

Assessment of Strategic Development Locations beyond settlement boundaries - Methodology Paper

3rd November 2016

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This paper documents the work carried out as part of the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) to identify places and the methodology for assessing the potential development capacity at Strategic Development Locations beyond existing settlement boundaries. Separate work is being carried out to identify the potential capacity within urban areas.

1.2 The Joint Spatial Plan Issues and Options Consultation (November 2015) identified an indicative list of places (Table 5.1) which could be considered for housing and/or employment uses based on the experience of the four local authorities and known developer interest. The threshold for identifying places in the Issues and Options Consultation was approximately 500 dwellings and/or 500 jobs. The potential capacity of these locations beyond existing settlement boundaries has now been further assessed, together with a number of additional locations arising from further refinement of the work. This paper explains how that technical exercise has been undertaken.

2.0 Stage 1: Identifying places

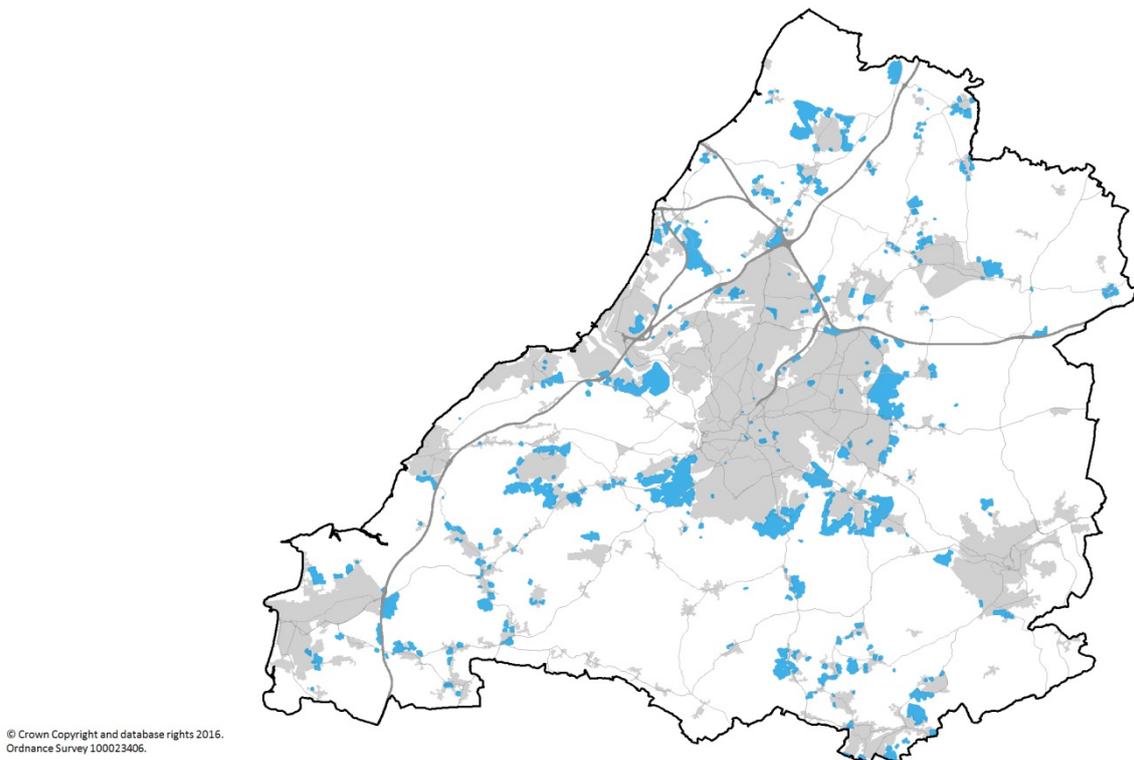
2.1 Initial locations for consideration were based the places already identified in Table 5.1 of the Issues and Options document, together with a number of additional places based on the population size of settlements and Call for Sites information.

2.2 Locations based on larger settlements were initially considered as they provide existing services, facilities and infrastructure which can more readily support new development.

2.3 Additional locations were included for consideration based on their population size (based on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) definition of Built-up Areas / Built-up Area Sub-division and used resident population data from the 2011 Census). The additional places were identified where settlements had a population of greater than 5,000 and for settlements with a population of between 1,000 and 5,000 where there had been individual or groups of Call for Sites sites with an indicative capacity of 500 or more dwellings. The list of places generated through this exercise is set out in Table 1.

2.4 To support this a Call for Sites exercise was carried out by the four local authorities in the West of England - Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. It took place between 23rd January 2015 and 6th March 2015. The local authorities sent letters and e-mails to all stakeholders on their Local Development Framework stakeholder database seeking sites and areas which may be suitable for development.

Figure 1. Call for Sites



2.5 In line with the work undertaken to support the Joint Spatial Plan Issues and Options, an indicative capacity of 500 dwellings was used. This was based on the identification of individual or groups of sites submitted through the Call for Sites adjacent to settlements with a total area of 25 hectares (500 dwellings). The working assumption used was that 50% of the land would be available for residential use, at an average of 40 dwellings per hectare; and 50% of the land would be available for other non-residential uses, including, recreation, education, social, business, infrastructure, etc. The threshold of 500 followed the approach used in the Issues and Options. The Call for Sites submissions were used as this was considered to give an indication of market interest in particular places.

3.0 Stage 2: Identifying Areas of Search

3.1 Having established the places to consider for strategic growth potential, the next stage undertaken was to identify the Areas of Search at these places. This was carried out through the creation of buffers around the built-up areas. The built-up areas have been digitised using Ordnance Survey MasterMap data and were generally based on the ONS

definition of Built-up Areas / Built-up Area Sub-divisions. Different distance buffers were used depending on the size of the settlement. The places and buffer distances are set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Place and buffer distances (metres)

Place	Buffer (m)	Place	Buffer (m)
Bath	1,600 (800 along main roads)	Churchill	400
Bristol (including Avonmouth)	1,600 (800 along main roads)	Clutton/Temple Cloud	400
Weston-Super-Mare	1,600 (800 along main roads)	Congresbury	400
Clevedon	800	Winterbourne / Frampton Cotterell / Coalpit Heath	400
Keynsham	800	Long Ashton	400
Midsomer Norton/Radstock	800	Olveston	400
Nailsea	800	Paulton	400
Portishead	800	Peasedown St John	400
Sevenside	800	Pill	400
Thornbury	800	Pilning	400
Yate / Chipping Sodbury	800	Pucklechurch	400
Bristol Airport	400	Saltford	400
Almondsbury	400	Severn Beach	400
Alveston	400	Temple Cloud	400
Backwell	400	Wickwar	400
Banwell	400	Yatton	400
Charfield	400		

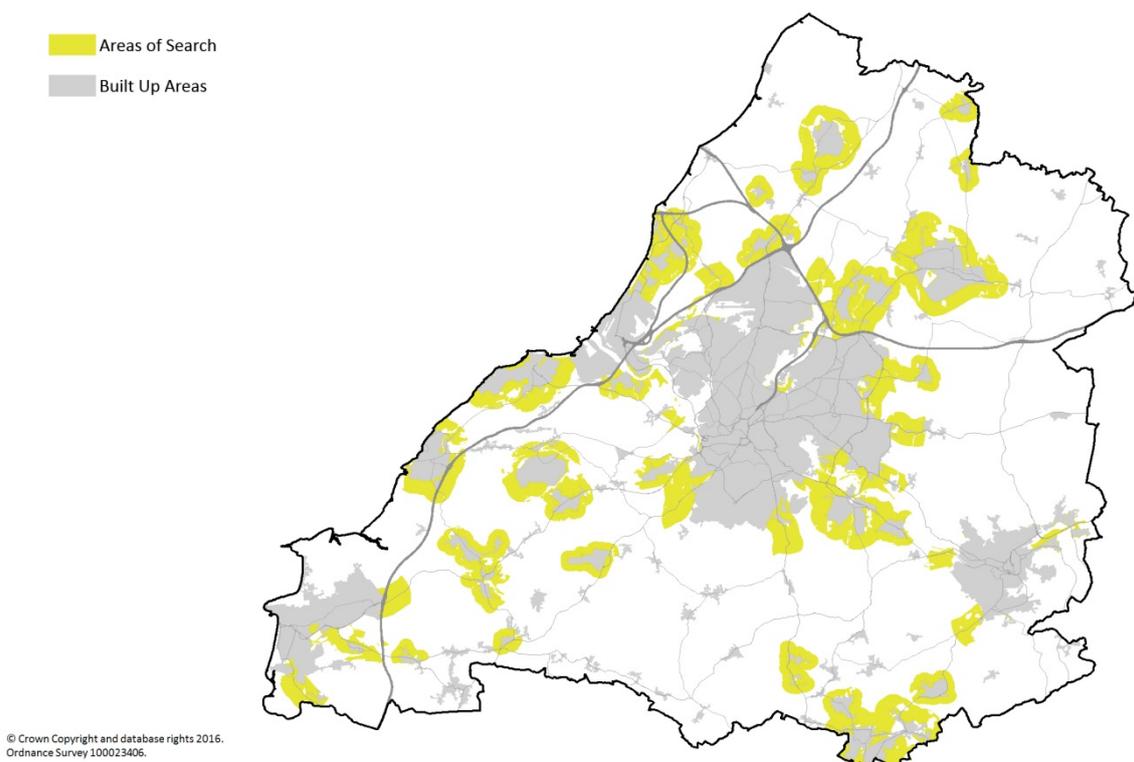
3.2 For the three largest settlements, Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare, Areas of Search were focussed on the main transport corridors going into/out of the main urban areas. This approach was used as it was considered that these locations would be more accessible to employment, services and facilities within the urban areas and be easier places to provide transport infrastructure to support new development. A combination of a 1,600m buffer around the built-up area and an 800m buffer either side of A-roads and B-roads has been used to identify these Areas of Search.

3.3 The 1,600m / 800m distances were used as it was considered that the area identified could accommodate a new accessible neighbourhood (800m is approximately 10 minutes walking distance). This was based on the approach used by the Wolfson Economics prize winning entry by Urbed which identified new neighbourhoods with a radius of 800m. The Manual for Streets (Department for Transport, 2007) also refers to walkable

neighbourhoods as typically characterised by having a range of facilities within 10 minutes' (up to about 800 m) walking distance of residential areas which residents may access comfortably on foot.

3.4 For smaller settlements a 400m buffer has been used and for the larger towns an 800m buffer has been used. These distances are approximately 5 and 10 minute walk time from the edge of settlements. Detailed accessibility of locations to the existing settlements has been considered as part of the assessment process.

Figure 2. Areas of Search



3.5 The Areas of Search buffers provided a starting point to guide the identification of potential land around larger settlements.

4.0 Stage 3: Defining Assessment Areas

4.1 To produce more realistic areas for assessment, the Areas of Search were used as a guide to defining Assessment Areas.

4.2 These areas were created by snapping boundaries to linear features including field boundaries, roads, railways and rivers. Some areas were not included where the areas were

isolated and not well connected or accessible to the existing settlements. Some of the areas were also not included because of local specific issues or constraints.

4.3 The general extent of Assessment Areas was often shaped by a number of significant environmental assets and physical constraint listed in Appendix 1.

4.4 Land within the Green Belt was considered as part of the assessment, as the National Planning Policy Framework allows Green Belt boundaries to be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan.

4.5 Some of the areas around settlements have then been sub-divided into smaller units for assessment purposes. The approach included consideration of clear strategic delineations between areas reflecting broad geographically distinct parts of settlements. The sub-division of areas supported a more focussed approach to the assessment of areas, provided clearer evidence to support the development of the Joint Spatial Plan and Sustainability Appraisal, and to identify the broad capacity opportunities for delivering development at the Strategic Locations.

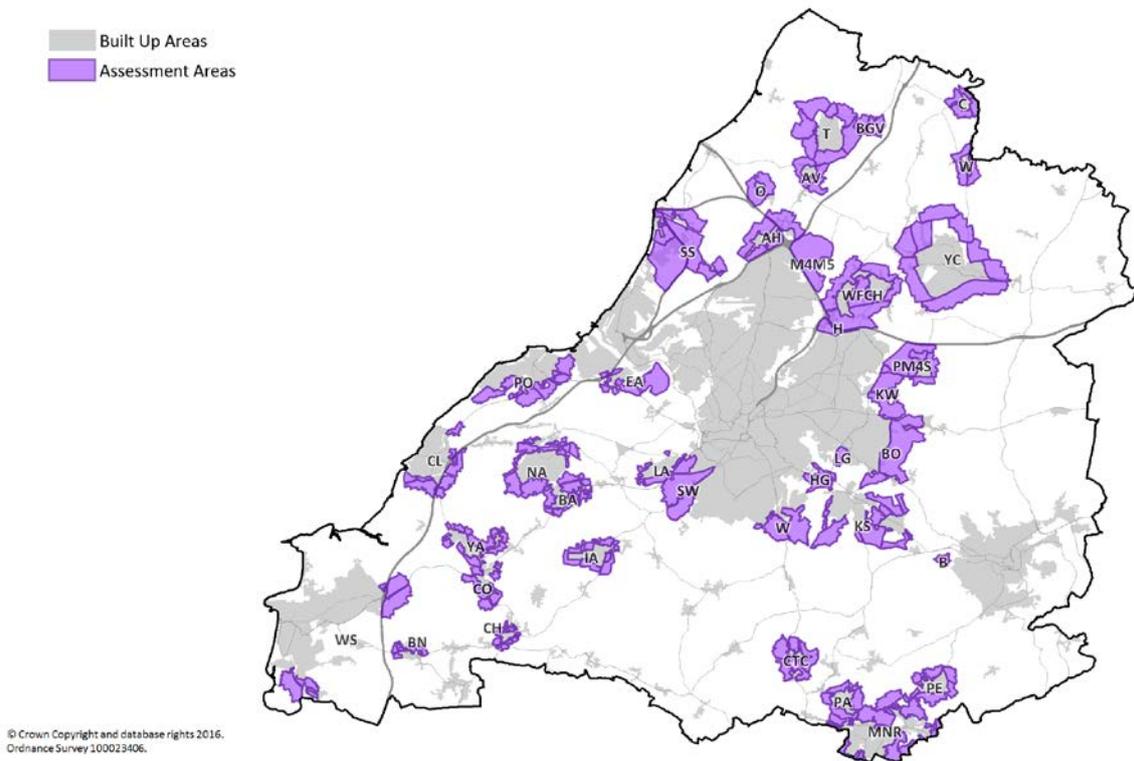
4.6 Some land beyond the areas of search were included with the assessment areas where sites had been submitted as part of the Call for Sites or in response to the Issues and Options consultation and the site was considered a reasonable development option.

4.7 Table 2 below sets out the number of Assessment Area Cells at each place. The Assessment Areas are shown in Figure 3. This information is also presented in a large format in the assessment dashboards.

Table 2. Places with number of Assessment Area Cells

Unitary Authority	Place Code	Place	Number of Assessment Area Cells
B&NES	B	West of Twerton	1
B&NES	CTC	Clutton & Temple Cloud	5
B&NES/BRISTOL	HG	Hicks Gate	1
B&NES	KS	Keynsham & Saltford	6
B&NES	MNR	Midsomer Norton, Radstock and Westfield	7
B&NES	PA	Paulton	4
B&NES	PE	Peasedown St John	4
B&NES	W	Whitchurch	2
NSOM	BA	Backwell	2
NSOM	BN	Banwell	3
NSOM	CH	Churchill	3
NSOM	CL	Clevedon	3
NSOM	CO	Congresbury	2
NSOM	EA	Easton-in-Gordano	2
NSOM	IA	Bristol Airport	4
NSOM	LA	Long Ashton	2
NSOM	NA	Nailsea	4
NSOM	PO	Portishead	2
NSOM/BRISTOL	SW	Ashton Vale	1
NSOM	WS	Weston-super-Mare	2
NSOM	YA	Yatton	3
SGLOS	AH	Almondsbury / Hortham	4
SGLOS	AV	Alveston	2
SGLOS	BGV	Buckover Garden Village	1
SGLOS	BO	Bridgeyate / Oldland Common	2
SGLOS	C	Charfield	4
SGLOS	H	Hambrook	1
SGLOS	KW	East of Kingswood Warmley	3
SGLOS	LG	Longwell Green	1
SGLOS	M4M5	North of M4/M5	1
SGLOS	O	Olveston	2
SGLOS	PM4S	Pucklechurch & M4 to Shortwood	5
SGLOS	SS	Sevenside	5
SGLOS	T	Thornbury	7
SGLOS	W	Wickwar	2
SGLOS	WFCH	Winterbourne, Frampton Cotterell, Coalpit Heath	5
SGLOS	YC	Yate / Chipping Sodbury	8
Total		37 Places	116 Assessment Area Cells

Figure 3. Assessment Areas



5.0 Stage 4: Potential capacity assessment

5.1 The assessment process has primarily been focussed on identifying the potential of broad locations for strategic housing-led development, rather than the suitability of individual specific sites. At this stage locations have not been considered for strategic employment land provision. The assessment has therefore not included the Bristol Airport Assessment Area.

5.2 Following the definition of their geographical boundaries, the suitability of Assessment Areas have been assessed through collecting and considering a wide range of information including: Call for Sites, national and local designations, physical constraints and other considerations such as archaeology/heritage, ecology, landscape and transport. To assess the areas specialist officer input available in each of the local authorities and existing evidence has guided the approach taken.

5.3 Land was not considered suitable in principle for strategic development where it is designated as a significant environmental asset or identified as a physical constraint. These significant environmental assets and physical constraints were: Flood Zone 3b (functional floodplain), Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Common Land, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, World Heritage Site, Registered Battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens, Conservation Areas, National Trust Inalienable Land, National Nature Reserves, Ramsar Sites, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Sites of

Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Ancient Woodland, and Local Nature Reserves (LNR). Appendix 1 sets out the detailed justification for not considering this land suitable for strategic development.

5.4 As part of the assessment it was also considered that land was not generally considered suitable for strategic development where the following list of environmental assets and physical constraints applied:

- Settings around heritage assets (Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, World Heritage Site.);
- Existing development and land-uses – e.g. solar farms, cemeteries, telecommunications, allotments, woodland, existing water bodies including watercourses, large ponds, etc.;
- Noise buffers around motorways, main roads and railways;
- Land around significant overhead power lines;
- Hazard zones around Gas / Oil pipelines;
- High landscape value areas/views of high importance;
- Significant slope where it is considered that development would not be reasonably be feasible; and
- Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCl) and Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS).

5.5 The suitability of land has also been considered through the assessment against the following:

- Contaminated land / landfill sites / quarries;
- Green Infrastructure corridors (strategic in nature, i.e. along river valleys/flood zones (2/3), linking significant field boundaries, woodland blocks/SSSI/SNCl/LNRs and heritage assets, etc.) and green corridors along certain edges/features
- Recent planning permissions (at 31st March 2015)
- Sports pitches and other recreation;
- Buffers to existing uses/areas for amenity reasons;
- Buffers to undesirable uses (sewage farm, sub-stations, abattoirs etc.); and
- Local accessibility issues.

5.6 In addition to the considerations above, where disparate and isolated parcels of land have been identified, these parcels have not been considered suitable as they were not considered to present appropriate strategic locations for growth or contributing to sustainable communities / well planned places.

5.7 Strategic development potential has also been considered beyond the Assessment Areas in some locations where opportunities for further potential were identified e.g. related to transport work. These locations include Banwell, Churchill and Nailsea. In these places the dashboards presents the general extent of the area considered.

5.8 The outputs of this work are a series of findings for each place presented as dashboards including maps showing the Assessment Areas, key environmental assets and physical constraints, together with annotations of specific local issues or constraints.

Accompanying the maps are descriptions of the main constraints in each location together with a description of the potential land which may be suitable for strategic housing growth in the Joint Spatial Plan.

5.9 A number of other statutory assessments, including Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Habitats Regulations Assessment, and Sustainability Appraisal will also further inform the capacity assessment work.

5.10 This work will be further refined and developed in future to support the preparation of the Joint Spatial Plan. This evidence base, in combination with the other technical work being undertaken to support the Joint Spatial Plan, demonstrates the process for selecting locations with the potential to accommodate further strategic development. This work will also inform and support the preparation of each local authority's Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessments (HELAA) as part of preparing their respective Local Plans.

Appendix 1. Land not considered suitable for strategic development

Layer	Justification
Flood Zone 3b (functional floodplain)	NPPG: Housing is a 'more vulnerable use'. Development should not be permitted in Flood Zone 3b (functional floodplain).
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty	<p>NPPF Paragraph 14: Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or – specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.⁹ <p>9 For example, those policies relating to sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives (see paragraph 119) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast or within a National Park (or the Broads Authority); designated heritage assets; and locations at risk of flooding or coastal erosion.</p> <p>115. Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.</p>
Common Land	Development on common land is controlled under section 38 of the Commons Act 2006.
Listed Buildings	<p>NPPF: 132. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.</p> <p>Designated heritage asset: A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.</p>
Scheduled Ancient Monuments	See listed buildings.

World Heritage Site	See listed buildings.
Registered Battlefields	See listed buildings.
Registered Parks and Gardens	See listed buildings.
Conservation Areas	See listed buildings.
National Trust Inalienable Land	National Trust Act 1907: NT holdings can be declared inalienable which means they cannot be sold, mortgaged or even compulsorily purchased by the government (without a debate in Parliament).
National Nature Reserves	NNRs are declared by the statutory country conservation agencies under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
Ramsar Sites	<p>NPPF Paragraph 118:</p> <p>the following wildlife sites should be given the same protection as European sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation; – listed or proposed Ramsar sites;²⁶ and – sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on European sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites. <p>Ramsar sites: Wetlands of international importance, designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.</p>
Special Areas of Conservation	Special Areas of Conservation: Areas given special protection under the European Union’s Habitats Directive, which is transposed into UK law by the Habitats and Conservation of Species Regulations 2010.
Special Protection Areas	Special Protection Areas: Areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within European Union countries. They are European designated sites, classified under the Birds Directive.
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	<p>NPPF Paragraph 14:</p> <p>Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or — specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.⁹ <p>⁹ For example, those policies relating to sites protected under the Birds and</p>

	<p>Habitats Directives (see paragraph 119) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast or within a National Park (or the Broads Authority); designated heritage assets; and locations at risk of flooding or coastal erosion.</p> <p>Site of Special Scientific Interest: Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.</p>
Ancient Woodland	<p>NPPF Paragraph 118:</p> <p>planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss;</p> <p>Ancient woodland: An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD.</p>
Local Nature Reserves	<p>Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are a statutory designation made under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.</p>