

Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Aylesbury South Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document

SEA Scoping Document

December 2021



LEPUS CONSULTING
LANDSCAPE, ECOLOGY, PLANNING & URBAN SUSTAINABILITY



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SEA Scoping Document

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Acronyms & Abbreviations

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
CA	Conservation Area
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EA	Environment Agency
EU	European Union
GI	Green Infrastructure
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
IRZ	Impact Risk Zone
LCA	Landscape Character Assessment
LCT	Landscape Character Type
LGS	Local Geological Site
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
MHCLG	Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government
NBN	National Biodiversity Network
NCA	National Character Area
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PPP	Plan, Policy and Programme
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
PRoW	Public Right of Way
RPG	Registered Park and Garden
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEO	Statement of Environmental Opportunities
SM	Scheduled Monument
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
VALP	Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan

1 Introduction

1.1 This report

- 1.1.1 The Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) of the Aylesbury South Masterplan is being prepared by Buckinghamshire Council. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is being undertaken by Lepus Consulting to inform the SPD-making process. The purpose of this report is to identify the scope and level of detail of information that is necessary to inform the SEA.

1.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 1.2.1 EU Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (SEA Directive) is transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations). Detailed guidance of these regulations can be found in the Government publication '*A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive*' (ODPM, 2005) and Paragraph 009 of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) 'Neighbourhood Planning' section.
- 1.2.2 The Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD SEA and HRA Screening was prepared by Lepus Consulting in October 2021¹. The screening opinion recommended that the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD should be screened in for full SEA. Following consultation on this report, the conclusion that SEA was required was agreed on with the three statutory bodies: Historic England, the Environment Agency (EA) and Natural England, as well as the local planning authority, Buckinghamshire Council.
- 1.2.3 SEA seeks to ensure that environmental considerations are part of the process of preparing certain plans and programmes. The objective of the Directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with the Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.
- 1.2.4 Regulation 12 (5) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 1633) states that:

¹ Lepus Consulting (2021) Aylesbury South Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Documents.

1.2.5 “When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”.

1.2.6 This report will identify the appropriate scope for the SEA of the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD. This report will then be consulted on with at least the three statutory bodies.

1.3 Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD

1.3.1 The Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD will provide a framework for the development of the proposed site D-AGT1 ‘South Aylesbury’ allocated within the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP), which was adopted in September 2021. D-AGT1 is a strategic site which forms part of the proposed Aylesbury Garden Town, which is the focus for the majority of the former Aylesbury Vale District’s growth.

1.3.2 Site D-AGT1 is proposed to include the development of:

- At least 1,000 dwellings;
- One primary school;
- Multi-functional green infrastructure;
- Aylesbury South East Link Road (A413 to B4443 Lower Road);
- Local Centre; and
- Cycling and walking links.

1.3.3 The SPD takes the proposals from the VALP and outlines the aspirations of the area as well as responses and key issues that will influence the new development. The SPD will be a material consideration, which expands on policies set out in the VALP, to help guide the preparation and assessment of future planning applications within the site.

1.3.4 **Table 1.1** below presents the criteria for development at D-AGT1 as proposed within the adopted VALP (September 2021)².

² Aylesbury Vale District Council (2021) Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013-2033. Adopted Plan (September 2021). Available at: https://buckinghamshire-gov-uk.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Aylesbury_local_plan_L46JWaT.pdf [Date Accessed: 01/12/21]

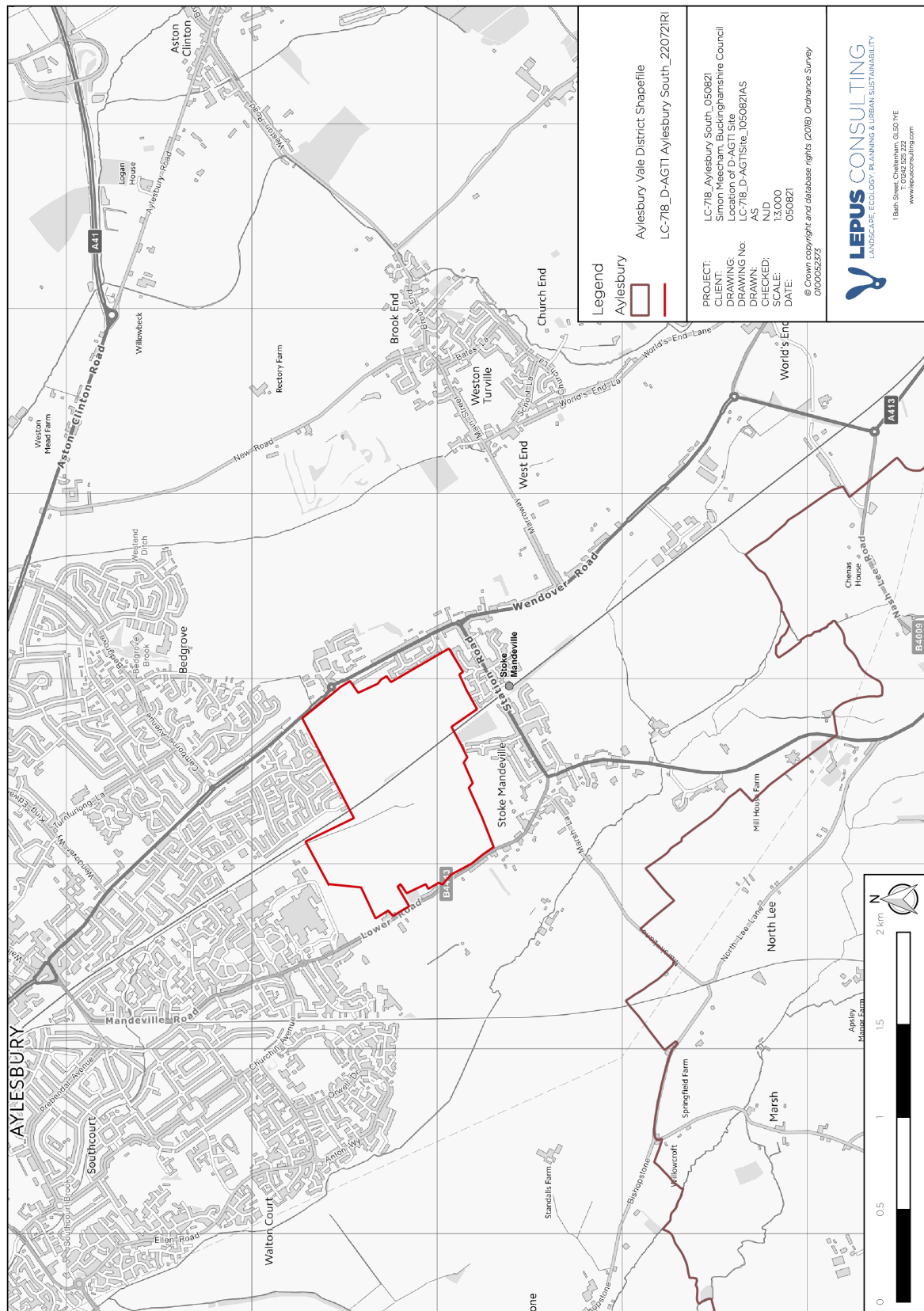
Table 1.1: D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Site Allocation criteria as presented in the VALP

D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Information	Site Details
Site Reference	AGT1
Site Name	South Aylesbury
Size (hectares)	Approximately 95 ha
Completions and expected time of delivery	39 homes delivered up to 2020, 161 homes to be delivered 2020-2025 and 800 homes to be delivered 2025-2033
Allocated for (key development and land use requirements)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,000 dwellings • One primary school • Multi-functional green infrastructure • Aylesbury South East Link Road (A413 to B4443 Lower Road) • Local centre • Cycling and walking links
Site-specific Requirements	<p>Development proposals must be accompanied by the information required in the council's Local Validation List and comply with all other relevant policies in the Plan, including the principles of development for Aylesbury Garden Town and the Masterplan SPD to be prepared for the site. In addition, proposals should comply with the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of land for at least 1,000 dwellings at a density that takes account of the adjacent settlement character and identity, integrates new development with the existing built area of Aylesbury and responds positively to the best characteristics of the surrounding area Provision of 5 Gypsy and Traveller pitches Safeguarding the land required for the delivery of a dual carriageway distributor road (the SEALR) between B4443 Lower Road and A413 Wendover Road to cross the railway line, with sufficient land for associated works including but not limited to earthworks, drainage and structures Provision of new access points into the development parcels from the B4443 Lower Road and A413 Wendover Road. Access from the South East Aylesbury Link Road (SEALR) will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that this would leave parcels of land inaccessible and incapable of development. Provision for public transport into the town and to surrounding areas Existing vegetation should be retained where practicable, including existing woodlands and hedgerows. Existing public rights of way need to be retained and integrated into the development within safe and secure environments as part of a wider network of sustainable routes, to directly and appropriately link the site with surrounding communities and facilities Proposals must retain and enhance existing habitats where practicable, including the creation of linkages with surrounding wildlife assets and green corridors linking development with the wider countryside and surrounding communities. Provision and management of 50% green infrastructure to link to other new development areas and the wider countryside as part of a high quality built and semi-natural environment The development should be designed using a landscape-led approach including consideration of the long-distance views of the AONB and the field pattern and landscape features on the site Detailed modelling will be required to confirm 1 in 20, 100 and 1,000 year extents and 1 in 100 year plus climate change extents on the ordinary watercourse (see SFRA Level 2)

D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Information	Site Details
	<p>k. Surface water modelling should be undertaken to define the level of surface water risk and the risk areas/flow paths. Climate change should be modelled using the +40% allowance (February 2016) for rainfall intensity. A surface water drainage strategy should ensure that the development does not increase flood risk elsewhere. Opportunity to mitigate against potential surface water flooding of Stoke Mandeville Hospital</p> <p>l. Risk of overtopping or breach of the Aylesbury Arm (Grand Union Canal) should be modelled</p> <p>m. The development should be designed using a sequential approach. Flood Zones 2 and 3, and 3a plus climate change (subject to a detailed flood risk assessment) should be preserved as green space as shown in the policies map as the area of 'not built development'. Built development should be restricted to Flood Zone 1</p> <p>n. Drainage designs should 'design for exceedance' and accommodate existing surface water flow routes, with development located outside surface water flood areas</p> <p>o. Provision of buffer between the new development and Stoke Mandeville to maintain the setting and individual identity of the settlement of Stoke Mandeville</p> <p>p. provision of land, buildings and car parking for a combined primary school, including playing field provision, and a contribution to secondary school provision</p> <p>q. Provision of land, buildings and car parking for a new local centre, including retail</p> <p>r. Provision of financial contributions towards off-site health facilities</p> <p>s. Provision of community buildings, including temporary buildings if necessary</p> <p>t. Provision of and contribution to infrastructure as appropriate.</p> <p>u. Retention of the Grade II listed Magpie Cottage within an appropriate setting</p>
Implementation Approach	<p>Development of the South Aylesbury Strategic Site Allocation will come forward towards the latter end of the Plan period, and only once an AGT1 Masterplan SPD for the allocation has been prepared and adopted by the council. Proposals for development within the South Aylesbury Strategic Site Allocation will be expected to demonstrate how they positively contribute to the achievement of the SPD and the Aylesbury Garden Town Principles as set out in Policy D1. Any development on this site should be in accordance with the overarching policies and principles for the development of Aylesbury Garden Town.</p>

- 1.3.5 The SPD will be a Masterplan which expands upon the policy contained within the VALP and provides a framework to help guide the preparation and assessment of future planning applications within proposed development site D-AGT1.
- 1.3.6 The boundary for Site D-AGT1 is shown in **Figure 1.1**. The site comprises approximately 95ha of mostly undeveloped land and lies to the south east of Aylesbury Town.
- 1.3.7 The SPD is a masterplan, prepared for the site specific planning purposes of proposed development site D-AGT1.

- 1.3.8 A scoping report is not required by law, but it is a useful way of presenting information in order to establish a proportionate and relevant SEA process that informs the plan-making process effectively in a way in which the statutory bodies and the local authority agree.



2 Screening and scoping the plan

2.1 SEA Screening outcome

2.1.1 The SEA and HRA screening opinion prepared in October 2021 reviewed the extent to which the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD could potentially result in significant effects on the environment.

2.1.2 Annex 1(f) of the SEA Directive³ states that the information provided in SEA should include:

2.1.3 *“The likely significant effects (⁴) on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors”.*

2.1.4 The SEA screening opinion considered the extent to which the SPD could potentially have a significant effect on each of the topics listed in Annex 1(f) of the SEA Directive. The screening opinion concluded that a significant effect on the environment could not be ruled out. Potential impacts could not be ruled out due to several impact pathways:

- **Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna:** Conclusions from the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD SEA and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) state that there is potential for significant effects on Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC), located at its closest point approximately 4.2km south west from the site which the SPD concerns. An HRA Screening exercise has been completed by Buckinghamshire Council⁵ which identified likely significant effects arising from recreational pressure associated with proposed development Site D-AGT1. Consequently, the Council proposes to prepare an Appropriate Assessment of the SPD. It is uncertain if development of Site D-AGT1 would result in negative impacts to other nationally or locally designated biodiversity assets.
- **Climate Change:** The proposed link road as set out within the SPD could potentially cause some negative impacts in terms of climatic factors, such as an increase in local air pollution. Additionally, the introduction of 1,000 new dwellings will likely increase energy consultation, pollution and traffic during both construction and occupancy stages, to some extent.

³ SEA Directive. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN> [Date Accessed: 22/11/21]

⁴ These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.

⁵ Aylesbury South (D-AGT 1) Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document. Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Statement. Last updated: 04 June 2021 Version: 1.1 – 04 June 2021

- **Cultural Heritage:** There are a range of heritage assets within the area surrounding proposed development Site D-AGT1 and it is currently uncertain if new development would have a negative impact on the setting of these assets.
- **Landscape:** The site is located approximately 2.3km from the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural beauty (AONB) and also coincides with the Round Aylesbury Walk long distance footpath. It is currently uncertain if the construction and occupation of new dwellings and infrastructure at Site D-AGT1 would have a negative impact on the highly distinctive and sensitive character of the AONB, however development at the site is likely to have adverse impacts on the recreational experience associated with the long distance footpath.

2.1.5 It is not expected that new development outlined within the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD would result in any negative impacts in relation to any of the other topics listed in Annex 1(f) of the SEA Directive.

2.2 Proportionate scope for the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD

2.2.1 The SEA screening stage determined that the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD could potentially have a significant effect on some of the SEA topics. After further consideration, these topics are determined to be: biodiversity and geodiversity, climate change, landscape and cultural heritage. It is therefore considered that an appropriate scope for the SEA of the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD would be an Environmental Report that focusses on these topics. **Table 2.1** provides an overview of the SEA topics and their screening outcome.

Table 2.1: Content of the SEA topics screened in or out from this Scoping Report

Annex 1(f) topic	To be scoped into or out of the SEA of the SPD
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	In
Population	Out
Human health	Out
Soil	Out
Water	Out
Air	Out
Climatic factors	In
Material assets	Out
Cultural heritage	In
Landscape	In

2.3 Policy, Plan and Programme Review

- 2.3.1 The plan may be influenced in various ways by other policies, plans or programmes (PPPs), or by external sustainability objectives such as those put forward in higher strategies or by legislation. The SEA process will take advantage of potential synergies between these PPPs and address any inconsistencies and constraints. A summary of the PPP review is presented in the following chapters under each sustainability theme. The PPP summaries should be read alongside the more detailed information included in **Appendix B**.

2.4 Baseline data collection

- 2.4.1 **Chapters 3 to 6** provide a review of the current baseline data for each of the ‘screened in’ topics listed in **Table 2.1**. The purpose of the baseline review is to help define the key sustainability issues for the plan as well as the likely evolution of each topic in the absence of the SPD. This will enable the predicted effects of the plan to be effectively appraised. The currency, resolution and presentation of data is crucial to an effective baseline. This is limited by the range of data available but seeks to focus on data at the level of the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD where possible whilst being up-to-date and fit for purpose. One of the purposes of consultation on the Scoping Report is to seek views on whether the data selected is appropriate.

3 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

3.1 Summary of policy and plan review

- 3.1.1 The strategic emphasis of the various PPPs is to conserve biological and geological diversity (including a reversal of the current trend of biodiversity loss) and protect and monitor endangered and vulnerable species and habitats. Policies identify a hierarchy of designations which aim to protect and enhance the natural environment. The highest priority is afforded to internationally designated habitats and species (Natura 2000) which are the subject of a specific HRA regime to examine the potential impacts on site or species integrity arising from policies or programmes. Other notable designations include national sites such as Sites for Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs), as well as Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) being identified locally. The integration of biodiversity considerations into all environmental and socio-economic planning is strongly advocated.
- 3.1.2 The Natural Environment White Paper⁶ focuses on promoting high quality natural environments, expanding multifunctional green infrastructure (GI) networks and initiating landscape scale action to support ecological networks. The White Paper specifically seeks to: protect core areas of high nature conservation value; promote corridors and 'stepping stones' to enable species to move between key areas; and initiate Nature Improvement Areas, where ecological functions and wildlife can be restored.
- 3.1.3 The White Paper is supported by the Biodiversity 2020 strategy⁷. This seeks to halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy, well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people. The Biodiversity Strategy for England also proposes introducing a new designation for Local Green Areas to enable communities to protect places that are important to them.

⁶ HM Government (2014): Natural Environment White Paper. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/366526/newp-imp-update-oct-2014.pdf [Date accessed: 22/11/21]

⁷ DEFRA (2011) Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services> [Date Accessed: 22/11/21]

- 3.1.4 The NPPF includes guidance on promoting the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. It requires the planning system to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.
- 3.1.5 The recently enacted Environment Act⁸ introduces plans, policies and targets to improve the natural environment. Focussing on biodiversity and the anticipated incorporation of the Biodiversity Metric 3.0⁹ into law, the act aims to ensure all new development delivers 10% net gain in biodiversity.
- 3.1.6 The 25 Year Environment Plan¹⁰ sets out how we must improve the environment over a generation by creating richer habitats for wildlife. The Plan also sets out how we will improve air and water quality, as well as reducing plastic within the world's oceans.

3.2 Baseline data

Natura 2000

- 3.2.1 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are sites of the Natura 2000 network protected under EU Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora¹¹ (the Habitats Directive). Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are also sites of the Natura 2000 network, protected under Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Conservation of Wild Birds¹² (the Birds Directive). Sites classified as a SPA or designated as a SAC are protected for the habitats and species they support.

⁸ Environment Act 2021. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted> [Date accessed: 22/11/21]

⁹ Natural England (2021) Biodiversity Metric 3.0. Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6049804846366720> [Date accessed: 22/11/21]

¹⁰ HM Government (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf [Date accessed: 22/11/21]

¹¹ European Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora . Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31992L0043&from=EN> [Date Accessed: 25/11/21]

¹² European Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds . Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32009L0147&from=EN> [Date Accessed: 25/11/21]

- 3.2.2 The closest Natura 2000 sites to the Aylesbury South Masterplan Site D-AGT1 is Chiltern Beechwoods SAC. This is located approximately 4.2km south-west from the site. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) process has been carried out parallel to the preparation of the VALP to inform the plan-making process to ensure that potential impacts arising from the VALP in relation to this SAC and other European sites have been suitably addressed and mitigated.
- 3.2.3 An HRA Screening exercise has been completed by Buckinghamshire Council¹³. The screening process identified likely significant effects arising from recreational pressure associated with D-AGT1. Consequently, the Council proposes to prepare an Appropriate Assessment of the SPD.

National designations

- 3.2.4 Natural England designates Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981¹⁴ (as amended). The closest SSSIs to Site D-AGT1 are Weston Turville SSSI and Bacombe and Coombe Hills SSSI located approximately 2.1km and 3.7km from the site respectively.
- 3.2.5 Natural England has developed Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) for each SSSI unit in the country. IRZs are a tool for rapid initial assessment of the potential risks to SSSIs posed by development proposals¹⁵. Site D-AGT1 is located within IRZs which do not indicate the proposed site uses are likely to be a threat to nearby SSSIs.

Ancient woodland

- 3.2.6 Ancient woodland is an area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600AD and includes 'ancient semi-natural woodland' and 'plantations on ancient woodland sites', both of which have equal protection under the NPPF. A number of stands of ancient woodland can be found towards the south east of the former Aylesbury Vale, including 'Hale Wood' and 'Aston Hill Coppice/Buckland Hoo', situated over 3km from Site D-AGT1.

¹³ Aylesbury South (D-AGT 1) Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document. Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Statement. Last updated: 04 June 2021 Version: 1.1 – 04 June 2021

¹⁴ HM Government (1981): Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (amended). Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69> [Date accessed: 23/11/21]

¹⁵ Natural England (2021) Natural England's Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 12 October 2021. Available at: <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/5ae2af0c-1363-4d40-9d1a-e5a1381449f8/sssi-impact-risk-zones-england> [Date Accessed: 25/11/21]

Habitats and Species

- 3.2.7 The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas¹⁶ has revealed numerous protected and notable species have been recorded within Site D-AGT1 and surrounding land, some of which include:
- West European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)
 - Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)
 - Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)
- 3.2.8 Site D-AGT1 does not coincide with any known sites of national or local importance for biodiversity, however there is a small section of deciduous woodland priority habitat adjacent to the north of the site boundary, close to Stoke Mandeville Hospital.
- 3.2.9 The site comprises undeveloped land which is primarily agricultural in nature although hedgerow boundaries to fields and pockets of scrub would be expected to provide some ecological value.
- 3.2.10 The proposed development at Site D-AGT1 must be in accordance with VALP policies including Policies NE1 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) and NE8 (Trees, hedgerows and woodlands) which seek to protect and enhance designated sites, protected habitats/species and GI, and deliver biodiversity net gain.
- 3.2.11 The site allocation as proposed within the VALP includes requirements to ensure “*existing vegetation should be retained where practicable, including existing woodlands and hedgerows*” and “*proposals must retain and enhance existing habitats where practicable, including the creation of linkages with surrounding wildlife assets and green corridors*”. However, the SPD does not contain any policies with more specific guidance relating to the site. The proposed “*provision and management of 50% green infrastructure to link to other new development areas*” could potentially help to provide a high quality ecological network, ensuring habitat connectivity to the wider area is retained and improved. The SPD could be enhanced through inclusion of more specific detail regarding the proposed GI and how the existing non-designated biodiversity assets (e.g. hedgerows) would be incorporated into this scheme.

¹⁶ NBN Atlas (2017) Explore your area. Available at: <https://records.nbnatlas.org/explore/your-area#51.79310644957166|-0.7914388227539004|14|Animals> [Date Accessed: 23/11/21]

3.3 Key Sustainability Issues

- 3.3.1 Based on the PPP review and baseline data presented in this Chapter, key sustainability issues for the Biodiversity and Geodiversity theme are listed in **Box 3.1**.

Box 3.1: Key Biodiversity and Geodiversity Issues for the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD

- Avoiding damage through recreational pressures, promoting restoration and/or enhancement of protected site Chiltern Beechwoods SAC in line with the NPPF.

3.4 Future Evolution without the Plan

- 3.4.1 Annex 1(b) of the SEA Directive¹⁷ requires information on: *“the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme”*.
- 3.4.2 The Aylesbury South SPD is an essential component of Strategic Policy D-AGT1 within the VALP, where without the SPD in place, co-ordination of the various parcels of development would be unlikely to occur in a timely and well-planned method. Therefore, without the SPD, the housing requirement would still stand and a potentially less-comprehensive approach in place of the SPD could lead to possible adverse impacts on Chiltern Beechwoods SAC. Based on local and national trend data, the likely evolution of the Biodiversity and Geodiversity theme in the affected area is presented in **Box 3.2**.

Box 3.2: Future evolution of the baseline without the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD

- Sites designated for their national and international biodiversity and/or geodiversity value will continue to benefit from legislative protection.
- Without the SPD, it may be difficult to help ensure that development is not of a type, scale and location that could potentially have a major adverse impact on a biodiversity and geodiversity designation or on the functioning ecological network. It would be likely that biodiversity features would be somewhat protected by policies set out in the VALP, however, it is uncertain to what extent.

¹⁷ SEA Directive. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN> [Date Accessed: 23/11/21]

4 Climate Change

4.1 Summary of policy and plan review

- 4.1.1 Anthropogenic climate change is predominantly the result of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. GHGs are emitted from a wide variety of sources, including transport, construction, agriculture and waste. Typically, development leads to a net increase in GHG emissions in the local area, although efforts can be made to help limit these increases.
- 4.1.2 The Climate Change Act 2008¹⁸ is the basis for the UK's approach to tackling and responding to climate change. It requires that emissions of carbon dioxide and other GHGs are reduced and that climate change risks are prepared for. The Act also establishes the framework to deliver on these requirements.
- 4.1.3 The UK is a member of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The UNFCCC is the key forum which oversees international action to tackle climate change. The UNFCCC led the development and adoption of The Paris Agreement in 2015¹⁹. A total of 160 countries have pledged to cut their emissions as part of this process. The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) report 'Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming'²⁰ recommended new emission targets: reducing GHG emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050.
- 4.1.4 Buckinghamshire Council have published a Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy²¹ which sets out a 'blueprint' on how the Council aims to tackle the issues of climate change and air quality within Buckinghamshire. Additionally, the former Aylesbury Vale District Council have outlined various programmes and initiatives to tackling climate change²² including a Carbon Management Plan, carbon off-setting initiative and an Energy Strategy.

¹⁸ Climate Change Act 2008. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents> [Date Accessed: 23/11/21]

¹⁹ United Nations Climate Change (2015) The Paris Agreement. Available at: <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement> [Date Accessed: 23/11/21]

²⁰ Committee on Climate Change (2019) Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming. Available at: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/net-zero-the-uks-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming/> [Date Accessed: 23/11/21]

²¹ Buckinghamshire Council (2021) Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy. Available at: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/environment/sustainability-and-climate-change/climate-change-and-air-quality-strategy> [Date Accessed: 23/11/21]

²² Aylesbury Vale District Council (2015) Your council tackling climate change. Available at: <https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/your-council-tackling-climate-change> [Date Accessed: 23/11/21]

- 4.1.5 The CCC's latest progress report²³ discusses the need for further measures to be implemented by the Government to ensure that the UK meets the target of net zero by 2050. The COP26 event in November 2021 has provided an opportunity for the UK Government to continue to strengthen its focus on climate change resilience and adaptation and to ensure Covid-19 recovery plans help to accelerate the UK's transition to net zero.
- 4.1.6 Commitments to reduce GHG emissions have been introduced from the international level to the sub-regional level. The PPPs address policy development across all sectors and at all levels, combining both demand management (reduced energy consumption and increased efficiency of use) and supply-side measures (low carbon options including fuel mix and renewables).
- 4.1.7 Climate change and energy efficiency PPPs to encourage sustainable development are set out by central government. The national Building Regulations, as updated March 2015²⁴, require certain levels of sustainable construction to be met and provide guidance on additional, optional regulations for water and access. The UK Government has outlined, through the Localism Act, the importance of sustainable development and its commitments to reducing carbon emissions and GHGs.
- 4.1.8 The Environment Agency (EA) provides guidance on flood risk for planners, developers and advisors in order to inform flood risk assessments and the plan-making process and stresses the importance of making allowances for climate change²⁵.
- 4.1.9 Adaptation measures proposed by the PPPs include a presumption against development in flood risk areas, appropriate design of new development, the promotion of new infrastructure such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and improved maintenance to help address the changes that are likely to occur as a result of climate change. Through this approach, the Government is seeking to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages of the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to direct development away from areas of highest risk.

²³ Reducing UK emissions: 2021 Progress Report to Parliament. Available at: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/2021-progress-report-to-parliament/> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

²⁴ The Building Regulations (Amendment) Regulations 2015. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/767/contents/made> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

²⁵ Environment Agency (2021) Flood risk assessments: climate change allowances. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessments-climate-change-allowances> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

4.2 Baseline Data

Carbon emissions

- 4.2.1 Air quality within the Vale of Aylesbury is generally good²⁶, and there are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within or in close proximity to Site D-AGT1.
- 4.2.2 The proposed new link road between the A413 to B4443 Lower Road could potentially cause some negative impacts in terms of climatic factors, such as an increase in local air pollution. The SPD would be expected to facilitate active travel through the provision of new routes and multi-functional Green Infrastructure (GI). Promoting active travel, such as walking or cycling, as well as improving the provision of public transport links into Aylesbury, would help to encourage new residents to use more sustainable travel modes compared to personal vehicles, and in turn, result in an improvement to the air quality.
- 4.2.3 The introduction of 1,000 new dwellings will inevitably cause an increase in energy consumption, pollution and traffic during both the construction and occupancy stages, to some extent.

Renewable energy

- 4.2.4 The SPD is expected to adhere to Policy C3 of the VALP, as well as national policies, where the development is expected to “*make use of renewable energy*” and residents will be encouraged to make use of community renewable energy schemes to achieve greater efficiency in the use of natural resources.

Flooding

- 4.2.5 Climate change is anticipated to increase the risk of extreme weather events. Of particular concern in the UK is the rising risk of fluvial, pluvial (surface water) and coastal flooding. In 2009 the EA estimated 2.4 million properties in England were susceptible to fluvial and/or coastal flooding, whilst 3.8 million properties in England were susceptible to pluvial flooding²⁷.

²⁶ Buckingham Council (2021) Air Quality. Available at: <https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/section/air-quality> [Date Accessed: 01/12/21]

²⁷ Environment Agency (2009) Flooding in England: National Assessment of Flood Risk. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/292928/qeho0609bqds-e-e.pdf [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

- 4.2.6 Although Site D-AGT1 is located wholly within Flood Zone 1, it is likely that flood risk will become more prevalent in future years due to higher flood plain levels and climate change introducing more extreme weather events including higher volumes of rainfall. Multi-functional GI should be used within this development as a buffer for current and future flood risk. It is expected that the requirements of VALP and national policies, alongside the delivery of 50% GI on site, would help to ensure that significant adverse impacts regarding flood risk do not arise through a reduction in surface water runoff.

Green Infrastructure

- 4.2.7 Green Infrastructure is a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities²⁸. GI has many benefits including human health, climate change adaptation and wildlife value²⁹. GI can play an important role in helping urban areas adapt to climate change, by filtering airborne pollutants, providing shade and local cooling and reducing surface water runoff³⁰. The Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD requires development of Site D-AGT1 to implement 50% GI throughout its design, this may include parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural green spaces and green corridors and buffers. In order to meet the 50% GI requirements, the GI needs to be publicly accessible natural green space to subsequently meet the ANGSt standards, as outlined within VALP paragraphs 3.38 and 11.1.
- 4.2.8 VALP Policy D1 states that “*new garden communities should be designed to be resilient places that allow for changing demographics, future growth and the impacts of climate change by anticipating opportunities for technological change including renewable energy measures*”. In line with Policy C3, development would be expected to utilise sustainable design and construction measures and seek to use decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources for energy where feasible. The SPD would benefit from inclusion of more specific guidance with regards to sustainable energy, water consumption and how the proposed development will be adaptable to climate change.

4.3 Key Sustainability Issues

- 4.3.1 Based on the PPP review and baseline data presented in this chapter, key sustainability issues for the Climate Change theme are listed in **Box 4.1**.

²⁸ MHCLG (2021) National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

²⁹ Forest Research (2010) Benefits of green infrastructure. Available at: <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/research/benefits-of-green-infrastructure/> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

³⁰ Landscape Institute (no date) Green Infrastructure (GI). Available at: <https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/policy/green-infrastructure/> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

Box 4.1: Key Climate Change Issues for the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD

- Development of the proposed link road between the A143 and B4443 could potentially lead to adverse impacts on local air quality and climate change mitigation through the release of pollutants, including GHGs.
- Introducing 1,000 new dwellings will increase energy consumption, pollution and traffic within the local area.

4.4 Future evolution without the Plan

- 4.4.1 The Aylesbury South SPD is an essential component of Strategic Policy D-AGT1 within the VALP, where without the SPD in place, co-ordination of the various parcels of development would be unlikely to occur in a timely and well-planned method. Therefore, without the SPD, the housing requirement would still stand and a potentially less-comprehensive approach in place of the SPD could lead to possible adverse impacts on climate change. Based on local and national trend data, the likely evolution of the Climate Change theme in the affected area is presented in **Box 4.2**.

Box 4.2: Future evolution of the baseline without the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD

- In the absence of the SPD, future planning applications for the land which encompasses Site D-AGT1 would be required to adhere to local and national policies regarding production of emissions and air pollution.
- The extent to which pollution could result in absence of the SPD is uncertain, and would depend on any future planning applications which would be required to fulfill the housing need. For example, the proposed link road between the A143 and B4443 may not be developed and therefore housing development applications on the land encompassing Site D-AGT1, or land proposed elsewhere, may increase local traffic on current road systems and associated air pollution.

5 Historic Environment

5.1 Summary of policy and plan review

- 5.1.1 Historic environment priorities from the international to the local level seek to address a range of issues. These include protecting designated resources and their settings (such as Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, and Registered Parks and Gardens); recognising the cultural aspects of landscape and establishing mechanisms for their protection against inappropriate development; recognising the potential value of unknown and undesignated resources; and conserving/enhancing sites and landscapes of archaeological and heritage interest so that they may be enjoyed by both present and future generations.
- 5.1.2 Regional guidance provides information on the way in which streets and public open spaces are managed in order to reinforce local character, creating a set of general principles for the continuing maintenance and enhancement of space. The local PPPs are in line with the regional, national and international PPPs, providing more specific guidance and information.
- 5.1.3 Relevant legislation, plans, policies and programmes include the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979³¹, the Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England 2010³², Historic England Corporate Plan 2021-22³³ and Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes 1-3³⁴.

5.2 Baseline data

Designated assets

- 5.2.1 Stoke Mandeville and the surrounding area contains an array of distinctive heritage assets and historic areas recognised through designations. This includes:
- Nationally designated Listed Buildings;
 - Scheduled Monuments; and

³¹ UK Government (1979) Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1979/46> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

³² UK Government (2010) Statement on the historic Environment for England 2010 - Parts 1,2 and 3. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-governments-statement-on-the-historic-environment-for-england> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

³³ Historic England (2021) Historic England Corporate Plan (2021-2022). Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/about/what-we-do/corporate-plan/> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

³⁴ Historic England (2015) Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes 1-3. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

- Registered Parks and Gardens.

Listed Buildings

5.2.2 Listed Buildings are those that have been placed on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. There are several Grade II Listed Buildings within and surrounding the settlement of Stoke Mandeville, including a cluster along the B4443 running north to Aylesbury, which represents the western edge of the proposed scheme. This includes the 'Stoke Cottage', 'Lone Ash' and 'Bell Cottage and Tudor Cottage'. One Grade II Listed Building, 'Magpie Cottage', lies within the southwest corner of Site D-AGT1 itself.

5.2.3 By applying Policy BE1 of the VALP, the proposed development at Site D-AGT1 should ensure the "*retention of the Grade II listed Magpie Cottage within an appropriate setting*", however the SPD could usefully add further clarity to this statement to ensure that the cottage and its setting are protected and enhanced in line with its historic significance.

Scheduled Monuments

5.2.4 A Scheduled Monument (SM) is a nationally important archaeological site or historic feature that is given protection under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

5.2.5 There are no SMs within close proximity to Site D-AGT1, with the closest SM, 'Motte and bailey in grounds of manor house', being located approximately 1.8km from the site.

Registered Parks and Gardens

5.2.6 The Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest was first published by English Heritage in 1988. Although inclusion on the Register brings no additional statutory controls, registration is a material consideration in planning terms.

5.2.7 Although there are no Registered Parks and Gardens (RPGs) within close proximity to Site D-AGT1, with the nearest being 'Hartwell House' RPG located 2.4km to the north west of the site.

Conservation Area

- 5.2.8 Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Local authorities have the power to designate conservation areas in any area of 'special architectural or historic interest' whose character or appearance is worth protecting or enhancing. This is judged against local and regional criteria, rather than national importance as is the case with listing. Conservation Area designations increase the local planning authority's control over demolition of buildings and over certain alterations to residential properties that would normally be classed as 'permitted development' and not require planning permission. There are no conservation areas located in close proximity to Site D-AGT1, and therefore there is likely to be a negligible impact on these assets.

Non-Designated Features

- 5.2.9 The Archaeology Data Service shows three records of physical archaeological evidence in the location of Site D-AGT1³⁵. This includes records of known features as well as digs and excavations, some of which resulted in archaeological finds. Although Policy BE1 within the VALP could help protect these features, it is uncertain if any adverse impacts will be completely mitigated by the policy.

³⁵ Archaeology Data Service (2018) ARCHSEARCH. Available at: <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

5.3 Key Sustainability Issues

- 5.3.1 Based on the PPP review and baseline data presented in this chapter, key sustainability issues for the Historic Environment theme are listed in **Box 5.1**.

Box 5.1: Key Historic Environment Issues for the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD

- Development within Site D-AGT1 could potentially alter the setting of historic assets, both designated and non-designated.
- Archaeological remains, including that which has not yet been discovered, are present in the area and could potentially be affected by development proposals of the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD.

5.4 Future evolution without the Plan

- 5.4.1 The Aylesbury South SPD is an essential component of Strategic Policy A-DGT1 within the VALP, where without the SPD in place, co-ordination of the various parcels of development would be unlikely to occur in a timely and well-planned method. Therefore, without the SPD, the housing requirement would still stand and a potentially less-comprehensive approach in place of the SPD could lead to possible adverse impacts on the historic environment. However, based on local and national trend data, the likely evolution of the Historic Environment theme in the affected area is presented in **Box 5.2**.

Box 5.2: Future evolution of the baseline without the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD

- In the absence of the SPD, the character and setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets is unlikely to change significantly, primarily due to policies set out in the Vale of Aylesbury Development Plan.
- The extent to which the accessibility, local awareness or setting of heritage assets may be enhanced over time without the SPD is uncertain.
- In the absence of the SPD, it is unlikely that archaeological assets (both discovered and undiscovered) will be harmed or threatened.

6 Landscape

6.1 Summary of policy and plan review

- 6.1.1 At European, national, regional and local levels, emphasis is placed on the protection of landscape as an essential component of people's surroundings and sense of place. The 2006 European Landscape Convention³⁶ acknowledges the quality and diversity of European landscapes, that they constitute a common resource and that it is important to co-operate towards its protection, management and planning. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF³⁷ states:
- 6.1.2 *"Achieving sustainable development means ... to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy".*
- 6.1.3 The relevant plans, policies and programmes seek to increase recognition of the linkages and interplay between the different aspects and roles of landscape, including: local distinctiveness; the historic environment; natural resources; farming, forestry and food; educational, leisure and recreation opportunities; transport and infrastructure; settlements and nature conservation.
- 6.1.4 Policies generally advocate the provision of open space, green networks and woodland as opportunities for sport and recreation, creating healthier communities, supporting and enhancing biodiversity, reducing temperatures in built up areas in summer, reducing the impact of noise and air pollution, and limiting the risk of flooding.
- 6.1.5 The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located approximately 2.3km to the south east of the site, at its closest. The settlement of Stoke Mandeville lies between the proposed site and the AONB.
- 6.1.6 VALP Policy NE4, landscape character and locally important landscape, aims to ensure that the local landscape is maintained. Any development must recognise the individual character and distinctiveness of particular landscape character areas set out in the Landscape Character Assessment and must follow the relevant policies set out in the VALP.

³⁶ Council of Europe (2000) European Landscape Convention. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/1680080621> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

³⁷ MHCLG (2021) NPPF. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

6.2 Baseline data

National Character Areas

- 6.2.1 Based on a combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and economic activity, England has been sub-divided into 159 National Character Areas (NCAs) that follow natural boundaries³⁸.
- 6.2.2 Site D-AGT1 lies within the National Character Area (NCA) 'Upper Thames Clay Vales'. Key characteristics of this NCA include "*low-lying clay-based flood plains ... gently undulating topography ... fields are regular and hedged*"³⁹.

Landscape Character

- 6.2.3 Landscape character is defined as the distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape. It is these patterns that give each locality its 'sense of place', making one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse. In defining the combinations of components which make each landscape unique, landscape character is a way of thinking about landscape more holistically and objectively, rather than focusing on scenic beauty and subjective responses. Landscapes have evolved over time as a result of both natural and cultural processes.
- 6.2.4 Site D-AGT1 is located within Landscape Character Area 'Southern Vale'⁴⁰ which has key characteristics of:
- Flat landscape in the north rising gently to a rolling land form on the southern edge;
 - Parliamentary enclosure;
 - Streams and ditches draining off the chalk scarp to the south marked by belts of mature black poplar;
 - Landscape continuity interrupted by development and communication corridors;
 - Predominance of large open arable fields; and
 - Pockets of grazing land and smaller field parcels associated with settlements.

³⁸ Natural England (2014) National Character Areas. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

³⁹ Natural England (2014) NCA Profile: 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales (NE570). Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5865554770395136> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

⁴⁰ Aylesbury Vale District Council (2008) Landscape Character Assessment. Available at: <https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/landscape-character-assessment> [Date Accessed: 01/12/21]

The Chilterns AONB

- 6.2.5 The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located approximately 2.3km to the south east of the site, at its closest. The settlement of Stoke Mandeville lies between the proposed site and the AONB.
- 6.2.6 The Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019-2024⁴¹, prepared by the Chilterns Conservation Board, aims to conserve and enhance the AONB through four general policies:
- Explore the case for and against the Chilterns having enhanced status or being designated a National Park;
 - Review the boundary of the protected area to cover the wider area of the Chilterns landscape that merits it;
 - Establish a strong partnership to deliver the Chilterns AONB Management Plan working together in the best interests of the area, its environment, communities, economy and visitors; and
 - Support projects and proposals that have a positive impact on the ability of the Chilterns to contribute sustainable Ecosystem Services through various approaches, including 'sustainably managing land and water environments'.
- 6.2.7 VALP Policy NE3 specifically regards the conservation and enhancement of the Chilterns AONB and its setting. Additionally, VALP Policy NE4, landscape character and locally important landscape, aims to ensure that the local landscape is maintained. Any development must recognise the individual character and distinctiveness of particular landscape character areas set out in the Landscape Character Assessment and must follow the relevant policies set out in the VALP.

Visual impacts

- 6.2.8 As stated in the previous SA, Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan⁴², completed in 2018, the main concern was the potential results that the expansion of Aylesbury to the south and southeast, may cause for the Chilterns AONB. The completed SA examined the 'cumulative effects' of growth at Aylesbury and paragraph 10.9.2 (page 95) of the SA report concludes:

⁴¹ Chilterns AONB (2019) Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-2024. Available at: https://www.chilternsaonb.org/uploads/files/ConservationBoard/ManagementPlan/Chilterns_Management_Plan_2019-2024_Full.pdf [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

⁴² AECOM (2018) Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. Available at: https://www.aylesburyvaldc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/VALP%20-%20SA%20Report%20170918.pdf [Date Accessed 25/11/21]

“There would be direct visual effects on the AONB as a result of the cumulative development sites. The visual extent of the cumulative development sites, combined with the existing development at Aylesbury and nearby settlements, would be readily apparent. However, development across the sites will be predominantly low-rise and incorporate substantial mitigation planting, reducing the impact on views across the low-lying vale landscape from the elevated viewpoints within the AONB. The key characteristics of views across the wider landscape would be fundamentally unchanged, in that they would remain expansive across the settled vale landscape. It is considered unlikely that there would be significant cumulative residual landscape and visual effects on the AONB”.

- 6.2.9 The proposed development will aim to maintain the setting and individual identity of Stoke Mandeville, through the provision of a buffer. Whilst maintaining the character of the area, the long-distance views across the site to the Chiltern AONB should be maintained as much as practicable by building low lying dwellings. Green corridors, cycle and footpaths should be used to reduce traffic flow, noise, sound and air pollution that may affect the surrounding landscape quality and character. A carefully planned and well-managed GI network, as advocated by the VALP, would be expected to minimise intrusion on the nationally important landscape of the Chiltern Hills AONB.
- 6.2.10 The Round Aylesbury Walk long distance path is one of three walks that circumnavigate Aylesbury. The path is located to help provide open views of the countryside and high quality open air recreational experiences. Although the SPD outlines green corridors which may support the retention of this PRoW, the extent to which the development associated with the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD is likely to adversely affect the recreational experience associated with the path is uncertain at this stage.

6.3 Key Sustainability Issues

- 6.3.1 Based on the PPP review and baseline data presented in this Chapter, key sustainability issues for the Landscape theme are listed in **Box 6.1**.

Box 6.1: Key Landscape Issues for the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD

- The SPD seeks to develop Site D-AGT1 which is located 2.3km from The Chilterns AONB, separated by the settlement Stoke Mandeville. Development outside the AONB should seek to conserve and enhance its setting.
- Development proposed within the SPD could potentially alter views for users of The Round Aylesbury Walk long distance path and other PRowWs within the site.
- Assessments from Aylesbury's Landscape Character Assessment should also be considered.

6.4 Future Evolution without the Plan

- 6.4.1 The Aylesbury South SPD is an essential component of Strategic Policy D-AGT1 within the VALP, where without the SPD in place, co-ordination of the various parcels of development would be unlikely to occur in a timely and well-planned method. Therefore, without the SPD, the housing requirement would still stand and a potentially less-comprehensive approach in place of the SPD could lead to possible adverse impacts on the landscape. However, based on local and national trend data, the likely evolution of the Landscape theme in the Neighbourhood Plan area is presented in **Box 6.2**.

Box 6.2: Future evolution of the baseline without the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD

- The Chilterns AONB will continue to be proactively and effectively managed by the Chilterns Conservation Board and, in the absence of the SPD, would be likely to be conserved and enhanced through the Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024.
- In the absence of the SPD, housing needs would likely be met through planning applications and it is uncertain whether distinctive and long-distance countryside views within and of the site, and of any alternative site, would be altered, which may include views experienced by local residents and users of the local PRow network. The SPD outlines green corridors which may protect these routes to some extent. Policies set out in the Vale of Aylesbury Development Plan would be likely to protect some views but may not be specific to Stoke Mandeville and the Chilterns AONB, however without proactive management to conserve landscape features and open space, the quality of these views could potentially deteriorate over time.
- In the absence of the SPD, the local distinctive and rural landscape character would be unlikely to be altered. Although housing need would still be required to be met, key landscape features would be likely to be preserved in the absence of the SPD through policies set out in the VALP.

7 SEA Framework

7.1 Purpose of the SEA Framework

7.1.1 The Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD will be assessed through an SEA Framework of objectives, decision making criteria, indicators and targets. The full SEA Framework for the SPD is presented in **Appendix A**.

7.1.2 SEA Objectives are typically of a high level but at a detail appropriate to the plan being assessed. The extent to which proposals in the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD (predominantly policies and site allocations) will help to achieve each SEA Objective (or have a 'positive impact' on each SEA Objective) will be determined by using decision making criteria and a set of indicators. The decision-making criteria and indicators can be revised and updated over time should the baseline data or the key sustainability issues in the affected area change. The set of indicators in the Framework can also be used to monitor the success and sustainability performance of the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD should it be adopted.

7.2 SEA Objectives

7.2.1 The purpose of the SEA objectives, found in **Appendix A**, is to provide a way of ensuring the proposed SPD policies consider the needs of the wider community in terms of their environmental and socio-economic effects. The SEA topics identified in Annex 1(f) of the SEA Directive are one of the key determinants when considering which objectives should be used for the environmental criteria. Consequently, the SEA Objectives seek to reflect all subject areas to ensure the assessment process is transparent, robust and thorough.

7.2.2 The SEA/SA Framework used by the local planning authority, which in this case is Buckinghamshire Council, generally acts as a starting point for identifying suitable Objectives. However, the Objectives should be narrowed down to issues pertinent to the local area.

7.2.3 The SEA Objectives have drawn on the baseline information, the key issues and other plans and programmes of particular interest discussed earlier in this Scoping Report (see **Chapters 3 - 6**). It should be noted that the ordering of the SA objectives does not infer any prioritisation.

7.2.4 A summary of the proposed SEA Objectives for the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD is presented in **Table 7.1**.

Table 7.1: Proposed SEA Objectives

SEA Objective	
1	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna: Protect, enhance and manage the flora, fauna, biodiversity and geodiversity assets of the areas affected by the development of Site D-AGT1.
2	Climate Change: Mitigate and reduce the development of Site D-AGT1's contribution towards climate change.
3	Cultural Heritage: Conserve, enhance and manage sites, features and areas of historic and cultural importance, including their setting.
4	Landscape: Conserve, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening its distinctiveness.

8 Subsequent stages to be carried out

8.1 Refining options and assessing likely effects

8.1.1 The assessment of options (or alternatives) is an important requirement of the SEA Directive, which requires that the Environmental Report includes the following information about reasonable alternatives:

8.1.2 *“An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information”.*

8.1.3 Each proposal of the SPD, and their reasonable alternatives, will be assessed for their likely impacts against the SEA Framework. These impacts will be considered in light of the likely evolution of the baseline in the absence of the SPD (i.e. a do-nothing scenario). The assessments of reasonable alternatives will help the SPD group to identify and refine options so that they are more economically, environmentally and socially sustainable. Specifically, the SEA of the South Aylesbury Masterplan SPD will help to ensure that significant effects on the local landscape, the local biodiversity, geodiversity and heritage assets, as well as climate change are identified and mitigated.

8.1.4 Reasonable alternatives will be assessed through the SEA process and the assessment of alternatives will take place following consultation on the Scoping Report. This will enable options for the SPD to be explored. Whilst this report would not be a requisite of the SEA Directive, a report of this nature can help demonstrate iteration between the plan making process and the SEA and provide a coherent story of the SPD's evolution and choice of options.

8.1.5 The assessments of alternatives will include information in relation to:

- A description of the predicted effect;
- The duration of the effect: whether the effect is long, medium or short term;
- The frequency of the effect: will it be ongoing?
- Whether the effect is temporary or permanent;
- The geographic (international, national, regional, local) significance;
- The magnitude of effect;
- The severity of significance; and
- Whether mitigation is required/possible to reduce the effect.

- 8.1.6 The footnote for Annex 1(f) of the SEA Directive⁴³ states:
- 8.1.7 *“These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects”.*
- 8.1.8 The terms ‘synergistic’, ‘secondary’ and ‘cumulative’ are not considered to be mutually exclusive and in this report the term ‘cumulative effects’ is taken to include secondary and synergistic effects. Each is defined as follows:
- Secondary effects are effects that are not a direct result of the Plan, but occur away from the original effect or as a result of a complex pathway;
 - Cumulative effects arise, for instance, where several developments each have insignificant effects, but in-combination have a significant effect, or where several individual effects of the Plan have a combined effect; and
 - Synergistic effects interact to produce a total effect greater than the sum of the individual effects, so that the nature of the final impact is different to the nature of the individual impacts.
- 8.1.9 Wherever possible, throughout the appraisal process, GIS will be used as an analytical tool to examine the spatial distribution of identified effects.

8.2 Environmental Report

- 8.2.1 The environmental report is a core output of the Strategic Environmental Assessment process. An environmental report for the purpose of the SEA Directive must identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the SPD⁴⁴. The Environmental Report will accompany the Consultation version of the SPD and will be consulted on with at least the statutory bodies; Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England.

⁴³ SEA Directive. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN> [Date Accessed: 25/11/21]

⁴⁴ MHCLG (2021) Plan-making. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making> [Date Accessed: 25/11/21]

9 Consultation on the Scoping report

9.1 Purpose of Consultation

- 9.1.1 The SEA Regulations state that the scoping stage should be the subject of consultation with statutory bodies for a minimum period of five weeks.
- 9.1.2 Public involvement through consultation is a key element of the SEA process. The SEA Regulations require consultation with statutory consultation bodies but not full consultation with the public at the scoping stage. Regulation 12 (5) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 1633) states that:
- 9.1.3 *“When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”.*
- 9.1.4 This report will be subject to consultations with the statutory bodies; Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England. Their responses will be presented within **Appendix C**.

Appendix A – Full SEA Framework

SEA Objective		Decision making criteria	Indicators
1	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna: Protect, enhance and manage the flora, fauna, biodiversity and geodiversity assets of the areas affected by the development of Site D-AGT1.	Will it result in a net loss or a net gain for biodiversity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new residents which generate adverse impacts on sites of biodiversity importance, such as the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC. • Creation of new biodiversity assets. • Provision of multi-functional green infrastructure. • Protection of existing vegetation and hedgerows.
		Will it protect or enhance wildlife sites or biodiversity?	
		Will it protect sites and habitats designated for nature conservation including protected species?	
		Will it protect and enhance the water environment?	
2	Climate Change: Mitigate and reduce Site D-AGT1's contribution towards climate change.	Will it reduce emissions from transport and the built environment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of green infrastructure. • Public transport and cycling and walking provision for new development. • Increased local traffic. • Drainage designed for 'exceedence' events.
		Will it reduce flood risk?	
		Will it conserve water resources?	
3	Cultural heritage: Protect, enhance and manage heritage assets, including designated and non-designated, as well as features and areas of and heritage importance.	Will it preserve buildings of historic interest and, where necessary, encourage their conservation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of local heritage features including Listed Buildings, such as Grade II Listed Building 'Magpie Cottage'. • Annual number of visitors to historic attractions. • Below ground remains.
		Will it preserve or enhance archaeological sites?	
		Will it preserve or enhance the setting or character of cultural heritage assets or areas?	
4	Landscape: Conserve, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening their distinctiveness.	Will it protect and enhance the local landscape?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape-led development with consideration of long-distance views of the AONB? • Use of locally sourced materials. • Is development in-keeping with surroundings (e.g. character of Stoke Mandeville)? • Increase of coalescence. • Protection of local PROWs.
		Will it protect and enhance the local townscape?	

Appendix B – Plans, policies and programmes review

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (2018)	<p>The document sets out government action to help achieve natural world regain and retain good health.</p> <p>The main goals of the Plan are to achieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean air; • Clean and plentiful water; • Thriving plants and wildlife; • A reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought; • Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently; and • Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment.
EC Seventh Environmental Action Programme 2013-2020 (2013)	The main concern of the EEB was the need to describe in an un-ambivalent manner the environmental challenges the EU is faced with, including accelerating climate change, deterioration of our eco-systems and increasing overuse of natural resources.
Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 (2011)	<p>The EU biodiversity strategy follows on from the EU Biodiversity Action Plan (2006). It aims to halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services across the EU by 2020. The strategy contains six targets and 20 actions. The six targets cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full implementation of EU nature legislation to protect biodiversity; • Better protection for ecosystems, and more use of green infrastructure; • More sustainable agriculture and forestry; • Better management of fish stocks; • Tighter controls on invasive alien species; and • A bigger EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss.
The Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (1995)	The strategy aims to stop and reverse the degradation of biological and landscape diversity values in Europe.
UN Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)	The aims of the Convention include the conservation of biological diversity (including a commitment to significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss), the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.
Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979)	The Convention seeks to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats, and to monitor and control endangered and vulnerable species.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	
Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora 1992 (the Habitats Directive)	<p>The main aim of the Habitats Directive is to promote the maintenance of biodiversity by requiring Member States to take measures to maintain or restore natural habitats and wild species listed on the Annexes to the Directive at a favourable conservation status, introducing robust protection for those habitats and species of European importance. In applying these measures Member States are required to take account of economic, social and cultural requirements, as well as regional and local characteristics.</p> <p>The provisions of the Directive require Member States to introduce a range of measures, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain or restore European protected habitats and species listed in the Annexes at a favourable conservation status as defined in Articles 1 and 2; • Contribute to a coherent European ecological network of protected sites by designating Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for habitats listed on Annex I and for species listed on Annex II. These measures are also to be applied to Special Protection Areas (SPAs) classified under Article 4 of the Birds Directive. Together SACs and SPAs make up the Natura 2000 network (Article 3); • Ensure conservation measures are in place to appropriately manage SACs and ensure appropriate assessment of plans and projects likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of an SAC. Projects may still be permitted if there are no alternatives, and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In such cases compensatory measures are necessary to ensure the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network (Article 6); • Member States shall also endeavour to encourage the management of features of the landscape that support the Natura 2000 network (Articles 3 and 10); • Undertake surveillance of habitats and species (Article 11); • Ensure strict protection of species listed on Annex IV (Article 12 for animals and Article 13 for plants). <p>Report on the implementation of the Directive every six years (Article 17), including assessment of the conservation status of species and habitats listed on the Annexes to the Directive.</p>
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (Habitats regulations)	This transposes into national law the Habitats Directive and also consolidates all amendments that have been made to the previous 1994 Regulations. This means that competent authorities have a general duty in the exercise of any of their functions to have regard to the Directive.
The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000	The Act provides for public access on foot to certain types of land, amends the law relating to public rights of way, increases measures for the management and protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and strengthens wildlife enforcement legislation, and provides for better management of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006	The Act makes provision in respect of biodiversity, pesticides harmful to wildlife and the protection of birds, and in respect of invasive non-native species. It alters enforcement powers in connection with wildlife protection and extends time limits for prosecuting certain wildlife offences. It addresses a small number of gaps and uncertainties which have been identified in relation to the law on sites of special scientific interest. And it amends the functions and constitution of National Park authorities, the functions of the Broads Authority and the law on rights of way.
DEFRA Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended)	The principle mechanism for the legislative protection of wildlife in Great Britain.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	
DEFRA. Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services (2011)	<p>The England biodiversity strategy 2020 ties in with the EU biodiversity strategy in addition to drawing links to the concept of ecosystem services. The strategy's vision for England is:</p> <p><i>"By 2050 our land and seas will be rich in wildlife, our biodiversity will be valued, conserved, restored, managed sustainably and be more resilient and able to adapt to change, providing essential services and delivering benefits for everyone".</i></p> <p>The Strategy's overall mission is <i>"to halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people".</i></p>
DoE Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan (1994)	Government's strategy for protection and enhancement of biodiversity, from 1992 convention on Biodiversity commitments. Advises on opportunities and threats for biodiversity.
TCPA: Biodiversity by Design: A Guide for Sustainable Communities (2004)	The development process should consider ecological potential of all areas including both greenfield and brownfield sites. Local authorities and developers have a responsibility to mitigate impacts of development on designated sites and priority habitats and species and avoid damage to ecosystems.
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2021)	<p>The recently released NPPF seeks to streamline the planning system and sets out the Governments planning policies and how these should be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is presumption in favour of sustainable development.</p> <p>The NPPF includes guidance on promoting the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. It requires the planning system to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils; • recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services; • minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures; • preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and • remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
Making Space for Nature: a review of England's wildlife sites and ecological network (2010)	<p>The Making Space for Nature report, which investigated the resilience of England's ecological network to multiple pressures, concluded that England's wildlife sites do not comprise a coherent and resilient ecological network. The report advocates the need for a step change in conservation of England's wildlife sites to ensure they are able to adapt and become part of a strong and resilient network. The report summarises what needs to be done to improve England's wildlife sites to enhance the resilience and coherence of England's ecological network in four words; more, bigger, better, and joined. There are five key approaches which encompass these, which also take into account of the land around the ecological network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality of current sites by better habitat management. • Increase the size of current wildlife sites. • Enhance connections between, or join up, sites, either through physical corridors, or through 'stepping stones'. • Create new sites. • Reduce the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment, including through buffering wildlife sites. <p>To establish a coherent ecological network 24 wide ranging recommendations have been made which are united under five key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to continue the recent progress in improving the management and condition of wildlife sites, particularly our SSSIs. We also make recommendations for how these should be designated and managed in ways that enhance their resilience to climate change.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to properly plan ecological networks, including restoration areas. Restoration needs to take place throughout England. However, in some areas, both the scale of what can be delivered to enhance the network, and the ensuing benefits for wildlife and people, will be very high. These large areas should be formally recognised as Ecological Restoration Zones. • There are a large number of surviving patches of important wildlife habitat scattered across England outside of SSSIs, for example in Local Wildlife Sites. We need to take steps to improve the protection and management of these remaining wildlife habitats. 'Protection' will usually be best achieved through incentive-based mechanisms, but at times may require designation. • There is a need to become better at deriving multiple benefits from the ways we use and interact with our environment. There are many things that society has to do that may seem to have rather little to do with nature conservation, but could have, or even should have if we embrace more radical thinking; e.g. flood management by creating wetlands. <p>It will not be possible to achieve a step-change in nature conservation in England without society accepting it to be necessary, desirable, and achievable. This will require strong leadership from government and significant improvements in collaboration between local authorities, local communities, statutory agencies, the voluntary and private sectors, farmers, landowners and other land-managers and individual citizens.</p>
DEFRA England's Trees, Woods and Forests Strategy (2007)	<p>The England's Trees, Woods, and Forest Strategy (2007) aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide, in England, a resource of trees, woods and forests in places where they can contribute most in terms of environmental, economic and social benefits now and for future generations • ensure that existing and newly planted trees, woods and forests are resilient to the impacts of climate change and also contribute to the way in which biodiversity and natural resources adjust to a changing climate • protect and enhance the environmental resources of water, soil, air, biodiversity and landscapes (both woodland and non-woodland), and the cultural and amenity values of trees and woodland • increase the contribution that trees, woods and forests make to the quality of life for those living in, working in or visiting England; and • improve the competitiveness of woodland businesses and promote the development of new or improved markets for sustainable woodland products and ecosystem services where this will deliver identify able public benefits, nationally or locally, including the reduction of carbon emissions.
The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature. The Natural Environment White Paper. (HM Government 2011)	<p>Published in June 2011, the Natural Environment White paper sets out the Government's plans to ensure the natural environment is protected and fully integrated into society and economic growth. The White Paper sets out four key aims:</p> <p>(i) <u>Protecting and improving our natural environment</u></p> <p>There is a need to improve the quality of our natural environment across England, moving to a net gain in the value of nature. It aims to arrest the decline in habitats and species and the degradation of landscapes. It will protect priority habitats and safeguard vulnerable non-renewable resources for future generations. It will support natural systems to function more effectively in town, in the country and at sea. It will achieve this through joined-up action at local and national levels to create an ecological network which is resilient to changing pressures.</p> <p>(ii) <u>Growing a green economy</u></p> <p>The ambition is for a green and growing economy which not only uses natural capital in a responsible and fair way but also contributes to improving it. It will properly value the stocks and flows of natural capital. Growth will be green because it is intrinsically linked to the health of the country's natural resources. The economy will capture the value of nature. It will encourage businesses to use natural capital sustainably, protecting and improving it through their day-to-day operations and the management of their supply chains.</p> <p>(iii) <u>Reconnecting people and nature</u></p> <p>The ambition is to strengthen the connections between people and nature. It wants more people to enjoy the benefits of nature by giving them freedom to connect with it. Everyone should have fair access to a good-quality natural environment. It wants to see every child in England given the</p>

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	
	<p>opportunity to experience and learn about the natural environment. It wants to help people take more responsibility for their environment, putting local communities in control and making it easier for people to take positive action.</p> <p>(iv) <u>International and EU leadership</u></p> <p>The global ambitions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> internationally, to achieve environmentally and socially sustainable economic growth, together with food, water, climate and energy security; and to put the EU on a path towards environmentally sustainable, low-carbon and resource-efficient growth, which is resilient to climate change, provides jobs and supports the wellbeing of citizens.
UK National Ecosystem Assessment (2011)	<p>The UK National Ecosystem Assessment is the first analysis of the UK's natural environment and the benefits it provides to society and economic prosperity. The assessment leads on from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005) and analyses services provided by ecosystem set against eight broad habitat types. The ecosystem services provided by these habitat types have been assessed to find their overall condition. The assessment sought to answer ten key questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What are the status and trends of the UK's ecosystems and the services they provide to society? 2) What are the drivers causing changes in the UK's ecosystems and their services? 3) How do ecosystem services affect human well-being, who and where are the beneficiaries, and how does this affect how they are valued and managed? 4) Which vital UK provisioning services are not provided by UK ecosystems? 5) What is the current public understanding of ecosystem services and the benefits they provide? 6) Why should we incorporate the economic values of ecosystem services into decision-making? 7) How might ecosystems and their services change in the UK under plausible future scenarios? 8) What are the economic implications of different plausible futures? 9) How can we secure and improve the continued delivery of ecosystem services? 10) How have we advanced our understanding of the influence of ecosystem services on human well-being and what are the knowledge constraints on more informed decision making?
DEFRA Guidance for Local Authorities on Implementing Biodiversity Duty (2007)	<p>The Duty is set out in Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006, and states that: <i>"Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity"</i>. Particular areas of focus include: Policy, Strategy and Procurement; Management of Public Land and Buildings; Planning, Infrastructure and Development; and Education, Advice and Awareness.</p>
CABE Making Contracts Work for Wildlife: How to Encourage Biodiversity in Urban Parks (2006)	<p>Advises on how to make the most of the potential for biodiversity in urban parks and it shows how the commitment of individuals and employers can make the difference between failure and inspiring success.</p>
Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013 - 2033	<p>The adopted Local Plan, which covers the area of proposed development Site D-AGT1, seeks to ensure that development adheres to relevant policies within the Plan which will protect and enhance the local environment. The Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD is outlined within the Local Plan as a component of the strategic policy, which allocates the site as part of delivering the 'Garden Town' status.</p>

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	
Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 – 2033 (emerging)	The emerging Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan seeks to incorporate the Aylesbury Garden Town project into the Plan and aims to take a holistic view on the need to ensure comprehensive planning of the whole Parish. The SPD will be required to adhere to the relevant supporting policies outlined within the Plan, to ensure the development provides seamless interaction with the community.
Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Biodiversity Action Plan (emerging)	This plan aims to build upon the previous Biodiversity Action Plan, the timeline of which completed in 2020, produced by the partnership of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes councils. The plan will aim to ensure that the unique local environment and biodiversity is promoted and protected, where local residents can connect to nature and promote health benefits.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Climate change	
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992)	Sets an overall framework for intergovernmental efforts to tackle the challenge posed by climate change.
UN Paris Climate Change Agreement (2015)	The Paris Agreement builds upon the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Paris Agreement's central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5°C.
IPCC Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1997)	Commits member nations to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases or engage in emissions trading if they maintain or increase emissions of these gases.
European Sustainable Development Strategy (2006)	This Strategy identifies key priorities for an enlarged Europe. This includes health, social inclusion and fighting global poverty. It aims to achieve better policy integration in addressing these challenges, and to ensure that Europe looks beyond its boundaries in making informed decisions about sustainability. The Sustainable Development Strategy was reviewed in 2009 and “underlined that in recent years the EU has mainstreamed sustainable development into a broad range of its policies. In particular, the EU has taken the lead in the fight against climate change and the promotion of a low-carbon economy. At the same time, unsustainable trends persist in many areas and the efforts need to be intensified”. Sustainable development is a key focus of the EU and the strategy continues to be monitored and reviewed.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Climate change	
European Floods Directive (2007)	Requires Local Authorities to feed into the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment, as well as the Local Flood Risk Strategy (already completed) and ensure that objectives within Local Plans compliment the objectives of the Directive.
UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009)	The UK has committed to sourcing 15% of its energy from renewable sources by 2020 – an increase in the share of renewables from about 2.25% in 2008. The Renewable Energy Strategy sets out how the Government will achieve this target through utilising a variety of mechanisms to encourage Renewable Energy provision in the UK. This includes streamlining the planning system, increasing investment in technologies as well as improving funding for advice and awareness raising.
UK Renewable Energy Roadmap Update (2013)	This is the second Update to the 2011 Renewable Energy Roadmap. It sets out the progress that has been made and the changes that have occurred in the sector over the past year. It also describes the continuing high ambitions and actions along with the challenges going forward.
The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan (2009)	<p>The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan sets out how the UK will meet the Climate Change Act's legally binding target of a 34% cut in emissions on 1990 levels by 2020. It also seeks to deliver emissions cuts of 18% on 2008 levels.</p> <p>The main aims of the Transition Plan include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producing 30% of energy from renewables by 2020; • Improving the energy efficiency of existing housing; • Increasing the number of people in 'green jobs'; and <p>Supporting the use and development of clean technologies.</p>
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG, 2021)	<p>The NPPF seeks to streamline the planning system and sets out the Government's planning policies and how these should be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is presumption in favour of sustainable development.</p> <p>The NPPF includes guidance on climate change, flooding, and coastal change. Plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape. New development should be planned to avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure.</p> <p>To increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts); • consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development; and • identify opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co- locating potential heat customers and suppliers. • Local Plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development to avoid where possible flood risk to people and property and manage any residual risk, taking account of the impacts of climate change, by:

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Climate change	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • applying the sequential test and then, if necessary, applying the exception test; • safeguarding land from development that is required for current and future flood management; • using opportunities offered by new development to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding; and • where climate change is expected to increase flood risk so that some existing development may not be sustainable in the long-term, seeking opportunities to facilitate the relocation of development, including housing, to more sustainable locations.
Department for Transport: An Evidence Base Review of Public Attitudes to Climate Change and Transport Behaviour (2006)	This is a summary report of the findings of an evidence base review investigating the research base on public attitudes towards climate change and transport behaviour.
Carbon Trust: The Climate Change Challenge: Scientific Evidence and Implications (2005)	This report summarises the nature of the climate change issue. It explains the fundamental science and the accumulating evidence that climate change is real and needs to be addressed. It also explains the future potential impacts, including the outstanding uncertainties.
Energy Saving Trust: Renewable Energy Sources for Homes in Urban Environments (2005)	This document provides information about the integration of renewable energy sources into new and existing dwellings in urban environments. It covers the basic principles, benefits, limitations, costs and suitability of various technologies.
HM Government: The Road to Zero (2018)	This report outlines how the Government will support the transition to zero-emission road transport. This includes measures to reduce emissions from vehicles including specific targets for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), promoting low- and zero- emission cars and developing high quality electric vehicle infrastructure networks.
Environment Agency, Adapting to Climate Change: A Checklist for Development (2005)	The document contains a checklist and guidance for new developments to adapt to climate change. The main actions are summarised in a checklist.
Environment Agency: Building a Better Environment: A Guide for Developers (2013)	Guidance on addressing key environmental issues through the development process (focusing mainly on the issues dealt with by the Environment Agency), including managing flood risk, surface water management, use of water resources and preventing pollution.
DECC Energy White Paper: Meeting the Energy Challenge (2007)	<p>Sets out Government's long-term energy policy, including requirements for cleaner, smarter energy; improved energy efficiency; reduced carbon emissions; and reliable, competitive and affordable supplies. The White Paper sets out the UK's international and domestic energy strategy, in the shape of four policy goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aiming to cut CO₂ emissions by some 60% by about 2050, with real progress by 2020; • maintaining the reliability of energy supplies; • promoting competitive markets in the UK and beyond; and

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Climate change	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring every home is heated adequately and affordably.
Department of Energy and Climate Change: Microgeneration Strategy (2011)	The strategy aims to improve the effectiveness of the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS), enable policy makers and industry to understand the consumer protection structure and suitably sign post schemes in policy and create regulatory environment and assessment framework that enables accurate representation of contribution of microgeneration technologies to low carbon homes and buildings.
Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013 - 2033	The adopted Local Plan, which covers the area of proposed development Site D-AGT1, seeks to ensure that development adheres to relevant policies within the Plan which will protect and enhance the local environment. The Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD is outlined within the Local Plan as a component of the strategic policy, which allocates the site as part of delivering the 'Garden Town' status.
Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 – 2033 (emerging)	The emerging Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan seeks to incorporate the Aylesbury Garden Town project into the Plan and aims to take a holistic view on the need to ensure comprehensive planning of the whole Parish. The SPD will be required to adhere to the relevant supporting policies outlined within the Plan, to ensure the development provides seamless interaction with the community.
Buckinghamshire County Council: Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy (2021)	<p>The strategy seeks to reduce emissions, improve air quality and adapt to climate change and sets out the following targets to achieve aims through various objectives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve net zero carbon emissions across council operations no later than 2050 and possibly before this, potentially by 2030, subject to resources. Support communities to achieve net zero carbon emissions <p>The strategy guides activity for nearly 30 years, and sets out actions required to meet the targets outlined within the document.</p>
Aylesbury Transport Strategy (2017)	The strategy is intended to address current issues on the transport network and accommodate future planned growth. Additionally, it allows for the single coordinated approach to planning improvements and contains objectives aimed at improving transport connectivity within Aylesbury town, air quality and pollution and accessibility to other urban centres and new growth areas outside Aylesbury town, such as the site of the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD.
Buckinghamshire County Council: Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2015)	The strategy seeks to explain the current understanding of flood risk across the county and ensure that development does not increase flood risk, for example through encouraging the use of sustainable drainage techniques and working with natural processes.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Historic environment	
Council of Europe: Convention on the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985)	Aims for signatories to protect their architectural heritage by means of identifying monuments, buildings and sites to be protected; preventing the disfigurement, dilapidation or demolition of protected properties; providing financial support by the public authorities for maintaining and restoring the architectural heritage on its territory; and supporting scientific research for identifying and analysing the harmful effects of pollution and for defining ways and means to reduce or eradicate these effects.
Council of Europe: The Convention on the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (Revised) (Valetta Convention) (1992)	The convention defines archaeological heritage and identifies measures for its protection. Aims include integrated conservation of the archaeological heritage and financing of archaeological research and conservation.
DCMS Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)	An act to consolidate and amend the law relating to ancient monuments, to make provision of matters of archaeological or historic interest, and to provide grants by secretary of state to the Architectural Heritage fund.
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG, 2021)	<p>The NPPF seeks to streamline the planning system and sets out the Government's planning policies and how these should be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is presumption in favour of sustainable development.</p> <p>The NPPF and related guidance given within the PPG includes direction on conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It seeks to ensure local authorities plan recognise heritage assets as an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner that reflects their significance.</p> <p>Local planning authorities should take into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; • the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring; • the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and <p>opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.</p>
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990)	An act to consolidate certain enactments relating to special controls in respect of buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest with amendments to give effect to recommendations to give effect to recommendations of the Law Commissions.
Circular on the Protection of World Heritage Sites, CLG 07/2009 2	<p>The purpose of this circular, which applies only to England, is to provide updated policy guidance on the level of protection and management required for World Heritage Sites.</p> <p>The circular explains the national context and the Government's objectives for the protection of World Heritage Sites, the principles which underpin those objectives, and the actions necessary to achieve them.</p>

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Historic environment	
Office of the Deputy Prime minister (ODPM) Secure and Sustainable Buildings Act (2004)	Amends the Building act, and others, with regard to sustainable construction practices and conservation of historic buildings. Also states the general nature of security provisions which should be in place at the construction stage and beyond.
Heritage 2020: strategic priorities for England's historic environment 2015-2020	Over the next five years the commitment to the Heritage 2020 framework will achieve a step change in the understanding, valuing, caring and enjoyment of the historic environment of England. The vision concentrates on five strategic areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovery, identification & understanding • Constructive conservation and sustainable management • Public engagement • Capacity building • Helping things to happen.
Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 1, 2 and 3 (2015)	These three notes provide information on good practice to assist local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing historic environment policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the related guidance given in the PPG.
Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013 - 2033	The adopted Local Plan, which covers the area of proposed development Site D-AGT1, seeks to ensure that development adheres to relevant policies within the Plan which will protect and enhance the local environment. The Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD is outlined within the Local Plan as a component of the strategic policy, which allocates the site as part of delivering the 'Garden Town' status.
Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 – 2033 (emerging)	The emerging Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan seeks to incorporate the Aylesbury Garden Town project into the Plan and aims to take a holistic view on the need to ensure comprehensive planning of the whole Parish. The SPD will be required to adhere to the relevant supporting policies outlined within the Plan, to ensure the development provides seamless interaction with the community.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Landscape	
Council of Europe: European Landscape Convention (2006)	Aims to promote the protection, management and planning (including active design and creation of Europe's landscapes, both rural and urban, and to foster European co-operation on landscape issues.
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG, 2021)	The NPPF and related guidance given within the PPG states that development could seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness; both aesthetic considerations and connections between people and places should be considered. The NPPF also promotes the protection and enhancements of valued landscapes, giving greatest weight to National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

English Heritage and CABE: Guidance on Tall Buildings (2007)	Provides advice and guidance on good practice in relation to tall buildings in the planning process and to highlight other related issues, which need to be considered, i.e. where tall buildings would and would not be appropriate.
Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013 - 2033	The adopted Local Plan, which covers the area of proposed development Site D-AGT1, seeks to ensure that development adheres to relevant policies within the Plan which will protect and enhance the local environment. The Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD is outlined within the Local Plan as a component of the strategic policy, which allocates the site as part of delivering the 'Garden Town' status.
Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 – 2033 (emerging)	The emerging Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan seeks to incorporate the Aylesbury Garden Town project into the Plan and aims to take a holistic view on the need to ensure comprehensive planning of the whole Parish. The SPD will be required to adhere to the relevant supporting policies outlined within the Plan, to ensure the development of Site D-AGT1 provides seamless interaction with the community.
Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024	<p>This management plan of the Chilterns AONB sets out a series of policies and actions that, through effective long-term planning and decision making, aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns • Enhance public understanding and enjoyment of the special quality of the AONB <p>The management plans notes the special qualities of the AONB to be protected, including panoramic views which can be harmed by development, and has produced Position Statements on Development Affecting the Setting of the Chilterns AONB and their cumulative impacts, to help protect the long-term interests of the landscape.</p>
Buckinghamshire County Council: Aylesbury Landscape Character Assessment (2008)	Explains the modern concepts of landscape and landscape character. Summarises the 13 landscape character types.

Appendix C: Responses from the statutory consultees

Habitat Regulations Assessments

Sustainability Appraisals

Strategic Environmental Assessments

Landscape Character Assessments

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments

Green Belt Reviews

Expert Witness

Ecological Impact Assessments

Habitat and Ecology Surveys



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