connected with the boundary review and the environmental impact is therefore likely to be the same or less.

2.3 The Plan was screened for HRA (EU Habitat Regulations Assessment) on 17th March 2017. Wiltshire Council’s ecologist recommended that some changes were made to policies. While supportive of the ecologist’s intentions, the Steering Group’s planning consultant felt that these would be more correctly included in supporting text and changes were made accordingly (see Appendix 10 for correspondence detailing this and the NDP itself for the final format of the draft policy).

2.4 Residents were consulted as part of a parish Housing Needs Survey (HNS) by Wiltshire Council in partnership with the parish council published in January 2017. This showed a demand for 13 affordable homes in the parish – 8 subsidised rent and 5 by means of shared ownership or discounted market housing. The HNS is discussed in section 6 under the heading ‘Population and Housing’, and is given in full as Appendix 7. The Area of the parish has since reduced in size by some 264 properties under the Local Government Boundary Review, so the figures in the HNS may be an over-estimate of need.
3.0 **Context and Scope**

3.1 One of the main tasks of this Scoping Report is to set out the baseline information to establish the local environmental, demographic, social and economic and policy context which the plan will be operating within. This is considered to be an essential first step in identifying areas for policy development.

3.2 Although the international, national and regional contexts are acknowledged, the physical area under greatest consideration is the entire Parish of Hilperton – the Neighbourhood Area. However, what constitutes the parish has changed during the production of the plan. When the area application was approved on 20th September 2016 (for maps of original and revised area see Appendix 9) the parish included part of the Paxcroft Mead estate. It was while this was the case that most of the original scoping research took place.

3.3 However, an unrelated boundary review was conducted by Wiltshire Council in early 2017 and as a result, some 264 properties in Paxcroft Mead were transferred from Hilperton to Trowbridge with effect from 1st April 2017. On the advice of the LPA, Hilperton parish council decided to re-apply for its Neighbourhood Area after that date, based on the new smaller, post-review boundary. The application was submitted on 21st April 2017. All maps in this Scoping Report were then amended to reflect the new parish Boundary, which is the new area covered by the plan. The revised area, although slightly smaller, is still the whole of the new parish. See Appendix 11 for maps.

3.4 Despite the change in boundary, and modest reduction is size of the parish, this is not considered to be problematic for the Scoping Research for the following reasons:

- The area of change was relatively small and consisted of a suburban part of a housing estate. The rural context and village of Hilperton, as well as the wider strategic context (for example proximity to Trowbridge), remain the same.
- Population and area were removed and not added. There are no new factors therefore to consider.
- A detailed review of the Scoping Report was carried out after the revised boundary was adopted and alterations were made where necessary to harmonise existing research and the NDP with the change.

3.5 Following these general principles, a comprehensive review has been carried out of those relevant policies, plans and documents, including those published by statutory bodies such as the Environment Agency, English Nature and English Heritage; national policy, the saved policies of the West Wiltshire Local Plan, the Wiltshire Core Strategy topic papers, the WCS itself, the SHLAA and the Housing Land Supply Statements. The Hilperton NDP reflects, interprets and takes forwards all of the above policies and priorities. The Housing Site Allocations Plan (HSAP) emerged for consultation at a later stage in the plan preparation – after this Scoping Report was produced. Discussion of the HSAP is therefore included in the later NDP document itself. Also produced later and included in the NDP is the Landscape Visual Setting Analysis Report used to support Policy 1 of the NDP.
4.0 Methodology

4.0 In order to establish the key issues, priorities and objectives for the plan area, all of the documents listed in Appendix 1 were read and noted. These include the relevant plans, policies and programmes identified and suitable sources of baseline information. For each topic (using the topic headings of the WCS) the information was expressed in a table which shows the baseline information source, the local issues and problems the area. Written summaries generally accompany these quick-reference section. There may be some variation in precise procedure and writing style as the data gathered is the result of a large team made up of individuals.

4.1 Once created, the Baseline Data Summary (Section 6) was then used to create an analysis Identifying key issues, problems and solutions (section 7). Finally, following on from this directly is section 8, which consists of a list of draft policies suggested by the scoping exercise.
5.0 Policy Context Summary

5.0 As part of the Development Plan, the NDP will sit within an established planning context. Clearly this context needs to be understood. What follows is a summary to establish the context and familiarity with local policy issues. Links between this policy context and actual draft policies are discussed in section 7 of this report.

5.1 The planning context for the NDP includes:

- Planning Regulations: (For Example the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004).
- National Policy including the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance (online resource) published by the DCLG.
- Development Plan Policy including the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Saved Policies of the West Wiltshire Local Plan
- Evidence Base documents for the WCS and other documents, such as the Wiltshire SHLAA and the Housing Land Availability Statements.
- The emerging HSAP (though not yet part of the Development Plan)

5.2 The NPPF sets out principles governing a number of key areas of the Neighbourhood Plan including the following:

- The need to deliver a range of high quality homes (section 6)
- Nature, quantity and type of housing (47-55)
- Design Standards (58)
- Conserving and enhancing Heritage (137/38)
- Planning for flood risk (99/100)
- Conserving biodiversity (117/8)
- Preserving green infrastructure (74)
- Designating Green Space (76/77)
- Ensuring viability and deliverability of sites (173)
- Encouragement of sustainable transport (29-41)
- Employment and jobs in rural areas (28)
5.3 The Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) (WCS) is at present the key planning document for Hilperton. The WCS establishes the overall planning strategy for the area, stating that Hilperton is a ‘Large Village’. Large Villages are defined in Core Policy 1 as:

‘..settlements with a limited range of employment, services and facilities…. Development at Large and Small Villages will be limited to that needed to help meet the housing needs of settlements and to improve employment opportunities, services and facilities’.

5.4 Core Policy 2 states:

‘Within the limits of development, as defined on the policies map, there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development at the Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Large Villages…. Other than in circumstances as permitted by other policies within this plan, identified in paragraph 4.25, development will not be permitted outside the limits of development, as defined on the policies map. The limits of development may only be altered through the identification of sites for development through subsequent Site Allocations Development Plan Documents and neighbourhood plans’

5.5 WCS Core Policy 3 (as expanded on by the guidance in Wiltshire Planning Obligations SPD May 2015) states:

‘All new development will be required to provide for the necessary on-site and, where appropriate, off-site infrastructure requirements arising from the proposal. Infrastructure requirements will be delivered directly by the developer and/or through an appropriate financial contribution prior to, or in conjunction with, new development’.

5.6 Hilperton is located within the Trowbridge Community Area and as such Core Policy 29 Applies. Although the Core Strategy requirement was for 165 homes for the remainder of the plan period across the entire Community Area and despite the fact that recent evidence, the Wiltshire Housing Land Supply Statement (November 2016 and the March 2017 update), indicates that this level of housing has already been delivered with a zero requirement therefore remaining, additional housing (950 homes) is required to meet the needs of Trowbridge (footnote 56 of the WCS). Since the delivery of the Ashton Park Strategic Site has been slower than anticipated, more housing land is claimed by Wiltshire Council to be required to ensure an adequate housing land supply going forward. This is the main role of the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (HSAP).
5.7 A particular issue for Hilperton, and one acknowledged in the supporting text of CP29, is the maintenance of what is known locally as the ‘Hilperton Gap’, that is, a space between the developed eastern edge of Trowbridge and the village of Hilperton itself. Paragraph 5.150 of the WCS:

‘it is recognised that the villages surrounding Trowbridge, particularly Hilperton, Southwick North Bradley and West Ashton, have separate and distinct identities as villages. Open countryside should be maintained to protect the character and identity of these villages as separate communities. The local communities may wish to consider this matter in more detail in any future community-led neighbourhood planning’.

This is a major issue for local people and is discussed in more detail later in the Landscape section. The Wiltshire Open Space Study 2015 also identifies a shortage of such open space in the area and is discussed under the Service Centre heading below.

5.8 Other relevant WCS policies follow:

Core Policy 39 Tourist development
Outside the Principal Settlements and Market Towns, tourist and visitor facilities should be located in or close to Local Service Centres or Large and Small Villages and, where practicable, be located in existing or replacement buildings. Any proposal needs to carefully consider the need to protect landscapes and environmentally sensitive sites with the objective of providing adequate facilities, enhancing enjoyment and improving the financial viability of the attraction.

In exceptional cases development may be supported away from the Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Large and Small Villages where it can be demonstrated that all of the following criteria are met:

i. There is evidence that the facilities are in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction.
ii. No suitable alternative existing buildings or sites exist which are available for reuse.
iii. The scale, design and use of the proposal is compatible with its wider landscape setting and would not detract from the character or appearance of the landscape or settlement and would not be detrimental to the amenities of residential areas.
iv. The building is served by adequate access and infrastructure.
v. The site has reasonable access to local services and a local employment base.
Extensions to existing facilities should be appropriate in scale to their location and help to ensure the future viability of the business, including farm diversification schemes. Proposals for camping and touring caravan sites (including extensions) will be supported where they can be accommodated without adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape and meet criteria iii to v above.

Core Policy 40 Hotels, bed and breakfasts, guest houses and conference facilities
Proposals for new hotels, bed and breakfasts, guesthouses or conference facilities, together with the sensitive extension, upgrading and intensification of existing tourism accommodation facilities will be supported within:

i. Principal Settlements and Market Towns
ii. Local Service Centres, and Large and Small Villages where the proposals are of an appropriate scale and character within the context of the immediate surroundings and the settlement as a whole
iii. Outside the settlements above, proposals that involve the conservation of buildings that for contextual, architectural or historic reasons should be retained and otherwise would not be. In all cases, it must be demonstrated that proposals will:
   iv. not have a detrimental impact on the vitality of the town centre
   v. avoid unacceptable traffic generation.

Proposals for the change of use of existing bed spaces provided in hotels or public houses or conference facilities to alternative uses will be resisted, unless it can be clearly demonstrated there is no longer a need for such a facility in either its current use or in any other form of tourism, leisure, arts, entertainment or cultural use.

Core Policy 41 Sustainable construction and low-carbon energy
New homes (excluding extensions and conversions) will be required to achieve at least Level 4 (in full) of the Code for Sustainable Homes. Conversions of property to residential use will not be permitted unless BREEAM’s Homes “Very Good” standards are achieved....

Core Policy 43 Providing affordable homes
Provision on sites of five or more dwellings, affordable housing provision of at least 30% (net) will be provided within the 30% affordable housing zone and at least 40% (net) will be provided on sites within the 40% affordable housing zone. Only in exceptional circumstances, where it can be proven that on-site delivery is not possible, will a commuted sum be considered. (Hilperton is in the 30 % Zone)
Core Policy 45 Meeting Wiltshire’s housing needs
New housing, both market and affordable, must be well designed to address local housing need incorporating a range of different types, tenures and sizes of homes to create mixed and balanced communities. Housing size and type, including any distinction between flats and houses, will be expected to reflect that of the demonstrable need for the community within which a site is located. The Wiltshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment identifies the housing needs of Wiltshire. Any variation to this will need to be justified through the production of new, sound evidence from either an updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment or other credible evidence source. In relation to affordable housing, other sources of credible evidence include the council’s housing register and local needs surveys.

Core Policy 46 Meeting the needs of Wiltshire’s vulnerable and older people
The provision, in suitable locations, of new housing to meet the specific needs of vulnerable and older people will be required. Wherever practicable, accommodation should seek to deliver and promote independent living.

Core Policy 49 Protection of rural services and community facilities
Proposals involving the loss of a community service or facility will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the site/building is no longer economically viable for an alternative community use. Preference will be given to retaining the existing use in the first instance, then for an alternative community use.

Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and geodiversity
Development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale. There is an expectation that such features shall be retained, buffered, and managed favourably in order to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term. Where it has been demonstrated that such features cannot be retained, removal or damage shall only be acceptable in circumstances where the anticipated ecological impacts have been mitigated as far as possible and appropriate compensatory measures can be secured to ensure no net loss of the local biodiversity resource, and secure the integrity of local ecological networks and provision of ecosystem services.

Core Policy 51 Landscape
Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character, while any negative impacts must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures. Proposals should be informed by and sympathetic to the distinctive character areas identified in the relevant Landscape Character Assessment(s) and any other relevant assessments and studies. In particular, proposals enhanced through sensitive design, landscape mitigation and enhancement measures:
i. The locally distinctive pattern and species composition of natural features such as trees, hedgerows, woodland, field boundaries, watercourses and waterbodies.
ii. The locally distinctive character of settlements and their landscape settings.
iii. The separate identity of settlements and the transition between man-made and natural landscapes at the urban fringe.
iv. Visually sensitive skylines, soils, geological and topographical features.
v. Landscape features of cultural, historic and heritage value.
vi. Important views and visual amenity.
vii. Tranquillity and the need to protect against intrusion from light pollution, noise, and motion.
viii Landscape functions including places to live, work, relax and recreate.
ix. Special qualities of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and the New Forest National Park, where great weight will be afforded to conserving and enhancing landscapes and scenic beauty.

Core Policy 52 Green infrastructure
Development shall make provision for the retention and enhancement of Wiltshire’s green infrastructure network, and shall ensure that suitable links to the network are provided and maintained. Where development is permitted, developers will be required to:

i. retain and enhance existing on site green infrastructure
ii. make provision for accessible open spaces in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Wiltshire Open Space Standards
iii. put measures in place to ensure appropriate long-term management of any green infrastructure directly related to the development
iv. provide appropriate contributions towards the delivery of the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Strategy
v. identify and provide opportunities to enhance and improve linkages between the natural and historic landscapes of Wiltshire.
Core Policy 53 Wiltshire’s canals
The restoration and reconstruction of the Wilts and Berks and Thames and Severn canals as navigable waterways is supported in principle. The historic alignments of the Wilts and Berks, including the North Wilts Branch, and Thames and Severn Canals, as identified on the policies map, will be safeguarded with a view to their long-term re-establishment as navigable waterways. These alignments will be safeguarded by:

i. not permitting development likely to destroy the canal alignment or its associated structures, or likely to make restoration more difficult
ii. ensuring that where the canal is affected by development, the alignment is protected or an alternative alignment is provided.

Core Policy 57 Ensuring high quality design and place shaping
A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality.

Core Policy 58
Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment. Designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance, including:

i. nationally significant archaeological remains
ii. World Heritage Sites within and adjacent to Wiltshire
iii. buildings and structures of special architectural or historic interest
iv. the special character or appearance of conservation areas
v. historic parks and gardens
vi. important landscapes, including registered battlefields and townscales.

Core Policy 60
Sustainable transport
The council will use its planning and transport powers to help reduce the need to travel particularly by private car, and support and encourage the sustainable, safe and efficient movement of people and goods within and through Wiltshire. This will be achieved by:

i. planning developments in accessible locations
ii. promoting sustainable transport alternatives to the use of the private car
iii. maintaining and selectively improving the local transport network in accordance with its functional importance and in partnership with other transport planning bodies, service providers and the business community
iv. promoting appropriate demand management measures
v. influencing the routing of freight within and through the county
vi. assessing and, where necessary, mitigating the impact of developments on transport users, local communities and the environment.

Core Policy 64
Demand management
Demand management measures will be promoted where appropriate to reduce reliance on the car and to encourage the use of sustainable transport alternatives.

5.9 Some policies of the old West Wiltshire Local Plan (pre-Wiltshire Core Strategy) have been saved and carried forward. All were considered, however the most relevant for the NDP were felt to be the following. **Policy numbers and this plan’s comment is in Bold Type:**

R12 - Development proposals which involve the loss of existing allotment sites will not be permitted unless appropriate alternative provision is made elsewhere, or it can be demonstrated that there is no longer demand for such a use locally. **The allotments in the village are very popular.**

E10 - Proposals for equestrian facilities and changes of use will be required to have regard to minimising their effects on the appearance of the countryside and to highway implications. **Such facilities could however, provide useful local employment in Hilperton and would be in keeping with the rural area.**

T5 The following routes for essential new link roads will be safeguarded …

3.4.17 A safeguarded road link from Trowbridge Road to Horse Road, across the land known locally as the "Hilperton Gap", will eventually complete the north eastern distributor road network for Trowbridge…..This link, will relieve the village of Hilperton of through traffic. It is to be funded by the development of Paxcroft Mead and other development south of Paxcroft Mead and provided through the development control process. The County Council has identified a corridor of interest within which the road will be constructed, as defined on the Proposals Map. **This road has now been constructed and is known as Elizabeth Way.**

SP6 Local Shopping in Towns and Villages - Further local shopping facilities will be permitted within local or village centres provided criteria Aa-D in Policy SP1 can be met. Out of local centre proposals should be permitted only if provision cannot be made in a local or village centre or, failing that, on the edge of a centre and if criteria A, C-F in Policy SP3 can be met. **Additional local shopping would be welcomed in Hilperton. This would reduce the need to travel and provide employment.**
S2 Land is allocated in the following areas, as broadly identified on the Proposals Map, for new or extensions to existing primary schools: .... 3 South of Paxcroft Mead, Trowbridge - 1.84 hectares (4.5 acres). The School has now been built. However, a Secondary school is also needed.

U1a Development will only be permitted where adequate foul drainage, sewerage and sewage treatment facilities are available or where suitable arrangements are made for their provision. In sewered areas new development will be expected to connect to mains drainage. New sewers will be expected to be constructed to a standard adoptable by Wessex Water.

U6 Proposals for new telecommunications developments will be permitted provided that: A The siting and external appearance of apparatus, including any location and landscaping requirements, have been designed to minimise the impact of such apparatus on amenity and the environment, having full regard to any statutory and local designations, while respecting operational efficiency; B Applications for large masts include evidence that the possibility of erecting antennae on an existing building, mast or other structure has been explored; C The materials, colour and design minimise obtrusiveness; D In the case of installation of satellite dishes on blocks of flats, that consideration has been given to the provision of a shared system. Improvements in phone and broadband services are needed in Hilperton (these will have to comply with the above policy).

I3 The needs of the disabled should be adequately catered for in new development proposals for buildings open to the public and buildings used for employment or education purposes....

5.10 Parts of the West Wiltshire Leisure and Recreation DPD 2009 have also been saved:

LP1 Protection of existing high value open space or sport and recreation facility
LP2 Replacement facilities for leisure and recreation if lost through development
LP4 Leisure and Recreation to be provided in new developments
CR1 Footpath network protected and to be improved / extended
CR3 Green Space network to be created.
Leisure and Recreation are issues of concern to Hilperton Residents as is improvement of existing path and cycle way network.

5.11 Although produced in 2005, a Village Design Statement (VDS) exists and is a material planning consideration. The VDS gives valuable advice concerning the design of development and of the aspects of the locality that make the village a unique and recognizable place. This is particularly so in relation to the need to preserve the ‘Hilperton Gap’ fields (See map in Appendix 2).
5.12 The VDS described Hilperton Gap as ‘an essential part of Hilperton’s rural character’, this, referring to the old village core, being essentially of a rural village with a compact core but surrounded by open fields and open space. The VDS (2.4) states:

‘To the west, between the village and Trowbridge, is the area of land, known colloquially as the Hilperton Gap. This is an important area of open countryside, as it provides a barrier between the village and the eastern outskirts of Trowbridge. There are attractive rural views across the Gap from the old village and to the church from Hilperton Marsh which contribute greatly to the village atmosphere and character of Hilperton.’

5.13 The VDS (2.4) notes that the Gap is:

‘criss-crossed by a network of Public Rights of Way, is an important amenity area for informal recreation, which for the most part runs successfully alongside its agricultural uses. The most popular footpaths are those radiating from the Knap across the open fields of the Gap. These are principally used by dog walkers (including walkers from Trowbridge). Path numbers are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 33, and 54’.

5.14 The document recommends (part 2) that:

- The natural beauty of the landscape including flora, fauna features should be respected and where appropriate enhanced and protected.
- New development in open countryside should be avoided.
- New developments on the edge of the village should give high priority to landscape design.
- Green verges, hedgerows and spaces are characteristic of the entry to Hilperton and should be included in new development.
- All public rights of way should be respected and maintained through liaison with landowners and farmers.
- Existing hedgerows should be retained and enhanced to maintain the character of the village.

5.15 The underlying point being made is that the old village in particular is not simply a collection of old and newer buildings, but a rural Wiltshire village, the character of which is drawn to a significant degree from the open spaces around it. These form not only the characteristic setting for the village, but an important community resource for recreation and in addition provide characteristic views both in and out. Village and setting are inseparable and must be considered together in planning matters.

5.16 Since the VDS was created, relatively little has changed in terms of the Gap; it still performs the same functions (as recreational area, habitat for wildlife, as a setting for Hilperton Village and above all as a physical separator from Trowbridge). However, the Hilperton relief road - effectively a single carriage-way by-pass - now cuts through it from the A 361 to the edge of the Canal Road Industrial Estate. This change is considered in section the landscape section of this report. **The preservation of the Hilperton Gap is an important part of the NDP.**
5.17 The Wiltshire Open Space Study (2015) is intended to be part of the evidence base for future policy and sits alongside the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Strategy. Both documents stress the need for maintaining and enhancing green spaces in order to achieve a range of policy objectives (for example health). The Trowbridge section of the Open Space Study identifies a shortfall in provision of open space in a number of categories. The study says:

‘Although it is up to local communities to define their own priorities within neighbourhood plans, the information provided within the area profiles in this study will form a good basis to inform any decisions related to the provision or replacement of open space, sport and recreation facilities. Some settlements may seek a consolidation of facilities on a single site, such as a new sports hub’.

And also:

‘Future LDP’s and Neighbourhood Plans should consider the opportunities for creating and enhancing a network of both utility and recreation routes for use by foot and bike in both urban and rural areas. Creative application of the amenity green space/natural green space components of the proposed overall standard in respect of new development should be explored’.

Hilperton has a number of green open spaces (including formal recreation areas for children). However, by far the largest and most important in the life of the village is the Hilperton Gap and its fields.

5.18 Although it is not part of the Development Plan, the 2011 Draft Community Area Plan produced by Trowbridge Community Area Future Partnership (TCAF) covers the following issues:

1. Economy, including Tourism and Employment.
2. Transport, including Access and Traffic.
3. Housing and the Built Environment.
4. Culture, including Leisure, Recreation, Heritage and Arts.
5. Environment including Countryside and Land Based Issues.

5.19 The broad aim of the NDP is to take forward, interpret and add detail to the land use policy framework in ways that have community support and that are in general conformity with the Development Plan. This will add certainty and clarity for both developers and the local community.
6.0 Baseline Data Summary

Baseline data includes the characteristics of the current environment issues and trends in the area to be covered by the Neighbourhood Plan (NDP). The collection of this information ensures that the process is based on sound evidence and, as well as identifying areas for policy, provides the basis for prediction and monitoring of environmental and sustainability effects of the plan.

6.1 Biodiversity

At the European level, the EU Biodiversity Strategy 5 was adopted in May 2011 in order to deliver an established new Europe-wide target to ‘halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020’.

6.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has much to say on this topic.

- Development should stop the overall decline in biodiversity by minimising impacts and achieving net gains wherever possible.
- Plans should promote the ‘preservation, restoration and recreation of priority habitats, ecological networks’ and the ‘protection and recovery of priority species’.
- They should set criteria based policies for the protection of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites
- We need to take account of the effects of climate change in the long term. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks.
- We must plan positively to create ‘green infrastructure’.

6.4 The Natural Environment White Paper describes the importance of a healthy natural environment to economic growth, and personal well-being. The White Paper includes commitments to:

- Halt biodiversity loss, support functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks by 2020;
- Establish a new voluntary approach to biodiversity offsetting to be tested in pilot areas;
- Enable partnerships of local authorities, local communities and landowners, the private sector and conservation organisations to establish new Nature Improvement Areas; and
- Address barriers to using green infrastructure to promote sustainable growth.

6.5 In Wiltshire, the Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) sets out Habitat Action Plans for a range of habitats. The BAP is now complimented by a new Wiltshire and Swindon Landscape Conservation Framework.

To deliver conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, a number of Landscape Biodiversity Areas have been identified. These are shown on the Lnk2Nature website. In terms of the landscape map of the latter, Hilperton lies within the ‘Bristol Avon Vale’ area.

6.6 **Biodiversity in Hilperton parish.**
The vast majority of land in the parish is open countryside amounting to approximately 600 hectares. All the land apart from the public spaces e.g. playing fields and allotments is farmed. Approximately half is arable and the rest pasture. Crops are usually grown on a rotation system to enrich the soil. While not rich in sites of major importance (there are no SSSI’s in the parish for example and only one Special Area for Conservation (SAC) – for Bats - just outside the boundary. However, the rare bats present forage in the Hilperton Gap. There are several categories of what the Wiltshire BAP identifies as ‘Priority Habitats’ present. These include:

6.7 **The Kennet and Avon Canal to the north and other water habitats**
An important wildlife corridor and habitat for numerous water birds, fish and invertebrates, the Kennet and Avon canal crosses the parish from east to west and is an important area for aquatic plants and wildlife. It is valuable amenity for boating, fishing, walking and cycling. The canal with the river Avon forms the northern boundary of the parish. These 2 waterways are designated as county wildlife sites and managed by the Environment Agency and British Water Ways. There is also Semington Brook, which flows into the Avon at Whaddon. Through the area known as The Gap are 2 brooks both of which appear to have their source from underground springs. These merge and eventually flow under Wyke Road. Along all these waterways is mature vegetation, willows and hedges. There are several ponds within the parish some of which are in neglected state.

6.8 **Paxcroft Brook to the south:**
A small stream but with a thriving population of water voles.

6.9 **Hedgerows and trees throughout the parish:**
Hedgerows are Important corridors but also habitat for hundreds of plant and insect species, birds and mammals. Hedgerows can act as a refuge for many farmland plants and animals, and as links between habitats. Nationally hedgerows are under threat – with 23% of English hedges being lost between 1984 and 1990.

6.10 There are miles of mature hedgerows all around the parish and mainly consist of elder, blackthorn, field sycamore and hawthorn. There are blackberries, dog rose and honeysuckle. These are vital places for food, habitats and nesting for birds, mammals, insects, invertebrates and butterflies (the latter being in serious decline of 70% from 1976-2014 due to the destruction of these habitats). Their decline gives insight into the changing state of biodiversity and halting the funding for the environment and achieving the AICHI Biodiversity targets set by Biological Diversity the year 2020 looks poor according to Butterfly Conservation. In Hilperton, many of the hedgerows in the parish are in a degraded state and need re-planting – in particular with native trees.
6.11 The whole parish has hundreds of mature trees from those in the fields and hedgerows and the others in private gardens. These trees provide the necessary solution to air pollution, sound absorption and provide wildlife habitat and give a pleasant vista to the whole area. There are huge varieties of trees from ornamental to typical English trees that have been growing for centuries. There are Elms that have reached approximately 7 metres tall and so far, have managed to resist the Dutch Elm Disease (any tree over 3.5 metres tall in the Conservation Area is protected by The Tree Protection Order). The Area is not far from the Bath and Bristol SAC – which is a foraging and roosting area for protected Bats – see HRA for detail.

6.12 Farmland habitat
Much of the land in the parish is farmed – mainly arable. This land is home to a range of species from plants, fungi, butterflies, mice, birds, hares and rabbits. There are many species of birds on the red danger list (published by the RSPB) that seem to be surviving on the untouched fields and many on their amber list too but in lesser numbers than 10 years ago. Lost in the last 2 years is the skylark (which was in fields adjacent to Middle Lane) and this year crickets and grasshoppers. Bechstein bats are nearby, but no recent survey as confirmed they are in the parish. It is possible however that they forage here. During the winter months the fields and the banks of the River Avon at Whaddon provide an ideal habitat for visiting migratory birds.

6.13 Urban habitat
Most people forget that built up areas, with their trees, gardens, buildings and drainage systems are also habitats for animals. In Hilperton these include hedgehogs (an endangered species), sparrows (also endangered), mice, owls, swallows, starlings, house martins and swifts. Churchyards, road verges, allotments and private gardens – especially those with ponds – are an important part of this habitat. The proportion of urban habitat in the plan area will have declined slightly following the transfer of part of Paxcroft Mead to Trowbridge in April 2017.

6.14 The Hilperton Gap and the Bath and Bradford on Avon SAC
The Hilperton Gap is within the foraging range of Bechstein’s Bat and the Greater Horseshoe Bat (both protected species) that live in the nearby Bath and Bradford on Avon SAC. This habitat could be enhanced by tree and hedgerow planting, and is unlikely to be affected by informal recreation, which is a present use of the Gap. However, in terms of housing, the HRA for the Hilperton Neighbourhood Plan says:

‘Housing development at the Hilperton Gap could lead to impacts on the Bath and Bradford on Avon SAC alone if on-site habitats used by SAC bat species for foraging, commuting or roosting are adversely affected by development. In-combination with other schemes, development can be expected to contribute to recreational pressure in woodlands in the SE of Trowbridge. Which are used by SAC bats for roosting.’
6.15 **The future**

What happens to biodiversity in Hilperton very much depends what, as people, we do about it. There are threats and opportunities:

**Threats:**
- New housing and employment development will increase pressure on all habitats – the bats of the nearby SAC are the most important species at risk from this.
- Lack of positive management and investment will harm hedgerows
- Farming can lead to nitrate and other run-off into water courses
- Climate change, litter, neglect and fuel spillages from boats or pollution from the marina may adversely affect water habitats including the canal and Paxcroft Brook.
- Domestic cats from new housing may predate upon water voles, mice and birds.

6.16 **Opportunities:**

- Policies already exist in the WCS protecting biodiversity and encouraging the creation of new green infrastructure*. However, if a design policy is included in the NDP this could emphasise the importance of planting new hedgerows and trees and maintaining and linking this to older networks. Green roofs and habitat-friendly designs could be encouraged.

- A local project – **hEdges** – already exists with the aim of conserving the hedgerows in the parish. This is a project for Hilperton and Paxcroft Mead which has been developed by artist Alex Murdin. hEdges has the aim of supporting local biodiversity and making up for hedgerows which were lost – planting some edible wild plants in public spaces with local volunteers. All of this will feed into some new artwork for southern Hilperton and Paxcroft Mead’s public spaces

- Other non-planning projects could aim to conserve the urban habitat – for example by improving and making nature-friendly back gardens, installing ponds and building Hedgehog Highways linking gardens under fences.

- Protection of the Hilperton Gap would protect the foraging area of Bechstein’s bat and the Greater Horseshoe bat.

* Green infrastructure is a network of multifunctional green space, urban and rural, capable of delivering a range of environmental and life benefits for local communities. This can include parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, street trees, allotments and private gardens. It can also include streams and canals.
### Biodiversity

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<tr>
<th>Sub-Topic</th>
<th>Relevant Plans / Policies</th>
<th>Local Problems / Issues / Baseline for Hilperton</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biodiversity and development</strong></td>
<td>Wiltshire Core Strategy Policies 50, 51, 52 and 53</td>
<td><strong>Baseline Information:</strong> Core Policies 50-53 already gives substantial protection to biodiversity in Wiltshire – the Bath and Bristol Bat SAC is protected under national and international law. However, these protections rely on effective development control and enforcement. There is a role also for local action (for example in re-planting hedgerows and making gardens serve as better habitats. <strong>Problems and Issues:</strong> Development Pressure Risk to Bats if Hilperton Gap is developed Is development control effective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protected area designations</strong></td>
<td>Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan 2008 <a href="http://www.link2nature.org.uk/">http://www.link2nature.org.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.h-edges.org.uk/">http://www.h-edges.org.uk/</a></td>
<td><strong>Baseline Information:</strong> No SSSI’s are present in the Parish, and only one SAC is nearby. There are no County Wildlife Sites, although one exists to the South of the Parish boundary (Biss wood). <strong>Problems and Issues:</strong> Risk to bats foraging area if Hilperton Gap is developed upon. Hedgerows are in decline and need management and replanting Farmland and urban habitats may be underrated in importance. In fact, action can make these better and even more important than they already are for many species. Species may decline if habitats are not maintained and / or enhanced. Development may destroy or disrupt habitat – need for sensitive design. Pollution risk of canal Nitrate run-off from farms Predation by domestic cats</td>
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<td><strong>Nature reserves</strong></td>
<td>Wiltshire &amp; Swindon Biological Records Centre <a href="http://www.wsbrc.org.uk/">http://www.wsbrc.org.uk/</a></td>
<td><strong>Baseline Information:</strong> No reserves within Hilperton Parish. <strong>Problems and Issues:</strong> The community may wish to designate local areas for habitat enhancement as non-planning action.</td>
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6.17 Land and soil resources

6.18 The wise use of land and soil is an essential component of sustainability, not least because both are a finite resource. It is an aim of the Wiltshire Core Strategy to concentrate development onto brownfield land where possible. Core Policy 2, referring to the strategic housing target of 42,000 homes;

‘This will be delivered in a sustainable pattern in a way that prioritises the release of employment land and the re-use of previously developed land to deliver regeneration opportunities, and to limit the need for development on Greenfield sites, with approximately 35% of development taking place on previously developed land’.

6.19 The NPPF requires the planning system to:

- Protect and enhance soils. The quality of agricultural land should also be taken into account
- Prevent new or existing development from being ‘adversely affected’ by the presence of ‘unacceptable levels’ of soil pollution or instability
- Encourage the effective use of land through the reuse of land which has been previously developed, ‘provided that this is not of high environmental value’
- While there is no longer a national requirement to build at a minimum density, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to ‘set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local needs’.

6.20 Other relevant information includes: ‘Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England’, which sets out a vision for soil use in England. The Spatial and Market Intelligence section of the Homes and Communities Agency keeps the National Land Use Statistics (the NLUD database) However, the latest entries are from 2012 and the data is raw and unsorted. A pilot scheme has been set up for LPA’s to compile Brownfield Land Registers – however Wiltshire Council is not a participant. The best data available is therefore the 2014 SHLAA.

6.21 In 2015 the Government confirmed its wish that 90% of suitable brownfield sites have planning permission for housing by 2020 and to assist that target legislation was brought forward to require local authorities to hold a Register of available brownfield land. The new brownfield registers will soon become a statutory requirement aiming to improve the availability and transparency of brownfield information, providing certainty and encouraging investment, plus help to measure progress in delivering planning permissions on the sites listed.
## Land and soil resources

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| **Land quality**   | Agricultural Land Classification Maps – South West http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/144017?category=5954148537204736 | **Baseline Information:** Soil in Hilperton Parish is mainly Agricultural Land Grade 3 (1 being highest). ‘Good to moderate’.  
**Problems and Issues:**                                                                 |
| **Brownfield land availability** | National Land Use Database of Previously Developed Land (NLUD-PDL) 2012 https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-land-use-database-of-previously-developed-land-nlud-pdl Wiltshire SHLAA 2014 | **Baseline Information:** Brownfield land availability in Hilperton is low. Appendix 3 of the 2012 SHLAA discusses the available sites in Hilperton and describes just 0.83 hectares being as non-agricultural land. By contrast, the figure for greenfield sites was 93.09 hectares.  
**Problems and Issues:** Lack of brownfield land. |
6.22 Water resources and flood risk

6.23 The most important bodies of water in the parish are the Kennet and Avon Canal, Paxcroft Brook, Hilperton Stream and Semington Brook. About 1.85 miles of the K&A lies within the parish with around 0.7 m of the westerly end forming the boundary with Staverton. There are a few properties within the parish alongside the canal but in the main it runs through farmland. Under normal circumstances its level is maintained by spillways which are ducted down to the river Avon to the north. Some sections of the canal lie above the surrounding land and a breach here could cause localised flooding mainly to the north over farm land. There is no record of this happening in the past however.

6.24 Semington Brook runs east-west into the Avon at Whaddon, the last 0.5 mile lying within the parish. The comments below on flooding of the Avon apply equally to the Semington Brook. Paxcroft Brook rises within the parish just south of the A361 near Fairfield Farm and runs southwest into the River Biss in Trowbridge. On the eastern side of Ashton road, it runs through farmland where any flooding would cause minimal problems but it would be a concern if development was considered here. The western end from the Ashton Road runs through the Paxcroft Mead development. The Environment Agency class this a Level 2 flood zone but as far as is known no residential flooding has occurred as the brook runs through designated recreational land effectively acting as a flood plain. Since this part of the parish is being absorbed into Trowbridge in April 2017 no further research is planned.

6.25 Hilperton Marsh Brook (aka Hilperton Stream). This is a brook which rises behind the primary school and runs westerly to Wyke road where it is culverted to eventually empty into the River Biss. There is another branch which rises behind Victoria Road and joins the brook close to Wyke Road. The land to either side of the brook is classed as a Level 3 Flood Zone and is the closest area to the main village at significant risk of flooding - This is zone 3b (functional flood plain or 1 in 20-years chance). During the building of (Elizabeth Way), a flood pond was built to the west of the new road. For flood map see Appendix 2.

6.26 Surface water or flash flooding. Though the bulk of the residential parts of the parish are above the level of the flood zones some parts are prone to surface water flash flooding following severe storms. Such storms now occur more frequently and it is an area which needs more consideration. The causes are unclear and are probably a combination of poor storm drainage and the heavy clay subsoil typical of parts of the parish. Flash flooding has been recorded around the Lion & Fiddle roundabout and at the junction of Church Road and the Knapp. Also around Newlaze and the Marsh Road Post office. Whaddon Lane suffers from poor drainage even under relatively mild rainfall and if followed by a frost is extremely hazardous.
Despite much of the land being low-lying the risk of flooding to existing homes is actually small. The only part of the parish significantly affected is the area to the north around Whaddon. However, even here most buildings are actually in Flood Zone 1 (low probability - once in 1000 years’ chance). Only the area around Whaddon Grove Farm is in Flood Zone 3 (High probability or 1 in 20 years’ chance) and it floods to some degree several times a year. As far as can be ascertained no structures or residential properties are adversely affected even in Whaddon, the remainder of the parish lies much higher and some way from the river. The river levels are managed by the Environment Agency to protect other lower lying habitation - upstream (Melksham & Chippenham) and downstream (Bradford and Bath).

Drinking water comes mainly from aquifers located in Wiltshire and Dorset. Wessex Water also has several reservoirs. A Water Network is currently being constructed which will link all of these supplies enabling water to be transported wherever it is needed by future development. As a result, there will be adequate water supply for present and projected development for the foreseeable future. In terms of local supply arrangements, a Reservoir in Devizes Road is a single chamber type fed by a pipeline from the Water treatment plant at Holt. The reservoir feeds most of the village via gravity which may explain why low water pressure is a known complaint. It is not known what capacity the reservoir has to cope with additional development.

Water resources and flood risk

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| Water supply | Wessex Water website https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/  
British Geological Survey http://www.bgs.ac.uk/research/groundwater/shaleGas/aquifersAndShales/maps/aquifers/home.html | Baseline Information: Water supply is from mainly underground sources – principally the Chalk Aquifer to the East of the County. Quality is very good.  
Problems and Issues: Water Network project aims to create supply grid based on a range of sources. Unlikely that water supply will be a restricting factor on development. |
| Flood risk | Environment Agency Flood Risk Maps http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/  
West Wiltshire SFRA, 2008  
Level 1 SFRA Update Final Report July 2013  
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment High Level Executive Summary Final Report June 2009 | Baseline Information: Low risk of flooding for most of Parish which is in Flood Zone 1 (low probability). Some risk near to Whaddon plus strip running across the Gap – both FZ 3.  
Problems and Issues: Flooding unlikely to be a major issue for existing or new development in most of the Parish. Due to climate change, there is an increased risk of flash or surface water flooding in areas where there is a lot or hard surfacing. This can be mitigated by maintenance of the exiting ditch and stream network and by incorporating SuDS into designs. |
### Air quality and environmental pollution

There are no significant air, ground or water pollution issues in Hilperton Parish at present. However, there are some risks, including; pollution of the Kennet and Avon Canal by boat fuel and litter and traffic fumes from increasing traffic levels. Water supply and quality for drinking purposes is very good.

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<td>Air quality</td>
<td>Wiltshire Council&lt;br&gt;Air Quality Strategy for Wiltshire&lt;br&gt;Wiltshire Air Quality Action Plan for Wiltshire&lt;br&gt;Wiltshire JSA</td>
<td><strong>Baseline information:</strong>&lt;br&gt;-. Wiltshire is characterised by extensive areas of unspoilt countryside and enjoys very good air quality, giving rise to a high-quality environment for residents, visitors and businesses. There are, however, a few specific areas in market towns that have issues with air quality.&lt;br&gt;-. Nearest air quality monitoring area (AQMA) to Hilperton is at Bradford – on- Avon. As of the 8/8/16 the air quality was rated as level 2 (low) out of a possible 10. Air pollution in the area will be affected by either road or industrial causes. There aren’t any industrial facilities in Hilperton which could cause pollution. The nearest factory site is at Cereal Partners UK in Staverton. There are no reported incidents of air pollution from this site.&lt;br&gt;-. Likely air quality in the main part of Hilperton village has improved since the bypass has been built reducing the amount of traffic passing through the village. Main roads nearby include A361 to Devizes which is the main route from Trowbridge to the A350, which can get congested during rush hour periods. Paxcroft Mead estate is rapidly growing in size and therefore air quality could be affected due to the increase in car journeys from new residents.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Problems and Issues:</strong>&lt;br&gt;-. Hilperton village is situated to the north of Trowbridge and is partly surrounded by open countryside. The air quality is generally good. Consider reduction of car journeys and congestion by promoting sustainable transport models, and thereby helping to improve air quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water quality</td>
<td><strong>Baseline information:</strong>&lt;br&gt;-. The Kennet and Avon Canal runs through Hilperton Parish, as does Paxcroft Brook.&lt;br&gt;-. Paxcroft Brook is home to a thriving community of water voles.&lt;br&gt;-. Hilperton Marina is a busy centre for canal boat holidays. It also has a canal boat servicing facility, which may impact on water quality in that part of the canal.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Problems and Issues:</strong>&lt;br&gt;-. Overall, there have been no reported incidents of water pollution in the Hilperton area.&lt;br&gt;-. The general water quality is good – though supply is hard as it comes from chalk aquifer.&lt;br&gt;-. Both Paxcroft Brook and the Kennet and Avon Canal are maintained well to prevent flooding.</td>
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6.31 **Climate Change**

6.32 The evidence for climate change is now overwhelming and there is little doubt that rises in global temperature are partly the result of increased human-generated emissions. Predicted global temperature rises range from 1.1 to 6.4 degrees. Even a rise at the lower end of this scale will increase the risk of flood and storm damage in the UK as weather patterns become more unpredictable and extreme weather vents become more intense and frequent. Hilperton will not escape the localised consequences of these wider changes.

6.33 **Greenhouse gas emissions**

In relation to greenhouse gas emissions, data from the Department of Energy and Climate Change suggests that Wiltshire has had consistently lower per capita emissions than England since 2005, but marginally higher per capita emissions than the South West since 2009. Wiltshire has also seen smaller reductions in emissions per capita between 2005 and 2012 (15%) compared to the South West (18.2%) and England (a 17.7% reduction).

Source: Department of Energy and Climate Change (2011) Official statistics: Local Authority carbon dioxide emissions, UK local and regional CO2 emissions

6.34 In its 2007 strategy on climate change, the European Commission recommended a package of measures to limit global warming to 2 degree Celsius. In relation to energy, the Commission recommends that the EU’s energy efficiency improves by 20% and the share of renewable energy grows to 20% by 2020.

6.35 In 2009 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP09) issued projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on climate models. Projections are available at regional level across the UK and illustrate the potential range of changes and the level of confidence in each prediction. The effects of climate change for the south west by 2050 for a medium emission scenario are as follows:

- increase in winter mean temperature is 2.1ºC and increase in summer mean temperature of 2.7ºC
- increase in winter rainfall of 17% and decrease in summer of 20%.

6.36 It can be seen from these issues that tackling climate change is an important issue and something that policies at all levels can help with. Given a willingness to plan, per capita emissions are likely to continue to decrease as the effects of this plus energy efficiency, renewable energy production and new technologies become more widely used. However, a likely increase in the development of Hilperton could reverse this.

Resulting from the above, a range of problems and opportunities may exist for Hilperton. These are described in the table below.
### Climate Change

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</table>
| **Increased winter rainfall and milder temperatures** | Department of Energy and Climate Change (2011) Official statistics UKCP09 – Met Office | **Baseline Information:**  
  - Winters variable. Usually featuring sub-zero as well as mild temperatures.  
  - Frequent rain, occasional storms.  
  **Problems and Issues:**  
  - Flash flooding of roads and low-lying ground  
  - Possible soil erosion  
  - Increased risk of injuries due to increased number of storms  
  - Reduced risk of hypothermia for the elderly  
  - Increase of damp in buildings  
  - Winter gloom due to increased cloud |
| **Decreased summer rainfall and higher peak temperatures** | Department of Energy and Climate Change (2011) Official statistics UKCP09 – Met Office | **Baseline Information:**  
  - Summers variable. Usually mixture of short sunny periods of up to a few days, and more overcast days with showers. Some days of prolonged rain. Occasional thunderstorm.  
  **Problems and Issues:**  
  - Increased incidence of heat related illnesses  
  - Potentially greater risk of fires  
  - Increased incidence of illnesses related to sunlight (e.g. skin cancer, cataracts);  
  - Increased incidence of insect borne diseases  
  - Uncomfortable sleeping conditions  
  - Crop damage / ability to grow different crops |
| **Secondary wildlife impacts** | Department of Energy and Climate Change (2011) Official statistics UKCP09 – Met Office | **Baseline Information:**  
  - Overall mild climate with fairly frequent rain all year round. Noticeable seasonal variation. Few extremes of hot /cold or wet/dry.  
  **Problems and Issues:**  
  - Changes in populations reflecting their natural ranges  
  - Degradation of existing habitats  
  - Species loss and gains (not always welcome) - e.g. new pests for farm crops. |
6.37 **Historic environment.**

6.38 Care of the historic environment is an important issue for land use planning. The NPPF for example requires that plans should:

- Recognise heritage assets as an ‘irreplaceable resource’ that should be conserved in a ‘manner appropriate to their significance’, yet recognising the positive contribution new development can make to local character and distinctiveness
- Set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment
- Development should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics.

6.39 The following is a basic summary of the history and present character of the area – drawn from a number of sources (see Appendix 1) including the village design statement from which some sections have been borrowed.

6.40 The area within which Hilperton is set is in many ways an ancient landscape, within which remains of bronze and iron age settlement has been found. Roman occupation included numerous farms and villas including several in the area of Whaddon. Early occupation tends to be concentrated on the best and most easily farmed land – Hilperton Marsh for example does not seem to have been much used before about 1400, when drainage works probably began.

6.41 The churches at Hilperton and Whaddon were extant during the early Norman period. The Doomsday book indicates mixed Norman and Saxon ownership of what is now the modern parish with a population of no more than 50 or so. These inhabitants would probably have been clustered around the churches and indeed an abandoned mediaeval settlement east of the present church, now a scheduled ancient monument supports this. Population grew gradually throughout the mediaeval period, as did the strength of the economy, with the wool industry emerging to be the main source of wealth. Weaving grew in importance in the area until by the mid 16th century the area was quite prosperous. This is reflected in local building, both in Trowbridge and Hilperton parish.

6.42 By the early 17th century population was increasing. Numbers 75 Hill Street and 209 and 210 Hill Street were built around this time. Early in the 18th century both Hilperton House and Oriel House were constructed. Mixed farming was the main occupation, although with some processing involved; corn, livestock and production of cheese, butter and beer. In the mid 18th century weavers' cottages were built alongside Horse Road in Hilperton Marsh and these were joined by an ale house by 1770. Hilperton's present day landmark of the blind house, or lock up was built at this time. It is now a scheduled ancient monument and is in the ownership of the parish council.

6.43 By the turn of the nineteenth century, although the overall character was strongly rural, most people were employed in the textile industry, or other manufacturing processes. A striking feature of the area (especially in contrast to today) from about 1800 to 1940 were the number of small businesses serving the Parish, a diversity probably initiated by the arrival of the Kennet and Avon canal in 1810. These included grocers, bakers, smiths, coal, livestock dealer, shoemakers, post office, seeds, florist, pubs. Later a vet, accountant, tea dealer, plasterer, a builder and a cigar and tobacco dealer were to be found.
6.44 This astonishing diversity was added to by several alehouses; The Kings Arms, the Lion and Fiddle, and the Three Horseshoes, the latter in Church Street. A Wesleyan Methodist chapel and schoolroom was built at the top of Church Street in 1891 to replace an earlier chapel of 1819. Much of the ‘old’ village of Hilperton visible today dates from this period, and many of the present houses are in fact converted commercial or non-residential structures.

6.45 The 20th century saw a decline in local facilities and businesses, despite the population more than doubling between 1951 and 1971. A new school was built in 1970 and a village hall has also been built on Whaddon Lane. The blind house was restored in 1978. From the 1990s on development of more than 1,100 houses has occurred at Paxcroft Mead.

6.46 The majority of the parish has a mixed architectural character, with older elements overlain by more prolific modern building, thanks to its rapid later development, chiefly of the 20th century.

6.47 The historic core of Hilperton however is very much apparent, with a cluster of pre-20th century cottages as well as some grander structures being concentrated in a rough and crooked cross running North-South as Hill Street / Church Street and East-West as the Knapp and Whaddon Lane. In the Knap are St Michael’s and All Angels Church, Hilperton House, the old school, and schoolhouse. Middle Lane, a public bridleway that is thought to have been an old drove road for villagers taking their sheep and cattle to markets in Trowbridge, leads from the Knapp. Even today, this is still a very well used route to Trowbridge, and is a popular starting point for walkers using the other footpaths leading from the Knap. Due to a lack of other parking spaces in the village, the Knapp has become a parking place for cars belonging to residents, and for those using the church. Opposite the Knapp is the war memorial, which commemorates those lost in the two World Wars.
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<th>Sub-Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservation area</td>
<td>West Wiltshire District Local Plan 2004 (Appendix A)</td>
<td><strong>Baseline Information:</strong> Conservation Area Boundary (Map)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Village Design Statement</td>
<td><strong>Problems and Issues:</strong> Street clutter?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Modern Development Pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed buildings</td>
<td>Historic England: National Heritage List for England.</td>
<td><strong>Baseline Information:</strong> Number in Parish 63 (3 at II*, no Grade I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record.</td>
<td>No historic buildings ‘At Risk’ (chiefly a measure of neglect)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wiltshire Community History Online</td>
<td><strong>Problems and Issues:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeology and scheduled ancient monuments</td>
<td>English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register.</td>
<td><strong>Baseline Information:</strong> Number in Parish: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Problems and Issues:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Modern Development Pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General character</td>
<td>Wiltshire Community History Online</td>
<td><strong>Baseline Information:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="https://history.wiltshire.gov.uk/community/getcom_print.php?id=118">https://history.wiltshire.gov.uk/community/getcom_print.php?id=118</a></td>
<td>Early rural past, later wool industry and then manufacturing. Boom during 18/19 centuries. Large scale of modern building (much architecturally anonymous and bland) overwhelms much heritage, which is mainly visible in small pockets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Victoria County History - Wiltshire</td>
<td><strong>Problems and Issues:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>British History Online- Hilperton</td>
<td>Protection of remaining heritage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.48 **Landscape**

6.49 In 2005 the parish council produced a Village Design Statement. Despite its age, much of the description of landscape character remains accurate. The text below borrows heavily from the VDS, although other sources were used, including inputs from the community, the West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment 2007 and the Wiltshire Open Space Study 2015. The VDS gives valuable advice concerning the design of development and of the aspects of the locality that make the village a unique and recognizable place. This is particularly so in relation to the need to preserve the Hilperton Gap fields.

6.50 The vast majority of undeveloped land in the parish is open countryside, amounting to approximately 600 hectares. All the land, apart from public areas such as playing fields, is farmed; approximately half is arable and half pasture. Underlying geology plays a large part in establishing landscape character – being composed mainly of clays. The landscape is fairly flat (described as `Semington Open Clay Vale – Character Area C2 in the WWLA - West Wiltshire Landscape Assessment`) and low-lying. It slopes gently up towards Hilperton from the East. There is a sense of openness, with few trees and hedges in sometimes poor condition. Skies are large and open. Yet, at the same time, views of Trowbridge are present, making the viewer aware that this is in fact an urban fringe. The Kennet and Avon canal provides a distinctive green corridor across the landscape. This is designated as a county wildlife site.

6.51 The Avon Clay River Flood Plain crosses the parish in the north (Character Area B1) and this is characterised by the meandering River Avon, water meadows, scattered development of hamlets and isolated farms and sense of tranquility. Nevertheless, on top of this broader structure, and viewed from a resident’s perspective - it is a Parish that, in landscape terms, divides into several very different areas:

6.52 **Hilperton Old Village**

This includes the conservation area. Here, mainly historic buildings lie together in a pattern typical of many Wiltshire villages – buildings from the last couple of centuries or so grouped around a parish church and along a limited pattern of streets and lanes, set against the rural backdrop of flattish fields and a few trees. To the east and north these are the open fields of Hilperton and Hilperton Marsh. This spreads out along both sides of the ridge bordering Gypsy Lane (byway no.22 to Semington) and affords widespread rural views to Whaddon and beyond and to Salisbury Plain. To the southeast open countryside lies between the B3105, the Kennet and Avon Canal and the River Avon.
The Hilperton Gap
To the West, separating the village from Trowbridge, is the Hilperton Gap (See Map as Appendix 2). There is a clear sense here of being on a dividing line between rural and urban. Indeed, to a large extent Hilperton’s identity as a rural village comes from the presence of the Gap, separating it and emphasizing its difference from the urban sprawl of Trowbridge.


The VDS describes the Gap as:

- An important area of open countryside, as it provides a barrier between the village and the eastern outskirts of Trowbridge.
- Providing attractive rural views across the Gap from the old village and to the church from Hilperton Marsh which contribute greatly to the village atmosphere and character of Hilperton.
- An important amenity area for informal recreation

Reference should be made by the reader who wishes to gain a better understanding of the Gap to the VDS.

The VDS recommendations for the Gap include:

- The natural beauty of the landscape including flora, fauna features should be respected and where appropriate enhanced and protected.
- New development in open countryside should be avoided.
- New developments on the edge of the village should give high priority to landscape design.

There are attractive rural views across the Gap from the old village and to the church from Hilperton Marsh which contribute greatly to the village atmosphere and character of Hilperton. Middle Lane, a public bridleway, lined with hedgerows, trees and a deep ditch, reminiscent of the old drove roads, crosses the Gap from the village to Victoria Road in Trowbridge. Every day many people use it to gain access to the fields in the Gap, and in particular those walkers, joggers and cyclists going to the town as it avoids the busy roads. The rest of the land, which is criss-crossed by a network of public rights of way, is an important amenity area for informal recreation.
6.56 The Hilperton Gap is the most significant area of landscape in the parish. It performs several important functions including and related to this.

- As open countryside – of value in its own right and as protected by Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policy 2.
- As a physical separator from Trowbridge, helping to define the separate, rural identity of Hilperton Village.
- As a green open space of value to informal recreation in an area with higher levels of Cardio-Vascular Disease and a shortage of such space in proportion to the growing population.
- As a provider of views enjoyed by the community – both to and from Hilperton.
- As a habitat. As discussed in the Scoping Report, the Hilperton Gap performs an important function for biodiversity. In particular, it is within the foraging range of Bechstein’s Bat and the Greater Horseshoe Bat, both protected species, which live in the nearby Bath and Bradford on Avon SAC. Development in the Gap would impact negatively on the bats, while the habitat enhancement proposed in this plan would benefit them.

6.57 Since the VDS was produced, the Hilperton Relief Road (Elizabeth Way) has been created. This cuts across the Gap from the A361 to the area of Canal Road Industrial estate and has removed much traffic from the old village of Hilperton – and incidentally emphasizing its rural character through the relative peace and quiet this has created. The road has therefore been mostly welcomed.
6.58 The Hilperton Gap relief road, when viewed close up, seems a strikingly hard, obviously man-made linear feature cutting a swathe through the otherwise green, rural landscape (see pic on this page). The contrast is emphasised in the vertical plane by tall steel road lighting, and in the horizontal by crisp, hard edging to the carriageway. Nevertheless, its presence does not deter pedestrians (or indeed horses). Indeed, pedestrian use of the gap has almost certainly increased since the road was built due to the excellent footpaths than run alongside the road, welcome additions to the existing network.

6.59 The new road has been provided with a number of crossing points and dog-walkers and horse-riders can often be seen crossing the new road, which provides clear sightlines and long-distance visibility aiding safe crossing, even when on horseback.

6.60 The photo on this page was taken from Point 5 on the map key above, facing north-west and looking toward the Canal Road industrial estate end of the relief road. Note the pedestrian using the new path and the wooden stock fencing (a type used locally on farms with livestock) that has been used to help the road blend into its rural surroundings.

6.61 The impact of Elizabeth Way on the Gap and the general landscape value of both eastern and western halves is considered more fully in the Landscape Setting Report produced by Indigo Landscapes and given as an appendix in the NDP.
6.62 There are no large areas of woodland in the parish, but trees add interest to the landscape, sited in the open countryside, either standing alone or in small groups. A copse is situated west of Whaddon Lane with ash and maple but with many dead elms. Another one is sited at Paxcroft Mead. Farmers have planted trees and shrubs in the parish including oak, cherry, ash, and broadleaved lime among other species either in clumps, or in hedgerows or alongside farm tracks. The orchards that were once commonplace around the village have all but disappeared, although remnants remain in back gardens, notably along Church Street. Trees add interest to the landscape, are of importance to the village environs and form essential wildlife habitats. Examples are:

- The row of beech and cluster of pine and lime trees in fields on the approach to Hilperton from Trowbridge;
- Two separate oaks at Marsh Farm and Paxcroft Farm
- The two copses of ash and maple off Whaddon Lane and at Paxcroft.

6.63 Hedgerows found on Lower Paxcroft Farm, on the south side of the A361, are distinctly different to elsewhere in the parish, being very broad and thick, and very good for wildlife. Unfortunately, some field hedgerows in open farmland have become rather sparse in depth and height. Modern methods of farm management are not always compatible with management for wildlife, where to leave the autumn cut until after berries have been consumed would be desirable.

6.64 **Paxcroft Mead**
A large modern housing estate. Like many modern housing estates, this is of low landscape value – however it does have numerous large green open spaces. The development covers approximately 100 hectares of previously agricultural land. This development has had a huge impact on the parish as it has more than doubled the number of houses in Hilperton. It has stimulated much thinking about our built environment. There development includes open play areas, a community centre, a small parade of shops including a supermarket, a primary school and a privately-run nursery. Paxcroft Brook on the Southernmost boundary of the Parish was considerably altered to control flooding and landscaped with large traffic free areas where residents can walk and cycle. New footbridges were built over the brook at various points together with a road bridge to southern areas of the development. A cycle path and footway running under the A361 allows people living north of the road to gain access to the school and shops. A small section of the housing estate (south of the A 361) was transferred to Trowbridge after the Local Government Boundary review in April 2017.

6.65 **Hilperton Marsh**
Hilperton Marsh lies 1/2 mile to the north-west of the village and is centred on a triangle of roads formed by Wyke Road, Marsh Road and Horse Road. The housing development in the middle of this triangle was built in the 1960s. Before any houses were built in this area the land literally was marsh land, hence the name of Hilperton Marsh. The river Avon valley still incorporates a rich area of marshland. There is a sense of peacefulness and a strong sense of a more rural past here, somewhat at odds with the more modern character of housing and traffic on the roads.
6.66 The Kennet and Avon Canal crosses the parish from east to west and is an important linear landscape and wildlife feature, now successfully softened by trees and greenery. This was opened in 1810 and this, together with the River Avon form the northern boundary of the Parish. A wharf constructed at the time also served the needs of Trowbridge. The hard lines of this contrast harshly with the surrounding countryside. Today, this is the site of Hilperton Marina, a gateway for visitors, just off Hammond Way adjacent to an industrial estate. The canal and the wharf are a busy thoroughfare for boat traffic and its towpath is a favorite place for anglers, picnickers, ramblers, dog walkers, and cyclists. These contribute to the life of the village, making it more than just a residential place.

6.67 Whaddon
The hamlet of Whaddon is a small collection of buildings in a generally open rural setting of farmland one mile to the northeast of the old village. It is situated beyond the Kennet and Avon canal, and overlooks the River Avon (Character Area B1 in the WWLA). The few houses are strung out along the lane, with small clusters beyond the canal, around the church, and surrounding Whaddon Grove Farm. Many have been renovated or rebuilt on sites of older properties. Whaddon is an ancient settlement which has been occupied since prehistoric times and there is evidence of Roman habitation. Humps and hollows in the field around the church mark the site. There is a strong sense of tranquility and history here. Semington Brook joins the Avon at Whaddon alongside pasture and is an important area of scrub and copse.

NOTE: A separate Landscape and Visual Setting Report was commissioned after the Scoping Report was produced. This is given and discussed in the NDP
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Sub-Topic</th>
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</table>
| **Hilperton old village and setting** | British History online  
http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/wilt/vol7/pp86-91  
Changing Historic Landscape of West Wiltshire  
Village Design Statement  
http://www.hilpertonparishcouncil.org.uk/index.php/village-design-statement/  
West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment  
https://history.wiltshire.gov.uk/community/getcom.php?id=118  
Wiltshire Core Strategy Policies 29 and 51  
Map in Appendix 2 | Baseline Information:  
‘Hilperton Gap’ is the area of agricultural land situated either side of the recently built road Elizabeth Way. Hilperton is inseparable from this setting – which emphasises its distinct rural identity and individuality as a village. This rural character is central to a desire to develop local employment from tourism.  
The Gap provides characteristically rural views in and out of the village and feels like a necessary area of transition – from rural to urban and vice versa.  
The fields in the Gap provide easy access to green space for the residents of north east Trowbridge, entirely comparable with Southwick Country Park that is provided for residents to the south west of the town.  
Green verges, hedgerows and spaces are characteristic of the entry to Hilperton and should be included in new development. Trees and hedgerows are valued in an area of otherwise fairly flat landscape.  
Problems and Issues:  
Development pressure on the Hilperton Gap.  
If the Gap were substantially built over, the nearest large open space would be very much further way. The healthy pursuit of walking would likely be much reduced, especially among seniors.  
Some hedgerows need re-planting and more trees could be planted also.  
Shortage of Open Space identified in the Wiltshire Open Space Study 2015 (see section on Service Centre Provision). |
| **Hilperton Marsh**       | British History online  
http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/wilt/vol7/pp86-91  
Changing Historic Landscape of West Wiltshire  
Village Design Statement  
http://www.hilpertonparishcouncil.org.uk/index.php/village-design-statement/  
West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment  
Wiltshire Community History  
Wiltshire Core Strategy Policies 29 and 51 | Baseline Information:  
Mainly modern building character contrasting sharply with open, peaceful low-lying agricultural land.  
Problems and Issues:  
Development pressure could erode this access to countryside and sense of place. |
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<th>Sub-Topic</th>
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</table>
| **Paxcroft Mead** | West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment. Community comment | **Baseline Information:**
Modern housing development. The proportion in the Parish was reduced after April 1st 2017 when an area to the South of the A361 was transferred to Trowbridge. This has not fundamentally altered the dominant rural character of the Parish - indeed in may have reinforced it.

**Problems and Issues:**
The houses have been built by a number of well-known national house builders. The design of the houses follows the companies’ corporate national style too, which are not, in the main, indicative of the style of the original cottages and houses. There is a desire for better quality design in future development. |
| **Whaddon** | British History online [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/wilts/vol7/pp86-91](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/wilts/vol7/pp86-91)
West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment
Wiltshire Community History
Wiltshire Core Strategy Policies 29 and 51 | **Baseline Information:**
Small hamlet with ancient origins. Whaddon Farm is at the centre - originally the stable of the vicarage house and has been converted to a single storey residence. Agricultural buildings belonging to both farms now make up much of the hamlet. These range from modern galvanised metal barns, to old stone barns. The area I surrounded by much low-lying land prone to flooding.

**Problems and Issues:**
Development pressure could erode this intensely rural character and overwhelm it with urban sprawl from Trowbridge unless restrained. |
6.69 **Population and housing**

In terms of housing, the needs of the local area are already substantially met by existing strategic allocations, including the major urban extension of Trowbridge - Ashton Park. The WCS identified on publication in 2015 just 165 additional houses as being required across the entire community area up until 2026. The latest evidence, - an update on the 2016 Wiltshire Housing Land Supply Statement (November 2016), published in March 2017, indicates that the original level of housing has already been delivered for the Trowbridge Community Area, with a zero requirement therefore remaining. Additionally, the Parish Housing Needs Survey (HNS) indicated only a relatively low level of demand for affordable housing (even when this was based on a larger Neighbourhood Area). Given this context, and the 'Large Village' status of Hilperton in the settlement hierarchy established in Core Policies 1 and 2, there appears to be little need for significant additional housing development in Hilperton, and not much of an imperative to directly allocate more sites in a Neighbourhood Plan, especially since windfall schemes seem very likely to meet any local needs. However, it is accepted that under Core Policy 29 additional housing will be required to meet the needs of Trowbridge in the HSAP (not yet part of the Development Plan), and the NDP is committed to a positive stance on this and on development in general. This stance is discussed further below and in the NDP.

6.70 The north and west Housing Market Area (HMA) in which the village is located can currently demonstrate a land supply of 5.73 years, which is above the minimum 5.25 required by Government. However, the 2017 figures are based mainly on 2016 data, and do not include a significant number of known sites that are anticipated to come forward by the next data collection point of April 2017 (see Wiltshire Housing Land Supply Statement Update March 2017). It is understood, on the other hand, that housing land supply may be reduced later in the WCS plan period should Ashton Park not be delivered on time. These calculations are given in the evidence base of the DPD or HSAP.

6.71 A Parish Housing Needs Survey (HNS) was undertaken in January 2017 at the request of Hilperton Parish Council and this was competed by Wiltshire Council Staff. The full Parish Housing Needs Survey is given as Appendix 7. This shows a demand for 13 affordable homes in the parish– 8 subsidised rent and 5 by means of shared ownership or discounted market housing. In fact, this level may be an over-estimate because the HNS was based on the parish and Neighbourhood Area as originally approved in September 2016, which included a larger survey population. As noted earlier in the Scoping Report, from 1st April 2017 some land including 264 homes from Paxcroft Mead were transferred to Trowbridge Town Council as a result of a separate boundary review by Wiltshire Council.

6.72 The difference in area between the HNS and the later Neighbourhood Area is not considered to be problematic for the Plan. This is because the HNS covered a slightly larger area and population and may be a slight over-estimate. It is not likely to have under-estimated need and its evidence is therefore broadly accepted by the Steering Group.

NOTE: Hilperton has for some time been receiving the attention of developers with a number of windfall schemes now pending. The Parish Council has already been approached by a developer for one scheme of around 200 homes. The NDP will be able to meet more than the bare minimum of housing needs from this source – see discussion in NDP.
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| Population (age structure, mortality etc.) | Wiltshire Council Topic Paper 14 Wiltshire JSA Census 2011 | **Baseline Information:**
- Trowbridge Community Area has a population density of 996 persons per square kilometre 123 more persons per square kilometre than in 2001. In the 2011 census the population of Hilperton was 4,967 and is made up of approximately 51% females and 49% males. Population size will have reduced by 264 households following the April 2017 Boundary Review.
- The average age of people in Hilperton is 39.
- By Community Area, Trowbridge Community Area has the sixth highest percentage of its total population under the age of 15 years, the fifth highest percentage of its total population being of working age, and the fifth lowest percentage of its total population being of retirement age and over.
- Life expectancy is 83.0 yrs. for females and 79.4 yrs. for males.
- The number of retirement age in the Community Area will rise by 35% by 2026.
- Trowbridge has a significant Polish population - the largest minority group within all Wiltshire’s community areas. The 2011 Census showed the community area had 1,445 residents from Poland.  

**Problems and Issues:**
Population likely to grow. Provision for older members of the community into the future, plus current facilities for the younger working age population and children. Facilities for healthy recreation, education, open space. |
| Housing | Wiltshire Core Strategy Parish Housing Needs Survey Wiltshire JSA Wiltshire Council Housing Land Availability Report 2014 | **Baseline Information:**
Strategic Objective 3 is ‘to provide everyone with access to a decent, affordable home’. The Core Strategy proposes 42,000 new homes in Wiltshire, 6,975 of them within Trowbridge Community Area. Most of these homes have already been found sites, with only 165 remaining to be identified across the entire community Area when the WCS was published in 2015. The latest evidence, (November 2016), indicates that this level of housing has already been delivered for the Community Area, with a zero requirement therefore remaining.

The Parish Housing Needs Survey indicated a need for just 13 affordable homes. However, these seem likely to be more than met by windfall schemes (see NDP document for data which was quantified after this Scoping Report). Nevertheless, the Steering group could consider a policy facilitating housing and committing to engagement with developers of suitable schemes.  

**Problems and Issues:**
Preserving the Gap / setting of Hilperton in the face of housing demand Few brownfield sites available (see figures in Land and Soil topic) Affordability? Environmental impact of new housing (e.g. on trees and hedgerows) |
6.73 **Community wellbeing and health**

6.74 Hilperton is a safe area to live with a wide range of services available nearby and fairly good internet and mobile connectivity. Social and community facilities are better than in much of Wiltshire. However, there are some concerns. For example, some health indicators in the Trowbridge area are worse than the Wiltshire Average and the population is ageing. There is some evidence that levels of physical exercise are also lower than is ideal and Trowbridge has a relatively high level of cardiac disease.

6.75 Although the majority of the Trowbridge community is relatively affluent, deprivation still exists in small pockets. Violent crime, domestic abuse and drug use, while low by national standards, are a problem when judged against the Wiltshire levels.

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</table>
| Health morbidity, obesity, long-term illness | Wiltshire Council Topic Paper 14 Wiltshire JSA | **Baseline Information:**
  - Trowbridge Community Area has the highest morbidity rate for cancer (rank 20 out of 20 community areas). Ranked 19 out of 20 for Alcohol related admissions to hospital and 18 out of 20 for Cardiovascular disease.
  - It is the least active CA in Wiltshire. 57.1% of people in the Trowbridge Community Area would like to do more physical exercise. This is significantly higher than the Wiltshire average of 48.8%.
  - 66.1% of respondents from Trowbridge Community Area said they were in good or very good physical health and 83.3% in good or very good mental health compared to 69.2% and 86.4% respectively for Wiltshire.
  - 36.2% of respondents in Trowbridge Community Area are quite happy with their weight but 60.7% said they would like to lose some weight. This is higher than the Wiltshire figure (59.4%).

**Problems and Issues:**
Ageing population. Least active CA in Wiltshire.
How to help people be more physically active across a range of age groups – provision of services/ at the right times and in the right places. More cycle paths (lack of these in the community area). Retain and enhance recreational opportunities.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poverty</strong></td>
<td>Index of multiple Deprivation Wiltshire Council Topic Paper 14 Wiltshire JSA</td>
<td><strong>Baseline Information:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Against national comparators, Trowbridge has a lower level of child poverty but it is the joint highest community area in Wiltshire at 14.8%. This equates to 1426 children.&lt;br&gt;• There are 26 LSOAs contributing to this community area, with proportions ranging from 2.1% of all children within the lowest ranking LSOA (Hilperton village (part) &amp; Paxcroft Mead (part) to 46.1% of all children within the highest ranking LSOA (Trowbridge John of Gaunt – Studley Green) living in poverty. This signifies that there are pockets of relative affluence and pockets of deprivation within the community area and probably within Hilperton too.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Problems and Issues:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Hilperton is a more affluent part of Trowbridge Community Area, with poverty affecting a small proportion of the local population. However small the proportion is – what is being done to help and support families and their children with social/economic disadvantage so that they too can participate in village life? Affordable housing would be a start, as would facilities for free recreation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crime</strong></td>
<td>National crime Survey Wiltshire Council Topic Paper 14 Wiltshire JSA</td>
<td><strong>Baseline Information:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• There has been a decrease in the number of Anti-Social behaviour incidents and violent crimes. Although Trowbridge community area ranks 1st out of 20 for violent crime.&lt;br&gt;• Domestic abuse incidents are on the increase.&lt;br&gt;• Slight rise in drug offences (3rd out of 20 CAs)&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Problems and Issues:</strong>&lt;br&gt;As with the rest of Wiltshire, Hilperton is a very safe place to live. However, development could still help to design out crime and make people feel safer.</td>
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## Community Wellbeing and Health (Continued >)

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<tr>
<td><strong>Recreation</strong>&lt;br&gt;sport, culture, pubs, community organisations, meeting places</td>
<td>Wiltshire Council Topic Paper 14&lt;br&gt;Wiltshire JSA Rural Facilities Survey</td>
<td><strong>Baseline information:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Hilperton Marina and Kennet and Avon Canal&lt;br&gt;• St. Michael’s and All Angels Church, Hilperton&lt;br&gt;• St. Mary’s CE Church, Whaddon&lt;br&gt;• St Mary Magdalene Church&lt;br&gt;• Football pitch on Whaddon Lane&lt;br&gt;• Village Hall, which hosts a range of regular clubs/societies including:&lt;br&gt;• Whist drives, Skittles, Social Dancing, Bingo, Beavers, Cubs &amp; Scouts, Video Society, Model Flying Club&lt;br&gt;• 2 Pubs – The Lion and Fiddle, The King’s Arms&lt;br&gt;• Trowbridge Rugby Club at Paxcroft&lt;br&gt;• Garden Centre/Nursery at Hilperton Marsh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problems and Issues:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Hilperton is very well served in terms of opportunities for recreation, and social interaction. Is enough being offered for the working age population and children and young people?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural service provision</strong></td>
<td>Wiltshire Council Topic Paper 14&lt;br&gt;Wiltshire JSA</td>
<td><strong>Baseline information:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Bus services – to Trowbridge, Staverton, Bath, Melksham, Chippenham and Corsham (See ‘Transport’)&lt;br&gt;• Petrol Station and Store&lt;br&gt;• Post Office&lt;br&gt;• Paxcroft Mead Local Centre (Budgens’ Supermarket, Estate Agents, Fish and Chip Shop, Chinese Takeaway, Hair Salon, Charity Shop and Carpet Shop) – just outside Parish since boundary review.&lt;br&gt;• 3 primary schools (Hilperton CE Primary School, The Mead School, Castle Mead School)&lt;br&gt;• ‘Busy Bees’ Nursery at Paxcroft Mead, St Michael’s Pre-School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problems and Issues:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Hilperton has a range of services available to its residents. Bus services however may not be adequate and at the right times. Would the community like any additional facilities? No current medical services available.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Digital Inclusion</strong></td>
<td>Wiltshire Council Topic Paper 14</td>
<td><strong>Baseline information:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Standard broadband (up to 17mbps) and Fibre Broadband (up to 76 mbps) are available in the Trowbridge Community Area&lt;br&gt;• Anecdotal evidence to suggest service could be improved for broadband and mobiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problems and Issues:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Good basic service across the Community Area – some areas will be better served than others…how to ensure service is good enough to enable working age population to work at home if this choice is available to them? What about those in the community who do not have computers or computer skills? Adult education?</td>
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</table>
Education

The first school in the parish was located in the Knap from 1832, becoming a national School with 100 pupils in 1843. In 1970, the primary school moved to Newleaze (see Village Design Statement).

Pre-School
Current provision includes Pre-School/Nurseries located in Horse Road, Hackett Place and Whaddon Lane at the Village Hall. Catherine’s Pre-School (see website Catherine’s pre-School) is run in an extension of a private home in Horse Road. Modifications have resulted in the provision of a specifically designed playroom and garden area. The school was opened in September 2003 and is run by 41-year-old mother of three, Catherine. Places are limited by size, with provision for 3 to 5 year olds.

Busy Bees Hilperton, formerly known as Just Learning, was registered in 2001 and is located in Hackett Place, Paxcroft Mead. (see Busy Bees website). An OfSted inspection in 2015 recorded that there were 144 children on roll. The service provided is extensive, with places for children aged 2 to 5 years of age and the centre is open for sessions from 7.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday all year round. Currently the facility employs 26 full and part time qualified staff.

Formerly a one day per week Play School run by mums St Michael's Pre-School opened in 1982 and now operates, term time only, five days per week offering sessions to children aged 2 to 5 years. Sessions operate between 9.00 and 12.30 and, currently for 3 days per week 9.00 to 3.00pm. (see St Michaels Hilperton website). St Michael’s has a close link with St Michael’s church and is based in the Village hall in Whaddon Lane. Demand for places is high and, with the prospect of 30 hours per week funding, there is pressure to increase the number and length of sessions. The trustees are also currently investigating the possibility of building a single-storey extension to the site on the land owned by the parish council. This scheme has the backing of the parish council and an architect is in the process of drawing up plans.

It is clear that the demand for Early Learning places within the parish is considerable. This is largely driven by the birth rate - births in Wiltshire averaged 5400 births per year between 2005 and 2014. However, this is augmented by in-migration, which is mirrored by extensive housebuilding; near to Hilperton, developments in Paxcroft Mead, Stourton Park, Millard’s Close, Navigator/Towpath in the past 10 to 15 years have all contributed to the increase in demand.

Primary Schools
Much the same can be said for places in the three primary schools currently located in the parish/immediate area. The pressure on primary school places since 2009 has been high and will continue so for the next 7 years as the peak 2005 to 2011 birth years feed through. These children will begin to appear in secondary education demand from September 2016.
6.83 Hilperton C of E Primary School (see website), which moved to Newleaze in 1970 has 173 pupils currently on role. The children, aged between 5 and 11 years are housed in 6 classrooms. The Head Teacher advised that an additional classroom would be desirable. Whilst the school is well located at the end of the Newleaze cul-de-sac and is surrounded by grassland and trees and backs on to farmland there are issues with the school’s Travel Plan. Currently operating breakfast and after-school clubs, with children arriving and leaving site at staggered times, there are concerns over the volume of traffic and parking problems when parents drop-off and collect children.

6.84 As part of the development of Paxcroft Mead, The Mead Community Primary School opened in September 2001. A substantial extension, providing an additional 7 classrooms was added in 2005 and academy status was granted in May 2012 (see The Mead and Castle Mead websites). Castle Mead school, located outside the current Hilperton Parish boundary is a recent addition to The Mead with 210 places and, in addition, an onsite nursery provision (Pipistrelle Bats).

6.85 **Secondary Schools**
There has never been a secondary school facility within the parish and, whilst in the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire there were views expressed with regard to the location of schools predominantly in the west of the Trowbridge area there are concerns with regard to transport links, bus routes etc. within the area. The provision of a secondary school in the West Ashton area would alleviate most of these concerns. Currently parents within the parish generally select between Clarendon School, John of Gaunt School and St Augustine’s RC School (all located to the west of Trowbridge). Growing numbers choose to travel to Melksham Oaks School and St Laurence in Bradford-on-Avon, or often using rail transport to Bath (Hayesfield and Beechen Cliff, which provide single sex education). A smaller number select from the large number of independent schools in the area.

6.86 **Higher and Adult Education.**
Wiltshire College has a campus nearby in Trowbridge and there is an adult education centre in Trowbridge based at County Hall and managed by Wiltshire Council. This offers a comprehensive range of course from general interest to ones suitable for changing or progressing a career.

6.87 **Attainment**
Wiltshire’s education attainment levels are broadly at or above the national average. Close to 70% of Wiltshire students achieved 5 GCSEs graded A*-C in 20/14/15. This compares well against the national average (64.9%). The county is ranked 41 nationally out of 152 counties. 2,995 individuals achieved a level 3 qualification by 19 in 2015. This was above the national average (57.4%), as well as better than Wiltshire’s statistical neighbours (57.81%). Wiltshire is ranked 50. This data is sourced from the LAIT September 2016 showing March 2016’s data for people aged 19 in 2015.
# Education

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<tr>
<th>Sub-Topic</th>
<th>Relevant Plans / Policies</th>
<th>Local Problems / Issues / Baseline for Hilperton</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilities pre-school and primary</td>
<td>Community Childcare Plan – Trowbridge, Wiltshire Council</td>
<td><strong>Baseline Information:</strong> Good facilities but nearing capacity. Growing demand from various sources. <strong>Problems and Issues:</strong> Need to expand facilities or provide new ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities secondary</td>
<td>Wiltshire Education, Employment &amp; Skills Strategy 2014-2020</td>
<td><strong>Baseline Information:</strong> Existing schools reaching capacity. New Secondary as part of Ashton Park nearby would be welcome and would reduce the school run across Trowbridge. <strong>Problems and Issues:</strong> Will need new facility soon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attainment</td>
<td>Wiltshire Education, Employment &amp; Skills Strategy 2014-2020 Wiltshire School Places Strategy 2015-2020 Work Wiltshire Statistics LAIT (Local Authorities’ Interactive Tool) <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait</a></td>
<td><strong>Baseline Information:</strong> Wiltshire’s education attainment levels are broadly at or above the National Average. Close to 70% of Wiltshire students achieved 5 GCSEs graded A*-C in 20/14/15. This compares well against the national average (64.9%). The county is ranked 41 nationally out of 152 counties. 2,995 individuals achieved a level 3 qualification by 19 in 2015. This was above the national average (57.4%), as well as better than Wiltshire’s statistical neighbours (57.81%). Wiltshire is ranked 50. This data is sourced from the LAIT September 2016 showing March 2016’s data for people aged 19 in 2015. <strong>Problems and Issues:</strong> Need to ensure attainment levels remain good even with substantial in migration of non-English migrants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Education</td>
<td><a href="http://www.learninginwiltshire.org.uk/">http://www.learninginwiltshire.org.uk/</a> Wiltshire Education, Employment &amp; Skills Strategy 2014-2020</td>
<td><strong>Baseline Information:</strong> Good range of options nearby in Trowbridge. <strong>Problems and Issues:</strong> None, other than public transport improvements for access.</td>
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</table>
6.88 **Service centre provision**

6.89 The Neighbourhood Area is generally well served with services and facilities. However, many of these are in Trowbridge or out of the village centre and access can be a problem for the elderly or the young who have no access to a car. A local medical facility would be especially welcome. Restoring some of the village shops and small enterprises could also be a possibility.

6.90 The Wiltshire Open Space Study of 2015, produced by Wiltshire Council, identifies a shortfall in provision of most kinds of open space in both the Trowbridge rural and urban areas (See Appendix 8). The study sets out a clear role for neighbourhood plans in:

- Protecting the existing resource
- Enhancing the existing resource
- Relocating the resource
- Identifying new resources
- Identifying sites no longer required.

6.91 Other infrastructure improvement identified in the WCS will also benefit Hilperton residents – for example a new secondary school on the east side and riverside enhancements in the main town as well as the new cinema. However, there is still scope for more local facilities for entertainment and to serve other community needs, within the parish.
## Service centre provision (Continued >)

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<th>Sub-Topic</th>
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| **Community facilities** | Wiltshire Council Topic Paper 14 Wiltshire JSA | **Baseline Information:** Village Hall in Hilperton provides a range of social clubs including:  
- Whist drives, Skittles, Social Dancing, Bingo, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, Video Society and Model Flying Club  
- It also has a licensed bar and can be hired for community events  
  Community Centre/Social Club at Paxcroft Mead (now just outside the Parish following boundary review) provides;  
- Coffee Club  
- Mother and toddler, Karate, Tai Chi, Short Mat Bowls, Zumba and Pilates  
- Youth Club  
- It also has a licensed bar ‘The Mead Club’ and can be hired for private functions and events  
  **Places of Worship**  
- St. Michaels and All Angels Church, Hilperton  
- St. Mary's CE Church, Whaddon  
- St Mary Magdalene in Horse Road  
  **Post Office at Hilperton Marsh, Recreation/ Sports Fields**  
- Trowbridge Rugby Club  
- Football Pitch at Village Hall  
- Various green spaces and children’s play areas on Paxcroft Mead, village hall and Jacklins / Millard  
  **Public Houses**  
- The Lion and Fiddle, Hilperton, The Kings’ Arms, Hilperton Marsh  
  **Medical**  
- Hilperton is covered by Adcroft Surgery (Trowbridge - 2 miles away)  
  **Problems and Issues:** Hilperton is well served with a wide range of facilities. The one area which is lacking is any locally based medical services. The nearest Doctor’s Surgery is approximately two miles away, so residents without cars will have to use public transport or hire a taxi to get there. There is an identified shortage of Open Space. |
### Service centre provision (Continued >)

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<tr>
<td><strong>Shopping and retail</strong></td>
<td>Wiltshire Council Topic Paper 14 Wiltshire JSA</td>
<td><strong>Baseline Information:</strong>&lt;br&gt;  - Local centre at Paxcroft Mead - just outside parish Boundary following boundary review -includes:&lt;br&gt;  - Budgens Supermarket&lt;br&gt;  - ‘Salon Excel’ Hairdressers&lt;br&gt;  - ‘1st Choice’ Carpet Shop&lt;br&gt;  - Paxton’s Estate Agent&lt;br&gt;  - ‘Mind’ Charity Shop&lt;br&gt;  - Robinson’s Fish and Chip Shop&lt;br&gt;  - ‘Star East’ Chinese Takeaway&lt;br&gt;  - In addition:&lt;br&gt;  - ‘Central’ Convenience Store at Hilperton Marsh&lt;br&gt;  - Texaco Petrol Station at Hilperton Marsh&lt;br&gt;  - Garden Centre at Hilperton Marsh&lt;br&gt;  - Paxcroft Farm Estate Business Centre&lt;br&gt;  - <strong>Problems and Issues:</strong>&lt;br&gt;    Hilperton has a range of shopping facilities, however these tend to be sited at the extremes of the village in Paxcroft Mead and Hilperton Marsh, with no facilities of this kind in the central part of the village. This means that car travel will be necessary to access these facilities for many local residents.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
6.92 **Transport**

6.93 The WCS proposes some transport infrastructure improvements - for example to the A350 and in terms of linking parts of Trowbridge itself internally with foot and cycle paths and externally by mean of public transport. It is important that Hilperton benefits from such links – as these would enable the existing pattern of commuting to become more sustainable - e.g. foot, cycle path or bus links to Trowbridge railway and bus station (the latter to be provided as part of the Trowbridge Master Plan). The footpaths across the Hilperton Gap should be preserved and if possible enhanced to cycleways to improve connections with Trowbridge.

6.94 Hilperton is a small village with limited local transportation facilities. However, its proximity to Trowbridge means that residents do potentially have access to a good rail service – providing they can catch the bus or drive to the station in the town. The train has a regular service, usually half-hourly each way Mon-Sat, (hourly on Sundays) provided by Great Western Railway to Bath Spa, Bristol Temple Meads and either Gloucester or Cardiff Central northbound and Weymouth or Southampton and Portsmouth in the south. On an average weekday, there are 60 trains per day travelling from Trowbridge to Bath Spa with the fastest journey time being 18 minutes. On an average weekday, there are 48 trains per day travelling from Trowbridge to London Paddington. The journey time between Trowbridge and London Paddington is usually 2 hours 2 minutes.

6.95 The main ways to access Hilperton is via the main roads either by car or by bus on one of the local services to and from Hilperton. This service is provided mainly by two buses, the X34 and the 68 with destinations ranging from Trowbridge, to Melksham, Chippenham and Frome and at present there are no buses to Bath or Holt but some locals feel this would be very useful. The situation regarding public transport is therefore not too bad – although some feel the bus service could be improved. For example, more bus stops would help. The service to Staverton and Corsham is only really available to Horse Road and Marsh Road residents. Service 49 (Devizes & Swindon) which does run through part of the parish via the A361 has a similar problem – namely a long walk to stops. Additionally, the main bus service reduced from 5 trips per hour in each direction (X34/234/236) to 2 buses an hour (X34 only) in September 2015. Leapgate also lost its bus service (236) at that time and now only has occasional X34 services.

6.96 The main issue facing Hilperton in more recent years has been the oversized vehicles using its old and somewhat narrow roads as a rat run, causing damage to its properties (Some within its conservation area and of a considerable age) and danger to its pedestrians. This has been mostly resolved as after over 30 years of protesting, a Relief Road (Elizabeth Way) has finally been built and opened in October 2015, built by Persimmon Homes, after planning permission was granted to the developer by Wiltshire Council in 2006. The road cuts across the Gap, where it bisects footpaths used by the villagers for recreation.
The opening of Elizabeth Way has removed the majority of HGV traffic, but there are concerns about the relatively high level of traffic still entering the village especially at commuter times. The bulk of this comes in (and leaves) via Devizes Road and falls into two main categories. Category 1 is traffic continuing via Trowbridge Road to the Fieldways roundabout which it can access with priority over A361 traffic. Even school buses can be observed doing this. Category 2 is traffic which continues via Church St and Hill Street to Marsh Road and Horse Road this is almost certainly ‘Rat Run’ traffic going to Canal Road and East Trowbridge or to Staverton and beyond. Such traffic tends to leave by the same route(s).

There have been thoughts on closing Devizes Road to prevent this (was mentioned as recently as the last PC Newsletter). There is no formal evidence of this problem as yet but Wiltshire Council is supposed to be arranging a traffic count on Devizes Road and Church St/Hill St once the traffic flow changes resulting from Elizabeth Way have stabilised. The results would then be compared with the pre EW monitoring.

Lack of parking is another Issue that is relevant to many residents of Hilperton which is demonstrated by the many cars parked on the pavements and verges throughout the village. This situation could get worse if the village is successful in developing facilities and jobs from tourism. There is a large car park available for all users of Hilperton village hall where there are also a limited number of resident’s parking spaces available for rent each year. The rest of Hilperton has mostly limited road parking, unless there is a private drive, due to double yellow lines (put in place when the roads were used by the larger lorries).

Speeding is a problem on some of the parish roads and is felt to be too high at 50 mph on the new Elizabeth Way (the main village ‘by-pass’ across the Gap). Community Speed Watch (CSW) operates in the area. Sites in Hilperton which met the criteria for CSW are Devizes Road, Hill Street, Horse Road, Marsh Road, and Trowbridge Road (basically all the main through roads). The recorded data shows varying figures, but the ‘busiest’ site is Trowbridge Road where offending levels (36mph and over) can reach 24% of vehicles.

The canal also provides a form of transport – however the main impact of this is probably to bring in more pedestrian and cycling visitors rather than as a practical means of transport for villagers. On the other hand, the towpath could form part of an extended path and cycle way network.

Despite the fairly close proximity of facilities in Trowbridge, many people use cars locally for short journeys. It would improve the overall sustainability of Hilperton if more of these short trips could be done on foot or by bicycle. The Wiltshire Open Space Study 2015 also stresses how important it is to link together existing open spaces to facilitate access for recreation and use as habitat:

‘Future LDPD’s and Neighbourhood Plans should consider the opportunities for creating and enhancing a network of both utility and recreation routes for use by foot and bike in both urban and rural areas. Creative application of the amenity green space/natural green space components of the proposed overall standard in respect of new development should be explored’.
## Transport

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<tr>
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<th>Local Problems / Issues / Baseline for Hilperton</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public transport</td>
<td>Topic Paper 10 – Wiltshire Core Strategy 2012&lt;br&gt;Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026 (LTP3)&lt;br&gt;Trowbridge Community Area Plan 2011 NPPF</td>
<td><strong>Baseline Information:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Regular Bus service to Trowbridge and elsewhere but none to Bath.&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.carlberry.co.uk/rfnlist.asp?L1=HIL0020&amp;op=B">http://www.carlberry.co.uk/rfnlist.asp?L1=HIL0020&amp;op=B</a>&lt;br&gt;Community Link Bus also available.&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.wiltshirecommunitytransport.org.uk">http://www.wiltshirecommunitytransport.org.uk</a>&lt;br&gt;Good train service from Trowbridge&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://unidoc.wiltshire.gov.uk/UniDoc/Document/File/MTYvMDA2NzIvT1VULDY5NjU4NA===">http://unidoc.wiltshire.gov.uk/UniDoc/Document/File/MTYvMDA2NzIvT1VULDY5NjU4NA===</a>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Problems and Issues:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Bus service could be improved – especially link to Bath. Also, no evening or Sunday service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foot and cycle paths</td>
<td>Topic Paper 10 – Wiltshire Core Strategy 2012&lt;br&gt;Wiltshire Core Strategy CP 60&lt;br&gt;Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026 (LTP3)&lt;br&gt;Trowbridge Community Area Plan 2011, NPPF</td>
<td><strong>Baseline Information:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Good basic network but needs safety improvements, signage and ideally upgrading to cycle path.&lt;br&gt;Links to Trowbridge across the Gap could be improved.&lt;br&gt;Crossing over Elizabeth Way?&lt;br&gt;<strong>Problems and Issues:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Safety and quality issues as above.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HGV / traffic</td>
<td>Steering Group Observation</td>
<td><strong>Baseline Information:</strong>&lt;br&gt;As above text.&lt;br&gt;<strong>Problems and Issues:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Traffic types and levels – despite new ‘by-pass’ road (Elizabeth Way).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policy 61&lt;br&gt;Trowbridge Community Area Plan 2011 NPPF</td>
<td><strong>Baseline Information:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Regularly observed vehicles parked on road and elsewhere.&lt;br&gt;Plan to tackle this with parking restrictions&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.hilpertonparishcouncil.org.uk/index.phpdouble-yellow-lines/">http://www.hilpertonparishcouncil.org.uk/index.phpdouble-yellow-lines/</a>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Problems and Issues:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Congestion and harm to setting of listed buildings and conservation area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.103 **Economy and enterprise.**

6.104 In terms of employment, it is the policy of the WCS to attract businesses to Trowbridge and such jobs as result are likely to meet a significant part of the local need for additional employment, as they have historically done. Nevertheless, this does not mean that a ‘Large Village’ like Hilperton should give up on one of the central themes of sustainable development – improving self-containment and reducing the need to travel by providing local jobs. Topic paper 7 covered the economic background from which that element of the Wiltshire Core Strategy was developed. It does not include any specific references to Hilperton parish.

6.105 Although living in a rural location, residents of Hilperton have worked in various local industries for centuries – although rarely with any sector being dominant. This situation broadly continues, with many residents working in Trowbridge or commuting further afield. While there are some local sources of employment, there is a desire for more opportunities within the parish, whether ‘working from home’ or in local enterprises. While large scale employers would probably not be welcomed (due to traffic and other impacts), small scale and medium businesses would be ideal. Tourism is a possible sector which could be developed and the rural setting makes farm diversification and horse-based businesses a possibility.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History &amp; overview</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hilpertonparishcouncil.org.uk/index.php/village-design-statement/HilpertonVillageDesignStatement.pdf">http://www.hilpertonparishcouncil.org.uk/index.php/village-design-statement/HilpertonVillageDesignStatement.pdf</a></td>
<td><strong>Baseline Information:</strong> Hilperton does not have a history of large scale employment within the Parish itself. Being a rural community it would seem likely that agriculture would have been a major employer but even as far back as the 1801 census only 20 out of 708 villagers were recorded as being employed in agriculture. The remainder worked in Trade, Manufacturing and Handicraft industries, probably linked to the existence of the large Woollen Industry in Trowbridge. There is some evidence of home working connected with the woollen industry in some of the older cottages.</td>
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</table>
[http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/Distance Travelled to Work, 2001 (UV35) (2001)](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/Distance Travelled to Work, 2001 (UV35) (2001))<sup>3</sup> | **Baseline Information:** The 2011 census shows 30 out of 2474 in employment working in agriculture. The range of other occupations is now far wider but it is clear that the majority work outside the parish boundary and indeed well beyond Trowbridge. The 2001 distance travelled to work census (unable to find a 2011 version of this table) shows 10% working from home, 41% within 5kms, 29% up to 20kms and the remainder even further afield. |
### Economy and enterprise (Continued >)

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<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Relevant Plans / Policies</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk">www.wiltshire.gov.uk</a> Wiltshire Council Planning applications ¹³</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/EconomicActivity">http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/EconomicActivity</a>, 2011 (QS601EW)⁵</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157357/%E2%81%B6">www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157357/⁶</a></td>
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<td>House of Commons Library – Unemployment by Constituency January 2015 – Research Paper 15/04¹²</td>
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<td>Hilp Questionnaire Analysis FULL FINAL.pdf ¹¹</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baseline Information</td>
<td>The current employment opportunities in Hilperton are mainly based around the light industrial units centred on farm sites (Marsh Farm and Paxcroft Farm), Trojan Light Engineering at Whaddon and New Barn Farm in Whaddon Lane. There is also a small office services business park based on the Grange, Canal Road Industrial Estate is nearby. There is also some employment in the local shops and the two pubs.</td>
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<td>A search of planning applications on the Wiltshire Council site¹³ failed to find any ongoing applications for any of the current industrial sites, but one failed application for housing at Marsh Farm some time ago. Unable to find any current unemployment statistics for Hilperton more recent than 2011 ⁵ when it was 3.5% against a figure for Wiltshire of 3.9%. This latter had dropped to 3.3% in March 2016 ⁶ and it is unlikely that the Hilperton figure has increased as there has been no special economic downturn in the local economy in the last 5 years. This is supported by the House of Commons Research document¹² which shows unemployment at an all-time low for South West Wiltshire constituency in Jan 2015. Nevertheless, there was a desire for more local employment in the recent questionnaire ¹¹.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems and Issues:</td>
<td>Majority of residents commute out of the Parish – but many relatively short distances – probably to Trowbridge. No dominant employment sector, but some employment within Parish however there is a desire among residents for more opportunities. There are a number of homeworkers and technology may help this increase.</td>
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## Economy and enterprise (Continued >)

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| The future    | http://www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/dbimg/WILTSHIRE & SWINDON VISITOR ACCOMMODATION FUTURES.pdf                                                                                                                                  | **Baseline Information**  
There is nothing in the public domain about any planned major economic development for Hilperton. It could be argued that this is a good thing and the policy should simply be to minimise any further such development to retain the predominantly residential nature of the community. However, this is essentially a negative approach and does not take forward the desire of some residents for more local work opportunities.  
**Issues / Opportunities**  
More local employment would be good. Suggest:  
Job creation and facilitation through:  
Promotion of tourism - in particular accommodation, restaurant and camping/caravan facilities. Hilperton is well placed geographically as a base to visit many attractions and has the K&A canal on its doorstep. However, it is lacking in tourist amenities.  
Working with local businesses  
Investigate and facilitate expansion of hi-speed internet into the whole parish. This is essential to business, homeworker and domestic users alike.  
New employment should however be appropriate in scale and nature to the rural community. Policies may be required or existing ones may need to be enforced to ensure that commercial development blends into the local environment. |
7.0 Identifying key issues, problems and solutions

The scoping research in this report gives the policy and environmental context for the Hilperton Neighbourhood Plan. Hilperton is in many ways a safe, desirable place to live with relatively low overall deprivation and a high quality of life. However, there are challenges that a Neighbourhood Plan could help to address, whether through formal planning policies or by identifying areas for non-planning community based action. In practice, both the scoping research contained within this report and the inputs from community engagement will be used in selecting draft polices for the community to consider. That synthesis will occur when the draft Neighbourhood Plan is written.

However, in terms of the scoping evidence alone (including the planning policy context) the following issues have been identified as well as ways these could be taken forward in the plan.

7.1 Biodiversity and Natural Environment

The rural setting and quality of the natural environment are known to be important to Hilperton residents. Research has indicated some pressures and challenges:

- New housing and employment development will increase pressure on all habitats including the Hilperton Gap.
- Neglect or lack of management and investment will harm hedgerows
- Farming can lead to nitrate and other run-off into water courses
- Climate change, litter, neglect and fuel spillages from boats or pollution from the marina may adversely affect water habitats including the canal and Paxcroft Brook.
- Domestic cats from new housing may predate upon water voles, mice and birds.

7.2 It may not be appropriate to tackle all of these within a Neighbourhood Plan – for instance there is little that a plan could do about predation by domestic cats, nor possibly issues relating to the canal and wharf. On the other hand, the following may be possible:

- Non-Planning policy to continue to support and if possible expand hEdges project and other work to restore hedgerows in the parish.

7.3 Land and soil resources

Most of the agricultural land in the Parish is grade 3. There is a shortage of brownfield land.

As no sites are proposed, there is no need for a policy covering this issue which is also dealt with by the WCS.
7.4 **Water resources and flood risk**
Most of the parish’s built environment is not subject to significant flood risk. In terms of new development, SuDS is already required by virtue of Core Strategy policy. Similarly, any new applications for development in areas prone to flooding (such as parts of the Hilperton Gap) would be subject to consideration during the planning application process. There would be little point in repeating higher level policy and indeed this is considered to be bad practice.

7.5 One factor that could be tackled by non-planning action however is the maintenance of existing ditches. Lack of maintenance is an issue behind some flash flooding of roads. Accordingly, it could be suggested that the plan includes:

- **Non-Planning Policy to encourage landowners to maintain ditches or to organise community volunteers to do so.**

7.6 **Air quality and environmental pollution**
The area does not suffer from poor air quality or significant pollution threats. No policy is required covering this issue. However, sustainable transport policy encouraging shift from cars could still be beneficial given projected growth of traffic nationally.

7.7 **Climate Change**
While Hilperton will suffer from the effects of climate change, there seems little that the community can do in the Neighbourhood Plan on this issue. Renewable energy would help cut emissions but landscape concerns would rule this out on a large scale. Installation within the conservation area or on listed buildings could be similarly problematic. Perhaps the best things the community could do would be to support tree planting (see landscape policy), protect the open spaces from development (this would reduce the heat island effect of Trowbridge and Hilperton village) and act to reduce emissions through sustainable transport (see Transport and Developer Contributions Policies).

- **Formal Planning Policies in Landscape, Transport and Developer Contributions Sections**

7.8 **Historic environment**
The historic environment is crucially important in terms of the identity of the old village of Hilperton and any future attempt to capitalise on this for tourism. While the VDS exists, it would be strengthened by formally requiring applicants for planning permission to demonstrate how their proposals were in accordance with the principles of the VDS.

- **Formal Planning Policy covering Design and requiring demonstration of compliance with VDS principles.**
7.9 **Landscape**

Landscape is important to Hilperton in a number of ways:

- Preserving open spaces for leisure and recreation (important given the areas health issues)
- Preserving the setting of old Hilperton village in terms of openness and greenness (the Hilperton Gap)
- Preserving trees, hedgerows and verges – important visual texture and a welcome natural contrast to the relatively high levels of development nearby.
- Preserving views of Hilperton both in and out
- Preserving the separate identity of Hilperton from an encroaching Trowbridge (Hilperton Gap)

7.10 Accordingly, the following may be appropriate:

- **Formal Planning Policy covering Landscape to include the Hilperton Gap as suggested in the Wiltshire Core Strategy** (5.150)

7.11 **Population and housing**

The area is subject to substantial strategic housing allocations – for example Ashton Park which will also include large amounts of affordable housing (2,600 homes at 30% affordable). The original housing requirement for the entire community area as expressed in the Wiltshire Core Strategy has already been met (as shown in the Housing Land Supply Statement March 2017) and there is now an adequate housing land supply – at least for the present stage of the WCS. The HNS indicated a relatively low need for affordable housing from within the present parish, even though the report was based on the pre-boundary review (larger) parish area. Hilperton is, of course, not expected to take significant elements of housing in any case, being a Large Village as defined in the WCS.

Having said this, the NDP should take a positive attitude towards meeting what local housing needs there are, and the community is, in any event, not opposed to suitable schemes of moderate scale. While the community has so far not expressed a strong desire to formally allocate sites (and local windfall activity is significant and likely to meet demand*), the NDP could be positive in dealing with this issue by:

- Adapting any landscape setting policy to plan positively and accommodate the proposed DPD (HSAP) site West of Elizabeth Way, thereby sacrificing some land to meet not local, but strategic housing need, and;
- Creating a policy encouraging self-build housing** and other homes, making a commitment to negotiating with developers of suitable windfall schemes.

* see later data in NDP.
** self-build has a long history in the village, with several homes having been delivered by this means.
7.12 **Community wellbeing and health**
Trowbridge Community Area has the highest morbidity rate for cancer (rank 20 out of 20 community areas). Ranked 19 out of 20 for Alcohol related admissions to hospital and 18 out of 20 for Cardiovascular disease. It is also the least active CA in Wiltshire. There is a demand for closer medical facilities for an ageing population. Accordingly, it may be appropriate to have:

- **Formal Planning Policy covering Infrastructure and encouraging medical facilities.**
- **Formal Planning Policy retaining landscape / green spaces (such as the Hilperton gap) (see above)**

7.13 **Education**
Facilities are good locally but nearing capacity. New secondary school however is likely to be provided soon and pre-school centre likely to be subject of planning application to renew existing permission. In the light of the above, no policy is proposed.

7.14 **Service centre provision and infrastructure**
Medical facilities in Hilperton would be welcome. So would more shops. The following might therefore be appropriate:

- **Formal Planning Policy covering Infrastructure and encouraging medical and retail facilities.**

7.15 **Transport**
Hilperton has a reasonable network of paths, but, given the proximity of Trowbridge and the potential to get residents to switch to sustainable transport rather than get in the car, there is a need to enhance the network in terms of improving connectivity, enhancing signage and widening to create cycle paths. The Wiltshire Open Space Study 2015 stressed the need to link together existing open spaces. A crossing over Elizabeth Way would also be useful.

7.16 There are also problems with speeding vehicles and parking. However, these cannot be controlled directly via planning policies as they are properly highway matters.

- **Formal Planning Sustainable Transport Policy requiring developer to link into and improve existing foot and cycle path systems, especially in terms of improving access to Trowbridge and cycling safety.**
- **Informal Non-Planning Policy to encourage action over parking issues and speeding**

The above policies would also support maintenance of good air quality, health and leisure and recreation objectives.
7.17 **Economy and enterprise**
Many residents commute considerable distances to work. Others join the traffic queues in Trowbridge. There is also a desire for more local work opportunities. Accordingly, the following may be appropriate:

- **Formal Planning Employment Policy encouraging local businesses, including tourism**

7.18 **Developer contributions**
Tackling many issues requires physical action – usually with a financial price-tag. Under some circumstances, it is possible to fund these using contributions from developers wishing to gain planning permission. Some of these come directly, for example via Section 106 Agreements. Others can come indirectly for example via CIL contributions. A number of issues in Hilperton need investment in order to solve them. While not seeking to impose additional burdens, it is considered to be reasonable that this should be found from development and that priorities should be spelt out in the NDP so that the community secures a benefit from any growth that does happen.

7.19 The general local policy context for this is set out in WCS Core 3 and the Planning Obligations DPD May 2015. The purpose of a Developer Contributions policy in the NDP is not to duplicate this context or encourage ‘double-dipping’ but simply to add local detail and let developers know in advance what the priorities and expectations of the community are.

Accordingly, the following may be appropriate:

- **A Formal Planning Policy regarding Developer Contributions** that would set out the main priorities for Hilperton. These could include:
  - Recreation facilities for children
  - Upgrading of path and cycle network
  - Contribution towards medical centre or facility
  - Hedgerow and tree planting and maintenance
  - Improvements in Broadband

- **An Informal Non-Planning Policy stating the infrastructure priorities for CIL funding.**
8.0 **List of policies suggested by the scoping research**

8.0 **List of possible draft policies for Hilperton based on the evidence collected**

To summarise; the following are suggested by the scoping research:

**Formal Planning Policies**

- Formal Planning Policy covering **Design** and requiring demonstration of compliance with VDS principles.
- Formal Planning Policy covering **Landscape** to include protection of the Hilperton Gap as suggested in the Wiltshire Core Strategy (5.150) and as evidenced by the Wiltshire Open Space Study / Green Infrastructure Strategy and VDS.
- Formal Planning Policy to encourage self-build **Housing** and engagement with windfall scheme developers.
- Formal Planning Policy covering **Infrastructure** and encouraging medical and retail facilities.
- Formal Planning **Sustainable Transport** Policy requiring developer to link into and improve existing foot and cycle path systems, especially in terms of improving access to Trowbridge and cycling safety.
- Formal Planning **Employment** Policy encouraging local businesses, including tourism.
- Formal Planning Policy regarding **Developer Contributions**

8.1 **Informal Non-Planning Policies**

- Non-Planning policy to continue to support and if possible expand hEdges project and other work to **restore hedgerows** in the parish.
- Non-Planning Policy to encourage landowners to **maintain ditches and drainage** or to organise community volunteers to do so.
- Non-Planning Policy to encourage action over **parking issues and speeding**
- Non-Planning Policy stating the **infrastructure priorities for CIL funding**.

8.2 **Roles of scoping research and community engagement in policy creation**

While important, scoping research is only part of the background to policy creation. The other half is community engagement. What policies eventually get selected in any plan owe as much to what the community wants as what research shows objectively are the main issues. In the case of the Hilperton Neighbourhood Plan, the decision was taken to require both objective evidence AND community wishes in order to create draft policy. The wishes and thoughts of the community, derived through several community engagement exercises, are given in the accompanying Consultation Statement and should be read alongside this scoping report.
Appendix 1 Data Sources (not exhaustive)

- An Air Quality Strategy for Wiltshire 2006
- AONB Management Plan
- CIRIA (2010) Planning for SuD - making it happen [online]
- County SMR and GIS System
- Designated Sites – Natural England website
- European Commission (2011) ‘Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020’ [online]
- Flood Risk Maps – Environment Agency website
- Hilperton Village Design Statement
- House of Commons Library – Unemployment by Constituency January 2015 – Research Paper 15/0
- Housing Site Allocation Plan (HSAP) draft and topic papers
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Neighbourhood Planning Advice Note – Historic England website
- Neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk
- Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)
- Strategy for Historic Environment in the South West 2004
- The Hampshire Avon Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy for Wiltshire 2006
- Trowbridge Draft Community Area Plan 2011
- UK Census - Wiltshire and Hilperton Parish - 2011
- Victoria County History - Wiltshire
- West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment 2007
- West Wiltshire Local Plan 2004
- West Wiltshire Leisure and Recreation DPD (saved policies)
Appendix 1 Data Sources (Continued >)

Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan 2008
Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015
Wiltshire Core Strategy Habitat Regulations Assessment
Wiltshire Community History Online http://history.wiltshire.gov.uk/community/
Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Strategy
Wiltshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2011-2016
Wiltshire Open Space Study 2015.
Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment 2005
Wiltshire Planning Obligations SPD May 2015
Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Local Plan 2011
Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Local Plan 2001
Wiltshire Renewable Energy Action Plan
Wiltshire Strategy for 14 - 19 Education and Training 2005
Wiltshire and Swindon Economic Strategy 2003 - 2008
Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record
Wiltshire & Swindon visitor accommodation futures
Wiltshire Council (2015): JSA for Trowbridge Community Area, [online]
http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/communityandliving/rightsofway/publicrightsofwaymapping.htm
http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/communityandliving/rightsofway/commonlandandvillagegreens.htm
https://library.thehumanjourney.net/884/
https://history.wiltshire.gov.uk/community/getcom.php?id=118
http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/wilts/vol7/pp86-91#h2-0001
www.h-edges.org.uk
http://www.carlberry.co.uk/fnlist.asp?L1=HIL0020&op=B
http://www.wiltshirecommunitytransport.org.uk
Appendix 2 The ‘Hilperton Gap’
Appendix 3 Hilperton and Flood Risk
Appendix 4 Hilperton and Heritage
Appendix 5: Sustainable Transport
Appendix 6: SEA Screening Decision

Wiltshire Council

Strategic Environmental Assessment - Screening determination for the Hilperton Neighbourhood Plan

February 2017

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Legislative requirements
3. The Hilperton Neighbourhood Plan
4. SEA Screening assessment
5. SEA Screening decision
6. Statutory consultee response to screening decision

Appendix A – Consultation responses from statutory consultation bodies
1. Introduction

1.1 This document provides a screening determination of the need to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Hilperton Neighbourhood Plan.

1.2 Wiltshire Council, as the Responsible Authority\(^1\) under the SEA Regulations\(^2\), is responsible for undertaking this screening process of the Hilperton Neighbourhood Plan. It will determine if the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, and hence whether SEA is required.

1.3 This process has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC\(^3\), often known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive, which has been transposed into English law by the SEA Regulations.

2. Legislative requirements

2.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires neighbourhood plans to comply with EU legislation. The screening procedure outlined in this report meets the requirements of the SEA Directive and Regulations, as introduced in Section 1 of this document.

2.2 Regulation 5 of the SEA Regulations requires an environmental assessment of plans which:

- 1. are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use (Regulation 5, para. (2)(a)), and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annex I or II to the Directive (Regulation 5, para. (2)(b)); or
- 2. in view of the likely effect on sites, have been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) (Regulation 5, para. (3)); or
- 3. set the framework for future development consent of projects\(^4\) (Regulation 5, para. (4)(b)); or
- 4. are determined to be likely to have significant environmental effects as determined under regulation 9(1) (Regulation 5, para. (4)(c)).

An environmental assessment need not be carried out for:

- a) plans which determine the use of a small area\(^5\) at local level (Regulation 5, para. (6)(a)); or
- b) plans which are a minor modification\(^6\) to a plan or programme (Regulation 5, para. (6)(b)); or
- c) changes to a plan or programme prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use (Regulation 5, para. (6)(c)); or
- d) plans which determine the use of small areas at local level (Regulation 5, para. (6)(d)); or
- e) plans which determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.37 (Art. 3.30).

2.3 The diagram below shows the SEA Directive’s field of application:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application of the SEA Directive to neighbourhood plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is the plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority or prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Is the plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative procedures? (Art. 2(a))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is the plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the Directive? (Art. 3.2(a))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Will the plan, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Does the PP determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.37 (Art. 3.3))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Does the plan set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the Directive)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Is the PP’s sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006? (Art. 3.9, 3.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The organisation which adopts the neighbourhood plan (this is described in Wiltshire Council’s guide to Neighbourhood Planning) is responsible for ensuring the plan is prepared correctly. It is their responsibility to ensure that the plan includes the appropriate level of assessment required.

The diagram is intended as a guide to the criteria for application of the Directive to neighbourhood plans. It has no legal status.

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\(^{1}\)The organisation which adopts the neighbourhood plan (this is described in Wiltshire Council’s guide to Neighbourhood Planning).

\(^{2}\)The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2000.

\(^{3}\)European Directive 2001/42/EC, on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.

\(^{4}\)European Commission guidance notes that plans and programmes which set the framework for future development consent of projects would normally contain criteria or conditions which guide the way a consenting authority decides an application for development consent.

\(^{5}\)European Commission guidance suggests that plans which determine the use of small areas at local level might include a building plan which, for a particular limited area, outlines details of how buildings must be constructed, determining, for example, their height, width or design.

\(^{6}\)Minor modifications should be considered in the context of the plan or programme which is being modified and of the likely effect on its likely effect on the environment.

\(^{7}\)Taken from A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (ODPM, 2005)
3. The Hilperton Neighbourhood Plan

3.1 The Hilperton Neighbourhood Plan covers the whole parish of Hilperton as shown on the following map:

3.2 The proposed draft vision statement of the draft Plan, main objectives and policies are outlined in sections 8, 9 and 10 of the draft Plan that accompanies this screening report.

4. SEA Screening assessment

4.1 Wiltshire Council, as the ‘Responsible Authority’, consider that the Hilperton Neighbourhood Plan falls within the scope of the SEA Regulations on the basis that it is a plan that:

a) is subject to preparation or adoption by an authority at national, regional or local level (Regulation 2);

b) is prepared for town and country planning or land use and it is a plan that sets the framework for future development consent of projects generally (Regulation 5, para. 4); and
c) will apply to a wider area other than a small area at local level and is not a minor modification to an existing plan or programme (Regulation 5, para. 6).

4.2 A determination under Regulation 9 is therefore required as to whether the Hilperton Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

4.3 The screening requirements set out in Regulation 9 and Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations includes two sets of characteristics for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment. These relate to: i) the characteristics of the Hilperton Neighbourhood Plan and ii) the characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected by the Hilperton Neighbourhood Plan.

4.4 In making a determination, Wiltshire Council will take into account the criteria specified in Schedule I of the Regulations as follows:

1. The characteristics of the plans and programmes, having regard in particular to:

   a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;

   b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;

   c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;

   d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and

   e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:

   a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;

   b) the cumulative nature of the effects;

   c) the transboundary nature of the effects;

   d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);

   e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);

   f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to—

      i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;

      ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or

      iii) intensive land-use; and

   g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.
Table 1 - Screening assessment of the Hilperton Neighbourhood Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria (Schedule 1 SEA Regs.)</th>
<th>Significant environmental effects likely?</th>
<th>Justification and evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The characteristics of plans, having regard, in particular, to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) the degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The draft neighbourhood plan sets out a framework of objectives designed to address particular issues in the parish. These seek to protect and enhance the local environment and heritage assets. The draft plan is not allocating any sites for development. All draft policies will be in general conformity with policies in the Core Strategy as to what development is permitted and where.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) the degree to which the plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The draft neighbourhood plan is produced by the local community to influence development at the local parish level. It does not strongly influence strategic plans higher up in a hierarchy, although any potential future review of the Wiltshire Core Strategy will need to give consideration to the Plan’s proposals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) the relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The draft neighbourhood plan is a land-use plan that seeks to promote the objectives of sustainable development. However, it is not specifically a plan for integrating environmental considerations. Policies are proposed to protect and enhance local landscape setting as well as encourage new hedgerow and tree planting and improvement of existing green infrastructure including ponds and habitat enhancement. The proposed design policy requires new development to demonstrate how the design reflects the principles of the 2005 Village Design Statement and expects higher quality design in the conservation area. New buildings and extensions to buildings will be required not to harm the character of the conservation area or the setting of nearby historic buildings, whether listed or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The draft neighbourhood plan will seek to address environmental problems that are relevant to the parish. There are no specific environmental problems relevant to the neighbourhood area. The draft Plan seeks to enhance the local environment and landscape setting, protect existing green spaces and protect heritage assets in the parish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) the relevance of the plan for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The draft neighbourhood plan is not relevant as a plan for implementing community legislation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:

<p>| (a) the probability, duration, frequency | No | The draft neighbourhood plan is not proposing any new development. No development sites are |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria (Schedule 1 SEA Regs.)</th>
<th>Significant environmental effects likely?</th>
<th>Justification and evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) and reversibility of the effects</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>allocated in the draft Plan. The draft Plan is proposing policies to protect and enhance the local natural and cultural environment. Consequently, adverse effects are not considered likely to be significant in terms of their probability, duration, frequency or reversibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) the cumulative nature of the effects</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No cumulative effects are considered to be significant with the proposals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) the transboundary nature of the effects</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>There are no likely EU transboundary effects arising from the neighbourhood plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>There are unlikely to be risks to human health or the environment arising from the neighbourhood plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The neighbourhood plan will apply to the parish area only. Significant effects due to the geographical size of the area and population size are not considered likely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to— (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use;</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>It is considered that the draft policies proposed will not significantly affect the natural characteristics or cultural heritage of the area, or lead to an exceedence of environmental quality standards. The draft Plan is not proposing any new development or allocating any sites for possible future development. The parish is not covered by any specific environmental designations. There is a conservation area within the village of Hilperton and individual listed buildings throughout the parish; draft policy 2 seeks to protect the conservation area and individual historic buildings, as does the Wiltshire Core Strategy and NPPF.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The draft neighbourhood plan is not proposing anything that is likely to adversely affect areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status. No new development is proposed and no sites for future development are allocated in the draft Plan. Draft policies focus on protecting and enhancing natural and cultural features.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. **SEA Screening decision**

5.1 Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations requires that the responsible authority shall determine whether or not a plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. The responsible authority shall —

(a) take into account the criteria specified in Schedule 1 to these Regulations; and
(b) consult the consultation bodies.

5.2 Where the responsible authority determines that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), it shall prepare a statement of its reasons for the determination.

5.3 Wiltshire Council, as the responsible authority, consider that the proposed Hilperton Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and consequently will not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment, as per the reasons given in Table 1.

5.4 This screening decision was sent to Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England as required by the SEA Regulations. Their comments are attached to this report as an appendix.

6. **Statutory consultee response to screening decision**

6.1 Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England, as statutory consultation bodies under Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations, were consulted on this SEA screening determination between 4th January 2017 and 15th February 2017. All three bodies agreed with the screening determination that the Hilperton Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have significant environmental effects and therefore an SEA is not required.

6.2 The responses received from the three consultation bodies, agreeing with the screening determination, are presented in Appendix A.
Appendix A – Consultation responses from statutory consultation bodies

Dear David

Thank you for your consultation on the SEA Screening for the emerging Hilsdon Neighbourhood Plan.

I can confirm that we have no objection to the opinion that an SEA will not be required.

This is our first involvement with this Plan and it is useful to be able to form an early view of its likely scope and content. It is quite modest in its ambitions with potential for impact on heritage interests and therefore raises little that we feel the need to comment on. We are pleased that the community values the area’s distinctive historic built environment and seeks to preserve and enhance this. The recognition and appreciation of the landscape setting of Hilsdon and the desire to maintain the “Hilsdon Gap” is therefore welcome, along with the need for new development to reflect guidance in the Village Design Statement and respond to the specific historic character which defines the Conservation Area.

On this basis we do not anticipate needing to comment further or raise additional issues as the Plan progresses and we receive subsequent consultations. As a consequence we are happy for any heritage issues which need attention to be addressed by your authority’s own historic environment officers.

Kind regards

David

David Stuart | Historic Places Adviser South West
Direct Line: 0117 975 0693 | Mobile: 07977 924 9316

Historic England | 29 Queen Square | Bristol | BS1 4ND
Dear David
Thanks for the reminder!
We have no objection to your opinion that the above NP does not require a SEA. We concur as there is no proposed new development.
Kind regards, Ellie

Ms Ellie Challans, Planning Advisor, Sustainable Places, Wessex Area, Blandford
T 02030 259311 (Internal 59311) E ellie.challans@environment-agency.gov.uk
Environment Agency, Rivers House, Sunrise Business Park, Higher Shaftesbury Road, Blandford, Dorset, DT11 8ST

Dear David, I can confirm that Natural England concurs with the SEA screening report’s assessment that Hilperton Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (para 5.3).

Charles Routh
Lead Advisor, Planning & Licensing, Somerset, Avon and Wiltshire Area Team, Natural England. 07990 773630
Appendix 7: Parish Housing Needs Survey

Hilperton

Parish Housing Needs Survey
Survey Report
January 2017

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<td>15</td>
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</table>
1. Parish Summary

The parish of Hilperton is in the Trowbridge Community Area within the local authority area of Wiltshire Council.

It is one mile to the east of Wiltshire’s county town, Trowbridge. The towns of Bradford-on-Avon, Melksham, Devizes and Westbury are all less than ten miles away, and it is twelve miles to the south east of the historic city of Bath.

In the 2011 census the population of Hilperton was 4,967 and was made up of approximately 51% females and 49% males. The average age of people in Hilperton is 39, while the median age is higher at 40.1

The parish has 1,929 houses of a great variety, types, ages and styles, from the oldest found in the Conservation Area, surrounding St Michael and All Angels Church to the newest at the Paxcroft Mead development.

The village itself is a long ribbon settlement and a large part of the old village is designated a Conservation Area.

It is at the top of a gradual incline on a bed of mainly Oxford Clay with alluvium in parts. The highest point in the parish, at the parish church of St Michael, is sixty-four metres above sea level, and is on a par with the top of the spire of St James Church in Trowbridge. The land drops away to 30 metres on the northern parish boundary formed by the River Avon and the Kennet and Avon canal. At 40 metres, on the southern boundary is Paxcroft Mead, a housing development commenced in 2000, which doubled the number of houses in the parish.

Hilperton has a history going back to Saxon Times and is mentioned in the Domesday Book. Hilperton Marsh is 39, while the median age is higher at 40.

The village centre is Grade II listed. It is not known if there was a Saxon church here but there was certainly a Norman church of the 13th century.

The church is affectionately known locally as the ‘tin church’. There are two primary schools, Hilperton Church of England School, Newleaze and The Mead, Paxcroft. Older children travel across Trowbridge to attend secondary schools.

There are three public houses: The Lion & Fiddle in the village, the Kings Arms in Hilperton Marsh, and The Red Admiral on Paxcroft Mead.

Hilperton has a strong sense of community spirit, with many thriving special interest groups. The village hall and playing field in Whaddon Lane, St Mary’s Church which doubles as a centre for those in the Marsh area and the new centre at Paxcroft Mead are all well used by groups as their base.

A wide range of activities for all ages are covered, from toddlers, play-groups, scouting and guiding groups, walkers, gardeners, women’s institute to over sixties. Football, skittles and darts are the main sports played. Events such as coffee mornings, church fete, open garden day, and Christmas pantomime raise money for village charities, and take place throughout the year. There are four halls/rooms available for letting. The village hall, the Paxcroft Mead Community Centre, the church room at St. Michael’s, and the hall at St. Mary Magdalen in Hilperton Marsh.

The village hall has changing facilities and showers for formal football matches on the adjoining playing field which is used for informal recreation too. There is a well-equipped play area which is maintained by the parish council, as is the playing field. Also located close to the village hall are the allotments and community orchard.

As with many villages with an infrastructure fixed by old and attractive buildings with no off street parking, traffic and parking can be a problem especially in the village centre.

There is a regular bus service to Trowbridge and Melksham with less regular services to Frome and Devizes.

1 http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/
2. Introduction

In the summer of 2016, Wiltshire Council’s Development Officers discussed carrying out a rural housing needs survey with Hilperton Parish Council, to establish if there was a proven need for affordable housing in the parish and potentially to use the findings of the survey to inform the parish plan.

Such surveys assist officers in identifying those areas with the greatest housing problems so that scarce financial resources can be put to best use.

Experience has shown that these surveys need to be carried out at regular intervals if the results are to remain relevant in identifying trends.

- The Principal Development Officers are employed by Wiltshire Council’s Service Development and Enabling Team to assist in the delivery of new affordable housing.
- The Principal Development Officers work closely with rural communities, housing associations, local authorities and landowners to meet the affordable housing needs of rural communities.
- The survey is funded by members of the Wiltshire Rural Investment Partnership (WRIP).
- The Wiltshire Rural Investment Partnership brings together representatives from the economic development, regeneration, spatial planning, service development and enabling teams of Wiltshire Council together with Registered Provider [housing association] partners and the Homes and Communities Agency to enable and promote the sustainable delivery of new build housing in the rural communities of Wiltshire.

3. Aim

The aim of carrying out the survey is to investigate the affordable housing needs of local people (or those who need to live in the parish) in Hilperton parish.

- ‘Housing need’ can be defined as the need for an individual or household to obtain housing that is suitable to their circumstances.
- It implies that there are problems or limitations with the household’s current housing arrangements and that the household is unable to afford or to access suitable accommodation in the private sector.
- Such problems may be concerned with housing costs, size, location, layout, state of repair, or security of tenure either immediately or in the future.

4. Survey Distribution and Methodology

In order to carry out the housing needs survey, questionnaires were delivered to the Parish Council for distribution on the 10th October 2016.

To encourage a good response, households were given a pre-paid envelope in which to return the completed survey. The council applies the data protection policy to responses, ensuring that all survey responses remain anonymous.

Residents were asked to return the completed surveys in the pre-paid envelopes by 25th November 2016. The forms were recorded and analysed by the Service Development Officers at Wiltshire Council.

- A total of 2009 questionnaires were distributed to the parish.
- Everyone was asked to complete the first section of the form.
- If a household considered itself in need, or likely to be in need, of affordable housing within the next five years, it was invited to complete the rest of the survey.
- There was a good response rate of 25.9% with 521 replies received.
- This report describes the views only of the residents who returned the questionnaires and these views may not be representative of the wider population of Hilperton.
- 15 responses were made online.

5. Key Findings

This report is divided into two parts. The first section looks at existing households in the parish in order to provide a description of the current housing in Hilperton. This section also describes the levels of new housing, if any, which would be supported by respondents to the survey.

The second section examines the households who have declared a need for new housing in Hilperton. The section begins by describing the overall need for both market and affordable housing in the parish. A financial assessment is then made in order to determine the numbers of households who have a current need for new affordable housing. The results of this assessment are summarised in the recommendations of the report (Section 8).

Part One – Households currently living in the parish

The first question asked on the survey was whether the respondents’ home in Hilperton was their main home. 100% of those who replied said that it was.

The 2011 Census data for Hilperton indicates that 78.7% of households in the parish were owner-occupying. 11.4% were renting from social landlords, 8.7% were privately renting and 1.0% of households were living rent free.

The chart below shows the tenure of respondents to the survey. The majority (86.3%) of respondents were owner-occupiers, while 7.2% of respondents were living in socially rented
properties, 3.2% were renting from a private landlord or letting agency, none were living in accommodation tied to their employment, and 0.4% were living in a tenure described as 'other'. These results indicate a bias in the survey responses toward those living in owner-occupied homes and the rest of this section should be read with this in mind.

Chart 1

The chart below indicates the length of time that respondents have lived in their current home. It shows that the majority of people who responded to the survey have lived in the parish for more than ten years, which is appropriate for the high levels of owner occupation among survey respondents:

Chart 2

As shown in the chart above, there were significant numbers of households responding to the survey with members aged 45-64 there are smaller numbers responding from the lower age ranges and with children aged under 16. This indicates a spread of different household types in Hilperton, from older person households with fewer members, to younger households with children.

The distance travelled to work can also be a good measure of the sustainability of local housing development, as more people working locally can indicate an ongoing need for local housing. The table below shows how far people in the respondents' households travelled to work:

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons in household</th>
<th>Up to 2 miles</th>
<th>2 - 10 miles</th>
<th>10 - 50 miles</th>
<th>50 miles +</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person 1</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person 2</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person 3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person 4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person 5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results suggest a reasonable level of sustainabilty for new housing development in Hilperton, indicated by the survey respondents' access to local sources of employment with
65% of the households’ working members usually travel less than ten miles to their place of work.

Respondents were also asked whether anyone currently living in their household would need separate accommodation in the parish now or in the near future, to which 5.6% of respondents (27 households) answered ‘yes’, indicating a low level of sustained need for housing in the parish.

Respondents were then asked how many new homes they would support being built in the parish. The majority of respondents (66.8%) were in support of some new housing in Hilperton, with the most popular quantity (22.8% of respondents in favour) being for between twenty one and forty new homes. 33.2% of respondents were opposed to any new housing in Hilperton parish:

Chart 4

![Number of new homes supported chart]

Respondents to this section were finally asked what types of housing development, if any, they would support. The types of housing considered most needed in Hilperton by the survey respondents were affordable starter homes for young people (25.6%) and older persons’ accommodation (19.0%). Full results are given in the chart below (more than one answer could be given):

Chart 5

![Types of new home supported chart]

Part two – Households requiring accommodation in the parish

This section of the report looks initially at all the responses to section two of the survey in order to give a broad picture of the need for both market and affordable housing in the parish. A financial assessment and an evaluation of the current affordable housing in Hilperton are then made in order to describe in more detail the need for specifically affordable (i.e. non-market) housing.

Twenty nine respondents replied to this section of the survey, indicating their need for housing in Hilperton. The prevailing reason given for needing to move was that respondents were currently living with their families but wanted to live independently in the parish (ten households).
The respondents requiring accommodation in the parish were asked what type of tenure they sought. The expressed need was for all types of tenure, with socially rented homes the most desired. Households could indicate more than one response:

In terms of size, the most popular option was for two bedroom homes and respondents also expressed a need for properties with one and three or five bedrooms. No need was declared for homes with four bedrooms:

The respondents were then asked if there was a lack of suitable existing housing in Hilperton to meet their needs, to which 81% of respondents answered ‘yes’.

In order to assess the need for affordable housing in Hilperton, it is necessary to consider the equity, income and savings levels of respondents. Please note that due to the need to preserve the confidentiality of respondents, only a short summary of the financial assessment is presented below.

The respondents were then asked if there was a lack of suitable existing housing in Hilperton to meet their needs, to which 81% of respondents answered ‘yes’.

In order to assess the need for affordable housing in Hilperton, it is necessary to consider the equity, income and savings levels of respondents. Please note that due to the need to preserve the confidentiality of respondents, only a short summary of the financial assessment is presented below.

Only one of the households responding to this section of the survey reported having equity in an existing property, although this may be because respondents are not aware of the current value of their homes. The estimated levels of savings among the respondents varied, with 15 households declaring less than £14,999 in savings and only two households declaring more than £14,999 in savings (both of those having between £30,000 and £39,000). Income levels were also notably low. 18 of the 28 households reported gross incomes of less than £25,999, while 10 reported a gross household income of over £26,000pa. The median gross income bracket reported by the 28 respondents was £21,500-£22,999pa.

Comparing income, savings and equity levels with affordability in Hilperton suggests that 14 of the 29 households would require public assistance in order to achieve their required housing and so would be considered ‘in housing need’ as defined in Section 3 of this report. These households inform the recommendations of this survey for new affordable housing in Hilperton, presented in Section 8.

Of the households not considered to need public assistance in order to achieve their required housing, one household specified that they would like to purchase, rather than rent, a new

The respondents to this section were also asked what type of housing they required. The most sought-after types were terraced (including end-terrace) and semi-detached properties. Full responses are given in the chart below (more than one answer could be given):

In terms of size, the most popular option was for two bedroom homes and respondents also expressed a need for properties with one and three or five bedrooms. No need was declared for homes with four bedrooms:

The respondents were then asked if there was a lack of suitable existing housing in Hilperton to meet their needs, to which 81% of respondents answered ‘yes’.

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Of the households not considered to need public assistance in order to achieve their required housing, one household specified that they would like to purchase, rather than rent, a new
home. However as this household declared a very low income and limited savings, it did not meet the financial criteria for low cost home ownership and as such is excluded from the recommendations of this report. It is possible that changing financial circumstances may mean that in the future this household would be suitable for low cost home purchase in Hilperton.

Their requirement was for a three bedroomed home. Four households specified that private rented accommodation would satisfy their housing needs and the levels of income and savings indicate that this is realistic. Two respondents that were contacted following completion of the survey have declared that they are no longer in need of affordable housing. One household did not complete their questionnaires in sufficient detail to be included in the affordable housing assessment.

6. Affordability

In order to investigate affordability, further research has been carried out on house prices in the area.

It is possible to estimate the average property prices in the Hilperton area:\footnote{House price estimates from the Mouseprice local area guide to the BA14 postcode area, www.mouseprice.com/area-guide/average-house-prices. Please note that the BA14 postcode covers a wider area than Hilperton parish and that there may be significant internal variation in house prices.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bedrooms</th>
<th>Jan 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>£124,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>£174,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>£227,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>£334,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5+</td>
<td>£438,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example calculation for a mortgage

Typically, a household making a single application can obtain a mortgage of 3.5 times their annual income, or 3x annual income for joint applications. Households would generally expect to need a deposit of around 15% of the total price.

If an average two-bedroom property sold in Hilperton cost £174,000 then a household may require £26,100 as a deposit. Annual household income would have to be at least £42,257 for a single applicant or £49,300 for joint applicants. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings indicates that the gross annual median income of employed persons in Wiltshire in 2015 was £21,467:\footnote{Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2015, resident analysis. Gross annual pay of employed persons resident in Wiltshire, www.nomisweb.co.uk. Note that while the mortgage calculation refers to household income, i.e. to the combined income of all persons in the home, the ASHE figure refers to individual income.}

- It would be unlikely that a household would be able to purchase a property in this parish without a large deposit, some equity in an existing property or a substantial income.

- In some cases intermediate housing (shared ownership or low cost market housing) would be a suitable option, whilst in other instances affordable rented accommodation would be appropriate.

7. Summary

This survey’s recommendations (see Section 8 below) concentrate on those households who are unable to afford accommodation on the open market.

This is just a quarter of the research needed for this assessment: the Housing Register of Wiltshire Council, the local Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the advice from allocation staff who manage the Register must also be taken into account.

- In January 2017, there were 14 households on the Wiltshire Council Housing Register seeking affordable accommodation in Hilperton parish: six of these households are also described in Section 8 of this report as in need of affordable housing. The remaining eight households on the Register are seeking properties with between one and four bedrooms, and any full assessment of housing need in the parish must take account of the Register.\footnote{Wiltshire Council, Housing Strategy, live tables.}

- The 2011 Census recorded 220 social homes in the parish.\footnote{Table QS405EW, 2011 Census: Tenure – Households, English parishes / Welsh communities. These properties represent 11.4% of the total housing in Hilperton, which is lower than the Wiltshire affordable housing average of 14.7%.

- The social housing in Hilperton had a 7.7% re-let rate in the past year: from the quarter 4 of 2015-16 to quarter 3 of 2016-17, 17 social homes were re-let in the parish. Below is a breakdown of the bed size of properties let in Hilperton from 1st January 2016 to 31st December 2016:}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of beds</th>
<th>Number of properties let</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The low levels and turnover of social housing, for all but 2 bedroom properties, in the parish suggest that one of the households responding to section two of this survey and in need of affordable accommodation could meet their needs through accessing the existing social housing of the parish.

- 81% of respondents described a lack of suitable accommodation for their needs in the parish, and it is notable that while Hilperton has a reasonable proportion of privately
rented homes (8.7% of the total parish stock), the turnover of these isn’t high and rents are generally higher than the LHA. The lack of availability of low cost privately rented homes in Hilperton does indicate a need for an open-market or mixed tenure development in the area.

8. Recommendations

This survey’s recommendations concentrate on households unable to afford accommodation on the open market.

The following indicates the minimum need over the next three years for new affordable housing development in the parish, based on the responses to the survey. Please note that this report provides a description of the affordable housing need only of those who responded to the survey, and as such may underestimate the total affordable housing need in the parish. As described in Section 7, the survey is only a quarter of the evidence required to fully assess housing need in the parish. Wiltshire Council’s Housing Register, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, and the advice of allocation staff who manage the Register must also be taken into account in properly determining local housing need.

Subsidised rented housing

- 4 x one bedroom homes (1x bungalow/ground floor accommodation)
- 4 x three bedroom homes

Shared ownership / discount market homes

- 1 x one bedroom home
- 3 x 2 bedroom homes
- 1 x three bedroom homes

Sheltered housing for older people

- None

Please note that recommendations for numbers of bedrooms in subsidised rented properties are where possible made in line with the ‘family size’ criteria implemented as part of the Housing Benefit changes by the 2012 Welfare Reform Act.

Please note that recommendations for numbers of bedrooms in shared ownership/discounted market properties are based on the number of bedrooms wanted by respondents, applicants can purchase the size of home they are able to afford.
## Appendix 8: Shortfall of Open Space

### Table 14: Supply of open space in urban analysis areas against the Wiltshire Standard (Ha/1000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARISH</th>
<th>Allotments</th>
<th>Amenity Green Space</th>
<th>Park and Recreation Ground (combined)</th>
<th>Park and Recreation Ground</th>
<th>Outdoor Sport (Pitches)</th>
<th>Outdoor Sport (Fixed)</th>
<th>Outdoor Sport (Private)</th>
<th>Play Space (Children)</th>
<th>Play Space (Youth)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amesbury</td>
<td>-1.88</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>-1.68</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>-1.84</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>-1.36</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradford on Avon</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>-11.67</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>-7.31</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulford</td>
<td>-0.84</td>
<td>-6.30</td>
<td>-1.87</td>
<td>-2.78</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calne</td>
<td>-3.01</td>
<td>-18.03</td>
<td>-13.27</td>
<td>-16.94</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chippenham</td>
<td>-2.38</td>
<td>-5.20</td>
<td>-21.37</td>
<td>-34.85</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>-1.06</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corsham</td>
<td>-0.37</td>
<td>-7.42</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>-10.52</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>9.35</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cricklade</td>
<td>-0.85</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>-3.53</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devizes and Roundway</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>-3.29</td>
<td>-14.43</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>9.64</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durrington</td>
<td>-1.23</td>
<td>-2.96</td>
<td>-6.28</td>
<td>-6.56</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laversstock</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td>-2.59</td>
<td>-4.84</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
</tr>
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Appendix 9: Habitat Regulations Assessment

HILPERTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT (HRA)

1. Introduction

1.1. This HRA relates to the version of the Hilperton Neighbourhood Development Plan SEA Screening Draft which was current at the time of the assessment on 17.03.17.

1.2. The HRA has been carried out to comply with Regulation 102 of the Habitats Regulations 2010 (as amended). Under these Regulations, a competent authority must consider whether a relevant plan is likely to have a significant effect on any European sites before deciding to give any consent, permission or other authorisation to the plan. If the screening exercise demonstrates significant effects are likely, the competent authority must undertake an appropriate assessment to examine the effects of the plan on the conservation objectives of the European Sites in question. Both the screening and the full appropriate assessment must consider the impacts of the plan alone and in combination with other plans or projects.

1.3. Where appropriate assessment is undertaken, the competent authority may only authorise the plan having ascertained in the light of the sites’ conservation objectives, that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site or sites. Otherwise the plan cannot be authorised unless specific statutory tests are be met.

1.4. Wiltshire Council has conducted the following HRA as competent authority for the Hilperton Neighbourhood Development Plan SEA Screening Draft. The HRA is iterative; where risks to European Sites are identified, amendments must be incorporated into the plan to remove these before the plan is made.

1.5. The HRA process should be repeated after any significant changes are made and before the final plan is considered by a referendum.

2. Screening Methodology

2.1. Each element of the plan has been categorised against screening criteria developed by Natural England to provide a clear audit trail for the screening assessment.

2.2. The screening criteria used are as follows:

- **Category A1**: The policy will not itself lead to development e.g. because it relates to design or other qualitative criteria for development;
- **Category A2**: The policy is intended to protect the natural environment;
- **Category A3**: The policy is intended to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment;
- **Category A4**: The policy would positively steer development away from European sites and associated sensitive areas;
- **Category A5**: The policy would have no effect because no development could occur through the policy itself, the development being implemented through later policies in the same plan, which are more specific and therefore more appropriate to assess for their effects on European Sites and associated sensitive areas.
- **Category B**: no significant effect;
- **Category C**: likely significant effect alone; and
- **Category D**: Likely significant effects in combination.
2.3. The effect of each policy has been considered both individually and in combination with other plans and projects (see table in section 4 below). Where potential for likely significant effects have been identified, a further appropriate assessment is undertaken in section 5.

3. Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA

3.1 The Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA (October 2009, February 2012, March 2013, and April 2014) identified general parameters to determine the likelihood of potential impact on Natura 2000 (European protected) sites. The following parameters were identified and assessed for the following Natura 2000 sites.

- **Recreation – Natura 2000 sites within 5km of the plan area, or where Salisbury Plain SPA/SAC is within 15km of the plan area:**
  - Salisbury Plain SAC and SPA
  - River Avon SAC
  - New Forest SAC / SPA

- **Hydrology / Hydrogeology - Sites that fall wholly or partly within the Wessex Water Resource Zone** may be susceptible to impact:
  - Salisbury Plain SAC / SPA
  - Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC
  - Pewsey Downs SAC
  - North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC
  - River Avon SAC
  - River Lambourn SAC
  - Kennet & Lambourn Floodplain SAC

- **Air Pollution / Nitrogen Deposition – Natura 2000 sites within 200m of a main road**

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1 Wiltshire Core Strategy Submission Draft – Assessment under the Habitats Regulations, Wiltshire Council, February 2012
2 Wiltshire Core Strategy – Assessment under the Habitats Regulations, Wiltshire Council, March 2013
3 Wiltshire Core Strategy Updated Habitats Regulations Assessment, April 2014
4. Screening of Policies in Hilperton Neighbourhood Development Plan

4.1. The Hilperton Neighbourhood Development Plan comprises 5 planning policies and 3 informal community action policies.

4.2. All parts of the draft plan have been screened for potential impacts on the European sites listed in section 3 above, as set out in the table below. Three policies have the potential to give rise to significant effects on the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC and are taken forward to appropriate assessment in section 5 below.

4.3. Although the plan area falls within 15 km of Salisbury Plain SPA, mitigation for impacts on breeding stone curlew arising from recreational pressure were addressed through the HRA for the Wiltshire Core Strategy. CIL contributions are funding a project to identify, manage and protect breeding sites used by this species for the lifetime of the Core Strategy. The Hilperton HRA can therefore conclude no likely significant effects for this European site.

4.4. Other policies would either not lead directly to development or would have no significant effects due to the scale and nature of the proposals in the plan.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Initial screening Category</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Screening category after changes recommended by appropriate assessment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Setting</td>
<td>C and D</td>
<td>Housing development at the Hilperton Gap could lead to impacts on the Bath and Bradford on Avon SAC alone if on-site habitats used by SAC bat species for foraging, commuting or roosting are adversely affected by development. In-combination with other schemes, development can be expected to contribute to recreational pressure in woodlands in the SE of Trowbridge. Which are used by SAC bats for roosting.</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Transport</td>
<td>C and D</td>
<td>The provision of new and upgraded paths and crossing points could lead to impacts on the Bath and Bradford on Avon SAC alone if lighting adversely affects habitats used by SAC bat species for foraging, commuting or roosting. Effects could also occur in-combination with other schemes.</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure and developer contributions</td>
<td>A1 / A2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Local economy, jobs and tourism</td>
<td>C and D</td>
<td>Development to facilitate the local economy could lead to impacts on the Bath and Bradford on Avon SAC alone if development adversely affects habitats used by SAC bat species for foraging, commuting or roosting. Such development could also have effects in-combination with other schemes.</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal policy A – Hedgerows and trees</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Restoration of hedgerows and trees could contribute positively by enhancing habitat used by bats which are features of the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat SAC. <strong>Advisory note:</strong> felling and management of diseased, dead and dying trees has the potential to affect roosting bats and professional advice should be obtained before undertaking such works.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Policy B – Ditches and drainage</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Policy C – Highway issues</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
5. Appropriate Assessment

5.1 The screening Assessment found that the Hilperton Neighbourhood Development Plan could lead to significant effects on the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC in combination with other plans and projects. The following assessment has been conducted taking the following plans and projects into consideration:

- Wiltshire Core Strategy (Adopted January 2015)
- Application 15/04736/OUT Ashton Park, Trowbridge
- Application 16/04468/OUT land South West of Ashton Road, Trowbridge
- Application 16/00547/FUL Drynham Lane, Trowbridge
- Application 15/11267/FUL Parcels P8 and P9B East Trowbridge
- Application 16/01633/OUT The Grange, Hilperton
- Application 16/00672/OUT Land W of Elizabeth Way, SW of Hilperton Marsh, Trowbridge
- Permission 13/06879/OUT Land South of Devizes Road, Hilperton
- Other housing applications in and around Trowbridge which are 2 miles or more beyond Green Lane and Biss Woods
- Permission W/11/01932/REM Land North East of Green Lane Farm, Trowbridge
- Permission W/04/02105/OUTES Land adjacent to scrapyard, Trowbridge
- Emerging Housing Sites DPD

5.2 The Bradford on Avon Bats SAC comprises former stone mines around Bath and Bradford on Avon used by lesser horseshoe, greater horseshoe and Bechstein’s bats during the winter for hibernation and in the autumn for swarming. In spring and summer the bats breed in buildings (horseshoes) or woodlands (Bechstein’s) within a few kilometres of the SAC. Their survival relies not only on these seasonal roosts but also on connecting habitat which allows them to forage in and move through the surrounding landscape. All three species are highly sensitive to light and have very specific roost and habitat requirements making them susceptible to landscape changes. Hilperton lies between breeding routes to the south and hibernation/swarming sites to the north and therefore the neighbourhood plan could potentially affect the SAC though proposals for land use change in this area.

5.3 The policy on Landscape Setting identifies that development could come forward for the Hilperton Gap if it was in accordance with Wiltshire Council Core policy 44 for Rural Exception Sites. It is possible that habitat within The Gap is used by SAC bat species for foraging, commuting and roosting. There is a risk therefore that development could adversely affect bat habitat by, for example, direct habitat loss, degradation through light spill or deterioration due to change in management.

5.4 Residential development in The Gap also has the potential to lead to increased recreational use of Green Lane and Biss Woods and potentially Pickett and Clanger Woods, all of which are known to support maternity colonies of Bechsteins bats. Recent development at Castlemead demonstrates recreational pressure could be having an adverse impact on this sensitive bat species through damage to roosts and foraging habitat as well as through increased activity such as the presence of dogs and people, noise, informal fires etc. While recreational pressure from any single development is unlikely to trigger impacts, there is a significant risk that the combined pressure from proposed development around Trowbridge would cause a gradual reduction in both breeding success and use of the woodlands by this bat species.
species. There is an added concern that, as The Gap is already used by local people for recreation, particularly dog-walking, development within it could cause current users to go elsewhere, including to woodlands on the SE edge of Trowbridge.

5.5 New development could therefore potentially lead to impacts both alone and in-combination with other schemes. For new development to be able to come forward it would be necessary to be able to demonstrate, beyond reasonable scientific doubt, that there would be no adverse effects on the SAC. Any loss in recreational area would need to be accompanied by a scheme which demonstrated an appropriate increase in the recreational carrying capacity of the Trowbridge area which at the same time did not increase use of the SE woodlands.

5.6 **Recommendation 1** - In order to guard against any risk of this policy conflicting with the objectives of the Habitats Regulations, it is recommended that following wording is inserted into the policy:

Any scheme coming forward as a result of the rural exemption granted by Core Policy 44 must satisfy the following criteria;

- “The scheme must demonstrate no adverse impact on woodlands in the south east of Trowbridge which are functionally linked to the Bath and Bradford on Avon SAC, either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects”

5.7 The policy on Sustainable Transport requires new development proposals to be connected into the existing footpath and cycle network by the provision of new routes where possible and otherwise through upgrading of the overall local system. Footpaths are often located adjacent to hedgerows and other linear landscape features which are the routes preferred by bats for commuting and foraging in otherwise open landscapes. Where hedgerows could be affected by creation of new paths or upgrading of existing ones e.g. through removal or reduction in hedgerow size, change in hedgerow management or installation of artificial lighting there is a significant risk of effects due to habitat severance and reduction in foraging habitat. Impacts may occur alone or in-combination with other schemes. Green Lane for example, which extends from Green Lane Wood into Trowbridge, is used as a footpath and cycleway and is partially lit. Proposals to extend lighting would need to be able to demonstrate no loss in bat use of the lane and ideally bring an improvement on the current conditions which can be expected to have reduced bat activity since lighting was installed. A carefully designed scheme making use of modern techniques and equipment may bring improvements for people using the path and for bats.

5.8 **Recommendation 2** - In order to guard against any risk of this policy conflicting with the objectives of the Habitats Regulations, it is recommended that following wording is inserted into the policy:

“Due to the importance of the Hilperton area for conserving Britain’s rarest bats, proposals for creating and improving footpaths and cycleways will be subject to an assessment under the Habitats Regulations 2010 (as amended). Proposals will only be implemented where it can be demonstrated there will be no deterioration of bat habitat as a result of lighting or changes to hedgerows and trees along proposed and existing paths.”

5.9 The policy on Local Economy, Jobs and Tourism promotes small-scale tourism and employment of specified types. Although the scope for such development to impact on the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC is less than for the above two policies, there remains some potential for adverse effects through changes to hedgerows and trees especially in-combination with other schemes.
5.10 **Recommendation 3** - In order to guard against any risk of this policy conflicting with the objectives of the Habitats Regulations, it is recommended that following wording is inserted under point 1 of the policy:

> “Subject to acceptable impacts on neighbouring properties, landscape, biodiversity, provision of sufficient parking and compliance with the Habitats Regulations 2010 (as amended) and other policies of the neighbourhood plan...”

6 **Conclusions**

6.1 Three policies in the neighbourhood plan have the potential to give rise to significant effects on one European site alone and in combination with other plans and projects. These policies have been considered through an appropriate assessment in section 5 above to determine whether they could lead to loss of site integrity of the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC. In all cases, additional wording can be added to the policies to ensure adverse impacts are avoided or offset. Provided this wording is added to the appropriate sections of the plan, I can conclude it would not lead to loss of site integrity of the SAC.

6.2 This HRA should be reviewed if the plan is altered significantly and before it is considered by a referendum.

**Addendum**

Please note, under Biodiversity at para 5.15, I recommend wording is modified to more closely reflect the current situation. My suggestion is as follows:

> “…The Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan and the Wiltshire and Swindon Landscape Conservation Framework provide the local context for biodiversity policy which is contained under Core Policy 50, “Biodiversity and Geodiversity” and Core Policy 52, “Green Infrastructure”. In addition much of the Hilperton Neighbourhood Development Plan area falls within the core area of habitat used by bats which roost in woodlands to the south east of Trowbridge, including Green Lane and Biss Woods. The particular bats concerned are associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC (Special Area of Conservation). Development in the plan which could adversely affect these populations must be subject to an assessment process prescribed in the Habitats Regulations 2010 (as amended). “

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4 Bat Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) Planning Guidance for Wiltshire 2015
Appendix 10: Correspondence re HRA.

In Reverse order – go to bottom and work up.

*From:* "Kilgallen, Louisa"  <Louisa.Kilgallen@wiltshire.gov.uk>  *Date:* Wednesday, 19 April 2017 at 14:57  *To:* "Smith, Tracy M"  
<Tracy.Smith@wiltshire.gov.uk>  **Subject:** RE: Hilperton HRA

Tracy,

I’ve annotated David’s comments below in green. I suggest we ensure the inspector has a copy of this email to help him make a decision on my recommended policy wording changes arising from the HRA I completed on 17 March 2017.

Louisa Kilgallen MCIEEM CEnv
Senior Ecologist
Wiltshire Council

Tel: 01225 713303
Email: louisa.kilgallen@wiltshire.gov.uk

Please note, I work 4 days a week, Monday is my non-working day.

*From:* Smith, Tracy M  *Sent:* 10 April 2017 13:48  *To:* Kilgallen, Louisa  **Subject:** FW: Hilperton HRA  **Importance:** High

Hi Louisa

Would be grateful if we could have a chat about this.
Will put something in the diary for next week – hope that’s ok.

Thanks.

T
Hi Tracy,

I’ve now had a chance to read the HRA and make a response. Please note references to the ‘WCS’ in what follows are to the *Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015*. I have indicated the various parts of the HRA in Red. I attach the HRA for your ease of reference.

I’d be glad if you would please be so kind as to share this with the ecologist who wrote the report.

Unfortunately, I think a significant misunderstanding has occurred and feel that, as a consequence the ecologist might want to re-visit the report. There are also problems in requiring with the ecologist’s requirements in terms of staying within planning law and good practice.

Alternatively, perhaps the ecologist would be prepared to accept the following….I’ll deal with the issues as they come up in the HRA report...

**Recommendation 1 - Landscape Setting Policy**

The intention of this policy seems to have been misunderstood. It is not intended to encourage development – *but the reverse*, and indeed its consequence would be the preservation of open space and habitat, and perhaps its enhancement!

The Policy, which takes forward the Core Strategy invitation to create such a policy in WCS Paragraph 5.150, cannot simply block development and, in order to comply with National Policy and Planning Legislation has to choose its words carefully. It therefore states:

*The landscape setting of Hilperton village to the west (the area known locally as The ‘Hilperton Gap’, separating Hilperton from Trowbridge) will be preserved and if possible enhanced for both biodiversity agriculture and recreation.*

*No development will be permitted in the ‘Gap’ - as defined on the map included here as Appendix 6 - except in accordance with Wiltshire Council Core Policy 44.*

*Any scheme coming forward as a result of the rural exemption granted by Core Policy 44 must satisfy the following additional criteria;*

*• The openness and landscape value of the Gap must not be significantly*
Compromised

Existing facilities for informal recreation must be preserved and enhanced

The scheme should enhance local biodiversity and habitat.

The issue seems to revolve around the reference to the existing Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy CP 44.

This is not a consequence of our policy but is essentially a reference to an existing WCS policy (which has incidentally already passed an HRA and SA). It is good practice to mention the WCS policy here because a neighbourhood plan cannot legally contradict the WCS. We therefore make it clear that, while we would like the gap to remain open (of benefit to biodiversity such as the bats of which we are aware) we are not attempting to over-ride WCS established policy. This is important for an Examiner to understand.

Put another way – if we remove the mention of WCS Policy 44, then not only could an Examiner think there is a potential conflict, but the WCS policy will in any case continue to apply. The fact that this element of the policy already exists and will continue to exist, is therefore nothing to do with the NDP policy under consideration. We are simply mentioning an existing policy context. It is not therefore for the NDP to ensure (as suggested by your recommendation 1) that;

“The scheme must demonstrate no adverse impact on woodlands in the south east of Trowbridge which are functionally linked to the Bath and Bradford on Avon SAC, either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects”

• “The scheme must demonstrate no adverse impact on woodlands in the south east of Trowbridge which are functionally linked to the Bath and Bradford on Avon SAC, either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects”

This was a matter for the WCS policy CP44 itself which was exposed to HRA itself as part of its adoption process. A Neighbourhood Plan cannot retrospectively impose conditions on an existing Wiltshire Council approved policy! We cannot therefore add this wording.

It is important to understand that the particular issue regarding impacts of public pressure on woodlands SE of Trowbridge has emerged after the HRA for the core strategy was completed. Not only is the HRA for the core strategy out of date but it significantly underestimated this issue for the Trowbridge housing allocation. The HRA for the Hilperton NP is the first opportunity for the potential consequences of core policy 44 to be assessed. The HRA for the core strategy took the approach that where a policy potentially conflicted with a specific HRA issue, the policy wording was altered to ensure this was avoided. Not only is it entirely appropriate, I consider it is essential that this policy is caveated
according to my recommendation in order to appropriately reflect its relevance.

We can however add wording to the explanatory text to indicate the presence of the SAC and the issues mentioned. We want to achieve the same protection as the County Ecologist, but we are constrained by Planning Law as to exactly how this can be done.

I would suggest therefore that the following wording is used in the explanatory text:

- **The Bath and Bradford on Avon SAC, is close to the Hilperton Gap and this is a habitat for rare bats. The woodlands east of Trowbridge are functionally linked to this SAC. The Habitat Regulations 2010 would require any scheme which did come forward to in the Hilperton Gap to demonstrate no adverse impact on these woodlands or any other element of the bat habitat.**

This is not an acceptable alternative as it downplays the significance of the Habitats Regulations assessment compared to other bullet items. My recommendation is consistent with planning law, current case law and the Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook (DTA Publications, online) which is recognized by statutory agencies and Defra as the authoritative guidance for complying with the Habitats Regulations in planning.

I turn now to **recommendation 2**. This concerns the **Sustainable Transport Policy**, which reads:

- **Development proposals within the plan area must demonstrate:**

  That the site itself is directly and adequately served by the existing network of paths. Where there is no direct physical link into the network from the development, a link must be provided or, where this is impracticable, contributions made to upgrading the overall local system in lieu.

  Where appropriate, contributions will be sought to upgrade footpaths to cycle paths, provide road crossings at appropriate points, improve surfaces and signage. Contributions may also be sought to improve the local bus service.

  **Particular priorities for local investment are:**

  - Improving path links that facilitate safe foot or cycle journeys to and from Trowbridge
  - Providing safe crossings where paths cross roads (e.g. Elizabeth Way)
  - Upgrade footpaths to cycle paths where possible, and in particular across the Hilperton Gap.
• Improving bus service frequency and range of destinations.

The Recommendation is to insert the following wording:

“Due to the importance of the Hilperton area for conserving Britain’s rarest bats, proposals for creating and improving footpaths and cycleways will be subject to an assessment under the Habitats Regulations 2010 (as amended). Proposals will only be implemented where it can be demonstrated there will be no deterioration of bat habitat as a result of lighting or changes to hedgerows and trees along proposed and existing paths.”

The difficulty with this is:

1. The policy is already consistent with approved Wiltshire Council Core Policy 60. This has passed an HRA and SA. It does not add any more, but merely shows how it could be applied locally. This is an accepted role for neighbourhood planning. As referred to above, the HRA for the core strategy is out of date and, in relation to the SE Trowbridge area, is inadequate following considerable further data obtained for the area following submission of the planning application for the strategic allocation at Ashton Park.

2. It is a rule of policy writing that policies should not repeat other legislation or higher level policy unnecessarily. Any scheme which could affect Bats would have to comply in any case with the HR and there is therefore no need to repeat that here in the policy itself. This would be bad practice. Data is available for specific areas in SE Trowbridge that demonstrate all three species which are features of the Bath and Bradford on Avon SAC are moving through the Hilperton landscape and are specifically vulnerable to the works proposed under this policy due to their preference for hedgerows as commuting routes. Relying on the general legal requirement to comply with the Habitats Regulations would negate the need for HRA of this plan in the first place. Drawing on guidance in the Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook (DTA Publications) “when undertaking an appropriate assessment of a plan, adverse effects must be assessed at every relevant stage of the procedure to the extent possible on the basis of the precision of the plan. This assessment is to be updated with increasing specificity in subsequent stages of the procedure”.

1 However, the Steering group is committed to protecting and enhancing Habitat (this is Objective 5 of the Plan: ‘To conserve and enhance nature including trees and hedgerows’).

2

3 Accordingly, I would propose to include the suggested wording - or something very like it - as an advisory besides the policy (we might have
to replace the word ‘must’ with ‘should’ as we cannot legally require someone to comply with other legislation in a planning policy). To do this would keep the policy precise and to the point, as required by law, but still makes the need to cater for the Bats in any scheme crystal clear. Perhaps the following would suffice?

“Due to the importance of the Hilperton area for conserving Britain’s rarest bats, proposals for creating and improving footpaths and cycleways will be subject to a separate assessment under the Habitats Regulations 2010 (as amended). Proposals should only be implemented where it can be demonstrated there will be no deterioration of bat habitat as a result of lighting or changes to hedgerows and trees along proposed and existing paths.”

An advisory is not adequate in these circumstances where there is a real risk of works associated with foot and cycle way improvements such as lighting installation, changes to hedgerows and tree removal, having an adverse effect on habitat used by SAC features for commuting and foraging.

Recommendation 3 refers to the NDP Policy on Economy and Tourism. This states:

1. Subject to acceptable impacts on neighbouring properties, landscape, biodiversity, provision of sufficient parking and compliance with other policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, the following will normally be permitted in appropriate areas of the Parish:

Small-scale tourism and employment development of the following kinds:

- Bed and Breakfasts
- Canal-based development of retail or restaurant facilities
- Farm-based tourism where the development is on brownfield land (for example among the existing buildings or within the farmyard).

- Summer-only campsites for tents, motorhomes and caravans may be permitted in the Parish with the exclusion of land in the Hilperton Gap subject to acceptable impacts on landscape and compliance with other policies of the Plan.

- Micro-businesses based on the conversion, subdivision or small scale extension of existing employment facilities.

- Small shops (e.g. convenience store, post office)
• Garden-based home offices subject to their being a maximum of 20% the volume of the parent dwelling and no more than 20% of the garden area in which they are located.

2. Conversion of existing retail premises including pubs and garages to residential use will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the retail use in no longer viable.

The Recommendation here is to insert the following into the policy itself:

“Subject to acceptable impacts on neighbouring properties, landscape, biodiversity, provision of sufficient parking and compliance with the Habitats Regulations 2010 (as amended) and other policies of the neighbourhood plan...”

Again, a planning policy cannot require an applicant to secure the approval of another body or person, and nor should it repeat other legislation. If we inserted this then there is a very good chance that it would be removed by an Examiner. However, we do want to raise the profile of conservation, so... I would therefore suggest that very similar wording is included, not in the policy but in the explanatory text:

The Parish has a wealth of habitat and biodiversity. In terms of impact on such biodiversity (for example, like the nearby Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC) it should be noted that proposals will also have to comply with the separate the Habitats Regulations 2010.

The Hilperton neighbourhood plan is at particular risk of causing adverse effects on habitats used by bats which are features of the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC. Risks relate to the loss of individual trees or hedgerows, conversion of farm buildings, and lighting in the countryside and this issue should therefore be highlighted as a potential constraint in the policy on Economy and Tourism.

In my view the above changes to the plan would comply with planning law and also take forward the very valid aim of the county ecologist in preventing loss or harm to the integrity of all biodiversity locally, including the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC.

We would also be more than happy to refer the plan back at a later stage, and before referendum for further ecological comment.

Addendum.

It is recommended that Paragraph 5.15 is modified to read:
“...The Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan and the Wiltshire and Swindon Landscape Conservation Framework provide the local context for biodiversity policy which is contained under Core Policy 50, “Biodiversity and Geodiversity” and Core Policy 52, “Green Infrastructure”. In addition, much of the Hilperton Neighbourhood Development Plan area falls within the core area of habitat used by bats which roost in woodlands to the south east of Trowbridge, including Green Lane and Biss Woods. The particular bats concerned are associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC (Special Area of Conservation). Development in the plan which could adversely affect these populations should be subject to an assessment process prescribed in the Habitats Regulations 2010 (as amended). “

I confirm that we can insert this, but replacing the word must with ‘should’. We cannot require compliance with Habitat Regulations in a planning document. It is already required by law.

Please let me know if the above is acceptable. I think we have the same objectives at heart.

Kind regards

David King
PlanningStreet

From: "Smith, Tracy M" <Tracy.Smith@wiltshire.gov.uk>  Date: Tuesday, 28 March 2017 at 16:53  To: David King <hogpos@hotmail.com>, TOBY KING <tobydgking@btinternet.com>, "Clark, Ernie" <Ernie.Clark@wiltshire.gov.uk>  Subject: FW: Hilperton HRA

Dear All

Please see attached the Hilperton HRA prepared by our Senior Ecologist. Sincere apologies for its delay. The Plan has been taken through to full appropriate assessment on account of potential significant impacts to the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC. As a result, changes are recommended to the wording of three policies. These could either be incorporated now, or sent to the Inspector to advise on.

Before the HRA is adopted, the council will need to quickly look through any changes made to the plan to ensure the HRA remains valid. I can then issue a letter confirming the position of the plan in relation to the Habitats Regulations. This will be done later in the process.

BR

Tracy

Tracy M Smith
Spatial Planning Manager
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Wiltshire Council
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Appendix 11: Pre-boundary review and post-boundary review maps

A: Area before boundary review
Appendix 11: Pre-boundary review and post-boundary review maps
B: Area of Parish lost in Boundary Review
Appendix 11: Pre-boundary review and post-boundary review maps
C: New Neighbourhood Area Applied for after review
Appendix 12: Research Team

In addition to assistance from PlanningStreet, a professional planning consultancy, the scoping researchers from the community were:

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