

North Wessex Downs AONB & Neighbourhood Planning

Andrew Lord
MA BA(Hons) MRTPI
Planning Advisor



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 - Introduction to the North Wessex Downs AONB
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Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Parks and the Broads





An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is exactly what it says it is: an outstanding landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so precious that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard them.

There are 46 AONBs in Britain (33 wholly in England, four wholly in Wales, one which straddles the English/Welsh border and eight in Northern Ireland) and they cover 18% of our countryside.

44% of Wiltshire lies in an AONB.

Wiltshire is one of nine local authorities that make up the NWD AONB partnership.

North Wessex Downs AONB is the 3rd largest in the country covering an area of 1730 sqkm

Conservatives believe that Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are vitally important, not only for conserving some of the UK's most beautiful environmental assets, but also for unlocking the value in our national landscape. At a time when UK biodiversity is in decline, we need AONBs to help us protect and enhance our habitat and safeguard wildlife. We recognise that they are uniquely placed to provide both effective management of important areas of habitat and also proper delivery of initiatives and targeted local funding.













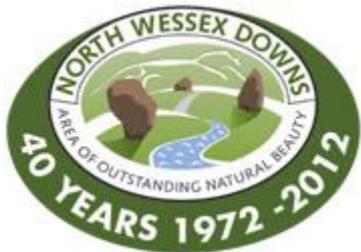
North Wessex Downs AONB

Designated in 1972 under the National Parks and Access to Countryside Act 1949.

Purpose of designation

1. To conserve and enhance natural beauty.
2. To provide for quiet informal recreation.
3. To foster socio-economic well being of communities within AONBs.

In achieving these aims each AONB relies on:



- * *Planning controls & practical countryside management.*
- * *Co-operation through Council of Partners.*
- * *Partnership with Natural England / DEFRA / Nine Authorities.*
- * *CRoW Act 2000 Section 85 Duty.*



Statutory Requirements and Planning Policy

IUCN – World Conservation Union Category V Protected Areas Objectives (2002)

The European Landscape Convention 1st March 2007

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

Part 85 – All public bodies shall have regard to the purpose of **conserving and enhancing** the natural beauty of the AONB.

The NPPF:

“Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and AONBs, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.” (paragraph.115.).

“Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest.” (paragraph.116.).



Pressures for Development

The growth agenda has concentrated on jobs, housing and renewable energy.

Of course all three are vital to the state of the nation.

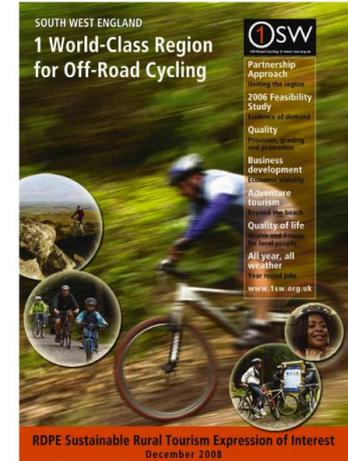
However, all too often the pursuit for growth has come with little or no acknowledgement of the long term value of maintaining the character and intrinsic qualities of the countryside in relation to the health agenda, food, water, recreation, tourism, agriculture and agricultural diversification, bio-diversity and rural employment.

Our nationally protected landscapes, through legislation and planning policy, at least have the opportunity to place conservation and enhancement of natural beauty first from which a more sustainable and balanced approach to development should be possible.



Access Projects In The AONB

- 1 SW Project (Cycling)
- Swindon Bus Walks
- Oxfordshire Geo-Trail
- Ridgeway Circular Walks
- East Garston / East Woodhay / Hampstead Marshall /Brightwalton / Elm Farm Trail
- Friends of the Railway Path – Chisledon to Marlborough





Tourism

Chilterns - Cotswolds - High Weald - Isle of Wight - Kent Downs -
New Forest - North Wessex Downs - South Downs - Surrey Hills

Our Land – Experiences To Treasure

£1 million project to promote sustainable and responsible tourism across nine of the South East protected landscapes.

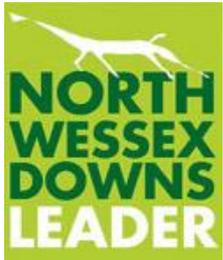


With funding from the Rural Development Program for England and a partnership with online travel expert www.responsibletravel.com, we set out to create new parameters for sustainable and responsible tourism in the protected landscapes and Our Land was born.

www.our-land.co.uk



Grants



Rural development grants of up to **£50,000** available to farmers, foresters, community enterprises and rural-based businesses located within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- * **Farming, Food and Forestry**
- * **Business Transformation and Community Development**
- * **Challenges and Opportunities of Climate Change**
- * **Enjoying the North Wessex Downs – Tourism & Heritage**

Sustainable Development Fund - grants of £1000 to £5000



MP Richard Benyon with Chairman of the Local Action Group, Ian Ritchie

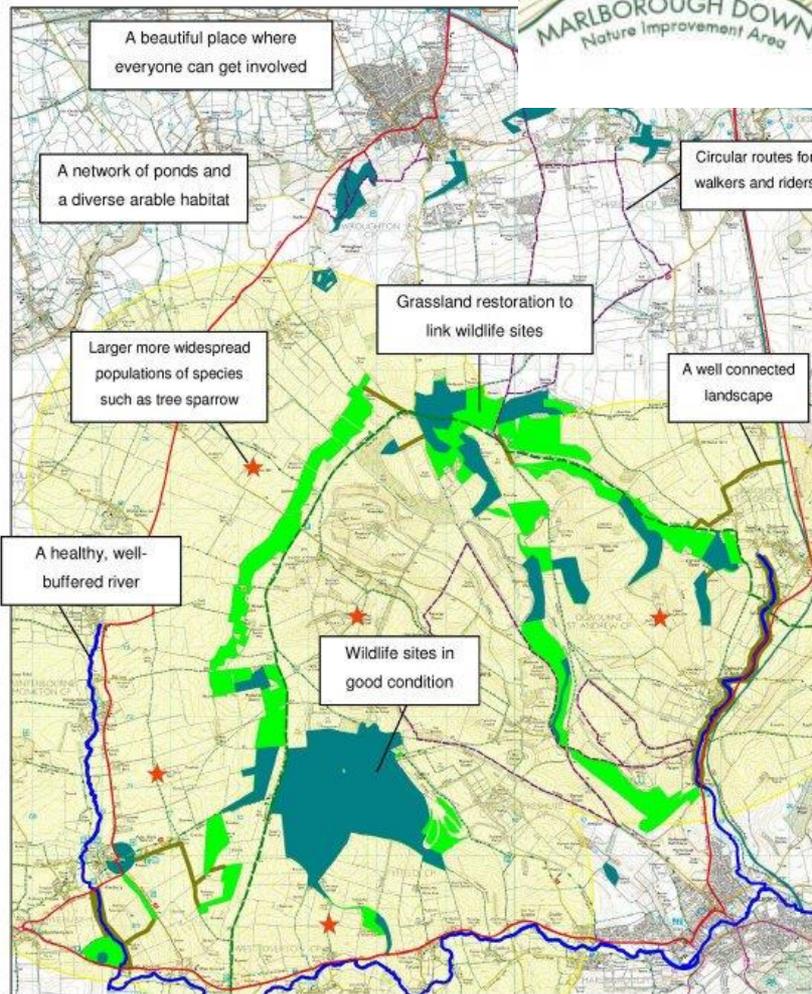
Nature Improvement



NIA grant awarded: £555,090
Additional resources provided by this NIA: £505,149.

The Marlborough Downs NIA covers 10,370 ha of chalk downland and lies to the south of Swindon and within the North Wessex Downs AONB.

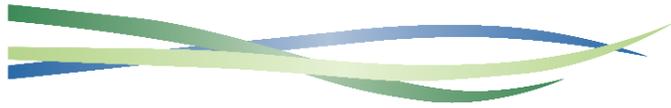
The NIA will support and supplement existing efforts by delivering **more**, on a **bigger** scale with **better** management of **more joined up** habitat.



Map 6: Marlborough Downs Nature Improvement Project – Our Vision

(Please note that this map is for illustrative purposes only and should not be taken as definitive in any way)





Landscape Enhancement



Before



After

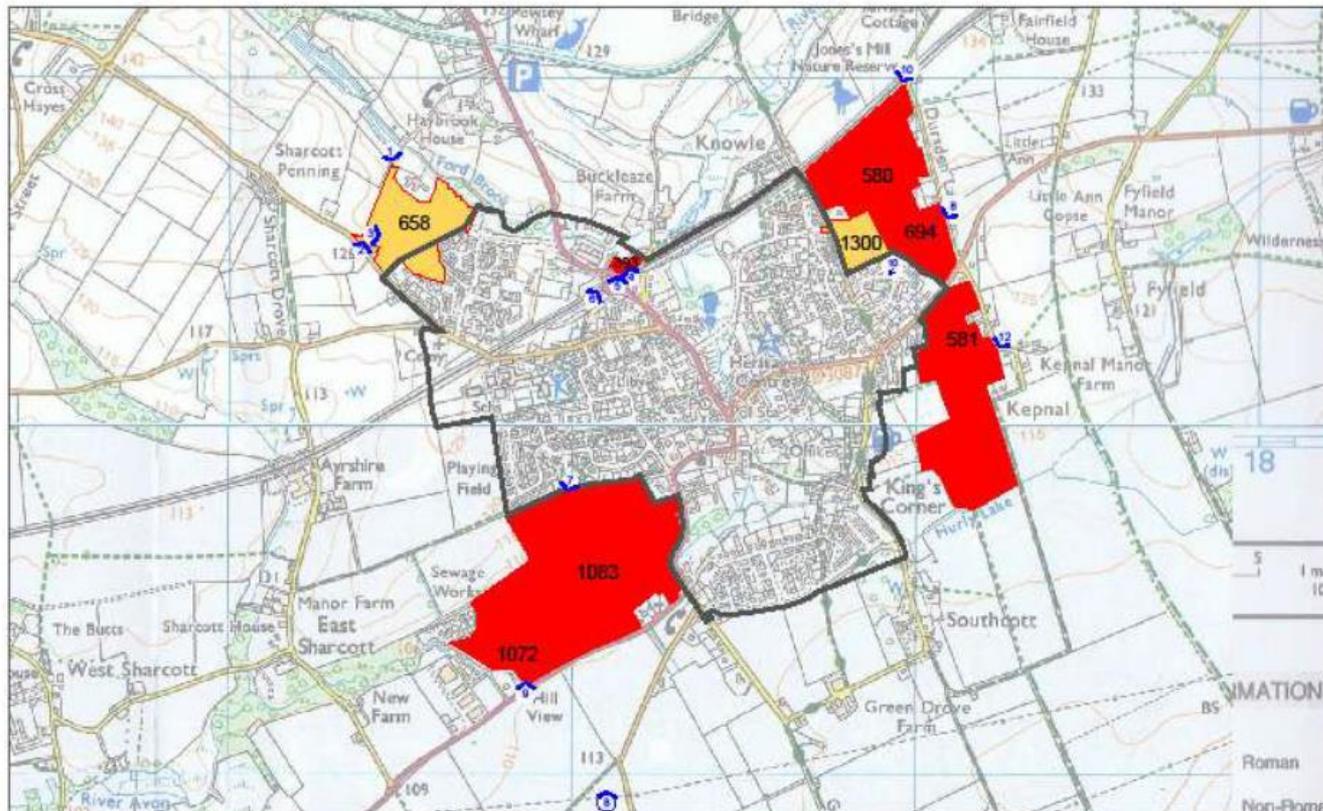
Meeting Our Needs Without Harm To The Landscape

- The Goring and Streatley Hydro Electric Scheme.
- “Greening Hermitage” – parish campaign to reduce energy use.
- Ground source heating to Milton Lilbourne Village Hall.
- Support to wood fuel based enterprises including equipment and support for Wessex Biofuels, Seasoned Timber Co, Frank Houghton Forestry, Thomas Owen, Rural Heat.



Photo Montage of Goring Gap weir next to the lock-keeper's house with three 3.5m diameter Archimedes Spirals

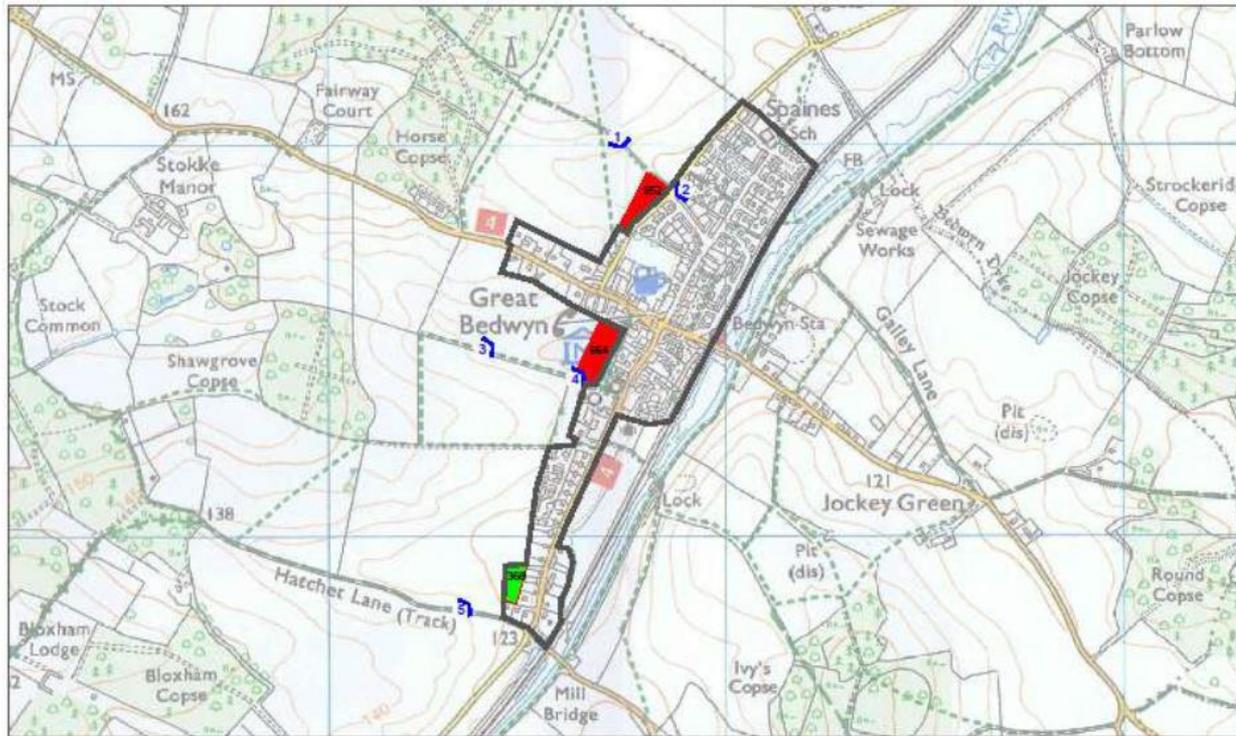




- sites considered appropriate for development
- sites considered to have some potential for development
- sites considered inappropriate for development
- Settlement boundary

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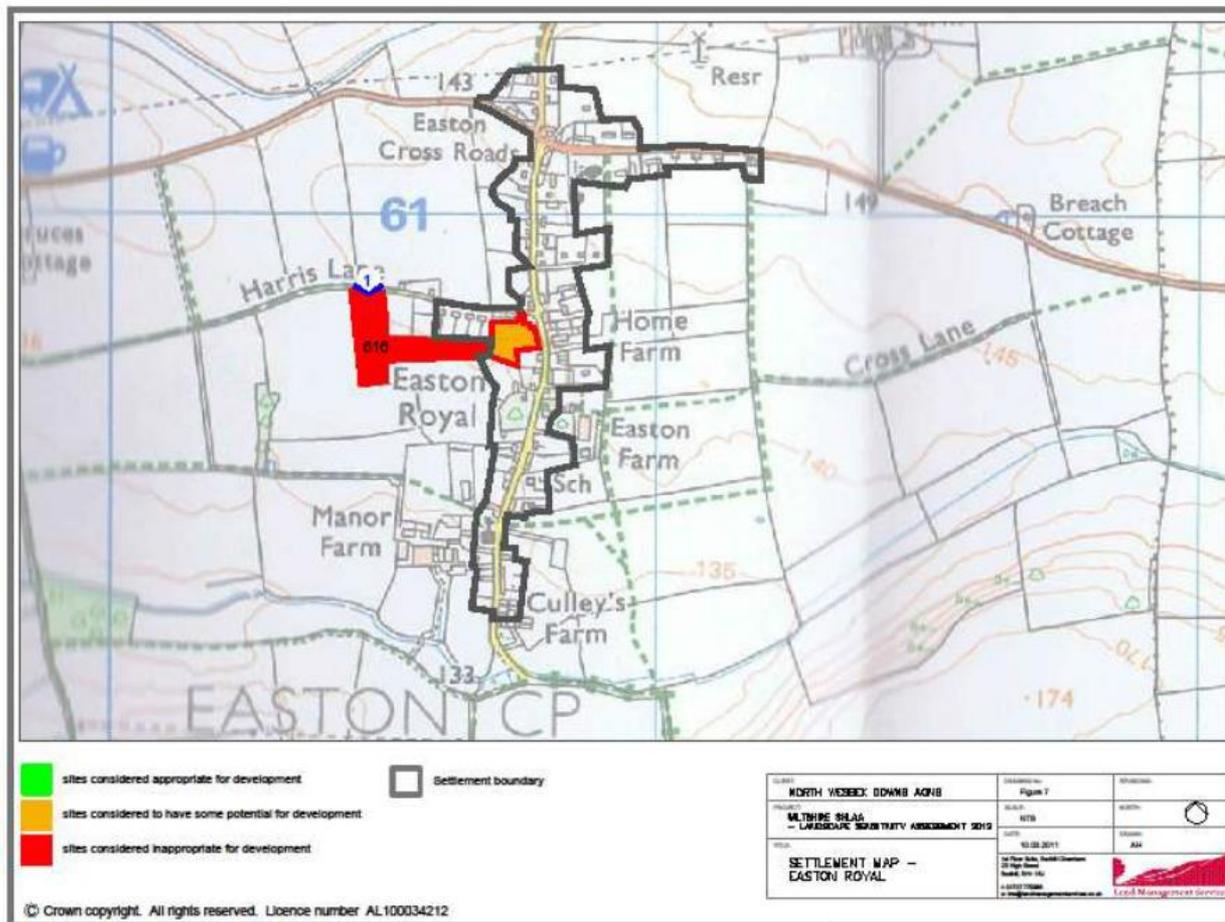
TITLE NORTH WESSEX Downs AONB PROJECT WILTSHIRE SHLAA LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT 2012 DATE SETTLEMENT MAP - PEWSEY	DRAWING NO. Figure 13 SCALE NTS DATE 10.03.2011 BY Peter Sibley, Sarah Clouston 01753 601161 1 01753 70000	SHEET NO. 01 NORTHING 454 EASTING 454 DATE 10.03.2011 BY Peter Sibley, Sarah Clouston 01753 601161 1 01753 70000
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PROJECT NORTH WESSEX DOWNS AONB	FIGURE NO. Figure 10	REVISED None
CLIENT WILTSHIRE SHLAA - LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT 2012	SCALE N/A	NOTES 
TITLE SETTLEMENT MAP - GREAT BEDWYN	DATE 10.08.2011	STATUS AM
IN THIS CASE, LAND USE DESIGNATION IS NOT APPLICABLE. © 2012 WILTSHIRE SHLAA www.wiltshire-shlaa.co.uk		 Wiltshire SHLAA Landscape Sensitivity Assessment





Neighbourhood Planning

Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to:

- * make a neighbourhood development plan
- * make a neighbourhood development order
- * make a Community Right to Build order

Neighbourhood planning was introduced through the [Localism Act 2011](#). [Neighbourhood planning legislation](#) came into effect in April 2012.

Neighbourhood development plans

A neighbourhood development plan establishes general planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood, like:

- * where new homes and offices should be built
- * what they should look like
- * The plan can be detailed or general, depending what local people want.
- * Neighbourhood plans allow local people to get the right type of development for their community, but the plans must still meet the needs of the wider area. In most cases we expect this will mean that neighbourhood plans will have to take into account the local council's assessment of housing and other development needs in the area.

As of April 2014:

- * 1,000 communities have taken the first formal steps towards producing a neighbourhood development plan
- * 80 full draft plans have been produced for consultation
- * 13 neighbourhood plans have been passed at community referendums

Examples of progress to date locally:

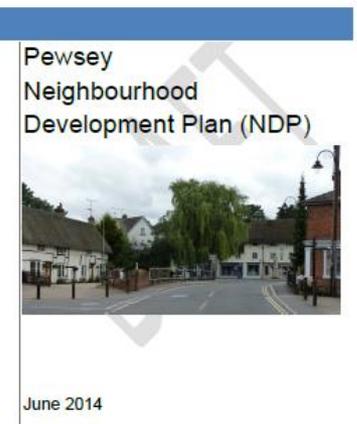
Pewsey Neighbourhood Plan – Delivery Stage (draft Neighbourhood Plan).

Marlborough Neighbourhood Plan – suspended over costs?

Burbage Neighbourhood Plan – Scoping (draft Neighbourhood Plan).

Devizes Neighbourhood Plan – Neighbourhood Plan submission stage.

Stanton St Bernard – Scoping.



The Government's Aim:

- empower local communities to do things their way.

therefore...

- introduces a new tier of planning: Neighbourhood Development Plans.
- inspire innovation and creativity.
- explores ways of enabling communities to deliver their development needs.
- community led, not Council led.
- light-touch process.
- part of the Local Development Framework



Neighbourhood Planning Advantages

The community takes responsibility for deciding its future.

- The community gains a greater understanding of the issues it faces and the practicalities of addressing them.
- Brings the community together to tackle the issues it faces.
- Catalyst for a sense of community achievement and pride.
- Opportunity to have a direct dialogue with landowners/developers wishing to promote development in your area.



Neighbourhood Planning Disadvantages

Requires considerable commitment/volunteers – time, energy & staying power and money!

- Inability to achieve consensus.
- Pressure of being in the limelight and focus of attention.
- Frustrating if not achieving ambitions/expectations.
- Could be divisive – not everyone will be content with the outcomes.
- You will have to tackle difficult issues.

Therefore Neighbourhood Planning may not suit many of the smaller well protected settlements in the AONB where little or no development may occur.



NWD AONB Recommendations

- If you are preparing a Neighbourhood Plan seek advice from Wiltshire Council, the AONB, other communities inside and outside Wiltshire.
- Don't forget you are in or near an AONB when writing your Plan.
- Keep a look out for our soon to be published new Management Plan 2014-2019 and make references to it within your Plan.
- Don't forget your Plan must be compliant with the Wiltshire Core Strategy (which in turn must be compliant with national policy that seeks to conserve and enhance AONBs and affords them “great weight” in the decision making process).
- neighbourhood.planning@wiltshire.gov.uk

- **Further Guidance:** www.northwessexdowns.org.uk *publications*
- **Sign Up to Our Regular Newsletter**
- **Find Out About Grants**
- **Courses we sponsor**
- **Our “Local Products Directory”**
- **Publications, Guidance and Strategies**
- **Walks and Cycle Leaflets and Maps**
- **New Management Plan Autumn 2014**

