



STEWKLEY PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2013 - 2033

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Stewkley Parish Council has prepared a Neighbourhood Plan for the whole Parish to cover the period 2013 – 2033. Aylesbury Vale District Council's screening opinion confirmed that a Strategic Environmental Assessment would be required to ensure that the proposals presented in the Stewkley Parish Neighbourhood Plan (SPNP) contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development.

The Neighbourhood Plan area contains a number of designated heritage and nature features, as detailed on Page 8.

The area does not suffer from any significant environmental problems although foul water management has been a long-term problem.

The SPNP is primarily about the use and development of land and buildings and will therefore form the basis for determining local planning applications within the plan area, to ensure that it meets local objectives and needs.

The SPNP contains a number of policies relating to: the type, character and location of new housing; protecting Stewkley's heritage assets; maintaining the integrity of key open spaces within the village; and maintaining the connection between the village and its surrounding countryside. These policies, together with the policies of the emerging Aylesbury Vale Local Development Plan (VALP) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), will be used by the District Council in determining planning application once the SPNP is approved.

The SPNP has been prepared to address key planning issues in the neighbourhood plan area. As the SPNP must be in general conformity with national and local strategic policies, it does not therefore seek to repeat them.

The conclusion of the assessment is that the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan will have mostly neutral environmental effects, but have the potential for occasional positive effects, especially in respect of sustaining the special heritage and identity of the village. There was the potential for adverse landscape effects of its housing and employment policies, but those policies propose mitigation measures. As a result, it is considered there should be no significant environmental effects. In no case is it considered that a reasonable policy or site alternative has the potential to deliver a stronger overall environmental performance than the proposed policy.



1. Introduction

The purpose of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is to provide an assessment of any significant environmental effects resulting from the policies and proposals of the Submission version of the Stewkley Parish Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with EU Directive 2001 / 42. Figure A below shows the designated Neighbourhood Area.



Figure A: Designated Neighbourhood Area

The Neighbourhood Plan is to be submitted to the local planning authority, Aylesbury Vale District Council, by Stewkley Parish Council, which is the 'qualifying body', in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended) and with the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004 (which transcribed the EU Directive on SEA into UK law).

The District Council issued a screening opinion requiring an SEA of the Neighbourhood Plan in November 2016 (see the relevant extract in **Appendix A**). This Final SEA report provides an assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan in a way that is proportionate to this task and that recognises the limitations of the available data and means of measuring direct impacts.

The proposed scope of the SEA (i.e. the framework of environmental objectives and measures to be used in the assessment) was consulted upon with the statutory consultees using an SEA Scoping Report in November/December 2017. The consultees made no comments on the selection of the proposed SEA objectives, which are set out in Section 6.



A Draft SEA Report was prepared and consulted on alongside the Pre-Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan in May – July 2019. The final version of the Plan has been modified to take account of comments made on the draft proposals, and this Final SEA report has also been modified.

2. Background to Strategic Environmental Assessment

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) involves the evaluation of the environmental impacts of a plan. The requirement for a SEA is set out in the European Directive 2001/42/EC adopted into UK law as the “Environmental Assessment of Plans or Programmes Regulations 2004” as follows:

- An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan, and relationship with other relevant plans or programmes;
- The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan;
- The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;
- Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;
- The environmental protection objectives, established at international, national or community level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken to account during its preparation;
- The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce, and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan;
- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of competency encountered in compiling the required information; and
- A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring.

Since 2004, the requirement for SEA of relevant plans and programmes has been aligned with the similar process of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in the UK. During the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Government confirmed that a SA is not required of a Neighbourhood Plan but that SEA may still be necessary in circumstances where policies may have a significant environmental effect.

The methodology for the assessment is intended to be proportionate to the task of assessing the modest development proposals of a Neighbourhood Plan in a medium parish area.

The report responds to each of the SEA requirements listed above, beginning with a short description of the Neighbourhood Plan, identifying the key environmental features of the parish and then assessing the impact of the strategic objectives and policies of the Neighbourhood Plan on those features, using a number of SEA objectives and measures.



3. An Outline of the Contents, Main Objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and Relationship with other Relevant Plans or Programmes

The Neighbourhood Plan contains a number of policies for the use and development of land and maintenance and upkeep of infrastructure in the Parish of Stewkley in the plan period up to 2033. These policies, together with the policies of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (AVDLP) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), will be used by the new Buckinghamshire Council in determining planning applications once the Neighbourhood Plan is made. The Neighbourhood Plan has also been informed by the reasoning and evidence base of the emerging Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan.

3.1 AVDLP Saved Policies

The 2004 AVDLP contains a number of 'saved' policies that have a specific relevance to the Stewkley Parish NP and these are listed below:

- GP4 – Affordable housing on small sites for local needs
- GP8 – Protection of amenity of residents
- GP24 – Car parking guidelines
- GP32 – Retention of shops, public houses and post offices
- GP35 – Design of new development proposals
- GP38 – Landscaping of new development proposals
- GP39 – Existing trees and hedgerows
- GP53 – New development in and adjacent to Conservation Areas
- GP84 – Public rights of way
- GP86 – Provision of outdoor playing spaces
- GP87 – Application of open space policies
- GP91 – Safeguarding of community buildings and facilities
- RA2 – Loss of open gaps and consolidation of settlements
- RA3 – Extension of residential curtilages into open countryside

3.2 Neighbourhood Plan Vision & Objectives

The vision of the Neighbourhood Plan is:

It is envisaged by 2033 the Parish of Stewkley will have grown in population and diversity, continued to be a progressive community embracing the following values:

- Retain village character and heritage
- Remain a caring and safe community
- Provide new homes which meet the needs of all ages
- Protect enjoyment of the open Buckinghamshire countryside
- Support local amenities and organisations
- Protect the environment by creating sustainable energy solutions

The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are:

Housing

Encourage small scale developments which respect the 'linear' nature of the village's built form. Maintain the character of the village by incorporating traditional and/or sympathetic design.

Facilitate the provision of suitable types of housing for the elderly to down-size and encourage smaller



dwellings to be built allowing younger families the opportunity to continue to reside in the village.

Employment

To improve the local business space offer through the provision of additional/ improved premises for local businesses to relocate or expand; encouraging reduced levels of out-commuting.

Where possible improve access to high speed broadband, especially important considering home working.

Conservation, Heritage and Design

Conserve and enhance local heritage features and minimise the effects of development on the historic character of the village.

Ensure any new developments respect and reflect the key characteristics of the historic built environment in its form, layout, massing, materials and design.

Infrastructure, Transport and Parking

Ensure new developments provide for enhanced levels of parking, for both residents and visitors.

Improve the accessibility around Stewkley for pedestrians (including wheelchair users).

New developments should be shaped by suitable traffic and parking-management principles to improve the safety of all road users including drivers, cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians.

Seek to support a modal shift from driving to more sustainable travel choices.

Education and Community Uses

Protect and where possible enhance local community facilities valuable to the residents of Stewkley.

Assess the use of existing village facilities before new community buildings are considered

Natural Environment

Protect and where possible enhance linkages to the local countryside, including the Stewkley Rights of Way.

To maintain and protect existing green and open spaces, and vistas within the village, in particular the recreation ground.



4. The Relevant Aspects of the Current State of the Environment and the Likely Evolution thereof without Implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan area contains a number of designated heritage and nature features, including:

- The Conservation Area
- A number of other listed buildings and buildings of interest
- Airport Monument and Spinney
- Chapel Square island
- Drover's Way
- Dunton Road Brickfields and Kilns
- Fishweir Green Space
- Griffin Field Green Space
- Littlecote Medieval village
- Moated Earthworks to the west of St. Michael's Church
- Parish Council Lawn Cemetery
- St Michael's (1150AD) Church + Churchyard
- Stewkley War Memorial
- Stewkley Wildlife Reserve
- Stockall Tiger Island
- Sycamore Close Green Space
- The Football Field (adjacent to the Recreation Ground)
- The Recreation Ground
- Warren Farm Quarry
- All trees within the conservation area have tree preservation orders (TPOs)
- A number of trees outside of the conservation area also have TPOs

Stewkley village is characterised as a 'linear' built village, approximately 2 miles long, enabling views to the countryside from the High Street and its Closes. The village of Stewkley has limited available sites within its current 'built' boundary to meet the demand for homes required by its existing residents, as projected over the next 20 years. Extension along the entrances to the village are obvious spaces for development since they continue the linear nature of the village. A 'secondary' settlement boundary has been proposed to meet this housing need, whilst maintaining the character of the village. This boundary links 'gaps' on the outer built areas of the village and therefore defines a clear line between countryside and built village.

The Stewkley Conservation Area covers the main part of the village and developments within this area are strictly controlled.

The Parish is approximately 10 miles north of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The village of Stewkley currently holds the award for being a Buckinghamshire Best Kept Village and has won this competition on several previous and consecutive occasions.

Without a Neighbourhood Plan developments could have a detrimental impact on the linear nature of the village and its heritage assets.

The Plan contains policies and proposals for the development of approximately 25 homes in sites chosen to have the least impact on the village and the Parish. Without it, proposals for housing development in the parish would be left to individual planning applications. This would make little difference to controlling the environmental impact of those proposals as they must in any event demonstrate they conform to the development plan and NPPF policy.



5. Any Existing Environmental Problems that are Relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan

The area does not suffer from any significant environmental issues, although foul water management has been a long-term problem.

The community consultations have shown that both congestion and traffic speeds along the High Street are of concern. The community is also worried that larger housing schemes would have a harmful impact on the character of the village and that existing infrastructure would be unable to cope. However, there are no pressing environmental problems to which the SPNP needs to respond.

The Environmental Agency (EA) identified small areas of modelled fluvial flood risk associated with the head of the Hardwick Brook to the west and south-west of Stewkley and various small watercourses in the Neighbourhood Plan area designation, although none of these are classified as main rivers. The EA recommended an assessment of the potential impacts of the neighbourhood plan on these.

There is one industrial installation with an Environmental Permit within the Neighbourhood Plan area and two just outside the plan area.

There are two Environmental Permits for waste operations within the plan area. New development within 250 metres (m) of an existing waste facility, or within 400m of an existing intensive poultry farm, could result in the community at the proposed development being exposed to odour, noise, dust and pest impacts.

Natural England highlighted the need for policies around connected green space and suggested that a measure of biodiversity net loss or gain should be provided for the plan. Also, that development sites should be assessed for 'Best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land' (Grades 1-3a).

Historic England highlighted that new developments could contribute to issues already highlighted in the Stewkley Conservation Area Appraisal and that potential cumulative impact should be considered. Also, that sites may be considered that could affect heritage assets within the plan area, or in its vicinity either directly or indirectly by affecting its setting or resulting in indirect effects such as increased traffic.



6. The Environmental Protection Objectives that are Relevant to the SPNP and the Way Those Objectives and any Environmental Considerations have been Taken into Account During its Preparation

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to address, amongst other aspects, key planning issues in the Neighbourhood Plan area. As the Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with national and local strategic policies, it does not therefore seek to repeat them.

To assess the sustainability performance of the SPNP the following assessment framework has been adopted:

Objective 1 - Conservation & Heritage

To give due regard to existing and surrounding characteristics

- Will the policies conserve and enhance the significance of designated heritage assets and their settings?
- Will the policies conserve and enhance the significance of non-designated heritage assets?
- Will the policies conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of the Conservation Area?

Objective 2 - Landscape

To ensure landscaping and green areas/spaces are incorporated

- Will the policies protect the linear nature of the village and relationship with the surrounding landscape?
- Will the policies protect the views into open countryside?
- Will the policies have regard to the local landscape, features, character and open spaces within the village?

Objective 3 - Biodiversity

To ensure biodiversity is addressed and designated habitats are protected.

- Will the policies protect or deliver a net biodiversity gain?
- Will the policies avoid development in a known site of habitat value?

Objective 4 - Roads, Traffic and Parking

To ensure congestion and traffic speeds are managed and encourage the use of walking and cycling

- Will the policies mitigate and/or avoid against congestion and increased vehicle movement in the village?
- Will the policies improve walking and cycling routes in the Parish?

Objective 5 – Flooding and Drainage

To ensure development proposals are able to mitigate groundwater flooding and foul water impact

- Will the policies require appropriate mitigation of any likely groundwater flooding and foul water discharge?
- Will the policies affect land in Flood Zones 2 and 3 (Water Framework Directive)?



7. Assessing the Impact of the Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Objectives

The strategic objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are outlined in Section 3. They cover a number of social, economic and environmental issues in support of realising the Vision. Each of these objectives have been assessed against the SEA objectives below but do not take into account the ways in which the policies of the Plan can be chosen and specified to avoid or satisfactorily mitigate adverse effects (see Section 8).

SEA Objectives	Conservation & Heritage	Landscape	Biodiversity	Road, Traffic and Parking	Flood & Drainage
NP Objectives:					
Housing					
Employment					
Conservation, Heritage and Design					
Infrastructure, Transport and Parking					
Community Uses					
Natural Environment					

	Potential for Positive Effects
	Likely Neutral Effects
	Potential for Adverse Effects

Table A: Summary Assessment of Plan Objectives & SEA Objectives

Conservation & Heritage

The Conservation and Natural Environment objectives of the Plan both had the potential for positive effects as they are both very much in line with the desire to protect and enhance the special heritage interest of the village, the majority of which lies within a Conservation Area. The Housing objective might have had the potential for an adverse effect, but the objective is caveated to ensure that new housing supply respects the heritage and identity of the village. The other three objectives contain no such caveat and so it is possible that policies could have proposed employment, infrastructure and community related development that through their location and/or design could have had adverse heritage effects. However, as set out below, the policies do not have such effects.

Landscape

Again, the Conservation and Natural Environment objectives of the Plan both had the potential for positive effects. The Housing, Employment and Infrastructure objectives had the potential for adverse effects if they involved extending the village into the countryside or encouraged proposals in isolated locations in the countryside. However, as set out below, the such effects have been satisfactorily mitigated in the policy choices and wording.



Biodiversity

There is a strong correlation between this objective and the Natural Environment objective of the Plan. However, the Housing, Employment and Infrastructure objectives had the potential for adverse effects if the policies chosen to pursue them did not make proper provision for protecting biodiversity value and delivering a net gain. This is not the case with the final policy choices.

Road, Traffic and Parking

The Employment and Community objectives are intended to reduce the dependency of the village on car-based journeys to other settlements for access to employment opportunities and community facilities. The Infrastructure objective aims to improve the way that traffic and parking are managed, given that the isolated location of the village means that car trips are inevitable. All three objectives therefore had the potential for positive effects. However, it is possible that poorly located housing allocations, or proposals that make inadequate provision for parking, would have an adverse effect. The final policy choices have ensured that new development is small in scale and continues to adjoin the existing village edge, so the adverse effects have been partially mitigated and the residual effects are insignificant.

Flood & Drainage

The Housing and Employment objectives had the potential for adverse effects if policy proposals were to be located in a Flood zone 2 or 3 or were not to take proper account of surface water flooding risk. This is not the case with the final policy choices.



8. Assessing the Impact of the Neighbourhood Plan Policies

The Neighbourhood Plan policies have been assessed against the SEA objectives below. The assessment has taken account of any mitigation measures included in the wording of the respective policies and a simple scoring mechanism has been used. The mechanism seeks to distinguish between significant and minor effects. Where a policy is considered to have the potential for both minor positive and minor adverse effects in generally equal measure, the assessment offers a 'net neutral' score, but the nature of the assessment is described in detail in this section.

SEA Objectives:	Conservation & Heritage	Landscape	Biodiversity	Road, Traffic and Parking	Flood & Drainage
SPNP Policies:					
Policy STK1: Settlement Boundary					
Policy STK2: Housing Type					
Policy STK3: Housing Allocations					
Policy STK4: Village Character					
Policy STK5: Buildings of Local Interest					
Policy STK6: Car Parking					
Policy STK7: Cycling & Pedestrians					
Policy STK8: Community Assets					
Policy STK9: Local Green Spaces					
Policy STK10: Local Amenity Land					
Policy STK11: Important Views					
Policy STK12: Biodiversity					
Policy STK13: Local Employment					
Policy STK14: Broadband					

	Potential for Significant Positive Effects
	Potential for Minor Positive Effects
	Likely (Net) Neutral Effects
	Potential for Minor Adverse Effects
	Potential for Significant Adverse Effects

Table B: Summary Assessment of Plan Objectives & SEA Objectives

Conservation & Heritage

A number of policies should have significant positive effects in protecting the essential character of the village. Policies STK4, STK5 and STK11 are expressly intended to have that purpose in terms of helping define its architectural and historic significance; policies STK9 and STK10 will protect open land of various types, that, amongst other purposes, play a role in defining its character. The potential for adverse effects resulting from the housing site allocations in Policy STK3 is avoided through the selection of land outside the Conservation Area and the requirements of the policy for the schemes to respect its setting and views southwards to the countryside beyond.



Landscape

Policy STK1 is intended to consolidate the existing village built up area by distinguishing it from the surrounding countryside and by accommodating growth (via Policy STK3) only in one specific location. This should prevent piecemeal encroachment into the countryside and so should have a positive effect. The two small housing site allocations of Policy STK3 are on greenfield land on the southern edge of the village.

Although the policy requirements should ensure high quality design proposals, which will mitigate most of the potential for an adverse landscape effect, there is a minor residual adverse effect. There may also be an adverse effect by allowing some degree of intensification and extension of established employment uses in the countryside (STK13), but the deployment of other development plan policies on design and landscape character should ensure that it is minor. In both cases, the positive economic and social effects (as noted in the Basic Conditions Statement) have been considered as outweighing the minor adverse landscape effects.

Biodiversity

Policy STK12 expressly addresses this objective and so will have a positive effect. The housing site allocations of Policy STK3 provide the opportunity to improve the biodiversity value of land that has little or no value at present and so should have a minor positive effect. Policies STK9 and STK10 will protect established green spaces from harmful development, which should protect their existing biodiversity value.

Road, Traffic and Parking

Policy STK6 should have a positive effect as it is expressly intended to ensure that adequate parking arrangements are secured on all new schemes. The choice of sites in Policy STK3 at the southern edge of the village should ensure that the potential for adverse traffic effects in combination with the consented schemes in the centre of the village will be avoided. The encouragement of cycling and walking in Policy STK7 and for investment in broadband services in Policy STK14 may lead to fewer local car trips, which should have a minor positive traffic effect.

Flood & Drainage

It is considered that all of the policies will have neutral effects as they any potential for adverse effects will be avoided or mitigated with the application of other development plan policies on managing flood risk at the planning application stage.

Summary of Effects

In conclusion, the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan will have mostly neutral environmental effects, but have the potential for occasional positive effects, especially in respect of sustaining the special heritage and identity of the village. There is the potential for adverse landscape effects of its housing and employment policies, but this is considered minor. Importantly, it is considered there should be no significant environmental effects, as their potential has been avoided or satisfactorily mitigated.



9. Assessing the Reasonable Policy Alternatives

An important requirement of the Directive and Regulations is that the assessment comprises not just the policy proposals but also the reasonable policy alternatives, with an explanation of why those alternatives have not been chosen. This exercise must be proportionate, testing either alternative locations where policies are site-specific or a 'policy-off' approach where policies apply across the Parish. To be reasonable the alternatives must also be compliant with strategic planning policy and must be realistic. However, although community opinion may be crucial in helping to determine final policy choices, it does not inform whether or not a policy alternative is reasonable.

Set out below is the analysis of the reasonable alternatives for each policy. In respect of Policy STK3, three distinct spatial options have been tested comprising all of the qualifying housing sites for allocation in the Plan. For all the other policies, a 'policy-off' alternative has been tested, either because they are development management-type policies or because the policies contain the only sites that qualify for inclusion.

STK1 Settlement Boundary

The 'policy off' alternative has the potential for minor adverse landscape and heritage effects as the distinction between built up area and countryside will rest on the interpretation of the planning authority and applicants.

STK2 Housing Type

The 'policy off' alternative has neutral effects as there are other development plan policies that require an appropriate housing mix on sites, although the loss of the specificity of the policy provisions to Stewkley may have an adverse social effect (as explained in the Basic Conditions Statement).

STK3 Housing Allocations

The Neighbourhood Plan proposed sites have been assessed against the SEA objectives below.

SEA Objectives	Conservation & Heritage	Landscape	Biodiversity	Road, Traffic and Parking	Flood & Drainage
Spatial Options					
Spatial Option 1: 'Linear'					
Spatial Option 2: 'Dog Bone'					
Spatial Option 3: 'Bulge'					

	Likely Significant Positive Effects
	Likely Minor Positive Effects
	Likely Neutral Effects
	Likely Minor Adverse Effects
	Likely Significant Adverse Effects

Table C: Summary Assessment of Plan Objectives & SEA Objectives



The 'southern gateway' sites selected are the only sites consistent with the 'Linear' spatial option. This option assesses more positively than the other two options as it maintains the linearity of the village, which is its most essential and distinct characteristic and does not compromise the setting of any heritage assets. Its adverse landscape effects are therefore considered to be only minor. As with the other two options, all new housing schemes ought to be able to deliver a net biodiversity gain and so have minor positive effects. It is acknowledged that there may have been the potential for an adverse traffic effect as lengthening an already two mile long village further may discourage walking to the village centre. However, there are very few facilities in the village centre; they are located along much of the length of the main road; and such trips are made only occasionally. It is therefore considered that there is no material adverse effect.

Although it too does not compromise any heritage assets, the 'Dog Bone' option would push development out further into the countryside and begin to dilute the village linearity and thus has the potential for significant adverse landscape effects. Those extremity locations would also be further from the village centre, causing minor adverse traffic effects as walking to the centre would be more arduous. In which case, it does not present a more favourable spatial option.

The 'Bulge' option will also begin to undermine the strong linearity of the village, with little precedent set for development extending behind the main road frontage. Growing the village closest to its historic core and setting would also likely lead to some adverse heritage effects. In addition, it has the potential for minor adverse traffic effects as growth is concentrated in the centre, with the small rural roads of the village likely to be busier at peak hours. However, it is closer to the village centre to encourage walking and so will have minor positive effect. The two minor effects net each off, resulting in a net neutral effect. Again, overall, this spatial option does not present a more favourable alternative to that chosen.

STK4 Village Character

The 'policy off' alternative has the potential for an adverse heritage effect as the design attributes of planning applications will have to be judged on general design guidelines and using supplementary planning guidance, which carries a lower weight in the planning balance.

STK5 Buildings of Local Interest

The 'policy off' alternative has the potential for an adverse heritage effect as there will be no formal recognition of the buildings as 'non-designated heritage assets', risking applicants bringing forward proposals that do not properly acknowledge or respond to the specific significance of the asset.

STK6 Car Parking

The 'policy off' alternative has neutral effects as there are other development plan policies that provide guidance on car parking provision.

STK7 Cycling and Pedestrians

The 'policy off' alternative has neutral effects as there are other development plan policies that encourage cycling and walking.

STK8 Community Assets

The 'policy off' alternative has neutral effects as there are other development plan policies that protect community facilities, although they rely upon clarity as to what constitutes a 'community facility'.

STK9 Local Green Spaces

A survey was undertaken to identify candidates for this designation, using the NPPF §100 tests. Only those sites proposed in the policy are considered to meet those tests. There are no reasonable alternative sites.



The 'policy off' alternative has neutral effects as there are other development plan policies that may protect the selected spaces from harmful development.

STK10 Local Amenity Land

A survey was undertaken to identify candidates for this designation of those sites that would not meet the NPPF §100 tests but still had some amenity value. Only those sites proposed in the policy are considered to have this value. There are no reasonable alternative sites. The 'policy off' alternative has neutral effects as there are other development plan policies that may protect the selected sites from harmful development.

STK11 Important Views

The 'policy off' alternative has neutral effects as there are other development plan policies that may protect the selected views from harmful, obstructive development.

STK12 Biodiversity

The 'policy off' alternative has neutral effects as there are other development plan policies that may protect biodiversity value from harmful development.

STK13 Local Employment

The 'policy off' alternative has a positive landscape effect as development plan policies that may be more constraining of rural employment proposals than this policy. It has not been chosen as the positive economic effect of promoting local employment opportunities is considered to outweigh the positive landscape effect (as explained in the Basic Conditions Statement).

STK14 Broadband

The 'policy off' alternative has neutral effects as there are other development plan policies that may encourage investment in rural broadband services.

Summary of Reasonable Alternatives Assessment

In no case is it considered that a reasonable policy or site alternative has the potential to deliver a stronger overall environmental performance than the proposed policy.



10.A Description of Measures Envisaged Concerning Monitoring

The Neighbourhood Plan proposes that the progress in its implementation will be assessed using the measures for each objective as set out in Section 6. The data for some of these measures will be collected by the new Buckinghamshire Council in its planning monitoring reports. In other cases, the Parish Council will endeavour to collect data on an annual basis to report on the progress of the plan. Should any real or potential negative impacts be identified then the two Councils will seek to review the relevant policies and their implementation.



APPENDIX A

Extract from the Aylesbury Vale District Council Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report for the Stewkley Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan

‘Having reviewed the criteria Aylesbury Vale District Council concludes that the Stewkley Neighbourhood Development Plan has some potential to have significant environmental effects beyond those expected by ‘strategic’ district-wide policies of the Local Plan, although the magnitude and location of these effects is difficult to ascertain at this stage of the plan making process. Therefore the best course of action is to produce a Strategic Environmental Assessment, particularly as this is a process that needs to be started in the early stages of the plan making process and cannot be retrofitted at a later stage. Although not a requirement, we would recommend this incorporates a Sustainability Appraisal to consider more widely the balance of sustainability and to help ensure the plan meets the basic conditions.’



APPENDIX B

Stewkley Parish Neighbourhood Plan: Baseline Data

Title	Source	Data	Trends and consequences
Historic Landscape			
Settlement Hierarchy	Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP)	The settlement of Stewkley has been identified as a 'medium village' in the VALP . Medium villages have some provision of key services and facilities, making them moderately sustainable locations for development.	Due to the rural character of the parish, it is important to keep the settlements' character.
Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas	Stewkley Conservation Area	There is one Grade 1 and thirty-three Grade 2 RCHM Designated Listed Buildings in the parish. Stewkley has a Conservation Area, covering High Street North and High Street South. The principles applied in defining the boundary of the conservation area include: the boundary follows features on the ground which are clearly visible, for example walls, hedges and building frontages; the boundary includes the curtilage of important buildings; The conservation area map identifies features important to the character of the area, its building groups, listed buildings, important townscape views and landscape features.	Stewkley Parish has a number of listed buildings and a Conservation Area and therefore needs to ensure that any new development is sensitive to the character of those heritage assets and their settings.
Biodiversity & Environment			
Nature Conservation	Stewkley Wildlife Reserve & Stewkley Conservation Area	<p>Stewkley Wildlife Reserve is situated to the east of the village of Stewkley which is approximately 5 miles west of Leighton Buzzard. The geology is Chalky Till, overlying fine loam over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils - soil association (ASHLEY 572q). The altitude is 140M and the fields have a very slight southerly aspect with shallow ridge and furrow in evidence. There is a Biological Notification Site 82N10 (a green lane called Garners Lane) immediately to the north of one of the fields (Jackdaw Field) and 82N03 (a churchyard) to the west. The fields are surrounded by a mix of arable, pasture, short mown recreation fields and green lanes.</p> <p>Tree Conservation All trees within the conservation area are protected and there are a number of other trees in the village with TPOs.</p> <p>The Airport Monument and Spinney Approx. 2.2 ha of managed woodland, the Spinney is divided into three "petals" that straddle the junction of roads to Dunton and Cublington. The Monument Petal has been fully restored; the westerly Kingsbridge Petal has been largely left to nature; the northern Penton Farm Petal is providing an ideal location for Stewkley Explorer Scouts' countryside activities. A variety of Stewkley groups regularly utilise the wonderful space for activities, adventures and learning.</p>	The Stewkley policies will have to show that there will be no harmful effects on the TPOs, and Open and Green Spaces

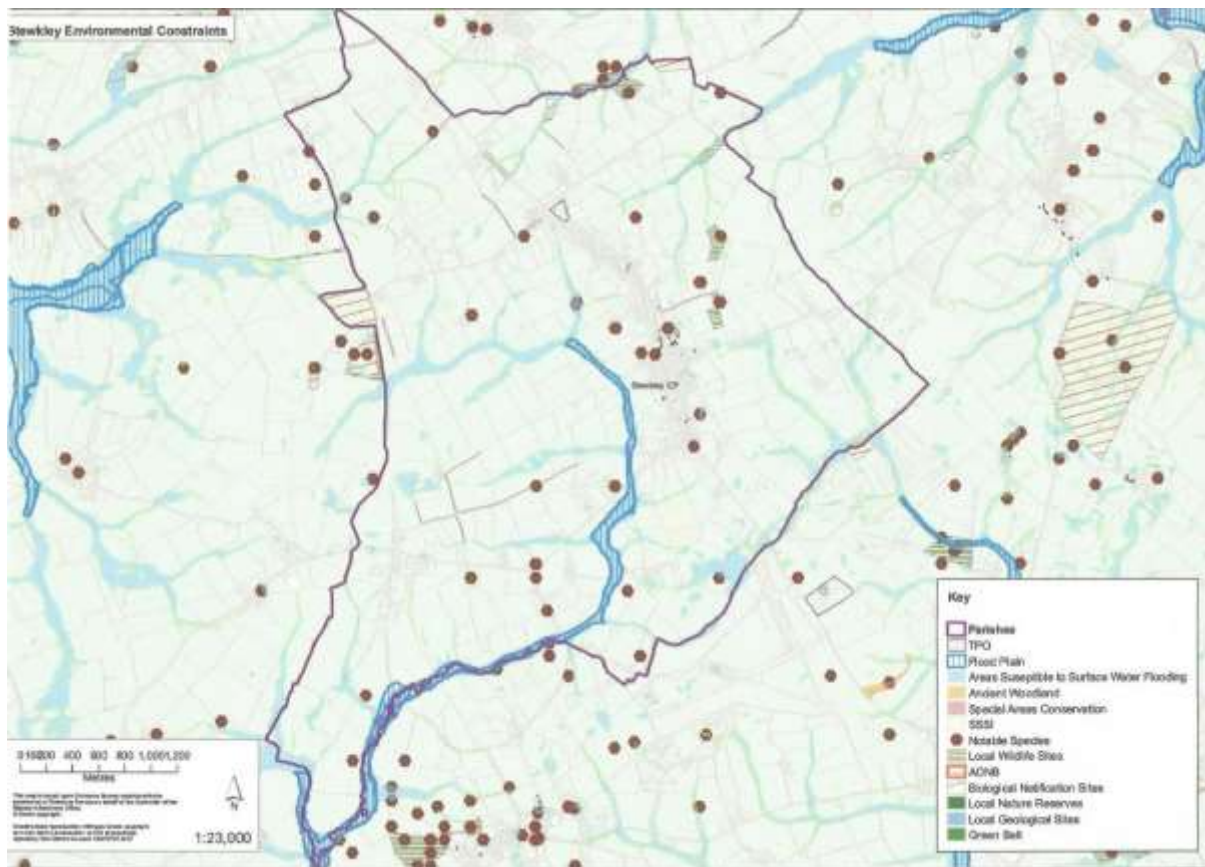


Landscape	Stewkley Fact Pack AVDC and Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment	<p>Landscape character Eroded edge of a clay plateau with a shallow ridge running between Mursley and Stewkley. An incised network of valleys has produced a series of rolling ridges with streams between that drain both towards the Ouzel valley to the east and the River Thame to the west.</p> <p>Settlements are located on the drier ridge tops. Straight roads cut across the rolling landform. There are numerous ponds springs and streams dispersed over the area. Wet valley bottoms, often with self set willow copses are a common feature. The field pattern is a dominant characteristic of this mixed farming landscape bounded by a mixture of clipped and overgrown hedges with groups of mature hedgerow trees</p> <p>Topography The Mursley to Stewkley watershed runs at a level of approximately 150m AOD. Drayton Parslow sits lower at a level of 130m AOD and Soulbury at 120m AOD. The clay plateau landscape has been eroded by the numerous streams often into a distinctive rolling landform of steep 'switchback' ridges such as those experienced when travelling between Stewkley and Mursley and around Soulbury.</p>	The Stewkley policies will have to show they have responded to the local landscape character.
Designated Site of Special Scientific Interest – Warren Farm	Natural England	<p>This site was first described in the early nineteenth century. It is the most northern exposure of the Jurassic Portlandian basin, and is important for palaeographic reconstruction. It is described by Natural England as "vital to our understanding of the late Jurassic environments, stratigraphy and palaeogeography.</p> <p>There is no public access to the site, but it can be viewed from a footpath through Warren Farm.</p>	The Stewkley policies will not have an impact on the site.
Flooding			
Fluvial Flooding	Stewkley Fact Pack AVDC	<p>There are small areas of modelled fluvial flood risk (i.e. Flood Zones 2 and 3) associated with the head of the Hardwick Brook to the west and south-west of Stewkley.</p> <p>There are various small watercourses in the Neighbourhood Plan area designation, although none of these are classified as main rivers. This includes the head of Hardwick Brook to the west of Stewkley and the head of the Claydon Brook in the far north-west of the plan area. Both of these watercourses are currently at good overall status/potential under the Water Framework Directive (WFD).</p>	<p>Stewkley policies must avoid land in Flood Zones 2 and 3</p> <p>An assessment of the potential impacts of the neighbourhood plan on these watercourses under WFD should be included within the SEA appraisal.</p>
Surface Water Flooding	Stewkley Fact Pack AVDC	Areas where high rainfall events are likely to exceed the drainage	New development in areas particularly susceptible to surface water flooding will need to effectively demonstrate they can mitigate the risk of flooding without having adverse effects on surrounding areas.



Permitted Sites			
		<p>There is one industrial installation with an Environmental Permit within the Neighbourhood Plan area and two just outside the plan area. VFuels hold an Environmental Permit at The Ploughing Barns on Soulbury Road. The two permitted sites outside the plan area are: Faccenda Foods Limited at Wing & Stewkley Poultry Farms, Stewkley Road, Wing and Simon Egg Farms at Richmond Hill, Stewkley Lane, Mursley</p> <p>There are two Environmental Permits for waste operations within the plan area - Twomey Waste Management on Dunton Road and at the Bletchley Road Transfer Station.</p>	<p>New development within 250 metres (m) of an existing waste facility, or within 400m of an existing intensive poultry farm, could result in the community at the proposed development being exposed to odour, noise, dust and pest impacts.</p>

Map 1 - Stewkley Environmental Constraints Map





Map 2 - Stewkley Historical Constraints Map

