

see space differently



→ **SUTTON COURTENAY LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL
OF THE CONSERVATION AREA AND ITS CONTEXT**

An Assessment in Support of the Neighbourhood Plan Proposals

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PREFACE

This report was commissioned from Novell Tullett landscape architects by Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group as part of the landscape evidence to support its forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan proposals.

The document comprises the following sections:

Landscape appraisal of the Conservation Area and its setting

Evaluation of the landscape of the local gaps

Key views of the village

Methodologies are set out under each of the individual sections of the report followed by an evaluation of the character and quality of the village and its context.



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LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL OF THE CONSERVATION AREA AND ITS SETTING

Introduction

As part of the evidence already gathered by the Parish, a Character Assessment of the Conservation Area was provided by Dr Kathryn Davies in August 2019. Dr Davies' document divided the wider village environment into a series of four character areas that were described in detail drawing out the historical significance of each area.

This landscape appraisal of the Conservation Area has been structured differently because the historic village form and the Conservation Area's relationship with its context is often germane throughout the settlement. The landscape typologies identified therefore runs throughout the village and transcends the boundaries identified in Dr Davies' report.

Methodology

- In evaluating the character and quality of the landscape context of the village, we have used established urban design analysis methods¹ and referred to the guidelines set out in the GLIA3² published by the Landscape Institute. However, since this report is not a formal Landscape Assessment, we have described the landscape elements with particular regard to their contribution to the character and quality of the Conservation Area and the listed buildings.

Other agricultural land and countryside is described in Section 2 under Local Gaps, which provides the context of the landscape between Sutton Courtenay and the adjoining villages.

Threats to the village character and quality have been identified under each section of the landscape appraisal to underscore the key structural and identifying features that are at risk.

Following desk and baseline assessment of the village, which included detailed mapping of the open spaces and their relative characteristics, a site visit was conducted on 20 March 2020, to provide photographic evidence and to assess the spaces, their relationships and connections as part of the appraisal.

From the baseline study and close observation in the field six main typologies have been identified which are key characteristics and broad

¹ The Councillors Guide to Urban Design, CABE

² GLVIA3 Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 2013

open space types of the village. They are:

1 Village streets

Elements such as streetscape are described in relation to the scale and juxtaposition of the built environment, noting elements that relate to rural village character and the historic environment.

- High Street
- Church Street
- The Green
- Appleford Road
- Brook Street

2 Lanes, routes and paths

The narrow, secondary routes form another layer of permeability and access, providing a network largely outside the vehicular zone. This secondary connection is an important part of the character analysis as it punctuates and subdivides the built environment.

- Old Wallingford Way
- All Saints Lane
- Churchmere Road
- Mill Lane
- Frilsham Street

3 Spatially important gardens and grounds

Within the street-environment there are occasions where, although not part of the street, private open spaces contribute to the openness of the Conservation Area and are therefore important to its setting and that of the heritage assets.

- The Abbey, The Green
- The Manor House and Norman Hall, Church Street
- All Saints' Parish Church
- Lady Place, High Street
- Southfield Farm, High Street
- Buckridges, High Street
- Prior's Court

4 Paddocks and former orchards

Flanking the core of the village, smaller, open land parcels, within the Conservation Area or on its periphery, contribute to the rural nature of the village. Their boundaries are strongly related to historic plots, and the original village structure. These are, therefore, described in terms of their landscape structure and quality.

5 Rivers and watercourses

The wetland landscape context of the village is described in terms of watercourses and their floodplains. These are key to the origins of the historic settlement, but also provide separation to the north and strong boundaries to the west. Scale, openness and topography are key to their character.

- The Thames
- The Mill and Ginge and Willow Brooks

6 Village fringe: former quarries, ponds and disturbed land

The disturbed land to the east of the village is also included, as despite being outside the Conservation Area it provides landscape amenity to the village and is well-connected by pedestrian routes. It is therefore a different but similar context to the floodplains to the north, with their openness and scale, albeit this landscape type is of much lower quality.

- Churchmere Pool
- Millennium Common

The cemetery on Old Wallingford Way is within one of the remnant small fields/paddocks or former orchard spaces which are characteristic to the outer edges of the conservation area. This shows the distinctive pines along the boundary of Lady Place.





Conservation Area
Landscape Typologies



1 Village streets

Description

The central village street network is easily legible and broadly forms a T shape. From the direction of Milton, the High Street runs north as far as a triangular junction, where it fans north east into Church Street, heading towards Appleford, and West into Brook Street, heading towards Drayton.

The street spaces are described from the south, moving north, starting with the High Street, followed by Church Street, the Green and then Appleford Road. Following this, Brook Street and its connection to Drayton Road. The side streets are part of the network of lateral paths and routes and are described under section 2.

High Street

Entering the Conservation Area from the south, the Post Office and a collection of cottages fringe the street quite closely. Even so, the wider grass verges on the eastern side and intermittent pollarded trees on the western side begin to create the rural and well-vegetated character that is prevalent throughout the village. Many of the old cottages and remnant farmhouses (such as Southfield Farm described in section 4) have well treed and abundant gardens, whose planting spills over walls. The rurality of this scene is reinforced by red brick and tiled dwellings of the traditional vernacular.

Moving north the slightly discordant nature of Lady Place is encountered on the eastern side of the road. This was formerly one of the larger village houses, The Grange, is set within a generous garden and was renamed Lady Place in the C20th. After a fire destroyed the main house in 1998, the site was redeveloped with large houses with a high footprint to plot ratio, and over-engineered road access that is at odds with the prevailing nature of the village street. A children's playground, prominent in the front of the property, reinforces the suburban character of this plot (See 3. Spatially important private open space for further description).

On the opposite side of the street the entrance to the Nursery can be seen. This C20th development infilled behind the street frontage has a looser courtyard feel than Lady Place, but its typology is more rigid than the prevailing style and informality of the village. Although long buildings that echo some of the barns in the village are in evidence, the hard edged courtyards and formal placing of trees does not mirror the vernacular.

There are glimpses from the street to the paddocks and small open fields that characterise the back land behind the main street. A wide verge with pollarded limes and set-back houses, gives way to a tighter



The triangle forming the junction between High Street and Church Street



Lime pollards



The Green looking north

density, more traditional street scene. On the west side, the houses are terraced forming a continuous frontage, directly addressing the footway. On the east side, there is more variation with a wide grassy verge, larger plots and houses set back from the road behind stone walls, or hedges. Vegetation is more domestic with smaller trees and well-kept gardens.

The lack of parking spaces is more obvious in High Street with cars parking on the pavement and sometimes on the grass verge which has been badly damaged in places. This has a detrimental effect on the overall attractiveness of the street scene and would ideally be controlled (see threats).

Moving north towards its junction with Brook Street, the triangle has a loose feel with buildings set back with informal parking at the road's edge. A motoring garage sits discreetly next to a listed building.

The road junction with the Church Street is unusual having relatively few buildings to address the street frontage. The grassed triangle in the centre, broad grass verges especially to the east and the distinctive grouping of mature trees associated with the Abbey give this space a generous and rural character.

Church Street South

The southern end of Church St is contained by long walls on either side of the street particularly those associated with The Abbey and the Manor House estates (which are described further in section 3). The street has wide, grassed verges, mature Lime trees within the verge and a simple informal footway, which although metalled, is without kerbs. Because of the overhanging vegetation and proximity to the trees within the adjoining properties, this part of the street has a verdant, green character that looks as if it has changed very little over the centuries.

The Green

Moving north past the Abbey wall, The Green forms a broad and surprisingly long, open space ahead. This is the physical and historic heart of the village, where Church Street opens up into a wide grassy triangle bordered by two public houses, All Saints' Church and listed houses to the east. There is a war memorial prominently positioned in the apex of the triangle outside the church.

Contrasted with the containment of High Street and Church Street, the green is an open public space that still has some formality. The grassy space is subdivided by narrow roads, without kerbs or street markings, which follow key desire lines. Timber posts edge the cut grass to prevent parking, although the large number of these tend to spoil the simplicity of the space. The sense of history and formality is increased by a line of pollarded Horse Chestnuts that create a distinctive edge on the eastern side of the green. A few of the pollards are missing outside the Abbey and outside the George and Dragon Pub, where lime trees have been allowed to grow to full canopy. They now form a distinctive part of the view from the north end of Church Street.

The green is a key, local, open green space because it provides the setting for several important listed buildings, allowing them to be seen and appreciated from a distance.

The residential buildings around the green have generous grass verges, although in places these have been removed to provide parking which is detrimental to the quality of the space. The pub parking has also resulted in the loss of grass verge. For the most part, parking has been removed to a discreet area abutting the north-eastern corner of the Abbey grounds, which reduces its impact on this central space.

Houses fringing the green are set back behind stone walls, hedges, or picket fences, and have good-sized front gardens which are planted and well cared for. The garden areas contribute to the sense of space and openness which is a key characteristic within this core area.

The green is well maintained and in good condition. The only detracting features are the loss of verge outside some houses, and the amount of traffic along Church Street, which is relatively busy for a village.

The green is connected through the depth of the built environment, to the east especially, via a series of lateral paths that link to All Saints Lane and Churchmere Road. These narrow routes are part of the lattice that links to the village backlands.

Church Street North

Moving north from the Green, Church Street has wide grass verges intersected by driveways leading to large houses, well set back from the



The Green looking towards All Saints' Church



The George and Dragon with parking on the side of Church Street



Cottage gardens on the frontages of Church Street west

road, many of which are listed. Most have gated garden boundaries of stone-walls with occasional hedges. It creates a generous street with a pleasing green and rural ambiance.

The verges have little or no protection and occasionally show signs of vehicle damage. The footways meander from front to back of the verges, switching from made paths to muddy grass paths with little coherence. However, the informality of the footways is a key part of the rural nature of the village and a regular highway alignment with uniform paths would be highly detrimental to the character of the village.

At the north end of Church Street, the village meets a bend in the River Thames and the road makes an abrupt 90 degree bend to the east, where it becomes the Appleford Road. Just before the bend, dwellings on the west of the road form an articulated, terrace of conjoined buildings, with gateways and arches accessing the gardens, and other property to the rear. The footpath here runs close to the cottages' frontage and cottage gardens between the path and the road are an important feature of this part of the street. These semi-private/semi-public spaces contribute much to the informality and intimate character of this rural scene.

The east side of the road lacks the delightful pattern of the west side, with a muddy, pitted footpath, eroded by use and cars parked parallel to the road. Here, the verge is encroached on and in poor condition as a result. A netting fence around one of the verges illustrates the issues. The grass finally gives way to the remnants of old pavers and cobbles where doorways are raised up a step due to their proximity to the river.

Running north again and approaching the transition to Appleford Road, there is a long view looking north towards the mature trees of The Wharf and Mill House, both once owned by the Asquith family. The notable



Appleford Road as it bends south west to Church Street



Church Street as it bends east to Appleford Road



Church Street as it bends east to Appleford Road with The Fish on the right

features are the tall mature trees, including pine, horse chestnut and sycamore within the grounds of the listed house and lining the walled path between them to the river.

There is some parking here for village houses and access to the larger houses. The brick and stone wall is a notable feature as it guides the eye, and the vehicles, around the bend. The northern footway quickly runs out, forcing pedestrians to cross to the southern side.

Facing east towards the Appleford Road, there is a change in character as the last of the historic properties gives way to later development. The porticoed front, but closed face of Mill House, hugs the road, opposite the The Fish Restaurant and Bar on the corner of All Saints Lane.

An old large red-brick wall, covered in creeper, is set back from the southern footway leading to The Fish behind a wide grass verge. This has become a permanent parking space for a campervan, indicating once again that inappropriate parking is an issue for the village.

Appleford Road

Moving east, past The Fish, the Conservation Area runs out on the southern side of the road and the properties there are largely post war, ribbon development, albeit much enhanced during the C20th. Opposite on the northern edge of the road there are clear views through the gappy hedge to the floodplain of the River Thames. This low-lying land, laid to pasture, and flooded at the time of the assessment, is within Flood zones 2 and 3. A broad hedgerow subdivides the field and there are willows lining the riverside on the northern side of the field. Well-used footpaths run beside the river through the field towards Sutton bridge.

To the east the boundary of the Conservation Area is formed by Abingdon Road as it runs north towards the Tollgate Road, and Sutton



The Thames floodplain looking west from Abingdon Road, towards the distant village

bridge over the Thames, at the tip of the heritage zone. There is ribbon development, and some later additions, on the eastern side of this road, but the views between the hedgerow trees, across the water meadows indicate a scene of lowland, rural openness that would have remained this way for centuries.

This northern termination of Sutton Courtenay ends with a clear edge to the built development, and open land that forms an important context to the Conservation Area namely the broad water meadows of the Thames floodplain, forming a soft transition to the wider countryside beyond.

Note on the recent appeal decision Notice for Appleford Road North: The land north of Appleford Road comprises a pastoral field. Its boundaries are formed by trees and hedgerows, and associated fencing. It abuts a further agricultural field to the north, beyond which is the River Thames. To the east there is a further field. To the west, there is a line of dwellings along Abingdon Road and opposite the site on Appleford Road there are modern housing developments. The bulk of the village of Sutton Courtenay lies to the south west of the site.

Brook Street

Returning to the triangular junction at the top of High Street, Brook Street runs west towards Drayton Road. The northern edge of the road is formed against a high stone wall that curves along the street backed up by a row of pollarded and unpollarded Horse Chestnut trees, which creates a high green screen above it. The wall continues as far as a bridge over the Ginge with listed buildings dotted north and south.

There are some later backland developments behind the main street here, including the majority of Chapel Lane, which has both C20th development interspersed with older village cottages. Other examples on Brook Street, include properties accessed along driveways that had originally served the principal house facing the street. This consolidates the development but has already reduced the openness of this section of the village. A broader opening in the street is afforded as the Ginge Brook emerges, with its accompanying footpath running away south.

As Brook Street leaves the village, hedgerows on steeply sloping banks become characteristic, with some large houses set back behind them. At the western fringe of the Conservation Area, the edge of the village meets the countryside. A temporary car park on here appears well used and possibly serves the pumping station. There are views to the water meadows to the north of the street especially as the houses thin out on the northern edge of the village. This area all falls within Flood Zone 2.

The south side of Brook Street has a mix of property ages with old workers' cottages and 20th century houses, interspersed with the occasional more recent infill development. The houses are set back in their plots, with well-established trees and well-cared for gardens.

POTENTIAL THREATS

- Erosion of informality of the layout by imposition of standard highway layouts – see for example Lady Place
- “Tidying up of verges” – hardening edges for example and inappropriate planting within simplicity of grassed areas
- Loss of mature trees, there are no replacement trees for the mature limes for example
- Management of pollards – allowing trees to develop full canopy would detrimentally affect the character of the trees in this location and the pollards have a strong local characteristic
- Accretion of signage and clutter within the street relating especially to highway standard features
- Remetalling (tarmacadam to) of informal footpaths
- Informal and unregulated parking and erosion of grass verges and degradation of edges could be further controlled with posts or stone markers as seen elsewhere in the village.
- Greater traffic volume with commensurate traffic noise



New development at Lady Place within standardised layouts with high built footprint to plot size, laid out to a suburban layout which does not respect the prevailing pattern of development in the village Conservation Area



Pressure for parking spaces is clear within the High Street where parking clutters the street and puts pressure on grass verges



Unmade paths without kerbs are part of the character of the village



Pollards are an important part of the village scene and need to be maintained

2 Lanes, routes and paths

Description

A lattice of secondary routes bisects the structure of Sutton Courtenay. These paths and lanes give the village a highly connected structure and provide a layer of pedestrian permeability outside the main vehicular routes. The historic structure of the village includes these routes and many of them are shown on the 1804 enclosure map.

The relatively grid-like-layout of the village, with the High Street running practically north-south, means that lateral connections to the land behind the main street are generally straight and run perpendicular to the village streets. These paths are usually narrow, running between garden boundaries, overhung by vegetation. Many of the lateral paths and pedestrian routes open out into wider paths that run through the open paddock spaces, such as that between Old Wallingford Way and Frilsham Street. Churchmere Road and the extension of Frilsham Street - Hobby Horse Lane are part of the pattern of lateral routes that run out into the open land to the east of the village. The latter small streets may once have been paths that have gradually become hard surfaced. They retain an informality without conventional highway format, and usually below standard width, without kerbs and some are not adopted highway. Most are single track, uneven and their character is clearly that of a local, secondary route.

Other narrow lanes are unnamed, and include the single-track access to Cross Trees Farm. This lane runs between hedgerows on its southern edge and long garden walls with views into large, newly developed plots, with large houses. Despite the gentility of adjoining new houses, the area around the farm itself has an air of dilapidation, many of the buildings are semi-derelict and the hard standings unused. A small business (Brazilstone) is occupying part of the farmyard, but the use appears at odds with the original purpose of the buildings.

To the north of the farm, a large plot forms a garden to a house on its north eastern side. This space is heavily planted with trees of various types. Along the boundary, a grown out hedge of Lawson’s cypress now reveals groups of smaller trees that appear to have orchard character. One of the local footpaths runs along the western edge of the garden. The farm and this garden are part of the pattern of the historic village, the open space immediately west of the farm remains as a small field, and constitutes one of the small paddocks or orchards discussed in section 4 below, its current viability for agriculture, with limited access must be questionable.

The paths and lanes are extremely well used by local people, for dog walking, local recreation and by children playing safely, away from the traffic on the village street.

POTENTIAL THREATS

- Changing or broadening the width of the narrow lateral routes, tidying up or surfacing in conventional materials, introducing other highway vernacular, signs, kerbs - suburbanisation of the routes
- Loss of pedestrian only paths and erosion of the network of non-trafficked routes
- Increased infill behind the main street will put pressure on these small lanes with over use by vehicles effecting a change to their character.



A series of images to show the lanes, footpaths and alleyways that are characteristic of the well permeated built fabric of the village. These pedestrian routes offer great amenity to the villagers and enable access throughout the village on foot.



3 Spatially important gardens and grounds

Description

A number of the historic village houses have gardens that make an important contribution to the character and quality of Sutton Courtenay's Conservation Area, and the setting of its listed buildings. Many of these gardens are key to the pattern of the streetscape, broadening and opening the space within the village streets, and providing opportunities to expose the side elevations of adjoining buildings (whereas traditional street structure seldom affords more than view of the front building façade.) The garden spaces are also important because of their effect of greening and softening the streetscape, and the sequence of gardens playing a spatial role within the street frequently reinforces the irregularity, informality and sense of rurality of the village.

Lady Place

On the east side, at about the mid-point along the High Street, there is a substantial development plot, that once formed the grounds to Lady Place. The old house was burned down and has subsequently been developed with a new, rather grandiose grouping of large houses in relatively small plots. The character of the old grounds is still tangible and the once extensive gardens remain intelligible because of the numerous notable trees, including distinctive stands of mature pine trees that date from the historic landscape. Other significant trees include a black pine, *Ginkgos*, horse chestnuts, mature limes and a large holm oak. The trees identify the location of the old garden and can be picked out not only in views along the High Street, but also from views within the land to the rear, where Lady Place backs on to a relatively new cemetery.

The Abbey (Grade I)

The history of this medieval courtyard house is covered in the Village Character Assessment and its status is made clear by the old stone pillars and gates which directly face the green. The grounds occupy an unusually large plot within the centre of the village, stretching all the way from The Green to the junction with the High Street, to the south. The estate now hosts spiritual retreats and is in private ownership.

Once inside the gates, an unmade drive leads along an avenue of limes towards the buildings that are hidden from the street itself. The trees are one of the defining features of the estate as they are mature specimens, very tall and can be seen from many viewpoints around the village, especially from High Street. They play a major part in making the village appear green and rural in nature.

The appearance of two large new contemporary homes along the southern boundary of the Abbey appears to show that parts of the Abbey land have been sold off, although it is not clear how recently. Further subdivision of this large estate would erode its character and potentially threaten the viability of tree root zones if new buildings were to be permitted. Protecting the trees' viability and longevity is an important part of ensuring the character of the village is retained.

The majority of the estate is enclosed by stone walls, sometimes with interesting features such as arched doors, but areas of missing wall, replaced by hedges and timber fences shows an element of neglect which is detrimental to the overall character.

Manor House (Grade II*) and Norman Hall (Grade I)

The contribution of these two historic listed properties to the village is described in the Character Assessment. Both are set back on the west side of Church Street with stone-walls and generous grass verges, and river frontages to the rear of their gardens, which lie at the edge of the Oxford Green Belt. Both plots are large as befits their former high status, and are notable for large areas of cut grass, with mature trees, including plane and horse chestnut.

In addition, the garden of the Manor House has a registered designation, it was designed in the 1920s and updated by Brenda Colvin in 1960. The grounds are well cared for and the walls are in good condition. The gardens make an important contribution to the Conservation Area and the village green, enhancing the sense of openness within the broader space with the planted spaces and trees enclosed by the garden wall, but clearly visible in the wider context.

The north-east section of the Manor House grounds has previously been subdivided, with two new houses constructed and a listed barn converted. In 2016, the plot was further reduced, and design changes requested to extant planning consent for a third house and boathouse on a vacant plot which has now been completed. The house uses the existing access and faces the river, rather than the village. Although still set in generous gardens, with good tree cover, the size of the historic plot has been substantially diminished.

All Saints' Parish Church

All Saints' Church addresses Church Street and is slightly set back from the northern end of The Green. The churchyard lies to the south and east, stretching back into the plot as far as All Saints Lane. It is surrounded by stone and brick walls, but it is notable for the many ancient yew trees which line both the northern and southern paths to the church.

A new community building is being constructed on the north side of the church, shielded from view by the yews, indicating that the church



The Norman Hall garden contributes to the sense of space, an important characteristic of the Conservation Area and to the setting of the listed buildings



All Saints' churchyard provides another open space to All Saints Lane



Southfield Farm's orientation to the street reveals the long elevation of the building, and its garden provides a widened space to the street

remains well used by the community. There are more yews within the grounds making them a romantic and striking feature of the churchyard, which is home to the graves of Eric Arthur Blair, better known as the writer George Orwell who wanted to be buried in a 'classic English country village' and former Prime Minister Harold Asquith.

There is a grass path through the churchyard that links to All Saints Lane, which kinks around the back of the churchyard, making the churchyard part of the network of small lanes and passages that characterise the village.

No 66 High Street, Southfield Farm

This is a grade II listed farmhouse, dating from 15th to 17th century with a jettied bay to its street end. It has a brick wall with stone coping to the south and a stone wall with coping to north. This building presents its gable end to the street, with a long elevation running back into the plot, a different building form to neighbouring houses, and the prevailing style of Sutton Courtenay. The effect of this is to provide a garden that runs parallel to the street and a space that addresses and opens to the street. The orientation of the garden is also key to the setting of the listed building as it exposes the long elevation running west into the plot.

Other outbuildings and converted barns to the rear of the main house, also contribute to the enclosure of the garden, but on its inner not its street edge. The effect of the layout of Southfield Farm's garden is to broaden the view into a private space, with trees and shrubs contributing a softening of the garden walls and to the street scene. One characteristic Ash tree is growing between the access to the south of the farmhouse, which leads to the now converted barns and outbuildings at the rear of the site.

Buckridges, High Street

There is a notably large plot at Buckridges, a Grade II* listed building to the east of High Street. It has been identified in the Vale of White Horse Housing Allocation report as a potential development site but a previous application for three houses within the site has been overturned due to poor access. This potentially remains a sensitive green space within the Conservation Area.

Prior's Court

The original house on this site may have been replaced, but the grounds remain as a substantial open space north of Cross Trees Farm. The patchwork of farm buildings, paddocks and orchards that remain close to or immediately behind the village core, are testament to the relationship of the village with the wider landscape.

POTENTIAL THREATS

- Development of larger garden spaces would cause loss of openness and erosion of the street character and quality, depleting the variety and form of vegetation and eroding the sense of rurality of the village
- Loss and degradation of the quality of the setting to the listed buildings
- Loss of quality and character of the Conservation Area



Trees and open garden of Lady Place are visible from both sides of the village



The Abbey garden trees are important local features



Thames side gardens

4 Paddocks and former orchards

Description

Historically, many of the houses and farms along the west side of High Street had long plots stretching as far as the Ginge Brook, often described as allotments. The 1872 map, shown in the Character Assessment, shows that many of the plots were planted as orchards.

These small, open landscape units are closely associated with the plot dimensions of the adjoining houses that front the street, and the nature of this extended curtilage forms a key part of the setting of the Conservation Area. While the quality of some of the field boundaries has been eroded, and former hedgerows have been replaced by post and wire fences - especially within the paddock area mentioned below - these enclosures reiterate the plot boundaries of the village core structure.

Latterly, many of these open spaces have been infilled, and developed for housing except for a sizeable area north of Mill Lane that is retained in use as pony paddocks. Typically open grassy spaces, there are also remnants of these former orchards behind Lady Place, south of Old Wallingford Way, where small scrubby fields form part of the amenity of local paths, cemeteries, recreation and sports fields

The setting of the Conservation Area is much enhanced by these open and semi-domestic fields, as they afford a buffer to the wider countryside and their scale is a key part of the intimate village environment. Views from these spaces offer glimpses into private gardens and reveal the rear elevations of the listed and other village buildings. The open space mosaic is linked by the series of lanes and paths, as well as the Ginge Brook on the western village boundary, which together form a strong part of the complex pattern of the settlement.

POTENTIAL THREATS

- Infill and conversion or redevelopment of barns and former agricultural buildings, forming part of original farmyards, means that these open spaces may be eroded by access and parking
- Loss of the historic relationship with the immediate open space around the village
- Loss of the openness of the Conservation Area
- Detrimental effect on the setting of the listed buildings
- Increase of traffic effect on the narrow streets of the village
- Pressure for increased space for parking which can erode village greens and local lanes



Small fields north of Frilsham Street used for local recreation



Pony paddocks inside the Ginge Brook, part of the setting of the Conservation Area



Cemetery off Old Wallingford Way part of the setting of the Conservation Area

5 Rivers and watercourses

Description

Sutton Courtenay is a village fringed by wetland, flood plains and the substantial watery landscape of the Thames and its tributaries. It is an ancient village, whose early settlers were attracted by the fertility of the floodplain, with evidence of settlement here since the Neolithic period onwards, as described by Kathryn Davies in her assessment of the village development. The richness of the agricultural land and its proximity to the Thames were important in the prosperity of the village and a wharf was shown on the Thames with a history of paper making in the C17th. Mills and maltings are also evident on the historic maps of Sutton Courtenay, all evidence that the use of water was important in powering local processes and industries that supported the livelihoods of the villagers.

The use of water power has largely been superseded by more powerful and larger scale industry, such as the omnipresent power station. This structure formed a substantial landmark in much of the local area. This change will be felt, especially to the southern village margins, where redevelopment of the power station storage and coal yards is now coming forward. This is mentioned further in the second section of the report on local gaps.

The river landscape is now largely untouched by industry, but is marked by successive gravel extraction, which has potentially changed the structure of the floodplains and watertable in the local area. The riverine landscape, with its fragile and diverse habitats, evolves with seasonal floods and forms a dynamic part of the village setting and character. The enclosure formed by wooded islands within the Thames, as well as the river itself, provide a strong character to the northern fringes of the village. Here sluices, lock structures, bridges and the skeins of the braided river and altered river course, form the boundary to the settlement and recognition of the quality of this environment is evidenced by the boundary of the Conservation Area extending out to encompass large swathes of the wetland landscape.

The river is close-coupled to the northern village fringe with many listed buildings having gardens that run down to its southern bank. Walks along the towpath cross bridges over the sluice gates and jump north over the Sutton Pools. Though this landscape may previously have been extracted for gravel, the extent of restoration and revegetation now shows more biodiversity than degradation.

Flooding here may be a frequent and present peril to the village properties, but the riverine landscape is a strong characteristic and flooded land, wetland and watercourses on the village periphery are key to its identity. Protection from further encroachment by development



The Ginge - site of former ford, with adjoining meadow and heavily vegetated east side which forms a strong boundary to the Conservation Area setting.



The Ginge is a local amenity, well used by the local community for recreation



Thames riverside gardens (above and below) with boat houses and lawns. This edge is an important part of the character of the Conservation Area



The Thames in flood north of the village edge, with sluices open to expand channel capacity to the north

on these ecologically and scenically valuable landscapes, would allow space for the river to move within its floodplain.

The Mill and Ginge Brooks have a smaller, softer character than the wide, open landscape of the Thames. The Ginge in particular is local watercourse that forms a strong boundary along the western village fringe. The brook has a well-vegetated eastern boundary, in particular, which largely screens and shelters the Conservation Area from the wider agricultural land beyond. The watercourse exhibits typical, lowland stream characteristics with broader shallows and more deeply incised banks as the water cuts a course through the landscape. The tangible proximity of the village is shown by frequent community use of the meadows adjoining the Brook, with a footpath network that hugs the streamside linked by stiles over ditches along field boundaries. A former ford is still visible within the field accessed from Mill Lane, and local children’s play includes a rope swing over the brook here. These features show how much the Ginge is part of the context, use and character of the village and it forms a key part of the setting of the Conservation Area.

POTENTIAL THREATS

- Development of the small paddocks and fields adjoining the watercourse to the east will increase the likelihood of flooding by increasing surface water run off
- Erosion of the vegetation adjoining the banks will prejudice the wild-life corridor and affect the continuity of the screen along the brook that forms part of the setting to the Conservation Area



Churchmere Pool, with views towards Didcot power station

6 Eastern village fringe:

Former quarries, ponds and disturbed land

Description

This area falls outside the Conservation Area but some of the waterbodies immediately abut its boundary on the eastern side. Routes leading from the village, along Churchmere Road give access to local people into the heart of this former quarry land.

This is open, though disturbed land (see note) pitted by quarry extraction and partially filled. There are lakes and water bodies and revegetated zones that are characterised by ruderal and scrub vegetation. Routes through this zone are part of the village network of paths. In itself, this is a low quality landscape. Nevertheless, this land forms part of the context to the Conservation Area and creates a transition in scale between the landscape compartments of the village to the wider countryside beyond.

Bird life and biodiversity is thriving within the waterbodies that are the former quarry pools. Some of these are now designated as fishing lakes and the value to birdlife is clear. Many people walk through this landscape with their dogs on a daily basis and this land is strongly integrated with the network of paths through the village.

The restoration of the parcel of land immediately beyond Churchmere Pool was designed to afford additional amenity to the village and is called Millennium Common. This also forms part of the recreational resource of the village, although it is poorly linked to the village on its northern edge, where a new development on Appleford Road is bounded by a chain link fence and deep drainage ditch. The barrier is an unusual feature within a settlement characterised by a multiplicity of lanes and local connections.



Millennium Common - even the disturbed landscape of the quarried land is part of the amenity and setting of the village

NOTE:

The disturbed land to the east of Sutton Courtenay is required to be restored and returned to agricultural use in accordance with the approved documents, which form part of planning application MW.0039/15, 3 August 2015. The planning conditions require that land filling will cease by 2030. Condition 31 also states “the first restoration operation as described in condition 30 (capping) of the whole site shall take place by 30 September 2031 and the second restoration operation, as described in condition 30 (topsoiling) of the whole site shall take place by 30 September 2036” and condition 28 states “the planting of restored areas shall be carried out in the first planting season following restoration of any part of the site to be planted”.



Churchmere Pool, local amenity open space closely linked to the village

POTENTIAL THREATS

- Development of brownfield land would result in loss of openness and erosion of the context of the Conservation Area. This land is part of that covered by planning ref: MW.0039/115 of 3-08-15, which is required to be restored to agricultural use by 2031.
- Loss of wildlife and wetland habitat
- Potential for loss of village footpath network

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Potential threats to each of the landscape typologies are identified under the relevant sections. The recommendations for retention of the character and value of each of the identified landscape types is to observe how the character of each zone will change if the threats identified are allowed to persist and proliferate. One of the most pervasive and insidious changes to village character is the standardisation of highway and pedestrian spaces. Creeping suburbanisation includes introduction of new, standard highway-style lighting, introduction of kerbs and resurfacing or metalling of pedestrian paths that had formally been flexible, gravelly surfaces. The accretion of signs also tends to suburbanise and is often an unnecessary addition to village environments.

Maintaining the current balance of planting to hard or built environment is also important. Sutton Courtenay has a wealth of mature trees and vegetation, some “borrowed” within the street space from adjoining gardens and grounds, but much of it captured in the street itself. Planning long term for the replacement of mature trees to ensure that the structure and character of spaces endures is important. A strategy for replanting existing mature pollards and trees on the Green should be put in place so that the loss of the existing trees will not be detrimental as young trees come to fruition.

And finally, planning for new development within the village, that is appropriate to the scale of the spaces, contextually accurate and sympathetic to the plot ratio of adjoining settlement is very important. Development in the longer term will come, and a place that is entirely static would lack the dynamic and evolving nature of the current village scene, with buildings that come from various periods and are built of a variety of materials. Careful reference to urban design guidance locally and within the neighbourhood plan will help in assessing any planning applications that come forward within the village. This will help to guide and structure new development. Referring to this document and identifying the prevailing and adjoining site characters will be key to getting new development to fit and be absorbed into the patina of the village.



2
ASSESSMENT OF THE LOCAL GAPS

INTRODUCTION

As part of our assessment of the village of Sutton Courtenay’s context, the following section describes the local gaps that help to provide the wider landscape setting to the village, and prevent coalescence with neighbouring settlements.

The village in Oxfordshire is sensitively located between expanding Didcot Garden Town, and Milton Park business and technology area, to the south, and the growing town of Abingdon to the north. With the Didcot area tasked with absorbing 15,000 new homes, the risk of Sutton Courtenay permanently coalescing with other communities and losing its identity is real. Such an outcome goes against planning legislation.

This study provides evidence to support SC1: Local Gaps and Preventing Coalescence of the emerging Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Plan. It takes the form of:

- A methodology for examining Local Gaps
- An examination of relevant policy to support Local Gaps
- An analysis of particular Gaps relevant to Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Plan, namely those with neighbouring Milton and Drayton
- A discussion of key findings and future management recommendations.

It stands alongside the following commissioned and completed documents, provided by others, which will be referenced, and it is not intended to duplicate information.

- Village Character Assessment – the document gives a character analysis of the built environment. It describes the historic development of the settlement and the current pattern of building styles within 4 character areas
- Green Space Assessment – this document assesses open spaces within the Neighbourhood Plan area based on location, type, status, quality, condition and value to the community. It sets out the shortfall in open space within the area. It does not deal with all the spaces within the Conservation Area.
- Sutton Courtenay Landscape Study – this is a broad-brush review of the landscape character around the wider village.

A site visit was undertaken on March 20, 2020 in early spring, before vegetation was in full leaf. The day was slightly overcast and dry.

POLICY

Local Gaps

The many terms used to refer to these land gaps, such as ‘green gap’, ‘local gap’, ‘green buffer’, ‘strategic gap’ or ‘meaningful gap’ refer to land between settlements that lie close together and where new development could result in the physical or visual coalescence of settlements undermining their separate identity. This is particularly important where villages are subject to intense development pressures.

Development beyond the existing edge of a settlement, or within the local gap, can impact on the real and perceived separation between distinct settlements. The effect can be cumulative when taking into account recent planning permissions and new applications for development.

Other authorities

While there is much policy on protection of the Green Belt around towns and cities, many villages fall outside this definition, relying on more general countryside policy. We have reviewed how this local gap policy is treated in a number of local authorities:

North Somerset District Council (Policy CS19, 2016) acknowledged that, without the added protection of strategic gaps, existing countryside policies *‘are unlikely to be sufficient to protect against development which would harm the separate identity, character and/or landscape setting of settlements or distinct parts of settlements.’*

Local Gap policy has therefore evolved to protect rural villages that lie close to larger towns, both of which have targets for expansion, sometimes eroding the green spaces between them.

There does not appear to be one accepted methodology for assessing Local Gaps, so an examination of recent policy written by several other authorities is helpful.

South Hampshire Strategy 2012 has the following definition of a gap.

- The designation is needed to retain the open nature and/or sense of separation between settlements
- The land to be included in the gap performs an important role in defining the settlement character of the area and separating settlements at risk of coalescence.

Basingstoke and Dean Borough Council in a Strategic Gaps Topic Paper, October 2014, said:

- The land to be included within the gap is open and provides a sense of separation between settlements
- The land to be included within the gap performs an important role in defining the settlement character of the area and separating settlements at risk of coalescence in particular from land

allocations in the Local Plan.

- In defining the extent of a gap, no more land than is necessary to prevent the coalescence of settlements should be included, having regard to maintaining their physical and visual separation.

Gaps Criteria	Explanation/Comment
The land is predominantly open or undeveloped and provides a sense of separation between settlements	Gaps should be <i>predominantly</i> open or undeveloped, but they need not be <i>entirely</i> open or undeveloped. For example, forms of development associated with the countryside (eg. farmhouses, agricultural buildings, and certain types of infrastructure) may be able to exist within a Gap without undermining its function. Previously developed land can also exist within a Gap. Given the general encouragement to redevelop brownfield land, a Gap designation that washes over such land means that coalescence issues must be considered as part of any development proposal. Gaps should only be designated on land <i>between settlements</i> . They should not cover areas of countryside that do not separate settlements. Nor should they cover existing built-up areas.
The land performs an important role in maintaining the separate identity of settlements at risk of coalescence.	A Gaps policy focuses only on areas where there is a genuine need for the policy i.e. where settlements are close together and where there is a genuine risk that development would threaten physical or visual coalescence. They should not cover large areas of countryside where some development could clearly take place without harm to the separate identity of settlements.

When it comes to defining the precise extent of the Gaps, either through a future Local Plan or in a Neighbourhood Plan, the following criterion should be taken into account:

Gaps criteria	Explanation/comment
In defining the precise extent of a Gap, no more land than is necessary to prevent the coalescence of settlements will be included, having regard to maintaining their physical and visual separation.	It is important that Gaps are not drawn larger than necessary for the purpose they are intended. To do otherwise could be construed as failing to positively prepare a Local Plan

In conclusion, a local gap is primarily a landscape function, related to physical and visual separation, and settlement identity, rather than about landscape quality or protection of landscape character. However, gaps also provide green infrastructure and wildlife benefits close to settlements. Many contain public rights of way which are highly valued by residents and can be heavily used.

The important questions therefore in assessing a local gap are the following:

Is the gap already protected by Green Belt?
Is it a gap between two nearby settlements?
Is the land predominantly open or undeveloped?
Does it play a part in defining one or both settlements?
Is it a larger expanse of land than is needed to allow for clear separation between settlements?

METHODOLOGY

In order to answer these questions in detail, a desktop study was undertaken to map the gaps, along with relevant planning and landscape designations and any other information relevant to how these gaps are controlled, perceived and used. Land allocations and planning permissions and applications were also checked to understand the sensitivity of the gap to development. This information has been presented for each relevant land parcel in the form of an introductory table.

This was followed by a site survey to gather additional analytical information about the gaps, such as descriptions of topography, landscape features, vegetation, built features, land function and scale.

Account was also taken, where relevant, of sense of place, perception of the separate identity of settlements, sense of leaving or arriving at a settlement and the landscape setting.

Relevant factors included the actual and perceived proximity of the settlements and views, particularly from land that is publicly accessible, and whether boundaries formed identifiable features.

This information was used to evaluate the sensitivity, or importance of the gap to the identity and individuality of the settlement.

POLICY CONTEXT

Local Plans must be consistent with national policy. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does not refer to preventing coalescence, except within the context of the Green Belt, and therefore does not specifically support or oppose the principle of gaps. It makes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan, including neighbourhood plans. The following paragraphs from the NPPF have been selected as pertinent to the discussion for Sutton Courtenay.

NPPF

5 Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

72. Significant extensions to village and towns need to be well-located and designed and supported by necessary infrastructure and facilities. It should be considered whether it is appropriate to establish Green Belt around or adjoining new developments of significant size.

8 Promoting healthy and safe communities

97 Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields should not be built on unless it is surplus to requirements or could be replaced by better facilities.

100 Identifying land as Local Green Space allows communities to identify

and protect areas of particular importance to them. It must be close by, demonstrably special to the community and local in character.

11 Making effective use of land says that land should be used effectively in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Development strategies should prioritise brownfield land (117).

It also recognises that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production (118b).

15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

171 – plans should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, recognising the character and beauty of the countryside, minimising impacts on biodiversity and protecting new and existing developments from unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution and land instability.

Vale of White Horse Local Plan

The Local Plan is split into two sections. Part 1 was adopted in December 2016 and identifies a number of strategic policies that help to maintain and achieve a high-quality environment across the district. Part 2 was adopted in October 2019.

The Spatial Strategy says it will:

Promote thriving villages and rural communities whilst safeguarding the countryside and village character.

Core Policy 1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy - identifies Sutton Courtenay as a larger village.

Core Policy 4a: Meeting Our Housing Needs

Sutton Courtenay is within the sub-area strategy of South East Vale and is identified as a larger village within a network of attractive rural villages. A site called East of Sutton Courtenay has been identified for the allocation of 220 homes. Policy 4.1 says new development will maintain vitality and the sustainability of local services.

The policy states that *'development outside of the existing built area of these settlements will be permitted where it is allocated by the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 or has been allocated within an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan or future parts of the Local Plan 2031. The development must be adjacent, or well related, to the existing built area*

of the settlement or meet exceptional circumstances set out in the other policies of the Development Plan and delivery necessary supporting infrastructure.’

Open Countryside – development in open countryside will not be appropriate unless specifically supported by other relevant policies as set out in the Development Plan or national policy.

Core Policy 6: Spatial Strategy for Abingdon on Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area

Development in the Abingdon on Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in Core Policy 2.

Core Policy 37: Design and Local Distinctiveness

Core Policy 39: The Historic Environment

Core Policy 42: Flood Risk

Core Policy 43: Natural Resources

Core Policy 44: Landscape

Core Policy 45: Green Infrastructure

Core Policy 46: Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity

This policy seeks to protect, and where possible enhance, key features that contribute to the nature and quality of the district’s landscape. It requires proposals to demonstrate how they have responded to these identified aspects of landscape character.

Local Plan Part 2

Protecting the Environment and Responding to Climate Change

Development Policy 23: Impact of Development on Amenity

Development Policy 29: Settlement Character and Gaps – states that development proposals will need to demonstrate that the settlement’s character is retained, and physical and visual separation is maintained between settlements.

Development proposals will only be permitted provided that:

- I. The physical and visual separation between two separate settlements is not diminished
- II. Cumulatively, with other existing or proposed development, it does not compromise the physical and visual separation between settlements and
- III. it does not lead to a loss of environmental or historical assets that individually or collectively contribute towards their local identity.

Development Policy 30: Watercourses—seeks to ensure that watercourses are accommodated appropriately within new development

Development Policy 31: Protection of Public Rights of Way, National Trails and Open Access Areas

Development Policy 36: Heritage Assets sets out the approach to conserve and enhance heritage assets

Development Policy 39: Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments – says development will be permitted where it can be shown that it would not be detrimental to the site or setting of Scheduled Monuments, nationally important archaeological remains and other non-designated archaeological sites.

Design (3.137) states that new development should respect the local character and distinctiveness of villages in the Vale. The planning authority also has an adopted Design Guide SPD which sets out the expected standards.

The **Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan**, adopted by Vale of White Horse District Council and South Oxfordshire District Council in October 2017, established the principle of Green Gaps (or buffers) to prevent Didcot Garden Town coalescing with neighbouring villages, and villages with each other.

DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES

It is clear from the Local Plan that Sutton Courtenay is defined as a larger village and as such has potential to absorb another 200 homes. The village lies just south of the Oxford Green Belt which ends at the north bank of the River Thames and therefore has no protection from being within it.

However, planning policy says that development should not cause villages to merge or lose their own identity.

Sutton Courtenay is establishing its own Neighbourhood Plan, under Localism legislation, in order to define, record and strengthen its policy on growth in a way that won’t undermine character, environment and quality of life. During the preliminary collection of evidence, it has become clear that there are local gaps which are being eroded, and partially vulnerable to development.

Strategic House Land Availability Assessment

The following map shows the sites promoted for housing in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan. A SHLAA is a technical exercise determining the quantity and suitability of land potentially available for housing development, rather than an indication of potential permission to develop. However, the very fact that they have been identified on a map as theoretically developable

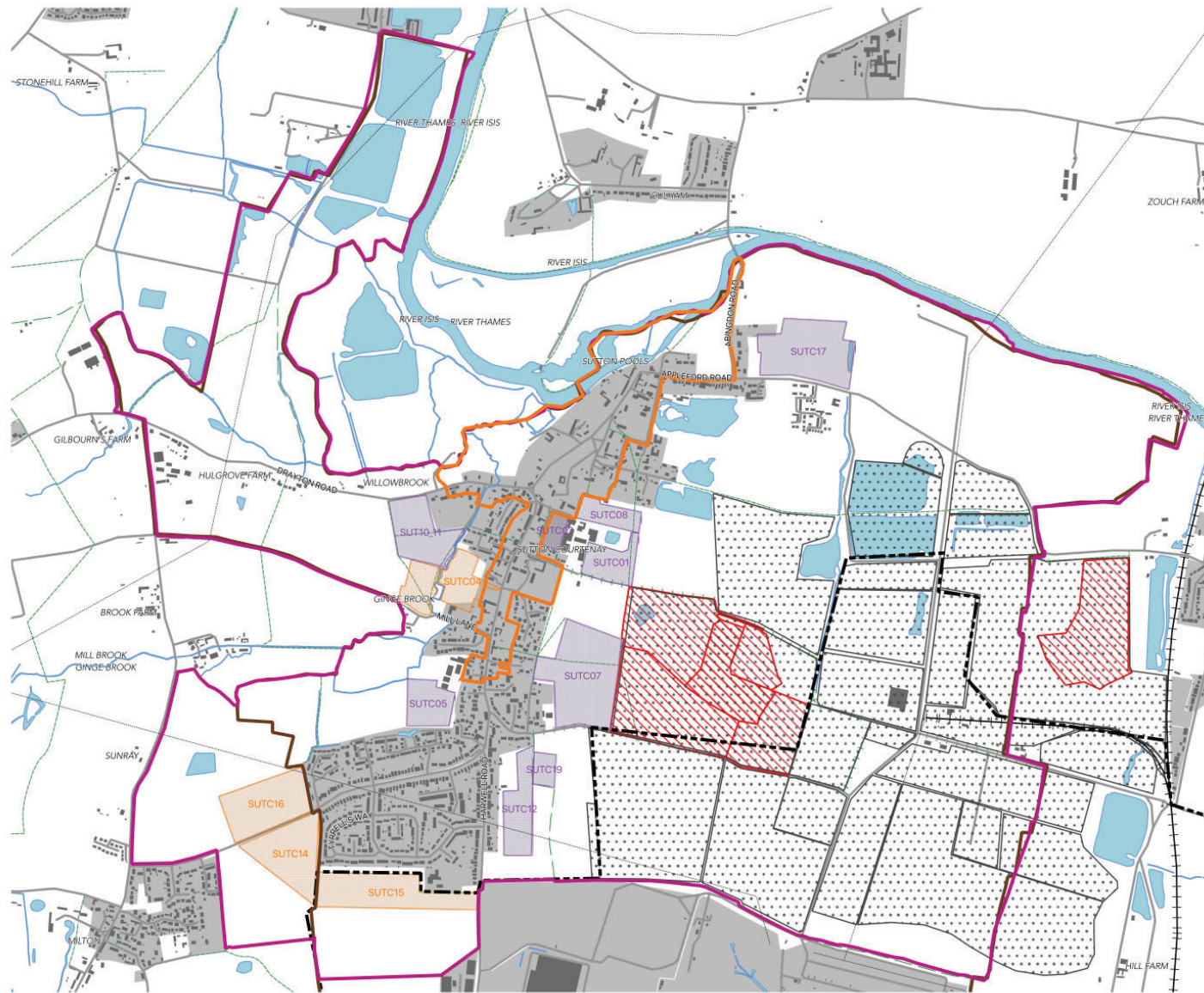
increases their vulnerability to be tested with planning applications.

The sites that are of interest for this study are:

SITE	SUITABILITY FOR DEVELOPMENT AS NOTED IN THE SHLAA
SUTC01/02 and 08: Land adjoining Gorse Tree Farm assessed under the SC Green Space study	Suitable in principle
SUTC07: land south of Old Wallingford Way described within Green Space study	Suitable in principle
SUTC10/11: Land at end of Ginge Brook and land south of Drayton Road (4.34ha) Grade 2 agricultural land	Suitable in principle
SUTC12 and 19: Land east of Harwell Road described with LG5	Suitable in principle
SUTC14: Land south of Sutton Road (5.54ha)Not in Green Belt, Archaeological constraints, Grade 2 agricultural land	Unsuitable - buffer
SUTC15: Land south of Sutton Courtenay CoE primary school (7.59ha) Ancient monument, not in Green Belt	Unsuitable – heavily constrained
SUTC16: Land north of Sutton Road Not in Green Belt, archaeological constraints, Grade 2 agricultural land	Unsuitable – buffer

While having no planning force, the SHLAA definitions show that the gap between Sutton Courtenay and Drayton appears vulnerable to development. The gaps between Sutton Courtenay and Milton have partial protection, but the gap has been carved up in an arbitrary way, ostensibly by using a line of telegraph poles marked on a map as a potential boundary.

The following assessment will use desktop and site information to assess the nature of the land gaps and establish if they are necessary and compliant.



Planning designations

- Conservation Area
 - NDP Area
 - Parish Boundary
 - Electricity Lines
- PLANNING**
- Didcot Garden Town Masterplan area
 - SHLAA
 - SHLAA unsuitable
 - Gravel Extraction and Landfill
 - Energy Crop Scheme
 - Surface Water
- ACCESS**
- Railway
 - Road

ASSESSMENT

Local Gap 1: Between Sutton Courtenay and Drayton

LG1	Gap between Sutton Courtenay and Drayton
Parish	Sutton Courtenay
Landscape Character	Lowland Village Farmlands
Landscape Type	Village terrace farmlands (landscape study)
Cultural character	Open field system or older enclosure
Landscape Function	Cultivated agricultural land (Grade 2)
Landscape Designations	None
Infrastructure	Large electricity pylon traverses field
Historical assets	There is a site of a Roman villa in the north east corner of a field containing Peewit Farm.
Planning Designations	None
Flood Zone	Partially in flood zones 2 and 3
Planning history	SHLAA SUTC 10/11 The site is allocated as suitable in principle
Landscape Study Conclusion (by Stephen Warnock)	Sensitivity to development – overall this area is big enough and functions coherently enough to retain a distinctive rural character within a partially urbanised setting. Although the natural character of the landscape is rather weak, the cultural pattern is sufficiently coherent and survives well enough to be moderately sensitive to change. Visual sensitivity is also moderately strong due to the relatively open nature of the landscape. New development should thus be resisted within this area.

On the western edge of Sutton Courtenay, Brook Street leaves the Conservation Area and becomes a country lane called Drayton Road which leads west towards the neighbouring village of that name.

The north side of the road is floodplain, with a pumping and electricity sub-station, while the south side is higher ground and has three houses beyond the edge of the Conservation Area, set back in long plots.

To the west of the buildings are two large agricultural fields divided by Peep O’Day Lane, a public footpath running north south defined by a wire fence. This is Grade 2 agricultural land in arable use. It is undeveloped, flat and open, with wide skies nor strong features apart from the footpath and some distant electricity pylons. (Views 1 and 2)

The larger land parcel is bounded by hedges interspersed with trees, with no internal field boundaries of any note, adding to the sense of openness. The southern boundary also marks the route of Drayton East Way footpath, which connects to Mill Lane in Sutton Courtenay.

To the west, a cluster of roofs is discernible below the distinctive pine tree that belongs to Peewit Farm. The farm lies within Sutton Courtenay parish, although the land to the south is part of Drayton parish.

Another small field boundary can be seen in front of Peewit Farm behind which is the site of a Roman villa. New housing has been built on the west side of Peewit Farm infilling between once dispersed rural buildings.



View 1 (Local Gaps plan) Photograph from the field boundary of the last house in Sutton Courtenay looking towards Drayton. The hedgerow runs close to the footpath mentioned above.



View 2 (Local Gaps plan) Photograph from footpath south of Drayton Road looking south towards Sutton Courtenay. Last house of Sutton Courtenay clearly visible to left of photograph with settlement on Drayton Road concealed by vegetation to right of photograph.

Looking east towards Sutton Courtenay, the white render of the last village house is visible, and a glimpse of one of the chimneys of Didcot B power station, and to the distant south part of the new red brick of the village extension. However none of the buildings within the Conservation Area can be seen mainly due to the dense vegetation along the Ginge Brook, which creates a strong visual barrier to the village. The tops of some of the Abbey and Church Street trees are just perceptible.

In the SHLAA, these fields are identified at SUTC 10/11 and suitable in principle for development.

In response to the key questions, the Drayton Gap has no Green Belt protection. It is a distinctive gap between settlements, although in this case, due to the irregular parish boundaries, both sides of the gap are within the same parish. The land is open, undeveloped and provides a clear rural context to Sutton Courtenay. The contrast with Peewit Farm is less defined. New homes within its curtilage and further west, are eroding the buffer towards Drayton, creating piecemeal ribbon development.

The gap, is a reasonable size at 400m and it therefore cannot be argued that it is larger than necessary. However it does read visually as one compartment due to the openness within the established boundaries.

Sensitivity: Value of Local Gap: High

Management

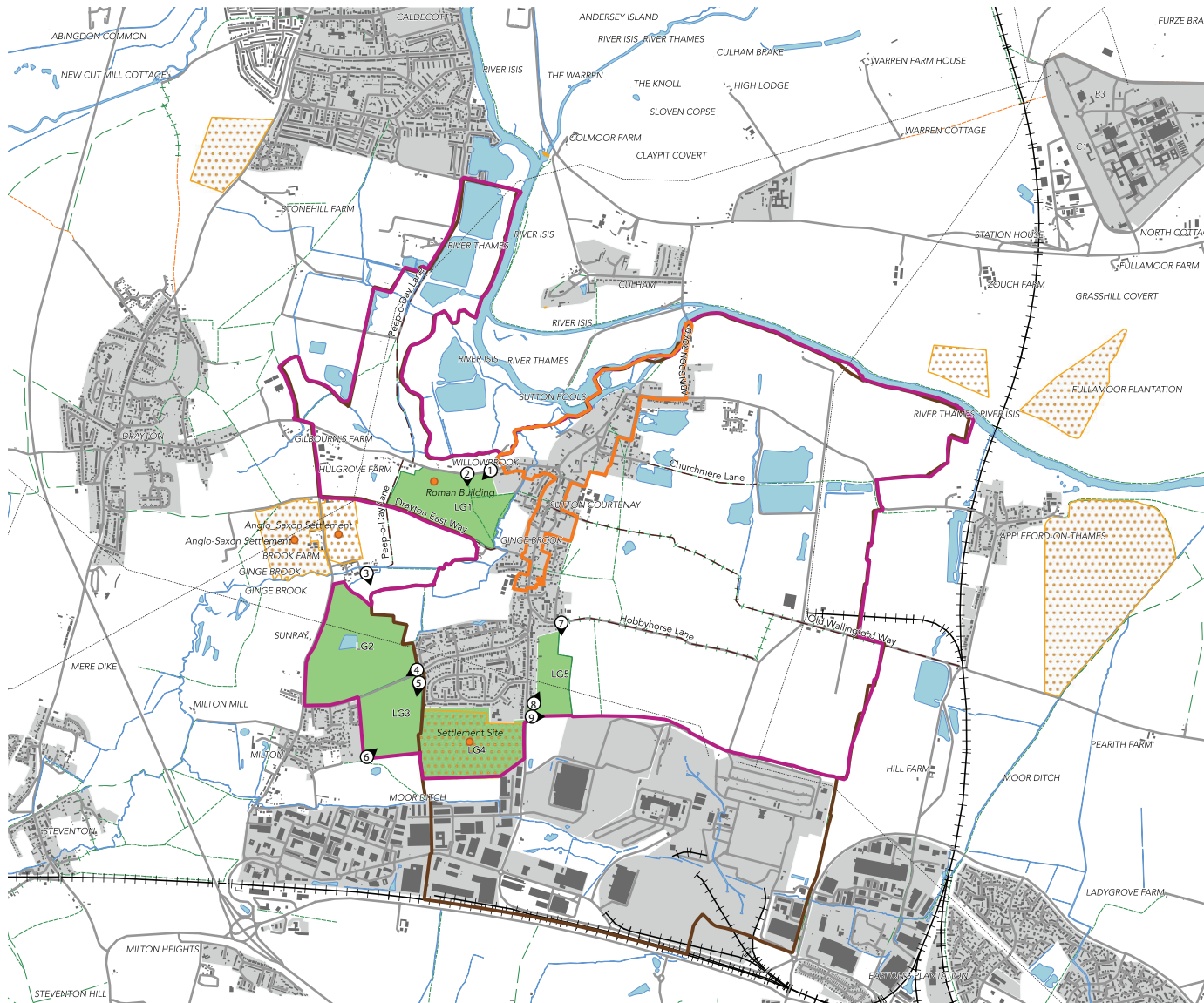
Protect the public footpaths by ensuring they are well signposted, and walkable. Do not allow any development to encroach within the green space, including additional infrastructure.

Identify the agricultural importance of preserving Grade 2 agricultural land, which is of high quality, for food production.

Manage hedgerows, particularly along the Ginge, and increase vegetative buffer to the south.

Local Gaps

- Local gap
- Conservation Area
- NDP Area
- Parish Boundary
- Surface Water
- Development Area
- Archaeological Sites
- Scheduled Monuments
- Electricity Lines
- Railway
- Road



The Local Gaps between Sutton Courtenay and Milton are spread across three connected parcels of land, identified as LG2-4 in the Neighbourhood Plan.



View 3 (Local Gaps plan) Photograph from East Paddocks looking south east, the edge of Sutton Courtenay can just be seen on the right of the shot



View 4 (see Local Gaps plan) Photograph from western edge of Milton Road looking west towards Milton. New development on eastern edge of Milton can clearly be seen defining the edge of the local gap

Local Gap 2: Between Sutton Courtenay and Milton

LG2	Gap between Sutton Courtenay and Milton
Parish	Milton
Landscape Character	Lowland Village Farmlands
Landscape Type	Village Terrace Farmlands
Cultural character	Open field system
Landscape Function	Grade 2 agricultural land – cultivated
Landscape Designations	Public footpath
Historical assets	Archaeological constraints
Infrastructure	Sutton Road runs through it Large electricity pylon is adjacent
Planning Designations	None
Flood Zone	Partially in flood zones 2 and 3
Planning history	SUTC16 – unsuitable for development because a buffer
Landscape study conclusion	The open agricultural character provides a valuable gap with the adjoining, heavily urbanised area to the south and east. This makes the area very sensitive to change.

Discussion

This field, north of Sutton Road, is a flat, very open arable field which is being used actively for farming. It is a wide expanse with a large open sky. Milton Village can be clearly seen, with its new brick housing prominent in the view, and the prominent tall outline of East Paddocks/ Drayton Mill in the north west corner. There is no development within the gap itself, with the exception of a line of pylons.

The boundaries of the gap are clearly defined with Sutton Road to the south, which is slightly raised above the field level, scrub and hedge along the Milton boundary to the west and to the north, and the defined edge of Sutton Courtenay to the east. The settlement boundary consists of close boarded timber fences, clipped hedges and domestic planting, with roofs seen above, indicating their proximity to the gap.

The boundary is further illustrated by a cycle path running parallel to Milton Footpath No 1, following the eastern edge of Kelaart’s Field, both are well-used by cyclists and walkers. This part of the Vale Way which is a promoted path. A telegraph line further defines the fence line.

The main landscape feature in this open landscape is a group of willow trees which indicates the presence of a pond in the north west corner.

There is a clear sense of arrival and departure from the village due to the change in nature of Sutton Road as it departs from a lime-lined avenue, with grass verges, through a chicane to an open country road with no features which gives clear views to the neighbouring settlement. There is approximately 300m between settlements.

Despite some noise from the road, the atmosphere of the gap is rural, with long views and the sound of birdsong.

The view back towards Sutton Courtenay from East Paddocks, shows the open field and defined settlement boundary, with the towers of Didcot B beyond.

SHLAA SUTC16 shows an area of land close to Sutton Courtenay which is unsuitable for development because it would constitute a buffer, but does not include the Milton side of the field within this red line.

It is judged that this is a highly sensitive gap because it constitutes a single compartment of land with clearly defined boundaries. Development would encroach on the broadness and openness of the field, as can be demonstrated by the impact of the new housing at Milton.

In response to the key questions, LG2 has no protection from the Green Belt, and is a defined and narrow gap between settlements. The land is open and undeveloped and provides the rural contrast to two settlements, which is part of their historic identity. Due to the flat nature of the landscape and the well-established field boundaries, the size of the Local Gap is no larger than necessary and should not be diminished.

Sensitivity: Value of Local Gap: High

Management

Protect the public footpaths by ensuring they are well signposted, and walkable.

Do not allow any development to encroach within the green space, including additional infrastructure.

Identify the agricultural importance of preserving Grade 2 agricultural land, which is of high quality, for food production.

Manage and preserve the hedgerows which are an important defining feature of the field boundary which gives credibility to the land parcel.

Local Gap 3: Between Sutton Courtenay and Milton

LG3	Gap between Sutton Courtenay and Milton
Parish	Milton
Landscape Character Type	Village Terrace Farmlands
Cultural Character	Open field system
Landscape Function	Grade 2 agricultural land – cultivated
Landscape Designations	None
Historical assets	Archaeology
Planning Designations	None
Infrastructure	Large electricity pylon
Flood Zone	None
Planning information	SHLAA SUTC14 – unsuitable for development because a buffer
Landscape study conclusion	Despite the containment of this area by development, a large part of the land is a designated historic site, while the open agricultural character provides a valuable gap with the adjoining, heavily urbanised area to the south and east. This makes the area very sensitive to change.

compartment of flat, open, arable land between Sutton Courtenay and the long edge of Milton Park, currently planted with a red grass. The slightly raised ground of Milton Heights, topped with pines, can be seen in the distance. A group of crack willows marks the existence of a pond just beyond the confines of the field on the edge of Milton village.

There is no development within the field, but there are telegraph poles dissecting it. The boundary edge with Sutton Courtenay is a defined urban edge with garden fences and sheds, with roofs seen above, shielded by a wide hedge with scrubby black and hawthorn.

Public Footpath 2 runs along the edge of the field and is easily visible as a muddy track in the image, showing regular use by villagers. The northern boundary is the ditch and slightly raised profile of Sutton Road to the north, which forms the transition to LG2.

There is mixture of willow and hawthorn scrub and a copse of cypress trees to the south, and LG4 to the east.

The distance between Sutton Courtenay and Milton is approximately 300m at its closest point. As with LG2, the flatness and openness of the field means that the opposite boundary is highly visible and appears close. Both Sutton Courtenay and Milton have strongly defined edges, with a distinct transition from tree-lined residential streets, to open countryside with long views. The placement of a chicane (see view 4) to prevent vehicles speeding along the straight road into Sutton Courtenay from the south and west provides a gateway into the village.

Despite the road crossing, and change of crop, LG2 and LG3 are visually and physically a single landscape compartment, making any development within this area an encroachment on the broadness of the field.

LG3 is a rural landscape with evidence of agriculture and wildlife. The sound of birdsong was loud and a skylark and red kite were observed

there. Dog walkers were also seen using local footpaths, giving value to the land as access to the countryside.

When seen from Milton (view 5) the defined edge of Sutton Courtenay is clear, a broken line of buildings interspersed by many trees, along with the towers of Didcot B power station to the south, separated by a narrow undeveloped gap, with distant telegraph poles. Looking to the south the large blocks in Milton Park are visible beyond the field boundary in view 6. The footpath (evidenced by a discernible darker green in the field) marks the field boundary of LG3, but is not a physical boundary.

In response to the key questions, LG3 has no protection from the Green Belt, and is a defined and narrow gap between settlements. The land is open and undeveloped and provides the rural contrast to two settlements, which is part of their historic identity. Due to the flat nature of the landscape and the well-established field boundaries, the size of the Local Gap is no larger than necessary and should not be diminished.

Sensitivity - Value of Local Gap – high

Management

Protect the public footpaths - ensure they are well signed, and walkable.

Do not allow any development to encroach within the green space, including additional infrastructure.

Identify the agricultural importance of preserving Grade 2 agricultural land, which is of high value for food production.

Manage and conserve hedgerows to ensure definition of field boundaries and underscore the integrity of the landscape compartment.

Discussion

The site visit confirmed that the field south of Sutton Road is a single



View 5 (see Local Gaps plan) Photograph from eastern edge of Milton village looking north east towards Sutton Courtenay



View 6 (see Local Gaps plan) From the southern edge of Sutton Courtenay looking south west towards Milton Park. Large infrastructure buildings are clearly visible although vegetation buffers the development on the horizon and on the field boundary.

Local Gap 4: Between Sutton Courtenay and Milton

LG4 is a field between Sutton Courtenay primary school and Milton known locally as Kelaart’s Field. This demesne of this land is complex as it is within Sutton Courtenay parish, but Milton Park’s ownership and also features in Didcot Garden Town masterplan.

LG4	Gap between Sutton Courtenay and Milton
Parish	Sutton Courtenay
Landscape Character	Lowland Village Farmlands
Landscape Type	Village terrace farmlands
Cultural character	Open field system
Landscape Function	Agricultural land - pastoral
Landscape Designations	None
Infrastructure	Large electricity pylon traverses field
Historical assets	Archaeological, Ancient Monument (whole site)
Planning Designations	Didcot Garden Town boundary borders this area
Flood Zone	None
Planning history	SHLAA SUTC15 – unsuitable for development as heavily constrained
Landscape Study conclusion	Despite the containment of this area by development, a large part of the land is a designated historic site, while the open agricultural character provides a valuable gap with the adjoining, heavily urbanised area to the south and east. This makes the area very sensitive to change.

Discussion

The field study shows that Kelaart’s Field is flat, open land in permanent pasture, under a wide expanse of sky. There is no development within the field, although telegraph poles traverse the space. It is a permissive path and the tracks show that it is regularly used by dog walkers demonstrating a well-used community asset.

There is a defined hedge and cherry tree boundary to the east, along Sutton Courtenay Road, running between the village and the former Didcot Power station site; a defined boundary with the development

at Milton Park with its large commercial and industrial buildings; and a scrub hedge along the school’s boundary to the north. The western boundary is open to LG3. The gap between the two developments is between approximately 300 - 400m at its narrowest point.

This land is bordered on the east side by Sutton Courtenay Road, which means that there is regular traffic noise, but also lots of birdsong. The road narrows to a chicane at the entrance to Sutton Courtenay marking the change from the rural nature of the field, to the start of the urban area. The change is a significant and clearly defined village gateway.

The field contains a Scheduled Monument (OX250) which records that it has the important archaeological remains of a presumed Iron Age settlement (see Green Spaces Assessment p.19). As such, there is a presumption under the NPPF of non-development. This has also been acknowledged by the SHLAA which concludes that it is unsuitable for development.

The gap will be affected by planning permission granted in 2018 (P18/V1349/FUL) for two warehouse buildings (see view measuring a combined total of 28,907 sq.m (GIA), associated parking and servicing areas, relocation of vehicular junction on Sutton Courtenay Lane, creation of new internal access road, hard and soft landscape which includes acoustic screening, attenuation and mitigation ponds, associated utilities and ground works.

The site adjoins the field on the east side of Sutton Courtenay Lane, effectively boxing in the field to the east and reducing the beneficial impact of LG4.

In conclusion, Kelaart’s Field plays an important role in preventing the visual and physical coalescence of the residential area of Sutton Courtenay and the large commercial infrastructure on the former Didcot power station land. Any merger would clearly threaten the identity and character of Sutton Courtenay, which is residential in character and low rise. LG4 provides clear green space between these two distinct settlement areas and is therefore of high value as a Local Gap.

LG4 is not within the Green Belt, is a gap between two settlements, is open and undeveloped, and provides clear definition between two very different types of development. It falls within the definition of a Local Gap and is already too narrow, so should not be eroded further.

Sensitivity - Value of Local Gap – very high

Management

Facilitate use of the permissive path

Maintain vegetation and replant when necessary to strengthen field boundaries, particularly along the Didcot edge.

Ecology survey may show presence of protected birds, such as skylarks.



View 7 (see Local Gaps plan) Looking south from Hobby Horse Lane towards the former Didcot power station site, where new warehouses are being built. These large infrastructure buildings are barely 300m from the village edge.

Local Gap 5: Between Sutton Courtenay and former Didcot power station site

LG5	Gap between Sutton Courtenay and former Didcot Power Station site
Parish	Sutton Courtenay
Landscape Character	Lowland Village Farmlands
Landscape Type	Village terrace farmlands
Cultural character	Open field system
Landscape Function	Grade 2 agricultural land - arable
Landscape Designations	None
Infrastructure	None
Historical assets	None
Planning Designations	Didcot Garden Town boundary borders this area
Flood Zone	None
Planning history	SHLAA SUTC12 and 19 are relevant
Landscape Study conclusion	The narrowness of the gap between the residential area and adjoining heavily urbanised area to the south makes the parcel of land very sensitive to change and amalgamation

DISCUSSION

LG5 lies adjacent to Kelaart’s Field on the east side of Harwell Road/Sutton Courtenay Lane. It has been included as a gap because of the constricted approach to the village envelope, truncated by the redevelopment of the power station site, with the area that lies between the last house of the ribbon development along Harwell Road and the recently completed commercial development there now remains only a narrow tranche of open land.

The local gap is flat, wide and open and in arable use. It is bounded to the west and north west by Sutton Courtenay village, to the north by fields, to the east by former gravel pits and to the south by the redeveloped Didcot Power Station site. The physical boundaries are a mature hedgerow along Harwell Road western side with a gap for pedestrian access to the bridleway. To the north, the hedge gives way to garden fences and boundaries. There are more hedgerows to the north, and distant hedgerows to the east. The southern boundary is a metal fence with scrub and occasional trees.

The access point in the south west corner is clearly at the southern edge of the village, as there is a chicane which slows the traffic at the village gateway. There is a bridleway from the access along the southern boundary and from north to south through the field.

Once through the access in the hedge, the field partially opens out, as far as the last house of the Sutton Courtenay ribbon development, which provides a gap of approximately 90m between house curtilage and the metal fence. As the field skirts the housing, it opens out to its full extent which is one large open agricultural area stretching north and west.

The metal fence provides a clear demarcation between the industrial development to the south, including the remaining towers of Didcot

power station, and the more rural setting to the north. The projection of houses and fences into the edge of the field is incongruous. There is no other built development within the field, but a view to distant pylons.

The northern parts of the field have been identified as ‘suitable in principle’ locations for potential development in the SHLAA as SUTC 12 and SUTC19. However, Sutton Courtenay parish council wishes to include the whole area in the list of proposed Local Green Spaces.

In response to the key questions, LG5 has no protection from the Green Belt. The southern section of the field is defined as a gap between settlements as it prevents the village of Sutton Courtenay from joining Didcot.

The land is generally open and undeveloped, providing long, rural views and provides a context to the built areas. In response to the question of whether the local gap is larger than necessary, it is evident that the gap is already too narrow particularly between the southernmost houses of the village and the new large scale infrastructure buildings being developed on the former power station land.

Although the immediate gap boundary is that of the hedgerow seen in the distance to the east side of the field from the ribbon development, the land extends beyond this, parallel with Hobbyhorse Lane (a BOAT). This landscape compartment is part of the wider pattern of parallel fields which divide the land on the eastern flank of the village in roughly similar sized parcels, with equidistant hedgerows along which there are public paths running out towards the east such as Old Wallingford Way and Churchmere Lane. The more northerly of these fields become the disturbed land of the former quarry site, but the historic pattern of field boundaries and their clear relationship with the village and its Conservation Area is still discernible.

Sensitivity - Value of Local Gap – very high

Management

Protect the public rights of way as these form critical boundaries - ensure they are well signed and walkable. Protect and enhance local amenity and access to the countryside.

Conserve hedgerow boundaries, interplanting with maiden trees, particularly on this southern boundary, to help buffer development.

Prevent any further development from reducing the gap further or encroaching on this Grade 2 agricultural land to safeguard land valuable for food production.



View 9 (see Local Gaps plan) Looking east along the public right of way adjoining the boundary with the former Didcot power station site on the right, where new warehouses are being built.



View 8 (see Local Gaps plan) Looking north from the east side of Harwell Road along the footpath and field edge that comprises LG5. The edge of Sutton Courtenay is visible to the left of the photograph.

SUMMARY

Sutton Courtenay has been identified as a larger village by the planning authority, which means that it needs to remain separate from other settlements, such as Milton and Drayton or it would lose its village identity and scale.

Sutton Courtenay is very close to the Oxford Green Belt, but is excluded from it. There are circumstances in which Green Belt can be extended although, in this case, the physical barrier of the River Thames creates a strong boundary on the northern side of the village.

Under Policy 29 of the Local Plan, development is not permitted where the physical and visual separation between two separate settlements is diminished, and it should not lead to a loss of environmental or heritage assets.

Between Sutton Courtenay and Milton, and Milton Park, three field parcels were identified as being suitable for Local Gaps, because they represented the last area of landscape that prevented coalescence between settlements. While they were identified as separate fields, in reality they form one continuous buffer to the south and south west of the village. To the east of the gaps identified above, the land immediately east of Harwell Road forms a vestigial open space between the northern edge of the former Didcot power station site, which is being redeveloped with large commercial infrastructure. This land has similar open characteristics to the western gaps described.

The land forming LG 2, 3 and 4 comprise a buffer that is extremely open, due to its level topography and agricultural function. This means that any development would be highly visible and detrimental to the separate identity of both Sutton Courtenay and Milton villages.

The land is high quality agricultural land which should be retained in agricultural use.

The SHLAA map acknowledges that a buffer is necessary and that a Scheduled Monument is protected, but proposes boundaries which bear no relation to the land parcels when seen on the ground.

The proposed Milton Local Gap has already been reduced by development on the east side of Sutton Courtenay Road, leaving a very narrow gap of green space on the south east corner of the village. This provides even more imperative to designate a Milton Local Gap. Due to the character of the landscape, the parcel is no larger than necessary.

The Drayton gap was proposed to prevent coalescence between Sutton Courtenay and Drayton village. This open land extends west of the village, but may in the longer term be eroded by ribbon development and infilling between farms along the Drayton Road.

On this boundary of the village there are still complete fields which are unencroached by development. The rising land also helps to screen the ribbon development further to the west of Sutton Courtenay. The field boundaries indicate the visual edge of the Local Gap necessary to prevent coalescence as seen in the views provided.

This study concludes that all the land parcels discussed are eligible to be designated as Local Gaps, and should be included as such in the Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Plan.

REFERENCES

- Assessment of the Value of the Meaningful Gap and Potential Green Belt Alterations, North Warwickshire Borough Council, January 2018
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3), 2013, LI and IEMA
- Hart Local Plan Topic Paper: Gaps between Settlements, Hart District Council
- Historic England 2019 Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management Second edition, Historic England Advice Note 1
- Local Plan 2031 Strategic Sites and Policies: Appendix 22 Sutton Courtenay
- Local Plan Strategic Sites and Policies, SHLAA, Appendix 22: Sutton Courtenay
- National Planning Policy Framework 2019, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
- North Somerset Council Site Allocations Plan Background document Strategic Gaps, March 2016, NSDC

Key Views - Introduction

This section illustrates a series of key views around and within the village of Sutton Courtenay.

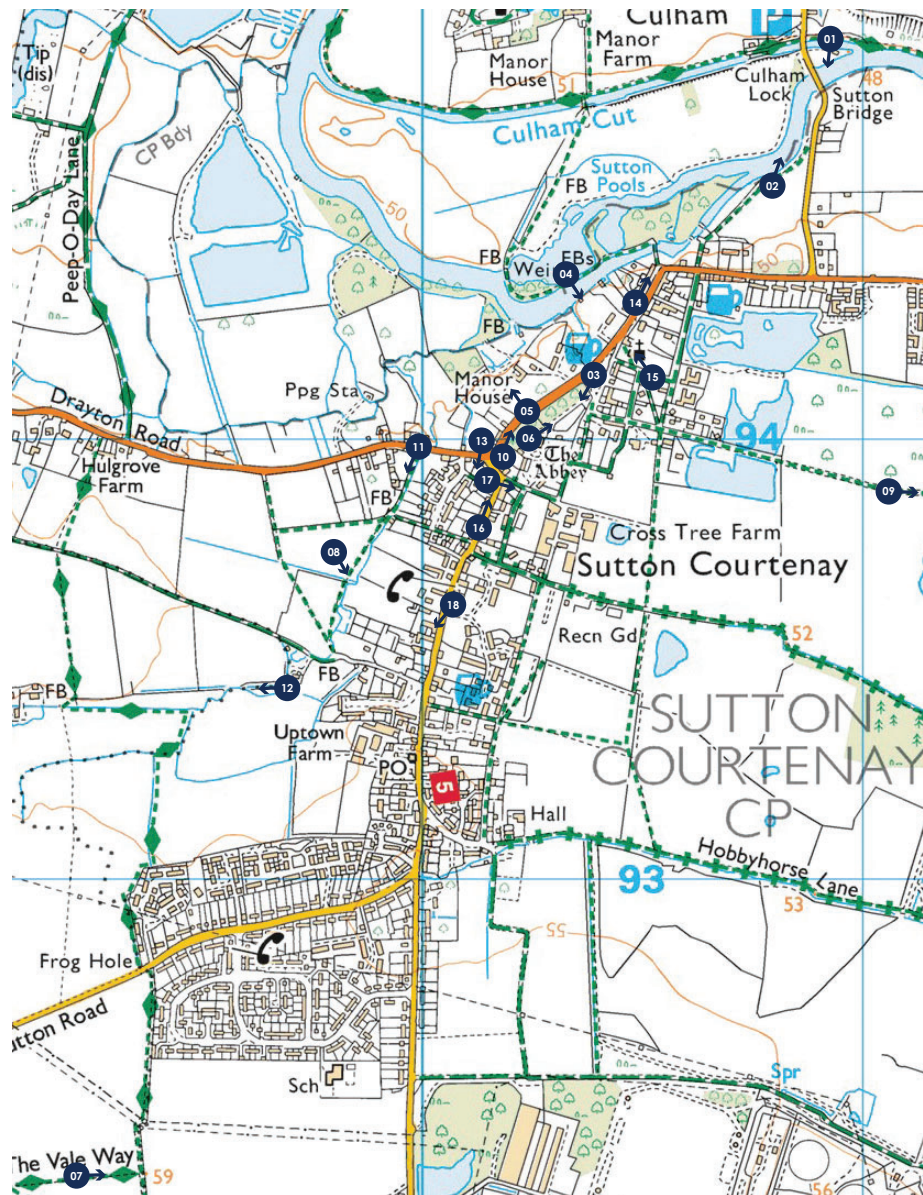
The photographs provided here are intended to illustrate both natural and built elements, factors that make the village identity and quality. They are not intended to be exhaustive but representative of the settlement character, and to show key relationships between the village and its landscape setting.

The historic development of the village was related to its close proximity to the River Thames and its tributaries. The low topographical range of the watercourses and their flood plains means that there are few views of the village from local highpoints, and it is difficult to get an overall sense of the shape of the village in its setting.

What is perceptible is the strong structure of the village, and the high ratio of open space and planting to buildings. This well vegetated environment, with large numbers of mature trees, illustrates the village's longevity just as much as the heritage value of its buildings.

> APPENDIX 1 KEY VIEWS

Key Views



View locations and direction of photograph



1 River Thames footpath looking towards the western village edge across flood meadows.

The open space on the northern and western edges of the villages is a flood zone where the river dominates the character of the landscape and the village appears within a well treed edge that addresses countryside.



2 River Thames and Sutton Bridge from the flood meadow north of the village.

The relationship of the River Thames to the development of Sutton Courtenay remains as current today as it was to the growth of the original settlement, with the Thames forming a key northern boundary confining the village to land outside the flood zone.



3 The Green and the Abbey grounds from the War Memorial

The broad, grassy expanse of the Green comprises a key element of the village heart, flanked by pollarded trees and the mature wooded grounds of the Abbey. The scenic value of this characteristic opening in the village core contributes hugely to the village identity.



4 River Thames backwater with Church St houses from footpath over weirs

The arrangement of historic houses, often with moorings or boathouses, and gardens running straight to the water's edge is characteristic of this village river boundary.



5 The Norman Hall when seen from the Green.

This ancient building is set back from the street behind stone walls, within a substantial garden plot that contributes mature trees and a break in the development pattern to the overall street scene.



6 Looking north over the Green towards the Swan and All Saints' Church

A mix of building styles, periods and materials contribute a harmonious frontage to the Green. The built elements are framed by gardens, planting and larger trees which absorb the buildings into their setting.



7 Looking east from footpath to the south of village, Didcot on rhs

The open, flat agricultural land that surrounds the village with far views to Wittenham Clumps are characteristic of its setting. Here the towers of Didcot power station and telegraph poles provide vertical features.



8 Ginge Brook at site of former ford

The Ginge forms the western boundary to Sutton Courtenay. The contrast of well-wooded eastern bank and the broad open meadows to the west make this stream a well recognised part of the village context. (See also photos on page 12.)



9 East along footpath adjacent to the Millennium Common

Sutton Courtenay is well linked to the adjoining landscape by a series of leafy tracks that run out from the village core. These paths provide amenity to villagers and are characteristic of the village structure.



10 Church St looking north with stone wall and lime trees along the verge

Generous planted margins to the village streets are a well recognised part of the village character, here backed by old walls on property boundaries.



11 Ginge Brook looking south from junction with Brook St

Waterways around the village are numerous and of diverse form. Part of the village character is the proximity of these watercourses and their historic use in the village development, c/f old mill in distance here.



12 Mill Brook and farmland looking west behind Uptown Farm, High St

Crack willows and reedy margins signal the course of the mill stream as it winds through the flat open fields to the south west of the village.



13 Looking south towards the Triangle from Church St

The softer, non-standard alignment of highway through the village contributes to the informality of the scene. This junction backed by diverse building forms illustrates a generous character in the street.



14 Church St west side looking north from Courtenay Cottage: This core street has many forms, these cottages have front gardens within the street space. Their character is informal and historic, interspersed with alleyways to rear gardens and other buildings within the plots. A diverse, planted streetscape highly characteristic of this old settlement.



15 All Saints' Church and churchyard

The church is one of the key buildings flanking the east of the Green. The planted churchyard with mature Irish Yews and the Limes along the Green adjacent, give a traditional setting to the building.



16 Looking north along the High Street

Where the village street narrows the diverse character of buildings closely front the street, the predominance of brick and stucco here united by clay tiled roofs. Parking is a detractor in this key view.



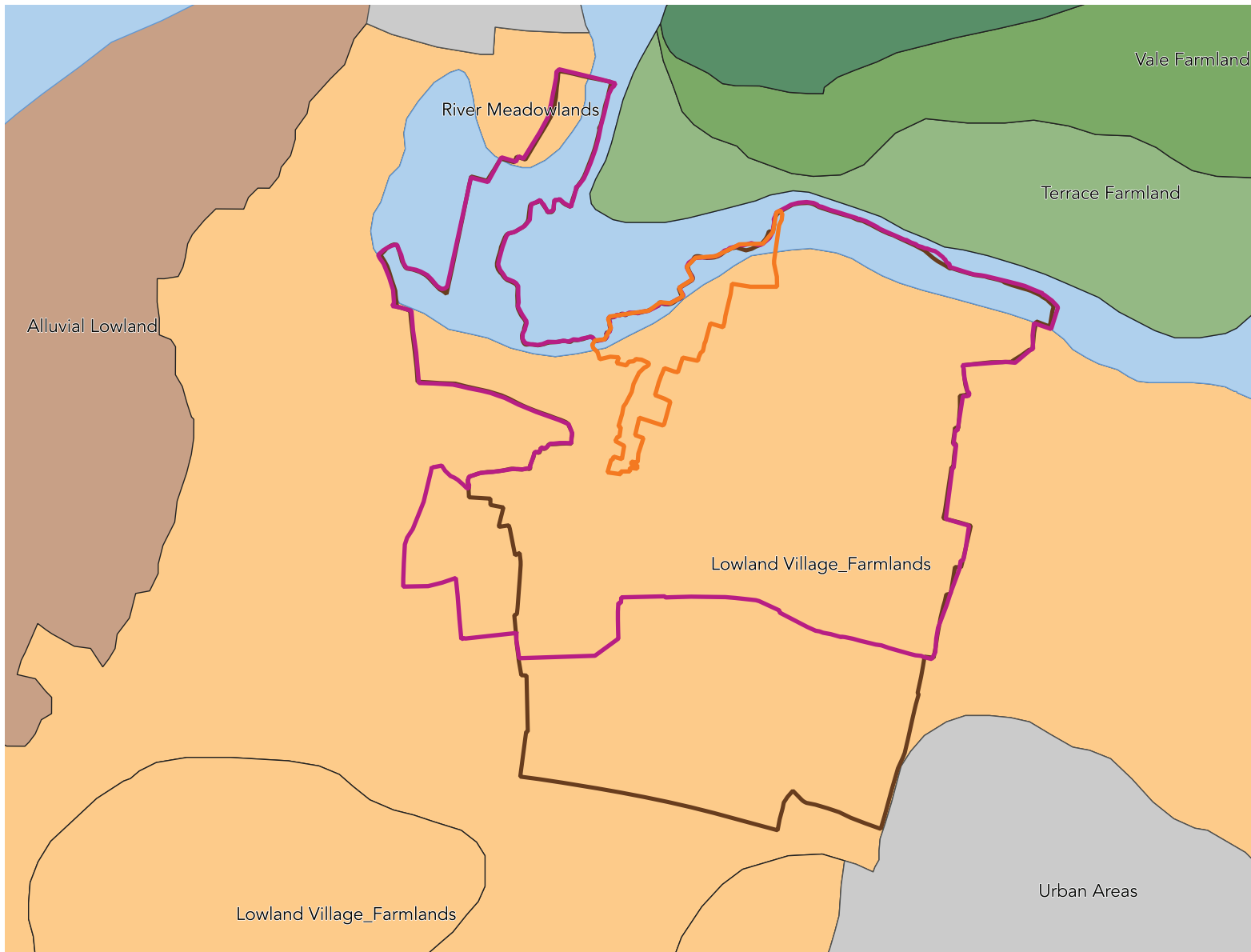
17 Pollarded Limes on High Street opposite byway to Cross Trees Farm

Pollards are highly characteristic of the village core and are planted on incidental banks, wider verges and broader greens. Their knobbly winter forms become blousy and soft when leafed out in summer.














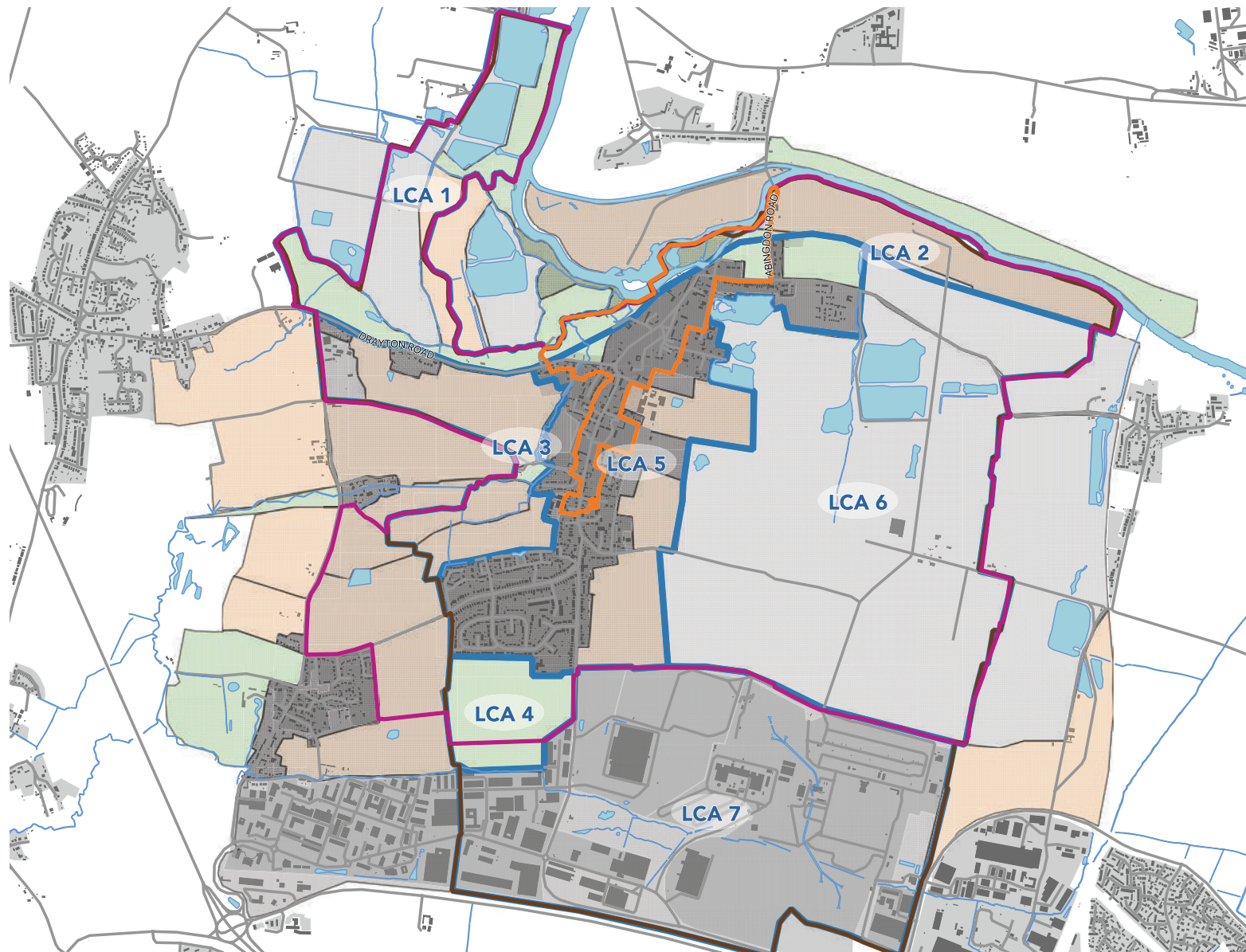
18 58 High Street, Southfield Farm, looking south opposite Lady Place

This long, timber framed building, extends into its plot that includes old barns. The evolving nature of historic buildings in the village and orientation of gardens make a strong contribution to the street scene.



Landscape Character - Setting

-  Conservation Area
 -  NDP Area
 -  Parish Boundary
- Landscape Character Types**
-  Alluvial Lowland
 -  Lowland Village_Farmlands
 -  River Meadowlands
 -  Rolling Farmland
 -  Terrace Farmland
 -  Urban Areas
 -  Vale Farmland
 -  Wooded Estatelands



Landscape Character - Parish

- Conservation Area
- NDP Area
- Parish Boundary
- Surface Water
- Landscape Study Character Areas
- Road
- Building
- Development Area

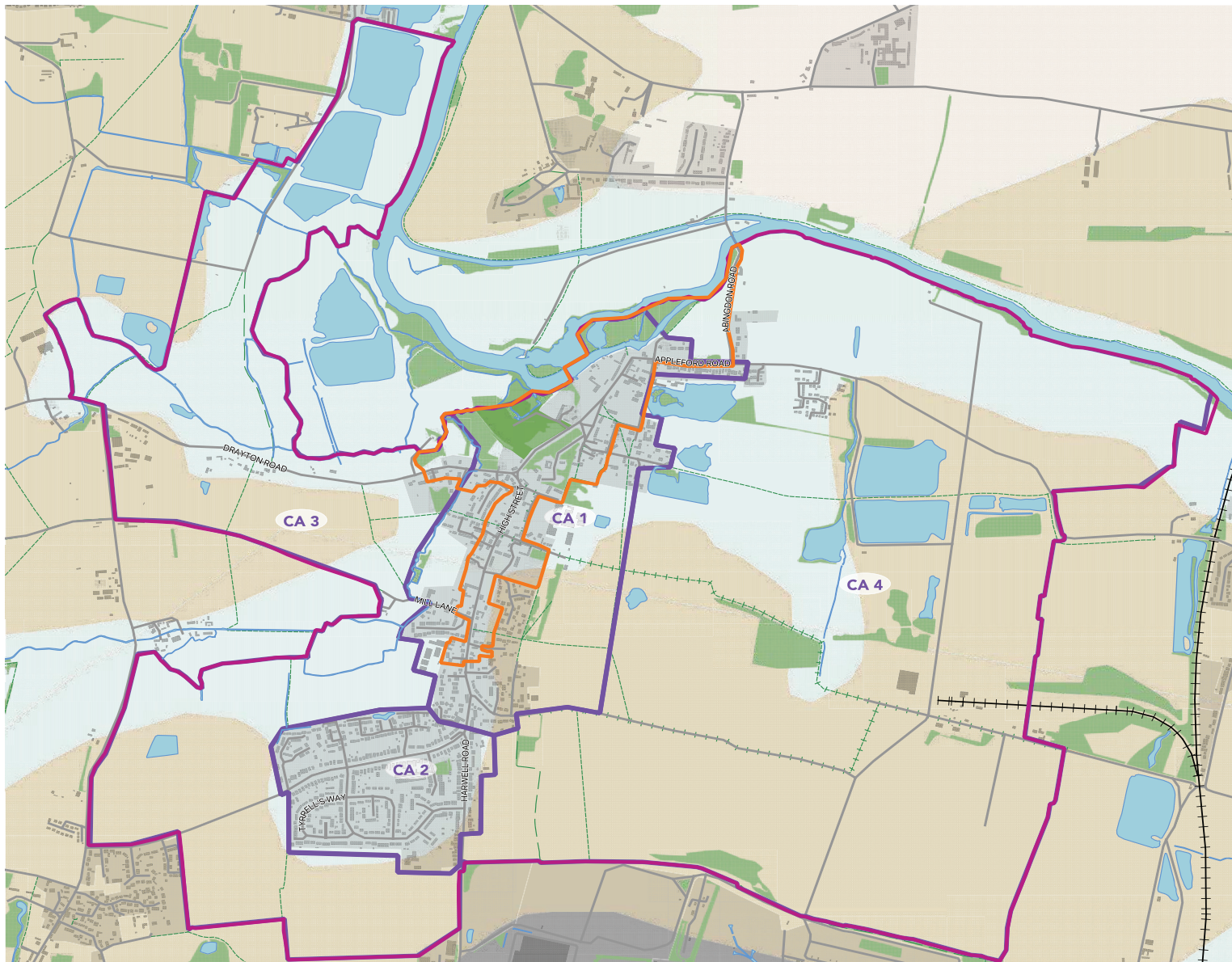
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Landscape Study Landcover Parcels

- Commercial
- Cultivated land
- Disturbed ground
- Industrial
- Mixed farming
- Pastoral
- Residential
- Woodland

LOCAL CHARACTER AREAS
as defined in Sutton Courtenay
Landscape Study 2019

- LCA1 - River meadowlands/gravel pits to the north of Drayton road
- LCA2 - River meadowlands to the east of Sutton bridge
- LCA3 - Village terrace farmlands to the south of Drayton road
- LCA4 - Village Terrace Farmlands to the south of the village
- LCA5 - Sutton Courtenay village and adjoining eastern plots
- LCA6 - Disturbed land to the east of the village
- LCA7 - Urban area bordering Didcot to the south



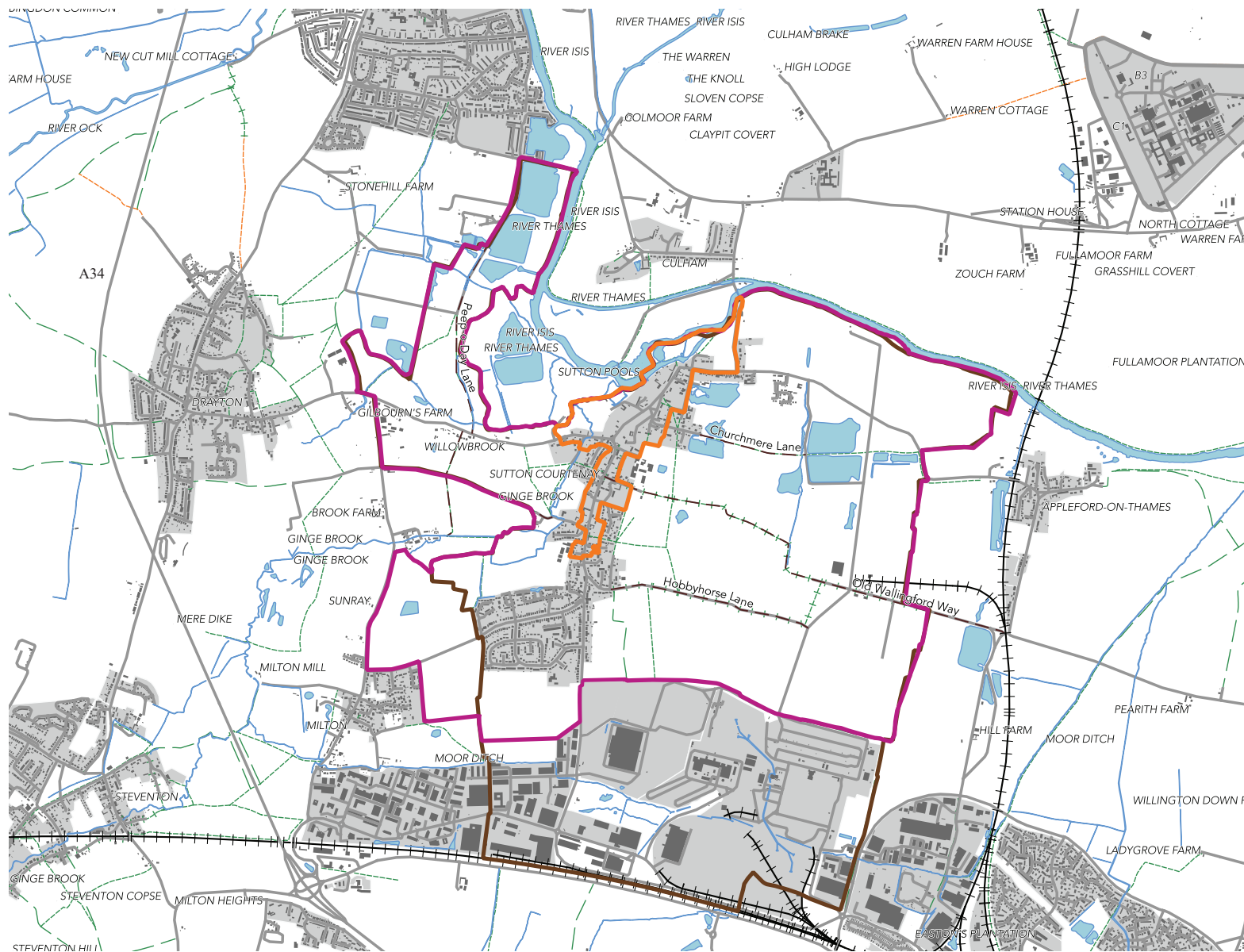
Landscape Character - Neighbourhood

- Conservation Area
- NDP Area
- Surface Water
- HERITAGE**
- Character_Areas
- ACCESS**
- Railway
- Road
- Public Rights of Way**
- Byway Open to all Traffic (BOAT)
- Public Bridleway
- Public Footpath
- Restricted Byway
- LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**
- Woodland
- Orchard
- Parks and Gardens
- Agricultural Land Classification**
- Grade 2
- Grade 3
- Grade 4
- Urban
- Development Area

CHARACTER AREAS as defined in Sutton Courtenays Character Assessment 2019

- CA 1 - Historic Core
- CA 2 - 20-21st century development to the south-west
- CA 3 - Land to west
- CA 4 - Land to east





Access

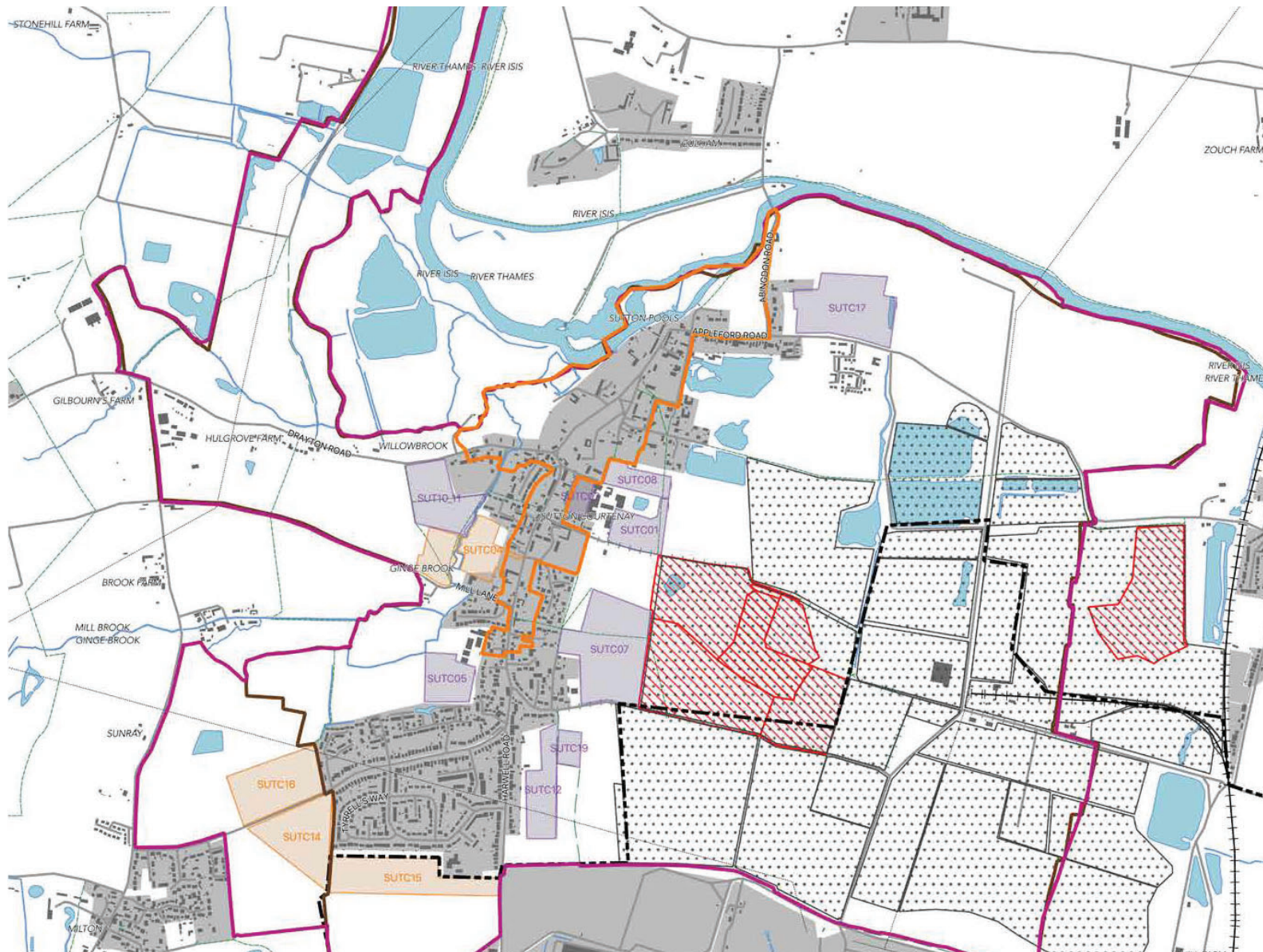
- Conservation Area
- NDP Area
- Parish Boundary
- Surface Water
- Development Area

ACCESS

















- Railway
- Trackways
- Road

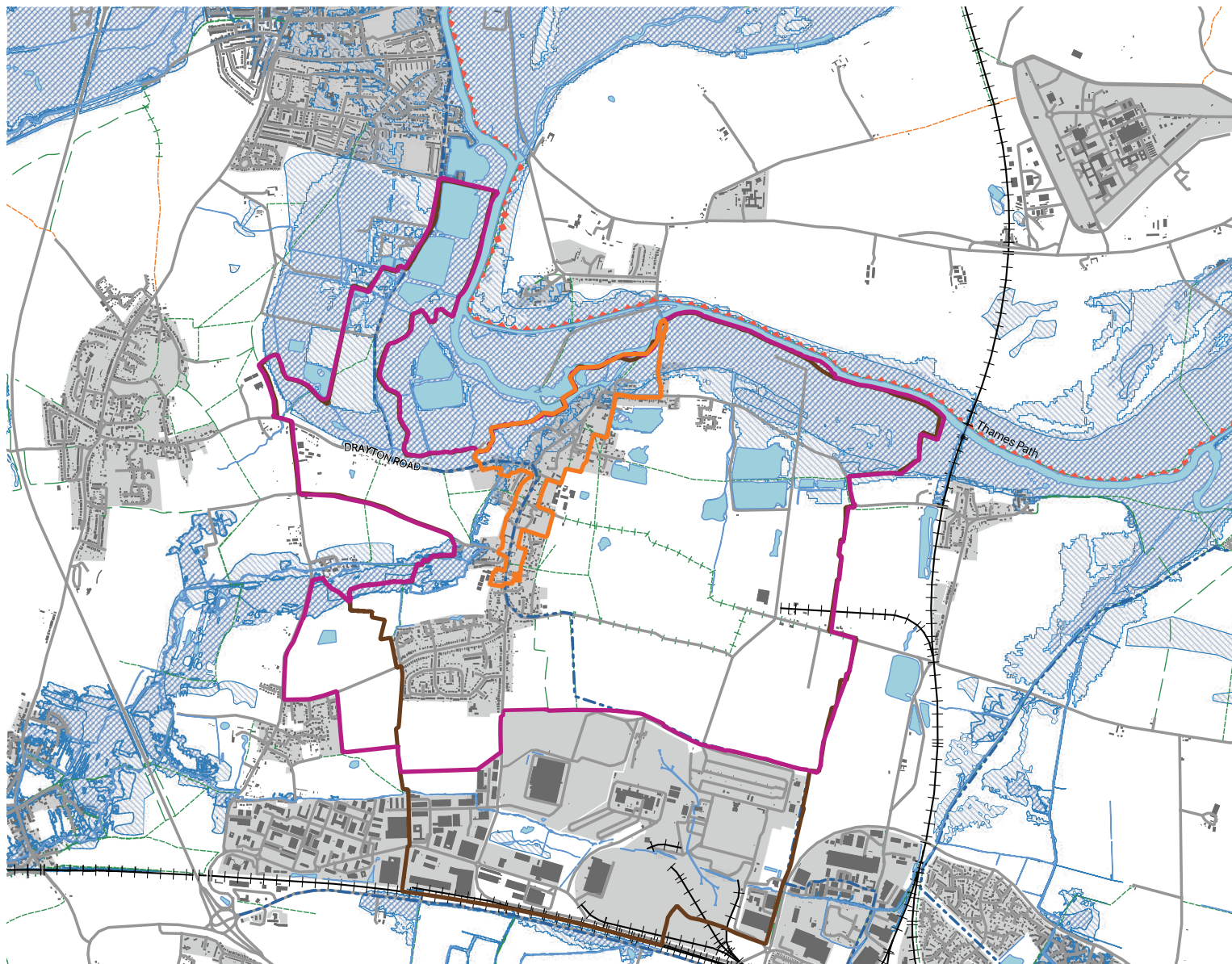
Public Rights of Way

- Byway Open to all Traffic (BOAT)
- Public Bridleway
- Public Footpath
- Restricted Byway



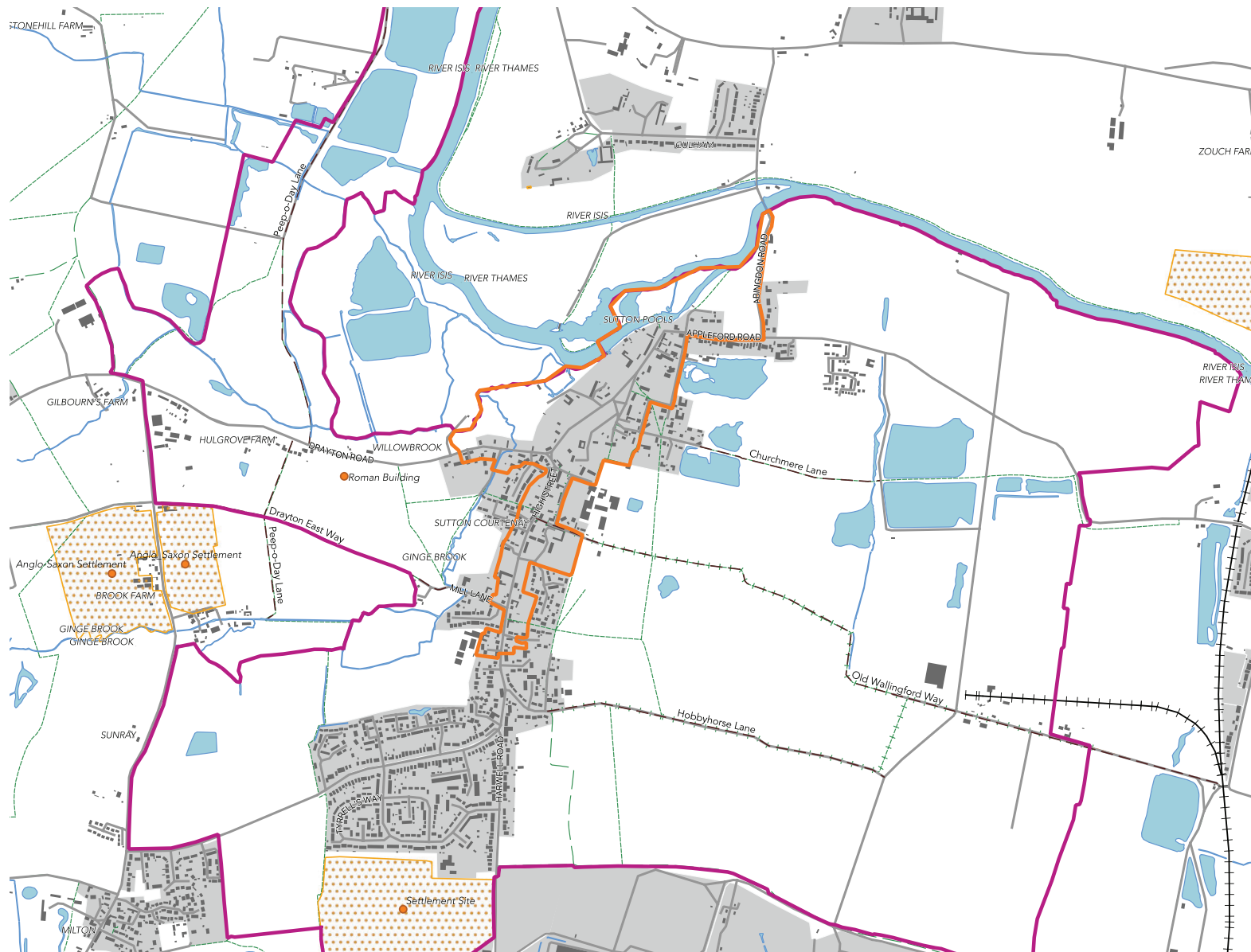
Planning

-  Conservation Area
-  NDP Area
-  Parish Boundary
-  Electricity Lines
- PLANNING**
-  Didcot Garden Town Masterplan area
-  SHLAA
-  SHLAA unsuitable
-  Gravel Extraction and Landfill
-  Energy Crop Scheme
-  Surface Water
- ACCESS**
-  Railway
-  Road
- Public Rights of Way**
-  Byway Open to all Traffic (BOAT)
-  Public Bridleway
-  Public Footpath
-  Restricted Byway



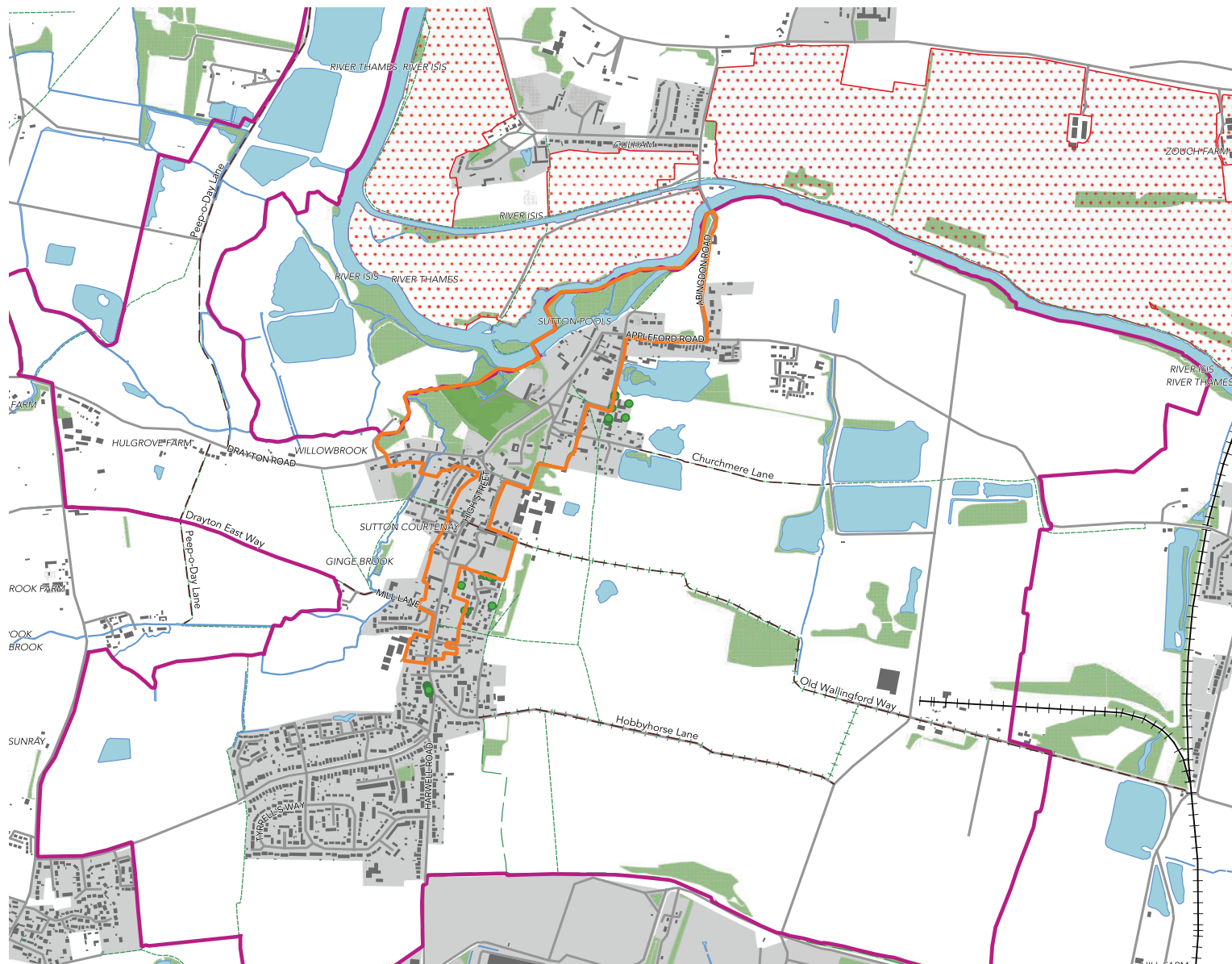
Flooding

- Conservation Area
 - NDP Area
 - Parish Boundary
 - Surface Water
- ACCESS
- Railway
 - Cycle Network
 - Thames Path National_Trail
 - Road
- Public Rights of Way
- Byway Open to all Traffic (BOAT)
 - Public Bridleway
 - Public Footpath
 - Restricted Byway
- FLOODING
- Flood Zone 3
 - Flood Zone 2
 - Building
 - Development Area



Archaeology

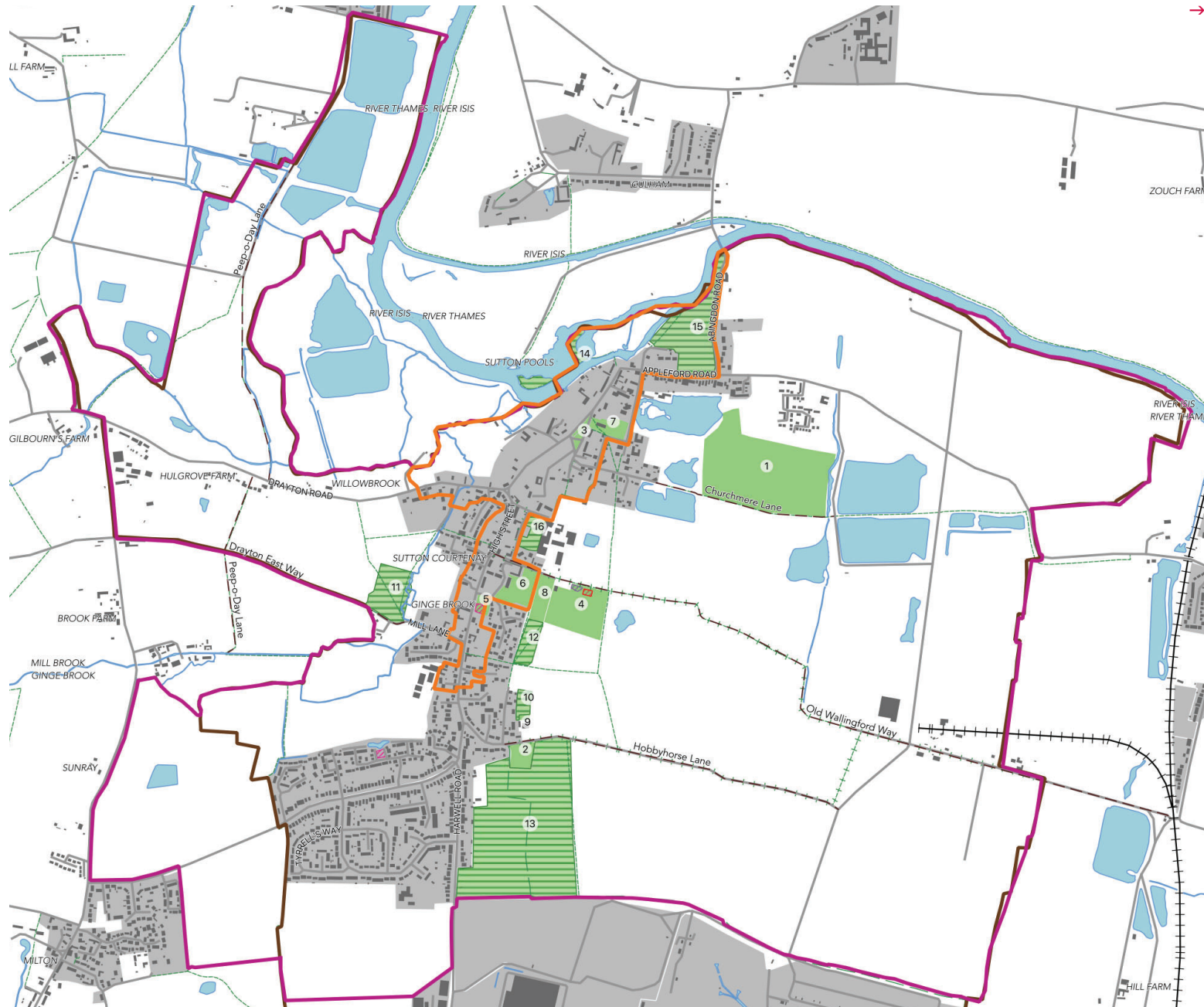
- Conservation Area
- NDP Area
- Surface Water
- ARCHAEOLOGICAL**
- Archaeological Sites
- Scheduled_Monuments
- ACCESS**
- Railway
- Trackways
- Road
- Public Rights of Way**
- Byway Open to all Traffic (BOAT)
- Public Bridleway
- Public Footpath
- Restricted Byway
- LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**
- Development Area



Nature Conservation

- Conservation Area
- NDP Area
- Surface Water
- HERITAGE**
- TPOs
- ACCESS**
- Railway
- Trackways
- Road
- Public Rights of Way**
- Byway Open to all Traffic (BOAT)
- Public Bridleway
- Public Footpath
- Restricted Byway
- NATURE CONSERVATION**
- Countryside Stewardship Scheme
- LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**
- Woodland
- Orchard
- Parks and Gardens
- Development Area

NOTE:
All trees within Conservation Area have Tree Preservation Orders



Local green spaces

- Conservation Area
- NDP Area
- Parish Boundary
- Surface Water
- Local Green Spaces**
- Designated Local Green Space
- Proposed Local Green Space
- MUGA
- NEAP
- LEAP
- Public Rights of Way**
- Byway Open to all Traffic (BOAT)
- Public Bridleway
- Public Footpath
- Restricted Byway

DESIGNATED LOCAL GREEN SPACES

1. Millennium Common
2. Site of former catholic church (not accessible)
3. The Green
4. Recreation Ground
5. Lady Place and High St. GS
6. Communal Gardens for the residents of Lady Place
7. All Saints' Churchyard
8. The Cemetery
9. Tennis Court
10. Allotments

PROPOSED LOCAL GREEN SPACES

11. Semi-natural off Mill Lane
12. Semi-natural south of cemetery
13. Semi-natural off Harwell Rd. and Hobbyhorse Lane
14. Sutton Pools
15. Riverside Meadow
16. Field bordered by High Street, Cross Trees Farm and Cross Trees Lane

