

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The overall scope and methodology used in preparation of the landscape sensitivity assessment for the SHLAA sites has been to identify sites which are available and then to prepare an assessment of these sites. This approach does not give sufficient weight to the conservation and enhancement of the special landscape qualities of the AONB, as stated in Area Delivery Plan Policy 5 of the Core Strategy.
- 6.2 The SHLAA for the AONB should have been landscape led. An overall landscape character and sensitivity assessment should have been carried out for each settlement, prior to the identification of potential development sites (as was carried out for Hungerford as part of the 2009 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, and is recommended in the AONB Management Plan).
- 6.3 Allowing for the reservations we have as to the limitations of the approach taken, all sites have been assessed and our conclusions presented in a layout consistent with the 2011 Kirkham/Terra Firma Report.
- 6.4 The table below provides a comparison of the total number of proposed dwellings from the Kirkham/Terra Firma assessment and the Land Management Services Assessment.

Settlement	KTF	LMS	
	Sites with potential for Development	Appropriate for Development	With potential for Development
Hungerford	509	90	0
Lambourn	189	57	0
Pangbourne	146	0	26
Hermitage	321	321	Part HER 004
Compton	250*	210	40
Kintbury	210	19	50
Chieveley	112	33	0
Great Shefford	24	24	0
Total net dwellings	1,761	754	116

* Excludes COM 002A as no figures are included in the February 2011 SHLAA report.

- 6.5 A limited number of the sites are brownfield sites. These are:
- Denison Barracks in Hermitage - HER 006
 - The Animal Health Research site in Compton - COM 004
 - The Garden Centre and Veterinary sites at Hungerford – HUN 003, HUN 015 and HUN 020.
- 6.6 These sites could accommodate a total of 530 dwellings from the February 2011 SHLAA report based on the figures included in the February 2011 SHLAA report.
- 6.7 All of the other sites are greenfield. As such there could be an argument that all these sites contribute to the special landscape qualities of the AONB to some degree as open countryside. Both the Kirkham/Terra Firma and our assessments include observations and comments that, for reasons of neglect, land use or current management, these sites contribute to a varying degree to the special landscape qualities and/or natural beauty of the AONB. Where we have disagreed with the observations in the Kirkham/Terra Firma Report we have stated our reasons why. In a number of cases removal of particular features, such as conifer hedges or bringing the land into active management, for instance with the re-introduction of grazing, could enhance the natural beauty of the AONB, but this should not necessarily represent an argument to promote development of the land.
- 6.8 The Kirkham/Terra Firma assessment and our subsequent assessment have significantly reduced the number of sites which could be taken forward as part of the SHLAA and still conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB. More detailed landscape and visual assessment must be undertaken for all sites, should they be taken forward as development sites. We have, however, highlighted a number of sites which, based on our conclusions as to the strength of the relationship between the site and the neighbouring settlement and the limited contribution the existing site makes to the special landscape qualities or natural beauty of the AONB, could accommodate development incorporating measures to enhance the character of the AONB, for instance through creation of an improved edge to the settlement. These sites are bordered in yellow on each of the Settlement Maps.

- 6.9 The cumulative impact of development of all of the November 2010 SHLAA sites would have been significant. The character, tranquillity and sense of place of almost all of the settlements would have been affected. We have reservations as to the cumulative impact of development, in particular at Hermitage and Compton, due to the scale of development which could be accommodated on the two brownfield sites at Denison Barracks and the Animal Health Research centre, respectively. We would strongly support the need for phasing of development, as advocated in the Kirkham/Terra Firma report, and the need to assess impacts on the overall village infrastructure and services.
- 6.10 We strongly support the recommendations set out in the Kirkham/Terra Firma report as to the need for measures both to conserve existing landscape features and site characteristics and to include measures which will enhance the natural beauty of the AONB, where sites are to be taken forward as part of the SHLAA. Any development must conserve and enhance the special landscape qualities and sense of place associated with each settlement and the natural beauty of the AONB.