



# Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Plan Countryside & Green Gap Assessment

V2.0 February 2023

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# 1. Introduction



## 1.1. What is a Neighbourhood Plan

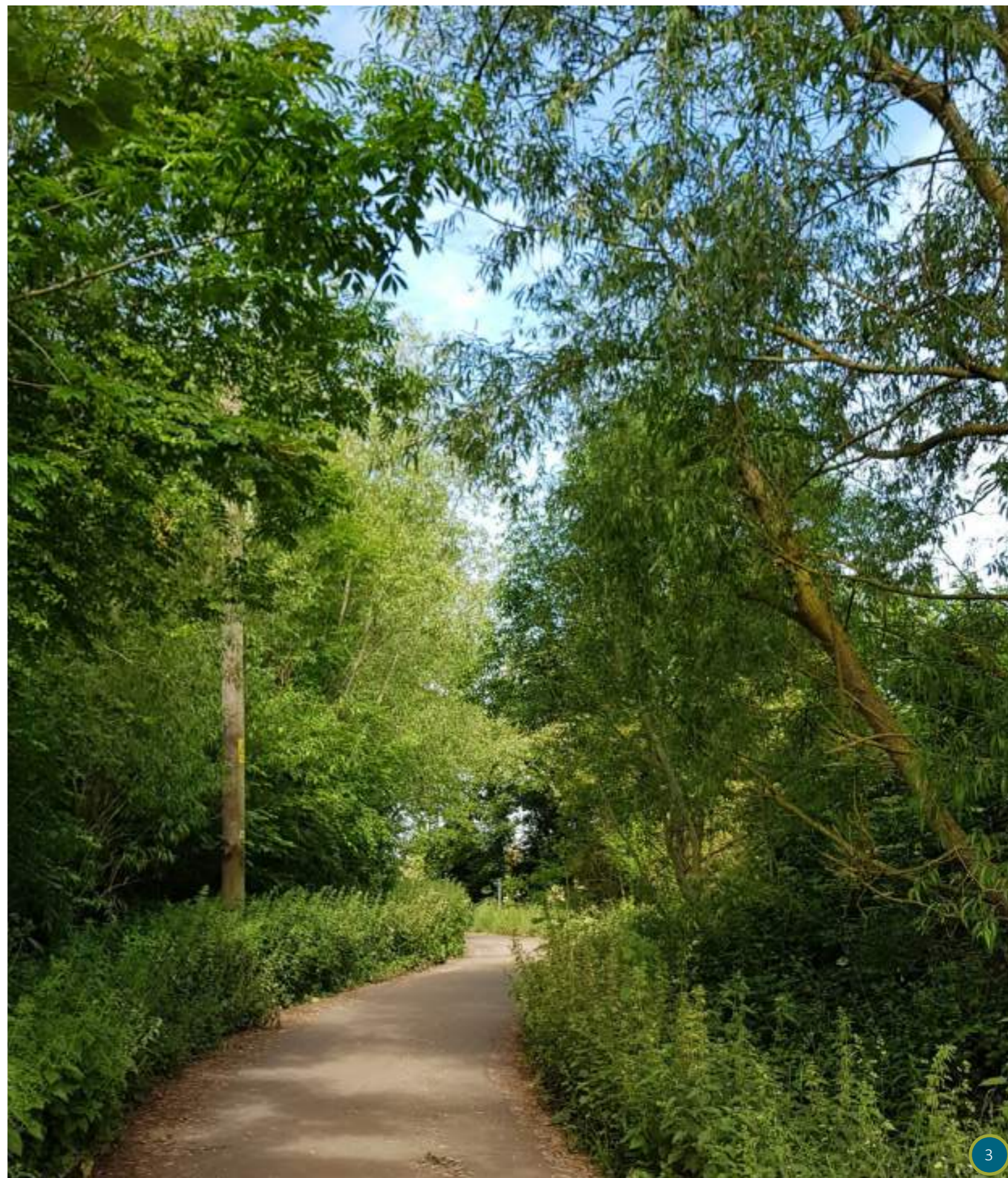
The Localism Act 2011 introduces the right for communities to shape their local areas by creating their own Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). Sutton Courtenay Parish Council is currently in the process of preparing the Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Plan, which “*gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area*” (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2014).

## 1.2. Purpose of this Document

The study has been produced for a number of reasons, but most importantly to inform the preparation of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

In order to successfully plan for the future growth and development of the Parish and to ensure that such growth is undertaken without detriment to the landscape setting of the village it is important that the vulnerabilities of the landscape setting are fully assessed.

The aim of this report is therefore to highlight the uniqueness of Sutton Courtenay’s landscape setting and assesses the physical and historical links between the countryside and the village. This report also examines the possible risks to Sutton Courtenay identity as a result of development proposals and proposes a number of green gaps to ensure that the landscape setting of the village is neither eroded or degraded.





## 2. National and Local Policy and Guidance



## 2.1. National Policy Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was adopted by the Government in March 2012 and revised in February and July 2021. The NPPF sets out how the Government intends to deliver sustainable development through the planning process. It expressly states that sustainable development is about achieving positive growth, balancing economic, environmental and social considerations.

Whilst there is a strong presumption in favour of sustainable development, the framework also recognises the finite nature and value of our built heritage and the natural environment.

Section 12 of the NPPF sets out the main policies in respect to the importance of design in the planning process, it includes the following criterion in relation to landscape:

- Policies should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

The following approach is set out for the historic environment:

- There should be a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment.
- When considering the impact of proposals on a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Substantial harm should be exceptional, whilst less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the development.

Part 15 seeks to protect and enhance valued landscapes by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and recognising the wider benefits including natural capital and ecosystem services.

## 2.3. Local Plan

The development plan for the Parish currently comprises the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (Dec 2016) and the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (Oct 2019). The Local Plan identifies a number of key challenges and opportunities that are faced by the district and these are focused around four thematic areas.

- *building healthy and sustainable communities,*
- *supporting economic prosperity,*
- *supporting sustainable transport and accessibility, and*
- *protecting the environment and responding to climate change.*

The following policies are relevant to the protection of the landscape surrounding Sutton Courtenay:

*Core Policy 4: Meeting Our Housing Needs* identifies the housing target for the Vale of White Horse and prescribes how that target will be achieved. 220

houses are allocated in Sutton Courtenay at Land East of Sutton Courtenay.

Core Policy 4 also includes a presumption in favour of “*sustainable development within the existing built area of ....Larger Villages*”, of which Sutton Courtenay is one.

*Core Policy 6: Meeting Business and Employment Needs* identifies land for future employment development. None of the strategic sites are within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary, however both Milton Park and Didcot A immediately adjoin it.

The Local Plan includes developed three Sub-Area Strategies and Sutton Courtenay falls within the South East Vale Sub-Area. The adjacent plan highlights the relevant allocations, designations and constraints affecting this sub area. Further detail on the area specific policies apply is provided below:

*Core Policy 15: Spatial Strategy for the South East Vale Sub-Area* reinforces the settlement hierarchy and development allocations identified above.

*Core Policy 16: Didcot A Power Station* prescribes that the former power station would be considered suitable for a “*high quality mixed-use development*” particularly “*employment (B1, B2 and B8) but also residential (C1, C2 and C3), ancillary retail, an element of bulky goods retail, leisure (D2) and community uses*”.

*Core Policy 16b: Didcot Garden Town* requires proposals for development within the Didcot Garden Town to demonstrate how it can positively contribute to the achievement of the Didcot Garden Town Masterplan principles.

*Core Policy 17: Transport Delivery for the South East Vale Sub-Area* recognises the need to “*mitigate the impact of the planned growth across Science Vale*”. As a consequence “*all development within the South East Vale Sub-Area will be required to contribute towards the infrastructure identified within the Science Vale Area Strategy*”.

*Core Policy 18: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Highway Improvements* safeguards land to support the delivery of the prescribed transport infrastructure schemes. Of relevance to Sutton Courtenay are:

- *Science Bridge and A4130 re-routing through the Didcot A site.*
- *A4130 dualling between Milton Interchange and Science Bridge.*
- *A new Harwell Link Road between the B4493 and A417 and Southern Didcot Spine Road.*
- *A new strategic road connection between the A415 east of Abingdon-on-Thames and the A4130 north of Didcot, including a new crossing of the River Thames.*
- *Improvement of the strategic cycle network.*

Paragraph 5.93 of the Local Plan also prescribes that land will be safeguarded “*to deliver a South Abingdon bypass crossing the Thames and connecting with the A415 and some junction improvement schemes*”.

The Local Plan includes a number of District wide policies, which are also

relevant to the sustainable development of Sutton Courtenay. A full list of those policies of relevance to Sutton Courtenay is provided at appendix A. A summary of those of policies that specifically relate to the challenge of meeting the local community's needs whilst preserving its historic character and environment, is provided below.

*Core Policy 35: Promoting Public Transport, Cycling and Walking* aims to achieve modal shift away from the private car to more sustainable modes of travel.

*Core Policy 37: Design and Local Distinctiveness* requires proposals for new development to be of high quality Design and sets out 12 criteria against which development will be assessed. *Core Policy 38: Design Strategies for Strategic and Major Development Sites* requires that these design criteria be taken on board in master-planning for all strategic allocations.

*Core Policy 39: The Historic Environment* seeks to protect and enhance important townscape assets such as Conservation Areas and Listed buildings.

*Core Policy 40: Sustainable Design and Construction* promotes a design led approach to tackling climate change.

*Core Policy 44: Landscape* seeks to protect the key features that contribute to the nature and quality of the Vale of White Horse District's landscape, including trees, hedgerows, woodland, field boundaries, watercourses and water bodies, important landscape settings, topographical features, areas or features of cultural and historic value, important views and and tranquillity.

*Core Policy 46: Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity* seeks to “*conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity in the district*”.

The Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (LPP2) set out a number of development management policies, a full schedule of which is provided at Appendix A. Development Policy 29 is of particular note to this document:

Development Policy 29: *Settlement Character and Gaps*  
 “*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 be considered in the context of Core Policy 4 in the Local Plan 2031: Part 1, and in addition, will only be permitted provided that:*

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



## 3. Analysis

### 3.1. Development Pressure

Sutton Courtenay is experiencing significant development pressure from sources including:

- Local Plan Strategic Housing Allocation.
- Milton Park.
- Didcot Garden Town.
- New transport infrastructure projects.
- Radcot Green site (being promoted).

The village has also had a number of recent urban extensions including to the north of Milton Road and south of Appleford Road, with further applications for planning permission on un-allocated greenfield sites coming forward in recent years. Each of these projects in isolation has the potential to erode the integrity and separate identity of the village, a fact that has been recognised in the Didcot Delivery Plan, October 2017, with an “*undertaking to protect the green buffers surrounding the necklace of villages neighbouring Didcot*”. This is also supported by the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2, Development Policy 29: Settlement Character and Gaps, which seeks to maintain the “*physical and visual separation between settlements*”.

The Didcot Delivery Plan sets out the proposed buffers to the necklace of villages surrounding the new garden town. Figure 6 highlights the indicative location of these gaps, which were identified using broad brush principles. The Delivery plan prescribes that “*these need to be verified on site, with a greater understanding of heritage assets of each village, extent of conservation areas and mapping the visual envelope of the settlement within the countryside*”. “*Once mapped and evaluated the extent and components of the green buffer should be included in the local neighbourhood plan of each village to ensure that this asset can be captured*”.

Using Figure 6 as a starting point for analysis, the following section considers the land surrounding Sutton Courtenay and seeks to “*define a clearly defensible boundary to the landscape setting of the village using a baseline study to include the following tasks*”:

- Evaluate landscape character assessment information.
- Desktop analysis of Ordnance Survey maps to establish the parcels of land which relate to the village envelope on all sides.
- Evaluation of the heritage assets, with a mapping of conservation areas, listed buildings and historic landscape features.
- Review existing archaeological records and note any local designations or monuments.
- Mapping of tree preservation orders and protected trees and woodland.
- Mapping of biodiversity assets designated local nature reserves or other wildlife protection areas.
- Use visual assessment to analyse the visual relationship between parcels of land and check for intervening vegetation which may separate landscape compartments from the village. Where landscape compartments are contiguous and have a strong visual connection to the village in question the whole parcel of land should be included in the green buffer. Remnants of historic landscape structure are particularly vulnerable to loss and careful identification of these elements should be made by an experienced practitioner in the field and through mapped study.
- Topography: where landscape compartments are broken by a change in topography, which limits the visible land only that within the view should be included’

#### Green Gaps - Didcot Delivery Plan



## 3.2. Evaluate Landscape Character

159 National Character Areas (NCAs) have been developed for the varying landscapes in England. Sutton Courtenay is sited within NCA 108, the Upper Thames Clay Vales, which is a broad belt of open, gently undulating lowland farmland. It is a predominantly agricultural landscape, with arable fields, dairy herds, hedges and hedgerow trees and field trees. Industrial activities at Abingdon and Didcot, and in particular the power station, visually dominate much of the open character of the Vale landscape.

The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) provides an investigation of landscape character and biodiversity across the Oxfordshire county. The landscape character areas surrounding Sutton Courtenay are identified as River Meadowlands and Lowland Village Farmlands.

- River Meadowlands
- Lowland Village Farmlands

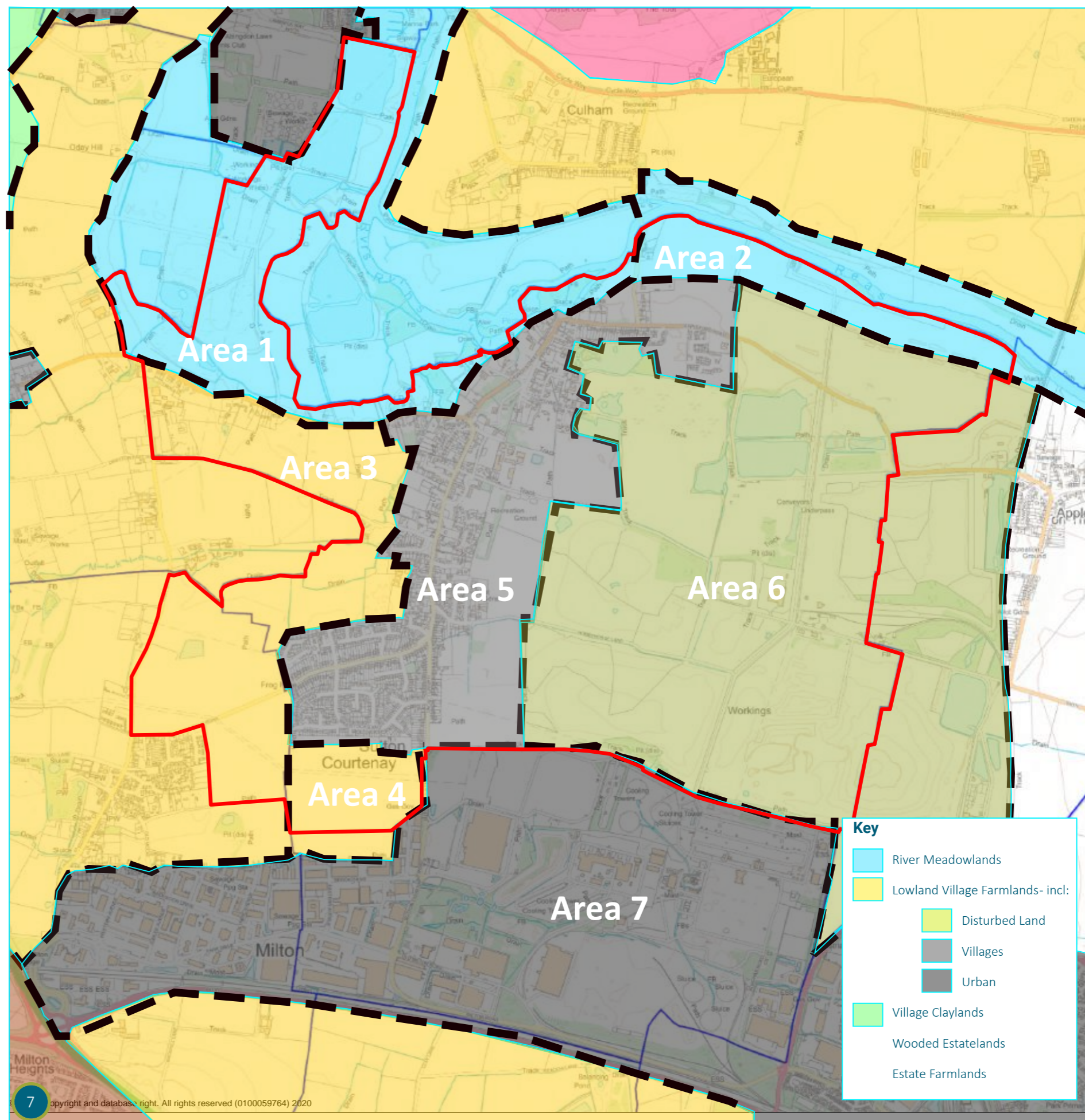
The *Vale of White Horse Landscape Character Assessment, 2017* identified the different Landscape Character Types found within Sutton Courtenay parish. It identified the following two main types of landscape:

- Landscape Type RF- River Floodplain
- Landscape Type VL- Lower Vale Farmland

The *Sutton Courtenay Landscape Study, Steven Warnock, 2019* provides a more in-depth analysis of the two distinct types of landscape that occur within Sutton Courtenay Parish.

- River Meadowlands- *This is a low-lying, linear landscape associated with alluvial soils along the River Thames that are prone to seasonal flooding. Where there is regular flooding patches of wet grassland and marsh occur. Such features evoke a strong sense of naturalness and give these meadowland landscapes a special quality that is now rare in Oxfordshire. Woodland is largely restricted to secondary tree cover and scrub around flooded gravel pits, or associated with dense corridors of willow and ash bordering ditches and watercourses.*
- Lowland Village Farmlands- *To the north of Didcot this landscape is associated with recent fluvio-glacial drift which gives rise to the relatively flat, low lying terrain around Sutton Courtenay. Intensive arable production is a dominant feature in this landscape, resulting in a variable field pattern with many gappy/low cut hedgerows. Tree cover is limited, but many of the streamlines crossing the river terrace are well treed, often creating a strong sense of enclosure and scale in this flat landscape.*

These two landscape character areas are then further sub-divided into 7 separate local areas as described below:



## River Meadowlands:

- Area 1** River Meadowlands /gravel pits to the north of Drayton Road and west of Sutton Bridge - A mixed area of land use, including a series of flooded and restored gravel pits within a matrix of fields used for livestock grazing.
- Area 2** River Meadowlands to the east of Sutton Bridge - A strip of fields along the alluvial floodplain, bounded by the river to the north and land affected by sand and gravel extraction to the south. This is an intensively managed arable landscape.

## Lowland Village Farmlands:

- Area 3** Village Terrace Farmlands to the south of Drayton Road - This is the main area of Village Terrace Farmlands within the parish and it links well with the adjoining areas of this landscape within the parishes of Drayton and Milton.
- Area 4** Village Terrace Farmlands to the south of the village - A small area of Village Terrace Farmlands surrounded in part by residential development within the villages of Sutton Courtenay and Milton and a major area of commercial development to the south and east. Only to the west, beyond Sutton Road and the village of Milton, is there any link to the main area of this landscape type.
- Area 5** Sutton Courtenay village and adjoining eastern plots - Sutton Courtenay, displays evidence of having been planned around a main street, with lanes enabling access to river meadows and arable land in former Medieval Open fields.
- Area 6** Disturbed land to the east of the village - A former area of Village Terrace Farmlands extending into the neighbouring parish of Appleford. This area has been completely changed in character by extensive sand and gravel extraction and subsequent re-use as a large scale waste disposal site.
- Area 7** Urban area bordering Didcot to the south - A former area of Village Terrace Farmlands, extending to the parish boundary along the railway line and beyond, that has been completely changed to an urban landscape - including the old Didcot power station and associated more recent commercial/industrial development.

Area 7 falls outside the neighbourhood plan boundary and is therefore not evaluated further for this study.



### 3.3. Establish Land Parcels

The Sutton Courtenay Landscape Study, Steven Warnock, 2019 subdivides each of the areas within the neighbourhood plan boundary into parcels, which following analysis of *Ordnance Survey maps* and on-site features, have been further subdivided. Figure 16 sets out the location of each parcel. A description of each area and the parcels within is provided below.

#### Area 1

The River Thames and its associated water-body features, including Sutton Pools and the Culham Cut are the most notable countryside features to the north of Sutton Courtenay. On the eastern edge of Area 1 is a 0.15 ha area of land comprising three islands that in part include parcel A1f. A1f abuts the weirs on the River Thames that feed Sutton Pools. The parcel is heavily treed, with narrow unmade paths running within the tree cover, that is part of the weir structure that crosses the River Thames at Sutton Pools. These paths are well used by walkers, as well as for fishing and informal recreation. Live-on boats and pleasure crafts are moored alongside these paths. The northern bank of the River Thames is accessible via public footpath (373/01).

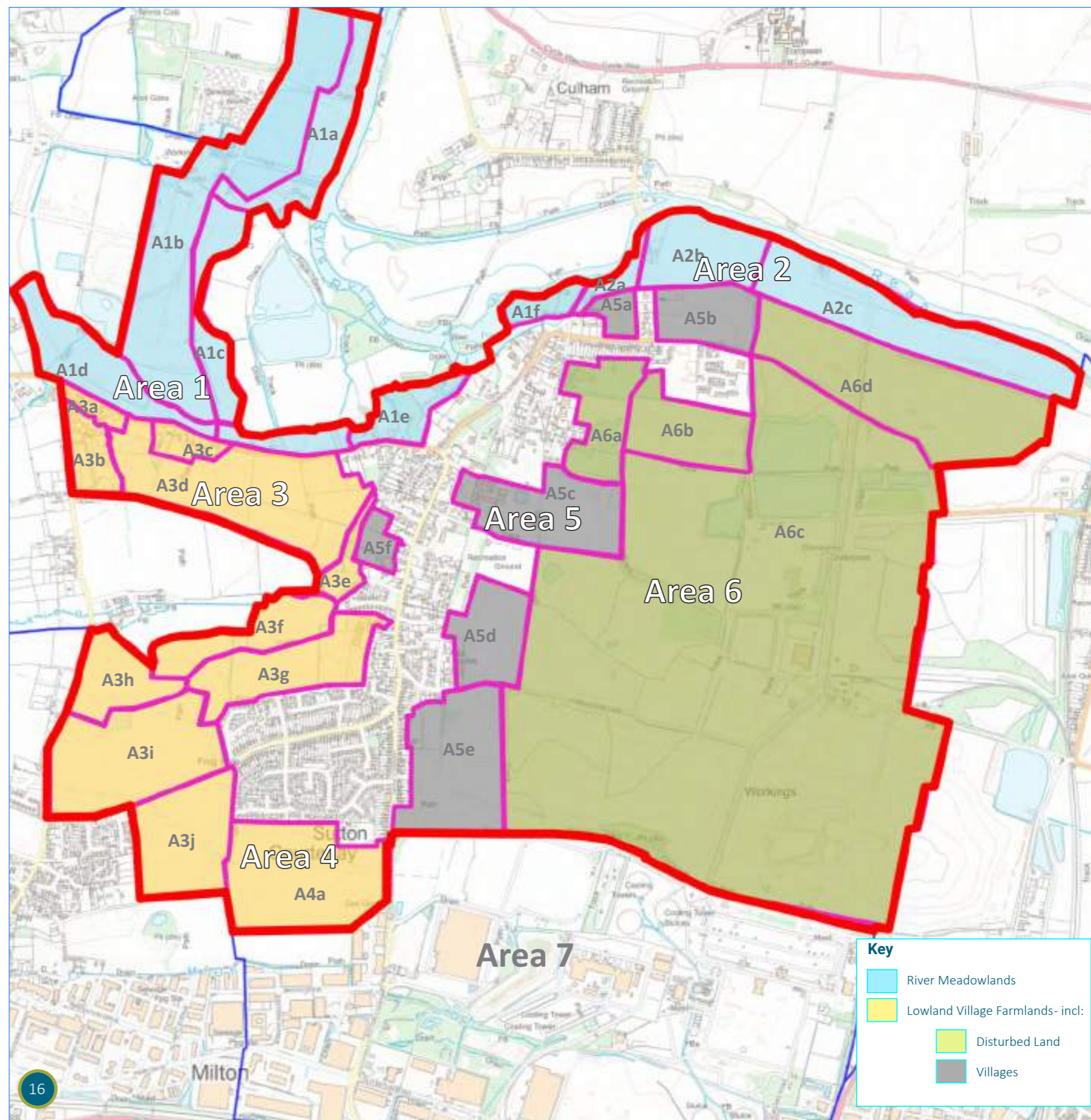
To the west of Sutton Courtenay and north of Drayton Road is an area of farmland divided by Hanson Way- Peep-O-Day Lane (A1d and A1e). The fields are classified as Grade 4 agricultural land, with a habitat typical of wet grassland reflecting the location of the land within Flood Zones 2 and 3. Historical field boundaries are still discernible here, with some deciduous tree and hedgerow planting forming the boundaries.

A former gravel pit, which has been restored as a water-body adjoins the agricultural land to the north and extends to the River Thames. Beyond this, within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary is further agricultural land (A1b) and another former gravel pit water-body, which aligns Abingdon waste water treatment plant on its western boundary.

#### Area 2

Area 2 comprises a strip of intensively managed arable fields running east along the alluvial floodplain of the River Thames. Access to the southern bank of the river is provided along the western edge of this area in parcel A2a via public footpath reference 373/03, which can be accessed from Appleford Road. Boundaries towards the south of this parcel are strongly landscaped but further north attractive riverside views are available, and Sutton Bridge can be seen where the riverside trees are less dense. Footpath 373/03 joins the relatively narrow Abingdon Road just south of Sutton Bridge.

To the east of Abingdon Road, the large agricultural field (A2b) is strongly enclosed with boundary planting, with the planting particularly dense along the northern boundary with the River Thames. Further east within parcel A2c- marks the northernmost section of the Bridge Farm sand and gravel workings. These sections of Bridge Farm Quarry which are known as Phase 6, 7a and 7b were approved for planning in June 2018 and are due to be completed and “*all associated pumps, plant and machinery shall be removed and the site shall be restored..... no later than 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021*” (condition no. 2 of MW.0049/19). The restoration scheme for parcel A2c is set out in figure 26 and includes restoration to waterbodies, with marginal grassland and additional tree and shrub planting to supplement the retained landscape planting.



### Area 3

Area 3 comprises a large tract of land to the west of the village. This tract of land is segmented by Milton Road and the northern boundary is defined by Drayton Road.

The land immediately to the south of Drayton Road (A3d) comprises farmland, which is predominately classified as Grade 2 agricultural land, largely in arable use. Some hedgerows remain as field boundaries but the landscape is predominately large, flat open fields which forms the setting for the both the villages of Sutton Courtenay and Drayton. The land is crossed by Drayton East Way, which is well-used track connecting Sutton Courtenay with Drayton.

On the south-western boundary of this part of area 3 is a small area of residential development, including a section of ribbon development along Drayton Road (A3a and A3c), the former which includes a recently approved development of 3 detached dwellings. Immediately to the south of A3a is an area of commercial development and the Drayton Highways Depot (A3b).

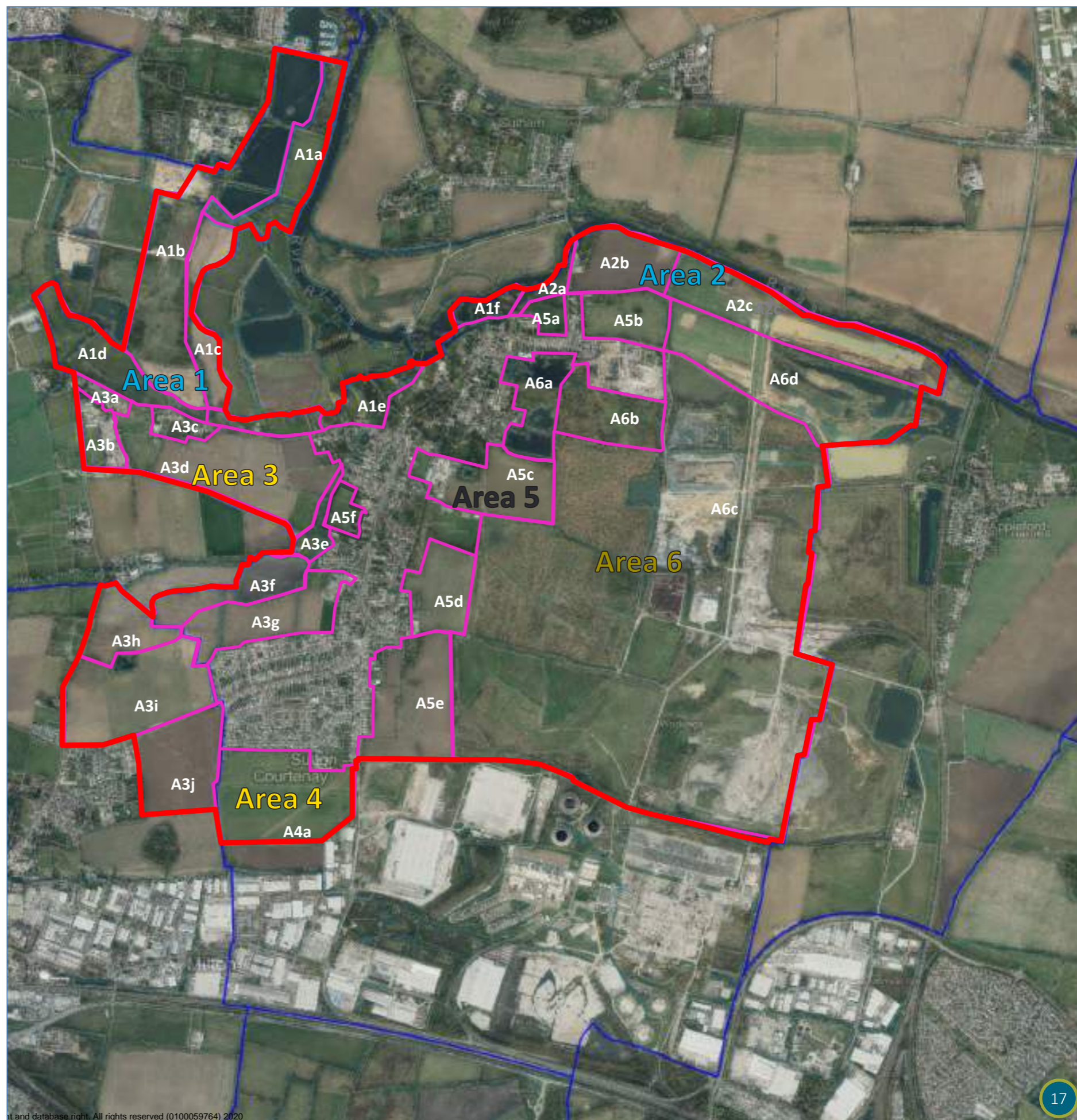
Further south again and bisected by Milton Road in another tract of Grade 2 agricultural land. These parcels of land (A3e- A3j) are entirely flat and largely devoid of any internal trees or hedgerows, with only distant field boundary planting visible from along Milton (Sutton) Road. The sense of openness in this location is marked, with a distinct visual foreshortening between the villages of Milton and Sutton Courtenay. The boundary with Sutton Courtenay is marked by close boarded timber fences, domestic hedges and planting, with glimpses of residential properties beyond.

### Area 4

The countryside to the south of Sutton Courtenay is marked by a relatively small stretch of land, known as Kelaart's Field (A4a). Although entirely within Sutton Courtenay Parish, the southernmost part of this site falls outside the Neighbourhood Plan Boundary. The entire site falls within the boundary of the proposed Didcot Garden Town, a status that was granted in 2015 and envisions an increase in population of Didcot from 26,000 to 60,000.

The site is entirely flat and visually open, with some patchy hedgerow trees along the southern and eastern boundaries. The eastern boundary is broadly un-vegetated, while some planting does occur along the northern boundary adjoining the Sutton Courtenay Church of England Primary School. The site is of high recreational value for the village as the field is criss-crossed with paths, including some permissive paths and some historical but unregistered paths. In addition, a recently approved shared use cycle/pedestrian Path runs N/S parallel to the western boundary of Kelaart's field. The majority of the properties on Tyrell's Way and Bradstock's Way, adjoining Kelaart's Field, have access gates directly into the field from their properties and some have well maintained link paths.

South of Kelaart's field is the village of Milton (Area 7), which is outside the neighbourhood plan area. Immediately south of which is Milton Park, a 250-acre (1.0 km<sup>2</sup>) mixed use business and technology park operated by MEPC plc. It is on the site of a former Ministry of Defence depot between the A34 and Didcot Power Station. Milton Park is home to 7,500 people and 250 organisations. The centre plans to expand to a working population of 20,000 people by 2040. A Local Development Order has been adopted for Milton Park, which simplifies the planning process at the site for a period of 15 years.



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## Area 5

Area 5 includes the village of Sutton Courtenay and a number of field parcels that immediately adjoin the built up area, to the east, west and north.

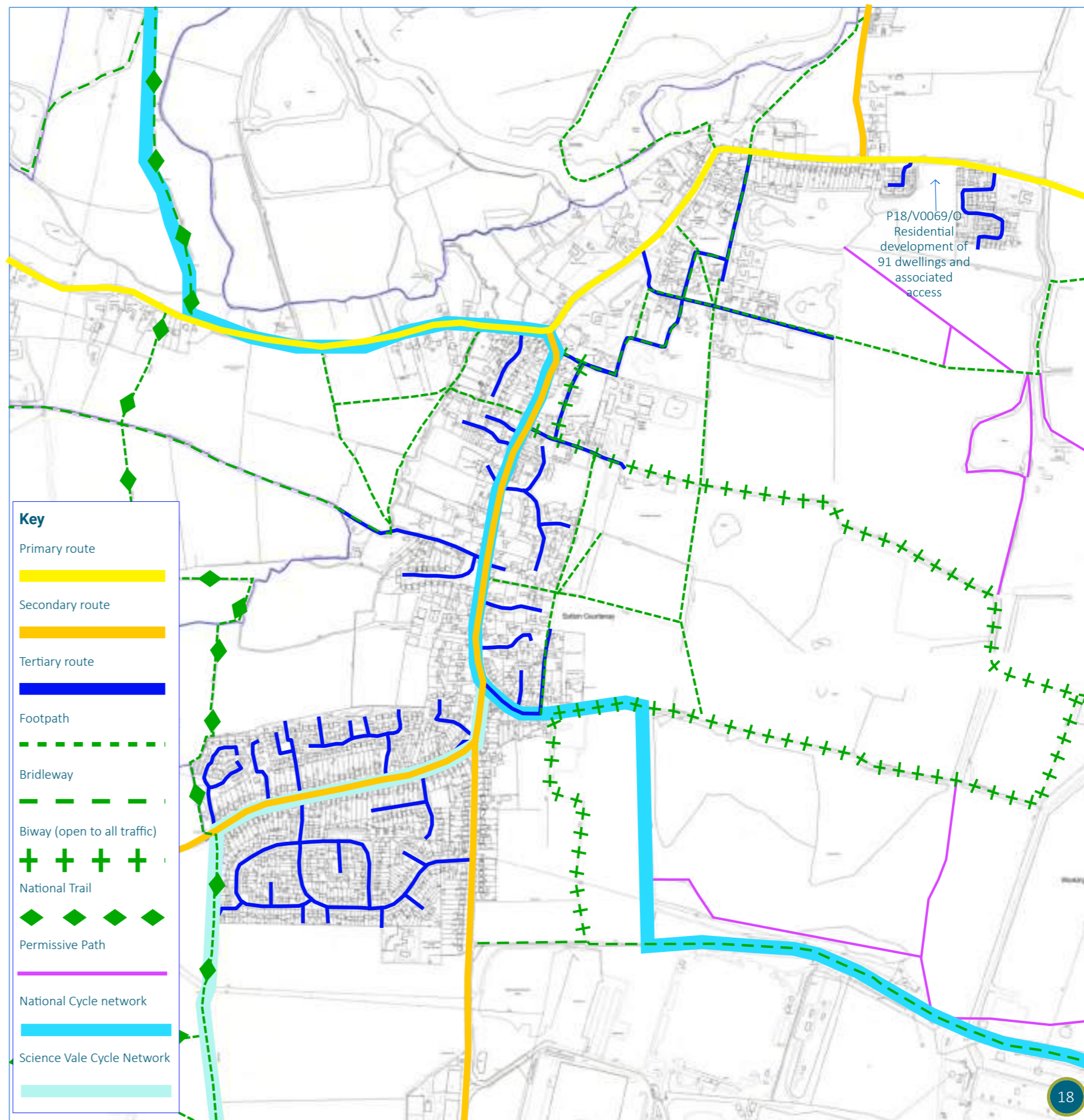
A5a comprises a parcel of agricultural land to the north of Appleford Road and bounded along its southern boundary by the ribbon development along Appleford Road. Footpath 373/03 defines the north-eastern boundary of the site with parcel A2a to the north.

Parcel A5b also comprises a parcel of agricultural land to the north of Appleford Road, though to the east of Abingdon Road. The western boundary of the site is defined by the ribbon development along Abingdon Road, with the remaining three boundaries defined by mature trees, which provide glimpsed views into the site. Further to the east is the site of the Bridge Farm Quarry (Area 6)

A5d comprises a parcel of land to the east of the village which is identified in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (Dec 2016) as a strategic allocation for 220 houses. The site itself predominantly comprises a flat and open arable field, which is accessed off Hobbyhorse Lane. The site is currently undeveloped as planning permission was refused in August 2019 due in part to the severe pressure on the existing road network, and due to on-site constraints such as flooding and inappropriateness due to its proximity to the operational landfill site. Remnants of former orchards are notable to the west of the site, where ancient fruit trees on land to the south of the cemetery, indicate a possible former orchard for Lady Place. Parcel A5d also contains the village hall, tennis courts and adjoining allotment gardens.

Towards the south of Area 5, immediately south of Hobbyhorse Lane are a series of a flat, agricultural fields (A5e), divided in places by stretches of hedgerow, particularly along Harwell Road, but elsewhere visually open. Towards the north of the parcel is a small woodland copse and the site of the former Catholic Church. The southern boundary is a metal fence with scrub and occasional trees. This land was the subject of an application for residential development, which was ultimately refused as the site represents Grade 2 and Grade 3 agricultural land. The officers report also highlighted that the site is “*an essential gap between Sutton Courtenay and Didcot*”. This parcel of land, in addition to a broad stretch from Hobbyhorse Lane to the River Thames, is included in the Didcot Delivery Plan (October 2017) as a proposed green gap which would function as a “*buffer to the necklace of villages*”.

Parcel A5f encompasses the patchwork of farm buildings, paddocks and orchards that remain close to or immediately adjoining the village core. These features are testament to the relationship of the village with the wider landscape. Elsewhere in the village, many of these open spaces have been infilled and developed, however Parcel A5f continues to be used as pony paddocks.



## Area 6

Area 6 represents an area of disturbed land which formally represented Lowland Village Farmland, but now provides a mix of operational, restored and historically restored mineral workings and landfill sites.

Closest to the village parcel A6a comprises three tree-lined water-bodies, which represent historic gravel extraction sites. Two of the water-bodies are accessed directly from Churchmere Road, while the northernmost lake is accessed via a fisherman's path at the northwest of Millennium Common as well as directly off All Saints Lane. These watercourses are predominately a leisure resource, particularly for walking and fishing.

To the east of parcel A6a is Millennium Common (A6b), a semi-natural area of scrub, grassland and woodland, which was created as an informal recreational resource for the village. The site can be accessed from Churchmere Road, although it is poorly linked to the village on its northern edge. Immediately north of the Millennium Common is an area of recent residential development fronting onto Appleford Road. This new residential infill development on Appleford Road is bounded by a chain link fence and deep drainage ditch creating a barrier for both residents and wildlife. To the east of Millennium Common is a large tract of land which comprises the Sutton Courtenay Landfill site (A6c). This site includes a the following waste developments

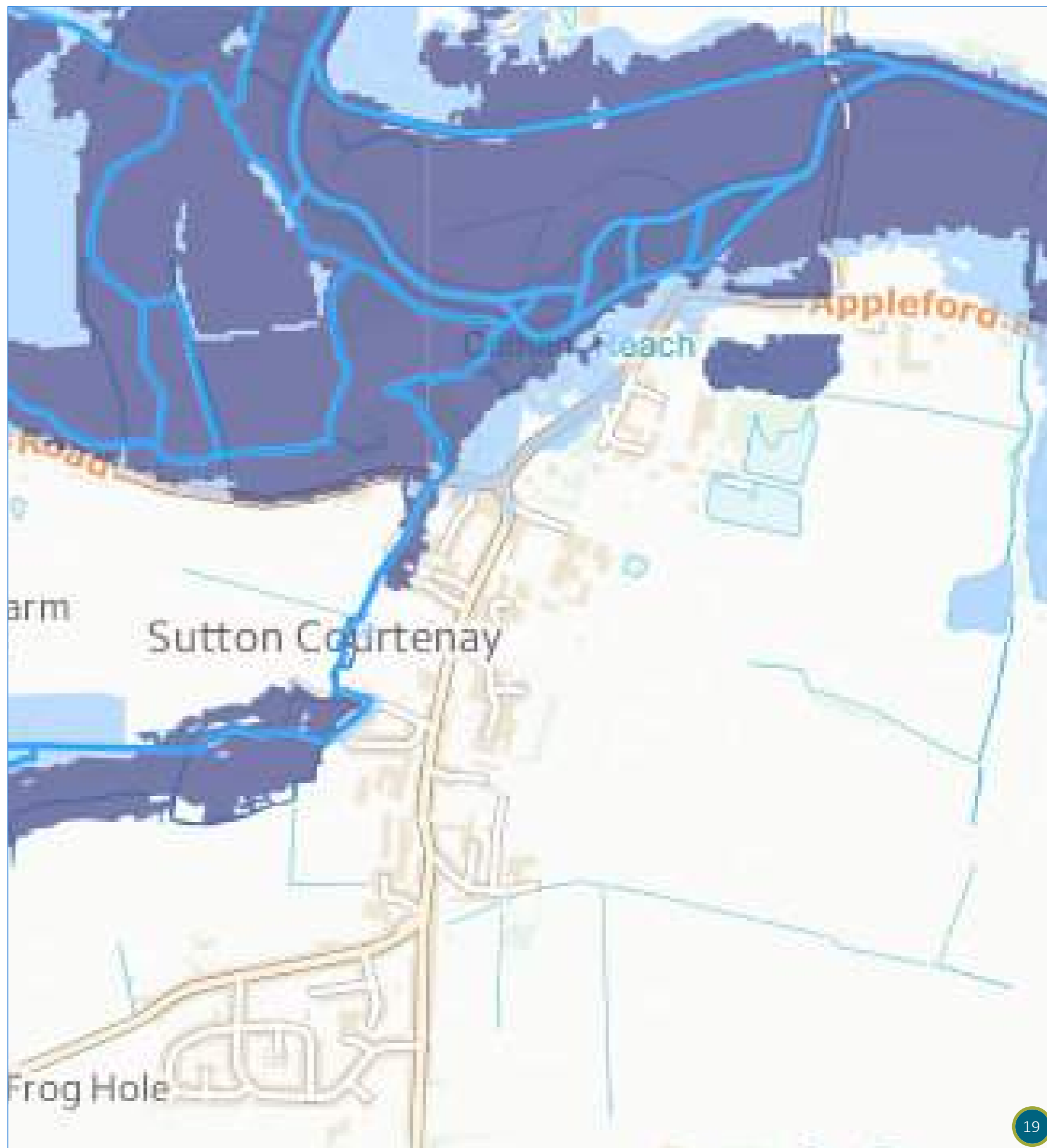
- Sutton Courtenay Composting Facility (Permit Ref: EPR/BP3295ET)
- Sutton Courtenay Landfill Site (Permit Ref: BV7001 | K)
- Sutton Courtenay Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) and Waste Transfer Station (WTS) (Permit Ref: EPR/NP3890VV)

A6c has been progressively restored to agriculture, creating substantial areas of grassland bounded by hedgerows and woodland shelterbelts. The agricultural land is being managed through sheep grazing and crops. It is understood that approximately 50% of the site is restored including Hobby Horse Lane North, Hobbyhorse Lane South and a large area immediately west of Appleford. There are a number of other smaller fields which are also fully restored.

A large tract of land to the south east continues to be used as landfill, with a licence to operate until 2031. Detailed restoration proposals for this area include is return to agricultural use as has already been done for a number of parcels to the west of the operational site.

Bridge Farm Quarry (A6d) lies to the north of the B4016 Appleford Road between the villages of Appleford and Sutton Courtenay. The quarry and the access from the plant site to the highway network contain land in both parishes. A mineral processing plant for the quarry material is located 650 metres south of the quarry, south of the B4016, within A6c. This was historically connected to the extraction area by conveyor, which ran beneath the road, however this has now failed and the remaining stockpiled sand and gravel is transported by road.

This area has been earmarked for the location of the proposed route of the new road linking the proposed new River Thames Crossing and the Science Bridge. In addition this area of land is being promoted as a potential future strategic housing allocation, known as Radcot Green. The promoted masterplan for the site includes proposals for between 2000 and 2500 new houses, with a proposed village centre where it is proposed to provide *healthcare, local shops, over 55's apartments, a public house and micro brewery, community facilities & a two form entry primary school.*



## 3.4. Heritage & Archaeology

### Area 1

Area 1 is shown on Rocque's map of 1761 as Oday Common. The land was enclosed during the nineteenth century and parts of these historic field boundaries still persist.

### Area 2

The western boundary of Area 2 (A2a) marks the original location of Sutton Courtenay Paper Mills. From 1697-1724, Sutton Mill produced paper for printing banknotes for the Bank of England. Paper production continued until the end of the 19th century.

Further north and east Abingdon Road leads to Sutton Bridge and Causeways, a Grade II listed structure built circa 1807. The bridge is notable having 3 round arches spanning the river and with causeways to north and south.

### Area 3

Area 3 very rich in archaeology, with an Iron Age settlement immediately to the south of Drayton Road and the site of a Roman Villa, at Hulgrove Farm.

### Area 4

Area 4 includes a Scheduled Ancient Monument (List Entry Number: 1004853, SM OX250). The monument "comprises an area of extensive cropmarks" which "are at their most concentrated on the eastern side of the scheduled area, with outlying linear cropmarks to the west, described as being typical of later prehistoric to Anglo-Saxon period features".

### Area 5

Area 5 encompasses the built up area of Sutton Courtenay, which contains three Grade I listed buildings, six Grade II\* listed buildings and 54 Grade II listed buildings as well as a Grade II registered garden in the village, at Sutton Courtenay Manor. The location of the listed buildings and gardens and the Sutton Courtenay conservation area are set out in Figure 20.

The land immediately adjoining the village has strong historic links to the village, historically being used as paddocks and / or orchards. 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.

There are numerous footpaths and tracks leading out from the village to the countryside. Prior to enclosure during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, these would connect the fields to farms within the settlement. These tracks remain an important part of life in the village. A number of the fields immediately adjacent to the village remain in mixed agricultural use and have retained their historic field boundaries.

### Area 6

Area 6 has a long industrial history with gravel extraction in the area believed to date back to 1764. The River Thames to the north of the site was historically used for the transport of aggregates from the area.

The three water-bodies that comprise area A6a are former quarry sites that have been restored to water-bodies surrounded by dense vegetation. The northernmost water-body is partly within the Sutton Courtenay Conservation Area and therefore makes an important contribution to its setting.





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Rocque's map of 1761 (Bodleian Library)



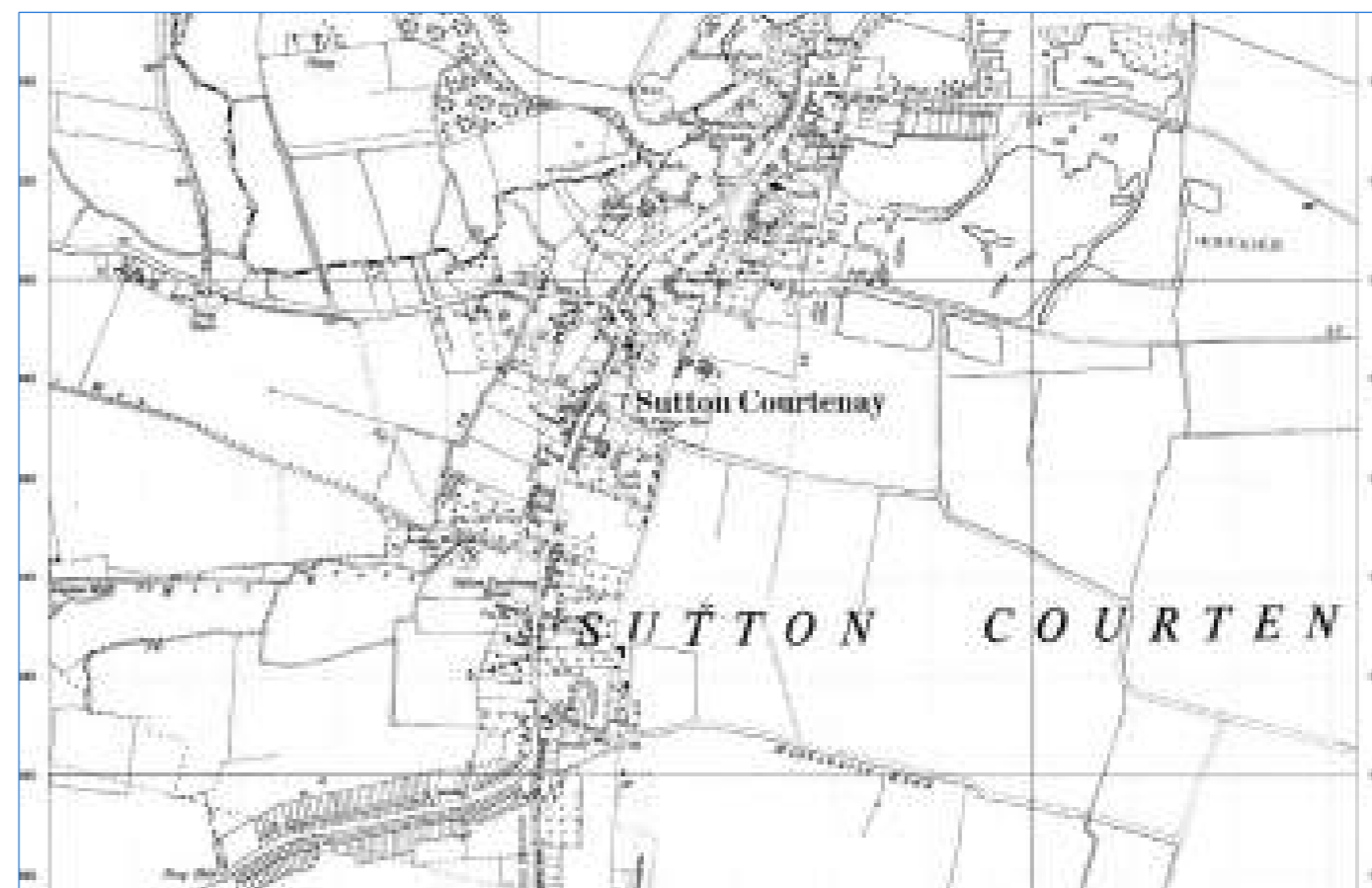
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Sutton Courtenay 1933



22

Sutton Courtenay 1900



24

Sutton Courtenay 1958

## 3.5. Biodiversity

### Area 1

Area 1 is predominately in agricultural use, though primarily for pasture, comprising rough grasslands. Where regular flooding occurs, patches of wet grassland and marsh can be observed. This river meadowland landscape is both rich in terms of its landscape and biodiversity interests.

The area is also a priority area for Countryside Stewardship measures addressing habitat issues faced by Lapwing, while the following species have been recorded or noted locally including corn bunting, curlew, grey partridge, redshank, heron, kingfisher, little egret, water vole, grebe, cormorant and shag.

### Area 2

Area 2 comprises a strip of intensively managed arable fields running east along the alluvial floodplain of the River Thames. Hedgerows in this location include mature tree species, but are fragmented towards the west and absent further east.

Although disturbed, the Bridge Farm Quarry site provides a mixed habitat with various species observed, included waders (little ringed plover, redshank, green sandpiper and common sandpiper) as well as other bird species (tree sparrow and breeding sand martin). In the long-term the site will have potential for a net gain for biodiversity, with restoration to water-bodies with associated reed bed, grassland margins and supplemental tree and shrub planting. These habitats would offer potential for breeding birds, bats, otter and water vole.

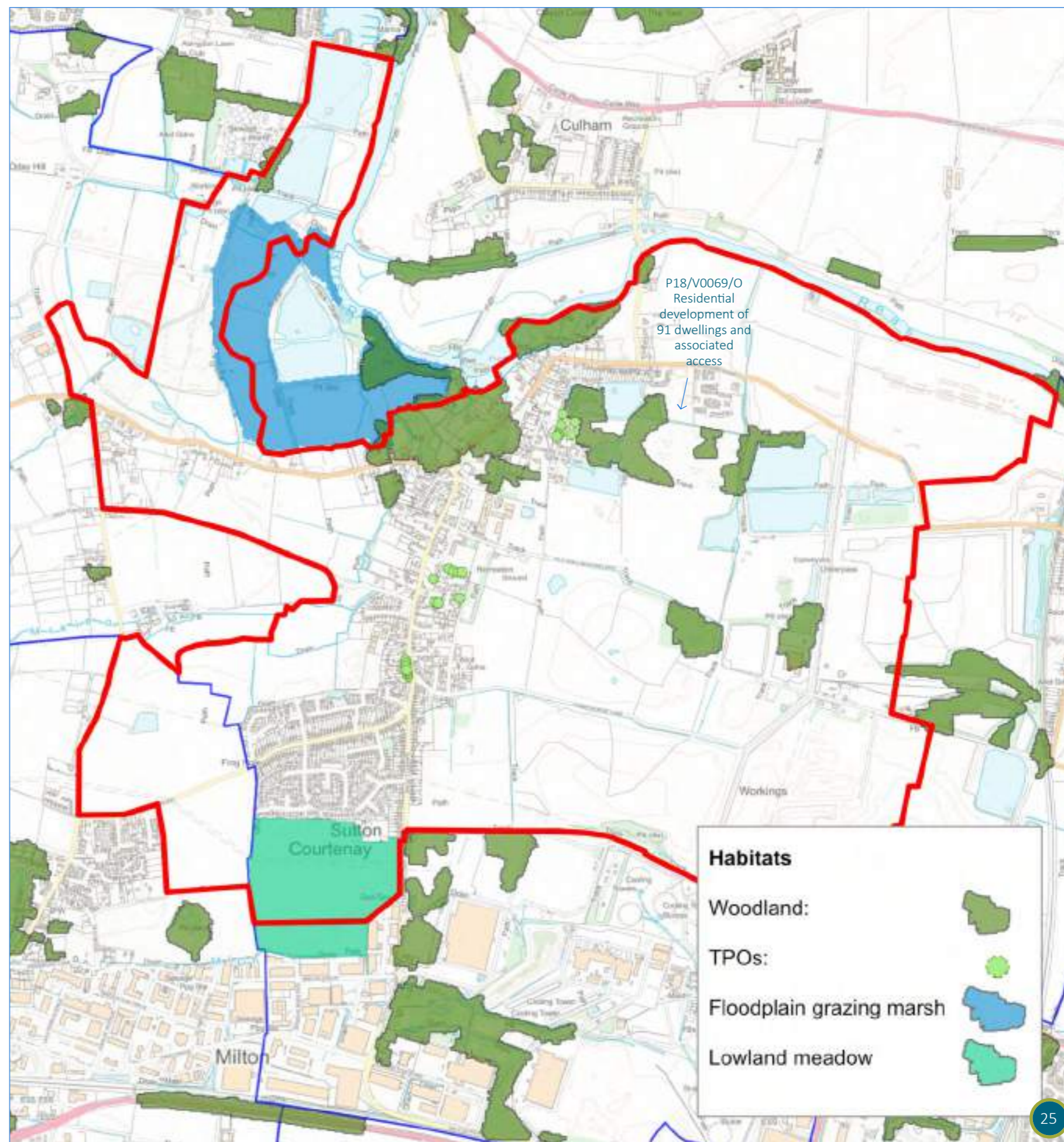
### Area 3

The landuse in area 3 is predominately intensive arable, particularly towards the south of the area at parcels A3i and A3j. Biodiversity interest in this area is therefore broadly limited to the hedgerow and tree planting, which is densest in parcels A3e and A3f, at Ginge Brook and Mill Brook respectively. Ponds may offer potential for great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*). The north western boundary of area 3 adjoins the Sutton Wick Nature Reserve.

### Area 4

Area 4 is managed as pasture and consequently is likely to be of greater biodiversity interest than Area 3. It includes Kelaart's Field proposed Local Nature Site (pLWS) "a reasonably diverse, large semi-improved grassland area with some elements of lowland meadow habitat. Dominant grasses consist of red fescue, Yorkshire fog, creeping bent, false oat-grass, perennial rye-grass, meadow foxtail, sweet vernalgrass and crested dogs-tail. Other flowering plants include field scabious, wild carrot, black knapweed, lady's bedstraw, ox-eye daisy, creeping buttercup, self heal, bird's-foot trefoil, bush vetch, agrimony, white clover, red clover, yarrow, perforate St. John's wort and common centaury". The site has also been noted as supporting breeding waders or possessing a high potential to be restored for breeding waders.

The Moor Ditch, which runs along the southern boundary of the field, is known to support otters and water voles, while water-bodies to the west and land immediately to the east, on the opposite side of Harwell Road are known to support great crested newts.



## Area 5

The village of Sutton Courtenay and particularly the Sutton Courtenay conservation area, includes a number of generous gardens and open spaces which provide a resource for flora and fauna within the core of a village.

Parcel A5d includes the proposed Local Plan Allocation for 220 houses. The site itself predominantly comprises an arable field bordered by narrow field margins, hedgerows / tree belt. Scattered bramble scrub is present along the southern boundary of the site. The area has also been noted for species including lapwing, corn bunting, curlew, grey partridge and redshank. To the west of A5d is an area of small scrubby fields, which includes hazel, ash, dogwood, field maple, blackthorn, oak, poplar, cherry, hawthorn and elder with bramble, traveller's joy and Ivy trailing through.

Parcel A5e, immediately south of Hobbyhorse Lane comprises a series of small agricultural fields, divided by stretches of hedgerow and towards the north includes a small woodland copse and the site of the former Catholic Church. The Moor Ditch, which runs along the southern boundary of A5d, is known to support otters and water voles. Also to the south of A5d is a 28,907 sq.m warehouse development, approved in 2019, which included attenuation and mitigation ponds for great crested newts, which are known to be present on the site. This parcel may offer important green links for fauna connecting the countryside east to west.

Elsewhere, within area 5 there are a number of woodland habitats, including to the north of A5e with additional tree planting occurring along the lane-ways that lead out from the village core. A number of these paths and parcels east and west of village may offer important green links for fauna connecting the countryside east to west.

## Area 6

Parcel A6b at Millennium Common, a former gravel workings which was restored to provide an additional amenity area for the village. This land offers optimal habitat for foraging bats comprising grassland with scattered scrub, woodland and numerous waterbodies. This area is also a resource for many varieties of wild flowers and grasses, including pyramidal orchid and grass vetchling. This parcel may also offer important green links for fauna connecting through waterbodies to the west to green spaces within the village and to the countryside to the west.

Although disturbed, the Bridge Farm Quarry site A6d provides a mixed habitat with various species observed, included waders (little ringed plover, redshank, green sandpiper and common sandpiper) as well as other bird species (tree sparrow and breeding sand martin). In the long-term the site will have potential for a net gain for biodiversity, with restoration to water-bodies with associated reed bed, grassland margins and supplemental tree and shrub planting. These habitats would offer potential for breeding birds, bats, otter and water vole.

Parcel A6c is similarly disturbed and whilst the restoration plan would offer an improvement over the present minerals and waste workings, the restoration to predominately agriculture offers less biodiversity potential to that offered further north at Bridge Farm. Nevertheless, the proposed restoration includes some areas of wet lowland broad leaved woodland, lowland meadow and additional hedgerows. These are all priority habitats for national and local BAPs.

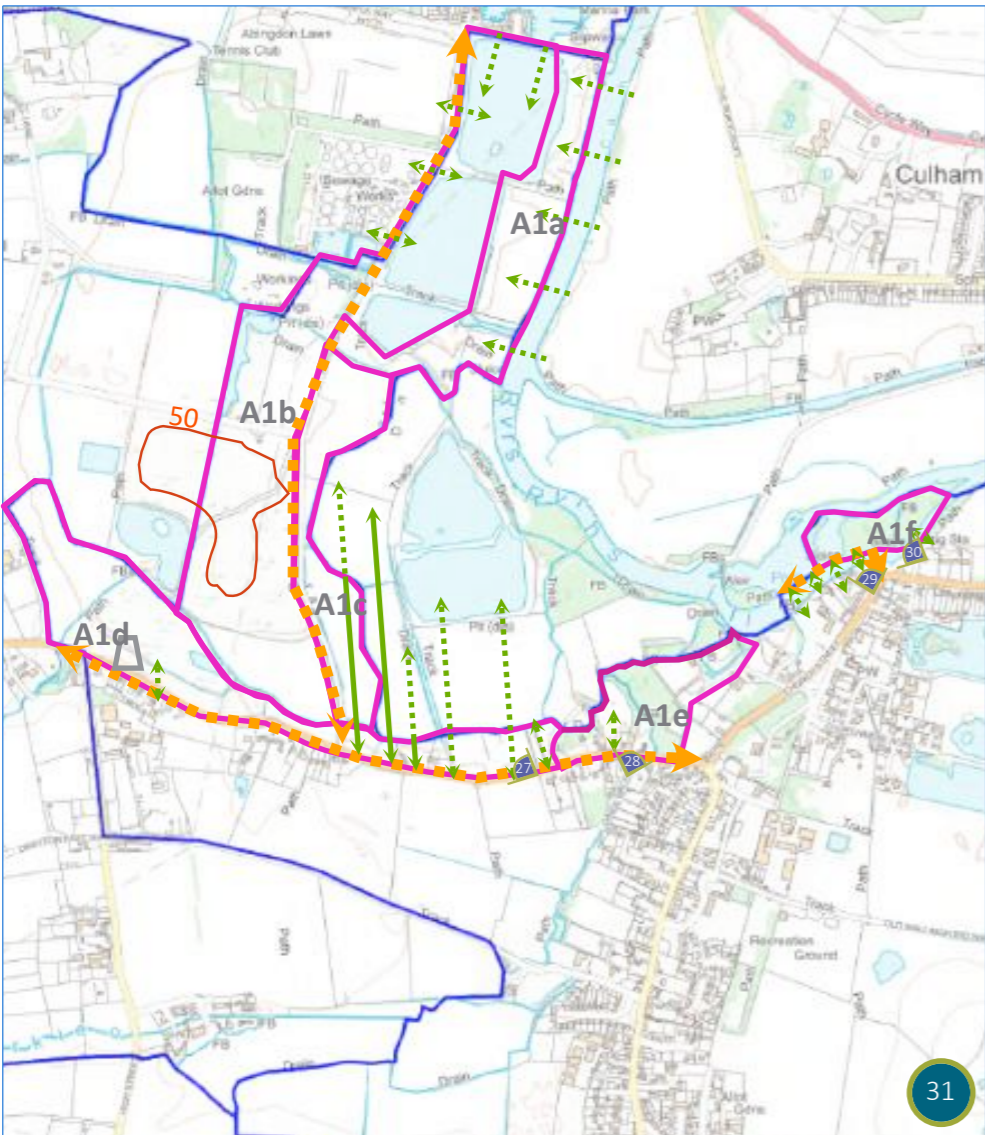


### 3.6. Visual Assessment & Topography

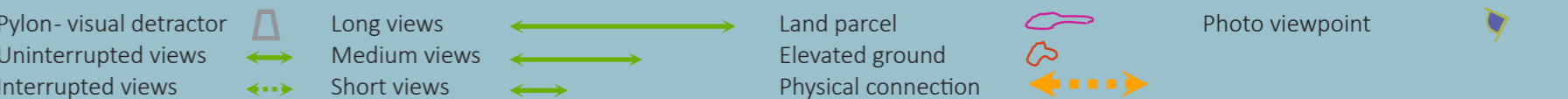
#### Area 1

Area 1 is broadly flat and low-lying reflecting its proximity to the River Thames. The area has a good degree of visual enclosure from the south but glimpsed views of the land can be gained from gaps in the vegetated field boundaries on Drayton Road. Similarly towards the north of Area 1 at A1a and A1b, views are contained by roadside and lake margin vegetation. The cycle route known as Hanson Way bisects parcels A1b and A1c where it uses a raised causeway leading north to Abingdon, therein affording opportunities for internal views of these parcels.

At the western fringe of the conservation area (A1c east and A1e west), the village meets the countryside where there are views to the water meadows to the north. A1f is visually contained, being heavily treed and access in parts limited to narrow paths, particularly on the easternmost of the three parcels of land. Although these parcels of land are visually enclosed, views of the rear gardens on Church Street can be gained as well as views across the grounds of the Norman Hall. These paths are well used for recreational purposes, including for walking and fishing, while the River Thames at this location is also a popular recreational resource with house boats and other leisure craft evident along the river bank.



Views of Area 1



## Key Views Identified in Area 1

The Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Plan and Design Code identifies 27 key views within and/or of the neighbourhood plan area. These views reflect the character of the Sutton Courtenay conservation area and its strong connection to the surrounding Landscape. Area 1 contains the following key views. Note: View 5 has been included in this area as although the viewpoint location is outside Area 1, it is the closest area to the viewpoint and the view from the viewpoint incorporates part of Area 1.

**View 2 River Thames backwater and Church Street houses and gardens from footpath over weirs** - The riverine landscape 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 of the northern fringes of the village. The conservation area extends 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 banks.

**View 3 North over River Thames and flood meadows from weirs at Sutton Pools** - Another element of the riverine landscape rich in natural beauty and affording good opportunities for walking and informal recreation.

**View 5 The Manor and Manor Grounds from meadow upstream from weirs on River Thames** - The grade 2\* listed Manor is set back on the western side of Church Street with extensive river frontage to the rear of its designated gardens.

**View 8 Views of water meadows to east and west from Peep-O-Day Lane** - This route is well used by commuters and recreational users and forms an important physical and visual separation between Sutton Courtenay and Abingdon.



View 3



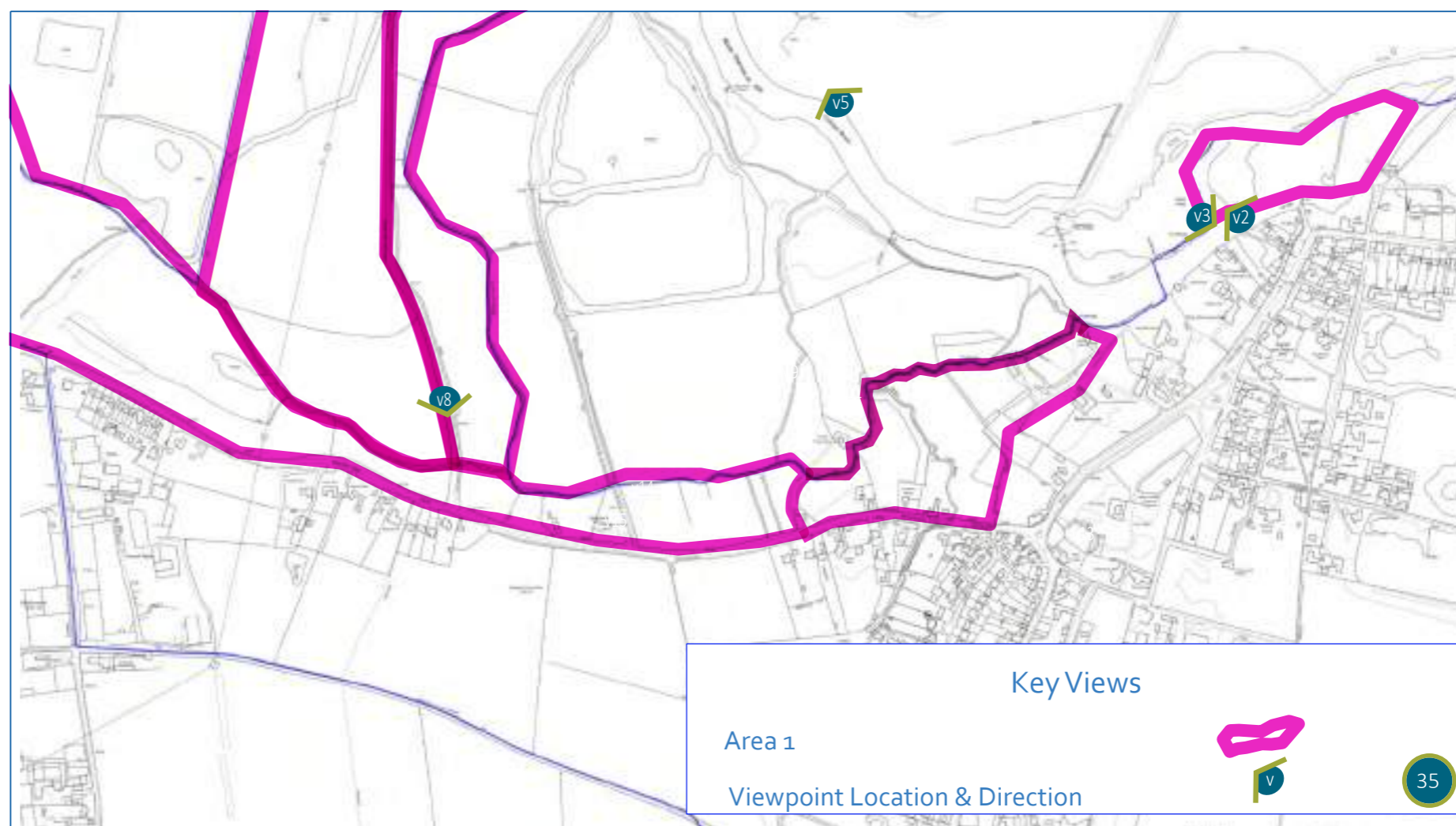
View 5



View 8



View 2



Key Views

Area 1

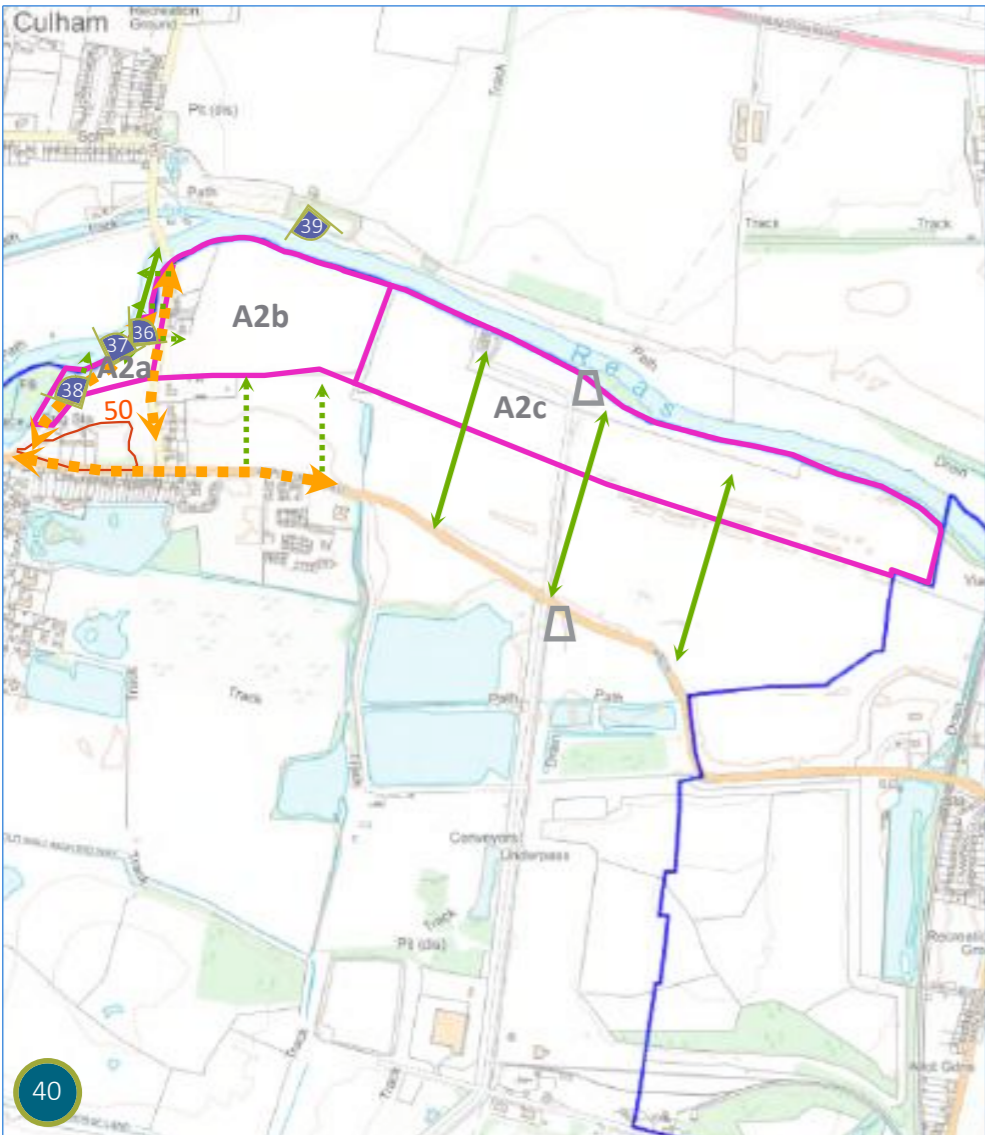
Viewpoint Location & Direction

## Area 2

Area 2 comprises a strip of intensively managed arable fields running east along the alluvial floodplain of the River Thames. Hedgerows in this location are fragmented affording a strong visual link between Area 2 and Area 6. Views of Area 2 from either the River Thames or the northern boundary of the river are intermittent due to dense tree and hedgerow cover that exists.











Glimpsed views into parcel A2a and A2b are available from Abingdon Road through gaps in the roadside hedgerows. Views into these parcels are also available through hedgerow gaps and field gates along Appleford Road.

Parcel A2c is very visually open from the south, with open views available across it from Appleford Road. To the north of A2c, the tree lined River Thames provides some visual enclosure from that point.



## Views of Area 2



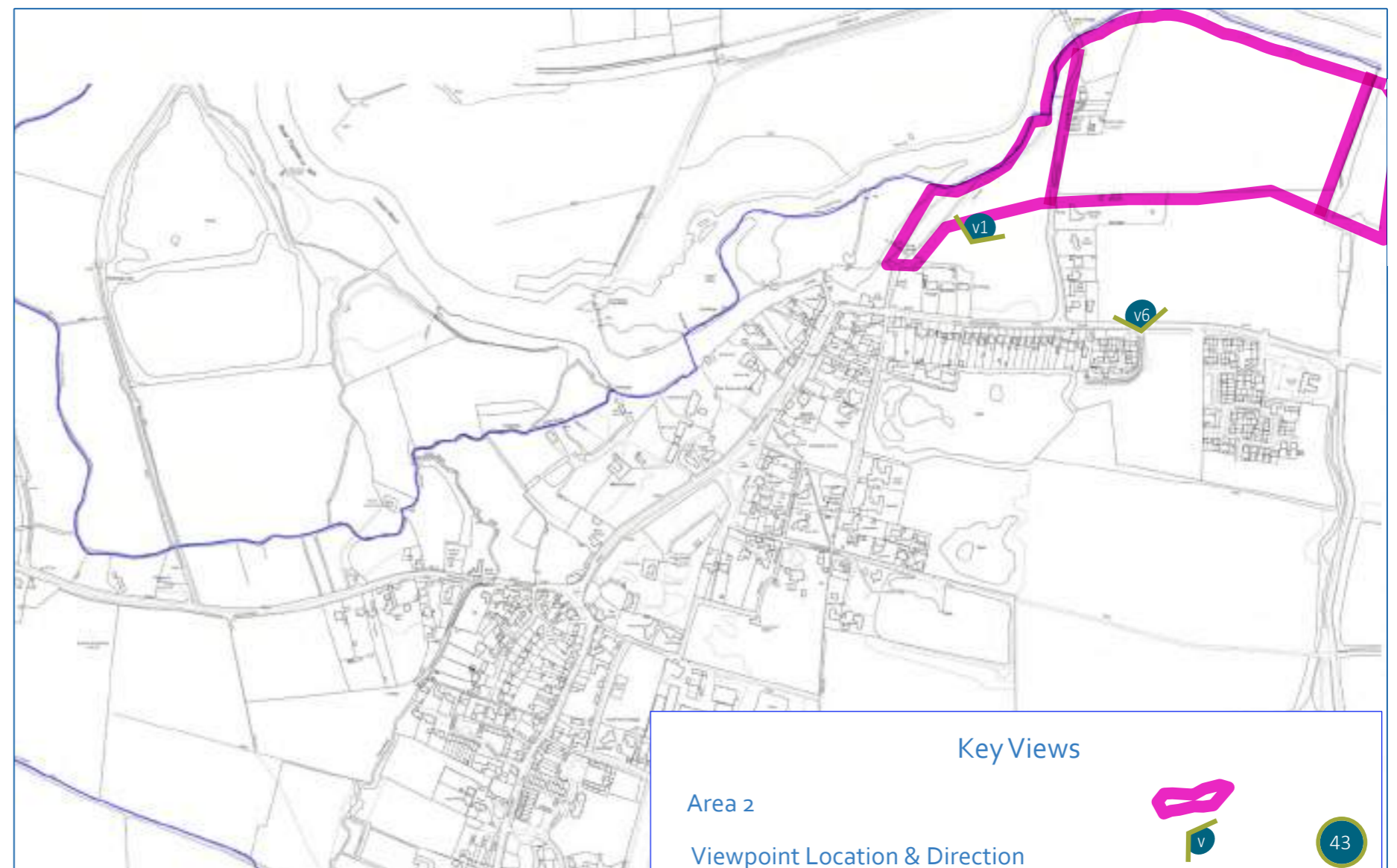
Pylon- visual detractor  Long views  Land parcel  Photo viewpoint   
 Uninterrupted views  Medium views  Elevated ground   
 Interrupted views  Short views  Physical connection 

## Key Views Identified in Area 2

The Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Plan and Design Code identifies 27 key views within and/or of the neighbourhood plan area. These views reflect the character of the Sutton Courtenay conservation area and its strong connection to the surrounding Landscape. Area 2 contains the following key views. Note: View 6 has been included in this area as although the viewpoint location is outside the area, the view itself incorporates part of Area 2.

**View 1: River Thames and Sutton Bridge from the flood meadow to north of Appleford Road and west of Abingdon Road** - The riverine landscape is a strong characteristic of Sutton Courtenay and flooded land, wetlands and watercourses on the village periphery are key to its identity.

**View 6: North over meadow towards Sloven Copse and Culham Brake, part of the Oxford Green Belt from Appleford Road** - A tranquil rural image with distant rural views and the well treed course of the River Thames notable in the middle ground. This is interrupted by the ribbon development along Abingdon Road visible in the left of the image, which significantly reduces the gap between Sutton Courtenay and Culham.

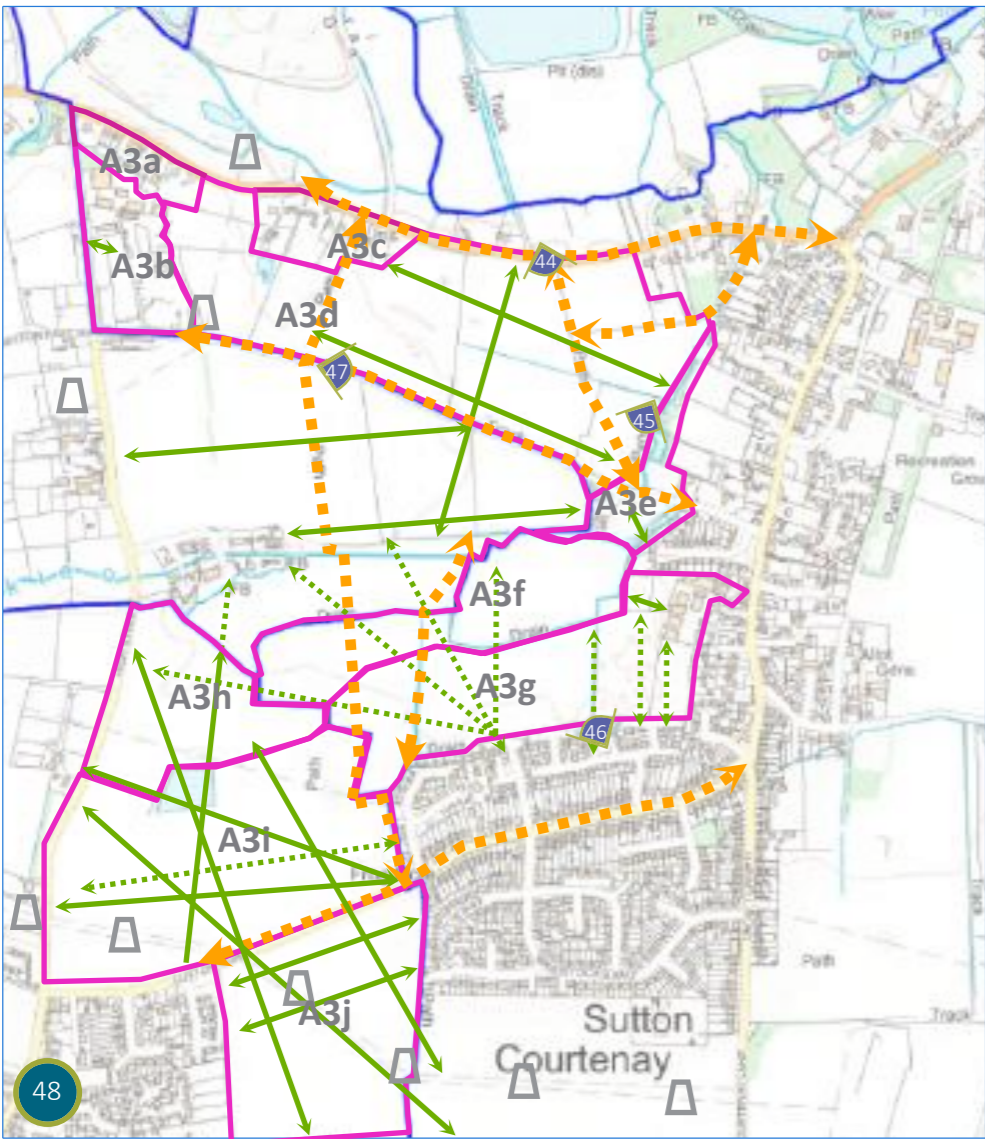


### Area 3

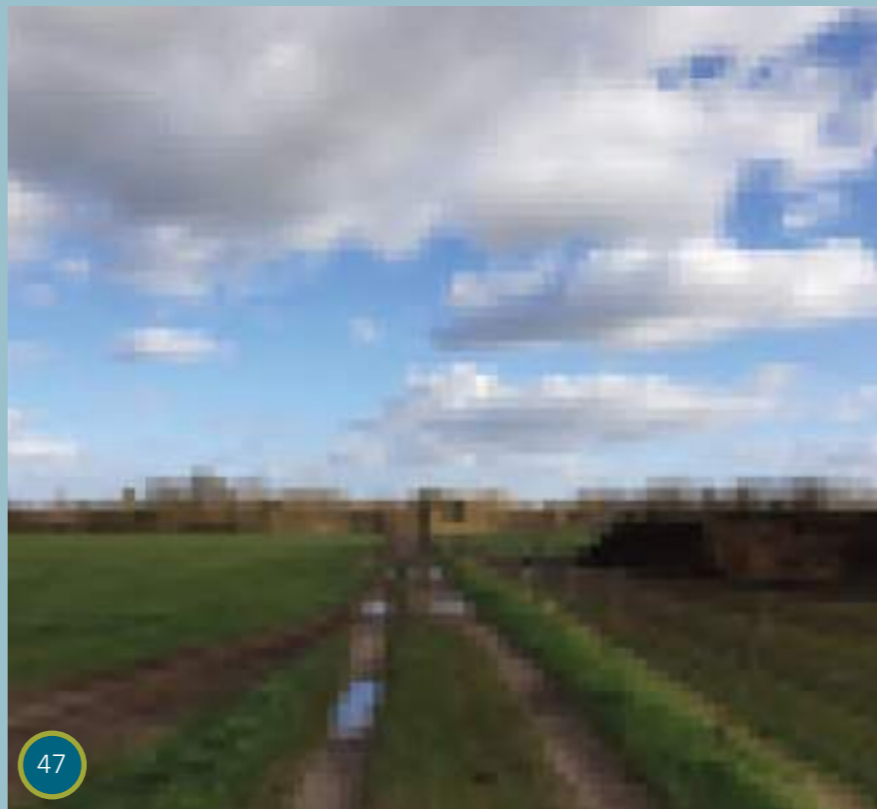
A significant amount of development is notable within parcels A3a, b and c, which has an urbanising effect on the western extent of Drayton Road within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The flatness of the landscape ensures that this development is also perceptible from Drayton East Way which runs along the southern boundary of parcel A3d. Other visual detractors include the pylons and distant views of the Didcot B towers.

Parcels of land (A3f- A3j) are entirely flat and largely devoid of any internal trees or hedgerows, with only distant field boundary planting visible from along Milton (Sutton) Road. The sense of openness in this location is marked, with a distinct visual foreshortening between the villages of Milton and Sutton Courtenay. Recent development on the edge of Milton provides a very sharp edge that has not been effectively softened with landscaping.

Views across the flat landscape towards Sutton Courtenay are available from the west at Milton Road and along Drayton East Way, though the dense vegetation on along the Ginge Brook creates a visual barrier to the village with glimpses of buildings discernible amongst the trees.



### Views of Area 3

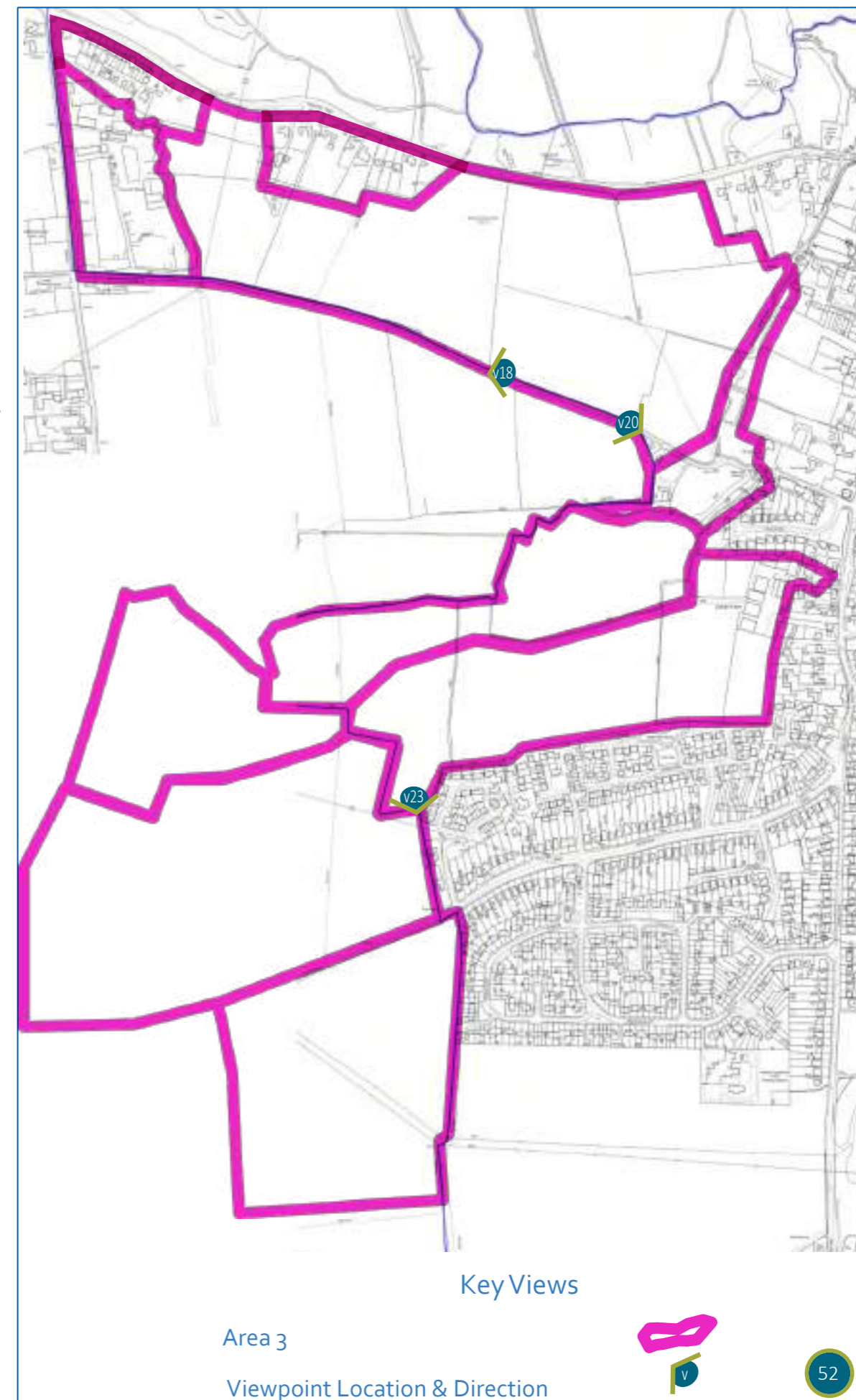
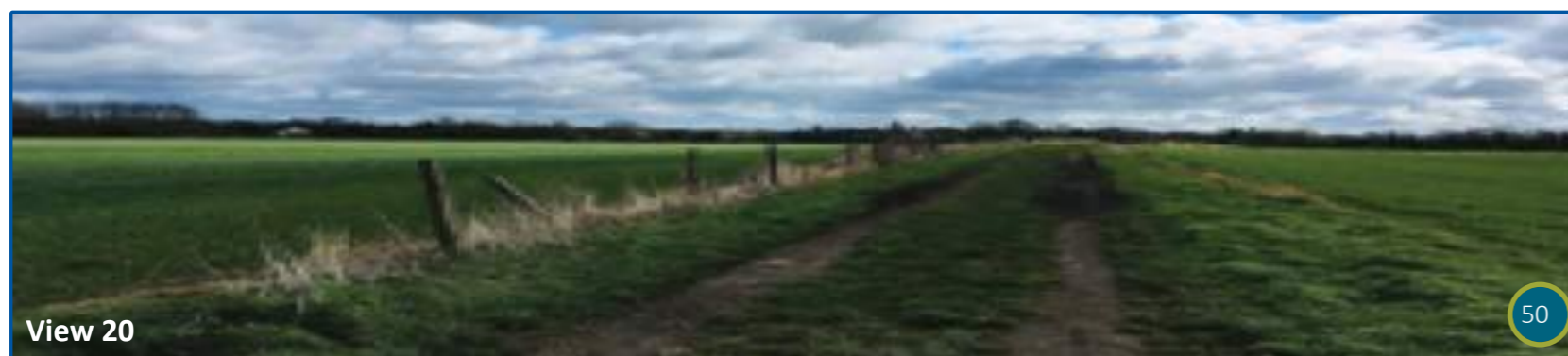


Pylon- visual detractor	△	Long views	→	Land parcel	→	Photo viewpoint	→
Uninterrupted views	→	Medium views	→	Elevated ground	→		
Interrupted views	→	Short views	→	Physical connection	→		

### Key Views Identified in Area 3

The Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Plan and Design Code identifies 27 key views within and/or of the neighbourhood plan area. These views reflect the character of the Sutton Courtenay conservation area and its strong connection to the surrounding Landscape. Area 3 contains the following key views.

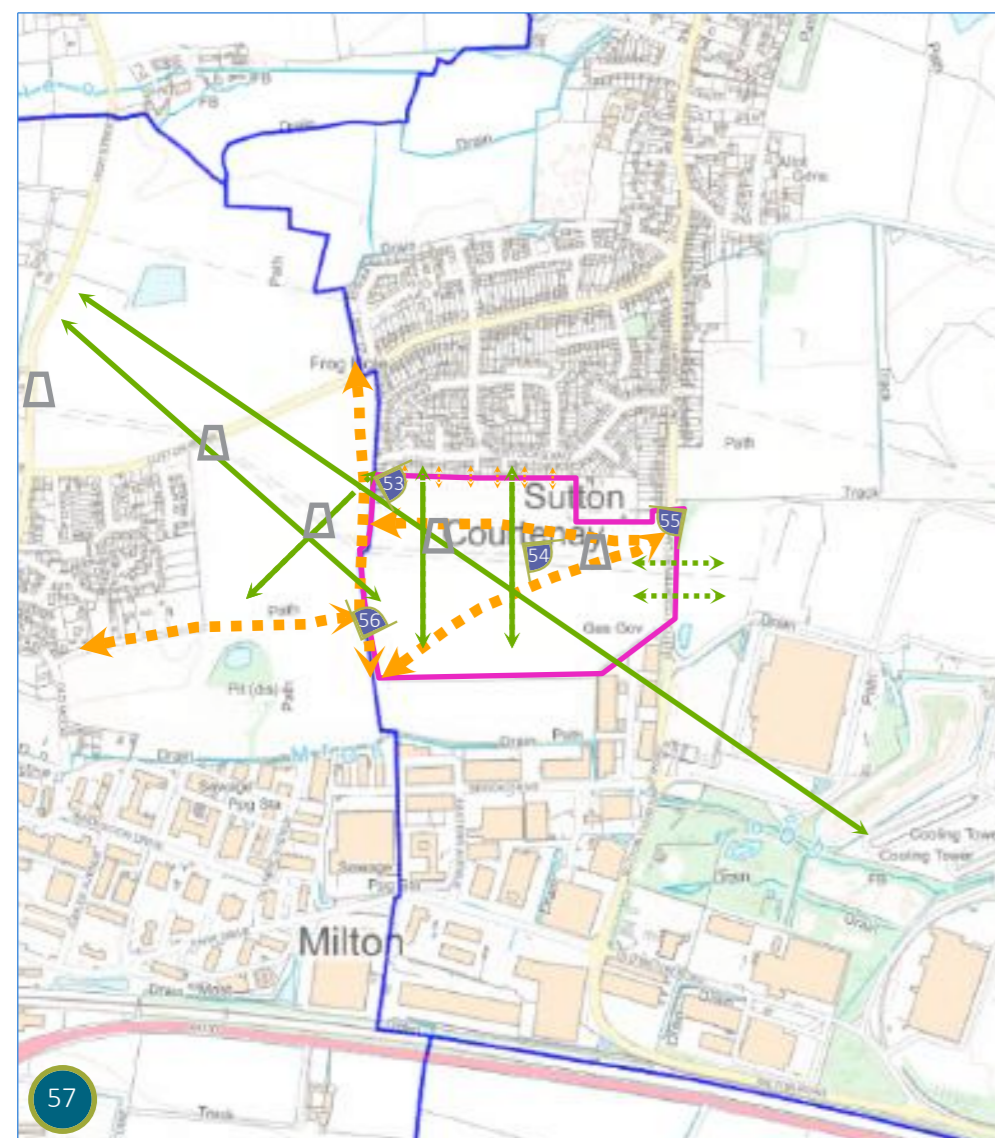
- View 18** **East along Drayton East Way towards wooded boundary of village behind High St** - Flat open, agricultural land with wide skies. The tops of some trees of the Abbey and Church Street are visible. This route crosses an important physical and visual separation between Sutton Courtenay and Drayton, especially the development at Drayton Road and Milton Road. The towers associated with the Didcot B power station are a visual detractor.
- View 20** **West from Mill Lane/Drayton East Way over farmland** - This route is well used by recreational users and crosses an important physical and visual separation between Sutton Courtenay and Drayton, especially the development at Drayton Road and Milton Road.
- View 23** **Views of old willows, ditches and brook on land north of Springfield Way** - This view introduces a softness to the high density development, though the contrast between the two areas is very apparent. Visual detractors such as pylons detract from the view.



## Area 4

Area 4, is very visually open. The topography and openness of the field provides clear views of the development edges of Sutton Courtenay and Milton, with views of the recently constructed data centre on Harwell Road and industrial development in Didcot also perceptible. Pylons bisect the field and are a conspicuous feature in the flat open landscape. Figure 54 shows a historical picture of the Didcot A power station, and although this has now been demolished, the Didcot B towers as well as other industrial and commercial development have a strong visual impact on Area 4.

Residential development associated with the village of Milton is also highly perceptible from this location significantly reducing the visual and physical separation between the two settlements.



## Views of Area 4



Pylon- visual detractor  
Uninterrupted views  
Interrupted views



Long views  
Medium views  
Short views



Land parcel  
Elevated ground  
Physical connection



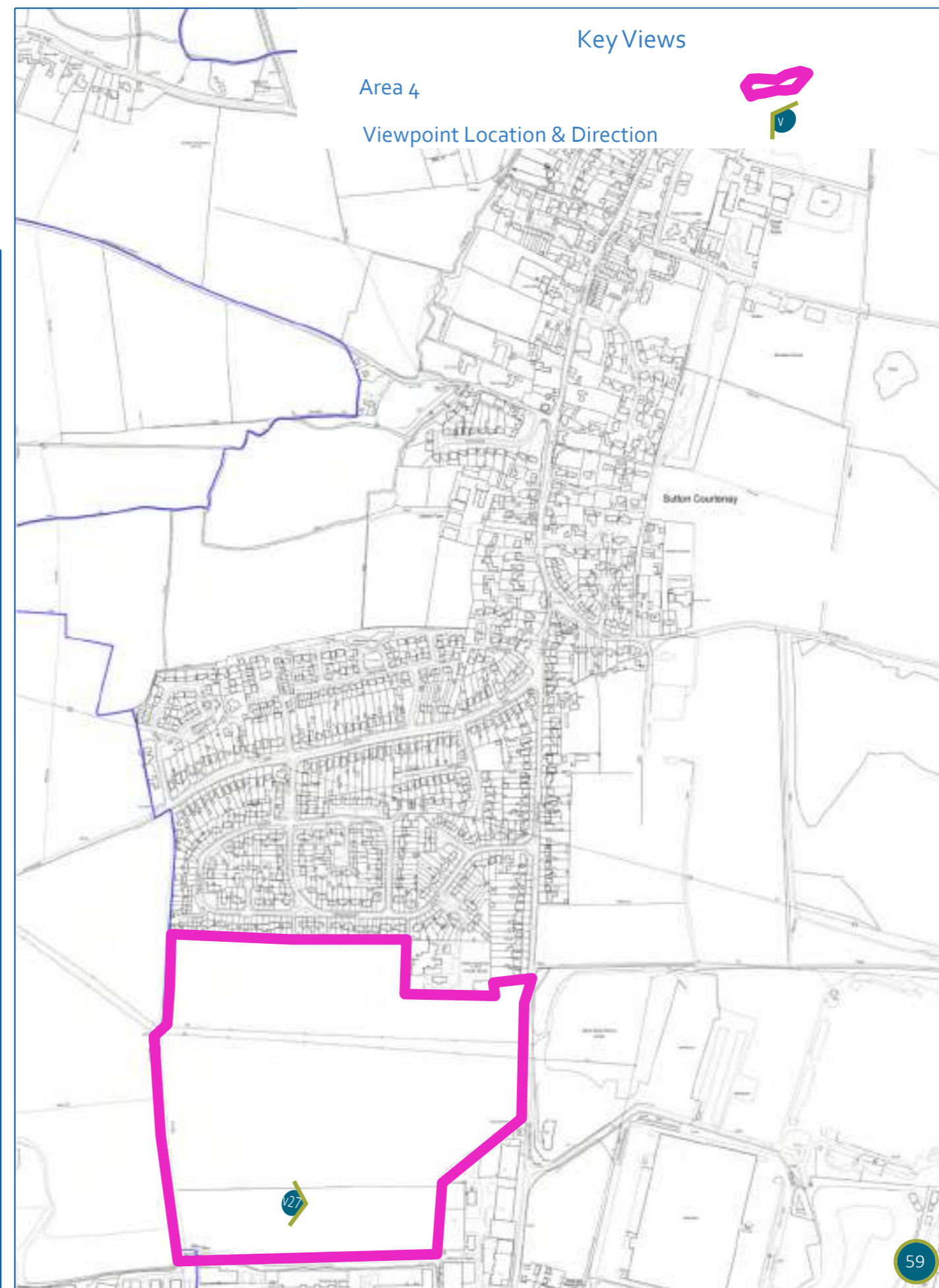
Photo viewpoint



## Key Views Identified in Area 4

The Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Plan and Design Code identifies 27 key views within and/or of the neighbourhood plan area. These views reflect the character of the Sutton Courtenay conservation area and its strong connection to the surrounding Landscape. Area 4 contains the following key view.

**View 27 West towards Milton over Kelaart's Field** - Kelaart's Field is a flat open pasture with permanent grasses with a wide expanse of sky. Detractors on the view include pylons as well as the highly visible new development associated with Milton village.

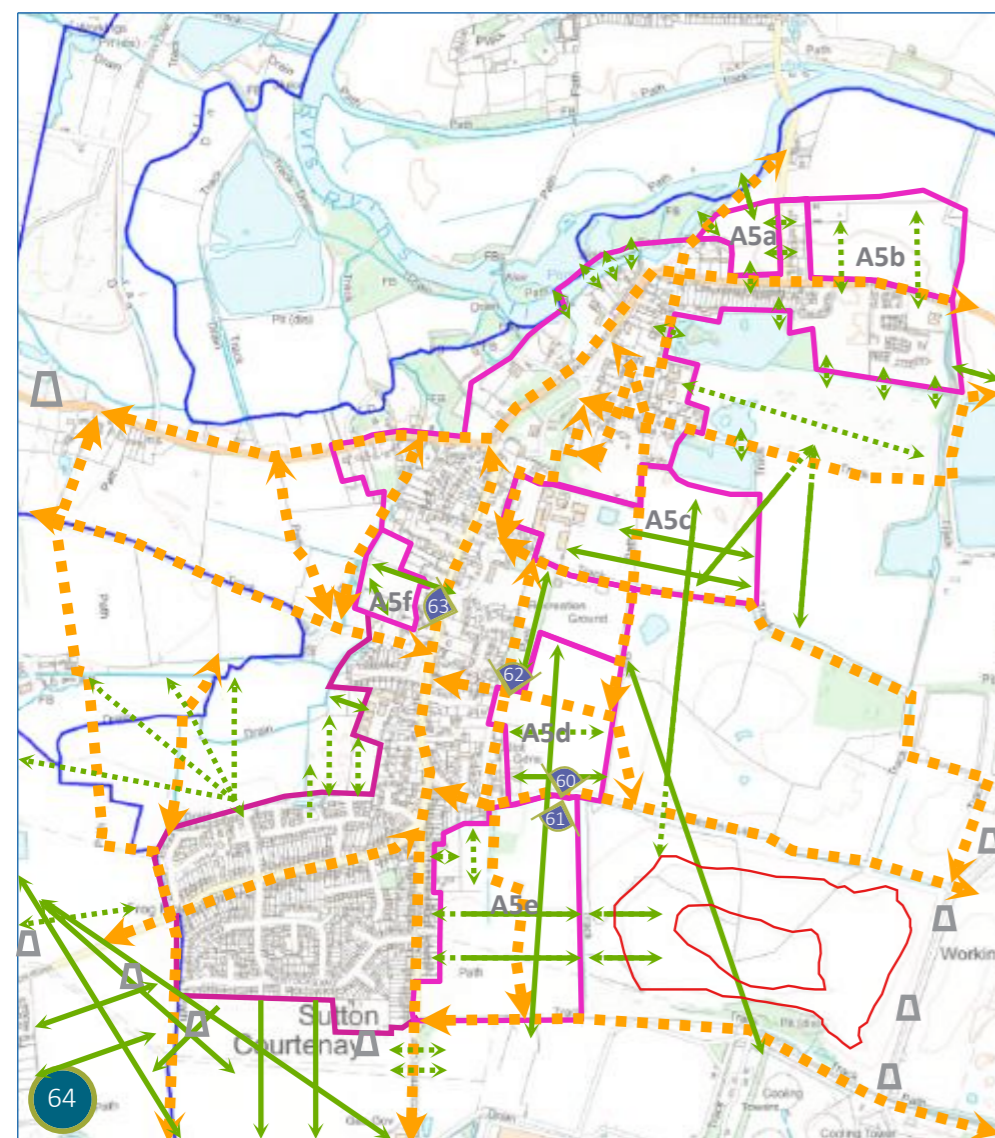


## Area 5

Sutton Courtenay is very well linked to the open countryside beyond the built up area of the settlement. Numerous lanes lead out from Sutton Courtenay village to the open countryside beyond. Hobbyhorse Lane, Courtenay Close, Old Wallingford Way and Churchmere Road all connect the village to the land to the east, while, Mill Lane, Brook Street, Chapel Lane as well as public footpath reference 373/13/10 provide access to the countryside to the west. In addition, access to the River Thames, to the north is provided via two public footpaths of Church Street and Appleford Road (373/1 and 373/2).

Towards the south of Area 5, immediately south of Hobbyhorse Lane are a series of a flat, agricultural fields (A5d), divided in places by stretches of hedgerow, particularly along Harwell Road, but elsewhere visually open. Towards the north of the parcel is a small woodland copse and the site of the former Catholic Church. The southern boundary is a metal fence with scrub and occasional trees.

As the land is broadly flat and undeveloped clear views of the extent of the built up area of Sutton Courtenay can be gained from the numerous public footpaths and permissive paths that criss-cross this area. Many of these PROWs lead to Area 6 which is dominated by landfill and minerals developments and has been significantly degraded as a result. Visual detractors include pylons leading from Didcot B power station.



## Views of Area 5



Pylon - visual detractor  
Uninterrupted views  
Interrupted views



Long views  
Medium views  
Short views



Land parcel  
Elevated ground  
Physical connection



Photo viewpoint

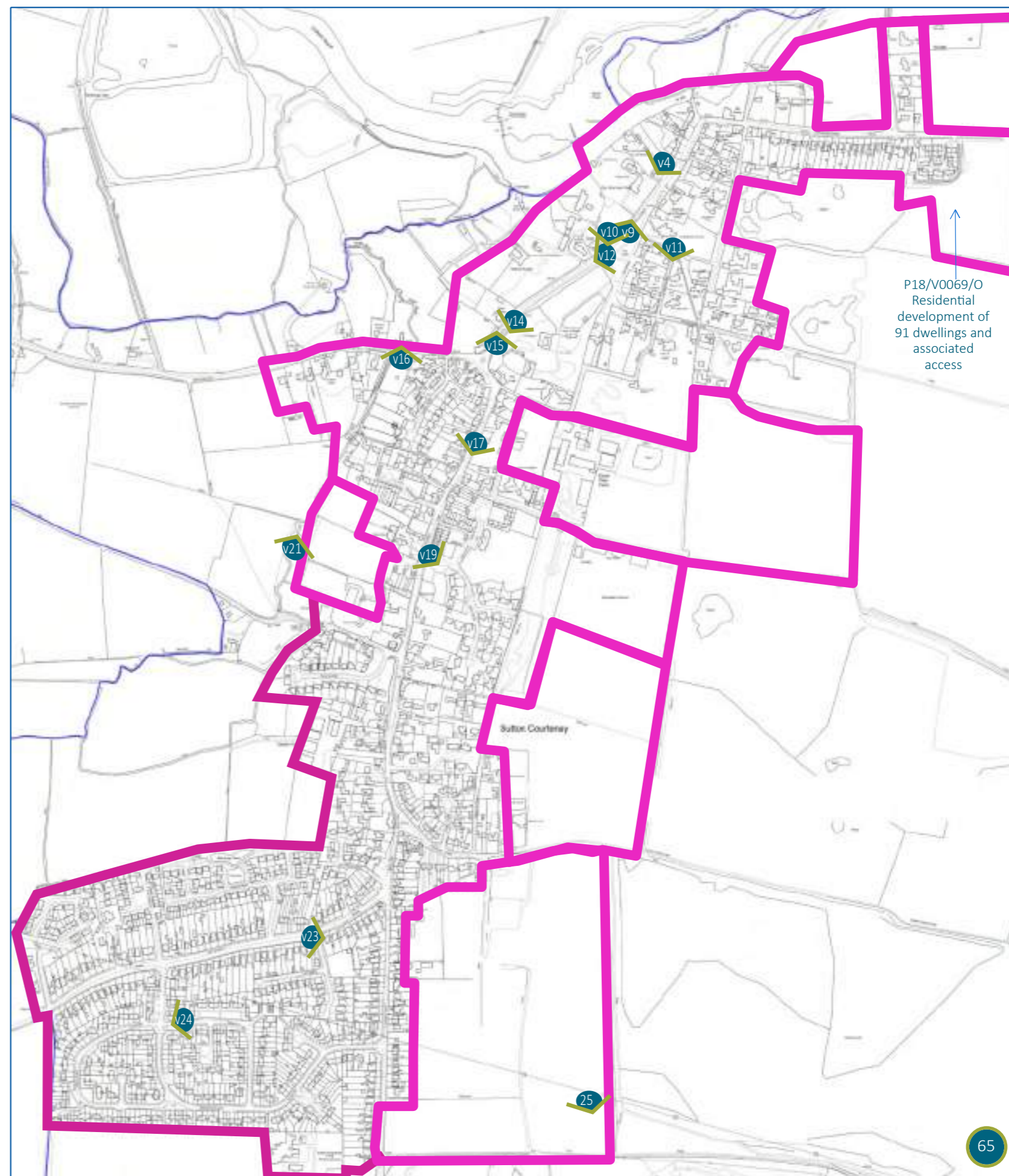


## Key Views Identified in Area 5

The Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Plan and Design Code identifies 26 key views within and/or of the neighbourhood plan area. These views reflect the character of the Sutton Courtenay conservation area and its strong connection to the surrounding Landscape. Area 5 contains the following key views, which have been divided into built up area views and countryside views below:

### Area 5 Built up Area Key Views:

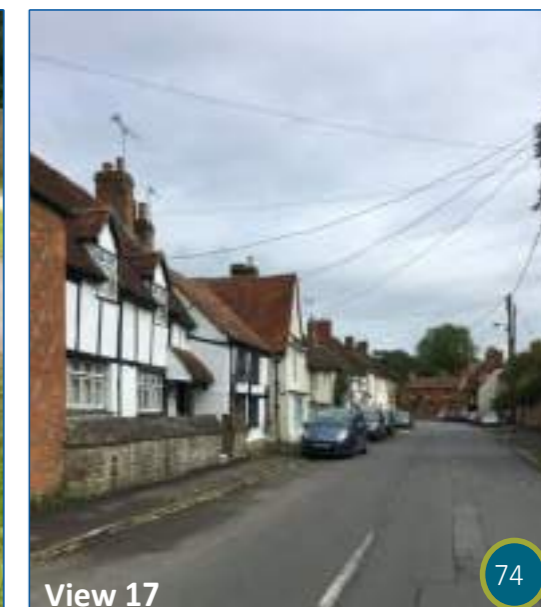
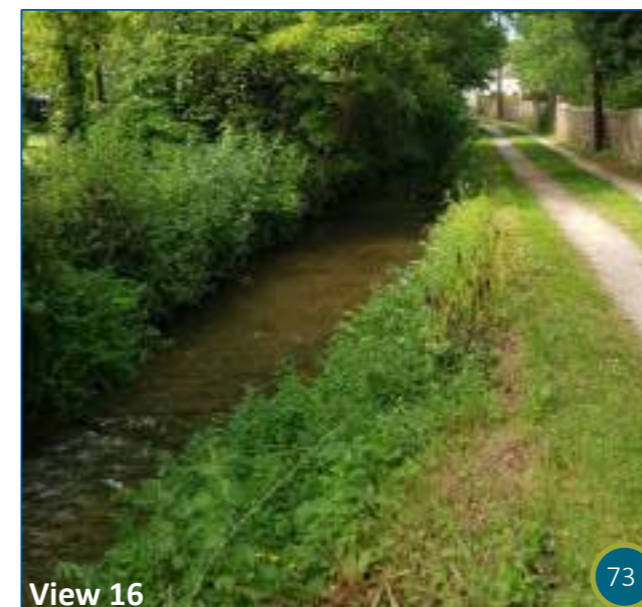
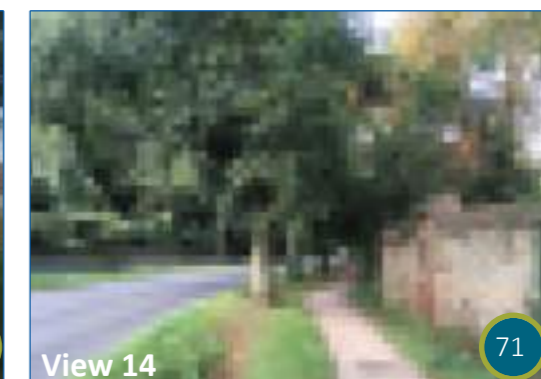
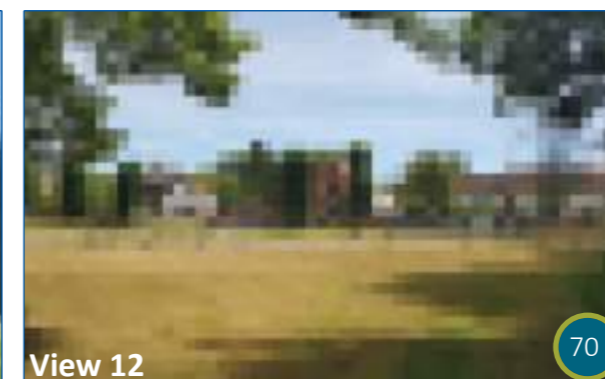
- View 4**    **Church St western side looking north from Courtenay Cottage** - PRoW runs close to the cottages and are an important feature of this part of the street. These semi-private/public spaces contribute much to the informality and intimate character of the scene.
- View 9**    **The Green and The Abbey grounds from the War Memorial** - The status of the Abbey is apparent by the stone pillars and gates directly facing The Green. Trees are a defining feature of the estate and their presence contributes significantly to the rural character of the village.
- View 10**    **North west towards the long (south) elevation of The Norman Hall across the adjacent paddock from the footpath on the western side of Church Street** - The paddock contributes to the sense of space, an important characteristic of the conservation area and to the setting of the listed building.
- View 11**    **All Saints' Church and churchyard from northern end of All Saints Lane** - This view reflects the importance of the Church in the village.
- View 12**    **North over The Green looking towards The Swan public house and All Saints' Church** - The Green is the physical and historic heart of the village. It is a key local open green space providing a setting for several important listed buildings, allowing them to be seen and appreciated from a distance.
- View 14**    **North along Church Street showing stone wall to the west and lime trees to the east** - The southern end of Church Street is marked by long stone walls on either side of the street associated with The Abbey and The Manor House estates. With wide verges, mature trees, and a simple footway, the street has a verdant, green character that looks as if it has changed very little over centuries.
- View 15**    **South towards The Triangle from Church St** - The Triangle is a focal point with a loose feel with buildings set back with informal parking at the road edge.
- View 16**    **Ginge Brook looking south from junction with Brook Street** - A lattice of secondary routes bisect the structures of Sutton Courtenay. These 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.
- View 17**    **North High Street from High Street** - Typical picturesque view obtained along the winding High Street with historic buildings in a variety of styles, dates and materials lining the street.



**View 19** **Southfield Farm on West side of High Street from entrance to Lady Place**  
- Remnant farmhouses such as Southfield Farm reinforce the rurality of the scene and provides glimpse to the paddocks and small open fields that characterise the back land behind High Street.

**View 24** **View along Milton Road** - Milton Road looking west showing low density development, generous plots and mature trees lining the road.

**View 25** **Barretts Way looking east showing communal front gardens to the north and tree lined grass verge to the south** - The green around the houses in the southern end of the village are locally very important.



**Area 5 Countryside Key Views:**

**View 21**   **Ginge Brook at site of former ford** - Ginge Brook has a smaller, softer character than the Thames. The Ginge forms a boundary along the western village fringe.

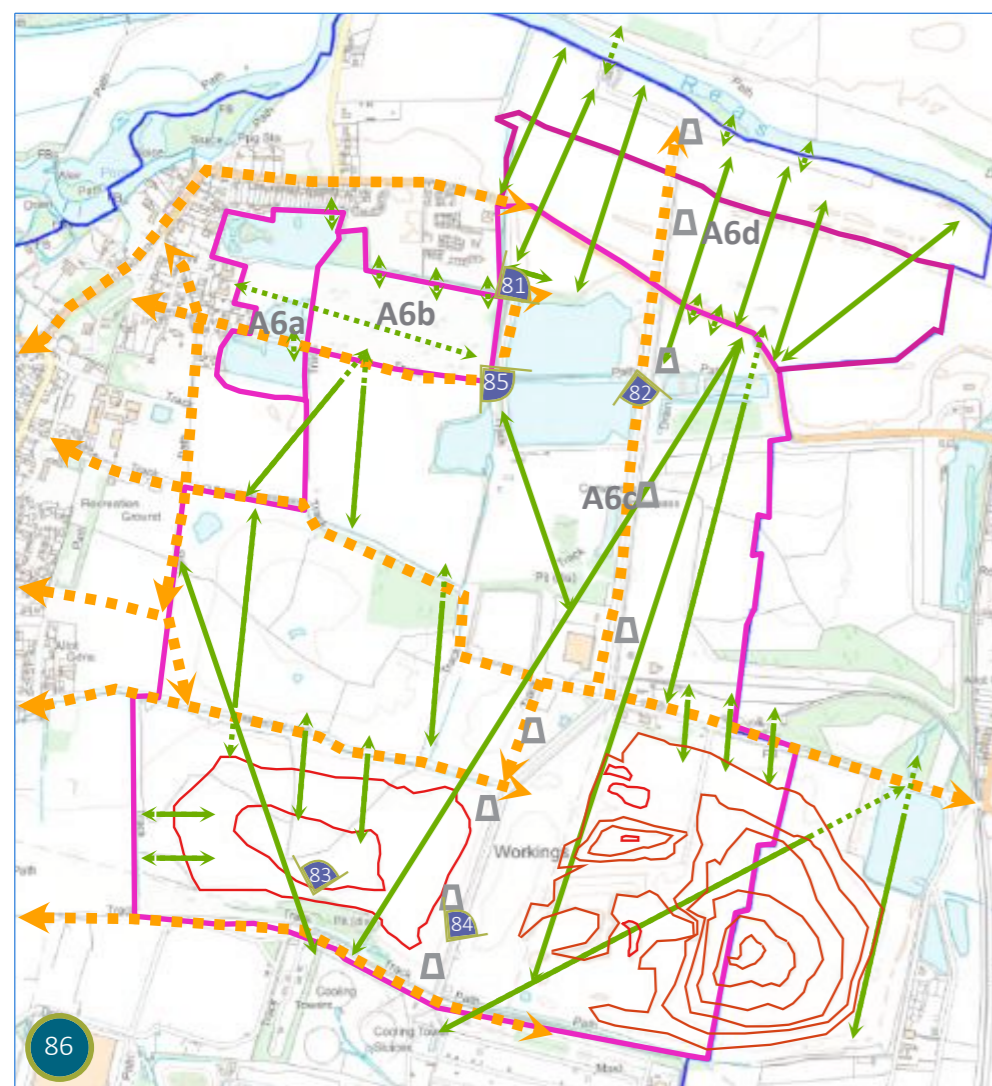
**View 26**   **North towards The Village Hall over agricultural land lying to the east of Harwell Road** - This view forms an important physical and visual separation between between Sutton Courtenay and Didcot.



## Area 6

Much of Area 6 is expressed in water-filled pits, plant and machinery, exposed spoil and man-made bunds, which represent significant visual detractors to the landscape. Additional visual detractors within Area 6 include overhead electricity cables and pylons which stretch across the landscape from south to north as well as east to west along the southern boundary. Aesthetically, the main value lies in the openness of this land as the topography remains broadly flat and visually open, though some contour changes have occurred as a result of the operations on the land and the subsequent restoration works. These contour changes have resulted in the loss of long distance views towards Wittenham Clumps from the southern end of the village.

The northern boundary of Appleford Road at this location has few hedgerows resulting in clear views into A6d and Area 2 beyond. The southern boundary of Appleford Road has more hedgerows, however glimpsed views south are provided through gaps in the hedgerow and at entrances. Part of the land in the Bridge Farm workings is being restored as waterbodies with the remainder planned to be restored similarly, with a mix of habitat including wet woodland, reedbeds, fens and flower rich meadow/pasture.



## Views of Area 6



Pylon - visual detractor  
Uninterrupted views  
Interrupted views



Long views  
Medium views  
Short views



Land parcel  
Elevated ground  
Physical connection



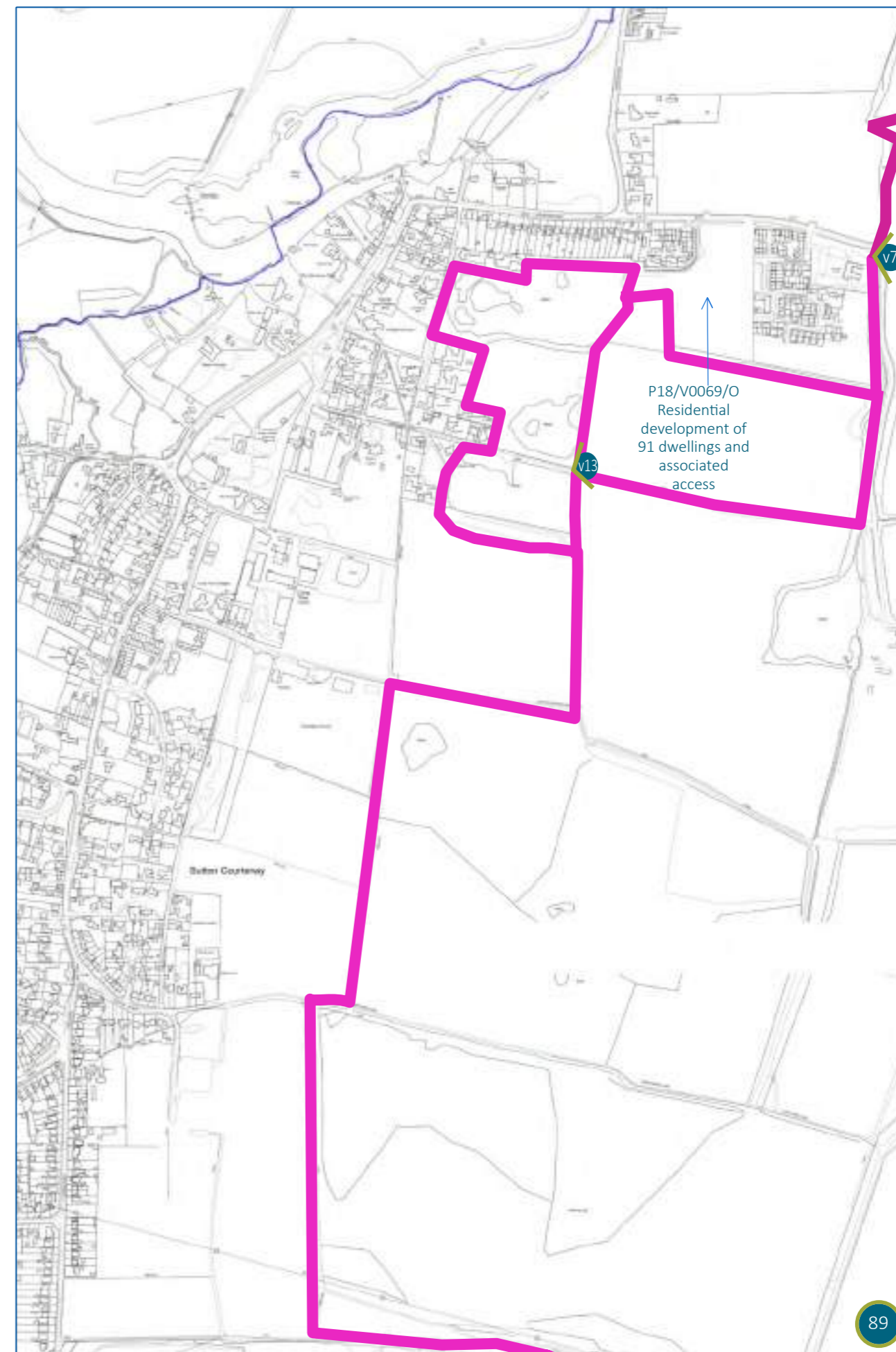
Photo viewpoint



## Key Views Identified in Area 6

The Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Plan and Design Code identifies 27 key views within and/or of the neighbourhood plan area. These views reflect the character of the Sutton Courtenay conservation area and its strong connection to the surrounding Landscape. Area 6 contains the following key views, which have been divided into countryside views and built up area views below:

- View 7**    **East towards Wittenham Clumps over agricultural land from Appleford Road as road exits Sutton Courtenay -** Wittenham Clumps are an important local site of recreation; long views have been lost at the southern end of the village by the height of the rubbish tip.
- View 13**    **East along bridle path adjacent to the Millennium Common** - Enticing view along tree lined footpath/track to the south of the Millennium Common. This land is strongly integrated within the network of paths through the village.





## 4.Green Gap Proposals

## 4.1. Interpretation of Analysis

	Landscape Character	Land Parcels	Heritage & Archaeology	Biodiversity	Visual Assessment & Topography	Vulnerable to Development Pressure?	Important Gap Between Existing Settlements?	Include as Green Gap	Gap Ref.	Comment
Area 1	River Meadowlands	A1a	Historically linked through a network of PRow	Hedgerows	Glimpsed Views	No current development proposals, , but potentially vulnerable to future development proposals	Situated to the east of Abingdon and therefore does not offer a robust gap for Sutton Courtenay to the southeast.	No	No	Appears contiguous with Abingdon
	River Meadowlands	A1b	Historically linked through a network of PRow		Visually enclosed	No current development proposals, , but potentially vulnerable to future development proposals	Provides separation between southern Abingdon and Sutton Courtenay	Part	Green Gap 2	Boundary drawn to the south of waterbodies at Abingdon. Defensible boundary to the west at parcel A1d provided by strong landscaping belt and PRow. Eastern boundary defined by strong landscaping adjacent built up area.
	River Meadowlands	A1c	Historic field boundaries evident Historically linked through a network of PRow	Wet grassland and marsh can be observed.	Glimpsed Views	No current development proposals	Provides separation between southern Abingdon and Sutton Courtenay. Provides separation between southern Abingdon and Sutton Courtenay	Yes		
	River Meadowlands	A1d	Historic field boundaries evident	Wet grassland and marsh can be observed.	Glimpsed Views	No current development proposals	Provides separation between southern Abingdon and development within Sutton Courtenay Parish	Part		
	River Meadowlands	A1e		Densely landscaped, adjoins Ginge Brook	Glimpsed Views	No current development proposals	Provides separation between southern Abingdon and Sutton Courtenay	Part		
	River Meadowlands	A1f	Site of former Sutton Paper Mill Historically linked through a network of PRow	Densely landscaped, adjoins Ginge Brook	Glimpsed Views	No current development proposals	Provides separation between southern Culham and Sutton Courtenay	Part	Green Gap 1	Combined with A5a and A5b to provide physical, visual and psychological separation with Culham and protect the historic setting of Sutton Bridge.
Area 2	River Meadowlands	A2a	Site of former Sutton Paper Mill Adjoin Sutton Bridge- listed building	Adjoins River Thames	Visually open from PRow Views of River Thames	No current development proposals, but potentially vulnerable to future development proposals	Provides separation between southern Culham and Sutton Courtenay	Yes		
	River Meadowlands	A2b	Adjoin Sutton Bridge- listed building	Adjoins River Thames	Glimpsed views	No current development proposals, but potentially vulnerable to future development proposals	Provides separation between southern Culham and Sutton Courtenay	Yes		
	River Meadowlands	A2c		Bridge Farm Quarry site provides a mixed habitat	Visually very open	Bridge farm restoration proposed to waterbodies and mixed habitats. Within area earmarked for new road.	Does not provide a robust gap between settlements	No		Excluded as affected by minerals planning consent.
Area 3	Lowland Village Farmlands	A3a	Historically linked through a network of PRow	Developed area with limited potential	Views available through gaps in boundary planting along Drayton Road	Currently comprises residential area, recently extended to the west.	Comprises built up area, so does not provide a robust gap between settlements	No	No	Excluded as comprises a built up area that does not function to prevent coalescence.
	Lowland Village Farmlands	A3b	Adjoins Scheduled Monument Historically linked through a network of PRow	Developed area with limited potential	Visually open from Milton Road	Currently comprises Drayton Highways Depot and adjoining commercial units	Provides separation between Sutton Courtenay and Drayton and residential/commercial development on Drayton Road & Milton Road.	No		
	Lowland Village Farmlands	A3c	Historically linked through a network of PRow	Developed area with limited potential	Views available through gaps in boundary planting along Drayton Road	Currently comprises residential area	Comprises built up area, so does not provide a robust gap between settlements	No		
	Lowland Village Farmlands	A3d	Contains site of Roman Settlement Historic field boundaries evident Historically linked through a network of PRow	Intensively managed agriculture, potential in hedgerows and adjoining Ginge Brook	Visually very open from Drayton East Way and Ginge Brook	Vulnerable to development on western edge	Comprises built up area, so does not provide a robust gap between settlements	Yes	Green Gap 3	Three parcels to the north of Mill Brook, provide an essential separation between Sutton Courtenay and Drayton. The eastern boundary is defined by development at Milton and Drayton Road.
	Lowland Village Farmlands	A3e	Historic field boundaries evident Historically linked through a network of PRow	Adjoins Ginge Brook	Visually very open from Drayton East Way and Ginge Brook. Used as recreational resource.	Aligns development edge of Sutton Courtenay and Ginge Brook, important recreational resource	Provides part of separation between Sutton Courtenay and Drayton	Yes		
	Lowland Village Farmlands	A3f	Historic field boundaries evident Contains one listed building Historically linked through a network of PRow	Adjoins Mill Brook	Views available through gaps in boundary planting	No current development proposals, , but potentially vulnerable to future development proposals	Provides part of separation between Sutton Courtenay and Milton	Yes	Green Gap 4	Four parcels function as essential gap between Sutton Courtenay and Drayton (including Drayton Mill) to the west and Milton to the Southwest. Parcels A3h, i and j are particularly visibly open hence boundaries are drawn at development edges.
	Lowland Village Farmlands	A3g	Historically linked through a network of PRow	Intensively managed agriculture, potential in hedgerows and adjoining waterbodies. Pond may offer potential for great crested newt ( <i>Triturus cristatus</i> )	Views available through gaps in boundary planting	No current development proposals, , but potentially vulnerable to future development proposals	Provides part of separation between Sutton Courtenay and Milton	Yes		
	Lowland Village Farmlands	A3h	Historically linked through a network of PRow		Visually very open	No current development proposals, , but potentially vulnerable to future development proposals	Provides part of separation between Sutton Courtenay and Milton	Yes		
	Lowland Village Farmlands	A3i	Historically linked through a network of PRow		Visually very open	No current development proposals, , but potentially vulnerable to future development proposals	Provides part of separation between Sutton Courtenay and Milton	Yes		
	Lowland Village Farmlands	A3j	Adjoins Scheduled Monument Historically linked through a network of PRow		Visually very open	No current development proposals, but potentially vulnerable to future development proposals	Provides part of separation between Sutton Courtenay and Milton	Yes		

	Landscape Character	Land Parcels	Heritage & Archaeology	Biodiversity	Visual Assessment & Topography	Vulnerable to Development Pressure?	Important Gap Between Existing Settlements?	Include as Green Gap	Gap Ref.	Comment
Area 4	Lowland Village Farmlands	A4a	Contains Settlement Designated as Scheduled Monument	Kelaart's Field proposed Local Nature Site (pLWS)	Visually very open	No current development proposals, important recreational resource	Provides part of separation between Sutton Courtenay and Milton	Yes	Green Gap 5	Essential gap between Milton and Sutton Courtenay.
Area 5	Lowland Village Farmlands-Villages	A5a	Historically linked through a network of PRow	Managed for agriculture, but potential due to proximity to R.Thames and in hedgerows and A5b adjoins Bridge Farm mixed habitat.	Visually open from PRow Views of River Thames	No current development proposals, but potentially vulnerable to future development proposals	Provides separation between southern Culham and Sutton Courtenay	Yes	Green Gap 1	Combined with A1f, A2a and A5b to provide physical, visual and psychological separation with Culham and protect the historic setting of Sutton Bridge. Eastern boundary aligns with Bridge Farm quarry.
	Lowland Village Farmlands-Villages	A5b	Historically linked through a network of PRow		Glimpsed views from gaps in boundary planting from Abingdon Rd. and Appleford Rd.	No current development proposals, P15/V2933/O for 93 dwellings refused 22nd August 2019. Appeal Dismissed on 3 November 2020	Provides separation between southern Culham and Sutton Courtenay	Yes		
	Lowland Village Farmlands-Villages	A5c	Historically linked through a network of PRow	Potential in waterbody and hedgerows. Potential east-west pathway for fauna linking countryside east to west	Visually open from PRow	No current development proposals, but potentially vulnerable to future development proposals	Provide an important buffer between Sutton Courtenay and existing landfill & waste activities to the east. Also would provide an important separation between Sutton Courtenay and any potential future development to the east.	Part	Green Gap 6	These parcels provide important buffers between Sutton Courtenay and the operational landfill to the east or any potential future development in that location. Parcel A5d is a strategic housing allocation, however it is that part of the site that falls within the floodplain is identified as a green gap.
	Lowland Village Farmlands-Villages	A5d	Historically linked through a network of PRow	Managed for agriculture, potential limited to hedgerows and links to woodland areas to the west	Visually open from PRow	Local Plan Strategic Housing Allocation for 220 dwellings	Provides an important buffer between Sutton Courtenay and existing landfill & waste activities to the east. Also would provide an important separation between Sutton Courtenay and any potential future development to the east.	Part		
	Lowland Village Farmlands-Villages	A5e	Site of former Catholic Church Historically linked through a network of PRow	Potential in woodland area and hedgerows. Potential east-west pathway for fauna linking countryside east to west	Visually open from PRow Glimpsed views from Harwell Road	Numerous applications for residential development, including SUT/18384/1, 10/02230/FUL, P15/V2353/O and most recently P18/V0340/O refused on 11th June 2018.	Provides an important buffer between Sutton Courtenay and existing landfill & waste activities to the east. Also would provide an important separation between Sutton Courtenay and any potential future development to the east. Also provides important separation between Sutton Courtenay and Didcot.	Yes	Green Gap 5	Provides an essential gap between Sutton Courtenay and Didcot. Boundaries drawn to the east adjoining the Sutton Courtenay landfill site boundary where boundary planting is most robust.
	Lowland Village Farmlands-Villages	A5f	Historically linked through a network of PRow		Views available from High St.	No current development proposals, but potentially vulnerable to future development proposals	Provides an important open space within the settlement and contributes to the separation between Sutton Courtenay and Drayton	Yes	Green Gap 3	
Area 6	Lowland Village Farmlands-Disturbed Land	A6a	Partly within Sutton Courtenay Conservation Area & important to its setting Historically linked through a network of PRow	Potential in waterbodies and hedgerows. Potential east-west pathway for fauna linking countryside east to west	Glimpsed views through boundary planting.	No current development proposals. Important recreational resource.	Provide an important buffer between Sutton Courtenay and existing landfill & waste activities to the east. Also would provide an important separation between Sutton Courtenay and any potential future development to the east.	Yes	Green Gap 6	Provide an essential gap between Sutton Courtenay and existing landfill & waste activities to the east. Also would provide an important separation between Sutton Courtenay and any potential future development to the east.
	Lowland Village Farmlands-Disturbed Land	A6b	Historically linked through a network of PRow	Potential due to proximity to waterbodies and hedgerows.	Glimpsed views through boundary planting.	No current development proposals. Important recreational resource.	Provide an important buffer between Sutton Courtenay and existing landfill & waste activities to the east. Also would provide an important separation between Sutton Courtenay and any potential future development to the east.	Yes		
	Lowland Village Farmlands-Disturbed Land	A6c	Historically linked through a network of PRow	Limited potential in disturbed areas, but potential in waterbodies, wooded areas and hedgerows.	Visually open from PRow	Currently operational landfill and waste site. Highly vulnerable to potential future development, including the Radcot Green settlement proposal, which includes 2500 new homes, a village centre and a primary school. Also within area earmarked for new road.	Part of a large area between Sutton Courtenay and Appleford, however majority of the area comprises active landfill site and associated developments. Parcel of land to the north west of A6c is outside operational landfill.	Part		
	Lowland Village Farmlands-Disturbed Land	A6d	Historically linked through a network of PRow	Bridge Farm Quarry site provides a mixed habitat.	Visually open from Appleford Road, glimpsed views from River Thames	Bridge farm restoration proposed to waterbodies and mixed habitats. Within area earmarked for new road.	Part of a large area between Sutton Courtenay and Appleford, however majority of the area comprises active landfill site and associated developments.	No	No	Part of Bridge Farm Quarry affected by minerals planning consent.

## Proposed Green Gaps

