

# Submission draft



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*Front cover image courtesy Kenneth Jones. All other images by members of the Houghton NDP Steering Group.*

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## LIST OF POLICIES

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*Houghton village hall*

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# 1. SETTING THE SCENE

## Introduction

- 1.1 New planning powers were given to local communities by the Localism Act 2011. These include the ability to prepare Neighbourhood Development Plans as part of the statutory planning framework governing the development and use of land in the area. When planning applications are made, they must be decided in accordance with this framework unless there are overriding circumstances to the contrary.
- 1.2 Houghton Parish Council has decided to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) to make use of these planning powers and help ensure that decisions on future development are guided locally.

## Format of the Neighbourhood Development Plan

- 1.3 To ensure that the NDP is based on a proper understanding of the character, needs and opportunities of the Neighbourhood Area, chapter 2 sets out the social, environmental and economic characteristics of Houghton and identifies the key issues to be addressed.
- 1.4 The NDP's vision for the Neighbourhood Area in 2029 is set out in chapter 3, together with more detailed objectives. In line with national and Borough-wide planning policies, the NDP seeks to contribute to sustainable development by addressing social, environmental and economic matters together. Chapter 4 provides an overarching policy to guide the sustainable development of the Neighbourhood Area.
- 1.5 The NDP then details policies on the development and use of land, grouped around the themes of community (chapter 5) and the built and natural environments (chapters 6 and 7). A concluding chapter explains how the NDP will be delivered, and includes a set of Community Actions to capture aspirations on non-land use matters.
- 1.6 The NDP has been prepared using evidence from a range of sources. Much information has been taken from reports and other documentation prepared by Test Valley Borough Council, particularly that underpinning the Revised Local Plan 2011-2029. This has been supplemented by a questionnaire survey of residents (the Village Survey) undertaken in 2018, together with separate studies of housing need and traffic. Regard has been had to the comprehensive Houghton and Bossington Parish Plan, prepared in 2008 and which remains relevant. The overall evidence base for the NDP is set out in Appendix A and each policy refers to supporting information. Reports of the surveys undertaken and of community events can be found on the Parish Council website.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.houghtonparishcouncil.org/community/houghton-parish-council-13622/neighbourhood-development/>

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## National and local planning policy context

- 1.7 The NDP needs to be read alongside existing national and Borough planning policies which apply in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 1.8 National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF promotes the achievement of sustainable development by acknowledging interdependent and overarching economic, social and environmental objectives for the planning system. Planning Practice Guidance gives more detailed advice as to how national policy is to be implemented.
- 1.9 The Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan 2011-2029 (the Local Plan) was adopted in January 2016. It sets out strategic and other planning policies for the development of the Borough over this period. The five-year review of the Local Plan carried out by the Borough Council in January 2021 and independently assessed concluded that the spatial strategy remained sound and that plan policies remained up-to-date, and whilst some policy amendments were needed to ensure consistency with the then NPPF these were not considered to mean that the adopted Local Plan was out-of-date or unsound. The NDP has been written to complement and add detail to the Local Plan policies. Where topics covered in the Local Plan are referred to, this is to ensure that the NDP can be read as a whole as a coherent and locally relevant document and to respond to matters of concern to residents.
- 1.10 The Local Plan designates Houghton as a Rural Village in the overall hierarchy of settlements.<sup>2</sup> It identifies a settlement boundary for Houghton and Bossington, within which development and redevelopment will be acceptable in principle. This is expected to be through small-scale proposals including windfalls,<sup>3</sup> replacement dwellings and the re-use of buildings. There are no proposals in the Local Plan to allocate land for development in the designated Rural Villages. Land outside the settlement boundary is classed as countryside for the purposes of planning policy.
- 1.11 The Borough Council have embarked on a review of the Local Plan, to cover the period up to 2036. Issues and Options consultations were held in 2018 and 2020. At the time of writing no draft planning policies are available.
- 1.12 In preparing the NDP, consideration has been given to the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). The Borough Council has concluded in a screening opinion in December 2019 that the NDP will not be likely to have significant environmental effects, including on European designations, and that on this basis SEA and HRA are not required.
- 1.13 The Houghton Neighbourhood Development Plan covers the period 2020 to 2029.

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<sup>2</sup> Local Plan, policy COM2 and Table 7, Settlement Hierarchy.

<sup>3</sup> Defined in the NPPF as sites not specifically identified in the development plan.

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## 2. HOUGHTON NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

- 2.1 This chapter describes the Neighbourhood Area in terms of the social, economic and environmental aspects which contribute to sustainability and to a sense of place.
- 2.2 The Neighbourhood Area was designated in June 2017. It covers the administrative area of Houghton parish (Plan 1), an area of 1081 ha. The qualifying body is Houghton Parish Council.

### The community of Houghton

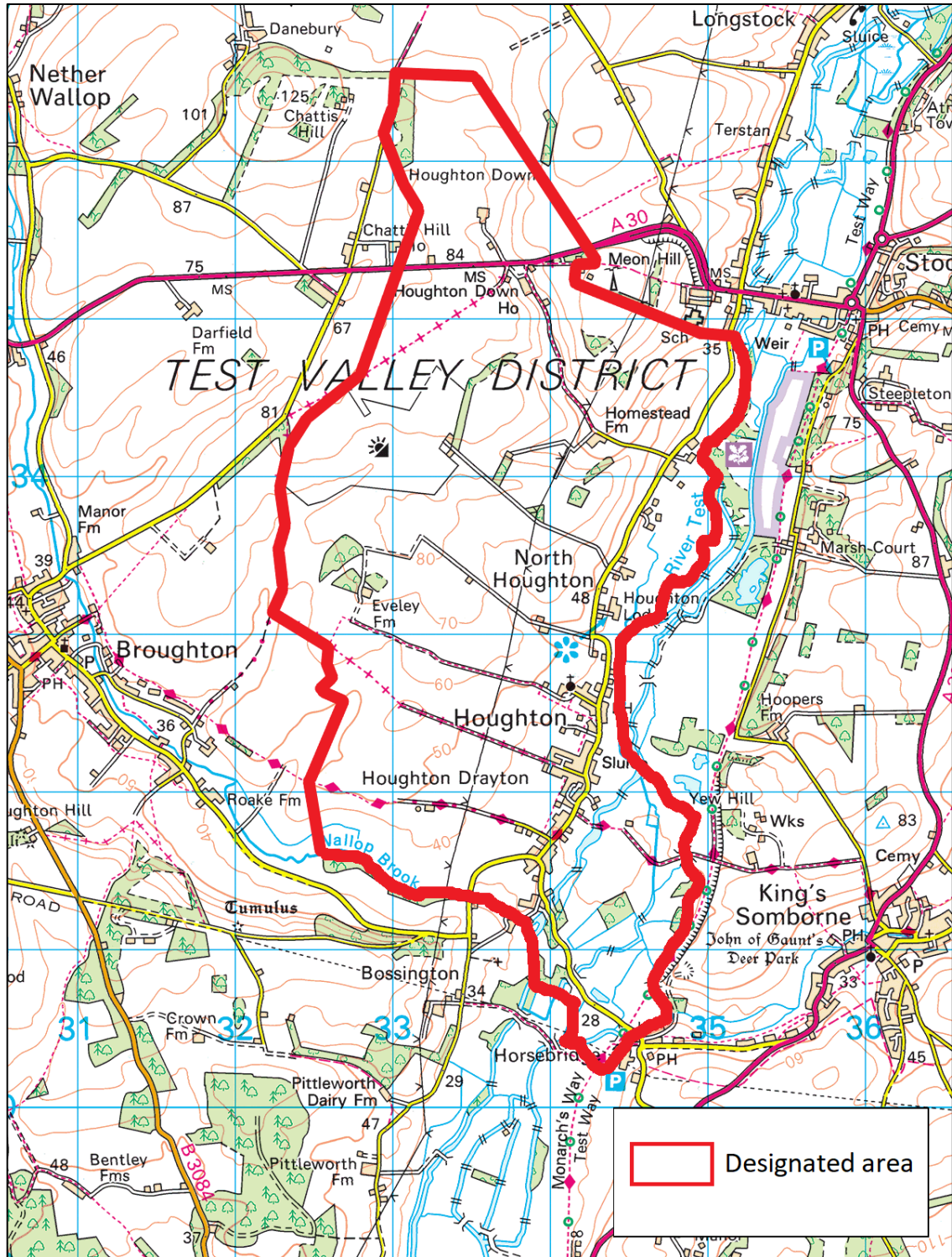
- 2.3 The Neighbourhood Area lies to the west of the River Test and south of Stockbridge and the A30. The main areas of settlement have grown up alongside a single road which runs southwards from the A30, between the River Test and rising farmland to the west, towards Bossington, Horsebridge and Kings Somborne. Today, the village of Houghton has a clear linear form (see front cover image), typical of the area and which extends some 1.4 km from Wisteria Cottage in the north to Test Lodge in the south.<sup>4</sup> The majority of properties face onto the village road, with only limited development extending westwards towards or up the valley slopes at Church Lane, Stevens Drove, Chapel Close and Kents Orchard.
- 2.4 Between Houghton and the A30 lies Houghton Lodge house and gardens, North Houghton Manor and North Houghton Farm. Away from the village and the valley floor, the remainder of the Neighbourhood Area is open agricultural land with scattered farmsteads. It is crossed by two long-distance footpaths, which intersect in Houghton: the Monarch's Way from Worcester to Brighton, and the Clarendon Way between Salisbury and Winchester. There are two large agricultural/sporting estates, Houghton Lodge estate to the north and Bossington estate in the south. The Eveley Solar Farm was completed in 2016 on land north of Eveley Farm; the developer-donated Community Benefit Fund supports a range of projects in and around the village.
- 2.5 Houghton has a village hall, with a playground and playing field to the rear; a public house (The Boot Inn), allotments, and a parish church (All Saints). There is a scheduled bus service to/from Stockbridge and Winchester six days a week. There is a primary school in Stockbridge. Test Valley School for 11-16's abuts the Neighbourhood Area boundary in the north.
- 2.6 The population of Houghton parish was 474 at the time of the 2011 Census.<sup>5</sup> Population forecasts suggest that the proportion of young adults (20-39) and those aged 65-85 will have increased in the period to 2021.<sup>6</sup> There were 200 households, an average household size of 2.4 persons per household. Most dwellings were owner-occupied, with 59.5% being owned outright or with a mortgage or loan (this is lower than the equivalent figure for Test Valley

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<sup>4</sup> As per the Local Plan settlement boundary for Houghton.

<sup>5</sup> Note that at the time of the 2011 Census, the parish included land south of the Wallop Brook which now forms Bossington civil parish. Census 2011 figures quoted here refer to this larger area.

<sup>6</sup> Test Valley Borough Council, Houghton parish profile.



**Plan 1: Houghton Designated Neighbourhood Area**

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Borough, 70.3%). A further 25% were privately rented, notably higher than the Test Valley figure of 12.9%, and 11.5% were social rented (Test Valley 14.4%).

- 2.7 Reflecting the emphasis on owner-occupation, there is a preponderance of higher value property in Houghton. Council Tax bands F to H account for 47.1% of dwellings (Test Valley 17.1%) whilst 15% of property is within the lowest value bands A and B (Test Valley 22.2%).<sup>7</sup>

## Economy

- 2.8 Houghton has a strong rural and residential character, with no purpose-built industrial or trading estates. The prevailing land use is agriculture, principally arable, with the farmland rated as grade 3 (good to moderate). Employment is provided by the Houghton Lodge and Bossington estates, village services such as The Boot public house, and other small businesses including home-working. Nearby Stockbridge provides employment, including in retail and services. Further afield, Andover, Romsey, Winchester and Salisbury provide a wide range of job opportunities as well access to local government, educational, health and leisure services and facilities.

## Environment

- 2.9 The landscape is important in defining local character and distinctiveness. Most of the Neighbourhood Area is chalk downland, a large-scale, elevated arable landscape with infrequent tree planting and fragmented hedgerows adding to the very open character. To the east and south, the downland is bisected by the Wallop Brook and the River Test. These watercourses flow through intimate and pastoral landscapes composed of water meadows, woodland and valley floor pasture, all in sharp contrast to the open and exposed character of the surrounding chalk downland. There are areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3 associated with the River Test and the Wallop Brook (see Plan 2 at end of chapter).
- 2.10 There are many areas of habitat within and adjoining the Neighbourhood Area which are important in terms of biodiversity. The River Test is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a classic chalk stream which is one of the most species-rich lowland rivers in England (Plan 3). The SSSI citation explains that the river has been modified over the centuries by the construction of sluice systems and creation of channels for water meadows, water mills and navigation. Many stretches have also been realigned for such purposes and some deepened for land drainage. This has resulted in a multiplicity of water courses, evident in the river reaches at Houghton, though as a chalk river it would naturally have a braided channel.
- 2.11 For many years the river channels, banks and vegetation have received regular management and alterations, to maintain, improve and facilitate fishing; all activities which have variously contributed to its present character and appearance. The Test is world renowned for game fishing, which is largely provided by brown trout, both wild and stocked populations, and to a lesser extent salmon and sea trout. Most of the fishing within and around the village is owned

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<sup>7</sup> Test Valley Borough Council, Houghton Parish Profile.

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by either estate or the exclusive Houghton Club, founded in 1822, making it the oldest fishing club in England.

2.12 Stockbridge Common Marsh SSSI abuts the Neighbourhood Area, opposite North Houghton Farm, with Stockbridge Fen SSSI to the north of the A30 (Plan 3).

2.13 The natural habitats along the River Test and Wallop Brook are also of importance for biodiversity, forming a continuous corridor along these watercourses. They include the following as recorded on the Priority Habitats Inventory:<sup>8</sup>

- River Test: extensive areas of floodplain grazing marsh, especially north of Horsebridge; pockets of deciduous woodland, and lowland fens.
- Wallop Brook: floodplain grazing marsh, good quality semi-improved grassland, purple moor grass and rush pastures, and deciduous woodland.

2.14 Away from the river/brook corridors, habitats of note comprise fragmented areas of woodland. That at Eveley Wood is ancient and semi-natural woodland. A traditional orchard is recorded at Houghton Down Farm.



*River Test at Sheep Bridge*

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<sup>8</sup> The Priority Habitat Inventory is maintained by Natural England pursuant to section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. This requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of living organisms and types of habitat which are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

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2.15 There are three County-level Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, identified by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre. They comprise: Eveley Wood (three sites), Wallop Brook Meadows (east), and Horsebridge Water Meadows Central (Plan 3).

2.16 The Neighbourhood Area has a range of heritage assets (Plan 4):

- Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area, covering the historic core of the village on the river valley floor as well as water meadows and other open land. The Conservation Area extends beyond the boundary of the Neighbourhood Area to the south.
- 45 listed buildings, all grade II except for three listed grade II\*: Houghton Lodge, the Old Rectory, and All Saints Church.
- A Scheduled Ancient Monument: John of Gaunt's Deer Park Pale.

2.17 Houghton Lodge is a registered Historic Park and Garden (grade II\*).

## Key issues

2.18 The NDP addresses a range of land use and development issues in seeking to deliver the sustainable development of the Neighbourhood Area. These have been identified through work on the NDP including the Village Survey. They are listed below in the order in which they are tackled in the NDP.

- The needs of the community for social, recreational and other services and facilities.
- The need to ensure that new housing is of a suitable type and size to meet community requirements, particularly to help younger people buy and live in Houghton.
- The design of new development and the extent to which it reflects and enhances local character.
- Preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area.
- Protecting the distinctive landscape character and associated views of the Neighbourhood Area for future generations to enjoy.
- Protecting Local Green Spaces of importance to the community.
- That the implications of renewable energy projects such as solar farms should be comprehensively addressed, taking account of cumulative as well as individual impacts.




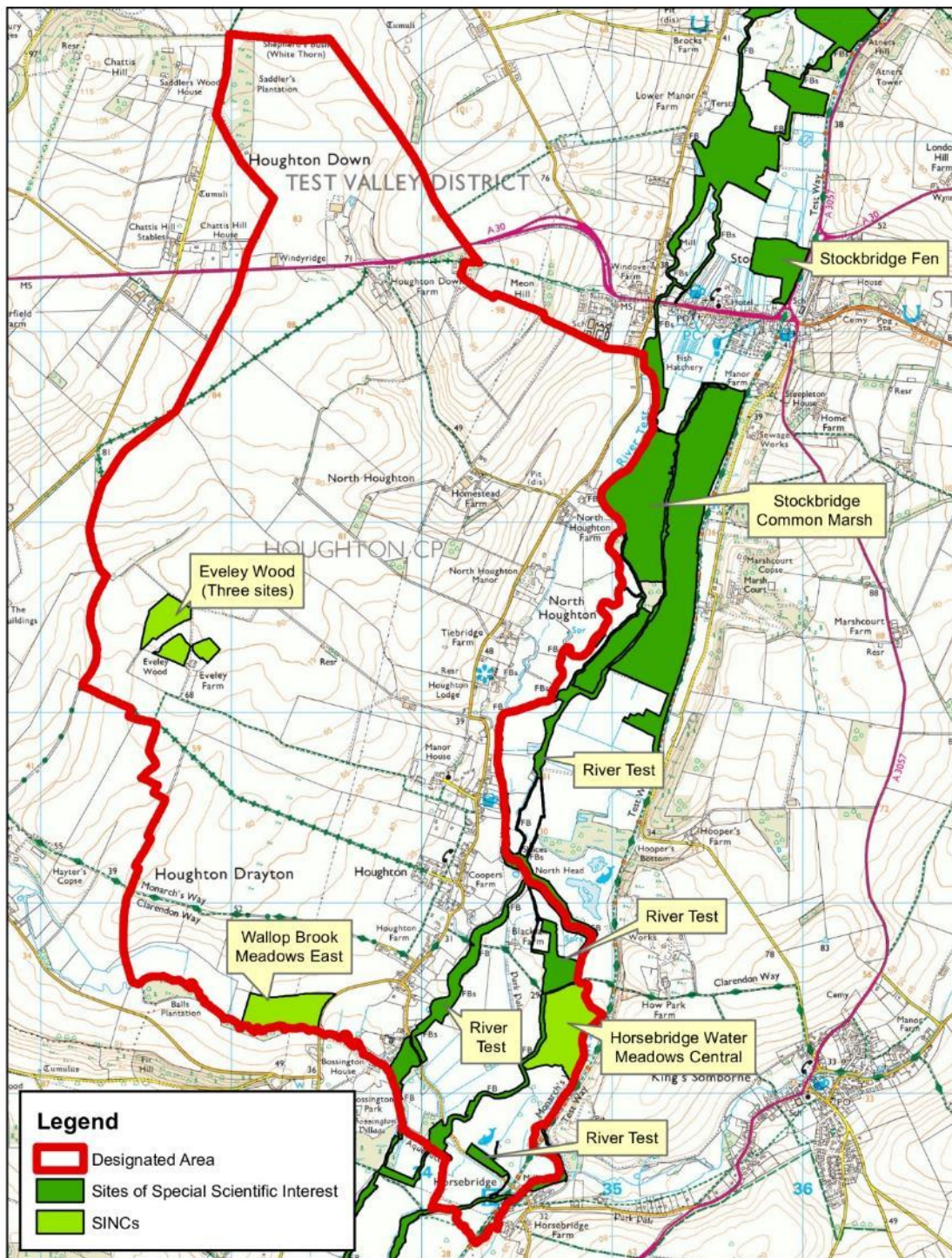
## Flood Zones 2 and 3



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### Plan 2: Flood Zones 2 and 3

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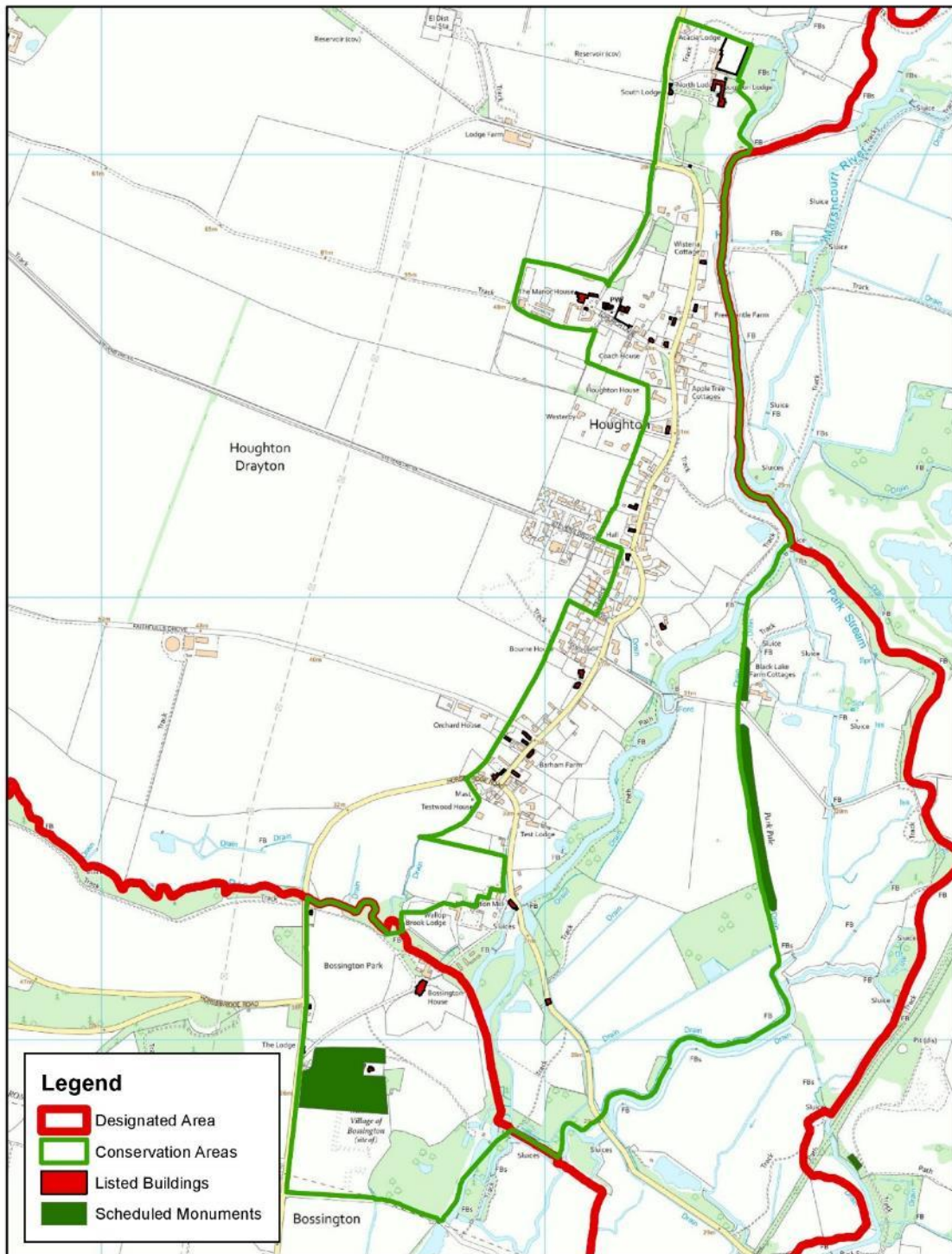
# SSSI's and SINC's



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## Plan 3: Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

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# Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area

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Not to Scale

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## Plan 4: Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area

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## 3. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

### Vision

In 2029, the community of Houghton will be:

- a peaceful and tranquil village with facilities and a mix of housing to meet its needs; and
- a place where the built environment has been preserved or enhanced, and where new development has respected the existing local character; and
- a parish whose distinctive landscape character, views and open spaces have been protected and where appropriate enhanced.

### Objectives

#### 3.1 Objectives for the community

- **To protect, retain and improve community services and facilities** including open space and land and buildings used for sport and recreation and access to the countryside, to support health, social and cultural well-being.
- **To help meet housing requirements** by encouraging a mix of type and size of properties in line with community needs.
- **To ensure that any future development takes account of the impact on the community** including infrastructure and amenities.

#### 3.2 Objectives for the built environment

- **To conserve the rural character of the village and to preserve and enhance the things that are valued by the people of Houghton** such as its peace and tranquillity.
- **To ensure that any future development** is in keeping with the rural setting and meets the needs of the community.
- **To protect Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area, important buildings and open spaces.**

#### 3.3 Objectives for the natural environment

- To protect, conserve and enhance **landscape character**.
- **To protect important views** of the landscape and the settlement within it.
- **To protect Local Green Spaces** of particular importance to the local community.
- To define criteria to assess proposals for **renewable and low carbon energy projects**.

#### 3.4 Objectives for delivery of the NDP

- **To identify matters which fall outside the formal development and land-use scope** of the NDP, such as traffic and transport, as Community Actions for further consideration and action by Houghton Parish Council working in partnership with others.

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## 4. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### **Policy HTN1 Sustainable development**

**Development proposals which contribute to the sustainable development of the Houghton Neighbourhood Area will be supported. In making this assessment, the following objectives will be sought and balanced, as relevant to the proposal:**

- 1. meeting the needs of the community for housing, services and facilities;**
- 2. supporting small business uses and the re-use of existing buildings for commercial purposes, where these are in accordance with Local Plan policy and compatible with the rural character of their surroundings; and**
- 3. taking all opportunities to conserve and wherever possible enhance the built, historic and natural environments.**

### ***The reason for this policy***

- 4.1 Sustainable development aims to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.<sup>9</sup> In achieving sustainable development, the planning system has three overarching and interdependent objectives - economic, social and environmental. These are to be pursued in mutually supportive ways.
- 4.2 The Houghton NDP seeks to play an active role in guiding development towards a sustainable solution. It does this by setting out the rural character of the area, identifying needs and opportunities informed by the surveys undertaken for the NDP, and providing appropriate land-use planning policies to manage change and supplement those in the Local Plan where required.<sup>10</sup> Policy HTN1 identifies the local priorities to be actively considered in guiding development in the Neighbourhood Area towards a sustainable outcome.
- 4.3 Some development proposals may entail a mix of gains and losses when assessed against policy HTN1. Planning decisions will need to balance such variable impacts against each other in considering how individual projects contribute to sustainability, considering the character, needs and opportunities of the Neighbourhood Area.

### ***The evidence for this policy***

- 4.4 Supporting evidence for this policy can be found in:
- NPPF chapter 2 Achieving sustainable development
  - Local Plan chapter 4 Delivering sustainable development, including policy SD1.
  - NDP Village Survey.

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<sup>9</sup> NPPF paragraph 7; Resolution 42/187 of the United Nations General Assembly.

<sup>10</sup> In respect of the economic objective, the NDP relies on Local Plan policies notably COM2, LE16 and LE17.



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## 5. COMMUNITY

### Community services, facilities and recreational open space

#### Policy HTN2 Community services, facilities and recreational open space

Development involving the loss of the community services, facilities and recreational open space shown on Plan 5 will only be supported when the criteria in Local Plan policies COM14 and LHW1 as applicable can be shown to be met:

- All Saints Church
- The Boot Inn
- Houghton allotments
- Houghton Village Hall
- Playing field and children's playground.

The provision of new or the enhancement of existing community facilities will be supported provided that:

1. the siting, scale and design respects the character of the surrounding area; and
2. the local road network can safely accommodate the additional traffic; and
3. provision is made for off-road vehicle parking and cycle parking/storage in accordance with Local Plan policy T2.

#### *The reason for this policy*

5.1 This policy is in accord with the NPPF which promotes healthy, inclusive and safe communities,<sup>11</sup> and adds local detail to strategic Local Plan policies COM14 and LHW1. It guards against the unnecessary loss of valued services, facilities, and open spaces in the village which enable many different forms of social interaction, support healthy lifestyles and which are well-used. For instance, in the NDP Village Survey, 78% of respondents said that they made use of the village hall.

5.2 Whilst the development of new community facilities is not anticipated during the plan period, any which do come forward together with proposals for the enhancement of existing provision will be supported subject to the policy criteria as to impact on surroundings, traffic generation and parking.

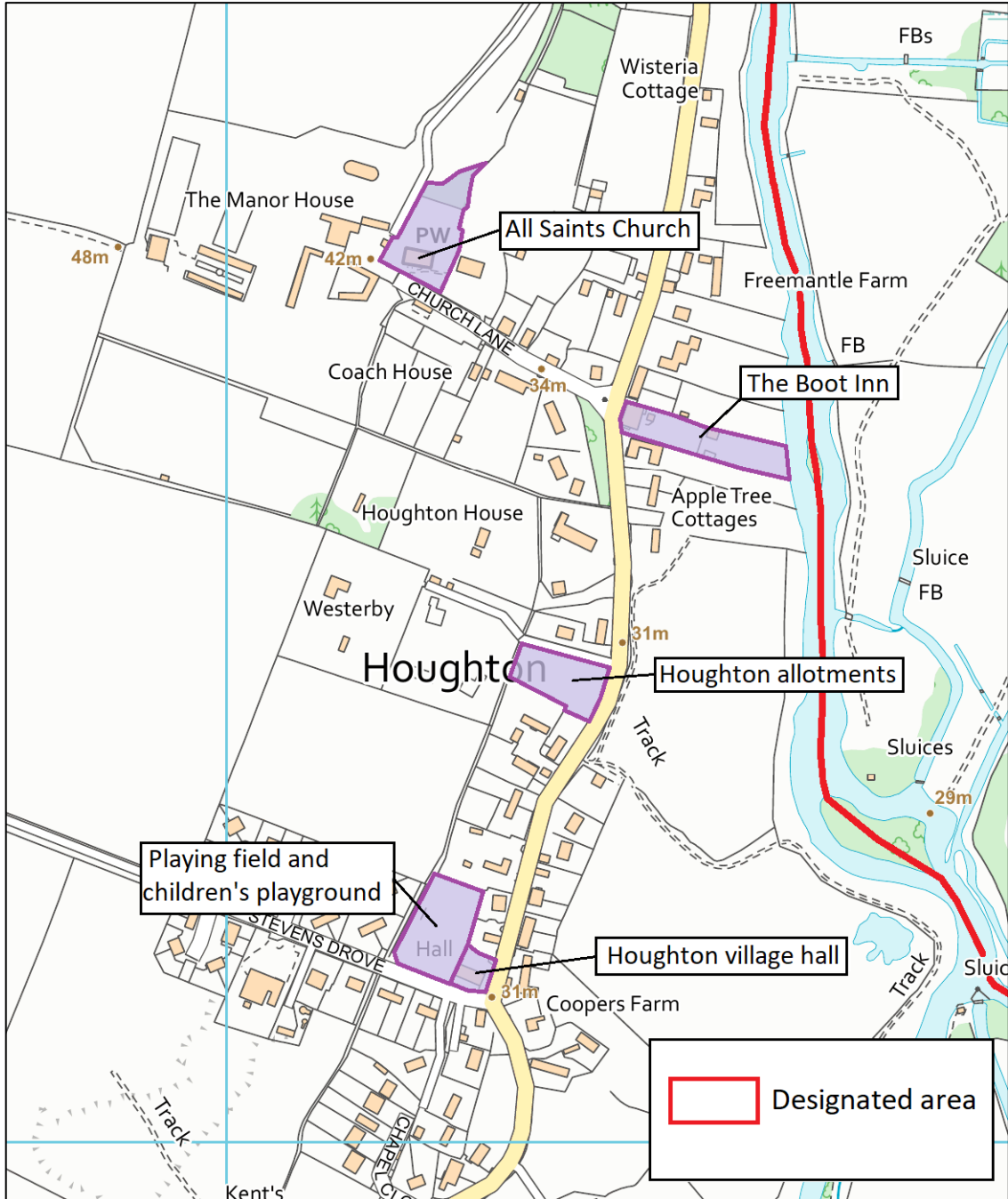
#### *The evidence for this policy*

5.3 Supporting evidence for this policy can be found in:


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<sup>11</sup> NPPF chapter 8.

- NPPF chapter 8 Promoting safe and healthy communities
- Local Plan policies COM14, LHW1 and T2
- NDP Village Survey.



### Plan 5: Community services, facilities and recreational open space

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## Type of new housing

### Policy HTN3 Type of new housing

**New housing development should provide dwellings of a type and size that meets the latest assessment of local needs. This includes predominantly providing dwellings with 2- and 3-bedrooms to meet the need for smaller property. Larger dwellings will only be supported where there is up-to-date evidence of a local need for such homes.**

### *The reason for this policy*

- 5.4 It is important to make sure that housing of the right kind is provided to meet local needs. National planning policy requires that in rural areas planning policies be responsive to local circumstances and that they support housing developments that reflect local needs.<sup>12</sup> Local Plan policy COM1 identifies the overall housing requirement for the Borough. Policy HTN3 adds detail by requiring a mix of sizes and types of new homes to meet local needs.
- 5.5 The Test Valley Strategic Housing Market Assessment provides information on the size of dwellings required in various sub-areas of the Borough over the period 2011-2031. Houghton Neighbourhood Area is in the Central-Rural sub-area and relevant information is set out in Table 1.

House size	Market housing	Affordable housing
1 bedroom	8%	40%
2 bedrooms	31%	32%
3 bedrooms	42%	26%
4+ bedrooms	18%	1%

**Table 1: Size of dwellings required, Test Valley Central - Rural sub-area 2011-2031**

Source: Test Valley Strategic Housing Market Assessment figures 8.11 and 8.12.

- 5.6 Table 1 shows that for market housing the main requirement is for 3-bedroom houses, followed by 2-bedroom homes. For affordable housing, there is a greater emphasis on smaller properties – 72% should be 1- or 2-bedroom homes.
- 5.7 The Assessment comments that the Borough Council may wish to promote a stronger focus on smaller 1- and 2-bedroom market homes in rural locations such as the Central-Rural sub-area than the pure modelling would suggest, with a consequent dampening of the requirements for 4 or more-bedroom properties. This is to take account of the ageing demographic, the higher prices of market housing and significant levels of under-occupation. These factors are

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<sup>12</sup> NPPF paragraph 78.

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relevant in Houghton and the Parish Council concurs with this approach which is reflected in policy HTN3.

- 5.8 The Assessment also identifies a number of household groups which may have particular housing needs, including older people, people with disabilities, households with children and young people.
- 5.9 Locally, surveys carried out for the NDP confirm the requirement to provide smaller rather than larger units of accommodation. Respondents to the Village Survey who acknowledged a need for further housing felt this should be more affordable, in particular to enable younger people to buy and live in Houghton. The top three needs that were identified were for affordable housing, discount market homes and shared ownership schemes.
- 5.10 To explore these issues further, a local Housing Needs Survey was carried out in 2018. This found a limited need for affordable housing arising from responding households and their family members. There was also a need for smaller open market homes, both to allow existing homeowners in the parish to downsize as they grow older and to enable those in younger age groups to buy cheaper entry-level property. For example, of survey respondents wishing to move, 44% were doing so in order to downsize, and 73% were looking for two- or three-bedroom property. Key factors seen as preventing a move were a lack of suitable properties in the area (73%) or with the number of bedrooms required (42%). For the younger age groups, the survey asked about family members who may require a separate home in the near future. In these cases, the main reason given for moving was the desire to start a first home (84% of respondents), the principal requirement being for one- (31%) and two-bedroom (62%) properties across a wider range of tenures than sought by existing homeowners wishing to move. Whilst this latter group favoured continued owner-occupation (96%), emerging households were also interested in private rent (38%), affordable rent (31%) and shared ownership/equity (23%). The Survey concluded that a scheme of 6-10 homes across a mix of tenures and price levels could help to provide for the future housing needs of the community.
- 5.11 Taking all this into account, policy HTN3 will help deliver a sustainable and balanced community by requiring a suitable mix of housing. A range of housing provision will cater for all ages including the young and old alike so as to allow both groups to remain or move into the village. As well as the mix of dwellings identified through the Housing Needs Survey, this also includes housing for people who wish to commission or build their own homes.
- 5.12 In respect of affordable housing, the social rented and shared ownership tenures represented 12.5% of the housing stock in 2011. Some further affordable housing may arise from the application of Local Plan policies.
- 5.13 A particular village opportunity is at Houghton Farm, a 0.98 ha site within the settlement boundary. This has potential to meet the village need set out above, both as to the quantity and type of new housing, and including some affordable provision. Planning permission for

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residential development of the site was granted in April 2020, for 13 dwellings of which four are to be affordable.<sup>13</sup>

***The evidence for this policy***

5.14 Supporting evidence for this policy can be found in:

- NPPF chapter 5 Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- Local Plan policy COM1 and paragraphs 5.31 to 5.33.
- Test Valley Strategic Housing Market Assessment chapters 8 and 9.
- Local Plan Housing Topic Paper
- NDP Village Survey
- Houghton Neighbourhood Plan Housing Needs Survey, Final Report.



*Village housing at Alexander Close*

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<sup>13</sup> LPA ref 19/02293/FULLS.

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## 6. BUILT ENVIRONMENT

### Village design

#### Policy HTN4 Village design

Development proposals should protect and enhance the key characteristics of Houghton village as set out in Table 2 and having regard to the design components identified in Appendix B. In particular, proposals should:

1. maintain the overall dispersed and linear form of the village through the siting and orientation of development; and
2. be in keeping with the character of properties in the locality, including as to scale, height, materials and detailing; and
3. make provision for off-road vehicle parking and cycle parking/storage in accordance with Local Plan policy T2; and
4. provide boundary treatments using traditional local styles and materials suitable to the rural context. Existing boundary hedgerows should be maintained and strengthened, and new hedgerows of native deciduous species provided wherever possible; and
5. retain existing roadside grass verges, with provision of new verges encouraged; and
6. use native deciduous species for new tree planting; and
7. avoid undue adverse impacts on amenity, wildlife and dark skies from external lighting and signage.

#### *The reason for this policy*

- 6.1 It is important that new development is of a high quality of design which respects and complements local distinctiveness. National planning policy gives weight to the role of good design as an aspect of sustainable development, and recognises that neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of an area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.<sup>14</sup>
- 6.2 Local Plan strategic policy E1 endorses this approach, providing that development will not be permitted if it is of poor design and fails to improve the character, function and quality of the area.
- 6.3 To provide local guidance, a Village Design Statement (VDS) for Houghton and Bossington is in preparation. This initiative reflects the view of villagers that the essence of good future design lies in respecting local vernacular architecture and other key characteristics of the village. Houghton is a tranquil village, set alongside the River Test and within open countryside. It has

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<sup>14</sup> NPPF paragraphs 126 and 127.

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a distinctive linear form, with properties set in the main along the village road. Many of these are listed and the village is a Conservation Area. Table 2 sets out the key characteristics of buildings and townscape in Houghton, developed from the work undertaken for the VDS, which are relevant to an assessment of the design of new development in and around the village. Appendix B sets out a checklist of design components to be considered when assessing whether development proposals are in keeping with the key characteristics of the village.

6.4 Policy HTN4 should be read alongside other NDP policies:

- Policy HTN5 Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area: many of the considerations highlighted in policy HTN4 will be relevant in considering the impact of proposals on the significance of the Conservation Area.
- Policy HTN6 Landscape character: design guidelines on rural character, trees, hedgerows and roadside verges will help maintain and enhance landscape character.
- Policy HTN8 Local Green Spaces: this policy protects the green spaces identified in work undertaken for the VDS.

***The evidence for this policy***

6.5 Supporting evidence for this policy can be found in:

- NPPF chapter 12 Achieving well-designed places
- Local Plan policy E1 and T2
- Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area Policy
- NDP Village Survey.

Characteristic	Defining features
<b>Period property building styles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Thatched:</b> steep-pitched and generally tall roofs; timber-framed with brick infill panels in vernacular masonry bonds, exposed or colour washed; painted (white), timber, casement windows, multi-paned or with horizontal glazing bars; (typical examples: Elm Tree Cottage, Church Lane Cottage, Hunters Cottage, The Anchorage, Marwin Cottage, Vine Cottage);</li> <li>• <b>Chalk cob</b> with shingle or natural slate tiles, with painted (white), timber, casement windows; shallow-pitched roofs (typical example: Clarendon Cottage);</li> <li>• <b>“Georgian”:</b> shallow-pitched roofs (generally hipped) with local, red/orange, plain clay roof tiles; local mellow, mixed, red/orange (or painted) brick; vernacular masonry bonds (mostly Flemish); pale/creamy mortar; painted (white), timber, sash windows with glazing bars; (typical example: Tiebridge Farmhouse; Houghton Farm (north));</li> <li>• <b>“Victorian”:</b> shallow-pitched roofs (sometimes hipped or half-hipped) in natural slate with (generally) grey ridge tiles; local, mixed, mellow, red/orange brick (sometimes painted); vernacular masonry bonds (mostly Flemish); pale/creamy mortar; painted (white), timber, sash or casement windows, generally multi-paned or with horizontal glazing bars; (typical examples: Glebe House, Baker’s Cottage, Coopers Farm); flint is occasionally found in place of brick (e.g. The Old School House, The Boot Inn (north wall), Bossington Lodges);</li> <li>• <b>Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, ‘Arts and Crafts’ vernacular revival, estate style (at South End and Bossington):</b> tall, steep-pitched roofs with local, red/orange, plain clay tiles or natural slate; local, mixed, mellow, red/orange (or painted) brick; vernacular masonry bonds (Flemish or Running bond); pale/creamy mortar; render/rough-cast first floor walls; local, red/orange, clay hanging-tiles; natural slate or local, red/orange, plain clay roof tiles; painted, timber, casement windows, generally multi-paned or with horizontal glazing bars; (typical examples: South End Cottages (north and south); River Cottage).</li> </ul>
<b>Other buildings</b>	<p>Vernacular barns and working buildings are timber-framed with dark, straight-edged weather-boarding, and pitched roofs (often half-hipped), with natural slate roof tiles and grey ridge tiles (e.g. the barn at Houghton Lodge south of the walled garden entrance, the former Wheelwright’s Workshop, and the Village Hall) or plain clay tiles (e.g. Lavender Cottage Barn on Faithfull’s Drove).</p>
<b>Roof height and pitch</b>	<p>Generally low compared with wall height and have a shallow pitch.</p>
<b>Materials - walls</b>	<p>Timber framing; local, mixed, mellow, red/orange brick, with pale, creamy mortar (originally with a high lime content); painted brickwork; half-rendered facades; local, red/orange, clay hanging-tiles; flint with brick quoins and/or piers, or alternating course of brick and flint; straight-edged weather-boarding in working buildings.</p>



Characteristic	Defining features
	<p>Principal brick bonds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Flemish' bond (alternate stretchers and headers; much the most common local vernacular bond);</li> <li>• 'Monk' bond (two stretchers to one header);</li> <li>• 'Sussex' bond (three stretchers to one header);</li> <li>• 'English' bond (alternating rows of stretchers and headers);</li> <li>• 'Running' or 'Stretcher' bond (all stretchers).</li> </ul>
<b>Materials - roofs</b>	Thatch; natural clay roof-tiles in local, red/orange tones (not concrete, and not pantiles or other profiled tiles); natural slate roof-tiles, generally with grey ridge tiles; cedar shingles.
<b>Materials - windows</b>	Painted (white) timber window frames; sash windows; or casement windows, generally with horizontal glazing bars, and frequently with vertical glazing bars as well.
<b>Building heights</b>	Generally no more than two storeys; tiled roofs are not steep or tall.
<b>Plot size</b>	Detached houses mostly have sizeable gardens, creating ample space around and between houses.
<b>Building line</b>	The building line varies, but virtually no houses stand hard up against the road/pavement/verge, and most are set back significantly. The large majority of houses are parallel to the road. There is virtually no double-depth housing, and almost no houses/gardens back on to one another; as a result, the settlement pattern is strongly linear.
<b>Parking</b>	Nearly all houses have off-street parking (a few, mostly in a group north of the village hall, do not); nearly all parking areas and drives are gravel. There is also some on-street parking including towards Houghton Corner.
<b>Boundaries</b>	Front boundary hedges are common, mostly of native, mixed deciduous types, with some beech and privet; there are also a number of front boundary walls, mostly low, generally brick with pale/creamy mortar (matching the house), many with half-round coping bricks, sometimes with flint infills.
<b>Trees</b>	Extensive tree cover, both in gardens and on verges, predominantly deciduous species.
<b>Townscape</b>	Minimal signage and street furniture, no street lighting except in Stevens Drove, grass verges and limited pavements.

**Table 2: Key characteristics**

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## Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area

### **Policy HTN5 Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area**

Development proposals in or adjacent to the Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area should preserve or enhance its character or appearance, having regard to its significance and special interest as this is set out in the Conservation Area Policy document adopted by Test Valley Borough Council, including by:

- 1. reflecting traditional building forms in terms of density, height, massing and scale; and**
- 2. using local or traditional materials, colours and detailing; and**
- 3. retaining and reinforcing local landscape features such as trees and hedgerows.**

In considering proposals affecting the following non-designated heritage assets in the Conservation Area, regard will be had to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset concerned:

- **Rectory Cottage**
- **Rose Cottage**
- **School House**
- **Church Stowe including boundary walls**
- **Wayside Cottages**
- **The Boot Inn**
- **Yew Tree Cottage**
- **Walnut Cottage**
- **Orchard Cottage**
- **Outbuilding north of Forge Cottage**
- **Rosemary Cottage**
- **The Old Post Office**
- **Coopers Farm**
- **Meadow Barn (eastern part)**
- **Riverside**
- **Walled garden in grounds of Kent's Orchard**
- **Properties north-east of Meadow View (2)**
- **Estate cottages opposite The Rowans**
- **Roadside building south of The Rowans**
- **Terrace of four dwellings at Houghton Corner**
- **South End Cottages**
- **Testwood House**
- **Littlemead**
- **Test Lodge**
- **Dairy House**
- **Buildings north-east of Bossington Mill.**

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### ***The reason for this policy***

6.6 The Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area was designated in February 1990. It extends from Houghton Lodge in the north along the village street as far south as the site of a deserted hamlet at Bossington Park (this southern part of the Conservation Area is outside the Neighbourhood Area). It is contained to the east by the River Test and John of Gaunt's Deer Park Pale, and by rising arable land to the west.

6.7 Test Valley Borough Council adopted a Conservation Area Policy document at the time of designation. This sets out the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area, identifying the features that give it its unique identity (Plan 6). These are:

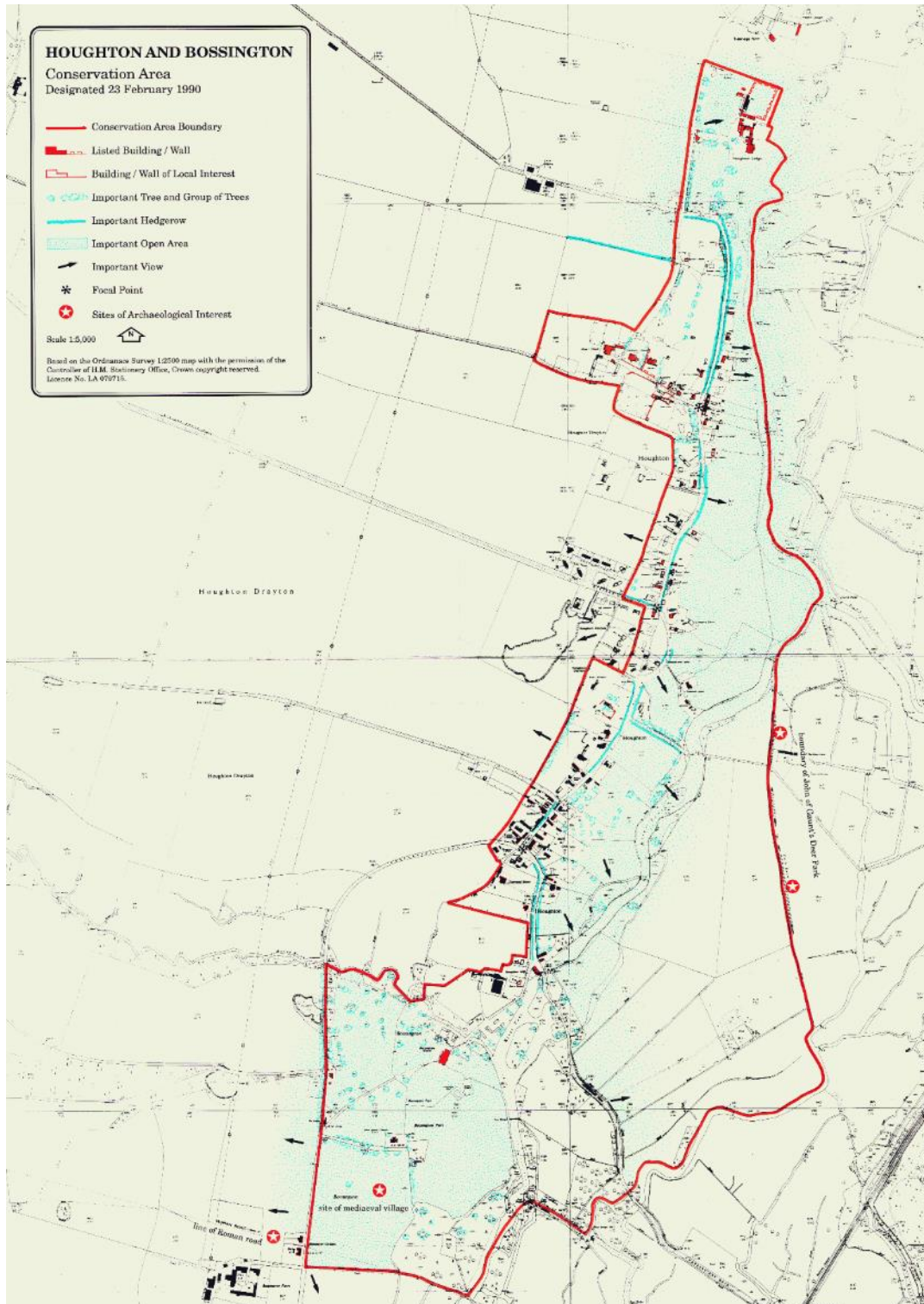
- A dispersed linear settlement with hedgerows forming strong linking elements between groups of dwellings.
- Important open areas to the east adjacent to the river.
- Church Lane as the main focal point of the village, with the church, manor house and rectory.
- Characteristic local estate cottages dispersed throughout the village.
- Views eastwards across the valley of the Test and from footpaths on the western edge of the village.
- Characteristic use of local materials in buildings, with a lack of suitable building stone giving rise to an early strong timber framed tradition. Oak was the preferred material with wattle and daub or lath and plaster being used for infill panels. These were often replaced with brick at the end of the medieval period. Georgian buildings were commonly brick of brick and tile, which chalk cob often used for cottages and walling. Cottages were traditionally thatched in long straw or water reed from the river valley.

6.8 National planning policy and Local Plan policy E9 require that heritage assets such as Conservation Areas are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Policy HTN5 gives weight to the Conservation Area Policy published by the Borough Council. It will ensure that such aspects as traditional building forms, materials and landscape features, as identified in the Policy document as contributing to the Conservation Area's special interest, will be considered in assessing the impact of development proposals on its significance. The policy also identifies non-designated heritage assets within the Conservation Area, as these are identified as buildings/walls of local interest in the Conservation Area Policy document. Policy HTN5 applies only to that part of the Conservation Area within the Houghton Neighbourhood Area.

### ***The evidence for this policy***

6.9 Supporting evidence for this policy can be found in:

- NPPF chapter 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
- Local Plan policy E9
- Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area Policy.



**Plan 6: Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area Character Appraisal Map**

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## 7. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

### Landscape character

#### Policy HTN6 Landscape character

Development proposals will be supported where it can be shown that landscape character and key valued characteristics will be protected, conserved and where possible enhanced when assessed against the Test Valley Landscape Character Assessment.

The landscape character of the Middle Test Valley Floor will be protected, conserved and enhanced by seeking to ensure that development:

1. respects and conserves the existing linear form of Houghton village, avoiding further encroachment onto the valley side and development on the valley floor; and
2. does not lead to the coalescence of settlements, so as to protect the physical separation between Houghton and adjoining settlements; and
3. minimises the impact on landscape character and positively enhances the sense of place and local distinctiveness, taking account of policy HTN4; and
4. provides for any impacts to be satisfactorily mitigated by a landscaping scheme which is itself acceptable.

The landscape character of the Thruxton and Danebury Chalk Downland will be protected, conserved and enhanced by seeking to ensure that development:

5. responds to the local characteristics of the landscape; and
6. maintains the historic integrity of the settlement pattern; and
7. avoids undue impact on views, rural character and sense of openness; and
8. otherwise mitigates the visual impact arising from new structures, buildings and changes of use through suitable native species planting which is itself not out of character with the landscape; and
9. does not unduly impact on elevated views from outside the Neighbourhood Area.

Trees, woodland and hedgerows will wherever possible be conserved, with every opportunity taken to restore, strengthen and where possible enhance and make new provision.

#### *The reason for this policy*

- 7.1 National planning policy requires development plans to contribute to and enhance the natural environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes in a manner commensurate with their identified quality. The intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside should also be recognised.<sup>15</sup> Local Plan strategic policy E2 sets out the Borough-wide approach to the

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<sup>15</sup> NPPF, paragraph 174.

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protection, conservation and enhancement of the landscape. In particular, the location, siting and design of new development should be in keeping with the character of the local landscape.

- 7.2 The Test Valley Landscape Character Assessment identifies a series of Landscape Character Types (LCT) and Landscape Character Areas (LCA) across the Borough. The following are relevant to the Neighbourhood Area (Plan 7):

Landscape Character Type 5: River Valley Floor

- LCA5B Middle Test Valley Floor
- LCA5F Wallop Brook Valley Floor

Landscape Character Type 10: Open Chalklands

- LCA10C Thruyton and Danebury Chalk Downland

- 7.3 The Landscape Character Assessment provides the principal means of assessing the impact of development on receiving landscapes. It includes guidelines which give direction to those proposing to implement change in the landscape. The guidelines are set out at three levels, which are to be read together: Borough-wide; for each LCT, and for each LCA. They cover both land management and land use and development.

- 7.4 Policy HTN6 provides that the guidelines set out in the Landscape Character Assessment will be applied as they are relevant to the nature and location of the proposal.<sup>16</sup> Key guidelines for each of the three Landscape Character Areas in the Neighbourhood Area are set out below.

- 7.5 As well as the guidelines on land use and development, those on land management may also be relevant to the NDP and the assessment of development proposals. For instance, land management guidelines for LCA5 refer to the need to “protect and enhance the important green spaces around and within the settlement fringe and their contribution to green infrastructure, links with the wider countryside, nature conservation and the setting of settlement” and to “avoid the extension of gardens and domestic curtilage which will erode the undeveloped landscape character of the undeveloped rural valley floor”.<sup>17</sup>

### ***Middle Test and Wallop Brook River Valley Floors (LCA5B and 5F)***

- 7.6 The Middle Test Valley Floor remains strongly pastoral and undisturbed by modern development, with a high level of tranquillity and solitude. It contains part of the River Test Site of Special Scientific Interest (see Plan 3) and nationally significant water meadows.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The Test Valley Landscape Character Assessment can be seen at <https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/treesandlandscape/landscape-character-assessment-documents>. Borough-wide guidelines are at pp. 45-51 of the Main Report. Guidelines for individual LCTs and LCAs are included in each LCT document.

<sup>17</sup> Landscape Character Assessment, LCT5: 6 and 7.

<sup>18</sup> See Historic England, *Conserving Water Meadows*, 2017.

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Houghton village is an example of the Chalk River Valley settlement type,<sup>19</sup> with a typical and distinctive linear form arising from early development on the flat riverside land contained by rising chalk downland to the west. A key feature in its historical development is the close relationship that is evident between All Saints church and the adjacent Manor House. The Wallop Brook River Valley Floor to the south is broad and undeveloped where it joins the River Test.

7.7 The overall landscape strategy is to conserve the small-scale traditional, water meadow and historic character and to protect and enhance key valued characteristics. In the Neighbourhood Area these characteristics include:

- The tranquillity and scenic, pastoral and cultural interest of the river valley. Of particular note are the trout fishing, water birds, and the clean river and streams.
- Multi braided channels of clear spring water with even flows within a valley floor dominated by pasture, rough grassland and woodland.
- Linear settlements such as Houghton located on first river terrace on the valley sides with a road system that follows the gravel terraces which define the transition from valley floor to valley sides.
- Traditional styles of built form include brick walls with thatch or clay tile roofs, and white render or chalk cob walls.
- Settlements have a strong rural character with mainly hedgerows and low walls as property and garden boundaries creating inter-visibility through the settlements.
- Undeveloped valley sides.
- A strongly remote, small-scale and undeveloped rural character, with little light pollution.

#### ***Thrupton and Danebury Chalk Downland (LCA 10C)***

7.8 This is a strongly rural landscape dominated by large-scale arable farming. The landscape is open and exposed with a weak hedgerow structure and only isolated woodland areas, such as that adjacent to Eveley Farm.

7.9 The overall landscape strategy is to conserve open views and historic and ecological value, and to protect and enhance key valued characteristics. In the Neighbourhood Area these characteristics include:

- elevated gently undulating area of very open chalk downland, dominated by arable farming, providing opportunities and experiences for long views with big expansive skies and wide views, which also provides a development free backdrop and contrast to the adjacent LCT5: River Valley floors.
- isolated woodlands and shelter belts which traverse the landform.
- The lack of visibility of settlements creates a strong feeling of remoteness.

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<sup>19</sup> Landscape Character Assessment Main Report, Appendix 2 Settlement Analysis, p.4.

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- 7.10 Local Plan policy E2 also requires that development is designed and located to avoid the loss of features such as trees, walls, hedges or water courses, and to ensure that the health and future retention of important landscape features is not likely to be prejudiced. Hedgerows and watercourses often provide recognisable boundaries to settlements, as is the case in Houghton, and so help to establish an identity for that area. Such features should be protected as their loss either individually or cumulatively could have a potential impact on both the immediate and wider character of the landscape.<sup>20</sup>
- 7.11 Hedgerow fragmentation and loss is a continuing issue in terms of landscape and settlement character. They are also important in maintaining connectivity of habitats and enabling the movement of wildlife (including protected species). The LCT guidelines seek the restoration of lost and fragmented hedgerows on former hedgerow lines using native species, the survival and growth to maturity of hedgerow trees, and the promotion of new hedgerow planting in new development. Hedgerows are recognised as a key village characteristic in policy HTN4 and Table 2, and their contribution to the character and appearance of the Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area is shown on Plan 6.
- 7.12 Trees and woodland are also an important feature of the local landscape, notably in the corridors of the River Test and Wallop Brook. Here, bankside deciduous woodland contributes to landscape character and a feeling of seclusion. As well as their landscape value, trees and woodland are important for biodiversity, including for connectivity between areas for wildlife, and as such are priority habitats.<sup>21</sup> The contribution of important trees and tree groups to the character and appearance of the Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area is evident from Plan 6.

***The evidence for this policy***

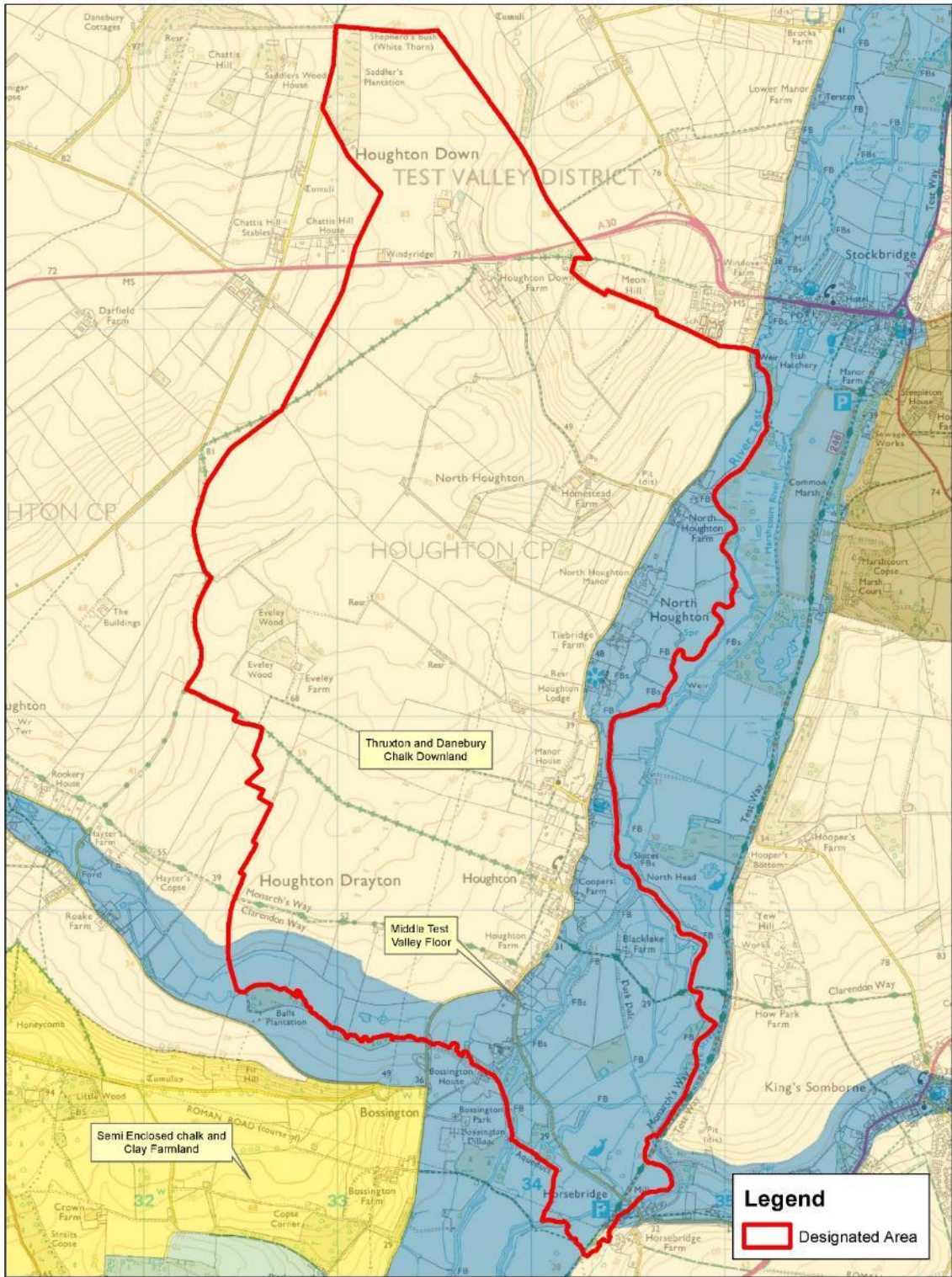
- 7.13 Supporting evidence for this policy can be found in:
- NPPF chapter 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
  - Local Plan policy E2 and E5
  - Test Valley Borough Landscape Character Assessment
  - NDP Village Survey.

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<sup>20</sup> Local Plan paragraph 7.22.


<sup>21</sup> Habitats included in the Priority Habitat Inventory, maintained by Natural England pursuant to section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. This requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of living organisms and types of habitat which are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity.





## Landscape Character Types

### Plan 7: Landscape Character Types

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## Important views

### Policy HTN7 Important views

Development proposals should not block, or materially intrude into or detract from, the important views listed below and shown on Plans 8A or 8B:

#### Views shown on Plan 8A

- **Views 1 and 2: looking north-west and south-west at North Houghton**
- **Views 3 and 4: looking west and east at Tiebridge Farm**
- **Views 5 and 6: looking north-west and north-east at Houghton Lodge**
- **View 7: looking south-west at Houghton Lodge**
- **View 8: looking east at Freemantle Farm**

#### Views shown on Plan 8B

- **Views 9 and 10: looking east from the village road**
- **View 11: looking west from public footpath**
- **View 12: looking south-west from public footpath rear of Chapel Close**
- **Views 13 and 14: looking north-east and south-east from the village road**
- **View 15: looking south-east from the village road**
- **View 16: looking west from public footpath at Houghton Farm**
- **View 17: looking west from the village road**
- **View 18: looking east from the village road.**

### *The reason for this policy*

7.14 Views of the rural landscape around Houghton and environs are a significant way of appreciating the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. The type and nature of views varies by the Landscape Character Type:

- The large-scale arable landscape of the **chalk downland** above the village, with fragmented hedgerows and limited tree cover, means that views are typically long-range and expansive. These are at risk from factors such as large farm buildings, solar farms, and other visually intrusive and suburbanising development. Landscape Character Assessment guidelines protect significant open vistas from such intrusion and seek to enhance views of valued local landscape features.
- The **River Test and Wallop Brook river valley floors** have a distinctive wetland character with a pastoral field and woodland pattern. The guidelines seek to protect the setting of historic settlements such as Houghton, including views of church spires and key buildings across the valley floor.

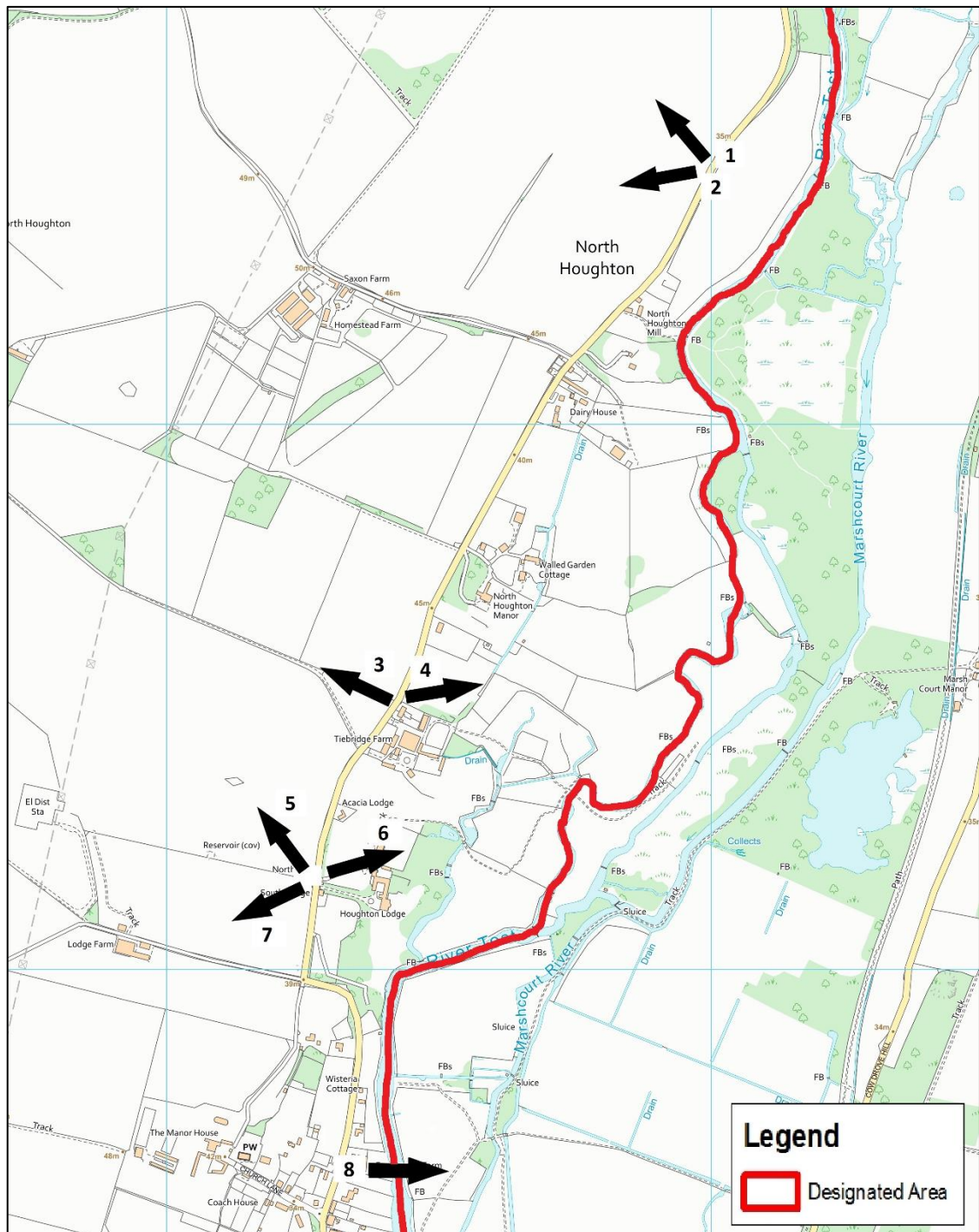
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7.15 A number of important publicly-accessible views from the village, looking both east and west, have been identified from the Conservation Area Policy document and by the Steering Group. They are shown on Plans 8A and 8B and in the accompanying photographs. They demonstrate the close relationship between Houghton and the surrounding open countryside, one of the key characteristics of the village. They are protected from blocking, intrusive or detracting development by policy HTN7. Where a development proposal could have an adverse impact on one of these views, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment or similar study should be carried out to demonstrate that the levels of effects are acceptable, and that the scheme has been sited and designed sensitively and appropriately reflecting, respecting, and where possible, enhancing the landscape context within which it is situated.


***The evidence for this policy***

7.16 Supporting evidence for this policy can be found in:

- NPPF chapter 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Local Plan policy E2
- Test Valley Borough Landscape Character Assessment
- Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area Policy
- NDP Village Survey.



**Plan 8A: Important views - north**

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*Views 1 (left) and 2 (right): NW and SW from North Houghton*



*Views 3 (left) and 4 (right): W and E at Tiebridge Farm*



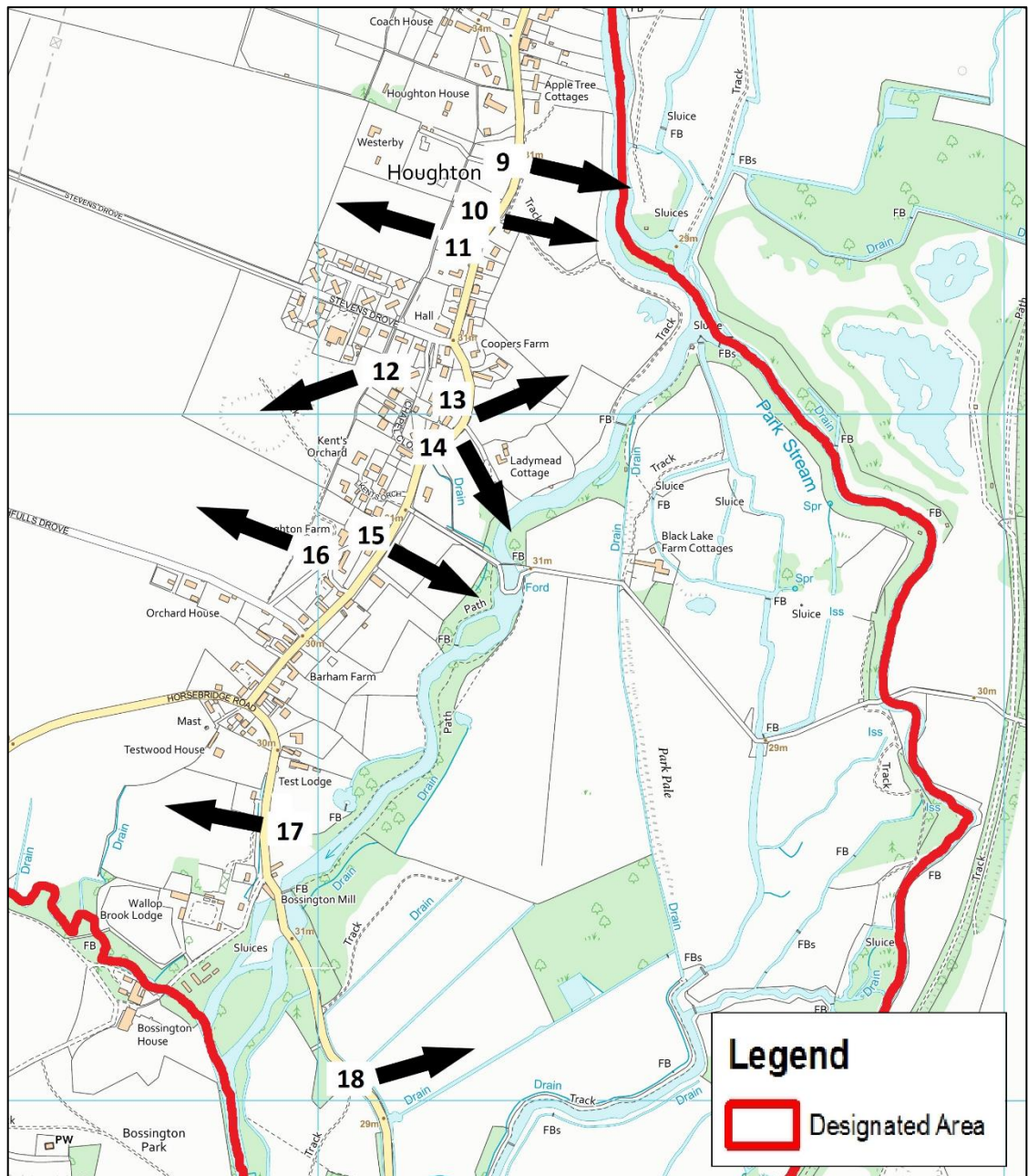
*Views 5 (left) and 6 (right): NW and NE at Houghton Lodge*




*View 7: SW at Houghton Lodge*



*View 8: E at Freemantle Farm*



**Plan 8B: Important views - south**

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*Views 9 (left) and 10 (right): E from the village road*



*View 11: W from public footpath*



*View 12: SW from public footpath*



*View 13 (left) and 14 (right): NE and SE from the village road*



*View 15: SE from the village road*



*View 16: W from public footpath*



*View 17: W from the village road*



*View 18: E from the village road*

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## Local Green Spaces

### Policy HTN8 Local Green Spaces

The following sites as shown on Plan 9 are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- LGS1: land between Houghton Lodge and Wisteria Cottage
- LGS2: land between Rose Cottage and Fremantle Farm
- LGS3: land between Drayton Corner and Fir Tree Cottage
- LGS4: land at Church Lane
- LGS5: land between Yew Tree Cottage and Ladymead Cottage
- LGS6: Houghton allotments
- LGS7: Houghton recreation ground
- LGS8: land north of Clarendon Way
- LGS9: land south of Clarendon Way
- LGS10: land between The Retreat and Bossington Estate Offices
- LGS11: land west of Horsebridge Road.

Development will be managed in a manner consistent with that applicable to designated Green Belt.

### *The reason for this policy*

7.17 National planning policy allows NDPs to designate land as Local Green Space in order to protect green areas of particular importance to local communities. Local Green Space designation should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period. The designation should only be used where the green space concerned is in reasonably close proximity to the community served, is demonstrably special to the community and holds a particular local significance, and is local in character and not an extensive tract of land.<sup>22</sup>

7.18 One of the key characteristics of Houghton is the many open spaces within the village. These contribute to the dispersed character of the settlement; they often border the village road and include fields, allotments and small areas of woodland. In the NDP Village Survey some 87% of respondents felt it is very important that these green spaces are protected (a further 11% thought this fairly important). To this end these open areas are designated as Local Green Space by policy HTN8.

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<sup>22</sup> NPPF paragraphs 101 and 102.



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7.19 The NDP's Vision, objectives and policy HTN1 confirm that the approach to their designation is consistent with the local planning of sustainable development, with social, economic and environmental objectives having been considered together. Local Green Space designation will complement investment in homes, jobs and other essential services addressed elsewhere in the NDP. The Local Green Spaces are all capable of enduring beyond the plan period. In terms of the further requirements of the NPPF for Local Green Space designation:

- all of the Local Green Spaces are in or adjacent to the Houghton settlement boundary and are therefore in close proximity to the community, as described in Appendix C;
- by virtue of the uses they represent and benefits they offer, they are all special to the community, for the reasons described in Appendix C, and are of local significance; and
- they are all local in character and none is extensive in area, as confirmed in Appendix C.

7.20 The identification of these Local Green Spaces is consistent with the Test Valley Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy, prepared pursuant to strategic Local Plan policy E6. The GI Strategy supports local communities in identifying and protecting green infrastructure such as Local Green Spaces. Designation of the above Local Green Spaces will also implement relevant guidelines in the Landscape Character Assessment. These seek to protect and enhance important green spaces around and within the settlement fringe, as well as their contribution to green infrastructure, links with the wider countryside, nature conservation and the setting of settlements.<sup>23</sup>

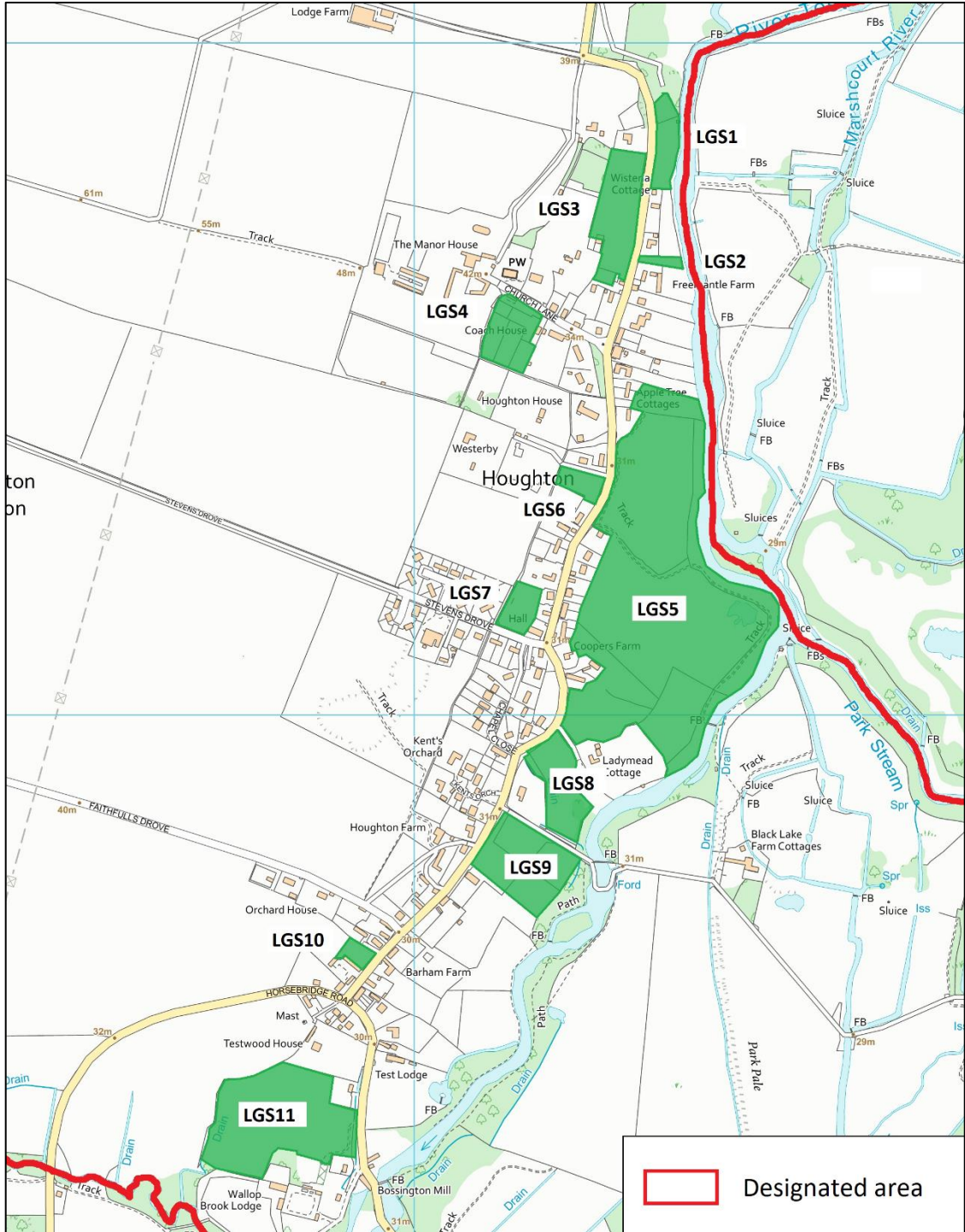
### ***The evidence for this policy***

7.21 Supporting evidence for this policy can be found in:


- NPPF chapter 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Local Plan policies E5 and E6
- Test Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy
- Test Valley Borough Landscape Character Assessment
- NDP Village Survey.

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<sup>23</sup> Landscape Character Assessment, LCT5 River Valley Floor paragraph 5.19



**Plan 9: Local Green Spaces**

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## Renewable and low carbon energy projects

### Policy HTN9 Renewable and low carbon energy projects

Proposals for renewable energy projects and associated infrastructure will be supported where they can demonstrate that the following requirements can be met. In making this assessment, any other existing, permitted or proposed similar developments in the locality will be taken into account so that cumulative impacts are considered. Wherever possible, proposals should be situated on previously-developed or non-agricultural land provided this is not of biodiversity value. The requirements are that:

1. any proposed use of agricultural land has been shown to be necessary, that poorer quality land has been used in preference to land of higher quality, and that the proposal allows for continued agricultural use where applicable and encourages biodiversity improvements; and
2. the impacts on landscape character, views and visual amenity are acceptable, or are capable of being satisfactorily mitigated by a landscaping scheme which is itself acceptable; and
3. there will be no undue loss of amenity to the occupiers of residential properties, including by way of external security fencing, lighting or the design and siting of any installation; and
4. the local highway network and the proposed means of vehicular access can cater safely for both the volume and type of vehicles anticipated, and the proposed access would not cause significant detriment to the character and appearance of the locality; and
5. where relevant, sustainable drainage proposals are included to acceptably manage surface water and avoid risk of pollution, soil erosion and damage to wildlife habitats; and
6. any affected heritage assets have been conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, taking account of the impact of proposals on views important to their setting; and
7. there are no unacceptable impacts to biodiversity interests; and
8. there are no unacceptable impacts on the utility and enjoyment of public rights of way.

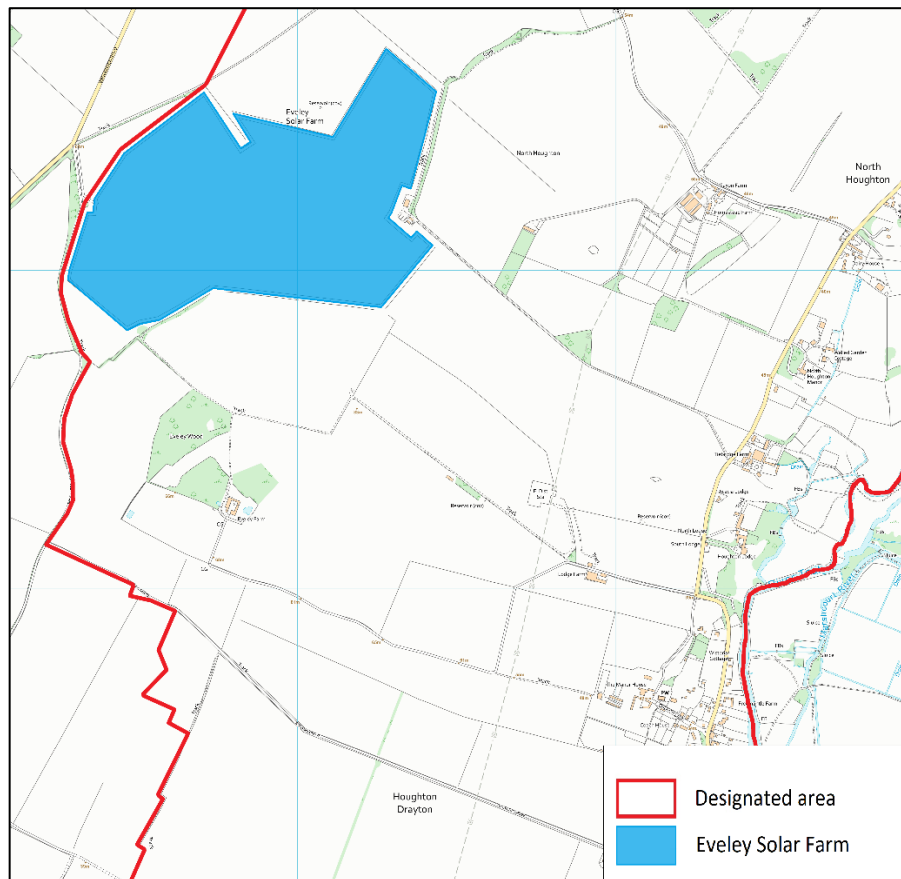
Where appropriate, any planning permission may be granted subject to conditions to ensure that installations are removed when no longer in operational use, and that the land is restored to its previous condition.

### *The reason for this policy*


7.22 Policy HTN9 provides a framework for the assessment of proposals for larger-scale renewable energy projects and associated infrastructure. The policy is consistent with the NPPF, which

looks for plans to support suitable renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts, are addressed satisfactorily.<sup>24</sup> The Local Plan supports the principle of energy generating proposals which help mitigate and adapt to climate change and explains that the merits of such proposals will be considered against relevant Local Plan policies.<sup>25</sup> Policy HTN9 draws on these provisions to provide a focussed and locally-relevant approach to this topic which complements the strategic policies.<sup>26</sup>

7.23 For the Neighbourhood Area, the principal application of the policy is expected to be proposals for the development of solar farms. As explained in Chapter 2, the Neighbourhood Area is home to the Eveley Solar Farm, which was completed in 2016 on land north of Eveley Farm. This facility covers some 60 ha. of chalk downland on the western boundary of the Neighbourhood Area, some 5.5% of the parish area (Plan 10).



### Plan 10: Eveley Solar Farm

 © Crown copyright and database rights (2019) Ordnance Survey (0100048066). Not to scale.

<sup>24</sup> NPPF paragraph 155.

<sup>25</sup> Local Plan paragraph 7.50.

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7.24 The policy will ensure that all impacts can be properly balanced in the consideration of any further schemes. The policy will also be applied to any other larger-scale renewable energy projects, such as biomass or proposals to harness hydropower from the River Test.

7.25 The policy addresses:

- The need to support the effective use of land by encouraging the use of previously-developed and non-agricultural land where this is not in itself of biodiversity value, and requiring any proposed use of agricultural land to be justified including in terms of relative land quality;
- Landscape character and visual amenity impacts: large-scale developments such as solar farms may cause harm to landscape character, views and visual amenity. Where landscaping is proposed in mitigation, it should be compatible with existing established planting in the locality and the prevailing landscape character and should normally specify indigenous species (see also policy HTN6). Landscape Character Assessment guidelines call for proposals for new solar developments (including associated infrastructure e.g. highways improvements, roads, fencing, CCTV etc.) to consider cumulative impacts, minimise impacts on the countryside and ensure characteristic landscape features such as hedgerows, trees and copses are protected and landscape and biodiversity enhancements are incorporated.<sup>27</sup>
- Residential amenity: potential impacts arising from undue proximity, siting, and external lighting spillage may be reduced by the careful location of plant and equipment and design.
- Highway matters: impacts may arise through an increase in heavy goods and other traffic on the rural lanes and through the formation of new site access points and associated visibility splays, including loss of hedgerow and changes of level.
- Flood risk and surface water management: where relevant, sustainable drainage systems should be used to manage discharge flows such that the outcome is no worse than the existing position, and to prevent harm to receiving watercourses and habitats, soil erosion and nitrification. Wherever possible, existing run-off rate and volumes should be reduced and new environmental benefits created.
- Natural and historic environments: the potential impacts of proposals on biodiversity and the historic environment, including heritage assets and their settings, will be considered. Because of the degree of ground disturbance involved, solar farm schemes may have archaeological implications.
- Public rights of way: these are important in promoting active travel, enabling local community access and for recreation and tourism. This is important in the Neighbourhood Area which is crossed by the long-distance Monarch and Clarendon Ways. The use and enjoyment of public rights of way may be adversely affected in a variety of ways, including loss of visual amenity.
- The potential for cumulative as well as individual impacts.

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<sup>27</sup> Landscape Character Assessment Main Report p.49.

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- The use of planning conditions as appropriate to ensure the removal of temporary installations and land restoration.

7.26 For proposals to be properly considered in the planning balance, full supporting information on these matters will be needed at the time of submission of a planning application. For the same reason proposals should also include full details of any ancillary or associated development and works as relevant to the proposal. This may include but is not necessarily limited to such matters as vehicle access, perimeter fencing, lighting and security equipment, staff facilities, transmission equipment, workshops/storage units, areas of hardstanding, and surface water management/sustainable drainage systems. Where appropriate and required, planning conditions may be used to secure mitigation.

***The evidence for this policy***

7.27 Supporting evidence for this policy can be found in:

- NPPF chapter 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Local Plan policies E2, E5, E7, E9, LHW4, and T1
- Test Valley Borough Landscape Character Assessment
- NDP Village Survey.

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## **8. DELIVERING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

- 8.1 The Neighbourhood Development Plan is a long-term planning document which will be implemented in the period up to 2029. Houghton Parish Council will seek to implement the objectives of the NDP in delivering the sustainable development of the Neighbourhood Area.
- 8.2 The principal means of delivery will be through decisions on planning applications, taken by Test Valley Borough Council as the local planning authority in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NDP when made will form part of the overall 'development plan'.
- 8.3 When consulted on planning applications by Test Valley Borough Council, the Parish Council will base its response on the policies set out in the NDP. This will include supporting proposals which meet the policies of the NDP, and objecting to those which do not.
- 8.4 The Parish Council will work pro-actively with applicants and the local planning authority to seek to support planning applications for development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of Houghton Neighbourhood Area.

### **Community actions**

- 8.5 The formal role of the NDP is the setting of planning policies which deal with land use and development. However, in preparing the NDP the local community has identified ways of improving the Neighbourhood Area by the provision of different forms of community infrastructure which extend beyond this remit. Whilst these cannot be addressed through the land use planning policies of the NDP they may be recorded as Community Actions to be undertaken or led by the Parish Council. These are set out in Table 3. Where appropriate, Community Infrastructure Levy funds and/or developer contributions will be used or sought to deliver, or support the delivery, of improvements to these aspects of village life.

Ref.	Topic area	Community Action by Houghton Parish Council
<b>CA1</b>	Highways – road safety for all users	To continue to work with the highway authorities* and other partners to identify and implement measures to address the issues raised in the Village Survey and other NDP consultations. This may include speed indicator devices, footway improvements, the enforcement and lowering of speed limits, and weight restrictions.
<b>CA2</b>	Highways - parking	To work with the highway authorities to address issues relating to on-street parking in the villages and to explore initiatives to allow the provision of further off-road parking which is conveniently located.
<b>CA3</b>	Highways – road maintenance	To continue to work with the highway authorities to address issues of highway maintenance including potholes and drainage (road run-off, ditches and gullies) as they arise.
<b>CA4</b>	Highways – other matters	To continue to work with the highway authorities to address other highway issues including road and public right of way signage.
<b>CA5</b>	Public transport provision	To work with the highway authorities, bus operators and Community Transport providers to investigate ways of addressing issues identified in the Village Survey and other NDP consultations and to continue to press the case for existing service levels to be maintained and for improvements to be delivered.
<b>CA6</b>	Walking and cycling	To continue to work with the highway authorities and landowners to promote the maintenance of public rights of way throughout the Parish, and to seek improvements to connectivity in and around the village to foster walking and cycling as alternatives to use of the private car for short trips including to and from Stockbridge.
<b>CA7</b>	Recreational facilities	To continue to maintain the Village Hall playing fields and play areas/equipment for the benefit of all in the community.
<b>CA8</b>	Communications and broadband	To promote and support improvements to communications infrastructure by working in partnership with Test Valley Borough Council, Hampshire County Council and network operators, and including consideration of a community-led scheme.
<b>CA9</b>	Recycling and waste	To investigate ways of improving recycling facilities available locally and to monitor and appropriately address fly tipping and dog fouling.
<b>CA10</b>	Community information and communication	To continue to maintain and improve ways of providing information to and communicating with the community including use of notice boards, publications and the website.

\* Hampshire County Council, with some functions delivered by Test Valley Borough Council

**Table 3: Houghton Community Actions**



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## APPENDIX A: EVIDENCE BASE

A.1 The following planning policy documents, reports, consultation evidence and other survey material have been used in drawing up the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

TVBC = Test Valley Borough Council

### National level evidence

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, National Planning Policy Framework, 2021.

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Planning Practice Guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

Census 2011 at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census>

Historic England, National Heritage List for England at <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/>

Historic England, Conserving Water Meadows, 2017.

Natural England, Magic Map at <http://www.magic.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx> (includes Priority Habitat Inventory sites).

### Borough level evidence

Test Valley Strategic Housing Market Assessment, JG Consulting, 2014.

TVBC, Local Plan Topic Paper on Housing, 2014.

TVBC, A Green Infrastructure Strategy for Test Valley 2014-2019, 2014.

TVBC, Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan 2011-2029, adopted January 2016.

Test Valley Borough Landscape Character Assessment, 2004 updated 2018.

### Neighbourhood Area level evidence

TVBC, Houghton Parish Profile, undated.

TVBC, Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area Policy, 1990.

Parish Plan Steering Group, Houghton and Bossington Parish Plan, February 2008.

Hampshire County Council, Traffic Survey 3 to 10 July 2018.

Action Hampshire, Houghton Neighbourhood Plan Housing Needs Survey, Final Report, August 2018.

NDP Steering Group, NDP Village Survey.

NDP Steering Group, Report on parishioners' feedback on initial draft NDP, August 2020.

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## APPENDIX B: DESIGN COMPONENTS

c.1 When considering what is involved in sympathetic and sensitive design in keeping with the key characteristics and immediate locality, particular regard should be had to the following design components:

### **Construction: the new structure**

- architectural style
- architectural detailing
- form and massing
- proportions
- scale
- density
- roof line / building height
- roof height
- roof pitch
- orientation / alignment relative to the road and to other buildings
- chimney and chimney pot style
- window style
- building materials (and building material combinations), including those used in: roofing, chimneys and chimney pots, walls, mortar, visible timbers, windows, doors, gates, fences,
- masonry bond type
- the desirability of using suitable, recycled building materials
- the palette/colour/tone and texture of building materials, colour washes and paint.

### **Construction: around the new structure**

- curtilage: building size relative to plot size
- curtilage: spacing between neighbouring buildings
- building line: distance of buildings from road
- drives and off-street parking
- signage
- lighting
- domestic utilities and appliances, e.g. aerials, satellite dishes, dustbins, oil tanks, and solar panels (screening);
- garden or boundary walls and fences.

### **Landscape and planting**

- boundaries and screening (primarily any publicly visible hedges, walls, fences and gates)
- planting (boundary hedges and tree cover)
- walkable grass roadside verges (adding, maintaining or enhancing)

- 
- preservation of open space, open countryside and views
  - preservation of the rural approaches to the village
  - enhancement of the focus on the riverside setting and the connection between village and river
  - retention and reinforcement of landscape features such as mature, indigenous, hardwood trees and hedgerows
  - features encouraging biodiversity and indigenous wildlife.

## APPENDIX C: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

D.1 This Appendix provides information on the Local Green Spaces which are proposed for designation under policy HTN8, to confirm that each meets the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework for such designation in terms of being:

- **in reasonably close proximity to the community served:** all of the Local Green Spaces are in close proximity to the community as shown on Plan 9 and set out in the following table. They are all either in or adjacent to the Houghton settlement boundary as defined in the Local Plan.
- **demonstrably special to the local community and holding a particular local significance:** the following table explains how each Local Green Space meets this requirement. Houghton is characterised by a number of green spaces within and adjoining the village, including to the east between the settlement and the River Test, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Local Green Spaces make a significant contribution to the beauty and tranquillity of the village and its rural setting.
- **local in character and not an extensive tract of land:** the Local Green Spaces are all local in character and do not represent extensive tracts of land. The area of each is given in the following table.

Close proximity to the community of Houghton	Reason for being demonstrably special and holding a particular local significance	Area (ha.)
<p><b>LGS1: land between Houghton Lodge and Wisteria Cottage.</b></p> <p>Land east of the village road from Lodge Hill (Drayton Corner), from the southern boundary of the gardens of Houghton Lodge to the northern boundary of Wisteria Cottage, between the village road and the river.</p>	<p>This is a high-profile gateway site at the entrance to the village, providing rare views of the River Test at close range which demonstrate the village’s riverside setting. When accessing the village from the north, it invites views of the River Test and the fishing hut. The land adjoins Houghton Lodge, a beautiful, historic listed building. The charming little doorway set in flint walling is an historic and cherished feature of the village and is local in character. It is of local significance because of its beauty, tranquillity and wildlife (the site adjoins the River Test SSSI).</p>	0.4.
<p><b>LGS2: land between Rose Cottage and Freemantle Farm</b></p> <p>Land, currently accessed by gate, to the east of the village road, bordered to the north by the garden of Rose Cottage and to the south by Freemantle Farm.</p>	<p>This strip of land provides an open view from the village road towards the River Test and the countryside beyond. It invites views of the River Test and is local in character. It is of local significance because of its beauty, tranquillity and wildlife (the site adjoins the River Test SSSI).</p>	0.1.
<p><b>LGS3: land between Drayton Corner and Fir Tree Cottage</b></p>	<p>This is a hedge-lined field providing an open, rural setting for the community and neighbouring properties on both sides of the</p>	1.0.

Close proximity to the community of Houghton	Reason for being demonstrably special and holding a particular local significance	Area (ha.)
Land to the west of the village road from the southern boundary of Drayton Corner to the northern boundary of Fir Tree Cottage, and from the road westwards to The Old Rectory.	village road. The hedgerow, a Habitat of Principal Importance, <sup>28</sup> contributes to landscape and settlement character and to the rural context of the village. This area of countryside provides a natural transition from the north to the built-up south of the village. It is of local significance because of its beauty and tranquillity.	
<p><b>LGS4: land at Church Lane</b></p> <p>Land on the south side of Church Lane bordered to the east by Coach House and to the west and south by a public footpath (Field Path).</p>	The only open space in Church Lane, providing a very fine view of All Saints Church and the Old Rectory, one of the architectural gems of the Village, from Field Path. It is of local significance because of its beauty and tranquillity which can be readily appreciated by many users of the public footpath and has been used as such for centuries.	0.7.
<p><b>LGS5: land between Yew Tree Cottage and Ladymead Cottage</b></p> <p>Land east of the village road from the southern boundary of Yew Tree Cottage to the northern boundary of Ladymead Cottage, and extending eastwards to the River Test.</p>	<p>Hedge-lined, open farmland comprising a series of fields lying between the built-up area of Houghton and the River Test. It provides a profoundly rural context to the village, creates a natural break between areas of frontage development and provides visual relief. It is of local significance because of its beauty, tranquillity and wildlife (the site adjoins the River Test SSSI). Natural England has identified the site as within Network Enhancement Zone 1, i.e. land connecting existing patches of primary and associated habitats. The following sections adjoining the village road contribute powerfully to the rural setting of Houghton:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hedge-lined field bordering the road between Walnut Cottage to the north and Orchard Cottage to the south, creating a visual break between areas of development in conjunction with the allotments opposite, LGS6). The outlook eastwards from the road towards and across the River Test is protected by policy HTN7 as views 9 and 10; and</li> <li>• hedge-lined field bordering the road between Coopers Barns to the north and the drive to River Cottage and Ladymead Cottage to the south; the outlook eastwards is protected by policy HTN7 (view 13).</li> </ul>	9.5.

<sup>28</sup> Under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Close proximity to the community of Houghton	Reason for being demonstrably special and holding a particular local significance	Area (ha.)
	The hedgerows are a Habitat of Principal Importance and contribute to the landscape and settlement character of the village and to its rural context.	
<p><b>LGS6: Houghton allotments</b></p> <p>The village allotments, west of the village road from the southern boundary of the track leading to Four Winds and Westerby to the northern boundary of the properties known as No 2 Plum Tree Cottage and Plum Tree Barn, and from the village road westwards to the public footpath.</p>	Open space within the settlement adjoining the western side of the village road (a rarity), creating a natural break between areas of frontage development and providing visual relief in conjunction with LGS5 opposite. Of particular value to the community as allotments by enabling and promoting healthy lifestyles. There are limited open public spaces in the village and other than the recreation ground this is the only community facility.	0.2.
<p><b>LGS7: Houghton recreation ground</b></p> <p>The village recreation ground, bordered to the east by the village hall and adjoining properties, and to the south and west by Stevens Drive.</p>	The village recreation ground, which has been well-used for generations having been in existence since the 1940's. It is the only recreational space available for the whole village and promotes a healthy and safe community. It is situated in the middle of a housing estate so there is safe access to the ground and its facilities. It is used in conjunction with the adjoining village hall, another asset of great value to the community. It has landscape character with a perimeter hedge which promotes a rural context to the area and is a Habitat of Principal Importance. It is a home to beautiful horse chestnut, lime and cherry trees – also contributing to the rural context. It is of local significance because of its recreational and community value.	0.3.
<p><b>LGS8: land north of Clarendon Way</b></p> <p>Land east of the village road extending to the northern boundary of the Clarendon Way and towards the River Test.</p>	Open space adjoining the village road and providing views from it towards the River Test (protected by policy HTN7 as view 14). It creates a natural break between areas of frontage development and provides visual relief. The hedgerows are a Habitat of Principal Importance and contribute to the landscape and settlement character of the village and to its rural context. It is of local significance because of its beauty and tranquillity, filtered views of which can be readily appreciated by users of the public footpath (from Sheepbridge), together with its wildlife interest (the site is close to the River Test SSSI).	0.8.

Close proximity to the community of Houghton	Reason for being demonstrably special and holding a particular local significance	Area (ha.)
<p><b>LGS9: land south of Clarendon Way</b></p> <p>Land east of the village road from the southern boundary of the Clarendon Way to the northern boundary Mayfield, and from the village road eastwards to the river.</p>	<p>Open space adjoining the village road and providing views from it towards the River Test (protected by policy HTN7, view 15), and from Sheepbridge footbridge over the River Test and the Clarendon Way looking west towards Houghton Farm and Houghton Farmhouse. It creates a natural break between areas of frontage development and provides visual relief. The hedgerows (a Habitat of Principal Importance) and trees contribute to the landscape and settlement character of the village and to its rural context. It is of local significance because of its beauty and tranquillity, which can be readily appreciated by users of the public footpath, together with its wildlife interest (the site is close to the River Test SSSI, with the intervening deciduous woodland also Habitat of Principal Importance).</p>	1.3.
<p><b>LGS10: land between The Retreat and Bossington Estate Offices</b></p> <p>Land west of the village road from the southern boundary of The Retreat to the northern boundary of Bossington Estate Offices, and from the road west to farm buildings (Grain Store).</p>	<p>A rare instance of farmland adjoining the village road on its western side, reinforcing the rural context to the settlement and providing views of open countryside for neighbouring properties. The field creates a natural break between areas of frontage development and provides visual relief. The hedgerows contribute to the landscape and settlement character of the village and to its rural context and are a Habitat of Principal Importance. It is of local significance because of its beauty and tranquillity.</p>	0.1.
<p><b>LGS11: land west of Horsebridge Road</b></p> <p>Land west of the Horsebridge road from River Cottage to the northern boundary of Mill Cottage, and westwards from the road to the natural field boundary.</p>	<p>Field, edged with trees, adjoining the Horsebridge Road with views to the west towards the Wallop Brook (protected by policy HTN7, view 17), and reinforcing the rural character of the village and its dispersed linear settlement pattern. Entering the village from the south after the last river bridge by the old Mill, this area of land provides a natural transition from the settlement of Bossington into the village of Houghton. The hedgerows (a Habitat of Principal Importance) and trees contribute to the landscape and settlement character of the village and to its rural context. It is of local significance because of its beauty and tranquillity.</p>	2.7.