

WEST CHILTINGTON
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2017

**SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL/STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT**

NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this Draft Sustainability Appraisal report is to provide an assessment of any significant social, environmental and economic effects resulting from the policies and proposals of the draft Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Development Plan for West Chiltington Parish (WCNP).
2. The WCNP contains a number of policies for the use and development of land in the Parish of West Chiltington in the plan period from 2016 to 2032. These policies, together with the policies of the development plan - that is the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), will be used by Horsham District Council ("the District Council") in determining planning applications once the Neighbourhood Plan is approved in due course.
3. The WCNP contains modest policies and proposals for development that are broadly consistent in scale and location with the strategic policies 1-4 and 14-15 of the HDPF. It makes provision for approximately 15 new homes in the parish in the first 5 years and a further 8 in subsequent years. Within these policies it seeks to increase the supply of affordable housing to meet the needs of the local community and to protect important local open spaces.
4. The Horsham Landscape Character Assessment defines a number of landscape character areas and assesses their relative sensitivity to development. The sensitivity has been taken into account in framing the proposals.
5. The Parish contains a large number of primarily Grade II listed buildings and structures and a Conservation Area in West Chiltington village. The Parish however does not contain any sites of European importance, Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or RAMSAR sites. There is one Site of Special Scientific Interest but no local nature reserves though one lies to its southwest.
6. The social, economic and environmental problems that affect the neighbourhood area to which the WCNP is intending to respond, include meeting local housing need through a number of small site allocations concentrating on affordable homes, improving the availability of facilities for children and young people and elderly and disabled persons and ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the parish environment.
7. The WCNP has been prepared alongside the HDPF, which contains all the appropriate strategic policies to address social, economic and environmental issues across the district, including the Neighbourhood Plan area. The WCNP must be in general conformity with those policies and it does not therefore seek to repeat them here.
8. In all respects, the relationship between the WCNP objectives and the sustainability framework is assessed as complementary.
9. The assessment of Policy H1 Housing shows that the priority given to affordable housing is sustainable compared with a no development policy. It is also based on a scale that reflects the character and density and visual impact of the settlement. It avoids allocating land in the South Downs National Park, close to Monkmead Woods and its SSSI and avoids any heritage/ Listed buildings. It therefore provides a sustainable framework for the development proposals of the WCNP.

10. Of the remaining Neighbourhood Plan policies, there are no negative impacts and many positive impacts, particularly in respect of promoting the value of green infrastructure and protecting biodiversity and local green spaces.

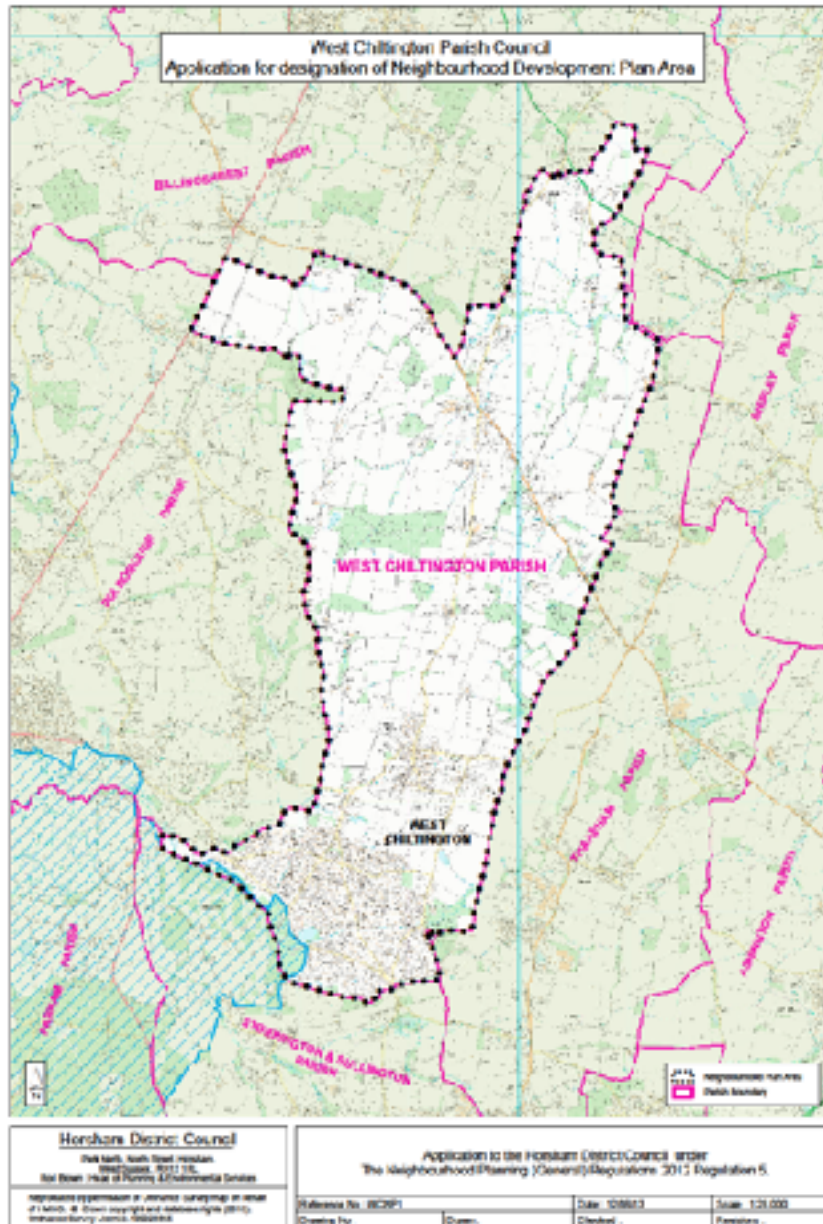
11. In overall terms, therefore, the sustainability impacts of the Neighbourhood Plan are positive or, at worst, neutral. The proposed mitigation measures of most policies will effectively avoid any negative impacts.

12. The WCNP proposes that the progress in its implementation will be assessed by the Parish Council on an ongoing basis.

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this Draft Sustainability Appraisal report is to provide an evaluation of the significant social, environmental and economic effects resulting from the objectives and policies of the Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan for West Chiltonon Parish (WCNP) in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations and the EU Directive 2001/42 on strategic environmental assessment (SEA). Plan A below shows the designated Neighbourhood Area.

Plan A: The Designated West Chiltonon Parish Neighbourhood Area



1.2 The WCNP has been published for pre-submission consultation by West Chiltington Parish Council (“the Parish Council”) under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. Horsham District Council has issued a screening opinion requiring a Sustainability Appraisal and the Parish Council has chosen to meet this obligation by preparing a combined Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) under the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004.

1.3 The report therefore provides an evaluation of the WCNP objectives and policies in a way that is proportionate to this task and that recognises that the available data and means of measuring direct impacts has some limitations. This report will be amended, if needed, following the evaluation of responses to the consultation .

2. Sustainability Appraisal & Strategic Environmental Assessment Background

2.1 Through the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), the social, environmental and economic effects of the WCNP are tested to ensure that these promote sustainable development. There is no statutory requirement for a Neighbourhood Plan to undertake an SA.

2.2 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) can, however, be a requirement of a Neighbourhood Plan and will in this case be incorporated within the SA. It involves the evaluation of the environmental impacts of a plan. The role of the assessment is as follows:

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

2.3 The methodology for the assessment is intended to be proportionate to the task of assessing the modest development proposals of a Neighbourhood Plan in a relatively small Parish area.

3. WCNP objectives and the relationship with other relevant plans or programmes

3.1 The WCNP contains a number of policies for the use and development of land in the Parish of West Chiltington in the plan period from 2016 to 2032. These policies, together with the policies of the Development Plan - that is the policies of the HDPF and the National

Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), will be used by Horsham District Council (“the District Council”) in determining planning applications once the WCNP is approved in due course.

The policies of the HDPF most relevant to the WCNP are:

- Policy 3 - Development Hierarchy
- Policy 4 - Settlement Expansion
- Policy 9 - Employment Development
- Policy 15 - Housing Provision
- Policy 16 - Meeting Local Housing Needs
- Policy 18 - Retirement Housing and Specialist Care
- Policy 25 - The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Policy 27 - Settlement Coalescence
- Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Policy 32 - The quality of New Development
- Policy 38 - Flooding
- Policy 43 - Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

3.2 The vision of the WCNP is:

To ensure that the special, attractive and valued characteristics of the Parish, including their rural feel, historic buildings, low-density construction, relative tranquillity, gardens, wildlife and relationship with the surrounding countryside, are protected and enhanced.

3.3 The vision is underpinned by a clear set of core objectives that seek to make a positive contribution to sustainable growth within the Parish, economically, environmentally and socially.

Housing:

- a) Meet identified local needs;
- b) Complement the current character, local distinctiveness and cultural heritage of the village;
- c) Contribute to the provision of local infrastructure and facilities.

Environment:

- a) Protect high quality agricultural land;
- b) Protect and enhance existing green spaces;
- c) Protect and enhance the parish’s biodiversity and rural setting;
- d) Minimise the risk of flooding.
- e) Minimise the impact from oil and gas exploration

Getting around:

- a) Encourage provision of improvements to cycle ways and footpaths;
- b) Promote greater connectivity within the Parish and the wider area.

Employment and enterprise:

- a) Support local shops and other businesses;
- b) Encourage greater digital and internet connectivity.

Leisure and community:

- a) Ensure provision of a range of facilities for leisure and recreation;
- b) Promote improvements to health and wellbeing provision.

3.4 These objectives have been incorporated into policies for development and land use.

4. Social, environmental and economic issues without the WCNP

4.1 The over-riding sustainability issues in the Parish are the need for affordable homes and the poor road infrastructure. The WCNP contains modest policies and proposals for development that are broadly consistent in scale and location with the strategic policies 3, 4 and 15 of the HDPF. It makes provision for approximately 23 new homes in the parish. It seeks in particular to increase the supply of affordable housing and elderly person provision that meets the need of the local community. It recognises the impact of additional traffic on local roads and the need to protect the special historic and environmental features of the Parish.

4.2 Without the WCNP proposals for housing development in the parish would be left to individual planning applications. Those that have come forward in recent years have had little regard to maintaining the beauty, character and nature of the Parish and would not necessarily have reflected local needs and priorities. On the other hand, the WCNP emphasis is on delivering a series of proposals that have positive social and economic outcomes within the environmental limits imposed by the HDPF. In particular the WCNP emphasises the importance of affordable housing provision both on sites with more than five dwellings and on infill sites.

5. The environmental characteristics of the Neighbourhood Area

5.1 The Horsham Landscape Capacity Assessment (2014) defines character areas in the Parish.

- Local Landscape Character Area 53: Land south of Nutbourne and West Chiltington - described as having no/low landscape capacity
- Local Landscape Character Area 54: Land South and South East of West Chiltington Common - described as having no/low landscape capacity
- West Chiltington Village - Capacity Assessment for smaller scale development divided into three areas - WC1 - Moderate to high; WC2 - Moderate; WC3 - Moderate

Of these three areas 53 and 54 are of highest sensitivity because of the separation zones with Storrington and between The Common and The Village, the proximity to the South Downs National Park, the network of footpaths that is of considerable amenity benefit and some ecology. Traffic is also an issue because of the poor infrastructure.

5.2 The Horsham Landscape Character Assessment 2003 identified the area as having following key characteristics:

- Undulating sandstone ridge.

- Partly wooded low scarp.
- Extensive arable and some horticultural land use with glasshouses and mushroom farms.
- Small orchards vineyards.
- Leafy sunken lanes with sandstone exposures.
- Small historic villages built of sandstone and half timber.
- Scattered small cottages and farmsteads mainly along lanes.

The overall character was described as:

Lying over and along with the prominent north facing lower Greensand Ridge, this is an undulating mixed farmland landscape of arable and horticulture, with small areas of pasture. It has a varied hedgerow pattern, fragmented in parts with a few small woodlands. Essentially the area retains a rural character, but there is localised visual intrusion from derelict nurseries and small-scale industrial uses.

5.3 The Parish contains a large number of primarily Grade II listed buildings and structures and a Conservation Area at West Chiltington Village. There are no sites of European importance, Special Protection Area (SPA), Special of Conservation (SAC) or RAMSAR sites in the parish. There is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Site of Nature Conservation Interest in Monkmead Woods to the south of the parish. The whole parish lies within a SSSI Impact Zone and a 'bat sustenance zone'. Pulborough Brooks Nature Reserve (RSPB) lies 2-3 miles south of the parish.

5.4 There are Priority Habitat areas identified by Natural England. There are Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodlands and some Traditional Orchard Priority Habitats. Lots of areas of Deciduous Woodland and many tree preservation orders (TPO) throughout the parish including in the built up areas.

6. Any existing social, economic or environmental problems that are relevant to the WCNP

6.1 There are no existing social, economic or environmental problems that affect the neighbourhood area to which the Neighbourhood Plan is intending to respond, other than in respect of seeking to meet local housing need through a number of small site allocations and to strengthen the protection for the Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services that currently exist.

7. Taking account of sustainability

7.1 The WCNP has been prepared alongside the HDPF, which contains all the appropriate strategic policies to address social, economic and environmental issues across the district, including the Neighbourhood Plan area. The WCNP must be in general conformity with those policies and it does not therefore seek to repeat them.

7.2 To assess the sustainability performance of the WCNP, the following assessment framework has been adopted. The proposed framework was consulted upon with the statutory consultees as part of the SA Scoping Report and it has been modified to take into account their comments.

Topic	Key issues	Criteria and assessment
Natural Environment/ Biodiversity	<p>West Chiltington is a quiet rural village whose beauty, nature and character are important reasons why people have chosen to live there. The proximity to the South Downs National Park, Monkmead Woods with its SSSI, the network of footpaths and bridleways, the low density housing and the rich biodiversity provided by the hedges, trees and open spaces are key aspects of the environment that residents are very keen to protect.</p>	<p>Whether the WCNP leads to the loss of biodiversity, flora or fauna as a result of development, either directly or through habitat fragmentation?</p> <p>The Plan proposes a network of protected areas and ecological corridors available to support the movement of species and to sustain habitats, ecological processes and functions necessary to maintain biodiversity. Article 10 of the Habitats Directive requires EU member states in their land-use planning and development policies to encourage the management of features which constitute such ecological networks and which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora. Such features are those which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure (such as rivers with their banks or the traditional systems for marking field boundaries) or their function as stepping stones (such as ponds or small woods), are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.</p> <p>New development in the plan is limited to two sites. A small number of homes on each site will have a limited impact on the environment and where relevant will include mitigation measures if any risk to endangered species were to be identified.</p> <p>The presence of private gardens will replace the scope for biodiversity that might be lost by the removal of a small number of trees and hedgerows.</p>
Landscape	<p>One of the two sites proposed for development is in area WC2 landscape character area known as West Chiltington Village in the Landscape Capacity Assessment 2014 carried out by Horsham District Council. It is ranked as having moderate capacity for development. The other lies inside the BUA within a residential area.</p>	<p>Whether the WCNP will result in any deterioration in the landscape or village scape.</p> <p>The Steele Close site will adjoin the existing built up area and lie behind a horticultural site and so have no significant effect on the landscape. The Garage site is within a built up area of the Parish and will have no impact.</p>

<p>Housing</p>	<p>There is an identified need for affordable homes and homes for the elderly within the neighbourhood area.</p>	<p>Whether the WCNP will improve the availability of decent, affordable housing</p> <p>The proposals for two development sites will provide 15 affordable homes in the first five years. It will provide sheltered accommodation to support the needs of the elderly in the latter part of the Plan period.</p> <p>Given that market value housing is prohibitively expensive in the Neighbourhood Area for many individuals and families the additional provision would be a significant improvement.</p>
	<p>The preponderance of houses in West Chiltington are privately owned and detached with low density. No affordable homes have been built in recent years.</p>	<p>Whether the Plan will provide a range of housing types of various sizes and tenures?</p> <p>The policy of 70% social rented and 30% shared equity set by the District Council for affordable homes, if applied to the proposed developments, will provide the appropriate range of tenures. In the process of agreeing planning applications it would be expected that the housing type and size on each proposed site would reflect the need expressed in the Housing Needs survey and thus ensure that an appropriate range and size would be available. Whilst any market value homes would be privately owned a mix of size and types would be expected. The provision of sheltered accommodation will provide for those wishing to downsize and will release larger homes at the 'top' of the market.</p>
	<p>West Chiltington is a quiet rural village whose beauty, nature and character are important reasons why people have chosen to live there. The proximity to the South Downs National Park, Monkmead Woods with its SSSI, the network of footpaths and bridleways, the low density housing and the rich biodiversity provided by the hedges, trees and open spaces are key aspects of the environment that residents are very keen to protect.</p>	<p>Whether the WCNP will avoid developing protected/sensitive areas of the natural environment?</p> <p>Neither of the proposed development sites is in a protected/sensitive area.</p>

Heritage	The Norman church is a Grade I listed building and there are 66 Grade II listed buildings and a conservation area.	Whether the WCNP succeeds in avoiding any impact on heritage assets No development is proposed that will impact on heritage assets beyond some additional traffic that will necessarily pass through the conservation area. The Plan has policies that seek to protect heritage assets.
Leisure & Recreation	There is a wide range of activities available to residents based on the recreation ground, village hall, skate park, Church Hall and Parish Reading Room as well as an extensive network of footpaths and access to woodlands and the South Down National Park.	Whether the WCNP will sustain and increase community facilities The plan seeks to protect important green and open spaces and allows for the provision and improvement of further community facilities.
Transport, Infrastructure and Community Safety	The road network is typical of rural villages. Access roads from the principal A roads develop before long into narrow roads with bends and width restrictions leading into even narrower roads which in large measure are single track. A particular feature is sunken roads flanked by hedges and trees developed from historic drovers tracks. Pressure on major routes such as the A27 and A283 causes a degree of rat running and problems of speeding. Air quality in neighbouring Storrington is poor and there is concern that mitigation measures would impact the village adversely. There is also potential for village development to add to the problems in Storrington.	Whether the WCNP will avoid materially worsening the impact of the difficult infrastructure and improving community safety. Whilst any development will inevitably increase the volume of traffic and therefore worsen the current situation the modest scale of developments that the WCNP envisages are unlikely to cause any significant issues. It is considered that the balance of advantage from increases in the number of affordable homes outweighs the modest worsening of current infrastructure conditions.
Access to Healthcare	A key health care provider is the Pulborough Medical Group but there is no direct public transport to its location.	Whether the WCNP will improve access to healthcare. No it will not. Improvements to bus services (which lie outside the scope of the NP) could help and this will be pursued by the PC.
Flooding	Surface water flooding is a nuisance in many areas	Whether the WCNP will avoid materially worsening the impact of surface water flooding as a result of its development proposals. Proposed developments will be expected under planning rules to contain all water run off within the development.

7.3 Assessing the impact of the WCNP objectives and policies

The consultation on the Scoping Report did not lead to any significant amendments to the sustainability framework. Natural England welcomed the concern for biodiversity and landscape in the assessment criteria and drew attention to sensitive areas but the location and scale of proposed development is such that these are not going to be impacted to any significant extent.

The principal impact of the proposals will be positive to the extent that affordable housing is a priority for development in the plan against the background of no affordable housing built for many years. One scheme has been in gestation for at least five years.

SA/SEA OBJECTIVES	Biodiversity	Landscape	Housing	Heritage	Leisure Recreation	Transport Infrastructure Community	Access to healthcare	Flooding
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN OBJECTIVES AND POLICY HEADINGS								
Employment and Enterprise								
Housing								
Getting Around								
Environment and Heritage								
Leisure and community								

	Positive impact
	No impact or mitigable
	Negative impact

7.4 **Commentary on policy sections**

7.4.1 **Housing** - The housing policies prioritise development in favour of affordable homes coupled with homes for the elderly. Policy H5 will ensure that local people will get first access to such affordable housing as is made available.

The control of 'windfall' sites to within the BUA should ensure the integrity and character of the built area is maintained. Controls on the density and design should ensure that the built environment supports healthy living.

The policies meet the NPPF objectives 1,6,11,12

7.4.2 **Environment and Heritage** - The Environment and Heritage policies seek to protect the countryside from development and specifically protects the Settlement Separation Zone, development of which in the words of a Planning Inspector would "alter the individual settlement characteristics of this settlement". The policies further propose a network of protected areas and ecological corridors available to support the movement of species and to sustain habitats, ecological processes and functions necessary to maintain biodiversity; policies that seek to protect existing listed heritage assets and extend this by adding a local list of key features.

The policies meet the NPPF objectives 10, 11, 12, 13

7.4.3 **Employment and Enterprise** - The Employment and Enterprise policies seek to retain and enhance employment opportunities and improve communication infrastructure.

The policies meet the NPPF objectives 1,3,5

7.4.4 **Getting Around** - The Getting Around policies seek to retain and enhance the network of footpaths and bridleways and to control parking on new developments.

The policies meet the NPPF objective 4

7.4.5 **Leisure and Community** - The Leisure and Community policies seek to ensure that important Green Spaces are protected along with key community assets.

The policies meet the NPPF objectives 3,8,10,11

7.5 **Assessing the impact of reasonable policy alternatives**

7.5.1 In assessing the alternatives to the policies contained within the Plan the key issue was the development sites. The Housing Sites analysis report provides full details of the assessment of each site but the main issues were:

- The Built up Area Boundary
- The Settlement Separation Zone
- Coalescence with neighbouring Parishes
- The impact upon heritage assets/Conservation Area
- The impact upon ecological/biodiversity assets
- Traffic generation/infrastructure
- The views of residents

7.5.2 The alternative options were:

- No development
- Develop of one of the shortlisted sites

7.5.3. The first alternative undoubtedly preserves the status quo, cannot harm the environment and will not add to traffic but it would fail to meet the terms of the NPPF and the need to provide affordable homes that the Housing Needs Surveys required.

7.5.4 Of the shortlisted sites that were considered only two emerged from the process as being available and which:

- did not conflict with policies that preserve the separation zones between settlements,
- did not diminish significantly amenity in open spaces,
- adjoined the built up area,
- did not impact adversely the landscape,
- did not have significant access problems,
- were broadly acceptable to residents.

7.5.5 Given the constraints within the Parish and the views of residents any further allocation of land for housing would be highly unlikely to secure a majority vote at Referendum.

8. Appraisal of all policies

For completeness all the policies of the Plan have been assessed whether or not they involve any proposed new land uses (see Appendix A).

9. Monitoring

9.1 The WCNP proposes that progress in its implementation will be assessed by the Parish Council over the coming years. This will be done by assessing the impact of policies on development issues in the parish against the sustainability issues identified in para.7.

Appendix A - Appraisal of all policies

Policy Title	Social	Economic	Environmental
H1 Allocation of land for Housing	+	0	0
H 2 Quality of design	0	0	+
H3 Housing mix	+	0	0
H4 Housing density	0	0	+
H5 Affordable housing	+	0	0
H6 Windfall site	0	0	0
H7 Outdoor space	+	0	+
H8 Attention to detail	0	0	0
EH1 Built up area boundary	0	0	+
EH2 Settlement separation loan	0	0	+
EH3 Green infrastructure and ecosystem services	+	+	+
EH4 Surface water management	0	0	0
EH5 Protection of trees and hedgerows	+	0	+
EH6 Renewable and low carbon energy	0	0	+
EH7 Non-designated heritage assets	+	0	+
EH8 Conservation area	0	0	+
EH9 Un-lit Village status	0	0	+
EH 10 Wells houses	0	0	0
EH 11 Sunken roads and stream lane	0	0	+
EH 12 Mineral extraction	-	0	-
GA1 Promoting sustainable movement	+	0	+
GA2 Footpath, bridleways and cycle path network	+	0	+
GA3 Parking and new development	0	0	0
EE1 Supporting existing employment and retail	0	+	0
EE2 Employment land	0	+	0
EE3 Local shopping facilities	+	+	0
EE4 Improving signage	0	0	0

EE5 Sustainable recreational and tourism activities	+	+	0
EE6 Rural buildings	0	+	+
EE7 Communications infrastructure	+	+	0
LC1 Support independent living	+	0	0
LC2 Healthcare facilities	+	0	0
LC3 Provision of buildings for community use	+	0	0
LC4 Protection of assets of community value	+	+	0
LC5 Designation of local green space	+	0	+

Key: += positive; 0 = neutral; - = negative